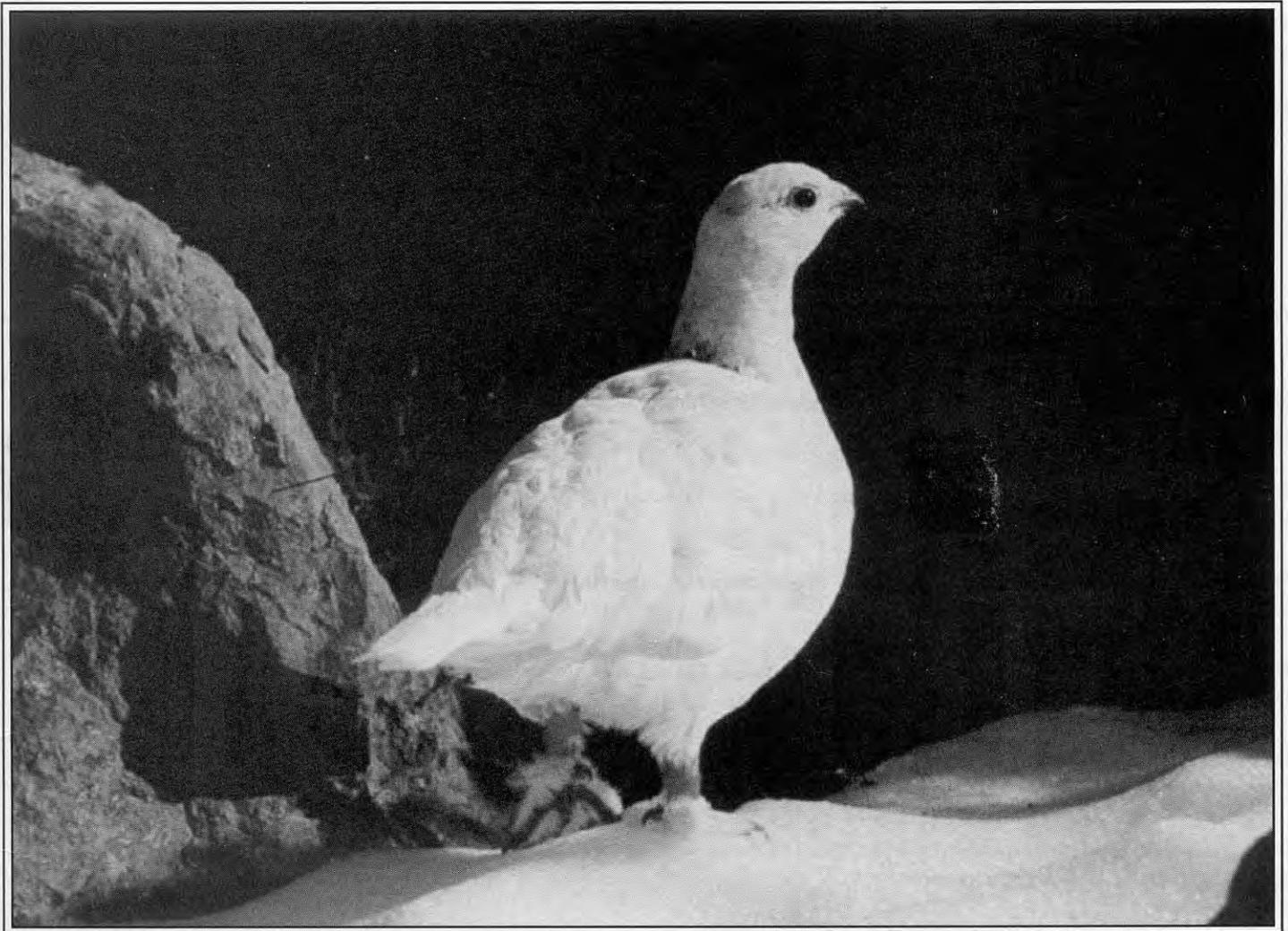


PICOIDES

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

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Banded White-tailed Ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucurus saxatilis*) in winter plumage on Vancouver Island, to accompany article on page 12. Photo by Steve Ogle.

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Next SCO/SOC Meeting

Saskatoon, Sask. 2003

in conjunction with Whooping Crane migration and CWS bird committee meetings

Possible theme "avian conservation"

Contact Cheri Gratto-Trevor with suggestions
cheri.gratto-trevor@ec.gc.ca

More information will be posted on SCO website and in June issue of *Picoides*.

EDITOR'S MESSAGE



This issue of *Picoides* is my fifth, and I continue to enjoy putting it together. However, asking for promised articles is sometimes like being a nagging wife, and I try HARD not to be that! Thank you so much to Ted Leighton, Kathy Martin, Graeme Brown, Dan Mazerolle, Lesley Evans Ogden, S. Fisher, Tom Dickinson and Bill Montevicchi for your contributions to this issue.

I have discovered that one of the "perks" of this job is receiving books from publishers wanting a review. Several new books have come my way in the past six months, and although I strongly covet them, I cannot review them all, neither am I qualified. So I am putting out a call for potential reviewers ---who wants a copy of *The Birds of BC*? You will have to work hard, but what a reward!

This very cold winter has been a good time for catching up on reading. Those new to the debate about whether birds evolved flight from dinosaurs in a "trees down" or "ground up" manner should read Pat Shipman's 1998 book, *Taking Wing: Archaeopteryx and the Evolution of Bird Flight*. She documents much of the history and context of this discussion which has raged for more than a

century. Recent discoveries (see *Nature*, Jan 2003) may appear to support the ideas of William Beebe, who in 1915 imagined a four-winged gliding stage in bird evolution. Now we learn that in China a small dromaeosaur fossil, named *Microraptor*, with clear and fully-modern asymmetrical feathers on both fore AND hind limbs, has been found. Although, the finding gives more support to the link between dinosaurs and birds, and some clues as to the origins of feathers, it still does not provide answers to the conflicting theories describing the origins of flight itself. If cursorial, this raptor would get its hind feathers dirty from dragging them on the ground; if arboreal, and thus also gliding, why would a second set of feathered limbs be advantageous?

Some suggest that any creature that flies with two limbs must have descended from ancestors that had already become bipedal on the ground. Thus the possession four feathered limbs puts this creature more firmly into the "trees down" theory. However, feathered legs don't seem to be an aid to flight as we know it. For a better understanding of why this debate is so intriguing, read *Taking Wing*. Once you have, future bird-like fossil discoveries will mean much more to you.



NEWS FROM THE ORNITHOLOGICAL COUNCIL

posted by Lesley Evans Ogden, as follow up to issues noted in *Picoides*, October, 2002.

This letter comes from Ellen Paul, Executive Director of the Ornithological Council.

Last year, Fred Cooke and Sean Boyd asked the Ornithological Council to investigate the cross-border coordination of frequency assignments for avian radio telemetry. They were concerned about the possibility of interference between transmitters set to the same frequency and then placed on birds by researchers on either side of the border. Of course, this could also be a problem with longer-distant migrants that are large enough to carry large transmitters for some length of time.

At about the same time, Brett Sandercock asked the OC how the frequency assignments were made in the U.S. It seems that manufacturers are selling transmitters with the frequencies pre-set, presumably to frequencies assigned to wildlife radio telemetry by the FCC.

To make a long story short, we hired an expert in frequency assignment (in the U.S.). What we learned was of great concern, because it turns out that it is most likely that there is no legal frequency for avian wildlife telemetry in the U.S., except for government-users of wildlife telemetry (I'll explain in more detail, below). We're just getting ready to publish a fact sheet that will address the U.S. frequency assignment problem. However, it will not specifically address the cross-border issue for 2 reasons:

1) The issue of cross-border frequency coordination is technically moot, since there is no legal frequency for avian telemetry in the U.S.

2) I spoke to an FCC International Bureau representative named Rick Engelman. He said that apart from the technical problems with frequency assignment in the U.S., there is no cross-border coordination for low power equipment. He stated that there is generally no interference from low power transmitters, but that if such a situation should occur (either between multiple avian telemetry users or between avian telemetry users and other users) then they would have to set up some kind of coordination.

He suggested two alternatives:

a) direct coordination on a voluntary basis through some kind of clearinghouse (e.g., an organization like the OC). This solution would be less than perfect, because it would be voluntary, but it is a service we could provide.

b) get permission to use the frequencies assigned to U.S. government agencies for wildlife telemetry, because these frequencies are coordinated.

In fact, we are trying to get permission to use the frequencies assigned to U.S. government agencies as a solution for the U.S. frequency-assignment problem. I'll keep you posted on our progress in this regard. The Department of the Interior said "sure no problem" but that statement was made by a rather low-level staffer (albeit the radio frequency coordinator for the DOI) who probably does not have the authority to make this statement. Once we request some kind of letter or document that can be provided to a non-government researcher in order to purchase a transmitter set to the government frequency, there will likely be all sorts of bureaucracy to wade through. The National Science Foundation said that it has no authority by itself to permit private researchers to use federal frequencies. The frequency coordinator for NSF stated that we would need to ask the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (a branch of the Commerce Dept.) for that authority. In turn, NTIA would turn to its Interdepartmental Advisory Committee for a decision, and as DOI and NSF are the agencies most directly affected, if they concur, then NTIA is likely to give permission.

So, at the end of the day, the answer to Fred and Sean's question is: There is no cross-border coordination for avian telemetry frequencies at this time, but the Ornithological Council is working on ways to prevent interference among researchers using transmitters near the borders.

I would like to request that one of you post this to the SCO listserv, and if possible, publish it in *PICOIDES*.

Thanks,
Ellen Paul, Executive Director, The Ornithological Council
Mail to: epaul@concentric.net

Ornithological Council Website:
<http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET>
"Providing Scientific Information about Birds"

Technical details on wildlife telemetry frequency assignment in the U.S:

There are three bandwidths available for wildlife telemetry in the U.S:

40.66-40.70 MHz - this is actually not useable because it requires more powerful transmitters that are too large for birds to carry.

216-220 MHz - this is useable for transmitters that birds can carry, but there are two conflicting FCC regulations. One provision says that this frequency cannot be used for airborne applications if the transmitter exceeds one milliwatt of power. The other provision flatly prohibits airborne use. I have asked the FCC for a clarification. If this turns out to be an unintended glitch, the FCC might just fix the regulations and our problem goes away except for more powerful transmitters (more than one milliwatt). I asked ASTRACK owner Larry Kuechle for technical assistance and he told me that typical bird transmitters would be well below 1 milliwatt. If that is indeed the case, then an FCC clarification of the regulations will solve the problem nearly entirely.

162-174 MHz - assigned to federal agencies. As stated above, we are working on getting authority from the federal agencies for non-government use of these frequencies.

Alternatives currently available to U.S. non-government researchers are not coordinated:

Multiple User Radio Service: MURS is a personal radio service available without the need for individual license documents. MURS users shall take reasonable precautions to avoid causing harmful interference. This includes monitoring the transmitting frequency for communications in progress and such other measures as may be necessary to minimize the potential for causing interference.

MURS is authorized for the frequencies 151.820 MHz, 151.880 MHz, 151.940 MHz, 154.570 MHz, and 154.600 MHz. The authorized bandwidth is 11.25 kHz on frequencies 151.820 MHz, 151.880 MHz and 151.940 MHz. The authorized bandwidth is 20.0 kHz on

frequencies 154.570 and 154.600 MHz. These frequencies are in a part of the spectrum that should make them physically suitable for avian telemetry.

Experimental Radio Service:

This service has an expansive mandate. FCC rule 5.5, "Definition of terms," defines the Experimental Radio Service as "a service in which radio waves are employed for purposes of experimentation in the radio art or for purposes of providing essential communications for research projects that could not be conducted without the benefit of such communications."

The applicant must propose a frequency or frequencies. The FCC will not do this for the applicant. These frequencies should be within as narrow a range as possible. The Experimental Radio Service does not have a specific band allocated to it. All reasonable frequencies are "on the table" as long as the applicant can justify them.

If the frequencies proposed are not exclusively within the FCC's jurisdiction -- that is, if they include frequencies allocated for federal agency use -- the FCC attempts to coordinate (obtain agreement on) the applicant's proposed frequencies with NTIA and with the Interdepartmental Radio Advisory Committee (IRAC), a council of radio chiefs of the various agencies.

Equipment used under a Part 5 license need not be separately FCC authorized. But the license application must describe the technical parameters of the equipment, as well as:

- (1) A description of the nature of the research project being conducted;
- (2) A showing that communications facilities are necessary for the research project involved; and
- (3) A showing that existing communications facilities are inadequate or unavailable.



SOME NOTES ON WILDLIFE DISEASE SURVEILLANCE IN CANADA

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In recent months, the media have carried many headline stories about diseases in wild animals. West Nile virus is sweeping the continent and chronic wasting disease threatens farmed elk and wild deer. Avian botulism and avian cholera, hantavirus and Lyme disease, tuberculosis and brucellosis B --these and other diseases of Canadian wildlife are receiving ever more public attention, and ever more public expenditure, to try to understand and to manage them in some way.

How is it we even know about wild animal diseases in Canada? What branch of government holds this portfolio? How do we know where West Nile virus was active in 2002, or where Newcastle disease was active in the past ten years? To what institutions can ornithologists turn for help to learn why some birds in a population under study have died or to find a database of diseases in a particular species and geographic area? In Canada, in most instances, the answer to these questions is the CCWHC.

The Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre (CCWHC), with its long name, vowel-free acronym, and mysterious logo was founded in 1992 with a mission to improve and consolidate knowledge about diseases in Canadian wildlife and to establish a national program of disease surveillance. Now, ten years later, that surveillance program is well established, with a national database of disease occurrences that contains over 30,000 records, and a pleasing number of research projects, within the Centre and elsewhere, arising from the results of the surveillance program. Major government and non-government wildlife agencies are taking greater account of health issues in their plans and programs. At the same time, the modest CCWHC organization established in 1992 now finds itself the vessel of choice for a burgeoning cargo of urgent and important health issues that threatens to sink the ship.

The CCWHC is an organization among the four veterinary colleges in Canada and is sponsored by all



provincial and territorial governments, by five federal government agencies, and by several non-government groups. The Centre provides disease surveillance and a variety of information services to its sponsors and is a centre of academic activity in wildlife health and disease at each veterinary college (Charlottetown PEI, St-Hyacinthe QC, Guelph ON, Saskatoon SK). The Centre also provides instruction to scientists, wildlife personnel and the public on various aspects of wildlife health, publishes a newsletter and maintains an informational web site. All of these activities provide teaching and research material to undergraduate and graduate programs at the colleges. In this way, the Centre has been able to apply the full power of the veterinary medical expertise of the four colleges to wildlife health issues and, at the same time, bring wildlife, environment and ecosystem issues more firmly into the veterinary profession.

Wildlife diseases are prominent issues in at least three major domains of public concern and government responsibility: wildlife management and conservation, agriculture and public health. In fact, many of the wild animal diseases currently receiving media attention are important simultaneously in all three domains. For example, West Nile virus (WNV) is a virus of wild birds and bird-feeding mosquitos. Its arrival in 1999 triggered the largest epidemic of viral encephalitis in people ever recorded in North America and the virus is a major public health concern. Wild birds are a focus of attention in the

public health response to WNV because corvids which have died from acute infection have turned out to be the best indicator of virus activity in a geographical area. On the agriculture side, WNV is causing an epidemic in horses affecting both the food and the pharmaceutical industries. WNV also has killed very large numbers of wild birds of many species and there is mounting concern among ornithologists that such mortality may have a negative impact on vulnerable populations. In addition, a small number of people have become ill from infections with West Nile virus obtained from small cuts in their skin while dissecting infected birds. The possibility of such infections from handling wild birds may require major changes in the routine methods of ornithologists and hunters alike. Tuberculosis in bison and elk, brucellosis in bison and caribou, and chronic wasting disease in elk and deer are additional examples of diseases that are major issues simultaneously for wildlife management, agriculture and human health.

Disease surveillance requires on-going sampling of wild animal populations with a particular purpose. The purpose of the CCWHC surveillance program is two-fold: to identify and record the full range of disease-causing agents and affected host species in Canada, including distribution ranges and changes over time, and to provide decision-makers in relevant Canadian agencies with valid technical information about wild animal diseases. The Centre's general surveillance program is passive in that it relies on samples of diseased animals found by chance and collected by vocational and avocational field personnel across the country. These specimens are examined by veterinary diagnostic specialists within the Centre itself and in cooperating government veterinary laboratories. All findings are archived in a national database within the Centre. Various communication instruments then are used to deliver information derived from the surveillance program to the appropriate government agencies and to the public.

During its first ten years of operation, the CCWHC program has recognized a wide range of diseases in wild birds. For example, in the mid- to late 1990's, type C

avian botulism caused very large-scale mortality among aquatic birds on many prairie wetlands (Fig. 1). The CCWHC developed techniques to quantify this mortality and then coordinated a three-year multi-agency study to determine whether or not the very expensive carcass clean-up efforts undertaken by agencies to reduce the impact of the disease were effective. Results indicated convincingly that in large-scale die-offs, such clean-up efforts were ineffective and management agencies have changed their practices accordingly.

More recently, type E avian botulism has emerged as an important cause of autumn mortality in fish-eating birds on Lakes Erie and Huron in the past four years. Over 1,000 Common Loons and larger numbers of mergansers, gulls and shorebirds have died of this disease in some years. The source of the toxin for these birds is fish, particularly an alien species of gobie. Some ecologists have associated the emergence of type E botulism with the



FIGURE 1. DUCKS DEAD OF AVIAN BOTULISM AT OLD WIVES LAKE, SASKATCHEWAN. PHOTO: TRENT BOLLINGER



ecological changes in the Great Lakes brought about by invasion of alien species molluscs and fish.

Beginning in the mid-1990's and continuing to the present, the Centre's surveillance program has recorded an alarming number of raptors, especially bald eagles, dead of acute poisoning with carbamate and organophosphate insecticides on prairie agricultural lands. These eagles have almost invariably died after feeding on dead coyotes illegally poisoned with these chemicals. Since the probability that poisoned raptors will be found and submitted to the Centre for diagnosis is very small on the thinly-populated prairies, the submission rate of 10-15 affected birds per year that we have recorded may represent many hundreds of eagles poisoned each year.

The Centre also has a mandate to respond to disease emergencies. When West Nile virus was first recognized in North America in August of 1999, in New York City, the Centre was contacted by Health Canada and asked to establish a comprehensive surveillance program for West Nile virus in Canadian wild birds. Rapid deployment of such a program would have been impossible were it not for the Centre's disease surveillance infrastructure already in place. The national database was adapted to facilitate a very complex system of data transfer among laboratories and institutions, and rapid mapping and dissemination of results to public health agencies. The program processed 2,000 - 4,000 birds each summer and fall in 2000, 2001 and 2002, and successfully tracked virus activity as it spread across the country in 2001 and 2002. Because this special surveillance program was linked to the Centre's general disease program, it was possible to extract additional information from specimens collected in the West Nile program. In this way, epidemics of trichomoniasis in Mourning Doves, of Newcastle disease and avian cholera in cormorants and of type E botulism in piscivorous birds on the Great Lakes also were detected.

Disease occurrences of lesser scale but high interest also have turned up in the Centre's surveillance program. The arrival in Canada of mycoplasmosis in House Finches and its occurrence also in grosbeaks is one example. Bird mortality in an urban residential area turned out to be an early warning of toxic emissions from a local manufacturing enterprise. A die-off of gulls on an industrial site, widely publicised as due to pollution, was found to be a bacterial infection. Passerines dead on roadsides in winter were found to have died of salt poisoning. Culture of bone marrow from a collection of skeletal remains gave evidence that large-scale mortality

among arctic nesting geese was due to avian cholera. Loons die regularly of lead poisoning from ingested fishing tackle; Horned Larks die of strychnine intended for ground squirrels. Although qualitative rather than quantitative, records such as these are often the critical data that trigger changes in public policy or corrective measures.

The Centre currently is working on its own renewal. The prominence of wildlife health issues in the last few years has resulted in a workload for the Centre that is beyond its capacity of personnel and resources. In 2002, the Board of Directors of the Centre proposed expansion of the CCWHC as Canada's best option to increase national capacity to respond to and manage wildlife health issues. In June and September, the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Councils of Deputy Ministers and Ministers of Wildlife endorsed the Directors' proposal and agreed to facilitate the expansion of the Centre. The first installment of new resources for the Centre is scheduled for 2003-04. Thus, if the Ministers remain true to their collective undertaking, as larger and better CCWHC may soon take shape.

There are several levels at which ornithologists in Canada, professional or avocational, can interact with the CCWHC. In the disease surveillance program, detection of disease is totally dependent on the participation of people who work in the field and are willing to include disease detection and the collection of specimens among their activities. Such participants receive full diagnostic reports on the specimens they submit. The CCWHC would be pleased if all ornithologists, assistants, hunters and birdwatchers would consider themselves participants in this essential aspect of disease surveillance. Some ornithologists may find the Centre's national database a useful resource for their work. This is not a publically-accessible database, but the Centre will extract from it information for research purposes. The staff of the CCWHC includes scientists open to various forms of collaborative research. Some of the diagnostic and information technology capabilities of the Centre are available on a contract basis. The Newsletter of the CCWHC is available, in both English and French, to everyone who requests it; it is available in hard copy or via the CCWHC web site. You are invited to visit that site <<http://wildlife.usask.ca>> and to contact the CCWHC to receive the Newsletter, submit a specimen, or seek further information [Email: <ccwhc@usask.ca> ; telephone (Headquarters Office): 800-567-2033 (within Canada only) or 306-966-5099].



Jean-Pierre Savard

M. Normand David has been actively involved in ornithology for over 30 years. He played a major role in the development and promotion of amateur ornithology and is largely responsible for the major surge in amateur birdwatching in Québec during this period, partly through the publication of several books for amateurs ranging from a very popular guide on bird feeding (in 1982) to a detailed guide on birdwatching sites in Québec (in 1987). He has authored or co-authored over 200 publications on birds, both popular and scientific in nature. Mr David is regularly consulted by media on ornithological issues. He has also presented hundreds of conferences on birds, mainly to regional clubs. In 1988, Mr David became director of the Association québécoise des groupes d'ornithologues (AQGO), which he had co-founded in 1981. AQGO acts as a federation of regional clubs and is in its 14th year of publication of a popular magazine (Québec Oiseaux). He has been on the boards of La Société de Biologie de Montréal(1969-1970); the Club des ornithologues de Québec (1972-1981) ; the Fédération québécoise du loisir scientifique (1976-1980) and the

Province of Québec Society for the Protection of Birds (1976-1985).

Mr David has co-authored the compilation of sightings from Québec in American Birds since 1975. He played a key role in the making of the Québec Breeding Bird Atlas as a member of the Financial and Editorial Committees. He has translated or contributed to the translation in French of several major field guides and many popular text books on birds. In 1993, he co-authored the list of French names of the birds of the world (Devillers et al. 1993), for which he was a leading force. His recent papers on Latin nomenclature in the Bulletin of the British Ornithological Club are spectacular, and contribute significantly to the work of the checklist committees of both the American Ornithologists' Union and the British Ornithologists' Union.

For these reasons, it is with great pleasure that the SCO/SOC has chosen Mr Normand David as the recipient of the Doris Huestis Speirs Award for his outstanding lifetime achievement in ornithology.



M. NORMAND DAVID IN HIS HABITAT. PHOTO: JACQUES LARIVÉE



SAVING THE LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE

This article is reprinted with permission from *Envirozine*, Environment Canada's online newsmagazine found at www.ec.gc.ca/envirozine. Photo credits: *Amy Chabot*.

In August 2002, 14 juvenile Eastern Loggerhead Shrikes left the confines of the cages where they were conceived to face an uncertain future in the wild. The experimental releases near Ottawa were part of an ongoing effort to develop techniques for increasing the breeding success of these endangered birds in captivity.

A recovery team has been struggling for the past decade to determine why this predatory songbird is in decline. Although no clear answer has emerged, the loss and fragmentation of grasslands--where the eastern subspecies hunts for mice, grasshoppers and other small prey--is likely a key factor. In the first half of the 20th century, the clearing of land for agriculture and the use of grasslands for pasturing livestock contributed to the expansion of the bird's range.

In recent years, however, conversion of pastures and hayfields to cropland has reduced shrike habitat. In Canada, where it was once abundant from Manitoba to New Brunswick, the Eastern Loggerhead now numbers about 40 breeding pairs in the wild--at one location in southeastern Manitoba and two in Ontario.

In 1997, when there were only 18 pairs in Ontario, Environment Canada and its recovery team partners began establishing a captive population to ensure that the unique genetic material of the Canadian birds would be preserved. A total of 43 nestlings were taken to aviaries at the Toronto Zoo and McGill University in 1997 and 1998, and the first captive breeding occurred.

In 2001, the Wildlife Preservation Trust Canada, an organization with international expertise in captive breeding and release of birds, joined the recovery team. With the cooperation of local landowners, the Trust bred

six shrikes--themselves captive bred--in field propagation/release cages in the Smiths Falls area, southwest of Ottawa. Three pairs raised 10 young shrikes, which were released into the wild. In 2002, the experiment involved more birds and improved cage designs.

The cages measured about 4m x 4m x 2.5m, with each pair sharing two units linked by a mesh corridor that was temporarily blocked off. The male and female were only allowed to mix after the male approached the female with

food and nesting material. All six pairs built nests, with five pairs producing 21 young, and one of the five pairs successfully nesting twice. As before, the baby birds learned to hunt live insects and honed their flying skills while they were still in their cages.

The birds' behaviour was monitored by remote video systems mounted in the cages and by telescope from nearby blinds. Elevated feeding platforms were located outside the release door, so that juveniles could exit without stress. Although some returned for food for up to a week, they were observed hunting, avoiding predators and flying with confidence immediately following release. Birds that were hatched at the Smiths Falls facility in 2002 but not released, will be returned to the site next summer to

breed and be released with their young.

Before the start of the 2003 nesting season, a satellite facility will also be established at Prince Edward Point National Wildlife Area on Lake Ontario, near Picton. Eventually all captive loggerheads will be located at such facilities, each in an area of planned restoration within their historic range. This will enable the birds--which are believed to migrate at night--to imprint on the night sky in their natal area.

The status of the Eastern Loggerhead in the wild remains precarious. Not only is the subspecies faced with such new threats as West Nile Virus, but there also remains a lack of knowledge about, and therefore protection on, its



YOUNG LOGGERHEAD SHRIKES



LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE PRIOR TO RELEASE

wintering territories in the United States. As such, plans are currently underway to engage the help of wildlife biologists in states where the birds may be found.

Meanwhile, Canadian recovery efforts are ongoing to protect and restore habitat, conduct research on the genetic makeup of subpopulations, carry out stable isotope analyses, band birds, monitor populations and habitats, and identify critical habitat for this endangered species.

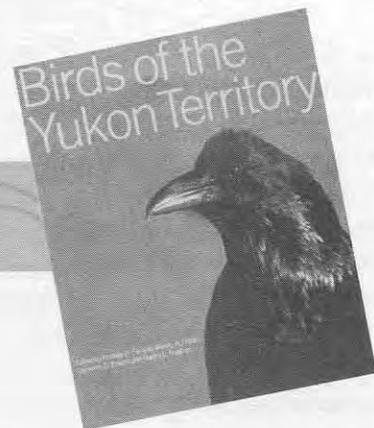
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PUBLIC SURVEYS: USEFUL SOURCES OF SPECIES DISTRIBUTION DATA

Kathy Martin and Graeme Brown

For a number of species at risk, a lack of data on historical distribution and abundance hampers accurate estimations of current status and trends. The feasibility of long-term field surveys covering large areas is limited by practical constraints, however for some purposes there exist effective and economical alternatives. Here, we describe our methods of collecting historical and current distribution data for the Vancouver Island White-Tailed Ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucurus saxatilis*).

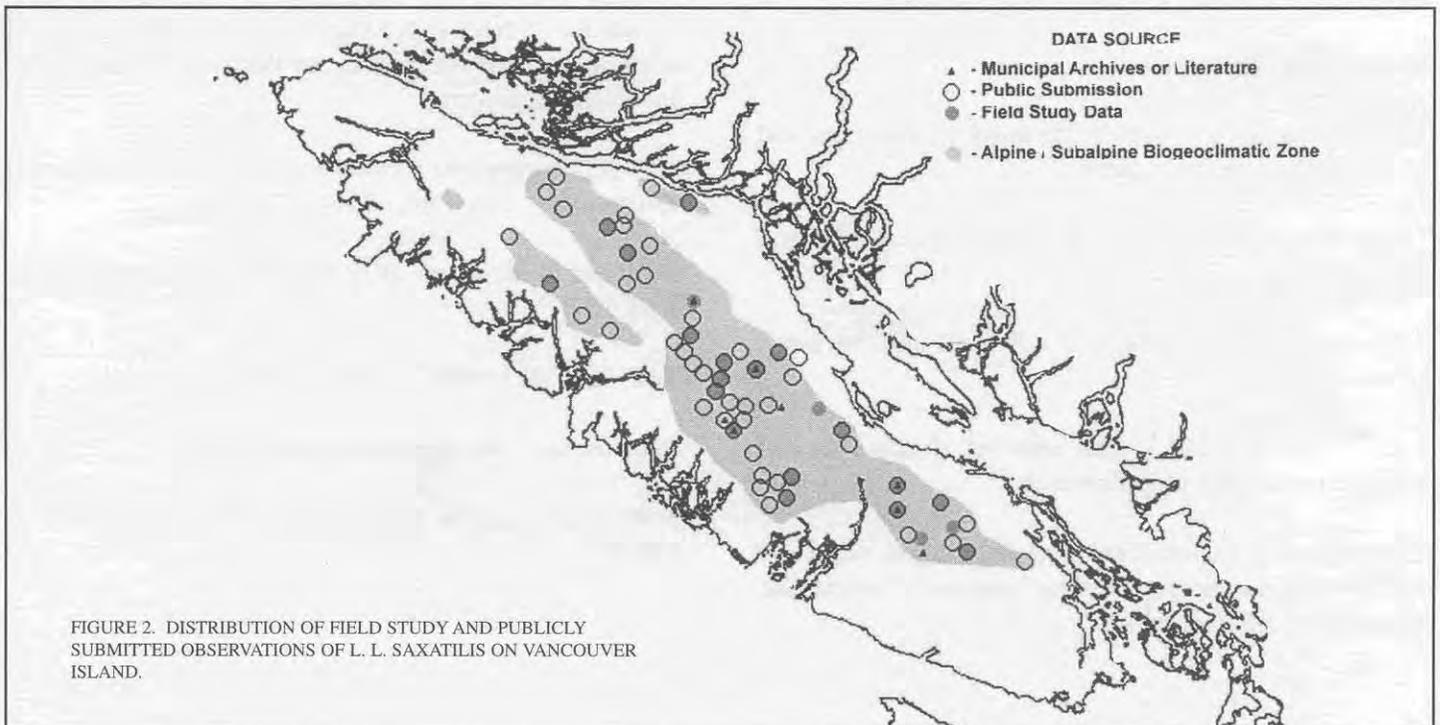
L. l. saxatilis is one of five recognised subspecies of white-tailed ptarmigan, and is endemic to Vancouver Island (McTaggart-Cowan 1938) (Photo: Picoides cover). It inhabits alpine and subalpine environments during the summer. In the fall and winter some individuals move to the upper montane while others remain in or near breeding habitat (Martin and Forbes 2001). The restricted range of the subspecies, and its perceived susceptibility to anthropogenic and natural disturbances led to its designation as "vulnerable" by provincial conservation agencies (Fraser et al 1999, used by Storch 2000).

In 1995 we initiated a study of the ecology and distribution of *L. l. saxatilis*. This included field studies and a public survey. We solicited reports of ptarmigan

sightings from hikers, amateur naturalists, and government personnel who spend time in the Vancouver Island alpine. We contacted individuals directly and distributed a poster highlighting the distinguishing features of *L. l. saxatilis*. A sighting-card program was initiated by the Strathcona Wilderness Institute. Cards with information about the study and how to contribute a report were placed at popular trailheads (Figure 1). This has continued to generate an abundance of reliable sighting reports; since the initiation of the survey in 1995, a total of 301 sighting reports have been submitted. A review of the literature and municipal archives generated a further 13 observation reports (Martin et al. pending publ.).

The publicly submitted sighting reports contribute significantly to our dataset. The combined data from field studies and public surveys represent a total of 93 mountains; 54 of these mountains are represented only in the publicly submitted reports. Many of the mountains represented in publicly submitted reports are remote or difficult to access and fill gaps between field study areas (Figure 2).

The majority of reports submitted by the public were reliable and informative. The only species in or near alpine and subalpine habitats on Vancouver Island with



which *L. l. saxatilis* can be confused is Blue Grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*). All reports were screened for reliability through discussions with the observer to ensure they were able to distinguish between ptarmigan and blue grouse, or by evaluation of the observation details provided. In addition, many modern records were accompanied by photos and/or feather and scat samples. In most cases observers were able to provide high quality data including descriptions of bird behavior, habitat, and precise location.

Public survey has proved to be a highly effective method of collecting a large quantity of reliable data on the current and historic distribution of *L. l. saxatilis*. This method could be applied to other species that are easily identified, and where the appropriate habitats are frequented by humans.

References:

Fraser, D.F., Harper, W.L., Cannings, S.G., and Cooper, J.M. 1999. Rare birds of British Columbia. Wildlife Branch and Resource Inventory Branch, British Columbia Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Victoria, BC. pp. 60-61. British Columbia Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management Species Explorer: <http://srmapps.gov.bc.ca/apps/eswp/>

Martin, K., Brown, G., Young, J. The Historic and Current Distribution of the Vancouver Island White-tailed Ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucurus saxatilis*). Pending publication.

Martin, K. and Forbes, L. 2001. Species Account, *L. l. saxatilis*. British Columbia Ministry of Environment, Lands, and Parks. 10 pp. This document, along with reports on our studies and sightings of the Vancouver Island White-tailed Ptarmigan are available at Kathy Martin's Centre for Alpine Studies website: www.forestry.ubc.ca/alpine

Mctaggart-Cowan, I. 1938. White-tailed ptarmigan of Vancouver Island. Condor 41: 82-83.

Storch, 2000. Grouse Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan 2000-2004. WPA/Birdlife/SSC Grouse Specialist Group. IUCN, Gland. Switzerland and Cambridge, UK and the World Pheasant Association, Reading, UK. x + 112 pp.



Where are the White-tailed Ptarmigan on Vancouver Island?



The Vancouver Island White-tailed Ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucurus saxatilis*) is found exclusively on Vancouver Island. This small, chicken-like bird is one of the few that lives in the alpine year round. Ptarmigan always have a distinctive white tail and wings, but their body feathers change from white in the winter to a mottled brown in summer and fall. These wily birds are able to hide in plain sight in the alpine, subalpine, heather, or on rocky slopes. In summer, they are often found near snow field edges. Ptarmigan are sometimes confused with Blue Grouse, which move up into the alpine in late summer. Blue Grouse have a gray-blue band on their dark tail.



WINTER PLUMAGE.
Note coloured bands on legs



SUMMER PLUMAGE

White-tailed Ptarmigan
SIGHTING RECORD CARD

AREA SURVEYED

Lot : General (eg Strathcona Park) Strathcona Park
 Specific (eg Mountain or Ridge) around 880 meters near Redwell Lake
 Date: month, day, year 9 / 12 / 02 Time in 10am out 5pm

SIGHTING INFORMATION

OF BIRDS IN GROUP 2 Habitat subalpine
 # adults # young .eg alpine, subalpine forest, heather, rock
 (specify male or female if known)

LOCATION BY: GPS or NTS Map (circle one)
 ZONE (e.g. 10U) 10U NORTHING 88 EASTING 13

NTS MAPSHEET NO.: 92F/12 and North American Datum (NAD) used 27 or 83 (circle one)
 OR GPS PRECISION (+/- metres) _____

Comments (e.g., behaviour, plumage colour, size of chicks, predators in vicinity)
moving around in low plants, open partly sunny area along the trail

Observer name and address _____



The 2001/2002 Vancouver Island White-tailed Ptarmigan Conservation Project is financially supported by Mountain Equipment Co-op and the Important Bird Areas program, and with technical assistance from UBC. This public outreach and education initiative has grown to become a community partnership, relying on volunteers and local hiking clubs, coordinated by Strathcona Wilderness Institute.

FIGURE 1. SIGHTING CARD



CANADIAN BIRD-RELATED THESIS ABSTRACTS

Mazerolle, D. 2002. Effects of forest fragmentation on space use and body condition of territorial male ovenbirds. MSc. Thesis Dept. of Biology, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK

Dan.Mazerolle@ec.gc.ca

Several studies have shown a decline in densities and reproductive success of Ovenbirds in response to forest fragmentation. However, many proximate mechanisms potentially linked to the response of Ovenbird populations have not been fully explored. My study evaluated the consequences of forest fragmentation for vegetation characteristics, arthropod prey biomass, and space use and body condition of territorial male Ovenbirds (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) breeding in the southern boreal mixedwoods of Saskatchewan, Canada.

Densities of Ovenbirds were more than 80% greater in contiguous forest than in forest fragments in an agricultural matrix, and were positively correlated with maturity of hardwood stands. Total arthropod biomass was similar between contiguous forest and forest fragments. There was also no relationship between total arthropod biomass and home-range size of Ovenbirds, nor was total arthropod biomass associated with densities of territorial males. However, vegetation composition differed significantly between fragmented and contiguous forest. Canopy trees in contiguous forests were taller, had greater diameter, and were less dense than in forest fragments. Furthermore, percentage of canopy hardwoods, density of high shrubs (> 2m), and volume of coarse woody debris was greater in contiguous forests.

Since female Ovenbirds appear to prefer mature forests with large hardwood trees, differences in vegetation between fragments and contiguous forests could be contributing to reductions in the pairing success of male Ovenbirds in forest fragments. However, current levels of fragmentation in this region do not appear to be affecting densities or space use of Ovenbirds by altering total arthropod prey biomass. As determined by radio-telemetry, Ovenbird locations within home ranges abutting forest edges were situated closer to edges than randomly plotted locations. However, edge use varied with time of day. Males tended to use edge habitat later in the day compared with the interior of fragments. This indicates that previous studies focusing on singing

locations during the morning have likely underestimated the use of edge habitat by territorial birds. Vegetation structure was more complex and soils dryer near edges than in the interior of forest fragments, although total arthropod abundance varied little in relation to edges. Overall, edges abutting agricultural fields did not appear to diminish habitat quality or deter use by male Ovenbirds, suggesting that the generally assumed association between area-sensitivity and edge avoidance for Ovenbirds should be reassessed.

Males in contiguous forest were larger than males in forest fragments and had higher values of hematological indices that are positively associated with energetic demands. Moreover, the proportion of heterophils, a type of white blood cell positively correlated with stress, decreased through the breeding season only for males in forest fragments. Total plasma protein and body mass corrected for structural size did not differ between landscapes indicating that the nutritional status of males in both landscapes was similar. Thus, current levels of fragmentation do not appear to be negatively influencing the health of male Ovenbirds.

These findings also indicate that size of male Ovenbirds could be playing a role in habitat selection, but that defending territories in contiguous forest appears to have physiological consequences.

Previous research conducted in my study area had demonstrated that Ovenbirds in forest fragments, relative to contiguous forest, consist of more first-time breeders, occur at lower densities, and have lower reproductive success. Results from this study indicate that these demographic differences are not likely caused by differences in food supply. However, differences in vegetation structure between landscapes could be influencing Ovenbirds in forest fragments by reducing suitable microhabitats for nesting or by increasing habitat suitability for nest predators. Finally, condition indices measured from birds in fragmented and contiguous forest demonstrate a physiological component to contrasting costs and benefits associated with territory acquisition for this species.

Many of the findings from this thesis are presented in the following publications:

Mazerolle, D.F., and K.A. Hobson. Do ovenbirds avoid boreal forest edges? A spatio-temporal analysis in an agricultural landscape. *Auk* 120: in press.

Mazerolle, D.F., and K.A. Hobson. 2002. Consequences of forest fragmentation on territory quality of male ovenbirds breeding in western boreal forests. *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 80: 1841-1848.

Mazerolle, D.F., and K.A. Hobson. 2002. Physiological ramifications of habitat selection in territorial male ovenbirds: consequences of landscape fragmentation. *Oecologia* 130: 356-363.

Evans Ogden, L. J. 2002. Non-breeding shorebirds in a coastal agricultural landscape: winter habitat use and dietary sources. Ph. D. Thesis, Simon Fraser University.

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The Fraser Delta's intertidal mudflats currently support approximately 44,000 shorebirds during the winter. Adjacent agricultural fields also provide roosting and feeding habitat, but land-use changes are reducing the availability of open-soil farmland. A multi-faceted research program was designed to quantify farmland use by Dunlin (*Calidris alpina pacifica*), Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), and Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) during three non-breeding seasons (October-April) from 1997-2000.

Habitat surveys and farmer interviews revealed disproportionately greater use of fields close to shore for Dunlin and Plover, and smaller fields for Killdeer. Dunlin made disproportionately greater use of bare, cover crop, winter vegetable, and grass fields; Plover mainly used bare and cover crop fields, and Killdeer used all crop types equally. Agricultural practices appearing to enhance field usage were multi-year applications of manure, inorganic fertilizer, laser levelling, and a longer time with the same crop. All species occurred more frequently in fields previously used by conspecifics and where other shorebird species were present.

The frequency of occurrence in fields was greater by night for Dunlin and by day for Plover and Killdeer.

Environmental predictors of field use differed between day and night, and among species. Shorebirds used fields less frequently during increased nocturnal moon illumination, consistent with the hypothesis that perceived predation risk is an important modulator of field use.

The proportional contribution of diet from terrestrial fields versus marine mudflats was quantified via stable isotope analysis (^{13}C and ^{15}N) of Dunlin blood samples. Isotopic turnover rates and tissue fractionation factors for these isotopes were also measured experimentally for Dunlin in captivity. Based on these results, mudflats were the main source of invertebrate prey for Dunlin, contributing approximately 70% of their diet. However, extreme inter-individual variation was found, with farmland dietary contribution ranging from 0 - 87%. Juveniles had consistently more terrestrial diets than adults in all years.

The proportion of diet from fields varied with body shape, but not with overall skeletal size or sex. Culmen lengths were shorter relative to wing and tarsus lengths for Dunlin with more terrestrial-based diets. The results of this research will facilitate targeted conservation and management strategies for non-breeding shorebirds.

Fisher, S. A. 2002. Courtship behaviour, incubation behaviour and brood patches of American kestrels (*Falco sparverius*) exposed to polychlorinated biphenyls. MSc. Thesis, Dept. Biology, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK.

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Historical population declines of raptors have been associated with the bioaccumulation of organochlorine contaminants, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). PCBs are ubiquitous, persistent environmental contaminants that adversely affect reproduction in raptors. One mechanism associated with decreased reproductive success and population decline could be altered or inefficient behaviour during the breeding season. Captive American kestrels (*Falco sparverius*) were studied during the courtship and incubation periods to determine whether PCB exposure could result in behavioural differences compared to control kestrels.

Kestrels ingested approximately 7mg/Kg body weight each day of a mixture of PCBs (Aroclors 1248:1254:1260) through their diet of day-old cockerels.



PCB-exposure began on 17 March 1998 and encompassed the entire incubation period, with an average exposure length of 100 days. The dietary dosage of Aroclors resulted in environmentally relevant total PCB residues in eggs, averaging 34.1 g/g wet weight (geometric mean).

Adult kestrels were studied to investigate potential behavioural and hormonal changes during the courtship period, resulting from clinical exposure to PCBs. There was no difference between treatment and control birds in circulating levels of total androgens ($p = 0.44$) or in 17 β -estradiol ($p = 0.29$), one week following pairing. Male kestrels exposed to dietary PCBs exhibited significantly more sexual ($p = 0.034$), and flight ($p = 0.026$) behaviours, than did control males. Sexual behaviours of male kestrels included inspecting nest-boxes, soliciting copulations, offering females food and giving food to females.

Flight behaviours of the male included flying from one perch to another and aerial display. In addition, the frequency of male sexual behaviours was correlated ($r = 0.605$, $p = 0.001$) with total PCB residues in the eggs of their mates. A concurrent study found that these same PCB-exposed kestrels experienced a delay in clutch initiation as well as more completely infertile clutches (Fernie et al. 2001a).

I investigated whether inefficient incubation behaviour could be attributed to PCB-exposure, possibly leading to poor reproductive success of American kestrels. PCB exposure resulted in a later clutch completion date ($p = 0.005$), a lengthened incubation period ($p = 0.026$) and differences in the frequency, timing and length of incubation behaviours.

Sex-specific differences were evident, with contaminated males spending less time in the nest box ($p = 0.034$) and having fewer incubation bouts ($p = 0.027$) than controls, whereas the behaviour of females did not differ from controls (p 's > 0.33). The length of time PCB-exposed kestrels spent in the nest box ($p = 0.033$), the time the male was in the box ($p = 0.09$), number of male incubation bouts ($p = 0.06$), number ($p = 0.0025$) and length of recesses ($p = 0.02$), number of nest switches ($p = 0.033$), and the time of the last recess began ($p = 0.03$) were correlated with hatching success during some observation periods.

Incubation and brood patches share a related function; therefore, brood patch size could potentially explain hatching failure, or patches may be a confounding factor in the relationship between incubation behaviour and hatching success.

Exposure to PCBs resulted in size differences of brood patches in American kestrels. PCB-exposed male and female non-breeders had two larger brood patches than control non-breeders (p 's < 0.04).

Breeding males exposed to PCBs had smaller patches than control breeders (p 's < 0.068), whereas PCB-exposed female kestrels had one larger ($p = 0.035$) and one smaller ($p = 0.03$) patch than controls.

Patch sizes were not related to total PCB residue levels in eggs (p 's > 0.21) of exposed birds. Brood patches were not related to incubation behaviour (p 's > 0.08) or hatching success in either control male ($p = 0.75$) and female ($p = 0.42$) or PCB-exposed male ($p = 0.13$) and female ($p = 0.3$) kestrels.

FIRST BROWN THRASHER

Banding birds is always exciting. This is the first Brown Thrasher ever to be caught at the Brier Island Banding Station, which has been running for many decades. Although thrashers are known to stop on the island (situated at the end of Digby Neck, NB), this one was captured in October of 2003, happily on a day when your editor was there.



PHOTO: JUNE SWIFT

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS



Intercontinental Hotel, New Orleans, Saturday, September 28th 2002, 1200 – 1430h.

In attendance: 33 persons and 8 proxies

1. Introduction (Kathy Martin): Kathy Martin thanked the outgoing councillors (David Bird, Leah deForest, Fred Cooke and Erica Nol) for their dedicated work for the SCO.

2. President's Report (Kathy Martin) - handout: Two new awards were created: the Fred Cooke Student award and a student SCO-AOU joint-membership award. *Picoides* has been redesigned under the new editor. We have a new Vice-president and Recording Secretary.

3. Minutes of the 2001 AGM meeting (Kathy Martin): Motion to accept previous minutes by David Bird, seconded by Charles Francis, and carried.

4. Membership Secretary's Report (Kathy Martin for Nancy Flood) handout: There was a slight decrease in the membership, especially in Ontario and British Columbia. Renewal by the web site is increasing. Motion to accept report by Charles Francis, seconded by André Desrochers, and carried.

5. Treasurer's Report (Kathy Martin for Tom Dickinson) handout: The finances of the Society are healthy. Fund raising is needed for the Fred Cooke Student Award. This award is administered by BSC and the candidates are selected by SCO. Motion to accept report by David Bird, seconded by Pierre Mineau, and carried. Larry Peat was nominated as auditor for 2003. Nomination moved by Charles Francis, seconded by Marty Leonard, and carried.

6. *Picoides* Editor's Report (Tranquilla-McFarlane for Dorothy McFarlane): Input is needed for *Picoides* (book reviews; articles; opinions; editorials etc.). She would like to have volunteers survey journals for papers written by Canadian ornithologists so that they can be listed. Someone is needed to write an obituary for Earl Godfrey. Francis Cook was suggested by Stuart Houston as a possibility. It was proposed that a series of editorials on the future of ornithology in Canada be solicited for *Picoides*. Possible writers include: Fred Cooke, Hugh Boyd and Jean Bédard. Action by Editor to approach possible contributors. Motion to accept report by Charles

Francis, seconded by Pierre Mineau and carried. Bob Currie mentioned that he will gladly add items to the SCO web site. If anyone wants to add items to the web site, please send material to Jean-Pierre L. Savard who will circulate them through council to ensure adequacy for SCO.

7. Committee Reports:

Student presentation awards (Kathy Martin for Greg Robertson): Fifteen applications were received for the Baillie and the Taverner awards. The Baillie award was won by Ryan Norris from Queen's University, and the Taverner awards by Scott Lovell from the University of Calgary and Daniel Mazerolle from the University of Saskatchewan. Two student presentation awards were given to SCO students at the 2002 NAOC meeting in Louisiana: Marylene Boulet from McMaster University (Where do Yellow Warblers go? An application of genetic markers as a tool to assess migratory connectivity among breeding and wintering grounds) and Stephane M. Doucet from Queen's University (Parasites, plumage and sexual selection in Satin Bowerbirds)

Doris Huestis Speirs Award (Kathy Martin for Marc-André Villard): The committee (Marc-André Villard, Gilles Seutin, Erica Dunn, Susan Hannon) selected Mr. Normand David as recipient of the award for 2002.

Fred Cooke Student Award (Kathy Martin): this is a joint award between BSC and SCO. Terms of agreement between SCO and BSC have been signed. The award is in place and will be operated much like the Baillie and Taverner awards. BSC will cover the costs of the first few awards to allow enough time for fund-raising for award to be sustainable. Action by Jean-Pierre Savard: to produce a brochure announcing the award and to initiate fund-raising. The objective is to try to raise enough funds to make the award operable within a year. If anyone wishes to serve on the award committee, please contact either Jean-Pierre Savard or Kevin Teather.

Ornithological Council (Lesley Evans-Ogden): OC has commissioned fact sheets on 1) overlapping telemetry signals between Canada and the US; 2) the risks posed by the West Nile Virus to researchers;



3) revised guidelines on the use of wild birds in research.

It was suggested that if we need a new list server, Evans Cooch at Cornell could possibly do it. OC is looking into taking responsibility for research priorities by creating a research working group.

Bird Studies Canada (Jean-Pierre L. Savard): We need to suggest to BSC a new SCO representative on their National Council to replace Tony Diamond whose second term has expired. BSC indicated their preference for someone from the University community. Four possible candidates were identified.

IOC Committee Canadian members-2002 (Fred Cooke): Five new Canadian members were appointed: Ross Lein; Susan Hannon who is also the Program Chair for the next meeting in Germany in 2006; Gilles Gauthier; Tony Diamond; and Kathy Martin.

Nominating Committee (Jean-Pierre L. Savard): Elections were held on March 31st 2002. Dr. Susan Hannon was elected as Vice-President (President Elect); two councillors were re-elected for a second term: Dr. Cheri Gratto-Trevor and Dr. Kevin Teather; and five new councillors were elected for a first term: Dr. Rob Butler, Dr. Bob Clark, Dr. Charles Francis, Dr. Roger Titman, and Dr. Marc-André Villard. In 2003, there will be at least two positions to be filled on the council.

North American Bird Banding Council (Heidi E. den Haan for Brenda Dale): (see report 2002 I filed with the executive minutes). Five training manuals are available in English (Bander Study Guide; Trainer Study Guide; Landbirds; Hummingbirds; Raptors). French and Spanish translations are being prepared. The Shorebird Manual should be ready within a year. The Education Committee has placed material on the NABC web site (www.nabanding.net). An ad-hoc committee was formed to deal with the issue of banding in extralimital areas.

Publication Committee (Erica Nol): A journal feasibility committee was formed in the fall of 2001. It produced a comprehensive analysis of the feasibility of producing a Canadian ornithological journal and on possible partnerships. The report is not yet finalized and needs some reworking in light of unofficial contacts with potential partners. A new implementation committee will be formed replacing the journal feasibility committee. Erica Nol has agreed to chair the committee. The committee will include Jim Duncan and Richard Elliot

representing BSC, Erica Nol and Charles Francis representing SCO and Michael Bradstreet and Jean-Pierre L. Savard as ex officio members. The role of the committee will be to initiate fund-raising for the journal and to refine the focus, layout and look of the journal. Also it will seek to clarify and strengthen the level of collaboration of the three major Canadian organisations concerned with the conservation of birds (BSC, CWS and SCO). It will also initiate some tentative solicitation of manuscripts from well known North American ornithologists. At this stage SCO favours a joint production of a bird journal by BSC and SCO. It is hoped that CWS will also support the journal, but the nature of this support is yet to be determined. The production of a journal published on paper and electronically, with three issues per year, would cost approximately \$45,000. The goal of the fund-raising efforts is \$120,000 to ensure that funds are available until income from subscriptions covers production costs.

Three names for the journal were examined and ranked in order of preference by the membership: 1) Most preferred: Bird Conservation and Ecology; 2) Canadian Journal of Ornithology; 3) North American Bird Study. Motion to accept this ranking by Stuart Houston seconded by David Bird, and carried.

Spencer Sealy has been invited to be the Editor of the journal and has accepted. The membership acknowledged the fact that the SCO fees will be increased if the journal becomes a reality. Stuart Houston mentioned that a journal usually needs about 1,000 subscriptions to be economically self-sustainable. There was some discussion about publishing only an electronic version. Most felt that this was not a good option now but realised that in a few decades if not sooner, most journals may be only electronic. We would follow the trend when it happens.

2003-2006 meeting locations (Kathy Martin): In 2003 the meeting of the Society will be in Saskatoon, probably during the week following Thanksgiving. Cheri Gratto-Trevor is heading the organising committee. The CWS songbird and shorebirds committees may meet there at this time. The final theme is not decided yet but it may include species at risk and population dynamics. The length of the meeting will be approximately 2 days. In 2004, the Society will meet jointly with the AOU in August in Quebec City. In 2005, the SCO may meet in Halifax, Nova Scotia with Marty Leonard possibly heading the organising committee. Ontario was mentioned as a possible meeting location for 2006, but

there will also be an NAOC meeting that year and SCO may wish to participate in a joint meeting with other societies.

8. SCO Student Membership Recruitment incentives (Kathy Martin): The joint student membership drive was established to complement the AOU initiative. This opportunity needs to be better publicised. This year 6 free SCO student memberships were given. We have funds for approximately 40 more.

9. Other Business: Policy on Resolutions. After much debate it was decided that the Society will not adopt resolutions on conservation issues until it has developed a policy on this topic.

Motion to close the meeting by Marty Leonard, seconded by Heidi E.den Haan, and carried.

Jean-Pierre L. Savard, Recording Secretary (acting)

SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2001



Tom Dickinson, tdickinson@cariboo.bc.ca

Fellow members of the SCO:

I'm happy to report that the Society's finances remained healthy in 2001. As shown on our financial statement, our membership revenue from invested funds remains steady despite very low interest rates, our membership is reasonably stable, and donations are up. In addition, we received funds from our joint hosting of the Newfoundland meeting in 2000.

These revenues have adequately covered our basic operating costs associated with the publication of the newsletter, our membership in affiliated organisations, the Taverner awards in support of research, and the Speirs award (although this amount was not incurred until 2002). In addition, we have been able to support two new initiatives.

Based mainly on the funds transferred from the Memorial meeting and donations from members of Council (special recognition owing to Ross Lein and Kathy Martin), our society now allows students to apply for free membership. This brings us in line with the AOU and very likely will help generate a healthy age structure within the organisation.

A second initiative in support of students was also begun in 2001. The Cooke Travel Award was established thanks to a generous endowment from Fred and Sylvia Cooke and donations from many of their friends and colleagues. Early in 2002, through discussions with Bird Studies Canada, we arrived at what I believe is a very workable

solution for the management of this award. Owing to its more stable funding base, BSC will deal with the finances. SCO, through its standing awards committee will adjudicate applications and recommend recipients to BSC.

Individuals can make donations either to BSC or SCO; donations made to SCO will be transferred annually to the Cooke account at BSC. I am extremely happy with this arrangement, especially because it recognizes Fred's monumental support of both organisations.

Speaking of endowments, our Own Speirs and Taverner funds are doing well. Following the reinvestment guidelines established in our constitution, they have grown from the \$7,000 originally donated in the late 1980's to more than \$16,500 in 2001.

The Speirs endowment has a current value of \$7,311.85 and the Taverner stands at \$9,175.67.

I encourage all of you to invest in our Society's future by renewing your membership for several years and by making a donation to the Student Membership Award and/or the Cooke Travel Award.

Tom Dickinson
Treasurer, SCO



Society of Canadian Ornithologists Financial Statement 2001

Cash	100.00
Savings	1,668.22
Chequing	6,424.20
Investments	19,077.93
Total	27,270.35

Income:

Donations	650.00
Transferred from other accounts	2,500.00
Membership Fees	3,883.99
Publication	80.00
Interest on Investments	963.01
Total	8,077.00

Expenses:

Picoides: Fall 1999	1,535.25
Spring 2000	1,535.25
Taverner Awards (Kasumovic)	500.00
(Strickland)	500.00
Membership Fees: Ornithological Council 2001	390.01
Society Registration	30.00
Bank charges	26.06
Total	4,516.57

Closing Balances(December 31st, 2001):

Cash	100.00
Savings	1,669.89
Chequing	1,569.32
Investments	27,491.57
Total	30,830.78

Prepared by Thomas E. Dickinson
Audited by Larry Peat

BOOK REVIEW

REVIEW OF *The Atlantic Gannet*. By B. Nelson. 2002. 396 pages, drawings (by John Busby) and maps. Second Edition. Norfolk: Fenix Books. ISBN 0-9541191-0-X.

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The Atlantic Gannet is an attractive, more colorful revision of the fine compact first edition *The Gannet* (Buteo Books, 1978). The new edition contains some stunning new photographs, many population updates, and a few new references but is otherwise essentially the same in organization and content. Much is derived from Nelson's Ph.D. studies on Bass Rock four decades ago, with some qualitative updates. The Atlantic Gannet is an engaging but at times uninspiring read.

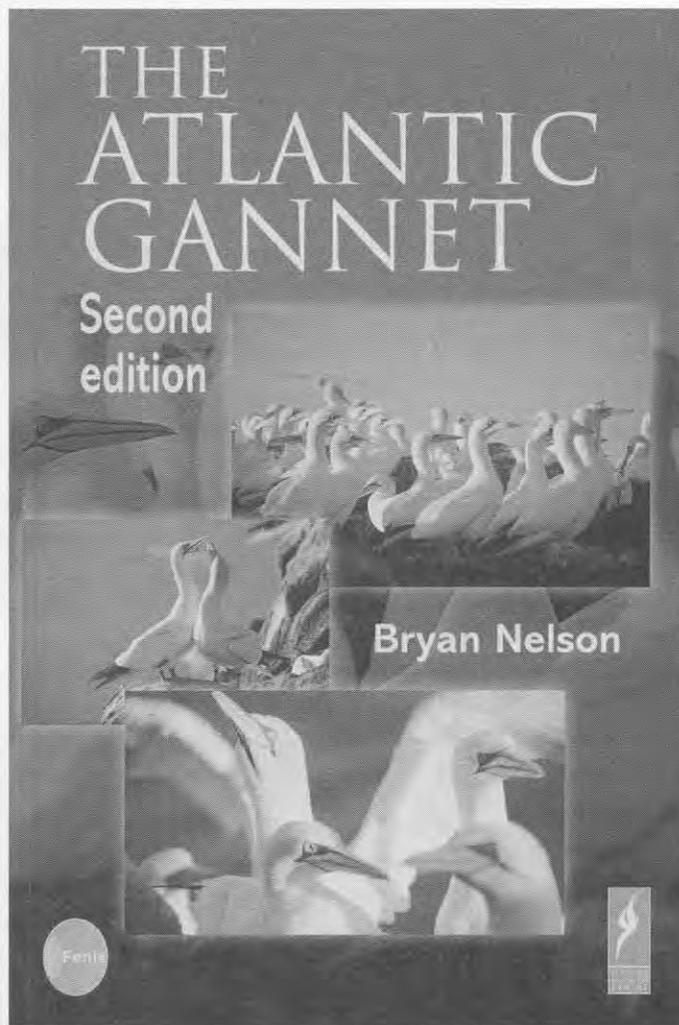
Many of the inspiring qualities of the book derive from Nelson's compelling and insightful descriptions of the behavior of gannets at the colony. Exhibiting the matured skills of a keen naturalist and scientist, Nelson weaves his behavioral studies of gannets into the rich comparative fabric of the sulid family. In contrast, his dated, dogmatic and static ethological interpretations of motivational aspects of innate behavior are tedious. At times, Nelson argues unnecessarily with "critics" and gets entangled with ghosts of opinion. Some perspectives are confounded with group selection, e.g. the population "is always striving towards the [laying] distribution which on average does best ..." (p. 229). The accounts of colony numbers are interesting but do not include the most recent North American counts.

Environmental and weather/climate influences on gannets are well addressed but do not grasp the striking differences in oceanographic conditions among gannet colonies. This is why Nelson attributes compressed breeding seasons at Canadian colonies to high latitude, when in fact these gannetries are the southernmost ones in the world, though also in the coldest arctic water.

Comprehensive, single-species studies, like *The Atlantic Gannet*, though essential could be going the way of

single-species management, i.e. being replaced by more inclusive multi-species and ecological treatments. If so, something important will be lost. Research with gannets is moving from the colony out to sea. These large, robust and docile seabirds are the Northern Hemisphere marine bird of choice for studies employing remote-sensing telemetry and archival data loggers. Nelson has reset the stage for novel explorations of the at-sea tactics of the fools of Bass Rock.

The Atlantic Gannet is, despite minor foibles, a worthwhile read that I highly recommend to all ornithologists and institutions.



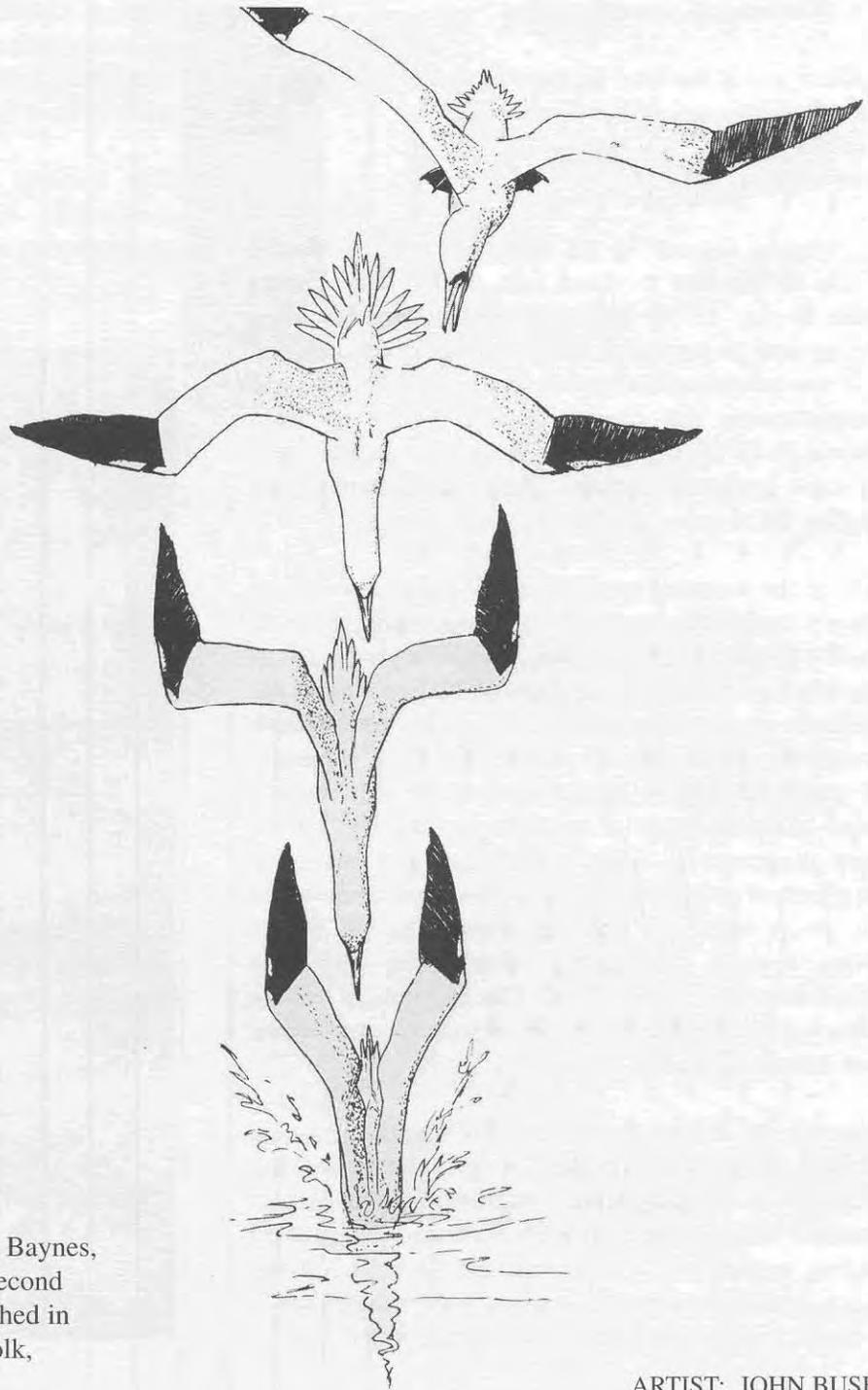
Gannets

Simon Baynes

Gannets
before the fall, before
the sixth day, plunged
from brow to base
a hundred feet
of the Bass cliffside
with the weight and
speed of a plummet
the slant sea riving.

Gannets no doubt
when man is redeemed
or redundant will
nest on the wreckage
of the world he leaves;
spread their wings
to the measure of man
and continue in calm
their immaculate diving.

from *God's Dominion* by Simon Baynes,
found in *The Atlantic Gannet*, Second
Edition by Bryan Nelson, published in
2002 by Feniz Books Ltd. Norfolk,
England.



ARTIST: JOHN BUSBY

Society of Canadian Ornithologists/Société des Ornithologistes du Canada

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