PICOIDES

June 2011
Volume 24 (2)

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

Second-year male Merlin, with prebasic moult of body feathers just beginning (Photo by Brigitte Noël)

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Editors' Message

Rob Warnock and Marcel Gahbauer

Welcome to the second issue of *Picoides* for 2011. We hope that you and your families have all had a great spring and Easter. In the last two issues, we piloted a new format for *Picoides*. We hope that you found the new format more user-friendly and attractive. We still welcome positive and negative feedback from SCO-SOC members, as it is your publication (*contact information is on page 14, or feel free to chat with us at this summer's SCO-SOC conference*).

We congratulate all nominees for the Jamie Smith Mentoring Award, which will be presented at the SCO-SOC conference in Moncton, August 4-6 (*see page 4 for more information on the meeting, including a reminder about events planned by the Student Affairs Committee*). Meanwhile the deadline for nominations for the Doris Huestis Speirs Award has been extended to July 1, and we encourage you to suggest any worthy candidates (*see page 10 for details*). Another deadline that has been extended is for the submission of workshop or symposium themes for the North American Ornithological Conference in August 2012 (*see page 11 for the updated call for proposals*).

We also congratulate Raphaël Lavoie of Queen's University (Fred Cooke Award), Kira Delmore of UBC (James L. Baillie Award), Vanya Rohwer of Queen's University (Taverner Award) and Ryan Germain of UBC (Taverner Award) on receiving SCO-SOC Student Research Awards in 2011 (*brief biographies and project summaries can be found on pages 7-8*).

Also in this issue we have abstracts of three recent Canadian ornithological theses (*see page 9*), a feature article on the Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program (*see pages 5-6*), an announcement from the Cooper Ornithological Society about four new titles in the *Studies in Avian Biology* series (*see page 12*), and a pair of book reviews (*see page 13*).

As always, we welcome submission of material for upcoming issues of *Picoides*. The deadline for the next issue is October 15, but we encourage you to contact us earlier, especially if you have articles to propose. In particular, we encourage reports from students who have received support from SCO-SOC, photographs of Canadian birds, and short items for the Canadian Ornithological News, Announcements, and Information Exchange sections (which you may notice is missing from this issue, as we did not receive any contributions for it). Also, reflecting our desire to present a more bilingual product, we welcome items in French for any part of Picoides (and invite anyone willing to help with translations of articles to contact us). See the box on the final page of this issue for instructions on submitting items for future issues.



Bohemian Waxwings getting drunk on rotten apples (Photos by Brigitte Noël)

Student contributions wanted for *Picoides*!

SCO-SOC encourages students to submit material for publication in *Picoides*. In particular, we would like each issue to feature abstracts of one or two recently published theses. They must be from students at a Canadian university and/or focusing on Canadian birds. Abstracts should be 250-400 words long, preferably accompanied by one or two relevant photos. In addition, we welcome articles that describe in greater detail some aspects of student research. These should focus on a subject relevant to Canadian ornithology, require references, and may be up to 1000 words long, again preferably accompanied by one or two photos.

President's Message

Erica Nol

We have a diverse membership, many of whom are government associated ornithologists (including 3 members of our current council). Many of these scientists will not regularly formally teach undergraduate students. However, nearly 60% of SCO-SOC members are at universities and virtually all of our graduate student members are either involved in teaching themselves, or are interested in teaching as a profession in the future. A quick survey of the calendars of 19 universities in Ontario suggest that only 9 of these offer formal courses in ornithology, while a number of others offer field courses where students may be either directly or tangentially introduced to the biology of birds. Having an educated body of people who can identify and understand the basics of the biology of birds is going to be critical to the future of our discipline. Additionally, birds are used extensively in environmental consulting as indicators of the influence of anthropogenic activities on the environment. Thus, the ability to identify birds and their habitats will continue to be essential skills in environmental stewardship.

A colleague of mine at Trent recently passed on an article from the New York Times DotEarth blog on the use of Twitter in ornithological teaching (A. Revkin, NY Times DotEarth, May 5, 2011). In brief, Mr. Revkin relates the story of instructor Margaret Rubega (University of Connecticut) who requires students to get a Twitter account and post any time they witness any interesting bird behaviour, as a means of noticing birds wherever they happened to be. In the blog Dr. Rubega is quoted as saying "The use of Twitter in this case was an attempt to subvert what seemed to me excessive attention to their phones to actually force the students to look away from them." While on a vacation in Belize Dr. Rubega learned another use of this tool. She twittered a few of the species that she had seen (Boat-tailed Heron and Jabiru Stork) and then asked the students to guess where she was. After a few false starts and a few more hints (Bat Falcon, Black-collared Hawk, Green and Pygmy kingfishers), one student indeed was able to pinpoint the correct location. Although I do not have a Twitter account myself, this story has convinced me to sign up and to use this social media tool more in my own teaching. Dr. Rubega also mentioned that through this exchange one student commented about increasing her knowledge of geography through looking up bird distribution lists. We could try this in our travels across Canada!

Are there other techniques that SCO members use to promote ornithology in teaching? How much do you use ornithological examples in other courses like Behavioural Ecology? Why not contribute a short article to Picoides on your successes or failures in undergraduate teaching? It would also be nice to get a sense of how our graduate student members were taught ornithology. Perhaps there are some opinions on their most memorable learning experiences. (Is anyone interested in starting a blog on this topic?)

Red-bellied Woodpecker and White-breasted Nuthatch
(Photo by Brigitte Noël)

I am always struck by how well the students (mostly American) perform at the quiz bowls held at the AOU meetings while answering sometimes very specific and obscure questions from ornithology (e.g., What famous ornithologist explored the coast of Newfoundland in the early 19th century? Find the answer on page 6). Do our students do as well? Perhaps one of our annual meetings will also host a quiz bowl showcasing our students' knowledge (or Professionals against Students!). See you soon.

SCO-SOC meeting / Congrès de la SCO-SOC

4-6 August / août

You are invited to join us at this year's meeting, which will be held at Université de Moncton on 4-6 August. The opening plenary will be given by Dr Bridget Stutchbury, from York University, and the meeting will also include a public presentation by Dr. Joël Bêty of Université du Québec à Rimouski, who was recently named CBC-SRC scientist of the year. There will be a half-day symposium organized by Craig Machtans on estimates of human-related bird mortality from major sectors in Canada and their biological relevance.

A field trip to the Bay of Fundy coordinated by Diana Hamilton will allow participants to observe the spectacular migration of Semipalmated Sandpipers, with occasional attacks by locally nesting Peregrine Falcons. Early bird registration ends on 15 June. Details and online registration are available at:
http://www.sco-soc.ca/2011_conference.html

Vous êtes cordialement invité(e)s à participer au congrès annuel de la SCO-SOC qui aura lieu à l'Université de Moncton du 4 au 6 août. La conférence d'ouverture sera prononcée par le professeur Bridget Stutchbury, de l'Université York, et le congrès inclura aussi une conférence publique du professeur Joël Bêty, de l'Université du Québec à Rimouski, récemment nommé scientifique de l'année SRC-CBC. Un colloque d'une demi-journée organisé par Craig Machtans portera sur l'estimation de la mortalité reliée aux activités humaines majeures au Canada et leur importance biologique.

Une visite sur le terrain à la baie de Fundy coordonnée par Diana Hamilton permettra aux participantes et participants d'observer la spectaculaire migration des Bécasseaux semipalmés, incluant des attaques occasionnelles par les Faucons pèlerins qui nichent dans le secteur. L'inscription au meilleur tarif se terminera le 15 juin. Vous trouverez plus de détails et le lien pour l'inscription en ligne à:
http://www.sco-soc.ca/2011_conference.html

SCO-SOC Student Affairs Committee Events

The student affairs committee is hosting a student-professional social, and you're invited! Please save the date, August 5th, to mingle with colleagues over lunch at the upcoming meeting in Moncton. This will be a great opportunity for professionals to mentor ornithology students, and for students to get to know ornithology professionals in a casual setting. If you have any questions about the student-professional lunch, please contact Andrea Norris (arnorris@interchange.ubc.ca). Details of this event are forthcoming.

The SCO-SOC student affairs committee is also holding a silent auction at the Moncton meeting, and we need your help! We are hoping to raise funds for student events at future meetings, and are in need of donations. Suggested donations include: books and field guides, binoculars, photography equipment, and any other field supplies, services (e.g., statistics consulting, photography lessons), jewelry, crafts, artwork, and decorations. All items will be collected and displayed at the meeting in Moncton, where all participants can peruse the booty and place a bid on their favourite item(s). If you have any items to donate or questions about the silent auction, please contact Tyler Flockhart (dflockha@uoguelph.ca).

Le comité des affaires étudiantes sera l'hôte d'une activité sociale étudiant-professionnel et vous êtes invités! Veuillez svp inscrire à votre agenda la date du 5 août où vous êtes conviés pour un goûter entre collègues, au congrès à Moncton. Il s'agit d'une bonne opportunité offerte aux professionnels pour conseiller des étudiants et étudiantes en ornithologie et pour eux de se faire connaître par ces derniers dans un environnement amical. Si vous avez des questions concernant le repas étudiant-professionnel veuillez svp vous adresser à Andrea Norris (arnorris@interchange.ubc.ca). De l'information supplémentaire sera disponible sous-peu.

Le comité des affaires étudiantes de la SCO-SOC tiendra un encan silencieux, lors du prochain congrès à Moncton, et a besoin de votre aide! Nous espérons amasser des fonds pour des activités étudiantes lors de congrès futurs et avons besoin de dons. Nous suggérons les dons suivants: livres, guides d'identification, jumelles, équipement de photographie ou tout autre équipement de terrain, services (ex. consultations statistiques, cours de photographie, etc.), bijoux, artisanat, œuvres d'art et décorations. Tous les items seront exposés lors du prochain congrès à Moncton. Chacun des participants aura l'opportunité de miser une somme d'argent sur les items de son choix. Si vous êtes intéressés à donner un (des) item(s) ou avez des questions concernant l'encan silencieux veuillez svp vous adresser à Tyler Flockhart (dflockha@uoguelph.ca).

Feature Article:

Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program reaches 15th Year

Doug Tozer (Aquatic Surveys Biologist) and Kathy Jones (Ontario Volunteer Coordinator), Bird Studies Canada

Various programs track populations of marsh-nesting birds in Canada and the US (e.g., Prairie and Parkland Marsh Monitoring Program, Ohio Wetland Breeding Bird Survey). Bird Studies Canada, however, launched the very first marsh monitoring program in North America in 1995, the Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program (GLMMP). The GLMMP was popular from the beginning, growing as of 2010 to an all-time total of 810 volunteer participants, assistants, and partners who have conducted 35,000 point counts in wetlands across 8 US states and Ontario. The value of the program is illustrated by the current push to combine all marsh monitoring programs into a standardized North American Marsh Monitoring Program. Since the GLMMP reached its 15th year in 2010, we thought it was timely to provide an overview.

Virginia Rail (Photo by S Horvath)

The primary objective of the GLMMP is to track population trends of marsh-nesting birds (and amphibians) through time in the Great Lakes basin (e.g., Figure 1). The program has grown to include enough sampling points to detect changes as small as 2% per year for some bird species in individual lake basins (e.g., Lake Ontario, Lake Erie). Across the entire Great Lakes basin, the data show long-term population declines for most marsh-nesting bird species, although a few species show increases (Figure 2). These valuable data are presented biannually at the State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference (SOLEC)—a gathering of scientists and policy makers dedicated to improving the health of the Great Lakes. They are also used to generate Indices of Biotic Integrity, which allow wetland managers to compare the health of their wetland to other wetlands within their region and to track recovery of wetlands in Areas of Special Concern—highly polluted areas targeted for restoration.

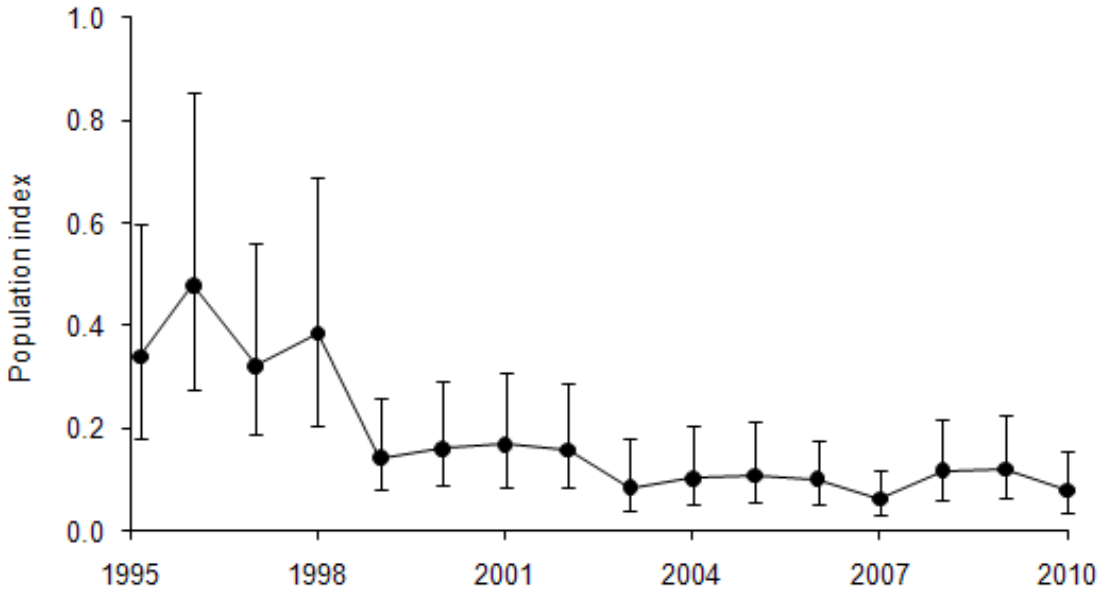

Fig. 1. Annual population indices (± 95% Bayesian credibility intervals) for Black Tern from 1995 to 2010 in the Great Lakes basin. Indices estimated with a Bayesian mixed-model framework, assuming a Poisson distribution.

In addition to population data, the GLMMP collects habitat data at various scales at each sampling point (e.g., aerial coverage of open water within 100 m, wetland size). These data allow assessments of marsh-nesting bird habitat use with sample sizes well beyond virtually any other study. Analysis to date shows that wetland size, the type of vegetation cover, and annual water level fluctuations influence many marsh bird populations. We plan to build upon these findings with more research in the future.

Volunteer observers are critical to the success of the GLMMP (Photo by F Horvath)

Despite 15 years of success, the GLMMP continues to evolve. We recently improved our analytical methods and soon we hope to offer online data entry. In 2008, we adapted our bird point count protocol to include detection probability and in 2010 we encouraged participants to conduct three rather than two point counts each season to assess what we can learn from an additional survey. More changes may be needed in the future to make the program even more effective for tracking population trends of marsh-nesting birds through time. We hope that all of our dedicated volunteers continue to support the oldest and longest-running marsh monitoring program as it becomes even better at achieving its objectives.

For more results from the GLMMP and other monitoring programs run by Bird Studies Canada visit our online library at www.bsc-eoc.org/library.html. The GLMMP would also like to thank Environment Canada, US Environmental Protection Agency, and TD Friends of the Environment Foundation for financial support for 2011-2012.

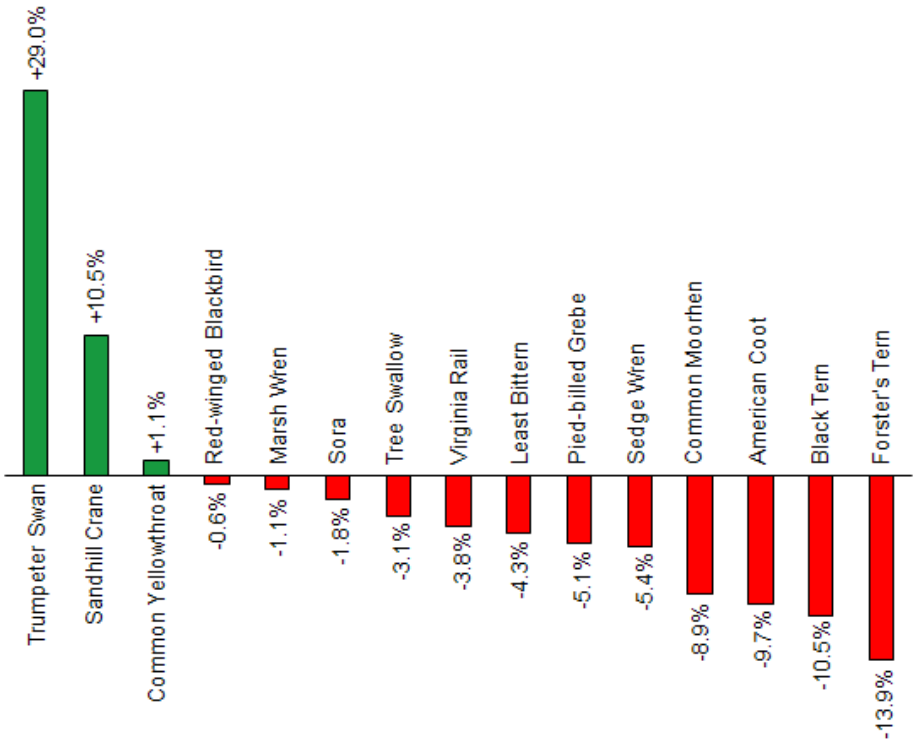

Fig. 2. Percent annual change of population indices for some marsh-nesting bird species from 1995 to 2010 in the Great Lakes basin. Indices estimated with a Bayesian mixed-model framework, assuming a Poisson distribution. All trends are statistically reliable.

President's message quiz answer / Réponse au quiz du message de la présidente:

John James Audubon

2011 SCO-SOC Student Award Recipients

Ian Warkentin, Chair of the SCO-SOC Student Awards Committee

The SCO-SOC Student Awards Committee wishes to congratulate the four 2011 SCO-SOC Student Award winners. We received many outstanding applications from across Canada. I thank the other members of the committee this year: Colleen Barber (St. Mary's University), and Karen Wiebe (University of Saskatchewan) for their contribution. Below are the 2011 SCO-SOC Student Award recipients with brief summaries of their research and their biographies.

Fred Cooke Award:

Mr. Raphaël Lavoie, Department of Biology, Queen's University (lavoie.raphael@gmail.com)
Thesis title: Trophodynamics and effect of migration on contaminants in fish-eating birds

Raphaël Lavoie holding a Caspian Tern, having attached a geolocator logger on the left foot to track its migration (Photo by Diana Flood)

Biography:

I completed my technical diploma in Applied Ecology at the CÉGEP de La Pocatière (QC) where I became interested in ornithology and eventually did volunteer work in British Columbia on seabirds. I pursued my B.Sc. at the Université du Québec à Rimouski where I worked for Environment Canada on seabirds as a summer student. I then did my M.Sc. at the University of Ottawa (Dr. David Lean) in collaboration with Environment Canada (Jean-François Rail) studying contaminants in seabirds of Corossol Island (QC), Gulf of St. Lawrence. I am currently doing my Ph.D. at Queen's University (Dr. Linda Campbell), researching bird migration and its effect on contaminants of fish-eating birds breeding in Lake Ontario.

Project summary:

The potential for migratory birds to act as biovector transport agents of contaminants between ecosystems has been recognized but little is known about the actual contribution of each ecosystem in which birds breed, overwinter and migrate to explain variations in contaminant levels within and among species. Even though contaminant concentrations in predatory birds are mostly determined by diet, intra- or interspecific variations in contaminant concentrations not explained by food intake are often attributable to differences in migration routes. However, little reliable evidence is available in support of this hypothesis owing to the complexity of tracking migration and quantifying contaminant exposure across these inter-continental routes. Chemical tracers such as stable isotopes, contaminants and trace elements in inert tissues (e.g., feathers) have been proposed as being efficient tools to assess migratory connectivity of birds. I propose to study migration patterns using chemical tracers and geolocator loggers of two fish-eating birds breeding in the Great Lakes (Lake Ontario) and link it with contaminants exposure.

James L. Baillie Award:

Ms. Kira Delmore, Department of Zoology, University of British Columbia (kdelmore@zoology.ubc.ca)
Thesis title: Migration and reproductive isolation in songbirds

Kira Delmore holding two brown lemurs (Photo by Margaux Keller)

Biography:

I conducted my undergraduate degree at Queen's University where I worked on several projects involving songbirds, including projects describing differences between several species in sperm morphology and motility and sex allocation in tree swallows. I completed my Master's at the University of Calgary where I took a break from ornithology to study primates. Work for this degree focused on a hybrid zone between two subspecies of brown lemur in southeastern Madagascar. I was interested in the factors responsible for the maintenance of stability in this zone. I am currently working on my Ph.D. at the University of British Columbia. I am studying the role migration could be playing in maintaining reproductive isolation between songbirds. This project will involve both comparative work using data from North American birds in general as well as empirical work using data from a single species, the Swainson's Thrush.

Project summary:

Funding from this SCO award will contribute to the empirical work I'm conducting on Swainson's Thrush. Two forms of Swainson's Thrush have been described, the coastal, russet-backed thrush and the inland, olive-backed thrush. These taxa form a hybrid zone in

western North America with evidence for a barrier to gene flow (e.g., lower population densities at the center of the zone). In this project, I will evaluate the role differences in migratory orientation could be playing in maintaining this barrier: the coastal form migrates along a southwestern route while the inland form migrates along a southeastern route. Hybrids between these taxa could exhibit intermediate orientations, which may also be inferior (e.g., bring them over deserts in the southwestern USA). Under this scenario, hybrids would be selected against and differences in migratory orientation would be serving as post-mating isolating barriers. I will test this hypothesis using light-level geolocators and age ratios for each taxonomic group. Data from geolocators will be used to assay the orientation of hybrids and age ratios will be used to compare rates of survival between hybrid and parental forms.

Taverner Award:

Mr. Ryan Germain, Centre for Applied Conservation Research, University of British Columbia (rgermain@interchange.ubc.ca)
Thesis title: Phenotypic and environmental effects on timing of breeding in an insular Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) population

Biography:
I completed my B.Sc. at Queen's University in 2007, conducting a study on male plumage colouration and parental care in American Redstarts (*Setophaga ruticilla*) for my honour's project. I remained at Queen's for my M.Sc., focusing on plumage colouration and delayed song maturation in juvenile Redstarts, under Drs. Laurene Ratcliffe (Queen's) and Peter Marra (Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center). For my Ph.D., I decided to pack up and move from my home province of Ontario to the rainy shores of British Columbia. My Ph.D. project (at UBC under Dr. Peter Arcese) will focus on the effects of nesting site microclimate, food availability, and individual female quality on reproductive success in the Song Sparrow population of Mandarte Island, BC.


Ryan Germain with SY male American Redstart (Photo by Matthew Osmond)

Project summary:
Nest site microclimate can play an important role in the annual breeding effort of open-cup nesting birds by allowing females to maximize thermoregulation and allocate more energy towards reproduction. However, because individual and nest site quality may be linked, it is often difficult to separate the effects of each on reproductive success. For the proposed research, I will use temperature data loggers, precise records of nest location and success from over three decades, and a long-term pedigree to decompose the components of variance in territory and individual quality. This work will be the first to use precise, long-term data to investigate the effects of nest site microclimate, individual phenotype, and inbreeding on reproductive success in birds, and help further our understanding of female investment in reproduction.

Taverner Award:

Mr. Vanya Rohwer, Department of Biology, Queen's University (6vgr@queensu.ca)
Thesis Title: Fitness consequences and selective mechanisms favouring local nest morphologies in Yellow Warblers: nest transplant experiments between subarctic and temperate populations

Biography:
I love field biology and try to spend as much time outside as possible. I believe that new observations inspire new research, and that there is endless wonder in the world of living things. My research interests include evolution, the natural history and ecology of birds, and currently focus on breeding adaptations and nests. My research on Yellow Warblers with Dr. Paul Martin has taken me to Churchill, Manitoba, a land where man bows before bugs and bears.


Vanya Rohwer on the shore of Hudson Bay, minutes away from his field site in Churchill MB. This photo was taken on 16 July 2009, and the bay had only recently thawed (Photo by Carla Crossman)

Project summary:
Yellow Warblers have one of the widest breeding distributions of all North American wood warblers, breeding from the Canadian Arctic to South America. Different breeding habitats expose Yellow Warblers to a diversity of selective pressures, thus birds should build nests that are well suited to local breeding conditions. Using reciprocal nest transplant experiments, my research examines the benefits of geographic variation in nest building behaviour of Yellow Warblers breeding in northern Manitoba and southeastern Ontario.

Recent Canadian Ornithology Theses

Dohms, Kimberly M. 2009. Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*) nestling provisioning and growth rates in native and planted grasslands. M.Sc. Thesis. Department of Biology, University of Regina, Regina SK.

Loss and degradation of native prairie is believed to be the primary cause of population declines of North American grassland songbirds. Considering these declines and the challenges associated with restoring native grassland, conservation programs have considered alternative nesting habitats such as planted grasslands to conserve grassland bird populations. Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii,* henceforth pipit*)*, an insectivorous North American grassland passerine, is known as a native grassland specialist. However, pipits have been found nesting in planted grasslands, though the quality of these habitats is unknown. The overall aim of my thesis was to assess the quality of planted grasslands where pipits nest relative to native grasslands. I quantified biomass of arthropods in 2006-2007 in planted and native grasslands to determine if prey resources differed between the habitats. In planted grasslands, arthropod biomass was higher relative to native grasslands early in the breeding season. My results suggest that planted grasslands provide comparable or higher levels of arthropod biomass when compared to native grasslands.

I quantified nestling provisioning and growth rates in 2006-2007 at pipit nests in planted and native grasslands. I investigated factors that affected these rates early in the breeding season in both habitats and throughout the breeding season in native grassland. In 2006, low temperatures combined with heavy precipitation had a strong negative effect on provisioning rates throughout the breeding season. In 2007, age was the only factor that strongly affected provisioning rates, which increased with increasing age. Nestling growth rates were negatively affected by heavy precipitation and positively affected by temperature, but the effects of these factors varied with age and throughout the breeding season. Overall, pipits were able to provision nestlings at similar rates and raise nestlings that grow at comparable rates in both planted and native grassland habitats. While the conservation of native grassland is essential for pipits, planted grasslands can offer suitable habitat for pipit reproduction. Therefore, planted grasslands should be considered in conservation and management plans for pipits and other grassland passerines where similar planted grasslands exist. Management practices that enable prolonged use of planted grasslands by pipits will increase available habitat throughout the breeding season and benefit pipits and other grassland songbirds.

Leston, L.F.V. 2011. Do grassland birds prefer settling in food-rich grassland fragments? Ph.D. Thesis. Natural Resources Institute, Clayton Riddell School of Earth and the Environment, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg MB.

While prairie songbirds are not thought to be limited by the availability of arthropod prey in prairie landscapes in the breeding season, prey availability for prairie birds might vary significantly in landscapes where prairies have been mostly replaced by urbanization, agriculture and frequently-mowed manmade grasslands. Prairie birds might then settle in larger numbers in grassland patches with greater food supplies. In 2007 – 2009, I surveyed prairie bird abundances (# territories per site) and relative abundances of arthropod prey (biomasses in sweep-nets and pitfall traps) along 48 Winnipeg transmission lines that varied in on-site vegetation management (mowed 0 – 2 x/year, with or without haying) and in surrounding land-use (urban lands, grassland, cropland) within 100 m. Potentially available arthropod food biomass declined with increasing urbanization and extent of frequently-mowed grasslands around transmission lines, but was highest at sites with infrequent mowing, rather than no mowing at all. Although many prairie birds also declined as urbanization increased around sites, they were generally not more abundant at the sites with the most potential food. Thus, food availability does not appear to be a primary mechanism driving habitat selection by prairie birds settling in urbanizing landscapes.

Thurber, Bethany. 2010. Daily flight timing and movement strategies of migrating landbirds: Importance of local wind patterns. M.Sc. Thesis. Faculty of Science, University of Western Ontario, London ON.

Although weather variation is known to affect behaviours of migrating landbirds, the specific effects of wind conditions on flight timing and orientation at ecological barriers are not well understand. To assess seasonal effects of wind on flight timing at Long Point, Ontario, I compared estimates of daily arrival and departure derived from mark-recapture banding data to radar counts of nocturnally migrating birds at different times of the night. The timing of migratory landfall was later on nights with unfavourable winds versus nights with favourable winds, and later on nights in spring versus fall. Daily arrival was positively associated with radar counts on nights with NE and SW winds, but variably associated otherwise. Departure timing could not be assessed. To investigate effects of wind on flight speed and orientation, I tested whether migration proceeded in a broad front among four coastal sites in southwest Nova Scotia during fall 2007.

Broad front migration was defined as a migratory movement through a broad geographical area that was maintained at constant heading and airspeed regardless of changes in topography. There was considerable variation among sites in each of the mean airspeeds, mean headings, and degree of scatter in those headings of birds crossing the Gulf of Maine. This variation was partly governed by variation in wind direction among nights, where migration more closely matched a broad front on nights with westerly wind versus nights with easterly winds. Collectively, these results are consistent with previous findings that wind conditions influence migratory flight behaviours at a regional scale, and refute the hypothesis of broad front migration at the southern coast of Nova Scotia.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Photo by Brigitte Noël)

D.H. Speirs Award – Call for Nominations / Appel de Candidatures

*** Deadline extended to July 1 ***

The Doris Huestis Speirs Award is the most prestigious award given by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and is presented annually to an individual who has made outstanding lifetime contributions to Canadian ornithology. Past awardees include professionals who work at museums, government agencies, private companies and universities, as well as amateur ornithologists.

To nominate a candidate for the Speirs Award please provide the Chair of the award committee with the name of the nominee and supporting information that describes the nature and scope of the nominee's contributions and impact in Canadian ornithology. This could include their efforts to advance conservation, science, public education, or some combination of these or other contribution(s). Please note that the selection of the award-winner will be largely based on the strength of the nomination package and the supporting documentation.

Nominations for the 2011 award may be sent to:

Dr. Greg Robertson
Wildlife Research Division
Environment Canada
Mount Pearl, NL A1N 4T3
Phone: 709-772-2778; Fax: 709-772-5097
E-mail: greg.robertson@ec.gc.ca

Nominations will be accepted until 1 July 2011. For more information on the award and previous award winners go to: http://www.sco-soc.ca/speirs_award.htm

Le Prix Doris Huestis Speirs est le prix le plus prestigieux décerné par la Société des ornithologistes du Canada. Ce prix est remis annuellement à une personne en reconnaissance pour sa contribution au développement de l'ornithologie au Canada. Les récipiendaires des années passées sont des professionnels et amateurs ayant travaillé dans les musées, l'administration publique, des compagnies privées ou le milieu universitaire.

Pour soumettre une candidature, vous êtes priés de faire parvenir au président du comité le nom de la ou du candidat accompagné d'informations décrivant la nature, l'importance et l'impact de sa contribution à l'ornithologie au Canada. Ceci devra préciser ses efforts pour faire avancer la conservation, la science, l'éducation du grand public, ou une combinaison de ces éléments, et toute autre contribution digne de mention.

Veuillez soumettre les candidatures pour le prix 2011 à :

Dr. Greg Robertson
Wildlife Research Division
Environment Canada
Mount Pearl, NL A1N 4T3
Tél. : 709-772-2778; Fax: 709-772-5097
Courriel: greg.robertson@ec.gc.ca

Les candidatures seront acceptées jusqu'au 1 juillet 2011. Pour plus d'information au sujet de ce prix et des récipiendaires passés, aller à:
http://www.sco-soc.ca/speirs_award_fr.html

Announcements

The 5th North American Ornithological Conference, Vancouver BC, 14-18 August 2012

We are pleased to announce the ***REVISED DATE AND CALL FOR SYMPOSIUM AND WORKSHOP PROPOSALS*** for the 5th North American Ornithological Conference, to be held 14-18 August 2012 on the University of British Columbia campus in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Proposals for symposia should contain the following details: symposium title; the names, institution or affiliation, addresses, phone, fax, email addresses of organizer(s) and keynote speaker(s); a description (500 words maximum) of the objectives and conceptual flow of the symposium. In addition, provide a separate 300 word justification for why this symposium is important and timely (i.e., in terms of fundamental science or the application of science to address management problems) and why it would be interesting to attendees (e.g., to attract >100 participants). Proposals that provide opportunities for speakers to present alternate perspectives or evidence about controversial topics are encouraged. Additional information about the application process, selection criteria, presentation timing and format, and symposium structure will be placed on the NAOC web site at http://www.naoc-v2012.com.

Symposia will be limited to half-day sessions (approximately 3 hours, composed of 15 or 30 minute time slots); there will be no full-day symposia. Symposium and Workshop organizers and presenters will be expected to pay for full conference registration, and will be responsible for their own travel expenses. Presenters at symposia will not be considered for presentations in contributed paper sessions (i.e., limit of one oral presentation per person at the meeting). Abstracts for papers given during symposia must be submitted as part of the normal abstract submission process and deadlines (to be announced). Symposium organizers should confirm attendance by prospective speakers.

Proposals for workshops should contain the following details: workshop title; the names, institution or affiliation, addresses, phone, fax, email addresses of organizer(s) or instructor(s); a 300 word justification for why this workshop is important or useful to attendees; maximum number of participants; and time, space and resource (e.g., computing) requirements. Workshops will be scheduled either before, during (evenings) or after the main conference.

Colour-banded juvenile Snow Bunting (Photo by Sarah Baldo)

The deadline for submission of proposals for Symposia or Workshops (Word file or PDF; in English) **is 15 July 2011**, with decisions being sent to applicants within 2 months of submission. Send enquiries and proposals to NAOC2012@ec.gc.ca. In some cases, symposium and workshop organizers may be contacted by the Chair of the Scientific Program Committee (Bob Clark) prior to final decisions to discuss proposals.

REMINDER: 4th Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group Meeting, Simon Fraser University, Fraser River Delta, British Columbia, 11-15 August 2011

The 4th Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group/SRGA meeting will be held at Simon Fraser University between 11 and 15 August, 2011. It will bring together researchers, managers, and other shorebird enthusiasts, with an emphasis on hemispheric species and systems. We hope for and will facilitate substantial Latin American participation. The first of such meetings to be held in Canada is hosted by the Centre for Wildlife Ecology at SFU, with support from Environment Canada, USFWS and the US Forest Service. Updated information is available at our website: http://www.sfu.ca/biology/wildberg/4WHSG/4WHSG.htm. For further information, e-mail WHSGmeet@sfu.ca, or contact Dov Lank or Ron Ydenberg. Hope to see you in August in Vancouver!

Studies in Avian Biology is an ornithological series published by The Cooper Ornithological Society that includes monographs and edited book-length projects on important topics in ornithology. Starting in 2011, the series will be published by the University of California Press as part of the publisher's book catalogue. We are pleased to announce that four volumes of the Series in Avian Biology are scheduled for publication in 2011 and will be of interest to members of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists / Société des Ornithologistes du Canada. Volume 38 addresses the ecology of Greater Sage-Grouse, an important species of conservation concern in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Volume 39 was edited by SCO members Brett Sandercock and Kathy Martin, and reports on current studies of grouse biology. Many of the papers were presented at the International Grouse Symposium in Whitehorse, Yukon in September 2008, the first time this international meeting was held in Canada. Volume 40 reports a meta-analysis of long-term population studies of Spotted Owls in three western states, with new insights for the ecology of northern owls. Volume 41 summarizes recent work on the ecology of the boreal bird community, both in their breeding range in northern Canada and at non-breeding sites elsewhere.

Volume 38 - Greater Sage Grouse: Ecology and Conservation of a Landscape Species and Its Habitats (Steven T. Knick and John W. Connelly, editors). Admired for its elaborate breeding displays and treasured as a game bird, the Greater Sage-Grouse is a charismatic symbol of the broad open spaces in western North America. Unfortunately these birds have declined across much of their range—which stretches across 11 western states and reaches into Canada—mostly due to loss of critical sagebrush habitat. Today the Greater Sage-Grouse is at the center of a complex conservation challenge. This multifaceted volume, an important foundation for developing conservation strategies and actions, provides a comprehensive synthesis of scientific information on the biology and ecology of the Greater Sage-Grouse. Bringing together the experience of thirty-eight researchers, it describes the bird's population trends, its sagebrush habitat, and potential limitations to conservation, including the effects of rangeland fire, climate change, invasive plants, disease, and land uses such as energy development, grazing, and agriculture.

Volume 39 - Ecology, Conservation, and Management of Grouse (Brett K. Sandercock, Kathy Martin, and Gernot Segelbacher, editors). Grouse—an ecologically important group of birds that include capercaillie, prairie chickens, and ptarmigan—are distributed throughout the forests, grasslands, and tundra of Europe, Asia, and North America. Today, many grouse populations are in decline, and the conservation and management of these charismatic birds is becoming a global concern. This volume summarizes current knowledge of grouse biology in 25 chapters contributed by 80 researchers from field studies around the world. Organized in four sections—Spatial Ecology, Habitat Relationships, Population Biology, and Conservation and Management—the chapters offer important insights into spatial requirements, movements, and demography of grouse. Much of the research employs emerging tools in ecology that span biogeochemistry, molecular genetics, endocrinology, radio-telemetry, and remote sensing. The chapters explore topics including the impacts of climate change, energy development, and harvest, and give new evidence for life-history changes in response to human activities.

Volume 40 - Population Demography of Northern Spotted Owls (Eric D. Forsman et al.). The Northern Spotted Owl, a threatened species that occurs in coniferous forests in the western United States, has become a well-known environmental symbol. But how is the owl actually faring? This book contains the results of a long-term effort by a large group of leading researchers to document population trends of the Northern Spotted Owl. The study was conducted on 11 areas in the Pacific Northwest from 1985 to 2008, and its objectives were both to evaluate population trends and to assess relationships between reproductive rates and recruitment of owls and covariates such as weather, habitat, and the invasion of a closely related species, the Barred Owl. Among other findings, the study shows that fecundity was declining in five populations, stable in three, and increasing in three areas. Annual apparent survival rates of adults were declining in 10 out of 11 areas. This broad, synthetic work provides the most complete and up-to-date picture of the population status of this inconspicuous forest owl, which is at the center of the complex and often volatile debate regarding the management of forest lands in the western United States.

Volume 41. Boreal Birds of North America: A Hemispheric View of Their Conservation Links and Significance (Jeffrey V. Wells, editor). Reaching from interior Alaska across Canada to Labrador and Newfoundland, North America's boreal forest is the largest wilderness area left on the planet. It is critical habitat for billions of birds; more than 300 species regularly breed there. After the breeding season, many boreal birds migrate to seasonal habitats across the United States, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. This volume brings together new research on boreal bird biology and conservation. It highlights the importance of the region to the global avifauna and to the connectivity between the boreal forest and ecoregions throughout the Americas. The contributions showcase a unique set of perspectives on the migration, wintering ecology, and conservation of bird communities that are tied to the boreal forest in ways that may not have been previously considered.

The four volumes of Studies in Avian Biology are available for purchase from the University of California Press (www.ucpress.edu/go/sab). Ornithologists in Canada who would be interested in developing a book-length project in ornithology are welcome to contact the Series Editor, Brett K. Sandercock (www.ksu.edu/bsanderc) or visit the COS website for more information (www.cooper.org).

Book Reviews

Sandilands, A. 2010. Birds of Ontario – Habitat Requirements, Limiting Factors, and Status. Nonpasserines: Shorebirds through Woodpeckers. UBC Press, Vancouver BC. 392 pages.

Hard cover ($95.00, ISBN 978-0-7748-1762-2), 20.8 cm x 25.7 cm

This second volume of *Birds of Ontario* by Al Sandilands focuses on 83 regular breeding and regularly migrating species comprising shorebirds, gulls, terns, doves, pigeons, cuckoos, owls, nightjars, swifts, hummingbirds, kingfishers and woodpeckers. Like the first volume, it is not a field identification guide. The species accounts deals exclusively with habitat requirements, limiting factors and status of each species. The book begins with an introduction section describing the scope, sources for the book, format of the species accounts and future research. Before using this volume, one should read fully the introduction section, as it will help the reader orient themselves with the species accounts. In this section, the author also discusses in detail the challenges he faced and the important limitations of this book.

I found each species account to be full of accurate and useful information about the ecology and conservation of each species. Although Ontario is the focus, each species account has useful discussion and comparisons with studies and surveys completed in Ontario and elsewhere in North America. These species accounts do make an excellent introduction to species ecology and conservation and successfully complement and update both the *Birds of North America* monographs and *The Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005*[1,2]. It is clearly written in a scientific monograph format for professional ornithologists. I did not detect any glaring errors in the species accounts. The weakest part of the species account is the range map. Colour range maps would have been much better if publication costs were not a consideration. I found some of the range maps hard to read.

Each species account begins with an excellent illustration by Ross James. I also really liked the front cover with a Great Horned Owl on its nest. It is outstanding. The hard cover binding is extremely sturdy and the book should last a long time. After the 83 species accounts, there is a handy list of plants and animals mentioned in the text. There are 31 pages of references to help the reader find more information in the ornithological literature. One can find information quickly through either the subject index or the table of contents. I highly recommend this excellent and useful reference book to ornithologists working in Ontario and beyond.

Footnotes:

1 Cadman, M.D., D.A. Sutherland, G.G. Beck, D. Lepage, and A.R. Couturier. (Editors). 2007. The Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005. Bird Studies Canada, Environment Canada, Ontario Field Ornithologists, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and Ontario Nature.

2 Poole, A. (Editor). 2005. The Birds of North America Online: http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/BNA/. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY.

Cannings, R. (Ed). 2010. Flights of Imagination: Extraordinary Writing About Birds. Greystone Books, Vancouver BC. 288 pages.

Soft cover ($22.95, ISBN 978-1-55365-535-0), 12.5 cm x 20 cm

Flights of Imagination is an interesting collection of essays about birds that celebrates their importance to individuals, communities and societies across the globe. These essays are excerpted from the essay authors' previously published works. Essay authors come from a variety of countries, professions and backgrounds include Kenn Kaufman and Trevor Herriot. Editor Richard Cannings has done an excellent job in selecting and organizing essays in this volume.

The essays are organized into four logical sections: 'Beginnings', 'Watching Birds', 'Cycles in the Air' and the 'End of Birds'. The first set of essays, 'Beginnings', is largely about the discovery of one's interest in birds and the universal curiosity in birds. The next section is about watching and observing birds, followed by 'Cycles in the Air', which is about unique and special behavours of birds. The last section, called 'End of Birds', is about the past and current risks to birds and efforts to protect them and their habitats. The last essay by Trevor Herriot shows that there is still hope for grassland birds and birds in general in the face of daunting conservation challenges.

All the essays are eloquent yet very easy to read. Discussion of complex issues and concepts are clearly written for both layperson as well as the ornithologist. I can easily visualize and relate to the birds and places described in all the essays in the book. In addition, I learned a number of new things about birds such as crane and hummingbird migration and bird mating rituals. All the essays successfully illustrate the majesty, wonder and mystery of birds. The book concludes with brief biographical summaries of the essay authors and the acknowledgements and original sources of the essays found in this lovely volume. I am proud to say that I really enjoyed the book and highly recommend it to anyone interested in birds.

Book reviews by Rob Warnock, e-mail: warnockr@accesscomm.ca

SCO – SOC Information

Contact information:

Name	Title	Phone	Fax	E-mail
Officers for 2010-2011 / Membres de l'exécutif pour 2010-1011:				
Dr. Erica Nol	President	705-748-1011 (ext. 7640)	705-748-1139	enol@trentu.ca
Dr. Joe Nocera	Vice-President / President-elect	705-755-5220	705-755-1559	joe.nocera@ontario.ca
Dr. David Bird	Past President	514-398-7760	514-398-7990	david.bird@mcgill.ca
Mr. Pierre Lamothe	Treasurer	418-829-0379	418-829-0584	beaudet.lamothe@sympatico.ca
Ms. Thérèse Beaudet	Membership Secretary	418-829-0379	418-829-0584	beaudet.lamothe@sympatico.ca
Ms. Brenda Dale	Recording Secretary	780-951-8686 (ext. 495)	n/a	brenda.dale@ec.gc.ca
Dr. Ken Abraham	Recording Secretary	705-755-1547	705-755-1559	ken.abraham@ontario.ca
Dr. Marcel Gahbauer	Co-editor, *Picoides*	403-475-8093	n/a	marcel@migrationresearch.org
Mr. Rob Warnock	Co-editor, *Picoides*	306-586-2492	n/a	warnockr@accesscomm.ca
Voting Members of Council (* second term) / Conseillers et conseillères: (* second terme):				
Mr. Marc Avey	Member of Council*	780-492-5844	n/a	marc.t.avey@gmail.com
Ms. Debbie Badzinski	Member of Council*	519-586-3531 (ext. 211)	n/a	dbadzinski@bsc-eoc.org
Dr. Erin Bayne	Member of Council	780-492-4165	n/a	bayne@ualberta.ca
Dr. Russ Dawson	Member of Council*	250-960-6068	250-960-5845	dawsonr@unbc.ca
Dr. Sarah Jamieson	Member of Council*	011-64-6-356-9099 (ext. 7964)	n/a	s.jamieson1@massey.ac.nz
Dr. Paul Martin	Member of Council*	613-533-6000 (ext. 36598)	n/a	martinp@biology.queensu.ca
Dr. Ian Warkentin	Member of Council	709-637-6200 (ext. 6246)	n/a	iwarkent@swgc.mun.ca

(Non-voting) Past Presidents / (Membres sans droit de vote) Anciennes présidentes et anciens présidents:

Ross Lein	1983-1986	Henri Ouellet	1994-1996	Jean-Pierre Savard	2002-2004
Spencer Sealy	1986-1988	David Nettleship	1996-1998	Charles Francis	2004-2006
Erica Dunn	1988-1990	Tony Diamond	1998-2000	Susan Hannon	2006-2008
Jon Barlow	1990-1992	Kathy Martin	2000-2002	David Bird	2008-2010
Bruce Falls	1992-1994				

Membership Information
www.sco-soc.ca/membership.html

SCO-SOC membership forms can be found at the link above. Current membership rates are as follows:

Student	$10.00 / year	
Regular	$25.00 / year	($35.00 / year outside Canada)
Sustaining	$50.00 / year	
Life	$500.00	

SCO-SOC Website
www.sco-soc.ca/index.html

The SCO-SOC website includes sections on membership, meetings, news, publications, awards, information for students, an overview of SCO-SOC, and links of interest to members and other visitors.

To suggest any additions or corrections for the website, contact webmaster Joe Nocera at joe.nocera@ontario.ca.

Submissions to *Picoides*:

Articles and photos relevant to Canadian ornithology are welcomed by the editors. If submitting photos, please save them in tiff or jpeg format with descriptive file names, and supply captions including common names of species, location, date, photographer, and any other notes of interest. Deadlines for submission are February 15, May 15, and October 15. Please send all submissions to Rob Warnock at warnockr@accesscomm.ca.

Disclaimer: *Picoides* is not a peer-reviewed journal, and the publication of an article in *Picoides* does not imply endorsement by SCO-SOC.