

PEOPLE AND PLACES

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE ABA FAMILY

Birding welcomes your contributions to “People and Places.” Please e-mail your submissions to Ted Floyd <tfloyd@aba.org>. Submissions must be 125–150 words in length. No want-ads. Other than that, all birding-related news items will be eagerly received.

Stamp Campaign Spreads

With 98% of the proceeds from sales of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (formerly the “Duck Stamp”) directed to secure wetland and grassland bird habitat, supporters of the stamp remind us that “it’s not just ducks” which benefit. Supporters of the stamp have begun a campaign of circulating creative public service announcements, or “PSAs” <<http://tiny.cc/AO6SP>>. The team responsible for the PSAs consists of the following people, many of whom will be familiar to ABA members: Paul Baicich, former editor of *Birding*; Vaughn Collins, former head of the Federal Duck Stamp Office; Bill Hartwig, former chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System; Bill Stewart, conservation chairman of the Delmarva Ornithological Society; Jim Williams, former vice president of the Minnesota Ornithologists’ Union; Barbara Volkle, president of the Friends of the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge; and Ric Zarwell, Senior Scientist with Natural Resources Consulting, Inc.

— contributed by Paul J. Baicich

Climate Change and Birds

Audubon California has been employing Christmas Bird Count data to model how California birds will be affected by climate change—and has gained insights into what humans can do to help these birds. Climate change could cause declines in a third of California bird species, but those impacts could be greatly reduced if immediate action is taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The endemic Yellow-billed Magpie, for instance, could lose up to 75% of its range under the worst emissions scenarios, but as little as 9% if action is taken now. For years, people have made substantial investments in conservation with their fingers crossed that their work won’t simply be erased by climate change. These new predictions provide insights for making better investments to protect birds and their habitats.

More information is available at the Audubon California website <<http://tiny.cc/dqgvK>>.

— contributed by Gary Langham

Seabird Rehabilitation

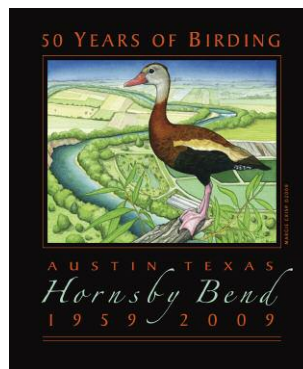
Save Our Seabirds (SOS) is a Florida-based nonprofit organization dedicated to providing rehabilitation to injured seabirds and other bird species. SOS provides medical attention and equipment for injured birds, food for the birds, and a rehabilitation facility with holding areas that resemble the birds’ natural habitats. Members, staff, and volunteers rescue injured birds, then provide proper triage, treatment, and rehabilitation as needed, and then finally release rehabilitated birds back into their natural environments. In some instances, an injured bird cannot be released because its injury is permanent; the bird would not be able to survive on its own in the wild. In that event, the bird remains at an SOS sanctuary where staff members provide the bird with a home and attempt to provide an environment similar to the one it inhabited in the wild. More information is available at the SOS website <<http://tiny.cc/fTVFw>>.

— contributed by Shawn Smith

Hornsby Bend Celebration

Hundreds of birders celebrated 50 years of birding at the Hornsby Bend wastewater facility in Austin, Texas, with an event 8–11 October 2009 <<http://tiny.cc/FYncq>>. Rob Fergus kicked off the celebration with a workshop highlighted by calling in Barred Owls and showing more than 70 participants how owls see the world and how to help owls in yards and neighborhoods. On Saturday, birders participated in several public bird walks while six birding teams scoured the 1,200-acre facility to tally 124 bird species, including more than 4,000 migrating Swainson’s Hawks. After the morning’s birding, the Travis Audubon Society provided lunch and dinner for those staying to enjoy an afternoon and evening of presentations and sharing of birding stories. Event organizer Julia Balinsky sold more than 100 Hornsby Bend t-shirts featuring artwork by Margie Crisp, and the celebration concluded on Sunday with a “big sit” at the ponds.

— contributed by Rob Fergus



Birders recently celebrated 50 years of enjoyable field study at the **Hornsby Bend** wastewater facility in Austin, Texas.

Sonoran Desert Education

The 40th Annual Institute of Desert Ecology will take place at Catalina State Park, in the foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains near Tucson, starting 15 April 2010. Students and experts will unite in a four-day learning experiencing focused on learning about the Sonoran Desert. A key focus will be Sonoran Desert ecosystems, emphasizing the dynamic relationships among birds, other animals, plants, and the physical elements of the desert. Classes include birds, herps (reptiles and amphibians), mammals, insects, botany, and geology. Evening activities include opportunities to learn about owls, to see nocturnal invertebrates, and to explore the night sky, all with expert teachers. Participants and faculty interact in small groups during the first three days; the highlight of the fourth and final day is a group hike. For more information, visit Tucson Audubon's website <<http://tiny.cc/GsL3E>> or contact Matt Brooks, Institute Director, by telephone (520-622-2230) or e-mail <mbrooks@tucsonaudubon.org>.

— contributed by Matthew Griffiths



Photo by © Nils Navarro.

Cuban Kite Discovery

The Cuban Kite (*Chondroierax wilsonii*), endemic to Cuba, is designated by BirdLife International as Critically Endangered. In 2004 Cuban biologist Ernesto Reyes photographed a Cuban Kite in the area surrounding Humboldt

Park in Guantánamo province. The photo quality was poor but adequate to show that the bird was indeed a Cuban Kite. On 3 December 2009 it was officially announced that Reyes and his expedition partner, Nils Navarro, had recently discovered another Cuban Kite; they were able to obtain photographic documentation of their find; see accompanying image. It is hoped that another expedition will be funded to obtain better-quality photos of this endangered rare bird; an additional goal will be to obtain information on the population status of the Cuban Kite. Research by Reyes and Navarro has been supported by donations of camera equipment via the ABA's Birders' Exchange program <aba.org/bex>.

— contributed by Betty Petersen

New from the ABA: *Let's Go Birding!*

This guide for beginning birders is unlike any other on the market. *Let's Go Birding!* is fun, fast, and friendly—designed for a beginner who wants to get up to speed quickly. Expert birder Ned Brinkley says, "Rich in wise counsel and understanding, this pithy text is part manifesto, part mantra, part mentor."

The text encourages you to start birding right where you are—in the suburbs, in the big city, anywhere. Then, by focusing your attention on the most common birds in your area, you quickly start to acquire the skills of the expert birder. Topics covered include learning birdsong, keeping a field notebook, understanding behavior and ecology, and many others. *Let's Go Birding!* also emphasizes conservation, education, and getting involved in the work of the American Birding Association.

- ❑ Text by Ted Floyd, *Editor* of *Birding* magazine and a prominent advocate of the "whole bird" approach to identification.
- ❑ Color photographs by Bill Schmoker, a bird photographer with numerous credits in major field guides and nature magazines.

This handsome guide features 48 full-color photos, and its 32 pages are packed full of information on everything you need to get started. *Let's Go Birding!* is available for **FREE for a limited time to new members who join the ABA**. It is available through Buteo Books for only \$4.95. You can also get a free copy of *Let's Go Birding!* when you sign up for either of Eagle Optics' beginning birder kits. For more information go to aba.org/abasales.

Order your copy today, and join in all the birding fun! If you are already an advanced birder, please consider giving *Let's Go Birding!* as a gift to an aspiring birder.

