The SONG SPARROW
Bird Protection Quebec - Protection des oiseaux du Québec

December 2020 (vol: 63.2)

For the Birds since 1917
Pour les oiseaux depuis 1917
Bird Protection Quebec is a registered charity: Donations are tax deductible.

Charity Registration #: 11925 2161 RR0001.

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The Song Sparrow: ISSN 1710-3371
Legal Deposit: National Library and Archives of Canada

Publication Mail No.: 40044323
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Cover Photo

Carolina Wren / Troglyde de Caroline © Richard Gregson

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President's Message
by Simon Duval
BPQ President

2020 has been a very special year so far, to say the least. While in the human world, we are trying to cope with COVID-19, birds continue to live their normal life in their world, as they’ve always done.

Bird Protection Quebec had to postpone in-person field trips and monthly lectures. However, as the year progressed, we adapted and began offering more and more online content to our members and to the general public. Our third monthly lecture of the season will take place via Zoom on December 7. See “Increases, Declines, Fluctuations, and Changes in Timing” on page 7. Our field trip committee has come up with a ton of new “virtual” field trips ideas, which are open to all. See “Field Trip Committee Report” on page 12.

We are now getting into probably the toughest part of this pandemic, good old winter. We birders are extremely lucky because the winter 2020–2021 is shaping up to be one to remember! Early reports are showing a strong irruption of Evening Grosbeaks (one individual even made it all the way down to Florida!), Pine Grosbeaks and Common Redpoll. The winter also seems like it will be good for Bohemian Waxwings. So get out there and enjoy the finches, while, of course, respecting public health safety measures. While you’re out, don’t forget to look for Snowy Owls and Rough-legged Hawks and who knows, maybe some Great Gray Owls will brighten up the winter too!

New Members
by Darlene Harvey,
Membership Secretary

We are pleased to welcome the following new and rejoining members:

Phil Grohe, Claire Maryniak, Cheryl Grohe, Carmen Carbone, Lorraine Craig, Dina Alnumani, Naomi Fukuyama and Family, Delores Steinlicht, Sharon Todd, Margaret Ludwig, Valerie Aitken, Brenda Parsons, and Andrew Aitken.

We look forward to meeting you in person once it is safe for us to resume our group activities. In the meantime, join us for our Zoom monthly lectures and don’t forget to join our Song Sparrow e–list to connect with other members (https://groups.io/g/bpqsongsparrow) and to follow us on Facebook.

It’s Time to Renew Your Membership

Current memberships expired on September 30 so, unless you are a Life Member or a new member who joined after March 1, 2020, if you haven’t renewed yet it’s time to renew your support and remain a part of BPQ, one of the oldest bird conservation charities in Canada!
Click here to go to our website, where it is easy to renew online with your credit card through Paypal (no Paypal account needed) or, if you prefer to pay by cheque, by following the instructions for “Becoming a Member by Mail” at the bottom of the page.

C’est le temps de renouveler votre adhésion

Votre adhésion actuelle a expiré le 30 septembre, donc, à moins que vous ne soyez un membre à vie ou un nouveau membre qui s’est joint après le 1er mars 2020, le temps est venu de renouveler votre soutien et de faire partie de POQ, l’un des plus anciens organismes de bienfaisance de la conservation au Canada!

Cliquez ici pour accéder à notre site Web et renouveler facilement en ligne avec votre carte de crédit par l’entremise de Paypal (aucun compte Paypal nécessaire) ou, si vous préférez payer par chèque, en suivant les instructions «Si vous préférez payer par chèque» au bas de la page.

New BPQ Grants Deadline — January 31, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

This new (earlier) deadline is to accommodate applications to other funding opportunities later in the year that require matching funds. Results will be announced by the end of February. Also, please see revised guidelines (https://pqspb.org/bpqpoq/research-grants/). Send applications to Mélanie Guigueno (melanie.guigueno@mcgill.ca).

Nouvelle date limite pour les subventions POQ — 31 janvier 2021 à 18h00

Cette nouvelle date limite (plus tôt) est destinée à permettre la présentation des demandes pour d’autres possibilités de financement plus tard dans l’année qui nécessitent des fonds correspondants. Les résultats seront annoncés avant la fin du mois de février. Veuillez également consulter les lignes directrices révisées (https://pqspb.org/bpqpoq/research-grants/?lang=fr). Envoyez les demandes à Mélanie Guigueno (melanie.guigueno@mcgill.ca).

Rough-legged Hawk
© Chuck Kling 2020
Fall Birding and Birding Ethics

by Jane Cormack

As you’re out observing the beautiful birds of fall and winter, while following physical distancing rules and other measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19, it’s important to observe birding ethics and conservation efforts.

With fewer options available during the pandemic, an increased number of citizens are making use of the city parks. While this is great, especially if they can begin to enjoy the pleasures of bird and wildlife observation, the increased visits have put an increased strain on the natural variety of plant and animal life of these parks along with any efforts to conserve them.

According to a spokesperson for Les Amis de la Montagne, the greatest threat to biodiversity on Mount Royal is people straying off the established paths and creating new ones, not just for mountain bikers and trail runners, but also pedestrians.

Les Amis de la Montagne have roped off many unofficial trails. It is important to observe these signs and abide by their measures. There are still several official trails through the woods. There is no need to feel restricted.

With the arrival of winter finches and other iconic and sensitive winter species, it is worth remembering BPQ’s Birding Code of Ethics. You can download a copy from the BPQ website.

If you’re birdwatching off the beaten path this fall and winter, check the local hunting regulations before you head out. Although deer hunting season has now closed, hunters in Quebec are permitted to hunt a variety of small game, large game, and migratory bird species until the end of March, then Wild Turkey hunting begins in April. Visit the following link for hunting periods: https://mffp.gouv.qc.ca/publications/enligne/faune/reglementation-chasse/impression/index.asp

Opt for humane rodent control.

For more information

• Visit the website.
• Follow the campaign on Instagram and Facebook
• Sign the petition if you are a resident of Montreal.

Rodenticides

Julien Bourdeau, a student at cégep de Saint-Laurent has started a petition to ban the use of rodenticide traps in the City of Montreal. The poisons used in these traps are a serious threat to raptors, other wildlife, and domesticated animals, due to secondary contamination.
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: For the sixth consecutive summer, the species made an incursion in the region; this time a group of 5 birds made a brief appearance at Montmagny 21 Jun (G. Bonneau, ph.). Mute Swan: one at Île aux Grues 23–25 Jul (M. Robert). Trumpeter Swan: nesting was confirmed at la Morandière, Abitibi (R. Gélinas). Single pairs spent summer at Saint-Fulgence (m.ob.) and Saint-Étienne-de-Beauharnois (L. Falcon, D. Collins) but without evidence of breeding. Several birds were also reported in the Outaouais Valley, west of Gatineau (m.ob.). Tundra Swan: one at Irlande 3 Jun (A. Sheinck). Tufted Duck: one continued at Sept-Îles until 1 Jun (B. Duchesne). Eurasian Collared-Dove: one at Béarn (Témiscamingue) 23 Jun (M. Gervais, ph.). White-winged Dove: a very good summer for this species: singles at Trois-Rivières 29 Jun (H. Samson), Les Escoumins 1 Jul (D. Turgeon), and Île Bonaventure 31 Jul (R. Turgeon). Yellow-billed Cuckoo: it was an exceptional summer for this species with at least 40 individuals found in 33 localities in Jun-Jul (fide S. Denault). Sandhill Crane: a pair was confirmed nesting in Frontenac NP 13 Jun (T. Deleuil).

Baird Sandpiper: one at Yamachiche 1 Jun, rare in spring (M. Pelletier). Willet: one at Rivière-Ouelle 7 Jun (C. Girard, C. Auchu). Long-tailed Jaeger: singles at Portneuf-sur-Mer 13 Jun (T. Grandmont), and at Pointe-des-Monts 7 Jul (B. Drolet, J. Ibarzabal), rare for these dates on the North Shore. Sabine’s Gull: 


Bécasseau de Baird: un à Yamachiche 1 juin, rare au printemps (M. Pelletier). Chevalier semipalmé: un à Rivière-Ouelle 7 juin (C. Girard, C. Auchu). Labbe à longue queue: un à Portneuf-sur-Mer 13 juin (T. Grandmont), et à Pointe-des-Monts 7 juillet (B.

American White Pelican: singles at Maskinongé 18–26 Jun (Y. Dupont) and on Lake Abitibi 28 Jun (m. ob.). Snowy Egret: one at Saint–Barthélemy 22 Jun (S. Lemieux, S. Blackburn). Tricolored Heron: one at Cap Tourmente 22–28 Jun (P. Normand, C. Hébert). Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: a juv photographed at Havre–aux–Maisons (îles de la Madeleine) 31 Jul (B. Arseneau). Black Vulture: reported in 8 localities of s. Québec. Mississippi Kite: a 1st summer bird was a nice discovery at Saint–André–Avelin 3–4 Jun, a second record only for the Region (C. Samoisette–Pilon, MP. Langlois, ph.)

Eastern Screech-Owl: one heard in Openican NP, Témiscamingue) 4 Jul, well north of its range (C. Schryer, J. Fréchette). Northern Hawk Owl: an ad with 2 juv at Ile aux Lièvres 14–15 Jul (P. Coquereau). Burrowing Owl: one seen and photographed by a very lucky observer at Saint–Hubert 7 Jun, a fifth record only for the Region and the second in 2 years (G. Lamarre).

Red-headed Woodpecker: possibly the best summer in over a few decades for this species: singles ad were reported at Île Saint–Jean (Terrebonne) 12 Jun (F. Fortier), Saint–Joachim–de–Shefford 26 Jun (D. Fontaine), Gatineau 29 Jun–18 Jul (G. Shields, C. Barbery), Magog 1 Jul (L. Cousineau), Beaconsfield 13–16 Jul (J. Labrosse), and Montreal 15 Jul (S. Lapointe). White-eyed Vireo: one heard singing at Godmanchester 6 Jun (M. Robert, P. Bannon et al) and another at Neuville 7 Jun (M. Saint–Michel). Sedge Wren: several new locations for this species in the Region. Red-headed Woodpecker: possibly the best summer in over a few decades for this species: singles ad were reported at Île Saint–Jean (Terrebonne) 12 Jun (F. Fortier), Saint–Joachim–de–Shefford 26 Jun (D. Fontaine), Gatineau 29 Jun–18 Jul (G. Shields, C. Barbery), Magog 1 Jul (L. Cousineau), Beaconsfield 13–16 Jul (J. Labrosse), and Montreal 15 Jul (S. Lapointe). White-eyed Vireo: one heard singing at Godmanchester 6 Jun (M. Robert, P. Bannon et al) and another at Neuville 7 Jun (M. Saint–Michel). Sedge Wren: several new locations for this species in the Region.
Montréal area: up to 2 at Ile Saint-Bernard (Châteauguay) (D. Ouellette, S. Vanier), up to 2 at PN Cap Saint-Jacques (Montréal) (J. Demers, m. ob.), up to 4 in Lauzon Marsh (Pierrefonds) where nesting was confirmed (S. Denault). One at Lorrainville (Témiscamingue) 11–13 Jul was well north of its range (J. Fréchette). Carolina Wren: the species is definitely strengthening its presence in S. Québec with at least 2 dozen sites occupied.


Blue–winged Warbler: a male was banded at Godmanchester 13 Jun and again 17 Jun (McGill Bird Observatory). Lawrence’s Warbler (F2 Hybrid) the male photographed at Godmanchester 14 Jun was most probably the same previously reported in May (A. Quenneville). Blue Grosbeak: an ad male at Grosse Ile (Iles de la Madeleine) 6 Jun (C. Roy). Painted Bunting: a female was seen at Ile du Grand Calumet 8 Jun (R. Dubois) while a male was well described at Memphrémagog 9 Jul (D. Geffroy).

ADDENDUM: A Forster’s Tern stopped at Victoriaville 28 Aug 2019 (C. Roy).

Please report your interesting bird observations by email at pbannon@videotron.ca


ADDENDUM: une Sterne de Forster s’est arrêtée le 28 août 2019 à Victoriaville (C. Roy).

Signalez vos observations intéressantes par courriel à pbannon@videotron.ca
Our Upcoming Presentations via Videoconference

Join us for our next two presentations via video conference. All are welcome! All our regular monthly presentations are free of charge.

For security reasons, you must register in advance. You'll need to create a Zoom account and download the Zoom app to your desktop, mobile, or tablet if you haven’t done so already. All this is free of charge. For more details, click here.

Registration Information

- For our December presentation, RSVP before noon on December 7 via this link.
- For our January presentation, RSVP before noon on January 4 via this link.
- You will receive confirmation via email containing the meeting link and a unique password once the BPQ Zoom team has approved your registration.

Questions?

Please contact the BPQ Zoom Team at bpq-zm-admin@pqspb.org

Monday, Dec. 7, 7:00 p.m.

Increases, Declines, Fluctuations, and Changes in Timing

Insights from 15 Years of Migration Monitoring at the McGill Bird Observatory

Presented by Marcel Gahbauer, Cofounder of the McGill Bird Observatory

Over the first 15 years of McGill Bird Observatory’s operation, more than 78,000 birds of 127 species were banded, and an additional 95 species were observed. Already enough years have passed to identify distinct trends in abundance of some species and changes in their timing of migration.

The Zoom presentation will spotlight some of the key insights from McGill Bird Observatory’s upcoming 15–year report. Marcel will also preview plans for the future which involve a growing relationship with BPQ.

Marcel Gahbauer with Northern Saw-whet Owl / avec Petite Nyctale

Marcel Gahbauer cofounded McGill Bird Observatory while completing his PhD on Peregrine Falcons at McGill University. He lives in Ottawa, where he works as a biologist for the Canadian Wildlife Service. He has also served for the past six years as co–chair of the birds subcommittee of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), and is a past co–chair of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network.
January 4, 2021, 7:00 p.m.

Ecuador: Bird land Extraordinaire

Presented by Charlie Vogt, Andean Birding

Ecuador straddles the equator on the west coast of South America. Its diverse landscape encompasses Amazon jungle, Andean highlands and the unique Galápagos Islands. Sandwiched between the much larger countries of Colombia and Peru, tiny Ecuador, has a bird population of approximately 1800 species.

For its size Ecuador harbours the richest birdlife in the world.

Charlie will introduce us to this rich avifauna with an emphasis on southern Ecuadorian endemics and their conservation. He will also provide some insight into some interesting bird surveys as part of a wind farm feasibility study and a road rehabilitation project.

Charlie Vogt has been a birder since 1974. He is the owner of Andean Birding. A native of Boston, he received his BSc in biology from Colorado College and MSc from Northern Arizona University.

He started his career in Mexico where he worked for 12 years and at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology. In 1990 Charlie was engaged to carry out a highway environmental assessment in Ecuador. This seminal event in his life has resulted in a 30–year love affair with the birds of Ecuador. Over the years he has worked as a bird guide, an environmental consultant, a teacher of tropical ecology, and has carried out bird surveys and prepared bird lists for foundations and protected areas in Ecuador and Bolivia.

Charlie has led two ornithological expeditions to Volcán Sumaco. Along the way he discovered a new bird species for Ecuador and published articles on bird behaviour and range extensions. He has recorded over 1000 bird sounds for Xeno–canto and assembled 42 tracks on bird sounds of Ecuador.

Volcán Sumaco © Don Henise licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic licence.

RSVP before noon on January 4 via this link.
New Look, Better Packaging for Shade-Grown Coffee

by Connie Morgenstern

The Café Le Nichoir initiative exists to encourage people to drink certified Bird Friendly®, Fair Trade, organic coffee as a way to protect biodiversity on coffee farms.

This commitment to conservation extends beyond the beans. Since 2018 the bag has been made of omnidegradable® packaging, meaning the entire bag including the liner and valve is completely biodegradable – you can even compost it in your own composter if you like.

Up until now the labels on the bags were not biodegradable, but that changes today as we introduce our new labelling.

The top card on each bag is now printed on Rolland Enviro 100 paper which is 100% post-consumer recycled material. The card is recyclable and biodegradable. The new labels are certified compostable paper with a compostable adhesive. The only remaining challenge is the small batch label on each bag. Rest assured though that the cafebirdfriendly.org team is working on it! In the meantime, please remove this tiny batch label before recycling the rest of the package.

Introducing new labelling was an opportunity to give cafebirdfriendly.org partners a unique new look to reflect their organization. BPQ chose the Golden-winged Warbler, one of the birds that the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Centre lists among those that overwinter in the shade-grown coffee plantations of South America. It is also a species that influenced BPQ’s decision to purchase the Montee Biggar sanctuary; the imperiled songbird is among the 184 bird species recorded at this eBird hotspot.

In Canada, the Golden-winged Warbler is listed as Threatened on Schedule 1 of the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA). Under Quebec provincial species at risk legislation, it is on the Liste des espèces susceptibles d’être désignées menacées ou vulnérables (list of wildlife species likely to be designated threatened or vulnerable). You can read more here.

Bird Friendly® is the world’s only 100% organic shade-grown coffee certification. Bags of Café Le Nichoir contain only 100% certified Bird Friendly, organic and Fair Trade coffee – no mixing – just 100% certified coffee that fights deforestation, saves habit, helps wildlife, fairly compensates farmers, and supports Le Nichoir and its partner organizations like BPQ.

All Wrapped Up in Time for the Holidays!

Are there any coffee connoisseurs on your gift list? Consider introducing them to a unique coffee this holiday season.
Add two BPQ branded 342 g bags of coffee and a gift box to your cart and they will be packaged in a Quebec-made gift box surrounded by a colourful sleeve featuring local birds whose winter habitat certified Bird Friendly® coffee protects. Choose to have your gift shipped to you or directly to the recipient with your message.

**Choose from three sizes, two roasts, beans or ground or decaffeinated format**

- 342 g bag $15.50
- 1 kg bag $39.75
- 1 kg bag decaf $45.50
- 2.5 kg bag $86.50

The coffee you choose really can make a difference. Show your support for Bird Protection Quebec and the certified Bird Friendly initiative this season by gifting Café Le Nichoir.

To order visit cafebirdfriendly.org and please choose BPQ as your partner of choice.

BPQ coffee is also available at Le Panier Bleu. Visit this link.

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**The Secret Life of Winter Birds**

**Sat., Dec. 12, 2020, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

**For Kids Aged 8-12**

**Get a free illustrated bird checklist to download**

**What You Will Learn**

- All about the birds you’ll see in winter and where you’ll find them
- Learn about some of the special birds, like owls, you may see in 2020–2021
- How birds survive in cold weather
- How to make your backyard winter bird–friendly
- What foods birds eat and why
- How to make your own bird feeder craft

Join Us via Zoom Video Conference

RSVP required by Friday, Dec. 11!
Click [here](#) to register.

After registration participants will receive an email with a list of materials to use if they wish to follow along with the feeder craft demonstration.

Please email us with any questions at education@pqspb.org
Our 85th Annual Montreal CBC – Saturday, Dec. 19

And Our 80th Annual Hudson CBC – Sunday, Dec. 27

Two of Bird Protection Quebec’s most popular annual events, the Montreal Christmas Bird Count (CBC) and the Hudson Christmas Bird Count will take place on Saturday, December 19, 2020, and Sunday, December 27, 2020, respectively.

Christmas Bird Counts play a vital role in tracking local and national birding trends and are very important events on the citizen science calendar. We are once again counting on your participation. Jean Demers, Clémence Soulard, and Sheldon Harvey make up the BPQ Christmas Count Committee. Sheldon will be responsible for the Montreal Count, with Jean and Clémence looking after the Hudson Count.

We hope that many of you who participated in previous years will return again this year, but we encourage those of you who have not previously participated to get involved. We have a long-standing tradition to uphold and, with everyone’s support and cooperation, we aim to carry it on.

Teams of birders are assigned designated sections of territory within the Montreal and Hudson circles. It’s a fun day of birding, all for a valuable and important purpose. The key thing to remember on a Christmas Bird Count is that every single bird you see is important, regardless of whether it’s a common or rare species. Seeing some “good birds” is always a bonus, but the goal of the day is to count each and every bird of each and every species. If you live anywhere within the count circles and have feeders installed, but are unable to join one of our field teams, you can still assist us without leaving the comfort of your home.

Our website explains how to participate as a Feeder Watcher. All previous participants will be receiving an e-mail from us inquiring about your possible participation again this year, covering the same territory. If you would like to move...
to a different territory, we will do our best to accommodate.

If you are new to the Christmas Bird Counts and are interested in becoming a field participant, please contact us and we will assign you to a sector on a team with some experienced Christmas counters.

This year, we will have a new challenge facing us. We remain in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, our methods and approach to conducting the counts will change. Out of necessity, teams that have historically had numerous participants may be required to reduce the size of their teams in order to comply with the pandemic guidelines in place at the time.

The traditional post-count socials, normally conducted following each count, sadly will not take place this year due to the pandemic. We will not be holding the usual compilation get-together at the end of the day, but we do plan on doing an online Zoom compilation gathering in its place. Details will be announced in the coming days.

Full details of both BPQ Christmas Bird Counts can be found on the BPQ website.

We look forward to your participation again this year. If you would like to participate, or if you have any questions, please contact us.

For the Montreal Christmas Bird Count, contact Sheldon Harvey by e-mail: ve2shw@yahoo.com or telephone: 450–462–1459.

For the Hudson Christmas Bird Count, contact Jean Demers by e-mail: cbchudson2@gmail.com or telephone: 514–694–8240.

Watch for further details on both the Songsparrow IO Group forum and the BPQ Facebook page as the events approach.

Field Trip Committee Report

by Wayne Grubert

The Bird Protection Quebec Field Trip Committee has continued to follow COVID pandemic guidelines by maintaining a schedule of "Virtual Field Trips" through the autumn months of 2020. A series of theme-oriented weekends has proven popular with many birders and many have taken part in every event.

Following our Labour Day Weekend blitz which saw birders visit many locations throughout Southern Quebec we decided that something closer to home might be appreciated for the following weekend. So on September 12 and 13, birders were encouraged to count all species observed from home. This was an extended version of our spring "virtual" trips and enabled birders to compare spring and fall migration on their own turf. Twenty-two people participated and, although the birds were less than cooperative, we did manage 61 species in all.

Wood Duck / Carnard branchu
© Chuck Kling 2019
The following weekend, **September 26-27**, was titled "Birding by the Alphabet" and involved some targeted observations. Birders were given a set of rules for the event concerning key letters in species names. The task was then to match each letter of the alphabet with a particular bird observed on the weekend. Three languages came into play: English, French and Latin. Twenty-four people took part and although no one managed all 26 letters a few came close.

**October 3-4** had us doing a stretched-out version of the Big Sit that we titled "The Golden Mile." Using various tools birders were required to map out a one-mile stretch of prime habitat and then find as many species as possible along that route. They again could spend as much time as desired and could return multiple times over the weekend if they wished. Sixteen participants found 88 species.

After the success of our Birding by the Alphabet Weekend, we could not resist having a similar event over the **Thanksgiving holiday**. A slight modification had participants matching species names in any of three languages with letters in the phrase “Thanksgiving Action de grace.” Twenty participants tried valiantly to find all matches but again the best that could be done was one letter short.

**October 17th** was set aside for our members and friends to help [eBird](https://www.ebird.org) with its **October Big Day** event. The worldwide goal was to have 25 000 participants submit checklists to this important citizen science database on one day! In their own small way our birders helped the organizers smash that goal as close to 33 000 participants submitted almost 80 000 checklists from all over the globe.

For the final weekend of **October** we reincarnated the "Weekend Challenge" which pitted Team Saturday against Team Sunday birders. Nineteen participants competed hard with Team Saturday eking out a narrow 77 to 76 victory when all species were tallied up.

An incredible stretch of warm sunny weather descended on Southern Quebec. Hopefully birders have taken advantage of conditions to participate in our month-long **BPQ November 2020 Big Birding Event.** Participants could choose any or all of our mini-competitions: Big Month, Big Day, Big Sit, Backyard List, Most "Lifers," and Photograph of the Month. We look forward to reading the results.