

THE LARID SEABIRD BREEDING POPULATIONS OF THE SAN NICOLAS BAY CAYS, ARUBA

ROELAND E. DE KORT

Aruban Foundation for Nature and Parks
Seroe Colorado #87, Aruba

The San Nicolas Bay cays, off southeastern Aruba, have harbored a larid breeding population for many years. Records of nesting Roseate (*Sterna dougallii*) and Bridled (*S. anaethetus*) terns go back as far as 1892. Since then profound changes in San Nicolas Bay have occurred, including: (1) the establishment and growth of one of the largest crude oil refineries in the western hemisphere, the Exxon affiliated Lago Oil and Transport Co. Ltd.; (2) the blasting of two channels through the reef (1937 and 1969) to broaden the original natural channel between the bay and open sea to accommodate large oil tankers; and (3) the re-activation of the oil refinery by the Coastal Aruba Refining Co. N. V. in 1991, after the former refinery ceased operation in 1992.

Despite these changes, several nesting bird species managed to survive, return annually, and have actually increased both in number and diversity. Today nine species nest on the cays: the Cayenne Tern (*Sterna eurygnatha*), Roseate Tern, Common Tern (*S. hirundo*), Bridled Tern, Sooty Tern (*S. fuscata*), Least Tern (*S. albifrons*), Brown Noddy (*Anous stolidus*), Black Noddy (*A. tenuirostris*), and Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*).

The Aruban Foundation for Nature and Parks (FANAPA) is charged with enhancing, conserving, and protecting, in its widest sense, the natural environment of the land, water, air, and its living flora and fauna, as well as the natural scenery of Aruba. In 1984, the FANAPA implemented a conservation program to conduct research, to protect the nesting seabirds from disturbance by humans (e.g., egg collectors, boaters), and to prevent marine pollution. This was realized with the help of the World Wildlife Fund, the International Council of Bird Preservation (now BirdLife International), the HRH Prince Bernard Fund, and several other organizations and institutions. The main objectives, performed annually during the breeding season (from April to August), of the conservation program are:

- wardening of the cays
- censusing of the nesting population
- monitoring kleptoparasitic behavior of Laughing Gulls on especially Cayenne and Sooty tern eggs and chicks
- monitoring habitat availability to extend nesting potential
- educational publicity

Older legislation (dating from 1926) only protected species, prohibiting disturbance of birds, along with their eggs and chicks. Their habitat, however was not protected by law. Parliament has just approved new conservation legislation through which effective protection of is possible. With this

new law, the FANAPA hopes to finally obtain the official protected status it has pursued for so many years for the San Nicolas Bay cays.

RESULTS OF 1995 ELECTION OF SOCIETY OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Joe Wunderle
VICE-PRESIDENT: Roland de Kort
SECRETARY: Marcia Mundle
TREASURER: Rosemarie Gnam will continue to serve in this office through 1996

1996 MEETING SITE

The 1996 annual meeting of the SCO will be held in the Bahama Islands. Further information will appear in *El Pitirre* and members will receive direct mailings of details.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW BOOK FROM CBE—LATIN AMERICAN RESEARCH LIBRARIES IN NATURAL HISTORY: A SURVEY

The Council of Biology Editors announces the publication of *Latin American Research Libraries in Natural History: A Survey*. Second edition. 1994. Compiled by Neal Woodman, Marion A. Jenkinson, and Mercedes S. Foster. vi + 260 pp.—The Survey was carried out to facilitate the exchange and donation of publications among scientific institutions in the United States, Middle and South America, and the Caribbean. The second edition of the Survey contains entries describing 241 libraries in 29 countries, including the name of a contact person, and an institutional address, fax, and telephone number. It also provides information about library holdings and usage, research activities, and areas of interest for literature donations. ISBN: 0-935868-74-7. Order from CBE, P. O. Box 109069, Chicago, Illinois 60610, U.S.A. \$24.95 – nonmembers; \$19.95—CBE members, bookstores, and other resellers; \$3.50 shipping and handling per order.

CHECKLIST AVAILABLE: OISEAUX DE GUADELOUPE ET DE MARTINIQUE

A new checklist of birds of Guadeloupe and Martinique, "Oiseaux de Guadeloupe et de Martinique," produced by the Association pour l'Etude et la protection des Vertébrés des petites Antilles (AEVA), is available free of charge from:

Announcements (continued)

Philippe Feldmann
CIRAD-CA
station de Roujol
97170 Petit Bourg
Guadeloupe
French West Indies
e-mail: feldmann@antilles.inra.fr

The AEVA is eager to receive observations and records of birds and other vertebrates gathered by visitors to Guadeloupe and Martinique. If you have such information, please pass it along to Philippe Feldmann, as above.

**SOCIETY OF CARIBBEAN ORNITHOLOGY T-SHIRTS
AVAILABLE**

The SCO has produced a t-shirt to promote the Society and help raise much needed funds toward the Society's annual operating costs. The t-shirt depicts the Society's logo, the Pitirre or Gray Kingbird, on a light blue shirt. Large and X-large shirts are available. The cost of the shirt is \$15 (U.S.), which includes shipping costs. Please purchase a shirt today and help support the Society! The shirt will make a great Christmas gift for Caribbean birdwatchers. Send your order and a check or postal money order made payable to the Society of Caribbean Ornithology to Rosemarie Gnam, Treasurer SCO, 13 East Rosemont Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301, U.S.A. Please don't miss out on this opportunity to promote the Society!

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

WANTED: Tissue samples of the Cuban Green Woodpecker, Jamaican Woodpecker, Antillean Piculet, Fernandina's Flicker, *Hyetornis* cuckoos, Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo, and Jamaican Lizard-Cuckoo for a large molecular biogeography study of the endemic todies, cuckoos, and woodpeckers of the Greater Antilles. I will pay for shipping. If you would like to help or know where I can get samples of these species, please contact Lowell Overton, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701, U.S.A. (Telephone: 501-575-7539 [Office]; 501-575-4756 [Lab]; e-mail: loverton@comp.uark.edu).

I WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR STUDY TAPES OF **LOGGERHEAD KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus caudifasciatus*) songs from the Bahamas, and breeding season songs or calls from Masked Duck (*Oxyura dominica*), male and female, from anywhere, especially the West Indies. George B. Reynard, 105 Midway, Riverton, New Jersey 08077-1012. Many thanks.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS YEAR'S SCO MEETING

