



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS

SLSN is an incorporated not-for-profit Member of Ontario Nature.

Post Office Box 1044 Sutton West, Ontario, L0E 1R0

Telephone 905-722-8021

(www.slsnc.ca)

Research Partner with The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe (www.zephyrsociety.ca)

Member: Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition

Member: Ontario Greenbelt Alliance

Note: Please renew your membership to receive future Newsletters

Meetings and Outings

Meetings: All Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. at the York Region Police Building Meeting Room (Baseline Road between McCowan and Civic Centre Road) unless noted otherwise. Members events (insurance compliance). Visitors welcome.

York Regional Police, 3 District Community Meeting Room 3527 Baseline Road, Georgina.



Tuesday, March 8 **Cottontail rabbit and Snowshoe hare:** Club members research and presentation these important southern Ontario mammals. These animals supply important winter food for our predator animals and although they are small and non-aggressive they have special talents and secret lives. Life history, tracking, range and much more will be explored.

Tuesday, April 12 **Caribou Conservation in Ontario:** Club members research and presentation these important Ontario mammal of woodland and tundra. Presently a hot button Canadian wildlife management issue. Life history, tracking, range and serious conservation issues in the boreal and much more will be explored.

*Tuesday, **May 3*** **We know that insect species are being Lost across the planet:** Club members research and presentation. This will be a review and analysis of an expose article in the December 2015 “Canadian Geographic” Magazine. ***“Insects are by far the most populous species on Earth, and they seem to be disappearing. So why aren’t more people concerned?”*** This serious wildlife and planetary conservation issue and needs urgently to be explored by us all. **Please read the article – pp. 51-56 Canadian Geographic, Dec. 2015 at the local library, or on-line for the conversation.**

Note: This is the first Tuesday of the month, as the meeting room is not available the second Tuesday in **May**.

Outings: All regular outings – Note: **Paid-up members may participate (for insurance compliance).**

2016 SPRING

Saturday April 30: **Spring Birding and Nature Study:** The annual Spring Birding trip along Lake Simcoe will concentrate on waterfowl and shorebirds, this year to the east. Rare migrants can sometimes turn up unexpectedly so be prepared. Later in the day we may do some hiking and general nature study in one of our local natural areas. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Tim Horton's in Sutton on Dalton Road. Dress for the weather. Bring binoculars etc.

Saturday May 28: **Birding at Carden:** The Carden Alvar is designated an Important Bird Area (IBA) by Birdlife International. Carden is nationally significant as one of the last strongholds of the Eastern Loggerhead Shrike in Canada and it has high populations of grassland and scrubland birds such as Upland Sandpipers, American Kestrels, Common Nighthawks, Whip-poor-wills, Eastern Bluebirds, Brown Thrashers, Golden-winged Warblers, Bobolinks, Eastern Meadowlarks, Eastern Towhees, Clay-colored Sparrows, Vesper Sparrows and Grasshopper Sparrows. Meet at 1:00 p.m. at the Coffee Time east of the hamlet of Virginia on Highway 48(north side) in the Town of Georgina. Dress for the weather. Bring binoculars etc. This will be a whole afternoon event and may include getting back early evening.

Area Events

Kids between the ages of 6 and 12 can learn and have fun as they explore Scanlon Creek on March 15-17. Each day is different so attend one day or all three!

Register Today

Phone: (905) 895-1281 X116 | Email: SCNC@LSRCA.on.ca

Spring into Scanlon! March Break Day Camps

Register

Details:

Ages: 6 to 12 years

Drop Off: 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Program: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Pick-up: 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Rates:

Each Day - \$40* per

3-Day - \$110* per

Location:

Scanlon Creek Nat
2450 9th Line, Bra

Program Activity Features:

March 15 - Nature Hike & Making Maple Syrup

March 16 - Orienteering & Fire Building or Kicksledding

March 17 - Nature Photography & Shelter Building

For more information or to register, contact 905-895-1281 Ext. 116 or SCNC



Lake Simcoe Region
conservation authority

Registration by March 10th required

Birding at Presquile Provincial Park

March 19 and 20: Waterfowl Weekend, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

World-class waterfowl viewing during the spring migration. Volunteer naturalists will help you view and identify over 25 different species of ducks, geese, and swans. And, we will have plenty going on in the Nature Centre, and at the Lighthouse Interpretive Centre. Contact Ontario Parks for more information or friendsofpresquile.on.ca.

Large Development Application Raised Again in Sutton

After a number of years this proposed subdivision development now fronted and being pushed by two separate named companies has recently come forward again. In 2012/2013 it was raised, and for years the developers had been trying to get servicing allocation into the Sutton Secondary Plan. In recent years they have done this. We (SLSN) reviewed and made comment on past submissions. I have had inquires of concern by members of our organization and the general public in the last week or so apparently resulting from information in the local paper. In this regard I had requested the Town of Georgina planning department make available copies of the detailed information for public and community review as soon as possible for this large subdivision proposal at the Sutton Library. The Town has not undertaken this public information strategy. The Town has requested our (SLSN) review, and I have requested and received some digital copies of key information.

Paul Harpley

Members who are interested and can make comment see The Town of Georgina Notice message is below for further information,

Town of Georgina Notice:

YOU ARE INVITED to attend a **Public Meeting** on **Wednesday, March 23, 2016** beginning at approximately **7:30 p.m.** in the Council Chambers of the Georgina Civic Centre at 26557 Civic Centre Road, Keswick. Please note that this application, along with other matters, will be dealt with in the order that they appear on the agenda or as Council may determine.

PROPOSAL Part of Lots 21, 22, and 23, Concession 7 (NG); Catering Road EIS and WS, Sutton): The Town is in receipt of applications submitted by **AINSLIE HILL I** and **AINSLIE HILL II** for Draft Plan of Subdivision approval to permit the creation of 183 single family dwelling lots, and an associated application to amend Zoning Bylaw No. 500 to address various zoning standards and provisions for the development. A key map showing the location of the subject lands is provided below and a copy of the proposed draft plan is provided on the back of this notice.

Inquiries Refer to Town Files: 01.143 and 03.1087; Planner: Tolek A. Makarewicz, ext.2297 or *Please ensure you reference the File Number(s) in all communications.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Additional information and/or material related to the application is available for viewing at the Planning Division within the Civic Centre at 26557 Civic Centre Road, Keswick, ON from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on regular business days. For more information, please contact the Planning Division, by phone at 905-476-4301, ext.2250, by fax at 905-476-4394, or by email to the Planning Division Secretary, Anna Geniole, at aggeniole@georgina.ca.

PROVIDING COMMENT:

i) Any person may attend the meeting and/or make written or verbal representation either in support of or in opposition to the applications. Written comments should be mailed/faxed/mailed to the Planner noted above. Please ensure you include your name and address so that you may be contacted if necessary.

ii) If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Georgina in respect of the proposed plan of subdivision before the Town gives or refuses to give approval to the draft plan of subdivision, or before the by-law is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision of the Town of Georgina to the Ontario Municipal Board.

iii) If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Georgina in respect of the proposed plan of subdivision before the Town gives or refuses to give approval to the draft plan of subdivision, or before the by-law is passed, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Municipal Board unless, in the opinion of the Board, there are reasonable grounds to do so.

iv) If you wish to be notified of the decision of the Town of Georgina in respect of the proposed plan of subdivision or zoning by-law amendment, you must make a written request to the Town of Georgina.

NOTICE OF COLLECTION:

Personal information collected in response to this planning notice or in relation to this application will be used to assist Town staff and Council to process the application and make a decision on this matter. Such personal information is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), the Planning Act, and all other relevant legislation, and will become part of the public record, may be viewed by the general public, and may be published in a Planning Report and Council Agenda. Questions about this collection may be directed to the Town Clerk, John Espinosa, at 905-476-4301, (2223).

DATED AT THE TOWN OF GEORGINA THIS 9th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2016

A KEY MAP of the development can be seen in recent Town Posts in the local Georgina Advocate Newspaper, and by contacting the Town of Georgina.

Ministry review of the Upper York Sewage Solutions Environmental Assessment – Comment Due.

As you will recall in our SLSN February Talon Newsletter (Volume 26, no. 1) members were provided detailed information and sources of reports regarding this large servicing provision development by the proponent the Region of York, and comments by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOEE/CC) for review and comment, and submission to me of any broad issues of relevance to our SLSN response. As per the information, comments were **due February 2, 2016**. I was able to review the material and submit a response from SLSN and I will have this at our February 8, 2016 meeting for conversation.

Paul Harpley

Watch where you are Walking Your Dog !

Valerie Strain, edited - Change.org 2016-03-06

Here's the background: Our dog was killed by an unmarked, legal baited trap on a public snowmobile trail on Crown Land. Hundreds of dogs are killed each year by traps and snares, dozens in Ontario alone. Most are sporting dogs lost to careless and outdated trapping methods.

Ontario residents are encouraged to get out and enjoy our multi-use trails and provincial parks for hiking, snowmobiling, ATVing, snowshoeing, etc . People are mostly unaware that these same trails are also used for trapping. There are no regulations about how close to a public trail or roadway a trap can be set, or any requirement to notify the public that they are there. As a matter of public safety, these uses are not compatible.

The time has come for this to end. More than 75,000 people have signed our petition asking the Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry and Minister Bill Mauro to act on this issue.

If your MPP/MP gets enough calls, maybe they'll ask Bill Mauro what he's doing about it. Just one phone call, they might ignore, but 10 or 20 or 100 calls and they'll be paying attention. So ask your friends and family to call too. Politicians have to take notice when voters care about an issue.

A petition to change the rules about trapping in Ontario has been raised. They are going to make this happen but we need your help. It won't take long, and it could make all the difference

regarding.

We are asking that you call, write or email your local MPP and ask them what they are doing about this issue.

Three Easy Steps:

1. Find your local MPP or MLA (links below)
2. Call, email or write them (sample text below)
3. Let us know about it. (This one's optional but we'd love to hear from you – especially about the response you get. notrapsontrails@gmail.com)

Ontario residents, please contact any or all of the following:

- Your local MPP http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/members/members_current.do?locale=en
- Provincial Minister of Natural Resources & Forestry , Bill Mauro http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/members/members_detail.do?locale=en&ID=2147
- Federal Minister of Natural Resources James Carr, <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members/Jim-Carr%2889059%29>
- Your local municipal government representatives



Why Are Snowflakes Individually Unique?

By: Blue Sky Science

Posted on: February 9, 2016

Edge Effects editorial board member *Eric Nost* asked “*Why are snowflakes individually unique?*” to the team at the UW-Madison Morgridge Institute for Research’s Blue Sky Science program, who recruited Dr. Pao Wang to answer. The reply was originally posted at Blue Sky Science’s blog [here](#) and in the Wisconsin State Journal.

Two important factors influence the shape of a snowflake. One is the ambient temperature, and the other is humidity. A snowflake needs to grow under the condition of a super saturated environment.

The more moisture in the air, the more complicated and intricate the structure of the snowflake will be. So these two factors, the temperature and the super saturation are the most important factors that influence the shapes.

The folklore says that there aren't two snowflakes that look exactly alike. I think that's just a fancy way of saying that there are thousands of these different shapes, and people are always amazed that the shapes can be so complicated and different.

In reality, if you're looking just with the naked eye you could see two snowflakes that look almost exactly alike. For example, some snowflakes consist of very simple hexagonal plates with very little design on the surface.

If you were to look into the structure of a snowflake using a microscope, you may see somewhat different structures, but they could be minimal.

With so many different shapes that snowflakes can take, the chances of seeing two similar snowflakes in your lifetime are small, although not zero. Most likely you're going to see many different shapes, and it can be exciting to see so many configurations.

Featured image: Snowflake captured by a microscope. Michael. Wikimedia Commons. CC-BY-SA 2.0.

Pao Wang is a professor in the department of atmospheric and oceanic sciences at UW-Madison.

Blue Sky Science is a collaboration of the Wisconsin State Journal and the UW-Madison Morgridge Institute for Research.

Canadian Wildlife Conservation News



The Saskatchewan-based *Public Pastures-Public Interest* is reporting that the new federal government may re-consider Stephen Harper's decision to kill the Community Pastures program which for decades had protected and sustained more than 2 million acres of majestic, unique and fragile prairie grassland!

A narrow window of opportunity may now be open to urge the federal government to reverse that harmful decision.

The World Commission on Protected Areas has recognized this land as rare and as ecologically important as old-growth forest. **It is important for Canadians to contact their federal politicians and ask for positive conservation action.**

In the interest of climate change mitigation, protection of species at risk, and living up to Canada's international commitment to protect this exceptionally beautiful landscape, please send your message right now.

Bob Kingston
Protect the Prairie campaign



Authorized by the Public Service Alliance of Canada | © ProtectthePrairie.ca | [Privacy](#)

The Messenger Documentary

February 23 2016 9:56am

Global TV News and the Global Morning Show

Director Su Rynard and York University Biologist Bridget Stutchbury spoke with The Morning Show's Carolyn Mackenzie, discussing how Toronto lies on a bird flyway (a super-highway for birds) and the perils that migratory birds face every year as they travel through Toronto and other cities.

7 Things You Can Do To Help Songbirds If You've Just Watched The Messenger

By Hugh Powell

November 25, 2015

6



Black-throated Blue Warbler in flight.



The Messenger is a 2015 documentary about the problems that migratory songbirds face and the scientists that are trying to help them. The movie is fascinating and beautifully filmed, but one thing it doesn't do is address what can be done about the problems.

It's an intentional omission on the part of the filmmakers—as if they're saying that the first step is understanding the full scope of what's wrong, and that's enough to take up an entire movie. As it turns out, good science can only take us so far. The actions of the general public are also a vital component of change, and it's through collective effort that we'll make the biggest difference.

So what can regular folks like us do? Lots. We teamed up with *The Messenger's* filmmakers to bring you this short list of ideas:

1. Make Windows Safer, Day and Night. Some of *The Messenger's* most powerful images are of migrant birds killed by window strikes. Volunteers in Toronto arrange hundreds of brilliantly colored fallen birds—as tiny as hummingbirds and as large as ducks—as stark evidence of the toll that one city's buildings can take. The toll in North America is estimated at 624 million birds per year, according to the 2014 State of the Birds Report. Although skyscrapers are the most obvious problem, the sheer number of small single-family buildings mean window safety at home is just as important. The issue has two parts: at night, lighted windows attract and kill migrating birds; in daylight windows reflect foliage or sky, encouraging birds to fly into them. Toronto's Fatal Light Awareness Program can help with the goal of turning out lights at night; our 2015 article Glass Action describes cutting-edge ways to make windows safer for birds.



Look out for Bird-Friendly coffee certified by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center.

2. Brew a Bird-Friendly Roast. The film’s camera crews travel to Costa Rica, where many of our forest birds spend winters in semi-open habitats. Shade coffee plantations are one such habitat, in which local people can raise a high-value crop while offering great habitat for birds. Migrants such as orioles, tanagers, and warblers—including the strongly declining Golden-winged Warbler—thrive alongside spectacular tropical residents such as toucans, motmots, and fantastical hummingbirds like the White-necked Jacobin. Buying Bird-Friendly coffee certified by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (from retailers like Birds and Beans) is one of the most direct ways you can fund habitat conservation in the tropics while supporting local economies. Looking for Bird-Friendly coffee instead of brands with a more generic “shade grown” label ensures that the product is organic, Fair Trade, and conforms to the highest standards of habitat quality.

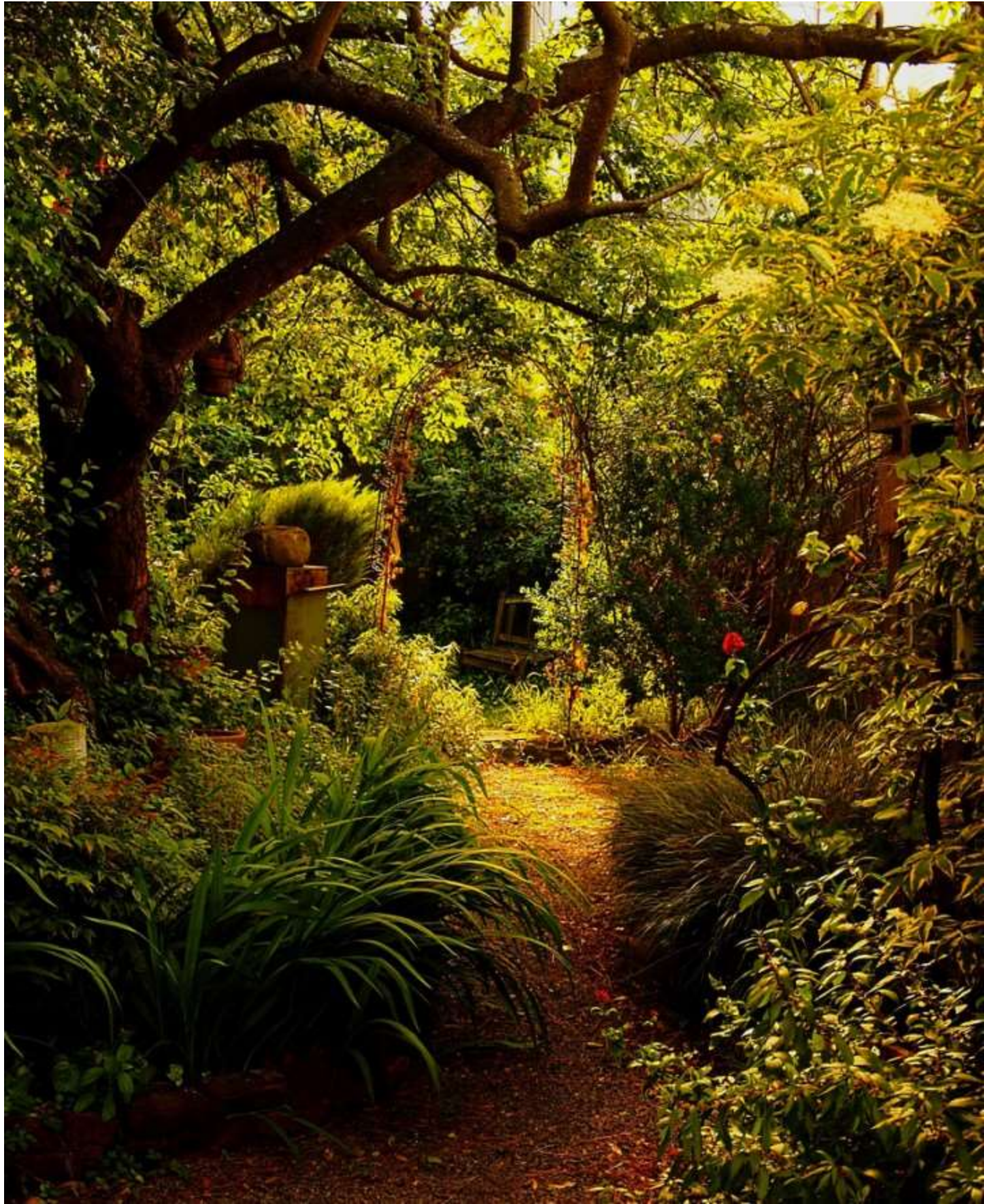


Like many birds, this young Tufted Titmouse has left its nest before it is fully fledged and is especially vulnerable to unsupervised pets that are kept outdoors. *Photo by PauerKorde Photo via Birdshare.*

3. Keep Cats Indoors. The issue of outdoor and feral cats is perennially contentious, but the cumulative effect of millions of outdoor cats is clear-cut. An estimated 2.6 billion birds die in the U.S. and Canada each year when they are caught by cats. “They’re as invasive as West Nile virus, kudzu, zebra mussels,” Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center director Pete Marra tells *The Messenger*. Outdoor cats also live shorter, more unpleasant lives—they suffer from tapeworms, contract diseases such as herpes and leukemia, are maimed in fights, killed by predators, and run over by cars. Far from being anti-cat, many bird enthusiasts (including Cornell Lab director John Fitzpatrick) have cats as cherished companions—but keeping them inside is good for the cat and good for the local wildlife.

4. Save Half the Boreal Forest. *The Messenger* pays a visit to the field site of the University of Alberta’s Erin Bayne, deep in the green blanket that stretches across Canada. This vast region is the planet’s nursery for billions of birds—species such as Blackpoll, Blackburnian, Magnolia, Tennessee, Palm, Yellow-rumped Warblers; Gray-cheeked, Bicknell’s, Swainson’s, and Hermit Thrushes; and many others. It’s an ecosystem so big, the film says, that you can watch global carbon dioxide levels drop as the forest wakes up each spring and summer. And yet it’s being nibbled away by timber harvest, energy extraction and other types of fragmentation. The Boreal

Birds Need Half campaign is a push by the Boreal Songbird Initiative and partners including the Cornell Lab to ensure that some of this vast wilderness is set aside for the future.



Plant diversity, both in species and height, makes this backyard attractive to both people and birds. Check out the Cornell Lab's YardMap Program for lots of great ideas on making a wildlife friendly yard. *Photo by darwin Bell.*

5. Embrace Your Patch. One of the most basic dangers of migration, York University scientist Bridget Stutchbury tells the camera, is the simple problem of landing someplace unfamiliar each day, day after day, during a twice-a-year journey that covers thousands of miles. Each day, is a new round of Where's the food? Where are the predators? Where's the shelter, the water? Birds need habitat not just in summer and winter, but in a thread of green connecting the two. That's where small, individual actions can have a tremendous impact: by restoring modest patches of habitat (our YardMap project can help) or banding together to preserve larger patches that offer safe harbor to birds on their long journeys (such as the National Wildlife Refuge system that's supported by sales of the Duck Stamp). Repeatedly birding a spot (known as "patch birding") also offers the joy of getting to know an area and its annual cycle intimately—and submitting your records to eBird creates an invaluable baseline of information, too.

6. Lend Your Eyes and Ears to the Cause. Citizen science has become an indispensable tool for monitoring our environment. The observations of skilled, interested people scattered across the world provide data at a scale and level of sophistication that satellites and computer can't match. If you're interested in the natural world, chances are there's a citizen-science project that can benefit from your participation. Try Project FeederWatch, NestWatch, YardMap, and eBird, or visit Citizen Science Central or Zooniverse for even more ideas.

7. Be a Messenger: Host a Screening. This is a specific suggestion for a recommendation that works more widely: speak up about the issues that concern you, and look for ways to bring people together around causes that deserve attention. Our Celebrate Urban Birds project has lots of ideas and opportunities for community activities that allow people to share the joy of birds and make a connection with nature. If *The Messenger* isn't yet scheduled to play near you, their website has directions for how to bring a showing to your community.

**SLSN club member Beth Daw-Ryder advised about a
Citizen Science project that members might want to
participate in this year.**

The Cornell Lab, Global BIG DAY



In our ongoing effort to push the boundaries of a Big Day, **we're inviting everybody around the world** to join together and participate in our Global Big Day to support global conservation.

How to Participate

Submit Your Data to eBird on May 14

It's that simple. If you submit your birds to eBird they count. Learn how to take part. Don't worry — you don't need to be a bird expert, or to go out all day long. Even a half hour checklist from your backyard will help. Of course, you are welcome to spend the entire day in the field, but know that it is not required! Please enter your data as soon as you can, preferably by **Tuesday, May 17.**

Visit the Page (birds.cornell.edu/bigday) for Live Updates and Detailed Stats

During the Big Day, this page will be updated. You'll be able to follow Team Sapsucker in Colorado — but more importantly, you'll be able to track how many species have been seen around the world and in any region of interest to you.

Organize With Your Friends for Greater Coverage

Now is the time to start discussions on local birding discussion lists to make a plan to find difficult species. Who will “get” Lesser Prairie-Chicken? Resplendent Quetzal? Blue Pitta? Wallcreeper? Not all efforts need to work towards the global total. Try to organize in your home state, province, or even county to make sure teams spread out and find as many species as possible.

Climate Change News

Top 5 Actions for a National Climate Plan

February 24, 2016 - 12:36pm



Robert van Waarden | Survival Media Agency

First Ministers are meeting with Prime Minister Trudeau in Vancouver March 3 to launch climate talks that will lay the groundwork for Canada to meet its obligations under the global Paris Climate Agreement.

This is a critical meeting when our leaders need to make tough choices to ensure we are on a path towards doing our fair share in addressing the growing crisis of climate change. As it stands, we are far off course with emissions set to rise above even above the weak climate targets set by

the Harper government. Without additional action, there will be a strong emissions growth in the fossil fuel sector, the tar sands will lead the way.

Here are my top 5 actions for an effective national climate plan.

Freeze fossil fuel expansion and related infrastructure

We have reached a point when it is abundantly clear that more production, particularly of extreme forms of energy (extreme in their impacts on land, water, climate and communities) like the tar sands, fracking and offshore drilling, must end. We must say no to projects like the Kinder Morgan and Energy East pipelines. Filling the Energy East pipeline could spur an up to 40 per cent increase in tar sands production and generate up to 30 to 32 million tonnes of carbon pollution. Along with Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain expansion, 45.4 million tonnes could be unleashed annually. This is more than the annual climate pollution of eight provinces and territories. We can help reach this end to expansion by ensuring that the review of energy projects effectively incorporates their upstream and downstream climate impacts in the context of Canada's pledged support to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. While the Trudeau government has promised to include a climate test for pipelines, it also continues to state that oil needs to get to tidewater. We need to hold our government to account for an effective and fair climate test and pipeline reviews.

A clear plan towards a 100% clean energy economy by 2050

Not only is this necessary, it is entirely feasible to have 100% renewable energy by 2050. This means more renewable energy from solar and wind, wave, geothermal and tidal power. This expansion is best under public and community (or collective) ownership, ensuring public benefits are maximized, and the respect of community input. It means dramatically improving efforts to conserve energy and a universal and accessible programme for new energy efficient buildings and retrofitting homes. More affordable and effective public transit, including high speed rail. Better energy and electricity sharing across borders and improving our electricity grid.

Recent promises for federal infrastructure spending must be used for these opportunities, not further entrenching our fossil fuel economy or falling prey to false climate solutions. In other words, we need money for renewable energy, public transit and retrofits, not more pipelines and highways.

How can this all be financed? Making good on Canada's promise to eliminate subsidies to fossil fuel industries (averaged \$2.9 billion over 2013 and 2014) is a good start. The Leap Manifesto also calls for a progressive carbon tax. There is also military spending that could be redirected, higher corporate taxes, fines from effective corporate regulation, higher royalty rates and a global financial transaction tax (Robin Hood tax).

All plans must respect the inherent rights and title of Indigenous communities

Fully implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) would go a long way in mending the very broken relationship in this country between settlers and Indigenous communities. While the Trudeau government has recognized the need for improved relationships, questions regarding whether free, prior and informed consent, as enshrined in UNDRIP, will be respected, remain .

Just transition and prioritizing equity measures

Critical to this plan will be the need to support workers and communities affected by the transition from fossil fuels to a clean economy by 2050. What does this look like? Measures like job training and other resources for workers in the coal industry (that should be fully phased out by 2030) into the clean energy economy. Putting Indigenous and low income communities at the front of the line for building retrofits which will help lower energy costs. As the Leap Manifesto highlights, “Indigenous Peoples should be first to receive public support for their own clean energy projects. So should communities currently dealing with heavy health impacts of polluting industrial activity.”

\$4 billion a year for climate adaptation and mitigation measures in the Global South.

Those countries that have historically contributed the most to climate change, must be responsible for helping contribute both to the adaptation (dealing with unavoidable climate impacts) and mitigation (transition off of fossil fuel reliance) costs of the Global South, being hit hardest by the ravages of climate change. As highlighted in this joint open letter endorsed by 55 Canadian organizations including the Council of Canadians, Canada’s fair share of the US\$100 billion promised in the Paris Decision document requires a contribution of \$4 billion a year by 2020. This is based on precedents where Canada has contributed 3% to 4% of multilateral funds.

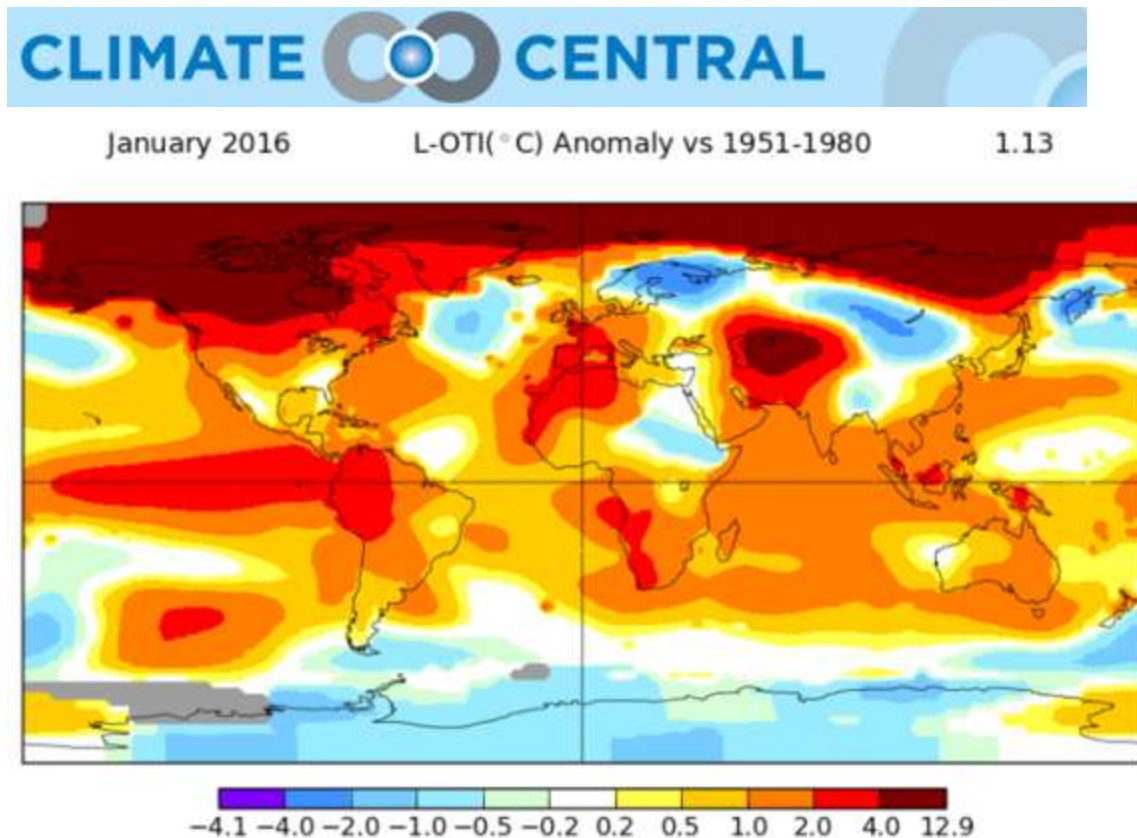
The Leap Manifesto outlines a number of other clean priorities that relate to, and compliment these actions in setting us on a path to greater climate justice which include:

- investments in decaying public infrastructure to withstand more frequent extreme weather events
- more localized and ecologically based agricultural system, which can include better reflecting on the climate impacts of food in our eating choices
- end to all trade deals that interfere with our attempts to rebuild local economies, regulate corporations and stop damaging extractive projects
- demand immigration status and full protection for all workers
- expand sectors that are already low carbon such as care giving, teaching, social work, the arts and public interest media.
- vigorous debate on a universal basic annual income
- a system in which every vote counts and corporate money is removed from political campaigns

January Smashed Another Global Temperature Record

Live Science

by Brian Kahn, Climate Central | February 16, 2016 02:07pm ET



January 2016 temperatures across the globe.

Credit: NASA GISS

This January was the warmest January on record by a large margin while also claiming the title of most anomalously warm month in 135 years of record keeping. The month was 1.13°C — or just a smidge more than 2°F — above normal. That tops December's record of being 1.11°C — or just a smidge below 2°F — above average.

It marks the fourth month in a row where the globe has been more than 1°C (1.8°F) above normal. Incidentally, those are the only four months where the globe has topped that mark since record keeping began.

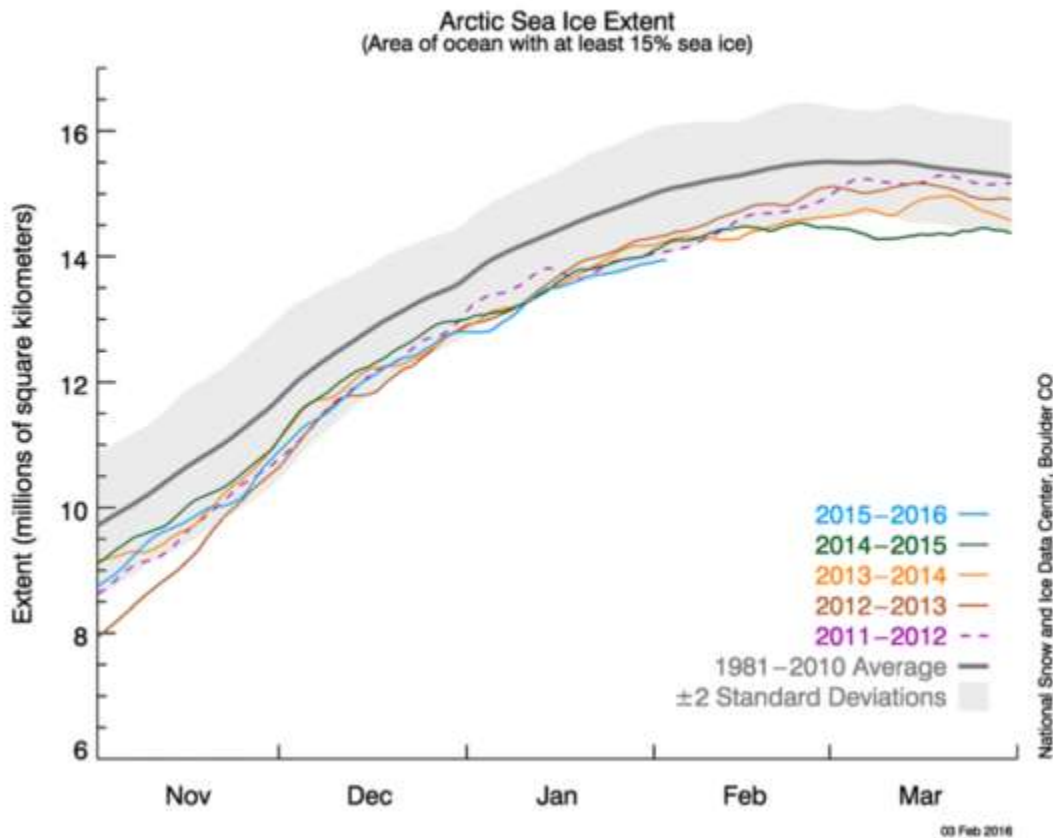
Large swaths of the globe were painted red by warmth to the point where it's easier to talk about where the heat wasn't (that would be Antarctica, Scandinavia, East Africa and a few parts of

Russia for the record). The telltale signal of El Niño's heat in the Pacific continues to be notable, but it's the Arctic that truly stands out as the most abnormally warm place on the planet.

According to NASA, temperatures in some parts of the Arctic averaged up to 23°F above normal for the month. No, that's not missing a decimal point.

The extreme warmth in the region sent sea ice dwindling to a new record low for January. Sea ice extent was 402,000 square miles below average, according to the National Snow and Ice Data Center. That's the equivalent of a missing area of sea ice almost four times the size of Colorado, and puts this year right in line with a trend of ever decreasing sea ice in the region as the climate warms.

Since 1979, winter sea ice extent has decreased 3.2 percent per decade (the loss is much more pronounced in summer at a rate of 13.4 percent per decade).



Arctic sea ice through Feb. 3, 2016 shows the record low sea ice extent in January. February has seen sea ice continue to trend in record low territory.

Credit: NSIDC

The first half of February has continued the trend of pronounced heat in the Arctic with no signs of it letting up soon. The western U.S., which was also a hot spot in January, is continuing to see abnormal warmth this February as is the East Coast after a brief cold blast this weekend.

Global heat is somewhat a symptom of El Niño. The climate phenomenon of warm water in the eastern tropical Pacific might have passed its peak, but is still providing a little boost to global temperatures.

The big driver, though, is human-caused climate change, according to a Climate Central analysis.

With January off to record heat, it reinforces the likelihood that 2016 could be yet another record-setting year. The U.K. Met Office has already released its forecast for 2016. It expects the globe to "be at least as warm, if not warmer" than 2015, according to Chris Folland, a Met Office research fellow.

If 2016 sets another global temperature record, that would make it back-to-back-to-back years of record setting hot temperatures. That's never happened before.

And regardless of whether 2016 sets a record or not, some scientists think the world has stepped up to a new period of global warming. That doesn't mean every year will set a record, but "it seems to me quite likely that we have taken the next step up to a new level," National Center for Atmospheric Research climate scientist Kevin Trenberth told Climate Central last month.

Originally published on Climate Central.

Monarch Migration News

February 11, 2016

By Elizabeth Howard [Facebook](#) [Tweet](#) [Pinterest](#) [Email](#)

It's peak season in Mexico now. As temperatures rise, the butterflies break out of their clusters and fill the air.

News: A Critical Time is Passing

It's mid-February now and temperatures at the overwintering sites are starting to rise. Monarchs have survived the coldest part of the winter season.

"The really critical time for the monarchs is January and early February," says Dr. Lincoln Brower. "During that time, severe storms can be lethal when the butterflies are wetted by the storm and then subjected to freezing temperatures."

Conditions have been favorable this winter. Massive mortality from a severe winter storm has not occurred.

Peak Tourist Season

With rising temperatures the butterflies break out of their tight colonies during the day and fill the air. The next 6 weeks are the best time to see the spectacle.

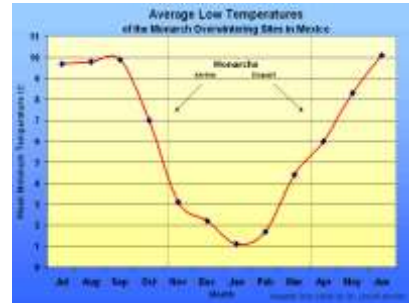
People in the region depend heavily on ecotourism during the brief peak season as Estela Romero describes.

"The whole atmosphere in communities surrounding the Sanctuaries is of joy and smiles in people's faces. We all rush around, just as Monarchs do when the sun shines for them. This is indeed the best time of the year for most families in our region!"

Temperature and Survival

It's Cold in Mexico!

During the day it's usually warm at the monarch's winter home in Mexico, but at night it's as cold as the inside of your refrigerator. Sometimes it's even cold enough to snow. Why do the butterflies migrate across the continent to spend the winter in a place that is cold? Monarchs need cool temperatures to survive.



Temperatures Rising



Ecotourism Peaks

Cool Temperatures Help Monarchs Survive

“Since monarchs are cold-blooded, they do not use much energy when they are in a cool environment,” says Dr. Karen Oberhauser. Monarchs arrive in Mexico with fat (lipids) stored in their bodies. They eat very little, if anything, during the winter months. Because of the cool temperatures, they burn their food reserves slowly.



Copyright Dr. Lincoln Brower

JourneyNo

What temperatures do overwintering monarchs need to survive? Explore the risk and benefits of the cold winter temperatures in Mexico's monarch sanctuaries.

- [Teaching Suggestions](#) and [Weekly Journal](#)

Temperature and Winter Survival



Date	Results

How do cold temperatures in Mexico help monarchs survive?
In what ways does the cold put them at risk?

Maps: Report Your Sightings



[What to Report](#)



First Adult
[report](#) | [map](#) | [list](#)



Milkweed
[report](#) | [map](#) | [list](#)



First Egg



First Larvae



Other Observations

Environmental Issues

Suspended USDA researcher alleges agency tried to block his research into harmful effects of pesticides on bees, butterflies

Washington Post – Federal Eye

By Steve Volk October 28, 2015

A prominent Agriculture Department scientist is alleging that he was suspended after complaining that the agency was blocking his research into the harmful effects of pesticides on pollinators, such as bees and butterflies.



Jonathan Lundgren (USDA)

In a whistleblower complaint filed Wednesday, Jonathan Lundgren, an entomologist and 11-year veteran of the USDA's Agricultural Research Service, says his supervisors retaliated against him by suspending him initially for 30 days before reducing it to 14 days.

The complaint, filed with the federal Merit Systems Protection Board, says his superiors began to "impede or deter his research and resultant publications" more than a year ago. Lundgren has also previously alleged that the agency tried to prevent him from speaking about his findings for political reasons and interfered with his ability to review the research of other scientists.

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The trouble began after he published research and gave interviews about the effect that certain common pesticides were having on pollinators, according to a statement by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), which filed the complaint on his behalf. The whistleblower complaint says that Lundgren's "work showed the adverse effects of certain widely used pesticides, findings which have drawn national attention as well as the ire of the agricultural industry."

Over the past decade, there have been dramatic declines in the population of honeybees, which play an essential role in pollinating about one-third of the food Americans eat.

Christopher Bentley, a spokesman for the Agricultural Research Service, declined to discuss the specifics of Lundgren's case but said the agency is committed to maintaining scientific integrity.

"We take the integrity of our scientists seriously, and we recognize how critical that is to maintaining widespread confidence in our research among the scientific community, policymakers and the general public," Bentley said in a statement.

In suspending Lundgren, PEER says USDA cited two infractions: He provided some of his research to a scientific journal without proper approval, and he violated official travel policies in connection with lectures he delivered in Philadelphia and Washington.

In his complaint and related documents released by PEER, Lundgren says the submission of the journal article — which concerned the non-target effects of clothianidin, a widely used nicotine-based pesticide, on monarch butterflies — was not inappropriate. He calls the travel violations an inadvertent paperwork error.

Lundgren has published work suggesting that soybean seeds pretreated with neonicotinoid pesticide produce no yield benefit to farmers, who pay extra for the seeds. He wrote a paper on the potential hazards of "gene silencing" pesticides, which he said require further study to determine whether they could harm other organisms. He also peer-reviewed a report published by the Center for Food Safety called "Heavy Costs," which was critical of neonicotinoid pesticides for providing little to no benefit to farmers and adversely affecting bees.

Lundgren, a 2011 recipient of the Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers, has given interviews on aspects of his research, including a widely distributed interview with Minnesota Public Radio, and spoke before the National Academy of Sciences. According to the complaint, his suspension was based in part on the paperwork associated with that trip.

"Having research published in prestigious journals and being invited to present before the National Academy of Sciences should be sources of official pride, not punishment," PEER staff counsel Laura Dumais said. "Politics inside USDA have made entomology into a most dangerous discipline."

The whistleblower filing culminates months of speculation about Lundgren in the small community of commercial beekeepers and researchers studying their decline. Earlier this year, Lundgren's dispute with his superiors became evident in a scientific journal.

A paper published in *Environmental Science & Policy*, with the sole listed author Scott W. Fausti, includes the following footnote: "I would like to acknowledge Dr. Jonathan G. Lundgren's contribution to this manuscript. Dr. Lundgren is an entomologist employed by the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS). However, the ARS has required Dr. Lundgren to remove his name as joint first author from this article. I believe this action raises a serious question concerning policy neutrality toward scientific inquiry."

That paper suggests that the combination of federal mandates for corn ethanol production and the advent of genetically modified corn crops have produced a host of unintended adverse consequences, including rising environmental pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, stronger pest resistance and inflated corn prices.

Increasing pest resistance is of particular concern for beekeepers, whose bee populations have been declining at rates deemed “unsustainable” by Darren Cox, president of the American Honey Producers Association. Increased resistance creates a need for stronger pesticides, bringing potential harm to bees. “Beekeepers have been heavily involved in ensuring that all scientists are free to conduct unfettered research,” Cox says.

In the statement, ARS spokesman Bentley said: “As one of the world’s leading promoters of agriculture and natural resources science and research, USDA has implemented a strong scientific integrity policy to promote a culture of excellence and transparency. That includes procedures for staff to report any perceived interference with their work, seek resolution and receive protection from recourse for doing so.”

But Jeff Ruch, PEER’s executive director, said Lundgren’s whistleblower complaint adds to the debate about scientific freedom. He said USDA is essentially saying: “‘You can do whatever science you want, as long as it has no real-world applications.’ The rules allow for scientists to be silenced based on the content of their science.”

Volk is a freelance writer.

Federal ban on microbeads update: Gov’t invites public to comment

BLOG

Published on February 17, 2016 by Tristan Willis.



Photo via Lake Ontario Waterkeeper

The Federal Government is moving forward with its plan to enact regulations to restrict the use of microbeads in personal care products. The government recently made the proposed regulations available online and invited the public to comment until March 10th, 2016. Submitting comments will help remind the decision-makers that this is an issue Canadians care about and want to see addressed properly.

The move comes in the wake of a submission from Environmental Defence, Ottawa Riverkeeper, and Lake Ontario Waterkeeper, with representation by Ecojustice, recommending that microbeads be regulated by the federal government in order to protect Canadian waters.

We posted our comments on the federal government's proposed ban on microbeads in October. As a reminder, here are our main concerns:

1. **Microbeads come from many sources that this proposed ban ignores.** "Personal care products used to cleanse or exfoliate" are not the only means by which microbeads are coming from.
2. **Microbeads have the potential to cause great harm to human health.** Microbeads have the ability to carry toxins and pathogens, transferring them to animals and human health.

3. **Harmonizing with US regulations could do more harm than good.** Mirroring American regulations on microbeads for the purpose of creating a *level playing field* could be dangerous since many American regulations are riddled with loopholes.
4. Environment and Climate Change Canada is held a meeting on February 22nd to outline the rationale behind the regulations and solicit feedback from stakeholders. Waterkeeper is following this process and will post comments on the proposed regulations following the meeting.

Important International Bird Research and News

Endangered seabirds to get United States boost?

Bird Life International 2016-02-12



Implementing ACAP is a golden opportunity for the United States to improve wildlife conservation (image: F Peppes)

By James Lowen, Thu, 11/02/2016

Globally threatened seabirds have been given a boost by a proposed new law in the United States. Congressman Alan Lowenthal has introduced legislation that would enable U.S. federal agencies to comply with an international agreement that aims to reduce seabird deaths by longline fishing and other threats. Conservationists have welcomed the initiative.

If the new Act is agreed, the U.S. will become the 14th country to sign the international Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). This agreement seeks to conserve albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters by coordinating international activity to reduce known threats to their populations. ACAP came into force in February 2004 and currently covers 31 species, 21 of which are globally threatened.

The U.S. has been active in reducing fisheries bycatch but has yet to sign up to ACAP despite efforts by Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. The proposed legislation, says Congressman Lowenthal, "would authorise the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service to implement fisheries conservation measures, increase international fisheries enforcement, restore habitat, reduce non-native species, develop educational programs, and cooperate internationally".



Implementing ACAP, adds Congressman Lowenthal, is "a golden opportunity for the United States to improve wildlife conservation not just here at home, but around the world, by urging other nations to adopt strong conservation standards".

Conservationists welcomed Congressman Lowenthal's leadership. David Yarnold, President and CEO of National Audubon Society, BirdLife Partner in the United States, commented that "it's time to protect these incredible birds from such needless deaths. This legislation makes sense for birds and makes sense for people. We call on members of Congress to get it across the finish line."

BirdLife International is an observer organisation to ACAP, playing an active role on all ACAP working groups. Cleo Small, head of BirdLife's Marine Programme, will coordinate BirdLife input to the ninth meeting of ACAP's Advisory Committee, to be held in Chile during May this year.

Bird Life International 2016-02-09

Survey confirms Chinese Crested Terns in Indonesia



Adult winter Chinese Crested Tern, Seram (2nd bird from right, with black bill-tip) (Image: Ken Fung Hon Shing)

By Ed Parnell, Tue, 09/02/2016

A survey team led by Burung Indonesia (BirdLife in Indonesia) and BirdLife's Asia Division has confirmed a wintering site of the globally threatened Chinese Crested Tern *Thalasseus bernsteini* in eastern Indonesia.

At least one adult and possibly one first-year Chinese Crested Tern were seen in a flock of up to 250 Greater Crested Terns *T. bergii* near Seram Island (approximately midway between Sulawesi and Papua). Threats to the site and the birds were assessed in detail during the one-week survey that was carried out in mid-January 2016, and the team also visited local university and government institutions to raise awareness of the nearby presence of this Critically Endangered seabird.

Despite its name, the Chinese Crested Tern was first found near Halmahera, in the Wallacea region of eastern Indonesia. However, since its discovery in 1861 the species had not subsequently been recorded in Indonesia (apart from an unverified record in Bali) until December 2010, when a lone bird was photographed near Seram. As a result of this initial sighting (and further reports in 2014/15), BirdLife and Burung Indonesia believed the area to perhaps be a regular wintering site. A survey team was formed, including local conservationists and three university students from Hong Kong.



There are only a handful of records from Indonesia (image: Ken Fung Hon Shing)

“Although the number of Chinese Crested Terns found during the survey is low, it does confirm that the species is a regular wintering bird to the Seram Sea, and it is very likely that Wallacea is a main wintering area for this species. As the local authorities and community are starting to be aware of and feel proud of its presence, it will surely only be a matter of time before more sightings are reported from the region,” said Simba Chan, adding that more surveys and outreach work are planned by BirdLife around Seram in the future.

“The involvement of local communities in conservation actions is one of Burung’s main strategies,” added Ria Saryanthi, Head of Communication and Knowledge Center, Burung Indonesia. Burung has been focusing its work in the Wallacea region which includes Sulawesi, the Lesser Sundas and the Moluccas, since it was established in 2002.

It is also hoped that another recent project – in China itself – may help to build more knowledge of this little-known species. In August 2015 some 31 crested tern chicks (probably all Greater Crested Terns, which share the colony with their rarer relatives) were banded at Tiedun Dao, the largest Chinese Crested Tern colony. The birds were ringed with numbered red bands, the first step in a systematic study that aims to investigate the movements of the colony’s terns.



The survey has confirmed that the species winters in the Seram Sea Image: Simba Chan

Ocean Park Conservation Foundation (OPCFHK) Foundation Director Ms. Suzanne Gendron said, “The Foundation has been supporting the conservation efforts on Chinese crested terns since 2008. We are excited to know that after years of efforts, there is a higher hope for the recovery of this critically endangered species. I believe our sponsored students benefit from and are inspired by Mr. Simba Chan’s passion and experience.

The Seram survey was sponsored by the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong and BirdLife's Preventing Extinctions Programme. The team would also like to thank Craig Robson for his invaluable advice.

Reclamation of Yellow Sea causing serious declines in migratory shorebirds

Bird Life International 2016-02-11



The main threat to the globally threatened Great Knot is reclamation in the Yellow Sea (image (c) Zhang Ming)

By James Lowen, Thu, 11/02/2016 - 11:53

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In-depth studies have indicated that rapid declines in three species of shorebird that migrate between Siberia and Australia is due to land reclamation along China's Yellow Sea coastline.

Research published in the Journal of Applied Ecology has revealed 20% reductions in the survival of three shorebirds that use Yellow Sea mudflats to refuel while migrating along the East Asian—Australasian Flyway. The three species – **Red Knot** *Calidris canutus*, **Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris* and **Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* – nest in different areas of north-east Siberia but rely on staging posts in the Yellow Sea before wintering together in Western Australia.

By individually marking thousands of birds with colour rings, an international team of scientists calculated the annual and seasonal survival of the three species from 2006– 2013. They found that the birds' survival rates remained constant on breeding and wintering grounds, but declined markedly from 2010 onwards during and immediately after each migration.

Led by Professor Theunis Piersma (Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research), the team concluded that the declines stemmed from the loss of habitat and food on Yellow Sea mudflats – a result of land reclamation. Between 1990 and 2013, the area of shallow seas and intertidal flats along the Yellow Sea shrank by an average of 4% per year, with the rate of loss doubling towards the end of the period.

"This research", says Piersma, "delivers proof that land reclamation around the Yellow Sea puts many migratory birds at risk". Piersma fears that continuing land reclamation will result in "a further halving of the shorebirds' populations within three to four years. To halt further losses, the clearance of coastal intertidal habitat must stop now".

"Shorebird populations worldwide are declining and their habitats are under stress from human factors including land-use change, but the loss of habitat in the Yellow sea is particularly alarming, " said Ade Long at BirdLife International.



Migratory Bar-tailed Godwits roosting on an active dredge-dumping site on the Yellow Sea on 20 April 2012 (David S. Melville). The material was being excavated from a channel to improve access to the Donggang Fishing Port,

Liaoning Province. The infilled area is planned to be part of an industrial park to be built on an area of intertidal mudflat that was excised from the Yalujiang National Nature Reserve by a boundary adjustment in 2012.

BirdLife International, in its role as Red List Authority for birds for the IUCN Red List, listed all three of these species to higher threat categories in 2015, partly owing to information about their declining population on the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

Professor Theunis Piersma is also a professor in Global Flyway Ecology at the University of Groningen, a position funded by Vogelbescherming Nederland (VBN, BirdLife in the Netherlands) and WWF-Netherlands. Professor Piersma and his team are part of the Global Flyway Network, a global alliance of worldwide shorebird-research groups. In 2014, he was awarded the Spinoza Prize – the so-called ‘Dutch Nobel Prize’ for his work on migratory shorebirds.

Study identifies parrots as most-threatened bird group



Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, a non-threatened arid Australian parrot (Photo: Chris Parnell)

By Ed Parnell, Thu, 18/02/2016

Scientists, including staff from BirdLife International and the Australian National University, have published new research indicating that parrots (*Psittaciformes*) are among the most threatened groups of bird species, with 28% of extant species (111 out of 398) classified as globally threatened on the IUCN Red List.

On average, the study confirms that parrots are more threatened than comparable groups of birds (including seabirds, pigeons and raptors). Parrots with a small historical distribution (for instance, those found on islands), large body size, a long generation time, and a dependency on forest habitats, are more likely to be threatened. Large-bodied birds tend to have low population

densities and are more at risk from human hunters, while forest parrots are overwhelmingly tree-cavity nesters, meaning that primary forest destruction has a severe impact on the availability of their nesting sites and consequent reproductive success.

“This study confirms that, as a whole, parrots face a higher rate of extinction than any other comparable bird group. Indeed, 56% of all parrot species are in decline. They face a wide range of threats, but loss and degradation of forest habitat, agricultural expansion, and hunting and trapping – parrots are the most common bird group reported in the wildlife trade – are all major factors. However, this study identifies conservation priorities for these attractive, intelligent birds – which have beguiled and fascinated humans since we first set eyes upon them – and offers a way to prevent more species following the Carolina Parakeet and Paradise Parrot into extinction,” said Dr Stuart Butchart, Head of Science at BirdLife International.

The study found that the following 10 countries are the highest priority for parrot conservation: Indonesia, Brazil, Australia, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Papua New Guinea, Venezuela, and Mexico. The most common actions needed in the Neotropics (Central and South America) are site protection and management, with improved legislation and ex-situ conservation a priority in Africa, and greater awareness and site/habitat protection a priority in South-east Asia and Oceania.

The severity of extinction risk (rising from Vulnerable to Critically Endangered) is also positively related to the per head gross domestic product (GDP) of the countries of occurrence, with more-developed economies tending to have higher rates of urbanisation and a consequent increased pressure on remaining parrot habitat.

Interestingly, and perhaps counter-intuitively, the study also found that the risk of extinction is lower for those parrot species widely held in captivity as pets, backing up recent studies that show that the vast majority of species within the domestic and international bird trade are non-threatened. This is largely thought to be because most parrot poachers concentrate on species that are more readily available and easier to catch. However, illegal trade is rapidly driving a number of species towards extinction.

Dead parrots: a sad lesson from history



The extinct Paradise Parrot of Australia. This specimen (a male) is in the Museum of Liverpool and was one of the first collected by the naturalist John Gilbert in 1844. The last confirmed sighting of the species was in 1928. (Photo: Edward Parnell)

A total of 14 of the 16 parrot species BirdLife officially classifies on the IUCN Red List as Extinct were restricted to islands, and disappeared following the arrival of Europeans from the mid-17th century onwards. The two exceptions are: Carolina Parakeet *Conuropsis carolinensis*, a North American species that was wiped out by human persecution and deforestation, with the last known bird, a captive male, dying in Cincinnati Zoo in 1918; in Australia (south-eastern Queensland), the Paradise Parrot *Psephotellus pulcherrimus*, a grassland specialist that nested in termite mounds, had its last confirmed sighting in 1928.

Turkey needs your help to create its first breeding bird atlas



Audouin's Gull is one of the many beautiful species found in Turkey. Photo: Thanos Kastritis/HOS

By Sanya Khetani-Shah, Wed, 17/02/2016

Turkey is one of the most fascinating countries in the Western Palearctic for birdwatchers: the location of the country at the crossroads of continents has resulted in diverse habitat and bird species.

Rare and endangered species such as the **Yelkouan Shearwater**, **White-headed Duck**, **Purple Swamphen**, **Caspian Snowcock**, **See-see Partridge**, **Audouin's Gull**, **Great Spotted Cuckoo**, **Brown Fish-owl**, **Pallid Scops-owl**, four species of vulture, **Rüppell's Warbler**, **White-throated Robin** and **Krüper's Nuthatch** are found here – either breeding or stopping over during their migration.

In spite of its rich biodiversity, bird studies and conservation only started in Turkey in the early 1990s (**Doğa Derneği**, the BirdLife Partner in Turkey, began work there in 2002). But while some surveys were undertaken in smaller areas, the country as a whole was never covered. All that changed in 2014, when Turkey was invited to be a part of the second **European Breeding Bird Atlas**.

Over the next three years, in collaboration with the European Bird Census Council (EBCC), a group of Turkish birders will help to collect breeding bird information of representative squares (important areas will be marked in a grid so that all ground is covered systematically) in the country. This study will shed light on the distribution and abundance of breeding bird species and enable the improved bird conservation in the country.

Your help is needed to complete as many squares as possible in the coming years. Access to large parts of the country is still considered safe. If you are planning a birding holiday next spring to Turkey and are willing to contribute your data, or even better, spend three days to count one square, please contact the Turkish Atlas Team.

Eight million birds killed illegally at 20 Mediterranean locations each year



A Red-backed Shrike caught on a lime stick in Egypt. Photo: Mindy El Bashir/Nature Conservation Egypt

By Stuart Butchart, Fri, 04/03/2016

Scientists from BirdLife International estimate that 20 locations in the Mediterranean may be responsible for eight million individual birds being illegally killed or taken alive each year.

In the paper *Preliminary assessment of the scope and scale of illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean* published this week in the scientific journal *Bird Conservation International*, the authors present a detailed analysis of how many birds and of which species are impacted, where the 20 worst locations are and why different species are targeted in each country. The report was previewed in the BirdLife review *The Killing*, published in August last year.

“We were shocked to discover that 25 million individuals of over 450 species are estimated to be illegally killed or taken alive in the Mediterranean region per year, mainly for food (to be eaten as a delicacy or sold for profit), sport and for use as cage birds or hunting decoys,” Dr Anne-Laure Brochet, lead author of the report, said. “Importantly, eight million birds are estimated to be killed or taken at just 20 locations. Given the uncertainty around these numbers because of the difficulty in documenting illegal activities, the total could be anywhere from five to 11 million.”

These 20 places are found in just four countries: Cyprus, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria. They include the Famagusta area of Cyprus, where 400,000-1 million individual birds are illegally killed or taken each year, and

the El Manzala area of Egypt, where 30,000-1.1 million individuals birds are illegally killed or taken each year.

The highest estimates of birds illegally killed or taken in the Mediterranean region were for Italy (3-8 million birds), Egypt (300,000-11 million) and Syria (3-5 million), while the density of illegal killing/taking was highest in Malta (18-667 birds per year per sq km), Cyprus (146-351 birds per sq km) and Lebanon (161-335 birds per sq km).

“It was disturbing to find that despite the positive impact of EU legislation, half of the top 10 countries with the highest levels of illegal killing are Member States of the EU. This indicates the need for greater effort to ensure that the EU Birds Directive is fully implemented at national level,” said Willem Van den Bossche, co-author of the paper and Flyway Conservation Officer for Europe and Central Asia at BirdLife Europe.

The birds affected by illegal killing include the Blackcap (1.2-2.4 million individuals per year), European Turtle-dove (300,000-900,000 individuals per year) and Song Thrush (700,000-1.8 million individuals per year), among many others.

The data were collected by BirdLife Partner organisations across the region using a variety of sources, including targeted monitoring data, police records, publications, reports and expert opinion. In many cases, the numbers were extrapolated from data or estimates of the number of mist-nets, shooting incidences, recoveries in animal hospitals and rehabilitation centres, and illegal ‘limesticks’ used to trap birds with sticky glue

“Illegal killing is a complex conservation problem, with key methods of killing, targeted species and motivations varying between countries,” explained Dr Vicky Jones, co-author of the paper and Senior Flyways Officer at BirdLife International. “Addressing this issue requires action on a local, national and international scale, involving law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, hunting associations, national government authorities, non-governmental organisations and international policy instruments.”

National action plans to tackle illegal killing have recently been developed by a wide range of stakeholders in Egypt/Libya and Cyprus, with the aim of strengthening legislation and its enforcement, improving monitoring, and supporting efforts to take action for individual species.

“Unsustainable exploitation is one of the major threats to the world’s birds, and much of this is illegal. Our study is the first to compile detailed quantitative estimates of the scale of the problem in the Mediterranean. Our identification of the worst locations will help to focus efforts on the ground to tackle the issue,” said Dr Stuart Butchart, co-author of the paper and Head of Science at BirdLife International.

Eight million birds killed illegally at 20 Mediterranean locations each year

BirdLife International

2016-02-04



A Red-backed Shrike caught on a lime stick in Egypt. Photo: Mindy El Bashir/Nature Conservation Egypt

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Water

SCIENCE

Fresh water crisis: Four billion people face water scarcity, says study

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Scientists from the Netherlands suggest four billion people face water scarcity, twice the number previously expected. But the authors say this accurate assessment is important, because it sets the stage for real progress.

By Story Hinckley, Staff FEBRUARY 13, 2016



Manish Swarup/AP

Fresh water on Earth is scarce and getting scarcer – we know that. In 2015 the World Economic Forum ranked "water crises" as the top risk facing the planet.

But authors of a recent report published Friday in the journal *Science Advances* say previous studies have underestimated the severity of water scarcity around the world. Instead of impacting around two billion people as researchers previously suggested, it's more along the lines of four billion, say Dr. Mesfin Mekonnen and Dr. Arjen Hoekstra at the University of Twente in Enschede, Netherlands.

So how has previous research been so off? It relied on annual averages, say the authors.

Five ways Americans can save water through food choices

“Most of the previous water scarcity studies are done on an annual basis, which hides the actual variability within a year,” co-author Dr. Mekonnen, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Twente, tells *The Christian Science Monitor* in an email Thursday. To understand water scarcity on the global level, Mekonnen and Hoekstra assessed local "blue water scarcity," or the amount of freshwater that is withdrawn and not returned, on a monthly level.



PHOTOS OF THE DAY Photos of the day 02/18

But these four billion people are not facing water scarcity all year round, notes Mekonnen, instead it's more along the lines of one month a year.

“When you average over the whole year, you miss that one month where [a] large number of people face water scarcity,” says Mekonnen. “Before we thought only [a] small number of people face severe water scarcity,” but a larger population's few, difficult months were skewing the annual average.

“Water scarcity generally occurs only during part of the year, when there is a mismatch between water availability and demand,” explains Mekonnen. Only half a billion people actually experience water scarcity for the entire year.

The truth about water scarcity's impact is important, say the authors, because informed consumers are more likely to “demand transparency about the water consumption and pollution underlying consumer products from business and governments,” Dr. Hoekstra explains in a paper published last year. And the most water-demanding products are not always the most obvious.

“Little interest in water has been shown in the meat and dairy sectors, which is surprising given the fact that the meat and dairy sectors contribute more than a quarter to the global water footprint of humanity,” says Hoekstra.

Their study also breaks down a presumed barrier between developed and underdeveloped countries, instead suggesting water scarcity may be more correlated to population levels.

In their study, Mekonnen and Hoekstra suggest India and China, the two most populated countries, are home to up to half of the total four-billion people experiencing water scarcity. Other significant populations facing severe water scarcity live in Bangladesh, the United States, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Mexico – five of the 10 most populated in the world.

And a detailed breakdown of water-stressed months makes mitigation efforts more realistic, say Mekonnen and Hoekstra.

“Governments should put a cap on water footprints, per river basin and per month, to ensure that water consumption doesn’t exceed maximum sustainable levels,” Mekonnen tells The Monitor. “Without proper measurement of the extent of the water scarcity, it will be difficult to design proper response strategies to address the problem. By measuring the water scarcity level properly, we are able to assess the human, economic, social, and environmental costs.”
