



The Cactus Wren•dition

Volume LX1, No. 1

Spring 2010



Programs 2010

Feb 2, 2010

Scott Davies **Abert's Towhee Study.** How has urbanization influenced birds? ASU doctoral



Towhee by Scott Davies

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

An Investment in the Future

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

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

candidate, Scott Davies, is researching this question and is looking for citizen participation in his study. Urban towhees breed earlier and longer compared to their rural counterparts. More data is needed to confirm this and determine what is stimulating them to breed differently and whether urban areas are better or worse for adapted species. This project will also determine which urban areas are best for birds, which may have implications for urban planners and conservation organizations. Davies will mist net, draw blood



Anna's Hummingbird by Ian Morris

samples, band and release Abert's Towhees. Davies spoke about urban bird research around the world and asks that anyone interested in participating by volunteering their yard for bird capture should contact Emily Morris.

March 2, 2010

Kathe Anderson **Identifying Hummingbirds.** We will see Charles Melton's stunning hummingbird DVD, focusing on Arizona's specialty species, get a tip sheet on identifying female hummers, collect some hummingbird resources, test yourself on little known hummingbird facts, and share hummingbird stories. Moderated by Kathe Anderson.
 Dorrance Hall



Ornate Box Turtle by Jonathan Zander

April 6, 2010

Audrey Owens **Ornate Box Turtles and the New Ornate Box Turtle Watch Program.** Because of concerns about ornate box turtle populations in Arizona, the Arizona Game and Fish Department created the Ornate Box Turtle Watch (www.azgfd.gov/boxturtlewatch), a new program which allows the public to participate in citizen science by reporting box turtle observations. This will be a long-term program which will assist in the evaluation of population trends and landscape-level threats.

Audrey is a turtle biologist with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. She came to Arizona 2 years ago from Florida, where she worked with gopher tortoises. Her favorite birds are those that she can see while looking at the ground, as she searches for snakes and other creepy-crawlies.
 Webster Auditorium

May 4, 2010

Paul Bannick **The Owl and the Woodpecker** Join nature photographer Paul Bannick for a return engagement with more stories and riveting images that will amaze you. Mr Bannick authored *The Owl and the Woodpecker: Encounters with North America's Most Iconic Birds*. Shalimar Country Club (Reservations required. Please see information on page 4 or online).



Rufous-backed Robin photo by Rich Ditch

October 21, 2009. Boyce Thompson Arboretum picnic area. I discovered the bird there before it moved on to the Rose Garden, where I found the second bird with it as well. Nikon D200 camera, 600mm lens.

I got to wondering recently: What is this organization to which we all belong? What does it stand for? What are its roots? I knew a little, but decided to find out more. These days, thankfully, research sources are right at our fingertips. Here's what I learned.

The Audubon Society was founded by conservation activists. There was a little confusion before the turn of the 19th Century on what should be done and who should do it, but once the idea of conservation of birds and their habitats in the U.S. got started, there was an immediate groundswell of support. In the 1880s the wholesale slaughter of birds for sport, food, feathers for in vogue ladies' hats and other garments or just for the heck of it was rampant. In 1886, George Bird Grinnell, a Manhattan resident, big game hunter, and editor of *Field and Stream*, a hunter's and fishermen's magazine that is still going strong was motivated to act to try to put a stop to the decimation of our local bird populations. He formed a new organization and named it after the late bird collector and famed bird portraitist, John James Audubon. He called his club "The Audubon Society for the protection of wild birds." In no time 38,000 people had joined him in his efforts to stop the slaughter of our native and migratory birds.

Sadly, Grinnell's organization fizzled when he ran out of funds. In 1896 in Boston, however, the concept was revived by Boston philanthropist, Harriet Hemenway. A New York chapter was formed and then independent chapters were organized in other states in the East. One of the group's earliest activities was to lobby for and successfully achieve in New York State in 1910 a law banning the use of plumes in ladies' hats. This model law was soon adopted by other state legislatures. The New York success, however, was the most significant, because the U.S. center for hat making and garment industries was New York City. Still later, Audubon's lobbying efforts secured the passage of the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which still helps protect our native and migratory birds today. Audubon, since its earliest days, served the dual role of supporter of and watchdog over federal agencies responsible for the protection of birds, other wildlife and their habitats.

Thus, The Audubon Society's roots feature a strident activism and vigilance in the protection of birds, other wildlife and their habitats.

Jumping to a different kind of birding 'action,' the Christmas Bird Counts are over for another year. I participated in three. I know a number of other people who participated in four or more. Did you know that after your fourth one, you no longer have to pay the \$5 participation fee? Thanks are due to all of you who

participated, but even more so to the 36 or so Arizona and environs compilers, and to Steve Ganley, our regional compiler. All have contributed to the furtherance of citizen ornithological science. A tired Herb says: "I don't know about you, but I can hardly wait for next year's CBCs."

This year MAS is getting involved in yet another bird counting activity—The 13th Annual Great Backyard

Bird Count, occurring

February 12th through 15th, jointly "hosted" by The National Audubon Society and Cornell Lab of Ornithology. It's simple, fun, family friendly and educational. I have instructional brochures on hand that I will mail to you if you call me, or you can go online to www.birdcount.org for details on how to proceed.



Louisiana Heron by John James Audubon images



Snowy Egret by John James Audubon images

Your 2010 MAS Board Nominating Committee

Pursuant to our Bylaws, it is the duty of the President, with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors, to select a Nominating Committee consisting of no less than three non-current Board members, and publish their names and phone numbers in the Cactus Wren-dition prior to the annual Board of Directors elections. This year the Board of Directors elections will take place at the General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, April 6, 2010. Any adult member in good standing seeking nomination will have his or her name placed in nomination by the Nominating Committee. If you are

interested in serving, call any of the following members of the Nominating Committee and let him or her know of your interest in running for a particular position on the Board. Your name will be placed on the slate as a candidate for that position, and your candidacy will be announced by the Nominating Committee.

All Board positions except Wren-dition Editor are elected by the membership. Our Bylaws also require that nominations be open from the floor at our annual elections. As a request, though, to help keep things simple, please let the Nominating Committee person know in advance

of your interest if possible. Please do not nominate someone else unless you have his or her consent, and know that he or she is a member in good standing of this Chapter. To learn more about the job description for any particular Board position, please feel free to contact the Board member who currently holds that position. Information on present Board members may be found on the back cover of this edition.

This year's Nominating Committee is: Doug Green, chairman, (480) 998 5638
Cynthia Donald, (480) 283-4515
Brian Ison, (480) 315-9031

Maricopa Audubon Society Annual Meeting and Banquet

By Herb Fibel

The Maricopa Audubon Society will hold its Annual Meeting and Banquet on Tuesday, May 4, 2010, at Shalimar Golf Club, located at 2032 E. Golf Avenue in Tempe. This is one block north of Southern Avenue, midway between McClintock Drive and Price Road (The 101). You can access Shalimar from Southern Avenue by turning north on either Country Club Way or Fairfield Drive. There is a sign for Shalimar at the intersection of Southern Ave and Fairfield Drive. If you turn on Country Club Way there is a sign for Shalimar at the west end of their parking lot.

There will be a no-host bar starting at 6:00 p.m. We will have a raffle and a silent auction, so plan to arrive early and peruse the raffle and auction tables. Tickets for the raffle

will be available at the door.

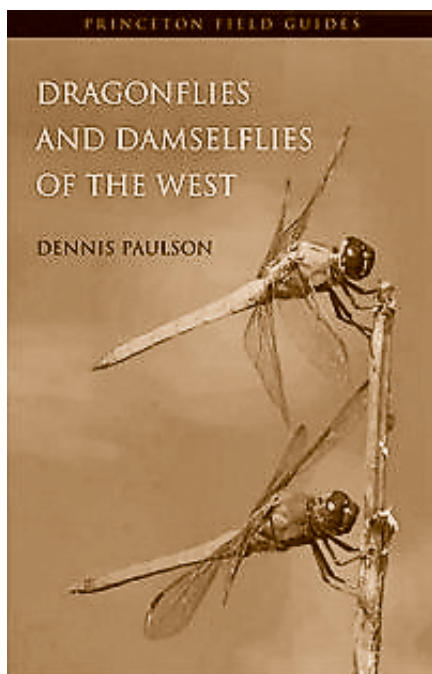
Our guest speaker this year is award winning wildlife photographer and naturalist Paul Bannick. Paul was also our guest speaker last year. You may recall his magnificent presentation on the owl and the woodpecker and his beautiful book of the same name. TPaul will speak on a different topic this year, so don't worry about a repeat performance. His wonderful photographs combined with his enthusiastic rhetoric will undoubtedly entertain you. Paul works full time for Conservation Northwest, an environmental organization dedicated to protecting and connecting wild areas from the Pacific coast to the Canadian Rockies and the biodiversity of these areas. He will have some of his books available for

sale, and will be happy to autograph them for you.

The buffet dinner begins at 7:00 p.m. and reservations are required. We will have a buffet menu with salads, bread, vegetable selections, main course selections, beverages and desserts. The cost once again is \$25.00 (\$22.50 for "Friends of Maricopa Audubon" members.) Please contact Herb Fibel at (480) 966-5246 hsfibel2004@q.com or Mark Larson at (480) 474-4439 larsonwarren@gmail.com to make your reservation. Please indicate the names and number of people in your party, and provide an e-mail address and phone number in case we need to contact you. Payment is made at the door and can be either by cash or check. Dress is casual. We look forward to seeing you at the banquet.

Dragonflies and Damselflies of the West

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



Flagged Shorebirds

Although not common in our area, please be aware of color-flagged Hudsonian Godwits, Whimbrels, and any other shorebird species which you notice have color bands. You can also contact Dave Krueper, Ass't. Nongame Migratory Bird Coordinator, US Fish and Wildlife Service, PO Box 1306, Albuquerque, NM 87103, (505) 248-6877 or dave.krueper@fws.gov

Unwanted Catalogues

Is your mailbox full of unwanted mail?

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

E-mail Alert System

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

Monthly Announcements

MAS emails monthly announcements that include meeting reminders, upcoming field trips, events and other items too late to get into the Wrendition. To receive this monthly e-newsletter, send your email address to laurie@laurienessel.com. You do not need to be a MAS member to be on the email list.

Birding Community E-Bulletin

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

Casa Del Caballo Blanco EcoLodge - Belize

A new six-cabana, eco-friendly

accommodation in Belize - Casa del Caballo Blanco is a 23-acre former ranch 9.5 miles from the Guatemalan border near San Ignacio. It also shelters the not-for-profit Casa Avian Support Alliance (CASA) <http://www.casaavian.org/>. Its purpose is to understand and support the biodiversity of Belize that attracts and sustains over 530 species of migratory and resident birds spotted in a given year. Jodi and Vance Benté, owners of the property, also established The Alliance whose motto is: "Birds are the farmers of the world - help us to help them continue to sow their seeds." Their work has been undertaken in cooperation with the Government of Belize's efforts to protect critical habitat, the loss of which threatens the avian population. Guests are invited to share in the responsibilities of supporting the avian program. They can assist in nest-box building, maintenance and feeding as well as trail building and signage. A percentage of each cabana rental will be donated to the CASA center to assist with medical and other expenses related to the management of the facility. Casa also organizes day-long tours that in addition to an educational and scientific focus can include bird-watching, horseback riding, cave tubing and visiting archeological and World Heritage Sites in Belize and Guatemala. For more information, call 707-974-4942 or visit www.casacaballoblanco.com.

Land of the Quetzal

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

Notes & Announcements cont.

Book Store Selections

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

Arizona Watchable Wildlife Tourism Association (AWWTA)

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

Museum of Northern Arizona

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

Environmental Fund

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

Credit Card

The American Birding Association has negotiated an agreement with US Bank to provide ABA members a distinctive US BANK VISA Card. Using your card will not only show your connection to ABA and birding but also, at no additional cost to you, provide a contribution to ABA. If interested, contact www.americanbirding.org.

The Dovetail Directory

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

881-1145, and someone will always happy to take your call.

Shade-grown Coffee

If you are searching for a source to purchase shade-grown coffee and haven't been successful, try ABA Sales. They carry seven kinds of Song Bird Coffee. For information call 800-634-7736. Also, Trader Joe's carries shade grown coffee, as does Sunflower Market. Another source is Toucanet Coffee/Avian Ecologist. They are in the business of serving Smithsonian certified, bird-friendly coffee. All of their varieties are organic and shade grown. They also have fair trade varieties. Please visit www.toucanetcoffee.com for more information about their goals or to place an order. The website also includes an online community for bird and/or coffee lovers. They invite you to join. Another website for shade grown/organic coffee is www.cafebritt.com. An additional website is Thanksgiving Coffee Co--www.thanksgivingcoffee.com or 800-648-6491. And another from Kenn Kaufman is www.birdsandbeans.com

Birdwatching in Northern Italy

The fabulous Po Delta region of Northern Italy provides birding enthusiasts with a wealth of opportunities to observe a wide variety of birdlife. The region between Ravenna, on the Adriatic coast, up to Venice, is renowned for the variety and quantity of both breeding and migratory species. The Po Delta is a wetland with features varying from sand dunes and Mediterranean bush, to ancient woods of umbrella pines, salt pans, underwater forests, open shallow lagoons, river mouths, marshes and swampy grassland. The birdlife includes, Grey, Purple, Squacco and Night Herons. Great White and Little Egrets, Glossy Ibis, Greater Flamingo, Pygmy Cormorant, Red footed Falcon, Golden Oriole, White Stork, Little Bittern, Spoonbill, Cetti's and Fan tailed Warblers, Collared Pratincole, Penduline and Bearded Tits, and Montague's Harrier. Casa di Antonio is an English-run Bed & Breakfast located in the heart of this region by Tony and Karen Ainley, who have built up good background birding knowledge of the area. The B&B is located within an hour's drive from Bologna airport. Any Audubon members will be offered a discount of \$25 per night on our advertised rates until the end of April 2010. For more details: www.casadiantonio.com or email to casadiantonio@hotmail.co.uk



Lizards of the American Southwest

(Rivo Nuevo Publishers) edited by Lawrence Jones and Robert Lovich. Lizards of the American Southwest includes over 400 color photos of all 96 species found in California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, and Texas west of the Pecos River. It also covers five Mexican states: Baja California, Baja California, Sonora, Southwest Texas and Chihuahua. This new guide includes detailed information on habitat, natural history, taxonomy, viewing tips, laws and regulations, conservation, plus illustrations, and maps. 77 experts contributed to this book making it the most comprehensive guide to lizards of the southwest. HerpDigest has a limited amount of copies autographed by the editors. Contact: asalzberg@herpdigest.org

More Birding and Nature Festivals

www.americanbirding.org and www.birdinghotspot.com

SUBMISSIONS

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

Audubon Arizona's Nature Center's Programming in Full S'WING

The Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center in South Phoenix, which opened in mid-October has hit the ground running with programming for kids and adults. When you're not already planning to attend a Maricopa Audubon field trip or event, maybe think of checking out some of the programs listed below at the new center.

Water's Changing Journey

You'll find this free program a fun and interesting way to explore how water quality affects nature! Take our self-guided walk, check out an activity back pack or attend a free naturalist-led program.

Free Saturday Bird Walks

Audubon Arizona walks start from our center every other Saturday at 8:30. Jan. 16 & 30, Feb. 13 & 27, March 13 & 27, April 10 & 24. Binoculars and bird guides available.

Teen Leaders in Conservation

This free environmental sciences career exploration program covers a variety of topics, from wildlife biology to environmental law. Teens attend one weeknight lecture per month followed by a weekend volunteer workday. Call Emily Morris for more information or to sign up, (602) 468-6470.

Beginning Birding Classes with Maricopa Audubon's Kathe Anderson

Sat., Jan 30: 8am-11am, Sun., Feb 7: 8am-11am
Sign up by emailing riosalado@audubon.org, Donations appreciated.



Celebrate Hummingbirds

Sat. March 13, 7:30-9:30. Join Tom Gaskill and Rio Salado Rangers on a hummingbird walk; binoculars, field guides and snack provided. Eight species of hummingbirds are possible!

International Migratory Bird Day

April 10 9am-1pm
Want a fun-filled morning for children and adults alike? Drop by the center to learn more about the birds that migrate through Arizona every spring. Activities include speakers, face painting, story time, scavenger hunts, bird watching and a 7th-12th grade art and photography contest. We will also feature booths from local conservation organizations.

Audubon Quest

Great for families, our quest is a guided way to explore and learn about the habitat around the center. Use the map and clues provided to find your way!

Nature Story time

Story time on the 1st Saturday of the month at 11:30. Dates: Feb. 6, March 6, April 3. Please call ahead to verify.

Arizona Animal Encounters

Feb 20: Raptors of Arizona, March 20: Migratory Raptors, April 17th: Desert Tortoises, May 15: Hunters and Prey, June 19: Arizona Mammals. Learn more about reptiles, birds and mammals by seeing them in person! Every third Saturday starting in Feb. at 11am. Please call for details of time and what animals will be there!

Letter From the Editor

Emily Morris

Don't you just love it when it rains in the desert? I do. I love how everything is fresh and washed clean and smells of creosote bush. To me, that smell encapsulates all that the Sonoran is: earthy, wild and unexpected. I hope everyone made it down to the Salt River to see our Phoenix river in its full glory after the rains in mid January. People who've been lucky enough to see the river at full bore tell stories about how the bridges were washed away and nothing could withstand the rushing waters. I felt the power of those stories last week as I stood on the banks near the Audubon center at Broadway and Central in South Phoenix where I now work. A Shrike sat on a stray

piece of willow and several Verdin flitted from one perch to the next. All the birds seemed in a frenzy of activity after being driven from their favorite perch or hunting ground. I watched the river rush by and thought about the groups of children and adults whom I've taken down to the banks to learn about birds and riparian areas. I hope those kids all saw the swollen river too and thought about the importance of water in the desert.

On another note, I would like to make a plug for **submissions** to our wonderful publication, *The Cactus Wrendition* (which now is looking so great in its new coat of paint). Do you like to write or take

photographs? We would love for you to submit and become a part of this newsletter. I don't want anyone to think that because they're not on the board or haven't lived in Arizona long or been a birder for very long or for any other reason that they're not good enough to submit something for others to enjoy. We are a community of people who love nature, particularly birds, so there's no reason why we cannot publish as a community. If you have a great birding story or have always wanted an excuse to research a nature-related science topic or have a photo or two that you'd love to see in print, please feel free to contact me. We would love to have you join our ever-growing team.

Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips

Laurie Nessel

FEBRUARY-JULY 2010

CAR POOLING: Please make every effort to organize your own carpool; consolidate vehicles at meeting places and/or contact leaders for car pooling assistance. It is recommended that passengers reimburse drivers 10 cents per mile. Be courteous to the trip leader and help cover their gas costs.

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

DIFFICULTY LEVELS 1 THROUGH 5:

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

REMINDERS:

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

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

Impromptu Field Trips: Post your own outings or get notified of others planned field trips on short notice. Also get reminders of MAS field trips by email. Founded by naturalist Mike Plagens, membership is easy, free and open to those who have an interest in the flora, fauna, and ecology of Arizona. Not just a trip listing, view the website for trip reports, flora and fauna databases, maps, links to google earth including Gilbert Water ranch, and photos. Trips focus on plants, animals, mycology, geology, biology, entomology, herpetology, ecology,

paleontology, birding, anthropology or microbiology. Share expenses, experiences and expertise with like-minded travelers. Proposed trips should include a brief description of the destination, ways, means, purpose, hiking difficulty, departure location, date and time. Drivers and riders will negotiate between themselves any shared expenses, but it is recommended that riders at least cover the cost of gas. Users can share via e-mail questions and experiences they have encountered while hiking through the wonders of Arizona's landscapes. http://groups.yahoo.com/group/az_nature_fldtrips/

Saturday, February 6

Gilbert Water Ranch. This is now the number one place for rare bird sightings in Maricopa County. The ponds and associated marsh vegetation attracts a wide variety of wintering waterfowl, raptors and passerines and whatever surprises we find. Scope helpful. Difficulty: 1

Leader: Cindy West 480.830.5332 or quetzal@cox.net for reservations and information.

Monday, February 15 (President's Day)

Buckeye LeConte's Thrasher Site: Traditionally the most reliable spot for LeConte's Thrasher in the Phoenix area, along with Sage, Crissal and Curved-Billed Thrashers and Sage Sparrows. Black-Throated Sparrows, Blue-Gray and Black-Tailed Gnatcatchers also are probable, along with other desert species. We will keep an eye out for raptors (Ferruginous and Harris Hawks are possible). The terrain is flat low desert, tailless but easy walking. Optional extension of birding to nearby desert and/or riparian sites if attendees want. Bring water and (if possible) a scope. Sunscreen or a hat and long-sleeves are a good idea. End around noon (with possible extension). Difficulty: 1 (2-3 mile easy walk). Meet 7 AM at the Waffle House just south of I-10 at Exit 129 and we will caravan and try to carpool from there. Limit: 12.

Leader: Myron Scott (480) 968- 2179 or gaia_3@netzero.com for reservations and directions to the site.

Saturday, February 20

Veterans Oasis Park. The urban wildlife habitats at Veterans Oasis Park are becoming a haven for a variety of wildlife, especially birds and insects. This guided walk explores the plants and animals of the park's desert and wetland habitats. Bring binoculars, water, good walking shoes, and a hat. The walks are not fast-paced, and the terrain is easy. Children accompanied by an adult are welcome! There is a suggested \$5 donation for the

Chandler Environmental Education Center. Meet 8:30AM at the Environmental Education Center. Done by 11:30AM. No reservations required. Difficulty: 1.

Leader: Laurie Nessel

Saturday, February 27

San Pedro River bird walk has been cancelled.

Saturday, March 13

Flagstaff Lakes. On this field trip we will visit the lakes around Flagstaff looking for waterfowl and Bald Eagles. We also hope to find Red Crossbills, Cassin's Finches and Pinyon Jays. We will meet at Denny's Restaurant at the intersection of I-40 and I-17 at 8:00AM. Bring a lunch, water, snacks and a scope will be very helpful. Difficulty: 1.

Leader: Charles Babbitt, (602) 840.1772 or cjbabbitt@cox.net for reservations

Friday, March 19

Native Flowers and Plants of the

East Valley: Join us for a walk in the desert by the lower Salt River to look for wildflowers and other native plants. With staggered winter rains we should find an interesting season for flora. We will touch on identification techniques and ecology. Bring binoculars as we will be watching for typical desert birds as well (and you can use them backwards as a loupe). Limit 15. Difficulty 1. Bring snacks and water. Lunch optional.

Leader: Mel Bramley, 480.969.9893 evenings for reservations and information.

Wednesday, March 31

Agua Fria Recharge Ponds. View overwintering waterfowl, shorebirds and passerines. Migratory shorebirds here lesser yellowlegs, solitary sandpiper, willet, long billed curlew, w. sandpiper While uncommon they might be seen, including: Forster's Tern, Black Tern, California, Franklin's and Bonaparte's Gulls as possibilities. Possible shorebirds might include Solitary Sandpiper, Willet, Long-billed Curlew, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Black-bellied and Snowy Plover, and various duck, heron and egret species. Take East Camelback Rd. to 107th Ave. Turn north about one mile to where the road dead ends at the ponds. Scope optional. Meet 7:00am. Done by 11:00am. Difficulty: 1.

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

Saturday April 3

Peachville Peachville Mountain:

Peachville Mountain is a huge, dome-shaped mountain in the Superstitions (in the Superior CBC area), with approximately

Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips

Laurie Nessel

field trips

18 square miles of contiguous grassland, rocky washes, and riparian areas in the wash between Peachville and King's Crown Mountains. It has been nearly inaccessible for almost a decade, but SRP work on nearby power lines has led to FS229 being re-graded. We will drive up FS229 to the base of the mountain, hike some of the grasslands and washes, and visit the riparian area on the way back. There should be vast numbers of sparrows (migrant Brewer's and others, and resident Rufous-crowned and Black-throated), a nice array of wrens and gnatcatchers, and birds of prey. The area has only recently been birded (the 2008-09 CBC), and we should expect surprises. Elevations range from 2,000 to 5,000 feet. Temperatures can range from quite cool in the morning to warm in the afternoon, so dress in layers. High-clearance vehicles are recommended, but 4WD is not necessary. Bring lunch, plenty of water, and a scope (optional). Meet 6:00AM Open Range Steakhouse, 6030 S. King's Ranch Rd, Gold Canyon (1 mile northeast of US 60, on the north side of King's Ranch Rd). End around 6:00PM. Maximum 15. Difficulty 4 (appx. 5 miles hiking, some moderately strenuous)

Leader: Tom Gaskill gaskillthomas@gmail.com or 480.968.5614 for reservations.

Saturday, May 1

Pinall Mountain. This trip will be a cool drive to 8000' elevation and cover mesquite, chaparral, juniper, ponderosa and fir forest habitats. We usually see between 70 and 85 species on this trip, and if we hit migration right, it could be even higher. Specialty birds on this trip include Black-chinned Sparrow, Gray Vireo, Juniper Titmouse, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Magnificent Hummingbird, Red-faced Warbler, Olive Warbler, Zone-tailed Hawk, all three species of nuthatches, Yellow-eyed Junco and Mountain Chickadee. We leave from the s.e parking lot of the Tempe Library (s.w corner of Southern and Rural) at 4:30 am (sunrise is at 5:40 am). Bring bag lunch and drinks as we will picnic near the peak. We should return to Tempe about 3:00 pm.

Leader: David L. Pearson, School of Life Sciences, Arizona State University Laurie Nessel laurie@laurienessel.com, 480.968.5614 for reservations.

Saturday, May 8

Boyce Thompson Arboretum International Migratory Bird Day Count. Celebrate the remarkable phenomenon of bird migration by counting spring migrants. Nearly 350 species of birds migrate between nesting habitats in North America and non-breeding

grounds in Latin America, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

Doug Jenness 520-909-1529 or djenness@hotmail.com to sign up to count.

Saturday, May 15

Roger's Trough* Rogers Trough and Montana Mountain: We will travel up FS172 northeast of Queen Valley to Rogers Trough, a beautiful riparian area in the Superstition Mountains. From there, we will continue on FS650 to the north face of Montana Mountain, a seldom-visited area at nearly 6,000 feet. Vegetation changes from saguaro desert to cottonwood corridors to alligator and one-seed junipers as we gain elevation. The country is spectacular, and the bird life is rich and varied. Expect Spotted and Canyon Towhees, Scrub and Steller's Jays, Bushtits, Bluebirds, and a wide variety of Flycatchers, Vireos and Warblers.

The hiking is fairly level, although some at almost 6,000 feet. Even in May, temperatures can be cool in the shaded areas of Montana Mountain, so bring a light jacket. The road is rough in spots with creek crossings. High-clearance vehicles are required (4WD is recommended). Bring lunch, plenty of water, and a scope (optional). End near 6:00PM. Maximum 15. Difficulty 3 (appx. 5 miles hiking, some higher-elevation). \$6/vehicle Tonto National Forest pass required. Meet 6:00AM Open Range Steakhouse, 6030 S. King's Ranch Rd, Gold Canyon (1 mile northeast of US 60, on the north side of King's Ranch Rd).

Leader: Tom Gaskill gaskillthomas@gmail.com or 480.968.5614 for reservations.

Thursday, June 3-Sunday, June 6

Q Ranch: Flora, Fauna and Archeology. Q Ranch is a 250-acre private ranch in Gila County at an elevation of 5600'. This was the headquarters of one of the largest cattle ranching operations in Arizona dating from the 1800s. The owner, Jonathan Rogers, was raised on the Q and has been running a private bed and breakfast since 1989. Surrounded by Forest Service land, accessible only by unpaved roads and not having cattle for several years have resulted in an unspoiled natural habitat. Mammals include bear, lion, javelina, elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer, beaver, ringtail, raccoon, and a host of smaller critters. Over 90 higher elevation species of birds have been recorded at the Q along with 25 species of butterflies and 10 of dragonflies. There are important pueblo ruins on site as well and the ranch hosts AAS (AZ Archaeological Society) field schools each year. The Q's remote

location and lack of light pollution allow naked eye viewing of the Milky Way and a host of other celestial orbs.

Arrive Thursday afternoon to bird the ranch grounds and explore the historic buildings and cemetery. Enjoy a gourmet dinner that evening, breakfast on Friday morning, then field trips to upper and lower Gentry, an adjoining ranch. Upper Gentry has a perennial spring, pines, willows and meadows. Lower Gentry is in a canyon with oak and pine vegetation. We will either return to the Q for lunch or make sandwiches to go and picnic at the Gentry. Enjoy another gourmet dinner Friday evening and Saturday breakfast at the Q, then field trips to Bottle Springs and Crouch Creek Canyon. Bottle Springs has a perennial spring, oak/pine/willow vegetation, and a hundred apple and pear trees. Crouch Creek Canyon is a beautiful canyon with nesting peregrine falcons, mostly pine vegetation and running water. Saturday late afternoon or evening have a lecture by John Hohmann, the lead archaeologist for AAS, about the prehistoric people of the area and the pueblo ruins on the Q. A quick breakfast Sunday morning, then a tour of the pueblo ruins. Return to the ranch house for lunch and then return to Phoenix. The ranch is in the Young, AZ area, just below the Mogollon Rim in Pleasant Valley, the location of the longest and bloodiest range war in US history. Driving time is about 3 - 3.5 hours from Phoenix. Cost \$360 - \$380 includes lodging (with shared bathrooms), breakfast, lunch and gourmet dinner, a gratuity for the archaeologist and a \$20 donation to the Maricopa Audubon chapter. Coffee, tea and water are provided and a refrigerator for guests wanting to bring wine, beer, or other beverage. Various leaders will cover geology, butterflies, dragonflies, plants, animals, birds and archeology. Min 8/max 14. Difficulty varies depending on which side trip you take.

Cynthia Donald planres@earthlink.net or 480.283.4515 for reservations.

Saturday June 19

Dragonflies & Damselflies of Dudleyville Area. Join odonata expert Dr. Pierre Deviche on a guided walk through the riparian area along the San Pedro River in Dudleyville, and the Lower Gila River at Kearney and the Kelvin Bridge in search of dragonflies and damselflies. Learn about the life history and identification of these interesting creatures. Bring plenty of water, snack/ lunch, a hat, and waterproof shoes/ waders since this hike will require walking along the creek. Close-focus binoculars are helpful. Meet 9:00am at Gilbert

Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips cont.

Laurie Nessel



"The" way to bird the beautiful oxbow lakes at Manu.



Red-and-green Macaws coming to a Clay Lick near Manu Wildlife Center

Public Library, east end of south lot (off Greenfield). Difficulty 2 (easy walking in high temperatures). Done by midafternoon. Leader: **Dr. Pierre Deviche** Contact: Laurie Nessel, laurie@laurienessel.com, 480.968.5614 for reservations and information.

Saturday July 10 to Sunday

Southeastern Peru: The Wilds of Manu (The Manu Road, Manu National Park, and Machu Picchu). There is no place that I know of in South America that compares to Manu! Located southeast of Cusco, this huge National Park encompasses elevations from high *Paramo* in the eastern Andes to an amazing

expanse of lowland Amazonian rainforest. The bird list for the park exceeds 1000 species, and it is one of the few truly *wild* places left on Earth that have huge areas undeveloped and even unexplored, with indigenous people living within the park that have never had any contact with the outside world! Despite the seeming remoteness of Manu, it is actually quite accessible by way of the Manu Road that traverses a transect from Cusco to the Amazonian Lowlands, and then along the Madre de Dios River to the Manu River. Our 16 day tour is designed to sample the best Manu has to offer, staying first at a small rustic lodge near treeline in the eastern Andes, then at Cock-of-the-

Rock Lodge at mid-elevations, famous for its Andean Cock-of-the-Rock lek, then two nights at Amazonia Lodge on the Madre de Dios River, then three nights at a comfortable tent-camp at Cocha Salvador, up the Manu River in the heart of Manu National Park, and finally at wonderful Manu Wildlife Center, with it's famous Macaw clay lick nearby. This tour is unsurpassed in scenic beauty, spending virtually all the time in untouched, virgin rainforest, full of macaws, monkeys, large mammals, and more than 500 species of birds. The tour is not at all strenuous, with level trails and comfortable lodging. Maybe we'll even see a Jaguar! A post tour extension to incredible Machu Picchu is also available. Cost \$4600. Cost of Machu Picchu extension \$1300.

Leader: Gary Rosenberg, Avian Journeys. P.O. Box 91856, Tucson, AZ 85752-1856. 520-744-6780.

info@avianjourneys.com, www.avianjourneys.com

Continuing

Desert Botanical Gardens Bird Walks.

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

Sonoita Creek State Natural Area Bird Walks and Boat Tours.

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

2nd & 4th Saturdays

Tohono Chul Park: Ask the Plant Expert.

Ever wonder what arid-adapted plants you can purchase to attract butterflies, birds or bats? Curious about what to plant this fall to ensure spring garden color? Or what little pest is destroying your favorite plant or tree? Come to Tohono Chul Park and ask Curator of Plants, Russ Buhrow. Seek advice on plant selection, finding the perfect plants for your dream garden or get answers about under-performing

Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips cont.

Laurie Nessel

field trip review

backyard plants, from identifying disease or pest problems to diagnosing nutrient deficiencies and watering issues. Drop by anytime between 9AM and noon for this FREE event. Tohono Chul Park is the desert corner garden where nature, art, and culture connect. Educational programs, art, cultural exhibits, nature trails, gardens, and special events offer opportunities to experience the desert and all its treasures. For more information, please call (520) 742-6455, visit their website www.tohonochulpark.org, or in person at 7366 N. Paseo del Norte, one stoplight west of the intersection at Oracle and Ina in Tucson.

Boyce Thompson Arboretum Bird

Walks. Guided bird walks at 8:30 a.m. Marceline Vandewater February 6; Richard Ditch February 14; TBA February 20; Cindy Marple February 28; Troy Corman March 6; Kathe Anderson March 14; Cynthia Donald and Pete Moulton March 20 and March 28; Marceline Vandewater April 3; Troy Corman April 11; Cindy West April 17; and Pierre Deviche and Richard Ditch April 25. **The International Migratory Bird Day** spring migrant



Catalina State Park
photo by Laurie Nessel

count will be Saturday, May 8. Volunteer bird counters should sign up with Doug Jenness 520-909-1529 or d_jenness@hotmail.com.

Catalina State Park. One of the states most popular parks is at the base of the majestic Santa Catalina Mountains. Dedicated in 1983, this 3,000' upper Sonoran desert in the Coronado National Forest was narrowly saved from a golf course development of 17,000 people.

Bird Walks Friday mornings. Over 150 species of birds occupy this wonderfully diverse habitat. Bring water, a bird book, binoculars, and sturdy shoes. Meet at Main Trailhead parking area. Call (520) 628-5798 for times. **Reptile/ Wildlife Exhibit** Saturday mornings 10 am - 1 pm. weather permitting. **Guided Hikes** Sunday mornings 8AM leave from the main trailhead, unless otherwise specified. Occasional, light bushwhacks and exploratory tangents may occur. Bring water, hat, hiking boots, and snacks. Moderately paced. Round-trip mileage, duration, and elevation changes vary. Hikes last approximately two hours and are subject to change due to trail conditions and weather. No pets. Registration required by 3 PM the day. Call (520) 638-5404 to register for hikes. Entry fee \$6.00 per vehicle. Contact Park for more information (520) 628-5798.

Patagonia and San Rafael Grasslands Field Trip

Dr. Dave Pearson

Eleven of us from Maricopa Audubon Society birded the Patagonia-San Rafael area November 7th. Of the 60+ species we managed to find, the most notable were:

Five Montezuma Quail near the entrance to Spirit Tree Inn on Harshaw Creek Rd.; three Hammond's Flycatchers and a Dusky Flycatcher along Sonoita Creek in the Nature Conservancy Reserve (where we failed to find the Rufous-capped Warblers that had been seen there up to the previous day); one Sprague's Pipit sitting on top of a fence post near (but not in) the dreaded no-stop, no-bird watching area of the Vaca Ranch in the San Rafael Grasslands; one Baird's Sparrow in the same area from which it was recently reported southeast of the junction of Forest Roads 765, 214, and 58 (near the western entrance into the grasslands from Patagonia); a flock of 13 Eastern Bluebirds that looked to be the Mexican subspecies on Forest Road 58, two miles southeast of the junction with Harshaw Cr. Rd and Forest Road 49; and one Rufous-backed Robin in the Pyrocantha at the patio of Spirit Tree Inn (thanks for the warm welcome by the hosts there).



Group looking for a Baird's Sparrow
photo by Anand Arya

Recognizing the Biological Importance of Two Globally Important Bird Areas in Arizona

Article Courtesy of Audubon Newswire

Two Arizona sites have received Global Important Bird Area designations this month: the Chiricahua Mountains in the southeastern corner of the state and Anderson Mesa, nine miles southeast of Flagstaff in the Coconino National Forest.

The designation was given by BirdLife International, an alliance of conservation organizations working in more than 100 countries and territories that, together, are the leading authority on the status of birds and their habitats. The Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program is a world-wide effort to identify and conserve areas that are vital to birds and other biodiversity. Sites qualify for "global" designation because they hold significant numbers of a globally threatened species or other species of global conservation concern.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department, Tucson Audubon Society, and Audubon Arizona are the IBA partners in Arizona. To date, 37 sites have been identified as state Important Bird Areas. Designation confers no legal requirements; the global recognition is intended to motivate and encourage

voluntary conservation actions to assure long term protection of these sites.

Anderson Mesa

An area rich with wetlands, Anderson Mesa was previously nominated as a state Important Bird Area (IBA) for waterfowl and water birds. The area qualified as a global IBA because of its extensive pinyon pine woodlands that support populations of Pinyon Jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*), a species of global conservation concern and an Audubon Society WatchList species. <http://stateofthebirds.audubon.org/>

Although a familiar sight in pine forests of the American west, the gregarious blue-gray Pinyon Jay's dependence on pinyon pine seeds as its main food source has put it at risk. Declines in western pinyon pine forests due to drought, bark beetle infestations, fire, and indiscriminate clearing of pinyon and juniper woodlands have caused a dramatic decrease in the population of these specialized jays.

Chiricahua Mountains

The Chiricahua Mountains are part

of a chain of mountains that span from southern Arizona to the Sierra Madre in central Mexico. Within the Coronado National Forest and including Chiricahua National Monument, the IBA extends from the grass and oak woodland at 5,000 feet elevation to the top of Chiricahua Peak, at 9,795 feet. The Chiricahua IBA qualified as a site of global importance because it is habitat for the "Mexican" Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis mexicana*), a threatened species that nests within the deep canyons that incise the face of the rugged mountain range.

Known as a "perch and pounce" predator, the Mexican Spotted Owl hunts by locating its prey from an elevated perch and then pouncing to capture it with its talons. The species is threatened by loss of old growth forests, its typical habitat.

Two other Arizona sites have already received global IBA designation; Marble Canyon for California Condor and the lower San Pedro River for Bell's Vireo. Recognition of these two Arizona sites brings the total number of global IBAs in the U.S. to 378.

Famed Hog Island Audubon Camp Reopens

Article Courtesy of Audubon Newswire

In summer 2010, the National Audubon

Society will open the historic Audubon Camp on Maine's Hog Island for four ornithology sessions. Camp director Dr. Steve Kress has lined up some of the best ornithologists in the country - Kenn Kaufman, Pete Dunne, and Scott Weidensaul - to teach in June during the traditional camp programs. Additionally, said Dr. Kress, the camp will host two totally new sessions in cooperation with [Exploritas \(formerly Elder Hostel\)](http://www.exploritas.org/) where participants will work on active seabird nesting islands to census gulls, eiders and cormorants, and later to help restore habitat on Eastern Egg Rock for endangered and threatened terns. One teen birding session will be held in late June, for ages 14-17, with 13 spaces available.



Camp participants can choose from a variety of housing arrangements on the 330-acre spruce-covered island and will enjoy three home-cooked meals

a day in a reconverted farmhouse directly overlooking Maine's picturesque Muscongus Bay. During the five-day sessions, small field groups of "campers" will go on a variety of trips and boat cruises and attend workshops and presentations on topics ranging from migration and the identification of warblers to the restoration of Atlantic Puffins and terns on a nearby island.

The Hog Island Audubon Camp first opened in 1936, with Roger Tory Peterson as its first bird instructor. It is well known in America's environmental community as a distinguished and

beautiful place of nature learning and enjoyment. For more information about the camp, including dates, sessions, costs and instructors, go to www.projectpuffin.org. You can find out more about the seventy-year history of Audubon's Hog Island Camp at www.naturecompass.org/fohi. Or for more information about the Hog Island camp



sessions, contact Pete Salmansohn, camp registrar, at (607) 257-7308 ext 14, psalmansohn@audubon.org or go to <http://www.projectpuffin.org/OrnithCamps.html>.

"The best environmental novel ever written."

As a birder tuned in to habitat loss and declining species, wouldn't you be wildly curious to know what book earned that environmental accolade? A few months ago a national magazine ran a cover story on "fifty books that make sense for our time . . . what to read now and why." As a birder with a college major in English and major guilt at this point in my life that I can't/don't/won't find time to read novels, I certainly was.

The Bear. William Faulkner. Surprise, surprise . . . but of course! A lifetime ago I had written reports on Faulkner but this literary icon of the Deep South hadn't crossed my mind in all the intervening years. Skeptical but fascinated, I hurried to the library to renew the acquaintance and discovered *The Bear* was indeed, among many other things, a prescient-for-the-times chronicle of what man was doing to the planet clear back in late 19th century Mississippi.

I'm only guessing (anybody out there anal enough to have actually kept all their college course reports?), but I probably wrote then that Faulkner was commenting on the passing of the "frontier," or at least a fictional Mississippi version of it, but the frontier ain't in Kansas anymore. In a world gone global, even if you trust only half the bad news, we may need to place "planet," not "frontier," after "the passing of . . ."

The Bear, written in Faulkner's sometimes rather inaccessible stream of consciousness style, is an 1880s

coming of age story of a boy in the backwoods of Mississippi. It is filled with flashbacks and flashforwards exploring the complex relationships between Native Americans, White land owners, former slaves, and the rapidly disappearing forest wilderness. Today no one who loves wildlife and wild places would ever think to use "bear" and "Mississippi" in the same sentence, but that is only



Pileated Woodpecker male in habita by Jim Burns

sad testimony to Faulkner's keen and nostalgic sense of impending loss--"that doomed wilderness whose edges were being constantly and punily gnawed at by men with plows and axes who feared it because it was wilderness . . ."

Early in the book Faulkner speaks of the "tall and endless wall" of dense woods and the "big woodpecker called Lord-to-God by the negroes."

The bear is Faulkner's symbol for the vanishing woods and a vanishing way of life, and as the boy becomes an accomplished woodsman he sees the bear but doesn't shoot, then hunts it even without a gun. Inevitably, of course, the bear is killed, and the boy who is now a man visits the woods, now gashed by the timber companies' rail line and fragmented by sawmills and surveyors' stakes, one last time knowing he, and it, will never return.

Ironically enough, I finished *The Bear* sitting amidst the mindless scurry of LAX waiting for a late night flight which had been delayed two hours. The book became my cocoon. I finished it in tears. Faulkner knew. Undoubtedly he had seen an Ivory-billed, but I can give you only the image of a poorer planet's version of the great bird. Faulkner goes biblical to message his readers that no man, no race, can own the land that was given to all in stewardship. He does give a flicker of hope. Mentored by a mixed breed Chickasaw steeped in the old ways, the boy come into manhood treats ex-slaves with humanity and repudiates his inheritance of his family's land.

There are long and short versions of *The Bear* because Faulkner wrote for magazines and later combined several novellas into the more detailed history of his fictional Mississippi homeland. If you're curious, be sure you find the version included in the book *Go Down, Moses*, and read that entire book. Read it in your favorite desert or mountain retreat, then please go out and do something to help the planet.

Sandhill Crane Migration Focus of 40th Annual Rivers and Wildlife Celebration

by Kevin Poague, Audubon Nebraska



The 40th annual Rivers and Wildlife Celebration will be held March 18-21, 2010, in Kearney, Nebraska. Organized by Audubon Nebraska and the Nebraska Bird Partnership, the conference gathers together nature enthusiasts from across the county to witness the migration of over half a million Sandhill Cranes and millions of waterfowl and other birds through central Nebraska. Events include guided field trips, workshops, a family fun room, and daily visits to river blinds operated by Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary for

up-close views of cranes roosting on the Platte River

Local and national speakers will present information on a variety of wildlife and conservation topics; the main speakers are Scott Weidensaul, author of more than two dozen natural history books, including *Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds*, a Pulitzer Prize finalist; Mike Forsberg, nature photographer and author of *Great Plains: America's Lingering Wild*; Ron Klataske, executive director of Audubon of Kansas; and Chris

Wood, eBird Project Leader, Cornell Lab of Ornithology. More than twenty local environmental organizations will have information booths and hands-on activities on Saturday.

The celebration is open to the general public. Registration materials can be found at www.nebraska.audubon.org. Or contact Audubon Nebraska to be put on the mailing list: Nebraska@audubon.org; (402) 797-2301. Rowe Sanctuary has information about viewing the Sandhill Crane migration, (308) 468-5282; www.rowesanctuary.org.

Fighting for Parks

Janice Miano, Director of AZ Heritage Alliance

Arizona's 27 State Parks and the Arizona Heritage Fund are in crisis.

Protecting these important resources and providing state parks that are well maintained is essential to our state's economy, unique quality of life, and the future of our children and their children. During these difficult budget times, it is as important, if not more important, to invest in these resources and secure their protection for the future, not close them or put them under

private/commercial management.

Since 1990, the Arizona Heritage Fund has helped to protect wildlife, conserve habitat, preserve historic buildings and archaeological sites, and provide safe playground equipment for children in community parks, among other accomplishments. The Heritage Fund has benefitted and continues to benefit every legislative district in the state.

It is important to protect, during this difficult time, core Arizona

resources - our true capital: parks and wildlife, prehistoric and historic sites, trails, and other cultural and outdoors amenities which will serve well the citizens of Arizona during this bleak period.

It is also essential to Arizona and Arizonans who created the Heritage Fund to protect those dollars. To make a difference, go to www.azheritage.org and click on "Help Protect the Fund Now."

Improving Your Birding Skills: Species Splits and The Importance of Bird Song

by Gillian Rice

species splits

"Anna's Hummingbird. Check. Gila Woodpecker. Check." I'm sitting in the Desert Botanical Garden with my fellow birders making the list of what we've seen on a Monday bird walk. "Ladder-backed Woodpecker. Check. Plumbeous Vireo....." Mmmm. I look in my field guide to review the details of what, for me, is a life bird. Or, so I thought. I'm puzzled. "Can't find it," I announce. Someone explains the Solitary Vireo shown in my favorite, but aging Peterson field guide has been split into three species: Plumbeous Vireo, Cassin's Vireo, and Blue-headed Vireo. At home, I consult my newer Sibley Guide, which notes that "the three species in the Solitary Vireo group are rather poorly differentiated....and not every individual will be identifiable."

This experience a few years ago was my first with species splits. I wondered: Who decides these matters? On the basis of what kind of evidence? Why is this important?

The American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) publishes the Checklist of North American Birds, which is the official source on the taxonomy of birds found in this country. The list is produced by the AOU North American Classification Committee. For details, see <http://www.aou.org/checklist/north/index.php> Among the pending proposals for this committee are (1) to recognize a new species of Red Crossbill, *Loxia sinesciurus* and (2) to elevate *Troglodytes troglodytes pacificus* to species status. The former is known only in Idaho, while the latter, with the suggested common name, Pacific Wren, is a rare visitor to Arizona.

To make determinations about species, researchers ask questions such as (1) how do closely related bird forms differ – do they differ most in traits associated with ecology, or with traits associated with social or sexual selection, and (2) whether the forms are reproductively isolated.

The non-migratory South Hills Crossbill (*Loxia sinesciurus*) found in Idaho, differs from other Red Crossbills there. It has a different call type and a deeper and shorter

bill. In South Hills, when squirrels are absent, the local lodgepole pines evolve larger cones in defense against the local crossbills. The South Hills birds evolve a bill size and shape that enables them to feed efficiently on the relatively large cones. This example of local co-evolution arises because of the absence of squirrels – hence the proposed name – *sinesciurus*, "without squirrels". Research during 2001-2006 by Craig Benkman and his associates demonstrated

"The Arizona Bird Committee has elevated the eastern Winter Wren to review status."

reproductive isolation among *Loxia sinesciurus*: among 1,704 birds, only 12 were paired with birds of the other two crossbill call types present in the region (See *Birding* July 2009, p30).

David Toews and Darren Irwin (*Molecular Biology*, 2008) found an area in Canada where both western and eastern Winter Wrens occupy neighboring territories. "Two things tipped us off as to the likelihood of the western form being a different species," says Irwin. "The songs are dramatically different. We found that the song predicts distinct DNA for each form." The lack of gene flow and cultural exchange (learning of the other's song) implies strong reproductive isolation. Absence of habitat difference between the western and eastern wrens and close similarity in appearance - plumage differences are subtle, most noticeably on the throat, where *pacificus* is darker than the eastern form – might imply that differences in song play an important role in causing the reproductive isolation. Females of many species assess male songs when choosing a mate. Song can be an indicator of isolation and also can play a role in causing that reproductive isolation. Irwin explains: "the different songs suggest that sexual selection (driven by competition by mates) is happening here, but environmental differentiation

might also have influenced what types of songs are the best."

The proposal of the Pacific Wren as a new species is an example of a cryptic speciation – when animals appear identical but are genetically distinct. Scientists initially thought that cryptic species were predominant in reptiles and insects. Markus Pfenninger and Klaus Schwenk (*BMC Evolutionary Biology*, 2007) discovered that cryptic species are found in equal proportions in all major branches of the animal kingdom.

Identifying species is important because there can be major implications for biodiversity estimates, wildlife management, the understanding of infectious diseases, and evolution. Also, "birders usually like to see the true relationships among the things they are seeing," says Irwin. "With DNA, we are able to analyze a 'molecular clock,' and we have determined that the Pacific Wren diverged from the eastern Winter Wren perhaps three or four million years ago. If you've seen a Winter Wren on the east coast, you can list that. If you've seen a Winter Wren on the west coast, check that off as a Pacific Wren – one more for your life list!"

The situation is a little less clear in Arizona. *Troglodytes troglodytes pacificus* is the Winter Wren usually seen here; the status of the eastern Winter Wren here is imprecise. Jay Miller discovered one at his home in Mesa. The bird was present and photographed during winter 08/09. "The Arizona Bird Committee has elevated the eastern Winter Wren to review status," says Dr. Pierre Deviche of ASU. "We hope that this will encourage birders to pay more attention to it and to document observations in more detail." There have been about ten reports of the eastern form in Arizona since 2001, but it is probably underreported. Here's a good opportunity to improve your birding skills: to see photos of the eastern and western forms of the Winter Wren and to listen to their songs, visit <http://www.zoology.ubc.ca/~irwin/wrens.html>.

McCain Ramrods NEPA-compromised Legislation through Senate.

Bob Witzeman



This irreplaceable Sonoran Desert riparian habitat would be dewatered and destroyed by the proposed NEPA-compromised Resolution Copper mine land exchange legislation now before Congress. Photos by Sky Jacobs

*Several of Nature's people I know
and they know me: I feel for them
a transport of cordiality .*

Emily Dickinson 1830-1886

In what was called "compromise" legislation (involving heavy-handed, backroom dealing by Senator McCain) an environmentally vitiated Oak Flat/Resolution Copper Company (RCC) land swap bill emerged (Dec. 16, 2009) from the U.S. Senate Natural Resources Committee. It was anything but compromise, - greatly weakening National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) citizen oversight opportunities.

This land swap would destroy an irreplaceable Oak Flat U.S. Forest Service Campground bird habitat. It is bounded on the east by one of Arizona's most outstanding Sonoran Desert riparian habitats. The Oak Flat land exchange, recognized as one of the most environmentally, culturally and hydrologically destructive mines in North America, would hand over 2400 acres of USFS land for the benefit of two foreign mining companies.

NEPA is a federal law which allows citizens to present questions to the U.S. Forest Service regarding the impacts of this proposed mine and the privatizing of those USFS lands for the benefit of the world's two largest mining companies (RCC); Britain's Rio Tinto, and Australia's BHP. Even a cursory glance in Google shows they have had horrendous environmental and human rights violations.

NEPA allows U.S. citizens to submit their input and questions about the mining project through a USFS-prepared document called an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). There any citizen can obtain full disclosure of the various environmental, hydrologic, cultural and social harms caused by the mine. Though this would be the largest copper mine in the U.S., the McCain Senate legislation would allow only three years to complete NEPA documentation. Normally a decade or more would be required. A small copper mine only a few miles east of Oak Flat (Cambior Mining Co.) required over ten years of NEPA and other public oversight entities.

Nor did Cambior face the huge Native American, historic, cultural, hydrologic and environmental issues which confront RCC. Cambior's ten years was inadequate and the mine is already destroying its riparian habitat.

The Tucson Audubon Society's Conservation Chair, Christina McVie, in the Jan.-Feb. 2010 *Vermilion Flycatcher* describes McCain's behind-closed-doors Senate Natural Resources Committee move as follows:

"Senator John McCain has successfully struck a deal with Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, Chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to pass by a voice vote and without debate, the Resolution Copper (Rio Tinto) land exchange bill, S. 409, as amended along with a bundle of 31 other bills...After holding Senate confirmation hearings, and advocating a quick resolution favoring the wealthy foreign owned mining Company, McCain also disregarded the commitments made to Native American tribes to consult prior to moving the bill forward. Conservation groups who have followed this issue closely, and submitted testimony to congress were excluded.

"This action comes on the heels of the news that Rio Tinto has been charged with war crimes and will soon be defending itself in federal court. The Los Angeles District Court has ruled that, due to the "universal" nature of Rio Tinto's crimes, Bougainville islanders do not need to exhaust legal options in Papua New Guinea and, under the US Alien Tort Claims Act, can seek legal remedy for crimes against humanity, war crimes and racial discrimination committed by the mining giant in the 1980s and 1990s. The plaintiffs allege that Rio Tinto created extensive environmental damage at its Bougainville mine, paid Black

McCain Ramrods NEPA-compromised Legislation through Senate.

Bob Witzeman

workers less than white counterparts and instigated a violent civil war, leading to the deaths of roughly 10% of the island's population.



*"The 'compromise' benefiting the \$300 billion dollar mining consortium **appears to circumvent NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) requirements to consider reasonable alternatives and impacts in advance of an action** and contains a number of other*

clauses that are tremendous setbacks for Native American communities, climbers, naturalists, and citizens.

This "compromise":

"Allows Resolution Copper to immediately commence and continue directional drilling to explore under Oak Flat for three years and install a drilling pad within it, prior to NEPA compliance or tribal consultation. Oak Flat was determined to be a native sacred cultural site, and withdrawn from mining by President Eisenhower's Executive Order. This sets a precedent undoing and making vulnerable all lands previously withdrawn from mineral exploration nationally.

"Removes previously agreed to commitments to the recreational climbing community, including finding a replacement site that would provide an equally world class climbing site.

"Removes the mandate to provide an alternative camp site for citizen recreational use and ignores the

need to provide another traditional gathering location for tribal cultural activities.

"Leaves unchanged the provision that allows the Town of Superior the chance to buy (at full market value) land that, without the interference of Rio Tinto, the Town would have received free of charge from the US Forest Service.

"Leaves tremendous wiggle room for the appraisal process to cheat the US taxpayer out of full payment for the tremendous natural and mineral resources we would lose.

"Allows Rio Tinto's subsidiary, BHP, to develop up to 35,000 residences on land it owns along the lower San Pedro River, potentially dewatering and devaluing lands included in this land exchange and imperiling other San Pedro conservation mitigation lands (of endangered species such as the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, and Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo) downstream of the proposed BHP development."

conservation

Audubon Survey Shows Many Bird Populations Moving Northward

A study by the National Audubon Society of its annual Christmas bird counts over the past 40 years found that, on average, bird species have been moving about one mile north each year. Nearly 60 percent of all bird species in the Audubon surveys have shown a distinct movement to colder, more northern climates.

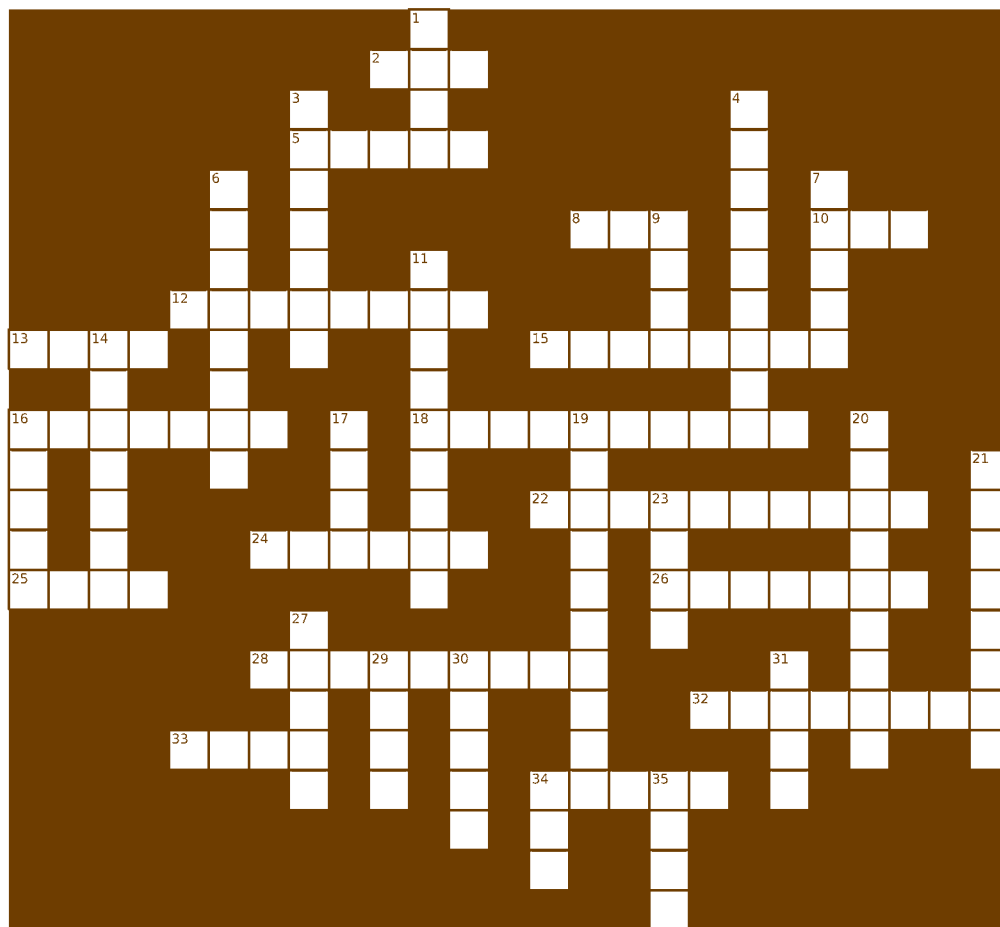
The purple finch was found to have moved its habitat northward by 433 miles over the past 40 years. Other birds that have shown a dramatic northward shift are the robin, wild turkey, and the red mergansers.



Purple Finch

Audubon and Bird Trivia

Emily Morris



Across

- 2 TYPE OF FEATHER SEEN DURING MOLT
- 5 YELLOW AREA ON BLACK-THROATED GRAY
- 8 AUDUBON ISLAND RECENTLY REOPENED
- 10 PYGMY, BURROWING, ELF
- 12 AUTHOR OF BIRD GUIDE PUBLISHED IN 1934 THAT POPULARIZED BIRDING
- 13 NET TYPE FOR CATCHING BIRDS FOR RESEARCH
- 15 HABITAT BASED AROUND RIVERS
- 16 TITLE FOR SEEING AS MANY SPECIES IN 12 MONTHS AS POSSIBLE (2 words)
- 18 TYPE OF BIRD DESCRIBED BY GENUS 'PUFFINUS'
- 22 AZ STATE BIRD (2 words)
- 24 AREA OF AVERAGE ANNUAL PRECIPITATION LESS THAN 10 IN./YR.
- 25 TYPE OF BIRDS THAT GO TO AZ AND FL IN WINTER
- 26 JOHN JAMES' SIR NAME
- 28 SEASONAL ANIMAL MOVEMENT
- 32 DRAGONFLIES, DAMSELFIES
- 33 BLACK, HARRIS, SWAINSON'S
- 34 ONE WINTER WARBLER IN AZ HAS AN ORANGE

Down

- 1 FIRST CBC PROPOSED AS ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL XMAS ____ HUNT
- 3 RED AND YELLOW-SHAFTED AUDUBON PRES
- 4 FASTEST BIRD
- 6 LONG-TERM SITING COMPILER
- 7 RUFOUS MEXICAN VISITOR TO ARBORETUM
- 9 SONORAN MONSTER
- 11 WINTER WRENDITION COVER PIC (2 words)
- 14 THE APARTMENT BUILDING OF THE SONORAN
- 16 BIRDS HAVE HOLLOW ____
- 17 LATIN FOR 'BIRDS'
- 19 WILEY'S NEMESIS
- 20 DESCRIPTION OF DUCK, GULL, SHOREBIRD CHICKS
- 21 BIO CONTROL BEETLE THAT THREATENS FLYCATCHER NEST SITES
- 23 US SMALLEST DUCK
- 27 PHAINOPEPLA IS THIS KIND OF FLYCATCHER
- 29 YELLOW ____ GIVES AWAY THIS WINTER WARBLER
- 30 TOWN LAKE GOOD FOR DUCKS
- 31 THINK MOURNING AND PEACE
- 34 BLACK ON WILSON'S WARBLER
- 35 CACTUS, CANYON, BEWICK'S

Answers

13 MIST	26 AUDUBON	34 CROWN	35 WREN
12 PETERSON	25 SNOW	33 HAWK	34 CAP
10 OWL	24 DESERT	32 ODNATES	31 DOVE
8 HOG	22 CACTUS WREN	31 CLICKER	30 TEMPE
5 LORES	18 SHEARWATER	1 SIDE	29 RUMP
2 PIN	16 BIG YEAR	14 SAGUARO	27 SILKY
Across	15 RIPARIAN	11 WOOD STORK	23 TEAL
		Down	
		9 GILA	21 TAMARISK
		7 ROBIN	20 PRECOCIAL
		6 WITZEMAN	19 ROADRUNNER
		4 PEREGRINE	17 AVES
		3 FLICKER	16 BONES
			14 SAGUARO
			11 WOOD STORK

Nature through the Artist's Eye: Laurent Baig

Laurent Baig grew up in the concrete jungle of Los Angeles and didn't discover his love for wild landscapes until after he moved to Tucson in the 1990s and took up rock climbing. He took to his new hobby with great gusto and quickly realized that in search of new places to climb he was discovering some of the most beautiful places in Arizona. When his friends weren't available to go climbing, he started just hiking by himself. He began to see and have an eye for the startling compositions framed in the Arizona wilderness, so started to bring a regular point and shoot camera along with him. But the quality of the images frustrated him,



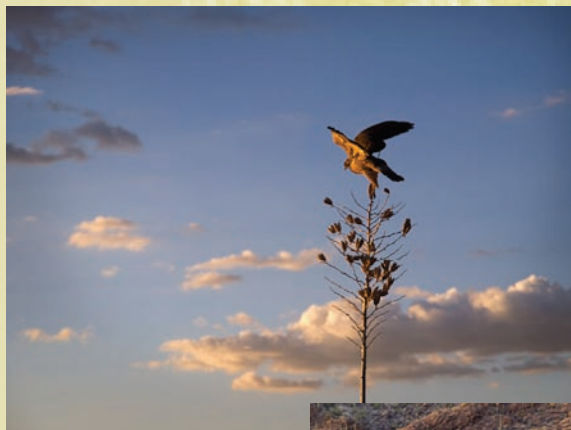
Tank, Santa Rita Mountains, Coronado National Forest



Piñon pine, Grand Canyon National Park



Ironwood Tree, Saguaro National Park



Red Tail Hawk, Las Cienegas National Conservation Area



Foxtails, Aravaipa Canyon, BLM

so he started to research large format photography techniques, teaching himself detail by detail until he was satisfied with the images he was making. Though he still loves to climb, a camera is now Laurent's main companion in Arizona's most beautiful landscapes.

If you want to see more of Laurent's amazing photographs, you can visit his website at www.thewildlight.com, or view images in print on the walls of the Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center.

laurent baig

Maricopa Audubon Society

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Monthly Meeting

First Tuesday of the month, unless otherwise announced, September through April, 7:30 p.m. Our meeting place is Dorrance Hall or Webster Auditorium, at the Desert Botanical Garden (DBG), except for our annual banquet in May, the location to be announced. The DBG is located at 1201 N. Galvin Parkway, Phoenix, Arizona. This is approximately 1/4 mile north of the Phoenix Zoo. For a map, please see the DBG website at www.dbg.org/.

Dorrance Hall is located just off the main parking lot and entry to the DBG. Webster is in the far southeast side of the gardens. Please contact a board member if you have any questions, or check out our web site at www.maricopa-audubon.org. Pre-meeting dinners (September through April) are held at Rolling Hills 19th Tee Restaurant, 1405 N. Mill Avenue, starting at 6:00 p.m.

Membership Information

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

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

Submissions

Copy for *The Cactus Wren*dition* must be received by the editor by e-mail, by January 15, April 1, July 1, and October 1. Articles not received by the deadlines may not appear in the upcoming issue. E-mail to: The Cactus Wren*dition Editor, Emily Morris: monarchmorris@gmail.com

Opinions

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

Reprinting of material

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