

BSC PEOPLE PROFILE Ken McKenna

Ken McKenna grew up in Prince Edward Island. After completing a B.Sc. at the University of PEI, he earned a dental degree from Dalhousie. Ken has worked as a dentist at the same clinic in Stellarton, Nova Scotia for about 30 years. Although his profession keeps him busy, he probably spends an equal amount of time looking for birds!

Ken's initial interest in nature was in fish. After seeing a bird he couldn't identify, in 1987 he began to take local birding courses, led by instructors such as Bob Bancroft and Harry Brennan.

Soon Ken joined the Nova Scotia Bird Society. He is still a member, serves as a seasonal editor for their quarterly publication, and has led several field trips for them. He has also headed up the Pictou County Naturalists Club for more than 15 years. Learning to identify local birds by song has been a particularly enjoyable aspect of his birding experiences.

Ken participates in numerous bird monitoring programs. His biggest current project is the Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas, for which he is the regional coordinator for the Antigonish area. "I like to see things documented, and it's always useful to have background data," Ken told us.

Ken has coordinated the Pictou Harbour Christmas Bird Count for nearly two decades. He has two routes for the Maritimes Nocturnal Owl Survey, a Breeding Bird Survey route, coordinates the Pictou County spring migration count, and has been collecting data for many years for a Chimney Swift monitoring project.

Ken enjoys travelling, and most of his vacations are birding trips. Destinations have included Australia, Panama, Cuba, Portugal, Brazil, and Ecuador (which he had the opportunity to visit when he volunteered at a dental clinic).

In his travels, Ken has met many friends with similar interests. "No matter where you go," he explains, "having a set of binoculars around your neck is an open invitation for people to talk to you!"

