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19 May 2006

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INTERNATIONAL

Record Bird Numbers Slip to Extinction

4 May 2006, BirdLife International - BirdLife's annual evaluation of how the world's bird species are faring shows that the total number considered threatened with extinction is now 1,210. When combined with the number of Near Threatened species this gives a record total of 2,005 species in trouble - more than a fifth of the planet's 9,799 total species. Of the species most at risk 181 are now categorized as Critically Endangered, the highest level of threat. New additions include the Purple-backed Sunbeam, a hummingbird found only in a tiny area of alder woodland in western Peru.

It is not all bad news: the Seychelles Fody, a small yellowish songbird has been downlisted to Near Threatened. Habitat management and conservation measures have encouraged the regeneration of natural woodland on its island homes and are thought to have been key factors in the recent substantial population increase. Nature Seychelles (BirdLife in the Seychelles) has also recently translocated birds to Denis and Aride Islands where self-sustaining populations are now established.

"We face a huge challenge in improving the status of the 1,210 threatened and 795 Near Threatened species. But the success stories show that concerted conservation action can save these birds from extinction: we just need the political will and resources." - Dr Stuart Butchart, BirdLife's Global Species Programme Coordinator. To read more about BirdLife's annual evaluation, [click here](#).

NATIONAL

Highlights from Bateman Birdathon



This Week's Highlights

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9 May 2006 - This year's Baillie Birdathon's guest birders Robert and Birgit Bateman recently spent a day scouring the Long Point, ON area in their quest to tally as many birds as possible. Funds raised through the event will support the conservation efforts of Bird Studies Canada. Despite the relatively early date of 9 May, they managed to observe a very respectable 145 species. Taking advantage of the beautiful blue skies, balmy southerly breezes and temperature near 25C, their effort touched all the various habitats of Norfolk County and tallied many of the area's specialties. Highlights of the day included the spring's first Yellow-breasted Chat, several Virginia Rails and Least Bitterns, and a pair of Sandhill Cranes with two young colts. True to his aesthetic sensibilities, Robert's most esoteric moment came after dark at the end of the day when he and the others watched a Whip-poor-will singing in the headlights on a sandy backroad. In all of his years observing birds, he had never before seen one sing. A poignant ending to a special day.

"We are pleased to be able to assist Bird Studies Canada and their efforts to conserve Canada's birds," said Robert. "And, I'm thrilled to be able to spend a day in spring at Long Point, a place near to my heart since my teenage years," he added. There is still time to support Robert and Birgit's Birdathon. To do so online [click here](#) and select their names from the drop-down participant list or call 1-888-448-2473 Ext. 210.

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REGIONAL

BSC Welcomes New Staff in Québec Office

17 May 2006 - BSC is pleased to welcome Andrew Coughlan to its regional office in Québec City. Mr. Coughlan will be responsible for the delivery of BSC's programs in Québec, including the delivery of the Québec Marsh Monitoring Program. Mr. Coughlan is fully bilingual and has a diverse background working with birds, including The Zoological Society of London (England), The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, and the Tadoussac Bird Observatory in Québec, as well as with mushrooms through Université Laval, Québec. Mr. Coughlan will be replacing Catherine Poussart during her one-year maternity leave beginning at the end of May and can be reached at the following address, effective June 1: 1141, route de l'Église, P.O. Box 10 100, Québec, Québec, G1V 4H5, Ph. 418-649-6062, acoughlan@bsc-eoc.org.

ÉOC est fière d'accueillir Andrew Coughlan à son bureau régional de Québec. Monsieur Coughlan sera responsable de la livraison des programmes d'ÉOC au Québec, incluant la mise en œuvre du Programme de surveillance des marais du Québec <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/regional/qcmarais.html>. Monsieur Coughlan est bilingue et possède une expérience de travail diversifiée reliée aux oiseaux, acquise notamment au sein des organismes suivants : The Zoological Society of London (Angleterre), The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (Angleterre) et l'Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac (Québec). Monsieur Coughlan possède également une bonne connaissance des champignons grâce à son travail récent à l'Université Laval (Québec). Andrew Coughlan remplacera Catherine Poussart lors de son congé de maternité d'un an qui débutera à la fin mai. Les coordonnées pour joindre monsieur Coughlan à partir du 1er juin sont : 1141, route de l'Église, C.P. 10 100 (Québec) Québec, G1V 4H5, (418) 649-6062, acoughlan@bsc-eoc.org.

Field Season Gears up in Maritimes

16 May 2006 - Bird Studies Canada field crews are eagerly preparing for summer bird research all across Atlantic Canada. In southern Nova Scotia, Piping Plover staff have already started locating nests of the endangered shorebird. Despite inclement weather, staff have searched 16 southern beaches and have located five nests. Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas and High Elevation Landbird Program staff will soon be traveling to remote regions of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Here they will conduct point counts of local breeding birds, and gather information on the elusive Bicknell's Thrush. Field crews will often be tenting in isolated campsites, waking before dawn and working long hours to get as much information in these remote areas as possible. Atlas staff Isabelle Robichaud and Frédéric Paillard will be conducting work mainly in the francophone regions of the Maritimes from southwestern Nova Scotia to Northern New Brunswick. Emily MacKinnon and Greg Campbell will conduct High Elevation Landbird Program and Atlas activities in the more remote regions of Northern New Brunswick, while Stephen Gullage will work in Cape Breton prior to heading to Southern New Brunswick for Atlas workshops there.

Atlas volunteers have already begun collecting data on birds breeding in their areas, and Atlas staff will be offering on-site training opportunities to participants throughout the Maritimes. These sessions will allow participants to get familiar with Atlas methods. Also for early risers, teams will demonstrate the ins and outs of birding by ear and the point count method. All are encouraged to join in the fun! To find out more about the Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas and how to participate in surveys, [click here](#). To find out more about BSC's other Atlantic Region programs, [click here](#).

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Researchers are Boreal Bound

12 May 2006 - Fergus Nicoll, Boreal Forest Assistant Biologist, and a small crew of student field assistants have returned to boggy spruce forests of the north where they will remain until the month of August. These researchers will be conducting point counts and habitat surveys in and around areas where different silvicultural practices have occurred as well as in areas of recent forest fires. Research has suggested that at the forest stand level there are significant differences in abundance and distribution of some boreal bird species. Ryan Zimmerling, Boreal Forest Research Associate, and Fergus, are working in partnership with the Canadian Wildlife Service and Abitibi-Consolidated Inc in coordinating a project to determine which particular aspects of forest management are responsible for differences in bird communities between recently burned and harvested sites. Accommodations will be primarily tents along the thousands of lakes in this beautiful area of Ontario. They will no doubt have a challenging yet enjoyable field season in this breeding ground of millions of birds as well as billions and billions of black flies and mosquitoes.

Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas Launched to the Media

11 May 2006 - Media representatives, atlassers, regional coordinators, and Atlas staff gathered this past week for the official Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas media launch held at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History in Halifax and the following day at the Moncton Museum in New Brunswick. Both launches were successful and brought in ample television, radio, and newspaper coverage to the project. Since these launches, registrations for the Atlas have been pouring in! The Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas is the largest citizen science project ever undertaken in the Maritimes, and the number of participants in this second Atlas is expected to easily eclipse the 1,100+ who participated in the first Atlas 20 years ago.

Karel Allard, Atlas Coordinator, gave a presentation on the need for community involvement in the Atlas. "This is not just for science but involves the entire community, as it did 20 years ago," he said. He also discussed the role of the Atlas in raising conservation awareness and alerting us to environmental concerns. "By gathering comprehensive bird information in every part of the Maritimes, we will gain valuable insights into how natural and human influences such as land use, climate change and other factors are affecting the environmental well-being of the region where we live."

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Banded Eagle Recovered

1 May 2006 - In mid-April, an injured immature male eagle was found near Shelburne, Ontario (north of Guelph). The Ministry of Natural Resources was contacted and a local Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) officer transported the bird to a nearby wildlife rehabilitation centre. The injury consisted of soft tissue damage to the left wing as a result of an apparent gunshot wound. Under the skillful care of the rehabilitator, the bird quickly recovered from this serious injury and was released back into the wild in early May. What makes this even more of a good news story is that this particular bird had been banded by Bird Studies Canada (BSC) staff as nestling in 2004 at a location near Long Point, Ontario. It is a rare event when we are re-united with one of the eaglets banded under the Southern Ontario Bald Eagle Monitoring Program and more often than not the report is of a bird found dead. Collecting information on the whereabouts of eaglets once leaving the nest is critical to understanding survival rates and also the sources of contaminants observed in adult birds. Through the "Destination Eagle" program, researchers at BSC have been able to use satellite technology to track the weekly movements of young eagles and pinpoint their precise locations over several years. To date nine eaglets have been affixed with satellite transmitters, with plans to include an additional five in 2006. Keep an eye on "[Eagle Tracker](#)" where you can follow the journeys of these birds.

Long Point Bird Observatory Launches New Boat



23 April 2006 - Thanks to a substantial capital grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO) had a 20ft welded aluminum boat custom made for our specific needs on Long Point. LPBO's two remote field stations, the Tip and Breakwater, can only be serviced by water. The waters of Lake Erie are not always forgiving and maintaining the operations at the remote field stations can be very demanding. Traditionally this has been done by a tandem of 16 foot aluminum boats. The yet to be named boat was launched successfully on 23 April, and has since made five successful trips back and forth to the Tip in a variety of weather conditions. It has already made a large difference in our ability to safely and efficiently service our field stations.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ontario Ministry of Culture, receives annually \$100 million of government funding generated through Ontario's charity casino initiative. More information about the Ontario Trillium Foundation can be found by [clicking here](#).



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