



**BIRD STUDIES**  
**ÉTUDES D'OISEAUX CANADA**

# Latest News

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## Christmas is Coming

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12 November 2004

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## INTERNATIONAL

### Barn Swallows in Worrisome Decline



Photo: Ethan Meleg

**11 November 2004** - Data from a variety of sources suggest the cosmopolitan Barn Swallow is becoming much less common. In Canada, Breeding Bird Survey data suggest Barn Swallows have experienced a 2.9% annual decline over the past 30 years. That decline has steepened in the last decade to 7.6% annually. Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas data back up this decline, with the number of atlas squares in which Barn Swallows have been found declining by a third over the past 20 years. U.S. data suggest a smaller decline of 1.4% over the last 20 years.

Dick Cannings, BSC's British Columbia Program Manager, and the co-chair of COSEWIC's (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada's) Species Specialist Subcommittee for birds, is increasingly concerned about the future of Barn Swallows: "Barn Swallows have shown a very worrisome pattern of decline over the past 30 years, and if something doesn't turn things around in the next few years, they could well be declared a Threatened species in Canada within a decade."

Concern for declining Barn Swallow populations is not limited to North America. BirdLife International recently published *Birds in Europe*, an in-depth study of the conservation status of European birds. This report highlights the Barn Swallow in their "losers" category. As a breeding bird in Europe, this migratory species is widespread but in moderate decline and showing little sign of recovery. To read more about BirdLife's comprehensive study, [click here](#)

### Guide for Improving Marsh Bird Habitat Now Available

**11 November 2004** - BSC's Marsh Monitoring Program has just produced the full-colour practical guide, *Marsh Havens: improving marsh habitat for birds in the Great Lakes Basin*. This booklet provides practical information about monitoring marsh birds and marsh habitats, and provides a source of information about the relative importance of specific marsh habitats for a variety of marsh bird species. Ultimately, Marsh Havens offers landowners and managers valuable information to help guide habitat management, conservation, and stewardship practices, in order to benefit marsh birds in the Great Lakes basin. The Marsh Havens document can be downloaded by [clicking here](#), or hard copies can be ordered from Kathy Jones, Aquatic Surveys Officer, at [aqsurvey@bsc-eoc.org](mailto:aqsurvey@bsc-eoc.org).

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## 29th Season of Project FeederWatch Starts this Weekend

**10 November 2004** - Saturday, 13 November marks the start of the 29th season of Project FeederWatch. The project has over 15,000 volunteers from across North America. These dedicated "Citizen Scientists" keep track of the kinds and numbers of birds coming to their backyard feeders every two weeks from November to March. The resulting dataset gives us a glimpse into the lives of Canada's winter birds, including population trends, distributional changes, and impacts of disease.

To participate in this winter's count, you can sign up by e-mailing [pfw@bsc-eoc.org](mailto:pfw@bsc-eoc.org). If you are currently not a member of Bird Studies Canada (\$35 annually), you can sign up for membership, which includes all project materials, online, by [clicking here](#) or phone toll-free 1-888-448-2473. Happy FeederWatching!

## Featured FeederWatcher Hails from Canada

**9 November 2004** - Kathy Marie Gaider, from Dauphin, MB, has been a FeederWatcher since 1998. This year, she's the Featured FeederWatcher on Project FeederWatch's website. Kathy feeds the birds only black-oil sunflower seed, and keeps her feeders clean to avoid the spread of disease. She lives right next to Riding Mountain National Park so her feeders host many birds all year long. Read more about Kathy on the Featured FeederWatch web page by [clicking here](#).

## Project FeederWatch Exhibit Featured at Ontario Science Centre

**8 November 2004** - From 26 November 2004 to 2 April 2005, the Ontario Science Centre in Toronto, ON will be featuring a special exhibit about Project FeederWatch. You can learn more by [clicking here](#).

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## Government of Canada Introduces Legislation to Protect Canada's Marine Environment

**Ottawa, 2 November 2004** - A Bill that will allow Canada to better protect its marine environments and send a strong message to polluters has been presented for Second Reading in the House of Commons, the Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of the Environment, announced today.

Bill C-15, An Act to amend the Migratory Birds Convention Act (1994) and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (1999) is designed to make the enforcement of marine pollution cases more effective. The amendments will deal with the flaws exposed by recent court cases and will send a clear message that the discharge of oily waste in Canadian waters is unacceptable. The Bill calls for increased fines of up to \$1 million and additional powers for enforcement officials to redirect and detain ships suspected of having polluted our ocean waters. Each year, an average of at least 300,000 seabirds are killed off the coast of Atlantic Canada as a result of oily bilge from passing ships. To learn more and to read the full press release, [click here](#).

Bird Studies Canada's President, Dr. George Finney, who has been closely involved in the drafting of the Bill reports, "the amendments proposed in this Bill are amongst the most important ever introduced to the Migratory Birds Convention Act since its inception in 1918. The proposals for the Canadian Environmental Protection Act are also fundamental. In my view, the proposed amendments will make the Migratory Bird Conservation Act one of the strongest pieces of environmental legislation in Canada and it has the potential to substantially alter the legislative framework for bird conservation in our nation." For a summary of the content of Bill C-15, [click here](#).

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## Hawk Surveyors Still Seeing Red

**11 November 2004** - The results are in from the spring 2004 Red-shouldered Hawk and Spring Woodpecker Survey in central Ontario, and the number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded is up slightly from 2003. In total, 45 volunteers completed 52 survey routes. Surveyors recorded 159 Red-shouldered Hawks on 69% of routes, with a mean of 3.38 birds/route. Turkey Vulture was the second most common raptor species recorded, followed by Broad-winged Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was the most common woodpecker species (11.7 birds/route) followed by Northern Flicker (7.9 birds/route). For more information about the Red-shouldered Hawk and Spring Woodpecker Survey, and to read about current population trends in the 2004 annual report, [click here](#), or contact Susan Debrececi toll-free at 1-888-448-2473, ext. 222, [sdebrececi@bsc-eoc.org](mailto:sdebrececi@bsc-eoc.org).

## Québec Loon Productivity to be Presented at CWS Conference

**9 November 2004** - On 25 November, Catherine Poussart, coordinator of the Marsh Monitoring Program in Québec, will be speaking to the Canadian Wildlife Service in Sainte-Foy (Québec) about results from the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey (CLLS). Catherine will present results from a study on factors influencing productivity of Common Loons nesting on interior lakes in Québec. Data used in this study came from the CLLS, the Mauricie National Park, and the Canadian Wildlife Service. The conference begins at 9:30 a.m. and is open to the public.

Le 25 novembre, Catherine Poussart, coordonnatrice québécoise du programme de surveillance des marais, sera la conférencière au Service canadien de la faune à Sainte-Foy (Québec). Madame Poussart présentera les résultats d'une étude visant à identifier les facteurs qui influencent la productivité des Plongeurs huard nichant dans les lacs intérieurs du Québec. Les données analysées proviennent de l'Inventaire canadien des Plongeurs huard, du parc national de la Mauricie et du Service canadien de la faune de la région du Québec. La conférence débute à 9h30 et le public est invité à y assister.

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## BSC to Present Bald Eagle Research to St. Thomas Field Naturalists

**9 November 2004** - BSC's Bald Eagle Program Coordinator, Dawn Laing, will be speaking to the St. Thomas Field Naturalists on 3 December 2004. Dawn will be presenting the latest results from Destination Eagle, BSC's Bald Eagle monitoring program. This research is helping answer some important questions about where they go in the period between fledging and becoming a breeding adult (3-5 years later), and associated threats to their survival. The meeting will be held at the Knox Presbyterian Church at 55 Hincks Street, St. Thomas, at 7:30 p.m. Anyone who is interested in learning about this exciting program is invited to attend. To learn more about Destination Eagle, [click here](#).

## Cape Breton Beached Bird Survey Launches Fourth Season

**8 November 2004** - November marks the start of the fourth season of the Cape Breton Beached Bird Survey. Approximately 20 volunteers will be walking their designated beaches once at the end of each month throughout the winter, in search of dead birds and signs of oil pollution. Beached bird surveys are one of the best known methods of tracking marine oil pollution. For more information on this survey, [click here](#).

## Second Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas a Strong Possibility

**6 November 2004** - Today, 31 people from across the Maritimes, representing the naturalist and NGO community, the scientific community, and provincial and federal governments, met in Sackville, NB to discuss the possibility of a second Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas. The first atlas ran from 1986-1990, and the resulting database and book, Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Maritime Provinces (authored by Tony Erskine), has since played an instrumental role in bird conservation planning in this region. The primary goal of a second atlas would be to repeat the coverage achieved in the first atlas in order to examine changes in distribution and abundance of Maritime breeding birds. The group discussed the value of a second atlas, technical aspects of a second atlas, and what needs to be done in order to achieve it. The meeting, hosted by Bird Studies Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service, was a good first step toward developing this important conservation project.

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