



Updated February 15, 2011

[History](#)

[Pennant](#)

[50 Years in 2011](#)

[Roger Craig](#)

History of the Blue Heron Power & Sail Squadron

The Squadron turns 50 years old in 2011. We are compiling a history of the Squadron for its birthday party in 2011, but **we need help piecing together the Squadron's history**, since records are scattered in boxes of personal files in people's homes. **Please check your basement and closet:** If you have photos, certificates with signatures of officers, copies of old minutes, stories and other information, please contact us at web2 at blueheroncps.pe.ca.

Contents:

- Chartered in 1961
- Half a Century of Better Boating
 - The 1960s, 70s and 80s
 - The 1990s
 - The 2000s
- The Squadron's Names
- Squadron's Season Today
- Public Relations
- Social Life
- Blue Heron Squadron and the Charlottetown Yacht Club
- Silver Fox Squadron, Summerside
- Squadron's Commanders

Blue Heron Power & Sail Squadron (Charlottetown)



Our "favicon": The tiny 16 x 16 pixel icon that shows up beside the



Logo, new in 2005



Logo, new in 2004



Squadron's pennant, new in 1995. There was no prior logo or pennant.

Squadron's website address in your browser. New in 2007.

Chartered in 1961: 50 years old in 2011

The Squadron was established by the *Canadian Power Squadrons*, as it was then called,

[Home](#)
[What's New?](#)
[Our Squadron](#)
[Boating Courses](#)
[Sign-up Forms](#)
[Membership](#)
[50 in 2011](#)
[Calendar](#)
[Newsletter](#)
[Courtesy Check](#)
[Ship's Stores](#)
[Awards](#)
[Photo Album](#)
[Raftup](#)
[Cruising PEI](#)
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acting on an application from 15 Island CPS members. The original charter was cared for by Henry Scales until 2004, when it went on display at the Charlottetown Yacht Club. The charter reads, "*Canadian Power Squadrons. Squadron Warrant. Be it known that upon application made pursuant to resolution of the Governing Board of Canadian Power Squadrons, a Squadron has been constituted, known as **Charlottetown Power Squadron.***"

We confirmed with Headquarters that the official start date of the Squadron was *02 June 1961*. In 2009, National staff found in old minutes that Charlottetown Squadron's Regulations were approved on June 2, 1961. This is the only official record we can find regarding the start of the Squadron. The Squadron's number is 05-01: 05 for Atlantic District, and 01 for the first Squadron in the District.

The charter was signed by Charlottetown Squadron's charter members:

*Avon B. Andrew
Ron H. Atkinson
Dr. Malcolm Beck
Ralph R. Beck
Horace E. Carmichael
Douglas H. Coffin
Stewart Eagles
Dr. A.E. (Bud) Ings
Dr. Louis A. Johnston
Neil D. MacLean
Don A. Martin
Wendell B. McLaine
James B. Peake
John Shaw
William Soper
B. Lloyd Weeks*

The Warrant was signed by:

*Donald E. Wood (S), national Secretary.
Alex R. Neville G.P., Chief Commander.*

Some original members, taken at our annual meeting in April 2006



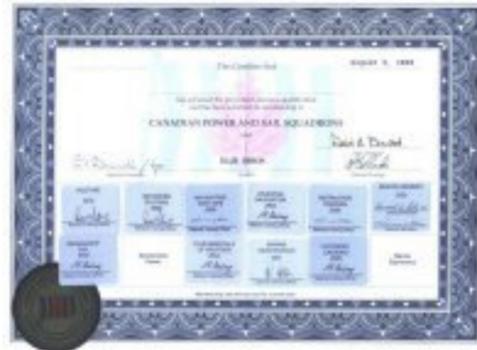
Blue Heron Squadron has been Teaching Better Boating in Charlottetown for Half a Century

Squadron volunteers have taught safe boating skills and knowledge to generations of boaters since its founding in 1961.

boaters since it was chartered in 1961.



1966 membership certificate for a Charlottetown Squadron member. This member had qualified to join by passing the "Piloting" course, and later took "Seamanship". The first edition of the current Boating Course was 1980. By 2006 (we don't know when), "Piloting" referred to an advanced course, and "Seamanship" was divided into "Seamanship Power" and "Seamanship Sail". [Click here to view a larger image.](#)



2006 membership certificate for a Blue Heron Squadron member. This was a "full card", meaning enough courses to qualify for "Senior Navigator".

The 1960s, 70s and 80s

Our knowledge of the Squadron's history prior to 1990 is very murky. If you can help us, please do so. We found no records of Squadron activity from prior to the 1990s. If minutes were kept, they have not been found.

In 2007, there were 13 CPS-ECP Atlantic Distinct Squadrons:

- Kennebecasis (05-03): 1960
- Blue Heron (Charlottetown) (05-01): 1961**
- Halifax (05-02): 1962
- Fredericton (05-04): 1963
- Shediac (05-05): 1964
- Miramichi (05-06): 1969
- Fundy (05-07): ????
- Nipisiguit Bay (05-08): 1971
- Bluenose (05-09): 1976
- Abegweit (05-10): 1977
- Avalon (05-11): 1990
- Alderney (05-12): 1996
- Silver Fox (05-xx): 2003

During the 1960s and 70s, members initially taught themselves from books borrowed from the United States Power Squadron until volunteer CPS-ECP course committees began to provide Canadian materials. Although the Squadron was active continuously from the time of its charter in 1961, the level of activity waxed and waned as personalities came and went. We have almost no information at all from the 1980s.

Leigh Murdoch (Bluenose Squadron) sent along the following details. In 1974, Charlottetown Squadron had 45 members and 4 "Registered Lady Associates". The 1976 Bridge was as follows:

- Commander: K. Mutek, S.
- Executive Officer: R. Beck.
- Training Officer: P. Griesbauer, S. (Peter taught Extended Cruising in 2007/08).
- Secretary: K. Le Lacey, S.
- Treasurer: T. Richardson.

The CPS-ECP's flagship Boating Course first edition was 1980. This best course for boating beginners continues to evolve today. Many an experienced sea captain has been dragged kicking into the Boating course, then at the end was glad he had taken it. The worlds of big ships and little boats are similar in many ways, but very different in so many others.

Monica Brittain sent us some bits: "Chris Brittain was the commander of the Squadron from 85-87. Chris taught Basic Boating and Seamanship Sail. I was secretary-treasurer. Les Waugh I believe took over from Chris and I believe he passed the reins on to John MacKinnon. David (Sleepy) MacLeod was commander of CPS many years before Chris took over the position. David was a teacher at StonePark School and was a very good friend of Peter Johnston. Hope this helps with your compilation of data for the 50th anniversary."

The '90s

In October 2006, Geoff Church sent us this recollection about the '90s from his home in the Ontario:

"I joined the Squadron in 1991, after completing the Boating course taught by John MacKinnon. John MacKinnon had been Commander for many years. A small group headed by John brought the Squadron back from the "dead". When I joined the Squadron it was a group of about 25 members. I was invited to become the Public Relations Officer. I taught Boating at least a couple of times, as well as Seamanship. The Squadron grew to about 50 members, and then John stepped down as Commander, since that had been his goal.

"Fraser Cameron served as Commander for two years, which I think you have correctly identified as 1992-93. I must have been XO at that time. I became Commander after Fraser in '93 and continued until '97 when Christina Fields took over. Chris stepped down in '99. I was drafted again and served until we moved rather unexpectedly to the Caribbean in the summer of 2000. Sometimes you have to do something drastic to find another Commander!

"During my time we tried to make the Squadron a more social organization. We hosted events like an annual Christmas party, a summer raft-up on several occasions, and a couple of get-togethers with the Shediac Squadron in Summerside. We also tried to organize at least a couple of free seminars every year for our members. These included talks about GPS, which was new at the time, and extended voyaging courtesy of the Shards. One summer when we had some extra cash in the coffers we chartered the tour boat from the marina to host a free on-the-water tour and safe boating seminar for the Big Brothers and Sisters organization, followed by a BBQ on the dock. Our annual general meeting and graduation was quite a grand affair in those days. For a few years we held it at the CYC, then later by Liam's place at the marina. The times and membership eventually dictated a much more informal affair, so we moved to the Navy's new digs (HMCS Queen Charlotte). The Squadron grew from about 50 members when I took over to about 150 when I left.

"Originally the Squadron was called the "Charlottetown Power Squadron", with a few members from outside the city as well. In the early '90s our membership grew greatly in Summerside and Montague, to the point where one winter we put on courses in the three cities simultaneously. At that point we decided that a name that better reflected the province as a whole should be chosen for the Squadron. After some discussion, the name Blue Heron stuck. I am not sure exactly when the name change took place but I would guess 1995.

*"We thought we should celebrate the name change with a Squadron burgee, which we had never had before. I am sure that we asked for submissions and that there were none except mine, which was adopted. The **burgee** contains a few significant elements. The "waves" mimic the blue bars in the CPS flag identifying us as a CPS Squadron. The red and green lines are reminiscent of the view of PEI as seen from the water, red cliffs and green grass. The red maple leaf arising from the cliffs is meant to pay homage to PEI's history as the birthplace of Confederation, as well as identifying us as a Canadian Squadron. Lastly, the blue heron stands along the shore, a regular visitor to the waters of PEI and the namesake of the Squadron. Another initiative that grew out of that time was the Squadron newsletter, again aimed at linking members on a regular*

time was the Squadron newsletter, again aimed at linking members on a regular basis, making the organization a little more than just a teaching tool."

The 2000's

The decade after 2000 saw another dramatic rise in activity, but little change in membership. The Squadron temporarily lost a number of members when Summerside left to form the Silver Fox Squadron, a welcome development on the Island, assisted by Blue Heron's Commander Al Roach. Courses and instructors expanded. John MacKinnon single-handedly bridged the instructor shortage from the early 90's as boaters came and went from the local community, teaching continuously for more than 18 years. David Livingston taught the Boating course for many years. It took four instructors to replace him in about 2005. During the mid-2000's decade many instructors taught various courses for power and sail boaters, from Boating to Celestial Navigation, including Maritime Radio and electronic navigation.

Past Squadron Commander Allen Roach provided this history from his time on the Bridge:

"I first became involved with the Canadian Power and Sail Squadrons in the winter of 1980, when I was asked to instruct their basic boating course. I don't recall the name of the squadron but if memory serves me it was in Port Elgin, Ontario on Lake Huron.

"I became involved with Blue Heron Power & Sail Squadron in the early 1990's as a member, instructor and then Bridge Member. I became Commander in 2000. At that time, our focus was first to build a new bridge, enhance our training, training methods and build for the future. It was during this time that the Bridge really moved forward with e-mail, laptops, PowerPoint presentations and electronic newsletters.

"It was also during this time that the Summerside group had grown. They expressed an interest in having their own Squadron as well as training in their area. We were very pleased to assist them. It was quite exciting to see the new Silver Fox Squadron come into existence in P.E.I. My recollection was their great enthusiasm and organizational abilities. We did over the short term lose Summerside members from Blue Heron Squadron, but we have long since retrieved those numbers, and the real gain was a new and vibrant squadron in Summerside.

"The Blue Heron Bridge at that time hosted a very successful Atlantic District Conference followed by a lobster and steak dinner, completed with great entertainment. The Blue Heron Bridge became extremely active at both the Atlantic and National level.

"The one item that sticks out was the Bridge's decision to be less military-like. We were told that the uniforms, and especially the pomp and ceremony was not that welcomed by new members who were considering joining. As a result, we developed a casual dress policy for the Bridge where we wore Squadron shirts and dress slacks. We took this to Atlantic where it was discussed at some length and endorsed. We then took it to National where we really had a lot of fun with it. Some of the very old die-hards didn't think too much of it, but others thought it was a great idea and long overdue. We spoke informally to many squadrons, and the feedback we received was more positive than not. We felt as a Bridge that this may go a long way to bring younger people into the Squadron, making it a more attractive organization for youth and young adults.

"One of the comments I will make is that Bridge was just about as fine a group of people I had ever had the privilege of working or associating with. Their hard work and efforts resulted in them receiving an award from Atlantic for the most improved squadron in Atlantic."

From 2001, the Squadron partnered with Quartermaster Marine to provide a proper two-

evening course for the new Pleasure Craft Operator Certificate, pioneered by Al Roach and Gus Houston.

In about 2000, several members became certified as Registered Examiners to teach the Maritime Radio course (Radio Operator's Certificate (Maritime)), and the Squadron ran a radio certification course each spring.

In the fall of 2006, the Squadron offered two new evening seminars: Distress Signaling and Fire Extinguisher Demonstration/Training. Students in both courses had the opportunity to participate by firing flares or dousing a fire with their fire extinguishers.

In 2006, CPS-ECP nationally began moving away from the militaristic ranks and uniforms that had been so popular after the World Wars. The military style had become too out of synch with society, and appeared to alienate some. Blue Heron's formal dress had been "Full Charlottetown" for several years already: navy blue golf shirt with CPS-ECP and Blue Heron logos, beige pants and dock shoes. Ranks and grades were rarely used in local Squadron business.

The 2007-08 winter training season:

- Boating: Tuesdays 7 pm, Stonepark School. Instructors David Livingstone and others.
- Celestial Navigation: Thursdays 7 pm, Hall & Stavert. Instructor Jim Thompson.
- Navigating with GPS: Wednesdays 7 pm, Stonepark School, Instructor Greg MacKay.
- Electronic Charting: Wednesdays 7 pm from January 16, 2008, Stonepark School, Instructor Jim Thompson.
- Marine Maintenance: Thursdays 7 pm, Instructors Doug Mills, Guy Belliveau, Peter Holmes, Wellington Gay, Neil MacIsaac.
- Extended Cruising: Mondays 7 pm, Instructor Peter Griesbauer.
- Fundamentals of Weather: Tuesdays 7 pm, Instructor Jim Spears, meteorologist.
- Maritime Radio: Spring 2008, to be announced. Instructors Jim Honsberger and Ellen MacPhail.
- Distress Signaling: (includes Flares): Spring 2008, to be announced.
- Instructor Development: To be announced. Instructors Terry and Bernadette Allen.
- Officer Orientation: Saturday March 1, 2008. Instructor David Estey.

Blue Heron Power & Sail Squadron turned **50 in 2011**. Under the leadership of Executive Officer Dave Beaton, a committee developed a series of birthday events to highlight the Squadron's activities:

- In the classroom: handed out a free calendar to students.
- At the Winds and Waves social evening in February: a birthday cake, and rollout of a free window decal and free whistles promoting the Squadron.
- At the Squadron's annual graduation/instructor appreciation/AGM in April: another birthday cake, free calendars, decals and whistles, rollout of 24" x 24" storefront signs, and rollout of a new banner. Atlantic District came to Charlottetown for their AGM too.
- At Quartermaster Marine's annual Open House in May: another birthday cake, and free whistles and decals.
- At the CPS-ECP national conference in Halifax in October: Squadron members assisted the host Squadron in Halifax.
- At the Squadron's 50th winter course registration evening in November: final birthday cake, and handout remaining decals and whistles.





Rise of the "Digital Bridge" -- Electronic Navigation

The 1990's saw the decline of sextant navigation and the rise of the "digital bridge", when GPS became widely available to recreational boaters. Loran had been paving the way, but GPS quickly replaced that aging technology. Blue Heron Squadron helped local boaters keep abreast of the rapid changes. The Canadian Government reduced traditional aids to navigation to within 10 nautical miles of ports soon after 2000, making it more important than ever for boaters to learn to navigate in unmarked waters between ports.

In about 1999, the Squadron hosted a well-attended evening seminar on the newfangled GPS by Jim Nixon from Nova Scotia. The Squadron gave increasingly improved versions of the CPS-ECP GPS courses as electronic navigation became the primary mode of navigation. In 2006, CPS-ECP continued to expand its offerings of courses in electronic navigation, while still offering essential training in manual coastal and offshore navigation. Blue Heron Squadron made the whole range of paper and electronic navigation courses available to local boaters, depending on demand and instructor availability.

Seminars

From time to time various organizations hosted boating seminars in Charlottetown. The 2006-07 season was one of the busiest in recent memory. CYC hosted race official training, WaveSkills ran adult sailing in the summer and Maritime Radio in the spring, Blue Heron Squadron ran a fire extinguisher demonstration, and all 3 combined to run a Distress Signaling seminar/demonstration. Hall & Stavert hosted the fire extinguisher seminar for Blue Heron, and ran an independent fiberglass/gelcoat seminar. The Office of Boating Safety ran demonstrations and seminars on PEI. There were probably other seminars by these and other organizations too.

French Language Training

Although PEI has a proud, rich French-language history and culture, Blue Heron Power & Sail Squadron has not had the resources to put on French-language courses for boaters. French-language training materials and assistance are available from the national Escadrilles canadiennes de plaisance/Canadian Power & Sail Squadrons (CPS-ECP) website at http://www.cps-ecp.ca/public_fr/.

The Squadron's Names

Blue Heron Power and Sail Squadron was first named **Charlottetown Power Squadron** in **1961**, according to records obtained from CPS-ECP Headquarters. In 1995, the name changed to the **Blue Heron Power Squadron** to better reflect representation of the whole of this small province. About 2005, the name was formally changed locally to **Blue Heron Power & Sail Squadron** to better reflect the proper mandate of the Squadron to serve sailors as well as power boaters. The national organization had already changed its name to "Canadian Power & Sail Squadrons" from "Canadian Power Squadrons".

Squadron's Season Today

Under CPS-ECP regulations, Squadrons must follow a cycle of events throughout the year. Blue Heron's current calendar is [here](#).

During the late 1990s and the busy decade of the 2000s, the Squadron Bridge (executive) met monthly through the winter. They met at Henry Scale's home through the 90's, then the naval base HMCS *Queen Charlotte* for a few years, and then a variety of donated private board rooms.

The first Bridge meeting is in September, when the boating season begins winding down. On a Tuesday in early November, the Squadron holds a public registration evening at HMCS *Queen Charlotte*. The Squadron Training Officer balances uncertainty about public

demand for various courses with uncertainty about instructor supply. Boaters vote with their feet, and by the end of that evening the die is cast for most of the winter. The Supply Officer then orders the right amount of supplies in time for the start of courses.

Through the winter, the Bridge tends to Squadron business and plans late winter/early spring events. These include the mid-winter *Winds and Waves* social evening: finding a speaker, organizing advertising, and arranging for food and drink. Typically the Squadron runs short courses after the main winter training season ends, such as the Maritime Radio course and the GPS course.

By late spring, everybody is busy getting boats ready for the water. Squadron business ends for the season with a spring evening social that combines graduation, instructor appreciation, a speaker and the Squadron's AGM.

2007-08 winter training course season:

- *Boating* start: November 20/07 , Tuesday 7 pm , Stonepark School. Instructors David Livingstone and others.
- *Celestial Navigation* start: October 11/07, Thursday 7 pm, Hall & Stavert. Instructor Jim Thompson.
- *Navigating with GPS* start: November 21/07, Wednesday 7 pm, Stonepark School, Instructor Greg MacKay.
- *Electronic Charting* start: January 16, 2008, Wednesday 7 pm, Stonepark School, Instructor Jim Thompson.
- *Marine Maintenance* start: December 6, Thursday 7 pm, Instructors Doug Mills, Guy Belliveau, Peter Holmes, Wellington Gay, Neil MacIsaac.
- *Extended Cruising* start: November 26, Monday 7 pm, Instructor Peter Griesbauer.
- *Fundamentals of Weather* start: November 20, Tuesday 7 pm, Instructor Jim Spears, meteorologist.
- *Maritime Radio*: March 27 and 29 2008. Instructors Jim Honsberger and Ellen MacPhail.
- *Distress Signaling (includes Flares)*: May 7 or 8, 2008. Instructors TBA.
- *Instructor Development* start: To be announced. Instructors Terry and Bernadette Allen.
- *Officer Orientation*: Saturday March 1, 2008. Instructor David Estey.

Public Relations

The Squadron's success in providing local boater safety training resulted from many public relations activities carried out by its volunteer members. Word of mouth continues to be the best advertising method, even in the digital age of the Internet, but the Squadron's PR officers had to get words out to put in mouths.

Henry Scales was writing and publishing the Squadron's newsletter in 1999. The next Newsletter editor, Cindy (Dale) Sharkey, oversaw naming the newsletter *Docklines* and began posting an electronic version on the website. After she passed the torch to Andrew Cudmore in 2004, he started emailing full colour versions of *Docklines* in addition to snail-mailing a printed version for those not on email. In 2010 Andrew passed the reins to Marc

Dagenais, who used his professional skills to build on Andrew's pioneering electronic work, producing a sophisticated email list and newsletter.

Over the years, Squadron Public Relations officers also kept the public aware of Blue Heron activities using free public service announcements on EastLink and CBC television and radio, and by purchasing ads in the Guardian newspaper and other PEI publications. The Guardian ran stories highlighting the Squadron's activities.

In 2000, Jim Thompson developed and began maintaining the Squadron's first website at www.blueheroncps.pe.ca, a project he was still running in 2011. Squadron members and boating course students increasingly used the website as the Internet rapidly entered most homes and many boats. In 2006, Jim added forms so viewers could sign up for courses, request to be placed on the Squadron's email broadcast list, and express interest in joining the Squadron. With tips from National and local sailor Marc Dagenais' expert help, he gradually improved the website's utility and marketing functions. In 2007, CPS-ECP created a new national website system and encouraged Squadrons to migrate their websites there. Blue Heron decided to stay put for the time being, because along with the Charlottetown Yacht Club's website built by Marc Dagenais, the Blue Heron website became a familiar place for Charlottetown boaters to keep up with local events.

Social Life

Each April, the Squadron meets to hold a combined graduation ceremony, social evening, instructor appreciation and annual general meeting. Guest speakers give boating presentations.

Summer social activities complement winter classroom training from time to time. Following a delightful overnight raft-up at anchor off St. Peters Island in September 2001 (*Mar-Ron-Ner II*, *Tommy T*, *Juno V* and *Lady B*), members continued the tradition each August or September. Raftups have long been a tradition among local boaters.

On August 27, 2003 the Squadron initiated the Rodney Walsh Memorial Cruise and BBQ, in honor of a boating colleague lost in 2002. Together with Quartermaster Marine, members annually provided a BBQ and cruise on the *Fairview* for Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

In January 2005, the Squadron began the annual [Wind and Waves](#) winter social evening at the Haviland Club, reviving an earlier tradition. The first of the new series was a panel comprised of a professional sailor, ferry captains, a Holland College marine faculty member and a commercial fisherman. In 2006, a Charlottetown sailor gave a riveting talk about his cruise to Labrador and Greenland. In 2007, a Halifax sailor told his story about crewing for Peter Peter Brock as he finished sailing *Minke* through the Northwest Passage. In 2008, Harry T. Holman, provincial archivist and sailor, talked about the early history of Charlottetown Harbour, including the Charlottetown Yacht Club. In 2009, sailing instructor and retired hydrographer Dave DeWolfe travelled from home in Mahone Bay to pass along lessons from a lifetime on the water. In 2010, Joe and Mary Beth Amelia described their year of adventures, sailing on *Pot'O'Gold* around "the Loop" from PEI, down U.S. inland rivers to the Gulf of Mexico, and home along the eastern seaboard.

Charlottetown Yacht Club

The old Charlottetown Squadron had its roots in the 1960's Charlottetown Yacht Club. By the late 90's it was somewhat dominated by power boaters, but that changed again in the 2000's as power boaters and sailors merged to keep the winter courses going.

Over the decades [Charlottetown Yacht Club](#) and Blue Heron Squadron had complementary roles in local boating life. Many boaters had memberships in both organizations. The Yacht Club taught sailing on the water during summers, and the Squadron taught boating in the classroom during winters.

Charlottetown's Ellen MacPhail became the first Canadian Yachting Association-certified keelboat instructor on PEI in about 2005. Her sailing school, WaveSkills, provided on-the-water and theory CYA training for sailors. She joined the Blue Heron Bridge, bringing her teaching skills with her. In 2007, WaveSkills won the CYA's distinguished William Abbott

Senior Trophy as the *Sail Training Program of the Year*.

The big event for CYC during the mid-2000's was the difficult decision about whether to move from its original home-grown location to the expanded "potato wharf" cruise ship center. Debating the move was extremely complex, tying up CYC Board members in negotiations for years.

Current and Past Squadron Commanders

(We are uncertain of this list's sequence and completeness prior to 1988 -- please send information to web2 at blueheroncps.pe.ca).

Jim Thompson 2007-09

Gar Andrew 2006-07

Jim Honsberger 2004-06

Scott Stewart 2002-04

Al Roach 2000-02

Geoff Church 1999-2000

Christina Fields 1997-99

Geoff Church 1993-97 (name changed from Charlottetown Squadron to Blue Heron Squadron)

Fraser Cameron 1992-93

John MacKinnon 1988-92

Les Waugh

Chris Brittain 1985-87

Roger Tanton

Keith MacLean

Keith Lelacheur

David (Sleepy) MacLeod

Clarey Pineau

Wendell MacLean

Don Martin

K. Mutek 1976

Silver Fox Squadron, Summerside

In 2001 boaters in Summerside organized a Squadron with assistance from the Blue Heron Squadron, broadening CPS-ECP representation on the Island. The new squadron was called **Silver Fox Squadron**: <http://www.peisle.com/sfcps/>. They are closely associated with the **Silver Fox Yacht Club**.