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22 July 2011

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This Week's Highlights

International News

[Searching for Sandpipers](#)

National News

[Birdathon Deadline](#)

Regional News

[Swift Blitz!](#)

[L'Atlas du Québec/ Quebec Atlas](#)

[LPW Opening](#)

Archives

[Bird Studies Canada Main Page](#)

Searching for Spoon-billed Sandpipers



Photo: John Sullivan/RSPB

12 July 2011 – Searching for the critically endangered breeding Spoon-billed Sandpiper in the vast coastal expanses of Arctic Russia is like looking for a needle in a haystack. So, when Heritage Expeditions passengers, guides, and crew discovered a previously unknown breeding population of these rapidly declining waders on Russia's Chukotka coast, they were thrilled. "We were absolutely stunned when we came across the first bird," said Chris Collins – Heritage Expeditions tour guide and member of the survey team that found the nesting birds. "Seeing a breeding plumaged Spoon-billed Sandpiper walk towards us and settle on to its nest was undoubtedly one of my all time top birding moments and everyone on this expedition was equally excited when I radioed in the news that our survey had been successful."

Through BirdLife's Preventing Extinctions Programme, new surveys have been designed to look for breeding birds in coastal areas where scientists predicted they should be present but had previously been unable to explore. As the only access to these remote areas is by sea, the costs of mounting searches have been prohibitive in the past. Along came Heritage Expeditions – a New Zealand travel company specializing in worldwide natural history expeditions for small groups of discerning travelers. Heritage Expeditions became a Species Champion for the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and an opportunity unfolded. With careful planning in conjunction with BirdLife and Birds Russia, Heritage Expeditions' vessel - *Spirit of Enderby* – has provided the ideal access solution. Heritage's passengers and experienced guides, travelling ashore in zodiacs, are valuable and enthusiastic participants searching for these rare birds under the guidance of experts from the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force.

The conservation breeding team, led by Birds Russia, the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force and the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, is working with colleagues from BirdLife International, the RSPB (BirdLife in the UK), British Trust for Ornithology, and Moscow Zoo to protect this species, which would most likely become extinct within a decade without

urgent action. To find out all the latest news on Spoon-billed Sandpipers, [select this link](#).

[Return to Top of Page](#)

NATIONAL

Birdathon - Deadline for Prize Eligibility Nearing

For those of you who have raised funds for the 2011 Baillie Birdathon, be sure to get your pledge money in by the August 1st deadline to be eligible for some fantastic prizes! Prizes available range from birding books and gear to an all-inclusive guided birding tour generously provided by [Eagle Eye Tours](#). For the full list of prizes [select this link](#).

To read all about the birding adventures of our 2011 Guest Birder team, Dick Cannings in British Columbia and Blake Maybank in Nova Scotia, [select this link](#). The efforts of these two birders this past May netted a total of 255 species for the Bi-Coastal Birdathon list. There is still time to [pledge your support for their Birdathon](#).

[Return to Top of Page](#)

REGIONAL

Ontario-Wide Chimney Swift "Blitz"

22 July 2011 – Each evening as dusk approaches, you may notice small birds chirping overhead, circling tall chimneys. If these birds are cigar-shaped, with relatively long pointed wings and a quick, jerky flight – and if they dive at (and then into) a chimney around sunset – you likely have just observed Chimney Swifts, a federally Threatened species whose population has declined in Canada by 96% over the last 40 years. Bird Studies Canada would like Ontario residents to help look for Chimney Swifts as part of a province-wide "blitz." This is part of a larger nation-wide blitz happening across Canada designed to identify national population trends of Chimney Swifts.

You can help investigate Ontario's Chimney Swift population, and identify critical Chimney Swift habitats, by committing to three nights – July 24th, July 28th, and August 1st, and watching a chimney where swifts may roost. Start your monitoring period 20 minutes before sunset, and continue until the last bird has been seen entering the chimney. Record your findings using the Ontario SwiftWatch [Data Entry Form](#) and [submit your findings](#) using the submission form or by email to OntarioSwiftWatch@birdscanada.org.

In addition to the monitoring blitz, there are two upcoming SwiftWatch workshops, Wednesday August 10th in Chatham, Ontario and Tuesday August 16th in Brockville, Ontario. If you are interested, please contact OntarioSwiftWatch@birdscanada.org for more details. BSC gratefully acknowledges Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, and TD Friends of the Environment Foundation for supporting Ontario SwiftWatch.

L'Atlas des oiseaux nicheurs du Québec : une autre nouvelle espèce pour la province et une offre d'emploi



Eurasian Collared-Dove Photo: Ron Ridout

22 juillet 2011 – **L'Atlas des oiseaux nicheurs du Québec**, qui est dans sa deuxième année, est un projet conjoint entre le Regroupement QuébecOiseaux (RQO), le Service canadien de la faune d'Environnement Canada et Études d'Oiseaux Canada. L'atlas est le plus vaste projet d'inventaire ornithologique jamais entrepris au Québec et il vise à documenter la répartition et l'abondance relative de tous les oiseaux qui nichent dans la province. Cette année, le projet a aidé à documenter la nidification d'une autre nouvelle espèce pour le Québec : la Tourterelle turque, dont un nid a récemment été trouvé dans le sud de la province à Sainte-Brigide-d'Iberville. Il faut noter que l'expansion de cette espèce est en marche depuis plusieurs années en Amérique du Nord, suite à une introduction aux Bahamas dans les années 1970. Si vous souhaitez travailler au sein de l'équipe de l'atlas, le (RQO) est à la recherche d'une personne afin de combler le poste d'adjoint à la coordination de L'atlas. Le rôle de l'adjoint à la coordination consiste à assister le coordonnateur dans tous les aspects du projet, afin d'en assurer le bon déroulement. La date limite pour présenter sa candidature est le 15 août 2011. Veuillez faire parvenir votre curriculum vitae accompagné d'une lettre de présentation, ou toutes demandes d'information, à Jean-Sébastien Guénette (directeur du RQO), à l'adresse courriel suivante : info@quebecoiseaux.org.

The Québec Breeding Bird Atlas: Another New Species and a Job Opportunity

22 July 2011 – **The Québec Breeding Bird Atlas**, which is in its second year, is managed by the Regroupement QuébecOiseaux (RQO), the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada, and Bird Studies Canada. It is the largest ornithological project ever undertaken in Québec, and aims to map the distribution and relative abundance of all bird species breeding in the province. This year, the project has helped document the first breeding of yet another new species for the province: the Eurasian Collared Dove; the first nest of which was recently found to the south of the province in Sainte-Brigide-d'Iberville. This species was introduced on the Bahamas in the mid 1970s and has since been rapidly spreading across North America. If you are interested in joining the atlas team, the RQO is currently seeking to appoint an assistant coordinator. The successful candidate will help ensure the smooth-running of the atlas by facilitating the coordinator in all aspects of the project. The closing date for applications is the 15th August 2011. Please send a cover letter expressing your interest in the position and your curriculum vitae, or requests for further information, to Jean-Sébastien Guénette (director of the RQO) at info@quebecoiseaux.org.

The Inaugural LPW Community Appreciation Day



Photos: LPW

22 July 2011 – Long Point Waterfowl (LPW) invites you to attend the first annual open house at their Research and Education Centre (REC) on Saturday, August 27th from 10am until 4pm. The day will include presentations from LPW staff and graduate students on wetlands and waterfowl research in the Great Lakes region, interpretive walks along the new nature trail, a free-flying raptor display, waterfowl calling and decoy carving demonstrations, as well as many youth games and other activities. Food and refreshments will be available throughout the day. There is no charge for this event. The REC is located at 546 Turkey Point Road, approximately one kilometre south of Highway 24 near Turkey Point, Ontario. For more information and/or to confirm your attendance, please contact Katelyn Weaver by email at rec@longpointwaterfowl.org, or by calling (519) 428-2866.

LPW, founded in the 1980s, is a non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated primarily to the study and conservation of waterfowl and wetlands throughout the lower Great Lakes. LPW established the REC in 2007 to help further its outdoor educational mandate. The five main buildings located on the REC's 40-acre property are currently used to provide seasonal and year-round accommodations and office space for LPW staff, undergraduate students, graduate students, technicians, volunteers, and visiting scientists.

[Return to Top of Page](#)

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