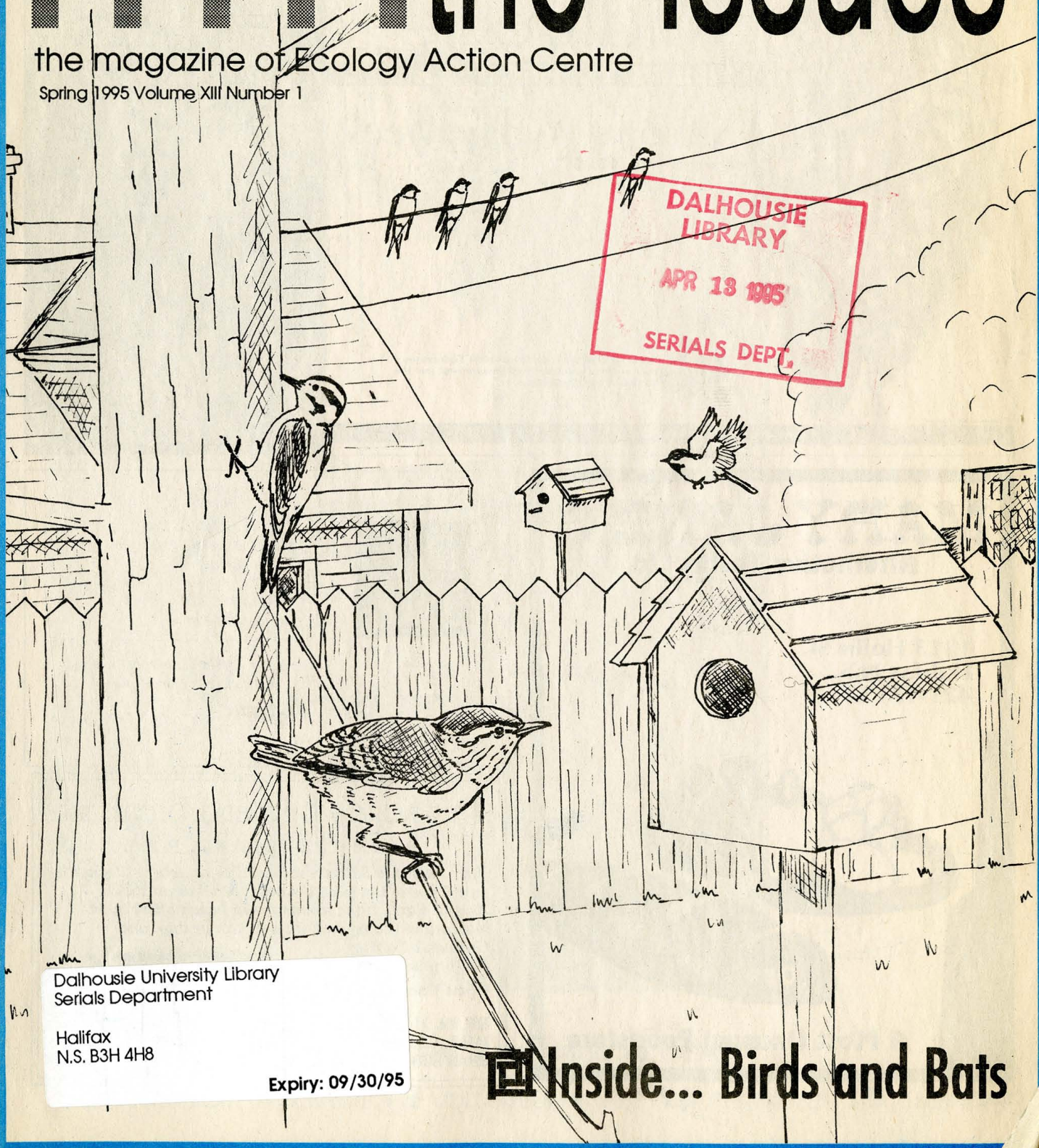


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Spring 1995 Volume XIII Number 1



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 Inside... Birds and Bats



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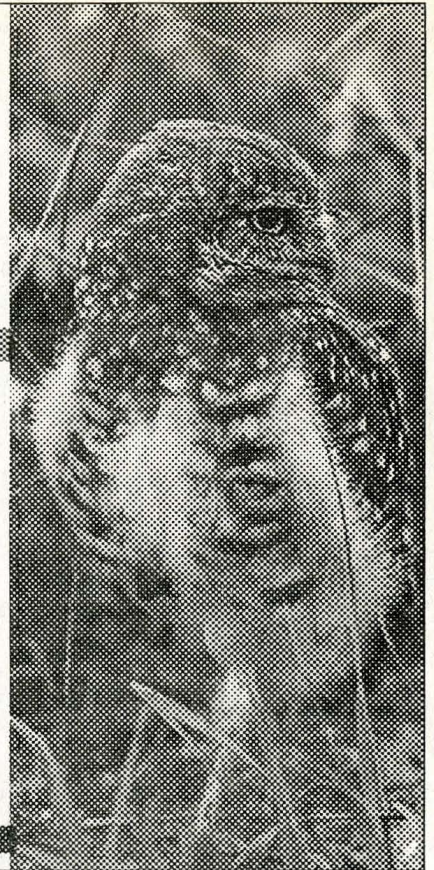
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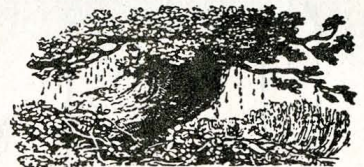
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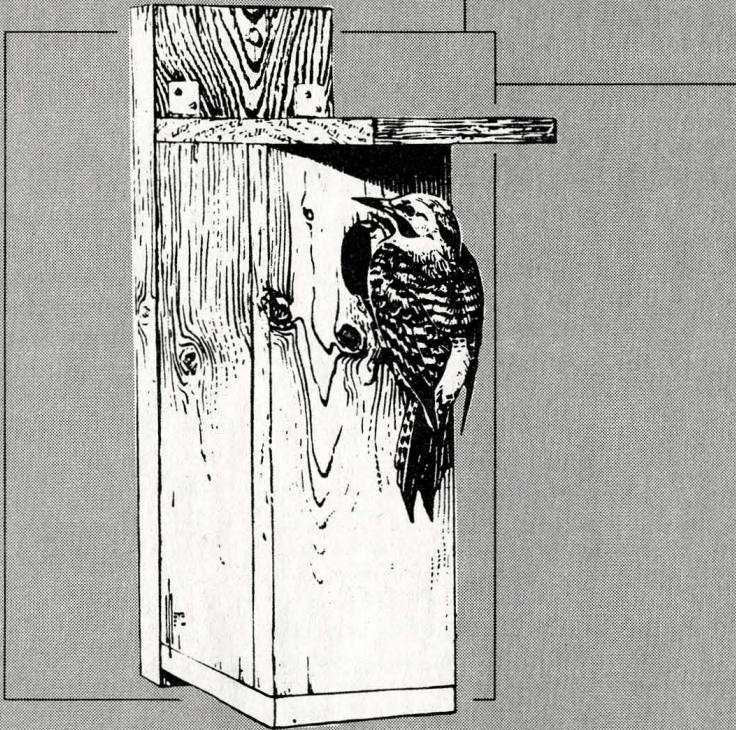
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the issues

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EDITORIAL

IS CARING FOR THE BIRDS?

Why should we care "For the Birds" when there are so many other environmental problems that need our attention? In his introductory chapter to the Worldwatch Institute's recent State of the World for 1995, Lester Brown observes that:

Although collapsing fisheries and water scarcity attract attention because of their immediate economic effects, the decline of the bird population maybe a more revealing indicator of the earth's health. Recently compiled data by BirdLife International of Cambridge, England, show populations dropping on every continent. Of 9,600 species, only 3,000 are holding their own; the other 6,600 are in decline. Of these, the population of some 1,000 species have dropped to the point where they are threatened with extinction. The precise reasons for this vary, but they include deforestation, particularly in the tropics; drainage of wetlands for farming and residential construction; air and water pollution; acid rain; and, for some species, hunting. (p.4)

We need, in other words, to pay attention to birds and how we are treating them, since these fragile, beautiful creatures are key indicators of the health of the world. The attention that we can lavish upon birds is a needed antidote to those who doubt the decline in bio-diversity. The doubters seem divided into two camps. One camp says that, if the spotted owl must die for humans to prosper, so be it; others deny that there is a decline at all (and write papers like *Species Loss Could Be Statistical Shell Game*), so we can proceed as usual. But anyone who has thought carefully about how we depend on the careful weave of nature knows that these views ignore both the growing evidence and the peril of ignoring our place in a larger pattern of life.

The Ecology Action Centre tries constantly to inform people about the environmental effect of

our species' activities and point the way to a sustainable future. "For the Birds" is a way of heeding a warning sign. Even after the "For the Birds" contest ends on the 25th Earth Day (April 22nd), EAC will continue with a new project that takes another tack on one of the problems underlying the decline in bird populations.

Environment Canada has approved a project that we have called "Garden Green Teams." It's designed to continue our effort to reduce pesticide use, which is known to be harmful to birds. With a network of trainers, we hope to give people who already garden with chemicals the opportunity to share their experience and knowledge with other people—initially in the Metro Halifax area, but later in the whole province. We are putting into action the precautionary principle: if we suspect that our practices cause harm, let's find other ways of doing them to avoid damaging our planet. This is in fact an opportunity: to find a healthier way of treating our gardens, the spaces we live in, green spots in the midst of urban pavement; not a nuisance.

The project will have its official kick-off at the beginning of May, so look for more information on it then in the local newspapers, or drop by EAC's offices.

You are all also cordially invited to attend our Annual General Meeting, after a year of many difficulties and the effort involved in a move to a new location (see elsewhere in this issue). We hope to inform you about what we have achieved and what we hope to achieve this coming year! The AGM will be held at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic on Saturday, May the 27th, from 2 pm onwards, with an open house at EAC's new offices at 1553 Granville St. until sometime in the evening...

Ronald Wood

RIVERS THAT KILL

Some of the rivers in Brittany are so polluted with herbicides that greenhouse crops irrigated with river water are being poisoned. A study carried out by the Regional Service for Plant Protection in Rennes found that tomato plants watered from the river Seiche in central Brittany suffered from wrinkled leaves, bent stems, slow growth and deformed or unusually small fruit. The director of the service says the plants were not suffering from any disease, they were being poisoned by the irrigation water.

Analysts identified 15 chemicals from herbicides and pesticides in the Seiche, the most polluted of four rivers investigated. Most of the chemicals were present in concentrations above 0.1 micrograms per litre. In 60 per cent of the samples, the concentration of the weed-killer atrazine was more than two micrograms per litre. In April and June, it reached about 30 micrograms per litre. Under French law, the total concentration of all compounds derived from herbicides and pesticides should not be more than 0.5 micrograms per litre.

In the Seiche and the River Aven, investigators found high levels of dinitrophenol, a compound previously linked to deaths

of farmed fish. In some samples, the concentration was hundreds of times the dose fatal to rainbow trout. Half the fish farms in Brittany rear rainbow trout. Use of this herbicide was recently banned within 20 metres of any river.

New Scientist, 29 Oct 94

SMART WOOD

Several timber certification programs around the world are collaborating to form the Smart Wood Network to help set global standards for the timber industry.

The Smart Wood network will certify forest managers and loggers with the Smart Wood seal if they can demonstrate that they are maintaining the forest's capacity to regenerate itself, controlling ecological effects such as soil erosion, and returning benefits of their businesses to local residents. Companies that sell Smart Wood products can also receive certification.

The network hopes to set a standard in certification by providing the participating organizations with expert training and one internationally recognizable label. It is also working to apply its certification for the first time to the temperate and boreal forests of the United States and Canada. Previously, the program only certified tropical timber operations.

For more information on the Smart Wood program or the network, contact: Helena Albuquerque, Rainforest Alliance, 65 Bleeker Street, New York, NY 10012. Tel: (212) 677-1900.

BioScience, Jan 1995

EVERYONE MISSES THE MARK

At the "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, 155 nations solemnly pledged to cap industrial emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases believed to contribute to global warming. The next step was to develop "action plans" describing how each country intended to meet its obligations. In compliance with a September 1994 deadline set by the treaty, 15 developed countries have released their plans, (Canada was late), and the results are not impressive. None of the developed countries has actually met its treaty obligations.

Many of the plans focus on reducing emissions of CO₂ to 1990 levels by the year 2000. Some, such as Germany, go further, while others are more conservative than required by the treaty. Regardless, most of the plans are unlikely to meet their targets, according to the U.S. Climate Action Network and Climate Network Europe. Both organizations are coalitions of environmental organizations.

In a report released this past summer, the two groups predict only Norway, Denmark and the United Kingdom are likely to meet the treaty's goals. They are especially doubtful of the effectiveness of voluntary measures, such as those at the core of the plans of the U.S., Canada and New Zealand.

At a meeting of signatory countries in Berlin this March, Germany and several other countries are expected to propose strengthening the treaty to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 80 percent of 1990 levels by 2005. Such provisions are likely to be vigorously opposed by China, Russia and Saudi Arabia.

Science, 23 Dec 1994

AFRICA'S OLDEST PARK

The Virunga National Park, on the border between Zaire and Rwanda, was the first national park in Africa, established in 1925. In 1979, UNESCO declared Virunga a world heritage site, its premier designation of cultural and ecological places worthy of protection. Now it is likely to become the fifth ecological site on UNESCO's Heritage in Danger list. The others are the Air and desert nature reserve in Niger, recently occupied by Tuareg guerillas; the Manas tiger sanctuary on the border between India and Bhutan.

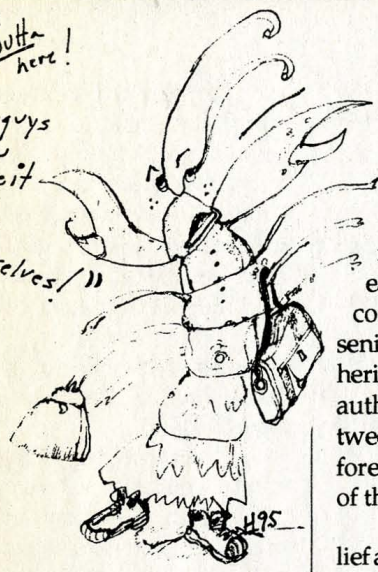
"People, people... I got ta tell ya... I'm only one river...
I'm overworked people, saturated...
I'm goin' around the bend...!"



ECOBRIEFS

"I am outta here!"

You guys can take it out on yourselves!!



square kilometres of Virunga have been "partly or completely deforested" in the previous six months by refugees seeking food to eat and wood to burn. According to Jim Thorsell, senior advisor on natural heritage at the IUCN and author of the report, "between 410 and 770 tonnes of forest products are taken out of the park daily."

Thorsell criticized relief agencies for establishing a defecation zone and a dump for medical wastes inside the park. He concedes that the UN High Commission for Refugees had few options, but he insists that "there should be contingency plans to prevent future refugee crises in other places turning into environmental crises as well. These kinds of things are going to happen again in Africa." UNHCR guidelines state that "the utmost care should be taken to avoid the establishment of

tan, where Assam separatists are active; the Plitvice Lakes in Croatia, caught up in the conflict in former Yugoslavia; and the Everglades wetland in Florida, threatened by development of water resources.

The park is also within walking distance of several refugee camps set up near Goma in Zaire as the Rwandan crisis peaked. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) reported in late November that some 3000

refugee sites in or near national parks..."

The Virunga park's current problems predate the refugee crisis. Political breakdown in Zaire has left the park extremely vulnerable to poachers. The World Wildlife Fund has asked the World Bank to fund a \$3-million project to revive the park.

New Scientist 3 Dec 1994

THE GALAPAGOS UNDER SIEGE

Last October, Ecuador authorized a three-month sea cucumber fishery, with a quota set at 500,000. Two months into the season, in response to scientists and Galapagos tour operators, the fisheries were shut down, the quota having been exceeded fourteen-fold.

According to conservationists, the overfishing of the sea cucumber is a serious threat to the wildlife of the islands. The cucumber is an important link near the base of the food chain. People are being asked to write letters of protest to the President of Ecuador about threats from sea-cucumber fishermen to the wildlife of the Galapagos Archipelago.

Early in 1994, biologists began finding slaughtered tortoises, some hung from trees. It is widely believed the slaughter was pressure from fishermen on government officials to allow the sea cucumber fishery.

In January, angry fishermen blockaded the Charles Darwin Research Station and the headquarters of the national park service. They took several

hostages, and threatened to kill the famous Galapagos tortoises. The government initially agreed to re-open the fishery, but reversed itself, under pressure from its own Ministry of Information and Tourism.

The situation is not resolved, but it is calm for the moment. There are rumours of a lobster fishery opening any time, and a re-opening of the sea cucumber fishery in October of this year.

Science/Nature, Feb 1995

THE FISH EATERS

Concerns that subsistence fishers consume much greater amounts of fish and therefore run a greater risk of ingesting waterborne toxins than the general population were confirmed in a US study by the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

The Environmental Protection Agency study, released this past October, found that fish consumption by members of four Columbia River Basin Native American tribes was nine times higher than that of the general population. The general population figure is used, noted EPA, to set state water quality standards that are supposedly protective of human health. The Native Americans were found to consume an average of 58.7 grams of fish per person per day. Some tribe members consumed more than 250 grams per day, according to the study. Figures used for water quality standards assume consumption of 6.5 grams per day.

Environmental Science & Technology 1994



What's Up? Summit's Happening!

Fred Gale

By now, just about everyone knows that a Group of Seven (better known at the G-7) Summit will take place in Halifax this June. But what is a G-7 Summit? What will its agenda be? And what will be its environmental and social legacy?

A G-7 Summit is an annual event that brings together the heads of state of the world's seven wealthiest countries. According to the deeply flawed measure of Gross National Product (GNP), these are taken to be Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

At a Summit, the rich world's self-appointed guardians discuss their pressing international concerns. Although last-minute items may be added, a key topic at the Halifax Summit will be the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Summit leaders may choose to celebrate the 50th anniversary of these international financial institutions by calling for a review of their mandates and operation.

In the past, both institutions have promoted socially

Group Of Seven (G-7) Summit, Halifax, June 11-18

and environmentally regressive policies. The World Bank's support for environmentally destructive mega-projects is legendary. The International Monetary Fund's structural adjustment policies have wreaked social and environmental havoc in the developing world. A review of both institutions is undoubtedly long overdue.

Concern about the potentially negative environmental consequences led to the formation of the G-7 Civic Environmental Committee late last year.

G-7 Civic Environmental Committee

The G-7 Civic Environmental Committee (CEC) is an ad hoc

The People's Summit (P-7) Halifax, June 11-18

G-7 & the Environment

For environmentalists, the G-7 Summit will have two outcomes. First, global environmental destruction will continue because of the refusal of G-7 leaders to reform the basic operation of the world trade, monetary and financial systems.

The lack of new and additional funds to implement sustainable development means that poverty-induced resource depletion will continue to plague developing countries. In the First World, economic restructuring will continue to promote over-consumption, pollution, resource depletion and social dislocation.

Second, the G-7 Summits' environmental consequences for the City of Halifax may be negative. Entertaining 5,000 people for a week places further stress on already environmentally unsustainable consumption patterns and waste-disposal and transportation systems.

coalition of environmental, municipal and business representatives, which has put together a set of proposals on how best to "green" the Halifax Summit.

CEC's proposals are eminently practical and cover the four R's of environmentalism (refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle). One idea is to issue Summit delegates free, reusable coffee mugs that they can use at all participating cafes and restaurants in downtown Halifax.

Another idea is for all official summit-related purchasing to adhere to environmental principles. When ordering office supplies, only 100 per cent post-consumer recycled paper would be requested. When purchasing food, local organic products would have preference over non-organic imports.

The Environmental Liaison Officer at the Summit Office in Halifax was enthusiastic about CEC's proposals and took them to Ottawa for

consideration. Ottawa's Summiters liked the ideas too, but unfortunately, they were unable to channel a penny of the Summit budget toward implementation. CEC has not given up yet, however, and is now going after Federal and Provincial Departments of the Environment for funding.

P-7:

The People's Summit

The anti-democratic nature of the G-7 Summit has prompted environmental and social action groups in Metro to organize a People's Summit. The P-7 aims to raise public awareness of how existing international policy affects people, communities and the environment. The P-7 also intends to provide information about and practical demonstrations of alternatives to the G-7 agenda. The P-7 process is open, democratic and participatory. Until now, the group has held monthly meetings at the North Branch Library. Five sub-committees are coordinating activities, and members are planning a whole series of diverse, positive, challenging and fun events during the week of the Summit.

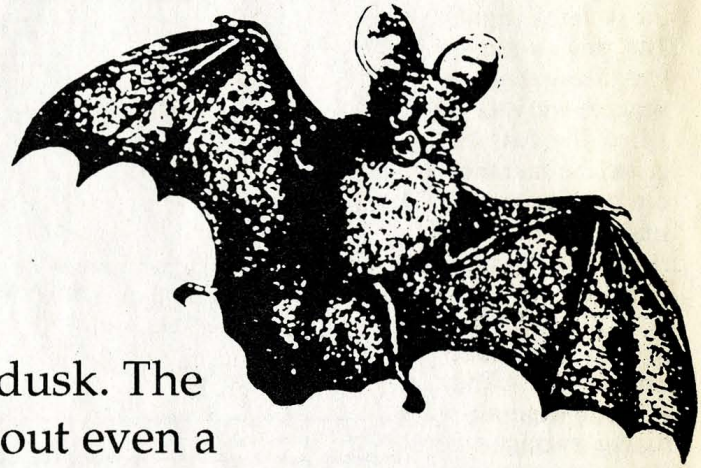
The P-7 Summit will run from June 11 to 18 inclusive and promises to be an excellent opportunity for environmental and social rights activists to work together toward a common goal. The group still has plenty of work to go round, however. So, if you are interested in getting involved, why not drop in to the newly established P-7 office at 2151 Gottingen Street, Halifax (Club 55) or phone 425-1550.

THE P-7 OFFICE

Drop by 2151
Gottingen Street,
Halifax (Club 55)
or call
(902) 425-1550

Living with Bats

by Matt Saunders



One of my most memorable field experiences occurred in a swamp just after dusk. The night was hot and humid, without even a whisper of wind. I remember wishing for a breeze to scatter the mosquitoes that swarmed

around me. The only protection was to tie my hood tightly round my face. My research on bats had brought me here, and as I tuned in my bat-detecting equipment, capable of picking up the ultrasonic cries of bats, the speaker came alive with feeding calls. Against the fading light, I watched as a lone bat hovered around me, feeding on the insects that tormented me.

Bats make many people uncomfortable. In fact bats' inquisitive nature is often misinterpreted as aggression. Although bats appear to fly recklessly, their unpredictable turns and kamikaze dives are essential for catching flying insects. So, even though it may seem as if bats are swooping at you, they're only trying to out-manoeuvre their prey. Bats also investigate sounds. They can be attracted by fluttering your fingers together or by scraping your fingernails on a nylon jacket. Soon their curiosity wears off and they resume hunting.

To see bats in action, stand under a street light and watch them feed on insects that swarm around the light. Or visit a pond on a moonlit night and watch for fleeting silhouettes of bats near the water.

Our most common species, the little brown bat, is also the most readily adapted to living with people. In some cases, one or two bats may roost under shingles or clapboard siding. These stragglers, usually males or young bats, often choose a new roost site each day. But some buildings may house hundreds of bats during the summer. These colonies usually consist of pregnant females that need a warm place to raise their young. They choose attics and unoccupied buildings because the warm temperature and crowded conditions allow baby bats to grow quickly. Rapid develop-

ment is critical to ensure that the young bats have sufficient time to gain weight before winter and learn how to feed.

A few bats in your home may go undetected; a colony is difficult to overlook. Young bats are noisy, calling for their mothers to nurse them, and as bat droppings accumulate, the colony becomes smelly. Despite these inconveniences, bats do not chew insulation, wood or wiring. Having the bats can be helpful. Consider the insect control that they provide. Bats are the most important predators of night-flying insects; each bat eats up to half of its weight in insects every night, the equivalent of 1,000 to 3,000 mosquitoes. No man-made insect deterrent can compare.

If bats have chosen to live in your house in the past, they will probably return each year. A number of different, usually ineffective methods have been used to discourage this. Noxious fumes can be annoying to people and pets, and the bats will be back as soon as the fumes dissipate. Rodent repellents that emit ultrasonic sounds may actually attract bats. Sticky traps may catch a few bats, but most will learn to avoid them.

Poisons often cause more problems than they solve. Dazed and weakened bats can be picked up by children or pets; dead bats may rot in corners and add to the existing odour. The only sure way to keep bats out of your house is to bat-proof it.

In old houses, bat-proofing is difficult because little brown bats can crawl through holes the size of a quarter. All entrances and exits that bats use should be blocked. You can find these openings by watching where they emerge at dusk, or by looking for droppings on the sides of the house. Bat droppings look like mouse droppings, but can be found

stuck to walls where mice cannot reach.

Because bats do not leave their roost every night, place a chute, such as a plastic bread bag with the bottom removed, over the exit for several nights. The device allows bats to leave but prevents re-entry. Once all of the bats are gone, the entrances can be permanently sealed with foam rubber plugs or caulking.

Expect the bats to keep trying to re-enter the house. They will look for an alternative entrance. If they succeed, the eviction process has to be repeated.

The timing of roost-sealing is critical. The work should be completed before the end of June when the young are born, or after the end of July when the young can fly. If roost entrances are sealed in July, young bats will be

locked inside and will die from starvation. Before blocking any entrances, check the attic to see whether any young bats are present. Newborn bats are furless and smaller than adults. Furred juveniles look like adults but will not fly when disturbed.

Free Boughs Donated for a Kindergarten Fest

Friedman Brauer

At the Ocean Wave Nursery-Kindergarten, the children make a special connection with nature and the changing seasons through the nature corner, stories and play. The toys are all made from natural materials, and include logs, pieces of bark, driftwood, rocks, and shells.

The celebration of festivals is an important part of the curriculum. George Post, who supplied the chemical-free Christmas trees to EAC, kindly donated fir boughs to the kindergarten for the "Garden of Lights" fest.

The celebration took place on the first Sunday of Advent, November 27, 1994. While inspired by Advent as a time of making ready for Christ's coming, the fest's symbolism has a far wider context of traditions. Indeed, various holidays with connotations of light and the sun are celebrated around the time when the

nights are longest, and when light as the symbol of the Spirit is carried into the darkness of winter.

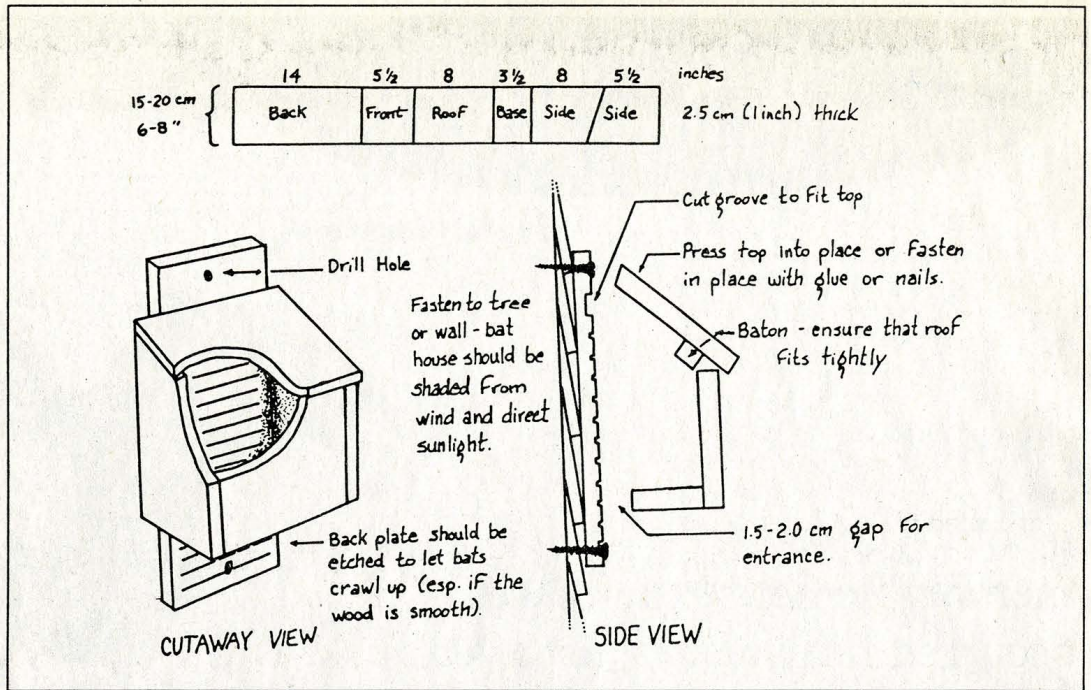
For the Garden of Lights, a spiral pathway is laid out on the floor of the hall, with boughs, rocks and crystals, and figures of animals and people. Each child picks up a candle stuck into an apple and is led along the pathway to the centre where a large candlestick burns. There they light their candles, and when returning, place it somewhere along the path, picking up a golden star to take home. As night falls, the room is lit by more and more candles. This takes place while a group of parents sing and play music.

The kindergarten is Waldorf-oriented and is located at 5429 Cornwallis Street, phone 421-1737. The children are between three and five years old and openings avail-

Relocating bats will search for new roosts, often staying close at hand and taking up residence in a nearby building. Your neighbours may not welcome this, so appease them and the bats by placing a bat house near their previous entrances. Bat houses are simple to construct, but you can also purchase them through bat conservation organizations. Place the bat house high above the ground on a wall or tree that is protected from wind and direct sunlight. To give the bats a strong grip, build the house from rough wood or etch the wood with a saw. Paint, stain or wood preservative will deter the bats, so select wood that weathers well.

The importance of providing an alternative roosting site is obvious when you consider that Nova Scotia's bats have only four or five months to feed, raise young and prepare for winter. Disturbances that disrupt their cycle mean that valuable time is wasted searching for new roosts, time that would normally be spent foraging or nourishing young. Careful placement of a bat house can keep you out of trouble with your neighbours, afford an unusual conversation piece and keep insects away. More importantly, it will help the bats.

Adapted from an article in N.S. Conservation, Vol. 14, No. 1, Spring 1990.



This small Bat house may house up to 30 at a time. It can be modified to hold more bats by increasing the width of the board and using the same dimensions for the other parts. Other designs can be used, but the best designs have an entrance no more than 2.0 cm wide and no longer than about 15 cm from side to side. If the distance between the back and front of the house is increased, include a dividing wall in the centre. Bats prefer relatively cramped space and the divider will increase the capacity.

EAC WISH LIST

It's beginning to feel like spring. If this feeling spurs you on to do a little cleaning and updating, think of us. The Centre desperately needs computer equipment. If you are updating your hardware and want your replaced equipment to go to a good home where it will be appreciated, call EAC. We would be interested in IBM or Mac computers and printers. Tax receipts will be provided for any donations.

BOXES, BOXES & MORE BOXES!

Shifting twenty five years of environmental history from one place to another is no easy task. Particularly from the third floor of one location to the second floor of another. Despite the odds against it, the Ecology Action Centre has set up new offices in downtown Halifax at 1553 Granville Street (above Red Herring bookstore). Increased accessibility and profile were key factors in the decision to move. It was clear to everyone using the Centre at our last location that the offices were not user friendly. The location was also not easily accessible by bus or on foot.

On weekends over the period of a month, Board members, volunteers, friends and family toted desks, chairs, file cabinets, shelves, boxes and more boxes to our new location. Everyone did a remarkable job and maintained a sense of humour throughout. Each one of those people deserves a huge pat on the back and heartfelt thank you from EAC!

SHINING STAR

Of all the people who worked so hard to make the move happen, one outshone us all. **Ellen Redden**, our dedicated volunteer librarian, was involved in every phase of the move from planning and packing, through

A Passion for the Birds

Jill Provoe

Abby has found a new favorite pastime. Sitting in her warm livingroom, she gazes out her window and watches a little black bird swoop down and sit on the snow-covered, square bird house. In search of peace and relaxation, Abby, like thousands of other North Americans, has recently found comfort in the growing hobby of bird watching.

"This is the second largest hobby in North America right now," says Clarence Stevens, manager of The Wild Bird Company in Halifax. "There seems to be no stopping this passion for birds."

Bird watching, however, is more than just a source of entertainment. It also makes us aware of how they preserve the environment. Birds eat insects for food and this helps to control the insect population.

"There is a decrease in the bird population worldwide and this is recognized very strongly in Nova Scotia," says Stevens. "This decline could be disastrous because we will then have more insects causing massive crop destruction." There are no easy solutions to this decline in the bird population but people can help by feeding them regularly during the year.

Although many kinds of birds migrate South in the winter, the species that remain subsist mainly on seeds. "People have a misconception that if they put up a bird house, the birds will eat the seed and not the insects. But that is just not the case," Stevens explains.

This assumption is false because the bird house will attract the adult seed-eating birds. These birds lay between one and eight eggs and they will search for insects in the local area to feed their young, says Stevens. It takes between two and four weeks for an egg to develop into a young adult and growing birds eat a lot of insects in those weeks. Those

with a bird feeder will have more insects eaten than those without.

This is one of the reasons the Ecology Action Centre is educating people about the value of birds. The EAC wants to make people aware that using chemical pesticides to control insects is not necessary. Birds do the same job naturally and at no cost.

The EAC has launched a unique contest called For the Birds which is open to the general public. All that is required is a little creativity to construct and design a bird house or a bird feeder. The plan is simple: you (or your group, class, family, etc.) build an original bird house or feeder and submit it for judging to the Ecology Action Centre in one of the four categories. Everyone is welcome to attend the For the Birds reception and auction to be held at 7.00 p.m. in the Green Room of Dalhousie University on Saturday, April 22, 1995.

Before the final judging takes place, the public will be able to view the bird houses and feeders at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, The Mary E. Black Gallery, and the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History.

Each bird abode will be judged by a jury of five qualified volunteers. A first and second prize will be awarded for each category. Those who attend the For the Birds reception will cast their ballot for a special People's Choice Award: two tickets to Vancouver, courtesy of Air Atlantic Canadian. The People's Choice Award will be presented at the For the Birds reception and auction.

"This is a good cause, a good opportunity, and a lot of fun," says Elizabeth Galbraith, publicity coordinator for the Nova Scotia Designer Crafts Council. "The contest allows people to spread their wings artistically," says Galbraith. Anyone interested in finding out how they can be a part of For the Birds can call the EAC office at 429-2202.

Volunteer Profile

*If you have a difficult job to do
and you don't know
who to call, try Maggie Moss!*

Maggie has been volunteering with EAC since 1992. Her first project was the Stars Recycle Quilt Lottery. Since then, she has either instigated, co-ordinated or participated in every one of the Centre's fund raising ventures.

Attendance at the Annual Luncheon and Silent Auction expanded under Maggie's direction. In three years, she increased proceeds more than 100 per cent! She achieved the same results with the Annual Auction. Her involvement with the Christmas trees was definitely a bonus as not too many people got past her on Saturdays at the Farmers' Market! One of her innovative fund raising ideas was the Enviro Coupon booklets featuring discounts on environmentally responsible products and services.

In addition to all these projects, Maggie has always been around to pitch in when help is needed. Maggie's main focus now is "For the Birds." She has secured sponsorship for all prizes and gained support for the Reception on Saturday, April 22nd. For the past few weeks she has been busy running here and there with posters and call-to-entry forms and contacting the media for promotion.

Maggie has always been interested in the environment and one of her major concerns is pesticide use. She, her husband Mike and their daughters Andrea and Allison live on lakeshore property that borders a golf course. For years, Maggie has been monitoring this situation to protect the

lake. Her worm compost is another story, though, but it's one you should ask her about!

With every task that Maggie assumes responsibility for, she gives 100 per cent paying attention to every detail. She has given her heart to each project large or small. From sending appeal letters, to delivering posters, to standing in the rain selling Christmas trees, she has been there!

As Development Director for EAC, I cannot think of another individual who has contributed as much as Maggie. She is a unique volunteer who takes her work seriously. When I became involved with EAC, Howard Epstein advised, "Maggie Moss is

an excellent fund-raising volunteer, don't lose her!" Well I followed his advice and have witnessed its truth. Maggie is an excellent fund-raising volunteer and we have been lucky to have her!

Mary-Catherine LeValle



Here is Maggie at the Wild Bird Store promoting the *For the Birds* Project

SHINING STAR... CONTINUED FROM P.11

the physical move to unpacking and organizing. Without all her assistance and guidance the resource centre move could have been chaotic. A sincere thank you goes out to a wonderful volunteer. **Thanks Ellen!**

AN INVITATION

The move to Granville Street is more than a physical one. It is an effort to strengthen the organization's presence and involvement in the community. The Board of Directors feels it is important to have the Centre as open and accessible as present resources permit. So please drop by for a visit! Once we

get settled in, and this could take a while so be patient, We will be holding an open house to share EAC's new home with you!

Ed. Note — Come to the EAC's AGM & Open House : See Between the Issues' back cover for details!

An increasingly popular pastime during the sometimes bleak days of winter is attracting birds to your yard by feeding a various assortment of foods. At this time of year, while most birds can survive on their own, they do appreciate a supplement to their diet and for a number of species that are at the northern-most edge of their winter range this may mean survival for another year. With the apparently decreasing population of many species, anything we can do to help is worthwhile and winter feeding takes little time.

To start with, you need to set up some sort of feeder. This can be as simple as a platform two or three feet square constructed of scrap wood, such as plywood or roughboards, and have a low edge to keep the seed from blowing off. The feeder should be approximately four feet off the ground on a post and should be located close to fairly dense shrubbery so your avian visitors can hide when any predators arrive. No cover is necessary though some elaborate models do sport a roof that does not seem to deter the birds and does help to keep the snow off.

A good mix of small seeds, white millet, hemp, niger, cracked corn and sunflower seeds or sunflower hearts spread generously on the platform and also on the ground will attract many passing birds. Start feeding in mid or early fall and try to continue until spring. Once you have a small flock coming, whether it is Starlings, Sparrows or some more desirable species such as Chickadees and Nuthatches, other birds will see the activity and be attracted.

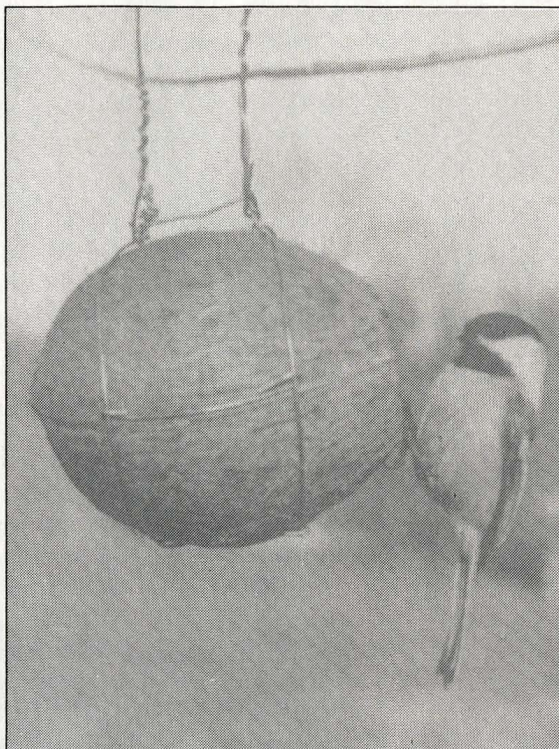
There are other useful types of feeders you can build. A wire bait holder from old lobster traps washed up onto the shore makes a handy suet feeder for Woodpeckers, Chickadees, Nuthatches and both Blue and Gray Jays. Suet is an important source of protein and can usually be obtained free from your local butcher, which otherwise might go to waste.

Another easily made suet feeder is a small log with one to one-and-one-half inch diameter (2-3 cm) diameter holes drilled randomly, which then are filled with a mixture of mainly peanut butter along with corn meal or cooked oatmeal and melted ground suet in any proportion to achieve a spreadable consistency. This can also be spread on tree branches or trunks.

A tube feeder, which unfortunately will have to be purchased, can be hung from a branch or installed on top of a small pipe with an inverted cone of plastic or metal to deter squirrels. This can either be filled with sunflower

WINTER ENJOYMENT TIPS for Building Birdfeeders

David Young



seeds (striped or oil) or sunflower hearts if the holes are rather large; niger (thistle) seed if the holes are quite small. Goldfinches, Siskins and Redpolls especially appreciate niger seeds; and Evening Grosbeaks, Red-Breasted and White-Breasted Nuthatches, Chickadees, Purple Finches and Jays enjoy sunflower seeds.

An especially successful feeder at our house is quite simple to construct and provides another way of recycling one-pound coffee cans. Save the plastic lid that comes with each can. Cut both metal ends from a can and replace with two plastic lids in which you cut a round hole, approximately one-and-one-quarter inches in diameter near the edge. The holes should line up end to end and lie, when the can is hung horizontally, near the upper edge. Suspend the feeder with a nylon line or wire from a branch, fill with sunflower seeds, and the Chickadees will love you forever!

A bird bath for drinking and bathing provides a basic need for all birds during dry weather - and during cold

weather if you place a low-wattage thermostatically controlled heater in the water. It's always great fun to watch birds throw water in all directions while bathing and then sit on a branch to preen themselves while drying off. To increase the attraction in the warmer months, a slow drip of water from above the bath will bring more visitors. This can come from a suspended can with a small hole or from a hose.

For the long-term, you can plant shrubs that provide berries, nuts or flowers that birds especially enjoy. Multiflora Rose seems to be the most attractive, will grow in Nova Scotia and provides many of our records of Bohemian Waxwings, which sporadically invade the province in large numbers during the winter months. Canada Holly provides a good crop of berries and this past year "Mountain Ash" (Rowan) had a tremendous crop and kept hundreds of Robins active in our region into the winter. Almost any fruit-bearing shrub is visited by our birds.

Our feeders in Little Harbour, Shelburne County, are very exposed and not in an ideal location, but we still have had up to thirteen species a day. The most exotic visitors have been Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Dickcissel, Indigo Bunting, Lark and Lincoln's Sparrows. This type of rare visitor serves to keep your interest at a high level - surprises are common and the general satisfaction of aiding nature in an increasingly hostile world makes the small effort of feeding very worthwhile. Have Fun!

Gwenda Wells

PestiNotes

Federal & Provincial Regulation Of Pesticides: Where To From Here?

Last winter, the Ecology Action Centre joined a large number of Canadian Environmental Network members in responding to the proposed new federal pesticide registration policy. There has been a four-year tug-of-war, and very mixed political commitment to this process, which aims to make pesticide testing safer. All that seems clear to date is that the responsibility will move from Agriculture to Health Canada, with chemical companies bearing a greater burden of the costs of research. There is fear that for the hundreds of chemicals that now have incomplete research dossiers, Green Plan money will be used to help "catch up."

As to ecosystem effects, precious little was stated, and with huge Environment Canada cutbacks, it is questionable whether Canadians can count on even the present "after-the-fact" ecosystem effect testing. Will we be looking to more of this research

being done by the provinces, as a result of the federal-provincial "harmonization" (read netcuts)? If so, Nova Scotians may well ask on whom we can rely within the provincial government to provide the necessary research capacity. The Department of the Environment, the one department with responsibility for pesticides that is not directly connected with a resource industry, is now almost entirely concerned with licencing and training. The new Environment Act could broaden this role, but will the dollars be there?

At the Nova Scotia Law Amendments Committee hearings on the New Nova Scotia Environment Act, EAC commented, among other things, on the inadequacy of the sections on pesticides.

Section 77 of the Act now reads: "the Minister shall undertake research on alternatives to pesticides and dangerous goods and reduction of pesticides or waste dangerous goods," with the word "pesticides" added in both places to the tabled version of the Act. A step in the right direction!

The Montreal-based *Citizens for Alternatives to Pesticides (CAP)* is promoting a "Pesticide-free Week," to run from Sunday 16 April to Saturday 22 April (Earth Day). Groups across the country are planning to promote pesticide-free living. The Ecology Action Centre will celebrate the week at its For the Birds celebration by launching its Garden Green Teams project.

Caveat Emptor

Last winter, during EAC's sale of chemical-free Christmas trees, a conventional grower from Lunenburg county called to comment on the television coverage of our project. "It's unfair to pick on small-scale growers who are just trying to fulfil market demands," the caller said. She stated that Lunenburg county growers have not used insecticides since the last outbreak of aphids, several years ago. During that outbreak, trees in the woods were not seriously affected; only the "choice" trees being grown to market standards were infested. From her account, it would appear that the fertilizer and herbicide regime followed by conventional growers may increase susceptibility to pests. "We produce what people will buy," she concluded.

Does organic gardening really make a difference to soil quality and biomass?

In 1990, scientists at the London, Ontario, Agricultural Research Centre began a four-year study to determine the impact of transition from conventional to organic vegetable production. Plots of organically and conventionally grown vegetables were studied for total yield, marketable yield, bacterial activity, mineral content, numbers of arthropods, earthworms, etc., and soil organic matter. The first couple of years showed lower, and indeed declining, yields in the organic plots for all crops studied (sweet corn, snap beans, cabbage, tomatoes and spanish onion). By the third year, organic yields were improving, and by the fourth, three of the five crops had equal or greater yields (snap bean, tomato, spanish onion). By the fourth year, marketable yields were 12 per cent higher from the organic plots overall. Soil enzyme activity was higher and populations of over 90 per cent of soil organisms had increased significantly.

During this fourth year, there were consistently more American toads counted in organic plots, and almost from the beginning of the study, more earthworms. Soil organic matter steadily increased (18 per cent over three years), whereas in the conventional plots it either remained constant or decreased.

The study also compared production costs over the period. They were significantly higher for the organic plots, because of higher labour demands. By the final year, costs had levelled off, as black plastic mulch had reduced weeding demands. In every year studied, the expenses associated with organic gardening were mostly labour costs; a higher percentage of conventional gardening expenses went to chemical maintenance programmes.

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Information drawn from the work of:

D.G.R. McLeod, J.H. Tolman et al., Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, London, Ontario)

A catalogue worth reading: B.I.R.C., The Bio-Integral Resource Centre's Least-Toxic Pest Management Publications and Services Catalogue offers 10 pages of publications, videos and other resources on everything from ticks to aquaduct vegetation control. The focus is on integrated pest management. The B.I.R.C. produces a quarterly, Common Sense Pest Control, and also features a number of Chinese-language materials! B.I.R.C.'s address is P.O. Box 7414, Berkeley, California 94707, Fax: (510) 524-1758

INSTITUTE FOR BIOREGIONAL STUDIES: 1995 Summer Programs

Ovens Natural Park, Riverport, N.S.

- Permaculture Design Course
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Kirkpatrick Sale, *Schumacher Society*
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William Rees, *School of Community Planning, University of British Columbia*
Carla Conrod, *Regional Atlantic Trading Note Association,*
Maureen Cureton, *Rocky Mountain Institute, and others*

For more information, send \$2.00 to:
IBS, 449 University Avenue, Suite 126,
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island,
C1A 8K3 tel. (902)892-9578; e-mail:
pferraro@peinet.pe.ca

APRIL

Calendar

►**FRIDAY 7:** Dalhousie University G-7 Seminar Series presents "Japan, the G-7 and the International Trading System" with Prof. K. Okuda and Mr. Sinsuke Fukushima from the International University of Japan, Niigata, Japan and Prof. Michael Hawes, Queens University, Kingston. The seminar starts at 3:30 p.m. For further details, contact Tammy Hall at 494-3769.

►**SUNDAY 9: Canadian Wildlife Week begins.**

►**Sunday 9:** "Spring Splash, a

Spectacular Showcase of Maritime Talent" presented by Unicef Nova Scotia takes place at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, Halifax. Come see Linda Brooks, Annick Gagnon, Rose Vaughan Trio, Vanity Fair and many other artists. The show starts at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are available (\$18) from Unicef Nova Scotia at (902) 422-6000.

►**FRIDAY 21:** "Go For Green Olympics" for grade five students in Bedford and Sackville takes place. The Olympics is a new and exciting event that combines environmental education with fitness and cooperation. For more details

contact CNSF at 420-3474.

►**SATURDAY 22: EARTH DAY's 25th Anniversary!**

►**SATURDAY 22: The Ecology Action Centre's "For the Birds" reception and auction** of original bird houses and feeders take place at 7:00 p.m. in the Green Room of Dalhousie University. For further information see articles in this issue of *Between the Issues* or contact EAC at 429-2202.

►**EAC and the Clean Nova Scotia Foundation are the provincial liaison for Earth Day.** Let them know what you're planning for Earth Day and how they can help organize your project/event. Contact

CNSF at 420-3474 for info. Halifax Field Naturalists are organizing the first of a four-part field trip to Conrad's Beach, a major migration area and home to piping plovers, fox, mink, otter, raccoons, frogs, and snakes. The trip starts at 10:00 a.m. at the Conrad's Beach Parking Lot, lasts 2-4 hours and is of moderate difficulty. Contact Jennifer MacKeigan at 883-9766 for details.

►**SATURDAY 29: The People's Summit Workshop Series, "How is Our Quality of Life Affected by the G-7?"** A workshop focusing on issues of health, education and racism at the North Branch Library, Gottingen Street from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

MAY

►**WEDNESDAY 1:** National Composting Awareness Week begins, coordinated by the Composting Council of Canada with provincial assistance from CNSF. For more information on how to get involved, phone CNSF at 420-3474.

►**WEDNESDAY 1-7:** The Clean Nova Scotia Foundation and PITCH-IN CANADA invite you to participate in "The Great Nova Scotia Pick Me Up" from 1 to 7 May. CNSF provides the clean-up materi-

als, including an organizational guide, posters, data collection cards, sample media releases, and garbage and blue bags. Registration forms are available from CNSF, phone 420-3474.

►**SATURDAY 13:** The People's Summit Workshop Series, "Deficit Cutting: What is the Agenda of the G-7?" A workshop examining the deficit hysteria and its connection to local issues, at the North Branch Library, Gottingen Street, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

►**SATURDAY 13:** Halifax Field Naturalists trip through

Kejimikujik National Park starts at 10:00 a.m. at the Visitors Centre at Keji Park. Join Rick Swain the Assistant Park Interpreter on a field trip by canoe and by foot. Contact Jennifer MacKeigan at 883-9766 info.

►**SATURDAY 27:** The People's Summit Workshop Series, "Sustainable Development or the G-7 Agenda?" A workshop that explores alternatives to an economic system that is increasingly harming our environment and putting people out of work, at the North Branch Library, Gottingen Street, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

►**WEDNESDAY 31:** "Taking Nature Into Account", at the European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium, is an international conference designed to create a new global momentum for making GDP and related indicators better reflect the costs of our economic policies. The conference is sponsored by the World Wide Fund for Nature, the Club of Rome and the European Parliament. Contact Jane Dunmore, Milestone House, 39 Main Road, Long Bennington, Nottinghamshire NG23 5DJ, United Kingdom, phone (44 1400) 281018.

JUNE

►**SATURDAY 3:** CNSF is organizing its "Moosehead Maritimes Beach Sweep and Litter Survey" from 3 to 18 June. CNSF provides Beach Sweep Groups with all necessary clean-up materials. Registration forms are available from the Foundation, phone 420-3474.

►**SATURDAY 3:** The People's Summit Picnic is a day to relax, eat and learn with presen-

tations from each of the information series' workshops. It will take place from noon to 5:00 p.m. at a location to be announced. For further information, contact the People's Summit Office, phone 425-1550.

►**SUNDAY 4:** Leslie Butters leads the trip to all the points of interest at Cape Split. The trek starts at 9:45 a.m. starting from Cape Split Parking Lot and lasts 5 hours and is moderate in difficulty. Bring your rubber boots and your lunch.

Organized by the Halifax Field Naturalists, contact Cathy Fulton-Strugnell at 835-8289 for further details.

►**THURSDAY 8: Oceans' Day**

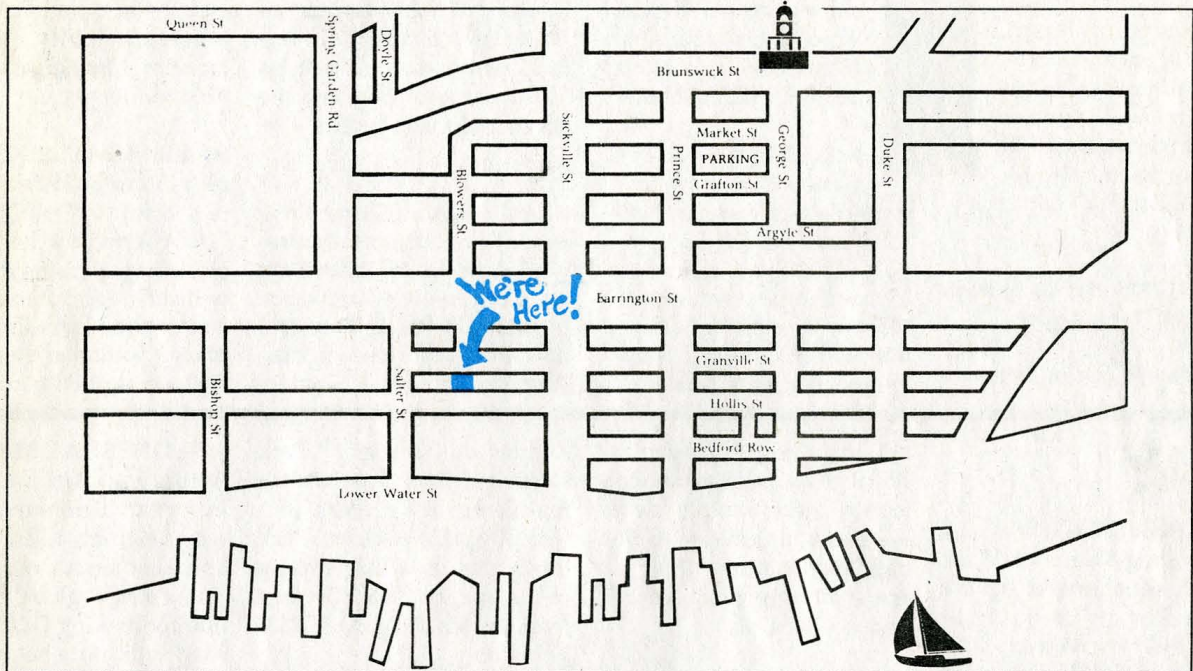
►**SUNDAY 11:** The People's Summit (P-7) launches a week-long series of events organized by local communities and non-profit groups. Details will be available later but those interested in organizing or helping with an event should attend the next meeting of the P-7 Forum. Further details are

available from the P-7 Summit Office at 425-1550.

►**SUNDAY 18:** Roger Foxhall is leading a birding trip at a location to be determined closer to the date. The trip starts at 7:00 a.m. at the NSM Parking Lot and lasts 2-4 hours and is moderate in difficulty. Organized by the Halifax Field Naturalists, call Jennifer MacKeigan at 883-9766 for details.



The Ecology Action Centre has **MOVED!**



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(Just Above the Red Herring Co-op Bookstore)

You're invited to...

THE EAC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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When? Saturday, May 27, 2-5 pm

Where? Maritime Museum of the the Atlantic

(1675 Lower Water St.)

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