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16 December 2016

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INTERNATIONAL

An Exciting Message from Bird Studies Canada's President



Photo: Dr. Ana Maria Gonzalez

16 December 2016 – With your support, Bird Studies Canada is taking conservation science to the next level, combining cutting-edge technologies with proven traditional methods. We've engaged over 40,000 volunteers annually in Citizen Science, banded nearly 1 million birds at Long Point Bird Observatory, and followed 27 priority bird species through migration using our groundbreaking Motus Wildlife Tracking System. These are achievements you can be proud of.

Please consider making your **year-end gift**, if you haven't already, to help us build on these successes. Many songbird populations are declining. Conserving key habitats is one of the most critical solutions, yet our picture of where birds go during migration is still incomplete. Fortunately, the Motus system tracks bird movements with unprecedented detail. With your help, we can track 50 of Canada's most threatened species by 2020, allowing us to direct land-conservation priorities with greater precision.

We invite you to discover some incredible insights the Motus system has already helped uncover. Please see a new **blog post by our president Steven Price**. We extend our warmest wishes for the holiday season and deepest gratitude for all you do for birds.

What Will You Find on Your Christmas Bird Count?

16 December 2016 – It's that time of year again! The 117th [Christmas Bird Count](#) season has just begun. [Find a count near you](#) to join the 14,000+ volunteers collecting valuable data on winter bird populations across Canada. Last year, over 2500 counts were held throughout the Western Hemisphere, including more than 450 in Canada. Rarities included a Siberian Accentor (BC), a Vermilion Flycatcher (ON), a Summer Tanager (QC), and a Prairie Warbler (NS).

[Please donate online](#) if you'd like to support the world's longest-running Citizen Science census. Your gift will directly fund national coordination, data collection, and analysis for the Christmas Bird Count in Canada, and help inform the conservation efforts of Bird Studies Canada and our partners.

Thank you for being part of the Christmas Bird Count! We hope you enjoy it.

International Ornithological Congress Coming to Vancouver in 2018

8 December 2016 – The 2018 [International Ornithological Congress](#) (IOC) will unite about 2000 scientists and conservationists from 100 countries around the world. The event will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia from August 19-26, 2018.

The Congress roster of [nearly 50 symposia](#) has just been released, complete with abstracts. Bird Studies Canada scientists are taking a leadership role in three of these sessions. Our BC Program Manager Dr. David Bradley will co-convene a symposium on "Advances in Biosecurity to Reverse Invasive Alien Species Impacts on Islands." Our Migration Programs Manager Stuart Mackenzie will co-convene "Cooperative Automated Radio Telemetry Systems in Avian Research." And our Director of National Programs, Jon McCracken, will be a co-convenor and keynote speaker on "The Role of Citizen Science in State of Bird Reporting and its Influence on Nature Conservation."

Bird Studies Canada is proud to be a co-host of the 2018 IOC, along with the International Ornithologists' Union and the Society of Canadian Ornithologists.

IUCN Red List Update

8 December 2016 – This year, [the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ has been updated](#) to recognize 742 new species of birds. This brings the overall count to 11,121, exceeding 11,000 for the first time. The new total is the product of a comprehensive taxonomic review, and suggests that avian diversity at the species level was previously underestimated by more than 10%. Unfortunately, over 11% of the newly-recognized species have been listed as threatened.

The need for conservation is especially urgent in Asia and Africa, where habitat loss and capture for the pet trade are depleting populations of the Java Sparrow, Grey Parrot, and other species.

On a positive note, some species endemic to small, remote islands have been downlisted to lower threat categories. Populations of Azores Bullfinch, St. Helena Plover, and Seychelles White-eye have sprung back from the brink of extinction, setting a hopeful example of what dedicated conservation efforts can achieve.

Save the Date for the 20th Great Backyard Bird Count

7 December 2016 – Do you participate in the [Great Backyard Bird Count](#)? This free annual four-day event engages birdwatchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are. The next Great Backyard Bird Count will take place February 17-20, 2017. In the meantime, check out the most recent issue of the [Great Backyard Bird Count eNewsletter](#) for information, resources, and news from related Citizen Science programs!

Season's Greetings and Our Holiday Schedule

16 December 2016 – All of us at Bird Studies Canada would like to thank you for supporting bird science and conservation. This is our final 2016 edition of *Latest News*. Watch for a new look for our e-newsletter in the new year! Please note: our offices will be closed from December 24 to January 2, reopening at 8:30 a.m. on January 3, 2017. Season's Greetings, and Happy New Year!

Connecting Kids with Nature



Photo: Jody Allair

16 December 2016 – The [Christmas Bird Count for Kids \(CBC4Kids\)](#) is a fun, family-friendly birdwatching event that promotes nature appreciation and environmental stewardship. Have you participated in a CBC4Kids event this season, or do you plan to? [Watch our new CBC4Kids video](#) to learn more about this exciting program.

Evening Grosbeak Joins Species at Risk List



Photo: Jane Ogilvie

5 December 2016 – The conservation statuses of three bird species were assessed at the fall meeting of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), recently held in Ottawa. COSEWIC confirmed the Endangered status of the Prothonotary Warbler, of which fewer than 15 mated pairs remain in Canada. It also recognized the Evening Grosbeak as a species of Special Concern due to strong population declines

occurring mainly in central and eastern Canada.

Worldwide, the Pink-footed Shearwater nests on only three islands off the coast of Chile. After breeding, it moves north and forages off the coast of British Columbia. Previously assessed as Threatened in 2004, this seabird was reassessed as Endangered, owing to threats posed by fisheries bycatch, nest predation by introduced mammals, illegal harvest of chicks, oil spills, and plastics ingestion.

[Visit the COSEWIC website](#) for more details on the most recent status assessments of Canadian wildlife.

Monarch Butterflies at Heightened Risk

5 December 2016 – At its recent fall meeting, COSEWIC also reassessed the status of the Monarch Butterfly in Canada. The risk category of this species was elevated from Special Concern to Endangered. Jon McCracken, Bird Studies Canada’s National Director and the co-chair of COSEWIC’s Birds Subcommittee, notes: “Numbers of this migratory species have been counted daily every fall at Bird Studies Canada’s Long Point Bird Observatory field stations since 1995, providing one of the world’s longest-running databases. Results from the Long Point analyses were used in the latest status assessment.” McCracken said, “It’s hard to think of a more iconic migratory species than the Monarch Butterfly, and even harder to think that its situation in Canada is growing more dire.”

New Publications Reveal Latest Findings

28 November 2016 – Five recently-published articles were co-authored by our staff and colleagues, or with Bird Studies Canada support using data from Long Point Bird Observatory, the Latin American Training Program, the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network, and the Motus Wildlife Tracking System. Examples of these works include: [an investigation of the effects of body composition analysis on stopover behaviour in migratory songbirds](#) (*Journal of Ornithology*); [an improved method for determining trends using data from counts, such as raptor migration counts](#) (*Avian Conservation and Ecology*); and [an experiment showing that White-throated Sparrows do not fly toward their usual breeding location after being transported across the continent in early spring](#) (*Scientific Reports*).

For a complete, searchable list of published works by Bird Studies Canada and partners, [visit our website](#).

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REGIONAL

Young Volunteers Survey Waterbirds



Photo: Lindsay Seegmiller

28 November 2016 – Thanks to the Laskeek Bay Conservation Society (LBCS) and their new youth birding club, Queen Charlotte Harbour's first-ever **British Columbia Coastal Waterbird Survey** was recently conducted. The idea for a club to get students outdoors to learn about local birds and engage in Citizen Science was born in September, at a meeting between LBCS and Bird Studies Canada. The BC Coastal Waterbird Survey was a natural fit for the group.

Led by experienced birders and armed with bird identification guides, students meet each month to participate in the survey. LBCS has developed a game for the budding birders that turns their data sheets into a bingo card, while sticking to the rigorous survey protocol. Many thanks to LBCS and the students who participated in the November survey!

The BC Coastal Waterbird Survey was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada.

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