

2019 Early Career Researcher Award – Elizabeth Gow

Elizabeth Gow is the 2019 recipient of the SCO-SOC Early Career Researcher Award. Dr. Gow, who was co-nominated by Dr. Karen Wiebe and Dr. Kyle Elliott, has been contributing to Canadian ornithology for more than a decade, exploring aspects of the avian annual life cycle including reproduction and parental care, variation in migration timing, and the impacts of moult on reproduction. She currently holds the Libro Ero postdoctoral fellowship in Conservation Science at the University of Guelph and has previously held both NSERC (U Guelph) and Killam Postdoctoral Fellowships (UBC). Dr. Gow's current research focuses on the temporal and geographic impacts of domestic cats (both feral and owned) on Canadian birds.

In her nomination letter, Dr. Wiebe writes *"Elizabeth was the most productive graduate student I have had to date, contributing to 11 peer-reviewed papers from work conducted here at U of S."* Dr. Gow's publication contribution has now grown to 23 peer-reviewed papers with half a dozen more papers in preparation.

A possible reason for her productivity (other than *"working tirelessly"*) is Dr. Gow's willingness to pioneer new technologies and learn new lab techniques to supplement her field studies. She was among the first cohort in Dr. Bridget Stutchbury's lab to use geolocators to study migration, a contribution that earned her co-authorship on a paper published in *Science* (Stutchbury et al. 2009, *Science* 323: 896) – not bad for a first publication as a Master's student! Elizabeth's PhD work on Northern Flickers at University of Saskatchewan was one of the first to study



Photos courtesy of Elizabeth Gow. // Photos gracieuseté d'Elizabeth Gow.

post-fledgling parental care using radio telemetry to track the movements of fledglings and parents across the landscape. As a Killam Postdoctoral Fellow, Dr. Gow took the initiative to start the CORT lab at UBC and then undertook training students in the techniques used to extract corticosterone from feathers. Not surprisingly, SCO-SOC is not the only society to recognize Dr. Gow's ornithological contributions. In 2015 she was the recipient of the Cooper Ornithological Society's Young Professional Award for outstanding early-career contributions to ornithology.

Elizabeth's community outreach includes interviews on CBC radio, judging at science fairs, serving as a panelist following the showing of *The Messenger* (an award-winning documentary on songbird conservation), and delivering public seminars to promote science and ornithology. She was the winner of the "Way Coolest Talk of 2015" in the Beatty Biodiversity Museum's Way Cool Talks public seminar series.

Dr Elliott writes in his nomination letter that *"Elizabeth exemplifies the spirit of the award, being someone who has dedicated her already-impressive career to Canadian ornithology"*. The committee (myself, Jon McCracken of Bird Studies Canada, and Tony Gaston Research Scientist Emeritus at Environment and Climate Change Canada) could not agree more! Congratulations to Dr. Elizabeth Gow, the SCO-SOC 2019 Early Career Researcher Award winner!

-Dorothy Hill, Chair SCO-SOC Early Career Researcher Award