

Bermuda Audubon Society
Annual General Meeting 11 May 2023
President's Annual Report

I am pleased to be presenting our report for June 2022 – May 2023. The Society continues to make progress in its work to conserve Bermuda's special bird life and habitats for the benefit of all. My sincere thanks go to the excellent committee of management who volunteer their time and expertise to ensure our success.

EVENTS

We have had a very busy year full of educational and volunteer events. They were as follows:

June 5, 2022	Pelagic Seabird Trip
June 18, 2022	Northrock Snorkel – cancelled due to weather
July 25, 2022	Volunteer Day at Somerset Long Bay – Local Girl Guides with visiting Girl Scouts from the United States. Mulching of trees at Somerset Long Bay West Nature Reserve.
Aug 27, 2022	STEAM Camp field trip to Somerset Long Bay Nature Reserves
Sept 5, 2022	Spittal Pond Field Trip – celebration of World Shorebirds Day
Oct 7-9 2022	Paget Island Bird Camp
Oct 22, 2022	Ferry Point Park Bird Walk and Mist Net Experience
Nov 5, 2022	ABS Reserve Volunteer Day
Nov 13, 2022	Cahow Watch Boat Trip
Nov 17, 2022	Deloitte Impact Day at Seymour's Pond Nature Reserve
Dec 17, 2022	Christmas Bird Count - 9243 birds, 90 species
Jan 28, 2023	Southlands Walk in conjunction with Bermuda National Trust
Feb 2023	Great February Bermuda Birding Contest. Winners include Richard Brewer, Andrea Webb and Ingela Perrson
Feb 15, 2023	BNT Children's Walk at Spittal Pond -Janice Hetzel, Erich Hetzel and Miguel Mejias manned the birdwatching station at the woodland pond.
Feb 19, 2023	Warwick Academy Tree Planting at Somerset Long Bay West – 20 native and endemic trees donated by Andrew Macfarland and planted by the students and parents.
Feb 28, 2023	Tern Talk by Miguel Mejias – update on Bermuda's endangered Terns
Mar 18, 2023	Eve's Pond Tour and Volunteer Day – Buy Back Bermuda
Apr 2, 2023	Palm Sunday Walk – featured Seymour's Pond Nature Reserve as well as BBB Reserves – Vesey Reserve and High Point Nature Reserve.
Apr 20, 2023	Volunteer Day by 1 st Sandys Brownies -placed tree guards on newly planted trees at Somerset Long Bay West Nature Reserve
Apr 22, 2023	Guided Birdwatching Walk in celebration of Earth Day
May 6, 2023	Annual Field Trip to Nonsuch Island

BUY BACK BERMUDA

BBB launched Campaign Three to raise funds for the restoration and development work at High Point Nature Reserve and to fund ongoing maintenance at the other three reserves. Initial work has been done on a manage plan for High Point. Twenty Southern Hackberry trees were donated by Kim White and will soon be planted. A building

permit was finally issued for remediation work at Somerset Long Bay East. It is hoped that this will eliminate the problem of glass entering the beach from the reserve. Earlier in the year Works and Engineering dug a massive pit at the entrance to the reserve but this has finally been remediated. Restoration work continues at Eve's Pond. Repairs to bridge were completed at Vesey Reserve.

AUDUBON NATURE RESERVES

Cat and Partridge Islands

Deeds were signed for Cat and Partridge Islands. We are very grateful to Sacha Simmons and her family for this generous donation. Plan to develop a management plan for the islands in the coming year.

Seymour's Pond

A hard-working team from Deloitte volunteered at Seymour's Pond as part of their impact day. They removed invasive species around the bird hide and adjacent to the pond and four trees were planted. Their efforts are much appreciated. The bird hide roof had come off in a hurricane and it was replaced as well as repairs made to the handrail going down to the hide. Preliminary investigations were made into the possible purchase of the land for sale at the adjacent property.

Somerset Long Bay West

The young people of Bermuda gave this reserve much needed attention over the year. The Girl Guides/Girl Scouts placed mulch around the trees in the reserve. The Natural History Club of Warwick Academy planted 20 new native and endemic trees throughout the reserve. The 1st Sandys Brownies followed later in the year with tree guards to protect these new plantings from damage. We hope that by engaging young people in these efforts they will learn to appreciate the importance and value of our natural environments.

Alfred Blackburn Smith

Our annual volunteer day was a big success. We continue to remove invasive seedlings. In addition, we redirected the trail at the western end away from the house of Mrs. Wardman. There has been increased traffic through the reserve which we will need to monitor. In March students from Bermuda College had a fungi tour of the reserve led by Chris Faria.

Stokes Point East

Wall at roadside was damaged on two separate occasions by car accidents. Fortunately Works and Engineering repaired the wall in a timely fashion.

ADVOCACY

Part Group

We continue to work collaboratively with the Bermuda National Trust (BNT), the Bermuda Environmental Sustainability Taskforce (BEST), the Bermuda Agricultural Group Heritage Collective and other interested individuals in a group we have called the Planning Application Review Team (PART). This group meets weekly to review and discuss planning applications that have been advertised that may impact areas with conservation or protective zoning. Over the past year the Bermuda Audubon Society

has reviewed at least 116 applications and submitted 27 letters of objection or concern. This is clear indication of the ongoing threat to our protected habitats in Bermuda.

Fairmont Southampton SDO

The Society submitted a detailed objection to the SDO application for the Fairmont Southampton development. We worked collaboratively with the other environmental groups and interested members of the public to promote the petition opposing the development, organize a protest at Cabinet and presentation of the petition on 28 April, request an extension of the deadline for the public to respond and facilitate the ability of the public to submit their own objections. We participated in an intensive and active education campaign that included radio appearances, videos and advertisements on tv and social media.

Southlands Park

Southlands is at risk for what we see as inappropriate development. We objected strongly to a proposed events lawn and parking lot that was proposed by the Bermuda Housing Corporation who are the owners of the adjacent Bermudiana Beach Resort. We also expressed our concerns to the Estates Department of the Department of Works and Engineering who have plans for a large restaurant, concession storage building, parking lot and bathrooms at the western end of the park on the beach side. The scale and location of these developments are out of proportion to the needs of the park. In addition, the park has no approved management plan as required by the Bermuda National Parks Act.

National Parks Commission

Minister Burch disbanded the National Parks Commission at the end of December 2022 and has yet to reappoint the commission. This is in violation of the mandates of the Bermuda National Parks Act 1986. We have pushed the Minister to do what is required without response. This may require future legal action.

Island Construction Appeal

The Development Application Board granted Island Construction permission to build three large warehouses on their property at Devonshire Marsh which are totally inappropriate for this location and had been refused multiple times in the past. In conjunction with BNT and BEST, we appealed this approval, but the Minister chose to uphold the decision of the DAB.

Beyond Plastic Champion

The Bermuda Audubon Society is now a Beyond Plastic Champion. This means that we will avoid single use plastics at all of our events and encourage our members to eliminate single use plastics from their lives.

CONSERVATION

Terns

The Tern Recovery Programme continues to move ahead despite disappointing results. Common Terns are our most endangered local bird species at this time. In 2022, we had 9 Common Terns in Bermuda during breeding season. Of these, only one breeding pair produced 3 chicks, two of which successfully fledged. We also had 4 Roseate Terns, but

no chicks were produced. Equipment remained at Southampton Island to attract Sooty Terns with decoys and sound recordings. No Sooty Terns were sighted.

Bluebirds

We continue to sell bluebird boxes and kits through Aberfeldys who kindly provide this service and we get the full sales price. Thank you to Jennifer Gray and Danny Greene for making this happen. The Bermuda Bluebird Society maintains and monitors bluebird trails throughout the island and also provide advice and assistance in setting up boxes on private property. We greatly appreciate the tireless work of Stuart Smith and his team of volunteer monitors.

Longtails

Longtail Igloos are still in demand. Thank you to Erich Hetzel and Alistair Border for constructing them to keep pace.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Our Newsletters continue to be well received full of information and updates on our birds and activities. We also maintain an active Facebook Page and have tried to increase our posts on Instagram. The website has been a great source of information for the public about development issues. Our birding community is very active and share their sightings on eBird. This data is invaluable for the assessment of the status of bird life in Bermuda and North America.

WHAT'S AHEAD

This year we will work on our new strategic plan. We will also begin to move forward on considering a name change for the organization. Last year we received a large bequest for the purpose of purchasing land for a nature reserve. We will begin a search in earnest for property to purchase. Please let us know if you know of any land that may be at risk for development and suitable as a nature reserve. We would also like to work towards increased member engagement with the Society. Please let us know if you are interested in volunteering with us.

THANK YOUs

We have so many people to thank and we express our deepest appreciation for everyone that has contributed their interest, time, sweat, money and support to this amazing organization. Please accept my apologies if I have forgotten anyone from the list below.

BAS Committee of Management, Members, Donors and Volunteers

H.E. Ms. Ren Lalgie, Governor of Bermuda – Patron

Bermuda National Trust/Myles Darrell – Management of jointly owned reserves, partner in advocacy work

BZS/Lisa Greene & Nigel Pollard – Lecture Series, Boat Trips

Department of Conservation Services – Nature Reserves and Biodiversity Support

Horsfield Landscape and Design – ABS Nature Reserve Maintenance

Bermuda Bluebird Society – Stuart Smith and his team of volunteers

Danny Greene – Carpentry for bluebird boxes

SAL – Discount for bluebird box supplies

Aberfeldy Nurseries – Bluebird Box Sales

Erich Hetzel/Miguel Mejias/David Wingate – Tern Recovery Programme

Alistair Border/Erich Hetzel – Longtail Igloo Construction
Bermuda Red Cross – Storage Space
Robert Chandler – ABS Reserve Maintenance and Bluebird Box Construction
Jamie Steves – Devonshire Marsh Reserve Maintenance
BdaTix – No added fees on donations
Andrew Macfarlane – Donation of 20 Native and Endemic Trees
Deloitte – Ongoing sponsorship of Seymour’s Pond
KPMG – Donation in kind for Audit of Financial reports 2022
Estate of Marion Pryde White Lyons
The Green Family