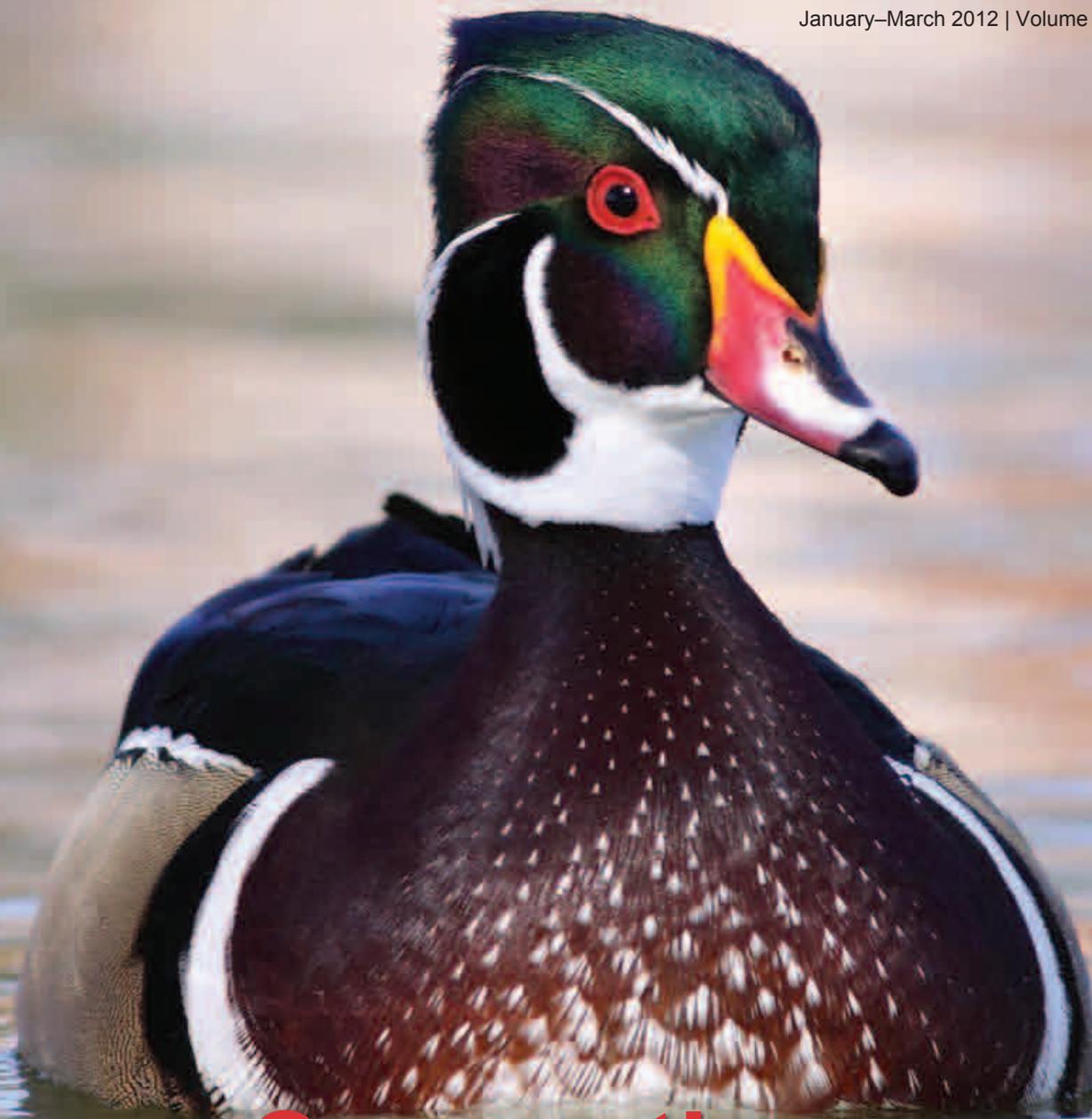


THE QUARTERLY NEWS MAGAZINE OF TUCSON AUDUBON SOCIETY | TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG

Vermilion

FLYCATCHER

January–March 2012 | Volume 57, Number 1



Connections

Connecting the Dots:
IBAs Provide a Conservation Framework

Migration: Southern Arizona's Year-round Spectacle

What's in a Name? Ring-necked Duck



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

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(January–March)

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Features

- 11 Migration: Southern Arizona's Year-round Spectacle
- 12 Connecting the Dots: IBAs Provide a Conservation Framework
- 17 What's in a Name? Ring-necked Duck

Departments

- 3 Commentary
- 4 Events and Classes
- 5 Events Calendar
- 8 News Roundup
- 18 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: Wood Duck at Fort Lowell Park in Tucson by Tom Ryan. View more of his images at flickr.com/photos/thomasryan.

To have your photographs considered for use in the *Vermilion Flycatcher*, please contact Matt Griffiths at mgriffiths@tucsonaudubon.org.

Why There is No Balance of Nature

Prof. John Kricher, Wheaton College, Massachusetts. 2012 Gala Speaker

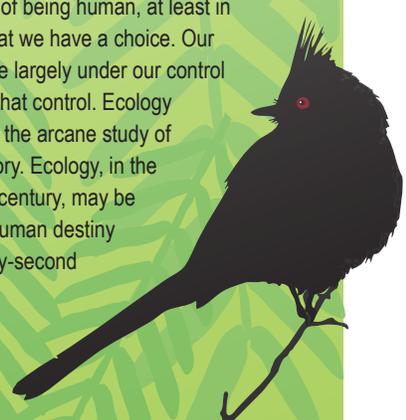
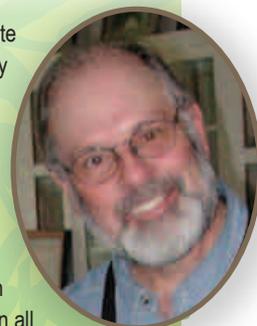
Any form of biology is, in reality, a branch of evolutionary biology. Failure to have some understanding of how evolution works makes understanding biology, and today, understanding what is happening in the world, very difficult. Ecologists study how Earth's ecosystems function. The relevance of this information goes well beyond the ivory towers of academe. It should be part of every educated citizen's understanding of his or her world.

A couple of years ago I wrote a book. It was called *The Balance of Nature: Ecology's Enduring Myth*. I wrote it for a broad audience, particularly readers who thrive intellectually by seeing connection among various disciplines such as philosophy, history, and the sciences. Ecology has deep philosophical roots, especially in the study of natural history, and has enjoyed a vigorous growth in the previous century. Hopefully it will distinguish itself in the present century.

I have studied and taught ecology for nearly four decades and I am opinionated about it. I tell my students that questions dealing with ecology will accompany their lives throughout the present century. The Earth's collective biodiversity is experiencing its sixth major extinction event since multicellular life first evolved. It is also passing

through a period of rapid climate changes, a change that is likely forced by anthropogenic actions. The natural world of the twenty-first century may bear little resemblance to that that of recent centuries. We have entered the Anthropogenic era in which human influence is pervasive in all ecosystems.

I hope to set you on the path to understanding the connections between evolution, ecology, and other areas of human thought and the realization that "nothing endures but change." However, some changes are better than others, and the great virtue of being human, at least in theory, is that we have a choice. Our destinies are largely under our control if we seize that control. Ecology is no longer the arcane study of natural history. Ecology, in the twenty-first century, may be the key to human destiny in the twenty-second century and beyond. ■



COMMENTARY

PAUL GREEN | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Connections

Migrating Birds Show the Way

It is a real thrill for a bird bander to receive news of any recovery or recapture of a bird they have banded (especially when the bird is found alive). Can you imagine how Fred Dietrich felt when he got the news that a Rufous Hummingbird he had banded in Tallahassee, Florida, in January of 2010 was found later that year in Chenega, Alaska? The bird's flight breaks all previous distance records for migrating hummingbirds. One wonders what route it took to get from Florida to Alaska.

This one specific migration record is a point of light in the hugely amazing phenomenon of bird migration in our region during which millions of birds move between their breeding and wintering grounds each year. Every species studied yields unique and fascinating stories of how animals adapt to changing circumstances. Arizona has some rather interesting phenomena around migration, including the importance of suitable stopover sites for birds that interrupt their migration to molt. Jennie MacFarland, our Important Bird Areas (IBA) Coordinating Biologist, presents some of these facts on p 14. We'll be inviting those in our community who know most about bird migration through Arizona to write for these pages in the coming issues.

Bird migration is a process fraught with danger for birds, and many of the threats to the completion of a successful

migration are the result of human activities. As conservationists, we need to understand how we can be most effective at helping birds by identifying and addressing these threats.

Of course, what we observe in Arizona is a small part of a much larger process. While our conservation actions are necessarily local in implementation they have to be at least continental-scale in planning. For example, the long-distance flights of birds depend upon energy stores for flight and most species need to stop to refuel on their journey. Knowing the most important stopover sites for each species, and protecting these sites and their productivity, has to be a key element of any strategy to help migratory birds.

How does Tucson Audubon become an effective player on the continental scale?

In a happy coincidence, major planning efforts by National Audubon and by Tucson Audubon have been happening in parallel over the last year. Understanding the unrealized potential of the chapter network, the new leadership team at National Audubon has been piecing together a new framework for collaboration to create a more effective conservation network.

A new vision puts migration pathways central to a coordinated approach to grassroots bird conservation, with our IBA program providing the sites where people connect with birds through conservation



and education work. Arizona's 42 Important Bird Areas become linked with those in other states, and in nations south of our border, and become focal points for support of bird species targeted as being in need of special conservation action.

Chapters in neighboring states can work together through their IBA programs to help sustain migration routes for birds.

The draft National Audubon plan builds on this Flyway-IBA framework with some additional "cross cutting" initiatives. These include Creating Bird-Friendly Communities (Urban Oases), Supporting Healthy Climate for Birds and People (addressing climate change), and Putting Farms, Ranches, and Forests to Work for Birds. All of these feature in Tucson Audubon's draft Strategic Plan that will be completed this winter.

The Florida to Alaska migration of the Rufous Hummingbird was an inspiration for our appeal to you to help build the strength of the Important Bird Areas program, as well as the education and conservation work that will become an increasing focus on these sites. Thank you for your donations, which have been very generous this season.

We know that many of our members have yet to make a gift to Tucson Audubon to support our work in conservation and education. I encourage you to give it a go this year. A small gift, of \$10 or \$25, contributes to the welfare of our birds and your quality of life. You'll feel great when you mail your check (just try it and see, and you can deduct it from your income tax!).

Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you at Dr. Bill Mannan's talk on urban birds of prey on Monday, January 9 at 7:00 PM at the University Medical Center at 1501 N Campbell Ave. in Tucson to thank you in person. And don't miss Dr. Jonathan Overpeck's talk on Climate Change and Tucson on February 13; see p 7 for details of both talks. ■

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD, JIM & DEVA BURNS, WWW.JIMBURNSPHOTOS.COM

MAP: BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA ONLINE, HTTP://BNA.BIRDS.CORNELL.EDU/BNA, MAINTAINED BY CORNELL LAB OF ORNITHOLOGY | RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD: JOHN KENNEDY



TUCSON AUDUBON EVENTS AND CLASSES

Tucson Audubon's Specialty Workshops

February 1, 2012 – May 2, 2012



HARRISS HAWK, JOAN GELLATLY; SAVANNAH SPARROW, LARRY SELMAN; MOSTLY BIRDS.COM; WOOD DUCK, JOAN GELLATLY

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. Each class consists of a Wednesday evening class followed by a Saturday field trip. Pick and choose several! Instructors: Homer Hansen, Larry Liese (Ducks and Geese), William Mannan (Protection of Raptors in Urban Tucson), Lynn Hassler (Birds of Mt. Lemmon).

This spring, we are offering **two raptor workshops** that if taken together, will give you an in-depth overview of identification techniques, in-flight, perching and nesting behaviors, life history, population monitoring, and how you can participate in their conservation and protection. Both workshops complement each other. First learn about identification and observable behaviors with Homer Hansen in February and then in March, Bill Mannan will teach you about how these birds have adapted to live in

urban environments, how we monitor their populations, the inherent challenges hawks and owls face in our city, and opportunities to engage in their protection. Both workshops include a classroom and field trip component. **SIGN UP FOR BOTH AND RECEIVE A 10% DISCOUNT THROUGH JANUARY 31ST!**

Raptors: February 8 & 11 with Homer Hansen

A favorite among birdwatchers, raptors impress us with their size and speed. Though there are not many species of raptors, identification challenges arise from variations in their plumages due to age, subspecies or color morphs. In this workshop, you will learn to recognize species apart from their plumages and learn behaviors that aid in their identification. The importance of a raptor's wing shape and its influence on flight and behavior and other physiological features will be presented. This workshop covers 28 species of raptors that can be found in the southwest.

Protecting the Health and Habitat of Hawks and Owls in Urban Tucson: March 21 & 24 with Bill Mannan

This workshop will cover basic biology and ecology of the large predatory birds that live in Tucson—the Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Harris's Hawk and Great Horned Owl. The classroom session will focus on the challenges that predatory birds face when they live in urban areas; the timing of nesting activities; how to locate nests; and the field methods for capturing and marking predatory birds for the purpose of monitoring populations. The workshop will include a field trip to visit 4–5 study sites where you will learn about field methods and how to actively participate in a local, long-term ongoing raptor monitoring program.

Full Specialty Workshop Schedule for 2012

Sparrows: February 1 & 4: \$110 members/\$145 non-members

Raptors: February 8 & 11: \$110 members/\$145 non-members

Ducks and Geese: February 15 & 18: \$55 members/\$90 non-members

Protecting the Health of Hawks and Owls in Urban Tucson: March 21 & 24: \$55 members/\$90 non-members

Birds of Mt. Lemmon: April 21 & 28: \$90 members/\$125 non-members

Birding by Ear: May 2 & 5: \$110 members/\$145 non-members

See our website for class times, locations and registration information:
www.tucsonaudubon.org/education

eBird Workshop in Tucson

March 24, 2012. \$25.
Reservation required.

You've probably been hearing a lot about  lately, the website and online birding tool that is changing the face of modern birding. eBird is an internet-based checklist program, built for birders by birders, whose goal is to harness the power of both birding and science.

eBird allows you to keep track of your bird records online and share them with the birding community, while making them available for science and conservation efforts. eBird allows birders to post sightings, keep life lists, and manage their personal records. eBird is also a remarkable tool to learn more about birds and birding.

We have invited eBird Project Leader Brian Sullivan to teach this workshop which we present in partnership with the Arizona Field Ornithologists. At the half-day workshop you will learn what eBird is, why it's important for you to add your checklists, what it can do for you as a birder, and how to get started.

We look forward to welcoming you as we experience this remarkable tool. It's a great way to make your observations count!

eBird is a project of National Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

The workshop is limited to 72 people. Deadline for registration is March 10, 2012. Register online or contact Bété Pfister at bpfister@tucsonaudubon.org or 629-0510 x 7012.

REGISTRATION DISCOUNTS

Register for both raptor workshops and receive a 10% discount!

Receive **gift certificates** from our Nature Shop when you register for classes and workshops this spring! See www.tucsonaudubon.org/workshops for details



MATT BROOKS

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR SUITE OF EDUCATION CLASSES, PLEASE VISIT
WWW.TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG/EDUCATION

Tucson Audubon's Flagship Education Program: The Institute of Desert Ecology

April 19–22, 2012

If you have ever thought about enrolling in the Institute of Desert Ecology, this is it! Inspiring people for 42 years, the Institute of Desert Ecology takes a small number of participants on a journey of discovery through the Sonoran Desert's dynamic and surprising ecological relationships. The program and instructors have been described by past participants as: "Life changing...", "An unforgettable experience...", "Teachers with warmth, humor, brilliance..."

The faculty of eminent scientist-teachers have ten to forty years of experience with the institute. They lead small groups into the field during a 4-day workshop in the Catalina Mountains to examine the interactions of the native wildlife, plants and landscape. Whether you consider yourself an expert or a rookie naturalist, you will come away from this program with new knowledge

and a sense of wonder at the desert surrounding us. This is a wonderful chance for you to interact with like-minded, inquisitive adults in the unique landscape of southern Arizona. In our 42nd year, our amazing faculty continues to teach Sonoran Desert ecology to people from around the continent. Join us for a once-in-a-lifetime educational experience. Space is limited, so sign up today! Don't miss the opportunity! **We will not be offering another Institute of Desert Ecology until 2014!**

For more information, contact Matt Brooks, Institute Director, at 629-0510 x7007 or education@tucsonaudubon.org. Online sign-up and more information is available at www.tucsonaudubon.org/ide. Cost \$425 Tucson Audubon member, \$460 non-member. All meals and camping fees included. Forty hours of professional development credit available through the University of Arizona.



Tucson Festival of Books

March 10–11, 2012

Tucson Audubon Society will once again be participating in the ever growing Tucson Festival of Books at the University of Arizona. This year, you will find us in two different parts of the event! We will have a tent representing our Nature Shop and Membership and the vast array of birding and nature books and gifts we carry. Our other tent will be part of the newly expanded Science Pavilion in the "Citizen Science" area. At the Citizen Science tent, you can learn all about how volunteer bird surveyors are vital to the Important Bird Areas Program and how birders who enter their sightings on eBird are contributing to the knowledge base of ornithology and bird conservation. We will also have information about how folks participating in the Tucson Bird Count, Christmas Bird Counts and the Great Backyard Bird Count are contributing using citizen science. Learn how you can participate in a long-term urban raptor monitoring program in collaboration with scientists at the University, as well as other educational opportunities offered by Tucson Audubon. So come on out and join us for this terrific event. There will be a special bonus for those who visit both Tucson Audubon tents!



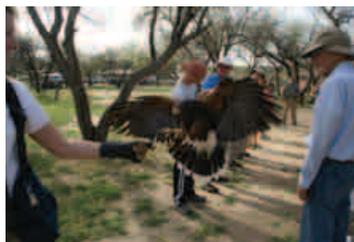
CURVE-BILLED THRASHER, JOAN GELLATLY

Field trips:

Saturdays,
January 21,
February 18; locations/times TBA

Cost: \$135 for Tucson Audubon members, \$170 for non-members.

Contact: education@tucsonaudubon.org or 629-0510 x 7012.



Backyard Birding and Beyond

January 14–February 18, 2012

Don't miss your last chance to sign up for our beginning birding class! The New Year is upon us! It is time to get out there and start birding! Learn the basics of birding from identifying species to how to use field guides and binoculars and where to go to watch birds in southeastern Arizona. Instructor Lynn Hassler, longtime

birder, educator, and noted author provides a through overview of birding for new birders. Come discover the interesting characteristics, adaptations, and charms of our local birds!

Classroom sessions: Saturdays, January 14, January 28 (NO CLASS), February 4, 11, 9:00–11:00 am; TAS offices on University Ave.

Visit tucsonaudubon.org for updates and more.

- January 7.** *Living with Nature* lecture (Green Valley): Ecuador: Andean Adventure with Doug Moore (see p 7)
- January 9.** *Living with Nature* lecture (Tucson) Urban Birds of Prey with Dr. Bill Mannan (see p 7)
- January 11–15.** Wings Over Willcox (see p 25)
- January 14–February 18.** Backyard Birding and Beyond (see below)
- January 14** More Trees Please (see p 6)
- January 16.** Martin Luther King Jr. Day Volunteer Project (see p 6)
- January 28.** Beat Back Buffelgrass Day (see p 6)
- February 1 & 4.** Specialty Workshop: Sparrows (see p 4)
- February 4.** *Living with Nature* lecture (Green Valley): Where the Chicks Hang Out with Pinau Merlin
- February 7.** Tucson Audubon's Fourth Annual Gala (see p 8 & 28)
- February 13.** *Living with Nature* lecture (Tucson): Climate Change: What Does it Mean for Tucson and the Southwest? with Dr. Jonathan Overpeck (see p 7)
- February 8 & 11.** Specialty Workshop: Raptors (see p 4)
- February 15 & 18.** Specialty Workshop: Ducks & Geese (see p 4)
- February 17 & 18.** Great Backyard Bird Count at Mason Center (see p 6)
- February 25.** Ash Canyon B&B Volunteer Project (see p 6)
- March 3.** *Living with Nature* lecture (Green Valley): Urban Birds of Prey with Dr. Bill Mannan (see p 7)
- March 10 & 11.** Tucson Festival of Books (see left):
- March 12.** *Living with Nature* lecture (Tucson): The Secret Life of Quail with Kirby Bristow (see p 7)
- March 21 & 24.** Specialty Workshop: Protecting Raptors in Urban Tucson (see p 4)
- March 24.** eBird Workshop (see p 4)
- April 3.** *Living with Nature* lecture (Green Valley): Sea Birds and Marine Mammals in Your Backyard! with Tad Pfister (see p 7)
- April 9.** *Living with Nature* lecture (Tucson): Live Birds with Anne Peyton of Liberty Wildlife (see p 7)
- April 19–22.** Institute of Desert Ecology (see left)
- April 20–29.** 25th Annual Birdathon (see p 10)
- April 22.** Earth Day at Tumacacori National Historical Park (see p 6)
- April 21 & 28.** Specialty Workshop: Birds of Mt. Lemmon (see p 4)
- May 2 & 5.** Specialty Workshop: Birding By Ear (see p 4)
- May 3–6.** Santa Cruz Nature and Heritage Festival (see p 9)
- June 16–24.** Special Birding Trip to Ecuador for Tucson Audubon Members (see p 23)

TOP AND LOWER INSET: KENDALL KROESEN; UPPER INSET: MARY BELLIN



TogetherGreen Volunteers Making a Difference

Tucson Audubon volunteers have again been doing great work for the environment at our TogetherGreen volunteer days. Tucson Audubon has a TogetherGreen grant (for the fourth year in a row!) from National Audubon for cool-season volunteer efforts. TogetherGreen is a program of National Audubon funded by Toyota. There have been five volunteer days so far this year.

On October 1 we worked with Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department to help install a trail along the south side of Arthur Pack Park. This trail is just across the street from Tucson Audubon's Mason Center, so it is an additional natural trail amenity for us as well as for park patrons, and also gives a safer place for Tortolita Middle School students to walk to and from school. We received a nice thank you letter from Supervisor Ann Day acknowledging our participation.

On October 15 we fielded a small crew to remove invasive fountain grass at Tucson Audubon's 15-acre property in Esperero Canyon. We made progress toward finishing our first sweep through the canyon bottom and set us up for a return trip on Beat Back Buffelgrass Day, January 28.

November 12 saw a big effort at Prickly Park. The park is an area being planted in a naturalistic fashion by the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society next to the Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation building. We planted an area that is to be a hummingbird-friendly garden.

On November 20 we worked with volunteers from Friends of Ft. Lowell Park and St. Gregory School to plant native grasses and shrubs next to the



pond at Ft. Lowell Park. This in an effort to improve habitat for ducks and other birds.

On December 3 we worked with volunteers from Arizona Native Plant Society and the Sierra Club, with support from the BLM, on a habitat restoration project in Ironwood Forest National Park. Several students from the U of A Department of Soil, Water and Environmental Science participated as well.

Upcoming TogetherGreen volunteer days include:

- Saturday January 14**, More Trees Please at the El Rio Open Space
- Monday January 16**, Martin Luther King Day with SASUN at Julian Wash
- Saturday January 28**, Beat Back Buffelgrass Day at Esperero Canyon
- Saturday February 25**, Ash Canyon B&B work day
- Sunday April 22**, Earth Day at Tumacacori National Historical Park

NOTE: For details, directions, and to sign up for any of the above events, contact Kara Kaczmarzyk at 520-629-0510 x7011 or volunteer@tucsonaudubon.org. All volunteers will sign a liability waiver. Please wear appropriate work clothing, work shoes, and hat, and bring a water bottle and gloves if you have them. We will provide additional water, snacks, gloves, and all the necessary tools.

*Kendall Kroesen
Habitats Program Manager*

Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)

February 17th and 18th at Tucson Audubon's Mason Center

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a great way for you to learn about counting birds, and to contribute to bird conservation. GBBC takes place every Presidents Day weekend for four days (February 17–20, 2012) and is for birders of all ages and experience. The goal is to create a real-time snapshot of how our birds are distributed across the continent, and we do this by having many thousands of people out counting birds over the weekend. You can spend as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. Then, you enter your checklist into the GBBC website (www.birdsource.org/gbbc). You can see your results appear almost immediately. Your participation is critical in helping scientists document the distribution and movement of hundreds of species in a short span of time. The information that we collect can help answer important questions regarding the health of specific populations of birds. Year by year comparisons yield fascinating outcomes that you can custom view through the GBBC website.

Tucson Audubon is making sure that the birds from southeast Arizona will be well represented in the count by offering two opportunities at our Mason Center to learn about and participate in the GBBC. Staff and experienced volunteers will be on hand to give an orientation to the

count and then lead a guided trail walk through ironwood-saguaro forest habitat. We will enter our sightings into the national database where they will be compiled with information gathered from other citizen scientists across our region and across the continent. You can take what you learn home with you and continue the count from your backyard or favorite birding destination!

On February 17th, we will be hosting a count for youth birders (ages 12–18) from 8 am–12 pm.

On February 18th, we will host a count for the general public from 8 am–12 pm. You need to register for the event, for which there is a fee of \$5.

If you enjoy GBBC, then you should **take part in our more advanced eBird training session on March 24, 2012**, being offered by Tucson Audubon, Arizona Field Ornithologists, and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (see p 4).

Come join us and make an important contribution to bird conservation! Contact Bete Pfister at education@tucsonaudubon.org or 520-629-0510 x 7012 to register or for more information.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada and sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited.



PHAINOPEPLA, JOAN GELLATLY

DORIS EVANS

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 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, 520-629-0510 x7012 or bpfister@tucsonaudubon.org, or visit tucsonaudubon.org.

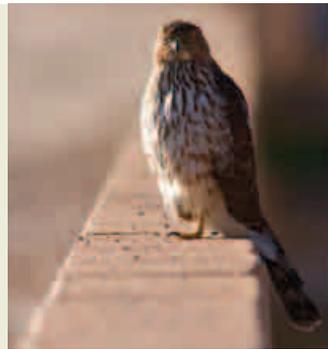
January 7 • Green Valley

ECUADOR: ANDEAN ADVENTURE: HUMMINGBIRDS, ORCHIDS, COMMUNITIES with *Doug Moore*

About the size of Arizona, Ecuador boasts one of the highest levels of biodiversity on earth, including 25,000 plant species, 1600 bird species and thousands of butterflies and moths. The country boasts 130 species of hummingbirds and more orchid species than anywhere else! With stunning photography, the program explores natural habitats and life in the west and east cordilleras of the Andes flanking the capitol of Quito, from Tropical Cloud Forest to Páramo Alpine Tundra. Here, local people work to provide a heritage for their children by conserving their lands and living sustainably with nature.



TOP TO BOTTOM: GOLDEN-TAILED SAPPHIRE, WIL SUIM; BOOTED-RACKETTAIL, M. KRÁJEVSKI; GOLDEN-HEADED QUETZAL, M. MASÁ



COOPER'S HAWK, JOAN GELLATLY

January 9 • Tucson

URBAN BIRDS OF PREY: LIVING THE CITY LIFE WITH LARGE HAWKS AND GREAT HORNED OWLS with *Dr. Bill Mannan*

Over the last two decades, predatory birds have become common residents of towns and cities across the United States. Their presence has increased the likelihood that birds and people will interact. Dr. Mannan and his students at the University of Arizona have been studying these birds in Tucson for over 20 years. Come learn about the life histories of hawks and owls, how to monitor their populations, inherent challenges in their survival and in turn, opportunities for you to engage in their protection.

Bill Mannan is a Professor of Wildlife Ecology in the School of Natural Resources and the Environment, University of Arizona, and Chair of the Wildlife and Fisheries Resources Program. He and his graduate students are currently working on a variety of subjects, but the focus is on habitat quality and population dynamics of birds in the urban environments of Tucson, Arizona.

February 4 • Green Valley

WHERE THE CHICKS HANG OUT: A GUIDE TO NESTING BIRDS with *Pinau Merlin*

Southern Arizona is one of the birding meccas in the U.S., with over 15 species of hummingbirds, and everything from Elf Owls to Elegant Trogons. Many species from Mexico reach their northern limit in southern Arizona and are not seen anywhere else in the United States. Discover why quail nest on the ground, why



CURVE-BILLED THRASHER, LARRY SELMAN, MOSTLYBIRDS.COM

desert birds "unincubate" their eggs, how turkey vultures defend themselves, how cavity nesting birds keep the nest clean and much more. Join us for a fun look at the life histories and breeding biology of Northern Caracaras, Burrowing Owls, gnatcatchers, Gila Woodpeckers, Gambel's Quail, Cactus Wrens, Roadrunners, Phainopeplas and many other species.

February 13 • Tucson

CLIMATE CHANGE: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR TUCSON AND THE SOUTHWEST? with *Dr. Jonathan Overpeck*

Last year's increase in carbon emissions to our atmosphere, an estimated extra half-billion tons, was almost certainly the largest absolute jump in any year since the Industrial Revolution, and the largest percentage increase since 2003. This trend of ever-rising emissions will make climate change an increasing challenge in coming decades. What are the particular possible outcomes for Tucson and the southwest? Water supply, food security, fire risk, habitability for people and wildlife will all be affected. Dr. Overpeck, an author in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Fifth Assessment, will tell us more.

March 3 • Green Valley

ENCORE PRESENTATION: URBAN BIRDS OF PREY: LIVING THE CITY LIFE WITH LARGE HAWKS AND GREAT HORNED OWLS with *Dr. Bill Mannan*

See the Tucson January 9 listing above for details.

March 12 • Tucson

NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE:

Arizona-Riverpark Inn, 350 S. Freeway



THE SECRET LIFE OF QUAIL with *Kirby Bristow*

Did you know that during favorable years, female Gambel's Quail will lay up to 15 eggs in a nest and leave them with a male while she courts and nests with another male. Backyard birdwatchers first described this polyandrous behavior. Learn much more about our quail species with Kirby Bristow, a Research Biologist with the Arizona Game and Fish department. His studies have focused on productivity, behavior, and habitat selection patterns of a variety of wildlife, and he has worked on quail research projects in Arizona, Texas, and Sonora, Mexico, over the past 12 years.

April 3 • Green Valley

ENCORE PRESENTATION: SEA BIRDS AND MARINE MAMMALS IN YOUR BACKYARD! with *Tad Pfister*

Join us as we explore the Gulf of California and its islands. Be amazed by its diversity of marine life including whales, dolphins, sea lions and seabirds, and the islands that support nesting seabirds such as Brown Pelican, Black and Least Storm Petrels, and Yellow-footed Gull.

Tad Pfister has been exploring the Gulf of California for more than 25 years as a student, teacher, researcher, naturalist and boatman. Tad has worked with Mexican researchers to study fin, sperm and blue whale movement patterns in the Gulf as well as assisted in sea bird research projects on San Pedro Martir, Rasa and Alcatraz Islands.

April 9 • Tucson

LIVE BIRDS with *Anne Peyton of Liberty Wildlife*.

TUCSON AUDUBON NEWS ROUNDUP

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Dan Adams, Ann Aust, Bed and Bagles of Tucson, Joseph Brinnig, David & Rosemary Brown, Hal Busch & Ruth Morton, Jill Cartwright, Carmen & Walt Christy, David Clark, Judith & John Clark, Kathy & Kenny Cook, Tanya Curington, Kathryn DeBoo, Ray Deeney, Elinor Engelhard, Ronald Feller, Nelson & Margaret Gingerich, Janice & John Gisler, Joan Goodenough, Carol Hegre, Fern Hieb, Twila Hulbert, Pam Hyde-Nakai, Inn at San Ignacio Condo Hotel, Doug Johnson, Kara Kaczmarzyk, Allen Klus, Travis Knowles, Amanda Kulberg, Marlene Lasko, Ana Lockhart, Curt & Alice Lund, Deanna MacPhail, Stanley Magill, Alan McBride, Bette McKolskey, John McLain, Metropolitan Tucson Convention & Visitors Bureau, Marge Mora-Brown, Vic Nelson, Nancy Nevitt & Vladimir Kaczurkin, Kendu Outlaw, Lorinda Paca, Erika Parrino, Lisa Partin, Robert & Patricia Pearson, Marlene Peterson, Timothy Preso, Liz Prohaska, Elizabeth Record, Clark Rogers, Mavis Rosell, Art Schaub, Elsa Schaub, Molly Scheffe, Alan Schmierer, Karen Simms, Joseph Sitter, Kim Skavari, Mary Lu Sketchley, Sandra Smith, Maia Stark, William Stewart, Mary Strohm, Karen Swenson, Brad Tatham, Tortolita Middle School, Mike Walstad, Carolyn Webb, Charles & Carole West

We welcome the Bed and Bagles of Tucson, Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Inn at San Ignacio Condo Hotel as Copper Level Birds & Business Alliance members.

Jean Barchman, Membership Coordinator

Happy Birthday!



Best wishes to our January birthday members:

Maia Stark, Paddy Walsh, Wanda Wynne, Ann Roscoe, Becky Aparicio, Joan Blumberg, Mary Bogus, Art Weiner, Gayle Brown, Stella Hotchkiss, Jerry Ogden, Joeine Green, Scott Olmstead, Joel Gilb, Mark Nall, Jan Bell, Ann Penton, Ferran Eales, Craig Marken, Alta Sailer, Betty Blackstock, Stephen Herron, Janice Shaughnessy, Janet Baker, Sarah Prasek, Judith Reeve, David Robinson, Nate Gwinn, Carol Gawrychowski, Diane Monnier, Emily Rhoads, Holly Finstrom, Sue Robinson, Helen Hensley, James Weiss

Best wishes to our February birthday members:

Carl Conney, Donald Edwards, Martha Anderson, Paul Green, Vic Nelson, Pacifica Summers, Jean Close, Betty McAnany, Marilyn Ruckman, Gary Gustafson, Joanne Hogan, Margaret Pearson, Dennis Weeks, Sam Campana, Sarah Grubaugh, Maureen Hughes, Elaine Fass, Roger Eastman, Janice Nicol, Lynn Jarrett, Jennifer Barnacastle, Kathy Little, Ivan Whitesel, Jefferson Carter, Shawn Everingham, Pete Baum, Heather Hatch, Dar Wright, Ann Sprague, Judy Calvert, Dottie Eshbaugh, Marga Raskin, Roger Tess, Melanie Alvarez

Best wishes to our March birthday members:

Martha Carr, Larry Curry, Pauline Fuus, Carl Kanun, Devona Painter, Joyce Wong, Eleanor Wilkerson, Michael Habib, Samuel Blakesley, Donna Marchinetti, Sara Pike, Bernard Cohen, Frank Kipper, John Milbauer, Michael Hall, Tory Syracuse, Karen Zipser, Shirley Helmerson, Jennie Scott, Helen Clark, Patricia Patten, Charles Warner, David Bass, Ray Miller, Steven Burke, Nancy Wieduvtl, William Grove, James Sugg, Larry Lee, Rita Smalling, Alondra Telles-Waite

We wish to thank Peter Bengtson and Brad Paxton for their generous donations to the birthday fund.

Have you remembered Tucson Audubon Society in your estate planning? Please let us know.

Gala Returns *Our Changing World*

with Special Guest John Kricher

February 7, 2012, 5:30pm • Loews Ventana Canyon

Change is the one constant in natural systems. Our guest speaker John Kricher, noted researcher, teacher, and author, has made change the central theme to one of his recent books. In fact, as he will share with us in his address at the Gala, the balance of nature is no more than an enduring myth. Constant change is the reality of nature.

Please join us as we celebrate our 4th Annual Gala on Tuesday February 7 at the fabulous Loews Ventana Canyon Resort. A no-host cocktail hour, live music by Entre Peruanos, and an exciting silent auction will precede a gourmet dinner in the Grand Ballroom. Enjoy a live raptor free-flight, great company, and a thought-provoking keynote presentation by John Kricher, author of *The Balance of Nature*. We hope you will become a part of this special Tucson Audubon tradition.

Tickets are \$150 each and \$1500 tables for 10 are available only to Friends of Tucson Audubon. Corporate sponsorship packages are offered from \$2000.

To reserve your seats, please call Jean Barchman at 520-209-1802 or Erin Olmstead at 520-209-1809 today!



Mason Center Windows Dedication



In January 2011 our board chair, Cynthia Pruett, challenged all members to replace the fourteen 60-year-old windows in Tucson Audubon's Mason Center with new thermally efficient units. By early summer you had achieved this goal—thank you for your generosity! On November 6 we welcomed many members who had donated funds for the windows to a thank you event at the Mason Center. Included in the group photo are Chris and Doug McVie, who have been the primary force behind the planning and development of the Mason Center site for the last 15 years. Also present were family members of the late Cynthia Lindquist who had a window dedicated to her memory. Ceramic commemorative plaques were made by Tucson Audubon Birds & Business Alliance member David Fiore-McMahon, who also sponsored one of the new windows. This event also marked the launch of the new eighth edition of Tucson Audubon's *Finding Birds in Southeast Arizona*.

BOTH PHOTOS CRAIG MARKEN

PAUL & ENGLI GREEN

Volunteer News Roundup

Kara Kaczmarzyk, Volunteer & Development Coordinator

Hello All

Volunteers of Tucson Audubon Society are amazing! In the last two months since I was hired, I've had the distinct pleasure of meeting many of you and seeing much of the great work you accomplish. In return, I'm working on more ways to recognize your service, getting more opportunities, and growing this support net. My door is always open, so if you have any suggestions or thoughts, please send them my way!

Volunteer Needs

Contact volunteer@tucsonaudubon.org or 520-629-0510 x 7011

TogetherGreen

- Jan. 14th — Plant trees at Marana Borrow Pits
 - Jan. 16th — Second annual MLK Day Buffelgrass removal, all ages!
 - Jan. 28th — Beat back Buffelgrass in Esperero Canyon
 - Feb. 25th — Ash Canyon
- See p 6 for details.

Wings Over Willcox

Jan. 11–15th — Spread the news about TAS at this festival. Volunteers needed to assist with outreach or sales.

Our Changing World — Tucson Audubon Gala

Jan–Feb — Help with silent auction procurement, decorations, and setup for the Feb. 7th event (see p 8)

Great Backyard Bird Count

Feb. 17–18th — Help schools and individuals to count birds, enter their finds online, and use the amazing results review tools (see p 7).

Festival of Books

Mar. 10–11th — Entice passing authors, publishers and the reading public to learn more about Tucson Audubon Society during this family-friendly community event (see p 5).

Birdathon

Apr. 20–29th — Many diverse opportunities to help during this exciting week of competition and fundraising (see p 10).

Santa Cruz Nature & Heritage Festival

May 3–6th — Join us for Tucson Audubon Society's first appearance at this festival.

Press and Publicity

Develop and spearhead publicity efforts to give Tucson Audubon a vibrant presence in press, radio, TV, social media, and the web.

There are many more ways to learn, meet new people, and contribute to a better birding world through volunteering at Tucson Audubon Society. If you have an interest, let us know and chances are we'll have an opportunity for you!

Welcome Kara

Kara Kaczmarzyk joined Tucson Audubon in the fall of 2011 as Volunteer and Development Coordinator. Before this, Kara worked in a number of development positions at nonprofit organizations in Arizona, New Jersey and New York City.

With a background in the arts, Kara works to get new people from a variety of backgrounds engaged in Tucson Audubon's goals of conservation, education, and recreation. A lifelong vegetarian, Kara grew up in rural Arizona and is constantly amazed by the everyday

opportunities to witness and appreciate the nature that surrounds us here.

Kara is new to birding, but is starting to identify southeastern Arizona birds outside her window at our Mason Center. She is excited to learn all she can about birding and work with the dedicated, passionate Tucson Audubon volunteers! Kara received a Bachelors Degree in Art History and Italian Language from the University of Arizona.



The Tucson Audubon Society is pleased to award **Liz Harrison** with the **2011 Volunteer of the Year Award** for her hard work and dedication to the organization and the field! Liz has been a Tucson Audubon Society volunteer since the Agua Caliente Nature Shop first opened, but this year, she went above and beyond the traditional volunteer duties and the Agua Caliente Nature Shop could not have prospered without her. With insight into just what makes Liz so special, Becky Aparicio says that "She was the only one willing to take up the challenge. I can't say enough about a woman who dedicates herself to us and other community organizations so thoroughly." Sara Pike adds, "Liz has a positive attitude and cares so much about her volunteer work."

As if she's not busy enough at Tucson Audubon Society, Liz also finds time to volunteer with school reading readiness, community events, as a master gardener with the University of Arizona Pima County Extension office, and in the Pima County Education department. A Maryland native, Liz has lived in Tucson for 18 years and became a birder after working in our Nature Shop. Liz especially likes seeing Phainopeplas in flight and has even converted her husband Rick Edwards into a birder (he likes finding hawks around town). In addition, Liz enjoys hiking, traveling, cooking, reading, and playing with her 2-year-old German Shepherd, Sheba. As for her favorite place to



bird, Liz loves Agua Caliente Park because it is so close by and one never knows what might be found there, especially during spring and fall migrations. Once, as Liz was releasing a pack rat from a trap near the entrance to Agua Caliente Park, a Harris's Hawk swooped down to catch the rat. Although the hawk missed the rat, it was so close that Liz felt the swoop!

About the Award

Every year, the Tucson Audubon Society selects one volunteer to receive this honor. A number of factors affect the selection of the unique individual. A Tucson Audubon Society Volunteer of the Year is one who has demonstrated outstanding leadership, taken on a high level of responsibility, volunteered in a diverse number of tasks, and has a significant impact on the organization. These factors, paired with the length and quantity of service, help to inform that one special individual who fits the bill of Volunteer of the Year. Our organization, and the birds, environments, and communities in which we work, are stronger because of them.

Nissan Leaf Raffle Supports Local Charities

You could win a 2012 Nissan Leaf from Jim Click Automotive! Tickets are \$25 or 5 for \$100, and Tucson Audubon keeps the proceeds of the tickets we sell. Find more details and buy your tickets online.

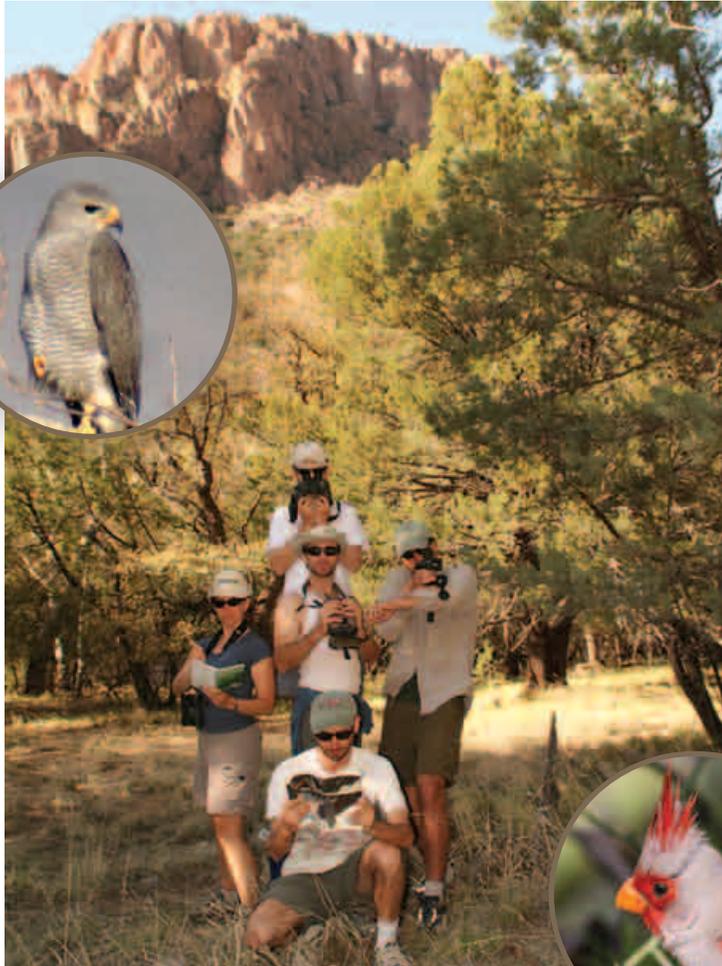
Curious about this 100% electric vehicle? Volunteer Laura Cotter gushes: "I love my Leaf! I wanted a car that was more eco-friendly than

the giant gas hogs I saw advertised. My Leaf is comfortable, peppy, and fun to drive. It can go about 100 miles between charges. The trunk holds an amazing amount of stuff, and my 6'3" son even fits in the back seat! Best of all, it's quiet and a really normal car to drive."



25th Annual **B**irdathon

The Birdathon “Big Week” April 20–29, 2012 promises to be unlike anything you have seen before.



BIRD PHOTOS: ACORN WOODPECKER, LARRY SELLMAN, MOSTLYBIRDS.COM; WESTERN KINGBIRD, ROBERT SHANTZ; PYRRULOXIA, LOIS MANOWITZ; GRAY HAWK, LEN BLUMIN

Birdathon is not just collecting pledges and counting bird species! **Go out to eat, take photos, visit a favorite birdy spot, or spend time with family** while supporting birds and bird habitat during Birdathon 2012!

What you turn to each year:

- Expert-led outings & beginner bird walks
- A Big Day & a Big Sit
- Birdathon 2012 t-shirt
- Prizes for most money raised, most birds recorded, and more!
- Fun activities for the whole family

And some things that might surprise you:

- Big Week challenge
- TogetherGreen volunteer day
- Local restaurants with Birdathon specials
- A 6-hr count, tribute to our first-ever Birdathon!
- Juried photo contest

What are your goals for the **25th Annual Birdathon**?
 Let's get **25** people a day donating, **25** Birdathon teams, **25** first-time birdathoners, and... we'll think of **25** more ways to make Birdathon 2012 a week to remember!

Spot a bird? Send in a donation! Many of the birds you see everyday are surviving thanks to the efforts of Tucson Audubon Society and our dedicated communities. Birdathon is an annual fundraising event that celebrates the importance of birds and conservation. **The money we raise during Birdathon 2012 will be used for local conservation and education programs.**

BIRDATHON TEAM PHOTOS: MATT GRIFFITHS, SARA PIKE

For details on all things Birdathon, visit www.tucsonaudubon.org/birdathon

Migration: Southern Arizona's Year-round Spectacle

RICHARD FRAY

The first three months of the year are mostly a time for classic winter birding. Our grasslands and wide agricultural valleys host raptors, sparrows, thrashers and cranes, and this keeps everyone thoroughly entertained. Many birders head out to the Sulphur Springs Valley and Santa Cruz Flats in search of Mountain Plover, Crested Caracara, Ferruginous Hawk, Sandhill Crane, Sage Sparrow and a variety of waterfowl at lakes and ponds. Early morning in San Rafael Valley gives the chance of Baird's Sparrow, along with White-tailed Kite, Chestnut-collared Longspur and more exciting winter grassland species. We're fortunate to have such great winter birding.

It's also a time to look forward to spring and the wonder of migration. In fact, migration of some sort is evident almost year round in southeast Arizona. The first swallows often arrive in January. A small influx of Tree, Violet-green, Barn and even a Cave Swallow in Tucson in December 2011 was evidence of swallows on the move this winter.

Migration is most noticeable along traditional routes such as the San Pedro and Santa Cruz rivers. It's easy

to overlook, but preserving habitat for birds on migration is just as important as protecting sites for breeding and wintering. Thanks to the Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program, large stretches of the San Pedro and Santa Cruz corridors, which constitute critical breeding and wintering grounds as well as life-saving oases for migrants, are already recognized as IBAs. As you will read in this magazine, work continues to protect more of these valuable ecosystems.

The annual raptor migration is always a highlight of early spring, with hawks and vultures heading north, following the San Pedro and Santa Cruz rivers. It varies year to year, but any day in early to mid-March is worth a try. Common Black Hawk is the big prize, but Zone-tailed, Gray and early Swainson's Hawks could all be mixed in with the more usual Turkey and Black Vultures streaming overhead. Raptors are not generally early risers, so mid-morning is when the largest concentrations of birds are on the move. Pick any vantage point giving views over one of these corridors. In recent years, it's become traditional to watch from the bridge on Bridge Road in Tubac. Last year there were a few occasions when too many birders congregated on the bridge and local residents complained. With this in mind, a better vantage point is Ron Morriss Park just to the south of Bridge Road, which has bathrooms, plenty of space and uninterrupted views of the raptors and vultures.

Many more birds are on the way north in March. Familiar summer residents such as Lucy's Warblers, Cassin's and Western Kingbirds and Bell's Vireo arrive on territory in the lowlands. Further up canyon, Painted Redstarts and Black-throated Gray Warblers share oak woodland with the plentiful Ruby-crowned Kinglets passing through.

Orioles add a splash of summer color along riparian corridors and at feeding sites. Likewise, hummingbirds pour into the state by the end of the month, turning feeding stations at Ash Canyon B&B, Paton's in Patagonia and Madera Canyon into 'must visit' attractions.



BOTH PHOTOS: JIM & DEVA BURNS, WWW.JIMBURNSPHOTOS.COM



Any given year can begin or end with Tree Swallows moving through southeast Arizona. As Ruby-crowned Kinglets start their journeys northward in spring, Zone-tailed Hawks are taking up residency in the region.

Finally, back to winter birding briefly. Every year, usually in early March, sections of dense cattails and bulrushes at Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson are burned, to open up the habitat and allow it to regenerate. It's a very effective process which has helped create the verdant and lively environment we have at Sweetwater, but there's an additional benefit for birders. In the week or two after the burn, several difficult-to-see species, most notably Sora, can be found with some ease as they wander about, wondering where all the cattails went. Listen for news of this year's burn and get to Sweetwater soon afterward. Pick a likely-looking spot where you can view exposed mud at the edge of the cattails, and wait quietly. Eventually you should be able to say you saw a Sora, as well as Common Yellowthroat, Marsh Wren and maybe a Virginia Rail or Swamp Sparrow if you're lucky. ■

Richard Fray is a birding guide and tour leader for Fun Birding Tours, offering custom birding trips in SE Arizona and birding tours to Belize in February 2012. Please visit www.funbirdingtours.com or call 520-394-0132 for more information.



TOP TO BOTTOM: LARRY SELMAN, MOSTLYBIRDS.COM; SCOTT WILBOR

Visit tucson.audubon.org for updates and more.

Connecting the Dots: IBAs Provide a Conservation Fram

JENNIE MACFARLAND | IBA CONSERVATION BIOLOGIST

The Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program in the Americas aims to identify and protect a key site network for birds and biodiversity, through joint efforts of governmental and non-governmental organizations and the public in general by engaging communities close to those sites

IBAs are priority areas for the conservation of globally threatened, range restricted and congregatory birds. Our data demonstrate that IBAs are excellent indicators of biodiversity richness and are therefore also important for a wide range of species.

Given that we know more about birds than any other wildlife group, IBAs enable us to identify priority areas for conservation based on a simple globally agreed to criteria. In Arizona, community-led site support groups will work with staff from Tucson Audubon and Audubon Arizona to: identify conservation threats to the sites; identify appropriate actions to combat those threats; and then implement conservation actions. We are opening the way to do this locally at our newly expanded Tanque Verde Wash/Sabino Canyon IBA close to Tucson.

Below, top to bottom: Bell's Vireo breed in large numbers in the Lower San Pedro IBA; Salt/Gila Riparian Ecosystem IBA was the first Arizona IBA to qualify for Global IBA status; Sandhill Cranes at Whitewater Draw State Wildlife Area IBA



DOMINIC SHERONY



DERRICK BOSTROM



A Matter of Perspective. Arizona IBAs at Very Different Scales

Arizona's Important Bird Areas are part of a global network, with more than 200 countries participating.

The massive size and multi-layered nature of this program make it very interesting to look at IBAs at different scales.

To become a state-level IBA, a site must have significant populations of either species of conservation concern—species with a very restricted range—or species that are vulnerable because they congregate in high densities. An independent committee of researchers and managers from around the state decide if an area meets these state-level criteria.

A Global IBA is part of a much bigger picture. To qualify as a Global IBA, a state IBA has to support a specified number



LADY CLIFF

etwork



Top to bottom: Chiricahua Mountains IBA qualified for Global IBA status for the numbers of breeding Spotted Owl (inset) that have been documented there; the Sabino/Bear Creeks IBA was expanded to include the Tanque Verde Wash and renamed the Tanque Verde Wash/Sabino Canyon IBA; the Arizona IBA program is supported by the Arizona Game & Fish Department.

of individuals from any of an explicit list of species. An IBA can also qualify if a certain proportion of the species' global population can be found in that location.

The Arizona IBA team recently requested that several of our State IBAs be considered for Global IBA status. Three new Global IBAs were designated in Arizona, raising the total number to eight.

The first newly elevated IBA is the **Salt/Gila Riparian Ecosystem IBA**, which qualified for the numbers of Yuma Clapper Rail and Neotropical Cormorant present. This IBA is very close to Phoenix and is a particularly productive and beautiful riparian area within easy visiting distance of a large metropolitan area.

The other two new Global IBAs are **Whitewater Draw State Wildlife Area IBA** and **Wilcox Playa/Cochise Lake**

IBA both of which qualified for the huge numbers of Sandhill Cranes that famously winter there. Both are located within the Sulphur Springs Valley southeast of Tucson and act as "loafing" sites—places to assemble while not feeding—for Sandhill Cranes that forage during the day in nearby agriculture fields.

The remaining Global IBAs in Arizona are scattered throughout Arizona. **Marble Canyon IBA**, which qualified because of the California Condors in residence there, is north of the Grand Canyon. **Anderson Mesa IBA** is south of Flagstaff and was made a Global IBA for its population of Pinyon Jays. **Bill Williams NWR IBA** is a marvelous riparian area located near Lake Havasu and qualified for Global Status for both Bell's Vireo and Black Rail. Closer to Tucson, the **Lower San Pedro River IBA** is a well-known riparian area

Global and Continental IBAs

When an IBA is designated a Global or Continental IBA it has been recognized as one of the highest priority sites for conservation actions. A Global IBA supports a significant portion of the world population of a species from a special list. This list of A1 Threatened Species is specific to the IBA Program and includes species such as Spotted Owl, Bell's Vireo and Pinyon Jay. A site can be elevated to a Continental IBA in a similar way using a different list of B1 Threatened Species including Elf Owl, Lucy's Warbler and Le Conte's Thrasher where a significant portion of the continent's population utilizes the habitat in that IBA. There are Global and Continental IBA Science Committees that review proposals to elevate state level IBAs to higher status and decide if the provided data is significant enough to justify such a high designation. Arizona currently has 8 IBAs with Global Status and one of those also has Continental Status.

that qualified for Global Status for the high numbers of Bell's Vireos that breed there. The last, but not least, Global IBA in Arizona is the **Chiricahua Mountains IBA** which qualified for the numbers of breeding Spotted Owls that have been documented in the range.

On a much closer scale, there is news regarding a part of a single IBA. At its last meeting in October, the Arizona IBA Science Committee approved the expansion of the existing Sabino/Bear Creeks IBA to include the Tanque Verde Wash, and it was renamed the **Tanque Verde Wash/Sabino Canyon IBA**.

This latter IBA offers a valuable proximity to urban Tucson and ease of access, and illustrates the concept that urban habitat can still be valuable for native birds if it is preserved and enhanced. We look forward to working with local birders and conservationists in developing threat assessments and conservation actions to enhance this area for birds. It is an excellent place to bird and very easy to visit year round. There are IBAs all over the globe and right in our own backyard and we hope to engage you in their protection.

Birds on the Move! Fall Migration in Arizona and the Significance of Important Bird Areas

The migration of large numbers of birds through our state, spring and fall, is one of nature's most breathtaking spectacles.

As a concept, it seems simple enough. As the year wanes, the weather turns frosty and food becomes much more difficult to find. To survive, birds undertake the long and dangerous journey south to warmer latitudes and more abundant resources. A never ending cycle, they return again in spring. For years, migration was generally thought to be this simple. Recent research results have shown that migration is far more subtle. This is especially true of fall migration in the American West. While details of migration in eastern North America are relatively well-known, recent studies have revealed that patterns of bird migration in the Southwest are unique, perhaps coming about through the relative lack of geographic barriers, such as those found in the east and the naturally fragmented nature of habitats in the west.

Recent investigations have shown several distinctive differences between spring and fall migration in the west. Spring migration can be characterized as a race to the breeding grounds in an attempt to claim the best nesting sites

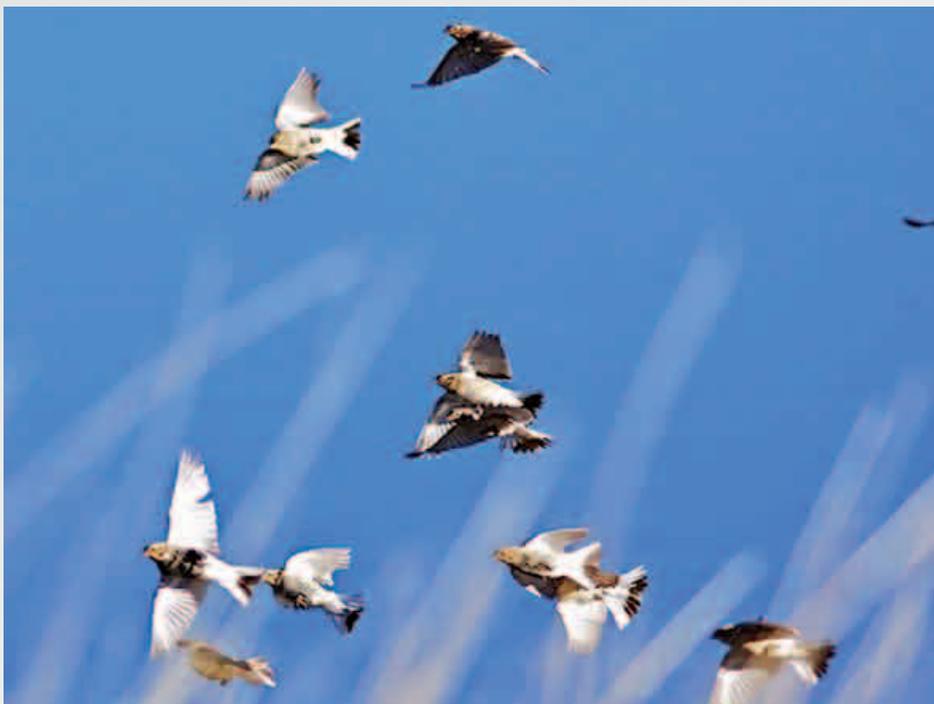
and to ensure young are in the nest during a time of peak food availability. In part this is because young birds that fledge earlier in the season have a higher survival rate than those fledging later. So spring migrants head north quickly, and in larger groups than in their fall return. After breeding is over, birds begin their return journey south in a much less hurried



JIM & DEVA BURNS, WWW.JIMBURNSPHOTOS.COM



JENNIE MACFARLAND



MARK SHARON

Two IBA surveyors (above) scan the horizon of the San Rafael Grasslands, one of Arizona's newest IBAs, in search of wintering birds. A target species for this survey was the Chestnut-collared Longspur (left) which was found (and photographed!) by IBA surveyors in good numbers and will likely qualify this site as a Global IBA in the near future as it is a vital wintering habitat for this species that has experienced a rapid population decline. IBAs provide important stopover sites for species that show interrupted molt and migration patterns such as Western Tanager (top).

way and in a far more dispersed pattern. A satellite tracking study of Swainson's Hawks showed that they migrated south on a much broader front than when they headed north in the spring, made more stopovers and stopped for longer periods of time during the fall migration.

The routes, or "flyways" as they are popularly known, are complex in the west and differ between spring and fall. Conservationists have long emphasized that riparian areas are vital to migration



LOIS MANOWITZ

and hummingbirds especially, have been observed traveling north through low elevation riparian areas in the spring and in the fall returning south through the Sky Islands such as **Chiricahua Mountains Global IBA**.

Our Sky Island habitats are also vital to those western fall migrants that have an interrupted molt strategy. More eastern species tend to complete their molt on their breeding grounds before heading south. Some western species, however, leave their breeding grounds and head south and then interrupt their migration to stop in favorable habitat to molt their feathers. Our Sky Islands, such as the **Huachuca Mountains IBA** and **Santa Rita Mountains IBA**, are two such molting areas. This pattern of interrupted molt and migration is more prevalent in birds of the west—with approximately 50% of species and subspecies using this strategy—than the east where only about 10% exhibit this behavior. It is thought that this difference is due to arid conditions found throughout the west in early summer which diminishes available food when birds are undergoing this physiologically demanding process. The abundance of food found in the Sky Islands during the late summer and fall fill the gap in available resources and the birds travel to these areas to take advantage of these resources. These birds are following a chain of stopover sites and we need to preserve the integrity of this chain to ensure their survival. Some of the species that show interrupted molt and migration are Lazuli Bunting, Painted Bunting, Western Kingbird, Lucy's Warbler, Western Tanager, Lesser Goldfinch and Bullock's Oriole.

Migration and molt are very taxing on birds, and for some species migration is the time of greatest mortality. However, the benefits of superabundant resources and decreased competition at distant breeding locations outweigh the high costs of migration from winter quarters. The success of this gamble, however, depends on suitable migratory stopover sites along the way.

Special Thanks to University of Arizona Professor Charles Van Riper III for his help with this article.



LOIS MANOWITZ



BRANDON KEIM

Top to bottom: Golden Eagle in Aubrey Valley; Wilson's Warbler (inset); Rufous Hummingbird (inset); Huachuca Mountains; Santa Rita Mountains

Riparian areas that usually flow year-round, such as **Lower San Pedro River Global IBA**, can remain somewhat productive into the summer, but such habitats are increasingly scarce in the American West. Higher elevation habitats, which may not be very productive early in spring, remain productive longer into summer and fall than low elevation areas due to cooler temperatures and higher retention of moisture at the higher locations. These conditions result in the plants at these higher elevations flowering later in the season, providing food in the form of nectar and insects for migrants in the late summer when food resources are far less abundant at lower elevations. Many species, passerines



JOHN HENDRICKSON

in the arid West and serve as the general pathway the birds follow. While this seems to be generally true for spring migration, it is less so in the fall. In the spring, riparian areas are productive when conditions are relatively cool and moist at low elevations. In late summer and fall, the productivity of these areas is heavily dependent on structure of habitat and availability of water.

Exciting 2012 Season for the Arizona Important Bird Area Program

The purpose of the Important Bird Area Program is to identify a network of sites that maintain the long-term viability of wild bird populations while engaging the public to conserve those areas of critical habitat.

This has been a busy season for the Arizona Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program with many exciting developments to share! First of all, this past October, we added two new IBAs to Arizona bringing the total to 42.

The first is **Aubrey Valley & Cliffs IBA** located north of Seligman on Route 66. This beautiful sweeping valley, lined with rugged and majestic cliffs, is unfamiliar to most Tucsonans and birders in general. It was made an IBA because of its importance to migrating raptors, especially Golden Eagles and Ferruginous Hawks. The thermals that rise from the cliffs have made this a natural jumping-off point for these raptors during their migration. The cliffs also provide nesting habitat for a small local breeding population of Golden Eagles.

The second new Important Bird Area in Arizona is the **San Rafael Grasslands**, located near the town of Patagonia. It is a well-known birding hotspot and important habitat for wintering sparrows and other grassland birds. An IBA survey team found many bird species of conservation concern here during three recent

road surveys, the standouts being the Chestnut-collared Longspurs wintering in large flocks. This little bird is an IUCN Near-Threatened species which may help this grassland become a Global IBA in the future. The importance of this area to many species of conservation concern and the growing rarity of intact grasslands led to the San Rafael Grasslands being unanimously approved as an IBA by the Science Committee.

These areas could not have become IBAs without volunteer surveyors who collected the information necessary to show how important they are to birds. If you are interested in putting your birding skills to use to conserve the habitat of native birds, consider training as a volunteer IBA surveyor. The next training workshop is on **January 12 and 14** (please see www.aziba.org for more information and to sign up!).

Upcoming Survey Season

This upcoming survey season has many exciting survey destinations in store. We hope you will want to become involved. We will again be surveying the BHP property along the San Pedro River that is normally closed to the public. We will be surveying this lush riparian area for upland desert birds and nocturnal birds such as Elf Owls, as well as Yellow-billed Cuckoos in the summer.

We will also be surveying the Patagonia Mountains, with a special emphasis on migratory species that use this area as a stop-over site or to



IBAs and eBird

While the Arizona IBA Program has a large network of dedicated volunteer surveyors, we cannot survey every IBA in Arizona every year. We bridge the gap in our data by looking for other bird observations and eBird is by far the biggest source. Sightings of birds entered into eBird help us monitor existing IBAs and identify areas that we should survey as potential new IBAs. To learn how to use eBird to its full potential and help the IBA program gather the most information please consider attending our eBird workshop on March 24 (see p 4 for details).

Main photo: Aubrey Valley and Cliffs was recently made an IBA due to high numbers of raptors, especially Golden Eagles, migrating through the area every year.

Inset, top to bottom: IBA volunteer Kelly Fleming surveying in the Patagonia Mountains; Golden Eagle and Ferruginous Hawk soaring over Aubrey Valley IBA; IBA back-country crew relaxing after a day of surveying.

complete their molt before continuing south to wintering grounds. We will do one more driving survey in the San Rafael Valley this February to upgrade this state IBA to Global status.

One of the more exciting expeditions this season will be to the Pinaleño Mountains, a new area for IBA surveys. This area came to our attention for the unusually large number of nesting Spotted Owls reported. We will be surveying for all bird species to get a clearer picture of how important this area is for all native birds before applying for this area to become an IBA this summer.

Do please join us for our field work, and we welcome your financial donations for the IBA program. ■

Ring-necked Duck

LARRY LIESE

Ring-necked Duck... one glance at a drake of this species and one can tell birders didn't get to name it! Beginning birders are sometimes befuddled by many fairly easy to identify bird species with names that don't seem obvious from what they are seeing in their binoculars. Other notables I'd include in this list are Band-tailed Pigeon, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Orange-crowned Warbler, and White-crowned Sparrow. But the early ornithologists who did name these birds had specimens in hand—a far cry from the challenge of a fleeting glimpse of a bird in foliage overhead. Needless to say, we're stuck with these names but if we could just change this bird's name to Ring-billed Duck we'd be happier!

The scientific name of this bird is *Aythya collaris*. *Aythya* is Greek for "a kind of waterbird" and is mentioned in Homer's *Odyssey* and Aristotle's *Natural History*. *Collaris* is from Latin for "collared," referring to the ringed neck. A hard to see field mark, the ring is a faint line of lighter color at the base of the neck. The word duck is from Anglo-Saxon *duce*, meaning "diver."

Ring-necked ducks are one of the typical diving ducks. They sit lower in the water than dabbling ducks and have bodily adaptations geared towards feeding underwater. Feet are placed more rearward and underwater locomotion is achieved using double-footed kicks without the use of their wings. The

latter are only used underwater for emergency avoidance of aerial predators. Diving ducks cannot pop up out of the water directly into flight the way dabbling ducks can—they must patter across the water surface before launching into flight. To dive, they first exhale, then tilt their heads down, entering the water with a forward and upward leap.

When still ducklings these birds consume mostly insects, but then switch to seeds and tubers of aquatic plants as they age. They sometimes feed similarly to the dabbling ducks, but in their more normal mode they dive for their food. They usually keep within 1.5 meters of the surface but can go deeper. A fun comparison can be made while watching them feed—they will resurface quite close to where they submerge while grebes may reemerge tens of meters distant. Typical dive times are ten to fifteen seconds in duration with between two and three dives per minute.

Ring-necked Ducks are an easy duck to find on small ponds and lakes, particularly those bordered with vegetation such as at managed locations like Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson. They are easy to distinguish from similar species even from a distance by the white vertical crescent just forward of the wing.



Their back is black which

also can be seen from a distance and helps distinguish them from scaups. Very common in small to medium numbers on still water almost anywhere in southeast Arizona, they can be found from October through March with thinning numbers a month to either side.

So, now that you're intrigued, how do you go about seeing that pretty ringed neck? The males have this feature for all but the summer months so unless they're just arriving or getting ready to leave you should be able to see it with a little preparation. The trick is to first pick a spot where these ducks are reliable and close approach is possible. City parks where the ducks are used to people and sometimes looking for handouts work best. Pick a sunny day and position yourself with the sun at your back and take a close look at the base of the neck, just above the black chest. The ring is a nice warm brown a little wider than a pencil. I read it sometimes doesn't quite finish all the way around the nape, but is clearly visible in the front under good conditions. Two good local sites here in Tucson are the small pond on the north side of the parking lot in Fort Lowell Park or either pond at Reid Park. When you do get a look you'll enjoy it. Good luck! 🍀

Join Larry Liese for a Specialty Workshop on **Ducks and Geese**, February 15 & 18, 2012. See p 4 for details.



ALL ARTWORK BY GEORGE WEST

CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION NEWS

CHRIS MCVIE, PAUL GREEN, KENDALL KROESEN

Raptor Electrocution Has Happy Ending

Well, there was no happy ending for the Great Horned Owl. It was electrocuted on a power pole and fell to the ground dead, still clutching its prey. Large birds—mostly hawks and owls—are sometimes electrocuted when landing on power poles since their wingspan allows them to touch the widely spaced live wire and ground simultaneously. The electrocution of this owl happened on an unmodified power pole in the pecan grove at Ft. Lowell Park. There are thousands of dangerous poles around the Tucson area. Tucson Electric Power (TEP) and Trico Electric Cooperative both have teams gradually working to retrofit poles with insulation that protects birds.

Tucson Parks and Recreation (TPR) personnel found the owl and notified supervisors. Tucson Audubon

was contacted immediately because of our long-standing cooperation with TPR and the Friends of Ft. Lowell Park. We have been working with both entities to envision park upgrades and maintenance—especially around the park's pond—that make it friendlier to birds.

At a meeting with the Friends group and TPR we described the TEP retrofit program and encouraged TPR to document the electrocution and ask for pole modification. The parks department was also in touch with Locana de Souza, urban wildlife specialist with the local office of the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

TEP personnel visited the park and found that several of the power poles in the park had already been modified. However, he wrote a "protection order"

for three poles in the pecan grove area (one of which was the pole where the owl was found) and five other poles in or near the north side of the park. The modifications were made in a matter of days. We congratulate both TPR and TEP for their quick attention to this matter. We hope the pole modification program can be accelerated so that we reach a point when birds are no longer subjected to death through electrocution.

If you find a dead raptor near a power pole please call TEP or Trico Electric, depending on your service area. You can also report raptor nest locations. Both companies prioritize retrofitting poles near nests because a University of Arizona study—led by former board member Dr. Bill Mannan—found that electrocutions are more common near nests.



Great Horned Owl, still clutching its prey, found electrocuted at Ft. Lowell Park. On closeup, note points of contact on both wings.

To learn more about the challenges that large hawks and owls face in urban environments and how you can be an active participant in their protection, come hear Dr. Bill Mannan speak at our Living with Nature lecture in Tucson on January 9th at UMC and take his workshop on March 21 & 24. See pages 4 and 7 for details.

Tucson Electric Power Customer Care: 520-623-7711

Trico Electric Cooperative Dispatch: 520-744-2944 x2

Carbon Offset

Most of us will be traveling this holiday season, which means more release of carbon to our atmosphere. Last year's global increase in carbon emissions, an estimated extra half-billion tons, was almost certainly the largest absolute jump in any year since the Industrial Revolution, and the largest percentage increase since 2003. This trend of ever-rising emissions will make climate change an increasing challenge in coming decades.

Tucson-based The Local Trust offers **Neutralizing Credits** to offset your travel, whether you flew to a ski resort or drove to a trailhead, and

also **Regeneration Credits** that go beyond your footprint, so you don't just keep a zero balance—you help rebuild a healthy world. You can designate your offsets to provide trees that Tucson Audubon plants to provide habitat for WatchList birds like Gilded Flicker, Costa's Hummingbird and Lucy's Warbler. Your neighborhoods will enjoy their new trees!

Visit thelocaltrust.org to calculate your carbon emissions and purchase offsets that will increase urban habitat for birds that are at risk while sequestering your carbon emissions.



GILDED FLICKER, WARREN LYNN

River Pathways

Audubon Arizona and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have pioneered an education program to provide high school students with a clear path to ecological understanding, stewardship, and careers in land and resource management.

Tucson Audubon will pilot this program in Tucson public schools this spring. The River Pathways program introduces students to Arizona's riparian areas through hands-on classroom activities, a local field trip to Sweetwater Wetlands and opportunities to take part in BLM monitoring efforts on Las Cienegas

Creek. Students can also receive information and counseling about career opportunities in resource management and professions in environmental sciences. Most importantly, students from highly urbanized areas will receive opportunities to experience nature.

In these ways, students may become the much needed stewards of our natural world. For more information, contact Bété Pfister at bpfister@tucsonaudubon.org or 520-629-0510 x 7012.



Clean Water Act

In the past, the Army Corps of Engineers has interpreted the Clean Water Act to apply to the Santa Cruz River and desert washes that feed into it. This has allowed the Corps to regulate developments that affect riparian habitat and that might pollute

the watershed. The 2006 Rapanos Supreme Court Decision forced the Army Corps of Engineers to reconsider this, by requiring protected waterways to have a significant connection to "navigable waters of the United States."

The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on Dec 9 that the National Association of Home Builders did not have standing to pursue claims that the Environmental Protection Agency wrongly designated two reaches of the Santa Cruz River in Arizona as

"traditional navigable waters" (TNW) under the Clean Water Act (NAHB v. EPA, 10-5341, D.C. Cir.).

Proposed Rosemont Mine—Comments Needed!

The Public Comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement being prepared by the Coronado National Forest for the proposed Rosemont open pit copper mine in the Santa Rita Mountains ends on January 18, 2012. To date, there have been five public hearings, and one more is scheduled for January. The January hearing will be Saturday, January 14, 1–5 PM, at Sahuarita High School, 350 W. Sahuarita Rd., Sahuarita.

If you haven't yet written a comment to the NFS or participated in a public hearing, please do so. The purpose of the hearings is for the Coronado National Forest staff to receive your comments on the Draft. For example: What are the omissions? What are the deficiencies? Has the geographical scope been too narrow? If so, where? Has enough attention been paid to: the lowering

of the water table in the Green Valley area; possible degradation of the pristine water of Davidson Canyon, an "outstanding water" of the state of Arizona; the impact of increased sky glow on Mt. Whipple Observatory (the glow would increase 23% at 30 degrees above the horizon and would negatively impact astronomical research)?

The Draft is over 1,000 pages long and is not light reading. But, please take the time to read the Executive Summary, available at www.RosemontEIS.us. Email comments can be sent to CoronadoNF@RosemontEIS.us. Comments can also be mailed to: Rosemont Comments, PO Box 4207, Logan, UT 84323.

In addition, the Army Corps of Engineers must issue or deny a permit to Rosemont under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Their decision will be based on the impacts of fill material

discharged into Barrel Canyon on the "waters of the U.S." At issue is the impact the fill and its consequences may have on Davidson Canyon, Cienega Creek and beyond.

Their comment period is short: it ends on 5 January 2012. Comments can be based on the values you place on the eastern foothills of the Santa Ritas that would be completely covered by waste and tailings piles as well as the values you place on Davidson Canyon itself. These can include water quantity, water quality, floodplain values, aesthetics, recreation, cultural resources, flood hazards, etc.

Email comments to: Marjorie.E.Blaine@usace.army.mil, or mail to: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Attn. Marjorie Blaine, Tucson Resident Office, 5205 E. Comanche St., Tucson, AZ 85707.

SunZia Southwest Transmission Project Update

Although official public comment on the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project ended on June 10, 2010, the BLM has delayed release of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) some three times now, with the official release date now being mid-February 2012. This date seems to be real, as the DEIS was distributed in October to cooperating agencies for comment, including the Arizona State Land Department and the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

In a presentation to the Southwest Area Transmission Planning Group on November 15, 2011, SunZia revealed that Arizona routes have been reduced to three: (1) crossing the Galiuro Mountains at Aravaipa, (2) following the east side of the San Pedro River, or (3) following the west side of the San Pedro River. The west-side San Pedro route differs somewhat from that presented for public comment, being farther west from the river.

On October 5, 2011, the Obama administration announced that it had selected SunZia as one of seven transmission projects to fast track in a pilot program. In a united front, nine federal agencies endorsed this program. It is unclear if this initiative will involve state agencies also or whether it is restricted to cooperation between federal agencies. This sharply increased concern about the project. When this announcement was made, the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) revealed that it had already committed around \$250 million dollars in federal loan guarantees to build SunZia, this some two years before the BLM will make a final decision on the project. Rep. Tom McClintock, Republican from California, has sponsored a bill, HR 2915, that would revoke WAPA's funding authority, although the bill would likely encounter opposition in the Senate.

When the DEIS is released in mid-February, the public will have 90 days to comment. For more details, visit cascabelworkinggroup.org.

Climate Change Committee

On September 6, 2006, Tucson's Mayor and Council adopted the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. In 2008, Tucson's Mayor and Council established a Framework for Advancing Sustainability. One component of the Framework is the creation of a Climate Change Advisory Committee, (CCAC) which first met in 2009, and on which Tucson Audubon has a seat. The CCAC was tasked with developing a Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Plan that includes recommendations to achieve the City's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction commitments along with strategies and actions needed to address the effects of climate change on the City's infrastructure and operations, as well as its ecological, economic, and social capital.

On Tuesday December 20, 2012, the Mayor and Council voted unanimously to adopt the initial set of recommendations towards reducing our community's carbon footprint.

The original goal was to reduce the emission of GHG within the

City of Tucson to at least seven percent below 1990 levels by 2012. However, between 1990 and 2006 GHG emissions rose 47 percent in Pima County as a whole, 28 percent in the City of Tucson, and 14 percent nationally.

The CCAC report recalibrated the emission reductions to 2020. The adopted proposals in the best-case scenario, would reduce GHG emissions by less than 50 percent of the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement goal. The goal itself has however become inadequate and outdated. The broad scientific consensus now is that developed nations must reduce their 2000 level emissions by 80 percent by 2050 in order that temperature rise and the resulting climate change remains in a range to which humans will be able to adapt. The proposals recommended today, if fully realized, would get us close to one-fifth of the way to this updated target.

Ask Game & Fish to Save the Least Grebe

Peña Blanca Lake is the site of the first substantiated breeding record for Least Grebe in Arizona. Breeding was noted in 2010 and 2011 following the renovation of the lake. Large-mouth bass have yet to be restocked. Restocking would be detrimental to successful breeding by Least Grebe since the bass (which are sometimes caught using bird lures) would likely eat the young grebes.

Many birders now travel to Arizona to see Least Grebe and bring their dollars with them. In addition, the Arizona Game and Fish Department is responsible for managing all wildlife species in the state and the establishment of a new breeding site for this species should be protected.

We encourage you to write to the Director and each Commissioner to express your opinion on this topic. Contact details are at AZGFD.gov. More information at tucsonaudubon.org/conservation.



LEAST GREBE, LOIS MIAKOWITZ

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 and click on the link that says Sign-Up E-newsletter. Otherwise send an email to pgreen@tucsonaudubon.org with your first and last name, or call Jean Barchman on 520-209-1802 and she will take your details.



SANDHILL CRANES, LOIS MANOWITZ

Whitewater Draw

On October 17, 2011, the Arizona Game & Fish Department (AZGFD) announced that the first Sandhill Cranes had arrived at the Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area, in the Sulphur Springs Valley in Cochise County. Their numbers built to 10,000 birds by mid December, and 20,953 were counted on January 10, 2011. The annual census is scheduled for the first week of January, so we'll get a better idea of total population and distribution among the SSV roost sites then.

In mid November a post appeared on the AZ-NM listserv asking "why isn't the Draw ready for them?" The post went on to say "...what has happened... where's Tucson Audubon Society...who (messed) up? Why wasn't the birding community notified?"

A rumor spread that a well-pump used for pumping groundwater into the Draw was broken and that the AZGFD did not have the funds to fix it. In fact, the major factor determining the reduction of water in the Draw

was the lack of runoff of water from the mountains following this year's monsoon. Whitewater Draw depends on heavy rainfall which produces runoff that flows down to the area. This big shallow playa depends almost entirely on runoff from big storms as the evaporation rate and infiltration rate is faster than a pump can supply. Water is still low even after the rains in December.

Tom Wood of the Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory (SABO) reports that following the dry winter and spring of 2010-11, they recorded less than half the average rainfall at their place in Bisbee. Those rains were of the slow, infiltrating kind; Tom recalls only one big storm producing runoff.

AZGFD tell us that the well used to pump water for the cranes is in working order. This well also provides water for the moist soil units and irrigation (see below). The pump was run for five months continuously which only maintained the existing fingers. It did little to increase the area

under water. However virtually no amount of pumping from one well is going to cover more than 400 acres of practically flat ground in a foot of water.

AZGFD told us that the well that is "out" would be used to pump to the moist soil units on the south end, established by a North America Waterfowl Conservation Act (NAWCA) and Ducks Unlimited agreement (see www.ducks.org) that is used for waterfowl hunting, and for food crop irrigation.

In short, the only "fix" is for the drought to end so we get adequate rainfall and runoff into the wildlife area. It's not clear how our changing climate might affect the draw, with increased temperature, higher evaporation rates, decreased rainfall and more extreme rain events. This situation also raises again the need for a way for the wildlife watching community to provide a funding mechanism for watchable wildlife in our state so that we can have a greater say in land management.

Conservation Corner!

What's the poop on the energy-water nexus?

The energy-water nexus refers to the fact that every time you use water you use energy, and every time you use energy you use water. Huge quantities of water are used in energy generation, and the diversion, delivery

and purification of drinking water require huge energy inputs.

Tucson Audubon is helping to publicize the energy-water nexus, and is leading the local effort to short-circuit this vicious cycle.

Not the least of our efforts is our composting toilet system at the Mason Center. *This is the "poop" on the energy-water nexus!*

Flush toilets in homes and businesses are getting more efficient. But because there are so many homes and businesses, and because toilets are used several times every day, they still contribute a lot to water use.

As the Mason Center begins to host more and more visitors and events, one of our priorities will be to educate about ways of handling



Composting toilet building at Tucson Audubon's Mason Center. Inset: Former employee Lia Sansom demonstrates the toilet's inner workings.

KENDALL KROESEN

human waste that are sanitary and reduce water use. Contact us to come see the composting toilets and find out

more about conserving scarce potable water by not pooping in it!

*Kendall Kroesen,
Habitats Program Manager*

TUCSON AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

KATE REYNOLDS | FIELD TRIP COORDINATOR

January

January 7—Saturday 7:30 AM

Sweetwater Wetlands

Meet at the parking lot on Sweetwater Drive at 7:30 AM. Winter is a great time to visit Sweetwater to view ducks and waterfowl along with other species. Plan to spend a couple of hours of easy walking. Bring water and snacks as needed. Please note that due to road construction, the Prince exit will not be open. See tucsonaudubon.org/sweetwater for the latest information and directions. Participants limited to 10 people. Trip leader: Janine Spencer jspencer@marana.com 520-245-6200

January 14—Saturday 8:00 AM

Hawks for Beginners: Avra Valley

Spend a relaxed morning driving on paved and graded dirt roads looking for wintering raptors perched on power poles. Easy walking on dirt. All ages and birding abilities invited. Bring scope if you have one. Meet at Mission Library on the NW corner of Ajo Way and Mission Road. Return by noon. Mileage 40 miles. No need to sign up, but call leader if questions. Leader: John Higgins 520-578-1830, jghiggins@comcast.net

January 17–18—Tues/Wed 7:00 AM

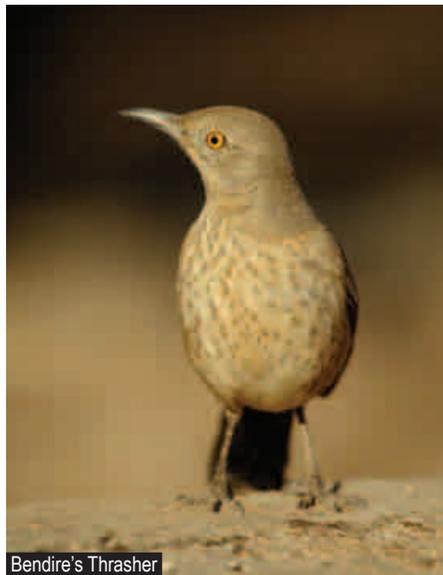
Winter birding in Portal

Focus on lesser-known "hotspots" in and around the Chiricahua Mountains. Some great spots are hardly visited at any time of year, like Fort Bowie or San Simon Cienega. We may detour for any good birds found on the Portal CBC. May also traverse a route from Willow Tank to Paradise, which can yield special species from Bendire's Thrasher to Black-chinned Sparrow and Juniper Titmouse. Longest walk: 3 easy miles round-trip (if sufficient interest). Otherwise, only short level walks. Prepare for cold! 350 miles roundtrip. RSVP Leader: John Yerger, jyerger24@yahoo.com or 520-558-0019

January 21—Saturday 7:00 AM

EI Sewer de Tucson

Meet at 7:00 at the Fry's parking lot corner of Ina and Thornydale (Gold Canyon Plaza). Take an odoriferous tour of some of the Tucson area's more bird-friendly watering holes. We will look for wintering waterfowl, raptors, sparrows and whatever else happens along. Dress for the weather, bring water, snack, lunch and scope, if you have one. Nose plugs/clothes pins at the discretion of participants. I can't guarantee specific species but will promise a garderobe at every stop. Back by 3:00 pm. Leader: Michael Bissontz seetrogon@comcast.net



Bendire's Thrasher

JIM & DEVA BURNS, WWW.JIMBURNSPHOTOS.COM

January 28—Saturday 7:00 AM

Florida Canyon

Let's see if we can find any strange and unusual warblers. Meet in Green Valley at the McDonald's at 7:00 AM. This area can be very uneven... clamoring over boulders and walking in the streambed. However, the birding can be rewarding. Plan about 3 hours unless the birding is overwhelming. Bring plenty of water and lunch. A visit to the Madera Canyon feeders after our adventure. 35 miles. Leader: Melody Kehl melodysbirding@cox.net 520-245-4085



January 31—Tuesday 8:00 AM

Crossroads Park, Marana

Join us for a stroll through one of Marana's "birdiest" parks along the Santa Cruz River. Likely sightings include egrets, ducks, shorebirds as well as wintering sparrows and warblers. We'll walk along a multi-use pathway where rarities have occasionally been spotted and check out the willow trees by the river's edge. Crossroads Park is off Silverbell Road west of the Santa Cruz River, south of Cortaro Road. Leader Kendall Kroesen kkroesen@TucsonAudubon.org, 520-971-2385.

February

February 4—Saturday 8:00 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 5700 N Sabino Canyon Road. \$5 parking fee. Return by noon. Sunhat, water and walking shoes



WEEKLY BIRD WALKS

Thursdays—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 for details.

MORE FIELD TRIPS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE.

Visit 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

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



Whitewater Draw

recommended. Leaders are Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists. Please email to reserve a space, limit 12 participants. Leaders: Jean & Mark Hengesbaugh (jhenge@yahoo.com)

February 7—Tuesday 6:00 AM

Whitewater Draw/Sulphur Springs Valley



We will begin at Whitewater Draw walking the dykes around the permanent ponds looking for waterbirds and sparrows and also checking nearby roads for thrashers. Later, we will visit other spots depending on what is being seen, likely including the Faria Dairy Farm and a search for Mountain Plovers if present in the Valley this winter. Raptors should keep us busy between locations. 180 miles roundtrip. Late afternoon return. Bring lunches and scopes if you have one. Limited to 11 participants. Please contact the leader beginning January 28 to sign up. Leader: Philip Kline PGKline_UK@Yahoo.com

February 18—Saturday 5:00 AM

Le Conte's Thrashers

A long trip for some great birds. With any luck we should have Sage Sparrow, four species of thrasher with the Le Conte's as the dessert to entice us. Terrain is uneven and you will want good walking shoes. On our way back, we will take a side trip into Santa Cruz Flats. Meet at Ina Road and I-10 on the northeast side in the Motel 6 parking area behind the Jack in the Box at 5:00 AM. 400 miles. Leader: Melody Kehl melodysbirding@cox.net 520-245-4085

February 21—Tuesday 10:30 AM

Reid Park

We will ramble around the park for two hours looking for wintering waterfowl, warblers, woodpeckers and raptors. Easy pace on flat ground. All ages and birding abilities invited. Meet in front of Edith Ball Adaptive Recreation Center, which looks like a big white tent near the zoo. Do

not go to the zoo entrance. No need to sign up before the trip, but call leader if questions. Leader: John Higgins 520-578-1830. jhiggins@comcast.net

February 28—Tuesday 8:00 AM

Crossroads Park Marana

Spend the morning birding Marana's Crossroads Park along the Santa Cruz river. Easy level walking. Limited to 10 participants so please contact the leader for details or directions. Leader: Mary Ellen Flynn 520-797-1743 or me.flynn@comcast.net

March

March 3–5—Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Time TBD.
\$75 fee to cover leader expense

Rosy-Finch at Sandia Crest, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Depart Tucson early Saturday morning arriving in Albuquerque for dinner and a good night's sleep. Sunday, up Sandia Crest in quest of all three species of Rosy-Finch, even if that means coming back the next day. Time permitting, we'll enjoy some of the area's other birding hotspots. Monday we're back to Tucson via a quick trip through Bosque Del Apache. Limited to 12. 1200 miles. Contact leader for more details, sign up after Feb 2nd. Leaders: Vivian MacKinnon 520-323-6452 or v_mackinnon@yahoo.com and Lainie Epstein.

March 3—Saturday 8:00 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 5700 N 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 (jhenge@yahoo.com)

March 13—Tuesday 6:00 AM

Patagonia Lake State Park



We'll look for waterbirds, flycatchers, gnatcatchers and whatever else we can find. We'll walk a couple of miles on mostly level but not always clearly delineated trails. Expect some mud so wear appropriate footwear. Bring lunch and park fee or pass. We may visit other sites in Patagonia and its surroundings as well. Meet at the Fry's at Irvington and I-19 at 6:00 a.m. or at the Green Valley McDonald's (Continental Road Exit) before 6:30 AM. (140 miles roundtrip). Leader: Dave Dunford 520-909-1809 or ddunford@dakotacom.net.

March 17—Saturday 6:30 AM

Sycamore Canyon



We will descend approximately one mile into this beautiful canyon along the Mexican border hoping for lots of birds. The terrain is uneven and rugged. Wear hiking shoes, bring plenty of water and lunch for in the canyon. Do not plan to leave anything of value in your vehicle. Although Border Patrol is monitoring this area vigilantly, there is no reason to make it easy for someone. Meet at the McDonald's in Green Valley (Continental exit off I-19). 200 miles. Leader: Melody Kehl: outdoor1@cox.net 520-245-4085.

March 27—Tuesday 7:00 AM

Crossroads Park, Marana

Another walk through one of Marana's "birdiest" parks along the Santa Cruz River. Likely sightings include egrets, ducks, shorebirds, wintering sparrows and early spring migrants. We'll walk along a multi-use pathway between the park and Ina Road where rarities have occasionally been spotted and check out the willow trees by the river's edge. Crossroads Park is off Silverbell Road west of the Santa Cruz River, south of Cortaro Road. Leader Kendall Kroesen, kkroesen@TucsonAudubon.org, 520-971-2385.



GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH, JIM & DEVA BURNS, WWW.JIMBURNSPHOTOS.COM

April

April 7—Saturday 8:00 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



Superstition Mountains

by the Visitor's Center at 5700 N 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)

April 21—Saturday 6:00 AM

Superstition Mountains

We'll bird Forest Service Rd. 287A on the edge of the Superstition Wilderness Area, an area forested with junipers, pines, and oaks. Expect to see scrub-jays, Juniper Titmice, lingering winter thrushes, sparrows. 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 roundtrip. Contact leader after April 1 to sign up. Doug Jenness d_jenness@hotmail.com, 520-909-1529.



Bald Eagles near Q Ranch

June

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 wildlife. Dark clear night skies mean plenty of stars. Combine birding with brief hikes to cool and scenic locations. Tour the 1000-year-old Q Ranch Pueblo. Depart Sunday after brunch. Ranch 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). Leader (present at Q Ranch only): Ken Furtado, seeqranch@earthlink.net

Special Trip for Tucson Audubon Members Only

June 16–24, 2012 (Saturday–Sunday)

Ecuador: The Northern Andes, led by Scott Olmstead

\$2295 per person from Quito, based on double occupancy; \$160 single supplement

Group size will be limited to 8 people.

Just one space remains on this special Tropical Birding tour, led by Scott Olmstead. Don't miss this fabulous opportunity to explore the Andes of Ecuador with other Friends of Tucson Audubon. An additional departure close to these dates is a possibility if there is enough interest. For a full itinerary, visit tucsonaudubon.org/Ecuador. For more information and reservations (or to join the waiting list) please contact Tropical Birding directly at 1-800-348-5941. ■



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.

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Colima and Jalisco: West Mexican Endemics from Beaches to Volcanoes.

March 10–18, 2012, \$2295. Leader: Keith Kamper and John Yerger. The states of Colima and Jalisco comprise perhaps the most biologically diverse region in Mexico, where the mountains of the Sierra Madre Occidental meet with the central volcanic belt. This volcanic belt bisects Mexico on an east-west axis, straddling a boundary along the northernmost or southernmost edge of many species' ranges. By scouring this region from its unspoiled coastlines up to volcanoes with cloud-enshrouded montane forest, we should see upwards of 40 endemics and specialties, including Balsas Screech Owl, Red-breasted Chat, Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, and Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer.

Big Bend Nat'l Park, Texas: Colima Warbler short tour

May 2–6, 2012, \$1065. 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 U.S. 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 folks desiring lots of birds 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!

RAVENS-WAY WILD JOURNEYS

www.ravensnatureschool.com

Sonoita Creek State Natural Area and Patagonia Lake. May 4–6 or May 18–20.

Tour Price \$425 (includes camping & food). Join Naturalist Vincent Pinto in Sonoita Creek State Natural Area. It hosts an array of birds, including many "Mexican Specialties"—Gray Hawk, Zone-tailed Hawk, Common Black Hawk, Montezuma Quail, Elegant Trogon, and Varied Bunting. You'll also search nearby aquatic habitats for waterbirds and unusual migrants and learn about native plants and wildlife. Tuition includes food and camping in Luxury Safari Tents at 42-acre Raven's Nest Wildlife Sanctuary. Contact: Vincent & Claudia Pinto (520)425-642 nature-journeys@hotmail.com

Sky Islands Bird Tour. August 16–20.

Tour Price \$650 (includes transportation, food, & camping in Luxury Safari Tents). Based on a beautiful & private 50-acre Nature Sanctuary, you'll explore an array of habitats in search of the incredible birds of the Sky Islands Region in southeastern Arizona. Traveling through Desert Scrub, Grasslands, Madrean Evergreen Woodland, and up into high elevation Conifer Forests, we'll possibly see Elegant Trogon, Red-faced Warbler, Mexican Spotted Owl, Greater Peewee, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Zone-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, Montezuma Quail, White-

nosed Coati, Mountain Lion, Collared Peccary, and more! Contact: Vincent & Claudia Pinto (520)425-6425 nature-journeys@hotmail.com

ROCKJUMPER—WORLDWIDE BIRDING ADVENTURES

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Birding Denmark & Sweden

20 May–1 Jun 2012 (13 days) Price: US\$5820 • £3670 • €4160 • SEK38,000 (Single Supplement: \$850.00). *Please note: these prices are subject to foreign exchange fluctuations.* The Scandinavian countries of Denmark and Sweden offer unbeatable temperate zone birding, spectacular scenery, cities and villages steeped in history, and wonderfully welcoming people. Our comprehensive tour is timed for the prime spring period and encompasses a wide variety of habitats, so we can expect to notch up most of the region's important species. Our accommodations are very comfortable throughout and we can expect long summer days surrounded by incredible landscapes and birds! This tour can be linked with a 6-day Finland Extension for the ultimate European birding experience.

Philippines — Endangered Endemics

22 May–08 Jun 2012 (18 days) Price: US\$4600 • £2890 • €3280 • ZAR31,500 (Single Supplement: \$500.00). *Please note: these prices are subject to foreign exchange fluctuations.* This fabulous tour explores the Philippines' three largest islands in search of some of the world's most beautiful and highly threatened birds. We can expect around 150 endemics and many other spectacular migrants and residents. Some of the great species we search for include Palawan Peacock-Pheasant, Stripe-headed Rhabdornis, Scale-feathered Malkoha, Yellow-breasted Fruit Dove, Azure-breasted and Whiskered Pitta, Chocolate Hawk-Owl, Giant Scops Owl, Wattled Broadbill, Philippine Trogon, and, our primary target, the magnificent Philippine Eagle! This tour can also be linked with our 7-day Visayan Islands Extension.

SOLIPASO TOURS

www.solipaso.com

Alamos... Two Ways! Come to Alamos and enjoy the great hospitality of El Pedregal, the beautiful Spanish colonial town and the many endemics birds! In January, we offer a unique trip that combines birding with the annual Music Festival. In April, we go up to mountain town of Yecora then to Alamos and the coast for a complete sierra to sea tour! No one runs tours to Sonora like Solipaso! **Alamos Birds and Music: January 22–28**, \$1900. **Yecora-Alamos: April 14–22**, \$2250. Leader: David Mackay.

Durango Highway and San Blas: February 4–13, \$2850.

Leader: David Mackay. We live in Alamos, but our second home is

San Blas! We have run more than 40 trips to this area ...and it shows! Starting in Mazatlan, we go up the Durango Highway for the Tufted Jay among many others. In San Blas, we stay at the wonderful family run Hotel Garza Canela and bird the many hot spots of this famous tropical birding destination. Great guides, great birds, lots of fun and delicious food throughout!

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research.amnh.org/swrs • tglor@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.

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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

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Costa Rica: The Introtour. February 10–20,

2012, \$2990. If you are looking for your first venture into the Neotropics Costa Rica is the perfect destination. 11 days covering the best sites in the country will yield many of the bird families that define this region from multicolored tanagers to dazzling hummingbirds to confusing woodcreepers and striking antbirds. However, the star of the show is likely to be the Resplendent Quetzal, arguably one of the most stunning birds in the world. Comfortable lodges, a bird list of more than 350 species, in a tour that covers everything from the northernmost paramo on Earth down to the lowland jungles of La Selva!

Sri Lanka: Ceylon Sojourn. February 21–5

March, 2012, \$3600. Easy birding awaits in the "teardrop of India", where we are likely to see all of the 30 or so Ceylon endemics from striking Red-faced Malkohas, to stunningly indigo Ceylon Magpies, and the Ceylon Junglefowl. For those looking for an introduction to Asian birds, Sri Lanka provides relaxed birding, great photography opportunities, and many endemics for the dedicated lister. Other attractions include jewel-like Indian Pittas, streamer-tailed Asian Paradise-Flycatchers, and cryptic Ceylon Frogmouths. Birds are not the only thing on offer, as herds of Asian elephants and leopards are very real possibilities. ■



CEYLON MAGPIE, THIMINDU GOONATILLAKE

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A few weeks ago, my brother sent me a copy of *Field Notes on Science and Nature*. He hoped the book would provide insight regarding methods for recording my own observations. It did. Beyond catching my attention with its beautifully designed cover, the book engaged me with its content. In each of the twelve essays, the authors thoroughly describe their own personal approach to keeping and organizing natural history observations. While this book does not read as a "how-to" guide for field note-keeping, it does provide a number of important considerations for the design, management and discipline of keeping field notes.

A chapter that immediately caught my attention is Kenn Kaufman's "One and a Half Cheers for List-keeping." Here, Mr. Kaufman discusses his own love for, and criticisms of, list-keeping. In his own words, "The listing game has repeatedly provided me with a stimulating and effective framework for learning about the diversity and current classification within a group and for getting out to encounter some of these things in the field." He continues by cautioning, "By the time you come to your senses and stop, you will have learned a lot." Ultimately, I think the biggest virtue of this chapter is in its encouraging stance toward the value of amateur observation. The author points out how the efforts of list-keeping in the form of Christmas Bird Counts and eBird have given us a greater understanding of our world. Reading this got me very excited about making more of an effort to keep accurate, accessible lists of bird diversity and density on my walks.

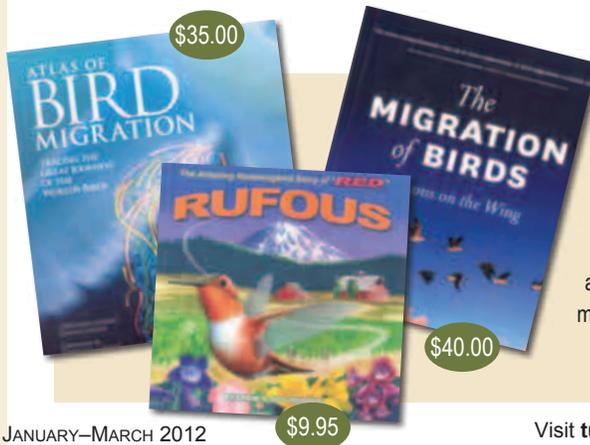
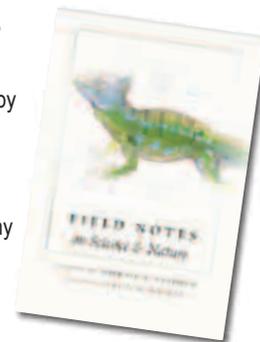
What makes *Field Notes on Science and Nature* so appealing to me is that at the end of each chapter, I got more excited about keeping good records of my daily observations. In addition to Kaufman's, other standout chapters include "The

Pleasure of Observing" by George B. Schaller, "Untangling the Bank" by Bernd Heinrich, "In the Eye of the Beholder" by Jonathon Kingdon, "Why Sketch?" by Jenny Keller and "Letters to the Future" by John D. Perrine and James L. Patton. Schaller and Heinrich do an excellent job of describing how fulfilling it is to keep good notes, while Kingdon and Keller make strong arguments for why sketching is an effective tool for recording important information and even making discoveries. Finally, Perrine and Patton show us the value of in-depth note-keeping for long-term ecological research.

One of the most pleasant aspects of this book is how each chapter reveals the personality of author. This is interesting given that most chapters touch at least briefly on the importance of maintaining a balance between detailed observation and personal commentary. While conveying information is of primary concern for scientific use, the personal discovery associated with the process is what makes this topic enjoyable to learn about. Gaining a greater understanding of the nuance and motivation of so many accomplished observers provides much to think about.

Although some chapters kept my attention better than others, I felt that every part of the book is worth reading. Not only does it provide compelling arguments regarding the importance of field note-keeping for any naturalist, *Field Notes on Science and Nature* captures the spirit of active engagement with one's surroundings.

Scot Pipkin



AVAILABLE IN OUR NATURE SHOPS

Follow Red Rufous on his miraculous journey from his birthplace in the Pacific Northwest to southern Mexico where he spends the winter. Share this tiny hummer's adventures as he makes such a long migration during his first year of life

Comparison Chart of Mid-sized Binos vs. their Full-sized Counterparts

Maker/Brand	Size	Price	Weight (oz)	Field of View (ft)	Close Focus (ft)	Eye Relief (mm)	Dimensions (in)
Nikon Monarch	8X36	\$233.96	19.8	367	8.2	17.0	4.9 X 5.1
	8X42	\$279.86	21.5	330	8.2	19.6	5.7 X 5.0
Eagle Optics Ranger	8X32	\$289.99	19.2	393	3.0	16.0	4.9 X 4.8
	8X42	\$299.99	21.8	341	5.2	19.5	5.8 X 5.1
Kowa Genesis	8X33	\$1,160.00	20.8	420	5.0	15.0	5.6 X 4.9
	8.5X44	\$1,385.00	33.5	366	5.6	18.3	6.5 X 5.4
Leica Ultravid HD	8X32	\$1,899.00	18.9	404	6.9	13.3	4.6 X 4.6
	8X42	\$2,099.00	27.9	389	9.8	15.5	5.6 X 4.8

Mid-sized Binoculars but “Full-sized” Performance



With the recent addition of the Leica Ultravid 8X32 binoculars to the offerings at the Tucson Audubon Nature Shop (as well as the planned introduction of the Swarovski SLC 8X32s in January 2012) we now offer a diverse line of binoculars in the “mid-sized” range. At the more economical end, we have the Eagle Optics Ranger 8X32s and Nikon Monarch 8X36s. In the mid- to upper-end (and with more features), the Kowa Genesis 8X33s complement the Leicas.

When considering purchasing a mid-sized binocular, consider their pros and cons vs. their full-sized siblings. Who wouldn't appreciate less bulk and weight around their necks while out in the field (not to mention usually saving a few bucks)? These mid-sized binoculars have the same general design, workmanship, glass elements, and engineering as their full-sized versions, but are no more fragile or less functional. For those who are more data-driven in their choices, I put together this table to compare the metrics that most folks want to know about in binoculars. Surprisingly, the smaller versions are better in most categories. Check out *field of view*: the Kowa (8x and 10x33) and Leica (8x32) are significantly better than their x42 counterparts—almost equivalent to a 7-power binocular. And *close-focus*: the EO Rangers focus down to 3 ft (wow!); great for those butterflies who have chosen to land on your shoe! In fact the only area where the mid-sized optics give up anything to their larger siblings is in eye relief. This would be important to those who prefer to look through their glasses when using binoculars, but anything 12mm or greater is considered sufficient, so I don't think this will be an issue for any user. All in all, these smaller binoculars stand up very well to comparison.

A key feature (and the most important thing which you don't hear about from manufacturers) is optical performance, or what it is actually like to look through them. Given their smaller objective lenses and the fact that they are going to collect less light, would you expect the view through these smaller binoculars to be noticeably different? My expectation was that in daylight conditions, not so much, but under low-light conditions (dawn-dusk, deep shadows, etc.) it should be obvious. To answer this, I tested both mid- and full-size versions of the EO Rangers and the Leicas at the Tucson Audubon Nature Shop. Other staff and I both agreed that we couldn't see any significant difference between the mid- and full-sized versions in normal daylight. Under lower light conditions, we still didn't see any difference and we had to darken the room considerably before we could convince ourselves the larger versions provided more detail. The time of day this effect would be evident would be so short (around dawn/dusk) that it would rarely come into play for most users. I have to admit I was surprised at how small the difference was in optical performance between the mid- and full-sized versions.

In conclusion, these smaller versions deserve a look when you're thinking about new binoculars, particularly if you are considering spending the money on one of the premium brands where the weight/size difference is greatest. Their general construction is identical to their larger siblings and their optical performance is often as good (or even better) in some aspects. You might think of getting a pair as a “second” but my guess is once you have them around your neck, they'll be the pair you reach for most often. If they're the Kowas or the



TIM HELENTJARIS

Leicas, they'll probably also be the last binocular you'll ever buy and well worth the investment.

Full disclosure here, I own Leica 8X42 Ultravids for my own use but a year ago, purchased the Nikon Monarch 8X36's for my wife. We're both very happy with the latter. ■

Tim Helentjaris

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