

Vital Signs

- Common name:** Northern Spotted Owl
- Latin name:** *strix occidentalis caurina*
- Status:** Currently one of the most endangered birds in Canada.
- Size:** Approximately 48cm long with a wingspan of 101cm.
- Lifespan:** Spotted Owls can live 10 to 15 years in the wild.

Spotted Owl Facts

- Northern Spotted Owls begin breeding at two or three years of age. They usually mate for life and use the same nest site in subsequent breeding years.
- Northern Spotted Owls depend on old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest for nesting, sustenance and survival. In British Columbia, the owl is found north to Anderson Lake, east to Mowhawkum Creek and west to Capilano River.
- Northern Spotted Owls favoured foods include flying squirrels, wood rats, mice and small rodents.
- The Northern Spotted Owl is on the brink of extinction in Canada. Recently, only seven individual owls have been counted in the wild.



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The Spotted Owl Needs Your Help to Survive!

The Spotted Owl is one of 585 endangered species in Canada right now. You can help them survive for as little as \$10 a month. To make a real difference for endangered species and the places they call home, visit: naturecanada.ca/sponsor.asp



Northern Spotted Owl
Photo: US Fish and Wildlife Service

Renew Your Membership for 2009

If you haven't had a chance to renew your Nature Canada membership for 2009, please take a few moments to update your membership today. Your support is the best way to make a difference.



Celebrate, Educate, Protect!

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.



Greater Sage-Grouse
Photo: Gary Kramer, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Did You Know?

During courtship, the male Greater Sage-Grouse performs a strutting display on dancing grounds known as leks. Although many males may display at a lek, only one or two get picked by a majority of the females for mating.

Breaking News

Victory for the endangered Greater Sage-Grouse: Canada ordered to protect critical habitat

The Greater Sage-Grouse, an endangered prairie bird known for its spectacular courtships, received a much-needed legal victory this past summer. A federal court judge ruled the Canadian government failed to protect the bird's critical breeding grounds, contrary to the Species at Risk Act.

Last year Nature Canada completed a scientific review of the government's proposed Greater Sage-Grouse recovery strategy and identified shortcomings in habitat designation. This review became a key part of a lawsuit brought forth by a coalition of environmental organizations. The court found the government acted unreasonably by not identifying the critical habitat despite there being adequate data to do so.

"These birds have been extremely well-studied in Canada," explains Ted Cheskey, Nature Canada's Conservation Ecologist. "Their habitat requirements and ranges have been carefully documented and all of their communal display areas are well-known and have been monitored by naturalists for dozens of years."

The legal victory will force the Canadian government to identify Greater Sage-Grouse habitat, a crucial step in protecting the endangered species whose population has plummeted over 90% in the past two decades from 5,000 individuals to less than 500. Securing true protection for the bird's critical habitat is the next step in saving this endangered treasure of the prairies.

Greater Sage-Grouse

Photo: Dr. Thomas G. Barnes, US Fish and Wildlife Service



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

Helping Nature Win Against the Odds

Nature Nuggets



Nestled amongst the busy shipping traffic of the St. Lawrence River, in an industrialized area east of Quebec City, lies a critical habitat for globally significant concentrations of migrating waterfowl and shorebirds.



The wide mudflats and marshes of the Battures de Beauport Important Bird Area (IBA) provide essential habitat for thousands of spring and fall migrants including Semipalmated Sandpipers and American Black Ducks. More than 30 shorebird species forage on the Beauport flats, including Short-billed Dowitchers, Killdeer, and Dunlin. Shorebirds are vulnerable to human interference because they concentrate in huge numbers in only a few locations on their migratory routes and wintering grounds. During migration, Semipalmated Sandpipers stop at staging areas, like the Battures de Beauport IBA, that provide food and enable fat accumulation required for long flights.

Greater Snow Geese rely on the contaminated shoreline of the Battures de Beauport IBA, Quebec for survival.

Conservation Action:

Through the Important Bird Areas Program, and with member support, Nature Canada is working hard to raise community awareness of the ecological value of this area and generate government support for conservation efforts.

Our provincial IBA partner, Nature Quebec, has identified priority site conservation objectives including:

- Revegetating eroded areas
- Constructing an observation station
- Ensuring emergency-response preparedness in the event of chemical spills



Fast Facts:

Semipalmated Sandpipers

- The Sandpiper sheds its body feathers twice a year.
- Semipalmated Sandpipers on the east coast are believed to undertake transoceanic migrations of 3,000 to 4,000 km.
- Some mating couples will breed together for three or four years but do not spend winter months together.
- At hatching, the chicks' eyes are open and they stumble about pecking for insects because the parents do not feed them.
- Females desert their young within 10 days of hatching, but the males stay a little longer, usually until fledging.

There are 597 Important Bird Areas in Canada. For a detailed guide to featured birds, visit: naturecanada.ca/IBA_overview.asp



Semipalmated Sandpiper

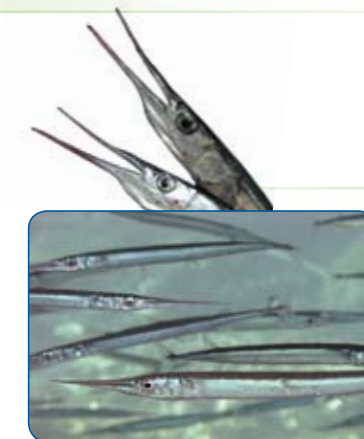
Strange but true facts about nature



The wood frog has a rare ability – it can freeze itself completely when winter comes, entering a hibernation period that actually stops its heartbeat and breathing. When the spring thaw arrives, the frog emerges from hibernation and begins breeding.



The monarch butterfly is often known as the "milkweed butterfly" because milkweed is the only plant monarch larvae can eat.



The garfish, a needlefish found in the Eastern Atlantic, has bright green bones. The unusual colour discourages many people from eating them.

Winds of Change

Nature Canada supporter Sharolyn Vettese is a pioneer in bird-friendly wind power



Sharolyn Vettese

As a long-time environmentalist, Sharolyn Vettese has always cared deeply about nature. So when the Toronto-based mother became increasingly alarmed about climate change, she decided to take matters into her own hands. With the help of her father and business partner, Alfred Mathieu, Sharolyn invented something extraordinary.

Their company, Wind Simplicity, manufactures and installs the Windancer, a highly-efficient, on-site wind

turbine that is designed to be bird and bat friendly. While traditional wind turbine blades are light-coloured and taper to a point, rendering them invisible when moving at high speeds, Sharolyn's Windancer has gold-coloured blades that are wide at the ends so birds and bats are aware of the wind turbine, and avoid the blades. Sharolyn's company aims to put nature first.

Sharolyn has been giving generously to Nature Canada as a dedicated member since the early 1990s. "I like that Nature Canada is a Canadian environmental organization, with the goal of protecting wildlife habitat and leaving our natural areas intact."

As a Nature Builder donor, Sharolyn's generosity is making a tremendous impact. "I'm a big supporter of Nature Canada's educational and outreach programs," she says. "Just as I teach my children the value of nature and the importance of co-existing with nature, I like to know that my donations help to teach others across the country."

Nature Builders give \$500+ to Nature Canada annually. To learn more about becoming a Nature Builder, contact Jodi Joy at 1-800-267-4088, ext. 239, or email jjoy@naturecanada.ca.