



# NEWSLETTER

## **DR. C. STUART HOUSTON INDUCTED INTO HALL OF FAME**

*excerpted from the Center for Biological Diversity press release – March 1, 2008*

OBBA member, Dr. C. Stuart Houston was inducted into the **World Owl Hall of Fame** on February 29, 2008 in Houston, Minnesota as part of the International Festival of Owls.

The World Owl Hall of Fame was hatched in 2006 to bring public recognition to the humans and owls who have dedicated a significant portion of their lives to making this world a better place for owls. The Champion of Owls Award is granted to a human and the Lady Gray’l Award, named for a great gray owl from Winnipeg, Canada, is bestowed upon an owl.

The winner of the prestigious Champion of Owls Award was coincidentally the International Festival of Owls’ keynote speaker, **Dr. C. Stuart Houston** from Saskatoon. Houston has banded more than 10,000 owls of 11 species since 1943, published 51 papers on owls, written reviews for six owl books, and inspired multiple generations of ornithologists, despite being a medical doctor himself.

“He always involved other people in his work, from farm lads to grown people,” says Dr. Robert Nero of Winnipeg, a Champion of Owls award winner himself and keeper of Lady Gray’l during her lifetime. “[His wife] Mary Houston is right up there with Stuart. They are a team.”

Houston’s Champion of Owls Award will join a long list of other awards on his *curriculum vitae*, including awards from the American Ornithologists’ Union, Canadian Nature Federation, Raptor Research Foundation, and being named an Officer of the Order of Canada, among others.

The 2008 World Owl Hall of Fame is sponsored by the World Owl Trust, Global Owl Project, Center for Biological Diversity, Owl Research Institute, Raptor Education Group, Inc., Hancock House Publishers, Gray Owl Fund, and owlstuff.com.

### **Inside**

AGM reports.....	2
Banding Highlights.....	5
NSWO Cooperative Project.....	6
Doug Tarry Award.....	7
Dates to Remember.....	7
Your Board.....	8

The OBBA AGM was held on Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> and Sunday, February 24<sup>th</sup> at Bird Studies Canada in Port Rowan, Ontario. Approximately 40 people attended the meeting - enjoying interesting presentations, learning sessions and general conversation with fellow banders. President Eric Machell began the AGM with the following words to participants:

## **OBBA PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE AGM FEBRUARY 23, 2008**

Eric Machell

Once again welcome to Port Rowan for this year's OBBA AGM. I trust that any of you who have any questions regarding administria such as times, meals etc. have received answers, and if not please speak either to myself or any board member after the business session. First I would ask the board members who are here today to please stand and introduce themselves. Next as has been our tradition over the years let each of us now introduce ourselves to all the members who are here today.

Last year I spoke of three OBBA stalwarts who passed away in 2006, and now only a year later I am again in the position of having to report three more deaths, those of Betty Wasserfall, Don Baldwin and Marshall Field, better known as 'Marsh' to all his friends. If my arithmetic is correct this is my 25<sup>th</sup> OBBA meeting, and the first at which I didn't see Marsh, and share a few moments with him. Let us now spend a few moments to remember these three people.

On the positive side OBBA is financially sound as you will see from the treasurer's report. We are not an organization that is trying to set records in fund raising, but rather one whose purpose is to serve its members.

There are two other aspects that I particularly wish to point out. One, there are now four NABC trainers in Ontario, namely David Okines, who is OBBA's rep to NABC, Audrey Heagy, Stu Mackenzie and Nick Bartock. All of them are here today and I am confident they will be only too pleased to answer any of your questions. Secondly on the agenda you will see there is mention of the new style hard metal bands. While I am not trying to steal any ones thunder on this please be aware they require a different technique to the lock on bands we are familiar with.

It takes a lot of effort to pull a meeting like this one together, and many thanks to all the people who have been involved both in planning an interesting agenda and ensuring the meeting runs smoothly.

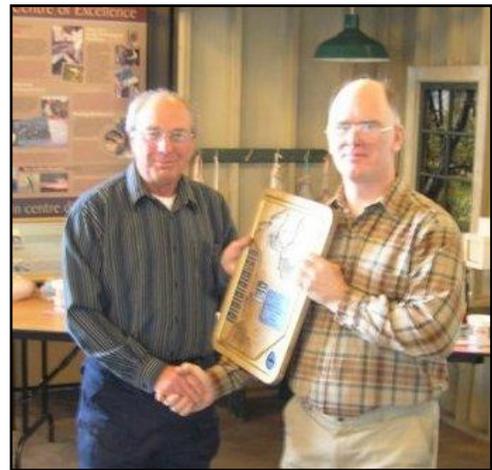
I wish to thank in advance the speakers we will be hearing during the meeting. Also I thank Bird Studies Canada for again giving us the opportunity to hold our AGM in their wonderful facilities here in Port Rowan. And finally but certainly not least let us not forget the people from the banding office, who continue to do a great job for us.

In closing it's a pleasure to see all of you here, enjoy meeting old friends and making new ones, and do have an enjoyable conference.

# AGM HIGHLIGHTS

photos by Christian Friis

Eric Machell was the recipient of this year's Janette Dean award.



Informal conversation is an important part of the AGM weekend.

Presentations included the first Kirtland's Warbler nest found in Ontario while banding at Petawawa; Pelee Island Bird Observatory; and an update on the Eastern Loggerhead Shrike by Jessica Steiner from Wildlife Preservation Trust Canada.



AGM participants learning from one another while banding on Sunday morning at Old Cut, LPBO.

# TREASURER'S REPORT TO AGM - Audrey Heagy

## ONTARIO BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2007 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

	<u>2007</u>
<b>REVENUE</b>	
Memberships	1390.00
Donations	894.00
U.S Exchange	11.39
Birdathon	553.25
Annual General Meeting	1160.00
Equipment - Sales	0.00
GST rebate	44.26
Project Grants	0.00
Bank Interest	0.00
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<u>\$4,052.90</u>
<b>DISBURSEMENTS</b>	
Journal/Newsletters	1392.29
Postage	16.32
Office Supplies	33.46
Annual General Meeting	933.17
Janette Dean Award	50.00
North American Banding Council	500.00
Board Catering	150.00
Board Mileage	653.61
Project Grants	0.00
Miscellaneous	0.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<u>\$3,728.85</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over disbursements	324.05
Balance forward – January 1	7327.82
<b>CASH BALANCE before Interfund Transfers</b>	<u>\$7,651.87</u>
Fund transfers (out)	410.00
Fund transfers in	280.00
<b>CASH BALANCE after Interfund Transfers</b>	<u>\$7,521.87</u>
Plus: Accounts Receivable	0.00
Less: Accounts Payable	0.00
<b>NET BALANCE @ DECEMBER 31</b>	<u>\$7,521.87</u>
<b>OTHER ASSETS</b>	
– Investments	<b>\$5,475.93</b>
<b>Memberships:</b>	<b>106</b>

### Notes on funds held in the Operating Account as of 31 December 2007

- 1) Balance of Owl Project grant in Operating Account is \$2100 (carried forward from 2005).
- 2) Total of \$297.16 of operating account funds are allocated to Janette Dean and Donation Funds. See Investment Portfolio Report for details.
- 3) Unallocated cash balance in Operating Account totals \$5124.71

*The complete Treasurer's report is available on the OBBS website [www.ontbanding.org](http://www.ontbanding.org)*

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## BANDING HIGHLIGHTS

David Lamble

We trapped an adult male Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) on the 29th of February 2008, about 15 Km South East of Arthur that had been banded as an adult male on the 24th of August at the harbour, Kangerlussusag, Sisimiut district Greenland. The bunting had travelled a great arc distance of 2,538 km S.W. The time difference between initial banding and encounter was 189 days. Interestingly, this is the only "foreign" encounter in over 1,100 birds banded.



Apparently it was banded by a fellow named Ole Roland Therkilsen out of the University of Aarhus in Denmark. They were carrying out a surveillance program for avian influenza in Greenland. To quote his e-mail... "In total, we ringed 230 snow buntings, lapland buntings, northern wheatears and mealy redpoll from Aug 22 - Sept 2. None of them were positive for avian influenza"



The lapland bunting is our Lapland Longspur and the mealy redpoll is our Common Redpoll.

However, it is interesting that he banded so few birds and one of his ends up in Wellington County -- talk about a needle in a haystack!!!!

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**THE QUESTION:** Why do geese honk constantly while they fly? asked **Liane Sharkey** of Toronto.

**THE ANSWER:** Toronto's **Michael Graham** says the juvenile geese flying at the back of the traditional V are doing all the honking. "A recent ornithological theory suggests that what they are repeatedly saying is, 'Are we there yet?' 'Are we there yet?' "

*submitted by Terri Groh*

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# ONTARIO NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL COOPERATIVE PROJECT

Christian Friis

In the fall of 2007 the Ontario Bird Banding Association (OBBA) launched the Ontario Northern Saw-whet Owl Cooperative Banding Project. The goal of the project is to organize and carry out a five-year cooperative project to increase our understanding of Northern Saw-whet Owls (NSWO) in Ontario. The first phase of this multi-year project involves acquiring available NSWO banding and effort data from Ontario banders, and compiling these data in a central database, which will house both current and historic datasets.

The OBBA has developed guidelines and templates of forms and spreadsheets for use by the project participants. The purpose of these documents is to increase the compatibility of data currently being collected at different stations so that data can be pooled for future analyses. These documents are now available on the OBBA's website [www.ontbanding.org/NSWO/](http://www.ontbanding.org/NSWO/) with the following **case-sensitive** login information:

**Username:** Aegolicus      **Password:** Ontario.

Now that the project has been initiated, there are a few items that require a concerted effort to facilitate data compilation. The first is computerizing all effort and moult data for each banding operation. Many banders – in fact all NSWO banders should – collect these data as part of their NSWO banding operation, but neither have the time nor the proper amount of sleep to enter these data into a computer. To get the ball rolling, the OBBA has hired a contractor to enter large sets of effort and moult data. Smaller operations are encouraged to enter their data using the available templates, or mail hard copies (**make sure to make a photocopy**) to the Owl Project Coordinator to be entered into the database. An electronic copy will be sent in return, once these data have been entered. Banders can then enter their yearly effort and moult data, and contribute to the project, in a timelier manner.

The second involves enrolling as many NSWO banders in Ontario as possible. This will provide the greatest amount of data and thus lead to better answers to the questions this project means to elucidate. To date, 11 stations or individual banders have registered and data have begun to arrive. Registration forms and all applicable documents are available on the OBBA website, or can be acquired from the Owl Project Coordinator.

The third item involves attaining banding and recapture data. Much of the banding data can be acquired from the Bird Banding Office, but these data do not include parameters such as weight, fat measurement, time of capture and so on. Once registered, banders will be asked to send along their band and recapture data for inclusion to the Owl Project dataset. Of particular value are recapture data, which provide exciting details on movement and moult patterns and will allow the project to increase our understanding of saw-whets in Ontario.

All interested banders are encouraged to visit the OBBA website and login to the Owl Project page to learn more and find out how to get involved. Alternatively, questions can be sent to the Owl Project Coordinator at [friis.christian@gmail.com](mailto:friis.christian@gmail.com) or via snail mail to:

Christian Friis, 637 Broadview Ave., Apt #3, Toronto, ON, M4K 2N9

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# THE DOUG TARRY BIRD STUDY AWARD FOR YOUNG ORNITHOLOGISTS

**Deadline: Applications are due 30 April 2008**

The Doug Tarry Young Ornithologists' Workshop occurs annually each summer at Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO). This year's workshop will be held from Friday, August 1<sup>st</sup> to Sunday, August 10<sup>th</sup>. The goal of the Doug Tarry Bird Study Award is to foster the interests and development of ornithology in Canadian teenagers. Recipients of the award attend a ten day workshop/natural history camp at LPBO, located along the north shore of Lake Erie, Ontario, in the Long Point World Biosphere Reserve.

The Doug Tarry Young Ornithologists' Workshop is a major component of the observatory's educational program. Many of Canada's talented field biologists got their start here since its inception in the mid 1970s. Thanks to the foresight and generosity of humanitarian and naturalist Doug Tarry, the Workshop is free for the selected applicants.

The Workshop focuses on "hands-on" learning and training in field ornithology. It provides a unique opportunity for like-minded teenagers to enhance their knowledge and skills in the scientific study and aesthetic enjoyment of birds. Participants learn how to identify, age and sex birds, and how scientists study populations and behaviour. Careful and skilled instructors teach bird handling and banding techniques, how to prepare specimens for scientific study and bird censusing techniques. Regularly scheduled afternoon field trips to places of biological interest within the Biosphere introduce participants to the flora and fauna of the region. Evening programs include slide presentations and nocturnal fieldwork.

Space is limited to six participants, ranging in age from 13-17 years old. The Award covers all direct costs of the workshop (accommodation, meals, travel while at Long Point, and professional instruction). Recipients are responsible for their own transportation to and from Long Point, though a small travel grant may be available. Prospective participants are invited to download and complete the application form (<http://www.bsc-eoc.org/longpoint>). Completed applications should be sent to the Landbird Programs Coordinator, Long Point Bird Observatory, Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario N0E 1M0 (fax 519-586-3532), E-mail: [lpbo@bsc-eoc.org](mailto:lpbo@bsc-eoc.org), by **30 April 2008**.

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

Deadline for next issue of newsletter	July 15
Western Bird Banding Assoc. Annual Meeting in Boise, Idaho	Sept. 5-7

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Articles for the newsletter should be submitted **unformatted** in Times New Roman font 12 by email. Photos should be sent in jpeg files. Drawings and jokes are also appreciated.

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