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Short-tailed Hawk photographed by Jim Burns in the Chiricahua Mountains, AZ, August, 2002 with Canon EOS 1V body, Canon 400 mm f/2.3 lens and Fujichrome Velvia film.

PROGRAMS

Meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month, September-April, at

the Phoenix Zoo Auditorium. Meetings start at 7:30, and feature a speaker, book sales, refreshments, and a chance to socialize with fellow MAS members. Nonmembers welcome!

Join us for a pre-meeting dinner at Pete's 19th Tee, 1405 N Mill Avenue, Tempe (at the Rolling Hills Golf Course) starting at 6:00 p.m. Except for the September meeting which will be our annual potluck starting at 6:30. Each attendee is invited to bring a platter of his or her favorite h'ors de oeuvres, sufficiently large enough to serve at least six people. We'll provide the eating utensils, the plates, and the drinks, bring a friend and enjoy swapping birding stories. The regular meeting will begin at 7:30. Meals average about 45:00 miles. begin at 7:30. Meals average about \$5.00 with a variety of choices on the menu. Join us!

PROGRAM TOPICS

November 5: Kevin McCoughlin from Adventure Camera in PA—Belize and Central America. Raised as a naturalist, Kevin Loughlin developed a life-long fascination with photography and birding at an early age. He became hooked on Belize during his first visit and, with his Belizean partner, has become an expert in Central America birding. Kevin is active in environmental tourism. His company promotes community service in Belize, teaches photography and birding workshops. Come and learn about these wonderful places and birds! (www.wildsidebirding.com)

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December 3: Southwest Forest Alliance (SWFA) focuses on public education/awareness and protection of old growth forests in Arizona and New Mexico. Seeking to protect and restore public lands through scientific research, they also help forestdependent communities become selfsustaining. Their slide show covers threats to remaining old growth forests and the need to preserve these special places. Please join us 44 to show your support of this important conservation issue. (www.swfa.org)

January 7, 03: Doug Alexander — Antarctica. A 34-year Arizona resident from California, Doug Alexander is an avid student of nature photography. His diverse interests (member of the Arizona Native Plant Society, the Arizona Herpetological Society) show in his love of the Sonoran Desert. This evening, Doug broadens our horizons by taking us on a trip to the white continent. Come and enjoy this exceptional program!

his partnership in the 2002 Valley Land Fund Photo Contest with Monica and Ray Burdette, owners of El Canelo Ranch, north of Raymondville, Texas. The ranch is known in the birding world for the Ferruginous Pygmy-owls nesting in the yard at the inn. Jim is a regular contributor to the Wren-dition through the Photo Quiz and articles on Arizona's Special Species.

April 1: Peter Moulton "Beyond Birds – Dragons and Damsels in Arizona" We've all seen them – those creatures with gossamer wings, hovering and zipping about, sometimes found in a shrike's beak! Join us for a glimpse into the world of dragons and damsels (dragonflies and damselflies) and you will be amazed at their attitudes, habits and colors. Trained as a biologist, MAS member Pete Moulton has been an avid birder and naturalist for over 30 years. He has a life-long interest in photography, and became fascinated with photographing these diminutive animals that share many habitats with the birds we all enjoy seeing. Think they're always around water? Are they territorial? Join us for an engaging evening among Arizona's dragons and damsels.

May 6, 2003: Dan Fischer "Early Southwest Ornithologists - On The Trail Of Pioneering Birders". MAS is very pleased to have Dan Fischer as the guest speaker for our annual banquet. Dan has traveled the southwest for over fifty years, photographing birds and exploring our diverse environments. Dan and his wife live in a stone house in the Chiricahua Mountains in southeast Arizona, which he says isn't as warm

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT, LAURIE NESSEL

Cool evenings and double digit days are ushering us into the season that verifies our sanity for living in the desert. The general elections are recently behind us and hopefully your candidates have prevailed. Our supreme wish is for substantial and ground water and raise the moisture level of our forests to avert another catastrophic wildfire season next year. But we also must face the potential for continued drought. The SRP announced that it will cut 1/3 of it's water delivery to valley cities in 2003. The SRP reduced water allocations briefly in 1991. The last time it was reduced for a full year was in 1951. Local municipalities are forced to compensate by more groundwater pumping, augmented CAP deliveries and actually conserving water. Unbelievably, most cities are assuring their customers that prices will be contained by drawing on water contingency funds or savings elsewhere, which discourages voluntary conservation efforts.

What happens if we do get snow this and consecutive winters? Will we return to our complacent habit of unhindered growth in both our desert and forests? As Charles Babbitt pointed out in the last issue, environmentalists are not the cause of catastrophic fires. Decades of fire suppression, logging, and grazing coupled with an extended drought and high

wilderness on foot. We can ask if it is the responsibility of the government to subsidize forest development by spending millions of dollars clearing the wildland-urban interface (WUI) of fuel loads, especially if that burden is borne by publicly owned old growth. Even without "catastrophic" fires like Rodeo/Chediski, creeping sub-urbanization will require more resources to fight fires that heretofore would have better served the forest health by being allowed to burn themselves out

snowpack in the congress is trying to pass legislation to "fix" this mountains this winter to recharge our reservoirs threatening to come at the expense of the last 5% of fire resistant old growth trees. Bush's Healthy Forests Initiative would open up 10 million acres of national forests to commercial logging without any oversight. It would eliminate environmental analysis, public comment, and administrative appeal. Both plans disquise destructive timber harvesting as salvage logging, fuel reduction and forest restoration.

> Meanwhile, the Bush administration announced Sept. 20th that it would provide \$752 million in emergency aid for livestock producers in the west and elsewhere. This subsidy serves to perpetuate an already heavily subsidized, marginal industry in the arid west. Dry lands grazing is arguably more destructive than productive in the best of years. It leaves a legacy of introduced grasses crowding out natives, trampled riparian habitat, endangered and candidate species such as the Southwest Willow Flycatcher and Yellowbilled Cuckoo, and soil erosion so egregious that some liken it to mining.

February 4: Mike Rupp "Birds of the Salt River - Gillespie Dam to Coon Bluff". The owner of Rupp Aerial Photography, Inc., Mike Rupp successfully combines vocational and life interests. His documentary-style video presentation contains superb footage of birds and assorted creatures along this stretch of the Salt River. Having flown and birded around the Phoenix area for twenty years, Mike has just published "The Birdseye Guide to 101 Birding Sites, Phoenix". This book is currently available directly through Rupp Aerial (602-277-0439), at the Wild Bird Center in north Scottsdale, and at the Phoenix and Mesa locations of Wide World of Maps. Additional outlets will be available in the future. Mike has graciously agreed to have copies of this book for sale and will do a book signing for those interested. (www.ruppaerialphoto.com, select Birding Guide on the home page.)

or as cool as you would think it should be! He will be talking about his recent book, which reveals the regions' avian diversity as he traces 100 ornithologists from 1528 to 1900. As Col. Thomas Henry wrote in 1853, there "are to be found many curious birds, peculiar to the country." Copies of the book will be available for sale and Dan has graciously agreed to do a book signing for those who are interested. Please plan to attend our last event until next fall. (for more information on the book, visit www.uapress.arizona.edu and type Dan Fischer in the search bar.)

Speakers wanted: If you have ideas for speakers, or if you would like to make a presentation yourself, please contact Cynthia Donald, Program Chair, at (602) 791-5157 or planres@earhlink.net

temperatures are what caused the largest forest fire in Arizona's history. Gauged by the fire perimeter, 468,000 acres burned. The mosaic pattern of the fire path, however, left untouched acreage that provides habitat for wildlife and a baseline for recovery. Arizona Game and Fish reports that wildlife fared relatively well in Rodeo/Chediski. It is development in the forests and poor management that turned anatural, healthy event into a crisis. Building in the forest is arisky venture just as building ina flood plain or entering the

March 4: Jim Burns "El Canelo Ranch, Texas. Jim Burns, MAS writer/photographer, highlights

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Committees/ Support

From The Editor

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By Deva Burns

Activist Alert: Shawn Bauer

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AN INVESTMENT IN THE **FUTURE**

Bequests are an important source of support for the Maricopa Audubon Society. Your chapter has dedicated itself to the protection of natural world through public education and advocacy for the wiser use and preservation of our land, water, air and other irreplaceable natural resources

You can invest in the future of our natural world by making a bequest in

The overall tone of this newsletter is one of need. A need for members that will get involved in writing letters, a need for members that will make donations to help the chapter survive, and a need for members that will actively participate in projects such as the Christmas Bird Count. The Wren-dition has always tried to provide you, the members, with information. In this issue Laurie has provided contact information about Hassayampa, the Environmental Fund has provided information on how to get employers donations to help Maricopa Audubon Society, and Walter Thurber has put together this year's CBC information. Now you, the members, need to help Maricopa Audubon Society--get involved!

This final issue of the year is the time to say thank you. Thanks to all of you who have sent in articles. Whether once or many times, your contributions are greatly appreciated. I will not take up ink and paper to list everyone, but from the bottom of my heart--THANKS!

By the way--if you are not able to attend the National meeting in December, fill out the proxy that is included in this issue and send it to Herb. (If you don't like to tear up your Wren-dition, make a copy and send it!).

Now more than ever we need your contributions to maintain the programs that make the Maricopa Audubon the unique organization that appeals to you.

Another pressing issue is the state of our local chapter. With dues share from National Audubon being incrementally phased out, it is more critical than ever that we continue to lend our support both financially and management by volunteering. We have a small but dedicated group of expenses and volunteers working on securing prizes to entice all you Birdathon '03 participants. More help is always welcome. We need people to obtain prizes and donations. Or you can join or lead a birdathon team and solicit monetary pledges. Contact me about this. But I hope that the lure of prizes is not the only reason you participate. Now more than ever we need your contributions to maintain the programs that make Maricopa Audubon the unique organization that appeals to you. Your donations support out-of-town program speakers, monthly meetings, free field trips, bookstore capital, subsidized banquets, Audubon Adventures for our school children, conservation efforts and this newsletter that informs you of our many field trips, bird sightings and conservation. Last years birdathon raised \$1,200, with \$1,000 coming from an anonymous donor. Aside from this anonymous donation, Sharon Arnold and Alison Grinder were the top contributors, raising a total of \$200.00, but fell short of the \$300.00 required to win the stained glass hummingbird. Sharon and Alison received custom bead necklaces for their efforts. The stained glass prize will be rolled over to Birdathon '03, to the individual or team that raises the most money over \$300.00. Check out our the land in question, website, www.maricopaaudubon.org, to see a picture of as have Red-

In other news, The Nature Conservancy's intent to sell 35 of its 333 acre Hassayampa Preserve to the Desert Caballeros Western Museum of Wickenburg was uncovered by preserve volunteers. It was TNC's desire to keep the

story under wraps. It is part of an organization wide effort to offset concentrate on watershed protection by partnering with entities that agree to conservation easements. Whether relegating the gateway to the preserve to a living history museum is compatible with TNC's mission, to preserve natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive, remains to be seen. The endangered Southwest Willow Flycatcher nests on shouldered Hawks, only the second confirmed breeding record in the state. The Nature Conservancy has extended a comment period beyond the original Oct. 4th deadline after hearing vociferous protests from birders and preserve advocates during a meeting with preserve director, Mike Rianev (mrigney@tnc.org The Hassayampa Preserve, 49614 Hwy. 60, Wickenburg 85390, 928-684-2772, fax 2773), TNC's State Director, Pat Graham, (pgraham@TNC.org, 333 E.Virginia Ave. Suite 216, Phoenix, AZ 85004, 602-712-0048 x 18) and

your will to the Maricopa Audubon Society . Talk to your attorney for Desert Caballeros Western Museum more information on how this can be **Executive Director** Michael Ettema, on Saturday, Sept.28th. An open house is accomplished. planned at the preserve for mid- to 1 late November to address our concerns and provide a status report on the negotiations. Before then, I urge you to contact Messrs. Rigney, Graham as well as TNC's headquarters (The Nature Conservancy, 4245 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22203-1606, comment@tnc.org, (800) 628-6860), especially if you are a TNC member. 2

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Last updated: December 1, 2002

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Short-tailed Hawk photographed by Jim Burns in the Chiricahua Mountains, AZ, August, 2002 with Canon EOS 1V body, Canon 400 mm f/2.3 lens and Fujichrome Velvia film.

NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Basha's donates to Help

donate 1% of your total to 18 conservation & environmental groups including: az wildlife federation, audubon arizona, tucson audubon. native seeds/SEARCH, grand canyon trust, gray hawk nature center, oracle land trust, trout unlimited, wild at heart, az recycling coalition, southwest wildlife rehabilitation & education foundation, az association for environmental education, mcdowell sonoran land trust, willow bend environmental education center, four corners school of outdoor education, grand canyon wildlands council, maricopa audubon society, and land & water fund of the rockies. For more information go to www.efaz.org or call 480-969-3682.

Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch suffered much damage in the April fire that swept through the ranch. There is both an immediate and a long-term need for volunteers to assist with a wide-range of tasks as the Research Ranch implements a recovery and restoration plan. If you are interested in helping please call Sam Campana at 602 468 6470 for information. Please do not just show

Sandhill Crane Festival: Lodi, CA, November 8-11. For information contact the festival at 916-683-1700 or www.lodichamber.com/ cranefestival.html

up without calling.

Festival of Cranes: Socorro, NM, November 19-24. Contact information is 505-835-0424 or www.friendsofthe bosque.org/crane.

The Birdseye Guide to 101 Birding Sites, Phoenix: A new guide published by Rupp Aerial Photography. The maps are excellent, it is all in color and is \$23.95. For more information check www.ruppaerialphoto.com. Also catch the author, Mike Rupp, at February's meeting.

ABA Regional Conference:

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January 12-16, 2003 at the Salton Sea, California. For more information call the ABA at 800-850-2473 or check their website-www.americanbirding.org

Preserve Arizona: Give the cashier begin at 8:30 a.m. and last all day the charity code #29039 between 9/1 with instruction indoor s and in the and 1/31 each year and Basha's will field. Call Mark Sklarny to register or with questions (480) 317-1395.

> Birding in Cuba: February 15-24, 2003. Under a license from the U.S. Treasury Department, Grand Canyon University is offering an adult education class on the birds of Cuba that includes a 10 day trip to the major birding areas of Cuba. The focus of the trip will be to locate and study the 21 endemic birds of Cuba, as well as birds rarely found elsewhere in North America (Ivorybilled woodpecker?!?) The cost is between \$2,500 and \$3,000. Linda and Tom Rawles will be leading the trip. For more information contact Linda at Irawles@grand-canyon.edu or at (602) 279-5900.

> For a detailed itinerary email the editor and it can be sent via email. In Winging It, ABA's newsletter, is information for 2 more approved study trips to Cuba. These trips are sponsored by Manchester Community College. For information contact Gary Markowski at 860-354-5590 or cubirds@aol.com. The dates are February 13-22 and February 27- March 8.

ABA Annual Convention: June 2-8, 2003 in Eugene, Oregon. Call the ABA or check their website for more information.

More birding and nature festivals.

www.americanbirding.org and www.birdinghotspot.com

Audubon Adventures: Give the gift of discovery and share your love of the environment. The program is designated for students in grades 4-6. Introduce an entire classroom (up to 32 students) to the wonders of nature for just \$35 (plus shipping charges). You can select your favorite school or let Audubon do it for you. For orders: call 800/813-5037.

Maricopa Audubon T-Shirts—For information, contact Laurie Nessel at (480) 968-5614 or

laurienessel@hotmail.com

Do you have an interesting story to tell about birding? Please forward your submissions to the Editor-

NATIONAL AUDUBON BOARD MEETING

By Herb Fibel

The National Audubon Society Board proxy form either in the Audubon of Directors is holding its December 2002 meeting at the Arizona Biltmore on December 7th and 8th. I would encourage each of you to attend. This is the meeting where the annual board elections are held. There are 36 NAS board members. Nine of the 36 NAS board members are nominated as regional board members by the chapters in the various regions, while the remaining 27 directors are considered at-large directors. Regardless of whether the person is nominated by the regional chapters or whether he or she is nominated by the nominating committee, they all stand for election at the annual December meeting. Each year one-third (12) vear term.

Historically the nominating committee lists only twelve candidates for the twelve board openings. As required by law NAS mails out to all members a

magazine or separately, authorizing one of the NAS bigwigs to cast the vote of the proxy sender for each of the twelve nominated candidates. Last year the NAS people claimed that they had some 40,000 proxies in hand at the December meeting.

A group of chapter leaders from around the U.S. is trying to make this process more democratic, and is hoping to get more chapter oriented people elected to the NAS board. You can help by attending the meeting or by sending me the proxy below, thus allowing me to vote in your stead.

You must be a member in good standing of National Audubon on of the 36 directors are elected at the October 4, 2002. If you would like to December board meeting to a three-help, please complete the proxy and mail it to me, Herb Fibel, 1128 E. Geneva Drive, Tempe, Arizona, 85282-3940. Do not send in the proxy you receive from National Audubon.

PROXY

Instructions:

You must be a member of National Audubon Society in good standing to assign vour voting right under this proxy.

Members, please place a check next to each voting instruction you wish to authorize.

When voting for Board member candidates, you may only vote for a maximum of 12 people, because there are only 12 vacant positions.

To whom it may concern:

Know all persons by these presents, that I, the undersigned, a member of the National Audubon Society, Inc., do hereby constitute and appoint: Herbert Fibel with full power of substitution, my attorney and agent for me, in my name, place and stead, to vote my proxy the number votes I should be entitled to cast f personally present at the annual meeting of members of the National Audubon Society to be held in Phoenix, Arizona, on either Saturday, December 7, 2002 or Sunday, December 8, 2002, and at any adjourned meeting thereof as authorized below:

to vote for the election of any, but not more than 12, directors to terms expiring in 2005 or until their successors are elected, as he chooses.

Nature and Bird Photography Workshop--January 17, 2003 at the for address/e-mail. Actually, Hassayampa Preserve in Wickenberg. Open to all skill levels. Bring lunch and camera equipment. The price is \$45 which is a savings of \$75 over the regular cost. The workshop will

Deva Burns. Check the back page attaching an article to an e-mail is the absolute easiest way to submit an article. If you have pictures or slides, you do need to send those to me directly. Remember, all articles may not be published the first month after receipt.

NATIONAL STATE DIRECTOR, SAM SAMPANA

used to think being the Mayor of Scottsdale was the Best Job in the World. But then I discovered it was not: Being the Former Mayor of Scottsdale was the Best Job in the World. And now I know the real fact: being the first state director for Audubon is for sure the BEST JOB in the World! Thank you Maricopa Audubon for making me feel so welcome.

We are going to do great things together in Arizona. We have already been successful on several public policy issues. I believe our own Senator McCain provided true leadership in Washington as he broke ranks with most of his party and his President to vote against drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I had the opportunity to be with him recently in a quiet social setting and he thanked Audubon for supporting him on that critical decision! Very impressive all the way around.

We are getting Important Bird Areas nominated from all over Arizona. Scott Wilbor, the IBA co-ordinator, is doing a tremendous job being certain that the process is made easy, and that Arizona gets the national prominence it so deserves for our unique habitats for birds. (Hey! We have one of the Top Ten Birding Trails in America right here in Arizona!)

We are working hard on identifying the first site in Arizona for an Audubon Center. We know it will be in Maricopa County, probably in central Phoenix. We are building on all the work done by Maricopa and Sonoran Audubon members in the last few years. We are meeting with federal agencies, state departments, county districts and city officials. But we will come to our Maricopa Audubon chapters with the recommendations first. Stay close – this will be very exciting!

I am SO enjoying this new job. I hope to be here for the next fifteen years! Please come by soon and see us! You'll be delighted by the wonderful donated magazines, furniture, rare and wonderful books. Birds in oil, rare prints, watercolor, ironwood, saguaro ribs, clocks, plush toys, cups, calendars, cartoons, pins and plaques. Bring a contribution or just come by to say hello and appreciate fellow Audubon members' generosity!

To end on a birdnote: I think watching the release of condors into the Vermillion Cliffs one windy February Day was my first authentic "birding" experience. (Well, you have to start somewhere!) I recently saw five of those same California Condors while hiking out of the Grand Canyon after a night at Phantom Ranch. They were exquisite looking up at them from Indian Gardens

Yes, we are going to do great things together in Arizona!

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to vote in favor of any resolutions presented at the annual meeting which he believes will increase democracy in Audubon.				
to vote for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting.				
I hereby revoke any previous proxy executed by myself to authorize another to vote my proxy at the National Audubon Society December 7, 2002 or December 8, 2002, Annual Meeting of members.				
IN WITNESS WHEREOF I hereunto set my hand this day of, 2002.				
Signature				
Print Name				

Help Maricopa Audubon Society Dramatically Increase its Donations with One Letter!

ATTENTION: ARIZONA EMPLOYEES!

The Maricopa Audubon Society has expanded its audience to thousands of Arizona employees through workplace giving programs! Many concerned citizens that have never been involved with our organization are now learning about our work and having an opportunity to participate and donate to Maricopa Audubon Society programs!

Still most campaigns only include the United Way - campaigns are just beginning to include conservation & environmental groups. Employee letters are the key to opening up these campaigns to the **Maricopa Audubon Society** and many other excellent non-profit groups working on behalf of our State's environmental health and beauty!

Please take a few minutes to contact us* in and help make a big difference!

Email your name, phone number, and the name of your employer to: efaz@efaz.org (We will email a sample letter and answer any questions)

Fill out the information on our web site: http://www.efaz.org/CompanyLeads

OR

Give the Environmental Fund of Arizona a call! (480) 969-3682

We will email a sample letter to you and contact you by telephone or email.

IMPORTANT: Your name will not be shared and will be used for the sole purpose of broadening your workplace giving campaign.

The Environmental Fund for Arizona coordinates workplace campaigns for Maricopa Audubon Society



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Short-tailed Hawk photographed by Jim Burns in the Chiricahua Mountains, AZ, August, 2002 with Canon EOS 1V body, Canon 400 mm f/2.3 lens and Fujichrome Velvia film.

WINTER - 2002/2003 PHOTO QUIZ

By Jim Burns

THIS ISSUE'S CLUE—We first did crested birds in the summer of '01 and promised the next crested bird quiz would be harder. As part of this quiz, see if you can assign gender to these these birds even before you name the species. Two of these, as you can tell be comparing bill shapes, belong to the same family.



Photo

A) Good Photo, Easy Bird



B) Good Photo, Difficult Bird

C) Bad Photo,

AZ's SPECIAL SPECIES, RUFOUS-WINGED SPARROW

By Jim Burns



What is "the only common resident breeder in Arizona that has never been found in any other U.S. state? The answer is Rufous-winged Sparrow, Aimophila carpalis. This interesting piece of state birding trivia was first posed on the internet found in early spring and again during Arizona's "second spring," to make Rufous-winged Sparrow the quintessential Arizona special species, a species truly found only here in our state.

Two factors conjoin to give Rufouswinged this unique status: it is non-migratory and it requires a habitat niche which has proven to be extremely narrow. That niche, extending southward from Tucson across the Mexican border through Sonora to northern Sinaloa, is a combination of flat terrain, tall grass, mesquite, cholla, and hackberry interspersed with bare ground. Tall grass--read "ungrazed or lightly grazed"--is the key ingredient. Where you find Rufous-winged Sparrows you will typically find Black-throated Sparrows, but you won't find Rufous-winged everywhere you find Black-throated because the latter is far more adaptable, apparently tolerant of overgrazing, and evolved to thrive in short grass and sparse grass habitats.

It is fascinating and instructive to view the grazing issue through the microprism of Rufous-winged Sparrow history in southern Arizona. The penultimate U.S. species to be discovered and described to science,

found ground foraging in small family groups in loose association with Black-throateds and overwintering flocks o Brewer's Sparrows. It is perhaps more readily last winter by Rich Hoyer, Wings tour after the monsoon rains have begun, leader from Tucson, and would seem when males tee up and sing from the tops of mesquites or patches of cholla. Nests are cups of dry grasses placed low in shrubs and cactus. In wet years two broods are raised.

Special Species

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Species

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Currently one of the easiest spots to find Rufous-winged Sparrow is in the washes around the hamlet of Continental below Madera Canvon. Park in the café/gift shop parking lot, cross the road and the rail line to the east and search the sparsely vegetated areas north and south along the tracks. If it is springtime, either first or second, listen for the distinctive song which consists of two high introductory notes followed by a lower, accelerating, monotone

Other good strategies are to walk either the gravel 406 Road which loops off to the right along the main road up to Madera Canvon or the road into Chino Canyon where the pavement ends. Rufous-wingeds have also been found in Gardner Canyon north of Sonoita and in residential areas of Green Valley. Recent reports have come from the Arizona Sonoran Desert Museum on the west side of Tucson and east of Agua Caliente Park on Tucson's far east side.



Easy Bird

Our first venture into the world of crested birds was made relatively easy by the bold facial patterns of the three highlighted species. Although the new sepia tone has immeasurably added to the visual panache of the newsletter, we are still basically working in shades of black and white and, with the exception of the eyering and undertail on our third bird, in this month's quiz we are dealing with rather plain birds in rather uniform plumage. None of these birds show us much pattern or contrast.

Birders are attuned to seeing more and/or more vibrant color in male plumage, but often fail to consider pattern and contrast, irrespective of color, as another and perhaps more important male gender marker.. On this basis we might guess our first two quiz birds are females and the third is a male. Sibley refers to plumage patterns as tools of "passive communication: be which birds signal to others of their own species as well as to would be predators. Crests are certainly another of these tools. Birds, unlike birders, probably recognize and react to pattern and contrast rather than colors themselves. This is the underlying reason field trip leaders request dark, muted clothing and I often wear camouflage when I'm out with my camera.

(Continued on page 12)

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Rufous-winged Sparrow was first found by Bendire in 1872 in the Tucson area, where it proved to be abundant. Cattle were introduced to the southern Arizona grasslands in the late 1880s, a final Rufous-winged specimen was taken in 1886, and then the species "disappeared" for nearly 50 years, presumably extirpated from the state and thus from the country!

Another specimen was not found in Arizona until 1932 when the bird was Chippies are Spizellas--skinny little rediscovered on the Papago Indian Reservation near the Baboquivari Mountains, and four years later birds were seen again in Tucson in areas that had been only lightly grazed or had not hosted cattle at all. Since that time Rufous-winged Sparrow has undergone a slow but steady increase as areas of its required habitat have been taken out of grazing rotations.

Despite its comeback, Rufous-winged Phillips, Marshall, and Monson's Sparrow is still considered a local breeder. At this time of year it can often be

As you search for Rufous winged Sparrow consider why, besides its narrow habitat niche, it might have been such a late scientific discovery. It may well have been overlooked because of obvious plumage similarities with Chipping Sparrow with which it shares rufous crown and dark "mustache" marks. Additionally, the wing patch for which the Rufous-winged is named is often or even typically hidden beneath that species' scapulars. But sparrows with round crowns and notched tails--and Rufous-wingeds are Aimophilas--robust sparrows with flat crowns and long, rounded tails.

Species

Species

Though it may not be visually stunning like many of our state's special species, Rufous-winged Sparrow is a handsome sparrow and, by virtue of its singular and revealing biogeographical history in the state, well deserving of its cover status on classic Birds of Arizona

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Last updated: December 2, 2002

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Short-tailed Hawk photographed by Jim Burns in the Chiricahua Mountains, AZ, August, 2002 with Canon EOS 1V body, Canon 400 mm f/2.3 lens and Fujichrome Velvia film.

BIRDING FOR DRAGONFLIES

By Pete Moulton

"Any luck today?"

"A little. Saw a mating pair of Gray Sanddragons back at the last bend."

"Cool! That'd be a lifer for me. Where, exactly, did you see them?"

"Just go back about fifty yards, and look on the sand at the outside of the bend, right below where that Comanche Skimmer's been perching. There're some Painted Damsels in the grass there too."

"Oh wow! I've always wanted to see those!"

This little scenario is fictional, of course, but before too long I expect it to be playing out in Arizona and all over North America as birders and butterflyers begin to pay more attention to dragonflies and damselflies. We've all seen dragonflies: big, robust insects plying the air above our favorite birding ponds and lakes, or patrolling beats up and down the rivers and streams which we also patrol in search of birds. On the days when the birds aren't being too cooperative, some of us have improved the time spent waiting for them to appear by watching the antics of dragonflies, though it would be a mistake to consider these fascinating insects as 'default" subjects, suitable for study only until our real targets finally make their entrance.

Dragons obviously come in different flavors. They wear all the colors of the rainbow, from the most brilliant scarlet to the drabbest grays and browns; some are boldly, even strikingly, patterned, while others are more uniform. Arizona dragonflies vary widely in size, from the little Plateau Dragonlet (about 35mm [1.4 "] long) to the Giant Darner, which can exceed 110mm [4.3"]. Their shapes differ too, from stocky and compact to long and slender, and some have their tails expanded into obvious "clubs." Some regularly perch, others seem to be constantly on the wing. Some we see only along streams, others only at ponds, and a few kinds might be almosť anywhere.

Fewer of us may have noticed the dragons' close relatives, the damselflies, because they're usually smaller (most Arizona species are less

covers about 100 of the most common, widespread and distinctive North American species, and illustrates them mainly with Nikula's superb photographs, though the work of some other fine bugshooters is in there too. You won't find all of Arizona's 61 dragons and 52 damsels in this book, but you will learn the characteristics of the seven Families of North American dragons (five of which are known to occur in Arizona) and the five Families of North American damsels (four in Arizona). It's an excellent way to get started.

Both books employ the English names proposed by the Nomenclature Committee of the Dragonfly Society of the Americas, as well as the scientific binomials. This will be a comfort to the amateur naturalist who may find it easier to pronounce "Arizona Snaketail" than it would be to wrap the lips around "Ophiogomphus arizonicus." I'm fully aware of the value of scientific names, but certainly won't deny that some of them can be real jawbreakers.

While both books are strongly oriented toward field identification, both plainly state that some species groups still require in-hand methods. This is probably more true with the damselflies, partly because they're smaller and far less conspicuous than the dragons, partly because no real field quide is available for them yet, and partly because some groups, such as the blue Argia damsels, contain very similar species. Birders who have faced silent Empidonax flycatchers on migration, which is to say all of us, will understand this problem. On the other hand, most of the dragons and many of the damsels can be identified by the same methods we use on birds. There are some anatomical and physiological differences, of course, but those are easily dealt with.

Now we can go birding for dragonflies, and it's not too awfully different from birding for birds. The first step, naturally, is to find some odes to observe. This isn't difficult. For the most part, they'll be near surface water, precisely in the

SCIENCE WITHOUT HUMANITY: THE MT. CRAHAM TELESCOPE PROJECT

By Bob Witzeman

"Wild beasts and birds are by right not the property merely of the people who are alive today, but the property of unborn generations whose belongings we have no right to squander (President Theodore Roosevelt).

The University of Minnesota is currently considering joining the foundering University of Arizona (UofA) telescope project on Mt. Graham in Arizona. This project not only desecrates a profoundly sacred Apache mountain but also threatens an American ecological treasure.

Mt. Graham this April was designated by the U.S. Department of Interior as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as an Apache traditional cultural property of religious importance. Think of it as a Mt. Sinai, Mt. Ararat or Mount of Olives.

Nearly every U.S. Native American and environmental organization has urged the University of Minnesota not to join the project. A unanimous National Congress of American Indians, representing virtually every U.S. tribe, passed a resolution imploring UofM to go elsewhere.

Approval of this project would make a mockery of the recommendations against joining made by the UofM Faculty Senate's Advisory Committee and the UofM American Indian Advisory Board. The Faculty Senate report stated: "On ethical, material, political and cultural grounds, we cannot afford to join the MGIO project."The UofM American Indian Board wrote to President Yudof: the Advisory Board has researched the Mt. Graham issue looking at the cultural, religious, social, political and scientific aspects and we firmly believe that the University should not participate in this endeavor.

Repeated San Carlos Apache and White Mountain Apache Tribal Council resolutions over the past twelve years have opposed the project. Several declared the project "...a display of profound disrespect for a cherished feature of our original homeland as well as a

by a "sea" of Arizona desert. Here more than 18 plants and animals found nowhere else in the world have evolved.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stated that the project would destroy 10% of the "best" habitat of the endangered Mt. Graham red squirrel in its "cradle of evolution" boreal forest. UofA says that if they are ever able to obtain funding partners to complete their Large Binocular Telescope project, they will build four more telescopes. This means more pain and suffering to the Apache, as well as, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, destruction of a total of 22% of that critical boreal forest cradle of evolution.

UofA lawyers have declared in court that even if the project "was going to kill every squirrel nothing could be done about it." UA spent millions and sneaked a rider through Congress in 1988 without any hearings or public debate. They have argued in court that their rider maneuver exempts them from all U.S. Native American cultural and religious protection laws as well as all U.S. environmental laws.

Other new telescope options continuously become available. Dartmouth, Wisconsin, Florida, and Carnegie-Mellon spurned Mt. Graham and recently joined the huge 10.4meter Canary Island telescope and/or the 9.1-meter Southern African Large Telescope (SALT). Harvard, MIT and Michigan likewise rejected Mt. Graham for two massive 6-meter telescopes in Chile. A \$3,000,000 partnership is still open in SALT. Mr. Hubbard, the UofM benefactor who is offering the university \$5,000,000 to purchase seven viewing nights on the Mt. Graham Large Binocular Telescope should instead invest in SALT. The

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than 40mm [1.6"] long), much more slender, and generally inconspicuous. Dragons and damsels are closely related to each other and both groups belong to the Order Odonata, also known as "odonates," or "odes" for short; but they differ sufficiently that they fall into separate suborders: Anisoptera for the dragons, Zygoptera for the damsels. Adult dragons are bigger, sturdier insects with powerful flight; when perched, they hold their wings horizontally out to the sides and resemble little airplanes. The damsels are slender, and their flight is weak in comparison to their big relatives; at rest, they usually hold their wings backto-back just above and parallel to their abdomens, though the spreadwings (Lestidae) often perch with their wings spread out horizontally and resemble dragonflies. Adults differ in other ways, but this is enough information to assign any unfamiliar ode to its proper suborder.

If there are different species, then we ought to be able to identify them, and thereby gain access to the attendant literature where we can learn more about them; but now we hit a snag: what do we use for a field guide? As birders, we're all accustomed to the field guide concept; after all, field guides to North American birds have been around since the 1930's, and it's a rare birder indeed who didn't start his or her birding life with a Peterson or some such in a daypack, or shoved into a back pocket, readily available for onthe-spot reference. Most of us know that no field guide is perfect, so we own several in order to facilitate crosschecking; and we spend countless hours debating their relative merits. Prospective dragonflyers don't have this luxury. Even the redoubtable Peterson Field Guide series, the very series that introduced the term "field guide" to our lexicon and which now runs to over fifty volumes covering nearly every aspect of the natural world, fails to include a guide to the Odonata. We haven't had even one field guide to choose from.

In late 2000 Sidney W. Dunkle partially filled this void with the publication of his <u>Dragonflies Through Binoculars</u>. Birders may not be too familiar with the ...Through Binoculars series of field guides, but the butterflyers among us will know them well. These guides are illustrated with excellent photographs of virtually all the species they cover, but unlike most photographically illustrated bird guides they also include useful textual information. Sid took the lion's share of photographs for <u>Dragonflies Through Binoculars</u> himself; but a quick scan of the photo credits discloses the names of several other excellent bugshooters, some of whom are also known as fine birdshooters: Bob Behrstock, Blair Nikula and Dennis Paulson, to mention a few. The book covers the 307 species of dragonflies known to occur in North America, but doesn't include the 165 or so of damselflies. Sid tells me that a companion guide to damsels is in the works, but it may be a while before it finally reaches the shelves of your favorite bookstore.

More recently, this year in fact, Blair Nikula and Jacqueline Sones brought out A Beginner's Guide to Dragonflies, a Stokes guide to the basics of North American dragonfly and damselfly identification. This volume

same places where we spend the majority of our birding time. Certain species prefer various types of streams, others favor still waters, and a few might be near any kind of water; some-the Wandering Glider and Variegated Meadowhawk, to name two Arizona species-may occasionally be well out in the desert, miles from the nearest water. Water is the key factor for odes because they lay their eggs in it and their larvae are all subaquatic, emerging into the air only when they're ready to undergo their final molt into the adult form.

Arizona's roster of odonates includes widespread and common species, local species, western specialties, eastern species at their western range limits, northern species at their southern limits, desert-adapted specialties, neotropical species at their northern limits, and a few strays. Many of our species live only in strictly circumscribed habitats, and can be scarce even in their favored haunts. Some odes fly throughout the year, while others have more limited periods of emergence: a few migrate on a regular basis. None of this will seem strange to an Arizona birder. Most odonates are sexually dimorphic; that is, the males and females look different, and in at least one species of damselfly, the Rambur's Forktail, the females occur in four wildly different color morphs.

Dragonflying is similar to birding and butterflying in other ways Amateur odonatists can contribute to biogeographical knowledge, especially in Arizona, where the distributions of many odes are only poorly known. Plenty of birders and butterflyers, and not a few amateur herpetologists and botanists, live in or visit our state, but hardly anyone has studied Arizona's odonates. True, some odonatists, such as Blair Nikula and Stu Tingley, have visited Arizona for the express purpose of photographing our specialty odes; but they've usually maintained low profiles, passing themselves off as birders perhaps, and then published their photos elsewhere. We all know that amateur naturalists can provide useful data on plant and animal distributions and populations, and in fact that's why many of us do what we do. Now's the time for amateur odonatists to step up and add their own data.

The more conservation-oriented observers can study the changing populations of odes as an indirect indication of water quality. Listers will keep state and life lists, and begin to make trips to Florida, Texas and New England hoping to find new species for their lists. Some will make pilgrimages to Chicago, seeking out the federally endangered Hine's Emerald, or possibly to Gainesville for Say's Spiketail, exactly as we birders trek to Grayling to see Kirtland's Warbler. Ode "hotlines" and computer chatlines already exist in New England, Iowa and some other regions, and we can expect more to emerge as interest and awareness increase. Some subscribers to the Arizona-New Mexico bird-sighting

serious violation of our traditional religious beliefs." The United Nations High Commission on Human Rights cites the Mt. Graham observatory as a prime example of religious intolerance by government in the United States.

UofA has unsuccessfully sought partners to complete funding on their binocular telescope project for the past 15 years. During that time, over forty U.S. universities have reviewed, studied, and rejected the project. Thus far, only Notre Dame and Ohio State have joined. Reasons for the rejections included: bad science, bad economics, bad viewing weather, very bad visibility, and an egregious environmental and cultural affront that would bring shame and dishonor to any university participating. It is currently an empty observatory building waiting for parts.

Mt. Graham has more separate biotic communities than any other isolated North American mountain. It possesses the southernmost spruce-fir or boreal or "Hudsonian" forest in N. America. The tiny, virgin, boreal forest on its summit is a Galapagos-like "sky island" cradle of evolution surrounded

remaining \$2,000,000 could be used to purchase viewing time on any of a number of major telescopes worldwide.

This July Germany's Max Planck Radio Astronomy Institute refused to renew their Mt. Graham radio telescope contract with UofA. They relocated elsewhere. They said: "We were handicapped because the quality of the weather was not first class...We would like to cooperate in projects with more efficient telescopes." UofA's own studies, obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, revealed that the visibility at the Large Binocular Telescope site would be between "unacceptable" and "marginal." On a ranking of one-to-eight, with "one" as worst, it approached a "one."

The M.K. Gandhi Institute for Non-Violence advises that eight fundamental "blunders" cause all of the violence in the world. Mt. Graham telescope participants are guilty of at least four:

- --Knowledge without character.
- -- Commerce without morality.
- --Politics without principles.

Conservation

--Science without humanity.

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CLASSIFIED AD

Arivaca, SE Arizona:

Casa Bella B&B: closest lodging to California Gulch (Five-striped Sparrow!), and Buenos Aires NWR, 6 comfortable rms w/baths, secluded on 20 acres; reasonable rates incl. a delicious breakfast & other meals by arrangement. Winner top 15 most environmentally friendly B&B - Arrington Press. 877/604-3385; www.casa-bella-bandb.com.

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listserv have begun posting ode observations right along with their bird reports. And why not? Dragonflying is a lot like birding, after all.



Comanche Skimmer by Pete Moulton

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Short-tailed Hawk photographed by Jim Burns in the Chiricahua Mountains, AZ, August, 2002 with Canon EOS 1V body, Canon 400 mm f/2.3 lens and Fuilchrome Velvia film.

MARICOPA AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD TRIPS

By Mark Horlings

Car Pooling:

Maricopa Audubon Strongly encourages carpooling on filed trips. Please make every effort to organize your own carpool; consolidate vehicles at meeting places; and/or contact leaders for car pooling assistance. It is recommended that passengers reimburse drivers 5 to 10 centers per mile.

Legend:

Limit: Maximum number of participants per filed trip. Please call early to make your reservations.

Difficulty Levels 1 through 5: 1

equals very low level of exertion, short waling distance, considerable birding from vehicle and possible multiple birding stops. 5 equals very high level of difficulty with respect to exertion. Longer hiking distances are expected with possible steep trails.

Reminders:

- · Wear neutral colored clothing and sturdy walking shoes.
- · bring sunscreen, sunglasses, head protection and water
- · Avoid wearing bright colors
- · bring your binoculars
- don't forget to have FUN!!

MARICOPA AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD TRIPS **NOVEMBER, 2002 - MARCH, 2003**

Saturday, November 2nd - Boyce Thompson Arboretum. We will assemble at 7:00 a.m. in the valley and carpool 60 miles to the Arboretum. The Arboretum always produces a good variety of species and occasionally a genuine surprise. An excellent site for beginners. Bring lunch. Call leader for reservations and information.

Difficulty: 1 Leader: Marceline Van DeWater (480) 922-4910.

Tuesday, November 12 - Gilbert Library Ponds. The ponds and

Saturday, November 23 - Granite Reef Dam & Lower Salt River. We will cover a ten-mile stretch of the Salt River, below Granite Reef Dam. Excellent area for waterbirds and raptors. There is a lake entry fee. Bring water, lunch and a scope if available. We will meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Walgreen's parking lot at Contact McKellip and Bush Highway. leader for reservations and information.

Limit: 20 Difficulty: 2 Leader: Charles Saffell (480) 668-9393 mws2@qwest.net

Sunday, January 26, 2003 Flagstaff, Wintering Waterfowl.

We will meet at 8:00 a.m. at Raymond Park, on the west side of the Kachina Village/Mountainaire exit from I-17, seven miles south of Flagstaff. Wintering ducks are a staple of this trip; bald eagles, red crossbills, pinyon jays, and Lewis' woodpeckers are possibilities. We will start at the Kachina Village wetlands, then visit Lake Mary, Continental Country Club, and other sites. Bring lunch, spotting scope if available, and warm clothing.

Limit: 20 Difficulty: 2 Leader: Curt Ful (928) 773-1198

Saturday, February 15 - Gilbert

Ponds. We will visit the Gilbert wildlife habitat areas and other nearby ponds. Wintering waterfowl should be present. Possible sightings of American Avocet, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, and Peregrine Falcon. Close looks at snipe and all the common waders were a feature of this trip last year. Spotting scopes are helpful. Bring lunch. We will break up in the early afternoon. Limit 20. Difficulty 1. Call leader for information and reservations.

Co-Leaders: Herb Fibel (480) 966-5246 Mark Horlings (602) 279-2238

FIELD OBSERVATIONS - JUNE, JULY, AUGUST 2002

By Janet Witzeman

significant records that were inadvertently omitted from the summer report of a year ago.

Two adult Eared Grebes (rare in summer) were observed at the Chandler Ponds June 29, one was seen at Gila Farms Pond July 14, and by Aug. 31 the adult was accompanied by two immatures (PD,DP). This represents only the second nestincy record for Maricopa County; the first was May 31, 1992 in the same place. At least two Clark's Grebes (rare in summer) were seen with about 250 Western Grebes on Roosevelt Lake July 14 (TC) and at least one was still present there Aug. 2 (JS). About 50 Am. White Pelicans (rare in summer) were seen flying over Roosevelt Lake June 21 (JE). Two were observed at GFP Aug. 30 & 31 (PD).

There are usually a few mid-summer sightings of immature Brown Pelicans who wander north into Arizona each year, but this summer there were many more than usual. Just in the Phoenix area alone there were eleven reports of individuals: at Roosevelt Lake June 25-27 (JE), at the Gila Bend Sewage Ponds and at the heron nesting colony on Painted Rock Dam Rd. July 6 (TC), on the Salt River near Granite Reef Picnic Area July 16-17 (JoB), at Garden Lakes near 111th Ave. & Índian School Rd. July 24 (JT), at Fountain Hills July 29-Aug. 25 (JS,JiB), at Indian Bend Wash in Scottsdale July 29-Aug. 12 (WT,JiB), at Leisure World Lakes in e. Mesa Aug. 7 at least to Aug. 15 (P&MM), the lake at Hayden and Camelback Rd. in Scottsdale Aug. 9 (JiB), w, of Litchfield Park Aug. 9 (HD), and near Firebird Lake Aug. 30 (CB). Two more were seen at the Air Force Pond s. of Gila Bend Aug. 3 (TC), and in the White Mountains, one was seen near Alpine and two were seen at Luna Lake Aug. 11 (JS).

Individual Neotropic Cormorants were found in some new and unusual localities: at Alamo Lake June 11-12 (TM), at the "jaeger pond" on the

Included in this column are a few Two Gadwalls (rare in summer) were seen at the Chandler Ponds June 29 and one was seen at the pond s. of Ocotillo Rd. July 14 (PD,DP). A Gadwall was also seen at the Tres. Rios Hayfield Site June 18, 2001 (WT), A Blue-winged Teal (rare in July) was observed at GFP July 14 (PD,DP) and eight were reported at the Tres Rios Hayfield Site July 7 2001 (HB,WT). Several pairs of Cinnamon Teal, found nesting on the Lower River Rd. Pond, n. of Palo Verde, represented a new nesting locale for this uncommon breeder (TC). Two N. Shovelers (uncommon in summer) and a Green-winged Teal (rare in summer) were seen at the Chandler Ponds June 29 (PD,DP). A number of Redheads (usually considered uncommon in summer) were reported: five at El Mirage Pond June 29 (TC), six at the Chandler Ponds June 29 (PD,DP), ten at the pond s. of Ocotillo Rd. July 14 (PD,DP), and three on the Salt River near Granite Reef Picnic Area July 17 (JoB). A Ring-necked Duck (rare in summer) was observed at the s. of Ocotillo Rd. pond July 14 (PD,DP).

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Sightings

The results of this year's Bald Eagle breeding season were: of 41 occupied breeding areas, 34 pairs laid eggs (10 failed), 24 pairs hatched 46 young, and 39 fledged (which broke the old record of 31 fledged young in 1999). Three new breeding areas were discovered and one historical breeding area was reoccupied (fide AZ Game & Fish Dept.). A second year Gray Hawk, discovered at Paloma Ranch July 6 (TC) until at least mid-September (SG), was far north and west of its usual range; there have been only five previous records for Maricopa County. An early Swainson's Hawk was observed at Painted Rock Dam July 21 (BG). A Zone-tailed Hawk, seen at the Roadside Rest Area in Wickenburg June 9 (PM,CD), was a late date for that low elevation. A Zone-tailed Hawk, found at Jewel of the Creek Preserve in Cave Creek July 13 & 27 (V*rr, HB), was in a new area for this species. A Peregrine Falcon (rare in summer) was

surrounding marshes attracting migrating wildfowl, wintering raptors, and passerines. Bring a spotting scope, if available, lunch and water.

Difficulty: 1, if that. They don't get any easier. Leader: Cindy West (480) 830-5332 cwestbirdr@juno.com

Saturday, November 16 -

Cottonwood. We will visit two or three locations near Cottonwood, including Dead Horse Ranch State Park and Tavasci Marsh. We will meet in the a.m. in northern Phoenix and carpool to Cottonwood. Expect to see a variety of residents and waterfowl. Contact leader for reservations and information.

Limit: 15 Difficulty: 2 Leader: Richard Kaiser (602) 276-3312

Wednesday, March 12 -Southwest Phoenix. Visit several locations in search of Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, and various raptors, passerines, and waterbirds. We will stop at El Mirage Pond, the 115th. Avenue bridge over the Gila, and farms along Broadway Road. Bring a lunch. Call leader for information and reservations.

Limit: 20 Difficulty: 1 Leader: Bob Witzeman (602) 840-0052 No e-mails please.

Saturday, March 22 - Lost Dutchman State Park. This beautiful desert park lies at the base of the Superstition Mountain near Apache Junction. Bird feeders and baths make locating birds easy. Canyon Towhee and Pyrrhuloxia are regulars here. There is an entry fee at the park. Total of three miles to walk. Bring a lunch. Call leader for information and reservations.

Limit: 20 Difficulty: 3 Leader: Laurie Nessel (480) 968-5614 lauriénessel@hotmail.com

Please check the Christmas Bird Count List in the back for information on this year's **Christmas Bird Counts**

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Paloma Ranch Aug. 3 (TC), and at the pond s. of Ocotillo Rd. in Gilbert Aug. 25 (MS). Several Double-crested Cormorant nests with fledglings were observed at the heron nesting colony on Painted Rock Dam Rd. June 9 (HD) and about 20 were seen there July 6 (TC).

Least Bitterns were observed at the Tres Rios Cobble Ponds June 9 & 16 (PM,CD) and on June 29, a juvenile was seen there (TC), representing a new nesting area for the species. Two Least Bitterns were seen at the Tres Rios Hayfield Site June 7, 2001 (WT,HB). A Reddish Egret was discovered on the Gila River west of Hwy. 95 in w. Arizona Aug. 31 (DT) and remained at least until Sept. 4. Several Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets were found nesting at McClintock Rd. and the Salt River in Tempe June 15 (RWz,SB). Six Great Egrets, including a nest with young, 20 Snowy Egrets, including many fledglings, 70 Cattle Egrets, including fledglings, and 20 Black-crowned Night-Herons were all seen at the heron nesting colony on Painted Rock Dam Rd. July 6 (TC). Many Black-crowned Night-Herons were reported at Leisure World Lakes in early August (P&MM). A Wood Stork was discovered with the Am. White Pelicans near the Tonto Creek arm of Roosevelt Lake Auo. 20-21 (JE). A large number of 16 Black Vultures were observed on Baseline Rd., e. of 83 d Ave. July 13 (CB).

observed in Ahwatukee June 23 & 25

A Clapper Rail (a rare local summer resident) was heard calling at 115' Ave. and the Gila River July 13 (CB). An early Sora was seen at the Gilbert Water Ranch Ponds July 28 (PD). A Sandhill Crane was found June 14 at Luna Lake in the White Mountains where one was found a year ago in July (TC et al.), well away from where the species is usually found and at an unusual time of year.



Brown Pelican by Jim Burns

Over sixty Black-necked Stilts with young were observed at the pond e. of the El Mirage Pond June 29 (TC) and adults with two downy young were found at the Air Force Pond's. of Gila Bend Aug. 3, representing a new nesting locale for the species (TC). A pair of Am. Avocets were seen with three young near the Tonto Creek arm of Roosevelt Lake (JE) and a pair with four or five young were seen there July 14 (TC), representing a new locale for this species.

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Short-tailed Hawk photographed by **Jim Burns** in the Chiricahua Mountains, AZ, August, 2002 with Canon EOS 1V body, Canon 400 mm f/2.3 lens and Fujichrome Velvia film.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS - JUNE, JULY, AUGUST 2002 **Continued**

By Janet Witzeman

A Whimbrel was found near Yuma Aug. 3 (HD). An early Long-billed Curlew was seen at Fountain Hills June 30 (JS). An early Pectoral Sandpiper was observed at the Gilbert/Riggs Ponds Aug. 18 (SG,RJ). A Stilt Sandpiper was seen at the Gila Bend Sewage Ponds Aug. 11 (HD) and two were seen at the Gilbert/Riggs Ponds Aug. 31 (PM,CD), An early adult Short-billed Dowitcher was found at the Gila Bend Sewage Ponds July 6 (TC) and eight were counted there Aug. 11 (HD); another individual was seen at El Mirage Pond July 13 (CB) and a juvenile was observed at the Gilbert/Riggs Ponds Aug. 18 (SG,RJ).

Sightings

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An adult **Long-tailed Jaeger** was discovered on Nelson Reservoir in the county. A Western Tanager was seen White Mountains Aug. 11 (JS,DG). A first year **Least Tern** was found at the Air Force Pond s. of Gila Bend Aug. 3 (TC); there have been eight previous county records. Two Black Terns were reported at Painted Rock Dam July 21 (BG) and ten were counted at GFP Aug. 31 (PD). Eurasian Collared-Doves were found in a new area when three were seen at Paloma Ranch July 6; at least one remained until Aug. 3 (TC). In the White Mountains, one was observed at Springerville and two at Nutrioso Aug. I I (JS). Individual Yellow-billed Cuckoos were reported at Whitlow Dam June 20 (JBa), at Boyce Thompson Arboretum June 20 (JBa), in a Scottsdale yard June 26 (JBa) and in a s. Tempe yard July 1 (KG). A pair were observed at the Tres Rios Hayfield Site July 22, 2001 (WT,HB).

A Burrowing Owl was found in a new area at the Gilbert Water Ranch July 7 (JoB). Also one was seen e. of El Mirage Pond June 29 (TC), five were counted along Broadway e. of El Mirage Rd. July 13 (CB), and two were observed at the s. of Ocotillo were observed at the 3. of Control Rd. pond July 14 (PD,DP). A Shorteared Owl was found along the road to Green's Peak in the White Mountains June 6 (TM). An immature Broad-billed Hummingbird (a rare visitor, especially in summer) visited a Grebe, at the Sweetwater Wetlands ii.e. Phoenix feeder July 13-14 (TC).

An early Greater Pewee was found on adult Short-tailed Hawks were

Warbler was observed in an Ahwatukee yard on the early date of July 15 (RD); there were no previous July records for the county. An Ovenbird was found s. of Colorado City in n.w. Arizona June 8 (CL,TC). A MacGillivray's Warbler was still at Whitlow Dam on the late date of June 27 and two late Wilson's Warblers were seen there June 13 (JBa). A Red-faced Warbler, which is seldom seen on Mt. Ord, was observed there Aug. 26 (SG).

Unusual was the female Hepatic Tanager found in a n.e. Phoenix yard July 23 (TC); the species is a rare visitor in the lowlands in winter and has not been recorded previously in the lowlands in summer in the at Whitlow Dam on the late date of June 27 QBa). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was found at BTA June 27 (JBa). Early individual Black-headed Grosbeaks were seen in a n. Phoenix yard July 3 (BD) and at the heron nesting colony July 6 (TC). A Lazuli Bunting was observed in a Scottsdale yard on the early date of July 19 QBa). A male Indigo Bunting (a rare summer visitor) was found at Whitlow Dam June 20 (JBa).

Of interest were the dozens of Yellow-headed Blackbirds seen at the Tres Rios Hayfield Site July 22, 2001 (WT); the species was considered to be an uncommon local summer resident in the past when there were fewer mashes. A male Conunon **Grackle** was discovered at a feeder at the Toroweap Ranger Station in n. Arizona June 8 (LRfideTC). An adult male **Streak-backed Oriole** was discovered June 1 and again July 19 (but not later) along the lower San Pedro River s. of Dudleyville, where the species has nested in the past (TC,TM). A male Lawrence's Goldfinch was observed at Whitlow Dam on the late (or early?) date of June 27 (JBa).

Highlights from s.e. Arizona during this period are as follows. The Least in Tucson since early May, was still present there at the end of July. Two

Photo Quiz Answers

By Jim Burns

A) Good Photo, Easy Bird

One of the cardinal rules of bird identification is to evaluate structure rather than getting hung up on color. It's probably been awhile since you've heard the adjective "cardinal" used as a synonym for "principal" rather than to describe a shade of red. The two principal structural features of our first quiz bird are the full bushy crest and the perfect seedeater bill-conical, straight, and massive. Around the base of that bill on the throat, and in front of the eye is just a hint of black.

The structural features tell us this is Northern Cardinal, Cardinalis cardinalis. The small touches of black in the facial plumage, not extensive enough to create the pattern or contrast of our familiar "redbird," tell us this is a female of the species. You will recall the "Texas cardinal," the Pyrrhuloxia from our previous crested quiz, sported a thinner wispier crest and a blunt, curved bill often described as "parrot-like" and certainly much different than that of our 'cardinal" cardinal. This female Northern Cardinal was photographed in March of this year in the brush country of south Texas where Pyrrhuloxias outnumber "real" cardinals by perhaps three to one.

And here is more cardinal information than you wanted to know. Even when a common bird name seems a perfect fit, the etymology of that name can still be an exercise in the arcane. Cardenalis comes to us from the Latin fore door hinge, thus something important upon which a thing hinges or turns. The cardinals, in importance one rung below the Pope in the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, wear scarlet robes - cardinal robes. Twelve years of Catholic education and four years of Latin. My mother would be proud.

B) Good Photo, Difficult Bird

Although judging from this ventral view, it's hard to imagine a plainer looking bird than this, our second photo does gives us three defining structural clues: a full, vertical crest similar to our cardinal's; a thin,

"gray-brown" cardinal. Bill shape and the red iris should make it unlikely for a female Phainopeplas are closely related to the waxwings, and some taxonomists place the two in the same family.

C) Bad Photo, Easy Bird

This poor image was taken from beneath, looking up through foliage, rendering the underparts of the bird both shadowed and partially occluded. Luckily the top of the head is well lit and sharp, and the diagnostic undertail pattern is visible through the occlusion. Are we seeing a shorter crest in this photo, has this bird contracted its crest, or are we simply fooled here by the sight angle? And would these considerations make identification of this species easier? This short answer is "No."

We can all recall instances where uncrested species such as Rubycrowned Kinglet and Green-tailed Towhee appear crested by expanding their crown feathers when agitated - active non-oral communication. But have you ever seen one of our crested species relax its crest? Yes you have, but perception so strongly overrides reality that you don't remember it, and guide books seldom depict it because, after all, a fully expanded crest is the principal visual marker for a crested species. Over the years I have taken a few photos of cardinals with their guard (read "crest") down, but all have been relegated to my circular file. We birders, like other cardinals and like predator, just don't notice a cardinal with it crest relaxed. Our reality conforms too strongly to the images we have stored in our minds. And is a hindrance to all our identification issues.

There is only one bird recorded in North America with a crest, bold eyering, Phainopepla/waxwing type bill, and contrastingly white undertail pattern. Although this is an easy bird, it is not an easy identification because we have no stored memory of this species. Northern Cardinals and Phainopeplas are seen daily in

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Photo

were seen in Cave Creek June 9 (WT) and two more at Whitlow Dam June 13, with one remaining until June 27 June 13 and June 20 QBa). A few Tree Swallows were observed at the Gilbert/Riggs Ponds and at the Gila Bend sewage Ponds on the early date of July 6 (TC); they are not commonly seen before late July or Auaust, A Mountain Chickadee that showed up in a central Phoenix yard July 31 was still present the end of August (TP); there were no previous summer records in the lowlands in the county. Two pairs of Bushtits were found nesting at a lower than usual elevation at Whitlow Dam June 13 (JBa). Phainopepla is rarely seen in summer, so of interest were the many seen at the Tres Rios Hayfield Site June 18, 2001, with a few still remaining July 22, 2001 (WT).

Individual late-staying N. Parulas were observed in Watson Woods, Prescott June 18 (CT) and at Whitlow Dam (JBa). A male **Tropical Parula** was discovered at Mesquite Wash June 2 (PM,CD), providing the first record for Maricopa County and only the third record for the state. A Townsend's Warbler was seen at the Wickenburg Roadside Rest on the late Thurber, Carl Tomoff, Jolan Truan, date of June 9 (PM,CD). A Black-andwhite

Sightings Sightings Sightings Sightings Sigh

seen off and on during the summer in the vicinity of Barfoot Park at least until Aug. 27. An immature **Purple** Gallinule, discovered at Sweetwater Wetlands July 26, remained until Aug. 14 and was the first to be recorded in the state since 1993. At least one pair, and perhaps two pairs of Buff-collared Nightjars were discovered in California Gulch in mid-June. A Plain-capped Starthroat frequented a feeder in Ash Canyon, Huachuca Mts. from mid-July until Aug. 28. Two Magnolia Warblers were discovered: one at the Empire-Cienega Ranch June 19 and one in lower Carr Canyon June 23. A Baybreasted Warbler was found near Arivaca June 21. Individual Flycatcher, found in a n. Phoenix yard Kentucky Warblers were observed July 20 (CB), was unusual in an urban in French Joe Canyon June 3 and in Whitetail Canyon June 23. The pair of **Rufous-capped Warblers** in French Joe Canyon nested successfully again - two young were seen with the adults Aug. 1. The Flamecolored Tanager remained in Miller Canyon at least until Aug. 22. (Records from s.e. Arizona courtesy of the Tucson Audubon Society weekly bird tape compiled by Bill Scott).

> Farther afield, of interest was news from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service that a pair of Aplomado Falcons successfully fledged three young from a nest in s.w. New Mexico the end of July, providing the first successful nesting of this species in the U.S. in over 50 years (fide TC).

Abbreviations: Boyce Thompson Arboretum (BTA), Gila Farms Pond (GFP).

Observers: Charles Babbitt, Jack Bartley, Pat Beall, Harvey Beatty, Scott Burge, Jim Bums, Josh Bums, Troy Corman, Bix Demaree, Henry Detwiler, Pierre Deviche, Rich Ditch, Cynthia Donald, Jeff Estis, Steve Ganley, Dan Green, Kathy Groschupf, Bill Grossi, Roy Jones, Chuck LaRue, Tracy McCarthy, Pete Moulton, Pea & Mark Mowry, Dave Pearson, Timona Pittman, Liz Roberts, James Smith, Mark Stevenson, Dave Taylor, Walter Anita Van Auken, Russ Widner, Robert Witzeman.

pointed bill; and a long tail. The bill is our deserts, but this bird is neither reminiscent of the waxwing in our previous crested quiz, and the length of the tail suggests this bird may be adept in flight, perhaps even catching insects on the wing- a berry and bug specialist.

Even if we dismiss as angles of light the hint of pale feathering in the throat area and the possibility of a wingbar in the deep shadow just beneath the branch, there is, after all, one discernible bit of contrast on our bird. Note the black pupil (all birds have black pupils) and the noticeable lighter iris. Lighter irises run the gamut from bright white (Acorn Woodpecker) too deep red (Bronzed Cowbird). Wee don't know if pupil/iris contrast provides information for this bird's mate, but it certainly catches the eye ob birders.

There are only two crested passerines of uniform color with a colorful eye. Bronzed Cowbird with it demonical red eye against black plumage (or gray brown in the female) may come to mind, but even with its ruff distended, it would not display a crest of this shape, and cowbirds have heavier bills at least a little more stored memory and shorter tails than our bird. This is of bulbuls from your guide books one of tow members of the Ptilogonatidae family recorded in the U.S. This is a "black cardinal," a Phainopepla, photographed in Tucson's Agua Caiente Park in March,

Since this is a female (the solid black male, with solid black throat and no wingbars, would have appeared much darker in this black and white rendition), I guess technically it is a

seen nor expected, and you haven't encountered it as you flip the pages of our field guides unless you have a Mexican book. This second member of the Ptilogonatidae family has turned up north of Mexico only twice in my birding lifetime.

Answers

Photo

Answers

Photo

Answers

Photo

Answers

This is the male Gray Silky-Flycatcher which sojourned in El Paso in the winter of 1994-95. Two winters ago another was discovered in Southern California and was seen for several weeks. Both birds were initially considered possible escapees from the Mexican bird trade. Female Gray Silkies, like the females in this quiz, are much plainer than their males, uniformly gray-brown with the males, facial pattern, but lacking any color or contrast other than yellow undertail coverts.

I almost used a different crested bird for this slot in the quiz - a species somewhat more familiar, a very similar species of which I have very similar crummy photographs -Red-whiskered Bulbul. You would have fared better because you have event if you haven't been to south Florida, and bulbuls have more pattern and contrast than any of the birds in this quiz. It is fun and instructive form time to time in this feature to step outside your memory bank. We'll do it again.

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Last updated: December 2, 2002

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Short-tailed Hawk photographed by **Jim Burns** in the Chiricahua Mountains, AZ, August, 2002 with Canon EOS 1V body, Canon 400 mm f/2.3 lens and Fujichrome Velvia film.

Christmas

Counts

Bird

Christmas

DUES SHARE

By Herb Fibel

Should I Be Conserned?

Just as we've arrived at what many of us agree is the quintessential printed voice of the Maricopa Audubon Society, the sepia-toned, twenty-page, notified the chapters that they were thoroughly entertaining and comprehensively informative, Cactus Wren-dition, we are compelled to come face-to-face with the possibility that future renderings will hardly be recognizable as the same publication.

Although our shared membership with National Audubon is currently about 2,100 families and individuals, we feel fortunate if we see ten percent of these people involved in any of our many activities throughout the course of the year. This is typical, of course, of any organization. It is impossible to assess what impact, if any, the Wren-dition has in making the other ninety percent of our membersubscribers not only aware of the environmental problems in our world, but motivated enough to do something about them. I can tell you that based upon my own observations over the years, when we've sought reader feedback, not only for financial contributions, but even just for opinions, the results have been more than disappointing, they've been practically nil. Those are some of the downsides of sending out a newsletter to our membership, which last fiscal year cost us a little less than \$11,000.

On the positive side, though, it's nice to be able to say that the Maricopa Audubon Society is an organization of about 2,100 member families. Also, some moderately substantial bequests have been received as a result, possibly, of our suggestion to do so, which is a regular feature of the Wren-dition, and certainly some portion of our members who are currently participating in, and contributing to, our various activities, learned about these activities by reading about them in the Wrendition. Sadly, at least in my opinion, however, many of the positive benefits chapter. In the past fiscal year, of the Wren-dition can be accomplished in a much less expensive way-via our web page.

"What does all this have to do with connection. When you join the

What's with the Dues Share and Why was receiving, they were netting about \$2.38 a member. So, when they sent the chapters \$5.50 per member, they were actually going in the hole on their dues operation. Having concluded thusly, they dropping the \$5.50 index figure and were going to start using the net figure, which will be recalculated each year. On the last dues share we received, the figure used was \$2.61. We have been told that it is possible that this number could come out to zero or less, down the road, and it is something over which we have no control.

> As you can see, this is less than half of what we were receiving previously. The chapters were so incensed when they heard about NAS's plan, widespread protest occurred. NAS acceded to the protest by agreeing to phase in the new dues share arrangement. NAS decided that the first year we would receive our dues share based on the new formula, or 75% of what we would have received under the old formula, whichever was greater. The next year it would be 50% of the old formula or the new formula, whichever was greater. The next vear 25%, and thereafter our dues share would be calculated annually based upon the new formula. In September 2001 we received a dues share check for \$8,692.97, which was the 75% figure. We have not yet received this year's dues share check, and I'm unable to find out how much it will be. I estimate that it will be \$5,795, but it could go as high as \$7,000, if this year's index figure is \$2.61 again.

It is increasingly difficult to predict our dues share amount, and with the check not coming until we are more than four months into our fiscal year, the problem is compounded. In fairness I should add that NAS also sends to us an additional \$20 for each new member generated by the however, this amounted to less than \$300.

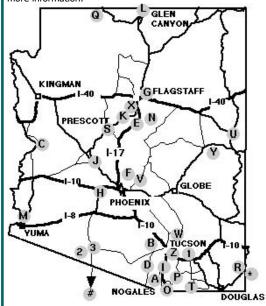
Are you still with me? Well, bless you for hanging in there, because I'm the dues share?", you ask. Here's the now coming to the point of this long epistle. Maricopa Audubon can no

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SCHEDULE

By Walter Thurber

The National Audubon Society has conducted Christmas bird counts since 1900. Volunteers from across North America and beyond take to the field during one calendar day between December 14 and January 5 to record every bird encountered within a designated 15-mile diameter circle. These records now comprise an extensive database that helps to monitor winter bird populations and the overall health of the environment.

Participants are typically assigned to teams based on their bird identification skill level and endurance. A \$5.00 participation fee defrays a portion of the cost of tabulating and publishing the count results. Help is needed on most of these counts, so find one that interests you and contact the compiler for more information.



Map Code	Count Name	Compiler	Phone			
	Saturday, December 14, 02					
Α	Atascosa Highlands	Ken Kertell	520- 327- 3822			
N	Mormon Lake	Elaine Morrall	928- 526- 1022			
#	Puerto Penasco, Sonora, MX	Steve Ganley	480- 830- 5538			
w	Santa Catalina Mountains	Bob Bates	520- 296- 5629			
Y	Timber Mesa	Jimmy Videle	928- 537- 5144			

National Audubon Society, and each year that you renew your membership, National Audubon sends a portion of your dues that you send to NAS to the chapter to which you have been assigned, based upon your Zip Code. This is known as the "NAS Dues Share". How much they send is based upon a complicated formula, which they've followed for at least the past 25 years. Simply stated, though, it came to about \$5.50 a year for each members. We also fund extensive new member and renewed member, plus \$20 for each chapter-generated new member. Since 1991 it has averaged about \$15,000 a year. Oddly, although our membership numbers grew steadily over the last decade, dues shares were all over the map-from a low in '92-'93 of \$13,288 to a way above average \$24,418 in NAS's fiscal year '99-'00, the year that the other local chapter was formed. The following year our membership went from 3,300 to about 2,100, and our dues share dropped to \$13,139.

National Audubon Society formed a taskforce, which discovered that when National Audubon subtracted its cost of obtaining new members and of renewing old members from the dues

longer send out even four issues of a newsletter to our 2,100 joint members that costs about \$2,200 an issue, when we only receive about \$6,000 total from National Audubon to provide all sorts of services to these 2,100 joint members! In addition to the newsletter we provide free monthly membership meetings, free field trips, and a public information phone line for our conservation and environmental education activities.

Where do you think we should cut back? Those few of us who are willing to put time and effort into fundraising for the chapter, or into donating our precious spare time in other ways, would far rather see the fruits of our labors be used to educate youth and save our environment than we would to see the money go to financing a flashy newsletter that goes out to the 2100 members of National Audubon assigned to our chapter, the vast majority of whom we'll never see, and will never be able count on to help our chapter volunteers save birds, other wildlife, and their habitats.

So, please be prepared for major changes in the near future in the Cactus Wren-dition itself and in the way we furnish it to you.

Sunday, December 15, 02						
K	Jerome	Gary Romig	928- 639- 1516			
Z	Tucson Valley	<u>Susan Birky</u>	520- 743- 9390			
	Monday, Dece	mber 16, 02	020			
С	Bill Williams Delta	Kathleen Blair	928- 667- 4144			
	Tuesday, December 17, 02					
	Phoenix-Tres Rios	Daniela Yellan	602- 942- 7791			
	Wednesday, De	cember 18, 02	928-			
	Prescott	<u>Carl Tomoff</u>	778- 2626			
	Thursday, Dec	ember 19, 02				
٧	Salt-Verde Rivers	<u>Josh Burns</u>	602- 468- 3002			
	Saturday, Deco	ember 21, 02				
J	Hassayampa River	<u>Vanessa Montgomery</u>	623- 465- 0012			
0	Nogales	<u>Michael Bissontz</u>	520- 577- 8778			
X	Sedona	<u>Dottie Hook</u>	928- 204- 1894			
Q	Pipe Spring Nat. Monument	Andrea Bornemeier	928- 643- 7105			
М	Martinez Lake-Yuma	Henry Detwiler	928- 783- 9468			
	Friday, Decer	nber 27, 02	602-			
Н	Gila River	Troy Corman	482- 6187			
	Saturday, Dec	ember 28, 02	619-			
3	Ajo-Cabeza Prieta NWR	David Griffin	445- 9302 928-			
G	Flagstaff-Mount Elden	Russell Balda	526- 2865 520-			
I	Green Valley-Madera Canyon	Matt Gable	578- 2139 520-			
5	Havasu NWR	Norma Miller	578- 1399 520-			
R	Portal	Arnold Moorhouse	364- 3178 520-			
Т	Ramsey Canyon	Ted Mouras	803- 0221 928-			
U	Saint Johns	<u>Brian Heap</u>	337- 4865			
	Sunday, Dece	mber 29, 02	520-			
*	Peloncillo Mountains, NM	Alan Craig	558- 2220			
Monday December 30, 02 928-						
E	Camp Verde	<u>Carl & Ruth Breitmaier</u>	282- 1041 480-			
F	Carefree	Walter Thurber	483- 6450 619-			

2	Sierra Pinta-Cabeza Prieta NWR	David Griffin	445- 9302				
Wednesday, January 1, 03							
S	Chino Valley	Russell Duerksen	928- 636- 6944				
	Friday, January 3, 03						
D	Buenos Aires NWR	Bonnie Swarbrick	520- 823- 4251				
L	Glen Canyon	John Spence	928- 608- 6267				
	Saturday, Ja	anuary 4, 03					
	Baviácora, Sonora, MX	Arnold Moorhouse	520- 364- 3178				
4	Dudleyville	Tracy McCarthey	602- 973- 0881				
Unknown							
В	Avra Valley	George Montgomery	520- 682- 8530				
6	Elfrida	Rob Hunt					
1	Saint David	Rob Hunt					
14							

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