

VERMILION FLYCATCHER

TUCSON AUDUBON

Spring 2020 | Vol 65 No 2



CREATING SPACE
FOR CHANGE

IN YOUR YARD &
IN OUR COMMUNITY

TUCSON AUDUBON SOCIETY

TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG
Spring 2020 | Vol 65 No 2

MISSION

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

TUCSON AUDUBON SOCIETY

300 E University Blvd. #120, Tucson, AZ 85705
TEL 520-629-0510 · FAX 520-232-5477

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NATURE CENTERS

Mason Center

3835 W Hardy Rd, Tucson, AZ 85742

Hours: Open most weekdays 9 am–5 pm or when chain is down

Paton Center for Hummingbirds

477 Pennsylvania Ave, Patagonia, AZ 85624

520-415-6447

Hours: Open sunrise to sunset

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Vermilion Flycatcher Production Team

Matt Griffiths, *Production Coordinator*

Autumn Sharp, *Managing Editor*

Keith Ashley, *Editor-in-Chief*

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ON THE COVER

Lazuli Bunting. Photo by John Fox @Omnitriigger. Migration is underway in Southeast Arizona, be on the lookout for these colorful birds.

ABOVE: Whiskered Screech-Owl, Freddie Huang

PROTECTING RIPARIAN AREAS IN ARIZONA: CREATING CHANGE THROUGH ADVOCACY



Katharine Jacobs is a professor of Environmental Science at the University of Arizona, and chairs the Conservation Action Committee of Tucson Audubon. She was a water manager for the state of Arizona for 23 years and was the director of the US National Climate Assessment from 2009–2013.

KATHARINE JACOBS, *DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR CLIMATE ADAPTATION SCIENCE AND SOLUTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA; TUCSON AUDUBON BOARD OF DIRECTORS*

According to the Arizona Riparian Council, less than 10% of the riparian acreage that once existed in Arizona still remains in its natural form. Our surviving rivers and riparian areas—stands of willows, mesquite bosques, and cottonwood galleries—support an incredible diversity of bird species. They are under increasing threat, in part due to increasing temperatures and reduced flows associated with climate change. We must protect them now.

One reason I've served on the board of Tucson Audubon is because the organization directly supports riparian habitat protection. The Tucson Audubon Conservation and Education staff have implemented habitat management, restoration, and mitigation projects for years. They are currently creating floodplain habitat and interpretive resources at the El Rio Preserve Park in Marana. The Paton Center, which grew by 5 acres in 2019, includes new restoration acreage along Sonoita Creek. As Chair of Tucson Audubon's Conservation Action Committee, I advise staff on conservation issues and help guide the organization in its fight to preserve the sensitive riparian habitat along the San Pedro, Gila, and Santa Cruz Rivers.

In addition to investing in restoration of areas that are critical for species in the future, Tucson Audubon must also engage and educate our members

about the magnitude of the broader environmental challenges in Arizona, and the importance of urging decision-makers to protect resources. If you are looking to join Tucson Audubon in this fight, please consider:

1. Subscribing to Tucson Audubon's Advocacy Action Alerts, which focus on changes to existing laws, such as the Groundwater Management Act. Action needs to be taken to help reduce groundwater pumping in the vicinity of specific riparian areas with high habitat values and to protect watersheds across the state.
2. Contact your Arizona elected officials about the need for changes to the state's Environmental Quality Act. Arizona desperately needs meaningful regulatory review of changes in land and water use in the vicinity of public lands, critical habitats and designated riparian areas.
3. Speak out in support of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Clean Water Act, and other laws that protect our wetlands, rivers, and small streams.

Protecting riparian habitat in Arizona is critical. It is one of the many strategies we must employ to relieve pressure on the most vulnerable bird species in our state.



TUCSON AUDUBON
All Together,
We Are Southeast Arizona

SOUTHEAST ARIZONA ALMANAC OF BIRDS APRIL THROUGH JUNE



Matt Griffiths
Digital Media & Bird Conservation
mgriffiths@tucsonaudubon.org



Western Screech-Owl, Dan Weisz

WESTERN SCREECH-OWLS AND NESTBOXES

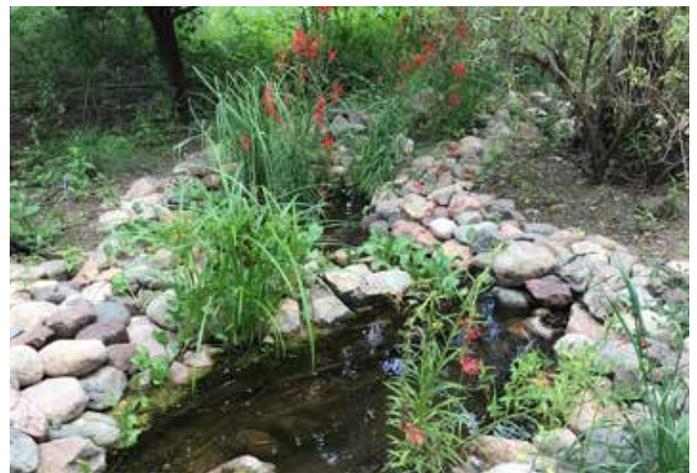
April is an active time in the Sonoran Desert as cavities in saguaro cactus are alive with Western Screech-Owl nesting behaviors. Courtship has already been going on for at least a month and eggs are usually laid in late March into early April in Southeast Arizona. The male has been bringing food back to the female during incubation, but the real action begins when the eggs hatch after about a month. Of course the new family is hungry, and Western Screech-Owls love eating mice, lizards, small snakes and birds, and large insects. This is the perfect time to watch our nestbox live feed at tucsonaudubon.org/owlcam as you never know what tasty morsel will be brought back to the box! Screech-Owls are known to readily use nestboxes, and here in Tucson these could be valuable in creating additional nesting sites for some of our urban washes and desert edges where competition for cavities could be more intense. Learn how to add a nestbox on your property at tucsonaudubon.org/nestbox.



Nashville Warbler, Kenneth Cole Schneider; Brown Creeper, Mick Thompson

MIGRATING BIRDS NEED DARK SKIES

Spring migration is in full effect and many birds passing through Southeast Arizona fly in groups at night. We know now that excessive light pollution can disrupt circadian rhythms of birds and disorient them during these flights, the most critical stages of their annual cycle. Research in large, eastern US cities has even identified “super collider” species—birds that were found most often to have hit buildings. In Southeast Arizona these include Hermit Thrush, Common Yellowthroat, Brown Creeper, White-crowned Sparrow, and other species that are known to use flight calls during migration. Interestingly, “quiet” species such as vireos, gnatcatchers, and flycatchers were found far less often, suggesting that birds are reacting to lights and calling others to follow. The findings of these studies suggest that a species, such as the Nashville Warbler, migrating through Southeast Arizona could benefit from expanding Lights Out programs (see page 20) and Tucson Audubon’s Habitat at Home new Dark Skies designation. The warbler and other species would then have a greater chance of completing their journeys to the northern US and Canada. Learn more at tucsonaudubon.org/habitat.



Calliope Hummingbird, Alan Schmierer; Paton Center landscaping has many features attractive to Calliope Hummingbirds, Jonathan Horst

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRDS AT THE PATON CENTER

The ongoing landscape improvements at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds can be viewed as one enormous demonstration garden for our Habitat at Home program. All the diverse new habitat there seems to be a good magnet for a very special bird—the Calliope Hummingbird. This is the smallest breeding bird in North America and the smallest long-distance migrant in the world! Calliopes can be found in Southeast Arizona in March and April and again in August and September in the middle of their migrations between central Mexico and the Pacific Northwest. The abundance of nectar-rich flowers now dominating the landscape surrounding the Paton Center offer these tiny travelers a steady supply of resources to refuel. Water features, vegetation to hide and rest in, and a healthy population of small insects to feed on further benefit a hummingbird as a stopover point. And Calliopes seem to have received the message—they are often seen feeding on flowers as opposed to the many feeders on site. So, make a Paton Center visit soon for a chance to see these tiny wonders, and don’t forget to take your eyes off the feeders every now and then!

CREATING SPACE FOR CHANGE

TUCSON AUDUBON SOCIETY
HABITAT *at* HOME



Jennie MacFarland,
Bird Conservation Biologist
jmacfarland@tucsonaudubon.org

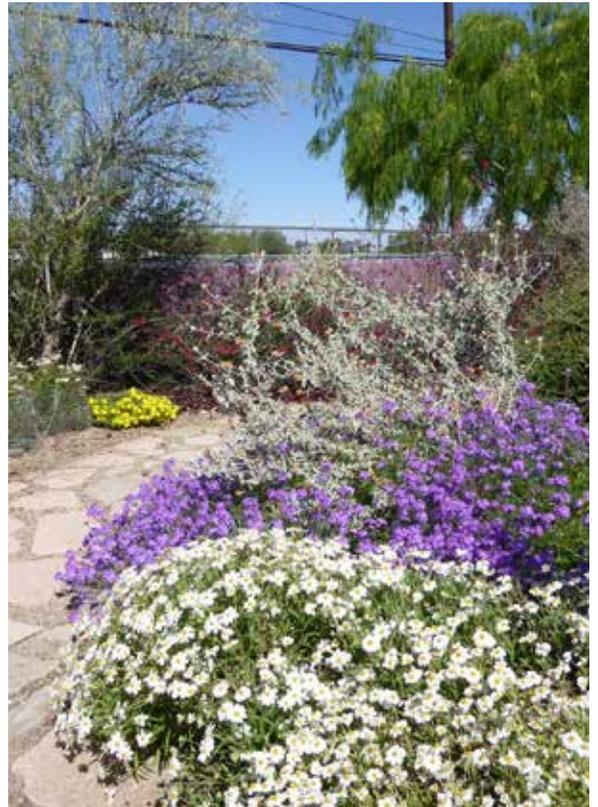
HABITAT AT HOME REVISIONED: A HOLISTIC APPROACH

Habitat loss is by far the leading source of human-caused bird mortality today. The problem is so colossal in scope and scale that creating positive change through individual action can seem frustratingly futile. Fortunately, our individual efforts to create and enhance bird-friendly habitat in the spaces we control can be incredibly effective. The positive impacts of enriching our own yard habitats are increased by the cumulative effect of community-wide participation. When multiple properties in an area incorporate thriving, native habitat, the benefits are greater than the sum of individual parts. Collaborative efforts really can propel us toward our goal of creating a better world for birds, and for people.

With this principle in mind, Tucson Audubon's Habitat at Home program has been revised, and will relaunch this year with a more holistic approach to creating positive change. A primary goal of the revised program is to make it as inclusive as possible, ensuring accessibility by removing barriers to participation. One of the ways we'll accomplish this is by creating a comprehensive booklet detailing how anyone can create urban and suburban habitat that is beneficial for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife. This booklet, made possible by our recently-awarded Heritage Grant from Arizona Game and Fish, will be distributed widely and with no charge at future events such as the Southern Arizona Home Builders Association (SAHBA) Home & Garden Show. The Habitat at Home booklet will feature information specific to Southeast Arizona, because the more people in this region know about creating bird-friendly habitats at home, the more our local birds will benefit.

Registration for the Habitat at Home program is a \$35 one-time fee, which includes your Habitat at Home yard sign and helps fund the program. After registration, a participant moves through different categories of certification as their habitat at home becomes more enhanced and dynamic. The qualifying actions for each category have been expanded and diversified. For instance, rainwater harvesting requirements can still be met by installing gutters and water storage barrels; however, there are also new options, such as creating swales and berms to benefit your plants by redirecting rainwater runoff into basins. This requires elbow grease and a shovel, but considerably less direct expense than traditional rainwater harvesting.

With our revisioning of Habitat at Home, we've taken a more holistic approach. The program not only focuses on growing native plants, but now encourages a more biodiverse yard to benefit birds and other pollinators, such as insects and bats, plus lizards, mammals, and indeed all wildlife. We are creating more thorough and advanced home habitat resources that will be available online, exclusively for members of the Habitat at Home community. If you are already a part of our community, stay tuned for exciting new developments! And if you're not enrolled yet, this is a great time to join us!



A varied yard design attracts many types of pollinators, Matt Griffiths; Lizards such as this desert spiny lizard will benefit from the new Habitat at Home program guidelines, Doris Evans

HABITAT A LA CARTE

The revised Habitat at Home Program will now proudly recognize yards intentionally designed and maintained to support specific species and conservation concerns. Eight new categories of recognition have been created. For each, participants can earn stickers for their Habitat at Home signs to celebrate habitat richly supporting:



BATS

Habitat includes an abundance of native agave plants to help support nectar feeding bat species such as the Endangered Lesser Long-nosed Bat. Expert opinions on these requirements were given by Bat Conservation International.



INSECTS

(separate recognitions for butterflies, caterpillars, moths, and native bees)
Both nectar-producing native plants and caterpillar host plants (milkweeds plus many others) are required, as well as bare earth for ground-nesting, and bare wood for tunnel-nesting solitary bees.



LIZARDS

Home habitat is bio-rich, with limited or no pesticide use, includes rock piles to provide shelter for hibernation, and bare earth for lizards to burrow and lay eggs.



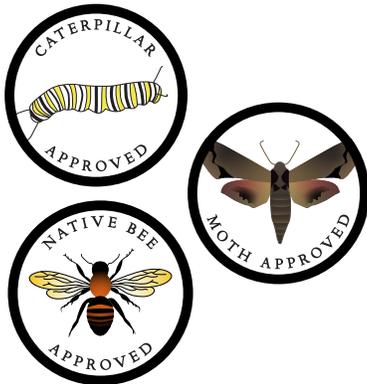
DARK SKIES

Habitat displays limited light pollution with downward pointing, covered lights, and motion-activated outdoor lighting. Qualifications established with guidance from International Dark-Sky Association.



CAVITY NESTER

Yard includes nestboxes for Lucy's Warbler, Western Screech-Owl, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and others, bee boxes for tunnel-nesting native bees, and dead trees that are safe to maintain are preserved, providing additional natural cavities.





PROTECT THE NIGHT AT HOME FOR A HEALTHY HABITAT

Many people aren't aware of the amount of light around their homes at night, and how this unnatural lighting affects birds and other wildlife. The Habitat at Home Program's new Dark Skies designation, established with guidance from International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) guidelines, is an effort to help people decrease light pollution on their property. Founded and headquartered in Tucson, the International Dark-Sky Association serves a global movement seeking to eradicate light pollution and its harmful effects. Senior Outreach Director, Amanda Gormley, shares here a few thoughts on birds, light pollution, and your habitat at home:

It's well-known that light pollution can disorient or inappropriately attract many species to lit areas. Artificial light at night can interfere with ecological interactions like predator-prey relationships, interrupts habitat connectivity, disrupts natural circadian rhythms, and influences species' ability to detect seasonality. Birds and insects have been hit particularly hard by light pollution. Collisions with windows and disruption to navigation contributes to population decline significantly.

Misguided lighting practices not only disrupt wildlife—they also impact human health, and waste money and energy. The good news is that light pollution is completely reversible!

IDA has developed *Five Lighting Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting* to help you reduce light pollution at your home.

1. Use light only when it is needed and has a clear purpose
2. Direct light only to where it is needed
3. Use low-level light so that light is not any brighter than what is needed
4. Use light only when it is needed by engaging timers or motion-detectors
5. Use warmer color lights whenever possible to minimize blue light

Learn where to shop for IDA-approved Dark Sky Friendly lighting and follow a step-by-step guide to conduct an outdoor lighting assessment around your house, apartment building, or business, at www.darksky.org/get-involved.

IDA has been pleased to build a growing relationship with Audubon Society chapters around the country and is excited to now be connecting with the Tucson Audubon Society right here at home.



Amanda Gormley, Senior Director of Outreach at IDA, is glad to be a part of the important work protecting the night from light pollution to protect wildlife, human health, and preserve our view of the universe.

CREATE HABITAT AT YOUR HOME

While habitat loss may loom large as the greatest threat to birds, it is possible to create effective, attractive, and inviting habitat right where you are. And, as unlikely as it may seem, plopping a house on a property makes possible the creation of more diverse and higher-value habitat in the remaining area by concentrating some resources (rain) and diversifying others (sunlight). This can be achieved as a retrofit, or to greatest effect, with intentional design incorporated into the structure.

Tucson Audubon staff can guide and assist you through the potentially overwhelming stages of planning, creating, and turning existing problems into habitat opportunities: which invasive species have to go, what native plants will thrive and attract desired species, and how to make the most of the rain. Our aim is to intersect high-value habitat with your aesthetic and personal goals to turn your yard into a wildlife haven.



Before and after, photos by Bess Wong

TESTIMONIAL

“We honed in on the Habitat at Home program shortly after we bought our home. What we value are the quality of the initial plan we received and the breadth of questions asked before even drafting it (for example, front and center, will you be doing rainwater capture?) Our answer was “yes.” We now have the capacity to hold 3,200 gallons of rainwater!

We thoroughly enjoyed the talent and depth of knowledge, the extraordinary hard work, even in the heat, and the pleasantness of the personalities of Jonathan Horst, Kari Hackney, Rodd Lancaster, Dan Lehman, and Andy Bennett—all of whom have worked on our project from the beginning. And, of course, none of it happened without the support of Tucson Audubon—management, staff, volunteers, contributors, and members. That makes it all possible.”

—Rick Applegate and Bess Wong

CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE!

Call or email Kimberly Matsushino, Habitat at Home Coordinator, at 520-209-2474 or kmatsushino@tucsonaudubon.org and we will work with you to help you make your habitat goals a reality.

Base pricing for a single-residence property up to one acre:

- \$250 On-site focused 2 hour consultation
- \$700 In-depth written property evaluation and habitat creation plan

Large properties and installation services negotiated.



ABERT'S TOWHEE (*MELOZONE ABERTI*)

Abert's Towhee, Lois Manowitz

In this column we look at some of our Southeast Arizona borderlands specialty bird species. Birders from all over the US travel to Southeast Arizona to add birds to their life lists, and we are proud of the birds that make our region unique! But how well do you know your local birds outside of the context of Southeast Arizona? Here we take a broader look at some of our iconic species, and try to see how they fit into the larger birding landscape.

Abert's Towhee, the chunky brown sparrow with the black mask and pumpkin-colored undertail, probably isn't the top bird on the wish list of many visiting birders. After all, it's easily overshadowed by more showy species like the Red-faced Warbler, Montezuma Quail, Rivoli's Hummingbird, and Elegant Trogon. However, this common inhabitant of riparian areas actually has a fairly limited distributional range. It is almost completely restricted to the Lower Colorado River watershed, including its tributaries. The species is found across much of Arizona in suitable habitat, a sliver of northern Mexico, the Salton Sea area of southern California, the upper Gila River watershed of New Mexico, and some very limited portions of southern Nevada and Utah within the Colorado River watershed. And although there are many places where Abert's Towhees are common, we could quite plausibly say there's no better place anywhere to see them than the placid trails of Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson.

More often heard than seen, Abert's Towhees are fond of dense brush in the shady understory of tall riparian forests and mesquite bosques. However, due to development and groundwater

loss, this habitat occupies just a fraction of its former extent. In spite of this habitat loss, the species continues to thrive in areas where healthy riparian ecosystems persist, and has even expanded into urban areas. In Tucson, Abert's Towhees can be encountered in parks, backyards, and alleys, typically in close proximity to the washes that wind their way through the city, but perhaps the quiet alleys that cut across town behind houses provide some structural similarity to these watercourses; my backyard in central Tucson has a pair of breeding Abert's and there are no washes nearby. If you want to host Abert's Towhees in your yard, the most essential feature aside from access to a wash or alley is probably dense shrubs (preferably native plants), which offer necessary shelter for this shy species.

The taxonomic relationships of Abert's Towhee have been coming into focus in the last decade or so. Formerly classified in the genus *Pipilo* along with the Spotted and Green-tailed Towhees, Abert's Towhees (and Canyon and California Towhees too) are now placed in the genus *Melospiza*. Birders who have traveled to Mexico or Central American may recognize

Melospiza as being the genus that belongs to the ground-sparrows: Rusty-crowned, White-eared, Cabanis's, and Prevost's. These tropical relatives share preferences for dense, dark understory vegetation and a foraging strategy that includes scratching in dirt and leaf litter with their feet. Could Abert's Towhee someday bear the name Abert's Ground-Sparrow in order to illustrate their taxonomic relationship? Time will tell!



White-eared Ground-Sparrow, Scott Olmstead

Scott Olmstead is a high school teacher, member of the Arizona Bird Committee, and occasional guide for Tropical Birding Tours.

CREATING HABITAT FOR BUTTERFLIES



Lynn Hassler, *Nature Shop Garden Volunteer Captain*

Because of its extraordinary variety of habitats, Southeast Arizona is host to a great diversity of both birds and butterflies. We already know that gardening to attract birds can be very rewarding. Adding butterflies to the mix adds another dimension. In addition to the pleasure derived from watching the flights of these elegant creatures, we also benefit from the services they render in our gardens. Along with hummingbirds, bees and many other insects, butterflies play an important role in pollination, an essential process for many of our flowering plants.

It's important to include plants with blooms for nectaring adult butterflies. Choose flowers that have short throats, are flat-topped or clustered since most butterflies prefer landing pads where they can sit comfortably to sip nectar. Group flowering plants—masses of colorful, fragrant blossoms are more likely to capture the attention of a passing butterfly; and plant with different blooming periods in mind since butterflies may be on the wing year round here.

For a truly effective butterfly garden, you need to provide places for the adults to lay eggs and leaves for the caterpillars to eat. These are called

larval food plants or host plants. Most butterflies have specific larval food plants, usually from a single plant family. For example, Empress Leilias use desert hackberry; Giant Swallowtails like citrus; the caterpillars of Black Swallowtails feed on parsley and rue; Monarchs and Queens require milkweeds for their larvae.

Butterflies are warm weather fans, so place plants in a warm, sunny location. Create windbreaks by planting shrubs or trees—they don't like to be buffeted by the wind. Provide shade because even these sun-loving creatures need some, particularly when temperatures rise above 95 degrees. Include flat stones or rocks for basking. Butterflies also like to take in salts and nutrients from damp or muddy soils,

Keep herbicides or pesticides out of the butterfly garden—they may kill both caterpillars and adult butterflies and also the birds that feed on them. Caterpillars rarely do any permanent damage—just get used to holey leaves and let them nibble away. The reward will be beautiful adult butterflies for all to enjoy. And some of your birdlife will be happy to pick off a caterpillar or two, helping to keep numbers in check.

PLANTS FOR NECTAR



GOODDING VERBENA, *Glandularia gooddingii*: This low water use native produces mounding masses of clustered lavender flowers spring-fall, perfect for nectaring adult butterflies.



GREGG'S BUTTERFLY MIST, *Conoclinium greggii*: Butterflies (Queens and Painted Ladies in particular) mob the lavender blue flowers of this summer-blooming small shrub.



ORANGE COSMOS, *Cosmos sulphureus*: Start from seed in late spring and enjoy blooms through October. This annual can get to 3–4' high in a season. Nectar favored by all butterflies. Self-sows readily.

Plant photos by Lynn Hassler unless otherwise noted

Gregg's butterfly mist with Painted lady, Ken Slade

BUTTERFLIES

Butterfly photos by Ken Kertell



MONARCH, *Danaus plexippus*: Probably the most famous of all North American butterflies, monarch caterpillars feed on toxin-containing milkweed, which make the caterpillars and adult butterflies distasteful to predators, a protective device.



QUEEN, *Danaus gilippus*: Very common in our region. Males seek out particular kinds of flowers (*Ageratum*, *Conoclinium* spp.) to obtain alkaloids they require for breeding. Also use milkweeds as host plants.



PIPEVINE SWALLOWTAIL, *Battus philenor*: Often seen sipping nectar at the widely-used red bird of paradise (*Caesalpinia pulcherrima*), which blooms non-stop late spring through fall. They seek out pipevine plants (*Aristolochia* spp.) for laying their eggs.



GIANT SWALLOWTAIL, *Papilio cresphontes*: Large and conspicuous, these graceful flyers use citrus as their host plants. The larvae look like bird droppings so predators are fooled.



CLOUDLESS SULPHUR, *Phoebis sennae*: Common in warm southern regions, these butterflies sometimes appear in waves during monsoon. Plant slimpod senna, *Senna hirsuta* var. *glaberrima*, for their caterpillars.



TEXAN CRESCENT, *Anthanassa texana*: If you are already growing Mexican honeysuckle (*Justicia spicigera*) for hummers and verdins, you are in luck: Texan crescents use the plant (and others in the Acanth family) for their larvae.

FOR LARVAE



VELVET MESQUITE, *Prosopis velutina*: Low-branching, wide-spreading deciduous shade tree bears light yellow flowers in late spring. Serves as host plant for the Leda Ministreak, *Ministrymon leda*, and Palmer's Metalmark, *Apodemia palmerii*.

Velvet mesquite with Palmer's Metalmark, Alan Schmierer



PINELEAF MILKWEED, *Asclepias linaria*: White flowers spring through fall attract scores of pollinating insects; the plant is a major food source for Queen and monarch caterpillars.



DESERT SENNA, *Senna covesii*: Rich yellow flowers may appear spring to fall, but are most abundant during monsoon. Serves as larval food plant for the Sleepy Orange, *Abaeis nicippe*.

PATON CENTER: BLOOMS AND BUILDING PLANS



Paton Center Project Team

The next three months are peak periods for both birds and birders at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds. According to observation data available via eBird, more species of birds were observed at the Paton Center during the month of April than during any other month over the past decade. A whopping 169 species in April alone!

Gray Hawks are already calling from the cottonwood galleries along Sonoita Creek, and Summer Tanagers will soon be replacing the overwintering Hepatics. Gone are most of our winter sparrows, while a full spectrum of hummingbirds—Anna's, Black-chinned, Broad-billed, Costa's, Rivoli's, Rufous, and Violet-crowned—are all possible to see visiting the Paton feeders.

With the spring arrival of birds comes the Paton Center's busiest period for people. March through mid-May are traditionally the busiest months at the Center, with birders (and non-birders) visiting from across the country and the world. If you're planning a visit, please keep in mind the following:

- Please be courteous to our immediate neighbors by not blocking or using their driveways.
- If parking is full, consider parking in town and walking the short distance (less than one mile). Lots of great birding along the way!
- Pack it in, pack it out—if you bring trash and recyclable materials to the property, please consider taking them with you and disposing of them elsewhere.
- No flash photography is allowed at the Paton Center.
- Well-behaved dogs are welcome, but always on a leash and under an owner's control.



Photos by Dan Lehman



CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

Tucson Audubon has re-engaged the design-build team of our award-winning Hummingbird Viewing Pavilion to lead the Master Planning Phase of the effort to replace the crumbling Paton homestead. Jesus Robles and Cade Hayes of DUST Design-Build will be working closely with the Paton Project Team through the summer to achieve the following:

1. Evaluation, discovery, and understanding of current conditions measured against what Tucson Audubon can do to redevelop the site, which exists entirely in the floodplain of Sonoita Creek.
2. Preliminary conceptual diagramming of a new site master plan.
3. Finalization of a Master Plan.
4. Preliminary conceptual drawings.

Once completed, Tucson Audubon will be positioned to move into the architecture and engineering phases of the project, which we hope to complete by the fall of 2021. Say tuned to the Paton Center Facebook Page, Tucson Audubon weekly emails, and tucsonaudubon.org for real-time updates about changes to hours and access that might result from project construction.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT

Ringling out from dense vegetation, the familiar “whichety-whichety-whichety” betrays the presence of a male Common Yellowthroat. Yet the singer sometimes remains unseen, furtively skulking. The black-masked male has a rotund belly, longish tail, yellow below, olive above; the female has similar proportions, lacks the mask, is browner, with a yellow throat. Nesting from northern Canada, well into western Mexico, the northern population migrates south, augmenting permanent resident populations in the southern states, and Mexico. While widespread, Common Yellowthroat is notoriously secretive when nesting, and much still remains to be learned about their breeding biology. Recently, the Paton Center for Hummingbirds has become a great place to see this species well, particularly from March through early October.

A primary reason that the center has become such a good place to see Common Yellowthroats is due to the hard work Tucson Audubon has put into creating habitat to attract all birds, butterflies and other wildlife to the yard. The Richard Grand Memorial Meadow has been a fantastic addition to the center, with the many native wildflowers and grasses that have been planted, which provide berries, seeds and nectar. The other key component to make this a true bird and wildlife magnet: water. A pond, with a small stream leading into it has been dug. Around the edges here, Common Yellowthroat has entertained many visitors, with the warbler often coming out in the open, offering great, unobstructed views. Of course, many other species of birds can also be seen coming into the pond, and in 2019 we celebrated the release of the rare Gila topminnow.

In Arizona, Common Yellowthroats nest in a variety of lowland riparian-associated habitats, with evidence of breeding all the way up to 8350 feet. This insectivore nests on or near the ground. Males have one mate per territory, while females might mate with other males. While numerous, the North American Breeding Bird Survey notes a one percent decline from 1966 to 2014, for a cumulative decline of 38%. A couple of the sedentary subspecies, in San Francisco and Brownsville, have declined precipitously. In addition to habitat loss, all populations, due to their diet and proximity to water, are susceptible to pollution, including pesticides. Still, this species is not on the State of the Birds Watch List 2014, and continues to be one of the most familiar and beloved warblers in North America.

Keith Kamper, Paton Center Volunteer and Board Member



Common Yellowthroat, Jeremy Hayes

YOUTH VOICE

HELPING OTHERS SEE BIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS

At the 2019 Southeast Arizona Birding Festival, Tucson Audubon awarded Dorian Escalante with the first Bill Thompson III Youth Award, recognizing contributions of an outstanding Southeast Arizona youth with a demonstrated commitment to birds and habitat.

Dorian describes his investment of the scholarship funds and a couple of the photos he has taken, featuring birds in their habitat:

I had the privilege of birding with Bill Thompson at Sweetwater Wetlands and I was very surprised and honored to have received this award. I used the money from the award to purchase a Tamron 100-400mm f/4.5-6.3 lens to get good close-ups, and a 24mm f/2.8 lens to get wider angle shots of the habitat. Along with the lenses, the Zeiss binoculars that I received are fantastic.

The Canyon Wren is one of the cutest wrens that we have in Southeast Arizona. I love that they have a memorable call, and memorable patterns. I captured the shot of this guy while I was with Richard Fray in Madera Canyon. It almost seemed like he wanted his picture taken when he perched in this stump and started calling.

Every birder loves the Elegant Trogon... unless they aren't willing to work for it. This handsome bird was calling nearby so we all went to find him. We knew the tree it was in and what area of the tree it was in, but we just couldn't see it. Eventually, we walked around the tree and it was preening itself out in the open. Trogons will definitely make you a more patient birder.



Dorian Escalante, 18, has been actively engaged with Tucson Audubon since 2014, participating in surveys, supporting youth education, volunteering at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds, and inspiring us with his art skills, energy, and passion for birds. Now in his senior year at Cienega High School, Dorian plans to travel to Peru and enlist in the Army after graduating.



Canyon Wren; Elegant Trogon, Dorian Escalante

URBAN BIRD OASES, WHY THEY MATTER

I'm 15 and love birds. I was raised in Tucson and fortunate enough to grow up in a co-housing community with native landscaping, surrounded by Sonoran desert. Sweetwater Wetlands was just a short bike ride away. These little urban oases gave me a place to develop my passion for birds. However, I didn't realize how lucky I was to have access to places like these until two years ago when my family moved to Kuwait City, a capital four times as large and denser than Phoenix.

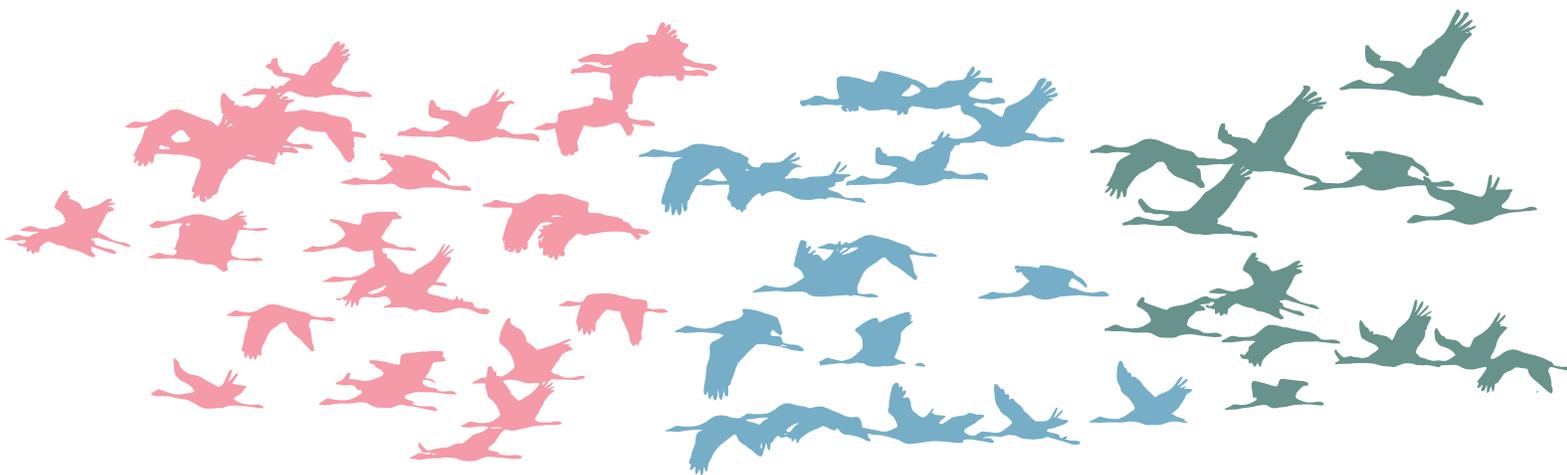
The Arabian Gulf is a stopover point for many bird migrants. That's why it made me sad to see most children there with no more than pigeons in their daily lives. In Kuwait's arid and urbanized landscape, birds are concentrated in a few literal oases—a couple of islands and unpolluted marshes far removed from the city. People living in the urban core just aren't exposed to a diversity of birds, and miss the chance to appreciate and protect them.

Bird-friendly urban areas have been a transformative element of my life. To then experience a city without bird diversity made me all the more appreciative. That's why, as a young birder, I feel that Tucson Audubon's programs that work to create these spaces, like Habitat at Home and their guided Sweetwater trips, are some of their most essential to inspiring love in youth for the birds around them.



Maia Stark is a long-time member of the Tucson Audubon Community. She has participated in 5 previous Birdathons and is the recipient of a Tucson Audubon youth grant to participate in a Cornell Lab of Ornithology online course: Comprehensive Bird Biology. Her family is currently living in Switzerland.

2019: TURNAROUND *for* TUCSON AUDUBON / ANNUAL REPORT



TOTAL REVENUE – \$2,616,237.85

44% PHILANTHROPIC GIVING

Through memberships, donations, and restricted giving, you gave us the wings to fly.

26% EARNED INCOME

Through participation in our programs, you energized our journey.

30% GRANTS & CONTRACTS

We built upon your gifts and dedication to soar throughout the year.

DEAR FRIENDS OF TUCSON AUDUBON,

At this time of year I think about the long migrations of birds passing through Arizona or arriving in our state for the breeding season. Each migration journey requires enough energy to endure sustained flight, to navigate shifting weather patterns, and to find safe places for landing and recuperation. After thousands of flight miles, some birds will arrive at their breeding grounds to face a fresh set of challenges: diminished habitat, limited food sources, and new obstacles on the landscape. *In many ways, the challenges faced by migratory birds are similar to those faced by our non-profit organization.*

Like a bird's migration, our journey requires energy, careful navigation, and seeking opportunities that will help us grow and succeed as an organization. I'm pleased to report that our journey through 2019 resulted in a true turnaround for Tucson Audubon—a year of successes, new direction, and the strengthening of our core:

- You—our members and donors—answered the call and infused our work with the financial support required to sustain and grow our programs.
- Our Board of Directors, together with Executive Director Jonathan Lutz, helped guide Tucson Audubon from a scenario where we were living beyond our means to a position of financial strength (our board members alone contributed over \$35,000 last year).

- The talented staff capitalized on opportunities to *inspire people to enjoy and protect birds* through habitat restoration, conservation advocacy, education programs, and more.
- Donors, members, board, and staff working together created a \$256,000 positive swing, from a position deep in the red to \$50,000 profit. You ensured that Tucson Audubon's profile remains high as a conservation leader in Southeast Arizona.

In 2020, I look forward to finalizing a new 3-year strategic plan and making progress on our capital project at the Paton Center. I look forward to remaining more committed than ever to our conservation, advocacy, habitat restoration, bird sanctuaries, education, field trips, data collection, and scientific enquiry—all working in concert to protect birds and their habitats.

Our resilience following the unforeseen challenges of 2020's global health crisis will require heightened reliance on donor generosity, but like the birds passing through our region this time of year, I'm confident we're up for the challenge.

With deep appreciation,

Mary Walker

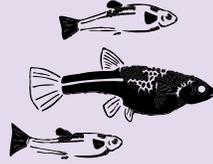
Mary Walker, Board President



OUR 2019 JOURNEY, MADE P

FIRST EVER

SEAZ Bird Guides Summit held to increase safety on the birding trail for birds and people



215 Endangered Gila Top Minnows introduced to refugia stream and pond in the Richard Grand Memorial Meadow



145+

School children at Ochoa Elementary built and took home Lucy's Warbler nestboxes

134

Activities educated and entertained

1,500+ visitors at the SEAZ Birding Festival



15,000+

Wildlife Watchers from all 50 states and 17 foreign countries visited the Paton Center

179

Bird species recorded at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds

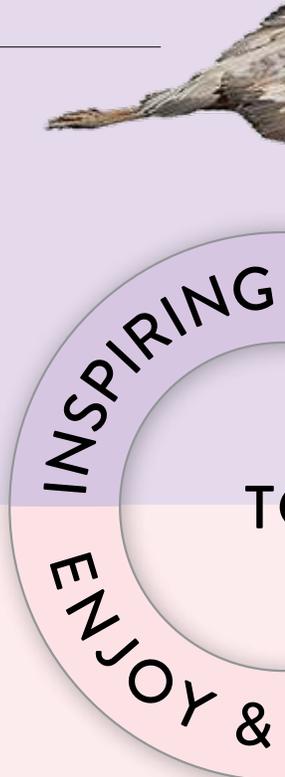
230

Bird species spotted at the SEAZ Birding Festival



3,082

Individuals with binoculars found birds on our field trips





4,208
Customers connected with birds through our Nature Shops' merchandise

566

Paid participants joined the SEAZ Birding Festival (34% increase from 2018)



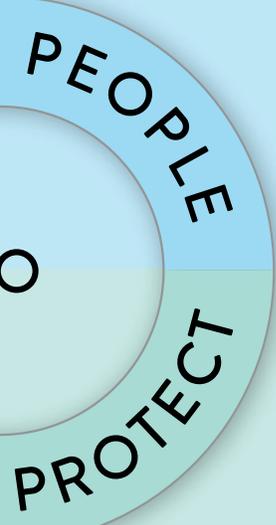
3,500+

People of all ages enjoyed our classes, field trips, and excursions from urban Tucson to California and Sonora, Mexico



17,088

Volunteer hours recorded (14.7% increase over 2018)



5 Acres of riparian habitat added to the Paton Center (aka The Cuckoo Corridor)

RDs



7 State legislators,
3 US Representatives, and
2 US Senators met with us to discuss important bird and habitat issues

An estimated

304-380

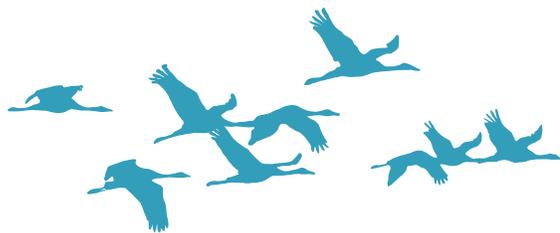
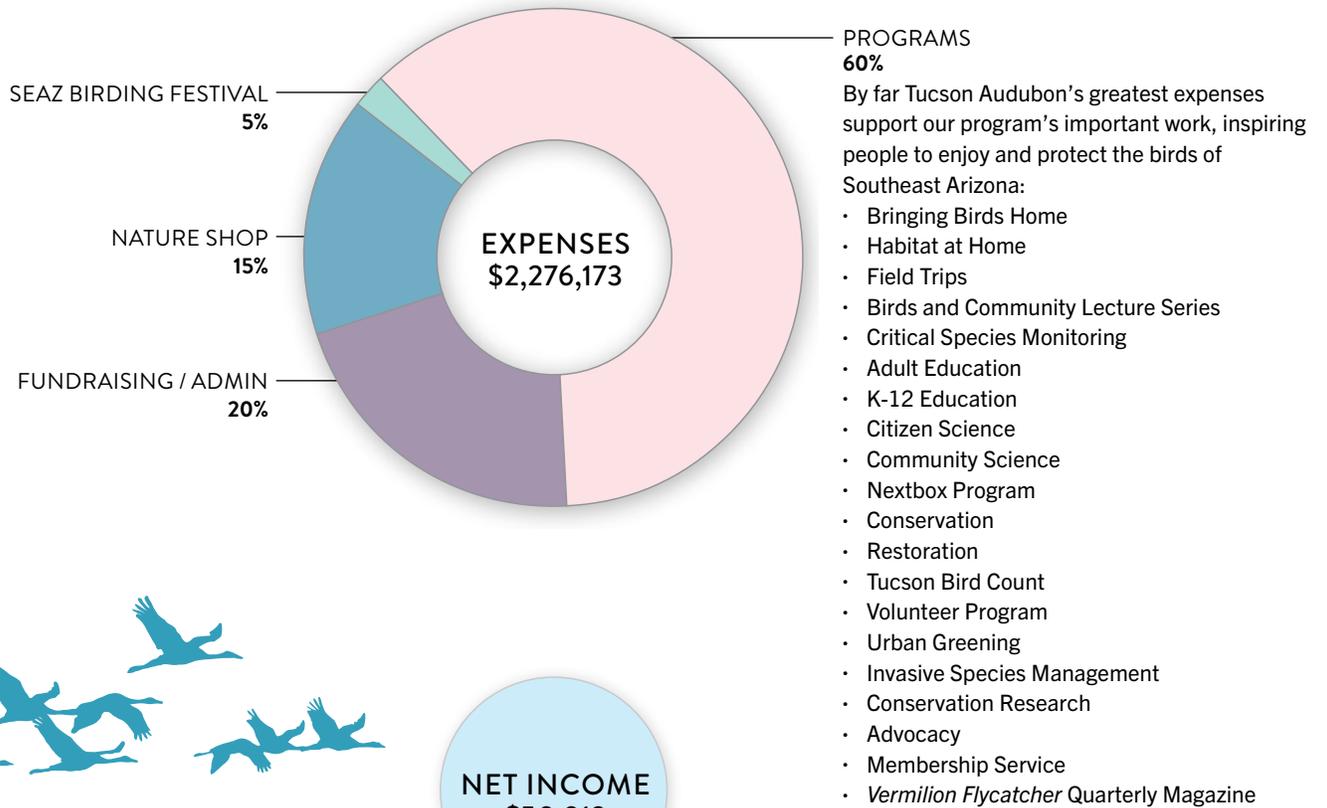
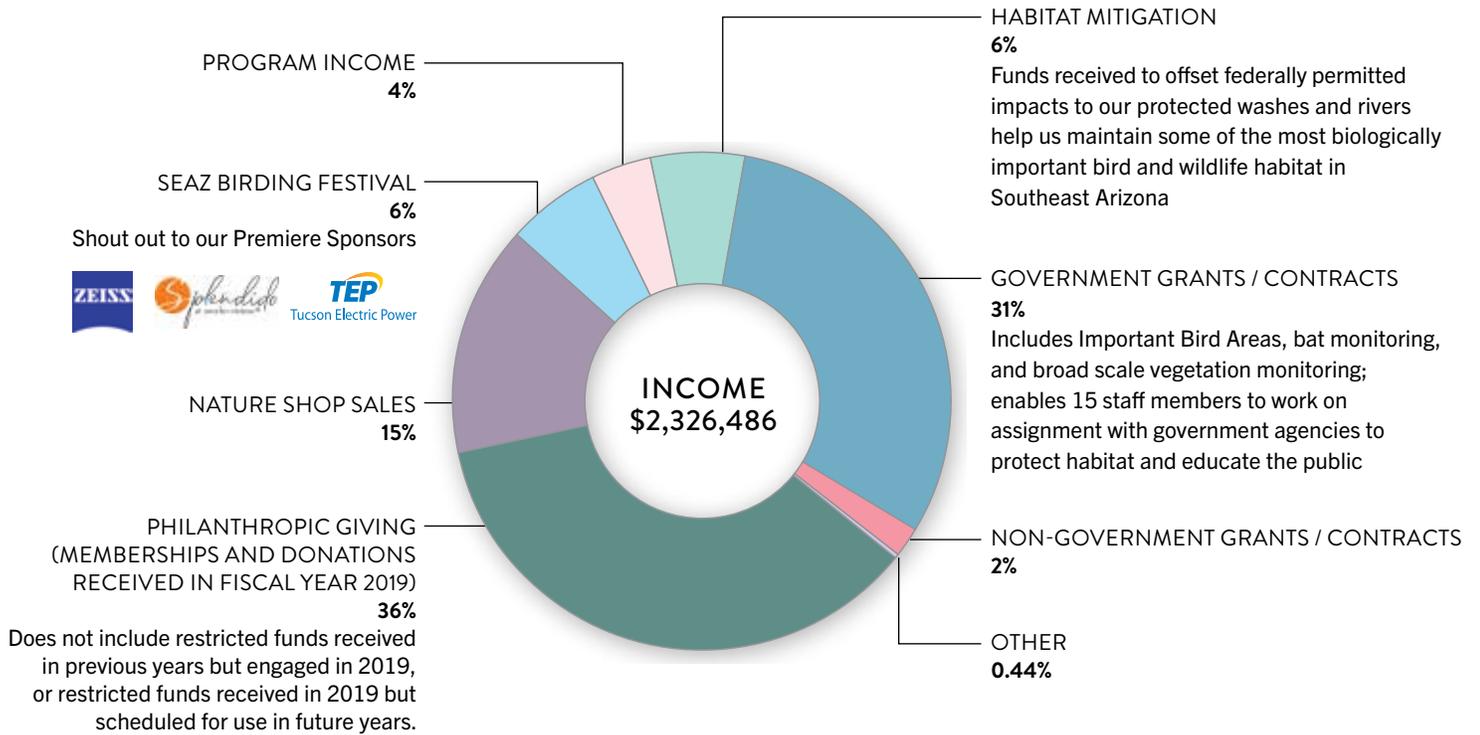
Lucy's Warbler chicks hatched and fledged from

2,600+

nestboxes across SEAZ

300+ Acres of land at **6** sites under intensive habitat restoration care

2019 FINANCIALS



NET INCOME
\$50,312

STRENGTHEN THE FLOCK!

You can impact the Tucson Audubon mission all year long!



Become a Frequent Flyer today! Provide Tucson Audubon with a guarantee of regular, predictable funding we can use to respond to conservation, advocacy, restoration, and education needs.

It's easy! Make a monthly gift to Tucson Audubon through your credit card or bank account. We'll send you an e-mail confirmation each month, and a year-end annual giving statement in the mail for your tax purposes. Your membership automatically renews, so you'll never miss an issue of the *Vermilion Flycatcher*!

Sandhill Cranes aren't the only frequent flyers bringing joy to Southeast Arizona.



TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG/FREQUENTFLYERS

Keith Ashley, Development Director · 520-260-6994 · kashley@tucsonaudubon.org



westgate
GARDEN DESIGN

Westgate Garden Design is a sustainable landscape design firm in Southern Arizona. Charlene Westgate, Owner, is certified in permaculture

design and rainwater harvesting. By treating nature as a resource, rather than a nuisance, landscapes become lush places of native plants that provide beauty and enjoyment for people, and habitat for wildlife. Landscapes in harmony with nature are also easier and less expensive to maintain, save water, and create comfort.

Charlene specializes in helping homeowners who want to participate in Tucson Audubon's Habitat at Home program with presentations on "Gardening to Attract Birds," plant and design consultations, and full-service design assistance.

Westgate Garden Design recently collaborated with the Green Valley Gardeners and Tucson Audubon on the Rainwater Garden in Green Valley's Desert Meadows Park. Designed as a demonstration garden for passive water harvesting and wildlife habitat, the garden includes signage that identifies the plant, the birds it attracts, and the resources the plant supplies such as nectar, fruit, insects, nuts, and seeds. Charlene believes that our actions have a ripple effect, and that we can heal the earth one garden at a time.

Contact Westgate Garden Design at westgategardendesign.com or 520-829-0399.



**BIRDS
BENEFIT
BUSINESS**
Alliance

Many thanks to our Birds Benefit Business Alliance Members, who show their support for Tucson Audubon's mission through annual contributions and in-kind donations.

For more information about their businesses visit tucsonaudubon.org/alliance.

PREMIERE (\$5,000+)

Carl Zeiss Sports Optics
Splendido at Rancho Vistoso
Tucson Electric Power

LEADING (\$2,500)

Birdwatcher's Digest
Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Swarovski Optik
Tamron USA

SUSTAINING (\$1,000)

Alexander | Carrillo Consulting
Beaumont & Port Arthur Convention
and Visitors Bureau
Birding Ecotours
Crown Community Development-Arizona
& Farmers Investment Co.
Diet of Hope Institute
Dr. Miguel A. Arenas, MD
Green Valley Pecan Company
Hatfield CPA LLC
Historic Y
Kimberlyn Drew, Realtor
Originate Natural Building Materials Showroom
Sabrewing Nature Tours
Vortex Optics

SUPPORTING (\$750)

Solipaso Tours / El Pedregal Nature Lodge

CONTRIBUTING (\$500)

Adventure Birding Company
AZ Birder Casitas
Bed and Bagels of Tucson
Desert Harrier
Visit Tucson
Westgate Garden Design
WINGS Birding Tours Worldwide

CREATING BIRD-SAFE BUILDINGS IN TUCSON

Tucson Audubon is excited to announce that we received a \$9,000 Audubon in Action grant from the National Audubon Society for our Bird Safe Buildings Program. Tucson, like many cities, is experiencing rapid urbanization, a phenomenon that is well established and will continue to increase in the future. To reconcile the loss of habitat, Tucson Audubon encourages people to create pockets of native habitat in their own yards by providing water, food, and shelter for local birds. An important part of bird-friendly communities is also providing safe passage. Close proximity to buildings brings the threat of window strikes, a significant cause of death for many birds.

High-rise buildings are especially problematic during peak migration periods when birds, unfamiliar with the concept of glass, are distracted by lit up spaces and collide with the windows, often resulting in death or injury. The importance of this project is further heightened by Tucson's location, right in the middle of a migration funnel for birds flying over land to and from South American wintering grounds.

With our Bird-friendly Tucson initiative, we plan to tackle the dual issue of residential window strikes as well as encourage owners of high-rise business buildings to turn off lights during peak migration season in Arizona. Current Lights Out programs in the US are highly concentrated in the eastern part of the country, not including several major flyways as a result. We plan on joining the ranks of other North American cities that have adapted bird-safe buildings programs to increase the initiative's coverage across the US in efforts to provide a safe passageway for the millions of birds traveling through, or residing in, Arizona and the larger Central Flyway Migration Corridor.

Our Bird Safe Buildings Program is intended to educate and empower everyone to take action in their homes and make passage safer for birds. People interested in strike-proofing the windows in their homes will be able to pledge to take action in preventing bird strikes or register on our website, which will help us track participants and general outreach. Program participants will receive a Tucson Audubon designed decal which will recognize your efforts to benefit birds.

Look for upcoming details on our website and if you'd like more information contact Olya Phillips, Citizen Science Coordinator, at ophilips@tucsonaudubon.org.

Olya Phillips
Citizen Science Coordinator
ophilips@tucsonaudubon.org



Hermit Thrush is a building super collider species that migrates through Southeast Arizona, Cathy Wasson

HOW WE CREATE WHEN WE ADVOCATE: HELP MAKE TUCSON AN URBAN BIRD TREATY CITY

The Urban Bird Treaty (UBT) city program helps protect birds and enhance their habitats in urban areas across the U.S. Tucson Audubon believes we can create a thriving UBT city program right here in Tucson, and you can help us get there!

“The treaty is a partnership agreement between a U.S. city and the Service that promotes the benefits of urban bird conservation to the city and its communities and expresses the city’s support for helping achieve the goals of the UBT program.”

—The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

An Urban Bird Treaty city should:

- Protect, restore, and enhance urban/suburban habitats for birds
- Reduce hazards to birds
- Educate and engage urban/suburban citizens in caring about and conserving birds and their habitats

Tucson Audubon, our members, volunteers, and partners are already making strides in all of these areas, and together we can bolster these efforts by becoming an Urban Bird Treaty city.

The program begins with a granting cycle to help finance community-based conservation projects in the target city, and results in a comprehensive agreement between the city and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. At its heart, the Urban Bird Treaty City program is a partnership between a U.S. city, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the many community partners that love and protect birds.

The Urban Bird Treaty city program has proven to be an effective and lasting tool in protecting and improving bird habitat. The program has 30 cities currently on board and emphasizes both municipal and citizen efforts to take action across a city to improve habitats. The program works to enhance neighborhood green spaces, make backyards more wildlife friendly, and ensure city facilities are as bird friendly as possible.

This program is made possible by more than 45 million people who watch and enjoy birds in the U.S. Together we can create a better world in which birds and people thrive together. Help us bring the Urban Bird Treaty city program to Tucson. Stay tuned for ways you can get involved.

Learn more about the program and see other cities in action at: arcg.is/mDGDz.



Desert hackberry fruit attracts birds such as this Phainopepla, Dan Weisz; Enhancing habitat at Atturbury Wash, Kendall Kroesen; Urban Tucson can provide quality habitat for wildlife, Autumn Sharp



Nicole Gillett
Conservation Advocate
ngillett@tucsonaudubon.org

NO SIZE FITS ALL: TUCSON AUDUBON WELCOMES BIRDABILITY



Virginia Rose has announced her mission, and the world is listening... all across the country, and right here in Southeast Arizona. Birdability is on the move!



Challenges to an individual's ease of mobility can take many forms: a wheelchair, a walker, a slower but determined pace. However, mobility impairments don't need to stop a person from the pleasures of birding. On the contrary, through Birdability these challenges might even offer a gateway to discovering this fantastic hobby in the first place!

A horse-riding accident left Virginia Rose unable to walk more than 45 years ago. A wheelchair provided her with the mobility she needed to live a full life, including a career as a high school English teacher. An important turning point occurred, however, about 17 years ago when she discovered birding—and it happened here in Tucson.

When Virginia's sister Cathryn, a long-time Tucson Audubon supporter, took up binoculars here in the Sonoran Desert, she quickly passed a passion for birding along to her sister. Virginia then discovered that the hobby gave her a new reason to spend time outdoors, with the added benefit of the active lifestyle that goes along with negotiating park paths, bumpy trails, mud puddles, and more.

"Birding gave me an exciting reason to explore nature in my wheelchair," Virginia explains, "and then I realized it could have the same motivating effect on others." Virginia began to share her joy of birding with other mobility-impaired individuals in her hometown of Austin, Texas: through Easter Seals, amputee support groups, and rehab gyms taking creative approaches to physical therapy. As she saw birding improve the lives of many individuals, she recognized that birding could be brought to mobility-impaired people all over the country.

One core principle of Birdability is that No Size Fits All—because different individuals face different mobility challenges, this isn't about a single solution for everyone. It's about recognizing that with perseverance, everyone can find their way. Virginia sums it up: "No one can tell you what you can do. You won't know until you go."

This year, Virginia will be guiding Tucson Audubon as our community invests in Birdability in a few ways:

- STEP 1** We will convene a group of volunteer stakeholders interested in seeing Birdability reach its full potential here in Southeast Arizona.
- STEP 2** This group will be tasked with using guidelines developed by Virginia to review the accessibility of birding sites around Tucson and Southeast Arizona.
- STEP 3** Site by site, we will update our Birdability webpage with more accurate and descriptive accounts of local accessibility.
- STEP 4** Virginia Rose will join us as a special guest at the Southeast Arizona Birding Festival (Aug. 5–9), leading Birdability hikes around Tucson each day.
- STEP 5** Our Birdability Volunteer Corps will be invited to chart the course of Birdability moving forward for Tucson Audubon.



TOP/MIDDLE: Provided by Virginia Rose; BOTTOM: Virginia Rose, Birdability Founder



TUCSON AUDUBON BIRDATHON 2020

KEEPING OUR TRADITIONS ALIVE, EVEN IN TROUBLING TIMES

Now in its 33rd year, Birdathon is a treasured spring ritual of our Tucson Audubon community. In continuing to hold Birdathon 2020 despite the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 health crisis, we do not intend to downplay the severity of the situation. On the contrary, we hope to support everyone in adapting to life at home by offering the comfort of our time-honored traditions and evolving opportunities to stay connected with birds.

PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR UPDATES TO BIRDATHON.

BIRDATHON BASICS:

NEW TO BIRDATHON? It's like a walkathon, only instead of counting miles, we count birds! Decide on your approach, reach out to friends and family to gather support, and go birding any time between April 7 and May 7!

PRIZES Your team could win Zeiss binoculars, gift cards to local restaurants, or a stay at Casa de San Pedro. Raise \$100 to receive a Birdathon T-shirt.

BIRDABILITY \$7,500 of Birdathon funds raised will support Tucson Audubon's Birdability initiative to make birding more accessible.

2020 COMPETITION CATEGORIES: Grand Champions, Home Patch, Big Day: Traditional, Big Day: Freestyle, Best Bucks for Birds, Social Media Storyteller, Birdathon Beyond AZ,

PHYSICAL DISTANCING, CRITICAL CONNECTION

We have adapted Birdathon's rules this year to help people stay safe at home, but still connect with the birds and community that can offer us strength to weather this crisis. Here are 3 points to consider:

STAND STRONG ON YOUR OWN: While Birdathon usually requires teams of at least two, this year we encourage and support individual efforts.

TEAM UP, CREATIVELY: If you would like to continue teaming up with others, while observing physical distance protocols, consider a shared approach, held in different places. You can compile your lists to achieve a final total.

YOU'VE GOT A MONTH...TAKE IT?: While teams traditionally cover many locations in just one day, another possibility is one location over the course of many days...

Consider one of these approaches:

- **Bird by Ear** – How many songs and calls can you learn to identify from home?
- **A Daily Yard List for a Month** – Do all your favorites show up every day? Create your own daily survey process.
- **A Neighborhood Walk List** – If you will be exercising in your neighborhood, that could be the perfect time to keep track of bird neighbors.



TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG/BIRDATHON

Curve-billed Thrasher, Mark Mackin

SOUTHEAST ARIZONA BIRDING FESTIVAL

SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO COVID-19 HEALTH CRISIS:

AUGUST 5-9, 2020

Tucson, Arizona

Registration Postponed Until Further Notice

Held at the DoubleTree by
Hilton Hotel at Reid Park



*Celebrate 10 years
of finding life birds in
Southeast Arizona!*

See the full schedule and register at
TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG/FESTIVAL

PRESENTED BY



BIRD WATCHER'S
DIGEST

WONDERING WHAT TO REGISTER FOR?

Here are a few different ways you could schedule your festival experience:

MAXIMIZING YOUR BIRD SPECIES LIST

- Thursday Aug 6, Sky Island Birding Blitz with Vincent Pinto
- Friday Aug 7, Sonoran Desert to Conifer Forest with Ken Blankenship
- Saturday, Aug 8, Big Day Van with Alex Lamoreaux
- Sunday, Aug 9, Specialty Clean-up with Tim Helentjaris

GOING BEYOND BIRDS

- Thursday Aug 6 (AM), Butterflies with Jim Brock
- Thursday Aug 6 (PM), Creatures of the Night with Jim Rorabaugh
- Friday Aug 7, Hummingbird Murals of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe with Dan Weisz
- Friday Aug 7 (PM), Going Batty with Karen Krebbs
- Saturday Aug 8, Dragonflies & Damselflies with Laurens Halsey
- Sunday, Aug 9, Southern Arizona Life Zones with Jeff Babson

PHOTOGRAPHY TRACK

- Thursday Aug 6, Elephant Head Pond with Dano Grayson
- Thursday Aug 6 (PM), Birds in Flight class workshop with Krizstina Scheef
- Friday Aug 7, Birds in Flight field workshop with Krizstina Scheef
- Friday Aug 7 (PM), Birding Photography class session with Henry Johnson
- Saturday Aug 8, Photographic Bird ID with Maresa Pryor-Luzier
- Saturday Aug 8 (PM), Photography is a Journey class session with Lisa Langell
- Sunday Aug 9, Birding Photography field workshop with Henry Johnson

THE UNIQUE EXPERIENCE TRACK

- Wednesday–Thursday Aug 5–6, Overnight at Casa de San Pedro with Sheri Williamson and Tom Wood of SABO (includes hummingbird banding)
- Friday Aug 7, Birding & Culture at The Amerind Foundation with Rick Wright
- Friday Aug 7 (PM), Birds & Beer at Borderlands Brewery with Beaumont/Port Arthur
- Saturday Aug 8, Beyond the Pavement in French Joe Canyon with Ethan Beasley
- Saturday Aug 8, Festival Banquet with Alvaro Jaramillo
- Sunday Aug 9, Tucson Migration in the Desert with Brian Gibbons

BIRDING WITH THE CELEBRITIES

- Thursday Aug 6, Madera Canyon with Tom Stephenson and Robert Mesta
- Thursday Aug 6 (PM), Sparrow ID workshop with Alvaro Jaramillo
- Friday Aug 7, Montosa Canyon with Alvaro Jaramillo and Laurens Halsey
- Friday Aug 7 (PM), Never Stop Looking: Warblers from all Angles with Tom Stephenson
- Saturday Aug 8, Birding & Culture at the Tumacacori NHS with Rick Wright
- Saturday Aug 8, Festival Banquet with Alvaro Jaramillo
- Sunday Aug 9, Sparrows with Alvaro Jaramillo and Homer Hansen

Vermilion Flycatcher, Freddie Huang



RIZONA /AL



PLEASE SEE WEBSITE FOR ONGOING UPDATES



BIRDABILITY

An exciting new addition to this year's Birding Festival is Birdability! As part of Tucson Audubon's 2020 initiative to make birding more inclusive and accessible, Birdability founder, Virginia Rose, will be leading bird walks throughout the festival. Be sure to watch our website for details!

SOUTHEAST ARIZONA BIRDING FESTIVAL & PROTECTING THE BIRDS WE LOVE

One of the reasons we hold a festival every year is to leverage the growing interest in birding around the globe to raise awareness of local conservation issues. Beginning this year, we will have an annual conservation focus, and for 2020 we have chosen the Sonoita Creek Watershed. The Birding Festival will incorporate field trips and programs focused on improving the habitat along the Sonoita Creek and raising awareness of conservation needs in the region, as well as more ways to join in protecting this unique area.

We've found this is a great way to not only educate birders on the need for restoring habitat, but being on-site also helps create the emotional connection that inspires many of us to start getting actively involved.

Look for "Birding with a Purpose" field trips, including:

- Montezuma Quail habitat restoration with Borderlands Restoration
- Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve with John Hughes and Friends of Sonoita Creek
- Cuckoo Corridor Birding & Planting with Tucson Audubon's Restoration Crew
- Harshaw & Mining with Keith Kamper and Carolyn Shafer

Be sure to sign up for Sonoita Creek focused presentations and attend our Thursday evening "Green Drinks" to mingle with other conservation-minded friends and enjoy a drink and appetizers.

A portion of your contribution for each "Birding with a Purpose" event will go directly to help protect the Sonoita Creek Watershed.



Sonoita Creek, Francisca Weber



BUILDING NESTBOXES AT CENTENNIAL ELEMENTARY

On Monday, March 2nd, Eric Scheuering, Education Programs Manager; Olya Phillips, Citizen Science Coordinator and three Tucson Audubon volunteers worked with over seventy 5th grade students from three classrooms at Centennial Elementary to learn about the nesting habits of birds in Southeast Arizona. Students first drew all the types of bird nests they could think of before learning about the particular nesting requirements for Lucy’s Warblers. Every student then built their own Lucy’s Warbler nestbox to put up in their own yard or neighborhood.

This was the third program at Centennial Elementary. Earlier programs with these students included learning about the common birds in Tucson and identifying birds around the school, as well as mapping the available habitat for birds in the area. Students also completed their science fair projects this year using data from the Tucson Bird Count.



“We are making these bird boxes because Lucy’s Warblers come up north to live and they need our help getting shelter, so they can make nests and protect their eggs.”

—Madlyn Ashmore, student

“Lucy’s Warblers don’t have a lot of places to live in the north because there aren’t a lot of old mesquite trees, so we are building boxes for them to live and have their children in.”

—Kyla Stephens, student

“They’re really engaged and more into science. For example, when we go outside for recess, they will point out and look at birds. Overall, they’re just more aware of their surroundings with this experience. They’ve loved it. I said to them earlier, ‘Hey, we’ve got Audubon Society coming’ and they all just lost their minds in class. They’ve also gotten hands-on experience in science where they’ve had to collect real-life data and sort it, so they’ve learned how to essentially read science.”

—Jelika Cullinan, 5th grade teacher

“The kids were so excited to have you guys here. Their science projects this year—instead of doing something about which paper towel is better—they have each chosen all different birds and used the Tucson Audubon Society data to put together their projects. It’s really great because they are able to see and study nature in our area.”

—Anna Heyer, Flowing Wells District Science Specialists and Coordinator



Photos by Rhianyon Larson

COMMUNITY-FOCUSED FIELD TRIPS!

FREE AND OPEN TO ALL. NO REGISTRATION NECESSARY.

ALL FIELD TRIPS TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS HEALTH CONCERNS. VISIT TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG/FIELDTrips FOR UPDATES

SWEETWATER WETLANDS
Every Wednesday, 7:00-10:00 AM

ISABELLA MOUNTAIN NATURAL PRESERVE
Sundays, see schedule

MACK CENTER/ARTHUR PACK PARK
Saturdays, see schedule

MISQUELE MOUNTAIN
Thursdays, see schedule

WHO KEEPS OUR MASON CENTER GARDENS SO BEAUTIFUL?

Cynthia Pruett,
Mason Green Gardeners Captain

Being a Mason Center volunteer since 2007, I've long thought that the gardens surrounding the house could become a haven for birds and other wildlife. I saw them being larger, and more diverse—a place where members and the public could get ideas for their own gardens. To this end, the Mason Green Gardeners volunteer group was formed in 2016 and spends most Sunday mornings throughout the year making things happen. Meet them below!

As with all gardens, there is never a finish. Some future plans include making the entrance more inviting and having demonstration plots to give people ideas for their gardens no matter the size or monetary investment. A big goal is finishing the garden recognizing Mrs Orpha Mason, who donated her home and 20 acres of native desert to Tucson Audubon over 20 years ago.



Kathy Heitzmann, Victoria Howard, Cynthia Pruett, Ruth Morton, and Touhid Ahamed



Mack Consigny

RUTH MORTON

The Mason Green Gardeners is a great fit to keep my gardening skills sharp. I've enjoyed learning the desert plants, getting acquainted with fellow gardeners, and enjoy hearing the morning bird songs that accompany us.

HAL BUSCH

Working at the Mason Center, especially on trail maintenance, fits well with my desire to be of service in the natural world.

KATHY HEITZMANN

At the Mason Center I enjoy learning about bird and butterfly friendly plants, the "art" of laying out a garden, planting, pruning, weeding, and the pleasure of seeing our new plants mature and thrive.

PAUL "MACK" CONSIGNY

I got involved to give back to my community by donating my time and to help maintain a piece of desert where birds can flourish and people can come to connect with the birds. My reward is working with a great team of volunteers in a beautiful desert setting while supporting a great organization.

CARELLA MANNDEVILLE

I'm new to birding, and volunteering with the Mason gardeners seemed like a great way to get involved in conservation and learn about native plants in the process. I thoroughly enjoy sharing the time with fellow bird and plant enthusiasts.

VICTORIA HOWARD

I first became involved with the Mason Gardeners to fulfill volunteer hours at the University of Arizona. I have continued because I found the experience supported my desire to grow professionally. Having the opportunity to contribute to the Tucson Audubon community every week has absolutely been rewarding!

TOUHID AHAMED

Nature has always been my interest and I enjoy contributing to conservation. Gardening at the Mason Center provides a unique opportunity to get in touch with nature while learning about the plants and animals—especially the birds!—of the Sonoran Desert.

THANKS TO



FOR SPONSORING
TUCSON AUDUBON'S
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



GIFTS IN HONOR OR MEMORY OF

In honor of Carianne & Josh Campbell from Michele Girard, Shannon Breslin & Kristin Terpening, Dana Backer, Jana Bowditch, and Vasiliki Karanikola

In honor of Cathy & Rick Swanson from Andrea Lawyer

In honor of Ewan Jarvis Cantor from Amy & Howard Cantor

In honor of Jane Reichart from Jan Bell & Salvador Navarrete

In honor of Janine Glasson from Maureen Glasson

In honor of Jonathan Lutz from L. Elliott Farber

In honor of LeeAnne Maier from Harold Roberts

In honor of Marcia & Ty Tingley from Will Lidwell

In honor of Mary Fitzgibbons from Mary Williams

In honor of Nicole Gillett from Kari Anderson

In honor of Norma Hart Anderson from Pam & Stan Hart

In honor of Virginia Rose from Cathryn Rose

In memory of Carol Forsythe from Marilyn Carney

In memory of Darrel Wilder from Marita & John Reed

In memory of David Planinsek from Kathy & Mike Watson

In memory of Eileen Withey from Kathleen Bethel

In memory of Elaine & Robert Goldman from Stephanie Barnet

In memory of George Gerben from Gigi Gerben

In memory of Ginny Sherman from Cindy & David Soffrin

In memory of Kyriaki Blake from Maria Blake

In memory of Larry Ladouceur from Corrinne & Joe Bartell and Kathy Kuyper

In memory of Martha McKibben from Bea Forbes Herndon & Dewey Herndon, Jeff Schlegel, Nancy & Richard Tredway, Bruce Hackel, Margaret Kurzius-Spencer, Mary Paradise, and Nancy Swinford

In memory of Paul Hernandez from Gretchen Van Nuys

In memory of Ralph Van Dusseldorp from Nancy Mayerhofer

In memory of Sally Jochum from Ashley Forrester



Black-throated Sparrow, Roger van Gelder

WOO HOOT!

BIRDY NEWS BITES WORTH CELEBRATING

BLUEBIRD SOCIETY GRANT FOR LUCY'S WARBLERS NESTBOX PROGRAM

North American Bluebird Society (NABS) awarded a \$1,210 grant to Tucson Audubon Society for the study of Lucy's Warbler breeding stages, as well as fledging success, and nest predation/parasitism documentation using motion-triggered photography. The small breeding range and the shy nature of Lucy's Warblers have left gaps in the amount of information we know about these birds. The project, *Secret Lives of Lucy's Warblers—a Breeding Biology Camera Study*, directly supports the NABS mission of population recovery for native cavity-nesting bird species of North America.

NEW HABITAT CREATION AT DELL URICH GOLF COURSE

Tucson Audubon is working with Dell Urich Golf Course and Tucson Parks and Recreation to fill the unused open spaces between fairways with plants that can support birds, bats, butterflies, native bees, and other pollinators. The habitat improvements are part of certification through Audubon International's Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, and will include enhancements such as nestboxes, bat houses, bee keeps, and more. Cavity-nesting birds like Lucy's Warbler, and pollinators such as monarch butterflies, could benefit immediately from the initial stages of the project. This new partnership is exciting and could lead to additional parks in Tucson adopting the same habitat protocols and opening new areas to birding.

MEET OUR NEWLY-FORMED CoATIS TEAM!

The CoATIS (Collaborative Audubon Treatment and Inventory Squad) was created as a partnership with the National Park Service, Saguaro National Park, and Fish & Wildlife Service. Tucson Audubon won a major, 5-year umbrella-agreement award through NPS last summer to form this group.

The main goal of the CoATIS is to perform invasive species monitoring and control in the region's most ecologically sensitive areas—areas with threatened or endangered species or large assemblages of species. They identify areas of greatest need, implement treatment, and then monitor post-treatment to determine ongoing control needs. They also survey and monitor a variety of other species including saguaros.

WHY PROTECTING THE MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT MATTERS... NOW MORE THAN EVER

1. Helps us avoid putting birds at risk.
2. Holds those who threaten or harm birds accountable.
3. Ensures bird populations endure for future generations.



TAKE A STAND TODAY: WWW.TUCSONAUDUBON.ORG

Great Egret, David Kreidler

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OUR PLEDGE TO YOU

The production of this issue coincided with one of the most unique periods in human history. As we were putting the finishing touches on an upbeat 2019 Annual Report, rounding up bird photos from our amazing photographers, and editing content to make sure you're informed about the work of Tucson Audubon, the coronavirus (COVID-19) has been dominating headlines, our dinner table conversations, and our work plans.

On Friday, March 20, I issued an immediate call for donations to an emergency fund to support our operation. Tucson Audubon is not an organization with deep reserves, and we've only recently turned the corner from being on shaky financial ground. You helped make 2019 a turnaround year for Tucson Audubon. **Now we're asking for your support to maintain our organization's health and ensure its survival. We need to raise \$75,000—an amount that reflects what we project to lose due to canceled programs and fewer donations through May 31.**

Tucson Audubon will be a different organization when the pandemic subsides. Some of our programs will be more streamlined, while others may require extra time to resume. Travelers may be hesitant to plan travel

to our region, which could mean fewer people visiting Southeast Arizona's birding hotspots. My pledge to you is this:

Tucson Audubon will continue to work on behalf of birds. When we can't lead a field trip, we'll endeavor to offer an online birding experience. When we can't be in the field restoring habitat, we'll be laying the groundwork for future projects. And when we can't be engaging the public on issues like preserving the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, we'll continue providing you the digital tools for taking a stand.

Together, we'll persevere.



Best Regards,

Jonathan E. Lutz,
Executive Director

The Vermilion Flycatcher is the newsletter of the Tucson Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society. National Audubon Society members and members of other chapters may receive the Flycatcher by becoming a Friend of Tucson Audubon. For more information visit: tucsonaudubon.org.



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TUCSON AUDUBON NATURE SHOPS

PLEASE NOTE

The Nature Shops are currently closed until further notice due to coronavirus health concerns.

Please see the expanded inventory of our new online shop at tucsonaudubonnatureshop.com. Delivery of orders may be delayed.

MAIN SHOP

300 E University Blvd #120, Tucson 85705
(corner of University & 5th Ave.)

AGUA CALIENTE PARK SHOP

12325 E Roger Road, Tucson 85749

NOTE: The Nature Shop at Agua Caliente Park is currently closed until further notice due to Shop and Park renovations.

Nature Shop space generously provided by Pima County Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation

HABITAT RESOURCES AT THE NATURE SHOP

The Nature Shop can help you create an oasis in your own yard. We sell bee habitats and nest boxes with 100% of the proceeds going back to support conservation programs. Visit our expanded online store to see all we have to offer birders and nature lovers: tucsonaudubonnatureshop.com



Bee Habitats
(100% of sales support
Habitat at Home)
\$10.00–20.00



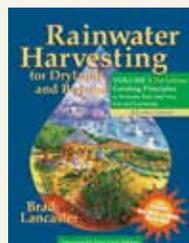
Bee Resistant
Copper Hummingbird Feeders
\$25.00–48.00



Going Green
Recycled Plastic
Seed Tube Feeder
\$44.00



Invasive Plants
Fold Out Guide
\$6.95



\$39.95



Solar Water Wiggler
\$50.00



Nest Boxes
(100% of sales support
conservation programs)
\$10.00-55.00