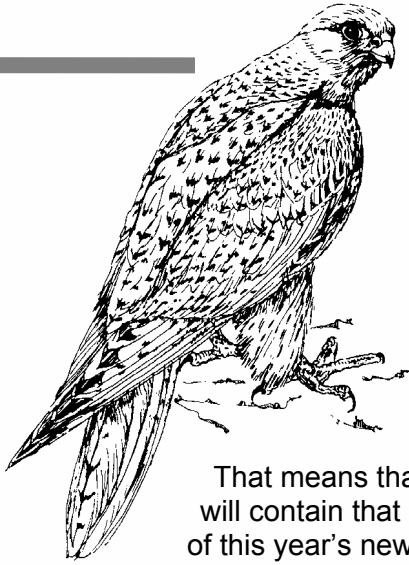


NWT/NUNAVUT BIRD CHECKLIST SURVEY

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2004



A program coordinated by the Canadian Wildlife Service since 1995

MAJOR UPDATE TO WEB SITE READY IN MID-2004

The NWT/NU Bird Checklist Survey web site is being revamped! Visitors will soon be able to access the entire database directly through the internet (***no personal information is accessible***, such as observer names or contact data). Detailed, species distribution maps will be one of the many neat features available through the new sections of the web site. All the features of the website operate in real time.

That means that as soon as a new observation is entered into the database, a map created right after will contain that observation. A detailed description of the features of new web site is the focus article of this year's newsletter. Observers with current email addresses in the database will receive email notification of the official launch. Special thanks are extended to the eBird website (www.eBird.org) that served as a great resource for visual layout of a website to collect bird data.

LONG-TAILED DUCK & WILSON'S SNIPE: NEW NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS?

If someone said they saw a few Wilson's Snipe while bird watching somewhere in Canada, would you know which bird they saw? And if someone saw a Long-tailed Duck, would that bring notions of a new species to mind? In fact, neither of these birds is new to North America. Both species have recently had their common names changed.

The version of the NWT/NU Checklist form that was issued in April 2001 no longer had Oldsquaw listed among all the other ducks. Numerous observers pointed this out and dutifully entered "Oldsquaw" observations using the blank portion of the form reserved for species not already on the existing list. Most of those observers now know that the bird known to taxonomists as *Clangula hyemalis* had its common name officially changed to Long-tailed Duck to "conform to worldwide use". This was reported in the July 2000 issue of the scientific journal called The Auk. The Auk is published by an organization called the American Ornithologist's Union (AOU). The AOU was founded in 1883, and is the oldest and largest organization in the New World devoted to the scientific study of birds. The AOU is the official entity in charge of bird taxonomy in North and Central America.

The AOU has also issued a few other common-name changes in the past two years. Common Snipe was renamed to Wilson's Snipe in 2002 since it was recognized as a distinct species from its Old World relative. Three-toed Woodpecker was changed in 2003 to American Three-toed Woodpecker also because it was considered a distinct species relative to the similar bird occurring in the Old World. The AOU has made a number of changes to scientific names, and has also recently reshuffled how bird families are ordered. Loons will no longer be first in new bird books; Waterfowl will appear first, followed by grouse, then by loons. Up-to-date details on bird taxonomy can be found on the AOU website at www.aou.org



Is the "Long-tailed Duck" some new, undiscovered species or something more familiar?

FEATURES AND PREVIEWS OF THE EXPANDED WEB SITE

Make Species Distribution Maps

You can quickly create a map showing where any species or particular groups of birds (such as raptors) have been observed in the north. If you enter your data on the web site, maps created thereafter will include your data!

Generate a Hypothetical List of Birds

Users can zoom into any area in the north and the database can provide a list of bird species that should occur there, given appropriate habitat. This works even if no checklists have been submitted from the area of interest; the hypothetical list is based on newly updated species range maps that were modified by Canadian Wildlife Service staff in Yellowknife in late 2003.

Download Raw Data

All data (**except any personal information about observers**) will be available for download. You can download data about all species, about individual species, or a myriad of choices that include:

- If the species was breeding or not;
- Observations from a particular month of the year or a particular year;
- Limiting the data by if the observers included all birds or just some birds (complete versus non-complete counts);
- Only certain habitats;
- Creates a species list for each territory (based only on observations in the database, not all known observations as is typical in a published list of birds);
- Bird data can be downloaded for some predefined areas including National Parks, other protected areas, land claim areas, and also for Bird Conservation Regions.

The data will be sent to users in a file that can be loaded into a spreadsheet for analyses, mapping, or other purposes.

Users will be sent a file that explains the limitations of the data.

One of the key features of the new web site is interactive mapping. The upper map shows locations of checklists around Great Slave Lake. Using the zoom function, the Yellowknife area is shown in the lower map. Map detail ranges from general lakes and rivers for large areas to direct reproductions of 1:250,000 scale National Topographic Series maps for the most detailed views. All of the features mapping have been designed to work well for someone with a regular computer using a 56k modem on a telephone line.

Registered Users	View Data Only	Location Info	Observation Info
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LOCATION INFO - ZOOM TO MAP

LOCATION NAME

Bird Locations

- Pending
- ▲ Unconfirmed
- CWS Accepted

Layers

- Land Claims
- Conservation Areas
- BCR Regions

Refresh Map

Click on map to: Recenter Plot my location

ZOOM [-] [+]

Use the map to create your location:

1. Zoom to find your location.
2. Plot your location by selecting the "Plot my location" option (below the map) and clicking on the map. A circle will appear indicating your new location.)
3. Name the location(**required**).
4. Click "Continue".

CONTINUE

LOCATION INFO - ZOOM TO MAP

Enter Checklist Data

Birders can enter their own observations directly into the database and see maps updated instantly with their observations.

Separate Age and Sex for Observations

More detailed information about the age (adult or immature) or sex of the birds you observed on the checklist can be entered into the database.

Submit Nest Record Data

The database was expanded to allow people to submit formal nest record data. The Ontario Nest Record scheme is being adopted, and an internet link to that information is on the last page of this newsletter.

Submit Digital Photos of Unusual or Unknown Species

The database now accepts digital photographs of birds. This will help substantiate unusual occurrences or help identify unknown species. Acceptable file types will include common computer graphic formats (such as jpeg or gif) and must be smaller than 1 MB.

NEW OBSERVATION

All Species
A Z Order
Order
[Link to Bird ID](#)

Species	#	BR	Seen On Migration?	Nest Record?	Age/Sex Info.
Cranes					
Whooping Crane	1	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sandhill Crane	5	X	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grouse					
Spruce Grouse	1	NE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sharp-tailed Grouse	1	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unidentified Grouse	1	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unidentified Ptarmigan	1	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Willow Ptarmigan	1	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This is the page where observations will be entered into the database. Checking off either the "Nest Record?" or "Age/Sex Info." columns will lead the user to detailed screens to enter those data.

NEW OBSERVATION

Age / Sex Information

Common Redpoll: 2 Total

#	Age	Sex
1	Adult	Unknown
1	Immature	Unknown
	--	--
	--	--



The upper left page is where users can input more detailed age and sex information. The page on the right shows some of the details required for a nest record. Nest record data usually contains multiple visits to the nest. The fate of the nesting attempt is determined (such as hatching successfully or being predated) for a complete record.

NEW OBSERVATION

Nest Information for bird: Spruce Grouse

No.	Visit Date & Time			Host			Parasite		
	Day	Month	Time(24h)	Eggs	Young	Dead	Eggs	Young	Dead
1	8	5	07 : 00	5	0	0	0	0	0
	Visit Status Codes			WA	NA		Comments still laying		
2	15	5	10 : 00	8	0	0	0	0	0
	Visit Status Codes			WA	NA		Comments incubating		
3			:						
	Visit Status Codes						Comments		

CHANGES TO THE CHECKLIST FORM

There are several changes to the Checklist form that is being released with this newsletter. The changes will provide more detailed information about how each survey was conducted. The important new question now posed to observers is:

What kind of count did you do? (The choices are now...)

- a. **Casual Observation:** this is the sort of checklist completed by recording birds at your feeder, or by noting a single species of interest.
- b. **Point or Stationary Count:** this is when the observer counted birds for a short period of time (often 5-10 minutes) at one location without moving. Many scientific studies collect data in this way.
- c. **Transect or Traveling Count:** this is for people going on a walk along a particular trail or for traveling along roads, rivers, or other linear features. Some scientific surveys for birds are also conducted using transects. You are now asked to provide an estimate of the distance traveled.
- d. **Area Count/Search:** this is the traditional checklist survey where birds are counted from an area of interest such as a campground, a study plot, or a wetland. You are now asked to provide an estimate of the area surveyed. You can report in km² on the form or in hectares if you enter your own data on the internet. For example, a wetland that is approximately 500 m by 500 m would be 0.5 km x 0.5 km = 0.25 km². For conversion, 100 m by 100 m is one hectare (or 100m x 100m = 10,000 m² = 1 ha). There are 100 hectares in each 1 km².

Information on predators and other animals is no longer being collected. This information was often not reported, was confusing to record on the form, and was difficult to track in the database.

Finally, though there is no new space on the checklist form, you can now collect two types of more detailed information:

1. **Age and sex of birds observed.** Please record the number of adult birds seen in the regular space on the Checklist card. If you observed juveniles or knew that some of the adults observed were male or female, you can note this in the comments section of the form, and it will be recorded in the database.
2. **Nest records.** The NWT/NU Bird Checklist Survey adopted the protocol of the Ontario Nest Records Scheme. If you would like to submit data on nests that you have tracked from laying to hatching and fledging, please download the handbook and form from the Ontario scheme's website (www.birdsontario.org/onrs/onrsmain.html). You may then submit those data to us for entry or enter them on the internet. Your nest record data accompanies a regular checklist card where you note that there is detailed nest data for one of your observations. When entering the Checklist data, a screen to enter nest record data will appear, allowing you to enter the dates and special codes that describe the observations you made of the nest.

2003 BIRDER'S HALL OF FAME DELAYED

Usually the last page of this newsletter lists all participants who submitted Checklists in the past year. Moving the Checklist database onto the internet has delayed data entry, so the list is not yet available. Data submitted before the end of September 2003 has been entered into the database (285 checklists). However, any data submitted after those dates have not been entered. Data entry will resume once the new website is fully functional, sometime in mid 2004. Please accept our apologies for the delay if you are using the new website to check on your observations submitted during the time when data entry was delayed.



QUESTIONS? SUGGESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT US!

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