



The Cactus Wren•dition

Volume LII, No. 4

Winter 2004



Condor escorted by Ravens

Programs

November 2004 through May 2005

Meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month, September-April, at the Desert Botanical Gardens – Dorrance Hall. Meetings start at 7:30, and feature a speaker, book sales, refreshments, and a chance to socialize with fellow MAS members. Visitors welcome!

Join us for a pre-meeting dinner at Pete's 19th Tee, 1405 N Mill Avenue, Tempe (at the Rolling Hills Golf Course) starting at 6:00 p.m. Meals average about \$5.00 with a variety of choices on the menu. Join us! Except at the September meeting we will have our annual potluck starting at 6:30. Each attendee is invited to bring a platter of his or her favorite h'ors d'oeuvres, sufficiently large enough to serve at least six people. We will provide the eating utensils, the plates, and the drinks. The regular meeting will begin at 7:30. Also, in May we have our annual banquet.

Join us for a season of dynamic speakers and

Committees/Support

Activist Alert

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Maricopa Audubon web site

<http://www.maricopaaudubon.org>

"Man's greatest joy is to teach the love of nature." Anon

An Investment in the Future

Bequests are an important source of support for the Maricopa Audubon Society. Your chapter has dedicated itself to the protection of the natural world through public education and advocacy for the wiser use and preservation of our land, water, air and other irreplaceable natural resources.

You can invest in the future of our natural world by making a bequest in your will to the Maricopa Audubon Society. Talk to your attorney for more information on how this can be accomplished.

captivating topics! Visit Iceland, Alaska, Peru, Mexico and Arizona to see our favorite creatures and their associated environments. Learn to identify birds in the field by their sounds, get close-up and personal with digital photography, view habitat restoration along the Santa Cruz River, experience Arizona's sky island ecosystems and discover major conservation efforts throughout the state. Wow! And if that isn't enough to whet your interest, our banquet speaker for May 2004 is Kenn Kaufman!

November 2, 2004

Rick Williams The Northern Jaguar Project Wild jaguars once roamed the Americas as far north as Pennsylvania and Washington. By the mid-twentieth century, they were all but forgotten, having been purged from their habitat in the southwestern United States by habitat loss and extermination. In 1996, two wild, free roaming jaguars were photographed in Arizona and New Mexico. Come and learn about the Northern Jaguar Project and these secretive beauties. We anticipate that the book, "Borderlands Jaguars" will be available for sale at this meeting. Dr. Carlos Lopez founded this project and wrote the book with Dave Brown. Check it out - visit www.sonoranjaguar.org.

December 7, 2004

Connie Gartner Queen Creek and the Resolution Copper Mine Oak Flat Campground, Apache Leap and the surrounding public lands have long been important recreation sites near Superior. The "Friends of Queen Creek" are a grass-roots organization that is dedicated to ensuring that access to Oak Flat and the surrounding public lands be maintained. Currently, the Resolution Copper Company is exploring development alternatives to tap a large ore body in this area. See how this area exists today and learn about the development proposals. For more information visit www.friendsofqueencreek.com.

January 4, 2005

Bob Brister Wild Utah: America's Red Rock Wilderness Join Bob Brister of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance for a multi-media presentation of citizen efforts to designate public lands in southern Utah's spectacular canyon country as Wilderness under the 1964 legislation. Want more information? Look at www.suwa.org.

February 1, 2005

Scott Anderson The Gilbert Riparian Institute Gilbert's Riparian Institute contains two sites and totals 182 acres of land in the midst of a booming urban area. Both sites host important numbers of breeding, migratory and wintering bird populations. Hear Scott's update on how these island jewels have become important in our lives. Want to learn more? Visit www.riparianinstitute.org.

March 1, 2005 Sam Campana Rio Salado Audubon Center: At the Water's Edge Audubon Arizona has worked very hard to make the new nature center a reality. Come and see what's happened during the past two years and what will be happening in the near future.

April 5, 2005

Bob Witzeman Hummingbirds of Costa Rica A long-time conservationist and birder, Bob has graciously agreed to share his experiences with hummingbirds in Costa Rica. His photographs are alluring, his presentations are compelling, so come, enjoy this feast for the eyes and learn about these jewels of the air

May 3, 2005

Troy Corman Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas Over ten years in the making, the Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas should be available by early spring in 2005. Troy Corman will discuss the book and copies will be available for sale. The Breeding Bird Atlas is a statewide survey for nesting birds designed to document the current status and distribution of each species, as well as their relative abundance, habitat associations and nesting chronology. Atlas data provide a baseline against which future range expansions and contractions can be measured. The final product will be filled with range maps and natural history information specific to birds of a particular region. Written with the layperson in mind, this book will be a valuable resource. NOTE: This program will be associated with our Annual Banquet, which will not be held at the Desert Botanical Gardens. Check our web site, newsletter, or contact a board member for location information.

Speakers wanted: If you have ideas for speakers, or if you would like to make a presentation yourself, please contact Cynthia Donald, Program Chair, at 480-768-0593 or 480-503-2250.

From the Editor, Deva Burns

As some of you may know, Jim and I recently changed addresses. All of the frustrations of closing, remodeling, and moving are more than offset by the view outside my computer room window as I type these lines. We were initially attracted to this property by the large, tiered stone fountain in the front yard where right now a male Anna's Hummingbird is drinking from the top level. Yesterday we had our first Lesser Goldfinches and tomorrow, thanks to this issue's article from Kathy Biggs, I will begin learning dragonflies. Starting two new yards lists should make for an interesting winter.

Bob Witzeman's conservation article and Jim's report on the condors at the Grand Canyon

should remind us that the work of environmental protection is never done. Mark on your calendar the Christmas Bird Count date that best fits your schedule. "Citizen science" is a simple but effective way for all of us to be involved in helping birds and our environment. And don't forget to go to the polls on November 2nd!

As we move into the winter season and the end of the year, it is time to thank all of you who have contributed to the newsletter this year. I can't thank each of you enough for the time and effort you have put into your articles. Without your help, there would be no newsletter. Have a great Holiday Season and I'll be back in the Spring.

Escorted by ravens; photographed by Jim Burns on south rim of the Grand Canyon, September 5, 2004 with Canon EOS 1V body and Canon 400mm f/2.8 lens.

Needed—Hospitality Volunteers!—If you are interested, contact any Board Member.

Thanksgiving Bird Counts--

Thanksgiving Day—last for only one hour! The counter chooses the time that best fits his/her schedule. Some folks have called it a welcome break from the holiday activities. The count is to be made in a 15-foot diameter circle, the location of which also is determined by the participant. Such count circles are usually located around whatever attracts birds....feeders, bird baths, cover, etc. Most participants select a count area visible from a comfortable spot near a window. This is one winter count which can be made in comfort regardless of the weather. However, some counters do go outdoors and make their counts in favorite bird areas or on water areas. The same count circles should be used each year. Submit information to Dr. John G. Hewston Natural Resources Building Humboldt State University Arcata, CA 95521 (707) 822-5288. Tally sheets are on the MAS web site.

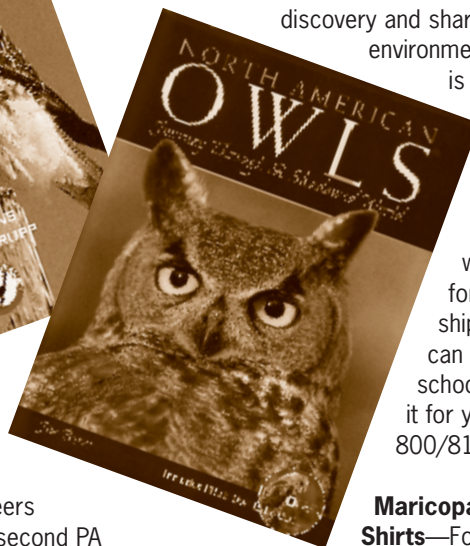
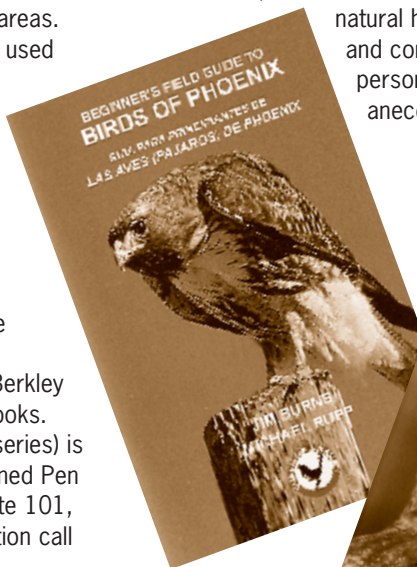
December 18—Poisoned Pen in Scottsdale (10:30 am)—Christine Goff, author of the best selling Birdwatcher's Mystery series for Berkley Prime Crime will be signing her books. The most current (and 4th in the series) is Death takes a Gander. The Poisoned Pen is at 4014 N Goldwater Blvd., Suite 101, Scottsdale, AZ. For more information call (480) 947-2974.

Children's Field Guide—There's a new book in town! Well, a new booklet in any event! This spring, the Maricopa Audubon Society published a children's field guide for 56 species of birds commonly found in the Phoenix area. Running 30 pages and measuring just 4"x6", this little book packs quite a wallop. Conceived by MAS member Mike Rupp, the book took flight through the writing and photos of Jim Burns, another talented MAS member. Unveiled at the Tres Rios and Feathered Friends festivals in March, the booklet is gaining in popularity. It also has some unique features. First of all, the text, in English and Spanish, is targeted at Kindergarten to pre-teen

children. (But I have it on good authority that it's being read and enjoyed by adults as well.) Secondly, it carries a strong conservation awareness message. And finally, the organization is based on five "neighborhoods" (habitats) that begin with your **Yard**, and progress to the **River, Ponds, Farmfields** and **Desert**. So, give it a "once over" at our next meeting. It's perfect for the children in your life or inquisitive adults who want to read about Pijiji Aliblanco o los Rascadores.

North American Owls: Journey Through A Shadowed World—MAS

writer/photographer Jim Burns' owl book has been published by Willow Creek Press and is now available in bookstores and online. It covers our 19 owl species with color photographs, a CD of their vocalizations, thumbnails of their natural history, and compelling personal anecdotes.



Pennsylvania Breeding

Bird Atlas: Volunteers are needed for the second PA Breeding Bird Atlas Project scheduled for 2004-2008. This atlas effort comes two decades after the first atlas which documented 187 breeding species in the Commonwealth. The sponsors include the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Powdermill Nature Reserve, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and Pennsylvania Game Commission. To learn more or register to participate go to www.pabirdatlas.org.

The Dovetail Directory (www.dovetailbirding.com): The Directory is an

online catalogue of world birding tours, and our goal is to help birders locate that special birding tour, to any of 85 countries around the world. This is a free service. There are no hidden costs or surcharges. Tours are offered at the operators price. In addition to tours, the Directory also carries a comprehensive inventory of birding-related books. For your further convenience we maintain a North American, toll-free number (877) 881-1145, and someone will always be happy to take your call.

Shade-grown coffee: If you are searching for a source to purchase shade-grown coffee and haven't been successful, try ABA Sales. They carry seven kinds of Song Bird Coffee. For information call 800-634-7736. Also, Trader Joe's carries shade grown coffee.

More birding and nature festivals. www.americanbirding.org. and www.birdinghotspot.com.

Audubon Adventures: Give the gift of discovery and share your love of the environment. The program is designated for students in grades 4-6. Introduce an entire classroom (up to 32 students) to the wonders of nature for just \$35 (plus shipping charges). You can select your favorite school or let Audubon do it for you. For orders: call 800/813-5037.

Maricopa Audubon T-Shirts—For information, contact Laurie Nessel at (480) 968-5614 or mail to: laurienessel@hotmail.com

Do you have an interesting story to tell about birding? Please forward your **submissions** to the Editor—Deva Burns. Check the back page for address/e-mail. Actually, attaching an article to an e-mail is the absolute easiest way to submit an article. If you have pictures or slides, you do need to send those to me directly. Remember, all articles may not be published the first month after receipt.

Photo Quiz

Jim Burns



A) good photo, easy bird



B) good photo, difficult bird

THIS ISSUE'S CLUE-

Sure these three species look similar. They are all in the same family and they are all in the same genus. All are possible in Arizona from right now through spring migration. One overwinters in the state almost annually. (All photos by Jim Burns)



C) bad photo, difficult bird

Endangered Species Act Under Attack

Bob Witzeman

"The wonder is that we can see those trees and not wonder more."

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Arizona's riparian habitats provide homes for many beautiful birds such as our Green Kingfisher and Elegant Trogon. Happily, this state's Southwestern Bald Eagle, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, and Yuma Clapper Rail are all given protections under the Endangered Species Act. In turn, they provide a layer of protection to our state's riparian habitats.

Arizona's geographically isolated, genetically unique, desert-nesting Bald Eagle population is one species protecting our rivers. Our eagles do not interbreed with eagles from other parts of the U.S. even though our young eagles, after they fledge in mid summer, may fly to the northern U.S. or Canada. When sexually mature, they consistently return to Arizona's streams and set up nesting territories just as their parents did before them.

While many non-Arizona Bald Eagles overwinter in Arizona, they should not be confused with our genetically isolated desert-nesting Bald Eagles. The northern eagles wintering here always leave Arizona in the spring and return to their northern U.S. or Canadian breeding areas.

Thirty years ago only some half a dozen pairs of eagles were known to nest here. Thanks to the protections afforded by the Endangered Species Act, which Congress enacted in 1973, some 40 pairs are currently nesting in Arizona.

Now the Bush administration wishes to remove Arizona's population of those

40 some individuals from the protection of the Endangered Species Act. This opens up Arizona's rivers to a host of habitat threats. The greatest problem is livestock grazing which destroys riparian nest trees and pollutes the water. Many of us are unaware that along our rivers cattle eat the cottonwood and willow seedlings and saplings as if they were ice cream. In addition, these trees, not cliffs, are the preferred nesting sites of our eagles.

Worse, the loss of trees warms stream temperatures due to direct



Photo by Jim Burns

sunlight. With this added heat and livestock excrement comes eutrophication and algal bloom. Eutrophication clouds the water so eagles can no longer see the fish prey they depend upon. Likewise, the loss of streamside vegetation reduces insect populations the fish need to feed upon to become suitably-sized eagle prey.

The League of Conservation Voters notes that since taking office in 2001, the Bush administration has worked systematically to undermine the Endangered Species Act (ESA), employing a wide variety of tactics to circumvent the clear language of the law and to skew its function in favor of developmental interests. This administration has listed only 25 species since 2001, all under court order. The Clinton administration added an average of 65 species per year, while the first

Bush administration listed an average of 58 per year.

At the U.S. House of Representatives, Natural Resources Committee field hearing in Safford, Arizona, (Sept. 20) Congressman Rick Renzi (R-AZ) urged Congress to "rewrite" (read terminate) the Endangered Species Act. Despite an expert witness testifying that the extremely endangered Mt. Graham Red Squirrel (down to some 300 individuals) needed 80% forest canopy (shade) to survive, Renzi declared: re-start logging on Mt. Graham to make jobs.

Renzi ignores history. Mt. Graham's small forest, logged from 1890 until 1986, yielded only 23 million board-feet. Tourism could create far more jobs for this ecological treasure. Logging trucks would snarl traffic and pulverize that mountain's steep, winding, single-lane road. This road accesses a unique national biological treasure possessing more vegetative life

zones than any U.S. mountain, and the southernmost North American spruce-fir forest.

It's true, Renzi's logging might solve the University of Arizona's squirrel "problem" by extirpating the species which forestalls expanding UA's telescopes on that profoundly sacred Apache mountain, and further impacting its ecologically irreplaceable summit spruce-fir forest.

It appears Renzi and his Republican allies in Congress would put us into a world devoid of endangered Bald Eagles, Gray Wolves, Florida Panthers, Spotted Owls, and Black-footed Ferrets for a few transient jobs that would destroy priceless treasures like Mt. Graham.

Genetic Coding

Jim Burns

Let me admit right up front that identifying birds to their proper subspecies does not excite me nearly as much as it does some of those who share my passion for birding. Nonetheless, one of the things that has always fascinated me is speciation itself. Though my spellchecker balks at “speciation,” the word connotes for me the process by which or the exact moment at which an individual begins to genetically diverge from its fellows. For better or for worse

If it be for worse, biologically we know the divergence will last only as long as the diverging individual, or perhaps for a few generations at most. And so, over the Labor Day weekend, we are once again at the Grand Canyon which is a large, remote hole in the ground where the destinies of two species, Man and California Condor, are once again interfacing, and I find myself wondering if speciation is occurring and, if so, for which of these species and whether for better or for worse.

It was in the September, 2001 issue of this newsletter that I first wrote about our sightings of California Condors at the South Rim of the Canyon. It was a feel-good article about an environmental success story, both instantly obscured by the cataclysmic events of 9/11. I obtained some good photographic images, then, of perched and roosting condors, but we are back this year for flight shots. In the interim both the Peregrine Fund and the condors at the Canyon have been busy.

In the fall of '01 there were 24 condors in the Canyon and the first egg laid in the wild since reintroduction had been discovered that spring. Though that first breeding attempt failed, there are now 44 condors present at the Canyon and one is the first wild-bred bird, #305 hatched in the spring of '03. On the northwest corner of the Battleship formation is another nest cave containing another chick which hatched this spring. This is a momentous event which gives the lie to the notion that all environmental news is inherently bad news. Or does it?

Last year a ranger/biologist rappelled down a cliff face in the Canyon into another suspected condor nest cave to see why the adult pair which had been exhibiting incubating and feeding behavior

had abandoned the area. At the entrance to the cave he found a dead chick. Back in a far corner he discovered a pile of old bones. The chick was x-rayed, the bones analyzed and carbon-dated. The result of the x-rays was an unpleasant though not unexpected surprise. The result of the carbon dating was a welcome and totally unanticipated surprise. The juxtaposition of the two set me to thinking once again about speciation which I have often speculated might have begun, for Man, for the worse on 9/11.

The intestines of the dead chick contained coins and bottle caps, scavenged from the Canyon by the parent birds and fed to their offspring because they resemble the bone chips which the adults instinctively know are necessary for dietary calcium. This confirmed yet another unsuspected way in which the presence of Man at the Canyon inadvertently and adversely impacts the condors.

And the pile of bones? Prehistoric condor bones confirming that Nature's huge and perfect undertaker had evolved and utilized this same cave back when other mammals were huge and carried adjectives like Woolly and Dire, and measly little Man was incapable of impacting anything in his environment. And confirming that any argument about California Condor recovery at the Canyon due to Man's intervention is a disingenuous one. Please note that in the opening sentence of the fourth paragraph I used the word “reintroduction” rather than “introduction.” Now we know which of the two species was here first! Uncertain is which of the two has evolved the farthest.

Are the 44 condors at the Canyon still California Condors, still genetically the same species whose bones inhabited the nest cave two of them chose again eons later? Most, including the wild born immature, have been recaptured multiple times—detoxified of lead ingested from coyote carcasses; vaccinated against West Nile virus; measured for tracking transmitters. Are they different, now, for having had these intersections with a different species of Man than their ancestors knew? A narcissistic one which assumes itself the ultimate species and disregards the rest, often even its own? Have these latter day condors diverged, devolved if you will, or been speciated

because the hand of this Man was inserted, had to be inserted, into the cloth and feather puppets used to feed and train them in captivity?

And what of Man at the Canyon, deprived of condors to these many generations and then suddenly reintroduced to this giant, antediluvian presence in the skies? One day at sunup, as condors begin boiling up out of the Salt Creek drainage on the morning thermals, I negotiate a quarter mile of rocky game trail out to a shelved outcrop. As I set up tripod and telephoto lens, a young couple appears, faces aglow with love and the sunrise reflecting off the Redwall. She is wearing spike heels and has, I think, recently visited a cosmetic surgeon.

As #03 and its Raven escort pass so close I can both hear and feel the air from their wings, the couple never looks up. I hear English coming from their lips, but they are not speaking my language. Is this a new species? How did it happen? When was the precise moment? How does a replicate from the Pleistocene with a nine foot wingspan shadow by and elicit no wonder or even a response from a supposedly superior species?

Or is it I who have diverged, blasphemously labelling the Canyon just another big hole? I came once, originally and long ago, to see it. I returned several times to hike down, through, across. Then I did not return for years and probably would never have, save for the condors. The condors, “brought back,” have brought me back. And I know I will return often now, for the condors have given a new old perspective, a new depth and breadth to a Canyon which was, for me, just a lifeless chaos of rock.

The same weekend we are at the Canyon, Charlie Babbitt and Bud Johnson, birding the Sunrise ski area, encounter Mexican Gray Wolves, the product of that species' recent reintroduction into the White Mountains. Reintroduction. Condors and wolves! Savor it. Twice is hardly a preponderance of evidence in this niche in time called Arizona, but perhaps by my next report from the Canyon, in September of '07, we will know with more certainty whether those who fly airplanes into tall buildings and those who toss coins into deep canyons are a new breed or just two more genetic losers.

Arizona's Special Species Elegant Trogon

Jim Burns

If there is a single bird among the roughly five dozen Arizona special species, species found only here or more easily here than in any other state, that fills the dreams of out-of-state birders planning their first trip to the Southwest, it most assuredly must be *Trogon elegans*, Elegant Trogon. The genus name derives from the Greek "gnawer," perhaps because some trogons have serrated bills. If you've seen the male of the species, the species name needs no translation.

Elegant Trogon, which reaches the northern apogee of its breeding range in the southern sky islands of our state, is common and a permanent resident in Mexico, from Sonora south through the interior to Oaxaca, in semiarid zones such as thorn forest and riparian deciduous in pines. In Arizona, however, there is nothing permanent or common about this spectacular exotic which retreats southward across the border in the fall, its elusiveness during breeding season a major part of its lure and lore.

How can a long-tailed parrot-sized bird, neon green over bright red, which barks like a dog, flies like a drunken woodpecker, and forages like a vireo on valium, be so hard to find and see well? For starters there are probably no more than 60 breeding pairs in Arizona in any given year, and preferred habitat is remote sycamore canyons, largely trailless, where high walls make the distinctive, croaking "coa" call ventriloquial. Indeed the best strategy for observing this species may be to sit quietly in a traditional usage area and let it find you.

Best places over the years have been the South Fork of Cave Creek in the Chiricahuas, Sawmill Canyon in the Huachucas, and Madera Canyon in the Santa Ritas. For every intrepid birder who has logged trogonless miles from

the trailheads in these ranges, there is a lucky birder who has had one come by while he ate lunch at Sunny Flat in the Chiricahuas, at the Garden Canyon picnic areas in the Huachucas, or the picnic area above the lodges in Madera Canyon. For every luckless birder who has watched a trogon flip away upslope just as she raised her binoculars to its hard-found perch, there is a disbelieving birder who has stumbled upon one unannounced, sitting quietly on a branch 20 yards out doing its queer, slow, tilt-and-turn head rotation as it searches the branches for insects and berries.

Large insects such as katydids,

grasshoppers, and beetles are the staple of the Elegant Trogon diet which is supplemented by available wild fruit and the occasional lizard. Because this is a big-bodied bird with relatively tiny feet ill-suited to foraging along branches and through foliage, food items are typically flycaught or hover plucked. Elegants are cavity nesters preferring large, streamside sycamores where they utilize old woodpecker holes or decayed and dead limbs 10 to 40 feet off the ground. Males return first, in late March or April, and prospect for a suitable cavity, then "sell" it to an

arriving female by calling from within. When the female has chosen a site, the male defends the territory with calls, making springtime the best time to find and locate a trogon by ear.

Which begs the question, why are we highlighting this spring breeder in a winter issue? Because occasionally Elegant Trogons overwinter in Arizona along lowland streams, and for at least the past five winters there has been one seen regularly along the Sonoita Creek trail on the State Trust Land east of the Lake Patagonia State Park boundary. This wonderful winter birding area is the featured "hotspot" in the upcoming December issue of *Birder's World* magazine, and Elegant Trogon has become the common denominator of a kaleidoscope of out-of-range and out-of-season rarities often found there at this time of year.

The accompanying photograph was taken there in December, 2002 as four tired and wet birders, having slopped through the creek all day, were alerted to the "Red-bellied Parrot" by a non-birding camper, and then sat and watched as this male perched motionless for ten minutes, five feet off the ground 20 feet away, totally oblivious to his dumbstruck audience. This park, the gem of the Arizona State Parks system, has now seemingly become, in winter, the best and easiest place to find an Elegant Trogon and see it well, the bird no less elusive, but the area way more accessible than this very special species' steep and remote breeding canyons.

Photo by
Jim Burns

Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips

Marjorie Eckman

The following field trips are sponsored by the Maricopa Audubon Society who have an organized program of trips throughout the year. They are open to the public and are free and include all skill levels. All the trips are Difficulty Level 1 unless noted otherwise.

CAR POOLING:

Maricopa Audubon strongly encourages carpooling on field trips. Please make every effort to organize your own carpool, consolidate vehicles at meeting places; and/or contact leaders for car pooling assistance. It is recommended that passengers reimburse drivers 5 to 10 cents per mile

LEGEND:

Limit: Maximum number of participants per field trip. Please call early to make your reservations.

Difficulty Levels 1 through 5: 1 equals very low level of exertion, short walking distances, considerable birding from vehicle and possibly multiple birding stops. 5 equals very high level of difficulty with respect to exertion. Longer hiking distances are expected with possible steep trails.

REMINDERS:

- Wear neutral colored clothing and sturdy walking shoes
- Bring sunscreen, sunglasses, head protection and water
- Avoid wearing bright colors
- Bring your binoculars
- Don't forget to have FUN!!!

Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips

October 2004 – March 2005

Wednesday, October 20

Watson Woods and Prescott National Forest/Lynx Creek. We will be birding a lovely riparian area along Granite Creek that leads to Watson Lake where we will "scope" for ducks, wading birds, and migrating shore birds. In Prescott Nat'l Forest we will walk through the Ponderosa Pine, Emory and Gambel's oak forest ending at Lynx Creek. The species list we are most likely to see is long but a few include Wood Duck, Great Horned Owl, Bridled Titmouse, Bushtit, Lark, Song and Lincoln's sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos (three forms), and even American Goldfinches. In the lake areas, Western Grebes, Forster's Terns, and late migrating warblers. A scope will be helpful. Bring lunch, \$2 fee, and car-pool money. We will leave Phoenix at 5:30 for two-hour trip. Contact Marjorie for reservations and car-pool information.

Leaders: Karen O'Neil & Kathy Wingert.

Contact: Marjorie Eckman

Phone: 480-368-1901

Email: desertjewelB77@aol.com

Saturday, October 30

Granite Reef, Phon D Sutton & Coon's Bluff. The birding is always great in these areas with waterbirds and raptors along the Lower Salt River. Resident and migrant birds in the mesquite bosques can include a surprise or two. This is a traditional favorite with a leader who frequently birds this area. Bring lunch, water, \$4 fee and scope if available. We will meet at the Walgreen's parking lot on the SE corner of McKellips and Power Roads. We leave promptly at 7 AM.

Leader: Richard Kaiser

Phone: 602-276-5312

Email: rkaiserinaz@aol.com

Saturday, November 6

Parker Dam on the Colorado River. Join us for a trip to Parker Dam for wintering hawks and waterfowl. We will search for hawks and sparrows around the agricultural areas of Ehrenberg en route to Parker where we have a good chance of seeing Ferruginous and possibly Rough-

legged Hawks. En route to Parker Dam we will stop at various bends in the river and at the Bill Williams delta to look for possible Scoters and Loons. At Parker Dam our target bird will be Barrow's Goldeneye. This will be a long day. Please bring a scope if available, lunch, snacks, water, car-pool & restaurant money. Meeting place to be decided on later. Please help with carpooling if possible.

Leader: Kurt Radmacher

Phone: 480-837-2446

Email: Kurtrad@mexicobirding.com

Wednesday, November 10

Tres Rios in southwestern Phoenix both the well-known Cobble Ponds and the Hayfields site across 91st Avenue are open ponds, with riparian habitat and trails that run along cottonwoods, mesquites and willows. These ponds have been a mecca for birders for years and can be depended on for an interesting list of birds including waterbirds, shorebirds, hawks, warblers and sparrows plus often a surprise or a rarity. Please bring a scope if available, lunch and water. Meet for prompt departure at the REI parking lot at the SW corner of Southern & Priest at 7 AM.

Leader: Mike Rupp

(this is a change of leader from the last issue)

Phone: 602-277-0439

Email: ruppar@mindspring.com

Sunday, November 14

Gilbert Water Ranch. The ponds and surrounding marshes attract migrating waterfowl, wintering raptors, and passerines. Burrowing Owl colonies are well established and easily viewed. Like Tres Rios in the west end, these ponds are fast becoming the east side mecca for birders and also have had their share of rarities. Bring a scope if available, lunch, and water. Start at site at 7:30 AM. Limit: 15

Leader: Cindy West

Phone: 480-830-5332

Email: cwestbirdr@juno.com

November 16 to 21

Bosque del Apache Festival of the Cranes. Is anyone interested in carpooling to this Festival in NM or shortly before the Festival?

Contact: Marjorie Eckman

Phone: 480-368-1901

Email: desertjewelB77@aol.com

Saturday, November 20

Arlington and Gila River area in southwestern Phoenix. We will concentrate on the ponds and agricultural fields looking for wintering waterfowl, wetland birds, sparrows and raptors. This is a good trip for late November, as we should have the possibility for similar species as the ones they get on the Gila River/Arlington Christmas Bird Count. A scope will be helpful. Please bring lunch, snacks and water. Meet at 7 AM for prompt departure at the REI parking lot on the SW corner of Southern and Priest in Tempe. Expect to return around 3 PM.

Leader: Tracy McCarthey

Phone: 602-451-4179

Email: tmccarthey@Acstempe.com

Tuesday, December 7

Phoenix Zoo Ponds. The Phoenix Zoo's ponds are home to incredible numbers of migratory waterfowl and this is a great chance for beginning birders to practice their identification. Seasoned birders will enjoy the sheer volume of migrants and the visibility of some usually difficult-to-view birds. This trip will include stops at the Arizona Aviary, three major lakes and the Harris Hawk demonstration. We will begin at 6 AM one hour before the park opens to the public and conclude at noon. Program is free to Zoo members and a \$4 donation is requested

for non-zoo members. Contact leader for reservations or additional information. Limit: 30 **Difficulty:** 1

Leader: Mike Foley

Phone: 602-273-1341 x 7339

Email: mfoley@thephxzoo.com

Saturday-Sunday, December 11 & 12

NOTE date change from Dec 4 & 5

Salton Sea in Southern California. This is an opportunity to learn new birds in an area of great avian biodiversity and with a leader who knows this location well. More than 400 species have been recorded in this unique shallow lake formed by the flooding of the Colorado River in the early 1900's. Contact leader for reservations or additional information. **Difficulty:** 1

Leader: Russell Widner

Phone: 480-595-2977

Email: rwidner@earthlink.net

Middle to end of December

Christmas Bird Counts are listed in our web site at Christmas Bird Count and in this edition of the Wrendition.

Wednesday, January 12

McCormick and Pavilion Ponds and El Dorado Park. There should be a good assortment of ducks and other waterfowl including mergansers. Last year about 250 Common Mergansers plus one Red-breasted drake and several Hooded Mergansers were present along with many ducks and shorebirds, cormorants and even a Brown Pelican. A lesser number of these species will be present at El Dorado Park where we will concentrate on the passerines. Bring a scope if available, lunch and water. Meet at McCormick south pond parking lot at 7:30 AM. Contact leader for reservations or additional information. **Difficulty:** 1

Leader: Marjorie Eckman

Phone: 480-368-1901

Email: desertjewelB77@aol.com

Saturday, January 15

Arlington and Gila River Area. Possibly we will see Sandhill Cranes as we travel around the Arlington area beyond Buckeye searching for ducks, hawks, sparrows, and other farm field species. This 3/4 day trip should produce a good variety of species as we look at sites along the Gila River, the Az Game & Fish Ponds, and desert areas. We will visit approximately eight well-known sites and some not so well known. Bring lunch, water, carpool money and a scope if available. The trip will end at Gillespie Dam, with a hoped for return to Phoenix around 2 to 3 PM. Meet at 740 E. Highland Ave. parking lot at 6:30 AM. Contact leader for reservations or additional information. **Difficulty:** 1

Leader: Mike Rupp

Phone: 602-277-0439

Email: ruppar@mindspring.com

Saturday, January 22

McCormick and Pavilion Ponds and El Dorado Park. There should be a good assortment of ducks and other waterfowl including mergansers. Last year about 250 Common Mergansers plus one Red-breasted drake and several Hooded Mergansers were present along with many ducks and shorebirds, cormorants and even a Brown Pelican. A lesser number of these species will be present at El Dorado Park where we will concentrate on the passerines. Bring a scope if available, lunch and water. Meet at McCormick south pond parking lot at 7:30 AM. Contact leader for reservations or additional information. **Difficulty:** 1

Leader: Marjorie Eckman

Phone: 480-368-1901

Email: desertjewelB77@aol.com

Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips

Tuesday, January 25

Patagonia Lake and Park trail plus nearby grasslands. This will be a long day trip starting with a Pontoon boat ride on the Lake and a park naturalist led two-mile hike afterwards. Cormorants, Common Loon, Eared Grebe, Common Goldeneye, and Osprey may be seen as well as rails, Snipe and Swamp Sparrows in the reeds. We will eat our lunch at Patagonia Park where Matt Brown of The Patagonia Birding & Butterfly Co. will take us on a search for grasslands sparrows, longspurs and Lark Buntings at the Empire Cienega Conservation Area. Bring scope if available, lunch, water and carpool money. **IMPORTANT:** call as early as possible on this one as some of us may want to go down the afternoon before as well as firm our arrangements with Matt beforehand. Contact leader for reservations or additional information. Difficulty: 1

Leader: Marjorie Eckman
Phone: 480-368-1901
Email: desertjewelB77@aol.com

Saturday, January 29

Agua Fria National Monument, Agua Fria River & Perry Mesa. The expansive and rugged Agua Fria National Monument, about 40 miles north of Phoenix, contains grasslands, chaparral and Sonoran desert scrub. We will hike along the perennially flowing Agua Fria River to look for the Vermilion Flycatcher, Belted Kingfisher, wintering warblers, sparrows, raptors and waterfowl. Rock and Canyon Wrens may be heard or found on the low canyon walls. Be prepared to wade in shallow water to cross the stream. Please bring snacks, lunch and water that can be carried with you. If time permits, we will travel to the grasslands on Perry Mesa. One of the monument's archeological ruins, Pueblo la Plata, overlooks a steep canyon at the edge of this mesa. Along the trail, we will look for Vesper, Brewer's and Sage Sparrows. Meet at 7:00 AM at Denny's parking lot just W of I-17 on Bell (S side of Bell) for carpooling. Contact leader for reservations or additional information. Difficulty: 2

Leader: Karen Stucke
Phone: 480-829-8059
Email: kstucke@earthlink.net

Wednesday, February 2, 2005

Le Conte's Thrasher site. This is our nearly annual trip to this traditional site on the far west side of Phoenix at the intersection of Baseline Road & the Salome Highway. Resident Bendire's, Crissal, and Curve-billed Thrashers may also be seen as well as Le Conte's and overwintering Sage Sparrows. Prairie Falcons have been observed on this trip in the past, and all of the typical low desert breeding birds should be present. The meeting place for those who wish to carpool will be Denny's parking lot, NW corner of I-10 & Litchfield Road at 7:00 AM. The leader will not be present, but will meet participants at the site at 7:30 AM. The leader must leave at noon, but those wishing to visit additional nearby sites should bring a lunch. Le Conte's are shy birds so we will limit the number of participants to 10 as we have done in the past. Call or email the leader early to insure a spot. Difficulty: 1

Leader: Jim Burns
Phone: 480-946-2052
Email: jpbaztec@aol.com

Sunday, February 20

Gilbert Water Ranch. The ponds and surrounding marshes attract migrating waterfowl, wintering raptors, and passerines. Burrowing Owl colonies are well established and easily viewed. Close looks at all the common waders usually possible. Bring a spotting scope if available, as well as lunch and water for a 7:30 start. Contact leader for reservations or additional information. Limit: 15 Difficulty: 1

Leader: Cindy West
Phone: 480-830-5332

Email: cwestbirdr@juno.com

Wednesday, February 23

Needle Rock to Rio Verde Ranch. We will visit an area north of Scottsdale's McDowell Mountain Park and work our way down to the Rio Verde Ranch. This is interesting country with varied habitats and normally provides a good variety of species. Bring spotting scope if available, lunch, water and carpool money. Meet at parking lot by the north pond at Scottsdale Pavilions on Indian Bend at 6 AM. Contact leader for reservations or additional information. Difficulty: 1

Leader: Ann Baker
Phone: 480-471-7081
Email: abjbaz@cox.net

Saturday-Sunday, February 26-27

Colorado River - Cibola National Wildlife Refuge to Topock. Join us for a weekend of birding at several sites along the Colorado River in search of wintering loons, grebes, geese, ducks, and other waterbirds. We should also observe a fair number of landbirds and several early migrants. Key locations to visit will be Cibola N.W.R., the Parker Oasis, Parker Dam, Bill Williams River delta, several locations along Lake Havasu, and the Topock Marsh area. The trip will begin early Saturday morning in Blythe, CA. To help limit logistic problems for this lengthy road excursion, this field trip will be limited to 15 participants. Contact Troy for reservations and additional information on carpooling from Phoenix. Limit: 15 Difficulty: 1

Co-Leaders: Troy Corman and Tracy McCarthey
Phone: 602-482-6187
Email: aplomado@cox.net

Saturday, March 5

Granite Reef Dam & Lower Salt River. We will bird the Salt River below Granite Reef Dam, using cars to cover hot spots along ten miles of road. A traditional favorite, excellent for waterfowl and raptors. This beautiful area usually produces a variety of species. There is a lake entry fee. Bring water, lunch and a scope if available. We will meet at 7 AM at the Walgreen's parking lot at McKellips and Power (Bush Highway). Contact leader for reservations or additional information. Difficulty: 1

Leader: Charles Saffell
Phone: 480-668-9393
Email: marisaff@cox.net

Saturday & Sunday, March 12 & 13

Tres Rios Festival

Saturday, March 19

Flagstaff Lakes. On this field trip we will visit the lakes around Flagstaff looking for waterfowl and Bald Eagles. We also hope to find Red-Crossbills, Cassin's Finches and Pinyon Jays. We will meet at the Denny's restaurant at the intersection of I-40 and I-17 at 8 a.m. Bring a lunch, water, snacks and a scope will be very helpful if you have one. Contact leader for reservations and possible last minute changes or instructions. Difficulty: 1

Leader: Charles Babbitt
Phone: 602-840-1772
Email: cbabbie@aol.com

Wednesday, March 23

Native flowers & plants of the east valley. Join us for a walk in the desert to look for wildflowers and other native plants. We will touch on identification techniques and ecology. A small loupe would be helpful. Bring binoculars as we will be watching for typical desert birds. Contact Leader for reservations or additional information. Limit: 15 Difficulty: 1

Leader: Mel Bramley
Phone: 480-969-9893 (in the evening)

Saturday, March 26

Picacho Peak wildflowers and plants. This trip will combine looking at birds, wildflowers, and desert shrubs. Wildflowers may be in short supply depending on the abundance of winter rainfall. Plant life dictates what bird species will be found in an area. These relationships and other aspects of avian natural history will be our primary topics as we search for desert birds. Meet at the REI parking lot at SW corner of Southern & Priest in Tempe for prompt departure at 6 AM. Bring lunch, water and carpool money. Contact leader for reservations or additional information. Difficulty: 1

Leader: Robert Obmart,
Dept. Applied Biological Sciences, ASU
Phone: 480-727-1126

Wednesday, March 30

Seven Springs, Camp Creek & Rackensack Canyon. We shall concentrate on two or three of these attractive areas looking especially for migrants. With an early start and a quick look at Rackensack, we will have time to linger at Lower Camp Creek and hopefully make it to Seven Springs for a day of quite varied habitats. Meeting place and time to be decided. Bring lunch, water and carpool money. Contact leader for reservations & additional information. Difficulty: 1

Leader: Joy Dingley
Phone: 480-419-9804
Email: joydingley@hotmail.com

Gilbert Water Ranch Beginning Birdwalks

Maricopa Audubon Society, the oldest and largest Audubon chapter in the valley, has teamed with The Riparian Institute of Gilbert, to bring regular monthly "birdwalks" to individuals and families in the southeast valley.

Located at the southeast corner of Greenfield and Guadalupe Roads, the beautiful 110 acre Gilbert Water Ranch will play host to guided birdwalks each second Saturday of the month, from October 2004 through April 2005. Running from 8AM to 12:00, the birdwalks will be guided by experienced leaders, with "loaner" binoculars and field guide books available free of charge. Each walk will travel around several of the ponds and a variety of habitats that will provide participants with good views of some of the 125 species that have been recorded at the water recharge facility.

In addition, there will be spotting scopes set up at various spots to see close-ups of waterfowl, and changing educational displays and learning opportunities at the exhibit tent. Come see bird artifacts, children's books on birds, stunning bird photographs, and even live birds like a Bald Eagle or Red-tailed Hawk, brought by Liberty Wildlife, a local wildlife rehabilitator.

The walks are open to all ages, individuals, and families, and are especially suited to let children experience, perhaps for the first time, the little known bird species that live right in our own neighborhoods- from beautiful Red-Tailed Hawks, and ground-dwelling Burrowing Owls that stand guard at their burrow entrances, to a good variety of ducks, sparrows, and sandpipers.

Details about birdwalk dates, times, and changing exhibits can be seen at: www.maricopaaudubon.org, and www.riparianinstitute.org

These birdwalks are a perfect way to introduce children and adults alike to local birdlife, and provide an educational family activity that will be long-remembered. Maricopa Audubon invites you and your little "naturalists" out for a fun morning of discovery and exploration.

Photo Quiz Answers

The backdrops of grasses, branches, and leaves tell us these are small birds, but they are foraging on the ground and all have distinctively marked light underparts so we know we are not revisiting the LGJs of our summer '04 quiz. First glance might suggest *Catharus* thrushes, but we've been there, done that in the summer of '03. Thrushes do not have these obvious head stripes or eyebrows and their ventral markings form muted spotting rather than the bold lines and streaks on these quiz birds.

If we start, as we always should, with structure, and compare body and bill shapes with last summer's quiz, we can see these birds are longer and slimmer than vireos, kinglets, and Verdins, our LGJs, with bills that are longer, thinner, and more pointed. These are warbler bodies and warbler bills.

A)--Good photo, difficult bird

The real issue in this quiz is separating these three warblers from one another. The most striking field mark on our first bird is the light eyebrow which it shares with the second, but there is another shared characteristic, not quite so evident, which should catch your eye. How many warblers feed on the ground? Well, yes, but even more interestingly, how many warblers, while foraging, exhibit the tail-up posture seen in the first two photos? With lucky timing the camera has captured the namesake characteristic of the genus *Seiurus*—through Latin from the Greek, *seio*, “to shake,” and “oura, “tail.” Here, together in one quiz, are the three tail-shakers that comprise the warbler genus *Seiurus*: Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, and Louisiana Waterthrush.

With a prominent eyeline and without a prominent eyering we know for sure our first quiz bird is one of the waterthrushes and not an Ovenbird. Separating the waterthrushes in black and white as we must do here may, in fact, be easier than doing it in the field in living color. Typically the background color in Louisianas is bright white, in Northern, yellow or cream but, as Dunn and Garrett caution in their Warblers field guide, occasionally Northern, too, throughout their range, will exhibit bright white eyebrows and underparts.

The best field mark for correctly identifying our two waterthrushes is the shape of their eye catching superciliums. In our first bird that supercilium is narrower in front of the eye and much broader, brighter, and cleaner behind the eye. This is the classic characteristic of Louisianas, and in some the eyebrows seem almost to meet on the nape. This Louisiana was photographed along Sonoita Creek on the State Trust Land east of Lake Patagonia State Park in January, '02.

B)--Bad photo, difficult bird

Our second photo, more contrasty, more muddy, and less crisp, features another bird with a bold, bright eyebrow. On close inspection it appears the shape of this eyebrow is the exact reverse of the one in the first photo. It is broader and brighter in front of the eye and tapers behind the eye, the classic Northern Waterthrush supercilium. This Northern Waterthrush photo was taken along the creek in Mesquite Wash on the Beeline Highway in May, 1992.

There is another notable difference between the waterthrushes in these two photos. This Northern's throat is spotted whereas the photo of the Louisiana shows a clear throat. Although this is typical for most specimens of the two species, Dunn and Garrett warn that throat spotting should not be considered diagnostic. Northern in worn plumage may lack throat spotting and the occasional Louisiana may have some spotting in this area.

We have probably covered dissimilarities easily discernable in these two photos, but there are at least four other features which, in their totality, should help in field observations. Louisiana Waterthrush, on average, is a heavier bird than Northern, with a plumper jizz and a longer, thicker bill. With a little imagination these differences can be gleaned from these photographs. What cannot be seen here is the well recognized variance in leg color of these two species, bright “bubble gum” pink in Louisiana, duller, darker, but still decidedly pink in Northern.

What also cannot be captured in still photography but becomes obvious with repeated field observations of these two congeners is the unique manner in

which each shakes that tail. Both bob continuously, but Louisianas do so in a rather slow, circular fashion which seems to involve movement of the entire body and has been described as “teetering.” Northern bobs up and down and seem to have a much faster rhythm, perhaps because only the tail rather than the entire body seems involved in the motion. It is speculated that bob and weave may act for the *Seiurus* warblers much like the head bobbing of raptors, helping to bring prey items at various levels in the ground cover into sharp focus.

C) Good photo, easy bird

Sure, this is an Ovenbird. There's no mistaking the nice head stripes, the bold eyering, the clear white throat with dark mustache marks, and the breast streaking which is denser and more prominent than that of the waterthrushes. Ovenbirds don't pump their tails, but typically forage with the tail cocked up, a characteristic not captured in this particular November, '89 photograph of the bird which overwintered at Paloma Ranch just west of Gila Bend.

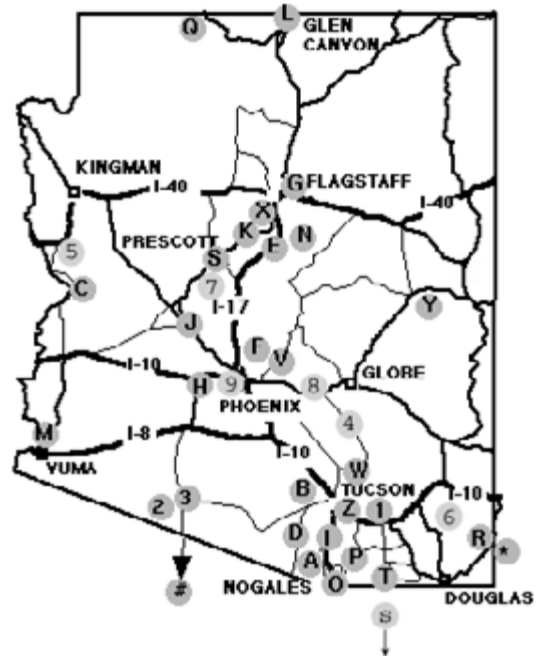
Ovenbird is the *Seiurus* most likely to be miscalled for a thrush, but thrushes are larger and feed in a completely different way, hopping, running and stopping, peering while motionless. Ovenbirds walk continuously, (so continuously that photography can be an exercise in futility) searching methodically. The common name derives from the shape of the nest which resembles a Dutch oven. Based on juvenile plumage and feeding behavior, some ornithologists have recently begun to question this species' inclusion in the same genus with the waterthrushes.

In Arizona look for waterthrushes in wet or creekside habitats such as Madera Canyon or the riparian areas of Boyce-Thompson Arboretum State Park. There is almost always a Louisiana somewhere in the state in winter. Northern is more to be expected in spring migration, Ovenbirds in the fall away from water in areas of heavy leaf litter. Here's a challenge for those of you getting a little bored with your birding—all three *Seiurus* warblers, in Arizona, in one calendar year. To my knowledge it's never been done.

Arizona (& Vicinity) Christmas Bird Count Schedule 2004-05

The National Audubon Society has conducted Christmas bird counts since 1900. Volunteers from across North America and beyond take to the field during one calendar day between December 14 and January 5 to record every bird encountered within a designated 15-mile diameter circle. These records now comprise an extensive database that helps to monitor winter bird populations and the overall health of the environment.

Participants are typically assigned to teams based on their bird identification skill level and endurance. A \$5.00 participation fee defrays a portion of the cost of tabulating and publishing the count results. Help is needed on most of these counts, so find one that interests you and contact the compiler for more information.



Date	Day	Code	Count Name	Compiler	Phone	E-Mail
12/15	We	Q	Pipe Spring Nat. Monument	Andrea Bornemeier	928-643-7105	andrea_bornemeier@nps.gov
12/16	Th	9	Phoenix-Tres Rios	Daniela Yellan	602-942-7791	danielay11@earthlink.net
12/17	Fr	D	Buenos Aires NWR	Bonnie Swarbrick	520-823-4251	bonnie_swarbrick@fws.gov
12/18	Sa	3	Ajo-Cabeza Prieta NWR	Curt McCasland	520-387-6483	curtis_mccasland@fws.gov
12/18	Sa	M	Martinez Lake-Yuma	Henry Detwiler	928-343-8363	henrydetwiler@earthlink.net
12/18	Sa	N	Mormon Lake	Elaine Morrall	928-526-1022	elaimorr@npgcable.com
12/18	Sa	O	Nogales	Michael Bissontz	520-577-8778	seetrogon@aol.com
12/18	Sa	#	Puerto Penasco, Sonora, MX	Steve Ganley	480-830-5538	sganley4@cox.net
12/18	Sa	W	Santa Catalina Mountains	Bob Bates	520-296-5629	batesr@u.arizona.edu
12/18	Sa	Y	Timber Mesa	Jimmy Videle	928-537-5144	moonrise@wmonline.com
12/18	Sa	B	Avra Valley	George Montgomery	520-682-8530	diamont@dakotacom.net
12/18	Sa	J	Hassayampa River	Vanessa Montgomery	623-465-0012	hassayampacbc@hotmail.com
12/19	Su	K	Jerome			
12/19	Su	Z	Tucson Valley	Susan Birky	520-743-9390	sbirky@mindspring.com
12/26	Su	G	Flagstaff-Mount Elden	Terence Blows	928-774-8028	terence.blows@nau.edu
12/26	Su	T	Ramsey Canyon	Ted Mouras	520-803-0221	mourast@saic.com
12/27	Mo	E	Camp Verde	Anita MacFarlane	520-282-4063	ajmac@sedona.net
12/28	Tu	H	Gila River	Troy Corman	602-482-6187	aplomado@cox.net
12/28	Tu	5	Havas NWR	Norma Miller	520-578-1399	n8urnut@comcast.net
12/28	Tu	1	Saint David	Tom Wood	520-432-1388	tom@sabo.org
12/29	We	C	Bill Williams Delta	Kathleen Blair	928-667-4144	kathleen_blair@fws.gov
12/30	Th	8	Superior	Steve Ganley	480-830-5538	sganley4@cox.net
1/1	Sa	R	Portal	Larry Gates	520-558-1020	hummers@vtc.net
1/1	Sa	2	Sierra Pinta-Cabeza Prieta NWR	David Griffin	505-382-2080	djg1@zianet.com
1/2	Su	S	Chino Valley	Russell Duerksen	928-636-6944	duerksen@msn.com
1/2	Su	4	Dudleyville	Tracy McCarthey	602-451-4179	tmccarthey@msn.com
1/2	Su	I	Green Valley-Madera Canyon	Reid Freeman	520-625-9895	wallcreeper@juno.com
1/2	Su	*	Peloncillo Mountains, NM	Alan Craig	520-558-2220	narca@vtc.net
1/2	Su	X	Sedona	Dottie Hook	928-204-1894	dothook1@aol.com
1/2	Su	6	Elfrida	Tom Wood	520-432-1388	tom@sabo.org
1/3	Mo	F	Carefree	Walter Thurber	480-483-6450	wathurber@cox.net
1/3	Mo	L	Glen Canyon	John Spence	928-608-6267	john_spence@nps.gov
Unknown	S		Baviacora, Sonora, MX	Arnold Moorhouse	520-364-3178	
Unknown	P		Patagonia			
Unknown	7		Prescott	Carl Tomoff	928-778-2626	tomoff@northlink.com
Unknown	V		Salt-Verde Rivers	Kurt Radamaker	480-837-2446	kurtrad@mexicobirding.com

wt: 10/10/04

Field Trip Reports

July 10 - Birding/Sailing at Mount Pleasant with Mike Rupp

Our MAS group started at an area near the Lake Pleasant Dam where mud flats and a trickle of water below allowed us to look down on an interesting number of riparian and desert species, including several excellent views of male Blue Grosbeaks, and a most beautiful up-close scope view of an American Kestrel. Quite a few Lesser Nighthawks in a loose group that arrived rather late in the morning surprised us. A move to dense cottonwood, willow and tamarisk stands below the Dam yielded an abundance of singing Song Sparrows, Yellow-breasted Chats, Bell's Vireos, Phainopepla, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Mockingbird and Ash-throated Flycatchers. We enjoyed sorting them out by song only, a good exercise. A Brown-headed Cowbird was briefly seen being fed by an unidentified rather small warbler (?). We have read about the parasitic habits of the Cowbird but witnessing it in person definitely made it a discouraging reality. Our "perk" of the day however, was a cruise in a 27' sailboat ably handled by our leader, Mike Rupp on Mt. Pleasant Lake. At one point when we had all gone overboard to cool off, a Brown Pelican circled us several times. Forty-one species were seen in all and it could not have been done more pleasantly on a middle of a July day!

August 14 & 15 - Gray Hawk Nature Center

A group of eight MAS members led by Sandy Anderson of Gray Hawk Nature Center spent August, 14 and 15 in Cochise County - a good place to be that time of year in spite of intermittent monsoon showers. We started in the grasslands where monsoon rains brought out a specialty of the region, the Botteri's Sparrow. Cassin's Sparrows were also seen well "sky-larking", their familiar breeding display. Both of these sparrows do not begin nest-building until the monsoons start. Fifty-two species were seen in the Huachucas' Garden Canyon with numerous Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers, Western Wood Pewees, Plumbeous and Hutton's Vireos, Hepatic Tanagers and Blue Grosbeaks. Ten species of hummingbirds were added at Beatty's and Mary Jo's including the White-

eared, Lucifer and Calliope. Afterwards, we drove up beautiful Carr Canyon - the gravel road was OK but the many switchbacks slowed us down. By the time we reached the top a dense fog had rolled in and it was literally impossible to see anything. A pair of Yellow-billed Cuckoo's changing places in a well hidden nest on the banks of the San Pedro River was a lucky find. A young Swainson's Hawk that was brought in extremely dehydrated and thin allowed us to see how Sandy, with the help of Andrea Nesbitt, MAS member and volunteer at Adobe Mountain, fed it water by tube and syringe and then three tiny living mice were put down its throat. This bird was later taken to the rehabilitation center in Phoenix for examination. It did not appear to have any broken limbs so why was it so emaciated? Stay tuned!

September 4 at Boyce Thompson Arboretum with Rich Ditch

A Zone-tailed Hawk was observed at 7:00 a.m. from the new suspension bridge before the start of this morning's birdwalk organized by the Maricopa Audubon Society. Other species throughout the morning included Northern Cardinal, Black-headed Grosbeak, Cactus Wren, Canyon Wren, Lesser Goldfinch, Curve-billed Thrasher, Gambel's Quail, Common Raven, Phainopepla, White-throated Swift, Yellow Warbler, Rock Wren, Gila Woodpecker, Bewick's Wren, White-winged Dove, Mourning Dove, Western Tanager, House Finch, Bell's Vireo, Turkey Vulture, Verdin, Yellow-breasted Chat, Wilson's Warbler, Belted Kingfisher, Cedar Waxwing, Warbling Vireo, Anna's Hummingbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Northern Mockingbird, Purple Martin (2 by lake), Pied-billed Grebe, Spotted Sandpiper, American Coot, Western Kingbird, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Inca Dove.

September 11 -- Paloma Ranch and area with Bill Grossi

Bill Grossi of BLM took us on a very extensive tour of southwestern Maricopa County starting on #85 going south through the farm fields of Arlington and south to the Gila Bend Sewage WWTP and ending at the Paloma Ranch. I lost track of the many turns we took searching fields of alfalfa and cotton

that were flooded and the many rows of salt cedar tamarisk bordering water canals. However, Bill knew every turn and we all were getting new "lifers". At Paloma Ranch, a long tall row of Athol tamarisk in the middle of surrounding flat fields provided a "migrant trap" for seven species of warblers, Western Wood Pewee, Vermilion and Western Flycatcher plus many Western Kingbirds, Warbling Vireos, Summer Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Lesser Goldfinches and a Barn Owl! Shorebirds included Greater Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpipers, Marbled Godwit, Western, Least, & Baird's Sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitchers, Wilson's & Red-necked Phalaropes. We owe a great deal to Mike Rupp who took us all in his large Suburban complete with water chest filled with ice. It was a dusty hot day but nobody minded - too busy finding birds.

September 18 - Fountain Hills Lake, Sunflower, Payson with Kurt Radamacher
Kurt Radamacher and his wife Cindy met us at Fountain Hills Lake where we got a great start to our day with 30 species including a Greater White-fronted Goose. Subsequent stops at Sunflower and Bushnell Tanks gave us quite a few warbler species among others. On Mount Ord we saw Mountain Chickadee and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Then lunch at Jake's Corner, and on to Roosevelt Lake where we did a lot of scouting. The most productive areas were Bermuda Flats and Grapevine where we saw over a hundred White Pelicans. They were close by with some feeding in unison; some resting while others flew in - quite a spectacle. Forster's Tern, Red-necked Phalarope and Cinnamon Teal were also observed. The storms off the coast brought very welcome cloudy cool weather that fortunately only turned to rain as we were leaving the Roosevelt area. We had a total of 91 species and saw many new areas - a very profitable trip especially when you have the benefit of Kurt's interesting commentary on birds and birding.

September 22, 2004 Neely Ranch, Ocotillo Pond, Gilbert Ranch Water

Warblers including Orange-crowned, Nashville, Lucy's, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Townsend's, and Wilson's Warblers were seen in the luxuriant cottonwood/willow habitat at Gilbert's Neely Ranch.

Brewer's, Savannah and Chipping Sparrows were back for the winter. The usual fall shorebirds were at the Ocotillo Pond though the Marbled Godwit and Red-necked Phalaropes seen there a few days earlier eluded us due to changeable water levels. A leisurely side by side comparison of Neotropical and Double-crested Cormorants was fun. Leader, Bob Witzeman. Total species 59.

September 25 - Tres Rios

A nice crowd of 11 met early at 7 AM. We started out at the Hayfield site to avoid any stray fire from the dove hunters that are prevalent at the Cobble Ponds this time of year. As we gathered in the parking lot, an Osprey, numerous Barn Swallows, and flocks of White-faced Ibis and Double-crested Cormorants flying overhead greeted us. There were vast numbers of Yellow-headed Blackbirds throughout the day. Things were a bit slow for a while with a pair of Warbling Vireos serving as the main highlight. Things started getting interesting when a brief spat between two birds dark above with white underparts had us wondering if we had spotted an Eastern Kingbird! We weren't able to confirm that sighting, but as we tried to find the two combatants, we saw a Fox Sparrow (sooty form) and then encountered a mixed flock of warblers in a stand of cottonwoods. The highlight there was a lovely male Townsend's Warbler seemingly oblivious to us as he picked insects from the undersides of leaves of a Fremont Cottonwood. Yellow-rumped, Orange-Crowned, and Yellow Warblers were also present. Before heading over to the Cobble Ponds we managed to spot a pair of Red-naped Sapsuckers as well. At the Cobble Ponds, we were all a bit downhearted given the state of the site. Although the area was still quite birdy, the trash left behind by other users of the area is growing. Also, many large trees have been pulled down. However, Belted Kingfishers still patrolled the stream, and among the many Turkey Vultures overhead we spotted a Black Vulture. The south pond remains drained, but we had a quick look - fortunate for us since we managed to spot a very bright Nashville Warbler flitting in one of the few live trees left in that pond. The total for the day was 57 species - not a bad day's work. Thanks to everyone who showed up! Jeff Fustich

What's Happening... Educationally?

Doug Green

Maricopa Audubon Society's new "Beginner's Field Guide to Birds of Phoenix" by Jim Burns and Mike Rupp is starting to move nicely. Several teachers have purchased the booklets for use primarily at the 4th grade school level. Our main contact at ASU, Charlene Saltz, recommends the beginners guides in her College of Education courses for elementary school teachers. Charlene just placed a 50 book order for her own use, and her recommendations have precipitated orders from other local teachers. Karen Schedler (a MAS member) ordered 50 booklets for use at the Arizona Game and Fish Departments' Educational Program. We have received orders from Changing Hands Bookstore and Wild Birds Unlimited in Tempe, and the Desert Botanical Gardens in Phoenix. Arizona Highways Magazine retail stores may also carry them. If any of you know of any educator, business or individual that would like more information about our new "Beginner's Guides" @ \$1.00 each, please have them get in touch with me at 480-998-5638 or via E-mail at azbotman@yahoo.com. I will contact them personally as quickly as possible. Retail typically runs \$1.95 per copy

Last August, Mike Rupp and I manned a MAS booth at ASU East College of Education. This event, designed for future K-8 grade school teachers, drew attention for "Audubon Adventures" and the "Beginner's Field Guide." Dr. Debi Molina-Walters (Dr. Mo) is already planning next year's Education Fair on January 8th, 2005 at ASU East. We plan on being there. In September, we manned a booth at the National Public Lands Day event at South Mountain Environmental Education Center.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES is an environmental education program for children in grades 3-6. Developed by professional environmental educators, Audubon Adventures presents basic, scientifically accurate facts about birds, wildlife, and their habitats. It comes as a Classroom Kit serving 32 students or Individual Kit. The program is used in classrooms, after-school programs, special education and homeschooling. I will bring a current Audubon Adventures kit to our next member meeting, should anyone want to look over these materials. If any of you knows of anyone that might benefit from "Audubon Adventures", please have them get in touch with me at 480-998-5638 or via e-mail at azbotman@yahoo.com. For schools that qualify, there is no charge for these kits. MAS underwrites the \$40 cost.

Another very exciting development on the education front is a powerpoint presentation being prepared by our secretary, Krys Hammers. Krys is working on several variations for different audience levels. She is eager for input from educators, as well as donations of images. This program will make it easy for volunteers to give presentations to schools, community groups and other organizations that regularly requests programs from MAS. Please contact Krys at 480-413-9805 or krys.hammer@cox.net.

We need your good help to establish a better, more effective educational program at MAS, for now and for years to come.

Birdwatching on the Navajo & Hopi Reservations

Charles J. Babbitt

It is late September. We are driving through the darkness across the vast Navajo reservation of northeastern Arizona. For 20 years my friend Bud Johnson and I have made these trips in the spring and fall looking for rare migrant and vagrant birds. Over the years times and places have blurred, but images of unlikely birds in unlikely places stand out in the mind like the tall sandstone monuments we pass in the night. Our destination this warm fall evening are the willows at Ganado Lake where we will throw out sleeping bags under the stars.

The willows can be difficult to find, especially at night. There are many roads that wind through the sagebrush down to the lake. After several wrong turns we find them and fall asleep listening to the distant barking of Navajo dogs and calls of American Widgeons out on the water.

The willows are a special place. There is always hope we will find an unusual bird. It was a fall day in 1984 when we first visited this spot and found a Palm Warbler under the trees. The Palm Warbler is an eastern vagrant whose name is actually a misnomer. It is seldom seen in Palm trees. Its breeding grounds are the boreal forests of Canada east and west of Hudson Bay. Today, we do not find any rare birds but we see a Downy Woodpecker tapping on a tree trunk and a female Wood Duck swimming in the reeds near the shore.

Not far from the lake the old Hubbell Trading Post sits on the bank of Ganado Wash. Picnic tables are set out under tall cottonwood trees whose leaves show patches of autumn gold. It is a tranquil place, perfect for breaking out a can of sardines and crackers for lunch.

Ganado Wash is one of our favorite birding spots. Over the years it has produced a number of uncommon and rare species. Among them: Hooded Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Northern Parula Warbler and Northern Waterthrush. Recently, the dense vegetation along the stream bottom has been cut and cleared to restore native plants and rid the area of Russian olive and tamarisk. These two exotic plants are competing with each other to overrun the landscape. Of the two, Russian olive is probably a little less undesirable. It has mean shirt-ripping thorns, but its grainy fruits sustain flocks of Cedar Waxwings and Robins over the winter, and its flowers scent the air on windy spring evenings.

Afternoon traffic on highway 191 is very light as we drive across the Defiance Plateau toward Chinle. I remember just how empty and lonely reservation roads can be. In January 1986, a biologist friend called to tell me he discovered a small flock of American Tree Sparrows in a field along Chinle wash. I left Phoenix late, driving through Holbrook and then north to Bidahochi where Navajo 15 turns east toward Lower Greasewood. It was a crystal clear moonless night with temperatures around 15 degrees. For the next 50 miles I never saw another vehicle. The only station I could get on my car radio was a faint broadcast of a heavyweight boxing match between Tony Tubbs and Tim Weatherspoon that soon faded out. I never did learn who won that fight.

About 15 miles from Chinle is Many Farms Lake, a large reservoir that irrigates nearby farms and

ranches. Its size and location make this lake a magnet for unusual birds, especially water birds like ducks, geese, and gulls. This fall afternoon we watch a flock of American White Pelicans fishing near the opposite shore. The steep walls of Round Rock Butte rise up in the background. Its shape reminds me of the "Mittens" in Monument Valley, the famous backdrop for many John Ford directed westerns of the 1940's and 50's.

Birding Many Farms Lake can be difficult. To get close to the birds we have to walk through mud, ford small streams and zigzag through cornfields. Worst of all we have to cross barbed wire fences.

Barbed wire fences become more difficult with age. When I was younger, I could cross them by pulling up on the third strand, stepping down on the second, bending my back and stooping under. Now, I look up and down the fence line for a good sturdy post where the strands are tightly wired. I can then climb up and over, hoping the wires wouldn't give way. Small holes and tears in the legs of my faded Levis are proof that they usually do.

The water level of Many Farms Lake fluctuates with the seasons but around its edges there is always a large swath of cocklebur. Dozens of spiny, irritating burs cling to pant legs and worm their way into socks and shoes as we cross toward the shoreline. One spring morning in 1987 we found a White-rumped Sandpiper standing in flooded cocklebur. It was only the second recorded sighting in Arizona. The White-rumped Sandpiper is a tundra breeder that winters at the tip of South America. Its usual spring migration route is through the central and eastern parts of the country. That one decided to wander.

Over the years the shoreline has provided many interesting birds. Among them Sanderlings, most often seen along beaches running back and forth away from breaking waves, and an American Golden Plover another long distance migrant that breeds in the high arctic and winters in Argentina. Late one autumn we saw a rusty gold Lapland Longspur feeding along the shore in a flock of American Pipits. At the time there were only a handful of previous Arizona records.

As we walk back to the car through a tangle of tamarisk we pass by an old Navajo sweathouse made of red mud and juniper posts. In a grove of tall cottonwoods to the east we hear the loud "mag" "mag" "mag" calls of Black-billed Magpies. It is about the only place in Arizona you can find them. Before leaving, we spend a half-hour pulling cockleburs out of our socks.

Driving northeast from Many Farms we travel toward Roundrock Lake. It has been several years since our last visit. In the distance the Chuska mountains rise up to nearly 10,000 feet. The town of Roundrock has not changed. There are only a few new houses in the area. There is a reassuring continuity on the reservation. Change is slow unlike other parts of Arizona where new developments seem to spring up overnight. We do not find many birds on the lake.

The Thunderbird Lodge at the mouth of Canyon de Chelly has a nice "no fee" campground. The cool well-watered lawns and trees around

the lodge are a pleasant contrast to the harsh plateaus, canyons, and mesas we have just crossed. The Lodge's cafeteria serves good hot meals. Over dinner we update bird checklists. Conversation invariably turns to the same question. Who makes the best Navajo tacos? Navajo tacos are fried bread topped with chili beans, covered with grated onions and cheese, and topped with strips of green Ortega chili. The answer is always the same, the truck stop in Tuba City.

The western part of the Navajo reservation is remote, and sparsely populated. Scattered and dispersed across this arid region are oases of trees and water or "migrant traps" that attract migrating birds. They include places like Kayenta, Cow Springs, Tuba City, Cameron and our next destination, Pasture Canyon.

As we drive toward Tuba City the highway climbs up onto the limestone capped Hopi Mesas past Walpi, Oraibi and Hotevilla. Years ago, I remember watching feathered Hemis kachinas dancing in the plaza at Hotevilla. On the western horizon the San Francisco Peaks are outlined in purple. They will be covered with snow in another month or two. Near Tuba City we pass through the gray hills of the Chinle formation. Teeth and jawbones of phytosaurs from the late Triassic period are sometimes found here.

Pasture canyon is just outside Tuba City. In its lower reaches there are tall willows and a small reservoir. Above the reservoir, the canyon deepens with steep sandstone walls on the west side. The bottom is farmland with riparian vegetation hugging the edges. The surrounding hillsides are covered with sagebrush, and scattered cottonwoods. After late summer rains the pungent fragrance of mint bush fills the air.

Every spring, rivers of neotropical birds migrate north from Mexico and Central and South America. They usually migrate at night. Most are never seen, but their numbers must be astounding when one considers they will fill up the forests of North America and Canada. One spring morning in Pasture Canyon we got an inkling of those numbers. With a loud cacophony of Red-winged Blackbirds in the background, we observed an unusual "fallout"; dozens and dozens of migrating birds, forced down by nighttime storms, were hopping through the trees, sitting on fences and moving through the sagebrush. Among them were flycatchers, vireos, warblers, thrushes, tanagers, and orioles, all in crisp, colorful spring plumage.

This warm fall day we see no "fallouts", just a trickle of birds migrating south. They include a Hammond's Flycatcher and a stunning black and yellow Townsend's Warbler. As Bud and I walk back to our parked car, we see two noisy Bewick's Wrens chasing each other across a large red sand dune. As we stand watching them we agree this has been a good trip. As we leave Pasture Canyon to start the long drive back to Phoenix, we are already anticipating a return visit in the spring when birds will once again be migrating north.

(Author's note: Remember when visiting the Navajo and Hopi reservations you are a guest of sovereign nations. Always ask permission to enter untraveled and private areas.)

Dragonflies for a Change of Pace

Kathy Biggs

Like the birds and butterflies, the dragonflies of Arizona come in vibrant colors. They fly; they have interesting life histories and amazing behaviors. When they emerge from their natal waters, they change from ugly aquatic nymph to beautiful, dazzling flying predators. See them during the spring, summer and early fall months. And if you're used to observing birds, you've already developed the skills for watching them!

In Arizona, dragonflies range in size from the Giant Darner, at nearly 6 inches the largest in North America, to the Citrine Forktail, a damselfly, that at less than 1 inch is the smallest in North America. The mostly green and blue Giant Darner is found in several locations within Arizona, as is the Citrine Forktail, a bright yellow little fellow. All the in-between sizes are present too, with many shapes and a variety of hues represented. They come not only in red, fuchsia, orange, pink, blue, gold, saffron, black, emerald, maroon, earth tones, and more, but also in metallic colors. Some have colored, spotted or banded wings; others may have clear wings but clubbed abdomens or a spike on their tail. And, no, they do not sting or bite. They have mouths that they do use to bite their prey (mostly mosquitoes and gnats) but they do not bite people unless caught and handled roughly, and even then it's akin to getting a good pinch. They have no stingers: the projections on the end of their abdomens are their claspers, used by the male to hold the female in their unique 'wheel' mating position.

All you really need in order to be a dragonfly watcher are your eyes. Optional items however would include shoes that can get wet, an insect net, a 10-20X magnifying hand lens, zip-lock baggies/glassine envelopes, and plenty of sunscreen. If you don't own close-focus binoculars, then a camera with a zoom lens can also be helpful: often our regular 'birding' binoculars won't focus in close enough while a camera will. You can click for a picture, or just use the camera for viewing. Some dragonflies need to be caught and held to learn their identifications, thus the net and zip-lock/glassine baggies. Dragonflies and damselflies can be held by their strong wings; folding the wings above their abdomens. Observe them thus in hand or temporarily placed in the baggies, viewing their markings before releasing them. But it is also enjoyable just to watch their amazing aerial antics.

To date, more than 65 species of dragonflies have been identified in Arizona - over 117 if you include the damselflies. We have a very prolific dragonfly area containing many different habitats. But dragonfly studies in the United States are in their infancy, as Ornithology was a century ago. Believe it or not, just 3 years ago a much smaller number of species of Odonata (the scientific name for the dragonfly's order that includes dragonflies and damselflies) were known to exist in Arizona. Many species have been added just in the last few years, mostly through observation of live flying insects. Other species were found through reviews of museum specimens and photographic records. And the census is nowhere near complete; we may get a few surprises yet! Part of the thrill of watching dragonflies is the ability for even beginners to

add to the understanding of their distribution, life cycles and habitat requirements. You could easily go out and find a new species in a new locality or observe and record new behavior or flight data! We have much to learn and record about their flight seasons here.

Unfortunately, you couldn't find a handy guidebook for identifying dragonflies until quite recently. The Audubon Society's Insects and Spiders field guide could be helpful, but this and other older insect guides cover only a few of the species of dragonflies found here. Dragonflies through Binoculars (Sid Dunkle) became available in 2000, but it only includes the dragonflies, not the damselflies. And Blair Nikula's 2002 "A Beginner's Guide to

Dragonflies" contained only a small fraction of AZ odes (the nickname for the dragonfly order). But, now there is Kathy Biggs' new guide, *Common Dragonflies of the Southwest, A Beginner's Pocket Guide*. It just became available this last Spring (2004) and does include the damselflies and most of the species found in AZ. Also many of the pictures it includes are by our own Peter Moulton. Other images are by Bob Behrstock and Dennis Paulson, both of whom are well known to Arizona birders/dragonflyers. All three of these books use the new common names that were adopted by the DSA (Dragonfly Society of the Americas) in the fall of 1996 and each is of a size where it can be taken into the field with you. Beware: all the guides written before 1996 use non-standardized common names. It is planned that everyone will now use these new standardized names and that the hobby/study of dragonflying will thereby avoid the confusing proliferation of common names that the butterflies and native plants have developed. If you have Internet access you may find the web site "Southwest Dragonflies" <<http://southwestdragonflies.net/>> both fun to look through and useful. This website is the companion site to the *Common Dragonflies of the Southwest* book. Besides containing much more information on identification, it includes updated distribution maps, and multiple images of each species. There is also a South West Dragonfly discussion group on the Internet: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SoWestOdes/>

We are lucky in that Arizona offers so many great places to begin/continue the study of dragonflies, and that some of the nation's most beautiful species occur here, such as the Painted Damsel or the Filigree Skimmer. So, just find a spot near water on a calm, sunny day; any natural or artificial body of water will do. Our parks would always be an excellent destination. The easiest species of dragonfly for beginners to observe usually occur at still waters such as lakes and pond, as they tend to perch, while those along the rivers aren't always so obliging.

Dragonflies need clean water in which to breed, so treat our waterways kindly. To encourage them in your yard, a pond is perfect, and the less fish in it, the better for the Odonata. Native water plants are easy to include, but even ponds with ornamental plants will provide some habitat for them. Short of a pond (even a half barrel will attract damselflies), provide strong perches in

sunny areas from which they can pursue their prey. And of course, avoid the use of pesticides! Since Dragonflies eat mosquitoes, even as underwater nymph, they can be used to help control those mosquito species that carry West Nile Disease, but they alone will not completely wipe out a mosquito population.

Like hummingbirds, and unlike the butterflies, dragonflies can maneuver quickly, making rapid zigzag maneuvers. Occasionally though, you'll find one basking in the sun or claiming and defending a territory on a pond or creek where it can be observed at leisure. Otherwise, enjoy the aerial antics of one of Earth's very first fliers: indeed, they predate the dinosaurs and are among our most ancient creatures.

The following are a few of the most common dragonfly species found Arizona.
Reminder: 25 mm equals one inch.

Dragonflies:

Dragonflies are heavy-bodied and usually larger than damselflies; their huge eyes are very close together and they are strong fliers. At rest, they hold their wings out flat to the sides, or slightly forward and downward.

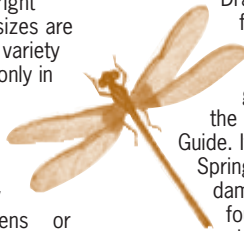
- Flame Skimmer - red-orange including the inside halves of wings, length 52-61 mm
- Variegated Meadowhawk - reddish with white 'porthole' like marks along abdomen sides, rests with wings forward, 33-43 mm
- Blue Dasher - baby blue, white 'face', perches on pond vegetation, 32-40 mm
- Spot-winged Skimmers - either 4, 8 or 12 largish dark spots on wings, 44-55 mm
- Black Saddlebags - black with black saddlebag mark on inner hind wings, 49-56
- Green Darner - green eyes and thorax, blue (male) or brown (female) abdomen, 65-79 mm
- Blue-eyed Darner - blue eyes, abdomen mosaic of blues brown &/or blacks, 62-70 mm

Damselflies:

Damselflies are the small, slender-bodied and dainty 'blue-tailed flies' with widely separated eyes. At rest, they hold their wings closed sail-like over their backs or alongside their abdomens.

- American Rubyspot - base of wings ruby red, bronzy-brown body, 38-48 mm. Found on moving water. [graphic at top of page is this species]
- Bluets - patterned blue and black, blue abdomen tip, wings held alongside abdomen 25-40 mm. Perch on vegetation around still waters.
- Dancers - patterned blue and black, blue abdomen tip, wings held above abdomen, 25-50 mm. Perch on ground/wood near slowly moving waters.
- Forktails - abdomen mostly black with a blue tip, 22-30 mm. Found near still water.

In Odonatology, the study of dragonflies, you can have fun, be outdoors, and even contribute to a growing body of new knowledge! Enjoy!



Field Observations

Janet Witzeman

**JUNE, JULY, & AUGUST
2004**

Unprecedented numbers of immature Brown Pelicans were reported in southern Arizona, around Phoenix, and even farther north at Prescott and Lake Mead, from early June into August. Numbers sent for rehabilitation at Sea World in San Diego were five times the number received in previous years. All were emaciated due to a decrease in the food supply and an increase in the population of Brown Pelicans. Individual Neotropic Cormorants were found in unusual places: one at Gillespie Dam, July 5 (TC) and one at the heron rookery at Painted Rock Dam Rd. and I-8 July 5 (TC) and July 9 (HD).

At least seven Least Bitterns were reported at the Arlington Wildlife Area June 25 and one at Gillespie Dam June 25 and July 5 (TC); several were seen at 115th Ave. and the Gila River Aug. 22 (CB). The growing rookery at Painted Rock Dam Rd. contained many Snowy Egret nests with young or eggs, several Great Egret nests, and 150 – 200 Cattle Egret nests with fledglings July 5 – 30 (TC, BG); 250 Cattle Egrets were counted in a flooded field e. of the rookery

July 30 (BG). Between 15 and 30 Black-crowned Night-Herons with juveniles were counted at the rookery during July (TC,BG).

Three **Tricolored Herons** were found in s. Arizona during the period: one in Yuma July 9-15 (HD), one at the Avra Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant in Tucson July 10 – Aug. 10 (fide KK), and one in a flooded field e. of the Painted Rock Rd. rookery July 30 – Aug. 26 when it was seen w. of Citrus Valley Rd. (BG).

Unprecedented numbers of **Reddish Egrets** were discovered. A juvenile, seen at the Perry Farms Pond on Painted Rock Rd., two miles north of I-8, July 2 – 30 (BG et al.), provided only the eighth record for Maricopa County. One was seen at the shrimp farm ponds, n. of Dateland in w. Arizona July 9 and remained until Aug. 6 (HD et al.). A juvenile was seen at the Maricopa Agricultural Center in Pinal County July 11 (DJ). Four more individuals were reported in southeastern Arizona: one at the Avra Valley WWTP June 28 – July 6, one at Willcox July 8, one at Lakeside Park in Tucson July 9 – 22, and one at the Buenos Aires Nat'l Wildlife Refuge July 13 – 18 (fide KK).

In June, two California Condor chicks hatched – one in Grand Canyon Nat'l Park and one in Vermilion Cliffs Nat'l Monument.

Ten adult Black-bellied Whistling Ducks with two young were observed at the sludge ponds e. of El Mirage June 25 and were still there Aug. 1 when the young were seen to be the size of their parents (TC). A male Wood Duck was reported in Avondale July 24 – 26 (JT) and one found n. of Roosevelt Lake Aug. 21 provided the first record for Gila County (KR). A sub adult male **Surf Scoter**, discovered at the Casa Grande sewage ponds July 11 at least to Aug. 3 (DJ et al.), represented the first summer record for the state. A very early male Hooded Merganser was observed at a pond in Papago Park Aug. 22 (JM); there were no previous county records before the end of October. A Clapper Rail was heard at Arlington Wildlife Area June 25 (TC) and two were seen at 115th Ave. and the Gila River Aug. 22 (CB).

A Snowy Plover was observed at the Gila Farms Pond Aug. 28 (PD). Two pairs of Am. Avocets were found nesting at the ponds e. of El Mirage along with about 50 Black-necked Stilts with several young, June 25 (TC); Am. Avocets were

also found nesting at San Carlos Lake Aug. 8 (fide KK). A Whimbrel was found at Paloma Ranch July 2 (BG). Individual Semipalmated Sandpipers were discovered at Willcox July 18 and at the pond e. of El Mirage Aug. 1 (TC). Individual Short-billed Dowitchers were observed at the Gilbert Water Ranch July 11 (PM et al.) and at one of the River Road ponds in Palo Verde Aug. 25 (BG).

A juvenile **Long-tailed Jaeger** was discovered Aug. 28 at Ashurst Lake in n. Arizona, where it remained until Aug. 30 (JH,CL); there are fewer than a dozen state records. More Ruddy Ground-Doves were observed in s.w. Phoenix near 107th and the Salt River. A male was seen again on May 30 and a pair plus two others, one of which may have been a juvenile, were found there June 6. On July 9, a male was seen making six or seven trips carrying nesting material to an olive tree (RJ,SG). This represents only the second nesting record for the county as well as for the state. An early returning Belted Kingfisher was seen at the Gila Bend Power Plant Pond Aug. 8 (PD),

The N. Beardless Tyrannulet, first heard singing in May at the Hassayampa River

Presserve, was heard singing there again June 13 (TC). A pair plus one individual Tropical Kingbird were observed at the HRP June 13 for the fourth consecutive year (TC). A pair of **Thick-billed Kingbirds** were discovered nesting at Palm Lake, HRP June 5 and continued to be seen there at least until Aug. 15 (JP,TL,TC,CR). An adult and a juvenile Thick-billed Kingbird, plus an **Eastern Kingbird**, were observed at the San Manuel crossing along the San Pedro River July 12 (DL,RD).

An early returning House Wren was seen at 115th Ave. and the Gila River Aug. 22 (CB); there were no previous county records before the first of September. A juvenile Sage Thrasher was observed in Fountain Hills on the early date of Aug. 25 (KR); there were no previous county records of this uncommon winter visitor before mid-September.

A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was discovered at Whitlow Dam on the early (or late?) date of July 8 (JBa), providing the first July record for the state. Another Chestnut-sided Warbler was seen there Aug. 26 (JBa). An Am. Redstart was observed in a Scottsdale yard Aug. 22 – 24 (JBa).

A Green-tailed Towhee was seen in a Scottsdale yard on the late date of June 12 (JBa); there were no previous records after the end of May. Another Green-tailed Towhee was seen at 115th Ave. and the Gila River on the early date of Aug. 22 (CB); the species has not been recorded previously in the county before the first week in September. A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was discovered at Quigley Pond on the Lower Colorado River Aug. 28 (HD); there have been only about three previous records from this part of the state.

More than usual numbers of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks continued to be reported. A female was found at Boyce Thompson Arboretum June 5 (DS) and a male was found at Jacob Lake in n. Arizona June 10 (TC). In s. Arizona, a pair were discovered nesting near the Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon in early August and the male was seen feeding two juveniles there Aug. 15 (fide KK). This represents the first nesting record for the state. A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak was observed at La Cienega Conservation Area Aug. 12 (fide KK). A Black-headed Grosbeak was seen in a n. Phoenix yard July 3 (TC), one of the earliest dates in the lowlands for the county.

Field Observations

An **Indigo Bunting**, a rare transient, was found at the Mohawk Valley Rest Area between Yuma and Gila Bend, Yuma County, Aug. 20 (MB). A male Varied Bunting was observed at Whitlow Dam, n. of its normal breeding range, July 8 (JBa); there has been one previous record at this location. Several pairs of Yellow-headed Blackbirds were found nesting at the El Mirage Pond June 25 and at least one fledgling was seen there Aug. 1, representing a new nesting area for the species (TC).

Following are highlights from s.e. Arizona not already mentioned in the above report. A **Roseate Spoonbill** was discovered in Nogales Aug. 16 and remained into September. Individual **Short-tailed Hawks** continued to be seen over Barfoot Lookout in the Chiricahuas and over Carr Peak in the Huachucas through the period. Two more White-eared Hummingbirds were reported at the Beatty's feeders in Miller Canyon, through the period, plus additional individuals were seen in Ramsey Canyon in July, and in Madera Canyon, at a feeder

in Hereford and at Sunny Flat near Portal in August. Lucifer Hummingbirds continued to be more numerous than usual. Up to four were observed in Ash Canyon during the period and up to three were reported at Beatty's in Miller Canyon. Additional individuals were reported in Hereford, at Arivaca, and in the Chiricahuas in August. A male **Berylline Hummingbird** was seen in Ash Canyon Aug. 5 and a pair plus a nest with two young were discovered in Ramsey Canyon Aug. 8 at least until Aug. 13. A female **Green Kingfisher** was found at Kingfisher Pond on the San Pedro River Aug. 12.

A **White-eyed Vireo** was discovered near Barfoot Junction in the Chiricahuas Aug. 2. A **Yellow-throated Vireo** was discovered near Patagonia Aug. 24 and remained into September. Four unusual warblers were found: a male **Blue-winged Warbler** in Ramsey Canyon June 27, a singing male **Magnolia Warbler** on Mt. Lemmon June 20, a **Yellow-throated Warbler** in Ramsey Canyon July 3, and a pair of

Rufous-capped Warblers in Sycamore Canyon July 20 & 28. The pair of **Flame-colored Tanagers** in Madera Canyon were seen feeding at least one juvenile during June and July.

Thanks to Keith Kamper and the Tucson Rare Bird Report for the above records from s.e. Arizona.

Abbreviations: Hassayampa River Preserve (HRP), Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP).

Observers: Charles Babbitt, Jack Bartley, Marian Bond, Troy Corman, Henry Detwiler, Pierre Devicche, Robert Dummer, Steve Ganley, Bill Grossi, John Hildebrand, Doug Jenness, Keith Kamper, Chuck LaRue, Diane Laush, Tom Linda, James McKay, Pete Moulton, John Prather, Kurt Rademaker, Carlos Ross, Diana Stuart, Jolan Truan.

Thanksgiving Bird Count Form

Thanksgiving (window watch) Bird Count

Counters name and mailing address:

_____, Zip _____

Location of count: _____

Date: _____, Temp. _____

Time: Begin _____ End _____

Weather _____

Habitat Type _____

Feeders/Baths _____

Feeder/bath (number) _____

Procedures for Count: Select a circular area on the ground (may include water area), 15 feet in diameter, to include feeders, bird baths, shrubs, etc., as you wish. Imagine the circle extending upward as a cylinder. Count the numbers of individual birds of each species which come into this circle (or cylinder) during exactly ONE HOUR. Try to judge as best you can the actual number of individuals which are making visits to the Circle, or which fly through imaginary cylinder. Try NOT to count the same individual bird over and over again! Please print "In Circle" column. If you wish to report any seen outside the Circle, list them in the "Outside" column.

Pick any ONE-HOUR period during the day and make the count on Thanksgiving Day!!!

Please send your results (even if you see no birds at all) to:

Dr. John G. Hewston
Natural Resources Building
Humboldt State University
Arcata, CA 95521

Record your observations on the field form below:

Species Name	In Circle	Outside
California Quail	_____	_____
Rock Pigeon	_____	_____
Mourning Dove	_____	_____
Anna's Hummingbird	_____	_____
Northern Flicker	_____	_____
Woodpecker, _____	_____	_____
Steller's Jay	_____	_____
Blue Jay	_____	_____
Western Scrub Jay	_____	_____
Black-billed Magpie	_____	_____
Common Raven	_____	_____
American Crow	_____	_____
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	_____	_____
Black-capped Chickadee	_____	_____
Mountain Chickadee	_____	_____
Red-breasted Nuthatch	_____	_____
White-breasted Nuthatch	_____	_____
Northern Mockingbird	_____	_____
American Robin	_____	_____
Golden-crowned Kinglet	_____	_____
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	_____	_____
Cedar Waxwing	_____	_____
European Starling	_____	_____
Yellow-rumped Warbler	_____	_____
Spotted (Rufous-S) Towhee	_____	_____
White-crowned Sparrow	_____	_____
Golden-crowned Sparrow	_____	_____
Fox Sparrow	_____	_____
Song Sparrow	_____	_____
Dark-eyed Junco	_____	_____
Red-winged Blackbird	_____	_____
Purple Finch	_____	_____
House Finch	_____	_____
Lesser Goldfinch	_____	_____
American Goldfinch	_____	_____
Pine Siskin	_____	_____
Evening Grosbeak	_____	_____
House Sparrow	_____	_____
Other Species	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Monthly Meetings

First Tuesday of the month, September through April, 7:30 p.m.

~~ CHANGE OF MEETING PLACE ~~

Our meeting place has been changed to Dorrance Hall, at the Desert Botanical Garden, beginning with our October 5, 2004 meeting. All remaining regular meetings of our society will occur there, with the exception of the Annual Banquet, which remains to be scheduled. The Desert Botanical Garden (DBG) is located at 1201 North Galvin Parkway, Phoenix, Arizona. This is approximately 1/4 mile north of the Phoenix Zoo. For a map, please see the DBG website at www.dbg.org/.

Dorrance Hall is located just off the main parking lot and entry to the DBG, and there will be signs directing you to the meeting place. PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH AS MANY PEOPLE AS YOU CAN. Please contact a board member if you have any questions, or check out our web site at www.maricopaaudubon.org. A banquet is held in May. Pre-meeting dinners (October through April) are held at Pete's 19th Tee, 1405 N. Mill Avenue, Tempe (at the Rolling Hills Golf Course), starting at 6:00 p.m.

Membership Information

Your membership entitles you to membership in the National Audubon Society and the Maricopa Audubon Society. National members receive bi-monthly issues of Audubon Magazine. For all new National Audubon memberships send check or money order payable to National Audubon Society to: Membership Chair, Mike Rupp.

Introductory rate for new members.....\$20/year
Senior Citizen or student rate.....\$15/year
Basic rate.....\$35/year
Foreign: add \$10 in US funds

For membership changes and status, call 1-800-274-4201. Address changes can be e-mailed to CHADD@audubon.org.

For Summer/Winter address change or to freeze your membership in our chapter call Membership chair, Mike Rupp.

Submissions

Copy for The Cactus Wren*dition must be received by the editor by e-mail, (may be on computer diskette, or typed and double-spaced; however, this is not preferred) by January 15, April 1, July 1, and October 1. Articles not received by the deadlines may not appear in the upcoming issue. E-mail to: Cactus Wren*dition Editor, Deva Burns. devaburns@aol.com

Bird Alert Line

602-795-0162

Opinions

The opinions expressed by authors in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the policy of the National Audubon Society or the Maricopa Audubon Society.

Reprinting of material

Unless stated explicitly in the article, material in The Cactus Wren*dition may be reprinted on other newsletters as long as the material is credited to the original author and to The Cactus Wren*dition.

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