

JAMAICA REPORT

SUZANNE DAVIS  
Jamaica Representative

The environmental movement in Jamaica has shown an increasing trend toward the development of programs that involve collaboration among government, non-government, and private sector organizations. Protected areas and threatened species received considerable attention during the past year, through workshops, education programs, the media, and research projects. Some of the major events which were successful through multi-organization collaboration are outlined below.

THE COCKPIT COUNTRY WORKSHOP

The Gosse Bird Club (recently renamed Birdlife Jamaica), in collaboration with the Life Science Department of the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, held a workshop on the Cockpit Country in March 1998. The goals of the workshop were (1) to share information on the Cockpit Country, and (2) to encourage a cooperative relationship between individuals and organizations involved in the conservation of the area. The importance of the Cockpit Country as a biodiversity treasure and the need for its declaration as a protected area were highlighted. Presentations were made by representatives from the Department of Geography and Geology—Mona Campus, National Arboretum Foundation, Department of Life Sciences, Jamaica Parrot Project, Water Resources Authority, Ministry of Mining, and ecotourism interests and operators. The workshop was well attended and participants left with a better understanding of the Cockpit Country's value in terms of the high levels of plant and animal endemism and the Cockpit Country's role as the main watershed of western Jamaica.

GREEN EXPO 1998

Another well-supported public event was the Jamaica Conservation Development Trust's (JCDT) biennial environmental fair, Green Expo. This year, JCDT sought to promote environmentally friendly and sustainable technology in several areas of economic development. The exposition was held 5–7 June 1998 at the National Arena and focused on the following themes:

1. Solid Waste Management
2. Industrial Waste Management
3. ISO 14000 Standards
4. Sustainable Agriculture
5. Energy Conservation and Alternatives
6. Sewage Treatment and Disposal
7. Sustainable Tourism and Ecotourism
8. The Environmentally Friendly Home

The slogan for Green Expo was "A Better Environment = A Better Life: Do the Right Thing!" Green Expo had about 15,000 visitors viewing the displays of 101 local, regional,

and international exhibitors.

THE JAMAICA BIRD PROTECTION INITIATIVE (JBPI) PROJECT

The JCDT, in collaboration with the Nature Conservancy, recently launched the JBPI project in the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park. The Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park provides prime habitat for most of Jamaica's endemic birds and many overwintering neotropical migrant warblers. The project is funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Orvis Co. JCDT are co-managers of the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park along with the Natural Resources Conservation Authority. The project seeks to (1) provide the Park managers with an increased knowledge of the avifauna, which will be used to establish long-term monitoring programs; (2) develop a management plan for the avifauna of the Park; and (3) develop bird tours as part of a wider ecotourism program.

SEARCH FOR THE JAMAICAN PETREL

The Jamaican Petrel Research Group was formed in 1996 to investigate the possible continued existence of the Jamaican Petrel (*Pterodroma caribbaea*) in Jamaica. The petrel is an endemic Jamaican seabird now thought to be extinct. In December 1997, the Research Group embarked on a long-term survey of possible nesting sites of the species at Southeast Cay, which is one of the Morant Cays. No Jamaican Petrels were detected, but a first record of Audubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*) was made for Jamaica. In addition, there was also a sighting of a threatened endemic West Indian species, the Black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*).

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

The Natural Resources Conservation Authority has established the National Environmental Education Committee (NEEC). The NEEC, which includes government, non-government, and private sector representatives, has spearheaded the development of the National Environmental Education Action Plan for Sustainable Development. The NEEC is currently focusing on the implementation of this Action Plan.

RESEARCH AND MONITORING PROJECTS IN JAMAICA

*Project:* Bird Communities in a Fragmented Buffer Zone of the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park.

*Status:* Results Pending

*Researcher:* Suzanne Davis

*Institution:* University of the West Indies (Mona Campus, Jamaica)

Reports from Island Representatives — Jamaica (continued)

*Project:* Biology and Distribution of Psittacines in Jamaica.  
*Status:* In Progress  
*Researcher:* Susan Koenig, Herlitz Davis, Garfield Basant  
*Institution:* Wildlife Preservation Trust International (US) and Birdlife Jamaica

*Project:* The Impact of Human Disturbance on Tropical Dry Limestone Forest of Jamaica on Resident and Migrant Bird Communities  
*Status:* In Progress  
*Researcher:* Leo Douglas  
*Institution:* University of the West Indies (Mona Campus, Jamaica)

*Project:* West Indian Whistling-Duck and Wetlands Conservation Surveys and Education Program  
*Status:* In Progress  
*Researcher:* Jamaica West Indian Whistling-Duck Working Group  
*Organization:* Society of Caribbean Ornithology

For more information on the above events, please contact:  
Birdlife Jamaica  
C/O 2 Starlight Avenue  
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THE BAHAMA ISLANDS — JULY 1998

CAROLYN WARDLE  
Bahamas Representative

The Ornithology Group of the Bahamas National Trust (BNT) continued to progress and grow since the 1997 SCO meeting in Aruba. The Group of New Providence continues to conduct monthly field trips. Monthly events are also offered at the Rand Nature Centre in Freeport, Grand Bahama. To our knowledge, there are no other active groups in other Bahamian islands doing regular field work, however a regular monthly check-list is received from Long Island.

Following the resolution passed by the SCO in Aruba last year, the Ornithology Group is about to submit a proposal to the Bahamian Government that the wetland area of Harold and Wilson Ponds be set aside as a National Park under the protection of the Bahamas National Trust. Our submission includes a check-list of over 100 species of birds known to use the area.

The West Indian Whistling-Duck Working Group held an extremely productive workshop at the headquarters of the BNT in Nassau last November, following ground-work laid at the Aruba meeting. Dr. Lisa Sorenson conducted the workshop, ably assisted by Lynn Gape in Nassau. Since the workshop, the Bahamas is actively pursuing local school education at various levels with the materials developed from the workshop. Lynn Gape and Monique Clarke are responsible for this programme.

Four members of the Ornithology Group visited the Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) nesting area in Michigan in June 1997. Thereafter, several members of the Michigan working team visited the Bahamas in February, to educate the local group in monitoring skills and also to attempt to find some Kirtland's Warblers in their winter habitat. The Michigan team also visited Grand Bahama and Abaco. This monitoring programme will be continued throughout next winter in as many islands as possible.

The Ornithology Group's Road Kill programme has made excellent progress this year, under the guidance of Dr. Barbara Brunhuber. Since the programme was started about 4 years ago, nearly 200 birds have been collected, which have had to remain in the Group's freezer until the next stage could be implemented. With the ability to purchase the correct storage cabinet for skin specimens, the Group is now progressing with its skills in preparing specimens for permanent storage. Also, thanks to an agreement with the University of Gainesville, Florida, we are fortunate to utilize the skills of Dr. David Steadman and Andrew Kratter to assist us. We plan to use the specimens to assist with school and college education.

With the recent publication of Tony White's book, *A birder's guide to the Bahama Islands*, we hope that more overseas birders will be encouraged to visit the Bahamas and particularly the more remote islands in the archipelago and help build our data bank of sightings. We are also excited to have the new *Guide to The birds of the West Indies* (Raffaële et al.) as an extra tool for birding in The Bahamas.

The Ministry of Tourism and the Bahamas National Trust have been able to increase the number of embryo birding tour guides in several Bahama Islands in conjunction with Government's efforts to promote ecotourism. It is hoped that this will increase local interest in birds and lead to more field activity.

Ongoing research continues by Michael Baltz on the status of the Black-cowled Oriole (*Icterus dominensis*) in North Andros and by Lowell Overton on his genetic studies of the West Indian Woodpecker (*Melanerpes superciliosus*).

The Bahamas National Trust currently administers 12 national parks throughout the Bahamas. Government has indicated that two more areas are likely to be put under BNT protection in the near future.