

## **LEGACYLINE NEWSLETTER – January ‘15**

Recently Susan and I said good-bye to our cat, *Beanie*. How does a little fur-ball that weighs practically nothing hold such a dear place in our hearts? For nearly twenty-three years she punished my wife each time I left on tour, and exacted double the attention upon my return. These 2015 Legacy adventures begin without *Beanie* sitting with her back to my suitcase, slowly rocking her tail from side to side in feline disapproval. More than ever I am aware that we are, each of us, a complex composite of those to whom we belong, and the souls and activities that fill our days. While on tour we as birders task one small part of ourselves to the pure fun of bird watching, the business of seeking lifers, and the delight of touring new areas. Each of us has our unique story, our reason for embracing this passion, and a narrative of that '*first birding experience*'... yet few of us want to define ourselves by this wonderful hobby. To one degree or another we are family members, and contributors in faith, conservation, and neighborhood communities. It is in this broad context of viewing ourselves that I *applaud my friend Hugh Buck on seeing his nine thousandth life bird* this past August; a superb milestone indeed, but not what defines Hugh, as birds are but one aspect of the life and loves of this fine Scotsman.

### **UPDATED TOUR CALENDAR**

I have been too slow in updating the tour calendar for 2015–2017 because it seemed of little purpose as I am scheduled to guide a great number of *Closed Custom Parties* over the next eighteen months. The web sight for the past six months had the look to the unfamiliar reader as if I had retired, or worse. So it has been updated this month. Please review the Tour Calendar Section of our web site: <http://www.legacy-tours.com/Tours.htm>

### **LEGACYLINE OFFERS**

I made personal arrangements for three boat trips in Mexican waters during 2015 with the hope of adding a few birds to my Mexico Life List of 1,033 species. I recently decided to share my plans with readers of the LegacyLine Newsletter. Two trips are on board commercial cruises – one in the Gulf of Mexico on *Carnival*, the other off Western Mexico on *Norwegian Cruise Line*, and the third trip timed for spring migration that accesses two land masses off the coast of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula – the *Cayo Chinchorro* and *Arrecife Alacranes*. I will arrange for LegacyLine readers to participate in any of these trips at no added cost above those charged by the trip provider. Legacy Tours will, however, offer optional day-programs that individuals can purchase to enhance the cruise experience.

The **YUCATAN BIRDING TOUR** runs May 4<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup>, and includes target species such as Gray Kingbird, Black-whiskered Vireo, Rufous-necked Wood-rail, Mexican Sheartail, Yucatan Bobwhite, Brown Noddy, and Roseate Tern. *This trip is for active birders*, and involves a land portion and two separate trips on water to offshore reefs. I am confident that this trip will result in at least one Mexican Lifer for me...

The **GULF OF MEXICO CRUISE** is a 5-day trip on *Carnival* from Galveston, TX from September 7<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup>. In addition I plan to offer two days of birding together along the Texas gulf coast to ensure we are all together in Galveston for the beginning of the

cruise. *This trip promises to be fun for anyone interested in cruising.* There will be two days in the Gulf of Mexico with 'Atlantic' possibilities for shearwaters, tropicbirds, storm petrels, and terns... some of which could be 'goodies'. In addition two day-trips on land allow for a visit to Mayan sites, and the opportunity to chase down endemic birds such as Cozumel Emerald, Cozumel Vireo, and Yucatan Wren.

The **WESTERN MEXICO CRUISE** is an 11-day trip out of San Diego that runs Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2015. In addition to the seabird possibilities Legacy will organize day-trips in Acapulco, Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan, and Cabo San Lucas. I anticipate that the optional land trips will result in seeing more than 150 species of birds, of which at least 20 will be endemic to Mexico. *This is a cruiser's paradise, while the day-trips are a superb introduction to Mexico's unique birdlife.*

PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE if any of these trips appeal to you...

### **THAILAND**

Legacy Tours has contracted with Nick Upton to guide a party of *six people* for 15-days in early December 2015. There is a not-so-modest pool of over 500 reasonable target species – including the likelihood of Spoon-billed Sandpiper – during this tour through Central and Northern Thailand: December 1<sup>st</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, 2015. A Birder's Introduction; Bangkok to the temple city of Amara Tepac. Contact us ASAP...

### **2014 YEAR-LIST TOTAL FOR MEXICO**

Though most readers care little how many species we tally each year in Mexico just enough do that I share the annual total within the winter newsletter. For the 16<sup>th</sup> time in the past twenty years I recorded more than 800 species while guiding clients in Mexico. This year we listed **817 AOU species**. None of those sightings included a Mexican Lifer for me, but the Clapper Rail split resulted in a personal uptick of one.

### **THANK YOU**

The past several years nearly half of our tour participants in Mexico hail from one either Canada or Britain. Our Heritage-Style Tours continue to appeal to those with a broad interest in the country in which they are birding. Looking at the 2015-2017 Calendar we are pretty much divided equally between *Open-birding Tours* in Mexico, *Heritage-Style Birding Tours*; and *Custom Tours* for private parties. These programs, whatever their nature, are successful only because you choose to support them... for this we continue to be very grateful, and to say to you toady; 'Thank you'.

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