



BIRD STUDIES
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25 November 2005

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INTERNATIONAL

Bird Flu No Reason to Stop Feeding Birds

23 November 2005 - No need to stop feeding birds because of the "bird flu," says Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The avian flu is currently found in Asia and a few locations in Europe. It is caused by a pathogenic form of the H5N1 strain of the avian influenza virus. While there have been approximately 60 human deaths in Southeast Asia since 1998, most of these people were in close contact with infected poultry. As of October 2005, no cases of the strain of avian influenza of concern have been detected in wild birds, domestic poultry, or people in North America. Other forms of H5 avian influenza have been detected this fall in Canada, but they are not strains which are a human health concern. The current risks to human health are extremely low because the virus is not easily spread between people. However, if the virus mutates into a form that can be transmitted between humans, the risk of contracting the bird flu from other people would be far greater than the risk of contracting the virus from wild or domestic birds.

Although exposure to the bird flu is currently not a threat in North America, people can contract other illnesses from sick birds and their fecal material. Avoid handling sick or dead birds, and always wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds and rinse thoroughly after filling bird feeders. Based on current information, there is no need to stop feeding or attracting birds to your yard because of the bird flu. To learn more, [click here](#).

Sparrow Shooting Receives International Attention

18 November 2005 - A misguided sparrow made the fatal mistake of flying into an exposition centre in the Netherlands where domino enthusiasts were attempting to set a new world record. The sparrow knocked over 23,000 dominoes before it was cornered and shot by an exterminator. The bird was apparently a House Sparrow, which was put on the Netherlands' national endangered list last year. The Dutch animal protection agency is investigating the death. House Sparrows have declined in the Netherlands from more than 2 million breeding pairs 20 years ago to half a million to a million at most. To learn more about this ill-fated bird, [click here](#).

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NATIONAL

Loon Alert Signs Now Available

24 November 2005 - The Canadian Lakes Loon Survey is moving forward with its TD Friends of the Environment Educational Project. Loons face numerous hazards from recreational and watercraft activities, and educating lake users is an important step in reducing the risks. Durable Nest Alert signs (for active nesting areas) and Loon Alert signs (for display at marinas, boat landings, or other locations where lake users gather) are now available for distribution to target areas. The purpose of these signs is to draw attention to loon-friendly boating and fishing practices. Individuals and naturalists clubs interested in distributing these signs can contact Kathy Jones at aqsurvey@bsc-eoc.org to determine if their area is eligible for free signs.



This loon was recently rescued near Barrie, ON, with fishing line wrapped around its body and bill. Photo: Jennifer Howard

Interest High in Christmas Bird Counts

24 November 2005 - The Christmas Bird Count season is fast approaching and count organizers are getting busy all across the country. Last year, 2022 counts were held with 355 of them in Canada. Both figures are all time records for participation. You can read the full report about last year's count by [clicking here](#) or read the Canadian and regional summaries [here](#).

Christmas Bird Count Coordinator, Dick Cannings, reports that interest remains high this year - he's already registered seven new counts: Ashcroft-Cache Creek, BC, Blandford, NS, Bridesville, BC, Fernie, BC, Peace River, AB, Uxbridge, ON, and Wainwright, AB.

Christmas Bird Counts are held between 14 December and 5 January. If you'd like to find out more about the program or about CBCs in your area, [click here](#) or contact Dick Cannings at dickcannings@shaw.ca.

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REGIONAL

Migration Season Included Unique Encounters

24 November 2005 - The Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO) shut its nets on 15 November, completing its 46th year of migration monitoring at Long Point, ON. The fall season kicked off on 1 August with the Young Ornithologists' Workshop followed by the Young Ornithologist Internship in mid-August, and three Latin American trainees joined us from Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico for most of September and October. Close to 50 dedicated LPBO volunteers helped to deliver what turned out to be one of the greatest seasons in the history of LPBO. Well over 30,000 birds were banded this year: 13,061 birds were banded this spring, and another 16,484 in the fall. An additional 1500 birds were banded through special research projects. A couple of firsts for Long Point were also discovered - a second-year female Lazuli Bunting on 8 June and an adult Sooty Tern on 31 August. For a more detailed account of this year's migration, visit the [LPBO Sightings Board](#). LPBO will begin its 47th migration monitoring season on 1 April 2006 with a whole new crew of hard-working volunteers. Thanks for a wonderful season and we look forward to meeting many of you next year at Old Cut Banding Station.



Photo: John Woodcock

BSC's and the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists' Thunder Cape Bird Observatory (TCBO) near Thunder Bay, ON also completed a banner year. By the end of October, 10,538 birds had been banded: 3721 in the spring and 6817 in the fall. TCBO also had a number of interesting encounters including the first and second Cackling Geese ever banded, and the second ever TCBO-banded Scissor-tailed Flycatcher occurred this fall. In the spring, an amazing eight species were banded for the first time: American Kestrel (2), Brewer's Blackbird (1), European Goldfinch (1), Fox Sparrow (1), Great Gray Owl (2), Hairy Woodpecker (2), Northern Rough-winged Swallow (1), and Red-headed Woodpecker (1).

For information about LPBO, TCBO, and other Canadian Migration Monitoring Network stations, [click here](#).

Great Lakes Surveyors Needed for Bald Eagle

23 November 2005 - The lower Great Lakes wintering Bald Eagle surveys are set to begin this December. BSC is looking for individuals interested in taking part in these weekly surveys (starting the last week of December). Specifically, there is a need for individuals willing to volunteer in Brantford, ON and surrounding areas. For more information on this program or to report casual eagle sightings in the lower Great Lakes, contact Bald Eagle Program Coordinator Dawn Laing at dlaing@bsc-eoc.org.

BSC Attends Youth Career Fair

23 November 2005 - Volunteer Projects Research Assistant, Susan Debreceni, represented Bird Studies Canada at the Haldimand Norfolk Youth Career and Volunteer Fair held in Simcoe ON, on 22 November. The career fair, organized by the Grand Erie Training and Adjustment Board, brought together individuals from a variety of career choices and volunteer opportunities to assist Grade 10 youth in discovering the diversity of career paths available to them. More than 1000 students were able to gather information on the latest job trends, and explore volunteer options, while helping to plan their future in the working world.

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