



Bermuda Audubon Society

NEWSLETTER Winter 2006

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Audubon News

Andrew Dobson

September: Art Show - Press Release



The Society's first Art Show was held at the Bermuda Arts Centre in Dockyard. The 'Birds of a Feather' art exhibition, featured watercolours, textiles, batiks, Bermuda cedar, pastels, Chinese ink drawings, oils, acrylics, pen and pencil, bronzes and hand etchings. Patron of the Audubon Society Lady Vereker opened the two week show which included more than 100 pieces of artwork. She said "For many years artists have been inspired by Bermuda's fauna and flora. It is often through art that people have their first opportunity to appreciate the wonders of nature and engage further in efforts to protect it. Birds and their habitat have always captured the imagination of painters, sculptors, writers, film directors and composers." Andrew Dobson, President of the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds, and co-organiser of the show added that, "Birds have always been an important part of Bermuda's heritage. Many people will be aware of the

extraordinary rediscovery of the Cahow - Bermuda's national bird. Longtails (White-tailed Tropicbirds) feature in so much of Bermuda life, heralding the arrival of spring, being featured in jewellery and fashion, and recognised in the names of local businesses and house names. The aim of the art show is to celebrate birds and make more people aware of the existence of the Bermuda Audubon Society and educate the public about our local birds. It provides funds for the Society but just as important an objective is promoting awareness of bird life in the local community. Bermuda would be considerably poorer without its birds. Our native birds face daily threats from habitat loss and invasive species. Birds have considerable aesthetic value, providing people

with pleasure and relaxation. Birds are an indicator of a healthy environment. Bermuda also has a great opportunity to benefit from eco-tourism through its unique bird life. The art show is one means of drawing attention to the value of birds." (The show received favourable reviews in the local press and raised more than \$3,000 for the Society. The BAS is extremely grateful to all the artists who contributed.) *Painting of Great Blue Heron by Vernon Clarke.*

September:

- Hurricane Florence was responsible for the cancellation of our planned fieldtrip to Spittal Pond. The path of Florence resulted in little fall-out of birds.

October:

- Paget Island Bird Camp. Despite a rainstorm on the Friday night and a forecast for a wet weekend, the Paget Island bird camp proved to be a great success. Due to some last minute cancellations we only had 18 people for the weekend - but enjoyed some great birds, good company and excellent food. With over 60 species recorded - it was well worthwhile, especially as about 32 species were seen on or from Paget Island - notably two Dickcissels, Chipping and White-crowned Sparrows. Great views were had of an Eastern Wood-Pewee near Lover's Lake and a real surprise was Ann Brown almost treading on a Virginia Rail at Kindley Field Mangroves. We also had very close views of a Warbling Vireo at Bartram's Pond and a Philadelphia Vireo at St. George's GC. The weekend tied in with BirdLife International's 'World Bird Festival 2006' - so our camp provided an ideal event for the World Festival.
- Buy Back Bermuda. Members helped with the restoration work at Somerset Long Bay east. Invasive plants have been cleared, most of the bottles and broken glass removed, and a considerable amount of planting has taken place.
- Tom Pawlesh delivered a great illustrated lecture on the Monarch Butterfly. A widely published wildlife and nature photographer, his images have appeared in most nature and photography magazines, including: Wild Bird, National Wildlife, Birds and Blooms, Birder's World, Popular Photography and Outdoor Photographer. The highlight of his talk was the breathtaking images from his trek high into the Mexican mountains to photograph millions of Monarch butterflies. www.tompawlesh.smugmug.com

November:



- The Buy Back Bermuda campaign continues to restore the area. Members have helped with work parties on the new reserve. After the removal of invasives and redesigning the pond area - replanting can begin!
- Celebration of the Botanical Gardens - Audubon members were out in force helping to make bluebird nest boxes as part of the day's activities. The day was one of celebration as the Government had abandoned plans to construct a new hospital in the Gardens.

- A very successful pelagic fieldtrip was held in late November to search for Cahows. Graham Maddocks kindly provided use of his dive boat for a trip of the East End. The full boat of members were full of anticipation and about 5.00 pm as the sun was setting, a couple of birds appeared – for many people, their first sighting of a Cahow. *Cahow photo by Andrew Dobson*
- The Society donated *Handbook of Birds of the World Vol. 11* to BAMZ Library, part of the Society's on-going commitment to provide the complete series of books.

December:

- Stokes Point Reserve working party cleared invasive plant species from the pond margins

2007

- A series of environmental documentaries about Bermuda will continue to be filmed (EnviroShorts) for local television in the Fall season. The Society is collaborating with the Bermuda Broadcasting Company to produce the programmes and is very grateful for the financial backing it has been given by The Bank of Bermuda Foundation, The Ace Foundation, BELCO and Mr. Jim Butterfield.

Christmas Bird Count 2006 – press release

Andrew Dobson



The Bermuda Audubon Society has just completed its 32nd annual Christmas Bird Count. Twenty members of the Society counted every bird from dawn to dusk over a 24-hr period as well as adding any additional species seen during the week. Nearly 7,000 individually birds were recorded of exactly 100 species. Mr. Andrew Dobson, who coordinated this year's count, stated, "Some unusual species were seen this year. New species for Bermuda's count included a Grey Heron at Tucker's Town Bay, a bird that is common on the other side of the Atlantic. A Northern Mockingbird on Boaz Island was also a new record, a species that is very common in North America, but rarely seen in Bermuda. Other unusual species included a Snow Goose on Belmont golf course, a hummingbird in St. David's (*photo by Andrew Dobson*) and a Surf Scoter on Mangrove Lake. Two species of globally endangered species of birds were recorded, our own national bird, the Cahow, and the Piping Plover, a small shorebird which breeds in the eastern US and Canada. However, 52% of all birds recorded were starlings, kiskadees or sparrows – all invasive species which shouldn't really be in Bermuda and they have certainly had an impact on our local birds. The low numbers of migrant warblers continues a depressing downward trend in the population of these species. It is a reflection of loss of habitat in summer (breeding grounds) and wintering areas and in some cases the effects of global warming. "Mr. Dobson went on to say: "Citizen Science is a way for people to connect with the natural world through

fun activities that generate vital information for the conservation of birds. This partnership benefits us all: observers learn about birds by taking part in these science-based activities, and Audubon's science staff gains invaluable information. Most importantly, the birds benefit because it helps Audubon focus on those birds and habitats that need our help most." Count results will be available as they are entered onto the National Audubon website www.audubon.org/bird/cbc

All about the Christmas Bird Count

More than 50,000 observers participate each year in this all-day census of early-winter bird populations in the Americas. The results of their efforts are compiled into the longest running database in ornithology, representing over a century of unbroken data on trends of early-winter bird populations across the Americas. Simply put, the Christmas Bird Count, or "CBC", is citizen science in action.

History

Prior to the turn of the century, people engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt": They would choose sides and go a field with their guns; whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won. Conservation was in its beginning stages around the turn of the 20th century, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the then budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition-a "Christmas Bird Census"-that would count birds in the holidays rather than hunt them. So began the Christmas Bird Count. Thanks to the inspiration of Frank M. Chapman and the enthusiasm of twenty-seven dedicated birders, twenty-five Christmas Bird Counts were held that day. The locations ranged from Toronto, Ontario to Pacific Grove, California with most counts in or near the population centres of north-eastern North America. Those original 27 Christmas Bird Counters tallied a total of 90 species on all the counts combined.

What does the Count data tell us?

The primary objective of the Christmas Bird Count is to monitor the status and distribution of bird populations across the Western Hemisphere. The information is also vital for conservation. For example, local trends in bird populations can indicate habitat fragmentation or signal an immediate environmental threat, such as groundwater contamination or poisoning from improper use of pesticides. From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition -- and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation.

Bird Report June to December 2006

Andrew Dobson

June to July



Bermuda's first live **Grey Heron**, discovered 22 April was present to 31 Jul+ (AD). Two **Great Egrets** and two **Little Blue Herons** also over-summered (EA). A **Tricolored Heron** was seen in the East End 24 Jul (PW). Two **Glossy Ibis** were still present on Jubilee Road 5 Jun (DBW). A late **Swallow-tailed Kite** was seen at various locations 12-23 June (BL, PH). Five **Black-bellied Plovers** and one **Whimbrel** over-summered (PW). A **Semipalmated Plover** at Long Island 25 June (PW) provided an unusual

summer record. An adult **Spotted Sandpiper** was at North Pond 9 Jun (DBW).

Returning shorebirds were at least one week later than usual, appearing in the third week of July (EA, AD). A single **Sandwich Tern** off Spanish Point and **Roseate Tern** off North Shore, were seen 20 Jun (PW). A **Brown Noddy** (*photo Andrew Dobson*) was in the Hog Fish Channel 15-17 Jun (BL). Sightings of a **South Polar Skua** in May well have been of the same individual 31 May, 6 & 10 Jun at Cooper's Point (PW, AD), 2 Jun at Elbow Beach (GA) and 21 Jun off Horseshoe Bay (PW). Amongst returning swallows was an early **Bank Swallow** at East End Dairy 31 Jul (PW). A **Louisiana Waterthrush** at Pitman's Pond 23 Jul (DW) was the first migrant warbler. **Common Grackle** is very rare in Bermuda. One seen on Nelly's Is. 31 Jul (PW) had presumably over-summered.

August to December

Fortunately Bermuda was spared any severe storms this season, with Hurricane Florence giving us a close shave on 10th September. So there was no influx of birds that occurred following Hurricane Wilma last year. There were some notable sightings this fall, including potential first records of MacGillivray's Warbler and Western Tanager. Bermuda's third Sandhill Crane put in a very brief appearance. A record four Northern Wheatears and three hummingbirds were seen. Long stayers include Bermuda's first live Grey Heron and two Red-tailed Hawks.

Tropicbirds to Terns

A late **White-tailed Tropicbird** was over Darrell's Island 22 Oct (AD, PW). Three **Masked Boobies** were seen off the East End 14 Sep (PW) - probably the result of Hurricane Florence passing on 10 Sep. Another was seen 17 Oct, also off the East End (PW). An **American Bittern** was at Cloverdale 14 Oct (DBW) and in Paget Marsh 29 Nov (DW). Two **Least Bitterns** were seen at Pitman's Pond 14 Oct (AD) and Cloverdale 24 Oct (AD). The long-staying **Grey Heron** was present throughout the period, mainly in the Tuckers Town area. An immature **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was seen at Spittal Pond during October (AD, PW). A **Brant Goose** was present at Daniel's Head 31 Oct (DW). An immature male **Surf Scoter** was discovered on Mangrove Lake 27 Nov-31 Dec (EA). The same bird was probably in Castle Harbour 24 Nov (JM). Single **Ospreys** were

seen throughout the period at both ends of the island. A **Northern Harrier** first was noted at the Airport 15 Oct-31 Dec (PA). A **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was over Cemetery Hill 28 Oct (DBW). The two long-staying **Red-tailed Hawks** were present throughout the period. **Peregrines** were seen at various locations in October. A **Virginia Rail** was flushed from Kindley Field mangroves 8 Oct (AB, PW). Bermuda's third **Sandhill Crane** flew over Long Island 22 Oct (AD, BF, PW). A flock of 23 **Semipalmated Sandpipers** was unusual at Riddell's Bay GC 18 Sep (DW). **Piping Plovers** were noted at a number of locations during the fall and two have over-wintered at Grape Bay and Cooper's Island respectively. **Upland Sandpipers** were noted at the Airport 21 Sep (DBW), St. Georges GC 27 Sep (PW), and Heydon Trust 12 Oct (DW). An oiled **Baird's Sandpiper** was on Riddell's Bay GC 10 Sep (DBW, EA). A Dunlin was at the same location in early mid-Oct and another at Spittal Pond 24 Oct (DBW). **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** appeared at a number of locations. A **Long-billed Dowitcher** was at Jubilee Road 17 Oct (EA). An adult light phase **Pomarine Jaeger** flew past Ruth's Point 11 Sep (PW) following the passage of Hurricane Florence. A **Common Black-headed Gull** was on the Causeway 29 Oct (AD) while two have been at Dockyard since 15 Nov (PW). A **Bonaparte's Gull** was also at Dockyard 15 Nov (PW). At least three **Royal Terns** were present in the early fall with at least one remaining into December.

Hummingbird to Dickcissel

Hummingbirds were reported from Devonshire 15 Oct (RM), St. David's 9-31 Dec (LO), and Botanical Gardens 29-31 Dec (LC, AD). As wintering hummingbirds on the US East Coast in winter are invariably Black-chinned rather than Ruby-throated, it is hoped that confirmation of species can be made from photographs. Perhaps as many as 15 **Empidonax flycatchers** were reported in October, mainly of the Alder-Willow variety. Scarce vireo species recorded included **Yellow-throated, Blue-headed, Warbling** and **Philadelphia**. A single **Golden-crowned Kinglet** was seen at Ferry Point Park 27 Oct-11 Nov (DW) while **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were seen at many locations including six on 11 Nov (DW, PW). A record year for **Northern Wheatears** reflected similar sightings along the Eastern Seaboard. Four birds were seen, with singles at the National Stadium 9 Sep (AD), Heydon Trust 23-24 Sep (DW), St. Georges GC 13 Oct (DBW) and Lukes Farm 6 Oct (DBW). Thrushes were once again thin on the ground. A **Swainson's Thrush** was on Nelly's Island 22 Oct (AD, PW). **Hermit Thrushes** were scattered widely with at least 12 individuals 28-29 Oct (AD) and there was a small influx of **American Robins** noted in late October with five on 27 Oct in the East End (PW). At least three **Northern Mockingbirds** were reported (a rarity in Bermuda). One was at Boaz Island 20 Sep to late Dec (PH), a 'tail-less' bird was seen at Tee Street 16 Oct (PJH) and again St. Georges 17 Oct (PW), while a third was discovered in Somerset in Dec (PH). **American Pipits** arrived from 24 Oct on Cooper's Island and 28 Oct at Brighton Hill (DW) with a small flock wintering at the Airport (DW). Thirty-five species of warbler were recorded during the season, with a notable fall involving hundreds of **Blackpoll Warblers** 12 Oct (EA, PW et al). A potential first for Bermuda was a **MacGillivray's Warbler** 28 Oct at Paget Marsh (PH). The three-second view allowed Peter Hopkin to note some detail, but it has not been seen again. *First year or adult female bird perched up in the dead cedar at the very end of the Paget Marsh boardwalk. At first side-on at the back of the tree, it moved to the front where it was above me looking down. It took a good look at me for about three seconds at 4m range then plunged back into the swamp vegetation. Fortunately I have seen many in Colorado, British*

Columbia and Costa Rica so it was no problem to identify. The main feature was the broken eye-ring, which was clear white and heavy, rather like a Laughing Gull, above and below the eye, broken front and back. It contrasted strongly with the dark grey lores and greyish ear coverts and bright enough that at such close range I could see the ring with naked eye. Face and breast cold olive-grey beige, much cooler in colour than Connecticut, although darker area around the eye and lores very small. Sharp division on lower breast between breast and with reasonably bright, but not vivid, yellow belly. The underparts were duller between the legs and then brighter cleaner yellow undertail coverts, which were short compared to the tail; thus the bird looked slimmer and better proportioned than the rather stubby Connecticut Warbler. Upperparts were plain brown, quite warm, and with no wing bars, tertial fringes or spots on the ends of the remiges noted. Tail was slightly raised away from me so I did not see the underside, or note the leg colour. Bill short and pale brown, at least on the underside. Size comparison was possible with Yellow-rumped Warblers; it was slimmer and perhaps slightly shorter; a neater bird.

Another potential first for Bermuda was a **Western Tanager** seen by David Wingate at Ferry Point Park 21 Oct. This bird hung around for some 10 mins, allowing the following description. David wrote: *As this is a first Bermuda record and I didn't have digiscope to photo it, here is my descriptive documentation as written in my field notebook BEFORE I returned to the car to check National Geographic Guide. "Size and greenish yellow head and underparts colour of Scarlet Tanager, but possibly bigger with yellowish rump. Typical tanager bill, pinky yellow, darker above and on tip. Darkish legs. Diagnostic feature was two bold wingbars on otherwise grey green wings. Bold yellowish front wing bar and narrow whitish rear wing bar, those coverts distinctly white tipped. Also white edges on tertials. Back slightly darker mottled grey green, not the smooth green of a Scarlet." I did not know (or recall) before I checked the guide that Western IS slightly larger than Scarlet and does have a paler yellowish rump, so noting these features without that awareness corroborates the diagnostic field mark which was the bold wing bars. Neither did I recall that the fore and aft wingbars are differently coloured, so my noting this is further support of correct identification. Indeed the field marks were so clear and distinctive that it was most likely an immature male if not even an adult male in winter plumage! In all other respects it was classic tanager jizz including the fact it was apparently catching and eating Polistes wasps which were common in the area. I encountered it at 1100hrs on the railway trail where the path from main road crosses it into the enclosed yellow fever cemetery. It was at eye level on dead snag and then in Jumbie Bean, all in full sunlight with sun at my back at 20' - 25' range. I had excellent repeated views for next 5 -10 minutes before it moved deeper into the thicket and I became distracted by a cell of migrants, mainly Indigo buntings moving through the same area.*

Scarce sparrow species included **Clay-colored** (6-12 Oct Pitman's Pond (DBW); **Song Sparrow** at Bailey's Bay 13 Nov (PW); **Swamp Sparrow** and **Dark-eyed Junco** 22 Nov Ferry Point Park (PW). A **Snow Bunting** was discovered on Castle Island 17 Dec (JM, LM). **Dickcissels** were present at Cedar Grove 30 Sep (EA), Paget Island 8 Oct (AD, PW), Port Royal GC 16 Oct (AD) and Lukes Farm 17 Dec (EA).

*Photographic proof of a significant Bermuda record has just been received. On Jan 2, 2005 an American Visitor, David G Smith, reported what he was sure were three **White Pelicans** flying east to the north of Spittal Pond. He gave a detailed account of them. And that same day Audubon member Heather DeSilva reported three white pelicans flying towards the east. Eric*

Amos recently received a digital print sent to him by a resident of Southampton (off Buck Island). It is dated 1 Jan 2005 and clearly shows three White Pelicans.

Observers: Gary Allport, Eric Amos, Gerry Ardis, Peter Adhemar, Ann Brown, Lisa Clark, Steven DeSilva, Andrew Dobson, BF? (Sandhill), Peter Holmes (PJH), Peter Hopkin (PH), Kay & Ray Latter, Bruce Lorhan, Jeremy Madeiros, Leila Madeiros, Robin Maraira, Louise Olander, David Wallace (DW), Paul Watson, David Wingate (DBW).

The Stern Review

Perhaps the most important report to have been produced on the effects of global climate change was published on 30 October 2006. Sir Nicholas Stern, a former chief economist of the World Bank, believes the whole world needs to act on climate change or face devastating economic consequences.

Findings included:

- Carbon emissions have already pushed up global temperatures by 0.5° C
- If no action is taken on emissions, there is more than a 75% chance of global temperatures rising between 2 to 3° C over the next 50 years (There is a 50% chance that average global temperatures could rise by 5° C)
- Melting glaciers will increase flood risk
- Crop yields will decline, particularly in Africa
- Rising sea levels could leave 200 million people permanently displaced
- Up to 40% of species could face extinction
- There will be more examples of extreme weather patterns
- Extreme weather could reduce global gross domestic product (GDP) by up to 1%
- A 2 to 3° C rise in temperatures could reduce global economic output by 3%
- If temperatures rise by 5° C, up to 10% of global output could be lost. The poorest countries would lose more than 10% of their output
- In the worst case scenario global consumption per head would fall 20%
- To stabilise at manageable levels, emissions would need to stabilise in the next 20 years and fall between 1% and 3% after that. This would cost 1% of GDP

What actions are necessary by all countries?

- Reduce consumer demand for heavily polluting goods and services
- Make global energy supply more efficient
- Act on non-energy emissions - preventing further deforestation would go a long way towards alleviating this source of carbon emissions
- Promote cleaner energy and transport technology, with non-fossil fuels accounting for 60% of energy output by 2050
- Create a global market for carbon pricing
- Extend the European Emissions Trading Scheme (EETS) globally, bringing in countries such as the US, India and China
- Set new target for EETS to reduce carbon emissions by 30% by 2020 and 60% by 2050
- Pass bills to enshrine carbon reduction targets and create a new independent body to monitor progress
- Investment in green technology, with the aim of creating thousands of new jobs

- Work with the World Bank and other financial institutions to create a \$20bn fund to help poor countries adjust to climate change challenges
- Work with Brazil, Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica to promote sustainable forestry and prevent deforestation

Bermuda will be affected by climate changes – not just with regard to the weather, but by rising sea level and considerable impact on our future economy. We need to influence our own decision-makers. Yes – we can also respond as individuals by thinking about our own lifestyles and consumption habits. Transport mode? Fuel usage? Energy-saving devices? Electric cars and bikes? Solar panels? Packaging? and much more! In order to read the Stern Review – go to:

http://www.hmtreasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/sternreview_index.cfm

Grenada Dove Threatened

Andrew Dobson



Bermuda is faced with the prospect of two new hotels and considerable expansion at three existing hotels. Decisions have to be made with regard to Sustainable Development. The natural environment cannot be replaced once it is covered in concrete. The plans includes the removal of woodland (a dwindling habitat in Bermuda), altering the cliff coastline (our natural defence to rising sea level), and loss of farmland (further reducing the ability for home-grown food). While not opposed to tourist development and all the benefits that this brings, it has to be done with due regard for the environment and sustainable

development. Bermuda is not alone in this dilemma. I have been involved with the increasing opposition to a proposed tourist development in Grenada, in my role as President of the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds (SCSCB). The following letter was sent to all ministers of Grenada's government and chief executives of the Four Seasons Group. If any Audubon member would like to write a similar letter of concern, I would be more than willing to provide the appropriate names and addresses. *(Photo of Grenada Dove: Bonnie Rusk)*

Re: IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED TO SAVE GRENADA'S NATIONAL SYMBOL

Dear

As you may know, Mount Hartman National Park, one of the last remaining refuges of Grenada's national bird, the Grenada Dove, is threatened by the proposed development of a luxury resort supported by the Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts group. The SCSCB Board is shocked and dismayed by the imminent threat to the Grenada Dove, a unique and irreplaceable aspect of Grenada's national heritage.

Please understand that we are not opposed to development. Indeed, we clearly recognize the need for economic growth and prosperity. However this must proceed in ways that do not threaten our valuable natural assets and those things that are uniquely Grenadian.

Mount Hartman National Park is particularly valuable in this regard. This area was previously prioritized for protection to conserve one of, if not the most, threatened species of bird in the entire Lesser Antilles, the Grenada Dove. The Mount Hartman National Park was established in 1996. As research has clearly shown, the Dove is so sensitive to human disturbance, it is virtually impossible to mitigate against either the direct (habitat loss) and indirect effects (habitat fragmentation, human disturbance due to increased traffic, etc) of a development. Sacrificing this irreplaceable population of what is truly a Caribbean gem for yet another tourism venture is an action the world will hold against us all in perpetuity. The Grenada Dove predates all human presence in the Caribbean by thousands of years. Human actions which threaten its survival are irresponsible, short-sighted and clearly do not represent sustainable development. Do not let Grenada be the first Caribbean island to bear the infamy of sanctioning the extinction of its most highly acclaimed national symbol. Instead, we urge you to do the right thing and support permanent protection of Mount Hartman National Park.

This crisis has attracted the attention of environmental NGOs, government conservation departments, private sector organizations, universities, and concerned groups and individuals from across the region, North America and Europe. As President of the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds (the largest single regional organization devoted to wildlife conservation in the Caribbean) I personally find the proposed development shocking.

David Wege of BirdLife International, a global alliance of conservation organizations with partners in over 100 countries, has declared that the development of Mount Hartman Estate will destroy a globally Important Bird Area (IBA).

Over four decades of biological study and scientific research funded by the World Bank and others has confirmed the following:

- The Grenada Dove is found on the island of Grenada, and nowhere else on the earth.
- The Grenada Dove is now restricted to small, very isolated populations with the largest stronghold now occurring within the Mount Hartman National Park.
- The species will only survive only if the coastal dry forest habitats in which it lives continue to exist.

We urge you to take decisive action to ensure protection of Mount Hartman National Park and the preservation of the Grenada Dove. Please don't sacrifice your children and grandchildren's unique natural heritage for a hotel development.

If action is not taken on this development issue, there will be no second chance. We are counting on your support!

Sincerely,

Andrew Dobson
President, SCSCB
www.scscb.org

Update on the Restoration of Cockroach Island as a Nature Reserve

Jeremy Madeiros

The large nature reserve sign naming the island as a reserve and spelling out the rules of access was installed a year ago. All large casuarinas and most of the seedlings except for a few rooted on sheer rock faces which have no chance of growing, are now removed. Likewise, all the Brazil Pepper bushes have been culled out. New native plantings include Bermuda Cedars, already up to 6' high, Bermuda Palmetto, Bermuda Olivewood, Forestiera, Doc Bush and Turnera. Surviving natives which have recovered extremely well since removal of the casuarinas include Bermuda olivewood, White Stopper, Jamaica Dogwood, Bermuda Snowberry and slender Paspalum grass. We plan to plant a couple of Southern Hackberry in the winter, completing the suite of native upland species that can grow here. We still have to cull out some simple leaved jasmine vine and two species of Asparagus which are very aggressive in the ground cover and trailing up the white stoppers.

Of three White-tailed Tropicbird (Longtail) "Igloo" nests installed last year, two were colonized and one reared a chick this year, the first we have ever recorded from Cockroach Is. We plan to install at least five more on the high outlying rocks comprising the island within a year.

The old wooden landing stage on the lee-side of the islet had rotted to such an extent by this year that it became a serious safety hazard, so a decision was made to demolish it completely. There was a natural flat faced and level topped rock underneath which serves equally well as a landing place so we left one of the support posts of the dock embedded in this as a stanchion for tying an anchored boat.

Despite the sign we were notified of "smoke from a small fire" on the island on 9 April and took a boat out immediately to investigate. It was a small cooking fire to boil up Calico clams made in a rock cleft which did not risk the plantings and it had nearly burnt out by the time we arrived and extinguished it. The individual responsible for the fire has not as yet been identified. No damage was done. There was an additional, larger fire in August (down in the lower area near a little inlet) that was started in a large pile of dead brush consisting of Pepper and Casuarinas cut out during invasive removal work. This larger fire seriously damaged a clump of White Stopper. On the plus side, all of the natives planted survived hurricane Florence with no damage, and there is now very little burnable fuel left on the island for more illegal fires! There is a small brick fireplace made years ago for barbequing which we have left in place, but this did not appear to have been used. This is the third incident of a fire on the island since it was leased and sign posted by the society, even though our sign specifically forbids camping or the lighting fires on the island! This appears to be a continuation of a traditional habit by an individual who has yet been identified.