

Species Spotlight

Naturally News

Nature Canada - October 2010

For Members Making a Difference



Oil-Covered Canadian Geese



Photo: © Zoe Lucas

Ipswich Sparrow

Vital Signs

Common name: Ipswich Sparrow
Latin name: *Passerculus sandwichensis princeps*
Status: Special Concern

Facts

- The Ipswich Sparrow is a song bird that nests almost exclusively on Sable Island, Nova Scotia.
- The Ipswich Sparrow is lighter in colour and larger than the savannah subspecies, a result of its adaptation to coastal dune habitat.
- In the fall and winter the yellow stripe above the Ipswich Sparrow's eye becomes very faint.



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Can you guess what this is? Find the answer at naturecanada.ca/mystery.asp



Nature Canada protects and conserves wildlife and habitats in Canada by engaging people and advocating on behalf of nature. With strategies based on sound science and passion for nature, Nature Canada effects change on issues of national significance, including bird conservation, wilderness protection, species at risk and national parks.



Yellow Rail

Photo credit Dominic Sherony

The Yellow Rail is one of several species of special concern that may be at risk from the BP oil spill during their fall migration from Canada through the Gulf of Mexico.

Take Action! Lend your voice to our campaign to tell the government to ensure our marine environment is protected from the perils of future oil spills. Visit www.naturecanada.ca/take_action.asp to send your letter today.

Oil Spills

The devastating consequences

Birds with oiled feathers unable to fly. Hypothermia. Poisoning from eating contaminated wildlife and ingesting oil while preening. As migratory birds arrive in the disaster zone caused by the BP oil spill, these are just some of the dangers they face.

Thanks to member support, Nature Canada has been raising awareness of the devastating consequences of oil spills for many bird species that depend on the Gulf coast region. We are also working to ensure an environmental tragedy like this does not happen here at home.

Nature Canada, with the help of our members, is working to ensure strict regulations – and the will to adhere to them – are in place to protect nature from unsustainable and risky oil and gas development off Canada's shores. Here are a few of our recommendations:

- 1. Place a moratorium on new offshore drilling.** The Gulf of Mexico tragedy is a wake up call. Offshore oil drilling is never safe for the environment or coastal communities. A moratorium should be in place until an independent commissioner is appointed to hold a review of offshore drilling on all of Canada's coasts.
- 2. Stop drilling in protected areas.** A permanent ban should be in place prohibiting any oil and gas drilling inside a recognized protected area. Just weeks before the Gulf of Mexico oil spill disaster, BP was actively lobbying the Canadian government to ease some of the planned rules for Arctic Ocean oil and gas exploration, and had already acquired three offshore exploration licenses for the Canadian Beaufort Sea.
- 3. Stop the addiction to fossil fuel.** There is an urgent need to end our reliance on polluting fossil fuels. Subsidies to oil and gas companies should be transitioned toward renewable energy and energy efficiency programs.

Don't let it happen in Canada!



Photos: Shutterstock

For more news and commentary about nature, the environment and our conservation efforts visit the Nature Canada blog at: naturecanadablog.blogspot.com

Sable Island



Photo: © Zoe Lucas

Protecting Canada's rare wild treasure

On a tiny sandbar off the coast of Nova Scotia lies what is set to become Canada's newest national park. Sable Island, just 42 km long and 1.5 km wide, is home to one of the world's most celebrated concentrations of wild horses. Nesting colonies of Terns – all threatened and declining throughout most of their range – are numerous. Virtually the world's entire population of vulnerable Ipswich Savannah Sparrow nest exclusively on the island.

"A national park designation signals vastly improved protection of Sable Island's sensitive coastal landscapes that are a haven for migrating and nesting birds," says Ian Davidson, Executive Director of Nature Canada. "However, a strict management plan is needed to mitigate human impacts on the island's fragile ecosystems."

Thanks to member support, Nature Canada is participating in the government's park consultation process to ensure all decisions made will benefit nature now and for generations to come.

To read the two new member resolutions adopted at this year's Annual General Meeting, visit www.naturecanada.ca/about_agm.asp

And the Winner is...

Every year, Nature Canada recognizes remarkable people and organizations who are helping protect nature and wildlife. Congratulations to the following 2010 award winners who were honoured at a special ceremony during our Annual General Meeting in Summerside, PEI on June 26.



Jackie Waddell, recipient of the Douglas H. Pimlott Award

Jackie has made significant contributions to nature conservation in Prince Edward Island over the past 23 years. Her tireless efforts have helped make Island Nature Trust the leading conservation group on PEI.



BC Nature, 2010 winner of the Affiliate Award

As the first to launch the IBA Caretaker Network Program, BC Nature's pioneering spirit serves as an inspiring model for others.



Tony Dean, recipient of the Volunteer Award

By volunteering his extensive management experience, Tony Dean has helped strengthen Nature Canada's structures, policies and human resource management.



Jeff Howard, first recipient of the Charles Labatiuk Scholarship Award

Jeff Howard has been making a difference to nature since he was eight years old, championing education programs and erecting signs for loon conservation and turtle crossings. Jeff is studying Ecosystem Management at Sir Sandford Fleming College.



Nature Nuggets

Strange but true facts about nature



Bufflehead Duck

The Bufflehead Duck has a very precise internal clock. It arrives and departs from its nesting area on EXACTLY the same days every year.



Many birds' feathers weigh more than their bones.

Remembering Charles Labatiuk:

Love and respect for nature grew in his family

Bill and Natalia Labatiuk are immersed in their memories as they sit on the bench that honours the legacy of their son, Charles, and watch the energetic bird feeding station at the Beaverhill Bird Observatory. They reflect that this bench would be a place that Charles would love to sit and listen to the birds. And they laugh as they agree that, "he actually wouldn't sit too long – he would just have to get up and explore."

Charles Labatiuk hiked, paddled and explored wild spaces like Beaverhill. He was a keen naturalist, photographer, mountaineer and environmental professional. As a boy, his parents remember him at his grandparents' farm: "He discovered the magic of our natural world through bugs, frogs and plants. By his 12th birthday, he was blazing his own trails and taking his younger siblings, other neighbourhood kids and his slower but enthusiastic parents to identify bird songs."

In his Will, Charles left a bequest to Nature Canada that will preserve and protect magnificent places like Beaverhill and other Important Bird Areas (IBAs).

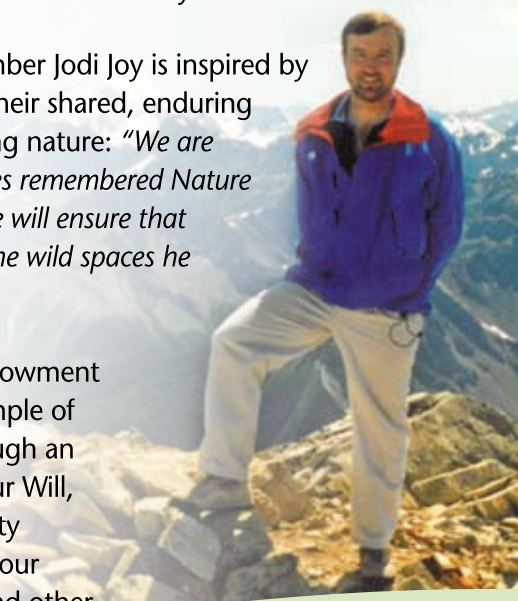
Charles' legacy will support the ongoing and future work at Beaverhill Bird Observatory, including extensive education programs, local conservation efforts protecting rare species including songbirds and Burrowing Owls, and research on bird ecology.

The Charles Labatiuk Entrance Scholarship will be awarded to a young naturalist attending post-secondary studies in the natural sciences, and the Charles Labatiuk Volunteer Award is for exceptional bird conservation and stewardship efforts.

An endowment is created through an initial outright gift of cash or bequest in your Will, the principal of which is held *in perpetuity*, or indefinitely. The annual interest generated can support one of our conservation projects, for example, the Important Bird Area of your choice.

Nature Canada staff member Jodi Joy is inspired by the Labatiuk family and their shared, enduring commitment to protecting nature: "We are truly honoured that Charles remembered Nature Canada in his Will, and we will ensure that his gift is used to protect the wild spaces he explored in his life."

The Charles Labatiuk Endowment Fund is an excellent example of how a planned gift, through an endowment or gift in your Will, allows you the opportunity to protect and preserve your favourite spot for birds and other wildlife, now and forever.



To leave your own lasting legacy for nature, please contact Jodi Joy at jjoy@naturecanada.ca or 1-800-267-4088 ext 239.