Sabine's Gull was photographed by Jim Burns at Fountain Hills Lake on October 1, 2003, with Canon EOS 1V body, Canon 400mm f2.8 lens, and Fujichrome Velvia film.
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COMMITTEES/SUPPORT

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Arizona Audubon Council Rep: Herb Fibe 408-966-5246 herbertfibel@aol.com

Audubon Phone 408-829-9209

Book Store

PROGAMS

September 2003 through May 2004

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AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

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

You can invest in the future of our natural world by making a bequest in your will to the Maricopa Audubon Society. Talk to your attorney for more information on how this can be accomplished.

traditionally it is now my turn to thank all of you who take time out of your busy schedules to provide me with ideas and articles for the Wrendition. What I try not to forget while gathering articles and laying them out, is that this is your newsletter, not mine. I appreciate the time it takes to put thoughts to paper. I know that the interests of our readers, although ultimately bird based, are many and varied. It is always a pleasure for me to receive something altogether different, be it in style or content. So, for those of you who haven’t yet submitted anything, give it a try!

Finally, don’t forget to check the Christmas Bird Count list that Walter Thurber has put together for us. If you have never participated in a Count, make this the year that you do.

Be sure to check out our website at www.maricopaaudubon.org!

Jp will not hear
Screamsongs of the wilderness
As the Gray Hawk soars

Jp will not see
Feathered rainbows vault the sky
As the buntings flush

Jp will not sense
Shadows silent on the grass
As the bobcat stalks

They say cockroaches
Await their inheritance
As we blade and burn

I say time has come
Today the springs at Kino
Hasten down the wind
Sometimes it's the simplest things that can bring about the most remarkable changes. Bruce Palmer, head of the Condor Reintroduction Program, reminded us of that on a recent field trip he and his wife led to the Grand Canyon.

We had remarkably few other species at the canyon--twelve, counting the condors. But we sure did get great views of that majestic king of the canyon. The cove off the backyard of Bright Angel Lodge is a favorite choice for condors roosting for the night. We were there at 4:30 PM as the first young condor straggler arrived and perched on a rock ledge cantilevered in space below Lookout Studio. Within a half hour a great kettle, a gathering, of ravens, turkey vultures and condors arrived. Seeing all these black-feathered canyon residents together emphasized the size of the condors. The giants of the air came gliding with feet extended to slow their descent, flexing flight feathers to direct their course. They were so close we could see their feathers quivering in the winds they rode, straining to support the twenty pound weight of the bird.

The condors' pink-orange crops showed they had been feeding, probably on a big-homed sheep carcass rangers had spotted them on earlier. Bruce explained that food is still provided by the Reintroduction Program, still-born calves, as a general rule. It is food the condor caretakers know is not contaminated with lead from hunter's bullets. The lead shot ammunition is ingested by the condors as they feed and remains in their system long enough to poison them. Condors are good at what they do. What they do is locate and consume dead animal matter, primarily large game, the same game hunters are hunting. There is no way the researchers can keep the condors from eating carcasses felled by hunters.

Every six months each one of the free-flying condors in Arizona and California's release programs has to be recaptured and retested for lead. Those highly enough contaminated have to be chelated through a series of injections which the condors hate. It hurts. It hurts the scientists too: one had his chin split open by a thrashing condor beak and another broke his tooth while trying to manhandle a condor who chose noncompliance. Bruce explained that the birds, with a wing-span of nine feet, are an amazing combination of strength and fragility. They are powerfully muscled, but their bones are air-filled, as all bird bones are, so they are brittle and easily broken if not handled very carefully. A condor on the run from the needle is apt to be making any kind of handling as difficult as it can.

"Condor reintroduction can never be successful as long as hunters still use lead shot ammunition," Bruce stated. Fortunately most ammunition producers are willing to consider making non-lead alternatives available when they are aware of the problem. Negotiations are ongoing. It's simple, and absolutely vital to condor survival in nature.

Last year three condors were hatched in the wild. Condors are nest-bound for the first six months of life. Then, at six months, they fledge. Flight training begins. The fledglings will remain with their parents another six months, just learning the ropes of flying and condor acculturation.

While nestlings, their parents bring them food daily. Instinctively, the parent condors also bring bits and pieces of material scattered around the carcass at the feeding site. Normally, this is comprised of bits of bone from the carcass. This too is fed to the young condors, providing minerals for their developing bones. Unfortunately, adult condors pick up other small items as well, like broken glass and bottle tops. The bottle tops are made of zinc. All three of last year's nestlings died between five and six months of age. Necropsies showed one had twelve bottle caps in its stomach and intestines and they all died of zinc toxicity. This year there was one condor hatched in Arizona. The Reintroduction Program has attempted to clean up the cliffs below the nest site and at the feeding sites to try to keep trash from being delivered to the chick by its instinct-driven parents. Time will tell how successful they've been. The chick is only a few months old now and it's still too early to know. But people have been coming to the canyon for a hundred years. A hundred years of trash. "The moral of that story?" asked Chris Palmer. "Pick up your trash. Today's and yesterday's, when you come across it. But at least start with your own, today."

It's the simple things that will ensure that condors sail free in blue skies over our children and our children's children. None of us needs to be many-degreed scientists to stop using lead shot ammunition and pick up our trash and the trash of others.

It's a start toward assisting the condor in its reintroduction, a start we can all make—simple as that.

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ARIZONA’S SO-CALLED WATER SHORTAGE

By Bob Witzman

“The Endangered Southwestern Bald Eagle strives to survive in the small amount of riparian habitat remaining in Arizona, including the cottonwood/willow habitat which has recently returned to the Verde River in Horseshoe Reservoir.”

The deserts should never be reclaimed. They are the breathing spaces of the West and should be preserved forever.

John C. Van Vykje, "The Desert" (1901).

During the recent drought, luxuriant willow and cottonwood vegetation has returned to the bottom of Verde River’s Horseshoe Reservoir. This is good news considering that 95% of Arizona’s riparian habitat has been “reclaimed” over the past century as the result of dams, groundwater pumping, and cattle grazing. The federally protected Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Southwestern Bald Eagle, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Razorback Sucker are now benefiting from the drought-induced return of the riparian habitat at the bottom of this empty reservoir.

Almost daily we read sky-is-falling articles about the water “shortage” facing Arizona and California. The untold story is that agriculture, growing surplus or heavily subsidized crops, consumes 80% of those states’ water supplies while yielding less than 1% of their states’ incomes.

These are not Ma and Pa farmers. In 1985 the Phoenix Gazette reported that 97% of Arizona’s agricultural income is earned by only 2050 individuals. With an array of federal water, power, and crop subsidies, they harvest a net annual cash income of $205,000 each. Today that figure is more likely $400,000. The net worth of each of the 25,000 U.S. cotton growers averages one million dollars.

With such wealth comes the ability of this class of subsidy-rich citizens to lobby Congress for even more subsidies.

The 25,000 U.S. cotton growers currently receive 3 billion a year in subsidies. These subsidies equal the value of that entire crop! Consequently, this below-market priced U.S. cotton is dumped abroad, courtesy of U.S. taxpayers, causing the world market price to drop—causing and third world cotton growers to be faced with the Ingress Permit being issued by the City of Phoenix. These can be obtained at the guard shack at the main entrance to the WWTP on the east side of the road, near the ponds. They can be reused and should be placed on your car dashboard, as Tribal Police do check the cars periodically. The City believes the site is within the city, and is working with the Gila River Indian Community to resolve the dispute. Protection of the site doesn’t really seem to have improved since the Tribal Police started policing the area. There are still fishermen, parkers, and more recently ATV’ers using the site, mostly on weekends. Whether these folks have permits or not isn’t known, but it’s best to come early to avoid problems, as these others folks don’t “recreate” til later in the day.

Over the last few months, the status of the 91st Avenue “Cobble Ponds” has been a hot topic because of an ownership dispute with the Gila River Indian Community and the resulting permitting process to allow birders into the site.

This article hopes to update birders on the most recent developments, and also make known a new opportunity for Audubon Chapters to have an presence at both sites and have some impact on the general visiting public.

The Hayfield Site, formerly inside the 91st Ave WWTP, will soon be open to the general public via a new access road across from the “Cobble Site”, outskirt of the plant. The site will be open from dawn to dusk, and will have a parking area and entrance gate away from the ponds which will make it difficult to haul in coolers and other gear, but access will be open to everyone. We will watch with great interest as to whether this access will improve, or degrade, this beautiful site. The Tres Rios managers are well aware of the degradation that has occurred at the Cobble site, and are concerned about the possible negative impact possible at the Hayfield site. I believe their concerns will result in whatever controls need to be implemented to guarantee protection of that habitat.

As a part of the overall public plan for Hayfield, there is a new need for volunteers to become “tourguides” for the Hayfield site on a regular basis. The City of Phoenix doesn’t have the staff to handle this, and has asked Audubon for assistance. This is a great opportunity to help foster appreciation for wetlands with the general public, promote birding and the Maricopa and Sonoran Chiricahua Mountains, and enjoy the site.

These tours would be similar to the Sunday morning birdwalks at Boyce Thompson Arboretum and the Desert Botanical Gardens, with added information about the ecosystem which would be provided by the Tres Rios staff. These tours would start on a weekend basis, but there is a need to guide schoolchildren that tour the facility during the week as well. I would like to see Maricopa, and Sonoran A5 have a presence at these sites through this opportunity, by supplying four “docents” a month, or one every weekend, at the start, and perhaps others during the week. Please contact Michael Rupp at 602-277-0439 days, or ruppar@ mindspring.com for information or to volunteer. You do not have to be a super-experienced birder to volunteer. Please consider spending a morning a month at this beautiful site, doing a service for the bird and mammal species, the Maricopa chapters, and birding in general.

Arizona voraciously consumes 6.8 MAF of water annually. That is enough water to support a population of 28 million people, assuming we use water at the rate Tucson uses it (150 gallons/person/day). That 28 million population would be somewhat less if Arizonans used water in the more profligate manner of Phoenix residents (250 gallons/person/day). There, summer and winter lawns and golf courses freely drink the area’s cheap, subsidized water. Arizona’s golf courses consume as much water as a half a million Arizonans. Because of our many federal water subsidies, water in Phoenix costs homeowners less than most citizens back east, and even here in the Southwest. There is no market incentive here for conservation.

And if Arizona ever grew to 28 million people, there would still be huge amounts of

UPDATE ON 91ST AVE “COBBLE PONDS” & HAYFIELD SITE, PHOENIX

By Mike Rupp

"Cobble Ponds” access is permitted at this time with the Ingress Permit being issued by the City of Phoenix. These can be obtained at the guard shack at the main entrance to the WWTP on the east side of the road, north of the ponds. They can be reused and should be placed on your car dashboard, as Tribal Police do check the cars periodically. The City believes the site is within the city, and is working with the Gila River Indian Community to resolve the dispute. Protection of the site doesn’t really seem to have improved since the Tribal Police started policing the area. There are still fishermen, parkers, and more recently ATV’ers using the site, mostly on weekends. Whether these folks have permits or not isn’t known, but it’s best to come early to avoid problems, as these others folks don’t “recreate” til later in the day.

On a more positive note, the expansion project on the north side of the effluent channel will begin sometime in late 2004, with water filling the site sometime in 2005. The expansion is currently in the planning stages, and Maricopa A5 has approached the City with a recommendation to include at least twenty acres of pure “shorebird habitat” within the 600 acres of new wetlands. The City’s response has been positive, and hopefully the site will include a large shorebird “area” that promises to be a major attribute of the site, with a possible twenty additional species added to the Tres Rios species count. Eventually, tour guides or docents will be needed at this site as well. The current ponds are about twenty acres-imaginatively what a 40 ft increase will look like! This may become the best birding site in the valley!
recharged or reclaimed water available for agriculture or golf. That is because for
every two or three gallons given to homeowners, at least one gallon can be
reclaimed.

Who uses Arizona’s water

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water Usage</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal &amp; Industrial</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Agriculture</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Livestock Feed &amp; Forage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power &amp; Mines</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citrus</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</tbody>
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Some male songbirds that migrate through Arizona draw on a repertoire of more
than 100 songs to hold their territory or attract females.

Crows near Flagstaff eat their own weight in food every day, consuming between
eight and 10 full meals.

There are more than 800 bird species in the United States and over 200 have
been sighted in Arizona!

In the Rincon Mountains, you’ll see Blue Jays whose feathers don’t have blue
pigment; the blue we see is due to differential scattering of parts of the color
spectrum.

A Purple Martin consumes thousands insects a day — dragonflies, bees, wasps,
moths, Japanese beetle, and flying ants. A very few migrate through Arizona.

The Ostrich (you can see one at the Ostrich Festival in Gilbert in the Spring) can
stand 9 feet tall, weigh 345 pounds, and run at speeds of up to 40 mph.

The Wandering Albatross has the largest wingspan of any living bird — as wide as
12 feet.

The Green-winged Teal is the only species of duck known to scratch itself in
flight.

An Eagle can look directly at the sun. You can see a Bald Eagle at the Grand
Canyon!

In 1941, there were 15 or 16 Whooping Cranes; in 2002 there were 277 in the
wild, and 121 in captivity. You can see Sandhill Cranes at the Willcox Festival in
January!

An Ostrich’s eye is larger than its brain. Stop by the Ostrich Farm just outside
Tucson. You’ll see eyelashes as long as your fingers on an Ostrich!

A Red-tailed Hawk has eyesight eight times sharper than a human. You can see
them hunting on the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community.

Grebes carry their chicks on their backs and dive to escape danger, even if they
are carrying chicks. Look for them in Tucson’s Sweetwater ponds.

Herons fish by dropping insects or bread on the water as bait, then standing
motionless, ready to stab an approaching fish. Look for Great Blue Herons in the
ponds along the Indian Bend Wash in Scottsdale.

Birds have a third, transparent eyelid that moves from side to side rather than up
and down, protecting the eye from sun and dust. Important to Arizona birds during
the monsoons in August!

There are more than 300 species of Hummingbird. And Ramsey Canyon in
southeastern Arizona is the Hummingbird Capital of the World.
Because it is common yet shy and retiring within its relatively restricted range, and because it does not wear the flashy colors of many of Arizona’s other special species—species found only here or more easily here than in any other state—tracking and studying all our Abert’s Towhee, and its uniquely restricted niche in our state’s avifauna. What do the water drip in my backyard, Ramer Lake in California’s Coachella Valley, and San Simon Cienega on the east side of the Chiricahua have in common? These few figs are all part of the Colorado River watershed and thus they all have Abert’s Towhees. Whitewater Draw in Arizona’s Sulphur Springs Valley is apparently the only site outside of the Gila-Colorado drainage where Abert’s have ever been found.

Another interesting aspect of the history of Pipilo aberti is the fact that the species is named for a U.S. Army surveyor who never reached Abert’s range, presumably another interesting aspect of the history of Pipilo aberti is the fact that the species is named for a U.S. Army surveyor who never reached Abert’s range, presumably never saw the species alive, and simply forwarded a specimen collected by someone else to Spencer Baird in Washington. Indeed, Abert’s is probably heard more often than seen, the sharp, pinging metal-on-metal call notes the only evidence left behind as a pair, mated for life, flip away unseen through the dense understory that is their preferred habitat.

Life in that understory depends on insects and seeds gleaned by “double scratch” foraging in the soil and leaf litter. The next time you come upon an Abert’s undetected, which is not an easy thing to accomplish, focus specifically and closely on the footwork taking place beneath the feeding bird’s body. Abert’s, like all towhees and many sparrows, can leave the ground, extend their feet forward to the limits of their reach, rake them backwards, and then return them to their original position, all with almost no perceptible body movement. The stout, conical emberrized bill then captures the exposed food.

Abert’s are non-migratory and inhabit dense willow groves and mesquite bosques along watercourses. Nests are large, open cups either low to the ground in bushes or high in mistletoe clumps, built by the female, of leaves and twigs. Nesting begins after spring rains and may continue through September with two broods.

Females do all of the incubation, but both adults feed the nestlings. Nests are sometimes parasitized by cowbirds, but host nestlings are large enough to outcompete the smaller interlopers.

The combination of bulky body and rounded wings make Abert’s and their Pipilo congener weak fliers, so typically they stick very close to vegetative cover. Nonetheless, they can be easy to both hear and see in popular central Arizona birding sites such as the Phoenix Desert Botanical Garden, Granite Reef Recreation Area along the Verde River and Boyce-Thompson Arboretum State Park where the accompanying photograph was taken in November, 2002.

Abert’s Towhee is one of 19 emberizid species on the conservation Watchlist. Parts of its restricted range, primarily in southwestern Utah and along the lower Colorado, have been fragmented because cattle have trampled the riparian vegetation upon which this species depends in these areas. Any population declines there seem to have been offset by expansion along the Santa Cruz River, Sonora Creek, and Oak Creek, as well as into suburban areas around Tucson and Phoenix. Abert’s can now be found in many city parks and backyards if there is water and ground cover where they can forage without fear of predators.

Like our Rufous-winged Sparrow which also inhabits a uniquely restricted niche in Arizona, Abert’s Towhee has shown resilience in repopulating its historical ranges because it does not wear the flashy colors of many of Arizona’s other special species—species found only here or more easily here than in any other state—tracking and studying all our special species if our state’s spectacular biogeographical diversity is to survive.

A) Good photo, easy bird

In this close-up profile, three structural features of our first bird stand out. Especially in comparison with the loons in the other two photos, here we see a large head, a massive bill, and a thick neck. These structural elements tell us this is one of our two large loons, immediately eliminating all species but Common and Yellow-billed.

A closer look at the bill reveals a slightly downcurved culmen (top edge), dark to the tip on an otherwise light upper mandible. Plumage considerations show a dark head and neck which contrast sharply with the bird’s light chin and neck, and there appears to be a dark collar which almost encircles the lower half of that neck. The eye is surrounded by white areas in sharp contrast with the dark head. All these are characteristic of winter Common Loon.

Yellow-billed, by comparison, has a straight culmen, entirely pale along its outer half. The head and nape of Yellow-billed in winter are much paler (brown rather than black) and without this apparent contrast with chin and neck, the collar less obvious and less extensive, and the face much paler, bearing larger areas of white.

This Common Loon was photographed at Site Six on Lake Havasu in February, ’02, foraging alongside the Yellow-billed which spectacularly spent the entire winter there. Seeing the two side by side was fun and instructive, and Site Six is a virtual field lab which I would encourage loon enthusiasts to visit even in the absence of any loon species other than Common.

We know this is a juvenile bird by the light scalloping in the scapular area (shoulders and upper back). Absent on this bird is the arilv shape (peaked fore and aft) of the head so often associated with our two large loon species. I am not sure whether this is a function of the bird’s immaturity or the simpler fact that the bird has just emerged from a dive.

B) Good photo, difficult bird

Though not quite as good as the full profile view shown in our first photo, the angled profile in this second shot presents three structural differences from Common Loon. The head of this bird appears smaller relative to its neck and body, its bill appears smaller and thinner, and that bill, in addition to being held at an upward angle, appears slightly upturned near the tip as well.

Plumage differences are also apparent. This loon shows more extensive white in its face, its neck is less clean and contrasty, and its back is more obviously discount its appearance here in some future winter. The first documented Colorado Arctic Loon occurred just this past winter!

There are, additionally, several structural and plumage related reasons why this loon is neither Arctic nor Pacific. Neither of those will ever show this extensive white in the face, and both in winter plumage have a much thinner white throat in much greater contrast between nape and throat manifest as a straight vertical border down the length of the neck.

So, could this be a Yellow-billed? The lower mandible of Yellow-billed does, after all, have a distinctive upturn which is rendered all the more noticeable because this species typically carries its bill tilted upward like the bird in our photo. Also apparent in this photo is a small dark spot on the auriculars (behind and below the eye toward the nape) which is a field mark for juvenile Yellow-billed. Curious too is the arilv shaped head with its appearance of two peaks, one near the front and one at the rear of the crown, a feature often noted on our two large loon species.

The white speckling on this loon’s back tells us it is a juvenile bird. Since it is diffuse and without pattern— in short, speckling rather than barring— it also tells us this is not a juvenile Yellow-billed. This is the juvenile Red-throated Loon! It was photographed from Palm Lake at the Hassayampa Preserve in November, 1996. Red-throated is our smallest loon, head and neck so similar in circumference that the bird has been mistaken for a snake when its body is submerged beneath the surface. The slender, upturned bill, the plain face, and the peaked crown are most useful field marks on winter birds.

C) Bad photo, easy bird

Our third image is a photo documentation, a euphemism for “crummy photo.” The Common Loon was photographed from almost within spitting distance of the Red-throated from about forty yards. This image was taken from well over 100 yards, looking through a chain link fence. Get the picture? Well, just barely. Nothing beats close, not even good light. In blowing this image to a size comparable to the other two, it is obvious how much sharpness and contrast have been lost.

Nonetheless, we have enough field marks here to pin a label on this loon
speckled with white. These comparative
differences suggest the description of
Yellow-billed four paragraphs above and
beg the possibility that the relatively small
head and bill in this photo might be
functions of sight angle and angle of light.
Additionally, along the flanks of this bird
just above the waterline is an extensive
area of white. Let's discuss this field mark
first.

When Arctic and Pacific Loon were split, it
was well noted that the single most reliable
distinguishing feature of the former was
the bright white visible on the flanks above
the waterline. At rest on the water Pacifics
do not reveal any white in this area. In
flight this difference between Arctic and
Pacific is analogous to that between Violet-
green and Tree Swallow, the former
showing its more extensive white flanks as
a saddle up and over the sides of the
rump. Pacific Loons and Tree Swallows
do not have this white saddle.

Could this be an Arctic Loon? There are
several reasons why not, the most obvious
being Arctic Loon has never been
recorded in Arizona. Nonetheless, don't
just from our discussion of the first
two images, and the similarity in sight
angle to the second photograph
makes it a fascinating study. We see
a smoothly rounded head with no
white around the eye. We see a thin
bill, light with a dark culmen which, if
not actually downcurved, certainly is
not upturned. The contrast between
the dark hindneck and light foreneck
is so sharp it appears as a well
defined line. The small white patches
on the bird's back, which designate it
as a juvenile bird, are arranged into
neat, parallel rows. And nary a hint of
white along the flanks at the waterline.

This juvenile Pacific Loon was
discovered by former Phoenix birder,
Bob Norton, in the canal south of
Granite Reef Dam in January, 1993
and lingered in the area for several
weeks. Winter is here. Arizona is
due for an Arctic Loon appearance.
The lakes along the Colorado, any big
water impoundment, even Tempe
Town Lake would be logical venues.
You've done your homework. See
you at Site Six.
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 carpooling 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!!!

Saturday, November 22
Cottonwood. We will visit sites near Cottonwood, including Peck’s Lake, Tuzigoot National Monument and Tavasci Marsh. We will meet in the a.m. in northern Phoenix and carpool to Cottonwood. Expect to see a variety of residents and waterfowl. Contact leader for reservations and information.

Limit: 15
Difficulty: 2
Leader: Richard Kaiser
(623) 276-3312

Saturday, January 10
Lost Dutchman State Park. This desert park lies at the base of the Superstition Mountain near Apache Junction. Bird feeders and baths make locating birds easy. Canyon Towhee, Pyrrhula pyrrhula, and many close looks at rock wrens made last year’s trip memorable. There is an entrance fee at the park. This is a beautiful hike, with good views of the spires of the Superstitions. Total of three miles to walk. Bring a lunch. Call leader for information and reservations.

Limit: 15
Difficulty: 3
Leader: Laurie Nessel
(480) 968-5814; laurienessel@hotmail.com

By Roxane George, Southwest Forest Alliance

SPEAKING OUT FOR OLD GROWTH: PRESERVING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

Perched on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, the Kaibab Plateau is home to the highest remaining density and distribution of old growth trees and the species that depend upon them for survival. Over half the forested acres on the Kaibab Plateau are made up of increasingly rare old growth ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forests. Old growth is protected within the boundaries of Grand Canyon National Park. However, 80 percent of the old growth on the Kaibab Plateau is on the Kaibab National Forest.

Unfortunately, in spite of the Forest Service’s many public pronouncements about management focused on ecosystem health, old growth logging on the Kaibab is far from a thing of the past. Over 55,000 large old growth trees have been logged during the last six timber sales on the north Kaibab. Six thousand more will be cut in a current timber sale called Dry Park.

Over 95 percent of the Southwest's original old growth has been destroyed by intensive logging over the last century. As a result, in 1995, the National Biological Survey declared the ponderosa pine forests of the Southwest one of the most endangered ecosystems in the nation. The Southwest Forest Alliance has an important campaign to protect and restore old growth forests in Arizona and New Mexico. Called Old Growth Forever, the campaign seeks to increase public awareness and outrage over the continued logging of rare old growth trees in the Southwest. The focus of this campaign is a proposal to create an old growth preserve on the Kaibab Plateau.

As wild habitat is increasingly fragmented throughout the Southwest, corridors such as the Kaibab Plateau play an ever-greater role in the preservation of diverse and unique wildlife species. One of these species, the Kaibab Squirrel, is found nowhere else in the world and is a classic example of evolution through geographic isolation. In 1965, 200,000 acres of the ponderosa pine forest type within the Kaibab National Forest were designated as a National Natural Landmark for Kaibab Squirrel Habitat. The Kaibab Plateau also contains the greatest density of imperiled goshawks in the Southwest. Goshawk populations are in decline throughout the Southwest due to the loss of old growth habitat.

The unique ecological values of the Plateau have been recognized since long before Goshawk populations began to decline. Almost a hundred years ago in 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt created the Grand Canyon Game Preserve to protect the native fauna and flora of the area.

Congress and President Roosevelt intended the Grand Canyon Game Preserve to serve first and foremost as a refuge for wildlife from the rampant and often disastrous logging, mining and livestock grazing practices occurring in many areas of the Southwest at the turn of the century.

Unfortunately, the “modern” Forest Service has ignored its responsibility to make the protection of wildlife its highest management priority within the Game Preserve. Instead of viewing the Game Preserve designation as an opportunity to protect and restore the Plateau’s wildlife and forests, the Forest Service continues to operate under industry influenced, destructive management policies.

The so-called “Healthy Forest” legislation currently before Congress will make protection of this and other unique old growth habitat even more difficult. This legislation will severely weaken environmental protections and restrict public input and appeal rights across our national forests.

If you care about preserving our last 5 percent of old growth please contact your Senator and ask him to vote against the “Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003” and to support policies that uphold environmental protection and provide real help for community protection. If Theodore Roosevelt’s vision of the Game Preserve as a haven for wildlife is ever to be permanently realized, it will only be through the continued dedication and vigilance of concerned individuals and organizations.

To contact your Senator: Senator McCain [DC: (202) 224-2235, Phx: (602) 952-2410] email: john.mccain@mccain.senate.gov

To learn more about the Old Growth Forever campaign and how you can help protect the North Kaibab’s remaining old growth forests, visit the Southwest Forest Alliance website at: www.swfa.org or contact us at swfa@swfa.org, (928) 774-6514.

Editor’s note: The House passed the bill on May 20, 206-170

By Mark Horlings

Saturday, October 25
Granite Reef Dam & Lower Salt River. We will visit the Salt River, below Granite Reef Dam. A traditional favorite, excellent for waterbirds and raptors, with a leader who bird this area frequently. There is a lake entry fee. Bring water, lunch, and a scope if available. We will meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Walgreen’s parking lot at McKillip and Power (Bush Highway). Contact leader for reservations and information.

Limit: 15
Difficulty: 2
Leader: Charles Saffell
(480) 668-9393; marlaff@coxnet.com

Tuesday, November 11
Gilbert Library Ponds. The ponds and surrounding marshes attract migrating wildfowl, wintering raptors, and passerines. Burrowing owl colonies are well established and easily viewed. Bring a spotting scope, if available, lunch and water.

Limit: 15
Difficulty: 1. They don't get any easier.
Leader: Cindy West
(480) 830-5332
cwestbirdr@juno.com

Saturday, November 15
Rio Verde -We will visit an area north of Scottsdale's McDowell Mountain Park, with particular sites depending on scouting results the previous weekend. This is interesting country with varied habitats and normally provides a good...
Gila River, Buckeye to the Gillespie Dam - We will work our way down Highway 85, with side trips into habitat for Le Conte's, Bendire's and Sage Thrashers. White Pelicans and White-tailed Kites are probable, and Collared Doves have been seen in the area. Bring lunch and a spotting scope if available. Contact leader for reservations and information.

Limit: 15
Difficulty: 2
Leader: Herb Fibel (480)966-5246.

Wednesday, March 10
Southwest Phoenix: Visit several locations in search of Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, and various wintering waterbirds, including Neotropical Cormorant. Bring a lunch. Call leader for information and reservations.

Limit: 20
Difficulty: 1
Leader: Bob Witzeman
(602) 840-0052
No e-mails please.
The Pacific Loon, at Montezuma well, n. of Camp Verde since at least May 20, was last seen there June 13 (filedJBR). Twenty-three Neotropic Cormorants were observed with 15 Double-crested Cormorants along the 91st Ave. effluent channel June 15 and several Neotropic Cormorants were seen at the Tempe Marsh below the 101 and 202 freeways July 12 (TCo). One of the Brown Pelicans that wintered at Tempe Town Lake was observed there June 6 (RJ), two were seen there June 12 (TH), and one was observed at Tempe Marsh July 12 (TCo). Eight Am. White Pelicans, rare in summer, were found at the Gilbert/Riggs ponds July 6 (PM,CD) and another two individuals southwest Phoenix was discovered June 29 (BG). There had been only one documented county record of the species in Arizona since the summer of 1998. After the first nest blew down, two juveniles were reported with the two adults, and the four continued to be seen at least until Aug. 24. The Buff-collared Nightjars, at the Oro Blanco Mine site near California Gulch, continued to be reported throughout the summer, with four being heard June 15 and one still being heard Aug. 24.

A Snowy Plover was observed at the Gila Bend Power Plant ponds July 15 at least to July 20 (HD). Two nearly grown juvenile Am. Avocets and young Black-necked Stills were seen at the new wetlands in the Lewis Prison complex June 15 (TCo). A family of Black-necked Stills was found at the Gilbert/Ocotillo pond July 20 (PD). A Whimbrel (a casual transient in the county) was discovered at the Sod Farm on Alma School Rd. Aug. 2 (EA), and a Semipalmated Sandpiper was found there the following day (CBa). A Short-billed Dowitcher was observed at the Gila Bend Power Plant ponds Aug. 23 (BG).

A Tricolored Heron was found at the Gilbert/Ocotillo Rd pond again June 29 (DC) and remained until Aug. 16 (PD et al.); one was present at this pond in September 2002. The White ibis in southwest Phoenix was discovered again June 22, this time at the confluence of the Agua Fria and Gila Rivers (BG) and another two individuals were found at the Gilbert Water Ranch June 29 (PM,CD). There had been only two previous county records. White-faced Ibis has been considered to be uncommon in summer in the county, so of interest were the numbers that were present this summer: up to ten west of Arlington June 10 (TH), two groups of 15 each between 91st and 107th Avenues June 12 (TH), 15 at the sludge pond e. of El Mirage June 15 (TCo), and five at the River Rd. ponds in Palo Verde June 29 (BG).

Eight Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were observed at the sludge ponds e. of El Mirage June 15 (TCo). During the month of July a family group of Am. Kestrels, consisting of two adults, one young female, and two young males, were reported catching insects inside Bank One Ballpark in downtown Phoenix (TG,TCh et al.). An unusually large number of Am. Kestrels (at least18) were counted at Seven Springs July 9 (BD,AV). In early July five Prairie Falcon pairs on Camelback Mt, fledged young and the Peregrine Falcon pair there fledged two young (TH).

A male Indigo Bunting, a rare summer visitor, was found at the Hassayampa River Preserve July 12 (CBu). A Varied Bunting, discovered in Tolleson July 28 (BG), was north of its usual range and provided only the second county record away from the mountains s.e. of Gila Bend.

Following are highlights from s.e. Arizona during the summer. The individual Least Grebes at Sweetwater Wetlands and Sam Lena Park in Tucson remained at least until July 19 and Aug. 14 respectively. Numerous reports were received throughout the summer of a pair of Short-tailed Hawks at Barfoot Park in the Chiricahuas. A recently fledged juvenile was reported there July 15, and by Aug. 7, two juveniles were reported with the two adults, and the four continued to be seen at least until Aug. 24. The Buff-collared Nightjars, at the Oro Blanco Mine site near California Gulch, continued to be reported throughout the summer, with four being heard June 15 and one still being heard Aug. 24.

The male White-eared Hummingbird in Miller Canyon was joined by a female June 26 and remained at least until the end of August; another female was reported in Garden Canyon Aug. 13-16. Individual Berylline Hummingbirds were reported in Ramsey Canyon, Carr Canyon, Miller Canyon, and Ash Canyon during June and July; in the first half of August individual hybrids were reported in Miller Canyon and Ash Canyon. The Plain-capped Starthroat returned to Ash Canyon for the second summer June 19 and remained into September. Lucifer Hummingbirds (more than usual) continued to be seen in Miller and Ash Canyons through August, an adult male was observed n. of its usual range at the AZ Sonoran Desert Museum in Tucson June 6, and a female was reported at Patagonia June 29.

A pair plus a male Rose-throated Becard were discovered building a nest near the Patagonia Roadside Rest the second week in June. This was the first sighting of the species in Arizona since the summer of 1998. After the first nest blew down, the pair was observed building another nest in late July and both were still present in the area the end of August. The pair of Black-capped Gnatcatchers at Patagonia Lake rested again in mid-June and were still present there in late August. Another individual was reported in California Gulch in mid-August and one was reported on private property during the summer.

A Rufous-backed Robin, unusual in summer, was reported in Patagonia June 17-18. The Flame-colored Tanager in Miller Canyon and the pair in Madera Canyon continued to be reported until late August and late July respectively. A first year male was reported in Rucker Canyon in early June and was seen there with a female in early July. (Records from s.e. Arizona courtesy of the Tucson Audubon Society weekly Bird Report compiled by Bill Scott).

Abbreviations: Desert Botanical Garden (DBG).

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<td>Gary Romig</td>
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<td>Alamos, Sonora, MX</td>
<td>David MacKay</td>
<td>011 52 647</td>
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<td>Terence Blows</td>
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<td>Reid Freeman</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:wallcreeper@juno.com">wallcreeper@juno.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>Sa</td>
<td>Peloncillo Mountains, NM</td>
<td>Alan Craig</td>
<td>520-558-2220</td>
<td><a href="mailto:narca_9@yahoo.com">narca_9@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<td>1/3</td>
<td>Sa</td>
<td>Pipe Spring Nat. Monument</td>
<td>Andrea Bormemeier</td>
<td>928-643-7105</td>
<td><a href="mailto:andrea_bormemeier@nps.gov">andrea_bormemeier@nps.gov</a></td>
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<td>1/3</td>
<td>Sa</td>
<td>Timber Mesa</td>
<td>Jimmy Videle</td>
<td>928-537-5144</td>
<td><a href="mailto:moonrise@wmonline.com">moonrise@wmonline.com</a></td>
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<td>1/4</td>
<td>Su</td>
<td>Patagonia</td>
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<td>1/4</td>
<td>Su</td>
<td>Portal</td>
<td>Larry Gates</td>
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<td>1/4</td>
<td>Su</td>
<td>Superior</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>Mo</td>
<td>Glen Canyon</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>928-608-</td>
<td>john_spence@</td>
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