

THE QUARTERLY NEWS MAGAZINE OF TUCSON AUDUBON SOCIETY | TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG

# Vermilion

FLYCATCHER

April–June 2012 | Volume 57, Number 2



## Nesting

In the Sonoran Desert  
Where the Chicks Hang Out

Upland Desert Grassland Birding:  
Closer Than You'd Expect

What's in a Name? Brown-headed Cowbird



Tucson Audubon Society is dedicated to improving the quality of the environment by providing education, conservation, and recreation programs, environmental leadership, and information. Tucson Audubon is a non-profit volunteer organization of people with a common interest in birding and natural history. Tucson Audubon maintains offices, a library, and nature shops in Tucson, the proceeds of which benefit all of its programs.

Tucson Audubon Society  
300 E. University Blvd. #120, Tucson, AZ 85705  
629-0510 (voice) or 623-3476 (fax)  
All phone numbers are area code 520 unless otherwise stated.  
[www.tucsonaudubon.org](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org)

#### Board Officers & Directors

*President* Cynthia Pruett  
*Vice President* Sandy Elers  
*Secretary* Ruth Russell  
*Treasurer* Richard Carlson

**Directors at Large** Ardeth Barnhart, Gavin Bieber, Jennie Duberstein, Debra Finch, Richard Fray, Bob Hembrode, Linda Greene, John Kennedy, Linda Stitzer, Herb Trossman, Claire Zucker

**Board Committees** *Conservation Chair* Chris McVie, *Development* Sandy Elers, *Education* Jennie Duberstein, *Finance* Richard Carlson, *Outreach* Vacant, *Nominating* Linda Greene, *Personnel* Cynthia Pruett

#### Programs & Activities

*Field Trips* Kate Reynolds  
Library 629-0510  
Membership Meetings *Jean Barchman* 629-0510  
Rare Bird Alert *Andrew Core* | Report Rare Birds 629-0510

**Staff** (unless otherwise stated, dial 629-0510 plus extension)  
*Executive Director* Paul Green ext 7001  
*Accountant* Michelle Bourgeois ext 7003  
*Finance* ext 7014  
*Membership Coordinator* Jean Barchman ext 7002  
*Development Manager* Erin Olmstead ext 7009  
*Volunteer and Development Coordinator* Kara Kaczmarzyk ext 7011  
*Environmental Education Coordinator* Bété Pfister ext 7012  
*IBA Conservation Biologist* Jennie MacFarland ext 7004  
*Habitats Program Manager* Kendall Kroesen ext 7006  
*Field Supervisor* Rodd Lancaster 256-6909  
*Communications / Habitat Restoration* Matthew Griffiths 971-7924  
*Operations Manager* Sara Pike ext 7008  
*University Shop Manager* Matt Brooks ext 7007

**Tucson Audubon Nature Shops**  
300 E University Blvd #120 ext 7015  
623-3476 fax / 629-0510 Shop Manager  
Hours: 10 AM–4 PM, Monday–Saturday  
Agua Caliente Park, 12325 E Roger Rd 760-7881  
Hours: April–May, Monday–Wednesday, 10 AM–2:30 PM;  
June, Thursday, 9 AM–1PM

*Vermilion Flycatcher* is published quarterly. For address changes or subscription problems call 629-0510, or write to Membership Coordinator, Tucson Audubon, 300 E. University Blvd., #120, Tucson, AZ 85705. Submissions are due the 1st of the month, two months before the date of the issue. Please send submissions as Microsoft Word or RTF documents, or plain text files, to Matt Griffiths at [mgriffiths@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:mgriffiths@tucsonaudubon.org).

**Coordinator** Matt Griffiths 971-7924

**Proofreaders** Robert Merideth, Tucson Audubon staff, and volunteers

**Design / Layout** Eng-Li Green

© 2012 Tucson Audubon Society

## Features

- 11 Upland Desert Grassland Birding: Closer Than You'd Expect
- 12 Nesting in the Sonoran Desert
- 14 Where the Chicks Hang Out
- 16 What's in a Name? Brown-headed Cowbird

## Departments

- 3 Commentary
- 4 Events and Classes
- 5 Events Calendar
- 8 News Roundup
- 17 Conservation and Education News
- 21 Field Trips
- 24 Birding Travel from our Business Partners
- 25 Birds & Business Alliance
- 25 Classified Ads
- 26 Nature Shops



**FRONT COVER:** Violet-crowned Hummingbird  
© Jim & Deva Burns, Scottsdale, AZ. To see more of their work visit their website, [www.jimburnsphotos.com](http://www.jimburnsphotos.com) and follow Jim's birding blog at <http://jimburnsphotos.com/pages/columns.html>.

To have your photographs considered for use in the *Vermilion Flycatcher*, please contact Matt Griffiths at [mgriffiths@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:mgriffiths@tucsonaudubon.org).

## Nests Are For Eggs

Mike Hansell, Emeritus Professor of Animal Architecture, University of Glasgow, Scotland, UK.

Nests are for eggs—well, that's not entirely true because they can also provide a secure place for vulnerable chicks. However, if birds reproduced like bats we would not be marveling at their nests! Nest building is a defining characteristic of birds and, although no other Class of vertebrate has so many accomplished builders, birds generally spend no more than a few days a year making their nests and no more than a few weeks using them.

From a parent's point of view, an egg is a self-contained system for growing a chick; to a predator, it is a very sustaining meal. The nest must provide a soft, warm bed for the eggs which is safe from predators. Large birds or colonial nesters may be able to protect the eggs through

active nest defence but mostly that job falls to the nest alone.

It does this in one of two basic ways: by being either inaccessible or invisible. Inaccessible nests are perched on cliff ledges, stuck to the cliff itself, placed high in trees, or hung from the very tips of twigs. This requires engineering to prevent the nest falling down or falling apart. Most nests therefore need two materials: a lining for insulation, within a firm, robust container.

A nest may be made invisible by being placed in a cavity or burrow but these may be scarce or require hard work to create. For many small woodland and forest birds the solution is to make a nest that is visible but unrecognised. A small nest hanging from a branch may have additional material sprawling over it or hanging below it, breaking up its outline. Alternatively, the solidity of a discrete cup may appear to break up or merge into the background with the addition of a scattering of pale lichen flakes or white papery spider cocoons. These 'invisible' nests are made of three kinds of material: for insulation, for engineering, and for disguise. ■



AMERICAN ROBIN NEST. AMY EVENSTAD



# COMMENTARY

PAUL GREEN | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Political Alignment



If you've been paying even a little attention to Arizona state politics you cannot help but notice how partisan and geographic politics have gotten in the way of our community's conservation needs. The "war on Tucson," as it has been labeled in the local press, sees the State Legislature, a supposed strong proponent of small government, telling Tucson what to do. Most recently, it is trying to tell Tucson that it has to supply water to areas outside the city—areas classified as "off limits" by a community-developed water policy that recognizes that water supplies are finite. And Arizona state legislators as close to home as those representing Marana and a large chunk of Tucson (Rep. Terri Proud is the sponsor of HB 2416) are seeking to stop Pima County's ability to bond for public improvements including open space land purchases.

Meanwhile, the 2012 "State of the Rockies" report tells us that the most recent survey of Arizona voters demonstrates a strong conservation ethic and support for conservation and environmental protections. This even as US senators from our state, Kyl and McCain, voted against the RESTORE Act as part of the Transportation bill. The RESTORE Act will push billions of dollars in fines for the Gulf oil spill to the Gulf for habitat restoration, and boost bird habitat through increased funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund—\$1.4 billion over two years. The vote was 76 in support to 22 against, and our Senators were among those voting no.

Arizona voters continue to vote for Representatives and Senators who appear to regard natural environment protections as an impediment to jobs and economic development. How do we square this with the results of this new survey which reveals that nearly 80 percent of Arizonans believe the state can protect water, air and other natural resources without hurting the economy, and oppose efforts to weaken protections?

The positions revealed by the "State of the Rockies" report put Arizonans at

odds with many of their elected officials in Phoenix and in Washington, where lawmakers are trying to dilute the influence of state and federal laws that regulate and safeguard natural resources.

Politicians' statements about the need for a trade-off between environment and jobs in a deep recession are not in accord with views of many western voters that a livable environment and well-managed public lands are compatible with a strong economy.

In the report, support for protection of public lands, air, water and other natural resources was strong across Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, Utah, Wyoming and Colorado. The poll revealed a concern for the health of our natural resources, and a desire to ensure forests, rivers, lakes, and public lands remain available to the public for hunting and recreation. Support for resource protection crosses party lines in ways many hot-button issues do not.

In Arizona, 79 percent of those surveyed consider pollution of rivers, lakes and streams a serious problem, while 78 percent said it is possible to protect land and water and have a strong economy with good jobs, without having to choose one over the other.

One half of Arizonans, the highest portion among the states, said Arizona should do more to protect water, air, wildlife and other natural resources, while 39 percent said the state is doing enough and only seven percent said the state should do less.

Nearly three quarters say the impact of mining on land and water is a serious problem in Arizona, significant because of recent debates over proposed uranium mining near the Grand Canyon and proposed copper mining near Superior (Resolution) and southeast of Tucson (Rosemont).

More than 80 percent believe that inadequate water supplies pose a serious problem even as the state tries to force Tucson to supply water outside of its designated service area. The pollsters also asked whether, even with all the budget problems facing the state, Arizona

PAUL WESTCOTT, PHOENIX, ARIZONA



How important are healthy habitats such as this to you? Let your representatives know you are watching their votes in the state and national legislatures.

should still find money to protect land, water, wildlife and state parks. Nearly 90 percent of those surveyed said yes.

The survey asked if reducing environmental regulations is a good way to create jobs. Republican lawmakers portray environmental regulations as job killers and have vowed to roll them back, but 63 percent of Arizonans surveyed disagreed with that approach. About the same number said such regulations are important safeguards for public health and safety and not burdensome to the economy.

As we head into State and National Elections, Tucson Audubon again requests that you ask each candidate about their support of the natural environment, and vote on that basis. Tell those who do not have strong pro-environment views that you will not be giving them your vote, and why. Keep close track of your state legislators at [azlcv.org](http://azlcv.org), the web site of the Arizona League of Conservation Voters. We'll continue to post items relevant to the elections on our website [tucsonaudubon.org/conservationnews](http://tucsonaudubon.org/conservationnews) so you can judge for yourself and vote accordingly.

Read the full "State of the Rockies" report at [tucsonaudubon.org/conservationnews](http://tucsonaudubon.org/conservationnews). ■

# TUCSON AUDUBON EVENTS AND CLASSES

## Lifelong Learning Opportunities with Tucson Audubon

MT LEMMON, JAKE WASDIN; STELLARS JAY (INSET), ALAN D. WILSON/NATURESPICSONLINE.COM



### Spring Specialty Workshops

Intended as stand-alone classes, these workshops are a great opportunity to focus on a specific group of birds and brush up on your identification skills. Instructors go into detail on similar species, identification techniques, and vocalizations.

#### Birding By Habitat for All Birders: Birds of Mt Lemmon April 21 & 28, 2012

Our Sky Islands provide elevation contrasts that result in a great diversity of animals and plants. Educator Lynn Hassler will teach a one-hour classroom session on the habitats of the Santa Catalina Mountains, describing the varied cast of avian characters. On the Saturday field trip, you will bird your way up the Mt. Lemmon Highway, stopping to experience the birds associated with assorted habitats.

Classroom session: Tucson Audubon, Saturday, April 21, 9 AM–10 AM  
Field trip: Saturday, April 28, 7 AM–3 PM  
Cost of the workshop: \$90 for members and \$125 for non-members which includes a year membership in Tucson Audubon.

### Fall Programming

Come participate in our fall workshops. A perfect way to keep your birding momentum up after this summer's Bird and Wildlife Festival! Each workshop has a classroom session on Thursdays and a field trip on Saturdays.

#### Warblers: August 23 & 25, 2012

Join Homer Hansen as he helps you learn to distinguish challenging fall warblers. Key structural characteristics and similar species comparisons will be taught during this workshop, along with an introduction to learning warbler vocalizations.

#### Flycatchers: September 13 & 15, 2012

Ready to leap into the identification of *Empidonax* and *Myiarchus* flycatchers? This workshop introduces you to the diverse family Tyrannidae and highlights the ways to separate the kingbirds, pewees, empids, and flycatchers of southeastern Arizona. Taught by Homer Hansen.

For both workshops:  
Classroom sessions: Thursday, 5:30–8:30 PM; *Warblers*: August 23; *Flycatchers*: September 13



ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER, DORIS EVANS; BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER, JOHN HOFFMAN

Field trip times: Saturday, TBA;  
*Warblers*: August 25; *Flycatchers*: September 15  
Cost: \$110 for members and \$145 for non-members which includes a year membership in Tucson Audubon

#### Moving to Mastery: A Beginner to Intermediate Level Birding Course October 18, 2012–November 15, 2012

Take your birding to the next level with our popular Moving to Mastery class. If you feel like you are ready to move your birding skills beyond the basics, this is the class for you. Taught by Wings Over Willcox chairman,

Homer Hansen, this class will build upon knowledge that you've acquired through experience in the field, in a beginning birding class, or from private study. Homer's techniques focus on structure and behavior to bring you to a better understanding of bird identification. Over the course of five weeks, you'll learn how to identify some of the more difficult bird groups, how to use technical references, and how to understand bird topography.

Class sessions: Thursdays, October 18–November 15, 5:30 PM–8:00 PM  
Field trips: Saturdays, October 18–November 10, 7:00 AM–5 PM  
Cost: \$250 for TAS members; \$285 for non-members which includes a year membership in Tucson Audubon.  
Location: Tucson Audubon offices on University Blvd. and 5th Ave.  
Contact for all education activities: Bété Pfister at bpfister@tucsonaudubon.org, 520-209-1812

**Tucson Audubon's  
Flagship Education  
Program: The Institute of  
Desert Ecology**  
April 19–22, 2012  
This spring's IDE is full! If you still wish to be considered, contact Matt Brooks at [mbrooks@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:mbrooks@tucsonaudubon.org); 520-209-1807 to be added to the waitlist.

Visit our Nature Shops to discover a whole world of resources to support your workshop experience.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR SUITE OF EDUCATION CLASSES, PLEASE VISIT  
[WWW.TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG/EDUCATION](http://WWW.TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG/EDUCATION)

# Get Ready Now for the Fall Festival and Mesquite Milling

by Kendall Kroesen, Habitats Program Manager

Join Tucson Audubon for the Harvest Festival and Mesquite Milling at our Mason Center on a Saturday in November (date to be announced). The festival is about the abundance of the Sonoran Desert: the natural foods and other products it produces and the opportunities it provides for living sustainably. There will be lots of fascinating talks, exhibits, and shopping opportunities—fun for the whole family!

And of course there will be mesquite milling! To take full advantage of this event, you will want to harvest mesquite pods in June, prepare them, and store them properly for the milling event. More on that below.

An archaeologist once told me that remains of mesquite trees are the one thing that is always found in archaeological sites in the Tucson area. The tree provided wood for crafting implements, fire wood, and of course the pods. As a food source, mesquite pods—which were ground into meal, eaten whole or used to make drinks—had the distinct advantage of being available every year without fail.

Mesquite pods still have that great advantage of predictability. And they are at least as abundant today, perhaps more so, than in prehistoric times. Although we have lost most

of the big trees that used to make up bottomland mesquite forests, in historic times cattle have spread mesquite and people have planted them in urban areas for shade.

Mesquites blossom in the spring and then set the green pods in the early summer. They gradually dry out and then fall off the trees. You can pick them off the tree before they fall or, if you are careful, pick them up off the ground. Just make sure to get them off a clean surface like a patio soon after they've fallen, to make sure that they have not gotten dirty or wet.

You can bake them in the oven at low temperatures to dry them, and to prevent the growth of small bruchid beetles. The beetles are not harmful, but they eat part of the pod's interior, reducing the amount of flour they produce when ground.

Full recommendations on how to harvest and prepare mesquite pods are available at [www.desertharvesters.org](http://www.desertharvesters.org) (click on "mesquite" on the menu). I highly recommend reading this.

Mesquite milling typically takes place in the fall after the summer humidity has decreased. This assures that the pods will have dried out completely—they need to be so dry that they snap when you bend them. When you bring your pods to the



KENDALL KROESEN

Tucson Audubon's Rod Lancaster (left) helps put mesquite pods through the portable stamp mill.

Harvest Festival they must be not only dry but clean—no black mold spots and no dirt. They will be put through a portable stamp mill while you enjoy the festival, and you can then pick up your mesquite flour when you leave.

Mesquite is abundant and locally produced, so it has a very small carbon footprint and contains little embodied energy. If we use mesquite to replace some of the wheat flour, or other products, that are shipped here from far away, we increase our sustainability. Plus it tastes good! Pick up *Eat Mesquite: A Cookbook* at the Tucson Audubon nature shop to have a look at the plethora of recipes that use mesquite flour! Most important, when you make one of the mesquite cookie recipes, bring in a few for the Tucson Audubon staff!

## Sign up for Tucson Audubon's eNews

Tucson Audubon sends out a weekly email of news updates to a list of around 2,500 people. In addition, we send our supplemental emails to this list, for example for urgent conservation action or special invitations.

You can sign up for this list in a number of ways. The easiest is to go to [tucsonaudubon.org](http://tucsonaudubon.org) and click on the link that says Sign-Up E-newsletter. Otherwise send an email to [pgreen@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:pgreen@tucsonaudubon.org) with your first and last name, or call Jean Barchman on 520-209-1802 and she will take your details.



JOHN HOFFMAN

## Walking for the Birds



PAUL & ENG-LIGREEN

Brad Storey, who is walking across the U.S. to raise funds for Audubon and the Important Bird Areas program, visited Tucson Audubon's Mason Center recently on his way from New Mexico to Yuma. He's pictured above with his dog Xena, and Tucson Audubon staffers (left to right) Erin Olmstead, Jean Barchman, and Paul Green. Follow Brad's progress at [web4.audubon.org/bird/iba/](http://web4.audubon.org/bird/iba/).

Visit [tucsonaudubon.org](http://tucsonaudubon.org) for updates and more.

**April 7.** *Living with Nature* lecture (Green Valley): Sea Birds and Marine Mammals in Your Backyard! with Tad Pfister (see p 6)

**April 9.** *Living with Nature* lecture (Tucson): Live Birds with Anne Peyton of Liberty Wildlife (see p 6)

**April 15–May 15.** Tucson Bird Count (see p 10)

**April 19.** Birdathon pregame at Birds and Beer at Sky Bar on 4th Ave (see p 7)

**April 19–22.** Institute of Desert Ecology (see see p 4)

**April 20.** Tanque Verde Wash/Sabino Canyon IBA Recognition Ceremony (see p 6)

**April 20–29.** 25th Annual Birdathon (see p 7)

**April 20.** Birdathon Big Week begins with All-Star team Bieber's Bluebirds (see p 7)

**April 21.** All-Star Birdathon day: Gonzo Birders (see p 7)

**April 21.** Earth Day Sale at Nature Shop (see p 27)

**April 21.** TogetherGreen volunteer day with optional Birdathon birding before the volunteer work at Tumacacori (see p 9)

**April 21.** TAS and SASUN at Reid Park's Earth Day Festival 9 am–2 pm (see p 18)

**April 21 & 28.** Specialty Workshop: Birds of Mt. Lemmon (see p 4)

**April 22.** Birdathon Family Outing at Sweetwater (see p 7)

**April 25.** All-Star Birdathon day: Wrenegades (see p 7)

**April 28.** All-Star Birdathon day: Birds of Fray (see p 7)

**April 29.** All-Star Birdathon day: Scott's Orioles; Birdathon Big Week ends (see p 7)

**May 3 & 5.** Specialty Workshop: Birding By Ear

**May 3–6.** Santa Cruz Nature and Heritage Festival (see p 9)

**May 4:** Deadline to turn in Birdathon pledges for prizes (see p 7)

**May 12.** Birdathon Birdy BB-Q on International Migratory Bird Day at the Mason Center (see p 6)

**June 16–24.** Special Birding Trip to Ecuador for Tucson Audubon Members (see p 24)

**August 15–19.** Tucson Bird & Wildlife Festival (see p 8)

**August 23 & 25.** Specialty Workshop: Warblers (see p 4)

**September 13 & 15.** Specialty Workshop: Flycatchers (see p 4)

**October 18–November 15.** Moving to Mastery course (see p 4)

# Tucson Audubon's Living with Nature Lecture Series

**TUCSON** Living with Nature Lecture Series and Member Meetings  
Traditional venue of DuVal Auditorium (NE section of the University Medical Center, Bldg. 501 N Campbell Ave) may change. Please check [tucsonaudubon.org](http://tucsonaudubon.org) for updates. Program begins at **7 PM, SECOND MONDAY** of each month **October through April**.

**GREEN VALLEY** Living with Nature Lecture Series  
Joyner-Green Valley Library, 601 N La Canada Dr. 594-5295. The Green Valley talks will now be at **10 AM** on the **FIRST SATURDAY** of the month, **November through April**.

For more information, contact Bété Pfister, 520-209-1812 or [bpfister@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:bpfister@tucsonaudubon.org), or visit [tucsonaudubon.org](http://tucsonaudubon.org).

**April 7 • Green Valley**  
SEA BIRDS AND MARINE MAMMALS IN YOUR BACKYARD!  
*with Tad Pfister*

Join us as Tad treats us to a visual exploration of the Gulf of California and its islands that support nesting seabirds such as Brown Pelicans, Black and Least Storm Petrels, and Yellow-footed Gulls. Be amazed by its diversity of marine life including whales, dolphins, and sea lions! Hear firsthand from Tad about conservation efforts taking place in the Gulf



BROWN PELICAN, DORIS EVANS

of California to track large whale populations, eradicate introduced species from important seabird colonies, and to help the Mexican government better manage their fish populations that are directly linked to the success of seabird colonies.

**April 9 • Tucson**  
WILD IN THE CITY *with Liberty Wildlife*

In January, we heard from Dr. Bill Mannan on the challenges that urban raptors face as they navigate life in the city amongst humans! We became more aware of the threats they face and the injuries they can sustain as a result. Come hear from Anne Peyton and Craig Fischer of Liberty Wildlife Rehabilitation Foundation, the organization that has been helping sick, injured and orphaned native wildlife throughout



BALD EAGLE, STEVE HILLEBRAND/USFWS

Arizona since 1981. They will present live birds that now have a new mission in life: to educate the public about the organization's programs, and to show us what we can do to help injured wildlife and to reduce the risk of injury.

## Important Bird Areas Recognition Ceremony for Tanque Verde Wash / Sabino Canyon IBA

Jennie MacFarland, IBA Conservation Biologist

**April 20, 2012**

Come out and help us celebrate this amazing Important Bird area right in Tucson's backyard on April 20!

In October 2011, the Arizona Important Bird Area Science Committee approved the addition of Tanque Verde Wash to the existing Sabino Canyon/Bear Creeks IBA resulting in the Tanque Verde Wash/Sabino Canyon IBA. This event is to officially recognize this IBA and celebrate all of its qualities that make it so important to birds.

All interested in participating in a bird walk in the Tanque Verde Wash portion of the IBA should meet in the Agua Caliente Park parking lot at 7 AM.

The recognition festivities will take place at Agua Caliente Park starting at 10 AM. There will be delicious refreshments and the amazing volunteers that surveyed Sabino Canyon and Tanque Verde Wash will



be recognized. There will be a brief talk about why this Important Bird Area is so special and what the IBA program is hoping to achieve. If you would like a pleasant morning full of birds, good company and fun, please come join us!

For more information please contact Jennie MacFarland at [jmacfarland@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:jmacfarland@tucsonaudubon.org).

This event also kicks off the 25th annual Birdathon fundraising competition, a week-long contest to see the most species in 24 hours!



Tanque Verde Wash (top) and Sabino Canyon.



## Birdathon Birdy BB-Q Awards Ceremony, Featuring *The Big Year!* Saturday, May 12, Mason Center

Birdathon participants and supporters are invited to the after party celebrating Birdathon on International Migratory Bird Day! For our 25th Annual Birdathon, we've re-envisioned the Birdy Brunch of years past into a Birdy BB-Q Awards Ceremony. Plus, your Birdathon supporters are invited! Celebrate birds and bird-friendly habitats with the competitors, see what team received the coveted title of Most Species, who was the highest fundraiser, and share highlights of your Big Week. After celebrating your Big Week accomplishments, join us for an outdoor viewing of

*The Big Year* extended cut! Want to join the fun? Donate at least \$10 and you're invited! RSVPs required by May 8 to [kkaczmarzyk@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:kkaczmarzyk@tucsonaudubon.org). Details at [www.tucsonaudubon.org/birdathon](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/birdathon).



# 25th Annual **B**irdathon

## The Birdathon "Big Week" April 20–29, 2012

This year celebrates the 25th Annual Birdathon with many ways to join the fun. Since 1987, Birdathon has garnered support for birds and bird-friendly habitats and for Tucson Audubon's work to conserve these unique natural resources and to educate our community on their importance. Remember to:

- 1 Register (online at [tucsonaudubon.org/birdathon](http://tucsonaudubon.org/birdathon) or on paper),
- 2 Collect Pledges, and
- 3 Go Birding!

### GUIDED TEAM OUTINGS JUST FOR YOU!

"Give or get" the suggested donation to join one of these expert-led trips. No experience necessary and transportation is arranged. Does it get any better?

**Friday, April 20 "Bieber's Bluebirds" with Gavin Bieber of WINGS.** Enjoy a full day of Sky Islands birding. Start at dawn and hit the Santa Cruz Lowlands, Tucson, and the Catalinas. A relaxed pace to see 130–150 species. (\$250)

**Saturday, April 21 "Gonzo Birders" with John Yerger of Adventure Birding.** We'll get prime Santa Cruz County spots like Patagonia, Madera Canyon, and Greaterville Rd. on a dawn-to-dusk-plus trip to see 130+ species. (\$250)

**Sunday, April 22 Youth Birding Extravaganza at Sweetwater Wetlands.** Kids join in this family Earth Day celebration of birding and bird conservation. All ages!

**Wednesday, April 25 "Wrenegades" with Jennie MacFarland of Tucson Audubon.** It's an avian adventure with Mt. Lemmon, Agua Caliente Park, Sweetwater, and Madera Canyon! The action packed day will start and end at "reasonable" times. (\$150)



COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, GEORGE WEST

**Saturday, April 28 "Birds of Fray" with Richard Fray of Fun Birding Tours.** Start the morning right at Sweetwater then head to Madera Canyon, Las Cienegas, and Patagonia on a laid-back attempt to see 100 species. (\$250)

**Sunday, April 29 "Scott's Orioles" with Scott Olmstead of Tropical Birding.** Meander the trails of Mt. Lemmon during this daylight birding trip. If you're new to Birdathon or renewing your interest, don't miss this trip! (\$150)

### THE COUNTS

**BIG DAY:** the classic, take 24 hours to count as many species as you can

**BIG SIT:** pick an area, sit back, and let the birds come to you

**BIG WEEK:** take the whole week to rack up species

**SIX-HOUR TRIBUTE:** compete like the original teams did 25 years ago, great for first-timers

Thanks to our Birdathon 2012 Sponsor



VERDIN, ALAN D. WILSON/WWW.NATURESPICSONLINE.COM



LADDERBACK WOODPECKER, ALAN D. WILSON/WWW.NATURESPICSONLINE.COM

### PLUS:

**Photo Contest:** Submit your best bird photo taken in the last year. No team necessary. Winner published in the next issue of the *Vermilion Flycatcher*.

**Dining:** After a day of birding, eat out at a sponsor restaurant and a percent of your bill is donated to Tucson Audubon.

**Raise \$50 and earn a limited-edition t-shirt** featuring the artwork of Ben Johnson (right).

Donations are tax-deductible and support Tucson Audubon's conservation and education programs. Details online at [tucsonaudubon.org/birdathon](http://tucsonaudubon.org/birdathon)



Texas Roadhouse, April 24, flyer required



SASKIA HEULTJES

### The Big Week of Events: Mark Your Calendars!

**April 19:** Pregame at Birds & Beer at Sky Bar on 4th Ave, 5 PM.

**April 20:** Birdathon Big Week begins! Bieber's Bluebirds

**April 21:** Gonzo Birders; Mason Center Bird Walk; Volunteer day at Tumacacori

**April 22:** Family Fun with Birdy Bingo

**April 25:** Wrenegades

**April 28:** Birds of Fray; Mason Center Bird Walk

**April 29:** Scott's Orioles; Birdathon Big Week ends

**May 4:** Deadline to turn in pledges/materials to be eligible for prizes

**May 12:** Birdy BB-Q on International Migratory Bird Day at the Mason Center

**All Big Week:** Dine at Renee's Organic Oven or Thunder Canyon Brewery and a percent of your bill is donated to Tucson Audubon! 



VERMILION FLYCATCHER, BEN JOHNSON

# TUCSON AUDUBON NEWS ROUNDUP

## Birthday Club



We invite you to share your birthday celebration by making a gift to Tucson Audubon and help us save birds and the places they live in southern Arizona. Will you join us? We will send you a specially designed birthday card during the month of your birthday and a 15 percent discount voucher for one purchase at the Audubon Shops during the month. Please provide your name, address and your birth date by emailing [jbarchman@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:jbarchman@tucsonaudubon.org) or by calling Jean Barchman at 520-209-1802. If you wish to send a card to one of your Tucson Audubon friends whose birthday is in April, May, and June, we have published a list on our website. You can check the list by going to [tucsonaudubon.org/joinnow.html](http://tucsonaudubon.org/joinnow.html).

We wish to thank **Larry Johnson, Scott Olmstead, and Marion Weber** for their generous donations to the birthday fund in the first quarter of this year.

## 2012 Nominees for Directors

The following names have been submitted by the Nominating Committee for election at the Annual Meeting of the Tucson Audubon Society on Monday April 9, 2012, at the Duval Auditorium, University of Arizona Medical Center, 1500 N Campbell Ave, Tucson.

For bios of prospective board members, visit [tucsonaudubon.org](http://tucsonaudubon.org).

### Nominees for a first three-year term:

Matt Bailey  
David Dunford

### Nominee for a second three-year term:

Cynthia Pruett

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Eileen & Bruce Aird, Jim & Peggy Alexander, Andy Andrews, Myra & Dave Appel, Cela Archambault, Margaret Armbruster, Donald Armes, Kevin Balsler & Cydney Turner, Anne Bancroft, Patrice Barkley, Ardeth Barnhart, William & Catherine Bartlett, Carl Bauer & Brooke Bedrick, Michael Benson, Katelyn Blakemore, Claudia Bowman, Gail Brandt, Martie Brean, Pamela Bridgmon, Coleen Brown, Kathleen Brown, Dr. Barney Burns & Mehina Drees, Arlene & Allen Burt, Brad & Carly Carlton, Connie Casebolt, Martin Christiansen, Frank Clark, Susan Clark, Brian & Patricia Clymer, Billie & Olive Cochran, Jan Coleman, Juanita Collins, W. Ralph & Susan Corbett, Enrico Cordova, Glen & Meghan Corey, Steve Covey, Cox Communications, Ruth Coykendall, Sidney Crawford, Phil & Leigh Creighton, Colleen Crook, Alex Dalenberg & Heather Price-Wright, Karen Dansby, Kate Dawes, David Day, Julio De Jesus, Lydia De Robertis, Dick Dennes & Louise Hammond, Stephanie Duisberg, Michael Dunn, Linda Dunnam, Bill & Martha Eccher, Vanessa Edwards & Family, Rhea Elliott, Richard England, Elmedia Farrand, Patricia Figuli, Howard Fischer, Klaus Fohlmeister, Diane Fordney, Margaret Franklin, Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc, Dietmar Gann, Stephen Garrod, Cheryl Gehrke, Lynda Gibson, James Gilroy, Michael Gray, Pat Grediagin, Sadie Hadley & Sage Goodwin, Jim Guest, Michael Hall, Sally Hall, Linda & Chris Hanson, Elizabeth Harding, Jerry & Sunny Harness, Mike & Jenny Hartung, Jim Hawkins, Heidi Herboldsheimer, Jim Hershberger, Faye Holzman, Bachihike Isoe, William Jessberger, Janet Jimenez, Judy Johnson, Charles Jonas, Jr., Patsy Jones, Susheel Jones, Jack Joppa & Felice Cohen-Joppa, Mike Judd, Mary Keane, Dawn & Jim Kerwin, Jackie Klieger & Kathy Dunham, Susan & Rich Knutson, Kent LaPorte, Garvin Larson, Annelise & Leon Leopard, Paul & Phyllis Lindberg, Jerome Linser, Beda Lovitt, Robert & Betty Maddox, Summer Marshall, Steve Martin, Jim Marx, Gary & Eileen McCluskey, Naomi McCay, Liza McCraren, Dale McCray, Meghan McGhee & Anthony Doran, Molly McKasson Morgan, Sarah McKenzie, Joan Metzger-Minnamon, Thomas Miller, Joe Molina, Larry & Anita Morgan, Donna Moulton, Linda Mount, Kenneth Muroya & Christine Highnam, Ed & Gretchen Murphy, Patricia Mustacci, Bob & Angie Muzzy, Lavonne Newman, John & Judy Newton, Charles Norrell, Katherine & Will O'Neil, Sarah Oakes, Sheree Oesterling, C. Lee Oler, Bill & Barbara Oppenheimer, Mitchell Ost, Miriam Otte, Connie Ownby, John & Mary Padgett, Donald & Tricia Page, David Palzkill, Susan Parker-Hotchkiss, Willis Parnley, Jean Patton, Richard Patze, Howard Pavitt, William Paxton, Mike & Rebecca Peralta, Kent Pflibsen & Mary Durham-Pflibsen, Roland Popken, Clark & Sarah Porter, Sue Pratley & Margaret Pratley, Patti Purcell, Ronald Quinn, Margaret Ramlow, Joseph & Maryann Reuter, Doris Riehm, Melissa Rife & Dyland DeRobertis, Jerry Roe, Jim Rogers, Susan Romero, Lee Roop & Kathleen Young, Janet Roozboen, Rebecca Salazar, Tom Schneller, Jean Schroeder, Shelby Schuck, Jan Schwartz & Judith McDaniel, David Seibert, Irene Sheppard, Sara Shifrin, Bill & Linda Sievers, Kathy Sjogren, Tom Slawson, D.P. & Connie Slotterbeck, Farwell Smith & Linda McMullen, Todd & Jane Smyth, Nancy Sopwith, Arthur Sowls, Mike & Donna Spooner, Constance Stevens, Arlene Stevenson-Booth, Don Streubel, Anna Summers Fulton, Susan E Swanberg, Susie Tharp, Richard & Marjorie Tipton, Kitty Tobin, Tawsha Trahan, Royden Tull, Jerry Van Cleve, Matthew & Karen Vandzura, Glenn Vavra, Kathryn Vega, Carolyn Vemulapalli, Taunya Villicana, Susan Voelker, Dorie Voight, Wayne Warrington, Judith Whitcomb, Daisy Whitten, Thomas Wiewandt, Laurel Wilkening, Aileen Williamson, Joanne Wilson & Judith Thomason, Bonnie Winslow, Julie Wohlers, Larry Wollam, Mort Womack & Linda Phelan, Kerren Wood, Pam Yeager, Bill Yohey, Josephine & Saad Zara, Ric & Betty Zarwell, Richard & Anne Marie Zimmerman

We welcome Cox Communications as a Silver Level Birds & Business Alliance member and Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold, Inc as a Gold Level Birds & Business Alliance member.

Jean Barchman, Membership Coordinator

## TUCSON BIRD & WILDLIFE FESTIVAL RETURNS!

August 15-19

**Celebrate the special birds and wildlife of southeast Arizona at our second festival.**

**Prepare to be amazed by nature in the Sonoran Desert and Sky Islands.**

Join us for hummingbird safaris, high-elevation excursions, borderland adventures, and more festival fun!

Featuring keynote addresses by **Rick Taylor** and **Richard Crossley** and small-group birding field trips

Plus workshops by **Sheri L. Williamson, Richard Crossley, Homer Hansen, Lynn Hassler**, and other experts.

Don't miss the free, family-friendly Nature Expo at the Riverpark Inn: FREE natural history talks, nature-related vendors, live critter exhibits!

**REGISTER NOW at [tucsonaudubon.org/festival](http://tucsonaudubon.org/festival).**



MATT BROOKS



LARRY LIESE

# Volunteer News Roundup

Kara Kaczmarzyk, Volunteer & Development Coordinator

## New Volunteers

Welcome new volunteers Candy Bagley, Susan Colony, Stephanie Griffiths, Twila Hulbert, Patricia Orosz-Coghlan, Luke Schwarz, Brad Tatham, Jim Watts, and Caleb Weaver!

## Keeping in Touch

This month we are launching a monthly volunteer email. Wait, keep reading! This outreach will show off what our current volunteers are doing, convey important Tucson Audubon news that is of special interest to you, and feature upcoming opportunities. Please take a few minutes to check these emails out; they are developed for you. Each of our volunteers plays a unique part in our success, and we are always looking for ways to engage you. And for all the soon-to-be volunteers, sign up for the emails and who knows, maybe an opportunity will present itself that you can't pass up...

## Volunteer Needs

Contact [volunteer@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:volunteer@tucsonaudubon.org) or 520-629-0510 x7011

## TogetherGreen

April 21st—Tumacacori workday: It's Birdathon, Earth Day, and Global Youth Service Day combined! A pre-work bird walk is followed by water harvesting, invasive removal, and tree planting.

RAINWATER HARVESTING, LEE PAGNI



Tucson Audubon volunteers at work (below, left to right):

- Jim Watts ready to make a sale or answer a question at our University-area Nature Shop
- Luke Schwarz and Carol Palmer keeping our Mason Center property looking great
- Linda Greene signs up a new member at the Festival of Books
- Tim Helentjaris talks to visitors at our IBA booth in the new Citizen Science pavilion of the Festival of Books

## Santa Cruz Nature & Heritage Festival

May 3–6th—Join us for Tucson Audubon's first tabling event at this festival in Rio Rico.

## Earth Day Festivities:

April 21st—Patagonia Trails Day  
April 21st—Earth Day Festival with SASUN at Reid Park (see p 18)

## Tucson Bird & Wildlife Festival

Aug. 15–19—There are more ways to help with this second annual festival than you might think. Keep volunteering in mind as you plan your personal festival schedule.

## Flyer Distribution

Bring a flyer or two announcing our events to a favorite business or organization that you already visit (library, gym, bookstore, etc). It's that easy, and it's a huge help!

Visit [www.tucsonaudubon.org/volunteer](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/volunteer) for complete listings!

We have many varied opportunities for you to get involved, or grow your involvement, with Tucson Audubon Society. Whether you have a few hours a month or are free the whole month, want to work in the field or stay at home, you can still be a Tucson Audubon volunteer!

## Nature Shops

Both our University-area and Agua Caliente Park Nature Shops need volunteers! Shifts available on Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

**Ruth Russell** is a perfect volunteer to spotlight this season! Besides her team winning the first-ever Tucson Audubon Birdathon (and later going on to hold the record for most species seen), Ruth has also been a devoted Tucson Audubon volunteer for more than 30 years! In this time, Ruth has been involved in myriad projects and programs, was a driving force behind developing the Birdathon fundraiser 25 years ago, and served as the Chair of the Board of Directors for four years (she's now the Board Secretary). Ruth is especially excited to be a volunteer and board member today, as Tucson Audubon and National Audubon are both launching new strategic plans that entail new and exciting endeavors for the future of our environment.

Ruth enjoys volunteering at Tucson Audubon for a reason we can all relate to: birds and conservation are deeply important to her. When Ruth began birding, she increasingly discovered that this recreational activity led to an interest in conservation. Her service and involvement have grown from there.

One of Ruth's favorite places to go birding is also one of Tucson's most convenient, Sweetwater Wetlands. Besides the bird watching, Ruth enjoys seeing people take pleasure in an outdoor destination that the city and county have worked together to develop. Does Ruth have a favorite bird? It's quite often what she is looking at in the moment, though Black-throated Sparrows and Cactus Wrens are especially interesting to watch and remind her of how lucky Tucson is to have these inquisitive species.

In their spare time, Ruth and her husband Steve are Master Hummingbird Banders. They have



gone through an extensive formal process (state permits, federal licensing, and other certifications) and are two of only about 150 people authorized to band hummingbirds in the country. For about 20 years, they have been banding hummingbirds primarily in Colorado, but don't think they are snowbirds! In fact, Ruth enjoys summers in Tucson, especially when the monsoons come and transform this arid desert into a lush valley. Ruth has plenty of other hobbies too; she sews, reads (she's currently hooked on *Thinking Fast and Slow*), does crafts, and gardens.

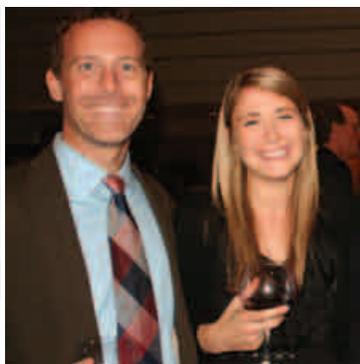
Ruth is a fountain of knowledge on all things Tucson Audubon-related, but I just had one more question. Does Ruth have any pointers for people thinking of participating in Birdathon? After years of experience, Ruth has switched her sponsor "ask" strategy. Rather than pledge per species, she urges supporters to donate what they can. In return, Ruth guarantees she'll do her best. That way, even if the chosen Birdathon day turns out to be less successful than hoped (if it's cold or rainy, etc.), everyone is still happy in the end. We at Tucson Audubon are so happy and fortunate to have Ruth as a volunteer, board member, supporter, and friend.

LEFT TWO PHOTOS KARA KACZMARZYK



RIGHT TWO PHOTOS JEAN BARCHMAN

# Party Fun at Our Fourth Annual Gala



ALL PHOTOS BY MATT GRIFFITHS

Tucson Audubon's Fourth Annual Gala on February 7 at Loews Ventana Canyon had people laughing and wondering where the time went. Clockwise from top right: former Tucson Audubon Vice President Mich Coker and his new wife Kate Galloway; Pima County Supervisor District 5 Richard Elias, Nancy Young Wright, Tucson Audubon Conservation Chair Chris McVie, Ron and Nancy Barber; Scarlet Macaw, one of the birds of our evening; our speaker Prof John Kricher and his wife Martha Vaughan with National Audubon's VP for Program Development Les Corey and his wife Bonnie. Nearly 200 people enjoyed live music by Entre Peruanos, friendship, a silent auction. Many will return next year. We hope you will join us.

## Year-end Appeal Thank You

The migratory exploits of one particular Rufous Hummingbird, probably on its way back to Alaska as we go to press, captured our imaginations over the New Year season. We reached out to ask you to help support the further development of our urban programs in order that Tucsonans learn how to better provide for migrant and resident birds in our area. You responded generously. You helped Tucson Audubon surpass our \$30,000 target by 50 percent!

Thank you, as a valued member of Tucson Audubon, for making our work possible.

If you have yet to donate to Tucson Audubon, we'll give you another opportunity this spring. As you enjoy the Gambel's Quail in your yard this year think how you can help more people appreciate their yard birds through Tucson Audubon.

JOHN KENNEDY

## Tucson Bird Count Comes to Tucson Audubon



Every spring for over 12 years (and counting!), the Tucson Bird Count (TBC) has surveyed an average of 800 sites in urban Tucson and in the surrounding non-urban habitat of Saguaro National Park. So far, it has counted more than 449,000 birds representing 246 species. For all these years the TBC has been primarily a University of Arizona project, but beginning this year the count will be coordinated by Tucson Audubon in partnership with UA.

Participating is fun and easy! You can adopt an available route and survey each of the 10 designated stops for five minutes on any morning of your choice between April 15 & May 15. That's it, just one morning of

birding! Any birder who can quickly and easily identify the birds commonly seen in Tucson is invited to contribute. The TBC would not exist without the amazing local birders that donate their time every spring.

The findings from the TBC are vital to determining what steps can be taken to make the urban habitat more hospitable to native wildlife. These principles of Reconciliation Ecology depend on people living in Tucson and urban areas all over the world to take the care and time to alter their landscapes to make their land useful to wildlife. With some knowledge and effort, we can work to share our living space with wildlife.

If you would like more information or to sign up, please contact Jennie MacFarland at [jmacfarland@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:jmacfarland@tucsonaudubon.org).



SCOTT WILBOR

SCOTT WILBOR

Participating in the Tucson Bird Count is fun and easy. These volunteers are conducting five-minute point counts at designated stops on their routes.

## June Hirsch 1923–2011

June Hirsch passed away peacefully at age 88 on December 17, 2011 in Lakewood, Colorado. She was the wife of Dr. Fred Hirsch and is survived by her daughters, Barbara Ohms of Lakewood, Colorado, and Susan Hunt of Bellingham, Washington.

June was a relentless volunteer for Tucson Audubon, the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, and the Friends of Sabino Canyon among others. June was the director of Tucson Audubon's Institute of Desert Ecology from 1982 until 1985. Her tenacity and creativity lives on in her daughters. A memorial is planned for the spring at Christ Presbyterian Church where she was a charter member. Donations can be made in June's honor to Tucson Audubon Society. Her daughter Sue and her family will be coming to Tucson this spring to plant a tree in her memory at Catalina State Park. ■

# Upland Desert Grassland Birding Closer Than You'd Expect

DOUG JENNESS

North of Tucson, between Oracle Junction and Oracle in Pinal County, there is an upland desert grassland that is splendid for birding. The best way to enjoy this area is to access Willow Springs Road from Hwy. 77 and drive slowly along the road. On both sides, the desert stretches for miles and an interesting variety of species can be seen at all times of the year. This upper Sonoran Desert habitat, at an elevation of 4,000–4,500 ft., features scattered mesquite, soaptree yucca, turpentine bush, several species of cactus, assorted wildflowers, and a variety of grasses. Many desert bird species such as Black-throated Sparrow, Curve-billed Thrasher, and Cactus Wren are common year-round and can be seen and heard from the road. Fairly consistent are Harris's Hawks and Rufous-winged Sparrows. In summer, nesting Scott's and Hooded Orioles are found along with Ash-throated Flycatcher and Western and Cassin's Kingbirds. The extensive grasslands also attract flocks of sparrows in the winter. You may want to stop and walk up one of the many washes, fringed with netleaf hackberry, soapberry, and

mesquite, that lace the area. In the thick vegetation of the washes, Bell's Vireo and Lucy's Warbler nest, and in winter the washes may offer shelter and food to bluebirds, robins, Sage Thrashers, Green-tailed and Spotted Towhees, sometimes Lawrence's Goldfinch, and other species. The washes are also a year-round home to many Great Horned Owls and Western Screech-Owls and sometimes in fall and winter to migrant or wintering Long-eared and Barn Owls.

Several roads off of Willow Springs Road, some of them often navigable with passenger cars, lead to cattle tanks, which attract ducks, grebes, shorebirds, swallows, nighthawks, flycatchers, and migrating warblers. One recent spring a Tropical Kingbird was even observed.

Fourteen miles from Hwy 77 you come to a road that heads up to Black Mountain (elevation 5,600 ft.) which has an oak-juniper habitat favored by year-round Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Black-chinned Sparrow, Western Scrub-Jay, Bushtit, and Crissal Thrasher, and by wintering Townsend's Solitaire. A cattle corral on the road up the mountain draws wintering robins, bluebirds, Chipping Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos.

There are accounts that 60–70 years ago this vast grassland area was a prime site for hunters seeking Scaled Quail, and references were also made to grassland-nesting species such as Cassin's and Botteri's Sparrows. A few Scaled Quail are occasionally reported today by game officials checking hunters bags. In 2006 Cassin's Sparrows began being reported. They have been found skylarking and singing during nesting season so are likely breeding. A few Botteri's Sparrows have been confirmed in an ungrazed grassland tract in nearby Oracle the past two years. These two sparrows typically nest in late summer on the ground or very near the ground in grass clumps or low shrubs. Botteri's is more sensitive to grazing so is less likely than Cassin's in the Willow Springs area, much of which is regularly grazed. As is typical for Cassin's, the number fluctuates depending on



Above top to bottom: Willow Springs Grassland looking toward Black Mountain; Harris's Hawks along Willow Springs Rd.

Below top to bottom: Big Wash; White Virgin's Bower in Big Wash (inset); Patterson Tank

summer rainfall. Another species also partial to grassland habitat is Chihuahuan Raven, which has been confirmed in the Willow Springs area year-round and likely nests there.

Willow Springs Road is well maintained and can be birded by car but may be slippery when wet. The road into Black Mountain, which includes opening and shutting a gate, has been recently improved and can be navigated by a regular passenger car. The area is popular with hunters so if you are there during dove, quail, and duck season be alert. Much of the 182,000-acre area is state trust land so carrying a state permit is advised. An individual annual or one-time group recreation use permit is \$15 and can be purchased at [www.land.state.az.us/programs/natural/recreation\\_permit.htm](http://www.land.state.az.us/programs/natural/recreation_permit.htm).

*Doug Jenness lives with his family in Catalina. He is treasurer of the Arizona Field Ornithologists, coordinator of the Dudleyville CBC and the annual Santa Cruz Flats Raptor Count, and Pinal County coordinator for the North American Migration Count.*



ALL PHOTOS BY DOUG JENNESS

Visit [tucsonaudubon.org](http://tucsonaudubon.org) for updates and more.

# Nesting in the Sonoran

CHRIS MCCREEDY

The desert is dry. We are in the midst of a double-dip La Niña this winter, the second consecutive winter of colder-than-normal conditions in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean. La Niña conditions generally result in dry weather patterns during the winter in the southern United States. The 2011 and 2012 winters have followed this trend. If not for a series of storms last November and December, Tucson would be facing extreme conditions similar to 2011, when we received only 24 percent of our average winter rainfall.

I am in Lake Havasu City to set up our upcoming field season. Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) Conservation Science's Xeric Riparian Project has surveyed the desert washes of southern California and southern Arizona since 2003. Our project is funded by the California Off-Highway Motor Recreation Division, the California and Arizona Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Arizona Bird Conservation Initiative. Our task is to assess potential impacts of off-highway vehicle use on the resident and Neotropical migrant bird species that rely on these important habitats.

Long-term projects are valuable because they enable us to see year-to-year trends in measures such as species abundance and species richness. Long-term projects are particularly valuable in arid habitats due to wide variation in climatic conditions from year to year; if we sampled the washes for just one or two years, our surveys may occur during periods that are not representative of longer term averages of species abundance and richness due to unusually wet or dry conditions.

During the course of our study, we have been fortunate to survey during a wide variety of climatic conditions, ranging from the very dry to the very wet. We have observed important, climate-related patterns from our results. One of these is that nest success rates are highest during the springs immediately following wet winters and lowest immediately following dry winters. Another is that the nesting season begins earlier in springs

KYLE HORTON



Preliminary results from studies (supported in part by Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, bottom right) on Black-tailed Gnatcatcher and Verdin (above left and right) indicate that increased predation and cowbird (including the Brown-headed Cowbird, middle right) activity may be important factors in low nest success rates later in the season.

immediately following wet winters and later after dry winters.

Nest success rates in turn play a large role in how many birds we count during our surveys. We tend to record higher breeding abundance and diversity the year *after* a wet winter (e.g. numbers were high in the spring of 2006, one year after 2005, which was one of the wettest winters on record), and we record lower breeding abundance and diversity one year *after* a dry winter (far lower numbers in 2007, one year after the epically dry winter of 2006).

Drought-caused delay in nesting has become the focus of my thesis research at the University of Arizona, supported by the US Geological Survey Sonoran Desert Research Station and the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge. We studied Black-tailed Gnatcatchers and Verdins in the Kofa NWR in 2009 and 2010. Our preliminary results tell us that nest success rates decrease markedly as the breeding season progresses, and that early nests have higher odds of success than nests with a later initiation date. Increased predator and cowbird activity later in the breeding season may play an important role in low nest success rates found later in the season.

Thus when Sonoran Desert species begin nesting may be one of the most important drivers of their population stability. It may play an important role in future population regulation of many of our Sonoran Desert species, as many climate models predict a higher frequency of dry winters in our future.

I think about this as I drive through the deserts, watching those creosote leaves. They are looking brown to me. I am afraid that nesting will begin late this year and that nesting success will be low. We begin our surveys on March 15, and our new season will begin to record the story of the 2011 drought. I cannot wait to find out. (PS: I've been on several washes in the Lower Colorado River Valley and have found species to be 1–2 weeks late and counting out here as we speak). ■

*Chris McCreedy is a student at the University of Arizona, and he supervises projects for PRBO Conservation Science in the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts. He enjoys birding, photography, his Jeep, and talking to lizards. He's worked in the Chihuahuan, Great Basin, Sonoran, Mojave, and Antarctic deserts, and he dreams of visiting and working in as many of the Earth's other deserts as he can.*

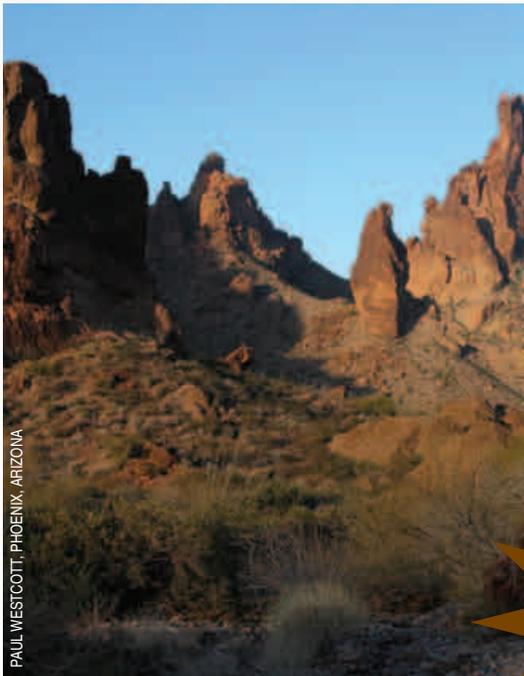
# Desert



LOIS MANOWITZ



ALAN D. WILSON/NATURESPICSONLINE.COM



PAUL WESTCOTT, PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Sometimes birds can find food, water, and shelter but they lack a place to nest. So along with providing the former in our yards and neighborhoods, we should think about helping birds to nest. Here are some things you can do.

First, as always, create naturalistic habitat. The best way to provide food, water, shelter *and* nesting opportunities is to landscape in a way that provides for their needs.

There are several elements to landscaping for bird nests. For some birds, simply providing their food will give them the opportunity to nest. Phainopeplas will nest where ever there is an adequate supply of their principal food: mistletoe berries. So include native trees in your landscape—such as velvet mesquite, ironwood, acacia and palo verde—and then infest them with the native desert mistletoe! And be sure to leave existing mistletoe in place.

In her doctoral studies Rachel McCaffrey found that in Tucson the presence of dense, thorny native trees and large shrubs often predicted the presence of several species of native birds. This is probably in part because they afford familiar vegetative structures for nesting. Along with the trees mentioned above, consider large shrubs like desert hackberry, wolfberry, graythorn and condalia.

And, of course, she found that the presence of chollas strongly predicted the presence of Cactus Wrens. Surely this is due to their preference for nesting in chollas.

Another thing birds need for there nests is fiber. Landscaping with a wide variety of native plants increases the likelihood that birds will find the right fibers—from coarse sticks to fine, soft materials. You can provide some of the finer fibers by putting dryer lint and hair from hair brushes (human, dog, cat) outside where birds can find them.

Finally, you can try nest boxes. Next boxes benefit birds that nest in cavities but can't find natural cavities. Vegetation in many suburban neighborhoods is not large or mature enough to have many nest holes created by woodpeckers or other processes.

In our climate nest boxes may become too hot for successful nesting, so you will need to put them where they are shaded much of the day. You also need to design the box for specific kinds of birds. Commercially available nest boxes may be used by our invasive and aggressive House Sparrows or European Starlings.

If you want to provide a nest cavity for one of our native species, you'll need to regularly remove the nesting attempts of the aliens or design the house with characteristics that discourage them. This might be done by providing an opening too small for House Sparrows to enter, or by using a design that is attractive to other species such as owls or kestrels. Western Screech-Owls successfully nest in the Tucson area—probably even in suburban areas—in boxes of the right size that are mounted at least 10 feet off the ground. One source of plans for a Western Screech-Owl box is at [www.utahbirds.org/featarts/2004/OwlBox/OwlBox1.htm](http://www.utahbirds.org/featarts/2004/OwlBox/OwlBox1.htm).

We are just beginning to learn what native species can be accommodated by nest boxes in southern Arizona. If you have had success with nest boxes, please contact me at [kkroesen@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:kkroesen@tucsonaudubon.org) or 520-971-2385 and let me know what has worked for you! We will publish the results in a future issue of the *Vermilion Flycatcher*. ■

*Kendall Kroesen, Habitats Program Manager*

In her doctoral studies, Rachel McCaffrey found that the presence of chollas strongly predicted the presence of Cactus Wrens, which is surely due to their preference for nesting in chollas.



DORIS EVANS

See p 26 for a selection of books on nests and nesting

# Where the Chicks

PINAU MERLIN



KENDALL KROESEN



KEN SLADE



AXEL ELLNER

I was hidden, camouflaged under a scrawny mesquite tree watching the goings on at a Crested Caracara nest. The parent bird had just chased down a rodent and now two cute baby carcaras with oversized beaks and huge feet sat contentedly in the nest, their crops bulging full. Perhaps the most fun time to observe birds is when they're nesting and raising young, but this is also when they are most vulnerable—they become sitting ducks for predators. Birds and their chicks not only face the threat of predation, but must deal with issues of thermoregulation (making sure they don't get too cold or too hot) now as well. They have developed ingenious adaptations to these problems, which are often reflected in the form and structure of the nest itself.

Ground nesting birds, such as quail, nighthawks, Common Poorwill, and Killdeer, have precocial chicks. When hatched the chicks arrive covered in down, wide-eyed, ready and able to follow their parents on foot. They generally quit the nest site shortly after hatching since the odor of open eggshells may attract predators. Most ground nesters usually don't construct much of a nest since it will be abandoned at hatching. Such species may rely on camouflaged eggs as nighthawks do, or hide their eggs under vegetation (or in backyard flowerpots) as do quail.

Those birds that produce altricial young that are naked, blind and helpless, need a safe refuge in which their young can develop.

Most altricial birds build elevated nests in cup shapes, platforms, hanging pouches, or they use cavities. Since a nest of baby birds is like a lunch box for predators, concealment is of prime importance. Most nests are small for keeping a low profile and decorated with plant parts or lichens for camouflage.

Passerines employ a diversity of methods for hiding nests. Many species, such as Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Pyrrhuloxia, Canyon Towhee, Bendire's Thrasher, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Elf Owl, Loggerhead Shrike, and Cactus Wren either roost or build their nests within the concealing shelter of mistletoe. Not only are the nests safely hidden, the mistletoe clumps provide a shaded microclimate.

Barn Swallows, which don't hide their nests, deal with predation issues by building their nests on vertical faces within one to two and a half inches of an overhang. The tight space prevents access by most predators, including cowbirds.

The Great Blue Heron does not do well at being inconspicuous, and the bulky nests of this species are not subtle, so the birds solve the problem of not being able to hide their nests by nesting colonially in rookeries. With herons coming and going there is always a pair of eyes to watch for predators and sound the alarm.

Cactus Wrens occasionally build their nests incorporated into the base of the nest of a Red-tailed Hawk or other raptor. The wrens glean bits of leftover food from the raptor's young, but also provide an

extra measure of safety for their host's chicks by giving an alarm call if predators threaten, which alerts the parent raptors to danger. Nesting here may seem like daredevil behavior, but the wrens are not in danger sub-leasing from the hawks, as raptors usually don't hunt at their own nest site.

Thermoregulation is a major issue, especially as baby birds don't control their body temperature well.

Anna's Hummingbird nests in winter and early spring when storms and freezing temperatures are common. Her thickly insulated and downy nest may be 40° F warmer inside than out. This not only keeps the eggs warm, but also helps the mother hummingbird conserve energy since she does not usually enter torpor at night while incubating. Late spring and summer nesting hummers, such as Costa's, are more concerned with shade and seek sites with overhead branches for mottled sun and shadow.

Although Verdins don't hide their nests, the round shape, thorny twig construction and small (1–1.2in) entrance hole reduce predation, especially by cowbirds. The tiny Verdins use nests year round, building three different kinds (winter roosting, summer roosting, and baby nests) for the various seasons. The thickly insulated winter nest reduces the Verdin's energy requirement for thermoregulation by up to 50 percent. Other birds also take advantage of these warm shelters. Wildlife biologist Barry Spicer filmed 30 Black-tailed Gnatcatchers emerging from a Verdin nest one freezing winter

# Hang Out



JIMI & DEVA BURNS/WWWW.JIMBURNSPHOTOS.COM



PINAU MERLIN



PINAU MERLIN

## HELPING BIRDS TO SUCCESSFULLY FLEDGE THEIR YOUNG

While nesting birds are fun to watch, we have a responsibility not to harm them, even inadvertently, by our attentions. Parents may abandon nests with eggs when disturbed by people. Once the eggs have hatched the parents are more reluctant to leave, but may still become stressed. Often cowbirds or predators are attracted to the nest by the activity of people or by the bird's alarm calls. Sometimes older nestlings may jump from the nest at the intrusion and are then lost to predators.

It is best to observe nesting birds with binoculars from a respectful distance, since it provides the observer a chance to watch natural behaviors without disturbing the birds.

Even nests that appear inactive should be approached with caution during spring and summer. I remember once a group of birders saw an apparently empty nest but then the parent bird returned with food, three begging nestling heads popped up.

State law (ARS 17-236) makes it illegal to harass nesting birds or to remove eggs or bird nests — even old ones — from the wild. Remember, some birds re-use nests or the nesting materials that they have taken much time and energy to collect.

When taking photographs, never break or remove branches or foliage from around the nest, as the birds have chosen the site specifically for its concealment and shade.

Birds are especially sensitive during breeding season, so always avoid the use of recorded songs or calls at this time.

Always leave the upclose examination and photography of nests until after the baby birds have fledged.

Clockwise from far left:

Curve-billed Thrasher on nest in staghorn cholla at The Nature Conservancy building in Tucson.

Barn Swallow nest within two inches of overhang. There is often a landing platform of some type nearby for the parents to land on or take breaks. Piles of scat are typical under these nests.

Lucy's Warbler nests in several different kinds of cavities. More experienced Cactus Wrens nest in cholla or saguaro.

Great Horned Owl parent and young.

Anna's Hummingbird nest (inset top) is fluffy and thick for insulation during winter cold fronts.

Broad-billed Hummingbird on nest shaded with mottled sun and shadow; they don't want full shade.

Lesser Nighthawks nest on the ground without making a nest. They rely on camouflage coloring on the eggs.

morning! Verdin nests are placed on the outside periphery of the tree, hackberry or cholla, along a wash, pathway or open area that provides a clear flight path to the nest, denying a landing platform to other birds. First brood nests are oriented away from prevailing winds in early spring, while second brood nests (around late April) are aligned towards the breezes in summer. The nest's position (and therefore microclimate), often on the east side of a cactus or tree, is directly related to breeding success for Verdins.

Cactus Wren nests are also positioned on the periphery of a cholla, facing outwards to facilitate quick escapes. The wrens are perpetually occupied with nest building, since storms, high winds and rampaging thrashers destroy many nests. The numerous nests are not dummy nests, as almost all are used at some point during the year for breeding

or roosting by adults or fledged young. In early spring parents carry away the fecal sacs of the nestlings, dropping them away from the nest so as not to alert predators to the nest's location. In summer though, parents leave the fecal sacs in the nest providing additional humidity and evaporative cooling.

Whatever strategies nesting birds use, they are wildly successful, filling nearly every habitat on the planet. ■

*Pinau Merlin is the author of A Guide to Southern Arizona Bird Nests and Eggs (see p 26) and writes frequently about the natural history of the Southwest. One of her main interests is bird and animal language. Birds have extensive vocabularies of calls, telling us exactly which predators are moving around them and what's happening in an area.*

Interesting stories about birds with interesting names

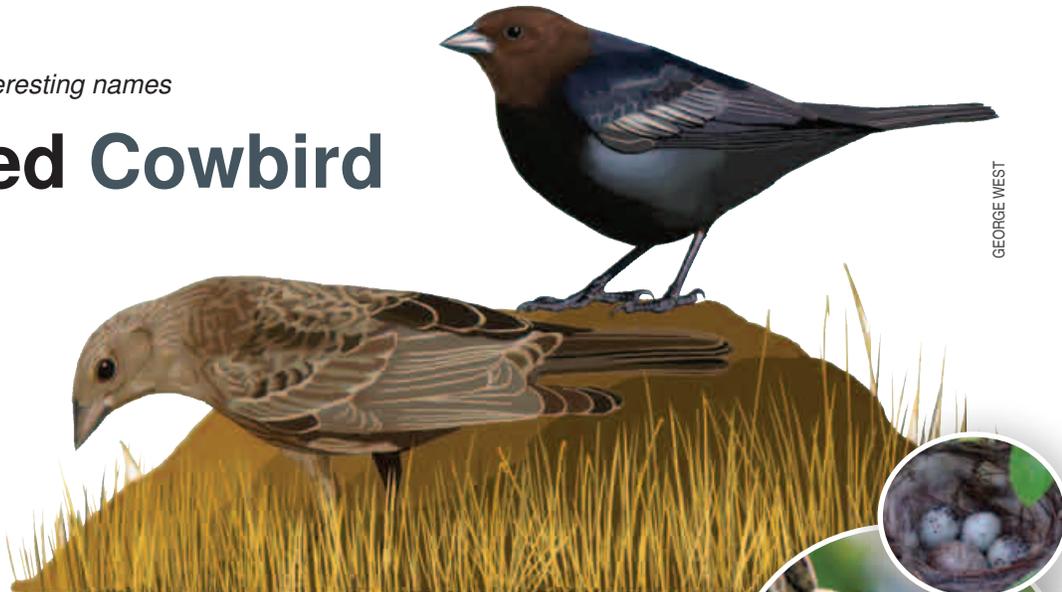
# Brown-headed Cowbird

LARRY LIESE

Taking a lunch break on a Tucson Audubon field trip one summer at the end of Carr Canyon Road, a group of us had the good fortune to see a fascinating event unfold before us. We had noticed that a small group of Buff-breasted Flycatchers was nesting in the oak trees nearby, right in the picnic area. Our attention was drawn to a passing bird, later seen to be a Brown-headed Cowbird female, heading towards the nests. Suddenly a pair of “defending” flycatchers zoomed in straddling the cowbird on each side, shuttling it through the nest area without any chance for the cowbird to detour onto a nest. The cowbird tried repeating its efforts a number of times but the diligence of the flycatchers prevented its success. Though presumably instinctive, we got the impression the flycatchers “knew” what would happen if they let down their guard. Fascinating!

As most birders know, cowbirds are brood parasites. They do not build nests of their own but rely on other host species to incubate, feed, and raise their young. They rely on the innate feeding response that parent birds have to feed hungry chicks—even if they look a little funny! If we take a look at cowbirds’ life history, it becomes apparent why this breeding method fits their lifestyle so well.

Cowbirds generally forage for seeds and insect prey by walking on the ground, frequently following herd animals as their movements disturb insects on the ground making them easy to acquire. Originally strongly tied to bison herds, the migratory behavior of those herds made brood-parasitism a favored way of reproduction as they could not remain at traditional nest sites as those herds moved on. As adaptations to this lifestyle strengthened, cowbirds came to hatch earlier, and to aggressively demand food (to the detriment of the “legal” nestlings). Without the demands of incubation and rearing of chicks, female cowbirds evolved into egg-laying machines. In a breeding season of about 45 days she can lay 40 eggs. Eggs are dispersed, with only one egg per host nest with the cowbird often taking a host egg from the nest. Quick deposition of



GEORGE WEST

the egg is an advantage, and though the norm is 20 to 40 seconds, taking only 4 seconds has been recorded. Though many species have become “rejectors” of a cowbird’s attempts to parasitize their nests, this style of breeding is successful with many host species. More than 220 host species have been documented as having cowbird eggs laid in their nests, and 144 species have actually reared cowbird young. For those species that do thwart the attempt, three main strategies are used. The host may remove the cowbird eggs, abandon the nest entirely, or construct a new nest on top of the old—usually with its own eggs left with the cowbird’s. One Yellow Warbler nest reportedly had six layers of nest levels due to extreme cowbird parasitism presence. The female cowbird finds suitable nests to parasitize in three ways—sitting silently in the upper branches of bushes watching for nest-building, walking about on the ground watching other birds’ activity, or noisily making short flights landing in leaves looking for birds flushing from their nests.

Bird species in our area that are more commonly targeted by cowbirds include Yellow Warbler, Song Sparrow, Spotted Towhee, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Red-winged Blackbird, Willow Flycatcher, and Bell’s Vireo. Species that have developed the ability to notice and eject cowbird eggs include Western Kingbird, American Robin, and Bullock’s Oriole. One notable exception to birds’ vulnerability to cowbird brood parasitism is the House Finch. Though the adult finches sometimes include a small amount of insect prey in their diet, nestlings are fed a 100% vegetarian diet of seeds buds and fruit. Though

Inset top to bottom:  
Yellow Warbler nest  
with a cowbird egg;  
Wilson’s Warbler  
feeding a young  
cowbird (on the left).



JAMIE CHAVEZ

studies in some areas sometimes find cowbird eggs in the finches’ nests, no cowbirds survive as that diet lacks certain nutritional components the cowbirds need.

Brown-headed Cowbird was named by Swainson as *Molothrus ater*. An error had crept in as what was meant was the Greek *molobros*, for “a parasite or greedy person.” The species name *ater* is Latin for “black,” referring to the plumage color of the male, and of course the name brown-headed comes from the males’ most distinctive plumage feature. The common name cowbird is a shortened form of cowpen-bird, an older name derived from its tendency to frequent cattle pens.

Here in Southeast Arizona, Brown-headed Cowbirds aren’t hard to find. Though they avoid closed forests, in summer they can readily be found along forest edges and in grasslands. In winter they congregate with other blackbirds, sometimes in large flocks at feedlots and lowland agricultural areas. They are common throughout in migration. Though often put in the category of “evil pest” bird species, cowbirds should perhaps not be thought of so harshly. They are native birds that adapted a reproductive strategy copasetic with their lifestyle. The fact that they have a large impact on some species in peril is more a result of man’s rapid alteration and fragmentation of habitat than something more sinister. **WF**

# CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION NEWS

CHRIS MCVIE, PAUL GREEN, KENDALL KROESEN, AND BÉTÉ PFISTER

## Watching the Effects of the Monument Fire

Prior to European settlement, Madrean pine-oak forests burned every three to fifteen years. The frequent, cool, surface fires favored large fire-resistant pines and maintained open stands by killing small trees and shrubs. Without these fires pines became less abundant while oaks became denser. Oak savannas lower on the mountain had also become denser. Would this extra fuel result in a fire that would burn so hot that soil damage and erosion would destroy the forest? How would tree species composition change, and what would happen to the birds?

Crews worked with staff at The Nature Conservancy's Ramsey Canyon Preserve to step up thinning efforts in preparation for fire in the canyon. Thinning at Ramsey Canyon had been going on for years to allow for safer management of wildfire, to protect the Arizona sycamore gallery so important to specialties like Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher and Elegant Trogon, and to open up tree canopies in woodlands where natural fire had been excluded.

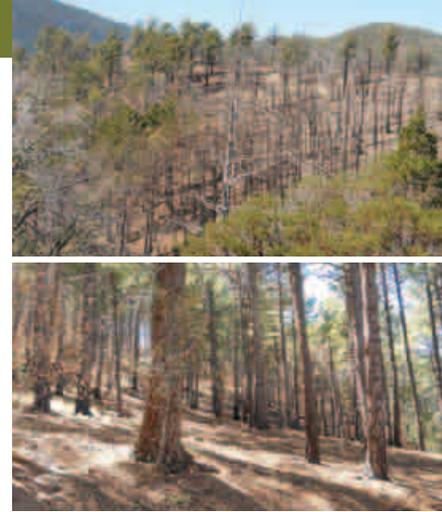
After six days of fire, the Spotted Owl territory at Ash Canyon was gone. Parts of Miller Canyon were black. Ramsey Canyon wasn't touched. Birds survived. Robert Weissler emailed us after returning home to Stump Canyon, "We awoke to the sound of Anna's Hummingbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Bridled Titmouse, and Bewick's Wren." Best of all, the fire was patchy, and the burn effects on soil were light to moderate over 90% of the fire's area. The fire had brought tragedy to some individuals, but in most areas it promised to restore the forest community.

Eight months later, the burned areas look different. In lower Miller Canyon burned oaks stand lifeless on hillsides. We see large rock outcrops we never knew existed. Before the fire, birding up this slope was an exercise in birding by ear for I couldn't see three feet beyond my scratched and bleeding arms. Now we watch Mexican Jays careen across the hillside from a quarter mile away. Oak savannas like this will at

least temporarily support more open-country birds like Eastern Bluebirds. Emory oak is superbly adapted to fire, and where fire burns the tops of the oaks, they respond by resprouting. In Stump Canyon the base of nearly every black Emory oak is flanked by a child-sized green sprout. The amount and timing of precipitation will have a strong influence on how much regeneration occurs and how open the savannas will remain.

About half the Monument Fire burned in mid-elevation oak-pine woodlands. It opened their understory, providing better habitat for flycatchers such as the Dusky-capped. An open understory will provide not only more room to fly, but more light for understory plants, which means more food for insect prey. The remaining oaks will have more room to grow large canopies for warblers and develop cavities for secondary cavity-nesters such as Bridled Titmouse.

In the less severely affected areas at upper elevations the fire cleared the understory and left large pines standing in a restored forest.



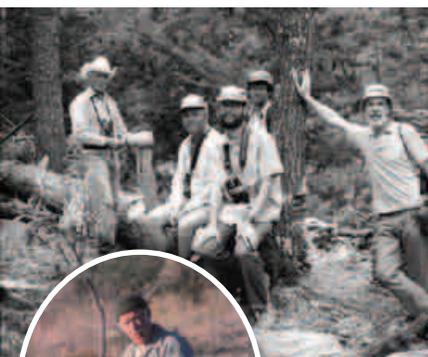
Top to bottom: Mosaic of Monument burns and unburned areas at upper elevations; Pine forest near Carr Reef with open understory as a result of fire.

Northern Goshawks and Mexican Spotted Owls will forage through these forests looking for small prey that would not have been visible before. Other areas were untouched, some severely burned. This spring Huachuca Audubon volunteers will revisit bird survey plots that they started three years ago to monitor the success of thinning treatments. In time we will see how much the vegetation will change as a result of the fire, and which bird species will respond best. This monitoring will help managers do a better job maintaining the Huachucas for future generations.

Terry Frederick, Senior Biologist,  
Harris Environmental Group

BOTH PHOTOS COURTESY TERRY FREDERICK

## Naturalist and Author Gale Wendell Monson: 1912–2012



Steve Russell, lead author of *The Birds of Sonora*, arranged many trips to Sonora, gathering students and others interested in helping. Gale Monson (far left, main photo and inset) went on almost every trip. Others in the main photo are (left to right): Arnie Moorhouse, Sherman Suter, John Bates, and John Hoffman.

Gale Wendell Monson passed away at his Albuquerque home on February 19, 2012. Born in Munich, North Dakota, Gale spent his professional life working for the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Soil Conservation Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. His work assignments took him and his family to Albuquerque, Gallup, and Socorro, New Mexico; Parker, Yuma, and Tucson, Arizona; and Washington D.C. Gale loved the Sonoran Desert and spent the bulk of his life's work there, where he contributed greatly to its study. His greatest passion was ornithology, but he had an abiding love for the study of the natural world in its entirety. He co-authored several books: *The Birds of Arizona*, *The Desert Bighorn*, *The Birds of Sonora*, *The Annotated*

*Checklist of Arizona Birds* and also authored and edited numerous other related publications.

Tucson Audubon Board Member Ruth Russell recalls the partnership Gale and Steve Russell formed to write the *The Birds of Sonora*. Research included many trips to Sonora over a number of years, sometimes with a fleet of vehicles carrying students, visiting ornithologists, and any local friends interested enough in birds to spend time in Sonora scouting out new locations and determining bird populations as we went. A trip would last from four to ten days, and destinations could be anywhere in Sonora not yet extensively covered. Each morning was spent scouting for birds—tallying species and numbers.

Afternoons were compilation time, with Gale determining, through his persistent and patient questioning whether everyone had truly seen what they thought they had seen. Says Ruth, "He made honest birders of us all." By mid to late afternoon the area was usually thoroughly covered and the group would move on to the next site. Campfire times were when Gale, a great storyteller who never tired of sharing his many adventures in the field, was at his best. He was an amazing man, who made a great many important contributions to our understanding of birds and their habitats. Contributions in his memory can be made to the Gale Monson Research Grant fund of the Arizona Field Ornithologists at: [www.azfo.org/grants/grants.html](http://www.azfo.org/grants/grants.html).

BOTH PHOTOS COURTESY RUTH & STEVE RUSSELL

## Mining Reform and Watershed Health

Tucson Audubon is not against mining. We are concerned about the amount of energy and water needed to extract and process metals and the increasing pollution generated by same. The mining of hard rock minerals—gold, uranium and other metals—on U.S. public lands is governed by the **General Mining Law of 1872**. We need to reform this outdated public lands law—a frontier-era statute that is no match for the scale of today's mining. Under the 1872 law:

Mining companies—even those that are foreign-owned—are allowed to take approximately \$1 billion annually in gold and other metals from public lands without payment of any royalty. Mining is given priority status, on most public lands, making it nearly impossible to prohibit or restrict it, even near national parks and other iconic places, like the Grand Canyon. There is scant regulation of mining, the nation's top-polluting industry, and few resources to clean up abandoned mines. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has documented more than \$2 billion in taxpayer spending over the past decade on mine cleanup.

Recently, New Mexico's Senator Jeff Bingaman introduced a much needed mining reform bill in the Senate. However, Nevada's Senate Majority leader Harry Reid, son of a gold miner, has been a powerful ally of the hard rock minerals industry, blocking earlier attempts at reform. We are now at a critical junction and reform of our antiquated mining law is essential to protecting the public's interests.

## Augusta Resource's Rosemont Mine Proposal

Tucson Audubon opposes Canadian-owned Augusta Resources' proposal to mine in the Santa Rita Mountains. Read our letters to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and to the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) at [tucsonaudubon.org/conservationnews](http://tucsonaudubon.org/conservationnews). The environmental costs of this proposal are impossible to mitigate and too overwhelmingly negative to be approved. Our comments addressed:

- The compromised position the USFS finds itself in as the result of working so closely with Augusta during the "public" process.
- A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that disregards the economic benefits of ecotourism and the potential loss of income that the mine would bring to our community.
- Permanent ecological damage to Pima County's first named Important Bird Area (IBA), part of a global system of scientifically peer-reviewed biologically important areas, and the potential effects on common, threatened and endangered bird species.
- The vagaries of economic development and relatively short term jobs associated with long-term regional habitat degradation

that are being offered in exchange for the concrete assets of available clean water, intact functioning ecosystems, and sustainable regional tourism jobs and dollars.

Our comments to the ACOE regarding Augusta's requested 404 permit were based on irreparable damage to: aquatic resources of national importance including Outstanding Arizona Waters (OAW); endangered and threatened plants and animals; critical wildlife linkages; and direct, indirect and cumulative adverse impacts to riparian, grassland, and woodland habitat. We support our colleagues' comments citing adverse impacts to local and downstream water quality and quantity, local economies, air quality, transportation safety, cultural resources, regional open space investments, and the health, safety and welfare of the people of southern Arizona.

On March 6th, Tucson Audubon's Conservation Chair accompanied representatives of the EPA, the ACOE, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), Pima Association of Governments (PAG), Pima County, the Tohono O'Odham Nation, and other nongovernmental organizations on a visit to the confluence of Davidson Canyon and Cienega Creek to discuss potential impacts of the proposed mine (see [tucsonaudubon.org/conservationnews](http://tucsonaudubon.org/conservationnews))

On March 15th, the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) heard a proposal for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility (CEC) for Tucson Electric Power (TEP) to provide a transmission line to the

proposed Rosemont mine. The ACC conditionally approved the line, by a 3-2 vote, but ordered that the approval be stayed pending hearing the case before an administrative judge to establish a complete record of associated activities and potential environmental impacts of the mine.

In November 2011, TEP filed an application for a CEC for a 138kV transmission line to be built from an area north of Quail Creek in Green Valley, transecting the scientifically, historically, and ecologically important Santa Rita Experimental Range, over the Santa Rita Mountains and connecting to the Rosemont project area. The case was heard by the Arizona Power Plant and Transmission Line Siting Committee in December 2011. After a rushed week of testimony, the Line Siting Committee approved the CEC, sending the decision along to the ACC for final approval.

In its order to reopen the case, the ACC writes "We believe that additional evidence about the mine and its environmental impacts should be admitted." Per state statute, concerned parties and citizens will be able to intervene in order to provide information that would help the ACC, as mandated, to "balance, in the broad public interest, the need for an adequate, economical, and reliable supply of power with the desire to minimize the effect thereof on the environment and ecology of this state." The proceedings will be conducted at a date and time to be established by the ACC's Hearings Division.

SANTA RITA MOUNTAINS



## Sunnyside-Audubon Student Urban Naturalists are Back

Thanks to the dedication and determination of two of our shining volunteers, Caleb Weaver and Deb Vath, the Sunnyside-Audubon Student Urban Naturalists (SASUN) Club is back at Billy Lauffer Middle School from January to May. The program provides an opportunity for interested students to deepen their understanding of nature, birds,

and our local environment through hands-on experiences.

Since January, the students have been busy! They facilitated the nest box building activity at Wings Over Willcox, and conducted a buffelgrass pull in Julian Wash. The club meets every week and has taken two field trips, one to Patagonia Lake State Park and one to Madera Canyon.

Along with traveling to new habitats and seeing new birds, they are busy planning "Earth Appreciation Week" (April 23–27) at their school to encourage students to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle. Look for the SASUN Club at the Tucson Audubon Earth Day Booth at Reid Park on April 21st where they will be facilitating kid-friendly activities.



SASUN CLUB MEMBER VICTORIA BEAUDRY HELPS PULL BUFFELGRASS IN JULIAN WASH, DEB VATH

## Britain's Rio Tinto and Australia's BHP = Resolution Copper Company

As we first wrote in 2005, another foreign-owned mining company, Resolution Copper Company (RCC) (Rio Tinto of the United Kingdom owns 55% and Broken Hill Properties (BHP)

of Australia owns 45%) has acquired the old Magma Mine outside Superior and seeks to expand its operation. RCC's research indicates it may be the third largest high-grade copper ore deposit in the world. RCC wants to acquire the Tonto National Forest's nearby Oak Flat Campground to block cave mine and dump the tailings on near-by state land. President Eisenhower removed Oak Flat from mineral exploration and extraction in 1955 (Public Land Order 1229).

Oak Flat, the nearby Apache Leap, and Gaan (Devil's) Canyon, with its beautiful riparian habitat, are all significant cultural sites.

The Pinal County Board of Supervisors approved up to 35,000 residences in a mixed-use community on over 23,000 acres of BHP lands around San Manuel, along the west side of the river. Meanwhile, RCC proposes to preserve a 3,000-acre mesquite bosque (the 7B bosque), just downstream of BHP's lands, as a part

of a legislative land exchange. BHP's proposed development would dewater and devalue the 7B bosque and downstream farms, ranches, mitigation lands of the Salt River Project (SRP) and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), as well as lands owned and managed for conservation by the Nature Conservancy (TNC). We recently wrote Senators Bingaman and Reid, again, opposing Resolution's most recent proposal (see [tucsonaudubon.org/conservationnews](http://tucsonaudubon.org/conservationnews)).

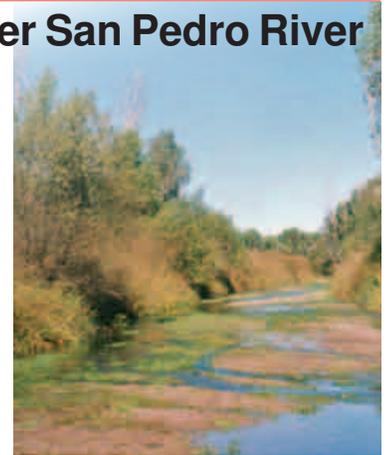


## A Collaborative Conservation Initiative Along the Lower San Pedro River

Meanwhile, unrelated to RCC's proposed legislation and in response to long standing requests of various landowners along the Lower San Pedro River, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has begun a pre-scoping process and regional discussion about forming a landowner-driven Collaborative Conservation Initiative along the Lower San Pedro River to further the preservation of rural working landscapes. Thus far the

Service has reached out to dialogue with local landowners, ranchers, Natural Resource Conservation Districts (NRCDS), other federal, state, and local agencies, Congressional delegation staff, the San Carlos Apache Tribe, and the Pinal Partnership's Open Space and Trails subcommittee. The Service hopes to raise awareness of the proposal, identify any issues or concerns and any interested voluntary participants.

The Service, in conjunction with the EPA and other scientific experts, has recently conducted an assessment of the San Pedro Watershed which indicates that it has greater ecosystem service values for some parameters than the southwest region in general and the middle Rio Grande River in particular (see [tucsonaudubon.org/conservationnews](http://tucsonaudubon.org/conservationnews)).



SAN PEDRO RIVER, BRUCE FULTON

## HB 2656 Threatens Pima County's Ability to Manage its Debt Rationally

Since the state-legislated controversial takeover of a Pima County wastewater treatment plant by Marana, and despite claims to a philosophy of "small government," the Arizona Legislature appears focused on micromanaging Tucson and Pima County.

Pima County voter-approved bonds build new roads, traffic and road-safety improvements, libraries, emergency communications equipment, detention facilities, bridges, flood control, government buildings, and affordable housing. Bonds fund open space, parks and hiking trails, which in 2004 gained more voter support than any other general obligation bond question on the ballot.

Pima County's bond program assists us in achieving balanced "smart growth" in compliance with existent state law. It creates jobs. Since 2006, over \$842 million spent on County capital bond projects

has employed or continued the employment of 12,000+ construction workers.

Voter approved bonds have enabled our county to emerge as a national award winning leader in land use planning, ensuring a quality livable community as envisioned by the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP; see <http://www.pima.gov/cmo/sdcp/MSCP/MSCP.html>). Our ability to bond enables our community to realize our vision of ourselves.

HB 2656 (see <http://e-lobbyist.com/gaits/AZ/HB2656>), as amended, was originally introduced by 11 southern Arizona legislators at Marana's behest. Subsection A would add requirements for *all counties* to hold a public hearing to present information about existing debt, prohibit use of lease-purchase agreements to pay for operating costs, and require adoption of balanced budgets prohibiting accumulating excess cash, even to

create a reserve for future capital projects. Without the ability to build cash reserves, counties would be forced to borrow for major capital projects.

Subsection B of HB 2656 as amended is "special legislation" targeting Pima County. It would add additional requirements for us, and only us, relating to certificates of participation (COPs) and long-term purchase agreements.

The Town of Marana is the only jurisdiction in Pima County to support HB 2656. South Tucson, Sahuarita, Oro Valley, and the City of Tucson have written to express their opposition and concerns. While sponsors say the bill would increase accountability, our current County code, revised for greater truth in bonding, transparency and accountability in 2004, far exceeds the accountability measures included in the bill.

HB 2656 sponsor, District 26 (Marana, and parts of Tucson) Representative Terri Proud says this about our efforts: "Most of the bonding is all about parks... We spent \$1.5 billion, and that's what we get—some freaking cactus... For \$1.5 billion, we should have Pima County looking like the god-dang Wizard of Oz, like the Ritz Hotel."

Terri Proud also says Pima County has "not much to show for it." We disagree and suggest she might want to learn more about our 2004 bond language. She and District 26 Representative Vic Williams, who is running for Supervisor Ann Day's seat on the county's Board of Supervisors, as well as Senators Antenori and Melvin, reveal a lack of due diligence and old fashioned homework.

We hope they will reconsider and put our jobs, health, welfare and safety, not to mention the will of the electorate, ahead of partisan politics.

# Water is Key to a Healthy Tucson—for Wildlife and People



WESTERN SCREECH OWL, PAUL & ENGLI GREEN

In another partisan-led effort, the House recently passed HB 2416 to force Tucson Water to supply water to an area outside of its community-determined water service area, preventing them from regulating their own water policies. This would support sprawl and raise our property taxes even higher, potentially stressing public and emergency services delivery.

**BACKGROUND:** Tucson's Mayor and Council and Pima County's Board of Supervisors initiated a multi-year study of water and wastewater infrastructure, supply and planning issues (WISP). The goal of this effort is to assure a sustainable community water source given continuing pressure on water supplies caused by population growth and the needs of our natural environment.

A joint City/County Oversight Committee produced the 2011–2015 Action Plan for Water Sustainability. Future efforts will seek to engage the greater metropolitan area in identifying shared values, objectives and preferred options for a sustainable water future [www.tucsonpimawaterstudy.com/](http://www.tucsonpimawaterstudy.com/).

The Pima Association of Governments (PAG) convened the Regional Water Assessment Task Force in 2010 to help the region shape its efforts to achieve a sustainable water future ([www.pagnet.org/Programs/EnvironmentalPlanning/](http://www.pagnet.org/Programs/EnvironmentalPlanning/)

[Water/tabid/185/Default.aspx](http://Water/tabid/185/Default.aspx)). One of the policy outcomes of the City/County Study was the City's formal adoption of a Water Service Area Policy in August 2010, establishing a water service boundary for Tucson based on economic, social and environmental considerations.

Tucson Audubon has participated in the first annual review of the Policy, as called for in the adopted ordinance, to determine if refinements to the Policy are needed. City staff and Tucson Water's Citizens Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) requested public and stakeholder comment as part of this review process.

Challenging the policy is the proposed Painted Hills development, a 289-acre county parcel between West Anklam Road and West Speedway Boulevard. The proposed development, along the scenic highway to Gates Pass and the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, would result in blading lush Sonoran Upland desert habitat, removing approximately 900 saguaros and impacting wildlife linkages. The Tucson Mountain Association has taken the lead on this issue (see [www.tucsonmountainsassoc.org/paintedhills.html](http://www.tucsonmountainsassoc.org/paintedhills.html)).

Read a good history of the situation written by Tim Vanderpool at [www.tucsonweekly.com/tucson/water-war/Content?oid=3260687](http://www.tucsonweekly.com/tucson/water-war/Content?oid=3260687), charting the efforts of the Dallas Police and

Fire Pension System to make good on their questionable investment. Some sources suggest that they paid about six times what the property was worth.

Since Painted Hills allowed its water assurance letter to expire in February 2008, the Arizona Superior Court DENIED a motion for summary judgment and ruled in favor of the City, the State of Arizona Court of Appeals affirmed the trial court summary judgment IN FAVOR of the City, and the Arizona Supreme Court is currently weighing the decision as to whether or not to consider the case. Pima County voters have twice voted to preserve this property for open space.

**NOW:** Scottsdale Representative Michelle Ugenti introduced HB 2416 <http://e-lobbyist.com/gaits/AZ/HB2416>, Denial of Water and Waste Water Prohibited, in the Arizona House. It would prohibit a city or town, located in a county with a population of more than 500,000 persons that has provided some domestic water or wastewater services outside of its municipal boundaries, from denying those services to any other owners of land outside of its municipal boundaries, if certain conditions exist. HB 2416 establishes a new and potentially harmful water management precedent wherein the State can mandate where water and wastewater services are provided regardless of the impact on assured water supplies, the

Groundwater Management Act, and a municipality's ability to determine if it can provide those services. This appears to be another piece of "special legislation" to force Tucson to supply water outside their designated service area regardless of having water resources available or the infrastructure necessary to serve the property.

Water is THE limiting resource and determining factor governing the future viability of the arid southwest. HB 2416 would undo Tucson's carefully crafted efforts to develop a cohesive water service area policy. The ultimate result could be that future developers within Tucson's service area may not have water resources available because those resources will have all been obligated to developers outside of the City.

A water provider needs to be able to determine their own service area or they may find themselves in violation of the Assured Water Supply rules and could lose their designation, thus jeopardizing ALL local development.

**MORE ONLINE:** For Multiple-species Habitat Conservation Planning (MSHCP) updates for the Town of Marana, the City of Tucson, and Pima County, as well as updates on SR 77 (Oracle Road) Wildlife Crossing Structures please see the full version of this article at [tucsonaudubon.org/conservationnews](http://tucsonaudubon.org/conservationnews). ■

## Conservation Corner!

### It is time to get serious about recycling

Recycling reduces waste going into landfills and delays opening up new ones. It means items like glass, aluminum and plastic are used as a resource for making new products, rather than new raw materials extracted from the Earth. It decreases the energy needed to create new products—this decreases greenhouse gas emissions.

If you live in the City of Tucson, you should already have a residential "blue barrel" available for recycling. If

you don't, call 520-791-5000. You can put a variety of products in the blue barrels, including aluminum cans, glass bottles, numbers 1 or 2 plastic containers, newspapers, junk mail, phonebooks, cardboard, certain rigid plastic items, and more. For the full list, go to <http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/es/customer-services-residential-recycling>. They won't take plastic shopping bags. Please return those to your supermarket or, even better, use reusable shopping bags!

Prepare now to recycle even more, including plastics 3, 4, 5 and 7! The city will be contracting with

a new recycling plant, scheduled to open July 1, at which time recycling will be expanded. See the story on this in the Arizona Daily Star at [http://azstarnet.com/news/science/environment/coming-soon-to-your-blue-bins-more-recyclables/article\\_7b7534f4-21a0-5a06-b609-a5d589b91b3d.html](http://azstarnet.com/news/science/environment/coming-soon-to-your-blue-bins-more-recyclables/article_7b7534f4-21a0-5a06-b609-a5d589b91b3d.html).

If you run a business, you need pay a fee for your blue barrel. However, if a lot of your current waste is recyclable, you may be able to offset the cost by decreasing your number of weekly waste pickups. See the Arizona Daily Star on commercial blue barrels at <http://azstarnet.com/news/local/>



KENDALL KROESEN

[govt-and-politics/city-pitches-its-case-recycling-can-be-a-plus-for/article\\_52a9ea88-8d06-5aa6-92a9-c3c38ad8d09b.html](http://govt-and-politics/city-pitches-its-case-recycling-can-be-a-plus-for/article_52a9ea88-8d06-5aa6-92a9-c3c38ad8d09b.html).

If you live in a multifamily dwelling or don't have blue barrel service, there is a map of community recycling centers at [www.deq.pima.gov/waste/recyclecenters.html](http://www.deq.pima.gov/waste/recyclecenters.html). ■

# TUCSON AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

KATE REYNOLDS | FIELD TRIP COORDINATOR



DONEHELEN

## April

April 1—Sunday 7 AM

### Fort Lowell Park

Fort Lowell Park is one of Tucson's premier public parks for birds and a historic place for birding. We will walk in the steps of Charles Bendire, a naturalist and cavalry officer stationed at the fort in the 1870s. We'll look for resident birds, remaining wintering species, and for spring migrants. The trip is cosponsored by Friends of Ft. Lowell Park. Contact leader to sign up and for directions to the meeting place. Leader: Kendall Kroesen 520-971-2385 [kkroesen@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:kkroesen@tucsonaudubon.org)

April 7—Saturday 7:30 AM

### Sabino Canyon

We'll bird Sabino Canyon Recreation Area walking a loop that includes both Sonoran Desert uplands and Sabino Creek riparian areas. The 4-mile walk includes rocky uneven trails. Meet at the ramada by the Visitor's Center at the end of Sabino Canyon Road. \$5 parking fee. Return by noon. Sunhat, water and walking shoes recommended. Leaders are Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists. Please email to reserve a space, limit 12 participants. Leaders: Jean & Mark Hengesbaugh [jhhenge@yahoo.com](mailto:jhhenge@yahoo.com)

April 10—Tuesday 6:30 AM

### Boyce Thompson Arboretum State Park

Walk the beautiful and birdy grounds of the Arboretum for a couple of miles. Slight elevation gain. \$9 entry fee or bring an AZ state park pass.



Limited to 10 participants so contact the leader for carpooling and other info. 160 miles round trip. Take a picnic lunch. Back in late afternoon. Leader: ME Flynn 520-797-1743 or [me.flynn@comcast.net](mailto:me.flynn@comcast.net)

April 14—Saturday 6:30 AM

### Catalina Mountains

Let's spend the morning perusing the mountain and trying to get out of the heat for a few hours. We will make stops at Middle Bear and Marshall Gulch. Bring a hat, sunscreen, plenty of water. Home after lunch. Meet at Tanque Verde and Catalina Mountains Road at the McDonald's at 6:30 AM. 50 miles round trip. Leader: Melody Kehl [outdoor1@cox.net](mailto:outdoor1@cox.net) 520-245-4085

April 17—Tuesday 7 AM

### Sweetwater Wetlands

Meet at the parking lot on Sweetwater Drive at 7 AM. Spring migration will be underway as we explore this man-made oasis. Expect warblers, swallows, flycatchers. We hope to see colorful orioles and tanagers along with the resident Harris' Hawks. We do easy walking for two to three hours on level paths. Bring water; wear hats. All ages and birding abilities are encouraged to participate. Check to see if the Prince Rd. exit is currently open. Otherwise use the temporary I-10 exit at Camino del Cerro. Leaders: Bev and Andy Robertson 520-615-2285 [bdprentice@msn.com](mailto:bdprentice@msn.com)

April 18—Wednesday 6:30 AM

### Peña Blanca Lake

Join me for a walk around beautiful scenic Peña Blanca Lake, one of the best birding spots in SE Arizona especially in Spring Migration. We will walk

## WEEKLY BIRD WALKS

Thursdays—April & May 8 AM;

June 7:30 AM

**Wake Up With the Birds at Agua Caliente Park.** A stroll through the bosque and along the ponds. Loaner binocs available, meet in front of the ranch house. For more info call Pima County Parks and Rec., 520-615-7855.

Saturdays—8–9:30 AM

**Tucson Audubon's Mason Center.**

Families and birders of all skill levels are welcome. Visit [tucsonaudubon.org/masoncenter](http://tucsonaudubon.org/masoncenter) for details.

## MORE FIELD TRIPS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE.

Visit [tucsonaudubon.org/fieldtrips](http://tucsonaudubon.org/fieldtrips) for more trips and the latest or expanded field trip information or call us at 520-629-0510.

### General Information

Tucson Audubon field trips are free. For general information call 520-629-0510. For specific information about a trip, contact the leader of that trip.

Please dress appropriately for your field trip. Always wear sturdy shoes, a hat, and use sun protection. Bring plenty of snacks and water for yourself. Always bring your binoculars, field guide, and for most trips a scope can be useful. Bring money to cover your share of the carpooling and any required entry fees (e.g. for state parks).

### Arrival Times

Please arrive *before* listed departure times. Trips will leave promptly at the time given.

### Carpooling Sites

Tucson Audubon strongly encourages carpooling and for some trips it may be required. Check our website for frequently used carpooling sites. You are expected to reimburse the driver for the actual cost of fuel. Drivers and trip leaders are not expected to contribute.

### Rare Bird Alert

Listen to the latest rare bird alert at 520-629-0510 ext. 3. Report rare birds at 520-629-0510 or [rarebirdalert@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:rarebirdalert@tucsonaudubon.org)

**Don't forget to stop in our Nature Shop for your field and ID Guides, and other birding supplies.**



Santa Rita Mountains

to the dam and back, about 2 miles, so wear sturdy shoes, bring water, sunscreen, snacks and lunch. Meet at the Green Valley McDonalds exit 63 I-19 at 6:30 AM for the hour long drive to the lake. Limit 8, contact leader after April 12. Sally Johnsen 520-399-4050 Empidonax@netzero.net

*April 21—Saturday 6:00 AM*

### Superstition Mtns.

We'll bird Forest Service Rd. 287A on the edge of the Superstition Wilderness Area, an area forested with Arizona junipers, pines, and oaks. Expect to see scrub-jays, Juniper Titmice, Bushtits, lingering winter thrushes, sparrows possibly migrant warblers. Bring water and lunch. Not much hiking. Trip limited to 12. We'll carpool from the north side of Basha's parking lot in Catalina (NE corner of intersection of Oracle and Golder Ranch Roads). 300 miles round trip. Contact leader after April 1 to sign up. Doug Jenness d\_jenness@hotmail.com, 520-909-1529.

*April 22—Sunday 7:30 AM*

### Agua Caliente Park

We will spend 3 hours photographing birds and discussing bird photography techniques at Agua Caliente Park. Participants should be familiar with their camera gear in advance of the trip so we can keep the focus on techniques rather than learning how to operate your camera. Limited to 22 participants, contact the leader to sign up. Leader: Ned Harris nedharris@cox.net.

*April 24—Tuesday 6:00 AM*

### Crossroads Park

Another walk through one of Marana's "birdiest" parks. Likely sightings: egrets, ducks, shorebirds, spring migrants. We'll walk along a pathway between the park and Ina Road where rarities have occasionally been spotted and check the willow trees by the river's edge. Meet to carpool at 6:00 AM at the Pima County library parking lot (Mission Rd. & Ajo Way) or meet at the Crossroads Park parking area at 6:45 AM. Bring water, snack,

comfortable walking shoes. Leader: Norma Miller n8urnut@comcast.net.

*April 28—Saturday 6:30 AM*

### Cave Canyon Trail (East side of the Santa Rita Mtns.)

We'll hike about two miles up this very gradual trail along a perennial stream, starting in oak-grassland habitat and reaching the beginnings of the upper pines. We'll look for migrants and residents, and then take a break at some pretty campsites, before returning. Wear good hiking gear (a couple of shallow stream crossings), bring water and a snack, we'll plan to be back early afternoon. Trip limited to twelve participants/three cars. Contact the leader to reserve a spot and get further details (~125 miles round trip). Leader: Tim Helentjaris, thhelentjaris@msn.com or 520-743-2283.

*April 29—Sunday, 6:30 AM*

### Madera Canyon, Bottom Up

Join TAS for an exploration of the Santa Rita Mountains starting in desert scrub and ending somewhere up canyon.



We'll explore a wide variety of habitats for the season. Meet at the Green Valley McDonalds on Conitnental Road at 6:30 AM. Please register with the trip leader, Cliff Cathers, at AZCliffy@Q.com or 520-762-3201. Limit of 20 participants.

## May

*May 1—Tuesday 4:30 AM*

### Fort Huachuca

Birding on foot in some of the canyons on Fort Huachuca. Because the Army limits the number of participants on the trails, this trip will be limited to twelve participants (including the leader) in three high-clearance vehicles.



Contact the leader by email on or after April 15 to reserve a place. All participants must have a government-issued picture ID, and all drivers must have drivers license, car registration, and proof-of-insurance. If you are not a U.S. citizen, please let the leader know when you make your reservation. Be prepared to hike on rough rocky trails that are steep in places. Bring lunch. 160 miles round trip. Leader: Jim Hays jhays@iname.com (preferred) or 520-895-3299

*May 5—Saturday 7 AM*

### Tanque Verde Ranch

We have permission to visit this private guest ranch located at the very end of East Speedway. We will bird along Tanque Verde Wash with 2 ponds, mesquites and cottonwoods. Done before noon - bathrooms and snack break midway at the cars. A good trip for beginning birders and those who have things to do later in the day. MEET AT McDONALD's located on the NE corner of Catalina Hwy and Tanque Verde Rd. Leader: Bill Wieboldt 885-1227 Williamwieb@aol.com



*May 8—Tuesday 6:00 AM*

### Biking the Loop

We'll be birding and biking 'The Loop' following the Santa Cruz River north of Grant Rd, riding up to the Rillito River through the bike I-10 underpass. We'll follow the Rillito a ways and return. A 15-mile round trip or longer. Bring bikes to start at Juhan Park. From I-10, take Grant Rd. west five blocks to Coyote Dr., turn right, drive north one block to the Park at 1770 W. Cooper St. Meet at 6:00 AM. Call Norma Miller 520-235-8927 for info. Or email: n8urnut@comcast.net

*May 12—Saturday 10:30 AM*

### Tucson Wildlife Center

The Tucson Wildlife Center is dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of injured and orphaned wild animals throughout Southern Arizona. Join us in a special behind-the-scenes tour of this remarkable wildlife emergency treatment center. Trip limited to 12. Wear long pants and close-toed shoes. Cameras ok. Done by about 12:30 PM. Contact leader to sign up and for directions to the meeting place. Leader: Kate Reynolds TASKateReynolds@gmail.com

*May 15—Tuesday 8:00 AM*

### Willcox Ponds

We will go look for migrating shorebirds, terns and gulls. Quick stop at Benson Ponds. Will be hot and sunny. Easy pace on flat ground. All ages and birding abilities invited. Bring snack and scope if you have one. We will leave at 8 AM from west side of Houghton Rd. north of I-10. Back by 1 PM Carpooling encouraged (200 mile round trip). No need to sign up before the trip, but call leader if questions. Leader: John Higgins 520-578-1830 jghiggins@comcast.net

*May 19—Saturday 6:30 AM*

### Atturbury-Lyman Bird and Animal Sanctuary

Join us to explore the rich microcosm of nesting birds along Atturbury Wash, and maybe catch some late migrants. This is a great place to see Lucy's Warbler, Bewick's Wren, Bell's Vireo, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher and many others. The location is the lower part of Lincoln Park off Escalante Road, on Tucson's east side. Meet at 6:30 AM.



Tucson Wildlife Center



Willcox Ponds

Bring water and sunscreen. Call leader to sign up and get directions: Kendall Kroesen [kkroesen@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:kkroesen@tucsonaudubon.org) or 520-971-2385

May 22—Tuesday 6:30 AM

### Two Hours at Sweetwater

Join us for a birding stroll at Sweetwater Wetlands. We'll check out the paths through the wetlands, and maybe pop over to the trail along the river easement. Easy walking, good birds, and pleasant company. Bring water and sun protection. Limit of 20. RSVP after May 1st. Meet at Sweetwater, bring water and sun protection. Leaders: Matt Brooks & Sara Pike 520-209-1807 [mbrooks@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:mbrooks@tucsonaudubon.org)

May 29—uesday 6:00 AM

### Crossroads Park

Another walk through one of Marana's "birdiest" parks. Likely sightings: egrets, ducks, and shorebirds. We'll walk along a pathway between the park and Ina Road, where rarities have occasionally been spotted, and check the willow trees by the river's edge. Meet to carpool at 06:00 at the Pima County library parking lot (Mission Rd. & Ajo Way) or meet at the Crossroads Park parking area at 06:45. Crossroads Park is off Silverbell Road west of the Santa Cruz River, south of Cortaro Road. Bring water, snack, comfortable walking shoes. Leader: Norma Miller [n8urnut@comcast.net](mailto:n8urnut@comcast.net).



Atturbury Wash

Visit [tucsonaudubon.org/fieldtrips](http://tucsonaudubon.org/fieldtrips) for updates and more

## June

June 3—Sunday 12 Noon

### Plants of the Catalina Mountains

Lets do something different. We're going to drive up the Catalinas looking at the plant composition of the different life zones and maybe learning a bit of Latin. There should be a lot of wildflowers to liven things up and maybe even some orchids near the summit. Meet at Tanque Verde and Catalina Mountains Road at the McDonald's at 12 noon. Yes you heard it right, no need to be early for plants. They can't run. 50 miles round trip. Leader: Anthony Mendoza [anthony\\_mendoza@hotmail.com](mailto:anthony_mendoza@hotmail.com) 520-219-0366.

June 16—Saturday 6:30 AM

### Catalina Mountains

Let's spend the morning perusing the mountain and trying to get out of the heat for a few hours. We will make stops at Middle Bear and Marshall Gulch. Bring a hat, sunscreen, plenty of water. Home after lunch. Meet at Tanque Verde and Catalina Mountains Road at the McDonald's at 6:30 AM. 50 miles round trip. Leader: Melody Kehl [outdoor1@cox.net](mailto:outdoor1@cox.net) 520-245-4085

June 22–24—Friday/Saturday/Sunday 10:00 AM

### Q Ranch/Mogollon Rim

Friday drive to Q Ranch. About 150 bird species have been identified, including Pygmy and Red-breasted Nuthatches and nesting Mountain Bluebirds. Expect lots of other bird life. Dark clear night skies mean plenty of stars. Combine birding with brief hikes to good and scenic locations. Tour the 1000-year-old Q Ranch Pueblo. Depart Sunday after brunch which is cell phone dead zone, but Verizon service available within a few miles. All meals included. \$135/person/night for shared room. \$175/person/night for single. Down payment due May 18. For reservations (due May 10) and more info contact Matt Griffiths ([Mgriffiths@TucsonAudubon.org](mailto:Mgriffiths@TucsonAudubon.org)). Leader (present at Q Ranch only): Ken Furtado, [seeqranch@earthlink.net](mailto:seeqranch@earthlink.net).

## Join the following All-Star Teams on their Birdathon Days

April 20: Bieber's Bluebirds

April 21: Gonzo Birders

April 22: Youth Birders Birdy Bingo

April 25: Wrenegades

April 28: Birds of Fray

April 29: Scott's Orioles

Details  
on p 7

### Miller Canyon Update

If you've hiked or birded in Miller Canyon, you know it's one of the best-watered canyons in the Huachuca Mountains. It is nationally famous amongst birders for sought-after species like "Mexican" Spotted Owl. Miller Canyon was heavily impacted by last summer's Monument Fire, but much of the riparian habitat remains intact.

Post-fire flooding damaged the Tombstone Aqueduct within the Miller Peak Wilderness Area. Concerned locals report that the City of Tombstone has recently done much destructive work within the Wilderness Area to restore the water pipeline. The City originally began work without oversight or permits, though later obtained a Forest Service permit: <http://tinyurl.com/cotdm2011>

There are many tricky issues to sort out. One problem is that the City of Tombstone must prove it has actual surface water rights, not just water "claims." And how much water? Claims searchable on the AZ Dept. of Water Resources website only total 270 acre-feet per year. With the vastly increased infrastructure recently installed, the City appears to be piping out much more than before. Miller Canyon is already drought- and fire-stressed, and needs all the water it can retain. Please stay tuned! Want more details? Contact Tricia Gerrodette at [triciag2@cox.net](mailto:triciag2@cox.net).

### ADDITIONAL BIRD WALKS IN TUCSON AND SOUTHEAST ARIZONA

For information on weekly regional bird walks from Agua Caliente Park to Ramsey Canyon Preserve, please see our website, [www.tucsonaudubon.org/what-we-do/birding/128.html](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/what-we-do/birding/128.html).

# BIRDING TRAVEL FROM OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS

## ADVENTURE BIRDING COMPANY

www.adventurebirding.com  
info@adventurebirding.com • 520-495-0229

### Big Bend Nat'l Park, Texas: Colima Warbler short tour May 1–5, 2013, \$1095.

Leader: John Yerger. Big Bend is one of the most remote birding hotspots in the U.S., and home to some of its most spectacular scenery! It's the only place in the country to find Colima Warbler, the focus of one long day hike. A surprising number of habitats and oases are found within Park boundaries. Ideal for anyone desiring lots of birding and sightseeing on limited vacation time. Lucifer Hummingbird, Painted Bunting and Golden-fronted Woodpecker are just a few others we'll seek on this fun-filled adventure!

### South Texas: Rarities and Specialties short tour Feb 27–Mar 3, 2013, \$1195.

Leader: John Yerger. Limited vacation time? This "short tour" will target some of the rarest birds in the ABA region! Our main focus: find mega-rarities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. In recent years, species included Crimson-collared Grosbeak, Golden-crowned Warbler and Black-vented Oriole. In addition, we'll seek rare residents like Brown Jay and Red-billed Pigeon. And of course, spectacular South Texas specialties like Green Jay, Altamira Oriole and Buff-bellied Hummingbird will round out the trip! See website for details and extended alternative to this tour.

## ROCKJUMPER—WORLDWIDE BIRDING ADVENTURES

info@rockjumperbirding.com  
www.rockjumperbirding.com  
(USA & Canada toll-free): 1-888-990-5552

### Guatemala - Central American Specialties.

8 to 16 November 2012 (9 days). Price: US\$2,250 \* £1,440 \* €1,730 \* ZAR18,000 (Single Supplement US\$300). *Note: these prices are subject to foreign exchange fluctuations.* Spectacular volcanoes and highland lakes set the scene where local people have developed an environmental bond resulting in much of the highland forests being protected. We will search for the gorgeous Pink-headed Warbler, fabulous Resplendent Quetzal, Blue-throated Motmot, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Rufous-collared Thrush and Horned Guan on the summit of San Pedro Volcano. This tour offers the best of Guatemalan birding with comfortable lodges and can be linked with a 5-day Tikal Extension—Birding the Mayan Ruins.

### Papua New Guinea: Birds in Paradise

III. 12 to 29 August 2012 (18 days). Price: US\$8,050 \* £5,070 \* €5,750 \* KINA16,750. *Note: these prices are subject to foreign exchange fluctuations and do not include internal flights, which at the time of writing are approximately US\$1,400.* We can expect a phenomenal variety of birds (including up to 24 birds-of-paradise species!) and vast regions of immaculate forests that have been experienced by very few people.

Traveling by air, road and boat, we will explore from winding lowland rivers and sprawling grasslands, to forested valleys abuzz with brilliant birds and where native tribesmen adorned with elaborate head plumes dance still dressed to mimic the island's fabulous birds-of-paradise.

## SOLIPASO TOURS

www.solipaso.com

### Northwest Mexico: August 25–September 1, 2012. \$1900.

Summertime in the Sierra Madre of Chihuahua and Sonora is a beautiful sight to see! Green meadows, blue sky vistas, lakes and waterfalls everywhere! In Madera, we see the endangered Thick-billed Parrot and Eared Quetzal. We visit the ruins of Cuarenta Casas and the magnificent Basaseachic waterfall, the highest in Mexico. In Yecora, we pick up more montane species including Mountain Trogon, Montezuma Quail, Rufous-capped Brush-finch and Aztec Thrush. Starts and ends in Tucson.

### Copper Canyon: September 11–25, 2012.

\$2350. Leader: David MacKay. The world famous Copper Canyon is a great destination for birding in the summertime! In Los Mochis, (start and end point) we explore the botanical garden and take a trip into coastal islands of the Sea of Cortez. We board the train in El Fuerte traveling through the tropical deciduous forest into the pine-oak. We stop along the way in Cerocahui, Cusarare and Creel. Target birds are Eared Quetzal, White-striped Woodcreeper, Mountain Trogon, Rufous-capped Warbler, Striped Sparrows and more. We'll see some of the Tarahumara villages and purchase their crafts.

## SOUTHWESTERN RESEARCH STATION—BIRDING AND NATURE TOURS

research.amnh.org/swrs • tgllore@amnh.org

### Chiricahua Mountains, Portal, Az. tours

2012: 22–28 April; 5–11 May; 23–29 May; 9–15 Sept. Our experienced guide, P.D. Hulce, is a local of the area and will take you on daily field trips, optional owl walks at night, and provide talks on the natural history of the region. Our rates are \$1250 per person, double occupancy; \$100 single supplement, when space allows: Single participants may be assigned a same-gender roommate to qualify for double occupancy rate.

### Birding Tour: The Chiricahua Mountains of S.E. Arizona

afford some of the best birding in the United States. Each tour is limited to 10 persons or 5 couples. Tours include: Roundtrip transportation from Tucson airport, double-occupancy in our newly remodeled rooms with kitchenettes, professional guide, and three full meals daily. We offer a newly added day trip to historic town of Bisbee. For itinerary see above contact information or call 520-558-2396.

## TROPICAL BIRDING

www.tropicalbirding.com  
info@tropicalbirding.com • 1-800-348-5941

## A Fun Follow-up to the Tucson Bird & Wildlife Festival with Solipaso!

### POST-FESTIVAL EXTENSION TOUR: THE THICK-BILLED PARROTS OF MADERA

August 20–23, 2012. \$900 per person (based on double occupancy)/\$190 single supplement. This is a special price for Tucson Bird & Wildlife Festival and a percentage of the trip price will go to benefit Tucson Audubon.

A short but very special trip into the Mexican states of Sonora and Chihuahua to see the endemic Thick-billed Parrot and Eared Quetzal (among some other sought-after specialties that won't count in the ABA area).

The old growth forests of the northern Sierra Madre Mountains of Chihuahua are the nesting grounds for the Thick-billed Parrot. This wonderful bird is often difficult to find throughout most of its range; however, in the area near Madera, these birds can be found in high numbers during the breeding months of August and September. Thick-billed Parrots nest at elevations over 8,000 feet and require a specialized habitat of dead old growth trees that they utilize for their nest cavities, many of which were excavated decades ago by the now-extinct Imperial Woodpecker. The parrots are quite approachable during this time of year, which should make for excellent photographic opportunities.

Although our main targets on this trip are the parrots, there is a lot more to be seen. The forests around Madera hold many other interesting birds, including Eared Quetzal, Pine Flycatcher, Spotted Wren, and Aztec, Slate-throated Redstart, Rufous-capped Brush-finch, Black-headed Siskin, Mountain Trogon, Russet Nightingale-thrush, Flame-colored Tanager, Striped Sparrow, Spotted Wren, Brown-backed Solitaire, Gray-silky Flycatcher and Montezuma Quail.

For more information or to reserve your space on this great trip, contact Jennifer MacKay at [jennifer@solipaso.com](mailto:jennifer@solipaso.com) or by calling 1.888.383.0062

## Tucson Audubon Special

### ECUADOR TOUR WITH TROPICAL BIRDING

June 16–24, 2012. Details online at [www.tucsonaudubon.org/ecuador](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/ecuador)

ONE  
SPOT  
LEFT!



SLATE-THROATED REDSTART, DOMINIC SHERONY

GOLDEN-HEADED QUETZAL, SCOTT OLMSTEAD



Visit [tucsonaudubon.org](http://tucsonaudubon.org) for updates and more.

# TUCSON AUDUBON'S BIRDS & BUSINESS ALLIANCE

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW BIRDS & BUSINESS ALLIANCE MEMBERS

GOLD

**THE SIERRITA OPERATIONS OF FREEPORT-MCMORAN COPPER & GOLD** proudly supports the Tucson Audubon Society in its efforts to connect people with the environment by providing education, conservation, and recreation programs, as well as environmental leadership and information.



We thank the following Birds & Business Alliance members for their major support of the Tucson Audubon Fourth Annual Gala:

Freeport-McMoran Copper & Gold  
Cox Communications  
Farhang & Medcoff, PLLC  
Tucson Electric Power

### Birds & Business Alliance Join today and connect with the Tucson Audubon community

For more information and to join, contact Erin Olmstead at [eolmstead@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:eolmstead@tucsonaudubon.org) or 520.629.1809

Tucson Audubon thanks our Birds & Business Alliance Members, who have shown their support for bird conservation through annual contributions and in-kind donations. **Please show them you appreciate their support for us by supporting them.** Visit [tucsonaudubon.org/alliance](http://tucsonaudubon.org/alliance) for more information, including links to member websites.



### GOLD

\*Freeport McMoran Copper & Gold, Inc  
Riverpark Inn • 800-551-1466

### STERLING

Adventure Birding Company  
• 520-495-0229 • [www.adventurebirding.com](http://www.adventurebirding.com)  
Rockjumper Birding Tours • [info@rockjumperbirding.com](mailto:info@rockjumperbirding.com)  
• [www.rockjumperbirding.com](http://www.rockjumperbirding.com)  
Southwestern Research Station  
• 520-558-2396 • [research.amnh.org/swrs](http://research.amnh.org/swrs)  
Solipaso Tours • [www.solipaso.com](http://www.solipaso.com)  
Tropical Birding • 800-348-5941  
• [www.tropicalbirding.com](http://www.tropicalbirding.com)

### SILVER

\*Cox Communications  
Fiore Tile Works • 520-971-0677  
Loews Ventana Canyon  
• 520-299-2020 • [www.loewshotels.com](http://www.loewshotels.com)  
The Oasis at Way Out West  
• 520-825-4590 • [www.wowarizona.com](http://www.wowarizona.com)  
Pima Federal Credit Union • 520-887-5010

### COPPER

Bed and Bagels of Tucson • 520-603-1580  
Brooklyn Pizza Company • 520-622-6868  
Casa Adobe B&B in Rodeo, NM • 877-577-2275  
Casa de San Pedro B&B • [www.bedandbirds.com](http://www.bedandbirds.com)  
Cat Mountain Lodge • 520-578-6068  
Down By the River B&B • 520-720-9441  
Farhang & Medcoff, PLLC • 520-790-5433  
Farmers Investment Co (FICO) • [sahuaritafarms.com](http://sahuaritafarms.com)  
Financial Architects • [www.financial-architects.com](http://www.financial-architects.com)  
Hughes Federal Credit Union • 520-794-8341  
Inn at San Ignacio Condo Hotel • 1-888-450-5444  
Kimberlyn Drew, Realtor • 520-237-1408  
Leica Sport Optics  
The Living Fence • 520-795-5300  
Metropolitan Tucson Convention & Visitors Bureau • [VisitTucson.org](http://VisitTucson.org)  
Naturalist Journeys • 866-900-1146  
Quailway Cottage • 520-558-0019  
Radisson Suites Tucson • 520-721-7100  
Ravens-Way Wild Journeys • 520-425-6425  
Shaffer Dry Cleaning & Laundry • [shafferdrycleaning.com](http://shafferdrycleaning.com)  
Sierra Vista Ranch • Sasabe, AZ  
Spirit Tree Inn B&B • 520-394-0121  
Sundance Press • 800-528-4827  
Swaim Assoc. Ltd Architects AIA • [www.swaimaia.com](http://www.swaimaia.com)  
Tucson Electric Power • [www.tep.com](http://www.tep.com)  
Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson • 520-795-9955 ■

## THE TAS-IFIEDS CLASSIFIED ADS

Classified and display ads are accepted from individual members and members of our Birds & Business Alliance. Visit [tucsonaudubon.org/vfly](http://tucsonaudubon.org/vfly) for rates or contact Matt Griffiths [mgriffiths@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:mgriffiths@tucsonaudubon.org) to book an ad.

**BIRDS & BEER** Third Thursdays at Sky Bar: 5-7 PM. Get a free slice of pizza (from Brooklyn Pizza) and beer at happy hour prices. Bring your bird photos on a USB stick or disk to share.

**DID YOU KNOW** a National Historic Trail exists in your back yard? The Anza Expedition passed through the Santa Cruz River Valley in October 1775 to colonize San Francisco. The Anza Trail Coalition of Arizona provides stewardship for the Anza Trail in Arizona. Support your community history & recreation [www.AnzaTrail.com](http://www.AnzaTrail.com)

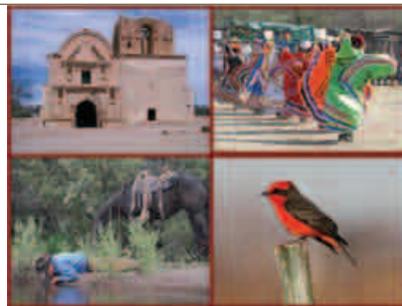
**FOR RENT.** Small cabin on beautiful, secluded, Blue River in Eastern Arizona. Tall pines. 6200' elevation. Excellent hiking and birding. Sleeps 2 ONLY. Small bath and kitchen, utilities included. Near Alpine, AZ. \$350/week, \$1000/month. Call 480-488-3006 or email [peggyalexander@q.com](mailto:peggyalexander@q.com).

**THE OASIS AT WAY OUT WEST** B&B/Private Nature Preserve. A secluded trail side location offers close-up wildlife observation and colorful mountain sunsets. Bird our trails (135+ House List) or the Catalinas. 20+ feeding stations, Naturalist/Photographer on-site, Wi-Fi, Hydrotherapy spas, Bike rentals, Eco-Excursions. [WOWArizona.com](http://WOWArizona.com). 520.825.4590.

Visit [tucsonaudubon.org](http://tucsonaudubon.org) for updates and more.

### SOUTH AMERICAN BIRDING SPECIALS.

**Active birding tours: ECUADOR:** Santa Lucia, Antisana NP, Guango and San Isidro Lodges. Expert guides, Spectacular scenery, Beautiful Lodges, Fabulous birds. 11day/12night = \$1775, 10day/9night = \$1300. **COLOMBIA:** Chingaza NP, Magdalena and Cauca Valley's 15 days = \$2913. For information contact; Sally Johnsen (520) 399-4050 [Empidonax@netzero.net](mailto:Empidonax@netzero.net)



### NATURE & HERITAGE FESTIVAL 2012

*Birding & History along the  
Santa Cruz*  
Classes, Tours, and Workshops

May 3 - 6, 2012  
Espendor Resort, Rio Rico

[www.SantaCruzHeritage.org/  
HeritageFestival2012](http://www.SantaCruzHeritage.org/HeritageFestival2012)

## Support Tucson Audubon... Become a Friend Today!

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Individual        | <i>Contributor</i> \$100 <input type="checkbox"/>        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Family            | <i>Supporter</i> \$250 <input type="checkbox"/>          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Senior Supporter* | <i>Guardian</i> \$500 <input type="checkbox"/>           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Student*          | <i>Steward</i> \$1000 <input type="checkbox"/>           |
|   | <i>Leadership Circle</i> \$2500 <input type="checkbox"/> |
- \*Individual

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- New membership  Renewing membership
- Please email me about Tucson Audubon events and conservation issues.
- Please do not share my contact information.
- Please do not mail me *Vermilion Flycatcher*. I'll read it online.

### DONATION

- I would like to support Tucson Audubon Society with an additional contribution of  \$25  \$50  \$100  \$250.
- Tucson Audubon Frequent Flyer Monthly Donor Program: I authorize the charge of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month for \_\_\_\_\_ months to my credit card (\$10/month minimum).

Tucson Audubon Society will use the full amount of your tax-deductible gift for its environmental, educational and recreational programs.

### METHOD OF PAYMENT

- Check (payable to Tucson Audubon Society)
- MasterCard  Visa  AMEX

Credit Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your application with payment to  
Tucson Audubon Society,  
300 E. University Blvd, #120,  
Tucson, AZ 85705  
(Attn: Jean Barchman,  
Membership Coordinator)  
OR join, renew or donate online at  
[www.tucsonaudubon.org](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org)



# TUCSON AUDUBON NATURE SHOPS

Tucson Audubon's Nature Shops provide for your needs in natural history books and guides, birding optics and accessories, and gifts right here in Tucson. We offer a great selection, the best prices, and member discounts. Remember to shop locally.

## Get Geared Up for **B**irdathon!

### The Tucson Audubon Nature Shops can help.

Below are some items to consider when planning your Birdathon:

- **Binoculars!** The Nature Shop can help you get set up with a pair that is right for you to enhance your Birdathon day with great views of the birds!

### Where to go? How to plan your Birdathon?

These tools can help:

- A copy of **Finding Birds in Southeast Arizona 8th Edition**—This will get you everywhere you need to go for an official Big Day, or for a fun-filled day with friends. \$24.95 (\$22.46 for members!)
- **Arizona Atlas and Gazetteer**—The best road map for your vehicle—it covers all the main streets and the back roads—and all of those nooks and crannies to find the birds. \$19.95
- Looking for a simple guide that highlights the main birding locations in southeast Arizona? Pick up a copy of the **Southeast Arizona Birding Trail map**. It will highlight for you the main birding hot spots and the main roads to get there for your Birdathon planning. \$3.00



### New to birding and the Birdathon?

These items will get you started in identifying the birds and tracking them on your Birdathon day:

- **A birding field guide**—Your choice from the classic Peterson or Kaufman guides to more recent versions of National Geographic, Sibley, or Princeton. Any are sure to help you in making a positive identification. \$18.95 and up.
- **Tucson Audubon's Checklist to Birds of Southeast Arizona**—Keep track of your bird sightings on Birdathon with this easy checklist. Purchase one for every member of the team and use to compare notes at the end of your Birdathon day! Updated 2011. \$0.75



### Don't forget the essentials for birding in the southeast Arizona desert

- A Sunday Afternoon **sun protection hat**. \$20 and up. UPF 50.
- A Sunday Afternoon **sun protection shirt** for men or women. \$59 and \$56. UPF 40.
- A Tucson Audubon **stainless steel water bottle** to keep hydrated. \$15–\$16.



### NESTS & NESTING BOOKS

**AVAILABLE IN OUR NATURE SHOPS:** Learn more about how birds design, engineer, and build the nests they do, and discover how to identify nests that you see. We have books on birds' eggs and nestlings too, for adults and kids.



## Great Binoculars for Budding Young Naturalists

Kowa YF 6x30. \$99.00 (TAS member price)

Children often struggle with using binoculars because they are designed for adults. They're often too large for their smaller faces and hands and are too hard to adjust and focus. Kids often have a lot of difficulty even finding the subject in the limited field of view offered by our standard 8X42 binoculars.

Kowa designed the **Kowa YF 6x30** with small faces in mind. Despite the binocular's smaller size (making it easier for smaller hands to hold), these are not "travel" mini-binoculars, but fully-fledged birding binoculars with a number of useful features, including:

- Small interpupillary distance, for eyes as close as two inches apart
- Long eye relief, 20 mm, making it easier and more comfortable to get one's eyes up to them, even with glasses
- Light weight: 16.5 oz., our lightest birding binocular in the shop



- Very large field-of-view: 420 ft @ 1000 yds, making it easier to find the subject quickly
- Over-sized, easily-turned focusing wheel
- And a great low price for binoculars with this quality at just under \$100.

They're waterproof and have diopter adjustment just as you would expect on any better binocular, so you can buy them with the confidence that they'll last. They are backed by Kowa's limited lifetime warranty too.

Don't think these binoculars are just for kids though; many adults will also like this binocular for their own use, given the compact size, light weight, and great field-of-view. If you're looking for a gift for a child whose interest in nature you want to encourage or perhaps a second pair of compact and easy-to-use binoculars for yourself, stop into the shop and take a look at the Kowa YF 6x30's.

Tim Helentjaris

## CAN YOU HELP?

The Tucson Audubon Education Program is hoping to update our binocular kits for both youth and adults to enjoy. Currently, we have two kits of binoculars that we loan out to classrooms and field trips or events. They are mostly used by beginning birders to both learn how to use binoculars and also to learn to enjoy birds and nature. Our kits are in need of updating and repair. Many of the optics in the kits are old and out of alignment, heavy, or difficult to use especially for small hands. In order to increase our effectiveness in promoting the enjoyment of birds, we need updated binoculars!

**YES!** Donate your current pair of optics\* and receive an additional 10% above your Member discount on your purchase of a new pair through the Tucson Audubon Nature Shop.

\*Please no donated optics larger than 8x42.

Optics should be in **GOOD** shape and easy to use, and should come with a case and a strap.

**OR** Purchase one of these styles of optics for donation to upgrade our kits at our **SPECIAL DONATION PRICE (SDP)**:

- Youth optics kit—Kowa YF 6x30, Member Price \$99.00, **SDP** \$90.00. These optics are smaller and lighter than a standard pair, making it much easier for kids to hold and focus. The 6x magnification allows kids to find birds much easier with a wider field of view.
- Adult optics kit—Nikon Action EX 8x40, Member Price \$119.99, **SDP** \$110
- Vortex Raptor 6.5x42s, Member Price \$119.99, **SDP** \$110.00

Stop by our Nature Shop (the University Location or Agua Caliente Park) to make your purchase or donation. Your purchase/donation is tax deductible. **THANK YOU!**

## Binocular Drawing Winner!

The winner of our binocular raffle at the Fourth Annual Tucson Festival of Books is Joanne Wilson of Tucson. Joanne won a Vortex Diamondbacks 8x42 and a year's membership in Tucson Audubon. Congratulations, Joanne. Thanks to everyone who participated in this drawing and visited both of our booths. ■



Visit [tucsonaudubon.org](http://tucsonaudubon.org) for updates and more.

## EARTH DAY SALE! Saturday April 21st only

20% off entire purchase  
of \$40 or more

15% off purchases under \$40

For any customer who does one or more of the following:

- Arrives at our shop via bicycle, bus, or hybrid vehicle, or on foot
- Purchases a recycled bird seed feeder\*
- Purchases a copy of our *Finding Birds* book (printed on recycled paper).
- Purchases a recycled cotton Tucson Audubon t-shirt\*
- Purchases a reusable, stainless steel Tucson Audubon water bottle
- Purchases a copy of *Rainwater Harvesting for Dry Lands\**

\*while supplies last



## NEED VOLUNTEERS IN UNIVERSITY SHOP!

**Monday:** 1–4 PM

**Saturday:** 10–1 AM, 1–4 PM, or all day!

Please contact Kara Kaczmarzyk if you'd like to join our group of Nature Shop volunteers. [volunteer@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:volunteer@tucsonaudubon.org), or 520-209-1811

## TUCSON AUDUBON NATURE SHOPS

When you support your local Tucson Audubon Society you are supporting birds and bird habitat conservation. Thank you!

### SHOP HOURS

#### MAIN SHOP

Monday–Saturday 10 AM–4 PM,  
Phone: 629-0510 ext 7015

On the southeast corner of University Blvd and 5th Avenue.

#### AGUA CALIENTE PARK SHOP

January–March:  
Thursday, Friday, Saturday  
10 AM–2:30 PM  
Phone: 760-7881

From Tanque Verde Rd and Houghton, continue east on Tanque Verde 2 miles. Turn left (north) onto Soldier Trail, continue north for 2 miles. Turn right (east) onto Roger Rd, continue ¼ mile to the park entrance on the left (north).

**When you need a book, think of  
Tucson Audubon Nature Shops first!  
Support your local book store.**



300 E University Blvd, #120  
Tucson, AZ 85705

Change Service Requested

**Vermilion Flycatcher**

Volume 57, Number 2, April–June 2012

© 2012 Tucson Audubon Society

The *Vermilion Flycatcher* is the newsletter of the Tucson Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society. National Audubon Society members and members of other chapters may receive the *Flycatcher* by becoming a Friend of Tucson Audubon. See membership at [www.tucsonaudubon.org](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org).



NON-PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
TUCSON, AZ  
PERMIT #1345



# MAKE A DATE WITH NATURE

## Birdathon 2012

**APRIL  
20–29**

**Expert-led trips** for advanced and beginning birders

April 20: **BIEBER'S BLUEBIRDS** with Gavin Bieber

April 21: **GONZO BIRDERS** with John Yerger

April 22: **SWEETWATER** Family Outing

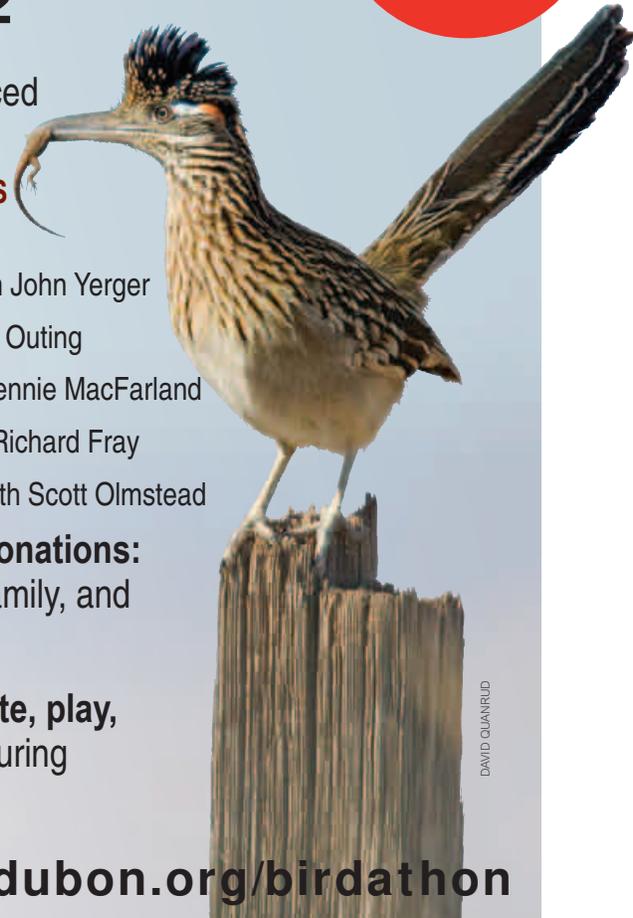
April 25: **WRENEGADES** with Jennie MacFarland

April 28: **BIRDS OF FRAY** with Richard Fray

April 29: **SCOTT'S ORIOLES** with Scott Olmstead

**\$150–\$250 Give or Get donations: JUST ASK** your friends, family, and colleagues for support!

**Bird, dine, pledge, compete, play,** photograph, volunteer, all during Birdathon 2012!



DAVID QUANRUD

Details at [tucsonaudubon.org/birdathon](http://tucsonaudubon.org/birdathon)

EVENTS CALENDAR page 5 • LIVING WITH NATURE page 6 • Visit [tucsonaudubon.org](http://tucsonaudubon.org) for event updates