

Northern Spotted Owl Breeding Program

Spring/Summer Update 2017

A Record Breaking Breeding Season

The 2017 breeding season was the 9th for the Northern Spotted Owl Breeding Program and marked the best season to date! After many years of gathering groundbreaking husbandry and scientific information to learn as much as we could about how to successfully breed this species in captivity, our efforts produced two chicks in 2017. A steep learning curve and young owls that were unwilling to breed has begun to plateau. In previous years, one chick was produced, so doubling that number in 2017 gives hope that more and more chicks will be produced in the years to come.



Shania and Scud welcomed Chick D on April 19. This young chick is the second born to this pair as their first born, Elliott, was born in 2016. Read on to learn more about Chick D!

Sally and Watson welcomed Chick B on April 12, a first for this pair! Sally and Watson pair bonded in 2016 and

in only their second year together, were able to produce offspring. Sally was born in Oregon and Watson was born here in British Columbia, thus making the genetics of Chick B very important to the overall genetic health of the population. The unique genetic combination found in Chick B will increase the genetic variability in the population and help to prevent a genetic bottleneck from occurring, which can be a common problem for small populations.



During this year's breeding season, a brand new pair bond was formed between Sedin and Amoré. Attempts have been made for four years to get these two individuals to form a bond, but despite Sedin's many attempts to persuade Amoré, she would not accept him as a mate. At age seven, Amoré finally matured enough to form a bond with Sedin, giving us further evidence that Northern Spotted Owl females are less likely to accept a mate in their first seven years of life. The bond formed between Sedin and Amoré will hopefully result in chicks next year to aid in the restoration of the population of Spotted Owls in British Columbia.

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The FWCP Sponsored Live Nest Camera

For the first time ever, live images of a Northern Spotted Owl nest were publicly accessible thanks to our partnership with the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP). The FWCP has funded our internship program for the last two years and this year generously hosted the live feed of Scud and Shania's nest on their website (www.fwcp.ca). People from all across Canada, not to mention other countries as far as Poland and New Zealand, were able to see as Scud and Shania raised Chick D. The feed garnered a lot of media attention as well, including a national news spot on CTV News and articles in a variety of local newspapers.



We were so happy to be able to share some incredible images of Chick D. Over 3000 people tuned in throughout the month of May and were able to watch Chick D grow from a small chick that required constant care from mom Shania to a large fluffball that was able to jump out of the nest on May 29.

Once Chick D fledged, the FWCP featured an aviary camera to allow everyone to peak in on what life outside the nest looks like for a Spotted Owl chick.

We'd like to thank the FWCP and everyone that watched the webcam for your support. We're looking forward to having some great images to share next breeding season too!

Summer Fundraiser Success!

Following last year's incredible turnout for our first ever pub night, we knew this year we would have to go even bigger! On June 24th, 130 of our supporters and friends joined us for an evening of trivia, food, games, a raffle, and more. This event served as a great opportunity for members of the Northern Spotted Owl Team to share

what we have been up to this year, and to provide updates on the two chicks that hatched this breeding season.

The event was held at St. Nicholas Parish, which is located in a beautiful area surrounded by tall trees and lush greenery that provided the perfect backdrop for an evening dedicated to the forest dwelling Northern Spotted Owl. The night kicked off in the lobby where guests had the opportunity to take pictures with Forrest, our Ambassador Barred Owl, and offer their guesses at the gender of the new chicks as well as suggestions for names!

The rest of the evening included entertainment for owl lovers of all ages. Our nest stump game was a big hit with the kids, offering them a chance to pick an egg from a real nest that had been previously used by Spotted Owl. Our interactive table gave guests a chance to take a look at equipment used for egg incubation, dissect Spotted Owl pellets, learn about owl egg development and see real Spotted Owl eggs. The Coastal Painted Turtle Project even brought two endangered turtle species for guests to learn about.



As guests mingled at their tables during dinner, answering challenging owl trivia questions, they also had the chance to check out the great booths set up where our friends from WildSafe BC shared information about safe interactions with wildlife, as well as the South Coast Conservation Program who provided great information on endangered species that can be found in the Lower Mainland.

A presentation from one of the NSO biologists, Jasmine M, offered guests a chance to learn in more detail what goes on at the centre, why the Northern Spotted Owl is so important, and of course to see photo updates of the owls and this season's chicks.

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We also decided to switch things up this year by including a raffle in the evenings events. Up for grabs were many fantastic prizes including original local artwork from Joyce Trygg, wine tastings from Township 7 Winery, camping gear from MEC, zoo passes from the Greater Vancouver Zoo, outdoor adventure packages from Vancouver Water Adventures and Grouse Mountain, and many other great prizes from the KEG, Starbucks, Boston Pizza, the Fair at the PNE Vancouver, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Toy Traders, Safeway, Anthony Bucci, Allison Leigh Smith, and Ray Morris. We would like to say a big thank you to all our hardworking volunteers, to St. Nicholas Parish for providing the venue, to Liz for helping organize and providing financial support, to all our generous donors, and of course to all those who came out to show their support. This event was successful in raising around \$3000 that will go towards the conservation of the Northern Spotted Owl, and none of it would have been possible without all of you!

We have a LOGO! (finally)

For years the NSO Team has been talking about creating our very own logo. Something distinctive and obviously Spotted Owl, somehow incorporating the idea of a mother with a baby. And since so many logos use owls,



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including the BCCF logo, we knew it had to be unique. Several versions of the potential logo were drafted up by different people over the years, but none

of them were quite right.

This past spring a young up-and-coming graphic designer was recommended to us by Saint Bernadine Mission Communications Inc., the design firm where he was interning. After a few email conversations it was clear that Alex Saar was not only on board to design the logo, but that he really understood what we were envisioning. A few months later, and more than a few interpretations of the design later, we had it! We all agreed that the mother with spotted wings wrapped around her downy-white baby was the perfect image to convey the very essence of the breeding program.

We are busy designing merchandise that will feature the logo, so soon you'll start seeing it everywhere!

Wait for it... Wait for it... Website!

The wait is over – we have a website! Last year's pub-night fundraiser raised close to \$2000 to help us achieve the long-awaited dream of creating our own website, and, after months of research, debate and finally creation, it is now up and out there for the whole world to enjoy!

Created by Spotted Owl biologists Karen and Jasmine (not software engineers or graphic designers by any stretch of the imagination), and using the very user-friendly website creator Wix, the Program now has a beautifully designed website filled with information about every aspect of the captive breeding program. There are videos of owl behaviours and eggs hatching, photographs of all the owls, even a guided tour of our incubation facilities. You can find out how to get involved as a volunteer, where to find us out and about in the community, or sponsor the owl of your choice. Read about the history of the program these last 10 years, or how we breed Barred owls in addition to the Spotted Owl to help us refine our techniques. Meet the team and follow links to recent news about us in the media.

We will update the website regularly as we add new tour dates, plan more outreach events, and as our resident owl population grows. We will share new fun facts, such as the names of our 2017 chicks once they are chosen this fall, and provide a link to our internship job postings. Soon we will have an online shop where you can get your hands on some NSO swag!

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Everything, hopefully, that you ever wanted to know about what we do, now you can find at www.nsobreedingprogram.com.

Outreach

As the NSO Breeding Program continues to grow, we are also striving to expand our outreach program and reach as many members of the public as possible. Our goal is to foster a passion for the conservation of endangered species within Lower Mainland communities, and get the word out about the plight of the Northern Spotted Owl and what we do here at the Breeding Centre. Even through the busyness of the breeding season, we were able to attend many events this spring including the Surrey Environmental Extravaganza, OWL Open House, Fingerlings Festival and the Richmond Nature Park Owl Show just to name a few. Big thanks to all our awesome volunteers who helped out at these events!



Our big spring fundraiser campaign featured our Adopt-an-Egg program, where donors received five weekly emails detailing the development of a Northern Spotted Owl egg. The emails included exclusive updates about our artificial incubation process, photos of the owl embryos, and our preparations for hatch. We are happy to report we surpassed our \$500 goal for this campaign and are using the funds to purchase much needed supplies for our incubation building including distilled water, sterile gauze, and cameras.

As the upcoming school year approaches, we are preparing for our new outreach initiative – delivering

presentations to elementary, middle, and high schools across the Lower Mainland. We aim to spark an interest in kids in topics such as endangered species conservation, biology, and biodiversity. If you are interested in hosting us for a presentation at your school, please shoot us an email! You may even receive a special visit from Forrest, our Ambassador Barred Owl!

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