

Bermuda Audubon Society
NEWSLETTER

Fall
1994

P O Box HM 1328, Hamilton HMF X

Vol.5 No.3

SAY'S PHOEBE - NEW TO BERMUDA

by Eric Amos

Towards the end of another disappointing early fall migration period (July through September) while most birders were flocking to the East End to see the first Baird's Sandpiper to visit the island since 1981 - I found a new record for Bermuda, a **Say's Phoebe** *Sayornis saya* (a not unexpected vagrant from western North America) on Saturday September 17th, 1994.

The fact that I had become fairly well acquainted with this highly migratory flycatcher during three summers in the Highlands of Mexico (where it is a permanent resident) in the late 1970's may explain why, fifteen years later, while driving from Fort Scaur towards Somerset, I said to myself "Say's (expletive deleted) Phoebe!!" when glimpsing from the corner of my eye a slim rather dusky flycatcher on the utility wires at the bottom of Morgan's Hill.

And a Say's Phoebe it was, as 23 minutes of video footage attests. I found it at 6.20 pm and watched it's constant aerial feeding forays for 45 minutes in the ripening rich sunset. It was never still for a moment, flying up, out and down in pursuit of small aerial prey which it consumed in flight, always returning to the wires - averaging at times 20 catches per minute! On a couple of occasions it plunged right at my feet to take rather dark looking caterpillars

back to the wires where it softened them up before swallowing them. It was rather similar to 1991's Ash-throated Flycatcher

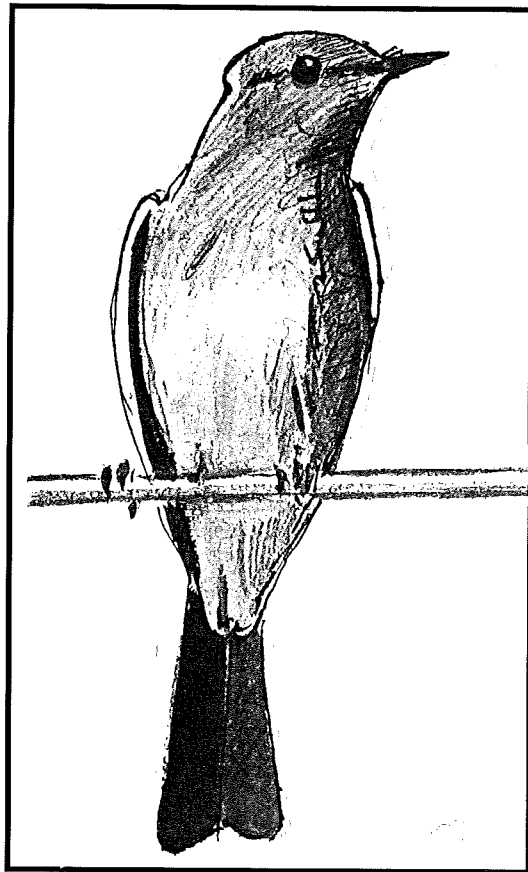


Illustration by Eric Amos

except for the black tail, warm pale grey-brown upper parts and faded orange-brown underparts and like the Eastern Phoebe, it frequently flicked and spread it's long black forked tail.

In Mexico this Phoebe overlaps the range of a close relative, the familiar Great Kiskadee. Although this individual - a young bird of the year from much further north - would not have met a Kiskadee before, on the wires at Morgan's Hill it coexisted with one companionably for a while, (unusual because Kiskadees don't tolerate other flycatchers) allowing me and the camera excellent size comparisons. The next day, several parties of birders covered much of the West End in vain.

A sad comment on 1994's landbird migration was brought home to me by the fact that on September 16th 1994, at most of the locations David Wingate, myself and Steven DeSilva searched, there were more bird watchers (3!) than there were visiting landbird species. What next from the west? Green-tailed Towhee, Townsend's Solitaire, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Varied Thrush.....

Say's Phoebe breeds from Alaska to Mexico and winters from California southwards. It is now the 352nd species on the current Bermuda List! They are fairly regular fall strays to northeast USA.

Hog Bay Park

It is hard to believe that on densely populated and heavily developed Bermuda, you can still find places away from the noise and bustle of the modern age - and imagine that you are in an age where modern traffic and roads do not exist.

Hog Bay Park is just such a place - one of Bermuda's newest additions to its National Parks system. It consists of 38.23 acres of unspoilt and almost completely undeveloped rural countryside in the southern area of Sandy's Parish. The Park is bounded to the west by the sea and to the east by Middle Road. Wreck Road properties form its northern boundary while Woodlawn Road is on its southern edge.

The land is typical of what much of Bermuda looked like prior to the housing boom of the 1960's to 1980's. It is comprised of large tracts of land previously owned by three different estates. The Bermuda Government purchased the Fordham Estate in 1986, and the James and Mayor Estates in 1990, for a total of \$7.925 million. Historically a rural area of varied land-use (open space, agricultural land, farm dwellings and mature woodlands), these estates, unlike most of the remainder of Bermuda, have managed to retain their inherited single-family ownership and the lack of sub-dividing the land into developable tracts.

The present parkland was originally part of the "overplus" of Richard Norwood's original 1616 survey, but by 1623 it had been given to Sandy's Parish and settled accordingly. At this time Sandy's and Southampton (then known as Port Royal) had the largest population of the eight tribes, which later became the Parishes of Bermuda. This was despite the fact that the main settlement was at the opposite end of Bermuda at St. George's. This was probably

Bermud Audubon Society

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"Where Old Bermuda Still Lives

by *Jeremy Madeiros*

because the best farmland was found at the West End of the island. The lighter, sandy soils were presumably easier to till with the primitive farm tools than the heavier, clay-rich soils typical of the Middle and Eastern Tribes. Since the colony's emphasis was so heavily focused on the cultivation of tobacco and maize in the early years, it is likely that these were the main occupations of the tenants on this property in the early days of Bermuda's settlement.

Farming continued to play an important role on this property throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Prior to the nineteenth century, most of the farming operations were evidently carried out under the direction of the primary landowner in the estate house, "The Hermitage." Later operations were carried out from "Doubloon House". Through the years, different property owners of the land which now comprises Hog Bay Park have been: Sir John Heydon, Captain Henry Tucker, the Outerbridges, Browns, Trotts, Fordhams, James and Mayors. The agricultural heritage of this area continues to the present day, with about fourteen arable plots, located through the park, being farmed by Mr. Junior Hill under lease from the Bermuda Government.

At least nine known locations of archaeological value are found throughout the park. Graduate Anthropology students from the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia have undertaken fieldwork around several of these sites during the summers of 1992/1993. Many interesting artifacts and construction details were discovered and catalogued during these field sessions.

Some of the most interesting and unique aspects of Hog Bay Park are its extensive woodland and thicket areas and the steep windswept coastal hillside which sweeps

down to Brown's Bay on the westernmost coastline of Bermuda. This hillside is dotted with the bleached skeletons of Bermuda Cedars *Juniper bermudiana*, killed by the scale insect epidemic of the 1940's and 50's. Healthy young Cedars are regenerating naturally throughout the park, however, supplemented by new plantings.

Hog Bay Park ranks high among the best birding locations in Bermuda, with well over 120 species being recorded in recent years. Its large size, undeveloped nature and mix of habitats, including fields, copses, thickets, mature woodland and coastline, attract a wide range of bird species. These have included, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Orchard Oriole, Clay-coloured Sparrow, Painted Bunting, Purple Finch and Rough-legged Hawk. During the winter period and spring and fall migrations, Spotted Sandpipers, Great Blue and Yellow-crowned Night Herons are often seen along the coast. The woodlands and thickets are host to a large range of warblers, orioles, tanagers and other land birds. Fallow fields can contain large flocks of Bobolinks and Blue Grosbeaks and the skies can be patrolled by the likes of Peregrine Falcons, Merlins and Chimney Swifts.

Future plans for the park call for the preservation of the undeveloped nature of the area, while carrying out further plantings of endemic and native plants. There are also plans to provide a freshwater pond using a plastic liner and possibly a bird observation blind. Parking facilities on the edge of Middle Road will also be improved. Hog Bay Park can be explored by parking just inside the main gate off Middle Road and then walking along the extensive network of footpaths and farm tracks. It is best to stay on or near these paths as Poison Ivy is common in the central part of the park. Don't forget to take your binoculars and good birding.

Society News

Bank of Bermuda

Another most generous donation to the society has been made by the Bank of Bermuda who have donated \$5000 from their Charitable Trust. The money will be used by the society to produce a guide book for visitors to Nonsuch Island. The society is most grateful for the Bank's continued support of environmental education.

Committee Members

The society was sorry to lose two of its committee members in recent weeks. Both Gerry Odisio and Penny Soares have returned to the USA and a big "thank you" is offered to both of them for their services to the society.

Books and Publications

As a result of budget restrictions, the public library in Hamilton no longer orders the National Audubon magazine. The society has decided to donate this publication to the library, and has taken out a subscription for 3 years. Please browse through this excellent periodical next time you are in the Par-la-ville Library.

The Society has also donated the first volume of the widely acclaimed "Handbook of Birds of the World" to the BAMZ library. Ask to take a look at this superb book next time you are at the Aquarium.

Field Trips

Please try to join us on our next field trip on **Sunday 4th December**. You have the chance to see Bermuda's latest **National Park at Blue Hole**. Much work has been carried out by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Parks to make this a most attractive area. The Bermuda Audubon Society has agreed with the government to jointly fund the cost of constructing a new pond. The entrance to

the park is at the western end of the airport causeway. So why not join us at 2.00pm. and learn about the natural history of the park.

On **Sunday 29th January** we shall be exploring the **Abbot's Cliff** area. It is a fascinating area of Bermuda, so if you want to learn more of its fauna and flora - meet on **Abbot's Cliff Road** at 2.00pm.

Working Parties

Members often ask if they can help maintain local reserves - well here's your chance! On **Saturday 12th November** we are meeting at **Devonshire Marsh** on the reserve we have recently acquired with the National Trust. The Trust's volunteers the A.N.T.S. will also be there, and we will be preparing for the planting of trees on **Arbor Day**. On **Sunday 20th November - Arbor Day** we will be back at **Devonshire Marsh** planting Cedar, Palmetto and Olivewoodbark trees. On **Sunday 14th January** there will be a working party at **Walsingham**, mainly to clear the non-native vegetation. Meet at **Tom Moores Tavern** at 9.00am. We will finish at 12 noon, so why not bring a picnic and relax in the glade afterwards.

Bermuda Audubon Society Committee 1994-95

President

Jeremy Madeiros

Vice-President

Andrew Dobson

Treasurer

Ted Cassidy

Members

Leila Madeiros

David O'Neill

Helge Trapnell

David Wallace

David Wingate

The 1994 Fall in Bermuda

by Andrew Dobson

The 1994 Fall migration started in promising fashion with a good shorebird passage in late July and August. All the expected shorebirds put in an appearance (see table for dates) - but two birds were of particular note. A **Curlew Sandpiper** (from Europe) at Spittal Pond was the first for 14 years, while a **Baird's Sandpiper** at St. George's Dairy was the first for 13 years. Of the less abundant shorebirds, only single observations have been made of **Red Knot**, **Willet**, **Dunlin** and **Long-billed Dowitcher**. Only two **Wilson's Phalaropes** were seen - both at Spittal Pond, while single **Ruffs** (another European species) were seen at Port Royal GC and the US Naval Air Station. It was Warwick Pond that attracted large numbers of shorebirds thanks to the low water level and much exposed mud. Up to 200 shorebirds could be counted there in late August with as many as 120 **Semipalmated Sandpipers** and 50 **Lesser Yellowlegs**. By early September, shorebirds were scattered widely around the island, following the heavy rain which filled the ponds. The number of **Piping Plover** sightings (at least 5) was encouraging for this endangered species of shorebird. Their presence amongst tourists on the South Shore beaches helps to explain why many are disturbed on similar breeding habitat in North America.

1994 saw yet another **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**, and like some of the previous records, it was feeding on Red *Justicia* (so why not plant some in your garden!). This year a *Phoebe* stole the limelight, with Bermuda's first record of **Say's Phoebe**. (See separate article.) A **Grey Kingbird** at Coney Island was the first since 1990.

Thirty-six warbler species have been recorded so far this Fall - all expected, but

not in the numbers that some observers remember in past decades. However, there were a remarkable fourteen early arrival records broken, many of them warbler species. By mid-October, most of the later migrants had been seen - including three species of thrush and eight species of migrant sparrow. Eric Amos managed to record another new species for Bermuda - a **Sharp-tailed Sparrow** *Ammodramus caudacutus*. Normally found wintering in coastal grasses along the US east coast, this sparrow was in a weedy field at Cedar Grove in Southampton. Andrew Dobson was the only other birder fortunate enough to see this small sparrow with a characteristic orange "triangle" bordering its grey cheek. **Chipping Sparrows** arrived in their best ever numbers, with nine at Fort Scaur thirteen at Ferry Point Park and at least thirty on the island. (The previous Fall high was 12 in 1970).

A superb late report comes from Steven DeSilva. His two boys persuaded their Dad to take them to the top of Fort Scaur during the height of the storm at 13.00hrs. on 16th October. While on top of the fort, with winds up to 50 mph., a **Whip-poor-will** flew in and settled briefly before it realised it had company - and flew off! It stayed long enough to be determined a male - showing extensive white in the tail. The only previous record of this species was in March 1964 when David Wingate flushed one several times on the Castle Harbour Islands while monitoring the Cahow burrows.

The cool and strong northerly airflow in the middle of October led many people to believe winter had arrived. Although the weather change was short-lived, it did encourage birds to move south and arrive on our shores. A **Northern Shrike** was seen hunting at Ferry Point Park and a **Solitary Vireo** was at the Biological

Station. Several duck species made their first appearance of the Fall, including **Black Duck**, **Ring-necked Duck**, **American Wigeon** and most unusually - four **Eurasian Wigeon** at the Audubon Society's reserve at Stokes Point.

Eric Amos makes a number of interesting observations on this Fall's migration..... Although we may never again witness the huge number of individual birds that migrated through Bermuda, 157 migrant species were recorded between 1st July and 31st October - the second highest over the last 20 years and only the fourth year that 150 species has been passed. In fact the average is only 138 species. The trend for

this year was decidedly early, and the overall average is 6 days early for the more common species.

Stop Press - Two excellent sightings at the beginning of November. A **Long-eared Owl** was discovered roosting near the Coral Beach Club on 3rd November by David Wallace. - this is the first time a live Long-eared Owl has been seen by any of Bermuda's Birdwatchers. (About four birds have been found dead in the last 25 years). Of equal rarity status was a **Red-necked Phalarope**, found on the same day at Marsh Lane by Jeremy Madeiros. This is the first Fall mainland record, with very few positive records on the ocean.

Other Wildlife News

Cahow Report 1993-94

No major problems were encountered this year with the **Cahow** *Pterodroma cahow*, but David was frustrated in his monitoring of the burrows by serious engine breakdowns on both boats and the recolonization of Nonsuch by **Black Rats** *Rattus rattus*. A successful baiting campaign in May eliminated the rats, but it was not until October that two boats were operational. David Wingate reports that 21 Cahow chicks successfully departed their burrows. The first chick began exercising on the night of 14/15 May and departed on the night of 19/20 May. Six more had departed by the end of the month, and the final chick left on the night of 15/16 June.

Butterflies

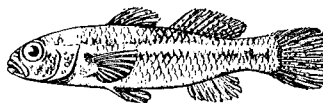
Although many people know that butterflies migrate, few may be aware of the migration that takes place through Bermuda each Fall. Species such as the **Monarch**, **Red Admiral** and **Painted Lady** are regular migrants, while others are seen very rarely. A small number of

Mourning Cloaks were seen in September and early October, while a single **Question Mark** seen by Eric Amos on 2nd October was the first since 1985.



Fish

The first known population of fresh water **Killifish** *Fundulus* has been found at Warwick Pond. An investigation was carried out by David Wingate after Eric Amos noticed a Greater Yellowlegs eating a small fish. A full identification is being undertaken, but it seems likely that it will prove to be a different species to the known populations of Killifish in Bermuda.



1994 Fall - First Arrival Dates

Species	First Fall Date	Location	
Pied-billed Grebe	13/9	Spittal Pond	
Bermuda Petrel	18/10	Castle Harbour Islands	
Double-crested Cormorant	18/10	Coney Island	
American Bittern	2/10	Lover's Lake	
Great Blue Heron	29/8	Causeway	
Great Egret	2/10	Spittal Pond	
Snowy Egret	3/10	Spittal Pond	
Little Blue Heron	31/8	North Shore	
Cattle Egret	12/10	Jubilee Road	
Green Heron	11/9	Seymour's Pond	
Black-crowned Night-Heron	8/10	Great Bay	
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	11/9	S.Princess GC Pond	
Canada Goose (MD)	6/10	Flatts	Early by 16 days.
Wood Duck	9/10	Port Royal GC Pond	
Green-winged Teal	22/9	Spittal Pond	
American Black Duck	19/10	Mid-Ocean GC Dump	
Northern Pintail	17/10	Spittal Pond	
Blue-winged Teal	21/8	Spittal Pond	
Northern Shoveler	12/9	S.Long Bay NR	
Eurasian Wigeon	23/10	Bartram's Pond	
American Wigeon	19/10	Mid-Ocean GC Dump	
Ring-necked Duck	18/10	Cloverdale/Spittal Pond	
Ruddy Duck	26/10	Jubilee Road	
Osprey (DBW)	7/9	Nonsuch	Early by 4 days.
Northern Harrier	18/9	Alton Hill	
American Kestrel	4/10	Talbot Estate	
Merlin	11/9	Smith's/Nonsuch	
Peregrine Falcon	14/9	Cedar Grove Fields	
Sora	2/9	Pembroke Marsh	
Virginia Rail	19/10	Spittal Pond	
Common Moorhen	12/9	Roberts Ave.	
American Coot	29/9	Cloverdale	
Black-bellied Plover	25/8	USNAS	
American Golden-Plover	4/9	USNAS	
Semipalmated Plover	3/8	Spittal Pond	
Piping Plover	29/7	Grape Bay	
Killdeer	12/8	North Pond	
Greater Yellowlegs	31/7	Spittal Pond	
Lesser Yellowlegs	17/7	Spittal Pond	
Solitary Sandpiper	31/7	Warwick Pond	
Willet	22/8	Riddell's Bay	
Spotted Sandpiper	16/7	Spittal Pond	
Upland Sandpiper	31/8	CAT	
Whimbrel	6/8	CAT	
Ruddy Turnstone	4/8	S.Princess GC Pond	
Red Knot	4/9	Spittal Pond	

Sanderling	26/8	USNAS	
Semipalmated Sandpiper	22/7	Spittal Pond	
Western Sandpiper	24/7	Spittal Pond	
Least Sandpiper	30/7	Warwick Pond	
White-rumped Sandpiper	9/8	Warwick Pond	
Baird's Sandpiper (DBW)	17/9	St.George's Dairy	First since 1981.
Pectoral Sandpiper	28/7	Warwick Pond	
Dunlin	30/8	Warwick Pond	
Curlew Sandpiper (LM/PH)	9/7	Spittal Pond	5th Bermuda record. Last 1987.
Stilt Sandpiper	26/7	Spittal Pond	
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	22/9	USNAS	
Ruff	29/9	Port Royal GC	
Short-billed Dowitcher	8/8	North Pond	
Long-billed Dowitcher	25/8	Warwick Pond	
Common Snipe	5/9	Little Sound/Talbot Estate	
Wilson's Phalarope	11/9	Spittal Pond	
Red-necked Phalarope (JM)	3/11	Marsh Lane	First Fall mainland record
Laughing Gull	21/9	Coney Island	
Common Black-headed Gull	19/10	Airport Dump	
Ring-billed Gull	21/9	Wreck Point	
Herring Gull	19/9	Mills Creek	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	7/10	Dockyard	
Great Black-backed Gull	6/10	Dockyard	
Common Tern	24/8	Dockyard	
Least Tern	24/8	Dockyard	
Black Tern	28/8	Dockyard	
Black-billed Cuckoo	14/9	Tucker's Town(Found dead)	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	27/9	Astwood Park	
Long-eared Owl (DWa)	3/11	Coral Beach Club	Possibly the first healthy bird found this century.
Common Nighthawk	15/9	Astwood Park/Prospect	
Whip-poor-will (SD)	16/10	Fort Scaur	Bermuda's second record!
Chimney Swift	26/8	Port Royal GC	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird (GM)	30/8	Sayle Road	One day earlier than Beebe's 1929 record!
Belted Kingfisher	24/7	Spittal Pond	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1/10	Tudor Hill	
Northern Flicker	19/10	Spittal Pond	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	7/9	Ferry Point Park	
Least Flycatcher	25/9	Talbot Estate	
Empidonax Flycatcher sp.	5/9	Nonsuch	
Say's Phoebe (EA)	17/9	Morgan's Hill	New Bermuda record.
Western Kingbird	10/10	Lukes Farm	
Eastern Kingbird	1/9	Arboretum	
Grey Kingbird (AD/RP)	4/9	Coney Island	Early by 3 days.
Purple Martin	23/8	St.George's Dairy	
Tree Swallow	28/8	Port Royal GC	
Bank Swallow	22/8	Riddell's Bay GC	
Cliff Swallow	28/8	Port Royal GC	
Barn Swallow	19/7	S.Long Bay NR	

Ruby-crowned Kinglet	14/10	Wreck Hill	
Veery	2/10	Little Head Park	
Grey-cheeked Thrush	2/10	Ferry Point Park	
Swainson's Thrush	1/10	Cooper's Island	
Hermit Thrush	23/10	The Peak	
American Pipit	17/10	Daniels Head Farm	
Cedar Waxwing	1/10	Paget Island	
Northern Shrike (DWa)	14/10	Ferry Point Park	Early by 10 days.
White-eyed Vireo (N. Am.)	3/10	Astwood Park	
Solitary Vireo (AD/DWa)	14/10	Bio Station	First since 1989.
Yellow-throated Vireo	6/9	Tom Moores Mangroves	
Warbling Vireo	15/9	Tom Moores Mangroves	
Philadelphia Vireo (DBW)	14/9	Nonsuch	Early by 5 days.
Red-eyed Vireo	7/8	Spittal Pond	
Blue-winged Warbler	26/8	Astwood Park	
Golden-winged Warbler	29/9	Coral Beach/Port Royal GC	
Tennessee Warbler	6/9	Arboretum	
Nashville Warbler	16/9	Spittal Pond	
Northern Parula	12/9	Riddell's Bay GC	
Yellow Warbler (DWa)	30/7	Riddell's Bay GC	Joint early record.
Chestnut-sided Warbler	6/9	Tom Moores Mangroves	
Magnolia Warbler	14/9	Astwood Park	
Cape May Warbler	30/9	Astwood Park	
Black-throated Blue Warbler (EA)	27/8	DH Park	Early by 10 days.
Yellow-rumped Warbler (LM)	16/9	Shelly Bay Marsh	Early by 3 days.
Black-throated Green Warbler	26/8	Ferry Point Park	
Blackburnian Warbler	30/8	Coney Island	
Yellow-throated Warbler	31/8	S.Princess GC	
Pine Warbler	2/10	Astwood Park	
Prairie Warbler	31/8	Spittal Pond	
Palm Warbler	30/9	Port Royal GC	
Bay-breasted Warbler	15/9	Shelly Bay Marsh	
Blackpoll Warbler	14/9	Tulo Valley	
Cerulean Warbler	20/8	Riddell's Bay GC	
Black-and-white Warbler	9/8	Riddell's Bay GC	
American Redstart	8/8	Port Royal GC	
Prothonotary Warbler	30/7	Walsingham	
Worm-eating Warbler	18/8	Bartram's Pond	
Swainson's Warbler	16/9	Tom Moores Mangroves	
Ovenbird	21/8	Port Royal GC	
Northern Waterthrush	9/8	Riddell's Bay GC/Coney Island	
Louisiana Waterthrush	8/8	Camden Ditch	
Kentucky Warbler	22/8	Coral Beach	
Connecticut Warbler	25/9	Spittal Pond	
Mourning Warbler	31/8	Spittal Pond	
Common Yellowthroat	28/8	Port Royal GC	
Hooded Warbler	23/8	Tom Moores Mangroves	
Wilson's Warbler	29/8	Ocean View GC	Early by 9 days.
Canada Warbler	25/8	Jenningsland	
Yellow-breasted Chat (DWA)	26/8	Coral Beach	Early by 5 days.

Summer Tanager (EA)	31/8	Arboretum	Early by 1 days.
Scarlet Tanager	29/9	Cooper's Island	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	17/9	Hog Bay Park	
Blue Grosbeak	14/9	Pembroke Dump/Spittal Pond	
Indigo Bunting	26/9	Annex	
Dickcissel	20/9	Hog Bay Park	
Chipping Sparrow	29/9	Port Royal GC	
Field Sparrow (EA)	13/10	Bio Station	Early by 6 days.
Savannah Sparrow	2/10	Talbot Estate	
Grasshopper Sparrow	4/10	Talbot Estate	
Sharp-tailed Sparrow (EA)	13/10	Cedar Grove Fields	New Bermuda record.
Song Sparrow	24/10	Coney Island	
Lincoln's Sparrow	4/10	Talbot Estate	
White-throated Sparrow	18/10	Shelly Bay	
White-crowned Sparrow (BAS)	1/10	Paget Island	Early by 2 days.
Bobolink	6/9	USNAS	
Northern Oriole	1/9	Jenningsland	

Earliest Record

Observers -

EA - Eric Amos
SD - Steven DeSilva
AD - Andrew Dobson
MD - Mary Draycott
HG - Hugh Griffiths
AH - Andrew Harford
PH - Peter Holmes
GM - Gary Morris
JM - Jeremy Madeiros
LM - Leila Madeiros
BO - Bernard Oatley
BAS - Bermuda Audubon Society
PS - Penny Soares
DWa - David Wallace
DBW - David Wingate

All records have been submitted and printed in good faith.

Audubon members are encouraged to submit any interesting bird records, or telephone the Audubon Hotline - 238 3239

Andrew Dobson
Bermuda Audubon Society

An Ocean Birder

by Paul Watson

I have been lucky enough to complete several ocean crossings since I arrived in Bermuda in 1989 - on sailing yachts and on Weatherbird II, the Biological Station's research vessel. June 17th 1994 saw the start of my first ocean yacht race - the Newport to Bermuda race. In between time at the helm or winching sails on the yacht *Dillightful*, I did manage to spend a little time birding. The race started windy and sunny with plenty of the common gulls and terns. Once offshore, one or two Red-throated Loons were seen plus Great and Cory's Shearwaters and Wilson's Storm-Petrel. A few hours into the race the fog and drizzle set in, making birding difficult, as did the 4 hours on - 4 hours off shift!

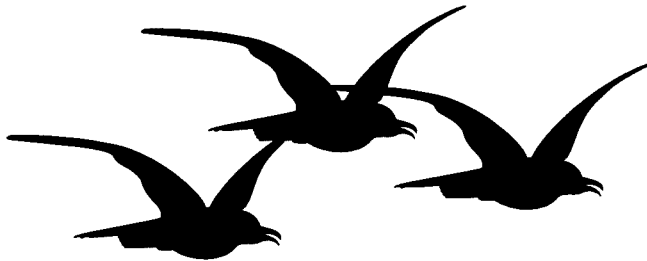
The morning of the 18th saw fog and very light rain, with 50 feet visibility. It was eerie to see both Great and Cory's Shearwaters flying towards the yacht out of the mist only to disappear again. With light winds, large rafts of Leach's and Wilson's Storm-Petrels were sitting around on the ocean. As the day progressed, the sun shone and lots of shearwaters and petrels were seen. A Least Tern was recorded about 80 miles offshore, probably still migrating north, and a couple of pods of pilot whales were

also noted. The highlight of the day was undoubtedly a Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, which breeds on the east side of the Atlantic and is rarely seen this side of the Pond! Throughout the crossing, shearwaters and petrels were seen as well as dolphins - (mainly White-sided and Pantropical-spotted) which rode the bow of the yacht.

The Gulf Stream is the highlight of the ocean crossing for most birders (a higher concentration of fish attracts more birds) but the only bird of note was an Audubon's Shearwater which flew off just in time as the yacht approached - providing me with splendid views of a good bird.

The first Longtail was seen about 265 miles north of Bermuda, but they became more numerous as we neared home. Many flying fish and small flying squid were also noted, and shearwaters were seen all the way to the finish line at St. David's. Returning back along North Shore a Laughing Gull was seen.

If you love seabirds as I do, and you have a good stomach, try an ocean crossing - it can be rewarding not only for birds, but for whales and dolphins too!



SPECIAL OFFER

from the Bermuda National Trust

Revised Edition of Bermuda's Delicate Balance

edited by Stuart Hayward

Rapid economic growth with its attendant development, traffic congestion and consumption, threatens the health of the island's fragile environment.

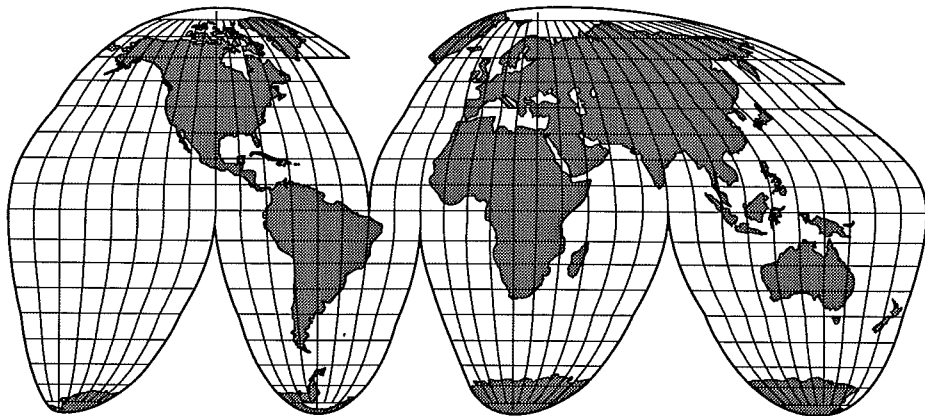
The new book contains data that is both current and relevant. New data is compared to the original data from the late 70's. The text is far more readable than the first edition and the book has expanded from 400 to 650 pages.

Here is a wonderful opportunity to purchase in advance, copies of **Bermuda's Delicate Balance** for yourself, your family and your friends.

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This book will be available in stores in December for approximately \$26.

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Audubon Natural History Camp 1994

by *Gretchen Hasselbring*

A smile crossed my face as I sat at school, mourning the fact that summer was over. The smile reflected the week I had spent on Nonsuch Island with a group of naturalists and naturalists-to-be. I thought of how I saw a turtle on the boat ride over to Nonsuch Island and knew it was going to be a great experience.

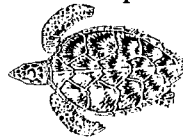
We had tours of Nonsuch's environments by their creator, and our host, Dr. David Wingate. Other terrestrial environments that we visited included Spittal Pond, Paget Marsh, and Tom Moore's Jungle. We learned the problems of Madagascar buddleia while trekking across Paget Marsh. We visited one of the most beautiful places in Bermuda when we went to Deep Blue cave at Tom Moore's Jungle. Even the people that suffered poison ivy from the path thought it was worth it.

A lot of our field trips were snorkeling trips to study the marine environment. We snorkeled in Harrington Sound, Castle Harbour, Walsingham Pond and at North Rock. We used quadrants to record the ocean bottom. Other instruments we used were thermometers to measure temperature and a Secchi disk to measure visibility. We learned that C.R.A.P. (carbon rich aggregate particles) are at the bottom of the marine food chain. Some of the snorkelers caught an injured little Hawksbill Turtle with a missing flipper on one of our off-shore trips. It was taken to the Aquarium for rehabilitation.

When we returned from all of these expeditions we had quite an appetite. Roz Collins was our kitchen coordinator and instructed the kitchen crew on how to get dinner to us as quickly as possible! Our evenings were anything but free time.

Many evenings were spent listening to lectures. One night we viewed microscopic monsters (from a night plankton tow). We were not without the comforts of home. On two occasions we went to the "open-air movies". I'll never forget handing the ticket-taker, camp director Andy Fields, my olivewood leaf ticket and taking my seat on Dr. Wingate's front steps. There was the occasional interruption by a night-heron flying across the screen. Later, everyone would be snug on their air mattresses... The instructors in their area, and the girls and boys in their separate areas. The girls ended each evening with stand-up comedy and a game of crazy eights. Even though I can't speak for everyone, I believe a good time was had by all.

On the last day we competed in games on the beach, including an egg snorkel relay, flipper race, and the dizzying relay. We ended the evening with a campfire on the South Beach. A Giant Land Crab came out of hiding to join the party on the beach. There was much singing - of old girl-guide songs and English rugby tunes alike. It was a happy ending to an exciting week. I returned home tired, sad to leave the camp, but with a knowledgeable smile on my face, glad to have been a part of Audubon Camp 94.



Editor's note: Gretchen was the top student at this year's camp. A big "thank you" is due to the staff who ran this year's camp - Duncan Ashworth, Brenda Chandler, Roz Collins, Andrew Dobson, Fiona Doe and Andy Fields. A great debt of thanks is also offered to Richard Winchell and BAMZ, and to the chief lecturer David Wingate.

Paget Island Birding Weekend

— by Andrew Dobson

Seventeen Audubon members camped on Paget Island for a birding weekend at the beginning of October. The two previous camps in 1992 and 1993 had recorded 54 and 60 species respectively, but thanks to a double frontal weather system that had passed over Bermuda only a couple of days before, we managed 76 species, most of which were migrant species.

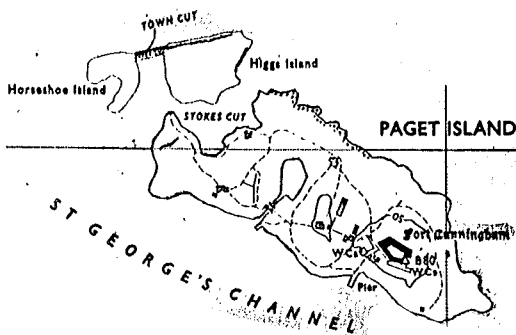
After a successful search for warblers on Paget Island, we spent the rest of Saturday morning checking the east end of St. George's Island. A small pond on the dairy farm hosted a good range of shorebirds while the golf club casuarinas and bushes had attracted a wide range of warblers. A Scarlet Tanager was watched drinking and bathing in a small puddle, seemingly oblivious to an admiring audience. A Silver-haired Bat flying just over our heads at 11.30 am was the biggest surprise of the day.

A trip onto the US Naval Air Station in the afternoon was equally rewarding (once we had got past MacDonalds!). The Ruth's Point trash dump not only attracts flies, but birds to feed on them - so three species of swallow, a Purple Martin and Chimney Swift added to our growing list. Nearby a stunning Rose-breasted Grosbeak caused our convey of cars to halt abruptly. Coopers Island was full of birds - including a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Swainson's Thrush and a magnificent male plumaged American Redstart.

A refreshing swim back on Paget Island, followed by a sumptuous barbecue, gave us time to reflect on a very full and rewarding day's birding - surely Sunday couldn't be as good.

Most of Sunday morning was spent in Ferry Point Park, and it was difficult to leave the area around the car park - more thrushes (Grey-checked and Swainson's), more warblers (notably a male Wilson's) and another White-crowned Sparrow. It was just as well we made it to Lover's Lake, where an American Bittern rose up out of the mangroves. A brief visit to Little Head Park in the afternoon was equally successful - a Black-billed Cuckoo, an elusive Veery (our third thrush species) and another day flying migrant Silver-haired Bat!

Many thanks to all those who made the weekend a great success. Such was the enthusiasm of the group that there is a proposal to visit the mecca of North American migration - Cape May, in 1995.





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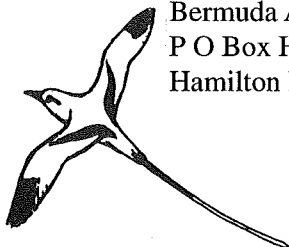
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Future Events

Saturday November 12	Working Party - Devonshire Marsh 9.00am Old Chapel - Jubilee Road
Sunday November 20	Arbor Day - Devonshire Marsh 2.00pm Old Chapel - Jubilee Road
Sunday December 4	Field Trip - Blue Hole Park 2.00pm Meet at carpark
Dec./Jan	Christmas Bird Count Date to be arranged
Saturday January 14	Working Party - Walsingham 9.00am Tom Moores Tavern
Sunday January 29	Field Trip - Abbot's Cliff 2.00pm Meet at Abbot's Cliff Road

Tel. 238 3239 For information on any event.