

2006 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 an eighth 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 following each meeting. This keeps our organization fairly well informed on both our club and Federation activities, as well as other current matters.

Our membership remains stable at approximately 115. We have invested in several promotional articles of clothing bearing club insignia, including hats in five different color schemes, golf shirts and tee shirts, and club vests to wear at public events. Sales of these items have been good, so our name should be becoming more distributed throughout the area. We have donated several of these items as well. Promotion of all wildlife organizations is critical, and this is certainly an excellent way of doing it.

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. It was unfortunate that our White Elephant Petition opposing registration of long guns was a major disappointment. Although we collected over 2000 signatures, this petition should have logged ten times that amount across this province. The change of government in Ottawa was a welcomed relief, but we may well see ourselves back in the same boat in the upcoming year, due in large part to a lack of action from gun owners themselves.

Our club was busy with activities this year which included several repeat functions that have become annual events:

Earth Day Clean Up - We participated in the Earth Day clean up this 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.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters Annual Fishing Derby - A month later, we once again entertained 20 young people from Big Brothers/ Big Sisters in our annual fishing derby. Unfortunately, neither the trout nor the weather cooperated this year. However, not even the cool and drizzly morning could dampen the spirits of these excited "littles" as they managed to land a total of 18 trout. SSWA members cleaned, bagged, and packed the fish on ice for these kids. The refreshments we served to the thirty 'bigs' and 'littles' in attendance, especially the hot drinks, were much appreciated. It was another enjoyable outing, as the follow-up thank you letter from BB/BS Director stated. Our fishing derby is their most popular event, and we had barely finished when they were already asking when next year's event would be held.

Michelin Health and Safety Fair - In June, SSWA once again attended the annual Michelin Health and Safety Fair. Our display on outdoor awareness included literature and handouts on West Nile, lyme disease, poison ivy and poison oak, and wood ticks, and saw hundreds of 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 us, and for wildlife groups in general.

Camp Wohelo Expansion Project - For a slightly different approach to promoting a positive image, SSWA threw their support behind the local Girl Guide movement this year. An expansion of the local Girl Guide camp facility provided an opportunity for our club to supply a much-appreciated hand. It was acknowledged that the 1250 sq. ft. building would not have been completed this year if it were not for our involvement. Over the course of the winter and into spring, several club work parties kept the project alive with carpentry, plumbing and painting skills. In addition to an appreciation certificate from Girl Guides of Canada, we received media coverage in the local paper twice for our efforts. The pictures and accompanying articles went a long way in promoting the value our clubs can have in our communities.

South Shore Wildlife Club Float - To further promote SSWA, we decided to enter a float in the several local parades this summer. The theme we displayed was “Supporting Community Organizations, Events, and a Healthy, Active Lifestyle”, and was portrayed through posters depicting our community involvements. The float also featured five club members dressed in various appropriate hunting and fishing apparel complete with props and decorations. Out of the three parades we entered, we received two first place awards for our efforts, (one being \$100 from Bridgewater’s parade committee). These three parades put our club in view of thousands of spectators. Is there a better way to promote our organizations? Although it can be a bit of work, it may well be worth the consideration of other clubs, and especially the Federation, to take advantage of the various parades held each year in and around their cities and communities.

Walk Lunenburg County Challenge - In September, the local paper, supported by various town, municipal, and government depts., issued a challenge to groups and industry to get active when they introduced a “Walk Lunenburg County” contest. SSWA jumped at the chance to further promote the active lifestyle theme by not only becoming a paying sponsor, but also by entering a team.

Teams of six were requested to keep track of all their activities and convert them into ‘steps’ over a six-week period. With their paid registrations, team members were supplied with pedometers and logbooks. Our team put on a gallant effort, logging almost 4 million ‘steps’. Once again we received public acknowledgement in the local paper, this time over several weeks.

Open Bible Church Skeet Shoot - As a show of support we were represented and actually took first place at an annual skeet shoot put on by a local Open Bible Church in September. It is strongly felt that an event such as this is one of the most effective means to promote a positive image of the shooting sports in the public’s perspective. Due to limited funds to hold this event SSWA donated \$50 to the church organizers towards next year’s shoot.

Trapper’s Association Summer Rendezvous - SSWA received an invitation from the Trapper’s Association to help out at their weekend Summer Rendezvous event in August by operating a BB gun target shoot booth for young people. At least 35 young people took part; many for the very first time handling a firearm. This turned out to be a very popular and successful idea and was well received by the many participants. We hope to receive the same invitation next year.

Fund Raising - Our fundraising efforts in 2006 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 - our second Annual Giant Flea Market, complete with refreshments and 50/50 draws. Over 40 sellers’s tables nearly filled the gymnasium for the 323 buyers who paid admission to look for that special deal. The second fundraiser was held in November utilizing the 7th Annual NASCAR Final Race. This event is well supported by local businesses. A good turnout enjoyed the good-natured camaraderie, lots of refreshments, hundreds of dollars worth of prizes awarded, and of course the race on a giant screen TV.

In April we were again represented at the Annual Convention in Truro, plus had the privilege of having one of our members chair one of the workshops. In support of our Provincial Federation, SSWA purchased 2 tickets to the NSFAH banquet, and sold our allotment of the Lottery of a Lifetime tickets. We have also purchased the club insurance to provide that level of security as recommended by the Federation.

In closing, I wish to issue a word of thanks to our members for belonging to SSWA, and to our active club members, especially our secretary/treasurer, who help us achieve all that we do. 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, 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 encompassed under this umbrella, have always been easy targets for anti-groups and government legislation. Look at how much we have lost in just the last two decades, and what we continue to lose at a fairly rapid pace. Why? Most refuse to get involved. Worse yet, most refuse to even take out a lousy \$10 membership to a local wildlife or gun club. They always expect the *other guy* to fight their battles. Our opponents know this, and they use it very successfully. How stupid we must look to them.

To all who enjoy the hunting, fishing, and shooting sports, but are not represented by any organization - wake up! 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. We, the active minority, need to get the message out that every individual who refuses to join a club allows for 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..... Unity is the key and it starts with U (you)!

Respectfully submitted,

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