



Conservationists walk through a patch of giant hogweed in Terra Cotta, Ont. The weed has been discovered in the Halifax communities of Hammonds Plains, Purcells Cove, on North Street and in Dartmouth. (DARREN CALABRESE / CP)



ACROSS NOVA SCOTIA

Lotto 6-49 ticket sold in Truro worth \$11.2m

TRURO, (CP) — Someone who picked up a Lotto 6-49 ticket in central Nova Scotia can start doing their happy dance.

Lottery officials say a ticket sold in Truro for the Wednesday night draw is worth more than \$11.2 million.

It was the only winning ticket that matched all of the six main numbers — 4, 17, 20, 31, 36, and 40.

Details on the winner — or winners — will be released when the prize is claimed at lottery headquarters in Moncton.

Woman allegedly stole pension contributions

A Timberlea woman who allegedly deposited Halifax Regional Municipality employee pension contributions in her own bank account has been charged with fraud.

Sharon Elizabeth Thoms, 55, is accused of defrauding TD Canada Trust of more than \$5,000.

Thoms sobbed as she was arraigned in Halifax provincial court this week. Judge Hughes Randall ordered her to return to court Sept. 16 to enter a plea.

Sources say about \$17,000 in pension contributions went missing from May to September of last year. Thoms was a pension administrator at the time.

Police allege that Thoms mishandled personal cheques from municipal staffers that were intended to top up their pension plans. Some of the money came from Halifax Regional Police employees, sources say.

Thoms remains free on a promise to appear in court.

Police raid leads to drug charges against couple

A British Columbia couple face drug charges after police raided a Dartmouth home Wednesday.

David Lorenzo Spencer Downey, 25, and Julisa Morika Velvet McDonald, 24, appeared in Dartmouth provincial court Thursday on charges of possession of ecstasy and marijuana for the purpose of trafficking.

The Crown consented to the couple's release on \$5,000 recognizances. They have to live with Downey's mother on Kennedy Drive in Dartmouth and follow a curfew from midnight to 6 a.m.

Police say they were acting on a search warrant when they went into a Kennedy Drive residence, where they found 3,200 ecstasy tablets, just over a kilogram of pot, 49 rounds of .357-calibre ammunition and a bulletproof vest.

Downey and McDonald will be back in court Aug. 10.

Lost elderly couple uses cellphone to call for aid

An elderly couple who became disoriented and lost on a Pictou County logging road was found safe and sound Wednesday night following a lengthy search.

Cpl. Mark Kellock of the Pictou County District RCMP said police got a call at about 7:30 p.m. from a man and wife in their 70s who used their cellphone to report that their vehicle was stuck in a ditch on a logging road outside of Laggan.

The couple, who had been delivering telephone books to the people who lived in that area, had no idea where they were and had been in the woods for several hours, he said.

RCMP called on Pictou County Voluntary Ground Search and Rescue team members to co-ordinate a search. A Department of Natural Resources helicopter was also called in to help.

Several hours later, a logging crew working in the area found the couple.

Cpl. Kellock said the two were in good shape and were reunited with relieved family members waiting at the search command centre.

The aliens among us

Giant hogweed latest invasive species to hit N.S.

By **DAVENE JEFFREY**
Staff Reporter

Halifax wants to map the location of all unwelcome foreign nationals.

"I'd really like to get a map to plot what's where, so over the long-term we're able to look at strategies around management and prevention of (the) spread of different invasive species," said Richard MacLellan, manager of Halifax Regional Municipality's sustainable environment management office.

Recently several pests and plants plaguing metro Halifax have hit the headlines.

"It seems like it's a new week, it's a new invasive (species)," said MacLellan.

Last week it was Japanese knotweed threatening Point Pleasant Park, in June it was Lyme disease carrying ticks, then European fire ants, brown spruce longhorn beetle and floating yellow heart in Dartmouth's Albro Lake.

But the current danger is the giant hogweed. Contact with the plant can cause severe skin and eye irritation, and possibly blindness.

"Early this week, we learned about the presence of giant hogweed in the municipality," MacLellan said. "We're working right now to gather information and to disseminate information to the public and co-ordinate the appropriate response with all other jurisdictions, levels of government and other stakeholders."

MacLellan said the weed has been discovered in Hammonds Plains, Purcells Cove, on North Street and in Dartmouth.

So far, it has only been found on private property but MacLellan expects it will likely be discovered on city-owned property before long.

"I'm sure that now that we are looking for it, we're going to find it."

For now, the city is recommending that land owners with the weed contact professional landscapers to handle the plant's disposal.

In the meantime, MacLellan said, "Don't panic. First of all the plant is not going to attack you. To get burns, or whatever, you need to handle the plant or break the leaves and get the sap on you."

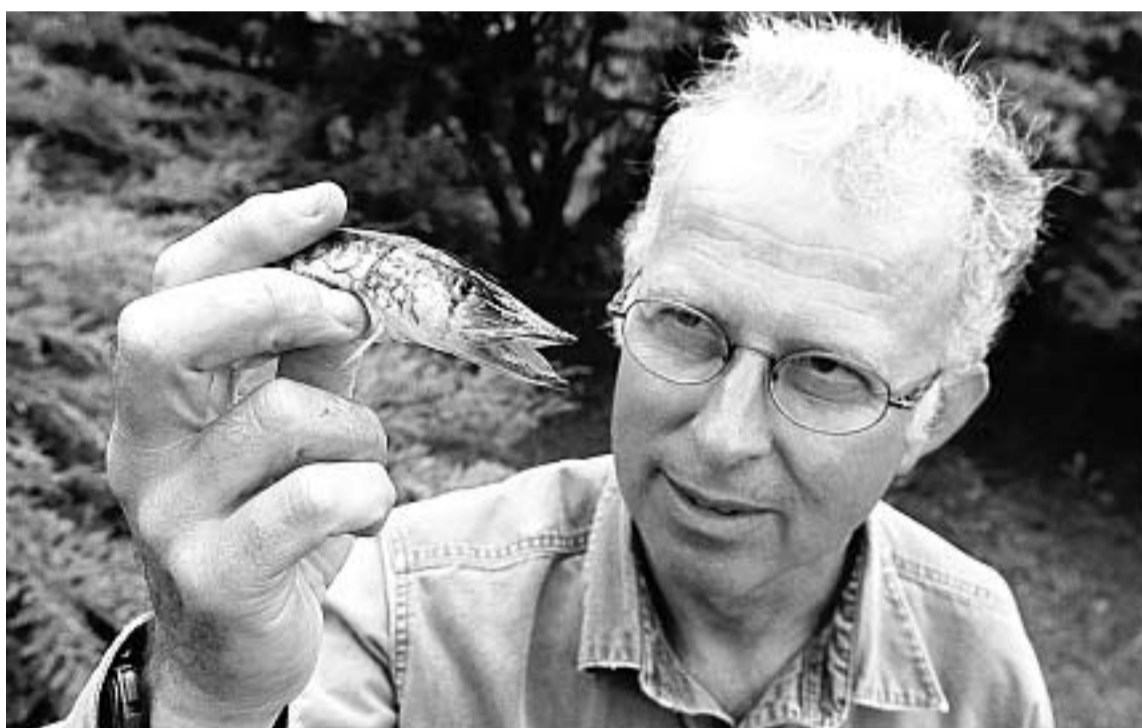
Invasive bugs and plants aren't a threat to just Halifax.

The province's manager of biodiversity for the Department of Natural Resources lists alien invasive species among the top three dangers to Nova Scotia's beach and wetlands biodiversity, posing a risk to plants, animals and our ecosystem, MacLellan said.

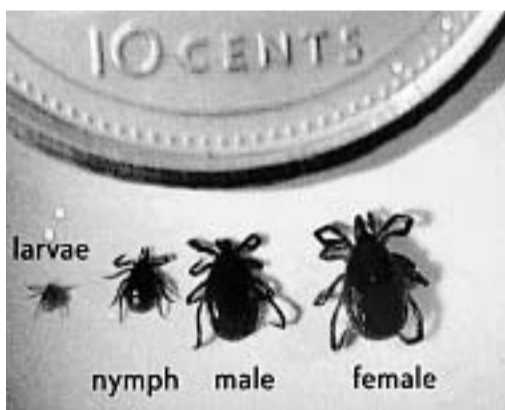
"It's an emerging issue. It's not new, but it's a rapidly growing issue."

His department is particularly concerned with endangered species and how invasive plants and creatures impact them, he said.

The province boasts 1,800



Bob Cross of Cole Harbour holds a pickrel he caught at Morris Lake in Portland Estates. The avid recreational fisherman says the introduced pickrel is having a devastating effect on native species. (PETER PARSONS / Staff)



Bedford Councillor Tim Outhit is trying to get provincial approval to set up tick bait stations around Admiral's Cove to combat Lyme disease-carrying blacklegged ticks. (ERIC WYNNE / Staff)

FOREIGN INVADERS

Invasive species are threatening Nova Scotia on land and sea:

Giant hogweed: It resembles a huge version of Queen Anne's lace. Growing up to five metres high, it poses a human health risk, severely irritating skin and eyes. It can cause blindness.

European green crab: A voracious predator of mussels, clams, sea squirts and tunicates. It is nicknamed the Blob because of its icky texture. It is a particular threat to mussel farming.

Chain pickrel: It threatens the brook trout population and could change the ecology of Nova Scotia's waterways.

Yellow floating heart: A densely growing, flowering aquatic plant that can choke out other aquatic growth.

Blacklegged tick: The Lyme disease-carrying tick has been found in Bedford, areas of Lunenburg County and Shelburne County.

Common reed: It is a tall, perennial grass that can grow to more than five metres in height. Its dense and rapid growth can take over marsh areas, choking out native plants.

Source: *The Chronicle Herald archives and the Invasive Species Alliance of Nova Scotia.*

plant species, 600 hundred of which are alien, having been brought here intentionally or accidentally, he said. But only the ones that pose a risk to humans or the ecosystem are a cause of worry.

Although the public's initial reaction is to demand information on how to get rid of invasive species, MacLellan said a better approach is educating

people on how to avoid bringing harmful foreigners here in the first place.

Education and prevention is a focus of the Invasive Species Alliance of Nova Scotia. The non-profit organization is based out of the Acadia Centre for Estuarine Research at Acadia University and its members include academics, federal and provincial agencies and aborig-



Fire ants crawl through a Halifax backyard. The ants are among several invasive pets found in the province. (TED PRITCHARD / Staff)



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RICHARD MACLELLAN
Halifax
Regional
Municipality

inal peoples, alliance spokeswoman Marika Godwin said.

The group's website www.invasivespeciesns.ca lists several troublesome come-from-aways that are threatening the province, Godwin said.

"We want people to be aware (of invasive species) so that if they do see it, they can report it," she said.

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