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Society of Canadian  
Bulletin of The Ornithologists

# PICOIDES

Bulletin de la  
Société des Ornithologistes du Canada

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ISSN 0836-060X

Picoides, November, 1993  
Volume 6, Number 2

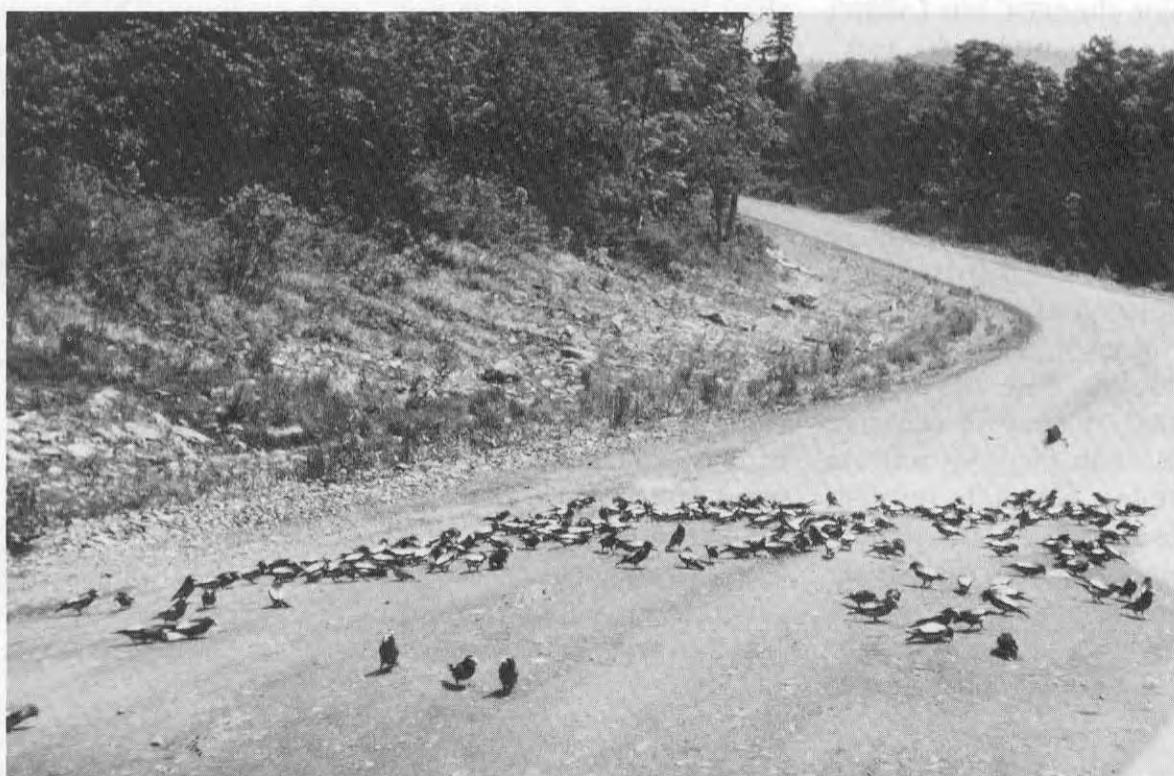


Photo by Editor

Evening Grosbeaks on highway in central New Brunswick, 23 June 1967  
(example of "Dynamic populations..." - see S.C.O. article inside)

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## EDITOR'S MUSINGS

Editors are usually drafted rather than elected, as there are no lineups for these jobs. I'm like most retirees (i.e. fully occupied), and I travel less than most of you, so I miss a lot that might appear in our bulletin, unless someone tells me or sends me a copy. The last sentence in each introduction to the Bent Life Histories series applies to Picoides too. I don't expect to make major changes, but I won't promise not to make any.

As with our Society, our bulletin is hemmed in by the need to encourage Canadians in ornithology without duplicating functions already covered by other organizations and outlets. The historical slant of recent feature articles in Picoides reflects that few journals publish this kind of material, which provides insight on how Canadian ornithology evolved \*. Arguments for or against particular

policies or practices affecting ornithology in Canada, as in S.C.O. Column in this issue, comprise another type of article with few possible outlets.

Most of Picoides' content is "news", but a twice-yearly publication cannot avoid including some information that is months old when it appears. Programs that are about to begin, papers about to be published, people about to move, will be news when they happen, but not yet history three months later. What is new to one person may be old hat to another.

Increased frequency of publication depends on having enough material - plus money for extra mailings. The Society must decide if the benefits of more frequent communication balance the costs of extra issues. Without more material, we can't fill more than two issues per year, but more issues might generate more material - a "chicken-and-egg" situation.

The Editor

\* In 1980 I floated the idea of a volume of capsule biographies of Canadian ornithologists, as a contribution to the 1986 I.O.C. in Canada. The responses were favourable, but I haven't made time to continue with it. Marika Ainley and Stuart Houston have published many articles in that field, but most people who added to Canadian ornithological knowledge won't rate separate accounts; these might be included in such a volume. The historical articles in Picoides, plus several recent books on Canadian bird people, suggest that the idea might be revived. Who else wants to learn more about people who worked on birds in Canada?

Published by:

The Society of Canadian Ornithologists.  
c/o Canadian Wildlife Service, Atlantic Region,  
P.O. Box 1590, Sackville, New Brunswick E0A 3C0

To advertise in Picoides,  
please write to:

The address at left, with  
Attention: Dr. Anthony Erskine

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## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

If you would like to be a member of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, please send your name, address, phone number, and a cheque or money order for \$10.00 to:

Dr. Philip R. Stepney, Provincial Museum of Alberta,  
12845-102 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5N 0M6

Si vous désirez devenir membre de la Société des ornithologistes du Canada, faites parvenir vos coordonnées ainsi qu'un chèque ou mandat-poste au montant de 10,00\$ à l'adresse ci-haut.

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## IS Picoides A rara avis? WHAT ELSE SHARES THE FIELD?

(An editorial initiative)

To learn how Canadians interested in birds communicate, I canvassed several people across the country as to regional or provincial groups and periodicals serving the field. The following (incomplete and very condensed) summary provides some perspective that may help SCO as well as its Editor. [Note: Provincial naturalists' federations or natural history societies are listed by initials to save space.]

**Alberta** (per Geoff Holroyd): Alberta Naturalist, published by the FAN, and local naturalists' bulletins such as Edmonton Naturalist and Pica (Calgary) include many articles dealing with birds. The Beaverhill Bird Observatory publishes an annual report. Occasional Papers of the Provincial Museum of Alberta often deal partly or wholly with birds. Alberta bird papers also appear in Blue Jay (see Saskatchewan).

**British Columbia** (per Wayne Weber): The British Columbia Field Ornithologists publish British Columbia Birds (began 1991) and a newsletter. The FBCN includes bird summaries in its newsletter, and presumably will also feature birds in its projected journal. The Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology (formerly Pacific Northwest Bird and Mammal Society), based in Washington

State, covers British Columbia and now Alberta as well as northwest U.S.A. in its journal Northwestern Naturalist (formerly Murrelet).

**Manitoba:** The bird committee of the provincial naturalists society seems to be the main functional group, with a provincial bird book as its present focus. It has no regular publication, although some regional faunal summaries from its work have appeared through the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature. Bird articles by many Manitoba naturalists appear in the Blue Jay (see Saskatchewan).

**New Brunswick:** The N.B. Naturalist, published by NBFN, is the only in-province outlet for popular bird articles beyond the local level. The local club in Edmundston is explicitly a bird group, although birds feature prominently in most naturalists' clubs, here as elsewhere.

**Newfoundland and Labrador** (per Bill Montevecchi): The N&LNHS publishes Osprey, which includes bird articles regularly. A birding newsletter The Bullbird appeared until recently but may have lapsed.

**Northwest Territories (including Nunavut)** (per Jacques Sirois): Yellowknife seems to have the largest number of



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interested people, but no organized bird group, the CWS office being the main identifiable focus. There is an assortment of bird check-lists for migratory bird sanctuaries and other designated areas in the N.W.T., but no local periodical devoted to birds.

**Nova Scotia:** The Nova Scotia Bird Society publishes Nova Scotia Birds (this name from 1981, as N.S. Bird Soc. Newsletter from 1964). Bird summaries also appear in local naturalists' bulletins.

**Ontario** (per Ross James): Ontario Birds, published by Ontario Field Ornithologists, is the major outlet for bird articles, and summaries of birding observations also appear in Birders Journal (with some coverage beyond the province). Ontario Bird Banding Association publishes the Ontario Bird Bander. Long Point Bird Observatory publishes a newsletter, as well as co-sponsoring many co-operative surveys, some extending more widely or across Canada. The FON co-sponsored various programs with LPBO, but its magazine is aimed at mass audiences so bird articles included are quite general. Some of its local groups are strongly bird-oriented, and regularly feature bird articles in their bulletins.

**Prince Edward Island:** The P.E.I. Naturalist (of the PEINHS) is the only provincial outlet, and seems less slanted towards birds than most naturalists' bulletins.

**Québec** (per André Cyr): Association québécoise des groupes d'ornithologues (26 bird clubs in 1993) publishes Québec Oiseaux (began 1989), as well as building a computerized database of bird checklist data. The Province of Quebec Society for the Protection of Birds/Société québécoise de protection des oiseaux publishes a journal Tchebec (several years behind, but catching up) and a newsletter. The Société Québécoise pour l'Étude Biologique du Comportement focuses on bird topics at its annual symposia about one year in three, some papers having been published later, individually or in proceedings volumes; their

newsletter includes an extensive summary of publications (some extracted for our "In press" section).

**Saskatchewan:** The Blue Jay (of SNHS) is probably the outstanding regional naturalists' publication in Canada, and includes many bird articles, including some from Alberta, Manitoba, and the N.W.T.. The SNHS also frequently issues special publications, mostly regional compilations on bird distribution/status.

**Yukon Territory** (per Pam Sinclair): The Yukon Bird Club (founded 1993) has a newsletter, 50+ members, and lots of enthusiasm!

[Note: I regret that space precluded giving all details, often including subscription rates, addresses and frequency of publication of these groups and their outlets, kindly supplied by some of you. I can provide much of this information on demand.]

In addition to using regional/provincial outlets, bird students of all levels and from all parts of Canada publish in The Canadian Field-Naturalist (issued by the Ottawa Field-Naturalists Club). The Canadian Journal of Zoology includes some bird papers, but is used (and read) mainly by professional scientists.

One correspondent suggested that SCO and Picoides are focussed largely (excessively?) on professional ornithologists. This reflects interests of the people who joined SCO, not a restriction on who may join. Birders presumably would join SCO if it offered something different that they wanted. As the above summary makes clear, regional/provincial groups and outlets are focussed on a "birding" level, and most birders' needs for information or entertainment seem to be adequately served thus. The fact that many Canadian bird professionals (perhaps half the potential membership?) are SCO members indicates that our Society fills a gap for them, presumably through Picoides which is the only tangible return for all those who don't

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get to the annual meetings. Birders and bird professionals share many common interests, but no single publication will appeal equally to all of us. See the next column for another view.

### A Call to Action

The past-President of the Vancouver Natural History Society writes (in part):

I was very pleased with the latest (issue) of Picoides - it has ...actual reports of ongoing research... my own opinion is that long biographies of dead ornithologists belong in a book, not a periodical... There seems to have been a falling-away of academia in active public involvement... They all seem (to be) beaver away at increasing knowledge... but they don't come and share it with other naturalists, alert us to trends, show how we can help...

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## COMMENTS ON CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE DISMISSALS

SCO members mostly will be aware of the crisis at the Canadian Museum of Nature (CMN), formerly known as the National Museum of Natural Sciences. For those of you who hadn't heard, or who hadn't thought it important enough to pay attention, the CMN was made into a Crown Corporation in 1990, and the new management has implemented "economies" by dismissing on 27 July 1993 51 staff members, including the only research workers (formerly titled curators) in mammalogy, ornithology (our SCO President Henri Ouellet), herpetology, vascular plants, mosses, arctic ecology, and two other areas. Aside from the impacts on these people personally and professionally, these dismissals jeopardize the existence of the museum collections assembled by these people, and used in their work, by removing the collections from the hands of those people who know most about them and have most at stake in ensuring their maintenance. Although CMN, like other crown corporations, reports to a member of the federal cabinet, the latter maintains an "arms-length" relationship with the management team, which is an easy response to any

criticisms directed to the government regarding the dismissals - as with the campaign being orchestrated through TRUE FRIENDS OF NATURE (1 Nicholas St., ste.620, Ottawa K1N 7B7). Whether any new government elected in October will take a more responsible attitude towards the CMN remains to be seen.

Following this introduction is a copy of a letter written on behalf of SCO by our immediate past-President to the (supposedly responsible) Minister. Copies of other, more forcefully worded letters are available on request. No doubt more on this subject will appear in future issues of this bulletin.

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Copy of letter

July 20, 1993

Honourable Monique Landry...

Dear Minister,

I write on behalf of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists to express concern over press reports of changes at the Canadian Museum of Nature. Our Society is made up of professional scientists and others active in the serious study of birds in Canada. We promote research on birds and exchange of information among ornithologists.

The press reports to which I refer... indicate that as many as 51 scientists and other staff may be laid off as part of restructuring. It is also stated that "the museum no longer needs to concentrate as much attention on well known fish, mammal or bird species. Instead research will focus on lesser known species, such as insects." In other words, research on vertebrates is to be downgraded. There is also reference to interactive displays replacing older ones but that is not (our) main concern.

The Canadian Museum of Nature should take a leading role among similar institutions in Canada. We look to the Museum to house representative, permanent and retrievable collections of Canadian plants and animals. These collections should document research already done and provide for ongoing and future studies. They should be managed by scientific authorities in the various groups represented. It is not sufficient merely to conserve them. Collections and scientists form part of a network of scientific studies in Canada and abroad. Specimens should be available for exchange, loans and examination by other institutions and researchers, including graduate students. All these activities occur now at the (Canadian) Museum of Nature. It should be noted that members of the scientific staff often share in the training of graduate students in their areas of expertise.

It is important that these traditional roles of the Museum be maintained. This necessitates that the scientific staff not be diminished.

The suggestion that enough is known about vertebrate animals is clearly not true. The interest of our Society is in birds but (similar) gaps in knowledge apply in other groups. The bird fauna of many parts of Canada is poorly known as are the life histories and evolutionary relationships of many of our species. Much has been made recently of the need to conserve diversity and to use it as a measure of the health of ecosystems. This is a subject very close to the mandate of museums for it calls for detailed knowledge of the identity, distribution and status of species. Birds, by virtue of their mobility, variety and habitat preferences are excellent indicators of environmental quality and change.

I believe the Museum should maintain its expertise in all groups of plants and animals. Of course this includes insects but it should be noted that this group is not neglected but continues to have the attention of specialists in Agriculture Canada.

I referred above to the need to retain authorities in the various fields of biology. We look to these experts not only for their research but also to represent Canada in international circles and to share their knowledge with the public. To take examples from birds, Dr. Ouellet, who is the Museum's ornithologist, is the Canadian representative on the American Ornithologists' Union Checklist Committee. From 1983 through 1986 he also gave distinguished service as Secretary-General of the International Ornithological Congress held in Ottawa, an event that brought great credit to the Museum and to Canadian ornithology. Regarding publications one can cite Godfrey's outstanding and scholarly work "The Birds of Canada". One wishes that the Museum would sponsor comparable volumes on other groups.



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On behalf of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, I urge that every effort be made to maintain and enhance the scientific stature of the staff and collections of the Canadian Museum of Nature. Recent press reports are not encouraging.

Sincerely yours,

J. Bruce Falls  
Immediate Past President SCO  
Fellow, American Ornithologists' Union  
Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE INCOMING PRESIDENT

The Society of Canadian Ornithologists, entering its second decade, has reached a level of relative stability and a maturity from which we may review its status, examine its role in the context in which it functions, plan for the future, and launch new initiatives if warranted.

Since the beginning, membership in the Society of Canadian Ornithologists has fluctuated from year to year but averages over 200 members. The financial situation is sound although there are no large reserves of funds, and it has been possible to make awards to meritorious students and ornithologists, as well as to publish newsletters and PICOIDES. The latter is now our only publication and vehicle of communication among members because it is difficult to meet on our own, as we all know.

For the second time since the International Ornithological Congress in 1986, the Society of Canadian Ornithologists held its annual meeting in Canada, last spring in Guelph, jointly with the Wilson Ornithological Society. This was a well-attended and very successful meeting (see various reports in this issue of PICOIDES). Should we plan a special independent meeting of the Society to provide the membership with an opportunity to present communications, discuss and plan for the future of ornithology in Canada, consolidate the Society's base, and consider or launch new initiatives?

The officers and council of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists are anxious to accept responsibilities and challenges. Tony Erskine, the editor of PICOIDES, has taken over from Bruce MacGillivray who contributed much for several years to the establishment and survival of this bulletin. Tony has already ensured continuity by preparing the current issue, and he is planning for the two issues to appear in 1994.

At this time, it is important for the Society of Canadian Ornithologists to increase its membership. I am appealing to every member of the Society to make serious efforts to recruit new members for 1994. **Could every individual member be challenged to enlist at least one new member in 1994?** If the Society is to develop beyond its present limited sphere and become involved in new endeavours, its membership must increase.

Some members have suggested that the Society of Canadian Ornithologists should be involved in conservation issues. This is probably a direction that it should take, but before investing efforts in this direction I would like to receive more views and suggestions on this issue. Should the response be positive, a committee on conservation will be created from among the members who have shown their interest, to examine conservation issues and make recommendations to the executive of the

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Society. Then what actions should the executive take? Again your opinion and suggestions are requested so that actions may be discussed in the next issues of PICOIDES and at the next annual meeting. Another important point to consider on this matter: should our activity on conservation be restricted to birds, or should it have a broader scope?

During the last 2-3 years several members of the Society and other individuals in Canada and abroad have mentioned to me that Canada should have an ornithological journal of its own, and that the Society of Canadian Ornithologists should be the main driving force in promoting such a project. I too have felt for several years that lack of an ornithological journal was one of the main shortcomings of Canadian ornithology. I feel that the publication of a Canadian journal of ornithology would be a very important project for the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and Canada. I am prepared to spend the necessary time and efforts to investigate fully the possibility of starting such an ornithological journal. A few colleagues also have indicated their interest in this project and have volunteered to work on a committee to look into the feasibility of starting such a journal. Consequently, I will put together a small committee to investigate the actual needs for a Canadian ornithological journal, the modes of financing, the production and editorial aspects, and the availability of high quality manuscripts. Your ideas and suggestions will be very welcome. I should be able to report, in at least a preliminary fashion, on the progress of this project in the next issue of PICOIDES.

Phil Stepney has recently informed me that he will not be able to continue as Treasurer and Membership Secretary after the end of 1993 owing to a very heavy

work load. Phil has served the Society very well for many years and has provided extensive support to successive Presidents and Councils. On behalf of all the members I am pleased to extend to him our grateful thanks. As a result of Phil's decision, **I am appealing for a volunteer to occupy this important function**, preferably before the end of the year. Please contact me as soon as possible.

The manuscript of the Directory of Canadian Ornithologists, a joint project of the Society and the Canadian Wildlife Service, is being revised and is due to appear before the end of the year. This reference should be a useful tool containing a great deal of information about those who work in ornithology and related fields in Canada.

Concerning the situation at the Canadian Museum of Nature, I would obviously be too biased to comment on it, but I take this opportunity to thank all those who have expressed their support. I will only add that I am extremely concerned about the future of the unique and very valuable collections, particularly the national ornithological collections, that are entrusted to the museum. Regarding my personal plans, I will take an early retirement at the end of January 1994, and I plan to continue my research in avian zoogeography and taxonomy afterwards. I will be able to provide additional details in the next issue. As one of my ornithological activities, I intend to carry on as your President until the end of my term. In the meantime, correspondence can be sent to me at my regular museum address, or to my home, as follows: 3820 Autumnwood, Gloucester, Ontario K1T 2G8. Telephone (613) 738-6485.

Henri Ouellet



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## REPORTS FROM 1993 ANNUAL MEETING/RAPPORTS DU RÉUNION ANNUELLE DE 1993

### SCO PRESIDENT'S REPORT/ RAPPORT DU PRÉSIDENT DE LA SOC

I was going to say that this report would be my swan song, and then I began to wonder about the derivation of the term, because I've never heard a swan sing. Webster (the dictionary) described it as a poetic, musical, or artistic work composed shortly before the artist's death. That wasn't exactly what I had in mind - I'm only stepping down as your president.

It has not been an easy year for our Society but we have continued our essential activities. I thank those who chaired and served on committees. Laurene Ratcliffe with Jon Barlow and Jean-Pierre Savard continued our student awards. Henri Ouellet with Bill Montevecchi and Dave Mossop handled nominations. Stuart Houston with Andre Cyr and Steve Wendt selected our Speirs Award winner. Several members of the Council agreed to help the Editor with regional material - Tom Dickinson, Tony Erskine, Jean-Francois Giroux, and Jim Rising. Some of these reports have already appeared.

I thank the officers for carrying out their duties - André Cyr our Secretary and Phil Stepney who has served as Treasurer/Membership Secretary for six years. Jon Barlow our past-President and Henri Ouellet the President-elect have been particularly helpful to me.

I want to say a special thanks to Bruce McGillivray, who is retiring after six

years as editor of Picoides. Bruce turned our newsletter into an attractive, interesting and lively bulletin. Heavy responsibilities have forced him to relinquish the Editorship, but not before producing issue 6(1) [March 1993] which continues the tradition he established.

Five councillors are stepping down at this meeting - Tony Erskine (who is taking on the Editorship), Stuart Houston, Laurene Ratcliffe, Jim Rising, and Jean-Pierre Savard. I thank them all and trust that they will continue to help the Society. I also welcome the new members of the Council; I'm sure Henri will involve them in our activities.

Ricky Dunn, who helped to found our Society, continues to support our activity. This year she started a new column of opinion in Picoides and solicited future contributions. It's particularly timely to mention that, for several years, Ricky has carried out a Birdathon with the Long Point Bird Observatory, with part of the proceeds going to the starving coffers of SCO and part to support our Baillie student award. This year she will be out counting two weeks hence and we can thank her by pledging our sponsorship at this meeting.

In fall 1992 Henri and I visited Tom Manning at his home near Merrickville, Ontario, to present a photograph of Red Phalaropes as recognition of the Speirs Award for 1992. Tom expressed his appreciation to the Society. Our visit is illustrated on the cover of the previous issue of Picoides.

During the year, I received a report I had

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solicited from Tony Diamond, offering suggestions for the improvement of our Society. He pinpointed our difficulty in meeting, and recommended ways in which we might overcome it. I am particularly pleased that we have been able to meet here in Guelph. The Wilson Ornithological Society and particularly Dick Banks and Keith Bildstein have been gracious in welcoming us aboard as full participants. This gives us the opportunity to present the results of our research and also to meet together and discuss issues facing our Society.

During the year I corresponded with members of Council and obtained their views on a number of issues, in particular the formation of a Conservation Committee and Tony Diamond's proposal for regional meetings. We will discuss these and other questions shortly.

The main purpose of our Society is to further communication among our members. On that score we have had a very difficult year. The absence of *Picoides* for over a year, though we understood the reasons, virtually cut off communication with the members and prevented us from implementing initiatives which we could all be involved in. It may also be responsible for a drop in membership which fortunately seems to have levelled off. We must encourage new members to join so that we can support our awards and properly represent Canadian Ornithologists.

With our new Council and Editor, we now have the opportunity to reverse these problems and grow again with new initiatives. I hope I have helped to set the stage and look forward to the future with our new President Henri Ouellet. Thank you for your support during my term of office.

Bruce Falls

(lightly edited)

## SCO FINANCES & MEMBERSHIP/LES FINANCES ET LE NOMBRE DES MEMBRES SOC

Bank balances + investments, 31 December 1991 - total \$15,208.60

Bank balances + investments, 31 December 1992 - total 17,371.32

The Society is financially better off than at the end of last year. The main reasons were that only one issue of *Picoides* was paid for in 1992, no student travel awards were given, and the Taverner Awards were reduced by a total of \$300.00. If those savings (not all planned) had not been made, the additional expenses would have reduced our financial growth to about \$400.00, less than the 15% of the capital account we need to add to our GICs to keep pace with inflation. We should be prudent, given the very low interest rates now earned on our investment.

There are presently 177 paid members of the Society, and I expect we will reach about 190 within the next two months, through late renewals. This would about equal last year's total. (from letter and financial statement by Philip H.R. Stepney, Treasurer/Membership Secretary, dated 19 April 1993)

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## NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE/COMITÉ SUR LES NOMINATIONS

The term of office of five councillors ended this year, and the President-elect becomes President. The Recording Secretary (André Cyr) agreed to continue in his position for another year. The Treasurer/Membership Secretary (Phil Stepney), after having served in that capacity since the Society began, has requested that a successor be found for this important position. No candidate has yet been found, and Dr. Stepney will continue in that role for the present.

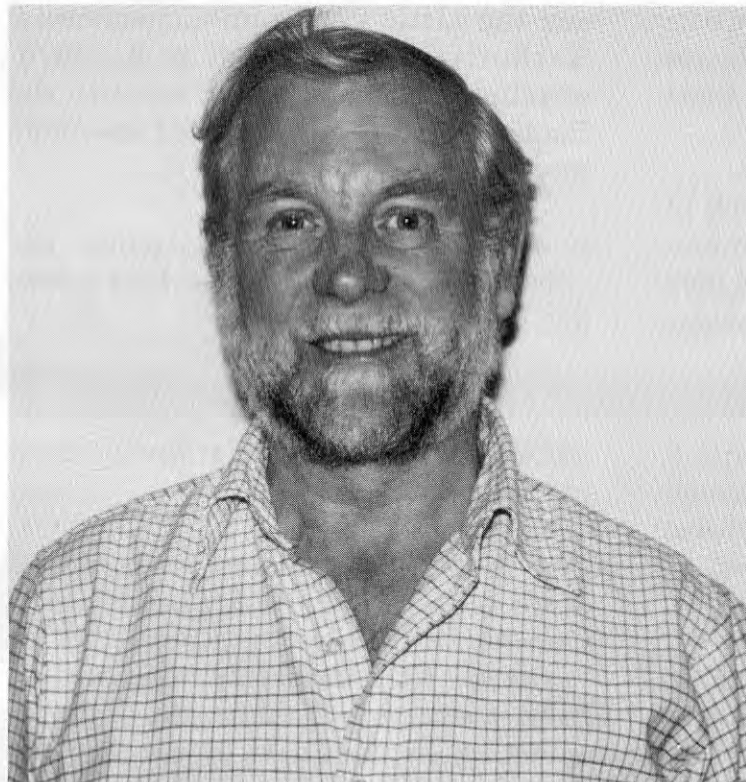
A total of 59 ballots was received to elect five new councillors, for a two-year term ending in 1995, and a president-elect. The following were elected:

President-elect: D.N. Nettleship

Councillors: Hans Blokpoel, R. Wayne Campbell, David J.T. Hussell,  
Richard W. Knapton, Bridget J. Stutchbury

(from report by Henri Ouellet, Committee chair, dated 28 April 1993)

## 1993 DORIS HUESTIS SPEIRS AWARD for CONTRIBUTIONS TO CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGY - - - - - Fred Cooke



Each year the Society of Canadian Ornithologists presents the Doris Huestis Speirs Award to a person who has made important contributions to Canadian ornithology. This year we honour Fred Cooke, who has carried out a monumental long-term study of the Lesser Snow Goose and in the process has influenced the careers of many colleagues and students.

Fred was born in England in 1936 and educated at Cambridge through to his doctorate in botany. He joined the biology department at Queen's



University in 1965 as a specialist in fungal genetics. His passion for birds got the better of him and in 1975 he started the Tundra Biological Station near Churchill, Manitoba, where he had begun in 1969 his studies of Snow Geese that have continued to the present. At first, conditions were rather rough, and we hear stories of Fred trying to pitch a tent knee-deep in water, although it is not clear who would want to sleep in such a tent. I understand the station is rather palatial now, with a goose colony where the front lawn should be. Here Fred and a small army of students and colleagues, with a distinctly international flavour, have carried out research into the selective forces shaping the population of mixed Snow and Blue Geese. [As an aside, it's appropriate to note that Graham Cooch, who first established that Snows and Blues were colour-morphs of one species, was an earlier recipient of the Speirs award.] Fred's studies have also dealt with life history, reproductive strategies and genetic variability, always tied to the birds in the wild and their ecology.

Fred Cooke has directed the research of 27 graduate students, and their many joint publications attest to the close collaboration within his group. Besides

authoring many journal papers and invited presentations, Fred co-edited a widely acclaimed book on avian genetics, and is in the process of drawing together the work on Snow Geese in another volume. Fred was vice-chair of the program committee for the XIXth International Ornithological Congress in Ottawa in 1986. He is a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union and a Corresponding Fellow of the Deutsche Ornithologen-Gesellschaft. From 1985 through 1987 he was a Killam Fellow. He received the William Brewster Award of the AOU in 1990. He has certainly added lustre to Queen's University biology, and will shortly take up a newly established chair in wildlife ecology at Simon Fraser University.

Throughout his distinguished academic career, Fred has continued an interest in natural history and conservation, for example helping with the Rideau Trail and the Little Cataraqui Conservation Authority. I can attest to his bird-watching skills: when we went to the Camargue [south France], Fred saw more species than I did.

It is a pleasure to recognize the outstanding contributions of Fred Cooke to Canadian ornithology.

## STUDENT AWARDS/BOURSES AUX ÉTUDIANTS

A total of 14 applications from 5 provinces was considered by the Research Awards Committee in 1993. Those judged most deserving were as follows:

The James L. Baillie Student Research Award went to Rachel F. Holt, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Forest Science, University of British Columbia, for her project titled "Ecological energetics and demography of a

woodpecker guild in relation to forest management".

Two Taverner Awards were made, to Paul Martin, an Honours B.Sc. candidate at Queen's University, for a project titled "Evidence for interspecific influences on habitat selection, habitat use, and prey selection in the Least Flycatcher and American Redstart", and to Michael S. Quinn, a Ph.D. candidate in the Faculty

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of Environmental Studies at York University, whose thesis is titled "J.H. Fleming, Dean of Canadian Ornithology: His Life and Contributions".

(from report by Laurene Ratcliffe, Committee chair, dated 1 May 1993).

#### NOTE

A report on activities by the 1992 James L. Baillie Award winner, Marilyn Merkle, was published in the recent Newsletter of the Long Point Bird Observatory. Reports from the 1992 Taverner Award winners were not yet available.

### EXCERPTS FROM THE EDITOR'S REPORT

(supplementing his farewell message in the preceding issue)

Vol.6(1) of Picoides was the first prepared exclusively on Word Perfect 5.1 and without desktop publishing software. Word Perfect can create the Picoides-style format, eliminating layout costs and enabling the bulletin to be produced almost anywhere. For advice on formatting, consult my secretary, Colleen Steinhilber, at (403) 453-9175. [The Editor is still fumbling!]

One significant part of the SCO's mandate is the bridging of the gap between amateur and professional ornithologists. Expansion of the Canadian Ornithologists and their Research section to profile individuals in detail might give the public a better understanding of the value of what superficially may seem to be esoteric research.

### RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE/COMITÉ SUR LES RESOLUTIONS

(jointly with Wilson Ornithological Society)

The following resolutions (plus "whereas" sections available on request) were drafted, and later passed by the combined attendance in Guelph of the two societies:

1. ... strongly recommend the Saskatchewan Water Corporation delay their schedule of filling Lake Diefenbaker, so that losses of Piping Plover eggs and/or chicks are minimized.

2. ... support the immediate completion of the management plan for the (Presqu'île Provincial) Park, and a cessation of the annual waterfowl hunt in that park.

3. ... respectfully urge that the regulatory institutions relax bans on the export of mist nets for scientific use.

4. ... applaud efforts by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to study (Steller's Eider and Spectacled Eider), and ... support listing the North American population of the Steller's Eider, and the world population of the Spectacled Eider, as "threatened" by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

5. ... commend the Committees on Local Arrangements and on the Scientific program for their efforts towards this fine

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meeting, and ... also thank other groups, including the University of Guelph Graphics and Print Services, and the U. Guelph Conference Coordinator Gary Nadalin, and Chris Earley for designing the Woodcock logo, and all others without whom this meeting would have not been possible.

## NEXT MEETING/LA PROCHAINE RÉUNION

The Society members present in Guelph agreed that the 1994 annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the combined meetings of the American Ornithologists' Union, the Cooper Ornithological Society, and the Wilson Ornithological Society, at Missoula, Montana, U.S.A., 21-26 June 1994.

Members wishing to propose SCO activities for that meeting should contact the President or other member of the Council soon, so that arrangements may be announced in the spring 1994 issue of *Picoides*.

## Call for Nominations DORIS HUESTIS SPEIRS AWARD

The Speirs Award is presented annually to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to Canadian ornithology. If you wish to nominate someone, please contact:

Society of Canadian Ornithologists,  
Speirs Award,  
c/o Dr. Henri Ouellet, 3820  
Autumnwood St., Gloucester, Ontario  
K1T 2G8

## Call for Applications STUDENT RESEARCH AWARDS

Applications are sought annually for 1 Baillie Award (\$1,000) and 2 Taverner Awards (up to \$500 each).

The James L. Baillie Student Research Award is open to any student conducting ornithological research at a Canadian university. It honours the memory of James L. Baillie, and supports field research on Canadian birds. The James L. Baillie Student Research Award is funded by Long Point Bird Observatory from proceeds of the Baillie Birdathon, and is administered by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists.

Taverner Awards are offered by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists to honour and further Percy A. Taverner's accomplishments in increasing knowledge of Canadian birds through research, conservation and public education. The awards are available to people with limited or no access to major funding, regardless of professional status, who are undertaking ornithological work in Canada.

A single application may be made for both awards, but only one award can be



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won by an applicant in a given year. Tavernier Awards are only given once for a project; Baillie Awards only once to an applicant; but past winners of either award may apply for the other. Funds are not awarded to cover stipends.

To apply, submit a resumé, two letters of reference, and a proposal (maximum 3 pages) which should state the purpose of the study, the methods to be used, and a budget outlining

total costs and other sources of funding received or requested. Applications should reach the Society before 15 January of each year, through:

Society of Canadian Ornithologists,  
Research Awards,  
c/o Dr. Henri Ouellet,  
3820 Autumnwood St.,  
Gloucester, Ontario K1T 2G8

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## S.C.O. COLUMN: DYNAMIC POPULATIONS NOT COVERED BY POPULATION DYNAMICS?

Population dynamics has been a buzz-phrase for many years. The Grouse, in health and disease (MS left with the publishers when its author, E.A. Wilson, started for the South Pole with Scott in 1910) was an early study of the population fluctuations of a bird species and their possible causes. Bird populations increase and decrease, and it's a lot easier to recognize the fact of such fluctuations than either to measure or to explain them. Serious efforts to monitor bird population changes over large areas really began in the 1930s. [Yes, I know Christmas Bird Counts began in 1900, but they really don't require change in that statement.] People have been trying to devise, or improve, or extend the use of, bird-counting exercises ever since. People, including some of the same ones, were trying to explain bird population fluctuations even before those could be measured. What goes up must come down - though human populations haven't come down recently... We all know that bird numbers decrease as well as increasing.

"Distribution is related to abundance; the edge of the breeding range of a species is where its breeding density

falls to zero. The region where average annual reproduction fails to replace average annual losses in the population is another aspect of the range limit." (Atlas of breeding birds of the Maritime Provinces, N.S. Museum & Nimbus Publ., 1992, p.4). Because many populations are stable in the long run though dynamic on a shorter time-frame, decreases probably occur about as often as increases. Decreases involve contractions at the range limits as well as declines in abundance in the main range, and conversely for increases.

For discussion of other aspects of avian biology it is convenient to "freeze" a bird's distribution at one point in time, within the limits of then-current knowledge. We don't know everything about distributions of birds in Canada, even if we know a lot more than about most other classes of animals. The real expansions or contractions known to have occurred in Canadian bird ranges were rarely a big deal; the approximate maps in field-guides, or in The birds of Canada (Rev. ed., Nat. Museums of Canada, 1986), are fully adequate for most purposes. We now also have breeding bird atlases - published for 5 provinces

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and in press for another, with map-based provincial bird books on the way for the rest - though more detail is needed for the territories and other northern areas. All of these summaries are attempts to set benchmarks, from which future changes in bird distribution may be recognized. Those changes will include both expansions and contractions in ranges. The atlases are time-limited, referring only in appendices to earlier reports not substantiated in their base periods. This is a very desirable shift in emphasis from the traditional practice of keeping all alleged breeding records from the 1800s in current summaries, sometimes including regions where no one had seen those species for decades, even as vagrants. However, it remains very much easier to publish an account of an apparent "range extension" than of a range contraction.

The ornithological literature is full of short notes and longer articles describing sightings of birds breeding or wandering in places where this hadn't been known previously. Range contractions, on the other hand, have to be documented exhaustively to get attention in most journals, and few except major disappearances get published until a new regional bird book appears, 20 or more years after the last one. The reluctance to publish range contractions when they are detected means that most range summaries, whether textual or mapped, show the extreme locations at which breeding season occurrences have been detected in the past, rather than the current range limits. Even the breeding bird atlases show this bias, in a slightly different way; a single record of breeding in one year by one pair of a species adds that sampling unit (whether a 10x10km square or a degree-block of latitude/longitude) to the mapped range as effectively as the regular occurrence of several thousand breeding

pairs of a species.

Before considering whether bias against range contractions should and can be remedied, it may be instructive to explore why it exists. One cause might be a "guilt complex". We acknowledge that people have been responsible, directly or indirectly, for most (all?) declines or extinctions of bird species during historic times. We do not want to hear that any bird species no longer occurs where it used to be, so we demand more "proof" of its absence than we demanded earlier for its presence.

Another part of the problem may be the probably innate human preference for positive over negative evidence. "What's hit is history, but what's missed is mystery!" If a bird was reported seen, it is accepted as having been there. The main question asked is whether it was correctly identified, although the reasons why it was believed to be breeding (if so claimed) may be more trenchant. A person who reports many extra-limital species may be credited with "good imagination", but this is seldom the response to his/her first report. However, if a species previously encountered in a region is claimed to be absent there, the first reaction of "the authorities" nearly always is that it must have been missed, with the implicit corollary that the observer would have found it if he/she had tried harder or been more competent. Thus, assessment of absence, instead of being based, as with a new occurrence record, on the evidence presented - a thorough survey of suitable areas (which found most expected species but not the one in question), may be replaced in part by the "experts'" personal reactions to the observer. A different standard for range contractions results vis-a-vis range extensions.

A partial solution might be to involve more and different people in the

assessment of negative records, not quite as new occurrences now are screened by rare bird panels in many areas. It is not a question of seeking people to provide testimonials as to the observer's competence and/or veracity. For assessing negative evidence, the people on the panel need to be able to evaluate the absence of a species on the basis of what other species were seen, relative to the supposed abundance and detectability of the various species, much more than being "experts in field identification". For a range contraction, the species may not have been seen in the field, so arguments over the observer's ability to identify it would be largely hypothetical, not to say irrelevant.

Even more important is for people to

recognize the "mental block" that causes most of us intuitively to disbelieve absences. Last winter I was repeatedly asked by people in town, "Where are all the birds?" No one had seen Evening Grosbeaks here 60 years ago, but now they find it hard to believe that these birds might be absent all winter. "Birds have wings, and use them" is often trotted out to explain how a species could have got here from its distant range. Equally, birds can and do fly away from places where they were known previously, and they don't always come back every year. People's memories tend to be very short for transient phenomena - such as weather, or birds.

A.J. (Tony) Erskine

P.O. Box 1327, Sackville, N.B. E0A 3C0

## IN PRESS

### Current and "In Press" Articles in Canadian Ornithology

#### UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

**Bédard, J., Lepage, M., & Nadeau, A.** Cormorant culling in the St. Lawrence River estuary: a population modelling approach. Col. Waterbirds...in press.

**Bédard, J., Lepage, M., & Nadeau, A.** Double-crested Cormorant morphometry and field sexing in the St. Lawrence estuary. Col. Waterbirds...in press.

**Bélanger, L. & Bédard, J.** Role of ice scouring and goose grubbing in marsh plant dynamics. J. Anim. Ecol...in press.

**Bélanger, L. & Bédard, J.** 1992. Flock composition and foraging behavior of greater snow geese (Chen

caerulescens atlantica). Can. J. Zool. 70: 2410-2415.

**Boismenu, C., Gauthier, G., & Larochelle, J.** 1992. Physiology of prolonged fasting in Greater Snow Geese (Chen caerulescens atlantica) Auk 109: 511-521.

**Darveau, M., Gauthier, G., DesGranges, J.-L., & Maufette, Y.** Parental care and nesting success of the least flycatcher in declining maple forests. Can. J. Zool. 71: 1592-1601.

**Desrochers, A. & Magrath, R.D.** Age-specific fecundity in European Blackbirds: individual and population trends. Auk...in press.

**Desrochers, A. & Magrath, R.D.** 1993. Environmental predictability and mate

fidelity in European Blackbirds. Behav. Ecol. 4: 271-275.

**Desrochers, A.** 1992. Age-related differences in reproduction by European blackbirds: restraint or constraint. Ecology 73: 1128-1131.

**Desrochers, A.** 1992. Age and foraging success in European Blackbirds: variation among and between individuals. Anim. Behav. 43: 885-894.

**Gauthier, G.** 1993. Feeding ecology of nesting greater snow geese. J. Wildl. Manage. 57: 216-223.

**Gauthier, G.** Bufflehead (Bucephala albeola). in The birds of North America, no. 67 (A. Poole & F. Gill, eds.). Acad. Nat. Sci., Philadelphia;



Amer. Ornithol. Union, Washington, D.C.

**Gauthier, G., Choinière, L., & Savard, J.-P.L.** 1992. Nutrient reserves of wintering American black ducks in the St. Lawrence estuary, Québec. Can. Wildl. Serv., Progr. Notes no. 202.

**Gauthier, G., Giroux, J.-F., & Bédard, J.** 1992. Dynamics of fat and protein reserves during winter and spring migration in greater snow geese. Can. J. Zool. 70: 2077-2087.

**Hughes, R.J., Gauthier, G., & Reed, A.** Summer habitat use and behaviour of Greater Snow Geese. Wildfowl... *in press*.

**Hughes, R.J., Reed, A., & Gauthier, G.** Habitat use and movements of greater snow goose families. J. Wildl. Manage.... *in press*.

**Manseau, M. & Gauthier, G.** 1993. Interactions between greater snow geese and their rearing habitat. Ecology 74: 2045-2055.

#### MCGILL UNIVERSITY

**Date, E.M., & R.E. Lemon.** Sound transmission: a basis for dialects in birdsong. Behaviour...*in press*.

**Hurly, A., Ratcliffe, L., Weary, D.M., & Weisman, R.G.** 1993. White-throated Sparrows can perceive pitch change using the frequency ratio independent of the frequency difference. J. Comp. Psychol. 106: 388-391.

**Lemon, R.E., Weary D.M., & Norris, K.J.** 1992. Male features as predictors of reproductive success in the American Redstart (*Setophaga*

*ruticilla*). Behav. Ecol. Sociobiol. 29: 399-403.

**Lemon, R.E., Parot, S., & Weary D.** Dual strategies of song development in American Redstarts *Setophaga ruticilla*. Animal Behaviour...*in press*.

**Shackleton, S.A., Ratcliffe, L., & Weary, D.M.** 1992. Relative frequency parameters and song recognition in Black-capped Chickadees. Condor 94: 782-785.

**Weary, D.M., Lemon, R.E., & Perreault, S.** 1992. Neighbor-stranger recognition is not effected by song repertoires. Behav. Ecol. Sociobiol. 31: 441-447.

**Weary, D.M. & Weisman, R.G.** 1992. Temporal relationships in White-throated Sparrow song. Condor 94: 1013-1016.

**Winqvist, T., & R.E. Lemon.** Sexual selection and exaggerated tail length in birds. Amer. Nat....*in press*.

#### UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL

**Benoit, R., DesGranges, J.-L., & McNeil, R.** Directions of arrivals of great blue herons *Ardea herodias* at nests with large chicks near Montréal, Québec. Can. J. Zool....*in press*.

**Benoit, R., DesGranges, J.-L., & McNeil, R.** Flight path of great blue herons at a colony near Montréal. Can. J. Zool. *in press*.

**McNeil, R., Benoit, R., & DesGranges, J.-L.** 1993. Day-time and night-time foraging of Great Blue Herons in a non-tidal environment. Can. J. Zool. 71: 1075-1078.

**McNeil, R., & Rodriguez, J.R.** Nocturnal foraging in shorebirds. Wader Study Group Bull....*in press*.

**Poulin, B., Lefebvre, G., & McNeil, R.** Variations in bird abundance in tropical arid and semi-arid habitats. Ibis 135: 432-441.

**Poulin, B., Lefebvre, G., & McNeil, R.** Characteristics of feeding guilds and variation in diets of bird species of three adjacent tropical sites. Biotropica...*in press*.

**Thibault, M., & McNeil, R.** Day/night variation in habitat use by Wilson's Plovers in northeastern Venezuela. Wilson Bull....*in press*.

#### UNIVERSITÉ DE QUÉBEC À RIMOUSKI

**Beauchamp, G., Guillemette, M., & Ydenberg, R.** 1992. Prey selection while diving by common eiders, *Somateria mollissima*. Anim. Behav. 44: 417-426.

**Guillemette, M., Bolduc, F., & DesGranges, J.-L.** Stomach contents of diving and dabbling ducks during fall migration in the St. Lawrence River, Quebec, Canada. Wildfowl...*in press*.

**Guillemette, M., Himmelman, J.H., Barrette, C., & Reed, A.** 1993. Habitat selection by common eiders in winter and its interaction with flock size. Can. J. Zool. 71: 1259-1266.

**Guillemette, M., Ydenberg, R.C., & Himmelman, J.H.** 1992. The role of energy intake in prey and habitat selection of common eiders *Somateria mollissima* in winter: a risk-sensitive

interpretation. *J. Anim. Ecol.* 61: 599-610.

**SERVICE CANADIEN DE LA FAUNE, RÉGION QUÉBÉCOISE**

**Chapdelaine, G., & Brousseau, P.** Distribution, abundance and changes of seabird populations of the Gaspé Peninsula (Québec). *Can. Field-Nat.*... in press.

**DesGranges, J.-L., & Gagnon, C.** Duckling response to changes in the trophic web of acidified lakes. *Hydrobiologia*...in press.

**Hooper, T.D., & Savard, J.-P.L.** Bird diversity, density, and habitat selection in the Cariboo - Chilcotin grasslands, with emphasis on the Long-billed Curlew. *Can. Wildl. Serv. Tech. Rep. Ser.*...in press.

**Reed, A.** Duration of family bonds in Brent Geese *Branta bernicla* on the Pacific coast of North America. *Wildfowl*... in press.

**Rodway, M.S., Regehr, H.M., & Savard, J.-P.L.** Activity levels of Marbled Murrelets in different inland habitats in the Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia. *Condor*...in press.

**Rodway, M.S., Savard, J.-P.L., Garrier, D.C., & Lemon, M.J.F.** At-sea activity patterns of Marbled Murrelets adjacent to probable nesting areas in the Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia. *Proc. of Pac. Seabird Group - Murrelet Symposium*...in press.

**Savard, J.-P., Boyd, W.S., & Smith, J.** Waterfowl-wetland relationships in the aspen parkland of British Columbia: comparison of analytical methods. *Hydrobiologia*... in

press.

**Savard, J.-P.L., & Hooper, T.D.** Influence of survey length and radius size on grassland bird surveys by point counts. in *Proc. of a workshop on point counts (USFWS)*...in press.

**Savard, J.-P.L. & Lemon, M.J.** Geographic distribution of the Marbled Murrelet on Vancouver Island at inland sites during the 1991 breeding season. *Can. Wildl. Serv. Tech. Rep. Ser.*...in press.

**UNIVERSITÉ DE SHERBROOKE**

**Brunet, R., & Cyr, A.** 1992. The impact of dimethoate on rhythms of three granivorous bird species. *Agriculture, Ecosystems Environ.* 41: 327-336.

**Cyr, A., & Brunet, R.** 1992. Anesthetization of Red-winged Blackbirds with mixtures of alpha-chloralose and secobarbital. *J. Wildl. Manage.* 56: 806-809.

**Fullard, J.H., Barclay, R.M.R., & Thomas, D.W.** 1993. Echolocation in free-flying Atio Swiftlets (*Aerodramus sawtelli*). *Biotropica* 25: 254-258.

**Gauthier, M., & Thomas, D.W.** 1993. Nest site selection and cost of nest building by Cliff Swallows (*Hirundo pyrhoneota*). *Can. J. Zool.* 71: 1120-1123.

**Gauthier, M., & Thomas, D.W.** 1993. Succès relatif de deux tentatives consécutives de nidification chez l'Hirondelle à front blanc (*Hirundo pyrhoneota*). *Can. J. Zool.* 71: 1055-1059.

**Martin, K., Holt, R., & Thomas, D.** 1993. Getting by

on high: ecological energetics of arctic and alpine grouse. In *Life in the cold. III. Ecological, physiological and molecular mechanisms*. Carey, C., Florant, G.L., Wunder, B.A., & Horowitz, B. (ed.). Westview Press, Colorado.

**Thomas, D.W., Bosqué, C., & Arends, A.** 1993. Development of thermoregulation and the energetics of nestling Oilbirds (*Steatornis caripensis*). *Physiol. Zool.* 66: 322-348.

**MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND**

**Montevecchi, W.A.** 1993. Birds as bio-indicators in marine and terrestrial ecosystems. pp.60-62 in *The scientific challenge of our changing environment. Proc. of a conference addressing environmental change in Newfoundland and Labrador and similar regions*. Hall, J., & Wadleigh, M. (ed.). Royal Soc. Canada, *Can. Global Change Progr. Incid. Rep. Ser.* no IR93-2.

**UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA**

**Duncan, J.R.** 1992. The influence of snow cover and prey availability on Great Gray Owl breeding dispersal. Ph.D. thesis.

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## CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS AND THEIR RESEARCH

### UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

**Julien Beaulieu** - M.Sc. (Gauthier/Rochefort) - Response of plants to grazing by Greater Snow Goose goslings.

**Jean Bédard** - Population dynamics of an island population of Ruffed Grouse; Energetics of moult migration in Surf Scoters in the St. Lawrence estuary.

**Richard Bernier** - M.Sc. (Larochelle) - Factors affecting heat dissipation of the head in birds.

**Suzanne Carrière** - Ph.D. (Gauthier) - Feeding ecology in pre-breeding Canada Goose and White-fronted Goose.

**Sylvie Daigle** - M.Sc. (Bédard) - Role of secondary metabolites on winter food selection in Ruffed Grouse.

**Marcel Darveau** - Research Associate - Ecology of forest wildlife in relation to natural perturbations and forest practices.

**André Desrochers** - Post-doctoral fellow (Gauthier) - Reproductive strategy in Snow Geese; Peatland bird communities and boreal forest fragmentation.

**Daniel Fortin** - M.Sc. (Gauthier/Larochelle) - Cost of thermoregulation in Greater Snow Goose goslings.

**Gilles Gauthier** - Reproductive strategy in Arctic-nesting geese; Plant-herbivore interactions in geese.

**Jacques Larochelle** - Mechanisms of heat dissipation in birds.

**Denis Lepage** - Ph.D. (Gauthier) - Seasonal variation in reproductive success in Greater Snow Goose.

**Louis Lesage** - M.Sc. (Gauthier) - Growth patterns and energy reserves of Greater Snow Goose goslings.

**Éric Melaçon** - M.Sc. (Huot) - Abundance of birds in

regenerated boreal fir forest.

**Stéphane Menu** - M.Sc. (Gauthier) - Factors affecting first-year survival in Greater Snow Goose.

**Nathalie Piedboeuf** - M.Sc. (Gauthier) - Feeding ecology and nutrition of Greater Snow Goose goslings.

**Jean-François Rail** - M.Sc. (Huot/Darveau) - Effect of ecological barriers on behaviour of passerines in boreal forest.

**Éric Thibault** - M.Sc. (Gauthier/Larochelle) - Metabolic cost of activities in Greater Snow Goose.

### SASKATCHEWAN CONSERVATION DATA CENTRE

**James R. Duncan & Patricia A. Duncan** - Northern forest owl ecology in southeastern Manitoba including population monitoring, food habits, prey availability, and habitat use.

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## SOME RECENT OR IMPENDING PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

### **L'Atlas de Oiseaux Nicheurs du Québec/Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Quebec.**

- to be published (probably) in 1994;  
- pre-publication sale hoped to begin in autumn 1993.

- ca. 1,000 pp, covering 241 spp. breeding in southern Quebec in 1984-89, plus another 50+ spp. breeding only in northern Quebec or outside that time-period.

- Price likely \$75-100 (high, but not excessive for a big book).

(extracted from briefs in PQSPB Newsletter & in Québec Oiseaux)

Comm. internat. des NFO \*. 1993. **Noms français des oiseaux du monde.** Les Éditions Multimondes Inc., Québec. 452 + xvi pp.

\* The Commission includes Canadians H. Ouellet, N. David, and M. Gosselin.

### BOOK REVIEWS

Paulson, D. 1993. **Shorebirds of the Pacific Northwest.** (with drawings by J. Erkmann) Univ. Brit. Col. Press, Vancouver, & Seattle Audubon Soc. 406 pp.



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This book takes shorebird watching well beyond the scope of our field guides. The first 83 pages discuss shorebird characteristics, distribution and conservation, and identification tips and problems. However, the focus of this attractive package is the accounts of 79 species, including residents, migrants, vagrants and accidentals. For most, there are detailed descriptions of status, habitat and behaviour, plumages, moults, voice and other characteristics, many of which help identify individuals to species and age, Paulson also points out that the sexes of many species can be differentiated in the field, and that shorebird watchers can add to our knowledge by watching for differences in occurrence and behaviour of the sexes. The text is effectively supplemented by clear photos, and drawings by Jim Erkmann. There are few errors in the photos or text (although Short-billed Dowitchers do **not** nest in the Maritime Provinces!), but Paulson carefully points out many misidentifications in other texts and guides the reader may use, and directs the reader to useful photos in other books. Although geared to the Pacific Northwest, including British Columbia south of the latitude of the north tip of Vancouver Island, this book deals with all shorebird species occurring regularly in Canada. The many identification tips that Paulson pulls together here for the first time will be useful across Canada, although specific plumage descriptions may not always apply when the species is present in other parts of the country. He provides descriptions and evaluations of regional occurrence and key records, again helping shorebird watchers assess the context of birds they see.

The standard format of the species descriptions make it simple to find specific points, while the "Further Questions" and "Notes" sections permit Paulson to muse on characteristics birders can investigate,

or to add other comments, often addressing dubious statements in other publications. His normally subjective style is off-set by species introductions written with a literary slant, e.g., "Appreciate the world's smallest shorebird [Least Sandpiper], available at roadside puddles as well as picturesque estuaries" or Pectoral Sandpipers in flight "rolling their r's as if practicing Spanish for their winter sojourn". In summary, this is a wealth of stimulating information in an attractive and surprisingly error-free package that is lots of fun to browse through and use.

Richard D. Elliot

Roberson, D., & Tenney, C. eds. 1993. **Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Monterey County, California.** Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society, Monterey, Cal. 438 pp.

The latest breeding bird atlas is the first from southwestern North America, where more species are permanent residents than elsewhere. Monterey County is half again the area of Prince Edward Island, three times as large as Rhode Island. It rises from sea-level to 1,787 m elevation, with habitats from cool sea-cliffs and humid coastal forests to arid shrubland. In 1988-92, 45 observers or teams spent over 3,500 hours afield in documenting the breeding status (with tentative population estimates) for 178 breeding bird species. The results, through desk-top publishing, are now available within a year after completion of field-work, a very creditable achievement. The book also includes a useful summary of historical breeding status in the county for each species. Priced at \$19.95US (paperback, + \$2.75 shipping), this attractive volume offers good value for the money.

A.J. Erskine

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We also call the attention of bird students to some little-known Canadian sources of information on birds.

(1) Canadian Wildlife Service publications in several series appeared at irregular intervals since 1948. The CWS Monograph and Report series were discontinued a few years ago, because of costs but also because few MSS were offered for those series recently. A new series, the CWS Technical Reports, was initiated in 1986, and already includes about 150 titles. These reports, produced in limited quantities, are official publications (with ISBN & ISSN nos.). They are numbered consecutively, but issues from the five CWS regions and CWS headquarters/NWRC are distinguished by covers of different colours and different species "logos". They "contain technical and scientific information from projects ... to make available material that either is of interest to a limited audience, or is too extensive to be accommodated (elsewhere)".

(2) The work of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), in designating bird (and other) species as Endangered or Threatened, is well-known, through media attention. Less known is the designation of additional species as Vulnerable, defined as "at risk because of low or declining numbers, small range or for some other reason, but not a threatened species." The designation

A few examples are:

Bordage, D. 1988. Suivi des couples nicheurs de canard noir en forêt boréale - 1986. Sér. rapp. tech. no. 36. SCF-Région Québécoise.

Savard, J-P.L. 1987. Status report on Barrow's Goldeneye. Tech. Rep. Ser. no.23. CWS-Pacific & Yukon Region.

Threlfall, W., Goudie, R.I. 1986. Marine bird observations at Placentia Bay and Cape St. Mary's, 1973-76. Tech. Rep. Ser. no.6. CWS-Atlantic Region.

"Technical Reports are available in CWS libraries and are listed with the DOBIS system in major scientific libraries across Canada. They are printed in the official language of the author's choice."

process is based on the review by specialists of specially prepared status reports on each species. Not all species for which status reports were prepared are later designated in any category, but the status reports for those species remain in the COSEWIC files, where they may be consulted. In some cases, these are the most recent status summaries available for a species, and as such they deserve more attention than they have received.

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Species for which COSEWIC status reports exist but for which no category was designated, with the geographic area treated and the year of review, included (through 1992):

Red-necked Grebe - all areas exc. N.B., P.E.I.	1982
American White Pelican - B.C., Prairie Prov., Ont.	1987 *
Double-crested Cormorant - all provinces	1978
Bald Eagle - all provinces & territories	1984
Sharp-shinned Hawk - all provinces & territories	1986
Golden Eagle - all areas exc. Atl. Prov.	1987
Merlin - all provinces & territories	1985
Gyr Falcon - all exc. Man., N.B., P.E.I., Nfld.	1987 *
Prairie Falcon - B.C., Prairie Prov.	1982
(Greater) Sandhill Crane - B.C., Man., Ont.	1979
American Coot - all provinces exc. Alta, Nfld.	1991
Black Tern - all areas exc. Y.T., P.E.I., Nfld.	1988
Eastern Screech-Owl - Sask., Man., Ont., Que., N.B.	1986
Northern Hawk-Owl - all exc. Man., N.S., P.E.I.	1992
Gray Flycatcher - B.C.	1992
Canyon Wren - B.C.	1992

\* Notes: White Pelican was designated as Threatened in 1978, but was de-listed in 1987; Gyr Falcon was judged as "not in any category" in 1978, and this rating was confirmed on re-examination in 1987.

For information on any of these species, please contact:

COSEWIC, c/o Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa K1A 0H3

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Colleen Steinhilber for written instructions on converting my WordPerfect MS into the format needed by the printers, and Dan Busby for trouble-shooting the various problems I encountered in the process. I also thank Bruce McGillivray for general guidance on approaches and practices he had found useful in assembling and producing earlier Picoides issues. Don Hopkins, of Tribune Press Ltd., Sackville, N.B., arranged the final polishing and production of the bulletin. Last but not least, I thank all the people who responded to my last-minute requests for materials for this issue. Without all the help I received from various quarters, you would still be waiting for the next Picoides. Keep it up!



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## SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS 1993-94 OFFICERS AND COUNCILLORS

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<b>Ex-officio</b> J. Bruce Falls	<b>(Past-President)</b>		
Anthony J. Erskine	<b>(Picoides Editor)</b>		

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editor's Musings .....	2
Membership Information .....	3
Is Picoides a rara avis? What else shares the field? .....	3
Comments on Canadian Museum of Nature dismissals .....	5
A message from the incoming President .....	7
Reports from 1993 annual meeting .....	9
SCO President's report .....	9
SCO Finances & Membership .....	10
Nominations Committee .....	11
1993 Doris Huestis Speirs Award for Contributions to Canadian Ornithology .....	11
Student Awards .....	12
Excerpts from Editor's Report .....	13
Resolutions Committee (jointly with W.O.S.) .....	13
Next meeting .....	14
Calls for Nominations or Applications for Awards .....	14
S.C.O. Column: Dynamic Populations not covered by Population Dynamics? .....	15
"In press" and Recently Published .....	17
Canadian Ornithologists and their work .....	20
Some recent or impending publications of interest .....	20