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ÉTUDES D'OISEAUX **CANADA**

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Join Us at the BSC Annual Meeting

24 September 2006, 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
BSC Headquarters, Port Rowan, ON

28 July 2006

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INTERNATIONAL

BSC Helps with U.S. Wetlands

28 July 2006 – Bird Studies Canada (BSC) staff are extending helping hands across the border this summer as they study the health of U.S. wetlands.

Steve Timmermans, Aquatic Surveys Scientist and Program Coordinator for the Marsh Monitoring Program (MMP), is working with Assistant Projects Coordinator Ryan Archer and Field Technicians Clair Robinson and Emily Apse to complete wetland monitoring activities at numerous marsh wetlands within seven U.S. Areas of Concern (AOC).

The team is examining various water quality parameters, including those that can be strong indicators of salt compounds from industry and domestic activities (e.g., road salt, water softeners).

At each site, samples of aquatic macroinvertebrate communities are also being collected for later lab identification. Collectively, composition of aquatic bird, amphibian, and macroinvertebrate communities act as indicators of relative marsh health, and non-biological aspects of marshes such as water quality and surrounding land use can be used to relate to the biological communities present. This information will help Steve determine which aspects of the marsh communities best act as approximate indicators of wetland status across sites within each AOC, as well as between AOC watersheds. This project is ongoing through 2006 and possibly beyond.

BSC at North American Duck Symposium

28 July 2006 – Staff and graduate students of Bird Studies Canada's (BSC's) Long Point Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Fund (LPWWRF) will be presenting scientific papers at the 4th North American Duck Symposium in Bismarck, ND, 23-26 August 2006.

LPWWRF Scientist Dr. Shannon Badzinski will present a paper, co-authored with LPWWRF Research Director Dr. Scott Petrie, on their research into the migration ecology of Lesser and Greater Scaup titled, "Satellite tracking Lesser Scaup and Greater Scaup from the Lower Great Lakes."

Ted Barney, a M.Sc. student from the University of Western Ontario, will also present a paper, co-authored with Scott, titled, "Changes in the availability and nutritional quality of post-harvest waste corn for staging waterfowl near Long Point, Lake Erie."

To learn more about LPWWRF's Scaup and graduate student research projects, [check here](#) and for the 4th North American Waterfowl Symposium, [check here](#).

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BSC Seeks Database/Web Programmer

28 July 2006 – Bird Studies Canada (BSC) is seeking a database and web application programmer to assist in the development and maintenance of web applications and databases for its bird research and monitoring projects. Responsibilities will include the development and maintenance of applications used for the management of bird population data and volunteer management.

Qualifications sought include a college technical degree or B.Sc. in computer sciences with a strong interest in the life sciences (birds, in particular), or a B.Sc. in life sciences with pertinent experience in software and database development.

Experience with various software and web applications is also required. For a detailed job description [check here](#).

The work will be based at BSC's headquarters in Port Rowan. This is a one-year term position that may be renewed. Salary range is \$27,600 - \$36,100. Starting date will be subject to confirmation of funding. Closing date is 15 August 2006, 5 p.m.

Call for Avian Research Papers



28 July 2006 – Editors-in-Chief, Tom Nudds and Marc-André Villard, invite researchers to submit innovative papers for publication in Avian Conservation and Ecology - Écologie et conservation des oiseaux. [Check here](#) for the call for submissions. ACE-ÉCO is an exciting, new, open-access, fully electronic scientific journal sponsored by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and Bird Studies Canada. To view the full-text articles from the [most recent issue](#), select the HTML or PDF links from the online Table of Contents.

Information on how to contribute research papers to Avian Conservation and Ecology - Écologie et conservation des oiseaux can be found on the journal's web page by [checking here](#).

And if you haven't already, you can subscribe to the journal (there's no cost to subscribe!) and automatically receive announcements of future issues by [checking here](#).

Key support for the development of the journal of Avian Conservation and Ecology - Écologie et conservation des oiseaux was provided by George Weston Limited and the Canadian Wildlife Service.

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Several BSC Studies Published

28 July 2006 – Bird Studies Canada (BSC) staffer Steve Timmermans has been very prolific recently on the publication scene.

A collaborative wetland research study co-authored by our Aquatic Surveys Scientist was recently published in the peer-review literature in the Journal of Great Lakes Research.

The paper documents extensive research by the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Consortium to develop fish-community-based indicators for monitoring and assessing biological health and disturbance resilience of Great Lakes coastal wetlands. A copy of this paper can be viewed by [checking here](#).

Steve has also put into print a study that used volunteer-collected data from the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey (CLLS) in Nova Scotia. The study, recently published in the peer-review journal *Hydrobiologia*, looked at the influence of lake chemistry and other lake-based human activities on the ability of Common Loons to successfully rear their young. This study was made possible thanks to hundreds of hours contributed by volunteer participants of the CLLS.

Hydrobiologia also carries another article co-authored by Steve, together with Canadian Wildlife toxicologists and other researchers. This piece, which included volunteer-collected data from the CLLS in Quebec, is based on a study examining the effects of aquatic mercury exposure on Common Loon breeding success and productivity. The study is an important contribution to exposure of environmental contaminants on aquatic wildlife, of which loons are a top-level food-web species. View this paper by [checking here](#).

Steve has also co-authored a paper that was recently published in the journal *Wetlands*. This paper, which included an analysis of volunteer-collected data from the Marsh Monitoring Program, documents an assessment of the sensitivity of wetland-dependent birds to influences of hydrologic change in the eastern portion of the Great Lakes region. [Check here](#) to view this paper.

BSC Staff Certified as Bander Trainers



Banders, from left, are Stu Mackenzie, Debbie Plotts, Matt Timpf, John Brett, Audrey Heagy, Erin Karnatz, David Okines, and Tom Bartlett. Photo: Stuart Mackenzie

15 July 2006 – Bird Studies Canada (BSC) staffers Audrey Heagy and Stu Mackenzie have become two of only a handful of certified bird bander trainers in Canada. The achievement comes following a North American Banding Council (NABC) bander trainer certification session held the weekend of 15 July at the Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO).

The following weekend, a NABC bander session was held, which saw John Brett (Toronto, ON), Matt Timpf (South Walsingham, ON) and Debbie Plotts (Tiffin, OH) certified as banders.

The Ontario Bird Banding Association (OBBA) co-hosted the sessions with LPBO.

NABC is an incorporated not-for-profit group representing organizations whose members utilize bird banding as a tool. One of NABC's key goals is to promote sound ethical banding principles and techniques, partly achieved through two certification levels that have been established for North America - banders and trainers. Certification sessions include a written exam and a series of verbal and practical assessments using live birds and specimens. Sessions are designed to ensure bird safety is at the forefront of all activities, and that candidates have an adequate knowledge and skill base to be proficient bird banders.

LPBO and the OBBA would like to thank everyone involved in the certification process, especially the six trainers who traveled from afar to evaluate the sessions: Tom Bartlett (Tiffin, OH), Nick Bartok (Bracebridge, ON), Anthony Hill (South Hadley, MA), Erin Karnatz (Albion, NY), Sarah Morris (Buffalo, NY), and David Okines (St. Williams, ON).

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REGIONAL

Owl Survey Gets \$12,000 Grant

28 July 2006 – Bird Studies Canada's (BSC's) Owl Survey in Atlantic Canada has received a shot in the arm following the successful application to the New Brunswick Wildlife Trust Fund for a \$12,000 grant.

The money is going towards volunteer owl surveys and owl education in New Brunswick schools.

This is the sixth year of the New Brunswick Owl Survey, which also takes in Prince Edward Island.

For 2006, our goals are to:

- Continue to determine population trends of owls in NB through the NB Nocturnal Owl Survey.
- Through these surveys, gather location and habitat information on rare or little-known bird species in New Brunswick.
- Involve volunteer birders ("Citizen Scientists"), youth in particular, in active wildlife monitoring.
- Educate young New Brunswickers in schools about owls and forest conservation in the province.

The grant will help provide surveyors with CDs for training and playback, as well as instruction guides, data sheets, and packets of hot chocolate.

The money will also be used to increase efforts to recruit young people. Greg Campbell, our staff biologist, will be visiting four schools (two English-speaking and two French-speaking) to provide children with information on owls breeding in New Brunswick, including how to identify them, their habitats, and their conservation needs.

Unique Piping Plover Research in Saskatchewan

28 July 2006 – Bird Studies Canada (BSC) Research Associate Dr. Ryan Zimmerling, in collaboration with the National Wildlife Research Centre (NWRC) and the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority (SWA) will be addressing fundamental questions regarding the biology of the endangered Piping Plover this summer and fall.

As part of a rescue effort in June 2005, the SWA collected 264 Piping Plover eggs threatened by flooding at Lake Diefenbaker. Approximately 13.5% of the continental population of Piping Plovers breed in Saskatchewan and losing so many eggs would certainly have impacted the Piping Plover population.

The rescued eggs were incubated and hatched in captivity by the SWA. Amazingly, 42% of the chicks that hatched survived to the juvenile stage and were released during late summer 2005 at Chaplin Lake. This was a remarkable number considering captive-rearing of Piping Plovers had never been previously attempted in Saskatchewan. Those chicks that did not survive were collected and immediately deep-frozen.

Because of its small population and endangered status, little research has been done on the Piping Plover in Canada. Moreover, it is extremely rare to have access to more than 100 Piping Plover chicks. That's why Ryan, who has taken the lead on this research, was excited by such a rare opportunity to address fundamental questions of the Piping Plover's biology.

One of the questions being addressed concerns the sex-ratio at hatch, which, if skewed, can have important implications on population demographics. Using state-of-the-art molecular technology, scientists at the NWRC's Wildlife Toxicology Division will collect small samples of tissue containing DNA from each chick and, after amplifying a sequence that is specific to a gene on the sex chromosomes, will determine the sex of each individual. This is the first time Piping Plovers have been sexed using DNA-based molecular techniques and BSC appreciates the support provided by NWRC. The research will also address such issues as improving facilities for captive-rearing Piping Plovers should another rescue effort be necessary.

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