

2003 Annual Report for South Shore Wildlife Association

Bridgewater, NS

Another year is behind us. It's hard to believe that I am again submitting this annual report – my 5th – for South Shore Wildlife Association. Although it's been a bit quieter than normal, SSWA enjoyed another interesting year. Membership remains consistent in the 110 – 115 range. The few typical losses each year are quickly replaced with new members to retain this level. Our club continues to meet one night a month at the Lunenburg County Search and Rescue facility. We also continue to issue minutes of these meetings to all members, something which although limiting our budget for other ventures, is felt to be a necessary part of maintaining a strong and active club.

One of the main focuses again this past year continued to be the notorious long gun registration issue. We feel that although a few battles have been fought and lost the war is far from over. Information still flows from various sources and resistance remains strong. SSWA followed with interest the exploits of the defiant and vocal anti-registration group openly challenging this law. Two of our members attended the final cross-Canada meeting held in Stellarton at which time we donated \$150 in the support of their gallant efforts on behalf of all gun owners. Most recently SSWA designed and purchased a large 5' x 4' anti-registration banner depicting the large white elephant C-68 has become for our Federal lawmakers. The intent is to relay it though various provinces via wildlife and outdoors clubs to eventually pass it on to our new Prime Minister, hopefully accompanied with thousands of signatures and comments.

In typical fashion again in 2003 we hosted another fishing venture for South Shore Big Brothers/Big Sisters in May. This was perhaps the most successful one yet as over 100 trout were caught, cleaned, bagged, and cold stored, much to the delight of the excited group, some of whom had never caught a fish before. The barbecue and refreshments (including ice-cream, the pictures, and the SSWA crests we presented to all participants made for an excellent time on a beautiful spring day.

We also sponsored two new young people to the Hibernia Junior Guides Camp in July. The young ladies did extremely well and by all reports had a very good time, with plans to repeat the experience in 2004.

In June SSWA again displayed a booth at the annual Michelin Health and Safety Fair, depicting various outdoor safety concerns, and passing out information to the many interested individuals who stopped. This year's SSWA main theme was the West Nile Virus. We had two guest speakers address our club in 2003. Lloyd Duncanson returned in April to put on our second coyote information session. For several hours he entertained the group with extensive knowledge and experiences with this truly amazing animal. The second guest speaker was DNR wildlife biologist John Mills. At our June meeting he presented an interesting slide show on the deer, bear & moose statistics followed by a question and answer session. We were especially interested in the current deer situation and forecast for the upcoming 2003 season. Some of the general changes to hunting regulations, and the proposed new hunting zone 2a were discussed.

For something different this year SSWA took part in the Earth Day clean up in April. Seven club members worked for several hours one evening gathering and bagging the usual assortment of roadside debris and garbage. Because six of the seven volunteers worked at the Michelin Plant, we chose to clean up the road running adjacent to the tire making facility, a highly visible and well traveled stretch of road in the town industrial park. We finished with an accumulated of approximately 300 lbs of mostly paper and plastic, by far the majority being fast food containers and Tim Horton's coffee cups. A picture of our group gathered around the bags of garbage appeared in the Michelin quarterly newsletter.

Unfortunately we missed two of the three quarterly NSFPAH meetings in Truro this year but did get to the September one plus the convention in March. SSWA was also represented at several other clubs activities in 2003 including a NWTM meeting in February and their banquet in May, Trout Nova Scotia annual meeting in Bedford in March, Trappers Summers Rendezvous in August, and Spruce Cove Wildlife Rehab Center open house in June. For a second year we did not get to submit a float in the Bridgewater Big Ex Parade. Not only do we lose the exposure for our club, but also the exposure for our recreation in general. There is far too little support and publicity for our shooting, hunting and fishing sports as it is, and when opportunities such as this are lost it is a loss for us all. Perhaps it's time to actually push for more exposure for our many clubs in the Federation. There are many well attended exhibitions and parades throughout the summer and fall in our province. A float is an excellent way to advertise your club, and to promote what it stands for. It could be an avenue to increase membership as well. As the anti groups seek more exposure and grow more vocal, maybe it's time to start combating them, both visibly and vocally, to neutralize the serious threat they impose on us all.

Respectfully submitted
Stephen M. Joudrey – President
South Shore Wildlife Association
Bridgewater, NS