

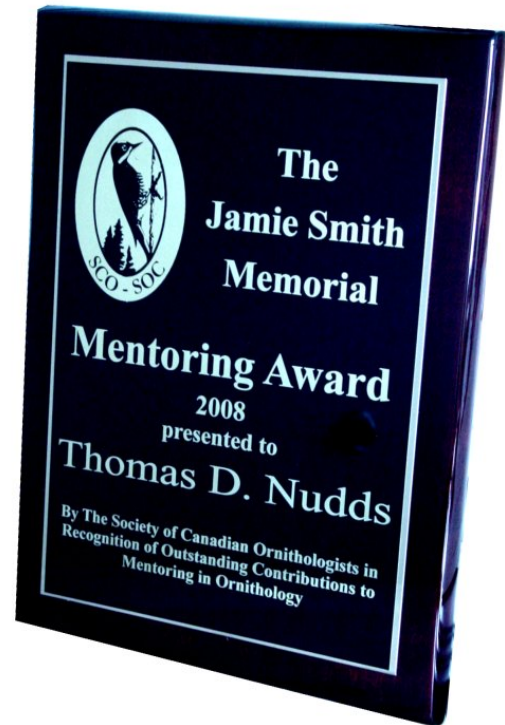
The Jamie Smith Memorial Award for Mentoring in Ornithology

It is with great pleasure that the Society of Canadian Ornithologists presented the 2008 Jamie Smith Memorial Mentoring Award to:

Dr. Thomas D. Nudds
Professor
University of Guelph



Photo credit: M. Pieron, LSU



Once again, the awards committee had an exceptional cohort of nominees for the Jamie Smith Mentoring Award. All nominators highlighted the qualities in the candidates which we have come to expect: demonstration of obvious respect for the development of students/mentees; the ability to intellectually challenge people to meet their full potential without simply providing answers for them; interest in the mentoring process; and making themselves unconditionally-available to their students/mentees etc.

Tom Nudd's nomination stood out for several reasons. He had the greatest breadth of mentees as well as broadest outcomes of Mentees. He had nominations from postdocs, PhD students, MSc students who either currently work or had formerly worked in his lab. He even received one letter from someone who had worked as a TA for him! A fair number of nominations came from students that only had Tom as a committee member, rather than a primary supervisor. Many others were mentored as undergrads and stayed on with him. His mentees are now working in a wide range of employment positions, including academic (all across Canada and the US, as well as international), as well as both Provincial and National Govt (Parks, Renewable Resource Depts, etc), Non-government organizations (Bird Studies Canada, CPAWS), consultants, and home makers. All felt highly valued by Tom given their diverse career choices, as well as those who are still job hunting. A theme that ran through almost all the 19 support letters for this nomination was the value Tom placed on critical thinking, scientific integrity and rigour which he instilled in his mentees.

Another common theme in Tom's nomination was the unlimited time that he devotes to spending with his students (a 'door-always-open' policy). Tom's nominators also highlighted his emphasis on a balance between research and life, and putting family and friends first. The fact that Tom has remained successful in his career while supporting and even encouraging students to take time off for having families, or supporting students who needed to withdraw from programs for personal reasons (and then taking them back on later and helping them complete again), was striking. This is pretty difficult when we consider that external measures of 'success' for academics are often linked to success of their students; it is easy to be supportive of students who are highly productive and motivated, harder when they aren't. There was clear evidence that he faced significant challenges with his mentees that he was able to successfully resolve to their very strong satisfaction.

On behalf of the award committee, I would like to congratulate Tom on his achievements and encourage others to consider making nominations of supervisors and peers for next year's awards.

Ken Otter, Chair,
Jamie Smith Memorial Mentoring Award Committee