PICOIDES

Bulletin of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists **Picoides, July 2007**
Bulletin de la Société des Ornithologistes du Canada **Volume 20, Number 2**

Piping Plover pair at nest on Miscou Island, Northeast New Brunswick. Photo by Bob Belliveau-Ferrin Lemieux

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Adult Mourning Dove on its nest with a nestling tucked underneath. Photo by Marie-Anne Hudson.

Editor's Message

Welcome to the second issue of Picoides of 2007! I trust everyone's year is going well so far.

Please find numerous reports ranging from Student award winners, Avian Science and Conservation Centre and the finalized details of the 2007 SCO-SOC conference at Opinicon. Unfortunately, I have a prearranged commitment that weekend, so I will have to miss it. Have a great meeting! Also check out the other ornithological articles and notices in this issue.

I hope you have had opportunity for some fun birding. I had 2 excellent opportunities in the last while. First was on International Migratory Bird Day on May 13. I went to the Wings over Wascana Nature Festival in Wascana Park in Regina. It was sunny and very windy (no bird banding with mistnets demonstrations). Thirty-two species were seen and or heard by me include Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Double-crested Cormorant, Brown-headed Cowbird, White-crowned Sparrow, Blue-winged Teal and the locally famous Canada Goose.

On June 1 to 3, 2007, I went to the Nature Saskatchewan Spring Meet in Moose Jaw with field trips to Chaplin and Reed Lakes. The weather was absolutely wonderful. Sunny, wind 0 to 10 km/h and high about 25 C. Chaplin lake is a salt lake just by Trans Canada highway (1 hour west of Moose Jaw) where sodium sulphate deposits are extracted and brine shrimp are harvested. Chaplin Lake is also a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site and home to a top-notch nature centre. An unique partnership exists between the nature centre and the mine in the area of bird conservation. Reed Lake is a nearby freshwater marsh and lake and we saw a Merlin carry a plover and feast on it. Unfortunately most of the head of the plover was missing. I would like to know if this observation is unusual. On the last day, I participated in an early morning bird walk in Wakamow Valley in the heart of Moose Jaw near the conference site. Weather was great that morning and the Wakamow Valley is a wonderful place to go birding. I saw or heard 63 bird species that weekend. Notable species include Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, Belted Kingfisher, Black-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Kingbird, Sanderling, Piping Plover, Black bellied Plover, Red Knot, Black-necked Stilt, Whited-rumped Sandpiper and Baird Sandpiper.

Please take note of photo submission guidelines on page 6. On a final note, I need all members to continue to submit material and I welcome your feedback to improve *Picoides*. After all, it is your publication. I look forward to hearing from you. Have a safe, productive and fun summer!

Cheers,

Rob Warnock
Editor of Picoides

Baltimore Oriole Photo by Jean-Sebastien Guenette

PLEASE NOTE NEW PICOIDES DEADLINES! Deadlines are now February 15, May 15 and October 15.

Update

26th SCO/SOC Annual Meeting
Lake Opinicon, Ontario
27-29 September 2007

Important: The conference website is now online at http://www.sco-soc.ca/SCO2007/index.html. The site will be updated regularly. It contains information on all aspects of the conference, including online registration. **Abstract and registration deadline is 6 August 2007.**

The 26th SCO/SOC annual meeting will be hosted by Queen's University at their Biological Station and the nearby Opinicon Resort Hotel on Lake Opinicon, Ontario from 27-29 September 2007. Lake Opinicon is along the historic Rideau Canal, near the communities of Chaffey's Locks and Elgin, Ontario - approximately 50 km north of Kingston and 120 km southwest of Ottawa.

CALL FOR PAPERS

We invite participants to submit an abstract for an oral or poster presentation on any topic related to the scientific study of birds. The deadline for receipt of abstracts is **6 August 2007**. Oral presentations will be 15 minutes long, including questions. Posters must be no more than 122 cm X 122 cm.

Abstracts should be submitted as e-mail attachments to greg.robertson@ec.gc.ca. For those wishing to mail abstracts, please send them to Greg Robertson, Canadian Wildlife Service, 6 Bruce Street, Mount Pearl, NL, A1N 4T3. Make sure that they are posted in advance of the deadline, as abstracts received after 6 August 2007 may not be considered.

Please provide the following information, in the order listed, when preparing abstracts.

1. Title of presentation.
2. Name(s) and affiliation(s) of all authors.
3. The body of the abstract, no more than 300 words.
4. Full name, address and contact information (tel, fax, e-mail) of corresponding author.
5. Type of presentation: ORAL or POSTER.
6. If your oral presentation falls within the remit of one of the two symposia (see web page for more information), please indicate in which one you would like to participate: BOREAL BIRDS or CAVITY NESTERS. Please note there is limited availability for both, so some applicable presentations may be allocated to general contributions.
7. Format for oral presentations; POWERPOINT, SLIDES, OVERHEAD.
8. Whether a STUDENT presentation to be considered for a student presentation award.
9. Any special instructions

CONTACTS

Local Host – Joe Nocera (nocerajj@biology.queensu.ca)
Meetings Committee – Sue Hannon (sue.hannon@ualberta.ca); Charles Francis (charles.francis@ec.gc.ca)
Sci. Committee - Joe Nocera; Andrea Pomeroy (apomeroy@sfu.ca); Greg Robertson (greg.robertson@ec.gc.ca)

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM OUTLINE

Thursday, 27 Sept. - Arrival and evening icebreaker.

Friday, 28 Sept.
- Opening Keynote Presentation by Raleigh J. Robertson
- Special Session: "Cavity Nesters: Challenges and Conservation"
- Contributed Oral Presentations
- Lunch
- Contributed Oral Presentations
- Poster Session and BBQ supper

Saturday, 29 Sept.
- Special Memorial Session: "Management and Monitoring of Boreal Birds"
- Contributed Oral Presentations
- Lunch
- Contributed Oral Presentation
- Banquet

TRAVEL

Close proximity to Ottawa and Kingston will facilitate travel. The largest regional airports are in Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal. There are smaller airports in Kingston and Smith's Falls, which require a connecting flight. Via Rail operates a busy train station in Kingston, with easy access to and from Montreal and Toronto. For train information, visit the Via Rail website at www.viarail.ca.

For those who wish to rent a car at their disembarkation point, there is ample parking at both conference venues. In addition, a shuttle service will be provided for conference attendees from the Ottawa airport and the Kingston train station to the conference locale.

On 27 September, a shuttle van will be departing from:
- Ottawa airport at: 0700, 1100, 1500, and 1900.
- Kingston rail station at: 0930, 1245, 1500, 1845, and 2115.

Driving Directions
- From Toronto: Take 401 E. At Kingston, take exit 617 (Division St.). Turn left onto Division St. Division becomes CR-10 / Perth Rd. Continue approximately 40 km, then follow conference signs.
- From Montreal: Take 20 O, becoming 401 W in Ont. to exit 645 in Gananoque. Turn right onto Rt. 32 (Stone St. N.). Continue approximately 20 km, and turn right to Rt. 15. Along Rt. 15, near Elgin, follow signs to conference.
- From Ottawa: Take 417 W. Take exit 145 (Toronto / Carleton Place) and follow provincial Rt. 7. Turn left onto provincial Rt. 15 (CR-29). Stay on Rt. 15 through Smith's Falls and continue towards Portland and Elgin. Along Rt. 15, near Elgin, then follow signs to conference.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Except for those arranging otherwise, attendees will stay at the Biological Station or the Opinicon Resort. We have reserved all rooms and cabins at both (so there is no need to make reservations at either). Three meals per day, plus several coffee breaks, will be served. On the registration form (see website), attendees will be asked: 1) at which venue they would like to stay, 2) if they will be staying elsewhere, 3) if they prefer a single/double room or cabin, and 4) roommate preferences for double rooms/cabins.

Note to students: Students will have priority booking access to the Biological Station cabins. These accommodations, although more spartan, are considerably less expensive than the suites at the Resort.

2007 SCO/SOC Student Award Winners Announced

By Bob Clark, Research Awards Committee Chair :

The 2007 SCO student award winners have been confirmed and have accepted their awards. The winners and their theses are as follows:

Taverner Awards (2)

- Justin Rasmussen, University of Manitoba. Limits of grasp-ejection in hosts of the parasitic Brown-headed Cowbird: implications for the evolutionary equilibrium and evolutionary lag hypotheses**.**

- Megan Sellick, University of Guelph. Geographic variation of stable-strontium isotopes ($\delta^{87}Sr$) in avian tissues across North America: applications for tracking long-distance movements of passerines.

James Baillie Award (1)

- Heather Major, Simon Fraser University. Recovery of nocturnal burrow-nesting seabirds following eradication of introduced predators in British Columbia.

Fred Cooke Award (1)

- Nicole Barker, University of Windsor. Effective communication in human-impacted tropical forests: Song transmission and the singing behaviour of Rufous-and-white Wrens (*Thryothorus rufalbus*).

Congratulations to the award winners! We look forward to future reports on their research.

Attention Photographers- Submission Guidelines!

To assist the Picoides editor with managing photo submissions, please do following

- Use tiff or jpeg file format
- Minimize file size while maintaining photo quality. This helps keep overall file size down and speed up downloads
- Use descriptive file names. Generic file names from photo software are not very helpful.
- Supply captions for all photos. Good captions include common names of species, names of people, locations, activities, behaviours and dates and very importantly photo credit.

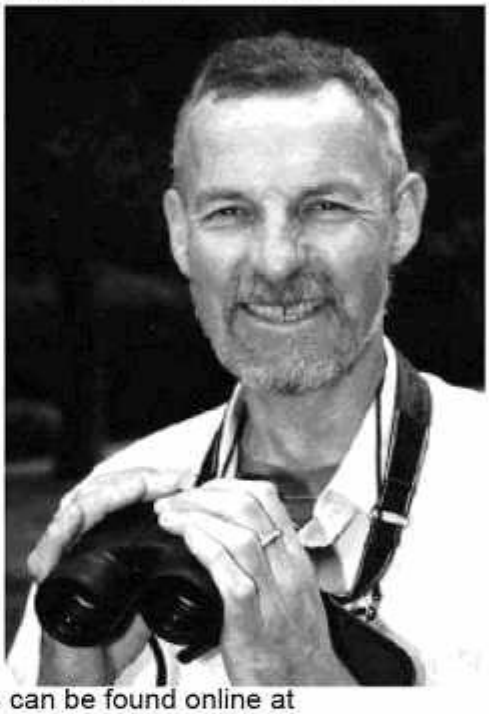
Your submissions are greatly appreciated and always welcome.

Rob Warnock
Editor of Picoides

Yellow-throated Euphonia.
Nicaragua, March, 2007.
Photo by Kevin Fraser, University of New Brunswick

The Jamie Smith Memorial Award for Mentoring

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS - 2007



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 honours 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.

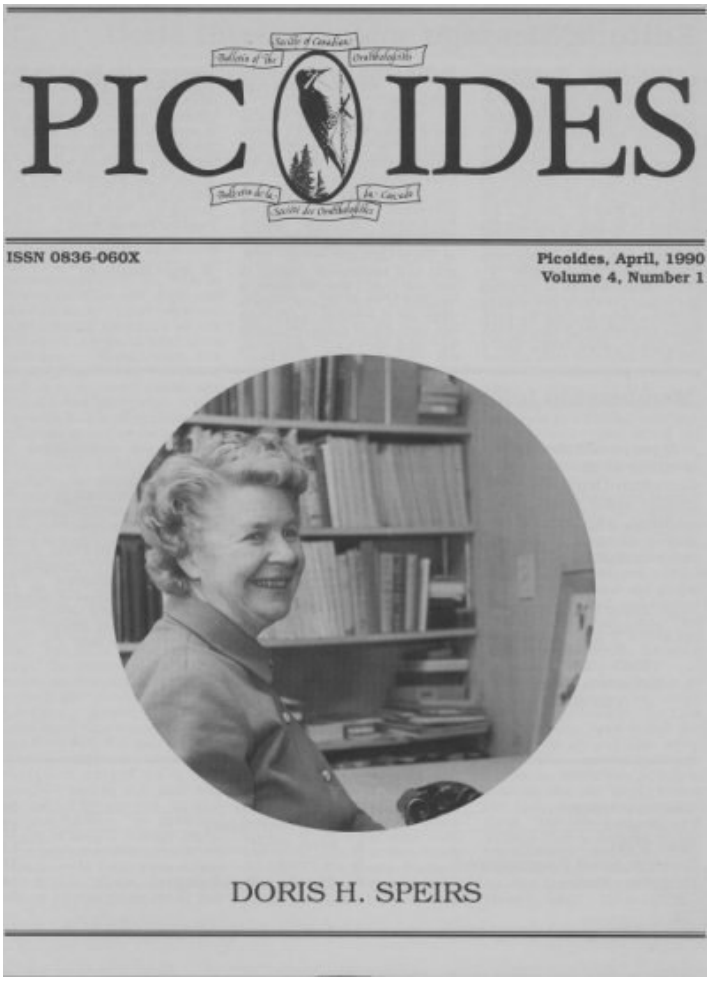
Nomination: Details concerning nominations can be found online at (http://www.sco-soc.ca/jamie_smith/mentoring_award.htm). A coverletter (max 1000 words) outlining why the nominee should receive the distinction should accompany the nomination, and should be supported by three nominators.

Deadline for submission of nominations is 1 August 2007.
Nominations should be sent to:

Ken Otter
Chair - Jamie Smith Memorial Mentoring Award Committee
Ecosystem Science & Management Program
University of Northern British Columbia
3333 University Way, Prince George, BC, V2N 4Z9
email: otterk@unbc.ca

Society of Canadian Ornithologists
Société des ornithologistes du Canada

Doris Huestis Speirs Award - Call for Nominations



The Doris Huestis Speirs Award is the most prestigious award given by the SCO-SOC. The award is presented annually to an individual who has made outstanding lifetime contributions in Canadian ornithology. Past awardees include professionals who work at museums, government agencies, private companies and universities, as well as amateur ornithologists and people who have contributed to ornithological infrastructure of Canada.

Doris Huestis Speirs was born on 27 October 1894 in Toronto, Ontario and passed away in Ajax, Ontario on 24 October 1989. Doris was highly prominent in art, literary, and ornithological circles. She founded the Margaret Morse Nice Ornithological Club, which was the only such group specifically for women, and she was also a founding member of the Pickering Naturalists' Club. In her lifetime, Doris made several prominent contributions to the ornithological literature on Evening Grosbeaks and the Lincoln's Sparrow (the latter with her husband, J. Murray Speirs).

The award consists of a plaque bearing the logo of the Society, as well as the name of the award, the recipient, year and purpose of the award. The award is generally presented at the Society's annual meeting.

To nominate a candidate for the Speirs award, preferably with supporting data, contact the Chair of the award committee:

Dr. David M. Bird
Avian Science and Conservation Centre
McGill University
21,111 Lakeshore Road
Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec Canada H9X 3V9
ph: 1-514-398-7760
fax: 1-514-398-7990
email: david.bird@mcgill.ca

Photo (right) of an American Woodcock chick - found while doing an owl nest box check in Nova Scotia - no owls were found, but this does represent confirmed breeding for the woodcock in the second Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas. Photo by Randy Lauff.

Duet Behaviour of Rufous-and-white Wrens

By Stephanie M. Topp, Fred Cooke Award Recipient

Temporal and seasonal patterns of song use in temperate species have been well documented and have contributed to our understanding of the dual functions of bird song in mate choice and territory defense (Searcy & Andersson 1986). Signals that are less prevalent, such as female song (Langmore 1998) or vocal duetting – the synchronization of male and female songs in a highly coordinated acoustic event (Farabaugh 1982) - are understudied. More than 200 species from different taxonomic groups are known to duet (Farabaugh 1982), yet the function of duets and the relationship between duetting and breeding behaviour is still controversial.

Photo1: Rufous-and-white Wren (*Thryothorus rufalbus*) (photo by: S. Topp)

During the summer of 2006, I received the Fred Cooke Award form the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and Bird Studies Canada, to explore the function of duetting in a Neotropical songbird, the Rufous-and-white Wren (*Thryothorus rufalbus*). Specifically, I investigated the singing strategies of Rufous-and-White Wrens with respect to time of year and breeding stage using a series of naturally recorded dawn chorus vocalizations. To accomplish this we recorded a colour-marked population of birds (n = 17 pairs or 34 different individuals) in the humid forests of Parque Nacional Santa Rosa, Costa Rica, between March and July; a time period that encompasses multiple breeding stages (pre-breeding to fledging). We conducted 115 focal recording sessions (0500 to 0700 hours), collecting over 201 hours of recordings from the 17 pairs, with each pair being recorded for an average of 11.88 ± 6.79 hours. Behavioural observations and nest checks were carried out between 0700 to 1100 hours following recording sessions to ensure that the accurate breeding stage and status of each of the territory holders was known. We analyzed recordings using SYRINX-PC sound analysis software (J. Burt, Seattle, Washington), calculating duet and solo rates and proportions for pairs and individuals to describe time of year and breeding stage patterns in the singing behaviour of Rufous-and-white Wrens.

Does duet and singing behaviour vary with time of year? Yes, duetting and singing behaviour varied substantially with time of year. Duet rates were highest (Fig 1a) and proportionally more songs were sung as duets than as solos (Fig 1b) early in the year. At this time, female song contributed most to rufous-and-white wren vocalizations (e.g. in March females sung 45.0 ± 0.09 % of vocalizations). Later in the year, duets and female song contribute very little to Rufous-and-White Wren vocalization behaviour (e.g. in July females sung only 3.6 ± 0.8 % of vocalizations).

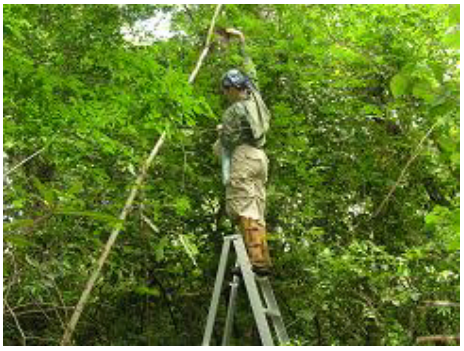


Photo 2: S. Topp collecting nestlings for banding (Photo by D. Mennill)

Does duet and singing behaviour vary with breeding stage? Yes, duetting and singing behaviour varied significantly between the pre-breeding and breeding season. Duet rates were significantly higher (Fig 2a) and proportionally more songs were sung as duets than solos in the pre-breeding season (Fig 2b). Females contributed most to Rufous-and-white Wren vocalizations in this season (e.g. females sung 22.2 ± 2.0 % of vocalizations). During the breeding season duets and female song contribute very little to Rufous-and-White Wren vocalization behaviour (e.g. females sung only 4.0 ± 0.7 % of vocalizations).

Figure 1

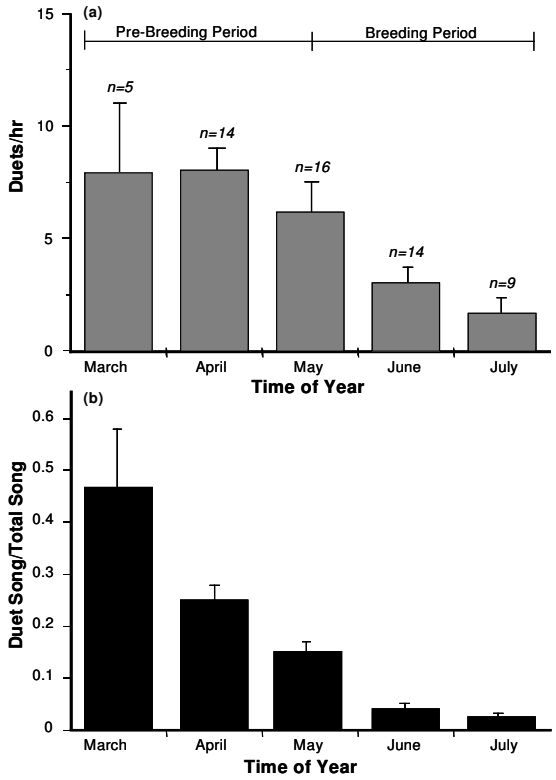


Figure 2

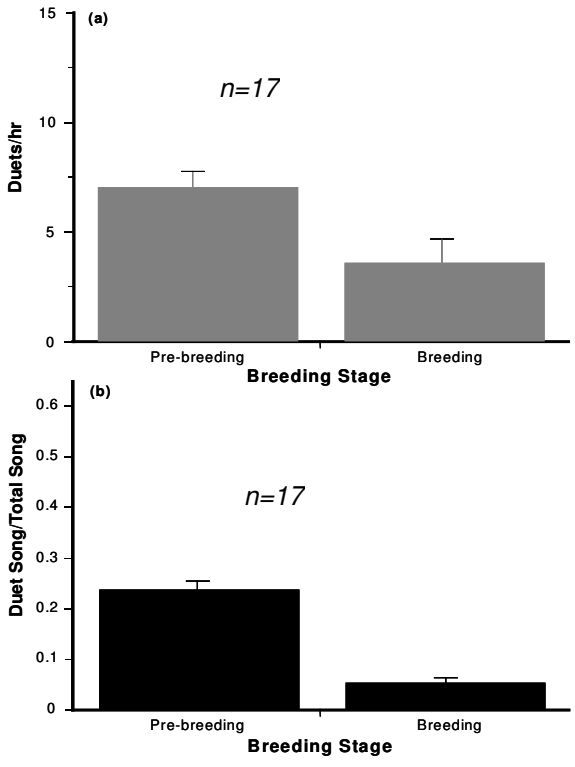


Figure 1. Time of year variation in duet behaviour of Rufous-and-white Wrens (a) dawn chorus duet rate, (b) proportion of songs sung as duets (per hour) during the dawn chorus.

Figure 2. Breeding stage variation in duet behaviour of Rufous-and-white Wrens (a) dawn chorus duet rate, (b) proportion of songs sung as duets (per hour) during the dawn chorus.

Overall, these analyses provide insight into the various functions of duets and provide a context for experimentally testing duetting hypotheses. With respect to Rufous-and-white Wrens, these analyses suggest that duets are multifunctional signals whose function varies depending on the season and context of use, with special importance prior to breeding.

We are indebted to Roger Blanco and Maria Marta at Area de Conservacion Guanacaste, Parque Nacional Santa Rosa for logistical and research support, and the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and Bird Studies Canada for their support through the Fred Cooke Award, NSERC, and University of Windsor for financial support of the project. We are grateful to David Bradley, Jason Mouland, and Cheryl Calaustro for their invaluable help in the field.

Literature cited:

Farabaugh, S. M. 1982. The ecological and social significance of duetting. In: Kroodsma, D. E., Miller, E. H. (eds) Acoustic communication in birds, vol 2. Academic, New York, pp 85-124.

Langmore, N. E. 1998. Functions of duet and solo songs of female birds. Trends in Ecology & Evolution 7:136-140.

Searcy, W. A. & Andersson, M. 1986. Sexual selection and the evolution of song. Annual Review of Ecology Systematics 17, 507-533.

A Piping Plover Lover's Journal

By Bob Belliveau-Ferrin Lemieux

JULY, DAY 21: I was awakened by the Nor'easter pounding the seaward side of my motor home. It was resting precariously on the edge of Lighthouse Point, on Miscou Island. Miscou is the most northerly point of land in Northeast New Brunswick.

My eyes tried to adjust to the pitch black darkness of the night. Only the occasional passing beam of light from the century-old beacon above me allowed me to see my hand before my face. My eyes searched for the illuminated face of the silent timepiece on the countertop. Finally, the bluish firefly of the beacon rested long enough for me to recognize the 2:00 on the digital face.

I stumbled from my bed, bracing myself against the wall to counteract the rocking-and-rolling motion of my home-away-from-home. I called out to my loyal travelling companion Jack to see if he was safe. My right foot crashed into the wooden leg of my office chair, which had shifted during the tempest. Not only was the night black, but the air had also now turned blue, matching the color of my toes.

Finally the dim glow of the flickering night light outlined my friend sleeping on the front dash. He had pushed his nose against the screen-covered open window on the leeward side of the vehicle.

In my time of need Jack had ditched me. I stared at my friend who, with one eye opened, was admiring my agility to navigate the narrow passageway in this unexpected July storm. After my mild scolding he simply replaced his head on his pillow, closed his eye and covered his nose with his paw.

When Jack and I began our travelling adventures two years earlier, we had come to an understanding: he agreed to remain in the truck or motor home while I explored sites and photographic opportunities. I, on the other hand, was obliged to provide an ample supply of fresh water, a few tasty treats, his chewy-squeaky rabbit, and open windows so he could sniff the fresh air of nature while lying upon his tattered "blankey".

However, whenever we found ourselves on an extended field trip in the "outback," Jack had a way of letting me know it was time to return to civilization. Whenever Jack refused to climb into the truck bed and sleep with me, I knew it was time to hit the nearest shower in a friendly RV park.

However, on this occasion, my two-year-old Chihuahua had made his point; 21 days was far too long to be away from a hot shower, even in the "expansive" confines of our motor home.

Apparently, my evening dips in the frigid waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence had failed me. I had simply lost track of time. I had spent the past three weeks observing, through the 1,000mm lens of my camera, two dedicated Piping Plovers incubate their eggs, oversee their hatch and nurture their offspring as they foraged for the first time in a cruel and sometimes inhospitable world. I had been captivated by this miracle of life.

My commitment and dedication to this event had provided me with critical awareness and a valuable experience of the perils faced by many species in the wild. I realized for the first time how precarious and fragile the balance between survival and death is in the migratory shorebird community.

The Piping Plover is a small, stocky shorebird that weighs in at about 43-63g and has a body length of approximately 17-18 cm. Its primary nesting sites are located within the boundaries of Atlantic Canada. Miscou Island and the entire Acadian Peninsula region in Northern New Brunswick are two of the primary nesting and chick raising areas in North America.

The Piping Plover occupy these critical areas between May and August; unfortunately, they are not alone. Tourists, dogs, uncontrolled 4 x 4 and off-road vehicle traffic, natural predators and freak storms all contribute to the growing fight for survival of these endangered birds.

In 1985 and again in 2001, the Piping Plover (sub-species melodus) was designated Endangered. Mammals, plants and birds considered Endangered or on the "Species at Risk" list are effectively on the verge of extinction if immediate efforts are not implemented to reverse the trend.

Fortunately for the Piping Plover, a plan to be implemented beginning this year (2007) may be at hand to help with their rejuvenation. Diane Amirault-Langlais, Acting Head of Population Assessment at the Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada, has written a masterful report called ***Recovery Strategy for Piping Plovers in Canada***. The recovery strategy is an appeal to you and me as well as provincial, federal and local authorities to embark on a worthwhile plan to save these threatened migratory shorebirds.

The International Census (Ferland and Haig 2002) estimated that the global breeding population of Piping Plovers was 5,945 in 2001. The Atlantic Canada population in 2001 was a meagre 481 adults or 33% of the total Canadian nesting population (1,454) and 8% of the North American population (Amirault 2005). However, by 2005 that number had declined to an estimated 444 individuals, including 213 breeding pairs.

In many situations, Piping Plovers have created their own problems; they sometimes nest below the high tide line where they subject themselves to "wash-outs" as a result of freak storms. Their primary camouflage against predation – their color and the speckled color of their eggs – work so well at hiding their nests that driftwood collectors, 4 x 4's and the unleashed dogs of beach walkers frequently destroy their nests.

Piping Plover hatchling and 3 eggs, Miscou Island, New Brunswick. Photo by Bob Belliveau-Ferrin Lemieux

Piping Plover chicks are flightless for the first 25 days and are almost invisible to the human eye. The tiny downy creatures forage in wrack (stacked seaweed along the shore), search for insects on the warm sand and between the pebbles, and peck for invertebrates along the tide-washed sand. Juvenile survival rates range from 34% (southern Gulf of St. Lawrence) to 53% (southern Nova Scotia), and a dismal 48% in Massachusetts.

The question is, how can the human race live in unison with nature's creatures, and specifically the Piping Plover?

- My first recommendation is for naturalists and conservationists across Atlantic Canada to obtain a copy of "Recovery Strategy for Piping Plovers in Canada" (November 2006, Environment Canada, author Diane Amirault-Langlais, P.O. Box 6227, Sackville, N.B. E4L 1G6; (506) 649-6864; diane.amirault@ec.gc.ca). Knowledge is power, and the Amirault report is filled with ammunition.

- Step two is the strict enforcement of existing laws and regulations regarding the use of beaches and habitats where Species at Risk or migratory shorebirds inhabit. Article 1 of the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994, has specific guidelines for enforcement but not the adequate funding reserves to implement them effectively.

- Step three, therefore, requires that the federal government and our elected public servants provide the funding for the effective enforcement of these laws and regulations. Parliament should either provide the funds to all research projects and enforcement agencies or it should ***STOP*** making a mockery of the Species at Risk Act (SARA) and the Migratory Shorebird Convention (MSC) and withdraw from all further participation in both.

- Step four is the implementation of extensive educational training and awareness programs intended for committed volunteers who are willing to become an extension of the enforcement and research arms of the governing bodies. A well trained and educated team of government-sponsored volunteers can, in a non-threatening way (to themselves and the birds), provide educational programs, distribute educational materials to beach enthusiasts, guarantee on-site protection of vulnerable nesting sites and chicks, and when necessary report violators.

- Step five must be the aggressive prosecution of SARA and MSC violators by the appropriate enforcement agencies. The establishment of special units within each branch of government, working in unison with one another, will work if they are appropriately staffed and funded. Drastic penalties will bring a halt to the majority of the violations presently occurring.

- Step six is the expansion of the guardian program and landowner involvement programs to insure that adequate information is provided to researchers who, with the help of property owners and the trained guardians, can expand the number of protected areas where nesting birds find a home.

- Step seven requires that funding support from these governmental agencies is a must to insure total cooperation between Ottawa and each province and community.

- Step eight must involve the provincial departments of education and all educational establishments within each province (kindergarten through college) who will mandate the use of a comprehensive curriculum in "earth management sciences."

- Step nine would immediately identify all SARA and MSC habitats, make them off limits for an indefinite period of time, and restrict all access to these areas until the endangered inhabitants have returned to a satisfactory level.

- Step ten is the involvement of corporate Canada in a significant way. Identified polluters would be mandated to stop and clean up their pollution as well as significant financial penalties for their lack of stewardship. Non-polluters would be encouraged to designate a significant percentage of their annual budget for environmental programs in exchange for tax abatements.

The Acadian Peninsula is one of the most significant nesting, re-fuelling and residence areas in North America for migratory, threatened and endangered migratory bird species.

I believe there are immediate options for the region: (1) Immediately designate the region a sanctuary under SARA and MSC; (2) once sanctuary status has been implemented, the area should be developed as a National Park; and (3) once these steps are in place, a concerted effort must be made to develop a controlled eco-tourism industry for the region. This is the pearl in the oyster for the future of this part of New Brunswick. A prosperous eco-tourism industry is the only answer for this declining area.

Piping Plover nestling at Miscou Island, Northeast New Brunswick. Photo by Bob Belliveau-Ferrin Lemieux

I caution my sceptics. Business is business, and it is only a matter of time before real estate developers descend upon the area with grandiose plans to buy up the dirt cheap land, convert it into seasonal condos, golf courses, and beachfront hideaways. The affluent part-time residents will have little consideration for the region's culture, its history or the natural beauty that is critical to so many wildlife species.

The Acadian Peninsula National Wildlife Sanctuary or The Acadian Peninsula National Park has a nice ring to it.

I believe that working together can bring about a rejuvenation of our endangered birds and threatened habitats, and an economic boom to a depressed area and struggling province.

As for Jack and me…we'll continue to hang out on the beaches, in the marshes and in the woods where we belong. We'll continue to investigate and write about our travels and share them with you. We'll continue to exhibit our photographs and give lectures on what we see, and suggestions we feel need to be acted upon.

Banding gulls in North America – a dying craft?

Anthony J. Gaston and Sophia Colantonio
Envrionment Canada, National Wildlife Research Centre, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H3
Dept. of Biology, University of Ottawa, Ottawa K1N 6N5

Bird banding in North America was begun by private individuals in the early years of the twentieth century but was subsequently adopted in both the USA and Canada as a legitimate concern of government. Bird banding in the US is administered by the Bird Banding Laboratory of the U.S. Geological Survey's Biological Resources Division (formerly part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), which was established in 1920. Banding in Canada is administered by the Canadian Bird Banding Office, established in 1923 and currently part of Environment Canada. These two agencies jointly administer the North American bird-banding scheme and issue all the numbered metal bands used on birds in North America.

Gulls (Laridae) have been banded in North America since the earliest days of banding and were among the most-banded species groups in the early years of banding, perhaps because their colonies, on flat ground, allowed easy access to large numbers of young (Gaston et al. 2007). During the first half of the twentieth century only aluminium bands were distributed. However, over time, some drawbacks to the use of aluminium bands for certain species became apparent and harder bands were introduced, using either stainless steel or hard alloys (incoloy, monel). These bands wear much less easily than aluminium and consequently are less liable to drop off the banded bird before it dies (Paynter 1966, Ludwig 1967).

As part of a project to compare the results of banding gulls with hard and soft bands, we requested data from the Banding office of the Canadian Wildlife Service relating to numbers of gulls banded in North America since 1960 (species of the genera *Larus, Rissa* and *Xema*). In this note we draw attention to the fact that large scale banding of gulls has become a thing of the past in both Canada and the USA.

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We obtained information on both hard and soft bands used by banders on gulls in North America since 1950 from the Banding offices of the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Bird Banding Laboratory of the U.S. Geological Survey's Biological Resources Division. These data were broken down by decades (1960-1969, 1970-1979, etc.). In addition to calculating the numbers of aluminium and hard bands used, we also calculated the number of banders using each type, based on the permit numbers assigned to each banding.

Results

A total of 1,776,737 gulls of 18 species were banded in North America between 1960-2003 (Table 1). These numbers include 764 gulls classified as "hybrids" (mainly Western x Glaucous-winged Gulls) and 27035 "unidentified gulls", presumably chicks banded in mixed colonies, likely mostly Ring-billed and California gulls *L. delawarensis* and *L. californicus*).

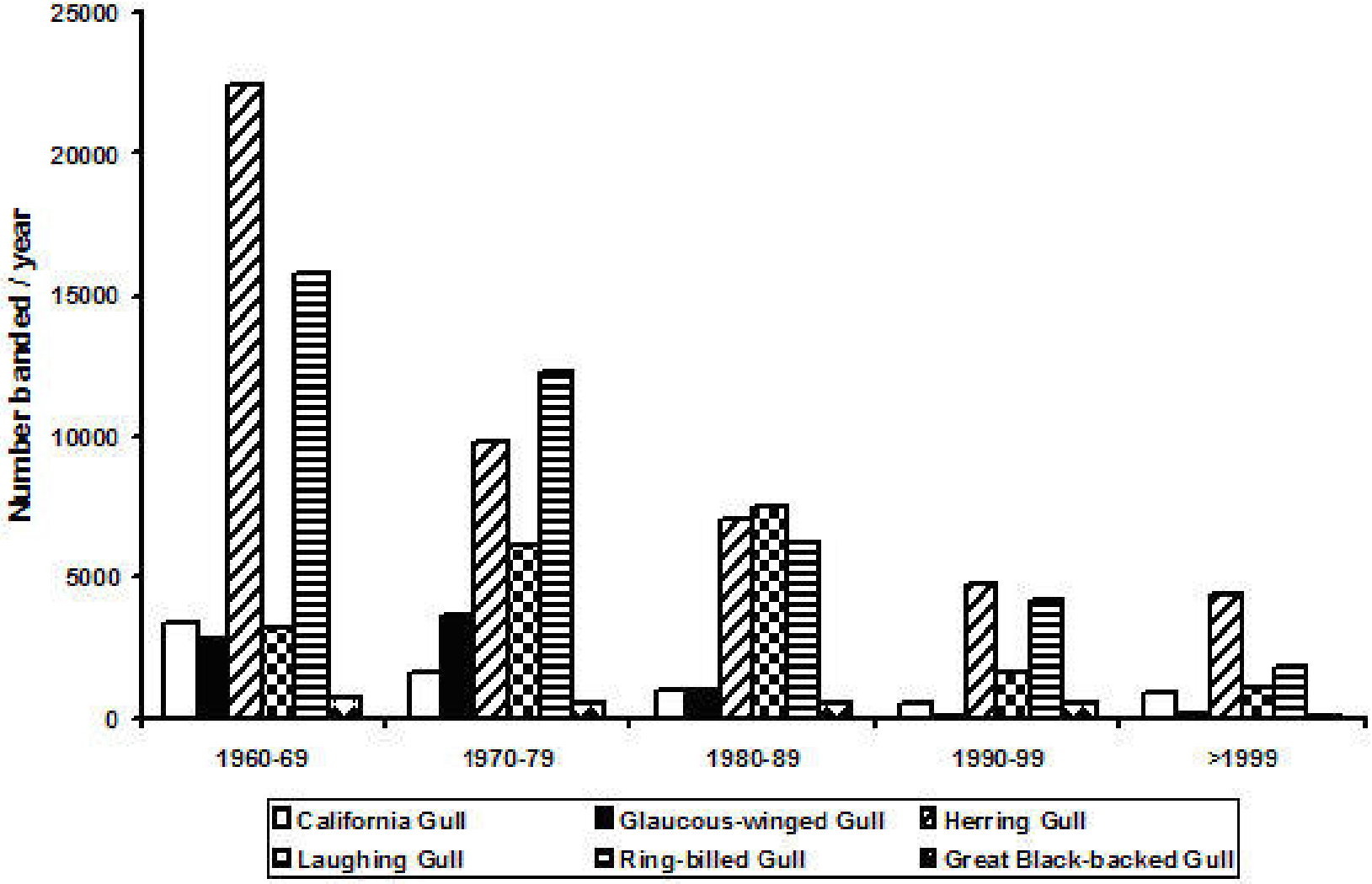
Banding of most species has declined steadily after the 1960s in both Canada and USA, the only major exception being Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla* for which banding peaked in the 1980s (Fig. 1), and the two kittiwake species *Rissa tridactyla* and *R. brevirostris*, for which banding peaked in the 1990s (Fig. 2). The trends in Canada and the USA have been similar, but the effect seems to have been more extreme in Canada, especially for Ring-billed Gulls, banded in the tens of thousands in the 1960s, but virtually unbanded post-1999 (Cf. Figs 1a, 1b).

Only 7.3% of the total were banded with hard bands, although the proportion of hard bands used rose from 1% in the 1960s to 41% after 1999, increasing rather abruptly in the 1980s (Fig. 3). Hard bands were applied to 12 species of gulls and represented >10% of banding for Glaucous *L. hyperboreus*, Iceland *L. glaucoides*, Sabine's *Xema sabini*, Thayer's *L. thayeri* and Western gulls. After 1979 this applied also to Herring and Ring-billed gulls (Table 1). Since 2000, more than 50% of Glaucous, Glaucous-winged, Sabine's, Thayer's and Western gulls have been banded with hard bands.

Species	1960-69		1970-79		1980-89		1990-99		>1999		All years		% hard	
	Alum.	Hard	Alum.	Hard	Alum.	Hard	Alum.	Hard	Alum.	Hard	Alum.	Hard	All years	Since 1980
Black-legged Kittiwake	976		3608	54	1007	1996	120	9703	3	4733	5714	16486	74.3	93.6
Bonaparte's Gull	52		38		49		16		45		200	0	0.0	0.0
California Gull	40022		20918		10808		4760		3744		80252	0	0.0	0.0
Franklin's Gull	13866		8206		87	3	754				22913	3	0.0	0.4
Glaucous Gull	137		171		68		81	187	1	111	458	298	39.4	66.5
Glaucous-winged Gull	54796		65972	835	10274		1814	172	189	401	133045	1408	1.0	4.5
Great Black-backed Gull	8064	929	8278	141	6437	86	6053	237	1029	774	29861	2167	6.8	7.5
Heerman's Gull	5		4		19709		10034		6		29758	0	0.0	0.0
Herring Gull	273705	8000	130053	1154	71096	7669	40787	12815	12119	6982	527760	36620	6.5	18.1
Hybrid gull			26		170		472		96		764	0	0.0	0.0
Iceland Gull	16				1	63		0		0	17	63	78.8	98.4
Laughing Gull	31582		61401	2	72658	1940	14627	1671	2710	1561	182978	5174	2.7	5.4
Little Gull			9								9	0	0.0	
Mew Gull	697		129		539		124	6	1		1490	6	0.4	0.9
Red-legged Kittiwake	4		73		34	3	7	1082		146	118	1231	91.3	96.8
Ring-billed Gull	282739		175699		82351	6067	36623	16235	6143	1723	583555	24025	4.0	16.1
Sabine's Gull	61		64		88	135		49		1	213	185	46.5	67.8
Thayer's Gull	14		4		1		39		8	19	66	19	22.4	28.4
Unidentified gull	2114		1219		2538	17247	3916			1	9787	17248	63.8	72.8
Western Gull	5804		24237	2647	4687	14757	2150	6436	115	2013	36993	25853	41.1	76.9
Totals	714654	8929	500109	4833	282602	49966	122377	48593	26209	18465	1645951	130786	7.4	21.3

Table 1. Total numbers of gulls banded in North America, by decade and the proportions that were banded with hard bands.

USA


25000
20000
15000
10000
5000
0
Number banded / year
1960-69
1970-79
1980-89
1990-99
>1999
California Gull
Glaucous-winged Gull
Herring Gull
Laughing Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Great Black-backed Gull

1b

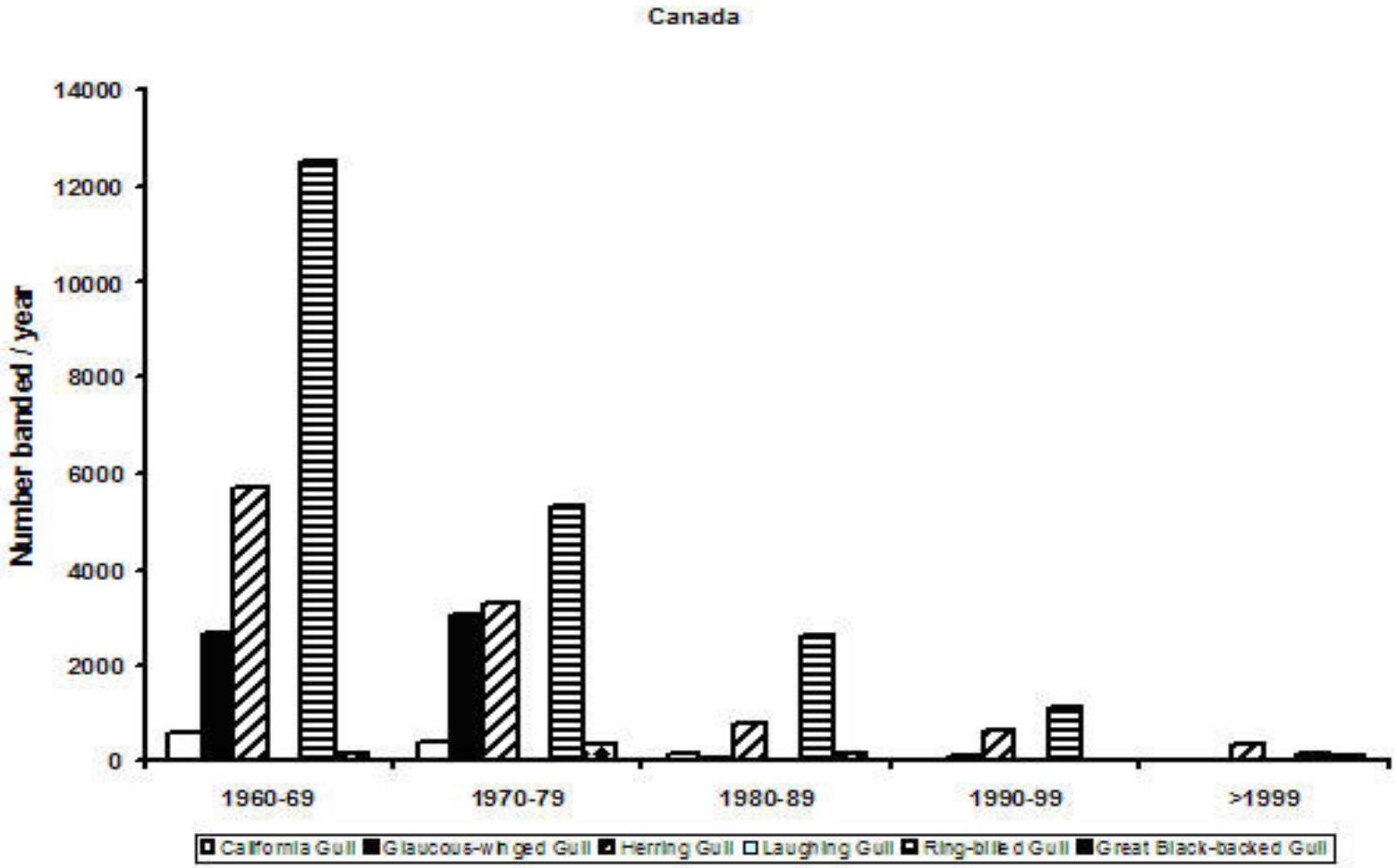


Figure 1. Numbers of gulls banded annually, by decade, from 1960-2005 in (a) USA and (b) Canada

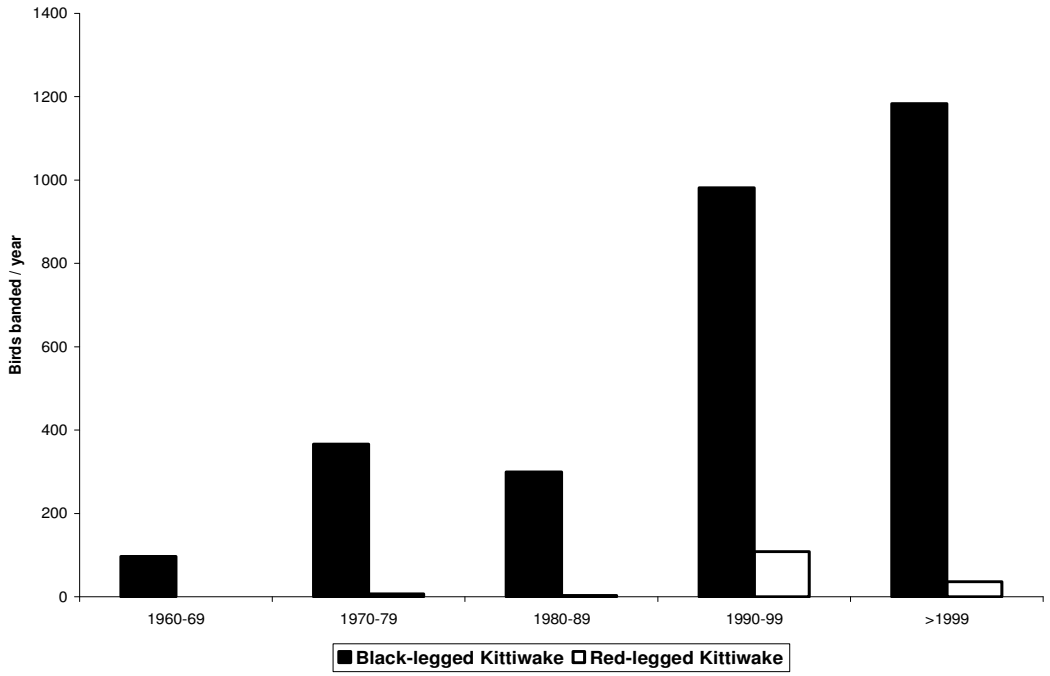


Figure 2. Numbers of kittiwakes (Rissa tridactyla, R. brevirostris) banded annually in North America, by decade, since 1960

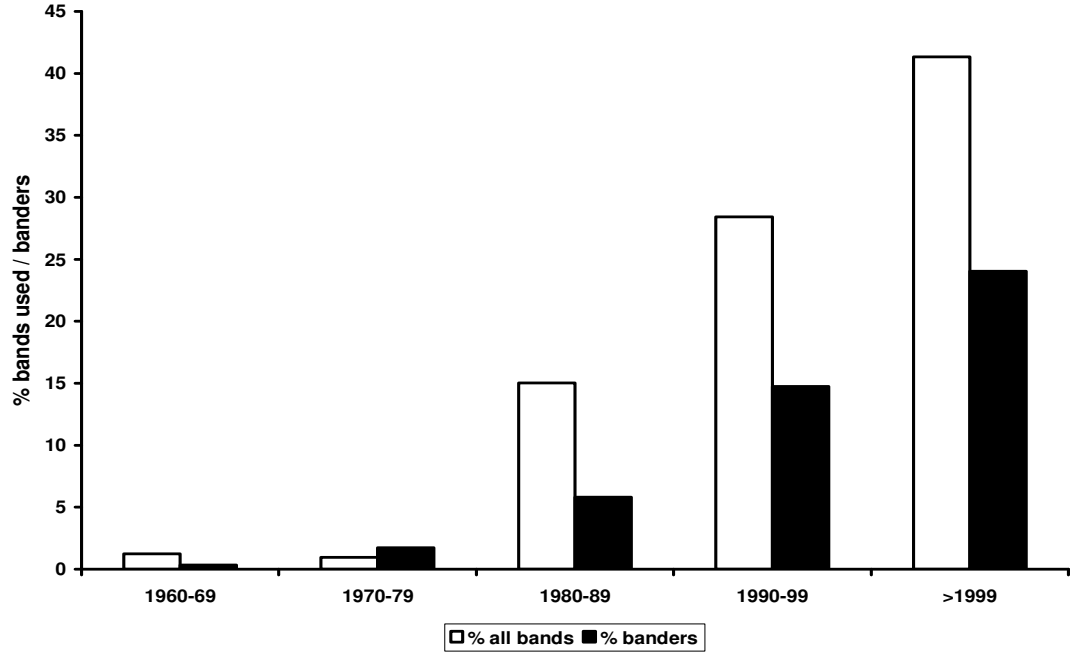


Figure 3. Proportion of hard bands used on gulls in North America and percent of banders using them, by decade, since 1960.

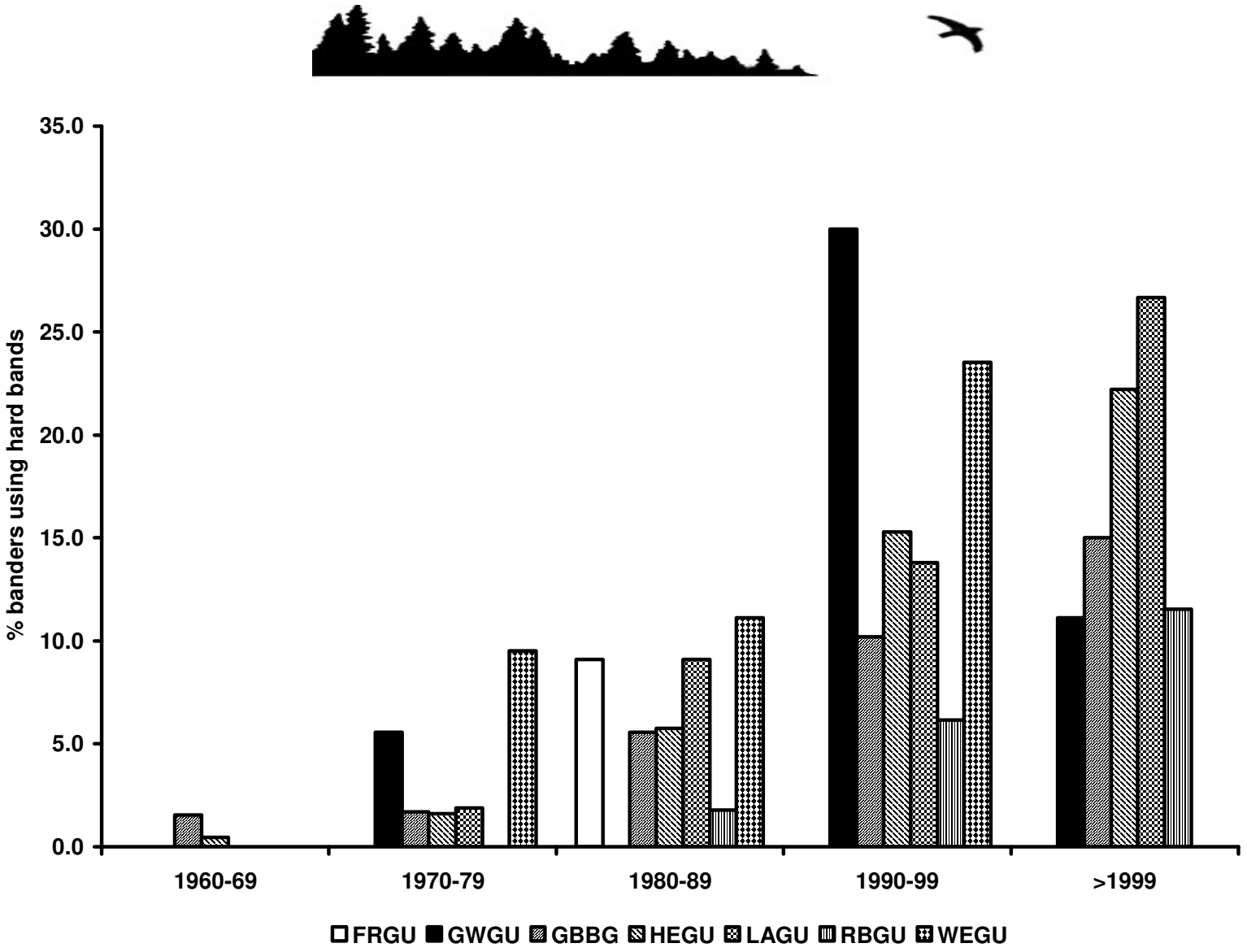


Figure 4. Percent of banders using hard bands on seven commonly banded species of gulls, by decade, since 1960.

The proportion of banders using hard bands increased from <1% in the 1960s to 24% after 1999. For commonly banded species (average >100/year) the proportion of banders using hard bands never exceeded 30% in any decade (Fig. 4), except for those banding Black-legged Kittiwakes, among whom eight out of nine banders used hard bands after 1999.

Discussion

There are many possible explanations for the decrease in numbers of gulls banded. First, for many species it was reasonable to suppose that most information on dispersal and migration had been obtained by the 1980s and that further banding would yield diminishing returns. In addition, evidence accumulated of the harmful effects of disturbance in colonies (Robert and Ralph 1975, Anderson and Keith 1980, Fetterolf 1983) and that, combined with greater awareness of animal care issues, may have led some banders to reduce their efforts. The realisation that aluminium bands frequently fell off before birds died caused some banders to switch to harder bands, but in the US others may have been dissuaded by cost because there hard bands had to be paid for by the bander. However, this effect was probably small as the trends were similar in Canada and the US. Canadian banders were not asked to pay for hard bands.

The trends in gull banding are counter to trends in almost all other bird species, where numbers banded have been either static or rising over the same period (CWS unpublished). The result of the decrease in gull banding over the past few decades is that gulls in North America have a lower proportion of the population banded than at any time over the past 50 years, so that no useful evaluation of changes in dispersal patterns, survival rates, or migration behaviour is possible after about the 1980s. Given ongoing climate change, this seems an unfortunate situation.

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Laughing Gulls. Photo by Alex Bond.

Ring-billed Gull. Photo by Frode Jacobsen

News from Avian Science and Conservation Centre, McGill University

ASCC Director David M. Bird getting ready to return a Peregrine Falcon chick to its nest after banding in 2005 – a success for the urban peregrine population

Associate Director of the ASCC Rodger D. Titman with a Surf Scoter off the coast of Labrador

Message from the Director:

Dear friends and bird-lovers:

Wind turbines (photo taken by Keith Bildstein) (above)

Over the last 10 years or so, I have given a talk entitled *Technology and Birds of Prey: A Double-Edged Sword* at various institutions throughout the world. Initially created to allow me to showcase all of the wonderful research done by graduate students affiliated with the Avian Science and Conservation Centre (ASCC), the presentation attempts to demonstrate the irony of humans developing new technology to combat old technology gone wrong or not working right. And I cannot think of a better example of this than a brand-new research study on wind energy the ASCC is undertaking in collaboration with the Quebec provincial government. Everyone wants wind energy farms to be successful, but they are not necessarily a panacea to our energy problems. Placed in the wrong locations, they can act as killing grounds for birds and bats. A recent wind energy farm located on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River may be a threat to both raptors migrating through the area, as well as to local nesting Bald Eagles. La Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune is very interested in engaging an ASCC graduate student supervised by me to determine whether any of these birds are flying into the turbines. One aspect of the study involves applying fairly new technology, i.e. satellite tracking devices placed on the eagles and their fledglings, to follow their behaviour. In a completely separate project on the west coast, the ASCC has successfully obtained funding from the Kenneth Molson Foundation to investigate the application of tiny airplanes known as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) to act as remote sensors of the contents of bird nests, as well as scaring away nuisance birds from valuable crops. We at the ASCC are extremely excited by these research projects and we will keep you posted on their development.

-- David M. Bird, Ph.D., Director

Congratulations to the Most Recent ASCC Fledglings!

Christina Donehower recently submitted her Ph.D. thesis, *An adaptive approach to managing gull predation at seabird restoration sites in Maine*, for evaluation. During the summers of 2003-2006, she studied the relationship between predatory gulls and their seabird prey on remote islands on the Maine coast. She showed that gulls consumed most (if not all) of the eider ducklings hatched at one study site and were voracious predators of tern eggs, chicks, and occasional adults at another site. Among the many exciting observations recorded during the study was the first-ever report of gulls attacking Glossy Ibis (a medium-sized wading bird) in flight, a tactic more commonly used by raptors!

In the summer of 2005, Sarah Fraser used radio telemetry to monitor endangered Eastern Loggerhead Shrikes released from the breeding program at the ASCC as part of the research for her M.Sc. project. In 2006, Sarah focused on determining the factors that had the greatest influence on shrike reproduction in captivity. She found that the amount of nesting time and the distance between paired birds were the best predictors of reproductive success. Sarah is now in the process of writing up her thesis and has started a job in Ottawa as a scientific writer for the Canadian Council on Animal Care. The captive breeding and release program at the Avian Centre had its most successful year yet in 2006, with 18 juveniles being released in Gatineau, Quebec. Sarah extends her gratitude to Ian Ritchie, Gérard Desjardins, Marie Bédard, the CWS, FFQ, BPQ, NSERC, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Environment Sterne, and Le club des ornithologues de l'Outaouais.

Staff and students are sad but proud to have lost a friend, colleague and co-founder of the McGill Bird Observatory (MBO) to the west. Marcel Gahbauer has flown the coop and is now working as a wildlife biologist out of Calgary, while also putting the finishing touches on his PhD thesis on the urban Peregrine Falcon population in the east. He means a great deal to everyone here, and will be missed in the Birdcage (graduate student office), as well as up at MBO. If he pours even half the energy and knowledge into his new venture that he did at MBO, we know he'll go far.

Current Members of the ASCC Flock

McGill's "Golf Girl" All for the Birds

This year was spent collecting breeding bird evidence in 12 green spaces around the Montreal area (6 golf courses, 6 parks and/or nature reserves) to determine what effect large and local landscape characteristics would have on breeding bird communities. Marie-Anne Hudson also deployed a handful of motion-sensing cameras to identify the main nest predators present on these sites. She recently put together a presentation about nest predation for the North American Ornithological Conference held in sunny Mexico in October. Marie-Anne is now in the midst of writing up her Ph.D. on breeding birds on Montreal-area golf courses and green spaces and hopes to finish up in the next year. Congratulations are going to her for becoming the new Director of the McGill Bird Observatory and being welcomed onto the Board of Directors of Bird Protection Quebec.

Some results from Marie-Anne's nest monitoring, motion-sensing camera study: the American Crow (left) ate the two eggs in the American Robin's nest and then destroyed the nest. The Eastern Chipmunk (right) visited this robin's nest four times before any eggs were even laid. Identified nest predators included the Eastern Chipmunk, Red Squirrel, Blue Jay, Common Grackle and American Crow.

They Take "Duck!" Literally and Seriously

Shawn conducting behavioral observations of mergansers

Fieldwork for Shawn Craik's 5-year investigation into the patterns of habitat selection by breeding and post-breeding Red-breasted Mergansers in the Gulf of St. Lawrence was completed during the summer of 2006. At Kouchibouguac National Park, New Brunswick, he conducted a nest-site selection study (2005-06) involving microhabitat measurements and monitoring of reproductive success at 157 merganser nests. From 2002 to 2004, 28 female mergansers were captured at the nest at Kouchibouguac and were equipped with radiotransmitters in order to determine movements and patterns of brood habitat selection. At Anticosti Island, Quebec, habitat-food relationships of post-breeding mergansers were studied in 2006 by sampling microhabitats at 76 flock locations. For this part of the study he also collected 49 birds for stomach content analyses and undertook nearly 60 hours of behavioural observations. Shawn intends to submit his Ph.D. dissertation for evaluation by the spring of 2008. Shawn and Dr. Titman would like to thank the numerous people who served as field assistants throughout this study.

Bubbly Bobos – Hope for the Future?

In May and June of 2006 the bubbly symphony of the Bobolink song greeted Barbara Frei, M.Sc. student, and her field team (Carine LeCoeur and Kate Robinson) every morning as they ventured into the hayfields of southern Quebec and eastern Ontario. Bobolinks, a species of conservation priority in the St-Lawrence valley, are suffering sharp declines as a result of habitat loss and high mortality in farmland landscapes due to earlier and more frequent mowing. With a bit of patience and painstakingly long searches of the grasslands, Bobolink nests were found and monitored throughout the breeding season. Sixty-four Bobolink nestlings were followed to the fledging stage and banded. Multiple nestling and vegetation measurements taken throughout the season will provide information on both the ecology and microhabitat selection of this species. Fieldwork will continue in the spring of 2007, as soon as the long-distance migrants return from their austral summer grounds in South America.

Adult male Bobolink (above) in its native habitat and nestling (below) being weighed and banded by Barbara Frei.

Sun, Coast, and Surf Scoters

As part of his M.Sc. project, Mark O'Connor travelled to northern Labrador to study the behavior of moulting Surf Scoters. For six weeks he lived on a remote island and spent several hours a day scanning flocks of up to 3,000 scoters and noting their behavior. Initial analyses of data indicate that the birds alter their behavior during the moult, potentially to maximize the energy available to moulting. New to the project this year was the use of satellite transmitters, with a total of 15 transmitters being implanted. The information obtained from the transmitters will be critical in determining home ranges and movement patterns during the moult. The results of this study will contribute to the knowledge about moulting in general and to the ecology of Surf Scoters in particular.

Current Members of the ASCC Flock continued

Domestic Kestrels, Anyone?

Captive breeding and release programs are often used to help preserve and propagate endangered species. Though the goal of these programs are to maintain as much as possible the animal's original wild state, a common concern is that animals bred in captivity will be unable to survive in the wild, especially if that population has been bred in captivity over many generations. The objective of Lina Bardo's thesis project is to determine the effects of long-term captive breeding on the behavior and morphology of a population of America Kestrels. She will do this by comparing traits of wild and captive birds, in addition to cross-fostering clutches between wild and captive pairs to monitor their success. Her first field season was completed in the summer and fall of 2006, and she is currently processing her data and preparing for her second field season in 2007. Special thanks go out to her field assistants Manon Dubé, Tania Motchula and Meghan Larivee for all their help.

Captive American Kestrels in a winter aviary at the ASCC colony

New Chicks for the New Year – Welcome to the Nest!

Flame Retardants and Bird Behavior – Related?

For several years the Avian Science and Conservation Centre, in association with the Canadian Wildlife Service and the National Wildlife Research Centre, have been studying the effects of polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) on captive breeding American Kestrels. PBDEs and 1,2-bis (2,4,6-tribromophenoxy) ethane (BTBPE) are components of brominated flame-retardants commonly found in everyday office and household items. When these items are disposed of, the residues can persist in the environment and can reach high concentrations in organisms such as raptors. Recently, PBDEs have been found in the eggs of Peregrine Falcons and Osprey in Sweden and other raptor species in Norway. They are suspected to affect the endocrine system and might cause behavioral side effects in the birds. Katie Sullivan is the new M.Sc. student who will be investigating the possible behavioral effects of BTBPEs on American Kestrel reproductive behavior in the summer of 2007. She will be comparing her results with the PBDE findings, and is also looking into the possibility of studying gene expression at the embryonic stage of development in kestrels exposed to both PBDEs and BTBPEs.

Two Students, Two Projects, One Great North and Hopefully, Plenty of Falcon Chicks

The Ungava Bay region of northern Quebec is home to a breeding population of Peregrine Falcons that has been extensively monitored in the past when this species was threatened by DDT contamination. Following a continent-wide comeback of peregrines due to pesticide bans and recovery programs, the Ungava Bay population was declared healthy and was last surveyed in 1990. In the nearly two decades since, a new breed of environmental contaminants has emerged, brominated flame-retardants (BFRs). Dominique Chabot's M.Sc. project consists of conducting an updated survey of the Ungava Bay peregrine population during the summer of 2007 in order to determine its current status, as well as examining blood samples taken from nestlings for BFR contamination. Michael Ross, another new M.Sc. student, will be accompanying Dominique in Ungava Bay to study the same birds. The specific objective of Mike's project will be to clarify the peregrine's

Peregrine Falcon on a cliff side (photo taken by Gordon Court)

subspecies status. The Ungava Bay peregrines have historically been labelled as belonging to the *tundrius* subspecies. There have been reports of morphological observations of individuals belonging to both *tundrius* and the more continentally widespread *anatum* subspecies in the region, however, raising the possibility that the region represents an interface where the two subspecies hybridize. Resolving this issue could potentially have repercussions on the management goals of the National Peregrine Falcon Recovery Team. If the proposal is successful, the team will depart by freight canoe this coming August from Kuujjuaq, Quebec to find active nest sites. The nests will be accessed using climbing gear and blood samples will be drawn from nestlings for both DNA sequencing and for BFR analyses. Collaborators include the Canadian Wildlife Service, Joseph Brown, the Makivik Corporation, the Aboriginal Fund and the Northern Scientific Training Program.

New Chicks for the New Year

Adult American Dipper feeding fledglings (photo by Steve Short)

Do Lots of Dippers Mean Lots of Trout?

Coalbed methane (CBM) is a potential energy resource in Canada that has not yet reached large-scale production. The chemical composition of the CBM wastewater, though highly variable, is usually not clean enough to be released safely into freshwater. Because the CBM industry is a relatively recent one, the effects of wastewater disposal into rivers remain unknown, but there is some evidence that it may be highly destructive. The objective of Sarah Marteinson' Ph.D. project is to determine the effects of CBM extraction on the aquatic environment in the Elk River Valley of British Columbia. She will determine this by studying the water quality in affected streams (water chemistry and macroinvertebrate abundance) in conjunction with a bioindicator species, the American Dipper. The information gathered for this bird indicator species will be used to project the impact on other aquatic and terrestrial life in and around the affected areas.

Can Owls Smell Their Food?

The Avian Science and Conservation Centre has found a new task for the centre's long-time resident Great Horned Owl (affectionately known to volunteers as Stevie). He is hopefully going to shed some light on an age-old question involving the olfactory capabilities of owls. One of this species' favorite foods is skunk. In collaboration with Dr. Bird and Dr. Julie Hagelin of Swathmore College, PA, an undergraduate student will be scenting Stevie's food with skunk odor and performing several behavioral tests to determine if the owl uses olfaction to locate its prey.

West Nile Virus – Results of a Three-Year Project

After three summers of climbing up ladders, crossing muddy ditches, being blown away, rained on or roasted by the weather, and getting stopped by the police – but most importantly having a wonderful time of it all – the West Nile Virus (WNV) project is coming to an end. Over 57% of wild adult American Kestrels caught in the Montreal area were infected with WNV. Levels of infected birds remained constant over the study period while the activity of the virus within the province as a whole fluctuated, suggesting that the infections were not acquired locally. There also seems to be a very low level of locally acquired infections in nestlings; only one chick was found positive (and barely at that!) during the study. Overall, the Montreal population is doing well and nestlings will continue to peek out of their nest boxes in the near future. Manon Dubé, who led the WNV study for the 2004 and 2005 seasons, is now in the final stages of writing up the results to be published in a scientific journal. To all who helped make this project a success, Manon would like to give her most sincere thanks.

Manon Dubé on a ladder removing kestrel chicks from nest box (left). This kestrel chick, at over 20 days of age, is ready to be returned to its nest box after a successful banding and blood sampling (right)

McGill Bird Observatory – 2006 Another Promising Success

This past fall 2006 season saw an additional 3268 birds banded of 76 species, bringing the overall total of the McGill banding station ever closer to the 10,000-bird mark. Banders observed 134 species on site, with notable sightings such as Caspian Tern and Sedge Wren. The MBO was lucky to have Seabrooke Leckie as the bander-in-charge throughout August and half of September, giving Barbara and Marie-Anne some time to prepare for conferences and recover from their field seasons. The most banded species have changed quite a bit since the last Talon, with the Ruby-crowned Kinglet jumping into the top spot. The Yellow-rumped Warbler, the top-banded species this fall with 522 individuals, follows closely at number 2, with the White-throated Sparrow, the Song Sparrow and the American Robin rounding out the overall top 5. But the MBO hasn't only been banding! The banders have given and/or hosted several talks and walks around the property to community groups and McGill undergraduate classes, and are very pleased to announce that the first undergraduate research project, Limoilou Renaud's look at sex differentiation in the Black-capped Chickadee, has now been completed. For more information and for a complete listing of the many volunteers and funding sources that make the MBO's work possible, please visit their website at www.migrationresearch.org/mbo.html.

This hatch-year Baltimore Oriole was one of several strangely coloured orioles this fall. Some feathers were tested and found to contain rhodoxanthin, a pigment found in honeysuckle berries (left)

A hatch-year Black-billed Cuckoo, banded in early August, joins last year's Yellow-billed Cuckoo as the only representative of its species banded to date (right)

……And as Always, We Could Not Do It Without YOU!

The staff and students of the ASCC extend a big thank-you to the following individuals and organizations for their kind and generous tax-deductible donations during the period 2005-2006: Canadian Wildlife Service, Dorean Estey, John Noble Fawcett, Fondation de la Faune du Quebec, Grant Gehlsen, Marianne Gehlsen, Gewurz Family Foundation, Rolf Hagen, Mark Hagen, Kenneth Molson Foundation, Peter Landry, Dale MacCandlish-Weil, Quebec Turf Research Foundation, Margaret Sifton, and Donna Stacey.

As always, David Bird, the Director of the ASCC, is especially grateful to the centre's Curator, Ian Ritchie, for all his hard work and dedication to duty. Without him, much of our work would not be accomplished.

eBird Canada Launched!

Bird Studies Canada has launched eBird Canada at www.ebird.ca. eBird is an free on-line bird sightings database where you can enter your sightings through custom checklists, then view the results of yours and other eBirders' contributions through maps, graphs and tables. The geographical extent of the database now covers Canada, the United States, Mexico and parts of the Caribbean. Participants can now keep track of life and year lists for any area. The eBird database also includes records for "hot spots" in Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. Over 25,000 checklists are submitted each month and a total of six to eight million bird records per year by birders across the continent. This tool allows anyone to upload records from bird sightings databases in almost any format, including AviSys, BirdBase, Excel, and Access. Contact Dick Cannings, Bird Studies Canada, at dickcannings@shaw.ca. for more details!

ERRATA –Picoides -March 2007, Volume 20, #1.

Future Direction for Loggerhead Shrike Research on their North American Breeding And Wintering Grounds by G.E. Pérez and K A. Hobson

On page 16, under 1.- Deuterium analyses of feathers.... the percentages 13.2% and 87.9% should be changed for 73.7% and 63.8%, respectively.

Dani Tschudin photographed this Northern Saw-whet Owl on March 4th at Fairmont Hot Springs, BC. For more of Dani's stunning photographs go to http://www.visualexposures.ca.

Newfoundland Bird Books For Sale

I have two books that may be attractive to the membership. They are described below.

1. "Newfoundland Birds- Exploitation, Study and Conservation" Nuttall Ornithological Club (1987), by W. A. Montevecchi & L.M. Tuck, inscribed by the first author. Condition= Mint. .... asking $25.00

2. "The Birds of Newfoundland" Published by the Province of Newfoundland (1951) by Harold S. Peters, and Thomas D. Burleigh, and illustrated by 32 Colour Plates, and over 30 sketches by Roger T. Peterson. Inscribed by Peters and Peterson. Condition= well cared for, dust jacket missing . asking $125.00

SHIPPING to a Canadian Address will be free for 2. / 1. & 2. together, add $5.00 if you want No.1 by itself. Guarantee= "Money back if you're completely not satisfied."

Henrik ("Hank") Deichmann
1884 Route 845, Summerville, NB E5S IG2, Phone: (506) 763-2969

Owl man Nero is one of a kind

Brought Lady Gray'l to thousands

During her 21½ years, thousands of people, including me, thrilled at meeting Manitoba's most travelled owl, the most photographed individual bird in North America, the beautiful Lady Gray'l.

This famous great grey owl was rescued from a nest near Marchand, Man., by lifelong handler, Dr. Bob Nero as an injured chick in May 1984. She died of natural causes Oct. 13.

LAURIE MUSTARD

It was a sad day, indeed, but she left a wonderful legacy. Many of you will remember her from her frequent visits to schools, shopping malls, nursing homes and various conservation events. Her impact, however, will last a lot longer than the two short decades she graced us with her presence.

Lady Gray'l and Dr. Nero played a major role in having the great grey owl selected as Manitoba's official bird emblem in 1987. Further to that, in Lady Gray'l's memory, a fund has just been established at The Winnipeg Foundation, the purpose being:

"To be used to fund research, conservation and education projects directly relating to owls and other wildlife. Priority will be given to owls and Manitoba-based projects."

The official launch of the Lady Gray'l Fund happened earlier this month during a fundraising dinner roasting and toasting the amazing and much beloved Bob Nero.

He is truly one of a kind. I had the good fortune of emceeing the event, where toasting was definitely the order of the day. I actually had to interject with a contrived shot or two just to provide balance to the evening. Popular guy.

The distinguished Dr. Bob worked for the Manitoba government as a wildlife biologist for over 20 years, retiring in May 1991. These days, at the tender age of 83 (but still spry enough to jump up on a chair and take a bow at his dinner), Bob is a volunteer ecologist with the Wildlife and Ecosystem Protection Branch of Manitoba Conservation.

Unquestionably, Dr. Nero and Lady Gray'l will long be remembered for educating and entertaining thousands of Manitobans, and the process continues through his five books about Lady Gray'l, who lived with Bob and his wife Ruth at their home in Charleswood.

'Affectionate'

Yesterday, during a chat with Bob and Ruth in their living room, I asked if Gray'l had been affectionate. A tad evasive with his answer, I have since found a previous and much more definitive response to the same question in a former interview with Val Werier.

"Affectionate? I usually gloss over that one," said Dr. Nero, "preferring to emphasize that she's not a pet. In truth she can be affectionate ... She often responds to me by a low soft call, a kind of plaintive murmur, or soft humming."

And he certainly felt affection for her, as evidenced with a few lines from one of the many poems he wrote about her: "I consult with this oracle, reaching through soft feathers to feel her warm throat ...

"She trusts us and accepts us; she comes from her owl-being to meet us in her time, gravely allowing us a glimpse of her world, a gift of tender tolerance we do well to honour."

A remarkable partnership. For information on how to contribute to THE LADY GRAY'L FUND, contact The Winnipeg Foundation at 944-9474.

Article by Laurie Mustard Reprinted from Winnipeg Free Press.

Bird Studies Canada and Junco Technologies Inc. to Offer Canadian Student Award

Ecological and Educational Products

Junco Technologies

Birdhouses & Birdfeeders
Made of Recycled Wood

Bird Studies Cananda is pleased to announce a new partnership with **Junco Technologies Inc**., a Montréal area company specializing in the production of birdhouses. Each year, Junco Technologies Inc. will donate $1000 for the Junco Technologies Award, a new grant to be given annually to a student enrolled in a Canadian university. The recipient must be conducting a field research project in Canada on cavity-nesting birds, and must use the funds to purchase field equipment (such as audio recording gear, optics, video camera, or radio transmitters). The **Society of Canadian Ornithologists** will select the successful candidate each year. The first Junco Technologies Award will be given in winter 2008, and students will be able to apply this fall. Visit **BSC's online shop** to purchase Junco Technologies Inc. birdhouses.

ÉOC et Junco Technologies Inc. s'associent pour offrir une nouvelle bourse d'étude canadienne

Études d'Oiseaux Canada (ÉOC) vient de signer une entente de partenariat avec **Junco Technologies Inc**., une compagnie opérant de la grande région de Montréal qui se spécialise dans la fabrication de nichoirs. Chaque année, Junco Technologies Inc. commanditera la bourse Junco Technologies d'un montant de 1 000$. Tous les étudiants inscrits dans une université canadienne et dont le projet de recherche est réalisé en milieu naturel, au Canada, sur au moins une espèce d'oiseaux nichant en cavité pourront postuler pour cette bourse. La bourse devra servir à défrayer les coûts d'achat d'équipements requis pour la réalisation du projet de recherche (p. ex. équipement d'enregistrement audio, produit d'optique, caméra vidéo ou émetteurs radio). La bourse sera offerte par ÉOC; le processus de sélection de candidature pour cette bourse sera administré par **la Société des ornithologistes du Canada**. La mise en candidature débutera à l'automne 2007 pour la première bourse qui sera offerte à l'hiver 2008. Par cette entente de partenariat, ÉOC offrira l'achat de nichoirs Junco Technologies par l'entremise de **son magasin en ligne**.

Red-headed Woodpecker
Deep Cove, New Brunswick

Photo by Jean-Sébastien Guénette

2008 Sea Duck Conference

We are pleased to announce that the **Third North American Sea Duck Conference** will be held in Québec City, Canada, on 10-14 November 2008. This international conference is open to all researchers, managers and others interested in sea ducks. It will be hosted by the Canadian Wildlife Service (Québec Region), in partnership with the non-profit organization Regroupement Québec Oiseaux. Additional information on the conference is available on the following web site:
http://www.seaduckconference2008.org

All relevant information regarding the conference should normally be available at the proper time through the above web site. For additional information, please use the following contacts:

Michel Robert (Chair of the Organizing committee)
michel.robert@ec.gc.ca
Phone: 418-649-8071

Jean-Pierre L. Savard (Chair of the Scientific committee)
jean-pierre.savard@ec.gc.ca
Phone: 418-648-3500

New Issue of Avian Conservation and Ecology Now Available

The newest issue of Avian Conservation and Ecology-Écologie et conservation des oiseaux (ACE-ÉCO) is now available. The June issue (Volume 2, Issue 1) includes several important new research papers, and also features a special section on Bird Conservation in the Boreal Forest. Select this link: **http://www.ace-eco.org/** to read the journal on the ACE-ÉCO website.

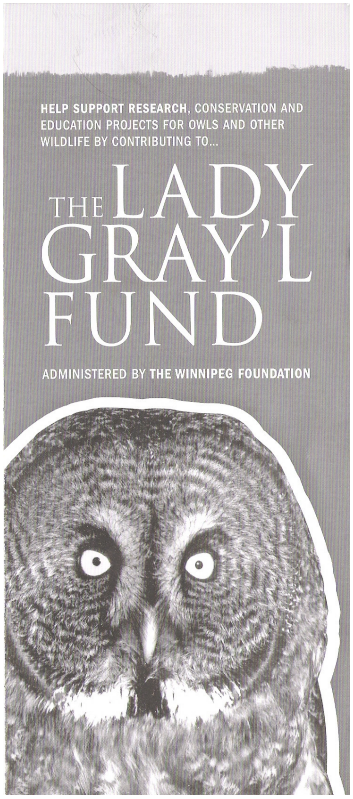
ACE-ÉCO publishes papers that are peer-reviewed and relevant to the bird conservation community. The Society of Canadian Ornithologists and Bird Studies Canada sponsor this free online scientific journal.

World Owl Conference 2007

31 October - 4 November
Groningen, The Netherlands

Birdlife International in The Netherlands, the Global Owl Project and the World Owl Trust are pleased to invite you to attend the World Owl Conference, which will be held in Groningen, The Netherlands from 31 October through 4 November 2007. A special workshop on Owl Survey and Monitoring Techniques will be held on October 31st.

www.worldowlconference.com



LADY GRAY'L, a Great Gray Owl that served to educate and entertain many people, died of natural causes on October 13, 2005. This famous owl, taken from a nest as an injured chick in May 1984, was *21 1/2* years old when she died. For her full story, see the book *Lady Gray'l, Owl With A Mission* by R. Nero. Along with her handler, Dr. Bob Nero, Lady Gray'l was a frequent visitor to schools, shopping malls, nursing homes and at various conservation programs. Together they educated thousands about conservation. She was the most travelled owl in Manitoba, the most photographed individual bird in North America, and her name is well known beyond our own provincial borders.

It should be noted that Lady Gray'l and Dr. Nero played a major role in having the Great Gray Owl selected as Manitoba's official bird emblem in 1987. And in her memory, a fund has been established at The Winnipeg Foundation.

PURPOSE OF THE FUND

The LADY GRAY'L FUND will be used to fund research, conservation and education projects directly relating to owls and other wildlife. Priority will be given to owls and Manitoba-based projects. Only projects sponsored by charitable organizations within Canada are eligible for funding.

A decision group, along with The Winnipeg Foundation, will be responsible for selecting recipients.

name _____ _
address _____ _
city _____province _____ _ postal code -_____
telephone _____e-mail _____ ____

Enclosed* is my *donation of:

0$50 0 $100 0 $250 0 $500 0 $1,000 other: $ __ I wish to pay with: 0 VISA 0 MasterCard 0 cheque
credit card # _____ _
expiry date _____signature _____
I will make* a *regular donation* of _____to *be paid 0 annually 0 semi-annually 0 quarterly 0 monthly

I authorize The Winnipeg Foundation to receive this regular donation
for a period _____of year(s) or until notified by me, by
0 credit card 0 post-dated cheque 0 automatic debit from account *(If debit, please include* a *voided cheque for the account from which you wish* to *make your pre-authorized donation.)*
signature _____

Please make cheques payable to **The Winnipeg Foundation,** with a memo on the cheque stating: **"Lady Gray'! Fund".** ***Thank you!***
Mail to: The Winnipeg Foundation 1350 - One Lombard Place Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B OX3
For more information, contact The Winnipeg Foundation at (204) 944-9474.

The Winnipeg Foundation registered charity no.: 119300960 RR0001

Society of Canadian Ornithologists
Société des ornithologistes du Canada

RENEWAL / APPLICATION FORM

This form is provided for you to use when renewing or joining, and to post or forward to others who might be interested in joining. Donations are also gratefully accepted (the SCO is a registered non–profit society and issues tax receipts). Please feel free to renew for more than one year if desired: this will cut down on administration and the need to send you reminders every year. For more on the SCO, please visit our website http://www.sco-soc.ca/.

Name
_____

Renewal? _____ New member? _____

Address _____Postal code _____

Tel.:_____Fax:_____E-mail _____

Affiliation_____

Membership Category (in Canadian Dollars)

Student:	_____ years @ $10.00 per year	Total= _____
Regular:	_____ years @ $25.00 per year	Total= _____
Sustaining:	_____ years @ $50.00 per year	Total= _____
Outside Canada:	_____ years @ $35.00 per year	Total= _____

Donation: Jamie Smith Memorial Mentoring Award in Ornithology _____
Doris Huestis Speirs Award _____
Student Research Awards:
Taverner Awards _____
Fred Cooke Award _____

All donors of $10 or more will receive a receipt for tax purposes; sustaining members will receive a $25 receipt for tax purposes for each year of sustaining membership. The SCO is a registered non–profit society and issues tax receipts.

Please make cheques payable to **The Society of Canadian Ornithologists.**

Mail to:

Thérèse Beaudet
SCO Membership Secretary
128, Chemin des Lièges
St-Jean de l'Île d'Orléans (QC)
Canada G0A 3W0

beaudet.lamothe@sympatico.ca

Society of Canadian Ornithologists
Société des ornithologistes du Canada

RENOUVELLEMENT / ADHÉSION

Ce formulaire peut être utilisé lors d'un renouvellement ou pour adhérer à la SOC. N'hésitez pas à le transmettre à d'autres ou à l'afficher pour assurer une plus grande diffusion et de nouvelles adhésions. Les dons sont acceptés (la SOC a le statut d'organisation à but non lucratif et peut émettre des reçus pour fins d'impôt). Les renouvellements pour plus d'une année sont privilégiés; cela réduit les frais d'administration et l'envoi de rappels annuels. Pour en savoir plus sur la SOC, vous pouvez visiter le site http://www.sco-soc.ca/.

Nom _____

Renouvellement? _____ Nouveau membre? _____

Adresse_____Code postal _____

Tel.:_____Fax:_____Courriel _____

Affiliation :_____

Catégorie de membres

Etudiant:	_____ ans @ $10.00 par an	Total= _____
Régulier:	_____ ans @ $25.00 par an	Total= _____
De soutien:	_____ ans @ $50.00 par an	Total= _____
À l'extérieur du Canada:	_____ ans @ $35.00 par an	Total= _____

Dons : Prix commémoratif Jamie Smith de tutorat en ornithologie _____
Prix Doris Huestis Speirs _____
Bourses pour étudiants :
Bourses Taverner _____
Bourse Fred Cooke _____

Toutes les personnes qui font un don de 10$ et plus recevront un reçu pour fins d'impôt; les membres de soutien en recevront un de 25$ par année de participation. La SOC a le statut d'organisation à but non lucratif et émet des reçus pour fins d'impôt.

S.V.P. Faire les chèques au nom de la ***Société des Ornithologistes du Canada****.*

Faire parvenir à :

Thérèse Beaudet
Secrétaire aux membres de la SOC
128, Chemin des Lièges
St-Jean de l'Île d'Orléans (QC)
Canada G0A 3W0

beaudet.lamothe@sympatico.ca

Society of Canadian Ornithologists/
Société des Ornithologistes du Canada

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President: Dr. Susan Hannon, Voice: 780-492-7544; Fax: 780-492-9234; Email: shannon@ualberta.ca

Vice-President/President-elect: Dr. David Bird, Voice: 514-398-7760; Fax: 514-398-7990; Email: david.bird@mcgill.ca

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Society of Canadian Ornithologists/
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Standing Committees and Work Groups

See Page 35 for contact information for those with # beside name.

Doris Huestis Speirs Award Committee (annual award for excellence in Canadian Ornithology): David Bird, chair, #

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 ($1,000), Taverner (2 awards $500 each) Fred Cooke Travel Award. Bob Clark, E-mail: bob.clark@ec.gc.ca

Meetings Committee: Charles Francis #, Sue Hannon #

Picoides Committee: Rob Warnock (chair) #, Ken Otter #, Jean-Pierre Savard, E-mail: pierre.savard@ec.gc.ca Dorothy Diamond, 247 English Settlement Road, Stanley, NB E6B 2E9, Voice (506) 367-3181, E-mail: doroth@nbnet.nb.ca; Andrea Pomeroy, Centre for Wildlife Ecology, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, V5A 1S6, Voice: (604) 940-4724, E-mail: apomeroy@sfu.ca

Journal Committee: Charles Francis, chair, #, Jean-Pierre Savard, E-mail: pierre.savard@ec.gc.ca, Erica Nol, Email: enol@trentu.ca.

Editors of ACE-ECO: Tom Nudds and Marc-André Villard Voice: 506-858-4334 (direct: 4292); Fax: 506-858-4541; Courriel: villarm@umoncton.ca

Finance and Investment Committee: Pierre Lamothe #

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

North American Banding Council Representative Wendy Easton, Voice: 604-940-4673; Fax: 604-946-7022; Email: *wendy.easton@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