



The Young Naturalists Club in 2023 - 2024

The Young Naturalists Club started providing natural history programming for kids and families in 2006, so this was our 17th year of nature-based events! This past year we hosted nature education events through our 5 Chapters:

1. Halifax
2. Nature Guardians (Dartmouth)
3. East Hants
4. South Shore
5. Cobequid

We also hosted 3 separate events for new Canadians in Halifax.

In total we hosted 48 events, reaching 1,144 participants. Examples of our programming included the Christmas Bird Count 4 Kids, the City Nature Challenge, bioblitzes, a field trip to see waterbirds, and a special 4-day trip to the South Shore for the Nature Guardians to learn about Atlantic coastal plain flora and more.

We continued to distribute and sell our field guides to mushrooms, lichens, and weird plants.

We hosted fundraising events including having a booth at farmers markets, and we tried a trivia night at a cidery (with all of our questions focused on nature).

We once again were able to have a paid, part-time coordinator. This role is so vital in supporting the volunteer-led Chapters, garnering funds, exploring new programs and partnerships, and in managing the organization. Becky was our Coordinator until October 2023, when she went off on parental leave. We then were supported by Juli Bishwokarma as the Coordinator for 5 months, in a shared role splitting her time with Nature NS. We now are fortunate to have Marina McBride as our Coordinator, once again working part of her time with Nature Nova Scotia. This has made for a lot of transitions this year, however, each woman has brought her intelligence and dedication to this role and led us well.

We were able to bring in several grants to support our work including from NatureHood (a program of Nature Canada), Habitat Conservation Fund, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, and the Nova Scotia Bird Society. We are so grateful for the support from these wonderful granting organizations!

We were especially grateful for donations this year - we had a challenging year financially and so were counting on donors being even more generous than they have in the past in order to sustain us. And people heard our call for support - we brought in more donations at Christmas than usual, thereby getting us through a tough time financially.

Challenges for our organization and for delivering on our mission included the increased cost of driving especially for families in rural communities, and more extreme weather which caused us to postpone or cancel events. It's also an ongoing challenge to find volunteers in some communities and for some roles.

Looking ahead, we hope to have at least 4 chapters operating over the next year. We will lead old favorites and new events, and will continue to reach out to find support for the valued educational opportunities that we provide about the species that surround us.

Finally, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for the contributions of our board members, who are essential to the life of this organization. Our board members act as emissaries of our organization, putting themselves out there at farmer's markets, field trips, and other events. And they are our guiding lights, debating questions that the outcome of which determines the future of directions of the organization. Along with our YNC families, our volunteers, our funders, and our supporters, they are a part of the ecosystem that makes the YNC wonderful.