



Bermuda Audubon Society

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A Message from the President

Jennifer Gray



After a summer break from scheduled meetings and events, your Audubon committee is back to the grindstone with numerous projects and events underway. A muddy but relaxing and successful field trip in early September was enjoyed and described beautifully in a recent Bermudian Magazine by writer and Audubon enthusiast Liz Jones. The Audubon Birding weekend on Paget Island in early October was another great success and readers can hear more in this

newsletter from Andrew Dobson. For three days in mid October, Audubon featured at a

booth during the Eden Project in the Botanical Gardens. This environmental exposition was a wonderful way to share our interests and concerns relating to the environment. Special thanks to members; Katherine Nisbet, Penny Hill, Sally Madden, Christine Littleboy, George Peterich and Keith Rossiter for their great gifts of time assisting the committee in manning the booth and making bluebird boxes.

In late October committee members were out in force again to expedite significant habitat management at our Sears Cave Nature Reserve. Donated to Audubon in 1992 by the Trott family, this half-acre reserve boasts a spectacular sinkhole, which is home to some of Bermudas rarest and oldest cave ferns. Thriving on the protected, damp and sparsely lit sinkhole slopes, giant Eddoe plants have recently invaded and overwhelmed the ferns, which share a 'wet appetite' for this exquisite roofless cave. Our early morning task was to remove the giant Eddoes from this thirty-foot deep hole in the ground. A job requiring a fair amount of agility and strength along with mattocks, hoes, machetes, ropes, a ladder and a careful sensitivity to the native and endemic plants in the area. The Eddoe plant, or Taro as it is better known, is described as a low-growing plant with large heart-shaped leaves borne on upright stalks 1' to 3' high. I call these in Sears Cave giants as they reached near twenty feet high sprawling with their huge leaves filling the majority of space across the opening of the sinkhole. A native of the East Indies and grown throughout the tropics and subtropics for its edible roots, the Eddoe is occasionally found in Bermuda gardens as an ornamental plant. After the giant leaves in the cave were slashed and carried away a great excavation of the rich red soils was made to unearth every last bit of the root system with it's interwoven tangle of tubers awaiting their chance to send up yet another Eddoe shoot. Our team worked hard and was pleased that in this single morning it appeared we were able to remove every last Eddoe from the hole. On the upper rim and hillside of the cave, we also made great headway clearing Brazilian Pepper and other invasives thus restoring the area to its intended special place for rare endemic plant species. Our gratitude goes out to the Conservation Services crew whose expertise and assistance turned the effort into a one-day job rather than an on going battle between the giant Eddoes and the Audubon executives. Thank you also to those special volunteers who came out to lend a hand.

Remember that every member of Audubon makes us stronger and more able to protect Bermuda's increasingly threatened wildlife habitats and your involvement can be meaningful, stimulating and enjoyable. Keep abreast of current issues, mark you calendars with our special events and join us in making Bermuda a better place for all life.

Green Heron - New Breeding Species for Bermuda

Andrew Dobson

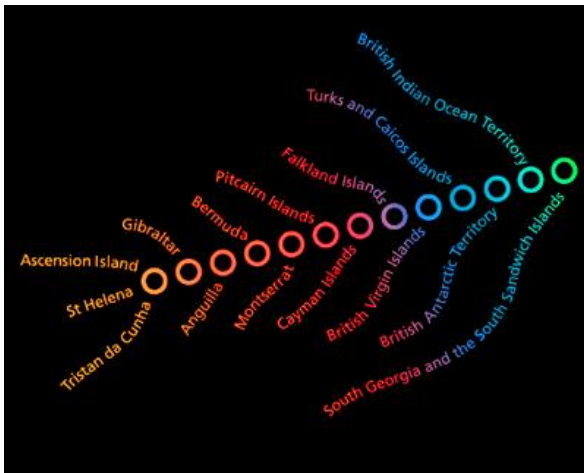
In recent years, suspicion had been growing as to the possible attempted breeding of Green Heron *Butorides striatus* near Mid-Ocean Golf Course. On 12th June 2000, there was a very intriguing sight of a displaying Green Heron (with another male heard) at South Pond. One was still present on 30th July but there was no evidence of breeding. In the summer of 2001, there were again summer sightings of Green Heron. On 26th May 2002, at least four adult Green Herons were seen by Wendy Frith, and again in early June at Trott's Pond. Finally, on 30th July 2002 at Mangrove Lake, David Wingate observed one

adult and one juvenile. The juvenile heron still had down on its crown and flanks. On 2nd August 2002, six Green Herons were seen at Mangrove Lake, three adults and three juveniles. There is certainly a small resident population of perhaps two pairs around the two lakes (Mangrove Lake and Trott's Pond).

Green Heron breeds commonly throughout the eastern half of the USA and into Central America and the Caribbean. It had certainly been thought a likely candidate to breed in Bermuda.

'A Sense of Direction' - an international environmental conference

Andrew Dobson



The Society is excited to be involved in the organization of this international environment conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories and other small island communities (22-27 March 2003). Representatives of the Bermuda National Trust, Bermuda Zoological Society, Bermuda Audubon Society and Bermuda Ministry of the Environment have been planning the conference for more than a year, liaising with the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum. It will be the third such

conference following the first held in London in 1999, and the second in Gibraltar in 2000.

The conference will provide a forum for governmental agencies and NGOs to discuss key conservation issues, to highlight success stories, exchange ideas, and to forge partnerships. It is hoped that Overseas territories and other small island communities that share similar environmental problems will benefit from Bermuda's history of planning and conservation initiatives. Bermuda hopes to learn from the success of environmental programmes tried and tested elsewhere.

The programme includes:

- Conservation issues of Bermuda
- Environmental charters and strategic planning
- Managing conservation organizations
- Implementing management plans
- Climate change
- Dealing with invasive species
- Local field trips

The organizers are grateful for support from the Government of Bermuda, The Environment Fund for Overseas Territories of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Bank of Bermuda Foundation, Capital G and fidelity Investments.

If you are interested in attending the conference, please see details of the Conservation Forum's web site www.ukotcf.org

Bird Report July - October 2002

Andrew Dobson



*Immature Black Tern -
through the spotting scope at
Spittal Pond*

The fall season is the most eagerly awaited time of the year for local birders. Most migrants are predictable in their arrival dates while there are always unexpected vagrants to be found. The fall-out of migrant birds in Bermuda is closely related to

weather systems (depressions and associated fronts) moving off the North American continent into the Atlantic, as well as the occurrence of tropical storms. Tropical Storm *Cristobal* (7/8th August) merged with a frontal trough and brought a large fall of shorebirds. On 9th August, David Wingate counted 16 species at the airport, including Semipalmated Plover (36), Lesser Yellowlegs (22), Semipalmated Sandpiper (54), Least Sandpiper (133), White-rumped Sandpiper (18), Pectoral Sandpiper (24) and Short-billed Dowitcher (46). Sub-tropical Storm *Gustav* (8/10th Sept) brought swallows and warblers, while a strong cold front (18/19th Sept) brought a scattering of empidonax flycatchers and more warblers. Hurricane *Kyle* spent many days arcing around Bermuda in late Sept and early October. A rain-bearing front on October 21st brought one of the best fall-outs of Blackpoll Warblers for many years. These long-distance migrants usually fly south, straight over Bermuda, but in bad weather conditions they may well take advantage of a stop-over. These warblers were seen from Lagoon Park to St. Georges, observers reporting "ten in every casuarina I looked at on Port Royal GC" to "a count of over 100 on part of St. George's GC". An estimate of 1,000 birds on Bermuda may well be far below the actual number that arrived. By the end of the week, most Blackpolls had departed. The fall of Blackpolls redeemed an otherwise rather poor migration season, which up to that point Eric Amos had described as never seeing it so poor in more than 32 years. David Wingate frequently recalls the fantastic numbers of migrants to be seen on Nonsuch Island alone in the 1960s. The reality is a world of fewer birds and Bermuda has little power to alter the causes of bird population decline in the Americas. Highlights of this fall season include: **Red-billed Tropicbird** (only the second adult ever to come in-shore); breeding **Green Heron** (see separate article); juvenile **Surf Scoter** (the first for 7 years); **Red-tailed Hawk** (remaining surprisingly elusive); **Wilson's Phalarope** (three together at Jubilee Road on 13th Sep); **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**; **Olive-sided Flycatcher**; **Great Crested Flycatcher**; **Red-breasted Nuthatch**; **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**

(three exceptionally early records); **Northern Wheatear**; **Blue-winged Warbler** (an earliest recorded date); **Brewster's Warbler** (Blue-Winged x Golden-winged Hybrid); **Yellow-throated Warbler** (three perched together on a casuarina branch on 14th Oct was exceptional); **Cerulean Warbler** (three records); and **Swainson's Warbler** (about ten records). The following table lists the migrant species that have occurred so far this Fall:

The date indicates the first date of arrival for each migrant species. The * indicates the only fall record this year).

Pied-billed Grebe	12 Sep	Cloverdale	EA
Bermuda Petrel	15 Oct	Castle Harbour Is	JM
Red-billed Tropicbird*	14 Aug	Nonsuch Is	DBW
D.C.Cormorant	1 Oct	Mangrove Bay	DW
American Bittern	23 Oct	Warwick Pond	PS/JN
Least Bittern	18 Jul	Spittal Pond	AD
Great Blue Heron	2 Sep	Trunk Is	DW
Great Egret	10 Sep	Jubilee Road	AD
Snowy Egret	13 Sep	Spittal Pond	DW
Little Blue Heron	16 Jul	North Pond	EA
Tricolored Heron	17 Sep		DBW
Green Heron	26 Aug	Walsingham	DW
Glossy Ibis	11 Aug	Jubilee Road	EA
Blue-winged Teal	23 Aug	Jubilee Road	DBW
Green-winged Teal	14 Sep	Jubilee Road	AD
Ring-necked Duck	10 Oct	Parsons Road Park	DBW
Lesser Scaup*	31 Oct	Spittal Pond	SR/DE
Surf Scoter*	31 Oct	Mangrove Lake	SR/DE
Osprey	29 Sep	Ferry Reach	AD
American Kestrel	6 Oct	PRGC	EA
Merlin	29 Sep	Cloverdale	AD
Peregrine Falcon	1 Oct	South Shore, Warwick	EA
Sora	24 Aug	Pembroke Marsh	BO
Purple Gallinule	2 Aug	Spittal Pond	DBW
Common Moorhen	10 Sep	Devonshire Marsh	EA
Black-bellied Plover	8 Aug	East End	DBW
American Golden-Plover	7 Sep	Airport	AD
Semipalmated Plover	9 Aug	Airport	DBW
Killdeer	8 Aug	Riddell's Bay GC	EA
Greater Yellowlegs	28 Jul	Port Royal GC Pond	EA
Lesser Yellowlegs	8 Jul	North Pond	EA
Solitary Sandpiper	16 Jul	North Pond	DBW
Willet	8 Jul	North Pond	EA
Spotted Sandpiper	8 Jul	North Pond	EA
Upland Sandpiper	9 Aug	Airport	DBW
Whimbrel	9 Aug	Airport	DBW
Turnstone	31 Jul	St Georges	EA
Sanderling	11 Aug	Nonsuch Is	DBW
Semipalmated Sand	8 Aug	Riddell's Bay GC	EA/DW
Western Sandpiper	9 Aug	Airport	DBW
Least Sandpiper	13 Jul	North Pond	EA/AD
White-rumped Sandpiper	9 Aug	Airport	DBW
Pectoral Sandpiper	16 Jul	North Pond	DBW
Stilt Sandpiper	30 Jul	Various	DBW
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	9 Aug	Airport	DBW
Short-billed Dowitcher	29 Jul	Whites Supermarket	EA
Common Snipe	2 Sep	Jubilee Road	EA

Wilson's Phalarope	2 Sep	Jubilee Road	EA
Ring-billed Gull	16 Sep	St Georges N coast	EA
Herring Gull			
Lesser Black-backed Gull	25 Aug	Castle Harbour	AD/JM
Great Black-backed Gull			
Royal Tern	18 Jul	Castle Harbour Is	DBW
Sandwich Tern	20 Jul	Dockyard	DBW
Least Tern*	9 Aug	Airport	DBW
Black Tern	31-Aug	Spittal Pond	AD
Black-billed Cuckoo	3 Aug	Harrington Hundreds	DBW
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	13 Sep	Spittal Pond	DW
Common Nighthawk	8 Sep	Port Royal GC	SR
Chimney Swift*	9 Sep	Port Royal GC	AD
R.T. Hummingbird*	7 Sep	Ferry Point Park	SR
Belted Kingfisher	3 Aug	Riddell's Bay GC	EA
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	8 Sep	Port Royal GC	AD
Olive-sided Flycatcher*	4 Oct	Ferry Point Park	EA
Eastern Wood-Pewee	12 Sep	Ferry Point Park	EA
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher*	22-Sep	Port Royal GC	EA
Acadian Flycatcher	13-Sep	Port Royal GC	EA
Alder/Willow Flycatcher	13-Sep	Port Royal GC	EA
Alder Flycatcher	22 Sep	Hog Bay Park	AD/WF
Least Flycatcher*	6 Oct	Biological Station	DW
Great Crested Flycatcher*	19 Oct	Cemetery Hill	SR
Eastern Kingbird	25 Aug	Mid-Ocean GC	DBW
Grey Kingbird	7 Sep	Ferry Point Park	SR
White-eyed Vireo	12 Sep	Ferry Point Park	EA
Yellow-throated Vireo			
Warbling Vireo	13 Sep	Coney Is	JM
Philadelphia Vireo	19 Sep	Ferry Point Park	EA
Red-eyed Vireo	11 Aug	Shelly Hall	DBW
Purple Martin	19 Aug	Riddell's Bay GC	DW
Tree Swallow	24 Aug	South Whale Estate	EA
Bank Swallow	25 Aug	Port Royal GC	EA
Cliff Swallow	23 Aug	Various	EA/JM
Barn Swallow	28 Jul	Riddell's Bay GC	EA
Red-breasted Nuthatch*	18 Oct	Sears Cave	JM
Golden-crowned Kinglet	30 Oct	Fort Scaur	AD et al
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	8 Sep	Coney Is	JM
Northern Wheatear	20 Oct	Castle Harbour Is	JM (to 23 Oct)
Veery*	14 Sep	Greta head Park	DBW
Grey-cheeked Thrush*	23 Oct	Arboretum	AD
Swainson's Thrush	23 Oct	Arboretum/Lagoon Park	AD/DW
Cedar Waxwing	13 Sep	Ocean View GC	EA
Blue-winged Warbler	19 Aug	Riddell's Bay GC Man	DW
<i>Brewster's Warbler*</i>	21Sep	Fort Scaur	AD/SR
Golden-winged Warbler	17 Sep	Ferry Point Park	DBW
Tennessee Warbler	22 Sep	Ferry Point Park	DBW
Orange-crowned Warbler	26 Oct	Cemetery Hill	AD/SR/PS
Nashville Warbler	19 Sep	Coney Is	JM
Northern Parula	30 Aug	Shelly Bay Mangroves	AD
Yellow Warbler	9 Aug	Nonsuch Is	JM
Chestnut-sided Warbler	7 Sep	Ferry Point Park	EA/SR
Magnolia Warbler	12 Sep	Cemetery Hill	EA
Cape May Warbler	6 Oct	Ferry Point Park	DBW
Black-throated Blue War	7 Sep	Ferry Point Park	EA
Yellow-rumped Warbler	2 Oct	Ferry Point Park	EA/DBW
Black-throated Green War	8 Sep	St. Georges GC	AD

Blackburnian Warbler	23 Aug	Riddell's Bay GC	AD
Yellow-throated Warbler	26 Aug	Port Royal GC	DW
Pine Warbler	2 Oct	Ferry Point Park	EA
Prairie Warbler	22 Aug	Tom Moores	EA
Palm Warbler	8 Oct	Shelly Bay Reserve	DBW
Bay-breasted Warbler	7 Sep	Port Royal GC	EA
Blackpoll Warbler	14 Sep	Ferry Point Park	EA
Cerulean Warbler	25 Aug	Port Royal GC	EA
Black-and-white Warbler	29 Jul	Riddell's Bay GC	EA
American Redstart	6 Aug	Tom Moores	EA
Prothonotary Warbler	19 Aug	Riddell's Bay GC Man	DW
Worm-eating Warbler	10 Aug	Nonsuch Is	DBW
Swainson's Warbler	12 Sep	Cemetery Hill	EA
Ovenbird	12 Aug	Spittal Pond	DBW
Northern Waterthrush	12 Aug	Riddell's Bay GC	EA
Louisiana Waterthrush	2 Aug	Spittal Pond	DBW
Kentucky Warbler	31 Aug	Port Royal GC	DW
Connecticut Warbler*	3 Oct	Port Royal GC	AD
Mourning Warbler	8 Sep	St.Georges GC	AD/SR
Common Yellowthroat	14 Sep	Ferry Point Park	AD
Hooded Warbler	12 Aug	Spittal Pond	DBW
Wilson's Warbler	13 Sep	Ferry Point Park	JM/DBW
Canada Warbler	13 Sep	Coney Is	JM
Yellow-breasted Chat	14 Sep	Ferry Point Park	EA
Summer Tanager	8 Sep	West Side Road	DW
Scarlet Tanager	13 Sep	Coral Beach Club	DW
Chipping Sparrow*	20 Oct	St.Georges GC	AD/JN
Savannah Sparrow	14 Sep	Port Royal GC	AD
White-crowned Sparrow*	14 Sep	Port Royal GC	AD
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	14 Sep	Mid-Ocean GC dump	EA
Blue Grosbeak	12 Sep	Port Royal GC	DW
Indigo Bunting	14 Sep	St. Georges GC	EA
Dickcissel	5 Oct	Ferry Point Park	BAS
Bobolink	12 Sep	Port Royal GC	DW
Baltimore Oriole	8 Sep	Port Royal GC	EA

Observers: Eric Amos (EA), Bermuda Audubon Society (BAS), Andrew Dobson (AD), Dewi Edwards (DE), Wendy Frith (WF), Jeremy Madeiros (JM), Julie Nicholson (JN), Bernard Oatley (BO), Steve Rodwell (SR), Penny Soares (PS), David Wallace (DW), Paul Watson (PW), David Wingate (DBW).

New Cahow Nest Burrows Constructed

Jeremy Madeiros

The Bermuda Petrel or Cahow *Pterodroma cahow*, is well known as one of the rarest seabird species on earth. It is continuing a slow recovery from near-extinction, increasing from 18 nesting pairs producing 8 fledged chicks in 1960 to 65 pairs producing a record 36 fledged chicks in 2002. The increase in the nesting population is largely due to intensive management, including an on-going programme of artificial nest burrow construction. The four islets on which the entire nesting population currently breeds are so small and eroded that each has only a limited number of natural nestsites suitable for the cahow, which required very deep, dark burrows or crevices. The artificial burrows copy the form of a typical petrel burrow and have been readily accepted by new cahow pairs prospecting for nestsites. One a nesting pair chooses a

burrow, they mate for life and return to the same nestsite, which can be for some 30 years. Almost 70 artificial burrows have been built since the 1960s and have been so successful that two-thirds of the breeding population uses them. The two western nesting islands have experienced the largest increase in nesting pairs, with 23 pairs now nesting on one island, using up almost all available sites. To maintain the continuing increase in nesting pairs on this island, a series of 12 new concrete burrows were completed in time for the next breeding season, which extends from October 2002 to June 2003. This was carried out in two stages, with the nests being chipped out of the rock in late July. During early October 3000lbs of concrete were mixed by hand on Nonsuch Island and taken by bucket out to the nesting islet. These were landed on the islet in a fairly heavy ocean swell from Tropical Storm 'Kyle', which was lingering south of Bermuda at the time. The cement was then carried thirty feet up to the top of the island and poured over paper and cardboard forms in the nests, leaving an opening in the top of the nest chamber as a viewing hole. The last stage was to pour heavy concrete lids to fit over the viewhole and to remove the paper and cardboard. These new nests should be sufficient to accommodate any increase in population on this island for the next 5 to 10 years. The cahows have already returned for their next breeding season and the new nest sites will be monitored to see if any interest is shown in their new 'housing complex'!

Paget Island Bird Camp

Andrew Dobson

Since the inaugural camp was held in 1992, the early October weekend based on Paget Island has become very much part of the Society's yearly calendar. Enjoyed by experienced and novice birders, young and 'not-so-young', campers and dormitory dwellers - this year was as successful as ever. Very wet weather in the days (if not hours) before the boat set off from Ordnance Island provided the ideal fall-out of migrant birds. We managed to record an impressive 24 species of warblers amongst the total 62 species. The rarely occurring Cerulean Warbler was perhaps the highlight of the weekend, but other 'goodies' included a Yellow-throated Vireo and brightly plumaged Dickcissel. A Peregrine Falcon sat obligingly on rocks near Lover's Lake and an Osprey flew over our campsite. A Common Nighthawk perching on a casuarina branch was especially memorable as this species is usually only seen at dawn and dusk. The best single location was Ferry Point, with 17 species of warbler, while the inappropriately named Cemetery Hill was 'alive' with ten species of warbler and a Summer Tanager. Culinary skills were once again competing for the birding skills, and I know that most of us can't wait for the next camp with sizable portion of rum cake!

If you have any questions regarding the book, please
email: info@audubon.bm

Future Events - For information on any of the events: tel. 238-3239

- **Sunday 10 November**
Boat trip on Michael Hayward's 'Explorer'.

Meet at B.U.E.I. dock at 12.00 noon. Return 4.00 pm
Please park cars on road by Fidelity – not in BUEI car park.
\$20 adults. \$10 children. (**rain date 17 Nov**)
Reservations : Email info@audubon.bm or tel. 238-3239

- **Wednesday 20 November**
Illustrated talk on the Ruddy Turnstone banding programme
by Ron Porter
Education Room, BAMZ 7.30 pm
Free admission. Donations welcome.
- **Christmas Bird Count**
Date to be announced
Email info@audubon.bm or tel. 238-3239

Executive Committee 2002-2003

President	Jennifer Gray
Vice-president	Andrew Dobson
Treasurer	Leila Madeiros
Secretary	Richard Amos
Officers:	Fiona Doe
	Jeremy Madeiros
	David O'Neill
	Patrick Talbot
	David Wingate

Newsletter	Andrew Dobson
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