



Bermuda Audubon Society

**NEWSLETTER** Summer 2008

P.O. Box HM 1328, Hamilton HM FX Vol.19 No.1

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## **Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*- New to Bermuda**

**Andrew Dobson**



January 6<sup>th</sup> was the first Sunday of 2008. The weather forecast was good, so David Wallace and I had planned a day's birding, starting in the west and heading east. It would be an effort to get our new 'year list' off to a good start. After meeting Dave at 7.45 at Mangrove Bay - we saw the four common gull species and then three Bonaparte's Gulls at Watford Bridge. We scoured the shoreline for Spotted Sandpiper and Semipalmated Plover on the way

to Dockyard. Scanning the southern outer arm with my scope - there were 65 Black-bellied Plovers, no new gulls, no semi plovers and not even a turnstone! At about 8.30 my attention was drawn to three turnstones that flew onto the breakwater - but something wasn't right with one of them - surely it lacked the distinctive wing pattern? I quickly got onto the bird - nearly 100 metres away and facing away from me into the wind. Orange legs - but why were there bold grey markings on the flanks. The back and head were dark. The briefest of looks at the bill showed that it appeared relatively long and down-curved. I didn't even have the chance to let Dave look through the scope when the bird flew to the outer arm with the two turnstones. The bird had a thin white

wingbar, not dissimilar to a Dunlin. A chance for Dave to look through the scope although it was now at considerable distance. All three birds then immediately disappeared on the other side of the breakwater.

I was convinced that I'd found the first Purple Sandpiper for Bermuda – but we needed far better views and if possible – photos. I hadn't seen a Purple Sandpiper for about 20 years, and it would be a new bird for Dave. We waited and waited but after about an hour the bird re-appeared, way in the distance – but surely this was a Dunlin – down-curved bill etc – and after an age it revealed dark legs and white underparts. It was a Dunlin and we began to think we had been imagining our earlier sighting.

Peter Hopkin who lives five minutes from Dockyard arrived with a fieldguide only to be told the possible Purple Sandpiper and Dunlin were both out of sight. Nearing 10.30 am and our effort at a big day list clearly out of the question, the bird suddenly appeared much closer to us on the breakwater – face on and clearly a Purple Sandpiper. I took a couple of record shots and made phone calls to put out the news. The bird then flew to the small beach just before the Cut Bridge on the way into Dockyard. We raced round to the beach and I managed to get some close photos (see photo). We stayed until Eric and Diana Amos arrived – and watched the bird until about 11.30 - initially feeding with 7 turnstones and then working its way along rocks on the southern end of the bay and out of sight. It was never seen again!

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima* has been long-expected in Bermuda. It is a breeding shorebird found in the high Arctic tundra regions of Canada, Greenland, Iceland, northern Europe and Asia. North American birds spend the winter months on the Atlantic coast from Prince Edward Island to Virginia. It winters further north than any other shorebird on the Atlantic coast.

## Cahow Nesting Season Update April 2008

Jeremy Madeiros



The latest nesting season for Bermuda's National Bird, the endemic Cahow or Bermuda Petrel *Pterodroma cahow*, actually began in late October, 2007 with the arrival of the breeding pairs of adult cahows from the open ocean back to their tiny nesting islands near Castle Harbour. This period, extending through the month of November, is normally when the adult nesting pairs carry out courtship activity, build nests

in their underground burrows, and mate. (Photo by Andrew Dobson shows Jeremy Madeiros observing evening courtship display). November 2007 was unusual in that several new pairs of cahows occupied nest burrows and built nests where no prospecting activity

had been noted before – new nest prospecting activity is not normally observed until February and March. What is more, at least three of these new pairs returned in January 2008 to lay eggs, an event that is quite rare for newly established pairs.

As of April, 2008, the cahow breeding population has increased to a record high number of 85 established active nest sites (nests where pairs of cahows and nesting activity, such as nest-building or egg-laying has been recorded). This represents an almost five-fold increase from the 18 nesting pairs that comprised the entire breeding population in 1960. In addition, at least six additional new nest burrows have experienced prospecting activity from February through April, so it appears that the population is continuing an encouraging growth trend.

Without a doubt, the most exciting development of this year concerning the cahow has been the first return of cahows to Nonsuch Island. These birds had originally been translocated, or moved, about three weeks before fledging to a new complex of artificial nest burrows built at a quiet location on Nonsuch, as part of a five-year project to establish a new breeding colony of cahows. This is being carried out because of the vulnerability of their present tiny nesting islets to erosion and overwashing from hurricanes, compounded by sea level rise, and their inability to support a large population. This project has now been underway for four years, during which 79 chicks have fledged successfully from Nonsuch. A Sound Attraction System was also set up at the translocation site in 2007 to help encourage returning cahows to stay and prospect at the site and overcome any tendency for these young birds to be attracted back to the activity at the original nesting islets.

The first indication that something exciting was occurring was on the night of February 10<sup>th</sup>, when I observed up to 6 cahows flying over the translocation site, then coming in low over the nesting burrows. Eventually, one cahow landed close to my side and I was able to confirm from its band (ring) number that it was indeed a bird translocated as a chick to Nonsuch Island in May 2005. By April 4<sup>th</sup>, four translocated cahows, all from the group moved to Nonsuch in 2005, have been recaptured at the translocation site during night watches, one of them three times, with at least five nest burrows being visited at night. No birds were recorded staying over for the day until March 19<sup>th</sup>, when a cahow that had been translocated to the number 833 burrow was recaptured back in the same burrow, where it was digging out a deep nest scrape in the nest chamber and excavating a large pile of soil out of the entrance. This bird was recorded back in the same nest on subsequent days, indicating that it has ‘claimed’ this nest and will next try to attract a mate to the burrow over the next season or two. It also represents a perfect ‘boomerang’ back to its exact point of departure three years ago! Surprisingly, aerial courtship and nest prospecting activity has continued at this site well into April, with three cahows flying around the site and two nest burrows visited during a night watch on the 6<sup>th</sup> of the month. I must confess that I can hardly wait for the next nesting season, when these birds should return and try to attract mates to these burrows, and should also be joined by the first of the returning 2006 cohort of translocated chicks.

The banding program for the cahow, which was initiated in 2002, has as one of its objectives the fitting of identification bands (rings) to a minimum of 75% of all fledglings

produced by the breeding population every year. This objective has been met or exceeded every year since, with a total of 171 fledglings banded between 2002 and 2007. In 2006, the first birds banded as chicks in the 2002 and 2003 nesting seasons returned to the nesting islets to choose new nest burrows and establish nesting pairs. Over the last two years an increasing number of these 'first-return' birds have now been recaptured, with a total of 31 now confirmed as having returned (including the 4 birds recaptured on Nonsuch). These represent birds from the chick cohorts of at least four nesting seasons, from 2002 to 2005. The exciting fact about the bands is that it allows positive identification of individual birds, enabling them to be followed through their natal development, fledging, return and breeding lifespan. Important data is already being collected, including the confirmation that most cahows return to the nesting grounds three to four years after fledging to sea. There is also now enough data to determine the survival rate for young cahows during the post-fledging dispersal at sea until they return to the nesting islets; this data will be presented in full in a paper during the next year.

Despite these encouraging signs of the continued recovery of the cahow, the species is still highly endangered with a very small population. It is also still subject to many threats and limiting factors, both natural and human-induced, a fact that was highlighted when, following a five-day period of high winds between March 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>, which prevented landings at the nesting islets, four recently hatched cahow chicks disappeared or were killed and partially eaten at one of the nesting islets. Evidence that rats had managed to swim to this island from the mainland just before the gale was found and rat bait was immediately set out in locked bait boxes. This saved the remaining two chicks on this island as within three days a single very large Black Rat *Rattus rattus* was found dead and appeared to be solely responsible for predated the other chicks, which were vulnerable as they were still very young and because there was no other food source on the island. Although the islands were all baited at the beginning of the nesting season, this has pointed out the need for constant vigilance and a requirement to provide fresh bait on the islands throughout the nesting season.

Despite this setback, it still looks very likely that this will be a record season for the cahow, helped by bumper crops of chicks on the other three nesting islets. As of April 7<sup>th</sup>, there appear to be about 40 chicks in total on all islands, just edging out the 2007 total of 39 fledged chicks. These are growing rapidly, with some chicks already outweighing the adult birds. Twenty-one of these chicks will be translocated to Nonsuch in May for the last year of the translocation project, with the last chicks not fledging until mid-June, so the real work is yet to begin for us. A final report on this year's exciting, and sometimes sobering, nesting season will be given in the next newsletter.

## Buy Back Bermuda – Round Two

Karen Border

Once again, you have the opportunity to help preserve some of Bermuda's unspoiled open space, which could otherwise be lost to future generations.

Following the success of the first Buy Back Bermuda campaign, the joint committee from the Bermuda Audubon Society and the Bermuda National Trust decided to remain in existence and in November 2007 launched Buy Back Bermuda – Round Two. The aim this time is to raise \$2.5 million to purchase and preserve two areas of green space, one at Skroggins Hill in Southampton and one near Shelly Bay in Hamilton Parish.



Buy Back Bermuda was started in 2004, when BAS and BNT joined forces to raise money to purchase Pitman's Pond at Somerset Long Bay, which was under threat of development. The \$1.7 million required was quickly raised from individual, corporate and Government donations and on

22<sup>nd</sup> April 2007, Earth Day, the Somerset Long Bay East Nature Reserve was opened to the public.

With some funds left over, even after work to restore Pitman's Pond as a publicly accessible nature reserve, the Buy Back team turned their attention to other prime areas of open space to purchase. Some years ago, the Audubon Society had been interested in acquiring the 3.36 acre plot nearly Shelly Bay that is the site of the former Eve's Pond. This inland tidal pond, which connected to Harrington Sound, was filled in with the dredgings of Flatts Inlet in the early 1940s. Buy Back Bermuda has provided a new opportunity to purchase the land, which includes a diverse range of habitats including a rocky coast with tide pools, an inland valley and an upland hillside with a densely forested lower slope. There is potential to restore the original pond should sufficient funds be raised.

The second site in the Round Two Campaign is 7.5 acres extending from the verges of Evans Pond in Southampton over the ridgeline of Skroggins Hill to the shoreline of Little Sound (see photo). It borders the Government-owned Evans Bay Nature Reserve



and is adjacent to the railway trail. The site is predominantly lush woodland, with many live cedars and rare native flora, including the Rhacoma, a relative of the sage bush found only in a couple of locations in Southampton Parish. Evans Pond in the bottom of the valley is a tidal saltwater pond bordered by mangroves and arable farmland. Overgrown quarries occur along the east slope of the valley and are of great interest for the native and introduced ferns they support.

In its first few months the campaign has already received donations and pledges of over \$1 million, but there is still a long way to go. Around 400 individuals gave to the first appeal; the goal this time is to get 1,000 people to contribute.

If you have not yet done so and would like to make a donation, please go to the BNT's website [www.bnt.bm](http://www.bnt.bm) and download the Buy Back Bermuda flyer for 'Round 2' Call Karen Border on 238-8628 if you have any questions.

## **New Homes for Longtails on Lambda and Pearl Islands**

**Karen Border**



Four new homes for Longtails were created during an igloo-building training day on Lambda and Pearl islands on Sunday 9 March, thanks to the efforts of several volunteer members.

Lambda and Pearl islands are both owned by the Audubon Society. Lambda, a bequest to the Society in 1985 from the estate of Gladys Collison, is situated just off the west tip of Hawkins Island. Pearl, a little

further out into Great Sound, was donated to the Society in 2004 by the Butterfield family. It is particularly important as a tern nesting site.

Jim Butterfield arranged transport for the team of volunteers, captaining a barge generously loaned by Tim Patton, with Clive Hook and Abby the dog along as crew. The barge proved ideal for landing cement, igloos, equipment and volunteers on these rocky islands. Other volunteers for the morning were Stephen & Nick Barton, Karen Border, Hugh & Meredith Gillespie, Ian Gray, Suzanne Koren, Lynn Thorne, Kim Smith and David Wingate. We were blessed with a sunny, breezy morning for the expedition.



Landing on Lambda Island first, David Wingate scouted out suitable locations for igloos, while other volunteers scoured the island for seedling casuarinas to cull. Lambda Island already had one Longtail burrow, created by placing a wooden baffle across a crevice in the cliff. This burrow was improved by narrowing the entrance to the right size with stone and cement instead of the baffle. In addition, under Dr. Wingate's instruction, two Longtail igloos were built on the island, but as it is fairly low-lying there were few suitable locations for additional igloos. Attention turned to Pearl Island nearby, which is much smaller but higher above sea-level. This proved to have a couple of ideal igloo sites, and the now well-trained volunteers took little time to build two more attractive Longtail homes.

New signs for Lambda and Pearl islands are due to be installed this spring by Jeremy Madeiros and his crew from Conservation Services. Jeremy, Jim Butterfield and others will be keeping a close eye out for the first signs that the igloos have been occupied and we'll be sure to keep members informed.

## Bird Report December 2007 to May 2008

Andrew Dobson



Highlights in the period included the first record for Purple Sandpiper in Bermuda, the second record of Cave Swallow (*photo: Andrew Dobson*), a rare sighting of Black Rail, and the first sighting of a Snowy Owl for 20 years.

### Grebes to Rails

A pair of **Pied-billed Grebes** produced five chicks 13 May on the new reserve at Somerset Long Bay (WF).

Four **Bermuda Petrel** chicks which were translocated and fledged from Nonsuch Is. in 2005 returned to prospect on the island in Feb-Apr. It is hoped that they will return to breed next year. This is the first time that birds have returned to Nonsuch Island for nearly 400 years! (JM). Returning **White-tailed Tropicbirds** were first noted 24 Feb

(AD), about a week later than usual. A **Northern Gannet** was seen off Gibbet's Is. 29 Dec (JM, LM). A **Great Cormorant** roosted at Nonsuch Is. from mid-Feb to May 4 (JM). An **American Bittern** was flushed from Firefly Reserve 5 Jan (AD, DW). The long-staying **Grey Heron** was in Tuckers Town Bay 18 Jan (JM). Two **Canada Geese** were on Port Royal GC 13 Feb (RC) and one remained at North Pond into May, while a **Brant** (Bermuda's 9th) was on Tucker's Point GC 1 Dec-4 Apr (AD). An **imm. swan** sp. was seen flying over Port Royal GC 14 Jan (DW). Eighteen duck species were recorded



during the winter period. A **Eurasian Wigeon** (*photo: Andrew Dobson*) found in Dec was re-discovered in Harrington Sound 18 Apr, still present 17 May (DBW). A male **Eurasian Teal** finally revealed itself 20 Jan-2 Mar on Spittal Pond (DBW). A **Common Goldeneye** was on Parson's Road Pond 12 Jan-1 Mar (DW). A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was seen in various locations 10 Mar-2 Apr (RL, KL). A **Peregrine Falcon** wintered (AD et al). The two long-staying **Red-tailed Hawks** remained throughout the period

and were seen displaying and nest building in Apr (DBW). A **Black Rail** was flushed and seen well 29 Dec and heard 31 Dec in Devonshire Marsh (JM, LM).

### Shorebirds to Tanagers



A **Least Sandpiper** was seen at various locations during the winter period (AD, DBW). A **Gull-billed Tern** (*photo: Andrew Dobson*) was at Spittal Pond 4-10 May (RG). A **Forster's Tern** remained at Watford Bridge until 2 Dec (PH). The **Black Skimmer** remained at Dockyard to 2 Dec (PW). An **Iceland Gull** was in the Great Sound 2 Feb (AD). At least two **Piping Plovers** wintered at Cooper's Is. and Grape Bay (AD). A

**Purple Sandpiper** discovered by AD and DW on the breakwater jetty at Dockyard 6 Jan was the first record for Bermuda (see separate article). A **Eurasian Collared Dove** (of debatable origin) was near the Govt. Quarry 16 May (PW). A **Snowy Owl**, last recorded in Bermuda in 1987, was on a school roof in Hamilton 6 Dec (*photo: Lisa Bargett*) and 9 Dec. A **Short-eared Owl** was seen at the Airport on 11 Dec (DBW) and 16-18 May (JA, BM), the latest spring date. At least four **Common Nighthawks** were seen at various



locations 13-17 May (JA, PJH, BM, KR). A hummingbird species was reported from a St. Anne's Road, Southampton garden on 30 Jan and again on 10 Mar (DBW), so it had presumably over-wintered. A **Tree Swallow** was over Somerset on 19 Dec and Ship's Hill Pond 26-28 Jan (DW). A **Cliff Swallow** over Daniel's Head Farm 26 Dec provided the first winter record in Bermuda (DW). Bermuda's second **Cave Swallow** (see photo) was discovered at Daniel's Head Farm on 3 May (WF, DBW). A record four **Yellow-throated Vireos** were seen this winter at Morgan's Point 29 Dec (EA), St. Georges 29 Dec (PW), Arboretum 11 Jan (DW) and Botanical Gardens 12 Jan (DW). A **Northern Mockingbird** spent 18-20 Mar at East Shore Lane, Somerset (PH). Of 22 warbler species recorded during the winter season, the more unusual included **Nashville Warbler** 24 Jan at Warwick Pond (DW) and **Swainson's Warbler** 15 Feb-9 Mar Riddell's Bay mangroves (AD, DW). A **Lincoln's Sparrow** was at Horseshoe Bay dunes 29 Jan (DW). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** was at Southside 3 Feb (AD). A **Dickcissel** was photographed at bird-feeder in Warwick 14 Apr providing a rare spring record (JT). A late **Bobolink** was at Pitman's Pond 3 Dec (DBW). A **Common Redpoll** was at Cloverdale 17 Jan (DW)



and seven at Little Head Park 26 Jan (AD). A **Summer Tanager** was calling in the Arboretum 8-11 Jan (AD).

Observers: Eric Amos, Julian Avery, Lisa Bardgett, Rob Chandler, Andrew Dobson, Wendy Frith, Richard Gozney, Peter Holmes (PJH), Peter Hopkin (PH), Ray & Kay Latter, Jeremy and Leila Madeiros, Blake Mathys, Keith Rossiter, James Tavares, David Wallace (DW), Paul Watson, David Wingate (DBW).

## Christmas Bird Count Dec 29<sup>th</sup> 2007

Andrew Dobson

More than 50,000 observers participate each year in this all-day census of early-winter bird populations. 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.

Prior to 1900, people engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt". They would choose sides and go into the 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.

The Bermuda Audubon Society held its 33<sup>rd</sup> CBC on 29<sup>th</sup> December 2007. Features of this year's count included:

- 6,921 individual birds (very similar to last year's total)
- 95 species of birds (100 in 2006)
- Three new species for count day
- European Starling was the most common species (23% of the count)
- Nearly 250 species have now been record on the CBC in Bermuda since 1975

Seventeen members of the Society counted every bird from dawn to dusk as well as adding any additional species seen during the week. Considerable effort went into planning the count, with the observers dividing the island up into nine areas.



Completing much of the census on foot, observers also used car, bike, boat and golf carts! Some unusual species were seen this year. New species for Bermuda's count included a Black Rail seen in Devonshire Marsh, a highly secretive small bird that is hardly ever spotted in Bermuda. A Cliff Swallow was seen during the count week at

Daniel's Head Farm, the first time this species has ever been recorded during the winter. A Peregrine Falcon seen in Harrington Sound had not been seen on count day before. Two Yellow-throated Vireos in St. George's and on Morgan's Point were new for both the count day and count week. Other unusual species included a Brant Goose on Tucker's Point golf course, a Northern Gannet off Gibbet's Island. The photo shows the Brant, of which less than ten have ever been recorded in Bermuda (*photo: Andrew Dobson*). This one was seen on Tuckers Point golf course. Two 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. A total of 46 Belted Kingfishers was the highest count ever recorded for this species. However, nearly 50% 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. 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 gain invaluable information. Most importantly, the birds benefit because it helps Audubon focus on those birds and habitats that need our help most. As to the future in Bermuda - the considerable variety and number of

birds wintering in Bermuda emphasizes the need to maintain and protect open spaces. Private landowners can help by planting trees and shrubs and trying to leave some natural 'wild' areas on their property. The Government has a series of national parks, but it can further assist by allocating money to the purchase of open space and not allowing the development of areas zoned as woodland reserve and arable land. Everyone can help by supporting organizations like Buy Back Bermuda, the Bermuda Audubon Society and the Bermuda National Trust in their efforts to establish and maintain nature reserves.

CBC results are available on the National Audubon website  
[www.audubon.org/bird/cbc](http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc)

## Cahow Painting Donated to Bermuda National Gallery



A painting by the famous American ornithologist Roger Tory Peterson (1908-1996) titled *Cahows in Flight*, circa 1952-1953 has been donated to the Bermuda National Gallery by Helen B. Wilson on behalf of her and her late husband, Dr. Howard E. Wilson. The painting, gouache on paper, measures 16½ inches by 11¾ inches and is a gift in recognition of David Wingate and his conservation efforts on behalf of the Cahow. Mrs. Wilson provided the following background information:

“In January of 1977, my husband and I attended a medical meeting held on Bermuda. Ardent birders and interested in all things natural, we made a trip to a small nature museum and saw the fossilized eggs of the Cahow. Entranced, as fossils are among our varied interests, we were able to contact David Wingate. Busy

with work projects, he did suggest areas of interest on the island. We were excited about the opportunities but limited by the length of our stay, so we returned in October of 1977. Prior to this trip we contacted David and with the advance notice were able to spend time with him. A tour of Nonsuch Island to view plans to restore the native

habitat was most inspiring. David attempted to show us the Cahows returning to their burrows but to no avail. It was an exciting night time motor boat trip never the less.

In February of 1984, my husband was reading a birding publication when he noticed a small advertisement. Listed along with two or three other paintings was *Cahows* by Roger Tory Peterson. Not only did that cause excitement due to our 1977 experiences, but the seller lived in Olympia, Washington, a relatively short drive from our home in Bellevue, Washington. Howard immediately called and we drove there that weekend. The seller turned out to be Alison Murphy Conner, daughter of the late Robert Cushman Murphy, the world famous ornithologist and conservationist.

Mrs. Conner was moving and had to part with some of her treasure-trove of paintings by well-known artists. She told us paintings were frequently given as presents for weddings, birthdays, and so on in this ornithological group of artistic friends. It was Mrs. Conner's father, Dr. Murphy, along with Dr. Louis S. Mowbray, who asked the then 15 year old David Wingate to row them to an offshore island where the rediscovery of the active Cahow nesting burrows occurred; this greatly influenced David's career choice. We were thrilled to return home with the watercolor and due to our friendship with David, we planned to ultimately donate the painting to the Bermuda National Gallery to be displayed as part of Bermuda's natural history.

We were unable to determine if the painting had been published until recently. It was used as the frontispiece of *Sea Birds* by James Fisher and R.M. Lockley, published in 1954. There may be one other publication, but that is proving to be a bit more elusive."

## Society News

**Andrew Dobson**

### Annual General Meeting

This will be held on Tues 10<sup>th</sup> June at the BUEI Auditorium at 6.00 pm. The AGM will be followed by a talk from Government Conservation Officer, Mr. Jeremy Madeiros on the "The Cahow - Return of the Ghost Bird to Nonsuch Island", starting at 7.00 pm. The following list of members has been proposed for the new Committee of Management:

President:	Andrew Dobson
Vice-President	Richard Amos
Treasurer	Judith Swain
Membership Sec	Lyn Llewellyn
Other members	Fiona Doe, Jennifer Gray, Jeremy Madeiros, Paul Watson, David Wingate
Executive Sec	Karen Border

If you wish to nominate anyone to the Committee of Management, please contact the secretary, Karen Border at [borders@logic.bm](mailto:borders@logic.bm) or 238-8628.

### New Patron

The Society is pleased to announce that Bermuda's Governor, Sir Richard Gozney, has agreed to be a patron of the Bermuda Audubon Society. Sir Richard is a keen birdwatcher and took part in the Christmas Bird Count within weeks of his arrival on



the island. Lady Vereker remains a Society patron. She was recently appointed a Vice-President of BirdLife International's Rare Bird Club.

### **Reserves**

**Lambda Island:** A working party of volunteers spent an enjoyable morning installing Longtail igloos on Lambda Island and removing invasive plant species. There was time to install igloos on Pearl Island as well. The good news is that one of the longtail igloos on Pearl Island is already occupied by a pair of longtails. (See feature article).

**Somerset Long Bay West:** New fencing has been erected around the reserve. This has also provided the opportunity to remove invasive plant species. The security of the reserve has been hugely improved and should end illegal camping and bike scrambling and lead to less littering.

### **Bird Carving**



The Society received a beautifully carved European Goldfinch by wood carver Larry Weston. In collaboration with the BUEI, who will hold and exhibit this fine piece of work, we look forward to the next in a series of local bird carvings which Mr. Weston has offered to our Society. The photo shows Sir Richard Gozney (left) and Larry Weston unveiling the goldfinch. This is the second in the series of Bermuda bird carvings, the first one being an Eastern Bluebird. The Society is hugely grateful to Mr. Weston for his generosity and time. The birds enable the Bermuda Audubon Society to continue to educate people about our local birds.

### **Audubon Committee**

A few changes have taken place since the committee was appointed last year. Lyn Llewellyn has taken on the role of Membership Secretary. If your membership details are not up to date, I'm sure you will hear from her. After several years as Treasurer, Leila Madeiros has relinquished that position to Judith Swain. Thank you Leila and a welcome to Lyn and Judith.

## EnviroShorts

The 13-part series of environmental documentaries about Bermuda finally concluded in May. The Society has collaborated with Sangita Iyer of the Bermuda Broadcasting Company to produce the programmes and we are very grateful for the financial backing it has been given by The Bank of Bermuda Foundation, The Ace Foundation, BELCO, Bermuda Waterworks and Mr. Jim Butterfield. The feedback from the series has been very positive. The next phase in the project is to produce some DVDs of the series and make them available to schools in particular.

## Bluebird Workshop

Every piece of wood was used for another very successful bluebird nest box workshop held at Government House in March. We also had the opportunity to inspect the impressive bluebird nest box trail, with some boxes already occupied. Our thanks to a large number of families who joined us for the morning and to Government House for hosting the event and providing refreshments!

## Strategic Planning



The Society undertook a Strategic Planning session 24-29 April, including a weekend workshop for the Audubon committee. This should ensure that the Society remains on a sound footing and has clear plan for the future. The session was led by Ken Smith and Sarah Sanders from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (UK).

## Bluebird Research

Julian Avery and Blake Mathys, research scientists from the US are back in Bermuda and continuing their efforts to monitor the local populations of bluebirds and kiskadees.

## Field trips



David Wingate led a birdwatching tour of the West End on 13 April. Starting at Fort Scaur, we then toured Somerset Long Bay, including the recently fenced west reserve and the new Buy Back reserve – where we were able to observe a Pied-billed Grebe nest, Great Egret, Great Blue Heron and Blue-winged Teal amongst other birds. After checking the gull species in Mangrove Bay, the group finished at Dockyard, where there were at least 13 newly arrived Common Terns.

## Lecture

RSPB staff member Sarah Sanders gave a fascinating lecture on the UK Overseas Territories. They are spectacular islands, home to plants and animals that are found nowhere else in the world. She explained how RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) works with local conservation organisations, government departments, scientists and volunteers to conserve the outstanding biological diversity of these special places. Sarah was ideally qualified to talk on this subject, having been the international officer for the UK Overseas Territories at the RSPB for over five years.

Sarah was here to assist in the Society's strategic planning workshop, so it was an ideal opportunity to hear her talking about the other overseas territories.

## Natural History Library

The Society donated *Handbook of Birds of the World Vol. 12* to BAMZ Library, part of the Society's on-going commitment to provide the complete series of books.

## Bermuda's 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

As part of the anniversary celebrations, the Society will certainly be doing its part to highlight our unique environment. One of the activities we have planned is to collect the seeds from Bermuda's national flower, the Bermudiana. This endemic plant will only



grow and survive if a strict mowing regime is followed. We intend to distribute 400 packets of seeds accompanied by a leaflet on "Managing a meadow", encouraging the Government and other organizations to leave unmowed areas at certain times of the year.

## Annual Show - Bermuda Audubon Society Bluebird Trophy

The Bluebird nest box category at the Annual Show once again attracted some well made nest boxes. For the second year running, the Audubon Trophy (a special cedar nestbox made by Audubon member Fred Phillips) was won by student Nicholas Barton. His winning entry is shown in the photo.

# Nonsuch Island Natural History Camp 2008

Saturday, June 28th to Saturday, July 5th

Learn about Bermuda's native plants and animals

Daily field trips to Bermuda's habitats

Lectures by local scientists

Boat trips to coral reef sites and Harrington Sound

Cost : \$150 (includes: camp t-shirt, food, accommodation and transport)

Open to Bermudian students age 15 to 18 currently registered in a certified school programme.

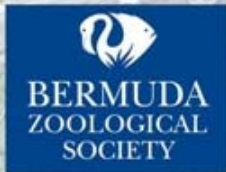
For further information contact:

BZS Education Office

293-4464 x 116

education.bzs@gov.bm

Application Deadline: June 2nd, 2008



## News on the web

Please click on the following link to read about the latest news regarding the Cahow (Bermuda Petrel)

[http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2008/03/Bermuda\\_Petrel.html](http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2008/03/Bermuda_Petrel.html)

I hope you will view the You Tube clip which comes from the documentary 'Bermuda's Treasure Island' - this DVD is still available from the Bermuda Audubon Society priced \$20

I am sure you will be pleased to see the following support for Cooper's Island published in a press release by BirdLife International.

Bermuda's new National Park extends IBA protection:

[http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2008/03/Coopers\\_island.html](http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2008/03/Coopers_island.html)

<http://www.theroyalgazette.com/siftology.royalgazette/Article/article.jsp?articleId=7d82db73003000f&sectionId=60>

Spring arrival of longtails:

<http://www.royalgazette.com/siftology.royalgazette/Article/article.jsp?sectionId=60&articleId=7d82db730030004>



<http://www.bermudasun.bm/main.asp?Search=1&ArticleID=36732&SectionID=24&SubSectionID=&S=1>

Warning of threat to shearwaters:

<http://www.royalgazette.com/siftology.royalgazette/Article/article.jsp?sectionId=48&articleId=7d8492f30030000>

Bermuda's Bluebirds:

<http://www.royalgazette.com/siftology.royalgazette/Article/article.jsp?sectionId=60&articleId=7d8372f3003000a>