



LEGACYLINE NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2022

Martin Painter, a world-birder with a reflective spirit, recently published a rather atypical memoir; *Birding in the Age of Extinction*. Martin's stories place him central within numerous accounts of birds and birding, however his tales are more occupied with one's nature, the motives of birders, natural ecosystems, and the struggle for survival. While reading *Birding in the Age of Extinction* I let myself muse across the span of my own fifty-plus years of birding. It took 10,000 years for humans to advance from basic agrarian communities to global interdependence, and during those one-hundred centuries the word *bird* was synonymous with food-source. In the early 1960's beginning in the UK, and shortly thereafter within continental Europe and the USA, the hunter's rifle was voluntarily laid down in favor of binoculars and a sketchbook. Birding as an avocation emerged as the new way to walk amid nature. This pursuit richly benefited from the innovations of the late 21st century, with ocean-liners giving way to air travel, letters and faxes rerouted to smart phones and texts, digital eBird communications superseding type-written trip reports, vibrant field guides emerging from inked manuscripts, powerful lenses overcoming the failings of human eyesight, hotels and jungle lodges comforting those who once tent-camped or slept in cars, and the iconic 'go-it-alone' adventurer relegated to the status of a present-day dinosaur by organized group-travel to exotic destinations. Yet for all these pluses we begin the second millennium under one immeasurable weight, the birds are disappearing. Isak Dinesen's *Out of Africa* describes a continent filled with hundreds of thousands of rhinos and lions, and millions of elephants. Merriweather Lewis' 1804-1806 journals of the *Corps of Discovery* list 122 newly described animals, and millions upon millions of significant beasts roaming the American mid-continent. These are gone now... not all, but most, and only the foolish fail to grasp that our grandchildren's children will never experience that which gives us pleasure today. Imagine a gigantic letter X, with the upward line from left to right being '*ease of travel*', and the downward line, from right to left, being '*what there is to see*'. In

terms of human history, the crossing point of these two lines, *the center of the X*, is our moment in time... the *X* represents the past 50-years of a planet that is 4.5 billion years old. Only this window in time encompasses '*what there is to see*' in a manner '*easiest in which to see it*'... our lifetimes overlap this *Golden Age of Birding*... however it will not continue for long yet, nor will it ever come again. There is deep sadness in this truth, indeed tragic desperation, yet birding gave reason to shelve the sportsman's rifle in favor of binoculars and camera. Birding affected both joy and meaning to a generation of adventurers who by their actions gave title to a unique chapter in human history, *Birding*. No other generation has embraced the full expanse of this marvelous globe. How fortunate, how very fortunate indeed, for our time and place in the long mark of time.

UPCOMING TRIPS

THE YUCATAN PENINSULA – DEC 1ST – 12TH, 2022

We can invite two people to join us in the Yucatan Peninsula later this year. This relaxed tour embraces a number of Mayan ruins, and post-conquest historical sites. We will see all of the endemic birds (including the newly split Yucatan Gnatcatcher) while touring in our *Heritage-Style* format – effortless birding, relaxed pace, comfortable accommodations, sit-down dining, with occasional generalized tourist activities. Contact us now for tour details... just two spaces available.

<https://legacy-tours.com/mexico-birding-tours/northern-yucatan/>

MEXICO BIRDING TOURS 2023

Legacy is recognized within the international birding community for routes in Mexico that regularly encounter the more difficult and least common species. During the spring of 2023 three such endemic-rich routes are offered. Some routes are full (2024 has openings), while others can still accept participants. Please review tours at: <https://legacy-tours.com/mexico-birding-tour-calendar/>

CURRENT CALENDAR

Tours to Southern Spain, South Korea, Georgia & Armenia, and Portugal, Madeira, & the Azores are filled at this time. However, people's plans during these curious days seem less certain than before, so let us know if you have a strong interest in any of these trips. We will let you know how registrations develop.

THANK YOU

Birding with you has been for us a source of resounding joy since our first tour in 1993. Together we have shared in this *Golden Age of Birding*, Thank You...