

Summer Photo Quiz Clues

by Jim Burns

THIS ISSUE'S CLUE—

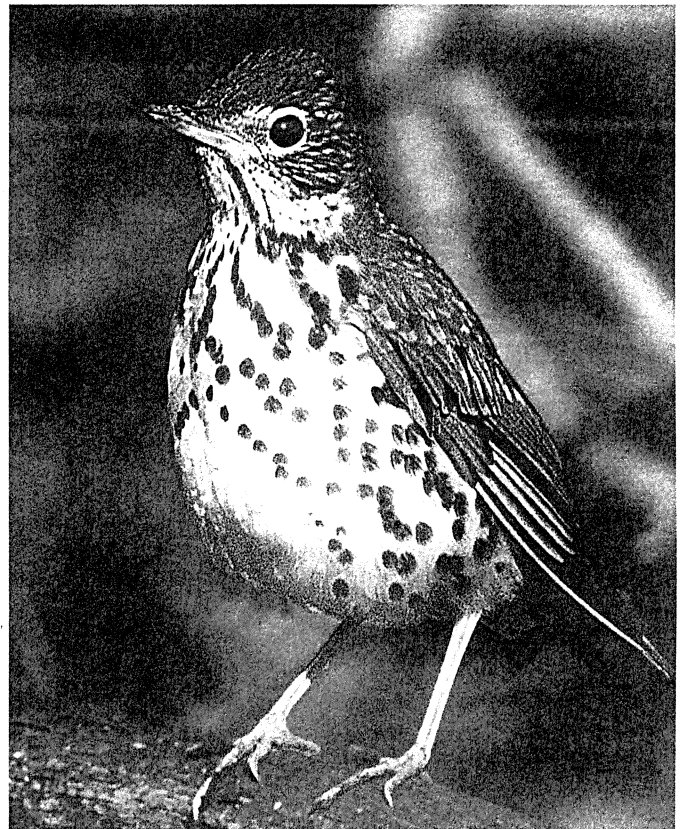
Those of you following Arizona bird reports on birdwg05 last fall should have seen this one coming. All three of these photos were taken at Boyce-Thompson Arboretum State Park.



B) good photo, difficult bird



A) good photo, easy bird



C) bad photo, easy bird

Photo Quiz Answers

by Jim Burns

Cursory glances or occluded views might lead an observer to think these three birds were all of a species, especially if all were seen proximally on the same day. Superficially the three are similar—ground foraging birds with erect postures, dark upperparts over light but heavily spotted underparts, obvious eyering—it could be a whole flock of these guys, or maybe its an invasion! But let's slow down and cast some critical focus on structure and on the shape and extensity of those spots.

A)—Good photo, easy bird

Those of you who have followed this feature from its inception have seen this species before. And you should have immediately noticed this bird's short, conical bill is quite different than the longer, thinner, straighter bills of our other two quiz birds, for sure placing it in a different family than theirs.

This bill shape says "sparrow," and the combination of light bill with lighter lower mandible and the heavy, sharply triangular breast spots resembling mountains on a map which coalesce into one large central spot says "Fox Sparrow." Our January/February, 1999 quiz also featured a Fox Sparrow, with the note that "at least one is reported somewhere around the Valley every winter." This year there were at least three and possibly four wintering at the arboretum. That is a flock for a species of bird that isn't considered a flocking species!

End of story? Not quite. Some ornithologists, though acknowledging zones of intergradation, consider the four main subspecies of Fox Sparrow to be separate and distinguishable, and the species may be taxonomically split if and when DNA studies are completed. The "Red" Fox Sparrow, the nominate subspecies, *iliaca*, breeds across the northern taiga and winters primarily in the southeast. "Sooty" and "Slate-colored" Fox Sparrows, *fuliginosa* and *schistacea* respectively, breed in the northwest and winter in the southwest. The "Thick-billed" of California, *stephensi*, closely resembles Slate-colored but has a massive bill.

The consensus of experienced birders who saw multiple Fox Sparrows at the arboretum this winter was that there were two Sooties and at least one Slate-colored present. Our quiz bird is one of those Sooties, photographed last October, showing little or no facial contrast and heavy spotting extending all the way down the flanks. Slate-colored's often have little or no spotting on the belly and lower flanks, a noticeably paler loreal area, and enough of a lower face pattern to be considered sub-moustachial and malar stripes. My side view slides of our quiz bird showed no wingbar and no dorsal contrast, whereas my slides of the Slate-colored showed a faint but distinctive wingbar and a definite contrast between gray back and rump and red wings and tail.

B)—Good photo, difficult bird

Were this quiz in color and our quiz bird's tail not partially in shadow, this would not be a particularly hard bird to identify. The thin, straight bill, the icy stare rendered by the proportionately large eye on the relatively plain face, the just-popped-erect posture, and the speckled breast pattern tell us immediately this is one of our spotted thrushes. In fact, those same field marks say the same thing about our third quiz bird too. There are six possibilities. Let's eliminate Bicknell's, based on geography, and see if we can sort out the remaining five.

Our quiz bird has a thin, petite jizz. It shows no face pattern other than its distinct eyering and a thin, dark malar stripe. Its spots are bold and dark against a white background, at least on the chest, but they are not crisp. They run together forming streaks, continue down the flanks becoming indistinct, and fade out against a background which could be gray or brown but is decidedly darker than our bird's white chest.

Wood Thrush is a spotted thrush, but it belongs to the genus *Hylocichla*. It is the biggest of our spotted thrushes, its larger size usually apparent because of its relatively plump body and proportionately large head which often appears peaked because this species raises its crown feathers when agitated. Woodies have bold white lores and eyering, distinctive horizontal black and white streaking on the ear coverts, and crisp, almost perfectly circular spotting that extends down the flanks, all the way on a clean white background, but stops at the lower belly. This description does not fit our second bird, so let's explore the four remaining species which, in addition to Bicknell's, belong to the genus *Catharus*.

Separating the *Catharus* thrushes without benefit of color is going to be an exercise in oversimplification. It will grate on the purists, but remember that the purpose of the quiz is not to make you an identification expert but to give you some starting points, some building blocks, and for this genus of structurally identical species, we're going to have to do it with plumage features.

Veery shows an indistinct eyering and a very weak malar stripe. Its spots are weak and light against a buffy background which is decidedly darker than its white belly. It has gray flanks but its spots do not extend down into the flank area. This is not a Veery. Veery is possible but not to be expected in fall migration in Arizona. It has nested locally in the White Mountains in the past, but not recently. If you see a Veery in Arizona, the Arizona Bird Committee wants documentation.

Swainson's Thrush typically displays the strongest face pattern of the *Catharus* congeners. It will show a warm and distinctly buffy eyering and loreal area which gives the species a pronounced "spectacled" appearance. It has dark spotting which runs together to form streaking against a warm, buffy background which fades to off-white on the belly. Based mainly on our quiz bird's

rather plain face, this is not a Swainson's. Swainson's nests locally in the White Mountains and is a rare fall migrant.

Gray-cheeked Thrush has no face pattern at all. The eyering is indistinct and incomplete, though there may be a thin, dark malar stripe. It is heavily and darkly spotted against a light, buff to off-white background. It has the darkest and most extensively colored flanks of the *Catharus* thrushes. Based mainly on our quiz bird's bold and complete eyering and its very light, probably white, chest color, this is not a Gray-cheeked. Gray-cheeked is an accidental fall migrant in Arizona, not to be expected. If you see a Gray-cheeked Thrush in Arizona, the Arizona Bird Committee wants documentation.

This Hermit Thrush was photographed at the arboretum in January, '02. Without the benefit, in living color, of the contrasting reddish tail, without the consideration of probability, and without the presence of at least half a dozen other Hermies (a veritable flock!), I believe this bird could for sure be passed off as a Gray-cheeked, possibly as a Swainson's, but probably not as a Veery and certainly not as a Woody. Hermies are common breeders in Arizona's mountains, common migrants throughout the state, and are not hard to find in the lowlands in the winter. They are, in fact, the only thrushes found in the U.S. in winter. Based on this bird's white chest, it is probably the Rocky Mountain subspecies. Watch for Hermies' distinctive behavioral characteristic of cocking and then dropping the tail, particularly after landing.

C)—Bad photo, easy bird

Often when a bird is partially occluded by vegetation, I will take the shot anyway if the face is unobstructed and sharply focused. I always think it's going to look cool to see the sharp eye peering out through the unfocused foreground. Wrong! Either the bird gets lost in the overly busy frame or, as in this case, it looks like I photographed part of my thumb, and the lower half of the bird is soft or muddy. This contrast between sharp and soft never seems to be appealing to the eye, no matter how many ways I try it.

Based on the plumage characteristics we've discussed, how would you describe this third quiz bird? It's all right up there in the paragraph beginning with "Wood Thrush . . ." isn't it? This is the Woody discovered at the arboretum in the fall of 1991 by Anita Van Auken. The quote from my notebook the day I took this photograph reads "It's great to see this fat, dapper thrush here in the desert after looking at so many plain little Hermies all these years."

One of my most memorable early birding experiences was seeing all five spotted thrushes within two days on my first trip to Pelee in mid-May of 1981. Another place to study them side-by-side is the upper Texas coast, third week of April. And you might see them together again in this space too.

Your choice of coffee could save songbirds

Had your morning coffee yet? The only connection you may see between coffee and birds is the obvious one: To be out there at the crack o' dawn when the birds are most active, you need that wake-up jolt that comes in a cup of caffeine. But there's another connection, much less evident, much more important.

September is the peak of southbound songbird migration. Have you ever thought about where your migrant songbirds are going and how they're going to survive? Most of them are going to where your coffee is coming from, and they need trees and insects there. If you want to continue enjoying their spring and fall passages, I'd like you to consider buying only "shade-grown" coffee.



Jim Burns

Special for
The Republic

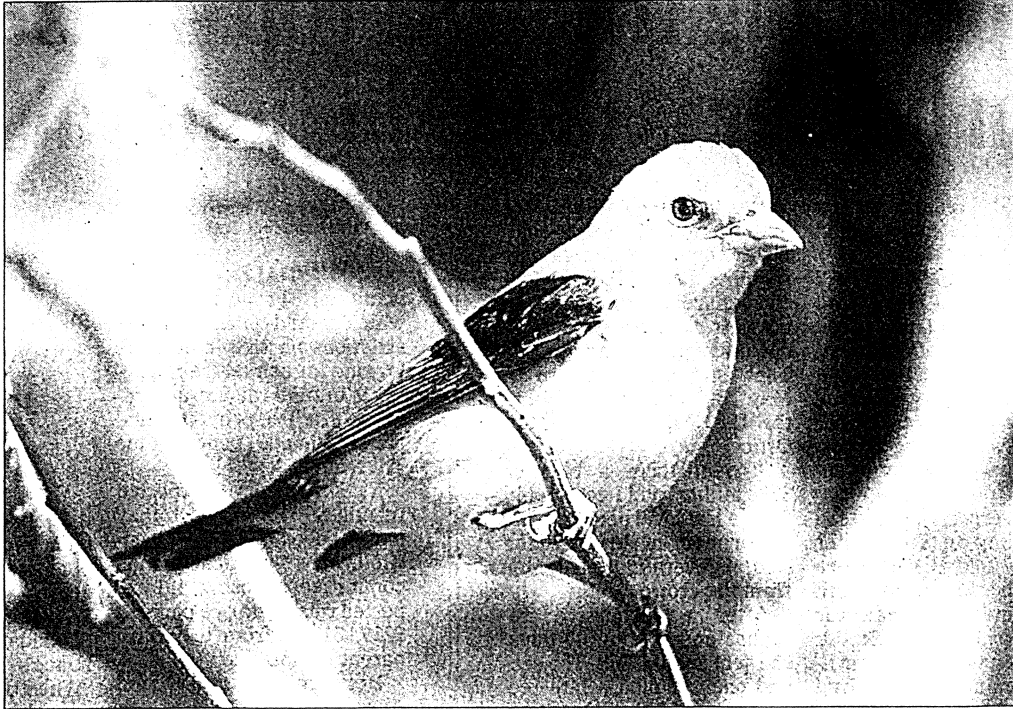
Originally, in the wild, coffee was an understory plant. Shade-grown refers to coffee that is cultivated in the traditional way, beneath a canopy of trees, typically leguminous species that fix nitrogen into the soil.

Let's connect the dots between shade-grown coffee and songbirds.

It is estimated that up to 10 billion birds breed in North America, then migrate to winter in Latin America. In the late 20th century, two factors adversely impacted our songbirds' winter habitat: slash-and-burn agriculture and the invasion of leaf rust. These have led to vast and rapid deforestation in Latin America, the latter because it induced many large coffee growers to convert their operations to sun-coffee grown with no canopy, using fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, an ecological desert with no trees, no insects and, thus, no birds.

Here are three random statistics along our dot line that will surprise, if not shock: By one estimate, more than 40 percent of Latin America's permanent cropland is devoted to coffee; in 1999, 60 percent of the remaining forest habitat in El Salvador was on shade-grown coffee plantations; during the time of greatest decline in shade-grown coffee, U.S. Fish and Wildlife surveys documented a songbird decline up to 3 percent annually. The shade-grown coffee movement by consumers has not yet reached the critical mass of the dolphin-free tuna campaign of the 1980s, but the time has come today.

In the Phoenix area, shade-grown coffee is available at Starbucks, Trader Joe's and the Sunflower Markets. Coffees carrying "organic" and "fair trade" labels imply smaller plantations operating in



JIM BURNS

The scarlet tanager is one of many species endangered in part because of loss of its wintering grounds. By supporting shade-grown coffee growers, which use forests to protect and nourish their crops, people also support birds.

the traditional way under a forest canopy, but there is much obfuscation in labeling practices. To be sure, look for the shade-grown label.

Flip to the second half of your field guide and savor the color plates of some of our most endangered songbirds: wood thrush, black-throated blue warbler, Blackburnian warbler, cerulean warbler, scarlet tanager. Loss of winter habitat is a primary cause of precipitous decline in these and other songbird species. Birds need coffee as much as you do, but they need the canopy that protects and nourishes the shade-grown varieties. Would it still be fall migration if there were no songbirds to migrate?

Jim Burns is an outdoor writer and photographer based in Scottsdale. His column appears on the first and third Fridays of the month. Reach him at hawkwowl@aol.com.

They really can sing

The common songbird can pick up the simplest grammar.

Starlings can tell the difference between a regular birdsong "sentence" and one containing a clause or another sentence of warbling, according to an April study in the journal *Nature*.

Songbirds also can add style to their songs using the same mechanism as humans, according to a March study.

X-ray movies of a singing northern cardinal reveal the bird rapidly changes its vocal tract shape, from the simple shape of a drinking straw to a voluptuous flower vase, to give the song some flavor. Sources: www.cnn.com and www.livescience.com

Twice monthly Jim Burns runs a column in the Arizona Republic. His wife, Deva is our newsletter editor. What talent from one family MAS is blessed with!



MAS publishes "Birds of Phoenix and Maricopa County"

An indispensable asset to the birdwatching community of our valley - compiled by three seasoned local birders, Janet Witzeman, Salome Demaree and Eleanor Radke. The book contains the history of bird watching in the region, bird sightings and records for the county, monthly bar-graphs of status (nesting, migratory, breeding, accidental etc.), habitat descriptions, and maps of places to find birds. First edition was 1972, second edition 1997.



1st Edition inauguration, publicity photo, *Arizona Republic*, May 1972, Eleanor Radke, Janet Witzeman, Bix Demaree

Book signing, 2nd Edition, MAS Banquet, May 1997: Authors: Eleanor Radke, Bix Demaree, Janet Witzeman

BIRDS OF PHOENIX
AND
MARICOPA COUNTY
ARIZONA



Janet Witzeman • Salome Demaree • Eleanor Radke

BIRDS OF
PHOENIX AND MARICOPA COUNTY,
ARIZONA

by
Janet Lauster Witzeman
Salome Ross Demaree
Eleanor Leland Radke

PUBLISHED BY MARICOPA AUDUBON SOCIETY
1997

Proceeds from the sale of this publication go to support the Maricopa
Audubon Society and the Hassayampa River Preserve.



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Who We Are

Maricopa Audubon Society (MAS) is National Audubon Society's Phoenix metropolitan area chapter. The chapter numbers over 3000 members

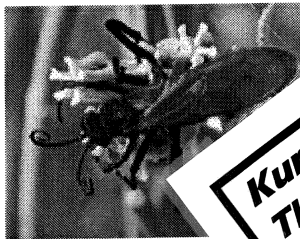


Globe, AZ: The Pinal Mountain

range just two hours east of Phoenix is known as a great birding spot, reliable for bridled titmouse, black-throated gray warbler and broad-tailed hummingbird... interesting seasonal migrants such as gray-eyed junco and red-faced warbler.

Noftsgger Hill Inn Bed & Breakfast new "Birders' Weekend" special with a guided birdwalk included at no additional charge. Reserve a guest room either July 8

Featured Photo



Tarantula Hawk.

[Click for larger image](#)

Kurt Rademaker is our chapter's talented webmaster. Thanks to Kurt our field trips, programs, birding locations, Christmas Counts and past newsletters can all be easily visited on our website. Kurt leads the MAS Christmas Count and makes it fun. His thoughtful planning brings great results.

For more information contact Kurt at kurt@birds.com

Donation Wish List

Maricopa Audubon Society is looking for a donation of a laptop computer in order to provide educational presentations to youth groups and classes. To donate please contact any board member [here](#)

MAS has participated in countless News Releases since the 1970's. Here are examples of some of their many letterheads.



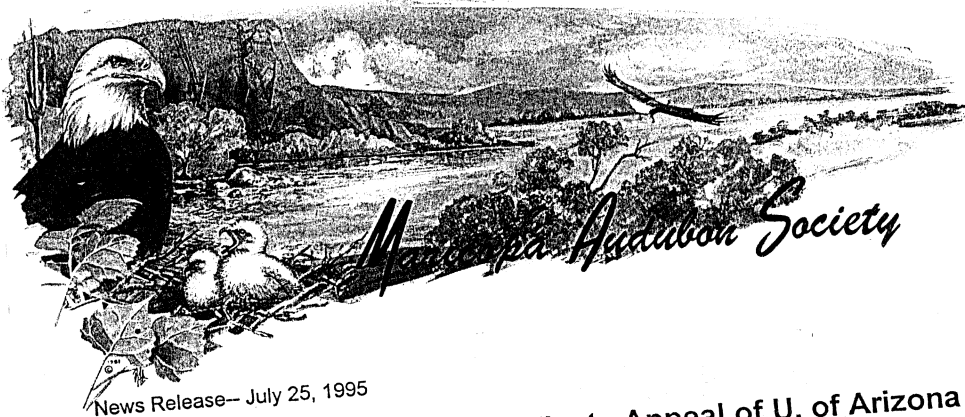
The Maricopa Audubon Society
4619 East Arcadia Lane • Phoenix, Arizona 85018

News Release - for release Friday, February 3rd.

For information:
Dr. Witzeman, 959-0052
or 254-5237

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News Release— July 25, 1995

9th Circuit Unanimously Rejects Appeal of U. of Arizona Telescope Project.
... environmental and cultural studies they have tried to
... avoid for 10 years

July 20, 1995



NEWS RELEASE: Sept. 19, 1985, 2:30 PM, Phoenix

CONSERVATION COALITION CHALLENGES CLIFF DAM

At a news conference today at the Phoenix Press Club, Audubon Society President Herb Fibel announced that a national conservation organization has been formed in Phoenix.

Maricopa Audubon Society
P.O. Box 15451, Phoenix, AZ 85060

News Release 11-05-05,

"The Rio Salado of 2005 makes sense" states Dr. Robert Witzeman, Conservation Chairperson, of the Maricopa Audubon Society. "We are pleased with the result of the Army Corps, and proud to see an Audubon Nature Center emerging there as a result of the fund-raising success of Audubon Arizona's esteemed Director Ms. Sam Campana. It is the vision and dream of John Flicker, National Audubon Society President, to bring Nature Centers to inner city citizens and minorities across the nation."

The Rio Salado of 1984-1985 made no sense at all. Witzeman points out. As proposed then, new upstream dams would radically narrow the floodplain greenbelt through Phoenix from its broad 170,000-200,000 cubic-feet/second (cfs) floodplain to a narrow greenbelt of only 50,000 cfs. This Rio Salado version proposed to place 36,000 people, their homes, and intense development deep within the banks of the former floodplain. The riverbed was peppered with methane. Their master plan proposed homes for 2000 acres of

Dam to flood wildlife area, group claims

Construction of proposed Orme Dam 10 miles east of Scottsdale would inundate valuable wildlife habitat, the Maricopa Audubon Society complained Wednesday.

It said the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation should consider some other site for the dam, which would provide flood protection and storage as part of the Central Arizona Project.

The Audubon chapter said an alternative might be Lake Pleasant reservoir, 20 miles north of Phoenix.

"For the \$90 million price tag of Orme reservoir, a great many flood-proof bridge crossings of the Salt River could be constructed in the Phoenix area and at the same time 24 miles of irreplaceable streamside wildlife habitat would have been saved," the chapter said.

The chapter said it plans a public field trip into the Orme Dam site Saturday, beginning at 8 a.m. from the Verde River bridge on Bee Line Highway.

Verde River Tour Planned

Dr. Robert Witzeman, president of the Maricopa Audubon Society, will lead a tour of the riverbottom of the Verde River Saturday "to show the public the area being threatened by Orme Dam."

The tour, which will begin at 8 a.m. where the Verde crosses Payson Highway, is open to the public.

The Audubon Society is proposing an alternate storage area be built at Lake Pleasant instead of Orme Dam to protect 15 miles along the Verde and nine miles on the

Friday, Nov. 16, 1973
OX
B-12 The Arizona Republic

Salt River vegetation to be studied

The Maricopa Audubon Society will conduct a field trip Saturday to evaluate riparian vegetation along the Salt River which will be flooded after the construction of the proposed Orme Dam, Dr. Robert A. Witzeman, society president, said Thursday.

The field inspection will begin at 8 a.m. at the parking lot of the caretaker's residence at Granite Reef Dam, 4½ miles north of the intersection of McKellips Road and the Bush Highway.

The society conducted a similar trip last month to study 15 miles of Verde River bottom to be flooded by the reservoir.

The nests of three of Arizona's estimated 20 pairs of bald eagles will be eliminated by the reservoir, along with one osprey nest, the society said. Fifty-three different species of birds were identified by the society on its Verde River trip.

Phoenix Gazette THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1973

Salt River which would be undated.

Nesting grounds for the bald eagle and osprey are in the endangered area, Witzeman said, as well as the habitats of 205 species of birds and 54 mammals. Particular-

ly important are stands of cottonwood and willow trees, he said.

The tour is free and will be designed for all ages. A second tour of the Salt River bottom is scheduled for next month.

By JOHN J. HARRIGAN

YUMA — One of the celebrities participating in the 74th annual Audubon bird count Monday in the Yuma area was Phoenix anesthesiologist Dr. Robert Witzeman, a widely-respected ornithologist.

Witzeman was here as much to inventory marshland birds as to check on the status of the scarce marshes.

Marshlands around Lake Martinez, Mitty Lake and Imperial Dam, he said, offer a rare habitat for such exotic birds as herons, snowy egrets, cattle egrets, and bitterns — and such endangered species as the black rail and the Yuma clapper rail, found nowhere else in the nation.

The land remains comparatively unspoiled. One of the indications of man's slight intrusion is the presence of owls in the count area. This year's count located two screech owls, two great horned owls and one barn owl during the one-day count. By comparison, bird counts in the Phoenix area rarely turn up owls. People tend to shoot them, he observed, "simply because they're there."

Witzeman was pleased to find a ring of cottonwoods and willows getting started around Mitty Lake. "They are a valuable part of the marsh resource," he said, and he urged local citizens to encourage the growth of cattails, willows and cottonwoods as nesting or feeding areas for the large, beautiful herons and egrets.

He said he believes that, unfortunately, the habitat for the endangered rails is threatened.

The tiny, 4-inch-tall black rail depends for survival on a stable water level only shoe-top high. Imperial Reservoir area, now withdrawn from the game refuge for eventual recreational purposes, offers such an exclusive habitat, Witzeman said. It also offers a peculiar vegetation the bird favors: A combination of three-square bullrush and salt grass, found only in the Imperial Dam area.

Fortunately, duck hunters, Arizona game and fish sporters and the U.S. Bureau

Border Lines

of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, are interested in preserving the marsh resource, he noted. Were it not for them, the entire river would have been channelized, lined with boulders and overpopulated with water skiers and speed boats, he said.

The small strip of land from the south end of Mitty Lake to the north end of Lake Martinez has all the known black rails and the only black-rail habitat from West Texas to the coast; it is trending toward the sort of development that has occurred on the strip north of Parker, where jet boats roar from dawn to dusk.

Witzeman observed that no native pelicans now exist in Louisiana, the Pelican State. DDT wiped them out and new ones had to be re-introduced from Florida.

No Wolverines are found in the Wolverine State — Michigan; trappers got them. And the country, as a whole, seems destined to kill off its the few near the Verde River the national bird — including the few near the Verde River in the Phoenix area where private development is in the offing.

The future of the black rail in Arizona, Witzeman observed, "depends on whether man wants to co-exist with it," he said.

Californians long ago drained or polluted all the marshes that once supported the black rail and drove it into extinction.

B-2 The Arizona Republic Phoenix, Thurs., Dec. 20, 1973

Ornithologist fears for habitat of rails

AUDUBON LEADER

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC Outdoors

D-16

Phoenix, Sunday Dec. 8, 1974

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 1
January 11, 1974

AGRICULTURE VS. WILDLIFE IN THE SOUTHWEST: PHREATOPHYTE CLEARING, FLOODING FOR EXTRA WATER, DESTROYS WILDLIFE HABITAT ALONG RIVERS; ORME DAM AN EXAMPLE

An ill-conceived program that has spread throughout the arid Southwest is the clearing of phreatophytes from riverbanks. Phreatophytes is a term that covers all long-rooted, water-drawing trees and plants, such as cottonwood and mesquite. The U.S. government offers incentives (increased water rights or cash payments) to farmers for cleaning out such vegetation, on the theory the trees and plants use up water from the rivers which could otherwise be used for irrigation.

However, there has been no conclusive study or even tangible evidence that removing the phreatophytes increases the flow of water in the river. On the contrary, the tight web of the root matrices of these plants holds in place the porous gravels and rocks, through which water can flow several feet beneath the arid surface. The moisture-bearing leaves maintain a higher relative humidity over the water surface than is usual in areas where there are no trees, thus reducing evaporation. The plants act as windbreaks along the river banks, cutting down the force of hot dry winds which also cause high evaporation. And, of course, the trees and underbrush offer valuable cover for wildlife, even some nesting bald eagles and ospreys.

The proposed Orme Dam portion of the Bureau of Reclamation's vast irrigation plan, the Central Arizona Project, would flood 15 miles of lush vegetation along the Verde River and nine miles along the Salt. Alternatives, per usual, have not really been looked into. Re-evaluation of the CAP in terms of modern needs and conditions (it was conceived in 1947) has not been made. Dr. Robert Witzeman, president of Maricopa Audubon, and his chapter, have been leaders in the fight to drum up citizen opposition to the Dam, but it is still an uphill job.

-The Phoenix Gazette- DECEMBER 9, 1974

Loud Objections Soar On Falconry

By DeWAYNE SMITH

After some four hours of testimony — mostly from persons in opposition — the Arizona Game and Fish Commission deferred action Saturday on proposed regulations to govern the sport of falconry.

Audubon Society members from all over the state, including a busload of 40 from Southern Arizona, mainly objected to adding three new raptors to be used in the ancient hunting activity.

"THE DEPARTMENT wanted additional time to review the contents of the testimony and include some of the suggestions," said commission member Bob Spillman of Scottsdale. "We'll probably come up with a better regulation."

Milton Evans of Flagstaff, chairman of the five-man citizen board, revealed at the

beginning of the meeting that the falconry proposal had generated "the most mail I have ever gotten on any one subject, probably more than the total I have received in two terms (11 years) on the commission."

The department and the Arizona Falconers Association had developed the proposal which was more restrictive than current rules and added the additional species.

Dr. Bob Witzeman, president of the Maricopa Audubon Society, and the prime force in generating the 30 some speakers at the meeting, drew a public apology from Bob Jantzen, director of the Game and Fish Department, for allegedly not informing him of an October meeting to finalize the proposal.

OBJECTIONS centered around the addition of the Goshawk, prairie falcon and Merlin to the regulations. Birders questioned the additions on the basis that populations were not known in the state, and that they were threatened by DDT.

The proposal called for the taking of five each during a year. Federal regulations are also pending on raptors.

In other action, the commission approved an agreement with the Forest Service on state projects constructed by State Lake Improvement Fund monies. Recent legislation eliminated Forest Service charges for normal day use of facilities at state constructed lakes on Forest Service lands.

The commission plans a special meeting Dec. 23 to cover wildlife water allocations from the Central Arizona Project, an item that wasn't finished Saturday. The next regular commission meeting has been set for Jan. 25.



Outdoor Editor

ROBERT THOMAS
PR patchup needed

SOMETIMES the Arizona Game and Fish Department is its own worst enemy.

Almost without exception the game personnel are dedicated, knowledgeable persons working at a job they love.

But on occasion they display the public relations skills of a Mack truck.

The flap the game and fish department got into with the Maricopa Audubon Society is a case in point. Another is the black eye the department received when it took away a 13-year-old boy's pet quail.

Both situations could have been handled with much more finesse and tact.

One of the department's troubles is that it is composed largely of persons who like to hunt and who believe in the necessity and rightness of hunting.

The department, rightly or wrongly, also caters to hunters through the setting of seasons and bag limits of game, through game management and hunter safety courses.

And, because hunters are a little paranoid these days with all the cheap shots they've been taking from antihunters, I think a little of this paranoia has rubbed off on the game department.

Members seem sometimes to see an antihunter lurking beneath the exterior of every conservationist.

Witness the remarks of John Russo, head of the department's game management division, when he tried to explain last week the department's oversight in not inviting the local Audubon Society to a meeting at which falconry regulations were revised.

Russo declared the Audubon members are antihunting. This was an unwarranted attack on a large segment of the outdoor-using public.

It also is untrue. Many Audubon members hunt and believe in hunting. Many are simply nonhunters. Some also are opposed to hunting.

But an entire group should not be labeled by the actions of a few.

That is the favorite tactic of the antihunter, to blacken all hunters and hunting because of the actions of a few slob hunters.

It would be easy to dismiss Russo's blast at the Audubon Society as just a slip of the tongue and not reflective of the department.

But I'm afraid that is not so. Russo's opinions about conservationists are shared, I'm convinced, after many conversations with game and fish people, by 90 per cent of the department.

Perhaps because of past criticism the department has developed a black and white attitude toward people: you are, they seem to think, either for hunting or against hunting.

Or, to be more precise, you either are for their policies and beliefs all the way, or you oppose them in all ways.

It is a circle-the wagons attitude, an us-against-the-world feeling.

I believe they are very wrong to think this way. The department, I'm convinced, has a lot more friends than its members think it has.

But the department is going to have to listen more to what the nonhunting public is saying.

Wildlife, as dictated by the legislature, does not just belong to the hunters. It belongs to all the people of the state.

Nonhunters have as much right to be heard on the policies that affect wildlife as do the hunters.

Threat To Desert Ecosystem Is Seen In Land

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1974

Tradeoffs And Proposed Dam

By ANTHONY SOMMER

The stately saguaro towered above a paloverde where a pack rat had built its nest.

On the site of Ft. McDowell footsteps crunched along a path running along the top of what once was an adobe barracks for long-ago cavalrymen.

At the confluence of the Verde and Salt rivers, children in the party waded in the cold swirling waters.

AND A Sierra Club member told the group that because of government land tradeoffs, land developers stripping away great chunks of the de-

sert and the flooding by the backwaters of proposed Orme Dam, "We may someday find there is nothing left."

About 30 members of the Sierra Club toured the area this weekend, stopping to look at the fragile desert ecosystem. Biologist Tom Danielson pointed out the homes of birds and small animals.

At a stop along the Pinnacle Peak Road just past Reata Pass, Dick Rowe, a geologist noted, "In 1961, from here to the Verde was all public land. Now it is privately owned."

THROUGH land tradeoffs by the Bureau of Land Man-

agement and the National Park Service, Rowe said, the government "has fragmented the area into an administrative horror."

By allowing parcels of land within federal lands to fall into private hands, he said, "They have created all kinds of problems in defending the national forests around them."

"Phoenix is lucky to have these lands so close," he said. "Federal land in close to the cities should be made into urban national parks, not traded a way for inaccessible pieces of land far from where the people can enjoy it." "No trespassing" signs all

along the road and developments such as Rio Verde and Fountain Hills on what had once been public land underscored his point.

ROWE suggested the land should remain in the public domain with trails for backpackers, four-wheel drive vehicles and motorcycles. Damage created by uncontrolled motorcycling across open country was evident in many scarred hillsides.

The caravan stopped for refreshment at a small grocery store where Ben Kill, the owner, visited with them on the front porch and sadly told them his store will be under water if Orme Dam is built.

Kill, a member of the Fort McDowell Tribal Council, said the tribe will fight any efforts to move them.

"We don't want to be flooded out. The people here are against being moved, especially the older people. They don't want any money at all."

"WE'RE TRYING to have the reservoir located elsewhere," he said. "They could store the water at Lake Pleasant, could pit some at Granite Reef Dam and some at Twin Buttes Dam."

"They don't have to flood an Indian reservation to bring water to Central Arizona," Kill said.

But he admitted, too, that many of the younger members of the tribe are not against moving "and they soon will outnumber the old people who love the land and don't want to leave."

Tom Danielson, MAS Conservation Chair



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AGRICULTURE VS. WILDLIFE IN THE SOUTHWEST: PHREATOPHYTE CLEARING, FLOODING FOR EXTRA WATER, DESTROYS WILDLIFE HABITAT ALONG RIVERS; ORME DAM AN EXAMPLE

An ill-conceived program that has spread throughout the arid Southwest is the clearing of phreatophytes from riverbanks. Phreatophytes is a term that covers all long-rooted, water-drawing trees and plants, such as cottonwood and mesquite. The U.S. government offers incentives (increased water rights or cash payments) to farmers for cleaning out such vegetation, on the theory the trees and plants use up water from the rivers which could otherwise be used for irrigation.

However, there has been no conclusive study or even tangible evidence that removing the phreatophytes increases the flow of water in the river. On the contrary, the tight web of the root matrices of these plants holds in place the porous gravels and rocks, through which water can flow several feet beneath the arid surface. The moisture-bearing leaves maintain a higher relative humidity over the water surface than is usual in areas where there are no trees, thus reducing evaporation. The plants act as windbreaks along the river banks, cutting down the force of hot dry winds which also cause high evaporation. And, of course, the trees and underbrush offer valuable cover for wildlife, even some nesting bald eagles and ospreys.

The proposed Orme Dam portion of the Bureau of Reclamation's vast irrigation plan, the Central Arizona Project, would flood 15 miles of lush vegetation along the Verde River and nine miles along the Salt. Alternatives, per usual, have not really been looked into. Re-evaluation of the CAP in terms of modern needs and conditions (it was conceived in 1947) has not been made. Dr. Robert Witzeman, president of Maricopa Audubon, and his chapter, have been leaders in the fight to drum up citizen opposition to the Dam, but it is still an uphill job.

EPA SUBMITS TO WESTERN STATES' PRESSURE AND ALLOWS 'LIMITED' USE OF CYANTIDE GUN; 21 WESTERN SENATORS SIGN LETTER ATTACKING INTERIOR DEPT.

In response to extreme pressure from Western states, the Environmental Protection Agency has decided to permit limited use of the M-44 cyanide device for predator control under the Experimental Use Permit section of the 1972 pesticide act. Although specific details of how distribution and use would be controlled have not yet been worked out, we hope that EPA will put every possible restriction on these lethal devices, use of which we continue to oppose.

Scathing Letter

Meanwhile, 21 Western Senators have sent a scathing letter to Secretary of the Interior Rogers C.B. Morton accusing Interior of disseminating "misleading information and distorted analyses" and of failing to "provide effective predator control." The Senators, egged on by the wool growers, are irate because the Interior

To Sec. Morton