



The Osprey

The bulletin of the International Fellowship of Birdwatching Rotarians

October 2005

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Editorial

by Editor Mike Lakin

As fellows of this Fellowship, our prime aim is bird watching and all that that entails. What do we feel about sanctuaries, aviaries, and zoos etc. who retain their specimens in some sort of restricted detention?

I refer you to an extract of my Preserve Planet Earth report submitted to my District (see below). Moholoholo is a wonderful example of care and attention necessary for certain birds to survive –individual specimens who would not be there had they not been referred to the wonderful services of Brian Jones, his son and staff. Watch National Geographic Channel “WILD ORPHANS” to take in the terrific work done at this refuge for damaged, intimidated and threatened individual birds (most of which cannot be rehabilitated into the wild for varying reasons).

The Rotary Club of Letaba near Tzaneen, (Limpopo Province, South Africa) has supported this project in many ways, believing in the theme “Preserve Planet Earth” as an honourable and worthy cause. I have visited a most organized and educational bird sanctuary in Mauritius where I learnt more about global bird species in one day than in the whole of my previous bird watching, books, referencing etc. And then what about the “World of Birds” at Hout Bay in the Cape, also visited fairly recently?

Now I would say that I, and many of you, should condemn cages or other restrictive enclosures to keep birds captive and the concept is wrong--especially as the motive is usually commercial. However, these places do commit themselves to conservation and most importantly EDUCATION –imposing an awareness of the environment and hopefully sowing seeds of further interest which could blossom into a fair commitment towards CONSERVATION.

I know I am a very uneducated ornithologist- (I’m supposed to be an applied entomologist and after many years I’m still learning plenty.) I appreciate what I have seen in these sanctuaries. If “Miss Jones” the vulture at our local Mokolodi Nature Reserve had not been rescued with her broken wing, a) she would have kept up with the dead Jones’s, and b) she would not have been gawked at--but reveled at--by hundreds of young Batswanans for interest purposes.

To all those who are dedicated to rescuing birds from whatever ravages they have been exposed to, or birds which have been damaged by national or human threats, but which cannot be re-exposed to the natural outside world, AND/OR to all those who have contributed to CONSERVATION EDUCATION (particularly of the Youth) -even when birds are enclosed in specially cordoned off areas-all I can say is keep up the good work. We as pro-conservation enthusiasts are grateful to them.

Perhaps we should say: “SANCTUARY MUCH”

Extract from Mike Lakin's Report as Chair D-9250 Preserve Planet Earth Committee

“Turning to Moholoholo Wildlife Rehab Centre which has been supported for some years by the Rotary Club of Letaba, was visited by Chair Mike on his tour 2002, John said the aviary badly needed was in progress but that the Centre is short of R15 000.00 to complete the project. The aviary is for orphaned or threatened birds who may or may not be eventually rehabilitated into the wild.”

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by President Steve Leonard

Greetings, Fellow Birders! What a fabulous time we enjoyed at our Centennial Convention in Chicago! We were fortunate to have a good booth location—on a corner near the Voting Delegates registration booth, which meant that many people came by! We were able to sign up 18 new members and received payments from several returning and/or continuing members.

We were fortunate to have several members of the Fellowship volunteer in the booth during the five days, including our intrepid founder and long-time President, Dick Tafel and his wife, Elsa; our Immediate Past President Mike Lakin and wife, Elsie; Secretary Dolf Wynia; newly-elected President Steve Leonard and wife, Susan; Len Stuttman; Bridget McDonough and Treasurer Cindy Hawkins.

As usual, our display of North American bird posters was eye-catching, and I was informed by the Fellowships Coordinator, Jesse Allerton, that we may, in fact, sell these posters. I would like to see us take orders for them in the future, and send those orders to the company I bought them from so we don't have to deal with mailing them. If we can make beautiful birding posters from other geographic areas available through the same method, I am sure we can generate some extra income for the Fellowship by requiring a small “handling charge.” Please give me your feedback on this idea at sdleonard@scican.net

During the convention, we were able to make a number of contacts with birders from Copenhagen-Malmo, Mexico, and New Mexico, South Texas and South Carolina, USA. The prospects look bright for the 2006 annual day-trip, with other longer trips in the offing. Those interested in working with these contacts to organize these trips should contact me. Don't forget to extend your stay in Copenhagen-Malmo so you can attend the annual field trip!

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find an article about the 2005 convention's annual field trip, which I was unable to attend, due to foot problems. I'm sure that the foot pain I already had when arriving in Chicago was aggravated by the long walks daily in the McCormick Place Convention Center! I am still not walking normally.

The entire Fellowship extends special thanks to Joan Heidelberg, who has edited our newsletter for several years, but has decided to step down. We shall miss her! Past President Mike Lakin has accepted the position of editor, and information for future newsletters should be sent to him at mikelsie@it.bw

I look forward to working with all of you to make the Fellowship of Birdwatching Rotarians serve you. Suggestions are always welcome.

IFBR Annual General Meeting, CHICAGO 2005

The IFBR "Global Council" met around a House of Hospitality Table at the Chicago Conference. Those present included Outgoing President Mike Lakin, Past President Dick Tafel, President nominee Stephen Leonard, Retiring Secretary Dolf Wynia, Treasurer Cindy Hawkins, Len Stuttman, Stephen Labuda and the special lady who not only helped set up and run the booth, host an IFBR get-together at her home and arrange the field day trip - Bridget McDonough. Several other Fellows dropped in as Observers for some of the proceedings. Secretary Dolf sent Osprey the following report:

"President Mike Lakin welcomed the members to the meeting and thanked them for taking out some time. Introductions were made and a list of attendants circulated. Mike explained some of the handicaps of communicating around the world even with modern technology.

Dolf Wynia recommended that the positions of Secretary and Treasurer be combined as their separation creates a lot of unnecessary work. Discussions centered on succession of position holders on the board. The following motions were made, seconded and passed by those present. Nominated for President Stephen Leonard by Bridget McDonough, and Cindy Hawkins. Nominated for Secretary/Treasurer Cindy Hawkins by Dolf Wynia and Steve Leonard.

Stephen Labuda was nominated for vice president but this could not be decided until his eligibility was confirmed as his spouse is the Rotarian in the family. (Mike Lakin later confirmed that Steve is eligible and he has been confirmed as vice president). However, the fellowship's constitution states that a President must be a "Rotarian."

Mike Lakin presented a new constitution which had been reviewed by several of the members. Richard Tafel suggested two amendments, which were accepted by Mike Lakin. Adoption of the new constitution which is now in conformance with Rotary International requirements for fellowships was made on motion by Dolf Wynia and Bridget McDonough.

Discussion then centered on the difficulty of some members remitting their annual dues to the fellowship. Although the use of an internet service might have some potential, the countries where difficulties are the greatest are to our knowledge not served by firms such as "Paypal". Dolf Wynia moved, seconded by Richard Tafel, that we institute a five year membership for the price of four years provided it is paid in advance; motion passed.

The new board is now made up as follows:

President Steve Leonard (sdleonard@scican.net)

Vice President Steve Labuda (slabudajr@yahoo.com)

Secretary Treasurer Cindy Hawkins (cindyhawkins@gci.net)

Editor Mike Lakin (mikelsie@it.bw)

FIELD DAY TRIP TO INDIANA DUNES STATE PARK, JUNE 2005

Thanks to the always enthusiastic efforts of IFBR stalwart Bridget McDonough of Evanston, we had a very successful and enjoyable day trip on the day after the close of the R.I. Chicago 2005 Conference including a picnic feast also arranged by Bridget.

Established in 1925, the Indiana Dunes State Park consists of 182 acres of primitive, beautiful, historic and amazingly unique Hoosier landscape. It lies in Porter County and includes more than three miles of beautiful beach along Lake Michigan's southern shore.

IFBR Past President, Dick Tafel's wife Elsa kept the list of species seen on the trip which Dick has sent to me as follows:

"52 species were seen in all.

The order is roughly that in which they were seen.

Mute Swan, Cerulean Warbler, American Crow, Indigo Bunting, Northern Cardinal (female), Downy Woodpecker, Chipping Sparrow, Gray Catbird, Great Blue Heron, Chimney Swift, Belted Kingfisher, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Wood Peewee, Brown-headed Cowbird, American Goldfinch, Ring-billed Gull, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Flicker, Red-eyed Vireo (with nest), Acadian Flycatcher, Great-crested Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, Song sparrow, Eastern Towhee, American Robin, Ovenbird, Scarlet Tanager, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Yellow-throated Vireo, Bank Swallow, Mourning Dove, Cedar Waxwing, Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Kingbird, Tufted Titmouse, Black-capped Chickadee, House Wren, Cooper's Hawk, Prothonotary Warbler, Field Sparrow, Red-tailed Hawk, Common Grackle, Turkey Vulture, Mallard, Canada Goose, Rock Pigeon, Barn Swallow, Double-crested Cormorant, Caspian Tern, Red-winged Blackbird.

The highlight bird had to be the fairly rare, Prothonotary Warbler, seen and heard so well, near the observation platform. Certainly the Scarlet Tanager had to be among the most exotic. The 5 New World warblers had to be somewhat special for foreign-continent visitors."

Thanks to Dick and Elsa, assisted by Margaret, for the count and to all who participated. Thanks again to Bridget who really acted as our IFBR hostess in Chicago. As many readers know, Bridget had started planning a bigger IFBR tour of the Great Lakes area, which sadly did not get enough takers. However, a little birdie told the Birdwatchers in Chicago that maybe Bridget would pursue her idea for the future. Len Stuttman proposed this and is willing to help: "Watch this space" as they say!



Participants in the Indiana Dunes Trip

BOOK REVIEW

By Dolf Wynia

I have thought for some time that the Osprey should run a publication review column. Any Fellow who has picked up a new or recent publication on birds, birding, bird watching or even the more scientific or technical- ornithology, please send their views and reviews to me for insertion herein. This issue, I have filched an article albeit edited but duly acknowledged, from "Oryx" by Jon Fjeldsa of Copenhagen- fittingly that's where Rotarians are going for our Convention next year! ---editor

State of the World's Birds 2004: Indicators for Our Changing World: Compiled by Leon Bennun, Stuart Butchart, Jonathan Ekstrom, Michael Evans, Lincoln Fishpool, Rob Pople & Alison Stattersfield (2004), 73pp., BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK. ISBN 0 946888 50 7 (pbk), GBP 10,00

This is an assessment from BirdLife International, published along with their *Strategy and Action Plan* for the global partnership meeting in 2004. *State of the World's Birds 2004* is an attractive publication that really asks to be studied. However, it is so packed with information (some of the text in very small fonts) that I doubt many people will read it in its entirety. On the other hand it is easy to browse. This is because every double page is designed in such a way that it makes sense on its own and therefore can be studied independently. Every double page is richly illustrated, and the essence is easy to grasp, as there is a short and clear main message, subheadings with short and clear statements and several boxes with different kinds of supporting evidence and attractive photos and graphical presentations. There are also relevant website addresses and a publication list for those who want to know more. The topics are clearly organized: firstly a section of double pages with the title *State*, documenting population trends, and then a section identifying *Pressures*, and finally a section describing BirdLife's *Response*.

Even a quick browse will provide the key messages and illustrate that BirdLife is not narrowly concerned with saving birds from people, but tries to use joy and appeal of birdwatching as a vehicle for better management of this world, so that birds as well as people can thrive. The publication is full of interesting stories, not only from the many studies conducted by BirdLife's own research unit. It also reviews a number of others from the recent conservation research literature, and describes the BirdLife network in action. Clear colour graphics illustrate the problems and documents the population trends (mainly the declines). Detailed maps illustrate where the threatened species are, and where BirdLife's priority areas are: their Endemic Bird Areas, which was first priority analysis based on global compilation of species distribution data, and the network of action points, Important Bird Areas. It all testifies to an efficient effort to collect detailed species data.

For many years BirdLife has given low priority to captive breeding and population manipulation as conservation tools, and focused much more on problems with unsustainable land use. This line is now clearer than ever before. Birdlife emphasizes the need to work together with local people, engaging local Site Support Groups around their priority sites. The approach described in the Response section is well aligned with the efforts towards sustainable development, and the publication is well suited as handout material for aid institutions.

Review by:

Jon Fjeldsa

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WHY DO WADERS MIGRATE? WHICH BIRDS ARE ENDEMIC TO THE WESTERN CAPE? THINGS WE LOVE TO LEARN

by Mike Lakin

THE IFBR CENTENNIAL TOUR OF THE CAPE, MARCH 2005

Encouraged as we were as a Rotary fellowship by prominent Rotarians such as PRIP Cliff Dochterman at the Brisbane conference two years ago, and others who have provided further ideas since, we decided to put together a birding tour of the South Western, Western and Southern Cape of South Africa as a Centennial celebratory event. Originally planned for January 2005, we were forced to postpone the tour to March as planning and announcing was delayed and it was felt that most Rotarians would want to celebrate their Centenary at their home clubs and would therefore rather be available to travel after the 23rd February.

The first official activity was birding on the Langebaan lagoon within the territory of first hosts-the Rotary Club of Saldanha. Here many species of migratory waders reach their southernmost roost.(our Secretary Bird,Dr. Campbell Love- a Birdwatching Fellow from the Rotary Club of Cambuslang,Scotland kept the checklist on the whole tour). The highlight at this spot was the distant but definite appearances of two Ospreys, one of which was seen catching and eating fish –what a joy to meet up with our “emblem” on our first outing. Guiding at this venue was carried out by Honorary Rotarian John Fannin (Saldanha) and PDG Peter Vurgarellies-an IFBR member (Kroonbroom, Cape Peninsula)



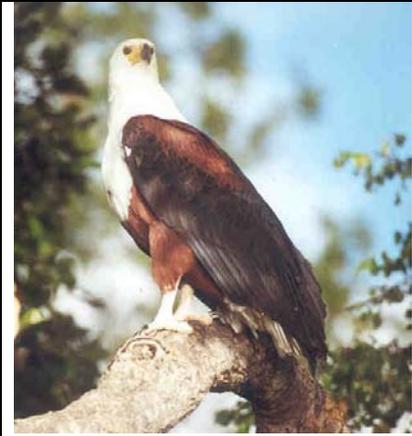
Cape Centennial Tour Participants

Donny Ferguson
Campbell Love
Elsie Lakin
PDG Peter Vurgarellis
PDG Ann Brenda
Guide PP John Fannin

Many sightings and photography of water birds were the highlights of the next day by boat on the Berg River estuary at Veldriff. We were honoured to be joined by Keith Harrison the

Chairman of the Western Cape Bird Club from whom we learnt a power of information concerning local species, vagrants and ornithological facts mainly involving seabirds, waders and terrestrial birds. Our “driver” Brian was also very knowledgeable about local birds and birding. One highlight was an African Fish Eagle, another –flamingos in flight captured by camera.

A quick photo call with the African Penguins at Betty’s Bay preceded an interesting walking tour of the Harold Porter Botanical Gardens-rich in many Cape species. A festive picnic lunch prepared by Elsie supported by the usual Lakin bar with PDG Peter and Brenda again in supportive attendance, together with Rotarian Anne Phillip boosted our energy enough to visit some farmland birds near Bot Rivier and lastly the Rotary Hide in the Klein River lagoon east of Voelklip. Hence our sea bird list was supplemented by more sightings of coastal species including the famous African Black Oyster Catcher-although officially “endangered” numbers have apparently increased in recent years. Many thanks are due to the Rotary Club of Hermanus, particularly President Sherry, Anne Phillip and David Reiach.



African Fish Eagle



Flamingos



Participants at De Hoop- A Highlight of the Centennial Tour

Cape vultures at Potberg, more African Black Oystercatchers at Kopje Aleen and various terrestrials, waders and coastal birds were the order of the weekend, then on Monday morning we reluctantly left De Hoop but consoled by the fact that we were heading for the Bontebok National Park where members of the Rotary Club of Swellendam met us with another sumptuous picnic feast all put together by the hostess with the mostest, Jeanette Fraser-Jones. Local expert John Coates accompanied us on our birding at “Bontebok” and the next day on the Breede River –the latter arranged with our friend Hennie Retief of Van Loveren wine farm who made sure we enjoyed some wine tasting to supplement our birding

enjoyment. A late lunch at Montagu where Sacred Ibis and others abide in trees lining the main street, and we wound our hot weary way back to Swellendam.

An unofficial visit we made on our way down to the Cape was a night stopover at the Karoo National Park where we knew we would see, from previous experience, many interesting species including an Eagle which unfortunately was too far away to identify - from records we are told it would have either been a Booted Eagle or the Black (Verroux) Eagle - you can't win with them all!

But we did win – a most interesting and educational experience from the failure to snap the famous Bokmakerrie and Orange-breasted Sunbird to wonderful sightings and photos of Oystercatchers, Flamingos on the wing, and the Fish Eagle on the Berg River. The Lesser Double –Collared Sunbird –one of nature’s prettiest species, alluded us but I can say now back in Hermanus where I’m putting finishing touches to my report that Elsie and I caught a glimpse of this beautiful sunbird only yesterday.

We can repeat that our enthusiastic scribe Campbell ticked off over 120 species on the official West Coast list but we had seen quite a few more not listed before the tour was over. We, on behalf of IFBR as participants in the Centennial Birding Tour of the Cape, wish to say a big **thank you** to all those mentioned above, plus a few not listed e.g. those clubs we contacted in the planning but we did

not include in the eventual tour. A special **thank you** to DG June Webber who was supportive from the very beginning .Thank you, June, for the cooperation, friendship, fellowship and hospitality of all your Rotarians. We trust we shall have the opportunity to reciprocate by inviting you to Botswana D-9250, Scotland D-1230 etc. at some time in the future.

**African Black Oystercatchers at de Hoop,
Cape Centennial Tour**



**THE KASANE LIBRARY CLUB- A LETTER TO MIKE LAKIN AS CHAIR OF D-9250
“PRESERVE PLANET EARTH” AND THE THEN, PRES. IFBR**

Those fellows of IFBR who visited the Chobe area of Botswana on the Southern African tour a few years back will recall sitting in on a session in Kasane Library of the “Library Club”- a project started and operated by Mrs. Trish Williams, wife of former Gaborone Rotarian Geoff. Trish wrote to me recently to say she has re-started the Conservation Education Project for young school children. Again we bought resources with the residual funds of the Tour, and Tour participant Harold Albers has sent them sets of *National Geographic* as ongoing references and teaching aids. Trish writes:

“Dear Mike,

I started the club in the Local Library about 5 years ago. My aims were:

- a. Primarily to provide environmental education to the children of the village*
- b. Since we live on the edge of a game reserve to make them aware of their responsibility to preserve and respect the environment that provides a living for 90% of the working population in Kasane.*
- c. To give the children a club to attend once a week where they would be given affirmation, interesting things to do and something to look forward to other than just roaming around the streets of the village .*
- d. To utilize the wonderful environment we live in Kasane and in getting them interested to, hopefully, steer them into careers associated with the environment, making them more employable in the town they grew up in and thus encouraging them not to leave for bigger cities.*

At the time I ran the club under the auspices of the Chobe Wildlife Trust, raising all the funds I needed under the Umbrella of that body. The Trust also employed a young woman to help me do all the administration and help with teaching, marking and supervision. A year ago Chobe Wildlife Trust was closed down and with it the Library Club. At the beginning of this year I restarted the club with just the help of a particularly helpful and motivated Chief Librarian. Within three weeks of starting the club we had up to 80 children attending again. Mr. Muzunga (The Librarian) and I decided to split the club by age. He now watches me teach the older children on a Wednesday and teaches the younger children the same lesson in Tswana on Thursdays. I prepare his lessons and worksheets for him. Many of the younger children have not fully mastered English yet since they only start learning it when they start school.

I constantly come back to the fact that we live in a world where everything is interrelated and where there is a necessity for preserving the whole planet earth in all its facets. Since I run the club independently, I personally fund all the expenses. The greatest expense is the up to 400 photocopies I make of the worksheets weekly. The children are very poor and cannot bring anything with them. I would appreciate help with any of these expenses.

*Kindest Regards,
Trish Williams”*

AN INVITATION TO NEBRASKA, USA

“Dear Rotarian Mike,

As incoming District Governor of D5630 in western Nebraska I am pleased to invite the IFBR to our District for the Sandhill Crane Migration that occurs each Spring from early March into April.

You can view National Geographic’s Crane Cam site to have a video summation of the spectacle. Our District Assembly is next April 6-8 in Kearney, Nebraska, and we would enjoy having your members present to join our festivities.

You may correspond with me at weballou@citlink.net, and, I also will try to make contact at the Chicago convention.

*Best wishes for the coming year,
Yours, In Rotary Service,
Wm. E. (Bill) Ballou, DGE 5630”*

IFBR BOOTH 2005 CHICAGO

by Mike Lakin

We nearly didn’t get a booth at the Conference and that would have been tragic, as apparently we’ve had a space allocated to our Fellowship since our inception in 1991. Not only is it a focal point for Rotarian Birdwatchers –members of the Fellowship or not--it serves as a rendezvous for Rotary friends and friends of Rotary. Our main aim of course is as a recruiting centre hopefully inspiring those on the periphery of joining, to actually sign on the dotted line and put a smile on the faces of the Treasurer, and now Secretary as well, Cindy Hawkins plus, Dolf, Dick, Elsa, Mike, Steve etc. This year we signed up 18 new members and fees were also collected from renewals from ongoing members.

I made notes on one or two interesting items brought by visitors to the booth. Dr. Sanders Harley Carey of Canyon Lake, Texas came to collect an application form for her friend back home, but also mentioned that she has a large farm, parts of which have one hill that has hardly ever been visited/investigated for birdlife. Would our Fellowship be interested sometime in sending a small team to survey the hill with a view of listing the avian species there? We should be flattered to be invited to carry out such a project after all; the making of a check list for a hitherto unrecorded area should be regarded as a positive service to science. I have Dr. Carey’s contact details if anyone would like to follow up on the offer!

We are inundated these days with doom and gloom quotes of statistics involving increasing threatened, endangered, rare, vulnerable species, so it was a great feeling to hear of a species which has been “re-discovered” having been considered extinct for some sixty years. So many birders came to us at the booth to tell us about the reports of the Ivory Billed Woodpecker in Arkansas. See separate note under “NEWS from all directions.”

The booth was visited by, indeed manned, by some of the 2001 Africa IFBR Tour. Nine out of thirteen overseas participants showed face and this was a reunion which best illustrates the value of a Fellowship such as ours.

Fellow birders –if you want to get out of our fellowship a real true Rotary fellowship bonus, volunteer now for a shift of two at the next year’s conference in Malmo/Copenhagen.

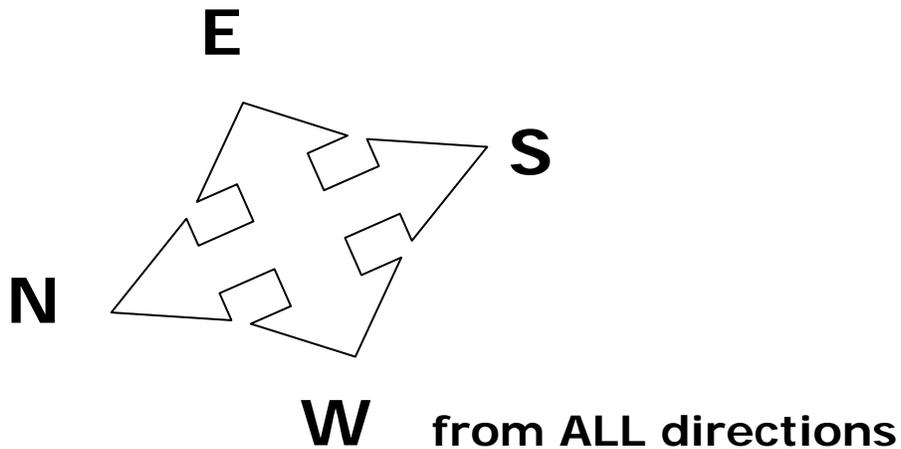


Left to Right:
Elena Laborde-Bishop.
 Records/Archives Officer.

Robin Hines.
 He sponsored a sample of his
 Company's binoculars for the trip.

Bridget McDonough.
 Hostess of a fellowship dinner,
 organizer of the day trip and
 stalwart booth attendant.

Members of Birdlife International and their affiliates in various countries can download their frequently published News releases. Their Web editor, Ed Parnell e-mailed back to me following my request to reproduce an excerpt from their releases to say "it will be fine to use stories, etc. from our website in your bulletin." Thanks Ed--Good name for an Editor: Ed(!)
 These snippets of International news will therefore be featured henceforth in a column called:



“RARE WOODPECKER’S IDENTITY UNDER SCRUTINY”

The authenticity of recent sightings of one of the world's most enigmatic birds has been called into question by a group of ornithologists in a paper submitted for publication in the online science journal *PLoS Biology*.

In April 2005 a team of scientists led by John Fitzpatrick from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology announced in the journal *Science* that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker *Campephilus principalis* had been rediscovered in Arkansas, USA. The species was widely thought to be extinct in the US, with no confirmed sightings there since 1944, and the best hope of its continued existence being focused on a remote part of Cuba.

In February 2004, a chance encounter in the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge, Arkansas, had changed that. Over the next 14 months, teams of experienced observers made six further sightings, all within three kilometers of one another. Brief but crucial video footage was obtained that, despite technical imperfections, seemed to show a number of diagnostic features allowing the researchers to confirm the species' identity.

However, another team led by Richard Prum of Yale University speculates that the bird in question is the similar, but much commoner, Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus*.

Alison Stattersfield, BirdLife's Head of Science went on to add, "There are many species on the edge of extinction. Any evidence of their continuing existence must be followed up with appropriate conservation efforts. In the 1940s, Ivory-billed Woodpeckers were lost from their last-known stronghold in Louisiana because of logging. In the case of the Arkansas sightings it is vital that the possibility that the woodpecker still survives should be taken very seriously – even though the supporting evidence of the birds' presence is not as good as the ornithological community might wish."

	
Gordon Harris, Our Representative /Correspondent for Australasia	Memories of Australia, 2003.