

## Doris Huestis Speirs Award

The Doris Huestis Speirs Award is the most prestigious award given by the SCO-SOC. The award is presented annually to an individual who has made outstanding lifetime contributions in Canadian ornithology. The 2015/2016 Speirs Award selection committee: Mark Brigham, Nicky Koper, Ken Otter, Bob Clark (Chair).

### 2015 – Dr. Erica Nol

Dr. Erica Nol has made important research and service contributions to ornithology in Canada, the Americas and internationally. In addition to this, Erica is a popular ornithology professor at Trent University where she has been strongly devoted to mentoring undergraduate and graduate students, building a new generation of highly qualified young scientists in avian ecology and conservation.



Erica's research interests focus on two primary areas. First, she is passionate about the biology and conservation of shorebirds. With students, Erica has worked on plovers and other shorebirds including Whimbrel, Dunlin and Red-necked Phalaropes, in many regions of Canada, in Cuba, Brazil and Venezuela. She has pursued questions about the impacts of a warming climate on the habitats and life histories of arctic and sub-arctic breeding shorebirds. Arctic and coastal areas are at risk of habitat loss and change and arctic birds living in low coastal marshes with rising water levels and tidal surges will experience changes in foraging and nesting habitats – Erica's research seeks to clarify how some species respond to increased threats, while for others habitat quality and quantity may improve.

Erica's second core research interest is in the conservation of songbirds, particularly those associated with habitats

impacted by anthropogenic factors such as forest fragmentation, forestry practices and urbanization. Plus, her current research on grassland birds focuses on the impacts of agricultural practices on Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks. Erica's work aims to understand, broadly, how birds and humans can co-exist in settled landscapes.

Dr. Nol also is heavily engaged in international and national professional service. She is President of the Waterbird Society and Past-President of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, and she has been active with major international Ornithological societies, serving on several executive councils such as the American Ornithologist's Union and the Waterbird Society. Erica served on the committee that was instrumental in developing Canada's ornithological journal - Avian Conservation and Ecology. Currently, Erica is serving on the Scientific Program Committee of the International Ornithological Congress to be held in Vancouver in 2018.

In summary, Erica Nol is a dedicated avian ecologist who conducts rigorous, internationally important research on factors influencing shorebird populations in northern coastal breeding areas and southern wintering areas, and on songbirds inhabiting forests and agricultural areas. Erica and her collaborators have produced over 100 papers in peer-reviewed journals, on a diverse assemblage of species. Erica is a highly motivated, hard-working ornithologist, an effective team player, and dedicated teacher. She has also contributed enormous service to several national and international ornithological organizations. Finally, Erica dedicates generous amounts of her time to communicating the importance of ecological and conservation science to a broad range of public groups in Canada and the Americas.

In view of all of her wonderful contributions and accomplishments, the Society of Canadian Ornithologists is most pleased – and very proud - to present the 2015 Doris Speirs award to Dr. Erica Nol.