



# NEWSLETTER

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## HAPPY Earth DAY



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Happy Earth Day
- Birds & Nature Bermuda
- New Species for Bermuda
- Owl Nesting Box Installed
- It's Bluebird Season
- Fire Ants have arrived
- Bird Reports
- News & Events



APRIL 22<sup>ND</sup> 2026

### Birds celebrate Earth Day each & every day!

They eat seeds & berries from plants & trees, then they fly, they defecate & then they make more plants & trees. More than 50 years after the first Earth Day, we stand at a pivotal moment where a changing climate and habitat loss imperils biodiversity. At the same time, we have the power to take bold steps forward for a cleaner future.

### Actionable Earth Day Bird Activities:

- **Keep Cats Inside:** To prevent them from hunting birds.
- **Plant Native Species:** Create a bird-friendly garden that provides food, shelter, and nesting materials, which also supports pollinators.



- **Avoid Chemical Pesticides:** Protect birds from eating poisoned insects by keeping your yard organic. Avoid using any and all pesticides or insecticides: not only can birds ingest these harmful chemicals directly, but recent research has also shown that these products can remain in the soil for months after their use
- **Join a Cleanup:** Participate in local community cleanups to reduce litter that harms birds and their habitats.
- **Build Habitats:** Install bluebird nesting boxes. Available at Aberfeldy Nursery in Paget.
- **Turn off Lights at Night:** Turning off the lights in your home or office to prevent birds colliding with the windows. This will also help migrating birds find their way and also encourage owls to your neighbourhood.
- **Advocate for Additional Land Protection for Birds:** Support Buy Back Bermuda, The Bermuda Audubon Society and the Bermuda National Trust.

## BIRDS & NATURE BERMUDA – A NEW CHAPTER TAKING SHAPE



At our 2025 AGM, members voted in favor of an exciting change: renaming our organization to Birds & Nature Bermuda. This new name better reflects our mission and strengthens our commitment to welcoming and engaging the wider Bermuda community.

### So, what's taking so long?

While it may sound like a simple rebrand, the process involves a number of important administrative steps behind the scenes. We are actively working through these requirements to ensure everything is done properly—but as with many official processes, it takes time.

We appreciate your patience and support as we move forward. We're looking ahead with enthusiasm to the moment we can proudly adopt our new name. It's a change which will allow us to deepen our connection with the community and in turn, advance our shared goal of protecting and preserving Bermuda's natural environment.

## COMMON GULL A New Species Record for Bermuda

by *Eva Bottelli and Paul Watson*



Common Gull (foreground) with Ring-billed Gull. Photo: Eva Bottelli



Common Gull (*Larus canus*)  
Photo: Eva Bottelli

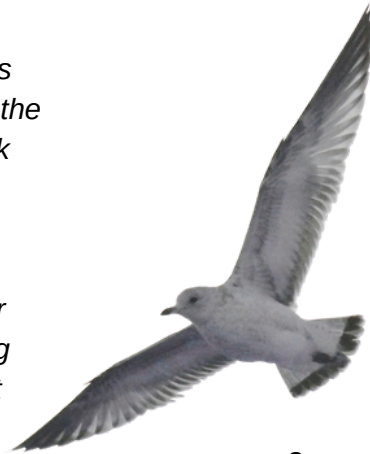
On the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2025 Eva Botelli found and photographed a bird she believed may have been a likely Common Gull (GOGU). She forwarded her images to seabird expert Bob Flood and others for comment. Bob agreed the bird in her images looked like a 1<sup>st</sup> Winter plumaged **Common Gull** (*Larus canus*).

*I was photographing gulls at the airport pond hoping to get pics of the black headed gull that had recently been seen in the area. The gulls all happened to take off and fly out towards the causeway, where the group of them were doing circles around the lay-by, as well as trying to land to roost on the rocks. The lighting was poor and I kept mistaking one of the “ring-bills” for the black headed gull due to how small it was as well as it having thinner, pointier looking wings. I managed to get a few photos of it, and went over them later and noticed the “ring billed gull” did appear to have some differences to the typical ones around. This one had a much thinner, pointier bill and large dark eyes. The tail was pale with a very dark band across it, and the pattern on the underwings and primaries seemed off for a normal ring bill. The pics were sent to the WhatsApp birding group and the bird was seen again the next day by Paul Watson. - **Eva Bottelli***

This gull is a 'common' species in Europe and Iceland with several records in the Northeast United States and Canada. The following is taken from Paul Watson's [eBird checklist](#) comments:

*About 4pm on the 21st December I saw a number of gulls roosting on the rocks adjacent to the Longbird Bridge on the Causeway. I parked on Kindley Field Rd and walked back across the bridge to scrutinise the gulls.*

*Present was a number of lesser Black Backed Gulls in varying plumages. A Juvenile Laughing Gull. A 1st Winter plumaged Black headed gull. 2 1st Winter plumaged Ring billed Gulls (RBGU) and a 1st Winter bird I was confident was a Common Gull as I drove past.*



Common Gull (*Larus canus*)  
Photo: Eva Bottelli

*I initially observed the birds from a distance of 30 metres from road edge, but they were backlit as the sun was fairly low.*

*Immediate comparison between COGU and adjacent RBGU was a slightly smaller (probably 5 to 10% smaller). More rounded head with a very neat black eye and a small amount of brown feathering on the rear head and nape. Smaller bill both in length and depth light fleshy pink with a neat black tip no obvious gonydeal angle on Lower mandible (unlike adjacent RBGU).*

*Mantle and scapulars light grey with obvious pale brown lesser and median coverts with darker brown centres. (Nearby RBGU by comparison were darker overall with dark brown centres mixed with black). Greater coverts were grey-brown appearing pale with light brown tertials which were pale tipped. Small amount of brown streaking on flanks with clean vent and undertail coverts. (adjacent RBGU much more coarsely streaked on flanks, vent and undertail coverts). Leg colour fleshy pink.*

*I shifted position to get better lighting from side, but as I moved position the gulls spooked and took flight. I picked up the COGU and attempted to get comparison with the RBGU in flight. COGU upper wing showed little variation through coverts with a darker edging to secondaries stopping at paler tertials. Inner primaries paler with dark tips and outer primaries dark brown/black.*

*Upper tail and lower rump were pristine white with no signs of any darker feather edging (Unlike adjacent RBGU) very clean narrow black bar at tail tip.*

*Birds flew around and with lowering sun I tried to stick with COGU and compare with RBGU but bird was lost amongst flock as they all flew off to the SW over Grotto Bay.*

*I was happy what I had looked at was a 1st Winter Common Gull, a species I see frequently when in the UK and Europe and had seen many as recently as October 2025. - [Paul Watson](#)*

**This bird represents a new species record for Bermuda.**

## A NEW HOME FOR OWLS AT HIGH POINT NATURE RESERVE

Raschid Alami-Merrouni, a superstar volunteer, donated one last incredible gift of a carefully crafted owl nesting box before he left Bermuda to return to the UK. Building an appropriate nesting box for owls is no easy feat. To start, it's not a square box but has complicated angles and levels to accommodate the best access and protection from the elements for adults and juvenile birds. Raschid's nesting box followed a design provided by the UK Barn Owl Trust and was made from thick, waterproofed wood with good insulation, drainage, a landing and exercise platform and an inspection hatch. The nest box was beautifully painted and supplied with all the best fittings for installation.



Raschid in his workshop with the owl nesting box

A known Barn owl haunt, High Point Nature Reserve was the obvious site worthy of our new gift. Installation. finding the right tree, cliff face or ledge, was challenging across the 10 acres of changing landscape but we settled on a ledge at the top of a quarry face behind the old ruin. This spot is well above ground level, away from roadways and human interference, tree canopy overhead and behind, hole visible to passing owls, clear view across arable fields and grasslands. The view will be spectacular for some lucky owl family. Kudos are due to BNT's Myles Darrell and Ronald Burchall for getting the rather large and very heavy nesting box up the steep hills of the reserve and to the top of the chosen ledge.



As Trevor Rawson, another valuable volunteer and owl box builder points out, "We now have one on an island in a tree that is pink over a lawn with an arched entry. One on a cliff which is raw wood over a pond and farmland with a circular entry and one on a quarry over farmland that is white with a square entry". These owl boxes are new to Bermuda and so the race is on to see which one, if any, gets chosen by a nesting owl pair offering a rare opportunity to further our understanding of their reproductive biology in Bermuda.

## MORE ABOUT OWLS

### Key Facts About Bermuda's Barn Owls



- The American Barn Owl (*Tyto furcata*) is Bermuda's only **resident** owl species.
- Habitat: Unlike "barn" owls in other places, our owls often nest in limestone cliff holes along Bermuda's coastline.
- Diet & Role: They are vital for the island's ecology as they act as a natural biocontrol for rats and mice.
- Threats: The biggest danger to them is secondary poisoning. When they eat rats that have consumed rodenticide, the poison can be lethal to the owls.
- They are found island-wide but are nocturnal and elusive.
- Appearance: They have a distinctive white, heart-shaped face and dark eyes. Females are generally darker with more speckling on their breast, while males tend to be whiter.



Barn Owl with it's rat, brilliantly captured by Darren Simmons

### Barn Owl facts:

- Barn Owls have large ears, positioned asymmetrically, one higher than the other, just behind their eyes. This helps them to precisely locate prey in almost total darkness.
- One of their claws is combed so that they can easily groom their short facial feathers.
- The facial disk of barn owls is heart shaped to maximise the collection of sound.
- Barn Owls eyes are very sensitive to low light providing acute nocturnal vision.
- Their feathers are very soft and enable them to fly silently as they listen for minute sounds made by their prey.

*We are interested in owl sightings. Please let us know at [info@audubon.bm](mailto:info@audubon.bm) if you see one.*

## A Birders Barn Owl Blog from [WingSearch](#)

Barn Owls have not always been considered things to cherish. In times gone by, our superstitious ancestry afforded it a sinister reputation; its nocturnal habits forging an association with doom and death. In these less enlightened times, to hear the screech of a Barn Owl as it flew past the window of a sick person foretold of imminent death. A gruesome custom of nailing an owl to a barn door to ward off evil persisted into the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

It is a widespread bird, occurring on every continent except Antarctica. Its association with all things supernatural is therefore not limited to the UK. For example, in the folklore of North American tribes it was believed that when a wicked person died, he or she would transform into a Barn Owl. Similarly in the Mediterranean regions Barn Owls were persecuted due to the belief they drank the oil of lamps in churches thus depriving saints of light. All this nonsense directed at a bird that simply goes about its business, shunning close contact with humans.

Far from being some evil banshee, the Barn Owl is harmless to us humans, flying low and slow over the ground listening intently for its prey of voles, mice, rats and shrews which they hunt over rough grassland, meadows and road verges. They can be found in a variety of habitats ranging from relative dry heaths, through parkland, wet meadows, open woodlands and coastal grazing marsh. Their favoured locale however comprises wide expanses of unimproved, wildlife rich meadows for hunting, interspersed with stands of old trees that provide safe roosting and nesting sites.

Barn owls don't stray far from the site of their birth and will form monogamous pairs, breeding in tree cavities or in barns and quiet farm outbuildings. Many young birds will perish in their first year of life through collision with vehicles or an inability to find sufficient food during the winter months. Those that survive that first spell of hardship generally live for an average of 4-5 years.

Barn owls are top predators but can only survive and flourish if there is a healthy population of prey species. They in turn can only proliferate if suitable habitat exists supporting plenty of food, breeding sites and safe haven. Common land in all its forms can often represent a vital oasis in a sea of intensively managed farmland or urban development and for this reason their value as wild spaces is immeasurable.



## Simple Fix Offers Hope for Bermuda's Bluebirds

[\*In case you missed it in the Royal Gazette\*](#)



A simple length of fishing line could help give Bermuda's bluebirds a better chance of holding off house sparrows that aggressively take over their nesting sites. Sparrows have threatened the native bluebird since they were introduced to the island in 1880. On their arrival, they pushed bluebirds out of favoured nesting sites such as building eaves and rock faces, beginning a steady erosion of the species' breeding success. Between the mid-1940s and early 1950s, the cedar blight devastated Bermuda's cedar forests, eliminating another vital source of nesting cavities. Bluebirds persisted largely through conservation efforts, including the introduction of man-made nesting boxes in 1968. When Stuart Smith began his conservation work with the Bermuda Bluebird Society about 25 years ago, it was believed there were about 500 nesting pairs of bluebirds on the island. Today, the population is difficult to measure but has declined significantly because of sparrows, other competing birds, rats, lizards, feral cats and pesticide use. The species now depends almost entirely on man-made nesting boxes.

The Bermuda Bluebird Society is offering to help homeowners install fishing line on bluebird boxes to deter sparrows from entering boxes.

Keeping the sparrows out of them is a battle Mr Smith has fought with limited success. His latest effort involves placing 6-8lb fishing line about 1/8 inch on either side of the entrance hole, a method that has shown promising results in field tests. He is now urging homeowners to do the same. Most important is that the line is installed now, before the male sparrow claims the box for the season.

"I'm beating my head against the wall because I'm not winning the war against these sparrows. We need to help," Mr Smith said.

"I can do it on my own trails but I'm trying to reach the private box owners who might be able to help and install this deterrent. It's not foolproof but it's a deterrent. And if we can get that going before this month ends, then maybe we can get two or three broods of bluebirds in the season."

Today many boxes are maintained by homeowners on private property. The Bermuda Bluebird Society maintains about 175 nesting boxes across the island.





“What happens is the sparrow will come into the box with the mother sitting on the nest and jump on top of the bluebird and then peck. And the poor bluebird, because the beak is pointing downwards, cannot protect themselves. If they're in the air, if they're face to face, they can fight them off, but because the sparrow comes in over the top it's very difficult,” Mr Smith said.

“I've seen sparrows go in and pick out individual bluebird eggs and throw them out of the nest. I've also found chicks with their heads pecked. So these sparrows can be quite aggressive. Violently aggressive.”

Once a sparrow claims a nesting box early in the breeding season, it can effectively block bluebirds from using the site.



“The male sparrow will dominate that box for the whole season, once he's claimed it,” he said. “So he'll go out in February and find a female sparrow and they'll start building a nest. In a lot of cases, [a volunteer] monitor comes along, he finds a sparrow, pulls out the nest and throws it away. But then the male sparrow is dominating this box. So he goes out and gets another female. He keeps on trying and it's not good because the sparrow will not let the bluebird nest.



The society began experimenting with monofilament fishing line as a deterrent last year, adapting an idea developed in the United States.

“The sparrows don't like it. They think it's either cobwebs or spider webs, or something and they're not very efficient flyers. The bluebird seems to miss that. They go in and they don't seem to have an issue with it.”



The boxes should be monitored at least twice a week during nesting season. It's an effort that Mr Smith understands can discourage some homeowners.

“It's understandable that people who had the good intentions of having a bluebird box in their yard, after a while, they're like, this is too much work. And then they leave the box to sit and it ends up being a sparrow producer,” he said. He acknowledged that some residents may also find it difficult to remove sparrow nests or eggs once they are established.

To encourage participation, the Bermuda Bluebird Society is offering to help homeowners install the deterrent. “We'll come and install a monofilament line on your box. You're more welcome to do it yourself but we're quite happy to come over for a small donation of, say, \$10 that will go back to the Bluebird Society,” he said. Mr Smith is also working with students at Warwick Academy to explore new technology that could further protect nesting sites.

“I'm working with schools right now trying to produce a face recognition camera run by a solar panel that once it recognises a sparrow, it has a little speaker that sends off [a sound].

“They're going to have to be a few sounds, because sparrows are smart. They'll get used to one single sound. And hopefully that's a start in making a sparrow-proof bluebird box.”

**For more information, visit [bermudabluebirdsociety.com](http://bermudabluebirdsociety.com) or call Stuart Smith on 777-9856**

# RED IMPORTED FIRE ANTS

This past November a member of the public discovered Red Imported Fire Ants on their property. Since then, more were found near a container storage site. This is a highly dangerous situation for Bermuda and we all need to be vigilant looking for their distinctive large mounds.



To report a sighting or for more information, please visit the Government of Bermuda, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Fire Ant page: <https://www.gov.bm/fire-ants>



*“Red Imported Fire Ants are widely recognized as one of the world’s most damaging invasive species. They attack wildlife, damage crops, threaten pets and livestock, interfere with electrical systems, and create genuine risks to public health due to their aggressive swarming behaviour. They can also impact tourism, outdoor recreation, and management of parks and heritage sites.”*

*Myles Darrell*

*Head of National Heritage, The Bermuda National Trust*



*Example of a Red Imported Fire Ant mound*



**FIRE ANTS IN BERMUDA**

**INVASIVE & DANGEROUS!**

**WHAT DO FIRE ANTS LOOK LIKE?**

- REDDISH-BROWN COLOUR
- 2-6 mm LONG
- PAINFUL STING
  - Aggressive Behavior
  - Small Mounds/Nests

**HOW TO REPORT FIRE ANTS:**

Help us stop the spread of fire ants in Bermuda!

- Note the LOCATION of the ants.
- TAKE PHOTOS of the ants and nests.
- REPORT IT to DENR.

Visit: [www.gov.bm/fire-ants](http://www.gov.bm/fire-ants)  
Call: 236-4201  
Email: [fireants@gov.bm](mailto:fireants@gov.bm)

**PROTECT BERMUDA'S ENVIRONMENT!**

# FALL BIRD REPORT - SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 2025

by Paul Watson



Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Calidris subruficollis*) Photo: Eva Bottelli



Gray Kingbird (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) Photo: Neal Morris



Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*) Photo: Herb Marshall

Fall is always full of the promise of interesting southbound migrants.

## September

A total of 129 species were documented during September.

Two **Brown Booby** were reported approximately 2 hours north of Bermuda by a departing cruise ship passenger on the 10<sup>th</sup> (VB). A total of 28 species of shorebird were recorded, which is noteworthy as mid-September is World Shorebirds Day. Notable records included **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** on Port Royal GC between 1<sup>st</sup>(LF) and 6<sup>th</sup> (Mult obs), **Hudsonian Godwit** on 3<sup>rd</sup> at Clearwater (PW/HM/EB), **Western Sandpiper** at Ships Hill Pond on 9<sup>th</sup> (Mult Obs), **Baird's Sandpiper** at Ships Hill pond on 12<sup>th</sup> (PW), 2 **Ruff** found at Kindley Park on 14<sup>th</sup> which were present for several days (Mult Obs), and **Upland Sandpiper** at Kindley Park on 19<sup>th</sup> (Mult obs)

**Sharp-shinned Hawk** in St George on 30<sup>th</sup> Sep (PW) is always notable. Several **Alder/Willow Flycatcher** were seen at multiple locations during the month (Mult obs). A single **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was found at Ferry Point on 28<sup>th</sup> Sept (PW/AW).



Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) Photo: Miguel Mejias



Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*) Photo: LeShun Smith

**Chimney Swift** were scarce with birds seen at Tobacco Bay on 10<sup>th</sup> (AW) and Ferry Point on 22<sup>nd</sup> (MM). A single-observer **Swallow-tailed Kite** over Crystal caves on 6<sup>th</sup> was unseasonal (VB). A **Gray Kingbird** at Cedar Grove Fields on 9<sup>th</sup> was a good find (LF) and lots of **Eastern Kingbirds** were found throughout the month (Mult Obs). A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** found by (LF) at Cedar Grove Fields was a noteworthy find and able to be seen by most birders. The last record was in 1977! A **Brown-headed Cowbird** was also a lucky find at Ferry Point Park on 15<sup>th</sup> (PW), whilst out walking with family.

**Yellow-throated Vireo** were seen at both BIOS (MM/EB) and Port Royal GC (PW) on 21<sup>st</sup> with the Port Royal bird joined by an **Eastern Warbling Vireo** (PW/IP). Thirteen reports of **Cave Swallow** in the east end from 8<sup>th</sup> (EB) to 11<sup>th</sup> (PW) may have involved up to 2 birds, as birds were seen at Tobacco Bay and Ferry Point Park at similar times on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

28 Warbler species were recorded with **Wilson's Warbler** on 24<sup>th</sup> at Warwick Pond (AW et al) and **Canada Warbler** at Ferry Point Park on 22<sup>nd</sup> (PW) being noteworthy.

## October

A total of 155 species was recorded during October

A large flock of 22-23 **Canada Geese** was recorded over Southampton Parish on 21<sup>st</sup> (TR) with multiple observers seeing a flock of 22 birds over Port Royal GC on 22<sup>nd</sup> (Mult Obs). By month's end just 2 were left at Jubilee road on 31<sup>st</sup> (AW).

Post-hurricane fallout produced a massive flock of 65 **Blue-winged Teal** over a large rain pond at the Bermuda International Airport on 2<sup>nd</sup> (PW), probably one of the largest flocks ever recorded. An amazing 96 reports of **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** were made with several counts in the double figures (Mult Obs.), the highest being 18 birds at Malabar Field on 22<sup>nd</sup> (EB). A single **Black-billed Cuckoo** was reported from Lodge Point on 23<sup>rd</sup> (EB).



Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*)  
Photo: Eva Bottelli



Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*)  
Photo: Miguel Mejias



Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*) Photo: Miguel Mejias

**Purple Gallinule** remained at Jubilee Road from 13<sup>th</sup> (2 birds-EB) with multiple observers reporting 1 to 3 birds throughout the month, and 4 birds reported on 21<sup>st</sup> (EB). A single **Black-necked Stilt** remained at Port Royal GC ponds between 3<sup>rd</sup> (EB) and 19<sup>th</sup> (IP). A **Baird's Sandpiper** and a **Ruff** were found with hurricane fallout birds at the Bermuda International Airport on 2<sup>nd</sup> (PW) and on the same day a **Dunlin** was found at Daniel's Head beaches (TR). A white rumped **Eurasian Whimbrel** was found with its American (*Hudsonicus*) cousins at Malabar Field on 21<sup>st</sup> (PW/IF) Also present with these birds was a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** (PW/IF).

Two **Sandwich Tern** were found at the Bermuda International Airport on 2<sup>nd</sup> (PW), and 4 in Harrington Sound, along with 2 **Royal Tern** on 3<sup>rd</sup> (PW) and a single bird seen at Shelley Bay on 4<sup>th</sup> (EB). Ten **Glossy Ibis** were found at the Bermuda International Airport on 2<sup>nd</sup> October (PW) with an additional 4 at Jubilee Road the same day (AO). Small numbers remained island-wide throughout the month (Mult Obs).

A good selection of flycatchers was reported with 16 separate records of **Eastern Wood-pewee** island-wide, involving 1-2 birds (Mult Obs). **Alder/Willow Flycatcher** at the Arboretum on the 8<sup>th</sup> (EH/JH) and **Alder Flycatcher** at Tom Moore's Tavern area on 23<sup>rd</sup> (PW/IF). An unidentified flycatcher in Devonshire on 2<sup>nd</sup> (EB) and a **Least Flycatcher** reported from Spittal Pond (AW). Three Kingbird species were documented: **Eastern Kingbird** in Devonshire Parish on 1<sup>st</sup> (EB), **Western Kingbird** on Hinson's Island on 22<sup>nd</sup> (EH), and **Gray Kingbird** from Somerset Long Bay NR on 16<sup>th</sup> (NM).

Six species of migrant vireo were documented, with obvious migrant **White-eyed Vireo** at several locations through the month (Mult Obs), 12 separate **Yellow-throated Vireo** records, some involving 2 birds together, were made from 20<sup>th</sup>- 31<sup>st</sup> in several East-end locations (PW/IF). Eight separate **Blue-headed Vireo** reports were made from 16<sup>th</sup> at Somerset Long Bay NR (MM), 1 to 2 birds on Port Royal GC from 21<sup>st</sup>- 26<sup>th</sup> (PW/IF/JS) with a separate bird present at Ferry Point Park on 20<sup>th</sup> (EB) and 21<sup>st</sup> (AW). Single **Philadelphia Vireos** were recorded at Port Royal GC on 8<sup>th</sup> (MM), Ferry Point Park on 20<sup>th</sup> (PW/IF) and Hinson's Island on 24<sup>th</sup> (EH/JS). **Eastern Warbling Vireo** was recorded at Port Royal GC on 5<sup>th</sup> (IP) and 8<sup>th</sup> (MM). Multiple records of **Red-eyed Vireo** were recorded, with a high count of at least 30 birds together at Hog Bay Park fields on 21<sup>st</sup> (PW/IF).

Six swallow species were recorded, with a **Cave Swallow** being present around the Fort St. Catherine area 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> (PW/IF). An amazing record of an Old World '*Phylloscopus sp.*' warbler was documented by sight and call recording at Port Royal GC on the 26<sup>th</sup> and confirmed as the second record of **Arctic Warbler** (IF/PW/JS), with the previous record being in 2014 only 100 metres away!! Could this have been the same bird seen in New York USA between 27<sup>th</sup> September and 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2025? (See the article on this sighting in our previous Newsletter) A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was a one-off sighting in a St George's garden, Grieg Hall, on 22<sup>nd</sup> (IF).

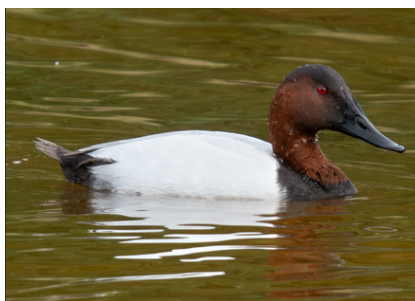
Eight sparrow species were recorded, with **White-crowned Sparrow** on 17<sup>th</sup> at Trimmingham Hill (LS) and another two on 22<sup>nd</sup> at Cedar Grove fields (PW/IF), and **Clay-coloured Sparrow** on St. George's GC on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> (PW/IF) being noteworthy.

Thirty-two species of warbler were recorded, 3 of which would've formerly grouped as '*oporonis sp.*': A single **Kentucky Warbler** at Ferry Point Park on 23<sup>rd</sup> (MM), **Connecticut Warbler** at St George's GC on 2<sup>nd</sup> (PW) and 5-6 birds at Ferry point on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> (MM/EB) with 6 additional sightings during the month, and a single **Mourning Warbler** from the Arboretum on 2<sup>nd</sup> (MM). Of these, Connecticut remains in *Oporornis*; Kentucky and Mourning have been moved into the genus *Geothlypis*. **Wilson's Warbler** was recorded at the Arboretum on 2<sup>nd</sup> (MM) and 3<sup>rd</sup> (AW), and at Great Head Park from 25<sup>th</sup> (MM) to the 28<sup>th</sup> (PW/IF), remaining throughout the winter.

## November

115 species recorded in November

During the month 13 duck species were documented. Four **Wood Duck** were reported at West Whale Bay on 11<sup>th</sup> (VB) with single birds at Seymour's Pond on 12<sup>th</sup> and Spittal Pond on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> (Mult Obs).



Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*)  
Photo: LeShun Smith



Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*)  
Photo: Neal Morris

A **Gadwall** was reported sporadically throughout the month at Spittal Pond from the 4<sup>th</sup> (Mult Obs) and a **Northern Shoveler** spent the month on the airport pond from 1<sup>st</sup> (PW). A **Canvasback** at Spittal Pond on 17<sup>th</sup> (AW) relocated to Ship's Hill Pond between 19<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> (Mult obs). **Greater Scaup**, always difficult to confirm, was reported from Spittal Pond on 4<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> with the ever-present **Lesser Scaup** flock. **Hooded Merganser** was recorded at the airport pond between 20<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>(AW/VB).

A late **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was reported from the Airport-Clearwater on 5<sup>th</sup> and a **Common Nighthawk** from Vesey NR on 17<sup>th</sup> (TR). A single **Virginia Rail** was reported from an undocumented private residence (MM), an **American Golden Plover** from Airport-Clearwater on 5<sup>th</sup> (2 birds) and Cooper's Island NR on 9<sup>th</sup> (PW). A **Dunlin** was reported at Ferry Point Park on 15<sup>th</sup> (VB) and a **White-rumped Sandpiper** at Mid Ocean GC on 18<sup>th</sup> (AW).

A single **Bonaparte's Gull** was reported at Spittal Pond between 17<sup>th</sup>- 30<sup>th</sup> (Mult Obs) and a single **Laughing Gull** was reported island-wide between 26<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> when there were 2 at Cross Island (Mult Obs). A late **Common Tern** was reported at Cross island on 29<sup>th</sup> (VB) and a **Brown Booby** was reported 4 hrs W of Bermuda by a cruise ship passenger (VB). A **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was reported from Ferry Point Park on 2<sup>nd</sup> (PW/IF/JS).

A late **Blue-headed Vireo** was seen at Ocean View GC on 3<sup>rd</sup> (PW) with a **Red-eyed Vireo**. Other late Red-eyed Vireos were seen at St George's GC on 10<sup>th</sup> (PW) and Morgan's Point on 27<sup>th</sup> (TR). An **Eastern Phoebe** was reported from the Railway Trail in Warwick on 29<sup>th</sup> (VB). Now becoming scarce, a single **Peregrine Falcon** was reported from Port Royal GC on 10<sup>th</sup> (NM) and Morgan's Point on 27<sup>th</sup> (TR).

# WINTER BIRD REPORT - DECEMBER 2025 TO FEBRUARY 2026

by Paul Watson

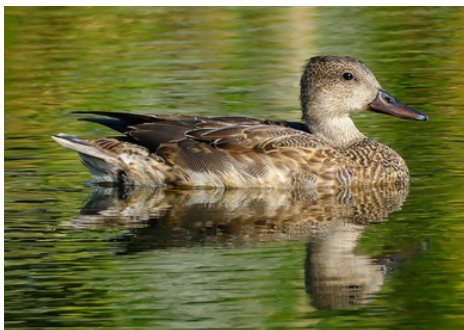
Winter highlights were a good number of wintering ducks with an addition of several species following winter storms in Jan and Feb. The weather pattern after the turn of the year was one of predominant and persistent cold and windy weather off the US with gale to storm (and even hurricane) force gusts being recorded on many days.

## December 2025

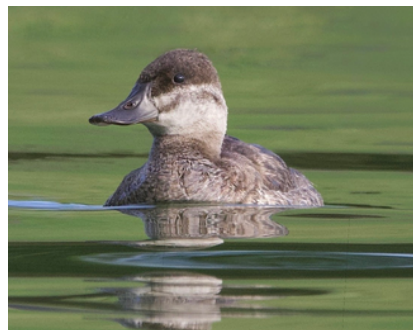
126 species were recorded.

The find of the month is undoubtedly a **Common Gull**, found and tentatively identified by EB on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Photos were confirmed as looking good for Common Gull by bird expert Bob Flood. The bird was seen again on the causeway (PW) on the 21<sup>st</sup> and a written description submitted. This bird is a 'common' species in Europe and Iceland with several records in the NE US and NE Canada and is a **new species record for Bermuda**. (See our article on this sighting on Pages 2-3)

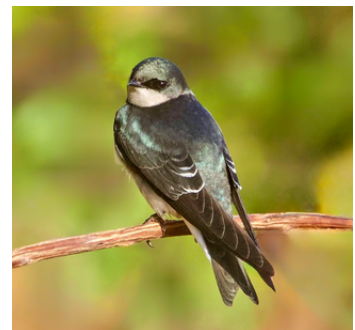
Fourteen duck/waterbird species were documented including 2 **Gadwall** at Ship's Hill pond and other locations from 8<sup>th</sup> (PW), **Greater Scaup** seen sporadically with the **Lesser Scaup** flock at Spittal Pond from 28<sup>th</sup> (Mult Obs). The **Ruddy Duck** continued at Ship's Hill Pond where it remained throughout the period (Mult Obs). One to two **Red-breasted Mergansers** were noted at different locations from the 10<sup>th</sup> (Mult obs).



Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*)  
Photo: Andrea Webb



Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)  
Photo: Neal Morris



Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*)  
Photo: Neal Morris

A **Striated Heron** was seen at Ferry Point on 29<sup>th</sup> December (MM), likely the same bird from earlier in the year. An unseasonal **White-tailed Tropicbird** (Longtail) was seen at the Reefs on 7<sup>th</sup> (PW) where 5 **Tree Swallows** were also seen (PW/MM). Several unseasonal Tree Swallow records were recorded during the month (Mult Obs). Several **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** were reported during the month from multiple locations and likely involved up to 6 different birds (Mult obs). Up to 3 **Barn Swallows** remained until late in the month. The **Eurasian Whimbrel** was re-located at Malabar Field on 17<sup>th</sup> (PW).



Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*) Photo: Andrea Webb

A total of 26 species of warbler was reported in December with uncommon/unusual sightings being: **Blackpoll Warbler** on 26<sup>th</sup> (AW), **Townsend's Warbler** on 27<sup>th</sup> at Spittal Pond (AM/PW/AW), **Wilson's Warbler** at Great Head Park on 18<sup>th</sup> (MM et al), **Northern Yellow Warbler** at Ship's Hill Pond on 16<sup>th</sup> (AW et al).

The **Yellow-breasted Chat** at Ferry point was seen from 1<sup>st</sup> (PW) and was reported sporadically through the month.

Nine sparrow species were documented including unseasonal **Grasshopper Sparrow** at Clearwater on 4<sup>th</sup> (PW) and **Dickcissel** at Spittal Pond (PW/AW) and Mid Ocean GC (PW) from 20<sup>th</sup>.

## January 2026

123 species were recorded.

The birding year started with a bang as local birders commenced their 2026 'Year list' with a total of 75 bird species being recorded on New Years Day alone.

Inclusive of **Canada** and **Snow Geese**, which were present for most of the month, a total of 19 waterfowl species were recorded. The ducks from December remained and an additional species, **Wood Duck**, was recorded at Mid Ocean GC and then re-located to Outerlea Dairy. All 3 **Merganser** species were documented with the least regular, a **Common Merganser**, found at Spittal Pond (AW) on 31<sup>st</sup>. This bird moved between Spittal and Compston's Ponds for several weeks.



Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*) Photo: Andrea Webb



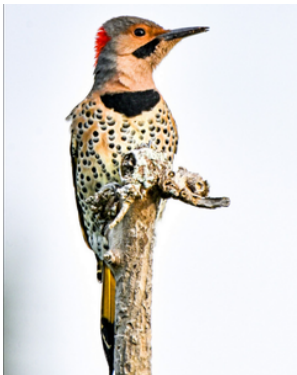
Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) Photo: Eva Bottelli

Eight gull species were recorded during the month. A **Black-legged Kittiwake**, observed from Cooper's Point on 27<sup>th</sup> (PW), was moving offshore and did not come close. **Black-headed Gulls** remained around St. George's Harbour and were sporadically joined by an immature **Laughing Gull** (Mult Obs), one of 4 birds initially found off Trunk Island on 2<sup>nd</sup> (TR).

Three **Glossy Ibis** were recorded on 1<sup>st</sup> at Lukes Pond Road (HM). A **Northern Flicker**, found on 1<sup>st</sup> (HM), remained and was seen by most birders throughout January. A female/immature **Painted Bunting** found on 6<sup>th</sup> January next to Fort Albert (PW) was a good find and observed sporadically through January (Mult obs). A **Summer Tanager** on 1<sup>st</sup> was a good garden bird found by (AW) off Wilkinson Avenue area.

A **Barn Swallow** on 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Airport Pond and **Tree Swallow** on 19<sup>th</sup> at Outerlea Dairy were unseasonal. (PW)

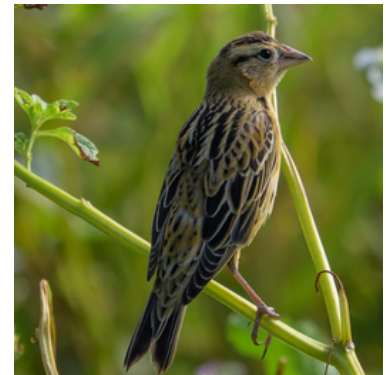
Twenty-two warbler species were recorded during the month (Mult Obs), and **Bobolink** on 6<sup>th</sup> at the old Driving range is an unusual Winter record (PW).



Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) Photo: Herb Marshall



Painted Bunting - fem/imm (*Passerina ciris*) Photo: Neal Morris



Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) Photo: Stephen Davies

## February 2026

110 species were recorded.



Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) Photo: LeShun Smith



Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*) Photo: Eva Bottelli

Common Goldeneye was found at Spittal Pond on 11<sup>th</sup> (NM), the first for several years.

A Horned Grebe, found in Ferry Reach off BIOS from 3<sup>rd</sup> (CF/MM), remained for about 2 weeks and was joined by a small Canada Goose, likely of the 'lesser' ssp. (Richardson's or Todd's Canada Goose) but not formally identified (PW). The corpse of a Red-necked Grebe was found at West Whale Bay on 13<sup>th</sup>. This is significant as this species was last documented in Bermuda on 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 1979, the last of only 2 previous records

A Nighthawk sp. seen around Stonecrusher Corner area on 4<sup>th</sup> was likely, but not confirmed, as a **Lesser Nighthawk** (EH/MD). Two **Swallow-tailed Kite** over Devonshire on 20<sup>th</sup> (NM) were relocated in Smith's on 21<sup>st</sup> (PW) and joined by a 3<sup>rd</sup> again over Devonshire Marsh on 22<sup>nd</sup> (PW/JS).

The 2 wintering **Black-headed Gulls** remained faithful to the Causeway and St. George's Harbour throughout the month. They were joined by an **Iceland Gull** (putative Thayer's ssp.) in St. George on 20<sup>th</sup> (MM). A record number of **Bonaparte's Gulls** were seen around the island with Spittal pond recording 49 alone on 21<sup>st</sup> (PW/JS), increasing to 61 on 23<sup>rd</sup> (MM et al) with multiple additional birds around. The last maxima were 28 birds in February 1977. A **Forster's Tern** found in Harrington Sound on 5<sup>th</sup> (TR) was seen sporadically around the causeway thereafter until 14<sup>th</sup> (Mult Obs).



Bonaparte's Gull (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) Photo: Herb Marshall

On the first sunny and calm day of the month, the first harbingers of Spring, **White-tailed Tropicbird**, were recorded off St. George's GC on 13<sup>th</sup> (PW).

2 **Red-winged Blackbirds** were found at Outerlea Dairy on 19<sup>th</sup> (PW). A **Purple Martin** (EB) on 1<sup>st</sup> over Hamilton Harbour was unseasonal.

**Observers:** Eva Bottelli (EB), Matthew Dryden (MD), Ian Fisher (IF), Luke Foster (LF), Erich Hetzel (EH), Janice Hetzel (JH), Herb Marshall (HM), Miguel Mejias (MM), Neal Morris (NM), Andrea Ottley (AO), Ingela Persson (IP), Trevor Rawson (TR), Joanne Smith (JS), LeShun Smith (LS), Paul Watson (PW), Andrea Webb (AW) and VB - "Visiting Birders"

# SOCIETY NEWS AND EVENTS

## January 31 2026

### Government House Bird Watching Walk

We had a great turn out for our birdwatching walk on the grounds of Government House yesterday morning. Twenty five species were seen including a variety of warblers, three different types of Gull and a Merlin.

The full list can be seen at:

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S297350239>.

Thanks so much to our guide, Paul Watson



## February 15 2026

### Alfred Blackburn Smith Reserve

### Volunteer Work Party

16 supporters turned up on a Bermudaful day to tackle a host of young casuarina trees that were sprouting up throughout the reserve.



Chainsaw helpers were able to take out larger casuarina and removed two big reproductive *Calophyllum* trees while volunteers pulled up thousands of their sprouts below the canopy.

The beautiful Yellowwood trees are now breathing a sigh of relief in their new space.

Bonus sightings of whales, the first longtails of the season and an Osprey were a real treat.

## March 19th 2026

### Sargasso Sea Advisory Council

The Bermuda Audubon Society was invited to join the Sargasso Sea Advisory Council by Noelle Young, a Bermudian Climate Justice Delegate. This council is headed by Green Peace UK and we were very pleased to be included.

The launch was held at The Loren Hotel on March 19th and was very well attended. The structure and long term goals of the Bermuda organization are currently being worked on and the BAS will be happy to participate and contribute whatever we can to this vital organization.



*Sargasso Sea Advisory Council  
The Loren Hotel, March 19, 2026*

## SOCIETY NEWS AND EVENTS

Join the  
**CELEBRATION!**



**Wednesday, April 22**  
**11am to 3pm at Victoria Park**

Connect with Nature  
Learn about Sustainable Lifestyles

**We will be there**  
along with other community stakeholders



### JOIN THE FLOCK: PROTECT BERMUDA'S NATURAL BEAUTY!

The [Bermuda Audubon Society](#) is looking for passionate people like YOU to help us "conserve Bermuda's special bird life and habitats for the benefit of all."

Whether you have a few hours to spare outdoors or want to lead the way on our Executive Committee, your skills can make a lasting impact on our island's unique environment.

#### How You Can Get Involved:

- **Committee Members:** Help steer our mission! We need visionary leaders for roles like Vice President, Secretary, Data Management, and Nature Reserve Management.
- **Habitat Heroes:** Join our reserve work parties to clear invasive species and restore native landscapes at our 20 nature reserves.
- **Bluebird Box Builders:** Use your hands to help our feathered friends by cutting wood or assembling Bluebird and Longtail nest boxes.
- **Community Ambassadors:** Represent Audubon at local events or help educate the next generation of conservationists.

#### Why Volunteer?

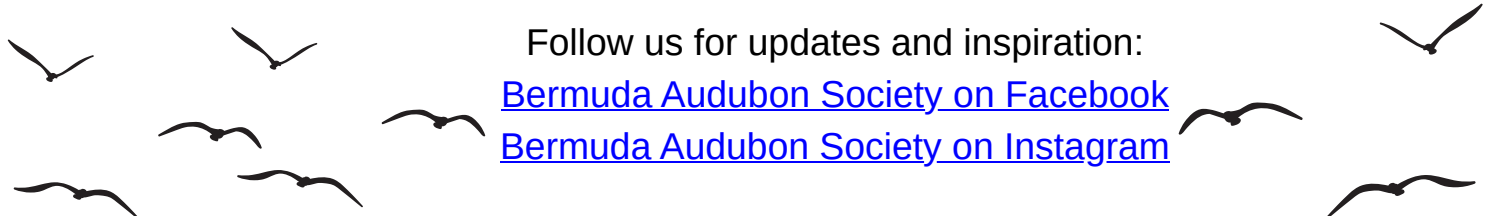
Connect with nature, meet fellow bird-lovers, and help protect iconic species like the Cahow and the Bermuda Longtail. As a purely volunteer-run charity, we rely entirely on people like you to keep Bermuda's open spaces thriving.

#### Ready to Make a Difference?

Visit our [Volunteer Page](#) to see current opportunities or email us at [info@audubon.bm](mailto:info@audubon.bm) to learn more about joining a committee.



Follow us for updates and inspiration:  
[Bermuda Audubon Society on Facebook](#)  
[Bermuda Audubon Society on Instagram](#)



# SOCIETY NEWS AND EVENTS

## Sunday - 17 May 2026

### Members Only - visit to Nonsuch Island

We are pleased to offer a rare opportunity to visit Nonsuch Island - the home base for our Bermuda Petrel (Cahow). Under the guidance of Jeremy Madeiros you will see some of this year's Cahow chicks and there will also be a tour of the island. We will depart from Tucker's Town Dock at 1.30pm on Castaway Charters' spacious catamaran and return between 4.30 and 5.00. This event is not available for children under 8 years of age. And also, please note, there are no bathrooms on the island. Space is limited so book soon to avoid disappointment. Here is the link for tickets: [https://bdatix.vbotickets.com/event/Nonsuch\\_Island\\_Trip/191743](https://bdatix.vbotickets.com/event/Nonsuch_Island_Trip/191743)



Photo of Bermuda Petrel by Miguel Mejias

## Saturday - 23 May 2026

### Pelagic Sea Watch

Join us when we go off south shore on Endurance to look for migrating seabirds. Boat will leave from the aquarium dock at 2pm and return between 5 and 6 pm. Possible sightings include a variety of Shearwaters, Petrels, Storm-Petrels, Jaegers, Skua and maybe our own Cahow.

Please email us at [info@audubon.bm](mailto:info@audubon.bm) if you are interested in participating. We need at least 10 participants for the trip to go. Tickets will be \$85 per member and \$95 for non-members.

## Thursday - 9 June 2026

### AGM at Waterville, 2 Pomander Road, Paget

6pm to 8pm. RSVP by email to [info@audubon.bm](mailto:info@audubon.bm)  
Please let us know if you would be interested in joining or helping the Committee with our ongoing work in education, bird conservation, habitat protection, and advocacy. More volunteers will help us to better achieve our mission "to conserve Bermuda's special birdlife and habitats for the benefit of all."



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## 9 through 11 October 2026

### Paget Island Bird Camp

You will want to mark your calendar for this event. It's a unique opportunity for Audubon members, their family and friends to get together in nature, socialise, enjoy the island and go birding. Details will be posted closer to the time.

