

Society of Canadian Ornithologists Société des ornithologistes du Canada

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*** INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS NEWS ***

Much ground-work has continued with preliminary planning, but without making any firm decisions pending official acceptance of the Canadian invitation at the Moscow meeting. As far as we can determine there are no other serious contenders for 1986 so that our chances of getting the Conference for Ottawa in 1986 seem excellent.

Ground-work has gone ahead both overseas and in Europe in Ottawa. The former has been directed at persuading the relevant authorities in Europe that we are well equipped and organized to host the Congress. This is, of course, the case. The Congress Centre in Ottawa is well under way and will be completed in 1983. As you know the National Museum of Natural Sciences has been authorized to make the official invitation and the National Museums of Canada will assume part of the expenses. We hope Canada will then be well out of its present economic woes. Overtures re aspects of the Congress have been made at various levels and to different authorities. We are indeed thankful for the inspired leadership of the National Museum of Natural Sciences, its recently-retired Director Louis Lemieux and Acting Director Hugh Schultz, not to play down, Henri Ouellet, our chief motivating force.

Henri, in his role as Secretary-General Designate journeyed to Europe last year and carried the results of this planning to the President of the forthcoming Congress, Lars von Haartman. He has also been in close contact with the Secretary-General of the Berlin Congress, Rolf Nöhring, who has provided much pertinent advice on some of the problems and subtleties of international ornithological congresses.

As you know the long-awaited Canadian Ornithological Society (I am not sure of its final name but the subject has been one of vigorous discussion) was launched in Edmonton during the last American Ornithologists' Union Annual Meeting. Some thirty members reviewed the idea over lunch and the concept got wholehearted support. It was agreed that its major forum should be a Newsletter and that no attempt should be made to compete with the AOU by initiating a new journal. A Preliminary Organizing Committee of seven was chosen. Ross Lein from Calgary offered to receive suggestions for the constitution. He has assembled and integrated these and the distribution of a draft is expected soon. Possibly this will be voted upon and become 'official' during the AOU Meeting in Chicago. A list of names of potential regional officers was assembled on the basis of representation in each Province. These 'local secretaries' have been asked to convey a list of 'regional news' to the Newsletter Coordinator, Ross James, at the Royal Ontario Museum.

Until the invitation is voted upon in Moscow and officially accepted it is unwise for us to get too ambitious in any of our planning. Enthusiastic suggestions about symposia, field trips, and other matters, are treated with discretion and a reply that sounds like 'Hush, there may be potential invitees listening! All will be resolved, and become public knowledge in due course!'

Some snippets for which 'muffled' enthusiasm is being expressed in 'quarters' are:

Program Theme:

The basic program will, of course, be determined by the Scientific Programme Committee, with input from ourselves. Most of us would like to see a central theme along the lines of 'Holarctic Ornithology', emphasizing such facets as: relationships across the north (with solid input from the Russians, Scandinavians, Japanese), ecological and physiological adaptations to Arctic life, tundra and conifer avifaunas, migration, seabird biology, population dynamics and conservation, fish-eating birds (loons, herons, mergansers), systematics of northern birds. There are also, of course, common environmental problems, especially in terms of acid rain and its effects not only on birds directly but on insect and fish prey.

Bird Stamps:

Issuing of these is up to the postal authorities, but they have had plenty of encouragement and inspirational visits from Henri. Stamps are a showcase for the country issuing them. Good quality artwork is a joy to look at. A set of stamps will dramatize Canada's commitment to conservation. We do not wish to hide our ambition to emphasize species that are spectacular as well as being widely known, and indeed species that if not peculiarly Canadian (that would be difficult!) but that are especially prominent in Canada. What about the Canada Goose (or Snow Goose), Loon, Spruce Grouse, Woodcock, Snowy Owl (or Great Horned Owl), Pileated Woodpecker, Gyrfalcon, Whooping Crane, Grey Jay, a Puffin (or two), Yellow Warbler, Tree Swallow, Flicker, as starters!!! It is all entirely up to the postal people. But Henri has not been slow to point out that we could have a series of birds in the 30 to 35 cent denomination (or whatever is the current postage rate in 1986)... like the current 'Canadian artists' series. Our authorities could try to emulate the quality of the "provincial flower" sets. But not every Province has a State Bird!!!

And Henri points out we should ensure that the world gets the point there are indeed a series of bird species with 'canadensis', as the species name: Whooping Crane, Spruce Grouse, Grey Jay, Canada Warbler!!!

Presentation of Canada's Invitation:

This will be extended officially, on behalf of the Canadian Government, the National Museum of Natural Sciences, and Canadian ornithologists by Dr. Henri Ouellet, initially to the Executive Committee of the International Ornithological Congress, and then to the assembled Committee of One Hundred at the end of the Moscow Congress. The latter body will then vote on acceptance.

Let us hope our case is as persuasive as we think it is. Canada is strongly devoted to conservation and our wildlife resources, and it has been pointed out that a billion dollars a year is involved in activities associated with the out-of-doors. An invitation will give us a real opportunity to be a showcase for the world.

Field Excursions:

We are quite looking forward to starting to plan these. Let us give them the best at modest prices, if we can. We have a mailbox ready for receiving suggestions.

National Bird; the Congress Symbol:

Henri has "forbidden" me to mention this as no two people think alike on it. We may eventually have to ban discussion and work strictly from secret ballot. It would not do for the Canadian ornithological federation to be torn assunder in its formative year!!! Fortunately, one can still dodge the brickbats by pointing out that we have not yet had our invitation to hold the Congress accepted. Now, do we want a Canada Goose (which has already been done to death, even though it be majestic and exhibits great resilience (virtues obviously shared with its hominid cohabitators)? Or what about something delicate, refined, and unique, like the Canada Warbler. Too many Congresses have had waterbirds as symbols and geese, cranes, avocets, are vulgar symbols of a decadent past, so argue the 'passerine' lovers. Some say we need wholesome Spruce Grouse canadensis, Grey Jay canadensis, or Canada Warbler canadensis, if not a good clean-living insectivorous Snow Bunting, or Meadowlark, so runs one line of argument.

This humble servant confesses not only to having no expertise in the area but to hope he is not on the Committee... or whoever it is... that decides!!!

I would not be surprised if we get a little mail on this one. You know, I really think the National Museum of Natural Sciences in Ottawa has the largest mailbox.

Good birding. Allen Keast

*** NORTH AMERICAN BIRD BANDER NEWS ***

Formerly published by the Western and Eastern banding associations, this journal has become representative of the whole continent in 1982, with the inclusion of the Inland Bird Banding Association among the contributors.

*** CONSTITUTION NEWS ***

The Constitution Committee of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists hopes to have a completed draft of the proposed constitution ready for presentation to members at the AOU Meeting in Chicago 11-14 October 1982.

*** ICBP - CANADA NEWS ***

A committee of the Canadian Nature Federation, the Bird Conservation Committee has recently been formed to deal with questions of bird conservation. The committee, which includes representation from World Wildlife Fund (Canada) and the Canadian Wildlife Federation, was formed with two objectives: to perform the role of a Canadian section of the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) and to prepare, promote and conduct programs of bird conservation in Canada.

By the late 1970's the Canadian national section of the ICBP had become moribund. The Canadian Nature Federation wrote to the other constituent organizations asking their permission to declare the section lapsed and to form a new national section. At the reorganizational meeting at Guelph in May of 1981 it was decided to form the Canadian national section of ICBP as a committee of the Canadian Nature Federation rather than as an independent organization. In this way, the technical difficulties of establishing and incorporating such a body would be avoided, and the national section would have the much stronger CNF to fall back on for support if needed.

The World Wildlife Fund (Canada) and the Canadian Wildlife Federation both agreed to serve on the committee. The Canadian Wildlife Service did not feel that it could be formally represented, but several of their staff are serving on the committee.

The committee is now trying to find its feet. They have expressed concern on the question of capture and sale of gyrfalcons from the Northwest Territories. They have also answered a number of enquiries from the international body, including information on the treatment of oiled seabirds and on the theft of the Ross's gull eggs, and input to ICBP on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

The chairman of the new Bird Conservation Committee is C. Eric Tull. He would be pleased to hear of any bird conservation questions that you feel the committee should be acting on.

*** WESTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION NEWS ***

the annual meeting of the WBBA in Logan, Utah in April the following slate of officers was elected: President - Martin K. McNicholl, 1st VP - R.R. Moldenhauer, 2nd VP - S.M. Russell, Secretary - R.C. Tweit, Treasurer - J.P. Church, Editor - E.L. Radke, Directors at large - P. Bloom and C.H. Trost. The 1983 annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the Cooper Ornithological Society in New Mexico.