



The Cactus Wren•dition

Volume LIX, No. 3

Fall 2009



Mexican Amberwing Dragonfly

Maricopa Audubon Meetings & Programs Sept. 2009 - Dec. 2009

Meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday of each month, September through May.

Meetings start at 7:30 p.m., and feature a general membership meeting, guest speaker, sales tables, refreshments and a chance to socialize with MAS members. Visitors are most welcome! Our September through April meetings are held in Dorrance Hall or Webster Auditorium at the Desert Botanical Garden. The Garden is located at 1201 North Galvin Parkway in Phoenix, which is approximately 1/2 mile north

of the Phoenix Zoo. Dorrance Hall is located off the main parking lot and entry to the Garden. Webster Auditorium is in the southeast section of the gardens (there is limited parking nearby for those who need it.)

A pre-meeting dinner will be held at Rolling Hills (formerly Pete's) 19th Tee Restaurant, 1405 N. Mill Avenue in Tempe (at the Rolling Hills Golf Course) for the September through April meetings. Come and join us at 6:00 p.m. for a delicious meal (no-host), meet our guest speaker and say "howdy" to other birders. Meals average \$7.00.

November 3, 2009

Bob Witzeman **Birds of Southwestern Ecuador:** Ecuador is one of the birdiest spots on this planet. Their colors are bright and breathtaking or camouflaged depending on their ecological needs. Birds of both the east and west sides of the continental divide of southwestern Ecuador will be visited. Knock-your-socks-off plumaged hummingbirds: Green-crowned Brilliant, Andean Emerald, White-necked Jacobin, Amethyst-throated Sun-angel, Fawn-breasted Brilliant and more are easily seen at Ecuador's ecotourism lodges in the high Andes. The rare Jocotoco Antpitta, discovered only a decade ago, and other unique species of antpittas, aracarís, toucans, and parrots are encountered in their dense forest habitats. The endangered El Oro Parakeet, discovered in 1980, was observed preening their bright plumage. Dorrance Hall

September 1, 2009

Emily Morris **Avian Field Research Around the World.** Emily Morris, the newest addition to the MAS board as the editor for *The Cactus Wren*, will talk about her time working as a research assistant in the US and Europe. She has studied the off-road vehicle affects on birds along the Colorado River, the nesting success of birds on the Mogollon Rim and the interesting and amazing behaviors of Ruffs. Dorrance Hall

October 6

Moez Ali **Birds of Kenya.** Moez Ali was born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya and has always been very interested in birds and wildlife. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Martin College in Pulaski, TN. He is an avid and experienced birder, active member and field trip leader for the Tucson Audubon Society. Dorrance Hall

December 1, 2009

Dr. David Pearson **Alaska from North to South: Birds and Wildlife** From the Arctic Ocean at Prudhoe Bay down the Dalton Highway through the Brooks Range, Denali National Park, and south to Prince William Sound and finally to the herds of Brown Bears fishing for salmon at the Brooks Falls of Katmai National Park, Alaska is overwhelming with its wildlife, birds and dramatic scenery. Tourism, oil, and politics that make Arizona's legislature look tame only add to a fascinating and educational place to visit. Webster Hall

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"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.



Cover photo by Dr. Pierre Deviche

Greetings, Maricopa Auduboners! This is the first edition of *The Cactus Wrendition* with me as the new editor, so I thought I would take this opportunity to introduce myself. Firstly, however, I would like to thank Deva Burns for all of her hard work over the past ten years as editor. She has left some large shoes to fill, and I feel honored to be attempting to do so.

My love for wildlife began back in my home state of Connecticut where my biology-teacher father encouraged me to really look at the world.

For most people the natural world is just a mix of browns, greens and greys...a backdrop for humans to live on or around; but, for those of us who have learned and continue to practice the art of looking, we are lucky enough to see the world in all its varied wonder and glory.

The favorite birds from my childhood include Black-capped Chickadees, Northern Cardinals and Dark-eyed Juncos—the regulars at our winter feeders. My family is half English, so I also loved European Kestrels and Robins. My father is also an avid gardener who builds his gardens with insects and birds in mind; when I was in middle school, my father became a member of Monarch Watch, an organization that tags monarch butterflies to help track and study their long migration along the east coast across to Mexico. That is when I first started to think about the role of science in how we understand the natural world.

My interests span the gulf between science and humanities...the love of science obviously encouraged by my father and my interest in the humanities supported by my mother who teaches Latin. Based on this split, I found that I enjoyed bridging the gap between science and the lay-person. At Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, NY I exemplified that split by double-majoring in Environmental Studies and Art History. My college adviser pointed me towards field ecology after I graduated and I proceeded to travel around the US and Europe studying plants, insects and birds.

I first studied the alpine meadows of Colorado, then the scrub of central Florida. It was at these first two jobs that I really started to focus on birds (with the help of the binoculars my parents had given me as a graduation present). Everywhere I go, I find that birders are extremely enthusiastic and excited to teach anyone who cares to listen. I soon caught the birding bug and wanted to know what bird made every chip, every wing flutter and every squawk.

I decided to take the plunge and began my first job studying birds; two years ago in March, I moved to Lake Havasu, Arizona to study the impacts of off-road vehicles on birds along the Colorado River using point-counts surveys.

I was terrified as, yes, I had done quite a lot of birding by that point, but, no, I had never even been to Arizona. Needless to say, I had to learn a lot very quickly.

After three months of point-counts, I moved to the Mogollon Rim where I searched for nests ranging from the chest-high sculpted nests of Hermit Thrushes with their sky-blue eggs to the tiny and amazingly cryptic nests of Virginia's and Red-faced Warblers. Though I had enjoyed the satisfaction of learning all the birds required for the

point-counts, this paled in comparison to the satisfaction of quietly watching a pair of Orange-crowned Warblers until I found their skilfully hidden nest at the base of a bent aspen. The quiet and patience needed to outsmart our feathered friends helped me to appreciate the grace and personality conveyed by every bill-snap and tail flick.

At the end of that field season, I moved to England to live with my partner, Scott, whom I met in Arizona. Though I had been to England many times to visit my family, Scott introduced me to truly living in Britain and all the countryside around his house just south of the Peak District National Park in central England. In the following March, we started a volunteer position in The Netherlands, studying the genetics and migration patterns of Ruffs. We lived in the northern province of the country

called Friesland in a converted church and worked with an international team to collect blood samples and re-sight color-banded Ruffs. If you want to hear more about this fascinating experience, come to hear my talk at the meeting on September 1st.

I moved to Tempe last August after Scott was offered a PhD position to study bird hormones with Dr. Pierre Deviche at Arizona State. I was happy to return to the desert as I have found very few places that rival the Sonoran's diversity and grandeur. You can imagine how excited I was for my first trip to south-eastern Arizona, where I saw 13 life-birds in one day (including Arizona Woodpecker, Flame-colored Tanager and Montezuma Quail). I am also expanding my horizons and beginning to learn Arizona butterflies and dragonflies, a challenge that reminds me of how much we always have to learn.

I am happy to be living here in our beautiful desert, despite the heat, and I am honored to be a member of an Audubon chapter that respects what Arizona has to offer and works to keep the lands safe. As I am new to the state and new to your Audubon, please introduce yourself to me at the next meeting or send me a quick email. I welcome all contributions to *The Cactus Wrendition* and look forward to learning as much as possible about Arizona's wildlife and the people whose passion it is to preserve it.



Me, holding a Golden Plover while studying Ruffs in The Netherlands.

Herb's Meanderings

Herb Fibel

I'm thinking of heading to Austin, Texas, in August to attend my Godson Will's graduate school graduation, with the thought of trying to spot on the trip what has been an elusive life bird for me, the colorful Painted Bunting. Do you think I could find one in the Austin area in August? Maybe so, if I can enlist the help of an experienced volunteer bird guide, who is familiar with where to find the local specialties. I do it here for visiting out of town birders to the Valley, and someone informed me that you can now find a birding buddy on the Internet, but I don't have the information at hand for doing so.

In early June I flew to Orlando for a Mended Hearts convention. I tried to organize a birding quest group among my fellow conventioners, but I was unsuccessful. I've never been to Orlando before, so I'm not sure

what it is like normally, but when I was there it was at the end of a particularly wet spring, and there were ponds everywhere. I'm sensing though that Orlando is probably built up swampland, anyway, and that standing water everywhere is the norm. Because of the tight meeting schedule, I was only able to bird on my morning exercise walks. It was fun to see some of the common Back East birds that I had seen before, but that we don't see around here, such as the Blue Jay and the Boat-tailed Grackle, and the not quite so common Back East species, such as the Little Blue Heron, the Anhinga, and the only once before seen Roseate Spoonbill. I managed to add two lifers to my mentally-stored life list, the Tri-colored Heron and the Wood Stork.

Other than that, my only birding success this spring is the adding of two birds to my "Seen From the Apartment

List", a Townsend's Warbler and a Eurasian Collared Dove, bringing that list up to 45 species in about 22 months.

You will see that we do not have a board member for field trips. Laurie Nessel, among her dozen other duties, is trying to organize our field trip schedule. Have you ever wished that there were a field trip going to someplace that you frequently go to on your own? Let Laurie know. I'll bet you though, that if you do so, she will ask you to lead it. And why not do so? You don't have to be the world's best birder, you just need to know where to go in the area to find the best variety of birds.

If someone out there reading this is high on the Arizona life bird list, and you decide that you want to do something for the birds that you covet, how about volunteering to serve on our board as our Field Trip Director!

Here Comes Another Big Sit!

by Herb Fibel

On your mark! Get set! Sit! It's time to get ready for the 2009 version of the Maricopa Audubon Kathryn F. Anderson Granite Reef Asterisk's Big Sit! The Big Sit! on Sunday, October 11th, will be the 14th annual Big Sit! at this site—the Granite Reef TNF Recreation Area, in the mesquite bosque on the shoreline of the Granite Reef Reservoir across from Red Mountain. What the heck is this guy talking about, you ask?

Everyone in birddom knows about Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Counts (CBC's) that have been going on since 1900, and which have expanded onto several continents, and many of you participate in one or more of them each year. The Big Sit! is sort of like that, but then again, different. Instead of a 15 mile diameter circle being canvassed each year in December through early January, with talliers rushing about on foot, in cars, in boats, and sometimes on sleds, hustling to count each species and each bird in their area (the CBC), the intrepid Big Sit! talliers on the second Sunday in October, sit peacefully and relaxed

within a 17 foot diameter circle and tally the bird species that come to visit them.

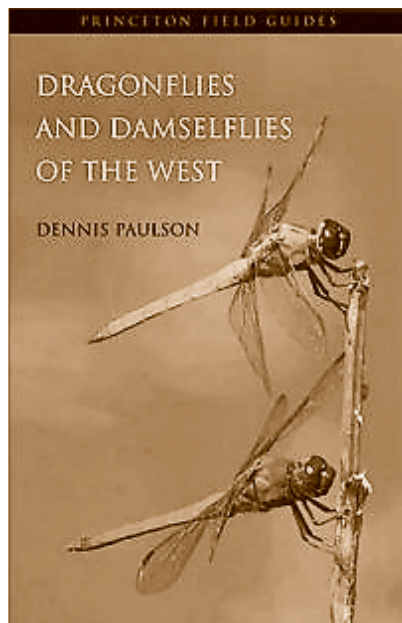
Big Sit! guru and creator, John Himmelman, of the New Haven Bird Club, once opined that if you sit in one place long enough, every bird in North America will come by where you're sitting, and that's the premise of the Big Sit! This has been truer than one might suppose. By the end of the 14th annual Granite Reef Big Sit!, 30% of all the bird species ever recorded in Maricopa County ("Birds of Phoenix and Maricopa County Arizona", Witzeman, Demaree, and Radtke, 1997) have come within the telescope and binocular sights of this particular group of Big Sit! observers..

In 2008, we changed the name of our group to the Kathryn F. Anderson Granite Reef Asterisk's Big Sit! to honor the memory of Kathe Anderson's mother, who had recently passed away. Kathe's mother had been Kathe's inspiration for taking an interest in birds and the maintenance of a healthy environment for them. In 2008, our 14th year at this location, we tallied an amazing 70 species while we sat within our 17 foot diameter circle for eight hours, from

pre-dawn 5:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., when we got tired of just sitting around, and packed up and left. Our cumulative total through 2008 is 128 species.

We have had many observers over the years. Pete Moulton and I have been in on it from the beginning. Other participants have been Terry Brodner, Ken and Ardelle Howe, Cynthia Donald, Joyce Fibel, Adam and Phyllis Martin, Tom and Rosalinda Partel, Deb Sparrow, Kathe Anderson, and Cynthia Grant. Many others have stopped by and helped us out.

For the past several years this event has become the only birding related fund raising event for Maricopa Audubon. If you would like to make a straight donation as part of this event, please send you donation checks payable to Maricopa Audubon Society to our treasurer, whose name and address appear on the back page of this Wren-dition, and note on the check that it is a Big Sit! donation. If you would prefer to make a per species pledge, please contact me, and I will bill you after the event.

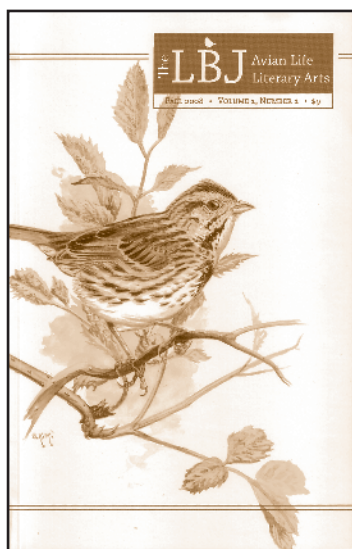


Dragonflies and Damselflies of the West

(Princeton Field Guides) by Dennis Paulson. If you are a dragonfly and damselfly enthusiast, then this recently published book is a must-have. "*Dragonflies and Damselflies of the West* is the first fully illustrated field guide to all 348 species of dragonflies and damselflies in western North America." Each species has a full-color photograph and extremely accurate map to help with identification and general natural history knowledge. Maybe beginners should still use the compact *Dragonflies of California* and *Common Dragonflies of the Southwest* by Kathy Biggs, but if you want to expand, Paulson's book is the way to go.

New Bird Publication Takes Flight

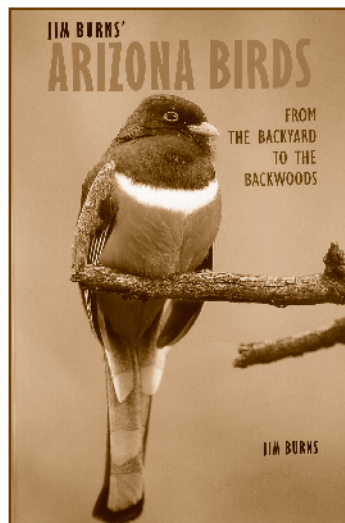
The University of Nevada Department of English has launched a new creative writing publication with a focus on birds, *The LBJ: Avian Life*,



Literary Arts. This biannual publication provides a venue for quality, new work in poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction, as well as full color art. Additionally, each issue features reviews on selected recent avian-oriented books. For more information and to subscribe go to www.literarybirdjournal.org or you can contact Nick Neely, Editor-in-Chief at 650-576-3484 or editor@literarybirdjournal.org. Subscriptions are available to individuals for \$15, or \$25 for 2 years.

Jim Burns' Arizona Birds

Jim Burns' *Arizona Birds* is a lively portrayal of the habits and habitats of seventy-five unique southwestern species. Burns has written much more than a field guide, site guide, or scientific survey . . . an original kind of birding book that is more at home on your bedside table than in your backpack . . . illustrated in full color by seventy-five of the author's own outstanding photographs. You can order at <http://www.uapress.arizona.edu/BOOKS/bid1948.htm>



You can see more of Jim's work at www.jimburnsphotos.com

Films on the Environment

If anyone is interested in films on the environment, check out www.eccfilms.com. Look for NAU's A River Reborn: The Restoration of Fossil Creek.

Flagged Shorebirds

Although not common in our area, please be aware of color-flagged Hudsonian Godwits, Whimbrels, and any other shorebird species which you notice have color bands. You can also contact

Dave Krueper, Ass't. Nongame Migratory Bird Coordinator, US Fish and Wildlife Service, PO Box 1306, Albuquerque,

NM 87103, (505) 248-6877 or dave.krueper@fws.gov

Unwanted Catalogues

Is your mailbox full of unwanted mail? Catalogue works collaboratively with the catalog industry to embrace voluntary measures to reduce unwanted mail by honoring your mail preferences. Catalog Choice has become a significant consumer voice in the direct mail industry. Nearly 200 catalog mailers are participating in Catalog Choice, and this number grows every day. ? Please go to <http://www.catalogchoice.org/pages/merchants> to reduce the mailing of unwanted catalogs.

E-mail Alert System

Maricopa Audubon Society has

established an e-mail alert system to notify members of upcoming events and activities. E-mail addresses were obtained from both the "Friends of Maricopa Audubon" roster and the National Audubon roster. There were several addresses that were returned, most likely because the e-mail addresses were not updated. If you would like to be included in or removed from this notification system, please let Jack Follett know at jackfollett@msn.com. The list will only be used for the stated purpose and not sold or used for any other reason.

Birding Community E-Bulletin

A monthly bulletin with rare bird sightings and other birding information. If you would like to be put on the monthly emailing list please contact either Wayne Petersen (Director of the Massachusetts Important Bird Areas Program) at 718-259-2178 or wpetersen@massaudubon.org or Paul Baicich at 410-992-9736 or paul.baicich@verizon.net. They never sell the recipient list and you will receive a lot of interesting information.

Notes & Announcements cont.

Casa Del Caballo Blanco EcoLodge – Belize

A new six-cabana, eco-friendly accommodation in Belize - Casa del Caballo Blanco is a 23-acre former ranch 9.5 miles from the Guatemalan border near San Ignacio. It also shelters the not-for-profit Casa Avian Support Alliance (CASA) <http://www.casaavian.org/>.

Its purpose is to understand and support the biodiversity of Belize that attracts and sustains over 530 species of migratory and resident birds spotted in a given year. Jodi and Vance Benté, owners of the property, also established The Alliance whose motto is: "Birds are the farmers of the world - help us to help them continue to sow their seeds." Their work has been undertaken in cooperation with the Government of Belize's efforts to protect critical habitat, the loss of which threatens the avian population. Guests are invited to share in the responsibilities of supporting the avian program. They can assist in nest-box building, maintenance and feeding as well as trail building and signage. A percentage of each cabana rental will be donated to the CASA center to assist with medical and other expenses related to the management of the facility. Casa also organizes day-long tours that in addition to an educational and scientific focus can include bird-watching, horseback riding, cave tubing and visiting archeological and World Heritage Sites in Belize and Guatemala. For more information, call 707-974-4942 or visit www.casacaballoblanco.com.

Land of the Quetzal

Rich Kern and his brother, Jim, are looking for twenty partners to join us in the purchase of the 486 acre parcel, which is adjacent to Los Quetzales National Park and across the Savegre River from Los Santos National Preserve in Costa Rica. Preserving an important piece of quetzal habitat is a big part of our motivation in choosing the Savegre tract; the area is one of the best places to see this beautiful bird. Besides birds, it is also possible to see puma, ocelot, the little margay, jaguar and tapir. Half of the shares for the project have been spoken for. If you would like more information and a copy of the DVD please contact Rich Kern at kernnature@aol.com. (N.B. The Kern brothers project is independent from Audubon.)

Book Store Selections

We now have a selection of books on birding topics for adults and children alike Remember that Friends of Maricopa Audubon members get a 10% discount and that your purchase helps to support our event, education and conservation efforts.

Arizona Watchable Wildlife Tourism Association (AWWTA)

Check out their website for events around the state--www.azwildlife.com

Museum of Northern Arizona

They sponsor Venture trips that explore and discover the Colorado Plateau in the Four Corners area. For more information contact Lisa Lamberson at 928-774-5211 x241 or llamberson@mna.mus.az.us.

Environmental Fund

Green At Work--Thousands of employees can now support Maricopa Audubon Society (MAS) in their annual fall charity campaign. The Environmental Fund for Arizona get thousands of Arizona employees involved with our group and many other conservation groups through payroll deduction workplace campaigns. Help spread the word at your office about checking off "Green" choices this fall! If your employer does not yet include environmental/conservation groups, please contact Solange Whitehead at the Environmental Fund for Arizona: efaz@efaz.org or (480) 510-5511.

Credit Card

The American Birding Association has negotiated an agreement with US Bank to provide ABA members a distinctive US BANK VISA Card. Using your card will not only show your connection to ABA and birding but also, at no additional cost to you, provide a contribution to ABA. If interested, contact www.americanbirding.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 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, as does Sunflower Market. Another source is Toucanet Coffee/Avian Ecologist. They are in the business of serving Smithsonian certified, bird-friendly coffee. All of their varieties are organic and shade grown. They also have fair trade varieties. Please visit www.toucanetcoffee.com for more information about their goals or to place an order. The website also includes an online community for bird and/or coffee lovers. They invite you to join. Another website for shade grown/organic coffee is www.cafebritt.com. An additional website is Thanksgiving Coffee Co--www.thanksgivingcoffee.com or 800-648-6491. And another from Kenn Kaufman is www.birdsandbeans.com

More Birding and Nature Festivals

www.americanbirding.org, and www.birdinghotspot.com



Maricopa Audubon T-Shirts

T-shirt Sale: MAS T-shirts are on sale at cost. Large and XL-\$9.00, XXL-\$12.00. Shipping \$5. Lot's of colors to choose from. Contact Laurie Nessel, 480.968.5614, laurienessel@gmail.com

Submissions

Do you have an interesting story to tell about birding? Please forward your submissions to the Editor – Emily Morris. Check the back page for address/email. Attaching an article to an e-mail is the absolute easiest way to submit an article. Please send any pictures to complement your article directly to me as well. Remember, all articles may not be published the first month after receipt.

DO MOCKINGBIRDS HAVE A SONG OF THEIR OWN?

Tom Gatz

A common songster here in the Valley, you have probably heard the Northern Mockingbird repeating a jumble of other birds' songs and miscellaneous sounds it imitates to defend its territory and attract a mate. One bird at the Metro Center parking lot even did a perfect imitation of a car alarm. Others have imitated cell phone ringtones and squeaky washing machines. But does it have any original tunes of its own? To find out, I perused *The Birds of North America* 1992 mockingbird account by Drs. Kim Derrickson and Randall Breitwisch. Researchers give this less than definitive answer: "The proportion of songs imitated is not known and would be extremely difficult to estimate because the entire auditory experience of an individual would need to be known to determine whether a vocalization was acquired through imitation." However, when someone apparently isolated a poor baby mockingbird in a sound proof chamber (the avian version of Abu Ghraib?), it was reported to have "abnormal vocal development under acoustic deprivation in the laboratory." So they do need to hear other birds and other sounds to develop a healthy song repertoire although they have four calls (but not songs) distinct to mockingbirds.

If you read Clay Thompson's column (one of my personal heroes) in the *Arizona Republic*, you may have seen his annual response to readers each spring wondering what bird is singing all night outside of their bedroom windows (unmated male mockingbirds is the perennial answer). I emailed Dr. Derrickson and learned that mated males will also sing at night if there is a bright patio light nearby. Dim the light and quiet the bird. Unfortunately, the only way to silence an unmated male is to find it a mate (this didn't happen, however,



Female mockingbirds are attracted to the male with the largest repertoire of songs, most of them borrowed from other birds. Photo by Richard Ditch

when my loquacious brother got married.) Other interesting mockingbird music trivia uncovered includes the fact that females sing too but not as loudly or as often as males (no surprise there). Also, females usually sing only during the fall when they too are establishing a territory for themselves. A male's repertoire often contains more than 150 distinct song types which change during its adult life and may increase in number with age (they can live for 8 or more years); it almost completely revises its playlist from spring to fall; and it replaces up to 65% of its music with new tunes each year. Males sing from perches, in flight, from the nest site (quietly), while foraging, during copulation, and even with food in their bills (don't try this at home). These guys just love to sing, although sometimes singing so much literally gets them into hot water. According to anthropologist Amadeo Rea, the mockingbird figures importantly in Akimel O'odham (Pima) stories and song. It is said that a child "who is slow in acquiring speech is fed the meat of the mockingbird either roasted or boiled."

Modified and reprinted from the Desert Botanical Garden volunteer newsletter "Gatherings"

Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips

Laurie Nessel

SEPTEMBER 2009-JANUARY 2010

CAR POOLING: 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 10 cents per mile. Be courteous to the trip leader and help cover their gas costs.

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 distance, considerable birding from vehicle and possible multiple birding stops. 5 equals very high level of difficulty with respect to exertion. Longer hiking distances are expected with possible steep trails. Trips are level 1 unless noted otherwise.

REMINDERS:

- Be courteous to the trip leader and help cover their gas costs.
- Wear neutral colored clothing and sturdy walking shoes.
- Bring sunscreen, sunglasses, head protection and water.
- Avoid wearing bright colors.
- Always bring your binoculars. Bring a scope if recommended.
- Submit trip and leader suggestions to the field trip chair.
- Unless stated otherwise, reservations are required.

***Day Passes Required for National Forests.** Many favorite spots in our National Forests now require Day Use Passes. You are responsible to acquire a day pass (\$6) in advance of field trips with an asterisk (*). Passes are available by phone or mail, at FS district and ranger offices, Big 5, some Circle K's, the Shell station at Tom Darlington and Cave Creek Road and elsewhere. Visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto/tp/where.shtml> for more information.

Impromptu Field Trips: Post your own outings or get notified of others planned field trips on short notice. Also get reminders of MAS field trips by email. Founded by naturalist Mike Plagens, membership is easy, free and open to those who have an interest in the flora, fauna, and ecology of Arizona. Not just a trip listing, view the website for trip reports, flora and fauna databases, maps, links to google earth including Gilbert Water ranch, and photos. Trips focus on plants, animals, mycology, geology, biology, entomology, herpetology, ecology, paleontology, birding, anthropology or microbiology. Share expenses, experiences and expertise with like-minded travelers. Proposed trips should include a brief description of the destination, ways, means, purpose, hiking difficulty, departure location, date and time. Drivers and riders will negotiate between themselves any shared expenses, but it is recommended that riders at least cover the cost of gas. Users can share via e-mail questions and experiences they have

encountered while hiking through the wonders of Arizona's landscapes. http://groups.yahoo.com/group/az_nature_fldtrips/

Saturday, July 18

Beginning Dragonflies and Damselflies (Odonata) of Gilbert Water Ranch:

Odonata-watching is a relatively new avocation bringing joy to birdwatchers that have already seen most of the local birds. We should see breathtaking Flame Skimmers, Mexican Amberwings and Red-tailed Pennants, Blue Dashers and Western Pondhawks, Red Saddlebags and Black Saddlebags and Wandering Gliders, a dragonfly found in every continent except Antarctica. Most intriguing, and easy to identify, are the diminutive damselflies: Familiar Bluet and Rambur's Forktail. *Common Dragonflies of the Southwest* by Kathy Biggs, an excellent pocket-sized odonata field guide, will be for sale for \$10. There is a suggested \$5 donation to support the Gilbert Riparian Preserve. Bring binoculars (close-focus preferred), water, and hat. No reservations. Meet 7:00AM at the Dragonfly Ramada just south of the parking lot, east of Greenfield Rd. off Guadalupe Rd. in Gilbert.

Leader: Laurie Nessel

August, date TBA

Stewart Mountain Desert Tortoise Quest.

Have you ever seen a Sonoran Desert tortoise in the wild? Increase your chances of stumbling upon one of these iconic desert creatures by searching in their preferred habitat after a summer monsoon. For this reason, we are not setting an exact date for this trip near Saguaro Lake until the monsoon has begun and conditions are right. We will collect email addresses and phone numbers and contact you one day before or possibly the morning of the walk. Learn about the behavior, life cycle and status of this keystone species. Leader Laurie Nessel found 12 wild tortoises last season. Limit 10. Difficulty 3- steep, rocky terrain and hot, humid weather. Bring snacks, sun protection, hat, sturdy hiking shoes, plenty of water. We will start near daybreak and be back before noon.

Leader: Laurie Nessel, 480.968.5614, laurienessel@gmail.com to get on the call list.

Friday-Sunday, August 7-9

Reynolds Creek. SR288 is now paved the entire route to this 5,200' Ponderosa Pine and oak campground in the Sierra Anchas. Leader Chuck LeFevre has reserved a campsite for three days. Join us for any or all of these days as we hike Hell's Hole and Reynolds Creek Trails. Possible species include Red Crossbills, Mexican Jays, Sulphur-Bellied Flycatchers, Magnificent Hummingbird and Hybrid Juncos. We will also concentrate on the diverse plant community. Campers may be rewarded with Whip-poor-will and Flammulated Owl. \$5 fee per night to share a spacious campsite with Sierra Singles. Reynolds Creek is 22 miles north of Junction 188 and 288. Limit 6.

Leader: Chuck LeFevre

Reservations and Information: Laurie Nessel 480.968.5614, laurienessel@gmail.com.

Saturday, August 8

Chandler Veterans Oasis Park Dragonflies and Butterflies.

This is Maricopa Audubon Society's first season leading trips to this urban oasis. While bird watching slows down in the summer heat, insect populations increase. The urban wildlife habitats at Veterans Oasis Park are quickly becoming a haven for birds and insects. We will see which beautiful and fascinating butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies have found the park's 113 acres of Sonoran Desert and wetlands habitat. Bring binoculars (close-focus preferred), water, and hat. The walks are not fast-paced, and the terrain is easy. This program is free, and pre-registration is not required. (There is a suggested \$5 donation to support the Environmental Education Center). Common Dragonflies of the Southwest by Kathy Biggs will be available for sale for \$10. Meet at 7 a.m. at the Curve-billed Thrasher Ramada just north of the main parking lot. Veterans Oasis Park is on the northeast corner of Lindsay and Chandler Heights Rds. Done by 10:00AM.

Leader: Laurie Nessel

Monday, August 10

Kachina Wetlands. A little known and absolutely beautiful meadowy area just south of Flagstaff, with ponds, marshes and views of the San Francisco Peaks. Last August we were surrounded by bluebirds, with Wilson's phalaropes in the ponds, great views of osprey and a nice variety of higher elevation birds. Scopes would be helpful. Plenty of walking--but flat. We'll leave Scottsdale about 5:30am, returning about 3ish. Best with only 2 cars, 8 people. Please pack a lunch.

Leader: Kathe Anderson for reservations and carpool arrangements kathe.coot@cox.net, 480.951.4890.

Saturday, August 15

Beginning Butterflies and Dragonflies at Gilbert Water Ranch. See information from July 18th

Leaders: Bob Witzeman

September, date TBA

Turtling for Birders: Desert Tortoise Quest.

Tortoises remain active into the fall with favorable weather conditions. Please see information from August (date TBA).

Leader: Laurie Nessel, 480.968.5614, laurienessel@gmail.com to get on the call list.

Saturday, September 5

Boyce Thompson Arboretum. 60 miles east of the valley, this desert oasis always produces a good variety of species and occasionally a genuine surprise. We will look for early winter arrivals, summer stragglers and residents including woodpeckers and cardinals. \$7.50

Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips

Laurie Nessel

field trips



Sonoran Desert Tortoise

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entrance fee per person. Meet 8:00AM by the visitors' center. Done by 2:00. Lunch optional.

Leader: Scott Burge, 480.968.5141, burge@burgenv.com for reservations

Saturday, September 12

Page Springs. We will visit the Page Springs fish hatchery near Camp Verde and bird other nearby locations. Possible Yellow-billed Cuckoo, American Redstart and Prothonotary Warbler. Spotting scopes are helpful. Bring lunch. Call leader for meeting time and place.

Leader: Herb Fibel 480.966.5246, herbertsfibel@aol.com.

Saturday, September 19

Beginning Dragonflies and Damselflies (Odonata) of Gilbert Water Ranch: Please see information from July 18th.

Leader: Bob Witzeman

Friday, September 25

Verde River/Needle Rock*. We will scope out Fountain Hills Lake before heading out through Rio Verde to a couple of areas along the Verde River, ending up at Needle Rock. We'll look for a variety of common desert birds, neo-tropic migrant songbirds on their way south, early returns of waterfowl, and perhaps a few shorebirds in different environments. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Done by noon. Share fees for entry into the Tonto National Forest. Limit 8. Meet 6:00am at the Fountain Hills Denny's, S.E. corner Shea and N. Saguaro Blvd.

Leader: Kathe Anderson. Reservations 480.951.4890 or kathe.coot@cox.net.

Saturday, September 26

Chandler Veterans Oasis Park Dragonflies and Butterflies. Please see information from August 8th except we meet at 8 AM not 7:00AM.

Leader: Laurie Nessel

Saturday, September 26

Rio Salado Phase Two. The new reach of Rio Salado (from 16th St east past 24th St) just opened to the public this spring, and few people have explored it yet. The river channel is wide and shallow with lots of cobbles,

riffles, and pools. There is a reclaimed gravel pit covered with grass. Shorebirds, waders and many ducks love this section of the Rio and we'll be there in the heart of fall shorebird migration. Expect Stilts, both Yellowlegs, Dowitchers, and Least, Western, and Spotted Sandpipers among other shorebirds, along with a wide selection of ducks and waders. Even though shorebirds are usually the highlight this season, the habitat attracts a wide variety of other birds. The parking area is next to a colony of burrowing owls, the ample grasses attract lots of sparrows, and horned larks breed in the area. Of course, all those shorebirds and sparrows attract lots of birds of prey. Easy walking, about 3 miles, mostly on paved trails. Bring water, snacks, and a scope if you have one (for the little 'peeps'). Meet 6:30 AM at the Rio Salado parking area, SE corner of the 16th Street Bridge over the Salt River, Phoenix (between University and Broadway). End by 10:30AM. No reservations.

Leader: Tom Gaskill

Sunday, October 4, 2009

Sabino Canyon. Share some history of the Santa Catalina Mountains and the formation of this scenic recreational area in the Coronado National Forest just northeast of the city of Tucson, along with some morning birdwatching on desert woodland trails in Lower Sabino Canyon and around Sabino Lake. In the afternoon, we will ride the shuttle (narration provided, and fee involved) into Upper Sabino Canyon, and then walk back down a portion of the road looking for birds along Sabino Creek. Possible bird sightings include good views of Belted Kingfisher, Black Phoebe, Pyrrhuloxia, Black-throated Sparrow, and Rock Wren. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at the visitor center on Sabino Canyon Road near the junction with Sunrise Road. Bring a lunch.

Leader: Richard Kaiser (602) 276-3312 or rkaiserinaz@aol.com

Saturday, October 10

Butterflies. The Central Arizona Butterfly Association leads butterfly walks to various locations throughout the year. Please visit www.cazba.com for details on October's trip and member meetings and information. CAZBA (Central Arizona Butterfly Association) is the local chapter of the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) in central Arizona that meets at the Desert Botanical Garden. 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM. Location to be determined.

Saturday, October 17

Beginning Dragonflies and Damselflies (Odonata) of Gilbert Water Ranch: Please see information from July 18 except we will meet at 8:00AM, not 7:00AM.

Leader: Laurie Nessel or Bob Witzeman

Saturday, October 24

Sunflower and Bushnell Tanks. We will visit riparian sites along the Beeline Highway to look for wintering finches, warblers and other

species. Meet at Denny's Restaurant parking lot on the south side of Shea Boulevard just west of the Beeline Highway (State Route 87) in Fountain Hills at 7:00 A.M. Done by 3:00. Bring a lunch, binos, water. Difficulty: 2

Leader: Scott Burge, 480.968.5141, burge@burgenv.com for reservations

Tuesday, Oct 20-Saturday, Oct 31

Ecuador's Andes - The Northwest and Northeast Slopes. Exciting and affordable 12 day tour to both the NW and NE slopes of the Andes, visiting fantastic bird lodges and reserves for an unforgettable birding adventure filled with mixed flocks of colorful tanagers, hummingbirds, toucans, antpittas, manakins, barbets, ovenbirds and so much more amid breathtaking montane scenery. The tour begins in the lush cloud forest reserves on the NW slope, comprising the biodiverse and endemic-rich Choco bioregion, home to over 500 species including a spectacular Cock-of-the-Rock lek with 30+ birds, rare White-faced Nunbird, Toucan Barbet, Giant Antpitta, Beautiful Jay and dozens of brilliant hummers. Based in the heart of the famed birding circuit around Mindo, short day trips to many hotspots at different elevations and habitats ensure a marvelous variety of birds with ease. The NE Slope begins in the paramo of the Papallacta Pass over 13,700 feet for Andean Condor, Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe, Giant Conebill, Ecuadorian Hillstar, specialty ovenbirds and waterfowl found only on paramo lakes. We descend into prime temperate forest, where the legendary feeders at Guango Lodge host scores of dazzling hummers including the spectacular Sword-billed Hummingbird and Long-tailed Sylph zipping right off the porch. Lower downslope, San Isidro Lodge is home to the famous and intriguing Mystery Owl – an as of yet undetermined species, a birder's dream! Located at 6,800 feet in subtropical forest, specialties include Highland Motmot, Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher, White-capped Tanager and Emerald Toucanet, with a myriad of glittering gems such as Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Collared Inca and Fawn-breasted Brilliant crowding the feeders.

www.bellavistacloudforest.com,
www.pachijalreserve.com,
www.cabanasanisidro.com



Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips cont.

Laurie Nessel

Amazon Extension – Rainforests and Rivers. 5 days, \$795 from Quito after Andes tour, www.sanilodge.com. A new realm of unsurpassed birding awaits! Sani Lodge on the Rio Napo boasts over 550 species and an impressive 100 foot high tower ideal for canopy birding with vibrant macaws, aracarís, cotingas, parrots, tanagers, raptors and even howler monkeys easy to see. Birding excursions to parrot clay licks, river islands, blackwater lagoons and both terra firme and varzea forests with expert native guides yield lowland specialties like the very rare Rufous Potoo, White-lored Antpitta, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Amazonian Umbrellabird, Crested Owl, noisy groups of the bizarre and comical Hoatzins and fascinating antbirds hosting flocks of complex antbirds. \$1695 from Quito.



Leader: Moez Ali 520-820-3499 moezali15@hotmail.com for reservations, itineraries, birdlists or additional information.

Wednesday, October 21

Agua Fria Recharge Ponds. View overwintering waterfowl, shorebirds and passerines. Meet 9:00AM. Take East Camelback Rd. to 107th Ave. Turn north about one mile to where the road dead ends at the ponds.

Leader: Bob Witzeman 602.840.0052 or witzeman@cox.net for reservations.

Saturday, November 7

Patagonia and San Rafael Valley Grasslands. We will leave the S.E. corner parking lot of the Tempe Library at 4:30 am (sunrise is at 7 am) and drive to Patagonia south east of Tucson. Along the Harshaw Creek Road we will look for flocks of Eastern Bluebirds, Mexican Jays, and wintering sparrows. As we climb up onto the San Rafael Grasslands, the habitat changes dramatically (according to legend, parts of the 1955 movie musical "Oklahoma" were filmed here). Among the ubiquitous Horned Larks and Savannah Sparrows, we will search the open grasslands for wintering Baird's Sparrow, Sprague's Pipit, Chestnut-collared Longspur and Prairie Falcon. If we are very lucky, we might also find McCown's Longspur and Short-eared Owl. The grasslands are often windy, and the birding can be extremely difficult (some ranchers also forbid bird watching on their parts of the valley), but on a good day some of these otherwise sneaky grassland species sit obviously on fence wires

or walk in open bare patches. Depending on the weather and our luck, we will end the day at the Patton's feeders in Patagonia, where the birding is always easier, and look for any unusual species that might be there. Come prepared for cold and wind, and wear high top boots because if we take short walks through grassy areas, sharp stalks and prickly chaff quickly stick to exposed socks. Bring spotting scopes, lunch and drink. We should be back in Tempe around 5 pm. If you want to go down the day before, meet us in front of the public restrooms on 4th Ave in Patagonia at 7:15 am. Limit: 4 cars and 15 participants.

Leader: Dr. David L. Pearson

Laurie Nessel 480.968.5614 or laurienessel@gmail.com for reservations.

Saturday, November 14

Lost Dutchman State Park. This desert park lies at the base of Superstition Mountain near Apache Junction. This is a beautiful hike but steep in places. Resident species include Canyon Towhee, Rock and Canyon Wrens. Plants and fall butterflies will be noted as well. Bring water, lunch. Scope optional. \$5 per car entry fee. Difficulty: 2 Limit 15.

Co-Leaders: Laurie Nessel and Mark Horlings. (602 279-2238)

Mhorlings@cox.net for reservations and carpooling.

Monday, November 16

Globe/Pinal Mountain. We travel to Besh Ba Gowah in Globe to see what might show up there before heading up Ice House Canyon, stopping wherever it looks birdy on the way. Can't guarantee we'll get to the top, but we'll wind our way up the mountain looking for a variety of resident chaparral, transition zone and higher elevation birds until about 11 am. Meet 6:00am at the north lot of the Gilbert Regional Library, S.E. corner Guadalupe and Greenfield Rds. Bring lunch. Back close to 2:00. Limit 8.

Leader: Kathe Anderson, 480.951.4890 or kathe.coot@cox.net for reservations.

Wednesday, November 25

Phoenix Zoo Ponds. Meet on the zoo bridge at 7:00AM for possible Great Horned Owl sightings. We will proceed into the zoo grounds for great, upclose views of waterfowl, especially good for beginners to learn the difference between male and females ducks. We may see other zoo surprises as well. No limit. Includes admission to the zoo. Done by 10:00.

Leader: Mike Foley 602.914.4339, mfoley33@gmail.com for reservations

December

No trips are planned for December due to the Christmas Bird Counts. Please check the bird count listings for more information.

January date TBA

Camp Creek and Seven Springs*: We will look for wintering birds and hope to find some

of the unusual birds that were found during the Carefree Christmas birdCount, perhaps a Townsends Solitaire or Cassins Finch.

Leader: Russ Widner, 480.595.2977 or rwidner@earthlink.net for information and reservations.

Sunday--Monday, Jan 17-18, 2010

Cibola National Wildlife Refuge/Salton Sea. A quick trip to the Salton Sea is better than none at all! More detailed logistics will follow for participants, but here's the outline: Leave the Phoenix area about 6:00am, arrive at Cibola National Wildlife Refuge about 10:00am, birding the agricultural areas in CA on the way. Leave Cibola mid-afternoon to catch the marshes at end of the day at the southern tip of the Salton Sea. Stay in Calipatria at a moderate hotel, and leave before sunrise to spend about 5 hours exploring the Sonny Bono National Wildlife Refuge and close-by areas that have been very productive in years past. Home by 6-7pm on Monday. We hope to see the Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese in great, noisy abundance, plus a wide range of waterfowl and shorebirds, and a fair number of raptors and birds of the fields. Limit 8.

Leader: Kathe Anderson, 480.951.4890 or kathe.coot@cox.net for reservations.

Continuing

Bird Walks at the Desert Botanical Gardens. Mondays and second Saturdays, Oct-May. Join expert birders for a morning bird walk along the Garden trails. Beginners are welcome. Wear a hat, sunscreen, comfortable walking shoes, and bring binoculars. Free with admission to the garden. Call 480-941-1225 for times.

Bird Walks and Boat Tours at Sonoita Creek State Natural Area located within Patagonia Lake State Park. Mondays through Thursdays, October 15- May. 5 mile bird hikes along both upland and riparian habitats. Over 300 resident and migratory bird species inhabit Sonoita Creek and Patagonia Lake including eastern, western, and accidental Mexican species such as the Elegant Trogon, Rufous-backed Robin, and the Black-capped Gnatcatcher. Patagonia Lake Road, 7 miles west of Patagonia. \$7 entry fee per vehicle. <http://www.pr.state.az.us/Parks/parkhtml/sonoitacreeksna.html> for current schedule. Meet at the Birding Trail Trailhead. For information/reservations (required) call (520) 287-2791. Meet

Bird, Butterfly, Lizard and or Dragonfly Walks at Boyce Thompson Arboretum. Join knowledgeable guides for walks through the Arboretum, located at Highway 60 milepost #223 near the historic copper mining town of Superior, 55 miles east of Phoenix. \$7.50 admission. Check their website for current schedule. <http://cals.arizona.edu/BTA/index.html>.

MARCH, APRIL, MAY 2009

Abbreviations: Boyce Thompson Arboretum (BTA), Gila Bend Power Plant Pond (GBPPP), Gilbert Water Ranch (GWR), Glendale Recharge Ponds (GRP), Hassayampa River Preserve (HRP), Morgan City Wash (MCW), Tempe Marketplace (TM), Tempe Town Lake (TTL), Wastewater Treatment Plant (WTP).

Between one and three Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were reported at each of the following areas: Tres Rios, Tolleson WTP, Gila Bend WTP, and the GRP, between 20 Mar and 24 May (MHe, BGro). The Greater White-fronted Goose, found at the ASU Research Ponds in December and early January, returned there 15 Mar (TL). A hybrid Eurasian X American Wigeon, reported at the Chaparral Pond 8 Mar (PMo), may have been the same one that wintered at another pond in Scottsdale. Two "Mexican" Mallards were seen again at GWR 22 May (MMo). Two male Green-winged Teal were seen at GRP on the late date of 26 May (MHe); the species is rare after mid-May. A female Common Merganser (part of a group of 20+ that wintered at Granite Reef Dam) was found lingering there on the late date of 22 May (SO); the species is rare after the end of April and there were no previous county records after 10 May. Three Red-breasted Mergansers, uncommon winter visitors, were seen at the GBPPP 27 Mar (BGro) and four were reported above Granite Reef Dam 11 Apr (MHa).

A Common Loon was observed at the Citrus Valley Rd. Sludge Pond

on the late date of 9 May (DPo). A Clark's Grebe, an uncommon transient, was found with two Western Grebes on TTL 19 Apr (MWeb). Between one and four American White Pelicans were reported in two areas in Chandler 10 – 11 Mar (TDeB). A new colony of Neotropic Cormorants was discovered at TM 30 Apr; seen were several courting and copulating pairs, plus a few carrying sticks and one nest started (TC). There are only a few nesting records for this species in Arizona.

Little Blue Heron is considered to be only a casual spring visitor, so most unusual were three individuals discovered during the period: at Rio Salado 9 May (TGA), at TM 9 May (TP), and at GWR 15 – 18 May (BGri, RDi). A **Glossy Ibis** was photographed near Southern and Dysart Rd. in Avondale 12 Apr (TC); there have been four previous county records.

Two Gray Hawks were reported back at the HRP 21 Mar (MHe) and two adults and a yearling were observed there 9 May (TC), suggesting that last year's nesting was successful at this new breeding location for the species; the yearling was seen there again 23 & 31 May (MWeb, TDeB). A Crested Caracara, uncommon away from its breeding area s.w. of Tucson, was observed near Picacho Peak, Pinal Co., 9 Mar (MCh). An adult Prairie Falcon was seen at the confluence of the Salt and Verde Rivers on the late date of 22 May (SO); the species is rare after the end of March. A pair of Clapper Rails was heard calling in Arlington Valley 16 Apr and several pairs were heard there 14 May (TC); one

was heard at 115th Ave. and the Gila River 18 May (TDeB).

A Black-bellied Plover, a rare spring transient, was observed near Arlington 30 May (CBa) and at Gila Bend 31 May (PL), almost two weeks later than previous county records. Three Snowy Plovers looked as if they were setting up territories 27 Mar at Paloma Ranch, where the species has nested the past two years (BGro). Many Black-necked Stilts and American Avocets were found nesting 8 May at a new locale in the Agua Fria Riverbed between Camelback and Indian School Roads (TC). A copulating pair of American Avocets, observed at the GRP 1 Mar, was more than a month and a half earlier than the previous date found in the Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas (MHe). An unusually large number of 20 Willets was counted at the Lower River Road Ponds 14 May (TC); one was seen at the Gila Bend WTP 17 Apr (CBa, SSSt) and two were reported at the GRP and the Agua Fria Riverbed 22 - 23 May (MHe, KR, DPo). Individual **Whimbrels**, casual transients, were found along Painted Rock Dam Rd., 26 Apr (K&CR), at the Citrus Valley Rd. Sludge Pond 9 May (DPo), and at Paloma Ranch 30 May (CBa); three were counted at Veterans Oasis Park, Chandler 9 May (ph. SFr). Two Long-billed Curlews were photographed in a most uncharacteristic location – in the North Mountain Preserve 2 Apr (MTh). A **Sanderling**, a casual spring transient, was found in the Agua Fria Riverbed 14 May (TC). Individual **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, rare spring transients, were discovered in Arlington

Field Observations cont.

Janet Witzeman

Valley 16 Apr (TC), at GWR 9 May (DPe, ph. MMo, ph. BGri), and at the GBPPP 23 May (PL); there were only three previous spring records for the county. A Western Sandpiper, rare before early April, was found at the GRP 7 Mar (MHe). Six Baird's Sandpipers, uncommon in spring, were observed in Citrus Valley 26 Apr (K&CR). Red-necked Phalaropes previously were considered to be rare in spring, but in recent year the species has become more regular: up to four were counted at the Higley Rd. Ponds 7 - 9 May (MMo), one was seen at Paloma Ranch 9 May (DPo), and a high of eight was reported at the GBPPP 23 May (PL).

Two Bonaparte's Gulls, uncommon transients, were observed at the Gila Bend WTP 17 Apr (CBa, SST), 14 were counted at GRP 19 Apr (MHe), an adult was reported at TTL 19 Apr (MWeb), one was seen at the GRP 9 May (DPo, MHe), and two were still present at GRP 31 May (MHe). Four California Gulls, uncommon transients, were observed at Granite Reef Dam on the early date of 11 Mar (SO); the species is rare before the end of March. The California Gull that wintered at Rio Salado remained at least until 9 May (TGa) and one was seen at the GRP 14 May (TC). More than usual numbers of **Least Terns** were reported. A **Least Tern** was discovered at the GRP 14 May (TC), up to four were counted at the GRP and the nearby Agua Fria Riverbed 20 - 24 May (MHe, MWeb, KR, DPo) and two of the birds were seen exhibiting courtship behavior 24 May (MHe); four (two probable pairs) were still present at

GRP 29 May (MWeb). Two more **Least Terns** were photographed at GWR 8 May (BGri) and one of them remained until 20 May (DPe). A Caspian Tern, an uncommon transient, was seen at the GRP 25 Apr (MHe). Between three and two Black Terns, rare spring transients, were observed at GRP 22 - 31 May (MHe) and two more were seen at GWR 28 May (PD).

A Band-tailed Pigeon was reported at an unusual lowland location, in a yard in Tempe 13 Apr (P&GH). Eleven **Ruddy Ground-Doves**, counted near 121st Ave. and Southern 13 Mar, was the high count for the group that wintered at that location (TC); one adult male was still present there 18 Apr (MHe).

An adult male Broad-billed Hummingbird, a rare but possibly increasing visitor to Maricopa County, was found along the Verde River near Needle Rock 29 Apr (TC); another adult male was observed at HRP 9 May (TC). A Broad-tailed Hummingbird, a rare spring transient, was seen near the confluence of the Salt and Verde Rivers 13 Mar (SO). A Rufous Hummingbird, an uncommon spring transient, was reported at BTA 14 Mar (ErH). The continuing Violet-crowned X Broad-billed Hummingbird at BTA was present all season (m. ob.).

A Willow Flycatcher, an uncommon transient, was observed in the Agua Fria Riverbed at Camelback Rd., 23 May (KR, DPo). A Warbling Vireo was observed east of Mesa on the early date of 6 Mar (RHu). A Bank Swallow, an uncommon spring

migrant was seen at GWR 31 Mar (MMo) about a week earlier than usual; three more were seen there 9 May (MMo, DPe). The Brown Thrasher that wintered at BTA was last seen 19 Apr (CT). Another Brown Thrasher was photographed in a north Phoenix yard 17 May (CBa). A fly-over American Pipit was observed at the GWR 9 May (MMo), about a week later than usual.

A **Tennessee Warbler**, that was first reported at the GWR 22 Feb., was relocated there 31 Mar (ph. TDeB, MMo). A **Nashville Warbler**, an uncommon spring transient, was found in Hidden Valley near Maricopa in Pinal Co., 29 Mar (NL). A **Northern Parula**, uncommon in spring, was found at the Granite Reef Picnic Area 22 May (G&TL) and a male was seen at Seven Springs 25 May (DMA). An adult female **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was discovered at Indian Bend Wash Park in Scottsdale 23 May (HBon) and provided the first spring record for the county. Individual "Myrtle" Yellow-rumped Warblers were found near the confluence of the Salt and Verde Rivers 9 Apr ((SO) and at Eldorado Park 9 May (JKo). A Hermit Warbler was seen on Mt. Ord 24 Apr (RWd, LHat, D&EA) and individuals were reported at three lowland locations during May (HF,TC,TDeB). The female American Redstart that wintered at the GWR was last seen there 16 Apr (TDeB); another individual, a first year male, was found at Paloma Ranch 23 May (KR,DPo). Northern Waterthrush is an uncommon migrant not usually seen before late April or May, so unusual was the individual

that was found at MCW 28 Mar (TC), providing only the second March record for Maricopa County and possibly indicating that the species may have wintered in that area. Individual migrant Northern Waterthrushes were observed at HRP 20 Apr (LTa) and 9 May (TC), along Queen Creek east of BTA 9 May (MV,PKi), and at Wild Horse Pass on the Gila River Indian Reservation 18 May (PD). A male **Hooded Warbler**, a casual visitor, was discovered at ASU Research Park 9 May (JKo).

A female Hepatic Tanager, a rare transient in the lowlands, was found in Hidden Valley, Pinal County 4 Apr (NL). Two male Summer Tanagers, seen at Rio Salado 24 Apr (TGa), was a good sign, as the species had become scarce in riparian areas west of Phoenix before the restoration of the habitat along the Salt River.

A singing Canyon Towhee was found at a lower than normal elevation at MCW, 28 Mar (TC). A **Cassin's Sparrow**, a casual visitor, was discovered north of Ajo in Maricopa County 11 Mar (*fide* TC). The White-throated Sparrow that wintered at BTA, was last seen there 19 Apr (CT); another individual was found at HRP 8 Mar (CRi). Individual late-staying **Harris's Sparrows** were discovered at Robbins Butte 23 – 26 Apr (ph. L&PS) and at the Gila Bend Airforce Auxiliary Field 9 May (JA), providing the first May record for the county. Fifteen *oriantha* race of White-crowned Sparrows were observed at GWR 22 May – a late date, especially for so many (MMo). Individual **Rose-breasted**

Grosbeaks, rare transients, were reported near Sunflower 22 May (T&GL) and at HRP 23 May (*fide* MWeb). More than the usual number of **Indigo Buntings**, usually rare transients, were reported: one was photographed at BTA 14 Mar (BGri) and seen there again 4 May (PW), one was photographed at Butcher Jones Recreation Area 18 May (MWA), a male was seen near the confluence of the Salt and Verde Rivers 15 May (SO), and a male was observed at GWR 9 – 20 May (MMo, DPe, PD); by 22 May, three were counted at GWR (MMo).

Two Red Crossbills, irregular visitors were observed on Mt. Ord 24 Apr (RWd, LHat, D&EA) and ten were counted at Slate Creek Divide 9 May (KR). A Pine Siskin, an irregular winter and spring visitor in the lowlands, was found at HRP 9 May (TC) and two were observed at Paloma Ranch 23 May (KR, DPo). American Goldfinch is also an irregular winter and spring visitor to the lowlands; one was reported at HRP 9 May (TC).

Observers:

Doug & Elaine Alexander (D&EA), John Arnett (JA), Charles Babbitt (CBa), Harold Bond (HBon), Matt Chew (MCh), Troy Corman (TC), Tommy DeBardeleben (TDeB), Pierre Deviche (PD), Rich Ditch (RDi), Herb Fibel (HF), Scott Frye (SFr), Tom Gaskill (TGa), Brenden Grice (BGri), Bill Grossi (BGro), Paul & Gloria Halesworth (P&GH), Michael Hartley (MHa), Liz Hatcher (LHat), Melanie Herring

(MHe), Eric Hough (ErH), Rob Hunt (RHu), Paul Kinslow (PKi), Jim Kopitzke (JKo), Nancy Lange (NL), Paul Lehman (PL), Grant Loomis ((GL), Tyler Loomis (TL), Dave Malia (DMA), Michael Moore (MMo), Pete Moulton (PMo), Scott Olmstead (SO), Dave Pearson (DPe), Dave Powell (DPo), Tim Price (TP), Cindy Radamaker (CR), Kurt Radamaker (KR), Carol Riddell (CRi), Lori & Phil Smith (L&PS), Sig Stangeland (SSt), Lance Tanino (LTa), Mike Thompson (MTh), Carl Tomoff (CT), Maeceline Vandewater (MV), Marcus Watson (MWA), Magill Weber (MWeb), Russ Widner (RWd), Paul Wolterbeck (PW), many observers (*m. ob.*).



Riparian Treasure for Sale

Bob Witzeman

In every walk with nature, one receives far more than one seeks. (John Muir 1838-1914)

On July 17, 2009 the U.S. Senate heard testimony for and against a proposed copper mine land exchange which would be located on 2400 acres of U.S. Forest Service land surrounding the Oak Flat campground located east of Superior, Arizona. The Resolution Copper Company (RCC), composed of the world's two largest mining companies, BHP of Australia and Rio Tinto of Great Britain, would destroy many miles of one of one of Arizona's most spectacular and species-diverse Sonoran Desert/Interior Chaparral riparian streamcourses, - Devil's Canyon.

Located a mile east of the Oak Flat USFS Campground, it is bejeweled with Arizona Walnut, Arizona Sycamore, Velvet Ash, Fremont Cottonwood, Arizona Alder, Arizona Cypress, four species of oak, two species of willow and exceptional bird and wildlife diversity.

Here in Arizona a number of conservation organizations are profiting from the cash and other handouts of the RCC multinational consortium. These two companies have some of the most horrendous human rights and environmental pollution records known to the third world.

Conservationists in Arizona have been appalled to read in newspapers of endorsements of this land swap by Audubon Arizona (the National Audubon Society's office here) the Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Sonoran Institute (SI) and the Superstition Area Land Trust (SALT). Arizona's newspapers have repeatedly cited Audubon Arizona's RCC endorsement, e.g. Republic, April 18, 2005; Arizona Daily Star, April 3, 2005; Tucson Citizen, March 26, 2005; Republic, April 14, 2006; Republic, April 17, 2006.

Oak Flat has been a cherished bird and nature study site of Audubon members, biologists, conservationists and the public for years. MAS members have conducted Christmas Count bird censuses there for over a decade. Why did Audubon Arizona's Director Sam Campana not show our chapter the minimal courtesy of consulting with us on what we thought of this ecologic treasure in our backyard being obliterated in a land swap? So important was this Oak Flat USFS campground area that Presidents Eisenhower (Sept. 27, 1955) and Nixon (Sept 25, 1971) by Executive Order both declared it off limits to mining/development.

Even more serious, these scofflaw foreign mining companies have lobbied Congress for exemption of their mine from the



Photo by Sky Jacobs. Limpid pools, flowing water, cascading waterfalls, and rare Sonoran Desert/Chaparral riparian vegetation would be lost if this USFS giveaway is approved. Currently congresspersons Harry Mitchell (Dem.) and Anne Kirkpatrick (Dem.) and Arizona's Republicans favor this land swap.

National Environmentally Policy Act (NEPA), arguably our Nation's most important environmental protection law. NEPA is the Magna Carta or Bill of Rights of U.S. environmental protection law. Without it there would be no Environmental Impact Statement, the document that allows full public transparency of a project's environmental harms. Here are some of the sums Audubon Arizona has received from RCC. Note the circa \$7,500,000 gift the National Audubon Society has been promised by RCC.

1. **Rio Tinto Mining Co.** (RCC partner) 2005, in the \$100,000 donor range.
2. **Resolution Copper Co.** 2006, "between \$25,000 and \$49,999"
3. **Resolution Copper Co.** 2006-2007, "between \$10,000 and \$24,999"
4. **Rio Tinto Mining Co.** (RCC partner) 2006-07, "between \$25,000 and \$49,999"
5. **Resolution Copper Company** 2006-07, "between \$10,000 and \$24,999"
6. **Resolution Copper Company** circa \$7,500,000 for a 1000-acre land gift to benefit the National Audubon Society's Appleton-Whittel Research Ranch, Elgin, AZ.

Audubon Arizona's Director, Sam Campana, told the Arizona Daily Star (4-3-05) that the mine's San Pedro

7B former cattle ranch swap property was "one of the most important riparian habitats in the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts...including cuckoos and orioles." In fact, it is a bone dry riverbed of rocks, sand and trespass cattle. The property is devoid of cottonwood/willow (etc.) broad-leaved forest galleries. Its mesquite trees are clearly not "important" habitat for "cuckoos and orioles" as Campana alleges.

Very seldom does Congress pass land exchanges exempt from NEPA, arguably the most important environmental law in our nation. In normal federal land exchanges citizens are allowed to ask and obtain answers from the government (here the USFS). NEPA transparency would reveal the mine's horrendous environmental, cultural or historical harms. It would address impacts to the Devil's Canyon Sonoran riparian treasure, as well as harms to Native American cultural, religious and historical sites.

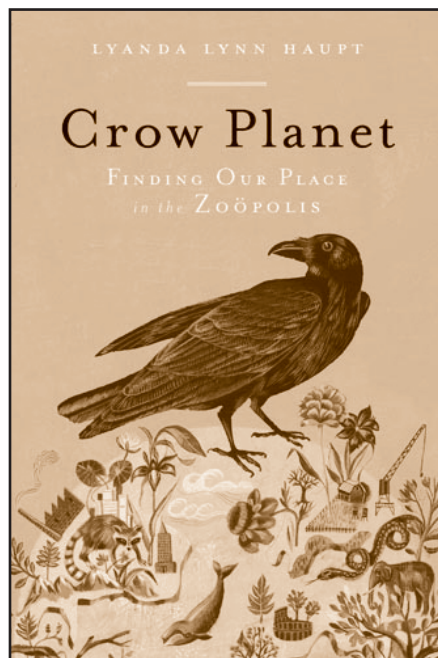
For example, it would address the mine's potential impacts to Apache Leap, a cultural/historic site where seventy Apache jumped to their death in the 19th century rather than face capture by the U.S. Cavalry. It would allow citizens to be informed of the mine's toxic mine waste disposal, air and groundwater pollutions, and massive annual water consumption and dewatering of valued water sources. Once land is privatized in a land swap citizen/NEPA oversight is terminated.

Crow Planet Essential Wisdom from the Urban Wilderness

by Lyanda Lynn Haupt

article

"A genial book of 'hopeful possibility' amid the current ecological crisis. Haupt writes gracefully about the interactions between crows and humans in the urban landscape and what those interactions portend for the future of the zoöpolis (where human and animal geographies overlap)." —Kirkus



Life on Earth is complicated, interconnected, and always changing—environmental and philosophical truths that Lyanda Lynn Haupt, as a naturalist, author, wife, and mother, knows all too well. Her new book, **Crow Planet: Essential Wisdom from the Urban Wilderness** (July 27, 2009; Little, Brown and Company; \$23.99), documents Haupt's journey to becoming an "urban naturalist" through the study of crows—the big, gutsy, boisterous, intelligent, and sometimes unsettling birds that have managed to adapt and thrive in expanding urban and suburban areas, where so many other species of native wildlife have been pushed back.

Haupt's book is a study of crows in both a natural and social sense: she examines their habits, physiology, and skills alongside their cultural reputation (in America and elsewhere) and describes the ways in which human and crow populations directly and indirectly interact. Crows recognize

our faces, dive-bomb familiar antagonists, and nurse their sick and injured kin. They drop hard-shelled nuts on the street to be cracked by passing cars—then wait at a crosswalk to retrieve the goods. Smart, playful, and always on the lookout for new opportunities, crows have had a special place in the human consciousness for centuries.

Haupt is the author of *Pilgrim on the Great Bird Continent*, which was praised by the *Los Angeles Times* for its "provocative originality." **Crow Planet** is a fresh, intrepid mix of science writing and memoir, highlighting the personal impact of the world we encounter every day. Despite having a husband she adores and a precocious young daughter, Haupt found city life stifling and barren and was determined to find nature in a concrete-covered urban landscape. Haupt's process of observing crows drew her first out of bed, then out of her house, and finally into the "wilds" of Seattle, where she became increasingly aware of the broad natural connections and tiny ecosystems surrounding her life.

Haupt's personal goal at the outset of this book—to become an urban naturalist, attuned to the natural world as it manifests itself in cities and suburbs, roads and homes—is part of her own environmental call to arms. She encourages readers to realize that nature is found not only in the pristine wilderness but all around us, and to understand that what affects the natural world comes directly back into our lives. Crows—as they hunt, play, grow, and learn right in the midst of the human world—are intriguing avatars for the urban ecosystems and natural cycles that surround us every day: complex, overlooked, and immensely important.

About the Author

Lyanda Lynn Haupt is an author and naturalist based in Seattle. Her first book, *Rare Encounters with Ordinary Birds* (Sasquatch, 2001), was a winner



of the 2002 Washington State Book Award. Her second book, *Pilgrim on the Great Bird Continent: The Importance of Everything and Other Lessons from Darwin's Lost Notebooks*, received positive reviews nationwide.

Haupt has created and directed educational programs for Seattle Audubon, worked in raptor rehabilitation in

Vermont, and been a seabird researcher for the Fish and Wildlife Service in the remote tropical Pacific. Her writing has appeared in *Image*, *Open Spaces*, *Wild Earth*, *Conservation Biology Journal*, *Birdwatcher's Digest*, and *The Prairie Naturalist*.

"Haupt captures crows wonderfully in elegant prose and weaves a thoughtful tale that connects them

from St. Benedict's philosophy of *lectio divina* of 480 CE to our growing awareness of our kinship to, and dependence on, the rest of life."

— Bernd Heinrich, author of *Mind of the Raven*

"If you picture Henry David Thoreau as a young mother and scientist in suburban Seattle, you can begin to imagine the literate elegance of Crow Planet. Lyanda Haupt has spun the natural life of neighborhoods, and most poignantly the surpassing intelligence of crows, into the kind of gold only the most gifted writer and naturalist could fashion. **Crow Planet** is a small treasure, a conversion experience of truth, wit, and re-enchantment that remakes the world and our place within it."

— Paul Hawken, author of *Blessed Unrest* and *Natural Capitalism*

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Maricopa Audubon Society

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miscellaneous

Monthly Meeting

First Tuesday of the month, unless otherwise announced, September through April, 7:30 p.m. Our meeting place is Dorrance Hall, at the Desert Botanical Garden (DBG), except for our annual banquet in May, the location to be announced. The DBG is located at 1201 N. 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. There will be signs directing you to the meeting place. Please contact a board member if you have any questions, or check out our web site at www.maricopa-audubon.org. Pre-meeting dinners (September through April) are held at Rolling Hills 19th Tee Restaurant, 1405 N. Mill Avenue, starting at 6:00 p.m.

Membership Information

There are two ways to become a Maricopa Audubon member and to receive the *Cactus Wren**dition by mail:

1. By joining the National Audubon Society. If you live in the Phoenix metro area generally east of 43rd Avenue, or in the East Valley other than in Gilbert or Chandler, when National Audubon Society receives your check made payable to National Audubon Society and your membership application, you will be assigned to Maricopa Audubon Society, or you can send your check payable to National Audubon Society and your National Audubon Society membership application to Jack Follett, membership chair, and he will send it on in to National Audubon for you, or
2. By becoming a "Friend of Maricopa Audubon". In this case you will become a member of Maricopa Audubon Society only, and you will not receive the Audubon magazine or any of the other "benefits" of National Audubon membership, but you will receive a one-year subscription to the *Cactus Wren**dition. "Friends" contribution categories are: Anna's Hummingbird-\$20; Verdin-\$35-\$99; LeConte's Thrasher-\$100-\$249; Cactus Wren-\$250-\$999; Harris's Hawk-\$1,000-\$9,999 and California Condor-\$10,000+. Mail your Friends membership application and your check made payable to Maricopa Audubon to Jack Follett, membership chair. All "Friends" members receive certain designated discounts. (If you reside outside the above-indicated geographical area, the only way to receive a subscription to the *Cactus Wren**dition is to become a "Friend".) For National Audubon membership address changes or other questions call (800) 274-4201 or e-mail CHADD@audubon.org. For all other membership questions call or e-mail Jack Follett.

Submissions

Copy for *The Cactus Wren**dition must be received by the editor by e-mail, 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: The Cactus Wren*dition Editor, Emily Morris: monarchmorris@gmail.com

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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