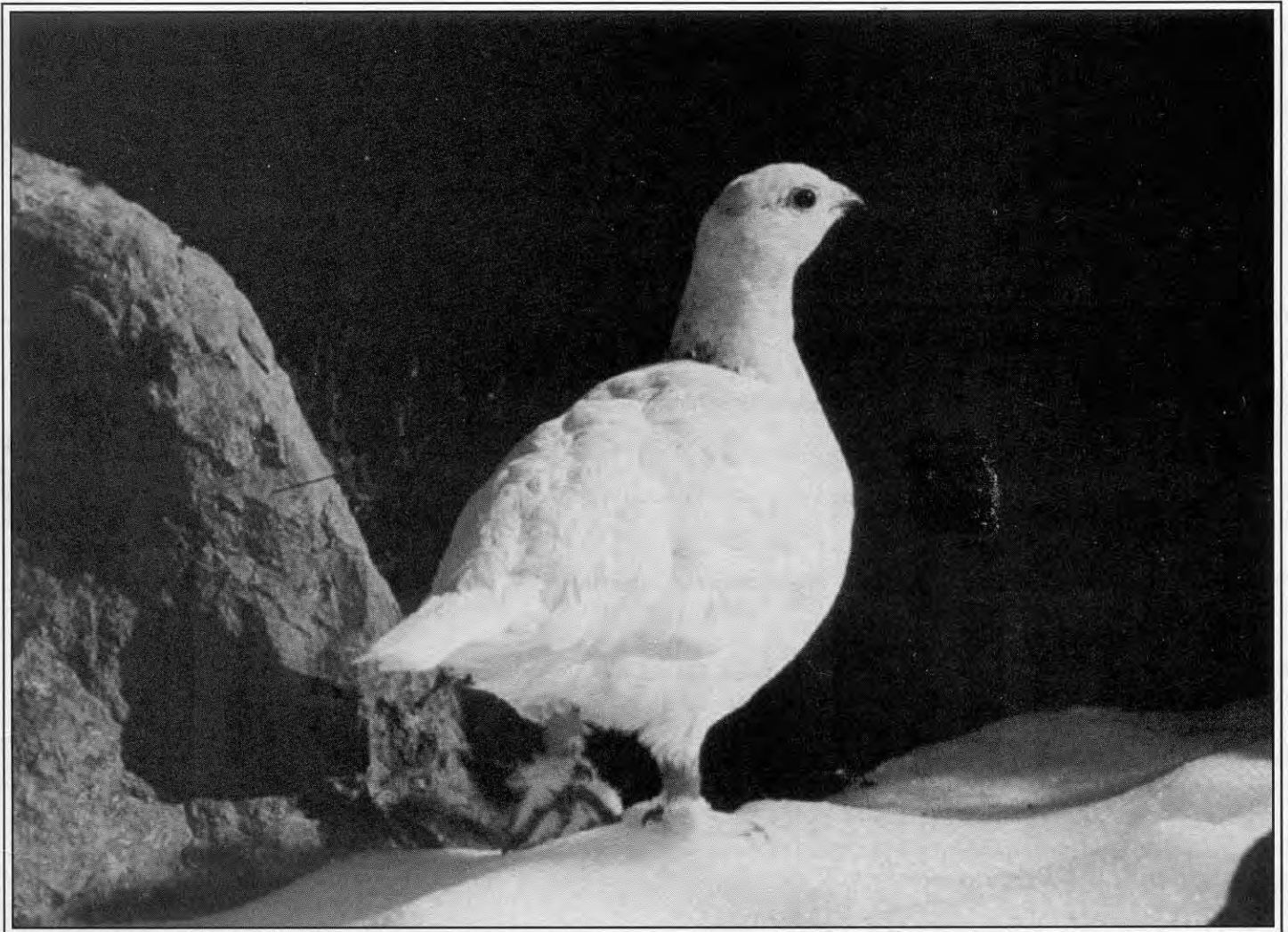


PICOIDES

Bulletin of The Society of Canadian Ornithologists
Bulletin de la Société des Ornithologistes du Canada

Picoides, February 2003
Volume 16, Number 1



Banded White-tailed Ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucurus saxatilis*) in winter plumage on Vancouver Island, to accompany article on page 12. Photo by Steve Ogle.

Society of Canadian Ornithologists/Société des Ornithologistes du Canada
WEBSITE: www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/SocCanOrn

Officers for 2002/2003:

President: Dr. Jean-Pierre Savard, Serv. can. de la faune, 1141 route de l'Église, 9^{me} étage, c.p. 10100, Ste-Foy, QC. G1V 4H5
Voice: 418-648-3500; Fax: 418-649-6475; Email: jean-pierre.savard@ec.gc.ca

Vice-President/President-elect: Dr. Susan Hannon, Dept. Biol. Sci., University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB. T6G 2E9
Voice: 780-492-7544; Fax: 780-492-9234; Email: sue.hannon@ualberta.ca

Membership Secretary: Dr. Nancy Flood, Dept. Biol. Sci., University College of the Cariboo, 900 McGill Rd., Box 3010, Kamloops, BC. V2C 5N3. Voice: 250-828-5436; Fax: 250-828-5450; Email: nflood@cariboo.bc.ca

Recording Secretary: Dr. Greg Robertson, 6 Bruce St. Mount Pearl, NF. A1N 4T3. Voice: 709-772-2778; Fax: 709-772-5097; Email: greg.robertson@ec.gc.ca

Treasurer: Dr. Tom E. Dickinson, Dept. Biol. Sci., University College of the Cariboo, 900 McGill Rd., Box 3010, Kamloops, BC. V2C 5N3. Voice: 250-828-5447; Fax: 250-828-5450; Email: tdickinson@cariboo.bc.ca

Editor of Picoïdes: Dorothy McFarlane, 521 Holtville Rd., Holtville, NB. E6A 1Y4. Voice: 506-369-2604; Email: mandd@nbnet.nb.ca. TO ADVERTISE IN PICOIDES PLEASE SEND OR WRITE TO EDITOR.

Members of Council:

Dr. Cheri Gratto-Trevor, CWS, 115 Perimeter Rd., Saskatoon, SK. S7N 0X4. Voice: 306-975-6128; Fax: 306-975-4089; Email: cheri.gratto-trevor@ec.gc.ca

Dr. Kevin Teather, Dept. of Biology, University of PEI, Charlottetown, PE. C1A 4P3. Voice: 902-566-0325; Fax: 902-566-0740; Email: kteather@upei.ca

Dr. Gilles Gauthier, Dep. biologie, Univ. Laval, Ste-Foy, QC. G1K 7P4. Voice: 418-656-5507; Fax: 418-656-2043; Email: gilles.gauthier@bio.ulaval.ca

Dr. Marty Leonard, Dept. of Biology, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, B3A 4J1. Voice: 902-494-21558; Fax: 902-494-3736; Email: mleonard@is.dal.ca

*Dr. Karen Wiebe, Dept. of Biology, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK. S7N 5E2. Voice: 306-966-4406; Fax: 306-966-4461; Email: wiek@duke.usask.ca

Dr. Rodger Titman, Dept. of Nat. Res. Sci. and Avian Sci. & Cons. Centre, Macdonald Campus of McGill U., Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, QC. H9X 3V9. Voice: 514-398-7933; Fax: 514-398-7990; Email: titman@nrs.mcgill.ca

Dr. Robert Butler, CWS Pacific and Yukon Region, Delta, BC. V4K 3N2. Voice: 604-940-4672; Fax: 640-946-7022; Email: rob.butler@ec.gc.ca

Dr. Bob Clark, CWS Prairie and Northern Region, 115 Perimeter Road, Saskatoon, SK. S7N 0X4. Voice: 306-975-4110; Fax: 306-975-4089; Email: bob.clark@ec.gc.ca

Dr. Charles Francis, National Wildlife Research Centre, CWS, Ottawa, ON. K1A 0H3. Voice: 819-997-6086; Fax: 819-953-6612; Email: charles.francis@ec.gc.ca

Dr. Marc-André Villard, Dep. de biologie, Université de Moncton, Moncton, NB. E1A 3E9. Tél: 506-858-4334 (direct: 4292); Fax: 506-858-4541; Courriel: villarm@umoncton.ca

Past Presidents: M. Ross Lein (1982-85), Spencer G. Sealy (86-87), Erica H. Dunn (88-89), Jon C. Barlow (90-91), J. Bruce Falls (92-93), Henri R. Ouellet (94-95), David N. Nettleship (96-97), Antony W. Diamond (98-99), Kathy Martin (00-02).



Next SCO/SOC Meeting

Saskatoon, Sask. 2003

in conjunction with Whooping Crane migration and CWS bird committee meetings

Possible theme "avian conservation"

Contact Cheri Gratto-Trevor with suggestions
cheri.gratto-trevor@ec.gc.ca

More information will be posted on SCO website and in June issue of *Picoides*.

EDITOR'S MESSAGE



This issue of *Picoides* is my fifth, and I continue to enjoy putting it together. However, asking for promised articles is sometimes like being a nagging wife, and I try HARD not to be that! Thank you so much to Ted Leighton, Kathy Martin, Graeme Brown, Dan Mazerolle, Lesley Evans Ogden, S. Fisher, Tom Dickinson and Bill Montevecchi for your contributions to this issue.

I have discovered that one of the "perks" of this job is receiving books from publishers wanting a review. Several new books have come my way in the past six months, and although I strongly covet them, I cannot review them all, neither am I qualified. So I am putting out a call for potential reviewers ---who wants a copy of *The Birds of BC*? You will have to work hard, but what a reward!

This very cold winter has been a good time for catching up on reading. Those new to the debate about whether birds evolved flight from dinosaurs in a "trees down" or "ground up" manner should read Pat Shipman's 1998 book, *Taking Wing: Archaeopteryx and the Evolution of Bird Flight*. She documents much of the history and context of this discussion which has raged for more than a

century. Recent discoveries (see *Nature*, Jan 2003) may appear to support the ideas of William Beebe, who in 1915 imagined a four-winged gliding stage in bird evolution. Now we learn that in China a small dromaeosaur fossil, named *Microraptor*, with clear and fully-modern asymmetrical feathers on both fore AND hind limbs, has been found. Although, the finding gives more support to the link between dinosaurs and birds, and some clues as to the origins of feathers, it still does not provide answers to the conflicting theories describing the origins of flight itself. If cursorial, this raptor would get its hind feathers dirty from dragging them on the ground; if arboreal, and thus also gliding, why would a second set of feathered limbs be advantageous?

Some suggest that any creature that flies with two limbs must have descended from ancestors that had already become bipedal on the ground. Thus the possession four feathered limbs puts this creature more firmly into the "trees down" theory. However, feathered legs don't seem to be an aid to flight as we know it. For a better understanding of why this debate is so intriguing, read *Taking Wing*. Once you have, future bird-like fossil discoveries will mean much more to you.



