

Atwood-Gibson Bird Centre
1023 West Shore Road,
Pelee Island, Ontario NOR 1M0

PIBO Mailing address
P.O. Box 240001 Market Square
Windsor, Ontario N8Y 4Y9



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pelee Island Bird Observatory to officially open Atwood-Gibson Bird Centre

New home for migration science, conservation and education honours the legacy of Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson

PELEE ISLAND, ONTARIO — September 12, 2026 — The Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO) will officially open and name its new Atwood-Gibson Bird Centre on Saturday, September 12, marking an important milestone in PIBO's more than 20-year history.

The Centre honours the shared legacy of Margaret Atwood and the late Graeme Gibson, whose love of birds, nature and Pelee Island helped inspire PIBO's beginnings. Graeme Gibson and his son, Graeme Gibson the Younger, founded PIBO with a vision of creating a beacon for science, conservation and community. Margaret remains PIBO's Founding Honorary Chair.

The Pinchin Family and Margaret Atwood, recognized as PIBO's Founding Legacy Builders, provided extraordinary leadership and support that helped make the Centre possible. The opening will also recognize the Don Pinchin Research Wing, named in honour of the late Don Pinchin.

The Bird Centre provides PIBO with a permanent home for migration science, conservation, education and community engagement, including expanded opportunities for research, collaboration and shared learning. The Centre will also provide a home for PIBO's evolving Science Plan developed in collaboration with Birds Canada, which will serve as a roadmap for setting future research and conservation priorities, developing partnerships, and guiding the expansion of PIBO's science and funding capacity.

For more than two decades, PIBO's long-term migration monitoring has contributed important data to the understanding and conservation of migratory birds. The new Centre provides a platform to build on this work and strengthen PIBO's contribution to the broader Canadian and hemispheric network of bird observatories.

The project received a \$150,000 capital grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Government of Ontario, together with support from donors, volunteers, partners and the Pelee Island community.

Atwood-Gibson Bird Centre
1023 West Shore Road,
Pelee Island, Ontario NOR 1M0

PIBO Mailing address
P.O. Box 240001 Market Square
Windsor, Ontario N8Y 4Y9



The official opening ceremony and ribbon-cutting will take place at 12:15 p.m. on Saturday, September 12, at the Atwood-Gibson Bird Centre, 1023 West Shore Road, Pelee Island. The ceremony will be open to the Pelee Island community and visitors.

PIBO is also establishing the Atwood-Gibson Legacy Fund, a permanent endowed fund intended to help carry the organization's vision forward for future generations.

"When my late partner Graeme Gibson and his son, Graeme Gibson the Younger, founded PIBO, they hoped it would become a beacon for science, conservation and community. Graeme would be delighted to see how far it has come, and how the new Bird Centre will anchor this work for generations to come. His legacy lives on in every bird counted, every student inspired, and every act of care for the natural world."

— Margaret Atwood, Founding Honorary Chair, PIBO

Media Contact

Emma Gignac|Pelee Island Bird Observatory|gignacemma@gmail.com|www.pibo.ca

Atwood–Gibson Bird Centre
1023 West Shore Road,
Pelee Island, Ontario NOR 1M0

PIBO Mailing address
P.O. Box 240001 Market Square
Windsor, Ontario N8Y 4Y9



PIBO BACKGROUNDER

The Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO) is a volunteer-founded Canadian registered charity dedicated to migration science, bird conservation, education and public engagement.

Pelee Island sits directly on two major migratory flyways. Each spring and fall, tens of millions of birds pass over the island, with many stopping to rest and refuel. Pelee Island is recognized as a Key Biodiversity Area and is one of Canada's important migratory bird habitats.

For more than 20 years, PIBO has conducted long-term, standardized migration monitoring that contributes evidence to local, national and hemispheric conservation efforts.

PIBO by the numbers

The PIBO 2024–25 Impact Report covers two years of activity, rather than a single reporting year.

- 57,000+ birds documented through long-term standardized monitoring, representing 266 species
- 660,000+ birds recorded through banding and census over the two migration seasons
- 4,000+ field hours of staff and volunteer monitoring
- 2,500+ community members reached through more than 40 events
- 21 years of continuous standardized data informing conservation decisions

The Impact of PIBO's Work

PIBO's value extends well beyond the birds observed on Pelee Island. Its long-term standardized monitoring contributes data to the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network and helps researchers and conservation organizations understand changes in migratory bird populations over time.

The opportunity ahead is to build on this foundation—strengthening research partnerships, integrating new technologies and approaches, supporting emerging conservation practitioners, expanding public understanding of migration, and connecting Pelee Island's observations to the larger picture of bird populations across Canada and the hemisphere.

Atwood-Gibson Bird Centre
1023 West Shore Road,
Pelee Island, Ontario NOR 1M0

PIBO Mailing address
P.O. Box 240001 Market Square
Windsor, Ontario N8Y 4Y9



The Atwood-Gibson Bird Centre

The Bird Centre is the most significant development in PIBO's history. It provides a permanent home for migration science, conservation and education on Pelee Island and is designed as both a scientific hub and a community gathering space.

- Long-term migration monitoring and species-at-risk research
- Visiting scientists, students and researchers
- Education programs, workshops and demonstrations
- Research collaboration and shared learning
- Community gatherings and learning
- Bird- and pollinator-friendly outdoor education
- Opportunities to inspire future conservation leaders

A Science Plan for the Next Chapter

PIBO is developing a new Science Plan to guide the next phase of its work. The Plan will provide a roadmap for setting research and conservation priorities, identifying opportunities for collaboration and partnership, and aligning future program and funding development with the needs of migratory birds and the broader conservation community.

The Science Plan builds on PIBO's more than two decades of migration monitoring while looking ahead to new opportunities in research, technology, data, education and knowledge-sharing. It will help PIBO make strategic choices about where it can have the greatest impact and provide a framework for developing the partnerships and resources needed to support that work.

A Shared Legacy: Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson

Margaret Atwood and the late Graeme Gibson share a foundational place in PIBO's story. Graeme Gibson and his son, Graeme Gibson the Younger, founded PIBO, inspired by a vision that the organization could become a beacon for science, conservation and community. Margaret Atwood has remained deeply engaged as PIBO's Founding Honorary Chair, donor, advocate and public voice.

The naming of the Atwood-Gibson Bird Centre recognizes this shared legacy and the continuing influence of their commitment to birds, nature, science and conservation.

Atwood-Gibson Bird Centre
1023 West Shore Road,
Pelee Island, Ontario NOR 1M0

PIBO Mailing address
P.O. Box 240001 Market Square
Windsor, Ontario N8Y 4Y9



Founding Legacy Builders

Margaret Atwood and the Pinchin Family are recognized as Founding Legacy Builders for their extraordinary support of the Bird Centre. Their leadership and generosity were fundamental to making the Centre possible and establishing a permanent home for PIBO's work.

The Don Pinchin Research Wing

The Don Pinchin Research Wing is named in honour of the late Don Pinchin. The Wing provides accommodation for researchers, field staff and volunteers, while also creating a dedicated hub for research connections, collaboration and shared learning.

Its purpose is not simply to house people conducting field work, but to bring researchers, students, field practitioners and conservation partners together on Pelee Island to exchange knowledge, develop relationships and advance research and conservation.

A New Chapter for PIBO

After more than two decades of volunteer-driven, founder-led work, PIBO is building increased professional and strategic capacity to support the next phase of its development. This includes strengthening organizational leadership, developing a new strategic plan, expanding research partnerships and creating the capacity to make full use of the new Centre.

The goal is not simply to do more, but to build thoughtfully on the foundation that has already been created.

The Atwood-Gibson Legacy Fund

The Atwood-Gibson Legacy Fund is being established as a permanent endowed fund to help sustain PIBO's work for future generations.

The Fund's capital will be preserved rather than spent. Its disbursements will be governed by separate investment and fund policies and will be limited to the interest and other income available for distribution.

The Fund carries forward the vision that Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson helped establish: that Pelee Island can be a place where science, conservation, community and public engagement come together around the extraordinary phenomenon of bird migration.

Atwood-Gibson Bird Centre
1023 West Shore Road,
Pelee Island, Ontario NOR 1M0

PIBO Mailing address
P.O. Box 240001 Market Square
Windsor, Ontario N8Y 4Y9



Supporting PIBO's Next Chapter

The opening of the Atwood-Gibson Bird Centre marks the beginning—not the end—of PIBO's next chapter. The Centre creates new possibilities for research, education, conservation, collaboration and community engagement.

Individuals who would like to help build this next chapter can make a donation, become a member or explore other ways of giving. Enquiries for more information are welcome.

[Explore ways to support PIBO](#)

Further Reading

With permission from The Globe and Mail, PIBO is pleased to make a licensed copy of Ivan Semeniuk's recent article about Pelee Island, PIBO's legacy and its future available as part of this background material.

Article: Island roost

*How Margaret Atwood and her family helped turn Pelee Island
into a migratory bird research hub*

Ivan Semeniuk, Science Reporter, Visuals by Melissa Tait, June 16, 2026

[licensed link to pdf](#)

The full digital article with additional content, including stunning video and photography are available on the Globe and Mail website.

"The Bird Centre is the milestone, but the story is what it makes possible: a new platform for science, conservation, education and collaboration, supported by a Science Plan that will help guide PIBO's priorities and partnerships into the future. With sincere gratitude to PIBO's many donors and supporters."

—Deborah Egan, Chair, PIBO

Media Contact

Emma Gignac | Pelee Island Bird Observatory | gignacemma@gmail.com | www.pibo.ca