



The Cactus Wren • dition

Volume LV, No. 4

Winter 2006/2007



Common Black-Hawk

MAS Meetings & Programs Nov. 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.

buy and legislation we support impacts the rain forest. Those impacts come back to affect us here in Arizona, our quality of life, our health and our economy. Even if you never visit a rain forest in your life, you are influencing their survival. David is a professor at ASU, an avid bird watcher, a world traveler and is passionate about our environment.

January 2, 2007

Sandy Anderson The San Pedro River

Known to local children as the "snake lady," Sandy Anderson volunteers full time as educator and curator of the live reptile and invertebrate exhibits at The Gray Hawk Nature Center, located on the beautiful San Pedro River. The San Pedro River is an internationally recognized treasure – the last major free-flowing river remaining in the southwestern United States. Its location (in southeastern Arizona and northern Sonora) and north-south orientation make it a critical corridor for bird migration, animal and plant movement across the border region. Join Sandy for an informative program on this living corridor.

November 7, 2006

David and Diane Reesor Birds of Bhutan

Come and join David and Diane for a trip around the country of Bhutan. Don't know where this is? Ah...think east from Nepal and north from India. Explore the country, meet the birds and animals and experience the Punakha Festival!

December 5, 2006

David Pearson Why Should We in the Desert Care About Tropical Rain Forests?

Even in the desert of Arizona we are connected by more than sentiment to tropical rain forests. What we consume, what we

February 6, 2007

Alvin and Arlene Scheuer Nesting Roadrunners

Join Sonoran Audubon members Al and

continued on page 3

Committees/Support

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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.

From the Editor, Deva Burns

The weather has finally cooled off and that means it's time to go birding around the Valley for the first winter arrivals. Don't forget the "invasion" of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks and the trio of rarities which graced the Gilbert Riparian Area last year. Have you made any plans for fall and winter birding outside the state? We're going to Costa Rica in December. It's not really a birding trip, but we're looking forward to seeing some beautiful tropical species.

This issue is packed with information. There is an updated list of Board Members on the back page, Walter has nearly completed the Christmas Bird Count list, Bob has given us a bit of conservation history, the

Board is presenting a proposal for a change in the by-laws, Jim has put a little different spin on the photo quiz, and Herb and Mark have presented a synopsis of the membership issues that came before the board this past summer.

Don't forget to look over the CBC schedule and make plans to participate in at least one count this year, and sharpen your skill for the CBC season with the Photo Quiz, no peeking at the answers first is allowed. Remember the information gathered in the Christmas Counts is vital to our understanding of how the environment is being affected. Citizen science plays a vital part in what Audubon is all about.



Immature Common Black-Hawk with frog; photographed by Jim Burns in Coconino County, AZ, August, 2006 with Canon EOS 1D body and Canon 600mm f/4 lens.

President's Message

Herb Fibel

from the president

It would be pointless to ignore the fact that a group of Maricopa Audubon members is seeking to form a new Audubon chapter in what they are calling the "East Valley". Their "East Valley" includes Cave Creek, Ahwatukee, Ahwatukee Desert Foothills (at one point as far west as 43rd Avenue!), downtown Phoenix on both sides of Central between South Mountain and I-10, two south Tempe Zip Codes, and all of Scottsdale. They appear to have National Audubon's and Audubon Arizona's blessing, even though, at this writing, as far as I know, they have not been granted National Audubon chapter status.

It's like *deja vu* all over again. In fact it was just six years ago when a disgruntled group of Maricopa Audubon members sought and were granted authority from National Audubon to carve a new Audubon chapter out of Maricopa Audubon's territory in the west part of the Valley. This is the genesis of Sonoran Audubon.

This time we are not going to give in without a fight. We are challenging not only the claimed need for a new chapter, but the proposed usurpation of many of Maricopa Audubon's assigned Zip Codes,

which are in very close proximity to our meeting place. The simple application of a compass to a map of the Valley readily shows that almost all of Scottsdale, Mesa, Tempe, Chandler and Gilbert are within 15 miles of our meeting place at the Desert Botanical Gardens! The criteria for the formation of a new chapter, according to National Audubon, is that the Audubon members are not being adequately served by their present chapter, and that the present meeting place is more than 20 miles or 45 minutes away!

We are assured by National Audubon officials that if you are in one of the Zip Codes ultimately assigned to the new group, and if they solicit you to join this new chapter, you can accept or decline the invitation. If you decline or do nothing your membership stays with Maricopa Audubon.

Maricopa Audubon represents a proud 53 year tradition of nationally recognized virtuous conservation activism, and of teaching environmentalism to the public through a wide range of programs as well as by example. If you agree, please stay with us. Our chapter meetings, if you should choose to attend, are less than a

45 minute drive, and less than 20 miles away, from every point in the east Valley to as far away as the Pinal County line. Our meetings bring together birders and others who share our environmental ethic. Besides being just plain fun, attendees come away from our meetings with a new appreciation of what the Audubon Cause is all about. If you are unable to attend you can stay informed through the Cactus Wren-dition and our outstanding chapter website.

If you have a need that you don't feel is being currently fulfilled by Maricopa Audubon, please let any of the volunteer board members listed on the back page of this newsletter know. One example might be that you belong to another unrelated organization, and would like a Maricopa Audubon member to give your group a program about birds or about some environmental issue. Let us know. There are a number of us willing to do this for you and your organization (If not 'have Power Point', at least 'have slide projector', and will travel!)

Please stick with us. The best is yet to come.

MAS Meetings & Programs Sept. 2006 – May 2007

Continued

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 it 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

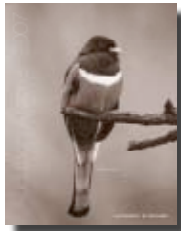
Larry Liese Birding By Ear

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

Nominating Committee: If anyone is interested in serving on the nominating committee for April's elections, please contact any Board Member.



2007 Audubon

Calendars: Audubon Arizona and the State Chapters have produced a beautiful 2007 Calendar. They are available for \$5 at MAS meetings. Doug Green has stated that if you order 10 or more not only will you receive a 10%

discount, but he will personally deliver them to you. Contact Doug for more information. Also, see the website for a color picture of the front of the calendar.

Impromptu birdwatching listserv: Have you ever been in the mood for a bird outing and checked the field trip listings only to find none coming up? Maricopa Audubon is initiating an impromptu birdwatching listserv. Here's how it works: you send your email address (or phone number) to the field trip chair (laurienessel@hotmail.com). These addresses will be sent out to everyone else on the list. Then, a day or two (or more if you know) before you want to go birding, send an email to everyone on the list. (If you are email challenged, call the field trip chair to disseminate your message). State the day you want to go, a meeting time and place for carpooling and a destination. State if you would like to drive or ride with someone else and list your closest intersection. This can also be used to arrange carpools to chase birds. Please, don't arrange trips when there are planned MAS trips, unless you need to bird much closer to the valley.

Globe, AZ--Noftsgger Hill Inn Bed & Breakfast November Birders' Weekend Specials: Noftsgger Hill Inn is once again offering a "Birders' Weekend" special during November. November 4 and November 17 are the dates. For complete details about the "Bed & Breakfast & Birds" package, call Rosalie 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 Chihuahuahua 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 tyrannotours@comcast.net

March 31--Gilbert Water Ranch--Feathered Friends Festival. Running from 8AM to 12:00
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: Jack Follett, Maricopa Audubon Society's membership chair, 1520 E Secretariat Dr, Tempe, AZ 85284, and he 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 Jack Follett, Maricopa Audubon Society's membership chair 1520 E Secretariat Dr, Tempe, AZ 85284. 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, as does Sunflower Market. 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.toucanetcoffee.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.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 \$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 of: 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.

Tonto National Forest to Implement Recreation Pass Program

Herb Fibel

If you go birding or otherwise recreating, to locations in the TNF such as north of Rio Verde, Granite Reef, Phon D. Sutton and Coon Bluff, it is important that you know that the Tonto National Forest is doing away with its vending machine day pass system. Beginning October 2, 2006, you will have to buy your day and/or overnight passes in advance. The daily use fee is still six dollars per vehicle (\$3.00 for Golden Age permit holders), and you will still have to post your permit on the dashboard of your vehicle. Each pass is good for a 24 hour visit, and may be used at more than one location during the specified 24 hour period.

You can purchase your day permits at the Forest Service, Mesa Ranger District Office at 5140 E. Ingram Street, Mesa, which is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can also call them at (480) 610-

3300 to find out where else day permits can be purchased in advance. Other TNF offices that you can call are at (480) 595-3300, (928) 467-3200, and (602) 225-5200.

In addition, several retail vendors have agreed to work in partnership with the TNF, providing over 80 outlets where the passes and stickers can be purchased. Many outlets are in the Phoenix metropolitan area and nearby forest locations, with others in Tucson, Flagstaff, Prescott, Casa Grande, Globe and Payson. Vendors at this time include Bartlett Lake Marina, Butcher Hook Store, Big 5 Sporting Goods (21 Of 25 Arizona locations), Canyon Lake Marina, Circle K Stores (38 of 400 plus Arizona locations), HWY 188 Tackle and Supply, Jake's Corner Store, Kilmer's Kountry Store, Orange Food Store #8, The Tackle Box, and Tortilla Flat. Other vendors are expected to join the program in the future.

TNF managers believe that people are going to appreciate the convenience of buying several passes and stickers in advance and then using them as they need them. Using the TNF webpage, customers can order passes and stickers directly from the forest by telephone or by mail using credit cards or debit cards! The web address is:

www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto/tp.

(Herb's comments—I found out that initially, at least, you will not be able to get the Golden Age discounted passes from any of the vendors, only from one of the TNF offices. My opinion, also, is that until people get familiar with the change, this is going to be a nightmare program. The lack of publicity so far is going to result in people going to places in the TNF without knowing that they need to pre-purchase passes elsewhere, and ahead of time.)

By-Law Proposed Changes

At a special MAS board meeting on September 30, 2006, our board voted to propose to the membership several By-law changes. The purpose of these changes is to change our annual board elections from the annual meeting in May to the April general membership meeting. Under the proposal the

terms of office of those elected would still run from the annual meeting in May to the next annual meeting in May.

Our By-laws require that the By-laws may be amended by a majority vote of those members of the Society present at any regular meeting, provided, however, that notice of

such amendments be mailed to each member at his/her last known address at least fifteen days before said meeting. This means that we will be voting on these By-law changes at our December membership meeting.

Photo Quiz

Jim Burns

photo quiz

THIS ISSUE'S CLUE —

Here's a quote from last summer's photo quiz on warblers—"next winter, when the sparrows return, we're going to take a look at some patternless silhouettes" The sparrows have returned. It's time.



A – Good silhouette, easy genus



B – Tricky silhouette, difficult genus



C – Good silhouette, easy genus

All Photos by Jim Burns

Ruddy Ground-Dove

Jim Burns

When Ruddy Ground-Dove, an aptly named little *Columbina* common in the tropics, was being recorded at multiple Arizona sites back in the mid-to-late '90s, one regional guidebook characterized the species as a "recent invader." Unlike the even more recent and grossly successful Eurasian Collared-Dove invasion however, the Ruddy Ground-Dove influx sputtered and died.

Reasons for this, speculative at this point, center around some apparent missing link in this species' preferred habitat between southern Arizona and southern Sonora where it is common southward to El Salvador and Honduras and on into Peru and Argentina. In its range in Mexico it is most common in humid areas, and perhaps has not adapted to the drier conditions that prevail in northernmost Mexico and Arizona.

Columbina talpacoti was first recorded in the state in October of 1981 when two males were found in Phoenix. The first sighting in southern Arizona was in Green Valley two years later, and the species has been noted as far north as Camp Verde. There have now been well over 100 occurrences in Arizona, and Ruddy Ground-Dove is no longer on the Arizona Bird Committee's Review List.

Nesting in the state has been confirmed at least once when a pair was seen with a fledgling at the Nature Conservancy's Hassayampa Preserve in Wickenburg in 1993. As recently as 2004, tenacious field birder Roy Jones observed a male Ruddy transporting nesting material to an olive tree at a residence in an agricultural district of far west Phoenix surrounded by fields and irrigation canals. Ruddies associate much more frequently with

Inca Doves than with Common Ground-Doves, most likely because Incas, like Ruddies, seem to prefer wetter habitats than Commons.

Whether you're looking for Ruddies posted on the internet or venture out to search on your own, be aware that this species varies geographically from paler and grayer in the west to deeper, richer rufous farther east where it has been recorded in west Texas and the lower Rio Grande Valley. The upshot of this plumage gradient is that Ruddies encountered in Arizona may be paler and less rufous than expected, female Arizona



Photo by Jim Burns

Ruddies may not look ruddy at all, and Arizona males may resemble western Common Ground-Doves in the amount of pinkish coloration. Both ground-doves have black wing spots, but note that only Ruddy Ground-Doves have them on the scapulars, above the wings. An excellent field mark for western females lacking any pinkish tones is the white tips on the greater wing coverts as shown in Sibley.

Most sightings of Ruddy Ground-Doves in Arizona have been in brushy or scrubby areas in proximity to agricultural fields with stock ponds or irrigation ditches. Whenever you go out for Ruddies, please remember the

DON'T LIST: don't leave perimeter roads to drive onto farm property; don't point scopes or binoculars toward background residences; don't interfere in any way with farm operations; don't smoke. Yeah, yeah, I know. But you need to know that more than one former Ruddy Ground-Dove site in Arizona has been closed to birders because of one or more of these very infractions!

The two most recent hotspots for this species have been the feedlots around the cattle operation west of Red Rock, a tiny farming/ranching community just off I-10 between

Picacho Peak and Marana, and the El Mirage pond west of Phoenix.

To reach the latter site, exit I-10 west at 115th Avenue, drive south to Lower Buckeye, then west to El Mirage Road. The pond is half a mile south, just south of Illini St., on the right. Park on the shoulder, walk up onto the berm, and sit and glass all the little doves coming and going from the reeds. Early mornings in fall and winter are best. Last winter more than a dozen Ruddies were present along with Inca Doves and one or two Commons around the margins of this pond.

With few exceptions, Ruddy Ground-Doves in Arizona have been fall and winter phenomena, disappearing when warm weather arrives. Appearances seem to have decreased in recent years, or maybe in-state birders have all seen them and no one is really looking anymore. The invasion that wasn't appears to be over, but this is a neat little bird, pale pink sides marked by black spikes, plain gray face and crown, and bright red eyes, well worth finding, especially in summer when evidence of actual nesting might add valuable information to our understanding of this tropical stray in Arizona.

Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips

Laurie Nessel

Attention Field Trip Enthusiasts: Please check our website for changes and additions to the field trip schedule <http://www.maricopaaudubon.org/calendar.htm>. Also check the Notes and Announcements for the exciting new program set up by Laurie Nessel—an impromptu birding list!

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

MaricopaAudubonSocietyFieldTrips

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. Limit 20.

Leader: Bob Witzeman, (602) 840.0052

Sun, 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. 928.684.2772

Wednesday, November 29

Phoenix Zoo Ponds. Meet on the zoo bridge at 7:00AM for possible Great Horned Owl sightings. We will proceed into the zoo grounds for great, upclose views of waterfowl. Especially good for beginners to learn the difference between male and females ducks. Maybe some other zoo surprises as well like Black Throated Magpie Jays. No limit. Done by 10:00. Difficulty 1
Leader: Mike Foley
Contact laurienessel@hotmail.com or 480.968.5614 for reservations

Monday, December 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.

December 14-January 4

Christmas Bird Counts: contact your compiler or check our website:

www.maricopaaudubonsociety.org

Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips

Saturday, January 6

Palo Verde to Gillespie Dam. We will travel down old Highway 80 from Palo Verde to Gillespie Dam, to look for gulls, Sandhill Cranes, White Pelicans and other unusual species spotted on the Gila River Christmas Count. There are a number of water holes that turn up a variety of rarities each year. Bring a lunch. A scope is helpful. Restroom facilities are limited. Limit 12. Difficulty 1 (not much walking).
Leader: Herb Fibel, (480) 966.5246 or HERBERTSFIBEL@aol.com for meeting place and time.

Saturday, January 13

Boyce Thompson Arboretum. A desert oasis near Superior, BTA attracts resident as well as surprises. We will look for Winter sparrows. Previous sightings include Rufous Backed Robin, Varied Thrush and Brown Thrasher. Carpool from Tempe Public Library at 7:00AM. Lunch and scope optional. Difficulty 2.
Leader: Scott Burge, (480) 968.5141 for reservations

Wednesday, January 17

Le Contes Thrasher Site. This is our nearly annual trip to this traditional site on the far west side of Phoenix at the intersection of Baseline Road and the Salome Highway. Resident Bendire's, Crissal, and Curve-billed Thrashers may be seen as well as Le Conte's and overwintering Sage Sparrows. Prairie Falcons have been observed, and typical low desert breeding birds should be present. The meeting place for those who wish to carpool will be Denny's parking lot, NW corner of I-10 & Litchfield Road at 7:00AM. The leader will not be present but will meet participants at the site at 7:30AM. The leader must leave at noon, but those wishing to visit additional nearby sites should bring a lunch. Limit:10. Difficulty 1
Leader: Jim Burns, (480) 946.2502, jpbaztec@aol.com for reservations

Saturday, February 10

Base & Meridian Wildlife Area-Gila River. Join us for a visit to an outstanding riparian habitat area almost in your backyard! The Base and Meridian Wildlife Area at Avondale Blvd. and the Gila River is the new host location for the Tres Rios Nature Festival. An accessible mix of open water, marsh and riparian woodland habitats makes this a great location for waterfowl, waders, osprey, kingfishers, and other fish-eating birds. Visit the top of "Monument Hill", the location where the Township and Range mapping system for all of Arizona has its zero-zero coordinate location. We often see black vultures here. Help us preview the local birds for the nature festival buildup! Walking difficulty varies from easy to rather difficult depending on extent of your adventurous spirit. Meet at the Fry's Parking Lot at Avondale Blvd. and Buckeye Rd. (MC85) at 7:00 am. Look for the White GMC Yukon with Arizona Game and Fish emblem on the door. Limit 12. Difficulty 2. A scope is helpful.

Leader: Tom Hildebrandt, (480) 324.3552, thildebrandt@azgfd.gov (email preferred) for reservations

Saturday, February 24

Cottonwood. We will visit sites near Cottonwood, including Peck's Lake, Tuzigoot national Monument and Tavasci Marsh. We will meet in the AM in northern Phoenix and carpool to Cottonwood. Expect to see a variety of residents and waterfowl including Loggerhead Shrike, Northern Harrier, Canada Goose, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Bring lunch and scope. Limit:15. Difficulty: 2
Leader: Richard Kaiser (602) 276.3312 or Rkaiserinaz@aol.com for reservations.

Saturday & Sunday March 17-18

**Tres Rios Nature Festival
B&M Wildlife Area** Avondale Blvd and the Gila River (just north of PIR)

Saturday, March 17

Flagstaff Lakes. On this field trip we will visit the lakes around Flagstaff looking for waterfowl and Bald Eagles. We also hope to find Red Crossbills, Cassin's Finches and Pinyon Jays. We will meet at Denny's Restaurant at the intersection of I-40 and I-17 at 8:00AM. Bring a lunch, water, snacks and a scope will be very helpful. Difficulty 1
Leader: Charles Babbitt, (602) 840.1772 or cjbabbitt@cox.net for reservations

Saturday, March 24

Boyce Thompson Arboretum Butterflies and Invertebrates. Join Fred Stewart as we explore the Arboretum for Lepidoptera and other invertebrates along with spring migrants. Learn about the migration patterns of Arizona's Monarchs from BTA Education Coordinator, Chris Kline, who is tracking tagged Monarchs. Limit 15, Difficulty 2
Leader: Fred Stewart, (480) 898.7239 or fspescador@yahoo.com for reservations and information.

Wednesday, April 18

Birds and Butterflies "Butterfly Canyon" and Seven Springs. An area much overlooked by birders and butterflyers alike, we will investigate the effect that the Cave Creek Complex fire of 2005 had on this transition zone. Meet at 7:30 A.M. at the junction of Carefree Highway and the road to Bartlett Dam. We will check for returning migrants and early butterflies. Bring a lunch and water. A field guide to butterflies would be helpful. Limit 15. Difficulty 1
Leader: Janet Witzeman, (602) 840.6089 for reservations.

Saturday, April 21

Oak Flat Campground & Haunted Canyon, Endangered Tonto National Forest Public Lands.

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Maricopa Audubon Society Field Trips

Continued from page 9

Celebrate Earth Day visiting two special birding spots in danger of transforming into copper mines. Early morning stop to Oak Flat Campground for a quick view of the 4100' elevation chaparral habitat where Crissal Thrasher were seen. Continue on to Haunted Canyon for a 3-mile round trip hike to a 95% forest canopy including One-seed juniper and Arizona alder. We will look for spring migrants at this 3500' elevation riparian habitat. Bring lunch and water. Limit 15. Difficulty 3. Leader: Laurie Nessel, (480) 968.5614 or Laurie Nessel@hotmail.com for reservations and information.

Wednesday, May 2

Mt. Ord. Enjoy a tour as we travel from the foothill scrub looking for the watch-listed Gray Vireo and Black-chinned Sparrow in the lower scrub, Painted Redstart, Hairy Woodpecker, Olive Warbler and other warbler species as we climb to near 7128'. Bring lunch snacks. Limit 15. Difficulty 2 for some steep walking at the peak. Leader: Russ Widner, (480) 595.2977 or rwidner@earthlink.net for reservations.

Wednesday, May 16

Slate Creek Divide. Some of the specialties of that area are breeding Gray Vireo, Black-chinned Sparrow, Scott's Oriole in the juniper area and Red-breasted Nuthatch, Virginia's Warbler and Red-faced Warbler higher up in the pines. We will meet at the Denny's parking lot on the south side of Shea Blvd. just west of the Beeline Highway (Rt. 87) at 6:30 A.M. Bring a

lunch and water. Difficulty 2 for some steep walking.

Leader: Janet Witzeman
(602) 840.6089 for reservations.

Sat. June 16

Charles Babbitt, Flagstaff/ San Francisco Peaks

Continuing:

Third Saturdays: Family Bird Walks at the Gilbert Water Ranch sponsored by Audubon Arizona. Details about birdwalk dates, times, and changing exhibits can be seen at:

www.maricopaaudubon.org, and
www.riparianinstitute.org

Mondays: Bird Walks at the Desert Botanical Gardens, free with admission to the garden.

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 Radamaker, Jack Holloway, Pete Moulton and Cynthia Donald). For other details visit the Arboretum website <http://ag.arizona.edu/BTA>.

Letter to Les Corey

Mark Horlings



Mr. Les Corey
Vice President & Chief Field Operations Officer
7400 N. Oracle Rd. Suite 326
Tucson, AZ 85704

Dear Mr. Corey:

I am the Treasurer of the Maricopa Audubon Society. I was a board member a few years ago and agreed to return in July, 2006, after several members of the Board resigned to join the newly-forming Desert Rivers chapter.

As you know, Herb Fibel won the election for President of Maricopa Audubon Society in May, 2006. The sponsors seeking to form the new chapter wrote Herb Fibel on July 25, 2006, emphasizing the growth of the valley and the need for a new chapter to serve residents in new east valley communities.

National Audubon and individual members can certainly debate whether Audubon acts more effectively, in education, conservation, and the enjoyment of birding, with more but smaller chapters, or with fewer chapters serving a larger geographic base and speaking for a larger membership. Such a debate, focused on the desire to split Maricopa Audubon into two chapters, would have added a legitimate issue for consideration during the chapter's recent campaign. However, the group seeking to form the Desert Rivers chapter never mentioned any need for a new chapter during that election.

Several of the Desert River Chapter organizers stood for election, were elected, and were installed as officers and directors of Maricopa Audubon at the May election. (Obviously, this does not apply to Mike Rupp or the Saffels.) The successful candidates did not disclose a plan not to serve out the terms to which the membership elected them.

Audubon chapters work hard to find people willing to serve, particularly in administrative roles. Practical problems arise when officers resign like this, whether or not they form a competing chapter. The newsletter, website, and stationery need to be updated. As Treasurer, I have yet to receive any chapter income which has not been received by and then forwarded from current or resigned Maricopa Audubon officers. (Fortunately, the chapter's creditors switched their records to bill me immediately.) Membership records present an even greater problem.

Candidates who stand for election and are elected should be expected to serve. If they leave in mid-term, it should be for personal or job reasons, not in an attempt to torpedo the chapter they agreed to assist. Perhaps one way to recognize this would be for National Audubon to simply table the request of Desert Rivers, for reconsideration in May, 2007, when the terms of office to which most Desert Rivers organizers were elected by Maricopa Audubon's membership expire.

I look forward to meeting with you, Ms. Campana, and Ms. Tennefoss on October 17. In considering this matter, I hope National Audubon will recognize that the petition for a new chapter does not reflect growth in the east valley, but a lost election.

Sincerely,

Mark Horlings

cc: Sam Campana
Lynne Tennefoss

Conservationist/Artist Brian Edgar Evans

Bob Witzeman

Artist Brian Evans is passionately devoted to the protection of wildlife and their habitats. Born in Utah, he lived in the Valley for many years. In the 1980's he moved to New Mexico. A consumed conservationist, he composed much of the art and graphics and T-shirts used in the Audubon, Sierra Club and Arizona Wildlife Federation campaigns in opposition to the Cliff and Orme Dams in the 70's and 80's. After moving to New Mexico he continued to provide artwork for T-shirts and

gave us a hand-colored stationery version for e-mail use. Anyone desiring to see it in all its beauty, with its subtle, yet impressive colors, visit the MAS website page of this Cactus Wren-dition issue.

To the right is an example of Brian's pen and ink craft from 1982. It is a pictorial map with many of Arizona's flagship birds, animals and herps. Past issues of our Cactus Wren-ditions contain many examples of Brian's artwork and his dedication to wildlife

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



educational graphics. Memorable were his 1980's and 90's graphics of the Mt. Graham Red Squirrel and its priceless sky island boreal forest on the summit of Mt. Graham which UofA astronomers were in the process of destroying.

Many of us know him for the inspiring letterhead he gave MAS. It features a Bald Eagle in a cliff nest over the Salt or Verde Rivers. In the nest are two downy young eaglets. The other parent is seen flying over the river foraging for fish. Brian also

protection.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

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

JUNE, JULY, & AUGUST 2006

Only one Western Grebe was seen June 18 below Painted Rock Dam (PRD), where the species bred a year ago and in other years on an irregular basis (BG). Individual Brown Pelicans were observed at PRD July 4 (BG), in Palo Verde July 29 (DL), and at Fountain Hills Lake July 30 – Aug. 15 (KR); up to three were seen on Tempe Town Lake (TTL) July 27 – Aug. 16 (MW,LL), and two were found dead along I-10 July 29 (KR). Between 10 and 27 Neotropic Cormorants were counted at the Gilbert Water Ranch (GWR) June 10 – Aug. 27 (PD,MM) and up to 15 were reported at TTL Aug. 7 - 10 (MW,MM).

The **Little Blue Heron**, found at Rio Salado in late May, was joined by a second individual June 24; both remained at least until Aug. 19 and one was still present Aug. 27 (TGs et al.). There were no previous June records for the county and no previous record for such an extended stay for this casual visitor. The White Ibis (frequenting the area s.w. of Phoenix since May 2003) was seen again July 23 at the Lower River Rd. Ponds (TC) and Aug. 13 along Old Highway 80 (BG).

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were found breeding during the period at El Mirage Pond (up to 29 adults and seven young) and at the Hunter's sludge ponds (at least 16 adults and seven young) (TC). Canada Geese were reported to have been breeding at Turf Paradise for the past ten years; this year's two or three nestings produced 10 – 12

young (TM). Two male Wood Ducks were observed on TTL Aug. 20 (LL). A number of "Mexican" Mallards continued to be seen at Rio Salado during the period (TGs).

Up to three Blue-winged Teal (formerly considered rare and still uncommon in late June and July) were observed at the GWR June 10 – July 19 (PD,MM). An adult with a young Cinnamon Teal (uncommon breeders) was observed at the GWR Aug. 27 (MM). Two adult N. Shovelers (uncommon in summer) were reported at the GWR June 10 – July 16 (PD,MM).

A male N. Harrier was observed in Chandler on the early date of July 16 (AP,CF); the species is seldom recorded before the first of September. One of the Red-shouldered Hawks at the Hassayampa River Preserve (HRP) was seen there June 3 (EL).

Three Clapper Rails were found at the west end of Sisson Rd. near PRD June 17 (BG) and one was heard calling near El Mirage and the Gila River July 30 (CBa,TC). An adult Black-bellied Plover was observed at the Lower River Road Ponds in Palo Verde Aug. 13 (TC). A Snowy Plover was seen at the GWR July 24-25 (LL,SG). Many families of Black-necked Stilts were reported at the GWR during the period (MM,PD); the species was also found nesting at the Dysart & Southern Ave. Pond June 17 (BG) and a pair with three downy chicks was seen at the Hunter's Ponds on the late date of Aug. 13 (TC).

Am. Avocets also were found breeding at the GWR and the Dysart & Southern Ave. Pond during the period (PD,BG,MM). A Long-billed Curlew was found at the GWR on the late date of June 15 (PMA); there have been only three previous June records for the county. Two juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were observed at the Hunter's Ponds Aug. 13 (TC). Individual Stilt Sandpipers were seen at the GWR July 17 (MM) and e. of El Mirage July 30 (CBa,TC); five were counted at the El Mirage Pond Aug. 26 (KR). A juvenile **Short-billed Dowitcher** was seen and heard at the Hunter's Ponds Aug. 19 (KR).

An **Elegant Tern**, photographed at the GWR June 14 (BGri, fide RD), provided only the second record for the county. A Black Tern was observed at Fountain Hills Lake Aug. 23-25 (KR). Burrowing Owls were found "everywhere" in the vicinity of PRD June 17 (BG) and several broods were observed at the Hunter's Ponds July 23 and Aug. 5 (TC,BI).

Two Willow Flycatchers were heard singing June 11 at the HRP where the species has nested in past years (PD). A migrating Willow Flycatcher was observed in a Scottsdale yard on the late dates of June 11-13 (JBa). Four Willow Flycatchers, two silent Dusky/Hammonds type Flycatchers, and six silent "Western" type Flycatchers were reported at Morgan City Wash, s. of Lake Pleasant Aug. 27 (TC). Individual "Western" type Flycatchers were observed at Rio Salado on the late dates of June 10 & 17 (TGs,EL).

Only one Tropical Kingbird was reported at the HRP June 3 (EL) and only one Thick-billed Kingbird was reported there June 3 & 11 (EL,PD); both species have nested at the HRP in recent years.

A **Blue Jay** was heard and seen in a Scottsdale yard Aug. 1-3 (JBa); the only previous record of this species in the county was one reported in October 2005 in a yard in Glendale. A Red-breasted Nuthatch (an uncommon migrant in the lowlands) was observed at Morgan City Wash Aug. 27 (TC). A Brown Creeper was seen in a Scottsdale yard June 18 (AMc); there were no previous summer records of this species in the lowlands in the county. Eight House Wrens seen at Morgan City Wash Aug. 27 (TC) was a large number for so early in the season, but several were also reported there at this same time a year ago.

Individual Am. Robins were observed in the lowlands on the unusual dates of June 18 in Encanto Park (MP) and Aug. 12 at the GWR (RD). An adult Sage Thrasher was seen on the early date of Aug. 28 at Fountain Hills Lake, where the species was also reported at the same time in 2004 (KR).

A female Yellow-rumped Warbler was discovered on Mt. Ord on the late date of June 3 (PD); there were no previous June records for the county and only a few after mid-May. A female Townsend's Warbler was found at Rio Salado on the late date of June 17 (EL); there was only one previous June record for the county. Individual

Hermit Warblers were observed at Rio Salado Aug. 12 (EL,TGs) and in Tempe Aug. 23 (BE). A singing male Am. Redstart was seen in a Tolleson yard June 17 (BG) and an injured female was found in n.w. Phoenix Aug. 25 (P&GH).

A **Kentucky Warbler** was discovered in a Tolleson yard June 22 (BG); there have been five previous county records, the most recent of which was recorded in the same yard in May 2003. An early male **Hooded Warbler** was found at Rio Salado July 26 and remained for an extended stay at least until Aug. 26 (EL,TGs); there have been a dozen previous county records but none for July or August.

A Green-tailed Towhee was observed at the GWR on the early date of Aug. 27 (MM), providing only the second August record for the county; the species is not usually recorded before Sept. 7. A very early Brewer's Sparrow was seen at El Mirage Pond July 30 (TC); this species does not usually begin to return for the winter until late August. A singing male Lark Sparrow was observed at the GWR June 21 at least until July 19 (CR,MM); there were no previous June records for the county, none past mid-May or before late July.

A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak (a rare transient) was found in a Mesa yard July 23 (JM). Individual male Indigo Buntings (casual spring, summer, and early fall visitors) were seen at El Mirage Pond July 30 (TC) and at the GWR Aug. 3 (MM).

A **Broad-winged Hawk** was seen

soaring over Signal Peak in the Pinal Mountains, Gila Co., Aug. 26 (PMo,CD). A Blue-throated Hummingbird was found farther north than usual in the Pinal Mountains Aug. 16 (DP et al.). A female N. Parula was discovered at the Sipe Wildlife Area in the White Mountains, Apache Co., July 3 (KR).

Abbreviations: Hassayampa River Preserve (HRP), Gilbert Water Ranch (GWR), Painted Rock Dam (PRD), Tempe Town Lake (TTL).

Observers: Charles Babbitt, Jack Bartley, Troy Corman, Pierre Deviche, Rich Ditch, Cynthia Donald, Brian Enos, Craig Fischer, Steve Ganley, Brandon Grise (BGri), Bill Grossi (BG), Paul & Gloria Halesworth, Brian Ison, Larry Langstaff, Eric Latternur, Dean Luehrs, Phyllis Martin, Turner Martin, Allison McGowan, Jay Miller, Michael Moore, Pete Moulton, Anne Peyton, Dave Pearson, Michael Plagens, Kurt Rademaker, Carlos Ross, Magill Weber.

Field Trip Reports

Pinal Mountain--Wednesday, August 16, six of us from the Maricopa Audubon Society birded Pinal Mountain in southern Gila County for 8 hours. The weather was in the mid 60s to low 70s with overcast skies. In total we found 72 species of birds. In the chaparral at lower altitudes, Black-chinned Sparrows, Crissal Thrashers and Juniper Titmice were still singing. However, we could find no Gray Vireos or Scott's Orioles. In the pine, aspen and fir forests at higher altitudes the large chickadee-nuthatch-warbler flocks typical of migration season were just beginning to form. They will probably be at their maximum densities next week. We saw 11 species of warblers, including all of the nesting or passage migrant species expected at higher altitudes this time of year, except for Yellow-rumped and Nashville Warblers.

The huge bright orange blossoms of Agaves attracted many hummingbirds on the drier southern slopes near the top of the mountain. At least 80% of these hummingbirds were Rufous type and the rest were Broad-tailed, but of the more than 50 individuals here, we did not see a single adult male of either species. At the crest of Pinal Mountain in the low bushy flowers in open areas as well as at the hummingbird feeders at

one of the cabins near the crest, we had many female Broad-tailed Hummingbirds and a single female CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD. We heard three male Broad-tailed Hummingbirds flying over but saw none. The Magnificent Hummingbirds reported at these feeders last month were absent. At the lower edge of the Ponderosa belt, we found a singing male BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD. This is one of the more northerly records for this species in Arizona. We also saw no flycatchers or thrushes the whole day (except for a single TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE near the Signal Peak road entrance). David L. Pearson, School of Life Sciences, Arizona State University.

Page Springs--Saturday, September 16 Seven of us had a great time on the Page Springs Fish Hatchery Field Trip, near Cornville on September 16th. Actually there were eleven of us, but only seven of us had a great time. No, just kidding, there were just seven of us and we all had a great time. The weather was fair and a little warm. It is sort of a quiet time of year for birding. Many of our summer species have moved on south, while our wintering species have not yet arrived. With us was a mix of brand new and veteran birders. Our contingent consisted of Lisa Fitzner, Emerson Stiles, Nancy

Eichorst, and MAS board members Cynthia Donald and Jack Follett. Highlights of the day were a female Lazuli Bunting, a bevy of flycatchers, including a Western Wood Pewee, an Olive-sided Flycatcher, and a Western type Empid that we couldn't agree on, plus the to-be-expected Black Phoebe and Say's Phoebe. Another special find was a White-throated Sparrow. At the Bubbling Ponds further up the road, a different type hatchery run by Arizona Game and Fish, our tape playing elicited responses from both a Sora and a Virginia Rail, but neither would come out of hiding to let us see them.

We were able, as well, to connect the call with the bird, when we both heard and saw a vigorously singing Summer Tanager. It was too late in the season for the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, which is one of the last neotropical migrants to arrive in Arizona and the one of the first to leave in the fall.

The trip presented some not so ordinary species, several of which posed some major ID challenges for us all. Our total for the day was 36 species. Certainly not the least pleasurable of our experiences that day was the post picnic lunch sharing of apple and peach cobbler ala modes for dessert at the Page Springs Restaurant overlooking Oak Creek. Herb Fibel.

Photo Quiz Answers

Jim Burns

When we did warblers last summer, the point of the quiz was that shape and structure can be your first clue to identification of birds in families of look alike species. Nothing bedevils us quite like the sparrow family, mostly brown and streaky, many of them skulkers, all of them active feeders who won't sit and sing for us in wintertime.

Many of you are familiar with the term "jizz" as it applies to bird identification. It is thought to be a bastardized acronym for the concept of "general impression and shape" used by plane spotters in World War II Britain to distinguish at a glance whether incoming aircraft were allies or enemies. A glance is often all we get with sparrows, with no chance to observe details of field marks or cryptic plumage.

Sparrows may all be little brown (or gray) jobs with stripes, but each of the twelve genera in the sparrow family has its own distinctive jizz. This is Kenn Kaufman's "generic approach" to sparrows from his book, *Advanced Birding*. You know "generic" as a product without brand name or label. The point of this quiz is simply to place each sparrow silhouette into its correct genus, not to give each a species label. In fact, from the visual information given in these silhouettes, the latter is impossible.

A) Good silhouette, easy genus

Each of our three sparrows is perched in a similar, rather sparrowly pose. Let's start at the top with each and work downward noting our first impressions of six specific details of shape and structure. Alright, I admit I just used the word "details," but aren't details of shape and structure easier to catch at a glance than details of plumage such as "median crown stripe," "breast streak coalescing into a central spot," and "wing bars?" That's what jizz is all about.

Our first quiz silhouette is the best of the three, a perfect profiling for diagnostic looks at all six details we need to help us in our genus identification. As we enumerate them, compare these details with the correspondent ones in the other two silhouettes. This first sparrow has a relatively flattened crown. The bill is quite long, conical to be sure, but the

upper mandible looks slightly decurved, giving the bird a "Roman-nosed profile." The body is "chesty" looking giving the overall impression that this is a medium to large sparrow. The tail is long and it is obviously rounded at the tip.

Now, flip through your field guide. This combination of the six structural features is *Aimophila* sparrow jizz. The *Aimophila* genus includes Bachman's, Botteri's, Cassin's, Rufous-winged, and Rufous-crowned. *Aimophilous* sparrows do not flock up in winter. Many birders consider their jizz the easiest of the sparrows. This Botteri's Sparrow was photographed in the grasslands below Madera Canyon in August, 1998.

Before we leave the *Aimophila* genus, here are two side-bars to consider. Because of their large bills, half the members of the *Ammodramus* genus-Baird's, Grasshopper, and Henslow's Sparrows-profile very closely to the *Aimophila*, but these three *Ammodramus* Sparrows have relatively short, spiky tails.

And secondly, what to do with the Five-striped? Originally classified in the genus *Zonotrichia* with the crowned sparrows, in the seventh edition of the A.O.U. checklist Five-striped was placed in the *Aimophila* genus. Subsequently, in his *Sparrows Of The United States And Canada*, the "sparrow bible," Jim Rising placed Five-striped with the *Amphispiza*. This is more information than you needed, but interesting nonetheless.

B) Tricky silhouette, difficult genus

The silhouette you see for our second bird was not a perfect profile like the other two. It was taken from slightly above the bird, giving us a dorsal view. This allows us to see the nicely notched tail, a good clue for this genus, but gives us a false sense of this sparrow's size.

We see a rounded crown and a short, sharply pointed conical bill, both quite different than our Botteri's. What we probably can't deduce, even knowing this is a dorsal view, is that this is a small, skinny little sparrow. Certainly the tail is shorter, proportionally, than that of the *Aimophilas*, and there is that obvious notch at its tip.

This profile fits the *Spizella* genus-American Tree, Chipping, Clay-colored, Brewer's Field, and Black-chinned. *Spizellas* typically form small flocks in winter which grow in size as springtime nears. Three of the *Spizella* sparrows, Chippies, Clay-colored, and Brewer's, are amongst our smallest sparrows and are perhaps the most difficult to separate from one another in winter plumage. The Sibley field guide has an excellent call-out box on their winter identification. This Chipping Sparrow was photographed in December, 2002 in Salinero, Texas.

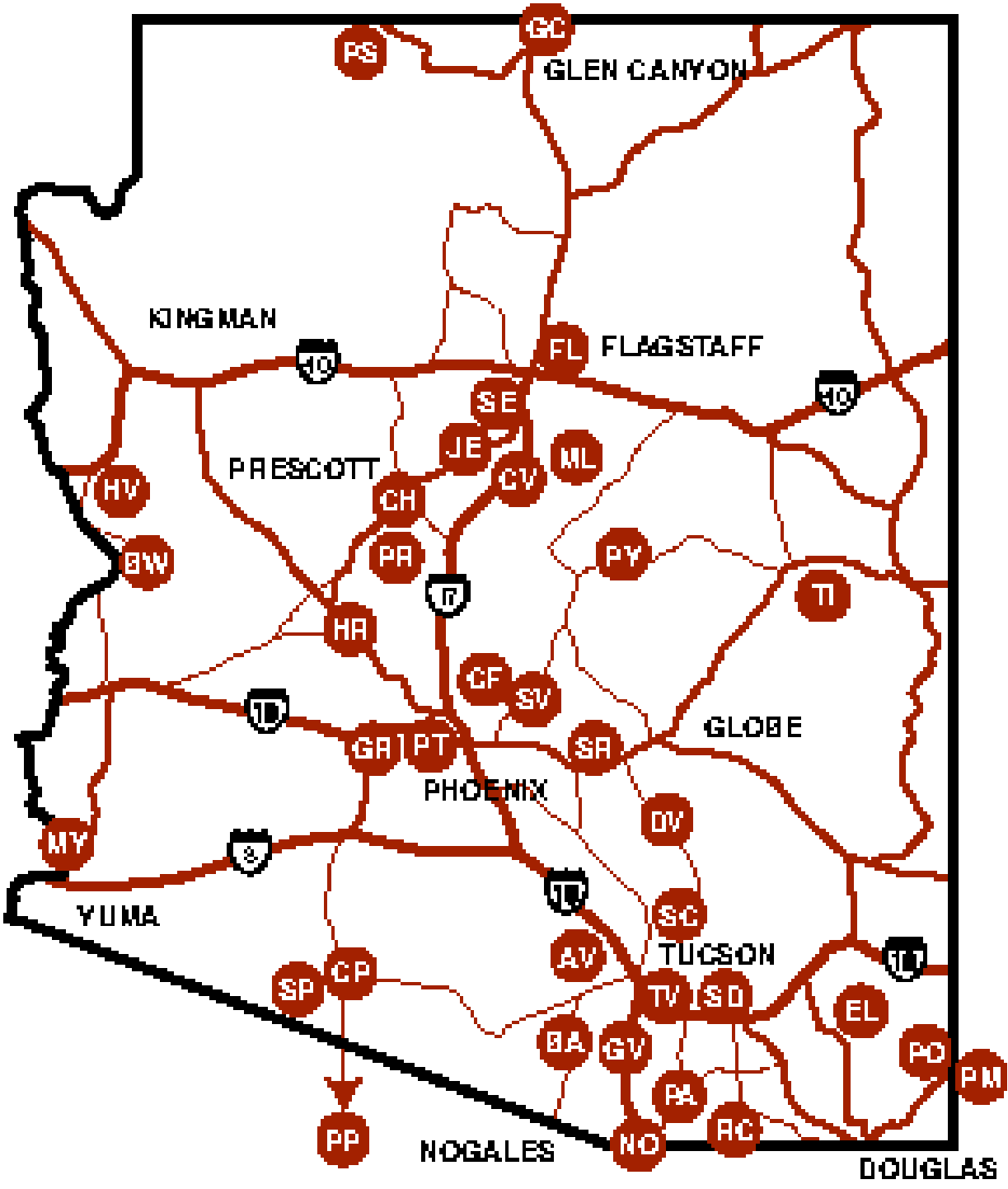
C) Good silhouette, easy genus

This third silhouette is an eye-level side profile, much like our first, but the bird's head is turned slightly toward the camera. Let's check out the six details. The head certainly has a different shape than that of our first two. Not flat, not even rounded, we have to characterize this as a peaked crown and it this bird a very large-headed appearance. The bill looks tiny and pointed, but remember our caveat. Camera angle has given us a false sense of this bill's actual size, and we know it must be bigger than it appears.

This is a big sparrow with a robust, pot-bellied body and a long tail which seems to be sharply squared off at the tip. Easy genus? Sure, this is one of the "crowned" sparrows, the *Zonotrichia*. This genus includes White-throated, Golden-crowned, White-Crowned, and Harris's. And Five-striped if your field guide is old enough. This genus is often found in large flocks quite early in winter. This White-crowned Sparrow was photographed at the Gilbert Riparian Area last winter. Our other large sparrow which shares all of the *Zonotrichia* jizz except the peaked crown is Fox Sparrow. Be forewarned the Fox Sparrow has been rumored a likely candidate for splitting into four (!) separate species, but they will comprise the *Passerella* genus.

Time to get out there and practice. Learn jizz first and see if you can put your sparrows in their proper genus. Then, from that baseline, you can start learning field marks in their plumage.

Arizona (& vicinity) Christmas Bird Count Map 2006-2007



Arizona (& vicinity) Christmas Bird Count Schedule 2006-2007

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 species and individual bird encountered within a designated 15-mile diameter circle. These records now comprise an extensive ornithological database that enables monitoring of 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. Many counts hold a compilation dinner at the end of the day where results are tabulated and stories shared. A \$5.00 participation fee defrays a portion of the cost of tabulating and publishing the overall count results. Help is needed on most of these counts, so find one that interests you and contact the compiler for more information.

Check the website for up to date information. Some of the counts did not have all their information at press time.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Count Name</u>	<u>Compiler</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>E-Mail</u>
12/14	Th	SV	Salt-Verde Rivers	Kurt Rademaker	480-837-2446	kurtrad@mexicobirding.com
12/15	Fr	BA	Buenos Aires NWR	Bonnie Swarbrick	520-823-4251	bonnie_swarbrick@fws.gov
12/16	Sa	AV	Avra Valley	George Montgomery	520-682-8530	diamont@dakotacom.net
12/16	Sa	ML	Mormon Lake	Elaine Morrall	928-526-1022	elaimorr@npgcable.com
12/16	Sa	NO	Nogales	Michael Bissontz	520-577-8778	seetrogon@comcast.net
12/16	Sa	PY	Payson	David Hallock	928-474-9475	eldoradh@rmi.net
12/16	Sa	PP	Puerto Penasco, Sonora, MX	Steve Ganley	480-830-5538	sganley@cox.net
12/16	Sa	SC	Santa Catalina Mountains	Bob Bates	520-296-5629	batesr@u.arizona.edu
12/16	Sa	TI	Timber Mesa	Jimmy Videle	928-337-2466	moonrise@wmonline.com
12/16	Sa	MY	Yuma-Mittry Lake	Henry Detwiler	928-343-8363	henrydetwiler@earthlink.net
12/17	Su	CH	Chino Valley	Russell Duerksen	928-925-5567	duerksen@msn.com
12/17	Su	JE	Jerome-Cottonwood	Betsy Feinberg	928-203-0676	betsyfpub101@catharon.com
12/17	Su	PA	Patagonia	Thomas Arny	520-394-0146	tarny@theriver.com
12/17	Su	TV	Tucson Valley	Susan Birky	520-743-9390	snbbirky@yahoo.com
12/18	Mo	EL	Elfrida	Tom Wood	520-432-1388	tom@sabo.org
12/19	Tu	PT	Phoenix-Tres Rios			
12/22	Fr	SD	Saint David	Tom Wood	520-432-1388	tom@sabo.org
12/23	Sa	CP	Ajo-Cabeza Prieta NWR	Curt McCasland	520-387-4992	curtis_mccasland@fws.gov
12/23	Sa	SE	Sedona			
12/27	We	GR	Gila River	Troy Corman	602-482-6187	aplomado@cox.net
12/28	Th	GV	Green Valley-Madera Canyon	Reid Freeman	520-625-9895	wallcreeper@cox.net
12/28	Th	HV	Havasu NWR	Norma Miller	520-578-1399	n8urnut@comcast.net
12/29	Fr	BW	Bill Williams River NWR	Kathleen Blair	928-667-4144	kathleen_blair@fws.gov
12/29	Fr	SP	Sierra Pinta-Cabeza Prieta NWR	David Griffin	505-382-2080	ripley@bluefrog.com
12/30	Sa	DV	Dudleyville	Tracy McCarthey	602-451-4179	tmccarthey@msn.com
12/30	Sa	FL	Flagstaff-Mount Elden	Terry Blows	928-774-8028	terence.blows@nau.edu
12/30	Sa	PO	Portal	Larry Gates	520-558-1020	hummers@vtc.net
12/30	Sa	RC	Ramsey Canyon	Ted Mouras	520-803-0221	tedmouras@mindspring.com
12/31	Su	CV	Camp Verde	Betsy Feinberg	928-203-0676	betsyfpub101@catharon.com
12/31	Su	PM	Peloncillo Mountains, NM	Alan Craig	520-558-2220	narca_9@yahoo.com
1/2	Tu	CF	Carefree	Walter Thurber	480-483-6450	wathurber@cox.net
1/3	We	GC	Glen Canyon	John Spence	928-608-6267	john_spence@nps.gov
1/4	Th	SR	Superior	Cynthia Donald	480-283-4515	planres@earthlink.net
Unknown		HR	Hassayampa River			
Unknown		PS	Pipe Spring Natl. Monument	Andrea Bornemeier	928-643-7105	andrea_bornemeier@nps.gov
Unknown		PR	Prescott			

wt: 10/1/06

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, Jack Follett.

- Introductory rate for new members..... \$20/year
 - Senior Citizen or student rate..... \$15/year
 - Basic rate \$35/year
- Foreign: add \$10 in US funds

For membership changes and status, call 1-800-274-4201. Address changes can be e-mailed to CHADD@audubon.org.

For *Wren-dition* subscriptions only--\$20/year (Make your check payable to "Maricopa Audubon Society") and send to Jack Follett at 1520 E Secretariat Dr., Tempe, AZ 85284. For Summer/Winter address change or to freeze your membership in our chapter call Membership chair, Jack at 480-897-7988 or jackfollett@msn.com.

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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