



# Centre de conservation de la faune ailée



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## CCFA - Nature Expert

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## Hours of operation

Tue. / Wed. 9:30 – 18:00  
Thurs. / Fri. 9:30 – 19:00  
Sat. 9:30 – 17:00  
Sun. / Mon. Closed

Hello everyone,

Did you know that each year, hunters and fishermen contribute more than 5 million dollars to conservation through donations, permits, and other fund raising efforts? This money is used to support various projects throughout the province. What would our birding hobby be like if such sums of money were available and if the birders were so generous? In this newsletter you will find information on two important bird observatories who are contributing to research and conservation of the birds we love. They are the McGill Bird Observatory and the Observatoire d'Oiseaux de Tadoussac. This year, these two organisations have experienced major funding cuts from the federal government. For this reason, CCFA-Nature Expert has launched a fundraiser to help ensure that important projects can continue in the years to come. You will find the details of this fundraiser on page 2 of this bulletin. If, like us, you don't agree with these cuts, please contact your elected officials.

Happy birding!  
*Alain Goulet, owner*

## McGill Bird Observatory

By Gayle Grunner

McGill Bird Observatory (MBO), located in the West Island of Montreal, comprises a lush mixture of deciduous woods, old orchards, fields, riparian edges and vernal ponds - prime staging habitat for boreal breeding birds. Established in 2004, the primary goal of MBO is to monitor migratory songbirds through banding. The banding and observation data collected on the birds that stop over at MBO are pooled with the national data set and ultimately contribute to the assessment of conservation priorities, as well as determining local bird-population trends.

MBO conducts two standardized migration monitoring programs, one from April through early June, and again from August through October. In addition, MBO monitors nest sites during May, June and July, conducts a Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship program in June and July, and a Northern Saw-whet Owl

migration monitoring program in fall. Detailed records are maintained for each program and reports are generated each season; all are available on the MBO website: <http://www.migrationresearch.org/mbo.html>.

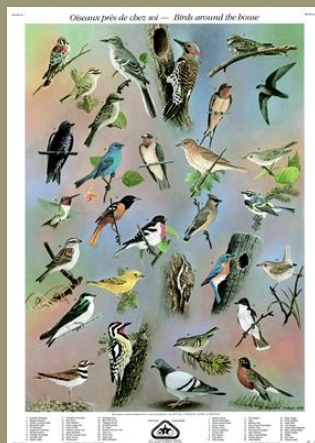


Banding occurs daily during the season from a half hour before sunrise to 5 hours later, weather depending. To catch birds, we use 16 standard 12-m long, 30-mm mesh nets as part of the Migration

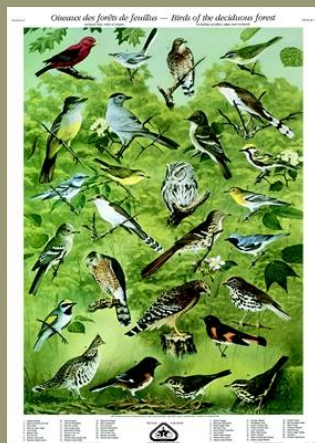
# Fund Raiser

Get our full series of 6 paper posters of the birds of Quebec for 30\$ and help support Observatoire d'Oiseaux de Tadoussac and McGill Bird Observatory.

For each series sold, 10\$ will go to OOT and 10\$ to MBO.



# 30\$



Monitoring Protocol. We also conduct a daily census (an hour-long walk around a set path around the property), and record additional observations. These, in combination with the birds banded, are used to compile the daily estimated total number of birds and species in the area.



Each bird is examined while being banded or recaptured. A variety of measurements are taken as part of the standard protocol (e.g. age, sex, unflattened wing chord if primary length was unaffected by molt, weight, fat score, date, and time), as well as particular comments with respect to ongoing research at MBO. Digital photos are also frequently taken for the ever-growing MBO photo identification library, a growing public resource for the education of both banders and other birders. This library is one of the first of its kind, and is invaluable in allowing both birders and banders to deepen and enrich their ability to not only identify species, but to age and sex birds in the field and in the hand whenever possible. The library is available to

one and all, free of charge: <http://www.migrationresearch.org/mbo/id/index.html>.

In addition to being a centre for scientific research, MBO also serves the local community as a training facility in field-work techniques. To this end, we welcome all volunteers! MBO volunteers play a vital role in the day-to-day functioning of the banding station; in return, they may choose to receive training as extractors, net assistants, scribes and observers. A structured Bander-in-training program is also available. Volunteering at the MBO is a great way to see and learn about birds.



As of June 2nd, 2010, a total of **24,260** birds of 105 species have been banded at MBO and 200 species have been observed on-site. These numbers are remarkably high for an inland site and reflect MBO's great potential for monitoring changes in populations of fall and spring migrants over time.

## Observatoire d'Oiseaux de Tadoussac

By Pascal Côté and Andrew Coughlan

The picturesque village of Tadoussac, located on the North Shore of the St. Lawrence Estuary, at the mouth of the majestic Saguenay Fjord is the oldest village in Canada and was the cradle of New France. It is also home to the *Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac's* (OOT), the first francophone bird observatory in North America. Because of the width of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the

Estuary (over 20 km at Tadoussac), many species of migratory birds moving south from their nesting areas in northern Quebec and Labrador, annually follow the North Shore of the St. Lawrence until they finally encounter a suitable, narrower, crossing point further upstream. This phenomenon creates what is probably one of the most important migration corridors anywhere in

# Quiz

## New QUIZ

Can a bird carry its young in flight? If yes, which species?

The answer will be in our next newsletter.

## Previous Quiz

What bird has the slowest powered flight without hovering or gliding?

We had many people guess Great Blue Heron but the right answer is American Woodcock.

northeastern America and makes Tadoussac a strategic location for a bird observatory.



Jacques Ibarzabal, a research professor in ornithology at the *Université du Québec à Chicoutimi*, established the OOT in 1993. Today, the observatory is run by the corporation *Explos-Nature* and it forms an important component of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network. The value of the data collected by the OOT is enhanced by the fact that the birds monitored come from a well defined area, which helps to provide a better focus on the potential reasons behind increases or declines noted in the population of a given species. Although the OOT's mission was initially to gather data on migrating raptors, under the guidance of a particularly active scientific committee, its mandate was rapidly widened to cover other groups of birds, including boreal passerines and seabirds.



The field station itself is situated within the *Parc national du Saguenay*, and because of the unique nature of the site, the majority of the observatory's focal species can be monitored using a standardized visual count approach. These counts are conducted from August 24<sup>th</sup> to

November 25<sup>th</sup> by two professional ornithologists. The OOT is lucky in that since 1993, it has only changed its team of official counters once, which significantly reduces the bias associated with observer turnover.

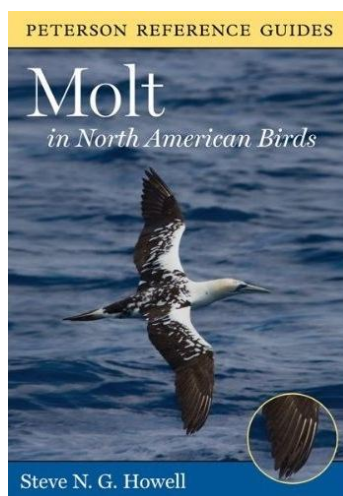
In addition to typical boreal nesting migrants, the OOT is also well situated to monitor populations of several typically resident but irruptive boreal species, which undertake occasional winter incursions further south in search of food. In fact, the OOT is currently the only observatory in North America that is able to follow species such as the White-winged Crossbill, Pine Grosbeak and Pine Siskin, using visual counts. In addition to documenting the cyclic movement of some typically residential boreal species, the OOT has also highlighted the apparently erratic mass movements of species such as the Gray Jay (in 1998 and 2007) and the Boreal Chickadee (in 1998, 1999 and 2008).



These results and the spectacular setting provide the stimulus necessary to keep the field team and the scientific committee coming back for more!

# Our new products and suggestions

## *Molt in North American Birds*



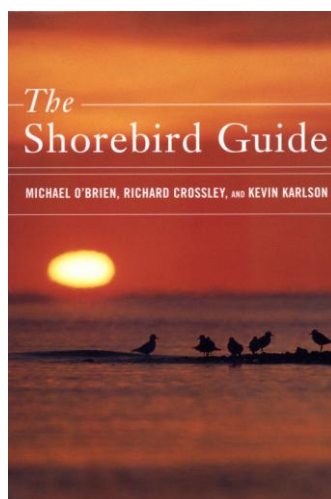
To most observers, the topic of molt seems overwhelming. But birders use many aspects of molt more than they realize. For those whose interest goes beyond simply identifying birds, questions such as, *What triggers molt to start? How fast do feathers grow? and How long do they last?* Molt offers a fascinating window into the lives of birds. Put plainly, molt relates in some way to everything a bird does, including where it lives, what it eats, and how far it migrates. Here, for the first time is a text in which molt is presented for the nonscientist.

## *Vortex Vulture*



Let there be light! With 56mm objective lenses, Vulture series binoculars deliver absolutely incredible light transmission and superior low light performance—a critical attribute at dawn and dusk when birds are most active. Available in 8x56 and 10x56. In general, binoculars of that format are bulky and heavy – but not with these. We tested them in-store and were very impressed with their brightness, feel and image quality.

## *The Shorebird Guide*



With the shorebird season approaching, a good field guide is a must. This guide includes more than 870 stunning color photographs, starting with a general impression of the species and progressing to more detailed images of the bird throughout its life cycle. Quiz questions in the captions will engage and challenge all birders and help them benefit from this simplified, commonsense approach to identification.

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