

Habitat Conservation Fund Projects 2003

By Shelley Shaw, Wildlife Division

Funding for eight wildlife conservation projects, totaling \$102,253, have been approved for 2003 under the Habitat Conservation Fund. The money for the fund is generated through the required purchase of a \$2 wildlife habitat stamp on all hunting licenses sold in Nova Scotia. One hundred per cent of the funds collected are used for habitat conservation.

The primary goal of the fund is to assist with programs that protect and enhance wildlife habitats. Projects may receive up to \$25,000 on a cost-shared basis, however, all projects must fall into one of four categories:

- purchase of land for the benefit of wildlife
- habitat improvement
- wildlife habitat research
- or related education programs.

Projects approved for funding in 2003:

Bird Studies Canada—Making Nova Scotia's Lakes Loon Friendly (Year 3) **\$4,778**

To continue to educate lake users about how their actions affect loon breeding and foraging habitat.

University of New Brunswick, Joseph Nocera—Benefits and Risks of Agro-ecosystem Management to Grassland Birds in Nova Scotia (Year 2) **\$13,800**

To evaluate the wildlife habitat value of managed agro-ecosystems so as to influence the delivery of successful habitat stewardship initiatives.

Ecology Action Centre—Coastlines Natural History Column (Year 2) **\$4,675**

To enhance knowledge and appreciation of the coastal ecology by creating and distributing a natural history column, "Coastlines," to weekly newspapers across Nova Scotia.

Ducks Unlimited Canada—Small Marsh Restoration **\$15,000**

To restore, enhance or create wetlands in the agricultural/urban landscape where many have been destroyed or altered by human activity since European settlement.

Saint Mary's University, Hugh Broders—Ecology of Bats in Nova Scotia (Year 2) **\$17,000**

To determine the distribution range of the eastern pipistrelle, northern long-eared and little brown bats on mainland Nova Scotia through trapping and echolocation surveys throughout the province. Additionally, to perform more intensive work in central Nova Scotia to examine the foraging and roosting ecology of eastern pipistrelles and northern long-eared bats, two forest-dwelling species that are expected to require specific types of roost trees in close proximity to suitable foraging areas.

The Blomidon Naturalist Society—The Nova Scotia Herpetofaunal Atlas Project **\$15,000**

To identify prime habitat for reptiles and amphibians by mapping their distribution and abundance.

Acadia University, Elaine Schofield—Conserving our only endemic mammal: habitat associations and genetic diversity of the maritime shrew, *Sorex maritimensis* **\$12,000**

To determine the genetic diversity of *S. maritimensis* and its habitat associations within a landscape mosaic in order to facilitate conservation planning.

Ecology Action Center—Salt Marsh & Tidal River Restoration Project **\$20,000**

To restore a more natural tidal regime to a tidal restricted river and wetland system. Restoration activities will allow Cheverie Creek to return to a functioning salt marsh and tidal river system with sufficient wildlife habitat, fisheries, shellfish, nutrient production and export, and biodiversity to continue its maturation by natural processes and to evolve over the long term in response to changing environmental conditions.

More information about the 2003 and previous projects is available on the DNR website.

Applications for 2004 can be submitted to the Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division between December 1, 2003 and January 31, 2004. Submission guidelines and application forms can be obtained from any Department of Natural Resources office or on the website at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/habfund>

