Tucson Audubon Society
Volunteer Handbook
Contact Us

Volunteer Coordinator:
520-209-1811
volunteer@tucsonaudubon.org

Tucson Audubon Society
300 E. University Blvd, Suite 120
Tucson, AZ 85705
History of Tucson Audubon

A group of birders volunteered to form Tucson Audubon Society over 60 years ago; their first meeting was held at Tucson High on January 6, 1949. The 25 members elected Florence Thornberg president and set the annual dues at $1. The first order of business was to organize a birding field trip, and by 1957 regular monthly trips were scheduled. Today, Tucson Audubon volunteer field trip leaders conduct over fifteen trips per month.

Also in 1957, the Tucson Audubon newsletter took the name Vermilion Flycatcher. Today, the Flycatcher is more than just a newsletter; it’s an environmental education, conservation, and recreation magazine. It has been joined by an online website, bringing Tucson Audubon news and information to a world-wide audience.

Tucson Audubon continued to grow and extend its reach into the birding community, publishing its first field checklist (Birds of Southeast Arizona) in 1958. Two years later, the 60 members undertook a fundraising program for The Nature Conservancy Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve. Now, Tucson Audubon continues to preserve important wildlife habitat in many places but especially at our two nature centers: the Mason Center in northwest Tucson and the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia.

In 1964, Tucson Audubon Society incorporated as a nonprofit and became a chapter of National Audubon. That same year the National Audubon Society convention was held in Tucson and hosted by Tucson Audubon.

Mary Watrous chaired a 1970 committee to explore expanding Tucson Audubon’s adult education; the first Institute of Desert Ecology (IDE) was held at Tanque Verde Guest Ranch in 1971. To assure small group learning activities, only 65 of the 120 applicants were accepted. Today, educating people of all ages in birding and environmental issues is still a core component of our mission.

Finally in 1979, having grown to 1,325 members, Tucson Audubon Society needed a home. The first office was opened on Tucson Boulevard. Shortly after, Joan and Bob Tweit began the Tucson Audubon library, which now serves as a member research and reference facility with over 1,000 titles accessible through an online library catalog. The grand opening of the Tucson Audubon Nature Shop occurred in 1983, the same year that Tucson Audubon hired its first executive director.
Within the first three years, the shop grew significantly, and in 1987 moved to its current location at 300 E. University Blvd. Tucson Audubon was the first nonprofit to occupy space at the Historic Y; now, the former YWCA supports over 25 nonprofits engaged in the arts, education, advocacy, and environmental activities.

**Tucson Audubon Society Today**

Today, Tucson Audubon’s work can be described in four words: conservation, advocacy, restoration, and engagement. We study and protect wild birds and their habitats, speak out for wild birds and their homes, create sustainable wild bird habitat, and help people connect with wild birds. We care for wild birds and inspire others to do the same.

Twenty staff members carry out our annual operations and twelve board members provide oversight and planning. Our membership is almost 3,000 strong, and we depend upon over 400 volunteers to achieve our mission.

Our work extends throughout southeast Arizona with four sites serving as Tucson Audubon headquarters:

- Our primary Nature Shop, library, meeting spaces, and offices are located at the Historic Y, at 300 E. University Blvd. #120.

- The Mason Center is a 20-acre saguaro-ironwood nature preserve with an educational classroom, room for special events, and employee offices at 3835 W. Hardy Rd. in Northwest Tucson.

- The Paton Center for Hummingbirds was acquired in early 2014 and is dedicated to the celebration and conservation of hummingbirds, and all of southeast Arizona’s astounding biodiversity, through recreation, education, and sustainable living.

- A small Tucson Audubon Nature Shop operated by volunteers is housed at Pima County’s Agua Caliente Park, located at 12325 E. Roger Rd.

**Our Mission:** Tucson Audubon inspires people to enjoy and protect birds through recreation, education, conservation, and restoration of the environment upon which we all depend.
The Volunteer Program

Tucson Audubon offers many opportunities to make an impact for wild birds and conservation. Over 400 hundred volunteers supported different program areas in 2018 and we have room, and need, for more. Some of our volunteers are seasonal, while others commit to a weekly shift. Volunteers work at offsite events, at Tucson Audubon locations, and even from home.

The volunteer coordinator and staff members seek to place volunteers in programs best suited to their skills while meeting department needs. We value feedback on your current role, and want you to find something you enjoy and find meaningful.

The varieties of volunteer positions are as diverse as the volunteers who make our activities possible. Opportunities include:

- Nature Shops
- Library
- Leading birding field trips
- Education activities
- Habitat restoration program
- Important Bird Area program
- Membership and development activities
- Administration
- Southeast Arizona Birding Festival
- Photography
- Publicity
- Special Events
- Community Outreach
- And much more!
**Time Commitment**

Your time volunteering with Tucson Audubon is flexible and varies based on your position. In the big picture, we want volunteers to become engaged with the organization and be long-term partners with us. Each volunteer position varies in its time commitment, with weekly roles averaging 2-3 hours. It is important to understand the time commitment of a position and consider your other current and upcoming obligations seriously prior to committing to volunteering. We request that volunteers in “high-profile” positions, such as Nature Shop Attendants and Paton Center Birding Ambassadors, give two weeks’ notice of departure so that we can adequately fill the need.

**The Application Process**

- Complete an application form
- Interview with the Volunteer Coordinator or Assistant
- Pick an area of interest
- Attend a new volunteer orientation
- Meet with department head for instruction and discussion of your role and any further training sessions that may be required

**Friend Membership**

In addition to supporting Tucson Audubon Society as a volunteer, joining as a Friend member is important for a few key reasons. Friend members receive a quarterly copy of the *Vermilion Flycatcher*, discounts in the Nature Shop, and a connection to a large and active membership base focused on birds and conservation. As advocates for Tucson Audubon, many of our volunteer roles involve getting new people interested in our mission and joining as members. A powerful persuasion in this effort is to show that you, too, are a member. Tucson Audubon’s programs and services are supported by membership revenue.

Tucson Audubon’s membership makes a strong impact. When Tucson Audubon advocates for the most pressing environmental issues to policy makers, businesses, and the public, our voice is as strong as our membership. In every outreach letter, in every comment letter, every time we speak out for wildlife and open spaces, we speak for our membership. Tucson Audubon is engaged in a continuing dialog with citizens, community leaders, and politicians concerning many of the conservation issues affecting southeast Arizona and beyond. Please stand by us as a Friend member.
Communication

Feedback is encouraged at all stages of your time as a volunteer with Tucson Audubon Society. If you have a recommendation for how we could make your role as a volunteer better, or the volunteer program better in general, let the Volunteer Coordinator know! If you have a question about a policy, procedure, or anything else, again, let us know!

Attendance and Punctuality

To maintain a productive work environment, Tucson Audubon depends on its volunteers to be reliable and punctual for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other volunteers and employees and may result in the need to cancel programs at short notice. *If for some reason you are unable to perform a promised task, please notify the volunteer coordinator and/or lead person of your impending absence as soon as possible.* Failure to do so may lead to removal from volunteer position. We value your time and want to ensure that scheduled volunteers and employees can rely on being able to start and leave at their designated time.

Volunteers are Tucson Audubon Representatives

Volunteers focus on achieving the Tucson Audubon mission and are a positive reflection of the values of our organizations. Volunteers must remember that our conduct and activities on the job reflect on the organization. No matter where you might be working, please keep the following in mind:

- Ask questions
- Answer questions
- Be respectful
- Be courteous
- Be patient
- Be flexible
- Be interested
- Be informed
- Be positive
- Be enthusiastic
- Be prompt
- And most of all, have fun!
**What to Wear?**

Overall, dress comfortably and wear a nametag when provided. At offsite events, we encourage a Tucson Audubon Society article of clothing. Because the attire varies in many program areas, please ask your supervisor if you have any questions.

**Your Hours at Work**

Tracking your volunteer hours is important for a number of reasons:

- Measures the impact Tucson Audubon volunteers have on the organization, birds, and nature.

- Your recorded hours help secure needed grants, which are awarded based in part on volunteer hours.

- Helps to assess program effectiveness and efficiency so we can plan for the future.

- Your recorded hours give you additional Nature Shop discounts.

Part of your volunteer training will include a “how-to” on recording your volunteer hours. Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator if you are unsure if your hours are being recorded.

Additional Nature Shop discounts are in the form of volunteer “points.” Each volunteer hour is equal to a “point” towards discounts and a detailed explanation of this discount system can be found on our website at tucsonaudubon.org/volunteer.

Thank you for your generous gift of time to Tucson Audubon.

**Insurance**

Tucson Audubon Society’s insurance will not cover you in the unlikely event of an accident or injury while volunteering. Tucson Audubon’s commercial general liability insurance covers claims up to $1,000,000 against volunteers by third parties, but your own health and property insurance must cover your claims for bodily injury or loss or damage to personal property that might be incurred while volunteering with Tucson Audubon.
Updating Personal Information

If you have a change to your contact information, or to that of your emergency contact, please let the Volunteer Coordinator know as soon as possible.

Resigning

We hope you stay as a volunteer with Tucson Audubon forever, but when you feel it is time to resign, please notify your supervisor and the Volunteer Coordinator immediately, with as much advance notice as possible.

Media Use

Every employee and volunteer has a responsibility to maintain and enhance the public image of Tucson Audubon and to use media in a productive manner. Practice discretion and good judgment regarding the number and the nature of personal calls made using Tucson Audubon facilities. Tucson Audubon provides computers, files, Internet and e-mail service that are intended for business use. Adherence to these workplace standards is fundamental to volunteering with Tucson Audubon.
Tucson Audubon Society
Employee Policies for Volunteers

If a conflict arises with one of these policies, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator immediately.

**Equal Employment Opportunity**

It is Tucson Audubon policy to provide equal employment opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, family responsibilities or status as a Vietnam-veteran or special disabled veteran, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local law. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment or volunteering, including, but not limited to, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, recall, transfer, leave of absence, and training.

**Anti-Harassment Policy**

All Tucson Audubon employees and volunteers should be able to enjoy a work environment free from all forms of harassment. Tucson Audubon expressly prohibits any form of employee harassment by another employee, supervisor, or a third party for any reason including race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or any other status protected by applicable law. Interference with the ability of Tucson Audubon staff to perform their expected job duties will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of each supervisor to create an atmosphere free of harassment, sexual or otherwise, and to immediately report harassing conduct that may violate this policy. In addition, it is the responsibility of each volunteer and employee to respect the rights of coworkers.

**Occupational Safety & Smoking Policy**

Tucson Audubon is committed to providing staff with a reasonably safe work environment that complies with occupational safety laws. Concerns in this area should be promptly brought to the attention of the Volunteer Coordinator. Pursuant to Arizona law, Tucson Audubon prohibits smoking in its offices and on its properties.
Employee Ethics and Conflicts of Interest Policy

All Tucson Audubon employees and volunteers are expected to adhere to the highest possible ethical standards in the performance of their duties and at all times abide by the law. Any staff member facing an ethical dilemma or possessing knowledge of the inappropriate acts of others must report these matters to the Operations Manager and/or Executive Director immediately. If the Executive Director is the individual committing the breach, then it should be reported to a member of the Personnel Committee. Any suspected ethical breach will be given the highest priority of attention by Tucson Audubon and no retaliation for reporting such matters will be tolerated. All reports of possible misconduct will be treated confidentially, to the extent possible.

The following is intended to be a guideline to illustrate the highest standards of ethical behavior expected of every volunteer:

- **Integrity**—Volunteers must be honest and maintain the highest professional standards at all times. Tucson Audubon resources should not be used for personal gain.

- **Fraudulent Acts**—At no time and under no circumstances should volunteers engage in any illegal acts, including but not limited to: falsification of business documents, theft, embezzlement, diversion of funds, bribery, or fraud.

- **Confidentiality**—Volunteers have an ethical duty not to disclose confidential information obtained during the course of their work at Tucson Audubon. They have a professional obligation to protect confidential relationships between Tucson Audubon and its donors and vendors. Volunteers should refer any requests for information about current or former staff members (including reference and credit checks) to the Executive Director.

- **Gifts and Favors**—It is unlawful to accept anything of value in exchange for a promise to influence a Tucson Audubon decision in the selection of a vendor or other collaborator.

Conduct

Tucson Audubon strives to provide a safe work environment that is based on trust and mutual respect. In accordance with this philosophy, Tucson Audubon does not allow weapons in the workplace and will not tolerate any violent or abusive behavior,
actions or words from or towards employees, donors, vendors, visitors, volunteers and Board members.

Public Speaking and Preparing Articles for Publication

TAS welcomes its volunteers to participate in public speaking, preparation of articles and other professional activities, unless the time required for such activities detracts from ongoing Tucson Audubon projects and responsibilities. However, in order to ensure that Tucson Audubon is being represented in a positive and consistent manner, employees must obtain prior approval of the Executive Director for any speaking engagement, participation in a public meeting or preparation of an article in which the volunteer will be explicitly or implicitly representing Tucson Audubon. Any and all work product resulting from service with Tucson Audubon, including but not limited to any copyrightable, trademarkable or patentable research or other work product, shall remain the property of Tucson Audubon, unless alternative arrangements are specified in advance in writing by the Executive Director. Further, income such as honorarium resulting from above mentioned activities should be disclosed and reported to the Executive Director for determination as to whether such payment should be returned to Tucson Audubon.

Communications on Behalf of Tucson Audubon

To ensure that Tucson Audubon is represented in a positive and consistent manner, all media requests seeking comments on behalf of Tucson Audubon should be directed to the Executive Director. Tucson Audubon volunteers should not provide comments on behalf of Tucson Audubon to the media without the prior approval of the Executive Director.
Code of Conduct

• Volunteers will attend orientation and training sessions as required by Tucson Audubon Society, and will undertake continuing education as needed

• Volunteers will carry out assignments in good spirit and will seek the assistance of their immediate supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator when necessary

• Volunteers will not report for a work shift while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Any degree of impairment from alcohol or drugs while on duty is strictly prohibited and is grounds for dismissal.

• Volunteers will respect the function of Tucson Audubon’s paid staff and contribute fully to maintaining a good working relationship between paid staff and volunteers.

• Volunteers will respect and accept Tucson Audubon Society’s right to dismiss any volunteer for such reasons as poor performance, poor attendance, unwillingness to accept direction, violation of any State or Federal law, or disregard for values and policies in volunteer handbook.

• Volunteers will abide by employee policies on harassment, discrimination, ethics, fraud, confidentiality, conduct, communications, and public speaking

• If a volunteer feels that a problem has arisen between themselves and Tucson Audubon personnel, they agree to engage in respectful conflict resolution and to seek assistance from the Volunteer Coordinator.

• Volunteers are representing Tucson Audubon Society and should be tactful, courteous, and diplomatic with the public at all times. Providing strong customer service will help audiences have a pleasant experience with Tucson Audubon Society and leave with a positive image of employees and volunteers

• Volunteers will maintain high standards of honesty, integrity, and impartiality, free from any personal considerations, favoritism, or partisan demands

• Volunteers will maintain the confidentiality of information learned while performing volunteer services.

• The volunteer’s personal property is not covered by Tucson Audubon if lost or stolen—even if used in the line of duty. Therefore, a volunteer should use Tucson Audubon equipment when available.
Tucson Audubon
Responsibilities to Volunteers

1. To assign tasks which are suitable to each volunteer’s experience, education, and preference.

2. To provide appropriate orientation to the organization and venues

3. To provide a written position description

4. To provide appropriate training for each position description

5. To provide an open atmosphere of teamwork between volunteers and Tucson Audubon employees

6. To ensure that every volunteer is treated with respect by other volunteers, employees, and visitors

7. To ensure that volunteers are adequately supervised and feel comfortable with their assignments

8. To provide a safe workplace

9. To provide a workplace free of harassment

10. To ensure that volunteers are consulted and fully informed when Tucson Audubon decisions affect their positions and performance

11. To provide conflict resolution if necessary

12. To provide an open and respectful atmosphere for suggestions, questions, and the expression of opinions

13. To provide a wide variety of recognition for the valuable service that volunteers bring to Tucson Audubon Society
Agreement to Perform Voluntary Services

__________________________________________ (Volunteer name)

may perform volunteer duties starting upon ________________ (date) upon the following conditions:

1. Tucson Audubon has provided the volunteer with pertinent Tucson Audubon handbook, information, and policies. The volunteer agrees to abide by all such policies and information.

2. The volunteer understands that they are working at all times on a voluntary basis without compensation.

3. The volunteer understands that they are not covered by Tucson Audubon Society’s insurance other than commercial general liability.

4. This agreement can be cancelled at any time by either the volunteer or Tucson Audubon Society.

I hereby acknowledge that I am volunteering my services at Tucson Audubon Society without pay and in order to enhance the mission of Tucson Audubon Society to promote the protection and stewardship of southern Arizona’s biological diversity through the study and enjoyment of birds and the places they live.

Signature of Volunteer __________________________________________

Signature of Volunteer Coordinator ________________________________

Date __________________________________________________________