

THE QUARTERLY NEWS MAGAZINE OF TUCSON AUDUBON SOCIETY | TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG

# Vermilion

FLYCATCHER

April–June 2015 | Volume 60, Number 2



## Transformation

Transformational Moments • Transforming Young Minds • Win-Win for Everyone

Exotic Birds a Day's Drive from Tucson • Discovering the Birds & Botany Connection



Tucson Audubon Society is dedicated to improving the quality of the environment by providing environmental leadership, information, and programs for education, conservation, and recreation. Tucson Audubon is a non-profit volunteer organization of people with a common interest in birding and natural history. Tucson Audubon maintains offices, a library, nature centers, and nature shops, the proceeds of which benefit all of its programs.

Tucson Audubon Society

300 E. University Blvd. #120, Tucson, AZ 85705  
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All phone numbers are area code 520 unless otherwise stated.

[tucsonaudubon.org](http://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 760-7881

Hours: Thu–Sat 10 AM–1:30 PM. Please call to confirm hours.

The shop opens earlier and closes later during certain months.

**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:** Female Lesser Goldfinch by Jim and Deva Burns, Scottsdale, Arizona. To see more of their work and follow Jim's birding blog, visit their website, [jimburnsphotos.com](http://jimburnsphotos.com).

To have your photograph considered for use in the *Vermilion Flycatcher*, please contact Matt Griffiths at [mgriffiths@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:mgriffiths@tucsonaudubon.org).

## Timeless Bird Conservation

Guest commentary by Kevin Dahl, former Executive Director of Tucson Audubon



Within memory for some of us, Tucson Audubon was just a small club of bird enthusiasts and conservation-minded folk who met to hear a speaker, take a walk, or write a letter. Our store contained only a few boxes of field guides, and everything was done by a few dedicated volunteers.

Somewhere in the middle of our history, it was my honor to become the executive director and experience firsthand the transformation from hobby group to habitat champion (we are much more than just that, but I love a good alliteration). If our beautiful Vermilion Flycatcher logo could talk, he would tell wondrous tales of this transformation, including:

- Opening the Tucson Audubon Nature Store, which for decades has provided useful birding and natural history information to residents and visitors
- Accepting the gift of desert land and home from Orpha Mason, now transformed into a Nature Center, and taking ownership of the Patons' house in Patagonia
- Conceiving, funding, and staffing hundreds of education programs and restoration projects in partnership with schools, towns, the county, Tucson Electric Power, and other groups

- Launching our own birding festival and participating in others
- Supporting citizen science through Christmas Counts, Tucson Bird Count, and our sponsorship of the Arizona Important Bird Areas Program
- Defending precious habitat from ill-conceived development (too many to list here!)
- Promoting land conservation in a positive manner (the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan) and offering hands-on tools to achieve urban sustainability (water harvesting, planting bird habitat and building nest boxes)

That little chatterbox bird could go on and on. But I stop him here to thank Paul Green for his recent years of steady hands at our helm and to welcome Karen Fogas, who will oversee whatever next transformation awaits us. Perhaps our birding future will involve personal jet packs or hover skateboards (I certainly hope not, though I wonder if personal drones will someday be a nuisance to our avian friends). Anyway, let's all join in and help Karen keep Tucson Audubon transforming to be the effective force that it was, is, and can be! 📌

Kevin Dahl was Executive Director of Tucson Audubon from 1997–2001

## COMMENTARY

Karen Fogas | Executive Director

# Our Shared Transformational Journey



My name is Karen Fogas, and I am the new Executive Director for Tucson Audubon Society. My experience includes many years of nonprofit leadership and management, including that as staff with the Sierra Club. I am so excited to have the opportunity to utilize my experience and skills to lead such a worthy and outstanding organization and to work with such a knowledgeable and dedicated group of people.

I came to this position most recently from South Dakota, where I had been the CEO for Boys & Girls Clubs of the Sioux Empire for the last nine years. Because I am not a South Dakota native, despite living there for more than 20 years and finding it a good place to live and raise my family, I knew that eventually I would return to an area that is richer in its natural environment, and that offers more in terms of outdoor enjoyment—including birds and bird watching!

The day we loaded my belongings into the moving trailer, the temperature never rose above two degrees. It was miserable. And most of the multi-day drive to Tucson that followed involved either the threat of snow storms or icy temperatures. As I drove, I marveled at how fortunate I am to be able to transform my life at this stage and to move my home to such an amazing area of the country, one that is teeming with outdoor and ecological opportunities!

And yet, even as I celebrated my good fortune, also in my thoughts was the parallel for our feathered friends. Climate change is transforming all aspects of our natural world, and is or will soon be creating conditions that are intolerable for many species, and not just to their comfort, as was mine, but to their very lives. In fact, according to *Audubon's Birds and Climate Change Report: 314 Species on the Brink*, more than half of the 588 birds studied will be dramatically affected in the years to come. Of the 314 species studied, 126 are classified as climate endangered and at risk of losing more than 50 percent of their current range by 2050; the other 188 species are at similar risk by 2080 if

global warming continues at its current pace. It was a poignant thought as I drove the many miles to Tucson. Will we recognize the power of this current transformation of our world in time to prevent irrevocable harm, perhaps even to ourselves? As I pondered this question, it served to further reinforce my desire and commitment to do what I can for birds and their habit in Southern Arizona, both personally and through the incredible work that is happening *right now* through Tucson Audubon.

And this ongoing transformation of our world means that your investment in Tucson Audubon is more important than ever. It makes possible valuable, timely and ongoing research regarding birds and their habitat in southern Arizona, the restoration of ecological wastelands into rich environments for birds and essential public education on why protecting birds is protecting *us*. Thank you for your investment in Tucson Audubon, and I look forward to furthering our work!

## BIRDATHON 2015 | **SAVE THE DATE** **FOR A BIRDING FUN[D]RAISER** April 9: Birdathon Launch Party | April 10—May 10



HARRIS'S HAWK, TOM RYAN



BLACK-NECKED STILT, JEREMY HAYES



BLUE GROSBEEK, DAN WEISZ

**CELEBRATE SPRING MIGRATION** and go birding for the birds. Since 1987, Birdathon has garnered support for birds and bird-friendly habitats, and for Tucson Audubon's work to conserve these unique natural resources and to educate our community on their importance. Birdathon is like a walkathon, only instead of walking, we go birding! Birdathon is fun for everyone—kids, adults, beginners and experts! Participating in Birdathon is an important way to share the excitement of being outdoors and watching birds while raising funds to support the programs that make this region a better place for us all to live and enjoy. Never done Birdathon before? Come to our Birdathon Launch Party on **April 9th** and learn how to sign up, receive asking tips, and size up fellow competitors! Stay tuned for details in our weekly emails and on our website [tucsonaudubon.org/birdathon](http://tucsonaudubon.org/birdathon).

**THE KEY TO SUCCESS** this year is expanding our list of supporters to engage new people and raise the interest of community members. We often ask you to donate funds to support our important work to protect and conserve the birds of our region. Birdathon is a way by which you go birding and ask others to give! Those are two unique features of Birdathon. It is key to our fundraising goals to go outside our usual group of valued donors—to your friends, family, business acquaintances, neighbors, hair dressers, employers. It's actually easy to ask people to give—we'll give you some pointers. Any amount helps and friends can pledge directly to you or donate online

*Tucson Audubon's work for our birds needs much more support this year as we restructure some of our activities. You've read that our overall fundraising goal by the end of Spring 2015 is \$500,000. Along the way we have set a series of mini-goals, that include Birdathon, as a way for us to reach that stretch goal.*

# TUCSON AUDUBON EVENTS AND CLASSES

## Southeast Arizona A Birding Wonderland



MATT GRIFFITHS



PYRRHULOXIA, LAURA STAFFORD

### Tucson Audubon Bird Education Program

Become a birder or improve your birding skills and knowledge through a suite of courses offered at Tucson Audubon. Our courses are designed to take you through a natural progression that will transform you from a beginner to an intermediate/advanced birder and transport you to some of the most beautiful locations throughout our region. Below, you will find our courses listed by birding level.

The regular non-member cost of classes and workshops includes a one-year membership to Friends of Tucson Audubon.

#### ALL LEVELS

#### Landscapes for a Bird-friendly Community

There are many things we can do to make ours a bird-friendly community. One way is to landscape our yards to support local bird populations and to be conservative in our use of water. We will explore what constitutes a bird-friendly yard and how that fits into the bigger picture of a bird-friendly community. This class will give you the tools to create a yard that welcomes birds and that uses resources sustainably.

Instructor: Kendall Kroesen  
Date and Time: Saturday April 11, 8:00 AM–Noon  
Location: Tucson Audubon Mason Center  
Cost: \$45



#### Advanced Topics: Birding by Ear

This workshop will delve into the world of bird vocalizations and give you a framework for learning the voices of our master singers. The classroom session will teach you to "see" what you hear with sonograms and provide a framework for understanding what you hear. Key parts of bird song will be deciphered, including trills, buzzes, upslurs, and overslurs. All this will be combined with methods to compare similar-

sounding species and recognize taxonomic variation and similarities. The field trip will give you a chance to practice these skills. Instructor: Homer Hansen  
Date and Time: April 16, 2015; 5:30 PM–8:30 PM (classroom); April 18, 2015 7:00 AM–5:00 pm (field)  
Location: Classroom session will be held in the conference room of the Historic Y on University Blvd. and 5th Ave. Field trip location TBD.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR SUITE OF EDUCATION CLASSES AND TO REGISTER ONLINE, PLEASE VISIT  
**TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG/EDUCATION**

## TUCSON MEET YOUR BIRDS!

GILDED FLICKER, BRUCE TAUBERT



Need to brush up on your local bird identification skills or just learn some new facts about species you see in your yard? Tucson Audubon has a great online resource for you!

Meet Your Birds will introduce you to many of the common birds in Tucson as well as some of the exciting rarities and riparian species. Also, if you're looking for new hot spots to bird in and around Tucson, check out the Great Places to Bird section. You may find one right near you!

Visit [tucsonaudubon.org/tmyb](http://tucsonaudubon.org/tmyb) and meet your birds today!



VERDIN, LOIS MANOWITZ



CACTUS WREN, LAURA STAFFORD

**April 4.** Living With Nature lecture (Green Valley): What's in a Nest Box? with *Jonathan Horst* (see p 6)

**April 9:** Birdathon Launch Party

**April 10–May 10.** Birdathon

**April 11.** Landscapes for a Bird-friendly Community: How to Make Landscapes Bird-friendly and Sustainable workshop (see p 4)

**April 13.** Annual Members' Meeting and Living With Nature lecture (Tucson): What's in a Nest Box? with *Jonathan Horst*. (see p 6)

**April 15–May 15.** Tucson Bird Count (see p 6)

**April 16 & 18.** Advanced Topics: Birding by Ear workshop (see p 4)

**April 18.** Patagonia Earthfest and Seven Saturdays in Patagonia (see p 9)

**April 25.** 3rd Annual River Festival at Winkleman Flats 9 AM–2 PM

**August 12–16.** Tucson Bird & Wildlife Festival

**Letters to the Editor.** We want to hear from you! Help us institute our new Letters to the Editor section of the *Vermilion Flycatcher*. Send your feedback, comments or questions to Matt Griffiths at [mgriffiths@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:mgriffiths@tucsonaudubon.org)



# EXPERIENCE Southeast Arizona's Birding at its Best

**12–16 AUGUST 2015 • TUCSON, ARIZONA**

**Don't Miss the Sky Islands Birding Cup**

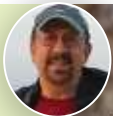
PLUS EXPERT-LED FIELD TRIPS • WORKSHOPS • NATURE EXPO • FREE TALKS • LIVE BIRDS

REGISTRATION  
NOW  
OPEN

## SATURDAY

### KEYNOTE by

**Paul Baicich**, author, birder, conservationist, and recipient of Ducks Unlimited's 2014 *Wetland Conservation Achievement Award (Communications)*.



Montezuma Quail / Robert Shantz



Sonoran Desert landscape / Larry Liese



Red-faced Warbler / John Hoffman



Five-striped Sparrow / Rich Hoyer-WINGS

## FRIDAY KEYNOTE

### by Rick Wright, a

Senior Leader at Victor Emanuel Nature Tours and Review Editor at *Birding* magazine.



Elegant Trogon / Dominic Shernoy



White-eared Hummingbird / Lois Manowitz



Gray Hawk / Collins Cochrane



Flame-colored Tanager / James Prudente

FOR DETAILS AND ONLINE REGISTRATION, VISIT [TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG/FESTIVAL](http://TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG/FESTIVAL)

# Tucson Audubon's Living With Nature Lecture Series

## NEW TIME FOR TUCSON LECTURES THIS SPRING

Our lecture series is a free public presentation once a month that seeks 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 global, regional, and local birding hot spots; bird biology and ecology; and conservation issues that affect birds, other wildlife, and their habitats.

**TUCSON** All lectures will be held at the Pima Community College Downtown Campus, Amethyst Room, 1255 N. Stone Ave. Lectures are scheduled for the **second Monday** of each month at **6:00 PM**, October through April. *Please note the time change to 6:00 PM for January–April 2015 lectures.*

### April 13 • Tucson

**What's in a Nest Box?** with Jonathan Horst, Tucson Audubon Restoration Ecologist

KENDALL KROESEN



Nest boxes can be an important conservation tool for supporting bird populations in southeast Arizona. Over the last year, Tucson Audubon has been experimenting with the use of nest boxes for various species. In an interactive presentation, you will learn about an experimental approach to determine the preferences



ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER EGGS IN NESTBOX, SARA PIKE

of various cavity-nesting birds. Discussions will include temperature concerns, nest box placement, and nest box design. Jonathan will describe these projects and their outcomes, including the findings of recent experiments regarding temperature inside nest boxes in the Sonoran Desert. He will also introduce Tucson Audubon's vision for the "Win-Win for Azure Bluebirds and Arizona Vineyards" nest box project.

**GREEN VALLEY** All lectures will be held at the Green Valley Recreation's Desert Hills Social Center, 2980 S. Camino Del Sol. Lectures are scheduled for the **first Saturday** of the month at **10:00 AM** from November to April.

### April 4 • Green Valley

**What's in a Nest Box?** with Jennie MacFarland  
See Tucson description above. ■

## Birding to Help Tucson's Birds

### You can help make Tucson more bird-friendly through the Tucson Bird Count!

Tucson Audubon recently launched the exciting Bringing Birds Home initiative that encourages Tucson residents to create bird-friendly habitats in their yards. This project is a product of the Tucson Bird Count, a citizen science-driven urban bird count that will survey the birds of Tucson in its 15th annual count this spring. For the past fourteen years, birders in Tucson have volunteered their time and skills to document what birds they observe on each of over 800 point counts throughout the Tucson Valley and Saguaro National Park (east and west). The spring count will occur again this year, April 15 – May 15, on any morning each volunteer chooses. There are many routes available and we need your help. If you are a birder

able to identify Tucson's common birds by sight and sound, you are qualified to help with the Tucson Bird Count.

The purpose behind the Tucson Bird Count has always been to determine how Tucson residents can better share their space with native birds. Known as Reconciliation Ecology, the concept of making your yard, neighborhood, and city more attractive to birds is something that many bird lovers have been doing for a long time. The TBC has added science to the discussion by documenting where individual bird species have found suitable habitat in urban Tucson for over a decade. This has allowed concrete suggestions for urban habitat enhancements that will

SCOTT OLMSTEAD



make Tucson a better place for native birds. As urban space envelops more and more natural habitat, we need to better share our urban space with native birds and other wildlife. Helping with this bird count is an important way to help maintain the foundation of the Bringing Birds Home initiative. If you are interested in volunteering for the Tucson Bird Count, please email Jennie at [jmacfarland@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:jmacfarland@tucsonaudubon.org)

## TUCSON · BIRD · COUNT



Bringing Birds Home



NORTHERN CARDINAL, LOIS MANOWITZ

# TUCSON AUDUBON NEWS ROUNDUP

## Tanque Verde Wash / Sabino Canyon IBA— Transforming Our Perceptions of Important Bird Areas

Jennie MacFarland, IBA Program Biologist

As a global program dedicated to identifying essential sites for bird conservation, the Important Bird Areas in over 170 participating countries include some of the most famous and protected habitats in the world: Lake Nakuru National Park in Kenya (notable for its huge congregations of Lesser Flamingos), Pink Lake in Australia (literally a bright pink lake popular with migrating birds and tourists), and closer to home, Grand Canyon National Park. These sites are exactly the sorts of places birders would expect to see a sign declaring an Important Bird Area and are obviously deserving of their IBA status. These areas are also highly protected through their federal park status and the active interest of the public in preserving these sites. However, there are over 12,000 IBAs in the world, and most of them are neither famous nor well-protected. One such area right in Tucson appears very different from what many imagine as an Important Bird Area.

The Tanque Verde Wash/Sabino Canyon IBA is the most urban of Arizona's 45 Important Bird Areas and also happens to be my favorite. One of my favorite things about this IBA is its accessibility, both in terms of its physical proximity to many Tucsonans and how familiar it looks to those of us who live in an urban setting. This area is also an example of the value of urban habitat to native birds: Tucson Audubon volunteer surveyors have recorded 209 bird species in this IBA, while eBirders have documented 243 species within 2094 checklists attached to the four hotspots within this Important Bird Area. Sabino Canyon is a popular destination for birders and non-birders alike, and the tram and robust trail



DAVID BARGAR / CCL

Tanque Verde Wash is a familiar area to many Tucsonans and offers excellent urban birding opportunities. Top: These three birders are enjoying the view of healthy cottonwood and willow trees that line the wash at Wentworth Road. Above: The Tanque Verde Wash is part of a larger watershed that includes the Rincon and Catalina Mountains and will often flow during our rainy season in the summer. This is the wash after a rain storm at Tanque Verde Loop Rd, which is an excellent birding access point. If you stay in the sandy wash bottom you are not trespassing, this is public access. Right: The portions of the Tanque Verde Wash that are at the eastern end of the IBA are particularly beautiful but can be difficult to access due to many private property restrictions. Some birders access this area by walking long distances through the wash itself from farther west but this can be daunting to many.



system makes visiting this area a delight. The less well-known portion of the IBA, Tanque Verde Wash, has excellent birding with easy access points at Wentworth Rd and Tanque Verde Loop Rd but without the crowds that Sabino Canyon can attract. This area has also been a hotspot for rare birds such as Harris's Sparrow, Northern Parula, Gray Catbird and

Red-shouldered Hawk, to name only a few of the exciting species found by birders in this house-lined wash. As spring brings the return of Vermilion Flycatchers, Lesser Goldfinches, Bell's Vireos and even Gray Hawks to this important habitat, consider spending a morning birding in Tucson's very own urban Important Bird Area.



JOSHI GURJAN / CCL

JENNIE MACFARLAND

# Tucson Audubon's Seventh Annual Gala—Highlight Reel



PHOTOS BY ANGELA PRITCHARD AND MATT GRIFFITHS

Top L to R: The silent auction is underway; Musical guests for the evening Geoff Williams and Andy Bennett; Harris's Hawk free flight in dining room. Middle L to R: Christina McVie, Award winner Scott Richardson, and Les Corey; Les Corey, Christina McVie, and Award winner Carolyn Campbell. Bottom L to R: Les Corey, Keynote Speaker Brad Lancaster, Honorary Chairwoman Kimberlyn Drew, and MC Kathy Jacobs; New Executive Director Karen Fogas, Erin Olmstead, and Sandy Elers; Tucson Audubon staff.

## Herb Trossman 1933–2015

Herbert D. Trossman, former chair of the Tucson Audubon Board of Directors, passed away at home on January 12, 2015 at age 81. Herb was born in Brooklyn on July 21, 1933 and graduated from Bay Shore HS in 1951. He attended a year of college at the University of Arizona, and served two years in the Army (stationed in Korea) before earning his bachelor's degree (Hofstra College) and his law degree (NYU Law School). A defining experience in Herb's life was his Peace Corps service in the Dominican Republic, where he worked with local fishermen to start a co-op. He left with a commitment to helping others and touched many lives in doing so. Following his return to the United States, Herb worked in NYC as an attorney, first in entertainment, then in general practice, specializing in real estate. After retiring to Arizona in 1998, he became a pistachio farmer for several years.

Herb and his wife Pat got involved in Tucson Audubon in the early 2000s, starting with a birding trip Tucson Audubon sponsored to Alamos, Sonora. They quickly became involved in a variety of other ways and Herb was soon serving on the board.

Paul Green remembers: *In the spring of 2007, Herb was the incoming Board President of Tucson Audubon as I was the incoming Executive Director. He and Pat welcomed Eng-Li and me into their home until we were settled in Tucson. The relationship between President and Executive Director is a critical one in a nonprofit, and Herb was stimulating to work with during his four years as President. Herb often had contrarian views, and we spent much time in humorous discussion of the pros and cons of different courses of action. Herb was a living example of the importance of maintaining humor in daily life. An attorney from Brooklyn and a zoologist*

*from Cambridge, England bring very different perspectives to bear on issues. Herb's presidency was a time of great change and growth at Tucson Audubon, and we worked together closely to modernize our board. During our financial difficulties of 2008, Herb came and worked alongside me as we grappled with things like the new 990 form that IRS had introduced—he was always key in successfully working through solutions to the problems we faced. Herb was always ahead of the curve in technology and I learned much from him here also. I valued his friendship, humor, and loyalty enormously and will miss him greatly. One phrase of Herb's is pinned to my wall, a slogan from his days as a pistachio farmer, and it always makes me smile and think of the twinkle in his eye. That phrase? "Nuts to You."*

Herb was a friend of the environment, giving freely of his



time and expertise as a board member, officer, or active member of numerous organizations besides Tucson Audubon, including American Littoral Society, NYC Audubon Society, Southeast Arizona Butterfly Association, and Friends of Redington Pass. Donations in his memory may be made to Tucson Audubon Society, 300 E. University Blvd, #120, Tucson, AZ 85705.

*Paul Green, Kendall Kroesen, and Pat Trossman contributed to this obituary.*



# Tucson Audubon's Paton Center for Hummingbirds Transforming Access

Keith Ashley, Coordinator: Paton Center for Hummingbirds and Jonathan Horst, Restoration Ecologist



JONATHAN HORST

(Above) Rodd Lancaster and volunteer John Hughes stabilize the creek bank after removal of old appliances. Native grasses are planted and wildflowers seeded throughout. (Right) Volunteers remove old appliances buried in the bank.

If you haven't been to Tucson Audubon's Paton Center for Hummingbirds in the last year, you might drive by it without realizing you've arrived. Even if you were last there in December, you'll notice meaningful changes. Wally and Marion Paton's genius offered birders free access to the diverse and rare birds of their backyard. Tucson Audubon is expanding the Patons' generous vision to encompass the entire property as well as the local community, the Patagonia Mountains, and beyond.

While the backyard still hosts its cozy canopy, benches, and feeders, the lot next door now offers a loop trail with more benches and a water feature. Although work on this arid-lands meadow has just begun, it already provides a whole new Paton's experience for birds and birders alike. Through Larry Morgan's guided bird walks in the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve and Bryon Lichtenhan's bird

and biodiversity hikes in the Patagonia Mountains, more birders are being offered access to more birds.

Through our **Seven Saturdays in Patagonia** relaxed lectures, the meeting space in and around the casita classroom also exposes visitors to the riches of the local conservation community. Learning about the work of the Patagonia Area Resource Alliance, Borderlands Restoration, and the Hummingbird Monitoring Network—while meeting members of the Patagonia community—might transform your understanding of the conservation context surrounding the birds and birders of the Paton Center.

## Focus on Restoration— Creekside Regeneration

Until recently, one of the less-birded corners of the property was the bank along the creek where dense trees and invasive grasses provided cover, but few other resources for birds. Matt Fraker, a life-long birder and long-time



BOB BRANDT

Patons fan who also sits on the board of the American Birding Association, is funding the restoration of this area.

To begin, our staff and volunteer crew had to remove a large patch of invasive giant reed, a series of old appliances buried in the bank as erosion protection, and the chain-link fence along the creek. The rebuilding phase has now begun. Stop by and you'll see a stretch of the bank sporting a spiky, porcupine-esque

## Upcoming Seven Saturdays

**April 18**—Patagonia EarthFest  
8:00 AM—Bryon Lichtenhan, guided hike around town and to the Paton Center

**10:00 am**—Keith Ashley, short talk on the Paton Center

**11:00 am**—Eggstremely Cool Adaptations, a free workshop by Kathy Pasierb (ages 10 and up)

look where we've re-stabilized the bank using cut and dried reed canes to weave a series of wattles through stakes made of the sturdiest canes. We planted grasses and seeded wildflowers to anchor the earth with their roots, while brush piled on top of the canes softens the look and provides dense cover for birds that use this area as a launch-point for the new feeders nearby. Soon, the trees and native grasses in the area will be dense enough to provide all the shelter and food necessary. A bench provides great viewing access to the new feeders and evolving creekside habitat. Visible changes are happening quickly, but the full transformation of the area will take some time.

**Coming Soon:** Thanks to other gracious funders, we're laying the groundwork to recreate an orchard in the front yard similar to what Wally had some decades past. There are still a few fruit trees hanging on, including a delicious apple tree. To tie the orchard in with its Patagonia roots, we're hunting scions from a number of the old remnant fruit trees that have survived in the mining ghost towns and homesteads around Patagonia. We're hoping for some peaches, pears, plums, and more apple varieties to be enjoyed both by people and birds.

Also, when you can't be present physically, keep your eyes peeled for an upcoming hummingbird webcam on one of the most active feeders. You'll have a lens to the site even when you can't make it to the magical place in person.

GREATER ROADRUNNER, DORIS EVANS



## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

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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](http://tucsonaudubon.org/give).

# Tucson Audubon Board Elections 2015

Tucson Audubon will hold its Annual Members' Meeting on Monday, April 13th 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).

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

For re-election to a 2nd three-year term—class of 2018:

- Matthew Bailey
- Ardeth Barnhart
- David Dunford

For election to their first three-year term—class of 2018:

- Mary Walker
- Kimberlyn Drew



CRESTED CARACARA, LOIS MANOWITZ

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



BARN OWLS, CHAD KING / CCL

Ross Adams, Nancy & Thomas Allin, Gloria Altemus, Eloise & Chet Anderson, Susan Atkisson, David Baker, Terry Barr, Barbara Bartell, Laurens Halsey & Louise Bator, Pat Bean, Roberta Stabel & NJ Bleser, Jean Booth, Nora & Rick Bowers, Mark Bradley, Darlene Brady, Beverly & Fred Brink, Alicia & Phillip Brown, Aaron Bugaj, Cheryl Calheiros, Yolanda Capriles, Jean Carr, Cathy Clayton, Christine Cody, Steven Cohen, Stephen Cook, Laura & William Couchman, Darla Cox, Pamela Cunningham, Scott DeWitte, Sandi & Richard Dreyfuss, Nancy Elmore, Barbara Erickson, Rosalinda Eurek, Grace Evans, Carolyn Farley, Jay Felix, Rachel Feuerbach, Linda Fowler, Elizabeth Gann, Ann Geiger, Mary Jo Ghory, Meg Gilbert, Ryan Gillespie, T. J. Glahn, Debra & Rafael Grau, Marie Griffiths, Betsy Hall, Cecilia Hanes,

Joe Hanson, Michelle Harlow, Steve Harrison, Janet Hawley, Bob Henley, Maria Heyde, John Higgins, Theresa Zink & Richard Hildebrand, Terry & Gerry Hodge, Mike Holaday, Dinah Hoyle, Lynn & Amy Hudson, Piotr Jablonski, Mary Ann Jones, Callie Jordan, Jeanette Juba, Sharon Judevine, Patricia Jutras, David Kiefner, Ka King, Karen Kluge & Terry Rosenmeier, Michael Koller, Joan Kornfeld, Kay & Michael Kutska, Anne Lawrence, Kresta Leal, Michael Lesko, Ryan LeVasseur, Clarissa Marques, Henry Maus, Deborah McMillan, Robin McSpaddin, John Miles, Alice Miller, Tiffany Miller, Linda Monstur, Frances Moore, Kathy Morrow, Pat Mount, Susan & Charles Nelson, Karan & Dale Newberg, Ann Nichols, Cecilia Noriega, Sonja Olsen, Pat & Chuck Pettis, David Pillmore, Mary Porter-Solberg, Jerry Probst, Paul Rees, Roberta & Ronn

Rich, Andy Rogers, Jim Rosborough, Meg Ruby, Jean Rudd & Lionel Bolin, Lance Runion, Luke Safford, Lester Salberg, Andrew Samuelson, Susan Sanders, Jennifer Schmidt, Pat Schultz, Judson Scovill, Salek Shafiqullah, Robert Shea, Carolyn & John Sherwin, Beverly & James Smith, Myron Smith, Susan McLane & Hal Smith, Andi Smith, Kerry Smith, Lalitte Smith, Jamison Somner, Hans Spiecer, Tracy Stillwell, Patrick Stirling, Nanette & Troy Thorns, Joyce Bolinger & Lavina Tomer, Vicky & Mike Toye, David & Carol Vleck, Sarah Walker, Norma Watson, Lorry Wendland, Emma Williams, Natasha Winnik, Jennifer & Todd Wood, Gabrielle Woodbury, Elaine Wychreschuk, Josie Zapata

*Diana Rosenblum, Membership & Development Assistant*

## Volunteer Update

Keith Ashley, Coordinator: Paton Center for Hummingbirds



BOB BRANDT



Top: Chris Strohm hard at work on the Paton's fence. Middle: A few members of the trail crew. Bottom left: John Hughes muscles a load of dirt out of a water-harvesting basin and onto the new parking area. Bottom right: John Hoffman gets his quadcopter aligned with the satellites before taking aerial photos of the site.

### Welcome to our New Volunteers

Luke Safford, Chris Strohm, Bruce Prior, Jan Bernadini, Amy Hudson, Mickey Nail, Gary Prosch, Lois Manowitz, Brianna McTeague.

## SPOTLIGHT ON PATON CENTER VOLUNTEERS

Tucson Audubon's volunteers transform the efforts of a small staff into the accomplishments of a conservation legion—and nowhere is this truer than at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia. We would need this entire issue to showcase everyone, but here are a few of our Paton volunteers.

### Chris Strohm: Trail Crew Leader and Master of Tools

Chris Strohm and his merry band of McLeod-toting path-makers have been creating access to wild southeast Arizona through trail building and maintenance for many years. Ranging from eight to 18 strong on any given Wednesday, some trail crew members refer to themselves affectionately as “the Dirtbags.” Most recently, Chris and the crew have joined us as Tucson Audubon volunteers to craft a trail connecting the Paton Center with the Nature Conservancy's Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve. Chris was previously a general contractor in Lake Tahoe, CA, where he gained years of experience working on the Tahoe Rim and Pacific Crest trails. He has also brought his contractor skills to bear on some aspects of our grounds work at the Paton Center. A great place to read about the trail building efforts is on the Tucson Audubon Blog, where progress is being documented by dedicated volunteer and trail crew scribe **Bob Brandt** (who isn't as keen on “the Dirtbags” moniker). You can read his posts at: [tucsonaudubon.org/blog](http://tucsonaudubon.org/blog).

### John Hughes: Meadow Steward and Trail Crew Member

Retired middle-school science teacher John Hughes regularly supports small-scale ecological restoration work at the Paton Center with his brains and his brawn. From helping with all aspects of the Richard Grand Memorial Meadow to joining our latest efforts with the streamside restoration project, John acts as our meadow steward as well as being part of the trail crew. He volunteers with many Patagonia organizations, leads bird walks at

Patagonia Lake State Park, and in the summer, supports the Flathead Audubon Society in Montana, where he previously served as a board member. John continues to write Bird-of-the-Month articles and collect Christmas Bird Count data for their organization.

### John Hoffman: Photographer, Painter, Quadcopter Pilot

John Hoffman is a jack-of-all-trades birder. If you've spent much time with Tucson Audubon publications, then you've seen his amazing bird photography (that's his hummingbird on the ad for our Bird and Wildlife Festival). John shows up for a million tasks at the Paton Center; he helped with two long days painting the casita, fills feeders and checks gates when Larry is away, and has even used his dazzling quadcopter drone camera for bird's-eye documentation of changes to the grounds. Previously, he also built nest boxes for American Kestrels, Azure Bluebirds, and even Elf Owls on his property in Sonoita. John is currently creating some small magnets to commemorate the hummingbird riches of the Paton Center.

We've got more Paton volunteers to tell you about in the future, but you can always come down and meet them for yourself! Thanks to everyone who makes Tucson Audubon possible.

### Contact Sharon about volunteering!

[volunteer@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:volunteer@tucsonaudubon.org)  
520-209-1811

[tucsonaudubon.org/volunteer](http://tucsonaudubon.org/volunteer)

Birds and birding in Mexico

# Exotic Birds a Day's Drive from Tucson

BOB BOWERS

When I think about exotic species, I picture distant places like Costa Rica or Ecuador and birds like parrots or macaws. Those places are rich with birds never seen in the U.S., but visiting often comes at a cost as rich as the bird life. If your budget chokes on distant travel, you might consider a nearby alternative: the colonial town of Alamos in Sonora, Mexico. The highway from Nogales tracks through familiar Sonoran Desert habitat for most of its journey south, and except for abundant water birds at San Carlos and Guaymas, most of the species along this route are as familiar as the habitat. However, just 440 miles from Tucson, everything changes when a left turn at Navohoa takes you 30 miles to the *Pueblo Mágico* of Alamos. A picturesque colonial village at 1,360 feet, Alamos was founded in the 17th century to exploit the discovery of silver. But today, the small town's silver lining is birding, not precious metal.

The Sonoran Desert reaches its southern boundary near Alamos, just as the tropical deciduous forest reaches its northern boundary. Arroyos climb into higher elevation canyons, while the Monte Mojino Reserve lies to the east and two major riparian areas are easily accessible north (the Rio Mayo) and south (the Rio Cuchujaqui). As if this weren't enough, the Sea of Cortez and Yavaros Bay (173 eBird species) are just an hour to the west. This collision of habitats rewards birders bigtime. Draw a 30-mile circle around Alamos, and you'll find a hundred eBird sites, including 26 hotspots. One tour company's checklist shows 341 birds, 15 of which are endemics. Notably, more than 70 of these are exotics with zero or only rare appearances in the U.S., including rarities like the Lilac-crowned and White-fronted Parrot, Mexican Parrotlet, Russet-crowned Motmot, Black-vented and Streak-backed Oriole, Ivory-billed and White-striped Woodcreeper, Gray-collared and Rose-throated Becard, Squirrel Cuckoo, Lineated Woodpecker, and Military



ALL PHOTOS BY BOB AND PRUDY BOWERS



Right, top to bottom: Streak-backed Oriole; Sierra de Alamos; Deciduous tropical forest near Alamos.  
Left, top to bottom: Black-throated Magpie-Jay; Alamos guides Dave MacKay and Armando Mejia.

Macaw. (Check eBird's hotspots for more from Alamos.) You can stroll around town and find Social Flycatcher, Elegant Quail and Black-throated Magpie-Jay. Nearby, easily accessible sites include the arroyo below, through, and above the little mining town of La Aduana, just a mile from Alamos. In La Aduana, you'll find Mexican Parrotlet, Rufous-backed Robin, and Blue Mockingbird, while the arroyo above the town lists 113 eBird species including Colima Pygmy-owl, Happy Wren, and Rufous-bellied Chachalaca. Another easily-reached site is the Arroyo Mentidero and Rio Cuchujaqui, less than 10 miles from Alamos. This eBird site lists 247 species, with specialties such as Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Green Kingfisher and Purplish-backed Jay. Other hotspots, such as the Rio Mayo and Sierra de Alamos, are more easily birded with a local guide. Fortunately, this is not a problem in Alamos. Just a mile

from the center of town is El Pedregal Nature Lodge, a 20-acre, 184-species eBird hotspot. The lodge is part of Solipaso, a birding tour company owned by David and Jennifer MacKay, and a member of Tucson Audubon's Birds and Business Alliance. Their excellent guided birding is reasonably priced and provides knowledgeable, friendly, and bilingual local guides like Armando Mejia to take you float-trip birding on the Rio Mayo or birding by van and foot to any of the area's other hotspots.

Parrots, Macaws, and 70 other exotic species are just 475 miles south of Tucson, closer than Los Angeles. If Costa Rica pushes your birding budget to the brink, take a closer look at Alamos. ■

*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.*

# Discovering the Birds and Botany Connection

## My Transformational Learning Experience

RICH HOYER

For the first ten years of my birding life, I enjoyed keying out plants as I went birding in exciting new places throughout the American West, but never connected birds and plants until I moved to Southeastern Arizona. Here, on my first post-university job with the United States Forest Service, I was required to do point counts as well as know all of the trees and shrubs. Within a week or two of starting the surveys, I had gone through a transformational learning experience and began to look at birds and their habitats in a totally new light.

We conducted our surveys at about 340 permanently marked points randomly located along straight-line transects at various elevations in five of the largest sky-islands (Santa Catalinas, Santa Ritas, Huachucas, Pinalaños, and Chiricahuas). We were required to visit each point three times during the breeding season, and after early July we began the complex and often tedious job of habitat measurements. But it sure beat sitting in an office or classroom.

Early in the season, as I arrived at each survey point—well-marked with colorful surveyor's flagging tape—I would be tense with anticipation, wondering which species I might get during the seven-minute count. I may have hiked

only three hundred meters from the previous point, but it was like a game: soon I found myself getting better at predicting the precise mix of species. At some points only five species would be singing, but at others, where there was clearly higher plant diversity, we would have more than 20 species – and I would be scribbling on the data entry sheet frantically, making sure I recorded every individual.

In any event, the mix of species and the numbers of each was always different. I detected Black-throated Gray Warbler almost everywhere, but I noticed that they were missing from those points too high or too low where no oaks were present (it didn't seem to matter which kind of oak, and we had to recognize about eight species). Sometimes the transect would cross over a ridge from a south-facing slope to the north side, which was cooler and moister. An open woodland dominated by small, scattered Arizona White Oaks would suddenly become a shady forest with taller trees and the addition of Silverleaf Oaks and Douglas Firs. Here I would have my first Painted Redstart of the morning. On to the next point, where a singing Grace's Warbler would be new, within sight of the first tall Chihuahuan Pine on the transect. I



JOHNIDA DOCKENS

learned over time that while some birds honed in on specific trees, it was often the general shape of the habitat that defined what a particular bird species found most attractive. The slope of the ground, the amount of leaf litter and grass cover, the density and size of trees and bushes, and the varying density of cover at different heights above the ground all contribute to give a habitat its shape, and a bird feels most comfortable in the habitat where it can most successfully forage, nest, roost, and keep from being preyed upon.

I still learn which birds prefer which habitats, especially when I visit a new site. Seeing a huge flock of Bushtits foraging in waist-high desert shrubbery in the eastern outskirts of Albuquerque last month was a new experience for me—but then, I did notice that scattered on the slopes nearby were oaks; apparently Gray Oak is the common one here. Bushtits don't need oaks (they occur in many areas where there are none), but my experience from twenty years ago in southeastern Arizona points to a connection, at least here in the Southwest. There is still a lot to learn.

The Tucson Bird Count (<http://www.tucsonbirds.org/>—not to be confused with the Christmas Bird Count) is an important long-term study that uses point counts as part of its protocol. The long standing Breeding Bird Survey across North America does as well. But if being part of a serious study scares you off, you can institute your own informal, personal study in your back yard or neighborhood; no need to think about publishing. Just try a point count or two or more: space them an equal distance apart, stand there for five minutes and write everything down, and do them several times. See if your understanding of birds and their habitat evolves. ■

*Rich Hoyer is a Senior Leader for WINGS Birding Tours Worldwide, [wingsbirds.com/leaders/rich-hoyer](http://wingsbirds.com/leaders/rich-hoyer).*



PAINTED REDSTART, LOIS MANOWITZ

# TRANSFORMATIONAL MOMENTS

**Tucson Audubon staff, volunteers, and members write about their personal transformational moments.**

## At Least To Try

Kentucky is supposed to be green, buggy, birdy, even farmy, filled with creeks, chickens, barred owls, bluebirds, raccoons—especially in late spring. Even on the edge of cities Kentucky crawls, flaps, and swims with riotous life. A transformational moment occurred for me when visiting my farming friends there, Adam and Rae. They rotate free-range chickens, grass-fed cattle, and organic vegetables on land farmed by Adam's family for eight generations. In spring the farm is blessed with creatures, flowers, vegetables, beauty—calves, chicks, purple cabbage, red lettuce, meadowlarks, towhees, barn swallows, skinks. After a morning working in their fields, Adam and Rae wanted to show me a patch of woods nearby. We walked to the edge of their property and through a border hedgerow of dense trees along a trickling creek. We emerged into a wide field of bleak, stubble death.

For acres and acres all that existed were the remnants of dead, dry corn stalks rising from gray, ashy ground. Not a bird, not an insect, not a single weed dared emerge from the poisoned soil. The contrast was nauseating. The perfect combination of lab-born pesticides and fertilizers cheaply and efficiently creates mono-crops to fill our grocery stores and hungry bellies—but at what cost to the rest of creation—and, in the long run, at what cost to us?

It's a complex world and we all face tricky choices as how to steward the land of our everyday



JEMEZ MOUNTAINS, MATT CLARK

lives. On that day the best I could determine was at least to try and make choices—in my garden, at the grocery, with my wallet, or in my interactions with others—that favor a diversity of teeming life over a mono-crop of efficient destruction.

*Keith Ashley, Coordinator: Paton Center for Hummingbirds*

## The Day I Became a Conservationist

It was 1994—my senior year of high school. My good friend Janet and I, both suffering from “senioritis,” decided to blow off our homework and take a hike in the nearby Jemez Mountains—a beautiful forested mountain range formed by a massive, ancient volcano. When we arrived, we saw an ominous storm cloud swirling like a whirlpool in the sky. With strong winds whipping around us, we decided to forge on. Thirty minutes into our hike, however, I felt the warmth of the sun on the back of my neck. Instead of unleashing rain and lightning, the energy of the storm had dissipated into spirals of bright white clouds as far as the eye could see down the river valley. A Red-tailed Hawk soared effortlessly above the towering basaltic cliffs. This scene expanded my awareness of the relationship between the elements, and in an epiphany I understood the unique and sacred nature of life on Earth. Both awestruck by the magnificence we had witnessed, Janet and I looked at each other and exchanged a knowing smile.

Just then, a semi-truck, using its obnoxiously loud “jake brake,” interrupted this powerful, peaceful experience as it rumbled down the

highway routed through the valley. In that moment, I realized the significant impact we humans were having upon the delicate balance of the natural world: destroying habitat with development, fragmenting the landscape with roads, and polluting our own air and waters. That was the day I became a dedicated conservationist.

*Matt Clark, Conservation Policy Analyst*

## What's That?

I've been paying attention to birds for as long as I can remember, whether watching Dark-eyed Juncos eating bread crumbs in my grandparents' yard or figuring out which egret was stalking fish in the hotel pond on a family vacation. I periodically perused my *National Audubon Society First Field Guide to Birds* or watched the odd flock of Common Grackles in my backyard in Pennsylvania, but birding wasn't a singular focus for me. That is, until about 8:30 AM on Saturday, November 13, 1999.

On my first official bird walk that fateful frigid weekend, I could barely follow what seemed to be bullets with wings, shooting by low over the lake. “Those are ducks?” I asked. “Yep, Bufflehead,” someone replied. I was in total disbelief from seeing a dozen species of ducks that morning, having only known of 3 or 4 species previously. Toward the end of the walk, I noticed a bird perched prominently at the top of a bush that no one else was watching. This is when I experienced the quintessential beginning birder moment of “What's that?”



KEITH ASHLEY

# Transformation: Migrating in New Directions

## Tucson Audubon's 2014 Annual Report



Each year, as we look back we see the breadth of programs and activities that Tucson Audubon accomplishes to serve its membership and the community at large here in southern Arizona. Some of those are highlighted on the following pages. However, this year three significant events occurred that are particularly noteworthy.

First, in February of 2014, Tucson Audubon took title to the Paton Center for Hummingbirds from the American Bird Conservancy, who purchased it from the family. But in order to accept the property, it was essential to have sufficient funds to maintain and enhance the facility and ultimately fulfill a vision. Generous designated donations from around the country, as well as funds raised by the Conservancy, Victor Emanuel Tours, and Tucson Audubon, funded over \$300,000 to allow that vision to begin. It is now a work in progress.

For over a decade, Tucson Audubon has been restoring degraded streamside land under a program instituted by the Army Corps of Engineers. Studies on lands we have restored show bird populations twice as large as on comparable unrestored lands, with twice the number of species. Several years ago, we partnered with Pima County Flood Control in a joint project. Unfortunately, the sudden and unexpected withdrawal of this partner from the program left us needing significant unrestricted donations for 2015. Your donations are helping us bridge that gap. We are currently establishing a new program with the Corps, as this program has proven to be a major contributor to supporting healthy ecosystems that are of strategic importance in southern Arizona.

Lastly, Executive Director Paul Green tendered his resignation, effective in January 2015, after eight exemplary years of service. Paul's significant contributions in moving Tucson Audubon forward on all fronts of conservation, education, and recreation cannot be applauded without mentioning the significant assistance of his wife, Eng-Li. They have moved to New Mexico to live gently on the land and contribute in other ways to making life on this earth a bit better. Tucson Audubon and the community were richly served by their being a partner in all things to serve birds and the environment.

*R. Cynthia Pruett*

R. Cynthia Pruett,  
Interim Executive Director and past Board President

As I assume the role of President for Tucson Audubon, I firmly believe that our actions should set an example of the change the world needs to embrace—the kind of radical change required for human endeavors on Earth to become more holistic and sustainable for future generations. Tucson Audubon can serve as both a purveyor and as a catalyst for these developing concepts.

Transformation of our surroundings into oases for birds and wildlife, are powerful concepts that we actively incorporate into our programming. Growing Skills for a Green Economy, our urban bird-friendly landscaping and recognition programs, and habitat restoration projects are prime examples of Tucson Audubon's visionary action.

Our impact has been growing due to the many partnerships we have fostered with public agencies and private organizations. Each year, the enthusiasm of our supporters, board members, volunteers, and staff intensifies.

The transformation we seek must enhance the traditional programming that our members value. A year-round schedule of field trips, the Bird and Wildlife Festival, Christmas Counts, the Tucson Bird Count, and informative lectures and workshops are all program mainstays that reached thousands of people in 2014. Our acclaimed Conservation Advocacy Program works across the region to stem the endless tide of environmental insults that may compromise or destroy all that we have worked so hard to protect.

The outstanding cadre of volunteers and staff at Tucson Audubon is what makes our organization uniquely positioned to inspire, educate, and help address the onslaught of threats to birds and their habitats to deliver the kind of transformational change we aspire to. Thank you all for your dedication and passionate action on Tucson Audubon's behalf.

As 2015 unfolds, we will be welcoming Karen Fogas as our new Executive Director. Karen brings to this position a deep concern for preserving wild lands and biodiversity for future generations. She is an energetic and successful leader of complex organizations and brings a strong passion for Tucson Audubon's goals and transformational vision.

I look forward to working with the entire Tucson Audubon family to build upon its proud legacy, and I challenge our community to transform itself into the future we envision together.

*Les Corey*  
Les Corey,  
President





## The Tucson Bird & Wildlife Festival

Did you know that birding and watchable wildlife activities have an annual economic impact of \$1.5 billion for Arizona? By simply engaging in an enjoyable pastime, the participants in these activities are transforming community awareness, understanding, and support for the conservation of wildlife and their habitats.

The Tucson Bird & Wildlife Festival plays a big part in this transformation. Our Festival is designed to showcase the plethora of outstanding watchable wildlife opportunities in southeast Arizona and increase the local economic impact through increased visitation to the area.

Our fourth annual Festival, in August 2014, attracted people from far and wide:

- We recorded 118 U.S. ZIP codes and three foreign countries for a total of 282 registered participants and 750 total attendees—a significant increase from 126 registered participants our first year, in 2011.
- We provided 27 expert-led field trips with 327 field trip attendees and seven workshops with 88 attendees.
- Birders in attendance recorded over 200 avian species for Southeast Arizona.
- We received corporate sponsorships and support from The City of Tucson, The Riverpark Inn, Carl Zeiss Sports Optics, Opticron USA, Swarovski Optik, Celestron LLC, Leica Sport Optics, Victor Emanuel Nature Tours Inc., and WINGS Birding Tours Worldwide.
- We showcased over 30 vendor booths for participants to peruse.
- Ninety-two percent of attendees said they were likely to attend this event again.

Enthusiastic participants shared their feedback, including this anonymous response:

*“Tucson Audubon is doing an outstanding job on the Festival. I appreciated the extra touches from personalized itinerary to snacks and drinks. The trip leaders were outstanding. This is a fantastic festival. Great job!”*

This Festival continues to widen its positive impact on the region and we are looking forward to our best Festival yet this coming August 12–16, 2015. Join us to help transform the nature of tourism for southeast Arizona and elevate Tucson’s recognition as a national birding headquarters!

## Bird Conservation— Important Bird Areas and the Tucson Bird Count

For over twelve years, Tucson Audubon has been coordinating the Arizona Important Bird Areas (IBA) program as part of a global initiative to identify the most important sites for native birds all over the world. As one of the most active and involved IBA programs in the United States, the Arizona program stands out for its data-driven approach and impressive volunteer involvement.



Three years ago, Tucson Audubon began coordinating the annual Tucson Bird Count. This count successfully completed its 14th annual urban bird count in the spring of 2014. Tucson Audubon coordinated this citizen-science effort with a strong conservation goal.

Here are some major bird conservation milestones in 2014:

- Tucson Audubon founded the Birds Beyond Borders survey initiative with our partner Nature and Culture International to cooperatively survey the Chiricahua Mountains Global IBA and Mexico’s Reserva Monte Mojino IBA, both of which are part of the larger Sierra Madre “Sky Island” mountain chain. This innovative project has transformed the Arizona Important Bird Areas program into an international conservation force.
- Over 160 volunteers helped make the Arizona Important Bird Areas program a success by contributing 2696 hours of survey time, data entry, and outreach in 2014.
- Five different “Recipe Cards” for creating bird-friendly yards were created by Tucson Audubon as part of the new Bringing Birds Home initiative. This is part of the long-awaited outreach component of the Tucson Bird Count, which aims to engage non-birding Tucson residents to help make urban Tucson a friendlier place for native birds.
- For the first time ever, Tucson Audubon partnered with the SAHBA Home & Garden show to launch the Bringing Birds Home initiative and create a new venue for innovative outreach.

In 2015, both the Arizona Important Bird Areas program and the Tucson Bird Count will continue to push the boundaries of conservation and outreach by forging new partnerships and creating outreach channels that will reach new audiences and increase the positive impact of our conservation message.





JENNIFER MACFARLAND



MATT GRIFFITHS



LINDA CATO, WILD STUDENT MEDIA DOCUMENTATION TEAM



LINDA CATO

## Tucson Audubon's Paton Center for Hummingbirds

Tucson Audubon has been the official steward of the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia for a full year now, and transformation has been a key theme at the site. For the first six months, we took our time getting to know the house, grounds, and community on more intimate terms than previous birding visits to the Paton backyard had allowed. We concluded that the best path to fulfilling Tucson Audubon's goals of education, conservation, and recreation at the Paton Center would be to follow in Wally and Marion Paton's footsteps—continuing to provide visitors with access to delightful birds and more.

- Our Seven Saturdays guided hikes lead people into the Patagonia Mountains once a month in search of the region's amazing biodiversity, while the relaxed lectures that follow provide access to the Patagonia community's conservation efforts.
- The casita next to the main house was transformed from a small apartment into a public gathering space—a great place for Patagonians, Tucsonans, and people from all over the region to come together.
- Ecological restoration of the grounds is replacing many invasive plants with native species that will, in time, provide for a wider variety of birds with more access to a greater abundance of natural foods such as seeds, berries, nectar and insects.
- The lot adjacent to the house was transformed into the Richard Grand Memorial meadow, which includes a trail, benches, and a wildlife water feature. Access to micro-environments around the grounds enhance visitors' experiences.

2015 will bring additional changes with the installation of a hummingbird cam, 'frontier' fruit orchard (to commemorate the Paton's previous fruit trees), and intense restoration along the creek. While some dense cover on site has been removed in the restoration process, new growth of native plants will soon flourish, and provide a more useful cover in its place.

Thanks to all who have supported Tucson Audubon in the past year to maintain and transform Tucson Audubon's Paton Center for Hummingbirds.



MATT GRIFFITHS



KEDNALL KROESEN

## WILD

In 2014, Tucson Audubon began a new chapter in its evolution as a leading conservation organization in the Tucson region: with assistance from a National Audubon Toyota TogetherGreen grant, Tucson Audubon is working with the local Western Institute for Leadership Development High School (WILD) on an ecological restoration education program called "Growing Skills for the Green Economy." This program will begin transforming the school's denuded landscapes into oases for people and wildlife.

Through integration with the school's curriculum, experiential workshop-format learning, and partnerships with community groups such as Nighthawk Natives, Tucson Community Food Bank, and Watershed Management Group, the program seeks to expose students and community members to ideas of ecological restoration and reconciliation as well as equip them with the tools to realize these outcomes. Participants in the program will learn fundamentals of ecology, project design, greenhouse construction, irrigation, plant propagation, water harvesting, and urban ecosystem restoration to transform their understanding of the urban environment and their ability to improve it.

Working with its community partners, Tucson Audubon and WILD will:

- Install 9,000 gallons of rainwater harvesting capacity at the school
- Build 1,700 square feet of plant propagation space in irrigated schoolyard growing houses
- Raise 250 native plants important to wildlife to be planted on the school grounds.

A primary goal of the project is to ensure that the WILD staff is equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to continue transforming their school grounds into an oasis for all creatures and a community demonstration site of urban restoration.

Tucson Audubon began this project as part of a larger innovative ecological restoration education program that seeks to transform youth perspectives of and engagement with the environment while also ensuring effective restoration of urban wildlife habitat.



LINDA CATO



## Officers, Board, and Staff

### Executive Officers and Board

- President** Les Corey
- Vice President** Robert Hernbrode
- Secretary** Ruth Russell
- Treasurer** Richard Carlson
- Directors at Large**
- Matthew A. Bailey
- Ardeth Barnhart
- Gavin Bieber
- Ed Curley
- David Dunford
- Debra Finch
- Jesus Garcia
- Kathy Jacobs
- John Kennedy
- Cynthia Pruett
- Nancy Young Wright
- Claire Zucker

### Staff

- Keith Ashley  
Coordinator: Paton Center for Hummingbirds
- Andy Bennett  
Restoration Project Manager
- Michelle Bourgeois  
Accountant
- Matt Clark  
Conservation Policy Analyst

- Karen Fogas  
Executive Director
- Matt Griffiths  
Communications, Webmaster, Habitat Restoration
- Jonathan Horst  
Restoration Ecologist
- Bete Jones  
Outreach Manager
- Kendall Kroesen  
Urban Program Manager
- Rodd Lancaster  
Restoration Field Crew Supervisor
- Dan Lehman  
Restoration Specialist
- Sharon Long  
Volunteer Coordinator and Outreach Assistant
- Jennie MacFarland  
IBA Program Conservation Biologist, TBC Coordinator
- Ken Murphy  
Field Trip Coordinator
- Sara Pike  
Associate Director
- Diana Rosenblum  
Membership and Development Assistant
- Sarah Whelan  
Operations and Retail Coordinator

BOARD—left photo, L to R: (back row) Bob Hernbrode, John Kennedy, Cynthia Pruett, David Dunford, Ardeth Barnhart; (middle row) Ed Curley, Richard Carlson, Les Corey, Claire Zucker; (front row) Jesus Garcia, Ruth Russell, Debra Finch (not shown: Matthew Bailey, Gavin Bieber, and Kathy Jacobs)

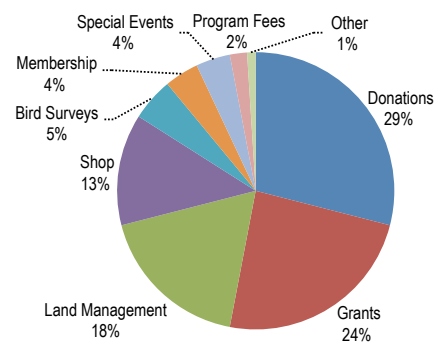
STAFF—right photo, L to R: (back row) Rodd Lancaster, Bete Jones, Keith Ashley, Sharon Long, Diana Rosenblum, Jennie MacFarland, Andy Bennett, Kendall Kroesen, Karen Fogas; (front row) Dan Lehman, Jonathan Horst, Michelle Bourgeois, Sarah Whelan, Sara Pike, Matt Griffiths (not shown: Matt Clark and Ken Murphy)

## Tucson Audubon Society Income & Expenses Summary

For the Year Ended December 31, 2014

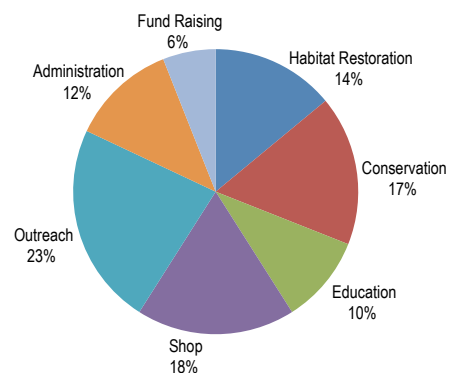
Income	\$2,105,576.82
Expenses	(1,417,842.04)
Investment Activity	30,906.62
<b>Net</b>	<b>\$718,641.40</b>

### INCOME



UNAUDITED

### EXPENSES



# ONAL MOMENTS



TUCSON WILDLIFE CENTER, TONYA PADILLA



NORTHERN SHRIKE, NEBIRDSPLUS

“Northern Shrike!” the leader yelled. Everybody seemed incredibly excited about this rare bird, and I had been the one to find it! I was hooked. Freezing weather or not, I sensed I was going to be spending a whole lot more of my life outside looking for birds!

*John Yerger, Adventure Birding Co.*

## Sowing the Seeds of Transformation

My wife Joni taught me a valuable lesson recently: she showed me that you don't need to be a birder to sow the seeds of transformation for the next generation of emerging naturalists!

It started with an adorable owl puppet that Joni picked up at the Tucson Audubon Nature Shop for her preschool class. The interest of her students prompted her and Tonya, her co-teacher, to begin reading stories and gathering fact books about owls, including my treasured field guides.

The students' thirst for knowledge of birds was encouraging. They pored over field guides together, asked questions, and shared information. One student would choose a bird to role play that day by researching its colors, sounds, and even range. Others fashioned hummingbird bills and “sipped” the nectar of plants on the playground.

Joni and Tonya supported their students' enthusiasm by enlisting Tucson Wildlife Center to visit the school and promoting the event with a fundraiser. The children enjoyed collecting items

to help the animals, drawing pictures of owls, and crafting owl habitats. They could hardly wait to see “Bubba” and “Otto,” the Great Horned Owl guests.

The event was a huge success, and now one of the children's favorite games is Tucson Wildlife Center, where one child plays an injured animal who is invited in to be cared for by others. After four months, their interest is still expanding: they have started their own nature book club by contributing their books to the existing library. I have given up all hope of seeing my field guides returned.

*Brian Nicholas, Tucson Audubon Volunteer*

## A Transformational Moment

Growing up in Ohio, I always liked to be outdoors hiking and camping, but I had never been exposed to “bird watching.” That changed for me one winter morning in graduate school in Salt Lake City, when two friends of mine told me that an uncommon bird had been seen in a nearby canyon and they were going to look for it. I was flummoxed by the whole concept. Going to look for a single bird? Why? And how likely were they to find it? They invited me along, and voila, we did find it: a very pretty bird called a Varied Thrush, which I had no previous idea even existed. Wow! With continued guidance from friends, I became more engrossed in this hobby. Birding provided me with a focus to my outdoor forays, forcing me to pay attention to all sorts of details of both the bird and its habitat. Just as importantly, I feel that birding made me a better scientist in my chosen career: I find myself looking not only at larger concepts, but at the details underneath them that are critical to understanding



VARIED THRUSH, BRYAN SMITH

them. My fascination with other aspects of nature has only continued to grow, even today.

*Tim Helentjaris, Tucson Audubon Volunteer*

## Life Amidst the Concrete

My family is not outdoorsy at all, so didn't even realize that birding was an activity that people actually did until I was almost through middle school. Growing up in the concrete jungle of Phoenix, I found the birds I was drawn to in the pages of books and during classic family road trips to National Parks. For years this is how I mainly thought of bird habitats—remote, pristine places or distant tropical jungles. It was not until I was a student at the University of Arizona and had heard that there were White-throated Swifts nesting on the stadium that I experienced a paradigm shift on birding and bird habitat in general. As I stood on 6th Ave in the late afternoon with dozens of cars zooming by just a few feet behind me, I watched scores of White-throated Swifts zoom around a huge concrete stadium, happily twittering away and catching insects. At that moment I realized that native birds live everywhere, not just in preserves and national parks. I began to explore urban birding and now believe urban habitat creation and enhancement to be one of the most important concepts in bird conservation.

*Jennie Macfarland, IBA Conservation Biologist*



WHITE-THROATED SWIFT, JULIO MULERO

#AudubongoesWILD:

# Transforming Young Through Restoration Ed

ANDY BENNETT | RESTORATION PROJECT MANAGER

ALL PHOTOS BY WILD STUDENT MEDIA DOCUMENTATION TEAM, LINDA CATO



The New Year saw Tucson Audubon gearing up its restoration ecology education project, **Growing Skills for the Green Economy**, with workshops and engaging lessons at the Western Institute for Leadership Development (WILD) high school. Using the reintroduction of wolves (the school mascot) to the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem as an example of species restoration and its role in degraded ecosystems, staffers Keith Ashley and Andy Bennett introduced the concepts of ecology and ecological restoration and linked them to the restoration work planned at the school. To continue the ecological learning, the students completed an “ecological scavenger hunt” at Tucson Audubon’s urban restoration area at Atturbury Wash.

WILD students reflected on transformational moments during which they recognized the importance of the natural world. Here are some of their thoughts:

**Alejandra Lopez:** The moment I realized that nature is important is when animals started to disappear all around the world. The moment I heard that, it broke my heart. Everyone should help preserve wildlife.

**Caleb Pipes:** Before coming to WILD and meeting all the amazing people through its partnerships, I felt that this world was pretty hopeless. We are constantly destroying it without a second thought: killing animals and disrupting the ecosystem, mining resources using inefficient methods, pouring pollution into the atmosphere—all without realizing what we were doing, not only to the earth, but to ourselves. The planet is dying, and before being introduced to organizations that are trying to fix the mess we created, I didn’t know that it shouldn’t be. I felt it was fairly normal; I mean, everything dies in the end. But I didn’t know that not only was this unnatural, but that there were many ways to prevent this. Meeting people from the Audubon Society and going through some of their lessons



allowed me to realize that even making a small change for the better in the environment could drastically change the situation we are in. Going through projects focused on improving the habitat around our campus for plants and animals alike helped me gain skills to change the future and make it a better place for the generations to come.

# Minds Education



Facing page, clockwise from left: students show off greenhouse doors they built; students building the greenhouse; student illustrating schoolyard plants; This page, clockwise from top: students on an ecological scavenger hunt at Atturbury Wash; buidling the greenhouses; students measure erosion in Atturbury Wash; students mix potting soil for native plants.



**Laynah Varnum:** I started to realize the environment was important when I noticed all the housing developments that were coming up in Tucson. I saw how many habitats were being destroyed by the developments, and I realized that in turn, the desert wildlife was being compromised. That is when I started to understand just how important sustaining our environment is.

**Devon Francisco Lopez:** The first time that I started to think of the environment was when I first came to WILD and saw how much the school did to fix the environment around them. This made me want to do the same thing. Today, I do all I can to help my own family. One thing I have helped with at the school is the greenhouse and helping WILD work with Tucson Audubon Society to help restore our native bird habitats at our own school.

**Yamilette Molina:** When I was in school, I read an article that talked about how much of our resources we used up. We have used the resources equivalent to six earths. This is when I realized how important nature is to us: the

amount of resources we use on a daily basis is limiting the amount of resources we will have in the future.

**Alma Baeza:** The moment I started realizing the importance of the environment was when we did the Belvedere cleanup to see the importance of the waste we throw away. Another was at school, when we had the presentation about the importance of saving the trees in our neighborhood that are the homes of the hawks. Restoring bird habitats affects all of us.

The school hosted two community workshops for the project so far in 2015, the first to build a hoop-house and shade-house that students will use to grow native plants important to wildlife, and a second to teach participants the fundamentals of seed collection, storage, planting, and nurturing featuring local native plant experts Berni Jilka and Gary Maskariniec. The project will hold two more workshops focused on urban ecosystem restoration and water harvesting that will begin restoring parts of the school's degraded landscapes. For more information about the project and workshops, contact Andy Bennett: [abennett@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:abennett@tucsonaudubon.org)

*This project is funded by a Toyota TogetherGreen Innovation Grant in partnership with National Audubon*

# Win-Win for Everyone: University Researcher

JONATHAN HORST | RESTORATION ECOLOGIST AND KEITH ASHLEY | PATON CENTER COORDINATOR



JIM DOLPH

When we hear about people transforming bird habitat, it's often for the worse—but not in this case. In early February, a troop of Tucson Audubon volunteers mounted nest boxes for Azure or Mexican Bluebirds on two of the Sonoita Wine Guild's vineyards in an effort to strengthen this vulnerable population of the Eastern Bluebird subspecies, *Sialia sialis fulva*. At the same time, students from the University of Arizona mounted boxes at four more vineyards under the direction of bluebird researcher Dr. Renee Duckworth. In total, about 50 new nesting cavities are now available to this tiny bluebird colony of southeast Arizona.

The collaborative project is dubbed "Win-Win for Azure Bluebirds and Arizona Vineyards" to emphasize its reconciliation ecology dimension: a conservation project with potential economic benefits for wine growers and the region. A stronger population of bluebirds could serve the vineyards as free and natural pest control. They might also draw more nature enthusiasts to the region through positive publicity about using land wisely to support both human and avian interests.

And, with this project, the "wins" just keep coming. Our bluebird efforts have been greatly enriched through this opportunity to collaborate with Dr. Duckworth, PhD student Ahvi Potticary, and their lab. Dr. Duckworth studies the dynamics of bluebird range expansion, inheritance of behavior, and a host of related ecological factors. Tucson



JIM DOLPH



BETTY DICKENS

Clockwise from top left: Azure Bluebird nest box; Azure Bluebird Team proudly display their boxes; Tucson Audubon volunteer Gary Prosch fine-tuning the wire attachment for a box; UA grad student Ahvi Potticary installing a box.

Audubon is striving to ensure that our conservation efforts can augment her research, while her research strengthens our conservation efforts by informing us of the experimentally-determined best practices for supporting the Azure Bluebird—the largest and palest subspecies of Eastern Bluebird, which happens to be a year-round resident in our region.

Yet another significant "win" is the small band of dedicated volunteers moving this project forward. For several months now, Joe DeRouen of Oro Valley has been the



JIM DOLPH

carpenter genius behind our experiments with several different box types: the Carl Little, the F-30, and the top-opening box that Dr. Duckworth uses for her bluebird research in Montana. Many volunteers have helped to assemble the kits Joe cuts, though recently the lion's share of assembly has fallen to Gary Prosch. Behind the scenes, Rick Fletcher has taken on some administrative duties, helping Tucson Audubon's Paton Center for Hummingbirds to become an

# Bluebirds, Vineyards, s, and Volunteers

## VOLUNTEER PHOTO JOURNAL

### A Visit to the Vineyards



VOLUNTEER PHOTO JOURNAL PHOTOS BY LOIS MANOWITZ

Clockwise from top: Pronghorn, Eastern Meadowlark, male Northern Harrier

official affiliate of the North American Bluebird Society. Lorry Wendland, Lois Manowitz, and Jim Dolph are generously contributing their prior knowledge of bluebird trails and boxes, dexterity with GPS, photography skills, availability to mount and monitor boxes, and citizen conservation ethics.

A final “win” would be to have your help! Several of the folks on our

monitoring crew are snowbirds and will be migrating to cooler climes in the late spring. The project could use a few more people to help with the weekly monitoring of boxes. If you would be interested, please contact Paton Center coordinator Keith Ashley: [kashley@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:kashley@tucsonaudubon.org) or Tucson Audubon’s Restoration Ecologist Jonathan Horst: [jhorst@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:jhorst@tucsonaudubon.org)

Visit [tucsonaudubon.org](http://tucsonaudubon.org) for updates and more.

## A Change in Our Thinking

It was a transformational moment for me when a couple living near Sabino Creek asked me if the Western Screech-Owls nesting in their nest box would scare hummingbirds away from their feeders.

“Wait, you have owls using a nest box?”

The conventional wisdom was that birds do not use nest boxes in the Sonoran Desert because it is too hot inside. There may be some truth to that, but later we heard from other people with Western Screech-Owls in boxes, and some that have had Ash-throated Flycatcher and Lucy’s Warblers nest in boxes.

There are a dozen or more species in the Tucson area that nest in holes and are therefore candidates for using nest boxes. Many of them nest in saguaro holes made by Gila Woodpeckers and Gilded Flickers. Others nest in holes in large, old-growth desert or riparian trees. There are not very many of either in suburbia. It may be that some species can find all the food, shelter and water they need in our neighborhoods and are limited only by the dearth of holes.

In the fall of 2013 with the expert help of Keith Ashley, then a Prescott College student, we had volunteers build around 50 boxes and put them up. We built big boxes for Western Screech-Owls or American Kestrels and medium boxes targeting Ash-throated Flycatchers and Brown-crested Flycatchers. We drilled holes in gourds for Lucy’s Warbler and later also discovered a very small nest box design for Lucy’s Warbler.

So far a few of our boxes have been used, with Western Screech-Owl and Ash-throated Flycatcher again being most likely. This spring will be an additional test since the boxes have now been up long enough for birds to be familiar with them.

We will continue to experiment and promote the boxes we think most likely to succeed. Let us know if you want to help. By the way, we do not think that nesting screech-owls are likely to scare away hummingbirds. Hummingbirds are hard to catch!

*Kendall Kroesen, Urban Program Manager*

## Christmas Bird Count Results for the Southeast Arizona Region

Rich Hoyer

For me, a frequent topic of conversation during the late winter months is the Christmas Bird Count. Most birders I've talked to these past two months certainly participated, and so my first question invariably is, "Which ones did you do?" I've been quite surprised how frequently the answer is "just one," and how often that one was called "the" Christmas Bird Count.

"But *which* Christmas Bird Count did you do?"

"Which? I just did THE Christmas Bird Count."

"But there are over 2400 different Christmas Bird Counts you could have participated in. What was the name of the circle you did?"

"Name? I didn't know it had a name."

Ah. Well, allow me to explain. Each of these 2400-plus circles (and every year there are more) has three characteristics that make them unique: a *center* (now described using latitude and longitude), a designated *compiler*, and a *name*. One of the compiler's jobs is to decide on and announce the date for his or her circle—any day from December 14 to January 5 each year—and then organize the participants into teams to cover the circle on that day. If you're among those who thought you had done *the* Christmas Bird Count, there are actually fourteen counts you might have done here in southeast Arizona (see the map). If you had limitless energy and few other commitments, you could have participated in nine of them without leaving this corner of the state!

If you began your CBC counting on December 14th, you had a choice between Tucson Valley or Saint David. Tucson Valley broke all kinds of records, with the highest number of species ever seen on an Arizona CBC (166), number of participants (124 in the field and 3 at feeders), and



MATT GRIFFITHS

a new all-time national record high count for five species and a sixth tied, which will surely be more than any other CBC in the country. Previously staked-out mega-rarities of Lucy's Warbler and Baltimore Oriole, were re-found, and surprise Pine Warbler (two!), Bell's Vireo, and Virginia's Warbler were discovered on CBC day. A high total of seven Clay-colored Sparrows was recorded, and 384 Vermilion Flycatchers boggles the mind. A single American Robin at Evergreen Cemetery was a near miss. Saint David, meanwhile, would have found you enjoying equally lovely weather (though a bit cooler), and its 11 participants reported 91 species, including two Long-eared Owls and a White-throated Sparrow.

If you kept going, you had a two-day rest before being able to participate in back-to-back Green Valley-Madera Canyon and Patagonia CBCs on December 17 and 18, both of which unfortunately coincided with the passage of a rather blustery and wet cold front. You wouldn't know it from the species list on the first, which reached an impressive 162 by 57 participants. Perhaps the most astounding find there was two Five-striped Sparrows in Chino Canyon, the first ever found in winter away from the Pajarito Mountains. Only

one of the resident Rufous-capped Warblers revealed itself, but an all-time record high thirteen Black-capped Gnatcatchers was impressive. The next day at Patagonia 45 participants reported a low 127 species, where the weather probably took its toll. Staked-out Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Yellow-throated Warbler, Rufous-backed Robin, Louisiana Waterthrush, and six Hepatic Tanagers were some of the highlights.

Amazingly, only one count was scheduled for December 19: the Elfrida CBC, an important one for the unique area it covers in the Whitewater Draw watershed. Nine participants found a respectable 95 species, among which were a rare White-faced Ibis, a Ruddy Ground-Dove, an impressive 27 Montezuma Quail, and 14,652 Sandhill Cranes.

If you had wanted to make a full weekend out of it, you would have had to choose among four CBCs on Sunday the 20th. Ramsey Canyon was in the unique position of not having a compiler this year, with a several-month search turning up no volunteers to take Ted Mouras' place. Nevertheless, 17 birders decided to cover the areas to which they had been assigned in previous years and submitted their results to eBird for what was called a "do-it-yourself"



The Crissal Thrasher is found in a wide variety of habitats and occurs in all of Southeastern Arizona's CBC circles, but its secretive nature kept it from being recorded on four of them this year. The Portal CBC led the pack with an amazing 32 found.

RICH HOYER

CBC. Robert Weissler stepped in to collate all those eBird lists into one CBC submission, which totaled 108 species. Two Botteri's Sparrows and two rare Fox Sparrows were found. Nogales was held the same day, where 26 participants found 127 species, among which were a surprisingly high 19 Black-throated Gray Warblers, an amazing ten Botteri's Sparrows, and four Wilson's Warblers, as well as the famous Elegant Trogon at Patagonia Lake State Park. Meanwhile, even if you had chosen to stay close to Tucson, you had to make a choice between the Avra Valley and Santa Catalina Mountains CBCs, the two that flank Tucson Valley. Avra Valley's 93 species, found by 20 participants, included a rare Common Loon and five Bendire's Thrashers, the closest population of that species to Tucson proper. To the east, Santa Catalina Mountains had many highlights among the 139 species found by the 30 participants; rarities included Pine Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, and an Eastern Phoebe, while four Merlins was a high count. On the other hand, singleton Great-blue Heron and Gilded Flicker were surprising near misses.

Few compilers are tempted to schedule their CBC on Christmas Day, so even if you were still energized after five CBCs in a row, you were forced to take a week-long break before the Portal CBC held on December 27. That CBC did very





VERMILION FLYCATCHER, DAN WEISZ

well, tying Santa Catalina Mountains with 139 species, found by an equally impressively high of 56 participants. Rough-legged Hawk, Gray Catbird, Pine Warbler, Eastern Phoebe, and three Rufous Hummingbirds were rare finds, while 10 Blue-throated Hummingbirds and 17 Long-eared Owls were impressive numbers. Of course, this CBC also held its unique spot among US CBCs with its four Mexican Chickadees.

The wait until January 2nd was worth it for the 61 participants on the Atascosa Highlands CBC, where they beat their own record (142) with 147 species. The rarest finds were Wood Duck, Short-eared Owl, Winter Wren, Wilson's Warbler, and an Evening Grosbeak, but eight Five-striped Sparrows set a new all-time national high. The next day, your only option would have been the unique Appleton-Whittell CBC, known for its

abundant grasslands. Some of the 37 participants were surprised by a Crested Caracara that flew over at the Audubon Research Ranch in the morning, and an additional 101 species were seen during the day, including 20 species of sparrows and an Elegant Trogon in the Huachuca Mountain foothills.

Finally, on the final Sunday of the CBC period, you had a choice of Buenos Aires NWR or Dudleyville,

both very attractive places to bird. The lower San Pedro River valley saw 37 participants finding 115 species that day, among which were a surprise Common Goldeneye, a Pacific-slope Flycatcher, and a Red-breasted Nuthatch. The Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge CBC hosted 25 participants who found 104 species, among which were a very surprising Broad-billed Hummingbird (no feeders!), a White-throated Sparrow, and a goodly sum of 55 Loggerhead Shrikes.

Compilers usually begin announcing their CBC dates as early as August or September, and by sometime in November you will be able to see the full schedule of Arizona CBCs on the Tucson Audubon Society website. Now's the time to put aside international travel and family commitments and start planning your next CBC blast.

## Wildlife Garden Plant Profile

Lynn Hassler, Garden Volunteer Captain

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

### Baja Fairy Duster

**Scientific name:** *Calliandra californica*

**Family:** Fabaceae (Bean/Pea)

**Native range:** Baja California, Mexico, near sea level to 4600 feet

**Wildlife value:** Flowers attract nectaring hummingbirds, Verdins, butterflies, bees, and other insects. Larval food plant for several blue butterflies. Seeds eaten by birds and small mammals. Spent flowers used for nesting material.

This medium-sized, low-water-use shrub sports scarlet tassel-like flowers that are magnets for hummingbirds and insects. Typically, the elongated flowering season begins in spring, peaks in the fall, and lasts until frost. In mild years, plants may bloom nearly year-round. Although Baja fairy duster is drought-tolerant, supplemental

water will induce more profuse flowering. Plants do not require pruning unless damaged by frost.

Baja fairy duster blooms are an orgy of pollination, attracting hummingbirds, Verdins, butterflies, and all manner of iridescent bees and flies. Ceraunus Blue and Marine Blue butterflies lay their eggs near a budding inflorescence, and the emerging caterpillars eat the flowers. The caterpillars secrete a sweet juice that is coveted by ants; in return, the ants provide the caterpillars with protection from predators and parasites. Cactus wrens and other bug-eaters visit to devour caterpillars and insects, and seeds of the plant are tasty to quail, doves, and finches. Verdins and Cactus Wrens may collect the dried "dusters" to line their nests, and although the plants grow to only about 5 feet tall and wide, their dense habit makes for good cover.

The main disadvantage of Baja fairy duster is its tenderness to cold (below mid-20s). For this reason, it needs to be placed in a warm



BOTH PHOTOS LYNN HASSLER

microclimate, preferably in full sun, against a south-facing wall, in a protected patio, or beneath a tree

canopy that gives light protection, but not deep shade. 📌

# Water: What is Our Message?

Kendall Kroesen, Urban Program Manager

PHOTOS BY KENDALL KROESEN

Through internal conversations and talking to experts, Tucson Audubon is cataloguing the nuances of water in our region and prioritizing which issues we communicate to our members and to the public.

Our first concern is riparian areas. In Arizona and New Mexico, eighty percent of vertebrate species use these river or streamside areas during at least one stage of their lives. More than half of these species are considered “riparian obligates” (needing riparian areas most or all of the time). Riparian areas are critical for a wide range of bird species that nest, winter, or migrate through riparian areas.

Many riparian areas have been lost through direct extraction of surface water or from pumping groundwater, which can dry up riparian areas from below. Other contributing factors include erosion and loss of keystone species like beavers. Estimates range from sixty to seventy-five percent of riparian areas that have been lost nationwide. In western states, the number is generally believed to be higher, but the exact percentage lost is still disputed.

Where does the water go? Seventy-five to eighty percent of water used in Arizona is for agriculture. Because of the volumes involved, one expert has suggested that reducing

agricultural water use by ten percent through more efficient delivery methods would result in erasing any potential municipal shortages. But achieving this would require state-level action, and conservation legislation seems unlikely to emerge in the current political climate. In fact, the state has drastically cut back funding for the Arizona Department of Water Resources, which formerly funded research into water conservation.

Does the heavy use of water by agriculture mean that residential and commercial water conservation is not relevant? In our own local Tucson Water service area there is very little agriculture. In the Tucson Water area, seventy-five percent of use is residential and twenty-five percent is commercial and industrial. Yet our own Santa Cruz River no longer contains the once-perennial flows (supported by high groundwater) that it had. Much of the groundwater pumping that destroyed natural flows was originally for agriculture, but municipal use by a population that has grown to one million has kept the groundwater table from rebounding. Each of us uses, on average, about ninety-five gallons per day at home. At this rate, we will not be able to restore groundwater levels to a point that will support natural flows.



Riparian resources in the effluent-dominated Santa Cruz River Tanque Verde wash near Tanque Verde Loop Road 3

To help reduce groundwater pumping, we have now largely shifted to using Colorado River water that comes to us through the Central Arizona Project canal. This water has indeed helped us to balance groundwater extraction with recharge, but it comes with its own cost: it contributes to the dewatering of the once vast freshwater estuary of the Colorado River Delta. One study estimates we are down to five percent of the delta's once-prodigious biological productivity. Over hundreds of square miles of former wetlands, that must translate into the death

of millions of animals. In addition, pumping Colorado River water here through the CAP is the biggest use of electricity in the state. Ninety-five percent of that electricity comes from burning coal, which pollutes the air with greenhouse gases and noxious pollution.

Once we use water, some of it ends up at wastewater treatment plants. From there, some of it flows into the Santa Cruz River heading downstream from Tucson, which is the only thing keeping any riparian resources like cottonwoods and willows alive there. But none of that

water is formally allocated to the river and there are disincentives for leaving it there, meaning this flow could soon end.

Finally, while groundwater extraction in certain areas has decreased due to the availability of CAP water, we still worry about some remaining areas of “high groundwater” threatened by pumping. The Tanque Verde Valley in northeast Tucson and the area along Cienega Creek are among these. There are still drainages with riparian trees, such as cottonwoods and willows, whose roots can reach the high groundwater table. Many wells in these areas provide residences, ranches, or local subdivisions with water. Although

there may not be a single super-user of water, the wells in aggregate threaten the aquifer supporting riparian trees.

So there are many reasons to change our use of water, whether it be on the agricultural, industrial, commercial, or residential scale. Using less water, and switching to captured rainwater rather than potable water for some uses, is always a good idea.

Here are things you can do at home:

1. Eat less meat, especially beef. Huge amounts of water go into raising meat, both for the water they drink and to grow the crops that cattle and other livestock eat.

This helps reduce the agricultural use of water.

2. Get a free water audit from the Zanjero Program at Tucson Water (or ask your water provider if they will do such an audit). Fix leaks, put aerators on faucets, change fixtures, and when you replace appliances, get ones that use less water.
3. Take advantage of rebates for residential and commercial water conservation.
4. Take five-minute showers.
5. If you have not already, convert lawns to xeriscapes and switch from sprinklers to drip irrigation.
6. Implement rainwater and stormwater harvesting in your yard to minimize the use of potable water for irrigation. Take advantage of rebates available for rainwater harvesting if you live in the Tucson Water service area.
7. Reduce your use of electricity, since large amounts of water are used in the production of most electricity.
8. Tell your city council members, town council members, and county supervisors that you want effluent left in the Santa Cruz River to keep riparian resources alive there.

## Conservation Corner!

### Start Small with Habitat

Tucson Audubon has produced a *Guide to Food-rich Landscapes for Birds and People* which describes how to provide for birds by creating bird-friendly and sustainable yards. The guide is available by clicking the “Resources” box at [www.tucsonaudubon.org/urban](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/urban), or you can pick one up at the Nature Shop for a small cost to cover printing.

But the lengthy guide presents lots of ideas and, at the end, a dauntingly long list of recommended native plants. What, you might ask, if you do not have much time or expertise? What if you do not have a lot of money? What if you have a bad back or no experience putting in drip irrigation?

My advice is to start small, with a project you can handle. Here is one such project:

1. Find a low place in your yard where water collects naturally, or where you can take a few inches of dirt away to create a broad pan, several feet across, where rainwater collects. Make it near a hose so it is easy for you to water.

2. Plant two or three large, native shrubs in the depression. Four-winged saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*) is a relatively fast growing and forgiving shrub. Baja wolfberry (*Lycium brevipes*) is also easy and forms a great, large bush with bird-friendly flowers and berries. Chuparosa (*Justicia californica*) creates an attractive evergreen shrub with flowers for hummingbirds.
3. Water the shrubs with the hose as needed, frequently at first and less often with time. Water more when it is hot and dry; less or not at all when it is cool and rainy. Sometimes just a little water on top is all that is necessary. Other times, let the hose just barely drip for 20 or 30 minutes to water deeply. Another cheap way to do drip irrigation is to drill a tiny hole in the side of a five-gallon plastic bucket near the bottom. Fill the bucket with water, place it next to the plant, and let it drip out.

Read the guide to get some basic ideas for your yard. From there, you can think of other ways to start small!

Kendall Kroesen  
Urban Program Manager



PHOTOS BY KENDALL KROESEN

Top to bottom: Chuparosa and Desert hackberry

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**Please note: these rates are subject to foreign exchange fluctuations.**



Sickle-billed Vanga

AMY MCANDREWS / CCL



Black Oystercatcher

KEVIN COLE / CCL


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www.solipaso.com

### Copper Canyon: September 12–20, 2015.

**\$2750.** Leader: David MacKay. This world famous destination is rich in culture, scenery, crafts and birds. In Los Mochis, we bird the botanical garden the head to the colonial town of El Fuerte. Here, we board the train and travel through a myriad of habitats and life zones. In the canyon, we visit the towns of Cerocahui and Cusarare, where we bird and take in the magnificent vistas. We also do 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, to name a few. Home to the Tarahumara Indians, we'll have the opportunity to see some of their villages and purchase their crafts.

### Baja Birds and Wine: October 15–22.

**\$2750.** Leader: David MacKay. This fun trip is a winning combination of birds, fine Mexican wines, gourmet food and the rugged beauty of northern Baja! The Valle de Guadalupe wine country is becoming well-known for its high quality wines and is also on the cutting edge of innovative gourmet cuisine in Mexico. Birds of interest are Gray and California Thrasher, Clark's Nutcracker and Black Oystercatcher. We visit the wine region, Ensenada, the valley of San Quintin, Bahia de San Quintin and San Pedro Martir, starting and ending in San Diego. 

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# TUCSON AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

Ken Murphy, Field Trip Coordinator

## Tucson Audubon Field Trips Listings Are Now Online Only

For a full listing of trips and details, visit [tucsonaudubon.org/fieldtrips](http://tucsonaudubon.org/fieldtrips), call the trip hotline at 520-629-0510 x4, or pick up a printout at our Nature Shops.

### FEATURED FIELD TRIP

**April 25—Saturday 8 AM**  
**Kennedy Park Lake & Avra Valley Wastewater Ponds**

"Migration special" for beginner birders and those new to birding. Come see which shorebirds and swallows are passing through. One mile of easy-paced walking on level dirt. There will be scopes and bird ID guides. Meet in the parking lot of the Mission Library on the northwest corner of Ajo Way and Mission Road. 30 mile round trip. Carpooling encouraged. We will be back by 11 am. There is no limit, but you must sign up online. Leader: John Higgins, contact with questions, 578-1830, [jghiggins@comcast.net](mailto:jghiggins@comcast.net).



Willet

LOS MANOWITZ

Weekly bird walks are listed at [tucsonaudubon.org/fieldtrips](http://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](mailto:rarebirdalert@tucsonaudubon.org).

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## The Buzz About Bee Habitats

*Sarah Whelan, Operations and Retail Coordinator*



BOTH PHOTOS SARAH WHELAN

'Tis the season to start your pollinators garden! As you plan the ideal habitat for the birds you love, we urge you to think of other pollinators as well. Bees play an integral part in the pollination process and are in need of their own nesting sites to lay their eggs. You can join in the effort to restore local bee habitats by installing one in your own pollinator garden. We carry a variety of custom-made bee habitats produced by local artist Suzie Daigneault. Each habitat is designed not only to support local bees, but also to inspire those who look at them with their intricate detail and handcrafted designs. These habitats bring art and function to your bird and pollinator oasis. Not sure if a bee habitat is the right choice for you? Stop in and pick up one of a number of titles we carry at our Nature Shop about bees. Learn all about the historical legacy of bees and how our societal views have shifted over the years in *The Bee; A Natural History* by



Noah Wilson-Rich (\$27.95). Did you know that honeybees are as political as humans? Pick up a copy of *Honeybee Democracy* by Thomas D. Seeley (\$29.95) and find out more about the complex social systems of honeybees.

**Stop Identifying Birds!**

**Karlson, Kevin T., and Dale Rosselet.**

2015. *Peterson Reference Guide to Birding by Impression: A Different Approach to Knowing and Identifying Birds*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 282 pages, hardcover—\$30.00.

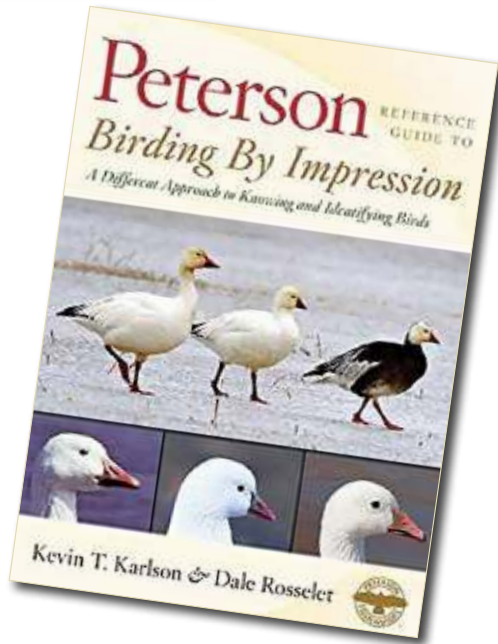
Think about it for a moment. How many of the birds you see each day do you actually stop to identify? Do you flip the colorful pages of your field guide each time a Gila Woodpecker lands on the feeder? Carefully note the belly and nape pattern of every Gambel's Quail that scoots across the road? Strain to see the wispy crest of a Phainopepla as it flutters and stutters high overhead?

Of course not. You're not identifying those birds, or any other bird you've seen time and again. You're *recognizing* them, just as you recognize your friends and family—effortlessly, unconsciously, by the impression they make.

In their new *Peterson Reference Guide*, Kevin Karlson and Dale Rosselet argue convincingly that that "right-brain" process of recognition can be taught, learned, and refined. Observers who can intentionally combine this process with the verbal, "left-brain" tools of traditional identification will be better birders, using both conventional field marks and "a more expanded assessment of a bird's shape, structural features, and motion" in the effort not just to name but to know—to recognize—the bird.

As one of the finest bird photographers in the world, and admittedly "'left-brained' by nature, Karlson tells the reader that he was at first skeptical of the new approach. But his co-authorship with Michael O'Brien and Richard Crossley of the splendid *Shorebird Guide* (2006) convinced him, as it has convinced countless readers, of the usefulness of consciously constructing a "database of lasting impressions." Dale Rosselet came to the same conviction through careful observation of the learning styles of thousands of children and beginning birders: introducing the idea of "impression" into her teaching helped every participant in her courses get the most out of the experience.

The first 19 pages of *Birding by Impression* describe how birders at any level of experience can learn to verbalize and remember their impressions of familiar birds, using mental and written notes or drawings to truly get to know a bird's shape, structure, and characteristic movements. This introductory section is richly illustrated with photographs—some of them quiz images—and accompanied by instructive and encouraging anecdotes of the authors' own early misidentifications. It concludes with two "sample field ID scenarios," one set on the upper Texas coast, the other in a northern Ohio woodland;



the authors walk the reader through the steps necessary to start sorting through the birds likely present in each habitat by size, shape, and behavior.

The remainder of the book is a series of more or less taxonomically ordered case studies, illustrated with both stunning portraits and field-realistic images of distant flocks for study. Bird families and other larger groups are introduced by a discussion of how to observe and assess the range of sizes, structures, behaviors, and habitats exhibited by the species included. Some particularly challenging or species-rich groups, such as terns and New World warblers, are also treated in tables.

Most of the family accounts end with a set of comparisons between similar species. There is a slight tendency here to emphasize problems encountered in the north or the east over those most commonly faced in the west and southwest: there is no mention, for example, of foot size in the screech owls, and the only kingbirds treated in detail are the Couch's and tropical—distinguishing that pair is not much of an issue for Arizona birders unless they live in Tacna. The distinctive flight habit and style of a number of southwestern species also go unrecorded: there is nothing about the odd swooping stalls of the Phainopepla, the weak fluttering of Violet-green Swallows high overhead, or the foot-trailing habits of the Cassin's Kingbird. But these discussions are meant to be demonstrations of a method, not definitive identification guides. Read as such, they are certain to inspire new and experienced birders alike to become better observers.

Try it yourself. Next time you see a roadrunner, a Harris's Hawk, or a Canyon Towhee, try to put into words just how you were able to recognize the bird with no need to "identify" it. Then, with the help



of *Birding by Impression*, practice using the same approach on less common, less distinctive, or less familiar birds. You'll be amazed.

Along with the rest of the birding community, we're happy to note that the new printing of David Sibley's *Guide to Birds* corrects the color and typeface problems we noted when this edition first appeared. To identify the corrected printing, turn over the title page to look for the words "Second printing, July 2014." If you order the guide by mail, ask your dealer explicitly to confirm the presence of that phrase before shipping the book.

*Rick Wright is a widely published author and popular tour leader in Europe and the Americas. He will be speaking at the 2015 Tucson Bird and Wildlife Festival.*



BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER, JOAN GELLATLY

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