2017 Year of the Hummingbird

Santa Cruz Flats—
A Great Place for Birding
Bye Bye Butter Butt

2016 Annual Report
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COMMENTARY

A Healthy Environment Cannot Afford Rollbacks on Essential Protections

Karen Fogas, Executive Director

Tucson Audubon’s Year of the Hummingbird initiative buzzed into 2017 like an Anna’s Hummingbird defending its favorite feeder. This initiative has created interest among school teachers and students, the hummingbird-loving public, the media and of course, among our members! It has been fun and engaging, and the year has only just begun—stay tuned, there is much more Year of the Hummingbird to come!

That’s the bright side of the story. The dark side is the current administration’s onslaught against environmental legislation, public lands, energy, climate and the Environmental Protection Agency. It is hard to reconcile the almost daily messages decrying new threats to air quality, water quality, the diversity of species and the public lands which support them—all of which support birds.

And yet I can’t believe that Americans concerned with jobs or the economy would knowingly choose smog-laden air, polluted water or to eliminate whole species from the earth. I also believe the majority would hedge their bets that climate change is real rather than a hoax. Unbddled, we know the pulling of today’s profits—as opposed to future values of clean air, clean water, diversity of species and lands set aside for future generations—drives business to compromise those values—sometimes with tragic results.

We—Tucson Audubon and its members—must do all we can to reach the public with the truth. Clean air, clean water, public lands and diversity of species already make this country great. Pitting these values against jobs and people’s well-being is a specious argument meant to distract so the bottom line profits can accrue. As the year unfolds, look for ways you can join Tucson Audubon in helping educate people on why people—and birds—depend upon these core American values and what we can do to protect them.

WILL YOU JOIN TUCSON AUDUBON TODAY?

Your membership supports Tucson Audubon’s efforts in:

• Conservation We enable people to conserve our natural environment through on the ground activities
• Advocacy We promote public policy and speak out for wild birds and their homes
• Restoration We create sustainable wild bird habitat
• Engagement We help people connect with wild birds

Benefits include:

• Free guided birding field trips
• 10% discount in our Nature Shops
• Tucson Audubon e-News and Audubon magazine
• Discounts on Tucson Audubon classes and events

All funds are used for local conservation efforts

Feel free to join using the attached envelope if this issue has one.

You may also sign up at or call our Membership Coordinator (520) 209-1802

*Please note: Not all organizations may contain an envelope.

Tucson Audubon inspires people to enjoy and protect birds through recreation, education, conservation, and restoration of the environment upon which we all depend.

Tucson Audubon offers a library, nature centers, and nature shops to its members and the public; any proceeds of which benefit its programs.

Tucson Audubon Nature Centers
Paton Center for Hummingbirds
679 Pennsylvania Ave, Patagonia, AZ 85624
P.O. Box 3028, Tucson, AZ 85702
300 E University Blvd, Tucson, AZ 85705
520-629-0510 (voice) or 520-623-3476 (fax)
TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG

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TUCSON AUDUBON EVENTS AND CLASSES

FIELD TRIPS  Luke Safford, Field Trip Coordinator

TUCSON AUDUBON OFFERS FIELD TRIPS TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES...

El Aribabi Conservation Ranch in Northern Sonora, Mexico
June 23–25
Cost: $60/night for lodge or $30/night for camping; $35 for food
Looking for a low-cost Mexican birding adventure? Join Jim Rorabaugh and Kathy Cooper for a two night stay at El Aribabi Conservation Ranch along the Rio Coscoperia, 35 miles south of the border in Sonora, Mexico where many of the tough to find specialty birds of SE Arizona are easier to find. Black-capped Gnatcatcher, Five-striped Sparrow, Sinaloa Wren, and Buff-collared Nighjar are expected, with Green Kingfisher, Rose-throated Becard, and White-tipped Dove as possible area specialties. Birding and naturalist walks will be conducted along the Rio Coscoperia and adjoining areas where Jim says “the Yellow-billed Cuckoos are as thick as fleas!” Register online.

AND IN YOUR BACKYARD...

Sweetwater Wetlands with Field Trip Coordinator, Luke Safford
Every Wednesday: April 7 a.m.; May–August 6 a.m.
Come join us as we explore the wilds of Sweetwater Wetlands and await the return of nesting Tropical Kingbirds, passing through neo-tropical species, and resident Green Herons. Bobcats, Javelinas, Raccoons, and Coyotes make appearances too. Diversity of bird life is the draw (last May 120 species were recorded here), but the company of local and out-of-town birders always starts the day off right! No prior registration required.

Year of the Hummingbird Field Trips led by Karen Krebbs: This Year of the Hummingbird excursion is a “can’t miss” for birders interested in getting to know some of the area’s most dazzling birds. Led by hummingbird expert, Karen Krebbs, we will visit popular hummingbird sites around the area and grow in hummingbird knowledge. Register online.
Dates: Saturday, May 13, Hummingbird Safari
Saturday, June 10, Hummingbird Safari (Member Priority)

MORE UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS:
(To register, for more info, and to see more field trips, visit tucsonaudubon.org/fieldtrips.)

Wednesday, April 26, Avra Valley Wastewater Treatment Ponds: Shorebird Migration for Beginners—Join John Higgins to see which sandpipers, plovers and other wading birds are headed north. There will be a scope and ID guides.
Saturday, May 6 & May 20, Mason Center/Arthur Pack Park—An introduction to birdwatching basics and our Mason Center. Feeder watching at the center and a stroll to Arthur Pack Park for some 20 to 30 more species. Great for families. Loaner binoculars available.
Tuesday, May 16, Rock Corral Canyon (Member Priority)—West of Tumacacori, another hotspot that flies under the radar in birding circles. Breeding season has just begun and there is the opportunity for Black-capped Gnatcatcher.
Tuesday, May 30, Pinal Mountain—A journey up through a variety of habitats and transition zones gives us the opportunity for many different species from Blue Grosbeaks to Red-breasted Nuthatches.

UPCOMING CLASSES

BIRDING BY HABITAT Taught by Lynn Hassler
Southeast Arizona offers such excellent birding opportunities in part because of its variety of habitats. Experience the fun of birding in three different natural environments, Sonoran desert, riparian, and sky island. Maximum 12 people.
Field trips: Saturday, April 8, 2017 – Catalina State Park, 7:00–11:00 a.m.
Saturday, April 15, 2017 – San Pedro River, 7:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
Saturday, April 22, 2017 – Mt. Lemmon, 7:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
Cost: $75 members, $110 non-members

BIRDING BY EAR Taught by Homer Hansen
Learn to use your ears as much as (if not more than) your eyes while birding your favorite destinations. This class will delve into the world of bird vocalizations and give you a framework for learning the voices of our master singers. The evening classroom session will introduce you to sonograms and vocalization types, as well as work on comparisons between similar sounding Arizona species. The field trip will give students a chance to use these skills in the field. Vocalizations will be recorded and brought back to the classroom to analyze.
Classroom session: Thursday, April 13, 2017; 5:30–8:30 p.m.
Location: Tucson Audubon Main Office University and 5th Ave, Tucson
Field trip: Saturday, April 15, 2017; 7 a.m.–2 p.m.; Location: Catalina State Park and Sweetwater Wetlands
Cost: $110 member, $145 non-member
Sign up online at: tucsonaudubon.org/education

SEARCH FOR ELEGANT TROGONS IN SOUTHEAST ARIZONA
Spring is just around the corner and soon the male Elegant Trogon’s barking call will be echoing through the canyons of our mountain ranges. Tucson Audubon and Borderland Tours partner every year on the only systematic surveys of this iconic bird of the sky islands and we need your help to find all the trogons tucked away this May and June. If you are interested and available to help with the following surveys please sign up using our easy online survey at tinyurl.com/trogon. More information at aziba.org.

2017 Elegant Trogon Surveys
Sunday May 7 – Atascosa Highlands (near Rio Rico)
Saturday May 27 – Patagonia Mountains (near Patagonia)
Sunday May 28 – Santa Rita Mountains (near Green Valley)
Saturday June 3 – Huachuca Mountains (near Sierra Vista)
Sunday June 4 – Chiricahua Mountains (near Portal)

JOIN THE GLOBAL BIG DAY IN ARIZONA, 13 MAY
If you like to get out in the spring sunshine and count birds, you should sign up to participate in the annual Global Big Day (GBD, formerly the North American Migration Count) on Saturday, May 13. The GBD is coordinated in Arizona by Arizona Field Ornithologists and supported by local Audubon societies, local bird clubs, and other organizations. With hundreds of volunteers in the field we will strive to get a “snapshot” of the progress and character of spring migration, and most of all have fun! You can be flexible about the amount of time you spend in the field or you can just sit in your yard and count birds. The last three years we’ve seen more than 300 species, and every year we discover unexpected rarities. The count is organized by county, and if you want to volunteer, check out the list of county coordinators at azfo.org.
Living With Nature: Hummingbirds and the Native Ecosystems

Hummingbirds depend on their native ecosystems, and the birds they revere. Native Americans, throughout their history have maintained a special relationship with hummingbirds, which have influenced their culture, beliefs, and practices. In this program, Robert will present some recent research results that threaten this relationship and triggered a series of laws, land reforms and societal changes to reverse this scenario.

Hummingbird visitors and the native ecosystems can help promote the health of both your hummingbirds to your porch or patio, but these tiny birds need your help. A bottle of sugar water is all you need to attract hummingbirds to your yard. Visitors will learn how to attract and understand and predict how hummingbirds will thrive in their environment. The donning of feathers is a celebration of an ancient connection, a spiritual communication. Dr. Wethington will present information about hummingbirds’ ability to survive and thrive. The Hummingbird Monitoring Network is working with multi-university and organizations to understand and predict how hummingbirds will respond to these changes. This presentation, Dr. Wethington will present information about hummingbirds, some recent research results that suggest how hummingbirds may respond to these changes, and offer suggestions on how each of us can help hummingbirds thrive.

Hummingbirds – Gems of Arizona’s Important Bird Areas

Arizona’s designated Important Bird Areas are habitats that have been identified as the most vital for supporting our native birds now and in the future. It is quite common for an IBA to have a star bird species such as Joshua Tree IBA near Wickieup, AZ which has abundant Bendire’s Thrashers or Fainelloa Mountains IBA with its many nesting pairs of Mexican Spotted Owls. For many of our species, though, the undeniable showstoppers are hummingbirds. These tiny birds have lots of class and sass and as southeast Arizona is especially rich in species. Our IBAs are often some of the best places to encounter these hovering gems.

Hummingbirds may be small, but they are mighty. Their size makes them especially vulnerable to habitat loss and climate change. However, by creating bird-friendly habitats in our yards and gardens, we can help support these amazing birds and their ecosystems. The Arizona Audubon’s Hummingbird Blitz is an opportunity for birders of all skill levels to participate in an important citizen science project.

Hummingbird Blitz

Arizona Audubon invites birders of all skill and age levels to participate in the 2017 Hummingbird Blitz, an important citizen science project. The Blitz is a citizen science driven urban bird count that will survey the birds of Tucson in its 17th annual count this spring.

Tracking Tucson’s Birds – The Tucson Bird Count

Tucson Audubon has launched the exciting Bringing Birds Home initiative that focuses on encouraging Tucson residents to create bird friendly habitats in their yards. This project has been influenced by the Tucson Bird Count (TBC). The TBC is a citizen science driven urban bird count that will survey the birds of Tucson in its 17th annual count this spring.

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DORIAN ESCALANTE

Dorian Escalante is a Jack-of-all-Trades when it comes to his volunteer work with Tucson Audubon. He conducts bird surveys with the conservation team out in the field, teaches kids (and some adults) the basics of drawing birds at Tucson Meet Your Birds, regularly co-leads outings for other youth through the Trekking Rattlers Birding and Hiking Club as well as the new Kids Birding in the Parks program, contributes to the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) and also supported the CBC for Kids last year. Most recently he has been volunteering as a backyard bird guide at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds.

It makes complete sense that Dorian would explore every nook and cranny of Tucson Audubon’s work with such gusto. Having just turned 15, he is himself a multi-layered birder and aspires to be both a bird artist (just have a look at his work) and a professional bird guide. “My work as a guide in the Paton yard is really fun,” Dorian says. “Many of the people I work with there are older. ‘Hey, you’ve really good eyes!’ or, ‘Don’t go anywhere, we need you here to help us identify these birds,’ they tell me.”

Paton Center Coordinator Jonathan Lutz has noticed the same relationship. “He fulfills the role of volunteer docent with enthusiasm and a great depth of knowledge for both local birds and butterflies. Our primary constituent base—birders and casual visitors of retirement age—respond well to Dorian’s youthful presence and willingness to help find and identify new species.”

Tucson Audubon Board Member and youth-education volunteer, Deb Vath, emphasizes that Dorian serves as a great role model for other kids, like those who participate in the monthly Trekking Rattler field trips. “He’s into birds? Then I’m into birds!” is the response she has noticed. Deb explains further: “He’s important for the kids around him and the adults as well. His birding-by-ear skills are phenomenal, and he loves to quiz you!”

Dorian is now studying birds on an international scale. He won and place for photography and a superior rating for his drawing at the 2016 National Youth Ministries Fine Arts Festival in Louisville, Kentucky, despite the fact that he has never had formal art lessons.

Dorian’s mom, Glenda Voyles, explains that she “absolutely loves the opportunities he gets working with Tucson Audubon. He’s exposed to seasoned birders, he contributes to scientific efforts, he gets to go places he would never have known about, he learns so much—and he has a blast while feeding his passion!”

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Maia Stark is continuing her role with Tucson Audubon as one of its most established and largest FUNraiser of the year: BIRDATHON!

What is Birdathon?
- It’s like a walk-a-thon, but instead of walking, we go birding! Some Birdathoners gather pledges for each species seen, while others welcome a direct donation. All pledges fund Tucson Audubon’s mission!
- Birdathon is a fun challenge for everyone—kids, adults, beginners, and experts. How many bird species can you find?
- Hold your birdathon any time from April 7–May 7; your day can last from 1 hour to 24!
- Join a team or lead one! Gather a group of friends and go find birds for an exciting, different activity
- Prizes will be awarded to Birdathoners in a variety of categories
- Join the fun online at tucsonaudubon.org/birdathon!

Maia Stark’s dream job is conducting bird surveys in the Grand Canyon on horseback. She’s concerned about climate change. She and her friend, Ollie, enjoy documenting what the local roadrunner pair near their homes in the Milagro Cohousing Community is up to—currently the feisty birds are feasting on Fig Beetle grubs. At 12 years of age, Maia clearly connects with birds and the environment. She has also connected deeply as a volunteer with the Tucson Audubon Society.

Maia is one of Tucson Audubon’s most effective volunteer fundraisers. Her Birdathon team, the Gila Woodpeckers, has raised over $10,000 in the course of the last five years. They brought in a whopping $8,895 last year earning the team the “Most Funds Raised” prize. She also delivered a brief, but inspiring address to the rest of the volunteer fundraising team gathered at the Birdathon wrap-up party. Maia noted: “If I don’t act on behalf of southeast Arizona’s birds, who will?”

Maia’s father, Brian Stark, explains that her volunteering is completely up to Maia. “She has shown devotion to Birdathon—staying in touch with supporters, keeping track of her spreadsheets, sending out her own water color thank you cards—she does it all, and I know these are skills that will carry her through life.”

In reflecting on her role with Tucson Audubon, Maia explains that “it feels really good to know that the birds I like are being helped by the funds I raise. I’ve seen places where Tucson Audubon works like the Paton Center for Hummingbirds. We recently visited a river they restored and also visited a Burrowing Owl site where they worked.” She is proud to be part of Tucson Audubon’s care for wild birds.

A student at the Khalisa Montessori School, Maia shares the inspiring quote from Maria Montessori: “With the child lies the fate of the future.” She explains that “What I think is pretty effective is kids teaching other kids. Bringing up kids who have an awareness of nature also makes adults more aware.” Tucson Audubon’s Executive Director couldn’t agree more: “When I first met Maia I knew I had come across a real teacher—for all of us!”

Maia’s Birdathon team is gearing up for another big year. You can support their team by following this link: bit.ly/maiastark

Tucson Audubon is celebrating the 30th Anniversary of its most established and largest FUNraiser of the year: BIRDATHON!
Living with Nature Volunteers

Many of you have attended one of our fantastic Living with Nature Programs but have you met the volunteers who are working behind the scenes to make them happen? Each location has a great team of volunteers who come early and stay late—and we are grateful for them! If you attend a program, be sure to look for them and tell them thank you! We recently had a chance to ask them some questions about volunteering:

Why did you get involved volunteering with Tucson Audubon? Jan: I knew that Audubon was a force for good with the environment, from being a member of Seattle Audubon, and finally, after retirement, had some time. I thought I might make some new friends.

Susan: I was very active with the local Audubon Society in Corvallis, OR, before retiring to Tucson. One of the first things I did was to join the Tucson Audubon chapter, not only for the birding opportunities but to be of assistance where needed.

Joanna: I take photos when going on bird walks and that led to being asked if I could take photos during the Living with Nature Tucson programs. I keep getting asked so I continue volunteering!

Eileen: I got involved with Tucson Audubon because I wanted to help with the Bird and Wildlife Festival. Then, because I was a regular attendee of the Living with Nature program here in Green Valley, I offered to help with it, if needed. It has been fun.

Jeff and Judy: Judy and I have been Audubon Members for many years. A great voice for saving planet earth.

What has been your greatest reward in volunteering with Tucson Audubon? Joanna: The greatest information the speakers provide. So much for this beginning birder to learn!

Eileen: My greatest reward in volunteering with Tucson Audubon has been the people I have met. They are all very friendly and interesting to know.

Jeff and Judy: I enjoy seeing people respond to the idea of the program and some even add the effort as a result.

If you were a bird, which bird would you be? Jan: I would be a Turkey Vulture. I like the way they look (really), and that they always have a good food source, not dependent on the largesse of humans, though because of roadkill, my food source would be even greater. My pacificist beliefs would work, since I would not have to kill to eat. I would not have to be afraid of hunters, and they seem to travel with friends. I would also be able to congratulate myself on assisting the world to stay a cleaner, and more hygienic place! I would be strong enough to travel at will, and would have a lifelong mate!!! Hurrah for the Turkey Vulture!!!

Susan: Because of my age and hair color, I’d say I’m a Gray Jay.

Joanna: Great-tailed grackle (I had a pair visit my backyard last summer and loved watching them frolic in my fountain).

Eileen: If I were a bird, I’d like to be a raptor of some kind because they soar. It would be fun to soar above it all and see a larger view of the physical landscape.

Jeff and Judy: Steller’s Jay.

GIFTS IN HONOR/MEMORY

In honor of Aliass Abel-Gawad from Aliass Abel-Gawad
In honor of Barbara Schneidaw from Susan Akker
In honor of Charlene Allert from Charlene Allert
In honor of Robert Gjestland from Peggy Bendel
In memory of Pamela Bent from Laurie Benjamin
In memory of Thomas Boutes from Diane & Thomas Boutes
In honor of Charles Bush from Charles Bush
In honor of Gregory Pence from Celeste Caccioli
In honor of Judy Caminer from Judy Caminer
In honor of Susan Carpenter from Susan Carpenter
In honor of Robert Casler from Carla & Robert Casler
In memory of Bobbie Gilkeron from Kay & Denny Cutter
In honor of Shirley Davis from Shirley Davis
In honor of Jean De Jong from Jean De Jong & Joseph Watkins
In honor of Martie and Art Borkent from Myliss Deefrae
In honor of Ann Donohue from Ann Donohue
In memory of Gabriella Duncan from Gabriella Duncan & William Marshall
In honor of Tim Dunwell from Tim Dunwell
In honor of Margaret & Alan Bennett from Carol & Don Eagle
In memory of Alice Cavender from Amy Estella
In honor of James Goodwin from James Goodwin
To Mel Gustafson from Jerri Gustafson

BOARDS ELECTION

For re-election to a second three year term to 2020:

Ed Curley
Jesus Garcia
Kathy Jacobs
John Kennedy — extending 2nd term to 2019 as Treasurer

New Board members for a first three year term to 2020:

Lynna Bruening
Tricia Gerrodette
Cynthia Pruet

Board Officers for two year terms:

President, Les Corey, 2nd Term
Vice-President, Mary Walker, 1st Term Secretary, Deb Vath, 1st Term Treasurer, John Kennedy, 2nd Term

Departing Board members to whom Tucson Audubon is in the debt of their service and commitment to the organization:

Robert Hembree
Gavin Bieber
Debra Finch
Claire Zucker
Richard Carlson
Ruth Russell

ROBERTA ABELOON, HELEN LARSON & MARK ADAMS, LIZ & JOHN ANDREWS, STARLIGHT NOEL-ARMENTA & DANIEL ARMENTA, THEODORE BABCOCK, ALAN BAKER, THERESA BATTLETT, THOMAS BEATTY, KAREN BIGLIN & RICHARD TURIER, PAUL & MINDY BLAEKI, PAMELA ROSE BMENT, GRETCHEN BALERI & BOB BOWMAN, RODNEY BRACKEN, JOHN BRODE, KATIE BUZER, CELESTE CACOLICI, BARBARA CALBERT & JOE MILANO, CAROL CARSON, JOHN CARSON, TERRY & CHUCK CHEIN, JUDY & JOHN CLARK, THEOSA CULLER & JOHN SATTA, KIRK CURRINGTON, KAY & Denny CUTTER, KATHLEEN DAVALIER, LIZ DAVIS, HOLLY & MATT MANFOLD, LINDA DEWEY, JUDY DICKSON, DONNA & ROGER DIETRICH, CONNIE J & SCOTT DIRKS, RENEE DUCKERSON, JIM DURER, JULIANNE DUNCAN, JOHN DEYER, JEFF EGERTON, BARBARA ELIS-QUINN & ROYAL QUINN, MARTHA & SAM ENVISON, TERRI EYRICE, JOSIE FREE, JIM FREE, DEBORAH & JUDY WEBSTER, JOSIE FABERGEE, PATTI GALB, SRI & BARI GORDON, LEILA GIMINO, TERESA I & SCOTT GOWELL, MICHELE & DICK GOWELL, KATHERINE GERMAN & PHIL HEDRICK, TED GOLAD, ELLA GREEN, MARION GREEN, ALAN GREEN, KATHEKAN GREGORIUS, CANDY WEBBER & DR TIM GRESHOW, CATHARINE HAGEN, MARY ANN & HANK HARLOW, JENN & BILL HARRISON, RICH HAYDEN, JUDITH HEFFNER, MARTY & JOHN HIRTH, STEPHANIE JOHNSTON & VALERIE JAMES, PEDRE JOHNSTON, RINE JOHNSTON, CARYN & THEODORE JOLLEY, DEBBY KERTZER, DANA KABASH, KATHY KASSELMAN, KEN KEWAN, SCOTT KELLY, EILEEN & STEPHEN KENNY, BETTIE KING, SUNDOWN KNOX, KAREN KOSTENMARK, LUCILE LANE, DOUGLAS LARSON, KURT LAUSCHER, MARCIANNE LEMASS-BOWS, GLORIA LINDER & INNAN GALIGOLY, BARBARA MARTIN & DON LOWLYL, JONATHAN LUTZ, LINDA MAISAC & BOB REESE, ROYAL MACADAM, ANDREW MACKAY, ANITA MALLAMPALLI, SYLVIA MANFOLD, ALBY & DON MARR, SARA & ROYAL MARR, KELLY & JON MCCLOSKEY, FREYA McGRAGG, RUSSELL & NELLIE MEER, JULIE & JOE MULY, NANCY MURPHY, KATHY & DALE NEEHEIM, MONI NICHTER, DEB ODAK, E. PATRICIA OBRIEN, CAROL & GORDON ODELL, SHELA OGLIEBLY, SUNNY PARKER, JEANNIE PENNY, SHELLY PIPPINS, SUSAN & DAVID PLATT, & MRS. & VERNON PLEON, PATRICIA PRECKETT, KATE & CHRIS RAY, JEN REES, CAROL REINKIN, FRANKLIN ROW, DINA & MIKE SANDSTEN, KAREN SAUSSAM, MARTHA MILBEEKIN & JEFF SCHLAGEL, JENNIFER & TERRY SCHMIDT, GUY SENSEE, RICHARD SHAW, BRENDA SHUGER, CARISSA SIPP & JOHN STOVER, JENNIFER SISKIN, CHRISTINE & RANDY SMITH, GARTH SMITH, SHANE SMITH, NANCY SPONBERG, RICHARD SPONBERG, CHERI & JONATHAN STAYL & LINDA KIRK STITT, SUE & MARK SULLIVAN, BARBARA SULLIVAN, ROYAL Sweeney, LINDA SYME, PEGGY & GORDON TANIS, JUDY TESFAR - RICHARDS, MARCIA TINGLEY, TYLER TINGLEY, CONNIE TOCANTIN, ERIKA TREKREMME, LAURA VILKUS, JACKLYNE VOLPE, THERESA WELLS, LUCIANA & ALAN WHITE, LASSIE WILLIAMS, SARAH WOLF, DAVID WRENCH, KATHY ZIEKER.
Couple’s Love of One Another and Birds Leads to Legacy of Love for Tucson Audubon

Recently, Tucson Audubon received an incredibly generous and transformative gift, given through a couple’s love of one another and her love of birds. What makes this gift even more meaningful was how it came to Tucson Audubon.

We didn’t know Gary and Vera Gregg well. In fact, we never got to meet Vera. Motivated by her love of birds, we met Gary when he called asking about including Tucson Audubon in Vera’s estate plans as part of her legacy, as she was quite ill with cancer. Barely into the discussion, communication paused. A handful of months later, we received a call from Dan and Tracy (Gregg) Craft. Their explanation for the lapse brought tears to our eyes as Dan explained that Tracy’s brother, Gary, did not know that he, too, had cancer at the time he was reaching out to assist Vera with her estate plans. He passed away shortly before Vera.

Vera and Gary were keenly aware of creating a setting in which to enjoy each and every moment they had left. They were eager to enjoy all that this beautiful area offers, and Tucson Audubon is honored to be a part of helping them to do that. Over time, they had expressed their appreciation to Dan and Tracy for three organizations that had helped them understand, experience and enjoy Southeast Arizona and its rich offering of birds, one of which, of course, was Tucson Audubon. Knowing this, Dan and Tracy felt it was important that Gary and Vera’s estate be left to support the work of these organizations for the future, and they went to work to see that Gary and Vera’s life’s savings would be gifted among them. I’m sorry not to have met either Gary or Vera, but when I met Tracy and Dan as they came to Tucson to deliver the estate gift, there was an instant connection. I’m sure given a little more time, Gary and Vera would have become fast friends to our Tucson Audubon family.

We are reminded that life can be unexpectedly short and that we never know how we touch others, but most of all that the gift of love transcends time and circumstances. We will assure that their gift enables others to share the love of birds, just as Vera did, for many, many years to come.

We share this tribute from Gary’s sister Tracy—

Gary and Vera loved birds and being in nature. They moved to Tucson in 1945 from Kansas City, although both were originally from the Cleveland, Ohio area. In Kansas City Vera trained blue jays to come flying whenever she shook an empty milk carton filled with peanuts. They came to her from their perches in every nearby tree.

Vera also loved the desert and Gary wanted to give Vera Tucson as a gift. She had been diagnosed with stage four breast cancer several years earlier and they chose Tucson as the place in which they would spend the rest of their lives together.

While in Tucson, Gary and Vera visited the Tucson Audubon Society’s Mason Center for lectures and to interact with the birds. They spent many days at Madera Canyon birding, anytime Vera felt up to making the trip. They also loved other wonderful birding hot-spots in southeast Arizona. They built their home in Marana on a nature preserve. Their landscaping choices were all carefully designed to attract butterflies and hummingbirds.

Gary wanted to create a memorial tribute for Vera in honor of her love for birds, but through a terrible twist of fate, he was also diagnosed with cancer and passed four months before Vera. Gary died September 2015 and Vera, January 2016. Both were 58 years old.

Their love for nature is also their legacy. Even though they only lived in Tucson for a short time, they left their footprint which will be around for years to come.

—Tracy Gregg

A small portion of Gary and Vera’s generous bequest has been dedicated to Tucson Audubon’s Habitat at Home program—in memory of their passion for supporting birds and other wildlife in their backyard. Another portion will be used to create a memorial to Vera and Gary that will also, over time, serve to honor other Tucson Audubon donors. The largest portion of their bequest is being set aside in the Tucson Audubon Society’s reserve fund. Its future purpose will be carefully considered by the Board.

Legacy Giving is a wonderful way to support the work of Tucson Audubon well into the future. For more information contact Keith Ashley at kashley@tucsonaudubon.org or 520-509-1809.

We enjoy sharing birds:
The Paton story arose from one couple’s love for sharing their private wonder openly with the public. Wally and Marion Paton’s decision to let folks roam their yard freely to enjoy “their” birds was a remarkable act of kindness and birding altruism that gave this place its legendary status.

We enjoy just watching birds:
Many birdwatchers love taking in the eye candy of a crazy mix of wonderful birds, especially in a calm environment that takes the effort out of bird-finding. The Paton Center offers up many of south-east Arizona’s specialties, and of course the possibility of something unusual or truly rare arriving exists at all times.

We can educate through birds and nature:
The Paton Center is a dream resource for educating our youth, an age group that often needs considerable stimulation to keep them focused. Taking children and teenagers to a place with easy access to birds offers a fabulous opportunity for youngsters to get hooked on the outdoors.

We have concerns for our environment:
The Paton Center is not just an isolated yard full of cool birds. It is a major cornerstone of a long-protected stretch of the Sonoita Creek watershed. Moving downstream from the Paton Center we travel through the Nature Conservancy’s Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, the privately owned Circle-Z Ranch, and into Patagonia Lake State Park and Patagonia State Natural Area. This conservation corridor has a diversity of partner organizations accomplishing its mission of protection.

We need certain birds for our lifelists:
One bird in particular stands out as THE iconic Paton Center species—the stunning Violet-crowned Hummingbird. The Paton yard can be thanked for the vast majority of birders’ “life” Violet-crowned.
HUMMINGBIRD COURTSHIP AND NESTING

Spring in southeast Arizona is a great time. The trees bud and leaf out and flowers appear everywhere. With many of these flowers come hummingbirds eagerly feeding on the abundant blooms. This is a heady time for most birders as bird migration begins and species diversity soars. Our local hummingbirds also feel the pull of spring and males battle one another for the best territories and flower patches. The males with the best locations fastidiously chase off male intruders but may react differently if a female appears. If the female seems interested in the slightest and the sun is shining to his advantage he will do his absolute best to impress her and he pulls out all the stops. In addition to his radiantly shining feathers he aims to dazzle her with acrobatics and begins a courtship flight display. What happens next varies by species and Costa’s Hummingbirds have a dizzying display involving loop de loops while making impressively loud whooshes. Then the male may fly directly in front of the female, lift his rich purple throat and crown feathers straight out and buzz directly in front of her. He carefully maneuvers himself to have the best light refracting off of his gorget feathers and looks like a blazing purple star right in her face. Looks impressive to us but it does seem that female hummingbirds do take quite a bit of convincing.

The Anna’s Hummingbird has a different and more acoustically stunning flight display. Male Anna’s Hummingbirds do sing a repeti- tive scratchy song that isn’t all that musical to our ears but is quite advanced in the hummingbird community. One may hear a male Anna’s Hummingbird sing all day in the backyard but when a female enters his territory he shifts into high gear. He will begin with short flights and makes sure she has her undivided attention. If he does, he hovers directly above her and then zooms over 100 feet straight up into the sky and then zooms straight down and screeches to stop right over the female. At the last second, he spreads his tail and hovers directly above her and then zooms over 100 feet straight up into the sky and then zooms straight down and screeches to stop right over the female. At the last second, he spreads his tail and

sound the male creates with his tail is so loud that it can be heard indoors. If you hear it, try to find its source outside as you may see a repeat performance.

All of this courtship on the male’s part segues into motherhood for the female. When it comes to preparing the nest and caring for the eggs and then chicks, she is entirely on her own and is very much up to the task. Some of our more common urban hummingbirds seem very comfortable nesting in our yards and many local residents have been delighted to discover a nesting mother and watch the ensuing raising of chicks. Their nests are delicate yet strong and largely made from spider’s webs. She will carefully add bits of bark, leaves or lichen to the outside to camouflage her nest so well it can be quite cryptic while in clear view. She then lays and incubates her tiny eggs and then devotedly feeds her chicks which grow rapidly and fledge in less than a month. The well designed nest will stretch in proportion to the growing chick keeping them snugly secure in the nest while accommodating their increasing size. Mothers may even start to make a new nest nearby when her current chicks get large enough to maintain their own body heat. The flight displays of male hummingbirds are some of the most dazzling sights in nature but the effective and elegant nests of the females can be just captivating in their modest way.

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PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

Tucson Audubon’s first ever photo contest was a big hit for the Year of the Hummingbird. Clearly, fast moving hummingbirds are a top target for photographers despite their speed. Forty-one people submitted 122 images, most via Facebook! Three categories were judged by local photographers and one (Flock’s Choice) was voted on by Facebook users. Thanks to all who made this a fun virtual birding experience!

GRAND PRIZE

The Anna’s Hummingbird cover photo for this Vermilion Flycatcher was chosen by Tucson Audubon staff and was taken by Bob Reese. Of all the bird species, Bob finds Hummingbirds to be the most fascinating and photogenic. “With so many birds competing for our attention, it is sometimes easy to look past these colorful little acrobats who can dart and hover about with such speed and grace. I am so pleased that Tucson Audubon has chosen to honor them in this way.”

PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

**PLUMAGE PRO**

**Violet-crowned hummingbird by Thor Manson**

**FLOCK’S CHOICE**

**Magnificent Hummingbird, Diane Poleyquiva**

**ANIMAL ARTISTIC**

**Broad-billed Hummingbird by Brian Stack**

**FLEDGLING PHOTOGRAPHER**

**Violet-crowned hummingbird by Thor Manson**

Tucson Audubon would like to thank the panel of photographer judges:

- James Capo
- Axel Elfen
- Doris Evans
- Bryan Holliday
- Lois Manton
- Ken Murphy
- Angela Pritchard
- Jim Prudente
- David Quanrud
- Tom Ryan
- Bruce Taubert
- Charles Trapani
- Mary Zalokar

**THE PATON CENTER EMERGES FROM CONSTRUCTION SEASON**

Jonathan Lutz, Paton Center Coordinator

Nearly 3,000 people visited the Paton Center for Hummingbirds between January 1 and February 28, 2017. Visitors came from more than 35 states and almost a dozen foreign countries! The birding hotspot’s signature species—the Violet-crowned Hummingbird—was seen almost daily during this period. The Richard Grand Memorial Meadow and a robust feeding station in the front yard provided looks at an incredible variety of winter birds. During much of this time, the most well-known feature of the two acre property—Paton’s backyard—was closed December through March as crews prepared the site for a new permanent viewing pavilion.

Now the sounds of excavators, skid steers, and dump trucks are being replaced with the songs of warblers, tanagers, and orioles. While the pavilion project is a work in progress, Tucson Audubon is pleased (and relieved) to resume the tradition of viewing birds in the area behind the Paton home. Updates that will occur throughout the spring and summer will include: a new stream feature, a fresh arrangement of bird feeders, and the planting of dozens of native shrubs and wildflowers. Temporary shade canopies are in place through the fall. The pavilion structure is being constructed in Tucson and is scheduled for installation at the end of the year.

The Paton Center is shaped by the time, talents, and wealth of thousands of individuals. From professional staff to the visitors who deposit a few dollars in the Sugar Fund, continuing the legacy of Wally and Marion Paton depends on a community that spans the globe. Thank you for your donations, for purchasing Paton Center merchandise, and for supporting Tucson Audubon through membership. On a personal note, I’m deeply appreciative of all the volunteers who pulled weeds, built fences, raked gravel, and engaged visitors during my first few months on the job. Together we are working together to preserve the Paton Center—a true hummingbird hotspot—for many years to come.

**MEXICAN ORégANO: All-Star Hummingbird Plant**

Lynn Hassler, Garden Volunteer Captain, photo by Lynn Hassler

**Scientific name:** Poliomintha maderensis

**Family:** Lamiaceae (Mint)

**Native range:** Sierra de la Madera, Coahuila, Mexico, 8000 feet

**Wildlife value:** Blossoms attract hummingbirds and sphinx moths

Add some spice to your garden with Mexican oregano! This small- to medium-sized (“x”) rounded shrub has very aromatic leaves, reminiscent of the herb oregano; hence the common name. Brush against it for a sensory delight. Plants appeal to the visual senses as well, sporting delicate white and light-to-dark lavender 1” long tubular flowers that are densely clustered at the tips of the stems. The flowering season is extensive—nonstop from spring through fall—and the blooms draw hummers galore. My specimen at home, situated in a large container located on a north side, is routinely visited by Costa’s, Black-chinned, Anna’s, and Broad-billed hummingbirds. White-lined sphinx moths (sometimes called “hummingbird” or “hawk” moths) are regular visitors as well. People sometimes mistake them for hummingbirds because, like hummers, they hover at blossoms and sip nectar through an extended proboscis. But sphinx moths are mainly active at dusk.

Mexican oregano grows relatively fast either in full sun or light shade. Water requirements are low to moderate, and plants seem to be relatively disease- and pest-free. They can also take the cold—hardy to 10 degrees. It’s a good idea to shear plants in late winter to promote new growth and to increase thickness. Mexican oregano tends to be on the brittle side, so avoid planting it in high traffic areas.

**WILD OrEGANO: All-Star Hummingbird Plant**

**Scientific name:** Poliomintha maderensis

**Family:** Lamiaceae (Mint)

**Native range:** Sierra de la Madera, Coahuila, Mexico, 8000 feet

**Wildlife value:** Blossoms attract hummingbirds and sphinx moths

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Many nonbirders likely think that birding must take you to pristine forests and cool, fast-running brooks. This is certainly true, but that’s not the whole story. We also spend a lot of time at sewage plants, dairy sludge ponds, feedlots, and farm fields. Why? Because that’s where a lot of interesting birds are. One of the more popular such sites is the Santa Cruz Flats, a broad flat agricultural area of roughly 350 square miles between Tucson and Casa Grande, where 274 species of birds have been reported. It is located in Pinal County west of the small town of Red Rock. It comprises many acres of cultivated crops, sod farms, pecan groves, a cattle feedlot, a dairy farm, and a sheep farm, all intersected by a labyrinth of irrigation ditches and canals and dotted with temporary and permanent ponds. It is surrounded on three sides by mountains and saguaro-studded bajadas.

Before the Santa Cruz Flats was settled by farmers in the late 1800s, much of the land was dominated by Sonoran savannah grasslands, which may be found at the Evergreen Turf sod farm. Other plovers, including Pacific Golden-Plover, American Golden-Plover, and Black-bellied Plover have also been recorded at the Evergreen Turf sod farms from September through March, with 177 the highest daily number recorded. In recent years, they have been most reliably reported at the Evergreen Turf sod farm. Other plovers, including Pacific Golden-Plover, American Golden-Plover, and Black-bellied Plover have also been recorded at least once. Individual Upland Sandpipers have been reported twice. Many observers were fortunate to see Pinal County’s first record of White-rumped Sandpiper in May 2016 at a small, temporary farm pond. Rarely reported in the county, a Ruff showed up in a flooded field in 2010 and a Whimbrel in 2011. A Roseate Spoonbill made a brief showing in 2012 at a floodwater containment pond. Many grassland species of sparrows as well as pipits winter in the area. Sagebrush Sparrows, found in the extensive saltbush flats in the western part of the area, are a favorite of birders. In early 2015 a few Sprague’s Pipits were discovered in the Bermuda grass fields adjacent to Evergreen Turf, and up to six have been reported in the two winters since. Three species of longspur have been occasionally reported at or near Evergreen Turf.

Many birders visit the Flats in the winter to observe the large number of raptors that winter or migrate through the area. Particularly notable is the influx of socially foraging, nonbreeding Crested Caracaras beginning in November and continuing through April. Although caracaras have been reported erratically from the Flats since 1985, their numbers in winter have dramatically increased in the past decade to an estimated high of 150. A total of 25 raptor species have been reported during the winter, including six species of owl. Not seen in winter, Swainson’s Hawk migrates through the area in spring and fall, with large flocks often numbering more than 100 birds. In addition to the farm fields interspersed with desert scrub, there are a few riparian corridors dominated by Gooding’s Willow and tamarisk that attract breeding birds such as Yellow-breasted Chat, Bell’s Vireo, and Lucy’s Warbler as well as many migrants. Such state rarities as Louisiana Waterthrush, Palm Warbler, and Black-throated Green Warbler have been reported. Farm yards with shrubbery and nut and fruit trees have attracted vagrants, including rarities, such as Rufous-backed Robin and Black-throated Blue Warbler.

A dozen years ago Ruddy Ground-Dove was reported regularly in the vicinity of the Red Rock feedlot. A nest along the Santa Cruz River at the Sasco Rd. ford in 2006 was the first documented north of Mexico. In recent years, however, this dove has been sparse with none reported some years. Particularly intriguing is the discovery of many nesting pairs of Tropical Kingbirds. This kingbird had been casually reported in the area since the late 1990s, but it wasn’t until 2013 that nesting was confirmed in single rows of pecan trees along roadsides, principally in the Baumgartner Road/Wheeler Road area. As many as 15-20 pairs have been detected nesting.

Paradise Lake, an artificial lake in the town of Arizona City at the northern end of the Santa Cruz Flats, has hosted many rarities, including both Brown and American White pelicans, Common Loon, Heermann’s Gull, and Horned Grebe, as well as many other waterbirds. Although continuing construction of new homes is restricting viewing sites, there still remain a few spots on the south side of the lake from which much of the lake can still be observed.

The Santa Cruz Flats can be accessed from five exits on I-10: Red Rock (Exit 226), Picacho (Exit 212), Sunshine Road (Exit 208), Toltec Highway (202), and Sunland Gin Road (Exit 200). Details about getting to the sod farms and other locations are included in Finding Birds in Southeast Arizona (revised eighth edition), published by the Tucson Audubon Society.

Doug Jenness, a long-time activist in Arizona Field Ornithologists. Coordinator of the annual Santa Cruz Flats Raptor Count. Author of articles on Crested Caracaras and Tropical Kingbirds for Arizona Birds.
Bye Bye Butter Butt

Chris Benesh

You may have heard news of it through the birding grapevine. “I hear they are going to split Yellow-rumped Warblers” in fact, you may feel as though you heard the same thing a few years back. If you thought that, you’d be correct. Back in 2010, a proposal was put forth to reassess species limits within Yellow-rumped Warbler. It failed owing to uncertainty as to whether the split should be three way or four way. Now that this has been largely cleared up through further research, a new proposal is before the American Ornithological Society (formerly AOU) to split Yellow-rumped Warbler into three species.

As birders, we’ve long been aware that there are two sorts of Yellow-rumped Warblers to be found in southern Arizona, those common yellow-rumped Audubon’s and the rarer white-throated Myrtle. Audubon’s and Myrtle were lumped together back in 1937, and since then, the Habacek and wrought the Audubon’s group, one or more subspecies breeding in forested mountain ranges between the western states and into British Columbia and Alberta (where they bump into Myrtle). While generally thought to be of one subspecies, birds breeding in Arizona up through the Rockies are sometimes described as another, slightly larger and darker subspecies, memorabilis. Birds that breed in Arizona average more extensively black than Audubon’s elsewhere, leading to speculation that this might be the result of shared genes with a fourth major group, known as Black-fronted Warbler (subspecies nigrifrons). It is this fourth enigmatic form that has recently caught my attention. As it is often the case for subspecies, this rather distinctive population has been largely ignored by birders traveling to its breeding grounds in the mountains of the northern Sierra Madre. Nearly as striking as Goldman’s Warbler, the breeding males are extensively black below and have largely black heads, accentuated by white eye crescents and a flared yellow throat.

It seems likely that Yellow-rumped Warbler will be divided up into three species as described above. But the relationship of Black-fronted Warbler to our Audubon’s Warblers remains somewhat of a mystery. Studies indicate that Audubon’s and Black-fronted share a lot of genetic markers not found in other Yellow-rumps indicating that gene flow has occurred at some point in the past. Is this form truly sedentary or does it occasionally wander north into Arizona? Do darker individuals seen in the Chiricahua Mountains, Huachucas represent Audubon’s X Black-fronted intergrades? These questions will likely keep these two populations lumped together under Audubon’s for the time being. I know I will be paying much closer attention to the appearance of “Yellow-rumped Warblers” during the breeding months in Arizona as well as making an effort to see and learn more about Black-fronted Warblers in northwestern Mexico. To learn more about this topic and to see images of the various forms, see bit.ly/yellowrump. ■

In 2016 Tucson Audubon took flight on a newly updated strategic plan, formally adopted in September. We reorganized and realigned accordingly, and took on new roles and responsibilities to achieve ambitious outcomes for people and birds. With our updated strategic plan we reestablished a commitment to “inspire people to enjoy and protect birds through recreation, education, conservation and restoration of the environment.” It was a big agenda for our little organization and we handled it well!

During the year, we said goodbye to Tucson Audubon staff who migrated on to new opportunities and greeted new people who came onboard. We were saddened by the loss of friends who passed away, including staff member Juliette Connelly, even as our hearts were warmed by their thoughtful provisions for our continued work. We worked hard, celebrated when possible and began gearing up for what we anticipate will be a tough few years as a new administration takes office. 2016 was a year of change, transition and certainly adaptation.

You will see that Tucson Audubon continued to engage in diverse programs and projects, including a new pond in the beautiful Richard Grand Memorial Meadow at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds, incredibly successful outreach in Benson to engage people with the San Pedro River, numerous citizen science projects like monitoring Azure bluebird nest boxes and the Tucson Bird Count, two Tucson Meet Your Birds events at Sweetwater that drew in nearly 1,000 people to view local birds, and a fascinating day with author Paul Bannick as he released his latest book, Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls. These activities, and others like them, honed our skills and fed our excitement about offering 2017’s initiative: The Year of the Hummingbird.

Above all, we are so very grateful to our members, donors, volunteers, community and partners, whose support, inspiration and energy give wings to our work. You make this work possible and we thank you with heartfelt gratitude. It is an honor to serve you through Tucson Audubon.

With warmest regards,

Karen Foggas, Executive Director
Les Corey, President
WE CARE FOR WILD BIRDS AND INSPIRE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME!

CONSERVATION
We study and protect wild birds and their habitats

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO
- Over 800 point count surveys to document Threatened Western Yellow-billed Cuckoos in Sky Island habitat (in collaboration with Coronado National Forest) as well as lower elevation riparian zones. Over 400 hours of survey time, 20 routes covered by 25 volunteers and 8 staff.
- Wrote one resource brief for the Sky Island Restoration Cooperative annual report regarding our work on Yellow-billed Cuckoos. Also produced updated annual report on Sky Island cuckoos based on surveys on forest service lands, Pima County, Tucson Audubon, and The Nature Conservancy properties.
- Based on 2015 anecdotal results, we piloted research on trogon aggression toward cuckoos using playback calls. Initial results showed no aggression response to cuckoos by trogon; however, due to constraints the experiment had to be performed before cuckoos had returned to the area and before the breeding season for other species which may have impacted results.

NEST BOX PROGRAMS
- Volunteers (including Cub Scouts and the Desert Woodworker’s Club) built roughly 450 nest boxes for Lucy’s Warblers, Azure Bluebirds, screech-owls, and kestrels.
- Installed and monitored 150 Azure bluebird nest boxes on ranches, vineyards, and people’s yards
- 5 active bluebird nests, also nests of Ash-throated and Dusky-capped Flycatchers, Bridled Titmouse, Acorn Woodpecker, Bewick’s and House Wrens
- One site an experiment with UA bluebird researchers
- Collected roughly 150 hollow logs (oak and elderberry) to use for natural cavity vs. artificial nest box experiment in 2017
- Sold 30 Lucy’s Warbler nest boxes at fall Tucson Meet Your Birds.
- Awarded two grants for nest box research experiments in 2017— one with Lucy’s Warblers (Tracy Aviary) and one with Azure Bluebirds (North American Bluebird Society)
- Over 3,000 hours of survey time donated by 71 volunteers in our Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program, which is one of the most citizen-science driven and active IBA programs in the United States.
- 187 species were counted by 60 participants during 1,283 point counts surveys for the Tucson Bird Count.
- 5,000 “Recipe Cards” for creating yard habitat for 5 types of birds were distributed to the public with help from partner, Saguaro National Park.
- 1,200 people reached during Spring and Fall SAHBA Home & Garden Show where information on creating bird supporting landscapes was shared

ADVOCACY
We speak out for wild birds and their homes

- 325 “I love the San Pedro River because …” postcards completed by the public and sent to Benson City Administrators, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and The Army Corps of Engineers
- 6,000 citizens informed by Tucson Audubon about pressing threats via email alerts, the Vermillion Flycatcher and our coalition networks
- Numerous additional units of critical habitat designations for the Threatened Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo in multiple sky island mountain ranges
- One 404 Permit suspended by The Army Corps of Engineers for Whetstone Ranch (a.k.a Villages at Vigneto)
- Two legislative attacks on Arizona’s Groundwater Management Act defeated by conservation partners, including Tucson Audubon
- Numerous coalition letters on important policy issues. Examples include: window strikes/federal buildings introduced legislation, pollinator-poisoning pesticides/neonics, Migratory Bird Treaty Act incidental take permitting, proposed Resolution Copper mine at Oak Flat, protecting the Endangered Species Act, the value of distributed energy generation, EPA authority over mining-related financial assurance, strengthening the take rule for bald and golden eagles, and more.

RESTORATION
We create sustainable wild bird habitat

- Completed a baseline survey and report on the Amethyst Creek for the Arizona Wilderness Coalition. Report focused on Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Lowland Leopard Frogs, endangered minnows, and vegetative characteristics of the project reach.
- Salvaged 15 Saguaro, 15 barrel cactus, 5 hedgehog cactus, and 70 pincushion cactus from road expansion along Cortaro Rd; plants were relocated to the Mason Center for Education and Ironwood Preservation.
- Completed baseline surveys for In-lieu Fee Mitigation project on lower Santa Cruz River, completed multiple scoping options for project.
- Awarded two grants through Partners for Fish and Wildlife for projects around Patagonia to support cuckoos, hummingbirds, and pollinators, including on the 5-acre parcel adjacent to the Paton Center for Hummingbirds.
- Installed Monarch Waystations in collaboration with the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds and at the Mason Center for Education and Ironwood Preservation.
- Presented on Tucson Audubon restoration work along the Santa Cruz River at the Santa Cruz River Research Days Symposium.

ENGAGEMENT
We help people connect with wild birds

- 2,808 participants went on 182 birding field trips to 49 Arizona hotspots
- 377 volunteers put in 9,627 volunteer hours in support of our mission
- We had 361 Southeast Arizona Birding Festival participants from 37 states and 2 foreign countries. There were 37 field trips led by 31 trip leaders
- 19 adult education classes and workshops were offered
- 5 youth education classes and workshops were offered
- Engaged 326 youth in various programs and 14 outings
- Our Nature Shops welcomed 5,326 members and other visitors
- Our Storytelling on the San Pedro event drew 140 people
- Totally Owlrageous: A Day with Paul Bannick drew 133
- 900 people came to Tucson Meet Your Birds in February, 425 to the October edition
- The 20 Living With Nature Programs drew 111 people
Tucson Audubon thanks our Birds Benefit Business Alliance Members, who have shown their support for bird conservation through annual contributions and in-kind donations. Please show you appreciate their support for us by supporting them. Visit tucsonaudubon.org/alliance for more information, including links to member websites.

**LEADING PARTNERS**
- Carl Zeiss Sports Optics
- Circle Z Ranch
- Crown Community Development—Arizona Farmers Investment Co (FICO)
- Geovision, LLC
- Riverpark Inn
- Tucson Electric Power
- Western National Parks Association

**SUSTAINING PARTNERS**
- Kimberly Drew, Realtor
- Leica Optics
- Rockjumper Birding Tours Worldwide

**SUPPORTING PARTNERS**
- Heartstone Ranch/La Cocina
- Chuparosa Inn
- Solar Zone
- Celestron
- Celestron
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**CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS**
- Western National Parks Association
- GeoInnovation LLC
- Farmers Investment Co (FICO)
- Circle Z Ranch
- Solipaso Tours

**SMALL BUSINESS BIRDING ADVENTURES**
- Baja Birds and Wine
- Rockjumper—Worldwide Birding Adventures
- Solipaso Tours

**MADERA: THICK-BILLED PARROTS**
- $1300
- Leader: David MacKay

A short trip into northern Chihuahua to see the highly endemic Thick-billed Parrot and Eared Quetzal. Summertime in the Sierra Madre is a sight to see with green meadows, lakes, blue sky vistas and monsoon! The trip starts in Tucson and we bird the pinion-juniper habitat on the way to Nuevo Casas Grandes. We visit the remote Paquime ruins site, Guerra Casas that are two miles north of the Madera area and the Thick-billed Parrots in their nesting habitat, along with many other high elevation species.

**TAS-the-ifused—CLASSIFIED ADS**
A custom home on an acre near Oro Valley is waiting for you, sitting on a private one-acre lot, in unincorporated Pima County with no HOA. Pad with 35-amp hookup for your RV. MLS#21703203


Classified and display ads are accepted from individual members and members of our Birds Benefit Business Alliance. Visit tucsonaudubon.org/flightr for rates or contact Matt Griffith at mg@tucsonaudubon.org to book an ad.

**BIRDS OF PARADISE**
- Look for this page in conjunction with the preceding page of the premier birding lodges in Central America.

**ROC JUMPER— justification.**

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CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION NEWS

Karen Fogas, Executive Director; Images from America in Crisis in the 1970s, Alan Taylor, November 26, 2011

We Know From Experience That Our Waters Aren’t Unlimited Resources That Can Handle Whatever We Dump in Them. Protecting America’s Waters Protects Us

DDT, fish kills due to toxic discharges, a burning river and contaminated drinking water samples and untreated sewage discharged into waters are just a snapshot of the conditions that prompted the creation of America’s Clean Water Act.

The Clean Water Act (CWA) was enacted in response to growing awareness and concern for public health and safety problems caused by pollution of our nation’s waterways. The CWA enables the federal government to regulate pollutant discharges into the “waters of the United States” and gave the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority to: establish programs to control pollution that has since provided billions of dollars to fund sewage treatment plant construction.

Since enacted, the CWA has roughly doubled the number of waters meeting quality goals, and sewage discharges, once commonplace in the 1960’s, are now rare occurrences. What were once rivers fouled by all manner of toxic chemicals and bacteria are now safe for swimming and fishing, dramatically improving their ecological health and increasing their recreational and economic value for communities. However, there is still room for improvement. Today, 40 percent of the waters surveyed by the states fail to meet national water quality standards.

Additionally, which water bodies qualify as “waters of the U.S.” has been a source of confusion and legal disputes. To clarify these “muddy waters,” the EPA issued a new rule in 2015: “The rule ensures that waters protected under the Clean Water Act are more precisely defined, more predictably determined, and easier for businesses and industry to understand. The rule does not protect any new types of waters, regulate most ditches, apply to groundwater, create any new permitting requirements for agriculture, or address land use or regulatory programs posed by “nonpoint source” pollution; and create a grant program that has since provided billions of dollars to fund sewage treatment plant construction.

Growing public concern regarding human health and safety impacts from air pollution prompted Congress to enact the Clean Air Act (CAA) in 1970. Significant amendments in 1977 and 1990 improved the effectiveness of the CAA and addressed emerging air quality problems such as acid rain and loss of the UV-protective stratospheric ozone layer caused by ozone-depleting substances (ODS).

The CAA requires the EPA to “establish national ambient air quality standards for certain common and widespread pollutants based on the latest science.” The EPA established standards for six common criteria pollutants: particulate matter, ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, and lead. The CAA requires states to “adopt enforceable plans to achieve and maintain air quality meeting the air quality standards... and control emissions that drift across state lines.”

Thick, hovering smog, acid rain, mercury and lead emissions, ground-level ozone and serious respiratory and cardiovascular health concerns are just a snapshot of the conditions that prompted the creation of America’s Clean Air Act.

Growing public concern regarding human health and safety impacts from air pollution prompted Congress to enact the Clean Air Act (CAA) in 1970. Significant amendments in 1977 and 1990 improved the effectiveness of the CAA and addressed emerging air quality problems such as acid rain and loss of the UV-protective stratospheric ozone layer caused by ozone-depleting substances (ODS).

According to EPA, “From 1970 to 2015, aggregate national emissions of the six common pollutants alone dropped an average of 70 percent while gross domestic product grew by 246 percent... The emissions reductions have led to dramatic improvements in the quality of the air that we breathe. Between 1990 and 2015, national concentrations of air pollutants improved 85 percent for lead, 84 percent for carbon monoxide, 67 percent for sulfur dioxide (1-hour), 60 percent for nitrogen dioxide (annual), and 3 percent for ozone.”

Despite its many successes, the CAA is under threat by special interests, lawsuits, and legislative proposals to rollback and de-fund the Act’s implementation.
We Know From Experience That Biological Systems are Complex and the Loss of Species is Forever. Protecting Endangered Species Protects Us

The impending loss of our nation’s symbol of freedom, the bald eagle, and the American alligator, Peregrine Falcon and the Brown Pelican are just snapshots of the conditions that prompted the creation of the Endangered Species Act.

In 1973, in response to a growing recognition there was no legal safety net for native plants and animals at risk of extinction, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act (ESA), recognizing our rich natural heritage and wildlife are of “esthetic, ecological, educational, recreational, and scientific value to our Nation and its people.” The ESA’s purpose is to, “protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend.”

If qualified under the Act’s provisions, a species may be listed as either endangered or threatened. “Endangered” is the most precarious status for a species and indicates a species “is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.” **“Threatened” status indicates a species “is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.”**

The Bald Eagle’s recovery is one of the ESA’s greatest success stories. The Bald Eagle went to the brink of extinction from habitat loss from extensive forest clearing, hunting of its prey, direct mortality from shooting and widespread use of the insecticide DDT, which caused the thinning of egg shells that cracked before chicks were developed. After being listed as endangered, killing of eagles was prohibited, nest sites were protected, water quality in our rivers and lakes was improved, eagles were reintroduced into former habitat, and the deadly chemical DDT was banned in the U.S.

Contrary to some miscalculations, the ESA is not stopping a significant number of development proposals or creating unwarranted delays. Proposals can only be stopped if a determination is made that “an action is reasonably expected, directly or indirectly, to diminish a species’ numbers, reproduction, or distribution so that the likelihood of survival and recovery in the wild is appreciably reduced.”

A 2015 Defenders of Wildlife study evaluated government data and found that between 2008 and 2015, “only two consultations resulted in “jeopardy” findings... All jeopardy/destruction/adverse modification findings were accompanied by reasonable and prudent alternatives, so none of the projects was stopped... The median duration of consultations was 13 days for informal and 62 days for formal.”

Less than 1% of the more than 2,000 plants and animals protected by the ESA have gone extinct, an impressive success rate that proves the efficacy of this landmark legislation. Despite its success, the ESA is continually threatened by special interests, political interference in scientific findings, and legislative proposals to weaken or render the Act ineffective through de-funding its implementation or carving out exemptions.

A TRIBUTE TO CONSERVATION HERO MICK MEADER


Mick was born to Robert Daniel and Ruth Jeanette Meader on June 17, 1951. He attended the University of Northern Iowa, from which he obtained a B.A. in Geology in 1973. Mick worked for the Department of Geosciences at the University of Arizona as a staff member for 23 years.

Following retirement in 2010, Mick became very active in conservation of the middle and lower San Pedro River Valley, a place he had come to love deeply for its beauty and its unspoiled environment. As a property owner in Cascabel, he became a leader of the Cascabel community’s efforts to save their valley from encroaching development and degradation. He was well known for his steadfast opposition to the previously proposed 110 bypass in the lower San Pedro River valley and the SunZia South-west Transmission Project. Regarding SunZia, Mick was a pro se intervenor and argued his case eloquently before the Arizona Corporation Commission. To his great disappointment, and ours, the Commission approved the project.

Mick served as Co-Chair of the Cascabel Working Group and chaired the Conservation Committee of the Cascabel Conservation Association. He was also a founding board member of the Lower San Pedro Watershed Alliance. Mick became Co-President of the Cascabel Conservation Association in 2013 and served as a board member until his death. He was also a long-time shareholder in the closely related Saguaro Juniper Corporation, a ranching-conservation enterprise founded by Jim Corbett of the Tucson-based sanctuary movement.

Mick was a fearless leader and a diligent investigator—shining light on critical issues facing our region. We believe such dedication and perseverance can only come from someone with a deep connection to the spirit of the land, and an appreciation for its role in sustaining our own lives and the lives of other living creatures. We at Tucson Audubon truly enjoyed collaborating with Mick over the years and value the many positive working relationships he fostered throughout our region. We will be sorely missed. Mick’s wonderful tact was reminiscent of the old adage, “speak softly, and carry a big stick,” in many ways, Mick was model citizen and will always be an inspiration to us all.

WHAT IS THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY?

Created by President Richard Nixon via executive order in December, 1970, the mission of EPA is to protect human health and the environment.

EPA’s purpose is to ensure that:

- all Americans are protected from significant risks to human health and the environment where they live, learn and work;
- national efforts to reduce environmental risk are based on the best available scientific information;
- federal laws protecting human health and the environment are enforced fairly and effectively;
- environmental protection is an integral consideration in U.S. policies concerning natural resources, human health, economic growth, energy, transportation, agriculture, industry, and international trade, and these factors are similarly considered in establishing environmental policy;
- all parts of society—communities, individuals, businesses, and state, local and tribal governments—have access to accurate information sufficient to effectively participate in managing human health and environmental risks;
- environmental protection contributes to making our communities and ecosystems diverse, sustainable and economically productive; and
- the United States plays a leadership role in working with other nations to protect the global environment.

CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION NEWS

Tuition Audubon Family Has Alaskan Adventure in Washington DC

Kimberlyn Drew, Tucson Audubon Board Member

This March my husband Andy, daughter Phoebe and I traveled to Washington DC representing Tucson Audubon Society at Alaska Wilderness Week. Wilderness Week is sponsored by the Alaska Wilderness League in cooperation with Audubon Alaska, the Sierra Club, Patagonia and other environmental organizations. This annual event began in the 1990s and brings volunteers from across the US and Canada to share their connections to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge with each other, and with members of Congress.
The Tucson Audubon Society Nature Shop has everything you need to celebrate spring. We have seeds from Native Seed Company to plant, hats and sunscreen to protect you from the sun, books to help you plant a water wise garden or landscape to invite native pollinators into your yard, and cookbooks with delicious recipes for your bountiful harvest and margaritas to sip on the patio while watching birds at the feeder.

Shop hours for the Tucson Audubon Society Nature Shop are Monday-Saturday, 10 AM–4 PM; and Thursday-Saturday, 10 AM–1:30 PM. The shop is located at 12325 E Roger Road, Tucson 85749.

Would you like to buy a gift for a child that would spark a love of nature and science? We have an amazing children’s area with books for kiddos of all ages, science kits, kites, stuffed animals, and so much more.

Come by and see all the Nature Shop has to offer. Be sure to ask about our frequent seed and coffee buyer program. We are getting new merchandise in all the time, so you can find something for everyone while shopping locally.

The first of the great illustrated hummingbird books appeared more than two centuries ago, and the genre shows no signs of slowing down. It’s easy to see why: What could be more captivating than these tiny feathered meteors, and what more inspiring to writers and painters than the effort to capture their beauty and fascination in word and image?

The latest in this long tradition is the first volume of John Arvin’s Hummingbirds, treating 172 hummingbird species found from Alaska to Panama. Each of the admirably compact text accounts offers information about the bird’s range and habitat, feeding behavior, identification, and conservation status. The occasional citation points to a two-page bibliography, but most of the wealth of information provided here is apparently based on the author’s own observations, an impressive circumstance if so.

The text accounts share their page with range maps for each species, with national boundaries marked but no state and province borders. Three inches square, these generously sized maps are at different scales, showing only the subregion where the species occurs. This gives the maps greater precision than would be possible on a map covering all of North America, but it can be disorienting in the case of hummingbirds with an exclusively Caribbean distribution; the range of some, such as the Blue-headed Hummingbird of Dominica and Martinique, appears on the page as a series of small green blotsches.

The main point of this book, though, is not the words but the pictures. Painters and printers have recognized the challenges posed by the hummingbirds’ metallic iridescence for nearly 250 years. The count de Buffon, eighteenth-century Europe’s most influential natural historian, ordered his illustrators to abandon the project entirely when they discovered that it was impossible to capture the ever-changing colors on paper; at the turn of the nineteenth century, Jean-Baptiste Audebert invented a new method of printing the birds in color and then highlighting the images with the thinnest gold leaf. Jean-Baptiste Audubert’s elegant contrasts as the pages are turned. Among the most striking images are Raul Andrade’s Broad-billed Hummingbirds (incongruously feeding at eastern red clymboles), Vydhehi Kadur’s sapsucking Red-billed Streamertails, and Sangethu Kadur’s dramatic Purple-throated Caribs prospecting in lush heliconia flowers.

As an object, Hummingbirds is reasonably well made. Libraries will be pleased to see that the design of the handsome dust jacket is repeated on the boards and spine. The glossy paper used for the book block itself is not my favorite, not least because it crimps and creases so easily even with careful page-turning. The color reproduction appears to be consistently good in the plates, and most are clear and crisp; it isn’t obvious whether the blurriness of a very few images is a printing problem or the faithful replication of a “soft” original painting. The text accounts are well proofread and edited, an effort that could profitably have been extended to the short bibliography.

The first volume was published by the Gorgas Science Foundation, the venerable education and conservation organization most famous for its El Cielo Biosphere Reserve in southern Tamaulipas. If the second volume, covering the remaining sooo or so currently recognized species, rises to the level of this first, its publication will mark another milestone in the history of a very special kind of book.

Rick Wright leads Birds and Art tours for Victor Emanuel Nature Tours. He is a widely published writer and popular speaker; among his recent publications is ABA Field Guide to Birds of Arizona. Rick will be the keynote speaker at the Southwest Wings birding festival this August, and will lead a Tucson Audubon trip to Puerto Peñasco in the days before this year’s Southwest Arizona Birding Festival.

Book Review

DON’T MISS MONSOON BIRDING IN SOUTHEAST ARIZONA. IT’S THE BEST FOR BIRDS!

Join us August 10–13, 2017 on a search for Broad-billed Hummingbird, Elegant Trogon, Harris’s Hawk, Montezuma Quail and over 200 more species!

TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG/FESTIVAL

Southeast Arizona BIRDING FESTIVAL