



EASTERN LONG ISLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY – From the Barrens to the Bays
Formerly Moriches Bay Audubon, established 1967

THE OSPREY

Fall 2024 — Vol. X, No. 2

Eastern Long Island Audubon Society

invites all our members and friends
to the newly reinstated

Annual Dinner

at the

Rock Hill Country Club in Manorville

on October 23, 2024 at 6 pm

Cocktails, Buffet Dinner, Raffles
& Chinese Auction

Our Guest Speaker is

Heather Wolf

Author of

Find More Birds,

111 Surprising Ways to

Spot more Birds

wherever you are

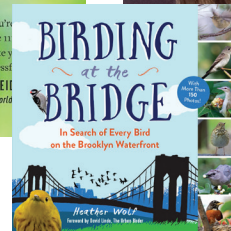
and

Birding at the Bridge,

In Search of Every Bird on

the Brooklyn Waterfront

Watch for your invitation.



Heather Wolf is a Brooklyn-based birder, photographer, educator, and the author of *Find More Birds* and *Birding at the Bridge*. She works for Cornell Lab of Ornithology as a web developer for sites including eBird and BirdCast. Heather teaches birding classes at Brooklyn Botanic Garden and leads educational bird walks for Brooklyn Bridge Park, Washington Square Park Eco Projects, and more. She blogs her photos at brooklynbridgebirds.com. She will have books available at the dinner. Books will be available at the dinner and Heather will be able to sign them for you.



Rainbow-bearded Thornbill

Special section
BIRDING COLOMBIA!

by Kathleen Heenan with
photos by Ardith Bondi.

See page 7.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Birding Backpack Project

Byron Young

Several years ago, the ELIAS Board began discussing the development of a Library birding backpack program to provide equipment and materials to aide folks interested in birding. After a period of researching what other chapters around the country were doing, we took the plunge, OK, so we just dipped ours toes into the Birding Backpack pool. We decided to make our first attempt with five Library Birding Backpacks. Using monies bequeathed to the Chapter by Arlene Schroeder we purchased ten sets of binoculars (five Nikon and five Celestron 8x42 binoculars), five Sibley field guides of *The Birds of the Eastern United States*. Each Backpack contains two sets of binoculars, (suitable for an adult or child), a field guide, materials to help potential birders find places to bird and other information to assist birders in their search for birds.

Our Chapter, after several years of slow progress is finally nearing the completion distributing five Birding Backpacks to local Libraries. Thanks to Eileen Schwinn for getting the first backpack out to the Hampton Bays Public Library and for keeping the fire lite under our feet. The project has picked up speed as one of our new Board Members, Darlene Massey, has picked up this project and making great progress in preparing

and distributing the remaining Birding Backpacks to Riverhead Library and Center Moriches Library. Bridgehampton Library is next on the list and once completed the last of the original five birding backpacks will go to the Quogue Library.

At this point in time, five additional backpacks are being prepared, with the purchase or preparation of the necessary materials (binoculars, field guides, fold out guides, binders to hold materials and information on where to bird, hopefully including maps). Four of the new backpacks will be distributed to local libraries in our area and one will be held by the Chapter as a display item. Having a display backpack will make it easier for local Libraries to examine the items contained. The library backpacks are held in the library's gadget room (or library of things) for loan to interested members. The libraries have been very receptive to these materials and have advertised their availability through their newsletters. We want to also thank them for their interest and support.

Our goal is to make introductory birding materials available through our Public Library system in hopes of attracting new members to the joy of birding. In so doing we will develop a whole new cadre of environmental stewards.

We will follow up with each library periodically to determine the amount of usage.

While this program has been on the drawing board for quite some time it was the generous bequeath from the Arlene Schroeder Estate that gave us the resources to accelerate the program, we dedicated the Eastern Long Island Audubon Society chapters birding backpack program in the memory of Arlene Schroeder. May this program bring hours of joy to prospective birding enthusiasts, both adults and children.

Hi Darlene,

The Southold Free Library is grateful to the Eastern Long Island Audubon Society for donating a birding backpack to the library for our patrons to check out for their birding adventures. Connecting to nature is an enriching experience with many beneficial returns. The sturdy backpack and the generous contents are a delightful addition to our circulating collection.

Sincerely,
Melissa Andruski

"Home of the \$1.99 Suet Cake"



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Programs & Field Trips

MONDAY EVENING, AUGUST, 5 AT 7 PM

Fall Migrations

Shai Mitra

MONDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 9 AT 7 PM

Invasive Plants

Dana McCormick

MONDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 7 AT 7 PM

Central American Birding

Matt and Cathy McCluskey

MONDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 4 AT 7 PM

Chapter Round Table and Story Night

Everyone is invited to participate

MONDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 2 AT 7 PM

Coastal Resiliency

Vicky O'Neil, NY Audubon

These free Programs are at the Nature Center at Quogue Wildlife Refuge. Refreshments are available.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2024, MEET AT 8 AM

Walk Around in the Water – Cupsogue County Park!

Meeting at 8:00 am at the western end of the parking area at Cupsogue CP, we will walk a short distance to the north trail toward Moriches Bay, observing the various migrating shore birds gathering to fuel up for their continued journey south in the shallow water and on the sand flats. Low tide is approximately 10:00 am, giving us plenty of time to walk and mark our way to the best viewing areas near the spoil island in the bay. Arriving before 8:30 insures we will not be charged to park and explore the area. With restrooms available, as well as light snack/food truck-type food available, you may even decide to spend the day at the beach after our walk! Our walk will cover approximately 3 miles, and we will expect some areas of water which will be crossed. Please wear appropriate shoes or plan to walk barefoot! The sand is hot on the way to the shore and back, so some footwear is needed - it can safely be left on the shore as we approach the channel. Weather in August is sometimes a challenge - and the trip will be postponed if there is a threat of lightening in the area. Binoculars are a must - check if your local Library has one of the ELIAS-provided back-packs containing two pair of Binoculars, if you need a pair! A bird scope, if you have one, is very useful. Migrating shore birds can be very skittish, and we see them from a safe, non-disturbing distance. Please register with Leader, Eileen Schwinn at beachmed@optonline.net. You will be notified if we need to postpone or change any information about the trip.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 7, 2024, MEET AT 9AM

Suffolk County Farm, Yaphank!

Meet in the parking area of the Farm at 9 am. We will walk the fields and farmyards, looking for hawks, falcons, and south-bound migrating song birds. Past trips have shown us Pipits, Meadowlarks, and Rusty Blackbirds! There are no guarantees, but it's a great place with perfect habitat for so many species. The walk is approximately 2.5 to 3 miles, depending on recent bird reports. If there's time, we will walk under the LIE and visit another piece of public land which may have different birds present. Please register with Eileen Schwinn at beachmed@optonline.net, who will notify you if there is any change in plans or weather-related issues.



A What? A Flamingo?

Eileen Schwinn

I have always like Flamingos. Back in the mid-1980's (before I even knew what a "birder" was), I wrote a little poem about them, which I recited to a group of friends one summer at a local beach: "Hark – How can that be? A lovely, long-legged Flamingo, I see! A flock has been spotted, along the Peconic, oft dining at Sunset, with (an adult beverage) and tonic.....".

The poem had a couple more verses, and there wasn't a dry eye in the crowd by the time I was finished... I printed up little copies, with a 1980-style computer-generated picture on the cover, and gave them out, along with some corny wind-activated mobiles I

AMERICAN FLAMINGO was reported at Georgica Pond in East Hampton, on 31st of May of this year!!!! I was scheduled to led a walk at SOFO the next morning, which began at 8:30. Rather than risk being late for the walk, I decided to follow the reports, and hopefully try to head east when we were finished. No, I didn't rush everyone – it was a delightful walk, as it always is when the two organizations - ELIAS and SOFO get together. I did convince Byron Young, our Esteemed President, to travel with me to Georgica Pond – knowing full well the parking rules, and not too sure of the enforcement of them at that time of year or even day. (A comment on my part – Southampton Town vs East Hampton Town: SH has MUCH better

scope. I told him if he saw the Flamingo, just leave the scope, knowing no one would try and sneak it out, especially if others were there. Forty-five minutes later, he returned, all smiles! I handed over my car keys, and started the ½ mile trek across the beach, dressed for a morning woods – walk rather than a day at the shore. I did plan ahead (optimist that I am) and had flip-flops in the car, which I took off after a few hundred feet. Arriving at high noon, on a hot June day, the scope was being guarded by "Joe", a guy in a swim suit and the only other person in the general vicinity. No birders to be seen. Easily spotted by me, and after a few could-have-been better scope photos, an East Hampton Marine Patrol office drove up and past me, stopping on the beach. Being the good citizen that I am, I trotted over to him and said, "Hey, did you know there was a Flamingo out there????????". He sighed, and said yes, and it had been an interesting afternoon/evening on Friday, and certainly that morning. I then took one final look at the amazing Pink Bird, and started the hike back to the parking lot, hoping Byron didn't decide to go to lunch with my car, wallet and shoes. He did take a little drive around the area when the Marine officer showed up, just to vacate the parking spot – and preventing a \$150. parking fine.

To be honest, as great a bird as the Flamingo was to see, it was not a Life Bird for neither Byron nor myself. I saw hundreds while birding in Cuba in 2017. But Byron, well, for him it wasn't even a State or County Bird! He had seen one in his former life as a DEC Fish Guy, in Bellport, right here in our ELIAS area, in November of 1978!! At least Byron can claim this Georgica Pond bird as a Year Bird on his list. I added my sighting to my US Bird List.

But the following day, June 2, even with birders in position from dawn and throughout the day, no sight of the bird was found! Reports initially from Cape Cod, and later from Gilgo Beach/



The now famous Flamingo, photo by Sean Keenan

had found – on super-sale – at a local nautical shop. It sort of took off with my friends and I, and for years we exchanged Flamingo-themed "gifts" for various occasions – the tackier the better. We even called the place we spent the summers, "Flamingo Row". In fact, we still reside there each summer!

Well, you can imagine my disbelief – and excitement – when A REAL-LIVE

parking options, lot locations/sizes, and ENFORCEMENT Rules, at least during the shoulder seasons. It makes it very easy for birders to find and visit rarities, like Elegant Tern, Lark Bunting, Harris's Sparrow to name a few)

Back to 1 June: Byron and I arrived around 11 or so – I asked him to go find the bird first, and he did, taking my



Flamingo photos on this page by Michael Sparks

Cedar Beach area, started to come in – an American Flamingo is being spotted. BUT, the morning of June 10, the American Flamingo was again reported on Georgica Pond!!!! The Race Resumed – and as of July 10, the bird is STILL BEING SEEN – by now, scores, if not hundreds, of people, with local and out of state folks making the pilgrimage to Georgica Pond.

Now the following “questions” must be asked:

1. Are we absolutely sure The Georgica Flamingo is real, and not a mechanical impersonator a la “Birds Aren’t Real”????
2. Since the bird was AWOL (or allegedly re-spotted in both Cape Cod as well as the very “popular” Gilgo Beach area), could the bird have been lured back (or possibly replaced by some wealthy East Hampton Residents from their home-in-FL stock) to obviously generate income for the Town of East Hampton via the notorious parking fines?
3. OR – Perhaps the return of the bird was a ploy by East End Governments to raise the issue of the TRAFFIC out this way, by having upstate, and outta state folks “experience” the



joy of heading east on either Sunrise Hwy/Route 27/Montauk Hwy every morning from 5 am-11am?, perhaps bringing to the Governor’s attention Congestion Pricing might be in order, at least from Westhampton east????

I have a personal theory that the Georgica bird really didn’t move that far away, and it spent 10 days tucked into

some corner of Georgica or other pond/marsh in the general area.

There might have been more Flamingos caught up in the storms that brought “George” here in the first place – but I’m no scientist. I’m just someone who has always been fond of Flamingos!



One more rarity

Sally Newbert

In keeping with Tom Moran's crossword puzzle one more rare bird showed up in our area and stayed for just a few days. A Lazuli Bunting was our birding guest in April. A homeowner in Flanders called some friends who were finally able to ID this brightly colored visitor who should be in the western United States and Mexico depending on the season.

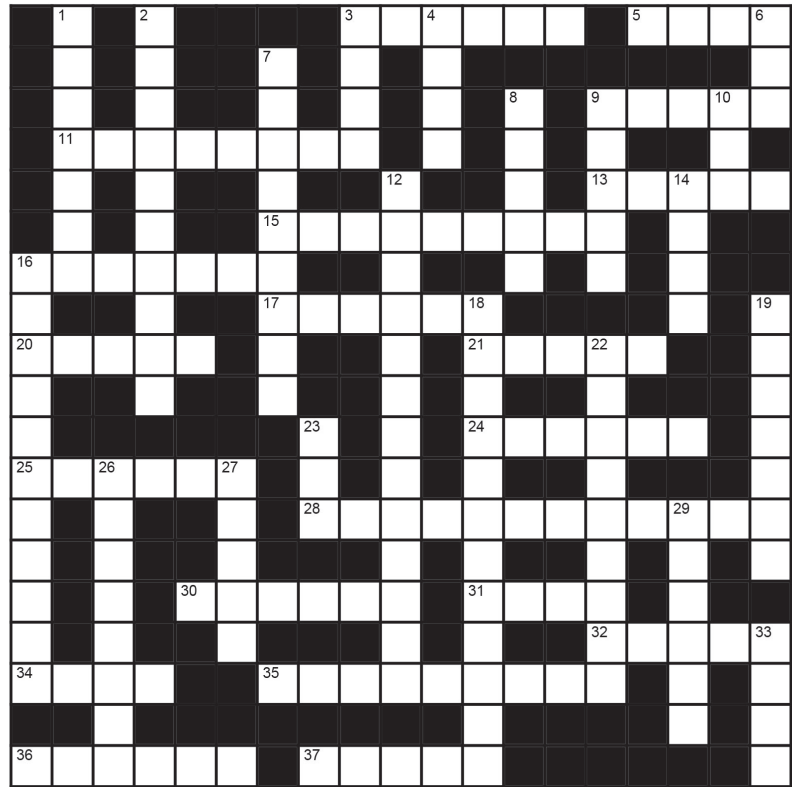
This brightly colored breeding plumage male had a bright cerulean blue back, rusty orange on the breast and wing bars. He was partial to one well-stocked feeder visible from the road where many birders waited respectfully for the bird for appear/reappear.

This bird breeds in the northwestern United States and winters along the north western Mexico coast according to Cornell's All About Birds.

What brought him here, no one knows but, he was seen by many birders who were happy to see this bright, beautiful bird.

Kind of Blue

Tom Moran



Across

- 3 _____ Bunting
- 5 _____ Warbler, tail bobbing
- 9 Thrush-like bird that says its name
- 11 Yellow-rumped Warbler with yellow throat seen at Jones Beach West End through December of 2023, not our common Myrtle with the white throat
- 13 _____ Turnstone
- 15 _____ Falcon
- 16 Common or Boat-tailed _____
- 17 _____ Flycatcher. Don't confuse it with 20 Across. Fitz bew
- 20 _____ Flycatcher. Don't confuse it with 17 Across. FreeBeeYeer.
- 21 _____ Finch, less purple, sometimes yellow, female has no distinctive facial eye streak
- 24 _____ Finch, more purple, female has distinctive eye streak
- 25 _____ Tern, very short legs, bird with the longest annual migration of any animal in the world
- 28 _____ Warbler, Audubon's or Myrtle?
- 30 _____ Bunting, only the second confirmed NYS sighting this April in Flanders
- 31 _____ Pigeon
- 32 Snowy or Great _____
- 34 Clapper or Virginia _____
- 35 One can be found on sod farms, grasspipers, or mudflats or ocean beaches
- 36 Blue _____ 9 Down
- 37 _____ Tern, identifiable by crown it's wearing, NOT!

Down

- 1 _____ Yellowlegs
- 2 Pileated _____, at Shu Swamp?
- 3 Common but make sure a White-faced isn't hiding among the Glossys
- 4 A sad one.
- 6 A good month for warblers or one with a distinctive facial pattern, Cape _____ Warbler
- 7 Eastern _____, that is how it's spelled!
- 8 Miles _____, legendary jazz trumpeter, bandleader and composer whose famous album is the title of this puzzle, but I don't think he was thinking of birds...
- 9 Blue, 36 Across _____
- 10 _____ headed Woodpecker, maybe at Paumanok Trail, Jones Pond
- 12 _____ 22 Down, a put-down by Yosemite Sam
- 14 _____, _____, Goose
- 16 Blue-gray _____
- 18 Night singing bird that repeats its name
- 19 _____ Sparrow, yellow at base of bill, look in salt marshes
- 22 12 Down _____
- 23 Blue _____, not Canada (Gray?)
- 26 _____ Wren
- 27 _____ Waxwing
- 29 Storm _____
- 33 Blue-winged _____

Answers to this puzzle are on page 11

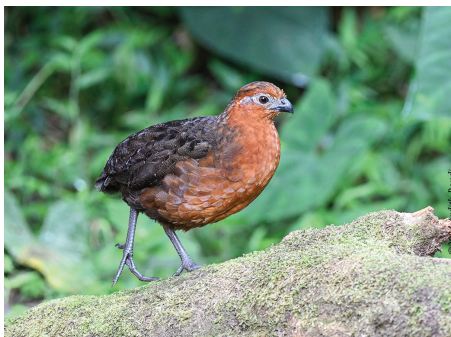
Birding Colombia

By Kathleen Heenan

Photos by Ardith Bondi

For Birders, Colombia really is number one according to Steven Hilty, author of the 550-page book, *Birds Of Colombia*. I have been wanting to go for the last decade. So, when well-known bird guide Joe Giunta announced his sixth trip to Colombia, I signed up. We left February 25, 2024, flying into Cali in the Valle de Cauca in the Western Andes.

Colombia has been affected by climate change with hot weather, drought and fires in the mountains north of Bogota. In addition, the Orinoco area near the border of Venezuela in the Eastern Andes has been described as dangerous with rebel activity. Cali, however, now is safe and stable. After an overnight in a downtown hotel, our group of nine plus our excellent Colombian guide, Daniel Uribe, left for Finca La Florida and Finca La Alejandria, 18 Kilometers away to see birds up close and personal. At Finca La Florida we first saw the endemic Chestnut-Wood Quail family of six visiting a fenced off area for seed. These chicken-like, elusive Quails frequently wake one in the morning with their whistling, rollicking duet. The 10 inch adults with chestnut breast and neck have a grey skin area around the eyes that makes them look like they are wearing goggles. The chicks are speckled, but have no goggles. They strolled out singly for five minutes, pecking away at seed as cameras clicked. A nearby log with fruit – lots of bananas – on it attracted a Golden

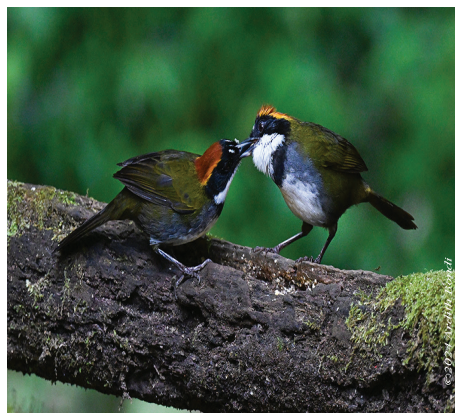


Chestnut-wood Quail



Green Honeycreeper

Tanager with black ear-covert patches and a knock-out Green Honeycreeper, sporting its sharp-pointed decurved yellow bill. The male has a black cap and aquamarine plumage and the female is bright green. They were right in front of us. Our leader Joe waited patiently for his favorite, the Multicolored Tanager, another endemic with a black ear patch. Meanwhile, many colorful birds flew in and out – including a Thick-billed Euphonia, a Green Jay with a yellow breast, several Tanagers (one more spectacular than the other), a Blue-headed Parrot (the first of sixty we would see), the familiar Acorn Woodpecker, Whitestarts (relatives of



Chestnut-capped Brushfinches

the Redstart), Blackburnian Warblers, hummingbirds, finches and a bright Red-headed Barbet. But the most handsome couple were the Chestnut-capped Brushfinches, one of the top three favorite Colombian bird species of Daniel Uribe. Finally, an attractive Multicolored Tanager appeared, but it



Golden Tanager

was an immature male. We would later see a mature male painted on a barn. Joe and the guide took us into the woodlands to see a resting Potoo. As we filed out, a fellow birder yelled “it’s a Yellow-headed Caracara” as it flew over us to a nearby tree.

Next stop was Finca Alejandria. Here I saw my first White-booted Racquet-tail. Their lower legs, male and female,



White-booted Racquet-tail

are covered with white cotton puffs (for warmth or beauty?) plus the males sport long racquet tipped tails. Very noticeable were the Buff-tailed Cornets which ruled the hummingbird feeder with their aggressive, pugnacious behavior. But the most stunning bird was the beautiful green headed Crowned Woodnymph. My record shows we saw 12 species of hummingbirds, including Long-tailed Sylphs, males 7-inches long with a very long metallic-green tail, and a Rusty Flowerpiercer.

We birded our way to the city of Buga in the Central Andes. Stopping

*Streaked Flycatcher*

at El Vinquilo, a dry forested area in the Andean foothills near the river Magdalena, we saw a 10-inch Cocoa Woodcreeper, with long flammulated streaks on its body and tail, climbing a tree. It would be one of many Woodcreepers we would see. We got our binocs on a greyish, green and yellow Streak-necked Flycatcher and noted its unusual white post ocular spot, grey neck and throat, finely streaked sides and yellowish breast. I believe this was the beginning of seeing a variety of streaked birds. It makes birding in Colombia's Central Andes very exciting.

Early the next morning we headed out to the Laguna de Sonso, a freshwater marsh and river in the lowlands. We hoped to see the 35-inch black and grey Horned Screamer with its unforgettable powerful, raucous, gulping honks. The van stopped quickly after someone spotted a flock of large black birds. One of our best birders screamed that he saw the Screamer and called for the scope... Exciting! Meanwhile the retired schoolteacher standing next to me said, as she focused her binocs, "that's it?" An early morning mistake.

*Spectacled Parrolets*

We picked up Jonathan, a local teenage schoolboy who is training to be a bird guide and mastering English. He spotted many birds for us in scrubland and parched wetland. Two of my favorites, the Amazon and Ringed Kingfishers, were partially hidden on a branch above a small stream. But not the Spectacled Parrotlet males which are bright green with blue around the eyes, wings and rumps and the totally green females. We counted 30 as they flew over, rattling high pitch "chit and chidit". We called out Lesser Kissadee or was it a Social Flycatcher. No, it was the similar looking Rusty-margined Flycatcher with rufous primary edges. Next up were three Nighthawks high up in the trees resting. A new species for us was the Yellow-bellied Elaenia with its spiky crest (rarely held flattened) and double white wing bars and pale yellow chest. High up in a tree a Smooth-billed Ani flew in. We read that the Anis are bizarre black cuckoos. Our guide soon heard the call of the Greater Ani off trail. With high hopes, we bushwhacked into the lowland forest and stood quietly for 20 minutes in pursuit of a 19-inch Greater Ani, but all we saw was a fly by – we did not see the yellow eye nor the glossy blue green and purple sheen on the wings and tail. However, a beautiful Crimson-backed Tanager with brilliant red underparts and a silvery white mandible perched near us. On our walk back we observed two small 5-inch Greyish Piculets, an endemic Woodpecker couple. Peggy, our best off the trail spotter saw two Red-crowned Woodpeckers attending to a nest in a tree snag. They looked like Red-bellies, but then we were in the Central Andes. A 14-inch female Crimson-crested Woodpecker was spotted in a large tree.

She had a wide white stripe on her neck and white V on her back – a knock out!

Across a river we saw a Cocoli Heron, looking like a Great Blue, except for a wide white stripe on its neck and chest. It is also apparently a couple of inches taller, but we didn't have a tape measure. A lagoon had Glossy Ibis,

Spotted Sandpipers with bopping tail and overhead three Snail Kite Hawks. We stopped by a very large Saman Tree that is an umbrella in the rain, provides shade for cows and is the name of the Colombian 500 pesos coin.

Then we were off on a long ride in the foothills of the Central Andes near the town of Pereira.



Kathleen and Maryanna Zovko under the Saman Tree with Jonathan, our teenage guide in training

Two plus hours later we were in Otun-Quimbaya Wildlife Sanctuary. We were looking for Torrent Ducks which swim against the rushing river currents. This agile, slender duck with its red soft bill and striped head and neck and chestnut back swims from boulder to boulder with ease. This would be my third attempt to see one. And success was ours as we leaned over the bridge, first one side then the other to follow this duck as it easily swam with its long

*Torrent Duck*



The bus loads up for Pereira

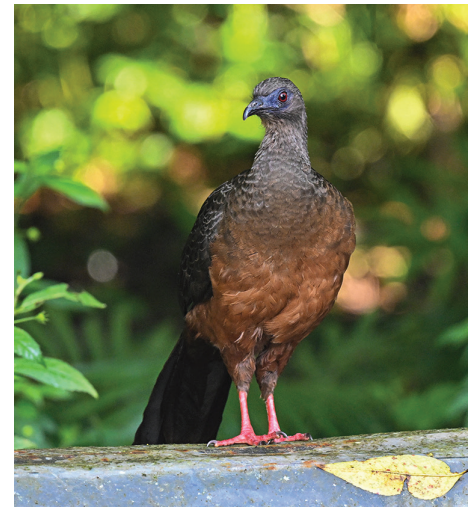
stiff tail (maybe operating like a rudder) and large fire engine red colored web feet in the swift moving water. It was memorable to see and many in the group are still talking about it. It was dinner time, but still light as we watched a Black Phoebe and a Golden-bellied Flycatcher (looks like a Lesser Kiskadee) sallying back and forth catching insects over the water.

We drove through the small town of La Florida with murals of birds and pastel painted houses. The sun was shining, and the locals were sitting outside bars and restaurants. The Hotel Kumanday where we stayed is also painted with birds in their habitat. Dinner was delicious, including a local soup and fresh trout. The next morning we saw a party bus outside the Hotel. It would take us to Otun-Quimbaya Sanctuary high up in the mountains at an elevation of 12,000 feet. The 12-kilometer drive took us by the bridge where we saw the Torrent Duck and was bumpy with potholes.



Red-ruffed Fruitcrow

Our reward was in a tall tree close to the entrance – two Wattled Guan (the wattle is yellow, the body black, the feet yellow) standing 30-inches tall. Their distinctive call starts soft, rises to loud and then softens again. Soon, from a small bridge over an Andean stream, we saw two six-inch White-capped Dippers swimming downstream between the boulders. Typically, they forage on the edge of a river. Up in the trees were four Sickle-winged Guans with blue facial skin and chestnut underparts. Their call is totally different than the Wattled Guan. Miguel, a thirty something year old, our second guide who had joined our trip the day before, said this was his favorite bird. Smaller birds included the endemic Rufus Sparrows, plus tanagers, warblers, flycatchers and redstarts were seen in the nearby trees. On the ride down the mountain, we got off the bus a few times when our guide heard the 16-inch Red-ruffed Fruitcrow deep in the woods. But it was far away so when I got him in my binoculars, I was able to note his large head, small tail, thick crow beak, orangish neck, but did not see the lumpy feathers on its chest. However Ardith, a fine photographer, fellow birder whose photographs are featured here, managed to take a great photo of this big bird deep in the woods. An endemic Hooded Antipitta only 4 1/2-inches long was heard and later seen by a few. We suggested maybe they flushed out the bird from the low bushes after most of the group took off down the road.



Sickle-winged Guan

After lunch we stopped at Cameguada, a bamboo marsh area near the town of Chinchina. In a pond a Blackish Rail (no black just brown and gray) with red legs, lime green beak and a yellowish eye was picking its way along the edge of the muddy wetlands. A Bare-faced Ibis with pink facial skin and legs, was seen as well as many other birds that love this habitat. Later, I missed the two Spot-breasted Woodpeckers in a leafy tree, but did see the Striped Cuckoo with its rufous crest and long tail.

Our next location where we stayed two nights was the comfortable Tinamu Lodge, a nature reserve (formerly a coffee plantation) located in the Central Andes at an altitude of over 4,200 feet. It was hot and dry, but the outdoor thatched roof lodge was in the shade and the food was good. As we ate breakfast one morning, we watched



Moustasched Puffbird

a 19-inch Andean Motmot, mostly green with turquoise brow, at a nearby feeder. The cabins were spacious with a large bathroom window overlooking the woods. I once showered as a Black Vulture walked by and paused. Birds, especially the Blue-grey Tanagers were “abundant residents”. One morning we watched as a local artist painted a Vermillion Flycatcher on a wall near our tables. That evening our Columbian guide, Daniel Uribe, told us how Tom Fiore the famous birder escaped from the guerillas who kidnapped him and two birding friends in the Orinoco in the 1990’s. Tom saw an opportunity to run while on an outdoors break with an inattentive guard. Guns were firing at him as he made it into a forest. He ran/walked all night till he reached a small



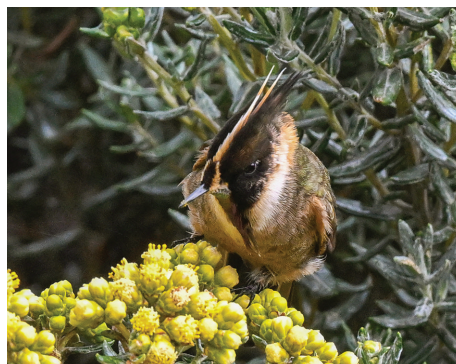
Golden-collared Manakin

town at daylight. He saw a news station car and jumped into it. Off they went to the police station and safety. Daniel said Tom had been warned not to bird in the Orinoco.

On our first morning at Tinamu Lodge, I found a favorite bird couple, the Mustached Puffbird with its white mustache and whiskers below its beak. Small, it flitted around in the bamboo before it made its move to catch an insect in the open. Bobby, our most enthusiastic birder, identified with them because of his own mustache. We had started the day watching our local guide, Fernando, spreading feed on the trail to attract the endemic and shy Grey-headed Dove with grey crown, buff cheeks and red eye. Only those sitting on the far left of the group saw the Dove, I was in the middle. Joe Guinta who had seen the Dove, took those who

had not seen it on a trail to see a 4-inch plump male Golden collared Manakin in the woods. We had excellent views of its shiny gold throat and collar. A further treat for those of us who missed the Dove was seeing a Common Potoo sleeping at the top of a snag. Joe said, “he sleeps with his eyes closed and opened.” I forget the explanation for that phenomenon. Two similar birds in the bamboo copse of trees were all black except for white wings – the White-winged Becard and the White-shoulder Tanager. Later, we saw four Black-chested Jays flying around in the tall Bamboo trees and Honeycreepers courting nearby.

The next day we all did see the Grey-headed Dove as Fernando spread the seed on the path. With its beautiful shades of grey and blue it was worth a second try. A friendly pair of Common Tody-flycatchers engaged our attention as they flitted around in the trees. They reminded me of small warblers with their yellow and black feathers, wing bars and yellow eyes with dark pupils. The 6-inch Bar-crested Antshrike is covered with black and white stripes, horizontal on the body and vertical on the head. We got good views as it sallied back and forth across the road. In the afternoon it was too hot to bird (and it was too hot and dry for the birds) so we left for the town of Manizales. Daniel Uribe described his hometown with five colleges as a good place to live.



Buffy Helmetcrest

But first we stopped at a craft shop. It featured beautiful handmade purses and bags, plus decorative items and local chocolate. I bought a lot, including

small musical instruments for our grandchildren.

On day 7 of 9 Maryanna Zovko, my roommate and longtime TWA Flight Attendant friend, and I put on our long underwear and wool sweaters as we prepared to go up to Los Nevados National Park in the Central Andes. We would be birding between 10,000 and over 12,000 feet. The first stop was the Black Laguna where we would see an Andean Duck (like our Ruddy Duck with a blue beak and tail sticking up straight), a Sedge Wren and Rufus-collared Sparrow. Across, the road walking on permafrost, we saw a variety of interesting birds: a blackish bird with a prominent orange beak and legs and an eye ring – a 13-inch Great Thrush – and close by foraging on the grass was a 6-inch many-striped Canastero. Canastero is a Spanish word for basket-maker which describes these birds’ large domed nests made of sticks or grass. The bird has an orange-buff chin spot and rufous wings and tail with stripes all over its head and body. We stopped at a bar where Daniel ordered cups of cocoa tea to help us adjust to the altitude. At over 13,400 feet we hoped to see the Buffy Helmetcrest, possibly



Pancho, the Chestnut-crowned Antpitta

on a red flowering plant. Within seven minutes of our arrival, we saw this large hummingbird, a male, 4.3 inches long with short beak, a green and purplish-blue stripe on its neck, black and buff head pattern and shaggy crest. It is quite recognizable in its tiny world. Later we saw a second Helmetcrest. What good luck!

Still in Los Nevados National Park, we drove to Hotel Termas de Ruiza, a former ski resort, for lunch. We climbed up to a birding hotspot with hummingbird feeders. We saw Golden-breasted Pufflegs (endemic) and Sapphire-vented Pufflegs, a Buff-winged Starfrontlet with a distinctive buff tertials square that is conspicuous day and night, and a stunning blue, yellow and black 9-inch Hooded Mountain Tanager with a red eye ring. We counted five Scarlet Mountain Tanagers and saw clearly the area's most beautiful bird, the Rainbow-bearded Thornbill. In sunlight its throat glimmers red, green and yellow, the top of its head is rufous and his white tail feathers are conspicuous. We continued to bird on our way down the mountain to our hotel in Manizales. We gathered every evening to do a bird list with our guide. It would be a long list that night.



Black-billed Mountain Toucan

The next morning we were on a bus at 7 am to get to a cloud/rain forest in the Rio Blanco area. It was a 45-minute drive and we had to be there before 8 am when the local guide would try to lure a Chestnut-crowned Antpitta out of the shrubs by calling it and offering worms. We quietly sat on benches as the guide started to call the bird. Its nickname is "Pancho" and the guide spoke to it in short Spanish words, I recall hearing "oyo, oyo" and "ma, ma". This went on for ten minutes until "Raul", a Green-and-black Fruiteater sauntered out of

the undergrowth, foraging. Only later did we see "Pancho" with its chestnut-colored head and neck, white chest stripes and silver, grey legs and feet. It



A Buff-tailed Coronet comes to the feeder held by Kathleen

was time for a bathroom and coffee stop at the Rain Forest's Green House. From the porch a mixed flock of birds were seen at a feeding station. Quickly, I noticed a handsome pair of Slaty Brushfinches. They are 7-inches long with a rusty crown and nape, black on



Flamulated Treehunter

the sides of the head, white throat and dark grey underparts. They were busily hopping around in nearby trees, disappearing for a few minutes, then reappearing. In the front yard of the house were hummingbirds. One could hold a small jar with sugar water that hummingbirds would land on.

After lunch a 20-inch male, Black-billed Mountain-Toucan was spotted moving toward a nest in a tree with a flowering bromeliad plant. We had great views of the yellow around its eye, powder blue chest and white throat, bill with red and black and black tail with red at the

top and tip. Joe Guinta was worried the male would not return to the nest and told us "vamos listo". We went down the road a bit and sure enough the female appeared, and they both flew off towards the nest. Joe was happy. They are two of his favorite birds. Meanwhile, Miguel our expert bird listener heard a Streaked-headed Antbird which sat in a bamboo copse with a streaked torso and white on the tip of its tail. Once again the reserve's guide tried to call in another bird, the endemic Brown-banded Antpitta with worms and short Spanish syllables. This time he immediately had success as a plain rufous brown, white and grey bird with silver blue legs and feet approached the worms.

While listening for birds I saw a 4-inch round hole in an embankment on the side of the road. I knew from our time at Tinamu Lodge that it was a Motmot's nest. They dig a tunnel and make an enlarged space at the end. I asked one of the guides about it. About one minute later a 9-inch Flamulated Treehunter which was using the Motmot nest flew out of the hole. It has the most streaking of any bird, very bold and buffy, covering its entire body and a long rufous colored tail. Miguel had us all retreat up the road. The bird would not return until the coast was clear. Five minutes later the Treehunter returned and flew into the nest. Luckily, our group got good views of this uncommon bird.

We saw more birds, but one of the last had a classic story. Daniel Uribe, our experienced guide, saw a nocturnal Stygian Owl perched on a tree trunk in the woods. Daniel put his scope on this 17-inch short-eared owl resting. So why is his name Stygian? Liz, our classics professor, and fellow birder, explained that owls were believed to be part of the Greek underworld. Owls are hunters of the night, so scary and dark yet wise and thoughtful with their big eyes. There were five rivers in the underworld, one of which is the River Styx, (river of sticks where the gods swore oaths by). Hence the name Stygian.

More on page 13

Just for Fun by Tom Moran

Word Search - the bird version

L	U	S	M	A	C	A	W	S	A	Y	S	N
C	O	J	N	M	W	H	E	T	A	E	Y	E
H	A	O	K	O	A	L	U	J	L	A	R	K
Z	A	N	N	N	W	G	R	E	A	T	P	W
B	O	W	A	O	A	D	O	U	B	L	E	H
M	R	M	K	D	J	P	P	I	E	M	S	E
A	A	I	N	C	A	F	E	K	B	A	H	R
R	N	M	U	R	R	E	A	D	V	A	I	A
T	G	I	A	W	P	I	N	T	A	I	L	L
I	E	D	A	F	C	S	N	R	R	O	L	D
N	P	S	F	N	E	W	U	I	I	R	E	D
B	L	U	E	C	H	A	T	W	E	E	L	F
I	B	I	S	E	S	N	S	I	D	E	D	I

ANI	GREAT	MAG	PIE
ASH	HAWK	MARTIN	PINTAIL
BALD	HERALD	MEW	RED
BLUE	HILL	MIMIDS	SAW
BUFF	IBISES	MONK	SAYS
CANADA	INCA	MURRE	SIDED
CHAT	JAR	NAPED	SNOW
DOUBLE	JAY	NEW	SWAN
ELF	KELP	NUT	TRI
EUROPEAN	LARK	OLD	VARIED
EYE	LOON	ORANGE	WHET
FEAS	MACAW	OWL	

What type of mystery book
 did the owl like?
 Hoot-dunits.

Sudoku

	8							
			5			9		
3	4						1	5
			8	9				
9		8	3		5			
	6				1			
5					4	1		
		2						3
7				8	6		5	

Answers to
 Kind of Blue
 Tom Moran's Puzzle
 on page 6

G	W				I	N	D	I	G	O		P	A	L	M
R	O			W	B	O									A
E	O			O	I	V		D			V	E	E	R	Y
A	U	D	U	B	O	N	S	E		A	I			E	
T	P				D	Y			V		R	U	D	D	Y
E	E				P	E	R	E	G	R	I	N	E		U
G	R	A	C	K	L	E			L		S	O			C
N		K			W	I	L	L	O	W				K	S
A	L	D	E	R				O		H	O	U	S	E	
T			R		E			W	I		A				A
C							J	B		P	U	R	P	L	E
A	R	C	T	I	C		A		E	P		S			I
T	A				E		Y	E	L	L	O	W	R	U	M
C	R				D			L	O		C			E	E
H	O			L	A	Z	U	L	I		R	O	C	K	T
E	L			R				E	W			E	G	R	E
R	A	I	L				S	A	N	D	P	I	P	E	R
		N							L					L	A
H	E	A	D	E	D			R	O	Y	A	L			L

The time to return to Manizales had come, but on the way back along the rushing Blanco River, I thought about the birds we saw on this afternoon walk including the 5-inch Beryl-spangled Tanager with its entire body boldly spotted with bright blue-green sharply contrasting with black mask and back. No other tanager has such a spangled appearance. Daniel said the male and female are monomorphic.

It was a long ride along the rushing Rio Blanco and soon we were talking about the 6.5-inch uncommon Yellow-vented Woodpecker with its red crown and nape, strong white eyebrow and mustache line, striped chest, yellow sides and green back. Just as we pulled up at the hotel we were talking about the Blue-and-black Tanager.

We did our bird list, ate dinner and gifted our guides, Daniel and Miguel, and our great driver. The next morning we were off to Pereira (a two-hour drive) to catch a flight to Bogota and later in the afternoon an Avianca flight to JFK.



Joe Guinta, Kathleen Heenan and Maryanna Zovko in front of one of the many bird murals.

Did you take a great picture this year?

Would you like to see it featured in the 2025 ELIAS Calendar?

We are doing it again. ELIAS is putting together a calendar for 2025 and asking our members to submit photos to be considered for the calendar.

Please, have a look through your photos – please make sure the image is high res, in focus, and taken on Eastern Long Island.

The only other requirement —

you must be a current member to have your photos considered!

We love seeing the birds you have seen this year.

Submit the photos to
eliasosprey@optonline.net
and to
youngb53@optimum.net

Take your camera out next time you go birding, get the next great shot! There is still time!

And, as always – Good Birding
Deadline October 1, 2025

10 Fun Facts about the Wild Turkey



I get a kick out of Wild Turkeys. I have had a family of 2 mama's and 10 babies visit me in the early morning and again toward sunset. Sometimes I hear them gobbling and communicating under the bathroom window as they eat the bird seed others have thrown out. They seem to be very chatty telling the babies what to do. So when I saw National Audubon had these 10 Fun Facts, I just had to share them.

Sally

The Wild Turkey might be the most recognizable bird in North America. Of course, a big reason for that is due to its strong association with Thanksgiving, when the bird's likeness is omnipresent. But the turkey's large size, impressive plumage, and distinct look make this bird hard to mistake no matter the time of year. Despite so many Americans being familiar with the Wild Turkey, however, folks might be surprised to discover that they know very little about them—and what they think they do know might not be true. Read on for a cornucopia of fun facts about everyone's favorite gobbler.

1. Turkeys are believed to be named after the country. Linguists theorize that early Europeans were reminded of their African Guinea Fowl back home, which was native to Turkey, and the similarity led to its name.

2. There are only two species of Wild Turkey: Ours here in North America and the Ocellated Turkey in Central America. The North American Wild Turkey has five distinct subspecies and also comes in a variety of color morphs.

3. Male turkeys can weigh up to 25 pounds, while the average female is around half that weight. Despite this heft and their reputation for being ground dwellers, Wild Turkeys often roost overnight in trees to avoid predators.

4. While they might not look like the fastest birds, Wild Turkeys are surprisingly confident fliers, capable of hitting 60 miles per hour. They are also more agile than they appear.

5. Turkeys have excellent eyesight, seeing three times more clearly than 20/20 vision. They can also see in color and

have a 270-degree field of vision.

This – along with their generally wary nature – gives them an edge on both predators and hunters.

6. Did you know you can discern a turkey's sex from its droppings? It's true. Male scat is shaped like the letter J, while a female's droppings are more spiral-shaped. And the bigger the poop, the older the bird.

7. Wild Turkey populations plummeted in the 19th century due to overhunting and a loss of habitat, with the species disappearing entirely from New England. Fortunately, Wild Turkey conservation efforts throughout the 20th century led to a sharp rebound throughout their historic range, and now the birds have taken over the Northeast and even some Midwest towns.

8. Along with their waddles and snoods – the piece of flesh that dangles from the beak – turkeys have another standout feature: beards. The bundle of feathers sprouting from their chest is known as a turkey beard, and it gets longer as the bird ages. While all males have beards, some females also grow them, though why is still a mystery to scientists.

9. To debunk a popular turkey tale, Benjamin Franklin did not advocate for the turkey as the National Bird. He also didn't besmirch the Bald Eagle, either. In fact, the letter to his daughter that is often cited as the source of both these "facts" was actually satire.

10. The first official presidential turkey pardon was given by George H.W. Bush in 1989, but reports credit many presidents with the tradition, including Abraham Lincoln, whose son took a liking to the turkey destined for Christmas dinner, and Harry Truman, who was the first to appear in a photo op with a turkey that would later be served.



How to Make Hummingbird Nectar

In a few easy steps, you can bring these nectar-loving birds to your feeder.

Hummingbirds may be some of the smallest birds in the world, but fluttering those tiny wings can be quite a workout. Flapping away at up to 90 beats per second burns up calories fast; to maintain their momentum, hummingbirds need to eat—a lot! To satisfy their speedy metabolisms, these busy birds consume half their body weight in bugs and nectar, feeding every 10-15 minutes and visiting 1,000-2,000 flowers per day.

You can help these hardworking foragers get the nutrients they need by providing them with their favorite post-workout meal—nectar. This hummingbird sweet treat can be made right at home with a few simple ingredients. By filling your feeder with this DIY delight, you can complement nectar-rich plants and watch these beautiful little birds feed and flitter all day.

To attract hummingbirds naturally plant nectar-bearing native plants in your yard or community.



In our area we mainly have Ruby-throated Hummingbirds although every now and again we will get a different species. The males have the ruby colored throat called a gorget. This is a female with attitude. Consider using the small 2 to 3 oz. feeders, less waste and the birds don't seem to mind. Be sure to change the nectar every few days Photo by Janis Hurley

How to make Nectar for Hummingbirds

- 1/4 cup refined white sugar
- 1 cup boiling water
- Bowl and spoon

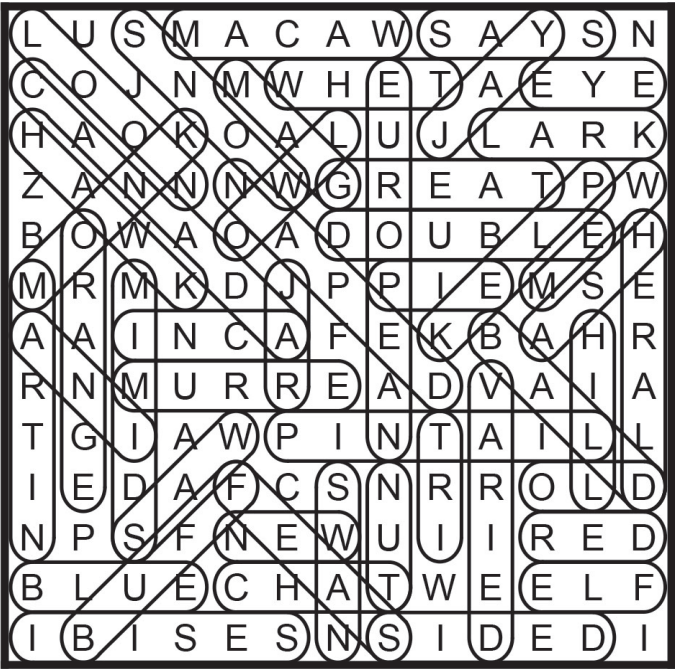
Please do not substitute honey, which can promote dangerous fungal growth, or use red food coloring, which could also prove harmful to birds.

Steps:

1. Mix sugar and boiling water until sugar is dissolved.
2. Cool and fill feeder.
3. Hang up your feeder outside and wait for the hummingbirds to come.

To make a quart use 1 cup of sugar to 4 cups of water. Store in the fridge.

Answers to the puzzles on page 13



1	8	5	9	4	3	7	6	2
6	2	7	5	1	8	9	3	4
3	4	9	6	2	7	8	1	5
4	5	1	8	9	2	3	7	6
9	7	8	3	6	5	4	2	1
2	6	3	4	7	1	5	9	8
5	9	6	2	3	4	1	8	7
8	1	2	7	5	9	6	4	3
7	3	4	1	8	6	2	5	9

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