

Vermilion

FLYCATCHER

April–June 2016 | Volume 61, Number 2



Engage with Birds in 2016

Habitat at Home, Birdathon,
Tucson Bird Count

Migratory Bird Treaty Act—
A Century of Protecting Birds

Masked Bobwhite in Southeast Arizona

Spring in the Sky Islands

Elf Owl and Rufous-backed Robin

Baja: Birds, Boojums, and Ballenas

2015 Annual Report



**TUCSON
AUDUBON
SOCIETY**
conservation
education
recreation

Tucson Audubon inspires people to enjoy and protect birds through recreation, education, conservation, and restoration of the environment upon which we all depend.

Tucson Audubon offers a library, nature centers, and nature shops to its members and the public, the proceeds of which benefit its programs.

Tucson Audubon Society

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TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG

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Tucson Audubon Nature Shops

300 E University Blvd #120 ext 7015
Hours: 10 AM–4 PM, Mon–Sat
Agua Caliente Park, 12325 E Roger Rd 520-760-7881
Hours: 10 AM–1:30 PM, Thu–Sat Please call to confirm hours.
Shop opens earlier and closes later during certain months.
Nature Shop space generously provided by Pima County Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation.

Tucson Audubon Nature Centers

Mason Center
3835 W Hardy Rd, Tucson, AZ 85742
Open most weekdays 9 AM–5 PM or when chain is down.
Paton Center for Hummingbirds
477 Pennsylvania Ave, Patagonia, AZ 85624

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FRONT COVER: White-winged Dove by Jeremy Hayes. See more of his work at flickr.com/photos/jhayesw

To have your photograph considered for use in the *Vermilion Flycatcher*, please contact Matt Griffiths at mgriffiths@tucsonaudubon.org.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Centennial: Conserving Today's Birds for Tomorrow

Jennie Duberstein, Sonoran Joint Venture



Tucson and the rest of southern Arizona is a special place for birds. We have resident species that you can see year-round. We have birds that breed here and then head south to spend the winter. And we have birds that breed in areas to the north—some as far away as Canada—and pass through Arizona on their migrations north and south.

Migratory birds don't recognize international boundaries, and neither can our efforts to conserve them.

The year 2016 marks the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty (see page 12). This agreement between the United States and Canada, together with the three others that followed (with Mexico, Japan, and Russia) forms the cornerstones of our efforts to conserve birds that migrate across international borders. Since the signing of that first Treaty, a lot has changed. We know that where we invest in healthy habitats, birds are doing well. And where birds do well, so do people.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, together with our many partners, including Tucson Audubon Society, is celebrating this important milestone promoting key actions, increase support, and expand opportunities for everyone to get involved in migratory bird conservation. Here in the southwest we have a lot going on, from a special Yellow-billed Cuckoo coffee, the purchase of which supports conservation efforts in Central America, to a special showing of *The Messenger*, a documentary film about the plight of migratory songbirds. See page 28 for info on both the coffee and the event.

Want to learn more? Check out this interactive timeline of bird conservation history and learn more about the Migratory Bird Treaty Centennial and how you can get involved:

fws.gov/birds/MBTreaty100/timeline.php

Membership Matters! Inspire Arizona to Care About Birds

Karen Fogas, Executive Director

What a great start to our Year of Engagement! Last week, I went out to walk one of our easement properties with Board President Les Corey, Conservation Director Jonathan Horst, and Field Crew Supervisor Rodd Lancaster. Returning to the truck, I glanced down to see the laminated “Benefits to Membership” talking points developed by the Membership & Development team tucked into the door pocket of the truck. It was great to see this useful tool placed in a handy reference spot so the Restoration crew could use it to communicate with potential members on short notice.

Membership matters! It directly protects water for birds, which means it protects water for us, too. It restores habitat: 280 acres at five sites are under intensive care. It identifies Arizona’s most valuable bird areas, including areas of national and global significance. Your membership inspires Arizona to care about, enjoy, and protect more birds. More than 125 guided field trips and local walks share the wonders of birds

with 1000+ participants annually. Your membership now also helps support the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia. This beloved hummingbird hotspot depends upon the Tucson Audubon Society.

Moreover, membership numbers directly impact our community conservation power. We gain strength in numbers and increased membership increases our power to influence change that benefits birds and their habitats. When Tucson Audubon Society represents thousands in membership, policymakers take notice. And the stronger our voice, the more we can do to promote the protection and stewardship of southeast Arizona’s biological diversity. Our membership goal is steep, but it’s a most worthy goal!

So one new opportunity for sharing our important work is a new event we are calling “Tucson Meet Your Birds” (our thanks to the folks who brought us Tucson Meet Yourself, and for letting us put our birdy spin on the name.) We held our first Tucson Meet Your

Birds event at Sweetwater Wetlands on Feb 13th. We offered tables of information, live birds, and friendly, knowledgeable birders with scopes positioned throughout the wetlands. We had no idea what to expect. The day was incredible! More than 900 people came to learn about birds, Tucson Audubon, and this easy-to-access wetland. We signed up almost 40 members that day.

Knowing how membership matters, I ask you to consider the people in your life. Do you know anyone who would enjoy accomplishing great work on behalf of birds and their habitat? Let them know that Tucson Audubon can be a tremendous vehicle to work on things they care about. Do you have a family member interested in birds or birding? Perhaps a gift membership would be in order. Whatever the situation, we are asking you to engage others on behalf of birds, birding, and habitat. Let’s be a strong voice for birds in Arizona! 🐦



American Birding Association Birding Rally: Sierra Vista, Arizona

Perhaps the hottest corner of the ABA Area for a staggering array of showy, specialty birds, southeast Arizona in August is a birder’s paradise. This rally is backed right up against Tucson Audubon’s Southeast Arizona Birding Festival so that you can enjoy both events back to back.

AUGUST 15–20, 2016

Hosts: Richard Fray, Jennie Duberstein, Homer Hansen, Jeff & Liz Gordon, George Armistead and more. Limit: 64 people

For info email: events@aba.org

Southeast Arizona BIRDING FESTIVAL

August 11–14, 2016 Tucson, Arizona (Based from the Arizona Riverpark Inn)

Expert-Led Field Trips, Workshops, Vendor Fair, Evening Programs

FOR DETAILS AND REGISTRATION, VISIT TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG/FESTIVAL
(Formerly the Tucson Bird & Wildlife Festival)

Clockwise from top: Lucifer Hummingbird, John Hoffman; Vermilion Flycatcher, Jeremy Hayes; Elegant Trogon, Lois Manowitz; Gilded Flicker, Bruce Taubert

TUCSON AUDUBON EVENTS AND CLASSES

Live and Learn with Tucson Audubon!

TUCSON AUDUBON BIRD EDUCATION PROGRAM

HABITAT AT HOME: HOW NATIVE PLANTS AND GARDENING TECHNIQUES WELCOME BIRDS INTO YOUR YARD!

Saturday April 16, 2016, 9–11 am

Taught by Kendall Kroesen with Callie Jordan

Location: Tucson Audubon's Mason Center

Cost: \$40

This spring, Tucson Audubon is launching its Backyard Habitat Recognition Program, designed to recognize the efforts of people who have made their yards into habitat for birds. At the same time, National Audubon is rolling out a nation-wide native plant initiative. Both efforts hinge on the role native plants play in attracting insects and other arthropods that create biodiversity, facilitate pollination, and provide food for birds. According to Douglas Tallamy's influential



Beetle on desert broom, Kendall Kroesen

Bringing Nature Home, 96% of terrestrial North American birds depend on insects to feed their young. Come to this indoor presentation and outdoor workshop to explore what this means for your yard and how to get in on the recognition program.

DEMYSTIFYING EBIRD

Monday, May 9, 2016, 5:30–7:30 pm

Location: Pima Community College NW
Campus, Amethyst Room

Cost: \$25; FREE to all Birdathon participants



eBird, an online birding tool, is changing the face of modern birding. This workshop will show you what eBird can do for you as a birder, explain why it's important that you contribute, and teach you how to get started. Bring your own laptop or device to enter your birding lists during the workshop. Join Jennie MacFarland, Tucson Audubon's Bird Conservation Biologist, and get empowered to make your observations count!

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

tucsonaudubon.org/education
education@tucsonaudubon.org

Living with Nature Monthly Program

Join us for our free monthly program! These public presentations seek to inform, educate, and entertain. We invite speakers who are experts in their fields to present on a variety of topics related to birds, including their biology and ecology; global, regional, and local birding hot spots; and conservation issues that affect birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. This season in Tucson we feature a social gathering from 6:00–6:30 pm, followed by Tucson Audubon news, rare bird alerts and our featured speaker.

TUCSON

Pima Community College Downtown Campus
Amethyst Room, 1255 N. Stone Ave.

Lectures are **Mondays at 6:00 pm**, October through April

April 11

Strutting our Stuff! Planning a Bird Trip without a Guide

with Rosie Bennett, Laura Cotter, Jenise Porter, and Deb Vath
Thinking about leaving Tucson during the hot summer and want to go birding? Four of Tucson Audubon's most dedicated world-traveling volunteers will prepare you for the adventure by showing you how to plan a fun, exciting bird trip on a budget.

ORO VALLEY

Western National Park Association

10:00–11:00 am

12880 N Vistoso Village Dr, Oro Valley, 85755

May 28

Birds and Climate Change

with Tice Supplee

Join Tice Supplee, the Audubon Arizona Director of Bird Conservation, for a presentation of Audubon's seven-year scientific study illustrating how climate change is becoming the number one threat to North American birds. Learn where potential habitat "strongholds" for birds are located in our state and find out how you can join Audubon in local actions to make a difference for the future of our birds.



Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Dan Weisz



BIRDATHON 2016 | APRIL 8–MAY 8

Sporting birders spotting birds in support of Tucson Audubon... that's the essence of Birdathon, a southeast Arizona tradition since 1987.

Between April 8th and May 8th, Birdathoners will go birding for the birds, raising support and awareness all across southeast Arizona.

This spring the tradition of Birdathon continues in southeast Arizona. Birdathon is like a walkathon, only instead of walking, we go birding and gather pledges per species seen. There are as many different approaches to Birdathon as there are different ways to love birds. Here are some examples to get your ideas rolling...

TRADITIONAL BIRDATHONS — *Completed within 24 hours*

COMPETITIVE: A BIG DAY

GO, GO, GO, and Win Big! Your goal is to beat last year's winning team total of 163 species or fundraising total of \$10,000 and you won't sleep until you do! The thought of driving halfway across the state and back in a 24-hour period sounds like fun to you! If nothing else, you're determined to see more birds than you did last year.

CASUAL: A MODIFIED BIG DAY

Relax... and Win Big! You complete your Birdathon in a 24-hour period, but probably not by driving halfway across the state and back! Instead, you might do a Big Sit at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds or in Agua Caliente Park, visit multiple sites around Tucson or southeast Arizona, or just record birds in your yard. If your kids and grandkids are on your team, a casual Birdathon might be just the thing!

NON-TRADITIONAL BIRDATHONS — *Completed in a time frame greater than 24 hours*

CREATIVE

Give it your personal flair! You prefer to stretch the enjoyment of Birdathon over multiple days or even weeks to focus on a particular species or circumstance. Perhaps your favorite bird is the Gila Woodpecker, so you set out to record as many of them as you can see in different areas of town. Alternatively, maybe you only record birds that are in flight, those sitting in mesquite trees, those in your backyard, only those you see out walking your dog... the possibilities are endless!

PERKS & HIGHLIGHTS FOR YOU!

TWO FREE EVENTS

1. Attend a free eBird Workshop on May 9th if you are a registered Birdathon participant, then take your Birdathon list and enter it into eBird. RSVP online when you receive your registration confirmation.
2. Come celebrate at our Birdathon Wrap Up Party, May 19th from 5–7 pm at La Cocina's Dusty Monk Pub—appetizers are on us! RSVP online when you receive your registration confirmation.

PRIZES, including high-end binoculars, will be awarded to Traditional Birdathoners for a variety of categories including: a grand prize, most species seen, most funds raised, and youngest birder.



ADDITIONAL PRIZES will be awarded to Traditional and Non-traditional Birdathoners alike if you record a Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Greater Roadrunner, and/or Elf Owl during your Birdathon.

T-SHIRTS will be given out at the Birdathon Wrap Up party.



Our **GIVING BANNER** is available for download when you register. Use this banner with email and social media when soliciting donations and promoting your Birdathon.

TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG/BIRDATHON



Team Wrenegades, Matt Griffiths; Elf Owl, Doris Evans; Black-bellied Whistling Duck; Greater Roadrunner, Joan Gellatly

Tucson Meet Your Birds: A Big Success

Kendall Kroesen, *Bringing Birds Home Program Manager*

Tucson Audubon's year-long initiative to engage the public got off to a great start on February 13 with an event we called *Tucson Meet Your Birds* at Sweetwater Wetlands.

Our goal was to get new people out to the wetlands to enjoy the birds and to get to know Tucson Audubon. In this case, new could mean new to birds, new to Tucson, new to the wetlands, or new to Tucson Audubon. More than that, we wanted to create an opportunity for birds to touch people's lives. Our hope is that they will go on to become birders, bird conservationists, or volunteers and members of Tucson Audubon.



This event exceeded our wildest dreams! Almost 950 people came out to the wetlands between 7 am and 2 pm. After checking in

at the entrance and learning about our many programs, participants wandered around the wetlands where they encountered bird experts and field trip leaders who helped them get closer looks at birds. Participants collectively saw around 65 species that day.

Many participants also joined Tucson Audubon during *Tucson Meet Your Birds*. We gave away about 375 copies of the new Tucson Birding Trail

Map, other Tucson Audubon publications, and commerce in our University Blvd. Nature Shop rose in the week following the event as well! Be on the lookout for more ways to expose your friends, family, acquaintances, new neighbors, and others to birds and the work of Tucson Audubon.



Our appreciation goes to Kathie Schroeder and Wildlife Rehabbers/NW Tucson, bird rehabilitators who brought live birds for the event; and to our other partners, including: AZGFD, Greg Corman of Corman Art, and Ironwood Tree Experience's "All About Birds" program. The event would not have been possible without extensive coordination and planning from Tucson Water, which operates the wetlands. Thanks in particular to Tucson Water staff members Wally Wilson, Fernando Molina, Dick Thompson, and Molly Collins. Nearly 38 Tucson Audubon volunteers and 9 staff members also deserve credit for making this event a success. A big "thank you" to all of you that were involved! 🍷

- April 7-10:** Tucson Audubon at SAHBA Home Show
- April 8-May 8:** Birdathon
- April 9:** Spring Wing Fling
- April 11:** Living With Nature at Catalina State Park (Tucson)
- April 15-May 15:** Tucson Bird Count
- April 15:** Birdathon Big Day Expert-led *Owlympians*
- April 16:** Habitat at Home class
- April 22:** Birdathon Big Day Expert-led *Patagonia Birder Patrol*
- April 23:** "This Coffee is for the Birds" at Raincrow Roasters 2-5 pm
- April 23:** Tree planting and meet & greet with Nick Beauregard, Paton Center Coordinator
- April 23:** Birdathon Big Day Expert-led *Scott's Orioles*
- April 23:** Birdathon Big Day Expert-led *Bird the Tucson Birding Trail Map*
- April 24:** Birdathon *Big Sit at the Paton Center*
- April 30:** 7 Saturdays in Patagonia
- May 3:** Birdathon Big Day Expert-led *Agua Caliente Birdbrains*
- May 3:** Showing of *The Messenger* at The Loft with panel discussion
- May 8:** Elegant Trogon Surveys begin
- May 9:** Demystifying eBird workshop
- May 14:** 7 Saturdays in Patagonia
- May 14:** International Migratory Bird Day
- May 19:** Birdathon Wrap Up Party
- May 21:** Living With Nature (Oro Valley)
- August 11-15:** Southeast Arizona Birding Festival



Photos by Mary Zalokar, Diana Rosenblum, Sara Pike, Deborah Osliek.

Arizona IBAs and Conservation Goals Jennie MacFarland, Bird Conservation Biologist

The Arizona Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program is part of the larger global initiative to identify the sites most important for bird conservation. For the ten-plus years the program has been co-coordinated by Tucson Audubon with Audubon Arizona. We have 46 designated IBAs in Arizona, of which 16 have the elevated status of Global IBA. With the dedicated work of many volunteers, we have successfully carried out the goal of creating and monitoring IBAs in the region.



Jonathan Horst hangs Eastern Bluebird box, Jennie MacFarland

As Arizona IBA enters its second decade, we are adding another focus to our activities. Teaming up with the ongoing restoration efforts at Tucson Audubon has helped Arizona IBA take the first steps in on-the-ground efforts to improve habitat for birds. Our first project was to install nestboxes in two existing IBAs and one proposed IBA for Eastern “Azure” Bluebirds, a specialty of southeast Arizona and

a focus species for the program. These bluebirds are still present in several Sky Islands such as the Patagonia Mountains, but historic accounts tell of them being common in the grasslands as well. This project attempts to provide the birds with suitable cavities in grass-

lands habitats such as Las Cienegas to facilitate their recolonization of these areas. This spring, we will be checking these nestboxes to see if bluebirds or other species utilize the provided nesting options. This program is still in its early stages, so stay tuned on outcomes and results!



Azure Bluebird, Jim Dolph

We also have several other volunteer opportunities planned for the upcoming season, including our very popular Elegant Trogon surveys. The survey of the Atascosa Highlands is scheduled for May 8, Santa Rita Mountains for May 21, Patagonia Mountains for May 22, Huachuca Mountains for May 28, and Chiricahua Mountains for May 29. This year, for the first time, we are adding an expedition to the Galiuro Mountains to search for the Elegant Trogons that were reported there last spring. We are planning a full season of great conservation activities for birds. For more information or to sign up, please visit aziba.org. ■

Tucson Birding Trail Map

At long last, the Tucson Birding Trail Map is here! The map complements the Southeast Arizona Birding Trail Map and our book *Finding Birds in Southeast Arizona*, but covers the Tucson metro area in much greater detail. The new map describes 45 locations to go birding around Tucson.

Maps are free at all Tucson Parks and Recreation Centers, our University Blvd. Nature Shop, our shop at Agua Caliente Park, and at Tucson Audubon’s Mason Center. The first printing of 5,000 copies is going fast. At our February “Tucson Meet Your Birds” event at Sweetwater Wetlands, the first day maps were available, we gave away about 375 of them. There is an online version available at tucsonaudubon.org/tucsonbirdtrail, but it does not yet contain all the information of the paper version. So come in now and get your copy!

The map was produced through a grant from Arizona Game and Fish Department’s Heritage Fund, with additional support from TPRD and in consultation with Tucson Audubon Society.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Alfred Altuna, Alia, Jerry, & Chris Moore, Alyce Pennington, Amy Anderson, Amy Dunmyre, Amy Jean Knorr, Ann Beck, Apache Springs Ranch Inc, Arofan Gregory, Barb & John Haymond, Barry Foster, Beverly B Goodwin & Jeffrey Rill, Bob Pahl, Bradley Leach, Brent Barber, Carol & Lonnie Haas, Carol & Neill Hollenshead, Carol & Ralph Currie, Cathryn Thorup, Charlie Buck, Courtney Crosson & Derek Lemoine, Craig Bowman, Craig Ottenstein, Curtis Bradley, David Ingram, Dawn Gunter, Dearing Household, Deb Johnson, Debra Hall & Charlie Dolezal, Debra Koss & Glenn Forchione, Dennis Rothrock, Denny Leonard, Diane & Jim Hays, Diane Breier, Don Dolga, Dori & Melvin Frankel, Doris Schoonmaker, Dusky Loebel, Earl Mendenhall, Edie Rens, Elizabeth & Charles Horn, Elizabeth & Inge Bartelsen, Ellayne Elias, Eris & John Armstrong, Eva Rad, Frederick Streams, G. Marie Swanson, Gail & Lee Rosenblum, Gary Garland & Paul Kreyling, George Nemeth, Glen Ostrender, Glenda & James Hughes, Heather Connally & Marty Fettman, Hebe Shipp, Helen Larsen, Helen Leslie Hall, Herbert Freeman, Ian Murray, Ine Van Kersen, Inman Gallogly, Irene Cohvin, James Standing, Jamie Ford, Jan Anderson, Jan Spell, Jane Lash, Jean Anderson, Jeffrey & Judith Bergfield, Jennifer Tate, Jesse Sherwood, Jo & Lance Dean, JoAnn McAllister, JoAnne Sapp, Jocelyn Knight, John Baffert, John Kwiatkowski, John Lauder, John Maguire, John Newman, John Sartin, John, Amy, & Marco Amoroso, Jolene Safford, Jolene Zuegner, Jorge Rivero, Joy Perry, Judith Bowen, Judy Callahan, Julia & Phil Rosen, Julia Rowe, Karen Ruhland & Susan Smith, Kari & Gary Kidd, Karl & Jeanne Newkirk, Kathleen Dubbs, Kathleen King & Michael Bertram, Kathleen Southern, Kathy & Jack Mattox, Katya Peterson & Pierre Landau, Kaye Crandall, Ken Blankenship, Ken Samuelson, Kris & Tyson Joye, Kym Fuhrig, Larry Hafner, Laura Davis, Laura Gronewold, Laura Gronewold & Chad Blair, Linda & Jim Dodge, Linda & Jim Work, Linda Gibson, Linda Maasch & Bob Reese, Lynn & Margaret Mitchell, Lynne Ann & Dana Gehm, Maggie Molloy, Marie & Jim Davis, Marsha Gary, Marty Hesla, Mary Curran-Perkins & Doug Perkins, Mary Ellis, Mary Harper, Mary Molinary, Mary Porter-Solberg & Steve Solberg, Michael Harris, Michael Tomulty, Michele Worthington, Mitzie & Ron Rakoce, Nan Thorngate, Nancy & George Mairs, Nancy & Michael Brown, Nancy Bent & Roger Reason, Nancy Jacques, Nancy Jorgensen, Naomi & George Adam, Nick Beauregard, Pat Mastrangelo, Patricia Curtis, Peg & Tom Wickliffe, Peggy & Chuck Gerba, Penelope Van Amburg, Priscilla & Dan Kirk, Reid Penland, Renae Stemper, Robin & Rob Ostermann, Ruth DeBruine, Ruthann & Joseph Sitter, Sandra & Woody Woods, Sara & Peter Juliano, Sharon & John Price, Sharon Leinenbach, Stephanie Frederick & Patrick Collins, Stephanie Speidel & Kris Eaton, Steve Harsy, Sue Hiabee, Susan & George Redpath, Suzanne & Alan Frank, Terry Lewis, Tim McCavitt, Trish Fowler, Walter Kokola, Wendy & Will High, Ying & Roy Gravel, Yvette Bolla & Bill Buckingham, Yvonne Endrizzi

THANK YOU TO OUR FREQUENT FLYERS

Nick Allison, Matt Bailey, Ardeth Barnhart, Melanie Builder, Shawn Burke, Karen Chandler, Janet Cohn, Mich Coker, Christine Curtis, Sandy Elers, Peggy Ford, Marlesa Gray, John Kennedy, Dorothy Kimball, Robert King, Susan Kozacek, Suzanne Long, Marcia Obara, Erin Olmstead, Lorel Picciurro, Deb Vath, Frances Ann Walker, Nancy Young Wright, Claire Zucker

Monthly giving through automatic credit card or bank withdrawals is convenient, secure, and simply one of the best ways you can support Tucson Audubon's programs. For more information, visit tucsonaudubon.org/give.

GIFTS IN HONOR/MEMORY

In honor of Ann Shoben from Ann Shoben
 In honor of Carol Bresnahan from Carol & Bill Bresnahan
 In honor of Charles Curtis from Joanne & Charles Curtis
 In honor of Charles MacCabe from Melissa Halpern
 In honor of Claire Zucker from Joan-Ellen Zucker
 In honor of Daryll Brosanders from Daryll Brosanders
 In honor of Don Macha from Claire & Don Macha
 In memory of Harrington Kerfoot Mason from Judith & Willett Gorham
 In honor of Hilary Hamlin from Jane Russell
 In honor of Joan Donnelly from Joan Donnelly & David Taylor
 In honor of Kimberlyn Drew from Susan & Alan Kendal
 In honor of Nancy Lyons from Clifford Lyons
 In honor of Prudy & Bob Bowers from Jon Bowers
 In memory of Shirley Rapp from Laurel Dambrosio
 In honor of Stephanie Duisberg from Stephanie Duisberg
 In honor of William Crosby from William Crosby

2016 MEMBERSHIP RAFFLE FREE!! Swarovski Binoculars

\$2,800 Value

Join Tucson Audubon... and see birds better

- **ALL NEW MEMBERS** automatically entered
- **CURRENT MEMBERS** entered each time you recruit a new member (ask your friends to share your name on their membership form)

- El 8.5X42
- Large field of view
- Edge-to-edge sharpness
- Versatile
- Bright images in poor light conditions



Drawing will take place on January 2, 2017

MEET THE AGUA CALIENTE PARK NATURE STORE VOLUNTEERS!

Pima County's Roy P. Drachman Agua Caliente Park is a 101-acre gem on the far eastern side of Tucson, home to a perennial warm spring that keeps two ponds filled with water and ducks. The surrounding park, recognized on the National Register of Historic Places, is full of trails, picnic sites, wildlife, and, of course, birds! The ranch house at Agua Caliente Park contains an art gallery for local artists and a small, but very active, Tucson Audubon Nature Shop. This wonderful little shop is completely run by a dedicated group of volunteers. Tucson Audubon appreciates their energy and devotion to this small but important part of our organization. Here is the crew!



Liz Harrison is the Captain of the crew. A transplant from the northeast, she has been in Tucson for 20 years. She built a house across the street from the park and became a volunteer there through Tucson Audubon. Liz loves being able to answer birders who ask, "What might I see?"



Icela Ricksecker, a native Tucsonan, was introduced to birds and nature through the Girl Scouts 60 years ago. She loved listening to bird songs as a young girl. This hobby eventually led her to Tucson Audubon, where she continues to enjoy her time helping others at the park.

Lexie Bivings was born in England but has lived in Tucson for the past 55 years. She was an avid hiker as she traveled through Switzerland, Ireland, and the Andes, but decided to "slow down" when she turned 81 and spend more time watching birds! She loves her time helping people at the shop.

Pam Emerson is another transplant from England and a relatively new volunteer with Tucson Audubon. She loves meeting other British people at the park and helping them find birds there.



R: Sharon Bale, L: Lexie Bivings

Sharon Bale has a lifelong love of nature, and when she saw Agua Caliente Park for the first time, she knew she wanted to spend more time in such a beautiful place. As luck would have it, Tucson Audubon was looking for new volunteers like her. Sharon loves the reliable birds at the park like the nesting Great Horned Owls and the Vermilion Flycatcher that hangs out near the picnic tables.



Rosie Bennett has been a resident of Tucson for only nine years but a lover of nature her whole life. She has been a Nature Shop volunteer for the past five years and enjoys hearing birding stories from the people that visit from all around the world.



R: Pam Emerson, L: Laura Cotter

Laura Cotter is a fourth generation Arizonan. She has always loved nature and spent her childhood trying to (unsuccessfully) lure vultures down from the sky. She has been a shop volunteer for almost a decade and still loves introducing new people to the park and the birds there.



Tom Rehm is a former member of the Tucson Audubon Board of Directors and is the resident carpenter for the shop. He has been generously building for us since 1972! Tom discovered his love of nature when his family moved to San Juan Island when he was a teenager and he was surrounded by trees, water, wildlife, and birds.

Tucson Audubon is very grateful for the energy and dedication that this group of volunteers shows year after year in this special little corner of our beautiful desert!

WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS!

Leslie Baird	Cassidy Mott
Kenneth Blankenship	Caitlin Smith
Sherman Bodner	Ken Stebbins
Phyllis Dean	Sarah Tarver-Wahlquist
Lance Dean	Stephen Vaughan
Juan Pablo Jorquera	

Please email or call if you would like to Volunteer for Tucson Audubon!

volunteer@tucsonaudubon.org
520-209-1811
tucsonaudubon.org/volunteer

Spring in the Sky Islands

Nick Beauregard, Paton Center Coordinator



Winter high in the Sky Islands gives way to..., Nick Beauregard



Lush spring growth in the lowlands, Nick Beauregard



Rufous Hummingbird, Lois Manowitz

It's early spring and I'm walking through a snowy forest of pine and fir trees. On this hike I see jays, chickadees, and juncos—all birds that remind me of the north woods of New England where I grew up. I hike uphill until I reach the rocky summit of a mountain and look out into the distance. Instantly the view of the expansive brown desert lowlands tells me that this is definitely not New England.

I am standing atop Mt. Wrightson, the highest point of the Santa Rita Mountains in the Sky Islands region of southeast Arizona. At over 9,000 feet above sea level, the climate here is cool enough to support a forest resembling that of the boreal forest in Canada. Upon closer inspection, though, the birds I saw on this hike aren't my familiar friends from New England at all, but rather their western counterparts. The jay is a Stellar's Jay, the chickadee a Mountain Chickadee, and that junco's eyes tell me it must be the Yellow-eyed Junco, a bird of the Madrean woodlands of Mexico and southeast Arizona.

Hiking back down the mountain toward the trailhead, I look to the east and see a ribbon of green cottonwood trees running through a valley between the Santa Rita Mountains and the neighboring Patagonia Mountains. Just like the coniferous forest atop Mt. Wrightson, the riparian forest of Sonoita Creek is in the perfect location to harbor birds that barely extend their ranges this far north from Mexico's Sierra Madre, or this far south from the Rocky



Yellow-eyed Junco, Jeremy Hayes

Mountains. Nestled in this lush riparian oasis is the community of Patagonia, where Wally and Marion Paton began feeding birds in the early 70's. Over 40 years later, Sonoita Creek is one of the most famous places in the region for finding

southeast Arizona rarities, and I feel lucky to work as the Coordinator and on-site caretaker for this spectacular birding haven.



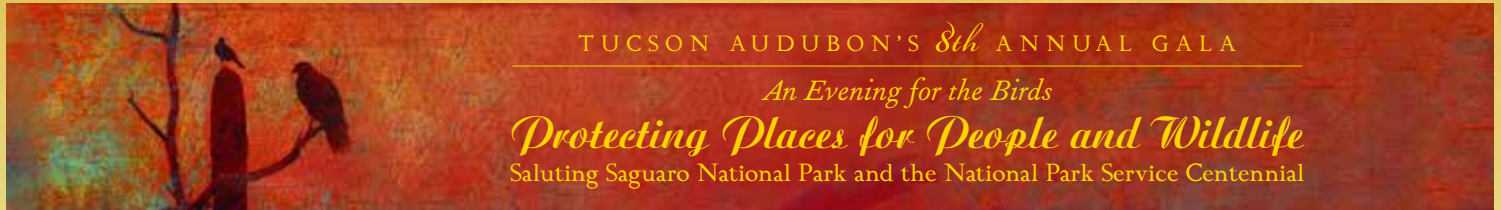
Broad-billed Hummingbird, Dan Weisz

Spring migration has always been my favorite time of year. In the northeast, it's the warblers that fascinate me; here at the Paton Center it's the hummingbirds that catch my attention as the Broad-billed, Rufous, Broad-tailed, Black-chinned, Calliope, and other species travel along this Sonoita Creek 'ribbon of green' in search of a summer breeding territories. Feeding on native flowers and the bird feeders sprinkled throughout the Paton Center property, they mesmerize me and the many visitors that come here to see the show. Spring is certainly one of the best times to make a trip to the Paton Center, as the hummingbirds concentrate here in their highest numbers during their migration.

All throughout the region, the lengthening of days and warming weather changes the avian composition of the landscape. While I truly feel lucky to live and work at one of the best yards to find birds in the southwest, I can't help but want to explore all of the mountains, deserts, and streams in search of even more birds. Now that the low deserts are heating up and the snow has melted on the high peaks, it seems appropriate to head back up into the cool mountain forests in search of Elegant Trogons, Mexican Spotted Owls, Blue-throated Hummingbirds, and my old friend the Yellow-eyed Junco. For me, getting out into the mountains and finding Sky Island specialties like these makes living in this region so worthwhile. But sometimes it's just as rewarding to sit in the Paton Center yard and watch the hummingbirds dart around the feeders and flowers, fueling their incredible migration north. 🇺🇸

Thank you to all our sponsors, attendees, partners, and silent auction and mystery wine raffle donors for supporting us in our celebration of the National Park Centennial at our 8th Annual Gala: An Evening for the Birds; Protecting Places for People and Wildlife.

Our sponsors for the evening: Mickey & Marty Baumrind, Circle Z Ranch, Tucson Electric Power, Farmers Investment Company/Crown Community Development, Western National Parks Association, Vicki & Jim Click, Ed Curley, Kimberlyn Drew & Andy Moore, Sandy & Karl Elers, Debra Finch, Julie & Mark Gordon, Chris & Doug McVie, Cynthia Pruett, Alice & Bill Roe, Diet of Hope Institute, Financial Architects, and Solipaso Tours.



Clockwise from top left: Keith Ashley and Karen Fogas flank local conservation advocates. Speaker Nancy Laney and Gala MC Kimberlyn Drew. Saguaro National Park staff. Steve and Ruth Russell, Wanda Wynn and Craig Marken with Jennie MacFarland. Les Corey and Saguaro Superintendent Darla Sidles. Liz Biss and Bete Jones. Karen Fogas and Kimberlyn Drew. Harris's Hawk with Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum staff. Maia Stark and Shari Montgomery. By Gary Mencimer and Matt Griffiths.

BOARD ELECTIONS

The slate of candidates for election to the Tucson Audubon Board is as follows.

For election to their first three-year term—class of 2019:

Laurens Halsey
Deb Vath

For reelection to her second three-year term—class of 2019:

Nancy Young Wright

Tucson Audubon will hold its Annual Members' Meeting on Monday, April 11th at 6:00 PM in the Amethyst Room at the Pima Community College, Downtown Campus, 1255 North Stone Ave., Tucson, AZ 85709 (NW corner of Stone and Speedway).

Laurens Halsey (member since 2009) has been passionate about (or maybe obsessed with!) birds and birding for practically his entire life. His interest in birding was inspired by his parents, whom he delighted with his identification of an Indigo Bunting at the age of four (pronounced "Indian Bunny"). Laurens owns Desert Harrier Guiding Services and conducts day guiding and private tours throughout southeast Arizona and beyond. Laurens is a voting member of the Arizona Bird Committee, volunteers for Tucson Audubon and the Friends of Madera Canyon, and is a regional eBird reviewer.

Deb Vath (member since 2008) has been an elementary and middle-school teacher/librarian for most of her professional career. Noting that children rarely engage in outdoor activities after her career working with youth, as a volunteer Deb has made it her mission to mentor students and provide opportunities for them to enjoy and appreciate southeast Arizona's great outdoors. With the support of Tucson Audubon in 2013, she developed the Trekking Rattlers, a local middle school student group that offers monthly nature outings to underprivileged youth. Deb also offers birding opportunities to various youth groups in the Tucson Valley.

HOW OUR REGIONAL SPECIALTY BIRDS FIT INTO THE WORLD OF BIRDING

Elf Owl and Rufous-Backed Robin

Scott Olmstead

In this column we look at some of our southeast Arizona borderlands specialty bird species. We are proud of the birds that make our region unique and birders from all over the US travel to southeast Arizona to add birds to their life lists. But outside of the context of southeast Arizona, are these birds really a big deal? Here we take a broader look at some of our iconic species, and then poll a panel of international birding tour leaders to find out if these birds are really essential “ticks” from a world birding perspective. Remember: there are over 10,000 species of birds in the world!

Elf Owl (*Micrathene whitneyi*)



Elf Owl, Scott Olmstead

Instantly recognizable to virtually everyone around the world, owls inspire fascination among birders and non-birders alike. The two owl families (Barn Owls constitute their own separate family, the Tytonidae) are widely distributed across all the continents except Antarctica. The true owl family (Strigidae) contains the vast majority of the owl species (close to

200 species), and they come in a vast range of sizes. Owls can be found from the Arctic tundra to Tierra del Fuego and in almost every habitat in between.

Southeast Arizona is home to a whopping 11 breeding owl species, and another two species visit in winter, making our region one of the most well-known owling destinations in the US. For me the most iconic of our local owls is the tiny Elf Owl, which is the only species in its genus. At just 5.75" long and 1.4 oz. in weight, the insect-eating Elf Owl is generally considered the smallest owl in the world! Elf Owls can be found in arid and semi-arid habitats across much of the southwestern US. In the cooler months, Elf Owls completely vacate their breeding range and migrate to southern Mexico. Like many of the smaller owls, Elf Owls make their nests in cavities, usually in trees. However, in the Sonoran Desert they have adapted to nest in Gila Woodpecker cavities in saguaros, making them a very Tucsonan owl indeed!

Rufous-backed Robin (*Turdus rufopalliatus*)

Like the more familiar American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), the Rufous-backed Robin is member of the thrush family (Turdidae), a family with a worldwide distribution like owls. North America got a fairly short straw when it comes to thrush species richness in general, and especially the genus *Turdus*; American Robin is the only *Turdus* thrush residing year-round in the US. However, if we expand our lens we can see the genus has experienced impressive speciation in other regions. Diversity is highest in Asia and South America: Colombia has 17 *Turdus* species, while China boasts a collection of 22. Like baseball caps and cell phone cases, *Turdus* seems to come in an infinite variety of colors and patterns, although most species blend tones of gray, brown, black, and orange. The Red-legged Thrush pictured below inhabits the Caribbean.



Red-legged Thrush (*Turdus plumbeus*), Ekaterina Chernetsova

Rufous-backed Robins live and breed in western Mexico and feed on a seasonal mix of invertebrates (such as insects) and fruit. According to *Rare Birds of North America*, the individuals that sporadically arrive to southeast Arizona are probably escaping cold winter temperatures in the mountains. Could you pick a Rufous-backed out of a lineup with other robins and thrushes? When Rufous-backed Robins are present and reliably seen, as one has been this winter at Catalina State Park, they draw birders from all over the US looking to add a tick to their life or year list.

Our tour leader panel this time was comprised of Chris Benesh of Field Guides, Gavin Bieber of Wings Birding Tours, and John Yerger of Borderland Tours. By a 3-0 vote, they suggested the Rufous-backed Robin is not an essential tick here in southeast Arizona as it's much easier to see in western Mexico. The tiny and unique Elf Owl, however, was voted a “big deal” bird by a margin of 2-1, since southeast Arizona is one of the best places to see it. Don't miss out! ■

Scott Olmstead is a high school teacher here in Tucson, as well as a part-time tour leader for Tropical Birding Tours. Scott reports there is still room to sign up for his Costa Rica trip this July. See tropicalbirding.com or email Scott at sparverius81@hotmail.com for details.

Baja: Birds, Boojums, and Ballenas Bob Bowers

Spy-hopping Gray Whale in Ojo de Liebre Lagoon, Bob and Prudy Bowers



50-foot Boojum Tree, Baja California, Bob and Prudy Bowers



Xantus' Hummingbirds, Baja California Sur



Of the four U.S. states that border Mexico, Arizona ranks second only to Texas in border length. Ninety-five percent of our international border is with the Mexican state of Sonora, but for a short 19 miles along the Colorado River, we also connect with Baja California. The Baja Peninsula actually consists of two nearly equally sized states, with Baja California Sur as the lower half of the peninsula. Even though the two states combined are less than half the size of Arizona, Baja's attractions are disproportionately rewarding. The 2,500-mile coastline is nearly twice Arizona's landlocked boundary, and this maze of beaches, bays, and coves that fronts both the Sea of Cortez and the Pacific Ocean is rich with shorebirds and pelagics. Inland, the peninsula's Sierra de Baja climbs 10,000 feet above sea level, establishing three distinct weather patterns and birdlife to match: Mediterranean to the northwest, humid highlands and valleys along the north central backbone, and deserts to the east and south.



Gray Thrasher, Tom Benson

If you picture Baja as a dusty wasteland suitable for little more than endurance racing, you're in for quite a surprise.

You'll drive farther to explore Baja than Sonora, but Arizona's second Mexican border state offers a plateful of opportunities, birding and otherwise, not found in Sonora. You can sample both peninsula states in an 18-hour, 933-mile road trip from Tucson to San Ignacio. Sure, that's twice the distance and time to get to Alamos, but consider these highlights: Western U.S. birds including California Quail, Thrasher, Towhee and Gnatcatcher; Tricolored Blackbird, Wrentit, Golden-crowned Sparrow; Nuttall's Woodpecker and Varied Thrush; plus three endemics: Gray Thrasher, Xantus's Hummingbird, and Belding's Yellowthroat (as well as a number of endemic subspecies which may qualify as separate species). All of the birds listed above can be found along the drive from the border town of Tecate to San Ignacio in Baja California Sur. Additionally, there are more than 100 eBird hotspots in each of the two Baja peninsula states and 23 IBAs within the peninsula and its islands. 438 species are listed on eBird for the northern state, with 38 hotspots of at least 100 species, and 411 species for the southern state



Beldings Yellowthroat, Amy McAndrews

with 35 hotspots of 100 or more. Nearly 10,000 eBird checklists have been submitted for each state, and although the peninsula stretches for 760 miles north to south, its narrow 28-143 mile width provides easy access to both the Pacific Ocean and Sea of Cortez. Furthermore, birding is relatively easy since most of the hotspots are concentrated around Highway 1, the primary north-south artery.

The frosting on this birding cake is that the 553-mile drive from the border town of Tecate to San Ignacio is as spectacularly beautiful as it is unique. You pass through rolling hills of olive trees and vineyards in Guadalupe Valley, Mexico's premier winemaking region, then enjoy the Pacific Ocean at Ensenada and climb into the mountains at El Rosario where a forest of boojum trees flourishes among countless botanic wonders for 200 miles. Across the border of Baja California Sur lies Guerrero Negro, Vizcaino Bay, and Laguna de Ojo Liebre, the largest and most prolific of Baja's shallow water gray whale nurseries. 70,000-pound females give birth to 2,000-pound babies in this 10-25 foot deep lagoon, nursing them until they're strong enough the 5,000 mile migration back to their summer range in the Bering Sea. When we were last here in February, there were 2,080 whales in this shallow lagoon, and nearly 900 of them were newborns. If your birding trip takes place between January and March, a 50 dollar boat tour will put you up close and personal with these wonderful whales.

The entire peninsula, this remarkable and magical gem of natural history, was offered to the United States in 1917 for 50 million dollars. Maybe we should be thankful that deal fell through. ■

Bob writes nature and travel articles. He writes a birding column for an Arizona newspaper, and he and his wife, Prudy, travel and bird extensively throughout Mexico. His email is bobandpru@aol.com

ENGAGE WITH BIRDS IN 2016

HABITAT AT HOME

Provide resources for birds in your own yard using our new program

Kendall Kroesen, *Bringing Birds Home Program Manager*

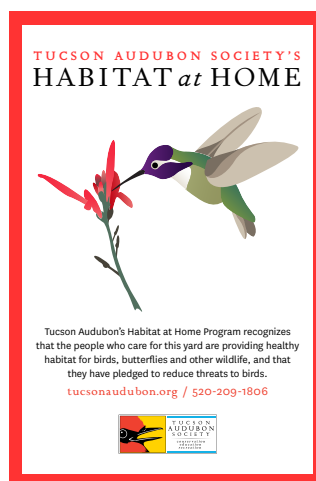
Do you want to engage with birds? Start where you live! Now Tucson Audubon recognizes your efforts to create habitat in your yard through our Habitat at Home program.

Of course we need to preserve and restore remote wild places, but many of the easiest changes to improve the lives of birds are right in your own backyard. You can make habitat in your yard. You can harvest rainwater, and use gray water, and cut your energy use.

The list of specific things you can do for birds at home is long and includes several categories such as incorporating native plants, habitat structure, and water while removing invasive plants and reducing pesticides. But you don't have to do them all or all at once. Even a few small changes will earn you the Hummingbirds at Home level of recognition. Your family can enjoy this easy-to-achieve status with a certificate from Tucson Audubon in recognition of your efforts. The *Goldfinch at Home*, *Thrasher at Home*, and *Cardinal at Home* levels require more work, rewarded with an attractive recognition sign that you can post in your yard. This sign says to passersby that you care about birds and the environment.

The cornerstone of these efforts is native plants. Plants that originated in our area co-evolved with our birds to provide food, shelter, and nesting opportunities. More importantly, they host native insects, which are the most important food for many of our bird species, especially when

raising young. A native-plant yard gives birds a fighting chance, and it also gives your yard a Sonoran sense of place. Learning about the many beautiful native plants available for landscaping is almost as fun as seeing the birds.



The best thing about our Habitat at Home program is that, by enrolling, you create a relationship with Tucson Audubon. We bring you and your family information about habitat and backyard birds and will continue to update you with the latest information about what you can do for birds and biodiversity.

The Habitat at Home program is now active and accepting enrollment. To see all of our information on bird-friendly yards and communities, and to enroll, visit tucsonaudubon.org/bringingbirdshome. ■

HABITAT AT HOME CLASS See page 2 for details
Saturday, April 16, 9–11 am at Tucson Audubon's Mason Center

TUCSON BIRD COUNT 2016— URBAN BIRDING TO BENEFIT BIRDS

Jennie MacFarland, *Bird Conservation Biologist*

Urban birding has received a lot of attention lately as a great option to see birds close to home. You can often find some very exciting migrant and wintering bird species in parks and lush landscapes right here within Tucson and Green Valley. Urban birding is also often more accessible to underserved communities and young people.

But why is urban habitat attractive to so many bird species? Often, landscaping can be a better food source for native birds in terms

of fruit-producing plants (such as hackberry and pyracantha) than the surrounding native habitat. Birds may also find more insect prey in an urban setting due to the extra water these landscapes receive—and of course, some of us supplement the natural food supply with feeders. On the other hand, we have all experienced the “dead zones” of empty dirt lots in Tucson that barely support any life form, let alone native birds. Determining where birds thrive and where they struggle brings us to the bird count.

The Tucson Bird Count is a citizen science project that began at the University of Arizona in 2001 and has been coordinated by Tucson Audubon for the last four years. The goal of the count is to study which parts of Tucson are utilized by native birds and which parts are not to determine what features make urban habitat useful to native birds. When we have this information, we can work to make more of Tucson into productive urban habitat. This effort has already begun with our five recipe



cards to bring native birds into your yard. Tucson Audubon and our partner, Saguaro National Park, have been getting these cards out into the community to encourage residents to create more urban habitat to support resident and migratory birds. The bird habitat recipe cards are available at the Tucson Audubon Nature Shop. If you would like to help with the volunteer bird count that makes all of this possible, visit tucsonaudubon.org/tbc. ■

“Engage with Birds in 2016” continues on page 17

TUCSON AUDUBON SOCIETY'S 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

We are pleased to share the 2015 Annual Report for the Tucson Audubon Society which highlights our many accomplishments since Karen Fogas arrived just one year ago as Executive Director. We appreciate your passion and commitment to Tucson Audubon as we strive to enjoy and protect birds and the precious habitats entrusted to us here in southeast Arizona.

Tucson Audubon is blessed with an amazing collection of highly talented and dedicated board leaders, staff, and volunteers. The depth of knowledge, significant achievements, visionary leadership, and steadfast commitment demonstrated by the Tucson Audubon Board of Directors is an incredible asset to the organization and the community. We are inspired and gratified by their work on behalf of the organization's mission.

The Tucson Audubon staff is a group of incredibly talented, dedicated, and intelligent individuals whose collective efforts account for far more high-quality, impactful accomplishments on behalf of birds and the environment than one could reasonably expect from such a small handful of people. Over and over, we witness the evolution and refinement of good ideas into excellent work and conservation success. What an honor it is to encourage and support this amazing team of professionals.

But as much as the board and staff contribute to the organization, volunteers provide the lifeblood of our programs, making Tucson Audubon the vital and exciting organization that it is today. Our members and volunteers make the critical difference between success and mediocrity, extending our outreach and making possible the many impressive achievements and conservation outcomes you will read about in this report. Volunteers are integral to our organization and essential to generating the enthusiasm, good ideas, and capacity

required to implement our mission. We salute each and every volunteer for their unselfish commitment and dedication to Tucson Audubon.

This past year brought significant change to Tucson Audubon as we carefully analyzed and realigned our resources and priorities to ensure our relevance to the community and responsibility to our core mission. With a new Executive Director and Board President, we brought about a carefully considered organizational restructuring, executed a strategic plan update to guide our work for multiple years, and refocused our mission statement to better describe our work. Each of these activities required the thoughtful participation of members and volunteers, who shared ideas and experiences; staff, who contributed expertise and historical/ organizational knowledge; and the Board, who participated collectively as responsible leaders on behalf of the community. We believe the resulting plan positions Tucson Audubon to be an even more effective voice for conservation as well as a fun and relevant place to learn about birds and wildlife.

Please join us in celebrating what we have accomplished together in 2015 and continue to actively participate and support us as our work unfolds over the upcoming years. Together, we are a strong voice for birds, wildlife and for the habitat that sustains us all. Thank you.



Les Corey, President



Karen Fogas, Executive Director



Matt Clark



Tucson Meet Your Birds at Sweetwater Wetlands, Mary Zalokar



Sonoran Joint Venture, Ironwood Tree Experience



Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Tom Kaestner

Tucson Audubon inspires people to enjoy and protect birds through recreation, education, conservation, and restoration of the environment upon which we all depend.



Recreation

Inspiring joy through a love for birds has always been a focus of Tucson Audubon Society. An appreciation of birds supports our mission by encouraging citizen involvement in their protection and the protection of the environment upon which we all depend.

In 2015, Tucson Audubon provided opportunities to grow in appreciation for birds in our region through:

- 172 free field trips offered by our 48 volunteer field trip leaders to over 45 different locations in Southeast Arizona, including trips led by volunteers at the Southeast Arizona Birding Festival, with 575 total attendees;
- One special trip into Mexico along the Rio Sonora to learn about birds, habitat, and the local communities, with 22 participants;
- 52 Rare Bird Alert reports, compiled by volunteers and updated on our website and through our phone system, based on submissions via the AZ/NM Listserv and directly through birdwatchers.

Our annual **Southeast Arizona Birding Festival** encourages local, out-of-state, and out-of-country visitors to value the incredible collection of bird species found in Southeast Arizona. During our Festival, we:

- **Welcomed over 800 attendees** to our Festival activities, from in- and out-of-state;
- Offered 30 field trips that were attended by over 300 participants;
- Greeted over 500 attendees to the Vendor Expo and free talks.

Education & Engagement

Connecting people to birds and habitat increases knowledge of the importance of birds to our region, and participating in educational activities increases dedication to supporting the goal of conserving habitat for birds.

In 2015, **Tucson Audubon offered an abundance of opportunities** for our members, visitors, and the public to learn, engage and support birds, including:

- 19 free presentations about nature and birds in our region and beyond, open to members and non-members in Tucson, Green Valley, and Patagonia, with over 750 in attendance;
- 13 education classes and workshops offered to over 140 participants on a range of topics, including Access to Birding Areas, Museum Birding, Southwestern Owls, Wild Bird Feeding, Birds and Conservation, Bats, Backyard Birding, Gardening to Attract Birds, Birding by Ear, Birding Identification Skills, Birding by Habitat, and Sparrows and Raptors
- **Over 5,000 members and visitors welcomed** by our staff and volunteers

to our Nature Shops, which provided items to further their love and enjoyment of birds and nature, including 285 pairs of binoculars, 495 field guides, and 238 memberships;

- **Keeping our members and the community informed:** Rare Bird Alert visited over 31,000 times; 318,000 webpage views and 124,000 visits (a 24% increase over 2014); 13,000 distributed copies of our Vermilion Flycatcher magazine; over 3400 people receiving our weekly electronic newsletter; 29 Blog posts read by over 5100 people; and over 8800 combined likes to our Facebook pages; **Over 20,000 visitors welcomed** to our Paton Center for Hummingbirds;
- 1500 "Recipe Cards" developed and distributed to help local residents learn about the types of plants to include in yard landscaping that help support habitat and food sources for our desert birds.

Tucson Audubon also expanded our **nest box test program** in hope of providing nesting spots to birds that are losing habitat to development to include:

- Four nest box building workshops with over 70 participants;
- **55 nest boxes built**, deployed directly into neighborhoods and backyards or sold through our Nature Shops. Nesting success was recorded in four of the nest boxes through statistics captured on nestwatch.org.

Working with children is especially important to encourage future generations to love and appreciate southeast Arizona's birds and their habitats. In 2015, we engaged children and students through classes such as nest box building, special bird watching field trips, and programs in local schools. Our Growing Skills for the Green Economy program and Trekking Rattlers Hiking and Birding Club successes in 2015 include:

- 1,830 hours dedicated by Tucson Audubon staff and by teachers and students at Changemaker High School;
 - Three greenhouses and shade houses build for growing native plants
 - Four rainwater-harvesting cisterns and eight rain gardens installed and planted with 185 native plants, providing 7,500 gallons of rainwater harvesting capacity;
 - Two acres cleared of invasive plant species and planted with 400 pots of native plants;
 - One community event to sell student-grown native plants;
 - Two student trips to regional restoration projects for cross-pollination learning;
- **One class added to Changemaker High School curriculum dedicated to Restorative Ecology.**
- 74 students at Billy-Lane Lauffer Middle School participated in the Trekking Rattlers club
- 41 volunteers providing a total of 328 hours to support seven outings for the Trekking Rattlers group;



Without **Volunteers**, our work and Mission would be impossible and we cannot thank our volunteers enough for giving so much and for sharing the love of birds! In 2015, Tucson Audubon and our volunteers supported:

- Over 200 volunteer opportunities in 26 different areas, some of which are: Nature Shops, bird surveys, membership, Festival, Gala, restoration work, library, and outreach
- 650 active volunteers;
- Over 11,000 volunteer hours.
- Creating a trail connecting the Paton Center for Hummingbirds with the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve;
- Providing and setting up the hummingbird and suet cams at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds;
- Arriving at 4:00 am to prepare vans for field trips at our Festival, and filling over 30 different volunteer roles throughout the day;
- Nurturing an urban garden at our University Blvd. office location;
- Caring for and maintaining Mason Center grounds;
- Cataloging and maintaining our University Blvd. library;
- Weekly Rare Bird Alert compilation and posting;
- Organizing our Gala event.

Conservation

We cannot continue to enjoy the diversity of species and the beauty of Southeast Arizona without working to **protect our natural areas and support the birds and other wildlife that depend on these environments**. Our staff and volunteers work tirelessly to ensure we are directly involved in conservation efforts through surveying, issuing formal comments on policy, supporting policy that protects the biodiversity of this region and engaging on issues affecting Important Bird Areas and sensitive bird habitats in Arizona. Of the many conservation efforts we led in 2015, some highlights are:

- Over 3,000 hours of survey time by 150 volunteers in our Important Bird Areas (IBA) program, which is one of most active and involved IBA programs in the United States; in 2015 we monitored 46 IBA areas in Arizona, 16 of which have Global Status;
- **Over 1,500 point count surveys** to document the threatened Yellow-billed Cuckoo habitat, including over 950 hours of survey time and 40 routes covered by 50 volunteers, concluding in formal documentation to support designation of Critical Habitat;
- 359,265 individual birds counted by 59 volunteers during 1,147 point count surveys for the Tucson Bird Count;
- 50 Azure Bluebird nest boxes installed in six different vineyards in the Sonoita, AZ area.

- Lead author in **125 pages of comments directed to decision and policy makers**;
- Joint supporter of 185 pages of coalition letters on a range of issues;
- Author of five Conservation Action Alerts that generated over 1,800 letters and emails to decision makers on key conservation issues.

Restoration

Tucson Audubon also **works directly on the ground restoring lands that provide habitat for birds**. Restoration efforts are mainly concentrated along riparian areas, as improving habitat along waterways is one of the most efficient ways to support birds and other wildlife. In 2015, Tucson Audubon's Restoration crew and volunteers:

- Planted over 700 plants and 12 fruiting trees for birds and wildlife at our Paton Center for Hummingbirds;
- Wrote three resource brief reports provided to the Sky Islands Restoration Cooperative and one presentation to the Society for Ecological Restoration on Restoration in Novel Environments;
- Planned two re-vegetation, native-plant salvage, and vegetation management projects for local businesses, with baseline documentation report for El Coronado Ranch Forestry Easement;
- Developed a plan for Tucson Audubon to mitigate development impacts statewide and began work on our first independent mitigation project along the lower Santa Cruz River.

Our Atturbury Wash Riparian Stewardship Project was completed in 2015, with dozens of local schools and community organizations pitching in to restore this riparian area and beautify the local park nearby. This project resulted in:

- 950 native plants planted and 12 major stream restoration structures composed;
- Seven demonstration water-harvesting rain gardens;
- 74 hand-laid rock water-harvesting structures;
- Over 2,000 volunteer hours; 20 volunteer work days;
- 365 site tours, 12 of which were recreational birding field trips;
- Six high school education events;
- **One long-term natural resource monitoring education program set up at nearby Santa Rita High School.**

Tucson Audubon Society would like to applaud all of our members, donors, volunteers, staff, supporters, partners and interested visitors who supported all of the amazing activities carried out by Tucson Audubon Society in 2015!



Officers, Board and Staff

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 Debra Finch - Retired
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 Kathy Jacobs - Director of Center for Climate Adaptation Science and Solutions with the Institute of the Environment
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 Nancy Young Wright - former AZ legislator

STAFF

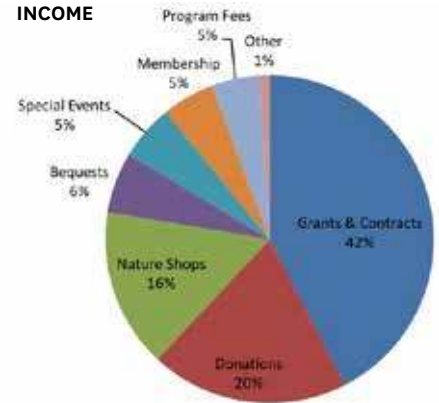
Keith Ashley, Resource Development Director - 3 years
 Nick Beaugard, Paton Center Coordinator - 3 months
 Andy Bennett, Restoration Project Manager and K-12 Coordinator - 5 years
 Matt Clark, Conservation Policy Analyst - 3 years
 Karen Fogas, Executive Director - 1 year
 Matt Griffiths, Digital Media Coordinator - 10 years
 Jonathan Horst, Conservation Director - 4 years
 Bete Jones, Former Events Manager - 5 years
 Mark Krietemeyer, Finance Director - 3 months
 Kendall Kroesen, Bringing Birds Home Program Manager - 14 years
 Daniel Lehman, Restoration Crew - 8 years
 Rodd Lancaster, Field Crew Supervisor - 14 years
 Sharon Long, Former Volunteer Coordinator - 2 years
 Jennie MacFarland, Bird Conservation Biologist - 6 years
 Kimberly Matsushino, Retail & Operations Assistant - 6 months
 Olya Phillips, Bird Survey Assistant - 1 year
 Sara Pike, Marketing & Operations Director - 11 years
 Diana Rosenblum, Membership Coordinator - 2 years
 Sarah Whelan, Retail Coordinator - 2 years

Tucson Audubon Society Income & Expenses Summary

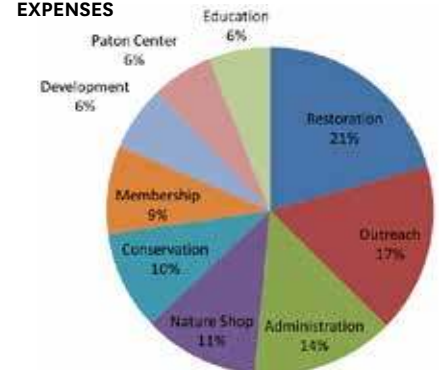
For the Year Ended December 31, 2015

Income	\$1,677,840
Expenses	(1,656,602)
Investment Activity	(12,470)
NET	\$8,768

INCOME



EXPENSES



Tucson Audubon Society Board of Directors



Tucson Audubon Society Staff

Partners in Conservation

American Bird Conservancy
 Arizona Bird Conservation Initiative
 Arizona Field Ornithologists
 Arizona Game and Fish Department
 Arizona Land and Water Trust
 Arizona League of Conversation Voters
 Arizona Mining Reform Coalition
 Arizona Native Plant Society
 Arizona State Forestry
 Arizona Water Protection Fund
 Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum
 Audubon Arizona
 Audubon Urban Chapter Network
 Billy Lane Lauffer Middle School
 Biosphere 2
 Borderlands Restoration
 Bureau of Land Management
 Care2Enhance
 Cascabel Conservation Association
 Center for Biological Diversity
 Changemaker High School
 Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection
 Community Water Coalition
 Conserve to Enhance

Cornell Lab of Ornithology
 Coronado National Forest
 City of Tucson Parks and Recreation
 City of Tucson Office of the Mayor
 City of Tucson Clean and Beautiful
 City of Tucson Office of Economic Development
 City of Tucson Ward Offices 1-6
 Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative
 Desert Survivors
 Earthjustice
 Environmental Education Exchange
 Farmers Investment Company
 Friends of the San Pedro River
 Green Valley Recreation, Inc.
 Huachuca Audubon Society
 Inspiring Connections Outdoors
 Ironwood Tree Experience
 Lower San Pedro Watershed Alliance
 Manzo Elementary School
 Maricopa Audubon Society
 Mountain View High School
 National Audubon
 National Park Service
 National Parks Conservation Association

Nature and Conservation International
 Nighthawk Natives
 Native Seeds/SEARCH
 Patagonia Area Resource Alliance
 Pima Association of Governments
 Pima Community College
 Pima County Department of Sustainability
 Pima County Department of Community and Economic Development
 Pima County Natural Resources, Parks, and Recreation
 Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department
 Pima County Regional Flood Control District
 Sam Hughes Elementary School
 Santa Cruz County
 Santa Rita High School
 Save the Scenic Santa Ritas
 Sierra Club, Grand Canyon Chapter
 Sky Island Alliance
 Sky Island Restoration Partnership
 Sky Island School
 Sonoran Institute
 Sonoran Joint Venture

Southwest Conservation Corps
 The Nature Conservancy
 The Wilderness Society
 Town of Marana
 Toyota TogetherGreen
 Trees for Tucson
 Trust for Public Land
 Tucson Water
 Tumamoc: People and Habitats
 University of Arizona Institute of the Environment
 University of Arizona Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
 University of Arizona School of Natural Resources and the Environment
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
 U.S. Forest Service
 Victor Emanuel Nature Tours
 Watershed Management Group
 Western Rivers Action Network
 Wildlands Network

“Engage with Birds in 2016” continued from page 12

BIRDATHON: COMPETITIVE, CASUAL, CREATIVE —BUT FOREVER A FUNRAISER

Keith Ashley, Resource Development Director

When competitive and casual teams come together to have fun and raise money for a cause they believe in, the results are extraordinary—but it’s worth noting that Birdathon is the Tucson Audubon FUNraiser that almost never took flight...

MEET RUTH RUSSELL: TUCSON AUDUBON BIRDATHON FOUNDER

Board Member Ruth Russell is the obvious go-to person for Birdathon history. Not only is she one of the event’s founders, but she has also participated annually for 29 years running! And here’s the beautiful secret: in 1987, when Ruth recommended Birdathon be adopted as an official event by the Tucson Audubon Board of Directors, they all voted against it—even her husband, Steve. She decided to hold a small, unofficial Birdathon anyway just for fun. And the rest is history...

Despite his “no” vote, Steve ended up leading Ruth’s team (the Coots) and four more local teams formed to compete (the Larks, the Becards, the Eagles, and the Kingbirds). Each of the five teams had three members: two birders and one recorder. Teams only birded for six hours each, but their star-studded cast knew where to find the birds. A few of the participants were John Bates, ornithologist and now associate curator of the Chicago Field Museum; Kenn Kaufman, acclaimed birder and author of *Kingbird Highway*; Gale Monson, “the father of modern Arizona field ornithology”; and Steve Russell, retired University of Arizona professor and researcher in ecology and evolutionary biology. Also on board was Arnie Moorhouse, at that time the organizer of the Christmas Bird Count in Elfrida.

Ruth describes Arnie: “He, for instance, knew where to find every single Barn Owl in his territory. He counted 57 one year. Arnie would give you directions to some deep hole in the ground. You’d look in and sure enough, there was a Barn Owl roosting.” Arnie proved to be the Coots’ ace in the hole. The team won the competition by spotting 138 species in just six hours. Total Birdathon donations for the event came out to \$2,190.

BIRDATHON: COMPETITIVE, CASUAL, CREATIVE

There are as many different approaches to Birdathon as there are different ways to love birds. Last year’s prize-winning team, the Wrenegades, saw 163 species. (Team member Tim Helentjaris points to Sara Pike’s “Just one more bird, just one more bird!” as the key to their success). Debbie and Tom Callazo, a decidedly more casual team, took their dog Blue out with them and included both an “American Rooster” from Barrio Hollwood and a Great-Horned Owl of the plastic roof-top variety among their 45 sightings.

In her 29 years of Birdathon participation, Ruth has run the gamut of approaches—but she clearly excels at the creative Birdathon. “We once held a strictly warbler Birdathon, beginning in Mexico, and ended up with 50 species,” she explains. “Another time we counted how many hummingbirds we could band in a day.”

Ruth always kicks off the Birdathon season with a letter to her supporters informing them of the nature of the year’s Birdathon—and to let them know why it is so important to her to raise money to support the work of Tucson Audubon. ■



Ruth Russell



Debbie and Tom Callazo

TUCSON AUDUBON SOCIETY 
BIRDING for the BIRDS

BIRDATHON 2016 | APRIL 8–MAY 8



CENTENNIAL OF THE MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT

MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY

A CENTURY OF PROTE



Rufous Hummingbird, Jeremy Hayes

HOW TUCSON AUDUBON IS CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF PROTECTING BIRDS

There are several events you can attend to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

APRIL 23 Rain Crow Coffee is hosting the “This Coffee is for the Birds!” event promoting bird-friendly coffee from 2 to 5 pm (see page 28). Come try this shade-grown locally roasted coffee, Smithsonian certified to provide high quality bird habitat for many bird species. Many of our migrants winter in these Central and South American coffee plantations and we encouraging these growers to continue to protect these important habitats.

MAY 4 The Loft will have a special showing of *The Messenger*, a documentary about the beauty and importance of imperiled songbirds in our changing world. The panel discussion following the film will include Tucson Audubon’s Conservation Biologist Jennie MacFarland (see page 28).

MAY 14 is International Migratory Bird Day and Friends of Madera Canyon will be celebrating this special day with the help of Tucson Audubon and other partners. There will be activities for kids, bird and nature walks, and many other fun activities.

MAY 14 is also eBird’s Global Big Day! Show your support of native birds by simply going birding and entering your sightings into eBird.org. For more information on the coordinated efforts for this Global Big Day in Pima and Santa Cruz Counties, visit aziba.org.

Birds are amazing creatures in so many ways. Their power of flight, delicate beauty, and astonishing variety of species is incredible. The famed intelligence of a raven inspires us while the parental devotion of a Peregrine Falcon patiently teaching her chick to hunt is touching. Perhaps the most impressive attribute of birds is their ability to not only survive in some of earth’s harshest environments, but thrive. The key to their success is migration, which allows them to take advantage of seasonal abundances by traveling to different regions. Some of the most impressive migrations in the animal world are carried out by birds: the tiny Rufous Hummingbird travels up to 4,000 miles from its wintering grounds in Mexico to nest as far north as Alaska in the spring. It is no wonder that birds have enchanted so many people.

Seeing a Rufous Hummingbird using a feeder and native flowers in a yard in Tucson as they pass through is a delight. They are here so briefly and are so pugnaciously energetic that it really does seem possible that they can make that long journey on such tiny wings. This annual journey is the most dangerous time in a bird’s life, and many do perish along the way, with only the strongest and luckiest successfully completing the task over multiple years.



Eskimo Curlew, Wikimedia Commons. Henry Eeles from *A History of the Birds of Europe 1871-1881*

When birds migrate, they tend to do so as a group, and the seasonal abundance of many migratory species has not gone unnoticed. There was a time in America when native birds were seen as a crop to be harvested, and throughout the 19th century, many species were severely depleted through market hunting. The

Eskimo Curlew is thought to have been the most numerous shorebird in North America at one point in history, but near the end of the 19th century, two million birds were harvested annually with up to 7,000 birds taken in a single day. The last confirmed sighting of this species was in 1962 and Eskimo Curlews are most likely now extinct.

The most famous example of a species exploited to the brink is the Passenger Pigeon. These birds used to migrate in enormous flocks

ATY ACT— CTING BIRDS

Jennie MacFarland,
Bird Conservation Biologist



estimated to be between 3 and 5 billion at their peak, and they were intensely hunted and sold as cheap meat through the 19th century. This alarming exploitation did not go unnoticed, however, and in 1857 a bill was submitted to the Ohio Senate to protect the Passenger Pigeon. A Select Committee of the Senate filed a report stating, "The passenger pigeon needs no protection. Wonderfully prolific, having the vast forests of the North as its breeding grounds, traveling hundreds of miles in search of food, it is here today and elsewhere tomorrow, and no ordinary destruction can lessen them, or be missed from the myriads that are yearly produced." It seemed impossible that such a numerous species needed protection, but by 1914, the species was completely extinct.

Soon it became apparent to many that swift actions must be taken to prevent other species from following the Passenger Pigeon into extinction. In 1916,

bird-specific protections were introduced in the form of a treaty to protect migratory birds. The United States and Canada, represented by Great Britain, entered into a treaty known as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which later grew to include other nations: Mexico was added in 1936, Japan in 1972, and Russia in 1976. This act made it unlawful to pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, or sell over 800 native bird species. Full protection was also granted to bird parts, including feathers, eggs, and nests, though special exemptions are made for native peoples and those with special permits. This new regulation was a huge achievement and continues to protect our native birds over 100 years later. As you enjoy the songs of returning Lucy's Warblers in your neighborhood this spring or tick off migratory birds on your year list, take a moment to celebrate this year's centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. ■



Passenger Pigeon, John James Audubon

MIGRANT SPOTLIGHT— YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO

The Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo has been getting a lot of attention this last year. The Yellow-billed Cuckoos that nest in



Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo in hand, USFWS

southeast Arizona each summer are part of the population that was officially listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in October 2014. Last summer, Tucson Audubon conducted extensive surveys in eight Sky Island mountain ranges and found 43 territories for these birds in oak-lined drainages. This finding may result in portions of the Sky Islands being included in the next draft of Critical Habitat designated for these birds.

One of the major differences between the western and eastern populations of Yellow-billed Cuckoos is their migration timing and strategy. The eastern birds generally reach their North American breeding grounds in late April into May and begin to depart after nesting in late September into October. They head to their South American wintering

grounds via Central America and the West Indies, with many of them wintering in Columbia. The western population of Yellow-billed Cuckoos arrives later than their eastern cousins; we see them in southern Arizona beginning in June. The Western Yellow-billed Cuckoos depart two to three weeks earlier than the eastern birds after their rapid nesting period. One Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, which was fitted with a geolocator near Socorro, New Mexico in July of 2009, migrated through Mexico in early September and arrived in Columbia in mid-October before continuing along the eastern side of the Andes. That bird arrived in Bolivia by mid-November having traveled 7,250 kilometers averaging 94 kilometers a day. They truly are amazing migrants to travel so far to reach us each summer.



Group at Buenos Aires NWR, Arivaca Cienga, David J Griffin



Grasshopper Sparrow, The Lakes at Castle Rock, Ken Murphy

TUCSON AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

By Kendall Kroesen, Field Trip Coordinator

tucsonaudubon.org/fieldtrips

If you cannot sign up online, please contact the field trip coordinator at 520 209-1806.

Our early 2016 birding field trips showed us again that winter birding in southeast Arizona is unsurpassed in North America. Participants saw everything from Long-eared Owl to Rufous-backed Robin to American Pipit. There were Crissal Thrashers, Western Bluebirds, Common Mergansers, Grasshopper Sparrows, and an oxymoronic wintering Summer Tanager, not to mention all the plentiful resident and overwintering species we have.

The trips also reveal how popular we are with birders! From January 1st through the end of February, Tucson Audubon ran 38 field trips, an average of more than one every two days. Even with all these offerings, many of the limited-enrollment trips filled very quickly. There were about 580 participants on those 38 trips!

If you have had trouble getting into trips because they fill so fast, we apologize. We are working to increase the number of trips available, especially during the winter and early spring when we have a lot of visiting birders in town. Meanwhile, you are always welcome to join the field trips with unlimited enrollment.

Are you well acquainted with a place with birds? Have you led field trips in another part of the country? Please consider leading a trip for us! We can help you get started.



Long-eared Owl, Buenos Aires NWR, Arivaca Cienega, David J Griffin

Do you have ideas for field trips that we should run? Please contact Kendall at fieldtrips@tucsonaudubon.org or 520-209-1806.

As always, check tucsonaudubon.org/fieldtrips to learn what field trips are coming up and to register online.

FEATURED FIELD TRIPS

April 9–Himmel Park, led by Robert Mesta

April 23–Upper Humbolt Canyon, Patagonia Mountains, led by Ken Blankenship

April 30–Avra Valley Wastewater Treatment Ponds:

Shorebirds for Beginners, led by John Higgins

June 18–Tucson Mountain Park: Summer Desert Birds for Beginners, led by John Higgins

THE TAS-ifieds—CLASSIFIED ADS

BIRDING, JAGUARS, & SONORA'S WILD RIVERS

August 20–28, 2016 / Tour Price: \$3500 / information@northernjaguarproject.org

Experience the Northern Jaguar Reserve's dramatic landscape while floating the Río Aros and Río Yaqui. This guided wilderness trip explores these mighty rivers of northern Mexico, home to 215 bird species (including Military Macaw) and the world's northernmost breeding jaguar population.

EASTWESTBIRDTOURS.COM

Birding Guide Services & Group Tours in SE Arizona, Lower Rio Grande Valley, TX & the Southeast

Upcoming Tours...

Appalachian Warbler Weekend 27–30 May 2016

Monsoon Magic in SE Arizona 19–27 August 2016

Coastal Georgia & Little St. Simons Island Fall Birding Days 24–29 September 2016

Celebrate New Year's in the LRGV, Texas 30 Dec 2016–7 Jan 2017

770-317-8486 / kenhblankenship@comcast.net / Like us on Facebook!

Classified and display ads are accepted from individual members and members of our Birds & Business Alliance. Visit tucsonaudubon.org/vfly for rates or contact Matt Griffiths at mgriffiths@tucsonaudubon.org to book an ad.

Weekly bird walks are listed at tucsonaudubon.org/fieldtrips

General Information Tucson Audubon field trips are offered at no charge and are led by expert volunteers. Bring money to cover your share of the carpooling and any required entry fees (e.g. for state parks). For specific information about a trip, contact the leader of that trip. Please dress appropriately for your field trip. Always wear sturdy shoes, a hat, and sun protection. Bring plenty of snacks and water for yourself. Always bring binoculars and a field guide. For most trips a scope can be useful.

Arrival Times Arrive *before* listed departure times. Trips will leave promptly at the time given.

Carpooling Sites Tucson Audubon strongly encourages carpooling, and for some trips it may be required. Check our website for frequently used carpooling sites. You are expected to reimburse the driver for the actual cost of fuel. Drivers and trip leaders are not expected to contribute.

Rare Bird Alert Listen to the latest rare bird alert at 520-629-0510 x3. Report rare birds at 520-629-0510 x3 or rarebirdalert@tucsonaudubon.org.

CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION NEWS

Matt Clark, Conservation Policy Analyst, and Chris McVie, Conservation Committee Chair

Growing Through Stewardship

Andy Bennett, Restoration Project Manager and K-12 Educator

Much like the remarkable work with Changemaker High School highlighted in the previous *Flycatcher*, another partnership to develop a restorative ecology curriculum is blossoming between Tucson Audubon and Santa Rita High School. Santa Rita sits just two blocks from Tucson Audubon's successful Atturbury Wash Riparian Stewardship Project site. Atturbury's relatively-intact ecosystems and the extensive restoration work that Tucson Audubon has conducted there provide the perfect living laboratory for immersive educational experiences.

Conceived and conducted with funding from a grant from the Arizona Water Protection Fund, the Atturbury Wash restoration project aimed to increase native plant cover, return natural flooding to the area, and improve water harvesting opportunities to nourish the site's recovering ecosystems. To accomplish this, Tucson Audubon installed dozens of stream restoration structures and planted over 950 native plants with the help of expert partners and hundreds of volunteers.

Tucson Audubon monitored site conditions and restoration plantings at Atturbury throughout the three-year project, ultimately concluding that the landscape appeared to be moving towards successful restoration. But our native Sonoran Desert ecosystems develop and change over significant periods of time, so the long-term functioning and viability of our Atturbury restoration work will be in question for some time. Furthermore, our restoration plants are no longer being watered or protected and are thus subject to natural weather patterns and herbivore damage.

Although funding for any further work at Atturbury expired at the close of 2015, Santa Rita High School (SRHS) students and faculty will carry the work forward by continuing to care for the area and utilize it as a living laboratory. Students will continue monitoring the condition of our restoration work to gradually build a long-term ecological perspective of the site. In so doing, students will gain technical skills and knowledge tied to state education standards that give them an edge in natural resource career fields. The high school's monitoring work will also help to guide

future management decisions at Atturbury Wash and inform restoration projects at similar sites.

Over the past year, Tucson Audubon and SRHS hosted four learning labs at Atturbury Wash focused on acquainting students and faculty with the area through the lenses of ecology, restoration, and bird watching. Starting in December 2015, Tucson Audubon began transferring all of the data, protocols, and techniques from our Atturbury monitoring work to a select group of SRHS students. These students will then teach this material to their classmates.

Partnerships that wish to revolutionize curricula always require a school faculty champion, and in this case we were lucky to meet SRHS's Biology and Earth Sciences teacher Josh Ruddick. Consistently setting high expectations of his students while providing them the motivation and inspiration they require to meet them, Mr. Ruddick exemplifies the best of teachers who struggle to succeed in an environment that seems intent on defunding education. Last June, Mr. Ruddick was voted the 2015 SRHS "Teacher of the Year" and nominated for Tucson Unified School District's "High School Teacher of the Year".

With inspiration from his work with Tucson Audubon and other partners, Mr. Ruddick recently began the Career and Technical Education Program for Natural Resource Management at SRHS. The program aims to equip students with skills necessary to enter the field of natural resource management and conservation and to continue their education at the university level. The monitoring work that SRHS will conduct at Atturbury is a central component of this program and Tucson Audubon will continue to help Mr. Ruddick develop it in 2016.

Tucson Audubon's vision is to continue to develop our relationships with schools like Santa Rita and Changemaker, using the living laboratory of the Sonoran Desert, so that students and teachers are excited about ecology and equipped with practical skills useful for improving ourselves, our communities, and our environment.



MASKED BOBWHITE IN SOUTHEAST ARIZONA

Keith Ashley, Resource Development Director



Masked Bobwhite



Masked Bobwhite

The Sutton Avian Research Center in Oklahoma has instituted a new approach to protecting the critically endangered Masked Bobwhite of southeast Arizona and Sonora. Tucson Audubon supporter George Kamp is helping to facilitate the project. As a board member of the Sutton Center, Kamp has one foot in the world of rare bird conservation and the other planted squarely here in the Green Valley home he shares with his wife, Marty.

The Masked Bobwhite was reclassified from a distinct species to a sub-species of the Northern Bobwhite in 1947, though recent genetic testing suggests that the distinct species classification may be justified. Masked Bobwhites have not been verifiably reported in the wild—in the U.S. or Mexico—for more than five years, though a captive breeding flock has been successfully established at the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge (BANWR) in southeast Arizona. BANWR is an 118,000 acre refuge on the only patch of U.S. soil where Masked Bobwhites are known to have regularly occurred.

Kamp explains that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approached the Sutton Center about the possibility of becoming a second breeding facility for the Masked Bobwhite because of their past specialty work with gallinaceous birds like the Attwater’s Prairie-Chicken. Not only did they agree to begin breeding the birds, but Sutton Center Senior Biologist Don Wolfe was selected to become a member of the Masked Bobwhite

Recovery Team, which oversees all aspects of conservation efforts on the birds’ behalf.

As part of their new research project, Wolfe and Sutton Center Executive Director Jeremy Ross report in a recent Sutton newsletter article that in June of 2015, they “deployed temperature data loggers along an elevational gradient and in different vegetation types [in BANWR] to begin a long-term thermal mapping program. As with any birds, bobwhites have specific thermal tolerances, as well as particular habitat needs and vegetation preferences. Even at small scales the difference in temperature in areas of respite from the searing heat or freezing cold, called thermal refugia, can be life-saving for bobwhite. Determining the thermal characteristics of BANWR can, therefore, aid in guiding vegetation restoration efforts as well as delineating areas where future releases are most likely to be successful.”

In his role as liaison between the Sutton Center, the Recovery Team, and Tucson Audubon, Kamp recently distributed informational posters in southern Arizona about the rare status of Masked Bobwhite and instructions for how sightings can be reported. In addition to raising awareness, Tucson Audubon will assist in recruiting members of a “rapid response” team able to quickly respond to and confirm any hopeful sightings of the bird. To read more about the developing Sutton Center project, please go to suttoncenter.org/conservation/saving-species/masked-bobwhite/.



Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, JN Stuart

Conservation Groups Urge Consultation on Vigneto

Tucson Audubon, in conjunction with six other local, regional, and national conservation organizations, has notified the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Service) that it is poised to file a lawsuit to protect the San Pedro River Watershed and the critical habitats it sustains. The notice asserts that the Corps has not adequately considered the impact of the proposed Villages at Vigneto development on listed species as required by the Endangered Species Act. Despite prodding by the Service and numerous conservation organizations for more than 10 years, the Corps has failed in its duty to consult with the Service. By law, consultation must occur to assess and minimize potential impacts to listed species such as the Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwest Willow Flycatcher, Mexican Spotted Owl, jaguar, ocelot, northern Mexican gartersnake, Lesser long-nosed bat, and Huachuca water umbel.

Vigneto, a proposed residential and commercial development of 12,324 sprawling acres sited close to the San Pedro River, could further imperil a variety of species dependent on the river ecosystem and surrounding habitats. Vigneto is forecasted to increase demand on groundwater resources from approximately 800 to as high as 13,000 acre-feet per year, potentially depleting surface and subsurface river stream flows. Through a proposed Community Facilities District, the new city could usurp water from the river and established water users in the valley. Vigneto would consume habitat, fragment wildlife corridors, and potentially increase stormwater runoff, flooding, sediment accumulation, and transport in the river.



Yellow-billed Cuckoo on the Gila, Harmony Planet Earth

Tucson Audubon rarely joins litigation, and does so only when faced with high-stakes threats to imperiled birds or Important Bird Areas. The San Pedro River is the last major free-flowing river in the Southwest and is a hemispherically vital bird migration corridor. This ribbon of life is at the heart of our regional focus on conserving important bird

habitats in southeast Arizona. Tucson Audubon has been involved with issues affecting the San Pedro River Valley for decades and assisted in establishing two Globally Important Bird Areas (IBAs) along the San Pedro River corridor. As a steward of the Lower San Pedro IBA, Tucson Audubon continues to conduct avian surveys and recreational outings in the region.

Nearly 45% of the 900 bird species in North America use this river corridor at some point in their lives. The watershed sustains stands of cottonwood/willow riparian forest and is home to 84 species of mammals and 41 species of reptiles and amphibians. Recognizing its

importance, Congress designated 36 miles of the river as the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area in 1988 – the first of only two RNCAs in the nation. Tucson Audubon helped facilitate this designation.

In addition to its direct environmental impact, Vigneto also puts at risk the sustainable birding and nature-based economy of the San Pedro River Valley. In 2011, watchable wildlife in Cochise County generated \$14,190,743 in retail sales with a total multiplier effect of \$24,130,389. Watchable wildlife in Cochise County created \$7,651,115 in salaries and wages, supported 234 full and part-time jobs, generated \$1,570,931 in state and local tax revenues, and generated \$1,769,276 in federal tax revenue. If the river dries up, so will the habitat, jobs, and revenues it sustains.



Site of the proposed Vigneto development, Matt Clark

SunZia Controversy Continues

After weeks of sworn testimony in public hearings throughout southern Arizona, the Arizona Power Plant and Transmission Line Siting Committee voted 8-0 to approve the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project last November. SunZia proposes two parallel 500 KV merchant transmission lines originating in northeastern New Mexico and traversing 200 miles of southeastern Arizona, running parallel to and north of I-10, up the San Pedro River Valley, and then westward to the Pinal Central substation east of Eloy. At the end of the hearings, Chairman Chenal stated, “I think this is a perfect example of the effort to find the least worst decision... The jewel, the San Pedro River Valley, is pristine... And my heart just breaks that, you know, there’s going to be a transmission line through there.” Several members of the Committee cited the lack of an alternative route as a primary factor in their conclusion.

Independent Pro-se intervenors Christina McVie, Peter Else, and Mick Meader provided evidence and arguments against the proposal before both the Line Siting Committee and the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC). The intervenors provided testimony regarding the economic infeasibility of the New Mexico wind portion of the project, the lack of proof of economic benefit to the ratepayers of Arizona, and the lack of assurances that the Project would actually provide renewable energy as touted by SunZia since its inception. The intervenors and their expert witnesses clearly established that the San Pedro River watershed is an “area of unique biological



Paige Canyon will see impacts from SunZia, Mick Meader

wealth,” as defined in the Factors to be Considered in Granting a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility (CEC), and that SunZia could adversely impact this renowned conservation mitigation and bird migration corridor.

In a statement to the ACC, the Salt River Project (SRP), which has the largest utility stake in the project, now says their only interest in SunZia is to deliver coal-fired generation from their power plants in eastern Arizona.

In a 3–2 vote on February 3, 2016, the ACC approved the granting of a CEC for SunZia. Commission Chairman Doug Little and Commissioner Tom Forese opposed approval because of the exploitation of Arizona’s resources, potential conflicts with our own renewable energy de-

velopment, and limited benefits to the state. At the end of the ACC meeting, Chairman Little stated, “I am extremely disappointed in the outcome of this decision and believe there were better alternative routes with significantly less environmental impacts that unfortunately were not approved during the route evaluation process undertaken by SunZia during the National Environmental Protection Act review process. I am truly saddened that one of the crown jewels of Arizona’s unspoiled wilderness will be irreparably harmed by this decision.” Chairman Little subsequently issued an eight-page written dissent stating, among other concerns, that the record does not establish a need for the project, that benefits of the project are highly speculative and questionable, and that consideration of environmental impacts as required by statute was limited by not having alternative routes to consider.

Intervenor Peter Else has filed a request for a rehearing before the ACC.

Conserve our Water: NO on SB1268 and SB1400

Arizona is in year 17 of a state-declared drought emergency and could face the same types of water shortages that California is currently grappling with if we don’t conserve and responsibly manage our

Wildlife Garden Plant Profile

Lynn Hassler, Garden Volunteer Captain; photos by Lynn Hassler

DESERT HONEYSUCKLE

Scientific name: *Anisacanthus thurberi*

Family: Acanthaceae (Acanthus)

Native range: Rocky canyons and sandy washes in southern Arizona, southwest New Mexico, and adjacent Sonora and Chihuahua, Mexico; 2500–5500 feet

Wildlife value: Provides cover, shelter and nesting sites for birds; flowers attract hummingbirds, Verdins, sulphur butterflies and other insects; larval foodplant for the Elada Checkerspot

A medium-sized and slightly rangy-looking shrub, desert honeysuckle grows at a moderate rate and makes a fine addition to the wildlife garden. Plants get large enough—4–6 feet high x 3–5 feet wide—to provide cover and shelter as well as nesting sites for birds. In spring, they sport clusters of 1 ½" long tubular blossoms, brick red to pale orange in color, that are a favorite with hummingbirds.

Blooms are distinctive in that the four petals on each flower curl back over the floral tube. Desert honeysuckle will often flower a second time in late summer and fall. Plant en masse to attract hummers, sweet-toothed Verdins, and butterflies such as Elada Checkerspots that use the plant as a larval host.

Desert honeysuckle is hardy to 10 degrees F and is a low to moderate water user. Once established, plants can survive on rainfall alone; however, supplemental watering twice a month during the hotter months will keep foliage looking lusher. Grow in full sun, reflected sun, or part shade in well-draining soil, and cut back to near ground level each winter to generate thicker growth and more flowers.

Desert honeysuckle happily reseeds in gardens where water is available.

Plants are deciduous in winter and/or during periods of drought, so it’s a good idea to sandwich them between evergreen plants or



bold accents such as agaves or yuccas. They are also attractive when placed among large boulders. Use as an informal hedge, in median strips, or in mixed plantings.

The species name is in honor of Dr. George Thurber, a 19th century pharmacist and botanist who was quartermaster of the U.S. Boundary Commission, which assembled in 1850 to survey the boundary between Mexico and the United States.

This series profiles plants that grow in the Tucson Audubon Wildlife Garden at University Boulevard and 5th Avenue.



San Pedro River, Environmental Protection Agency

limited water supplies. **Call Governor Ducey's office (602-542-4331) and encourage him to protect the public interest by vetoing both SB1268 and SB1400.**

SB1268 adequate water supply requirements; municipalities (Griffin, Gowan, Stevens) would allow cities and towns to **opt out** of county ordinances that currently require a proposed subdivision located outside of an Active Management Area (AMA) to demonstrate an adequate water supply before the final plan for the subdivision can be approved.



SB1400 water banking authority; report (Griffin) is a “strike everything” amendment on the renewal of adequate water supply requirements. After a county adopts the requirement for a mandatory demonstration of an adequate water supply by a proposed subdivision, it would **automatically expire after five years**. For counties that have already adopted the water adequacy provision, **it would automatically expire after two years**.

These legislative proposals create loopholes for special interests to avoid complying with important requirements for providing water adequacy for citizens and nature—a major step backwards. Remind your state legislators of their duty to protect our aquifers, streams, rivers, and springs—water we depend on for our health and safety—by ensuring that proposed developments have adequate water supplies.

BOR Proposal Threatens Santa Cruz River's Riparian Habitats

The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) proposes to divert 7,000 acre-feet of effluent from the Santa Cruz River (generated by the Tres Rios water treatment facility) to farm fields in the Cortaro-Marana Irrigation District. The BOR would use the revenue from this diversion to obtain rights to higher-priority CAP water and infuse money into the dwindling federal fund that the BOR uses to fulfill its obligation to deliver CAP

water to the Tohono O’odham’s San Xavier and Schuk Toak districts.

In a March 15 letter to the BOR from the Community Water Coalition, of which Tucson Audubon is a member organization, the Coalition urged the BOR to reconsider the plan because the proposed water removal “will cause enormous damage to the critical riparian area that is maintained by effluent discharge.” Upgrades completed at the Tres Rios water treatment facility near Ina Road and I-10 have already lessened how far downriver surface and near-surface flows reach. High-nutrient effluent-dominated rivers like the Santa Cruz often develop a clogging layer on the streambed called “Schmutzdecke.” Cleaner water from upgraded wastewater processing has reduced the re-formation of this impermeable layer, resulting in more water recharging into the groundwater and surface flows drying up far sooner than they had previously.

Less than 13 months after the cessation of perennial flow to the site, Tucson Audubon documented dieback and distress of cottonwood and willow trees at the North Simpson Farm restoration property, which is located astride the Santa Cruz River approximately 18 miles downstream from Tres Rios. 83% of willow trees and 34% of cottonwoods were either dead or had more than 25% structural dieback. This dieback provides a preview of the potential riparian impacts of the BOR’s proposal.

Riparian areas at risk from the BOR proposal include the rich hydro-riparian habitat of the Santa Cruz River Oxbow, which features willow, cottonwood, and mesquite and is designated as an Important Riparian Area (IRA) by Pima County. The federal government must figure out a fix for BOR’s underlying financial challenge in a way that does not rob our community of our river, nor the birds of their trees. Let’s make it clear to all agencies that manage effluent that we want proposals and agreements that will ensure a living river.

Oak Flat Designated Chi’chil Bildagoteel Historic District

On March 11, 2016, the National Park Service added Oak Flat to the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Chi’chil Bildagoteel Historic District, recognizing its status as a traditional cultural property. The Oak Flat area is considered by the Apache people as one of the sources of Ga’an, or Mountain Spirits, and the place of origin for the Apache group known as Dilzhe’e. The Apache conduct spiritual ceremonies and collect medicinal plants and acorns in this landscape, which they hold sacred. Representative Gosar (R-AZ), who supports Resolution Copper’s mine that would engulf the site, has objected to the designation. While the designation will not block the mining proposal, additional scrutiny and tribal consultation will be required to analyze, minimize, and mitigate for impacts from the proposed mining operation on the newly recognized historic site.

Take action! To learn more and to submit comments by the July 17 deadline to the Tonto National Forest Service regarding Rio Tinto’s Proposed Mine at Oak Flat, visit: bit.ly/1V5iYDs.



Tucson Audubon thanks our **Birds & Business Alliance** Members, who have shown their support for bird conservation

through annual contributions and in-kind donations. **Please show you appreciate their support for us by supporting them.** Visit tucsonaudubon.org/alliance for more info, including links to member websites.

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Thank you to our renewing **Birds & Business Alliance** members!

GOLD LEVEL

CIRCLE Z RANCH
circlez.com



Recently protected with a conservation easement, the Circle Z Ranch along Sonoita Creek in Patagonia is known for its fantastic horseback riding, breath-taking vistas, and world class birding. We cater to guests from all over the world looking for a relaxing and authentic experience.

CROWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT—ARIZONA
crowncommunities.com



Founded in 1973, Crown Community Development specializes in master planning for a variety of communities throughout the United States. Known for developing highly sought-after live-work areas, Crown responds to the unique needs of the region and is known for perfecting one of the most thorough and effective approaches to community master planning.

FARMERS INVESTMENT CO.
sahuaritafarms.com



Farmers Investment Co (FICO), the parent company of The Green Valley Pecan Company, was established in 1948 when R. Keith Walden purchased land in the Santa Cruz Valley. Dick and Nan Walden continue to run it as a family farm and have donated portions of their land for schools, a church, and employee housing, reflecting their deep roots in the community.

TUCSON ELECTRIC POWER
tep.com



TEP collaborates with community organizations to help balance the demands of a growing population with conserving the Sonoran desert. Our portfolio of environmental partnerships has diversified and strengthened over time, with contributions totaling nearly one million dollars in the last five years.

WESTERN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION
wnpa.org

Western National Parks Association As a nonprofit education partner of the National Park Service, Western National Parks Association supports 67 parks across the West, developing educational products, services, and programs that enrich the visitor experience. Since 1938, WNPA has worked to connect new generations to parks by creating advocates who want to preserve and protect these special places for everyone for all time.

STERLING LEVEL

SOLIPASO TOURS/EL PEDREGAL NATURE LODGE
solipaso.com



Solipaso is a birding and natural history tour company based in Alamos, Sonora, Mexico, owned and operated by David and Jennifer MacKay. They personally research, organize and run all tours and specialize in high quality, fun, small trips throughout Mexico, including Sonora, Sinaloa, Nayarit, Colima/Jalisco, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Yucatan and Chiapas. They also run El Pedregal Nature Lodge and Retreat Center, just outside of Alamos.

COPPER LEVEL

DIET OF HOPE INSTITUTE
dietofhope.org



In 2010, Dr. Dietmar Gann and his wife Elizabeth created the Diet of Hope. It is a balanced nutritious, low carbohydrate, portion controlled diet, that has proven to be very successful in treating obesity, diabetes, hypertension and other related conditions.

FINANCIAL ARCHITECTS
financial-architects.com



At Financial Architects, Certified Financial Planners™ James P. Walker and Brienne L. Dylewski are committed to helping individuals and businesses build financial futures that meet their personal and professional goals. As independent planners for more than 35 years, they are able to work in the best interest of their clients on retirement planning to wealth management to college savings.

Visit tucsonaudubon.org/alliance to learn about the products and services offered by our Bird & Business Alliance partners

BIRDS & BUSINESS ALLIANCE MEMBER PROFILE

Originate Natural Building Materials



Step into **Originate Natural Building Materials** and you immediately get the message—there is a way to have the beauty and inspiration of the natural world inside your home. A warm palate of colors, both soft and bright, hugs you from all directions. Intriguing textures of clay, bamboo, recycled glass, and so many more delightful finds invite both eye and hand to explore the possibilities.



A friend of Originate owner Natasha Winnik refers to the showroom as “the candy store of building materials.” It has precisely that wonderland magic—and on top of that, it’s healthy sweets! Products are selectively and sustainably harvested for minimal impact to the planet. Materials are renewable and

recycled. Many non-toxic alternatives to standard industry products are offered. It’s a wonderful combination of natural beauty and conservation ethic made tangible and transformative for your home.

Cork flooring is Originate’s #1 best-seller: softer underfoot, more resilient, warmer and quieter than other flooring materials. It’s naturally antimicrobial and resistant to pests and fire.

Clay plaster for walls is another popular product. Much thicker than paint, its mineral pigments provide warmth in color and feeling with the added dimension of texture offering the colors more play and depth. This material is sourced in Albuquerque, so it’s also a regional product.

Compressed paper countertops are a surprising, 100%-recycled material coming out of northwest Washington state’s paper industry. These countertop options are both soft and rich in hue.

Kirei board is another unusual and visually textured product made from sorghum (a sweetener) waste. The beautifully intricate

board can be used for cabinetry, counter tops, paneling, and flooring.

The list of Originate products goes on and on: natural paints with zero VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds); tiles recycled from granite, porcelain, and glass; environmentally friendly and non-toxic adhesives, stains, sealers, and finishes. Many of the products are made in the USA adding an extra layer of value to the customer.

Originate Natural Building Materials is located at 526 N 9th Ave. in Tucson. Contact them at 792-4207 or originateenbm.com.



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ALASKA—DENALI & KENAI 2016

Tour Dates: June 5–13, 2016

Tour Price: USD \$4,650

No Alaskan experience is complete without the scenic Denali & Kenai. Diverse activities include a boat ride through Kenai Fjords for auklets, puffins, murrelets, whales, sea otters and orcas, and exploring the Denali highway for Smith’s Longspur, Arctic Warbler, with excellent chances of spotting bears and wolves. We then search the lush forests around Anchorage and Seward for Varied Thrush, Pine Grosbeak, and more.

CLASSIC PERU—MACHU PICCHU TO MANU

Tour Dates: June 5–24, 2016

Tour Price: USD \$6,775

Top birds: Apurimac Spinetail, Apurimac Brush Finch, Cerulean-capped and Yungas Manakins, Rufous-capped Thornbill, Crested and Golden-headed Quetzals, Blue-banded Toucanet, Amazonian Umbrellabird, and up to twenty Cock-of-the-rock males congregating for a strange mating dance! With persistence, we may find the Napo and Rufescent Screech Owls, Rufous-banded Owl, Lyre-tailed Nightjar and even Andean Potoo.

SOLIPASO TOURS solipaso.com

COPPER CANYON

Tour Dates: September 12–20, 2016

Tour Price: \$2950

Leader: David MacKay

From Los Mochis, we head to El Fuerte, where we board the train and travel through a myriad of habitats and life zones. We also take a river trip and a boat trip on the Sea of Cortez. Bird highlights include Eared Quetzal, White-striped Woodcreeper, Mountain Trogon, Rufous-capped Warbler, and Rusty Sparrows.

BAJA BIRDS AND WINE

Tour Dates: October 7–14, 2016

Tour Price: \$2850

Leader: David MacKay

This fun trip is a winning combination of birds, fine Mexican wines, gourmet food, and the rugged beauty of northern Baja and the Valle de Guadalupe wine country! Birds of interest are Gray and California Thrasher, Clark’s Nutcracker, and Black Oystercatcher. We also visit Ensenada, the valley of San Quintin, Bahia de San Quintin, and San Pedro Martir.



Rusty Sparrow, Nigel Voaden

TUCSON AUDUBON NATURE SHOPS

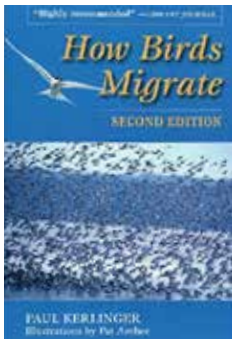
Tucson Audubon's Nature Shops provide for your needs in natural history books and guides, birding optics and accessories, and gifts right here in Tucson. We offer a great selection, the best prices, and member discounts. Remember to shop locally.

Learn More About Migration

Sarah Whelan, Operations and Retail Coordinator

'Tis the season for birds to migrate and for birders to enjoy the influx of species passing through our region. But have you ever stopped to think about the majestic nature of migration? There are myriad questions that go unanswered as we gaze in awe of creatures who instinctively know where and when to go. We do our best here at the Tucson Audubon Nature Shop to help make sense of these mysteries, answering questions to the best of our ability, but even

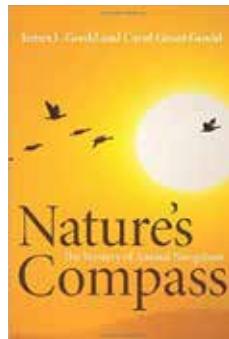
we at times find ourselves stumped by the phenomenon of bird migrations. That's why we lean on the experts to help us learn more about the ins and outs of bird migration. Where do we find these experts? We turn to the book shelves! We are proud to carry a wide variety of books covering the subject of bird migration, nesting habits, and much more. Stop in today to find the answers you are looking for.



How Birds Migrate, \$21.95



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TUCSON AUDUBON NATURE SHOPS

When you support your local Tucson Audubon Society you are supporting birds and bird habitat conservation. Thank you!

SHOP HOURS

MAIN SHOP

Monday-Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM
520-629-0510 ext. 7015
300 E University Blvd #120, Tucson 85705
(corner of University & 5th Ave.)

AGUA CALIENTE PARK SHOP

*Thursday-Saturday, 10 AM-1:30 PM
520-760-7881

12325 E Roger Road, Tucson 85749

*Please call to confirm hours. The shop opens earlier and closes later during certain months. Nature Shop space generously provided by Pima County Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation

When you need a book, think of Tucson Audubon's Nature Shops first! Support your local book store.

Rain Crow Bird-friendly Coffee

The Tucson Audubon Nature Shop is proud to announce our partnership with Rain Crow Coffee! Starting April 23rd, the Tucson Audubon Nature Shop will house and sell this locally roasted, single-sourced, bird-friendly coffee. Join us from 2-5 pm at Rain Crow Coffee Roasters to discuss, drink, and support this new partnership. With \$3.00 for every one-pound bag purchased going back to Cuckoo Conservation Efforts, the cup of coffee that gets you going on an early-morning birding adventure will also help protect the birds you love.

Rain Crow Coffee is single sourced from Guatemala and is Smithsonian Certified Bird Friendly.



Special Screening of *The Messenger*

The Loft Cinema
Tuesday, May 3 | 7:30 pm



The peril of migrating avian species is a literal 'canary in the coal mine' for humans. The elegance of these colorful creatures is captured in stunning slow-motion flight as ecologists, enthusiasts and everyday people work to protect them and petition for change.

Featuring a post-film panel discussion on the conservation of Arizona's migratory birds with local experts from Tucson Audubon, Southern Sierra Research Station, Rain Crow Coffee and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Disengaging With Birds

A review by Rick Wright

For many, birds are a source of solace: a few minutes of feeder watching at the end of a hard day or a long ramble through desert, woods, or grassland can lift our minds above the cares and worries that otherwise weigh us down.

Faced with the nearly simultaneous loss of her job, her home, and her father, the author of the painfully splendid *H is for Hawk* sought comfort in a slightly different way. Rather than go out into nature for a soothing dose of wildness, Helen MacDonald, an English writer and academic, brought nature at its most ferocious home with her, in the form of a young Northern Goshawk she named Mabel.

An experienced falconer, MacDonald had never wanted to “fly” a goshawk: “They unnerved me. They were things of death and difficulty: spooky, pale-eyed psychopaths.” She changed her mind—or rather her mind was changed for her—by the memory of a book she had read as a child: T.H. White’s 1951 *Goshawk*, the account of that author’s attempt, and ultimate failure, to train a bird of his own.

MacDonald’s book becomes three things: the story of her attempt (and ultimate success) to train Mabel for falconry; an exploration of T.H. White’s life; and the harrowing account of the bereaved MacDonald’s descent into a wildness that threatens to deprive her of her health and her humanity. The three topics are treated at first in parallel, but as the book proceeds, MacDonald weaves the strands together until they collapse into a single story, just as she and her hawk fuse for a time in a terrifying *unio mystica* of woman and bird, where “what passes between us is not human.”

Mabel and MacDonald withdraw into a world of their own, tramping wet fields and sharing a house that reeks of hawk dung. They hunt and—unintentionally—poach rabbits and pheasants, and retreat into the misty background when people approach. As the hawk becomes more reliable, MacDonald grows less so, turning feral and hawk-like herself; “H” is for hawk, but it is for “Helen,” too, and the reader fears that both will soon slip away over the horizon.

They do not. After months of depression, MacDonald finds her grief transformed into loving memory: a change due in part to medicine, in part to her work with Mabel, but mostly to the recognition that only human society can bring her back from the brink. The book ends with the most richly suggestive of its metaphors: MacDonald moves back into a house in the city of Cambridge, and Mabel, nearing her first birthday, goes into summer quarters for her annual molt. Author and bird will both be slowly renewed.

The care with which MacDonald manages these separate threads is only part of what makes *H is for Hawk* the instant classic it is. The quality of her prose stands well above almost any other book ever written about the relationship between birds and humans. At first, MacDonald’s style is easy, straightforward, and admirably clear; upon the death of her father and subsequent descent into near-madness, the sentences begin to twist and shrivel, one following the other without pause. The language is no less beautiful, the choice of words no less exquisite, but in MacDonald’s own words, “space-time is folded and crunched.” The paragraphs speed up, and we readers hold our breath in fear of where this headlong rush will end. It ends with the reader’s admiration for the author’s bravery, honesty, and surpassing skill as a writer. ■

Rick Wright leads birding and birds and art tours for Victor Emanuel Nature Tours and is the author of the forthcoming *ABA Guide to Birds of Arizona*. You can follow his travels at birdaz.com/blog.



H Is For Hawk, by Helen MacDonald
Grove Press, 2015
288 pages
\$16—softcover



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Southeast Arizona BIRDING FESTIVAL

August 11-14, 2016
Tucson, Arizona



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Clockwise from top left: Elegant Trogon, Lois Manowitz; Lucifer Hummingbird, John Hoffman; Vermilion Flycatcher, Jeremy Hayes

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