

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

Vermilion

FLYCATCHER

January–March 2014 | Volume 59, Number 1

Changes

The More Things Stay the Same

Changes in Latitude or Changes in Attitude



Cave Creek Complex

Tucson Meet Your Birds

What's in a Name: Sinaloa Wren and Happy Wren



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, and nature shops in Tucson, the proceeds of which benefit all of its programs.

Tucson Audubon Society

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All phone numbers are area code 520 unless otherwise stated.

tucsonaudubon.org

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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.

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FRONT COVER: Rufous-capped Warbler by Jeremy Hayes. Jeremy is a science teacher and biologist who has been photographing wildlife for four years. You can see his photos at www.flickr.com/photos/jhayesvw.

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



Can You Spare Some Change?

Keith Ashley, Nest Box Campaign Facilitator & Restoration Crew Member

During my first spring in Tucson, Elf Owls nested in the penthouse apartment of a crumbling saguaro just beyond my fence. Every evening one of the birds settled into my yard, peering at me through mesmerizing eyes, chortling away with owl songs. How did I get so lucky to land this cactus for a neighbor? That following winter the top two feet of saguaro containing the owls' home rotted away and fell off. Just recently, our property manager removed the cactus entirely, concerned its blackening hull would topple onto someone's car. Change is a hallmark of existence, and it's often quite unwelcome.

Everything in our world is always changing—always has been, always will be—but these days, change itself is changing. It's speeding up. We see rapid changes in technology, culture, and—most unsettling—in our climate and ecosystems. Paradoxically, resistance to change also typifies our lives. We all crave security, certainty, comfort in a world we know. How can we learn to face change with greater resilience? How do we offset loss of habitat, the pesticide poisoning of our birds, the cascade

effects of a heating world—and also transform ourselves?

I don't have the answers, but I think **WE** just might. Improving the health of our ecosystems requires committed communication and collaboration among citizens working for a common cause. Tucson Audubon's highly participatory programs provide us with exactly the platforms we need to act together in support of biodiversity, while cultivating our own positive role as dynamic members of the life-web.

For 2014, Tucson Audubon is launching a pilot project to support the declining American Kestrel and other bird populations by enhancing their urban habitat with nest boxes, and we're designing the program for optimal citizen participation. We recognize more and more the potential for urban areas to become biodiversity arks. Tucson offers not only rich land, water, and energy resources, but also a wealth of human resources. Perhaps in this season of change, we can also transform ourselves to become more constructive members of all our ecosystem communities. To learn more about the Nest Boxes for Urban Birds project, go to:

tucsonaudubon.org/nestbox



AMERICAN KESTREL, DORIS EVANS

COMMENTARY

PAUL GREEN | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Birds They Are A-Changin’

At our Gala in 2012, Prof John Kricher argued that there is no such thing as a balance of nature. Change is the constant in the natural world, and changes in our global, interconnected life-support system are accelerating because of our own activities. We are releasing sequestered carbon in fossil fuels, our soils, and our forests back into the atmosphere with results we are already experiencing.

The Rufous-capped Warbler on our cover is an example of the new birds that may become more common in our region as we lose others because of our changing climate. In many of the articles in this issue, we examine changes to bird populations and their habitat, from the past through into the future.

We’ll see changes of several kinds. Some birds may cease to be breeding species in Arizona in the future. These include Olive-sided Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Dusky Flycatcher, Gray Flycatcher, Tree Swallow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Gray Catbird, Sage Thrasher, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Redstart, MacGillivray’s Warbler, Lazuli Bunting, Indigo Bunting, Brewer’s Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Sage Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Lincoln’s Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Bobolink, and Pine Grosbeak.

The natural world is complex, and the reasons for each of these potential disappearances may be unique and surprising. For example, one recent publication revealed that MacGillivray’s Warbler may be threatened as an Arizona breeding species because warming temperatures reduce snow cover and allow elk to reach areas they could not before, eating the shrubs in which the MacGillivray’s Warbler nests.

Other bird species may react in different ways, for example by contracting or expanding their summer range in Arizona. Some other species may expand their summer range into our state. Apart from Sinaloa Wren, Rufous-capped Warbler, and others considered by the authors in this issue, candidates include Nutting’s Flycatcher, Cave Swallow,

Sinaloa Martin, Blue Jay, Blue Mockingbird, Tropical Parula, Pine Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Ovenbird, Flame-colored Tanager, Painted Bunting, Rusty Sparrow, Common Grackle, Black-vented Oriole, and Black-headed Siskin.

The driver for these bird distribution changes is human-induced global warming which results in changing climate and changing habitats, the two most significant threats to birds. We should not kid ourselves that the outcomes of climate change in our region will be pretty: increased temperatures, decreased rainfall, and increased severity of storm events will not enhance our vegetation.

Can you and I as environmentalists change our daily behaviors in ways to reduce these threats? What should we focus on changing first in terms of the scale and immediacy of effect? A perhaps surprising answer to that question is to increase the plant-derived portion of our diets. Recent publications suggest that livestock production, and our huge consumption of animal products, may be responsible for at least 51 percent of human-caused greenhouse gas. That’s nothing short of astonishing.

I find it empowering to know that we can have a significant and immediate effect on climate change and habitat loss by focusing on a plant-based diet, sourced locally through organic producers. We can take the lead and be an example. We need not wait to see what others do.

We can be proactive in other ways to restore resilience and biodiversity in our urban areas. In December, I was part of a small team tasked with pulling together a national conservation program for urban habitats. The promise of common activities, yielding clear quantifiable outcomes (yet to be determined) that could be collated through a social network on a continental scale is energizing. At Tucson Audubon, we will do what we can to help make this a reality, and we will do even more to develop grassroots activities with meaningful conservation impacts in our region.



Ovenbird (top) and Prothonotary Warbler (bottom) are among the birds that may expand their summer range into Arizona.

I encourage you to become a part of Tucson Audubon’s participatory programs that include many variants of habitat restoration, bird surveys, and our new Nest Boxes for Urban Birds project, to name just three. As Keith Ashley says on page 2, Tucson Audubon’s programs provide us with the platforms we need for grassroots action in support of biodiversity and urban ecosystems. Change is most effectively built from the bottom up, and Tucson Audubon seeks to facilitate your own transformation as you act together with other members to cultivate positive roles as influential members of our shared ecosystem. We thank you for your significant support and creative input as we develop these programs. 

Livestock’s Long Shadow—Environmental Issues and Options. Food and Agriculture Organisation. 2006. ISBN 92-5-105571-8.
America the Possible: Manifesto for a New Economy. 2012. James Gustave Speth. Yale University Press ISBN-13: 9780300180763
Ruminants, climate change and climate policy. 2014. William J. Ripple, Pete Smith, Helmut Haberl, Stephen A. Montzka, Clive McAlpine & Douglas H. Boucher. Nature Climate Change. Vol 4, 1.

TUCSON AUDUBON EVENTS AND CLASSES

Spring into Birding with Tucson Audubon

Please visit our website for more details and to register:
tucsonaudubon.org/education



LOIS MANOWITZ

MATT GRIFFITHS



One Day Workshops: Winter/Spring 2014

Eat Mesquite! And Other Desert Treats!

Interested in harvesting your mesquite pods, but not quite sure what to do with them once you have them? Barbara Rose of Bean Tree Farm will share her fearless experimentation and sun-loving, low-energy methods to prepare the desert's nutritious treats, AND give you wise rainwater harvesting examples to

regenerate your landscape.

She will have harvested mesquite beans and flours on hand to offer you tastings of soups, drinks, sauces and more. You'll come away with increased appreciation

for the generous, spiny land we call home. Participation limited to 20.

Date and Time: January 25, 2014;
9:30 AM– 2:30 PM

Location: Bean Tree Farm, Marana
Cost: \$50

An Introduction to Desert Birding for Teachers

Are you a K–8 teacher interested in getting your students outside next spring to learn about birds? Doris Evans, a retired TUSD teacher and environmental educator, will give you a basic introduction to common desert birds, take you birding, and facilitate hands-on activities that you can use in the classroom. All workshop participants will receive an online copy of *Desert Birding in Arizona with a Focus on Urban Birds: A Curriculum Guide for Elementary Grades*. Participation limited to 25.

Date and Time: Saturday, February
15, 2014; 8:00 AM–Noon
Location: Tucson Audubon's Mason
Center, 3835 W. Hardy Rd.
Cost: \$20

Register online today! Visit
tucsonaudubon.org/education
Contact for all education
activities: Bété Jones at
bjones@tucsonaudubon.org,
520-629-0510 x7012

Beyond Birding—Explorations of the Land Ethic

This workshop explores the concept of the land ethic as it applies to birding, conservation, and our own lives. Through compelling activities indoors and out, participants will hone observation skills, broaden their landscape vision, and reflect on their own personal land ethic. Whether as a bird watcher, a general nature enthusiast, an educator, or a field biologist, we can all benefit from deepening our understanding of the land ethic and examining how that contributes to conservation. Taught by Trica Oshant Hawkins. Participation limited to 15.

Date and Time: March 29;
9:00 AM–12:00 PM
Location: Tucson Audubon's Mason
Center, 3835 W. Hardy Rd.
Cost: \$25

Specialty Workshops 2014

Intended as stand-alone classes, these workshops are a great opportunity to focus on a specific group of birds and brush up on your identification skills. Instruction will focus on distinguishing between similar species, identification techniques, and vocalizations. Cost is \$110 for members, \$145 for non-members.

Spring Programming

See our website for more detailed descriptions of each workshop. All taught by Homer Hansen.

Sparrows: February 6 & 8
Raptors: February 13 & 15
Birding by Ear: April 17 & 19

Education Courses: Winter/Spring 2014

See tucsonaudubon.org/education

For Beginners

Backyard Birding and Beyond

Open yourself up to the natural world by gaining skills and knowledge about birding that you can take with you into your backyard or to any corner of the globe! Topics to be covered include: principles of identification, binoculars and field guides, birding vocabulary and etiquette, local bird I.D. and lore, seasonal occurrence, family characteristics, and gardening to attract birds. You will learn firsthand why southeastern Arizona is such a great place for birds and why bird watching is so rewarding. Taught by Lynn Hassler, longtime birder, educator, and noted author.

Classroom sessions: January 11, 18,
February 8, 15; 10:00 AM–12:00 PM
Field trips: February 1, 22; 9:00 AM–
12:00 PM
Cost: \$150 for members, \$185 for
non-members

Birding by Habitat

Southeastern Arizona offers such excellent birding opportunities in part because of its variety of habitats. Come experience the fun of birding in different natural environments with instructor Lynn Hassler. One classroom session is followed by three field trips to different habitats: Desert, Riparian and Sky Island.
Classroom session: April 5;
10 AM–12 PM
Field trips: April 12, 19, 26; 7 AM– 5 PM
Cost: \$125 for members, \$160 for
non-members

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

For Birders with Experience**Moving to Mastery**

Take your birding to the next level with our popular Moving to Mastery class. If you are ready to move your birding skills beyond the basics, this is the class for you.

Content will focus on structure and behavior to bring you to a better understanding of bird identification.

You will learn how to identify some of the more difficult bird groups, how to use technical references, and how to understand bird topography. Taught by Homer Hansen.

Classroom sessions: Thursdays, March 13–April 10; 5:30 PM–8:30 PM
Field trips: Saturdays, March 15–April 5; 7:00 AM–5:00 PM
Cost: \$250 for members; \$285 for non-members

For Families**Riparian Family Institute**

This weekend program for the entire family incorporates children's activities into an atmosphere in which everyone can experience nature, explore, and learn together. The focus is on the rich plant and animal life found along the beautiful San Pedro River, one of the last free-flowing rivers joining Mexico and the United States.

Date and Time: April 5–6
Cost: \$70 per person



BETE JONES



BETE JONES

Our Changing Climate

TUCSON AUDUBON'S SIXTH ANNUAL GALA

Be Part of an Elegant Tradition at Tucson Audubon

Thursday, February 20, 2014 at 6 o'clock in the evening

Our Sixth Annual Gala event returns to the fabulous Hilton El Conquistador resort on Oracle Road near Catalina State Park. We hope you will come along to enjoy a delicious meal and the great company of a dynamic group of conservation supporters! This festive event is an important fundraiser as well as a special time to gather in celebration of our region's unique natural treasures and engage our community on significant issues. We will also be presenting our President's Award to an outstanding member of our conservation community.

A lively cocktail hour will feature live birds, live music, tasty *hors d'oeuvres*, and an exciting silent

auction offering something for everyone. Daydreaming of Boreal Owls and Pine Grosbeaks? Bid on guided birding in southeastern Arizona and beyond. Grandparents won't want to miss four passes to Disneyland or a ride in style in the Truly Nolen Mouse Limo. Execs or party hosts can snag a wine tasting for 20 at Total Wine, plus lots more special gift items and unique experiences from local businesses.

After dinner, we'll hear from our special guest speaker, Katharine L. Jacobs, a Tucson Audubon member and birder who has spent the last four years in Washington

DC working for the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy as the Assistant Director for Climate Assessment and Adaptation. Kathy will provide us with a light-hearted view from within the National Climate Change Assessment.

The Gala is sure to be memorable! Reserve your place online or by calling Erin at 520-209-1809. Tickets are \$150 each; tables for ten from \$1500. Vegetarian or vegan meal are available. A portion of the ticket price is tax-deductible.

For more details, including a sneak preview of selected silent auction items, please visit tucsonaudubon.org/gala



Visit tucsonaudubon.org for updates and more.

Tucson Audubon's Living with Nature Lecture Series

This Season's Schedule: Save the Dates

TUCSON Living with Nature Lecture Series and Member Meetings

VENUE: Pima Community College Downtown Campus, Amethyst Room. Located on campus at 1255 N. Stone Ave. The program begins at **7 PM, SECOND MONDAY** of each month **October through May.**

January 13 • Tucson

As the Birds Fly: Migration Stopovers in Southeastern Arizona with *Dr. Charles van Riper III, USGS Research Scientist and Professor, USGS Southwest Biological Science Center Sonoran Desert, University of Arizona*

Populations of neotropical migratory birds are declining throughout much of North America and continue to be at risk because they depend on a diversity of habitats spread over huge geographic and political areas. Dr. van Riper III will speak to the challenges that birds face during their migration and how steps are being taken to increase our understanding of western neotropical migration so we can better protect these species.

February 10 • Tucson

Dung-on-a-twig: The Role of Phainopeplas in the Spread of Desert Mistletoe with *Dr. Jennifer Koop, NIH PERT Post-doctoral Fellow, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Arizona*

Have you ever asked yourself: What effect does mistletoe have on its host trees? How is mistletoe distributed across a geographic landscape? How do Phainopeplas influence that distribution? Dr. Jennifer Koop will discuss the projects underway to answer each of these questions. How can studying the relationship between parasitic desert mistletoe, its legume tree hosts, and the Phainopepla help biologists to understand how human parasites are

transmitted between hosts? Come find out!

February 17 • Tucson

SPECIAL GUEST LECTURE Celebrating the Ornaments of Life with *Theodore H. Fleming, Professor Emeritus of Biology, University of Miami*

Many of the most colorful and eye-catching rainforest inhabitants—toucans, monkeys, leaf-nosed bats, and hummingbirds, to name a few—play a vital role in the health of rainforest ecosystems. Join Ted as he illustrates the striking beauty of these “ornaments” of the rainforest through breathtaking slides. He will highlight the importance of these animals in the tropical ecosystem and discuss their current conservation status. After the lecture, there will be a book signing of Ted's latest book, *The Ornaments of Life: Coevolution and Conservation in the Tropics.*

March 10 • Tucson

Lambs or Lions? Grouse or Fox?—The Human Dimensions of Wildlife Conservation with *Trica Oshant Hawkins, Education Director, Environmental Education Exchange*

When conservation decisions have to be made regarding the health of a wild population, when is it appropriate to “choose” one species over another? Sage Grouse or Red Fox? Golden Eagles or Pronghorn? Bighorn Sheep or Mountain Lions? How do these decisions take into account the human dimension? Can we use ethics as a tool to guide conservation efforts? Trica will weigh the biological and ethical dimensions of wildlife management as she reviews several case studies that highlight the complex issues of avian and mammalian conservation, with a focus on our newly reintroduced population of Bighorn Sheep into the Catalina Mountains.



SAGE GROUSE, DAVE MENKE / USFWS

GREEN VALLEY Living with Nature Lecture Series

NEW VENUE!! All lectures will be held at the Green Valley Recreation's Desert Hills Social Center, 2980 S. Camino Del Sol. Lectures will be scheduled on the **FIRST SATURDAY** of the month, at **10 AM** from **November to April.**

January 4 • Green Valley

Secrets of the Spotted Cats: Jaguars and Ocelots in the Southwest with *Pinau Merlin, Communications and Outreach Coordinator for the UA/USGS Jaguar Survey and Monitoring Project*

They are rarely seen, but we know both jaguars and ocelots are here, as remote cameras document their presence in Arizona. Although we readily recognize their images, these charismatic cats are so secretive and elusive that most of us know very little about their lifestyles and habits. Join Pinau Merlin for an exciting look into the natural history, ecology and conservation issues of jaguars and ocelots in the Southwest.

February 1 • Green Valley

The Birds and Habitats of Western Mexico: Sierra Madre to the Central Volcanic Belt with *David MacKay, Co-Founder of Solipaso*

Mexico is home to the highest percentage of endemic birds in the world: over 85 species! David will take you on a virtual tour through Sinaloa, Nayarit, Jalisco and Colima—the cradle of Mexican bird diversity! You will be introduced to fantastic, limited-range bird species like the Tufted Jay, Red



Warbler, Bumblebee Hummingbird, Mexican Woodnymph, Rufous-necked Wood-rail, Green-striped Brush-Finch, Red-headed Tanager and dozens more!

March 1 • Green Valley

Where the Antelope USED to Play: Southeast Arizona Grasslands Pronghorn Initiative with *John Millican, Arizona Antelope Foundation Field/Project Manager*

How does a Pronghorn cross miles of fenced-off grassland? Ask the Arizona Antelope Foundation! John will give an overview of the projects currently being managed by his organization, specifically the Southeastern Arizona Pronghorn Enhancement project. He will highlight the work being done to modify existing fencing in an effort to create necessary travel corridors and promote healthy populations for Pronghorn, Black-tailed Prairie Dog, and a variety of other grassland dependent species.



YOKOHANAYOMAMA / CCL

UPCOMING TALKS

April 14 • Tucson

Martha's Flight into the Future: The Story—and Surprising Lessons—of the Last Passenger Pigeon with *Christopher Cokinos, Associate Professor of English; Affiliated Faculty, Institute of the Environment University of Arizona*

May 12 • Tucson

Tracking Seasonal Patterns in the Sonoran Desert with *LoriAnne Barnett, Education Coordinator, USA National Phenology Network*



L TO R: TUFTED JAY, LIMPKIN (INSET), CITREOLINE TROGON, RUFUS-NECKED WOOD-RAIL. ALL PHOTOS DAVID MACKAY

PHAINOPEPLA, DOIS EVANS

TUCSON AUDUBON NEWS ROUNDUP

Join Us at the Tucson Festival of Books

March 15–16, 2014



JEAN BARCHIMAN

Tucson Audubon Society will once again be participating in the ever-growing Tucson Festival of Books at the University of Arizona, with two different booths in different parts of the event! One tent will represent our Nature Shops and Membership, showcasing the vast array of birding and nature books and gifts we carry. Our other tent, focusing on "Citizen Science and Birding," will be part of the newly expanded Science Pavilion section in the Natural World area.

At the Citizen Science tent you can find out how volunteer bird surveyors are vital to the Important Bird Areas Program and how birders who enter their sightings on eBird are contributing to the knowledge base of ornithology and bird conservation.

Learn about how folks participating in the Tucson Bird Count, Christmas Bird Counts and the Great Backyard Bird Count are contributing using citizen science. Discover an opportunity to participate in a long-term urban raptor monitoring program in collaboration with scientists at the University, as well as other educational opportunities offered by Tucson Audubon.

At the Nature Shops and Membership tent, in addition to the great selection of merchandise, there will be promotions, the chance to enter a raffle, the bird game and much, much more!

So come on out and join us for this terrific event. Plus, there will be a special bonus for those who visit both Tucson Audubon tents!

Seeking an SLR...

Tucson Audubon seeks a fairly recent model digital SLR camera for documenting events, monitoring restoration projects, and—if it has a long enough lens—taking photos of birds and other wildlife! If you are upgrading this holiday season and are wondering what to do with the older camera, consider a donation to

Tucson Audubon. We have a Canon 28-105 zoom lens so the donation of a compatible body alone would be welcome.



Visit tucsonaudubon.org for updates and more.

Mason Center Highlight Reel

Harvest Festival and Mesquite Milling — November 9, 2013



Solar Soiree for Mason Center Donors — November 17, 2013



ALL PHOTOS MATT GRIFFITHS

BOTH PHOTOS SARA PIKE

Top to bottom

Harvest Festival: A tour of Tucson Audubon's sustainability features led by Urban Program Manager Kendall Kroesen; (left) Native Seeds / SEARCH stand with a variety of native seeds and a demonstration of cooking a delicious meal in a solar cooker; (right) Volunteers sort mesquite pods pre-milling; GeolInnovation provided a portable solar array to power the outdoor demonstrations and sound system.

Solar Soiree (left to right): GeolInnovation's George Vilek explains the finer points of solar arrays to a small group of donors who had made possible the renovations and upgrades towards turning the main house at Tucson Audubon's Mason Center into a net-zero-energy building; George receives a Tucson Audubon Gold Birds & Business Alliance Member certificate from Tucson Audubon Board President Cynthia Pruett for his generous donation of solar panels which his team installed *gratis*, and for his strong and enthusiastic support throughout the project.

Gearing Up for An Awesome 2014

The Arizona Important Bird Areas Program has a busy year planned



Jennie MacFarland, IBA Program Biologist

JENNIE MACFARLAND



Top: Sunrise on Baboquivari Peak from the Buenos Aires NWR, an area the IBA program is trying to include in the existing Arivaca Cienega and Creek IBA. Bottom, L to R: 1: New IBA volunteers learning how to conduct a bird survey; we will have another training workshop this January. 2: Chestnut-collared Longspurs, the species that made the San Rafael Grasslands a Global IBA; we will be surveying for this species in February. 3: A surveyor in the Buenos Aires NWR where we will be this February. 4: A Loggerhead Shrike presides over his prize of a Savannah Sparrow in the San Rafael Grasslands

Winter is an interesting time around the Arizona IBA office at Tucson Audubon. One might expect the colder months to be a slow time but they are in fact quite busy. This is when we write annual reports and nominate new Important Bird Areas. It is rewarding to look back at the last survey season, and 2013 was a blockbuster year! Remembering the amazing bird sightings and fun times on surveys makes all the office work and report writing a joy. Planning for the next year's field season is also exciting, and 2014 is going to be packed full of great surveys and opportunities for IBA volunteers to bird in some very special places.

Please come celebrate the Arizona IBA program at the **Whitewater Draw Global IBA Dedication on Friday, January 17** at the barn structure near the entrance. There will be free guided bird walks from 3 to 4:30 PM, and the dedication event will take place at 5 PM. There will be refreshments and information about the area and the Sandhill Cranes that earned this

site its Global IBA status. This is a wonderful opportunity for those of you who have not visited this area recently to experience the amazing (and noisy!) spectacle of thousands of cranes flying in. All are invited and we would be delighted if you could come get reacquainted with this site and the great birds to be encountered there.

To start off the season, we will host our annual **IBA Training Workshop** to recruit and initiate new survey volunteers. This year's workshop will be held on **Friday, January 24 and Saturday, January 25**. The classroom session will be at 10 AM to noon on January 24 at the Historic Y, with an optional field session in a nearby park afterwards for those who cannot make the Saturday field day. On Saturday January 25 we will do the field practice day in Tanque Verde Wash and are meeting at the McDonalds on Tanque Verde Rd and Catalina Highway at 7:30 AM. There will be an optional informal classroom session afterwards for those who cannot make the Friday class. All birders of intermediate plus

skill are invited to attend and become an IBA volunteer.

We will once again visit the **San Rafael Grasslands IBA** to monitor the Chestnut-collared Longspurs, a bird of critical concern that made this area a Global IBA. On **Saturday, February 8**, we will conduct our driving survey of this beautiful grassland habitat and count its many wintering sparrows and raptors. This survey is always a blast and is limited to 20 people. Winter is a great season for grassland birds in Arizona. Also on the schedule is a **driving survey on the Buenos Aires NWR on Friday, February 21**. As this is such a large area, we need all the help we can get. This survey is open to all birders, not only IBA volunteers, and you will be rewarded with many species of sparrow and raptors.

Arizona IBA uses many tools to nominate and monitor IBAs. In addition to our own own data, we also routinely request records from land management agencies. In recent years one of the best sources of data has been eBird.org which is

citizen science at its best. This huge collection of data is submitted by birders and has become invaluable to our program. If you use eBird.org or are interested in finding out what it's all about, please come to the free **eBird and IBA training workshop on Friday, March 7** at 5 PM in the Tucson Audubon offices on University Blvd. We will discuss how you can use eBird to keep track of your sightings, and also how your lists can add valuable data to benefit the IBA program. There is also a lot of great information that eBird can share with you for free, including interactive maps of hot spots, bird lists, and awesome animated migration maps. eBird is a great tool that all birders should be utilizing and we will show you how at this workshop.

Last year was a great one for IBA and this new year promises to be just as exciting. A huge THANK YOU to our dedicated volunteers and contributors—this successful program is possible because of your support!

Volunteers in Action: Looking Back to Look Ahead

Kara Kaczmarzyk, Volunteer & Development Coordinator

Each year I work with Tucson Audubon seems to get better. Our volunteer team continues to find new ways to impress me, not just by the amazing work they accomplish—and it is truly amazing!—but also by their stories and their passion that led them to volunteer and keeps them volunteering.

What a year it was in 2013! In addition to supporting many Tucson Audubon projects and activities in the first half of the year (see photos below), in August, 82 volunteers were onsite at the Riverpark Inn to make the third annual Tucson Bird & Wildlife Festival a smashing success. The volunteer team of the Harvest Festival nearly doubled from last year, with 29 eager volunteers onsite in November, some of whom also helped behind the scenes to plan the event. After a few years' hiatus, volunteers returned to plant grasses and shrubs at the Simpson Farm restoration site. Volunteers stepped up to support nitty-gritty administration (data entry, templates, software, organization, planning, sorting, tracking). The garden at our downtown Nature Shop was transformed week by week by a dedicated team. Professionals brought their specialized skills to make Tucson Audubon more skilled and skillful. The joy of birding reached new people at more community events than ever before. In addition to myriad unique field trips around southeast Arizona, new weekly field trips were added to Sweetwater Wetlands and Arivaica Cienega. Six new Important Bird Areas received global status.

Volunteers cheerfully helped people select the perfect birding gear at two nature shops, and the member library continues to grow in quantity and quality. You can now turn to Tucson Audubon for book reviews.

One of the accomplishments that I am especially excited about is the new behind-the-scenes work that is carried out by volunteers. Volunteers are playing an increasingly important role in putting on keystone annual events, like the Tucson Bird & Wildlife Festival, Gala, and Harvest Festival. These volunteers work within a framework that includes strong leadership from program staff and support from peer volunteers. Rather than being intimidating, "program support" is being seen as a way to use individual skills to reach a team goal.

As you read through the *Vermilion Flycatcher*, I encourage you to look at each article with fresh eyes, knowing that in some way, a Tucson Audubon supporter played a part.

Welcome new volunteers

Diane Hodiak, Julie Rogers, Ann Mavko, Frances Tourtellot, Sharon Freeman-Dobson, Josephine Toolan, Bailey Bennin, Jazelle Mondeau, Cynthia Elton, Nick Miller, Ginger Dunn, Pat McGowan

Contact Kara about volunteering!

volunteer@tucsonaudubon.org
520-209-1811

tucsonaudubon.org/volunteer

Each year, Tucson Audubon recognizes an outstanding individual, whose leadership, responsibility, and impact on the organization, birds, places, and people of our region earns the title Volunteer of the Year. This year, we couldn't choose just one.



Sherry Massie

CDs, DVDs, trade publications, etc.) and we have cataloged over 200 new items this year alone.

Deb Vath

Deb's involvement in youth programming has allowed Tucson Audubon to reach into the community and affect the lives of hundreds of children. In addition to spearheading our middle school education program at Billy Lauffer Middle School, she has also taken the lead in directing our offsite youth programming at local birding festivals. Her vibrant personality, passion for birding, and willingness to share her knowledge with youth is contagious and inspiring!

What birds or birding hot spots do these Volunteers of the Year love? How did they get started volunteering? Find out at tucsonaudubon.blogspot.com.



Dennis Weeks

Dennis Weeks

Dennis has taken on the responsibility of supporting offsite events for the Nature Shops. He takes initiative in making decisions when staff is not available, and always has Tucson Audubon's best interests in mind. His service results in both cost savings and a stronger presence at offsite events. Dennis also acts as backup manager when shop staff is not in town. He is a friendly face of Tucson Audubon and always wants the best for the organization.

Sherry Massie

Sherry takes full leadership of organizing the Tucson Audubon member library. She researched and implemented a library database and led other volunteers in efforts to update the labeling and tracking of the books and continues to keep the library in great shape. Thanks to her expertise and dedication, the library has a total of 1500 items (books,



Deb Vath



L to R: What a year! Tucson Audubon volunteers at the Festival of Books, the Water Festival, relocating burrowing owls, and gardening.

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. Stop by to see this plant and others up close and personal.

Fairy Duster

Scientific name: *Calliandra eriophylla*

Family: Fabaceae (Bean/Pea)

Native range: From southern Arizona and southeastern California south to central Mexico and northern Baja California, below 5,000 feet

Wildlife value: Blooms attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and other insects; seeds are eaten by birds and rodents.

Fairy duster is a spreading, semi-evergreen shrub that grows 2–3 feet high and 2–4 feet wide. Dainty leaves are finely divided into tiny leaflets and may drop in response to cold or drought. The plant is a good choice for small spaces in full or reflected sun. It's also valuable for erosion control as it is rhizomatous; that is, it has the capacity to spread by means of underground stems or rhizomes.

Plants are somewhat inconspicuous most of the year until they burst into bloom with fairy-like

puffballs in varying shades of pink. The delicate flowers consist of many thread-like stamens crowded together to make fluffy balls about 1" in diameter. Late winter/early spring is the primary flowering season, though many plants produce spurts of bloom in summer and fall. Blossoms are rich in nectar, attracting hummers and other pollinators. Seed pods are dehiscent, which means that the pods split open lengthwise, releasing ripened seeds for hungry quail and other critters.

LYNN HASSLER



Fairy duster shrugs off cold temperatures—it's hardy to at least 15 degrees—and is extremely drought tolerant, surviving on less than 11" of annual rainfall (once established). However, plants grow faster, look lusher, and bloom better if given supplemental water during the warmer months. Pruning is unnecessary unless a more compact shape is desired.

The genus name *Calliandra* means "beautiful stamens" in Greek. Also evocative is one of its Spanish names—pelo de ángel or "angel's hair"—which appropriately describes the ethereal loveliness of the flowers.

Be Part of the Vermilion Society: Remember Us in Your Estate Planning

We are grateful for bequests of any size. Your legacy gift will help ensure that Tucson Audubon remains here to do its job: connecting people to birds and the places they live. For more information about including Tucson Audubon Society in your will, please call Erin Olmstead, Development Manager, at 520-209-1809.



VERMILION FLYCATCHER

DORIS EVANS



BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD, ALAN D. WILSON/NATURESPICSONLINE.COM

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Birthday Fund: Rich Barchman, Judith Jacobsen

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- In memory of Ed Caldwell* from Jerilyn and Thomas Daugherty, Dorace Guin, Judy Mullican, and Bill and Alice Roe
- In honor of Leigh Creighton* from Phil Creighton
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- In memory of Izola Games* from Nancy Keene
- In honor of Art & Lois Morgan* from Rosemary Valentine
- In memory of Rozy Simek* from Family Service Association and Karen Gale Family

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

BARN OWL, AXEL ELPNER



Leslie Baird, Marilyn Barnhart, Craig Bevan, Liz Bezanson, Joy Bockius, Tamal Bose, Robert Brandner, Nikki Broadwell, Jim Broadwell, Isabel Carnes, Nancy Criswell, Carolyn Cross, Carol Currie, Jeanine Delgman, David Divine, Don Dunkle, Jan Eagle, Barbara Early, Laura Ellis, Virginia Fantetti, W. Morris Farr, Juliette Fernander, Elizabeth Fikejs, Jacque Friedman, Jane Gawin,

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Prendeville, Barb Rask, Seymour Reichlin, Henry Richmond, Scott Roederer, Julie Roederer, Juliana K. Rupert, Anne Russell, Laura Sagerman, Cami Schlappy, Amy Schwartz, Catherine Shisslak, Kathy Sjorgren, Elaine Smith, Peggy Smith, Joe Staab, Jack Stockslager, Robert Strand, Pat Stromseth, William Sutton, Margaret Sutton, Rich Thompson, Judie Tschacher, Justin Turner, Mark Vietti, Nedra Williams, Judith Willoughby, Richard Wilt, Susan Winkler, Janie Winkler, Barry Winkler, David Wise, Virginia Wise, Nate Woiwode, and Roger Wood.

We welcome new Birds & Business Alliance member at the *Gold Level*: GEOInnovation LLC

Jean Barchman, Membership Coordinator

BIRDATHON 2014

Bird for the Birds



BETE JONES



YELLOW WARBLER, LOIS MANOWITZ



LUCY'S WARBLER, LOIS MANOWITZ

The fun of bird watching (spring migration!) meets support for bird conservation during Birdathon. Choose a day to be your Birdathon, and go out birding with your team. Gather support from friends and family for your Birdathon. Afterwards, we all celebrate and win great prizes!

I've never done Birdathon before. Can I start now?

This is your year, make the leap! There are more ways than ever to make Birdathon part of your springtime birding.

Let's step it up!

Whose team will beat last year's 152 bird species seen by the Wrenegades? Who will beat last year's most donors, the 27 who gave to Maia Stark? Who will overthrow three time grand prize winner Kendall Kroesen, for most species seen plus most funds raised?

Citizen scientists to social fundraisers to you

Citizen scientists are you, me, our friends and neighbors, using skills and enthusiasm to affect positive change for our wildlife and environment. Guess what? Birdathoners are you, me, our friends and neighbors...we're social fundraisers and we can have a huge impact for bird conservation too!



LAZULI BUNTING, JOHN HOFFMAN

GET READY NOW FOR APRIL!

- ✓ **Plan your Big Day.** Will you do a full 24 hours? Or is your Big Day more relaxed?
- ✓ **Gather your team together.** Will they be expert birders? Will you take a new person birding? Will you join a team or make your own?
- ✓ **Pick your team name.** Puns intended!
- ✓ **Engage your sponsors.** Who can you ask to support your Birdathon?
- ✓ **Register your Birdathon online.** All Birdathoners register online or on paper. Your supporters can donate to your page and leave comments cheering you on.
- ✓ **When April arrives,** go birding!

Stay tuned online at tucsonaudubon.org/birdathon for the April 2014 Birdathon calendar and for new teams ready for you to join!



WESTERN TANAGER, JOHN HOFFMAN



COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, LOIS MANOWITZ



RED-FACED WARBLER, JOAN GELLATLY

BIRDATHON T-SHIRT ARTWORK CONTEST

Visit tucsonaudubon.org/birdathon to enter your design for the 2014 t-shirt art.



TUCSON meet YOUR BIRDS



AMERICAN KESTREL: JOHN KENNEDY; VERDIN: LARRY SELMAN

Curve-billed Thrasher

The Curve-billed Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) is definitely a rascal among Tucson's backyard birds—and like most rascals, this feathered scoundrel sports a fair dose of charm. Curve-billed Thrashers live up to their name by using long, thin, down-curved bills to thrash around dramatically in the soil and leaf litter, searching for insects. They also tend to skulk about in the dense understory of shrubs and trees, feeding on berries and seeds. You might observe a thrasher as it darts across the yard on its long, powerful legs—especially if it sees an opportunity to rush in and break up a gaggle of doves feeding peacefully on birdseed.

While their sandy gray-brown backs and lightly spotted breasts allow Curve-billed Thrashers to blend in seamlessly with desert surroundings, males often strut their stuff by singing conspicuously from the top-most branch of a cholla. Like Cactus Wrens, they also dare to nest in these thorniest of desert plants.

JEREMY HAYES



Thrashers are known for the creativity of their songs, rarely repeating the same notes or phrases twice. While their Captain Hook bills and fiery orange eyes give them a feisty look, they sometimes sing sweetly on moonlit nights. If you haven't yet made this bird's acquaintance, there is often one hanging around in the wolfberry beneath the velvet mesquite of the Tucson Audubon shop garden. This rascal likes to share his double-noted *whit-wheet* call early in the morning just before he sneaks a drink from the shop garden fountain.

Keith Ashley, Restoration Specialist



RICHARD FRAY

American Kestrel

The gorgeous coloration, conspicuous perching habits, and ferocious attitude packed into a relatively tiny package make the American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) one of my favorite raptors. The kestrel is North America's smallest, most numerous, and most widespread falcon, inhabiting more landscapes than most of the other raptors in the Americas—from the boreal of Alaska, to the sides of 15,000' Andean peaks, to the distant shores of Patagonia in South America. The kestrel feeds on arthropods and small rodents on the ground, and occasionally takes birds in flight. One of the most-studied birds due to its efficacy in captive breeding experiments, the kestrel was instrumental in developing our understanding of the effects of pesticides and other toxins on raptors (such as DDT's ability to thin the eggshells of Peregrine Falcons). Kestrels are secondary cavity-nesters, meaning that they use suitable holes, nooks, or crevices to raise their young; these spots can include old Gila Woodpecker holes in saguaro cacti, telephone poles, dead trees, or roof openings. Recently, research has confirmed long-term kestrel population declines across North America, including areas of the Sonoran Desert. It is not completely clear why kestrels are declining, but it's theorized that habitat loss, continued use of toxic pesticides, West Nile virus, and increasing populations of Cooper's Hawks may be to blame.

You can do your part to keep common birds like the kestrel common by joining Tucson Audubon's Nest Boxes for Urban Birds program (see page 2 and visit tucsonaudubon.org/nestbox), working to ban all toxic pesticides, and telling your friends about the plight of the kestrel and other declining bird species.

Andy Bennett, Restoration Specialist

KINO ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PROJECT (KERP) Together Kino Ecosystem Restoration Project (KERP) and adjacent Sam Lena Park—located north of Ajo Way and west of Country Club Road—make up the best birding site on the south side of Tucson. Beginning birders see common birds in the park and intermediate and advanced birders look for rarities like Least Grebe and Common Goldeneye in the restored habitat and ponds. You cannot enter the restored area but you can bird from the park or walk the trail that goes around the entire perimeter of KERP. Several years ago we put together an initial KERP checklist of 162 species, but since then birders have reported a whopping 187 species on www.ebird.org. KERP isn't just restored habitat. Stormwater runs in from the east and is detained, greatly reducing downstream flooding. Water flows through a series of basins where pumps recirculate it through three cottonwood-lined streams. Some of the water is moved into a settling pond from which it is pumped to irrigate the athletic fields. Recently Pima County dried the ponds and removed invasive bullfrogs that prey on native species (see October–December 2013 *Vermilion Flycatcher*, page 24). Tucson Audubon helped develop interpretive signs that you will see at KERP. Additional information is found at www.pima.gov/ksc2/kerp.shtml. *Kendall Kroesen*



KENDALL KROESEN

GREAT BIRD PLACES NEAR TUCSON



DORIS EVANS

Mourning Dove

Mourning Doves are easy to find and fun to watch. They are so common—especially around our cities and farms—that birders start to “tune them out.” But don’t stop watching the common birds—you might miss something cool!

For example, you might miss the Mourning Dove’s gorgeous, creamy brown color with hints of iridescence. Or the narrow ring of bright blue skin around their eyes. Or the tail that narrows to a sharp, white-tipped point. Or the pink legs!

You also might miss the characteristic squeaky sound their wings make then they take off or the fact that they seem to be able to fly straight up into the air.

Without paying attention, you might not hear this dove’s poignant vocalization: a low, flat whistle followed by a higher descending one, followed by three more low ones. To most people this sounds mournful. In Mexico it’s called “paloma triste” or the sad dove.

Finally, if you stop looking at small brown doves you might completely miss similar-looking species: White-winged Dove, Inca Dove, Common Ground-dove, and Eurasian Collared-Dove.

To make sure what you are looking at is a Mourning Dove, look for the combination of black spots on the folded wings and a tail that starts out broad and tapers to a fine point.

Kendall Kroesen, Urban Program Manager



JOHN HOFFMAN

Northern Mockingbird

As a beginning birder, the Northern Mockingbird is one of the first species I learned to identify, and it’s one that many who wouldn’t call themselves “birders” can’t help but notice. The distinct white wing patches make spotting this bird in flight easy, and the majestic, long-tailed profile makes identifying them while perched a cinch for a new birder. They make ID easy on us by perching conspicuously on fence posts or road signs and by showily defending their territory from others.

Mock? Yeah. Mockingbirds are so named for mimicking the songs of other birds—one individual can have a repertoire of up to 300 phrases—but it’s not an exact auditory replica, the mimicry takes on subtle tonal differences of the species. Instead of being used to fool other birds or predators, as an exact vocal mimicry might accomplish, it’s believed that the borrowed songs are used to expand a mockingbird’s repertoire, improving their ability to attract a mate or intimidate a rival.

Beginning in February, the springtime songs of the mockingbirds resume once again; one can even hear unmated males singing under a full moon at night, hoping to attract a long-term mate. If you’ve been awakened in the early morning hours by the song of a mockingbird, you know that serenade can sometimes last uninterrupted for 10–20 minutes!

*Kara Kaczmarzyk,
Volunteer & Development Coordinator*



JOHN HOFFMAN

Pyrrhuloxia

This amazing desert-adapted bird can be a source of confusion for beginning birders. The male of this species is often mistaken for a female cardinal—and quite understandably, as they are very closely related. Once you know what to look for on this species, they are quite distinctive and a treat to encounter in their favorite habitat, desert washes. The name, almost as challenging to speak as to spell, is pronounced: “pyro-locks-e-uh” and in Greek refers to its flame-colored plumage and its “crooked” beak. These two features are actually its most distinctive so perhaps its name is appropriate. Male Pyrrhuloxias are a slate gray with pinkish-red patches on their face, crest, tail, and in a stripe going down the center of their chest. The females are a warm brown with subtle streaks of red in the crest and wings and sometimes a little in the face. With a shape and song very similar to the more familiar Northern Cardinal, this bird is most easily distinguished by its bill, which is bright yellow and heavy with a squashed-in appearance instead of the dainty, coral pink beak of a Northern Cardinal. Also called the “Desert Cardinal,” this hardy bird thrives in the dry climate of the Sonoran Desert but will also venture into urban Tucson if there is a large patch of native vegetation. Next time you hear that familiar “tink” call you associate with cardinals, take a second look as it may be a Pyrrhuloxia. ■

Jennie MacFarland, IBA Conservation Biologist

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA FARM My favorite urban birding patch is the U of A Farm on Roger Road. The primary habitat of open agricultural fields is a very rare one within Tucson city limits. For me, the primary attraction is that it’s a mere 75 yards from my front door, and you can look into all the fields from three of the main perimeter roads with large shoulders. Having birded it regularly over the past 15 years, I’ve noticed some interesting changes. The good numbers of Inca Doves are gone and Vermilion Flycatchers have increased substantially (14 on my last visit in mid-November). It’s still the best place in town for wintering species like Western Meadowlark, American Pipit, and Killdeer, and it’s one of the few places in the state with reliable Bronzed Cowbirds in winter. My favorite find here was a Broad-winged Hawk on October 7, 2003, soaring with a group of migrant Turkey Vultures on a showery day with no thermals. I had been birding on my bike nearby and was able to race to my yard to see it from there. *Rich Hoyer*



RICH HOYER

The More Things St

RICK WRIGHT



DORIS EVANS



DORIS EVANS



MURIEL NEDDERMEYER

L to R: Inca Dove, Bronzed Cowbird, Great-tailed Grackle (top), Rosy-faced Lovebirds (bottom), European Starling, Eurasian Collared-Dove

No real birder scorns the common birds, the birds we see every day at our feeder or on the way to work. Deep down, though, most of us love seeing something new.

The great novelty of February 1872 at Fort Lowell was the tiny, long-tailed pigeon known as the **Inca Dove**. The specimen Charles Bendire shot was not just a novum for Arizona Territory, but, according to his colleague Elliott Coues (1873), the first skin ever “taken within the limits of the United States.” Over the following months, Bendire noted the species “from time to time, but never abundantly,” and this greatest of all American egg collectors managed to find a grand total of one nest, in the vicinity of Tubac in June 1872 (Bendire 1892).

Twenty years later, Herbert Brown (*in* Bendire 1892) was able to report a slight increase in this “rather rare” species; he examined several nests taken in Arizona. Still, as late as 1886, W.E.D. Scott (1886) had found it nowhere but in Tucson and (especially) Florence. From those points of first contact, Inca Doves spread rapidly and inexorably, reaching Wickenburg, Safford, and Solomon a century ago (Phillips et al. 1964). Most recently, volunteers conducting surveys for the Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas found probable breeding pairs in the very northwestern corner of the state (Corman 2005a).

In 1909, it was the turn of another southern species to surprise Arizona observers. Phillips (Phillips et al. 1964) writes that the **Bronzed Cowbird** “appeared suddenly”—as if there were any other way—in Tucson and in Sacaton; the discoverer of the Sacaton birds observed them “making violent love” (Gilman 1909), while the Tucson males “went through contortions similar to those frequently performed by the domestic turkey” (Visher 1909). Their exertions were obviously successful: within a decade the species had expanded its range east to the Patagonias and west to Sells (Phillips et al. 1964). These red-eyed beauties are now found all the way north to the Mogollon Rim (Corman 2005b), where they breed in a fascinatingly cooperative relationship with other songbirds, perhaps with a preference for orioles as foster parents (Jaramillo and Burke 1999).

The arrivals of the dove and the cowbird antedate human memory. But birders still walk among us who can recall the earliest days of the **Great-tailed Grackle** in Arizona. Now a noisy fixture at parking lots, fishponds, and fast food dumpsters across the state, these captivating blackbirds with their “unearthly outpourings” (Phillips et al. 1964) first appeared in Safford in May 1935 (Monson 1936) and in Tucson two years later (Phillips 1940). Eighty



GARY GOODHART

years on, this species breeds in suitable habitat throughout the southern half of Arizona, with outlier populations in the Four Corners area and far beyond—the past half century has seen the species’ expansion north to Oregon and east to Iowa (Johnson and Peer 2001).

These three birds, the tiny dove and the two icterids, reached Arizona under their own power, though their subsequent success in establishing breeding populations was almost certainly furthered by human changes to the landscape: more trees, more water, more bird feeders. The story of another recent arrival is a bit more complicated.

We all know, and most of us regret, the stories of the American introductions of the **Rosy-faced Lovebird** (Rademaker and Corman 2011), the **European Starling** (Phillips et al. 1964), and

ay the Same



the **House Sparrow** (Howard 1906). **Eurasian Collared-Doves** were first recorded in Arizona in 2000 (Jenness 2005), and are now found abundantly in all of the state's counties; though still most common in feedlots and other agricultural settings, they can be found in most small towns in southeast Arizona and have recently begun their move into Tucson itself, where their large size, pale plumage, and noisy rhythmic songs make them conspicuous on wires and rooftops.

The history of this species in North America is clouded by uncertainty and a tradition of misidentification. While we know almost to the day when the founding pairs of House Sparrows and European Starlings were released on the continent, it's unclear just when the first collared-doves—set free in The Bahamas in the mid-1970s (Smith 1987)—made the 300-mile jump to the Florida mainland; the first arrivals were long identified as **African Collared-Doves**, known in avicultural circles and in the older field guides as ringed turtle-doves.

By the time the Florida birds were correctly identified, their population in the southern part of the state and the Keys had risen into the thousands, and the species was clearly on the move. Rather than radiating in all directions, however, the Eurasian Collared-Dove has spread chiefly to the west and northwest; that was precisely the pattern of the species' earlier explosion, starting in the 1930s and 1940s, when it spread from Turkey and the Balkans into northwest



Europe, eventually reaching Iceland. In their American career thus far, the birds' compass has remained astonishingly true: this species, from its starting point in the extreme Southeast, has made its way in vast numbers to the Pacific Northwest, while barely trickling north along the Atlantic seaboard to New Jersey.

Even taking into account the possibility of additional releases somewhere along the way and the near-certainty of a freight car stowaway or two, the rapid establishment, in very large numbers, of this species in southeastern Arizona is every bit as dramatic as the arrival of the Inca Dove and the Bronzed Cowbird and the Great-tailed Grackle—or more so, given that those incursions likely originated just across the Mexican border in Sonora or Chihuahua. The collared-dove, in contrast, had to cover 2,000 miles between Miami and Tucson, an admirable feat indeed for these half-pound pioneers.

All these birds were “new” to Arizona at some point not long ago, and more are bound to join them. Happily for birds, and for birders in search of the novel and unseen, nature is never truly *naturata*. ■

Visit tucsonaudubon.org/citations for complete references for this article.

Rick Wright is Senior Leader at WINGS Birding Tours and Review Editor at Birding magazine. Except when he can get away to Arizona, he lives, writes, and birds in northern New Jersey.

Where Have All of the Inca Doves Gone?

Many long-term Tucson residents may be thinking, “Why don't I see Inca Doves around any more?” The Tucson Audubon Nature Shop fields many calls asking that same question.

Curious, I went to the Christmas Bird Count online database and downloaded the data for Inca Doves going back to 1960. Wow, there were a lot more previously, hitting a high for the Tucson count of just under 4,000 in 1980. More recently there were just 8 birds in 2011!

So, what's happened to them? It's been suggested their disappearance might be connected to the increase in resident Cooper's Hawks in urban Tucson. You may be surprised to know that we have more on our Christmas count than any other count in the US. I downloaded those data as well and have plotted both in the graph below.

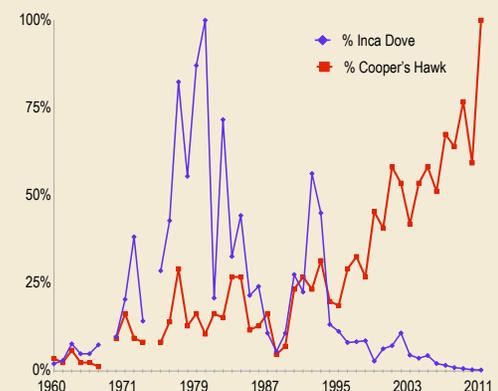
Interestingly, Inca Doves appear to have experienced a “boom-and-bust” growth pattern up to the point when Cooper's Hawks began to surge. After that, dove numbers fall precipitously and fail to recover.

More to ponder: Why did Tucson have so many Inca Doves? More than any other count?

Was their abundance in the 80s a principal reason for the Cooper's Hawks high numbers?

It's great to see how observations collected by citizen scientists over the years can contribute so much insight. ■

*Tim Helentjaris
Tucson Audubon Volunteer
and Citizen Scientist*



Changes in Latitude or Changes in Attitude

JOHN YERGER

That's right, as Jimmy Buffet once said "Nothing remains quite the same..." Yet, as birders, we often find "changes" difficult to understand. When we notice variations in the abundance, distribution, or status of our beloved birds, we wonder: are these changes part of the natural order? Are they human-caused? Or are they even changes at all, but rather new findings resulting from increased observers in the field?

What complicates our understanding of some avifaunal changes is the sheer complexity of their stories. The shifting and expanding range of the Gray Hawk in southeastern Arizona is one such example. At one time, the Gray Hawk was common just south of Tucson, but known

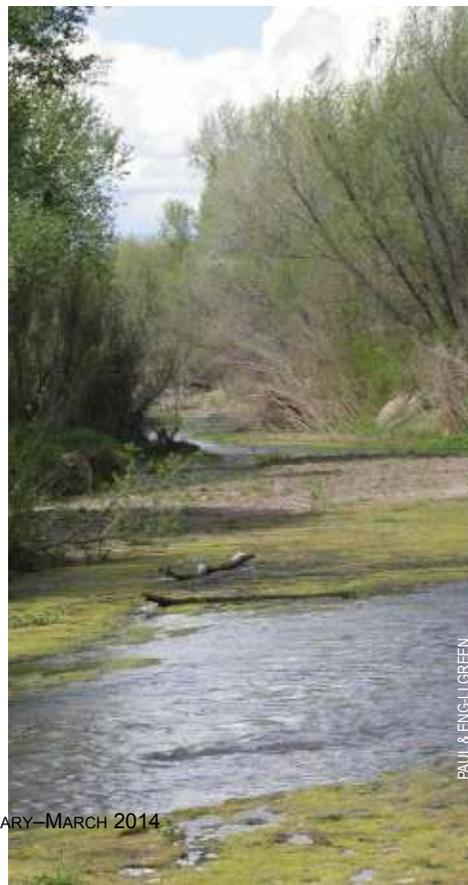
to occur in only a few other drainages. Huge, mature mesquite "bosques" once cloaked the banks of the Santa Cruz River near San Xavier, and these tracts of riparian woodland were the preferred nesting habitat for Gray Hawks. By 1948, groundwater pumping and wood-cutting had all but eliminated this habitat, and the hawks—along with many other birds—disappeared.

Meanwhile, the San Pedro River farther to the east had undergone many changes of its own. A number of human-caused impacts led to the river's conversion from a series of cienegas to a channelized riverbed between the 1880's and 1920's. However, by the time Gray Hawks were disappearing from the lower Santa Cruz, many mesquites and cottonwoods had regained a foothold along the San Pedro—and the Gray Hawk population seemed to shift accordingly. Now, at least half of the Arizona population is found

in summer along the San Pedro River. Gray Hawks are still supported along the upper Santa Cruz River, and some birds are finding their way even farther north to isolated pockets along the Verde, Salt, and Hassayampa Rivers in central Arizona. A slight uptick in winter sightings of Gray Hawk has been notable over the last few decades, and it will be interesting to see if the gradual shift northward of the breeding range is followed by a corresponding shift in the winter range.

In this example, the underlying theme is habitat. Bird enthusiasts are lucky to still have such a splendid species in Arizona, but this tale should be a cautionary one. Heavy groundwater pumping for urban development and proposed mines, coupled with increasing severity of droughts associated with climate change, could put this and other riparian species at risk. In this case, birders have good cause to be worried!

But what about status changes that seem to have no obvious cause? Rose-throated Becard has always been a fairly rare bird north of the Mexican border, but southeastern Arizona was THE place to find it in the 1970's and 1980's. As a result, birders formed an impression that the Rose-throated Becard was a rare but



PAUL & ENGLI GREEN



AXEL LEFNER

expected species that could be found here. However, before and since that time their population has fluctuated seemingly without explanation. In the last decade they have virtually disappeared. And yet, habitat hasn't changed in the areas where they have been found, and many nests seem to have been successful when present. This is a good example of a species that is simply at the very edge of its range. Since it is primarily a tropical bird, its occurrence in Arizona is probably dependent on how well the species does in subtropical Sonora from year to year. In good periods, some Becards may move north and take up residence in suitable Arizona habitat. In leaner periods, fewer competitors in more preferable habitat to the south means the species will retreat into Mexico. In this case, preconceived notions about what birds "should" be here may cause us consternation, but great concern from a conservation perspective may not be warranted.

Finally, there are mysterious "changes" yet to be understood. The recent discovery of wintering Botteri's Sparrows in Hereford and Patagonia is a fascinating one. An article in "Arizona Birds Online" theorizes that these birds are beginning to shift their winter range north, but the sparrows already overwinter in small numbers each year. However, I would caution that the closely related Cassin's Sparrow was thought as recently as 1964 to be only a "post-breeding visitor and irregular winter resident." Now, we know that they are not only a common breeding species in southeastern Arizona, but that they often occupy the same territories year round. In winter, they become highly secretive and are often overlooked. Likewise, Five-striped Sparrows were thought to migrate to Mexico after nesting was finished, until a concerted effort to find them out-of-season resulted in a

new discovery about their behavior: Five-striped Sparrows simply do not fly away when approached in winter! Instead, they run along the ground like mice to avoid detection. They are likely still present in the same numbers year round, but are virtually undetectable in the non-breeding seasons due to this behavior. I propose that Botteri's Sparrows are simply the most secretive of our winter sparrows, and that this "change" isn't really a change at all, but merely a new discovery based on increasing numbers of educated observers in the field.

As much as we know about birds, we still have so much more to learn. Whether the result of changes in attitudes (human impacts, new information) or changes in latitudes (natural fluctuations, climate change), all I can say with certainty is this: "change" is one thing that will remain the same! ■

John Yerger lives in Portal, AZ at the base of the Chiricahua Mountains, where he is currently building a strawbale house and leading tours for the Adventure Birding Company (adventurebirding.com).

L to R: Historic photo of the Santa Cruz River; Lower San Pedro River; Gray Hawk; Rose-throated Becard; Botteri's Sparrow (top); Five-striped Sparrow (bottom); Elegant Trogon

Southeast Arizona's Elegant Trogons

A summer hike in suitable habitat in nearly any of our Sky Islands such as the Santa Ritas or Chiricahuas will most likely result in one hearing the familiar bark of a male Elegant Trogon. Newly expanded Elegant Trogon surveys this past summer led by Rick Taylor and Tucson Audubon resulted in a total of 86 confirmed individual Trogons being seen or heard. That is a lot of individual trogons in the U.S. and there were certainly some that were missed as we couldn't cover every canyon. Abundant trogons in the right season may seem expected to us now but only 30 years ago such numbers of Elegant Trogons in Arizona were inconceivable. Surveys for this bird in the Patagonia Mountains in the 1990's found only one male; this year we documented 15 individual birds there. The Chiricahua Mountains have long been considered the most dependable place to see these amazing birds but the infamous fire a few years ago seems to still be suppressing their numbers and only 9 birds were documented in the entire range this year. A bird species' range certainly has amorphous boundaries, and the birds will come or go as best suits them in changing conditions. The trick to understanding these complex changes is to establish a good baseline and to not be confounded by other factors such as increased birder presence. Change is the normal state of ecology, and in truth the more things change the more they stay the same. ■

*Jennie MacFarland,
IBA Conservation Biologist*



DOMINIC SHERONY / CCL



DAN ARNDT / CCL



LAURENS R. HALSEY



LOIS MANOWITZ

Cave Creek Canyon Complex, Chiricahua Mountains

RICK TAYLOR

Last May I still needed a Slate-throated Redstart for Arizona. When one turned up at the Southwestern Research Station in Cave Creek Canyon, I arose well before dawn and drove straight from Tucson to the Chiricahua Mountains.

As I entered the mile-wide door of the drainage at Portal, daybreak was just rouging the colossal rhyolite formations on Silver Peak. Portal Peak on the south wall was still draped in layers of purple shadow, and the breath of the 3,000-foot-deep canyon was palpably cool and sweet. I felt like I was driving into the first chapter of a Zane Grey novel.

For the two-and-a-half hour sojourn from Tucson to Portal I relived prior encounters with Slate-throated Redstarts from Sonora to Peru, searching for commonalities that united Cave Creek with the *barrancas* of the Sierra Madre and the foothills of the Andes. Typically these steel-blue warblers with flame-orange chests are confined to the mountains. Within their montane habitats, they prefer dark woodlands with an understory. Those mottes of habitat are often—but not always—associated with nearby surface water. A few months earlier on my annual winter visit to San Blas, Mexico I had, as usual, seen the reliable Slate-throated Redstarts in the Bumblebee Hummingbird Ravine on Cerro San Juan.

Festooned with flowering vines and fruiting shrubs beneath a canopy of pines and grand old oaks, the ravine is miles from the nearest spring.

But in spite of its tropical latitude,

the sun treads softly in the Bumblebee Hummingbird Ravine. In midwinter it receives less than two hours of direct solar exposure and temperatures usually stay below 60

degrees Fahrenheit. In summer it's only 20 degrees warmer, and, owing to its location on a steep, north-facing slope, it remains sealed under a cool film of shade almost until noon.

Given its remarkably stable microclimate, the Bumblebee Hummingbird Ravine is lousy with birds. Aside from Slate-throated Redstarts, the community of other regularly-occurring Sierra Madrean specialties includes Berylline Hummingbird, Eared Quetzal, Blue Mockingbird, Tufted Flycatcher, Gray-collared Becard, Crescent-chested Warbler, Rufous-capped Warbler, Flame-colored Tanager, and Yellow Grosbeak.

Every member in this suite of species has appeared at least once in the Cave Creek Canyon complex. Half of them constituted the first U.S. record. The Slate-throated Redstart at the Southwestern Research Station in May represented only the eighth Arizona occurrence of this species since 1976.

Draining a crest that averages over 9,500 feet in elevation, Cave Creek has four primary tributaries and a southern thumb separated by massive Snowshed Ridge. The thumb is legendary South Fork. Permanent water occurs as springs and seeps in all five canyons. Tiers of citrus-colored cliffs thousands of feet high shield the drainage from dehydrating winds and reduce the hours of Arizona sun.

All five of the canyons lie within Madrean pine-oak woodland. Because contours are comparatively gentle within the Cave Creek basin, deep soils have accumulated, thereby fostering a well-developed riparian woodland interwoven with the sculpted white limbs of big white sycamores. Skeins of canyon grape and a smorgasbord of fruiting shrubs and small trees compete for space in the understory. Even though many of the plants components are completely different, the plant structure of the Cave Creek Complex is an ecological mirror of the Bumblebee Hummingbird Ravine in Nayarit, 800 miles farther south.

It dawned on me as I drove from Tucson to Portal that a wandering Slate-



MATT GRIFFITHS



MATT GRIFFITHS

Above, top to bottom: Cave Creek; South Fork
Inset below: Slate-throated Redstart

throated Redstart at the Southwestern Research Station was not so strange. I could easily imagine other birds from Cerro San Juan pioneering the Cave Creek Complex—think Squirrel Cuckoo, Ivory-billed Woodcreeper, or Spotted Wren.

I sometimes wonder if the two specimens of Bumblebee Hummingbird purportedly collected in the Huachuca Mountains in 1896 are genuine—or if they are actually examples of sloppy labeling by a tired museum employee. But Arizona is now at least 3 degrees warmer than it was in the 19th century. Were a Bumblebee Hummingbird to show in Cave Creek today, I would not be so skeptical.

The Southwestern Research Station Slate-throated Redstart eluded me this May. In fact, the one day I was free to visit, it dodged a small army of birders drawn from all over the United States. Since it was back again the next day and the next, however, it clearly had all the habitat it needed to frustrate any human pursuit it wished. And then it just disappeared somewhere in the vast Cave Creek Canyon complex.

To me, that very thought is elating. ■

Rick Taylor is Managing Director of Borderland Tours, borderland-tours.com. His photographic field guide, Birds of Southeastern Arizona is available in Tucson Audubon's Nature Shops.



Sinaloa Wren and Happy Wren

LARRY LIESE

Turn back the clock to December of 1997. Thirty or more birders quietly scanned the trees and bushes at the north end of Patagonia Lake, hoping to get a glimpse of a bird not seen in the U.S. for nigh on fifty years. “There it is!” ... “No, that’s just an Ash-throated.” ... “Zweeep!” Case closed! Smiles abound in a magical moment as Nutting’s Flycatcher makes the life lists of the lucky birders present, quite a few of whom had arrived by plane just on the chance that the bird was still there.

Fast forward to today. Doesn’t it seem that more rare sightings are happening of late? One example: Sinaloa Wrens are present in Huachuca Canyon and along the Anza Trail, both building nests, with another bird in the recent past having spent quite some time along the Sonoita Creek Preserve in Patagonia. Birders still get on planes to view these birds, but the rarity of these sightings seems less. With climate change a fairly established fact, one wonders if the two are related and what future sightings of birds from further south are on their way.

In this issue’s column we take a short look at Sinaloa Wren (*Thryothorus sinaloa*), and fellow congener Happy Wren (*Thryothorus felix*). These two birds are Mexican endemics common in thornscrub and tropical deciduous forest

in southern Sonora, and present up through the Yecora area to the northeast at about half that distance from the U.S. border. Since our area is enjoying a relative abundance of Sinaloa Wren sightings, it seems appropriate to learn about Happy Wren too since it’s possible this species could be the next rare bird to make an appearance here.

As George’s images show, with a small amount of preparation a good look should easily distinguish these two birds (note the stronger cheek pattern and less light area on the underparts of the Happy Wren). But, as many of the Mexico-travelled among us know, getting a good look at these birds can be a challenge. Not so much with Sinaloa Wren, but Happy Wren can be a true skulker! Both birds have rich, varied songs with strings of fairly loud notes. To distinguish the two I’ve found it handy to attach a mental image to part of their song that makes the connection much easier. For Sinaloa Wren, I have to give credit to one of Tucson Audubon’s business partners David MacKay (see Solipaso Tours, page 24), who resides in Alamos, Sonora. He related one day that he always thinks of the beginning of an old Mexican Western movie called *The Guns of Sinaloa*, where a classic stereotype of a Mexican bandito with bandoliers

of cartridges across his chest sprays machine gun bullets at some target offscreen. One section of the Sinaloa Wren’s song is reminiscent of the *rat-a-tat-tat* of machine gun fire. Following that sequence is a sharp, fast-rising sound I relate to memories of a Fourth-of-July bottle rocket taking off into the sky. Play a recording of this bird’s song and see if you make that connection.

I don’t remember how I first came to put this next association together with Happy Wren, but I must have once seen a Charlie Chaplin movie with him riding a bicycle with a large dent in the wheel. He pedaled along, oscillating up and down, barely able to keep on the bicycle. Again—play a Happy Wren song recording and see if the pairing fits! The point worth noting is that if you listen to a bird song recording and think “What does this sound like to me?”, you might come up with an association that sticks with you and comes in handy when encountering these birds in the field.

We’re pretty lucky these days with how easily information is passed around when new birds get sighted. Next time you’re heading out to find a reported rarity, listen ahead of time to a sound recording and match it up with what your mind relates it to. It might help. Good luck! ■

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GEORGE WEST



Sinaloa Wren

Happy Wren

SunZia: The Selective and Arbitrary Use of Science in an Environmental Impact Statement

With a Record of Decision drawing nigh for the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project and the Department of Defense objecting, what is SunZia up to? In a December 11 article published on RenewableEnergyWorld.com, SunZia manager Tom Wray made an impassioned argument for “a legitimate third-party scientific review” to dispel objections to routing his project across the extension of the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. Under pressure from New Mexico’s Senator Martin Heinrich, MIT’s Lincoln Laboratory has undertaken this for him.

This is not the first time that SunZia and its federal oversight agency, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), have appealed to scientific reviews to quash objections to the massive 500-mile-long project. A hastily organized feasibility study, used to eliminate any serious consideration of routing the project along the Interstate 10 corridor through Tucson, was conducted early on by the Environmental Planning Group (EPG), a company that has a long preexisting business relationship with SunZia’s proponents. EPG managed to become the BLM’s

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) contractor for the project through a recommendation by SunZia itself. EPG conducted a similar study to establish that burying the proposed extra high voltage lines through environmentally sensitive lands would not be economically feasible.

However, despite allowing SunZia’s use of *ad hoc* feasibility studies to support their interests, the BLM did not allow significant findings regarding SunZia in a third-party study conducted for the closely related High Plains Express transmission proposal. Those findings contradict the project’s renewable energy benefit claims in the EIS and clearly indicate that the BLM’s forecast estimate of renewable energy development likely to result from the project has been overestimated by two to three times. Four different local conservation groups submitted this study to the BLM eight times over the two-year period prior to the release of the EIS, and a ninth time immediately following the release of the EIS in July, only to see it dismissed without acknowledgment.

SunZia and the BLM used this gross overestimation of renewable energy development to justify the

necessary capacity of the proposed lines, the resultant routing through previously undisturbed lands in the environmentally sensitive lower San Pedro watershed, and the elimination of other more appropriately scaled and planned transmission projects as possible alternatives. The overestimation of renewable energy development also became the basis for both required and optional analyses in the EIS.

By selectively employing feasibility studies to favor the applicant’s interests, the BLM has violated federal regulations regarding neutral oversight and assessment of environmental effects. Recently Congressional representatives Ron Barber and Ann Kirkpatrick wrote to Secretary of Interior Sally Jewell requesting that the ignored feasibility study and other relevant information submitted by Arizona conservation groups be considered. If this information is not finally incorporated into the analyses of the EIS, litigation will be the only option available to enforce the law and restore integrity to the process. Otherwise, the globally important avian flyway along the San Pedro River will be significantly impacted for a misrepresented project and an invalid analysis of possible alternatives, a true waste.

Given the BLM’s past behavior, we are going to need legal support to return neutral oversight to this and future federal environmental reviews. If you can offer or suggest such support or need further information, please let us know.

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Obituary: Mary K. Foster

Former Tucson Audubon Board Member, Mary K. Foster, died in Marin County, California, in October 2013, surrounded by her family, at the age of 87 years. To the end, her love of people, books, birds, gardens, nature and history shaped her days and energized her friends. Mary was born and raised in Wisconsin. She received a BA from Northwestern University, and then moved to Los Angeles, California, where she met Robert N. Foster (Bob) of Marin County, whom she married a year later. Following Bob’s career, they lived in Pasadena and Georgetown until settling in Tucson. Here she raised her children, served her community, taught junior high and college, and received an MA in Latin American Studies at the University of Arizona. She presided over the boards of the Tucson Festival Society, the Pima College Foundation, the Junior League of Tucson, Brewster Home, and the North-South Cultural Center. She also served on the boards of the Tucson Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy of Arizona, the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, the Tucson Parks and Recreation Foundation (founding member), the Advisory Council of the Partners Board of the University of Arizona, and the Silver and Turquoise Board of Hostesses. Her honors have included the Tucson Festival Society Tohono Award, The Nature Conservancy of Arizona’s Oak Leaf Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service, the Association of Fundraising Professionals Spirit of Philanthropy Honoree, and she was awarded Emeritus status by the Pima College Foundation Board. After 42 years of marriage, Bob died and, to be closer to her daughters, Mary moved to The Tamalpais in Marin. There she quickly became active on the library and special events committees.

*Adapted from Arizona Daily Star,
November 3, 2013*



SAN PEDRO RIVER VALLEY AND CATALINA MOUNTAINS, LON & QUETA/CCO

Sweetwater Wetlands Updates

Improvements Continue

The Tucson Water Department is constructing an additional public parking lot on the north side of Sweetwater Drive. The parking lot will contain spaces for 30 cars and three school buses, and will be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The goal of this project is to make visiting the Wetlands safer by reducing the number of vehicles forced to park along Sweetwater Drive when the original, smaller lot fills up. This circumstance occurs frequently during our winter peak birding months or when extra teachers and parents join scheduled school tours. All bus drivers will be encouraged to discharge students in the old parking lot prior to parking their buses in the new spaces across the street. Pedestrian traffic crossing Sweetwater Drive is expected to increase, so all signage and pedestrian crosswalk markings will comply with the latest standards.

New West Wetlands Entrance

The new west entrance to the Sweetwater Wetlands continues to attract new visitors to the Wetlands off of the Santa Cruz River bike path. Staff is glad to report that bicycles are being locked at the available bike racks and, to date, no serious interactions along the bike path have occurred between fast moving bicycles and slow moving birders.

Speaking of the Bike Path...

Pima County will soon be completing the new paved bike path from Sweetwater Drive north to Camino del Cerro Road. This work will complete a large portion of the Loop trail system along the east bank of the Santa Cruz River between Grant Road and Camino del Cerro, which will facilitate access north of CDC Road to the Rillito River trail system.



PROJECT WET

Speaking of School Tours...

Public education is a fundamental goal of the Sweetwater Wetlands. To date, thousands of Tucson students have experienced the Sweetwater Wetlands while learning about the Water Cycle, conservation, and wetlands ecology. Schools have integrated visits to the Wetlands into their curriculums through the ProjectWET and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programs. Educational events, typically near the ramada, are scheduled on Tuesday and Friday

mornings, along with an occasional Wednesday. Kids will be kids and, during these sometimes boisterous events, birders are encouraged to trek a bit farther to the larger western pond where quiet, "library" voices are encouraged!

*Bruce M. Prior, Lead Hydrologist,
Tucson Water Department*

Bruce Prior is retiring from Tucson Water after a long career, including managing Sweetwater Wetlands from its inception. Tucson Audubon thanks Bruce for his good work and wishes him well in a well-deserved retirement.

The Trekking Rattlers are on the Move!



DEB VATH

Emmanuel takes in the fall colors on Mt. Lemmon.

Since September 2012, nearly 150 middle school students from Billy Lauffer Middle School have participated in Tucson Audubon's Trekking Rattlers hiking and nature program. The program is an offshoot of our Sunnyside Audubon Student Urban Naturalist Program (SASUN) and is run by one of Tucson

Audubon's 2013 Volunteers of the Year, Deborah Vath, in partnership with Inner City Outings.

The program is open to all students at Lauffer and provides them with an opportunity to explore the unique habitat we live in. In the process of exploration, they learn about themselves and about nature through the lens of birding. This is an experience that many students have for the first time with the Trekking Rattlers Club.

Once a month, students take a field trip to a local hiking destination. They have played in the snow-melt pools of Seven Falls, hiked to the top of Wasson Peak, basked in the glory of fall colors in Ramsey Canyon and atop Mt. Lemmon, experienced a night hike at Saguaro National Park West, and much more! They also participate annually in two service learning projects—removing invasive buffelgrass behind their school, and working with Tucson Audubon to help restore habitat at Atturbury Wash.

Along the way, they learn how to use binoculars and spot common southern Arizona birds. More importantly, they learn about themselves as they are immersed in nature and meet and overcome physical challenges inherent in hiking 4–5 hours through desert terrain. The impact of time in nature has been profound for many of the students.

"Silence even for just a second brings calm and peace to the world. Just letting it all go just for that moment brings center and wonder to all. Let the wind carry your thoughts away, leaving your mind and entering the whispers of the trees, bouncing off the mountains and into your mind once again".—Julia Molina, 8th grade Lauffer student, Mt. Lemmon outing.

This successful program is continuing into the spring of 2014. Consider sharing your love of birds, nature, and hiking by volunteering with the Trekking Rattlers! Contact Kara Kaczmarzyk for details.

Bete Jones and Deb Vath

CORRECTION

American Bird Conservancy (ABC) provided the following correction to the table on bird mortality published in the October–November 2013 *Vermilion Flycatcher*, page 14:

For the mortality estimate related to bird banding, a recent peer-reviewed paper suggests that mortality related to the use of mist nets is $0.23 \pm 0.15\%$. Given that other capture techniques used by banders have even lower mortality rates, it is reasonable to assume total mortality is in the region of 0.1–0.2% which translates to an estimate of 1,000–2,000 birds per year based on the approximately one million birds banded annually in the USA. ABC is supportive of science-based bird banding, does not consider these mortalities of sufficient magnitude to threaten bird populations, and acknowledges that the banding community has succeeded in reducing these mortalities through good practice in recent years.

Top Ten Reasons Why Rosemont Mine Will Never Be Built

The Coronado National Forest recently announced that it will recommend approval of the proposed Rosemont Mine in the Santa Rita Mountains southeast of Tucson. Notwithstanding the blaring trumpets of the ensuing press releases from Rosemont Copper Co., here are the *Top Ten Reasons Why the Rosemont Mine Will Never Be Built*:

1 The Coronado's analysis is inaccurate and inadequate.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement in this process was determined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to be one of the worst ever produced, out of many thousands of EIS documents over the past 40 years. Precious few of the flaws in the Draft have been addressed or improved in the recently released Final EIS, which makes it a likely target for formal objections and eventual litigation.

2 The U.S. Forest Service must address all objections before final approval.

A formal objections process begins on January 1, 2014. Everyone who formally commented on this project previously, whether in the scoping phase, on the Draft EIS, or even just oral comments provided at a Forest Service public hearing, has a 45-day window to raise formal objections based on their comments. The Forest Service then has 45 days, and possibly 30 more, in which it must address all objections.

3 The company still needs further permits.

Most notably, Rosemont has yet to procure a Section 404 permit under the Clean Water Act from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which it must have in order to legally disturb the riparian areas and surface waters that would be destroyed by the mine. As part of this process, the company must mitigate for the damage it would do to these precious areas. So far, its mitigation offer has been deemed woefully inadequate. Denial of this permit would prevent the mine from going forward.

4 The U.S. EPA has veto authority. Even if the Army Corps accepts Rosemont's weak mitigation offer and issues the 404 permit, the EPA has the authority to overturn it. The EPA has been highly critical of this project throughout. The agency has called into question the "unsound science" produced by the company and its consultants and voiced serious concerns about groundwater contamination, air pollution, harm to endangered species, and a host of other problems.

5 Rosemont's Aquifer Protection Permit is under appeal. The Save the Scenic Santa Ritas coalition is currently bringing a case in Arizona Superior Court to overturn the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality's issuance of this key permit that would allow toxic discharges into the aquifer that forms the headwaters of Davidson Canyon and Cienega Creek. Without this permit, the mine cannot proceed.

6 Rosemont's Air Quality Permit is under appeal. Another essential permit issued to Rosemont by ADEQ is currently working its way through the administrative appeal process and could later wind up in court as well. Without this permit, the mine cannot proceed.

7 The Rosemont jaguar. A large, healthy jaguar has been photographed repeatedly by remote

sensor cameras in the area of the proposed Rosemont mine over the past year. This intrepid animal is the only known jaguar in the U.S. at this time. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will soon finalize a critical habitat proposal that would designate thousands of acres of southern Arizona as critical to the survival and recovery of this majestic animal in the U.S. The critical habitat designation is almost certain to include the currently occupied habitat of the Rosemont project area, which is an intersection of three major wildlife corridors that are essential to the big cat's prospects for reclaiming the Sky Islands that it called home for thousands of years before being wiped out in the past century. The Endangered Species Act does not allow adverse modification of critical habitat that would significantly harm chances for survival and recovery.

8 Several other endangered species will be harmed. The Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Chiricahua leopard frog, Gila chub, Coleman's coralroot and other species face potentially catastrophic harm if the mine is allowed to proceed. The Bureau of Land Management has raised vehement concerns that massive groundwater pumping at the mine will dewater nearby Cienega Creek, in addition to the Rosemont area, which could spell doom for one or more of these vulnerable species.

9 Rosemont Copper is in a precarious financial position. Rosemont Copper's parent company, Augusta Resource Corp., is a highly leveraged junior mining company from Canada with no income other than loans and direct investment, since it has never operated a mine of any sort. The company's financial situation has been the subject of dire warnings by investment analysts in recent months, as it essentially ran out of cash this fall and was forced to resort to emergency measures to keep itself afloat through the end of the year.

10 You! A concerted, robust, broad-based effort to stop this mine has grown from widespread community opposition. The majority of people in Tucson and southern Arizona clearly realize that the mine's tradeoffs—the degradation of our air and water quality, the alarming diminishment of our groundwater supplies, the destruction of the beautiful mountains and wildlife that drive our economy and enhance our quality of life—are not worth the short-term influx of a few hundred jobs. Keep up the fight with us, and together we can stop this short-sighted travesty and protect a big part of what makes Tucson and southern Arizona such a great place to live.

*Randy Serraglio
Southwest Conservation Advocate
Center for Biological Diversity*



CIENEGA CREEK, PATRICK ALEXANDER / CCL



SOUTHWESTERN WILLOW FLYCATCHER, JOHN HOFFMAN

What's Next in the Forest Service's Review Process for the Rosemont Mine?

The Coronado National Forest has posted the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) and the draft Record of Decision (ROD) for the Rosemont Mine at www.rosemonteis.us/.

The FEIS should include responses to all of the substantive comments that were submitted on the Draft EIS as well as proposed changes in the alternatives and in the analysis of the impacts. The draft ROD indicates the Forest's selection of an alternative, along with monitoring and mitigation commitments.

The Forest is expected to publish a legal notice of the FEIS and the draft ROD in the *Arizona Daily Star*, the newspaper of record for this area, as we go to press at year-end. The notice will include a statement that objections to the FEIS must be filed within 45 days of the date of the newspaper notice. The 45-day clock will start the day following publication of the newspaper notice, on January 1, 2014, and the deadline for submitting objections will be February 14, 2013. Once the clock starts, the deadline cannot be extended.

Who Can File an Objection?

Those who are eligible to object include Individuals and entities who have submitted timely, specific written comments regarding a proposed project or activity during any designated opportunity for public comment, including the scoping period. "Written comments" include oral comments submitted and transcribed at a public hearing. Tucson Audubon qualifies to make written comments.

What are the Minimum Requirements for Objections?

Objections will largely be based on whether the Forest has responded adequately to comments previously submitted on the Draft EIS. Objections may also be based on new information that was not in the draft EIS and thus not previously available for public comment. Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted comments made by the person or entity raising the objections, unless the issue is based on new information that arose

after opportunities to comment (e.g., information presented for the first time in an FEIS).

Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted comments regarding the proposed project or activity and attributed to the objector, unless the issue is based on new information that arose after the opportunities for comment. The burden is on the objector to demonstrate compliance with this requirement for objection issues; aside from objections based on new information, the objector must demonstrate the connection between prior comments and the content of their objections.

A PDF containing more details about the process can be downloaded from the Tucson Audubon website at tucsonaudubon.org/conservation/Rosemont_Objection-Process-Fact-Sheet.pdf.

*Paul Green,
Executive Director*

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Did you know that Tucson Audubon offers a range of specialized email updates on various topics, such as Volunteer News, Green City News, Conservation Alerts, IBA News and Nest Boxes for Urban Birds, as well as a regular Weekly Update?

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PRAIRIE FALCON / JEREMY HAYES

Conservation Corner!

Three timely tips to start out the new year.

Save Water by Adjusting Irrigation Timers

Your garden and landscape do not need nearly as much irrigation water this time of year. In fact, if winter rains are regular they may not need any additional water. This is especially true for well-established native plants. So adjust your irrigation timers to water less often or for less time, or both. Or just turn it off until moisture from rains dries up a bit and plants look like they need some help.

Save Water and Save Money

This is an extra-good time of year to conserve water. Most people pay a sewer user fee as part of their water

bill. The sewer fee is determined by averaging your water consumption across the months of December, January and February (on the theory that this is when you use the least water outside, so most of the water you use goes into the sewer). The less water you use December through February, the lower your sewer fees will be through the rest of the year!

Recycle your Holiday Grease

Collect holiday cooking grease and bring it to one of the regular grease collection centers. Do not pour holiday grease down the drain! It can stop up your pipes. If it makes it through your pipes it causes big problems in the sewer system and wastewater treatment plants. Visit webcms.pima.gov/government/

wastewaterreclamation/community_relations/grease/ to find a regularly scheduled grease collection center. It will be recycled into biodiesel fuel!

Recycle your Christmas Tree

December 26 through January 12, take your Christmas tree to a Treecycle location where it will be chipped and shredded. The resulting tree chips will be available for pick-up at Randolph Golf Course, Udall Park and Los Reales Landfill. Check the City of Tucson Web page cms3.tucsonaz.gov/content/treecycle for more information.

Contact Kendall Kroesen with sustainability, gardening and landscaping questions at 520-209-1806 or kkroesen@tucsonaudubon.org.

*Kendall Kroesen
Urban Program Manager*



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Big Bend Nat'l Park, Texas: Colima Warbler Short Tour: April 30–May 4, 2014, \$1195. Leader: John Yerger. Big Bend is one of the most remote birding hotspots in the U.S., and home to some of its most spectacular scenery! It's the only place in the country to find Colima Warbler, the focus of one long day hike. A surprising number of habitats and oases are found within Park boundaries. Ideal for anyone desiring lots of birding and sightseeing on limited vacation time. Lucifer Hummingbird, Painted Bunting and Common Black-Hawk are just a few others we'll seek on this fun-filled adventure!

South Texas: Rarities and Specialties Short Tour: February 26–March 2, 2014, \$1295. Leader: John Yerger. Limited vacation time? This "short tour" will target some of the rarest birds in the ABA region! Our main focus: finding mega-rarities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. In recent years, species included Crimson-collared Grosbeak, Golden-crowned Warbler and Black-vented Oriole. In addition, we'll seek rare residents like Clay-colored Thrush and Red-billed Pigeon. And of course, spectacular South Texas specialties like Green Jay, Altamira Oriole and Buff-bellied Hummingbird will round out the trip! See website for details and on this and other tours.

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Cameroon—Rockfowl, Rainforests & Sahel I 2014: Tour Dates 17 Mar–07 Apr 2014 (22 days). Tour Price (per person) US\$ 6,570. Cameroon is undoubtedly Central Africa's richest birding destination and we expect to see up to 600 species of birds on this incredible tour. These include numerous highlights from the fabulous Gray-necked Rockfowl, Quail-plover and Arabian Bustard to Mount Kupe Bushshrike, Bannerman's Turaco and Bare-cheeked Trogon to name but a few.

Northern Ecuador—Birding the Andes to the Amazon 2014 + Sani Extension: Tour Dates: Sani Ext 30 Mar–03 Apr + Main Tour 03–18 Apr 2014: Tour Price (per person)



Arabian Bustard

ALAN DREWITT / CCL



Rufous-capped Brush-Finch

DOMINIC SHERONY / CCL

Sani Ext US\$ 1,275 + Main Tour US\$ 4, 675. Ecuador, boasting a bird list of over 1,700 species, has entrenched itself as a must-visit, premier South American birding destination. This particular tour covers a vast range of habitats from an in depth exploration of the Andes to the Amazonian lowlands around Sacha and Sani. This is a bird-watching tour not to be missed.

SOLIPASO TOURS

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Yecora-Alamos: April 5–13, 2014. \$2450. Leader: David MacKay. A complete sierra to sea tour! We'll see the montane species around Yecora, including Mountain Trogon and Rufous-capped Brush-Finch. In the colonial town of Alamos, we stay at the beautiful El Pedregal Nature Lodge and see birds like Black-throated Magpie Jay, Mexican Parrotlet and Elegant Trogon. Our last day will be on the coast to pick up more coastal species. See the best of Sonora...the place we call home!

Northwest Mexico: August 23–30, 2014. \$2100. Leader: David MacKay. Summertime in the Sierra Madre of Chihuahua and Sonora is beautiful! Green meadows, blue skies, lakes and waterfalls! In Madera, we see the endangered Thick-billed Parrot and Eared Quetzal. We visit the ruins of Cuarenta Casas and see the magnificent Basaseachic waterfall in full summer flow, the second highest in Mexico! Around Yecora, we see more montane species including Mountain Trogon and Aztec Thrush.

TROPICAL BIRDING

www.tropicalbirding.com
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Southern Ecuador: Highland Rarities and Tumbesian Endemics July 9–25, 2014. \$4690. Single Supplement \$480. Expect a spectacular variety of habitat, scenery, and birds on this tour led by Tucson's Scott Olmstead. The trip takes in both sides of the Andes, visiting desert scrub and deciduous forests, montane cloudforests, high altitude elfin forests, and páramo. We target outrageous bucket-list megas like Jocotoco Antpitta, Orange-throated Tanager, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, and Rainbow Starfrontlet, while staying in comfortable lodges. Plan to see a large percentage of the birds endemic to the Tumbesian Region of SW Ecuador & NW Peru.

Tucson Audubon thanks our Birds & Business Alliance Members, who have shown their support for bird conservation through annual contributions and in-kind donations. **Please show them you appreciate their support for us by supporting them.** Visit tucsonaudubon.org/alliance for more information, including links to member websites.



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TUCSON AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

MATT GRIFFITHS | INTERIM FIELD TRIP COORDINATOR

Tucson Audubon Field Trips Listings Are Now Online Only

For a full listing of trips and details, visit tucsonaudubon.org/fieldtrips or call the field trip hotline at 520-629-0510 x4.

FEATURED FIELD TRIP

January 25—Saturday 6:00 AM

Whitewater, Willcox & Wine



Winter residents abound in SE AZ and the latest vintage has arrived. We will look for Sandhill Cranes and wintering raptors and then experience a new dimension to the "Willcox Bench"—the prospering wine industry. Dress for the weather and bring scopes, snack, and lunch. Wine tastings typically cost \$7.00—we'll do two. Please preregister by January 15 so I can give a heads up to the vintners. Meet: 6:00 AM Houghton Rd and I-10. Designated drivers appreciated. Leader: Michael Bissontz 520-577-8778 seetrogon@comcast.net



SANDHILL CRANES, CALVIN KUININ

Weekly bird walks are listed at tucsonaudubon.org/fieldtrips

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

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The Zeiss Terra 8x42 ED binoculars are just one of many styles carried by the Tucson Audubon Nature Shops. Our pricing is competitive with online, reputable dealers and our volunteer staff is exceptional in their optics knowledge and wants to be sure you are happy with your binocular purchase.

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**The Crossley ID Guide:
Britain & Ireland.**

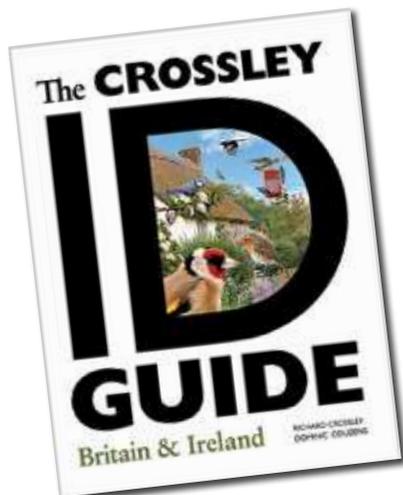
Richard Crossley and Dominic Couzens.

Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ. Pp. 304.
ISBN 978-0-691-15194-6. Pb. \$27.95.

The *Crossley ID Guide* series has expanded across the pond. The *Crossley ID Guide: Britain & Ireland* is aimed at beginner and intermediate birders, er, 'twitchers' if you prefer. What it does especially notably is just what the other Crossley guides do: it provides ecological context by placing birds in detailed scenes, it presents an astonishing array of photographic perspectives of each species (including different plumages), and it serves as a baroque feast for the eyes.

Opening up this book really does transport you while presenting its bird life, and for that alone it is worth examining—it's an armchair adventure, for which Crossley recommends as a companion a pint (of course) or a glass of wine. Indeed, the greatest advantages of this guide over other options are as a learning tool and source of entertainment at home, not necessarily its field utility in your pocket in the rain (its dimensions are more 'big Sibley' than, say, Peterson). The presentation style's value for students of bird identification is readily apparent—studying this book allows the reader to learn aspects of species' natural histories, to inform one's intuition regarding identification issues, and to train one's eyes to have appropriate search images for whichever environmental setting one encounters.

I'll venture an attempt to describe a page in this guide. Let's take p. 227, the famous Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*). We have a village setting: a thatch-roofed house, a brick walkway, a hedge, and, Photoshopped into the foreground, apple tree branches with some absolutely luscious-looking apples on them. The birds populate the scene: gorgeous close-up photos of adults and a juvenile, again Photoshopped in, and others in the mid-ground and background, in focus and in a variety of positions and attitudes, including in flight. The



overall effect is mesmerizing. Dominic Couzens' text description is extensive, insightful, and evocative ("very perky, inquisitive, fearless, and downright aggressive"), and includes quite a bit of natural history. For species that are more challenging to identify, there is less natural history in the text and more space devoted to identification particulars.

The bottom line: if you are making a trip to the British Isles or just are interested in its birds, have a look at this guide while keeping an open mind about what a guide should look like. It's a treat.

Dr Jay McEntee, University of Arizona

Counting Birds with Gale Monson.

Editors Bill Broyles and Richard L. Glinski.

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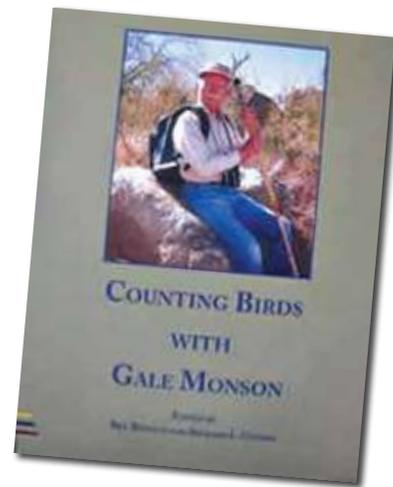
Tucson, AZ. Pp 244. 2012

ISBN 978-0-983-26588-7. PB \$13.65.

Our knowledge of Arizona's rich bird life was founded upon the work of intrepid ornithologists that first began to document wildlife throughout the state's vast landscape. One of the most significant figures in Arizona's ornithological history was Gale Monson, who passed away in 2012. Following his passing, friends and colleagues collected personal anecdotes, past interviews, and historical documents and notes of Gale Monson's to help honor his memory with a tribute compilation: *Counting Birds with Gale Monson*, edited by Bill Broyles and Richard L. Glinski (2012). Monson's family published the book and donated all copies to the Arizona Field Ornithologists (AZFO) to distribute. All sales go towards AZFO's Gale Monson Research Grants to further honor his legacy.

For those who have developed an interest in Arizona's avifauna, you may be familiar with some of Monson's earlier works, the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Arizona* (Monson & Phillips 1981) and the earlier *The Birds of Arizona* (Phillips et al. 1964), which provided the first comprehensive descriptions of the status and distribution of Arizona bird species documented at that time. Along with these valuable contributions, Monson was also among the first to document the bird life of the wildlife refuges in southwestern Arizona and throughout adjacent Sonora, Mexico, and was instrumental in some of the first studies on desert bighorn sheep. He also kept 80 years of meticulous field notes, authored several scientific articles, and contributed to chapters in several books on birds throughout his almost 100 years of life.

Much more than a standard biography, *Counting Birds with Gale Monson* portrays his unique personality and impressive work ethic as much as the colorful period of history he lived through. Interviews with Monson and anecdotes from those whose lives he impacted are informative, touching, humorous, inspiring, and altogether engrossing to the reader. Beginning birdwatchers, hard-core birders, ornithologists,



naturalists, and history buffs alike will all gain something rewarding from exploring this fantastic compilation of this extraordinary man's life. In addition to these insightful narratives, this book also provides some excerpts of Monson's journal entries, photos of him working in the field, and a full bibliography of his work for those who wish to learn more. Gale Monson will be remembered as an intelligent and kind man who took the time to instill a deep interest in nature and scientific integrity, both among his peers and younger generations of field researchers. His influence continues to reach ornithologists who have followed in his footsteps, and *Counting Birds with Gale Monson* is a vessel to help further propagate that influence in generations of naturalists to come.

Counting Birds with Gale Monson can be purchased from the Tucson Audubon Nature Shops.

Eric Hough

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YELLOW WARBLER, LOIS MANOWITZ

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Kathy Jacobs has spent the last four years working in Washington DC for the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy as Assistant Director for Climate Assessment and Adaptation.

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