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ÉTUDES D'OISEAUX CANADA

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4 May 2007

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## INTERNATIONAL

### Avibase Features New Photographic Guide to the Birds of the World

**1 May 2007** – Every day, thousands of birdwatchers visit Avibase, a popular website on birds of the world. This free service, hosted by Bird Studies Canada and created and maintained by BSC's Senior Scientist Denis Lepage, contains nearly 3.7 million records on bird taxonomy and distribution.

A new and exciting feature has been added to Avibase, providing access to a photographic guide to the birds of any region or country of the world. The photographic versions of the Avibase checklists link to a public photo site called Flickr, where photographers make their photos available to the world. [Follow this link](#) to see a photographic guide of the birds of Canada.

### BSC Senior Scientist Participating in the World Series of Birding



**30 April 2007** – Partners in Flight and International Migratory Bird Day have formed an international team of birders – the Redstarts – to compete in the World Series of Birding. BSC's Senior Scientist Denis Lepage will join team members from the U.S. and Central America in Cape May on International Migratory Bird Day (May 12) to begin a 24-hour Birdathon. The goal is to raise funds that will be dedicated to conservation, research, and education, and have fun doing it. The team hopes to find 200 bird species during a 24-hour period. Visit the [New Jersey Audubon Society's website](#) to learn more about the World Series of Birding.

The Partners in Flight team is fundraising for Cerulean Warbler conservation activities. The event will have a double purpose, as Denis will also conduct his own Birdathon on the same day. To sponsor Denis and support Bird Studies Canada's activities and other bird conservation projects in Canada, you can [make a donation here](#).

## This Week's Highlights

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## Raptor 'Super-Roost' Found in Senegal



Lesser Kestrel © Cuneyt Oguztuzun/ BirdLife International

**26 April 2007, BirdLife International** – Surveyors in Senegal have found one of the largest ever bird of prey roosts. The massive roost contains approximately 45,000 insectivorous raptors, including over 28,600 Lesser Kestrels and 16,000 African Swallow-tailed Kites. The roost is thought to host more than half of the combined known breeding Lesser Kestrel populations of western Europe and northern Africa. The species is listed as Vulnerable by BirdLife International, and has declined rapidly in western Europe since 1950. Significant conservation efforts have been devoted to the Lesser Kestrel in its European breeding range, but the discovery of this 'super-roost' highlights the importance of protecting wintering sites as well. More information is available on the [BirdLife International website](#).

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## NATIONAL

### BC's Ministry of Environment Supports Province's First Breeding Bird Atlas

**4 May 2007** – The long-held vision of a Breeding Bird Atlas in British Columbia is soon to become reality. It is over 15 years since BC's first bird faunal summary was published in the landmark first volume of *The Birds of British Columbia*, and there is now an urgent need for current, systematic, and explicitly mapped information on bird distribution and abundance, related to habitat across the entire province, collected using standard, repeatable techniques. The project will generate key data to inform local and regional conservation planning and actions, and will provide a simple, province-wide framework for long-term monitoring of distribution and population change. British Columbia's Ministry of Environment has provided a major contribution to making this happen, with a \$60,000 grant to help launch the project in 2007-08.

The BC Atlas is being planned as a seven-year (2007-2014) conservation partnership between government agencies and non-government organizations including Bird Studies Canada, the BC Field Ornithologists, BC Ministry of Environment, BC Nature (the Federation of BC Naturalists), and the Canadian Wildlife Service. The project is actively seeking additional partners from the donor, corporate, and non-government sectors. The BC Atlas is being modelled on the successes of, and lessons learned from, other Canadian breeding bird atlas projects, and will benefit enormously by building on the latest in atlassing data management and mapping techniques developed by Bird Studies Canada for the Ontario and Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas projects. Field surveys will be conducted over five consecutive breeding seasons (2008-2012), for which the project will be seeking the participation of as many volunteer atlassers as possible. Further updates will be posted here as the project develops.

### COSEWIC News: Alarming Declines in Aerial Insectivores; Peregrines Recover

**30 April 2007** – The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has recommended several species for inclusion on [Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act](#). In April, COSEWIC expressed alarm that aerial-feeding, insect-eating birds are disappearing: both Common Nighthawk and Chimney Swift were assessed as Threatened. Disturbingly, the cause of declines in these two species and other aerial insectivores (e.g. some swallows) is unclear, but is thought likely to involve impacts on insect populations through pesticide use and habitat loss. Red-headed Woodpecker was also assessed as Threatened, having experienced significant long-term declines associated with habitat loss and the removal of dead trees in which it nests. Sharp declines in the migratory Red Knot are also cause for concern; in particular, the subspecies *rufa*, which breeds only in Arctic Canada, was assessed as Endangered, and the subspecies *roselaari*, which migrates through BC and breeds in Alaska, was assessed as Threatened. Depletion of horseshoe crab eggs, a critical food source used during northward migration, has been cited as a key contributory factor in these declines. Black-footed Albatross, which feeds in significant numbers off the BC

coast and is subject to various threats including by-catch from long-line fisheries, was assessed as Special Concern. There was some good news in the down-listing of the *anatum* subspecies of Peregrine Falcon to Special Concern, following widespread population recoveries following the ban in Canada of organochlorine pesticides (e.g. DDT).

Volunteer-based programs continue to play a major role in assessing the status of birds in Canada. The assessments for Chimney Swift and Common Nighthawk were largely based on results from the Breeding Bird Survey and the second Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. Likewise, the assessment that resulted in a Threatened status for Red-headed Woodpecker was based upon results from the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas and the migration monitoring program at Long Point Bird Observatory. Prothonotary Warbler was reconfirmed as being Endangered, based upon a status report authored by Jon McCracken (BSC's Ontario Program Manager).

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## REGIONAL

### Birdathon Month is Here!

**4 May 2007** – It's your last chance to be involved in the 2007 Baillie Birdathon. If you haven't done so already, please support Birdathon, either by signing up to participate ([download a kit here](#)) or by sponsoring a participant (visit the [Baillie Birdathon Donation web page](#)). Whether you direct your funds to BSC, or direct a portion of your money to your favourite local naturalist club or a Canadian Migration Monitoring Network member station anywhere in the country, the proceeds support bird conservation in Canada. Read on for information about Birdathon events in different parts of the country.

### Supportez le Baillie Birdathon de l'OOT!

Ce printemps marque le lancement d'une nouvelle activité de financement de manière à assurer la survie des activités de l'Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac (OOT) : une participation au Baillie Birdathon! Les observateurs Samuel Belleau, Samuel Denault, et Émilie Berthiaume participeront au Baillie Birdathon de l'OOT, le 12 mai prochain à Tadoussac. Vous pouvez effectuer [un don en ligne](#) par carte de crédit sur le site sécurisé.

Chaque dollar compte et il n'y a pas de trop petit don. Votre don pourrait donc faire la différence cette année.

### Support the OOT Baillie Birdathon!

The Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac (OOT) is launching a new fundraising activity: this spring they are participating in the Baillie Birdathon! Samuel Belleau, Samuel Denault, and Émilie Berthiaume will make up the OOT's team and will be doing their Birdathon on the 12 May in Tadoussac. If you would like to support the OOT by becoming one of their sponsors, [please pledge online](#).

Please remember that even a small donation can make a difference, helping to buy new equipment for the banding station and publish Volume 4 of The Migration Chronicle.

### Meadowlark Festival's Okanagan Big Day Challenge to Support Birdathon

In British Columbia, the 22nd Okanagan Big Day Challenge on May 20th is one of the main events at the annual [Meadowlark Festival](#), and this year will again be run as a Baillie Birdathon. Teams regularly come from across Canada and the Pacific Northwest to compete to see the most species in the Okanagan Valley and surrounding area in 24 hours; for those preferring not to deal with sleep deprivation, there is the Little Big Day (an 8-hour Birdathon). The Meadowlark Festival is organized by the Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance (OSCA) and held over the May long weekend each year, to celebrate and encourage people of all ages to experience, discover, and explore the unique wildlife and habitats found in this region. All funds targeted to OSCA from the Birdathon will be used to run the Vaseux Lake Bird Observatory, a part of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network.

### Tommy Thompson Park Spring Bird Festival and Baillie Birdathon

Every spring, songbirds return to their breeding grounds. Toronto's Tommy Thompson Park, a globally significant Important Bird Area, is an ideal spot for viewing this natural phenomenon. Hone your bird identification skills and learn about research and conservation work underway in this urban wilderness. Bring binoculars and a bird field guide if you have them. Support the Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station (TTPBRS) by participating in the Baillie Birdathon or sponsoring celebrity birdathoner Mark Cullen. Select the link for more information on the [TTPBRS Birdathon](#) or select the following link for information on [guided bird hikes](#).

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