



From the President - Birds in Crisis

The year has only just begun and the SCSCB Board is already involved with some crucial bird-related issues. All of them involve the potential loss of habitat for some of our endemic birds. On behalf of the SCSCB, I have been in contact with representatives of other bird organisation in an effort to save the habitat for our birds. A huge amount of time is being spent by many people to write and speak to government leaders, developers, hotel executives, mining companies and others.

In July 2006, the SCSCB Board held a strategic planning meeting in Jamaica. We were lucky enough to include a fieldtrip to the **Cockpit Country**. This area is Jamaica's most significant natural resource, globally exceptional for its biodiversity, and it is threatened by bauxite mining. I make no apologies if you have already been asked to sign the petition to save the Cockpit Country. You can find background information at: http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2006/10/cockpit_country.html and <http://www.cockpitcountry.org/> There have been recent developments. A very active Cockpit Country Stakeholders Group (CCSG) has been established, and prospecting licenses issued by the government have been suspended due to pressure from CCSG. However, we now need as many voices as possible raised in protest against mining in Cockpit Country, so on behalf of the CCSG I would like to invite you all to support Jamaicans in their efforts to save Cockpit Country. The petition to Save Cockpit Country is at: <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/848967167> Please encourage others to sign also.

A potential development in Grenada could be equally disastrous. As you may know, Mount Hartman National Park, one of the last remaining refuges of Grenada's national bird, the **Grenada Dove**, is threatened by the proposed development of a luxury resort supported by the Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts group. The SCSCB Board is shocked and dismayed by the imminent threat to the Grenada Dove, a unique and irreplaceable aspect of Grenada's national heritage. The SCSCB is not opposed to development - we clearly recognize the need for economic growth and prosperity. However this must proceed in ways that do not threaten our valuable natural assets and those things that are uniquely Grenadian.

Mount Hartman National Park is particularly valuable in this regard. This area was previously prioritized for protection to conserve one of, if not the most, threatened species of bird in the entire Lesser Antilles, the Grenada Dove. The Mount Hartman National Park was established in 1996. As research has clearly shown, the Dove is so sensitive to human disturbance, it is virtually impossible to mitigate against either the direct (habitat



Critically endangered and facing serious threats to its survival: the Grenada Dove. Photo by Bonnie Rusk.

loss) and indirect effects (habitat fragmentation, human disturbance due to increased traffic, etc) of a development. Sacrificing this irreplaceable population of what is truly a Caribbean gem for yet another tourism venture is an action the world will hold against us all in perpetuity. The Grenada Dove predates all human presence in the Caribbean by thousands of years. Human actions which threaten its survival are irresponsible, short-sighted, and clearly do not represent sustainable development.

This crisis has attracted the attention of environmental NGOs, government conservation departments, private sector organizations, universities, and concerned groups and individuals from across the region, North America and Europe. So what can you do to help? Visit a new website at: <http://www.grenadadovecampaign.com/> The website has been developed by Graeme Gibson who along with his wife Margaret Atwood are joint Honorary Presidents, of BirdLife International's Rare Bird Club. It provides a link to a sample letter that can automatically be sent to the leaders at the Four Seasons, Michael Pemberton (the developer), Grenada Prime Minister Keith Mitchell and the leader of the Grenada opposition party and to Bill Gates who presently owns 6.6% of the Four Seasons and is negotiating to purchase considerably more. It also has considerable background on the situation. You can also visit: www.scscb.org – click on ‘News’ and read the ‘Take Action’ article, there is a sample letter there also.

Many of you will also have heard of the threat to the equally critically endangered **Puerto Rican Nightjar**. A locally created company in Puerto Rico, WindMar Renewable Energy, Inc., proposes the development of an industrial wind energy complex in the Important Bird Area (IBA) “Karso del Sur” (South Karst). This IBA is the main habitat for the Puerto Rican Nightjar (*Caprimulgus noctitherus*), which has a total estimated population of 1,400-2,000 individuals. Dr. Michael Fry of the American Bird Conservancy “encouraged the Wind Energy Industry to plan for avoidance of Important Bird Areas, Wildlife Refuges, Critical Habitats, and Significant Migration Corridors.” You can read a full report at: http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2007/01/puerto_rico_windfarms.html If you would like further details, please contact:

Engineer Luis Silvestre (Spokesperson)
 Puerto Rican Ornithological Society
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 Tel: 1 (787) 637-3599, Fax: 1 (787) 255-0666
 Email: luissilv2000@gmail.com

Meanwhile, some of our migrant and wintering species are facing problems too. Recently highlighted have been the Piping Plover and Cerulean Warbler:

http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2006/12/piping_plover.html
http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2006/12/cerulean_warbler.html

Next SCSCB Meeting - July 2007

The 16th Regional Meeting of the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds, **July 19-23 2007, San Juan, Puerto Rico**. The meeting, hosted locally by Sociedad Ornitológica Puertorriqueña, Inc. (and other organizations and institutions), will take place at the Centro de Estudios Avansados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe (CEAPRC) in Old San Juan. We have a contract with the Sheraton in Old San Juan for specially-priced rooms. Delegates will also have the option of staying at one of several hotels in the vicinity, all within walking distance of the CEAPRC. The

Local Organizing Committee is working very hard on meeting and mid and post-conference field trip arrangements. We expect to have hotel and meeting registration materials and a call for papers ready to send out very soon. We are still working on the agenda, so please let us know of particular training workshops you would like to have at the next meeting. Mark your calendars and plan to attend - more information to come soon!

Traveling to Puerto Rico: Please check with your local U.S. Embassy and determine if you will need a **visa** to travel to Puerto Rico. If you need assistance with obtaining a visa (e.g., a letter of invitation), please let us know as soon as possible.

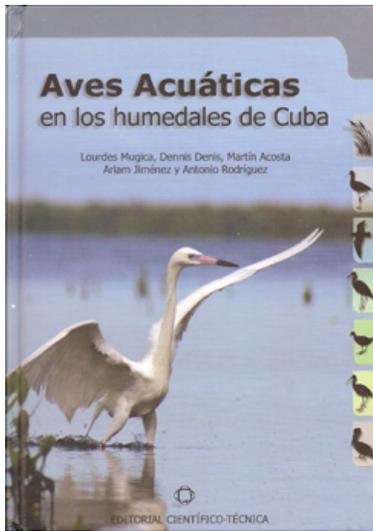
Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival 2007

Plans for the 6th edition of the Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival are underway. This year, for the first time, we will adopt a theme for the festival: **global warming**. We are preparing a poster about global warming impacts on the Caribbean and its bird life and also a fact sheet. We are also pleased that we will be able to offer the Small Grants program again to festival organizers. See the SCSCB website (www.scsb.org - click on Programs) for the latest news on the festival plans for 2007. See also the Summary Report, Full Report, and many superb photos from 2006 celebrations that are now posted on the CEBF pages – a great resource for ideas and inspiration! For more information, contact Sheylda Diaz Mendez, CEBF Coordinator (otoarina77@yahoo.com).



New Cuba Waterbirds Book Available

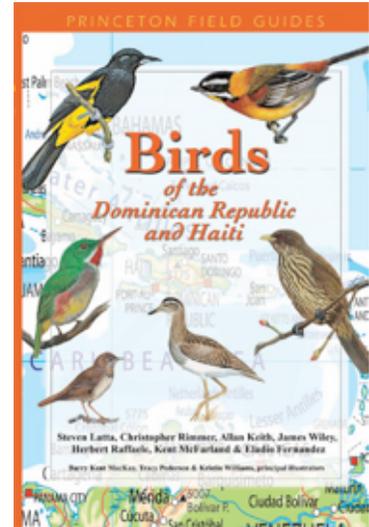
A beautiful new book on the birds of the wetlands of Cuba has been published by Cuban authors Lourdes Mugica, Dennis Denis, Martin Acosta, Ariam Jiménez and Antonio Rodríguez. *Aves acuáticas en los humedales de Cuba* is packed full of information on the ecology and conservation of Cuba's diverse wetlands and bird life, including detailed information from recent research by the authors. An abundance of colorful graphics, photographs, graphs, and informative sidebars and boxes, make the book a pleasure to explore. Comments Steve Latta in his review of the book in the *Journal of Caribbean Ornithology* (in press), "It should serve as a model for other such efforts to help translate research results into conservation practice, and to inform and inspire a new generation of avian conservation biologists." Copies of the book can be purchased from the Natural History Book Service (NHBS), 2-3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XN, UK. A percentage of the cover price is donated to Cuban conservation projects.



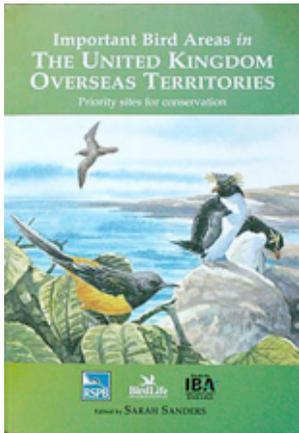
New Local Field Guide: Birds of Hispaniola

A new guide to the Birds of the Dominican Republic and Haiti has been completed by Steven, Latta, Chris Rimmer, and Eladio Fernandez, along with co-authors Alan Keith, Jim Wiley, Herb Raffaele, and Kent McFarland. This is the first comprehensive and fully-illustrated guide to the more than 300 species of birds found on the island of Hispaniola. Beautifully illustrated, the guide provides detailed species accounts, including information on key field marks, similar species, voice,

habitats, behavior, ecology, geographic distribution on Hispaniola, status, nesting, range, and local names used in both the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The guide also emphasizes the importance of promoting the conservation of migratory and resident birds, and building support for environmental measures. With publication in English, Spanish and French, the guide will undoubtedly inspire a new generation of birdwatchers, ornithologists, and conservationists. The English edition is available from the Princeton University Press (<http://press.princeton.edu/titles/8270.html>). Both the Spanish (Aves de la República Dominicana y Haiti) and the French (Les oiseaux d'Haiti et de la République Dominicaine) editions are available from the Sociedad Ornitológica de la Hispaniola (SOH) office in Santo Domingo. For more information, email Projects Director, Jorge Brocca: jorgeluisbrocca@yahoo.com.ar



IBA Directory of UK's Overseas Territories Launched



The RSPB has just launched a new publication - Important Bird Areas in the United Kingdom Overseas Territories, priority sites for conservation, which includes IBAs for Caribbean islands such as Montserrat, Bermuda, Cayman, Turks and Caicos, British Virgin Islands and Anguilla. Threatened species include the Critically Endangered Montserrat Oriole *Icterus oberi*, which is confined to Montserrat and lost more than half of its range following a devastating volcanic eruption in 1997. The Directory of Important Bird Areas in the UK's Overseas Territories was authored by the RSPB's Sarah Sanders. For more information, see: http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2006/10/ukot_ibas.html

SCSCB Website (www.scscb.org) - New Updates!

New material has been added to several pages (Contact Us/Board, Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival (CEBF), Local Field Guide pages). We are also working on a Spanish version of the website and hope to have this ready soon. We hope also that everyone is enjoying the 'Bird of the Month.' We are in need of contributions to this feature (see guidelines in the last issue of this newsletter, July 2006). Please consider sharing with us the interesting natural history of your favourite local bird. Send your submission to Lisa Sorenson (LSoren@bu.edu). All contributors will be acknowledged on the webpage.



Bicknell's Thrush – Bird of the Month, January 2007. Photo by T. Brandt Ryder

Journal of Caribbean Ornithology Update

Our editor-in-chief, Floyd Hayes, reports that volume 19(2) should be ready by the end of March. Detailed instructions for authors and other information about JCO (e.g. previous volumes, advertising, etc.) is available on SCSCB's website (from the home page at www.scscb.org, click on Publications). Floyd is ready for new manuscripts so send your research papers in!

A Neotropical Companion: An Introduction to the Animals, Plants and Ecosystems of the New World Tropics - Now available in Spanish!

Birders' Exchange, a program of the American Birding Association, is pleased to announce the availability of its Spanish language version of the highly acclaimed book, *A Neotropical Companion, An Introduction to the Animals, Plants and Ecosystems of the New World Tropics* by John Kricher. Birders' Exchange is distributing copies of the book at no cost to individuals and organizations throughout the Neotropics. SCSCB has already received 3 boxes (48 books)—we will distribute these at our meeting in San Juan this July to our colleagues from the DR, Puerto Rico and Cuba. We would also like to ask delegates from the DR and Cuba to carry back copies for the various NGOs, libraries and institutions in their country. Our sincere thanks to Birders' Exchange for this wonderful book, which will be of benefit to so many people.

Report on Bird Education Conference

SCSCB members Lisa Sorenson (SCSCB), Lynn Gape and Cecilia Boden (Bahamas National Trust) and Andrea Fender-Longman (Jamaica Environment Trust) attended a conference "Bird Conservation Through Education National Gathering" in Austin, Texas, Feb. 5-8, 2007. The meeting was an ambitious effort to bring together bird educators from around the country and beyond to share experiences and examine potential shared goals. It was hosted by the Council for Environmental Education and the associated FlyingWILD program. Originally, there were about 75 attendees expected, but more than 150 actually participated.



Andrea Fender-Longman at our display table featuring Caribbean educational materials; Bird Education Conference in Austin, Texas, February, 2007.

There were presentations on "Educating About Priority Conservation Issues," "Climate Change and Birds: Planning for Education," "Evaluating Bird Education Efforts," "Ecotourism and the Education Link," and the "Decade Past and the Decade Ahead for Bird Education," among many other topics. There were multiple presentations and discussions on techniques, methodology, evaluation, audiences, and background where it dealt with bird education. Lisa, Lynn, and Andrea gave presentations on bird outreach and education initiatives in the Caribbean, including The West Indian Whistling-Duck and Wetlands Conservation Project, Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival, IBA Program and Bird Education Teacher Training Workshops. All three presentations highlighted the importance of increasing awareness

and appreciation of the Caribbean's unique bird life and the value of using birds as springboards for conservation action in the region. "The four of us learned a great deal and came away with so many new ideas for the Caribbean" commented Sorenson.

SCSCB BOARD 2007-2008

The Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds is governed by an elected Board of Directors including the President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer and up to five at-large members. In addition the Board includes the Past-president and the editor of Journal of Caribbean Ornithology (who is selected by the Board of Directors). The President may serve only for two consecutive terms, after which a two-year break must occur before he/she may run for office again. The officers serve for two years and there is no limit to the number of times they can stand for office.

Following elections at the end of 2006, the Board consists of:

President: Mr. Andrew Dobson

Vice-President: Dr. Lisa Sorenson

Secretary: Dr. Ann Haynes Sutton

Treasurer: Dr. Rosemarie Gnam

Past-President: Mr. Eric Carey

Journal Editor: Dr. Floyd Hayes

Members At Large: Mr. Anthony Levesque, Dr. Lourdes Mugica, Mr. Joseph Prosper, Ms. Florence Sergile, Mrs. Carolyn Wardle

We welcome the new Board members, Anthony, Joseph, and Florence, and look forward to working together with everyone over the next two years. Our sincere thanks to outgoing Board members, Adrienne Tossas, Jeremy Madeiros, and Brandon Hay for their service to the Society.

Other Upcoming Meetings

The **8th Neotropical Ornithological Congress**, together with the Unión Venezolana de Ornitólogos will be held in Maturín, Móngas, Venezuela 13-19 May 2007. Go to the website to check for the call for papers, schedule of events and registration details. www.neotropicalornithology.org/

Volunteer Position Descriptions

NICARAGUA: For more information about the following volunteer assignment please contact Kimberly Kaine at the Coastal Resources Center at: kkaine@crc.uri.edu

Title: Ornithology Specialist

Description: To train local community members and tour guides to identify and describe the various bird species in the Matting Father Branches Reserve in Nicaragua. Produce a reference document of the local birds in Spanish. This document will include pictures of the birds, names and information about each bird that can be distributed to local tour guides

Qualifications: Fluency in Spanish both written and verbal. Knowledge of birds native to Nicaragua Experience in graphic design preferred but not required. Able to live and adapt to a rural setting with few modern amenities.

Length of Appointment: 4 to 6 weeks

Doctoral Assistantship #1

A PhD research assistantship will be available summer/fall 2007 to study the movements, reproductive success, and survival of White-cheeked Pintails in Puerto Rico. This study will expand on the long-term commitment of the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources to conserve the White-cheeked Pintail and associated wetland habitats in Puerto Rico by providing new and more extensive data on population demographics as well as data on intra- and inter-wetland movements. The project will involve traditional radio marking of 150 female White-cheeked Pintails per year for 3 years, as well as marking 10 birds/year with satellite radio transmitters. The general objectives of the study are to determine movements, habitat use, nest success, hen success, and survival of female White-cheeked Pintails breeding in Puerto Rico, determine inter-island movements.

QUALIFICATIONS: Completion of M.S. in wildlife management, conservation biology, or a related field. Upper percentile undergraduate and graduate GPA as well as GRE scores necessary. Experience with waterfowl and radio-telemetry preferred but not mandatory. Ability to speak Spanish preferred.

SALARY: \$22,000 plus health benefits and full tuition waiver

APPLICATION: Send resume and contact email to Dr. Guy Baldassarre at gabaldas@esf.edu

Doctoral Assistantship #2

A PhD research assistantship will be available summer/fall 2007 to study movements, habitat selection, and survival of the Scaly-naped Pigeon (*Patagioneas squamosa*) and Puerto Rican Plain Pigeon (*Patagioneas inornata wetmorei*) in Puerto Rico. This study will expand on the long-term commitment of the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources to conserve both the Scaly-naped Pigeon (game species) and the Plain Pigeon (endangered species) in private lands and associated forest habitats in Puerto Rico by providing new and more extensive data on population demographics as well as data on habitat selection and movements. The project will involve radio-marking and tracking, documenting foraging behavior, and conducting multi-resolution habitat analysis. The general objectives of the study are to determine movements, foraging ecology, resource use, habitat selection, and survival of both species in east-central Puerto Rico.

QUALIFICATIONS: Completion of M.S. in wildlife management, conservation biology, or related field. Upper percentile undergraduate and graduate GPA as well as GRE scores necessary. Experience with avian capture and handling, and radiotelemetry preferred but not mandatory. Ability to speak Spanish highly desirable.

SALARY: \$22,000 including tuition and fringe benefits

APPLICATION: Send resume including copy of academic transcripts and 3 references to Dr. Francisco J. Vilella at fvilella@cfr.msstate.edu

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2007, please do so, we need your support! Please send US\$20 (check or money order) to the Treasurer, Rosemarie Gnam, P.O. Box 863208, Ridgewood NY 11386-3208. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS. If you're willing to sponsor a Caribbean national who may be unable to pay a subscription, we thank you in advance for your multiples of \$20. You're welcome to name the person(s) you would like to sponsor, or we will assign one and let you know who that person is. Institutional membership is \$120 for US institutions and \$50 for Caribbean based institutions. Life membership is \$300 which may be paid in three annual installments of \$100.

This edition of the newsletter edited by Lisa Sorenson (LSoren@bu.edu) and Andrew Dobson (ADobson@warwickacad.bm). Contributions for the next newsletter should reach the editors by 31 July 2007.