PICOIDES

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White-rumped Sandpiper chicks on Bylot Island (Photo by Laura McKinnon)

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Editors' Message

Rob Warnock and Marcel Gahbauer

Black Guillemot (Photo by Raphaël Lavoie)

Welcome to the first issue of *Picoides* for 2011. We hope that everyone had a great Christmas and an enjoyable start to the New Year. In the last issue, we introduced a new format for *Picoides*. Our aim was to make it more user-friendly and attractive, and we welcome positive and negative feedback from SCO-SOC members, as it is your publication. More generally, the SCO-SOC Council is always open to input from members. For example, the President's message (*see page 3*) discusses the introduction of online membership renewal, in response to member requests for this option. We would like to thank Marc-André Villard for providing the French translations for the President's message and conference announcement in the past two issues, and welcome any other members willing to assist with translations in future.

A great opportunity to discuss the policies and operations of SCO-SOC is at the annual general meeting, which will take place during this year's conference in Moncton, 4-6 August (*see page 5*). Of course we are also counting on an exciting scientific program, and encourage all members to begin thinking about preparing abstracts for posters or presentations. Students are especially welcome to attend and share their research, and the Student Affairs Committee is planning special events for the conference (*see page 6*).

We encourage everyone to consider submitting nominations for both the Doris Huestis Speirs Award and the Jamie Smith Mentoring Award (*see page 7 of this issue*). Please take a moment to consider the ornithologists you know who may be deserving of these honours. Meanwhile, we congratulate Joël Bêty on his recent award from Radio-Canada (*see pages 9-10*).

The severe decline of many aerial insectivores is emerging as a top research and conservation priority in Canada. In this issue, the subject is touched upon in the contents of the latest issue of our journal ACE-ECO (*see page 6*), and in our feature article on Chimney Swifts, provided by the Bird Studies Canada team coordinating the volunteer-based SwiftWatch monitoring program (*see pages 8-9*).

We are pleased to dedicate five pages of this issue to sharing the results of research by student members of SCO-SOC. Taverner Awards are offered by SCO-SOC to support projects that increase the knowledge of Canadian birds through research, conservation, and education. In this issue we present a report from 2009 recipient Morgan Gilmour, who studied Leach's Storm-Petrels (*see pages 11-12*). We take this opportunity to remind other recipients of SCO-SOC awards that a written report is due to the Chair of the Research Awards Committee by March 1 of the year following the award, and we would be pleased to also receive copies of these summaries for publication in *Picoides*. Our research section in this issue continues with abstracts from three recent Canadian ornithological theses (*see pages 13-14*), and a report comparing the breeding behaviour of Swainson's and Bicknell's Thrushes that resulted in an interesting tangential investigation into parasitic larval mites (*see page 15*).

Rounding out this issue of *Picoides* are various announcements regarding conferences and volunteer opportunities (*see pages 16-17*), our Information Exchange section (*see page 18*), and a review of Lone Pine's guide *Birds of Canada* (*see page 19*), as well as a few other small items scattered throughout the issue. As always, our last page includes contact information for all Council members, information on SCO-SOC membership, and guidelines for submissions to *Picoides*.

In closing, we invite you to contribute material to Picoides. In particular, we welcome student contributions (*see below for details*), photographs of Canadian birds, and short items for the Canadian ornithological news, Announcements, and Information Exchange sections. Also, reflecting again our desire to present a more bilingual product, we welcome items in French for any part of Picoides. See the box on the final page of this issue for instructions on submitting items for future issues.

Student contributions wanted for *Picoides*!

SCO-SOC encourages students to submit material for publication in *Picoides*. In particular, we would like each issue to feature abstracts of one or two recently published theses. They must be from students at a Canadian university and/or focusing on Canadian birds. Abstracts should be 250-400 words long, preferably accompanied by one or two relevant photos. In addition, we welcome articles that describe in greater detail some aspects of student research. These should focus on a subject relevant to Canadian ornithology, require references, and may be up to 1000 words long, again preferably accompanied by one or two photos.

President's Message

Erica Nol

Since November your council and some important helpers (see below) have been working hard to provide the opportunity to renew your membership and contribute to our research funds, electronically. This has now been accomplished. You can renew if you have not already done so, or become a member, or ... I am suggesting this especially to faculty members with graduate students, provide a free membership to your graduate students! It is now as easy as having your credit card handy! And of course, membership to graduate students is only $10.00!! This is an incredible price to belong to a national society and membership also allows them access to our substantial research awards. I have signed up my newest graduate students and they were most appreciative of this gesture. So go to www.sco-soc.ca as soon as possible and see how easy this is.

Barred Owl (Photo by Brigitte Noël)

Now to those very important acknowledgements: First, I would like to thank Debbie Badzinski from Bird Studies Canada for suggesting Beanstream as a company that could handle electronic renewals for a small society like ours. Secondly, I would especially like to thank Kofi Garbrah and Erin Bayne of the University of Alberta for working very hard with Beanstream to make this system a reality. Next, I would like to thank Joe Nocera, our webmaster, who was patient and indispensable through the multiple changes/requests/inquiries that accompanied this process. Finally, Thérèse Beaudet and Pierre Lamothe deserve special thanks for going through the application page with a fine tooth comb, providing translations for our French page, and making sure that the online system meets the needs of the society both financially and administratively.

On other fronts, the local committee for the Moncton SCO-SOC annual general meeting has been hard at work organizing speakers, symposia (see below) and field trips for this wonderful opportunity to see Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*) migration and to join in the scientific camaraderie of our society. I would like to thank Marc-Andre Villard as Chair of this committee and its other hard-working members, for its accomplishments to date.

Message de la présidente

Erica Nol

Depuis le mois de novembre, votre Conseil et plusieurs bénévoles (voir ci-dessous) ont travaillé dur afin de vous permettre de renouveler votre adhésion et de contribuer en ligne à nos fonds de recherche. C'est maintenant chose faite. Vous pouvez maintenant renouveler votre adhésion, si ce n'est pas déjà fait, devenir membre ou … je le suggère particulièrement aux personnes qui dirigent des étudiants et étudiantes gradués, de les inscrire! C'est maintenant aussi simple que d'avoir votre carte de crédit à portée de la main! De plus, les frais d'adhésion pour les membres étudiants ne sont que de 10.00$!! C'est un prix incroyable pour se joindre à une société nationale et ainsi avoir accès à nos subventions de recherche. J'ai payé ces frais pour mes nouveaux étudiants et ils ont grandement apprécié ce geste. Allez donc à www.sco-soc.ca dès maintenant et constatez à quel point c'est facile.

J'aimerais aussi remercier plusieurs personnes : premièrement, Debbie Badzinski d'Études d'Oiseaux Canada, qui a suggéré la compagnie Beanstream afin de permettre les renouvellements électroniques pour une petite société comme la nôtre. Deuxièmement, j'aimerais remercier Kofi Garbrah et Erin Bayne de l'Université de l'Alberta qui ont travaillé très fort avec Beanstream afin de mettre ce système en place. De plus, je remercie notre webmestre, Joe Nocera, pour sa patience et son aide indispensable lors des multiples changements/requêtes/demandes associés à ce processus. Enfin, Thérèse Beaudet et Pierre Lamothe méritent un grand merci pour avoir passé au peigne fin le formulaire d'application et s'être assurés que le système en ligne rencontre les exigences de notre société, tant financièrement qu'administrativement.

Par ailleurs, le comité organisateur du congrès annuel SCO-SOC de Moncton a trimé dur afin de mettre en place le programme scientifique et planifier un colloque (ci-dessous) et une visite sur le terrain qui nous permettra d'observer la migration du Bécasseau semipalmé (*Calidris pusilla*) et de revoir les collègues et camarades de notre Société. J'aimerais remercier Marc-André Villard et tous les membres du comité organisateur pour le travail accompli jusqu'ici.

Finally, during an e-mail discussion with your council the topic of endorsements of particular ecological certification processes (e.g., Bird Friendly coffee) came up. Thérèse Beaudet, our secretary, during the course of this conversation, has reminded us of our goals, and because these were only approved and modified during the recent tenure presidents Drs. Susan Hannon and David Bird, I thought that I would repeat them here.

The goals of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists are:

1) To encourage and support research that aims to understand and conserve Canadian birds.
2) To serve as a professional society for amateur and professional Canadian ornithologists.
3) To represent Canadian ornithologists within professional ornithological societies in Canada, North America and worldwide.
4) To disseminate knowledge of Canadian birds through a newsletter and a professional journal.
5) To recognize excellence in research, conservation and mentorship within the Canadian ornithological community.

The conclusion about the question of endorsing a particular certification that helps to promote and conserve birds was that although council was highly supportive, that for every ecosystem there are potential certification processes (e.g., sustainable agriculture, grass fed beef cattle, FRI certification for sustainable forestry), and that our job as members of SCO-SOC, is primarily to support the research that must underlie the science behind these processes. Our job is not to become advocates for particular measures. This job should be left to the environmental non-profit or advocacy groups. As part of my role as President of the SCO-SOC, I would encourage members of SCO-SOC to also contribute to the fine and important work of these organizations, to get involved in local, national or international efforts to conserve habitat, to promote (and evaluate!) the science behind conservation and, finally, to buy products (including Bird Friendly coffee) that have achieved certification for environmental sustainability whenever possible.

Enfin, suite à un échange de courriels entre les membres du Conseil, la question de l'appui à divers processus de certification environnementale (ex.: café compatible avec la conservation des oiseaux) a été soulevée. Dans le cadre de cet échange, Thérèse Beaudet nous a rappelé les objectifs de notre société. Puisque ceux-ci ont été adoptés récemment sous les présidences de David Bird et de Susan Hannon, j'ai pensé qu'il serait utile de les répéter:

Les objectifs de la Société des Ornithologistes du Canada sont:

1) Encourager et soutenir la recherche dans le but de mieux comprendre et de conserver les oiseaux du Canada.
2) Agir comme société professionnelle pour les ornithologues canadiens amateurs et professionnels.
3) Représenter les ornithologues canadiens dans des sociétés professionnelles d'ornithologie au Canada, en Amérique du Nord et ailleurs dans le monde.
4) Contribuer à faire connaître les oiseaux du Canada via un bulletin et une revue scientifique.
5) Reconnaître l'excellence en recherche, conservation et mentorat dans la communauté ornithologique canadienne.

Nous nous sommes entendus sur la décision suivante : bien que le conseil soutienne fortement les initiatives visant à certifier les produits qui sont compatibles avec la conservation des oiseaux, de telles initiatives pourraient exister pour tous les autres écosystèmes (ex. : agriculture durable, bœuf élevé en paturages, foresterie durable) et notre responsabilité première à titre de membres de la SCO-SOC est de soutenir la recherche sur laquelle reposent ces initiatives. Notre responsabilité n'est pas de soutenir l'une ou l'autre d'entre elles. Celle-ci devrait revenir aux groupes environnementaux à but non lucratif ou aux organismes activistes. En tant que présidente de la SCO-SOC, je tiens à encourager les membres de la SCO-SOC à contribuer à l'excellent et important travail de ces organismes, à s'impliquer dans les initiatives de conservation des habitats aux échelles locale, nationale ou internationale, et de promouvoir (et évaluer!) la science qui sous-tend la conservation et, enfin, à acheter des produits (incluant du café compatible avec la conservation des oiseaux) qui a obtenu la certification environnementale à chaque occasion où ceci est possible.

Sharp-shinned Hawk with European Starling (Photo by Brigitte Noël)

News from SCO-SOC

SCO-SOC meeting 2011
Moncton NB, 4-6 August

You are invited to join us at this year's meeting, which will be held at Université de Moncton on 4-6 August. The opening plenary will be given by Dr Bridget Stutchbury, from York University, and the meeting will also include a public conference by Dr. Joël Bêty of Université du Québec à Rimouski, who was recently named CBC-SRC scientist of the year (*see article on page 10)*. There will be a half-day symposium organized by Craig Machtans on estimates of human-related bird mortality from major sectors in Canada and their biological relevance.

A field trip to the Bay of Fundy coordinated by Diana Hamilton will allow participants to observe the spectacular migration of Semipalmated Sandpipers, with occasional attacks by locally nesting Peregrine Falcons. The deadline for submitting abstracts is 15 May, whereas early bird registration ends on 15 June. Details and online registration are available at:
http://www.sco-soc.ca/2011_conference.html

Congrès de la SCO-SOC 2011
Moncton NB, 4-6 août

Vous êtes cordialement invité(e)s à participer au congrès annuel de la SCO-SOC qui aura lieu à l'Université de Moncton du 4 au 6 août. La conférence d'ouverture sera prononcée par le professeur Bridget Stutchbury, de l'Université York, et le congrès incluera aussi une conférence publique du professeur Joël Bêty, de l'Université du Québec à Rimouski, récemment nommé scientifique de l'année SRC-CBC (*voir article à la page 9)*. Un colloque d'une demi-journée organisé par Craig Machtans portera sur l'estimation de la mortalité reliée aux activités humaines majeures au Canada et leur importance biologique.

Une visite sur le terrain à la baie de Fundy coordonnée par Diana Hamilton permettra aux participantes et participants d'observer la spectaculaire migration des Bécasseaux semipalmés, incluant des attaques occasionnelles par les Faucons pèlerins qui nichent dans le secteur. La date limite pour la soumission des résumés est le 15 mai, tandis que l'inscription au meilleur tarif se terminera le 15 juin. Vous trouverez plus de détails et le lien pour l'inscription en ligne à:
http://www.sco-soc.ca/2011_conference.html

Canadian Ornithological News – Updates regarding Canadian Breeding Bird Atlases

Four Canadian breeding bird atlas projects are currently underway. In British Columbia (www.birdatlas.bc.ca), the fourth year of data collection is getting underway, while Manitoba (www.birdatlas.mb.ca) and Quebec (www.atlas-oiseaux.qc.ca) are each starting their second year. Meanwhile field work for the Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas (www.mba-aom.ca) has been completed and analysis is underway. Additionally, the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005*, originally published in English in 2007, is now available in French under the title *Atlas des oiseaux nicheurs de l'Ontario, 2001-2005* (www.birdsontario.org); both versions are now being sold at a reduced price of $63 including tax and shipping.

SCO-SOC Student Affairs Committee News

The student affairs committee is hosting a student-professional social, and you're invited! Please save the date, August 5th, to mingle with colleagues over lunch at the upcoming meeting in Moncton. This will be a great opportunity for professionals to mentor ornithology students, and for students to get to know ornithology professionals in a casual setting. If you have any questions about the student-professional lunch, please contact Andrea Norris (arnorris@interchange.ubc.ca). Details of this event are forthcoming.

The SCO-SOC student affairs committee is also holding a silent auction at the Moncton meeting, and we need your help! We are hoping to raise funds for student events at future meetings, and are in need of donations. Suggested donations include: books and field guides, binoculars, photography equipment, and any other field supplies, services (e.g., statistics consulting, photography lessons), jewelry, crafts, artwork, and decorations. All items will be collected and displayed at the meeting in Moncton, where all participants can peruse the booty and place a bid on their favourite item(s). If you have any items to donate or questions about the silent auction, please contact Tyler Flockhart (dflockha@uoguelph.ca).

Le comité des affaires étudiantes sera l'hôte d'une activité sociale étudiant-professionnel et vous êtes invités! Veuillez svp inscrire à votre agenda la date du 5 août où vous êtes conviés pour un goûter entre collègues, au congrès à Moncton. Il s'agit d'une bonne opportunité offerte aux professionnels pour conseiller des étudiants en ornithologie et pour les étudiants de se faire connaître par ces derniers dans un environnement amical. Si vous avez des questions concernant le repas étudiant-professionnel veuillez svp vous adresser à Andrea Norris (arnorris@interchange.ubc.ca). De l'information supplémentaire sera disponible sous-peu.

Le comité des affaires étudiantes de la SCO-SOC tiendra un encan silencieux, lors du prochain congrès à Moncton, et a besoin de votre aide! Nous espérons amasser des fonds pour des activités étudiantes lors de congrès futurs et avons besoin de dons. Nous suggérons les dons suivants: livres, guides d'identification, jumelles, équipement de photographie ou tout autre équipement de terrain, services (ex. consultations statistiques, cours de photographie, etc.), bijoux, artisanat, œuvres d'art et décorations. Tous les items seront exposés lors du prochain congrès à Moncton. Chacun des participants aura l'opportunité de miser une somme d'argent sur les items de leur choix. Si vous êtes intéressés à donner un (des) item(s) ou avez des questions concernant l'encan silencieux veuillez svp vous adresser à Tyler Flockhart (dflockha@uoguelph.ca).

ACE-ÉCO New Issue Announcement (Volume 5, Issue 2)

Editors-in-Chief Marc-André Villard and Tom Nudds are pleased to announce the publication of Volume 5, Issue 2 of Avian Conservation and Ecology. With articles reporting research ranging in focus from the Breeding Biology of Grassland Birds, to the Reproductive Success of Piping Plovers, and Citizen Science and Effective Monitoring. This issue also sees the publication of the first two papers in the Special Feature "Aerial Insectivores" edited by Philip Taylor and Jon McCracken. The Editors of ACE-ÉCO continue to invite new manuscript submissions to this special feature. See the Call for Papers for details.

To read the full text of the articles or to access all other articles published in this issue, please visit http://www.ace-eco.org/

Les rédacteurs en chef Marc-André Villard et Tom Nudds sont fiers d'annoncer la parution du deuxième numéro du volume 5 de la revue Écologie et conservation des oiseaux. Ce numéro poursuit la publication d'articles de la section spéciale sur la « Conservation des oiseaux de prairie ». Il contient aussi des articles sur le succès reproducteur du Pluvier siffleur ainsi que sur la science citoyenne et le suivi efficace des populations. Ce numéro contient aussi les deux premiers articles de la section spéciale sur les insectivores aériens, publiée sous la direction de Philip Taylor et Jon McCracken. Les rédacteurs d'ACE-ÉCO invitent toujours les personnes intéressées à leur soumettre des manuscrits pour cette section spéciale (voir l'appel de manuscrits pour plus de détails).

Pour accéder aux versions intégrales des articles du présent numéro ou des précédents, veuillez cliquer sur http://www.ace-eco.org/

D.H. Speirs Award – Call for Nominations / Appel de Candidatures

The Doris Huestis Speirs Award is the most prestigious award given by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and is presented annually to an individual who has made outstanding lifetime contributions to Canadian ornithology. Past awardees include professionals who work at museums, government agencies, private companies and universities, as well as amateur ornithologists.

To nominate a candidate for the Speirs Award please provide the Chair of the award committee with the name of the nominee and supporting information that describes the nature and scope of the nominee's contributions and impact in Canadian ornithology. This could include their efforts to advance conservation, science, public education, or some combination of these or other contribution(s). Please note that the selection of the award-winner will be largely based on the strength of the nomination package and the supporting documentation.

Nominations for the 2011 award may be sent to:

Dr. Greg Robertson
Wildlife Research Division
Environment Canada
Mount Pearl, NL A1N 4T3
Phone: 709-772-2778; Fax: 709-772-5097
E-mail: greg.robertson@ec.gc.ca

Nominations will be accepted until 1 June 2011. For more information on the award and previous award winners go to: http://www.sco-soc.ca/speirs_award.htm

Le Prix Doris Huestis Speirs est le prix le plus prestigieux décerné par la Société des ornithologistes du Canada. Ce prix est remis annuellement à une personne en reconnaissance pour sa contribution au développement de l'ornithologie au Canada. Les récipiendaires des années passées sont des professionnels et amateurs ayant travaillé dans les musées, l'administration publique, des compagnies privées ou le milieu universitaire.

Pour soumettre une candidature, vous êtes priés de faire parvenir à la présidente du comité le nom de la ou du candidat accompagné d'informations décrivant la nature, l'importance et l'impact de sa contribution à l'ornithologie au Canada. Ceci devra préciser ses efforts pour faire avancer la conservation, la science, l'éducation du grand public, ou une combinaison de ces éléments, et toute autre contribution digne de mention.

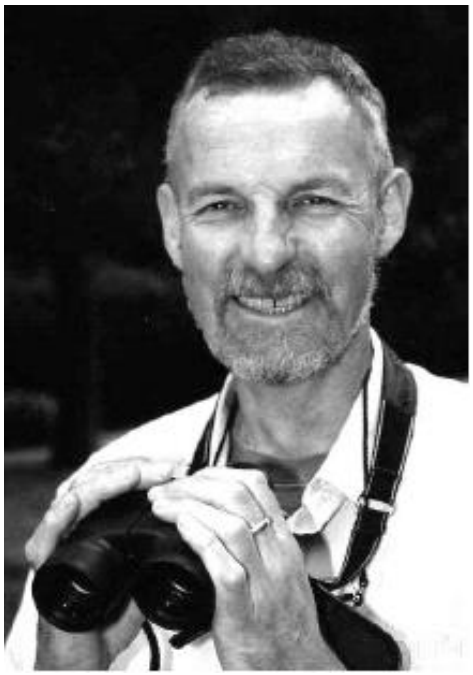
Veuillez soumettre les candidatures pour le prix 2011 à :

Dr. Greg Robertson
Wildlife Research Division
Environment Canada
Mount Pearl, NL A1N 4T3
Tél. : 709-772-2778; Fax: 709-772-5097
Courriel: greg.robertson@ec.gc.ca

Les candidatures seront acceptées jusqu'au 1 juin 2011. Pour plus d'information au sujet de ce prix et des récipiendaires passés, aller à http://www.sco-soc.ca/speirs_award_fr.html

The Jamie Smith Memorial Award for Mentoring – Call for Nominations

In recognition of Jamie Smith's contribution to fostering ornithological research, the Society of Canadian Ornithologists has created The Jamie Smith Memorial Award for Mentoring in Ornithology.



This award honours established ornithologists - either in academia, industry, non-government or government agencies - nominated by students, colleagues and/or peers to have displayed excellence in mentoring a new generation of professional or amateur biologists. The award will be presented to the recipient at the Society's annual meeting.

Nomination: Details concerning nominations can be found online at http://www.sco-soc.ca/jamie_smith/jsma_nominations.htm. A cover letter (max. 1000 words) outlining why the nominee should receive the distinction should accompany the nomination. The nomination must be accompanied by at least two additional letters of support (max. 500 words) that indicate they have seen and support the nomination letter. These reviewers may then add their own comments on the nominee.

Deadline for submission of nominations is 8 April 2011.
Nominations should be sent, by e-mail, to:

Ryan Norris
Chair - Jamie Smith Memorial Mentoring Award Committee
e-mail: rnorris@uoguelph.ca

Feature Article:

Chimney Swifts – A Bird Studies Canada Priority

Elisabeth van Stam and Kristyn Richardson, Bird Studies Canada

Chimney Swifts are fascinating birds – they fly up to 160 kilometres per hour, all of their eating and drinking is on the wing, they mate for life, and are often mistaken for bats when seen at dusk as they spill into chimneys for their nightly roost. Unfortunately, this species is showing one of the largest population declines of any bird species in North America. Bird Studies Canada (BSC) is trying to change that.

The Chimney Swift is primarily an urban species that forages exclusively on flying insects and as its moniker attests, makes its home in chimneys. Historically, Chimney Swifts nested and roosted in large hollow trees, but adapted to using chimneys when their natural habitat was destroyed following European settlement. A century later, Chimney Swifts are again threatened by the loss of their surrogate habitat, as traditional chimney structures disappear from the landscape.

Chimney Swift (Photo by Brendan Toews)

Once considered an abundant species, Chimney Swifts, like many other aerial insectivores in North America, are experiencing strong population declines across their range. Rough estimates indicate a Canadian population of about 12,000 individuals and an Ontario population of roughly 7,600 birds. Breeding Bird Survey data indicate that the Canadian Chimney Swift population has declined 8.3% per year from 1968 to 2007 – an overall decrease of 96%. Declines have been even more pronounced in Ontario, where Breeding Bird Survey data show that the species has decreased by 18.7% annually from 1997 to 2007. This rapid and alarming population decline has led to the Chimney Swift being uplisted from a Species of Least Concern to one that is classified as Threatened both federally (COSEWIC) and in Ontario (COSSARO).

Several environmental groups across North America have recognized that basic natural history information concerning Chimney Swifts was required before appropriate conservation strategies could be implemented, and so began voluntarily monitoring active nest and roost chimneys within local communities. A Swift Night Out, organized by the DriftWood Wildlife Association in Texas and happening all across Canada and the United States, is a notable example.

In 2009, BSC initiated Ontario SwiftWatch, a grassroots program that engages small groups of volunteers that act as urban stewards in targeted communities across Ontario. Because 63% of Canada's Chimney Swift population occurs in chimneys (and similar man-made structures) within urban centres in Ontario, SwiftWatch creates a unique opportunity for urban monitoring and to engage a typically unexploited group of people. The information acquired by these volunteers will also provide important data for urban biodiversity policies.

The main objectives of SwiftWatch are to: 1) identify habitat characteristics of nest/roost chimneys in urban centres, 2) quantify habitat availability, and 3) determine the number of swifts and active nest/roosts in key areas of Ontario. SwiftWatch has been extremely popular, and continues to expand rapidly. Chimney Swift observations and habitat data are now being collected from about 150 volunteers in 15 different communities throughout Ontario including Barrie, Lindsay, London, North Bay, Stratford, and Sault Ste. Marie. The data collected from these volunteers is helping researchers at BSC to fill in the knowledge gaps required to implement best management and stewardship practices required for the conservation of Chimney Swifts.

To complement the volunteer-based monitoring, BSC is also engaged in a study to inform the design of artificial nesting towers. With loss of habitat as a probable factor contributing to Chimney Swift population declines in Canada, many attempts have been made to replace habitat in the form of artificial nesting towers. However, artificial nesting tower installation trials in the Chimney Swifts' Canadian range have been largely unsuccessful to date. This lack of success is presumably because the current prototypes do not provide sufficient insulation to moderate against climate extremes.

In conjunction with research efforts by government and academic Chimney Swift biologists, BSC has placed data loggers in active nest and roost chimneys and nest towers to determine whether the internal microclimate differs between natural and artificial habitats. On average, artificial towers demonstrate larger temperature fluctuations than the natural chimneys. These findings suggest that temperature may be an important factor to Chimney Swift breeding habitat selection.

Nesting Chimney Swift (Photo by John Emms)

BSC is now working with relevant stakeholders to develop best stewardship practices to increase public awareness of Chimney Swifts as an urban dwelling species at risk, support the legislation mandating habitat protection, and identify ways to ensure amiable co-habitation of swifts and building owners. To facilitate public understanding and awareness, a document has been created describing how property owners and relevant stakeholders (such as chimney cleaning professionals) can maintain and conserve existing Chimney Swift nest and roost habitat.

There is a lot of work needed to address the recovery of Chimney Swifts in North America. The key to developing a stewardship and management strategy for this species is a sound knowledge of Chimney Swift population demography, habitat preferences, and the development of effective stewardship tools. BSC has developed a multi-faceted Chimney Swift research and stewardship program to fill information gaps and develop stewardship tools that will engage urban residents in the protection and conservation of Chimney Swift habitat. The observations and results collected from the Ontario SwiftWatch Program will help to ensure that years from now we will all still be able to enjoy the remarkable spectacle of hundreds or even thousands of Chimney Swifts pouring into a chimney at dusk.

BSC is looking for volunteers to observe and identify potential Chimney Swift nesting and roosting sites throughout Ontario. Please contact Elisabeth van Stam, BSC Ontario Program Biologist, at evanstam@birdscanada.org or 519-586-3531 ext. 173 if you would like to participate in identifying sites, know of any nesting/roosting locations, or would like to volunteer in a longer-term monitoring program in your community. This project is an excellent opportunity to directly contribute to Chimney Swift conservation efforts.

Researcher Profile:

Joël Bêty, Scientifique de l'année 2010 à Radio-Canada

Le texte est adapté du site de l'Université du Québec à Rimouski www.uqar.ca

Joël Bêty, professeur à l'Université du Québec À Rimouski (UQAR) s'est vu décerner le titre de Scientifique de l'année 2010 à l'émission *Les années lumière* de Radio-Canada « pour la démonstration remarquable de l'instinct de conservation qui entraîne les oiseaux dans leurs grandes migrations ». Joël Bêty a été reçu à cette émission le dimanche 23 janvier 2011; l'émission *Découverte* a également proposé aux téléspectateurs une rencontre avec Joël Bêty. Le titre de « Scientifique de l'année de Radio-Canada », décerné pour la 24e année consécutive, est remis à une personnalité ou à une équipe qui, au cours de l'année écoulée, s'est illustrée dans sa discipline par une découverte, une publication ou une réalisation remarquable, de portée nationale ou internationale.

Joël Bêty with American Golden-Plover
(Photo by Joël Bêty)

Si l'on comprend bien comment les oiseaux migrent vers le nord, on ne sait pas vraiment pourquoi. Ces voyages sont épuisants, les avantages doivent donc être élevés. Le chercheur et son équipe, dont l'étudiante au doctorat Laura McKinnon, ont en effet montré, à l'aide d'une expérience minutieuse menée à la Baie James et dans l'Arctique canadien, que plus hautes sont les latitudes auxquelles nichent les oiseaux, plus grandes sont leurs chances d'échapper aux prédateurs. Leurs travaux, qui jettent une nouvelle lumière sur la raison des migrations des oiseaux, ont été publiés dans *Science* en janvier 2010 (McKinnon et al. 2010).

Pour tester leur hypothèse, les chercheurs ont installé 1555 nids artificiels, ressemblant à des nids de limicoles, entre le sud de la baie James et le nord de l'île d'Ellesmere, une distance d'environ 3350 km. Ils y ont déposé près de 7 000 œufs de caille et noté le

nombre d'œufs détruits par les prédateurs. « Avec les nids artificiels, explique Joël Bêty, nous pouvons comparer les risques de prédation à différents endroits. Ils permettent d'éliminer les effets confondants de certains autres facteurs pouvant influencer la survie des nids naturels, comme le comportement des parents. Notre question de départ était donc de savoir si des œufs, placés en milieux naturels, avaient moins de chance d'être trouvés par un prédateur lorsqu'ils étaient plus près du pôle Nord. » Résultat : à chaque degré de latitude franchi vers le nord, le risque de prédation diminue de 3,6 % pour une réduction totale de 66 %. Ces résultats, en plus d'expliquer pourquoi les oiseaux vont nicher si loin, soulèvent d'importantes questions quant aux effets potentiels des changements climatiques sur la faune des écosystèmes des hautes latitudes.

Cette étude a été réalisée dans le contexte de l'Année polaire internationale (API, 2007-2008), et grâce à des subventions obtenues à travers le réseau de centres d'excellence *ArcticNet* ainsi que par le projet API *Arctic Wildlife Observatories Linking Vulnerable EcoSystems (Arctic WOLVES)*. Les deux chercheurs, membres de la SCO-SOC, font partie de la Chaire de recherche du Canada en conservation des écosystèmes nordiques de l'UQAR et du Centre d'études nordiques. De plus, ils ont pu compter sur la collaboration de chercheurs et de techniciens en poste dans différentes bases d'observation dans le nord canadien.
Plus d'information est disponible sur www.uqar.ca ou au Service des communications de l'UQAR (mario_belanger@uqar.ca).

Joël Bêty, named research of the year by Radio-Canada

The text is adapted from http://www.cbc.ca/canada/north/story/2011/01/20/arctic-bird-bety.html#ixzz1CMKRqtHn

Joël Béty, a biologist at the University of Québec in Rimouski (UQAR), who uncovered why so many birds nest in the Arctic, has been named researcher of the year for 2010 by Radio-Canada. Joël Bêty was honoured on the radio program *Les années lumière* and profiled the same day on the television program *Découverte*. Both air on Radio-Canada, CBC's French-language service.

Joël Béty and his student Laura McKinnon, both SCO-SOC members, published their results in *Science* in January 2010 (McKinnon et al. 2010), showing that the risk of eggs being eaten and nests destroyed by predators decreases 3.6% for each degree of latitude farther north. The increased chance of survival for their young explains why so many birds make such a long migration north to nest, despite the costs, such as the energy required for the journey.

Research camp on Bylot Island (Photo by Joël Bêty)

"In the context of global warming, it will be important to record the movement of predators toward the north and the impact of these changes on birds that effectively find refuge in the High Arctic," Bêty told Radio-Canada.

Joël Bêty and Laura McKinnon conducted an experiment in which they placed 1,555 artificial nests between the southern end of James Bay and the north of Ellesmere Island. Each nest contained quail eggs. The researchers recorded how many eggs were destroyed by predators. After just two days, the eggs placed at the southern end of James Bay were completely destroyed by predators such as foxes, crows and gulls. In the far north, almost 60% of the nests remained intact after nine days.

The research was achieved in the context of the International Polar Year (IPY, 2007-2008), and thanks to grants obtained through the Network of Centres of Excellence *ArcticNet*, and the IPY project *Arctic Wildlife Observatories Linking Vulnerable EcoSystems (Arctic WOLVES)*. The two scientists belong to UQAR Canada Research Chair in Conservation of Northern Ecosystems and to the Centre d'études Nordiques. They also relied upon the collaboration of researchers and technicians working in a number of field stations in Canada's North.

For more information visit www.uqar.ca or contact Mario Bélanger, Service des communications, UQAR (mario_belanger@uqar.ca).

Reference: McKinnon, L., P.A. Smith, E. Nol, J.L. Martin, F.I. Doyle, K.F. Abraham, H.G. Gilchrist, R.I.G. Morrison and J. Bêty. 2010. Lower predation risk for migratory birds at high latitudes. Science 327: 326-327

2009 Taverner Award Report

Investigating the relationships between winter corticosteroid levels, isotope signatures, and reproductive effort in a long-lived seabird, Leach's Storm-petrel

Morgan Gilmour, Bucknell University

In migratory animals, factors such as food availability and environmental conditions during the non-breeding season and along the migratory route affect the nutritional condition of individuals during the following breeding season (Marra and Holberton 1998; Yerkes et al. 2008), and nutritional condition can affect breeding performance (Wendeln and Becker 1999). Seabirds are highly migratory, spending the majority of their lives at sea and returning to land for only a few months during the summer to breed. The logistical difficulties of monitoring seabirds throughout migration and the winter months limit our knowledge of how ecological factors affect seabirds during the non-breeding season. However, measures of stable isotopes in winter-grown feathers provide an estimate of dietary niches. Additionally, a new, noninvasive method uses feather samples to measures stress levels (Bortolotti et al. 2009), providing a unique window into physiological stress during this inaccessible time.

Because Leach's Storm-petrels (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) have large, stable populations (Huntington et al. 1996), they can serve as an informative reference point for understanding the links between winter ecology and reproductive effort in many migratory seabirds whose populations are declining. In 2009 and 2010, I sampled winter-grown feathers (molt pattern described by Ainley et al. 1976) and collected reproductive success data from Leach's Storm-petrels at Bowdoin Scientific Station, on Kent Island in New Brunswick, Canada (44°35'N, 66°45'W). I measured stable isotope signatures and corticosterone levels of winter-grown feathers (2009 and 2010) and of breeding season blood samples (2010 only) in order to examine potential links between wintering ecology and subsequent reproductive success. Feathers become metabolically inert after growth, so that amounts of hormones and isotopes are maintained indefinitely in the feather (Hobson and Clark 1992; Bortolotti et al. 2009). Isotope analyses of feathers and blood samples were conducted at the Stable Isotope Facility at the University of California, Davis. Feather corticosterone was analyzed in collaboration with C. Lattin and M. Romero at Tufts University.

Preliminary Results:

Stable isotopes: I sampled winter-grown feathers of approximately 150 Leach's Storm-petrels between 2009 and 2010; I also sampled blood to determine breeding season isotopic signatures in 2010 (Figure 1). In order to assess inter-individual variation in wintering ecology, I sampled feathers from the same 58 individuals in both 2009 and 2010. The winter-grown feathers from these individuals exhibited a mean change in ^{15}N signatures of -1.38 +/- 2.09‰ (range: -9.29 to 2.08‰). Animals preferentially incorporate heavier forms of isotopes such as ^{15}N into their tissues while excreting lighter forms (^{14}N). Therefore, the ratio of heavy to light isotopes in animal tissue increases with trophic level. The observed mean decrease in the ^{15}N signatures of Leach's Storm-petrels indicates that there was an overall decline in the trophic levels at which they fed from the winter of 2009 to the winter of 2010. Carbon isotopes, however, are not significantly enriched between trophic levels (Kelly 2000). The ^{13}C signatures of Leach's Storm-petrels shifted between the breeding and non-breeding seasons (Figure 1), suggesting a shift in latitude of the foraging areas (Graham et al. 2010), which is consistent with the migratory behaviour of Leach's Storm-petrels (Huntington et al. 1996).

Corticosterone: The mean corticosterone level of winter-grown feathers in 2010 was 0.16 +/- 0.06 pg corticosterone mm^{-1} (range: 0.061 to 0.386 pg corticosterone mm^{-1}). Leach's Storm-petrels are small (50 g), but small amounts of feathers yielded enough sample material with which to detect corticosterone, suggesting that this noninvasive tool can be easily used to assess stress levels in many bird species during inaccessible times of the year. This type of information about potential ecological stressors can provide researchers and wildlife managers with data that both complements long-term population monitoring and provides a more immediate data source in populations which are less well-monitored, so that we can make better-informed management decisions. Preliminary models do not show a strong connection between over-wintering ecology and reproductive success in Leach's Storm-petrels; further analyses are currently being conducted.

Future Avenues of Research:

Because telomeres do not shorten with age in Leach's Storm-Petrels (Haussmann et al. 2003), measurement of telomere length will serve as an indicator of physiological stress and an index of physiological quality. Oxidative stress assays will also help determine the role of individual quality in reproductive effort and wintering behaviours, and in the stress response. These assays are currently underway at Bucknell University.

Acknowledgements:

In addition to the Taverner Award, funding was provided by an Eastern Bird Banding Association Research Award, AOU Research Award, Sigma Xi Grants-in-Aid of Research, a MIGRATE Training Grant, and the Bucknell University Department of Biology.

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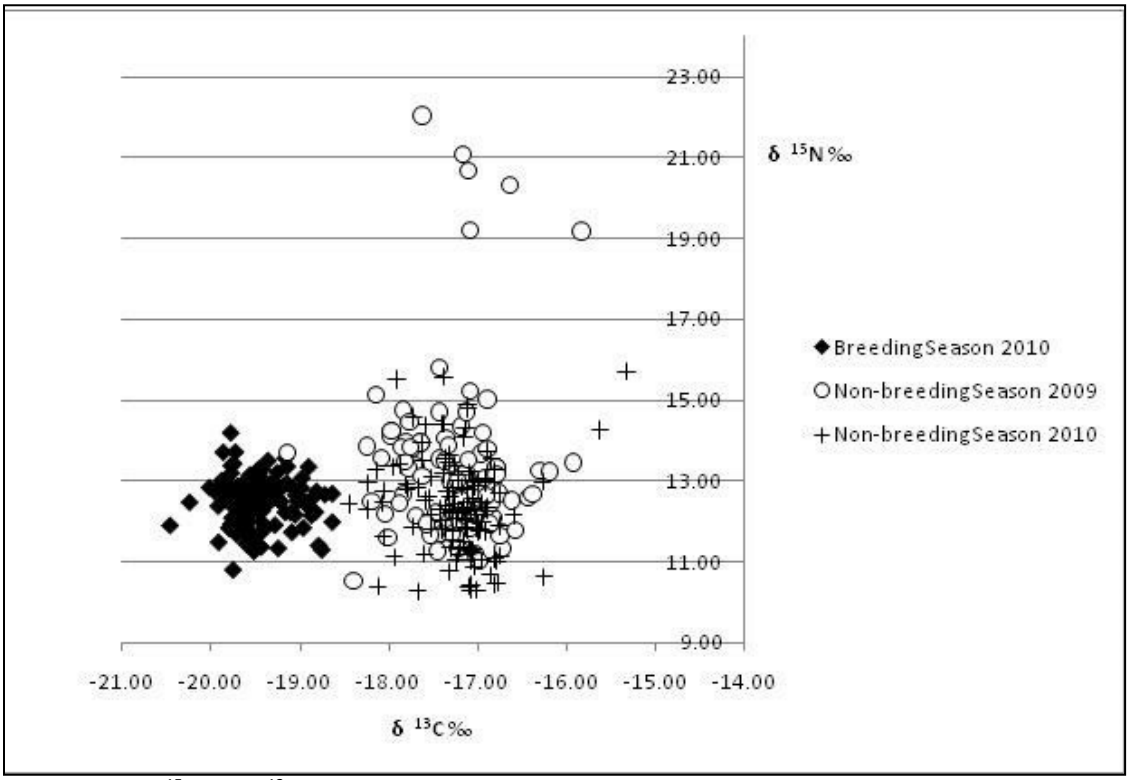

Figure 1: $\delta^{15}N$ and $\delta^{13}C$ values of Leach's Storm-petrel feathers during winter molt in 2009 (o) and 2010 (Δ), and blood during breeding in 2010 (◆.

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Check out our regularly updated job board on the SCO-SOC website, at http://www.sco-soc.ca/jobs.html.

Recent Canadian Ornithology Theses

Taylor, Bernie. 2011. Cormorant Management and the Leslie Street Spit. M.Sc. Thesis. Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, Toronto ON.

This research paper contains two distinct sections. The first section examines the management and development of the Leslie Street Spit, both historically, and in the context of current changes occurring at the site due to the presence of the largest cormorant colony on the Great Lakes. Various management visions for the site are explored, as are the concepts of balance and aesthetics in relation to the development of urban nature. The section concludes that management, specifically of the site's cormorant colony, is a necessary intervention, and by doing so, there is the potential for deepening human appreciation of non-human life. This conclusion is contingent upon a transparent management process that allows for stakeholder and public input to contribute to shaping management strategy. The second section of this paper presents the results of field research performed at the Spit in the summer of 2008. The study examined the effects of egg oiling on the behavior of ground-nesting adult cormorants. The research suggests that, for the behaviours included in our study, egg-oiling does not measurably affect the behaviour of ground-nesting adult birds. In addition, on average adult birds whose eggs were oiled incubated their eggs for approximately one week longer than birds whose eggs were not oiled. This suggests that birds whose eggs are oiled will attend their nest long enough to curtail opportunities for re-nesting within the breeding season, and hence, this management technique may be useful in future management activities at the Spit.

Rondel, Emily. 2010. Integrating Birder Knowledge into Ecological Monitoring Frameworks. M.Sc. Thesis. Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, Toronto ON.

Despite the great importance of in-depth monitoring data to the success of conservation programs, there is a widespread shortage of it, particularly in the Canadian national park system. To see how sparse monitoring data might be augmented, I compared information on avian population dynamics and habitat occupancy from two different sources. Local birdwatcher knowledge was compared to information from a bird-monitoring program at Point Pelee National Park for the Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) and the Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*). It was found that estimates of bird abundance differed significantly between these sources, and that they were not related through a predictive regression formula. Although this result implied that the data types were incompatible, each had different strengths that may be combined for improved monitoring in the future. In contrast, both sources' information on habitat preference largely agreed for the Wood Thrush, but differed for the Yellow-breasted Chat. Despite this, it was concluded that birder knowledge may give guidance to improve park monitoring strategies for both species, and that the different habitat comparison results were due to the disparate vegetation communities these species inhabit, rather than a reflection of the efficacy of birdwatcher knowledge in bird monitoring.

Major, Mélanie. 2011. L'influence des arbustes fruitiers sur la répartition des oiseaux en sapinière boréale (*Influence of berry shrubs on songbird distribution in a boreal fir forest)*. Université Laval, Québec QC.

La période suivant l'envol du nid et précédant la migration est critique pour les oiseaux forestiers, particulièrement pour les juvéniles qui doivent apprendre à se nourrir efficacement avant la migration automnale. A cette période, plusieurs oiseaux forestiers deviennent principalement frugivores et se déplacent fréquemment vers les jeunes peuplements forestiers. Ce déplacement pourrait être causé notamment par (1) la recherche de petits fruits ou de couvert anti-prédateurs par les oiseaux, (2) la fréquentation des lisières de peuplements ou (3) le transit des oiseaux entre différents peuplements matures via les jeunes peuplements. J'ai testé les hypothèses de la frugivorie, des lisières et du transit à la Forêt Montmorency, Québec, durant les étés 2007 et 2008. J'ai mené une expérience de retrait de fruits testant la prédiction que le taux de capture des oiseaux dans des filets japonais serait plus faible dans les parcelles sans fruits que dans des parcelles témoins. De plus, j'ai évalué le mûrissement et la consommation des baies de sureau rouge (Sambucus racemosa) dans les parcelles témoins suivant chaque session de capture, et modélisé les taux de capture d'oiseaux en fonction de l'abondance des arbustes fruitiers à différentes échelles spatiales. J'ai testé les hypothèses de lisière et de transit respectivement en comparant les taux de capture à différentes distances des lisières des peuplements matures, ainsi que dans des filets placés de façon parallèle vs. perpendiculaire à ces lisières. Soixante-quatre pourcent des oiseaux, représentant 15 des 33 espèces capturées, étaient des frugivores saisonniers. Chaque année, la consommation des baies de sureau approchait 100 % en fin de saison d'échantillonnage, ce qui suggère que ces fruits pourraient être en quantité limitante. Le retrait expérimental des fruits a réduit le taux de capture des espèces frugivores de 45 %, mais n'avait aucune influence sur les autres espèces. Il n'y avait aucune relation entre l'abondance des oiseaux et des fruits au-delà de quelques mètres des filets. Les taux de capture étaient indépendants de la distance aux lisières de peuplements matures, mais ils étaient plus élevés dans les filets parallèles vs. perpendiculaires aux lisières dans le cas des espèces nichant dans les peuplements matures.

En sapinière boréale, on trouve les arbustes fruitiers surtout dans les jeunes peuplements au stade gaulis. Or, c'est à ce stade que s'applique l'éclaircie précommerciale (ÉPC), un traitement sylvicole communément utilisé pour augmenter la croissance en diamètre des tiges éclaircies et orienter la composition en espèces des jeunes peuplements. Ce traitement soulève d'importantes préoccupations quant aux répercussions sur la faune associée aux milieux denses et à l'élimination possible des arbustes fruitiers dans les peuplements

traités en ÉPC. Ces préoccupations ont mené à l'application expérimentale d'ÉPC à valeur faunique (ÉPCvf) à la Forêt Montmorency, où l'évaluation des tiges compétitrices est moins sévère que dans l'ÉPC conventionnelle. J'ai examiné l'impact de cette ÉPC sur l'abondance et la répartition des arbustes fruitiers en effectuant un inventaire d'arbustes fruitiers par transects dans des peuplements traités en ÉPCvf et non traités (témoins). J'ai modélisé l'abondance d'arbustes fruitiers en fonction du traitement et de variables de sites (pente, altitude et exposition). De façon générale, les résultats indiquent que le nombre d'arbustes fruitiers semble être plus élevé dans les peuplements traités en ÉPCvf par rapport aux peuplements témoins, mais la différence n'est pas significative. L'abondance d'arbustes fruitiers était très variable dans les coupes et la réponse à l'ÉPCvf variait selon les espèces. Néanmoins, l'ÉPC à valeur faunique ne semble pas avoir d'impact négatif sur l'abondance d'arbustes fruitiers. J'attribue le maintien des arbustes fruitiers au fait qu'une bonne partie ne sont pas coupés lors de l'éclaircie et, dans le cas où les tiges sont coupées, à l'augmentation de lumière et de nutriments suivant l'éclaircie qui favorise les rejets de souche. Finalement, la répartition des arbustes fruitiers était fortement agrégée (contagieuse), mais n'était pas liée à la distance aux chemins ni aux lisières de forêt mature. Cependant, l'ÉPC a significativement réduit le taux d'agrégation des arbustes fruitiers.

Il semble que l'abondance de fruits et le transit entre les peuplements matures expliquent en bonne partie l'abondance des oiseaux dans les jeunes peuplements en fin d'été. Ainsi, on devra s'assurer que les traitements sylvicoles en sapinière boréale maintiennent cette ressource dans une mosaïque de jeunes coupes à proximité de forêts matures. L'ÉPC pratiquée dans l'aire d'étude semble non nuisible pour les oiseaux, car l'abondance d'arbustes fruitiers y est comparable aux peuplements non-traités. Toutefois, la réduction de l'aggrégation des arbustes fruitiers pourrait avoir une influence sur l'efficacité de recherche de nourriture des oiseaux frugivores. Les résultats de cette étude sur l'abondance et la répartition des arbustes fruitiers peuvent difficilement être extrapolés à l'ÉPC conventionnelle, mais donnent un apperçu sur la dynamique des arbustes fruitiers en forêt boréale. Il est nécessaire de mieux comprendre les effets de l'ÉPC et d'autres traitements sylvicoles sur les arbres et arbustes fruitiers, ainsi que les facteurs régissant la production de fruits en milieux forestier, car c'est une ressource qui est possiblement limitante pour les oiseaux en période post-reproductrice.

Introducing Ornithology Exchange

Ornithology Exchange is an exciting new social website for ornithologists sponsored by a dozen ornithological societies and other organizations in the Americas including SCO-SOC. Ornithology Exchange is designed to: provide a forum to allow ornithologists to communicate with each other about all aspects of ornithology; provide a mechanism for ornithological societies to communicate with their members; foster a sense of community and collaboration among ornithologists. The site includes online discussion forums, job announcements, and a wide range of articles profiling ornithological research and researchers. Additional content, including user-generated blogs, will be added over the coming months. You must be member of a participating society or organization to become a member of the site. Visit http://ornithologyexchange.org to register.

The Jesus-bird stops at my window
Sherrene Kevan

Sitting perfect in my outstretched hands
The world contained in tiny feathered thoughts
As heart beats pulse their lifelines through neural networks
Of compass and magnet
The wind gently blows life into its somewhat still body
Forgiving, forgiving

The prophets tell me in darkness there is light jesus-bird,
As you open your eyes to the earth
As your wings prepare for leaving
Your spirit re-awakens, my spirit, re-awakens
And for one moment in time our worlds collided

Hands lifting you to your sky
You free and precious bird, you
Angel in wings
You tiny package gift
Now fly, fly, fly

How Vulnerable are North America's Birds?

(adapted from the Bird Studies Canada e-newsletter, 28 Jan 2011)

Partners in Flight has released *Saving Our Shared Birds* (http://www.savingoursharedbirds.org), a report carried out by scientists from Canada, Mexico, and the United States, including several BirdLife Partners. After assessing the vulnerability of all 882 native landbirds, 148 species (17%) were found to require immediate conservation action. Among these are:

- 44 species having limited distributions
- 80 tropical species, which depend on deciduous, highland, and evergreen forests in Mexico
- 24 species that breed in temperate-zone forests, grasslands, and arid habitats

Hawk-eagles, wood partridges, *Cyanolyca* jays, and macaws are some of the birds included in the list of 148 species. Habitat loss is the greatest threat to these birds. The report concludes with six steps that Canada, Mexico, and the United States must take to reverse the trend of declining North American landbird populations.

Student Research

The Physiological Stress of Two Closely-related Songbirds During Their Breeding Season: the Polygynandrous Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*) and the Socially Monogamous Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*)

Hubert Askanas, M.Sc. Candidate, University of New Brunswick

We hope to determine whether the extent of parental contribution in two closely related songbirds with different mating systems has an effect on their physiological stress during the breeding season. Bicknell's Thrushes are polygynandrous, meaning that males mate with many females and females mate with many males, usually resulting in one to four males feeding chicks at multiple nests. Swainson's Thrushes are socially monogamous, with only one male feeder at the nest. The difference in the number of male feeders at the nests of these species implies different levels of parental contribution in the two species, creating a unique opportunity to study the effects of mating systems on the physiological stress of these birds during their breeding season.

One of our major goals this past summer was to find two or more Bicknell's Thrush nests in one site and simultaneously record the nests using camcorders. Against all odds, we managed to accomplish this goal. We have several days' worth of consecutive filming of two nests, sharing a male provider (Figure 1). To our knowledge this is the first detailed account of a male feeding at two nests in New Brunswick, and the fourth account for the species.

Figure 1: This male Bicknell's Thrush was first captured at Mount Mitchell, NB, in 2008. He is at least 4 years old in these photos. He would spend the first half of the day providing at one nest, and then would switch to the other for the remainder of the day. The nests were approximately 80 meters apart.

Figure 2: A Swainson's Thrush parasitized by larval mites (Photo by Hubert Askanas)

In 2009 we noticed some orange coloured polyps around the cloaca of three Swainson's Thrushes (Figure 2). In 2010 the number jumped to 16 Swainson's Thrushes, five Bicknell's Thrushes, as well as several White-throated Sparrows and Fox Sparrows. These birds had been infected with larval mites (Figure 3 shows a mite sampled from a Swainson's Thrush), which I am in the process of identifying. The six-legged larval stage is parasitic, and feeds upon the flesh of vertebrates. If you have seen this parasite on other birds, please e-mail me at hubert.askanas@unb.ca.

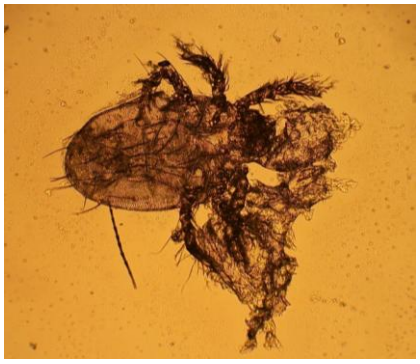


Figure 3: A larval mite at 400x magnification (Photo by Hubert Askanas)

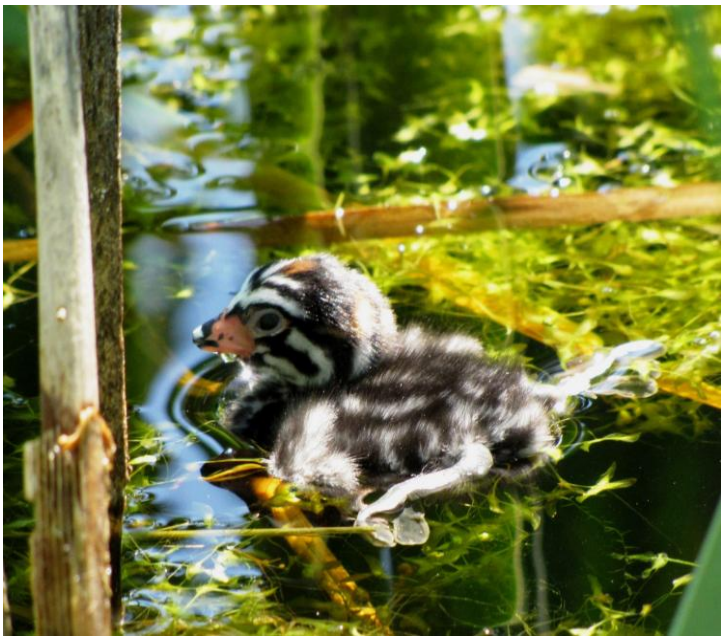
Acknowledgments

This project was supported by Bird Studies Canada, Canadian Wildlife Services, Environment Canada/Science Horizons, the Department of Natural Resources, the Atlantic Cooperative Wildlife Ecology Research Network, and the New Brunswick Wildlife Trust Fund.

Announcements

The 5th North American Ornithological Conference, Vancouver BC, 14-18 August 2012

We are pleased to announce the ***FIRST CALL FOR SYMPOSIUM AND WORKSHOP PROPOSALS*** for the 5th North American Ornithological Conference, to be held 14-18 August 2012 on the University of British Columbia campus in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.



Grebe chick (Photo by Dan Routhier)

Proposals for symposia should contain the following details: symposium title; the names, institution or affiliation, addresses, phone, fax, e-mail addresses of organizer(s) and keynote speaker(s); a description (500 words maximum) of the objectives and conceptual flow of the symposium. In addition, provide a separate 300-word justification for why this symposium is important and timely (i.e., in terms of fundamental science or the application of science to address management problems) and why it would be interesting to attendees (e.g., to attract >100 participants). Proposals that provide opportunities for speakers to present alternate perspectives or evidence about controversial topics are encouraged. Additional information about the application process, selection criteria, presentation timing and format, and symposium structure will be placed on the NAOC web site at http://www.naoc-v2012.com.

Symposia will be limited to half-day sessions (approximately 3 hours, composed of 15 or 30 minute time slots); there will be no full-day symposia. Symposium and Workshop organizers and presenters will be expected to pay for full conference registration, and will be responsible for their own travel expenses. Presenters at symposia will not be considered for presentations in contributed paper sessions (i.e., limit of one oral presentation per person at the meeting). Abstracts for papers given during symposia must be submitted as part of the normal abstract submission process and deadlines (to be announced). Symposium organizers should confirm attendance by prospective speakers.

Willow Ptarmigan (Photo by Scott Wilson)

Proposals for workshops should contain the following details: workshop title; the names, institution or affiliation, addresses, phone, fax, e-mail addresses of organizer(s) or instructor(s); a 300-word justification for why this workshop is important or useful to attendees; maximum number of participants; and time, space and resource (e.g., computing) requirements. Workshops will be scheduled before, during (evenings) or after the main conference.

The deadline for submission of proposals for Symposia or Workshops (Word file or PDF) is 15 June 2011, with decisions being sent to applicants within three months of submission. Send enquiries and proposals to NAOC2012@ec.gc.ca. In some cases, symposium and workshop organizers may be contacted by the Chair of the Scientific Program Committee (Bob Clark) prior to final decisions to discuss proposals.

4th Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group Meeting, Simon Fraser University, Fraser River Delta, British Columbia, 11-15 August 2011

The 4th Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group/SRGA meeting will be held at Simon Fraser University between 11 and 15 August, 2011. It will bring together researchers, managers, and other shorebird enthusiasts, with an emphasis on hemispheric species and systems. We hope for and will facilitate substantial Latin American participation. The first of such meetings to be held in Canada is hosted by the Centre for Wildlife Ecology at SFU, with support from Environment Canada, USFWS and the US Forest Service. Updated information is available at our website: http://www.sfu.ca/biology/wildberg/4WHSG/4WHSG.htm. For further information, e-mail WHSGmeet@sfu.ca, or contact Dov Lank or Ron Ydenberg. Hope to see you in August in Vancouver!

Flock of Dunlin (Photo by Toby St. Clair)

2011 Grassland Bird Survey – Volunteers Needed in Ontario!

Volunteer surveyors are needed for our Grassland Bird Survey (GBS) beginning in Spring 2011. The GBS is a collaborative effort of Bird Studies Canada, Wildlife Preservation Canada, and the Canadian Wildlife Service to locate Loggerhead Shrikes (*migrans* subspecies) while at the same time collecting information on other grassland bird species associated with shrike habitat. The survey results will help to improve our understanding of bird species composition in Ontario's remaining grasslands.

Grassland birds have demonstrated more significant and widespread population declines than any other group of North American birds. Given its need for large areas of suitable habitat, the Loggerhead Shrike serves as a flagship species for grassland birds in general. The GBS will focus on grassland habitats in the key breeding areas of the Loggerhead Shrike including the Carden, Napanee, and Smith's Falls limestone plains, the area around Pembroke/Renfrew, Grey and Bruce Counties in the Bruce Peninsula, and Manitoulin Island. Participants will be asked to complete a survey of a suite of grassland bird species compiled based on North American migratory bird population trends as well as results of the second Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. Surveyors will conduct 15-minute roadside surveys along assigned 'sites' from which high quality, grassland habitat is visible. Each volunteer will be provided with a survey kit containing detailed survey methodology, data forms, and survey maps.

If you are interested in participating in this project and would like more information, please contact the GBS Coordinator, Erica Lagios, at Wildlife Preservation Canada, 519-836-9314 or 1 (800) 956-6608 (toll free), or by e-mail gbs@wildlifepreservation.ca. Please confirm your participation prior to 18 March, 2011. We hope we can count on your support!

Short-eared Owl study

Bird Studies Canada is continuing to monitor Short-eared Owls this winter as researchers across North America and Europe try to learn more about this poorly understood owl that is classified as a species of Special Concern in Canada.

Using satellite and radio telemetry, and volunteer-supplied observations, Bird Studies Canada (Ontario Region) has tracked large- and small-scale movements of Short-eared Owls in Canada for the past three seasons, and plans to continue during winter 2010-2011. To assist in this important project, Bird Studies Canada asks field observers to report any sightings of Short-eared Owls this winter; please include the date, location, time, number of owls seen, and the type of habitat in which they were observed.

If you would like to report a sighting please send an e-mail to Kathy Jones, volunteer@birdscanada.org. Although this study has concentrated on eastern owls, they request sightings from across North America.

Information Exchange

Watch for Banded Caspian Terns

(Raphaël Lavoie, lavoie.raphael@gmail.com)

We installed archival geolocators on Caspian Terns during summer 2010 at Hamilton Harbour with yellow Darvic bands with black alpha-numerical codes (RA-01 to RA-10) to track their migration route. Please report any sighting (number, date and location) to Raphaël Lavoie, PhD student, Queen's University.

Colour-banded Caspian Tern
(Photo by Raphaël Lavoie)

Research Photos Sought for Upcoming Book

(Robert Alvo, robalvo1@gmail.com)

I am looking for photos for an upcoming book called, "Being a Bird in North America" (www.babina.ca). Specifically, I want photos of North American birds in situations in which it was your research that allowed you to get the photos. Some examples:

- young bird, super close-up
- bird in net, trap, or hand
- nest with young and/or eggs
- dead or sick bird
- aberrant birds
- taking blood for DNA sampling
- bird with transmitter or other device
- specialized field gear (e.g. traps, nets, nest-checking mirrors, nest boxes, nest towers, banding nets, observation blinds)
- field biologists at work (e.g. nest-searching, capturing birds, nest-checking, banding, weighing, surgery, obtaining stomach contents, photographing, observing, doing point counts, doing Christmas Bird Counts, doing Breeding Bird Censuses, doing Breeding Bird Surveys)
- habitat specific to a species (Jack Pine woodland for Kirtland's Warbler), or of particular interest (e.g. small prairie pothole for nesting/brooding waterfowl)

If in doubt, send it. Photo credit will be provided next to the photo in the book, and I'll publish your 50-word bio in the book. Please contact me by e-mail or by phone at (613) 236-0660 and I'll call you right back. Sending up to 10 megabytes by e-mail is fine. Thank you.

Recent Canadian Ornithological Paper:

Alvo, R. 2009. Common Loon, *Gavia immer*, breeding success in relation to lake pH and lake size over 25 years. Canadian Field-Naturalist 123(2): 146–156.

I monitored Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) breeding success in relation to lake pH (range 4.0–8.5) between 1982 and 2007 on 38 single-pair lakes (5–88 ha) in the Sudbury, Ontario, area. No chicks fledged on lakes with pH < 4.4. Chicks fledged on lakes with slightly higher pH only if the lakes were relatively large. Acidic lakes became less acidic as sulphur dioxide emissions from the Sudbury smelters and sulphur deposition from other long-range sources decreased. Two lakes initially too acidic to support successful loon reproduction eventually had successful reproduction. One loon pair used two large acidic lakes (combined area 140 ha) connected by shallow rapids, and one of the adults made extremely long dives (χ – = 99 s) while foraging for the chicks. One chick died on that lake after apparently ingesting a very large food item; the lack of smaller items was attributed to the lake's acidity. My results suggest that a shortage of food for chicks is the main reason why low pH reduces breeding success. I suggest that, for lakes without high levels of dissolved organic carbon (DOC), the critical pH for loon breeding success is approximately 4.3, and the suboptimal pH is approximately 4.4–6.0.

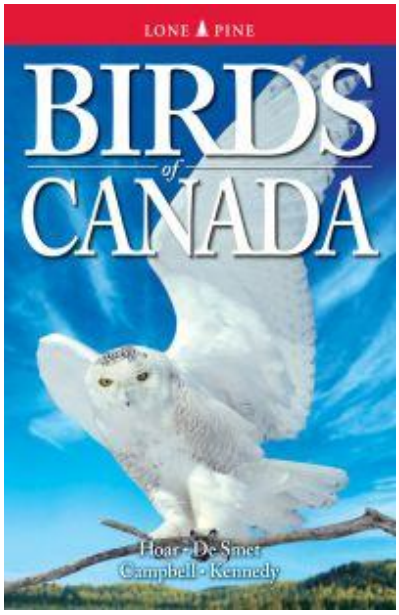
For a copy of the article contact Robert Alvo at 219-140 Mann Avenue, Conservation Co-op, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 1E5 Canada; or e-mail: robalvo1@gmail.com. Now that I have published the results of this 25-year study, it would be a pleasure to turn over the data, literature, maps, etc. to a scientist interested in furthering it along the lines below; if interested, please contact Rob Alvo at robalvo1@gmail.com.

1) Determining whether lake pH and loon reproductive success continue to recover
2) Examining food resources for loon chicks in relation to pH (a weakness of my study)
3) Observing loon family foraging behaviour
4) Determining whether mercury may have played a role in the results I found (I did not measure mercury levels in loon chick food)
5) Documenting the establishment of any exotic animals or plants that might impact loons
6) Determining whether thermocline depth may be declining as a result of global warming

Book Review

Hoar, T.L., K. De Smet, R.W. Campbell, and G. Kennedy. 2010. Birds of Canada. Lone Pine Publishing, Edmonton AB. 528 pages.

Hard cover ($39.95, ISBN 978-1-55105-603-6) / soft cover ($32.95, ISBN 978-1-55105-589-3), 15.2 cm x 22.9 cm



Birds of Canada is the latest bird guide from Lone Pine Publishing. It covers 451 regularly occurring bird species in Canada and 40 rare and accidental species. It uses the same successful format as other Lone Pine titles such as *Saskatchewan Birds* and *Saskatchewan Manitoba Nature Guide*[2,3]. Each species account is anchored by outstanding artist illustrations of species. For many species, a limited number of plumage variations (gender, breeding/non breeding and adult/juvenile) are included. Colour photographs are a new addition to the species accounts for regularly occurring species. I find both find illustrations and photographs helpful when they are done well. However, not all 40 rare species accounts in this volume have illustrations. Full species accounts include an introductory section in larger text highlighting natural history information not covered in other sections in the species account. Each full species account has a clear sharp Canadian range map and the following seven sections: ID, size, habitat, nesting, feeding, voice and similar species. Range maps are zoomed in for species with restricted ranges in Canada. In the ID section, plumage variations are briefly discussed. I prefer a more visual way highlighting field mark differences in plumages and species like in Lone Pine's *Compact Guide to Saskatchewan and Manitoba Birds*[4]. In the similar species section, differences between similar species are briefly discussed and also include page numbers for similar species. Text in the species accounts is informative, clear and easy to read without unnecessary technical jargon. Rare species accounts include ID and size and a short paragraph describing habitats and their normal range and where and when in Canada have they been recorded.

The book includes a very handy checklist that can be photocopied for future use and a reference section of 24 selected books and websites on the birds of Canada and the United States. It also has a useful three-page glossary. The glossary concludes with a sharp and clear and labelled illustration of external avian anatomy. In the photo credits, a limited number of photographs are identified for non-commercial educational or personal use by the reader. One can find information on individual species very easily with the table contents, a back cover quick reference guide and a very handy 17-page illustrated reference guide of 451 species at the beginning of the book. Each group of related birds is colour coded on the pages and in the table of contents and the two reference guides to aid faster searches of bird species in the book.

How does this book compare to Dorling Kindersley's *Birds of Canada*?[1,5] Lone Pine's book covers 20 more species in more detail but only 40 rare species as compared to about 170 in Dorling Kindersley's book. This book is more compact with about a 20% smaller width and length. With a smaller and less bulky book, it is can be more readily used in the field. The hard cover Lone Pine version is sturdier than Dorling Kindersley's more flexible hard cover binding. Lone Pine has superior range maps with a focus on Canada. I do like Dorling Kindersley's approach to species ID with key features identified and labelled on the bird photo itself and the inclusion of more plumage variations. Unlike Lone Pine, Dorling Kindersley also includes lifespan, social structure, weight or mass and conservation status in all accounts of regularly occurring species. Dorling Kindersley includes short introductions for each bird family and a more extensive glossary but lacks a reference section and has no species checklist. Dorling Kindersley took a different approach to the introduction of its guide with heavily illustrated two-page sections on evolution, anatomy and flight, migration, courtship and mating, nests and eggs and species identification. In short, both books have their strengths and weaknesses. I often use both books and would love to see the best of both books in a single volume.

In conclusion, this attractive bird guide has many useful features and therefore, I would recommend Lone Pine Publishing's Birds of Canada for beginner birders and for field use.

Reviewed by Rob Warnock, e-mail: warnockr@accesscomm.ca

Footnotes:

1 Bird, D.M. 2010. Birds of Canada. Dorling Kindersley. New York, NY.
2 Kagume, K. 2010. Saskatchewan Manitoba Nature Guide. Lone Pine Publishing, Edmonton, AB.
3 Smith, A. 2001. Saskatchewan Birds. Lone Pine Publishing, Edmonton, AB.
4 Smith, A., K. De Smet, K. Kagume, and C. Adams. 2005. Compact Guide to Saskatchewan and Manitoba Birds. Lone Pine Publishing, Edmonton, AB.
5 Warnock, R.G. 2010. Birds of Canada edited by D.M. Bird. Dorling Kindersley, New York, NY. Picoides 23 (2): 22-23.

SCO – SOC Information

Contact information:

Name	Title	Phone	Fax	E-mail
Officers for 2010/2011:				
Dr. Erica Nol	President	705-748-1011 (ext. 7640)	705-748-1139	enol@trentu.ca
Dr. Joe Nocera	Vice-President / President-elect	705-755-5220	705-755-1559	joe.nocera@ontario.ca
Dr. David Bird	Past President	514-398-7760	514-398-7990	david.bird@mcgill.ca
Mr. Pierre Lamothe	Treasurer	418-829-0379	418-829-0584	beaudet.lamothe@sympatico.ca
Ms. Thérèse Beaudet	Membership Secretary	418-829-0379	418-829-0584	beaudet.lamothe@sympatico.ca
Ms. Brenda Dale	Recording Secretary	780-951-8686 (ext. 495)	n/a	brenda.dale@ec.gc.ca
Dr. Ken Abraham	Recording Secretary	705-755-1547	705-755-1559	ken.abraham@ontario.ca
Dr. Marcel Gahbauer	Co-editor, *Picoides*	403-475-8093	n/a	marcel@migrationresearch.org
Mr. Rob Warnock	Co-editor, *Picoides*	306-586-2492	n/a	warnockr@accesscomm.ca
Voting Members of Council: (* second term)				
Mr. Marc Avey	Member of Council*	780-492-5844	n/a	marc.t.avey@gmail.com
Ms. Debbie Badzinski	Member of Council*	519-586-3531 (ext. 211)	n/a	dbadzinski@bsc-eoc.org
Dr. Erin Bayne	Member of Council	780-492-4165	n/a	bayne@ualberta.ca
Dr. Russ Dawson	Member of Council*	250-960-6068	250-960-5845	dawsonr@unbc.ca
Dr. Sarah Jamieson	Member of Council*	011-64-6-356-9099 (ext. 7964)	n/a	s.jamieson1@massey.ac.nz
Dr. Paul Martin	Member of Council*	613-533-6000 (ext. 36598)	n/a	martinp@biology.queensu.ca
Dr. Ian Warkentin	Member of Council	709-637-6200 (ext. 6246)	n/a	iwarkent@swgc.mun.ca

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Bruce Falls	1992-1994				

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www.sco-soc.ca/membership.html

SCO-SOC membership forms can be found at the link above. Current membership rates are as follows:

Student	$10.00 / year
Regular	$25.00 / year ($35.00 / year outside Canada)
Sustaining	$50.00 / year
Life	$500.00

SCO-SOC Website
www.sco-soc.ca/index.html

The SCO-SOC website includes sections on membership, meetings, news, publications, awards, information for students, an overview of SCO-SOC, and links of interest to members and other visitors.

To suggest any additions or corrections for the website, contact webmaster Joe Nocera at joe.nocera@ontario.ca.

Submissions to *Picoides*:

Articles and photos relevant to Canadian ornithology are welcomed by the editors. If submitting photos, please save them in tiff or jpeg format with descriptive file names, and supply captions including common names of species, location, date, photographer, and any other notes of interest. Deadlines for submission are February 15, May 15, and October 15. Please send all submissions to Rob Warnock at warnockr@accesscomm.ca.

Disclaimer: *Picoides* is not a peer-reviewed journal, and the publication of an article in *Picoides* does not imply endorsement by SCO-SOC.