Issue 67-4
June 2025

Summer Issue
Birding your patch

News for Members

Bird Protection Quebec
Protection des oiseaux du Québec

The SONG SPARROW

Bird Protection Quebec | Protection des oiseaux du Québec

The SONG SPARROW

Bird Protection Quebec - Mission Statement

VISION

We envision a world in which people appreciate the intrinsic benefits of birds and act to protect our planet and its wildlife.

MISSION

Our mission is to protect birds and bird habitat while fostering an appreciation of them through conservation, observation, research, and education.

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In this Issue

Features

BIRDING YOUR PATCH PHOTO CONTEST: WINNER ANNOUNCED! page 31

ON THE COVER

Blue Jay at the spa
Photo: Richard Gregson

This page: Purple Finch
Photo courtesy l'Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac

A Word FROM THE EDITORS

After a rainy, blustery spring, summer is finally here! With another migration season behind us, we hope you were able to get out for some great birding. As you'll see in the Field Trip Committee's Past Field Trips report, those who joined BPQ's spring outings enjoyed some fantastic sightings.

This summer issue is all about how you don't have to go far to experience the wonder of birds—they're right outside your door. In the feature article *Gardens, Waterfalls and Bridges*, Richard Gregson describes how his backyard waterfall became a "bird magnet" and offers practical tips for creating your own wildlife-friendly garden, no matter its size. In *Just look up! A driveway full of birds*, Mathias Mutzl reflects on how a pandemic pastime became a daily joy when he found a way to witness migration magic, stay connected to nature, and leave a zero carbon footprint—by staying home!

In keeping with the theme, earlier this spring we invited members to keep their eyes on their home patch and send in their best "First of Year" bird photos. See our contest feature starting on page 31, where we showcase the impressive pics that were shared with us and announce our winner!

Next, for something a little further afield, in our travel feature Kristen Lalla takes us to Costa Rica, where she set herself a bold birding goal, found her target bird, and fell in love with the country's incredible biodiversity.

Our regular columns are back, too: Birding Basics offers tips for backyard feeders, Birds With Quirks explores the surprising traits of the Northern Flicker, and Jeff Harrison introduces Pehr Kalm, whose journal contains the earliest natural history notes from Canada. In Cheep Sheets, Zofia Laubitz and Sarah Marshall wrap up the 2024/2025 lecture series with summaries of the final three presentations, and in Focus on Education, we share a list of bird-related books to keep your curiosity piqued all summer long.

Elsewhere in this issue, Frédéric Hareau calls for volunteers to help the SOS-POP program monitor Chimney Swift nesting sites on the Island of Montreal (page 10), and we once again challenge your knowledge with our French version of last issue's quiz— *Peut-tu devenir l'oiseaux ?* (page 23).

You will also find an announcement of the new board of directors and officers elected at BPQ's Annual General Meeting in May. Out-going president, Kristen Lalla, shares a last *Message* with you on the next page, and incoming president, Bonnie Soutar, introduces herself.

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together! Have a great summer—we'll see you again in the fall.

Darlene & Rina

A Message from THE PRESIDENT

With May's AGM, another board year has ended and a new one has begun. My two-year term as president also ended and I decided not to go for another term. I've learned a lot about leadership and work-volunteer-life balance. As an early career biologist, being president has helped me develop skills that are useful for my career, and, at the same time, I hope I've done some good things for BPQ.

Some neat, new things I'm proud of that have happened at BPQ in the past couple of years are: the development of a Montée Biggar conservation plan, an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion workshop for the board, surveying of the Lucas property, and a systematic approach to assessing potential lands for acquisition. Of course, these projects were the work of many, and I can only take credit for a small part of them.

I'll miss being president, but BPQ is in good hands with our new president, Bonnie Soutar. And I'm staying on the board, so am happy that I won't be leaving BPQ entirely!

All the best and happy birding,

Kristen

Message DE LA PRÉSIDENTE

Avec l'assemblée générale annuelle de mai, une autre année du conseil d'administration s'est achevée et une nouvelle a commencé. Mon mandat de deux ans en tant que présidente a pris fin et j'ai décidé de ne pas prendre un autre mandat. J'ai beaucoup appris sur le leadership et l'équilibre entre la vie professionnelle, la vie du bénévolat et la vie privée. En tant que biologiste en début de carrière, la présidence m'a permis de développer des compétences utiles pour ma carrière et, en même temps, j'espère avoir fait de bonnes choses pour POQ.

Je suis fière de certaines choses nouvelles et intéressantes qui se sont produites au POQ au cours des deux dernières années, notamment l'élaboration d'un plan de conservation pour la Montée Biggar, un atelier sur l'équité, la diversité et l'inclusion pour le conseil d'administration, le recensement de la propriété Lucas et une approche systématique de l'évaluation des terres possible d'être acquises. Bien entendu, ces projets sont le fruit du travail de nombreuses personnes et je ne peux m'en attribuer qu'une petite partie.

Le poste de présidente me manquera, mais POQ est entre bonnes mains avec notre nouvelle présidente, Bonnie Soutar. Et comme je reste membre du conseil d'administration, je suis contente de ne pas quitter POQ complètement !

Au plaisir et bonne observation des oiseaux,

Kristen

As the new president of Bird Protection Quebec, I would first like to thank my predecessor, Kristen Lalla, who guided our board with such dedication. It is an honour to support the incredible and wide-reaching work of this conservation organization, and I hope to keep the momentum of the past few years rolling along. With the help of our first project coordinator, we succeeded in realizing more of our dreams for sanctuaries and conservation projects, and the board and committees continue to educate the public and fund initiatives that protect birds and their habitats.

Access to birds and nature is something that should be available to everyone and we are committed to understanding our community's needs and acting to make it a reality for a greater diversity of people. Thanks to our members, volunteers and donors, so much is possible, and I am really excited to see what the next few years will bring!

Wishing all a wonderful summer filled with birdsong, and hope to meet you one day soon in person...

Bonnie

En tant que nouvelle présidente de Protection des oiseaux du Québec, j'aimerais d'abord remercier ma prédécesseuse, Kristen Lalla, qui a guidé notre conseil d'administration avec tant de dévouement. C'est un honneur de soutenir le travail incroyable et de grande envergure de cette organisation de conservation, et j'espère continuer sur la lancée des dernières années. Avec l'aide de notre premier coordinateur de projet, nous avons réussi à réaliser davantage de nos rêves pour les sanctuaires et les projets de conservation, et le conseil d'administration et les comités continuent à éduquer le public et à financer des initiatives qui protègent les oiseaux et leurs habitats.

L'accès aux oiseaux et à la nature devrait être accessible à tous et nous nous engageons à comprendre les besoins de notre communauté et à agir pour en faire une réalité pour une plus grande diversité de personnes. Grâce à nos membres, à nos bénévoles et à nos donateurs, tant de choses sont possibles, et je suis vraiment impatiente de voir ce que les prochaines années nous réservent !

Je vous souhaite à tous un été merveilleux, rempli de chants d'oiseaux, et j'espère vous rencontrer un jour prochain en personne...

Bonnie

A Message from the Elections & Nominations Committee

New Board Elected by the Members at the Annual General Meeting - May 26, 2025

At our recent AGM, five sitting directors were re-elected to the Board of Directors to serve with ten others who were elected last year for a two-year term.

In accordance with the By-laws, a call for nominations was put forward earlier in the year. No new nominations were received, but, happily, the five directors whose terms were ending this year all agreed to stand for re-election. This being the case, it was motioned and approved that the slate of five people presented be re-elected for a further two-year term, a motion which passed unanimously.

Anne-Marie Cousineau resigned from the board in late May, leaving one vacancy, but happily this was because she has accepted a contract to assist BPQ as a new coordinator of projects.

Board of Directors 2025/2026

* Suzanne Bélanger	Sheldon Harvey
Émile Brisson-Curadeau	Kristen Lalla
* Claude Cloutier	Zofia Laubitz
Katherine Collin	Sarah Marshall
Kyle Elliott	Helen Meredith
Jeff Harrison	Ron Rind *
* Darlene Harvey	Bonnie Soutar *

* re-elected

At a special meeting following the AGM, the board appointed Bonnie Soutar as president for the next two years, replacing Kristen Lalla, whose term had ended. The board thanked Kristen for all the time and effort she put into the role, and expressed its gratitude that she will remain on the board. Darlene Harvey was reappointed as vice-president, outreach and education for a further two years. (All other officers were appointed to a two-year term last year.)

Officers - Elected by the Board

President	Bonnie Soutar
Vice-President, Administration	Sheldon Harvey
Vice-President, Conservation	Émile Brisson-Curadeau
Vice-President, Outreach	Darlene Harvey
Treasurer	Sheldon Harvey
Secretary	Suzanne Bélanger

The Executive Committee, as appointed by the board for the coming year, will be comprised of the president, the three V-Ps, and the secretary.

Message du comité des élections et des nominations

Nouveau conseil d'administration élu par les membres lors de l'assemblée générale annuelle - 26 mai 20255

Lors de notre récente assemblée générale annuelle, cinq administrateurs en exercice ont été réélus au conseil d'administration, aux côtés de dix autres élus l'année dernière pour un mandat de deux ans.

Conformément aux statuts, un appel à candidatures a été lancé plus tôt dans l'année. Aucune nouvelle candidature n'a été reçue, mais, heureusement, les cinq administrateurs dont le mandat se terminait cette année ont tous accepté de se représenter. Dans ces conditions, il a été proposé et approuvé que la liste des cinq personnes présentées soit réélue pour un nouveau mandat de deux ans, motion qui a été adoptée à l'unanimité.

Anne-Marie Cousineau a démissionné du conseil d'administration à la fin du mois de mai, laissant un poste vacant, mais heureusement, c'est parce qu'elle a accepté un contrat pour aider le BPQ en tant que nouvelle coordinatrice de projets.

Conseil d'administration 2025/2026

* Suzanne Bélanger	Sheldon Harvey
Émile Brisson-Curadeau	Kristen Lalla
* Claude Cloutier	Zofia Laubitz
Katherine Collin	Sarah Marshall
Kyle Elliott	Helen Meredith
Jeff Harrison	Ron Rind *
* Darlene Harvey	Bonnie Soutar *

* réélu

Lors d'une réunion extraordinaire qui a suivi l'assemblée générale annuelle, le conseil d'administration a nommé Bonnie Soutar au poste de présidente pour les deux prochaines années, en remplacement de Kristen Lalla, dont le mandat avait pris fin. Le conseil a remercié Kristen pour tout le temps et les efforts qu'elle a consacrés à ce rôle et a exprimé sa gratitude pour le fait qu'elle restera membre du conseil. Darlene Harvey a été reconduite dans ses fonctions de vice-présidente chargée de la sensibilisation et de l'éducation pour deux années supplémentaires. (Les autres membres de la direction avaient été nommés pour un mandat de deux ans l'année dernière.)

Membres de la direction - élus par le conseil

Présidente	Bonnie Soutar
Vice-président, administration	Sheldon Harvey
Vice-président, conservation	Émile Brisson-Curadeau
Vice-présidente, sensibilisation	Darlene Harvey
Trésorier	Sheldon Harvey
Secrétaire	Suzanne Bélanger

Le comité exécutif, nommé par le conseil pour l'année à venir, est constitué de la présidente, des trois vice-président.e.s. et de la sécrétaire.

Focus on OUR MEMBERS

To all our members

We are very happy to welcome quite a long list of new members who have joined us since the last issue of Song Sparrow!

Sally Si, Isabelle Thibeault, Denis Lalonde, Jean Bilodeau, Lachlan Standing, Aurélie Vasseur, Benoit Gravel, Hélène Choquette, Valentine Dumez, Geoffrey Garver, Carlos Paredes, Cecilia Gonzales, Julia Brochocka, Mona Rutenberg, Mark Zoccolillo, Shane Ward, Maurice Gauvin, Karen Mitchell, and Graham Gammell

We look forward to meeting you all, either at a monthly meeting on Zoom, or on a field trip! Keep reading this issue for details of our planned activities, and be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram, and to join our iO Song Sparrow **e-list group** to connect with fellow members.

À tous nos membres

Nous sommes très heureux d'accueillir une longue liste de nouveaux membres qui nous ont rejoints depuis le dernier numéro de *Song Sparrow* !

Sally Si, Isabelle Thibeault, Denis Lalonde, Jean Bilodeau, Lachlan Standing, Aurélie Vasseur, Benoit Gravel, Hélène Choquette, Valentine Dumez, Geoffrey Garver, Carlos Paredes, Cecilia Gonzales, Julia Brochocka, Mona Rutenberg, Mark Zoccolillo, Shane Ward, Maurice Gauvin, Karen Mitchell, et Graham Gammell

Nous sommes impatients de vous rencontrer, que ce soit par Zoom lors d'une réunion mensuelle ou lors de l'une de nos excursions ! Continuez à lire ce numéro pour plus de détails sur les activités prévues, et n'oubliez pas de nous suivre sur Facebook et Instragram, et de rejoindre notre **groupe de liste électronique** « Songsparrow » pour vous connecter avec d'autres membres.

New member Isabelle (left) and friend, on a private outing offered by the field trip committee and donated by BPQ (along with a one-year membership) to QuébecOiseaux's annual fundraising auction. For 2025, the auction proceeds will be dedicated to projects aimed at mitigating man-made threats to the environment. Happy you chose us for your auction donation, Isabelle, and welcome!

La nouvelle membre Isabelle (à gauche) et une amie, lors d'une excursion privée offerte par le comité des excursions et donnée par POQ (avec une adhésion d'un an) à l'encan-bénéfice annuelle de QuébecOiseaux, Tous les profits de l'encan 2025 seront dédiés à des projets visant à atténuer les menaces en milieu anthropique. Nous sommes heureux que vous nous ayez choisis pour votre don, Isabelle !

BPQ volunteers at work

On April 12, Outreach Committee members Suzanne Bélanger, Darlene Harvey and Sheldon Harvey participated in the Earth Day FORUM in Ormstown for the second year.

In addition to welcoming visitors to the BPQ information kiosk, this year committee chair Sheldon Harvey was asked to be one of the presenters and gave a talk entitled *The Relationship between Trees and Birds*. The presentation was well received, judging by the number of people who came to chat with us at the table after it was over!

We had a great time meeting people from the region, a number of whom registered to receive our weekly eNews, and a few of whom signed up to become members immediately after the event!

-Outreach Committee

Bénévoles sur le terrain

Le 12 avril dernier, les membres du comité de sensibilisation Suzanne Bélanger, Darlene Harvey et Sheldon Harvey ont participé au FORUM du Jour de la Terre à Ormstown pour la deuxième année.

En plus d'accueillir les visiteurs au kiosque d'information du POQ, Sheldon Harvey, président du comité, a été invité à faire partie des présentateurs et a donné une conférence intitulée *La relation entre les arbres et les oiseaux*. La présentation a été bien accueillie, à en juger par le nombre de personnes qui sont venues discuter avec nous à la table après la présentation !

Nous avons eu beaucoup de plaisir à rencontrer des gens de la région, dont un certain nombre se sont inscrits pour recevoir notre eNews hebdomadaire, et quelques-uns se sont inscrits pour devenir membres immédiatement après l'événement !

-Comité de la sensibilisation

YOU CAN HELP SPECIES-AT-RISK CONSERVATION RESEARCH!

As is the case every year, BPQ is involved in the *Suivi des populations d'oiseaux en péril du Québec* (SOS-POP) program, which aims to identify important sites for birds at risk and to monitor their occupation over the years, all with a view towards conservation.

To this end, BPQ is calling on its members and friends to help the program find volunteers who are willing to follow up on one or more possible nesting sites of an endangered species on the island of Montreal. The species targeted this year is the Chimney Swift, and the level of effort required is a minimum of two observation periods of 30 to 45 minutes per observation site, at the end of June or during the month of July. There are several sites to be monitored on the Island of Montreal.

If you are interested or would like more information, please contact: Frédéric Hareau at fredhareau1@yahoo.ca.

For more information on the SOS-POP program (in French only): https://www.quebecoiseaux.org/fr/sos-pop

Thank you in advance for your contribution to these essential efforts to conserve our birdlife.

Frédéric Hareau
For the Conservation Committee
fredhareau1@yahoo.ca

VOUS POUVEZ CONTRIBUER À LA CONSERVATION DES ESPÈCES MENACÉE !

Comme chaque année, POQ s'implique dans le programme de Suivi des populations d'oiseaux en péril du Québec (SOS-POP) qui vise à identifier les sites importants pour la conservation des oiseaux en péril et à assurer le suivi de leur occupation au fil des ans. Tout ceci dans un objectif de conservation.

Dans ce cadre, POQ sollicite ses membres et affiliés afin de trouver des bénévoles qui sont prêts à réaliser un ou plusieurs suivis sur l'île de Montréal de possibles sites de nidification d'une espèce menacée sur l'île de Montréal. L'espèce ciblée cette année est le Martinet ramoneur et le niveau d'effort demandé est d'au minimum 2 périodes d'observation de 30 à 45 minutes par site d'observation, entre la fin juin ou durant le mois de juillet. Plusieurs sites sont à suivre sur l'Ile de Montréal.

Si vous êtes intéressé ou pour obtenir plus d'informations, veuillez contacter: Frédéric Hareau à : fredhareau1@yahoo.ca.

Pour plus d'information sur le programme SOS-POP : https://www.quebecoiseaux.org/fr/sos-pop

Merci d'avance pour votre contribution à ces essentiels efforts de conservation de notre faune aviaire.

Frédéric Hareau
Au nom du comité de conservation
fredhareau1@yahoo.ca

Focus on
FIELD OBSERVATIONS

Upcoming field trips

The end of our regular-season field trips is here, with the last being the traditional Southwestern Quebec Early Solstice Trip planned for June 21. We hope you took full advantage of spring migration. While preparing the Past Field Trips report that follows, we felt convinced that we did everything we could to get you out in the field, with 21 events held from mid-March to the end of May!

Starting Saturday, June 28, we will move into our popular "Summer Series of Birding," organized by Sheldon Harvey, which will be back for its 22nd season. When the summer trips were first added to our schedule, none of us were sure they would take off but here we are over 20 years later, and they're still going strong.

As is always the case for the summer series, each weekend's destination will be announced only a few days before, which allows Sheldon to take advantage of any special sightings or newly discovered locations, while also taking the weather into account. Details with driving instructions will be communicated before each week's event through our eNews bulletin, the BPQ Facebook pages and the iO Song Sparrow email group.

Last year, we gave ourselves the challenge of finding our 200th summer species—which turned out to be not much of a challenge when we quickly found number 200 (Trumpeter Swan) on Trip #4, and number 201 (Red-bellied Woodpecker) on Trip #6!

So be sure to join us for some summer birding, you never know what we might find!

BPQ Field Trip Committee

Kudos to member and avid field trip participant Charles "Bill" Thompson, whose photo of the gang taken during the March 23 outing to Point-du-Moulin was chosen for the *Les clubs sur le terrain* feature in the summer issue of QuebecOiseaux magazine.

Focus on

FIELD OBSERVATIONS

Past field trips

Our spring birding season kicked off under sunny skies at Parc de la Frayère and continued through shifting weather—but wind and rain didn't stop our birders or the birds. As migration ramped up in May, we added extra weekday outings, including beginner walks at the Morgan Arboretum and our popular Early Morning Warbler Walks at Mount Royal Cemetery. Highlights included Trumpeter Swans, Snowy Owls, Sandhill Cranes, and Horned Larks. Huge thanks to our guides and to everyone who joined us in the field. Whether you came for your first chickadee or your fiftieth vireo, we're glad you were there. — *BPQ Field Trip Committee*

15/03/25 – Parc de la Frayere, Boucherville, QC

Guide: Sheldon Harvey
Weather: Mild and sunny
Number of Participants: 25; Number of Species: 30
Birds of Note: Bald Eagles, Purple Finch, Northern Pintail. Common Goldeneye
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S218680937

22/03/25 – Parc Historique de la Pointe-du-Moulin, Notre-Dame-de-l'Île-Perrot, QC

Guide: Ron Rind
Weather: Clear sky, light wind, 0 C
Number of Participants: 30; Number of Species: 32
Birds of Note: Merlin, Bufflehead, Canvasback
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S220517591

29/03/25 – Parc-nature du Cap-St-Jacques, Pierrefonds, QC

Guide: Wayne Grubert
Weather: Grey skies, -5 C, very windy
Number of Participants: 20; Number of Species: 28
Birds of Note: Northern Harrier, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Cedar Waxwing, Eastern Phoebe, Killdeer
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S221605426

Pileated Woodpecker—
Beauharnois / St-Timothée
Photo: Tom Long

Cedar Waxwing—
Parc-Nature du Cap-St-Jacques
Photo: Cory Ruchlin

05/04/25 – Parc des Rapides, Lasalle and Verdun Waterfronts, QC

Guide: Diane Demers
Weather; Cloudy and cool
Number of Participants: 30; Number of Species: 36
Birds of Note: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Bald Eagle, Tree Swallow, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, White-winged Scoter
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/tripreport/348153

12/04/25 – Beauharnois / St-Timothée, QC

Guide: Wayne Grubert
Weather: Cloudy, northeast breeze, cold
Number of Participants: 14; Number of Species: 46
Birds of Note: Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Common Raven, Brown Creeper, Bald Eagle
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/tripreport/350906

19/04/25 – Baie-du-Febvre, QC

Guides: Sheldon and Darlene Harvey
Weather: Cloudy; rain near the end of the trip
Number of Participants: 15; Number of Species: 54
Birds of Note: 2 Snowy Owls, Snow Buntings, Horned Larks, 15 species of waterfowl; Purple Martin, Fox Sparrow
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/tripreport/353854

23/04/25 – Birding for Beginners – Morgan Arboretum

Guide: Barbara MacDuff
Weather: Sunny, light wind
Number of Participants: 5; Number of Species: 25
Birds of Note: Purple Finch, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-tailed Hawk
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S229351833

26/04/25 – Parc-nature du Bois-de-L'Île-Bizard, Île Bizard, QC

Guide: Ron Rind
Weather: Steady rain
Number of Participants: 11; Number of Species: 34
Birds of Note: Virginia Rail, Swamp Sparrow, American Bittern
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S230159896

29/04/25 – Early Morning Warbler Walk – Mount Royal Cemetery

Guide: Nicholas Acheson
Weather: Partly cloudy, +10 to 14 C
Number of Participants: 20; Number of Species: 30
Birds of Note: Merlin, Red-shouldered Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Eastern Bluebird, Palm Warbler
eBird Checklist : https://ebird.org/checklist/S230896467

Hermit Thrush—Birding for Beginners - Morgan Arboretum
Photo: Bill Thompson

30/04/25 – Birding for Beginners – Morgan Arboretum

Guide: Barbara MacDuff
Weather: Cold 1 C, strong north winds
Number of Participants: 8; Number of Species; 31
Birds of Note: Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler.
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S232156538

Sandhill Crane—
La Réserve Nationale de Faune du Lac Saint-François
Photo: Wayne Grubert

01/05/25 – Hudson, QC – Evening trip

Guide: Barbara MacDuff
Weather: Overcast
Number of Participants: 21; Number of Species: 29
Birds of Note: American Wigeon, Brant, Osprey, Great Egret, Great Blue Heron
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S232156552

04/05/25 – La Réserve Nationale de Faune du Lac Saint-François, Dundee, QC

Guides: Sheldon Harvey, Wayne Grubert
Weather: Cloudy, calm wind, temperatures low to mid-teens
Number of Participants: 23; Number of Species: 60
Birds of Note: Trumpeter Swans; Sandhill Cranes, Osprey, Wilson's Snipe, 5 Warbler species
eBird Trip Checklist: https://ebird.org/tripreport/361691

06/05/25 – Early Morning Warbler Walk – Mount Royal Cemetery

Guides: Harle Thomas and Minda Bernstein
Weather: Heavy, steady rain
Number of Participants: 10; Number of Species: 17
Birds of Note: House Finch, Eastern Bluebirds, Turkey Vulture, Common Raven
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S244612308

10/05/25 – Finnegan's Market and Area, Hudson, QC - World Migratory Bird Day Outing

Guide: Wayne Grubert
Weather: Cloudy, temperature 8 to 12 C
Number of Participants: 23; Number of Species: 60
Birds of Note: Snow Geese, Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Bobolink, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S235687715

13/05/25 – Early Morning Warbler Walk – Mount Royal Cemetery

Guide: Karen Sherman
Weather: Sunny, mild
Number of Participants: 27; Number of Species: 40
Birds of Note: Scarlet Tanager; Baltimore Oriole, Eastern Bluebirds; 9 warbler species
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S237362280

17/05/25 – Refuge Faunique Marguerite-D'Youville, Île Saint-Bernard, QC

Guide: Tom Long
Weather: Overcast, heavy rain late in the trip
Number of Participants: 18; Number of Species: 63
Birds of Note: Eastern Bluebird, Brown Thrasher, 10 warbler species; Common Loon, Osprey
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S239312145

Very wet BPQ birders—
Refuge Faunique Marguerite-D'Youville, Île Saint-Bernard
Photo: Darlene Harvey

19/05/25 – Mount Royal Cemetery, Montreal, QC

Guides: Darlene and Sheldon Harvey
Weather: Cool, partly cloudy
Number of Participants: 20; Number of Species; 50
Birds of Note: 14 Warbler species; Eastern Bluebirds, Indigo Buntings, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S240236127

20/05/25 – Early Morning Warbler Walk Mount Royal Cemetery

Guide: Nicholas Acheson
Weather: Grey skies, 7 C
Number of Participants: 13; Number of Species: 35
Birds of Note: Olive-sided Flycatcher; Eastern Bluebirds; Warblers (Magnolia, Blackburnian), Blue-headed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Bohemian and Cedar Waxwings
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S240586069

Marsh Wren—
Parc de Conservation du ruisseau de Feu, Terrebonne
Photo: Darlene Harvey

24/05/25 – BPQ Montgomery Sanctuary, Philipsburg, QC

Guide: Ron Rind
Weather: Light rain, 10 C, lots of mud!
Number of Participants: 13; Number of Species: 42
Birds of Note: Red-bellied Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, 8 Warbler species
eBird Checklists: https://ebird.org/checklist/S242091107 and https://ebird.org/checklist/S242091099

27/05/25 – Early Morning Warbler Walk – Mount Royal Cemetery

Guide: Karen Sherman
Weather: Cool, partly cloudy
Number of Birders: 18; Number of Species: 39
Birds of Note: Scarlet Tanager, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Indigo Buntings, 11 species of warblers, American Kestrel
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S244560862

31/05/25 – Parc de Conservation du ruisseau de Feu, Terrebonne, QC

Guide: Sheldon Harvey
Weather: Gray skies, threat of rain
Number of Participants: 20; Number of Species: 50
Birds of Note: Wood Ducks with young; nesting Gadwalls and Pied-billed Grebes, Black-crowned Night Heron, Bald Eagle, Marsh Wrens
eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/checklist/S245056199

Yellow Warbler—
Refuge Faunique Marguerite-D'Youville, Île Saint-Bernard
Photo: Omar Morsy

Focus On Education

BPQ presents a series of monthly lectures from October through April, usually on the first Monday of each month. Events are for the most part held via Zoom in order to reach a broader audience.

Summer Reading

For a second year, the nice people at Princeton University Press have curated a list of books for us from their Nature Catalogue, to help occupy our summer evenings and feed our thirst for knowledge while we wait for the monthly lectures to resume in the fall!

The first seven books are new to the list this year, and feature two books by our December speaker, Roger Pasquier, including *Birds in Winter*, the subject of his talk, and one by an award-winning Canadian photojournalist. The other books on offer cover a wide range of titles from field and identification guides to photo guides to fascinating books on bird behaviour. A 30% discount for BPQ members, good on purchases made until August 31, 2025 by using the unique code **BPQ30**, will apply again this year when ordering online.

Click on any of the titles below to link to the book description and purchase option.

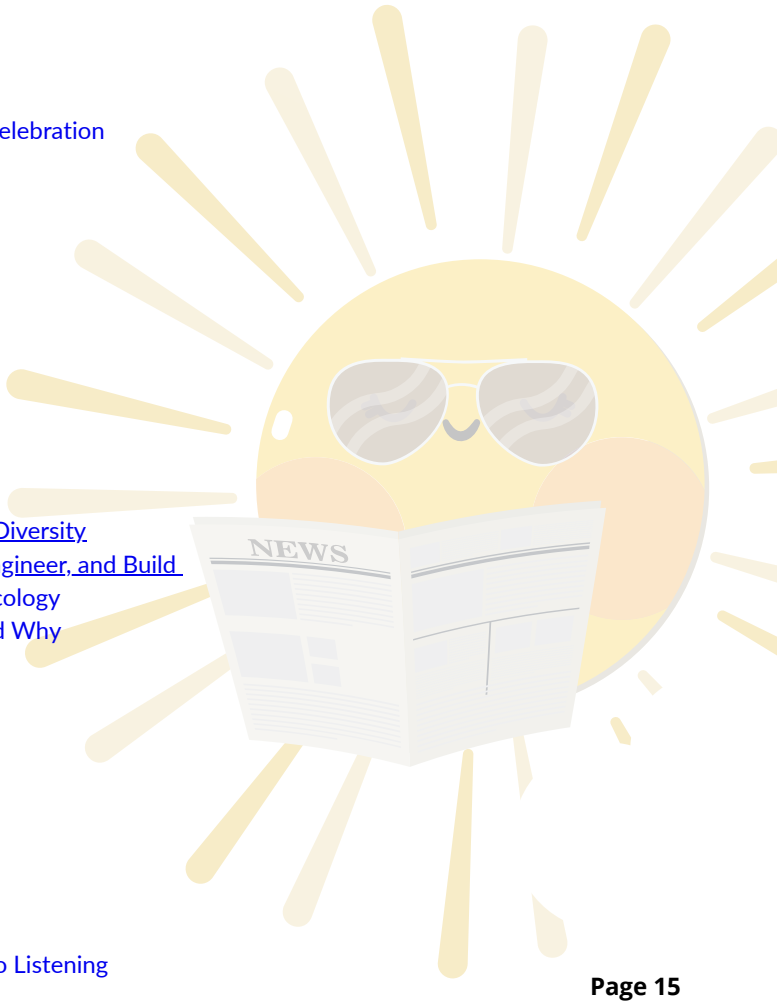
From Roger Pasquier:
· Birds at Rest: The Behavior and Ecology of Avian Sleep
· Birds in Winter: Surviving the Most Challenging Season

Title of Note (Overall Winner Canadian photojournalist Patricia Homonylo): Bird Photographer of the Year: Collection 9

New in Habitats of the World series: Habitats of North America: A Field Guide for Birders, Naturalists, and Ecologists

Available for Pre-order Now: Birds of the Tropical Andes

Identification Guides, Bird Behaviour, and more:
· The Gull Guide: North America
· Europe's Birds: An Identification Guide
· The Shorebirds of North America: A Natural History and Photographic Celebration
· Terns of North America: A Photographic Guide
· Gulls Simplified: A Comparative Approach to Identification
· Oceanic Birds of the World: A Photo Guide
· The Warbler Guide
· Field Guide to North American Flycatchers: Kingbirds and Myiarchus
· Field Guide to North American Flycatchers: Empidonax and Pewees
· All About Birds Northeast: Northeast US and Canada
· Hummingbirds: A Celebration of Nature's Jewels
· The Complete Birds of the World: Every Species Illustrated
· Birds of Maine
· Penguins: The Ultimate Guide Second Edition
· How Birds Evolve: What Science Reveals about Their Origin, Lives, and Diversity
· Avian Architecture Revised and Expanded Edition: How Birds Design, Engineer, and Build
· What Is a Bird? An Exploration of Anatomy, Physiology, Behavior, and Ecology
· Understanding Bird Behavior: An Illustrated Guide to What Birds Do and Why
· How Birds Live Together: Colonies and Communities in the Avian World
· Bird Love: The Family Life of Birds
· Vagrancy in Birds
· The Bird Name Book: A History of English Bird Names
· Birds and Us: A 12,000 Year History from Cave Art to Conservation
· Birdpedia: A Brief Compendium of Avian Lore
· In the Footsteps of Audubon
· Backyard Birds Flashcards – Eastern & Central North America
· Birders Life List & Journal
· Backyard Birdsong Guide Eastern and Central North America: A Guide to Listening



Wings Below Water: A Deep Dive into the Natural History of Diving Birds

Presented by Kyle Elliot - February 3, 2025

by Zofia Laubitz

Kyle Elliott, Associate Professor at McGill University and long-time BPQ Board member, has been studying seabirds for over two decades. He comes by his interest naturally: his father is also a seabird biologist. Although Kyle has studied birds on four continents, he has a particular interest in the Arctic, where he has worked at several research sites.

On this occasion, Kyle went into the question of how birds are adapted for diving. There are several adaptations that many diving birds share: streamlined shape; wings adapted for swimming with a flattened humerus; low buoyancy, large size, and heavy weight (the opposite of adaptation for flight); waterproof plumage; countershading (dark on top and light underneath, so that the bird is hard to see both from above and from below); and high oxygen stores combined with low oxygen use. In addition, diving birds don't get the bends so they're able to surface quickly after a dive; how they do this, no one yet knows! Moreover, a fairly high proportion of diving birds are flightless, like penguins; this represents an advantage, as flightless birds have no need for buoyancy and light bones.

Most diving birds inhabit cold regions (as do most seals). As warm-blooded animals, they're able to put on a burst of speed, either to catch cold-blooded prey or to evade cold-blooded predators, which are more sluggish in cold water. This advantage is lost in warmer waters.

Kyle divided diving birds into three major groups, based on their propulsion method: wing-propelled, foot-propelled, and plunge divers. Wing-propelled birds include penguins, auks, shearwaters and petrels, and dippers (the odd bird out?). Penguins use lift-based propulsion: their wings move up and down as if they were flying in the water. This action produces a smooth forward movement. Shearwaters, with their long flight-adapted wings, use drag-based propulsion: their wings move back and forth, like a person's arms when swimming. This produces a very jerky motion. Auks use a mixture of lift and drag propulsion, so they don't swim as smoothly as penguins but are still very good underwater swimmers. Auks also have the highest wing loading (weight to wing surface) of any flying bird, so they have to work very hard to fly.

The foot-propelled divers include grebes, cormorants, loons, and ducks. These birds are all quite buoyant and use their feet for drag-based propulsion. During a dive, foot propulsion burns more oxygen than wing propulsion so these birds can't stay underwater as long as wing-propelled divers.

Finally, plunge divers include gannets and boobies, terns, kingfishers, pelicans, and the Osprey; these birds make use of inertia-based propulsion. Plunge divers are among the few diving birds to attack their prey from above; most divers approach their intended victims from below. The three diving modes are the outcome of evolution acting on three different forces: buoyancy, gravity, and drag.

For our entertainment, Kyle presented some diving bird world records. The longest and deepest diver is the Emperor Penguin, which has been known to dive as deep as 564 m and remain underwater for 32 minutes! The longest and deepest diver for its size is the Thick-billed Murre, which can dive 240 m underwater. (Listeners may have sensed a hint of favouritism here... .) The fastest diver is the Northern Gannet, which can plunge at 100 km per hour. The smallest marine diver is the Least Auklet (but the dippers are even smaller). The largest diving bird ever to have lived was Kumimanu fordycei, a prehistoric penguin that weighed 150 kg. And the coldest diver is the King Penguin, whose body temperature drops to 11°C during a dive.

Kyle then took us on a very deep dive indeed into diving bird physiology, replete with equations, which (fortunately) I have no room to reproduce here. He also discussed some milestones in the history of seabird conservation, such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918), which made egging illegal. This practice had contributed to the extinction of the Great Auk. To wind up, he presented an overview of the main risks facing seabirds: fisheries bycatch (from longlining, gillnets, and trawling); invasive species, especially on birds' nesting islands; and, of course, climate change. Kyle left the audience with a wealth of fascinating information to assimilate about diving birds.

Return to the Sky: the Story of the Comeback of the Bald Eagle

Presented by Tina Morris - March 3, 2025

by Sarah Marshall

Raised in a large family and surrounded by myriad orphaned creatures both domestic and wild, Tina Morris was imbued with a lifelong love of animals. Tina earned her undergraduate degree from Oberlin College and her graduate degree in ornithology and wildlife biology from Cornell University, where she helped develop the first techniques for introducing Bald Eagles. Her field research ultimately became the instruction manual for eagle restoration programs throughout the Northeastern U.S. Tina now writes about environmental issues, particularly those that affect wildlife conservation.

A retired middle school teacher (Biology and English), Tina had a very interesting early career working to reestablish the Bald Eagle in upstate New York in the mid-1970s. She gave a presentation to BPQ on her ground-breaking work from 50 years ago and introduced her recently published book Return to the Sky (2024) that describes her project.

The Bald Eagle's image is ubiquitous in the USA, in spite of the story that Benjamin Franklin did not like the bird, reportedly due to its scavenger nature! It is only very recently that the Bald Eagle was named officially as the national bird. Thanks to Rep. Amy Klobuchar's work, then-President Joe Biden passed a bill just before his term ended to officialize what most people would assume was already in the books!

In the spring of 1975, on the eve of the US Bicentennial, Tina was selected to reintroduce Bald Eagles into New York State in the hopes that the species could eventually repopulate eastern North America. Bald Eagles had been decimated by the effects of DDT, a pesticide used against mosquitoes, which was banned in 1972. DDT ingestion disrupts the calcium cycle, and results in weak eggshells, causing unsuccessful breeding in all birds but especially those at the top of the food chain, like Bald Eagles. When concentrations of a toxin increase like this until the top destination, the phenomenon is called bio-magnification.

The saga of the return of the Bald Eagle closely mirrors that of the Peregrine Falcon. This bird also was affected by DDT, and, in the early 1970s, raptor biologists based at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, successfully re-integrated them to the wild. The Finger Lakes of upstate New York was the epicentre of raptor re-integration at the time. However, in 1973 both the Peregrine Falcon and the Bald Eagle were on the endangered species list. In 1976 in the lower 48 states there were only 417 breeding pairs of Bald Eagles, a number that was too low to sustain the population. The Peregrines had been re-introduced using captive breeding and artificial insemination. The use of hacking, a falconry technique where young birds are raised without parents, was, at the time, unusual but ended up being very successful when used for the reintroduction of Bald Eagles. Young eaglets were removed from active nests and transferred to the release site, where they were placed in artificial nests on top of a 35-ft (10.5m) tower, well-protected from predators, accessible only by climbing up a ladder, and constructed with a blind to keep their human caretaker hidden from view of the birds.

The Bald Eagle releases began at the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, in Cayuga County, New York, near Seneca Falls. If you visit, you will see the huge Bald Eagle statue on the edge of the refuge along the NY Thruway. There was plentiful food, marsh areas, streams, as well as open water, waterbirds and fish, and there were good trees for future nests. Eagles use the same nests year after year. Sometimes building a secondary nest nearby, they only use one nest at a time. This wilderness area had privacy and protection, it was in a no-hunting zone, and it was less than an hour's drive from Cornell University.

In the summers of 1976 and 1977, Tina essentially lived in the wild, with only her two dogs for company and protection. The marsh had carp and other fish, but she had to fish and trap them, and in the second year, a drought decimated the carp population, so Tina had to collect small mammals like squirrels and rabbits as roadkill to feed the eaglets. She did this daily, all summer both years, hoping that the eaglets would successfully thrive even when raised without parents.

But there was a problem: where could they source eaglets? Eagles usually lay three eggs a few days apart. The third egg is smallest, and that eaglet is usually weaker. Often, if the first two hatchlings survive, the third one gets thrown from the nest or starved out, so the plan was to take several of those third eaglets, at about seven weeks of age. Although Alaska has a surplus of Bald Eagles, they were considered too different genetically for the purposes of reintroduction to the Northeast. Therefore, eaglets were collected from the Midwest states, where DDT had not been used as much.

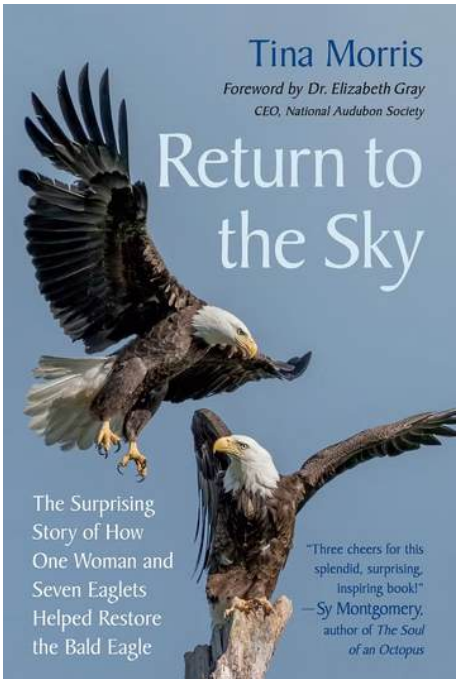
The first year, Tina received two eaglets: W1 and W2 (from Wisconsin). The next year she received four eaglets, which necessitated expanding the blind and nest area. These were M1 and M2 (from Michigan and Minnesota) as well as two captive-bred eaglets. Later in the second summer, another eaglet (M3) with a broken leg was found and brought in to join the first four. M3 lived a long life, as proven when his band identified him after a collision with a car. He lived to an age of 38 years! In the wild, Bald Eagles usually live for 20-25 years; when in captivity they can live longer (up to 50 but the average is 30 years).

For the two summers, the team installed a TV monitor for surveillance, and Tina set up her campsite and other paraphernalia. Banding was the next step. She discovered that the leg of a pair of jeans was the perfect fit to safely confine the eaglets and protect herself from those sharp talons! Once the eaglets matured and started to flap their wings they frequently flew from the nest platform into the marsh. In the wild, the adult eagles would have protected them and continued to feed them until they were able to fly on their own, however that was not realistically possible in this situation – so Tina had to find the fallen eaglets in the marsh and haul them back up to the nest!

In October all the eaglets flew off to go south, but contact was lost - the batteries in the radios Tina had put on the birds only lasted a few weeks. Bird surveillance was in its infancy!

Although the project was mostly kept secret to protect the birds, as well as to protect Tina herself, in 1977 word got out and she was besieged by media. Some notoriety ended up being advantageous when Tina was inducted into the Iroquois Confederacy because of her work.

Poisoning by lead shot is still a problem for Bald Eagles, as are vehicle deaths. Another challenge is Avian Vacuolar Myelinopathy (AVM), a fatal neurological disease that affects birds of prey and waterbirds. It is most common in Bald Eagles and American Coots. Wind farms, the use of rodenticides, habitat loss through logging and human development, and climate change, which results in extreme weather and poor food availability, also cause problems for the Bald Eagle population. Avian flu is a challenge, as well. For example, Snow Geese are preyed upon by Bald Eagles, and this winter these birds suffered huge losses, in the thousands, from the virus when flying south through New York and Pennsylvania along the Atlantic Flyway.



The success of reintroducing Bald Eagles has not been without criticism. Eagles steal prey from Osprey, they can take over Osprey platforms, they can harass loons, etc.

In New York, in 1967 there were no breeding pairs of Bald Eagles. By 2023 there were 426 breeding pairs! And, in 2007, Bald Eagles were removed from the (U.S.) federal endangered species list.

For more reading, look for *Silent Spring* (pub.1962) in which Rachel Carson shocked the American public with what she uncovered about the lethal effects of DDT, as well as Tina Morris' book *Return to the Sky.*

Climate Change and Birds: Research and Conservation in a Rapidly Changing World

Presented by Barbara Frei - April 7, 2025

by Zofia Laubitz

Barbara Frei is an adjunct professor at three universities—McGill, Concordia, and Carleton—and a research scientist with Environment and Climate Change Canada; she is also one of the co-founders of the McGill Bird Observatory. She has published on a wide range of avian topics; for our April lecture, Barbara talked about climate change.

Of course, climate change—a long-term shift in temperatures and weather patterns, which has been primarily driven by human activity in the last 200 years—is a huge topic. Barbara focused on its effects on North American birds, as manifested in three specific issues: (1) shifting ranges and migration patterns; (2) physical changes and adaptations; and (3) impacts on breeding and reproduction.

Barbara spent most time on the first issue: range and migration. She approached the question by asking why birds migrate. People often think that birds go south to escape the cold, but the real problem they face isn't so much cold weather as resource depletion. Thus, they fly south to find reliable food. Why do they come north in the breeding season, then? Not only to capitalize on the rich resources available in the northern spring and summer but also to escape predation. Indeed, tropical birds have higher adult survival than migratory birds, due to plentiful food, but lower nest success, due to heavy predation.

Migration is, of course, affected by weather. Barbara told us that spring migrants rush to get to the breeding grounds as fast as possible, risking dangerous cold snaps. But spring now starts three days earlier than in the 1960s. Short-distance migrants, such as the Song Sparrow, may notice the early onset of warm weather and move north earlier than they used to. But long-distance migrants, such as Swainson's Thrush, have no way of knowing what the weather is like up north; they rely on the length of daylight (photoperiod) to determine when to start. Thus, these long-distance migrants aren't keeping pace with the earlier arrival of spring; this can have serious consequences if they start nesting too late for their chicks to hatch when insects, a crucial food source, emerge. Some birds that start north later may fly as much as 50% faster to catch up with the season, but if they do that, they're risking their own survival and they still find the spring more advanced than they expected when they arrive. Overall, birds are nesting earlier but fledging fewer young, and boreal birds are experiencing the worst impacts.

Fall migration has been less researched than spring migration. It is a more leisurely process, as lots of inexperienced young make the trip; southbound migrants stop from time to time to rest and feed. Some fall migrants, particularly short-distance ones, may await the arrival of frost to trigger their departure. And our autumns are getting warmer. A study that made use of data from duck banding and hunters' band reports found that Mallards, short-distance migrants, are leaving later and not going as far south as they used to, whereas Blue-winged Teals, long-distance migrants, don't wait for cold weather to head south but rely on photoperiod.

As for range, according to Barbara, one in four bird species in Canada may need to move north because of climate change, including such iconic birds as the Canada Jay and the Common Loon. Long-time Montreal birders are well aware that there are birds here now we never used to see locally, such as the House Finch, the Turkey Vulture, and the beloved Northern Cardinal.

Regarding physical adaptations, Barbara reminded listeners of Bergmann's Rule (animals that live in cold climates tend to be larger than members of the same species that live in hot climates, to retain heat) and Allen's Rule (animals that live in hot climates usually have larger extremities than those that live in cold climates, to dissipate heat). In an interesting illustration of Allen's Rule, several species of Australian parrots have been growing larger beaks recently to deal with the heat! And birds of a number of species have been developing smaller bodies and longer wings, which may help them not only cope with heat but also migrate faster. This change has occurred in no more than 20 years.

On the third topic, breeding and reproduction, Barbara noted that many bird species worldwide are having fewer chicks. The main groups affected are large birds and migratory birds, with large migratory birds especially at risk. Heat waves are problematic, especially for baby birds, as adults can find ways to cool off. Nest boxes are getting hotter, which puts nestlings in danger. Rainstorms can lead to flooding, destroying marsh birds' nests. Furthermore, warmer weather can induce new predators to enter a territory or trigger new behaviours by existing predators.

Climate change is a pervasive problem with no easy solution. It is crucial for us to think of what we can do to combat the problem and then work together to do it. The last thing we should do is lose hope and give up!

FOCUS ON
GRANTS

Every year BPQ is proud to award grants to fund research, conservation and education projects that are deemed to advance our mission to protect birds and their habitat. These grants represent our largest annual financial outlay.

In this column we share progress reports from our grant recipients.

Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac (OOT)

In 2022, the board approved the grants committee's recommendation to award a three-year grant of $12,500 per year, for a total of $37,500, to the Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac (Tadoussac Bird Observatory) in support of the following project:

Original grant abstract:

"Over the past decades, the Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac (OOT) positioned itself as a leader in Canada for the quality of its migration surveys and the long-term monitoring of several boreal and arctic species. Keeping track of population dynamics (age structure, body condition, reproductive effort, survival rate) of indicative species is highly relevant for ecosystem monitoring.

Our organization wishes to collaborate with Bird Protection Quebec to monitor critically important indicative species of the boreal forest. For the next three years, OOT aims to track Horned Larks and Purple Finches, as well as to pursue its long-term monitoring of Saw-whet and Boreal Owls."

Results

The project came to a conclusion in 2024. The conclusions from the final report (predominantly in French) from the OOT on their three-year results follow. For those interested, the full report can be found here.

This is just one of several research projects that BPQ has been proud to support at the OOT. In fact, a new grant was approved in 2025 to provide funding for a study of the population dynamics and migratory patterns of the Evening Grosbeak.

POINT DE MIRE SUR

LES SUBVENTIONS

Chaque année, POQ est fier d'accorder des subventions pour financer des projets de recherche, de conservation et d'éducation qui sont considérés comme faisant avancer notre mission de protection des oiseaux et de leur habitat. Ces subventions représentent notre plus grande dépense financière annuelle.

Dans cette rubrique, nous vous présenterons les rapports d'activité de nos bénéficiaires de subventions.

Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac (OOT)

En 2022, le conseil d'administration a approuvé la recommandation du comité des subventions d'accorder une subvention de 12 500 $ par année pendant trois ans, pour un total de 37 500 $, à l'Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac pour soutenir le projet suivant :

Proposition initiale de subvention

« Au cours des dernières décennies, l'Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac (OOT) s'est positionné comme un leader au Canada pour la qualité de ses relevés migratoires et le suivi à long terme de plusieurs espèces boréales et arctiques. Le suivi de la dynamique des populations (structure d'âge, condition physique, effort de reproduction, taux de survie) des espèces indicatrices est très pertinent pour le suivi des écosystèmes. Notre organisation souhaite collaborer avec Protection des oiseaux du Québec pour surveiller des espèces indicatrices de la forêt boréale d'une importance critique. Pour les trois prochaines années, l'OOT souhaite suivre les alouettes cornues et les roselins pourpres ainsi que poursuivre son suivi à long terme des nyctales de Tengmalm et des nyctales boréales. »

Résultats

Le projet s'est achevé en 2024. Un extrait du rapport final de l'OOT sur les résultats obtenus au cours des trois années suit. Pour les personnes intéressées, le rapport complet est disponible ici.

Ce n'est là qu'un des nombreux projets de recherche que le POQ est fier de soutenir à l'OOT. En effet, une nouvelle subvention a été approuvée en 2025 pour financer une étude sur la dynamique des populations et les habitudes migratoires du Gros-bec errant.

Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac
Corporation Explos-Nature
Décembre 2024

Resumé / Abstract

Depuis 2022, le financement obtenu auprès de Protection des oiseaux du Québec a permis à l'Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac (OOT) de prolonger les suivis de populations de l'Alouette hausse-col et des deux espèces de Nyctales tout en débutant un nouveau projet portant sur le Roselin pourpré. Au total, ce sont 99 Alouettes hausse-col et 71 Roselins pourprés qui ont été munis d'un émetteur télémétrique VHF permettant de documenter leurs mouvements migratoires sur plusieurs années. Le projet de recherche sur les strigidés nocturnes s'est poursuivi et nous avons également testé pour la première fois en 2024 la capture de Hiboux moyens-ducs afin de répondre au besoin criant d'informations concernant cette espèce. Après plusieurs années de faible abondance, nous avons finalement observé un pic d'abondance pour la Nyctale de Tengmalm en 2024. De 2022 à 2024, plusieurs publications scientifiques ont été publiées, dont une dans la prestigieuse revue scientifique Ornithological Application (Walker et coll. 2025a), concernant nos travaux sur le Quiscale rouilleux – projet supporté par Protection des oiseaux du Québec dans le passé. Nous collaborons présentement avec plusieurs universités et étudiants gradués, et ainsi d'autres manuscrits scientifiques sont en préparation et verront le jour dans les prochaines années, grâce au support de Protection des oiseaux du Québec.

From 2022 to 2024, funding received from Bird Protection Quebec has enabled Tadoussac Bird Observatory (TBO) to pursue and extend population monitoring of Horned Larks as well as Northern Saw-whet and Boreal Owls. We also launched a new project studying Purple Finches. In total, 99 Horned Larks and 71 Purple Finches have been fitted with VHF telemetry transmitters allowing us to track their migratory movements over several years. In 2024, we tested for the first time, monitoring of Long-eared Owls to address the urgent need for information about this species. After several years of low abundance, we recorded a peak in Boreal Owls in 2024. From 2022 to 2024, several scientific publications were published, including one in the prestigious scientific journal Ornithological Applications about our work on the Rusty Blackbird – a project supported by Bird Protection Quebec in previous years. We are currently collaborating with several universities and graduate students and several scientific manuscripts are underway, thanks to the support from Bird Protection Québec.

4. Conclusion générale

Le suivi télémétrique de l'Alouette hausse-col et du Roselin pourpré nous a offert de précieuses connaissances sur les trajets migratoires et les aires d'hivernage de ces deux espèces. D'autres projets collaboratifs voient continuellement le jour; nous avons ainsi contribué des plumes récoltées sur plusieurs individus entre 2020 et 2022, pour des analyses spatiales à l'aide des ratios isotopiques de l'Alouette hausse-col. Ce projet se fait en collaboration avec les chercheurs d'Environnement et Changement climatique Canada, basés en Alberta. Ces données ainsi que celles concernant les autres espèces d'oiseaux munis d'émetteurs ont notamment permis la rédaction d'un article scientifique publié prochainement (Walker et coll., 2025b), afin d'étudier la connectivité migratoire des espèces suivies depuis 2014 par l'OOT.

Quant aux Nyctales, les données accumulées nous permettent de mieux comprendre les tendances de populations de ces deux espèces. Nos projets d'interprétation rejoignent également un grand nombre de personnes, notamment durant le Festival des oiseaux migrateurs de la Côte-Nord. Un nouveau scénario d'interprétation a d'ailleurs été créé cette année, mettant davantage en valeur l'avancée de nos connaissances sur ces espèces, à partir de nos projets de recherche. En 2024 seulement, ce sont 451 personnes qui ont assisté aux soirées d'interprétation, durant et après le Festival. Malgré le pic observé en 2024 de Nyctale de Tengmalm, des analyses sont présentement en cours, en collaboration avec d'autres stations de recherche en Amérique du Nord afin d'identifier s'il y a des raisons de s'inquiéter en ce qui concerne cette espèce. Une affiche portant sur cette recherche a notamment été présentée cet automne lors du congrès annuel de la Société québécoise pour l'étude biologique du Comportement (SQEBC) à Montréal (LeVaillant et collab., 2024).

Nous sommes à nouveau heureux de pouvoir compter sur le support de POQ/BPQ afin de nous permettre d'améliorer nos connaissances sur la faune aviaire. Nous sommes extrêmement reconnaissants et espérons sincèrement pouvoir compter encore sur votre collaboration dans les prochaines années.

LE QUIZ SUR LES OISEAUX

Les noms d'oiseaux se retrouvent souvent dans notre langage quotidien, décrivant des objets, des actions ou des caractéristiques. Par exemple, un « vautour » peut désigner une personne cupide ou opportuniste et un « tourtereau » peut également signifier un amour.

Peux-tu deviner l'oiseau?

Testez votre connaissance des mots influencés par l'avifaune avec ce quiz amusant : associez chaque indice au nom d'oiseau qu'il suggère.

1. Une équipe de football de Montréal
2. Partisan d'une politique dure
3. Une touffe de cheveux
4. Une histoire trompeuse
5. Quelqu'un d'idiot
6. Une salutation informelle
7. Quelqu'un qui répand des rumeurs
8. Une personne à l'œil vif
9. Un présage
10. Une personne vantarde
11. Argot pour désigner une femme

Réponses :

1. Alouette - 2. Faucon - 3. Huppe - 4. Canard - 5. Bécasse - 6. Coucou - 7. Corbeau - 8. Aigle - 9. Cygne - 10. Coq - 11. Poule

Gardens, Waterfalls and Bridges

Story and photos by Richard Gregson

One of the central features of our garden is a modest-sized pool with a recirculating waterfall at one end. It is placed in shade and, if you are a bird, offers the protection of some trees and bushes. I started digging it out the first or second summer we lived here (1999), doing a stint every day after work. It was hard work, but ever since it has been set up, birds of all species have made use of the small, shallow pool at the top of the waterfall, in which they splash and refresh themselves. We have dubbed it the "Bird Magnet" and during spring migration, and when nesting season is in the air, there are days when birds positively line up to take turns and enjoy it.

The heart of a wildlife garden

And not only birds! The sound of the waterfall is enticing on a hot day. Dragonflies dip down to drink and then zip off into the garden. Squirrels lean over the edge, taking sips of water, and chipmunks are all over it. At night it welcomes raccoons. Water spiders dance across the surface. Water lily stems hold their flowers above the surface, luring frogs and toads. A pond is very much the heart of a wildlife garden.

Much as my wife, Jean, and I love watching visiting birds, even we can't spend all the daylight hours glued to binoculars and staring at the water, so we set up a video trail camera to record what arrives between our observation stints. (My, oh, my, do Robins and Song Sparrows like to keep themselves clean!)

What about the rest of the garden?

So that's the waterfall—an essential feature—but what about the rest of the garden? I know a good number of the readers here try to make their gardens welcoming to wildlife, maybe simply with a corner for butterflies, a pond for birds and frogs, or even by joining us in going big with a total replacement of the lawn and a major makeover for wildlife. Just remember—every little bit helps to support suburban biodiversity.

Your garden must bring enjoyment to your life, as well as that of the animals that visit—don't forget that. There is no need to be a purist; plant flowers to attract bees and butterflies, and maybe a family of raccoons, or some rabbits (squirrels for sure) will come to visit and perhaps settle in for the long term. Be ready for the day when you find a raccoon wearing a lost sun hat, trying to dig up your prized tomatoes! When that happens, instead of shooing it away, join the raccoon for a picnic. Share your garden by turning it into a delightful, chaotic haven for all.

> **"Your garden must bring enjoyment to your life**

There are birds and insects around our gardens all year long, and we want them to stay, as they will with a little persuasion. There are many beautiful and interesting native plants that will support pollinator insects and are more enjoyable than those flashy, horticulturally modified, exotic imports…at least, that's my thinking!

Where and how to start? Some thoughts to get you going

Since there is a lot of detailed information available elsewhere, I'll just give a few pointers. The main goal is to encourage readers to consider converting at least a portion of their gardens into wildlife corners. There is an amazing range of species of all sorts right outside our doors, if only we try to encourage them to come in.

A moderate wildlife garden needs some of the following features, none of which need make your garden look scruffy, or "weedy." Quite the opposite, in fact.

- Shelter from weather and predators, mostly provided by shrubs.
- Nesting/breeding opportunities for resident birds.
- Plants at three levels to provide a mixed environment: ground cover, shrubs and trees.
- Food and water: a small waterfall is especially desirable but a dripping tap or a pond work.
- A spot from which you can enjoy the plants and watch the wildlife!

Desirable features include discrete piles of leaves and twigs, especially for the winter. Birds and other wildlife do not usually want “tidy” gardens. Pile up some logs left over from the firewood stack in a corner and the nooks and crannies will shelter insects and in turn attract foraging birds. Loose and decaying wood and green matter hosts insects and fungi, which in turn feed larger creatures.

Ideally grow some tree and shrub species that start the year covered in flowers, plus others that end it groaning under a crop of berries. There are some birds that spend a majority of their lives no more than 10 feet from the ground, so a shrub layer is absolutely essential to their survival. Planting shrubs in groupings of three or more creates a thicket… excellent shelter that looks great too.

Keep some old and dying trees. You never know what unexpected birds and other creatures will arrive and, as long as the trees are not in danger of falling on your head, why bother removing them? Scruffy corners are highly desirable, hard for some Canadian gardeners to get their heads around, but please DO NOT be too tidy in the autumn! A too-clean garden with no litter isn’t good if you want to keep your wildlife from year to year.

> **Each spring during migration our own garden sees a dozen or more species of warblers drop in to visit.**

Animals won't stay for long if they don't feel safe, however attractive you have otherwise made your garden. Wide open spaces with few places to retreat to may look right to a traditional gardener and mirror the designs in the glossy magazines but they terrify most birds and small mammals, who know that there are a lot of things out there just itching to eat them. The ideals include dense plantings, places with holes to get into, clear fly-ways, and feeders distant from cat-hiding shrubs.

Each spring during migration our own garden sees a dozen or more species of warblers drop in to visit. Often it seems they come solely to visit our pond and small waterfall. It rarely fails so if you do nothing else, install some sort of water feature, no matter how small.

Your garden should ideally provide plenty of natural bird foods in addition to anything that you put out in feeders: seeds, berries, nectar, fruit, nuts, buds, insects, worms, larvae, eggs, rodents, other birds. Remember, your plants don’t just have to attract birds directly, they should also attract creatures that birds like to eat. It has been determined through studies that a key threshold is 70%. If your yard has more than 70% native plants biomass, chickadees, the studied species, have a better chance to reproduce and sustain their local population. Once the number of native plants drops much under 70%, that probability of sustaining the species falls.

To summarize

It doesn’t matter if you live on a farm or in an apartment, in the country or in a city—anyone can attract birds to their home, given a little (pleasurable) work and some ingenuity!

Ten simple steps to follow

1 - Start by thinking like a bird or a rabbit! A wildlife garden needs food and water, shelter (from weather and predators), and nesting opportunities.

2 - Blend great design with great habitat. A mixed environment will please both birds, butterflies and bees *and* people. Incorporating plants at three levels will provide all of the above requirements to make it attractive to birds, while at the same time automatically incorporating the elements of good design needed to create an attractive garden.

3 - Start with a base of low to the ground design elements.
Ground cover plants – birds need somewhere to skulk when life seems threatening and a place to find tasty food such as insects and seeds.
Logs and rocks – Add rocks to provide a place to perch. Stack old firewood to simulate fallen trees. A pile of logs is important in a wildlife garden.
Lawns – Robins and flickers rather like grass, so does the odd sparrow, but most birds feel very exposed out there. Some grass is fine, but not too much, and don't cut it any shorter than necessary. Four inches is a height to aim for.

4 - Add a mid-level layer of shrubs and bushes. In addition to being beautiful to look at, shrubs provide your feathered garden visitors with food, shelter from inclement weather, and a perch to look about from. Use plant species that start the year covered in flowers and end it with a crop of berries that provide food.

5 - Look up, way up... add height with trees. Trees add beauty to please the gardener and offer built-in features that will make the birds happy too! Even small young trees will make your garden more attractive to birds and over the years will mature into something of beauty. Plant some trees this season! Trees provide places to nest, to eat, sing and be seen. Different species build nests at different heights, so a nicely wooded lot will make your garden appealing to a variety of birds. If your garden is small, then one medium-sized tree is better than none.

6 - Give yourself a break and don't be too tidy! Creatures love a messy garden and nothing says "welcome" like an old log. Really! In woodlands, fallen wood occurs naturally and many species have adapted to use this habitat. Scruffy corners are highly desirable. Leave piles of leaves and twigs, especially during the winter. The nooks and crannies of old logs shelter insects and in turn attract foraging birds. Plenty of wildlife makes its home in dead wood, and use it as a source of food. It's usually possible to find a spot to put a pile of old logs or firewood, even in the smallest backyard. Place your pile in a shady spot, so that it remains cool and damp. Leave a corner unraked in the fall to promote insect life and shelter for small rodents. Do not cut the heads of seed-bearing flowers before winter—birds will feed on these seeds during the winter months.

7 - Don't forget the importance of shelter. Creatures—birds and rabbits and squirrels and raccoons—need to feel safe and won't visit if they don't. Add some sheltering elements, though, and you'll have them singing your praises from the tree-tops soon enough!
Shelter comes in many forms, be it a low level hedge, a pile of brush, an old tree stump or a majestic oak tree. If it can provide a place to perch or to hide, it will be a welcome haven for your feathered visitors.

8 - Provide birds with a choice of feeder and food types. We all need choices, even birds! Different species like to have their food presented in different ways so offer a variety of feeder and seed types. Wrong seed types = no birds. Include tray or ground feeders, hopper feeders and tube feeders for large and small seeds.

9 - Provide a range of wild or natural foods. Variety is the spice of life ...and another secret to a great wildlife garden! Your plants don't all need to attract birds and bees directly; they can also attract creatures birds like to eat. Insects, worms, larvae, eggs, rodents and other birds are all potential food sources that will attract birds to your garden. Add plants that provide seeds, berries, nectar, fruit, nuts and buds for abundant variety.

10 - Just add water, the key ingredient in any birder's garden. Nothing else that you place in your garden will have such an effect on the number of species you see as will a bit of water. From rain filling that little dip in your lawn to an elaborate pond, water is a bird magnet. Moving water is a desirable feature to increase the range of species you are likely to see. No room for a pond? In a small garden or on an apartment balcony, a simple container of water such as an inverted dustbin lid or a shallow bucket will draw birds to it, especially if they can access the water by perching on the rim or on stones or twigs placed inside. Even just a dripping tap, or a slow trickle from the end of a hose can increase your bird "catch rate" tenfold.

If you only choose to do one thing to attract more birds, a bird bath may be the easiest option. Bird baths are readily available at a price point to please everyone, and there is nothing quite so likely to bring you joy as watching a bird splash about in water. Easy to acquire and set up, purchasing a bird bath adds instant beauty and bird-appeal to your yard. (If it's a heated one to offer open water in winter then so much the better.)

Bonus #11 – Enjoy your garden!

Now all that's left to do is to add somewhere to sit and watch and/or photograph the birds from, pour yourself a drink, and relax. After all that hard work you deserve it!

Just look up!

A driveway full of birds

Story and photos by
Mathias Mutzl

Why would you bird from your driveway?!

One of the few good things that may have come out of the Covid era, back in 2020, is our focus on birding from our driveway in Pincourt, Quebec. Being forced to stay home and isolated, my wife Sharon and I found salvation in at least being able to go out in the driveway and look for birds. We soon realized how many birds are passing over if you take the time to look.

From the driveway we have a pretty good 360° view of the skies around our house. This allows us to spot birds flying overhead without too many obstructions. So, during spring and fall migration, our focus is on birds passing overhead, best seen from the driveway. Our birding is not only done from the driveway, of course; we do Feeder Watch from November to April and concentrate on the feeders in our backyard during those two days a week. Once spring migration is finished, we spend a lot of time birding from our back deck as well. With the nice summer weather permitting, we usually have our meals outside, allowing for even more birding! With 15 feeder spots in our backyard, as well as birdbaths and a branch pile, and gardens in both the front and back of the property, we're a bit of a bird haven.

Our favourite part of birding in our driveway: we leave a zero carbon footprint while watching nature.

Bald Eagle and
Golden Eagle

Location, location, location

Our house sits in the middle of a housing development in Pincourt, Quebec, on the island of L'Île-Perrot. We are one kilometre from the Ottawa River and half a kilometre from the edge of a forested area. Our location seems to sit on a flyway, with a good passage of hawks and geese during migration time, and a good mix of waterfowl and gulls passing over in late fall and early winter. Although the location of our home is no doubt the biggest contributing factor to the number of species we see, it also takes putting in the time—and looking up!

Just behind our house there is a church with a big cross on its roof. This cross is for some reason the gathering point for Turkey Vultures in spring. One evening this past spring we counted 23 individuals gathered at the cross and all along the roof of the church.

Effort

We try to bird from the driveway every weekday after getting home from work in the afternoon. We usually spend about two hours outside before dinner and, if the weather conditions allow, we will spend a couple more hours after dinner. On the weekends, we start early morning and may spend four to five hours, until noon when the birds tend to slow down. Late afternoon we will pick it up again for a couple of hours. One of the added benefits of birding in the driveway, of course, is that when the weathers turns, it is only a short walk to shelter!

It's hard to end a birding session, since I'm always convinced that the moment I go inside a cool bird is going to pass over and I will miss it, thus the constant refrain of "five more minutes, just five more minutes!" We probably spend an average of 20 hours a week just birding from our yard, roughly 1,000 hours a year.

Tips and tricks

Tip #1 - During migration periods, I try to look where the winds are coming from and to concentrate my viewing in the direction best suited for the birds, in spring concentrating on looking south to southwest, and in fall looking north to northeast.

Tip #2 - I use the electrical lines to section off areas of the sky when scanning with binoculars. Breaking the viewing area into smaller sections makes it easier to spot birds while scanning.

Tip #3 - Always keep an eye to the sky. A nice find will pass over when you least expect it.

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Tip #4 - When the sky is clear, it is actually the hardest time to spot birds in flight, especially if they are a little higher in altitude. Your eyes have nothing to focus on so they will tend to focus on infinity. A trick that I like to use is to look for something else in the sky—like a plane or distant cloud— to focus my binoculars on. Many times this will help you see a bird that is flying between what you have focused on in the distance and yourself. I have found many hawks using this method.

Tip #5 - Watching the movement of birds closely, I am starting to notice what to look for and when. I have found that the birds are mostly very consistent in arrival dates during spring migration. Of course Mother Nature always has the final say, case in point was this year. For the most part the birds arrive almost to the day, year after year.

Tip #6 - Merlin is a great tool to use but do not rely on it to be 100% accurate. Use Merlin to see what birds it is hearing around you but then try to locate the birds with your binoculars. If the bird Merlin is hearing is a rare bird for your area, be more cautious and sceptical and try to visually confirm. Learn to identify the sounds first in your yard, get to know the local yard birds by your own ears and verify with Merlin. Be aware that Merlin can be fooled by birds imitating other birds—Starlings are great at doing this. We also have a local Blue Jay that can imitate a Red-shouldered Hawk to a tee!

Tip #7 - I am constantly turning while scanning the sky in the driveway. With the speed that some birds pass over, it is easy to miss something. Even soaring hawks can pass over in a very short period of time. Oftentimes, a bird can be out of sight within 20-30 seconds.


Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Neighbours

When I first started birding in the driveway, it drew the curiosity of the neighbours. With me standing in the driveway, binoculars around my neck and a camera slung over my shoulder, someone would always stop and ask what I was looking for. Even people driving by in cars would stop and ask. When I would say "I am looking for birds" they would ask what kind of birds, to which I would reply "any birds". On days when I was a little mischievous I would respond that I was hired by CSIS to keep tabs on the people coming and going in the neighbourhood, earning blank stares and requiring that I quickly tell them I was joking. Birding in the driveway has actually helped me get to know the neighbours in our area. When the same people are always walking by with their dogs, you get to know them. Sometimes you know the dogs' names long before you finally get to know the owners' names. My neighbourhood nickname is "The Bird Guy." People called me that long before they knew my name. When the neighbours hear all the different species of birds I see, they can't believe it. I remember talking one day to a neighbour and telling him that I see Bald Eagles. His response was that he would never have thought we had Bald Eagles around the area, never having seen one himself. Ironically, as we were standing there talking about the Bald Eagles, guess what did a low flyover at that very moment? An adult Bald Eagle, one from the local pairs we have. He was very emotional and shocked to have that experience; maybe it will be his spark bird?

One of the great things about birding is that it is available to all. Although not everyone will be lucky enough to have access to a very special driveway like ours, "birding your patch" can include the nearest neighbourhood park or even just the trees and shrubs lining the streets where you live. And, of course, don't ever forget—you can always just look up!

Species counts since 2020

Lifetime species - 161 species

2025 - 95 species so far
2024 - 123 species
2023 - 110 species
2022 - 104 species
2021 - 102 species
2020 - 104 species

Yard List

Checklist counts since 2020

2025 - 450 Checklists so far

2024 - 704
2023 - 642
2022 - 382
2021 - 202
2020 - 217

Backyard Birds of Spring Contest

Still need proof that birding from home can be as productive as heading out into the field?

To help highlight the theme of this issue—*Birding your Patch*—we asked members to share their favourite 2025 First of Year home patch photos. Home patch was described as your backyard, apartment balcony, or simply trees on your street.

Thanks to our generous friends at BROME, makers of the famous Squirrel Buster feeders, in addition to the fame and glory of having their photos printed in The Song Sparrow (all anyone really needs, right?), we had an added incentive to offer: a first place prize of a beautiful new Brome feeder to keep those birds coming to your patch.

Although some contributors admitted their pics *may* not have been their FOYs, they *were* all taken in their yards, near their homes, and some even through a window! Thanks to everyone who shared with us—we're in turn sharing all your FOYs with our readers on the following pages.

We had such a hard time choosing one winner that we also decided on two Runners' Up awards. Bragging rights only though!

So, without further ado, the winner is...

First Place

Jill Savouré

Baltimore Oriole
chowing down on an orange

Beaconsfield - May 3, 2025

Honourable Mentions

#1ST RUNNER UP

RICHARD GREGSON

BEST COMPOSITION

#2ND RUNNER UP

ALEX DRENNAN

MOST UNUSUAL

White-throated Sparrow - Baie d'Urfé - April 28

Mallards taking a dip - l'Île-Perrot - May 29

Amazing Finds

White-throated Sparrow
Pierrefonds
Brano Kovacevic

Belted Kingfisher
Beaconsfield - April 25
Jill Savouré

Rose-breasted Grosbeak (F)
Greenfield Park - April 14
Darlene Harvey

Scarlet Tanager
Greenfield Park - May 12
Darlene Harvey

Sandhill Cranes
Pincourt - March 22
Mathias Mutzl

Evening Grosbeak
Pincourt - April 26
Mathias Mutzl

Northern Parula
LaSalle - May 15
Cory Ruchlin

Ruby-throated Hummingbird
LaSalle - May 15
Cory Ruchlin

Pine Warbler
Hudson
Wayne Grubert

Hermit Thrush
Hudson
Wayne Grubert

Baltimore Oriole
Pointe-des-Cascades - May 3
Bill Thompson

Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Pointe-des-Cascades - May 7
Bill Thompson

Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Baie d'Urfé - May 4
Richard Gregson

Cape May Warbler
L'Île-Perrot - May 21
Alex Drennan

Travelogue: Finding wonder in Costa Rica's wild places

Story and photos by Kristen Lalla

Palo Verde National Park - tropical dry forest and wetland

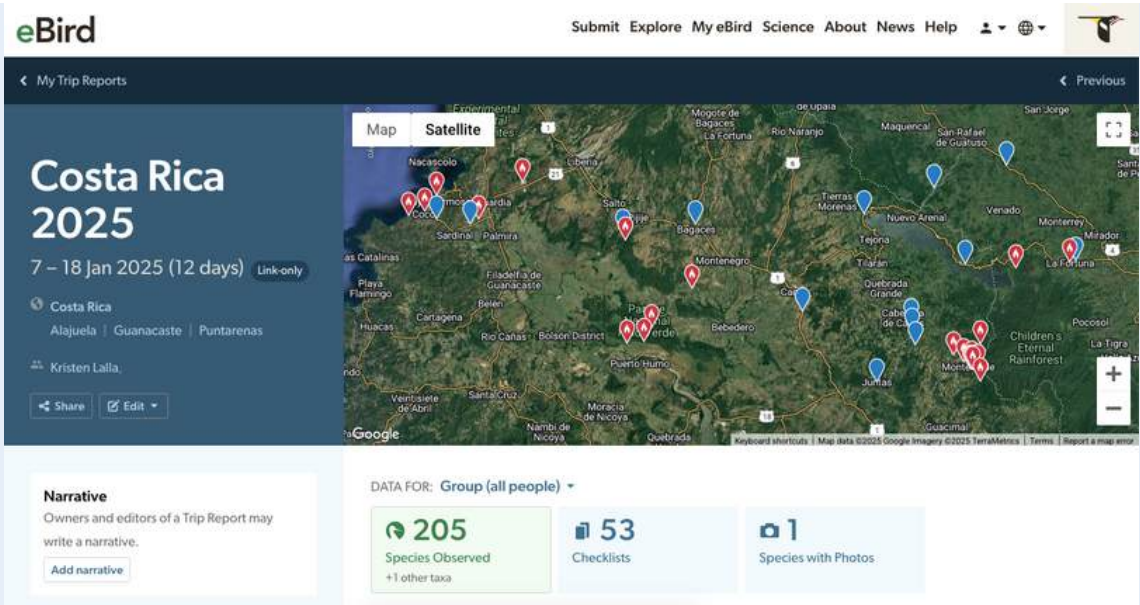
Costa Rica is a country well known for its incredible biodiversity and its conservation efforts. I had an amazing trip there in January, and I jumped at the chance to write a travel post for *The Song Sparrow* since my trip was planned around seeing wildlife!

We wanted a trip where we wouldn't feel too rushed trying to explore too many places, but we also wanted to move around a bit to be able to see a greater diversity of landscapes (and, therefore, birds!). We decided on a few main locations: the cloud forest in Monteverde (Puntarenas Province), Arenal Volcano (tropical rainforest; Alajuela Province), and the tropical dry forest and coast around Liberia (Guanacaste).

Despite my non-competitive nature, my partner and I set an ambitious goal of 200 bird species. According to the Merlin Bird ID app, there are 812 species in Costa Rica, so I felt that almost a quarter was reasonable. I'll admit that I've been to Costa Rica and Panama before on field courses, so I somewhat knew the birds, if only generally by family in many cases. So, I felt confident that we could identify 200 species, armed with binoculars, the Merlin app, and The Birds of Costa Rica field guide by Richard Garrigues and Robert Dean.

We had a do-it-yourself trip with a rental car and, apart from two night tours, did our wildlife spotting on our own. This perhaps started us off in hard mode, but learning to ID the birds ourselves was part of the fun, in my opinion – the learning aspect is something that I miss when birding in southern Quebec, since I know my local birds well.

> "Despite my non-competitive nature, my partner and I set an ambitious goal of 200 bird species.



Spotting Quetzals in Monteverde

Our first stop was Monteverde. The lush cloud forest was fascinating (from my slightly biased wildlife biologist perspective) and the mountainous views were stunning.

The plants are unique; there are epiphytes (plants that live on other plants) on pretty much every tree and there was always lots to look at even when the birds were quiet!

One of the reasons to go to Monteverde was to try and spot the Resplendent Quetzal, a “Near Threatened” species on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List that is threatened in part by the loss of a specific species of avocado tree upon which it relies to feed.

One morning, at a nature reserve, we happened upon a couple of people that were looking at one! He was feeding up in the canopy and was quite far away, but we got viewings of him with his long, shiny, “resplendent” streamer tail. Not the best sighting, but we were satisfied enough.

Finca ecologica San Luis Monteverde

Later on, we came across a huge group of people looking at a female sitting on a branch really close by, and felt fortunate to have an even better look at this rare species *(see photo below)*. Seeing this rare bird, I was reminded of the fragility of the cloud forest ecosystem, which is threatened by climate change. Costa Ricans, in recent years, have taken huge steps to preserve and restore nature, but climate change, a global threat, is already impacting the cloud forest.

Great Currasow

Female Resplendent Quetzal

Lesson's Motmot

Northern Jacana

Changing species, changing landscape

While Monteverde felt the most special to me, I loved the rainforest and wildlife around the Arenal Volcano and the tropical dry forest of Guanacaste. It was really neat to see how the species composition changed as we travelled around the northwestern part of the country; the landscape changed as we moved around, and we added more species to our list.

> **"It was really neat to see how the species composition changed as we travelled around the northwestern part of the country; the landscape changed as we moved around, and we added more species to our list.**

Arenal Volcano

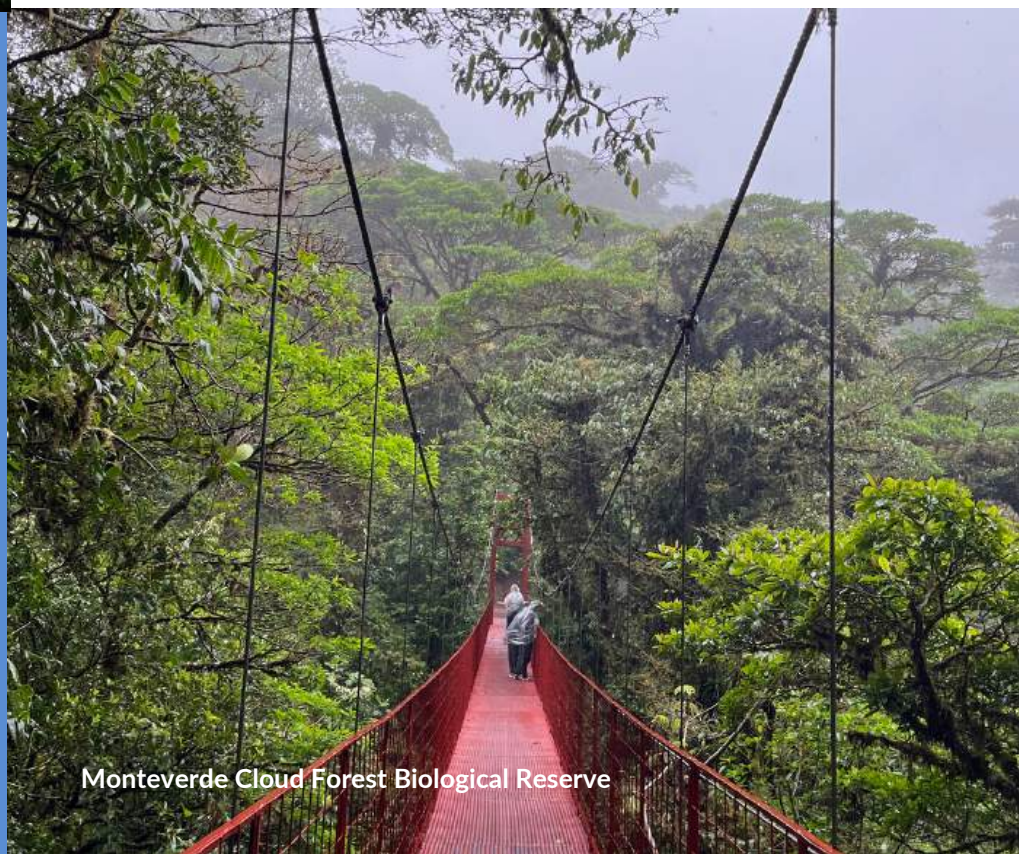
Some highlight birds of the trip were the Resplendent Quetzal, five species of toucans (and close relatives), four species of motmots, three species of trogons, Squirrel Cuckoo, tons of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in farm fields and even at the beach, a White-collared Manakin, close-up views of Great Curassows, many colourful tanagers, and underfoot views of Northern Jacanas.

I know I seem indecisive, but it's tough to pick just one species when we ended up seeing 205 species on our trip! We only cracked 200 on the morning that we left, and an honourable mention goes to the scruffy second-year male Rose-breasted Grosbeak that was #200. All in all, we had an amazing trip, with lots of great birds and other wildlife, and I would highly recommend Costa Rica as a destination; there is so much to do and see.

Top Birding Spots: Plan Ahead for These Must-See Sites

- Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve
- Curi Cancha Wildlife Reserve
- Santa Elena Biological Reserve
- Finca Ecológica San Luis
- Arenal Volcano National Park
- Palo Verde National Park
- Lomas de Barbudal Biological Reserve

**Some sites need to be booked in advance and have entrance fees.*



Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve

Carnet de voyage : Trouver l'émerveillement dans les espaces sauvages du Costa Rica

Récit et photos de Kristen Lalla

Parc national Palo Verde - forêt tropicale sèche et zone humide

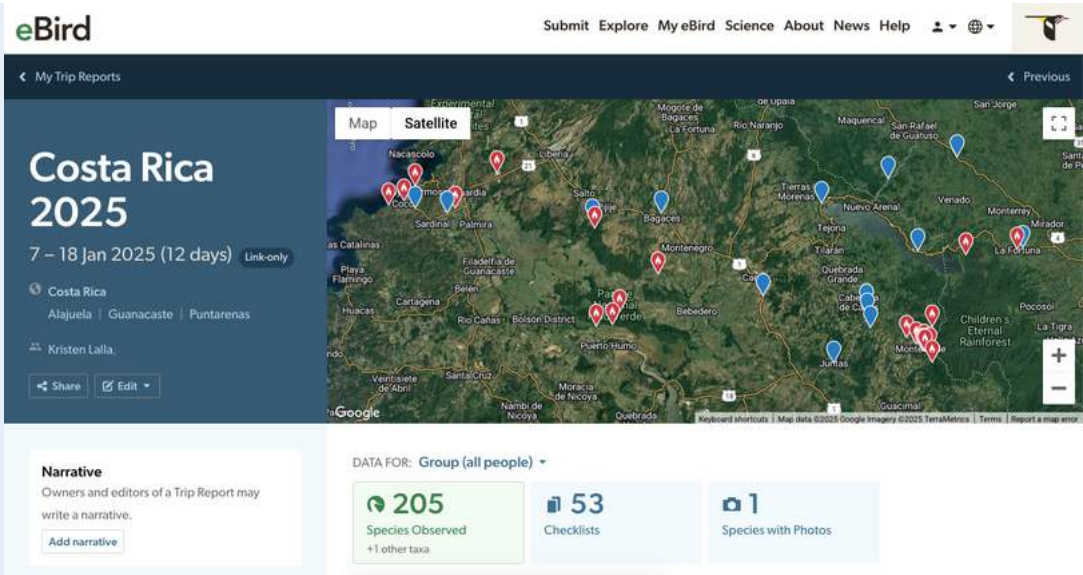
Le Costa Rica est un pays bien connu pour son incroyable biodiversité et ses efforts de conservation. J'y ai fait un voyage extraordinaire en janvier, et j'ai sauté sur l'occasion d'écrire un article de voyage pour « *The Song Sparrow* » puisque mon voyage était planifié autour de l'observation de la faune et de la flore !

On voulait un voyage où on ne se sentait pas trop pressés en essayant d'explorer trop d'endroits, mais on voulait aussi se déplacer un peu pour pouvoir voir une plus grande diversité de paysages (et, par conséquent, d'oiseaux !). On a choisi quelques endroits principaux : la forêt de nuage de Monteverde (province de Puntarenas), le volcan Arenal (forêt tropicale humide ; province d'Alajuela), et la forêt tropicale sèche et la côte autour de Liberia (Guanacaste).

Malgré ma nature non compétitive, mon chum et moi sommes fixé un objectif ambitieux de 200 espèces d'oiseaux. Selon l'application Merlin Bird ID, il y a 812 espèces au Costa Rica, j'ai donc estimé que près d'un quart était raisonnable. Il faut admettre que j'ai déjà été au Costa Rica et au Panama pour des cours de terrain, et que je connaissais donc un peu les oiseaux, ne serait-ce que par la famille dans de nombreux cas. Je pensais donc pouvoir identifier 200 espèces, armé de jumelles, de l'application Merlin et du guide de terrain "The Birds of Costa Rica" de Richard Garrigues et Robert Dean.

On a fait un voyage en toute autonomie avec une voiture de location et, à l'exception de deux excursions nocturnes, nous avons fait nos repérages de la faune par nous-mêmes. Cela nous a peut-être mis en mode difficile, mais apprendre à identifier les oiseaux nous-mêmes faisait partie du plaisir, à mon avis - l'aspect apprentissage est quelque chose qui me manque lorsque je fais de l'ornithologie dans le sud du Québec, car je connais bien les oiseaux de notre région.

> **Malgré ma nature non compétitive, mon chum et moi sommes fixé un objectif ambitieux de 200 espèces d'oiseaux.**



Repérer les quetzals à Monteverde

Notre premier arrêt a été Monteverde. La forêt de nuage riche était fascinante (de mon point de vue légèrement biaisé de biologiste de la faune) et les vues montagneuses étaient époustouflantes.

Les plantes sont uniques ; il y a des épiphytes (plantes qui vivent sur d'autres plantes) sur presque tous les arbres et il y avait toujours beaucoup à regarder, même lorsque les oiseaux étaient silencieux !

L'une des raisons d'aller à Monteverde était d'essayer de voir le quetzal resplendissant, une espèce « quasi menacée » sur la liste rouge de l'UICN qui est menacée en partie par la disparition d'une espèce spécifique d'avocatier dont il dépend pour se nourrir.

Un matin, dans une réserve naturelle, nous sommes tombés sur un couple de gens qui en observait un ! L'individu se nourrissait dans la canopée et était assez éloigné, mais nous avons pu le voir avec sa longue queue brillante et "resplendissante". Ce n'était pas la meilleure observation, mais on était assez satisfaits.

Plus tard, on est tombé sur un grand groupe de personnes qui regardaient une femelle assise sur une branche tout près, et nous nous sommes sentis chanceux d'avoir vue encore meilleure de cette espèce rare (voir photo ci-dessous).

Finca ecologica San Luis Monteverde

En voyant cet oiseau rare, je me suis rendu compte de la fragilité de l'écosystème de la forêt de nuage, qui est menacé par le changement climatique. Ces dernières années, les Costaricains ont pris d'énormes mesures pour préserver et restaurer la nature, mais le changement climatique, une menace mondiale, a déjà un impact sur la forêt de nuage.

Grande courbette

Femelle Quetzal resplendissant

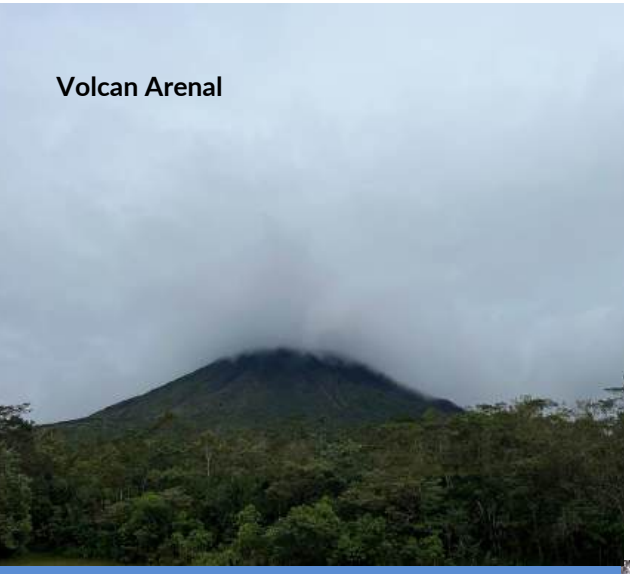
Motmot de Lesson

Jacana du Nord

Changement d'espèces, changement de paysage

Bien que Monteverde m'ait semblé la plus spéciale, j'ai adoré la forêt tropicale et la faune autour du volcan Arenal, ainsi que la forêt tropicale sèche de Guanacaste. C'était vraiment intéressant de voir comment la composition des espèces changeait au fur et à mesure que nous nous déplacions dans le nord-ouest du pays ; le paysage changeait au fur et à mesure qu'on se déplaçait, et on a ajouté de nouvelles espèces à notre liste.

“C'était vraiment intéressant de voir comment la composition des espèces changeait au fur et à mesure que nous nous déplacions dans le nord-ouest du pays ; le paysage changeait au fur et à mesure qu'on se déplaçait, et on a ajouté de nouvelles espèces à notre liste.



Volcan Arenal

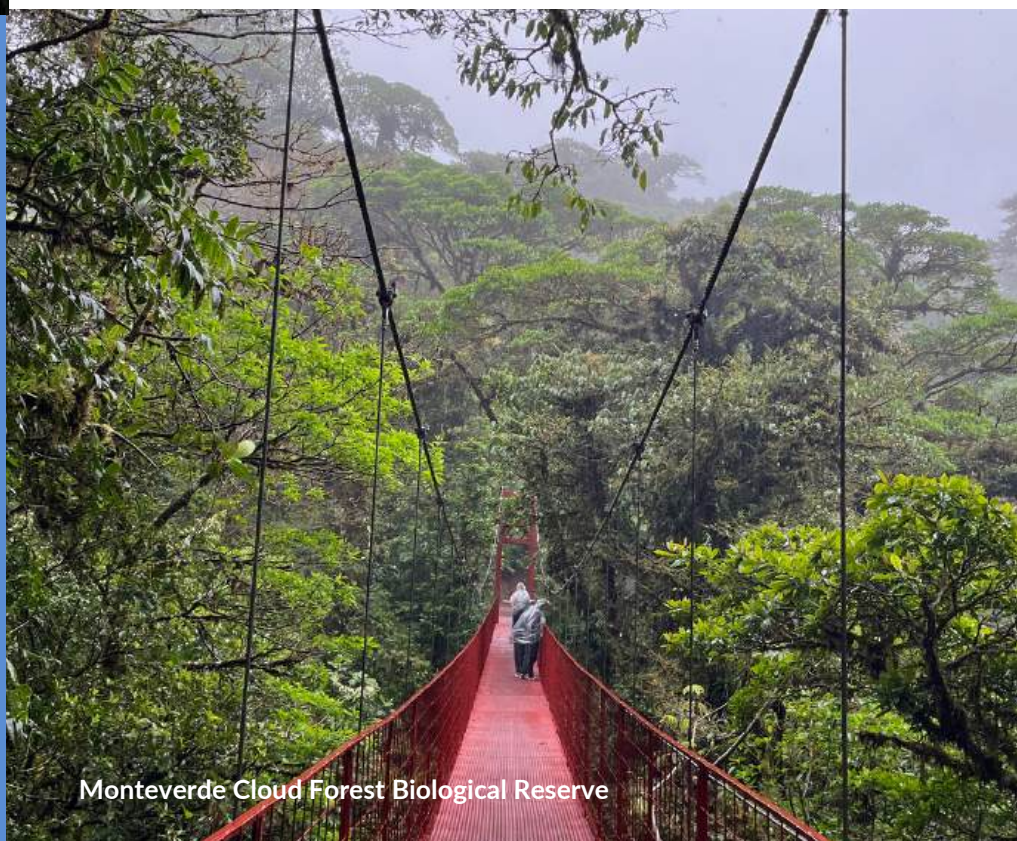
Parmi les oiseaux les plus remarquables de ce voyage, citons le quetzal resplendissant, 5 espèces de toucans, 4 espèces de motmot, 3 espèces de trogon, le piaye écureuil, beaucoup de tyrans à longue queue dans les champs et même sur la plage, un Manakin à col blanc, des vues rapprochées de Grand Hocco, de nombreux Thraupidae colorés et des vues sous les pieds de jacanas du Méxique.

Je sais que j'ai l'air indécis, mais il est difficile de ne choisir qu'une seule espèce alors que nous en avons vu 205 au cours de notre voyage ! Nous n'avons atteint les 200 espèces que le matin de notre départ, et une mention honorable va au cardinal à poitrine rose de deuxième année (mâle) qui était le numéro 200. Dans l'ensemble, on a fait un voyage extraordinaire, avec beaucoup d'oiseaux intéressants et d'autres animaux sauvages, et je recommanderais fortement le Costa Rica comme destination ; il y a tellement de choses à faire et à voir.

Principaux sites ornithologiques Planifiez à l'avance ces sites incontournables

- **Réserve de la forêt nuageuse de Monteverde**
- **Réserve de faune Curi Cancha**
- **Réserve biologique Santa Elena**
- **Finca Ecológica San Luis**
- **Parc national du volcan Arenal**
- **Parc national Palo Verde**
- **Réserve biologique de Lomas de Barbudal**

**Certains doivent être réservés à l'avance et ont des droits d'entrée.*



Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve

Marcel Gahbauer's

Birds with Quirks

By definition, each species is unique. However, some have more distinct characteristics or behaviours than others. This column features species with notable quirks, focusing on those found in Quebec but sometimes referencing related species elsewhere.

Northern Flicker: the non-Woodpecker Woodpecker!

As the French name *Pic flamboyant* indicates, flickers are actually woodpeckers. Overall, flickers are most closely related to the various olive-greenish Piculus woodpeckers of Central and South America, and somewhat more distantly to the mostly green Picus woodpeckers of Eurasia. Flickers do at times peck wood, most notably when excavating nest cavities. Where they differ is that most woodpeckers also hammer away at trees and rotten logs to find their prey, while flickers spend more of their time on the ground. This is because their preferred prey is ants – Northern Flicker has been called the "anteater of the bird world" and is thought to have the longest tongue of any North American bird.

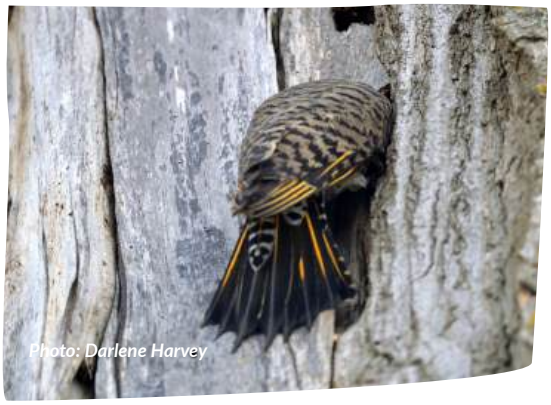


Photo: Darlene Harvey

> **"Northern Flicker has been called the "anteater of the bird world" and is thought to have the longest tongue of any North American bird."**

Photo: Marcel Gahbauer

Flickers don't just *eat* ants though – they also use them for grooming! Flickers spread their wings out near ant colonies, enabling the ants to crawl on them. It is thought that the formic acid released by ants (either passively, or if the birds crush them with their beaks) can kill or repel feather mites and other parasites, and, surprisingly, it can be soothing to irritated skin, especially when birds are moulting. (This isn't unique to Northern Flickers though – among North American birds, this "anting" behaviour is most frequently associated with Blue Jays, and, to a lesser degree, American Robins and Common Grackles.)

But back to their name – why are these birds called "flickers"? Some have suggested it derives from their loud call that sounds like "flicka-flicka-flicka," but that may be more a matter of interpreting the sound in a way that's convenient to remember. It's more commonly believed that the name came from the flashes of yellow or red in their wings when flying. Among the more notable other (nick-)names the species has had over the years are Golden-winged Woodpecker and Yellow-hammer (presumably inspired by the Yellow-shafted form), High-hole (based on an observation of it nesting at the top of a snag), Wick-up (onomatopoeic), and Yawker Bird (no idea!).

The Birds of America always offers interesting historical perspectives on birds, having been published in 1936, when natural history accounts were sometimes thin on scientific detail but the prose was often flowery. L. N. Nichols provided the account for the Flicker (as it was more simply known then) and judged it to be "the most interesting bird of all the Woodpeckers" and "a friendly neighbor" whose "interest is so hearty in the life about him." He went on to note that its "disposition to make friends with the Robins and Bluebirds and even with the English Sparrows has often been noted, and even Swallows and Hawks often meet him on friendly terms."

Whether Northern Flickers are viewed favourably by other birds is questionable, but even if that's the case, they certainly aren't always friendly to each other. In particular, territorial males engage in what have been described as "fencing duels"– facing each other on a branch or on the ground, they bob their heads back and forth with beaks pointed upwards, often accompanied by loud calls.

> **...you may notice that the red patch on their nape has a heart-like shape**

Photo: Marcel Gahbauer

Granted, it's more of a dance competition than an actual fight, so in that sense perhaps they can be considered friendly after all. And, although they don't have any sleeves upon which to wear their hearts, look closely from behind and you may notice that the red patch on their nape has a heart-like shape, as do some of the black breast spots!

With respect to that red patch on the nape, don't get confused – both males and females have it, unlike Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, where only the males do. Instead, male Northern Flickers have a 'moustache' – a distinct facial patch that is black against a beige background on Yellow-shafted individuals, and red on an otherwise gray face in Red-shafted birds - in both forms, whereas females have a plain face.

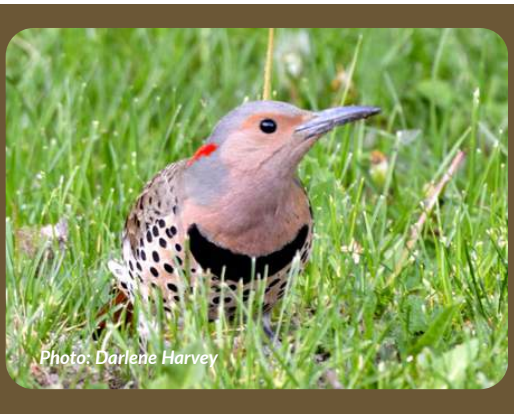


Photo: Darlene Harvey

Female with a plain face vs male with a black "moustache"

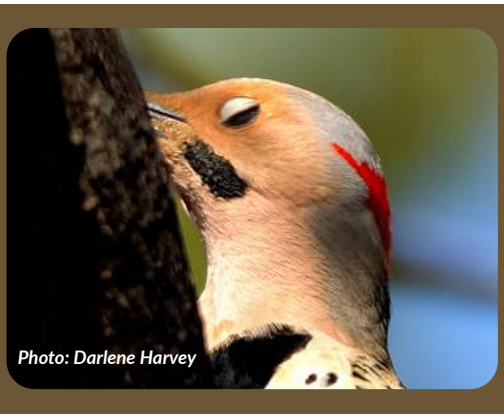


Photo: Darlene Harvey

Another (and more unfortunate) way that Northern Flickers stand out from other woodpeckers is in terms of their population trends. At the national scale, Northern Flicker abundance has declined by an average of 1.1% per year since 1970 based on analysis of data from the Breeding Bird Survey, amounting to a cumulative loss of nearly 44% (Figure 1-next page). The decline has been steepest over the past decade, but even before that there had been two prolonged periods of more gradual decline without much sign of rebound. Within Quebec, the long-term decline is even worse than the national average, but over the most recent 10-year period it's marginally better. In sharp contrast, the other woodpecker species that occur regularly in Quebec show long-term increases of 69% to 1140% ... or even over 80,000% if including Red-bellied Woodpecker, which of course is now well established in the south of the province but was barely present back in the 1970s (Table 1-next page).

What could explain Northern Flicker having such a different trend from its relatives? One angle to consider is that most of the other species are largely resident or (in the case of Black-backed and American Three-toed) regionally nomadic, whereas Northern Flicker is migratory – it may be the only woodpecker you ever see in a flock, with groups of a dozen or more sometimes flying together in fall. The recent State of Canada's Birds report highlighted that on average, long-distance migrants have declined by 29% since 1970, and short-distance migrants by 12%, whereas resident species have increased 9%. However, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is also migratory, and travels similar or longer distances than Northern Flicker, yet it has among the most positive trends... Another possibility may relate to flickers adapting well to suburban landscapes, where mowed lawns and other landscaping can provide easy access to ants, but, while this might seem like a good thing, being so terrestrial may make flickers more vulnerable to cat predation than most birds.

As is unfortunately so often the case, the causes of decline remain somewhat unclear, but whatever they are, we hope that trends will turn around for this quirky bird.

Figure 1: *Canada-wide population trend for Northern Flicker from the State of Canada's Birds (https://naturecounts.ca/nc/socb-epoc/species.jsp?sp=norfli) based on Breeding Bird Survey data. The top of the shaded area represents a population index 25% below initial abundance (average of 1970-1974).*

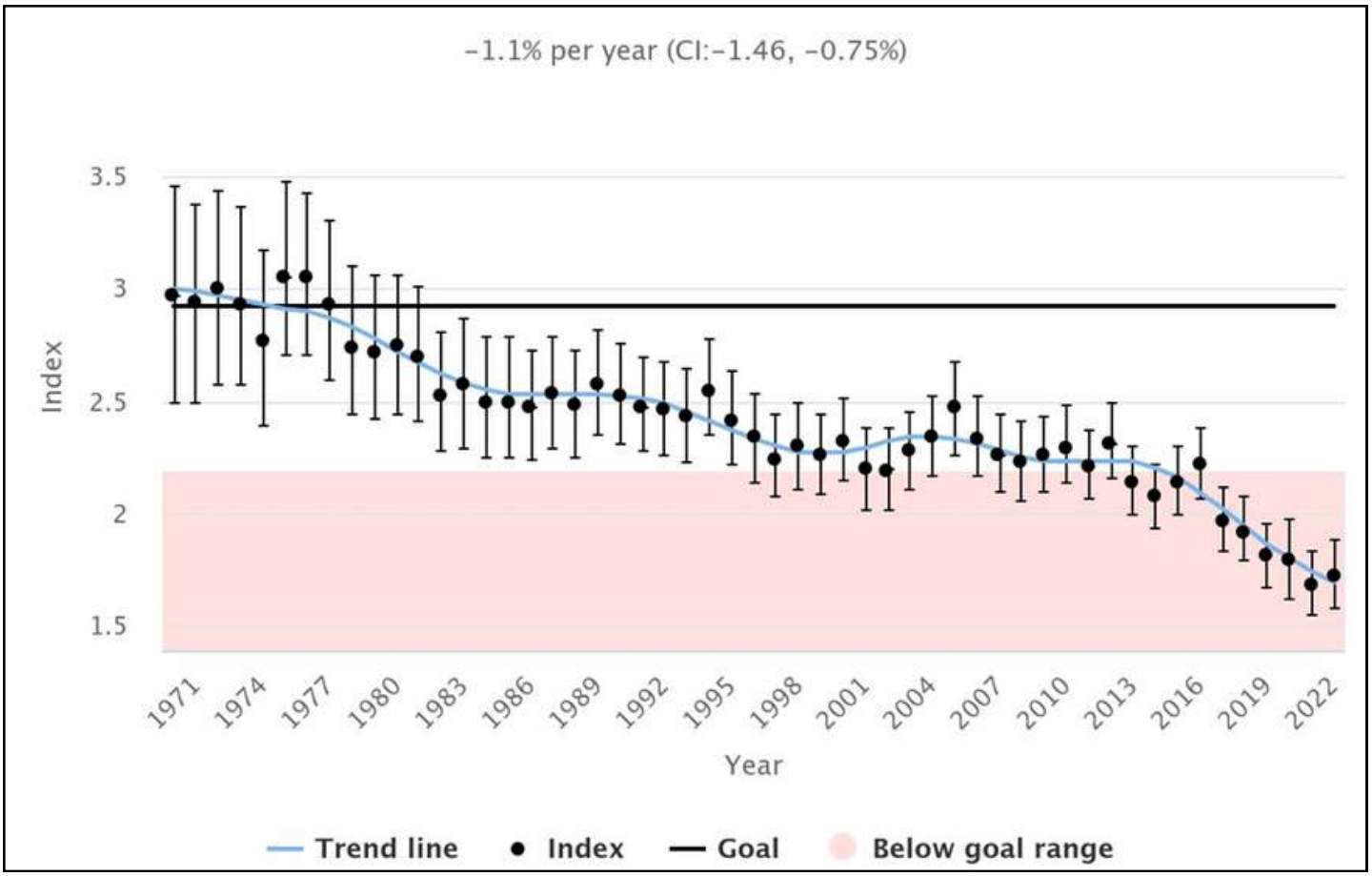


Table 1*: Long- and short-term trends for woodpeckers breeding in Quebec, based on analysis of Breeding Bird Survey data (except Christmas Bird Count for Red-bellied Woodpecker at the provincial scale)*

Species	Long-term change (1970-2022)		Short-term change (2012-2022)	
	Canada	Quebec	Canada	Quebec
Northern Flicker	-43.70%	-57.80%	-24.30%	-20.50%
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	20.10%	180.00%	-2.30%	5590.00%
Red-bellied Woodpecker	5440.00%	88244.00%	102.00%	228.00%
American Three-toed Woodpecker	187.00%	129.00%	6.70%	0.00%
Black-backed Woodpecker	259.00%	68.70%	8.20%	-5.20%
Downy Woodpecker	22.80%	75.30%	-3.90%	-2.90%
Hairy Woodpecker	86.80%	154.00%	0.50%	2.70%
Pileated Woodpecker	361.00%	1140.00%	22.90%	50.80%

Birding Basics

Bird Feeders 101:

What to know before hanging a feeder

Setting up a bird feeder is one of the easiest ways to bring the magic of birding to your window. Whether you're new to birdwatching or want to get better acquainted with your backyard visitors, a feeder offers great views and a chance to build your bird ID skills.

Why Feeders?

Feeders attract birds you might not normally see up close. They offer a chance to observe behaviour, compare species, and provide a helpful food source—especially in winter, when natural options are limited. (*See page 46 for a list of top seed choices for a variety of species.*)

Tips for Feeding Responsibly

- Keep it clean: Dirty feeders spread disease. Wash every couple of weeks, or more often in wet weather.
- Offer water: A clean birdbath can be just as important as food.
- Prevent collisions: Place feeders and birdbaths within 1 m (3 ft) of windows and make glass visible to birds with screens or tape in a 5 x 5 cm (2 x 2 in) grid on the outside.
- Use better seed: Skip mixes with fillers like milo or cracked corn unless feeding ground birds. Choose high-quality seed birds actually want.

Be a Good Neighbour to Nature

Keep feeders out of reach of predators, clean up spilled seed, and remember that native plants and trees provide natural food and shelter all year.

Begin with the basics, keep exploring, and enjoy every feathered visitor—feeding birds is a simple, rewarding way to connect with nature right outside your door.

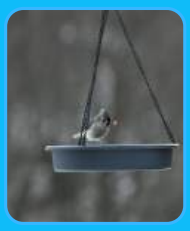
Types of Feeders

Different birds prefer different feeders:

Tube Feeders
Tube-shaped feeders, ideal for small songbirds like finches, nuthatches and chickadees. Keep seeds dry.

Hopper Feeders
Shaped like small houses, they attract everything from sparrows to cardinals and hold lots of seed.

Platform Feeders
Open trays for ground-feeding birds like doves and juncos—just clean them often.



Suet Feeders
Designed for suet cakes, great for attracting woodpeckers and wrens, especially in winter.

Hummingbird Feeders
Filled with sugar water, they attract hummingbirds and orioles—keep them clean and refreshed.

LES B.A.-BA DE L'OBSERVATION

Mangeoires pour oiseaux 101 :

Ce qu'il faut savoir avant d'installer une mangeoire

Installer une mangeoire est l'un des moyens les plus faciles d'apporter la magie de l'observation des oiseaux à votre fenêtre. Que vous soyez novice en matière d'observation des oiseaux ou que vous souhaitiez faire plus ample connaissance avec les visiteurs de votre jardin, une mangeoire vous offre de superbes points de vue et vous permet d'améliorer vos compétences en matière d'identification des oiseaux.

Pourquoi des mangeoires ?

Les mangeoires attirent des oiseaux que l'on n'a pas l'habitude de voir de près. Elles offrent la possibilité d'observer le comportement, de comparer les espèces et de fournir une source de nourriture utile, surtout en hiver, lorsque les options naturelles sont limitées. (*Voir la liste des meilleurs choix de graines pour une variété d'espèces à la page 46.)*

Conseils pour nourrir les oiseaux de manière responsable

- Veillez à la propreté : Les mangeoires sales propagent les maladies. Lavez-les toutes les deux semaines, ou plus souvent par temps humide.
- Offrez de l'eau : Un bain d'oiseaux propre peut être tout aussi important que la nourriture.
- Prévenez les collisions : Placez les mangeoires et les bains d'oiseaux à moins d'un mètre des fenêtres et faites en sorte que les vitres soient visibles pour les oiseaux à l'aide de grillages ou de ruban adhésif en formant une grille de 5 x 5 cm à l'extérieur.
- Utilisez de meilleures graines : Oubliez les mélanges contenant des substances de remplissage comme le milo ou le maïs concassé, sauf si vous nourrissez des oiseaux terrestres. Choisissez des graines de haute qualité que les oiseaux recherchent.

Soyez un bon voisin pour la nature

Gardez les mangeoires hors de portée des prédateurs, nettoyez les graines renversées et n'oubliez pas que les plantes et les arbres indigènes fournissent une nourriture naturelle et un abri tout au long de l'année.

Commencez par les bases, continuez à explorer et profitez de chaque visiteur à plumes. Nourrir les oiseaux est un moyen simple et gratifiant d'entrer en contact avec la nature, juste devant votre porte.

Types de mangeoires

Différents oiseaux préfèrent différentes mangeoires :

Mangeoires tubulaires
Mangeoires tubulaires, idéales pour les petits oiseaux chanteurs comme les pinsons, les sittelles et les mésanges. Gardez les graines au sec.

Mangeoires à trémie
En forme de petites maisons, elles attirent tous les oiseaux, des moineaux aux cardinaux, et contiennent beaucoup de graines.

Mangeoires à plate-forme
Plateaux ouverts pour les oiseaux qui se nourrissent au sol, comme les colombes et les juncos ; il faut les nettoyer souvent.

Mangeoires à suif
Conçues pour les gâteaux de suif, elles attirent les pics et les troglodytes, surtout en hiver.

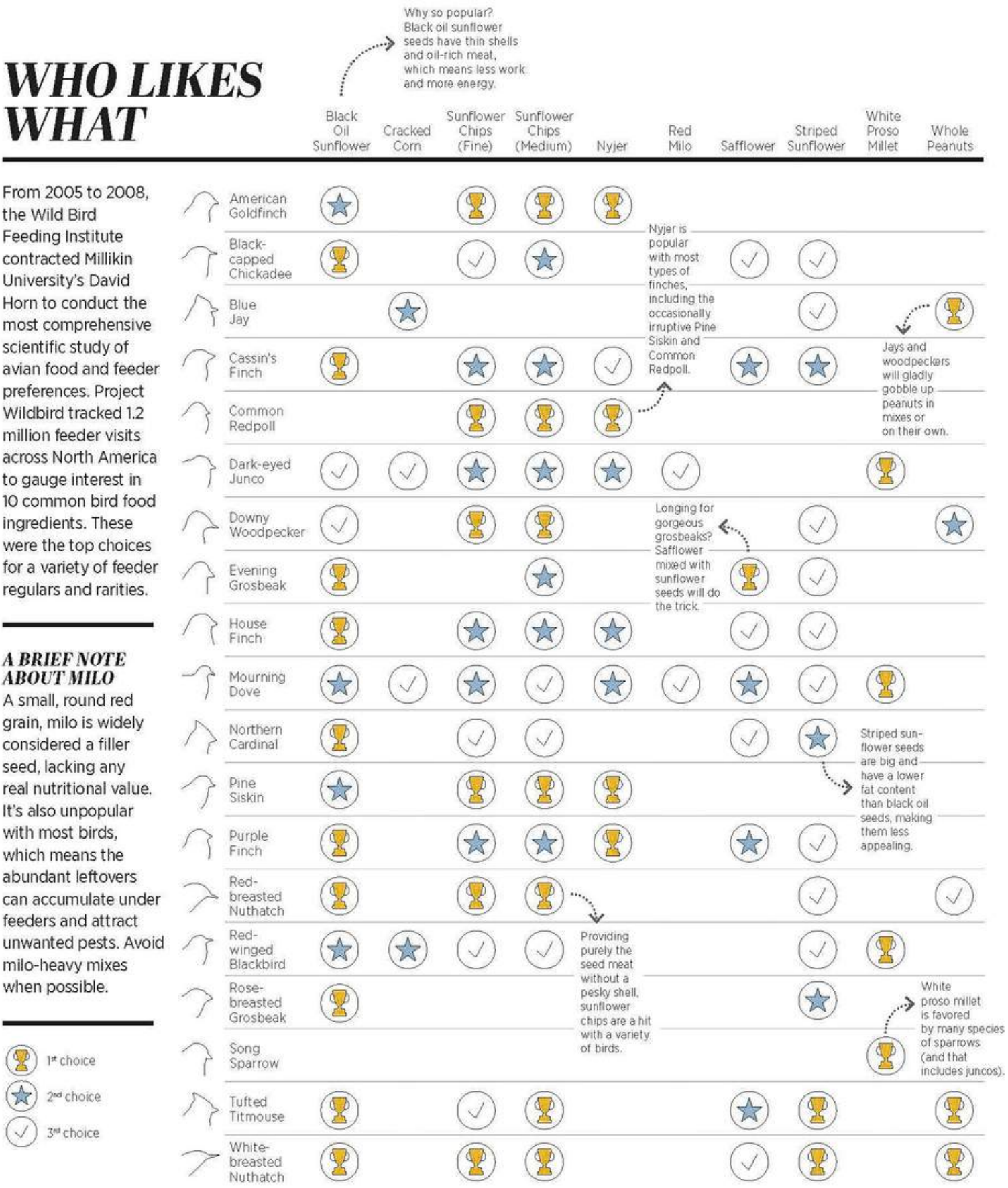
Mangeoires pour colibris
Remplies d'eau sucrée, elles attirent les colibris et les loriots - gardez-les propres et rafraîchies.

WHO LIKES WHAT

From 2005 to 2008, the Wild Bird Feeding Institute contracted Millikin University's David Horn to conduct the most comprehensive scientific study of avian food and feeder preferences. Project Wildbird tracked 1.2 million feeder visits across North America to gauge interest in 10 common bird food ingredients. These were the top choices for a variety of feeder regulars and rarities.

A BRIEF NOTE ABOUT MILO

A small, round red grain, milo is widely considered a filler seed, lacking any real nutritional value. It's also unpopular with most birds, which means the abundant leftovers can accumulate under feeders and attract unwanted pests. Avoid milo-heavy mixes when possible.



Exploring Early Canadian Ornithology

with Jeff Harrison

Pehr Kalm in New France:
A Botanist's 1749 Journey Through Canada's Early Natural History

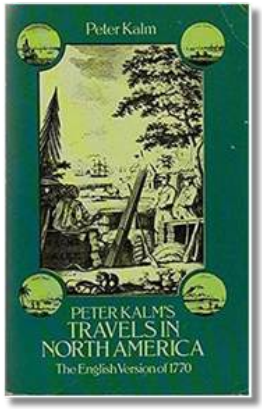
Pehr Kalm (1716-1779) was a Swedish botanist and one of Carl Linnaeus's disciples, commissioned to collect plants in North America between 1748 and 1751. While based in the United States, he toured parts of New France, mostly in the St. Lawrence valley, from late-July to mid-October 1749. In August 1750 he also visited Niagara Falls.

Pehr Kalm (1716-1779)

Kalm's North American travels were published in Swedish in three volumes between 1753 and 1761. The manuscript of his fourth volume containing his trip to Niagara lay unpublished and was eventually destroyed in a fire. The English version of his North American travels, entitled *Peter Kalm's Travels in North America*, was published in London in 1770-71.

A new English edition, *Travels in North America by Peter Kalm* translated by John R. Foster and edited by Adolph Benson, was published in 1937, with a revised edition published by Dover in 1964. A French translation by Morriset, Rousseau and Bethune, entitled *Pehr Kalm au Canada en 1749*, was published in 1977. This version offers by far the most complete account of Kalm's travels in Canada and deserves a prominent place in the literature of the early natural history of Canada. Details of Kalm's observations are taken from these most recent editions.

Kalm was born in 1716 in the Province of Ångermanland, Sweden. In 1735 he graduated from the Abo Academy, a multi-disciplinary university in Finland. He displayed an early interest in theology, but Bishop Johan Browallious, who recognized his interest in flora and fauna, and his scientific talent, encouraged him to undertake collecting trips to Finland and Sweden.



The English version of Kalm's North American travels, entitled Peter Kalm's Travels in North America, was published in London in 1770-71.

In 1739 the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences was founded to direct a flourishing interest in scientific research. One of the Academy's main interests was to increase the number of useful plants and trees in Sweden by the importing and planting of foreign seeds. Russia and North America were considered prime areas for research.

In 1741 Kalm moved to Uppsala to study natural history. There he became a pupil and disciple of Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus. In his field work Kalm gained a reputation as a botanist with a strong utilitarian focus. He was elected to the Academy in 1745.

Two years later he was appointed Professor of Agriculture at the Abo Academy. In the same year the Royal Swedish Academy decided to send a scientist to North America. Kalm with his background, interests and connections, was selected.

Kalm embarked from London in August 1748, arriving in Philadelphia on September 15, where he met with leading American naturalists. The Academy had instructed him to explore Canada [New France] with its more northerly climate, thought to be similar to that of Sweden and Finland.

In the fall, winter and spring Kalm botanized in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.[1] As the plant flowering season advanced, he left Philadelphia in mid-May and entered the Hudson River valley in mid-June. On July 2, 1749, Kalm

[1] Details of his life are taken largely from Richard Jarrell's biography in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography.

reached Fort Saint-Frédéric at the south end of Lake Champlain. At that time the fort was situated on the southern boundary of New France.

1

Kalm in Canada

On July 20, 1749, Kalm travelled up Lake Champlain, and spent his first night on Canadian soil at Fort Saint-Jean, at the entrance to the Richelieu River. From there he proceeded to Montreal, arriving on July 24, 1749. At Montreal he described Passenger Pigeons (*Pehr Kalm au Canada*, 172):

> **The French call them Doves (tourtes); they say that in summer they frequent the great forests and orchards here in infinite numbers and that the birds nest in the trees; they often blot out the sky; when it gets cold they leave the region and head south and one does not see them until the next spring. People try to preserve them but here it is not possible. It is very easy when one is at home to catch them by hand for food and they become as docile as domestic pigeons. They pass several days before flying into the forest where they do not reappear.**

One of the well-known ways of capturing pigeons was by netting, as illustrated at right.

"Passenger Pigeon Net, St. Anne's, Lower Canada". Watercolour and pen and black and brown ink on wove paper (1829). James Patterson Cockbur. Credit: Library and Archives Canada, Acc. No. 1989-262-18. Copyright: Expired.

Kalm botanized in the Montreal area for about one week. He noted the unusual construction of fans made with the tail feathers of wild turkeys (*Pehr Kalm au Canada*, 194).

> **One makes them [fans] here with the tail of wild turkeys. People take them from the dead animal and form a fan, leave them to dry in this position, they stick together in this form. I have seen women, and sometimes men of stature, with them while walking in the town, when it was really hot.**

Turkey feathers may have been collected by French traders from Indigenous people who lived along the north shore of Lake Erie. In the 18th century, this area was the eastern range limit known for Wild Turkeys in New France.

On August 2, Kalm travelled down the St. Lawrence, arriving the next day at Trois-Rivières. On August 4 he noted a Ruby-throated Hummingbird "among the bushes where we landed that day. The French call it *Oiseau mouche* and say it is pretty common in Canada, and I have seen it since several times at Quebec." Kalm arrived at Quebec on August 5. There he met with the Governor, de la Galissionière, and the Médecin du Roi, Jean-Francois Gaultier. Kalm and Gaultier collected many seeds and plants at Lorette and Île d'Orléans and other sites around the city.

Kalm was conscious of the immense task of setting down in his journal all the plants and wildlife he found. On August 8, 1749, he wrote (Benson's *Travels in North America II*, 447):

> **If I should crowd my journal with my daily botanical observations, and descriptions of animals, birds, insects, ores and like curiosities, it would be swelled to six or ten times its present size. I therefor spare all these things ... for a Flora Canadensis or a similar work ... Concerning the Canadian plants, I can here add that the further you go northward, the more you find the plants are the same as the Swedish ones: thus, on the north side of Quebec, a fourth part of the plants, if not more, are the same as the wild plants in Sweden.**

Regrettably, while he alludes to having made many additional notes on Canadian flora and fauna, his Journal remains his main contribution to Canadian natural history and ornithology.

Kalm and Gaultier travelled downriver on August 29, visiting Baie Saint-Paul, Les Éboulements and Cap-aux-Oies.

He wrote again on Passenger Pigeons (*Pehr Kalm au Canada*, 284) remarking that they do not nest in the vicinity of Quebec but northeast along the St Lawrence River. He noted that in some places their droppings covered the forest floor to a depth of one to two feet. Kalm writes that, unlike the settlers, the Indigenous people did not take the pigeons during the nesting season. De la Galissionière told him that he had acquired some pigeons that year which he intended to take to France.

While at Bay Saint-Paul he made a few comments on the birds (*Pehr Kalm au Canada*, 354):

> **Here are but few birds, and those that pass the summer here migrate in autumn, so that there are no other birds than white and brown partridges ["rapphons" Swedish for partridge, hence in this location Ruffed Grouse] and ravens in winter. Crows migrate in autumn.**

They returned to Quebec on September 7, left on September 11 and arrived in Montreal on September 15.

On September 11, 1749, on the way to Trois-Rivières he noted in his Journal many plovers. He shot one and provided a description of a Semipalmated Plover which he named the "Gravelotte [little plover]" (*Pehr Kalm au Canada*, 411-412). Kalm's complete description in Latin is detailed and conclusive. This record represents the first scientific description of this bird collected in Canada. Kalm's record pre-dates the American Ornithological Society accepted scientific description of the Semipalmated Plover by Charles Lucien Bonaparte from 1825.

When Kalm returned to Montreal he continued to collect botanical material. His initial plan was to travel from Montreal to Niagara Falls via the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario and return to Philadelphia through the Hudson Valley. The new governor, the Marquis de la Jonquière, refused his request. As a result, he left Montreal on October 11th and retraced his route back to the Fort Saint-Jean area. On the morning of October 15th he entered American waters in Lake Champlain His elapsed time in Canada totalled 88 days.

In the summer of 1750 Kalm travelled north from Albany reaching Fort Oswego on Lake Ontario on August 13. He travelled by boat along the southern shore of the Lake to Fort Niagara. On August 24, accompanied by some French officers, he visited Niagara Falls. He was one the first people to sketch and describe the Falls. In his brief notes describing his visit to Niagara Kalm mentions a large number of migrating waterfowl. He noted that some were occasionally swept over the waterfall to their death. He also mentions a single swan in the basin below the Falls. This bird survived the descent but was unable to fly. Given the location, the unknown length of its presence, and a lack of description it is not possible to determine the species.

Kalm spent likely three or four days in Canada on his Niagara trip. In total, his time in the St. Lawrence valley and Niagara amounted to about 92 days. In October he returned to Philadelphia and embarked for Europe on February 13, 1751.

Kalm's manuscripts of his travels are full of accounts, sometimes in considerable detail, of everything that caught his attention. While his interest was primarily botanical, he made many comments on the lifestyle, attitudes and dress of the settlers, traders, townspeople, religious leaders, politicians and the Native people he met, the geological features of the landscape he saw, items of trade, and the economic system, and wildlife he encountered.

Kalm's 1749 Journal entries represent the first scientific field notes in natural history in Canada. Of key importance for Canadian ornithology are his accounts of Passenger Pigeons and his scientific description of the Semipalmated Plover. Kalm's accounts of his meeting and interactions with de la Galissionière and Gaultier are unfortunately too brief. At this time both were in the middle of collecting ornithological specimens for the French scientist Réaumur whose collection provided the Canadian material for Mathurin-Jacques Brisson's pioneering work, Ornithologie. Its publication in 1760 with its detailed descriptions of Canadian birds is by far the most significant event in the history of the ornithology of New France.

In the introduction to the 1937 Dover edition, Adolph Benson comments on why he thinks that the Kalm Journal has maintained a wide readership over the centuries:

> **Large indeed is the scope of subjects that attract Kalm's attention, and striking the simplicity, straightforwardness, poise, conscientiousness, and the almost humorous naivete with which he makes the heterogeneous entries of his observations in his diary. (Benson)**

Kalm's diary is unique. It contains the first detailed natural history observations of a trained naturalist in Quebec and in Canada. Morriset, and his co-authors' meticulous work, deserves a prominent place in the literature of the early natural history of Canada.

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