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# Latest News



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14 October 2005

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## INTERNATIONAL

### Roseate Tern Undergoing Declines in U.S.

**12 October 2005** - BSC's Atlantic Canada Program Manager, Becky Whittam, attended the joint meeting of the U.S. and Canadian Roseate Tern Recovery Teams on 5-6 October 2005 in Yarmouth, NS. The two recovery teams generally meet every 1-2 years. This year, a five-year decline in Roseate Terns in the United States, from a high of 4300 pairs in 2000, to only 3100 pairs in 2005, was highlighted. Plans for studies of this Endangered species on its wintering grounds in Brazil were discussed, as were methods of deterring mink from predateding tern eggs, chicks, and adults at breeding sites. The Canadian population of Roseate Terns remains stable at around 120 pairs.

### Mapping the Birds of South America

**10 October 2005** - Bird Studies Canada (BSC) staff member, Andrew Couturier, and BSC member, David Agro, are working to produce distribution maps for Robert Ridgely's and Guy Tudor's new Field Guide to the Passerine Birds of South America. The guide will be the most comprehensive for the continent, illustrating, describing and mapping nearly 2000 species! The Field Guide is expected to be published in 2006 by the University of Texas Press. The maps will be the most detailed ever published for South American species and will document breeding and non-breeding ranges as well as migratory routes (for both boreal and austral species). More information about the book, and information on how to obtain a copy, will be published in future issues of Latest News.

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## NATIONAL

### Birdathon Fundraising Record Surpassed

**14 October 2005** - Congratulations to all participants in the Baillie Birdathon. Thanks to your collective effort, the past fundraising record has been shattered! The 2005 Baillie Birdathon has now surpassed \$200,000 in revenue, well above the previous record set in 2003 of \$194,535, and the year is not over yet. The Birdathon is a partnership fundraiser whereby many participants designate a local conservation club to receive a portion of funds raised. This year more than 80 clubs will receive revenue through the Birdathon. Of course, a special thanks goes out to those participants raising money specifically for Bird Studies Canada in support of BSC's bird research and conservation programs. Congratulations to George Pond who successfully held on to the position of top Birdathon fundraiser for another year (five out of the last six) with \$8326 raised to date. To view the top ten fundraisers and top conservation organizations to date, [click here](#).

### Birdathon Prize Winners Announced

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Common Loon by Chris Bacon

**14 October 2005** - Southeastern Arizona is one of the premier birding locations on the continent. Thanks to [Eagle-Eye Tours](#), grand prize winners Robin Fraser and Mary Ellen Hebb of Toronto, ON, will be exploring its grasslands, deserts, and spectacular canyons in search of birds. This year's Baillie Birdathon grand prize was a choice of three Eagle-Eye Tours including an all-inclusive guided trip for two to Arizona (no airfare); a trip to Costa Rica to follow the spectacular hawk migration (including airfare); or a trip to explore the rugged beauty of the high Arctic (airfare from Edmonton). Winners of other fantastic prizes include Bruce and Ann Falls of Toronto, ON who will be getting even closer to their favourite birds with a Raven Spotting Scope with 78mm objective lens and angled 20-60x zoom, with tripod, courtesy of [Eagle Optics](#). Janice Brown of Burnaby, BC will *clearly* enjoy birding as the lucky winner of Eagle Optics Ranger 8 x 42 "Platinum Class" binoculars. George Pond of Simcoe, ON can capture birds digitally with his new Pentax 5 megapixel Digital Camera with 5x optical zoom, courtesy of [Pentax Canada Inc](#). And, Beverly McLeod of Simcoe, ON will be decorating her home with the stunning limited edition framed print, *Common Loon*, thanks to artist [Chris Bacon](#). For a complete list of Baillie Birdathon prize winners, [click here](#). Many thanks to all prize sponsors and participants supporting this important fundraiser for Bird Studies Canada and our partners.

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## Research Grants Available through Baillie Fund

**11 October 2005** - Bird Studies Canada is now accepting applications to the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund for grants in 2006. Established in 1976, the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund for Bird Research and Preservation (the Baillie Fund) is a project of Bird Studies Canada. Each year, a portion of funds raised through BSC's Baillie Birdathon is allocated to the Baillie Fund to provide grants to individuals or groups for research and conservation projects. Successful applicants will propose projects that further Bird Studies Canada's mission to advance the understanding, appreciation, and conservation of wild birds and their habitats through studies and programs that engage the skills, enthusiasm, and support of its members, volunteers, staff, and the public.

Applications for Regular Grants are due by 15 December 2005 and applications for Small Grants are due by 15 January 2006. The James L. Baillie Student Award for Field Research is administered by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and the deadline for applications is 30 January 2006. The application and review process is different for each grant program. For more information about the Baillie Fund, [click here](#) or contact the Baillie Fund Secretary at [jbeckett@bsc-eoc.org](mailto:jbeckett@bsc-eoc.org) or phone 519-586-3531 ext. 217.

## Where Have all the Sparrows Gone?

**3 October 2005** - The House Sparrow garners little respect in the birding community. This introduced species from Europe, once annoyingly abundant in North America, is undergoing serious declines. In a recent article, CBCUnlocked explores varying opinions, including those of Bird Studies Canada staff, on the significance of this decline. Mary Wiens writes, "Ever since House Sparrows were brought from Europe to New York City in 1860, they've been met with a combination of hostility and exasperation. Sparrows quickly drove out native species such as swallows, wrens, and bluebirds from their nesting holes." The decline of this once ubiquitous little bird, however, could be signaling a more widespread malaise. To read this article in full, [click here](#).

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## Are You Wild About Wetlands?

**13 October 2005** - The Marsh Monitoring Program, in conjunction with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and the Grand River Conservation Authority, are looking for outdoor adventurers to be trained as amphibian and/or bird monitors (no prior experience necessary) for wetland areas in the Northern York and Brantford regions of southern Ontario. Sessions will be held on 3 November 2005 at the Brant Rod and Gun Club near Brantford, ON and on 12 November 2005 at the Scanlon Nature Centre north of Bradford, ON. Anyone interested in attending should contact Kris Dobney by e-mail at [kdobney@bsc-eoc.org](mailto:kdobney@bsc-eoc.org) for a registration package. Both sessions are funded by the Northern York and Brantford chapters of the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation. For more information on the Marsh Monitoring Program, [click here](#).

## New BC Projects Coordinator Announced

**11 October 2005** - Bird Studies Canada is pleased to announce that Peter Davidson will be replacing Tasha Armenta (nee Smith), effective 24 October 2005, in the role of British Columbia Projects Coordinator. Peter will be responsible for the design, development, supervision, and delivery of Bird Studies Canada's Coastal Waterbird and Beached Bird Surveys, as well providing support regionally for a number of national programs.

Peter has a strong background in ornithology and natural history, and holds a Master's degree in ecology from the University of East Anglia's Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Conservation (UK). For the past eight years, Peter has been working in Indochina with international non-governmental organizations, including BirdLife International, Wildlife Conservation Society, and World Wildlife Fund. Peter is very familiar with various Citizen Science programs and their importance to conservation and monitoring. Peter's work experience includes field ornithology, research, writing, conservation priority-setting, and project development in a range of bird habitats internationally. Peter is a British national, and will be relocating to the Vancouver area later this month from Vietnam.

Over the last few months, Tasha has continued to oversee the BC coastal projects from her new home in Prince Edward Island, and will continue to be a resource person for Peter in the coming weeks. Thank you, Tasha, and a very warm welcome to Peter.

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## Exotic Mute Swans on the Rise

**11 October 2005** - In coordination with Atlantic Flyway biologists, the Long Point Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Fund (LPWWRF) and Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) conducted a mid-summer Mute Swan survey in August 2005. LPWWRF and CWS survey the entire lower Great Lakes shoreline from the St. Lawrence River to the St. Clair River every third year. A total of 2737 Mute Swans were counted during the 2005 survey, which is more than twice the number counted during the 2002 survey when 1373 birds were counted. This rapid expansion is unfortunate as Mute Swans are a highly aggressive exotic species which tend to cause ecological problems when they occur at high densities. To learn more about LPWWRF's research on Mute Swans, [click here](#).

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