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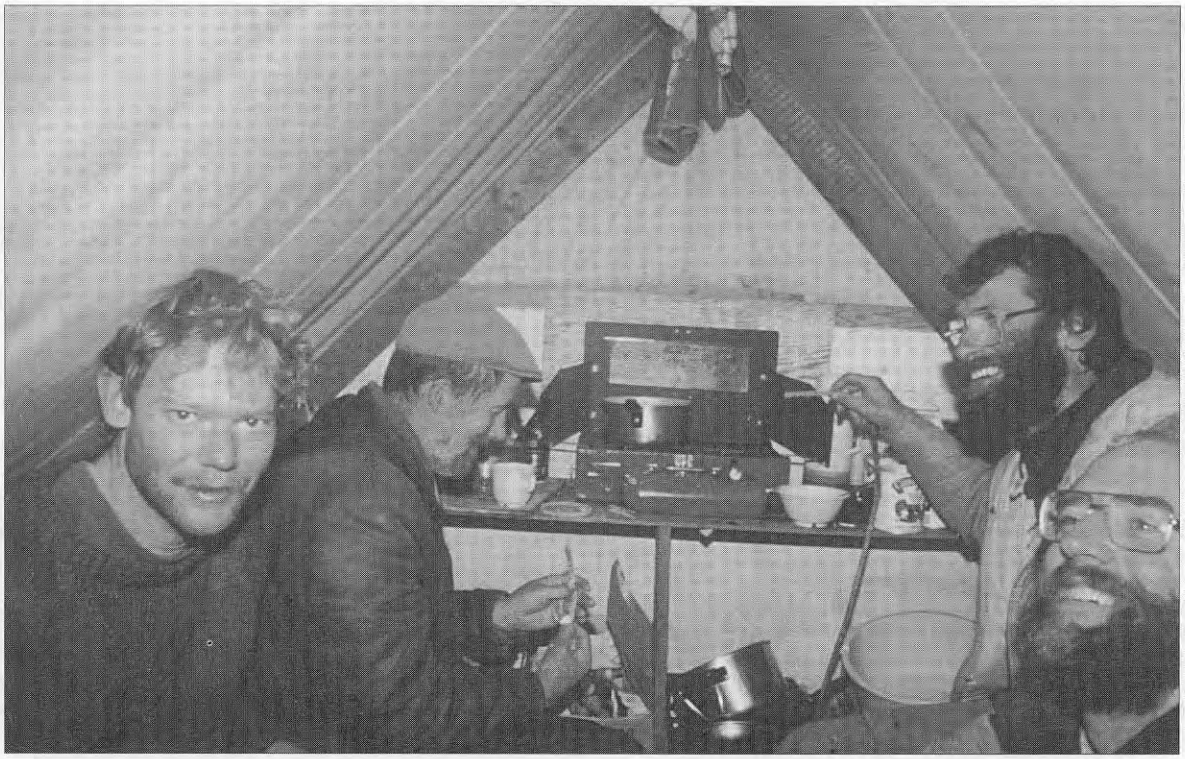

photo by Steve Wendt

"After three weeks in the field..."
(A motley crew on Coats Island, 1985)
see also Editor's Musings on C.W.S. and S.C.O.

Society of Canadian Ornithologists
Société des Ornithologistes du Canada

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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Challenge 1997: Peterborough and Publications

The year 1997 promises to be an exciting and productive one for the Society of Canadian Ornithologists. Not only do we have an annual meeting at Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, 9-11 August, to prepare for, something well under control by our esteemed meeting chairs Erica Dunn (science program) and Erica Nol (organization), but also the completion and publication of the solid information generated from last year's special symposium *Biology and Conservation of Forest Birds.* Under the guidance of Tony Diamond, papers from the Fredericton session are under review, with a target date for publication of the volume by the end of the year. Funding for its printing is in place, with the major determinant of the timing of appearance of the volume being the turn-around-time of manuscripts between authors, editors and referees (for details, see editor's progress report p.4). Once completed, this first special publication of the Society will stand as a milestone in the maturation process of the organization and as a benchmark against which to measure science publication accomplishments in the future.

Lead topics at this year's special symposium *Linking Bird Monitoring with Research and Conservation: an Integrated Approach* at the 1997 Annual Meeting and Conference in Peterborough will focus on linkages between research and monitoring of avian populations throughout North America and abroad, and the usefulness of such an approach in attaining conservation goals. The aim is to identify principal characteristics associated with various monitoring systems and to assess strengths and weaknesses of each in the context of original objectives and applications. Overall, the hope is to examine methods and procedures used to monitor birds and the data generated from them in a manner that will improve their usefulness for research and conservation purposes (program details appear in the Meeting insert; additional ideas appeared in *Ornithological Newsletter* No. 116: 2 & 18, February 1997). These are the subjects needed to be addressed, particularly in Canada, where avian monitoring projects, by a widely based community of individual researchers and organizations, continue to explode in numbers. What we do not need is a patchwork of monitoring exercises performed in isolation from each other. Only a unified and integrated system of monitoring across Canada will be successful in permitting research and conservation goals to be reached. The Peterborough symposium is a giant first step towards that objective. The call has gone out seeking potential symposium speakers and for contributed papers (oral and posters) on other avian subjects. Send your ideas to the science program chair (Erica Dunn, ph: 819-994-0182, em: erica.dunn@ec.gc.ca) and co-chairs (Fred Cooke, ph: 604-291-5610, em: fcooke@fraser.sfu.ca and Raleigh Robertson, ph: 613-545-6140, em: robertsr@biology.queensu.ca). Read the program details on the insert enclosed with this issue of *Picoides*, circle the key dates on your calendar, and make plans to attend and participate!

Another noteworthy initiative underway concerns *Picoides*, our beloved Bulletin. The reality is that more is required than the combined efforts of a dedicated editor and publication committee to produce a publication that meets its potential as an information transfer/exchange mechanism for members and non-members alike. Calls for input and assistance go largely unheeded. With so much to be done to formalize features within the Bulletin and the desire to expand from two to three issues per year, comments received from *Picoides* editor Tony Erskine in late February strike a disheartening chord: "No offers by others to assemble material or to organize reviews have reached me (same old story). Thus, most other content depends on what I can write or assemble." These words state the situation (read problem) succinctly and clearly. And what should our collective response be? Without doubt, we must offer a dedicated, results-orientated and overworked super editor a resounding vote of confidence for his outstanding achievements with *Picoides* during the last 4 years and a pledge of support to take action in helping him to attain new objectives identified to further enhance the usefulness of our Bulletin. *Picoides* is already a "gem", superbly edited and published in a high-quality format at a most economical cost. It's difficult to take issue with such a successful record! I have, however, asked for a continued and expanded thrust towards the attainment of additional objectives outlined in an earlier President's communication (see *Picoides* 9, No. 2, 1996). Those goals depend largely upon receiving input and participation by S.C.O. members at large.

What needs are there, and how can members

help? One of the greatest needs is for a permanent section devoted to regional reports from across the country. These reports should go beyond lists of research and conservation activities (albeit important to include). They should highlight the happenings of birds – movements, numbers in relation to environmental and climatic changes, oddities such as rare influxes or reverse migrations – along with summaries of activities of bird monitoring stations and observatories, conservation and people issues, etc. Subjects for inclusion are many. Do we have volunteers willing to participate in their region either as the regional news coordinator or as a member of the reporting team? A succinct 500-800 word summary for each region per issue, prepared by the official regional reporter alone or with others, should focus attention on topics of avian significance and be of service to our readers. Regional coverage might be: Atlantic (Newfoundland and the Maritimes), Quebec, Ontario, Prairies, British Columbia, and the territories (N.W.T. and Yukon). Let's make regional reports a priority for each issue of *Picoides*. Does the potential here for doing something special for Canadian birds stimulate and excite some members? If so, call me without delay!

Several other items are being considered as regular feature sections within *Picoides*:
(1) committee reports - summaries to update members on activities and focus of S.C.O. standing committees and work groups, prepared by the chairs and appearing as required, at least once annually;
(2) research in progress - general submissions from university scientists (faculty and students), federal/provincial government agencies, and NGOs followed by special research, conservation, management groups such as Atlantic Canada Wildlife Ecology Research Network (ACWERN), Bird Studies Canada (BSC), Canadian Nature Federation (CNF), (Pacific) Wildlife Ecology Research Chair, and Quebec-Labrador Foundation Canada (QLFC);
(3) special feature report - an invited special 1-2 page report of a major project outlining objectives and findings, including implications to avian biology and/or conservation;
(4) conservation corner - feature articles or reports focusing on key events or "hot-spots" and needs, and general concerns including aquatic and terrestrial issues, as well as policy-related matters such as endangered species legislation;
(5) recent publications - special section to include full book reviews, books/reports in brief, and journal publications, with emphasis on Canadian birds;
(6) notices and announcements - formal section for notices of interest to the ornithological community at large including announcements of meetings, opportunities for research/fieldwork positions, research cooperation and partnerships, and publications (new and used books, journals, exchanges, etc.); and
(7) members' news (or news corner) - general information provided by members ranging from awards, new postings and addresses (regular and e-mail), short letters, to retirements and birth/death announcements, etc.

Several of these sections require leaders to take charge and develop timecharts for initiation of feature articles and their regular production. The task is formidable for some items, less so for others. Sections 1, 3 and 4 can be initiated by developing a formal production schedule among the chairs of existing committees. This can be achieved by the editor and me, with considerable input of ideas from members to the chair of the Conservation Committee for items 3 and 4. Coordinators are, however, required for other sections. Coordinators of regional reports may be able to assemble lists of ongoing researches in their region to form the "research in progress" section. Recent publications are covered in a preliminary form in this issue of *Picoides*, assembled by the editor (see Recent Literature), but an expanded version will require an associate editor to take on the task full time — any bibliophiles and/or avid science readers out there ready for an exciting and rewarding challenge? Sections 6 and 7 may be combined under one coordinator, someone prepared to advertise the existence of these two feature sections, solicit materials at the start (an activity that should diminish over time as the services become established and known), and then collate and edit for publication. When the results of these undertakings are combined, *Picoides* will doubtless exceed all expectations and provide an invaluable service to Canadian ornithologists — communication of news and ideas.

Many members already have made and continue to make numerous contributions to the Society. In particular, I wish to extend my grateful thanks to four of our Councillors whose terms in office expired 1 January 1997: Mark Brigham of Saskatchewan, Alan Burger of British Columbia, Gilles Chapdelaine and Raymond McNeil of Québec. Their never-failing willingness to help and provide assistance with various tasks, often difficult and on short notice, provides the foundation of a working Council. I also welcome our newly elected members of Council — David Bird of Montréal, Peter Blancher of Ottawa, André Desrochers

of Québec, Kathy Martin of Vancouver, and Bill Montevecchi of St. John's — an impressive group of avian scientists, that spans the country and will be an enormous source of new ideas and visions of the future (see next article for details on 1996 election). I thank all members, new and old, for offering or accepting invitations to serve the Society by standing for election. There is much to be done, most of which can only be accomplished through an active and involved membership. I invite every member to make their interests known to members of Council and to me directly. We are always looking for participants to serve on committees and working groups, as well as new initiatives such as those outlined above.

Spring is here, the beginning of a new birding season! Enjoy the euphoria of *zugunruhe*, relish the opportunities of field researches and the never-ending joy of learning more from our fascinating and stimulating study subjects — the birds of Canada! See you in August in Peterborough to compare notes and trade stories.

David Nettleship

Lundy Lodge
Head of St. Margaret's Bay

Report on Nominations and Election of S.C.O. Councillors, from Vice-President A.W. Diamond, Chair, Nominations Committee

A slate of six outstanding Canadian ornithologists was selected, in consultation with other councillors, and mailed to the S.C.O. membership in late December 1996. Family illness prevented my getting out that mailing earlier, and many members did not receive their ballot until after the (original) mailing deadline. I underestimated the number of people who do not receive office mail between Christmas and New Year. A second mailing was then dispatched with an extended deadline; members were asked not to vote twice, and nobody was detected doing so.

From 298 members mailed (organizations and institutions do not vote), 103 ballots were returned (35%); two were incomplete (fewer than 5 candidates selected). The voting was very close, and the following were elected: David Bird of Montréal, Peter Blancher of Ottawa, André Desrochers of Québec, Kathy Martin of Vancouver, and Bill Montevecchi of St. John's. The even vote suggested that members shared the committee's view that these are all people with much to contribute to the Society. We tried to achieve a representative balance of geographic regions and to redress possible bias among councillors towards people working for government. We were less successful in persuading more female candidates to stand, so there remains a substantial gender bias on Council.

SEE inside front cover, under "1997-98", for addresses, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail codes, of new Councillors.

I apologize to members for the delay in sending out ballots and the resulting need to repeat the process. I covered costs of the second mailing myself. I thank new member Nikki Benjamin for her hard work in preparing, mailing and sorting ballots, without which the process would have been even more chaotic than it was. The fault was entirely mine.

Call for Nominations: S.C.O. ELECTIONS, FALL 1997

To avoid similar problems with the 1997 elections, we will begin the election process with calls for nominations in this issue of *Picoides* [10(1), spring 1997]. Five Councillor positions will become vacant 1 January 1998 (those elected for 1996-97), and replacements will need to be decided before that date. The Nominating Committee welcomes nominations by members of possible candidates both for Councillors 1998-99 and for Vice-President 1998-99 (President-elect 2000-01), which also becomes vacant then. Please send me any nominations at any time (see address on inside front cover), and watch this space for further announcements.

PUBLICATION PLANS - THE FREDERICTON SYMPOSIUM

Our initiative to establish a scientific meeting as an integral part of the Society's annual cycle is intimately linked with our strategy to explore publication opportunities. Part of the rationale for choosing forest bird biology and conservation as the theme for the Fredericton meeting - with the intrinsic importance of the topic - was that both Canadian Forest Service and Canadian Wildlife Service saw the issue as sufficiently important to sponsor some of the costs of the meeting and publication of the papers. As a result, we are able to proceed with plans to publish the proceedings, which will be peer-reviewed to journal standard. Contributing authors have been asked to submit a paper, usually but not necessarily based on their presentation. In addition, potential contributors who were not able to be at the meeting, but are known to be working on this topic, are being invited to submit papers to improve the coverage of the final publication. We hope to go to press before the end of 1997.

Dr. A.W. Diamond, Director/Senior Chair
Atlantic Cooperative Wildlife Ecology Research Network
(for address, phone, e-mail, see inside front cover)

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Atlantic Cooperative Wildlife Ecology Research Network – current research

A.W. (Tony) Diamond, Senior Chair

The Atlantic Cooperative Wildlife Ecology Research Network (ACWERN) was established in September 1994 as a collaborative initiative of Canadian Wildlife Service, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Acadia University, Memorial University of Newfoundland and the University of New Brunswick. It operates as a partnership, with initial core funding from C.W.S. and matched funding support from N.S.E.R.C. and the three universities.

ACWERN is a regional research network focused on wildlife ecology in the marine, coastal and terrestrial ecosystems of Atlantic Canada. The network brings multi-disciplinary scientific approaches to bear on fundamental and applied problems in wildlife ecology and habitat relationships. The research program is designed to improve the understanding of ecosystem dynamics in Atlantic Canada, to complement and enhance abilities of government agencies to conserve wildlife populations and habitats, and of universities to provide teaching and research opportunities in these fields.

ACWERN has diverse objectives, including:

- improve understanding of Atlantic Canadian ecosystems most at risk, and to help conserve wildlife populations and habitats in marine, coastal and terrestrial environments;
- develop protocols to use wildlife as indicators of environmental condition and change;
- create ecologically based strategies for coping with environment changes such as habitat modification and climate change;
- provide a scientific and ecological basis for sound, practical advice to government and industry concerning means of conserving large-scale ecosystem processes, biodiversity and species potentially at risk; and
- facilitate ecologically sustainable developments through basic and applied research programs.

The core of the network is provided by myself as Senior Chair at U.N.B. and Associate Chairs Philip Taylor at Acadia University and Ian Jones at Memorial University of Newfoundland, the partner universities. Expertise in seabird and marine ecology is shared between Memorial and U.N.B., in forest bird ecology at U.N.B. (where we collaborate closely with the Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit headed by Graham Forbes), and in landscape ecology at Acadia University. A complementary focus on coastal wetland and fresh water systems is integrated through the Acadia Centre for Estuarine Research (ACER).

The Senior Chair at the University of New Brunswick serves as director of the network, with support of the ACWERN Coordinator from Canadian Wildlife Service (Richard Elliot). Projects and expertise of the Chairs are shared among the three sites, and with other research staff at the Canadian Wildlife Service and member universities.

Our current research projects investigate effects of landscape structure on forest songbirds, and on movement behaviour of amphibians, insects and birds; plot-based approaches to monitoring terrestrial biodiversity; the use of seabird diets to predict fish stocks; the creching behaviour of Common Eiders, and their responses to gull predation; effects of acidification and mercury on Common Loon productivity; impacts of logging activity on songbirds in Labrador; habitat requirements of Bicknell's Thrush in the Maritimes; and impacts of ecotourism on seabird breeding colonies.

Current research is organised within 4 major themes, distributed among the partner universities as follows:

- *Effects of landscape structure on biota*, including research by Acadia University in the Annapolis Valley and the U.N.B. research on forest wildlife, involving a total of 15 projects and 11 graduate students;
- *Ecological responses of seabirds to environmental change*, including the seabird programs at Memorial and U.N.B. addressing essentially similar issues at opposite ends of the region: includes 11 projects and 8 graduate students between Memorial and U.N.B.;
- *Ecosystem structure and restoration*, with the 3 chairs focusing collaboratively on island ecosystems in southwestern Nova Scotia; and
- *Selected management issues* addressing more short-term priorities relating to wildlife conservation: includes 6 projects involving 3 M.Sc and several Honours students.

Further details of the programs, and contacts with the people involved, can be made through the ACWERN web site at: **http://dragon.acadiau.ca**

Wildlife Ecology Research Chair at Simon Fraser University – current research
This summary was excerpted, by courtesy of Fred Cooke - Senior Chair, from his 30+-page Third Annual Report (written in 1996)

We are almost 2 1/2 years into the program of the Chair, well into generation of data and the analysis and publication of results. Changes in personnel include departure of Ian Jones, our seabird specialist, to the Associate Chair of ACWERN at Memorial University of Newfoundland (see preceding account). Ian continues to collaborate in the Triangle Island project. To replace Ian, we have been fortunate to attract Doug Bertram, with expertise in seabird ecology and fisheries biology. Doug's main office is at Pacific Wildlife Research Centre (= CWS) on Westham Island. Joanne Harrington, our administrative assistant, also left us on promotion, and her place has been capably filled by Barbara Sherman (who made sure this material reached the Editor - Thanks, Barbara!).

Our research projects can be grouped into seven categories:

(i) *Triangle Island* (with cooperation of Ecological Reserves Branch - Ministry of Environment, Land and Parks), headed by Doug Bertram. Data are already collected on demography of most key seabird species; the first thesis completed through the Chair's activities was by Yolanda Morbey (M.Sc. under Ron Ydenberg) on Cassin's Auklets there; 2+ other thesis studies are underway, and scientists from U. Wash. and U. Alta. are also working there under the Research Network Program (RNP).

(ii) *Western Sandpiper network* (funded by N.S.E.R.C. and C.W.S.-Latin American Program), headed by Dov Lank. Projects extend from Alaska to Panama. Several thesis students and collaborating scientists are involved in various aspects of this study.

(iii) *Marbled Murrelet work at Desolation Sound* (funded by forest companies and N.S.E.R.C.), coordinated by Wendy Beauchamp. Over 400 birds were marked and means of sexing developed, so demography of this elusive species can now be studied. C.W.S. and B.C. Ministry of Forests scientists are collaborating.

(iv) *Waterbirds wintering in southwestern B.C.* (funded by B.C. Waterfowl Society, Ducks Unlimited, and Fraser River Action Plan). Species investigated include Western Grebes, Trumpeter Swans, Brant, Harlequin Ducks, Barrow's Goldeneyes, and Dunlins (on this last, see Pippa Shepherd's account under

S.C.O. Student Research Award reports in this issue). Various students, and also C.W.S. scientists, are involved with these studies.

(v) *western Snow Goose populations,* headed by Evan Cooch, and with collaboration of Russian scientists. Marked birds are being studied in both breeding and wintering areas.

(vi) *Riske Creek project* (funded by Interior Wetland Program and Forest Renewal B.C.), jointly with Kathy Martin and Sean Boyd of C.W.S., which has long-term waterbird population data there. The first species to be studied under this project is Eared Grebe, by Sean Cullen. Lesser Scaup and Green-winged Teal are also high-priority species for future study.

(vii) *Physiological ecology,* headed by Tony Williams. Topics already under study include aspects of protein and lipid utilization in migrating shorebirds, variability in reproductive effort, reproductive endocrinology and molecular biology of Marbled Murrelets. This unit was responsible for developing a molecular sexing technique, and improved indicators of body condition, already put to use in other projects of the Chair.

[The report contained far more information than could be presented in this brief summary. For more detail on any of these projects, please contact the Chair, at: Voice 604-291-4475; fax 604-291-3496.]

S.C.O. COLUMN: Considering cowbirds

The Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater* received a bad name as soon as word got around of its breeding habits. Laying eggs parasitically in nests of other species was considered deplorable by humans - who would never dream of saddling others with unwanted offspring (would they?). The very idea smacked of "getting something for nothing", which people with a work ethic consider immoral - until faced with a "giveaway" offer? Probably a (sentient) female cowbird would not consider producing 30+ eggs in one season was "nothing", even though she didn't have to rear any of the resulting young herself.

Originally a prairie species, cowbirds were among the birds that expanded into new agricultural lands created by human fragmentation or obliteration of many North American forests. In parts of Canada near the present limits of agriculture, cowbirds are rather recent arrivals, following clearing of the land in this century. Their appearance in the Maritime Provinces lagged even farther behind forest clearing for farms, which peaked around 1900, whereas cowbirds were rare vagrants here until the 1940s (Erskine 1992). By 1960 they were considered common to fairly common in our farming areas, but they are scarcer now.

When summarizing data in the Maritimes Nest Records Scheme (MNRS) recently, I found only one nest in 1996 noted as parasitized by cowbirds. A look through back files showed none or one cowbird record in each of the last three years, compared to 10+ each year 1971-86 (5+ each year 1963-93), with over 30 in two years. However, numbers of nest records submitted are **not** a sensitive index to variations in species populations (Ginn 1969). The recent scarcity of cowbird records in MNRS evidently meant mostly that our current observers spent less time looking for nests of small songbirds (thrushes, vireos, warblers, sparrows), that are most often parasitized by cowbirds, than was usual in past years. Regressions of cowbird card numbers against "host" (victim?) card numbers were highly significant for all four families as well as for the top 16 host species combined. From nest records alone, then, we would not conclude that cowbird numbers have declined in the Maritimes.

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data from the Maritimes (Downes and Collins 1996) showed statistically significant declines in cowbirds during 1966-94, as well as through both halves of that period. My personal records of sightings then showed a similar trend. Cowbirds also decreased in nearly all other ecozones of Canada in which their trends were evaluated (Downes and Collins 1996). Given their impact on nesting of small songbirds in some situations, no one seems alarmed about cowbird declines, yet.

The situation in relict woodlots in the largely agricultural eastern U.S.A., where cowbird parasitism is higher - and breeding success of parasitized species lower - in small than in large treed stands, was seized upon by some as explanation of declines in "Neotropical migrants", or other declining songbird populations (e.g. Brittingham and Temple, 1983). However, the translocation of such relationships, based on data from deep in agricultural America, to forested Canada seems questionable. Correlation of cowbird breeding distribution with agricultural lands was obvious in all five Canadian regions covered by recent bird atlases (Cadman et al. 1987; Erskine 1992; Semenchuk 1992; Gauthier and Aubry 1996/Cyr et Larivée 1995; Smith 1996). Sparse Cowbird distribution in areas of marginal agriculture, including the Maritimes, was also obvious. Even allowing that cowbirds are able to exploit many different hosts in a

region, it seems probable that the parasite is limited more by availability of suitable foraging habitat than by availability of suitable victims for parasitism (compare also Hanski et al. 1996). Many of the declining species over which concern has been expressed are forest birds, which cowbirds are not. Cowbird parasitism exerts additional pressure on species that are declining for other reasons, but data from most of Canada do not suggest cowbirds as primary agent of population declines in forest birds.

Cowbirds, however, exert a fascination for research workers in Canada. When compiling a list of 1996 publications by Canadian researchers (in this issue), I was surprised to find four papers relating to cowbirds, each from a different institution (senior authors at Toronto, Western Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia universities). Only 18 other papers that year dealt with particular passerine species (not counting community or wider-scale articles), and Tree Swallow was the only other bird represented by as many as four papers. (As noted earlier by James and Ethier (1994), the vast majority of 1996 papers were on waterfowl, seabirds, shorebirds, or raptors.) Maybe our cowbird enthusiasts should look also at cowbird population trends and dynamics?

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Call for Nominations - DORIS HUESTIS SPEIRS AWARD, 1997

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. D.N. Nettleship, Canadian Wildlife Service, DOE, Queen Square, 45 Alderney Dr., Dartmouth, N.S. B2Y 2N6
(see inside front cover for phone, fax, and e-mail).

S.C.O. STUDENT AWARDS

Reports from 1996 winners

(i) James L. Baillie Student Research Award

"The winter ecology of Dunlin (*Calidris alpina pacifica*) in the Fraser River delta." Philippa Shepherd, Simon Fraser University.

The Fraser River has the largest delta system on Canada's Pacific coast and supports the country's highest densities of waterbirds, shorebirds and raptors in winter. It is also a key wetland stopover site for many species of migrant birds flying between breeding habitat in Canada, Alaska and Russia and winter habitat in southern U.S.A. and Central and South America. Recently, Wildlife Management Area status was assigned to key portions of the delta complex, in part because over one million shorebirds use it annually, including internationally important populations of Dunlins and Western Sandpipers (*Calidris maurii*). The Fraser River delta is the northernmost site within the Dunlin's winter range to support significant numbers of birds. Dunlins begin to arrive there in October, some continuing south whereas between 30 and 60 thousands remain until late March/early April, when they migrate back to their Alaskan breeding grounds.

As with many of the remaining wetlands worldwide, the Fraser River delta is experiencing a great deal of pressure from the expanding human population around Vancouver and resulting increases in housing, recreational and industrial development. Owing to the rapidity of changes and the unique ecosystem of this area, it is imperative that as much ecological research as possible be conducted on local wildlife before irreversible damage to crucial habitats has taken place.

My Ph.D. research, generously supported by the 1996 James L. Baillie Award, was designed to answer questions about the basic winter ecology of Dunlins in the Fraser delta, as well as to investigate fat modulation, local adaptation, and genetic relatedness in geographically separate populations (northern- vs. southern-wintering *pacifica* Dunlins). Together, the results will be used to build a conservation strategy for the local population, and it is hoped they will contribute to conservation of the entire Pacific coast subspecies. I am about halfway through my research, and so far my focus has been primarily on the Dunlin's basic winter ecology. The rest of this account reports preliminary results which took me by surprise and which led to an entirely new line of questioning.

Dunlins here had been observed foraging at night, so two questions posed were whether they did so by necessity or by choice, and which mudflat microhabitats they preferred. Tidal fluctuations along the south coast of British Columbia shift in winter so that nighttime low tides expose a much greater area and diversity of mudflat habitats than daytime low tides. As well, other researchers found that invertebrates tended to move up through the mud closer to the surface at night (providing more accessible food for Dunlins), and that although owls winter in the delta they number far fewer than potential daytime predators of Dunlins.

Nocturnal foraging has interested shorebird biologists for over 25 years but, owing to technical and logistic difficulties of collecting data at night, only in the last few years have researchers been able to test in the field hypotheses about night foraging. To answer the questions posed above, I attached small (1.6 g) radio transmitters with activity switches to the backs of 46 Dunlins. Each radio emitted a constant signal that, received through my antenna system, allowed tracking of individual birds of known age, sex, and size. The activity switches double the radio signal pulse rate whenever the bird is feeding, so I could also record the number and length of feeding periods for each individual bird. Location and activity data were collected in winter and spring, during day and night, throughout the tidal cycle, and in all weather conditions.

To my surprise, the radio-tracking data showed that Dunlins were feeding at night, but when it was raining or windy (much of the time here in winter) they tended to feed in agricultural fields behind the dykes. Dunlins generally are not found feeding in fields during the day, presumably because the Fraser delta is the most important wintering site for raptors in Canada, and the open mudflats allow easier advance detection of an approaching predator. Does this mean that agricultural fields offer more or better food? We know that fresh water (rain) falling on mudflats tends to drive marine invertebrates deeper into the sediments, perhaps out of reach of Dunlins. We also know that rain falling on terrestrial habitats tends to bring certain invertebrates (especially earthworms) closer to the surface. I therefore collected several hundred samples to look at differences in available invertebrates in terrestrial vs. marine habitats during day vs. night and in the presence or absence of

precipitation. Are certain types of fields preferred? It appeared that Dunlins chose short-grass fields to feed in, many being dairy-farm fields that received all-natural fertilization. Local golf courses, although topologically similar, did not attract foraging Dunlins. Was that a function of fertilization process (natural vs. chemical)? Soil samples, farmer surveys, and data from Agriculture Canada GIS databases may allow me to answer that question. The above data, in combination with my bird locations, will also allow me to examine which other topographical features may be important in the Dunlin's choice of foraging sites. As the birds use different habitats during day and night, it will not be possible to tell whether they feed at night by choice or by necessity. Instead, the radio telemetry results raised several interesting questions, and caused us to look at the ecosystem in a different way. The Dunlin may even provide us with a new conservation tool to help stem the rapid urbanization of the Lower Mainland region.

Over the next two years, I will continue to investigate aspects of the Dunlin's basic wintering ecology, along with other questions relating to separate winter populations. Any readers residing in the Lower Mainland who might wish to volunteer to assist in trapping and banding operations next winter should contact me at Department of Biological Sciences, Simon Fraser University (ph 604-291-5618).

(ii) Percy A. Taverner Awards

"Occupancy of habitat patches, territory quality and spatial structure in the Yellow Warbler." Claudio Celada, University of Alberta.

Many studies have attempted to identify features of territory quality and to measure their importance to the fitness of the defender. Food availability, vegetation type and structure, and the quality of the breeding sites have been found to be the main characteristics affecting territory choice, breeding success and survival of territory holders. Previous studies on territoriality have not considered the effect of spatial structure of the territories (the number of patches of different habitat types within a territory, their size, shape and isolation) on territory defendability. My study aims to assess the relative importance of different components of territory quality and to test the hypothesis that spatial structure of territories is an important component of territory quality that affects fitness of the defender, in terms of survival and breeding success. I focus on patch occupancy and spatial structure of territories by Yellow Warbler *Dendroica petechia* in small patches of willow and aspen surrounded by mixed grassland.

This study is being conducted in the aspen-parkland region, at Rumsey Ecological Reserve in central Alberta. This area of 3445 ha consists of a range of aspen and willow patches varying in size and isolation. Inter-patch distances range from 10 to 80 m, and range in patch size is 0.005-3.2 ha. The Yellow Warbler was selected for this study because it is dependent upon patches of aspen and willow to nest and feed, and nests are mostly built 1.5-2 m high, making it possible to monitor its breeding success. In this landscape, some of the territorial males defend territories comprising several habitat patches separated by unsuitable habitat (multi-patch territories), whereas other males include one patch only in their territory (single-patch territories). Birds defending multi-patch territories may spend extra time and energy in defense which could reduce breeding success or increase risk of predation. On the other hand, costs of territorial defense may be lower in single-patch territories where the territorial boundaries can be more easily patrolled.

A map of the study area was digitized from aerial photographs at a scale of 1:10,000, using a Geographic Information System (G.I.S.) software package. Area occupied by willow, by aspen, total treed area (willow + aspen), and willow-pond/total area ratio were measured for each habitat patch. Habitat patch isolation was measured as the distance to the nearest patch. Patch shape was measured as perimeter/area ratio. Relative abundance of arthropods was determined by sampling both in aspen and willow using a sweep-netting method. Caterpillars were sampled using a beat. Vegetation structure and species composition were sampled in willow and aspen. Yellow Warbler was censused by point-counts in 200 habitat patches to detect the chronological order of occupancy of different patches. Territorial boundaries were determined through observations of marked birds or using the pattern of brown streaking of males. Nests were found and breeding success measured. If the nest could be reached, fledglings were weighed when they were 2 and 5 days old.

My results showed that: (1) territory choice was primarily affected by spatial structure of territories. Territories composed of one patch only were occupied, on average, earlier by both males and females than territories comprising several habitat patches separated by grassland. (2) More fledglings were produced in nests situated in patches rounder in shape. Vigor of willow and total number of arthropods in willow and aspen also positively affected number of fledglings.

(3) Nest predation rate was higher in multi-patch territories than in single-patch territories, and nests in patches with higher foliage density and lower proportion of bare ground were preyed upon later. (4) Females that arrived earlier in the study area had lower probability of having a nest depredated.

My preliminary findings suggested that vegetation structure, spatial structure, and arthropod abundance are all important components of territory quality for Yellow Warblers, but territory choice is mainly affected by spatial structure.

I am grateful for the funding I received, from the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, The Alberta Sport Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation, and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada through my supervisor Dr. Susan Hannon.

"Short incubation periods of Brown-headed Cowbird eggs: Are embryos stimulated to hatch early?" D. Glen McMaster, University of Manitoba.

Avian brood parasites, by definition, exploit the parental care of host species. Nestlings of some parasitic species eliminate competition for parental care by ejecting host eggs or young from the nest, or by killing young. The Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*, hereafter cowbird) has not evolved such drastic strategies; rather, cowbird nestlings compete with host nestlings for food provisioned by the foster parents, often so successfully that some or all host nestlings starve. Because of their short incubation period (10 days), cowbird nestlings may gain competitive "head-starts" over host nestlings by being the first to hatch.

The short incubation periods of parasitic cowbirds could be explained by two hypotheses: 1) cowbird embryos develop more rapidly than host embryos; 2) female cowbirds invest less energy per egg than expected by mass, which forces the embryo to hatch earlier when it runs out of yolk reserves. Recent research by Gustavo Kattan showed that Shiny Cowbird (*M. bonariensis*) embryos do not have higher metabolic rates than embryos of other species, but Shiny Cowbird eggs have less energy content than predicted by their mass. Therefore, Kattan's results are consistent with the hypothesis that cowbird embryos are forced to hatch early when they run out of energy. However, energy investment in Brown-headed Cowbird eggs does not differ significantly from that predicted by egg mass. Therefore, the mechanism of short incubation periods in Brown-headed Cowbirds appears to differ from that in Shiny Cowbirds.

In 1996, I tested a novel hypothesis explaining short cowbird incubation periods. Prior to hatching, embryos of all avian species tested to date make clicking sounds associated with movements of cartilage of the glottis. In some precocial species, embryos at different stages of development in the same clutch utilize clicking sounds to synchronize hatching. Whereas synchronous hatching may be adaptive in a clutch of related individuals, for a cowbird embryo in a clutch with host embryos to which it is unrelated, asynchronous hatching, with the cowbird hatching first, should be very adaptive. A window of time may exist prior to hatching during which cowbird embryos can hatch, but do so only when stimulated by clicking sounds from other eggs. To test this hypothesis, freshly laid cowbird eggs were incubated artificially (1) in contact with clutches of fresh Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) eggs, and (2) in isolation from other eggs. I predicted that (1) cowbird eggs incubated in clutches should have shorter incubation periods than cowbird eggs incubated in isolation; and (2) cowbird eggs in clutches should hatch before warbler eggs (as they do in natural nests). If cowbird incubation periods are labile, there may be a trade-off between hatching early and physical development at hatching. I tested this possibility by comparing measurements of cowbird hatchlings that had been artificially incubated in isolation with cowbirds incubated in warbler clutches. I predicted that cowbirds incubated in clutches should have shorter tarsi and wings than those incubated in isolation from other eggs.

Consistent with predictions, the incubation period of cowbird eggs in clutches was 0.4 days shorter than those incubated in isolation, but the difference only approached statistical significance. There was no significant difference between cowbird and warbler incubation periods, and cowbirds hatched first in only 23% of the clutches. Contrary to predictions, cowbirds incubated in clutches weighed more and had longer tarsi than cowbirds incubated in isolation. There was no difference in wing-length between cowbird hatchlings incubated in isolation or in clutches. Therefore, although these results are intriguing, it appears that stimuli from host eggs play a small role at most in determining incubation period of cowbird eggs.

I am grateful for the funding received from the Society of Canadian Ornithologists that supported my work under the supervision of Dr. Spencer G. Sealy.

Call for Applications - **1998** STUDENT RESEARCH AWARDS

Applications are invited for two Taverner Awards (up to $500 each) and one Baillie Award ($1,000) for **1998**.

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

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 will support 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.

A single application may be made for both awards, but only one award can be won by an applicant in a given year. Taverner Awards are given only once for the same project; Baillie Awards only once to the same person. However, past winners of either award may apply for the other. Funds are not awarded for stipends.

Application procedures are the same as for 1997 (changed from previous years). All applicants must use a standard application form, which may be obtained by contacting the chair of the committee. Completed applications must reach the following address before 15 January 1998:

Dr. M.R. Lein, Chair,
S.C.O. Research Awards Committee,
Dept. of Biological Sciences,
University of Calgary,
Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4

Awards will be announced by 1 April 1998. For application materials or additional information, contact M.R. Lein: ph 403-220-6549; fax 403-289-9311; e-mail mrlein@acs.ucalgary.ca.

RECENT LITERATURE

Book Reviews

It seemed appropriate to have reviews of recent biographies of both P.A. Taverner and William Rowan in the same issue, given the major and concurrent contributions by both to the development of Canadian ornithology.

A Life with Birds: Percy A. Taverner, Canadian Ornithologist, 1875-1947. Special Issue: *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*, 110(1) January-March 1996. 254 pp. ($25.00 (hard-cover) or $10.00 (soft-cover) + $2.50 p&p, from Bus. Mgr., Can. Field-Nat., Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ottawa, Ont. K1Z 1A2)

Once upon a time, Percy Taverner was a household word in Canada. His three major books, *Birds of Eastern Canada* (1919), *Birds of Western Canada* (1926), and *Birds of Canada* (1934), were government publications and therefore inexpensive and accessible to most lay people. His numerous other publications were widely read by naturalists in Canada and the United States. Unfortunately, most late 20th Century scientists know little about historical figures in Canadian science. They may well ask, who was Percy Taverner? and what did he contribute to Canadian science?

In the early 1980s, Jack Cranmer-Byng, a professor emeritus of history (University of Toronto) and a keen naturalist, decided to find out more about this by-then-elusive figure. *A Life with Birds* details Percy Taverner's life, his passion for nature, his struggle to find employment, and his long career as an overworked and underpaid zoologist-ornithologist at the National Museum of Canada.

The book is divided into four sections of unequal lengths: "Early Years" (chapters 1-3); "Apprenticeship Years" (chapters 4-5); "Challenge of the National Museum" (chapters 6-10); and "Ornithology in a Wider Perspective" (chapters 11-17). The 25 black-and-white photographs help bring the story alive.

Born in Canada and educated in the U.S., Percy Algernon Taverner (1875-1947) was part of a generation still able to pursue zoology without having graduate degrees. Like many other scientists, he showed an early fascination with nature. Stuttering prevented him from becoming active in most high school events, and in his late teens Percy turned to the serious study of birds at the

University of Michigan Museum and in the field. At age 20 he was still "a young man with no career in view" (p.10). Meeting Toronto ornithologist J.H. Fleming in late 1896 was a turning point in his life. The two became friends, and later Fleming acted as Taverner's mentor. Jobs in museum work were not available at the time, and for a while Taverner studied and worked in an architect's office in the U.S.. He met a number of active American and Canadian ornithologists, and soon bird study came to dominate his life. He spent time in the field, kept a journal, read the scientific literature, and carried on a lively correspondence with other ornithologists. In 1911, at age 36, helped by the influence of E.T. Seton, J.H. Fleming, and W.E. Saunders, he was hired as the first ornithologist (actually as "Naturalist and Preparator") at the Victoria Memorial Museum [in Ottawa]. He spent his entire career there, building up the study and exhibition collections, organizing field work for paid collectors and, time and funds permitting, for himself, struggling with government bureaucracy, and mentoring other Canadian ornithologists.

A Life with Birds should be read as part of the growing literature on Canadian science and scientists to appreciate its larger context. It is an eye-opener for those not familiar with major issues in Canadian ornithology and the role Taverner played in directing much of the ornithological work done during the first half of this century. In fine detail, nowadays rarely found in scientific biographies, the author introduces the reader to Taverner's life, his close-knit family, his friends and supporters, his joys, and his frustrations. Ornithologists will enjoy reading about Canadian birds seen and collected in various parts of the country, his correspondence with North American ornithologists, glimpses of the A.O.U. meetings he attended, as well as about Taverner's views regarding "splitters and lumpers". The author is to be congratulated for writing this carefully documented life of P.A.T..

Marianne Gosztonyi Ainley
(University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George)

Restless Energy: A biography of William Rowan, 1891-1957. Marianne Gosztonyi Ainley. Véhicule Press, Montreal. 368 pp. 1993. ($19.95 + $4 p&p from Véhicule Press. P.O. Box 125, Place du Parc Stn., Montréal, Qué. H2W 2M9)

(combined from two independent reviews)

A summary of the content of this book, then in preparation, was featured in the very first issue of *Picoides* (1987), and is not repeated here. About 15 years ago A.J.E. remarked that Rowan may be the **only** Canadian ornithologist whose name and work would be included in **any** world-wide history of ornithology. His pioneering work on behavioural physiology of migration, using controlled experiments, was basic to subsequent perceptions of that field of study. It attracted wide interest at the time, and stimulated later work (e.g. by Wolfson, Farner, King) that is more familiar to recent students. His ongoing work on population cycles was continually frustrated by scanty funding, so nothing substantial was published thereon, despite regular publicity and data-collection. In contrast to Rowan's work, most research on birds in Canada by others, then and later, focussed on particular species, and thus was limited to Canadian geographic contexts.

Besides summarizing a book's content, a review should assess the author's success in communication of information. I (A.J.E.) knew little more of Rowan than the barest outline of his work before Ainley's 1987 *Picoides* account appeared, and anyone who reads this book will also learn a lot, about the man and his problems as well as his work. There were abundant written and oral source materials, those consulted being meticulously noted at the back of the book (38 pp).

Among the photos in Ainley's biography is one taken on Rowan's wedding day. Cigar in hand, wearing a black cutaway coat and white spats, with his bride on his arm, his smile under a chaplinesque moustache revealed a man with a sense of humour. He wasn't only a scientist and teacher. His painting and drawings were popular and saleable, and he could successfully have ventured more extensively into the field of popular natural history. He wrote one book for the general public, *The Riddle of Migration* (1931), and some articles for *Country Life*, an upper-class English glossy magazine. He often broadcast on CBC Radio in Western Canada, and the text shows that he had mastered that medium of mass communication. When he died, he was working on another book, "Beloved Wilderness".

Dr. Ainley, who is Professor and Chair of Womens' Studies at the University of Northern B.C. in Prince George, wrote a biography which provides much personal information on Rowan's problems with his marriage and his fellow scientists. It also contains poetic passages - referring to Mrs. Rowan's first winter in the Canadian West: "She soon found that sunshine even at 30° below freezing was much preferable to the greyness and dampness of England... She learned to love the countryside - the flat and snowy fields, the big arching sky and the spectacular sunsets." This biography gives a well-rounded presentation of the man and his scientific accomplishments. It also convinced me (M.S.) that if Rowan had lived longer he would also have made a significant contribution to popular natural history.
A.J. Erskine (Sackville, N.B.) and Michael Spencer (Montréal)

Birds of the Elbow. J. Frank Roy. Saskatchewan Natural History Society, Spec. Publ. no.21 (no.3 in Manley Callin Series), 325 pp. 1996. ($30.00 + p&p, from rm 206, 1860 Lorne St., Regina, Sask. S4P 2L7)

This largest among Saskatchewan's regional bird publications spans a larger geographic area than most and gives more detail. Its compilation was a labour of love for Frank Roy, who was born in the region and returns there frequently. "The Elbow" includes an expanse of the Missouri Coteau and the large man-made Lake Diefenbaker on the South Saskatchewan River, thus treating birdlife of the dry plains, represented also by the Renauds' (1975) *Birds of the Rosetown-Biggar district, Saskatchewan*, no.9 in the same series.

The present book is in larger format, with many more pages. The front matter, with 10 pp of beautiful colour photos of regional habitats and birds, includes a thorough geographic description, a 30-page section on "birding hot spots" (with detailed route maps), and accounts of major contributors. The bird-finding section focuses on water and marsh areas, oases in the dry region, with changes in their habitats and birds over 50+ years of records. The 301 bird species are treated on 221 pages, some of regular occurrence receiving up to two pages, the many vagrants a half-page or less. At the back are 10 pages of references; appendices summarizing birds banded, birds noted on Christmas Bird Counts, Breeding Bird Surveys, or Heritage Farms; checklists by season and birding areas; and an index. Besides colour photos, attractive line-drawings of birds (by Trevor Herriot and Fred Lahrman) are scattered through the book. A pleasing presentation.

My criticisms were few and minor. The author emphasized, in capitals, that his book is not a field-guide (p.6), but he devoted sentences and even paragraphs to field distinctions of most species. Errors were few, but under Bufflehead the reference to the nest in a burrow should have been Houston (1981c) not (1981b).

I was especially impressed by the summary of huge water bird concentrations along the Saskatchewan River in fall. Two-thirds of all White-fronted Geese in North America (400,000+ birds) stop there, with many other geese, yet that assemblage was virtually unknown except to local farmers until the 1980s. As that occurred in the Elbow's wide open spaces, how can anyone claim we know all we need to know about bird distribution in Canada?

A.J. Erskine (Sackville, N.B.)

1996 Journal Publications – Canadian Birds

[Note: This section represents one possible way in which *Picoides* may be useful to S.C.O. members. The listing drew on periodical literature, including C.W.S. series, but excluded brief notes (1-3 pp), book reviews, and most articles in "popular" outlets. *Birds of North America* biographies were listed only if the senior author was resident in Canada. Toxics literature is scanty in our library, and thus incomplete here. Listing only a selection of titles, judged the more important ones, might be less unwieldy to use but would be biased, requiring consultation within a panel rather than merely 2-3 days' compilation by the Editor. Your contributions, comments and suggestions will help us to make this section on ornithological literature more useful to our members.]

Alexander, S.A., Hobson, K.A., Gratto-Trevor, C.L., Diamond, A.W. 1996. Conventional and isotopic determinations of shorebird diets at an inland stopover: the importance of invertebrates and *Potamogeton pectinatus* tubers. Canadian Journal of Zoology, 74: 1057-1068.

Ankney, C.D. 1996. An embarrassment of riches: too many geese. Journal of Wildlife Management, 60: 217-222. [The account in *Picoides* 8(2) was abridged from this paper.]

Armstrong, T. 1996. Effects of research activities on nest predation in arctic-nesting geese. Journal of Wildlife Management, 60: 265-269.

Arnold, T.W., Clark, R.G. 1996. Survival and philopatry of female dabbling ducks in southcentral Saskatchewan. Journal of Wildlife Management, 60: 560-568.

Beauchamp, W.D., Koford, R.R., Nudds, T.D., Clark, R.G., Johnson, D.H. 1996. Long-term declines in nest success of prairie ducks. Journal of Wildlife Management, 60: 247-257.

Beauchamp, W.D., Nudds, T.D., Clark, R.G. 1996. Duck nest success declines with and without predator management. Journal of Wildlife Management, 60: 258-264.

Bertram, D.F., Welham, C.V.J.,

Ydenberg, R.C. 1996. Flexible effort in breeding seabirds: adjustment of provisioning according to nestling age and mass. Canadian Journal of Zoology, 74: 1876-1881.

Blackburn, T.M., Gaston, K.J. 1996. Spatial patterns in the species richness of birds in the New World. Ecography, 19: 369-376.

Brodeur, S., Décarie, R., Bird, D.M., Fuller, M. 1996. Complete migration cycle of Golden Eagles breeding in northern Quebec. Condor, 98: 293-299. [By satellite tracking of telemetered birds.]

Brousseau, P., Lefebvre, J., Giroux, J.-F. 1996. Diet of Ring-billed Gull chicks in urban and non-urban colonies in Quebec. Colonial Waterbirds, 19: 22-30.

Brown, K.M., Ewins, P.J. 1996. Technique-dependent biases in determination of diet composition: An example with Ring-billed Gulls. Condor, 98: 34-41.

Brown, K.M., Morris, R.D. 1996. From tragedy to triumph: Renesting in Ring-billed Gulls. Auk, 113: 23-31.

Butler, R.W., Delgado, F.S., de la Cueva, H., Pulido, V., Sandercock, B.K. 1996. Migration routes of the Western Sandpiper. Wilson Bulletin, 108: 662-672.

Calmé, S., Haddad, S. 1996. Peatlands: A new habitat for the Upland Sandpiper, *Bartramia longicauda*, in eastern Canada. Canadian Field-Naturalist, 110: 326-330.

Champoux, L. 1996. PCBs, dioxins and furans in Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*), Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*) and Mink (*Mustela vison*) collected along the St. Maurice River near La Tuque, Quebec. Environmental Pollution, 92: 147-153.

Chapdelaine, G., Brousseau, P. 1996. Diet of Razorbill *Alca torda* chicks and breeding success in the St. Mary's Islands, Gulf of St. Lawrence, Quebec, Canada, 1990-1992. Canadian Wildlife Service Occasional Paper, 91: 27-36.

Chardine, J.W., Morris, R.D. 1996. Brown Noddy (*Anous stolidus*). *In* The Birds of North America, no.220 (Poole, A., Gill, F., eds.). Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, Pa., American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.

Chatwin, T., van den Driessche, R. 1996. Monitoring the long-term effects of prescribed burning on non-game wildlife in a grassland ecosystem in central British Columbia. Transactions North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, 61: 180-189.

Chilton, G., Lein, M.R. 1996a. Song repertoires of Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrows *Zonotrichia leucophrys pugetensis*. Journal of Avian Biology, 27: 31-40.

Chilton, G., Lein, M.R. 1996b. Long-term changes in songs and song dialect boundaries of Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrows. Condor, 98: 567-580.

Clark, R.G., Guyn, K.L., Penner, R.C.N., Semel, B. 1996. Altering predator foraging behavior to reduce predation of ground-nesting birds. Transactions North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, 61: 118-126.

Davis, S.K., Duncan, D.C., Skeel, M.A. 1996. The Baird's Sparrow: Status resolved. Blue Jay, 54: 185-191.

Dawson, R.D., Clark, R.G. 1996. Effects of variation in egg size and hatching date on survival of Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis* ducklings. Ibis, 138: 693-699.

De Forest, L.N., Gaston, A.J. 1996. The effect of age on timing of breeding and reproductive success in the Thick-billed Murre. Ecology, 77: 1501-1511.

Downes, C.M., Collins, B.T. 1996. The Canadian Breeding Bird Survey, 1966-1994. Canadian Wildlife Service Progress Notes, no.210. 36 pp.

Dunn, E.H., Larivée, J., Cyr, A. 1996. Can checklist programs be used to monitor populations of birds recorded during the migration season? Wilson Bulletin, 108: 540-549.

Dzus, E.H., Clark, R.G. 1996. Effects of harness-style and abdominally implanted transmitters on survival and return rates of Mallards. Journal of Field Ornithology, 67: 549-557.

Elliott, J.E., Langelier, K.M., Mineau, P., Wilson, L.K. 1996. Poisoning of bald eagles and red-tailed hawks by carbofuran and fensulfothian in the Fraser Delta of British Columbia. Journal of Wildlife Diseases, 32: 486-491.

Espie, R.H.M., Brigham, R.M., James, P.C. 1996. Habitat selection and clutch fate of Piping Plovers (*Charadrius melodus*) breeding at Lake Diefenbaker, Saskatchewan. Canadian Journal of Zoology, 74: 1069-1075.

Espie, R.H.M., James, P.C., Warkentin, I.G., Oliphant, L.W. 1996. Ecological correlates of molt

in Merlins (*Falco columbarius*). Auk, 113: 363-369.

Fox, A.D., Glahder, C., Mitchell, C.R., Stroud, D.A., Boyd, H., Frikke, J. 1996. North American Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) in West Greenland. Auk, 113: 231-233.

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NEWS ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Another C.W.S. newsletter

Recovery, subtitled "An Endangered Species Newsletter", was new to me. One pertinent recent article dealt with the C.O.S.E.W.I.C. de-listing of Baird's Sparrow last spring. That was no "conservation victory", merely a re-interpretation of status arising from new population estimates (see Davis et al. 1996, in listing above). The new data contradicted some earlier views of habitat use by this bird, and Paul Goossen and Brenda Dale (in *Recovery* article) noted that ongoing monitoring will be needed at least until the new patterns are confirmed.

Not all Bird Populations are Healthy

The *Wildlife Health Centre Newsletter*, 4(2), winter 1996, noted continuing seasonal mortality of terns in Kouchibouguac National Park, N.B.. The numbers of deaths reported were fairly small, but unexplained, thus deserving attention in this largest coastal concentration of breeding terns north of Massachusetts. Another item dealt with huge die-offs of waterfowl due to botulism on the prairies, with most reported deaths (>100,000 birds each) at Old Wives Lake, Sask., and Whitewater Lake, Man., both long-known foci for that problem. Bird mortality on that scale would rate newspaper headlines if it occurred in most other parts of Canada.

Globe and Mail Column Features Bird People

The "Lives Lived" column of the *G&M* isn't a usual source for this bulletin, but twice in one week of February 1997 it noted deaths of Canadian ornithologists.

- Vero C. Wynne-Edwards: (1906-1997), a Brit by birth and death, ranked as a Canadian by teaching at McGill University 1930-46. He pioneered counting seabirds at sea on his way to Canada, and he reported seabird colonies (including Fulmars at Cape Searle) new to science and investigations of other birds during his five visits to the Arctic. "There were giants in the earth in those days..."

- Helen Quilliam: (1905-1997), U.S.-born, settled in Kingston, Ontario, with her husband in 1953, after an adventurous quarter-century in Persia (Iran) and Egypt, when she studied birds in the bas-reliefs of ancient Egypt as well as in the field. Helen soon joined the local naturalists club, and became editor of its bulletin, the "Blue Bill", for over 20 years (except 1955-56 when the present *Picoides* Editor served an apprenticeship there). Her book on the birds of Kingston (1st ed. 1965) became a model for regional bird publications in Ontario. An amateur ornithologist with fully professional standards, Helen deserved all the recognition she received. I treasure our long acquaintance.

Editor

Atlas of Canadian Bird-Banding Recoveries

This project was advertised over 20 years ago, and many people probably assumed it had died long since. Like many complicated projects undertaken by volunteers, it took much longer than anticipated, and the original deadline of coverage through 1975 is hopelessly dated. A review and update through 1995 has been undertaken within C.W.S., with publication to begin under the 50th anniversary project if ready in time.

EDITOR'S MUSINGS

The idea of celebrating 50 years of Canadian Wildlife Service (C.W.S.) activity is one with which few of us would disagree strenuously, despite anomalies associated with this distinctively Canadian institution. C.W.S. wasn't the original name (Dominion Wildlife Service in 1947-50), and some bureaucrats in Environment Canada argue that C.W.S. no longer exists. However, ornithology in Canada has been and continues to be influenced by people who work in and for the organization that emerged and evolved from the Migratory Birds Protection unit of Canada's Department of the Interior 50 years ago.

In the U.S.A., the A.O.U. evolved, from a few government professionals along with a larger group of museum men and well-to-do private collector-taxonomists, to a body dominated by university research professors and graduate students. In Canada, almost from the beginnings of serious ornithology, government employees were in a majority. When the Society of Canadian Ornithologists first came together in 1981, my estimate was that C.W.S. employed (including term staff and contracts) at least one-third of all ornithologists working professionally in this country, and provincial governments employed half the remainder. The fact that most of "our birds" leave Canada for 4-8 months each year worked against the wider proliferation of Canadian university work on birds, even though nearly every university here now has one or more professors for whom bird study is a major scientific focus.

For 70 years, from Macoun through Taverner to Godfrey, Canada's national museum was the federal government locus of information on birds, but the influence in that field from what later became C.W.S. built gradually. Far from the government centre and museum, in British Columbia and the Maritimes, the long-term activity of James Munro and Robie Tufts as Chief Migratory Bird Protection Officers emphasized birds as a federal government concern, even when the C.W.S. precursor employed only five bird professionals. By the time the Dominion Wildlife Service was renamed C.W.S. in 1950, it had biologists stationed in all provinces except P.E.I..

In the early years of the Canadian Wildlife Service, the bird focus was largely upon game species, but many C.W.S. bird professionals had wider interests, and some made time to pursue and encourage work on birds in general. During the 1960s, with C.W.S. staff growth and expansion into many other kinds of bird work, that organization gradually assumed a central role as the federal government source of information on birds. Rapidly expanding series of publications, including full-length monographs, raised the C.W.S. profile and reputation beyond as well as within the country. The 1970s were the years of C.W.S.' greatest prominence, when expanded staff and resources allowed development of expertise in a wide array of bird-centred disciplines. Although it evolved from an agency responsible for regulations and management, C.W.S. work was then largely investigative, providing a scientific basis for management.

The concentration of so much Canadian bird work within C.W.S. may have delayed emergence of S.C.O., as the grouping of so many bird professionals within that one organization provided much of the association and information exchange functions proper to a national society. C.W.S. people supported the move to form S.C.O., but they were not the only or the most forceful movers in that initiative. They also declined presidency of S.C.O. to avoid potential conflict of interest should the Society wish to criticize the federal environment department. Criticism of the (then) largely research activity of C.W.S. was somewhat less likely. Soon after S.C.O. emerged, C.W.S. was hit by the 1984 cuts, and much of its collective attention was diverted to survival and in-fighting. C.W.S. refused to roll over and play dead, and its perceived interests still are seen by many as similar to, though not always identical with, those of our national society. Collaboration between S.C.O. and C.W.S. works to the benefit of both. S.C.O. benefits by its shared interests with C.W.S., and S.C.O. support should help to keep C.W.S. as a recognizable and functional agency within the federal government.

A.J. Erskine

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to all those who contributed material for this issue, with or without prompting, directly or indirectly. Filling an issue with material is a challenge, but making it both interesting and pertinent to the ornithological interests of S.C.O. members depends upon *your* support and feedback.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE (**deadline for copy will be 15 October 1997**)

The Annual Meeting, and 2nd Science Conference, of S.C.O., in Peterborough, will be major features. Our President outlined several new initiatives (see p.1 et seq.) which can appear in *Picoides* when suitable material is forthcoming. Articles, "opinion-pieces", "trial balloons", are always welcomed. *Photographs or other graphics material are needed for the front cover* to help catch attention, whether or not keyed to an included article (I can usually dream up a context, with a suitable picture!).

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Society of Canadian Ornithologists
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Mandate: (a) editorial advisory board to Editor, *Picoides*; (b) assessment of S.C.O. journal re conservation and biology of Canadian birds.

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Dr. Nancy Flood, Dept. of Biological Sciences,
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Si vous désirez devenir membre de la Société des ornithologistes du Canada, faites parvenir vos coordonnées ainsi qu'un chèque ou mandat-poste (à S.O.C.) au montant de 10,00$ à l'adresse ci-haut.