

*Grand Manan Trails. Annual Newsletter #13
October 2005*

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BIRDING ON GRAND MANAN TRAILS

The Grand Manan Archipelago has long been a Mecca for birders, conjuring images of puffins with beaks full of fish and shearwaters gliding effortlessly over the waves.

Some birders may not be aware of the birding potential of the extensive trail system that traverses habitats ranging from the old growth, hardwood forest of the "backside of the island" to the stunted spruce and bogs of the east.

Spring migration and the summer breeding season, although rewarding, are accompanied by blackflies and deer flies making the forest trails somewhat less attractive than the windswept, insect free, beaches! For those wishing to hike the remote parts of the island in search of birds, the period from August to late October is ideal.

During this interval, fall migration combines with post-breeding dispersal of resident birds to provide a great birding experience for novice and fanatic alike.



Blackpoll



Black-bellied Plover



Crossbill



Osprey



Pomarine

THE WEST COAST TRAIL: WHISTLE TO SOUTHERN HEAD

The drier, upland areas of this part of the island support large trees and often sparse undergrowth. Juncos and White-throated Sparrows flush off the ground as you walk. A half-day hike will almost always be punctuated at some point by the crash and clatter of a Ruffed Grouse springing up from under your feet!

When the breeding season ends, resident songbirds combine with northern migrants to form mixed species flocks

that forage together in the treetops. The presence of one of these "bird parties" is heralded by the persistent chatter of Black-capped Chickadees. The clue for the hiking birder that it may be time to stop admiring the ocean views and focus on birds is the presence of chickadees calling in the area. Attracting the chickadees with a "pishing" or squeaking noise will eventually attract the other birds in the flock to see what all the fuss is about. When the birds finally figure out what is creating the irritating sound, they will disperse so it helps to be very still and wear colours that blend in with the environment.

The composition of the feeding flocks varies as the season progresses. Black-throated Green, Magnolia, Nashville Warblers and Black-and-white Warblers dominate in August. Some species are more cautious and less curious. They are interested but hang back watching from a distance. This group includes the thrushes and some of the more interesting warblers such as the Canada and Mourning. It is a good idea to try and ignore the Chickadees that are attacking your hat and try to focus on these "skulkers" in the background.

As summer advances into fall, Blackpolls arrive in numbers and become the dominant species in some flocks. This species "stages" on the coast before heading out over the Atlantic in a migration that takes them hundreds of miles south over a hostile ocean. As the Blackpolls prepare to depart, Yellow-rumped Warblers become abundant, usually accompanied by Golden-crowned Kinglets and Red-breasted Nuthatches.

Broad-winged Hawks are the most commonly seen resident raptor, but vacate the island in early September. Goshawks and Sharp-shinned Hawks may provide a brief glimpse as they fly off through the foliage. An upward glance can spot a Bald Eagle or Osprey soaring along the cliff top anywhere on the back of the island.

Turning away from the forest and looking out over the Grand Manan Channel towards Maine, one can usually see Bonaparte's Gulls and Kittiwakes amongst the Herring and Black-backed Gulls. A careful study of a flock of feeding gulls will usually reveal a Minke Whale or two as well. If the wind is fairly strong, Jaegers are regularly seen. Formerly, Parasitic Jaegers were common but in recent years most sightings are of Pomarines. [top](#)

EAST COAST TRAILS.

Many of the trails on the eastern side of the island, such as the Ross Island or White Head trails are dominated by spruce bogs. The migrant song birds tend to be similar to those on the upland trails but there are a number of species that are more easily found in this habitat. One of these, the Boreal Chickadee, sounds like a Black-capped with asthma. This species is not as gregarious or curious as the Black-capped and often hangs back in the thickest part of the tree to observe the observer.

Finches are another specialty of the coniferous forest. The most interesting of these are the White-winged and Red Crossbills. These sparrow-sized finches are named for their bizarrely twisted bills, an adaptation for opening spruce cones. Crossbills are extremely nomadic, following the spruce cone crops. Some years there are hundreds on the island and others they are almost entirely absent. Flying in loose chattering flocks they descending on the tops of spruces to feed. Often they attack the cones while hanging upside down, bringing to mind miniature pink parrots. The eastern trails often run close to the shore where migrating shorebirds may number in the thousands, roosting on the beach at high tide then departing to feed on the exposed mud and seaweed as the tide falls. The far-carrying cry of the Black-bellied Plover is the hiker's constant companion while flocks of small sandpipers, collectively called "peeps", fly in tight flocks that twist and turn in perfect synchrony.

FINDING RARITIES

For the birding enthusiast, southern and western species that get blown off course are the attraction of Grand Manan in the fall. Many of these "vagrants" make land fall at lighthouses. The Whistle and the Swallowtail are excellent locations to bird in the early morning. As the day progresses, the birds disperse and you can find a rarity almost anywhere on the island. They usually accompany the mixed feeding flocks so don't forget to stop and check out those Chickadees!

A checklist of the birds of Grand Manan is available at the Business Centre, the Grand Isle and the Museum in Grand Harbour where there is an impressive display of bird species collected by Alan Moses in the first half of the 20th century.

Kenneth Edwards

Kenneth Edwards has visited Grand Manan every summer for 45 years. He has birded on every continent and seen over 3000 species. (John Belyea provided sketches)

OUR SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Island Arts, the Marathon Inn, the Grand Manan Museum, Newton's Wharf Art Gallery and the Shorecrest Lodge for selling our Trail Pins. And to Laura Buckley of the Inn at Whale Cove for sponsoring the 2004 Trails Dinner. Anne Mitchell James, Ce Bowden and Linda L'Aventure helped again in the kitchen while Fredonna, Jana and Joanne waited on table. A grand total of \$800 was raised for the benefit of Grand Manan Trails and a good time was had by all.



WILD FRUIT - Alison Hawthorne Deming

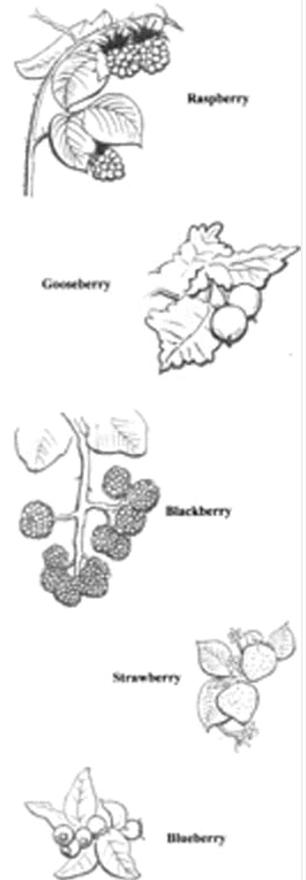
But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak. -Paul, I Corinthians 8:9

1
 At the cusp when spring begins
 to turn into summer, come
 the strawberries, little
 baby's knuckles,
 lying low in the scrub
 so that one who would taste
 their juice must kneel
 >or lie on the ground,
 testing her gentleness.
 Their season is short, yet
 if she grows impatient,
 she will carry home
 only their blood
 soaked into the knees
 of her jeans. They are so
 precious that a woman
 might refuse to eat them-
 five years worth in jars
 untouched on the shelf-
 but she would grow bitter
 from trying to hold on
 to that which will pass.

2
 If you want wild raspberries,
 level an acre of forest
 and leave the lot
 a mess of bleaching brush.
 The brambles will crawl
 out of the rubble
 as if to compensate the land

3
 Most of the blueberry patches are
 gone
 roads widened, backlots plowed,
 ridges claimed. On Beech Hill
 they subsist on the skin of soil
 covering bedrock, at the summit
 stone breaking through like bone
 on a wounded elbow. The bushes
 lie low, and it is a mystery why
 such scrawny plants are not
 overtaken
 by scrub of alder and spruce.
 >Perhaps their taste for acid ground
 is more refined. But where they find
 the ingredients to make their version
 of the color blue or the flavour
 that could remind a monk of sex
 these are questions for which I want
 no answers.

4
 No one but myself to blame
 for being late to get the gooseberries.
 The only patch unpicked, one
 growing
 over a domestic dump-little patch
 of china shards, rusted arcs of tin,
 and rotted pillow ticking behind
 a place where once a family was
 garled now with nettle and rugosa,
 the fruit smelling winy and falling



for its grievous loss.
To pick the berries you must walk
knee-deep in deadfalls,
waist-high in thorns, and
compete with yellow jackets.
You must inch your way
into thickets, crushing a path
through the canes, throwing off
the green beetle and white spider
that rise in your bucket like
stones in a fanner's field.
And when you are done,
backtracking through
your own destruction,
you will step free of the uncertain
ground and walk happily, perhaps
through a meadow of ferns,
to come home, lay ice
on the bee stings, and
savor, in small handfuls,
the healing taste of the wild.

at my touch. But I'm persistent
when it comes to berry picking,
driven by the avarice to know
how even this late and wasting
fruit that guards itself
with row upon row of rigid spines
might serve to make me thankful.

5

The blackberry is like
a person who puts off
saying the thing
she most wants to say
so that finally
the words blurt
too large and clumsy.
The blackberry puts off
making its fruit
until its canes
tower and are
over those
which have expended
themselves early in summer
and winter is just about
to wrap its hands
around the stalks.
After spending so long
making itself strong
it cannot promise
that its fruit,
gravel seeded,
All it can promise
is abundance.

Poem reprinted, with the author's permission, from genius loci published by Penguin Books, New York; 2005. Alison Hawthorne Deming is a long-time summer resident of Grand Manan whose writing has been published in previous Newsletters. (John Belyea provided sketch) [top](#)

GRAND MANAN MASTERPIECE

The Bishop, Ashburton Head Protected by Conservation Easement

Easement donor Jim Munro stands overlooking the Bay of Fundy from his property on Grand Manan

"**Grand Manan** is my favourite place on earth." So says Jim Munro, a plain-spoken New Englander who, some years back, bought a large chunk of land at the north end of the Island.

We are driving back to the ferry after a trip to Mr. Munro's property at Northern Head. The purpose of the visit arranged by lawyer and friend Frank Longstaff, was to see if the Nature Trust would contemplate holding a conservation easement on Munro's land - a 65-acre parcel that takes in three prominent landmarks: Northern Head, the Bishop and Ashburton Head, extending for just under 2km on the northern tip of the Island.

The magnificent scenery and wildlife of Munro's property took our breath away that day. And in January 2004, after agreeing on terms and conditions, the Nature Trust of New Brunswick signed a conservation easement with him that will protect the undulating coastal forest with its cliff-top trail, forever.

Mr. Munro bought the property in 1990 with the idea of one day preserving the best parts for Grand Mananers and others to enjoy. A resident of Nahant, Massachusetts, he frequently brings his boat to the island from Marblehead, a 11-hour journey on a good day.



Visiting the Northern Head property has obviously been a joy for Munro, and he knows the rugged trail well. At one time Islanders navigated carriages along the same route we walk on, looking for shipwrecks. As we arrive on a grassy plateau atop the Bishop, a whale's blow pierces the surface of the calm waters below us. We stand, mesmerized, not wanting to disturb the quiet of the warm September afternoon.

"This is certainly one of the better vantage points for watching marine life and migrating seabirds," said Laurie Murison, Managing Director of the Grand Manan Whale and Seabird Research Station, when informed of the

easement. "Overlooking the Long Eddy Rip (where tidal currents converge around the island), there is a wide variety of marine mammals and pelagic seabirds that can be observed from the site." Murison speaks of a painting which hangs in the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto depicting the geological majesty of the coastal bluffs on the property. A framed print of it hangs in her North Head office.

Island artist Helen Charters has walked the Munro property many times. "It (the easement) certainly has my support' she said during a telephone call. "It's good because a main interest of anyone who knows the island is to preserve the beauty of Grand Manan." The beauty she speaks of comes from her first-hand experience of viewing Bald eagles from the height of land, and colorful fall walks taken close to home.

The easement prohibits the building of new roads and houses, and all but the most rustic of trail markings and structures on the site. A clause ensures there will never be a fee for passage levied against hikers traversing the land. In donating the easement Mr. Munro has truly given Grand Mananers an Island masterpiece. A tribute to a son who passed away at age seventeen, the land will be known as the Thomas B. Munro Memorial Shoreline.

Margo Sheppard

In December 2004, Mr. Munro took one further step and donated this parcel of land as a full nature preserve to the Nature Trust.

[top](#)

IN APPRECIATION OF THE GRAND MANAN TRAILS

For the past ten years my wife Elaine and I have been coming to Grand Manan for two weeks in September from our home in Orangeville, Ontario. Many things keep drawing us back to the island, including the numerous friends we have made over the years, the challenge of kayaking in the bay, the amazing sightings of whales and of course, the Grand Manan trails.

Being avid outdoor enthusiasts and hikers we have explored much of Ontario, parts of the Maritime Provinces, as well as international destinations on foot. Much of this hiking has been spectacular but we keep returning to the footpaths of Grand Manan for a variety of reasons.

First and foremost it is the wide diversity of trails in a very concentrated area that make Grand Manan a hiker's dream. From a leisurely stroll on the Anchorage boardwalk and beach to a more demanding hike such as Pat's Cove to Southwest Head to a multi-day backpack trip along the whole backside of the island. It is clear that these trails offer something for everyone.

Secondly, it is the unbelievable scenery and opportunities to view wildlife. From squirrels to deer, butterflies to Bald eagles and eels in Eel Brook to whales just offshore. If you keep a close watch you will not have a hard time seeing something new even if you have walked the same trail a dozen times.

The history the coastal trails hold is also fascinating. If the trails could talk, harrowing tales of rescue both successful and doomed could be heard from the light keepers and rescuers who once used them as a vital link between life and death. Just pause for a few moments at the sign commemorating one such rescue near Southern Cross and you will appreciate the will to live of the victims and the heroics of the rescuers as you peer over the bank down to the cold dark waters below.

The trails of Grand Manan are a wonderful resource for both tourists and locals alike. They are a link to the past and a great opportunity to get some exercise while soaking in the beauty that surrounds you. One can only hope that the trails continue to be maintained so they can continue to entertain, educate and excite people in the future.

Alan Dernaline (John Belyea provided sketch) [top](#)

EARLY ECOTOURISM ON GRAND MANAN

In the 2004 Trails Newsletter, Don Baldwin reported on an ecotour he organized in 1970. This year, we turn to the early days of whale watching and two other ecotour programs.

In 1980 Jim Leslie, owner of the Marathon Inn received a phone call from the Department of Tourism inquiring "Do we have any whales on the Bay of Fundy?" (Whale watching had recently begun in Hawaii, Boston and Newfoundland). David Gaskin, a professor of marine science at Guelph, knew there were whales but nobody had paid much attention. So that summer, David and Ivan Green, a Grand Manan fisherman, set out in Ivan's "Pat and Robbie" to look



for whales - and they found many - North Atlantic Right Whales. This discovery created great interest among researchers and newspaper reporters from around North America.

The following year, 1981, Jim, David and Ivan created a whale watching company, Ocean Search, the first in the Bay of Fundy to take tourists out to see the Right Whales. David Gaskin was the whale watch naturalist on board the "**Pat and Robbie**" to identify and talk about the different kind of whales and seabirds that were sighted. Laurie Murison, initially a graduate student of Dr. Gaskin took over from him. Ivan Green continued as captain until 1987 when James Bates arrived with his boat, the D'Sonoqua, which he chartered to Ocean Search. The whale watchers filled rooms at the Marathon Inn and other places on Grand Manan and whale watching became a big draw attracting many tourists. Initially this was a week package with people hoping to sail every day and participating in evening programs about whales. This later changed to day trips with hot chowder served for lunch. James continued this tradition with his new company Grand Manan Sea-land Adventures and Laurie, who has 'the best eyes in the Bay of Fundy' continued as interpreter.

In 1981 the Grand Manan Whale and Seabird Research Station was incorporated and later Laurie started collecting mammal, bird and other materials for the museum. The research on the biology and ecology of ocean life was conducted by biologists at the Station and was and is presented to the scientific community through publications, conferences, lectures and the annual newsletter to the general public through the museum, now named the Gaskin Museum of Marine Life in tribute to the late Dr. David Gaskin. (*To become a friend of the GMWSRS and receive the newsletter Whale and Seabird send a charitable donation to 24 Route 776, Grand Manan, N. B. E5G 1A 1 <http://www.gmwsrs.org>*).

In 1991 Jim Leslie started offering Elderhostel programs with a natural history focus. The number of programs offered grew from 2 in 1991 to about 18 offered now. Different themes and activities are covered: whale watching and marine life (Laurie Murison), birding (Brian Dalzell and Hank Deichmann), botany (Wendy Dathan), geology (Dick Grant), ship wrecks (Eric Allaby), fisheries and social history (Jim Leslie).

Tourists still come from many countries and seem to appreciate the working harbours, natural trails, and the non-commercial feeling of Grand Manan. Many ecotourism companies offer natural history tours of the Island; these groups stay at such places as the Shorecrest Lodge, Manan Island Inn as well as the Marathon. The island is not a tourist trap with plastic slides and go-carts but rather a relatively unspoiled treasure where those interested in ecotourism can observe, learn and enjoy encounters with nature first-hand.

During the summer of 2005 two captains were taking tourists whale watching. Sarah McDonald of Whales-n-Sails Adventures in her ketch the "Elsie Menota" has been in the ecotourism business for seven years. Peter Wilcox of Sea Watch Tours, in his new boat the "Day's Catch", has been taking tourists to see the puffins on Machias Seal Island and whale watching for many years. Originally, his father, Preston, had the government contract to deliver supplies to the lighthouse keeper on Machias Seal Island and Ken and Mary Edwards persuaded him to take birders there too and that was 42 years ago!

Ann Chudleigh (Photo provided by Laurie Murison) [top](#)

STATUS OF THE GRAND MANAN WIND FARM

A significant portion of the roads for the wind farm have been built, and we are planning on additional groundwork preparation this fall. We anticipate that there will be 10 turbines, 2MW each and that the Island's entire energy needs will be met with the wind farm. In other words, the energy output from the farm over a year will approximately match the energy use in Grand Manan over a year, making it the only truly green-powered municipality in Canada.



So where are the turbines?

Our hope was to see the turbines up by the end of this year, but we have had some delays and we're now targeting Spring 2006 for turbine supply. Why the delay? Well, last September, a few days before we signed our agreement with NB

Power, a law was passed in the USA to encourage the construction of wind farms and that created a huge demand for turbines. We are pleased that this is spurring the installation of more renewable energy, but it has hampered the availability of turbines and increased pricing of course. However, we expect to announce our turbine supplier this fall and have turbines in the air next summer.

Our parent company, Western Wind Energy Corporation shares our commitment to Grand Manan, and is also continuing its development efforts in California and Arizona. Among its other activities, Western Wind Energy has completed the purchase of an operating wind farm in Tehachapi, California. This wind farm will have the older turbines replaced with newer more efficient ones within the year,

Eastern Wind Power is committed to long-term wind energy benefits for New Brunswickers, and we look forward to a showcase project on Grand Manan. In the meantime, the Provincial Government has indicated its commitment to renewable energy in the form of a Renewable Energy Portfolio, of which we all should be proud, and NB Power has followed suit with its own commitment to 400MW of renewable energy before 2016. We hope to see this result in direct benefits to New Brunswickers with manufacturing and service jobs for the long term.

So, although construction has taken longer than expected, Grand Manan will soon be able to say that all her energy needs have been produced right here on the island,

Paul Woodhouse

Eastern Wind Power (Photo of site from Eastern Wind Power) [top](#)

TRAILS 2005

Thanks to the hard work of Jessie James and Anne Mitchell, the trails were in very good shape at the beginning of the summer. The two spent a total of 96 hours working on them in the late spring. We are still having difficulty keeping signs in place, as they seem to disappear almost as fast as we put them in place. We found, much to our surprise, that the beginning of the trail going north from Dark Harbour had disappeared, as the side of the cliff had been cut away to provide material for the road to the **windmill site**. However, thanks to the able assistance of David Green, the beginning of the trail was moved east 200 metres or so, and then joined in with the existing trail.

TRAILS BOOKLET

We plan on a rewrite of the trails booklet for next year. Much will be the same, but there will be some changes because some of the trails are changing, and some areas -where we have had trails have been clear-cut. It will also include a section including GPS waypoints for major of places on the trail. They will be listed by longitude/latitude.

TRAIL DONATIONS

The following people have donated to the trail within the past, 12 months:

Malcolm Bull	Carl Cohen
Harley Griffin	Susian Lambert
Henry Biedrzycki & Valerie Evans	Laird & Jane Sloan
Nicole Faulkner	Heather Trim
Warren McFee	Marcel Boyer
Jane Zocchi	Sue & Nelson Isenhower
Linda Duchin	Patricia Tripp
Judy Stone	Frances Hodge
Grand Manan Tourism Association	Sue Vetterlein & Coleen Thompson
Mary Majka	David & Beverly Parker
Maude Hunter	Frank Longstaff
Elaine & Alan Demaline	

The number of donors has decreased this year, for the first time in quite a number of years. If you have enjoyed the trails and have yet to make a donation, please send it to the Business Centre, or to me, Bob Stone, 51 Red Point Road, Grand Manan, NB E5G 4J1. Your donations allow us to maintain the trails each year. [top](#)

TRAILS NEWSLETTER

We have been, indeed fortunate to have Ann Chudleigh as Editor of the Newsletter. Ann has said that after having been Editor for five years or so, she wishes to relinquish the position as of next year. We are greatly indebted to her for all the work that she, along with Susian Lambert in the Business Centre, has put into it. I suspect that you will find future editions will be much shorter and more "bare bones" than the polished editions Ann has edited.

We hope that you have enjoyed the trails this year, and look forward to seeing you on them next year,

Bob Stone

GRAND MANAN TOURISM ASSOCIATION

TRAILS COMMITTEE

Bob & Judy Stone	Anne Mitchell & Jessie James
Cecilia Bowden & Eugene Gilles	Carmen & Peter Roberts
John & Diane Cunningham	Frances Hodge
Sidney & Barbara Guptill	Lydia Parker
Maude Hunter	Shirley & Sheldon Cook
Ginny & George Riseborough	Beverly Parker

FRIENDS OF GRAND MANAN TRAILS

c/o Bob Stone

51 Red Point Road, Grand Manan, NB E5G 4J1

rstone@nb.sympatico.ca

or

Grand Manan Tourism Association

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gmtouris@nbnet.nb.ca

Web: www.grandmananNB.com

NOTE: If you would like to receive the newsletter by email or have changed your address, please let us know.

Note: Laurie Murison prepared the newsletter for the web site version.



Grand Manan Tourism Association

Box 1310, Grand Manan, N.B., Canada, E5G 4M9



Have a Question? E-Mail us at: info@grandmanannb.com

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