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23 November 2007

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INTERNATIONAL

Canadian-Led Study Supports 148-Year-Old Theory

14 November 2007 – A recently published study of the Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, a small tropical seabird, is helping to prove a theory first put forward in *The Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin in 1859. Queen's University biology professor Dr. Vicki Friesen and an international research team are suggesting that it is possible for different species to develop from a single parent species within the same geographic area.

Speciation is the process by which new species arise. Over the last century, many have believed that for speciation to occur, a geographic barrier (such as a mountain or ocean) is required. However, this study found that Band-rumped Storm-Petrels breeding within the same area during different breeding seasons differed genetically – i.e., speciation has occurred because of the separation of breeding seasons.

For more information, visit the [Queen's University website](#), or read the article, which was recently published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*.

Ecological Disaster in Black Sea



Photo: BirdLife International

13 November 2007 – Heavy storms that began on November 10 resulted in severe damage at the northern end of the Black Sea. Twelve ships were affected in the Kerch Strait, which separates Russia and Ukraine. The strait is an important migration route for birds. One tanker split in half, leaking at least 2000 tonnes of oil, and winds have carried much of the fuel oil to the Russian side of the strait. At least six sailors died in the storms; the oil spill has killed more than 30,000 birds and countless fish. Two other ships that sank in the storms were carrying tonnes of sulphur, which has begun to leak into the already polluted waters. Two nearby Important Bird Areas, the Kiziltash Bay and the Tamanski and Dinskiy Bays, are under threat. Hundreds of soldiers are working on cleaning up the spill, and EU environment experts traveled to the area this week to assess the damage and to make recommendations. Read more on the [BirdLife International website](#).

Caribbean IBA Accounts Now Available Online

13 November 2007 – The Important Bird Area (IBA) accounts for Dominican Republic and other islands and nations are now available online, thanks to the project Sustainable Conservation of Globally Important Caribbean Bird Habitats, which recently concluded its initial phase. The project was developed with the support of BirdLife International and the Global Environment Facility through the United Nations Environmental Program.

To access the Caribbean IBA accounts, visit [the Important Bird Areas in the Caribbean website](#). For more information or to provide feedback, email the Caribbean Program Coordinator Verónica Anadón-Irizarry at nesospingus@yahoo.com.

NATIONAL

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BSC Engages Chief Scientist

23 November 2007 – In September we welcomed Dr. Phil Taylor to BSC’s Port Rowan headquarters for a sabbatical year of research into bird migration in the Long Point area using radar technology. We are now pleased to announce that Dr. Taylor has agreed to remain with Bird Studies Canada for an additional year and assume the role of Chief Scientist. In this new role, Dr. Taylor will continue to pursue scientific enquiry in his own fields of interest, and will assist all biological staff in the design, analysis, and publication of scientific results. He will also explore new collaborations with ornithologists at the University of Western Ontario and elsewhere, which will result in additional opportunities for graduate students and Postdoctoral Fellows to work with BSC.

“This is a major and positive development for Bird Studies Canada,” said BSC President Dr. George Finney. “Dr. Taylor has already made significant contributions as the Chair of our National Science Advisory Council, and he is now positioned to take an even stronger role of scientific leadership within our organization. We are all looking forward to working with him closely over the next two years.”

Dr. Taylor will extend his stay in Port Rowan until the end of 2009. During this time he expects to retain his duties as a research chair for the Atlantic Cooperative Wildlife Ecology Research Network at Acadia University.

Canada Announces Major Land Conservation Initiative in Northwest Territories

21 November 2007 – The Government of Canada has withdrawn over 10 million hectares of land from industrial development in the Northwest Territories. During a November 21 celebration at the Canadian Museum of Nature, Environment Minister John Baird and Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl announced plans to create a new national park in the East Arm of Great Slave Lake, and a national wildlife area for the Ramparts River and Wetlands. While plans and agreements are finalized, the lands are protected from diamond and uranium companies working in the North. Official designations for each area are expected within five years. More details are available on [the Environment Canada website](#).

Donate Securities to BSC Online!

20 November 2007 – When the Canadian government eliminated capital gains taxes on donations of publicly-traded securities, gifts of securities became the most tax efficient way to donate to public charities. Transferring securities such as stocks, bonds, and mutual funds to a charitable organization such as Bird Studies Canada is an excellent method of giving for donors who want to make a greater impact with their gift. BSC is pleased to announce that you can now [donate securities to us online through CanadaHelps](#). For more information email Rosie Kirton at rkirton@bsc-eoc.org.

REGIONAL

Update from Eastern Canada’s Piping Plover Recovery Practitioners



Photo: Ron Williams

21 November 2007 – A new year of Piping Plover recovery planning began this month with meetings of the Eastern Canada Piping Plover Working Group and Recovery Team.

Sue Abbott, the coordinator of BSC's [Nova Scotia Piping Plover Conservation Program](#), has joined the Eastern Canada Piping Plover Recovery Team, which met on November 7. Sue is also working closely with Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service and NS Department of Natural Resources on provincial recovery planning through the newly formed Nova Scotia Piping Plover Working Group. We gratefully acknowledge support from The Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk, WWF-Canada and Environment Canada's Endangered Species Recovery Fund, Sage Environment Foundation, and Ecology Action Centre.

On November 8, the annual Eastern Canada Piping Plover Working Group meeting was held in Sackville, New Brunswick. Twenty-five participants represented a wide variety of not-for-profit groups and provincial, state, and federal agencies. Jennifer Stewart of the Canadian Wildlife Service led the meeting and shared a summary of results from the 2007 Piping Plover breeding season. The number of Piping Plovers in Eastern Canada in 2007 (530 adults) indicates that the short-term population recovery goal (510 adults) was met. However, productivity was lower than in recent years, and well below the recovery target of 1.65 chicks fledged per pair; the loss of nests to predators was one of the main challenges in some parts of the region. A presentation on managing predators on plover breeding beaches by Scott Melvin of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife informed discussions on this important topic.

Wild Birds Unlimited Supports Destination Eagle



21 November 2007 – Bird Studies Canada is pleased to announce that Wild Birds Unlimited (WBU) has become the latest supporter of the 2007-08 Destination Eagle satellite tracking program. WBU has committed \$5000 to fund a transmitter for a juvenile Bald Eagle during the 2008 field season. This is the second time that WBU has sponsored the program and we are very excited about renewing this partnership. To learn more about the Southern Ontario Bald Eagle Monitoring Program or to view the movements of our satellite tagged eagles, visit our [Destination Eagle website](#). Please contact Jody Allair (raptor@bsc-eoc.org) with any questions concerning the program, or to find out how you too can sponsor a Bald Eagle.

Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas Fall Newsletter is Now Available Online!

15 November 2007 – For the 'latest news' from the Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas, check out [the fall newsletter](#). The newsletter summarizes the second year of data collection, mentions some unusual bird sightings, and contains answers to frequently asked atlasing questions. If reading the newsletter leaves you thirsty for more information, use the website to generate real-time data summaries or the "clickable" maps page to see which species have been detected where. Atlasers won't finish entering their data until January, so keep checking back to track their progress.

Le Bulletin de l'Atlas des Oiseaux Nicheurs des Maritimes est maintenant disponible sur notre site Web!

Le 15 novembre 2007 – Pour les 'dernières nouvelles' sur ce qui passe avec l'Atlas des Maritimes, allez consulter [le bulletin de cet automne](#). Le bulletin fait le sommaire de la seconde année de collecte de données dans les Maritimes, mentionne quelques observations d'oiseaux peu communes, et répond à quelques questions fréquemment posées à propos de faire de 'l'atlasing.' Si la lecture du bulletin vous laisse sur votre soif pour avoir plus d'informations, utilisez notre site Web afin de générer des sommaires de données à jour ou des cartes interactives afin de voir quelles espèces furent détectées et où. Les participants à l'Atlas ont jusqu'au mois de janvier afin d'entrer leur données en ligne donc suivez leur progrès en consultant les cartes interactives régulièrement.

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