

## Species Spotlight

# Naturally News

For Members Making a Difference

Nature Canada - Spring 2010



### Vital Signs

<i>Common name:</i>	Chestnut-collared Longspur
<i>Latin name:</i>	<i>Calcarius ornatus</i>
<i>Status:</i>	Threatened
<i>Size:</i>	Medium-sized, sparrow-like bird

### Chestnut-collared Longspur Facts

- Now listed as Threatened, this bird's breeding habitat is being fragmented by road development and its numbers have declined severely since the 1960s.
- The Chestnut-collared Longspur can be found in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.
- The male Chestnut-collared Longspur defends his territory by performing aerial song displays—flying upward to a height of 10 to 15 meters, then spreading his tail and singing during descent.
- The Chestnut-collared Longspur's breeding range is restricted to short-grass and mixed-grass prairie. This is one reason why Nature Canada is working to permanently protect the Suffield National Wildlife Area from further gas development that will affect the habitat of this and many other grassland species at risk.



Chestnut-collared Longspur  
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### Endangered Species Need You!

You can help endangered species survive for as little as \$10 a month. To sponsor a species today visit:

[www.naturecanada.ca/sponsor.asp](http://www.naturecanada.ca/sponsor.asp)



- Please join us in beautiful PEI this summer for Nature Canada's Annual General Meeting! June 26, 2010 - Summerside, PEI. Visit [naturecanada.ca](http://naturecanada.ca) for more details.
- Join Nature Canada at The Green Living Show, April 23-25, 2010, Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place, Toronto. For details and tickets please visit: [www.greenlivingonline.com](http://www.greenlivingonline.com)



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.

### Celebrate EARTH DAY with Robert Bateman Contest

This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day. What better way to celebrate than with the launch of the annual Robert Bateman *Get to Know* contest which helps connect young people to our natural world. The Nature Canada sponsored contest runs from April 22 (Earth Day) until May 28, 2010 and invites nature-themed art, writing, and photography submissions from Canadians age 19 or younger. For more information and contest rules and prizes, please visit [www.gettoknow.ca](http://www.gettoknow.ca)

## Boreal Success!

### Supporters Help Protect North America's Bird Nursery

It's time to celebrate! In February, the governments of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador announced their commitment to establish Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve and a waterway provincial park to protect the Eagle River. Over 13,000 square kilometres of boreal habitat will be protected in these new parks.

Nature Canada has been working towards the creation of a national park in the Mealy Mountains for more than 15 years, and we couldn't have realized this success without you.

The national park in the Mealy Mountains will be the largest in eastern Canada, and larger than Yellowstone and Yosemite parks combined. The permanent protection of such a large area of boreal forest will ensure at-risk species like the Woodland Caribou and the Harlequin Duck have the habitat they need to survive.

The park will also serve as an anchor along the Atlantic Flyway, an important breeding ground and migration route for many arctic bird species heading to wintering grounds in the south, some as far as South America.

Establishing a national park will also help mitigate the effects of global warming. The soils and forests of the Mealy Mountains region are rich in organic carbon, which makes them an important storehouse for greenhouse gases that can accelerate global climate change. Leaving these soils, forests and extensive wetlands undisturbed will help to reduce potential carbon emissions that could impact climate change.

To learn more about Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve, visit [naturecanada.ca](http://naturecanada.ca).



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For more news and commentary about nature, the environment and our conservation efforts visit the Nature Canada blog at: [naturecanadablog.blogspot.com](http://naturecanadablog.blogspot.com)

Mealy Mountains  
Photo: Garth Lenz

# Standing up for Mackenzie Valley

## Nature Canada Submits Comments on Mackenzie Gas Project Report

Backed by member support, Nature Canada submitted our last official comments on the Mackenzie Gas Project Joint Review Panel (JRP) report on February 11.

The JRP concluded the Mackenzie Gas Project could be carried out without major negative impact if all 176 recommendations listed in its report were fully implemented.

Nature Canada outlined the challenges of implementing the Panel's recommendations and urged the federal and territorial governments, if they support a conclusion that the Mackenzie Gas Project is in the public interest, to accept all conditions recommended by the Panel.

"We want to see a solid commitment to the National Energy Board (NEB) from governments that they will table a plan with multi-year funding to implement the Panel's recommendations prior to the NEB approving construction," says Carla Sbert, Nature Canada's Manager of Conservation, Programs and Legal Issues.

The environmental effects of building gas pipelines along the Mackenzie River would be devastating and cause serious harm to the wildlife in the Mackenzie Valley region. From fragmenting habitat for bears and caribou to permanently damaging important breeding areas for millions of migratory birds, a large-scale industrial development such as this could forever destroy some of our most precious natural heritage.



### It's not too late to take action!

The hearings for final arguments for and against the project are scheduled for April 2010. Go to [www.naturecanada.ca](http://www.naturecanada.ca) today to say NO to mega-development in this pristine and ecologically rich area.

## Ian Davidson Named Interim Chair of WHSRN

Nature Canada Executive Director Ian Davidson has been named interim Chair of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, an international initiative to conserve shorebirds and their habitats across the Americas. Many shorebird species have experienced serious declines and may even become extinct within our lifetime.

"Protecting shorebirds is an important conservation priority for Nature Canada," says Davidson. "Participating in this Network offers our members an opportunity to bring about real change for suffering bird species."

## 2010 International Year of Biodiversity

The United Nations has declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity. As a Nature Canada member, you have already taken meaningful action by supporting our programs to protect biological diversity. For more ideas on simple ways you can join in the celebration of life on earth this year, visit: [www.cbd.int/2010/welcome](http://www.cbd.int/2010/welcome)



# Nature Nuggets



## Strange but true facts about nature

Hummingbirds can fly backwards and even upside-down.



Polar Bears are the only mammal with hair on the soles of their feet. They need it to get a grip on icy surfaces and for heat insulation.



Dolphins have a unique ability – they sleep with only one half of their brain at a time. By keeping one eye open the dolphin can remain aware of their pod mates and stay alert for any predators.

## A Legacy for Nature

If you were lucky enough to meet Connie Hawley in person, the first thing you would notice is the warmth and genuineness of her welcome, whether at her home in Victoria or visiting her cabin on Salt Spring Island.

"Aunt Con had a passion for nature and delighted in sharing her curiosity with others," recalls niece Cathie Smith. Her binoculars were always at the ready and conversations were often interrupted with "What's that?" as she pointed out the wing bars or habits of a passing bird. A lifelong learner, Connie was taking university courses in entomology into her 70s.

Connie's enthusiasm was infectious as she took visitors around her naturalized gardens and raised vegetable beds. She encouraged and fostered a 'curiosity' of how plants grow with people in the neighbourhood and with the local veggie group. She led by example, offering inspiration for how one could use flowers to attract birds, insects and bees or create a naturalized pond that self-cleans with snails.

Connie's commitment to nature ran deep. A Nature Builder donor, Connie was a loyal Nature Canada

member for nearly 35 years. She also organized local bird counts, was active in restoring natural fauna to Victoria green spaces, and mobilized letter-writing campaigns to promote environmental causes.

Now Connie has continued her long tradition of celebrating and protecting nature by leaving a generous bequest to Nature Canada in her Will. Her thoughtful gift will help connect children with nature and protect bird species and habitats, ensuring a legacy for nature that will benefit Canadians now and for generations to come.



Constance (Connie) Hawley, 1920-2009

For more information on how you can leave your lasting legacy for nature, please contact Jodi Joy at [jjoy@naturecanada.ca](mailto:jjoy@naturecanada.ca) or 1-800-267-4088 ext 239