

2011 Jamie Smith Memorial Award for Mentoring: Erica Nol

The Jamie Smith Memorial Award for Mentoring is one of the top honours of the Society and recognizes individuals who have made exceptional contributions to mentoring new generations of Canadian ornithologists. Nominees are ranked based on their commitment to fostering achievement among their students and peers and demonstrating the importance of mentoring in their professional life. I am pleased to announce that this year's award is being presented to Erica Nol.



Joe Nocera presenting Erica Nol with the 2011 Jamie Smith Memorial Award

Erica has made outstanding, internationally recognized, contributions in a number of basic and applied research fields including behavioural and population ecology, physiology, and conservation biology. However, an equally important achievement in Erica's career has been her success in developing young ornithologists. Erica has guided many undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral students to such prominent positions as university professors, government scientists, and private sector consultants. However, it's not just about where Erica's former students ended up but how they got there.

Current and former students regard Erica as exceptionally inspirational and supportive with the ability to convince them that a seemingly insurmountable

project could be successfully completed. Her constant positive energy always provided them with a renewed sense of motivation to overcome even the largest obstacles in the field and laboratory. Certainly, Erica seems to have some kind of magic touch because many of her students noted that they accomplished more than they initially anticipated, a feat that advisors know is rarely, if ever, realized!

Not only does Erica create an atmosphere in her lab that fosters mutual respect and collaborations between herself and students but she also mentors by example. Her personal involvement in university- and community-based conservation issues is well-known and has inspired students to be effective researchers and teachers and also thrive in their own lives as involved citizens with strong conservation values. Clearly, it is not just about writing papers and defending your thesis in Erica's lab.

Perhaps most surprisingly is that Erica is not only a mentor to students at Trent but also devotes a significant portion of her time to supporting young ornithologists throughout the Americas. One such individual, who now runs an NGO in Argentina, summed up Erica's role as a mentor quite well: "Erica is an educational multiplier because thanks to my experience with her, many children and adolescents in my community are learning about the importance of shorebirds, conservation, and environmental protection".

On behalf of the award committee, I would like to congratulate Erica on her achievements and encourage others to consider making nominations of supervisors and peers for next year's awards.