

succeeded the AOU in 2016) and, gratifyingly, within a few months our proposal was overwhelmingly approved (9 votes to 1).

Now the larger issue of a national bird for Canada is in the hands of the federal government. It could well be that they hesitated to choose the “Gray Jay” as our national bird because of its American spelling and lack of historical legitimacy. Or perhaps they hesitated to unilaterally declare “Canada Jay” to be the restored name of our bird because they thought



they might be committing some ornithological faux pas if they did. But now the formally recognized restoration of the original official name, “Canada Jay” lays to rest both these reasons for governmental caution. May we expect some movement on this file in the not-too-distant future? Let’s hope so and, once more, let’s hear it for the Canada Jay!”

*This bird is OOTLYOSR, named for his coloured bands (Orange Over light blue Left, Yellow Over Silver Right).*

PHOTO: GORD BELVEA

## 2018 Canada Jay Research Update

This year marked a year of change for the Canada Jays of Algonquin Park. Not only was their common name officially changed, but they also rebounded from the previous two record low reproduction years. During the breeding season of 2018, the Canada Jay research team found 18 nests that produced a total of 34 nestlings. Continuing with an ongoing project studying juvenile movement and survival, we radio tagged many of these nestlings, allowing us to follow young Canada Jays as they moved throughout the Park. This information is incredibly valuable because it allows us to see how far they move once they leave their natal territory and whether they survive throughout the summer and fall. This year our farthest mover travelled over 11 km!

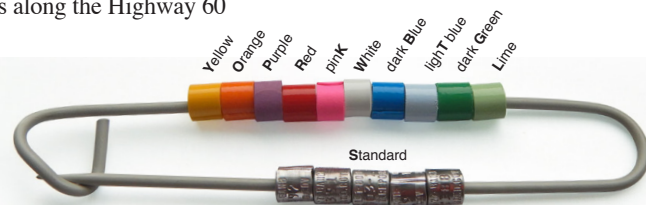
Researchers also recently completed their fall round-up, during which they counted Canada Jays along the Highway 60



*Canada Jay nestlings - 14 days old (above). Colour leg bands used to individually identify Canada Jays (below).*

Corridor. Consistent with the better breeding season in the spring, our population size has increased, in part due to a higher number of juveniles staying in the study area than in 2017. However, the Canada Jay population in the Highway 60 Corridor has declined by about 60% since the early 1970s and climate warming is the probable cause.

*Coloured bands used by Canada Jay researchers in Algonquin.*



If you would like additional information or an updated list of banded Canada Jays in the Park (with a key to the naming system) please stop by the Algonquin Park Visitor Center or contact Dan Strickland (perisoreus1@gmail.com), Alex Sutton (asutto01@uoguelph.ca) or Koley Freeman (nfreeman@uoguelph.ca).

# Algonquin Provincial Park's

# 8th Annual WINTER IN THE WILD

**February 16th, 2019**

*(Family Day Weekend)*

*All activities are free with the purchase of a valid Park Permit*

- Snowshoeing
- Special Presentations
- Winter Camping Demos
- Winter Birding
- Ice Skating
- Wolf Howl
- BBQ at Mew Lake Campground
- Roasting Marshmallows and more...

*For more details check [algonquinpark.on.ca](http://algonquinpark.on.ca)*



## ALGONQUIN VISITOR CENTRE

HOURS OF OPERATION

**Open Daily**

**9 am - 4 pm**  
(limited services)

**Museum • Bookstore & Nature Shop • Café** **Weekends & Holidays**

**9 am - 5 pm**  
(full services)

Winter Hours — October 30 to April 18, 2019

Holidays — Christmas (December 27 to January 6, 2019 | **Closed December 24-26**) • Family Day (February 18)  
March Break (March 9-17, 2019) • Easter Weekend (April 19 to April 22, 2019)

**Algonquin Logging Museum - Reception Centre is closed. The 1.3 km trail with outdoor exhibits is available year-round.**

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[algonquinpark.on.ca](http://algonquinpark.on.ca)



Algonquin

The

# Raven

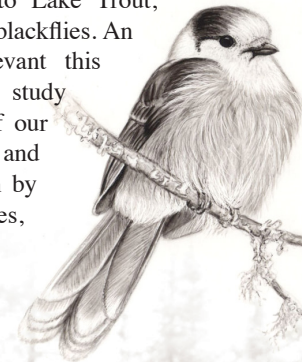
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## Let's Hear it for the Canada Jay!

Algonquin Park staff are proud of the Park's long tradition as one of Canada's most important areas for biological research—on everything from Wolves to Lake Trout, and from Sugar Maples to blackflies. An example, particularly relevant this year, is our decades-long study of the Canada Jay, one of our country's truly iconic birds and known with great affection by generations of native peoples,

explorers, trappers and campers in our north woods. Not only did the study begin way back in 1964, which now makes it one of the longest studies of its kind anywhere in the world, but also, for most of its 54-year history, the study was conducted exclusively by Park staff and on their own time. In 1964 park naturalist, Russ Rutter, the original editor (author, really) of *The Raven*, was the first person to put coloured leg bands on Canada Jays.



*Canada Jay*

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINE KERRIGAN

*In the 1960s Russ Rutter introduced coloured bands to permit identification of individual Canada Jays.*

PHOTO BY DAN STRICKLAND





Dan Strickland and University of Guelph M.Sc. student, Rachael Derbyshire, banding two nestling Canada Jays, April 17, 2014.

in the first place and why, only now, are we going back to the original name. We are pleased, therefore, to publish the following account of the Canada Jay's name change history by former Algonquin Chief Park Naturalist, Dan Strickland. Dan was very much involved in the restoration of "Canada Jay" and we are pleased to have him do this guest article and address these commonly asked questions.

This allowed him to begin observations of individually identifiable birds and to start unravelling the complexities of their social behaviour. Then, upon Russ's death in 1976, the study was taken over and greatly expanded by another Algonquin staff member, Dan Strickland, Chief Park Naturalist from 1970 to 2000 (successor as The Raven editor). Dan continues to help lead the study in retirement although he has also welcomed collaborators from the academic community, including Dr. Thomas A. Waite of Ohio State University in the 1990s and, since 2010, Drs. Ryan Norris and Amy Newman and their growing list of M.Sc. and Ph.D students from the University of Guelph.

But there is another major reason to be proud of Algonquin's role in Canada Jay research, especially in 2018. Earlier this year, in July, the English name of this famous bird was formally changed by the American Ornithological Society from "Gray Jay" (in use since 1957) back to the original official name "Canada Jay". Most of us have grown up using "Gray Jay" and it will take a while before people once again automatically and spontaneously say "Canada Jay". Even then, many Algonquin Park visitors and other Canadians will be left wondering why "Canada Jay" was changed to "Gray Jay" back in 1957

## How the Name Canada Jay was Lost and then Recovered

by Dan Strickland

"I was 15 years old in 1957 when the English name of *Perisoreus canadensis* was officially changed from "Canada Jay" to "Gray Jay" by the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU). Frankly, I don't remember thinking very much about the change one way or another at the time. The AOU came into being in the 1880s, partly because professional ornithologists and amateur naturalists alike all perceived the need to have some central authority that could come up with standardized scientific and English names and impose some order on the previous "chaos" surrounding the names of North America's birds. From the outset all the big names of North American ornithology were part of the AOU and any initial resistance to its decisions soon melted away. Ever since then, and right up to the present day, the Nomenclature Committee of the AOU has enjoyed such an enormous prestige and respect that no-one seriously challenges its "right" to determine the identity and names of our birds.

In the particular case of the 1957 name change from "Canada Jay" to "Gray Jay" there was some unpublished grumbling (at

least in Canada) but most people just assumed that the AOU must have had a valid reason to make the change and that, in the interests of having commonly accepted names, we had all better just accept the decision and "get on with life". That was certainly the way I looked at it and throughout my later close involvement with this bird, I unhesitatingly used the name Gray Jay, in talks, in written articles, and even on my licence plates—all without complaint.

That would still be the case if it weren't for the well-publicized 2016 campaign by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society to choose a national bird for Canada and its eventual decision to recommend the Gray Jay. I had no objection to the choice of the bird itself but I also thought that the official name, especially with its American spelling of "gray" instead of the Canadian "grey", actually disqualified the Gray Jay from being the chosen bird. And what a pity, I thought, that the original name, "Canada Jay", had been abandoned. After all, when it comes to having a Canadian national bird, one can hardly have a more suitable choice than a bird



Canada Jay  
PETER FERGUSON

with "Canada" in its official name. More to the point, people started to ask me why the name had been changed in the first place and I had to admit that I really had no idea.



The ultimate Canadian bird? Canada Jays nest in late winter well before snowmelt.

It was a question to which I, as a supposed authority on Gray Jays, could reasonably be expected to know the answer. So I decided to make amends for my previous inattention to the subject and to see if I could find out why the AOU made the decision it did back in 1957. My enquiries led me to several key references and especially to the AOU's own archives in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington which I was able to examine in April 2016.

It turned out that the story is rather complicated and space does not allow us to do full justice to it here.\* Suffice it to say that the AOU initially had a reasonable justification for proposing to replace "Canada Jay" with "Gray Jay". In the late 1940s they realized that they needed to replace the confusing English naming system then in use for birds. But they also needed to avoid geographically awkward English names for subspecies that would have resulted from their reforms—names like "Alaska Canada Jay, Oregon

\*For more details we are happy to refer readers to an article Dan prepared for the April 2017 issue of Ontario Birds (How the Canada Jay Lost its Name—and why it matters)  
[www.ofo.ca/site/download/id/178](http://www.ofo.ca/site/download/id/178)

Canada Jay, or Idaho Canada Jay". By instead choosing "Gray Jay" as the overall species name, they sidestepped this problem and ended up with much less awkward English names for subspecies (Alaska Gray Jay, Oregon Gray Jay, Idaho Gray Jay etc.). All well and good but then, at the last moment, before they actually published the new names, the AOU got cold feet and decided

not to have English names for subspecies after all. The whole reason for abandoning "Canada Jay", the name that we now know had been in use since at least 1772, was to avoid geographic awkwardness in the reformed English names of subspecies. But now, since they had decided not to have English subspecies names, the justification for imposing "Gray Jay" simply evaporated.

The minutes from an AOU meeting a year later (1955) show that the committee clearly recognized that the decision not to have English subspecies names meant it would be "possible to retain as specific names a number that have been long in use". Consistent with this realization, in at least 18 cases the new species names proposed in the late 1940s were not used in the fifth official Checklist when it was eventually published in 1957. Instead, the original common names



Canadians from coast to coast take great delight in meeting the confident Canada Jay!

appeared in their place. Unfortunately, and for no reason apparent to us, "Canada Jay" was not among those restored names.

When all was said and done, therefore, the original justification for suggesting "Gray Jay" as a replacement for the 185 year-old "Canada Jay" had disappeared several years before 1957. By nevertheless persisting with "Gray Jay", the AOU ended up by violating its own stated principle of preserving traditional names whenever possible and this became a major argument for restoring "Canada Jay".

Indeed, soon after this history was revealed, a group of us who had published scientific papers on Canada Jays (albeit using the name Gray Jay!) got together and prepared a formal proposal to have "Canada Jay" once again become the official name. We submitted our proposal in late 2017 to the "AOS" (the "American Ornithological Society" that

## The Joys of Canada Jay Research in Algonquin

The study of Canada Jays has brought many happy moments to researchers in Algonquin but this one may surpass all the rest. Watch as University of Guelph PhD candidate, Koley Freeman, while banding a nestling Canada Jay in April 2018, receives an amazing visit from the baby bird's father.



YouTube FOAPAAlgonquinPark  
<https://youtu.be/4V1DDMLl1jM>



ALEX SUTTON