



GREAT BIRDING PROJECTS



An approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing

25 October 2013

A Junco Re-inspection

Looking closely at a very common bird



photo by Trisha M. Shears

The Dark-eyed Junco is probably the most common feeder bird in North America. In fact, recent FeederWatch data from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology indicate that among 15 feeder-regions monitored in U.S. and Canada, the Dark-eyed Junco is the first, second, or third, most-common bird in nine of those regions, occurring in from 77.4% to 97.6% of the feeders.

Right now, different forms of Dark-eyed Juncos are returning to winter at lower elevations in the West and across multiple wide swaths of the East. (Those eastern birds are the "Slate-colored" forms shown in the photo on

the left.)

The arrival of this bird to backyards, woodlands, and edges across the continent is fortuitous. It comes at the same time as the general distribution of a fine video, called the *Ordinary Extraordinary Junco*. This is the project of a team of biologists at Indiana University led by Drs. Ellen Ketterson and Jonathan Atwell, and film student Steve Burns, and it is accessible [here](#).

The the video highlights how biologists study birds in the wild and in controlled environments, using a highly variable bird that even the most casual backyard bird watcher can identify. The video was funded by the National Science Foundation and Indiana University, and it is entirely not for profit. In fact, the whole thing can be viewed for free.

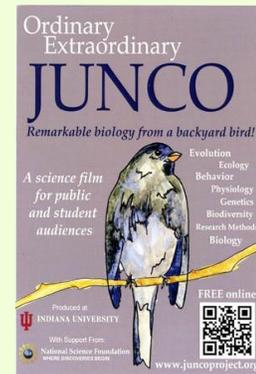
Eight section can be viewed separately or appreciated as a single feature-length piece, whether one wishes to study diversification, natural selection, breeding biology, or much more. The different forms are examined, among the Dark-eyed and Yellow-eyed taxa.

The eight sections of the video can be short (3 minutes) or long(20 minutes). They are

broken down as follows:

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Chapter 1, the pioneers in junco science
- 3 Chapter 2, Appalachian Sprint: studies in Virginia
- 4 Chapter 3, diversification in Dark-eyed Junco
- 5 Chapter 4, diversification south of the border
- 6 Chapter 5, the mysterious juncos of Guadalupe Island
- 7 Chapter 6, campus juncos in San Diego
- 8 What we can learn from the junco

The website even includes [related materials](#) for teachers. These include guides for biology and science (high school), study questions for "brain, behavior, and evolution" (college), and "keyword" notes for teachers, and an upcoming bibliography of research articles.



Juncos are so much more than "snowbirds," so much more than most observers ever considered.

Paton Project Reaches Goal Hummingbird Sanctuary to be Preserved



The Paton's Birder Haven, in Patagonia, Arizona, was the project of Wally and Marion Paton for more than 35 years. They welcomed tens of thousands of birders, ecotourists, and conservationists to see Arizona's outstanding hummingbird diversity. The property, passed on to the children of the Patons, has now been secured for the future. In partnership with Tucson Audubon Society and Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, the American Bird Conservancy has entered into a contract with the Paton family to acquire the property as a hummingbird sanctuary.

As of mid-October, the \$300,000 needed to buy the property was reached. Now, the acquisition can be pursued, and the Tucson Audubon Society can assume long-term ownership and management of the property next year.

We described the project previously [here](#) (on page 4), and you can find a list of all contributors to date [here](#).

Stamp Art Contest Winner

A pair of Canvasbacks by Adam Grimm



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ran the Federal Duck Stamp Art Competition at Maumee Bay State Park Conference Center in Oregon, Ohio, on September 27-28. Curiously, this was the weekend just before the government shutdown.

This year's contest winner is Adam Grimm who painted a pair of Canvasbacks, pictured on the left. This image will grace the 20014 - 2015 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp. Grimm

now becomes a two-time winner of the contest. His impressive painting of a Mottled Duck appeared on the 2000-2001 Federal Duck Stamp.

The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp - commonly called the Federal Duck Stamp and increasingly called the Migratory Bird Stamp - raises about \$25 million annually, of which 98 percent goes toward purchase of migratory bird habitat - wetlands and grasslands - in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Waterfowl hunters are required to have a current stamp, but increasingly, others including non-waterfowl hunters, birders, photographers, and collectors, are buying the stamp to support the Refuge System.

The eligible waterfowl species for this year's art competition were Canvasback, Gadwall, Cinnamon Teal, Mallard, and Blue-winged Teal. All of this year's 201 art entries can still be viewed [here](#).

Words to Consider:

"The most unhappy thing about conservation is that it is never permanent. If we save a priceless woodland today, it is threatened from another quarter tomorrow."

- Marjory Stoneman Douglas (1890-1998) - journalist, writer, feminist, and environmentalist

GBP Bulletin Archives

Great Birding Projects is a vehicle to promote a creative approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing. GBP functions as a bridge to an innovative engagement between people and birds. You can access all previous issues of the *GBP* bulletin on the GBP website [here](#).

