

The **Doris Huestis Speirs Award** is the most prestigious award given by the SCO-SOC. The award is presented annually to an individual who has made outstanding lifetime contributions in Canadian ornithology. The D.H. Speirs Award Selection Committee and SCO-SOC Council members are delighted to announce that **Keith Hobson**, a Senior Research Scientist with Environment Canada, is the recipient of the 2011 award.

Keith spent his formative years growing up in the Vancouver area (after arriving in Canada as a youngster from England). Following completion of a degree in physics, Keith was a mainstay at Simon Fraser's archeology laboratory where he honed skills in isotope techniques, including for assessing early human diets and movements. But, the birds got the better of him, and Keith turned his eye to working on questions about brood parasitism with Spencer Sealy at University of Manitoba. After completing his Master's at Manitoba, Keith flew west to the University of Saskatchewan where he undertook a PhD with Malcolm Ramsay, which is where he began his pioneering work in avian isotope ecology. By combining field and laboratory studies of both marine and terrestrial birds, Keith characterized fundamental aspects of tissue-isotope assimilation and turnover, and explored trophic relationships in communities of arctic-breeding seabirds. After a short post-doc sojourn at the DFO's Freshwater Institute, Keith was hired as a Research Scientist in Forest Ecology with CWS in Saskatoon. Shortly thereafter, Keith sought affiliation with the Department of Biology at University of Saskatchewan as an Adjunct Professor and began supervising a steady stream of top-caliber graduate students. Keith's efforts – alone and with collaborators from around the globe – have forged stronger linkages between science and conservation action and have helped to revolutionize how we investigate questions about forest conservation or migratory connectivity. The true hallmark of Keith's personality – something that has shaped his career - is a strong passion for birds and conservation of natural areas, especially in Canada and Latin America.

Keith is world-renowned for his pioneering work using stable isotopes to study foraging ecology, trophic dynamics and, more recently, understanding the migratory connectivity of migratory birds and other animals. A prolific writer (someone once asked, "Does he write in his sleep?"!), Keith and coauthors have produced over 300 scientific papers, with many appearing in top ecological journals and collectively attracting thousands of citations. Keith's service contributions to the ornithological community in Canada and elsewhere have also been stellar; he was Editor of *Waterbirds*, Associate Editor of journals such as *The Auk* and *ACE-ECO*, and co-edited the 2008 book, "*Tracking Animal Migration with Stable Isotopes*".

Even with his global reputation, much of Keith's focus has been on Canadian birds. His work on migratory connectivity in a wide range of Canadian breeding species, including several species-at-risk, is leading to improved conservation-decision making for these species now that it is known where they spend the non-breeding season. Keith has also made significant contributions to boreal forest bird ecology and management. Keith has received national and international awards for his research efforts, and this award rightfully acknowledges the outstanding contributions he has made to ornithology in Canada.