

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



60

1960 - 2020

BIRDS  
CANADA

OISEAUX  
CANADA

## COVER

Photo by: Ryan Pimiskern,  
Parks Canada

## RIGHT

Photo by: Andrés Jiménez



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# Discovering Birds for 60 Years

## Working to make birds accessible to all

It's been a year of discovery for us all. Discovering our resilience to unexpected threats, discovering how deeply rooted injustice can be, discovering how important birds are to our well-being.

On resilience, everyone has changed their home and work lives to respond to the pandemic – we postponed field surveys for spring 2020, but safely restarted most by June. On injustice, society must make profound reforms – we recognize that many communities are under-represented in our membership and too often unwelcomed, so we are working to understand and remove barriers. On the deeply felt affinity for birds and nature, many of us were surprised to discover how valuable we found our backyards, neighbourhood and 'local patch'. In a natural world that belongs to and benefits everyone, all Canadians are welcome and very much needed to fulfill our mission to understand, appreciate, and conserve Canada's wild birds.

And Canada's birds need our help. Your volunteer Citizen Science surveys, combined with field work we and our partners undertake, were the backbone of *The State of Canada's Birds 2019*. This report shows in stark reality the rapid declines of many bird groups, like shorebirds and grassland birds, but also how investment and conservation work have conserved waterfowl and raptors. Our work is urgent, and there's hope when you support us with your time, talent, and donations.

This year, we wrapped up a five-year effort to tackle five major challenges for birds in Canada and beyond: tracking species of conservation priority, conserving important places for birds, innovating solutions for birds at risk, empowering champions (*you!*), and engaging urban communities in all things birds. As you will read, we reached or exceeded most targets. Birds are better off for this, and Birds Canada became stronger

and wiser to tackle the challenges ahead. We note those, too, in this report, and I'd be interested in your views on whether you agree and how you can help.

Thank you for all you do for birds and let's – all of us, together – tackle the issues for the 2020s with renewed energy and commitment.



**STEVEN PRICE**  
President, Birds Canada



## INNOVATING CONSERVATION SOLUTIONS

Habitat loss is the threat most adversely affecting the most species and habitats. Our staff have been listening to stakeholders who are often outside the conservation community and working with them to implement science-based changes that will benefit birds.

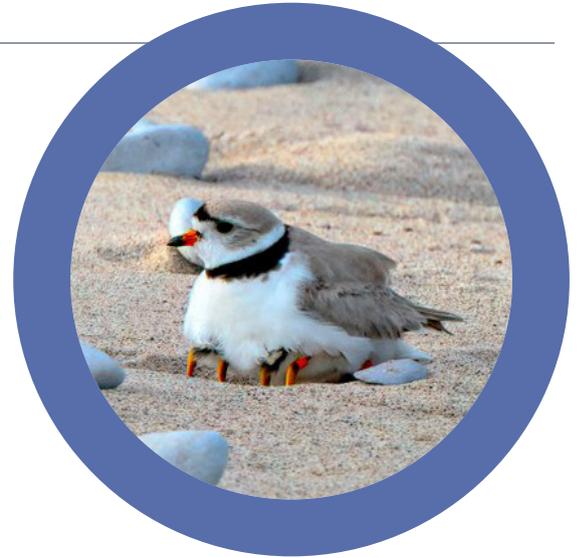
Thank you to all the stewarding partners for working together with us. Stewardship partnerships reduced threats to the benefit of 50 species and taxa of national conservation concern at local or regional levels.

### HIGHLIGHTS

1. Municipal partnerships are key to successful community stewardship of coasts that benefit shorebirds such as breeding Piping Plovers and Semipalmated Sandpipers. Federal, provincial, and municipal partners collaborated to ensure Ontario Piping Plover nests were monitored safely, following public health regulations, despite beach closures. Enforcement teams across the province, including OPP and bylaw teams, offered strong support to reduce the threat of human disturbance.
2. Listening to the needs and concerns of private landowners and combining people and wildlife values results in positive solutions. For example, in the Atlantic region the Shelburne Country beach stewardship partnership and Minas Basin, Bay of Fundy initiatives are creating positive change for shorebirds.
3. Information from our long-term Citizen Science datasets and strategic community and research partnerships achieves engaged conservation actions. For example, results from [25 years of the Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program](#) and 40 years of the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey are being applied with our many partners to make important contributions to conservation.

ABOVE PHOTO: Tiny Township municipality and landowners welcomed their first successful Piping Plover nest in recent history.

Photo by: Neal Mutiger



4. Our National Data Centre is trusted by thousands of researchers, students, decision makers, and interested citizens as the go-to place in Canada for bird population data and trends. The GIS Lab and the National Data Centre are at the core of the provincial breeding bird atlases, which are important resources to document changes in breeding bird populations in time and space. They are also powerful public engagement tools, as they allow volunteers from all walks of life to put their passion for birds and birding into action for conservation. Québec's Second Breeding Bird Atlas involved 2000 Citizen Scientist volunteers who gave more than 100,000 hours. Close to 1.5 million identifying records were used by the Birds Canada National GIS Lab to create maps illustrating changes in bird populations and identify hotspots for potential conservation efforts.
5. Birds Canada researchers produced more than 30 publications in 2019-20, such as *Falling through the policy cracks: implementing a roadmap to conserve aerial insectivores in North America* and *Drivers of declines in common loon productivity*. We also enabled other bird-related research resulting in more than 150 additional publications.



Birds Canada staff Andrew Couturier and Denis Lepage, as two of the four co-authors of the atlas, were recognized with Radio-Canada's Scientist of the Year Award – congratulations!

Award winners from left to right: Andrew Couturier, Michel Robert, Marie-Hélène Hachey, and Denis Lepage.



LEFT: The trail to deploy song meters used to determine the presence of Bicknell's Thrush on Cape Breton Island, NS.

Photo by:  
Amy-Lee Kouwenberg



BACKGROUND PHOTO:  
Red-headed Woodpecker  
Photo by: Ian Fife

LEFT: Willet, Matador Community Pasture, SK  
Photo by:  
Pete Davidson



LEFT: Bicknell's Thrush  
Photo by: Chris Ward

In a natural world that belongs to and benefits everyone, all Canadians are welcome and very much needed to fulfill our mission to understand, appreciate, and conserve Canada's wild birds.



LEFT: King Rail  
Photo by:  
Jeremy Bensette

## LOOKING FORWARD

### BUILDING UPON OUR SUCCESSES WILL BE OUR NEXT CHALLENGE. WE WILL:

- Include and listen carefully to voices from minorities to better address conservation and education objectives of greatest concern to them.
- Lead Canadian support of actions in key wintering and staging areas of the Western Hemisphere.
- Strengthen our partnerships and build new ones through science-based advice in Key Biodiversity Areas where human use and bird use can be better balanced.
- Lead a new roadmap for aerial insectivores with a coalition of government, academic, and non-government partners.



## CONSERVING IMPORTANT PLACES FOR BIRDS

The Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA) program is an international conservation initiative of BirdLife International co-led in Canada by Birds Canada and Nature Canada. More than 11,000 people volunteer their time as Citizen Scientists to monitor and steward IBAs in Canada. This is more than double the number of stewards involved five years ago but protection and consistent stewardship remain challenges. Employing social science with conservation science is essential to achieving success.

Thank you to all our caring bird-friendly stewards on shorelines, ranches, wetlands and other vital bird habitat – you secure the home place for birds so important to their survival.

### HIGHLIGHTS

1. Birds Canada has convened a unified voice for nature in the campaign to save the Fraser Delta mudflats in British Columbia and focused national and international attention on the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 port development issue. This area is of critical importance to Western Sandpipers and other wildlife, and to maintaining the overall health of the Fraser River.
2. Stewardship surveys increased the understanding among all stakeholders at the Pointe Sapin and Escuminac beaches in New Brunswick to the benefit of Piping Plovers. These hard-to-reach communities have stepped up to work side-by-side with conservation officers, conduct beach cleanup days, and post signs made by local students to remind people to protect their beaches.



Prince Edward County  
South Shore IBA in  
Ontario

Photo by:  
Amanda Bichel

**Deployment of 15 infrared cameras with First Nations partners in 3 Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas on BC's central coast and the new Scott Islands marine National Wildlife Area.**



Nighttime image of the Rhinoceros Auklet taken by one of the trail cameras used to identify invasives on Lucy Islands, BC.

Daytime image of Bald Eagle taken by the same trail camera on Lucy Islands, BC. Both images from David Bradley.

3. Partnering with and supporting First Nations and federal and provincial government agencies to assess the presence and impact of invasives on islands along the British Columbia coast.
4. Worked with the local community stakeholders to raise the profile of birds in the Prince Edward County South Shore IBA. Birds are important components of tourism and recreational values here.

## LOOKING FORWARD

The global movement to Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) combines bird values with all other animal and plant groups creating a larger, stronger, more consistent voice for nature. We are providing Canadian leadership towards global adoption of the KBA framework, through BirdLife International.



## EMPOWERING CHAMPIONS FOR BIRDS

More than 65,000 Citizen Scientists volunteered for our programs in 2019. While COVID-19 created challenges in 2020, Birds Canada quickly pivoted to offer online content and birding-on-your-home-patch information which was received enthusiastically.

Thank you to all of our volunteers serving Citizen Science roles across Canada – you are the field team making it all possible

*Photo by: Jody Allair*



**MANY MORE PEOPLE ARE DEVOTING THEIR TIME AND SKILLS TO BIRDS:**

**↑ 26%**  
growth in  
**eBird Canada**

**↑ 8%**  
growth in  
**Project FeederWatch**

**↑ 22%**  
growth in  
**Great Backyard Bird Count**

## HIGHLIGHTS

1. Between March 15 and June 30, 2020 our efforts to provide supporters with virtual programming resulted in:



**15 WEBINARS**  
6076 PARTICIPANTS



**3 ONLINE COURSES**  
200 participants

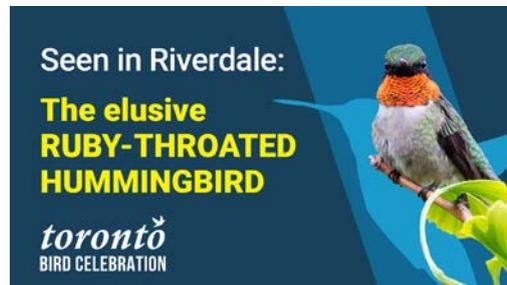


**3 LIVESTREAM EVENTS**  
7558 views



**5 PODCASTS**  
1200 listens 7 shares

2. The Birds Canada Urban Program expanded its capacity to reach champions across Canada. The Toronto Bird Celebration 'Take-Out Edition', coordinated by Birds Canada, offered 23 webinars and received powerful testimonials from a national and international audience thirsty for Canadian bird information. The new Search for Celebirdies Campaign captured the imagination and encouraged everyone to look in their neighbourhoods for the glamorous Indigo Bunting, the stylish Rose-breasted Grosbeak, the rowdy Belted Kingfisher, and more.





...  
Thank you to all  
of our volunteers  
serving Citizen  
Science roles across  
Canada – you are the  
field team making it  
all possible.

LEFT: Common Nighthawk photographed  
in Dinosaur Provincial Park, AB

*Photo by: Jody Allair*

Birds Canada assumed coordination of the  
Canadian Nightjar Survey in 2020.

James and Jannike  
birdwatching

Photo by:  
Justin Dutcher



3. A record-setting 20,700 checklists were submitted by Canadians to the Great Backyard Bird Count!
4. In 2019 Saskatchewan staff delivered 31 Bird ID Workshops (18 beginner, 7 intermediate, 6 advanced) attended by 941 participants in locations across the province. In Spring 2020 one online presentation reached 467 beginning birder participants (one of the largest workshops ever held by Birds Canada) and by summer had 1500+ views online. The model is being replicated in other regions.
5. Citizen Science and Species at Risk (SAR) programs in urban centres from Halifax to Saskatoon generated more than 12,000 SAR records.
6. Schoolyard Bird Blitz migrated to home schooling in 2020! Nearly 600 participants explored their local areas for birds, together reporting 209 species from across the country! More than 1200 students and youth across Canada participated in Birds Canada education programs in 2019.
7. Supporters of the Great Canadian Birdathon raised funds for research, conservation, and outreach projects that help birds. One way these funds are put to work is through grants provided through the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund. Regular Grants were awarded to projects of Nature Manitoba and Observatoire d'Oiseaux de Rimouski, as well as the Newfoundland Breeding Bird Atlas and the Saskatchewan Breeding Bird Atlas.

...

“Excellent workshop and a great way to feel a bit connected and to spend awhile doing something enjoyable during this time of isolation. Looking forward to more. Thanks”  
Sylvia Gent



Photo by: Parks Canada

# 467 beginning birder participants

...

Your online course for the blind and people with low vision allowed me to discover a 10 year mystery, a bird I have heard and no one was able to tell me what they were. It was a Song Sparrow.”

– Birding by Ear online course participant

## LOOKING FORWARD

Birds Canada commits to actively recruit to improve levels of diversity among our Citizen Scientists, staff, committees, and Board so we reflect the diversity of Canadian society. We will work to help everyone feel welcome in nature and to remove barriers to participation which may arise from location, travel, accessibility, lack of child care, lack of equipment, cost or other factors that influence the ability of all people to understand, appreciate, and conserve Canada’s wild birds.

### WE WILL CONTINUE TO:

- Expand successful e-learning programs and other opportunities for all champions.
- Broaden outreach and education efforts to reach a wide spectrum of Canadians.
- Maintain and grow champion support of existing conservation and monitoring programs.
- Secure champion support of emerging conservation and monitoring programs.

'I love you bird' - one of the messages children wrote on paper feathers at a 2019 Toronto Bird Celebration event.

Photo by: Andrés Jiménez



## TRACKING PRIORITY SPECIES

Our migration science is advancing conservation in the Americas. We have completed 60 and 29 years of migration monitoring, training, education, and collaborative research at Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO) and Thunder Cape Bird Observatory (TCBO) respectively. The Canadian Migration Monitoring Network is contributing to the understanding of national trends for migratory birds.

Thank you to the partners, volunteers, donors, and funders who are making these strides forward possible.



### HIGHLIGHTS

1. The migration ecology team has steadily grown the partnerships involved with the Motus Wildlife Tracking System. This collaborative network has expanded from its Canadian origins to 31 countries globally and tracked 228 species through some portion of their life cycle.
2. The pandemic meant LPBO's 60th anniversary was marked by its first ever closed season, as well as the spring closure of TCBO - but the birds didn't stop! Both observatories were up and running for the fall.
3. Results from our migration science are being published extensively and being used to inform and enact conservation efforts across the hemisphere.

Pat Woodford banded the first bird, a Song Sparrow, at LPBO April 2, 1960. As of April 2, 2020, 1,072,981 birds have been banded at LPBO.

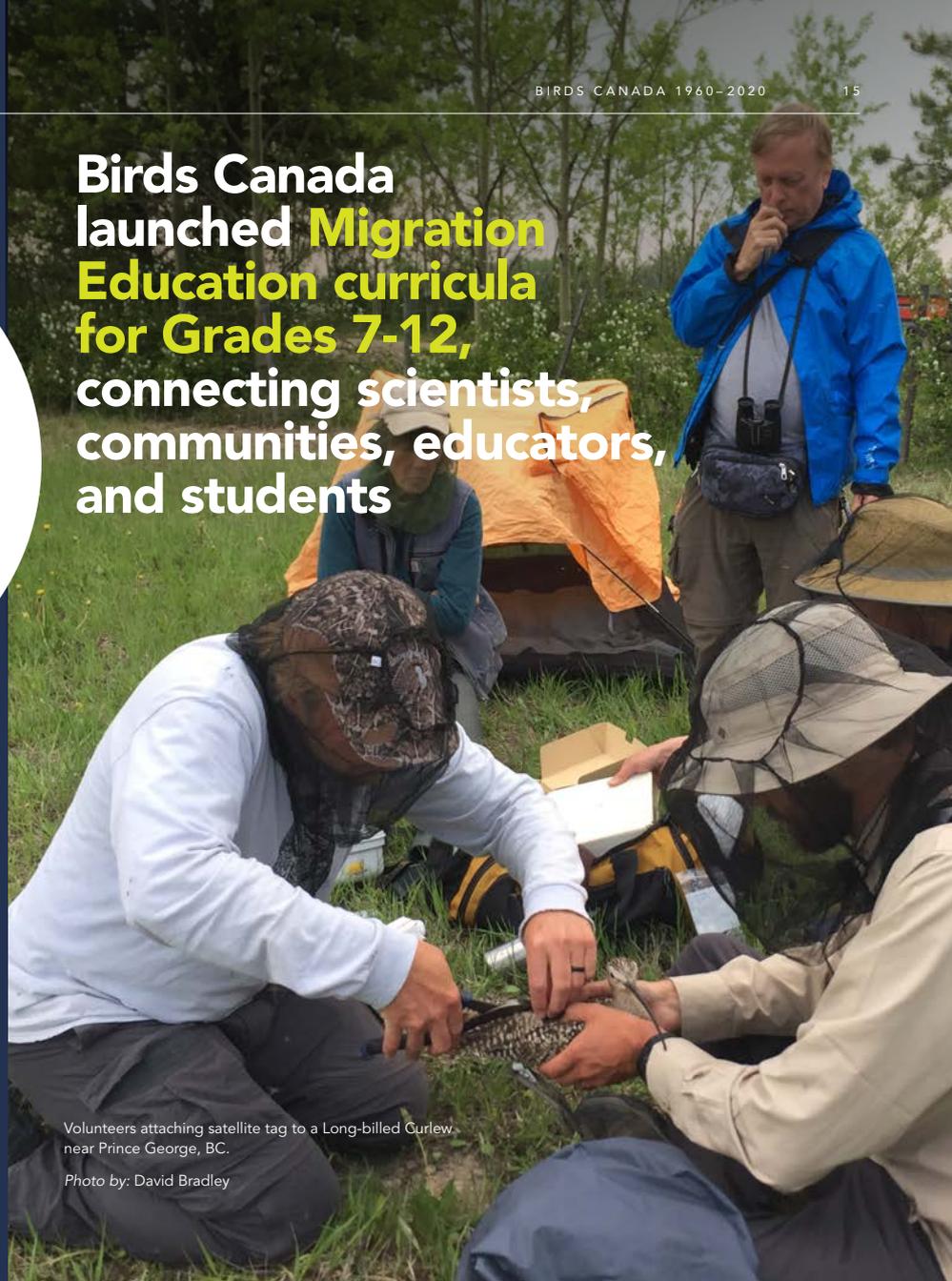
Students track and map tagged birds through the Motus Education program activities.

Photo by: Liza Barney



4. Birds Canada launched Migration Education curricula for Grades 7-12, connecting scientists, communities, educators, and students. The project was made possible by support from Motus collaborators and a growing network of enthusiastic educators with a passion for birds and conservation.
5. Connecting naturalist and farming communities in British Columbia through day-by-day tracking of individual birds connects people to birds and issues. This approach has catalyzed a community project in Prince George which is helping to conserve Long-billed Curlews.

## Birds Canada launched Migration Education curricula for Grades 7-12, connecting scientists, communities, educators, and students



Volunteers attaching satellite tag to a Long-billed Curlew near Prince George, BC.

Photo by: David Bradley



Migration education in action.  
Photo by: Liza Barne

## LOOKING FORWARD

Birds Canada will continue to ensure the Motus Wildlife Tracking System is well maintained. We will continue to expand the application of tracking data to impact conservation action.

The strategic use of tracking technologies can answer priority questions for the conservation of migratory birds. Our focus to date has been on neotropical migrant forest birds, aerial insectivores, and shorebirds on the Atlantic, Central and Pacific Flyways. This illustrates the importance of Birds Canada increasing our influence internationally for migratory birds through our BirdLife International network and our 300+ Motus collaborators.

**Motus receivers**  
**in 31 countries**  
**globally. 213**  
**species tracked**  
**through some**  
**portion of their**  
**migration.**

Louisiana Waterthrush  
Photo by: Andy Reago and Chrissy McLaren





...

“As long as I can remember I’ve been interested in birds. It’s very important to me that we protect existing bird populations and restore populations in decline. We can’t be the generation that says, “Oh well, they died out”. We have to protect them.

If I could share a message with anyone else considering joining me by making a gift in their Will, I would say: Go for it! Every contribution matters. Your Will tells people what you love and how you want to be remembered.”

**ANNE**

*British Columbia, member, former Board member, and legacy donor*

If you would like more information about remembering Birds Canada in your Will, please contact Kate Dalglish, Director of Membership and Annual Giving, by email at [kdalglish@birdscanada.org](mailto:kdalglish@birdscanada.org) or by phone 519-586-3531 x174.

# 2019-2020

# Legacy and Memorial Gifts

Many of our cherished friends leave gifts in their Wills to Birds Canada to continue to support our research, conservation, and education programs in perpetuity. Thank you to everyone who has made, is considering, or has arranged to make a gift to safeguard our birds and our environment for future generations.

## LEGACY DONATIONS

Audrey I. Silick, (Don Mills, ON)

Stefan Golebiowski, (Vineland, ON)

## MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Estelle Anderson (Simcoe, ON)

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Thank you to all our donors for sharing our commitment to be 'Canada's Voice for Birds'.  
**Together we are making a difference.**

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 \$500.**

\*Deceased

1 APRIL 2019 – 31 MARCH 2020

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- Atlantic Ecosystem Initiatives
- Canadian Wildlife Service
- Employment & Social Development
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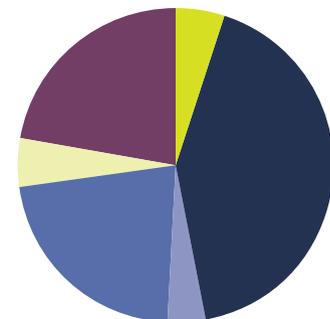
# 2019-2020 Financial Report

## CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

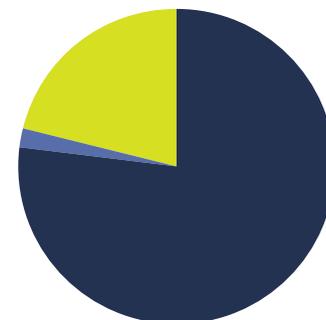
Year ending March 31

	2020			2019
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Current Assets	1,877,901			2,258,970
Investments	5,715,615			6,322,693
Capital Assets	1,054,189			1,126,599
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>8,647,705</b>			<b>9,708,262</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES</b>				
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	204,150			301,383
Deferred Revenue	1,137,896			1,379,271
Fund Balances:				
Operating	579,086		596,252	
Endowment	5,569,935		6,200,507	
Capital	1,075,149		1,149,395	
Other	81,489	7,305,659	81,454	8,027,608
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balances</b>	<b>8,647,705</b>			<b>9,708,262</b>

## SOURCE OF FUNDS



## USE OF FUNDS



## CONDENSED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND FUND BALANCES

Year ending March 31

	2020	2019
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Fees	123,360	186,603
Donations	670,593	1,650,264
Research and Conservation grants	4,735,524	4,184,882
Fundraising	241,204	223,957
Investment income	206,876	177,815
Gain (Loss) on sale of investments	160,066	135,852
Unrealized Gain (Loss) on investments	(580,979)	116,883
Other	26,091	45,974
	5,582,735	6,722,230
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Management and Administration		
Administration	478,174	442,419
Fundraising and membership development	262,165	266,146
Membership services	584,069	387,530
Amortization of capital assets	133,089	110,307
Investment Expenses	23,563	27,882
Research and Conservation		
International Collaborations	514,621	453,223
National Programs	1,874,557	1,498,049
Regional programs	2,403,088	2,384,574
Grants	30,358	15,500
Other	1,000	1,000
	6,304,684	5,586,630
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	(721,949)	1,135,600
Fund Balances, beginning	8,027,608	6,892,008
Fund Balances, ending	7,305,659	8,027,608

“Thank you for all you do for birds and let’s – all of us, together – tackle the issues for the 2020s with renewed energy and commitment.”

**STEVEN PRICE**

*President, Birds Canada*

Our audited financial statements are [available online](#) or by request.

# Our Mission

To conserve wild birds of Canada through sound science, on-the-ground actions, innovative partnerships, public engagement, and science-based advocacy.

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Piping Plover being tracked by the Motus Wildlife Tracking System.  
Photo by: Peter Paton