



IMPACT

REPORT

2025-2026



Young Naturalists at the 2025
Celebration of Nature in Debert

PRESIDENT'S FORWARD

"The impacts on nature authorized recently by the provincial government amount to trading the province for profits. What will be left for future generations of all species?"

Folks who wish to maintain healthy natural ecosystems are labelled "special interest groups" and "professional protesters". While soliciting industrial developments, this government turns a deaf ear to those who would see more sustainable development in their communities and those concerned about ecological degradation.

Nature Nova Scotia stands firmly with the citizens and organizations addressing this misinformation and greed. Doing our part to mitigate the linked biodiversity and climate crises requires us to wear many hats. In all of these areas, whether we have served as researchers, educators, science communicators, community mobilizers, or nature's defenders at court, Nova Scotians have been behind us every step of the way.

Here's what we've accomplished with your support in 2025-2026 and a glimpse of what we see ahead in 2026-2027.

Thank you for supporting our work profiling and protecting nature in Nova Scotia. Thank you for giving nature a voice."

Bob Bancroft, President of the Nature Nova Scotia Board of Directors



OUR COMMUNITY

NatureNS Organizational Members

Blomidon Naturalists Society
Cliffs of Fundy UNESCO Geopark
Friends of Nature
Friends of the Pugwash Estuary
Halifax Field Naturalists
Nova Scotia Bird Society
Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society
Save Our Old Forests
St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association
Young Naturalists Club

Associate Members

International Crane Foundation
The Dirt Gang
Friends of Blue Mountain Birch Cove
Lakes
Protect Wentworth Valley
Annapolis Environment & Ecology
Stop Spraying & Clearcutting Nova Scotia
Hope for Wildlife
Truro Forest School

102 Individual Members

91 Volunteers

10 Project Partners

8,200+ Subscribers/Followers

71 Other Supporters



Coral lichen, an indicator of old growth forest, spotted inside the proposed Ingram River Wilderness Area during a community hike with our friends at St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association

Networking, Education, Research, & Advocacy for Nature

OUR MISSION

Nature Nova Scotia exists to aid in the communication and cooperation among naturalists, natural history societies, and other nature-focused groups in Nova Scotia. We profile and protect Nova Scotia's natural history by supporting new research, hosting educational events, and advocating for science-based conservation and responsible environmental management at local, regional, and national levels.

MAJOR WINS

“Federal Court strikes down amended recovery strategy for endangered birds”

Nature Nova Scotia and East Coast Environmental Law, represented by EcoJustice, succeeded in forcing the federal government to reconsider its 2022 update to the Piping Plover Recovery Plan, which contained a change to how Critical Habitat is identified and that we felt weakened protections for the endangered bird.

Nature School

This in-school pilot program engaged over 150 grade P-6 students in curriculum-aligned nature learning inside 5 current, pending, or community-nominated protected areas in Nova Scotia. The program was so popular and received so much positive feedback that we are bringing it back in 2026-2027.

“Our students do not have much access to wild spaces as we are located in the middle of the city, and busses out to wild areas are prohibitively expensive, so without this program we never would have been able to get out and actually experience a wilderness area. Students asked if we could come back next week, they loved hopping over streams and climbing rocks! It was such a valuable experience.” - a teacher in Halifax participating in the 2025-2026 Nature School pilot program

“Halifax demonstrates strong commitment to saving bird lives”

Halifax Regional Municipality was narrowly awarded Bird Friendly City entry-level status in 2022, after the Bird Friendly Halifax coalition, chaired by Nature Nova Scotia, conducted an in-depth assessment under Nature Canada's scoring rubric. In 2025, that score improved thanks to ongoing outreach by coalition members, threat mitigation work, and a commitment from the city to produce a staff report on voluntary and mandatory bird-friendly design standards for new and existing buildings. We are proud of the work our coalition has done, hope HRM's score continues to improve, and hope the Bird Friendly Cities program will continue to grow in Atlantic Canada.

FOCUS AREAS

Nature Nova Scotia works in several key Focus Areas to ensure our work is grounded in a holistic view of the natural world and the factors that affect it. We also try to align current projects or initiatives with nature issues that need the most attention or immediate action. In 2025-2026, these included Protected Areas, Species At Risk, Sustainable Forestry, Urban Nature, and Wildlife.



More mainland moose sightings

Our ongoing Mainland Moose Conservation Initiative has documented over 50 previously unrecorded moose sightings from the last 5 years, captured 7 moose on volunteer trail cameras, and revealed serious mistrust of provincial moose management amongst the public (with nearly a quarter of survey respondents indicating that they knew about the provincial reporting hotline but chose not to share sightings with government.)

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Mainland Moose Conservation Initiative

- Volunteer trail camera network
- Public knowledge and opinion survey
- Outreach events

The Mainland Moose Conservation Initiative was established in response to the updated 2021 Recovery Plan for the endangered mainland moose, which identified significant gaps in scientific understanding and provincial capacity for generating new population data. Since 2022, we have engaged a growing network of trail camera monitors looking for moose and other wildlife and, in 2025, wrapped up a multi-year public knowledge and opinion survey revealing a troubling lack of reporting for moose sightings, despite the fact that many Nova Scotians are seeing moose.

7 Moose On Camera
53 Other Reports
Hundreds Of Other
Wildlife Sightings



We piloted this citizen-science and stewardship initiative in 2022, aiming to reduce bird-window collisions in our largest city. Residents install free bird-friendly, high-contrast, grid-like treatments on windows to make them visible to birds, preventing fatalities. The project collects data to understand risk factors and promotes bird-friendly practices at home. Thanks to individual donors and support from friends at Nature Canada, we were able to expand this project every year and, as of April 2026, have distributed kits and collected strike occurrence and other data from over 360 homes. In 2026-2027, with the support of TD Friends of the Environment, we are expanding Operation Window strike to public buildings to launch Halifax's Bird-Friendly Design Demonstration Site Network.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Operation Window Strike

- Free window solutions for HRM residents
- Data generated on: what birds residents are seeing, their knowledge and interest in birds and other wildlife, window strike prevalence, total window area, presence/absence of roaming cats, & if they feel the kits mitigated future strikes

Over 360 Homes
& Counting!



Sparrows & Woodpeckers Are
Common In Strike Reports





Moose Hike event participants en route to practice their moose scat, track, and browse identification skills in Tidnish



Volunteers planting shrubs and flowers at Shubie Park, Dartmouth, as part of the launch of Bird Friendly Halifax's "Birds & Blooms" Bird-Friendly Demonstration Site

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Bird Friendly Halifax

- Municipal Bird-Friendly Design Report
- Annual Bird Week Celebrations

In 2022, following an in-depth review of the city's strengths and weaknesses in bird conservation, the Bird Friendly Halifax coalition applied to Nature Canada for official Bird Friendly City status. HRM was narrowly declared an Entry-level Bird Friendly City that fall and with much work since, in 2025, that status was maintained but with a markedly improved total score of 80%. The municipality is now working on a jurisdictional scan of other cities and a staff report concerning voluntary and mandatory standards for new and existing buildings to meet bird-friendly design best practices.



13 Municipal Councilors & 183 Nova Scotians participated in Bird Week events



PANCAKE PANEL

EAT PANCAKES & TALK ABOUT USING LOCAL FORESTS SUSTAINABLY!



'Stand up for nature': Nova Scotia charity promoting nature activism through arts workshops

BY MADHA MUGHEER | AUGUST 28, 2025



PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Stand Up For Nature

- Art-as-activism and other events linked to new provincial push to develop unsustainable natural resource industries
- Themed around protected areas, mining, forestry, and other current topics

In response to Premier Houston's push for new natural resource industries, weakened environmental protections, and strategic villainization of scientists and other environmental experts, in 2025, we launched our Stand Up For Nature campaign and event series, aiming to educate Nova Scotians on these and related topics and encourage them to take action, whether at home or by getting social at one of our events. We are continuing the campaign into 2026-2027 and have generated a growing collection of community-made art for use in future communications. Events are coordinated in partnership with Nature Nova Scotia member groups and often feature art-making, sharing meals, expert lectures, and socializing.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Piping Plover vs Canada

- Federal judicial review
- Outreach events

You helped us fundraise for court!

In June 2025, the federal court ruled in favor of Nature Nova Scotia and East Coast Environmental Law, striking down the federal government's 2022 recovery strategy for endangered piping plovers. We argued that the switch in Critical Habitat identification from whole-beach to the use of a "bounding box" approach made enforcement on (and therefore protection of) beach habitats more difficult, ultimately leaving beaches less protected. The judge found the new habitat identification method "confusing" and ordered a re-evaluation of the strategy within 10 months.

CRIME AND COURTS, WILDLIFE

Nature Nova Scotia, environment lawyers going to court to protect piping plovers' critical habitat

BY SUZANNE RENT MAY 19, 2025



Nova Scotia

Judge orders rethink of preservation endangered piping plovers on East Coast

The small shorebirds nest primarily on sand, gravel or cobblestone beaches.

Michael Tutton · The Canadian Press · Posted: Jun 03, 2025 6:39 PM ADT | Last Updated: Jun 03, 2025 6:39 PM ADT



Listen to this article ⓘ

Estimated 4 minutes



This pilot program engaged P-6 classes in Nova Scotia in outdoor natural history learning focused on protected areas and bird conservation. Classes received a 2-3hr program delivered by Nature Nova Scotia staff, a travel bursary to get their classes to field trip sites like Migratory Bird Sanctuaries and Provincial Wilderness Areas, and a package of resources to take home.

"The "finale" of the eagle swooping over us to land in the nearby tree was the cherry on top! The kids were buzzing all afternoon! If you ever wonder if your programs make a difference, they absolutely do. Thank you again." - A teacher participating in Nature School

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Nature School

- Free curriculum-aligned program for P-6 classes
- On-site at current, pending, or community-nominated protected areas
- Travel bursaries and take-home resources





Nature School participants learning about birds and the Nova Scotia protected areas system

OUR 2025-2026 IMPACT BY PROJECT/INITIATIVE

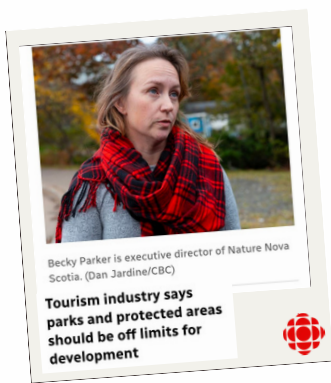
- **Make Room For Nature: Advocating For The 20% & 30% By 2030 Protected Areas Goals, Community-Nominated Protected Areas, & Updating The Provincial Parks Act**

Outputs

- 3 Interviews and News Stories
- 1 Presentation to HRM Standing Committee
- Attendance at 2 HRM Open Houses for development near Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes & Sandy Lake
- 1 Letter to the Provincial Government Re: West Mabou Beach Prov. Park
- 2 Template Letters to Decision Makers Re: 20% Goal & Parks Act For Public Use

Outcomes

- Thanks to public pressure and the organizing of locals and NGOs, in November 2025, government issued a cryptic statement seemingly walking back earlier communications about "having discussions" with development proponent Cabot Golf, and announced it would not proceed with the golf course development proposal.
- In March 2026, councillors on HRM's Standing Committee for Environment & Sustainability made a formal recommendation to Council that the municipality write a letter to the provincial government, voicing support for formal protection of the Ingram River area
- In March 2026, the province missed the Canada-Nova Scotia Nature Agreement interim deadline for protecting 15% of lands and waters by 2026. We are scaling up our advocacy work for the 20% goal in 2026-2027.



Thank you, nature network!

We want to thank our friends at Blomidon Naturalists Society, Eastern Shore Forest Watch Association, Ecology Action Centre, Friends of Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes, the Sandy Lake-Sackville River Regional Park Coalition, Save Our Old Forests, St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association, and local citizens in the Beals Brook, Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes, Chain Lakes, Goldsmith Lake, Ingram River, and Sandy Lake, and West Mabou areas for all their work protecting nature this year.

- **Mainland Moose Conservation Initiative: Volunteer-Stewarded Trail Camera Network, Public Knowledge Survey, & Awareness Campaign**

Outputs

- 42 New Cameras Deployed
- 1 Continued Survey
- 10 Outreach Events

Outcomes

- 72 cameras monitored by 34 volunteers capturing 7 moose and hundreds of other wildlife sightings, to date.
- 1,040 Nova Scotians engaged in moose track, scat, and browse ID practice.
- 785 survey responses revealing new moose sighting reports (53 out of 75 not previously reported to government since 2020 and hundreds of older reports) and low reporting (78% of survey respondents who had seen a moose did not report it, 57% because they were unaware of the provincial reporting hotline and 21% because they chose not to report, citing a general mistrust of provincial species at risk management.)



- **Piping Plover VS Canada: Standing Up for Critical Habitat**



Outputs

- 2 Interviews/News Stories
- 1 Judicial Review

Outcomes

- In 2025, Nature Nova Scotia and East Coast Environmental Law, represented by EcoJustice, succeeded in forcing the federal government to reconsider its 2022 update to the Piping Plover Recovery Plan, which contained a change to how Critical Habitat is identified and that we felt weakened protections for the endangered bird. The federal government must revisit the plan and release an updated draft implementing the court's instructions.
- 112 donors mobilized to take action for plovers under the Conservation Action for Birds Fund, launched in 2024 to prepare for the pending judicial review. No longer needed for legal costs, the fund was re-prioritized for other on-the-ground actions benefiting birds and in 2026-2027 will support projects like Operation Window Strike, the Ports of Halifax & Sydney Waterbirds Monitoring, and continued advocacy for habitat protections.

Thank you, nature network!

Winning at court meant we didn't need to spend raised funds on legal costs, freeing up capacity for other meaningful actions for bird conservation.



- **Operation Window Strike: Mitigating Bird Deaths Due To Residential Window Strikes**

Outputs

- Over 200 New Anti-Window-Strike Kits Distributed
- 1 Continued Survey

Outcomes

- In 2025, thanks to the support of Nature Canada and guidance from the Bird Friendly Halifax Coalition, we distributed over 200 new Feather Friendly window solutions to homes in Halifax Regional Municipality, bringing the total number of homes engaged in Operation Window Strike to over 360. With new support from TD Friends of the Environment, in 2026-2027 we plan to expand Operation Window Strike to include both residential and public buildings.
- Participants in Operation Window Strike answer pre- and post-installation surveys collecting information on window strike incidence, the presence of roaming cats (which may influence the likelihood of finding a stunned or deceased bird), participant knowledge and feelings around birds, and feedback on the kits' effectiveness. Data collected to date suggest that strikes are common across neighbourhood types, with many participants experiencing at least one window strike in the last year, that roaming cats are also common, and that kit installation reduces reports of bird strikes.



An Operation Window Strike participants' kit installation

Thank you to our partners at Friends of the Public Gardens for helping us distribute kits this year and to Nature Canada and individual donors for allowing us to expand the program with more residential kits.

Want to see more window kits distributed this year? Donate to the Conservation Action for Birds Fund!

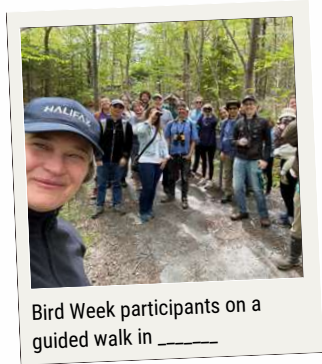
- **Bird Friendly Halifax: Improving HRM's Bird Friendly Cities Score**

Outputs

- 15 Bird Week Events
- 8 Coalition Meetings
- 1 Staff Report

Outcomes

- Nature Canada raised HRM's Bird Friendly score to 80% in 2025. Education and outreach continues to be a strength in the city's scoring, with coalition members both independently and collaboratively coordinating public awareness activities that benefit bird conservation, including Bird Week, but in recent years the municipality has also played a central role in increasing the city's scoring concerning policy, with continued work on the municipal park naturalization program and a new commitment to produce a staff report on bird friendly design guidelines.
- Bird Week Celebrations in 2025 engaged 13 municipal councilors and 183 Nova Scotians in bird identification practice and discussion about urban bird threats.



Bird Week participants on a guided walk in _____

- **Ports of Halifax & Sydney Waterbirds Monitoring**

Outputs

- 16 Volunteers Engaged In Monitoring 14 Sites In Halifax and 15 Sites In Sydney

Outcomes

- In March 2026, Nature Nova Scotia wrapped up a three-year contract with the Canadian Wildlife Service as part of The Atlantic Canada Coastal Waterbird Survey, piloting sites in Halifax and Sydney Harbours and establishing a long-term monitoring program for harbour health. The program is a collaboration of the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Birds Canada, working with local NGOs to implement monitoring in parts of Atlantic Canada and involves conducting shore-based surveys of waterbirds at least four times annually at specific coastal locations. We engaged 54 volunteers over three years and generated 290 seasonal surveys detailing species occurrences and local threat observations. This important citizen science program will continue in 2026-2027 with the support of Birds Canada's Community Fund.



Participants at a Port of Halifax Waterbirds Survey event

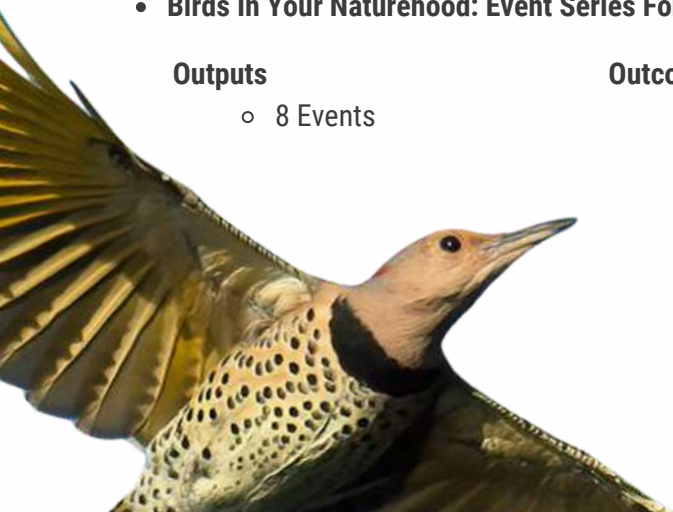
- **Birds In Your Naturehood: Event Series For Nova Scotian Families**

Outputs

- 8 Events

Outcomes

- 302 Nova Scotians, including 115 youth, engaged with Nature Nova Scotia staff at 5 outdoor and 2 indoor events in 8 communities, learning about resident and migratory birds and actions they can take at home to protect them.



A budding naturalist dissecting an owl pellet

- **Nature School: Birds- & Protected Areas-Focused Field Trips For Nova Scotian P-6 Classes**

Outputs

- 7 Programs Delivered at 5 Pending, Current, or Community-Nominated Protected Areas
- 4 Lesson Plans & Other Resources Created: Bird Form & Function, Bird Habitats & Populations, Big Bird Activity Book

Outcomes

- This pilot project engaged 158 Nova Scotian P-6 students in curriculum-aligned natural history lessons at pending, designated, or community-nominated protected areas or in school over 2025-2026. Students practiced bird identification skills, played games drawing on themes in food webs and bird anatomy, modeled population declines for species at risk, and explored current topics in protected areas planning and management at a local wilderness.



- **Nature Talks: Online & In-Person Natural History Lectures For Nova Scotians Of All Ages**

Outputs

- 1 Event

Outcomes

- 87 Nova Scotians engaged in Women’s Day bear rehabilitation talk with Hope for Wildlife

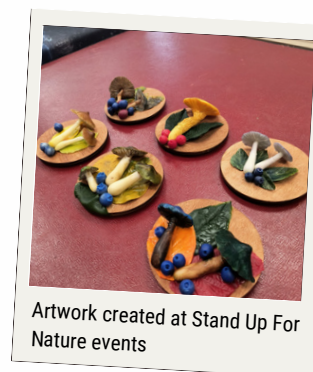
- **Stand Up For Nature: Advocating For Sustainable Natural Resource Use & Art As Advocacy Workshops**

Outputs

- 1 Interview/News Story
- 3 Letters to Provincial Government Re: Protecting Nova Scotians Act, Financial Measures Act, and Gutting of DNR Wildlife Division

Outcomes

- Over 100 Nova Scotians engaged in mining, forestry, and protected areas-dedicated workshops, making art and contacting their representatives to discuss the nature issues important to them.
- 3 artists contracted to lead art-making portion of events and 21 artworks created.



- **Celebration of Nature: The Annual Symposium for Nova Scotian Naturalists**

Outputs

- 1 Symposium offering 3 Talks & 6 Guided Hikes
- 1 Concurrent Youth Program in Partnership with the Young Naturalists Club

Outcomes

- 94 Nova Scotians Engaged In Natural History Learning, Including 18 Young Naturalists, In Debert.



LETTERS TO GOVERNMENT

Correspondence from Nature Nova Scotia to the provincial government on behalf of our nature network:

Nature Nova Scotia to Premier Houston: "High Production Forestry Sites South of Dunraven Bog Nature Reserve, Queens County in Mainland Moose Habitat"

Nature Nova Scotia Submission to Public Bills Committee re Bill C-127: Protecting Nova Scotians Act

Nature Nova Scotia to Premier Houston and Minister of Natural Resources Kim Masland: "Corporate Interests at West Mabou Beach"

Nature Nova Scotia to Premier Houston & Minister of Natural Resources Kim Masland: "Seeking Clarity On Gutting Of Natural Resources Wildlife Division"

Nature Nova Scotia to Public Bills Committee re Bill 198: Financial Measures Act

Read these and more at www.naturens.ca



PLANS FOR 2026-2027

We see a challenging year ahead. Given national and provincial interests in expediting both housing and natural resources development projects, the province's continued attack on environmental protections and dismissal of scientific expertise, and the reduced capacity of both governments' environment and natural resources departments, it seems likely that many of the threats we fought this year will return to test us in 2026-2027. We know that the nature community is stretched thin, that our supporter-base is aging, and that young Nova Scotians have limited capacity to take action for nature. Still, we see some opportunities. The Canada-Nova Scotia Nature Agreement and existing provincial legislation commit Nova Scotia to protecting 20% of lands and waters by 2030. The new federal nature strategy, A Force Of Nature, reaffirms the national commitment to protecting 30% by 2030. The protected areas system, though sometimes weakened by government's use of legislative or policy loopholes and often under attack by industry misinformation campaigns, is still one of our strongest defences against the related biodiversity and climate crises and one of few areas where we have existing laws to support our advocacy. Similarly, federal and provincial law concerning species at risk offer support to our efforts to protect habitat. We have learned, unfortunately, that we cannot always trust our decision makers to follow the law or to act in good faith when the law is unclear. However, since 2020, we have also participated in two successful judicial reviews forcing action from our governments, have fostered direct action in hundreds of Nova Scotians, and engage a growing community of passionate citizens ready to protect Nova Scotia.

To use our resources most efficiently and in an attempt to target as many threats as we can, in 2026-2027 we will prioritize strategic partnerships with member groups and other allies, are expanding and re-organizing existing activities under our Protected Areas focus area, and are implementing strategic engagement organizing techniques to grow the network and foster nature champions in local communities.

You can help by donating
or volunteering again in
2026-2027

Learn more at:

www.naturesns.ca

info@naturesns.ca





THANK YOU

FOR HELPING US PROFILE & PROTECT

NATURE

We would not have been able to accomplish all we did this year without the passion and hard work of our many volunteers, member organizations, donors, staff, and all other supporters. Thank you for everything you did for nature in 2025-2026!

Our 2025-2026 Member Groups

Organization:

- Blomidon Naturalists Society
- Cliffs of Fundy UNESCO Geopark
- Friends of Nature
- Friends of Pugwash Estuary
- Halifax Field Naturalists
- Nova Scotia Bird Society
- Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society
- Save Our Old Forests
- St Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association
- Young Naturalists Club

Associate:

- International Crane Foundation
- The Dirt Gang
- Friends of Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes
- Protect Wentworth Valley
- Annapolis Environment & Ecology
- Stop Spraying & Clearcutting Nova Scotia
- Hope for Wildlife
- Truro Forest School

Our 2025-2026 Board of Directors

- President: Bob Bancroft
- Vice President: Joanne Cook
- Secretary & Treasurer: Patrick Kelly
- Member Group Representative: William Bollwerk (Cliffs of Fundy Geopark)
- Member Group Representative: Soren-Bondrup Neilsen (Blomidon Naturalists Society)
- Member Group Representative: Bernie McKenna (Halifax Field Naturalists)
- Member At Large: Tim Lambert
- Member At Large: Heather Mayhew
- Member At Large: Sarah McDonald
- Member At Large: Adam Malcolm
- Member At Large: Jamie Simpson



Nature Nova Scotia (Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists)

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