



PELEE ISLAND EST. 2004™ BIRD OBSERVATORY

Jeff Schaffhauser to Lead PIBO's Next Chapter

Pelee Island, Ontario — August 31, 2026 — Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO) is pleased to announce the appointment of **Jeff Schaffhauser as its new Executive Director**, commencing September 8, 2026.

Jeff brings more than 20 years of progressive leadership experience in the not-for-profit sector, with a strong focus on conservation, community engagement, organizational growth, volunteer development and strategic planning. Throughout his career, he has led mission-driven organizations, built partnerships and high-performing teams, and developed programs that engage volunteers and communities.

Jeff holds a Bachelor of Commerce in Hospitality and Tourism Management from the University of Guelph and is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP).

His appointment comes at an important time for PIBO as the organization opens the **Atwood-Gibson Bird Centre** and expands its research, monitoring, education and conservation programs. As Executive Director, Jeff will lead PIBO's strategic development, fundraising and revenue growth, partnerships and organizational capacity.

Jeff also has a longstanding connection to the region, having grown up in **Leamington**. Now based in **Ottawa**, his experience with Scouts Canada has taken him to communities and sites across the country, providing a broad national perspective that will complement PIBO's growing conservation role.

Jeff's remarks on joining PIBO

"I have been going to Pelee Island since I was a child. I grew up in Leamington, and I spent summers on the island long before I understood its significance for migratory birds. To return and help lead an organization that protects this remarkable place, is a genuine privilege.

Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson built something extraordinary, and I'm honoured to help carry it forward. With the Atwood-Gibson Bird Centre opening soon, PIBO is entering a new chapter that will redefine it. I couldn't be more excited to leverage the twenty years of research to shape the new centre into a place where community members and tourists come to deepen their understanding of the island's importance to migratory birds, and where we can deepen our connection to the community, researchers and of course the birds.

I look forward to learning more about Pelee Island's vital role in migratory flyways and begin sharing the story of why this small island matters so much. I couldn't be more excited to join PIBO at this moment."



A new chapter for PIBO

Jeff joins PIBO as the organization enters an important new phase, building on the work of its founders, volunteers, staff, donors and supporters.

Suzanne Friemann will continue with PIBO as Director of Regional Programs and Operations, focusing on the development of PIBO's programs, operations and regional initiatives. Her continued leadership will provide important continuity and support the transfer of organizational knowledge and relationships as Jeff assumes the Executive Director role.

“We are delighted to welcome Jeff to PIBO at this important moment. He brings the leadership experience and energy needed to help PIBO realize the opportunities ahead, while Suzanne's focussed leadership in programs and operations provides an important foundation of knowledge and continuity. Together, this creates strong leadership capacity for PIBO's next chapter.”

~ Deborah Egan, Board Chair of PIBO

PIBO is grateful to **Logic Executive Search and Workplace Solutions**, a Windsor-based executive recruitment firm, for its expertise and guidance throughout the search process.

The Board looks forward to welcoming Jeff to Pelee Island and introducing him to the staff, volunteers, partners, donors, supporters and conservation community who have helped make PIBO what it is today.

About Pelee Island Bird Observatory

Pelee Island Bird Observatory is a Canadian registered charity dedicated to advancing bird conservation through research, monitoring, education and community engagement. Located in Canada's southernmost inhabited point in Lake Erie, Pelee Island is an internationally designated **Important Bird Area and Key Biodiversity Area** and plays an important role in understanding and protecting migratory birds and their habitats.

Contact:

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