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INTERNATIONAL

New Issue of ***BirdWatch Canada*** Released



5 March 2010 – In a fascinating feature article for the latest issue of *BirdWatch Canada* (No. 50), Dr. Charles Walcott reveals new details of the social structure, territoriality, and acoustic communication of loons. The information was gleaned through studies of a large loon population in Wisconsin over the last 14 years. Visit the [Bird Studies Canada website](#) to view the table of contents for the newest edition of *BirdWatch Canada*, and to download a PDF of Dr. Walcott’s article, “Loon Behaviour and Calls.”

Published four times a year by Bird Studies Canada, *BirdWatch Canada* reports the latest results from our programs, and includes topical feature articles about the world of birds. All BSC members receive quarterly issues of our magazine. If you are not already a member, you can join us for as little as CDN \$35 annually! Benefits include free participation in any of our volunteer programs, and the satisfaction of knowing that your membership fee supports bird research, monitoring, and conservation. And you’ll receive a charitable tax receipt for the full amount of your membership.

Join us today! To become a Bird Studies Canada member, [visit our website](#) or call us toll-free at 1-888-448-2473.

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Photo: Ann Maddock

24 February 2010 – In an effort to determine where Piping Plovers wintering in The Bahamas are staging during migration, and breeding, 57 birds were uniquely colour-marked this winter in The Bahamas for Environment Canada by Sidney Maddock and Peter Doherty, with help from The Bahamas National Trust. Each bird has a black flag (band with a tab sticking out slightly) on the upper left leg, nothing on the upper right, a single colour band on one lower leg, and two colour bands (which can be the same colour on top of each other) on the other lower leg. Colours used included red, orange, yellow, white, light green, dark green, dark blue, and black.

Please report all sightings to Cheri Gratto-Trevor, Prairie and Northern Wildlife Research Centre, Environment Canada, at cheri.gratto-trevor@ec.gc.ca. Please note the colour and location of each band on the bird, the location and behaviour of the bird (on nest or brood, foraging at migratory stop-over, etc.), the presumed sex of the bird (if possible), and information about how many birds at specific locations were examined for bands.

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NATIONAL

Things that Go 'Hoot' in the Night

3 March 2010 – All across Canada, adventurous volunteers are getting ready to conduct owl surveys. The Canadian **Nocturnal Owl Survey** is a roadside survey conducted by volunteer citizen scientists, primarily targeting nocturnal, forest-breeding owls (e.g., Barred Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl). The target owl species differ by region, and in some cases special protocols have been developed to sample poorly-monitored species (e.g., Flammulated Owls in British Columbia).

The national Nocturnal Owl Survey operates through a network of regional surveys that contribute data to a central database. Regional partners include government and non-government organizations. The main objectives of the survey are: to determine the relative abundance and distribution of owls in Canada; to monitor changes in owl populations over time; to determine habitat associations; and to investigate the impacts of forest management practices and other types of habitat change on owls.

Because spring arrives to the BC coast sooner than to the rest of Canada, some west coast surveyors have already completed their owl surveys. Timing varies across the country, but most surveys take place on a single evening in April or early May – a time when owls are most vocal. The owl survey is one of Bird Studies Canada's most popular programs, because it provides a unique glimpse into the lives of these mysterious nocturnal species.

Un cri dans la nuit !

3 mars 2010 – À travers tout le pays, l'équipe des bénévoles de l'Inventaire des hiboux nocturnes est fébrile à la veille de leur prochaine sortie annuelle. Ce programme d'inventaire vise un suivi démographique des espèces de Strigidés qui nichent en milieu forestier (p. ex. la Chouette rayée et la Petite Nyctale). Les participants notent la présence de ces oiseaux lors

de relevés menés le long de routes secondaires. Ce programme national est composé de plusieurs réseaux d'inventaires régionaux, auxquels participent de nombreux partenaires gouvernementaux et non gouvernementaux.

Les objectifs principaux de l'inventaire sont de documenter la répartition et l'abondance relative des hiboux nocturnes, de suivre la tendance de leurs populations et d'étudier l'effet sur les hiboux des changements survenus dans leur habitat.

Les espèces cibles du programme varient d'un océan à l'autre et, dans certains cas, les protocoles sont adaptés afin de suivre de plus près certaines espèces pour lesquelles nous avons peu d'information (p. ex. le Petit-duc nain en Colombie-Britannique). La période de recensement varie aussi selon les régions et il a lieu en avril au Québec ; un mois où les hiboux sont faciles à détecter aux chants.

Ce recensement suscite un grand engouement en raison du fait qu'il donne aux participants l'occasion d'être en présence de ces oiseaux mystérieux de la nuit. Pour en apprendre davantage, nous vous invitons à visiter [notre site Web](#).

LGL Supports Bird Studies Canada

1 March 2010 – Bird Studies Canada has recently received a \$10,000 donation from long-time supporter LGL Limited. We gratefully acknowledge LGL for their generous ongoing sponsorship of our programs. As one of North America's leading ecological research companies, LGL conducts benchmark environmental studies and provides biological consulting services for the public and private sectors. Learn more on the [LGL website](#).

Wildlife Habitat Canada Funds Bird Research and Conservation

22 February 2010 – [Wildlife Habitat Canada \(WHC\)](#) recently committed \$75,000 to support bird research, conservation, and education programs. Of this money, \$50,000 will support all aspects of program delivery for Bird Studies Canada's [Prairie & Parkland Marsh Monitoring Program](#). A primary objective of the Prairie & Parkland MMP is to develop spatially-explicit models to improve habitat conservation and management for wetland-associated birds within the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture delivery area.

WHC will provide another \$25,000 to support Long Point Waterfowl, with \$20,000 going toward research on the ecology and movement patterns of Sandhill Cranes in central Ontario. This work is being conducted by Everett Hanna, a Master's student supervised by Long Point Waterfowl. The final \$5000 will support Long Point Waterfowl's [2010 Youth Hunting & Wildlife Heritage Workshop](#).

Bird Studies Canada, the Prairie & Parkland Marsh Monitoring Program, and Long Point Waterfowl thank Wildlife Habitat Canada for their continued generosity.

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REGIONAL

American Woodcock Survey Comes to Bird Studies Canada



Photo: Sandra & Frank Horvath

5 March 2010 – The American Woodcock Singing-ground Survey is a bi-national monitoring program that provides an index of the relative size of the woodcock breeding population in North America. It is the most important source of data used to guide federal, state, and provincial woodcock programs. Bird Studies Canada has recently taken on the role of coordinating the Ontario portion of this survey, and we are looking for volunteers interested in surveying assigned routes throughout the province. Each route consists of a single sunset survey of 10 stops, where the participant will count the numbers of individuals observed using the vocal courtship displays, or “peents.” Monitoring will occur between April 15 and May 20; the actual monitoring window will depend on where in Ontario you live. Routes will be assigned according to the participant’s availability and geographic location.

If you are interested in participating in the American Woodcock Singing-ground Survey, please contact Elisabeth van Stam at evanstam@birdscanada.org.

The Winnipeg Foundation Supports Manitoba Breeding Bird Atlas

4 March 2010 – The **Manitoba Breeding Bird Atlas** has recently received a generous grant from **The Winnipeg Foundation** for \$15,000 to enhance community involvement and volunteer participation. Some of the funding will cover public workshops, such as the upcoming launch and workshop April 9-11, 2010 at FortWhyte Alive, Winnipeg. The grant will also help provide volunteers with specialized equipment, such as GPS units, and possibly also “song metres” or similar recording devices to encourage broader participation from volunteers with limited bird identification skills, particularly in remote areas of the province. Many thanks to The Winnipeg Foundation for this valuable support!

Ontario SwiftWatch Training Workshops

4 March 2010 – Bird Studies Canada is hoping to offer a limited number of free training workshops this spring for communities interested in joining **Ontario SwiftWatch**. This volunteer-based monitoring program – currently gearing up for its second full season – is designed to gather information on Chimney Swift abundance, distribution, behaviour, and habitats across the province. The results help scientists determine how and where to focus conservation efforts for this Threatened species.

Tentatively slated for April and May, the workshops will include indoor and outdoor components. Participants will learn how to recognize suitable Chimney Swift habitats; create survey routes; use the SwiftWatch monitoring protocol; and submit data using the NatureCounts website. If you are interested in participating, please contact Elisabeth van Stam at evanstam@birdscanada.org or 1-888-448-2473 ext. 173. Please include the name and contact information for a local volunteer coordinator, your community of interest, preferred dates for a two-day workshop in your area, and, if possible, potential workshop locations and the number of interested individuals.

2010 Lower Great Lakes January Waterfowl Survey

3 March 2010 – In collaboration with several Canadian and U.S. wildlife agencies, Long Point Waterfowl conducted the 2010 Lower Great Lakes January Waterfowl Survey (LGLJWS) during the first week of January. The LGLJWS is flown in conjunction with the annual Mid-winter Survey, and includes Lakes Ontario, Erie, and St. Clair, as well as the St. Lawrence, Niagara, Detroit, and St. Clair rivers. The survey ran for its ninth year in 2010. Long Point Waterfowl coordinates the survey, maintains the database, and distributes the results.

The total number of waterfowl observed increased by 47% from 267,761 birds in 2009 to 393,570 birds in 2010. Species observed well above the nine-year average include: Greater Scaup (76% above the average), Long-tailed Ducks (46%), Common Goldeneye (27%), and Red-breasted Mergansers (27%). Several species were observed below the nine-year average, including Tundra Swans (54%), Mallards (48%), American Black Ducks (34%),

Redheads (27%), and Black Scoters (0.3%). However, numbers of both Tundra Swans (5x increase) and Mallards (2x increase) observed this year were considerably higher than in 2009. For a more detailed summary of LGLJWS results, email Ted Barney at tbarney@birdscanada.org.

Long Point Waterfowl thanks the individuals and agencies involved in conducting this survey.

Foresters and Public Learn to Help Bicknell's Thrush

23 February 2010 – Bird Studies Canada's Atlantic Canada Program Manager Becky Whittam recently gave a presentation in Plaster Rock, NB for 19 staff and members of Acadian Timber's Tobique Forest Advisory Committee. The talk, "Forest Management Options for the Bicknell's Thrush: Reducing Incidental Take of a Bird Species at Risk," included information about habitat requirements of the Bicknell's Thrush, an elusive songbird that nests in the high elevation coniferous forests of New Brunswick. The Bicknell's Thrush, federally listed by COSEWIC as a Threatened species, uses regenerating industrial private and public forests about five to fifteen years post-harvest, coinciding with the period during which pre-commercial thinning is often scheduled.

Whittam presented the current habitat model for this species in NB, including specifics on the age and composition of industrial stands coinciding with the habitat model. Her presentation covered **best management practices** to reduce incidental take of this species, and long-term forest management options to maintain its habitat. She also raised awareness about how to identify this species while working in the forest. The Tobique Forest Advisory Committee consists of representatives of trapping, ATV, and snowmobile clubs, local town councils, forest industry, the NB DNR, naturalists, and conservationists.

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