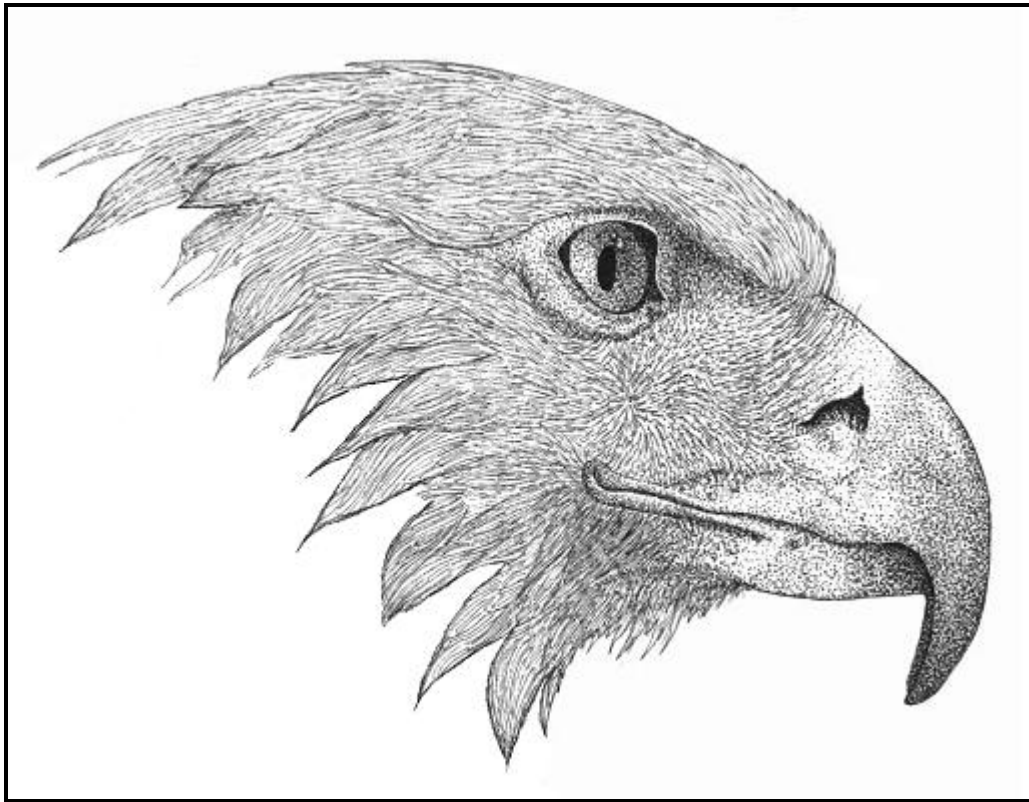


PICOIDES

Bulletin of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists
Bulletin de la Société des Ornithologistes du Canada

Picoides, January 2006
Volume 19, Number 1



Golden Eagle by Marie-Anne Hudson



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Burrowing Owls
Courtesy SK Conservation
Data Centre



President's Report

This past year has seen many exciting and new developments for the Society of Canadian Ornithologists / Société des Ornithologistes du Canada.

Perhaps the most dramatic highlight has been the successful launch of a new journal of Canadian ornithology in cooperation with Bird Studies Canada. Our journal, *Avian Conservation and Ecology/Écologie et conservation des Oiseaux*, under the leadership of the Editors in Chief, Tom Nudds and Marc André Villard, has just announced its first issue which includes several major, high quality articles related to bird conservation or ecology. Please check out the journal web site, www.ace-eco.org where these articles can be read onscreen or downloaded in .pdf format. Many thanks to the Editors-in-Chief, the Managing Editor, Michelle Lee, the joint SCO-BSC journal committee and the subject editors for the huge amount of work that they've done to pull this together, and to create such an excellent new venue for publication of scientific research.

The journal is Open Access, meaning that anybody, anywhere can access these papers without subscription, thus maximizing exposure to the articles. Those of us at universities may be used to having electronic access to a wide range of journals, but this comes at a cost of several million dollars per year to the universities. Many institutions, especially in developing countries, can't afford those costs, and thus don't have access to many scientific articles. If you have some exciting new research, relevant to the themes of the journal, that you would like to see published in a high quality journal, and become accessible to everybody, please consider submitting your work to ACE-ECO. A call for submissions is included later in this issue.

Another major change has been the launch, with this issue, of an electronic version of *Picoides*. With an electronic-only journal, it seemed only appropriate to update our newsletter into an electronic format. Starting with this issue, the newsletter will be permanently archived on the SCO/SOC web site, so that you will be able to access it at any time, through the society members section of the web site. For those who do not have easy access to the web, we will still print a limited number of paper copies for mailing – please contact the membership secretary if you are in this situation. However, this substantially increases our costs, and we hope that nearly everybody will take advantage of the electronic option.

With this change in format, we are also seeing a change in newsletter editor. I wish to welcome Rob Warnock as the new editor of *Picoides* and a member of SCO/SOC Council. Welcome Aboard, Rob!

On the behalf of the Council and membership of SCO/SOC, I would also like to express our heartfelt thanks to our outgoing editor Dorothy Diamond and her assistant Matthew MacFarlane for their outstanding work on *Picoides* over the past five years.

Another major highlight of the past year was an extremely successful annual meeting of members in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This was a stand-alone meeting of the SCO/SOC timed to coincide with the annual meetings of the Canadian Wildlife Service bird committees. This provided an excellent opportunity for government and academic scientists to interact with each other and with graduate students, and we hope to have more such meetings in the future. A more complete report on the meeting is provided later in this issue.

On a sadder note, 2005 saw the passing of Dr. Jamie Smith, a highly respected and much loved ornithologist, and a past winner of the society's highest award for contributions to Canadian ornithology, the Doris Huestis Speirs award. To honour his memory, the SCO has decided to



support a new award to recognize outstanding mentorship qualities in Canadian ornithologists. If you knew Jamie, and would like to help support this award, please send your donations to the SCO Treasurer (Pierre Lamothe, 8541 Esplanade, Montréal, QC, H2P 2S1) clearly indicating that you are sending a donation for the award. A tax receipt will be issued. A call for nominations for the award is included later in this issue.

Finally, I would like to remind you that it is time to start planning for the next SCO/SOC meeting, which will be a large spectacular affair to be held in conjunction with 7 other ornithological societies in Veracruz, Mexico in early October 2006. The call for papers will be announced shortly -- abstracts must be submitted by 3 April 2006 to be considered in the scientific program. Registration fees also increase after that date. A more complete announcement is elsewhere in this newsletter. I hope that many of you will be able to include Veracruz in your travel plans this year, and I look forward to seeing you there.

Charles M. Francis, President, SCO/SOC



Changes to the SCO/SOC Council

By Susan Hannon

The following three people were elected to SCO council in 2005.

- David Bird of McGill University
- Leslie Evans-Ogden of University of British Columbia
- Jean-Michel DeVink of Canadian Wildlife Service, Saskatoon

Thanks to all members who participated in voting.

The following three councillors have retired from SCO/SOC Council.

- Gilles Gauthier
- Liana Zanette
- Allan Baker

We thank them for their endeavors.



Loggerhead Shrikes



New Editor of Picoides

Happy New Year members of SCO/SOC! My name is Rob Warnock and I am the new editor of *Picoides*. I have been a member of the Society for a number of years now. I have a MSc. in Biology from the University of Regina. I have studied Burrowing Owls with Paul James and forest songbirds in Saskatchewan with Keith Hobson. I have also done environmental policy work and state of environment reporting for Saskatchewan Environment and assisted with climate change and wildfires and human health projects. I have completed Nature Saskatchewan projects including a Burrowing Owl Habitat Survey in 2000, a 12-page Burrowing Owl booklet, and evaluation of the Operation Burrowing Owl habitat stewardship Program (results published in *Environmental Management* in 2004). I contributed a number of bird entries to the newly published and award winning *Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*. Currently, I am Research Director of Nature Saskatchewan and co-editor of their quarterly newspaper, *Nature Views*. In 2005, I received the Long-term Service Award from Nature Saskatchewan. Presently, I am looking for opportunities for paid work and my CV is available on request. If you hear of any opportunities, please let me know.

I look forward to working with you all to carry on the good work started by Dorothy Diamond and other former editors of *Picoides*. I do need your help to continue to make *Picoides* useful as it is your publication. I welcome submissions and comments from all members (I accept bricks of criticism as well as bouquets of praise). I hope you enjoy this issue and you all had a great Christmas!

Cheers,

Rob Warnock
warnockr@accesscomm.ca



Rob Warnock (left) receives 2005 Long-term Service Award from Nature Saskatchewan President Attila Chanady at the Nature Saskatchewan Fall Meet in Regina, SK on October 1, 2005. Photo by Dale Williams.



Society of Canadian Ornithologists		Société des Ornithologistes du Canada
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24th Annual Meeting of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists/ Société des Ornithologistes du Canada

By Charles M. Francis

The 24th annual meeting of the SCO-SOC was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia from 20-22 October 2005, and was a tremendous success. It was held on the top floor of the Delta Halifax, in the Bluenose Ballroom which is surrounded by windows on three sides, giving a spectacular view over the Halifax Harbour (at least during coffee breaks!). There were 152 registrants, including 20 people who registered for the special half-day symposium on Citizen Science, which made it one of our most successful stand alone meetings ever.

Following the successful formula of the Saskatoon meeting two years ago, this meeting was timed to coincide with a meeting of all of the Canadian Wildlife Service bird groups that took place during the preceding few days at the nearby White Sands Resort. Those meetings included a large percentage of the biologists and research scientists in CWS who work on waterfowl, seabirds, colonial waterbirds, shorebirds or landbirds. They spent three days discussing recent research and survey results as well as current issues affecting birds, and setting priorities and directions for research and conservation actions over the next year. Many of them stayed on for the SCO meetings to present their science and interact with their academic counterparts and students.

The SCO-SOC meeting opened with a reception at the hotel on the evening of Thursday 20th October; an opportunity to catch up with many colleagues that one had not seen for a year or more. The scientific program began the next morning with a special symposium on Radar Ornithology featuring 4 speakers who updated us on recent developments in using radar to study bird migration, including assessing the impacts of developments such as wind turbines on migratory birds and bats. The remainder of the day we heard a diverse range of oral papers on many different aspects of Canadian ornithology in sessions entitled Migration, Conservation, and Population Variability and Genetics. A poster session in the evening, in the same venue, gave plenty of time to interact with poster presenters, enjoy a glass of wine, and admire the view of Halifax at night.

The next morning started with a plenary talk by Erica Dunn on Citizen Science followed by a series of papers outlining how data collected by volunteers and members of the public ("Citizen Scientists") are being used for scientific research. After break, the day continued with more papers on Habitat, Population Biology, and general ornithology.

The formal meeting closed with the society's Annual General Meeting, the minutes of which are now posted on the society's web site.



The social program continued in the evening with a banquet and ceilidh at the Halifax Citadel. Those who arrived early were able to watch the sun set over the town from the castle walls. After an excellent dinner, and a few glasses of beer, many a biologist could later be seen dancing traditional square dances to the fiddle tunes of a local Celtic band.

Heavy rain the next morning put a damper on the planned field trips, but a few die-hard birders went out anyway, and had a nice tour of the local birding sites, seeing a fair number of east coast specialties.

Altogether 37 oral papers and 34 poster papers were presented – a rich offering. As is becoming increasingly common at conferences, many of the best presentations were given by students. Two were selected as winners of the student presentation awards: Kevin Kerr for his talk entitled “DNA barcodes and the birds of North America: Species identification and discovery” and Paul A. Smith for this talk entitled “Factors affecting nest site selection and reproductive success of tundra nesting shorebirds.” Congratulations!

The meeting was sponsored by the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada, Bird Studies Canada, the Nova Scotia Bird Society, and the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture.

Particular thanks to the local organizing committee, chaired by Marty Leonard and Andrew Boyne with assistance from Andrew Horn, Cindy Staicer, Becky Whittam, Sabina Wilhelm, and a host of volunteers, and to the Scientific Program committee chaired by Greg Robertson with assistance from Sabina Wilhelm and Martha Robertson, all of whom did an excellent job of putting together this program.



Loons
Photo courtesy of Canadian
Wildlife Service



2005 Doris Huestis Speirs Award for Outstanding Contributions to Canadian Ornithology

John A. Crosby

By Gilles Seutin

The Doris Huestis Speirs Award of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists recognizes outstanding contributions to Canadian ornithology. In 2005, the SCO/SOC is pleased to present this award to Mr. John A. Crosby in the year of his 80th birthday.

To ornithologists and nature art lovers, John Crosby is best known as the illustrator of *The Birds of*

Canada, authored by the late W. Earl Godfrey. To other Canadians, John's name may not be familiar, but his artwork certainly is: he drew the bird plates from which etchings were made to illustrate the "bird banknotes" that the Bank of Canada issued between 1986 and 2000. Few will have appreciated the two Pine Grosbeaks illustrating the \$1000 notes, but all will remember the American Robins, Belted Kingfisher, Osprey and Common Loon on the \$2, \$5, \$10 and \$20 notes, respectively. The \$2 bill example is illustrated below. Other Canadians will remember stamps he illustrated, a 2¢ stamp showing a polar bear issued in 1953, or a 5¢ stamp in 1968 illustrating the mythical narwhal.



The American Robin from the old \$2 bill was one of several bird pictures drawn by Crosby that helped remind Canadians of their natural heritage every time they opened their wallet

John was born in Toronto in 1925. He studied forestry but soon found himself more attracted to illustrating bird life. He studied birds in the field and in the collections of the Royal Ontario Museum, perfecting his art in part under the guidance of renowned bird artists James L. Baillie and Terence M. Shortt. In 1951 he joined the National Museum of Canada as Artist-Naturalist. He illustrated books and other publications on birds, mammals, mollusks and other organisms.

John's most important contributions to Canadian ornithology include his plates for *The Birds of Nova Scotia* (1961; R. W. Tufts) and *The Birds of Canada* (1966; W. E. Godfrey). John's plates for *The Birds of Nova Scotia* complemented those of the late Roger T. Peterson, first produced to illustrate *The Birds of Newfoundland* by H. S. Peters and T. D. Burleigh (1951). But John surpassed himself in the plates he drew in the early 1960's for Godfrey's *The Birds of Canada*. Critiques of the book unanimously praised the quality of the artwork. In 1967, the late George



Miksch Sutton wrote in *The Wilson Bulletin*: "So exquisitely done are the eleven peeps shown on this plate [number 27] that I find myself turning to them for refreshment and inspiration... Plate 27 is the work of a genius."

John Crosby is not a trained ornithologist in the narrow sense of the word. However, few Canadians will have had a greater impact on Canadians' appreciation for birds as John has. It is in recognition of this major positive contribution that the Speirs Award is given to John A. Crosby.

The D.H. Speirs Award Selection Committee for 2005 consisted of Gilles Seutin (chair), Erica Dunn, Mark Brigham and Marty Leonard.

News from the Ornithological Council



2006-07 SCO reps to the OC are Lesley Evans Ogden and Liana Zanette.

Given the recent explosion of media coverage on the issue of Avian Influenza, the Ornithological Council (OC) consulted with experts and has recently released a fact sheet on the issue as it pertains to ornithological research in the field and lab. It is available linked to the OC web page, at <http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/OC/avianinfluenza.html>. On this page, there is also a list of alternative sources for facts about Avian Influenza with web links.

Get or renew your SCO/SOC membership today!



We have four membership categories:

- Regular membership \$25 per year
- Non-resident membership \$35 per year
- Student membership \$10 per year (proof of enrolment required)
- Sustaining membership \$50 per year (Canadian tax receipt for \$25 will be provided)

We encourage multiyear memberships and renewals as it saves us money as well as tax-deductible donations! Please send your completed membership form (can be downloaded from the Society website at: www.sco-soc.ca/index.html) and cheque or money order (in Canadian funds please!) to:

Thérèse Beaudet
SCO Membership Secretary
8541 Esplanade
Montréal, QC
H2P 2S1
Canada



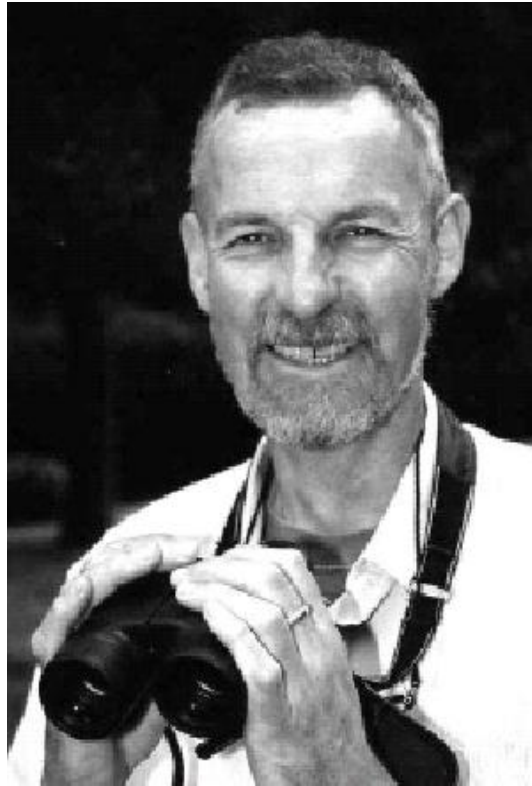
The Jamie Smith Memorial Award for Mentoring

In recognition of Jamie Smith's contribution to fostering ornithological research, the Society of Canadian Ornithologists has created The Jamie Smith Memorial Award for Mentoring in Ornithology.

This award will honour established ornithologists - either in academia, industry, non-government or government agencies - nominated by students, colleagues and/or peers to have displayed excellence in mentoring a new generation of professional or amateur biologists.

The award will be presented to the recipient at the Society's annual meeting.

Details on the award, as well as information on how to nominate candidates for recognition, are posted at the Society of Canadian Ornithologists' website: **www.sco-soc.ca**



Jamie Smith



Sprague's Pipit
Courtesy Canadian Wildlife
Service



An Update on the 2005 Activities of the Avian Science and Conservation Centre of McGill University

By Dr. David M. Bird, Director, ASCC

ASCC "Golf Girls" A 'Fair Way' Along toward Completing their Degrees

Golf is now one of the most widespread sports in the world, though there's still much we do not know regarding potential impacts on the environment. This past summer, Marie-Anne Hudson spent her third and final field season locating and monitoring birds' nests for her Ph.D. project, "Breeding birds on Montreal-area golf courses and green spaces". She examined the nesting habitat choices of several passerines and monitored 376 nests of 19 different species. She also characterized the vegetation surrounding each nest and compared it to random sites within pairs' territories. This will allow us to determine if birds actively choose nest sites. Such information may be used in the future for urban planning and conservation efforts

We also have no idea whether current golf course spray programs have an impact on feeding birds, and to what extent non-waterfowl species use golf courses as feeding grounds. An M.Sc. project now in the writing stages was undertaken by Isabel Julian to examine the feeding behaviour of selected avian species on suburban golf courses. We hope to be able to predict their pesticide exposure risk based on foraging behaviour and spray programs. In 2003 and 2004, the proportion of time spent feeding varied depending on the golf course, the habitat type and the month. Most species were more frequently observed in natural as opposed to highly maintained areas, and in the morning rather than in the afternoon. Based on the golf courses' spray data, target species seem to be at little risk of direct pesticide exposure, as their foraging patterns and preferences preclude them from direct contact with sprayed pesticides. The ASCC is grateful for the support of the Quebec Turf Research Foundation, Bird Protection Quebec, J.W. McConnell Foundation, and the golf course managers and superintendents.



Left: Marie-Anne Hudson taking a self-portrait using her nest-monitoring camera Right: A very rare glimpse at a hatching Yellow Warbler (Photos by M-A Hudson)





Are Great-black Backed Gulls Raptors in Disguise?

Christina Donehower holding a nape-tagged Common Eider hen (photo by Noémie Laplante) This past summer as part of a collaborative project with Dr. Stephen Kress of Cornell University and his Project Puffin, Christina Donehower completed the third and final field season for her Ph.D. study, "An adaptive approach to managing gull predation at seabird restoration sites in Maine". The main objective was to quantify the impact of gull predation on the reproductive success of terns and eider ducks. From May to August, she camped on remote islands on the Maine coast, living among gulls, seabirds, and a handful of dedicated researchers. She spent over 500 hours observing and filming gull-seabird interactions. She



Christina Donehower holding a nape-tagged Common Eider hen (photo by Noémie Laplante)

also colour-marked gulls to track individual behaviour, monitored tern and eider productivity through banding and nest-monitoring, and placed surveillance cameras in and around the seabird colonies to catch predatory gulls "in the act". Overall, predation on eider ducklings was severe, resulting in near-complete reproductive failure for this species at one study site. Terns fared better, but hungry gulls took many eggs and chicks.

Merganser Research Coming Along Just "Ducky" for Shawn Craik

Since 2002, Shawn Craik's Ph.D. research has focused on understanding the habitat requirements of breeding and post-breeding Red-breasted Mergansers. This past summer, he examined nest-site and brood habitat selection in Kouchibouguac National Park, New Brunswick and investigated merganser habitat use during their moult (flightless) stage at Anticosti Island, Québec. Seventy-seven merganser nests were monitored at Kouchibouguac and compared to randomly chosen sites to determine the factors determining nest-site location. Merganser nests were often located in denser stands of marram grass and were more concealed than randomly selected sites. He also identified 12 merganser post-breeding sites along the south, west, and north coasts of western Anticosti Island. Using kayaks, he looked at habitat requirements for the merganser flocks at 76 different locations. This research is being supported by Parks Canada at Kouchibouguac, New Brunswick Wildlife Trust fund, FAPAQ, and the Sea Duck Joint Venture.



Shawn Craik and Dr. Leigh-Anne Egan preparing to implant a radio-transmitter into a female Red-breasted Merganser (photo by Rodger Titman)



Tracking Surf Scoters in Labrador



Mark O'Connor intently watching moulting Surf Scoters off the northern coast of Labrador.
(Photo by Joanie Lussier)

In 2005 Mark O'Connor completed his first field season of an M.Sc. project on the moult ecology of Surf Scoters, one of the least known ducks in North America. He spent six weeks living on a remote island on the northern coast of Labrador with a field assistant and an Inuit guide. He banded scoters after using a new capture technique in which boats are used to herd the birds into gill nets. He then implanted 20 PD-2 radio-transmitters in an attempt to document habitat use and movements of the moulting birds. This was not easy, as local geography and behaviour of the birds made signal reception difficult. The rest of the time was spent hiking over the island observing scoters in order to characterize their behaviour while moulting. The next step will involve using pre-harvested birds to understand the energetic requirements of moulting. For this project, we owe thanks to Scott Gilliland and the Canadian Wildlife Service in St-John's, as well as to Gus Dickers and Elias Harris from the Sikumiut Environmental Agency in Nain.

Can Bobolinks and Farmers Coexist?

Barbara Frei, an NSERC scholar, recently joined the ASCC graduate crew this past September to undertake a M.Sc. project on the Bobolink. Known for their bubbly song, Bobolinks are a well known but sadly diminishing sign of spring. Now that their natural grassland habitat has largely disappeared, today Bobolinks are generally found in agricultural fields and pasturelands where they are experiencing a steady and ubiquitous decline due to intensification of farming practices and increased hay-cropping during the nesting period. Other than the fact that Bobolinks are shot by farmers, killed as food and caged as pets, very little is known about their extensive migration and wintering habitat. By researching local Bobolink populations, associated habitat management, and possibly their migration behaviour and southern wintering habitats, she hopes to further our knowledge and conservation of this colourful grassland species.

Radiotracking Endangered Loggerhead Shrikes

As part of her M.Sc. project, Sarah Fraser, an NSERC scholar, spent the 2005 summer monitoring the fates of juvenile, ASCC captive-bred shrikes released into the wild in Gatineau, Quebec. She attached transmitters to four individuals and tracked them using radio telemetry. She followed these birds for one month and observed the captive-bred birds hunting and responding to predators. With the help of Wildlife Preservation Trust Canada, Sarah is also recording and analyzing the breeding behaviour of captive breeding shrikes with the intention of learning why some birds breed and some do not. The breeding and release project is a joint effort of the Canadian Wildlife Service (Quebec Region), La Fondation de la Faune du Quebec, Bird Protection Quebec, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais, Environnement Sterne, Ministère des Ressources Naturelles et de la Faune Québec, National Capital Commission, local farmers of Pontiac, and NSERC.



Sarah Fraser using radio telemetry to locate released Loggerhead Shrike juveniles in the field.
(Photo by Katie Fraser)



These Hawks are no 'Snowbirds'!

Lina Bardo, an NSERC scholar, spent the summer of 2005 searching for and monitoring Sharp-shinned Hawk nests. As hawks and owls do not generally get along, she trapped adult Sharp-shins using a mist net with a tame live owl acting as a lure. These birds were banded and blood samples were taken for toxicological analyses. The first field season of her M.Sc. project, the winter ecology of Sharp-shinned Hawks in the greater Montreal area, began in November. Most of these hawks migrate south for winter, but over the past few decades, more of them are remaining farther north. Not much is known about their wintering habits. Using tail-mounted transmitters to track them over the coming months with a hand-held receiver, she will attempt to examine their range size and habitat use. Special thanks goes to l'Association pour la Conservation du Boisé Papineau, the Montreal Botanical Gardens, the Montreal Park Service, the Morgan Arboretum, Le Paradis des Orchidées and Pavillon de la Pomme.

Are Flame-Retardant Chemicals Really Safe?

Brominated flame-retardants are used in many household objects such as furniture, computers and building materials. Although the products do not pose any concerns for human health, their residues, known as polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), which arise from disposal of these objects, are showing up in alarming concentrations in organisms such as whales, Polar Bears, Peregrine Falcons, and even in human breast milk. To understand possible adverse effects on the endocrine system and reproduction in birds, we turned to the centre's valuable American Kestrel colony. Having been awarded a federal NSERC research grant for a 5-year period, Dr. Bird is collaborating with his 2 former Ph.D. students, Dr. Kim Fernie from the Canadian Wildlife Service and Dr. Laird Shutt from the National Wildlife Research Centre. Paired kestrels were fed different levels of PBDEs for 65 days prior to and during the breeding period. The pairs' behaviour was closely observed and recorded to determine if there was any change in courtship behaviour. Egg quality, hatching success rates and young growth/survival rates were also examined to determine whether dietary intake of the chemical has an effect on the kestrels' reproductive success. While the samples are currently being analyzed, early indications show a definite impact on reproduction.

West Nile Virus Research in Wild Kestrels



Meghan Larivée and Manon Dubé collecting a blood sample from an American Kestrel nestling.

With the help of Manon Dubé, Meghan Larivée and Lina Bardo as invaluable field research assistants, monitoring continued in the summer of 2005 on the prevalence of West Nile virus (WNV) in American kestrels. Blood samples were taken from 52 adult and nestling kestrels to detect WNV antibodies. All were captured using mist nets or bal-chatri traps, or were plucked directly from the nest box. The Canadian Science Centre for Human and Animal Health in Winnipeg is currently analyzing the samples as part of the collaborative team. So far, it appears that the majority of adult kestrels have WNV antibodies while the nestlings do not. We still do not know when and where the WNV infection first occurs.



McGill Bird Observatory Now Open!

By Marie-Anne Hudson, one of the many founders of MBO



The McGill Bird Observatory (MBO), operated by the Migration Research Foundation with support from McGill University's Avian Science and Conservation Centre, officially began its activities on September 19 2004. MBO is located near the western tip of the island of Montreal, and is the only active migration monitoring station in southwestern Quebec. Despite being landlocked with the only water contained in ephemeral ponds in spring and occasionally in fall, 170 avian species have been observed on site. As of December 2005, over 5000 birds have been banded, representing 92 species including such notable rarities as Bicknell's Thrush, Blue-winged Warbler, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. The 5 most abundant species banded to date are White-throated Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Black-capped Chickadee, and Song Sparrow.

Already, word of our operation has spread and we have now hosted several wildlife or conservation organizations as well as given lectures on bird banding to a variety of groups. We also presented an introductory poster detailing MBO's creation and milestones at the annual SCO meeting in Halifax. In line with one of our primary objectives - promoting avian research - two undergraduate students are taking measurements and documenting plumage patterns to refine our ability to age and sex some of the more common species at MBO. We could not have accomplished so much in so little time if it were not for the thousands of volunteer hours put in by both Bird Protection Quebec members, the general public, McGill's eager undergraduate students, and the core group of graduate student founders who created it. For MBO's latest report on banding activities, or to view the ever-increasing photo library, please visit <http://www.migrationresearch.org/mbo.html>.



This hatch-year Yellow-billed Cuckoo was one of the rarest birds banded at MBO. (Photo by Marcel Gahbauer)



Call for Submissions to *Picoides*

We are looking for submissions to *Picoides*. Bird related articles, announcements, advertisements, event notices, Society news items, Canadian thesis abstracts, book reviews, letters to the editor, poetry, artwork and photos are needed to create interesting and useful issues. Without them, there is no *Picoides*! With electronic issues, space limitations are no longer a problem.

Please send text as MS Word or RTF and photos and figures as JPEGs for Windows.

Thanks. Submission guidelines are on the SCO/SOC website.

Deadlines are May 1, September 1 and December 1.

Please send your submissions to Rob Warnock, *Picoides* Editor, 3603 White Bay, Regina, SK, S4S 7C9 or by e-mail to warnockr@accesscomm.ca



Editors-in-Chief: Thomas D. Nudds, University of Guelph, Canada and Marc-André Villard, Université de Moncton, Canada

Publisher: The Resilience Alliance on behalf of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and Bird Studies Canada

Journal URL: <http://www.ace-eco.org>

Publication Announcement

SCO is pleased to announce publication of the first issue of Avian Conservation and Ecology - Écologie et Conservation des Oiseaux (ACE-ECO). ACE-ECO is an open-access, fully electronic scientific journal, sponsored by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and Bird Studies Canada. The first issue has now been published: please check the website to see the articles. You can also register on the web site to receive automatic notification every time a new issue is published (twice a year).

Call for Papers

Editors-in-Chief Thomas Nudds and Marc-André Villard would like to invite authors to submit articles to ACE-ECO. The journal publishes peer-reviewed, scientific papers pertaining to the conservation, ecology, and status of birds. In focusing on research that is simultaneously pure and applied avian ecology, the journal will complement other publications, such as traditional ornithological journals, conservation publications, general ecology journals and those focused on specific groups of birds. Although ACE-ECO is intended in part to enhance the international profile of Canadian ornithology and applied avian science, contributions will be welcomed from all over the world. Authors are invited to submit their original work under any of the following manuscript categories:

Research Papers

Standard papers reporting research results using the classical format (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, Literature Cited). Length restricted to 6000 words exclusive of tables, figures and literature cited.

Letters

Relatively short papers designed to attract attention to innovative concepts or techniques which have the potential to strongly influence the research area. Letters will be of interest to a broader audience than topics addressed in standard research papers. For example, a letter describing a major advance in the estimation of juvenile survival using an innovative method to track bird movements over long time intervals and/or distances is likely to be of interest to avian ecologists generally. Statistical analyses supporting the concept or technique may be preliminary, but nevertheless robust with respect to the inferences drawn. Letters describing innovative concepts or techniques accompanied by too few data, or inappropriately analyzed, will not be accepted. Length is restricted to 3000 words, exclusive of tables, figures and literature cited.

Essays

In-depth reflection on an issue with major implications for avian conservation. Even though no original data are required for this manuscript type, the article must present an original, insightful perspective. Maximum length: 3000 words.



Forum

Short papers (1000 word limit) designed to respond/follow up on papers published in recent issues, or to reply to such commentaries. Short commentaries can also raise attention on issues that were not specifically addressed in the journal.

Publication fees are \$750 CDN for all articles except forum papers which are \$375 CDN. Note that these fees are the only way that we can afford to publish this journal and still make it fully open access, so that everybody, anywhere in the world can reach it. This is a small investment relative to the cost of doing your research.

Manuscripts are submitted electronically using a user-friendly online submission upload interface. Authors are asked first to register as an author (<http://www.ace-eco.org/login.php>) to obtain the pass codes that are needed to access the online submission upload interface. Submission details and manuscript formatting guidelines are available online at <http://www.ace-eco.org/submissions.php>.

For more information, please check the web site.



Photo by A. Wilson

Long-billed Curlews



2006 Student Research Awards Competition

The Society is pleased to announce the 2006 student research awards competition. Student members of SCO are eligible to apply; other eligibility and application guidelines are given on the website at <http://www.sco-soc.ca/awards.html>

The SCO-SOC administers three different student research awards - the Taverner Awards, James L. Baillie Student Research Award and the Fred Cooke Student Research Award.

- **Taverner Awards**

Taverner Awards are offered by The Society of Canadian Ornithologists to honor Percy A. Taverner and to further his accomplishments in increasing the 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. Two awards of up to \$500 each are made annually.

- **James L. Baillie Student Research Award**

The James L. Baillie Student Research Award is open to any student conducting ornithological research at a Canadian university. It honors the memory of James L. Baillie and shall be for research that is consistent with the objectives of the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund. These are to support: studies of Canadian birds in their natural environment; projects which contribute to preservation of birds; and projects, which disseminate knowledge of birds. Long Point Bird Observatory/ Bird Studies Canada funds the James L. Baillie Student Research Award from proceeds of the Baillie Birdathon, and is administered by The Society of Canadian Ornithologists. A single award of up to \$1000 is made annually.

- **Fred Cooke Student Research Award** The Fred Cooke Student Award is offered jointly by the SCO and Bird Studies Canada to honour the contributions of Professor Fred Cooke to Canadian ornithology by supporting ornithological conference travel or research activities by a student at a Canadian university. The Award shall be open to any student conducting ornithological research at a Canadian university, except that previous recipients of the Award shall not be eligible. The Award shall be for travel to ornithological conferences at which the student will make a verbal or poster presentation, or research in any aspect of ornithology anywhere in the world. A single award of up to \$500 is made annually

By submitting one application form, students will be considered for all three SCO research awards. Send E-mail applications ONLY to Bob Clark (bob.clark@ec.gc.ca), SCO Student Awards Committee Chair, along with reference letters, by 15 February 2006. Results will be announced by 31 March 2006.



**SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS
REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP - OCTOBER 2005
SUMMARY**

**by Thérèse Beaudet
Membership Secretary, SCO**

As of September 30, 2005, there were 335 members listed on the rolls of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists (SCO). This is an increase of 29 members (9.5 %) from the 306 of August 2004 and the 317 members of 2003. 76.5 % of the members have paid their 2005 membership so far (Oct. 05).

83 of our current members (25%) have joined the SCO prior to 1990 (including 18 founders); 61 (18%) joined between 1990 and 2000, and 186 (56%) from 2000 on.

54.8 % of the membership have renewed for more than one year at a time. The number that commits for more than one year has decreased slightly, maybe due to the increase in membership dues. The number of sustaining members has also decreased.

Provincial and territorial representation can be compared to the last two years. Abroad membership (many of these are, of course, actually Canadians living elsewhere, mainly in the U.S.) seems stable.

The existence of the SCO webpage has proved useful, allowing new members to join easily. A few collective electronic messages were sent since the last meeting.

Details and tables are available at <http://www.sco-soc.ca/>.

Thérèse Beaudet
Membership Secretary, SCO
14 October 2005



Piping Plover
Courtesy SK Conservation Data
Centre



SOCIÉTÉ DES ORNITHOLOGISTES DU CANADA RAPPORT CONCERNANT LES MEMBRES - OCTOBRE 2005 RÉSUMÉ

**par Thérèse Beaudet
Secrétaire aux membres, SOC**

Au 30 septembre 2005, la Société des ornithologistes du Canada comptait 335 membres, une augmentation de 29 membres (9,5%) par rapport aux 306 membres que comptait la SOC en août 2004, et aux 317 membres de 2003. À date (oct. 05), 76,5% des membres ont payé à date leur adhésion pour 2005.

83 des membres actuels (25%) ont adhéré à la SOC avant 1990 (incluant 18 membres fondateurs); 61 (18%) ont adhéré entre 1990 et 2000, et 186 (56%) entre 2000 et aujourd'hui.

54,8% des membres ont renouvelé pour plus d'un an à la fois. Le nombre de membres qui renouvellent pour plus d'un an a diminué légèrement, peut-être le résultat de l'augmentation des frais d'adhésion. Le nombre de membres de soutien a également diminué.

La distribution provinciale et territoriale des membres est comparable à celle des 2 dernières années, et le nombre de membres ne vivant pas au Canada, souvent des Canadiens vivant ailleurs, surtout aux États-Unis, semble.

L'existence d'un site internet s'est avérée utile, permettant le recrutement de nouveaux membres. Fait nouveau, l'ensemble des membres a reçu à quelques occasions des messages électroniques.

Les détails et de nombreux tableaux sont disponibles à <http://www.sco-soc.ca/>.

Thérèse Beaudet
Secrétaire aux membres de la SOC
14 octobre 2005



Passenger Pigeon
Courtesy University of Saskatchewan



M.Sc. Theses in Canadian Ornithology

Gorman, K.B. 2005. Reproductive energetics of female Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*): Nutritional and physiological correlates of timing and state of reproduction. MSc thesis. Centre for Wildlife Ecology, Department of Biological Sciences, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC.

I studied variation in energetics and physiology of female Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*) during arrival and egg production on the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta, Alaska, specifically in relation to timing and state of reproduction. I quantified ovarian follicle dynamics to assign reproductive states, estimate the duration of rapid follicle growth (RFG) (5.2 days), and derive predictive models to assign dates of RFG initiation for reproductive females. Circulating concentrations of plasma vitellogenin and very low-density lipoprotein were found to be accurate physiological predictors of reproductive state. I determined that female Greater Scaup, unlike many other duck species, did not use endogenous lipid, protein, or mineral reserves during egg production, nor was nutritional status associated with date of RFG initiation. Nutrient reserves were smaller in non-reproductive than reproductive females. These results suggest that nutritional status influences timing of reproduction via condition thresholds for RFG initiation, yet acquired reserves are not used during egg production.

Laing, Dawn Kelly. 2004. Dispersal and migratory behaviour of Osprey and Bald Eagles in Labrador. M.Sc. thesis. Department of Natural Resource Sciences. (Wildlife Biology), McGill University-MacDonald Campus, Montréal, Québec.

This study employed satellite telemetry to document dispersal and migratory behaviour of nine juvenile Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and two adult and five hatch-year Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) from central Labrador between 15 Aug 2002 – 31 Dec 2003. Autumn average departure dates were 20 October 2002 and 13 November 2003 for the eagles and 13 October for both 2002/2003 Osprey, siblings migrating independently. Juvenile Osprey travelled at an average rate of 200 km/d during fall migration; one adult travelled at a rate of 188km/d enroute to the Dominican Republic. Eagles travelled an average distance of 1200 km over 40 days at a rate of 81 km/d, wintering as far south as Virginia. Eagles departed wintering areas by 25 March 2003, travelling at an average rate of 76 km/d using similar waterways, river valleys and corridors as taken in the fall. Eagles and Osprey were not documented travelling overnight or crossing large bodies of water.

Kenyon, James K. 2005. Behaviours influencing the distribution of Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias fannini*) in the Strait of Georgia, British Columbia. Centre for Wildlife Ecology, Department of Biological Sciences, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC.

The Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias fannini*), a nonmigratory subspecies endemic to the Pacific Northwest of North America, is COSEWIC-listed in Canada as a species of 'special concern'. The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), conducted since 1969, indicate an ongoing decline in numbers. Recent findings show that nest and colony abandonments are common, and are strongly associated with disturbance by Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*).

Vanishing bearings of herons departing foraging sites were strongly associated with colony locations, and led to the discovery of small, previously unknown colonies. A probabilistic model predicted that dispersed nestling offers increased nestling safety under high eagle depredation. Ideal free distributions accounting for colony locations as well as foraging-site size and quality best matched the observed distribution of foraging herons. These findings support the hypothesis



that great blue herons have redistributed into smaller, more widely-scattered colonies as eagle numbers have recovered over recent decades.

Mathot, Kimberley J. 2005. Sex-related differences in feeding behaviour and implications for differential migration in Western Sandpipers (*Calidris mauri*). MSc thesis. Centre for Wildlife Ecology, Department of Biological Sciences, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC.

I examined relationships between bill morphology, feeding behaviour and non-breeding distribution in a sexually dimorphic shorebird, the western sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*). The sexes are differentially distributed across the non-breeding range, with males, the shorter-billed sex, shifted north relative to females. Males are more reliant on epifaunal (surface) feeding during both migration and the non-breeding period while females do more infaunal (sub-surface) feeding. I tested whether differences in feeding mode result in sex-related differences in diet. Results of surficial food removal plots and stable isotope analyses were equivocal. I also tested the hypothesis that latitudinal gradients in the vertical distribution of food (invertebrates and biofilm) underlie differential migration in western sandpipers. Epifaunal food dominated at northern sites, while infaunal food dominated at southern sites. This study is the first to relate latitudinal scale changes in the distribution of food to functional morphology and differential non-breeding distribution in a shorebird.

Richards, N.L. 2003. Exposure of the Eastern Screech-owl to selected contaminants in apple orchards of southern Québec. M.Sc. thesis. McGill University, Montreal, Québec, Canada.

This study examined the exposure of the Eastern Screech-owl (*Otus asio*) to contaminants in apple orchards of southern Quebec. Using a worst-case scenario approach, secondary exposure to three organophosphorus insecticides, (phosmet, azinphosmethyl and phosalone), two anticoagulant rodenticides, (chlorophacinone and diphacinone), and residues of previously applied organochlorines, particularly DDT and metabolites, was assessed. Exposure to PCBs and trace metals was also considered. Small mammal species preyed upon by Screech-owls were captured in orchards for residue analysis on a continual basis for persistent compounds or after insecticide and rodenticide applications. Beginning in the winter of 2000, 98 nest boxes were constructed and installed in woods inhabited by Screech-owls, adjacent to orchards. These boxes were then repeatedly inspected for pellets and prey remains. Estimated exposure of Screech-owls 0-60 hr post-application was 0.641 mg/kg for phosmet and azinphosmethyl and 0.401 mg/kg for phosalone. Exposure to phosmet at this level may warrant concern. The acute poison zinc phosphide is now the primary means of small mammal control in the study area and the possibility of exposure to anticoagulant rodenticides is diminishing. Observed DDE residues were most elevated in the short-tailed shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*) and ranged from <1.00 to 26.29 µg/g (wet wt) in whole-body pools. A Screech-owl egg found in a nest box between two orchards may have been thinned by as much as 19.8%, of concern because thinning maintained at 15.0 – 20.0% has been linked to population decline. Only background levels of PCBs and trace metals were detected. Finally, over 950 Screech-owl case files were also obtained from one Canadian and seven United States wildlife rehabilitation facilities and analyzed for evidence that pesticide exposure was an underlying or contributing cause of admissions.



Make Plans Now to Attend the 2006 North American Ornithological Conference!

The 2006 NAOC will meet in Veracruz, Mexico, October 3-7, 2006, in what promises to be an outstanding meeting of eight societies. This fourth such conference is being jointly organized by the American Ornithologists' Union, Association of Field Ornithologists, CIPAMEX, Cooper Ornithological Society, Raptor Research Foundation, Society of Canadian Ornithologists, Waterbird Society and Wilson Ornithological Society.

The theme is "Wings Without Borders" and the meeting will feature outstanding plenary speakers, oral and poster sessions and symposia, and will serve as the annual meeting for several societies. Special emphasis will be placed on involving colleagues from Mexico and other parts of Latin America. Along with the scientific program, several workshops and field trips will be offered, including the opportunity to view the fall migration of more than 5 million raptors! There are over 540 bird species in central Veracruz alone.

The call for papers will be announced shortly. Anybody who is attending is invited to submit an abstract for consideration in symposia, submitted papers or poster paper sessions. The deadline for abstract submission is 3 April 2006. This also coincides with the deadline for early registration (it is necessary to register before submitting an abstract – this can all be done online). Further details will be mailed shortly to all SCO members and will also be available on the conference web site:

WWW.NAOC2006.ORG



**Society of Canadian Ornithologists/
Société des Ornithologistes du Canada**

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**Society of Canadian Ornithologists/
Société des Ornithologistes du Canada**

Standing Committees and Work Groups

See Page 24 for contact information for those with # beside name.

Doris Huestis Speirs Award Committee (annual award for excellence in Canadian Ornithology):
Gilles Seutin, chair, Email: gilles.seutin@pc.gc.ca

Research Awards Committee (mandate: annual selection of research candidates, fall call for applications, selection and announcement by April of following year, members appointed and rotated) Four awards: James L. Baillie IKS, Taverner (2 awards) 0.5K\$. Fred Cooke Travel Award. Bob Clark, chair #.

Meetings Committee: Charles Francis #, Sue Hannon #

Picoides Committee: Rob Warnock (chair) #, Ken Otter #, Jean-Pierre Savard #, Tony Diamond, University of NB, ACWERN, PO Box 45111, Fredericton, NB E3B 6C2; Voice: 506-453-4926; Email: diamond@unb.ca

Journal Committee: Charles Francis, chair, #, Jean-Pierre Savard, Erica Nol

Editors of ACE-ECO: Tom Nudds and Marc-André Villard #

Finance and Investment Committee: Pierre Lamothe #

Bird Studies Canada Representatives: Richard Elliot, Email: richard.elliott@ec.gc.ca, Jon McCracken, James Duncan

Ornithological Council Representatives Lesley Evans Ogden, Email: lesleyje@interchange.ubc.ca, Liana Zanette Email: liazanette@uwo.ca

North American Banding Council Representative Brenda Dale, Voice: 780-951-8686; Fax: 780-495-2615; Email: brenda.dale@ec.gc.ca

Findings on the SCO/SOC website

WEBSITE: www.sco-soc.ca/index.html

Membership Application form

Notes about Annual Meetings

SCO/SOC Award information

Officers of SCO/SOC

Picoides Submission Guidelines

For Jobs and to post job openings see our link to the Ornithological Newsletter:

www.ornith.comell.edu/OSNA/ornjobs.htm