	Bermuda Audubon Society	
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First record of live Atlantic Puffin in Bermuda



On 10 April 2013 Matthew Watson was fishing with his brother Andrew at Challenger Banks to the southwest of Bermuda. He contacted the Audubon Society to say that he believed he had photographed a puffin. He said, "I came across this small bird swimming around. We were able to get pretty close to it, and it wouldn't fly away, it just kept swimming away. Twice it dove down and seemed to stay down for a really long time." When Audubon President, Andrew Dobson saw the photo he was delighted. He said that

over the years there have been many dead Atlantic Puffins washed up dead on our beaches. Recent research suggests that puffins do winter well out to sea away from the continental East Coast, to the north of Bermuda. In some winters, and this year was no exception, prolonged bad weather can prevent puffins from feeding and they can starve. Weakened birds can't fly and many drown. In March and April at least six dead birds have been found. Therefore it was a real thrill to know that a live puffin has at last been seen in Bermuda waters. Puffins are frequently referred to as the clown of the seas with their somewhat comical face. The bird that was seen at Challenger Banks was a first-winter bird, showing some red on its large triangular bill. Puffins only land on suitable coasts to breed, spending the majority of their lives on the sea. The nearest breeding colonies are in Maine and Nova Scotia. With the advance in photographic equipment, more and more people are taking an interest in wildlife photography. Mr Watson is obviously the envy of the local birding community, but if he had not photographed the bird, we might never have known! The Audubon Society is always pleased to hear of rare bird sightings or help people identify bird species. (Photo: Matthew Watson)

Vesey Nature Reserve

Karen Border

The Bermuda Audubon Society is delighted to announce the opening of its new Vesey Nature Reserve in Southampton. This 8-acre property was donated to Buy Back Bermuda by Sharon Vesey in 2009 and has been restored as a nature reserve with public donations to Buy Back Bermuda Campaign II. The reserve is entered from Middle Road, between Evan's Bay Road and Rockaway. It includes part of the valley containing Evan's Pond and a ridgeline extending all the way to the Little Sound. It also features two quarries (inland and coastal), a natural limestone sink hole and a variety of habitats, including mangroves, a lush woodland valley, an exposed hilltop and rocky shoreline. Amenities include walking trails, interpretive signs, a quarry exhibit, plenty of places to picnic and for children to play, benches to relax on and an observation platform with a fabulous view of the Little Sound.

Much of the reserve restoration was carried out by teams of volunteers from HSBC, Butterfield Bank, Lancashire Re, Deloitte and Audubon volunteers, under the direction of David Outerbridge of the National Trust and David Wingate of the Audubon Society. The volunteers culled thousands of invasive plants, planted many native and endemics and helped to clear pathways. Century Construction was hired for the hard landscaping - Jonathan Soares and his team from Century showed genuine sensitivity to this project and donated many hours of their time. The reserve features a number of interpretive signs and a quarry exhibit which includes an authentic five foot quarry saw. Dr. Ed Harris of the National Museum provided information on quarrying in Bermuda and Dr David Wingate provided expertise on the reserve's flora, fauna and natural features. The signs were designed by Linda Weinraub of Fluent.



Buy Back Bermuda is a joint initiative of the Bermuda National Trust and Audubon. The Somerset Long Bay East nature reserve - often known as Pitman's Pond - was the first of its nature reserves. Buy Back Bermuda Campaign II also funded the purchase of a piece of open space in Hamilton Parish known as Eve's Pond, which is next on the list for restoration.

At the official opening on Earth Day 22nd April, Bermuda Olivewood trees were planted by (L to R in photo) His Excellency the Governor Mr George Fergusson, Sharon Vesey (who donated the land) and The Hon.

Sylvan Richards, Minister of the Environment JP MP. The official ribbon cutting was done jointly by The Governor and Sharon Vesey. Also in attendance were Dr David Saul who led BBB Campaign II; Col. William White, President of the Bermuda National Trust; Jennifer Gray, Executive Director of the Bermuda National Trust; Andrew Dobson, President of the Bermuda Audubon Society; The Hon. Trevor Moniz JP MP, Minister of Public Works and Senator the Hon. Nalton Brangman, Minister of Education.

Bird Report January to May 2013

Andrew Dobson

January to February 2013

Highlights in this period included: a record number of Canada Geese, a Northern Lapwing (4th record), an adult Glaucous Gull and eight White-winged Crossbills.

During trips on the R.V. Explorer to the south of Bermuda, DBW recorded a **Cory's Shearwater** 14 Feb, two **Manx Shearwaters** 27 Feb and a **Leach's Storm-Petrel** 26 Feb (DBW). A **White-tailed Tropicbird** was seen at Challenger Banks 10 Dec (per AD). The first returning Longtail was on South Shore 2 Feb (LM). An adult **Brown Pelican** was in Castle Harbour 12-23 Feb (GBu). An imm. **Great Cormorant** was in the Great Sound 21-28 Feb+ (AD, PW). An imm. Black-crowned Night-Heron was at Seymour's Pond in Jan and Feb (DBW). A record 13 **Canada Geese** were present this winter. First seen in St. Davids 9 Nov (7 birds) the presumed three family groups settled at Tuckers Point GC (3), Port Royal GC (6) and Southampton golf range (4) to Feb 28+ (AD). Five **Snow Geese** (3 ad. 2 juv.) were present at various locations Jan 1- Feb 28 (AD). Seventeen species of duck were recorded in



Bermuda during the winter period. A **Eurasian Wigeon** at Spittal Pond 23 Oct (DBW) was the first of four present at various locations to 28 Feb+ (AD). A **Black Duck** in Harrington Sound 4 Jan was the first of an influx of about 10 birds at various locations to Feb 28+ (AD). A **Eurasian Teal** was seen in Warwick Pond 24 Feb (AD). Bermuda 8th record of **Long-tailed Duck** was on Tucker's Point GC 17 Nov-28 Feb+ (AD). A **Bufflehead** at Spittal Pond on 28 Feb (PW) was certainly a spring arrival. **Red-breasted Mergansers** peaked at 7 birds at Cambridge Beaches 10 Feb (PW). A **Ruddy Duck**

was at Cloverdale Pond 1 Dec-28 Feb+ (AD). The two **Red-tailed Hawks** were seen over Morgan's Point throughout the period (AD, PW). A **Peregrine** was seen at various locations 20 Dec- 28 Feb+ and from 16 Feb-28 Feb+ roosted on the window ledge of an office block in Hamilton (AD, RA, NM). A **Virginia Rail** was seen on Mid-Ocean GC 29 Dec-20 Jan (PA,



GB) and another at Paget Marsh 6 Feb (*photo Andrew Dobson*). An exhausted **Purple Gallinule** was found at Coco Reefs Hotel 11 Jan and taken into care. A **Northern Lapwing** (Bermuda's 4th record) was first seen over Hamilton 8 Dec before moving to the Airport to 24 Dec- 1 Feb (PW) (*photo Andrew Dobson*). A **Piping Plover** was at Cooper's Island 12 Jan-7 Feb (AD). A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was unseasonal at Mid-Ocean GC 20-30 Jan (GB). Single **Bonaparte's Gulls**

were seen in Harrington Sound 3 Jan (PW), Port Royal GC (ad.) 24 Feb (DBW) and Ferry Reach (imm.) 23-24 Feb (PH). An adult **Glaucous Gull** was photographed off Bermuda on the R.V. Explorer 26 Feb (DBW). Two **Forster's Terns** were at Dockyard throughout Dec to 28 Feb+ (PH). A dark phase **Parasitic Jaeger** was photographed off Bermuda on the R.V. Explorer 27 Feb (DBW). A **Short-eared Owl** was over the Airport 26 Feb (PW). An **Eastern Phoebe** was at Morgan's Point 5 Jan (AD). A **Yellow-throated Vireo** was seen in Camden Marsh 29 Dec (AD). A flock of 16 **Horned Larks** were at the Airport 16 Dec-3 Jan (DBW). Eight **American Pipits** were seen on Port Royal GC 13 Feb (PW). Twenty-two species of warbler were recorded during the winter period including **Swainson's Warbler** in the Smith's Hills 20 Jan (JM). A **Lincoln's Sparrow** was at Morgan's Point 12 Jan (AD). A **Swamp Sparrow** was at Morgan's Point 5 Jan (AD). At least five **Red-winged Blackbirds** were reported from various locations Jan 1 – Feb 24 (AD). A **Brown-headed Cowbird** was discovered at Port Royal GC 11-12 Jan (PW). Eight **White-winged Crossbills** were reported from Southampton Princess GC 13 Jan – 28 Feb+ (JR). Two **Common Redpoll** were seen at St. Georges GC 19 Jan (PW).

Observers: Peter Adhemar, Richard Amos, Geoff Bell, Gregory Burgess (GBu), Alison Copeland, Geoff Bell, Chris Burville, Steven DeSilva, Andrew Dobson, Wendy Frith, Charles Gosling, Peter Hopkin, Jeremy Madeiros, Leila Madeiros, Herb Marshall, Neal Morris, Nigel Pollard, Ron Porter, Adam Power, Natasha Power, J-P Rouja, Paul Watson, Tim White, David Wingate.

March to April 2013

The highlights of the early spring period were undoubtedly the seabirds; Bermuda's first live Atlantic Puffin, two Black Skimmers, Iceland and Glaucous Gulls and some impressive seabird movement past Cooper's Point.

Viewing with a telescope from Cooper's Point 17 Apr 16.00-18.00 hrs provided: **Manx Shearwater** (110), **Sooty Shearwater** (2), **Cory's Shearwater** (2), **Pomarine Jaeger** (26), **Parasitic Jaeger** (8), **Long-tailed Jaeger** (9), Jaeger sp. (20), **Leach's Storm-Petrel** (28), **Wilson's Storm-Petrel** (16), Storm-Petrel sp. (44). (AD, PW).

A **Masked Booby** was photographed off Bermuda on the R.V. Explorer 24 Apr (DBW). The last remaining **Canada Geese** (3) were seen on Tucker's Point GC 30 Mar (AD). A female **Eurasian Wigeon** was last seen at Spittal Pond 30 Mar (AD). The long-staying (perhaps injured) **Long-tailed Duck** remained on Tucker's Point GC into Apr (AD). The wintering **Ruddy Duck** was at Cloverdale Pond into Apr (AD). A **Peregrine** in Hamilton was seen to 3 May (DBW). One or two **Swallow-tailed Kites** were present at various locations 10-31 Mar (mult.obs.). A **Least Bittern** was at Paget Marsh 25 Apr (GB). An **American Golden-Plover** was on Cooper's Island 22 Mar (DBW). Seventeen **Sanderling** were on the South Shore beaches throughout March (AD). A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was at Spittal Pond 23 Mar (AD). Five **Bonaparte's Gulls** were seen in Harrington Sound 11 Mar (AD). An ad. **Laughing Gull** was in St. Georges Harbour 31 Mar (DBW). An **Iceland Gull** was present in Mangrove Bay 16-30 Mar (PH). An adult **Glaucous Gull** photographed off Bermuda 26 Feb (DBW) was almost certainly the bird that arrived at Dockyard 2-13 March (PH). A **Black-legged Kittiwake** was seen at Evans Bay 16 Mar (WF). Returning **Common Terns** (4) were in the Little Sound 28 Mar (PH). One **Forster's Tern** remained at Dockyard to 30 Mar (AD). A **Sandwich Tern** was in the Little Sound 29-30 Mar (PW). Two **Black Skimmers** flew past

Commissioner's Point 20 Mar (PH). An **Atlantic Puffin** found dead on Tucker's Town beach 14 Mar (JC) was the first of six found washed up dead on beaches during Mar and Apr. However, Bermuda's first live **Atlantic Puffin** was photographed on Challenger Banks on 10 Apr (MW). A **Eurasian Collared Dove** (of origin unknown) was seen off Fairylands 2 Mar (PW). A very early **Chimney Swift** was at East End Dairy 28-30 Mar (PW). An **Eastern Kingbird** was over St. Georges GC 10 Apr (PW). A **Blue-winged Warbler** was at Warwick Pond 22 Mar with another at Government House 13 Apr (AD). A male **Scarlet Tanager** was at Vesey NR 28 Apr (JV). A **Blue Grosbeak** was at Spittal Pond 7 Apr (NM). One **Red-winged Blackbird** remained at Mid-Ocean GC to 5 Apr (GB). A **Bobolink** was over St. Georges GC 9 Apr (PW). Six **White-winged Crossbills** were still visiting a Southampton garden to 21 Mar (J-PR).

Observers: Geoff Bell, Judie Clee, Andrew Dobson, Wendy Frith, Peter Hopkin, Jeremy Madeiros, Neal Morris, J-P Rouja, Joell Voorhees, Matthew Watson, Paul Watson, David Wingate.

Bermuda's Bluebirds

The Bermuda Audubon Society sponsored a study into the Eastern Bluebird population in Bermuda. A research paper was published in March 2013 in *Molecular Biology*.

Cryptic introductions and the interpretation of island biodiversity: Avery, J.D., Fonseca, D.M., Campagne, P. and Lockwood, J.L.

Abstract

Species with cryptic origins (i.e. those that cannot be reliably classed as native or non-native) present a particular challenge to our understanding of the generation and maintenance of biodiversity. Such species may be especially common on islands given that some islands have had a relatively recent history of human settlement. It is likely that select island species considered native might have achieved their current distributions via direct or indirect human actions. As an example, we explore the origins of eastern bluebirds (*Sialia sialis bermudensis*) on the island of Bermuda. Considered native to the island and a distinct subspecies, this population has diverged in morphology relative to mainland North America. Using microsatellite markers and simulation of island colonization, we show that the Bermuda population of bluebirds is the likely result of a single colonization event that occurred during the 1600s, making this a cryptic invader. To our knowledge, this is one of the youngest examples of a terrestrial vertebrate cryptic invader. We suggest that the eastern bluebird is not an isolated case of cryptic invader on either Bermuda or elsewhere and that caution be exercised when studying present-day distributions of organisms.

Time to renew membership - 1st June - Family \$30 or Individual \$20

- **Online by credit card** at www.bermutatix.bm click on Bermuda Audubon Society under 'Memberships' on the Home Page.
- **Bank transfer** Bermuda Audubon Society Butterfield Bank Account # 20 006 060 055394 100. Please put your FULL NAME in the beneficiary information field and email info@audubon.bm to let us know you have paid your membership by direct bank transfer.
- **Cheque in the mail to the Treasurer**

Society News

- **Working parties**

- In January a members' working party removed a considerable number of small casuarinas from the coastal slopes of the Alfred Blackburn Smith nature reserve.
- In February a good turnout of members worked on the Seymour's Pond NR clearing invasives and later in the month at the Vesey NR preparing for the official opening (see photo highlights).
- In March, Aberfeldy Nurseries once again hosted a very successful bluebird nest box workshop. Andrew Dobson and Karen Border gave a short talk about bluebirds and nest box construction. Members of the public then made about 50 boxes (see photo highlights).
- The Society is particularly grateful to Horsfield Landscape and Design (see photo below) who provided a volunteer day on our Alfred Blackburn Smith nature reserve. Their expertise was used to fell unwanted casuarinas and open up some fabulous views across the ocean.



- **Audubon Society bluebird nest box trophy**

The winner of this year's bluebird nest box competition was Kristen Bean from the Mount St. Agnes School (see photo highlights).

- **20 Years Ago**

A May fieldtrip to Cooper's Island listed the meeting point as McDonald's restaurant! Once there, security clearance was needed to proceed further on the U.S. Naval Air Station. Additional instruction stated "You can drive by car or bike (as long as you have a visor). If you do not have your own transportation you can take the NAS shuttle bus".

- **Longtail nest igloos for sale from Audubon at \$120 including installation advice.**

- **CEBF/IMBD**

The Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival (CEBF) is currently being held around the region with the theme of 'Celebrating the lives of Caribbean Birds'. Although we are not in the Caribbean, Bermuda joins in this annual event with various activities in April/May.

- School students once again submitted entries for the bluebird nest box category at the Annual Exhibition in Botanical Gardens in April.
- To coincide with Earth Day, our new Vesey nature reserve in Southampton was opened on 22nd April.
- Andrew Dobson and David Wingate led a fieldtrip to the Alfred Blackburn Smith nature reserve for members of Audubon and Coral Beach Club on 5th May.
- Our endemic bird was featured at the Explorers' Club in New York on May 7th when Deirdre Brennan showed her documentary of Nonsuch Island and the Cahow. The Bermuda Audubon Society was a sponsor of the film.
- The Bermuda Audubon Society celebrated World Migratory Bird Day May 11th with a fieldtrip to the Vesey nature reserve in Southampton. Members and friends enjoyed great weather and a guided tour by David Wingate. Not only did we see our own migratory Longtails (White-tailed Tropicbirds) but also an Osprey that flew overhead.

- **Grocery Bags - Please support this campaign**



'Bermuda says "No Thanks" to single-use bags'. Please sign the petition at:

www.greenrock.org/petition

Why is a charge proposed and not a ban?

- 1 - A charge has been shown to reduce usage by up to 90% (Ireland) and therefore goes a very long way to solving the environmental and waste reduction issues.
- 2 - A charge forces consumers to stop and think, therefore raising awareness (a ban does not present consumers with a decision).
- 3 - Bags are still available for tourists, spontaneous shoppers or those who want them for reuse at home.
- 4 - Many stores sell reusable bags so customers already have a choice.
- 5 - A charge could raise money for environmental education or remediation.



Bermuda Audubon Society Annual General Meeting

**Wednesday 5 June 2013 at 6pm
Bermuda Aquarium Education Room**

AGENDA

President's Report

Treasurer's Report

Election of Officers and Committee of Management

**The AGM will be followed by a short illustrated talk on
Birds of the Year by Andrew Dobson and
Cahow monitoring by Jeremy Madeiros**

All members are invited

Please email info@audubon.bm or tel. 238-8628 if you wish to attend or if you wish to make a dinner reservation at BAMZ's new restaurant 'Beastro' afterwards

If you wish to nominate someone to serve on the Bermuda Audubon Society committee please email Karen Border info@audubon.bm. Both the proposer and nominee must be paid up members of the Society.

- **Join the Bermuda Audubon Society on Facebook. We have several hundred followers and some of our postings have received thousands of views.**
 - **Keep up to date with all the Society's news and events**
 - **Bird photos from Bermuda are posted by members every week**
 - **Your chance to find out what is happening and to comment if you wish**
 - **Go to www.facebook.com and search for 'Bermuda Audubon Society'**

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



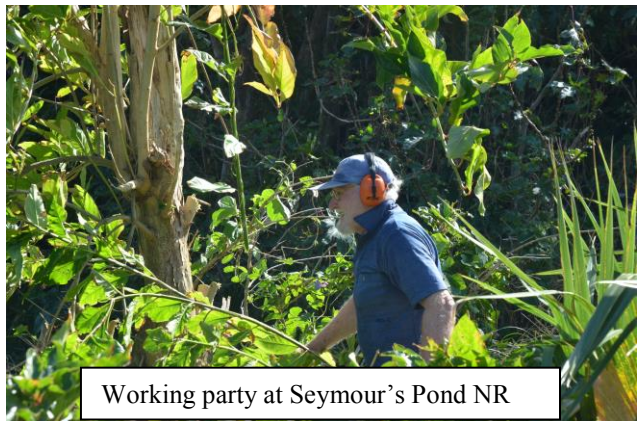
Left and below: Bluebird seminar and nest box workshop at Aberfeldy Nurseries



Bluebird nest boxes at the Annual Show



Working party at ABSmith NR



Working party at Seymour's Pond NR



Left: Working party at Vesey NR.
Below: Fieldtrip to the newly opened Vesey NR – the old quarry



Audubon fieldtrip to Coral Beach Club and A.B.Smith nature reserve
Left: David Wingate provides a history of the reserve. Below: A recently installed longtail igloo on the reserve is already occupied

