

Bermuda Audubon Society

Vol.3 No.2

# NEWSLETTER

SUMMER

P. O. Box HM 1328, Hamilton HM FX

1992

## *Nonsuch Island* *Major landscaping work nearly completed*

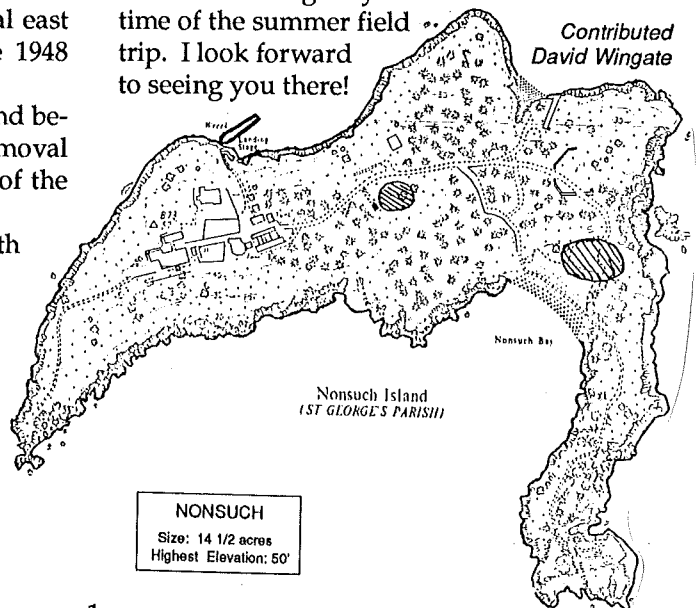
Members will have a chance to see first-hand some major improvements which have taken place on Nonsuch since January. This work represents the final phase of the Living Museum project requiring the use of heavy excavating equipment. Because of the difficult and costly logistics of getting such equipment onto the island, it was planned so that all of the projects needing such equipment could be done at the same time. Indeed, two of the projects were mutually dependent for their completion.

The specific projects undertaken were:

1. Demolition of the concrete porches and foundations of the former quarantine hospital east ward which had been a ruin since the 1948 hurricane.
2. The enlargement of the salt-marsh pond behind the South Beach dune by 60% and removal of the excavated material to other parts of the island where it could be used.
3. Extension of the level terrace area south of the buildings using rubble and soil excavated from the salt-marsh pond.
4. Installation of a new and permanent high-density polyethylene liner for the fresh-water pond. This became necessary when the original polyvinyl-chloride liner began leaking at the seams after fifteen years, causing the freshwater marsh to dry up.

As the liner has to be buried deep under the soil a "Bobcat" excavator has to be employed to remove and stockpile the soil first. The Conservation Division is now in the final stage of the project - replacing the soil on top of the liner. Unfortunately, this job had to be done by wheelbarrow because heavier equipment might puncture the liner. Approximately 40 tons of soil is involved, so much use is being made of volunteer help! Although the marsh plants will not yet be re-established in July, the pond is filling rapidly in this unusually wet spring and we fully expect to have migrating shorebirds using it by the time of the summer field trip. I look forward to seeing you there!

*Contributed  
David Wingate*

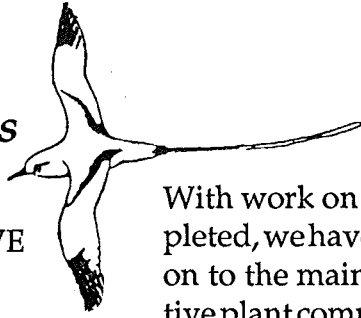


# Audubon News

## SEARS CAVE NATIVE FERN RESERVE

### An Update:

There was a good turnout of members for the April 5 sign unveiling and dedication, when Thad Trott explained the background of this land gift in memory of his parents, Sir Howard and Lady Trott. Fortune held with the weather too! Although the day was predicted to be stormy, the sunshine held out until minutes after the ceremony was concluded. Most of the guests were safely under cover touring the sink-hole when a squall line hit with torrential rains and a gale!



With work on the perimeter fence completed, we have finally been able to move on to the main task of restoring the native plant community within the reserve. During April and May most of the aggressive non-native saplings and trees surrounding the sink were either culled out, girdled or topped and the eastern half of the reserve has already been replanted with the full range of native trees and shrub species. Southern Hackberry - our only winter deciduous tree is being emphasized around the sink rim in order to re-create the ideal balance of light and shade for optimum growth of native and endemic ferns within the sink. We expect all the planting around the rim of the sink to be completed by July.

*David B. Wingate*

Bermuda Audubon Society

**HOTLINE**

**236-6483**

to report any environmental  
problems especially in relation to  
birds.

### Bermuda Audubon Society Committee 1992-1993

**PRESIDENT:**

Andrew Dobson

**TREASURER:**

Ted Cassidy

**SECRETARY:**

Leila Madeiros

**MEMBERS:**

Jeremy Madeiros

David O'Neill

Jean Pennington

Penny Soares

Helge Trapnell

David Wingate

## 1992 Spring Birds

Spring is a transitional period with our winter birds departing, migrant birds passing through, and breeding birds arriving.

Only two species return in the spring to breed. Longtails appear to have returned in good numbers, but the Common Tern is only just hanging on. Between 10 and 20 pairs are left on the undisturbed small islands which they require for breeding.

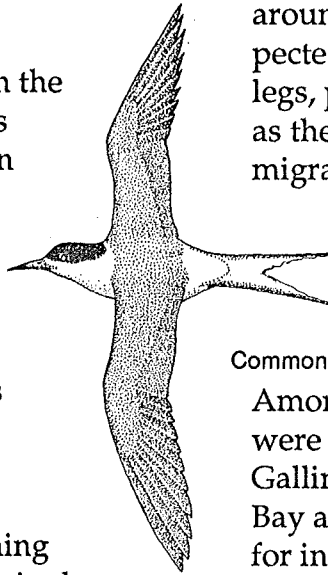
Migrant passerines (perching birds) are hard to come by in the spring, but the reward of continual searching is the chance of seeing male birds in their brightly coloured breeding plumage. Sightings this year included Chestnut-side Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Blue Grosbeak and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Two males and three females of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks came to a table in Hamilton Parish, feeding on sunflower seeds.

Hérons and egrets passed through, including at least four Cattle Egrets at Spittal Pond Farm. Two more Canada Geese arrived, seen grazing at Jubilee Road and the airport verges respectively.

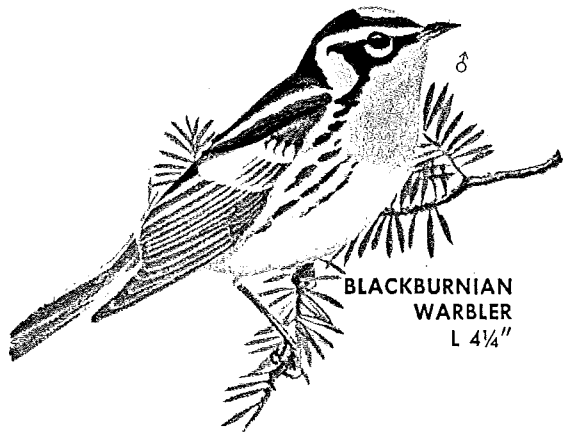
A scattering of migrant shore birds around the island included the expected small sandpipers and yellow-legs, plus less common species such as the Red Knot and Ruff. Common migrants included swallows and

martins. One garden in Smith's Parish had 40 Barn Swallows perched on overhead cables.



Common Tern

Amongst the rarer records this spring were two strikingly coloured Purple Gallinules together at Somerset Long Bay and a Gull-billed Tern hawking for insects over Spittal Pond.



BLACKBURNIAN  
WARBLER  
L 4¼"

1992 Spring Birds Cont'd.

A combination of wet weather, haze and unfavourable wind direction prevented good sightings of the off-shore pelagic migration. However, on 31st May, shearwaters were passing along South Shore at well over 100 per hour. Shearwaters thrive on strong winds for uplift. Calm conditions often forces them to rest on the water. Both David Wingate and Peter Holmes reported separate occasions when they were on the ocean and able to feed Greater Shearwaters - a unique opportunity to study this beautiful ocean wanderer.

*Andrew Dobson*

## **Nonsuch Island FIELD TRIP & BARBECUE**

### **JULY 19**

**Boat departs Tuckers Town  
9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m**

**Return Trips 1 p.m.  
and 4 p.m. onwards**

**Reservations:**

**293-7394**

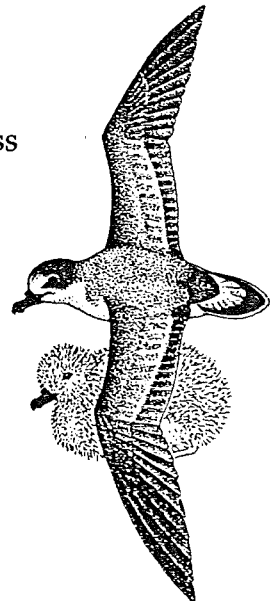
**Adults: \$15 Children \$10  
(includes boat trip & barbecue)**

**Vegetarian meals available on request**

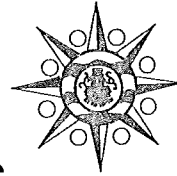
## **Update on the Cahow**

After two discouraging years of poor reproductive success and a slight decline of breeding pairs, the 1991-2 season has put the birds back on the road to recovery.

The most important factor involved in this change was the turning off, by USNAS, of an array of very bright lights which had been inhibiting new pair formation for the last 4 years. As a result no less than 9 new pairs were prospecting last November and 4 of these produced chicks for the first time, raising the fledgling crop to 23 from 43 established pairs. By the time this newsletter is mailed out all will have departed successfully to sea.



## How can you help the environment AND the Audubon Society?



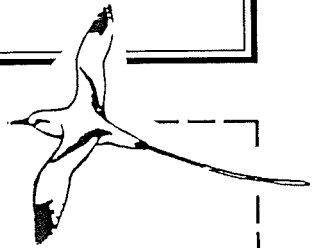
**The  
Bank of Bermuda  
Limited**

Members may have read in the local press about a new programme launched by the Bank of Bermuda.

Each time a customer uses his or her BermudaCard, 10% of the total transaction value goes towards an environmental charity. Each time someone signs up for a BermudaCard, \$100 goes directly to a charity. At the end of each month a name is drawn from all the Bank's customers and a donation is made in their name to a charity of their choice.

The Society would like to thank the Bank of Bermuda for donating over \$5,000 over the last year and also George Hammond for choosing to donate \$1000 to the Society.

### Membership / Subscription Renewal



Name .....

Address .....

..... Tel. No. ....

- |                                         |          |                                          |
|-----------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult .....    | \$ 10.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Existing Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student .....  | \$ 5.00  | <input type="checkbox"/> New Member      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donation ..... | \$ ..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member     |

Please send to: *Bermuda Audubon Society, P.O. Box HM 1328 Hamilton HMF*X

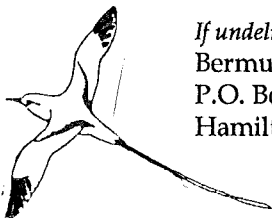
## COMING EVENTS:

Sunday  
**JULY 19**      **NONSUCH ISLAND FIELD TRIP & BARBECUE**  
TIME: 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.  
PLACE: Boats leave from Tucker's Town Dock

Sunday  
**AUGUST 30**      **SPITTAL POND FIELD TRIP**  
Observe Migratory Birds  
TIME: 7:30 a.m.  
PLACE: Meet at East End Car Park  
Trip followed by coffee and cake!

Wednesday  
**SEPT 2**      **ILLUSTRATED BLUEBIRD TALK**  
Steven DeSilva's current study on Bermuda's Bluebirds.  
TIME: 8 p.m.  
PLACE: Horticultural Hall, Botanical Gardens

Friday - Sunday  
**OCT 2 - 4**      **BIRDERS' WEEKEND - PAGET ISLAND**  
Phone 238-3239 after September 1st if you are interested.



*If undelivered please return to:*  
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Hamilton HM FX