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**Happy Holidays from
Everyone at Bird Studies Canada**

21 December 2007

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This Week's Highlights

International News

[BSC Participates in the
Development of a North
American Monarch
Butterfly Conservation
Plan](#)

National News

[Season's Greetings and
BSC's Holiday Schedule](#)

[Project FeederWatch
Season in Full Swing](#)

[Green Budget Coalition
Releases
Recommendations for
Budget 2008](#)

Regional News

[Bicknell's Thrush,
Piping Plover Get a Boost
from the Nova Scotia
Species At Risk
Conservation Fund](#)

[Long Point Bird
Observatory Wraps up
its 48th Season](#)

[LPWRF Tracks
Sandhill Cranes](#)

[Cook's Petrel
Visits Lillooet, BC](#)

Archives

[Bird Studies
Canada Main Page](#)

INTERNATIONAL

BSC Participates in the Development of a North American Monarch Butterfly Conservation Plan



Photo: Tara Crewe

10 December 2007 – Approximately 40 Monarch Butterfly experts from across Mexico, the United States, and Canada recently traveled to Morelia, Mexico to develop a North American Monarch Butterfly Conservation Plan. The effort, led by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, included presentations and discussions of the ecological, economical, and sociological threats to the North American Monarch Butterfly population across its wintering, migration, and breeding ranges. BSC Conservation Biologist Tara Crewe attended the Dec. 5-7 meeting and presented results from Long Point Bird Observatory's Monarch Butterfly migration monitoring program. Population monitoring should be a critical component of the management plan, which is expected to be made publicly available by mid-April, 2008.

[Return to Top of Page](#)

NATIONAL

Season's Greetings and BSC's Holiday Schedule

21 December 2007 – All of us at BSC would like to wish you and your family a joyous holiday season and a very happy New Year. We'll be off Bird Counting and FeederWatching over the next week or so, and Bird Studies Canada offices will be closed from December 24-January 1, reopening at 8:30 a.m. on January 2, 2008. Have a great Christmas Bird Count season!

Project FeederWatch Season in Full Swing

20 December 2007 – The 2007-08 season of Project FeederWatch is well underway. For over 30 years, FeederWatchers have been helping to document changes in the abundance and distribution of winter birds by simply watching and counting the birds at their own feeders. This national Bird Studies Canada program includes

participants in every province and territory, and is administered in the U.S. by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Each season brings new information about bird populations.

And with the season continuing until April 4, 2008, there's still time to join! Visit our [Project FeederWatch web page](#) for more information.

FeederWatcher Nick Saunders of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, submitted the first Feature Photo of the 2007-08 season. [Visit our FeederWatchers' Photo Gallery](#) to view his wonderful photograph of a Townsend's Solitaire as well as photos from others across Canada.

Green Budget Coalition Releases Recommendations for Budget 2008

19 December 2007 – As a member of the Green Budget Coalition, Bird Studies Canada is pleased to announce the release of *Big Steps Forward: Recommendations for Budget 2008*. These recommendations for the 2008 federal budget would fulfill the desire expressed by the Prime Minister and the Canadian public for effective federal leadership on the environment. Three priority recommendations would involve setting carbon pricing, investing in federal protected areas (including National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries), and renewing the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region.

The *Big Steps Forward* document, which is [available online here](#), contains recommendations on several important issues, including migratory bird conservation. The Coalition suggests the investment of an additional \$150 million over five years in migratory bird conservation programs managed by Environment Canada and its partners, and \$35 million annually thereafter, in order to meet the federal government's accountabilities under the *Migratory Bird Convention*. For details on this aspect of the recommendations, please contact Bird Studies Canada's President Dr. George Finney at gfinney@bsc-eoc.org or 1-888-448-2473 ext. 206.

The Green Budget Coalition is made up of 19 of Canada's leading environmental and conservation organizations. [Select this link](#) to learn more.

[Return to Top of Pagee](#)

REGIONAL

Bicknell's Thrush, Piping Plover Get a Boost from the Nova Scotia Species At Risk Conservation Fund

21 December 2007 – Nova Scotia's new fund for conservation of Species At Risk has committed to \$13,000 in funding to Bird Studies Canada's Atlantic Region programs, including the High Elevation Landbird Program and the Nova Scotia Piping Plover Conservation Program. With its share of the funding, [the Nova Scotia Piping Plover Conservation Program](#) will develop a Landowner Beach Stewardship Guide.

The High Elevation Landbird Program monitors Bicknell's Thrush and other birds breeding at high elevations in Nova Scotia. Funding from the Species At Risk fund will help BSC to produce a Best Conservation and Stewardship Practices guide for Bicknell's Thrush in Nova Scotia, and to conduct high elevation bird surveys in June 2008. For more information on the Bicknell's Thrush, visit BSC's [High Elevation Landbird Program site](#) as well as the website of the newly formed [International Bicknell's Thrush Conservation Group](#).

The Piping Plover and Bicknell's Thrush are both federally and provincially listed Species At Risk. [Select this link](#) for more information on the Nova Scotia Species At Risk fund.

Long Point Bird Observatory Wraps up its 48th Season



Photo: Hilde Johansen

21 December 2007 – The Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO) closed its nets on November 15, completing the 48th year of migration monitoring at Long Point, Ontario. The fall season kicked off at the beginning of August

with a Young Ornithologists' Workshop. This was followed by the Young Ornithologist Internship in mid-August. Two Latin American trainees joined us shortly thereafter for most of the season, one from Argentina and the other from Paraguay. Over 75 dedicated LPBO volunteers helped to deliver a spectacular year with over 32,000 birds banded: 16,782 in the spring and 15,535 in the fall, bringing LPBO's total birds banded to nearly 750,000. The spring was chock-full of rarities, including Long Point's first ever Pacific Loon on May 19, and our second Cassin's Sparrow captured at the Tip on May 30. The fall added another first for Long Point, a Western Grebe at the Tip on November 1. Long Point's second Western Tanager was found at Old Cut on November 2. You may learn all about these and other sightings from this year's migration on [the LPBO Sightings Board](#).

In addition, the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists' and Bird Studies Canada's Thunder Cape Bird Observatory (TCBO) also completed its 16th year, banding 11,076 birds – 3257 in the spring and 7819 in the fall. These fall totals included TCBO's first ever Bell's Vireo and its first five Cackling Geese!

For information on migration monitoring programs across the country please [visit the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network website](#).

LPWWRF Tracks Sandhill Cranes

19 December 2007 – The Long Point Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Fund (LPWWRF) is conducting a study of Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*) funded by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. Sandhill Cranes were nearly extirpated from the Great Lakes region by the early 20th century. Their recovery into central Ontario began in the 1960s, and the highest concentrations now exist in the area just east of Sault Ste. Marie, where LPWWRF is currently conducting research. The number of cranes using this area has increased to 5000-10,000 birds.

Cranes increased their time spent feeding over the month of August, to acquire fat reserves needed for migration. Cranes preferred to feed in harvested grain fields, but were also observed in early and mid-August feeding in standing grain fields, resulting in crop damage. Satellite transmitters were attached to four cranes in early October to track migration routes and identify wintering and nesting areas. All cranes spent varying lengths of time on staging grounds in Michigan, Indiana, and Tennessee, and have now arrived on their wintering grounds in Georgia and Florida. With any luck, transmitters will last long enough to monitor crane movement for up to four years. You can follow the migrations of these birds on the [Crane Tracker](#).

Cook's Petrel Visits Lillooet, BC

10 December 2007 – Earlier this month, a Cook's Petrel was found in Lillooet, BC, about 300 kilometres east of the nearest shearwater or albatross habitat. This is a first record for Canada.

Cook's Petrels nest on islands around New Zealand, dispersing to the North Pacific during non-breeding periods. They are very hard to find on the Pacific coast of North America, and had never before been seen in BC waters, let alone inland.

On December 3, a very strong southwesterly flow brought high winds off the Pacific in a stream extending straight from Hawaii. The bird was found in Lillooet the night of December 4. Photos and measurements were taken, and local birders and other experts collaborated to confirm the identification of this extreme rarity.

The now-famous petrel ate well for a couple of days but unfortunately it died on December 6, before plans to transfer it to the nearest suitable wildlife rehabilitation facility in Vancouver could be implemented.

[Visit eBird Canada](#) to read the full story and view a photo.

[Return to Top of Page](#)

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