



# GREAT BIRDING PROJECTS



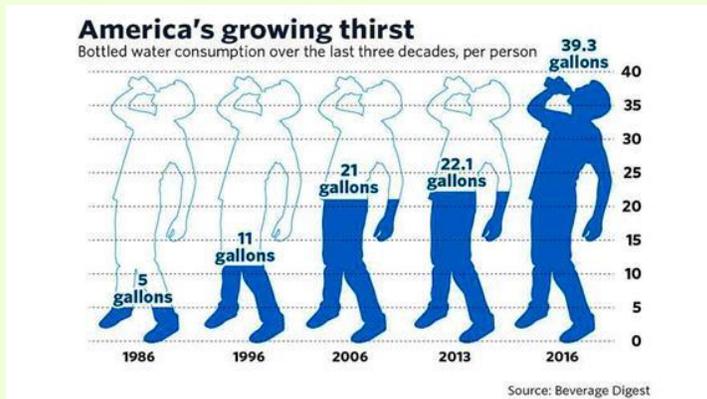
*An approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing*

*8 May 2017*

## ***Bottles, Behavior, and Bucks*** ***- how we drink our water***

In 1991, the U.S. crossed a dietary, market, and cultural barrier: salsa bested ketchup for the first time, with ketchup outsold by \$40 million in retail stores. At the time and in the words of David Weiss, head of Packaged Facts Inc., "the taste for salsa is as mainstream as apple pie." This was a cultural curiosity, something reflecting our corresponding changes in demographics, taste, and diet.

Last year, a quarter century later, another barrier was broken: bottled-water consumption in the U.S. reached 39.3 gallons per capita, while carbonated soft drinks fell to 38.5 gallons. This marked the first time that soda was knocked off the top position, according to the Beverage Marketing Corporation.



While the salsa/ketchup shift had a curious and even positive feel to it, the bottled-water/soda change leaves many folks scratching their heads. It is a shift in consumption that decades ago would have seemed unthinkable: consumers buying a packaged version of something they could get virtually for free from the tap.

Of course, there are rival motivations pulling consumers. On

the one hand, there are consumer concerns about the effects of artificial sugar and sweeteners. On the other hand, public dismay over possible water contamination has helped boost growing demand for bottled water.

But let's look at what much of the public does not know, at least about bottled water.

When the public buys bottled water, it is often drinking the very same water that comes out of the tap. For the most part, bottled water is no safer or cleaner than tap water. About 45% of bottled water brands are sourced from the municipal water supply, the same source as what you may get at your kitchen sink.

When the public buys bottled water, many of the very same soda companies benefit. More than a quarter of bottled water revenue last year was shared by the soda giants Coca-Cola Co. and PepsiCo, selling Dasani and Aquafina respectively. (Both companies claim that their water is filtered for purity using a "state-of-the-art" process.)

And, if you thought it was just a replay of the Coke vs. Pepsi battle, think again. Nestlé, the largest food company in the world, owns a suite of bottled-water brands with down-home names (e.g., Arrowhead, Deer Park, and Poland Spring). And if you are into higher-end water, try some of the European-based Nestlé options (e.g., the Italian San Pellegrino and the French Perrier). As of two years ago, multinationals like PepsiCo, the Coca-Cola Company, and Nestlé were raking in a combined \$110 billion a year selling bottled water worldwide.

Are there other good choices? Perhaps.

If you are truly hankering a taste of sweet or a jolt of caffeine with your cool drink, you can try that soft drink that matches your own taste. If you want water, however, simply bottle you own! [As we wrote four years ago](#), the purchase of a reusable and refillable water bottle for as little as \$1.99 - versus \$1.25 for vending-machine water is simply a smart deal. Those stainless-steel and durable plastic reusable water bottles are everywhere. Besides, under circumstances when only about 2 of every 10 commercial plastic water bottles are recycled, the use of tough reusable bottles makes even more sense. Today, billions of plastic bottles still wind up in landfills and hundreds of millions end up littering streets, streams, beaches, bays, and the ocean.

Alas, in the U.S. alone, more than half the population drinks bottled water. Paying a premium price for water in bottles is something that is now viewed as "normal" in America. The sale of bottled water here now accounts for about 30% of all liquid refreshment sales, far exceeding the sales of milk and, yes, even beer. Still, the trend can be reversed... if we try.

Unless you live in Flint, unless you are at a place where water is contaminated, go for bottling your own. (And if your local water is at risk, demand clean water as a right!) When you go afield - birding, hiking, canoeing, hunting, fishing, whatever - simply pack your own water. When you are at a conference - or, better yet, when you are planning a conference, meeting, or festival - make accommodations for refilling reusable bottles.



When you get down to basics, it's really pretty simple.

~ by PJB

## Words to Consider:

"How rich will we be when we have converted all our forests, our soil, our water resources, and our minerals into cash?"

- Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, 1938

## Incredible Eggs!



Barn Swallow Eggs  
Photo: Kati Fleming

Last month, the USFWS National Wildlife Refuge System featured a section on its webpages, emphasizing the variety and wonder of eggs among our wild birds. The short essay with accompanying photos is an appropriate seasonal feature, what with nesting beginning for many bird species. Paul Baicich, co-author of [\*A Guide to the Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds\*](#) helped the USFWS to assemble the information.

You can access the Refuge System [egg pages here](#). Topics covered on the webpages include egg color, eggshell content, egg size, clutch size, brood parasitism, predators, nest location, and the hatching of young.

*A Guide to the Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds* by Paul J. Baicich and the late Colin Harrison (second edition, paperback) remains the only thorough guide to the breeding biology of our North American birds. It regularly lists for \$29.95 and is available from us for \$25. That includes postage and handling. (Add \$1.50 for taxes, however, if you live in Maryland.) Send a check made out to Paul J. Baicich to P.O. Box 404, Oxon Hill, MD 20750.

## Cuba in July



Cuban Trogon  
Photo: Laura Gooch

Cuba is a beautiful country with a fascinating diversity of birds, other wildlife, stunning landscapes, and cultural treasures. It is also a country full of people in the midst of figuring out how the country will change, people engaged in a process of transition. Fortunately, the 21st International Conference of BirdsCaribbean will take place 13-17 July, at Topes de Collantes Nature Reserve Park on the island.

The usual participants at BirdsCaribbean meetings are individuals from across the region involved in aspects of ornithology, conservation, education, ecotourism, and birding. This event will also be another way for those of us from the U.S. to improve dialogue and interaction with our Cuban counterparts.

In addition to the five days of the main conference, there will be pre- and post-conference workshops and field trips to the best bird sites of Cuba. Indeed, these should be opportunities to see more of Cuba's birds and experience the rich culture as well as the warmth and generosity of the Cuban people.



You can review the [BirdsCaribbean website](#) for details.

# Hemp in 2016

- 2106 retail sales estimated at \$688 million

The size of last year's U.S. retail market of hemp products - hemp food, supplements, body-care products, clothing, auto parts, building materials, and various other items - has been estimated by Vote Hemp to be at least \$688 million.

Of this \$688 million hemp market, Vote Hemp and *Hemp Business Journal* estimate that hemp foods constituted 19% (\$129.3 million); personal care products constituted 24% (\$163 million); textiles constituted 14% (\$99.5 million); supplements constituted 4% (\$26 million); hemp derived cannabidiol or CBD products constituted 19% (\$130 million); and hemp dietary supplements constituted 4% (\$26 million); industrial applications such as car parts constituted 18% (\$125.5 million); and other consumer products such as paper and construction materials accounted for the remaining 2% of the market.

Missing in this market outline is hemp's use as birdseed. Hemp actually has bird-feeding history that goes back well over 100 years. In fact, bird-feeding literature well into the middle of the twentieth century extolled the goodness of feeding hemp and even recommended growing it locally for wild birds.

Part of the current problem may have to do with requirements to show that ingredients derived from hemp are safe in animal food. This need can slow down the process, even though hemp seed is already being used in human consumption. Beyond that, FDA and a few states still recognize aspects of self-identification as "generally recognized as safe" under some circumstances. Use as birdseed may yet occur, as hemp production grows and gets past a few more bottlenecks.

In any case, Vote Hemp, the organization working to change state and federal laws to allow commercial hemp farming, has followed last year's growth of hemp crops (planted in 15 states), the universities conducting research on hemp cultivation, and the many hundreds of state hemp licenses issued across the country as shown in the figure on the right. (You can access the [Vote Hemp 2016 Crop Report](#) for a state-by-state breakdown of hemp acreage grown in 2016.)

Industrial hemp cultivation is now legal in 32 states, which have lifted restrictions on hemp farming and may license farmers to grow hemp in accordance with Sec. 7606 of the Farm Bill, the Legitimacy of Industrial Hemp Research amendment. However, misguided drug policy still prevents American farmers from cultivating hemp at the scale needed to meet consumer demand. Instead, nearly all the hemp to supply the U.S. market is imported.

As the growing of industrial hemp expands, its use as a birdfood is virtually inevitable, recapturing the vaunted role it had a century ago at the backyard bird-feeding station.



# 1917 Feeder-poster Copy Available



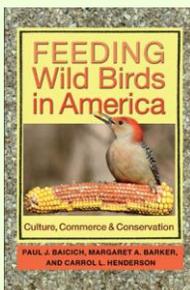
In 1917, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through the Bureau of Biological Survey, produced a winter bird-feeding poster, making the case for what were considered "useful birds" that "more than pay for their keep." This poster showed methods of attraction, foods, and results of feeding birds in winter. Instructions were included, in the words of an announcement in the magazine *Bird-Lore* at the time, "to enable anyone to establish feeding stations." *The Feed the Birds this Winter* poster, shown in the small image to the left, was to be the first in a long line of federally sponsored poster promotions to advocate bird feeding.

The story of the poster is further explained in *Feeding Wild Birds in America: Culture, Commerce & Conservation*, a book described below.

You can get a reproduction of this poster (12" X 18") on quality stock and suitable for framing for \$7. Send a check to:  
 Paul J. Baicich  
 P.O. Box 404  
 Oxon Hill, MD 20750

The price also covers postage and handling, but please add \$0.35 for taxes if you live in Maryland.

## On the History of Backyard Bird Feeding



The authors of *Feeding Wild Birds in America: Culture, Commerce & Conservation* (Paul Baicich, Margaret Barker, and Carrol Henderson) continue to line up talks, interviews, and book-signings with bird and garden clubs, nature centers, festivals, parks and refuges, and stores. For these activities and more information, please contact [Margaret Barker](#).

The presentations cover a wide range of bird-feeding history topics, linked with practical lessons for today. For example, they often address the following:

- Why extremely popular **hemp seed** lost favor as a birdseed. (And the possibility of it being on the verge of a comeback!)
- The origins of **black-oil sunflower seed**. (And the involvement of what could be considered Cold War agricultural espionage.)
- How **hummingbird nectar and feeders** came to be. (And the efforts to devise "just the right sugar-formula.")
- How the plastic **tube-feeder** was invented. (And its connection to modern-art design.)
- Why **coconuts** became the foundation for many feeder designs in the past. (And how the source goes back to the end of the 19th century.)
- How **nyjer seed**

came to America as a backyard birdseed. (And how it has been used in south Asia.)

### A FEW CONTACTS AND SUGGESTIONS

- If you want to order a supply of the book for your own store, nature center, or organization, contact [Kathryn Krol](#) at Texas A&M University Press: 979-458-3988
- For talks, book signings, festivals, interviews, etc. please contact [Margaret Barker](#).
- To order an individual copy of the book, use this [order-form](#).

## 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](#).

