

## 2023 Honorary Member: Donald McAlpine

*In recognition of outstanding contributions to Canadian natural history or to the successful operation of the Club.*

It is believed that Donald's love for the natural world began early in life, while spending summers at the family cottage along the Saint John River in New Brunswick, observing amphibians and reptiles. Then, as a young teen, he was volunteering at the New Brunswick Museum (NBM) after school and on weekends. Here he was introduced to the museum's natural history collections, its curators and people passionate about natural history research. Over the years his interest and expertise has grown exponentially. Today he is Research Curator of Zoology, Department Head of the NBM, and a renowned naturalist throughout Canada and beyond.



Donald's breadth of knowledge and expertise is enormous. It spans the gamut from small invertebrates such as nematodes, earthworms, insects, and jellyfish, to large vertebrates including wolves, sea turtles, sharks and whales. He is familiar with freshwater, marine and terrestrial environments and the wildlife inhabiting them. His publications include studies in mammalogy, ornithology, parasitology, malacology, herpetology, museology . . . the list goes on. A large portion of his research involves sightings of new species found regionally, provincially, and/or

nationally.



His interest in conservation, biodiversity research, and public education are apparent through some of his numerous projects. He is a leading advocate for the role natural history museums play in fostering public awareness of Canada's incredible biodiversity and the importance of protecting natural areas. One project, conceived by Don, included the life-size model of a Northern Right Whale found dead after a nearby ship strike. This NBM exhibit heightened public awareness of the threats large marine animals face in Canadian waterways and, most likely, contributed to the rerouting of a major shipping lane away from an important whale resting site. Then there's his BiotaNB project.



Initiated in 2009, this annual event brings groups of biologists, students, artists and volunteers together for a two-week intensive field study session at one of New Brunswick's larger protected areas. Its purpose is to not only enhance the understanding of the province's biodiversity and the

need for its continued conservation, but also to engage local residents and to inspire future natural history enthusiasts and conservationists.



What are Donald's direct contributions to the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club? For more than 40 years, he has contributed to the OFNC through his support of the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*. He has been a prolific contributor to the *CFN* with more than 40 papers published where he is listed as author or co-author. His first publication, in 1976, described a shark sighting in the Bay of Fundy. As for his last, who knows, he continues to contribute his findings. Since 2003, he has served as one of *CFN's* Associate Editors. In this role he has reviewed submitted papers by other researchers on a wide variety of subjects. His knowledge and broad experience in many areas make him an invaluable asset to the *CFN* and to the OFNC – just check out *CFN's* volume 137. The first two issues were dedicated to him and his work.

Donald's lifetime achievements in Canadian natural history and his long-time service with the *Canadian Field-Naturalist* make him worthy of Honorary Membership to the Club.

