



## Happy Easter to all !



Credit photo : Michel Bordeleau

Good day,

We are pleased to present our spring newsletter from Nature Expert. This season is one of the most anticipated for birders with the return of migratory birds and those nesting close to us.

This spring migration also heralds the return of the Grand Défi QuébecOiseaux!

In this newsletter, you will find an article on birdhouses for unusual species, the Grand Défi QuébecOiseaux, a new exciting technology that makes it easier to locate birds that are difficult to find, as well as our new products and suggestions.

Happy reading !

***Alain Goulet, owner and birding enthusiast and the Nature Expert Team.***



## Nesting boxes

by Serge Beaudette

When we think of nesting boxes or birdhouses, we often think of a swallow going in and out of one. This image may lead us to believe that all swallows nest in these wooden houses. In fact, only Tree Swallows and Purple Martins use them. The latter being the only one to frequent swallow “condos”, these large nest boxes with many units.

The other four species of swallow nest on beams in barns, in mud nests on a wall, in a hole dug in a riverbank or in a sand pit.

Before the advent of nesting boxes, cavities dug by the woodpeckers were also used by other birds and we can deduce that woodpecker can also use nest boxes.



*Sialia a poitrine blanche - White breasted nuthatch*

© Michel Bondeleau 2009

It's a good option for them but they prefer to dig their own

cavity.

Other birds with less powerful beaks can also dig their own hole in trees. These birds are the two species of nuthatches and the three species of chickadees. Because they have a harder time at digging, before doing so, they will check other alternatives. Nuthatches will preferably choose natural cavities (malformation in trees) or a nest box as a second choice, while the first choice for chickadees is a nest box. And even more so if you take care to fill it with wood shavings right up to the roof! They will remove almost all the shavings and feel like they dug their own hole and get the satisfaction of a job well-done!

But it is not necessary to have a beak capable of piercing wood to prefer a nest built in a wooden nest box.



Trees Swallows, Eastern Bluebirds, Great Crested Flycatchers and House Wrens are small-bodied birds that thrive in old holes dug by woodpecker species (downy, hairy and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker) or nesting boxes built and installed for them. The same is true for other species associated with larger species of woodpeckers (Northern Flicker and Pileated Woodpecker) such as the American Kestrel (a small bird of prey), the Eastern Screech-Owl and the Saw-whet Owl.

Even more unusual, some birds have a morphology that only allows them to rely on the rare large natural cavities or on nest boxes built for them. These birds are Wood Duck and Common Merganser, Common Goldeneye in



northern Quebec, and one of the largest owl in southern Quebec, the Barred Owl! They all lack a beak made for digging and a size that does not allow them to take advantage of old holes dug by woodpeckers. The Barred Owl needs a 20-centimeter opening for its nest box and 35 centimeters for the width of the floor. In total, more than 20 species sometimes use holes that they dig themselves in dead wood, holes dug by others in previous years or natural cavities. And since all these "natural" and usual possibilities are less and less present in the environment, nesting boxes are an alternative widely used by many individuals of these species... and very beneficial for nature.

The success of your nest boxes will therefore be closely linked to the natural availability of dead trees. If there are not enough, the installation of nesting boxes will fill a gap and will undoubtedly be very successful... provided that its construction, placement, and maintenance are done according to certain golden rules.

For bird lovers, you can learn more at [pitpitpit.com](http://pitpitpit.com)

Credit photos: Michel Bordeleau

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## The birding trips are back

by Alain Goulet

Many people have started to travel abroad again to watch birds. Several companies offer such organized trips but in Quebec, the best tour company is Serge Beaudette's Pitpitpit.com. Serge is an avid birder and has been organizing with his team, birding excursions around the world for over 20 years.

I joined one of his trips to South America. Colombia had been a birding destination on my bucket list. Visiting this country with Serge Beaudette was an excellent way to make that dream come true. This trip exceeded my expectations both in terms of number of species observed and the quality of lodges and hotels we visited. Serge and the birding guides on site were excellent and among the best I have encountered during my many travels around the world. I highly recommend this destination as well as Serge Beaudette's organized trips.



[Pitpitpit.com](http://Pitpitpit.com)





Photo: Michel Bordeleau

## Looking for birds... we're getting warmer!

Alain Goulet

For several years thermal cameras have evolved, and they are now used for scientific research and for birding as well. Any species that use their camouflage to blend in with their surroundings or tend to be in dense vegetation can be found more easily with a thermal camera.

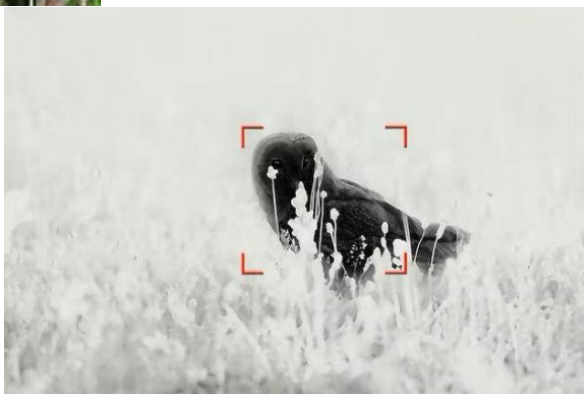


Among those species are: owls, nighthawks, bitterns, ptarmigans, woodcocks, snipes, grouse and birds that nest on the ground or in long grass. During a recent winter outing with a group of students, I scanned all the conifers in the area and a thermal image emerged from a spruce. From a good distance, I aimed my spotting scope at the subject and located a Short-eared Owl roosting in it. The students all had the chance to observe this owl in the spotting scope without disturbing it. I would never have found this bird without a thermal camera.

These cameras are also useful for determining the number of birds in a conifer or in dense vegetation. I observed a small group of Pine Siskins feeding in a spruce tree at the botanical garden. They were well hidden in that spruce and did not come out of it very much. I estimated their number at around 12 but when I observed this conifer with the thermal camera, there were actually 25 birds in the tree.

There are several qualities of thermal cameras. And prices can vary wildly. Devices over \$4,000 will offer more definition in terms of shape of the subject observed as well as a higher detection rate at longer distances than less expensive cameras. We have thermal cameras in stock and we are looking for another model that will perform well but at a lower price tag. Possible uses of thermal cameras in birding include:

- Finding resting birds
- Finding active nests
- Finding a signing bird
- Figuring out if a nest box is being used
- Finding a bird that flies away in a dense bush or canopy without getting too close to it
- Estimating the number of birds in dense vegetation
- Finding mammals



@Michel Bordeleau

Here is a video showing the results of several test by Serge Beaudette during a trip to Colombia (in French):

<https://youtu.be/GkNC-YLJiPg>

To view this video with simultaneously-translated English subtitles:

Bring your cursor on the video screen and click on CC (subtitles / closed caption) to turn the subtitles on.

Then choose Settings right beside it and click on subtitle CC and choose English as a language.



## Test concluant d'un monoculaire thermique pour la recherche des oiseaux!

84 views 21h ago ...more



Serge Beaudette 7.18K





## The Ornitrotteurs are back!

Alain Goulet

Once again, along with Serge Beaudette, Jean-Philippe Gagnon and Frédéric Hareau, I (Alain Goulet) will be doing the Grand Défi QuébecOiseaux on May 22nd.

We will try to see as many birds as possible in 24 hours, following a very specific route. We have chosen to pledge half of the donations collected to the Tadoussac Bird Observatory. <http://www.explosnature.ca/oot/>

The other half will of course go to QuébecOiseaux.

If you want, you can sponsor the Ornitrotteurs by clicking on the following

link: <https://www.quebecoiseaux.org/fr/campagne-grand-defi/donate/grand-defi-quebecoiseaux-2023/3558/participant/10/#don-form-box>

If you choose to do so, you can win one of the following prizes or one of the prizes offered by the Regroupement QuébecOiseaux for any donation over \$25.

- A pair of Vortex Vanquish 8x26 binoculars, courtesy of Nature Expert, value of \$190
- A Squirrel Buster Plus feeder, courtesy of Brome Bird Care, value of \$160
- A unique cardinal feeder, courtesy of Nature Expert, value of \$45
- A pair of tickets to the Montreal Biodôme, value of \$34
- A birding outing with the Ornitrotteurs with 3 of your friends in the company of Frédéric, Jean-Philippe, Serge and Alain, that is totally priceless!

Here is a video of the outing with our lucky winner of 2021

(French):: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOeCEdNU9g4>

Thank you for your support!!

[Sponsor the Ornitrotteurs](#)





Come and meet the Zeiss representative on Saturday April 22nd, 2023 from 9:30 to 5:00 at Nature Expert.

You will have the chance to try all their optical products and thermal cameras designed for birding and the outdoors.

Special sales will be available on Zeiss products throughout the day.

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## NEW PRODUCTS



### ZEISS SFL 8x30 and 10x30

ZEISS SFL (SmartFocus Lightweight) 8x30 and 10x30 binoculars are as light as they are compact. With their very wide field of view and the minimum focusing distance of 4.9 feet (1.5 meters), the SFL 8x30 and 10X30 models offer perfect views and great contrast.

Their optimal design allows for a weight reduction of up to 23% and their volume by up to 21% compared to the ZEISS Victory SF models. Moreover, SFL binoculars are up to 30% lighter than comparable competitors' products. The SmartFocus concept (SFL) will give you the ideal balance: intuitive finger placement as well as precise and fast focusing.

SFL binoculars are the only ones in their category at such an attractive price.



### ZEISS THERMAL IMAGING CAMERA DTI 3/25

Observation by day or by night with thermal imaging opens new doors: birds and other wildlife can be located and identified without disturbance from a light source. With its DTI 3 thermal imaging cameras, ZEISS always offers the right optical devices for nighttime and daytime observation. In complete darkness or through dense vegetation, they produce detailed images for an unforgettable experience.



### Butterfly Jumbo Mug

This large mug, decorated with pretty butterflies can hold 16 oz (475 ml).  
It is perfect for mornings that require a lot of coffee or tea.



### Cardinals on leafy branch Doormat

Welcome to your home family and friends with this ornate and attractive doormat.  
For indoors or outdoors. Easy to clean.