

Society of Canadian
Ornithologists

Bulletin of The

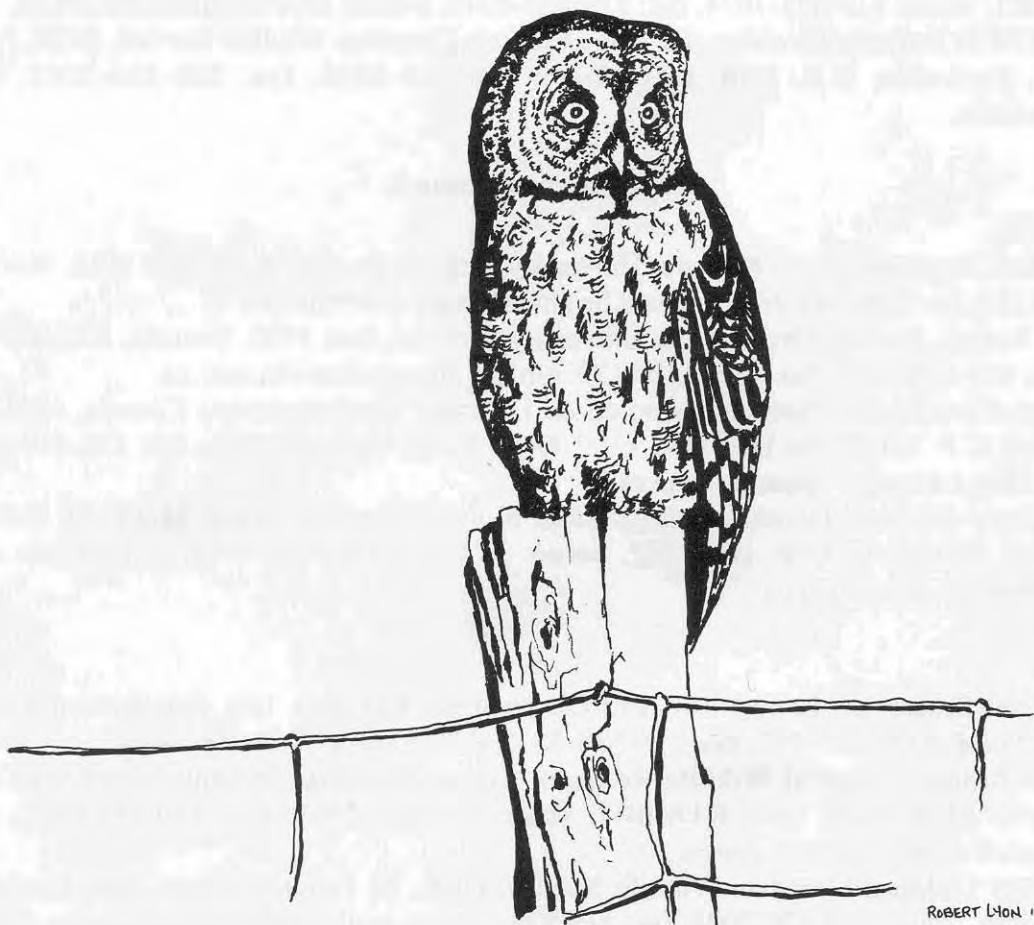
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ROBERT LYON 1996

Great Gray Owl, first confirmed in New Brunswick February 1996.
Drawing by Robert Lyon.

See also owl conference (under Announcements), in Winnipeg, centre for research on this species.

Society of Canadian Ornithologists Société des Ornithologues du Canada

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A Word From The President

NEW PATHWAYS, NEW HORIZONS

To say the response to our Questionnaire inserted in the last issue of *Picoides* (November 1995), on the proposed Society of Canadian Ornithologists (SCO) Annual Meeting, was large and varied is an understatement. It displayed a vibrant and interested membership, overflowing with ideas and suggestions for change or new directions. Although reactions varied from the identification of "problems of distance and travel costs to attend a regular annual meeting" to the "need for a journal more than a meeting" and everything in between including the desire to receive more for their money, two things stood out. First, there emerged a unanimous desire to communicate via a stand-alone or joint gathering dealing with Canadian bird issues both as avian biologists and from a strong conservation biology perspective. And second, a strong expression for the establishment of a mechanism to disperse the findings of scientific research and conservation needs of birds in Canada through a communication outlet such as a journal. The responses also varied in form. Some questionnaire sheets arrived with check-marks alone, many had additional marginal comments, often carried over to the backside of the sheet, and some were supplemented with attached letters outlining views in detail. Collectively, they presented an overwhelming endorsement identifying new pathways for the Society to follow and new horizons to aim towards. Spring is well on its way, a useful reminder of a new beginning and opportunities for tackling the stimulating and exciting challenges ahead. The SCO membership is not short on ideas!

Canada is vast, with a narrow ribbon of people extending from the Atlantic to the

Pacific, mostly along its southern border. This dispersed distribution pattern prompted suggestions of where to hold annual meetings. Views on this important issue separated clearly into two positions: (1) select a site centrally-located as to people distribution (i.e., Ontario or Quebec) which most members can reach with relative ease and at low cost (except for the extremities: British Columbia and Newfoundland), or (2) rotate the meeting location across the country (eastern, central, or western regions) allowing all members to attend an annual meeting at least once every three years. Both views have considerable merit, and further deliberations and inputs are required by SCO members, councillors and officers. Other possibilities also come to mind: for example, meetings might alternate between centre vs. eastern or western regions, resulting in east or west meetings every 4th year and central ones every other year? Also, nothing prevents us from seeking invitations from parties anywhere in Canada interested in hosting a SCO annual meeting. Whatever the final outcome, we are on our way to more direct communication and a forum for the transfer and exchange of information important to birds and their habitats in Canada.

The call for platforms to disseminate information on birds in Canada is fundamental to SCO's existence. The challenge is clear: organize annual meetings around "special themes" deemed significant to Canadian birds by the membership as a whole, including academics, university and government scientists, other professional and serious amateur ornithologists, students, and land-use managers and decision-makers. This will allow important avian subjects and

issues to be addressed in a serious manner, as well as allowing contributed papers to be submitted, on topics spanning the range of interests from field techniques to DNA analysis, plus meetings of special interest groups. The results of these meetings can be opportunities for the publication of the meeting's "subject theme" plenary and invited papers, supporting the SCO's special focus on dispersing information considered essential to our understanding of birds and their conservation. This view has been adopted for our upcoming 1996 Annual Meeting in Fredericton, New Brunswick, on 23-26 August, which features "Conservation and biology of forest birds" (for details, see below). Results of this special program theme are to appear as a special publication of SCO, following normal peer review procedures, and will form the foundation of our professional journal. Annual meetings driven by special themes should attract Canadian ornithologists at large and specialists from outside the country. They will also provide a continuity of SCO direction year-to-year, and satisfy the demand to communicate our views in an open and receptive forum, one that has a lasting and useful function. Overall, this approach not only meets the expressed aspirations of SCO members via the November 1995 questionnaire, but also pushes our society towards its long-term goal of translating ornithological science into public understanding and action.

This, my first communication as SCO President, is intended to outline in general my thoughts of our society's future and the nature of the task ahead. I'll attempt to do this by providing an encapsulated overview of my own mandate, some details of our 1996 annual meeting, and a brief outline of current activities of your executive council and associated working groups and committees. But first I would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond to the SCO meeting

questionnaire — the views expressed and suggestions given were extremely important and helpful. The SCO task, as I see it, divides into three parts, all interrelated:

SCO "mission" - To better identify SCO's structure and function via a careful refinement and expansion of current philosophy and associated aims; motherhood statements with a new twist — to carve out a niche in Canadian ornithology that is unique, important to avian biologists (professional and serious amateurs) and to birds in Canada — not an easy task, but crucial, as you the membership have clearly identified, to SCO's future as a viable and useful organization re ornithological science and conservation biology.

Annual Meetings - I believe it to be absolutely essential for SCO to hold (most of) its annual meetings in Canada, not precluding, of course, the very real advantages of holding them in association with other avian/zoological/nature conservation organizations when useful opportunities occur. These meetings must each include a scientific program, one that Canadian ornithologists, ecologists, ethologists and conservationists cannot afford to miss. The development of an exciting and stimulating "theme" program, dealing mainly with topics of direct relevance to birds and their habitats in Canada, may be the answer.

Publications - Establishment of a Canadian journal in avian biology and conservation that provides something not already available seems a daunting task. But is it? A journal focused to fit the principal needs of avian and conservation biologists in Canada centred on Canadian issues and

biological themes may fill a much-needed vacant role. That, combined with an organizational structure built around critical review "themes" on an annual basis, should prove invaluable to Canadian ornithology. Moreover, such a focus should prevent direct competition with other national journals such as *Canadian Journal of Zoology* and *Canadian Field-Naturalist* or those serving the national/international forum within North America, the OSNA partners' publications: *Auk*, *Colonial Waterbirds*, *Condor*, *J. Field Ornithology*, *Raptor Research* and *Wilson Bulletin*. Limitations might arise from cost of publication, but theme-centred annual volumes may find strong support from outside interest groups.

[Note: A publication committee was put in place by Past President Henri Ouellet, a committee that I view as essential to meeting our short- and long-term objectives. The committee's mandate also includes review of our bulletin, *Picoides*, and making recommendations for its further development. Input by the entire membership at this time is vital. Our Society's diverse composition and expertise make it imperative for us to know your opinion on where these publication endeavours should be headed. What do members want to see in *Picoides* and how best should that information be communicated? Are two issues a year sufficient, or would three issues make the news notes more timely and useful, and should we be examining the possibility of producing an electronic bulletin? Similar questions arise about our intended science journal. Once an annual "theme" volume is established, what

do we envision its future to be? Should it remain a single issue annual publication, or can it be expanded to fill the Canadian avian biology and conservation void that presently exists? These are exciting times, and we must work closely together if we are to develop communication links that are unique and important for birds in Canada and those of us that study and enjoy them.]

I view these three items as the agenda of my SCO administration and presidency, objectives shared by our immediate Past-President Henri Ouellet and current Vice-President Tony Diamond. I encourage you to join us in the development and attainment of these important undertakings. We want members to play an active role and be part of the process along these new pathways. We need your ideas on locations and themes of future annual meetings, and your thoughts on the form and content of our intended journal publication and existing bulletin. How can we best make these useful and essential as mechanisms for the transfer and exchange of information important to the study of birds in Canada? These and other questions form the challenge for all of us as individual members and for the Society as a whole. The SCO executive body invites your participation in formulating the pathway ahead and in shaping our future. I look forward to hearing your views as an essential part of the on-going process of determining our future directions, activities, and goals.

Ultimately I would like to see an SCO that serves an essential function for birds in Canada: the acquisition and application of knowledge to problem solving. There has never been a time when the need has been greater as we see governmental agencies responsible for the welfare of birds and other living things in Canada crumble and

disappear owing to budgetary reductions and shifting governmental priorities. Environmental problems abound as exemplified by the declines of many species of grassland birds, the plight of Swainson's Hawks on the prairies, the uncontrolled slaughter of Double-crested Cormorants and American White Pelicans in Manitoba, the steep declines of several seabird species in Canadian waters, the overexploitation of Thick-billed Murres in Newfoundland and Labrador, and the unknown impacts of fishery collapses (capelin, cod, herring) on fish-eating marine birds in Atlantic Canada, as well as the uncertain future of our coastal Atlantic waters owing to imminent major offshore oil developments (Hibernia). All of this points to "the need to know" and the immediate application of knowledge to problem prevention and mitigation. I would like to see SCO through its membership provide guidance, direction, and focus (along with other NGOs) to federal and provincial governments on matters critical to birds and the ecosystems they occupy, as well as avian science *per se* in Canada. The task is formidable, but attainable if the collective desire by the Canadian ornithological community is there! As a Society, we must continue to grow and mature still further, and be steadfast in our desire to see the application of solid scientific knowledge to problem-solving. We must resolve, as academics, ornithologists and conservation biologists, to make SCO play a vital role in the preservation and conservation of birds and their habitats in Canada.

In closing, I'd also ask you to review the list of SCO working groups and committees currently active (for details, see inside rear cover) and request that you don't hesitate to contact Chairs for additional information of activities or to express an interest in active participation. We hope you find the inclusion of this information useful, and urge you to make use of it. Our editor of *Picoides*, Tony

Erskine, intends to expand the bulletin over time by adding regular regional reports, conservation highlights, special features, and a more formalized review of noteworthy publications involving birds in Canada. With these new initiatives in mind, *Picoides* is looking for volunteers to serve as official regional reporters and news gatherers, so please contact Tony Erskine for details if interested in participating. Please also feel free to contact me directly on any matter concerning birds or items you wish to see SCO address. An immediate need is the formation of a formal conservation working group, and I invite anyone interested in participating as a working member or chair to contact me as soon as possible. I, in turn, shall attempt to keep you, as members of SCO, well informed and look forward to seeing you at our 1996 Annual Meeting at the beautiful University of New Brunswick campus, Fredericton, New Brunswick, 23-26 August. Plan to attend and book early for premium rates. A combination of ornithological science, social events, and outstanding field trips will make an exciting and enjoyable working holiday. Come and see the coastal and offshore habitats of the Bay of Fundy including thousands of marine birds (mostly Greater Shearwaters and phalaropes, also Leach's and Wilson's Storm-Petrels, Northern Gannets, Atlantic Puffins, Razorbills and Black Guillemots) and many dolphins, porpoises and whales. See you in August.

Best wishes for a productive summer bird season!

David Nettleship

President
Society of Canadian Ornithologists
Société des Ornithologues du Canada

Head of
St. Margaret's Bay
Nova Scotia

10 May 1996

S.C.O. ANNUAL MEETING 1996

University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, N.B. 23-26 August 1996

The Society of Canadian Ornithologists' Annual Meeting will be held 23-26 August 1996 at the beautiful University of New Brunswick campus, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. The general meeting theme is "Conservation and biology of forest birds", with a very broad approach to the term "forest bird". The format will include special symposia with invited plenary speakers, mini-symposia on related subjects (e.g. loons, raptors, seabirds, shorebirds, waterfowl), round-table discussions and informal workshops. Sessions will begin in the afternoon of Friday 23 August and will wind up in the evening of Sunday 25th with a banquet.

Accomodations will be arranged in student residences on U.N.B.'s beautiful campus overlooking the historic St.John River.

For information about the scientific program and accomodation arrangements, contact program chair:

Dr. Tony Diamond, Atlantic Cooperative Wildlife Ecology Research Network, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, N.B., Canada E3B 6E1 (voice 506-453-5006 (a.m.)/453-4926 (p.m.); fax 506-453-3583; e-mail: diamond@unb.ca).

Registration forms are enclosed with this mailing, and can also be obtained directly from Dr. Tony Diamond (see above).

Field Trips after Conference

1) Pelagic trip - Bay of Fundy (26 August). 5-hour trip on chartered boat in search of whales and seabirds. Specialties include Greater, Sooty, and Manx Shearwaters, Leach's and Wilson's Storm-Petrels,

Bonaparte's Gull, Arctic Tern, Common Murre, Black Guillemot, Atlantic Puffin, Fin, Humpback and Right Whales, Harbour porpoise. Cost is \$40-50 CDN per person. Bring your own lunch. Transportation to St. Andrew's (150 km one-way) provided. Space limited to 12 people - so book now!

2) Ferry trip to Grand Manan (26 August). Ferry to Grand Manan Island (2.5 hr each way) with short visit ashore on Grand Manan before return ferry to mainland. All of the above bird species and several whales may be seen (not all on one trip). Transportation to ferry (160 km one-way) provided, but no vehicle available on Grand Manan. Cost not yet settled but less than (1). Space may be limited so book early!

The organizers will be glad to advise on other options for birding around the Bay of Fundy.

For information on field trips, contact Dr. Graham Forbes, Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Management, University of New Brunswick, Bag Service 44555, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 6C2 (voice 506-453-4925; e-mail: forbes@unb.ca).

Please distribute this announcement to fellow ornithologists, whether or not S.C.O. members. This first formal (stand-alone) science program (avian biology and conservation) organized by S.C.O. will be stimulating, exciting and rewarding to everyone - something not to be missed. Make plans to attend now, and spread the word.

CANADIAN LANDBIRD CONSERVATION PROGRAM (C.L.C.P.)

At the initiative of the Canadian Wildlife Service (HQ) and the Canadian Nature Federation, an *ad hoc* National Working Group met 6 February 1996 to discuss documents prepared and circulated earlier by C.W.S. and C.N.F.. Those documents are part of a strategy evolved from Canada's commitment to preserve its biological diversity, following signature of the Convention in Rio de Janiero in 1992, from disturbing reports of declines over the long-term in a number of species of landbirds, as well as from Canada's participation in the "Partners in Flight" program. Membership in the Working Group is open to organizations interested in contributing to implementation at the national level of the objectives of the two documents. The Society of Canadian Ornithologists was invited to take part, and Henri Ouellet attended the meeting on its behalf.

The document titled "Framework for Landbird Conservation" describes the issue and the goal. Landbirds represent a conspicuous component of Canadian vertebrate biodiversity, but human use of natural ecosystems threatens landbird diversity. Loss and degradation of wildlife habitats are frequently associated with urban, rural and industrial development, and with some resource-use practices. These impacts on habitat are believed to be a primary cause of population declines in some bird species. Action is required to correct downward population trends as part of Canada's commitment to protect its biological diversity. The goal of the C.L.C.P. is to *conserve the long-term viability of native Canadian landbirds in their range of habitats*. The document covers a number of concerns such as conservation, management, and socio-economic aspects and describes

briefly the main points of these concerns and how they can affect conservation planning.

The composition and role of the Canadian Landbird Conservation Working Group are defined as a group of 'representatives from government and non-government conservation agencies, industry, academics, and other interested stakeholders' and 'will address national-level objectives' and is expected 'to assist regional delivery of landbird conservation programs'. It is stated that conservation priorities, strategies, and timeframes will be developed by these groups, and that the C.W.S. is committed to working with these partners to ensure the success of the programs.

Five components were recognized, with objectives, strategies, and implementation plans:

1. Planning: Provide a framework that supports conservation of and research on landbirds and their habitats. Ensure that there are national and regional forums to implement landbird conservation.
2. Outreach: Gain widespread understanding of and support for bird conservation issues and initiatives. Develop an informed and skilled pool of Canadians and others that can participate in landbird monitoring and conservation projects.
3. Monitoring: Increase knowledge of the status of bird populations across the country by identifying long-term trends in population levels. Fill existing gaps in monitoring coverage to improve detection of important population changes for some biogeographic areas and species.
4. Research: Increase knowledge and understanding of factors affecting landbird populations and their habitats throughout the breeding and non-breeding parts of their range. Identify populations of concern,

causes of this concern, and actions required to remove the concern. Identify habitat characteristics and other factors that may be implicated in landbird population change on the breeding, migration and wintering grounds.

5. Applied conservation: Ensure long-term survival of populations and habitats that indicate a trend towards non-viability. Conserve and protect bird species or populations showing critical decline. Conserve, protect, and restore habitat required to maintain viable bird populations. Link Canadian and international projects and research to maximize the effectiveness of conservation action.

A series of implementation procedures follow these objectives and strategies. At this stage, they are of a general nature, but can serve as models for the development of more precise or targeted objectives in all those areas. This document is under review and, when the final version is available, it should provide a sound document for actions to be taken towards the conservation of the land birds of Canada. A brochure and a newsletter are proposed. New public mailing address for the Program is:

Partners in Flight - Canada.
P.O. Box 79040,
Hull, Québec J8Y 6V2,
on send enquiries through our S.C.O.
representative.

The second document, titled "Draft terms of reference, Canadian Landbird Conservation Working Group" is also under review. It contains information about the composition of the working group, and the modalities under which it will operate. The main function of the Working Group will be 'to implement national-level activities that will support landbird conservation at regional and local levels'.

As may be seen, the scope and objectives of these documents are ambitious, but not unrealistic. The approach whereby a series

of partners are involved at all levels to promote landbird conservation and implement measures to ensure their success is different from past approaches. Co-operation between all those involved in landbird conservation is essential for success at all levels, whether it deals with fund-raising, field surveys, habitat-preservation, or dissemination of information to the general public, etc.. The Society of Canadian Ornithologists can play a role in the success of this program by being involved in several ways through the expertise of its members and in disseminating information to its members and to the general public, particularly when expert opinions are sought after by the media. More information about this national initiative is expected for the next issue of *Picoides*.

Henri Ouellet, Past President SCO
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S.C.O. COLUMN

"Publish or Perish": an alternative interpretation.

"Publish or perish" became a by-word among research workers, in university and government, 30+ years ago. The implication was that qualified people waiting for research opportunities would fill your job if you didn't publish. Some research workers boosted their output of papers by duplication, using the same data with slightly different slants in several papers. Others used fragmentation, dividing a study into several parts, often with identical introductory sections. Still others published general and specific accounts of a study in different journals. All these antics increased the burden on journal editors and referees, without greatly increasing the dissemination of knowledge. Invitations to take part in symposia further increased the number of separate papers that might better have been postponed until the study was completed, or combined with other MSS, or even not published at all.

No doubt many research workers publish only when they have a solid, well-reasoned manuscript ready for submission. The problem of when and how much to publish has been around for a while; the Bible says, "Of making books there is no end, and too much reading is a weariness of the flesh." (also of the eyes). Despite proliferation of publications, this essay explores the by-word in the title to encourage more publications.

When a person is asked to review a manuscript for a "scientific journal", they are chosen for their knowledge of some aspect of the subject, the species involved, the type of study, the geographic area, or several of these. Part of the referee's knowledge of a subject may include information that the author should have known before undertaking a study or publishing on its findings. If all, or even most, of the information collected in the past was

published, a visit to library, abstracting service, or computerized key-word search might be - and usually is - assumed to cover what was known previously. Gone are the days when research workers were advised to divide their time equally between library, field or laboratory, and writing desk. But what about the investigators who, for various reasons, never published their findings?

One suspects that these are usually dismissed, with comments such as: there can't be much; or, it can't have been worth much if it wasn't published; or, the situation has changed since then; or, by now it's lost beyond recall; and so on. There is some truth in each of these reactions. However, a large proportion of master's theses are never published, and the same applies to other substantial reports. Early in compilation of waterfowl volumes for the Handbook of North American Birds, their editor ventured the opinion that once past Canada Goose and Mallard he'd be home free. The person to whom he was speaking guffawed, suggesting that there was an unpublished master's thesis on Blue-winged Teal in every state college in the U.S.A., and the editor just about flipped at the thought. In fact, those volumes didn't appear for over a decade. Not all master's theses advance knowledge much, but you can't be sure of this without examining them. Theses are only one kind of unpublished material, and the data they contain are in a more finished state than many others. At least, they are secure.

Most people who worked for a government agency, even briefly, learned of unpublished information in files there. Unfortunately, government files don't repose undisturbed indefinitely; office managers or administrators may trash files older than a certain age, to make room for more. If the

only copies of data from an unpublished study are in the official files of an agency, copy them somehow. Such data may duplicate information available otherhow, but it ain't necessarily so.

One example may give some idea how much material is out there, waiting to be published - before it perishes. Thirty-five years ago I carried out a field study, assembled related data from local files, and wrote a 40-page report for Canadian Wildlife Service, describing the Canada Goose situation on the South Shore of Nova Scotia. This wasn't intended for publication, but four copies went into files in Sackville or Ottawa. Five years later, a new set of C.W.S. managers borrowed my draft copy, as all the official copies of the report had disappeared by then. (Yes, I got my copy back; photocopiers appeared in that interval.) Another 15 years passed, and I was assembling a compendium of waterfowl population studies in Atlantic Region. I noted to myself that a regional compendium of Canada Goose studies also should be undertaken; by then I knew of three unpublished M.Sc. theses sponsored by C.W.S., as well as my ancient report, and many goose surveys in various parts of the Maritimes were not summarized in any of those documents. Some of this information was known "by the grapevine" to provincial wildlife biologists and C.W.S. staff, but not to many others. Several more years passed, and I was asked to review a manuscript dealing with, among other things, Canada Geese in yet another part of the Maritimes. That author evidently had not learned of the unpublished MSS, let alone the many survey data in files, and without that information his account lacked perspective. I listed for him known sources of data, and suggested that they needed summary before anything further was published. No response.

After I retired from government and could choose which pieces of paper to look

at, I began assembling and writing up the Maritimes Canada Goose material. Two years later, a MS comprising 21 chapters and 150 pages (plus 69 tables and 50 figures), spanning 40 years of unpublished work, emerged. Only one Canada Goose study in the region had reached publication in that time (2 papers). Few chapters could have been published separately: the data were very uneven, "chaotic" in the words of one reviewer, but the picture that emerged from the whole was more consistent and convincing than the sum of its parts. Some detailed publication is often essential for regional workers. An extended abstract in a national Canada Goose compendium (K. Dickson, C.W.S.-HQ, in prep.) will provide most that would be needed elsewhere in Canada, though some Atlantic Flyway goose people may want the complete account.

The message that emerged from that example is:

- unpublished data may be much more plentiful than you think;
- such data can be obtained at lower cost than can new data;
- assembling all accessible data from a region may provide perspective not obtainable by examining small blocks of data;
- publishing summaries of data allows others to use past work carried out at public expense, and to obtain fuller perspective.

The data now in files may be in landfills soon. Publish, or they will perish.

A.J. Erskine
Sackville, N.B.

S.C.O. STUDENT AWARDS

(a) Reports from 1995 winners

(i) James L. Baillie Student Research Award

"Social signalling between male Lazuli Buntings: the importance of age-related differences in song and plumage." Vincent R. Muehter, Queen's University.

Animal signalling has been central in our understanding of sexual selection. From Darwin's postulate in 1871 that sexual traits such as bird song and plumage evolve through male-male competition and female choice, until recent studies of subordinate status signalling and honest advertisement, signalling has been at the centre of behavioural and evolutionary enquiry. Yet despite decades of interest, much about animal signalling remains highly contentious. Particularly intriguing is the transfer of information between individuals that maintain exclusive territories. We may predict sophisticated, albeit sometimes subtle, forms of signals that mediate interactions between territorial individuals.

I am investigating the hypothesis that social signalling between Lazuli Buntings (*Passerina amoena*) during territory settlement confers fitness benefits to adult (≥ 2 years old) and yearling males. With the help of volunteer field assistants, I collected data on a colour-marked population of Lazuli Buntings. Several important aspects of bunting morphology and social behaviour during the breeding season suggest that adult males may use age-related differences in song and plumage as signals of fitness to be gained or lost. First, yearling and adult males differ in plumage colour because yearlings exhibit delayed plumage maturation (DPM) in the first breeding season; yearlings are generally dull brown/blue whereas adults are bright blue. Despite their dull plumages, however, yearlings are sexually mature and

socially pair with females, although the extent to which these pairings result in paternity is unknown. Second, yearling males arrive on the breeding grounds in mid-May in "plastic" song phase, but then learn "stereotyped" song by copying adult song tutors during territory establishment. During this period the songs of yearlings are acoustically different than those of adults - yearling songs are shorter in duration, have fewer syllable types, have slower cadence, and tend to be made up of syllables of less distinct morphology than adult songs. Third, behavioural observations of male-male interactions during territory settlement show that adult males aggressively repel other adult males, yet appear to "tolerate" yearlings; males of the two age-classes were often perched together without any discernible aggression.

Why might adult males tolerate the presence of yearling males, potential competitors for mates or resources? My observations revealed that females preferentially pair with adult vs. yearling males and, importantly, females socially paired with yearling males may solicit extra-pair copulations from neighbouring adult males. Clearly, these observations suggest that the benefits of having a yearling male as a neighbour vs. the potential costs of having an adult male as a neighbour may select for the ability to discriminate age-related differences in song and plumage.

During the 1995 breeding season, I conducted playback experiments to test whether adult and yearling males discriminated between age-specific song types. Results demonstrated that discrimination of age-specific songs was highly dependent on the subject's age-class. Although both adult and yearling males discriminated between either age-class of conspecific and control song, yearling males generally did not discriminate

between yearling and adult song, whereas adults responded most aggressively to adult song types. To my knowledge, this is the first study to report both discrimination of age-related song-differences in passerines, and age-specific differences in discrimination behaviour.

In addition to playback experiments, I conducted model (stuffed study skins) presentation experiments to test two competing hypotheses for DPM in passerines: female mimicry and status signalling. The results of these experiments revealed that yearling plumage does not mimic female plumage because adult males attacked yearling male models while completely ignoring female models. When presented with a choice of adult and yearling male models, adult males were significantly less aggressive to yearling vs. adult plumages. These discoveries raise important questions with respect to the features that permit age-specific discrimination and the adaptive significance of these phenomena. Currently I am analysing Lazuli Bunting song and plumage to uncover the salient features that permit adult males to discriminate. Moreover, I am assessing paternity via DNA fingerprinting of families socially fathered by adult vs. yearling males to examine whether adult males gain fitness benefits by discriminating age-related differences in song and plumage.

I am grateful for the funding I received through the James L. Baillie Student Research Award of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, a Frank M. Chapman Memorial Award from the American Museum of Natural History, a Sigma Xi Grant-in-Aid of Research, an Ontario Graduate Scholarship, a Queen's University Graduate Fellowship, and a N.S.E.R.C. operating grant to my supervisor Dr. Laurene M. Ratcliffe.

(ii) Taverner Awards

"An interspecific phylogenetic analysis of the guillemots (*Cephus* spp.): Geographic variation and modes of speciation." Monica Kidd, Queen's University.

Characterizing patterns of geographic variation in species is critical to understanding the mechanisms of population differentiation and, ultimately, speciation. Knowing the nature and extent of molecular variation in a taxon with extensive morphological polytypy is of particular value. For these reasons, I am investigating the evolutionary divergence among molecular sequences of the mitochondrial "control region" from populations of *Cephus* guillemots, a northern circumpolar genus of seabird that contains 11 phenotypically distinct subspecies.

My null hypothesis is that colonies have undergone genetic isolation by distance as a result of the birds' limited dispersal; that is, the genetic distance between colonies is merely a function of the geographic distance between them. Preliminary results suggest that this holds true for most parts of the guillemot range, but that there is significantly more geographic structuring in the European populations than would be expected according to the isolation by distance scenario alone. A possible explanation for this is that populations underwent differentiation while isolated in Pleistocene glacial refugia, then expanded during the Recent interglacial to occupy their current range. My research is part of the growing body of information on geographic variation in molecular characters, and contributes to an understanding of modes of speciation in vagile organisms and of the nature of genetic variation in small populations.

I am very grateful for research funding I received for my Master's project from the Society of Canadian Ornithologists (Taverner Award), the Northern Scientific Training Project, and the Natural Sciences and

Engineering Research Council through my supervisor Dr. Vicki Friesen.

"An investigation into proximate and ultimate causes of adoption in Ring-billed Gulls." Kevin M. Brown, York University.

Although parental investment in non-kin young conflicts with Darwinian theory, natural adoptions have been reported in various seabirds, especially gulls. The key evolutionary question is why should some individuals accept the costs associated with a behaviour that enhances the fitness of others? Although adoption has been viewed as non-adaptive, some adaptive hypotheses have been suggested to explain it, including kin selection, parenting experience, reciprocal altruism, and various offspring strategies that lead to an intergenerational conflict. From 1992 to 1994, I tested predictions that either supported or refuted these competing explanations for adoption in Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) at a Lake Erie colony near Port Colborne, Ontario.

The study site and field protocols were previously described. Chicks were known to have abandoned their natal nests if a colour-banded/dyed chick was observed in a brood of foreign chicks (marked or unmarked), or if an unmarked chick from outside the study area was observed within a brood of marked chicks. Chicks that gained acceptance into a foreign nest were divided into two categories; 'adoptees' remained permanently (≥ 3 days) in foster broods, and 'runners' remained temporarily (< 3 days). Parental pairs were partitioned into four groups: (1) 'Foster' pairs permanently adopted a foreign chick; (2) 'alloparents' temporarily cared for a 'runner'; (3) 'donor' pairs had a chick depart; and (4) 'control' pairs neither accepted a foreign chick nor had a chick depart. Chick survival to 24 days (age taken as fledged) was monitored from a blind.

From 1992 to 1994, 26 Ring-billed Gull chicks were known to have abandoned their

natal broods; 16 were successfully adopted vs. 10 runners. Chicks that later abandoned their natal broods were significantly lighter than same-aged chicks that remained in natal broods and survived to fledge ($P < 0.05$), and 3rd chicks were more likely to depart than their older siblings ($0.1 > P > 0.05$). In most cases, adoptees were older than the oldest resident chick in the accepting brood, and realized high survival (80% fledged). 'Runners' were usually younger than their foster siblings, and realized poor survival.

At Port Colborne, average frequency of adoption was approx. 5% of study pairs and, on average, foster parents raised fewer (~0.5 chicks/adoption) of their own chicks to fledge than control pairs. Although male Ring-billed Gulls were philopatric, and both sexes were nest-site-tenacious, foster parents did not realize either inclusive or future breeding benefits through adoption. Kin selection was not supported because (1) DNA fingerprints revealed no difference between band-sharing coefficients of neighbouring males vs. spatially segregated males (assumed unrelated), and (2) foster and donor parents would need to have been first-order relatives for inclusive benefits to have outweighed the increment of personal fitness lost; neighbouring males shared fewer fingerprint bands than parent/offspring relationships ($P < 0.05$). As in most larids, it was unlikely that Ring-billed Gulls adopted young to gain parenting experience because (1) most foster parents had 2 or 3 chicks of their own at the time of adoption and (2) 6 of 7 colour-banded foster parents, with known prior breeding experience, had raised young to fledge during a previous breeding attempt. Although donor parents benefited (ave. +0.3 chicks) by having a chick raised elsewhere, reciprocal altruism was also an unlikely explanation because (1) breeding costs to the actor outweighed benefits to the recipient, and (2) there was no evidence of reciprocation between donor and foster pairs.

Therefore, adoption may best be viewed as an evolutionary arms-race between the two principal actors: disadvantaged chicks that gain permanent acceptance into foreign broods 'win' the intergenerational conflict at the expense of their foster parents. Selection likely has failed to eliminate adoption because the costs of an occasional adoption are less than those of kin discrimination (e.g. parental infanticide); a parent that makes a recognition error and kills one of its own offspring would suffer double the costs of an adoption.

(b) 1996 Research Awards

The James L. Baillie Student Research Award, funded by the Long Point Bird Observatory from proceeds of the Baillie Birdathon and administered by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, went to Philippa Sheppard, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Biological Sciences, Simon Fraser University. Ms. Sheppard's research project, supervised by Dr. David B. Lank, is titled "Winter ecology and energetics of Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) in the Fraser River delta".

The two Percy A. Taverner Awards of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists went to Claudio Celada, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Alberta, and to D. Glen McMaster, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Zoology, University of Manitoba. Mr. Celada's research project, supervised by Dr. Susan Hannon, is titled "Occupancy of habitat fragments, territory quality and spatial structure in Yellow Warblers *Dendroica petechia*. Mr. McMaster's research project, supervised by Dr. Spencer G. Sealy, is titled "The mechanism of short incubation periods in Brown-headed Cowbirds".

The Research Awards Committee for 1996 consisted of Cynthia K. Bluhm (Delta

Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Station), Antony W. Diamond (Atlantic Cooperative Wildlife Ecology Research Network), and M. Ross Lein (Committee Chair, University of Calgary). Committee members reviewed 19 excellent applications in arriving at their recommendations; all applicants are to be complimented on the quality of their submissions. Reports on the research supported, in part, by these awards will appear in a future issue of *Picoides*.

(c) Preliminary Announcement
1997 Student Research Awards

Applications are sought annually for one Baillie Award (\$1,000) and two Taverner Awards (\$500 each). Applications for 1997 awards must be submitted to the Chair of the Research Awards Committee by 15 January 1997. This preliminary announcement is to inform potential applicants that application procedures for these awards are currently under review and revision. Changes in procedure will include use of a standardized application form, to ensure comparability of applications and to assist the Committee in their evaluations. This new application form will be obtainable by requesting an application package from the Chair of the Research Awards Committee.

Application packages will be available from the following address AFTER 1 JULY 1996. Enquiries or requests for additional information may also be sent to that address.

Dr. M.Ross Lein, Chair,
S.C.O. Research
Awards Committee,
Department of phone: 403-220-6549
Biological Sciences, fax: 403-289-9311
University of Calgary, e-mail: mrlein@acs.
Calgary, Alta. T2N 1N4 ucalgary.ca

RECENT LITERATURE

Book Review

(Opinions expressed are those of the reviewer, not the official viewpoint of the Society)

Ornithology in Ontario. M.K. McNicholl and J.L. Cranmer-Byng, eds. Ont. Field Ornithologists, Spec. Publ. no.1. xiv+400 pp. 1994. (\$24.95 + \$3.50 p&p, payable to OFO, from S. Haddington, 1 Harbour St., RR#3, Brighton, Ont. K0K 1H0)

This large multi-author volume contains an impressive assembly of details bearing on the title subject, with many references providing still more, and any reader will learn something new from reading it, as I did. Conceived to commemorate the centennial (1986) of the first major book on the birds of Ontario, by Thomas McIlwraith (1824-1903), its completion eight years later was just in time for the centennial of the 2nd edition of that work.

The book begins with a biographical "foreword" (by M. Ainley) on McIlwraith and his book. The next nine chapters (160 pp) present concise historical reviews of successive periods, blending into status reports on different areas of bird study up to the present, thus: Historical overview (the Editors), archaeology (D. Sadler), Hudson's Bay Company employees (S. Houston), Champlain to McIlwraith (D. Brunton), naturalist clubs to 1920 (Cranmer-Byng), egg-collecting (G. Peck & J. Richards), museums (R. James), banding and bird observatories (McNicholl), cooperative studies (M. Cadman). Chapter 10 (58 pp) comprises 10 biographies (4-9 pp each) covering 11 people prominent in Ontario ornithology, by as many authors. Chapter 11 (94 pp) includes accounts of the changing status of 10 selected species (or pairs of

species), again each by a different author. Two appendices complete the book, one (by McNicholl; 92 pp) presents brief biographies (3 lines to 1/2 p each) of Ontario ornithologists, the other (5 pp) mentions some of Ontario's bird artists.

People who spent most of their working lives near Canada's coasts may be surprised, as I was, to realize how recently ornithology blossomed in Ontario, where European settlement scarcely began before 1783, with the first major bird book coming a century later. McIlwraith's name is hardly known outside Ontario; the only time I saw his book (1958 at U.B.C.) I had assumed it to be only one of several contemporary compilations, such as were then available from Nova Scotia (which admittedly is a much smaller area). While working in Ottawa in 1952-53 I learned about the long-established naturalists club there; although I knew that Halifax had no organized bird society until 1955, O.F.N.C.'s existence suggested that comparable clubs had emerged before 1900 in Ontario's larger cities - but they didn't. Similarly, I was startled to discover that the banding of migrant passerines at Point Pelee, of which I learned while a graduate student at Queen's University in 1954, had only begun that very year. Reading the historical and status reviews in Chapters 1 through 9 should expand the perspective of most field ornithologists in Canada, and especially those in Ontario.

The final choice of species for individual consideration in Chapter 11, evidently discussed at length by various people (see p.v), was heavily slanted to birds whose ranges are largely peripheral to Ontario. Among them, only Red-tailed Hawk and Evening Grosbeak were already common before I lived in Ontario in 1952-56, and three (Bobwhite, Little Gull, Blue-winged

Warbler) I never encountered in that province, then or later. Birders are turned on by scarce birds, but it seems a pity that more of the obvious, if less showy, species that changed greatly in status in the last 50 years were not treated here. The spread of Common Ravens is an obvious example, and the decline of Vesper Sparrows another, that would have been interesting to examine. Possibly these were among the proposed accounts that were not completed?

I confess to having a weakness for biography, the memorials in a new issue of a journal being often the first things I read. The editors evidently shared that interest, and they went to a lot of effort to check and correct errors in dates and places reported elsewhere. Most of the persons featured in the Chapter 10 biographies were obvious choices, including "early giants" (Saunders, Fleming), with those who made the R.O.M. "bird room" the first point of reference (Snyder, Baillie, Shortt), and a leader in the federal government's involvement (Lloyd). Taverner presumably was omitted from that chapter because Cranmer-Byng's full-length biography of him was approaching publication. The omission of L.deK. Lawrence, perhaps for a similar reason, left the impression that Mitchell was included as a "token woman", but the latter deserved recognition for her *magnum opus* on the Passenger Pigeon, though this was her only major contribution from Ontario. No doubt some people will argue that others were as deserving as Dear, Stirrett, or the White brothers, but a quick scan of Appendix 1 did not suggest to me obvious competitors. I wondered why it was decided to have the biography of Terry Shortt written from an artistic perspective rather than an ornithological one. And I rather deplored devoting up to 1/3 page of fine print (plus the references cited therein) in Appendix 1 to each of the people already treated in Chapter 10. Examination of Appendix 1 suggested a

more inclusive definition of "an ornithologist" had been used than I would have favoured. Its length would not have been reduced appreciably by deletion of the duplications noted above.

The volume was well-enough bound (by Hawk Owl Publishing) that it did not lose any pages during my review reading, a commendation not earned by many paperbacks of similar thickness. The cover drawings of Canada Jay and Bobolink, by Terry Shortt (whose name was misspelled twice on the inside front cover, the only typo I noticed), are attractive as well as eye-catching. The very professional art-work, including maps, graphs, and photographs as well as the bird drawings scattered through the book, helps the overall favourable impression.

Another mix of editors and authors would have produced a different book, with emphasis varying from that seen here, but not certainly a better read or a more useful reference. The facts are here, well-presented and affordably priced. Those who took part in creating this book can take great satisfaction in their work, and they deserve the thanks, for years to come, of those who will use it.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS

Introduction

Many items pertinent to our readers appear in other news bulletins, and cost prohibits our repeating most of them, even in précis form. As one example, the Wildlife Health Centre Newsletter (available from WCVM, U.Sask., or phone 1-800-567-2033) vol.3,no.3, included features on mortality in Common Loons, mercury poisoning suspected in some cases; Newcastle disease in Double-crested Cormorants in 5 or 6 provinces; and a botulism die-off of waterfowl in Mexico last winter. Regional reports therein touched on dead Robins in Kitchener, Ont.,

from pesticides; Ontario Great Horned Owls with heavy parasite loads; botulism die-offs in southern Alberta; gulls killed by eating double-chocolate cookies ("death by chocolate!") dumped in Alberta; and carbofuran, used against coyotes, implicated in deaths of Bald Eagles in Saskatchewan.

Presumably circulated too late for that issue of WHCNewsletter was the pesticide-caused deaths in Argentina of thousands of Swainson's Hawks recently, a front page feature in The Globe and Mail 15 February 1996.

A Name-change

For those who, like me, hadn't already heard of the change, the LPBO-offshoot originally cited as Canadian Centre for Study and Protection of Birds (CCSPB) was renamed Bird Studies Canada (BSC) at the

first meeting of its executive council, in Port Dover, Ont., 14-17 October 1995. That new name subsequently appeared, without further explanation, in connection with several initiatives.

New Appointments

The "Important Bird Areas" program of BirdLife International seeks to "identify and protect key areas for birds that are significant at" various (global to provincial) levels. Two positions were recently staffed in Canada: a Technical Coordinator (T.C.) at Long Point Bird Observatory, Port Rowan, Ontario, and a Campaign Coordinator (C.C.) at Canadian Nature Federation in Ottawa. Both are one-year term positions which may be extended.

- Audrey Heagy was the successful candidate

for the T.C. positon; she will be involved in "collection, analysis, and reporting of results and research".

- Chris Lemieux was the successful candidate for the C.C. position, with responsibilities for "building partnerships in each province and territory... to ensure adequate protection for IBAs"; "organizing media campaigns around specific IBA conservation issues"; producing informational materials...".

North American Banding Council taking form

The Institute for Bird Populations (offshoot of Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory) convened a “bird banding forum” in California in March 1995, to discuss bander training, evaluation, certification, and banding ethics. From that start, the North American Banding Council is evolving, with representation from most major bird societies, and ex-officio from the (U.S.F.W.S.

and C.W.S.) bird-banding offices. Canadian appointees, for the first council meeting (at the EBBA/IBBA meeting in April at Patuxent Research Stn., Md.), are Jon McCracken (east), Brenda Dale (west), and Lucie Métras (Bird-Banding Office). We expect to publish reports of further progress as they appear.

Conserving the birds of Ontario

A 48-page discussion document with this title was circulated by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Long Point Bird Observatory, C.W.S.-Ontario Region, and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. I

received it while I was assembling this issue of *Picoides*, and I have not yet made time to read it. Presumably it is a provincial counterpart to the C.L.C.P. noted earlier in this issue.

Bird Migration

Probably many of you, like me, received invitations to obtain “free” a copy of a special issue on this topic, in exchange for persuading your local institutional library to subscribe to the Israel Journal of Zoology, at \$190 (probably U.S.) for 1996 issues. Given

the important studies done on bird migration in Israel and the Red Sea area, the migration volume (300+pp) should be good value at 1/4 of \$190 (\$47.50U.S.), but few Canadian libraries can justify buying yet another journal in that price range.

2nd International Symposium on the Biology and Conservation of Owls of the Northern Hemisphere, 5-9 Feb. 1997, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The symposium will focus on the progress that has been made in research and management of owls and their habitats since the first symposium was held in 1987. The symposium will include contributed papers, posters and workshops; suggestions for workshop topics are welcomed. For registration materials and additional

information, contact
Dr. James R. Duncan, Manitoba
Conservation Data Centre,
Department of Natural Resources, Box 24,
1495 St. James St.,
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3H 0W4 Canada
(Tel 204-945-7465; fax 204-945-1365;
mbcdc@lic.gov.mb.ca)

EDITOR'S MUSINGS

Picoides cannot be viewed in isolation. Its precursor appeared because S.C.O. needed a means of communicating with its membership during the run-up to the 1986 I.O.C.. The present format emerged because a "face-lift" might help it to reach more Canadian ornithologists. Even with mailing costs covered entirely by the editors' employers, the current version is an expensive way to communicate. Editorial tinkering with format, style, or content is possible, but if our Bulletin/Newsletter is to mesh with S.C.O.'s action plan(s), it needs close integration with the Society's agenda. Where is S.C.O. going?

Many pages could be filled with criticisms, suggestions, navel-gazing, etc., about possible rationales and roles of S.C.O.. We went over that ground at length in 1980-82, by circulated letters (before e-mail) rather than through the newsletter. A consensus then was that the 1986 I.O.C. was a clearly defined objective that demanded a S.C.O.. That recognized "vacuum" had to be filled, so we have our Society. Other worthwhile objectives were identified, some of them still exist, but S.C.O. lacked resources for tackling them. We agreed that, as far as possible, S.C.O. should not play roles or deliver services covered through other organizations. A journal, and annual meetings with scientific programs, under a S.C.O. banner, may be duplication, unless we define and focus on uniquely and explicitly Canadian aspects. Without another "vacuum" to fill, "crusaders in search of a cause" are beating the air.

An example: Canada's resource exploitation record, in various sectors, is deplorable, and things must come to a crunch for birds at sea or in the boreal forest, sooner or later. No convincing consensus for actions on this have emerged among S.C.O.

members. In such roles, we'd be arguing against short-term jobs (thus, voters) and quick profits (thus, business \$\$); politicians seldom listen to anything less than a ground-swell in demands for remedial action (unless \$\$ are offered). S.C.O. is no more likely to generate a ground-swell with 500 or 1000 members than with 250. The A.O.U., a conventional ornithological society built around professional desires and aspirations, has over 4,000 members, including Canadians and other external members. Following that line, why should we expect more than 400 members in S.C.O.? One way we might attract more members, beyond the 600 Canadian professionals and near-professionals in bird work, is by involving serious amateurs. We will not do this by following the pattern of the larger bird societies of North America. Canadian professional ornithologists, who see our society as worthwhile only in terms of another professional journal, should look again. University libraries are cutting journal subscriptions totalling hundreds of thousands of dollars each year, because the costs of keeping up so many subscriptions is too great. As in other contexts, we must ask, not what we can get from S.C.O., but what we as S.C.O. members can do for birds in Canada.

The Editor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, AND APOLOGIES

A big "Thank you!" to all the people who, without prompting from the Editor, assembled "In Press" listings from their institutions for this issue, making that section the largest of its kind in years. Spontaneous assistance like that is essential to make our bulletin representative of Canada, especially where your Editor isn't a "roving reporter".

We all deplore the late appearance of this issue, which originally was planned to reach you in March. A delay, to include herein material about last fall's questionnaire, and the August S.C.O. meeting that emerged from it, seemed reasonable then. Now, hindsight always being 20-20, separate mailings would have been a preferable alternative.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

(deadline for copy is 20 October 1996)

The S.C.O. executive, including the Editor, wishes *Picoides* to evolve into an indispensable source of information and means of communication for Canadian ornithologists. A tall order indeed, if the Editor has to find all the material as well as getting it circulated. It can be made to happen! A first step is for someone in each province or region to assemble the kinds of information they would want others to let them know about, whether essays, publications, announcements, or observations. Just stick them in an envelope and, twice a year, send the accumulated material to the Editor. If that were done, the Editor would have a choice of material instead of using, in some form, everything that he (or she) received. Look out for changes in coming issues, and propose some yourself.

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<u>Mandate:</u> (a) editorial advisory board to Editor, <i>Picoides</i> ; (b) assessment of SCO journal re conservation and biology of Canadian birds.			
<u>Actions:</u> (a) on-going; (b) review results to executive council by 31 December 1996.			
Research Awards Committee			
(James L. Baillie & Taverner Research Awards)			
Dr. M. Ross Lein (chair)	403-220-6549	403-289-9311	mrlein@acs.ucalgary.ca
<u>Mandate:</u> (a) annual selection of candidates for Baillie Award (1K\$) and Taverner Awards (two 0.5K\$); (b) establishment of new committee structure.			
<u>Actions:</u> (a) summer-fall call for applications, review, & announcement of awards 1 April each year; (b) recommendation for rotational committee structure to executive council no later 1 September 1996.			

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

If you would like to be a member of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, please send your name, address, phone number, and a cheque or money order (payable to S.C.O.) for \$10.00 to the Membership Secretary:

Dr. Nancy Flood, Dept. of Biological Sciences,
University College of the Cariboo,
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Si vous désirez devenir membre de la Société des ornithologistes du Canada, faites parvenir vos coordonnées ainsi qu'un chèque ou mandat-poste (à S.O.C.) au montant de 10,00\$ à l'adresse ci-haut.