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PICOIDES

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Common Loons – Lake Laberge, Y.T., August 1999
(photo by Dorothy McFarlane)

A relatively "common" species across much of boreal Canada, in contrast to "panic-button" efforts on its behalf along the southern perimeter of its North American range. Also featured as the logo of the Canadian Wildlife Service.

Society of Canadian Ornithologists
Société des Ornithologistes du Canada

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BIRDS 2000 - LIVING ON THE EDGE

Joint Meeting of American and British Ornithologists' Unions, and Society of Canadian Ornithologists

Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Nfld. 14-19 August 2000

Dates to note:
6-13 August (Sun.-Sun.) - pre-conference tours;
14 August (Mon.) - business meetings;
15-19 August (Tue.-Sat.)- conference, with tours (17th, Thu.) and banquet (19th, Sat.);
20-26 August (Sun.-Sat.)- post-conference tours.

Plenary topics:
15 Aug. (Tue.) - Factors limiting bird populations: Relevance to conservation - I. Newton (Inst. Terr. Ecol, UK);
16 Aug. (Wed.) - The many edges of fragmented ecosystems: Conservation risks and strategies - S. Hannon (U. Alta., Canada);
18 Aug. (Fri.) - To cull or not to cull, is that the question? - F. Cooke (Simon Fraser U., Canada);
19 Aug. (Sat.) - Seabird ranges and oceanic habitats: Remote tracking in the service of marine conservation - J. Croxall (Brit. Antarc. Surv., UK).

Symposia topics:
15 Aug. - Long-term population studies: Relevance for conservation:
T. Gaston (Can. Wildl. Serv.);
J. Fitzpatrick (Cornell U.);
C. Perrins (Oxford U.).
16 Aug. - The many edges of fragmented ecosystems: Conservation risks and strategies:
K. Martin (U. Brit. Col.), & others;
18 Aug. - Are humans edging out birds? Species, habitat and human conflicts and resolutions:
D. Bird (McGill U.);
C. Feare (UK);
S. Kress (Audubon, USA).
19 Aug. - Birds foraging at sea: Performance indicators of prey and oceanographic changes:
B. Montevecchi (Mem. U. Nfld.);
R. Veit (Staten I. Coll., USA);
S. Wanless (ITE, UK).

For information, please contact:
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S.C.O. Council Elections

The fall 1999 elections confirmed David Bird as our new Vice-President (President-elect) - elected by acclamation.

Councillors elected, all for 2-year terms starting 1 January 2000, were:

re-elected: Fred Cooke, Erica Nol, Jean-Pierre Savard;
new [including replacing David Bird (promoted)]: Leah de Forest, Cheri Gratto-Trevor, Greg Robertson, Kevin Teather.

With incumbents, Past Presidents, and Editor (ex officio), Council for the first time has representation from every province, including the first from P.E.I.. Next year we may hope for representatives from the North.

from notes by K. Martin

(see inside front cover for full list of officers and councillors, with addresses)

Good News! Fredericton Symposium Proceedings in print.

Our book *Biology and Conservation of Forest Birds* (S.C.O. Special Publication no. 1) arrived from Bounty Print on 3 February. Copies were mailed in the following week to paid-up members (and those who were paid up during the gestation period but aren't now?). "The book looks splendid, with the contents most impressive." [8.5 x 11 inches, stiff softcover with perfect binding. 143 pp. ISBN 1-55131-004-X]

Extra copies are available for $20.00 (p & p incl.). To order, send cheque or money order, payable to "Society of Canadian Ornithologists", to Dr. A.W. Diamond, ACWERN, U.N.B., P.O. Box 45111, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 6E1. All purchased copies will help pay down the publication costs.

S.C.O. STUDENT AWARDS

Reports from 1999 Awardees

(a) James L. Baillie Student Research Award

"Natural and sexual selection in Least Flycatchers: Why do breeding birds cluster?". Scott Tarof, Queen's University.

The material resources hypothesis proposes that patchy resource distribution (e.g. vegetation, insects) results in preferential breeding sites within contiguous forests. The predation hypothesis suggests individuals cluster to reduce risk of predation. The hidden lek hypothesis proposes that clustering is adaptive in terms of sexual selection. That is, female pursuit of extra-pair copulations (EPCs, copulations outside the social partnership) contributes to male clustering because of female preference for appraising males in groups. Just as lekking males compete for promiscuous copulations with females that visit display sites, socially monogamous birds may cluster for EPCs resulting in a clumped distribution of territories. Male clustering, female pursuit of copulations, no female-required resources other than sperm, no paternal care, male-male competition, and a skew in male mating

success, characterize leks. I test these 'ecological' and 'social' explanations for clustering in the Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*), a socially monogamous migratory suboscine. I define clusters as aggregations (of at least two pairs) of breeding territories with contiguous boundaries, separated from other aggregations by adjacent unoccupied habitat. This is the first evaluation of possible ecological and social mechanisms contributing to clustering in this species using a combination of behavioural and genetic evidence. However, I also model spatial and temporal patterns of clustering, describe Least Flycatcher breeding biology (such as partnership formation, mate guarding and copulation behaviour), and assess how females choose social and genetic mates.

This study was conducted 1 May-31 July 1997-99 at Queen's University Biology Station, and includes data from 15 clusters ranging in size from 2 to 33 pairs each. Over the past three years I caught, banded, and collected DNA samples from 79 adults. To evaluate the three aforementioned hypotheses, I collected data on arrival dates, pairing success, spatio-temporal settlement patterns, male singing performance, male and female morphology, age and mating behaviour. Fifty-two pairs were observed for 2-4 hrs. during mornings (256 hrs.) to quantify mating behaviour and song performance. Territory boundaries and nest locations were mapped using GPS technology. I quantified vegetation characteristics (n=302 plots) and sampled insects (n=24 plots) using malaise traps inside and adjacent to clusters, as well as in control forests without Least Flycatchers. Paternity assignments are being performed using microsatellites. We have developed 7 variable microsatellite loci for use in paternity analyses at Queen's University Molecular Ecology Laboratory.

Although the majority of males established territories in clusters, some males settled solitarily, thereby exhibiting interesting variation in male settlement behaviour. These solitary males were significantly less likely to attract social mates. Mating behaviour within clusters of Least Flycatchers is consistent with the notion that clusters resemble leks. For example, males and females commonly foray off territory and seek EPCs at a rate of 1.8±0.3 attempts/hr. EPCs sometimes involved mixed-sex groups (of 4 or more) and typically ended in highly aggressive chases and fights. Female mating behaviour is consistent with the prediction that females exhibit some level of control over copulation. Male singing behaviour supports the notion that males compete and advertise their quality to females. Preliminary paternity data show that in a single cluster, 3/5 broods contained 100% extra-pair young. Vegetation characteristics do not explain clustering in Least Flycatchers. Insect data are currently being analyzed. That clusters are ephemeral further supports the idea that clustering is not a response to habitat features. I have observed over 20 instances of neighbours co-operating with focal pairs in predator mobbing, which suggests that clustering may help to reduce nest predation.

Preliminary results are most consistent with the hidden lek hypothesis; however, clustering may also serve to reduce predation. I have submitted one manuscript, on partnership and copulation behaviour, that is currently being revised. Some future considerations we are exploring as part of this project include a detailed comparison of clustered vs. solitary males with respect to morphology, age, song performance and fighting ability, and how migrating individuals detect clusters. I anticipate completing my dissertation project during fall 2000. The results of this study will have important implications for our understanding of avian ecology, and will also be valuable in helping to explain clustering in other socially monogamous passerines such as Cerulean Warblers or Red-eyed Vireos.

I gratefully acknowledge research funding I received from the Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund, the American Ornithologists' Union, and the John K. Cooper Foundation in 1998, and from the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund in 1999. I also thank the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and the Ontario Graduate Scholarship in Science and Technology council for scholarship funding. In addition, I am grateful to many individuals who provided excellent assistance both in the field and in the molecular lab.

(b) Percy A. Taverner Awards

(i) **"Energy constraints on incubating arctic Common Eiders (*Somateria mollissima*)",** Grace E. Bottitta, Trent University.

A key component of eider reproductive ecology is the influence of body reserves on reproduction. Energy reserves are particularly important for eiders nesting in the Arctic due to short breeding seasons and extreme environmental conditions. These constrain the ability of eiders to establish energy reserves necessary for egg laying, fasting during incubation (24 days), and subsequent brood rearing. They rely on fat and muscle reserves accrued prior to laying, and the weight loss of the female during incubation is often 40% of gross pre-incubation body weight. My project examined the costs of incubation among arctic Common Eiders: specifically, how variation in energy reserves and annual environmental conditions (e.g. temperature, precipitation) influence female incubation behaviour and reproductive success.

Mitivik Island, East Bay, Southampton Island, Nunavut (64°02'N, 81°47'W), supports one of the highest densities of breeding Common Eiders in the Canadian Arctic. The colony, located on a low-lying island 800-m long and 200-m in width, annually supports about 4500 Common Eider nests.

I examined the cost of reproduction by manipulating length of the incubation period. Body condition and behaviour of experimental and control females were compared particularly during the critical last five days of the incubation period. To determine the influence of body condition on incubation behaviour and nest outcome, I manipulated clutch ages in June-August in 1998 and 1999. During incubation (exclusively by females), clutches were switched pairwise between nests to shorten or prolong the length of incubation by an average of five days (1998, n=30; 1999, n=40). In addition, behaviour and reproductive success of unmanipulated females were also monitored (1998, n= 182; 1999, n=180). I predicted that females with 5-days-extended incubation period would have a lower body condition at the end of incubation than females with shortened or controlled incubation. This lower body condition would cause females to

1) take more incubation breaks (to drink or eat),

2) take longer breaks than the population mean,

3) defend nests weakly from predator attack,

4) experience a higher nest predation rate (associated with an increase of time spent off the nest) and

5) more frequently abandon the nest (due to starvation or dehydration).

Body condition at beginning of incubation affects nest attendance, nest abandonment and depredation. Incubating eiders possessing "good" body condition should not need to take frequent or lengthy incubation breaks and rely solely on their large energy reserves. Conversely, females in poor condition early in incubation should take frequent and/or longer breaks (perhaps to drink or eat). I predicted that Common Eider females with low energy reserves prior to incubation would be less likely to incubate their clutch to hatch than females in good condition at laying.

A sample of incubating females was weighed 1-3 times during various stages of incubation to determine individual rate of mass loss (1998, n=40; 1999, n=69). Body condition was inferred from body mass controlled for body size. This allowed me to compare females using body condition as an index. Manipulated (1998, n=36, 1999, n=30) and control females (1998, n=182; 1999, n=180+) were also observed during the incubation period to compare nest attendance patterns. Length and frequency of incubation breaks were monitored using 1) daily behavioural observations from blinds in 1998 and 1999 (3-6 h), 2) several continuous 24- and 48-h behavioural watches and 3) by electronic devices (Remote Incubation Monitoring Systems, aka RIMS) placed in individual nests (1999 only, n=39). The RIMS provided means for continuous and remote monitoring of nest attendance. They consisted of a pressure-sensitive microswitch covered by an artificial egg. The activity of the female on the nest was transmitted to a receiver and then downloaded onto a laptop computer. I also observed incubation

behaviours of females on RIMS nests to confirm that the RIMS generated data were accurate.

Informal interpretation of RIMS data indicated the majority of incubation recesses occurred during a 2-h period prior to and just after sunset. Recess breaks ranged from 3 to 90 minutes. As predicted, almost all avian predation occurred when females were taking recess breaks from their nests. This indicated there is a clear cost to incubation recesses. Other preliminary results include a nonlinear trend in decrease of body mass through incubation in both 1998 and 1999.

Clutch manipulations helped to determine the correlation between physiological condition and incubation behaviours of incubating females with nest outcome. As predicted, females with shortened incubation experienced highest nest success (including protection from predators and incubation breaks/recesses). Extended females had poorer body condition and demonstrated a greater tendency to abandon in the final days before hatch than either shortened or control hens. Behavioural observations indicated that abandonment during the late stages of incubation was caused either by starvation or inability of females in poor body condition to cope with persistent predator attacks. As expected, the length of incubation recesses increased for extended females during the last five days before hatch.

Information from this project generated the first experimental and behavioural data on influence of energy reserves levels on Common Eider annual fecundity in the Canadian Arctic. These data will provide baseline information for long-term population monitoring at East Bay, and also an opportunity to compare reproductive characteristics of Common Eiders in northern Hudson Bay with other eider duck populations.

Acknowledgements

I am honoured to be recipient of a Society of Canadian Ornithologists 1999 Taverner Award. I also received funding from: Canadian Wildlife Service - Northern Conservation Division, Arctic Institute of North America - Jennifer Robinson Memorial Scholarship and Grants in Aid, John K. Cooper Foundation, and Erica Nol - Trent University. Logistic support was provided by Polar Continental Shelf Project and Nunavut Research Center in Iqaluit. The Hunters and Trappers Association of Coral Harbour, as well as the community of Coral Harbour, provided project support.

(ii) **"The effect of forest fragmentation on the extra-pair mating system of the Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*)",** Ryan Norris, York University.

Behavioral data on movement and landscape use is critical in understanding the dynamics and persistence of forest-interior bird populations living in fragmented landscapes. I used radio-tracking to follow continuously male Hooded Warblers (*Wilsonia citrina*) that held breeding territories in small, isolated forest fragments (<2 ha). The objectives of this study were to determine

1) whether daily movements were restricted within forest fragments,

2) the purpose of these movements (if they existed), and

3) whether forested corridors were important for movement between fragments.

I radio-tracked males (n=20) May-July 1998-1999 (n=258 hours) in Crawford County, northwest Pennsylvania, U.S.A.. Territorial males were caught, banded with U.S.F.W.S. bands and fitted with Holohil BD-2B (0.67 g) radio transmitters (Holohil Systems, Ltd). Radio-tagged males were ground-tracked with a receiver and a hand-held Yagi antenna for two-hour sessions between 06:00 and 14:00, and followed quietly at a distance of about 30 to 40m.

Most radio-tagged males were the sole occupants of a fragment (n=15); the remaining five males had a single neighbor. Fifteen males were mated and 5 were unmated. Mean distance to nearest forest was 110m (s.e.=23m, range=40-250) in all fragments studied. Size of fragments ranged from 0.7 to 2.0 ha, similar to breeding male territory size in continuous forest. Territories always occurred within a single forest fragment and any forays outside the fragment were considered 'extra-territorial'.

Eighty-five percent of males (17/20) left their territories at least once to move between forest fragments, for a total of 106 forays. Males traveled

40m to 2.5km away from their own fragment (mean=405m, s.e.=62), and all forays involved a portion of travel across open field habitat to adjacent forests.

Males left their isolated forest fragment more than once every 2 hours, and spent an average of 16.5% of time outside of their fragment; 4 (20%) individuals spent more than one-third of time off territory. Foray rate (n/hr) was not correlated with distance to each woodlot visited (r_s=0.153, n=20, p>0.50). No mortality resulted from movements between fragments.

Forays occurred throughout the breeding season, even when the male had an incubating female or was feeding nestlings on his own territory (F=1.031, d.f.=5,129, p=0.402). Mean foray duration was 29.4 minutes but some males left their fragments for over an hour at a time. More than half of the forays (55/106) were to forest fragments occupied by other Hooded Warbler pairs, and males were usually silent (91%) during these territorial intrusions. During silent intrusions, males often (71%) visited the nest vicinity while neighboring females were fertile.

Most forays (77%, 82/106) occurred despite the absence of corridors connecting forest fragments. For forays where males had the opportunity to use corridors to travel between fragments (n=24), the majority used corridors when leaving (n=15) but not when returning to their territories (n=4), resulting in a significant difference in corridor use between departures and arrivals (X^2=10.54, p<0.005).

Movement between fragments occurred throughout the breeding season, and therefore was not solely associated with initial territory acquisition or dispersal at the end of the season. Forays between fragments likely occur because males are seeking extra-pair copulations (EPCs). Males made forays even when they had a nesting female on their own territory, and made only silent forays to territories where females were nesting. Both these behaviors are typical of males seeking EPCs in this species.

In continuous forest, males spend only 5% of their time off-territory, forays average only 7 minutes in duration, and males travel through forest to adjacent territories only 50-250 m away. The added time and energetic cost of making forays in a fragmented landscape could help to explain why so few isolated fragments are occupied by territorial males. In this study only 19% of isolated forest fragments between 0.5 and 5 ha in size were occupied by territorial Hooded Warblers.

Forays between forest fragments occurred despite the absence of corridors connecting isolated fragments (86%, 91/106 forays). Even where males had an immediate opportunity to use corridors, 38% of forays involved direct flight over open fields. Therefore, the protection of corridors linking forest patches may not be as important as conserving the degree of isolation between forested areas.

The maximum distance traveled over open fields did not exceed 500m. Greater distances between forest fragments likely would impede movements and create isolated breeding pairs. This occurrence could deter breeding altogether if territory settlement by males and females depends on availability of neighboring extra-pair mating partners over the local landscape. The ability to travel between forest patches in fragmented landscapes is likely more important than previously thought, particularly because many Neotropical migrants have high rates of extra-pair fertilizations. This study suggests a new link between social behaviour and habitat choice in fragmented landscapes.

REPORTS FROM S.C.O. REPRESENTATIVE TO NORTH AMERICAN BANDING COUNCIL (N.A.B.C.)

The first Canadian Banding Trainers' Workshop was held at University of Manitoba Delta field station 21-23 September 1999, just before the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network meeting. Sponsored by C.W.S., the workshop included lecture and slides on moults and plumages, interpretation of text and diagrams in Pyle's 1997 manual (on identification), independent aging and sexing of specimens - with discussion, and some real banding. The same pattern had been used at prairie workshops since 1994.

The N.A.B.C. annual meeting was held in Arizona 27-29 January 2000, with Canadians present including Brenda Dale (S.C.O.), Lucie Métras (Banding Office), Norm North & Randy Hicks (Int. Waterfowl Assn.), Heidi den Haan (Delta Marsh Bird Obs'y). The Pacific Seabird Group was added to Council. Manuals for passerines, near-passerines, and hummingbirds, plus guides for banders and trainers, are nearly ready for final editing; others are in preparation. Procedures and protocols for training and certification of banders are gradually being developed. Next year's meeting will be in Pennsylvania or Texas, that in fall 2002 at Delta Marsh, Manitoba.

condensed by Editor from
reports by Brenda Dale

RECENT LITERATURE
1999 Journal Publications - Birds in Canada

Abraham, C.L., Evans, R.M. 1999. The development of endothermy in American White Pelicans. Condor 101: 832-841.

Abraham, K.F., Leafloor, J.O., Lumsden, H.G. 1999. Establishment and growth of the Lesser Snow Goose, *Chen caerulescens caerulescens*, nesting colony on Akimiski Island, James Bay, Northwest Territories. Can. Field-Nat. 113: 245-250.

Abraham, K.F., Leafloor, J.O., Rusch, D.H. 1999. Molt migrant Canada geese in northern Ontario and western James Bay. J. Wildl. Manage. 63: 649-655.

Alderson, G.W., Gibbs, H.L., Sealy, S.G. 1999. Determining the reproductive behaviour of individual brown-headed cowbirds using microsatellite DNA markers. Anim. Behav. 58: 895-905.

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Barber, C.A., Robertson, R.J. 1999. Floater males engage in extrapair copulations with resident female Tree Swallows. Auk 116: 264-269.

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Beauchamp, W.D., Cooke, F., Lougheed, C., Lougheed, L.W., Ralph, C.J., Courtney, S. 1999. Seasonal movements of Marbled Murrelets: evidence from banded birds. Condor 101: 671-674.

Beaulieu, R. 1999. The new Porcupine Forest flock of Trumpeter Swans, *Cygnus buccinator*, in Saskatchewan. Can. Field-Nat. 113: 269-272.

Berezanski, D.J. 1999. Turkey Vulture nests in abandoned buildings in SW Manitoba. Blue Jay 57: 28-33.

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Borowik, O.A., McLennan, D.A. 1999. Phylogenetic patterns of parental care in Calidridine sandpipers. Auk 116: 1107-1117.

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Brua, R.B. 1999. Ruddy Duck nesting success: do nest characteristics deter nest predation? Condor 101: 867-870.

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Bugden, S.C., Evans, R.M. 1999. The development of a vocal thermoregulatory response to temperature in embryos of the domestic chicken. Wilson Bull. 111: 188-194.

Burnett, J.A. 1999. A passion for wildlife: A history of the Canadian Wildlife Service, 1947-1997. Can. Field-Nat. 113(Spec. Issue): 1-183 [supplemented by: Selected publications... from work by the Canadian Wildlife Service... (compiled by A.J. Erskine) Can. Field-Nat. 113: 184-214].

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Carrière, S., Bromley, R.G., Gauthier, G. 1999. Comparative spring habitat and food use by two Arctic nesting geese. Wilson Bull. 111: 166-180.

Clark, R.G., Shutler, D. 1999. Avian habitat selection: pattern from process in nest-site use by ducks. Ecology 80: 272-287.

Clayton, K.M., Schmutz, J.K. 1999. Is the decline of Burrowing Owls *Speotyto cunicularia* in prairie Canada linked to changes in Great Plains ecosystems? Bird Cons. Internat. 9: 163-185.

Collins, C.E., Houtman, A.M. 1999. Tan and white color morphs of White-throated Sparrows differ in their non-song vocal responses to territorial intrusion. Condor 101: 842-845.

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Cooch, E.G., Lank, D.B., Rockwell, R.F., Cooke, F. 1999. Body size and age of recruitment in Snow Geese. Bird Study 46(suppl.): S112-S119.

Copley, D., Fraser, D., Finlay, J.C. 1999. Purple Martins, *Progne subis*: a British Columbian success story. Can. Field-Nat. 113: 226-229.

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(Thanks to Darroch Whitaker and Ian Warkentin for assistance in scanning journals.)

NEWS ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

XXIII I.O.C., Beijing, August 2002

Most of you already will have heard of what will be the first I.O.C. to be held in Asia (not counting those "Downunder"), despite my failure to note it in previous issues of *Picoides*. The Scientific Program Committee (SPC) will meet 6-11 June 2000 to select plenary speakers and symposia for the 2002 I.O.C., so proposals need to be submitted ASAP (by end April). For full details, contact Dr. Fernando Spina, SPC Chair, at:

Istituto Nazionale per la Fauna Selvatica,
Via Ca' Fornacetta, 9,
I-40064 Ozzana Emilia (BO), Italy
[Ph: +39 051 65 12 111; Fx: +39 051 79 66 28;
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Canadian Ornithologist Honoured

Among those recently appointed to the Order of Canada was ornithologist Richard Fyfe, well-known to many of the older generation of S.C.O. members. As biologist and research scientist in Canadian Wildlife Service (1965-87), Richard spearheaded both the investigation of toxic chemicals responsible for decline of Peregrine Falcons in Canada, and the captive breeding program that ultimately led to re-establishing breeding Peregrines in many parts of this country. Congratulations, Richard!

Editor (after message from Glen Fox)

North American Important Bird Areas (IBAs)

The recent publication (late 1999), by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, of this summary of 150 "key conservation sites" (IBAs) in Canada, U.S., and Mexico may be the first substantive document from this initiative in this continent - previous releases mainly providing publicity for the designation process. Canadians should recognize that selection of the sample of Canadian IBAs featured herein was influenced by information available and potential for protection, as much or more than priorized importance for birds. The 50 Canadian sites certainly are important - but they almost certainly do not include all of those assigned greatest importance, when that can be done objectively. "Many more sites will be identified."

abstracted & interpreted (by Editor) from introductory sections of the document

Effects of Noise on Wildlife

A conference "to review... the impact of noise on animals in their natural habitat" is to be held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, Newfoundland, Canada, 22-23 August 2000 (soon after, and only a short plane ride from, the Birds 2000 conference in St.John's). Contact for details:

Institute for Environmental Monitoring and Research,

P.O. Box 1859, Stn B, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labr., Nfld., Canada A0P 1E0 Phone: 709-896-3266; Fax: 709-896-3076

e-mail: iemrhvgb@cancom.net

http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~iemr

EDITOR'S MUSINGS: What if *Picoides* were on-line?

With *Picoides* on-line,

- lots more people could read whatever we put into it; we should be glad of that, anyhoo;
- lots of potential - and some present - S.C.O. members could read all they'd get from S.C.O. (if they didn't go to meetings), so they would see no reason to join - or re-join - S.C.O.; we can't afford that - and without them we couldn't afford publishing *Picoides* (if we can now?)...

The above suggests that, unless content of *Picoides* stimulates readers to join/re-join S.C.O., it likely would not be in our interest to put it - as it now stands - on-line. Rather little of *Picoides*, as currently conceived, is planned as a deliberate "come-on" for S.C.O. recruitment; our present publication schedule also precludes using much time-sensitive material or that which needs frequent updating - both of which are strong arguments for on-line presentation.

From this, my impression is that an on-line "presentation" for S.C.O. calls for something quite different, rather than just putting *Picoides* (text) on-line. What is less clear is

- what would be needed?
- who would prepare it?
- would *Picoides* be needed - and affordable - as well?

My guesses on replies to these queries (others will have different ideas) are:

- needs (served better on-line) are for up-to-date news on "hot" issues and actions, updated (say) every month; notable recent findings; controversial arguments; in other words, the newspaper approach...
- the person to prepare such a document needs (i) ready access to those kinds of information, and (ii) time to produce literate copy from them. That person would have to "beat the bushes" for material much more than I do now for *Picoides*.
- some recent types of content in *Picoides* would still need circulation, but it might be hard to justify continuing publication in the current (costly) format - even as PR for S.C.O.? When/if S.C.O. achieves its own journal, *Picoides* presumably would shrink to a supplement, printed cheaply and circulated with the journal.

Twice previously I urged desirability of a round-table discussion, at an S.C.O. conference, to consider future directions for *Picoides*. These thoughts, assembled now while thinking about suggestions to put the latest *Picoides* on-line at the S.C.O. website, help make up for a scarcity of input to this issue of *Picoides*. They are not the last words on the subject; but S.C.O. membership needs a say in the matter - rather than leaving everything to the Editor. "The floor is yours." Responses - if any - may be included/excerpted in succeeding issues.

A.J. Erskine

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Société des Ornithologistes du Canada
Standing Committees and Representatives

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Mandate: annual selection of candidates;
Actions: (a) fall call for applications, review, & announcement of awards 1 April each year; (b) membership appointment and maintenance of rotational committee structure.

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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 $15.00 to the Membership Secretary [Note increased fee]:

Dr. Nancy Flood, Dept. of Biological Sciences,
University College of the Cariboo,
900 McGill Rd. (Box 3010), Kamloops, B.C. V2C 5N3

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 15,00$ à l'adresse ci-haut [Attention: Les frais sont augmentés!].

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