



## THE BIRDING COMMUNITY E-BULLETIN

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October 2010

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This Birding Community E-bulletin is being distributed to active and concerned birders, those dedicated to the joys of birding and the protection of birds and their habitats.

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[www.refugeassociation.org/birding/birding5.html](http://www.refugeassociation.org/birding/birding5.html)

### Table of Contents:

- [RARITY FOCUS](#)
- [LEAD ISSUE SETBACK](#)
- [IBA NEWS: MORE ON THE MBCC CONNECTION](#)
- [IMBD: OCTOBER IN THE CARIBBEAN](#)
- [BOOK NOTES: MEGA-PHOTOGRAPHIC FIELD GUIDE](#)
- [SHORT-TAILED ALBATROSS KILLED IN LONGLINE FISHERY](#)
- [TIP OF THE MONTH: AN INTER-AMERICAN BOOK CONNECTION](#)
- [SPRAGUE'S PIPIT: IN ESA LIMBO](#)
- [A PRIMER ON HOW TO PREPARE BIRD SKINS](#)
- [USEFUL FARM-BILL GUIDE](#)
- [LOOKING FOR COLOR BANDED SHOREBIRDS](#)
- [ONE RED KNOT'S RECORD-BREAKING FLIGHT](#)
- [BACK TO THE GULF: OIL STILL COMING ASHORE](#)
- [LOSS OF A FINE ARTIST: ROBERT V. CLEM](#)
- [THIS MONTH'S QUIZ FOR A NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC BIRD BOOK](#)

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### RARITY FOCUS

On 5 September, Larry Manfredi found a calling Cuban Pewee at Long Pine Key in Everglades National Park, Miami-Dade County, Florida. Larry reported that the bird had a distinctive call, which is what immediately drew his attention to it. Although the bird initially flew away, it was soon relocated nearby, close to the area's nature trail.

This species is a resident in the northern Bahamas and in Cuba. If you are unfamiliar with the species, for more information you might check the National Geographic Guide (fifth edition, page 294-295).

This bird represents the third fully documented record for the U.S. The previous two records were both from Boca Raton, Florida, in the early spring of 1995 and the fall of 1999, respectively. There are also two previous one-day sightings, one from Key Largo in 2001 and another report from many years ago at the Dry Tortugas, neither of which was fully documented.

Fortunately, this individual bird was seen or heard through 27 September, most often near gate 3 by the Long Pine Key nature trail. To the delight of many visitors from near and far, the Cuban Pewee was readily found in the mornings, when it was most likely to be heard calling. By mid-morning it would usually be perched by the gate 3 area of the nature trail.

For photos and audio notes by Larry Manfredi, see here:  
[www.southfloridabirding.com/html/recent\\_rarities..htm](http://www.southfloridabirding.com/html/recent_rarities..htm)

### **LEAD ISSUE SETBACK**

Last month we reported on a multi-organizational attempt to get the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to ban the use of lead in lead bullets, shot, and fishing sinkers because of the pernicious impact that lead has on wildlife:  
[www.refugenet.org/birding/SepSBC10.html#TOC09](http://www.refugenet.org/birding/SepSBC10.html#TOC09)

The EPA's original approach was to consider polling the public for its reaction to the petition, a process which could have taken a couple months. Ultimately, however, the EPA dismissed the petition, claiming that the circumstances fell outside its jurisdiction under the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976. Under this act, the EPA may regulate "chemical substances" under certain circumstances, but Congress had excluded any article the sale of which is subject to the tax imposed by section 4181 of the Internal Revenue Code. Still, section 4181 actually taxes firearms, shells, and cartridges, not bullets.

Apparently, the EPA is still considering how to handle the issue of lead fishing sinkers.

Appropriately, and especially with regard to fishing, The Wildlife Society and the American Fisheries Society have long recognized the toxicity of lead. Additionally, non-toxic shot has been required for all waterfowl hunting under federal and state law since 1991.

The organizations behind the petition are regrouping, and you can find further details here:  
[www.independent.com/news/2010/sep/28/epa-wont-bite-bullet/](http://www.independent.com/news/2010/sep/28/epa-wont-bite-bullet/)

### **IBA NEWS: MORE ON THE MBCC CONNECTION**

In mid-September, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission met to decide on how best to invest Migratory Bird Conservation Fund dollars for conservation. Duck Stamp monies currently account for a large proportion of the MBCCF.

A dozen investments were made on Refuge lands; some small, some large, some simply good, and some very impressive.

[See here for full details on the actions of the MBCC, including a listing of the sites and acreage](#)

The funds used to acquire 12,473 acres totaled over \$21 million.

Unknown to many people is the fact that at least nine of the 12 actions were for properties that have already ranked as Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in the U.S.!

For additional information about worldwide IBA programs, and those across the U.S., check the National Audubon Society's Important Bird Area program web site at:  
[www.audubon.org/bird/iba/](http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba/)

### **IMBD: OCTOBER IN THE CARIBBEAN**

This month, Caribbean conservation leaders, researchers, and nature enthusiasts will join forces to promote public awareness surrounding the incredible phenomenon of fall migration. This celebration, led by the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds (SCSCB), will be the third time that International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) activities have coalesced in the Caribbean. The SCSCB, the largest organization devoted to wildlife conservation in the Caribbean, will coordinate month-long Caribbean-wide activities, most of which will take place on Saturday, 9 October. Many of the island celebrations will have a "Welcome Home Migrants" theme.

Although many migrant bird species will be highlighted on different islands, the Peregrine Falcon will serve as the flagship species throughout the Caribbean for this year's IMBD celebration.

You can get many more details here:  
[www.scscb.org/programs/program-imbd-2010.htm](http://www.scscb.org/programs/program-imbd-2010.htm)

### **BOOK NOTES: MEGA-PHOTOGRAPHIC FIELD GUIDE**

Birders will eagerly welcome THE STOKES FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA (Little Brown & Co, 2010). This comprehensive, all-inclusive new field guide from Donald and Lillian Stokes is brimming with 3,400 stunning photographs illustrating 854 species. This is unequivocally the most spectacular compendium of North American bird identification photographs ever assembled between two covers. With high-quality depictions of the essential plumages of virtually every species and subspecies currently on the American Birding Association (ABA) Checklist, this monumental new volume offers birders some of the most up-to-date information on field identification of North American birds currently available. The guide also contains many innovative text and layout features, and an accompanying CD with more than 600 sounds and songs of 150 common birds. Handsome, comfortably sized at 5.5 x 8.5 inches, and affordable - at less than \$25 - this volume significantly resets the bar for North America field guides.

LATE NOTE: As we finished this month's E-bulletin, we received the latest National Geographic entry in the world of books on birds and birding, Les Beletsky's GLOBAL BIRDING. Its 320 pages invite the reader to pursue the birds of all the continents. Adventures and exploration abound. We will cover the volume more thoroughly with the November E-bulletin, but we will also offer copies in our usual National Geographic-sponsored quiz this month. (For details, see the quiz notice at end of this E-bulletin.)

### **SHORT-TAILED ALBATROSS KILLED IN LONGLINE FISHERY**

A Short-tailed Albatross was killed as a result of being caught on a longline fishing hook from a cod boat in Alaskan waters last month. This is believed to be the first recorded death of one of these Endangered birds by a U.S. commercial fishing vessel since 1998.

The albatross which was killed in the Bering Sea wore a metal band identifying it as a seven-and-a half-year-old bird from Torishima Island, Japan, where the majority of the world's Short-tailed Albatrosses breed.

The species, whose population once numbered in the millions, was devastated by commercial feather hunting at the turn of the last century. The birds were thought to be extinct after 1939 when a volcano erupted on Torishima Island, but a

few young successfully survived at sea. The total population of this Endangered seabird is thought to currently number about 3,000 individuals.

In 1990, a North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program was implemented on the domestic fishing fleet in Alaska to provide independent information on a variety of birds impacted by fishing, including Short-tailed Albatrosses. Since the program's start, fisheries managers have developed mitigation strategies that have reduced the number of all albatrosses (including Laysan, Black-footed, and Short-tailed Albatrosses) killed by commercial fishing boats from over 1,000 in 1993 to fewer than 150 in 2004. These estimates are based only on the subset of boats with marine observers. Additional mortality has probably occurred on unobserved fishing boats throughout this species' range during this time period.

This month, the Northern Pacific Fishery Management Council will consider reworking the observer program, a move that could significantly improve observer data, extending coverage to the commercial halibut fleet and to groundfish vessels less than sixty feet in length which are currently exempt from the need to carry observers.

### **TIP OF THE MONTH: AN INTER-AMERICAN BOOK CONNECTION**

Last month we suggested that you share a bird book with someone locally:

[www.refugenet.org/birding/SepSBC10.html#TOC12](http://www.refugenet.org/birding/SepSBC10.html#TOC12)

This month we suggest that you share a field guide with someone elsewhere in the hemisphere.

One way to do this is to contribute a bird field guide to a locality somewhere in Latin America or the Caribbean with a bird-oriented counterpart through Birders' Exchange, a project of the American Birding Association.

After you return from a birding trip to Mexico, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, or other location in Latin American or the Caribbean, consider recycling your field guide to that country that you may not use again. Birders' Exchange will then pass it along to a student, researcher, or teacher from that country or location, or at least to someone who can make good use of the guide. When you are ready to share a book, pack it up and send it to:

Birders' Exchange  
c/o ABA  
4945 N 30th St, Suite 200  
Colorado Springs, CO 80919

In the same spirit, a number of groups, including the Black Swamp Bird Observatory, the Sonoran Joint Venture, and Environment for the Americas have been cooperating to help put Kenn Kaufman's Spanish-language version of his North America field guide - Guia de campo a las aves de Norteamerica - into the hands of Spanish-speakers on both sides of the U.S./Mexican border.

Here's how you can help: Black Swamp Bird Observatory (BSBO) has arranged to purchase the book at the deep discounted price of \$12.00. You can donate the cost of a book (or books) and have a name plate inside the front cover placed there recognizing you as the donor. BSBO will then ship the books to the partner organization for their outreach programs. You can get more details about how to participate here:

[www.bsbo.org/kenn\\_kaufman.htm](http://www.bsbo.org/kenn_kaufman.htm)

### **SPRAGUE'S PIPIT: IN ESA LIMBO**

In mid-September, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced the results of a 12-month finding on a petition to list the Sprague's Pipit as Endangered or Threatened and to designate critical habitat for the species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973. After its review, the USFWS found that such a listing was warranted.

However, listing is "currently precluded by higher priority actions to amend the Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants." Thus, the species has been added to an already long list of "candidate species."

Essentially, it's "take a number and get in line."

For the full USFWS announcement see here:

[www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/pressrel/10-61.htm](http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/pressrel/10-61.htm)

### **A PRIMER ON HOW TO PREPARE BIRD SKINS**

The Beaty Biodiversity Museum (University of British Columbia) has launched an on-line series of instructions with lots of fine details on how to prepare bird study skins. This series also includes links for videos, PDFs, and related websites to provide additional information and techniques.

This museum site will provide helpful instructions for the staff of nature centers, small museums, and bird observatories desiring to make their own prepared skins (e.g., spread wings), either for their own use or for outreach purposes.

Initiated by Ildiko Szabo, an Honorary Assistant Curator, the project also reminds interested parties that it is essential that such centers or field stations have appropriate permits, or else are covered under some other existing permit, allowing them to possess wild bird parts covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Parties interested in skinning birds need to have these permits well before preparing any birds skins.

The bird prep site is up and running at:  
[www.beatymuseum.ubc.ca/projects.html](http://www.beatymuseum.ubc.ca/projects.html)

Later this fall, a forum will be added to the website site to enable people to ask questions and engage in ongoing dialogue.

### **USEFUL FARM-BILL GUIDE**

Among useful publications recently released is a new 72-page guidebook to the 2008 Farm Bill and written primarily for land trusts and private landowners. It's a cooperative project authored by Aimee Weldon and coordinated among conservation NGOs, land trusts, the Intermountain West Joint Venture, the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), and the Sustainable Ag Coalition. This publication can assist land trusts and landowners to better utilize the technical assistance and significant pots of money available from Farm Bill conservation programs. Bird conservationists should pay heed to this approach.

[You can find the full publication here.](#)

### **LOOKING FOR COLOR BANDED SHOREBIRDS**

Also in the category of helpful guides, the September issue of WHSR (Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve) News has a very useful and updated "birding for banded shorebirds" piece on gaining an understanding of those color bands that can sometimes be seen on migrating shorebirds anywhere in our hemisphere. Under the Pan American Shorebird Program (PASP), researchers use one (or two) specific flag color(s) to indicate the country where the bird was banded. The placement, sequence, and color of the accompanying bands are all described and explained in fine detail here:  
[www.whsrn.org/news/article/birding-banded-shorebirds-basics-updated](http://www.whsrn.org/news/article/birding-banded-shorebirds-basics-updated)

### **ONE RED KNOT'S RECORD-BREAKING FLIGHT**

On the subject of hemispheric migrating shorebirds, we have an amazing story to share this month. This spring, shorebird researchers analyzed the year-long data recorded by the sunrise- and sunset-sensitive geolocators that had been attached to migrating Red Knots in New Jersey in May 2009.

One of the recaptured knots had flown nearly 5,000 miles (8,000 kilometers) in six days, a record-breaking distance for a non-stop flight by a Red Knot. It flew across the Amazon and the Atlantic Ocean between southern Brazil and North Carolina, shattering the previous known Red Knot record by nearly 700 miles. In the previous summer, that same Red Knot flew non-stop for eight days between Canada's Hudson Bay and the Caribbean, a distance of 3,167 miles (5,100 kilometers).

These are just some of the fascinating results published last month in the bulletin of the International Wader Study Group by a group of shorebird researchers from the United States, Canada, Argentina, Britain, and Australia. The lead author, Larry Niles, and his colleagues employed a relatively new technique - sunrise- and sunset-sensitive geolocators attached to the legs of Red Knots in New Jersey - to reveal details on the annual migration of this species. Red Knots can winter as far south as Tierra del Fuego, South America, and breed in the Arctic.

To see more on this amazing Red Knot, the geocator technology applied, the researchers doing the work, and a migration map and photos, visit:  
[www.whsrn.org/alertsupdates/alert/20100920](http://www.whsrn.org/alertsupdates/alert/20100920)

### **BACK TO THE GULF: OIL STILL COMING ASHORE**

And just to remind you, as of 19 September, the BP Macondo 252 gusher was finally capped and sealed, even though attendant issues remain.

Shortly after the "kill" announcement was made, oil was still coming ashore in the shallow waters closest to the wetlands and beaches in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. This was according to reports from federal teams using shovels and snorkeling gear to survey the coastline for submerged oil.

Even with the oil away from shore and out of view, it remains ready to impact fish and other marine creatures, just as it will be waiting to impact wintering bay ducks, grebes, and loons, among other bird species due to arrive on the Gulf coast for the winter.

We will continue to report on this important issue in future issues of the E-bulletin.

### **LOSS OF A FINE ARTIST: ROBERT V. CLEM**

It is with sadness this month that we note the passing of the very talented bird artist, Robert Verity Clem. Bob Clem is perhaps best known for his magnificent shorebird paintings that appear in THE SHOREBIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA, edited by Gardner D. Stout and text by Peter Matthiessen and Ralph S. Palmer (Viking Press, 1967).

Though not widely published, Bob Clem's bird paintings were exceptional in their detail, accuracy, and the dramatic

Though not widely published, Bob's bird paintings were exceptional in their detail, accuracy, and the dramatic settings in which he often portrayed his favorite subjects, especially raptors and shorebirds. There are some art critics who feel his work belongs on a par with that of Louis Agassiz Fuertes, Robert Bateman, and Lars Jonsson.

Bob passed away quietly on 17 September at his home in Chatham, Massachusetts, at age 76.

## **THIS MONTH'S QUIZ FOR A NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC BIRD BOOK**

To celebrate National Geographic's connection with the E-bulletin, we have some fine National Geographic books to distribute to E-bulletin readers. Readers who choose to enter our quick-and-easy contest have the chance to win one of these books. Each quiz question will either relate to one of our news items for the previous month, or it will relate to some event or experience that is due to occur during the current month.

For more on the excellent NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC books, see:  
[www.shopng.com/birdbooks](http://www.shopng.com/birdbooks)

There will undoubtedly be multiple readers who answer our monthly question correctly, so we will only be able to distribute five copies to readers whose names are picked at random from all those submitting correct answers. Because of shipping constraints, only folks residing in the U.S. or Canada are eligible.

The prize this month will be GLOBAL BIRDING, a book that we touch on above and that will be the subject of a next month's review. We will have five copies to distribute.

For more on this book, see here:  
<http://shop.nationalgeographic.com/ngs/browse/productDetail.jsp?productId=6200640>

Question for this month:  
If you see a Red Knot next month with an orange flag on its leg, in what country would it have been banded?

Please send us your answer (along with your ground mailing address) by 18 October to:  
[birdingbulletin1@verizon.net](mailto:birdingbulletin1@verizon.net)

Question for last month: When the Bald Eagle was removed from the list of Endangered Species under the Endangered Species Act, it was still protected under two federal laws. The first is the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. What is the second?

The answer: The Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940 or - as amended the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

Last month's winners were Laurel Barnhill (Swansea, SC), Debbie Beer (Springfield, PA), Brian J. Byrnes (Audubon, PA), Kathi Davis (Springfield, IL), and Roberta Roberts (Seattle, WA). Congratulations to these winners.

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If you have any friends or co-workers who want to get onto the monthly E-bulletin mailing list, have them contact either:

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