

THE CACTUS WREN•DIDTION

JULY – AUGUST, 2001

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Glossy Ibis photographed by Roy Jones with Olympus C-3000 digital camera through Kowa 82mm scope. First State Record.

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PROGRAMS			NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS	
<p><u>Meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month, September-April</u>, at the Phoenix Zoo Auditorium. Meetings start at 7:30, and feature a speaker, book sales, refreshments, and a chance to socialize with fellow MAS members. Non-members welcome!</p> <p>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.</p> <p>NOTE: For our first meeting of the year on September 4th, there will be no pre-meeting dinner at Pete's. It is our annual potluck. Each attendee is</p>	<p>invited to bring a platter of his or her favorite h'ors de oeuvres, sufficiently large enough to serve at least six people. We'll provide the eating utensils, the plates, and the drinks (non-alcoholic, of course). Bring a friend. Festivities will start at 6:30 p.m., when</p>	<p>Riparian Institute speaking about the Gilbert Riparian Institute and The Preserves at Neely Ranch and Water Ranch.</p> <p>October 2: Kenn Kaufman topic: TBA</p> <p>November 6. Bob Stewart on the butterflies of Arizona.</p> <p>December 4: Roseann Hanson from the Sky Island Alliance.</p>	<p><u>Southwest Wings Birding Festival, August 8-11, 2001.</u> This popular event is held each year in Sierra Vista. Various daylong and half-day field trips will be conducted to such places as the Chiricahua Mountains, Huachuca Mountains, Patagonia Area, Ramsey Canyon and Sulphur Springs Valley. Over 100 species of birds are normally recorded during the festival. Call Southwest Wings, Inc. at 800-946-4777 or write PO Box 3432, Sierra Vista, AZ</p>	<p>sleeved shirts are available in Iris, Brick, Charcoal and Willow, large or XL for \$15.00. Long-sleeved shirts are available in Charcoal, Med, Large or XL, for \$20.00. Add \$4.00 shipping and handling for the first shirt, \$1.50 for each additional shirt. Please allow 3 weeks for delivery. Make checks out to: Maricopa Audubon Society, 1128 E Geneva Dr., Tempe, AZ 85282. For info, contact Laurie Nessel at (480) 968-5614 or laurienessel@hotmail.com. Look for a future posting of the shirts on our website:</p> <p>www.maricopaaudubon.org.</p> <p>A Birding Guide to Reno and Beyond is published by the</p>

	<p>we'll be able to tell one another where we had an opportunity to go birding this past summer, and what lifers we got. The regular meeting will get underway at 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Program topics: September 4: Scott Anderson of the Gilbert</p>	<p>Speakers wanted: If you have ideas for speakers, or if you would like to make a presentation yourself, please contact Laurie Nessel, Program Chair, at (480) 968-5614 or lauriennesel@hotmail.com.</p>	<p>85636-3432 for information and reservations.</p> <p>The ABA Regional Conference will be held in Santa Maria, CA on September 10-14, 2001. Midway between Morro Bay and Santa Barbara, near the central California coast, Santa Maria offers easy access to habitats including coastal bays and estuaries, rocky shoreline, chaparral scrub, semi-desert, and several types of woodland. For information call 800/850-2473, ext., 233.</p>	<p>Lahontan Audubon Society of Reno, NV. It covers 20 significant birding destinations and 25 side trips within an 80-mile radius of Reno. All the proceeds from the sale of the guide benefit the conservation and education projects of Lahontan Audubon Society. The price is \$10.00 and is available through ABA Sales or you can purchase it directly from Lahontan (total with postage is \$11.50). Contact Lucie Clark at luclark@sierra.net or 775/831-2909.</p> <p>Woodpecker Damage: A Simple Solution to a Common Problem is a new 8 page booklet available from Texas Parks and Wildlife which promises an inexpensive and successful way of dealing with woodpecker damage to man-made structures, and ways that man and woodpecker can coexist. If you would like a free copy of this booklet, send a 6x9 clasp envelope, addressed to yourself and including \$.55 postage to Clifford E Shackelford, Nongame Ornithologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife, 3000 IH 35 South, Suite 100, Austin, TX 78704. Fold the larger envelope inside a legal envelope and put "woodpecker damage" on the outside.</p>
	FROM THE EDITOR			
	by Deva Burns			
COMMITTEES/ SUPPORT	<p>How active a birder are you? Do you bird every weekend? Or do you simply enjoy reading about birding in publications?</p> <p>No matter which end of the spectrum you are on, you are important to an environmental organization. Herb Fibel's article on the upcoming changes in the relationship between National Audubon and the local chapters should be a wake up call for everyone. I know my view may be a bit slanted, but I would hate to see the</p>	<p>in their checks for \$20. Don't be embarrassed, we all know things happen. Feel free to contact me if you don't feel like calling Herb. As your editor I receive various other chapter newsletters. Tucson's <i>Vermilion Flycatcher</i> has a permanent column listing addresses and phone numbers for local, state, and federal government contacts. I really appreciate having this information all together in one place and have copied their idea. If you find any mistakes in our Maricopa County information, please let me know.</p> <p>I always enjoy reading about bird trips our members have taken. I especially enjoyed Bud Johnson's detailed directions for both the Gunnison Sage Grouse and the California Quail, and I enjoyed his company on the latter trip. As I am putting this issue to bed I am getting packed for my next adventure. In the next issue, I'll fill you in on</p>	<p>Hassayampa Preserve will follow a summer schedule that began May 15 and will continue until September 15. They will only be open Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 8-5.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Maricopa Audubon T-Shirts are available for sale at member meetings or by mail. They feature a Barn Owl primary flight feather overshadowing the common and Latin</p>	<p>Contacting elected officials. Look in this issue for contact names and addresses.</p> <p>Our web site www.maricopaaudubon.org has a web master, Michell Fulton. She is keeping it up to date for us. If you have access to the web, please check out our site. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Cliff Drowley for originally getting us up and running on the web.</p> <p>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.</p>
Activists Alert	<p>Shawn Bauer 602-828-3607 shawnbaur@hotmail.com</p>			
Arizona Audubon Council Rep	<p>Herb Fibel 480-966-9246 herbertsfibel@aol.com</p>			
Bird Alert	<p>Steve Ganley 480-832-8745</p>			
Book Store	<p>Richard & Karen Kaiser 602-276-3312</p>			

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<u>AND A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL</u>			<u>JULY – AUGUST, 2000 PHOTO QUIZ</u>	
By Herb Fibel			By Jim Burns	
On May Day Maricopa Audubon members celebrated Maricopa Audubon's 48 th year with a banquet at Shalimar Country Club in Tempe. Our featured speaker, Dr. George Archibald, the co-founder of the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin, entertained and educated us about the plight of cranes throughout the world. He told us that the most	The nominating committee, Evelyn Lewis, Harvey Beatty and Roy Jones, presented a full slate of candidates for the board. The present board was retained with the exception of Secretary and Field Trip Chairman. Those positions will be filled by Cynthia Donald and Mike Baker respectively. Also, the Hospitality Chair had been vacated	Outgoing Secretary, Karen Kaiser, outgoing Field Trip Chair, Walter Thurber, and outgoing Hospitality Chair, Evelyn Lewis were recognized for their service and were presented with mounted certificates of appreciation. Unfortunately, Evelyn was rafting down the Colorado, darn, and was unable to accept hers. It takes many people to	This Issue's Clue: Different families different make-up, same bad hair. All here in Arizona	

common and the rarest species of cranes, Sandhills and Whoopers, respectively, are found in the US. We learned that in many places in the world cranes are positive symbols, their presence boding happiness and good fortune for the community. Sadly, though, eleven of the worlds fifteen crane species are considered either endangered or threatened.

and Jeanine Baker has graciously agreed to fill it. The position of Editor is chosen by the board and they will decide whether to retain Deva Burns for another year at the next board meeting.

put together a program and dinner like this and many thanks go out to all. The only blemish on the otherwise perfect evening was that we had to pay for the dinners for the 13 people who made reservations for the event, never canceled, never showed and never paid.

CLIFF NOTED

In 1996, before many of us even knew what a web page was, much less how to access one, Cliff Drowley, a computer whiz, informed the Maricopa Audubon Board that in order to be cyber correct, Maricopa Audubon needed to have its own web page. After getting the go ahead, Cliff, with the help of Karen Stucke and Dwayne Fink, created a web page for our chapter, that has since been described by people who know about such things as one of the best Audubon websites in the country.

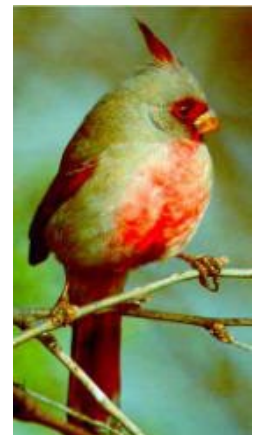
But a web site is not a static thing. Rather, it is a living, breathing organism, which requires constant tender loving care in the form of frequent updating and linkage with other web pages, in order to be of any ongoing value to the organization.

We pause today to honor and to thank Cliff for his contribution to Maricopa Audubon Society, and to let him know that we all appreciate the hundreds of hours and the thousands of dollars he invested in this task for no reason other than that he truly and correctly anticipated that the web page would be an advertisement and promotional tool for our chapter that would be viewed by countless web browsers seeking information each and every month about our activities



A) good photo, easy bird

[Answer](#)



B) good photo, difficult bird

[Answer](#)



C) bad photo, easy bird

[Answer](#)

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Mail comments to: webmaster@maricopaaudubon.org

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[BIRDS AND FORES FIRE](#)

By Bob Witzeman

"A land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow members and also respect for the community as such."

Aldo Leopold- *Sand County Almanac*

A consortium of the U.S. Forest Service, an NAU forestry professor named

If we were to have only Covington's cool fires here in the West, it would be an ecological disaster. There are important ecological benefits from having both hot and cool burning fires. Many birds and other wildlife are dependent upon hot, stand-replacing fires, intermediate fires, and cool fires. This mix of fire intensity types results in diverse

to his tree farm mindset. These are, in reality, the beneficial forces. Like fire, they open up overgrown post-mature forests for wildlife and promote tree species succession. The latest issue of Audubon Magazine pointed out that some insect species actively search out fires, homing in on the chemical compounds in smoke. These fire-loving insects include wasps, wood-boring beetles and robber flies. The black

[ARIZONA SPECIAL SPECIES:](#)



[BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER](#)

By Jim Burns

Thirty years of birding have come down finally to this: I would readily label any *Empidonax* flycatcher and happily sit through another root canal before I would comfortably try to distinguish between Arizona's two largest *Myiarchus* flycatchers, Ash-throated and Brown-crested. Though the former is widespread throughout the West, the latter, *Myiarchus tyrannulus*, is one of Arizona's special species, species found only here or more easily here

Brown-crested was formerly called Wied's Flycatcher after the Prince of Wied, a 19th century collector. If you lament the loss of history inherent in these name changes, but applaud the apparent addition of diagnostics, consider that all four US species of *Myiarchus* have brown heads and appear crested. Perhaps "Hook-billed Brown Cardinal" would have made more sense visually. Though they subsist

Wallace Covington, and others, are moving forward with their multimillion-dollar "fireproofing" of 100,000 acres of a Flagstaff area forest. They call it "pre-settlement restoration" or sometimes fire prevention but it has already been used as old-growth logging disguised as forest fireproofing. Proof of this is Covington's past pre-settlement "thinning" restorations at Mount Trumbull. Photographed at that site were 36-inch matriarchs being sold to logging companies, - supposedly to pay for the cost of the restoration thinning. Sometimes enviros are able to set a 16-inch cap on these "pre-settlement" logging schemes, sometimes not. George Bush's new appointees will certainly oppose any logging size caps.	tree species and age classes, and many beneficial stages of forest succession - essential to dynamic, productive forest ecosystems.	Melanophila beetles congregate at fires, arriving in time to lay their eggs in still-smoldering trees. These beetles apparently detect flames with a pair of infrared sensors on their thorax.	than in any other state.	primarily on insects and some fruit, there are many records of Brown-crested taking lizards and hummingbirds. That hook would be the envy of any shrike.
	Smokey's fire suppression policy has impacted a host of fire-dependent birds and wildlife. In Arizona these include Hermit Thrush, Hairy woodpecker, and Olive-sided Flycatcher. That flycatcher needs severely burned forests. Under fire suppression Arizona and the West have lost much of its aspen. Aspen is valuable here for our Red-naped Sapsucker, Warbling Vireo, and various woodpeckers and swallows.	Smoke may signal widely dispersed insects to gather, increasing their chance of finding a mate. Burned trees also provide food for growing insect youngsters as well as the birds that depend on these insects as prey items. In one wasp species, the mother lays her eggs under scorched bark, along with depositing a wood fiber-digesting fungus. Insectivorous birds thrive in hot fire areas with standing burned trees.	Brown-crested Flycatchers are migrants to the states, common but local breeders throughout central and southern Arizona and south Texas, with records from southeastern California and extreme southwestern New Mexico. Part of the identification problem is that they are notably late arrivals (early May) and notably early departures (mid-August), so time for study is relatively short and of course not many birders are doing south Texas in the early summer humidity.	Granted this bill looks massive and bill size is one of the features used to separate Brown-crested from its <i>Myiarchus</i> congeners, Great-crested, Ash-throated, and Dusky-capped, but most of these features throat color, amount and brightness of yellow on the belly, contrast in the tertial edges, rufous in the tail are only relative. It's unlikely you will have more than one <i>Myiarchus</i> in your binocular field for comparison. Distinguishing between Ash-throated and Brown-crested comes down finally to two things: voice and the <i>pattern</i> of rufous in the <i>undertail</i> .
This pre-settlement scheme claims to protect homes from forest fire. In reality, most of those millions of dollars will be wastefully spent in forests more than the 0.5 miles from homes. Numerous studies have shown that if you wish to protect homes and property you are wasting money if you thin and manipulate the forest more than half mile from that wildlands-urban interface.	Fire is indispensable for Arizona's Buff-breasted Flycatcher. That species depends upon fire-induced clear areas in pine forests. Aerial photos of most forest fires show a complex mosaic of heavily burned, partially burned and unburned areas. These burned/unburned mosaic interfaces with both living and standing dead trees become insect smorgasbords for bluebirds, swallows, woodpeckers etc.	Let's protect homes and property by only fireproofing the well studied, officially accepted half-mile wildland-urban interface distance. And let's not throw billions of tax dollars into the "pre-settlement" nonsense even one inch outside the 0.5-mile wildland-urban interface.	Brown-crested are short distance migrants, present most of the year in much of Mexico, widespread south to Costa Rica, found also from Columbia to northern Argentina. Here in Arizona they are typically but not exclusively found in riparian areas. The accompanying photograph was taken in a dry wash in a residential area of northwest Tucson. South of Tucson watch (listen) for them in lower Madera Canyon, at the Sonoita Creek preserve, and around the ponds at Kino Springs. Closer to Phoenix they are reliably found along the Beeline Highway at Mesquite Wash and in the Sunflower area, at Seven Springs near Camp Creek, and northward below the Mogollon Rim in areas such as Oak Creek Canyon.	One author verbalizes Ash-throated's song as "a rolling preer" and writes Brown-crested's as "a rolling prri-di-whew." Another calls Ash-throated's voice "burry," Brown-crested's "rough." Still another says Ash-throated has a "rhythmic series of ha-wheers" and Brown-crested a "series of soft burr-rs." One seemingly apt description likens Ash-throated to a referee's whistle, but I've listened to both tapes many times and I've heard both birds on the courts and playing fields. Aurally I'm just not getting it.
The "pre-settlement" approach embraces the Covington notion that by thinning the forests we can	They capitalize on the copious, varied food supply of the burned and unburned habitats.	The cool-burning "pre-settlement" forest type never even remotely characterized the West. The Covington prescription is nothing more than the foot in the door by a forestry professor to bring old-growth logging and even-aged tree farms back to the West. If you have any doubts about this, look how our pro-logging western senators are clamoring for this "fireproofing" charade.	Like its <i>Myiarchus</i> congeners, Brown-crested are cavity nesters, and being the largest of the <i>Myiarchus</i> they utilize the holes of our largest woodpeckers, Gilded Flicker and Gila in Arizona, Golden-fronted in Texas. Saguaro, cottonwoods, and sycamores are favored locations, and three to six eggs are laid on a bed of fur, feathers, and snakeskin. Brown-crested are very aggressive around the nest site and are one of our few native species that compete successfully with Starlings.	If you've been blessed with a musical ear you'll probably be fine. Otherwise try to catch the tip of the undertail. On our Brown-crested the undertail will show rufous all the way to the tips of the inner webs. Ash-throateds will show brown tips all the way across. Unless it's a juvenile bird. Are you starting to get the picture? I think the latest National Geo guide illustrates tails better than Sibley.

<p>return them to a benign "pre-settlement" forest type characterized by slow, cool-burning forest fires which will hug the ground and not reach the canopy. In reality, fire burned in Arizona and throughout the West in every possible manner from hot to cool.</p> <p>Since cattle are not permanently removed from our public forests following this "restoration" thinning, the cycle of dense conifer thickets and crown-fire laddering continues. Cattle, by removing grass, allow conifer seedlings to germinate in excess.</p>	<p>Fire is essential for the survival of various plant species, whether the flames open sealed cones to release seeds, or clear the ground to create conditions for germination. Harmful, exotic weeds brought in by the livestock industry, are reduced in number by fire. Smokey has always told us how inimical bark beetles, dwarf mistletoe, gypsy moths, porcupines and fires were</p>	 <p>Buff-breasted Flycatcher: This bird is dependent upon forest fires which create mosaics of meadows full of insects, surrounded by unburned standing trees for nesting. Jim Burns photo</p>	 <p>Brown-Crested Flycatcher photographed in Tucson, AZ 7/00. Photo by Jim Burns</p>	<p>Give me one more spring in the field and maybe I'll have it.</p>
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WHERE AND WHEN – MID-JUNE THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2001			CALIFORNIA QUAIL IN ARIZONA (Recently Added to the Arizona List By the Arizona Bird Committee)	
By Walter Thurber			By Bud Johnson	
Car Pooling: Maricopa Audubon strongly encourages carpooling on field trips. Please make	Saturday-Sunday, June 16-17	Wednesday-Saturday, August 8-11	<p>There it is! Where? I don't see it. Over there on the other side of the Little Colorado River. In the opening under the bush. Which bush etc., etc?</p>	
	<p>White Mountains Campout – Drought conditions have eased so we are bringing back this popular family event. Experience morning bird walks, beginning birder and wildflower workshops, and other activities at Greens Peak near Springerville. Some 60 species breed here in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, including Williamson's Sapsucker, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Mountain</p>	<p>Southwest Wings Birding Festival. Seminars, field trips, and lectures by wellknown speakers</p> <p>highlight one of the largest gatherings of birdwatchers in Arizona. (520) 3780233. Please see Notes &</p>	<p>You know the drill. Everyone else has seen the bird but you. Finally by lining up behind Deva Burns and looking directly over her head, you see the unmistakable male California Quail. He has obviously seen the birders and all their binoculars, but figures no one is going to</p>	<p>pressure, the birds moved south. This is an area upstream from Lyman Lake on the north flowing Little Colorado River.</p> <p>Brian has seen coveys of up to 40 Quail. He had not seen many this year until recently when he was eating his lunch by the river. A California Quail walked out and checked out what was for lunch before wandering back into the brush. Brian is a very good birder and was pleased to take us to see "his" Quail not far from Springerville. Seeing the Quail would be easier if they</p>

every effort to organize your own carpool; consolidate vehicles at meeting places; and/or contact leaders for carpooling assistance. It is recommended that passengers reimburse drivers 5-10 cents per mile

Legend:

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

Bluebird and Western Tanager. Meet Audubon members from across the state. Primitive camping with no facilities. Bring food as there is no organized cookout. Limit: None. Difficulty: 2 (some good birding spots are handicapped accessible). Call coordinator or local contact person for information.		Announcements.	wade across the waist high water to get any closer. The 3 grandchildren even get good looks before the Quail tires of the game and melts back into the heavy brush.	were calling. When the hens start sitting on eggs, they will be harder to find. The Quail is illustrated in the National Geographic Field guide among other guides. It is readily distinguished from Arizona's common Gamble's Quail. California Quail have scaly chests and lack the black belly of the Gamble's Quail, which does not occur at the 7,000-foot elevation around Springerville.
Coordinator: Brian Heap 520-337-4865 Local Contact: Walter Thurber 480-483-6450 frances.thurber@asu.edu		Saturday, September 15	Our local guide, Brian Heap of St. Johns, was getting a little concerned. We had been at it for quite awhile and the grandchildren's attention span had been exceeded some time ago. Mark Stevenson had come up from Tucson. From Scottsdale, Jim and Deva Burns and their grandson JP had met with 2 of my grandsons for the great Quail chase. We met north of Lyman Lake on routes 180/191, not far from the Raven Archeological site. The Quail are all on private land. Brian is involved in a sand and gravel operation where the Quail are often found. He also found a slippery hillside and did a slide that any Diamondback player would have been proud of.	There are a lot of other places nearby for birding. The Weimea (sp?) wildlife-viewing site is just south of the quail area. This is an area that was bought by the state using Heritage money. It was the first site that they purchased with the money from gambling. The general area is also known for other recreation and is much cooler than the valley of the sun in the summer. On the trip we also saw a number of antelope near Lyman Lake. This State Park has a number of campsites and the grandkids enjoyed the Petroglyphs.
Chiricahua Mountains – Another hot month in Phoenix . . . Another mountain getaway! Enjoy daytime and evening birding in the Coronado National Forest near Portal. Our destinations include the South Fork of Cave Creek, Rustler Park and the Southwestern Research Station of the American Museum of Natural History. Some target species include Whiskered Screech Owl, Lucifer Hummingbird and Elegant Trogon. Overnight accommodations are limited. Bring lunch for Saturday. Limit: 15 Difficulty: 3 Please contact leader for information and reservations.		Saturday-Sunday, July 21-22	The addition of California Quail to the Arizona list of species provided us with another excuse to visit scenic eastern Arizona. Last year we had photographed the Eurasian Collared Dove nesting in nearby Eager (see May/June 2000 issue of the Wrendition). Interestingly, the Dove has also just been added to the list of accepted bird species in Arizona.	There are several Motels in Springerville, Eager and St. Johns. There are some good eateries including some of the world's hottest chili at Los Dos Molinos in Springerville There is also a museum that features artifacts from the nearby Malpais (Bad Lands) archeological site. Tours are provided of the site and the grandchildren all enjoyed climbing up the site. The Raven site will be open when school is out. After seeing the Quail, some went on up through the nearby Petrified Forest and Painted Desert. By going up to Springerville through the Salt River Canyon and returning through Payson, it made a nice loop. Seeing the elusive quail without it calling was especially nice.
Leader: Scott Burge 480-897-8608 webmaster@maricopaaudubon.org		Wednesday, September 19	The Springerville area has long been a favorite of the Maricopa Audubon for finding eastern birds such as Veery, American Redstart and other warblers not found elsewhere in the state. This time a bird from the west had been added that does not normally enter Arizona. According to Brian, the California Quail was originally introduced some 30 years ago around St. Johns. Due to the better habitat and lower hunter	
	Box Canyon, Hassayampa River — This is a deep high-walled canyon along the Hassayampa River near Wickenburg. Flowing surface water provides a rare resource for an assortment of fall migrants that stop over here and for the many upper Sonoran resident bird species. Bring a lunch. Limit: 20. Difficulty: 2 (shallow water			

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

crossings).
Please contact leader for information and reservations.

Leader: Nancy
London

520-684-5530

gatto@w3az.net

Bring your
binoculars

Don't forget to
have FUN!!

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THE CACTUS WREN•DITION

July – August 2001



Volume XLIX, No.4

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Glossy Ibis
photographed by Roy
Jones with Olympus C-
3000 digital camera
through Kowa 82mm
scope. First State
Record.

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GOVERNMENT CONTACTS

How often have you thought about contacting your "congress(wo)man"? Did you put it off because finding the address was a hassle? The following is a list of local and national representatives. Let them know what you think on issues that are important to you. After all they are elected officials.

For statewide conservation information and conversation join the AZ.ACTIVIST listserv on the web. Send an e-mail message to LISTSERV@LIST.AUDUBON.ORG with **no** subject heading. The text of your message should read: Subscribe AZ-Activist **City of Phoenix**

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Sen Susan Gerard, R
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District 19

Rep Ted Carpenter, R
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PHOTO QUIZ ANSWERS

By Jim Burns

There are six North American bird species with "crested" in their common name and at least dozen more that have crest but don't carry it in their call letters, yet mention the work to anyone, non-birder and most birders alike, and they will "cardinal." So pervasive is this verbal/visual association that terms such as "Texas cardinal" (Pyrrhuloxia) and "black cardinal" (Phainopepla) are part of the casual birding vernacular in some parts of the country. If it's crested, it must be a cardinal.

As interesting and often

secondary tips which would be just be below and outside of the white inner tertial edgings, probably bright enough to show up in black and white, are missing. This waxwing is thought to be age related and possibly contingent upon diet. Most but not all adults birds of both sexes develop the red wing appendages, but juvenile birds do not. Some waxwings will show reddish tail tips, also thought to be diet related. Despite the missing wax, our photo bird is an adult. Juvenile Cedars sport a smaller mask with extensive white where this bird's black

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mysterious as the etymology of common bird names is, the evolutionary processes which have caused species from unrelated families to develop similar structural or plumage features is even more so. The best scientific explanation for the crests is disparate species is that they evolved to add size and presence to a bird when confronting an aggressor or defending territory. It's doubtful this was the thought behind the original application of the moniker "cardinal" to a sporting team but, if it was, the red birds on certain white helmets should certainly have their crests shorn away.

A) Good Photo, Easy Bird

Masked Cardinal? Structurally it seems possible. The crest is there and we see the short, thick bill of a seedeater. Northern Cardinals of both sexes do have a black face, but it's nothing like this unmistakable black mask outlined above and below in white. This is a Cedar Waxwing, photographed in Oak Creed Canyon, October 1985. Despite the bill profile, waxwings subsist primarily on a diet of insects and berries. Not that the bill is hooked which undoubtedly aids in the capture of bugs and fruit.

Our quiz bird's tail is tipped with the typical bright yellow, but the waxy red

mask tapers up into the crest. Bohemian Waxwings, also crested and masked, are chunkier birds than Cedars, lack white on the upper margin of the facial mask, and have white secondary tips and a streak of yellow spots running down the primaries.

Authors describing waxwings invariably turn to the word "sleek." Plumage is soft and velvety, uniformly gray (Bohemian) or gray over peach (Cedar). The combination of stubby bill, upswept crest, and spare but bold markings resembling racing stripes gives the look of speed. In flight the pointed, triangular wings enhance this jizz and cause waxwings to be mistaken for starlings.

Waxwings are gregarious at all seasons except when nesting, and they are highly nomadic. Cedar Waxwings may appear at any time any place in the state. In winter the huge flocks in the Pinyon/Juniper habitat north of Flagstaff should be checked carefully for the stray Bohemian, a very sporadic visitor and much sought prize for state listers

B) Good Photo, Difficult Bird

This could be a True Cardinal, a Real Cardinal. There's the crest and the short,

(continued on Page 12)

GOVERNMENT CONTACTS
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<p>Capitol Complex</p> <p>1700 W Washington</p> <p>Phoenix, AZ 85007-2890</p> <p>GOVERNOR'S OFFICE:</p> <p>602/542-4331</p> <p>Fax: 602/542-1381</p> <p>Jane Hull</p> <p>Office of the Governor</p> <p>1700 W Washington</p> <p>Phoenix, AZ 85007-2890</p> <p>FAX: Senate: 602/542-3429</p> <p>House: 602/542-4511</p> <p>http://www.azleg.state.az.us/</p> <p>see website for e-mail addresses</p> <p>District 6</p> <p>Rep John Huppenthal, R</p> <p>602.542.5898</p> <p>Rep Robert Robson, R</p> <p>602/542-5549</p> <p>Sen Lori Daniels, R</p> <p>602/542-4178</p> <p>District 7</p> <p>Rep Cheryl Chase, D</p> <p>602/542-5030</p> <p>Rep Mark Clark, D</p> <p>602/542-5829</p> <p>Sen Peter Rios, D</p> <p>602/542-5685</p> <p>District 15</p> <p>Rep Robert Blendu, R</p> <p>602/542-5894</p> <p>Rep Lowell "Mike" Gleason, R</p> <p>602/542-5409</p> <p>Sen Edward J Cirillo, R</p> <p>602/542-4173</p>	<p>602/542-5895</p> <p>Rep Christine Weason, D</p> <p>602/542-3297</p> <p>Sen Chris Cummiskey, D</p> <p>602/542-4916</p> <p>District 26</p> <p>Rep Jeff Hatch-Miller, R</p> <p>602/542-5051</p> <p>Rep Steve May, R</p> <p>602/542-5408</p> <p>Sen Tom Smith, R</p> <p>602/542-5955</p> <p>District 27</p> <p>Rep Meg Burton Cahill, D</p> <p>602/542-5896</p> <p>Rep Laura Knaperek, R</p> <p>602/542-5169</p> <p>Sen Harry Mitchell, D</p> <p>602/542-4124</p> <p>District 28</p> <p>Rep Carolyn Allen, R</p> <p>602/542-4225</p> <p>Rep Wes Marsh, R</p> <p>602/542-5503</p> <p>Sen Randall Gnant, R</p> <p>602/542-4138</p> <p>District 29</p> <p>Rep Mark Anderson, R</p> <p>602/542-4371</p> <p>Rep Russell Pearce, R</p> <p>602/542-5760</p> <p>Sen David Petersen, R</p> <p>602/542-4481</p> <p>District 30</p> <p>Rep Eddie Farnsworth, R</p> <p>602/542-5735</p> <p>Rep Karen Johnson, R</p> <p>602/542-4467</p> <p>Sen Jay Blanchard, D</p> <p>602/542-5325</p>	<p>thomas.loc.gov (searchable full text of bills, Congressional Record, extensive links)</p> <p>Federal Web Locator: www.law.vill.edu</p> <p>US Senate home page: www.senate.gov</p> <p>Senator John McCain</p> <p>241 Russell Senate Office Building</p> <p>Washington, DC 20510</p> <p>Phone: 202/224-2235</p> <p>Fax: 202/224-2207</p> <p>E-mail: senator_mccain@mccain.senate.gov</p> <p>Senator John Kyl</p> <p>724 Hart Senate Office Building</p> <p>Washington, DC 20510</p> <p>Phone: 202/224-4521</p> <p>Fax: 202/224-2207</p> <p>E-mail: info@kyl.senate.gov</p> <p>House of Representatives home page: www.house.gov</p> <p>Rep Matt Salmon (District 1)</p> <p>115 Cannon Building</p> <p>Washington, DC 20515</p> <p>Phone: 202/225-2635</p> <p>Fax: 202/225-3405</p> <p>E-mail: msalmon@mail.house.gov</p> <p>Rep Ed Pastor (District 2)</p> <p>2465 Rayburn House Office Building</p> <p>Washington, DC 20515</p> <p>Phone: 202/225-4065</p> <p>Fax: 202/225-1655</p>	<p>Washington, DC 20515</p> <p>Phone: 202/225-4576</p> <p>Fax: 202/225-6328</p> <p>Rep John Shadegg (District 4)</p> <p>430 Cannon House Office Building</p> <p>Washington, DC 20515</p> <p>Phone: 202/225-3361</p> <p>Fax: 202/225-3462</p> <p>E-mail: jshadegg@mail.house.gov</p> <p>Rep Jim Kolbe (District 5)</p> <p>205 Cannon House Office Building</p> <p>Washington, DC 20515</p> <p>Phone: 202/225-2542</p> <p>Fax: 202/225-0378</p> <p>E-mail: jim.kolbe@mail.house.gov</p> <p>Rep JD Hayworth (District 6)</p> <p>1023 Longworth House Building Ste B</p> <p>Washington, DC 20515</p> <p>Phone: 202/225-2190 or 800/874-0467</p> <p>Fax: 202/225-8819</p> <p>E-mail: hayworth@mail.house.gov</p>
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Glossy Ibis photographed by Roy Jones with Olympus C-3000 digital camera through Kowa 82mm scope. First State Record.

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SIGHTINGS – MARCH & APRIL 2001			SIGHTINGS – (con't. from Pg11)	PHOTO QUIZ ANSWERS (Continued From Page 10)	
By Janet Witzeman					
After 13 yars of reveiveing bird records, preparing and recording a weekly report that was available by telephone (the MAS Rare BirdAlert), Steve Ganley is retiring from that job. We hope someone will volunteer to take his place. On behalf of MAS and all of the birder in and out of Arizona who benefited from his service, I want to thank Steve and say	until Mar. 10 (SG). Two female com. Goldeneyes were seen below Roosevelt Dam Mar. 5 (RJ, JJ, DC) and a few females were reported at the Gila Bend Sewage Ponds Mar. 9 (AS, HD); one late-staying male was seen at the Water Ranch Ponds Apr. 4 (JB, SG) and one very late female was found at the 91 st Ave. Ponds May 4 (DL, HM). There have been only three previous April county	Owls are still present along Baseline Rd West of 51 st Ave.; six were seen in that area Apr. 15 (RD). A male Calliope Hummingbird was found at the Hassayampa River Preserve (hereafter HRP) Mar. 31 (MB); there have been only two previous low elevation spring records in the county. The Lewis's Woodpecker that was wintering in Tolleson, was still present there Mar.	Sparrow, seen and heard singing in a Phoenix yard and a Tempe Yard the first week in April, probably wintered in those areas (fide SG). A Lapland Longspur was photographed at a sod farm e. of Scottsdale Feb. 25 (AS), and a by Mar. 9, seven Lapland Longspurs and a female McCown's Longspur were discovered there;	Stubby seedeater bill. The plumage looks right this time, the black on the face running up from the chin, enclosing the eye, and extending across the lower forehead. This looks like your generic crested backyard seedeater. To bad we've lost the brilliant, uniform red in this black and white print Too easy, right?	ones. Imagine a raptor getting in your face like hummingbirds will often do! The trade-off For proximity to our small species is that they are nervous and flighty. They won't pose for long. Even with binoculars this can be a problem, so whenever you see a perfectly exposed, frame filling photo of a small bird, know that the primary ingredient of good bird photography is pure dumb luck.

<p>how much his time and effort were appreciated. Many of the records reported in this column were because of Steve's having disseminated information received from birders.</p> <p>Even though many birders post their sightings on the web, I would like to remind them to also email or call me with their unusual observations: jlwitzeman@aol.com or 602-840-6089.</p> <p>A Horned grebe was observed down stream from Roosevelt Dam Mar. 1 (DC) and one was still present at Canyon lake with 100 Western Grebes Mar. 5 (RJ, JJ, DC). A Clark's Grebe, seen at the Water Ranch Ponds in Gilbert Apr. 15 (SG), was almost two weeks later than previous spring occurrences in the county. Sixteen AM White Pelicans were counted on McCormick Ranch Pond Mar. 24 (HB). Numbers of Beotropic Cormorants continued to be seen at the 91st Ave. cobble ponds in mid-March (TC) and eight were observed along the Gila River near Estrella Parkway Apr. 22 (TC).</p> <p>An Am. Bittern was found along the Salt River at 115th Ave. Mar. 17 (TC). Two new Great Blue Heron rookeries were discovered</p>	<p>records for this species and no previous May records. Four Hooded Mergansers were seen at the Pavilions Shopping Center ponds Mar. 15 (AS). High numbers of Red-breasted mergansers (unusual away from the Colorado River) were found along the Salt River below Roosevelt Dam; 60 were counted there on Mar. 1 (DC), 37 females and 50 males were counted Mar. 5 (RJ, JJ, DC) and at least 45 were still present Mar. 18 (BH). Three females were seen on Canyon Lake Mar. 5 (RJ, JJ, DC).</p> <p>A pair of Osprey were seen along the Gila River at the jack rabbit Rd. crossing Apr. 22 and perhaps will nest there (TC). A red-shouldered Hawk was observed at Tuba City in n. Arizona from Feb. 16 until at least Mar. 12 (RR). Numbers of Swainson's Hawks are usually seen during their migration through the county in April and early May; 25 were seen in a field on Broadway west of 91st Ave. Apr. 1 (TC, NS). A clapper Rail was heard along the Gila river near Jackrabbit Rd. Apr. 22 (TC).</p> <p>An Am. Golden Plover was discovered at the Water Ranch Ponds Apr. 4 (JBU, SG); there have been only six previous spring records in the county – all later in April and in May. Black-necked stilts do not</p>	<p>24 (BG). The male and female Williamson's Sapsuckers, that were wintering in Encanto Park, were still present Mar. 12 (fide SG).</p> <p>A N. Beardless Tyrannulet, discovered at the HRP Apr. 8-13 (NL), provided only the third record for Maricopa County. A Dusky Flycatcher was observed along the Gila River near Estrella Parkway Apr. 22 (TC). An Eastern Phoebe, found at the 91st Ave. cobble ponds Mar. 17 (TC), probably wintered in that area and added another number to the three that were found elsewhere in the county during the winter. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was discovered across the Verde River from Dead Horse Ranch State Park Apr. 28 (DVG).</p> <p>A Cassin's Vireo and a Plumbeous Vireo were observed at the HRP Mar. 31 (MB). The Steller's Jays that wintered at Coon Bluff remained at least until Mar. 26 and one Boyce Thompson Arboretum (hereafter BTA) was still present Apr. 1 (fide SG). A Mexican Jay, very unusual in the lowlands and part of the winter's invasion of high elevation species in the lowlands, was observed in a south Phoenix yard Mar. 3-27 (MC).</p> <p>Two Mt. Chickadees</p>	<p>both species continued to be observed at least until Mar. 12 (RJ, JJ et al.). There was only one previous county record for each of these species.</p> <p>The Common Grackle, found at Apache Lake Feb 27, remained at least until Mar. 18 (BH). A Lesser Goldfinch was seen at a completed nest along the road to Seven Springs on the early date of Mar. 14 (BD, AV); the species does not usually nest until mid-May.</p> <p>Highlights from s.e Arizona; A Fulvous Whistling-Duck was discovered at Kino Springs Apr. 18 (NM). Individual Broad-winged Hawks were found in Miller Canyon Apr. 22 and at Dudleyville Apr. 24 (CB). A male Blue-winged Warbler was discovered at the San Pedro River Inn Apr. 14 (RH). The male Magnolia Warbler, found in Continental Feb. 18, remained at least until Apr 16 (RT). The Rufous-capped Warbler in French Joe Canyon was observed building a nest Apr. 25 (DS) and by early May a second Rufous-capped Warbler was detected there (fide SG)</p> <p>Abbreviations: Boyce Thompson Arboretum (BTA), Hassayampa River Preserve (HRP).</p>	<p>After three years and last issue's emipids, I would hope I've got you looking at bill shapes. Or is it just too hard visually to get past a Northern Cardinal's red and notice its bill? The red bill of our Northern Cardinal is thick, straight, and pointed. That does not describe the bill on our quiz birds. It has a thick bill which is noticeably curved and blunt. We're in the right genus, but this isn't <i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i> (Northern Cardinal). This is <i>Cardinalis sinuatus</i>, and in living color the field the odd, parrot-like bill with its curved upper mandible and zigzag cutting edges, is never red. It is <i>yellow</i> changing to gray in the winter and gray in young birds.</p> <p>This Pyrrhuloxia was photographed at Lake Patagonia State Park, November 2000. In color the apparent black on the crest, face, and wings is a deep rosy red, and the splash of paler rose on the bird's chest and belly is striking against the uniform gray background color. Many consider the Pyrrhuloxia, with its softer reds and subtle contrasts, to be a more beautiful bird than its garish congener. The unique bill is thought to be an adaptation for opening mesquite beans, a favorite winter food item.</p> <p>C) Bad Photo.</p>	<p>This Bridled Cardinal popped up right next to me as I sat at the Spofford's feeders near Portal in November 1999, too close to focus on its eye until it flipped around and faced away from me. The bird was long gone before I would have had time to move to the right to get the sun behind me. At least side-lit is better than backlit. The bright shaft of side light provides a nice profiled look at this bird's crest, seedeater bill, and diagnostic facial markings.</p> <p>Of course this is not a cardinal, but on more than one occasion I have watched non-birders refer to timice as cardinals, citing the obvious crest as proof. Bridled Titmouse is one of those rare birds aptly named, the black facial lines resembling the bridle used on riding horses. And of course you've been wondering about the origin of "titmouse." <i>Titr</i> is Old Icelandic for "small," <i>mase</i> old English for "bird."</p> <p>Most crested birds can raise or lower the crest at will. Titmice will be at "full crest" when agitated, and it seems titmice are usually agitated about something. Next time notice that the crest itself is gray matching the bird's back and nape, and is only outlined in black. And next time you see a crested bird remember the purpose of the crest. It is a distraction device, and it works on birders just as it</p>
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<p>along the Gila River Apr 22: one upstream from Estrella Mr. Park containing 15-25 active nests and the other n.e. of Jackrabbit Rd. containing 20-40 active nests (TC). Three hundred Cattle Egrets in breeding plumage were observed near 75th Ave. and Baseline Rd. Mar. 31 (MB)</p> <p>Five pairs of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks are observed at four ponds between 91st Ave. and El Mirage Rd. Apr. 1 (TC). The Eurasian Wigeon in Indian Bend Wash remained at least</p>	<p>usually begin nesting until the end of April or early May, so it was unusual to find some sitting on nests at the Water Ranch Ponds the first week in April (SG) and to find four early nests (three with eggs) south of Laveen Apr. 15 (TC). The previous early date for nesting as Apr. 21, 1972. Am Avocets also nested about three weeks earlier than usual this year-several sets of young were discovered at the Water Ranch Ponds the first week of April (SG). A Marbled Godwit was found with a group of 65 long-billed curlews at 75th Ave. and Baseline Rd. on the early date of March 31 (MB). There were no previous spring records of Marbled Godwit in the county before mid-April. Three Franklin's Gulls in breeding plumage were observed at the Water Ranch Ponds Mar. 30 (AS, SG).</p> <p>It was good news to learn that Burrowing.</p>	<p>and two White-breasted Nuthatches remained at Granite Reef Picnic Area at least until Mar. 7 (SG). The Rufous-backed Robin, that wintered in downtown Phoenix, remained at least until Mar. 12 (fide SG). The Brown Thrasher that wintered at BTA, was still present Mar. 19 (CT). Yellow Warblers were present and singing at the 91st Ave. cobble ponds in mid-March, about a week earlier than usual (TC). A N. Waterthrush was found at Indian School Park (Hayden and Indian School Rd.) Apr. 24 and remained until Apr. 27 (Lba <i>et al.</i>).</p> <p>Two mail Indigo Buntings were seen at Needle Rock, along the Verde River on the early date of Mar. 31 (RP), a month earlier than usual. Individual White-throated.</p> <p>Continued on Page 12</p>	<p>Observers</p> <p>Mike Baker, Jack Bartley, Harvey Beatty, Chris Benesh, Josh Burns, Matt Chew, Dale Clark, Troy Corman, Bix Demaree, Rich Ditch, Steve Ganley, Bill Grossi, Bill Higgins, Rob Hunt, Jill Jonews, Roy Jones, Nancy London, Norma Miller, Henry Messing, Rob Pearson, Roger Radd, David Sibley, Norm Shrout, Andy Spencer, Rick Taylor, Carl Tomoff, Anita Van Auker, Doug Van Gausig</p>	<p>Easy Bird</p> <p>Everything about photography is a trade-off and this is doubly true of bird photography. Typically, larger species have a larger "comfort zone" and will not allow nearly as close and approach as smaller</p>	<p>works on predators. You are drawn visually to the least important part of the bird and you neglect to look closely at structure, behavior, and maybe even plumage features. The next time you see crested birds in this photo quiz, it's going to be much harder</p>
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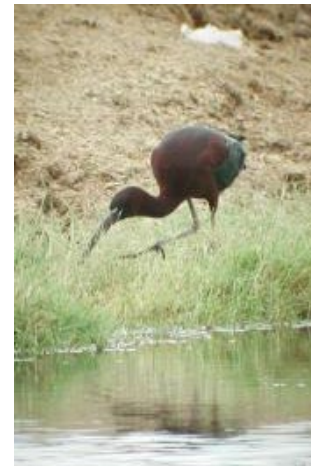
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Glossy Ibis photographed
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through Kowa 82mm
scope. First State Record.

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CHANGED IN THE WIND AT THE AUDUBON

By Herb Fibel

There are major changes in direction and focus occurring within your Audubon Society. One of these has to do with a change in how your National Audubon dues are divided up. The major source of funds for our chapter over the years has been the receipt of a dues share from National Audubon Society. For as long as this writer has been a member, National Audubon sent the chapters	past ten years in comparison to those of other national environmental organizations. In fact, during this period, there has been a net loss in National Audubon membership. The new dues share plan is extremely complicated, but, essentially, the \$5.50 a year is being reduced to \$1.34, roughly a quarter of what it was formerly. However, the chapters will receive	three or four year period. At this moment it is difficult to gage the impact of this change, but we can already anticipate that this is going to put a major squeeze on our annual income projections. It also means that each of us is going to have to become an Audubon Society salesperson. Additionally, we are going to have to come up with other fundraising ideas in order to offset this loss.
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GUNNISON SAGE GROUSE LEK (RECENTLY SPLIT FORM 'SAGE GROUSE')

By Bud Johnson

The sunrise was just getting serious when the 'ugly birder' arrived. You know the ones they never follow directions like "always stay behind the leader so you do not spook the birds", or "let others have a turn after you have seen the bird in the scope so all can see it before it leaves". Somehow they do not believe etiquette rules applies to them. Since the Gunnison Sage Grouse lek site was off the main road, the ugly birder must have seen the directions to the site and read the instructions for ones behavior at the lek:	Gunnison National Park that is west of Gunnison. On the trip we saw over a hundred deer, 50 antelope and a dozen elk. The only realistic time to see the Grouse is when they are performing at the lek. This is during late March to early May with the peak activity in mid April. The figure below shows the lek area and directions to the site. It is suggested that one makes a trial run the day before to ensure the performance area can be found in the morning before sunrise.
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<p>\$5.50 a year for each member recruited and retained by National Audubon Society, and \$15.00 for each new member recruited by the chapter. National Audubon maintains that it is losing money under this arrangement, for a number of reasons, the most important of which, it claims, is that it costs more than what National Audubon is getting out of it for each new member National Audubon recruits. Additionally, National Audubon admits that its membership recruitment efforts have not been particularly successful over the</p>	<p>more for locally recruited members. Since the ratio of locally recruited members to nationally recruited members in our chapter and in most others is around one in ten, local chapters will have to recruit more than ten times as many new members as they are recruiting now, just to keep the annual dues share amount equal to what it was previously. In real terms this means that whereas the chapter recruited maybe 200 new members each year, it would have to recruit close to 2,000!</p> <p>Because of a hue and cry from the local chapters, this change is being phased in over a</p>	<p>Over and above the cost of publishing and distributing the Cactus Wren-dition, our expenses are even now relatively minor. It would be extremely difficult to cut them back much further. So, one of the major challenges your board is going to have to meet over the next several years and beyond is to reduce the cost of publication and distribution of the Cactus Wren-dition to an amount that is about equal to the reduced dues share that we will be receiving from National Audubon.</p> <p>This is only one of a number of changes in direction by National Audubon. I will be discussing other changes in future articles.</p>	<p>DO NOT ARRIVE ANY LATER THAN AN HOUR BEFORE SUNRISE.</p> <p>DO NOT GET OUT OF YOUR CAR, WHICH WILL SERVE AS A BLIND.</p> <p>DO NOT TURN ON ANY LIGHTS.</p> <p>DO NOT MAKE NOISE.</p>	<p>A similar approach of going out early was taken a few years ago to see the Prairie Chicken lek by Roswell, NM. A cock and a couple of hens were at the lek in the afternoon so the trip in the dark the next morning was not really needed. Of course, seeing the birds displaying is well worth the price of admission before dawn.</p>
<p>“At this moment it is difficult to gauge the impact of this change, but we can already anticipate that this is going to put a major squeeze on our annual income projections.”</p>			<p>As you may have guessed it by now, the ugly birder arrived late, pulled up next to me and proceeded to set up his scope outside the car. Of course opening the door of the car turned on the interior light and the door was very noisy. By then the dozen or so Grouse had enough and flew off the lek. The 3 males and 8 females miraculously flew right over the half dozen assembled cars. One male flew right over my vehicle at such a low flight path that I instinctively ducked. It was like a B52 on final. There was some poetic justice since the ugly birder was bent over adjusting his tripod and did not see the birds!</p> <p>If you want to add the nearby Gunnison Sage Grouse to your list, there are several good references available and the Gunnison, CO Chamber of Commerce is very helpful. The bird is illustrated in the National Geographic Field guide. There are also great photographs in the August 2000 issue of ‘Birding’ plus interesting reading on the reasons for splitting the species from the other, somewhat larger, Sage Grouse. This species was once found in Arizona but habitat loss from over grazing has extirpated them.</p> <p>A Southwest Airline sale on flights to Albuquerque from Phoenix for \$30 precipitated my trip. One can drive from Phoenix to Gunnison, but it is quite a bit shorter to rent a car in Albuquerque or Denver. The car rental company had some problem with my compact car reservation so they substituted a bright red Grand Cherokee Jeep</p>	<p>Looking for Gallinaceous birds seems to bring out all sorts of serendipity. In trying for the larger Sage Grouse a few years ago, a before sunrise start was made from Susanville, in northern CA. Late arrival had precluded checking out the site in the daylight, but upon leaving the Motel, a string of cars was noted heading in the direction of the lek. Since it was too early for a funeral, the line of cars was followed. It turned out to be an Audubon field trip going to see the Sage Grouse lek!</p> <p>There are several Motels in Gunnison, some good eateries and a museum that features railroad memorabilia. On the way to Gunnison, we passed through Santa Fe and Taos, NM, plus Antonito, CO. The latter is one end of the Cumbres, NM to Antonito, CO narrow gauge railroad that goes over a 10,000-foot pass. This is a great train ride, but takes a day for the round trip.</p> <p>The species is under consideration for listing as endangered and the sooner you go the more likely that you can get to see this colorful bird on the dancing grounds. Just watch out for the ugly birder. Now is not too early to plan having Gunnison Sage Grouse for Easter 2002.</p> <p>The Chamber provided for free a nice pamphlet on the grouse, a great area activity book, a map and directions to the lek, an order blank for more maps and material in the area, and a sheet on a guide service that could include the sage grouse.</p>

with full time 4 wheel drive. The jeep came in handy going up over Monarch pass at 11,300-foot elevation and during the snowstorm we encountered in Taos. The 1400 miles we put on the vehicle was through some beautiful New Mexico and Colorado countryside.

Gunnison Country Chamber of Commerce,
PO Box 36; Gunnison, CO 81230;
<http://gunnisonchamber.com>
(970) 641-1501

[Gunnison Sage Grouse](#) web site:

We went over the bridge by Taos that is very high above the Rio Grande. We also checked out the Black Canyon of the

Bureau of Land Management
(970) 641-0471
Colorado Division of Wildlife (970) 641-0088

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