



The Cactus Wren • dition

Volume LV, No. 3

Fall 2006



Western Bluebirds

MAS Meetings & Programs Sept. 2006 – May 2007

Cynthia Donald

Please join us for a terrific year of speakers with a wide range of topics – bird flu, Liberty Wildlife, Birding by Ear, Thailand, roadrunners, Bhutan, East Africa, and more!

Meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday of each month, September through May. Our May meeting is our Annual Banquet with a location to be announced. Please check our web site or newsletter for the location of the May 2007 banquet.

Meetings start at 7:30 p.m., and feature a general membership meeting, guest speaker, sales tables, refreshments and a chance to socialize with MAS members. Visitors are most welcome! Our September through April meetings are held in Dorrance Hall at the Desert Botanical Garden. The Garden is located at 1201 North Galvin Parkway in Phoenix, which is approximately ½ mile north of the Phoenix Zoo. Dorrance

Hall is located off the main parking lot and entry to the Garden. There will be signs directing you to the meeting. Although there is no charge to attend our general membership meetings, the Annual Banquet does require a dinner reservation and associated cost.

A pre-meeting dinner will be held at Pete's 19th Tee Restaurant, 1405 N. Mill Avenue in Tempe (at the Rolling Hills Golf Course) for the September through April meetings. Come and join us at 6:00 p.m. for a delicious meal (no-host), meet our guest speaker and say "howdy" to other birders. Meals at Pete's average \$5.00 to \$7.00.

September 5, 2006

Dr. Todd Driggers *Avian Flu*

Dr. Driggers, DVM, will discuss avian flu, which is a topic of concern for many throughout the world. Dr. Driggers' veterinary practice specializes in exotics and he consults with Liberty Wildlife, the Oasis Sanctuary, the Phoenix Zoo and other organizations.

Anne Peyton *Liberty Wildlife*

Join Anne Peyton, Craig Fischer and others as they introduce us to some of the birds of Liberty Wildlife. Liberty Wildlife rehabilitates native wildlife, including all species of animals originating in Arizona. Liberty envisions a time when wildlife is seen as an integral part of our natural world, as having a place of importance on its own, both aesthetically and practically; as part of a community instead of a commodity; as something to take care of instead of something to use up. They believe that because human beings and their activities are responsible, directly or indirectly, for

many of the injuries suffered by wildlife, we have an obligation to help animals affected by these activities. It is their belief that prevention of these injuries is of foremost importance and can best be addressed through education and conservation services promoting understanding, tolerance and coexistence in our shared community.

October 4, 2005

Roseann Hanson *Wildlife and People in East Africa: Is There Room For Both?*

Roseann Hanson will give a program on current affairs in the Rift Valley region of Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia to protect wildlife and habitat even while human populations grow – and important landscapes are being lost – at the fastest rates in history. This is a crucial topic as protection of the Earth's biodiversity faces its biggest hurdles in the developing world where budding democracies must struggle with tribalism, colonial-style wildlife management and poverty. But there is hope in community-based efforts that are winning back the spaces for wildlife.

Now executive director of the new African Conservation Fund, which is helping community-based conservation efforts in East Africa reach US donors and technology, Roseann is a native Arizonan and has spent 20 years working in conservation as a writer, conservation program director and naturalist guide. She and her husband Jonathan were board members of Tucson Audubon, and she is past director of TAS' Institute of Desert Ecology. She has been involved with conservation and ecotourism efforts in East Africa since 2002. She will have just returned from a 6-week trip to the region, and promises lots of avian images,

Committees/Support

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Maricopa Audubon Phone

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"Man's greatest joy is to teach the love of nature." Anon

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 the 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 your will to the Maricopa Audubon Society. Talk to your attorney for more information on how this can be accomplished.

Parent Western Bluebirds exchanging prey item; photographed by Jim Burns in Coconino County, AZ, March, 2006 with Canon EOS 1D body and Canon 600mm f/4 lens.



From the Editor, Deva Burns

FWater! The lifeblood of all creatures on earth. Arizona! A place of incredible beauty and incredible growth. How do we balance water and growth? Twice in less than a year, the unthinkable happened—the San Pedro, the last free flowing river in Arizona, stopped. And yet, the politicians (and the developers contributing to them) assure us all is well. Water is what conservationists in Arizona need to rally around. Without concerned citizens “standing steadfastly in the way of the tanks”, Arizona’s loveliness will disappear.

In this issue, Herb Fibel states that water will be the major issue for Maricopa Audubon

for the next 50 years. In past issues, Bob Witzeman has consistently and concisely presented Arizona’s conservation issues—water being a primary topic. This issue he takes a break and gives us a marvelous history tour of National Audubon and various publications. Jim Burns’s photo quiz takes a different tack this time, and Cynthia Donald presents an interesting line-up of speakers for the coming year.

Be sure you check the back of the Wren-dition for the list of our new officers, and don’t forget after a long hot summer monthly meetings begin again in September.

Well, Maricopa Audubon seems to have come to a major fork in the road and we have taken that fork. As you can see on the list of officers and directors on the back cover of the *Wren-dition*, two re-elected board members resigned and were replaced at our most recent board meeting. One board member has shifted to another position. Your editor has been unanimously selected once again to steer the *Cactus Wren-dition*, and Maricopa Audubon is ready to embark on its fifty-fourth year.

I see our Chapter's mission as being two-fold: (1) Educating young and old on how maintaining a healthy and hospitable environment plays an important role in the quality of our present and future lives and (2) Standing steadfastly in the way of the rumbling tanks which are bent upon a course of destroying our environment in order to achieve their short-sighted economic goals.

How does Maricopa Audubon Society go about achieving this mission? Historically the lure of the Audubon Society has been the bringing together of people who enjoy

watching and identifying wild birds. The Audubon Society was actually founded by a group of people seeking to rally public support for legislation that would put an end to the killing by commercial interests of the beautiful American Egrets (later known as Common Egrets and now bearing the name Great Egrets) in order to use their feathers on women's hats and boas. If we can demonstrate to the general public why they should appreciate the beauty and diversity of our avifauna, it is an easy segue to then instill in them the importance of habitat preservation and biodiversity. Our monthly membership meetings are more than social get-togethers for birders, although they certainly are that. They help people learn more about birds and their habitats through educational and entertaining programs.

Maricopa Audubon keeps in touch with you via the *Cactus Wren-dition*, periodic e-mail announcements, and our outstanding website.

Our field trips take novices and old-timers alike to diverse birding hotspots, where

they can see firsthand the intimate yet complex relationship between healthy habitats and biodiversity. Throw into the mix some of the other activities in which our members are involved, such as education booths at nature festivals, birding classes, Christmas Bird Counts, Big Sits!, educational programs for schools and organizations, and the creation of Important Birding Area designations, and we have set the hook of creating interest and support..

I see the over-commitment of Arizona's limited, and quite possibly shrinking, water resource as being our major environmental challenge in the rapidly growing Southwest over the course of the next fifty years. We must find ways to counteract our opponents' claims that we are supporting the welfare of birds, whose survival depends on the preservation of our ever-diminishing riparian habitats, over the well-being of people, and convince folks that Arizona will not be an idyllic place to live in the future if it loses its biodiversity as the result of its population growth.

So, All Aboard! We're setting sail.

MAS Meetings & Programs Sept. 2006 – May 2007

Continued

especially from the seldom-visited Omo River region of southern Ethiopia.

November 7, 2006
December 5, 2006
January 6, 2006

These next three meetings are being finalized. Possible topics include Birds of Bhutan, Birding in Baja, a scope workshop, and others...stay tuned for updates!

February 6, 2007

Alvin and Arlene Scheuer *Nesting Roadrunners*

Join Sonoran Audubon members Al and Arlene Scheuer as they present a video they created of the breeding, nest building, egg laying, feeding and fledging of a roadrunner family from February through May 2001 on their two-acre Backyard Wildlife Habitat. Their property has been certified by the National Wildlife Federation, and contributes research to the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology. Many of us have seen adult roadrunners in Arizona, but how many have had the privilege of actually seeing a family

raise and fledge young?

March 6, 2007

Bob Witzeman *Birds of Thailand*

Bob is well-known to us for his informative presentations. He recently went on a Field Guides tour in Thailand, lead by a resident of that country. Bob says that the digital bird shots are high quality – done by digiscoping birdwatcher fanatics. Their guide also sent him an awesome collection of digiscoping shots taken over a period of time while leading trips. This should be a wonderful trip around Thailand and its fantastic wildlife.

April 3, 2007

MAS Elections

Following the elections of 2006, the MAS Board determined to separate elections and the annual banquet in future years. So this year's elections will be held indoors with a reduced program schedule. If we have numerous candidates for positions, we will show a short film, Life List. If we have a slate of candidates, we will have a regular

program (possibly a scope workshop or a segment from *The Life of Birds*).

May 1, 2007

Larry Liese *Birding By Ear*

We are fortunate to have Larry speak at our banquet! A long-time member of Tucson Audubon, Larry hails from Vermont and is a terrific guide whether in Mexico, Central America, or Arizona. He leads field trips, birding and natural history trips throughout southern Arizona, as well as Belize, Chihuahua, Jalisco, Mata Ortiz and other south of the border spots. Larry started the *Dastardly Duos* column for Tucson Audubon and teaches a course on birding by ear. He loves sharing his passion for birds with people of all levels and his excitement and enthusiasm are contagious. Come and learn about birding by ear just in time to practice!

NOTE: The May program will be associated with our Annual Banquet. Check our web site, newsletter, or contact a board member for location information.

Notes & Announcements

Board Minutes—Did you know that you could request Board Meeting minutes? Well, you can. Just contact Secretary Maureen Stewart or any Board Member. They will be available once they have been approved.

Globe, AZ: The Pinal Mountain range two hours east of Phoenix is known as a great birding spot, reliable for bridled titmouse, black-throated gray warbler and broad-tailed hummingbird...and with interesting seasonal migrants such as gray vireo, yellow-eyed junco and red-faced warbler. Noftsgger Hill Inn Bed & Breakfast in Globe is offering a new "Birders' Weekend" special during July and August, with a guided birdwalk in the Pinals arranged and included at no additional charge for five couples who reserve a guest room at the former Globe schoolhouse either **July 8, July 28 or August 25**. For complete details about the "Bed & Breakfast & Birds package, call Ayala toll-free 877.780.2479 or 928.425.2260, or visit the website www.noftsggerhillinn.com.

FESTIVAL OF THE CRANES & SOCORRO, NEW MEXICO – Thursday, November 16 – Sunday, November 19, 2006

A professional wildlife biologist specializing in birds will accompany us from Tucson to the annual Festival of the Cranes in charming Socorro, NM and at the Bosque del Apache (BDA) NWR. We will keep busy by attending the annual dinner and doing the fly-out walk, the fly-in walk, the BDA manager's tour, the mountain birding tour, the Chihuahuas Desert flora tour, the BDA wonder walk, the BDA loop drives, the BDA pond bridge, a star party, and museums in Socorro. We'll also make en-route visits to the Deming Luna-Mimbres Museum and the NRAO Very Large Array (VLA) radiotelescopes on the Plains of San Augustin. Some activities will require short walks/hikes; you may participate in these as much or as little as you wish. Daytime temperatures will be 50-60 degrees, nights 20-30 degrees. Tour fee includes transportation by van, guide fees, a clean and comfy motel in Socorro, all entry fees, festival registration fee, and fees for all of the festival activities listed above. Chief Guide and Top Tyranno: Stephen H. Buck, Ph.D.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 17, 2006 (Festival events fill up fast, so early reservations are required)
\$465 Per Person DOUBLE OCCUPANCY - \$565 PER PERSON SINGLE OCCUPANCY CALL 520-577-6546 TO SIGN UP OR FOR MORE INFORMATION E-mail to tyranotours@comcast.net

Expanded Book Store Selections—We now have a full selection of books on birding topics for adults and children alike. Maricopa Audubon logo items will include binocular harnesses, tote bags, UV-protection caps, and baseball caps. We will also have bird-themed sandstone coasters and note-cards. Newly-designed t-shirts will also be available. Remember that Friends of Maricopa Audubon members get a 10% discount and that your purchase helps to support our event, education and conservation efforts

Arizona Watchable Wildlife Tourism Association (AWWTA)—Check out their website for events around the state—www.azwildlife.com.

Museum of Northern Arizona—They sponsor Venture trips that explore and discover the Colorado Plateau in the Four Corners area. For more information contact Lisa Lamberson at 928-774-5211 x241 or llamberson@mna.mus.az.us.

Environmental Fund—Green At Work—Thousands of employees can now support Maricopa Audubon Society (MAS) in their annual fall charity campaign. The Environmental Fund for Arizona get thousands of Arizona employees involved with our group and many other conservation groups through payroll deduction workplace campaigns. Help spread the word at your office about checking off "Green" choices this fall!

If your employer does not yet include environmental/conservation groups, please contact Solange Whitehead at the Environmental Fund for Arizona: efaz@efaz.org or (480) 510-5511.

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.

Membership Information—There are two ways to get on the mailing list in order to receive the *Cactus Wren-dition*. First, by joining the National Audubon Society. If you live in Maricopa County, generally east of 43rd Avenue, when National Audubon receives your check and membership application, Maricopa Audubon will receive your name and address from National, and will add you to Maricopa Audubon's *Wren-dition* mailing list, or you can make a check payable to National Audubon Society for \$20.00 and mail it with your National Audubon Society membership application to: Kryss Hammer, Maricopa Audubon Society's membership chair, 1121 N Terrace Road, Chandler, AZ 85226, and she will forward it on to National Audubon. In the latter case, Maricopa Audubon will receive a rebate of your **entire** \$20.00 National Audubon membership fee the first year. Secondly, by becoming a "Friend of Maricopa Audubon". In this case you will become a member of Maricopa Audubon Society only, and will not receive the Audubon magazine, or any of the "benefits" of National Audubon membership but you will receive one year of the *Cactus Wren-dition*. "Friends" contribution categories in the form of a check made payable to Maricopa Audubon Society, and mailed to Kryss Hammer, Maricopa Audubon Society's membership chair, 1121 N Terrace Road, Chandler, AZ 85226. The categories are—Anna's-\$20; Verdin-\$35-\$99; LeConte's Thrasher-\$100-\$249; Cactus Wren-\$250-\$999; Harris's Hawk *-\$1,000-\$9,999; and California Condor *-\$10,000+. *These levels include a signed, framed photograph by Jim Burns of your designated raptor. All "Friends" members receive various discounts. If you reside outside the above-indicated geographical area, the only way to receive a subscription to the *Cactus Wren-dition* is to become a "Friend" of Maricopa Audubon Society.

Credit Card—The American Birding Association has negotiated an agreement with US Bank to provide ABA members a distinctive US BANK VISA Card. Using your card will not only show your connection to ABA and birding but also, at no additional cost to you, provide a contribution to ABA. If interested, contact www.americanbirding.org. I think Audubon should offer something like this!

The Dovetail Directory (www.dovetailbirding.com): The Directory is an online catalogue of world birding tours, and our goal is to help birders locate that special birding tour, to any of 85 countries around the world. This is a free service. There are no hidden costs or surcharges. Tours are offered at the operators price. In addition to tours, the Directory also carries a comprehensive inventory of birding-related books. For your further convenience we maintain a North American, toll-free number (877) 881-1145, and someone will always happy to take your call.

Shade-grown coffee: If you are searching for a source to purchase shade-grown coffee and haven't been successful, try ABA Sales. They carry seven kinds of Song Bird Coffee. For information call 800-634-7736. Also, Trader Joe's carries shade grown coffee. Another source is Toucanet Coffee/Avian Ecologist. They are in the business of serving Smithsonian certified, bird-friendly coffee. All of their varieties are organic and shade grown. They also have fair trade varieties. Please visit www.toucanet-coffee.com for more information about their goals or

to place an order. The website also includes an online community for bird and/or coffee lovers. They invite you to join.

More birding and nature festivals. www.american-birding.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 \$38.50 (plus shipping charges). You can select your favorite school or let Audubon do it for you. Each packet contains the following:

1. The Nature of Spiders. This is an outstanding brochure that distinguishes between spiders and insects, describes spiders prey, identifies the various parts of the spider body, and an interesting section on the differences between "Hunters and Trappers." Also included in this full color newsletter are sections entitled—"Along Came a Spider," "Friends, Not Foes," "Nominate a State Spider," and finally a true-false quiz on "The Truth about Spiders."
2. Birds of Prey: Hunters of the Air. This full color tabloid style news journal covers RAPTORS—i.e., hawks, falcons, eagles, and owls. One section is devoted to the subject of "The Hunter and the Hunted" and is a match-up exercise to choose the correct raptor to the prey animal. Other subject matters are: "Are Bald Eagles really Bald?," "The Truth about Raptors" (a true-false test about the presented subject matter), "Whats your Ecological Address?" (where to find raptors), and finally "Raptor Rescue" (injured raptors programs).

3. Real Life Dragons and Damsels
This is an outstanding full color pictorial of the life of "Dragonflies and Damselflies at Home"—and the differences between these two insects. Interesting sub sections include—"Habitat Health Check-Up," "Eyes on the Dragonflies," "Dragons, Damsels, and You" (Living together) and finally a quiz entitled, "What's your Ecological Address?"

These 3 above Adventures are the best I have seen. They are all great, and offer our kids wonderful educational opportunities. There is also a chart/poster included with each kit, that gets the kids involved in schoolyard/home projects and nature.

Each classroom KIT contains materials for 32 students. And, contained therein is a teachers & students 64 page guide/classroom resource manual, as well. Lastly, as a FREE BONUS each kit recipient will receive a one year subscription to Audubon Magazine, an affiliation with the local MAS Chapter, and an official certificate of participation.

If you have a nominee (teacher and school), please have them get in touch with Doug Green @ my e-mail address: azbotman@yahoo.com or call me @ 480-998-5638.

We will need the following information on all potential teacher candidates.

- A.) School name and street address, city, zip code.
- B.) Teachers full name & email address.
- C.) Grades Taught—3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, etc.

I'm really impressed with this school years' (2006-07) program. If more information is needed than shown above—try www.audubon.org/educate/aa to see Audubon Adventures on line.

Maricopa Audubon T-Shirts—For information, contact Laurie Nessel at (480) 968-5614 or mail to: laurienessel@hotmail.com

Do you have an interesting story to tell about birding? Please forward your **submissions** to the Editor—Deva Burns. Check the back page for address/e-mail. Actually, 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.



A – Cryptic Coloration

THIS ISSUE'S CLUE —

Shorebirds are passing through again, but this Photo Quiz is more about your vision and their survival than it is about identification. It was inspired by Art Wolfe's new book, *Vanishing Act*, and a recent article in *Birder's World* magazine.



B – Disruptive Coloration



C – Countershading

All Photos by Jim Burns



of interest

Basic Birding Classes

Herb Fibel

Do you enjoy looking at birds but feel that you lack the necessary skills and knowledge concerning available resources that would enable you to make birding a serious avocation? Help is available to turn you from an outsider into a birding cognoscenti.

I teach an adult basic birding class in Tempe, which is co-sponsored by Tempe Parks and Recreation and Maricopa Audubon. Currently the class takes place on seven consecutive Wednesday evenings from 7-8 p.m. The next class starts on September 20, 2006, in the conference room at the Pyle Center at Rural and

Southern in Tempe. Included are three half day weekend field trips, whose dates are set by the class at the first session. We carpool on the field trips. Registration for this next class starts August 14th for Tempe residents and August 21st for everyone else. The cost is \$24 per person for residents and non-residents alike. You can't register by phone, but you can call Lyn Cahill-Ramirez, Recreation Coordinator, at Tempe Parks and Recreation at (480) 350-5263 for more information. You can register Online by logging on to pkreonline.tempe.gov. The bar code for the class is 3036. We try to limit the class to 12 participants, but that

number is somewhat flexible.

What subjects do we cover? Here's a partial list: Necessary Equipment, Basic Species Identification, What You Should Do When You Think You've Spotted a Rare Bird, Publications Birders Read, Birding Ethics, Birder's Humor, Incorporating Birding Into Your Travels, Bird Lists and Listers, CBCs and The Connection Between Birding and Conservation.

There are three sets of classes a year. If September is not possible for you, the next session after that begins towards the end of January, and the spring session starts near the end of March.

Cosanti Helps MAS Raise Funds

Laurie Nessel

At our annual banquet last May, MAS held a silent auction with items donated by our members. We raised \$708 of unrestricted funds. Top money raiser was a cast bronze Cosanti bell that retails for \$160. That price was met by bidder Beverly Shaver. Thank you Beverly and our anonymous donor for your generosity!

The bell was a Save the Eagle model from amongst Cosanti's Cause Bells collection. Cosanti contributes \$16 from each sale of Cause Bells to a charity of your choice from a list of progressive causes. MAS has received over \$1000 from Cosanti sales over the years. Founded in 1956, the Cosanti Foundation supports Paolo Soleri's philosophy of combining ecology and architecture for urban living. This concept is manifested in the experimental habitat, Arcosanti, which minimizes the use of energy, materials and land, reduces waste and pollution and provides common natural areas including riparian stretches of the Agua Fria River north of Cordes Junction. Cosanti bells are unique and make ideal gifts. Please choose MAS as the charitable recipient of your next bell purchase! For more information or to purchase bells, visit their website [http://](http://www.cosanti.com/)

www.cosanti.com/ or Cosanti Originals, 6433 E Doubletree Ranch Rd, Paradise Valley, AZ 85253, 800-752-3187

We wish to thank all of the following members who generously donated an item or items, for the auction:

- Kathe Anderson
- Arizona Native Plant Society
- Mel Bramley
- Gretchen Burgess
- Sam Campana
- David Chorlton
- Joy Dingley
- Cynthia Donald
- Marjorie Eckman
- Herb Fibel
- Doug Green
- Richard and Karen Kaiser
- Maricopa Audubon Society
- Uta Moltrecht
- Pete Moulton
- Laurie Nessel
- Sarah Porter
- Diane and David Reesor
- Mike Rupp
- Walter and Fran Thurber
- Gloria and Don Traicoff
- Bob and Janet Witzeman

Thanks also to all the people who generously bid on these items. We will continue to hold silent auctions at our annual banquet. If you wish to donate something for next years auction, please contact auction organizer, Laurienessel@hotmail.com, 480.968.5614.

STATE OF THE CHAPTER FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED 5/31/2006

As required by our by-laws here is a summary of the Chapter's Income and Expenditure for the fiscal year ended 5/31/2006

INCOME	
National Audubon due shares & incentive payments	\$ 6347.75
Friends of Maricopa Audubon	5845.00
Grant for Binoculars from National Audubon	600.00
Books and T Shirt Sales	7926.72
Environmental Fund for Arizona	779.02
Fundraising Activities	2710.30
Miscellaneous Donations	1437.00
Realized interest and dividends	210.05
Total Income	25855.84

EXPENDITURE	
Wrendition	10994.94
Dues and Donations	520.00
Liability Insurance	1488.00
Cost of sales stock & T Shirts	5362.66
Officer and Committee Expenses	808.53
Telephone	575.60
Financial Review	510.00
Conservation	1575.85
Printing and Postage Costs re Brochures	2177.39
Banquet	214.00
Website and Publicity	359.45
Binoculars bought with grant	600.00
Miscellaneous	418.83
Total Expenditure	25605.25

The annual CPA review of the books is scheduled for August 2006. If you have any questions please call Joy Dingley 480 419 9804

White-Eared Hummingbird

Jim Burns

In Hummingbirds Of North America, Sheri Williamson states that Arizona's White-eared Hummingbird is "rare and local in the United States and likely to remain so." Sheri must be scratching her head over this species' "invasion" of Trans-Pecos Texas in the summer of '05 which produced the second nesting for that state, at least eight other birds there, and the first state record for Colorado.

Despite this widespread and unprecedented movement (drought in Mexico, forest clearing there?) through other regions of the Southwest, *Hylocharis leucotis*, remains an Arizona special species, a species found only here or more easily here than in any other state. South of the border, though, in mountain forests from Sonora and Coahuila in Mexico south to Nicaragua this is a common species. Indeed, in some areas of preferred habitat there, males will congregate in loose groups and sing competitively to attract females.

The genus name, *Hylocharis*, is from the Greek, "delight of the woods," and the species name, *leucotis*, comes to us from Greek via Latin and means "white-eared." This is a medium-sized, stocky hummer with a short, straight, red-to-orange bill tipped with black, named for the wide, bright white feathered postocular (behind the eye) stripe which contrasts with its black cheek to produce a bold and unmistakable face pattern. This visual delight is enhanced by iridescence on the crown and chin which appears black in shadowed light but a startling violet blue at certain angles of sunlight. The gorget of the male and the sides and flanks of both male and female are a blazing green for which adjectives such as "glittering" and "spangled" are routinely used, and the back of both sexes is bright golden green.

No discussion of White-eareds is complete without a cautionary note regarding the visual similarity between

juveniles and females of this species and those of the Broad-billed. Both species have black-tipped red bills and a white postocular stripe, but White-eared is a smaller, plumper hummer, bill short and straight. The Broad-billed is longer and leaner with a longer, decurved bill. The "ear" on our White-eared is wide, striking, and very obvious, whereas that of juvenile and adult female Broad-billeds is thin, dirty white, and often indistinct. Female Broad-billeds, with their plain gray throats, are one of the few female hummers without any throat spots. The throat on female White-eareds is lightly spotted with green.

In Arizona White-eared is a breeding migrant and there are less than a handful of overwintering documentations for this species. Although



Photo by Jim Burns

the canyons on the east side of the Huachucas, primarily Ramsey and Miller, have been reliable summertime places to find this species for many years now, there have been multiple sightings over the years at other southern Arizona locations such as Madera Canyon (Chuparosa Inn, Madera Kubo Bed & Breakfast, Santa Rita Lodge) and the Southwestern Research Station in the Chiricahuas.

Preferred habitat is pine/oak woodlands up to 10,000 feet in conifer forest, typically near water. White-eared breeding ecology is similar to

other hummingbird species—the female does all the work, but White-eareds are somewhat unique because a female will visit the male singing congregations, then entice a male to follow her back to her chosen nesting territory where she engages him in a mutual flight display featuring face-to-face hovering.

White-eareds are relatively aggressive, and males are known to guard and defend both flower patches and individual feeders and run off even the larger Magnificents and Blue-throateds. The most frequently heard White-eared vocalization is one reminiscent of Anna's, a sharp, prolonged chipping, and this is often given in flight or food source defense. White-eareds feed from low to high, but typically do not perch very high and usually afford killer looks to keen observers.

Beatty's Guest Ranch, at the end of the Miller Canyon Road, has for the last decade and a half been the place to go for assured White-eared sightings. In August of 1998 I made my first trek to Tom Beatty's feeders and was able to photograph a male, a female, and an immature. The entry in my logbook regarding the male whose photo accompanies this article reads "FINALLY A MALE; MUCH MORE COLORFUL THAN NAT GEO BOOK; PURPLE THROAT MAKES ORANGE ON BILL APPEAR FLORESCENT PINK!!!!"

This is a truly spectacular hummer that, but for its rarity and the fact that it is so seldomly seen relative to our Broad-billed, would certainly rival the latter as the real gem of Arizona's special hummingbird species.

Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips

Laurie Nessel

The following field trips are sponsored by the Maricopa Audubon Society who have an organized program of trips throughout the year. They are open to the public and are free and include all skill levels. All the trips are Difficulty Level 1 unless noted otherwise.

CAR POOLING:

Maricopa Audubon strongly encourages carpooling on field 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 cents per mile.

LEGEND:

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

Difficulty Levels 1 through 5: 1 equals very low level of exertion, short walking distances, considerable birding from vehicle and possibly 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!!!

Attention Field Trip Leaders! If you have a field trip scheduled that is not listed, please contact the Field Trip chair, Laurie Nessel, 480.968.5614 or laurienessel@hotmail.com. Due to a short transition between field trip chairs, some scheduled trips may have been omitted from the current roster. We are very sorry for any errors.

Attention Field Trip Enthusiasts:

Please check our website for trips scheduled too late to be printed in this newsletter. <http://www.maricopaaudubon.org/calendar.htm>

MaricopaAudubonSocietyFieldTrips

Saturday, July 15

Evening Herps. Join AGFD herpetologist

Randy Babb as we traverse Mesquite bosques in search of summer breeding snakes, lizards and more.

Leader: Randy Babb

Contact:

Saturday, August 5

Hassayampa Preserve. In prior years we have found nesting Thick-billed and Tropical Kingbirds, Hutton's Vireo (not supposed to nest this low) and Southwest Willow Flycatchers in addition to the Preserve regulars. We'll meet in the Hassayampa Preserve parking lot. There is a \$3 fee for TNC members, \$5 fee for non-members. For those interested, lunch in Wickenburg following the trip. If time permits, we will also check the rest area just south of the Preserve. Bring binoculars, sunscreen, water, hat, etc. Contact leader for reservation. Leaders: Cynthia Donald and Pete Moulton, 480-768-0593

Saturday, August 12

6-9am: **Bird Walk at the Water Ranch** (free to Riparian Institute associates, \$5 for others) Reservations required—call Kathe at 480-951-4890 or Scott at 480-503-6744.

Wednesday, August 16

Pinal Mountains. Take a respite from the summer heat in the Pinal Mountains southwest of Globe at elevations up to 8,800'. First a chaparral stop for Juniper Titmouse, Crissal Thrasher, Black-chinned sparrow. A spectacular migration could provide 80-90 species including hummingbirds and a dozen or more warblers. Bring lunch, water, scope. Leave Tempe Public Library south parking lot by 5:30AM. Return by 4:00PM. Limit 3 cars. Carpooling required.

Leader: Dr. Dave Pearson

Contact: laurienessel@hotmail.com

Please, use my email only for reservations. You will be contacted on August 15th.

Saturday, Aug 19

6:30-9am: **Birds and Breakfast at the Hassayampa River Preserve**, sponsored by the Preserve (\$10). Reservations required—call the Preserve.

August 19-20

Sierra Ancha Reynolds Canyon. Due north from Globe, Arizona on either side of the Young Highway (S.R. 288) lie the

wonderfully moist and biologically diverse Sierra Ancha. To the west is the Salome Wilderness and to the east the Sierra Ancha Wilderness. Ancha means broad in Spanish, so this is a huge, rugged and remote area. This range runs south from the rim and so picks up elements from both Northern Arizona and Southeastern Arizona. Distance from Phoenix is over 120 miles. We will look at all nature: birds of course, but also butterflies and plants. Camp over night (optional) with hike up canyon beginning early Sunday.

Leader: Mike Plagens, pompilid@yahoo.com for details and arrangements.

Saturday, September 16

Page Springs. We will visit the Page Springs fish hatchery near Camp Verde and bird other nearby locations. Last year Yellow-billed Cuckoo, American Redstart and Prothonotary Warbler were seen. Spotting scopes are helpful. Bring lunch. Call leader for meeting time and place. Leader: Herb Fibel, 480.966.5246

Wednesday; September 20

Gilbert Ponds. The southeast valley ponds are good sites for waterfowl, migratory shorebirds and passerines including warblers and tanagers. Meet 6:30AM at the dragonfly Ramada just south of the north restroom at the Riparian Preserve at the Water Ranch, southeast of Greenfield and Guadalupe Roads. Time permitting we will also visit Riggs and Ocotillo ponds. Leader: Bob Witzeman, 602.840.0052 or witzeman@cox.net for reservations.

Saturday, September 23

Dateland Shrimp Ponds. Sabines Gull, Phalaropes, Sanderling, Ruff and Reddish Egret have all been spotted at the shrimp ponds north of Dateland. Bring scope and water. Meet 4:30AM at I-10 and Chandler Blvd.

Leader: Pierre Deviche

Contact: Laurie Nessel, 480.968.5614 or laurienesse@hotmail.com for reservations and meeting place.

Sunday, September 24

Mesquite Wash - Birds and Plants.

What are the birds in the Netleaf Hackberry and are they feeding on fruit or insects? Join members of the Arizona Native Plant Society as we learn about native plants and the animals and insects that share the ecosystem.

Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips

Leader: Mike Plagens, pompilid@yahoo.com for details and arrangements.

Saturday, October 14

Lost Dutchman State Park. This desert park lies at the base of Superstition Mountain near Apache Junction. This is a beautiful hike but steep in places. Resident species include Canyon Towhee, Rock and Canyon Wrens. Bring water, lunch. Scope optional. \$5 per car entry fee. Difficulty: 3 Limit 15

Co-Leaders: Laurie Nessel and Mark Horlings 602.279.2238 mhorlings@cox.net for reservations and carpooling.

Saturday, October 21

Boyce Thompson Arboretum. 60 miles east of the valley, this desert oasis always produces a good variety of species and occasionally a genuine surprise. We will look for early winter arrivals, summer stragglers and residents including woodpeckers and cardinals. \$7.50 entrance fee per person. Meet 8:00AM at BTA. Done by noon. Lunch optional.

Leader: Kathe Anderson, 480.951.4890 or Kathe.coot@cox.net for reservations and carpooling.

Wednesday, November 8

Rio Verde. Vermillion Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Bald Eagle, Osprey and Gray flycatcher are just some of the species possible on this trip to the Verde River. Leader: Bix Demaree, 480.992.2252 for meeting time and location.

Saturday, November 18

Southwest Phoenix. Waterfowl including Sora and Virginia Rail are possibilities along the Tres Rios and PIR. Also learn to identify the difficult Savannah and Vesper Sparrows in the nearby fields. Raptors and other passerines round out the sightings. Bring lunch. Scope optional. Meet 7:00AM on the east side of 91st Ave just south of the Water Treatment Plant. Call leader for information and reservations. Difficulty: 2. Limit 20.

Leader: Bob Witzeman, 602.840.0052

Sunday, Nov 19

8-10:30am, Bird Walk and Talk at the Hassayampa River Preserve (\$3 for Nature Conservancy members, \$5 for

others) Reservations required—call the Preserve.

Monday, Dec 4

Scottsdale's Urban Ponds. We will visit the ponds at the Pavilions, Chart House and McCormick Ranch to look for a variety of ducks, waders and winter waterfowl. Possible species include Hooded Merganser, Eared Grebe, Kingfisher and Cormorants plus some desert species. Meet in the parking lot by the north pond at the Pavilions at 8:00AM. Done by noon. Scope optional. Limit 12. Leader: Kathe Anderson, 480.951.4890 or Kathe.coot@cox.net for reservations and carpooling.

Christmas Bird Counts

Continuing:

Every Monday: Bird Walks at the Desert Botanical Garden, free with admission.

Third Saturdays: Family Bird Walks at the Gilbert Water Ranch sponsored by Audubon Arizona

The walks are open to all ages, individuals, and families, and are especially suited to let children experience, perhaps for the first time, the little known bird species that live right in our own neighborhoods- from beautiful Red-Tailed Hawks, and ground-dwelling Burrowing Owls that stand guard at their burrow entrances, to a good variety of ducks, sparrows, and sandpipers. Children are invited to play "Bird Bingo."

These birdwalks are a perfect way to introduce children and adults alike to local birdlife, and provide an educational family activity that will be long-remembered. Maricopa Audubon invites you and your little "naturalists" out for a fun morning of discovery and exploration.

Details about birdwalk dates, times, and changing exhibits can be seen at: www.maricopaaudubon.org, and www.riparianinstitute.org

Autumn Birdwalks at BoyceThompson Arboretum

Late Summer and early Fall are a great time to explore the trails at

Boyce Thompson Arboretum; unusual sightings reported a year ago include a male Belted Kingfisher, Gilded Flicker, Willow Flycatcher, Nashville Warbler, Lazuli Bunting, Osprey, Zone-tailed Hawk, Crissal thrasher, Black-headed Grosbeak, Common Black-Hawk, and Green Heron (see attribution credit below). Guided birdwalks resume for the season Sept. 24 and will be offered at 8:30 a.m. on October 7, 8, 21 & 22 and also November 4, 12 & 18. Birders from novice to expert are welcome to join these guided birdwalks and learn about native birds and their habitat. The Arboretum is fortunate to have Maricopa Audubon Society members who volunteer their time leading seasonal walks – don't miss your chance to learn visual and vocal identification alongside the experts. More than 270 species of birds have been seen and heard over the years at the Arboretum – attend a walk this Fall to more knowledgeable about familiar Sonoran Desert birds, and perhaps even see a new life-bird! Walks are included with regular adult admission of \$7.50, or \$3 for ages 5-12. Here are a few of the most common species seen around the trails this time of year: Pied-billed Grebe, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, White-winged Dove, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Anna's Hummingbird, Gila Woodpecker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo, Violet-green Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Verdin, Canyon Wren, Cactus Wren, Bewick's Wren, Northern Mockingbird, Curve-billed Thrasher, Phainopepla, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Abert's Towhee, Black-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Hooded Oriole, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch and House Sparrow. (sightings above from checklists posted online at the BTA website by Jack Bartley, Tracy McCarthey, Rich Ditch, Cindy Marple, Kurt and Cindy Rademaker, Jack Holloway, Pete Moulton and Cynthia Donald). For other details visit the Arboretum website <http://ag.arizona.edu/BTA>.

U.S. Birding Comes of Age or "Bird is a Verb"

Bob Witzeman

Instead of talking about discouraging topics like the Verde River drying up from Prescott's urbanization, or the Lower San Pedro drying up as a result of a mining company involved in the Oak Flat/Resolution Copper Land Exchange, let's have some fun. Let's explore the explosion of birdwatching and bird conservation magazines that has occurred in recent years.

Frank Chapman and the "National Association of Audubon Societies" began publishing *Bird Lore* magazine in 1900. It was replete with articles about birds of interest to bird lovers. *Bird Lore* became *Audubon Magazine* in 1939 when the National Audubon Society (NAS) dropped the "Association" from its name. *Bird Lore* was more a bird lover's general information magazine and contained less conservation than *Audubon* magazine today. It was published six times a year and often contained striking full page color bird illustrations.

While there have been scientific ornithology journals for years (*The Auk*, *The Condor*, *The Wilson Bulletin*), the first journal to appear for birdwatcher hobbyists interested in bird distribution, migration, ecology and breeding patterns was *Audubon Field Notes*. Volume 1 appeared in 1947 and was published quarterly by NAS. Its name was changed to *Field Notes* in 1994.

In 1997 NAS began their shift in emphasis to building state offices and nature centers and away from supporting local chapters. The historic Audubon activist legacy of the turn-of-the-century days 100 years ago with Audubon heroically lobbying to change state and federal laws on plumed hats, and hiring bird sanctuary guardians (two of whom were shot by Florida plume hunters) was waning. In 1997 NAS turned publication of *Field Notes* over to the American Birding Association (ABA) a new organization catering to birders. As MAS's Jim Burns explains: "bird is a verb."

Even though quality bird guides were available by 1968 (Peterson, Pough, Robbins), almost no bird-finding location guides were available with the exception of the two Pettingill guides: "A Guide to Birds Finding – East U.S." (1951), and "West U.S." (1953). Janet and I diligently crisscrossed the U.S. with these two volumes.

Since there was a void of national organizations providing information

on localities for birders to find both common and difficult-to-see species, a new birding organization, the American Birding Association (ABA), arose to fill the void left vacant by NAS. Jim Tucker, an Audubon Field Notes sub-regional editor from Florida moved to Texas in December 1968 and set in motion a magazine for that huge U.S. cadre of ignored birders and bird-listers. ABA's first magazine, *Birding*, was published in 1968. Despite its hardcore bird finding and bird-listing emphasis, it also had a subtle conservation bent.

As National Audubon's Board of Directors systematically laid-off their longtime, talented and loyal regional chapter representatives, NAS also phased out their outstanding regional and annual national NAS conventions. Furthermore, NAS cut back on NAS dues sharing with their local chapters. ABA moved in to fill the void.

ABA annual conventions and regional seasonal seminars, located at "birdy" localities, included field trips, bird ID seminars, bird book reviews, and, yes, even bird conservation. The binocular, telescope and bookstore sales at ABA's annual and regional conventions are breathtaking.

Let us now list some of the many bird finding, bird ID and bird conservation publications available for U.S. birders today.

First, is our venerable Audubon magazine, *Bird Lore's* successor. Membership is \$35.00/yr. (NAS, 700 Broadway, New York, NY, 10003). It provides six issues/yr. and over 500 pages annually. NAS membership may entitle you to the local Audubon chapter's newsletter.

ABA membership is \$45.00/yr. (ABA, P.O. Box 6599, Colorado Springs, CO 80934). One receives three separate publications for that \$45.00. This includes 6 issues/yr. of *Birding* magazine (over 600 total pages annually). *Birding* articles include bird ID, distribution, conservation, birding hotspots, where to find difficult or rare species, book reviews, and the annual (optional) publication of members' state, national, continent, and world life-lists.

The second ABA publication is *North American Birds*, formerly published by NAS. This magazine published four times a year totals some 1000 pages annually. It lists essentially every significant

bird sighting in the U.S. and Canada, including many of the central Arizona sightings recorded by Janet in our *Cactus Wren-dition*.

ABA members also receive a third publication, *Winging It*, six times/yr. and totaling some 200 pages annually. The most recent issue has an excellent article by our own Charles Babbitt on birding in Arizona's White Mountains. Issues cover national and worldwide birding hotspots, ABA's panoply of regional and annual birding conventions with their workshops, field trips, birding hotspots.

And now to three beautiful, informative bird conservation magazines, two from the U.S., and one from Britain.

Bird Conservation, a publication of the American Bird Conservancy publishes 4 issues/yr. totaling some 80 fascinating, full color pages on western hemisphere bird conservation (\$40.00, American Bird Conservancy, P.O. Box 249, The Plains, VA 20198). If you have ever traveled to Mexico, Central or South America, you will be pleased by this publication's optimistic approach to protection of our western hemisphere's threatened birds. Subscribers also receive an excellent quarterly "Bird Calls" newsletter totaling some 60 pages.

The third and arguably the most outstanding world bird conservation magazine is: *World Birdwatch* (\$45.00 Birdlife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Rd., Cambridge CB2 0NA, U.K. Their website is: <http://www.birdlife.org/>). Published four times/yr. and though only consisting of some 30 pages per issue, it is, in my view, the most entertaining and informative publication anywhere on bird discoveries and bird conservation. If you have ever birded in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, or South America, you will be charmed by the stunning photos and conservation messages in this publication.

Even if you have never birded outside North America you will still find this publication a treasure. It provides news-breaking information and photos (or paintings—occasionally some birds are too rare, too endangered or too shy to risk photographing) on every newly discovered world bird species. Equally fascinating, is information about species that have been rediscovered after being considered extinct for decades. Both *Bird Conservation* and *World Birdwatch* provide encouraging, (not discouraging) information about new sanctuaries, land

U.S. Birding Comes of Age or "Bird is a Verb"

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purchases and conservation education programs being undertaken by the local indigenous peoples- in order to protect those imperiled bird species.

The Cornell Lab. of Ornithology publishes Living Bird, (\$40.00, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14850) four issues/yr., totaling over 200 pages). It is worth the subscription just to read the evaluation and ranking of binoculars and telescopes which it publishes every year or so. Living Bird

emphasizes bird feeding and citizen science.

On the commercial bird magazine side, let's mention two excellent publications: Bird Watcher's Digest, with six editions/yr. and some 800 "Reader's Digest"-sized pages annually, (\$19.99, 149 Acme St., Marietta OH 45750); and "Birder's World Magazine," with six editions/yr. of some 600 full-sized pages. Bird Watcher's Digest, also periodically publishes a valuable analysis and rating of commercial

binoculars and telescopes.

Regarding my comments about NAS' apparent falling from grace by avid birders, our 500 or so surviving Audubon chapters are an invaluable resource if one is an out-of-town birder seeking to bird a strange city. Secondly, National Audubon's Washington, D.C. office, headed by Betsy Loyless, is a citadel of conservation power even as many perceive Audubon today as abandoning its conservation roots.



Field Observations

Janet Witzeman

MARCH, APRIL, & MAY 2006

During the spring season, birds that have wintered are still lingering, migrants are arriving and departing, and breeding birds are nesting. All three of these phenomena were taking place during the North American Migration Count on May 13 when Troy Corman and a group of 30 other birders censused various areas of Maricopa County. Scattered throughout the following report are some interesting and unusual records as a result of that Count.

Two Eared Grebes and a Clark's Grebe were still present at Saguaro Lake on the late date of May 13 (TC). There have been only two previous May records of Clark's Grebe in the county. The nesting colony of cormorants, herons, and egrets below Painted Rock Dam (PRD) was found to be abandoned on Apr. 25 because of the fish die-off there and the nesting colony near I-8 and Painted Rock Dam Road was also not being used (TC).

The Am. Bittern that wintered at the Gilbert Water Ranch (GWR) continued to be seen there at least until Mar. 17 when a second one was observed there as well (RD). Great Blue Herons were found nesting Mar. 12 at the AZ Game and Fish ponds at 115th Ave. and the Gila River where they have been nesting since 2001 (TMc). A new nesting area for this species was discovered near the gravel pit ponds at Dysart and Southern Road, where between 55 and 60 active nests were counted in cottonwood trees there on Mar. 4 (TC).

A **Little Blue Heron** was discovered at Rio Salado May 26 and remained at least into early June (TGs, BH, JMc *et al.*); there have been 22 previous county records. Up to 200 Cattle Egrets in breeding plumage were counted in Arlington Valley Mar. 19 – 25 and were suspected of breed-

ing nearby (CGr, PD, TC).

Individual pairs of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were observed at the El Mirage pond and the gravel pit ponds Apr. 14 (BG) and at Hunter's Ponds May 28 (TC). Up to 12 were counted at the Hunter's Ponds and the gravel pit ponds May 13 (TMc). The **Fulvous Whistling-Duck**, that wintered at McCormick Ranch, remained until Mar. 31 (SH). A pair of Canada Geese, with four young, seen at the GWR May 5 (CR), provided the sixth nesting record of this species for the county. Another pair of Canada Geese with two young was observed in the lake upstream from Tempe Marsh May 17 (DS).

Individual male Wood Ducks were seen at Tres Rios Apr. 7 (TC) and at the lake at Fountain Hills Apr. 13 where it remained until the late date of May 10 (KR). The Eurasian Wigeon, at the Paradise Memorial Ponds, was last seen there on Mar. 10 (m.ob.). Individual pairs of Mallards with young were observed at the GWR and Tres Rios May 28 (TC). A pair of "Mexican" Mallards, first observed at Rio Salado Mar. 17, was seen there again with two young May 28 (TGs). A male "Mexican" Mallard was reported at the Arlington Wildlife Area Apr. 25 (TC).

A Green-winged Teal was seen at the gravel pit ponds on the late date of May 13 (TMc) and four males were observed at the Lower River Rd. ponds in Palo Verde on the very late date of May 28 (TC). A Com. Goldeneye was found at the GWR Mar. 26 (BW). The male **Barrow's Goldeneye**, that wintered at the gravel pit ponds, remained until Mar. 4 (BG). A female Red-breasted Merganser was observed on the lake at Fountain Hills on the late date of May 5 (KR).

An adult White-tailed Kite (rare in spring) was found near the dry "Jaeger" Pond on Paloma Ranch Apr.

25 (TC). A **Gray Hawk** returned Apr. 10 to the Hassayampa River Preserve (HRP) where one was present during the summer of 2005 and in June 2002 (ML). One pair of Com. Black Hawks returned to their nesting site near Sunflower Mar. 26 (JA) and two pairs were found nesting there May 13 (TC). One of the Red-shouldered Hawks at the HRP was observed there May 5 and May 20 (TC, KR). A **Broad-winged Hawk** was discovered at Morgan City Wash (MCW), near the Agua Fria River s. of Lake Pleasant Apr. 9 (TC, BI); there have been only four previous county records and this was the first in April.

Three Clapper Rails were detected in the Arlington Wildlife Area Apr. 30 (PD) and one was heard at the 115th Ave. and Gila River pond May 13 (TMc). A Black-bellied Plover (rare in spring) was found at the El Mirage Pond Apr. 14 (BG). Black-necked Stilts were found nesting again at the Hunter Ponds where several pairs with young were seen May 13 (TMc) and at the GWR where several pairs with young were seen May 26 (CR). Am. Avocets nested again at the GWR; one on a nest and one with a small chick were seen there May 12 (W&AT) – by late May several young were observed there (BW, CR). The species also nested at Hunter's Ponds where several pairs were seen May 13 & May 28 (TMc, TC).

Solitary Sandpiper, usually an uncommon migrant, was found in higher numbers than usual this spring: one was at the Neely Ranch Apr. 15 (JMc), one at Gila Bend Apr. 16 (BG), one at the GWR Apr. 22 (PD), one at Gillespie Dam Apr. 23 (PD), one at Paloma Ranch Apr. 25 (TC), and between two and five at the Arlington Wildlife Area Apr. 19 – 30 (CGr, TC, PD). Individual Willets (uncommon migrants) were observed at the Gila Bend Power Plant Ponds Apr. 15 (BG) and at the

Salt River Recreation Area May 13 (AP,CF); two were seen at the GWR May 20 (RD).

Whimbrel is usually considered to be only a casual transient in the county, so most unusual were the **15** that were counted with 30 Long-billed Curlews in fields at Gila Bend Apr. 16 (BG); up to four more were seen with 40 Long-billed Curlews in Arlington Valley Apr. 23-25 (PD,TC). A breeding plumaged Dunlin was observed at the GWR on the late dates of May 11 & 12 (DP,W&AT). Individual Stilt Sandpipers (usually rare in spring) were found at the Lower River Rd. ponds Apr. 16 (BG), at Arlington Apr. 20 (CGr), and at the GWR Apr. 21 – 25 (MM.PD,TC,TL).

Between one and three Franklin Gulls were seen at the GWR Apr. 6 – 22 (BW,GL,PD) and between one and seven were counted on Tempe Town Lake Apr. 14 – 21 (MW). A Caspian Tern was also observed at Tempe Town Lake Apr. 21 (MW). Two **Least Terns** (casual transients) were discovered: one remained at the GWR from May 4 to May 16 (BW,LL,DB,EH) and one was seen at the Lower River Rd. Ponds May 13 (TMc); there have been 13 previous county records.

A Eurasian Collared-Dove, observed in Tempe Mar. 27, was believed to be the first in an urban area in the county (TMc); two were found in another new area – at Rio Verde May 20 (HF *et al.*). At least 16 of the 27 Ruddy Ground-Doves, that wintered on 121st Ave. south of Southern, were still present there Mar. 4 (TC).

A **Spotted Owl** and a **N. Saw-whet Owl**, both rare local residents in Transition Zone forests in the county, were discovered on Slate Creek Divide May 13 (TC). The road up to Slate Creek Divide runs along the border between Maricopa and Gila Counties, and even though the N. Saw-whet Owl was calling just over the border in Gila

County, it probably goes back and forth and into Maricopa County where the species was recorded on the Maricopa County side in May 1998.

Individual Vaux's Swifts (uncommon transients), observed over Phoenix Apr. 4 (EL), at the GWR Apr. 8 – 9 (BW,CR), and MCW Apr. 15 (TC) were all earlier than the usual late April, early May migration dates. A male and a female Broad-tailed Hummingbird were seen at MCW Apr. 9 (TC). A male Rufous Hummingbird (uncommon in spring) was found in Paradise Valley Apr. 8 (BI). An Acorn Woodpecker (a rare resident in the Transition Zone forests of the county) was seen at Slate Creek Divide May 13 (TC). A **Downy Woodpecker**, discovered just over the border in Gila County at Slate Creek Divide May 13 (TC), was the first record for that area.

More than the usual number of Olive-sided Flycatchers were recorded during the period: one at Tres Rios Apr. 8 (EL), one on Mt. Ord May 2 (ES), two at Slate Creek Divide May 7 (TC,C&KR,SG), three on Mt. Ord May 13 (TC), and two more elsewhere in the county May 13 (*fide* TC). A Greater Pewee (an uncommon transient) was heard at Slate Creek Divide May 7 (KR).

Individual Willow Flycatchers (uncommon transients) were found during the census May 13 (*fide* TC) and at Tres Rios May 28 (TC). More than a dozen Hammond's Flycatchers and two Dusky Flycatchers were calling on Mt. Ord May 13 (TC). Pacific-slope Flycatchers were heard on three occasions at MCW during the period: one on Mar. 18 (TC,JJ), at least three on Apr. 15 (TC), and at least two on May 29 (TC); another individual was heard at the HRP May 5 (TC). "Western" type Flycatchers (some of which may have been Pacific-slope Flycatchers) were seen at Tres Rios – one on Apr. 1 (CB,RWz), at Rio Verde – three on

Apr. 19 (RWd,BD,LH,AV), one during the census on May 13 (*fide* TC), and at MCW – at least five on May 29 (TC).

At least one of the Tropical Kingbirds returned to the HRP Apr. 29 for the sixth consecutive year (*fide* TC) and three were reported there May 20 (KR). Individual Cassin's Kingbirds were still in two lowland areas – Tres Rios and MCW – on the late dates of May 28 & 29 (TC). One of the Thick-billed Kingbirds returned to the HRP for the fourth consecutive year May 5 (TC) and was still present there May 20 (KR).

A Mexican Jay (an irregular wanderer into the higher elevations of the county) was seen on Mt. Ord Apr. 30 (BE) and a group of about seven were observed at Slate Creek Divide May 7 & 13 (TC,C&KR,SG). A House Wren (rarely found in the lowlands after late April) was seen at the HRP on the late date of May 5 (TC). One was seen in a new area, at Slate Creek Divide May 7 and several were found singing there May 13, which may indicate a new nesting record for the county (TC *et al.*). A **Winter Wren** (a rare winter visitor) was discovered at the HRP Mar. 25 (BW *et al.*).

Two Golden-crowned Kinglets were observed at MCW Mar. 18 (TC,JJ) and one seen there on the late date of Apr. 9 (TC,BI), provided the first April record for the county. Two Western Bluebirds (one carrying food) were seen on Mt. Ord May 13 (TC). One pair has been nesting in that area since 1991. An American Robin was observed with fledglings in a downtown park in Wickenburg May 13 (NL), providing only the third nesting record of this species for the county. An American Pipit was seen in the Arlington Valley on the late date of May 13 (J&DL), providing the first May record for the county.

Individual Hermit Warblers were

continued on page 14

Field Observations

reported at MCW Apr. 22 (TC), at the HRP May 5 (TC), and a Hermit/Townsend's Warbler hybrid was seen on Mt. Ord Apr. 16 (EL). The **Prairie Warbler**, that wintered at the GWR, was last seen there Mar. 13 (BW). Individual Black-and-white Warblers were reported at MCW Mar. 25 & Apr. 1 (TC), in the Scottsdale Greenbelt Mar. 30 & 31 (BE), and in Tempe Mar. 31 (BE). A **Worm-eating Warbler** hit a window and died in an east Mesa neighborhood Apr. 26 (JS); there have been seven previous county records. A N. Waterthrush was found at Rio Salado on the early date of Mar. 4 (TGs) and it (or another) continued to be seen there Mar. 26 (TMC) and Apr. 14 (TC); one was mist netted and banded at the HRP May 6 (AL).

There were no Red-faced Warblers found at Slate Creek Divide May 7 and it was speculated that a contributing factor was that the Willow Fire of two years ago burned the only stand of Douglas Fir there (TC). More than the usual number of Painted Redstarts were found in the lowlands this spring. Individuals were reported at Coon Bluff Apr. 1 (PD), at the GWR Apr. 6 & 8 (DB,BW), at the Municipal Building in downtown Phoenix Apr. 11 (JMc), at MCW Apr. 2 & 22 (TC,JJ), and two were seen at the Granite Reef Picnic Area Apr. 2 (JA).

The male Summer Tanager, that wintered in a Tempe yard, was last seen there Apr. 14 (BE). Singing and courting pairs of Chipping Sparrows were observed on Mt Ord May 13 and may indicate a new nesting record for the county (TC); previous records of this species in the county were of migrating or wintering birds in the lowlands. Two Golden-crowned Sparrows were seen at MCW Mar. 18 & Apr. 9 (TC). Individual Indigo Buntings (rare transients) were found

at the HRP May 5 & 13 (TC,NL) and at the GWR May 6 & 21 (GR,JK *fide* RD).

Yellow-headed Blackbirds were found nesting in a new area – in cattails in the middle pond at the Lower River Rd. ponds May 28 (TC). The Orchard Orioles and Hooded Oriole that wintered in an Ahwatukee yard, remained until Apr. 1 (SBA). The **Streak-backed Oriole** that wintered at the GWR was last seen there May 3 (*fide* RD). A few Pine Siskins (irregular visitors) were observed at Slate Creek Divide May 7 (TC,C&KR,SG) and several small flocks were seen on Mt. Ord May 13 (TC). A pair of Am. Goldfinches (uncommon winter visitors) were reported at Sunflower Mar. 26 (JA).

Following are unusual records from Boyce Thompson Arboretum (BTA) in Pinal County. The pair of Broad-billed Hummingbirds that wintered there were found nesting in one of the potted plants near the entrance on May 5 and two young were seen in the nest June 2 (DG). A female Williamson's Sapsucker was discovered there on the late date of Apr. 23 (MV); there are few lowland spring records of this species, especially later than the end of March. A Hammond's Flycatcher was seen Apr. 23 (TC,CR) and a Dusky Flycatcher was found there Apr. 1 (TC).

The Rufous-backed Robin was last seen at BTA Mar. 19 (CWG) and the Brown Thrasher remained until Apr. 15 (m.ob.). A Hermit/Townsend's Warbler hybrid was found there Apr. 23 (TC,CR) and a N. Waterthrush was reported May 13 (MV). Another lowland Painted Redstart was seen at BTA Mar. 18 – Apr. 2 (RD). The two White-throated Sparrows that wintered there remained until Mar. 18, when a third individual was found with them

(RD); two of them were last seen Apr. 1 (TMC,CD,PM). Five Pine Siskins were observed there Apr. 23 (TC) and a Lawrence's Goldfinch was reported Mar. 24 (BW).

A late Red-naped Sapsucker was observed at Whitlow Dam in Pinal County on the late date of Apr. 20 (JBa). Additional interesting birds found at Whitlow Dam were a White-breasted Nuthatch on the late date of May 2, an **Ovenbird** May 23, and a male Indigo Bunting May 23 (JBa).

A trip to northeast Arizona resulted in some interesting records: an Eastern Kingbird at Ganado Lake May 20, individual N. Waterthrushes at Cameron and Pasture Canyon May 19, and a female Baltimore Oriole at Rimmy Jim Tank May 19 (CB,BJ).

Abbreviations: Gilbert Water Ranch (GWR), Hassayampa River Preserve (HRP), Morgan City Wash (MCW), many observers (m.ob.).

Observers: Jerry Allen, Charles Babbitt, Sally Barnes, Jack Bartley, David Burba, Troy Corman, Bix Demaree, Pierre Deviche, Rich Ditch, Cynthia Donald, Brian Enos, Herb Fibel, Craig Fischer, Steve Ganley, Tom Gaskill, Cathy Wise Gervais, Clive Green, Doug Green, Bill Grossi, Steve Hampton, Liz Hatcher, Bill Higgins, Eric Hough, Brian Isson, Bud Johnson, Justin Jones, Jim Kopitzke, Larry Langstaff, Eric Latterner, Marty Lawrence, Anne Leight, Tony Leonardi, Nancy London, Grant Loomis, Jean & Dean Luehrs, Tracy McCarthey, James McKay, Michael Moore, Pete Moulton, Dave Pearson, Anne Peyton, Cindy Radamaker, Kurt Radamaker, Gwen Robinson, Jan Stickney, Ed Strong, Diana Stuart, Walter & Andrew Thurber, Anita Van Auken, Marceline Vanderwater, Magill Weber, Barb Winterfield, Russ Widner, Robert Witzeman

Photo Quiz Answers

Jim Burns

My vote for best wildlife photographer in the history of the camera would go to Art Wolfe. Shortly before the June issue of *Birder's World* appeared, I had read a review and seen a few of the photographs from Wolfe's latest book, *Vanishing Act*, a compilation of images he had captured over the course of his career in which various animals and birds disappeared into the background, much as they might from the prying eyes of their predators.

The June issue of *Birder's World* was all about birds' feathers and their functions, and certainly one of the most widely recognized of those functions is camouflage. In an article entitled "Wait Till It Moves," Eldon Greij breaks birds' camouflage down into three types: cryptic coloration, disruptive coloration, and countershading. I thought it might be fun to incorporate these camouflage types into our Photo Quiz, creating a two part process—first you have to find the bird, then you have to identify it.

A) Cryptic Coloration

Cryptic coloration is certainly the most familiar and most easily illustrated of the three camouflage types. The plumage of many birds, particularly those devoid of bright colors, have bars and stripes, splotches and vermiculations that mimic the patterns of the habitats in which they spend most of their time. Think about bitterns in marsh grass, owls roosting by daylight in tree cavities, and woodpeckers working tree bark.

Your mental image of shorebirds and their habitat undoubtedly includes sand beaches, muddy pond edges, or perhaps barren concrete wastewater facilities. Picture what happens in these totally open areas when the neighborhood Peregrine flies over. First the resident Killdeer (so aptly dubbed "Screech-Plover" by Tucson's Mark Stevenson) go off, alerting everybody, then the flocks take flight *en masse*. But there are often a few isolated birds that flatten themselves to the ground and freeze. They're betting their lives on their head, back, and tail markings matching up well enough with the ground pattern to fool the falcon.

Our first photo doesn't look like any of the three shorebird venues mentioned above. It looks like leaf and twig detritus on the forest floor. This may seem a strange setting for any of our shorebirds, called "waders" by the Brits, but is actually a great clue as to what species of shorebird we're looking for. There are only two that you would normally expect in this habitat, only two that typically don't flush until you have just about put your

foot on them, and then you may wish another type of flush were available to you.

Have you found the bird yet? This photo was taken at medium range, and the bird is "hiding in plain sight." Only its big eye and its crown stripes really stand out. They are slightly to the right and above the center of the scene. Now you see the long, straight, stout bill, and you realize in this habitat our first quiz bird has to be either a Wilson's Snipe or an American Woodcock. The crown stripes on our snipe run lengthwise along its large head, those of our woodcock crosswise. This American Woodcock was photographed at Crane Creek State Park, Ohio, in May of 2005. The huge woodcock eye sits high and to the rear of its head so it can watch for predators even while probing in the leaf litter for earthworms.

B) Disruptive Coloration

Greij describes disruptive coloration as "breaking up the body lines" of the birds that use it. Typically this involves black and white or at least dark and light areas or detailing. Think about the patterns of chickadees' heads and breasts, the heads of nuthatches, the ladder backed effect on many of our woodpeckers, and the neck rings on our kingfishers.

Many of our shorebirds, both adults and their young, employ disruptive coloration. Remember our "Screech Plover?" Most of our plovers, which are shorebirds of course, have black and white patterns, neckbands or ventral (underparts) areas, which disguise their birdshape, particularly when seen amidst field or beach debris which may include the highlights and shadows of multiple rocks or small bushes.

Like the first photo, this second one really doesn't resemble any image of shorebird habitat that comes immediately to mind. It appears to have been taken in a patch of grassy field with either seed heads or flower buds emerging from the ground cover, but this again should give us a starting point for what we're seeking. We're not used to seeing our shorebirds away from open, exposed areas because we typically see them at home, our home anyway, only in migration or on their wintering ground. But, shorebirds are ground nesters, and eggs are often laid in grasses, meadows, or tundra hummocks.

There's a nice, nesty looking opening in the grass down in the lower right-hand corner of the photo, but nothing resembling eggs. Eggs, as Greij points out in his article, are another excellent example of disruptive coloration, splotchy or speckled against light

backgrounds to break up the oval shape and mimic ground cover or the fecal droppings of the parents around the nest area. I wouldn't expect you to identify a species by its eggs, but where do the young of our shorebirds go after hatching? Shorebird young are precocial—well developed with thick natal down which allows them to leave the nest almost right away. They run into the grass and stay hidden!

This photo is a close-up, and the baby Killdeer is just to the left of center, facing the camera. Its two black facial bands, one across the front of the crown, the other through the eyes and across the base of the bill, are about all you can see amidst the chaos of intertwined clover stems. This photo was taken in Cameron County, TX in May 2002.

C)--Countershading

Countershading occurs when a bird is dark on top and light on the bottom. Think about how many birds of open areas employ this plumage pattern. The theory is that shadows, especially on a distant bird, will make the lighter belly appear darker, the overall color thus more uniform, so the bird doesn't stand out against its background.

Finally here's a photo that fits a stereotypical shorebird habitat, a distant shot of a rocky shoreline. Do you see the bird or are you just seeing rocks? Alright, how many birds are there? The two Terek Sandpipers, low, on the waterline, center and right of center, were photographed on Attu Island, Alaska in May of 1999, and are identifiable by their long, spectacularly odd-shaped, upswept bills.

But here's how well countershading really works! The rock behind and slightly above the left-hand Terek closely mimics the shorebirds and illustrates how well countershading blends them into their habitat. Now you realize there are several rocks in this scene that might be out-of-focus birds. So, how many birds are there? Here's the real kicker! There are three and I didn't see the third one until after I had printed the photo and had almost completed writing up the quiz. I was going to crop it out, but realized how well it illustrated the point of Greij's article. At the far left, almost to the bottom, a Wandering Tattler has wandered into the scene, only the front third of its body visible.

If you had trouble with these identifications, imagine how hard a predator has it. They're not trying to identify to species. They're just trying to identify a meal. Check out Art Wolfe's latest book. Like the Tereks' bills, it's spectacular.

Monthly Meetings

First Tuesday of the month, September through April, 7:30 p.m. Our meeting place is Dorrance Hall, at the Desert Botanical Garden (DBG), except for our annual banquet in May at Shalimar Country Club in Tempe. The DBG is located at 1201 North Galvin Parkway, Phoenix, Arizona. This is approximately 1/4 mile north of the Phoenix Zoo. For a map, please see the DBG website at www.dbg.org/.

Dorrance Hall is located just off the main parking lot and entry to the DBG, and there will be signs directing you to the meeting place. Please contact a board member if you have any questions, or check out our web site at www.maricopaaudubon.org. Pre-meeting dinners (October through April) are held at Pete's 19th Tee, 1405 N. Mill Avenue, Tempe (at the Rolling Hills Golf Course), starting at 6:00 p.m.

Membership Information--see notes and announcements for more detail

Your National membership entitles you to membership in the National Audubon Society and the Maricopa Audubon Society. National members receive bi-monthly issues of Audubon Magazine and quarterly issues of the *Cactus Wren-dition*. For all new National Audubon memberships send check or money order payable to National Audubon Society to: Membership Chair, Krys Hammer.

- Introductory rate for new members..... \$20/year
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For *Wren-dition* subscriptions only--\$20/year (Make your check payable to "Maricopa Audubon Society") and send to Krys Hammer at 1121 N Terrace Road, Chandler, AZ 85226. For Summer/Winter address change or to freeze your membership in our chapter call Membership chair, Krys at 480-413-9805 or krys.hammers@cox.net

Submissions

Copy for *The Cactus Wren-dition* must be received by the editor by e-mail, (may be on computer diskette, or typed and double-spaced; however, this is not preferred) by January 15, April 1, July 1, and October 1. Articles not received by the deadlines may not appear in the upcoming issue. E-mail to: *Cactus Wren-dition* Editor, Deva Burns. devaburns@aol.com

Opinions

The opinions expressed by authors in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the policy of the National Audubon Society or the Maricopa Audubon Society.

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