



# Winging It

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION



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## The Falcon that Nests on Broadway

ROBERT DeCANDIDO, Ph.D. AND DEBORAH ALLEN  
WITH PHOTOS BY THE AUTHORS

Every birder needs a problem to solve. Often that means mastering subtle field marks to add another tick to one's life list. By comparison, our problem was relatively simple: we wanted to discover something new to science about birds. Not so easy in a place with eight million people, and home to some of the finest observers in birding history: Frank Chapman, Ludlow Griscom, Ernest Mayr, and Roger Tory Peterson to name a few. When an American Kestrel pair took up residence near our home in the Bronx, we watched them for fun at first, but then wanted to know more. Thumbing through research in the scientific literature, we realized that almost nothing was known about urban kestrels. We had our problem, and it bothered us sorely.

Our first challenge was to find a sufficient number of kestrel pairs to study, but where were they? We looked in city parks with no luck. Occasionally, we saw a kestrel hunting an abandoned landfill, but outside of the migration season, these urban kestrels were rare in city parks. Christmas Counts from each of the five boroughs told the same story: local birders were not seeing them in the meadows, salt marshes or even baseball fields of city parks—indeed any of the 30,000 acres of natural area in the city. We even went so far as to place nest boxes on an abandoned landfill in the Bronx...nothing! We might as well have been looking for alligators in the city's sewer system.

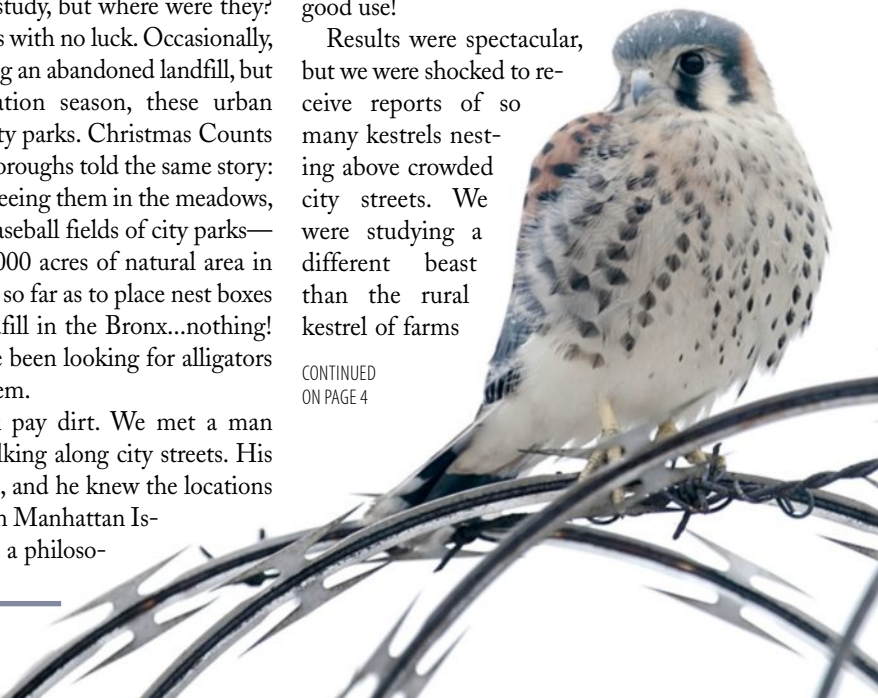
One day we struck pay dirt. We met a man whose job entailed walking along city streets. His name was Jim O'Brien, and he knew the locations of a few kestrel nests on Manhattan Island. He also provided a philoso-

phy to guide our kestrel searches. "They are not called sparrow hawks for nothing," he said. "If you can find congregations of House Sparrows, you will find kestrels." This was no urban legend—and Jim was to become a venerable kestrel spy.

Sure enough, once we left city parks for the mean streets of the urban jungle, we found kestrels. Fr. Tom Deely showed us a pair in the South Bronx ("Melrose Place"), and Chuck McAlexander alerted us to his kestrels in Chelsea. In order to reach out to as many observers as possible, we took our corporation public; we became NYKE people—the New York Kestrel Enumerators. For investors we issued a prospectus in 14 languages: "Have you seen this bird?" People who only spoke Korean or Polish or Russian or Hebrew could find information about these small falcons in Gotham. (See: <http://www.battaly.com/nehw/AmericanKestrel/>). We aimed to cast our net into every ethnic neighborhood in NYC, and put this human biodiversity to good use!

Results were spectacular, but we were shocked to receive reports of so many kestrels nesting above crowded city streets. We were studying a different beast than the rural kestrel of farms

CONTINUED  
ON PAGE 4



# Having Fun with Birds

HARRY ARMISTEAD

**S**PURIOUS SPECIES: John Sill's books on non-existent bird species contain his excellent paintings of such invented species as Mangrove Penguin, Middle Yellowlegs, Auger-billed Clamsucker, Warbling Cormorant, and Split Rail. On the way home from our annual string of five consecutive Christmas counts we sometimes dream up fake bird species. Baryshnikov's Tyrannulet (from Chris Witt). DiMaggio's Bunting. Southern Fried Chicken. Saddam's Desert-Tyrant. Gutter Snipe. Clinton's and Bush's Liabirds.

Pete Dunne and the Cape May crowd are famous for renaming birds. Great Black-backed Gull could be called Great Imperial Landfill Buzzard. European Starling was renamed as Swill Martin or Dirt Warbler. Local peregrines hacked on coastal plain sites, where historically they never were, can be called Pseudogrines. House Sparrow we renamed as Burger Kinglet. Bob Anderson on hearing this quipped... "Burger Kinglet, home of the Whooper".

I have my own screwy names for some birds I am especially fond of. Belly Bird (Eastern Bluebird). Lesser Goldeneye (Bufflehead). Blue Bullet (Tree Swallow).

Some of the best bird names are colloquial names. Labrador Twister (American Woodcock). Pond Snout (Hooded Merganser). Pigwitch (Horned Grebe). Thunder Pumper (American Bittern).

**QUOTATIONS:** I was witness to many. Some are classic, legendary, and a part of birders' oral traditions.

Francis Lee Jaques—"There's not much difference between warblers and no warblers." Jaques loved heroic landscapes populated with big game, large wading birds, caribou on the Canadian Shield, waterfowl. He didn't have much use for dickey birds.

Roger Tory Peterson—"A quick field observer who does not temper his snap judgment with a bit of caution is like a fast car without brakes." This message appears in the 1947 edition of his eastern field guide.

Will Russell—"A thousand birds is a lot of birds." This deceptively simple remark is much deeper than it seems. How many times do you see a thousand or more birds of one species at one time other than geese, Dunlin, blackbirds, Tree Swallows, and a few other species?

Ludlow Griscom—"I make mistakes but I am the first to notice they are mistakes" ... and... "Mr. Smart, Virginia Rails do not occur in Cape Cod in the winter", stated at a Cape Cod Christmas Bird Count compilation. Bob

Smart then took the Virginia Rail out of his pocket and the rail walked around the table. Bob was known for his "rhymers". What is a quiet alcid? A *murmure*. What is a quiet French butter alcid? A *beurre murmure*. What is a cold, quiet, French butter alcid? A *brr-Beurre murmure*.

*Harry Armistead posted this to Maryland Birds & Birding, MDOSPNEY@HOME.EASE.LSOFT.COM on 18 February 2004. Condensed and reprinted here with permission.*



European Starling, Swill Martin to some. © Bill Maynard

**Editor:**

Bill Maynard

**Design/Production:**

Ed Rother

**Publications Director:**

Bryan Patrick

**Chair of the Board:**

Dick Ashford

Freight address & editorial correspondence:

4945 N. 30th Street, Ste. 200

Colorado Springs, CO 80919

winging@aba.org • (719) 578-9703

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• The American Birding Association aims to inspire all people to enjoy and protect wild birds.

• The American Birding Association represents the North American birding community and supports birders through publications, conferences, workshops, tours, partnerships, and networks.

• The ABA's education programs promote birding skills, ornithological knowledge, and the development of a conservation ethic.

• The ABA encourages birders to apply their skills to help conserve birds and their habitats, and we represent the interests of birders in planning and legislative arenas.

• ABA Sales, (800) 634-7736, supplies birders with tools, equipment, and accessories to make their birding more enjoyable.

We welcome all birders as members.



## Mexico Update - Birders' Exchange

MANUEL GROSSELET

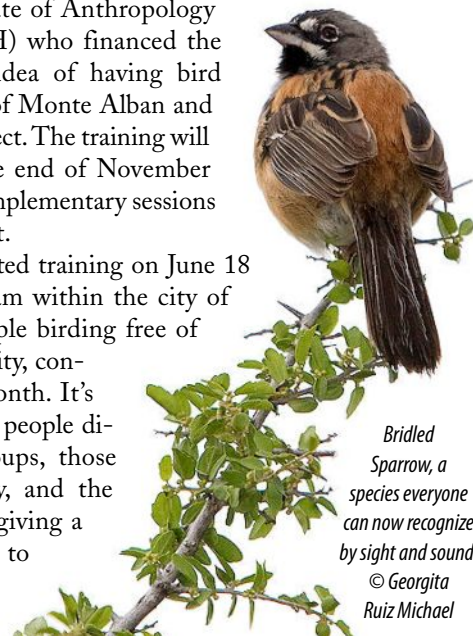
A long time ago, the ABA's Birders' Exchange program helped us locally to improve our knowledge of birds and they presented us with several binoculars. This is just a note to the ABA members to tell you that we are still following along with our work here in Mexico.



*Interns learning about bird identification: Lauriano Ibañez Goopar, Freddy de la Cruz Montesino, Azael Santiago Espinoza, Lucila Vázquez Vasquez, Enrique Nava Jimenez, Rosendo Pablo Reyes Ruiz, Manelik Olivera, and Manuel Grosselet. © Georgita Ruiz Michael*

Currently, we are training 11 young future bird guides in Monte Albán and Yagul, in Mexico's Oaxaca state. Stephanie and Ben Steben from England have also helped us by donating four binoculars. All the people photographed, except for Manelik are local people trained to learn about birds. Manelik is a local worker from the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) who financed the training with the idea of having bird guides at the ruins of Monte Albán and Yagul, as a pilot project. The training will be completed at the end of November and we will have complementary sessions year-round after that.

This year, we started training on June 18 with a social program within the city of Mexico, taking people birding free of charge around the city, continuing once per month. It's great, isn't it! Thirty people divided into two groups, those who woke up early, and the "lazy" birders, thus giving a chance for everyone to see local birds with a bird specialist.



*Bridled Sparrow, a species everyone can now recognize by sight and sound.  
© Georgita Ruiz Michael*

## Lister's Corner TONY WHITE, ABA DIRECTOR

### The AOU Area

It always surprises me how few people submit annual totals for the AOU Area. The AOU Area includes the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Central America, the West Indies, Hawaii, and Bermuda. Greenland will soon be added to the area. The number of birds in the AOU Area (2,048) is more than double the ABA Area's total (960), but the AOU-area threshold is comparatively low – 800 compared to 500. In the 2009 ABA List Report, the number of people who submitted AOU list totals (242) was about a quarter of those submitting totals for the ABA Area (840). Once a birder records over 500 ABA-area birds, the cost per bird begins to increase dramatically. Chasing a vagrant in south Florida or in the Lower Rio Grande Valley is an expensive and risky business. Why look for a single La Sagra's Flycatcher in Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park, when for almost the same amount of money you can go to Grand Bahama and see a dozen La Sagra's Flycatchers along with several other species you may not have seen before?

If you have seen 500 birds in the ABA Area you should be able to add the 300 needed for the AOU threshold in two, one-week visits to Mexico or Central America. Birding trips to Hawaii, the Caribbean, or Bermuda will also add birds to your list. It is not all

about numbers—you can see quetzals, Jabirus, macaws, and numerous hummingbird species in Mexico and Central America. The West Indies is the home to Bee Hummingbird, the world's smallest bird, and all five members of the Tody family—looking like Christmas tree ornaments. Some of the native Hawaiian honeycreepers are still findable although many species in the family have become extinct in recent decades.

Surely, it is worth your while to expand your birding horizons and visit our neighboring countries. The birding can be spectacular and the AOU Area will add a new incentive and goals to your birding pastime.

### The Revillagigedo Islands and Cocos Island

Two birders, ones who take their AOU Lists very seriously, recently asked me to clarify the status of the Revillagigedo Islands and Cocos Island. The former belongs to Mexico and the latter to Costa Rica. For ABA counting purposes, the islands are all in the AOU Area and in the North American Region, but not in the Pacific Ocean Region. The Revillagigedo Islands are included on the Mexican list, and Cocos Island can be included on the Costa Rica list and for the Central American Region.



## The Falcon that Nests on Broadway

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and fields. For example, on Broadway, we remember seeing a female kestrel swoop down from her perch to snatch a House Sparrow feeding on crumbs in front of Zabar's. It was a busy Saturday morning in May, and shoppers were out in number. But this female had to provide food to her growing family too. Later, a few blocks south on 68th Street we watched another pair working as a team to drive off a Red-tailed Hawk that ventured too close to their nest; north near 86th Street and Amsterdam Avenue, one of our kestrel spies reported that a male kestrel had discovered a concentration of House Finches at her bird feeder on the 20th floor. He was making frequent visits, especially in rainy weather. That kestrel had learned to burst into a feeding flock. At least one would bash itself into the glass—to become a stunned and easy meal for his family.

After we compiled a database of the reports we received, and then investigated ourselves, a picture began to emerge. There are about 60-100 pairs throughout the five boroughs, and we estimate 25 pairs on Manhattan Island alone. This is the largest population of nesting kestrels in New York State. Kestrels are the most common nesting raptor in NYC—yet we know little about their ecology here. We believe most of our adults are resident year-round, while young of the year disperse. Of the latter, one was even found (dead) in Florida in 2005. How is the NYC population doing compared to other urban populations? We don't know—ours is the first extensive study of urban kestrels in North America.

According to our research, the critical factor for urban kestrels is availability of suitable nest sites. In NYC more than 95% of kestrel nests are in the metal cornice of a late 19th century building. Kestrel nests average about 60 feet above street level, with the highest being about 125 feet and the lowest approximately 40 feet high. Kestrels have been nesting in these city cornices since at least 1916, when the first



Building cornice used for falcon nesting. © Robert DeCandido and Deborah Allen

published account of a pair in Brooklyn appeared in the magazine, *Bird-Lore*. This was very good news for us because some raptor professionals believed that NYC kestrels might be a “population sink”—in other words, taking away breeders that would otherwise do better elsewhere. We now had evidence that NYC kestrels were a self-sustaining population of long-standing merit and worthy of scientific investigation.

We do worry about what the future will bring to nesting kestrels in Gotham. Many of the smaller 19th century buildings with cornices have been replaced by skyscrapers, especially in Manhattan. Alternately, landlords are taught that anything living in a cornice cannot be good—it can only die or cause disturbance resulting in complaints from tenants. So we have watched a number of cornices used by kestrels for their nests be filled in, restored, or in many cases, removed entirely. Long-term, the loss of these critical nests sites will certainly have a negative effect on the population here.

The cornice nest sites offer several advantages versus “natural” cavities in trees, or even the occasional nest box in a city park. On city streets, mammalian predators such as raccoons or gray squirrels are unable to climb into a nest cavity on a building. European Starlings and Rock Doves, species that also nest in building cavities, are no match for an agile kestrel. We have watched on many occasions as a female kestrel chased starlings away from the immediate area of her nest site. After several such pursuits, starlings learn to avoid a “red” zone near the

*American Kestrel nest in a cornice at 69th Street & Broadway. Nest faces west, this view is looking east, 25 May '09. Other American Kestrel building nest locations can be seen in the extended Web version of the August Winging It at [www.aba.org/wingingit/archives](http://www.aba.org/wingingit/archives). © Robert DeCandido and Deborah Allen*





kestrel nest. Kestrels shape starling behavior so well that we have seen both species nesting within approx. 20 feet of each other. However, kestrels will raid the nest of these neighbor starlings (and House Sparrows) for their young, making kestrels the allies of every landlord in New York City.

Many of the metal cornice nests face east. We believe that after a cold spring evening, the nest warms up quickly in the morning sunshine. Later in the day, the overhang of the cornice shields the nest from the direct rays of the hot afternoon sun. This temperature moderation allows the female to leave the nest to hunt nearby. Also, urban kestrels begin nesting earlier in the year than their rural counterparts at similar latitudes. Pairs often nest close to a small community garden or “pocket park.” This allows the female to watch her growing brood from a prominent perch, while also scouting for House Sparrows feeding on the ground in these small green spaces, or nesting on nearby buildings. Throughout the city, sparrows comprise the bulk of the food taken by kestrels. Other prey items include small birds during spring and autumn migration, and the occasional roach, dragonfly or small rodent.

In May 2008 we received a report from a kestrel spy in Queens that his falcons were eating lizards. We were stunned—there are no native lizards on city streets. In late spring 2009, similar reports came in from the Upper East Side of Manhattan, then from the West Side, and from Brooklyn. NYC kestrels had discovered several discrete populations of non-native Italian wall lizards (*Podarcis sicula campestris*). According to Dr. Russell Burke of Hofstra University, who studies the herpetofauna of the region, these observations were the first in North America to document bird predation on these lizards.

More recently our investigations have led us away from the streets and into the laboratory. Working with Dr. Chad Seewagen of the Wildlife Conservation Society, Bobby and Cathy Horvath who re-hab many injured raptors in New York City, and Dr. Dan Cristol of the College of William and Mary, we are collecting breast feathers from young kestrels that end up on the ground, and are sent to raptor re-hab. About 15-25 young kestrels are received by Bobby and Cathy each year. This gives us a wonderful opportunity to test for toxicants such as lead and mercury. And we are teaming up with researchers at the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary to compare how levels of toxicants in New York City compare to those in rural Pennsylvania.

From farther afield, we regularly receive information about kestrels from different parts of North America, as well as from several cities in Europe and Asia. In Berlin, there are over 300 pairs of the Eurasian Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), nesting within city limits—most in nest boxes on buildings. In Israel, Drs. Motti Charter and Yossi Leshem have published on the nesting ecology of urban versus rural kestrels from Tel Aviv to the Negev. Here in North America, we receive reports from kestrel banders and nest box monitors from the high desert of Oregon to California all the way east to Pennsylvania and Massa-



Nestlings peer out from building cornice.  
© Robert DeCandido and Deborah Allen

chusetts. Our newsletter has become a clearinghouse for anyone interested in comparing when females lay eggs; hatching times; clutch size—from urban to rural areas.

Though New York City epitomizes the environment many who seek out the “natural” love to hate, it is not an unusual one. Most people in the world now live in an urban area. We cannot ignore urbanization, or wish it away—there will only be more and growing cities in the future. For scientists, urban areas represent a new frontier where people, wildlife and the environment interact closely. It is possible to discover something new to science about birds in cities—few people have closely studied species here. Meanwhile, we raised the bar in our goals: how can we protect birds in an increasingly urban world? We don’t know just yet, but the preservation of a small falcon living on city streets is a good place to start. The smiles and nods of our investors tell us there is keen interest in this blue-chip investment.

*Dr. Robert DeCandido is an urban ecologist who has been studying the flora and fauna of New York City since the early 1980s. With photographer Deborah Allen, they have studied migrating birds by night from atop the Empire State Building, as well as in Central Park by day. Currently they lead bird tours in Central Park, work as consultants to the wind power industry and publish scientific and popular articles about NYC's environment. Farther afield in Southeast Asia, they have studied and photographed raptors in migration from Nepal south to Malaysia, including the discovery of a globally significant watch site in Thailand. Contact them via: [www.BirdingBob.com](http://www.BirdingBob.com) for their bird walk schedule, or PDFs of their publications. For past issues of the NYC Kestrel Newsletter, visit the web site of the New England Hawk Watch: <http://www.battaly.com/nehw/AmericanKestrel/news/>.*



Fledgling American Kestrels. © Robert DeCandido and Deborah Allen

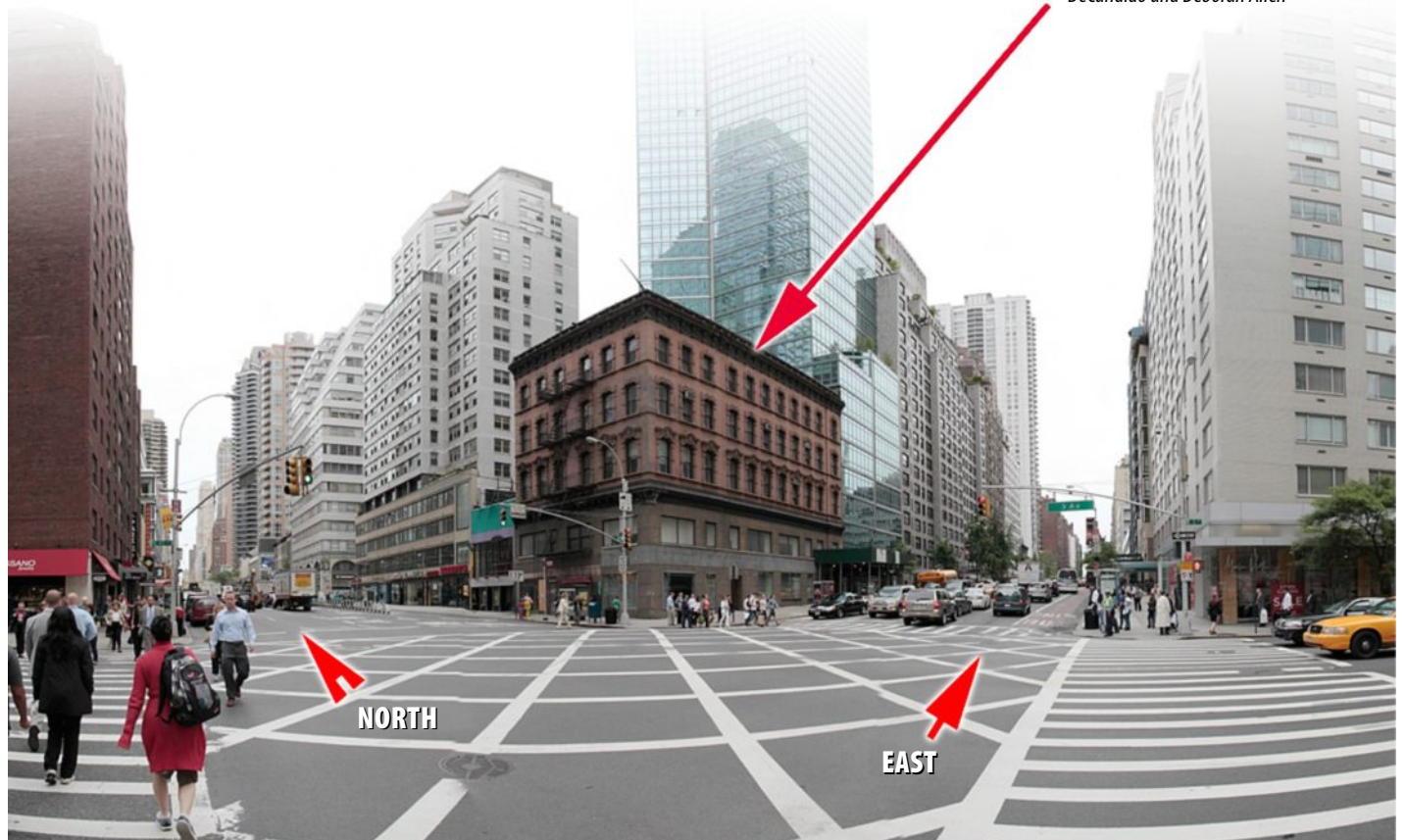
# The Falcon that Nests on Broadway

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A request for information prospectus was posted in 14 languages in every ethnic neighborhood in NYC. © Robert DeCandido and Deborah Allen



American Kestrel nest inside building cornice at East 57th Street, 4 June '09. © Robert DeCandido and Deborah Allen





*Female delivers food to the  
entrance of a cornice nest.  
© Robert DeCandido and  
Deborah Allen*



*American Kestrel nest location at the  
corner of 11th Street and St. Nicholas Ave.  
in Manhattan. 2 May '08. © Robert  
DeCandido and Deborah Allen*



## The Falcon that Nests on Broadway

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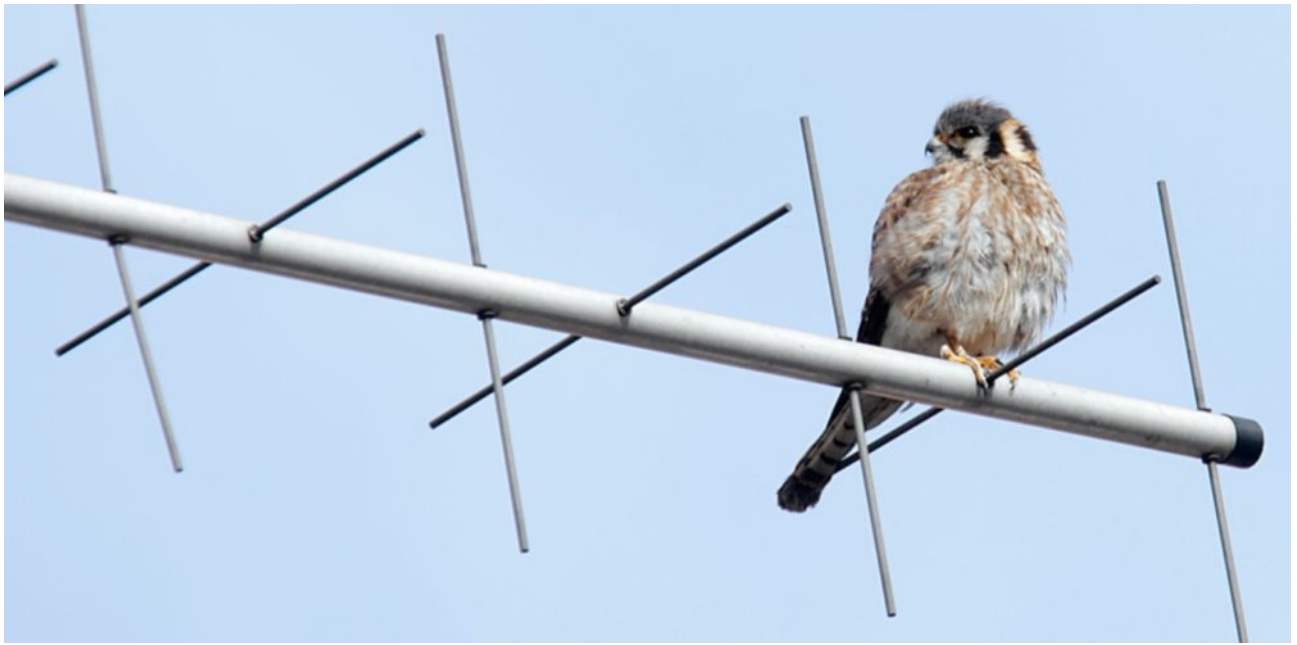


*Male American Kestrel  
at entrance to cornice nest.  
© Robert DeCandido  
and Deborah Allen*



*Cornice nest at W 80th Street and  
Broadway. 16 May '09. © Robert  
DeCandido and Deborah Allen*





*Fledgling waiting to be fed. © Robert DeCandido and Deborah Allen*



*American Kestrel nest in a building cornice on the Upper West Side. 8 June '09. © Robert DeCandido and Deborah Allen*

**G**entlemen, we can rebuild him. We have the technology. We have the capability to make the world's first bionic man... Better than he was before. Better. Stronger. Faster."

Some of you will recognize this quote from "The Six-Million Dollar Man." Steve Austin, the show's hero, became a TV pop culture icon of the '70s as the fictional test pilot whose wrecked body was repaired with "bionic" parts after the devastating crash of his experimental jet, resulting in speed, strength, and vision well beyond human norms. While not as dramatic as barely surviving a fiery crash, many birders lose the upper range of their hearing to some degree as they age; males over 50 are the most vulnerable. Typically genetic predisposition and/or prolonged/repeated exposure to loud noises lead to this problem, although reactions to medications and certain illnesses can also cause hearing loss. This takes on special significance for birders as many of the vocalizations we key in on contain high frequencies. For birds whose vocalizations are exclusively in the upper register (e.g. Cedar Waxwings or Brown Creepers), high-frequency hearing loss can virtually erase their detection in the woods. Other birds will sound differently as the high-frequency portions of their songs and calls are out of reach, leaving only the lower-frequency components. Portions of songs can be lost, and tone qualities can change, as beautifully illustrated by Nathan Pieplow's Earbirding blog entry on the subject: <http://earbirding.com/blog/archives/2105>

Enter the **SongFinder** (<http://www.nselec.com/index.html>), a device that works by shifting sound frequencies down in real time by 1/2, 1/3, or 1/4 as selected by the user. As opposed to traditional hearing aids that amplify sound (mainly to aid speech perception), the SongFinder is designed specifically for birders experiencing high fre-



Steve Brown showing the components of the SongFinder. © Jill Brown

quency hearing loss. It only responds to sounds above and around frequencies of 3-4 kilohertz (kHz), adjustable by a user-selected pass filter. These high-pitched sounds are lowered to hearable frequencies, and added at normal or slightly amplified levels to what one is hearing. The SongFinder also allows direction and distance estimation via a binaural headset containing the detecting microphones in addition to the stereo earphones. For example, a Blackpoll Warbler's song is mainly in the 8-10 kHz range, undetectable by many who can still hear human speech and lower-singing birds fairly well in the 2-3 kHz range. By selecting the 1/4 reduction value, the song will again be detectable and identifiable to them, albeit now around 2-2.5 kHz. According to some birders I've spoken with who use the SongFinder, there is a bit of mental recalibration to work through once the world of high frequency bird sounds is re-opened through frequency shifting. But the SongFinder shows that we do, indeed, have the technology for bionic ear birding.

Demystifying aspects of bird sounds can seem daunting, but in his Earbirding blog Nathan Pieplow has created an outstanding online tutorial and glossary of terms in addition to his ongoing litany of quality bird sound-related entries (as well as an extensive review of the SongFinder.)

Another excellent resource is *The Sound Approach to Birding* by Arnoud van den Berg, Mark Constantine, and Magnus Robb (with two accompanying CDs) that guides birders "through tone, pitch, rhythm, reading sonograms, acoustics, and using sounds to sex and age birds." I also recommend Donald Kroodsm's *The Singing Life of Birds: The Art and Science of Listening to Birdsong* which "teaches the reader how to see, hear, and understand bird songs" and also includes an audio CD. ABA's sales partner, Buteo Books <http://www.buteobooks.com> carries these titles (be sure to mention your ABA membership.)

As pictures and illustrations are keys to understanding field marks, sound recordings and spectrograms are keys to learning about bird vocalizations. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's **Raven software suite** enables birders to acquire, visualize, measure, and analyze sounds (<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/brp/raven/RavenOverview.html>), and the Raven Lite version is free! Another must-have is the free Raven Viewer which generates spectrograms to accompany the online sounds in the **Macaulay Library** (<http://macaulaylibrary.org>), which has over 100,000 digitized bird sound tracks. One more ever-growing free online resource for bird sounds is **xeno-canto** (<http://www.xeno-canto.org>), billed as the community database of shared bird sounds from the whole world. "X-C" boasts recordings of 6,713 species as of this writing and also provides spectrograms for visualization.

*Follow me online to the Arctic at <http://www.polartrec.com/expeditions/international-continental-shelf-survey>. I will be aboard the US Coast Guard Cutter Healy 2 August-6 September as it traverses the Arctic Ocean north of Alaska and Canada. As a **PolarTREC** teacher I'll be journaling about our oceanographic research and of course, any birds and arctic wildlife I see! There's an "ask the team" button and I welcome any of your questions, comments, and feedback.*

### ABA Seeks New President

The American Birding Association (ABA) is seeking a highly qualified individual to become its new President. Please see this link for details: <http://www.aba.org/070810.pdf>.

### RBA Change

The Tucson Audubon Society's RBA voice mail is now (520) 629-0510 ext. 3. Please delete the number (520) 798-1005 for Southeastern Arizona from your contact lists.

ABA's first ebook, *The Coolest Bird*, was written by Rich Levad and is now available on the ABA website, [www.aba.org](http://www.aba.org). *The Coolest Bird* is a natural history of the Black Swift (*Cypseloides niger*). Rich was fascinated by this species, researching them after retiring from teaching. The manuscript, meticulously typed with one finger, a result of Rich's struggles with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease), was sent to the ABA by his wife, Karen Levad. She hopes Rich's work is available for all to see. Please check it out.





NEIL GILBERT

*In late April, four other young birders and I traveled to the Upper Texas Coast to represent the ABA, competing in the Great Texas Birding Classic on the ABA Tropicbirds team. Our goal was to raise funds for the American Birding Association's education programs—and to see as many birds as we could in a 24-hour period.*

In the center of my pillow lies a June bug on its back, its legs kicking lazily in the air. Stooping, I scoop up the unfortunate insect and dump it outside. Housekeeping done, I sprawl onto the thin, hard mattress and shove my teammate Marcel Such a few inches farther away. He is hogging the mattress again. "Two hundred and seven species! Crazy!" I shout as I attempt to make myself comfortable. My teammates are too exhausted to give an enthusiastic response.

I survey the small, square bedroom of Tropical Birding's house on High Island. Several inches to my left, Harold Eyster moans and turns over, undoubtedly suffering from the combined effects of 22 consecutive hours of birding and several bowls of ice cream. Across the dimly lit room, Spencer Hardy slouches against the wall, staring into the ceiling fan swaying dangerously over our prostrate bodies. Andy Johnson, the only teammate attempting to be productive, kneels amid a pyramid of dirty clothing. A few clothes make it into his duffel bag, but he shrugs and stomps over to his bunk.

The room is silent for a moment, then someone says: "Man, that fallout was intense!" Everyone nods.

Spencer yawns and stretches. "Yup...there were so many warblers that I couldn't decide which one to look at."

Had it been only six hours since we were walking (and sometimes sprinting) down the trails at Smith Oaks on High Island? The last few hours of a big day are usually spent frantically chasing a handful of species; not so with us. We had been counting on a few new migrants to pad our list. What awaited us at High Island, however, far exceeded our expectations. We knew it was a fallout as soon as we first leapt from the car, scuttled down the trail, and promptly spotted a Cerulean Warbler, then a Blue-winged, then a Magnolia, then a...

Fallout on a big day! It doesn't get much luckier than that. We found over twenty new species in the last couple hours of daylight.

"I liked the Bachman's" I state as I lean back on my pillow. Marcel snorts. "Yeah—good thing you were so slow to see it!"

I'm instantly transported back to the foggy pineywoods two days previously, when we were scouting for the big day. Everything drips with water: the pines, my binoculars, the poison ivy I'm standing in. Gray mist cloaks the forest. I can almost taste it—thick, heavy, and wet. The gloom is occasionally punctuated by a clear, haunting whistle—a Bachman's Sparrow. It's close. We strain our eyes, scanning the branches for the hidden songster. Spencer suddenly

lifts his binoculars and gasps, "I see it! It's on a branch on the left side of the skinny pine in front of us!"

Hundreds of pines stand before us. They all have branches, and at least half of them could be described as "skinny." Huh. I try following Spencer's line of sight, but the bird remains invisible.

"Hey, I think a tree is blocking you," calls Marcel, beckoning me to move to the left. *Crunch crunch crunch.* I trample several poison ivy plants and probably pick up about twenty more ticks. "There, just below and to the right of the curved branch."

"Which curved branch?" I demand, looking over a forest of curved branches. "*That* one," directs Spencer, pointing into a clump of pines about fifty feet ahead. I spot the branch just in time to see a brown streak go shooting into the undergrowth.

"Why don't we move up and try to flush it?" I suggest. Everyone nods. We surround the bushes, advance...

Nothing happens. We are within feet of the low clump of scraggly bushes. We peer behind the leaves and penetrate the shadows, but nothing moves. It *must* be in there somewhere.

Spencer saves the day again. "On the log," he whispers, "right in front of me." Finally, the bird emerges, scurrying along the length of the fallen log, now visible, now not, coming ever closer...

"Yeah," I yawn, hurling a dirty sock at Marcel in retaliation for his insolence. "You guys would have left without seeing that sparrow run between your legs." I chuckle and lazily slide my eyes shut, listening to the treacherous fan squeaking back and forth in its socket. Sleep—I need it desperately.

*Neil Gilbert is a lifelong obsessive birder from Orange, California. In September he will be moving to Grand Rapids, Michigan, to enter Calvin College as a freshman. He plans to study biology—and continue to do excessive amounts of birding.*



ABA's Great Texas Birding Classic Tropicbird's team. Standing in van (left to right), Neil Gilbert (author), Spencer Hardy, Marcel Such. On the ground (left to right), Harold Eyster and Andy Johnson. © Chip Clouse



# Birding the Philippines

ZENY PALLUGNA

**M**y name is Zeny Pallugna and for the first 36 years of my life I was not a birder. That changed when the Philippine Department of Tourism, for whom I work, invited 7 professional tour guides, the operations head of a bird tour company, a freelance nature writer, and the editor of *Winging It* from the American Birding Association to tour my country. It was from our guests that I learned my country has almost 200 endemic bird species, ranking the Philippines behind New Guinea, Australia, and Brazil as the country with the most endemic birds. Thirty-three percent of my country's birds are found only on our islands and nowhere else. More than 1,130 wildlife species live here and almost 50 percent of them are found nowhere else on earth. Ten thousand species of plants have been identified, more than half of them are endemic to the Philippines, representing five percent of the world's known plant species. I was told that many of my country's birds are sexy but you will have to be the judge of that. As late as 2004, a new bird species, Calayan Rail, was discovered here on a tiny island that shares the bird's name.

The Republic of the Philippines is considered the world's second largest archipelago after Indonesia. We are separated from



*Palawan Peacock-Pheasant, Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park, Palawan Island, 9 Dec. '07. © Nicky Icarangal*

Borneo by the Sulu Sea to the southwest, to the south the Celebes Sea separates it from Indonesian islands, and it is bounded on the east by the Philippine Sea. Its location on the Pacific Ring of Fire and its tropical climate make the Philippines prone to earthquakes and typhoons, but the topography, geology, and climate have also blessed my country with natural resources making it one

*Karst topography on Palawan Island, June '10. © Bill Maynard*





*Fruit bats near Subic, Luzon,  
June '10. © Bill Maynard*



*Spotted Kingfisher, Mt. Makiling Forest Trail, Laguna, Luzon, 28 Oct. '08. © Nicky Icarangal*

of the richest areas of biodiversity in the world. An archipelago comprising 7,107 islands (many uninhabited), the Philippines is categorized broadly into three main geographical divisions: Luzon is to the north, the Visayas occupy our nation's center, and Mindanao is located in the south. We have some of the best coral reefs in the world and divers from all over have discovered the beauty of over 2,000 fish species that live amongst the colorful corals. As a developing country, our people use our resources for our daily living and as a result our native forests on many of the populated islands, and consequently some of our birds are disappearing at an accelerated rate. Most of the Philippine archipelago is categorized into no fewer than 7 Endemic Bird Areas (EBA). Most of the original forested areas are now restricted to our mountain tops. We feel tourism may be the solution to reverse the extinction process in my country.

Currently, bird tours from the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, and Asian countries have discovered our birds. The huge endemic Philippine Eagle can be found on Mindanao, the island where I was born. Our bird guides can show you an eagle on Mt. Kitanglad, a dormant volcano and a great birding destination. Mindanao has many endemic birds and while you wait for the eagle you will see many of them.

The endangered species, Chinese Egret, breeds in Korea and China. Only about 2,500 survive, but on the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary in the Visayas you will see them; a few can be found even during the summer months. During winter, up to 15,000 waders that have bred in northern Asia are found on Olango Island. In addition to the birds, such as those found in the Rajah Sikatuna Protected Landscape on the island of Bohol, the Visayas also have viewable Philippine tarsiers, one of the



## Birding the Philippines

CONTINUED

smallest primates in the world, and lots of butterflies including some spectacular birdwings.

Some of the more popular birding sites for local birders include: Mt. Makiling Forest Reserve (Laguna), Subic, Palawan Island, and Mt. Kitanglad. Palawan Island has a significant intact tropical forest. The limestone karst topography there creates spectacular scenery and Palawan is more closely allied with the avifauna of Borneo than with the other Philippine Islands. Here you may still see the endangered Philippine Cockatoo, Javan Frogmouth, the spectacular Palawan Peacock-Pheasant, Blue-headed Racquet-tail (parrot), Palawan Scops-Owl, Palawan Hornbill, Palawan Tit, four endemic babblers, and many more fancy species including a variety of brightly-colored kingfishers.

On our largest island, Luzon, you can find Stripe-headed Rhabdornis, a representative of the only endemic Philippine bird



*Red-eared Parrotfinch, Mt. Kitanglad, Bukidon, Mindanao, 14 Feb. '10. © Adrian Constantino*

family. A few of our the endemic birds include: Flame-breasted (beautiful) and Cream-bellied Fruit-Doves, Luzon Bleeding-heart (pigeon), Green Racket-tail, the very large cuckoo, Red-crested Malkoha, Indigo-banded and Silvery Kingfishers

*Mangrove river exploration, Palawan Island; Philippine guide, Adrian Constantino closest to camera, June '10. © Bill Maynard*







The author, Zeny Pallugna, birding on Palawan Island, 4 June '10. © Bill Maynard

(very beautiful), Azure-breasted or Steere's Pitta (we saw one perched!), Yellow-throated Leaf-bird, White-lored and Isabela Orioles, Rufous Paradise-Flycatcher, a number of beautiful sunbirds and flowerpeckers, and many more endemic species.

Although our endemic birds are viewable all year, the best time to visit is from November through March when the temperatures are cooler and when the typhoon season has ended. Our national language is *Tagalog*, but most of us also speak fluent English, the language of commerce, education, and science. Many Filipinos also speak one or more of the 8 major dialects. We have an excellent field guide to Philippine birds: *A Guide to the Birds of the Philippines* (Oxford Ornithology Series) by Robert S. Kennedy et al.

Please accept my invitation to come visit and bird on our beautiful tropical islands and find out for yourself about the abundant treasures the Philippines have to offer. If you don't believe me, ask Bill, your *Winging It* editor, about birding in the Philippines. *Mabuhay!*

*Zeny works for the Philippines Department of Tourism as a member of Team North America. She is a surfer, scuba diver, and a beginning birder. She is working on a Master's Degree in tourism. For more information about the Philippines please visit [www.experiencephilippines.ph](http://www.experiencephilippines.ph). Information on local bird guides can be found at the Birding Adventure Philippines website, [www.birdingphilippines.com](http://www.birdingphilippines.com) or from the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines [www.birdwatch.ph](http://www.birdwatch.ph) or visit [www.youtube.com/avianarhipelago](http://www.youtube.com/avianarhipelago).*



Philippine tarsier, Bohol Island, June '10. © Bill Maynard



Yellow-breasted Tailorbird, Rajah Sikatuna Protected Landscape, Bohol Island, 20 Feb. '10. © Adrian Constantino

# Duck Numbers Hold Steady Across North America

CHRIS JENNINGS, DUCKS UNLIMITED

**O**n 2 July the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released its preliminary report on mid-continent breeding ducks and habitats, based on surveys conducted in May. The total duck population is nearly 41 million, which is similar to last year's estimate and 21 percent above the long-term average.

"These are encouraging numbers as we see most species are at or above their long-term averages," said Dale Humberg, Ducks Unlimited chief biologist. "The habitat conditions in many regions should support a good breeding effort."

Habitat conditions across U.S. and Canadian prairies were generally good. Wetland conditions in boreal regions of Alaska and northern Canada were only fair at the time of the survey. During the survey and into early summer, many regions important to breeding ducks received significant precipitation, which could increase later breeding efforts and ensure brood survival. If these wet conditions continue, prospects going into the winter and possibly into spring 2011 could be favorable as well.

Mallards, Gadwalls, Green-winged Teals, Northern Shovelers, and Redheads mirrored last year's numbers, and all remained above their long-term aver-

ages. Canvasback and American Wigeon numbers were similar to last year's, as were Northern Pintail and scaup numbers, although populations of these two species remain below their long-term averages.

## 2010 Estimates of May Ponds and Breeding Ducks (in millions)

Species	2009	2010	% Change From 2009	% Change From Long-term Average
May Ponds (U.S. & CAN)	6.434	6.665	+4%	+34% *
Total Ducks	42.005	40.893	-3%	+21% *
Mallard	8.512	8.430	-1%	+12% *
Gadwall	3.054	2.977	-3%	+67% *
American Wigeon	2.469	2.425	-2%	-7%
Green-winged Teal	3.444	3.476	+1%	+78% *
Blue-winged Teal	7.384	6.329	-14% *	+36% *
Northern Shoveler	4.376	4.057	-7%	+76% *
Northern Pintail	3.225	3.509	+9%	-13% *
Redhead	1.044	1.064	+2%	+63% *
Canvasback	0.662	0.585	-12%	+3%
Scaup spp.	4.172	4.244	+2%	-16% *

\* Indicates significant differences

## Request for Help

**C**anadian eastern Loggerhead Shrikes are critically endangered. Captive breeding allows for release. We want to know where these birds winter. If you see a shrike with a colored breast and /or with a leg band, please report it to Wildlife Preservation Canada, [jjessica@wildlifepreservation.ca](mailto:jjessica@wildlifepreservation.ca), (phone) 519/836-9314, or (fax) 519/836-8840. Location details needed.

Loggerhead shrikes are declining across much of their range. In Canada, the Eastern subspecies is considered critically endangered, with less than 35 pairs found in 2009. The vast majority of pairs now breed in Ontario. An extremely active and multi-faceted recovery program is underway for this species in Ontario, including a captive breeding and release program. This program has been releasing approximately 100 juvenile shrikes annually since 2006. While much is known and has been learned about

this species, a critical piece of the puzzle is still missing: where exactly do these birds spend the winter? To maximise our chances of locating wintering areas and better define migration routes we will be coloring the breast of released young, ones produced from the captive breeding program, to make them more detectable by birders. Birds will be released over July and August. Birds will have an extensive area of their breast coloured in green, blue or purple. All released birds, and a large proportion of the wild population, are also colour banded. If you see a shrike with a colored breast and/or wearing bands, please report it to Wildlife Preservation Canada at (email) [jessica@wildlifepreservation.ca](mailto:jessica@wildlifepreservation.ca), (phone) 519-836-9314, or (fax) 519-836-8840. We will need details about specific location (GPS coordinates are ideal, but not essential) and colour(s) (breast and/or bands) seen. Thank you for your assistance.



# Finding "South Hills Crossbills"

ANTHONY W. WHITE

In the South Hills of Idaho there is a form of Red Crossbill that was proposed as a separate species by crossbill researcher, Craig Benkman. It evolved in pine forests that have no squirrels, hence the proposed specific name, *sinesciurius*, meaning "crossbill without squirrels." Unlike most Red Crossbill call types, it is sedentary and does not leave its home forest. For further discussion on the South Hills Crossbill see *BIRDING* Nov./Dec. 2008, pp. 30-31 and July 2009 pp. 30-31. Go to Craig Benkman's website, <http://www.uwo.edu/benkman/>, to see the scientific papers supporting the proposal to make this form a species.

South Hills Crossbill (*Loxia sinesciurius*) is common in its small range and relatively easy to find. The best locations are in the Cassia Division of Sawtooth National Forest. Starting at Twin Falls, Idaho, where there are many restaurants and motels, drive east on US 30 for 7 miles to Hansen, then turn south on Rock Creek Road. There is a large sign at the corner pointing south for Sawtooth National Forest. Take this road for 28.1 miles, passing through Rock Creek, to the Diamondfield Jack Trailhead parking area on the right. The crossbills can often be seen around this large parking lot. If you don't get good looks here, go 0.8 miles farther south to the Porcupine Springs turnoff on the left. Turn into the Porcupine Springs campground and search for the birds in the less congested areas. You should find crossbills in both areas. These sites are not mentioned in the ABA's *Birders' Guide to Idaho* (1997), but Diamondfield Jack Trailhead is shown in site SW39 in "Idaho Birding Trail" (2006) and [www.IdahoBirdingTrail.org](http://www.IdahoBirdingTrail.org).

Getting a firm identification is much more difficult. Two other forms of Red Crossbills, call types 2 and 5, occur in the South Hills and have nested there. South Hills Crossbills have shorter and broader bills, and therefore a more steeply curved culmen than

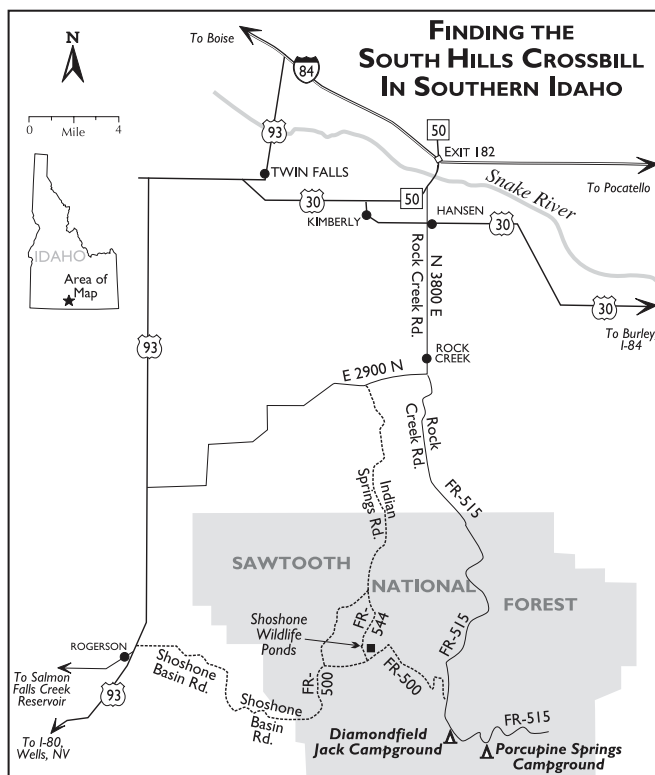
the other two types. Without direct comparisons this can be difficult to see in the field. They also have a different call note that begins with a rise in pitch; the call notes of the other two forms begin with a falling note. Songs of the South Hills Crossbills are buzzier and more repetitive than the other two types. Call notes including flight calls recorded by Nathan Pieplow at Diamondfield Jack Trailhead can be found at <http://www.xeno-canto.org/browse.php?query=red+crossbill>. It is useful to remember that South Hill Crossbills feed mostly on the seeds of lodgepole pines. Birds feeding in other tree species should be evaluated carefully.

Although the proposal to split South Hills Crossbill was recently rejected by the A.O.U. Check-list Committee, there is still

considerable support from the scientific committee to split the Type 9 crossbill, as it is morphologically, vocally, behaviorally, genetically, and evolutionarily distinct, with 99% of the South Hills Crossbills mating assortatively. Birders may still want to see the South Hills Crossbills and put this unique subspecies "in the bank" until (if) it is designated as a species. Certainly if you are traveling near the area it is worth your time to detour and search for the crossbills. The Cassia Division of Sawtooth National Forest is surprisingly beautiful, and whether or not the crossbill is designated as a separate species you will have seen our only sedentary crossbill and will have had a chance to learn more about the complex Red Crossbill variations. Climate change forecasters have predicted this region's isolated lodgepole pine forests will disappear in the near future if climate warming continues its current trend.

mate warming continues its current trend.

*Anthony W. White is an ABA director living in Jackson, Wyoming, although he spends much of his time in the Bahamas. He is the author of the ABA/Lane series, A Birder's Guide to the Bahama Islands. Tony also serves as Chair of the ABA's Standards and Ethics Committee.*



Map by © Virginia Maynard

## Bird Fair America

Come to the American Birding Association's First Annual Bird Fair America, the largest birding tradeshow in North America. Where? Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. When? 1-3 April 2011. What? Everything a birder could ever want.



# Report to the Membership on ABA 2009 Financial Results



Economic conditions continue to impact nonprofit organizations nationwide, including the American Birding Association. As required by our bylaws, ABA is presenting to the membership its financial results for the year ended December 31, 2009.

Revenues for 2009 totaled \$1,974,121 compared to \$1,763,269 for 2008. Membership dues accounted for 30% of 2009 revenue. Investment income added \$122,202 to our 2009 revenues compared to \$241,512 of investment losses in 2008.

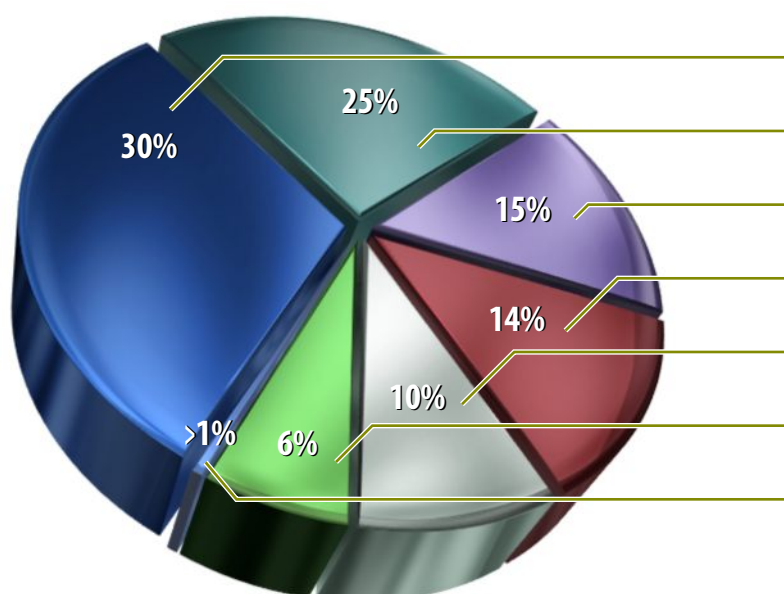
Expenses for 2009 were \$2,111,430 compared to \$2,371,214 for 2007.

ABA showed a net operating loss of \$259,511 in 2009 compared to \$366,433 for 2008. As a result, ABA showed a net loss of \$137,309 in 2009 compared to a net loss of \$607,945 for 2008. Significant efforts continue in 2009 and into 2010 to improve our revenues by examining all costs and identify efficiencies.

At year end, ABA had total assets of \$912,104 and \$655,517 of liabilities in 2009. This is compared to total assets of \$1,375,434 and liabilities of \$981,538 in 2008. Our Net Asset position at year end was \$256,587 for 2009 compared to \$393,896 for 2008.

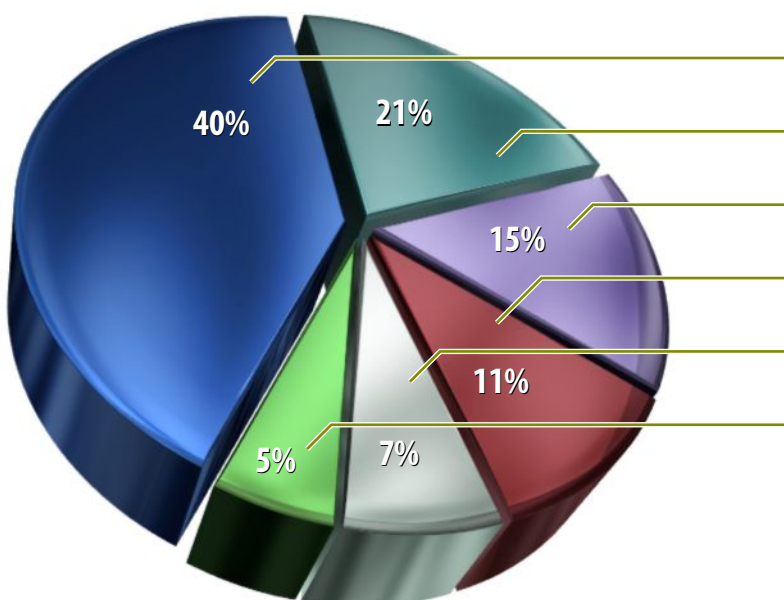
The ABA financial activities were reviewed by Waugh & Goodwin, LLP for 2009.

## 2009 REVENUES



MEMBERSHIP DUES	593,352
EVENTS AND CONFERENCES	485,811
CONTRIBUTIONS, GRANTS AND CONTRACTS	283,733
ADVERTISING	266,495
PUBLICATION REVENUES	190,104
INVESTMENT INCOME	122,202
ENDORSEMENTS ROYALTIES, OTHER	32,424
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>1,974,121</b>

## 2009 EXPENSES



PUBLICATIONS	850,134
EVENTS AND CONFERENCES	434,345
GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE	323,399
DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING	240,014
EDUCATION AND CONSERVATION	154,052
MEMBER SERVICES	109,486
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>2,111,430</b>



## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FOR DECEMBER 31, 2009 AND 2008

	2009 (REVIEWED)	2008 (AUDITED)
<b>ASSETS:</b>		
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	56,908	162,783
RECEIVABLES	111,914	65,143
PREPAID EXPENSES	21,387	85,798
INVENTORY	102,669	122,408
LONG TERM INVESTMENTS	574,171	898,565
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT	45,055	40,737
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$912,104</b>	<b>\$1,375,434</b>
<b>LIABILITIES:</b>		
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND ACCRUED LIABILITIES	152,833	221,266
DEFERRED REVENUE	502,684	760,272
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$655,517</b>	<b>\$981,538</b>
<b>NET ASSETS:</b>		
UNRESTRICTED FUND BALANCE	223,982	348,700
RESTRICTED FUND BALANCE	32,605	45,196
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$256,587</b>	<b>\$393,896</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$912,104</b>	<b>\$1,375,434</b>

## FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2009 AND 2008

	2009 (REVIEWED)	2008 (AUDITED)
<b>REVENUES</b>		
MEMBERSHIP DUES	593,352	596,184
EVENTS AND CONFERENCES	485,811	578,139
CONTRIBUTIONS, GRANTS AND CONTRACTS	283,733	242,375
ADVERTISING	266,495	341,828
PUBLICATIONS PRODUCTION	190,104	165,707
INVESTMENT INCOME	122,202	(241,512)
ENDORSEMENTS, ROYALTIES, OTHER INCOME	32,424	80,548
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$1,974,121</b>	<b>\$1,763,269</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
PUBLICATIONS PRODUCTION	850,134	1,008,326
EVENTS AND CONFERENCES	434,345	511,624
EDUCATIONAL AND CONSERVATION	154,052	203,354
MEMBER SERVICES	109,486	154,771
MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING	240,014	134,678
GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE	323,399	358,461
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,111,430</b>	<b>\$2,371,214</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>(\$137,309)</b>	<b>(607,945)</b>

## ABA-Endorsed Tours

If you are interested in one of the ABA-endorsed tours listed here, please contact the tour company directly for information and reservations, and tell them that you are an ABA member interested in an ABA-endorsed tour. The ABA endorses these tours because a variety of factors suggests that they will offer particularly fine birding experiences. We solicit feedback from members on endorsed tours. Tour operators have agreed to return to the ABA a portion of the fees paid by participating ABA members. For additional ABA-endorsed tours listings, or to learn more about our endorsement program, please visit us on the web at [www.aba.org/tours](http://www.aba.org/tours).

To learn more about our endorsement program, please visit us on the web at [www.aba.org/tours](http://www.aba.org/tours)

### CENTRAL AMERICA

#### Birding Costa Rica

Enjoy ten days in one of the birdiest places in Central America. Resplendent Quetzal by your cabin at Savegre Lodge, Great Green Macaw overhead at Selva Verde Lodge, a hummingbird feast at La Paz Waterfall Gardens, more trogons at the fabulous Hanging Bridges, and the wonderful grounds of the Hotel Arenal. **Oct 25 – Nov 4.** Contact Rick Houlik, Ocoee Adventure Travel, [www.ocoeeadventuretravel.com](http://www.ocoeeadventuretravel.com), [rick@bluemooncruises.org](mailto:rick@bluemooncruises.org), 888-723-8622.

#### Birding Belize (with Tikal extension)

Over 600 species of birds flourish in this environmentally-conscious country, with Jabiru, Yucatan Jay, Yucatan Flycatcher, Yellow-lored Parrot, Orange-breasted Falcon, Stygian Owl, Keel-billed Motmot as some of the target species. Leader Glenn Crawford is the premier bird guide in Belize. Lodges offer great birding, friendly atmosphere, and delicious meals.

**Nov 14-23, 2010 and Feb 11-20, 2011.** Optional 4-day extension to Tikal, Guatemala.

Contact Wildside Nature Tours, [www.wildsidetoursinc.com](http://www.wildsidetoursinc.com), 888-875-9453.

### CARIBBEAN

#### 2011- Cuba's Wild Western Peninsula & Mountains

Plus, Eastern Endemic Range and Zapata Peninsula, with Cayo Coco extension. A 10-day birding program with US leader Gary Markowski and Cuban leader Arturo Kirkconnell, co-author of *The Field Guide to the Birds of Cuba*. **January 13–22, 2011.** Birds of Cayo Coco Extension, **January 22–25, 2011** provides opportunities to see most Cuban and regional endemic species (30+). Gary Markowski, Executive Director, Caribbean Conservation Trust, 860-350-6752, 203 733-1162, [cubirds@aol.com](mailto:cubirds@aol.com).

#### Cuba 2011 Western Mountains, Zapata Peninsula

Plus Northern Archipelago and Eastern Endemic Ranges of Cuba. A 12-day birding program with up to 2 day extension. See 25+ endemics and near endemics with Cuba experts for 15 years. US leader Gary Markowski and Cuban leader Dr. William Suarez, Curator, National Museum of Natural History (Havana). Excellent opportunity to see the treasures of Cuba.

**April 6 – 17, 2011.** Pre-trip and post trip extension available. Gary Markowski, Executive Director, Caribbean Conservation Trust, 860-350-6752, 203 733-1162, [cubirds@aol.com](mailto:cubirds@aol.com).

#### Trinidad & Tobago

Superb tours led by Bill Murphy (Birdwatchers' Guide to T&T) and Martyn Kenefick (Birds of T&T). Asa Wright Nature Centre in Trinidad, Cuffie River Nature Retreat in Tobago. See Scarlet Ibis, Oilbird, hundreds more. Excellent introduction to tropical birding at its best! 2011 dates June 21–30 and Oct. 18–27, 2012 dates Feb. 2–11, June 19–28, and Oct 23–Nov. 1.

317/407-0467, [billmurphy8@sbglobal.net](mailto:billmurphy8@sbglobal.net), [www.TrinidadBirding.com](http://www.TrinidadBirding.com).

### AFRICA

#### South Africa 2009

Do you have target birds you want in Africa, and don't want to take a standard tour as the birds you need are scattered hither and yon? Contact Avian Leisure for custom tours as you like it – you pick the place and the pace. **Jan – Dec.** Contact Avian Leisure Birding & Wildlife Safaris, [enquiries@avianleisure.com](mailto:enquiries@avianleisure.com), [www.avianleisure.com](http://www.avianleisure.com), +27 21 786 1414.

#### Escarpment and Kruger National Park Voyager Birding and Wildlife Tour

From the Highlands to the savannah, experience South Africa's incredible diversity within a compact area. A superb range of species, and an ideal introduction to the region's avifauna and wildlife in general, with endemics and big mammals. **Nov 1-10.** An optional pre-trip, to add more activities to your trip over, to Western Cape will begin Oct 22 and end in Cape Town on Oct 31. Contact Lawson's Birding and Wildlife Tours, [www.lawsons.co.za](http://www.lawsons.co.za), [info@lawsons.co.za](mailto:info@lawsons.co.za).

### PACIFIC

#### Birding Wild Hawaii

Join Hawaii's foremost birding guide, Rob Pacheco, exploring the scenic parks and refuges of the Hawaiian Islands. Search for the local endemics and specialty birds, as well as seasonal migrants, while enjoying breathtaking views and stunning vistas. **Oct 12-21.** Contact Siemer & Hand Travel, [www.siemerhand.com](http://www.siemerhand.com), [travel@siemerhand.com](mailto:travel@siemerhand.com), 800-451-4321.

#### Hawaii 2009

If a trip to Hawaii is in your plans, birding with Hawaii Forest & Trail guides is the best way to maximize your experience. The Hakalau Forest National Forest Wildlife Refuge holds many endemics while the Rainforest & Dryforest Birdwatching Adventure on Mauna Kea offers more. **Jan – Dec.** Hawaii Forest & Trail, [www.hawaii-forest.com](http://www.hawaii-forest.com), [info@hawaii-forest.com](mailto:info@hawaii-forest.com), 800-464-1993.

# One Day from Snowy Plover to Red Crossbill

KEITH EVANS

It was 7:00 A.M. on a humid, late summer morning as we started our day at the base of 4,220-foot Little Mountain in Weber County, Utah. By early afternoon we were near Monte Cristo Peak and had already birded many habitat types between the salty playas and the alpine zone. The idea for this trip originated when I was gathering information for a book titled, *Utah's Featured Birds and Viewing Sites*, information describing the importance of this habitat diversity for Utah's avifauna, and also providing suggestions for citizen participation in bird conservation. The importance of these unique and diverse habitats is evidenced by 9 of the 21 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Utah are also designated as Global Important Bird Areas.

Our list began with low elevation Great Salt Lake shoreline birds and ended with high elevation mountain birds. Only a few highlight birds are featured in the text; however, all 118 species plus the 17 additional "new" species in the epilogue, are listed in Table 2. Less than 40 linear miles separate the beginning from the end of our route. With the curved roads and side-trips, the odometer registered 80 miles from start to finish. Very few areas in this country occur where such a diversity of habitats can be visited in such a short distance on easily accessible high-quality roads.

We initiated our birding day in habitats dominated by halophilic grasses, forbs, and shrubs near the Great Salt Lake. These mudflats, saltflats, and playas support a mosaic of sparse vegetation dominated by pickleweed, iodinebush, saltbrush, greasewood, and saltgrass. We recorded birds in marshes, grasslands, lowland riparian corridors, urban areas in Ogden, the mid-elevation riparian habitats of the Ogden River, and in a spruce-fir forest with touches of alpine habitat at the highest elevations. The diversity became obvious as we birded through barren playas, rich wooded riparian corridors, conifer-covered north slopes, mountain brush south slopes, aspen-conifer forests, mountain meadows, and the spruce-fir forests. Utah Highway 39 is the east and west extension of 12<sup>th</sup> Street running through Ogden, in Weber County, Utah.

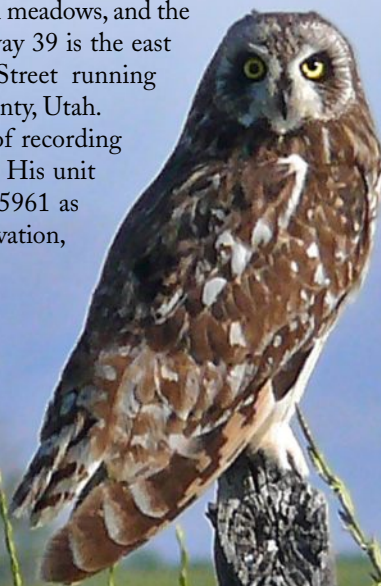
Jack Rensel was in charge of recording GPS coordinates at each stop. His unit was set at 41.265022, -112.205961 as we began (Table 1). At this elevation,

Horned Larks were abundant with their barely audible (for old ears) twittering. At the first stop, we commented on the variability in plumage of juvenile birds. The challenge of juvenile bird identification added to the enjoyment of late summer birding. We welcomed the loud song of the Western Meadowlark in the distance. Excitement elevated when we found water in some of the playas. During many years, this area is completely dry by late July. Where water was present, we recorded American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts with young. Aided by a spotting scope, we found one American Avocet at a nest site with one newly hatched chick and two eggs. We focused on the nearby grasslands when we heard the exciting call of a Sandhill Crane. A mixed flock of California and Franklin's Gulls were resting on a "bar" extending into one of the playas. As we fanned insects from our faces, several swallow species enjoyed the abundant insects.

In the next few miles, we added Loggerhead Shrike, American Kestrel, Killdeer, and Red-tailed Hawk. After an hour or so, near the lake shore, we headed for the Ogden Bay Waterfowl Management Area (WMA) to add marsh birds to the list. We accessed Ogden Bay WMA by driving south on 7900 West from UT-39. The elevation was still just over 4,200 feet, but the fresh water marshes provided habitat for a wealth of water birds not expected in the arid desert. The day list now included Cinnamon Teal, Northern Harrier, Sora, Virginia Rail, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Song Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, and many more (Table 2).

Our next stop was in a cottonwood gallery forest (lowland riparian) where the Weber River crosses UT-39. Throughout the west, the cottonwood gallery forests have been eliminated or greatly reduced by human development. The remaining cottonwood stands along the Weber River are precious. We added a Swainson's Hawk and noted that our summer Swainson's Hawk would soon be replaced by our wintering Rough-legged Hawk. In addition, we observed Lazuli Bunting, Mourning Dove, Yellow Warbler, Western Kingbird, Black-capped Chickadee, and Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker.

Our next stop included urban birding at the Ogden Nature Center—a 152-acre oasis amid the expanding city of Ogden. The nature center is located on the north side of UT-39 just east of I-15. In addition to over a mile of good birding trails, the nature center offers amenities like a cool drink and a restroom. A riparian corridor along Mill Creek



Short-eared Owl near  
Stop #2. © Keith Evans





*Riparian habitat along the Ogden River at stop #7. © Keith Evans*

and the Plain City Canal seasonally attracts additional migrating songbirds. We added Wood Duck, American Robin, California Quail, Black-billed Magpie, Ring-necked Pheasant, Bullock's Oriole, and Black-headed Grosbeak. Bullock's Orioles begin migrating out of northern Utah by the first week of August, so we were fortunate to have them on our list. Adult Black-headed Grosbeaks are difficult to find in late July; however, young-of-the-year were abundant. The habitat at the Ogden Nature Center consists primarily of reclaimed farmland that is now a diverse mixture of herbaceous and woody vegetation. We would prefer more native and less exotic plant species, but accept the diversity of this urban open space. Five small ponds have been excavated which add to the potential for a broad diversity of birds using the area.

We continued east to Monroe Boulevard, turned south for a couple of blocks before crossing the Ogden River. Just past the bridge is a park on the east (left) side of the road. This park provides access to the Ogden River Parkway Trail. We chose to walk down river to look for American Dipper, Mallard, Belted Kingfisher, Cedar Waxwing, and Barn Swallow. Our "official stop #6" was the Bird Song Trail, which is upstream about a mile. Bird Song Trail can be a destination or a side trip when walking the Ogden River Parkway. The trailhead is at the southwest corner of the "Rainbow Gardens" parking lot. Rainbow Gardens is a popular shopping and eating establishment and the owners are interested in protecting and pro-

moting the use of the nearby birding area. We left the Ogden area in time to drive up the Ogden River Canyon to the Oaks Restaurant for lunch (stop #7, Table 1). The "Oaks" have outside tables where we were lucky enough dine on good food and to view Song Sparrow, Yellow Warbler, Rufous, Black-chinned, and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, plus Gray Catbird.

Next, we made a quick stop at the Wheeler Creek Trailhead to scan nearby cliffs for White-throated Swift and Violet-green Swallow. The wooded hillside also offers habitat for Warbling Vireo, Western Tanager, Chipping Sparrow, and more. Wheeler Creek is good for American Dipper.

Our next stop was in a rich, dense riparian habitat at Jefferson Hunt Campground along the South Arm of the Ogden River just above the high waterline of Pineview Reservoir. While driving by Pineview, we added Osprey, Western and Clark's Grebes, and American White Pelican to our list. After adding several riparian birds at the Jefferson Hunt CG, we headed east and north towards the Middle Fork WMA. We turned east on Middle Fork Lane which dead-ends at a parking/turnaround spot; stop #11. The highlight was sighting a family of Bobolinks. A juvenile was sitting on a wood fence anticipating food. The female was carrying a mouthful of food. The male sat on a curly dock and preened. The Lewis's Woodpeckers

were probably still in the area where they nested this summer; however, we failed to add this species to our list until we reached the Meadows Campground Road.

By the time we drove up the South Fork of the Ogden River to the Forest Service-managed Perception Park and Meadows Campground and picnic areas, the air seemed cleaner and the sky bluer. We enjoyed viewing American Dipper, Common Nighthawk, Western Tanager, Gray Catbird, Red-naped Sapsucker, Western Wood-Pewee, Fox Sparrow, and Green-tailed Towhee. We looked for summering Lincoln's Sparrow, but didn't find any. We also checked-off several species seen along the road before our next stop on Dry Bread Pond Road (for Table 2). These "along-the-road birds" included Dusky Grouse, Wild Turkey, Golden Eagle, Brewer's Blackbird, and Brown-headed Cowbird.

By now it was getting late, so we continued east on UT-39 towards the alpine areas around Monte Cristo Peak. We selected the Dry Bread Pond Road, as one birder in our group knew the location of nesting Purple Martins. There are other side roads along UT-39 at high elevation that cross public land managed by the Forest Service and offer good birding opportunities. We were now wearing jackets as the air was cool at 8,200 feet. We located the aspen grove known for its Purple Martin nesting colony and we waited. It wasn't long before an adult, with a mouth full of insects, headed for a hole in one of the large aspen trees. We also observed a female martin



## One Day from Snowy Plover to Red Crossbill

CONTINUED



*Snowy Plovers.* © Keith Evans

return with a California tortoiseshell butterfly to feed the young.

We continued on the Dry Bread Pond Road to explore the area. We spotted common birds such as Mourning Dove, Northern Flicker, and Mountain Bluebird, and then we stopped for a better look at a flycatcher. It was an Olive-sided Flycatcher—the first for the day. We also enjoyed flocks of Mountain Bluebirds that were moving south along the Wasatch Mountain spine and added Dark-eyed Junco and White-crowned Sparrow to the list a reminder that these birds would be at our feeders in the valley in a couple of months. The Dark-eyed Juncos were the gray-headed race that nests in the high country of the Wasatch Mountains (in winter an Oregon race is common at our feeders).

Our last stop of the drive was at Monte Cristo Campground. As expected, we saw Clark's Nutcracker, Mountain Chickadee, Pine Siskin, Cassin's Finch, Dark-eyed Junco, White-crowned Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, and more. We felt lucky to see Red Crossbill, Golden-crowned Kinglet, MacGillivray's Warbler, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Williamson's Sapsucker, and Calliope Hummingbird.

The successful day of birding came to an end and we were still only a few miles from home. This was another great day of birding. With a few "fist pumps" and some thoughts about the importance of conserving these diverse habitats, we headed back to the Ogden area.

**EPILOGUE (Stop 15 in Tables 1 and 2)** – The next day, July 29, I was birding with a group of Wasatch Audubon Society members along the Antelope Island Causeway and throughout Antelope Is-

land State Park. Viewing the tens of thousands of shorebirds and waterfowl along the causeway enhanced the memories from the previous day of birding from playa to alpine. The causeway provides mudflats and open water that is crowded with birds in late summer through early winter on their stopover during fall migration. The Great Salt Lake is "fish free" but provides "megatons" of food for these migrants in the form of a brine fly and brine shrimp buffet. I remain amazed at the number of birds in the area, even though I've visited Antelope Island State Park hundreds of times. Looking across the Great Salt Lake, the curve of the earth can be appreciated and the entire view is filled with birds. Literally hundreds of thousands of Eared Grebe, Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes, American Avocet and Black-necked Stilt use the area as an essential staging area before their next jump south—or, a jump to the arctic if we consider spring migration. The designations of Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Site and a Global Important Bird Area are deserved for the Great Salt Lake. My half-day checklist included 48 species which I've added to the Table 2 list.

*Keith Evans, Ph.D., is retired from the research branch of the U.S. Forest Service. He has authored more than 60 publications. Since retirement, Keith has promoted bird conservation in Utah. He has written for the Wasatch Audubon Society's website ([www.wasatchaudubon.org](http://www.wasatchaudubon.org)) and has authored the three Birding Trails Maps for Utah. Keith's latest book is titled, Utah's Featured Birds and Viewing Sites: A conservation platform for IBAs and BHCAs. One of Keith's goals is to encourage "checklist birders" to become "conservation birders."*

*Looking south from Little Mountain, Utah,  
near the first stop. © Keith Evans*





**TABLE 1 – Viewing area descriptions.**

STOP	STOP NAME AND ELEV.	GPS COORDINATES	HABITAT TYPE
1	Little Mountain Playas (4,220 ft.)	41.265022, -112.205961	Mudflats and Playas
2	8300W Side Road (4,216 ft.)	41.281533, -112.180044	Agriculture and Marsh
3	Ogden Bay WMA (4,210 ft.)	41.222367, -112.161417	Marsh and Wetland
4	Weber River Corridor (4,220 ft.)	41.245017, -112.035283	Lowland Riparian
5	Ogden Nature Center (4,265 ft.)	41.248067, -112.001583	Diverse mix of grass, forb, shrub, and tree
6	Bird Song Trail (4,400 ft.)	41.237500, -111.930317	Lowland Riparian
7	The Oaks Restaurant (4,766 ft.)	41.254450, -111.861100	Mountain Riparian
8	Wheeler Creek Trailhead (4,850 ft.)	41.253133, -111.843383	Mountain Riparian
9	Pineview Reservoir (4,893 ft.)	41.256269, -111.833031	Water
10	Jefferson Hunt CG (4,912 ft.)	41.248017, -111.768817	Mountain Riparian
11	Middle Fork Lane (4,958 ft.)	41.276817, -111.754433	Wet Meadow
12	Meadows CG (5,330 ft.)	41.286717, -111.642250	Mountain Riparian and Shrub Steppe
13	Dry Bread Pond (8,240 ft.)	41.409433, -111.541150	Aspen
14	Monte Cristo CG (8,880 ft.)	41.463717, -111.497550	Mixed Conifer
15*	Antelope Island Causeway (4,205 ft.)	41.081053, -112.210581	Saline Lake and Salt Flats

\* Second day, see Epilogue

**TABLE 2 – Checklist of birds at each of 14 sites (Table 1) plus Antelope Island State Park.**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15*
Canada Goose		x	x		x				x						x
Wood Duck					x										
Gadwall			x						x						
Mallard		x	x		x				x	x					
Cinnamon Teal			x							x					
Northern Shoveler			x												x
Northern Pintail			x												
Red-breasted Merganser									x						
Chukar															x
Ring-necked Pheasant			x		x										x
Dusky Grouse												x			
Wild Turkey												x			
California Quail					x										
Pied-billed Grebe			x		x										
Eared Grebe															x
Western Grebe									x						
Clark's Grebe									x						
American White Pelican									x						x
Double-crested Cormorant															x
Great Blue Heron			x							x					
Snowy Egret															x
White-faced Ibis	x	x													x
Turkey Vulture		x					x					x			
Osprey									x						
Swainson's Hawk				x											
Red-tailed Hawk		x		x					x	x					
Golden Eagle												x			
American Kestrel			x							x		x			x
Peregrine Falcon															x

\* Second day, see Epilogue

# One Day from Snowy Plover to Red Crossbill CONTINUED

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15*
Virginia Rail		x													
Sora		x													
American Coot			x		x										
Sandhill Crane	x	x									x				x
Black-bellied Plover															x
Snowy Plover															x
Killdeer	x	x													x
Black-necked Stilt	x														x
American Avocet	x														x
Willet															x
Long-billed Curlew															x
Western Sandpiper															x
Wilson's Snipe											x				
Least Sandpiper															x
Wilson's Phalarope															x
Red-necked Phalarope															x
Franklin's Gull	x														x
Ring-billed Gull															x
California Gull	x														x
Caspian Tern									x						
Rock Pigeon			x	x	x										x
Eurasian Collared-Dove		x									x				
Mourning Dove	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x			x
Burrowing Owl															x
Short-eared Owl		x													
Common Nighthawk												x			
White-throated Swift								x							
Black-chinned Hummingbird					x							x			
Calliope Hummingbird														x	
Broad-tailed Hummingbird												x		x	
Belted Kingfisher										x					
Lewis's Woodpecker												x			
Williamson's Sapsucker														x	
Red-naped Sapsucker												x		x	
Downy Woodpecker										x		x		x	
Hairy Woodpecker										x				x	
Northern Flicker					x	x				x		x		x	
Olive-sided Flycatcher													x		
Western Wood-Pewee										x		x		x	
Willow Flycatcher							x								
Hammond's Flycatcher														x	
Dusky Flycatcher										x					
Say's Phoebe															x
Western Kingbird	x	x	x		x	x				x	x				
Eastern Kingbird		x													
Loggerhead Shrike		x													x
Warbling Vireo					x			x				x			
Western Scrub-Jay						x									
Clark's Nutcracker														x	
Black-billed Magpie		x	x	x	x	x				x	x				
American Crow												x			
Common Raven		x													x
Horned Lark	x	x													x

\* Second day, see Epilogue



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15*
Purple Martin													x		
Tree Swallow	x	x	x			x	x		x	x		x	x		x
Violet-green Swallow								x				x	x	x	
N. Rough-winged Swallow	x		x			x									x
Bank Swallow	x														x
Cliff Swallow	x				x	x		x							x
Barn Swallow	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x			x
Black-capped Chickadee					x	x	x			x		x			
Mountain Chickadee														x	
Red-breasted Nuthatch														x	
Brown Creeper														x	
House Wren													x	x	
Marsh Wren		x													
American Dipper												x			
Golden-crowned Kinglet														x	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet														x	
Mountain Bluebird													x	x	
American Robin		x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x		x	x
Gray Catbird							x					x			
Sage Thrasher															x
European Starling	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x		x
Cedar Waxwing						x	x			x		x			
Orange-crowned Warbler														x	
Yellow Warbler				x	x	x	x			x					
Yellow-rumped Warbler														x	
MacGillivray's Warbler														x	
Western Tanager							x					x	x	x	
Green-tailed Towhee												x			
Spotted Towhee					x										
Chipping Sparrow														x	
Vesper Sparrow												x			x
Lark Sparrow															x
Savannah Sparrow											x				
Fox Sparrow												x			
Song Sparrow		x	x		x	x	x			x		x			
White-crowned Sparrow													x	x	
Dark-eyed Junco														x	
Black-headed Grosbeak					x	x				x		x			
Lazuli Bunting				x								x			
Bobolink											x				
Red-winged Blackbird		x	x		x					x	x	x			x
Western Meadowlark	x														x
Yellow-headed Blackbird	x	x	x												
Brewer's Blackbird		x										x			x
Brown-headed Cowbird		x										x			x
Bullock's Oriole					x	x				x					
Cassin's Finch													x	x	
House Finch				x	x	x				x	x	x			
Red Crossbill														x	
Pine Siskin														x	
Lesser Goldfinch					x					x					
American Goldfinch			x	x	x	x	x			x		x			x
House Sparrow		x	x												

\* Second day, see Epilogue

# The Last Stand for Grenada Dove?

BY DEREK LOVITCH

PHOTOS BY JEANNETTE LOVITCH

Shortly after sunrise, my wife, Jeannette, and I found ourselves slowly, very slowly stalking our way along a narrow trail through thick, dense, impenetrable – and very thorny – Acacia-scrub forest. Occasionally a flutter of wings would erupt from the treetops, usually accompanied by the sounds of breaking twigs—clunky Scalynaped Pigeons flushing from a fruiting tree.

But once in a very long while, a smaller-sounding bird would launch from the forest floor with a whistling of the wings that was very reminiscent of our Mourning Doves back home. With each *whir* of the wings, our hearts would jump twice—first, from excitement and anticipation, soon followed by a rapid sinking feeling as we realized yet another Grenada Dove (*Leptotila wellsi*) had gotten away.

If we were really lucky, we might have even glimpsed a chunky, grayish, medium-sized dove as it exploded from the ground. We were just that lucky two times! However, as we caught our breath from a particularly steep ascent, our astute guide, Anthony “Jerry” Jeremiah, signaled us to carefully approach. He had spotted our quarry in the trail a short distance up ahead and just around a curve. I waited behind as Jeannette crept closer, slowly raising her camera to her eye.

*Whhhhhooooosshhhh . . . whhhhhhhiiiiisssttle . . .*

She didn’t even get a shot off as the National Bird of Grenada once again demonstrated its lack of cooperation with the paparazzi. I was the “lucky” one, having caught a glimpse of the bird as it crossed over a small opening in the canopy. This was actually a slightly better-than-average sighting, but despite the rarity of our encounter, we and our guide were clearly disappointed.

Afterall, we hadn’t traveled this far just for a glimpse!

For our first day this was the best we were going to get. Luckily, we had booked our guide — the ONLY guide, and quite possibly the only BIRDER on the island — for another day and another opportunity.

We continued our stroll through Mount Hartman Sanctuary—one of Grenada’s few National Parks—on the island’s southeastern side, while enjoying other exciting birds, from the near-endemic Grenada Flycatcher and spiffy, punk-rock Antillean Crested Hummingbirds to migrant shorebirds on their way south from the tundra of the Arctic, perhaps having passed through our home state of Maine a couple of weeks ago. After departing Mt. Hartman, Jerry took us to a few other local hotspots, including some ponds in a resort complex. A hotspot for wading birds, a particular white egret caught my eye. Little Blue Herons are common, and the completely white immatures were out and about en masse. Cattle Egrets are abundant, but this looked like a Snowy Egret.

Snowy Egrets are not common, but they are not rare either, and there was

little reason to think any further about the black-legged, yellow-footed, and slim-necked medium-sized white egret. But something seemed “off” to me. For one thing, the neck seemed long, and the bird was feeding much more “carefully” than the hyper and downright spastic Snowies tend to do. “Doesn’t that (all-black) bill seem long?” I asked Jeannette as the three of us approached for a closer look. Training our



Grenada Dove in the deep shade. © Jeannette Lovitch

scope, binoculars, and camera lens on the birds, respectively, Jeannette and I noted the green-gray lores. No breeding plumes were evident, as the bird was showing some molt in the head and neck. That bill was indeed long and thin, and interestingly enough, the yellow of the feet was sharply demarcated from the black legs. (I also later learned of the importance of the extensive feathering of the gular out along the base of the lower mandible as well.)

“Uh, Jerry, has there ever been a Little Egret on this island,” I inquired. “Not that I am aware of!” he responded. Now, while we did wait until we returned home and sent some photos out for confirmation from folks more familiar with the species than we were, we were quite excited to have just documented the first record of Little Egret for Grenada!

As a big fan of vagrants—especially the mechanisms that result in odd birds in odd places—this was a most exciting find, a life bird for Jeannette, me, and our guide! But, as Jeannette and I enjoyed some fresh fruit juice and curried chicken rotis for lunch, we had to admit that the joy of our discovery was a bit overshadowed by the agony of defeat—we came here for Grenada Dove photographs, afterall!

The next day Jerry picked us up once again at our hotel and we made a bee-line for Mount Hartman Sanctuary. When we arrived, we were greeted only by the sounds of silence. Even the boisterous House Wren (a near-endemic subspecies) near the entrance was quiet. And, unlike yesterday, we were not hearing the deep, resonant *Who – Who – Who* cooing of Grenada Doves (ap-



Antillean Crested Hummingbird, Grenada. © Jeannette Lovitch



proximately one note every seven seconds) emanating from the hill-sides (where we heard 4 –5 yesterday.).

“Uh-oh,” we—and no doubt our guide—thought. We walked up and down the same trail as yesterday, but little was seen or heard. Jerry decided wandering randomly would be unproductive, so he put us in position for best visibility along an often productive stretch of trail. And then we waited.

Jerry offered his impressive rendition of the bird’s “song,” and at least one bird in the distance responded, but it was not close. Bush-whacking through the thickets is not recommended even if such activity would be physically possible. So, we waited—and waited some more.

I’ll admit that I had all but given up hope a short time before I spotted some movement in the brush up ahead. “Something’s there... to the right... pale...” I mumbled as my excitement was being tempered by my expectations of just another Zenaida Dove and my desire to avoid, to the best of my abilities, scaring the bird back into the impenetrable understory.

A few seconds later, a stately Grenada Dove strutted out into the middle of the path. I’m listening to the pleasurable sound of Jeannette’s shutter as I enjoy a breathtaking view of the bird. Much buffier, and brighter overall, than our field guide led me to believe; the dove was subtly surprisingly beautiful.

Of course, as per the bird’s M.O., it stayed in the deepest, darkest shadow, and even though it was in the “wide open” relatively speaking, the low, early-morning sun had yet to penetrate the dense foliage of the canopy.

Seemingly in slow motion, the bird sauntered across the path, graciously pausing briefly as if to say, “OK, fine, you earned a look with your patience, take your pictures . . .” The bird continued its walk and disappeared back into the branch, twig, and thorn-packed denseness.

Elated, I turned to Jeannette, “How do they look?” “Dark.” She replied. But, it wasn’t until we returned to our hotel room after a long and very productive day of birding that we realized the “exceptional,” “I don’t usually see it that well” looks at the dove was photographed poorly. The photograph was wicked dark.

However low-quality the photos were, we could only consider ourselves very lucky indeed (we were hoping to be luckier) to be one of the relatively few people to have successfully captured a Grenada Dove in pixels.

This experience was a major highlight of a most wonderful vacation in the beautiful country of Grenada, at the southwestern end of the Lesser Antilles, sandwiched between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Volcanic in origin, the island of Grenada (the country of Grenada includes the island and the southernmost Grenadines, included the inhabited islands of Carriacou and Petit Martinique) features everything from steep, jagged mountain peaks to sheltered harbors and wide, white-sand beaches.

While most Americans know of Grenada only from our 1983 invasion, or perhaps from a short visit while taking a cruise, it’s actually a lovely island, with a diverse and accessible avifauna that tends to reflect its proximity to South America as much as it does the other islands of the West Indies.

August isn’t the most popular time to visit — it’s hot and humid, and there’s always the chance of a hurricane (although Grenada lies



*Lesser Antillean  
Tanager, Grenada.*  
© Jeannette Lovitch

south of the main path of hurricanes that pass through the Lesser Antilles, if it gets hit, it usually gets hit hard). The combination of the weather and the uncertainty of tropical systems reduces visitation by tourists at this time of year, which suits us just fine—off-season rates are most helpful for traveling on a budget! Plus, it’s less crowded, and as it happens, August is a fantastic time to be birding the island and the dove is most active and vocal July through October.

We eventually decided on Grenada for a number of reasons. We’re big fans of island biogeography, especially as it relates to endemic bird species. We don’t do resorts, so we needed a place that has smaller, less-intrusive lodging. We like local food and culture, such as getting out into the town to savor street food delicacies.

Furthermore, we wanted to use our vacation, and our birding therein, for a purpose more than just to augment our life lists (besides, if we were just looking to augment life lists, we would have headed straight to mainland South America). Anytime birders travel they support the local economy. Birding eco-tourism can have a tremendous effect on conservation in many places, especially in the tropics, by demonstrating the value of protecting habitat and species.

As far as we could tell, Grenada was woefully under-birded, so hopefully we could add a little more to the collective knowledge of the island’s avifauna (we just didn’t expect to find a first country record!). Plus, the less-birded a place is the better the chance for a thrilling discovery, i.e. a first country record!

And, last but not least, we decided we wanted to see a Critically Endangered bird —something that would need to be seen sooner than later. Enter the Grenada Dove and our confirmation that Grenada was just the place we were looking to visit.

With as few as 138 Grenada Doves left in the world, and a massive development scheme lurking over no small part of its habitat, the dove is most definitely Critically Endangered. We decided to make seeing — and photographing — the dove the focus of our trip, and we wanted to learn more about the species, its plight, and what we can do to help.

Not all is well in paradise, at least not for the Grenada Dove.

## The Last Stand for Grenada Dove?

CONTINUED

The Grenada Dove has shown itself to be surprisingly resilient. After the vast majority of its remaining habitat was devastated by Hurricane Ivan in 2004, many folks feared the worst. Before the storm, the population was estimated at an already-precarious 182 individuals. The storm, with its devastating impact on the habitat, and no doubt direct-mortality as well resulted in a collapse of the population. A survey along the West Coast which hosted 36 calling males before the storm only produced 3–12 calling males afterwards. The Mt. Hartman area saw a decline of 55 males down to 30–48 males. However, three years later, the population rebounded to an estimated 136 total individuals, but this is assuming an even sex ratio. The actual number could be significantly less according to Birdlife International, but our guide believed the population to be closer to 175–200 — but that's still hardly a secure number.

The current threat, meanwhile, is even more insidious. Developer Cinnamon 88 and Four Seasons Resorts have proposed a massive, sprawling new resort on the island, and it has been placed smack-dab in the epicenter of the dove's remnant habitat. The Grenada Dove is found only in "a successional stage of dry, coastal scrub-woodland in the south-west, which comprises a closed canopy of leguminous (often thorny) trees and shrubs c.3–6 m high, a sparse understory of shrubs and saplings, sparse to absent groundcover and much exposed soil. On the west coast, its habitat includes some mixed deciduous/evergreen vegetation, according to Birdlife International's Species Fact Sheet.

Mount Hartman National Park, which is often called the "Dove Sanctuary" was established in 1996 as mitigation for habitat destruction elsewhere on the island, primarily for the creation of a new landfill. Although encompassing a mere 155 acres of coastal scrub-woodland, this sanctuary protects an estimated 22% (a mere 20 pairs) of this critically endangered species. According to Birdlife International, "with such a low population in just a few remnant patches of forest, the Grenada Dove is facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the near future."

In a 2006 press release by Birdlife International, Caribbean Programme Manager David Wege, said: "There is more at stake here than just the removal of crucial habitat. The dwindling Grenada Dove population will suffer further from increased isolation, from human disturbance, from non-native animals and with the planting of non-native 'aesthetic' vegetation. Such a development in the heart of the Grenada Dove's largest and most well-protected strongholds might lead to the eventual extinction of this species."

The outcry from regional and international conservationists was clear: this proposal could doom the species. However, no one could argue that Grenada doesn't need some international investment. Hurricane Ivan virtually wiped out the country's spice exports, which has been the major driving force behind the country's economy. The



*Grenada Flycatcher, Grenada. © Jeannette Lovitch*

"Spice Island" is indeed well-named, as no small percentage of many of the world's spices, such as nutmeg (about a third of the world's supply came from Grenada before Ivan hit), cinnamon, and cloves, used to come from Grenada. Now, with crops still recovering—nutmeg trees, for example, take 7–8 years to mature and bear fruit for harvesting—tourism has become an even larger segment of the Grenadian economy.

The Government of Grenada, therefore, was rather welcoming to the development scheme as a way to increase foreign investment and provide jobs. Despite the lack of an actual analysis of the potential impact of the development — originally proposed as a 150 room hotel, with 300 separate villas, along with a golf course, marina and conference centre—it was declared that this massive development would somehow not be damaging to the Grenada Dove and its habitat! Birdlife International declared that the so-called Environmental Assessment failed to meet

any of the basic expectation of any analysis of a development plan that could impact up to 50 % of the population of an Endangered species. Furthermore, this area is the single largest undeveloped tract on the island, and the next largest tract is also slated for development!

Recently, there has been a slight turning of the tide. This international outcry has led to the announcement of a potential compromise, which has conservationists at least somewhat optimistic. Although the development will be allowed, and some habitat will be lost, the agreement would actually end up protecting the territories of significantly more birds than is currently protected. After the boundaries of the Mount Hartman National Park are redrawn to encompass more of the favored Grenada Dove habitat, as much as 50% of the population will be protected in one continuous block (as opposed to 22% in three separate sections now). The number of villas on the mainland portion of the resort has been reduced from 200 to 100 as well.

While 4–8 territories will be lost to the development (and 8–16 birds out of a population as low as 136 individuals is hardly inconsequential), there will be more doves in the new park than the old. Furthermore, if cattle are removed from the park, reforestation of pastures could provide vital links between territories and even further increase the number of birds that are being protected here and restoration of degraded areas could yield even more potential habitat.

A predator-control program and fencing around the park's boundaries has been agreed upon in order to reduce the potential of predators—especially introduced mongoose and feral and domestic cats—to benefit from the development and disturbance. Meanwhile, promises have been made for land clearing to take place at a time and sequence to minimize disruption to breeding doves. The government of Grenada will consider designating additional national parks to protect smaller populations of the dove.

And finally, according to the American Bird Conservancy, "A trust (will be) established to provide ongoing support for the costs of management could result in greater long-term security for the protected area than currently exists."



So, things are indeed looking up. That being said, there are still a number of unanswered questions. For one, there's the precedence that is being set by a Government redrawing the boundaries of a National Park to allow for development. What would happen if the resort wanted to expand?

There's also concern about how the development will impact the marine ecosystem, the local subsistence fisherman, and public access to the beaches (all beaches in Grenada are public). Will a greater "edge-effect" from the development, especially the patchwork of cleared golf course greens impact the dove directly, or indirectly? While there remain a lot of unanswered questions, it seems that at least we're on the right track to what the Grenadian government is calling a "win-win" agreement.

Meanwhile, the best thing for the dove may have actually been the recent global economic downturn (to put it mildly!), as construction was at least temporarily halted. Perhaps the developers and investors will rethink their massive plan, especially considering that many of the island's other resorts and hotels are well below capacity. In fact, one resort owner that we interviewed simply stated, "We just don't need more hotel rooms on the island... there are already too many empty rooms."

But, there's also no way to argue that Grenada does not need the income from tourists and international investment. Our hope is that there are more birders like us out there who want to visit such a spectacular place, spot a critically endangered endemic, and enjoy a relaxing vacation without compromising the biodiversity of the land we are visiting.

### What you can do to help.

Go to Grenada! I know, isn't that an awful thing to have to do!? But seriously, visit the island, hire Jerry, stay at small, preferably locally-owned inns and hotels, and let people know that you are here to see their Dove. Jeannette and I let every cab driver, every inn owner, someone sitting next to us at a bar, and even some restaurant staff know why we were there (they'd often ask, as out of season tourists are rare). We were surprised to learn how few people know about the dove – because it's so hard to see, some residents don't even believe it exists! Others are clearly thinking that the common Zenaida Dove is their National Bird, as we heard multiple people talk about how "we have the Gray Dove (*sic*) in our driveway."

Furthermore local, public support for the dove and conservation measures are minimal as there is little tradition or interest in birds among islanders (which at least means there are few bird hunters who could be a threat to the dove), and little interest in conservation of particular species. Grand Etange National Park and forest reserve, however, is very well known, highly esteemed, and receives much public support because of generations of protection and concern about the critical importance of this watershed to the island's survival. Perhaps this conservation ethic can be tapped and spread to include birds and other watchable wildlife, especially when residents begin to see the connection between conservation and revenue from ecotourism.

Our guide said that he is usually hired less than 50 times a

year—this year, it was closer to 20 as of the time we visited—and that's mostly for quick trips to see the dove. But, the more birders that visit the island—avoiding any new, massive, sprawling resorts of course—and the more income that the island receives from ecotourism, the more likely the powers that be are to respond to more sustainable development.

Furthermore, with development currently at a stand-still of the new Four Seasons resort, how about writing a letter to Cinnamon 88, Four Seasons, and the Government of Grenada to let them know that you find the destruction of the habitat for a Critically Endangered species to be unacceptable. We need to keep the pressure on in order to ensure that the best arrangement for the dove is adhered to.

And, lastly, consider supporting the Grenada Dove through Birdlife International's "Preventing Extinctions Programme," and becoming <http://www.birdlife.org/extinction/Grenadadovecampaign.com>, or view video of the Grenada Dove and learn more via the American Bird Conservancy at: [http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/video/bnn3\\_wmv.html](http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/video/bnn3_wmv.html)

*Derek, along with his wife, Jeannette, own and operate Freeport Wild Bird Supply, a retail store catering to birders and bird feeding. Derek also leads tours for WINGS, Inc. and guides locally, both on land and at sea.*



*Little Egret, Grenada. © Jeannette Lovitch*

# Sightings

"Sightings" appears monthly, alternating between *Winging It* and *Birding*, with the latest news, reports, and rumors from the ABA Area. Sightings are compiled from online discussion groups and RBAs, with valuable contributions from a growing network of informants continent-wide. Readers should note, however, that none of these records has yet been vetted by a records committee. All birders are urged to submit documentation of rare sightings to the appropriate state or provincial committees. For full analysis of these and other bird records, subscribe to *North American Birds*, the richly illustrated journal of ornithological record published by the ABA ([www.aba.org/nab](http://www.aba.org/nab)). (Italicized place names denote counties or parishes.)

COMPILED BY MICHAEL L. P. RETTER WITH

SPECIAL THANKS TO P. LEHMAN AND S. W. CARDIFF

## MID-JUNE TO EARLY JULY 2010

**Summary:** An albatross reported from Ontario and a Red-necked Stint in Massachusetts stand out as exceptional newsmakers, but the unbelievable presence of the ABA Area's 3rd (and SD's 1st) Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush in the Black Hills stole the show. Crested Caracara (MT) and Royal Tern (MI) furnished the first state records. First breeding records included "Myrtle" Warbler (NC), Sandhill Crane (NB), and Elegant Euphonia (Sonora).

**Southeast:** A Red-footed Booby flew by Canaveral Nat'l Seashore, FL 7/2. "Myrtle" Yellow-rumped Warblers were confirmed breeding in the Appalachians of NC.

**East-Central:** Assawoman Bay W.A. in *Sussex*, DE hosted 3 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks 6/28; KY's 2nd record of the species was in *Warren* 6/13–19; and 5 more were in *Baltimore*, MD. Single Mottled Ducks were in *Warren* and *Fulton*, KY in early July, when single White Ibis were noted in *Jefferson*, *Fulton*, and *Logan*, KY. A Swallow-tailed Kite was found in *Harrington*, *Kent*, DE 7/1. Mississippi Kites were noted in both *Berks* and *Northampton*, PA 6/18. An Arctic Tern was along the Potomac R. in MD 6/29–30. A White-winged Dove in Memphis mid-June was one of fewer than half a dozen records for TN. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was in *Henderson*, KY 6/26. "Myrtle" and Magnolia Warblers were found on territory in the Appalachians of TN. A Chuck-will's-widow was on territory throughout June in *Lebanon*, PA.

**Northeast:** A pair of Tufted Ducks was 1st reported in St. John's, NL 6/17. A Red-billed Tropicbird continued to be seen sporadically from Seal Island, *Knox*, ME. An Eared Grebe was back for its 2nd summer in Sanford, *York*, ME. A White-faced Ibis was on Plum I., MA 7/9. NB's 1st confirmed breeding record of Sandhill Crane occurred at Grand-Barachois. A rather obvious **Red-necked Stint** was discovered on Cape Cod in Chatham, MA 6/27.

**North-Central:** A Eurasian Wigeon was found in *Manitowoc*, WI

6/26. An **albatross**—possibly Yellow-nosed—was reported from Kingston, ON 7/4. Anhingas have returned to nest in extreme southern IL: 10 were observed at a rookery in *Johnson* 7/4. A Glossy Ibis was seen in *Kidder*, ND 6/18. All 3 ibis species were noted in southwestern IL. An adult Long-tailed Jaeger was photographed near Pierre, SD in mid-June. MI's 1st **Royal Tern** was on the southern L. Michigan shoreline in *Berrien* 6/30. Broad-tailed Hummingbirds had been assumed to be nesting in the Black Hills for the past decade, but the first confirmation since the 1920s occurred in *Custer*, SD 6/27. A White-winged Dove was photographed in Columbus, OH 6/12. One of very few state records, a stunning male Vermilion Flycatcher was in Holmes, OH 6/14. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were nesting in *St. Clair*, IL; additional Scissor-tails were noted in MN, WI, IA, extreme western SD, and the U.P. of MI. Hermit Thrush and "Western" Winter Wren were noted on territory in the *Lawrence*, SD portion of the Black Hills. The same area hosted a very lost **Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush** from 7/10 on; see next month's *Birding* for more information. Territorial Clay-colored Sparrows were noted in *Kosciusko*, IN and *Lake* and *Kane*, IL. A very late Harris's Sparrow was observed in *Pennington*, SD 6/16.

**South-Central:** Seven Band-rumped Storm-Petrels flew by the Quintana Jetty in *Brazoria*, TX on 7/5, a date that that curiously falls between tropical weather events in the region. A Red-billed Tropicbird was again observed in the Port Aransas, TX area—this time offshore 6/19. An early June report from

Big Bend NP, TX included Pauraque and Thick-billed Kingbird. A Yellow-green Vireo was found at Santa Ana NWR, TX 6/19.

**Mexico:** A Ruddy Crake was reported as being heard near Ciudad Guzmán, Jalisco 6/30. The ultra-rare and enigmatic **White-fronted Swift** was observed 6/17–18 at a waterfall near Tacámbaro, Michoacán; this report is one of perhaps only 3 known field reports of the species. A Cassin's Kingbird was near Linares, Nuevo León. A Sinaloa Martin was at Coatcomán, Mich. 6/21. An Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush was noted in mid-June near La Ciénega, NL, the extreme northern extent of its range. Grayish Saltators continue their northward push into Sonora and are now easy to find in the Alamos area, where 2 nesting pairs were located. **Elegant Euphonias** were found nesting east of Alamos in Sonora; this is believed to be a state first and serves as another reminder that this species is a good possibility for north-of-the-border vagrancy.



Sandhill Crane; Grand Barachois, NB; 2 July 2010. © Stuart Tingley



**Interior West:** A Red-necked Grebe was in *Jackson*, CO 6/15. A Glossy Ibis was at Morgan Lake in *San Juan*, NM 6/16. A **Crested Caracara** was photographed far out-of-range 6/6 near Hot Springs, MT; the state has no prior records. Two Least Terns, each a 1-day-wonder, were in *Pima*, AZ 6/16 and 7/4. An Arctic Tern was reported from *Boulder*, CO 6/13. Unusual in northern AZ, a female White-eared Hummingbird was in *Coconino* 6/22. A Costa's Hummingbird was at Clanton Pass in *Hidalgo*, NM 7/2. A Black-billed Cuckoo was in *Weld*, CO 6/14. An out-of-range Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher was found in *La Paz*, AZ 7/2. A rather vociferous Least Flycatcher was in *Humboldt*, NV 7/13. An Eastern Wood-Pewee was reported singing in *Larimer*, CO 6/13. A Cave Swallow was found over central Tucson, AZ 6/12; possibly the same bird was seen 12 days later. A White-eyed Vireo was in *Pinal*, AZ. Two Black-capped Gnatcatchers continued in *Hidalgo*, NM's Guadalupe Canyon. A Yellow-throated Warbler was reported from *Navajo*, AZ. Hooded Warblers were noted in Las Vegas and Santa Fe, NM. The long-staying Flame-colored Tanager continued sporadically in *Santa Cruz*, AZ.

**Pacific Coast:** The Ocean Shores, WA King Eider continued into its second year at the location. A Magnificent Frigatebird was observed in *San Diego* air space 6/29; this species was formerly a rare-but-annual summer visitor to southern CA, but since the '90s it has become casual at best. A Glossy Ibis was in *Plumas*, CA 6/22. CA's new 1-day record for Cook's Petrel was set in *Santa Barbara* 6/12, when **237** were recorded. Several Manx Shearwaters were reported from WA waters. A 6/11 pelagic off Kaua'i, HI turned up Newell's Shearwater, Christmas Shearwater, Buller's Shearwater, and Band-rumped Storm-Petrel. Two Zone-tailed Hawks were observed in *San Bernardino*, CA through late June. A Yellow Rail was in *Plumas*, CA 6/26–7/1. A Wilson's Plover was in *San Diego*, CA 6/17. *Del Norte*, CA hosted both an American Golden-Plover and a Ruff 6/30. A Red-necked Stint was at Morro Bay, *San Luis Obispo*, CA 7/10. A Sooty Tern, probably the same bird as last year's, was being observed in *Orange*, CA. A Horned Puffin was found off of Westport, WA 6/26. A Mariana Swiftlet was

*Elegant Euphonia*  
near Alamos, Sonora, MX,  
1 July 2010. © Carl Lundblad

observed along the 'Aiea Trail on O'ahu, HI 6/8. A Greater Pewee was in *San Bernardino*, CA 7/3–5. June sightings of Yellow-throated Vireo occurred in 4 CA counties: *Mono*, *Del Norte*, *San Diego* and *Riverside*. A Veery was in *Plumas*, CA 6/20–21. Chestnut-sided Warblers were noted in *Mono* and *Placer*, CA 6/12 and 6/11, respectively. A Worm-eating Warbler was in *Kern*, CA 6/9–10. A Prothonotary Warbler was in *San Mateo*, CA 6/14. A Hooded Warbler was in *Mono*, CA 6/22. An apparent MacGillivray's × Common Yellowthroat hybrid was observed near Duvall, WA 6/27. Quite rare in WA, Great-tailed Grackles were reported from Konnowac Pass, *Yakima* 7/3 and Ridgefield NWR, *Clark* 6/2. Three Common Rosefinches were on Shemya I., AK 6/13, and a Common Greenshank was there 2 days later. Highlights from Gambell, AK on 6/14 included 2 Common Rosefinches, an Olive-backed Pipit, and an impressive **1,000,000+** Crested Auklets passing by in under 3 hours. A productive 6/12 trip into the Alaka'i Swamp on Kaua'i, HI yielded Puaiohi, 'Akeke'e, and 'Akikiki. Maui Parrotbill (recently christened the Kiwikiu) was observed every day over the 6/19–22 period in the Waikamoi Preserve, Maui, HI.

## Milestones

On a recent trip to South Florida, **Magill Weber**, from Phoenix, AZ, saw her 700th ABA-area bird, a White-winged Parakeet near the emergency room at Kendall Baptist Hospital, FL.

**Suzanne Staples** from Ocean Park, Washington, passed the 1100 species mark on her world list while on a Costa Rica trip in April. Her 1100th bird was a Spot-crowned Woodcreeper seen at beautiful Savegre.

ABA director, **Tony White** from Jackson, WY, reached number 450 for the West Indies region on May 28, seeing a Eurasian Spoonbill at the Congo Road Swamp on Barbados. His week-long tour of Barbados, Grenada, Bequia, and St. Vincent enabled Tony to add 10 species to his West Indies list. The highlight was a Large-billed Tern on Grenada, a first for the island and third for the West Indies.

**Kathy** and **Jens Munthe** from Escalante, Utah, both exceeded the 3,500 world milestone during their May Peru trip. Jens' 3,500th bird was the beautiful Rufous-backed Inca-Finch along the Huallaga River. Kathy reached 3,500 with a marvelous Marvelous Spatuletail east of the Marañon River.

While birding on Adak Island, AK, 16–23 May with his local guide, **Claude Bloch** of New York, NY, spotted his 700th ABA-area bird. It was a Yellow-billed Loon.

Another Alaska loon was a milestone for **Sally Stebbins** from Harbor Springs, MI, who was thrilled to have an Arctic Loon for her 700th ABA-area bird while on a birding trip to Gambell, Alaska, in May 2010. She and her husband, Kenyon, also celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on the trip. Their anniversary present was seeing a Common Rosefinch.

A Bar-tailed Godwit showed up at Brigantine NWR, NJ, on 14 May and **Keenan Ennis** from Jackson, NJ, was there to see it for his 675<sup>th</sup> ABA-area bird.

On a recent trip to Texas, **Bev Agler** of Juneau, Alaska, saw her 650<sup>th</sup> bird in the ABA Area, a Golden-cheeked Warbler. The bird was seen at Neal's Lodge, Concan, Texas, on 5 April 2010.

In April, **Sam Fried** of Avon, CT, saw his 700th species in the U.S. Lower 48 region. The bird was a Bar-tailed Godwit at Flamingo in Everglades N.P., Florida. Sam says "I never thought I'd get there and I didn't even realize I had reached 700 until after returning home while checking my 'big lists'."

### A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Jamaica.

**Ann Haynes-Sutton, Audrey Downer and Robert Sutton. 2009.**

Princeton University Press. 650 color photographs by Yves-Jacques Rey-Millet, maps, introductory matter, species accounts, appendices, bibliography, index. 304 pp. Softcover \$29.95

### Flying with the Birds.

**Yossi Leshem and Ofer Bahat. 2009.** Yedioth Ahronoth, Chemed Books.

Color photographs, maps and diagrams throughout. 272 pp. Hardcover.

It is not often that I will recommend bird photography over art work in a field guide, but in the case of Jamaica the choice is clear. The alternatives to this new *Birds of Jamaica* are the classic *Birds of the West Indies* by James Bond (the real James Bond was an ornithologist who had a house in Jamaica near Ian Fleming) and its successor guide of the same name also from Princeton. Both of the older books require you to pick your way through the entire list of West Indian birds to find the Jamaicans. But even beyond that, the photographs in the new book actually do a better job in representing the birds. This is ironic because Bond used two famous bird artists of the day, Don Eckelberry and Arthur Singer, and the new Princeton book used a spiffy team of artists headed by Tracey Pederson and Kristin Williams. But Rey-Millet's photographs are close-up, artful, good-sized and well presented with double-page spreads and 2-5 images for the endemics and near-endemics. They do the trick and frankly they look more like the birds I saw in the field than their painted equivalents.

On a recent whirlwind 5½ day trip to the island, I saw a modest 82 species but two-thirds of them were restricted area species or subspecies and half of them were lifers. Jamaica, although only the third largest West Indian island, has a lot of endemics (between 27 and 30, depending on what you include; the usual count is 28) plus many near-endemics, West Indian endemics and endemic subspecies. All this information is well accounted for in the succinct, well-written entries for each species along with what you need to know about behavior, habitat and similar species. The colorful local names are included: Doctorbird for the Streamertails, Old Man Bird for the spectacular Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Hopping Dick for the White-chinned Thrush and (my favorite) Rasta Bird for the colorful Jamaican Tody. The seven appendices cover such matters as vagrants, probable extinct species and, yes, the various endemics. I have only two complaints. The list of Caribbean endemics is way too small because most of them are hidden in the list of Jamaican subspecies. Also the index could have been improved by including the local names. When someone says, "Ya, mon, a Mountain Witch" you could look it up (it's the Crested Quail-Dove).

My recent trip to Jamaica was preceded by my first trip to Israel and while the Jamaica book is a birding must, the Israeli volume is more of a curiosity—a souvenir of a country that has one

of the most outstanding bird migrations in the world and some of the most outstanding bird migration studies. Yossi Leshem is one of the two gurus of Israeli ornithology (the other is Reuven Yosef in Eilat on the Red Sea). This book bears the imprimatur of Leshem's International Center for the Study of Bird Migration in Latrun near Jerusalem. It also bears the imprimaturs of Tel-Aviv University, the Lowell Milken Family Foundation, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel and—wait for it—the Israeli Air Force. Leshem is known for a number of things; for example, his program for putting out nest boxes for European Kestrels and Barn Owls as an alternative to heavy pesticides on farms and kibbutzes in Israel, the Palestine Authority and Jordan. But this colorful and popular book is about migration and Israel's position on one of the world's great migratory flyways. This whole country is a land bridge between Africa and Europe and a safe haven for avian travelers where they are spared many of the perils that await them elsewhere (also documented here). Leshem's studies of migration—through banding, ground and aerial observations, and the use of unmanned aircraft and radar—has led him to set up a warning system for human air traffic that has reduced bird/airplane collisions in Israel by some 76%. All this can be found here and also in a book about Leshem entitled *The Man Who Flies With Birds* by Carole Barbury Vogel (her last name means 'bird' in German). For more information about these books contact Leshem and the Latrun Center at <yleshem@post.tau.ac.il>

### A Sound Like Water Dripping: In Search of the Boreal Owl.

**Soren Bondrup-Nielsen. 2009.**

Gasperau Press. B&w photographs. Softcover \$26.95.

Soren Bondrup-Nielsen was born in Denmark, emigrated to Canada at age 13, studied at the University of Guelph and the Royal Ontario Museum, and currently teaches in the biology department of Acadia University in Nova Scotia. In native folklore, the Boreal Owl is said to have a voice like the sound of dripping water—hence the title. In ornithological and birding circles, this owl is one of the least known and most sought-after birds in North America. As a graduate student, Bondrup-Nielsen set out for the forests of Ontario and Alberta to find what he could about this mysterious creature of the far north. He not only succeeded in finding the first nest in Ontario but also recorded a lot of previously unknown information about the life and times of *Aegolius funereus*. His memoir of searching for the bird is a lively and engrossing account of field biology in the boreal forest but its *joie de vivre* is somewhat dampened by the fact that the roads that got him there and many of the places in which he stayed belonged to the logging operations that have systematically destroyed the bird's habitat.



# Classifieds

Only current ABA members may submit ads (limited to 50 words). Non-business ads may be inserted in two issues at no charge. Business ads are \$50 per insertion (\$25 for registered non-profits). Ads are to be submitted online at [www.aba.org/wingingit/ads.html](http://www.aba.org/wingingit/ads.html), or send ad copy and check or credit card information to *Winging It*, 4945 N. 30th St., Colorado Springs, CO 80919; fax 719/578-1480; [advert@aba.org](mailto:advert@aba.org). Ad deadline for the next issue of *Winging It* is **September 10, 2010**.

## REQUEST FOR HELP

### WILDLIFE PRESERVATION CANADA

Canadian eastern Loggerhead Shrikes are critically endangered. Captive breeding allows for juveniles to be released. We need to find winter locations. If you see a shrike with green, blue or purple breasts and/or w/ leg band, please report sighting to [jessica@wildlifepreservation.ca](mailto:jessica@wildlifepreservation.ca), (ph) 519/836-9314, or (fax) 519/836-8840. Specific location details needed.

## BOOKS, ART, ETC.

### PHOTO OPP

Bird photos sought for upcoming book, "Being a Bird in North America". You send me photos, and I publish them for free. If photo selected, photographer's name will appear with the photos in the book, and 50 word bio published for at least 3 photos. Contact: [robalvo1@gmail.com](mailto:robalvo1@gmail.com) for list of species. 300 dpi jpegs required.

### BIRDING MAGAZINES

1993–2008 (April '98 missing). Best offer over \$50 (+\$25 ship) Leather-bound *BIRDS OF TEXAS* by R. Tory Peterson, 1985 ed., gilt decoration \$25 (+\$5 ship). *AOU CHECKLIST 7th Ed 1998* \$20 (+\$5 ship) *Birds of Kenya*, hardback 1996 Zimmerman et al. \$20 (+\$5 ship) Contact [eenye@cablespeed.com](mailto:eenye@cablespeed.com).

### BACK ISSUES – BIRDING

*Birding* - 1977 & 1979 – 2000 (almost complete) *Winging It* - 1988 – 2006 (almost complete) *Western Birds* Vol. 12, 13, 14 & 18 – 31 *Continental Birdlife* – Vol. 1 & 2 (That's all there were.) Free; you pay shipping. E-mail: [forabirder@yahoo.com](mailto:forabirder@yahoo.com).

### 65 FIELD GUIDES

to birds around the world, Africa to West Indies. Values to \$100. \$10/ea plus \$2.50 for postage. For annotated checklist send stamped, self-addressed envelope to Harriet Davidson, 5221 Lakeshore Dr, Apt 329, Fort Gratiot, MI 48059. Inquiries to: 810/385-4585 or [hattie83@sbcbglobal.net](mailto:hattie83@sbcbglobal.net).

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### BIRDING TELESCOPES

Leica APO-Televied 77scope with Leica 20-60X zoom eyepiece; padded field case; excellent condition; \$2,000 firm PPD. Kowa TSN-4 with 20x wide-angle lens, padded carrying case \$625 PPD. [CindyAndBob@earthlink.net](mailto:CindyAndBob@earthlink.net).

### EASY BIRD IDENTIFICATION

Audubon Birds – A Field Guide to North American Birds Authoritative Audubon content in a mobile app. Includes calls, photos, habitats & behaviors for over 750 species. Newly updated with additional species, winter range maps & expanded search functionality. Download on iTunes & Android Market. [www.audubonguides.com](http://www.audubonguides.com).

## TOURS: GENERAL

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### KENYA!

GRAND MANAN NB, Sep 14–19. MONHEGAN ISLAND ME, Sep 20–24. CHINCOTEAGUE VA, Oct 22–25. KENYA, birds plus mammals, Oct 31–Nov 15. South ARGENTINA, Dec 3–20. Many more tours in 2010 and 2011. BIRD TREKS, [www.birdtreks.com](http://www.birdtreks.com). 216 Spring Ln, Peach Bottom, PA 17563. 717/548-3303, [info@birdtreks.com](mailto:info@birdtreks.com).

### TROPICS AND U.S.

Jim Stevenson, Galveston Ornithological Society's bird guide, also runs trips to Alaska and Arizona, rest of U.S., plus very reasonable tropical trips. Other opportunities include small Texas coastal festival in heart of songbird migration, online birding courses, South Texas trips, and much more. Be put on e-mail list: [galornsoc@earthlink.net](mailto:galornsoc@earthlink.net).

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## TOURS: PELAGIC TRIPS

### SO-CAL PELAGIC TRIPS

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### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

3-5 days at sea with pelagic experts aboard the luxurious 95-foot live-aboard Searcher. September 6–10, 2010. Visit website for trip reports of Cooks, Murphy's, Bulwer's & Hawaiian Petrel sightings. See Red-billed Tropicbirds, Craveri's & Xantus's Murrelets, Least & Ashy Storm-Petrels, Black-footed & Laysan Albatrosses plus Blue, Humpback & Fin Whales. Visit [www.bajawhale.com](http://www.bajawhale.com). 619/226-2403.

### HALF MOON BAY

New departures! 2009 trips saw Short-tailed Albatross & White-chinned Petrel. All species found on Monterey Bay trips possible, too. Sep 13, 17, 18, 19, 27; Oct 2, 10, 11. Also from Bodega Bay: Sep 15. Peak of fall seabird migration. Debi Shearwater; [debi@shearwaterjourneys.com](mailto:debi@shearwaterjourneys.com); 831/637-8527; [www.shearwaterjourneys.com](http://www.shearwaterjourneys.com) for more info.

### MONTEREY SEABIRDING

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### MONTEREY SEABIRDS

Aug. 15, 29 Sept. 5, 19 Oct. 2 & 10 (8 hr. \$105) & 18 (12-hour offshore trip \$135), Summer & fall rarities seen in past years include Wedge-tailed & Streaked Shearwaters, Cook's Petrel. 5 sp. Storm-petrels. Monterey Bay is THE most reliable port in N CA. Also Blue & Killer Whales. Group charters \$1650; 831/375-4658 [www.montereyseabirds.com](http://www.montereyseabirds.com).

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### ALASKA 2011

ADAK: Asian Vagrants & Whiskered Auklets. May 11–19. PRIBILOFS: May 20–25; June 5–8. GAM-BELL: May 21–27. May 26–June 1. Sept 1–7. NOME: May 27–31. June 1–5. DENALI & KENAI: June 9–17. BARROW-The High Arctic: June 18–20. DUTCH HARBOR-Whiskered Auklet Plus: June 21–25. High Lonesome BirdTours 888/516-8247; 443/838-6589. [hilone@hilonomesomtours.com](mailto:hilone@hilonomesomtours.com); [www.hilonomesomtours.com](http://www.hilonomesomtours.com).

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### BIRDS OF MEXICO 2010

26 Aug–2 Sept 2010: Northwest Mexican Endemics; 29 Sept–8 Oct 2010: Veracruz: Raptors Migration & Endemics; 9–15 Oct 2010: Yucatan Endemics; 18–26 Oct 2010: Sonora. Yecora & Colonial Alamos; 8–15 Nov 2010: San Blas; 15–18 Nov 2010: Durango Highway extension with Solipaso Tours. High Lonesome BirdTours, 888/516-8247; 443/838-6589; [hilone@hilonomesomtours.com](mailto:hilone@hilonomesomtours.com); [www.hilonomesomtours.com](http://www.hilonomesomtours.com).

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### ACCOMMODATIONS: NEOTROPICS

#### HOTEL MOCKING BIRD HILL - JAMAICA

Perfect location and extensive bird-rich gardens for unrivaled quality birding in Jamaica. First class accommodations and dining. [www.hotelmockingbird.com](http://www.hotelmockingbird.com), [info@hotelmockingbird.com](mailto:info@hotelmockingbird.com). Tel: 876/993-7267 or 876/619-1215.

#### COSTA RICA BIRD LODGE

RANCHO NATURALISTA Excellent Caribbean Slope birding, resident bird guide, fine climate, great local food, comfortable lodging, hummingbird feeders, list of 400+ spp including the endearing Snowcap. For reservations contact: COSTA RICA GATEWAY, [rgateway@racs.co.cr](mailto:rgateway@racs.co.cr), Toll-free US/CAN 888/246-8513 [www.costaricagateway.com](http://www.costaricagateway.com).

#### JAMAICA

Enjoy a rural tropical experience birding the lush wooded 1600-acre Green Castle Estate on Jamaica's north coast. 122+ species incl. 21 of 27 endemics. Miles of trails. 1st class lodging for individs/small grps, meals incl. Can arrange guides/visits to other special Jamaican locales. [angie@gcjamaica.com](mailto:angie@gcjamaica.com); US 612/986-4709; [www.gcjamaica.com](http://www.gcjamaica.com).

#### WILD SUMACO LODGE

The new birding lodge in Ecuador's eastern foothills. Great birds difficult to find elsewhere. Our list of 450 species includes Military Macaw, Napo Sabrewing, Ecuadorian Piedtail, Coppery-chested Jacamar, Chestnut-crowned Gnatcatcher, Fiery-throated Fruiteater, Gray-tailed Piha, Foothill Elaenia, Yellow-throated Spadebill. A perfect combination of excellent birding, top-notch food & accommodations, and forest conservation. [www.wildsumaco.com](http://www.wildsumaco.com); [info@wildsumaco.com](mailto:info@wildsumaco.com).

## TRAVEL AND EVENTS

### WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

October 13-17, 2010; WFO's annual conference in California's Coachella Valley is open to all. Meeting includes science sessions, experts' panels, field skills workshops, field trips and social activities. Affordable, educational and entertaining! For details go to [www.westernfieldornithologists.org](http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org).

### RIO GRANDE VALLEY BIRDING FESTIVAL

10-14 Nov. 2010. Premier festival for beginners and advanced. Unique tropical species. Fresh locales plus the famous places: King Ranch, Laguna Atascosa, South Padre. Special photography trips. Best guides, seminars, workshops, socials, trade show. In South Texas—it's HARLINGEN! [rgvbirdfest.com](http://rgvbirdfest.com) 800/531-7346.

### BIRD CAPE MAY EVERY DAY

Visit [www.BirdCapeMay.org](http://www.BirdCapeMay.org). Cape May Bird Observatory, Cape May NJ. Steeped in ornithological tradition, popular acclaim, species diversity, and vast concentrations of migratory birds. Visitor services, latest sightings, optics experts on staff. Walks & programs all year. CMBO 701 East Lake Drive, PO Box 3, Cape May Point, NJ 08212. e-mail: [birdcapemay@njaudubon.org](mailto:birdcapemay@njaudubon.org)

### CAPE MAY SCHOOL OF BIRDING

Sponsored by Nikon - Where birders go to begin... and get better. World class fun and patient leaders. Make new friends. 2 and 3 day workshops in the Birding Capital of North America. Workshops focus on raptors, shorebirds, warblers, sparrows, songs and calls and more. [www.birdcapemay.org](http://www.birdcapemay.org) or call 609/861-0700.

### 34th Annual CAPE MAY SPRING WEEKEND

MAY 20-22, 2011 Congregate where the birds migrate. Celebrated speakers and expert leaders. 200 bird species +, programs, workshops, boat trips. Savor the horseshoe crab and shorebird phenomenon along the Delaware Bayshore. Cape May Bird Observatory, PO Box 3, Cape May Point, NJ 08212; 609/884-2736. [www.birdcapemay.org](http://www.birdcapemay.org) e-mail: [birdcapemay@njaudubon.org](mailto:birdcapemay@njaudubon.org)

### 64th Annual CAPE MAY AUTUMN WEEKEND

THE Bird Show October 29-31, 2010 Cape May Bird Observatory hosts 3 day festival at the Migration Mainline. Celebrated Speakers, Expert leaders, Field trips, Boat trips, Workshops. Prime time for those vagrant rarities! CMBO, PO Box 3, Cape May Point, NJ 08212; 609/884-2736. [www.birdcapemay.org](http://www.birdcapemay.org) e-mail: [birdcapemay@njaudubon.org](mailto:birdcapemay@njaudubon.org)

### WANTED... BIRDERS - MAY 14, 2011

28th ANNUAL NJ Audubon Society WORLD SERIES OF BIRDING Be part of North America's premier birding competition and raise \$\$ for the conservation cause of your choice. All skill levels and ages welcome. Especially Youth Teams. WORLD SERIES OF BIRDING, Cape May Bird Observatory, PO Box 3, Cape May Point, NJ 08212; 609/884-2736. [www.worldseriesofbirding.org](http://www.worldseriesofbirding.org) e-mail: [birdcapemay@njaudubon.org](mailto:birdcapemay@njaudubon.org)

### EVERGLADES BIRDING FESTIVAL

January 12-17, 2011, Everglades N.P., Corkscrew, Keys, STA 5, South Dade for Limpkin, Snail Kite, Common Myna, Painted Bunting, 5 possible Owls and more. Kevin Karlson & James Currie, full day field trips, pelagic trip, workshops featured. Focus on advanced birding skills in small groups. [www.birdadventure.com](http://www.birdadventure.com), [birdpaddy@yahoo.com](mailto:birdpaddy@yahoo.com), 954/805-6810, 954/926-5458. e-mail: [birdcapemay@njaudubon.org](mailto:birdcapemay@njaudubon.org)

### SAN DIEGO BIRD FESTIVAL

March 3-6, 2011. Featuring world-famous Peter Harrison, author of *Seabirds: An Identification Guide*. Join us for sunshine, blue skies and 235-250 species. Field trips to deserts, mountains, coast, chaparral, Baja, Mexico plus 4 pelagic birding/whale watching trip. Two pelagic trips to the Mexican Coronados islands to see the new 40+ Brown Booby colony. Leaders include Debi Shearwater and Steve Howell. [www.sandiegoaudubon.org](http://www.sandiegoaudubon.org) or 619/682-7200.

### WINGS N WETLANDS WEEKEND: A BIRD LOVER'S PARADISE!

Flock to Great Bend, Kansas April 29-May 1, 2011, to explore three designated wetlands of international importance along the Central Flyway. Enthusiasts of every level will enjoy exceptional guided birding opportunities, education, great food and fun! Information at [www.wetlandscenter.com](http://www.wetlandscenter.com) or 1-877/243-9268.

### GO BIRD PROVIDENCE, RI

3-8 October 2010  
800-850-2473 • [events@aba.org](mailto:events@aba.org)  
[www.aba.org/events](http://www.aba.org/events)

### GO BIRDING COSTA RICA

3-9 September 2011  
800-850-2473 • [events@aba.org](mailto:events@aba.org)  
[www.aba.org/events](http://www.aba.org/events)

## WINGING IT ONLINE AD RESERVATION FORM

Strongly recommended that ABA members submit classified ads for *Winging It*, using ABA website [www.aba.org/wingingit/ads.html](http://www.aba.org/wingingit/ads.html) select "Submit your Ad Online". This method greatly improves accuracy. Only current ABA members may submit. Non-business ads are free. Business ads - \$50 per insertion (\$25 for registered non-profits). Deadline for next issue is **September 10, 2010**.



WEB  
EXTRA

## Winging It Online

Many past issues of *Winging It* are now available in full color to members at the ABA website. If the dog or a Jurassic Park pet ate one of your recent issues, you will need three bits of information to view an online version: a URL, a user name, and a password. To view past issues, type the following into your browser: [www.aba.org/wingingit/archives](http://www.aba.org/wingingit/archives). When you click on an issue, you will be prompted for a user name and password. All members will use the same user name and password to access the archives. That information is: USER NAME- **members** PASSWORD- **migr@te** (the fifth character is the commercial "at" sign). Periodically, the password will be changed. When that happens, the new password will always be located on the bottom left corner of the last page of *Winging It* Classified ads. If you have already subscribed to receive ABA's email updates, now called "Flight Calls", you will receive the new password in that manner. As a backup, the password will be available in each new issue. If you are a member and are not currently receiving "Flight Calls", but would like to be included, please call ABA at 1-800-850-2473.

**CURRENT PASSWORD: migr@te**