PICOIDES

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Thick-billed Murre Photo by David Cahlander

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Sharp-tailed Grouse. Photo by David Raitt

Editor's Message

What did you do on International Migratory Bird Day (May 13)? I hope you did some birding.

I went to inaugural Wings over Wascana Nature Festival in Wascana Park in Regina. Wascana Park is the largest urban park in North America. Friends of Wascana Marsh did a wonderful job with the festival and the sold out fundraiser the Thursday night before. Congratulations! I won a small oil painting of a Boreal Owl at the fundraiser. Bill Lishman or Father Goose was the featured speaker at the festival and the fundraiser. Bill was hilarious with his many stories including teaching captive geese and cranes to migrate with his ultralight aircraft. There was entertainment, arts and crafts, fun eco-games, First Nation storytelling and a huge selection of guided hikes at the Festival. Thankfully, the weather cooperated and a large crowd of all ages came out to the Festival.

With casual birding with friends at the Festival, I saw and/or heard these birds: Yellow-rumped Warbler (lots of them), Palm Warbler, Black-throated Green warbler, Yellow Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Hermit Thrush, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Canada Goose, Mallard, Killdeer, American Coot, Blue-winged Teal, American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Eared Grebe, Clark's Grebe, Horned Grebe, Western Grebe and Great Horned Owl. It was a great day for me.

Anyway. Friends of Wascana Marsh was founded in 2003 to support and conserve the Wascana Creek and surrounding marsh habitat for what is known as the Wascana Marsh Nature Project. They strive to foster respect for a rich ecosystem and demonstrates a sustainable co-existence with all living things. They are also committed to forging partnerships with leaders, educators, and community supporters to develop world-class interpretive, conservation, nature based tourism and research opportunities that will enhance the public's enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of the Wascana Marsh. I hope you support your local ornithological/ nature organizations that help protect and enhance your favourite birding spots.

On a final note, I need all members to continue to submit material and I welcome your feedback to improve *Picoides*. After all, it is your publication. I look forward to hearing from you.

Cheers,

Rob Warnock
Editor of Picoides

Palm Warbler. Photo by Jean-Sébastien Guénette

Seabirds as Indicators of Northern Marine Ecosystems

By Kyle Elliott, Taverner Award Recipient

In the Canadian Arctic, where marine surveys are costly and logistically difficult, seabird diets are often the only long-term data that can be used to monitor shifts in ecosystem-level processes. For instance, Thick-billed Murres (*Uria lomvia*) in northern Hudson Bay have shifted their diet from Arctic cod, an ice-associated species, to capelin, a north temperate species (Gaston et al. 2003, 2005). In the absence of commercial fisheries in Hudson Bay, this major change in the marine ecosystem was not tracked by other monitoring tools. Using seabird diets to indicate these shifts, however, requires a comprehensive knowledge of seabird foraging behaviour (Davoren and Montevecchi 2003).

During Summer 2005, I received a Taverner Award from the Society of Canadian Ornithologists to investigate the foraging behaviour of Thick-billed Murres in northern Hudson Bay. Specifically, I used information from time-depth-temperature recorders (TDTRs) to test the hypothesis that foraging radius, dive depth, dive duration and dive shape correlates with prey type. Because I attached TDTRs to murre legs, we were able to record time-activity budgets (Fig. 1). When birds were at the colony, the temperature reading was near body temperature (>15 ºC). When the birds were in flight, the temperature reading was near air temperature (5-15 ºC). When birds were in the water, the temperature reading was near water temperature (<5 ºC). In addition, the pressure sensor recorded the depth of each dive in 3 s increments. Because Thick-billed Murres, like most alcids, use their bills to carry prey items to their chicks, I could visually identify each prey species brought back to the colony during 24-48 hr feeding watches.

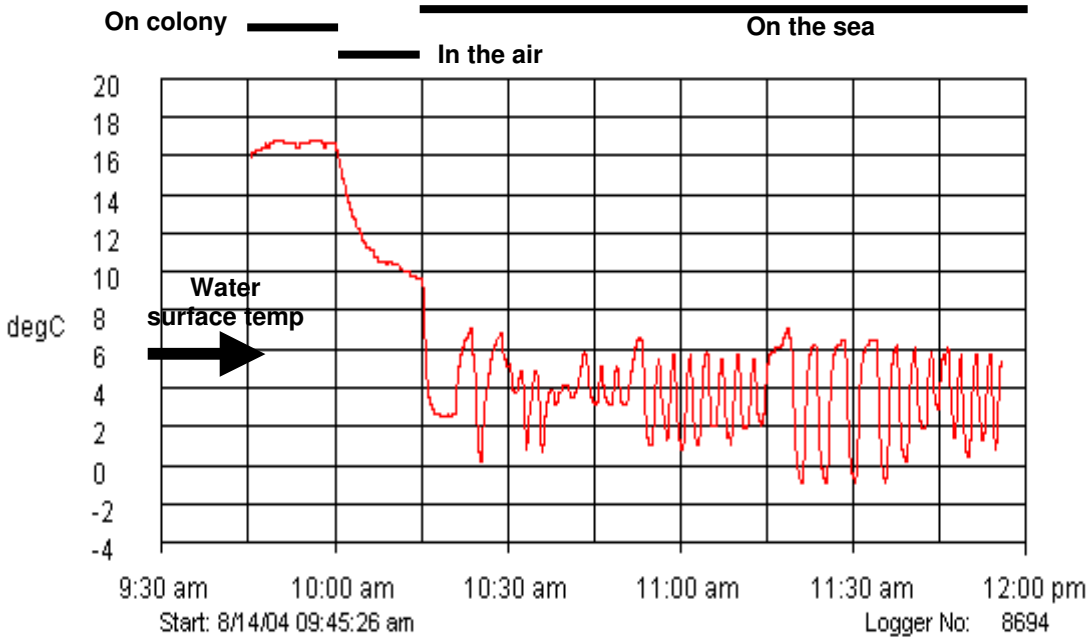

Figure 1. A TDTR temperature recording from a bird that left the colony and began foraging.

The foraging behaviour of 37 Thick-billed Murres was monitored showing clear patterns related to the prey species brought back to nestlings. I assumed that prey items were captured on the final

dive prior to returning to the colony, and that the maximum depth of the final dive was the depth at which prey items were captured. Squid (*Gonatus* spp.) was usually captured >80 m and all amphipods (*Parathemisto*) were captured between 50-80 m. Sandlance (*Ammodytes*) and fish doctors (*Gymnelus*) were captured at shallow depths (<50 m). Other species, however, showed much greater variation in depths, suggesting that they are present at a variety of depths (Fig. 2).

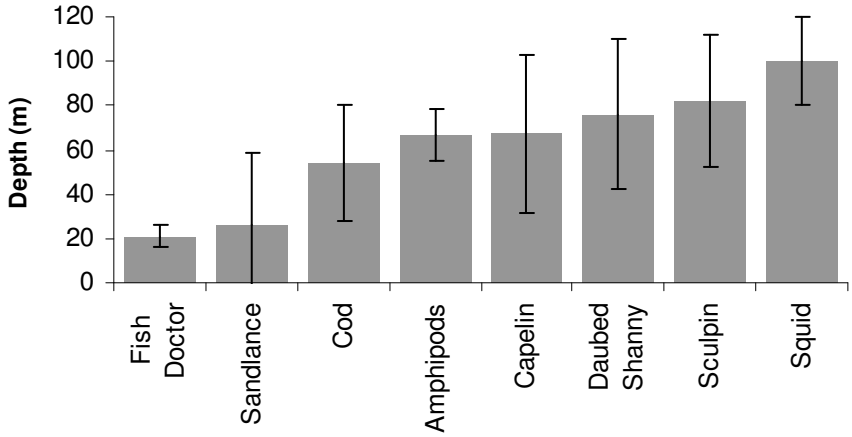

Figure 2. Mean depth (± SD) at which the eight main prey species were captured.

I estimated distance of foraging locations by assuming that the bird flew directly back to the colony after catching the prey item. I assumed that distance was approximately equal to flight time divided by a mean flight speed of 75 km/hr (Elliott and Gaston 2005). Small prey items, such as invertebrates (amphipods and squid) and sandlance, were captured relatively close to the colony (<10 km; Fig. 3). Large prey items, such as Arctic cod (*Boreogadus*) and fish doctors, were captured relatively far from the colony (>20 km; Fig. 3). This suggests that large, profitable items may have been depleted from the area around the colony or that larger prey items were available at longer distances from the colony.

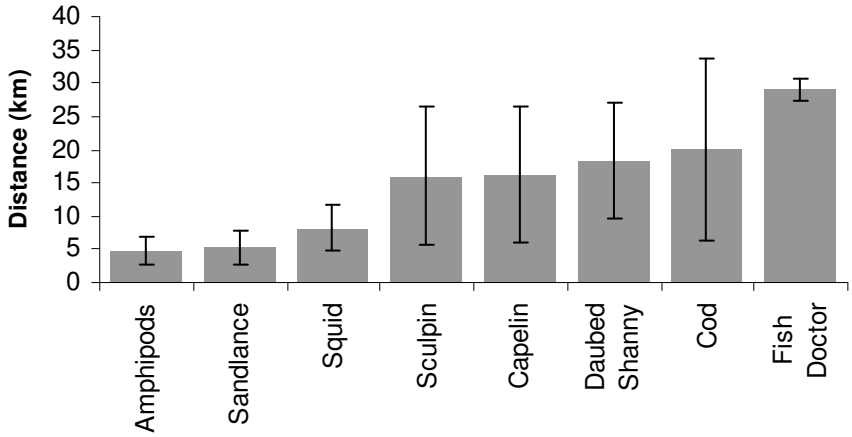

Figure 3. Mean distance (± SD) at which the eight main prey species were captured.

Dive shape is the third aspect of foraging behaviour that I was able to link to prey type. Over 95 % of dives could be classified as either V- or U-shaped, depending on whether they included bottom

time (at maximum depth, depth did not change by >0.5 m for 12 s or longer; U-shaped) or did not include bottom time (V-shaped). Some dives changed direction multiple times (W-shaped) or were otherwise erratic (irregular-shaped). I classified all dives during the final dive bout prior to arrival at the colony as either V-shaped or not V-shaped. Pelagic prey items, such as amphipods, squid and capelin (*Mallotus*), were primarily captured during V-shaped dive bouts, whereas benthic prey items, such as daubed shanny and sculpin were captured primarily during non V-shaped dive bouts (Fig. 4). This suggests that V-shaped dive bouts are linked to mid-water foraging, while non V-shaped (primarily U-shaped) dive bouts are linked to benthic foraging. Thus, dive shape may be a useful tool for identifying the habitat type used during foraging. Interestingly, Arctic cod was primarily caught during non V-shaped dive bouts, suggesting that the cod were mostly taken near the seabed (Fig. 4).

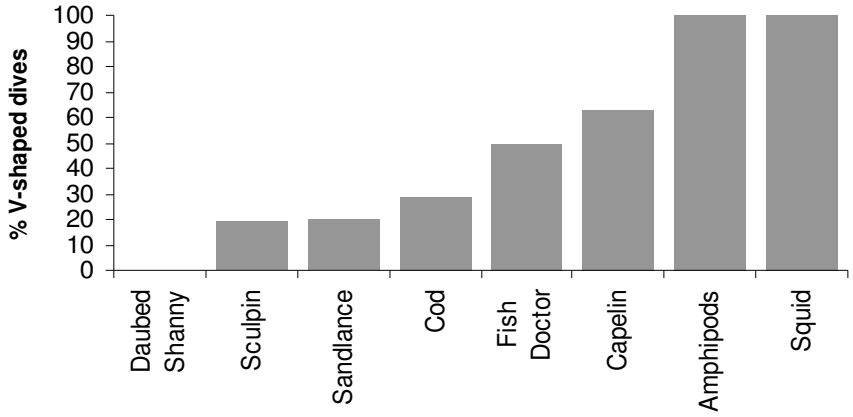

Figure 4. Mean percentage of V-shaped dives for the dive bouts when each of the eight main prey species were captured.

My results provide baseline information on the spatial distribution of several key prey species in northern Hudson Bay. They also provide a context for testing foraging theory models. This upcoming summer, I will be combining doubly-labelled water with TDTR recordings to measure activity-specific energy expenditure. This will allow me to estimate energetic costs associated with each prey species, and to determine whether changes in the horizontal and vertical distribution of prey will have energetic consequences for this species.

I am indebted to A. Gaston, J. Nakoolak, A. Ronston, P. Smith and K. Woo for their help in the field. G. Davoren and A. Gaston provided important guidance. Finally, I would like to thank the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and the James L. Baillie Fund for their support through the Percy A. Taverner Award.

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Gaston, A.J., K. Woo and J.M. Hipfner. 2003. Trends in forage fish populations in northern Hudson Bay since 1981, as determined from the diet of nestling thick-billed murres *Uria lomvia*. Arctic 56: 227-233.

Bird and Bat Response to Wind Turbines

Dr. R.L. Millikin, EchoTrack Inc.[1]

[photo credits: R.L. Millikin]

In the fall of 2004, EchoTrack Inc. used its radar-acoustic system to determine if the presence of wind turbines affected the night migration of birds and bats. This work was a collaborative effort involving four energy companies (Suncor Energy, Vision Quest Windelectric, Canadian Hydro Developers and Enbridge) and Natural Resources Canada. EchoTrack is grateful for their support.

The study was conducted at six areas in the Prairie Ecozone of Alberta, ranging from the foothill ridges of the Rocky Mountains, east to the rolling plains near Lethbridge (Figure 1). In each area, plots were chosen to either have turbines (E1 to E6) or not (C1 to C6). Pairs of plots (one with and one without turbines, but nearby and similar in topography and habitat), were sampled close in time to control for seasonal effects on migration. Plots were sampled three times each over the season (early, mid and late migration), from late August to early October.

Figure 1. Location of the study.

[1] For more information, please contact Rhonda at rmillikin@echotrack.com; EchoTrack Inc., 36 Ettrick Crescent, Ottawa, Ontario K2J 1G1

The surveillance radar provided bird and bat flights to a distance of 2 km, in all directions, and to an altitude of 1600 m (Figure 2). The microphones (acoustic and ultra-frequency) provided species identification for individuals that called within a smaller volume; to an altitude of 600 m for birds and 20 m for bats (due to the degradation of high-frequency signals). Samples were taken from dusk to dawn and analyzed by hour, season and the presence of turbines. There were 36 sampling nights and a total of 26 to 28 samples per night.

Figure 2. EchoTrack's mobile radar-acoustic system.

Using this technology, it was apparent that dusk and dawn were periods of greatest density of night migrants. However, few of these animals flew within 100 m, the presumed turbine height; 96% of the birds and bats flew over; only 4% were within the turbine height. For there to be a risk, birds and bats need to fly within the sweep volume of the blades.

It seems from this study, that birds and bats detect the turbines and avoid them using a change in direction, altitude and speed when they approach the turbines (Figure 3).

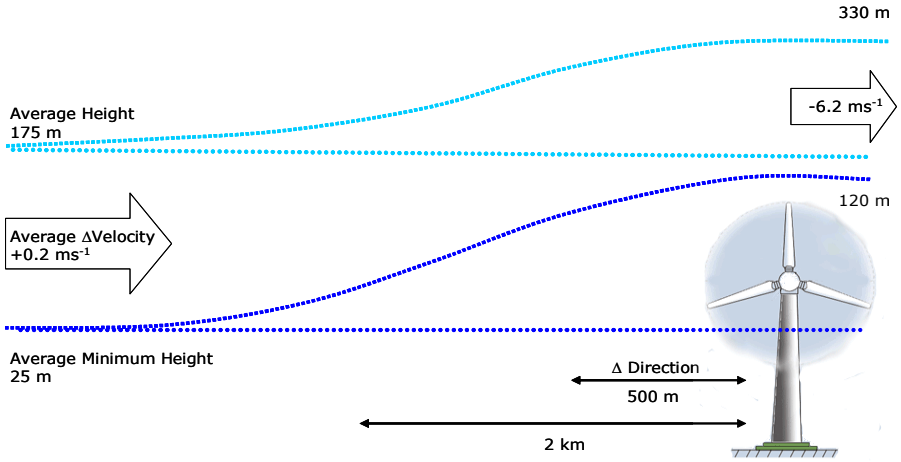

Figure 3. Overflight and avoidance behaviour. To a distance of 2 km animals responded with increased average height, increased minimum height and a slowing of velocity over their track. Closer to the turbine array, they responded with a change in direction over their track.

A small proportion of the towers (< 17%) on a wind farm were involved in collisions; determined either from manual search for carcasses or from flight path analysis where flights that terminated within 1 m of the tower were assumed to have collided. However, certain habitat features were found to be more often associated with high concentrations of flights that could be within the sweep volume of the turbines. These features of high collision-risk were ephemeral ponds and coulees; 63% of the carcasses were associated with ephemeral ponds.

University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Ag Wetland Waterbird Habitat Project

Jay Huner, Director, University of Louisiana at Lafayette Crawfish Research Center, 1031 W. J. Bernard Road, St. Martinville, Louisiana 70582 USA. Phone: 337 394-7508 /
E-mail: jhuner@louisiana.edu

With his retirement, Jay Huner, Director of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Crawfish Research Center and SCO/SOC member, is concluding his three decade study of the significance of Louisiana's ag wetlands as waterbird habitat. Louisiana boasts 600,000+ acres of ag wetlands. Ag wetlands are lands used to raise water-based crops, primarily rice, but including aquacultural crops such as crawfish and finfishes. Because rice requires soils that hold water and readily available water, it is not surprising that pond aquaculture developed in rice growing areas of Louisiana with crawfish in the coastal areas and finfishes being grown in central and northeastern Louisiana.

Crawfish aquaculture fits into rice culture nicely because the same fields are used to produce rice in warm months and crawfish in cool months. Crawfish is integrated into rice production in one of two ways: both crops are grown in the same 12 month period or rotations involve rice-crawfish-fallow-rice-crawfish or rice-crawfish-row crop-rice-crawfish. Currently about 130,000 acres of ag wetland fields is involved in crawfish production with expansion in the central and northeastern sections of the state where finfish operations have been converted to crawfish because of poor market conditions. Crawfish is also expanding into the rice growing areas of the northwestern areas of the state within the Red River Valley. Crawfish and/or finfishes are also often grown in mono-culture in marginal, heavy clay bottom lands originally cleared several decades ago for soybean culture.

Crawfish ponds attract waterbirds because they provide excellent resting/loafing sites for all species and also provide food resources, plan and animal, that rival, even exceed in values, those found in natural wetlands. In fact, the loss of over 1.5 million acres of coastal wetlands since the 1950s make the so called "artificial" ag wetlands along the coast of Louisiana that much more significant for local, regional, continental and inter-continental populations of waterbirds. Waterfowl have always been associated with rice lands. However, so, too, has the state's entire suite of waterbirds including grebes, cormorants, wading birds, shorebirds, gulls, and terns although their presence has, been more "take for granted" than highlighted because of the immense economic and social significance of waterfowl hunting.

Crawfish ponds are shallow water wetlands filled with water in the fall (September-November) so that female crawfish bearing young can emerge from burrows and drained in the spring (March-June) or even in the summer (June-August). Once ponds are filled, they quickly develop an invertebrate fauna including crawfish that is very attractive to carnivorous birds. Large, mixed flocks of egrets, herons, and ibises are found feeding in such ponds in the fall. They are joined in the winter and spring by large numbers of cormorants, gulls, and terns. Crawfish ponds become especially significant to shorebirds and wading birds when they are drained in spring or summer. Thousands of yellowlegs, Dunlins, peeps, dowitchers, and other shorebirds concentrate in the ponds when they are drained in the spring. Where ponds are drained in July or August, major concentrations of shorebirds can be found as "fall" migrants return to the region from arctic nesting grounds on their trips to their southern hemisphere wintering grounds. Interestingly, a very significant presence of wintering shorebirds utilizing ag wetlands has been well documented over the past two decades!

Regardless of when crawfish ponds are drained, they become a sea of white, blue, gray, and pink wading birds foraging on stranded crawfish, fish, tadpoles, and macro-invertebrates. This dependable food source provides sustenance to wading bird preparing to nest, nestlings during the nesting season, and post breeding birds dispersing from rookeries. In fact, Huner's team of professional field ornithologists has demonstrated conclusively that the dramatic increase in wading birds diversity and numbers in southern and central Louisiana since the 1950s is, in large part, due to the expansion of crawfish farming during the second half of the 20th century.

Huner and his collaborators have documented approximately 80 species of waterbirds utilizing ag wetland habitats in Louisiana and the upper coast of Texas. They have developed seasonal checklists for ag wetland sites in the Sorrento, Church Point, Catahoula, and Perry areas of Louisiana. These list also document the birds associated with fringing riparian areas and forests with the total number of species recorded now exceeding 175 birds which compares very favorably with the Louisiana's state list of slightly more than 450 birds.

Louisiana's aquaculture community has always expressed concern over possible damage done by waterbirds to crawfish crops through competition for food resources, direct predation, or trap displacement. These are valid concerns but funding necessary to quantify such effects has yet to be secured despite continuous efforts to locate such funds.

Huner's professional collaborators have included the following individuals: David "Rock" Boudreaux, Rex Caffey, Carroll Cordes, Bruce Fleury, Bill Fontenot, Albert P. Gaude', III, Clint Jeske, James Kushlan, Paul Leberg, Billy Leonard, Tibor Mikuska, Michael Musumeche, Ron Nassar, Wayne Norling, Gregory Richard, Robert Romaire, Tom Sherry, and John Westra. Huner has also worked closely with the following farmers: Jim Boyce, Jr., the Marin Durand family, Fred Kyle, David Lacour, Jim McCahill, Leroy Richard, Jr., Perry Smith, Jr., and Chester Wimberly. Huner's survey work has been funded by the Louisiana Crawfish Promotion and Research Board and the Coypu Foundation.

CALL for NOMINATIONS: D.H. SPEIRS AWARD

D.H. SPEIRS AWARD for outstanding lifetime contributions by amateurs or professionals to Canadian ornithology is given annually by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists (see URL: http://www.sco-soc.ca/speirs_award.htm). Nominations of candidates for the 2006 award will be accepted until September 1st, and the award will be presented by the Society at the North American Ornithological Conference in Veracruz in October.

Heron. Artwork by Hans Blokpoel

Editors-in-Chief: Thomas D. Nudds, University of Guelph, Canada and Marc-André Villard, Université de Moncton, Canada

Publisher: The Resilience Alliance on behalf of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and Bird Studies Canada

Journal URL: http://www.ace-eco.org

Publication Announcement

SCO is pleased to announce publication of the second issue of Avian Conservation and Ecology - Ecologie et Conservation des Oiseaux (ACE-ECO). ACE-ECO is an open-access, fully electronic scientific journal, sponsored by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and Bird Studies Canada. The first issue has now been published: please check the website to see the articles. You can also register on the web site to receive automatic notification every time a new issue is published (twice a year).

Call for Papers

Editors-in-Chief Thomas Nudds and Marc-André Villard would like to invite authors to submit articles to ACE-ECO. The journal publishes peer-reviewed, scientific papers pertaining to the conservation, ecology, and status of birds. In focusing on research that is simultaneously pure and applied avian ecology, the journal will complement other publications, such as traditional ornithological journals, conservation publications, general ecology journals and those focused on specific groups of birds. Although ACE-ECO is intended in part to enhance the international profile of Canadian ornithology and applied avian science, contributions will be welcomed from all over the world. Authors are invited to submit their original work under any of the following manuscript categories:

Research Papers
Standard papers reporting research results using the classical format (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, Literature Cited). Length restricted to 6000 words exclusive of tables, figures and literature cited.

Letters
Relatively short papers designed to attract attention to innovative concepts or techniques which have the potential to strongly influence the research area. Letters will be of interest to a broader audience than topics addressed in standard research papers. For example, a letter describing a major advance in the estimation of juvenile survival using an innovative method to track bird movements over long time intervals and/or distances is likely to be of interest to avian ecologists generally. Statistical analyses supporting the concept or technique may be preliminary, but nevertheless robust with respect to the inferences drawn. Letters describing innovative concepts or techniques accompanied by too few data, or inappropriately analyzed, will not be accepted. Length is restricted to 3000 words, exclusive of tables, figures and literature cited.

Essays
In-depth reflection on an issue with major implications for avian conservation. Even though no original data are required for this manuscript type, the article must present an original, insightful perspective. Maximum length: 3000 words.

Forum
Short papers (1000 word limit) designed to respond/follow up on papers published in recent issues, or to reply to such commentaries. Short commentaries can also raise attention on issues that were not specifically addressed in the journal.

Publication fees are $750 CDN for all articles except forum papers which are $375 CDN. Note that these fees are the only way that we can afford to publish this journal and still make it fully open access, so that everybody, anywhere in the world can reach it. This is a small investment relative to the cost of doing your research.

Manuscripts are submitted electronically using a user-friendly online submission upload interface. Authors are asked first to register as an author (http://www.ace-eco.org/login.php) to obtain the pass codes that are needed to access the online submission upload interface. Submission details and manuscript formatting guidelines are available online at http://www.ace-eco.org/submissions.php.

For more information, please check the web site.

Canadian Birds Wintering in Ireland

There were 4 Canadian ornithologists at the October 2005 International Wader Studies Group Conference in Cork Ireland: Allan Baker, Deborah Buehler, François Vézina, Brett Sandercock and S. Holohan.

At this moment, (March 29, 2006) we have thousands of common Canadian born birds (Nunavut) wintering in Ireland such as Brant geese, Ruddy Turnstone, Purple Sandpiper, Sanderling and Red Knot. They travel in late April back to Nunavut via Iceland. The Brant are impossible to avoid as they are so tame. They occupy their normal seashore habitat plus roadside grassy areas, school sport fields, public parks etc. They can be viewed at www.org.uk/supergoose/Canada.

S. Holohan

Ruddy Turnstone. Photo by Jean-Sébastien Guénette

New Address for SCO/SOC Treasurer AND Membership Secretary

Please take note that all non electronic mail for the SCO Treasurer or for the Membership Secretary should now be sent to a new address:

Veuillez prendre note que tout courrier non électronique adressé au Secrétariat des membres de la SOC devra désormais être envoyé à l'adresse suivante, que ce soit pour le trésorier ou la secrétaire aux membres:

Pierre Lamothe
SCO Treasurer/Trésorier de la SOC

Thérèse Beaudet
SCO Membership Secretary /Secrétaire aux membres de la SOC

New address/nouvelle adresse:

128, Chemin des Lièges
St-Jean de l'Île d'Orléans (QC) CANADA G0A 3W0
Tel.: (418) 829-0379
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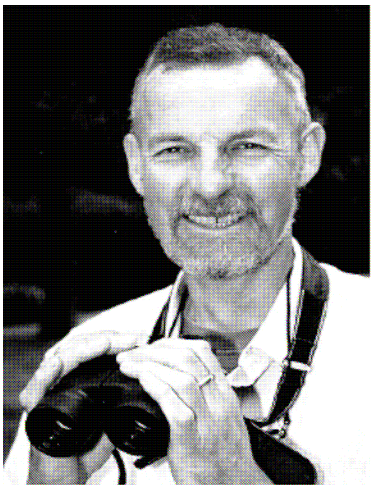
L'adresse courriel reste inchangée/e-mail address remains the same:
beaudet.lamothe@sympatico.ca


American Robin eggs. Photo by David Raitt.

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 will honour 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.

The selection committee is now accepting nominations for recipients. Nomination instructions are available at:

www.sco-soc.ca/jamie_smith/mentoring_award.htm

A summary of why the candidate should receive this distinction should accompany the nomination, and should be supported by three nominators.

Deadline for submission is 1 September 2006. Nominations should be sent or emailed to:

Ken Otter, *Chair,*
Jamie Smith Memorial Mentoring Award
Ecosystem Science and Management,
University of Northern British Columbia
Prince George, BC V2N 4Z9
Phone – 250-960-5019
Fax – 250-960-5539
Email – otterk@unbc.ca

M.Sc. Theses in Canadian Ornithology

Ball, Jeffrey R. 2004. Effects of parental provisioning and attendance on growth and survival of Red-throated Loon pre-fledglings: a potential mechanism linking marine regime shifts to population change. MSc Thesis. Centre for Wildlife Ecology, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC.

Since the 1970's, several piscivorous birds and marine mammals in Alaska have declined numerically, coincident with oceanic regime-shifts and associated prey community changes. Red-throated Loons have similarly declined and this study supports the hypothesis that impoverished prey conditions are a potential mechanism that could reduce productivity by altering chick growth and survival. During 2002-2003, moderate-to-low energy fishes dominated the prey community. This potentially constrained parental ability to meet brood attendance and energy requirements. Two-chick broods were not fed at higher rates than single-chick broods and all two-chick broods were reduced, apparently from starvation of the younger sibling. Energy consumption also influenced first-hatched chick survival during week one, when both provisioning effort and attendance requirements were high. For chicks surviving this early period, sex influenced growth variation more than energy consumption. Overall, survival and growth performance measures were poorer than published findings, suggesting poor foraging conditions were a mechanism limiting productivity.

Hadley, Adam. 2005. Winter habitat use by Boreal Chickadee Flocks within a managed forest landscape. M.Sc. Thesis. Faculté de forestrie et de géomatique, Université Laval, Québec, QC.

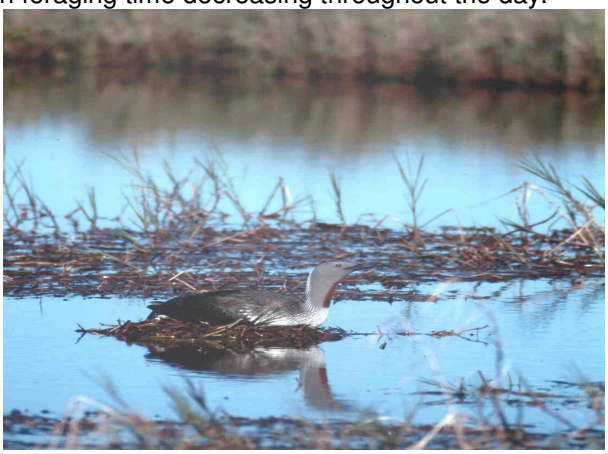
Resident bird species inhabiting northern latitudes are considered to be the species most exposed to the effects of habitat loss and fragmentation of boreal forests. Despite the fact that their population dynamics appear to be strongly determined by events occurring during the non-breeding season, we have little knowledge of the winter ecology of boreal birds. My objective was to determine how increasing edge densities and reducing the proportion of mature boreal forest will affect a resident bird species. I recorded movements of 85 unmarked and seven colour banded winter flocks of the little-known Boreal Chickadee (*Poecile hudsonica*), in a 66 km^2 boreal forest harvested for timber near Quebec City, Quebec, Canada. From January-March (2004 and 2005), I followed flocks on snowshoes and recorded their paths in real time using a handheld GPS receiver. Using marked individuals, I found winter Boreal Chickadee flocks included an average of 4 individuals, occupied a mean winter home range of 14.7 ha and showed stable membership. Based on 74 km of flock movements, Boreal Chickadees strongly preferred mature forest (>7 m in height), used regenerating forest (4-7 m) to a lesser extent and avoided younger stands (<4 m) and open areas. Chickadee flocks showed no response to forest edges when using mature forest stands. However, inside regenerating forest, flocks were significantly closer to both open edges (41 ± 6 m) and mature forest boundaries (11 ± 2 m) than would be expected from random use of the habitat. Boreal Chickadee flocks did not avoid exposed edges during harsh weather conditions. In fact, on colder days, they were found disproportionately more often along edges between mature and regenerating stands. Increasing edge densities, resulting from clearcutting in boreal forest, does not necessarily reduce the winter suitability of remaining forest patches, even under inclement weather. However, I conclude that forest harvesting will result in a reduction of optimal wintering habitat for this species.

Koper, N. 2004. Upland-nesting Ducks as Surrogate Species for Avian Conservation in the Dry Mixed-grass Prairie. MSc. Thesis. Department of Renewable Resources, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB

Surrogate species are frequently used to simplify conservation planning, but the effectiveness of this strategy has not been sufficiently evaluated. I hypothesized that upland-nesting ducks as a group may have potential to be effective surrogate species for avian conservation in the dry mixed-grass prairie, as they have a number of characteristics of flagship and umbrella species. I determined whether ducks might be effective surrogate species for upland and wetland songbirds and shorebirds by comparing effects of habitat management (cattle grazing and field size), distance to other habitats (water, cropland/forage, or roads), local vegetation characteristics, and landscape context (amount and distribution of upland habitat), on the richness, density, and nest success of ducks, songbirds, and shorebirds. Data were collected on density, richness, and nest success of ducks, songbirds and shorebirds in 39 native dry mixed-grass fields in southern Alberta, ranging from 11-3239 ha, that also contained wetlands managed for ducks. Three artificial nest studies complemented the data collected on natural nests. There were no consistent significant positive correlations between duck and songbird richness and density. Duck and shorebird nest success were correlated when data were combined across years, but duck and songbird nest success were not correlated. Ducks, songbirds, and shorebirds selected different nest microhabitats. Artificial nest studies indicated that predation rates by avian predators were higher on duck nests, while predation rates by small mammalian predators were higher on songbird nests. Ducks are therefore unlikely to be good surrogate species for avian conservation in the dry mixed-grass prairie. The effectiveness of proposed surrogate species cannot be assumed, and must be validated prior to including them in conservation and management plans.

MacCulloch, Kate. 2006. Habitat use and day-time activity budgets of shorebirds wintering in a tropical environment. M.Sc Thesis, Trent University, Peterborough, ON.

This study examined habitat use, day-time activity budgets, foraging behavior and abiotic factors influencing activity of non-breeding shorebirds in Cuba. Habitat use varied among activities, demonstrating the need for conservation plans protecting all habitats used, not only foraging grounds. Day-time activity budgets varied with body mass, with smaller species spending the majority of their time foraging. Closely related species used similar foraging techniques and foraged at comparable rates. Shorebird distribution reflected activity and foraging method, with shorebirds farther from conspecifics when they were foraging than when they were not, and tactile foragers closer together than visual foragers. Tidal cycle had a strong influence on the activity of shorebirds who frequented the tidal flat, with lowest activity levels occurring on high tides despite the availability of non-tidal foraging grounds. Time of day influenced the behavior of Black-necked Stilts, with foraging time decreasing throughout the day.



Incubating Red-throated Loon. Photo by Charles Eldermire

"Fat Broad", Two Canadians Inducted into Owl Hall of Fame

"Fat Broad," a Spotted Owl from Corvallis, Oregon, became the first owl to be inducted into the North American Owl Hall of Fame on Friday, March 3 in Houston, Minnesota during the Festival of Owls. Sharing the spotlight with her were two dedicated Canadian owl researchers: Katherine McKeever of Vineland, Ontario and Dr. Robert W. Nero of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Owl Hall of Fame presents two awards each year to those working to make this a better world for owls. The Champion of Owls Award is presented to an exemplary human, and the Lady Gray'l Award is presented to an exemplary owl. The Lady Gray'l Award was named in honor of a Great Gray Owl who entered this world doomed to death as the runt of her brood in 1984 who instead wound up spending a 21-year career touching the lives of untold thousands of people and giving researchers new insights into the life of the Great Gray Owl while working in concert with her handler, Dr. Robert W. Nero.

Fat Broad the Spotted Owl was chosen to receive the Lady Gray'l Award posthumously (postowlously?) for her educational, research, and legislative work for owls. She was rescued from a likely death in her Oregon nest by Dr. Eric Forsman, a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Forest Service now recognized as the world authority on Spotted Owls. While Forsman used Fat Broad to teach thousands of humans about owls at schools and research presentations over their nearly 32 years together, Fat Broad taught Eric a few things about Spotted Owls that led to several scientific publications.

But Fat Broad will best be remembered at the poster child of the Spotted Owl/Logger controversy. In 1991, Life Magazine's year in pictures featured a photo of one very innocent and soulful Fat Broad perched on the shoulder of a tough looking logger leaning over a felled tree.

So why the name "Fat Broad"? She had a well-earned reputation as a porker as an owlet, so she was named after the character they called Fat Broad in the B.C. comic strip. Mind you, this was in 1970, before the days of political correctness!

Fat Broad died of natural causes in Forsman's arms on Valentine's Day 2002 at nearly 32 years of age, the oldest Spotted Owl ever recorded.

Katherine McKeever was chosen to receive the Champion of Owls Award for her 40+ years of work on owl rehabilitation, cage design, breeding, and behavioral observations. Her early efforts focused on owl rehabilitation at her home in Vineland, Ontario. Over the years she developed many successful techniques for returning owls to the wild and published a manual titled "Care and Rehabilitation of Injured Owls," which has become known as the "bible" of owl rehabilitation and has sold close to 8,000 copies in nearly 30 countries around the world.

McKeever's later efforts turned to recycling the genes of damaged owls by breeding them in captivity. This involved developing innovative new cage designs that have become the ideal that other facilities strive to achieve. It also led to the installation of remote cameras in the owl cages to monitor pair bonding and mating behavior. With thousands of hours of footage of owls that have no idea they are being observed, McKeever has become a treasure trove of information about intimate owl behavior.

McKeever's unique sense of humor, tell-it-like-it-is personality, and vast experience have led her to become a much sought-after speaker for hundreds of meetings across North America over the years. Her efforts have also been recognized with innumerable awards, including honorary

Doctor of Laws degrees from two Universities and even the Order of Canada, the highest Canadian civilian honor possible.

Dr. Robert W. Nero also received the Champion of Owls award, since the judges simply could not decided between McKeever and Nero, both in their 80s. Nero began his pioneering work on Great Gray Owls in the 1960s when little was known of this elusive species. His Smithsonian Institution Press book "Great Gray Owl: Phantom of the Northern Forest" quickly become a classic, in part due to Nero's unique twin talents as both a scientist and a poet.

But one very special Great Gray Owl helped Nero gain new insights into the species and played a significant role in his life for over 21 years: an owl named Lady Gray'l. Together Nero and Gray'l taught thousands of school children about owls and raised money for graduate research and wildlife rehabilitation. Lady Gray'l also gave Nero insights into the behavior and molt patterns of her species that led to scientific publications. As a direct result of their efforts, the Great Gray Owl was named the provincial bird emblem of Manitoba on July 16, 1987.

Besides researching Great Gray Owls, Nero helped develop management plans for Barn, Burrowing, and Great Gray Owls through his work with Manitoba Conservation. Over the years he has studied eleven species of owls, and worked diligently to organize two international owl symposia.

Nero has received numerous awards from a plethora of organizations over the years including the Manitoba Naturalists Society, Saskatchewan Natural History Society, Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, The Wildlife Society, and the highest award possible from the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, the Doris Huestis Speirs Award.

The Owl Hall of Fame was organized as a way to bring recognition to the owls and humans who are working to make this world a better place for owls through conservation, education, legislation, rehabilitation, and research. It is sponsored by the Festival of Owls, Global Owl Project, Manitoba Great Gray Owl Fund, and Raptor Education Group. The Owl Hall of Fame is currently North American in scope, but may be expanded to a global level in the future. More information about the Owl Hall of Fame and its winners can be found at www.globalowlproject.com.

Dr. Bob Nero with his wife Ruth and Lady Gray'l

Bird Specimens Wanted

The zoological collection at St. Francis Xavier University is constantly looking to diversify its holdings. We are particularly deficient in northern, prairie and western species. Feather condition is unimportant as our collection is dominantly skeletal in nature. Other vertebrates are of interest as well. For more information, please contact Randy Lauff at rlauff@stfx.ca, or visit http://www.stfx.ca/people/rlauff/teaching/collections/animalcollections.html for our wish list and more information. We encourage the use of our collection by researchers from other institutes.

FULL CROWN

By Robert Nero

It was the unexpected
appearance of bright color
that drew our attention
a flash of scarlet
and a flutter of wings
in the leafless shrubbery
beside the birdbath ...
what bird is that?!
a fully-erect pompadour
of ruby red
lit By morning sun
until it slicked down
beneath green plumes
our kinglet revealed.

Ruby-Crowned Kinglet. Photo by Jean-Sébastien Guénette

Important Notice!
FREE E-PUBS as of April 24, 2006

All electronic publications offered on the Statistics Canada website (www.statcan.ca), including the PDF version of Human Activity and the Environment, will be free of charge starting April 24, 2006. For more information, please call 1 800 267-6677.

Avis important!
Les publications électroniques seront gratuites à partir du 24 avril 2006

Toutes les publications électroniques disponibles sur le site web de Statistique Canada (www.statcan.ca), y compris la version PDF de L'activité humaine et l'environnement, seront gratuites à partir du 24 avril 2006. Pour plus de renseignements, veuillez communiquer avec nous au 1 800267-6677.

ASSOCIATION QUÉBÉCOISE DES GROUPES D'ORNITHOLOGUES

COAQ

Congrès des ornithologues amateurs du Québec (COAQ) 2006

The Association québécoise des groupes d'ornithologues (AQGO) is organizing its second Congrès des ornithologues amateurs du Québec (COAQ). This year, this one-day event will take place in Saint-Hyacinthe (near Montréal), on 28th October 2006. The congress will proceed primarily according to the same formula as the precedent, held in 2004; more than 40 short presentations on various subjects will be offered simultaneously into concurrent sessions (research on birds, birdwatching, photography, etc.). The congress will end in a banquet bringing together lecturers and participants, and will be a unique opportunity for birdwatchers and ornithologists who share the same passion to meet. To register or obtain further information, visit the website of the congress at www.aqgo.qc.ca/coaq.

L'Association québécoise des groupes d'ornithologues (AQGO) organise son deuxième Congrès des ornithologues amateurs du Québec (COAQ). Celui-ci aura lieu le 28 octobre prochain, à Saint-Hyacinthe (près de Montréal). Le congrès se déroulera essentiellement selon la même formule que le précédent, tenu en 2004; une quarantaine de courtes présentations traitant d'une foule de sujets (recherche sur les oiseaux, loisir ornithologique, photographie, etc.) seront offertes en simultané dans quatre salles. Le tout se terminera par un banquet réunissant conférenciers et participants. Le congrès est une occasion unique, tant pour les ornithologues amateurs que pour les ornithologues plus expérimentés, de rencontrer d'autres personnes qui partagent la passion des oiseaux. Pour vous inscrire ou pour obtenir de plus amples informations, visitez le site Web du congrès au www.aqgo.qc.ca/coaq.

Baltimore Oriole. Photo by Jean-Sébastien Guénette

Announcing the 4th International Partners in Flight Conference!

13-16 February 2008
McAllen Convention Center
McAllen, Texas

Expect an extraordinary scientific program, terrific social events, exciting local birding, and world-class extended field trips.

Mark your calendars now and watch the PIF web site, listservs and newsletters for details as they develop.

Make Plans Now to Attend the 2006 North American Ornithological Conference!

The 2006 NAOC will meet in Veracruz, Mexico, October 3-7, 2006, in what promises to be an outstanding meeting of eight societies. This fourth such conference is being jointly organized by the American Ornithologists' Union, Association of Field Ornithologists, CIPAMEX, Cooper Ornithological Society, Raptor Research Foundation, Society of Canadian Ornithologists, Waterbird Society and Wilson Ornithological Society.

The theme is "Wings Without Borders" and the meeting will feature outstanding plenary speakers, oral and poster sessions and symposia, and will serve as the annual meeting for several societies. Special emphasis will be placed on involving colleagues from Mexico and other parts of Latin America. Along with the scientific program, several workshops and field trips will be offered, including the opportunity to view the fall migration of more than 5 million raptors! There are over 540 bird species in central Veracruz alone.

The call for papers will be announced shortly. Anybody who is attending is invited to submit an abstract for consideration in symposia, submitted papers or poster paper sessions. The deadline for abstract submission is 3 April 2006. This also coincides with the deadline for early registration (it is necessary to register before submitting an abstract – this can all be done online). Further details will be mailed shortly to all SCO members and will also be available on the conference web site:

WWW.NAOC2006.ORG

Society of Canadian Ornithologists/
Société des Ornithologistes du Canada

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President: Dr. Charles Francis, Voice: 613-998-0332; Fax: 613-998-0458; Email: charles.francis@ec.gc.ca

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Society of Canadian Ornithologists/
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Standing Committees and Work Groups

See Page 23 for contact information for those with # beside name.

Doris Huestis Speirs Award Committee (annual award for excellence in Canadian Ornithology): Gilles Seutin, chair, Email: *gilles.seutin@pc.gc.ca*

Research Awards Committee (mandate: annual selection of research candidates, fall call for applications, selection and announcement by April of following year, members appointed and rotated) Four awards: James L. Baillie lKS, Taverner (2 awards) 0.5K$. Fred Cooke Travel Award. Bob Clark, chair #.

Meetings Committee: Charles Francis #, Sue Hannon #

Picoides Committee: Rob Warnock (chair) #, Ken Otter #, Jean-Pierre Savard #, Dorothy Diamond, 247 English Settlement Road, Stanley, NB E6B 2E9, Voice (506) 367-3181, E-mail: doroth@nbnet.nb.ca; Andrea Pomeroy, Centre for Wildlife Ecology, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, V5A 1S6, Voice: (604) 940-4724, E-mail: apomeroy@sfu.ca

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Editors of ACE-ECO: Tom Nudds and Marc-André Villard #

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Ornithological Council Representatives Lesley Evans Ogden, Email: *lesleyje@interchange.ubc.ca*, Liana Zanette Email: lzanette@uwo.ca

North American Banding Council Representative Brenda Dale, Voice: 780-951-8686; Fax: 780-495-2615; Email: *brenda.dale@ec.gc.ca*

Findings on the SCO/SOC website

WEBSITE: www.sco-soc.ca/index.html
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Notes about Annual Meetings
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For Jobs and to post job openings see our link to the Ornithological Newsletter:
www.ornith.comell.edu/OSNA/ornjobs.htm