

WILDBIRD ON THE FLY

TIDBITS ABOUT BIRDS, BIRDERS AND BIRDING FROM WILDBIRD'S EDITOR

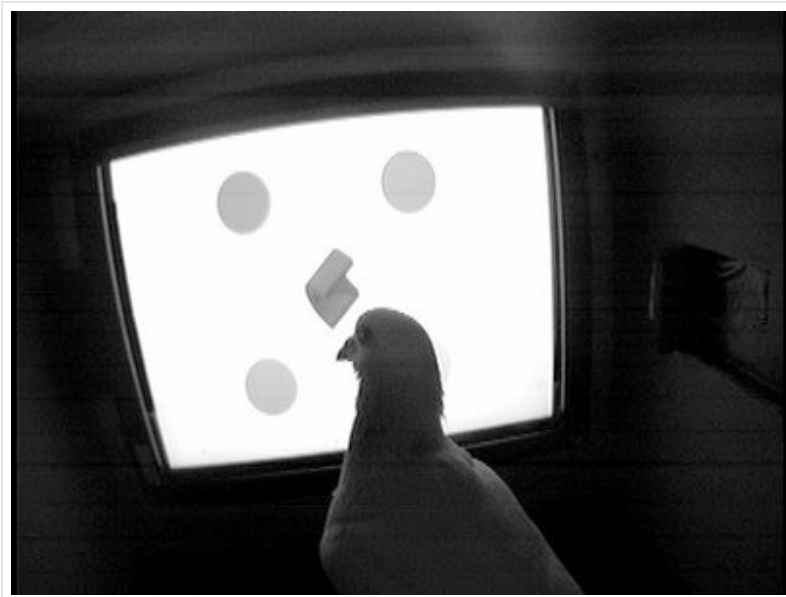
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2007

Pigeons and humans recognize objects with a similar technique

Who woulda thunk?

DURHAM, N.H. -- Pigeons and humans use similar visual cues to identify objects, a finding that could have promising implications in the development of novel technologies, [according to](#) new research conducted by a University of New Hampshire professor.

Brett Gibson, an assistant professor of psychology who studies animal behavior, details his latest research in the journal [article](#), "Non-accidental properties underlie shape recognition in mammalian and non-mammalian vision," published [Wednesday] in *Current Biology*. Gibson and his colleagues found that humans and pigeons, which have different visual systems, have evolved to use similar techniques and information to recognize objects.



"Understanding how avian visual systems solve problems that require considerable computational prowess may lead to future technological advances, such as small visual prosthetics for the visually impaired, in the same way that understanding visual processing in honeybees has led to the development of flying robots and unmanned helicopters," the researchers say.

Gibson's also studied navigation and memory in birds. He's currently [investigating](#) how [Clark's Nutcracker](#) uses different types of spatial information to find food caches during winter.

ABOUT ME



AMY HOOPER
ORANGE COUNTY,
CALIFORNIA,

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PROFILE](#)

Send an e-mail! **First Friday**

Write a fictional short story, and clean out my bookshelf!

July 7: [winner and prize](#)
Sept. 8: [winner and prize](#)
Nov. 3: [winner and prize](#)
Dec. 1: [winner and prize](#)
Jan. 5: [winner and prize](#)

Next deadline: Feb. 28 **Blog-
erviews**

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[June Osborne](#)
[Kenn Kaufman](#)
[Kevin T. Karlson](#)
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[Consistent effort](#)

Annual photo contest

Look in the March/April 2007 issue for the entry form and the prizes for the five categories. The entry form is not available online. The **current rules** appear [here](#).

Labels: [pigeon](#), [research](#), [visual cue](#)

POSTED BY AMY AT 10:45 AM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

Condor egg at Oregon zoo

Last Saturday, the oldest "reproductively active" [California Condor at Oregon Zoo](#) laid the first egg of the breeding season. Tama laid the egg at the zoo's Jonsson Center for Wildlife Conservation, and she will sit on it for two weeks before zoo staff remove and candle it to see if it's developing normally.



If all is well, the egg will be incubated artificially until early to mid-April, when it is likely to hatch. Assistant Condor Curator Shawn St. Michael said, "Once we see an external pip, we will immediately return the egg to Tama."

The Jonsson center currently houses 17 condors. You can learn more about the zoo's role in the California Condor Recovery Program [here](#).

Photo of Tama courtesy of Oregon Zoo

Labels: [California Condor](#), [captive breeding](#), [endangered species](#), [Oregon Zoo](#)

POSTED BY AMY AT 10:07 AM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

I and the Bird cinema!

Don't delay -- buy your tickets to the I and the Bird cineplex today! Grab your favorite movie treat (mine is Junior Mints), find a seat, and sit back for a delightful showing of [I and the Bird #43](#), with narration by [Tai Haku](#).



Want to share a recent post with birding enthusiasts? Send the URL to I and the Bird's next host, [The Ridger](#), by **March 6**.


I and the Bird's founder, [Mike](#), has openings for [carnival](#) hosts in the next few weeks. Drop him a note if you want the fun challenge of creatively corralling myriad varied posts about birding.

Labels: [carnival](#), [I and the Bird](#)

Ogle the previous winners:
[2005](#)
[2006](#)

Consider these contest tips:
[Tack-sharp focus](#)
[Current entry form](#)
[Composition](#)
[Up-close view](#)
[Appropriate packaging](#)
[Suitable camera mode](#)
[Auto-focus gotchas](#)
[Contest rules](#)
[On-topic](#)
[Look at trip photos!](#)

[Arkansas, Feb. 2006](#)
[Rio Grande Valley, April 2006](#)
[Maine, June 2006](#)
[Cape May, Oct. 2006](#)
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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2007

First Friday fiction due on Feb. 28



Have you read a good short story about birds, birders or birding lately? Better yet, have you written one?

Consider participating in [First Friday](#), a monthly contest that solicits 500-word pieces of fiction. The winner receives the choice of two recently published books from the *WildBird* office. The next **deadline** is Wednesday, **Feb. 28**.

Labels: [contest](#), [fiction](#), [First Friday](#)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2007

Robotic birder?

Did you already [read](#) about the robotic video cameras in the Ivory-billed Woodpecker search in Arkansas?

Deep in the bayous of eastern Arkansas, two robotic video cameras keep vigil for an elusive bird, aiming to capture conclusive evidence the ivory-billed woodpecker is not, as long feared, extinct.

Recent sightings have revived hope of the survival of the large and dramatically marked bird, with its characteristic white beak and red crest.

Now the search is on for proof -- something scientists hope the robot video cameras can provide.

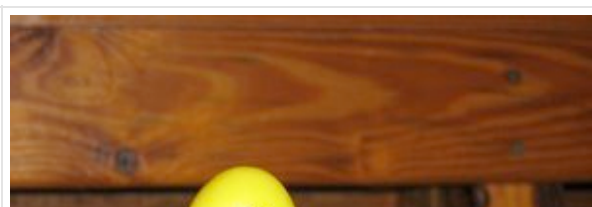
The cameras are part of a new project funded by the National Science Foundation to create automated observatories that can capture natural behavior in remote settings.

What's next, I wonder.

Labels: [Arkansas](#), [Ivory-billed Woodpecker](#), [robot](#), [video](#)

Quackery

Anyone recognize the restaurant in which this masterpiece briefly made an appearance? Care to identify the substance keeping Daisy on Park's head?



FAVORITE POSTS

[Why, why, why?](#)

[ABA: Tuesday](#)

[Stamp out the divide](#)

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[Brumfield's birds in a new book](#)

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QUACKERY

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[Bangor](#)

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[February 2007](#)



Labels: [rubber ducks](#)

POSTED BY AMY AT 10:15 AM 4 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2007

I and the Bird deadline: tomorrow!



Want to share a tale or some ruminations or an essay about birds and birding to a large audience? Contribute to I and the Bird #43 by sending an e-mail to [Tai Haku](#) today or tomorrow. The biweekly [carnival](#) will appear this

Thursday, and I look forward to the feast!

Here endeth the public service announcement for BirdChick.

Labels: [carnival](#), [I and the Bird](#)

POSTED BY AMY AT 3:30 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2007

Darker skies during migration?

Do the taller buildings and skyscrapers near you turn off indoor lights at night? [Audubon Minnesota](#) -- along with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the University of Minnesota and the [Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Minnesota](#) -- will ask owners of high-rise buildings to [go dark](#) between midnight and dawn from March 15 to May 31 and Aug. 15 to Oct. 31.



The goal: to reduce window collisions by birds migrating along the Mississippi flyway. The Lights Out Twin Cities program follows in the footsteps of [Fatal Light Awareness Program](#) in Toronto and similar efforts in [New York](#), Detroit and [Chicago](#).

Labels: [Lights Out](#), [migration](#), [window collision](#)

POSTED BY AMY AT 4:44 PM 2 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

Berryman Institute

Did you know that an institute, based in Mississippi and Utah, works to bridge conflicts between humans and animals? I wasn't aware of the [Jack H. Berryman Institute](#) -- named after a 30-year U.S. Fish & Wildlife employee -- until this week, but it's been working with USDA Wildlife Services since 1993.

Located at Utah State University in the wildland resources department and at Mississippi State University in the wildlife and fisheries department, it focuses on "improving human-wildlife relationships and resolving human-wildlife conflicts through teaching, research, and extension." An [example](#) of a human-wildlife conflict: catfish farmers and [Black-crowned Night-Herons](#).



The center accepts [grant proposals](#), provides [outreach and continuing education](#) programs, accepts [graduate students](#) whose work coincides with the center's [research priorities](#). Know any college students who might benefit from the opportunity? Spread the word.

Photo courtesy of [Fermilab](#)

Labels: [Berryman Institute](#), [Mississippi State University](#), [Utah State University](#)

POSTED BY AMY AT 4:10 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2007

New director for The Raptor Center

Julia Ponder, DVM, [recently](#) became executive director of [The Raptor Center](#) at The University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine in Minneapolis/St. Paul. If you're a [BirdChick](#) fan, then you're familiar with her [volunteer](#) work at The Raptor Center.

I'm rather jealous that Dr. Ponder gets to do things like look into a Bald Eagle's eye. How cool is that?





This might be a comprehensive list of [raptor rehabilitation programs](#). Do you know of or volunteer for one that isn't on the list? Then [suggest an addition](#) to the list.

In case you're not a fan of raptors, that list appears within the larger context of [wildlife rehab programs](#). Volunteer opportunities abound!

Labels: [rehabilitation](#), [The Raptor Center](#)

POSTED BY AMY AT 8:29 AM 2 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2007

Reminder: First Friday stories on Feb. 28



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Labels: [contest](#), [fiction](#), [First Friday](#)

POSTED BY AMY AT 9:02 AM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2007

Quackery

Anas rubberi has been absent for too long. Let me remedy that omission.





That reptile lives at Kit Carson Park in Escondido, Calif. And yes, that duck is wearing sunglasses while riding a red boogie board. *(Click on the image for a larger version.)*

Labels: [rubber ducks](#)

POSTED BY AMY AT 9:20 AM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

