



The Cactus Wren-Dition

September - October, 2001 • Volume XLIX, No. 5



California Condor

photographed by **Jim Burns** at the South Rim, Grand Canyon, AZ 7/01 with Canon EOS A2 body, Canon 100-400 zoom lens, and Fujichrome ProVia 100F film

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PROGRAMS

Meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month, September-April, 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!

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. **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 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 6:30p.m., when we'll be able to tell one another where we had an opportunity to do birding this past summer, and what lifers we got. The regular meeting will get underway at 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM TOPICS

September 4: Scott Anderson of the Gilbert Riparian Institute speaking about the Gilbert Riparian Institute and The Preserves at Neely Ranch and Water Ranch.

October 2: Kenn Kaufman topic: TBA

November 6: Bob Stewart on the butterflies of Arizona.

December 4: Roseann Hanson from the Sky Island Alliance.

January 8: Doug Alexander topic: TBA

February 5: Gunnar Engblom, a biologist and scientific coordinator for a Peruvian NGO called Ecosistemas Andinos

(ECOAN). His passion is bird conservation and is trying to raise funds for the conservation of Andean forests, especially Polylepis forests near Cusco.

March 5: Dr. David L. Pearson, professor of biology at ASU. His topic will be Why are there more bird species some places than others?

April 2: TBA

May 7: TBA

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 laurienessel@hotmail.com

NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.

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.

Hawkwatch. The location is in the Goshute Mountains in Nevada. For information or to arrange dates between September 1 and October 15, call 800/726-hawk.

Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival will be held November 14-18, 2001 in Harlingen, TX. For information, call 800/531-7346 or www.rgvbirdfest.com.

More birding and nature festivals. www.americanbirding.org

ABA Regional Conference in Miami, FL, January 18-22, 2002. Bird the Everglades and Loxahatchee NWR. More information to follow.

Annual ABA Convention in Duluth, MN, June 10-16, 2002. Information to follow

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

Maricopa Audubon T-Shirts are available for sale at member meetings or by mail. They feature a Barn Owl primary flight feather overshadowing the common and Latin names of birds found in Maricopa County. 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

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.

Corrections & Omissions for the last issue. 1. Mike Baker is the new Field Trip chairperson and Walter Thurber was given credit for Mike's first report. 2. The illustration was left out of Bud Johnson's article on the Gunnison Sage Grouse. 3. The wrong web site was used for the new Representative from District 1. It should have read—Jeff Flake at 512 Cannon House Office Building, the last 4 digits for the fax number are 4386, and e-mail is jeff.flake@mail.house.gov. 4. Thanks to the following people for their help at the annual dinner: Jeanine Baker, Terry Brodner, Cynthia Donald, Karen Kaiser, Laurie Nessel, Andrea Nesbitt, Robin Silver, Phil & Lori Snow, Theonia Vyvial, Bob Witzeman, and the International Crane Foundation.

Please Note: We have a new web site address
www.maricopaaudubon.org

From The Editor
(continued from page 1)

Finally, our Baffin Island adventure was beyond expectations. The Arctic is

From The Editor

By Deva Burns

COMMITTEES/SUPPORT

Activist Alert:

Shawn Bauer
602-828-3607
shawnbauer@hotmail.com

Arizona Audubon Council Rep:

Herb Fibel
408-966-5246
herbertsfibel@aol.com

Bird Alert

The primary focus of this issue of the Wren•dition is money, or rather the lack thereof. The Board has taken one step--reducing the number of issues of the Wren•dition produced each year. However, we need your help. Donations are always welcomed in any non-profit organization and we need your donations now more than ever. In this issue Herb Fibel and Scott Burge have explained the reason why the issue has become so critical.

I would like to make another suggestion--bequests. Bequests are a

Book Store
Richard & Karen Kaiser
602-276-3312

Field Observations
Janet Witzeman
602-840-6089

Hospitality
Jeanine Baker

Web Page
Michell Fulton
480-968-5141
webmaster@maricopaadubon.org

Maricopa Audubon Web Site
www.maricopaadubon.org

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 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.

great way to pass on your concern for birds and other wildlife. Additionally, your bequest may offer significant estate tax savings because gifts to non-profit groups are fully deductible from your gross estate. There are several types of gifts that you can give:

1. specific, residuary and contingent bequests
2. gifts of IRA accounts, Keogh plans, 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, and other qualified pension plans
3. bequests of real estate
4. named endowments and features

I am not a tax expert so please verify your situation with your accountant or tax attorney.*

And, for those of you who thought Audubon was about the birds, Jim Burns writes about an environmental success story witnessed on our visit to the Grand Canyon in July. Our August visit with our 6 year old grandson may have been even "grander." His "Oh wow" when a condor flew over at about 25 feet will be a lifetime memory. By the end of the trip he could, without binoculars, look up and separate raven from vulture from condor. Maybe, just maybe, we have hooked another birder. Scott and Lee Burge write about all the wonderful birds they saw on the Chiricahua Field Trip. And Alison McGowan poetically celebrates the killdeer.

[*Continued on Page 2*](#)

magnificent and gorgeous, and the immersion into the Inuit culture certainly expanded our world view. Travelling in a komatiq (Inuit sled) pulled by a snowmobile over the pack ice (cracks and all) was both exhilarating and scary. We saw fresh polar bear tracks but no bears. We saw 3 kinds of whales--bowhead (very rare), narwhal, and beluga. Oh yes, the birds--only two lifers, but what lifers!--Common Ringed Plover and Ivory Gull.

*Thanks to Peggy Wenrick of Tucson Audubon for specific

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FISCAL YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 2001 Report of Income & Expenditures

By Herb Fibel

Our efforts in the past at setting forth our annual financial report in the form of pie charts have had pretty miserable results. This year I thought I would simply lay it out by the numbers, rounded off to the nearest \$50. We had to dip into our financial reserves for about \$1,700 in order to cover the shortfall. If you have any questions about Maricopa Audubon's finances, if you would like to be on the finance committee, or if you would like to be assistant treasurer, please give me, Herb Fibel, a call. My number is on the back of the *Wren•dition*.

INCOME	Amount	Percentage
Dues Share from Nation Audubon	13,150	47.5
Birds of Phoenix & Maricopa County	4,050	14.6
Books & T-Shirt Sales	2,550	9.2
Birdathon 2001	2,250	8.1
General Donations	1,700	6.1
Interest & Dividends	1,200	4.3
Field Trips	1,000	3.6
Big Sit! 2000	800	2.9
Raffle	550	2.0
Local Dues & Postage	300	1.1
Shade-Grown Coffee Sales	150	0.6
Total Income	\$27,700	100.0

EXPENDITURES

<i>Wren•dition</i>	13,950	47.4
Birds of Phoenix & Maricopa County	3,050	10.4
Books & T-Shirt Costs	2,250	7.7
Audubon Council Dues	2,250	7.7
Donations	1,600	5.4
Audubon Adventures	1,250	4.2
Audit & Tax Return Preparation	800	2.7
Reduction in Value of Investments	700	2.4
Audubon Phone	650	2.2
Officer & Committee Expense	650	2.2
Conservation	550	1.9
Insurance	450	1.5
Annual Banquet Shortfall	350	1.2
Bird Alert	250	0.9
Proposition Arguments	200	0.7
Shade-Grown Coffee Cost	150	0.5
Bank Charges	100	0.3

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 2001 PHOTO QUIZ

By Jim Burns



A) Good Photo, Easy Bird

This Issue's Clue:

Shorebirds are passing through our deserts now. Here are three species of common, ringed plovers. Be careful. Only two of them were photographed in Arizona.



B) Good Photo, Difficult Bird



C) Bad Photo, Easy Bird

Property Taxes	50	0.2
Miscellaneous	<u>150</u>	<u>0.5</u>
Total Expenditures	\$29,400	100.0
.....		
3		

ably assisted in bringing this resolution to fruition. Here is the resolution:

National Audubon Society Policy on Livestock Grazing State & Federal Lands

Policy Overview

The guiding principle governing the administration of public lands where grazing is permitted should be the conservation, restoration and maintenance of their natural biological diversity. Any policy relating to livestock grazing on public lands must be consistent with this objective. Audubon recognizes that there may be alternative strategies for addressing the impact of grazing on public lands. We support effective strategies consistent with the principles and guidelines outlined in this document.

No Photo Available at this time

Caption: Such deep gullies and arroyos in the arid West are not normal phenomena but the result of domestic cattle introduction and their destruction of native plant communities. While one acre can support a cow in Georgia, it may take 125 acres to support it in Arizona.

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stability, depth, composition and chemistry;

- e) Natural conditions of water flow and stream channel structure in rivers and riparian ecosystems;
- f) Uncontaminated surface and subsurface waters;
- g) Undisturbed historic and archeological sites; and,
- h) Natural aesthetic and scenic conditions.

IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES

1. Livestock grazing on public lands is a privilege to be integrated with other uses and to assure

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came back. The doctors are lucky to be alive. Because of their insensitive behavior that morning, several people missed seeing the bird.



Eared Trogon photographed at Stewart Campground, South fork of Cave Creek, AZ 11/99.

Photo by Jim Burns

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WHERE & WHEN - SEPTEMBER THROUGH NOVEMBER 2001

By Mike Baker

Car Pooling:

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

Legend:

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

Difficulty Levels 1 through 5: 1 equals very low level of exertion, short wading 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.

Reminders:

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

Saturday, September 15

Seven Springs area -- Join the search for upper Sonoran riparian avifauna in the Tonto National Forest near Carefree. In combination, flowing surface water under mature sycamore and cottonwood trees, attract numerous resident and fall migrating bird species. Bring a lunch and water. Limit: 15. Difficulty: 2. Please contact leader for information and reservations.

Leader: Herb Fibel
480-966-5246
herbertsfibel@aol.com

Wednesday, September 19

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

Wednesday, October 3

Boyce Thompson Arboretum -- A unique state park near Superior remains one of our premier destinations. Diverse flora and vegetative structure combined with permanent water, appeal to many resident and fall migrating bird species. There is an admission fee at the arboretum. Bring walking shoes and a lunch. Limit: 15. Difficulty: 1. Contact leader for information and reservations.

Leader: Steve Ganley 480-830-5538
sganley@primenet.com

Saturday, October 13

Safford area, including Roper Lake State Park and the Pinaleno Mts (Mt. Graham) -- We will search for birds in diverse habitats of upper Sonoran desertscrub, interior chaparral, oak-conifer forest and associated riparian vegetation. Expect an array of migrating waterfowl, a suite of Mexican montane and winter resident bird species. Bring walking shoes, a lunch and water. Possible entrance fee into the state park. Limit: 20. Difficulty: 2. Contact leader for information and reservations.

Leader: John Williams
520-428-1009
petvet@zekes.com

Saturday, October 20

Bumble Bee and Turkey Creek Areas -- Join us in search of Black-chinned and Sage Sparrows, Crissal Thrasher, Townsend's Solitaire and migrant bird species. We will visit a wide range of plant communities including upland Sonoran desertscrub, interior chaparral, juniper-oak transition and associated riparian habitat. Bring walking shoes and a lunch. Limit: 15. Difficulty: 1. Contact leader for information and reservations.

Leader: Judy Taylor
623-374-0441
caratfeathers@aol.com

Saturday, October 27

Tres Rios Wetlands - This constructed wetlands and riparian area ranks among the best places for

CHIRICAHUA MOUNTAINS

By Lee & Scott Burge

Black-tailed Rattlesnake!" Scott exclaimed as our vehicle slowly descended on the dirt road from rustler's park. We pulled over to observe the reptile making its way across the road. Some members of the group opted to take photos of it. It was an immature, therefore only about two feet in length. It finally did make it to the side of the road and slid beneath a rock. There can be some unexpected exciting moments on birding trips and this was certainly one. This was the second time I have observed the Black-tailed Rattlesnake in the Chiricahua Mountains. Last July, Scott and I took a college exchange student from Germany with us to Cave Creek Ranch for the weekend. Along South fork trail, just after we had great views of the Elegant Trogon and were on our return hike from the trail, an adult Black-tailed Rattlesnake greeted us. It was in the rocks near the stream curled up and rattling its tail!

A Trip to the Chiricahua Mountains always proves to be popular, and so many people were interested that I had a waiting list. Our trip limit of fifteen was exceeded as eighteen participants gathered at the Portal Sore at 7:00 am on Saturday, July 21st. It had rained the previous evening, therefore the morning was cool and overcast. Wading along the tree-lined main street of Portal, (consisting of no much more than the Portal store and bed and breakfast, and a small post office), the group has some views of Cooper's Hawk, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, and Robin. We then drove to South Fork trail. After hiking on an unusually quit trail a family of painted Redstarts caught our attention and some saw Red-faced Warbler. Neither the Elegant Trogon nor the Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher was seen. Arizona Woodpecker, which has sometimes been difficult for me to see on this trail, was common. After lunch at the trailhead, with visits by Scrub Jay and Arizona Woodpecker, we traveled to the Southwest Research Station of the American Museum of Natural History. As we began our walk in to the area "oohs, aahs, and how cute!" were heard from the group. You guessed it! Several Coues' Deer were grazing near the housing area. Disappointingly hummingbird were in short supply at the feeders. Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager, Hepatic Tanager, and Black-chinned Hummingbird were seen. Jackets and sweaters were pulled out of

elusive. Nearby Barfoot Park was our next stop. There treetop birding is possible if you walk along the road. As w stepped out of our vehicles, a cloud forest aura surrounded us. The low clouds, ferns, moss, and wild flowers created a magical effect. Apache Fox Squirrel entertained us as we looked for birds. Pygmy and Red-breasted Nuthatch were seen. Mexican Chickadee, however, was not to be found. That evening Scott and I held a "gathering at Cave Creek Ranch, were Scott and I were staying.

After a full day of hiking and driving it was pleasant to sit at the feeders and have the birds come to us! We enjoyed the noisy antics of Acorn Woodpecker, and the repeated nasal "yank" made by the White-breasted Nuthatch. Lesser Goldfinch and Blue-throated Hummingbird were seen by most of the group and some say Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Rufous and Magnificent Hummingbird. Later that night some heard Whiskered Screech-Owl. A sunny day greeted us the next morning and a feeling overtook me that this would be the day to see some of the birds we missed on Saturday. I hoped this would prove to be true! Our group walked along a trail (suggested by Gisela and Bill Kluwin) that began near the park headquarters and ended near Sunny Flats campground. In the trees along the dry stream Bridled Titmouse was common. What was that squeaky noise (similar to the "rubber ducky" sound) were hearing? There, perched high on a tree limb over the stream was the elusive Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher. Still searching for the Elegant Trogon, we walked into a clearing and our persistence paid off as a bright red flash signaled its presence as it perched on a branch overhead. The entire group had excellent views of at least one of two males in the area. After the success of spotting the Elegant Trogon we said our good-byes and concluded the trip. A special note-of-thanks goes out the chapter members and one visitor (from Montana) participating in the trip who gave generous contributions to the Maricopa Audubon Society. They are Joan Barker, Ann Dowling, Georgia Frazier, Gisela & Bill Kluwin, Beth & Larry Lyon, Georgia Nelson, and Linda Peck.. Thank you for being so generous! No fee was published for this trip. However, if you were a participant, it is not too late to contribute. Just send

migrants that stop over here and for the many upper Sonoran resident bird species. Bring a lunch. Limit: 20. Difficulty: 2 (shallow water crossings). Please contact leader for information and reservations

Leader: Nancy London 520-684-5530
gatto@w3az.net

Saturday, September 29

Gilbert Area Ponds -- We will visit the Gilbert vicinity ponds and wildlife habitat areas. Migrating shorebird and waterfowl should be present along with early arriving raptors and passerines. Possible birds include Peregrine Falcon, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Baird's Sandpiper and teal species. Bring a spotting scope if available. Morning only. Bring

water. Limit: 15. Difficulty: 1. Please contact leader for information and reservations.

Leader: Ron Huettner
rollo@primenet.com

birding in the west valley. Expect a variety of waterfowl, herons, raptors and fall migrating passerines. Bobcat, muskrat, and other large mammals are sometimes observed here too. Bring walking shoes, lunch and scope if available. Limit: 25. Difficulty: 1. Contact leader for information and reservations.

Leader: Craig and Anne Fischer
 480-940-3512
CFischerAZ@aol.com

Saturday and Sunday November 10 - 11

Rocky Point Mexico Field Trip- Hope to encounter overwintering North American shorebirds and waterfowl, and Sea of Cortez breeding species including

[\(continued on page 8\)](#)

luggage for the trip up to Rustler's Park (it was chilly!). Cordilleran Flycatcher and Yellow-eyed Junco were of note. Red-faced Warbler and Mexican Chickadee remained

your check to Herb Fibel, Treasurer. The leaders looked forward to seeing you next year and maybe we will see the Mexican Chickadee! Sign up early!

Field Trips

[\(continued from page 7\)](#)

Saturday and Sunday November 10 - 11

Rocky Point Mexico Field Trip (con't)- two boobies. Possible shorebirds, waterfowl and gulls include Oystercatcher, Surfbird, Wandering Tattler, scoters, loons, Yellow-footed and Thayers gull. Lower Sonoran desert specialty birds include Large-billed Sparrow and Leconte's Thrasher. Drivers should purchase Mexican Insurance prior to entering Mexico. Limit 20. Difficulty 1. \$25.00 contribution to Maricopa Audubon Society is suggested. Contact leader for information and reservations.

Leader: Bob Witzeman
 602-840-0052
 No e-mails please.

Tuesday, November 27

Gilbert Library Ponds -- We will visit the Gilbert Library ponds and wildlife area. The ponds and associated marsh vegetation attracts a variety of migrating waterfowl, wintering raptor and passerine species. Bring a lunch, water and spotting scope if available. Limit: 15. Difficulty: 1. Please contact leader for information and reservations.

Leader: Cindy West
 480-830-5332
cwestbirdr@juno.com



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Photo Quiz Answers

By Jim Burns

Remember when Steve Ganley was doing the hotline? Fourth of July would roll around and you'd be thinking about watermelon and fireworks and Steve would be exhorting you to get out and look for fall shorebirds. Huh? Many shorebirds, called waders in England, are long distance migrants, breeding the Arctic and wintering in the southern hemisphere. Arctic summers are short and adult shorebirds leave the breeding ground as soon as they have finished their business there. Sometimes in late June it's impossible to know whether an adult shorebirds is going or coming. By the time you read this, most adult shorebirds may have already passed through Arizona.

The plovers, with their plump bodies, large eyes, and short, straight, rather bulbous bills are a typical of the shorebird group in some ways. Many of them are only short distance migrants and most of them can be found at certain times of the year in upland pastures, we meadows, and open fields rather than places we would consider shoreline.

A) Good Photo, Easy Bird

If we named all our species for what we see rather than for what we hear, this would be our "Double-ringed Plover," the most widespread and most familiar of all our shorebirds. No other plover, no other shorebird, has the double black breastband of the Killdeer. Be careful though, for young Killdeer just out of the nest have only a single band, and some of our other ringed plovers with black facial markings such as Semipalmated and Wilson's might appear double banded with only a cursory or long distance look

Typically, because of what we hear, Killdeer do not present any identification problem. This is, after all, Charadrius vociferus, and many shorebird aficionados consider Killdeer the most annoying of birds because if there is one near the wader flock you are maneuvering to study, guaranteed it will sentinel them all away with its strident cries. On the unlikely chance you see a silent Killdeer in flight, watch for the white wing stripe and the rusty rump patch. Killdeer are the masters of the broken wind charade meant to distract

behind it to form a well defined black auricular (ear) patch. There is an obvious white supercilium (eyebrow), and the short, stubby bill is obviously bi-colored. The overall tonal difference between upper and underparts appears about the same as our Killdeer in the first photograph.

Since we're not sure this bird was photographed in Arizona, we cannot eliminate Piping and Wilson's Plovers simply be geographical range, so there would seem to be five possibilities, five plovers with a single dark breastband: Piping, Wilson's, Semipalmated, Snowy, and fledgling Killdeer. Let's eliminate young Killdeer because our bird appears robust, yet short-legged, nothing like a spindly, long-legged young Killdeer with its uniformly dark bill.

Wilson's Plovers also show a completely dark bill in all plumages. Additionally, through the contrast between upper and under in a Wilson's would be about the same as the quiz bird's. Wilson's typically pauses in its feeding in a quite recognizable upright posture, much more vertical and very unlike the horizontal posture of the bird in the photograph. This is not a Wilson's Plover.

Snowy plovers, too, have uniformly dark bills in all plumages and, as their name implies, the contrast between upper and under is much greater in Snowies than our photograph shows. Snowy Plover upperparts are usually described as "light gray-brown." The clinching field marks for Snowy Plover, however, are the bands. Snowies' breast band is incomplete, often described as "breast patches". There is a forehead band and black auricular patch, but only in breeding plumage, and Snowies never show a band from cheek to cheek across the bill. This is not a Snowy Plover.

Piping Plovers in breeding plumage will show a bill similar to our bird's, two-toned, bright orange at the base, black at the tip. Pippings also have a breastband, a headband, and a white eyebrow stripe like our quiz bird. However, in all plumages they lack the black auriculars and the cheekband, so their face appears much plainer. The

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Scott Burge

The *Cactus Wren•dition* will be published on a quarterly basis beginning this fall. The reason is the significant cut in the amount of dues sharing the Maricopa Audubon Society (MAS) will be receiving in the future from the National Audubon Society (NAS) (see Herb Fibel's article in the July-August 2001 edition of *The Cactus Wren•dition*) and Part II on page 13 in this edition. The cost of preparing, printing and mailing *The Cactus Wren•dition* at the present schedule of six issues a year would fiscally deplete the chapter with in the year 2002. The board of directors has decided to reduce the number of issue to avoid this circumstance. If future fund-raising activities are successful, I am confident that the board of directors would restore the current schedule. The MAS website will be kept current and all programs, field trips and activities of the society will be updated as they occur. The board of directors welcomes any suggestions from the membership on fund-raising activities that would mitigate the deficiencies sure to be incurred by the new dues sharing policy of the NAS. Current ideas include charging for field trips (a trip conducted to the Chiricahua Mountains in July 2001 generated \$280 in contributions from members and visitors) and conduction a fund raising event such as a wildlife/nature are show. If you have any suggestions, please contact me or any member of the board of directors to discuss your idea.

The primary relationship of the MAS (and most other chapters) with the NAS appears to be undergoing very drastic changes in which the funds for chapters and their volunteer programs will be sacrificed for professionally managed state programs. In this new environment, it is not known whether chapters such as the MAS will be capable of continuing to subsidize the largely uninvolved NAS- recruited members with local programs and publications.

The dilemma of a volunteer organization being required to service members of an organization with paid staff is an interesting if not a textbook case study on how to exhaust volunteers in an organization. I am member of several volunteer organizations where the volunteer is held in the greatest esteem. The general impression form all correspondence form the NAS has an underlying premise that volunteers are inefficient and only professionally run programs are worthy of NAS. The greatest concern is "What about the birds"? The ever-present and significantly intensified pressures of protection imperiled species, saving dwindling habitats, and challenging the actions of agencies favoring extractive industries over our natural heritage, appear to have taken a back seat to the goal of the NAS to reorganize.

Over 100 years ago, ladies pulled the plumes from their hats and started what would become the NAS. Committed volunteers made the difference then and it is committed volunteers that make the difference today. Any organization that exhausts and alienates its volunteer base for the sake of recruiting inactive members and corporate sponsors to fund paid staff will find its ability to inspire people diminished. A great Arizona sage (and sometimes environmental friend) Sam Stieger stated a law known as Stieger's Law concerning government. It appears appropriate in this instance. I will paraphrase the Mayor of Prescott: "Whenever you create and agency, the natural response of the created agency is to worry more about the structure of the agency than the mission." It appears that the NAS has created a bureaucracy and one avenue to feed it is to reduce the chapters and their volunteers to an increasingly smaller role in the organization. Let's go back to the original question, "What about the birds?" The typical response form NAS is "Don't bother us now, we're reorganizing."

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you away from the nest which is often only a scrape on bare ground or gravel

Killdeer do migrate from the northern limits of their range, but here in Arizona they are year round residents. More will be seen during migration and winter as numbers swell with transient and nonresident birds. this Killdeer was photographed at Painted Rock Dam July 25, 1993.

B) Good Photo, Difficult Bird

Here's another plover with a single black breastband. It is boldly patterned with well defined field marks. The breastband is complete but not particularly wide, but is sorting out the small plovers be aware that the breastband can appear either broad or narrow depending on the posture of an individual bird, so width itself is not a good field mark.

The face is marked by two black bands separated by the white forehead. These bands meet in front of the eye and continue on

upperparts of the Piping are the lightest of any of our candidates and are described at "dry sand." Piping are ghostly little plovers, easy to over look. This is not a Piping Plover.

Semipalmated Plovers is our most boldly marked and most common migrant plover. It is a long distance migrant which may pass through Arizona quite early in the "fall." There are Maricopa County records from the second week in July. Semipals breed in the Arctic and winter to southern South America. this didn't seem such a difficult identification, but if you caught the play on words in the clue, you know we're not quite finished. My apologies. I just couldn't help myself.. This is not a Semipalmated Plover.

Charadrius Semipalmatus. Ever wonder exactly where that odd work "semipalmated" came from? From Latin, literally "half hand." Look at the back of your hand. There's a little webbing between each finger. Look at the quiz bird's feet. There's no webbing between the toes. This Common Ringed Plover was photographed

(continued on page 10)

in June on Bylot Island in the Canadian Arctic. Father south we had seen a Semi. He had webs. The guidebooks say you can't see this character in the field. My slides prove otherwise.

C) Bad Photo, Easy Bird

Our third plover looks like it is actually on a shore. Unfortunately it is smaller in the frame and quartered away from us so that we are not getting as clean a look at its diagnostic field marks as we did with our first two birds. We have enough, though. We can see the black headband, the black auriculars, and the black breastband which, if we look closely enough, we can tell is not complete. The bill and legs are uniformly colored and

appear as black as the facial markings. There's no much contrast in body plumage. Certainly not as much as our first two birds show. The back color looks like wet sand. This Snowy Plover was photographed June, 1988 at Wilcox, Arizona ponds.

Snowy Plover is listed as a summer transient and rare breeder in Arizona. There have been no confirmed nestings at Wilcox since the early '80s, but Snowies nested at Painted Rock Dam in Maricopa county After the floods of '93. Wilson's Plover winters as close as the Gulf of California and has been recorded at the Salton Sea. Piping Plover is a threatened and endangered species seen occasionally on the California coast. Common Ringed Plover is Arctic dream. Arctic dreams are good in Arizona's summer heat.



The Cactus Wren-Dition

September - October, 2001 • Volume XLIX, No. 5



California Condor

photographed by **Jim Burns** at the South Rim, Grand Canyon, AZ 7/01 with Canon EOS A2 body, Canon 100-400 zoom lens, and Fujichrome ProVia 100F film

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MAY, JUNE, JULY 2001

By Janet Witzeman

A Glossy Isis was discovered with a large flock of 200 White-faced Ibis in a field in Arlington May 19 (RJ), providing the first record for the county as well as for the state; it remained until May 21.

A Clark's Grebe was observed at the Maricopa Agricultural Center in Pinal Co. on the late date of May 19 (MB). An early wandering Brown Pelican was seen at the 91st Ave. Ponds June 16 (RDI). A large group of 35-40 Neotropical Cormorants, observed downstream from the 91st Ave. Ponds June 24, outnumbered the 10 Double-crested Cormorants seen in the same area (TC).

A Black Vulture, seen with a group of Turkey Vultures at Phon D. Sutton May 28 (RDU), was in a new locality away from the usual area of occurrence in s.w. Phoenix. An adult Little Blue Heron was observed flying over the 91st Ave. Ponds May 26 (PM, TB); there have been 18 previous county records. Two Cattle Egrets in breeding plumage were seen at the El Mirage Pond June 23 (TC, DY); six, some in breeding plumage were observed downstream from the 91st Ave Ponds June 24 (TC); and over 100 were counted at the 91st Ave. Ponds July 7 (PM). The species has been nesting in the county only since 1993. White-faced Ibis, uncommon in summer, were reported in three areas; eight at the 91st Ave. Ponds June 16 (RDI), six at El Mirage Pond June 23 (TC, DY), one on 99th Ave, s. of Broadway June 24 (TC), and a few still at the 91st Ave. Ponds July 7 (PM).

A male Harlequin Duck, discovered at mile 50 on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon June 7 (CL), provided only the second record for the state. A female scaup (sp?), rare in summer, was observed on the Salt River at 16th St., June 16 (MC).

An adult and a juvenile White-tailed Kite were observed downstream from the 91st Ave. Ponds June 24 (TC). Two N. Harriers were seen in Gilbert on the very early date of July 28 (SG) there were no previous July records for the county; the species doesn't usually return until early September. The pair of Red-shouldered Hawks at the Hassayampa River Preserve built another nest and were incubating eggs June 1 (NL).

An Eastern Kingbird was discovered May 18 in Cameron, where one was found about this same time three years ago (CL). A pair of Tropical Kingbirds were found nesting at the Hassayampa River Preserve (hereafter HRP) May 19+ (NL *et al*), representing only the fifth county record and the second nesting record for the county. Another Tropical Kingbird was seen at the Maricopa Agricultural Center in Pinal Co., May 19 (MN). An adult male Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was discovered in s.w. Phoenix July 10 and remained at least until July 19 (SG *et al*).

A singing Yellow-throated Vireo was reported along the Verde River, n. of Rio Verde May 15-16 (JBe); there have been four previous county records. Warbling Vireos, that were first found nesting above Slate Creek Divide two years ago, were found there again May 13 (SG) and June 15 when they were seen in two different places in that area (R&JW). A Steller's Jay was still in the lowlands at Lee's Ferry on the late date of May 23 (CL).

A new and unusual nesting place for N. Rough-winged Swallow was found when a nest with young was discovered in a pipe in a wall of one of the buildings at Arizona Mills Mall June 13 (MC). A Purple Martin, a rare transient in the Phoenix area, was seen in central Phoenix May 19 (CB). A Brown Creeper was still at the HRP on the late date of May 26 (RP).

A Male Golden-winged Warbler was discovered in Flagstaff May 19 (CL); there have been about two dozen previous state records. A N. Waterthrush was found at El Dorado Park in Scottsdale May 11 (JBa, PM). A Kentucky Warbler was observed May 19 along West Fork, Oak Creek Canyon (CL) where one was found about the same time a year ago. Several Red-faced Warblers were seen and heard May 13 and June 15 above Slate Creek Divide where the species has been nesting at least since 1998 (SG, R&JW).

A male Indigo Bunting, a rare summer visitor in the Phoenix area, was seen along Arlington Canal Rd., May 19 (TC, MB, SG). Individual Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were observed at the HRP May 19 at least to May 26 (NL, RP) and

CHANGES IN THE WIND AT AUDUBON (PART II)

By Herb Fibel

We now know the dollars and cents figures on the NAS dues share for our chapter for the current fiscal year. As you can see from my annual financial report published elsewhere in this edition, our dues share for the last fiscal year was approximately \$13,150, almost 50% of our total income for the fiscal year. By the same token, publishing and mailing out the *Wren-dition* was approximately \$13,950, almost 50% of our total expenditures for the fiscal year. In the current fiscal year National Audubon will be paying our chapter \$8,692.97, roughly 66% of what we received last fiscal year. Had the dues share been based on the new formula that Audubon intends to use, we would only be receiving \$6,318.91, which is about 47% of what we received this past fiscal year.

It is only because the chapters raised a ruckus that the new formula is being phased in over four years rather than all at once. It is entirely possible under the new system that there could be a time when chapters receive zero in dues share from National Audubon. However, National points out that as an incentive for the chapters to sign up new members, the chapters will receive from National Audubon

all the money that they receive from these chapter-generated new members, although that policy is not fixed in stone. When Audubon Nature Centers and state offices exist in this and other states in the future, these entities, and not the chapters, will get the dues kickback from National Audubon for new members generated by the state offices or by the nature centers.

Your board has taken the first step to realign our costs to conform to the anticipated reduced income. It is, regrettably, that after this edition of the *Wren-dition*, we will be going from a bimonthly publication to a quarterly one.

Obviously, if we are to continue our mission of saving birds, other creatures, and their habitats, we are going to have to find sources of revenue other than National Audubon. Turning the Big Sit! into a fundraiser will help, as will Birdathons. Presently the latter suffers from lack of volunteers to coordinate the activity. We will also be encouraging general donations and bequests. I intend to see to it that in the future anyone who donates \$50 or more is given credit for doing so in the *Cactus Wren-dition*.

.....

Sightings

(continued from page 11)

Bob springs, Madera Canyon May 24-June 1 (MS); there have been foru previous state records.

Abbreviations:
Hassayampa River Preserve (HRP)

Observers:
Charles Babbitt • Mike Baker • Jack Bartley • Jason Beason • Jerry Bock • Terry Brodner • Jim Burns • Matt Chew • Troy Corman • Rich Ditch • Robert Dummer • Steve Ganley • Bill Grossi •

KILLDEER

Allison Steen McGowan

Dee

dee

dee

The intense sound fell from the sky. Looking up revealed white Breast and rusty wings. Good Morning, I returned the greeting With delight, to the first shorebird I ever met, Back then I called it sandpiper But learned its true name When one led me away from its Nest with a feigned broken wing.

Black-necked Stilts nested at the Water Ranch Ponds in Gilbert; at least one young was observed there July 22 (JBU). Am. Avocets nested at El Mirage Pond; young were observed there July 10 (SG). A Caspian Tern was seen flying over the Salt River, upstream from Phon D. Sutton on the late date of May 28 (RDu). Another migrating Caspian Tern was observed downstream from the 91st Ave Ponds on the early date of June 24 (TC).

A Eurasian Collared Dove was heard calling in the town of Palo Verde, w. of Buckeye, May 20 (TC, MB, SG) and four were observed there May 28 (JBU). Borriwing Owls are still inhabiting the area on Lower Buckeye Rd. and 75th Ave. where some were seen May 26 (PM, TB), and along Baseline Rd. w. of 51st Ave. where two were seen June 16 (RDu).

A female Broad-billed Hummingbird was seen building a nest at Boyce Thompson Arboretum May 6 (TC, NS); the species has been reported breeding there only infrequently. A Magnificent Hummingbird was observed farther north than usual along West Fork, Oak Creek Canyon May 19 (CL).

in w. Phoenix yard June 17 (BG).

A male Bobolink was found at the golf course in Page May 23 (CL). A juvenile Red Crossbill, caught by a cat in n. Scottsdale May 8 (fide TC) provided the second nesting record for Maricopa County.

Highlights from s.e. Arizona: A Western Gull was discovered at the Green Valley Sewage Plant July 13 and remained until July 15 (BS *et al.*); there have been only three previous state records. Individual Elegant Terns were discovered at the Avra Valley Sewage Ponds July 18 at least to July 27 (RT *et al.*) and at White water Draw July 21 (KK *et al.*); there have been only three previous state records. A Yellow-throated Vireo was found in Miller Canyon June 24-30 (MS *et al.*). A yellow-green Vireo was found in Portal June 14 (DJ). The Carolina Wren is still present at Cook's Lake; it was heard singing there Mar. 16 (TC *et al.*). A singing Wood Thrush was observed at Stewart Campground in the Chiricahuas May 26-June 1 (DJ, RT). A Tropical Parula was discovered in Miller Canyon June 22 and remained at least until July 14 (MS, JBo), providing only the second record for the site. A Crescent-chested Warbler was discovered near

(continued on page 12)

Dave Jasper • Roy Jones • Ken Kertell • Chuck LaRue • Nancy London • Pete Moulton • Rob Pearson • Bob Schutsky • Norm Shrout • Mark Stevenson • Daniella Yellan • Robert Witzeman

A Beautiful friend, over the
Years met again and again
Kill
dee
dee
dear.



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VISITORS AT THE BRINK

By Jim Burns

Particularly because our MAS chapter has such a long-standing and outstanding reputation for environmental activism, it is easy for us to become fixated on the negatives in the uphill battle to save the planet from ourselves. We are Sisyphus. The rock is daunting.

The lady on our cover was just one of the hordes of visitors at the South Rim of the Grand Canyon over the 4th of July holiday. As we maneuvered the parking lots on our first day, looking for condors or condor jams, we played the license plate game, missing only DE, HI and ND from the fifty states. We missed the condors too, but at sundown I caught a rumor from a West Rim shuttle driver. All the Peregrine Fund trucks were out at The Abyss, the first overlook west of Mohave Point.

The Grand Canyon shuttles run early this time of year to accommodate hikers hoping to beat the summer heat. The next morning I was on the West Rim shuttle at 5:00 a.m. Just myself, my tripod and lens, and three backpackers headed for Hermit's Rest trailhead. At 5:15 the sun climbed over the horizon and flooded the awe-striking vertical wall of The Abyss with golden light. There was not another human being within five miles. A quarter mile west and a quarter mile straight down along the ledges of the Toroweap, eleven California Condors were on that wall, waking, wingstretching, preening, looking from that distance like Turkey Vultures except for the large, easily readable wing and tail tags securing their radio transmitters.

I hurried along the rim trail seeking a vantage point close enough to the roost for decent camera looks, but by the time I had walked a mile without another sighting I realized the dropoff was too sheer to allow observation of the ledges from directly above. I had walked

right over the condors. I finally lip reached a point where I could look back to the area I had first seen them. They were gone! Twenty-five pound birds with ten foot wingspans do not fly away like the warblers and titmice foraging along the trail. I turned back, crossed the top of a promontory, crested a small rise where the path again brought me within yards of the edge, and was brought to an incredulous halt in mid-stride.

Condors were boiling up out of the canyon all around me! It was 7:15. As the rock began reflecting the sun's heat, they had caught the early thermals, launching upon their daily activities of searching for food and assuaging their innate curiosity about the tiny upright creatures milling about the rim. Some were still below me, circling up the wall. Some were already above me, soaring out of sight around the promontory. Two were drifting right toward me, rim level, too close to focus binoculars or lens. I dropped to my knees, heard them pass within yards, spoke aloud to them, sat for moments unmoving, out of body, out of time, some lone pilgrim to some premodern planet.

The lady on our cover was hatched in the LA zoo in May, 1996. Her father, Mandan, was the second condor ever hatched from captive bred parents, spring of 1989. Her mother, Tama, was captured as an adult in 1985, one of the last nine condors left in the wild. At sundown on our second day she was atop the Orphan Mine tower, between the Powell Memorial and Maricopa Point, with eleven of her kind, half of the wild condors gracing the wilderness of rock and canyon that is northern Coconino County. There are now 160 California Condors in the world, the twenty-four in Arizona two more than

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BIG SIT! 2000 WRAP UP REPORT FINALLY ARRIVES

By Herb Fibel

For the second consecutive year Arizona had two Big Sit! circles-The Maricopa Audubon "Asterisks" at the Granite Reef Recreation Area, and Matt Brown's "Squatters" at Sonoita Creek, near Patagonia, in southern Arizona. The two teams recorded a total of 84 species, down from 1999's total of 97. Nevertheless, we ranked **5th** in the continental U.S. for total number of species seen after California, which had 6 circles and 172 species, Connecticut, which had 14 circles and 139 species, Michigan, which had 4 circles and 105 species, and Texas, which had 3 circles and 91 species.

The annual October event is now international in scope (pardon the expression) with circles in England and in The Netherlands. The circle with the highest count for the second straight year was Jim Royer's Elfin Forest Circle in Los Osos, San Luis Obispo County, California with 122 species. (I'm going to try to obtain specific directions to this location, because anyplace where that many species can be seen while sitting in one place must be a really hot birding spot.)

There were 66 circles altogether, and some 266 individual sitters. Twenty-two new species were added to the

cumulative count total in the U.S., in this the Big Sit's 8th year, four of which came exclusively from Arizona-Pyrrhuloxia, Canyon towhee, Brewer's sparrow, and Bronzed cowbird-the latter three contributed by the Asterisks.

Maricopa Audubon members will be participating in our 6th annual Big Sit! at our Granite Reef Recreation Area site this coming October 14th, and again we'll be raising money for Maricopa Audubon. We're sorry, but the six regulars who person the Circle pretty well fill up the allocated space, what with our picnic table, barbecue grill, lounge chairs, traditional baclava and champagne coolers, but we welcome your visit and encouragement. We ordinarily record between 45 and 50 species. If you would like to make a per species seen pledge this year, call Herb Fibel at (480) 966-5246. Contributors (we'll bill you after the event) of \$ 1.00 or more per species, will have their name or their business name, whichever they prefer, listed in an upcoming issue of the *Wren-dition*. If you would like to establish a Big Sit! Circle of your own, please let me know and I'll tell you how you can get started. The underlying purpose is to enjoy looking at birds while relaxing with friends. It's really a lot of fun.

VISITORS AT THE BRINK

(continued from page 13)

the 1982 world total of twenty-two. Releases at the Vermilion Cliff site in northern Arizona began in 1996. This March an egg was found in a Grand Canyon cave, the first egg laid in the wild since 1986.

If you consider yourself an environmentalist and you've grown weary pushing the rock, if you're tired of cows grazing your national forests, if you can't relate to blind salamanders or tiny flycatchers, go to the Canyon. Condors, even with their reputation as nature's undertakers and some less than endearing traits such as urohidrosis (you don't even want to know), are a part of

telephoto lens and tripod, and grabbed a smaller, lighter zoom. Running the quarter mile to Maricopa Point in the waning light, I realized I had not taken a photograph of a perched bird without a tripod for eight years. In my hand was Canon's new 100-400 image stabilized zoom. I ran out to the point and looked back. She was fifty yards behind me on a ledge just below the rim, screened by vegetation.

I set down my pack, circled back, walked toward the edge. At five steps from eternity my knees started to go. I stopped, got down on my belly, and scrunched forward, pushing Canon's new

