

2005 Annual Report for South Shore Wildlife Association

Bridgewater, NS

On behalf of South Shore Wildlife Association, it is my pleasure to submit this annual report for a seventh consecutive year. Once again our club entertained a fairly active twelve-month period. We continue to meet monthly, excluding November, at the Lunenburg County Ground Search and Rescue facility. Minutes of each meeting, along with misc. information of interest, continue to be forwarded to all members. This keeps our club fairly well informed on club and Federation activities and current matters. Club membership remains stable at approximately 112. This year our club invested in several promotional articles of clothing. Club hats are now available in five different color schemes. We also have purchased golf shirts and tee shirts, and are in the process of ordering club vests to wear at public events. We opted for embroidered lettering and crests for a first time as well. Sales of these items are good, so our name should be becoming more distributed throughout the area. Exposure for our organizations is more critical now than ever.

As is typical for us, long gun registration remains a main focal point for our club. C-68 is continuously monitored, and monthly updates are presented at our meetings. Unfortunately, our White Elephant Petition opposing registration of long guns circulating earlier this year, was a major disappointment. Although we collected over 2000 signatures, this petition should have logged ten times that amount across this province. Is it any wonder we are faced with the Federal Justice Dept.'s ever tightening noose, determined to eradicate firearm ownership from private individuals. If a simple signature requires too much effort, perhaps we should just hand our guns over right now!

Club activities this year included several repeat functions which have become annual events. We participated once again in the Earth Day clean-up in April, picking litter from along the same stretch of busy highway as last year. The local newspaper carried a picture of one of our members in action, crediting our club with becoming involved in this worthwhile activity. A month later, we once again entertained 20 young people from Big Brothers/ Big Sisters in our annual fishing derby. The fifty-five trout caught by these excited "littles" were in turn cleaned, bagged, and packed on ice. Excellent weather complemented the refreshments we served to the thirty 'bigs' and 'littles' in attendance. All the kids received a personalized certificate and rain poncho from us. It was an excellent outing, and the follow-up thank you letter from BB/BS Director stated so. Our fishing derby is their most popular event, and we had barely finished when they were already asking when next year's event will be held.

In June, SSWA once again attended the annual Michelin Health and Safety Fair. Our booth saw upwards of one thousand people pass by, many of who stopped to chat, ask questions, or pick up some of the literature we had available. This is more great public exposure for wildlife groups in general.

For a slightly different approach to promoting a positive image, SSWA threw their support behind the local Girl Guide movement, when in October some of our members spent an evening installing insulation and vapor barrier in their new camp extension. This 1250 sq. ft. building is nearing completion but needed a boost in labor to keep things moving. We were glad to have the opportunity, and plan on doing another work session there in the near future as the need arises. Once again we received media coverage in the local paper. The picture and accompanying article went a long way in promoting the value our clubs can have in our communities.

At the April Federation Convention in Truro, our club for the first time, was represented by two voting delegates. This, coupled with the fact that one of our members chaired the third workshop, allowed us to cover all three workshops.

Our fundraising efforts in 2005 centered mainly around two events. Although we sold raffle tickets on a barbecue, our main income was derived from the two events we hosted at the Michelin Social Club. The first was in July when we held our second annual giant flea market, complete with door prizes, refreshments, and 50/50 draws. Over 50 sellers tables filled the gymnasium to a maximum capacity. The second event was held in November, another Nascar Sunday. A good turnout saw hundreds of dollars worth of prizes awarded, along with refreshments, and of course the race on a giant screen TV.

For a bit of entertainment for club members, we sent out a freshwater fishing theme crossword puzzle in June. Two winners each received a one year subscription to Eastern Woods and Waters magazine.

SSWA sent a letter to Ontario Liberal MP Paul Steckle congratulating him for his stand opposing the long gun registry. We also sent a letter to our MP Michael Baker requesting improved winter parking arrangements at one of the local ice fishing lakes. We sent a one hundred dollar donation to Bruce Montague to support his court battle against the gun registry. A lengthy thank-you letter was received, accompanied by an informative DVD, parts of which were played at one of our meetings. We contributed seventy-five dollars toward the Youth Exchange program to help promote our sports among young people. We also sent a fifty-dollar check to Canadian Outdoor Heritage Alliance to help in their fight to protect our hunting rights against the well funded anti groups threatening our heritage. SSWA purchased 2 tickets to the NSFAH banquet in support of our Provincial Federation. We contributed one hundred dollars to Lun. Co. Ground Search and Rescue. Lastly, we donated club merchandise to a local fire dept. hosting an annual fishing derby.

In closing, I wish to issue a word of thanks to our members for belonging to SSWA, and to our active club members who help us achieve all that we do. A special thanks to our secretary/treasurer without whose hard work and dedication we would be unable to function. It is extremely important for people to belong to an organization represented by our Provincial Federation. I believe one of the main reasons wildlife associations are under such attack from all angles – Ottawa, animal rights activists, Coalition for Gun Control advocates, the misguided, and the uninformed – is now, and always has been, the fact that we are probably the most poorly organized group of individuals on the face of this earth. Hunters, trappers, gun collectors, target shooters, fishermen, and any one else caught under this umbrella, have always been easy targets for anti-groups and government legislation. Just look at how much we have lost in only the last two decades, and we continue to lose at a fairly rapid pace. Why? We refuse to get involved. Worse yet, most refuse to even take out a lousy \$10 membership to a local wildlife or gun club. We always expect the other guy to fight our battles. Our opponents know this, and they use it very successfully. How stupid we must look to them, like dropping a fox in a henhouse. Wake up people! Get off your butts and get involved. Join a club. Write your MP. Write letters to the papers. Voice your opinion. But most importantly, be counted. For every individual on our side who refuses to join a club, there is another vote in favor of eliminating our beloved sports. We have an awful lot to lose, and it takes so little effort to make a difference. Leaving the battle to a few dedicated individuals will no longer cut it. Everyone needs to get involved. The end is in sight
.....understanding is the key and it starts with U !

Respectfully submitted

Stephen M. Joudrey – President
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Bridgewater, NS