

# **In memory of Gareth Akerman**

**1974 - 2008**

**Gareth E. Akerman died in a tragic plane crash on March 13, 2008, along with Philip Heidemann and Damion Marx of Florida Atlantic University, and the pilot Jeff Rozelle of Kemper Aviation. The researchers were conducting an aerial survey of wading birds near Lake Okeechobee, when the plane went down at 8:23 am, instantly killing all four men.**



**Gareth was working as a lab technician with Florida Atlantic University studying migratory birds. Gareth completed his Bachelor's degree in Environmental Sciences in 2005 at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He was awarded a Canada Graduate Scholarship to attend Dalhousie University in Halifax, where he completed his Master's degree in biology six months before his death. His Master's thesis focused on the role of riparian buffers in forest bird conservation. He was planning on applying for other short-term ecological positions around the world to gain experience and make a difference for the environment.**

**Those close to Gareth recognized that he had found his passion in life. He was doing what he wanted to do and was excited to be contributing to conservation efforts. Gareth had a sense of adventure, an intense love of the outdoors, and a strong desire to improve the world. He believed that even the smallest individual actions could make a difference. Gareth's loves included music, traveling, his family, and the company of his friends. He played bass and sang with a folk/rock band, The Mungs. Gareth was respected and valued by those who knew him as a kind, quiet, and amiable man with a good sense of humor and contagious smile. According to his father, "all they need to do is say his name, and a smile will come to their lips."**

**Gareth leaves behind his father, Jeremy Akerman, the former leader of Nova Scotia's New Democratic Party; his mother, Joan MacKinnon, executive producer of the CBC program Land and Sea; his stepfather, Fred Mattocks; his grandmothers Audrey Akerman and Roberta Mattocks; and several aunts, uncles, and cousins.**