



SHARP-SHINNED HAWK IN PRIEST POND, TAKEN BY ISOBEL FITZPATRICK

# Souris & Area Watershed News

Souris and Area Branch  
of the PEI Wildlife Federation

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## ADOPT A STRETCH OF ROAD

We have written many articles in past issues of this newsletter about roadside litter and the thoughtlessness of the people who continue to persist in throwing garbage out of their vehicles. It is frustrating to drive along our highways enjoying beautiful landscape with scenic views while our ditches are littered with various forms of garbage. Most of the garbage seems to be related to people attempting to satisfy their thirst; coffee cups, juice containers, beer and pop cans, water bottles, etc. It takes approximately 450 years for a plastic water bottle to naturally decompose, so we have a real problem. Coffee cups that look like paper have a plastic ring around the top of them, a fine synthetic mesh that is within the paper-like body that takes a very long time to decompose. The plastic coffee cup lid is not the only problem.

We have had conversations with the "Eastern Seniors Neighbours Club" and the "Northside Pickers" (Marion Harris, Anne Lutz, Louise Deagle, Dave White and Brenda White) about this problem. A common theme suggests that several people walk our rural roads regularly in their attempts to live a healthier lifestyle, so why not adopt a stretch of road and regularly clean up that section. The first trip will probably be the worst, with the remaining trips rarely slowing you down. We also must change the mindset of the people that throw their garbage out of the windows of their vehicles. It is very easy to install a small plastic bag in the front area of our car to keep the garbage inside and dump it in your green/black bins that your tax money is paying for. Volunteers don't need the extra work of picking up your garbage. If you photograph the license plate of somebody doing this act the local Conservation Officer will investigate.

Souris and Area Wildlife Branch feels this idea has merit and would act as the coordinator and do the mapping to ensure as many of our roads are adopted by as many individuals as possible. To give you an example; Sandra and Richard Ching have adopted Basin Head Road. We will develop a map and match a section of road to the individuals that have adopted it. In future issues of this newsletter we will chart our progress. People are proud of the natural beauty that is offered in each of our districts. Plastic bags are to be banned this July 1<sup>st</sup> which will reduce some of our plastic problem. Souris and Area Wildlife Branch is willing to take the lead in this project to make our area as pristine as possible. If you are willing to adopt a stretch of road near your home or just an area you would like to walk, please give us a call at our office at 1-902-687-4115 and we will add your stretch of road to our map.



**Northside Pickers: Anne Lutz, Marion Harris, Brenda and Dave White**  
**Missing from photo: Louise Deagle**

## SOURIS AND AREA WATERSHED GROUP AND UPEI PARTNER ON ATLANTIC SALMON RESEARCH

The University of PEI (UPEI) and the Souris and Area Branch (SAB) of the PEI Wildlife Federation have received \$48,000 from the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation (ASCF) and \$7,000 from the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund (WCF) for Atlantic salmon research, monitoring and conservation in three rivers in Eastern PEI.



Atlantic salmon have declined on Prince Edward Island and are only present in 20 of the 70 rivers that they once were thought to inhabit on PEI. However, and despite their precarious status in many of those rivers where they remain, salmon numbers in Eastern PEI have been increasing due to the efforts of the Souris and Area Wildlife Branch watershed group.

Fred Cheverie, area Watershed Coordinator with the Souris and Area Branch of PEI Wildlife Federation, has overseen the conservation and restoration measures that have led to these increases in the Souris area. The previous discovery of a unique genetic strain of salmon in two rivers in the region has ignited further interest in research and restoration of these populations. "We believe that the native genetic strain of salmon may be more suited to the PEI environment and may be an important key to the re-establishment of wild Atlantic salmon populations across PEI" states Cheverie. "However, we need to better understand the optimal environmental conditions in our streams in order to give them a fighting chance."

Dr. Michael van den Heuvel, Director of the Canadian Rivers Institute and a professor at UPEI and his students Scott Roloson and Carissa Grove have been working with the Souris and Area Wildlife group to better understand the conservation implications of the unique and possibly ancestral strain of Atlantic salmon in the Souris area. Previous work has been funded by the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund and the Regis and Joan Duffy Foundation has been ongoing in partnership with the Souris group. "I believe that researchers working hand in glove with the boots on the ground conservations efforts of watershed group will help us turn around the fate of wild Atlantic salmon stocks on PEI" says van den Heuvel. "As compared to the large iconic salmon rivers, funding for Atlantic salmon research and monitoring is thin on PEI, the ongoing support of ASCF and WCF is absolutely critical to advancing salmon restoration efforts."

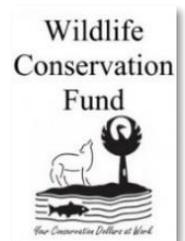
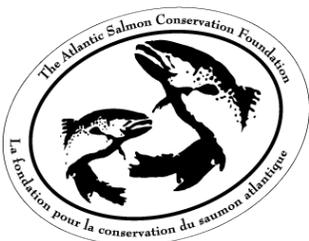
The SAB management area which encompasses the Northeastern cluster of Atlantic salmon rivers (North Lake Creek, Priest Pond Creek, Cross River, Naufrage River, Hay River, Cow River) have been deemed the "hub center" of research for Atlantic salmon on PEI. In 2019 SAB will initiate special research in Hay River and UPEI will concentrate research in Priest Pond and North Lake Creeks. Collaboration between groups will be immanent with leadership from UPEI grad students working closely with SAB staff.

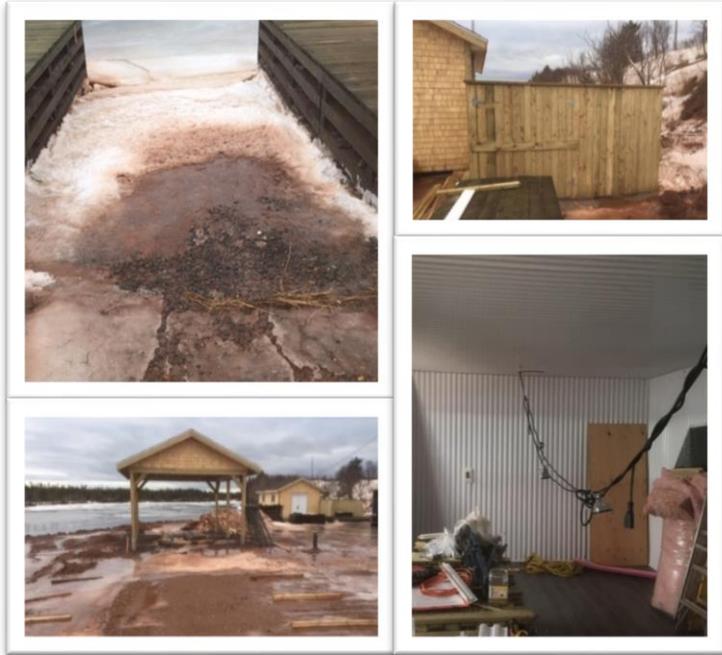
The Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation is a non-profit charitable organization with the mission of promoting enhanced community partnerships in the conservation of wild Atlantic salmon and its habitat in Atlantic Canada and Quebec. SAB and UPEI have had a rich partnership with ASCF throughout the years and are grateful that their projects have been chosen.



**Top photo:** North Lake Creek

**Bottom photo:** Atlantic salmon smolt being measured during fish density surveys in North Lake Creek in September 2018.





## BASIN HEAD INTERPRETIVE PARK

The work at Basin Head Interpretive Park is coming along nicely! Things slowed down over the winter with the cold weather, but they're picking up again now. There is a new research and maintenance building which will be used by Souris Wildlife, the Department and Fisheries and Oceans and UPEI for all the work that we do in Basin Head Marine Protected Area. The gazebo has been constructed, and work is underway to install a boardwalk and floating dock. After that, it's a case of installing benches, picnic tables, garbage bins, and completing landscaping. Interpretive panels will also be installed, which will cover the history of Basin Head and what makes it so special now. We're very excited to be nearing the end of the project, and we hope the new Park will be a fantastic, well-used spot for locals and tourists alike. We will be having a Grand Opening for the park during World Oceans Week, tentatively scheduled in for June 14<sup>th</sup>. Everyone is welcome to attend, and we hope to see lots of local faces there!

A big thank you our funders for this project: The Government of Canada, The Government of PEI, The Eastern Kings Community Council, The Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI and Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation.

## LARKIN'S POND DRAWDOWN

In recent years, changes have been happening in Larkin's Pond which are not all favourable. We have noticed increased vegetation within the pond and poor drainage of water above the railroad bridge, where increased growth of cattails is choking off the main channel. We also noticed the old timbers at the dam were leaking and the whole channel area of the pond needed to be flushed.

The last draw-down of the pond was done approximately 15 or 16 years ago, and it was past time for another. Under the direction of the PEI Department of Forests, Fish and Wildlife, the timbers at the face of the dam were removed slowly usually 1-2 timbers at a time with the total drawdown done in slightly over a week or two.

A meeting was arranged by Souris and Area Wildlife Staff to be held with staff of Forests, Fish and Wildlife and residents who had an interest in this project at the Souris and Area Wildlife Branch office.

Many thanks to Eric Peters for his efforts in getting a sizeable and interested crowd to attend. Suggestions were brought forward to methods that could help alleviate the problems. This meeting was very successful, with lots of good ideas brought forward.

To help remedy the problems an excavator will be brought to the site in early Spring, with the hopes of being able to rearrange rocks at the railroad bridge to assist the water in flowing better. New stop logs will be installed at the dam to a level that is approximately 8-12 inches below its previous level. This will be monitored closely to see if the area above the railroad bridge will cut its new channel. The objective will be to have reconstruction completed and water levels completed prior to April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019.





*SAB's Frances Braceland holding an injured juvenile Bald eagle in Red House.*

## SOURIS WILDLIFE EAGLE RESCUE

We often receive many phone calls from concerned local residents about injured animals – from seagulls hit by cars to Northern gannets on beaches with broken wings. Unfortunately, as an environmental conservation organization, rather than a wildlife rehabilitation group, we are unable to assist with these animals and the only advice we are ever able to give out is to let nature take its course. An injured bird can become a nourishing meal for some owl chicks or little fox cubs.

The only animal that can ever be assessed and possibly rehabilitated are birds of prey at the Atlantic Veterinary College's (AVC) Wildlife Service. We recently came to the rescue of an injured juvenile Bald eagle, who flew out of a thick stand of trees and straight into the side of Bert Perry's oil truck along Fortune Road. Bert kindly phoned Souris Wildlife and waited with the bird until we arrived. We phoned the Province of PEI's Forests, Fish and Wildlife Department who sent out Chuck Gallison, Wildlife Program Officer, who came and took the eagle to the AVC. The bird was examined and was found to have spinal injuries so euthanizing it

was the kindest thing to do, as it would not have been able to make a full recovery. If you discover an injured animal, please phone the Province at 1-902-368-4683 or 1-866-368-4683 as they will be able to direct you on what is best to do.

## RING-NECKED PHEASANT UPDATE IN OUR AREA

There has been lots of sightings of Ring-necked Pheasants this winter and we had many people act as hosts feeding pheasants through the tougher times of the winter. The common comment I have heard from people is how "skittish" they are, which is wonderful as we need them to have a wild streak so that they can manage on their own. Souris and Area Wildlife was pleased to have supplied cracked corn to assist these birds through the harshness of winter.

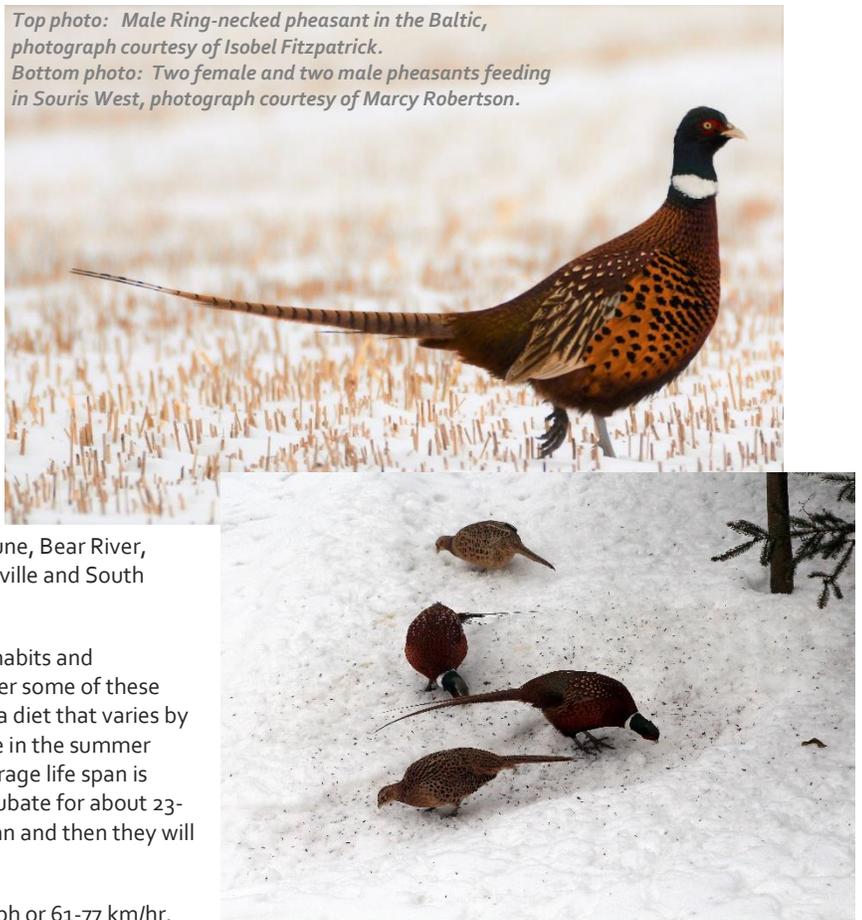
We are pleased to have reports of pockets of pheasant populations in Sheep Pond, Lower Rollo Bay, Gowan Brae, New Zealand (south, middle and north), Souris West, Souris River, St. Catherine's, Souris Line Road, Souris, Chepstow, Fortune, Bear River, MacKinnon Point Road, Black Pond, East Baltic, Naufrage, Lakeville and South Lake.

We receive many questions regarding pheasants, in relation to habits and characteristics. I will attempt to give short descriptions to answer some of these common inquiries. Ring-necked Pheasants are omnivores with a diet that varies by season. In the winter it is mostly grains, seeds and berries, while in the summer they take advantage of insects and fresh green shoots. The average life span is about 1-2 years in the wild. A hen will lay about 12 eggs and incubate for about 23-24 days. Typically, a hen will remain with her brood until Autumn and then they will disperse.

They are fast runners but can burst into flight at about 38-48 mph or 61-77 km/hr.

If you see a black pheasant usually with no ring on its neck don't be alarmed it is a melanistic mutation. We've had a few of these observations in our area. Spring is slowly appearing, and these birds will be able to forage on their own. They are also on the move and soon we'll hear the males crowing attempting to attract females. Hopefully it will be a successful breeding season as we look forward to seeing the population increase and spread.

*Top photo: Male Ring-necked pheasant in the Baltic, photograph courtesy of Isobel Fitzpatrick.  
Bottom photo: Two female and two male pheasants feeding in Souris West, photograph courtesy of Marcy Robertson.*





*A large amount of garbage carelessly dumped in a ditch in New Zealand, offence has been reported to local Conservation Officer Erin Perry.*

## WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?!

From time to time to time we get someone in our area who dumps a truckload of garbage into the ditch usually in a secluded spot where there are no houses nearby. This picture was taken near the intersection of the New Zealand and Northside road in the district of Clear Springs. We don't understand people's logic when most of the debris could be gotten rid of through Island Waste Management Corporation green or black bins. Households pay approximately \$205 annually in their taxes for garbage services, so why not use it.

We report incidences like this to our local Conservation Officer (Erin Perry), who sorts the debris and if anything can be found to identify the owner then charges are laid. Souris and Area Wildlife Branch puts pictures of scenes of this nature up on our Facebook page and sometimes we get some calls from people recognizing some of the debris which suggests the culprit. These calls are also handed on to our Conservation Officer immediately. Charges have been laid in the past, we encourage anyone with knowledge of such garbage dumping acts, to give us a call as we will keep your name anonymous and we will follow the steps to ensure charges are laid.

## 2019 COMMUNITY WILDLIFE SESSIONS

Eastern Kings Senior Neighbours Club has once again asked Souris Wildlife back to host a third series of our Community Wildlife Sessions held at the Eastern Kings Community Centre every Tuesday afternoon from January to March. These community presentations have proven to be a great success over the last couple of years, and we very much enjoy hosting them. We once again asked the group what subjects peaked their interests and contacted experts in various fields or topics to join us for the weekly presentations. The subjects that were talked about this year included; the status of American eels on PEI and worldwide presented by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Dr. David Cairns, a look inside a bee hive presented by Roland MacDonald, all about plastic waste presented by Island Waste Management's Heather Myers, all



*Roland MacDonald's "Inside the Hive" presentation at the Eastern King Community Centre on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019.*

about watershed groups on Prince Edward Island presented by PEI Watershed Alliance Watershed Ecologist Mary Finch, drilling in the Gulf of St. Lawrence presented by Ann Wheatley and a look at PEI wildlife in our backyards presented by Holland College's Dwaine Oakley. We'd like to thank all of our presenters this year who took time out of their very busy schedules to prepare and present excellent talks to our community week after week. Souris and Area Wildlife Branch also did a presentation on our 2018 annual activities to keep the community up to date on what's going on in the area, conservation-wise. We will hopefully be hosting these community sessions again next year and we welcome input from the community on what subjects they would like to hear talks on, so please get in touch with us about any suggestions that you may have!

# OUR ANNUAL FUNRAISING LOBSTER DINNER

The Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation will be holding our 7<sup>th</sup> annual "Lobster Fundraising Dinner" on Sunday, August 11<sup>th</sup> this year. This is our biggest fundraiser with funds directed towards important environmental and conservation initiatives in the local area.

We are seeking donations of live lobster to be tentatively collected the week of May 27<sup>th</sup> in North Lake, Naufrage, Souris, Fortune and Annandale harbours. If you would like to donate, each buyer's stand will have a signup sheet to mark your commitment and a member of Souris and Area Wildlife Branch will be ready and available in the harbour to collect the live lobster on this intended collection day. SAB will be giving fishers a charitable tax receipt for their generous donation of 10 lbs of live lobster or more.

We thank you in advance as this event would not be possible without your support and donations. We appreciate your contributions as harbours are a vital part of our watersheds – the point where the rivers enter the sea.



Left photo: SAB's Jake MacKinnon, SAB Director Fred Ward and SAB's Frances Braceland banding lobsters in Fortune harbour in June 2018.  
Right photo: North Lake harbour, May 2018.



We'd like to kindly thank the following funders, you have made our work over the past year possible! Thank you!!

The collage of logos includes:  
- Service Canada  
- Prince Edward Island Conservation Foundation (with French text: "Le fondation pour la conservation du comté d'Édouard")  
- Prince Edward Island Wildlife Federation  
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
- SKILLSPEI  
- Prince Edward Island Canada  
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada / Pêches et Océans Canada  
- Wildlife Conservation Fund  
- innovationpei (Accelerating Economic Development)  
- Agriculture and Fisheries  
- National Conservation Plan (with text: "This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada. Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier du gouvernement du Canada.")  
- Canada  
- Wildlife Conservation Fund (with tagline: "Your Conservation Dollars at Work")



Basin Head's Northeast Arm

## UPCOMING EVENT:

# SYMPOSIUM ON LAND AND WATER - JUNE 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 IN SOURIS

Cooper Institute is pleased to announce that its 2019 Social Justice Symposium will be held in Souris this year and it will be co-hosted by the Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation. The symposium, which is one of three that the Cooper Institute will hold in different Island communities this year, will be on the theme of "Protection of PEI Lands and Water as Sources of All Life" and it will take place at the Souris and Area Wildlife Ski Lodge located at 1358 Souris Line Road. This event will be held on Tuesday, June 4<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. There is no fee for this event, everyone is welcome, and refreshments will be provided. Travel and child/elder care subsidies are available upon request. Pre-registration is advised, to ensure seating. To pre-register contact Souris Wildlife via email at [sourisareawildlife@gmail.com](mailto:sourisareawildlife@gmail.com) or give us a call at 1-902-687-4115. The registration deadline is Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup>.

We will host two speakers for this event. Our first speaker will be the President of Nature PEI, Rosemary Curley, who studied wildlife at UPEI and Acadia University and feels exceptionally privileged to have worked for the PEI Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division for over three decades. For many years she was one of only two women working in this field in Atlantic Canada. She led provincial programs to conserve wetlands and establish protected areas, and also participated in the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada and associated programs related to the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk. Our second speaker will be Daryl Guignon. Daryl retired from the University of Prince Edward Island in 2008 after a 41-year teaching career. He is a founding member of the Island Nature Trust and the Morell River Management Co-op and was instrumental in creating the legislated 60-meter greenbelt along the Morell River. Daryl's appreciation for the environment stems from his upbringing in the wilderness of Gaspé in what is now Forillon National Park. He has extensive experience in watershed management and stream restoration and continues to provide technical assistance and encouragement to watershed groups throughout the Island. Daryl recently completed "A Renewed Conservation Strategy for Atlantic Salmon in Prince Edward Island". In groups, we will discuss land and water as sources of life, how they are threatened, why it matters, how we are working together as a community, and what more can be done to improve the health of our ecosystems.

The Social Justice Symposium is an annual event, held in memory of Father Andrew Macdonald, a founder of Cooper Institute. He wrote and performed a song in 1981 as part of the community lobbying effort in favour of passing the Lands Protection Act.

### ***Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation Membership & Donation Form***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City/Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Payment**

*Please check one or both:*

- Membership (\$10)
- Donations

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Note: An official tax receipt can only be issued for the value of the donation and will not include the \$10 membership fee.

## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS: KEVIN ROBERTSON

Trout fishing is here, and I would like to wish all trout fishers a very successful and safe season. Our watersheds are in very good shape so there should be good numbers of Brook trout this season. I would encourage all anglers to use the garbage cans placed at most sites and refrain from using lead for sinkers, as lead intake is one of the leading causes of deaths of Bald Eagles.

One can get all rules and regulations by going online to get your "PEI 2019 Angling Summary" or pick one up at any place selling angling licenses. Children under the age of 16 do not require a license.

There are special regulations in place for Souris River. The angling season on Souris River will open on May 15<sup>th</sup>, except for Harmony Pond which will open on April 15<sup>th</sup>. The section of the east branch of Souris River, upstream from the Souris Line Road will be closed to all angling for the entire angling season. Angling on the Souris River is extended from September 15<sup>th</sup> through to November 30<sup>th</sup> in that whole section of the main river, downstream from the Souris River Road (Route 358) or the Gowan Brae causeway. There is a daily limit of three (3) rainbow trout, single barbless fly use or barbless lure.

I would encourage all parents to get their kids outdoors and enjoy Mother Nature and a great way to do that is to take your kids trout fishing.

## WATERSHED COORDINATOR'S COMMENTS: FRED CHEVERIE

Souris and Area Branch of PEI Wildlife Federation is now accepting student applications for summer jobs for 2019. Students must be 16 years of age, apply to the provincial job registry at Johnny Ross Young Service Center or do an application online.

Students must submit a resume to: [sourisareawildlife@gmail.com](mailto:sourisareawildlife@gmail.com) and have the following attributes; 1) a strong work ethic, 2) a positive attitude, 3) be a team player, 4) be willing to work early and or late hours, 5) be able to handle heavy lifting in a very warm environment with lots of flies, 6) students should have no fear of the water.

Positions are usually for 8 weeks and students gain a great appreciation for the environment.

### ABOUT US:

The Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation is a non-profit, environmental organization dedicated to the conservation, protection and enhancement of watersheds in north eastern Kings County. Our management area accounts for approximately 62,000 hectares representing about 9.6% of PEI, including 27 individual watersheds.

The goals of our organization include:

1. To establish North Eastern Kings County as the "Sports Fishing Capital" of Prince Edward Island.
2. The management of natural resources and enhancement of fish, wildlife and their habitat through watershed planning, protection and restoration initiatives
3. To become the model watershed group on Prince Edward Island
4. To bring unprecedented environmental awareness to our stake holders to create a more informed general public capable of eliciting progressive environmental action
5. To promote our management area as one of the most pristine natural areas in Prince Edward Island through ecotourism ventures to attract visitors to the local area

We meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month at the Souris Striders Ski Lodge. Meetings start at 7 pm, all are welcome to attend.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Mailing Address: PO Box 692 - Souris, PEI - C0A 2B0

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Email: [sourisareawildlife@gmail.com](mailto:sourisareawildlife@gmail.com)

Website: [www.souriswl.com](http://www.souriswl.com)

Facebook: Souris & Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation

Twitter and Instagram: @SourisWildlife

