



GREAT BIRDING PROJECTS



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

9 October 2014

Martha's Lengthening Shadow *Opportunities Abound*

The centennial recognizing the extinction of the Passenger Pigeon may officially have occurred on September 1st, but the impact persists. Martha, the last of her species, died on that date in 1914 at the Cincinnati Zoo, yet the opportunity to use the event as a "teachable moment" is certainly not over.

By now, the award-winning film, [From Billions to None](#), produced and written by David Mrazek and Joel Greenberg, has mostly gone through the cycle of broadcasts on [Public Television](#) from coast to coast. Still, this presents a fine opportunity to engage in classroom and organizational viewing to review the bird's compelling story and striking relevance to today's conservation concerns.

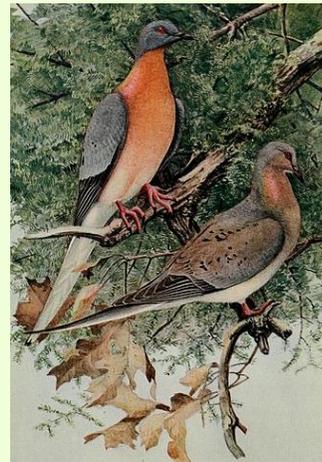
Schools, clubs, and nature centers can [get the 57-minute film](#) to conduct showings and discussions.

At the same time, there are parallel opportunities offered through Project Passenger Pigeon to plan for some [elementary through middle-school lessons](#). And there is a parallel plan [for high school students](#).

The combination of *From Billions to None* and the high-school lesson plan may also be an ideal starting point for more detailed and in-depth discussion for some high-school, college, or adult levels. So could teaming the film with a discussion of Joel Greenberg's book, [A Feathered River Across the Sky](#).

The results of the "Martha discussion" can have a long-term impact, a extended shadow of lessons.

Finally, it's worth considering Joel Greenberg's message at the end of *From Billions to None*, when he suggests that we view the story "as a cautionary tale, to the proposition that no matter how common something is - water, oil, something alive - if we're not careful with it, we can lose it."



Passenger Pigeons by
Louis A. Fuertes (1907)

New Art Chosen for the Next Stamp ***The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp***



On 20 September, at the National Conservation and Training Center in West Virginia, a panel of five judges chose the new waterfowl artwork to appear on the 2015-2016 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp. After the judges reviewed and rated the 186 pieces of qualifying waterfowl artwork, there was an amazing three-way tie. This was a first in the history of the renowned contest. Extra rounds of judging had to be conducted to select the final top three pieces.

The winning artwork was of a pair of very attractive Ruddy Ducks painted in acrylic by Jennifer Miller of Olean, New York. Describing her own outdoor as well as artistic interests, she said, "I am mostly self-taught, with no formal art education, and studied under the guidance of the natural world... I go out of my way daily to study, observe, and learn about my interests. I am equally happy examining a wild bird through binoculars as I am examining bits of moss growing across a fallen tree."

Jennifer Miller is only the third woman to win this prestigious national stamp-art contest. You can find out more about Miller and her work on her [website](#) and also in a profile which appeared in her home-town paper, the [Orlean Times Herald](#).

For more on the contest and the stamp program, see the website for the [Federal Duck Stamp Office](#).

Some Thoughts on Diversity and Bird Study ***The "colorful" world of birding?***

Why is it that the pursuit of bird appreciation and bird study is so compelling yet looks so unlike the makeup of this country? This question may have been the impetus to write a news-blog on the National Geographic website in late September, a piece perceptively titled: "Colorful World of Birding Has Conspicuous Lack of People of Color."

It's a subject that bird educators and conservationists have seriously considered in the past, but it is one that still demands discussion and action.

Martha Hamilton wrote this thoughtful piece on the subject which appeared on September 23rd and which you can access [here](#).

Words to Consider:

"One day in 1962 I got talking with Mick Jagger about the future prospects of our respective groups. My band had no hope of success he told me - after all, I was almost 30, and some of my band were even older he pointed out - how could we hope to score a hit with the younger generation at our advanced age?"

- David Hunt in *Confessions of a Scilly Bird Man* (1985)

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](#).

