

2017 Doris Huestis Speirs Award

Dr. David M. Bird

The Doris Huestis Speirs Award is presented annually to an individual who has made outstanding lifetime contributions to Canadian ornithology. On behalf of the society, I am happy to present this year's award to Dr. David M. Bird.

During his 35 year career at the University of McGill, David was well known for his work in raptor research. His work spanned both captive and wild studies, including four decades managing the captive American kestrel colonies of McGill and authored/co-authored



over 120 of his nearly 200 peer-reviewed publications on this one species alone. David and his students pioneered studies of captive breeding techniques and reintroductions of falcons into cities as a means of conservation. In recent years, David has taken on the championing of the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs – or 'drones' to the uninitiated), not only in monitoring nesting of raptors and seabirds, but encouraging application in all areas of ornithological research. This includes organizing multiple conference workshops on this new technology, as well as co-founding an open-access journal on the topic – the *Journal of Unmanned Vehicle Systems*.

David's research has produced scores of next-generation biologists that have gone on to positions in all levels of government and academia in both Canada and the US, as evident in the large body of support letters we received

championing his nomination. He also has extensive service within professional societies, notably having served as President of both the Raptor Research Foundation and the Society of Canadian Ornithologists.

But, David's career has not just focused on academics. Throughout his time in Montreal, he developed shows on birds for local radio and television stations, as well as produced a weekly column (the Bird's Eye-View) for the Gazette newspaper. This has amounted to a tremendous body of work on public outreach for Canada's birds. He continues to conduct numerous campaigns to raise public awareness of birds and bird conservation; most notably in the last few years in advocating for Canada to name a National Bird and his tireless efforts to promote the Canada Jay (which some of you may know also as a Gray Jay).

On behalf of the selection committee and the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, it is my pleasure to award the Doris Huestis Speirs Award for 2017 to David Bird.