



THE BIRDFISH

FALL 2016

Churchill Northern Studies Centre
Newsletter

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Where are they now?

Nathan Senner



I first visited Churchill in the summer of 2005, at the tail end of a year in which I had traveled the lengths of the Western Hemisphere following the migration of Hudsonian Godwits. I had come to Churchill because it was the site where Godwits had first been described, in 1745, and where the most famous study of this enigmatic species had taken place in the 1960s. What I found in Churchill were not just Godwits and history, though, but also an incomparable landscape and a welcoming and collegial environment at the CNSC; I immediately knew that this was a place to which I needed to return. My sense that Churchill and the CNSC were my home away from home only grew over the course of my PhD and even intensified in the intervening years — there is something magical about Churchill that is hard to shake. Something of that magic has rubbed off on my science, too. First in the Netherlands at the University of Groningen and now at the University of Montana, I continue to find that the lessons I learned from watching Godwits, Jaegers, and Polar bears in the fen and on the tundra below the Observatory needle their way into my scientific thinking. Whether its assessing how climate change will likely affect the breeding biology of long-distance migratory birds or developing hypotheses to explain how the severity of an environment will influence a populations evolution, I always seem to be able to trace my thinking back to something I experienced in Churchill. ❁

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Michael Goodyear

Since leaving the CNSC two years ago, former Executive Director Mike Goodyear is busy pursuing a new career as a commercial bush pilot.

Since earning his commercial pilot licence in British Columbia's beautiful Okanagan Valley in the winter of 2015, Mike has been flying a Cessna 185 floatplane for Amik Aviation. Based in Little Grand Rapids, Manitoba, he provides air taxi for local residents and seasonal visitors to remote locations throughout northeastern Manitoba and northwestern Ontario, as well as freight and Medevac services.



"The fourteen years I spent with the CNSC team was an incredible and especially rewarding experience," says Goodyear. In fact, he says friends of the CNSC played a significant role in the development of his new career. "The Board of Directors and staff were very supportive and extremely flexible in allowing me the time over the years to pursue my passion for flying." CNSC instructor Roger "Starman" Woloshyn and his wife Dawn Kelley continue to provide assistance, encouragement and friendship to the point where their southern Manitoba property has become a second home for an itinerant bush pilot. Mike still maintains ties to Churchill, spending a good portion of the winter at his home in Churchill, assisting with projects at the Itsanitaq Museum and volunteering with the Guiding and Scouting movement. ❁



Jennie with White-rumped Sandpiper, Nanuit Itillinga (Polar Bear Pass) National Wildlife Area, Bathurst Island, NU
Photo credit: JF Dufour

Jennie Rausch

What am I up to...counting the birds of the arctic one bird at a time...1, 2, 3, ooooh! A nest with pretty eggs! Oops, I lost count... have to start again. 1, 2, 3... just kidding! Well, not about the counting birds part. I'm a Shorebird Biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service (Environment Canada) in Yellowknife, NT. I started working here as a summer student before all of quality time spent at the CNSC doing my M.Sc. fieldwork, and then started full-time in 2005. The bulk of my job is being the Canadian lead for the arctic component of the Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring (Arctic PRISM; <http://www.ec.gc.ca/reom-mbs/default.asp?lang=En&n=FC881C1B-1>) where we are censusing the entire North American Arctic to get statistically-rigorous, accurate, survey-based, species-specific population estimates for non-colonial arctic breeding birds. As well, we are studying shorebird demographics and investigating the causes of declining shorebird populations which is where banding little dudes like the one posing with me in the photo comes into play. I'm also fortunate to get to work with elders from Cambridge Bay and Gjoa Haven, NU to manage the Ahiak (Queen Maud Gulf) Migratory Bird Sanctuary which is the largest protected area in North America and a biological hotspot for migratory birds and other arctic wildlife. What's the only thing equally cool as counting seedlings in/on gravel pits and pads?? Birds! I still haven't found a research station as fun or as cool as the CNSC though. The CNSC is definitely where I discovered the power of volunteer field assistants (yay Earthwatchers!); Arctic PRISM has been fortunate to have had more than 25 dedicated volunteers from a variety of science and non-science backgrounds over the past ~10 years and it has made all the difference! ❄️



Michael Ho

I came across Churchill Northern Studies Center when I was researching how to view and photograph polar bears in Hudson Bay. There are no shortage of outfits offering polar bear tours!

The CNSC is a different kind of company. It is a non-profit organization providing year round sub Arctic research in the Western Hudson Bay region. In addition, it offers Learning Vacations ranging from bird watching to beluga whales and polar bears.



Each course is led by a highly qualified wildlife specialist, well qualified to immerse participants in the area of their specific interest.

I have been coming to the Lord of the Arctic (LOA) program for a few years now to witness and photograph the annual ritual of polar bears, waiting around for the sea ice to form so they can return to their hunting grounds in Hudson Bay. The LOA is the best program I have discovered in polar bear encounter and education. This is the reason I return year after year and highly recommend it to anyone interested in learning more about global warming and how it affects the plight of these endangered animals. ❄️





churchillnorthernstudiescentre

LOOKING BACK AT 40 YEARS

Photos from the past 40 years: 1976-2016



1976-1986 ▲

Professor Robert L. (Bob) Jefferies and Joanne Rzadki (field assistant) chat at the Churchill Northern Studies Centre in September 1982

[Churchill Community of Knowledge]



1986-1996

Look at that strapping young researcher



1996-2006

A moment of discovery in 2005!



2006-2016

A beautiful day for field work in 2009! Researcher Amanda Winegardner and Ingrid Ng.



▲ The culmination of years of hard work, cutting the ribbon on the new building in 2011!

Hey Shutterbugs!!

Celebrating 40 years of Subarctic Research and Education:
Call for Archival Materials!



Do you have photos from the Churchill Northern Studies Centre you would like to share? We're putting out the call for photos, videos and documents about the CNSC! Do you have photos from your time at the CNSC as a researchers or learner? We will showcase the materials gathered during our 40th anniversary celebrations and in the next edition of the Birdfish!



Contact us at archive@churchillscience.ca for more information!



40th Anniversary Giftshop items!

To celebrate 40 years of subarctic research and education, we have introduced some special anniversary merchandise! All proceeds from our gift shop go toward supporting the mission of the CNSC.

Not going to be at the CNSC anytime soon? You can contact us, and we will ship to you!



Towards 40 more years of subarctic research and education: school and youth groups at the CNSC



In 2015 we broke our all time record for school and youth user days, and hosted 747 users days of young learners! From groups exploring the sea ice in May, to kayaking with belugas in the summer months, and climbing on a Tundra Buggy to see bears in October and November, we are happy to hosting so many youth at the CNSC and helping to inspire the next generation of researchers!



ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE WORLD AROUND US

ENTER TO WIN A COPY

THE SCIENCE of WHY

JAY INGRAM

WHAT IS DEJA VU?

Why do onions make you cry? Jay Ingram, former host of *Daily Planet*, is here to put your scientific quandaries to rest. Whimsically illustrated and chock-full of fun science facts, *The Science of Why* will delight and surprise your inner science geek. Want your own copy? Send your name and address to giveaway@churchillscience.ca to be entered for your chance to win!



featured course

Belugas in the Bay: Through the Camera Lens

by Evan Roberts, CNSC Bilingual Program Assistant, Summer 2016

THIS SUMMER I'VE BEEN FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE AFFORDED the opportunity to work as a Bilingual Programming Assistant at the Churchill Northern Studies Centre (CNSC). The CNSC is an independent non-profit organization that facilitates research and education in western Hudson Bay. Working in the Educational Programming Department I've had the chance to participate in and help facilitate a number of the CNSCs Learning Vacations (LV). A LV is a unique model of educational tourism that allows the participant the chance to be entrenched with experts on the subject of their choice throughout a one-week immersive, informative and participatory experience. The topics include beluga whales, polar bears and the aurora borealis.



The very first LV that I had the chance to participate in was titled *Belugas in the Bay: Through the Camera Lens*. The extremely knowledgeable and talented Kristin Westdal and Chris Paetkau led the LV. Kristin is a Marine Biologist who has worked extensively in the Arctic, and she was keen to share her vast knowledge of belugas with us throughout the week both on the water and in the classroom. Chris, a videographer by trade and co-founder of Build Films spent hours with participants leading and coaching us in a wide range of photography concepts that spread from basic intro point-and-shoot techniques and then into much more complex underwater photography skills while keeping all participants engaged whether they were simply equipped with a cell phone camera, goPro or loaded with lenses and a Digital SLR. With Kristen teaching us all about the whales that we were seeing around us and Chris taking photos of it all, it was a truly magical experience to be out on the water with them both. In addition to our time spent on boat excursions exploring the Churchill River estuary and Hudson Bay, we also had the chance to tour the town of Churchill and the surrounding area. A highlight for me was visiting the Prince of Wales Fort. As a National Historic Site managed by Parks Canada, we were treated to a captivating interpretation of the deeply rooted history of the Fort and the broader Churchill area from our Parks Heritage Presenter Duane. Understanding the history of the area allowed for a more profound understanding of the cultural and historical significance of this site. The history of Churchill is further punctuated with a visit to the Itsanitaq Museum (formerly Eskimo Museum) located in the town of Churchill. The museum exhibits Arctic marine mammal artefacts like baleen from a bowhead whale and a few examples of a narwhal tooth.

As a photographer, I was attracted to this LV because of its name, but what this opportunity allowed me to do was gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of Churchill beyond just being the *Polar Bear Capital of the World*. When you peel



back the layers of Churchill, and dig deeper, you start to realize just how culturally, socially, and historically significant this small little humble town on Hudson Bay really is. Your sense of identity as a Canadian starts to strengthen as you walk within the walls of the Prince of Wales Fort. Your sense of adventure and wanderlust peaks as a beluga whale breaches for air right in front of your kayak, and you snap the perfect photo. Your knowledge broadens as experts guide you on beluga age and gender identification with whales that are right beside you. In short, this LV was undoubtedly the springboard to a life-changing summer. ❄️

Evan Roberts is a student at the University of Winnipeg completing a double-major in Human Rights and Conflict Resolution. Evan is a passionate photographer, mediocre hockey player, and a cycling enthusiast.

Want to experience the belugas of Churchill through the camera lens? Sign up today! Visit churchillscience.ca/events



Upcoming Road Scholar Programs:

Into the Arctic Skies – January 25-30, 2017

Into the Arctic Skies – February 22-27, 2017

Lords of the North I: Ecology of Hudson Bay's Polar Bears – October 15-20, 2017

Lords of the North II: Ecology of Hudson Bay's Polar Bears – October 20-25, 2017

Lords of the North III: Ecology of Hudson Bay's Polar Bears – October 25-30, 2017

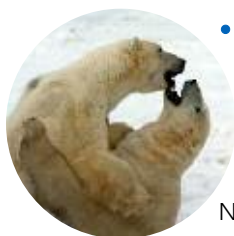
For more information, visit our website, churchillscience.ca/events



UPCOMING COURSES

CNSC Learning Vacations:

- **Winter Skies: Aurora and Astronomy in Churchill**
January 19-24, 2017
- **Winter Skies: Aurora and Astronomy in Churchill**
February 16-21, 2017
- **North of 58: Subarctic Winter Ecology**
March 7-11, 2017
- **Spring's Wings: Birding in Churchill** June 8-13, 2017
- **Belugas in the Bay: Through the Camera Lens**
June 22-27, 2017
- **Into the Wildflowers: Flora of the Subarctic**
July 6-11, 2017
- **Belugas in the Bay: The White Wales of Churchill**
July 13-18, 2017
- **Wild Planet: Whales and Wonders of the Subarctic in Summer** August 17-22, 2017



- **Lords of the Arctic I: The Ecology of Hudson Bay's Polar Bears**
November 2-9, 2017
- **Lords of the Arctic II: The Ecology of Hudson Bay's Polar Bears**
November 9-16, 2017.

FOR RESERVATIONS CONTACT:

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cnscc@churchillscience.ca • www.churchillscience.ca

Visit www.churchillscience.ca/events



4 for 40 Campaign Update

Thanks to your support we have raised nearly \$60,000!

- This has allowed us to expand our school and youth group offerings; we had a record setting year in 2015-16, hosting more school and youth groups than ever before!
- We have also increased our direct

contribution to the Northern Research Fund, directly supporting the work of researchers in the region.

- We have also continued to grow the Birdfish Fund, our greatest needs fund which will help support the CNSC for the next 40 years of subarctic research and education.

We count on the support of members like you to support the work of the CNSC! Consider becoming a monthly donor to help subarctic research and education year round! *

Established in 1976, the Churchill Northern Studies Centre is an independent, non-profit research station located along the western coast of Hudson Bay.

board of directors

Louise Lawrie (Chair) – Churchill Community Development Corporation
 Christopher Storie (Vice-Chair) – University of Winnipeg
 Richard Bello (Treasurer) – Member-at-Large
 Judy Wilson (Secretary) – Member-at-Large
 Jim Roth – CNSC Users' Representative
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 Matthew Bunka – Duke of Marlborough School
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 Mike Spence – Town of Churchill
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 Brett Wlock – Manitoba Conservation
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staff

to understand and sustain the north

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Seasonal Research Intern
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Phillip Park

Maintenance Assistant
Rene Preteau

The CNSC is a registered Canadian charity in part supported by the Manitoba Department of Education and Advanced Learning and Manitoba Conservation.

The Birdfish Newsletter is produced by CNSC staff with assistance from researchers and program participants.

Latitude: 58° 44.16'N Longitude: 93° 49.09'W

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churchillnorthernstudiescentre

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Join us in Sustaining the North for the Future

4 FOR 40

The CNSC Turns 40 in 2016!

It's an incredible time to be a part of this organization. For the last four decades we have welcomed up to 200 researchers per year, facilitated cutting-edge scientific studies that catalyze change, hosted the public in hands-on education opportunities, been a hub for culture and heritage and helped support Churchill's economy. We even moved into a beautiful new

facility. The board and staff of the CNSC are grateful to everyone who has contributed to the success of the Centre over the past 40 years. We are leaps and bounds from where we began, and we're excited for the future.

What is 4 for 40?

We have launched a campaign to raise \$4 Million to celebrate 40 years of leading research and education in the Canadian sub-Arctic! We will focus on expanding and enhancing our school and youth programming, so that we can be a better learning centre, our Northern Research Fund, so that we can be a better research facility and our Birdfish Endowment Fund, so we can better plan for the future. We want to be the best that we can possibly be, and we can't wait for you to join us to help achieve this.

contribute

Your contribution is still needed to ensure that WE meet all the expectations that YOU, our participants, researchers, educators, donors and members have for the future of the CNSC. No contribution is too small. Every gift counts.

How to contribute:

Visit our website www.churchillscience.ca – click the "Donate Now" button to donate securely through our partner Canada Helps.

Visit our Canada Helps Giving Page – <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/churchill-northern-studies-centre/>

Contact Kim at 204 675 2307 or daley@churchillscience.ca – and she will process your donation personally.

Clip the form below and mail to CNSC, Box 610, Churchill, MB, ROB OE0, Canada



Help Us Save \$\$\$\$ and Trees...

Did you know that you can receive the *Birdfish* via email?

Help the CNSC save on postage and save trees by opting to receive your *Birdfish* via email.

Contact Kim at 204 675 2307 or daley@churchillscience.ca and say I want to save trees! ❄️

join, renew, support

the Churchill Northern Studies Centre Today!

We rely on our membership to provide the support and funding needed to make the CNSC a place for world class research and education programs in the Canadian subarctic. Join us now and be part of these exciting times at the CNSC. Already a member? Use this form to ensure your membership remains current. Renew or Join today!

Name: _____ E-mail: _____ Tel: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Province/State: _____ Postal/Zip Code: _____

In accordance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, names, addresses or other personal information collected by Churchill Northern Studies Centre is used for internal purposes such as informational mailings, membership renewals and other communications, and is not shared with any third party. Complete details of our privacy policy are available by contacting the CNSC.

NEW* membership RENEW* my membership I would like to receive my copy of *The Birdfish* in electronic form

Individual \$50 Student/Senior \$40 Family \$80 Corporate \$500 *One-year CNSC membership

I want to support the CNSC Please use my donation of \$ _____ for:

General Operations School and Youth Programming

Northern Research Fund Birdfish Endowment Fund

Tax receipts are provided for Canadian donations of \$25 or more. Membership fees are not tax-deductible.

Please detach and mail to:
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P.O. Box 610, Launch Road
Churchill, Manitoba
ROB OE0 Canada
or call (204) 675-2307



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We appreciate your support of the Churchill Northern Studies Centre. Your donations support research and education that makes the world a better place. Thank you very much.