



**Inside this issue:**

- What's New? ... 1
- Island Watershed Groups Engaged in I.S. Discussion ... 2
- 2015-16 Envirothon ... 2
- Filling in the Gaps on Island Spiders ... 3
- Upcoming Events ... 3

**About the Council**

The PEIISC is a non-profit group of individuals and organizations focused on the creation of a framework for the management of invasive species that threaten Prince Edward Island's environmental, economic and social health.

Prevention is our number one tool against invasive species and we have to be diligent. In a province such as ours where so many of us are dependent, directly or indirectly, on primary resources such as fisheries and agriculture, invasive species can have a devastating effect on our economy and our culture.

**Newsletter Editor:**

Julie-Lynn Zahavich  
peiinvasive@gmail.com

**WHAT'S NEW?**

It has been a busy fall and winter for the PEIISC. In October 2015, the council hired Julie-Lynn Zahavich to coordinate the Spotter's Network and deliver a project to increase visibility of the PEIISC.

Project goals included: reorganizing the PEIISC website, delivering presentations to Grade 9 classes piloting new invasive species science curriculum, and hosting the PEIISC's first annual public meeting. As the Spotter's Network Coordinator, she was also tasked with delivering two Spotter's Network training workshops.

With just a month left in the project, Julie-Lynn has completed almost all of the outlined tasks.

The PEIISC website has been reorganized and lots of new content added. New pages have been added to help you get to know our council members, including a council activities page and a blog, and now you can find identification information for **all** priority species on the website.

In 2015-16, new science curriculum that includes a section on invasive species was piloted by four Grade 9 teachers on PEI. Presentations on how invasive species affect Island ecosystems were given to four classes. In 2016-17, this curriculum will be expanded to 20 schools and



Herbarium sheet prepared by a grade nine student at Hernewood Intermediate

reach approximately 1000 students. The PEIISC hopes to build on its connection with Island teachers and students in the 2016-17

school year.

The PEIISC's first annual public meeting is set to take place on Thursday, March 17, at the PEI Farm Centre in Charlottetown. A presentation series and display expo will feature some of our partners, including: the PEI Aquaculture Alliance, The City of Charlottetown and The PEI Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division.

The Spotter's Network has continued to grow over the winter through round table discussions with watershed groups (which you can read about on page 2) and spotter training. On March 8, Julie-Lynn and PEIISC Chair, Beth Hoar, will train the Holland College Wildlife Conservation Technology second year class on how to ID and report invasives.

On March 31<sup>st</sup>, Julie-Lynn will be wrapping up her work with the PEIISC, but will remain on the council as a volunteer.



# Spotter's Network Newsletter

## ISLAND WATERSHED GROUPS ENGAGED IN I.S. DISCUSSION

In January and February, the PEIISC hosted two round table discussions with Island watershed groups on the topic of invasive species.

A province-wide approach to managing invasive species does not exist for PEI, but the PEIISC hopes the round table discussions will be a first step in achieving this.

Island watershed groups were a logical group for the council to reach out to. They are the "boots on the ground" when it comes to invasive species management on PEI, and are often in remote areas across the Island that few others access.

Discussions at the round table focused on challenges groups face when dealing with invasive species, developing ideas to address these challenges, and how to move forward on creating a uniform approach to dealing with invasives on PEI.

Lack of regulations and government leadership, communicating and working with private landowners, and disposal were among the challenges groups identified. Many possible solutions and creative tactics were brainstormed over the session, and information gathered from the discussions will help to in-



Eleven Island watershed groups were represented at a round table discussion held in January

form the PEIISC's work in the future.

A summary of the round table discussions will be made available on the PEIISC website in the coming weeks.

## 2015-16 ENVIROTHON

This past fall, the PEIISC helped the Provincial Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division prepare for the 2015 Envirothon competition.

Envirothon is an international environmental education competition for high school students.

Teams explore four environmental themes: aquatic ecology, forests, soils and wildlife, plus a fifth topic which changes annually. For the 2015-16 competition, the fifth topic is invasive species!

Council members worked with the organizers to develop a final

challenge question for Island Envirothon teams.

For the challenge, teams are introduced to the topic, given some background information, and then are presented with the question.

The challenge is often a multi-part question that encourages students to think critically, work together and problem solve. Teams then have the rest of the day and evening to prepare a final presentation, which they present to a panel of judges.

Council members participated in teaching days and even sat on the final judging panel.

The council was very impressed with the quality of challenge answers from all teams.

Congratulations to the Montague High School team for winning the PEI competition. They will be representing our province in Peterborough, Ontario in July! Good Luck!



PEIISC members with the winning Envirothon team from Montague High School



# Spotter's Network Newsletter

## FILLING IN THE GAPS ON ISLAND SPIDERS

In August, 2015, Nature PEI citizen scientists began a project to collect and identify Island spiders.

Before August, only 38 spider species were identified in PEI, compared to 437 and 382 species recorded for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, respectively.

“The landscape of species distributions is altering rapidly with climate change and it will be valuable to have a baseline of spider information against which future change can be measured” says PEIISC member and Nature PEI President, Rosemary Curley.

“As well, we know the number and variety of alien species entering Canada is skyrocketing with global trade, and the effects of introduced spiders cannot begin to be assessed without a baseline of native species.

Species of European origin were recently collected on the Island and all alien species are of concern as they may negatively affect native species”.

As of February, 2016, 171 species have been identified on PEI. Almost 10% of those known spider species are exotic spiders.



Exotic spider (*Salticus scenicus*)  
Photo by Kaldari via Wikimedia Commons

Exotic spiders can outcompete native spiders, so that is a concern. These spiders can arrive with ships and transfer trucks, and in their cargo. Young spiderlings from further south may float in on suspended silken threads and survive in our warming climate. Imported ornamental plants are a major source of new arrivals, as are imported vegetable displays at the supermarket. Some, like the European House spider, like to live in our houses.

It appears that the rate of arrivals

to Canada may be accelerating.

Currently there are only 74 exotic spiders known in Canada but provinces like NL and BC, that have very recent spider studies, are showing greater numbers of exotic spiders.

For example, 50 of the 74 exotic species identified in Canada have been found in British Columbia. This is due to much higher shipping traffic, but could also have to do with the large number of people studying spiders in BC, compared to other provinces, since 2008. (Robb Bennett personal communication).

Sampling is complete for the project while a backlog of specimens are identified. It is hoped that a fuller picture of native and exotic spiders will emerge as a result of this project.

This project was made possible through funding from the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund and the Province of PEI.

### Thanks to our funding partners:



TD Friends of the Environment Foundation



## Upcoming Events:

### The PEIISC's First Annual Meeting

Thursday, March 17, 1:00 - 5:00pm at the PEI Farm Centre, 420 University Avenue in Charlottetown

Please email [peiinvasives@gmail.com](mailto:peiinvasives@gmail.com) or call 902-892-7513 for more details

## THE PEIISC ONLINE

For more information on the PEIISC, identification and management factsheets, and helpful links, check out our website: [www.peiinvasives.ca](http://www.peiinvasives.ca)

You can also find us on Facebook!