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22 May 2009

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INTERNATIONAL

International Day for Biological Diversity

22 May 2009 – Today is The International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB)! The United Nations designated this annual May 22 event to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. This year's theme is invasive alien species. "An unwanted by-product of globalization, non-native species are harming ecosystem services, livelihoods, and economies throughout the world," said United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Learn more about how invasive alien species are threatening the world's birds on the [BirdLife International website](#).

More Critically Endangered Birds Announced



Lear's Macaw Photo: BirdLife International/Andy and Gill Swash; www.worldwildlifeimages.com

14 May 2009 – BirdLife International's latest evaluation of the world's birds has revealed that more species than ever are threatened with extinction. The annual Red List update, on behalf of the IUCN, now lists 192 species of bird as Critically Endangered, the highest threat category, a total of two more than in the 2008 update. New additions to this category include the Gorgeted Puffleg (a recently-discovered hummingbird from Colombia); the Sidamo Lark from Ethiopia (uplisted to this category due to changes in land use); and the Medium Tree-finch, one of the Galapagos finches (partly as a result of an introduced parasitic fly).

A staggering 1227 species (12%) are classified as Globally Threatened. In eastern North America, the once-common Chimney Swift has suffered continent-wide declines of nearly 30% in the last decade alone, and has been uplisted to Near Threatened.

The good news is that when conservation action is put in place, species can be saved. The Lear's Macaw (Brazil), Chatham Petrel (New Zealand), and Mauritius Fody (Mauritius) have all been downlisted from the Critically Endangered category as a result of dedicated conservation efforts. Visit the [BirdLife International website](#) to learn more.

U.S. Bans Pesticide Residues in Food

11 May 2009 – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has revoked regulations that permitted small residues of the pesticide carbofuran in food. Carbofuran is a toxic insecticide which poses threats to human health through contaminated food, drinking water, and occupational exposure. Wild birds may ingest the pesticide when feeding on treated fields; an EPA Special Review in the 1980s estimated that carbofuran was killing over a million birds each year.

The EPA decision becomes effective December 31, 2009, and is being heralded by conservation groups as a victory for wildlife and the environment. Visit the [American Bird Conservancy website](#) for more information.

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NATIONAL

Nature Saskatchewan Celebrates 60 Years

22 May 2009 – Bird Studies Canada sends our warmest wishes to Nature Saskatchewan as they mark their 60th Anniversary next weekend in conjunction with their 2009 spring meet in Regina. The celebration will include a gala 60th Anniversary evening on May 29, a day at the Last Mountain Bird Observatory (LMBO) on May 30 followed by a banquet, and the AGM on May 31. Details of the spring meet are available on the [Nature Saskatchewan website](#).

Nature Saskatchewan has been an essential part of the Canadian conservation community since 1949, promoting the appreciation and understanding of our natural environment, and protecting and preserving natural ecosystems and their biodiversity. As the institutional sponsor for Last Mountain Bird Observatory (LMBO), a member station of the [Canadian Migration Monitoring Network](#), and an invaluable supporter of conservation planning and stewardship through the [Important Bird Areas of Canada](#) program, Nature Saskatchewan is a cherished friend and partner to Bird Studies Canada. From all of us at BSC, thank you for 60 years of outstanding work, and congratulations!

BSC Hires IBA Technical Coordinator

11 May 2009 – We are pleased to announce that Janet Moore has joined the BSC team at our national headquarters in Port Rowan in the capacity of IBA Technical Coordinator. The position entails close interaction and coordination with our national [Important Bird Areas](#) program partner, Nature Canada; our provincial partners; and BirdLife International to ensure that the program runs smoothly in Canada.

Janet has held a variety of positions in Canada, the United States, and Scotland during her career, and has recently completed her M.Sc. research on Midway Atoll where she investigated the accuracy and precision of different methods to estimate the population size of a colonial and burrow-nesting seabird. Andrew Couturier, Senior Analyst – Landscape Ecology and Conservation states, “Janet brings an ideal combination of technical, science, and people skills to the IBA program. Her analytical skills and experience with population modelling will support a variety of programs across the organization, including Species at Risk projects and others. We are delighted that she has joined BSC.” On behalf of the entire BSC family, welcome Janet!

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REGIONAL

BSC Launches Ontario SwiftWatch



Photo: Christian Artuso

21 May 2009 – Bird Studies Canada is excited to announce the launch of a new program: Ontario SwiftWatch. Chimney Swifts, like many other aerial insectivores in North America, are experiencing strong population declines across their range. The Canadian Chimney Swift population has decreased 96% over the past 40 years, leading to their COSEWIC designation as a federally Threatened species. Through funding provided by the Canadian Wildlife Service’s Habitat Stewardship Program, Ontario SwiftWatch has been developed as a province-wide initiative to expand and standardize volunteer-based monitoring practices that are already underway in a number of cities, including Peterborough, Guelph, and London, so that we might understand the causes of these population declines and work toward conserving this species. Chimney Swifts provide an exciting opportunity for city-based individuals to participate in important conservation work, as they are most often found nesting and roosting in urban chimneys.

Have you noticed Chimney Swifts in your area? We are looking for volunteer Chimney Swift monitors in cities all across Ontario. For more information, or to become a volunteer, please contact Elisabeth van Stam (1-888-448-2473 ext.173, evanstam@birdscanada.org) or Hazel Wheeler (1-888-448-2473 ext. 165, hwheeler@birdscanada.org).

Short-eared Owls on the Move!

21 May 2009 – The arrival of spring marked the end of another successful season of winter Short-eared Owl research and monitoring for Bird Studies Canada – Ontario region. Thanks to funding from the Shell Environmental Fund and TD-Friends of the Environment Foundation, BSC staff were able to deploy two more satellite transmitters on Short-eared Owls in southwestern Ontario, bringing our total number of tracked owls to three. Although transmissions from last year’s owl (#80096) are sporadic, the newly tagged Short-eared Owls (#90565 and #90566) are sending regular location data. One owl has moved east into Québec, while the other has moved up the west side of Hudson Bay and at last check was in northern Manitoba. Interestingly, each of the three owls has followed a different path during spring migration.

BSC’s Short-eared Owl satellite tracking project is part of a larger binational effort to learn more about lifetime habitat requirements. Movements of the three Ontario owls, and two owls tagged by researchers with the **New York State Department of Environmental Conservation** can be followed on **BSC’s Owl Tracker**. If you are interested in sponsoring one of our owls, or would like to learn more about this project, please contact Hazel Wheeler at 1-888-448-2473 ext. 165 or hwheeler@birdscanada.org.

BC Atlas on the Road: Sunshine Coast BioBlitz

21 May 2009 – Join Christopher Di Corrado and other nature enthusiasts this weekend in British Columbia’s Madeira Park and the Iris Griffith Interpretive Centre for the **Sunshine Coast BioBlitz**, May 23 and 24. Come and count everything that flies, crawls, swims, or grows, and of course join Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning to search for breeding birds for the **BC Breeding Bird Atlas!** Christopher will be available all weekend to provide atlassing tips and answer questions, and will give a short presentation Saturday night at 6:30 in the community centre.

Columbia Mountain Institute of Applied Ecology –
Conserving Wetlands in B.C. Conference

21 May 2009 – Join Pete Davidson and Christopher Di Corrado at the Conserving Wetlands in B.C. Conference in Revelstoke, BC, May 27-30, where we will have an atlas booth, and meet with regional coordinator John Woods and atlassers to blitz a few local squares during and after the conference. Pete will give an atlas presentation on May 27 at 7:30 p.m. in the MacPherson Room, Revelstoke Community Centre, 600 Campbell Avenue.

Long Point Waterfowl News



Photo: Theodore Smith

20 May 2009 – Long Point Waterfowl would like to announce that the application deadline for this year’s youth summer workshop is June 1. The workshop is open to youth between 12-16 years old, and will run from July 18-22, 2009. The \$250 course fee includes Ontario hunter safety and firearms safety certifications; one-year memberships with the Delta Waterfowl Foundation, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters; accommodation at LPW’s Research and Education Centre; food; and field supplies. Contact Ted Barney at 519-586-3531 ext. 151 or tbarney@birdscanada.org for more information, or **select this link to download the application.**

In other news, Jeremy Stempka (pictured above) has successfully completed his M.Sc. degree. Jeremy was supervised by Dr. Scott Petrie (Long Point Waterfowl) and Dr. Bob Bailey (University of Western Ontario). Jeremy is now continuing the “hen house” program while working for the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. To obtain a PDF version of Jeremy’s thesis, entitled “Factors influencing utilization of artificial nesting cylinders by Mallards and Wood Ducks in northwest Pennsylvania and southern Ontario,” email tbarney@birdscanada.org.

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