



NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 1328 Hamilton HM FX

www.audubon.bm

email: info@audubon.bm

BALD EAGLE IN BERMUDA – FIRST SIGHTING IN 34 YEARS!

by Paul Watson



Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) - Photo: Tim White

In late March several intriguing reports of a large hawk or eagle had been received from several island locations. The reports then focused mainly on the Port Royal area with several non-birders reporting an eagle over the golf course. The hunt was on!!

When searching for a bird, how hard is it to find an eagle with nearly an 8ft wingspan? That was quickly answered. Very Difficult. Despite much searching, no sightings were received for several days. Did the bird move on? Images soon appeared on Facebook of an Immature Bald Eagle photographed on Morgan's Point. The hunt was back on!!

On Sun 3rd April, Erich Hetzel and Joanne Smith searched the shoreline of the Little Sound by boat and were rewarded with sightings of an Immature Bald Eagle chasing an Osprey. This confirmation got the remaining local birders out desperately searching, myself included. After all, there had not been a Bald Eagle seen in Bermuda since 1988. I raced from St George's up to Morgan's Point where I knew several birders were searching and as I arrived the 'WhatsApp' messages were urgently pinging on my phone. Just as I was approaching the group, the eagle flew from view and disappeared. Dipped out!! (Birders expression for missing a rare or uncommon bird).

Now my pride was hurt, I was one of the few having not yet seen the eagle. Where to look for it next? After a little sleuthing, I decided to go to the old Somerset Bridge Ferry Dock where I knew I could get a good view over the wooded area of Morgan's Point. As soon as I arrived, I saw a large 'bird of prey' perched high on a tree. Success! Surely it was the Bald Eagle...but No. (Not often I can say I'm disappointed with an Osprey sighting.)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Bald Eagle - 34 Years Since Last seen in Bermuda
- Thank You Volunteers
- 10 Acres of Open Space Saved
- A Visit to Bartram's Pond
- Eve's Pond Opening
- Kingfisher Influencing Design
- Tribute to Stuart Hayward
- Bird Report
- News and Events

Herb Marshall joined me and as we were scanning the trees, I noticed something in the lower branches of a large dying laurel tree. Realising the game of Hide and Seek was now up, the bird I had seen soon took off, revealing itself to be the Bald Eagle. It flew in our direction. The excitement of seeing the bird grew, literally, as it flew closer, and closer. It then went over Somerset Bridge and into Ely's harbour. Elated to have seen the bird, the question was where to go next to get a view? Fort Scaur. This was the thought of many other birders searching, and I joined David Wingate, Eva and Heather Botelli, Ingella Persson and others to search for the eagle. Moments later it was back in view and soared past us all at eye level not 50 metres away. The noise of the camera shutters was almost deafening as the photographers vied for the best images. Well, what a morning. I had now reached my goal of seeing 350 species in Bermuda.



Bald Eagle - Photo: Miguel Mejias

Back at Somerset Bridge Ferry dock we saw the eagle return to the same tree where I had initially seen it. For an hour the group watched the eagle distantly in its favoured perch tree. Not to be outdone whilst there, the Osprey and then a Northern Harrier also put in an appearance.

After the initial excitement, we wondered how long the bird would stay, and despite the eagle wandering throughout the island, it certainly favours the Port Royal Golf Course and Western shoreline areas and has been seen regularly throughout April, May and into June. At this writing, sightings are still coming in.

Previous records were all immature birds in Dec 1953, Nov1978 to Mar1979. Nov 1987 to Apr 1988. Juvenile Bald Eagles are known to wander, so perhaps this bird was on a Walkabout or a Flyabout. It may have been blown over towards Bermuda on a winter storm or a front system coming from the west. It is vagrants such as these that make birding in Bermuda so exciting. You never know what is going to turn up.

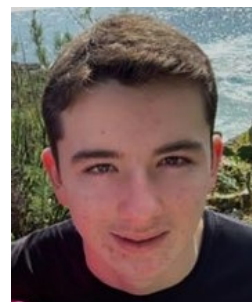
THANKING OUR VOLUNTEERS

by Jennifer Gray

Thank you, Danny Greene, Cole Steinhoff, Hubert Watlington, and Tyrone Webb, for applying your carpentry skills to the task of cutting many planks of wood into the appropriate sizes and shapes for bluebird boxes. The bluebirds and our community rely on the production of bluebird nesting boxes each spring. Our great carpenters make this possible.



Danny Greene



Cole Steinhoff



Tyrone Webb



Jamie Steeves

With twenty nature reserves to care for, and an ever-increasing challenge of invasive species, we are grateful to all those volunteers who have helped us tend these special places. In this issue, we particularly thank Jamie Steeves and Simon Van de Weg, volunteer reserve wardens for Firefly Nature Reserve and Somerset Long Bay West Nature Reserve respectively.

10 ACRES OF OPEN SPACE IN SOUTHAMPTON SAVED FROM DEVELOPMENT

by Jennifer Gray



Jennifer Gray & Karen Border
Seal the Deal

BUYING BACK BERMUDA TO SAVE PRECIOUS LAND FOR THE BENEFIT OF BERMUDA'S PEOPLE AND HER WILDLIFE

Hot on the heels of opening Eve's Pond, the Society (Buy Back Bermuda) has acquired a new nature reserve in Southampton. It is a magnificent ten-acre property on south shore that consists of woodland, arable fields and spectacular coastline. The purchase of this stunning piece of land was possible thanks to a major gift from a private anonymous donor and funds from our acquisition account.

Later this year, we will be launching a campaign to raise money to turn this property into a publicly accessible nature reserve, and to maintain all four of the Buy Back Bermuda properties for the enjoyment of all.

We look forward to yet another very special piece of Bermuda becoming available for everybody to enjoy forever.



REPORT YOUR BARN OWL SIGHTINGS

CALLING ON MEMBERS,
FRIENDS AND FAMILIES TO
HELP AS 'CITIZEN SCIENTISTS
AND REPORT ANY BARN OWL
THAT YOU SEE

LET US KNOW WHERE, WHEN,
TIME OF DAY AND BEHAVIOUR

info@audubon.bm

A VISIT TO BARTRAM'S POND

by Wendy Mcleod

I was recently introduced to Bartram's Pond in the Stokes Point West Nature Reserve and was so impressed by the main path with its mature cedar trees and bronze memorial. I snapped a photo of the plaque memorializing John Taverner Bartram and sent it to a friend whose grandmother is the great granddaughter of J T Bartram.

Next weekend the two Bartram descendants set out to visit the reserve. Here is a photo of Florence Oliver Myrtle Walker, great granddaughter of John Bartram and at 92 years old she is the oldest living Bartram descendant. She remembers being taken to visit the site as a child but sadly it was being used as a dump site at the time. It's wonderful that the Audubon society has both restored the site and memorialized the original naturalist who lived there.

The below is taken from an article by David Wingate published in the Bermuda Historical Quarterly, 1964:

John Taverner Bartram (age 23) had come to Bermuda in 1834 as a military servant to Captain Joseph Hunter. He was given a discharge on the condition that he farmed Hunter's estate at Stokes Point. Over the years he also became a dedicated student of Bermuda's wildlife. He kept aviaries, practiced taxidermy, and stored his own collections of stuffed birds and shells in his own museum. He became a virtual recluse, adding to his collections and writing about birds and natural history. He had visitors, though, since his reputation spread to other naturalists and writers.

He died in 1889 aged 78. Many of his descendants are living in Bermuda today.



THE KINGFISHER INFLUENCING DESIGN

by Lisa Greene

What does a kingfisher have to do with Japan's bullet train?

In a nutshell, the bullet train was making a loud boom when it entered tunnels because of the amount of air it was pushing ahead of it. Inspired by the Kingfisher's bill, the nose of the train was re-designed, resulting in increased train speed/efficiency and a decrease in the noise produced.

To learn more about this instance of bird-inspired design, listen to the full BBC podcast "30 Animals That Made Us Smarter, Episode 30". It's just 15 minutes long and very interesting. The link is: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p074bgy2>. There is also a short video on the website that graphically illustrates the concept. There are several other episodes centred on bird-inspired design that you may want to listen to as well!



Belted Kingfisher (*Megascops asio*)
Photo: Tim White

EVE'S POND NATURE RESERVE OPENING EARTH DAY 2022

by Jennifer Gray



BUYING BACK BERMUDA TO SAVE PRECIOUS LAND FOR THE BENEFIT OF BERMUDA'S PEOPLE AND HER WILDLIFE

Eve's Pond Nature Reserve was formally opened with a vine-cutting ceremony on Earth Day, April 22nd, 2022.

After pandemic delays and a lot of blood, sweat and tears by an army of individuals the results of the Eve's Pond restoration were beyond our expectations. With many thousands of dollars spent, many hours of hard labour toiled, many gallons of water spread to keep new grass and plants alive and many trips to weed and introduce native and endemic species, we observed the remarkable transformation of this land. Widgeon grass and killifish introduced to the pond stimulated a boom in biodiversity with the arrival of damselflies, dragonflies, water striders, beetles, bugs, and birds.

We installed a magnificent wheelchair accessible bird hide on the western edge of the pond and when the trees on the nature reserve mature and the wildlife makes its home there, the community will be able to enjoy close-up views of the birdlife on the pond. This gorgeous hide was dedicated in loving memory of teacher and bird lover, Yvonne Wright (nee De Groote). Funds for its construction were donated by her husband Eddie Wright who cut a special dedication vine at the hide.

There is a new cross walk leading from the railway trail to the reserve entrance and walking trails meander across the lowland and woodland hillside with occasional information graphics that enhance the visitor experience.

We are so grateful to the people of Bermuda who donated funds to support this project and to the many volunteers who have helped along the way. We look forward to having the Bermuda community enjoy another wonderful piece of land on the wild side.

Junior Minister for Home Affairs, Senator Lindsay Simmons officially opened the nature reserve alongside the President of the Bermuda Audubon Society and Buy Back Bermuda Chair, Ms. Jennifer Gray, and President of the Bermuda National Trust, Mrs. Alana Anderson. In a statement to the gathering she said, "I must recognise and give thanks to the effort put into this project by the Bermuda Audubon Society, the Bermuda National Trust, Buy Back Bermuda, and the many individuals and organisations who donated their time and energy and provided financial support toward this project. Without all of your contributions, this would not be possible. "To all of Bermuda, whether visiting, walking or driving past this location, as you gaze upon what has been created, I ask that you remember the work put into this project and recognise that by working together, we can make every day an Earth Day".

To learn more about Eve's Pond read the Bermudian Magazine article at <https://www.thebermudian.com/home-a-garden/nature/all-about-eves-pond/>



People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some it offers the chance to give something back to the community or make a difference to the people around them. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge. Regardless of the motivation, what unites them all is that they find it both challenging and rewarding.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Bermuda Audubon Society. We welcome and value each and every one. **Join our team today.**

Volunteer to assist our Committee of Management:

- Membership Coordinator
- Communications Coordinator
- Events Coordinator
- Merchandise Coordinator
- Bluebird Programme Coordinator
- Carpenter to cut wood for bluebird boxes
- Nature Reserve Warden
- Represent Audubon on the Buy Back Bermuda Committee

Contact info@audubon.bm to express your interest or find out more .

A TRIBUTE TO STUART HAYWARD

by Jennifer Gray

With the passing of Stuart Hayward Bermuda lost a defender of the people, and our environmental community lost a true eco-hero. While there are many remarkable environmentalists doing great work in Bermuda it remains to be seen if any will accomplish as much or leave such an all-encompassing legacy as Stuart.



Truly accomplished in so many fields, Stuart touched the lives of many and will be missed by them all. With a caring soul and kind demeanour, yet driven and strong, he built his wider family network - as a minstrel; published writer and columnist; environmental, social, and economic activist; independent politician; teacher; guidance counsellor and friend. Stewart was truly a champion and warrior for sustainability, diversity, and peace. His caring spirit was notable above all.

Like so many environmental groups, charities, musicians, meditators, politicians, friends, and family members, the Bermuda Audubon Society applauds Stuart's many accomplishments and will miss his support.

Whether we are facing issues related to environmental or cultural sustainability the time is right to take heed to Stuarts wise words...*"I call on citizens on all sides of the racial and ethnic divides to speak without being offensive, listen without being defensive and disagree without being disagreeable."* May peace and comfort be yours now, Stuart

"For the cause that lacks assistance, for the wrong that needs resistance, for the future in the distance, and the good that I can do."

George Linnaeus Banks

BIRD REPORT: MARCH - JUNE 2022

Joanne Smith

A total of 144 species were observed in the period of March through June 2022.

Most of our wintering waterfowl continued through March and April with May adding **Black-bellied Whistling Duck** first spotted at Spittal Pond (31 May, JH) and a **Greater White-fronted Goose** at the Airport Pond (18 May, PW). A **Canada Goose**, a regular winter visitor, was seen on Seymour's Pond (4 Mar, SI) and another arrived for a brief visit in June.



Black-bellied Whistling Duck - Eva Botelli



Solitary Sandpiper - Tim White



Wilson's Phalarope - LeShun Smith

In addition to our resident doves and pigeons, a **White-winged Dove** was seen at Alton Hill (23 Apr, MM). Several **Common Nighthawk** put in appearances with the first at Penhurst Park (12 May, TW) and others elsewhere the same week, and a lone **Chimney Swift** was spotted above the cow pastures at Spittal Pond (15 Apr, HM).

Shorebirds were low in number though a decent number of species at 21, including **Pectoral Sandpiper** (Port Royal GC, 31 Mar, EB), **Spotted Sandpiper** (Morgan's Point, 3 Apr, LF/MM), **Least Sandpiper** (Spittal Pond, 9 Apr, AW), **Solitary Sandpiper** (Spittal Pond, 16 Apr, LS), **Semipalmated Plover** (Spittal Pond, 1 May, LS) and a **White-rumped Sandpiper** (Spittal Pond, 9 June, RB). A **Wilson's Phalarope** appeared at Spittal Pond (25 May, PW) but the most photographed wader by far was the **Red Knot** in its spring plumage which first appeared at Tobacco Bay (16 May, EB) and later relocated to Stock's Harbour.

Sea watches and trips offshore yielded a good number of seabirds this Spring including **Pomarine Jaeger** (offshore, 15 Apr, LF), **Parasitic Jaeger** (Cooper's Point, 16 Apr, EH/JS/PW), **Long-tailed Jaeger** (Cooper's Point, 22 Apr, MM/PW), **South Polar Skua** off Cooper's Point (9 Jun, PW), **Wilson's Storm-Petrel** (Cooper's Point, 14 May, EB), **Leach's Storm-Petrel** (Cooper's Point, 16 Apr, EH/JS/PW) along with all the usual Shearwaters. A Brown Booby was seen by several birders, with the first sighting off Coopers Point (19 Apr, PW)



Red Knot - Herb Marshall

Six gull species including **Laughing Gull** (seen from BIOS, 15 Mar, PW) and **Bonaparte's Gull** at Seymour's Pond (13 Mar, SI) and five species of tern including **Arctic Tern** off Cooper's Point (19 Apr, PW), the first **Roseate Tern** at Mangrove Bay (25 May, EH/MM), a **Least Tern** at John Smith's Bay (6 June, EB) and a **Black Tern** at Ship's Hill Pond (8 June, PW)

A **Swallow-tailed Kite** was seen in the Gibb's Hill area (21 Mar, LS), a **Northern Harrier** continued in the area of Morgan's Point (3 Apr, EB/LS), and there was a single **Sharp-shinned Hawk** sighting at Kindley Field (13 Apr, PW) We had 6 **Barn Owl** sightings and the immature **Bald Eagle** continued in the Morgan's Point/Somerset Bridge area for much of April and then, in May, seemed to favor Port Royal GC.



Black Tern - Richard Brewer



Laughing Gull - Tim White

An **Eastern Kingbird** was seen at both Spittal Pond and the Crystal Caves Area by visiting birders, and a **Gray Kingbird** on Nonsuch Island (12 Jun, MM). April brought sightings of **Cliff Swallow** (Airport Pond, 6 Apr, PW), **Tree Swallow** at Kindley Field (17 Apr, LF/MM/PW) and **Bank Swallow** at Spittal Pond (30 Apr, PW). A **Hermit Thrush** was seen at Ferry Point Park (3 Mar, PW) and a group of 12 **Cedar Waxwing** visited the Arboretum (23 Apr, MM).

Visiting Sparrows included a **Song Sparrow** along the Crawl coast (2 Mar, MM), **Lincoln's Sparrow** at Ferry Point Park (3 Mar, PW), a **White-throated Sparrow** at the St. George's GC (8 Mar, PW) and **Savannah Sparrow** at Clearwater (9 Mar, EB). Twenty-one species of warbler passed through this Spring, including **Nashville Warbler** at Pompano (22 Mar, PW), **Swainson's Warbler** (29 Mar, PW) and **Orange-crowned Warbler** (31 Mar, LF/MM) at Spittal Pond, **Blue-winged Warbler** at Cemetery Hill (10 Apr, PW) and a **Blackburnian Warbler** at Ferry Point Park (16 May, PW). A **Scarlet Tanager** was reported in the Mills Creek area (9 May, KW) and a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at Seymour's Pond (14 May, LS).

Observers include Eva Bottelli (EB), Richard Brewer (RB), Luke Foster (LF), Erich Hetzel (EH), Janice Hetzel (JH), Stanley Ingham (SI), Herb Marshall (HM), Miguel Mejias (MM), Joanne Smith (JS), LeShun Smith (LS), Paul Watson (PW), Andrea Webb (AW), Tim White (TW) and Kevin Winter (KW)



Song Sparrow - LeShun Smith



**Orange-crowned Warbler
Richard Brewer**

SOCIETY NEWS & EVENTS

CHANGES IN AUDUBON COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

The Committee of Management, that hard working powerhouse that keeps Audubon going, has a few changes to announce. Janice Hetzel has agreed to take on the role of President. Jennifer Gray will move from President to Vice President so she will have more time to enjoy her new grandchild. Congratulations Jennifer!

Jeremy Madeiros will join David Wingate as an Honorary Member of the Committee; we are so grateful for their immense contributions, and we will continue to tap into their expertise and commitment in our future efforts.

Devika Mather has stepped down from the Committee after three years as Membership Secretary. She not only managed our membership rolls but was also instrumental in increasing our activities and membership offerings.

Thanks also to Devika, we now have a beautiful Instagram Page with over 600 followers. She will be greatly missed as a member of the team.

We are happy to welcome Heather Botelli who will serve as Secretary on the Committee

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am honored to serve in the position of President of this wonderful society. We are a fully volunteer organization with little overhead and no paid staff. Nevertheless, due to the enthusiasm and commitment of our volunteers, we accomplish great things. Our mission is to “conserve Bermuda’s special bird life and habitats for the benefit of all.” The importance of this work cannot be overstated. Pressure on our natural environments is on the rise and many species are in decline. We must all do our part to address global climate change and to protect and preserve Bermuda’s special animal species and habitats. I hope the Bermuda Audubon Society can help lead the way.



In the coming year, we will continue to provide opportunities for the community to experience nature and learn about our flora and fauna, particularly our birds. With education comes understanding. As more people understand and appreciate the nuances and intrinsic value of our natural environments, the better equipped we will be to advocate for effective conservation and truly sustainable development. Another key component of our work is Land and Bird Conservation. Our focus has been on bird species that need our help, such as Cahows, Longtails, Bluebirds and Terns. This list may expand in the future. We now have 20 Nature Reserves under our care, some in combination with the Bermuda National Trust. Acquiring undeveloped properties with valuable habitat is the only way to truly protect them now and for the future. We will be looking to the membership for help with our Nature Reserve acquisition and management programs.

A relatively new initiative is participation in the Planning Application Review Team (PART). PART is a collaborative effort among BEST (Bermuda Environmental Sustainability Task Force), BNT (Bermuda National Trust), BAG (Bermuda Agricultural Group) and other concerned citizens. We are working to ensure that the environmental protections written into our laws and policies are upheld. This has been an uphill battle and we need your help. The volume of planning applications has greatly increased, and we are looking for volunteers to help with the review process. We also ask individuals to carefully consider the environmental implications of their own construction activities. We are happy to provide insight and recommendations. Finally, we urge those who own undeveloped land to consider making a commitment to keeping those spaces green.

I look forward to working with everyone in the year ahead. Please feel free to contact me at info@audubon with your ideas and suggestions and also if you wish to volunteer.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Summer Harbour Cruise - Date to be confirmed

Spittal Pond Field Trip - Monday, 5 September 2022

Paget Island Bird Camp - 7-9 October 2022

RECENT EVENTS

Bluebird Box Workshop - 5 March 2022

A successful Bluebird Box Building workshop was held in March under the supervision of Stuart Smith.



We hope that everyone has been monitoring their boxes and entering data into NESTWatch. Email info@audubon.bm for more information about how to use NESTWatch.

Bluebird nesting boxes and kits are available at Aberfeldy Nurseries. We are grateful to them for selling our boxes with all proceeds to the society.



Liberty Volunteer Day - 23 March 2022

A big shout out to the volunteers from Liberty Mutual who helped us to clear the trails at the Alfred Blackburn Smith Nature Reserve



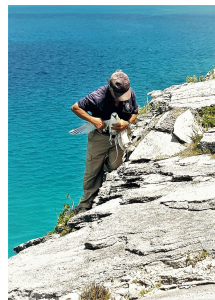
Global Big Day - 14 May 2022

Locally, 8 birders submitted 18 complete checklists to eBird for Bermuda sightings and 40 Species were observed



Nonsuch Island Field Trip - 21 May 2022

A big thank you to Jeremy Madeiros for a treat of a lifetime. How often can you get up close and personal with a Cahow and a Longtail? Everyone had a wonderful day exploring Nonsuch and enjoying the beach for a swim. Thanks also to those who helped with the trash pickup.



Pelagic Trip -5 June 2022



Twenty intrepid bird watchers headed out to sea under the care of Captain Nigel on Endurance. The views they had of the seabirds were awesome. Who knew that only two days later over a hundred dead Great Shearwaters would turn up on our shores?

