Meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month, September–April, at the Phoenix Zoo Auditorium. Meetings start at 7:30, and feature a speaker, book sales, refreshments, and a chance to socialize with fellow MAS members. Non-members welcome!

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

PROGRAM TOPICS

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

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

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

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

Meanwhile, the Bush administration announced Sept. 20th that it would provide $752 million in emergency aid for livestock producers in the west and elsewhere. This subsidy serves to perpetuate an already heavily subsidized, marginal industry in the arid west. Dry lands grazing is arguably more destructive than productive in the best of years. It leaves a legacy of introduced grasses crowding out natives, trampled riparian habitat, endangered and candidate species such as the Southwest Willow Flycatcher and Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and soil erosion so egregious that some liken it to mining.
February 4: Mike Rupp “Birds of the Salt River – Gillespie Dam to Coon Bluff”. The owner of Rupp Aerial Photography, Inc., Mike Rupp successfully published his two other books and adds this book for sale and will do a book signing for those who are interested. Please plan to attend our last event until next fall. (for more information on the book, visit www.uapress.arizona.edu and type Dan Fischer in the search bar.)

Speakers wanted: If you have ideas for speakers, or if you would like to make a presentation yourself, please contact Cynthia Donald, Program Chair, at (602) 791-5197 or cdonald@earthlink.net.

March 4: Jim Burns “El Canelo Ranch, Texas. Jim Burns, MAS writer/photographer, highlights the many curious birds, peculiar to the country.” Copies of the book will be available in the future. Mike has graciously agreed to have copies of this book for sale and will do a book signing for those interested.

(www.ruppaerialphoto.com, select Birdseye Guide to 101 Birding Sites, Mike Rupp writer/photographer, highlights creatures along this stretch of the Salt River. Having flown and bired around the Phoenix area for twenty years, Mike has just published “The Birdseye Guide to 101 Birding Sites, Phoenix”. This book is currently available directly through Rupp Aerial (602-277-0439), at the Wild Bird Center in north Scottsdale, and at the Phoenix and Mesa locations of Wide World of Maps. Additional outlets will be available in the future. Mike has graciously agreed to have copies of this book for sale and will do a book signing for those interested.

For more information, visit www.maricopaaudubon.org.

Another pressing issue is the state of our local chapter. With dues share from National Audubon being incrementally phased out, it is more critical than ever that we continue to lend our support both financially and by volunteering. We have a small but dedicated group of volunteers working on securing prizes to entice all you Birdathon ’03 participants. More help is always welcome. We need people to obtain prizes and donations. Or you can join or lead a birdathon team and solicit monetary pledges. Contact me about this. But I hope that the lure of prizes is not the only reason you participate. Now more than ever we need your contributions to maintain the programs that make Maricopa Audubon the unique organization that appeals to you. Your donations support out-of-town program speakers, monthly meetings, free field trips, bookstore capital, subsidized banquets, Audubon Adventures for our school children, conservation efforts and this newsletter that informs you of the many field trips, bird sightings and conservation.

Last years birdathon raised $1,200, with $1,000 coming from an anonymous donor. Aside from this anonymous donation, Sharon Arnold and Alison Griner were the top contributors, raising a total of $200.00, but fell short of the $300.00 required to win the stained glass hummingbird. Sharon and Alison received custom beaded necklaces for their efforts. The stained glass prize will be rolled over to Birdathon ’03, to the individual or team that raises the most money over $300.00. Check out our website, www.maricopaaudubon.org, to see a picture of it.

In other news, The Nature Conservancy’s intent to sell 35 of its 333 acre Hassayampa Preserve to the Desert Caballeros Western Museum of Wickenburg was uncovered by preserve volunteers. It was TNC’s desire to keep the temperatures are what caused the largest forest fire in Arizona’s history. Gauged by the fire perimeter, 460,000 acres burned. The mosaic pattern of the fire path, however, left untouched acreage that provides habitat for wildlife and a baseline for recovery. Arizona Game and Fish reports that wildlife fared relatively well in Rodeo/Chediski. It is development in the forests and poor management that turned natural, healthy event into a crisis. Building in the forest is arisky venture just as building on a flood plain or entering the...

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

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

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

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.

Desert Caballeros Western Museum Executive Director Michael Ettema, on Saturday, Sept 28th. An open house is planned at the preserve for mid- to late November to address our concerns and provide a status report on the negotiations. Before then, I urge you to contact Messrs. Rigney, Graham as well as TNC's headquarters (The Nature Conservancy, 4245 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22203-1606, comment@tnc.org, (800) 628-6860), especially if you are a TNC member.
CONTENTS:  • Events & Programs  • From the Editor  • A Word From The President, Laurie Nessel  • Notes & Announcements  • National Audubon State Director, Sam Campana  • National Audubon Board Meeting  • Attention: Arizona Employment  • Field Quiz  • AZ Special Species: Rufous-Winged Sparrow  • Birding for Dragonflies  • Science without Humanity: Thi Mt. Graham Telescope Project  • Classified Ad  • Field Trips  • Field Observations  • Photo Quiz Answers  • Dues Share  • Christmas Bird Count Schedule

NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Basha’s donates to Help Preserve Arizona: Give the cashier the charity code #29039 between 9/1 and 1/31 each year and Basha’s will donate 1% of your total to 18 conservation & environmental groups including: az wildlife federation, audubon arizona, tucson audubon, native seeds/SEARCH, grand canyon trust, gray hawk nature center, oracle land trust, tucson Audubon, and a long-term need for volunteers as the Research Ranch implements a recovery and restoration plan. If you are interested in helping please call Sam Campana at 602-468-6470 for information. Please do not just show up without calling.

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


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

ABA Regional Conference: January 12-16, 2003 at the Salton Sea in California. For more information call the ABA at 800-850-2473 or check their website—www.americanbirdbirding.org

NATIONAL AUDUBON BOARD MEETING

By Herb Fibel

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

Historically the nominating committee lists only twelve candidates for the twelve board openings. As required by law NAS mails out to all members a proxy form either in the Audubon magazine or separately, authorizing one of the NAS bigwigs to cast the vote of the proxy sender for each of the twelve nominated candidates. Last year the NAS people claimed that they had some 40,000 proxies in hand at the December meeting.

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

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

Instructions:

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

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

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

To whom it may concern:

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

To vote for the election of any, but not more than 12, directors to terms expiring in 2005 or until their successors are elected, as he chooses.
Last updated: December 1, 2002

NATIONAL STATE DIRECTOR, SAM SAMPANA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dramaically Increase its Donations with One Letter!

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

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

Please take a few minutes to contact us & help make a big difference!

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

OR

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

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

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

* The Environmental Fund for Arizona coordinates workplace campaigns for Maricopa Audubon Society
**WINTER - 2002/2003 PHOTO QUIZ**

By Jim Burns

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

A) Good Photo, Easy Bird

![Image of a bird](image1.jpg)

What is “the only common resident breeder in Arizona that has never been found in any other U.S. state?” The answer is Rufous-winged Sparrow, *Ammodramus carpalis*. This interesting piece of state birding trivia was first posed on the internet last winter by Rich Hoyer, Wings tour leader from Tucson, and would seem to make Rufous-winged Sparrow the quintessential Arizona special species, a species truly found only here in our state.

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

It is fascinating and instructive to view the grazing issue through the micro prism of Rufous-winged Sparrow history in southern Arizona. The penultimate U.S. species to be discovered and described to science, found ground foraging in small family groups in loose association with Black-throateds and overwintering flocks of Brewer’s Sparrows. It is perhaps more readily found in early spring and again during Arizona’s “second spring,” after the monsoon rains have begun, when males teet up and sing from the tops of mesquites or patches of cholla. Nests are cups of dry grasses placed low in shrubs and cactus. In wet years two broods are raised.

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

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

B) Good Photo, Difficult Bird

![Image of a bird](image2.jpg)

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

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

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

Despite its comeback, Rufous-winged Sparrow is still considered a local breeder. At this time of year it can often be a challenge to find them. As you search for Rufous-winged Sparrow, consider why, besides its narrow habitat niche, it might have been such a late scientific discovery. It may well have been overlooked because of obvious plumage similarities with Chipping Sparrow with which it shares rufous crown and dark “mustache” marks. Additionally, the wing patch for which the Rufous-winged is named is often or even typically hidden beneath that species’ scapulars. But Chippies are Spizellae—skinny little sparrows with round crowns and notched tails—and Rufous-winged Sparrows are A. robust sparrows with flat crowns and long, rounded tails. Though it may not be visually stunning like many of our state’s special species, Rufous-winged Sparrow is a handsome sparrow and, by virtue of its singular and revealing biogeographical history in the state, well deserving of its cover status on Phillips, Marshall, and Monson’s classic Birds of Arizona.
Any luck today?

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

“Cool! That’d be a lifer for me. Where exactly, did you see them?”

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

“Oh wow! I’ve always wanted to see those!”

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

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

Fewer of us may have noticed the dragons’ close relatives, the damselflies, because they’re usually smaller (most Arizona species are less than 100mm [4.3”]). Their shapes differ too, from stocky and compact to long and slender, and some have their tails expanded into obvious “clubs.” Some regularly perch, others seem to be constantly on the wing. Some we see along streams, others only at ponds, and a few kinds might be almost anywhere.

“Wild beasts and birds are by right not the property merely of the people who are alive today, but the property of unborn generations whose belongings we have no right to squander” (President Theodore Roosevelt). The University of Minnesota is currently considering joining the founding University of Arizona (UofA) telescope project on Mt. Graham in Arizona. This project not only desecrates a profoundly sacred Apache mountain but also threatens an American ecological treasure.

“Cultural property of religious importance. Think of it as a Mt. Sinai, Mt. Ararat or Mount of Olives.”

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

Approval of this project would make a mockery of the recommendations against joining made by the UofM Faculty Senate’s Advisory Committee and the UofM American Indian Advisory Board. The Faculty Senate report stated: “On ethical, material, political, and scientific aspects and we firmly believe that the University should not participate in this endeavor.”

Repeated San Carlos Apache and White Mountain Apache Tribal Council resolutions over the past twelve years have opposed the project. Several declared the project “... a display of profound disrespect for a cherished feature of our original homeland as well as a by a "sea" of Arizona desert. Here more than 18 plants and animals found nowhere else in the world have evolved.

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

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

Other new telescope options continuously become available. Dartmouth, Wisconsin, Florida, and Carnegie-Mellon spurned Mt. Graham and recently joined the huge 10.4-meter Canary Island telescope and/or the 9.1-meter Southern African Large Telescope (SALT). Harvard, MIT and Michigan likewise rejected Mt. Graham for two massive 6-meter telescopes in Chile. A $3,000,000,000 partnership is still open in SALT, Mt. Hubbard, the UofM benefactor who is offering the university $5,000,000 to purchase seven viewing nights on the Mt. Graham Large Binocular Telescope, should instead invest in SALT. The
than 40mm [1.6"] long), much more slender, and generally inconspicuous. Dragons and damsels are closely related to each other and both groups belong to the Order Odonata, also known as “odons” or “odonates” for short; but they differ sufficiently that they fall into separate suborders: Anisoptera for the dragons, Zygoptera for the damsels. Adult dragons are bigger, sturdier insects with powerful flight; when perched, they hold their wings horizontally out to the sides and rest on little airfoils. The damsels are slender, and their flight is weak in comparison to their big relatives; at rest, they usually hold their wings back-to-back just above and parallel to their abdomens, though the spreadwings (Lestidae) often perch with their wings spread out horizontally and resemble dragonflies. Adults differ in other ways, but this is enough information to assign any unfamiliar ode to its proper suborder.

If there are different species, then we ought to be able to identify them, and thereby gain access to the attendant literature where we can learn more about them; but now we hit a snag: what do we use for a field guide? As birders, we’re all accustomed to the field guide concept; after all, field guides to North American birds have been around since the 1930s, and it’s a rare birder indeed who didn’t start his or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her birding life with a Peterson or her bir...
listserv have begun posting ode observations right along with their bird reports. And why not? Dragonflying is a lot like birding, after all.
Field Observations - June, July, August 2002

By Janet Witzeman

Included in this column are a few significant records that were inadvertently omitted from the summer report of a year ago.

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

There are usually a few mid-summer sightings of immature Brown Pelicans who wander north into Arizona each year, but this summer there were many more than usual. Just in the Phoenix area alone there were eleven reports of individuals: at Roosevelt Lake June 25-27 (JE), at the Gila Bend Sewage ponds and at the heron nesting colony on Painted Rock Dam Rd. July 6 (TC), on the Salt River near Granite Reef Picnic Area July 17 (JoB), was far north and west of its usual range; there have been only two records here and one was seen at the pond s. of Ocotillo Rd. July 14 (PD, DP) and eight were reported at the Tres Rios Hayfield Site July 7 (WT). A Blue-winged Teal (rare in July) was observed at GPS July 14 (PD, DP) and eight were reported at the Tres Rios Hayfield Site July 7 (HT, WT). Several pairs of Cinnamon Teal, found nesting on the Lower River Rd. Pond, n. of Palo Verde, represented a new nesting locale for this uncommon breeder (TC). Two N. Shovelers (uncommon in summer) and a Green-winged Teal (rare in summer) were seen at the Chandler Ponds June 29 (PD, DP), ten at the pond s. of Ocotillo Rd. July 14 (PD, DP), and three on the Salt River near Granite Reef Picnic Area July 17 (JoB). A Ring-necked Duck (rare in summer) was observed at the s. of Ocotillo Rd. pond July 14 (PD, DP).

The results of this year’s Bald Eagle breeding season were: of 41 occupied breeding areas, 34 pairs laid eggs (10 failed), 24 pairs hatched 46 young, and 39 fledged (which broke the old record of 31 fledged young in 1999). Three new breeding areas were discovered and one historical breeding area was re-occupied (Hide AZ Game & Fish Dept.). A second year Gray Hawk, discovered at Paloma Ranch July 6 (TC) until at least mid-September (SG), was far north and west of its usual range; there have been only five previous records for Maricopa County. An early Swainson’s Hawk was observed at Painted Rock Dam July 21 (BG). A Zone-tailed Hawk, found on the S. Side of the Creek Preserve in Cave Creek July 13 & 27 (V*rr, HB) was in a new area for this species. A Peregrine Falcon (rare in summer) was...
surrounding marshes attracting migrating wildfowl, wintering raptors, and passerines. Bring a spotting scope, if available, lunch and water.

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

Saturday, November 16 - Cottonwood. We will visit two or three locations near Cottonwood, including Dead Horse Ranch State Park and Tavasci Marsh. We will meet in the a.m. in northern Phoenix and carpool to Cottonwood. Expect to see a variety of residents and waterfowl. Contact leader for reservations and information.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Brown Pelican by Jim Burns

Over sixty Black-necked Stilts with young were observed at the pond e. of the El Mirage Pond June 29 (29) and adults with two downy young were found at the Air Force Pond s. of Gila Bend Aug. 3, representing a new nesting locale for the species (TC). A pair of Am. Avocets were seen with three young near the Tonto Creek arm of Roosevelt Lake Aug. 20-21 (JE). A large number of 16 Black Vultures were observed on Baseline Rd., e. of 83 d Ave. July 13 (3B).

Observed in Ahwatukee June 23 & 25 (PB).

A Clapper Rail (a rare local summer resident) was heard calling at 115” Ave. and the Gila River July 13 (CD). An early Sora was seen at the Gilbert Water Ranch Ponds July 28 (PD). A Sandhill Crane was found June 14 at Luna Lake in the White Mountains where one was found a year ago in July (TC et al.), well away from where the species is usually found and at an unusual time of year.
A Whimbrel was found near Yuma Aug. 3 (HD). An early Long-billed Curlew was seen at Fountain Hills June 30 (JS5). An early Pectoral Sandpiper was observed at the Gilbert/Riggs Ponds Aug. 18 (SG, RG). A Stilt Sandpiper was first seen at the Gila Bend Sewage Ponds Aug. 11 (HD) and two were observed at Gilbert/Riggs Ponds Aug. 31 (PM, CD). An early adult Short-billed Dowitcher was found at the Gila Bend Sewage Ponds July 6 (TC) and eight were counted along Broadway e. of El Pedro River s. of Dudleyville, where the species has nested in the past (TC,TM). A male Lawrence’s Grasshopper Sparrow was discovered at a feeder at Whitlow Dam on July 12 (BG) and then on July 14 (PD, DP). A Short-tailed Hawk photographed by Jim Burns in the Chiricahua Mountains, AZ, August, 2002 with Canon EOS 1V body, Canon 400 mm f/2.3 lens and Fujichrome Velvia film.

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

An adult Short-tailed Jaeger was discovered at a feeder at Whitlow Dam on the late date of June 27 QBa). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was found at BTA June 27 (JBA). Early individual Black-headed Grosbeaks were seen in a n. Phoenix July 3 (BD) and at the heron nesting colony July 6 (TC). A Lazuli Bunting was observed in a Scottsdale yard on the early date of July 19 QBa). A male Indigo Bunting (a rare summer visitor) was found at Whittow Dam June 20 (JBA).

Northern Cardinal was photographed in the Chiricahua Mountains, AZ, August, 2002 with Canon EOS 1V body, Canon 400 mm f/2.3 lens and Fujichrome Velvia film.

A Burrowing Owl was found in a new area at the Gilbert Water Ranch July 7 (JoB). Also one was seen e. of El Mirage Pond June 29 (TC), five were counted along Broadway e. of El Mirage Rd. July 13 (CB), and two were observed at the s. of Ocotillo Rd. July 14 (PD, DP). A Short-eared Owl was found along the road to Green’s Peak in the White Mountains June 6 (TM). An immature Broad-billed Hummingbird (a rare visitor, especially in summer) visited a visitor near Ahwatukee July 8 (WT, HB). A Common Redpoll was recorded by photographing it on the Chiricahua Mountains, AZ, August, 2002 with Canon EOS 1V body, Canon 400 mm f/2.3 lens and Fujichrome Velvia film.

Of interest were the dozens of Yellow-headed Blackbirds seen at the Tres Rios Hayfield Site July 22, 2001 (WT, HB). The species is a rare visitor in the lowlands in winter and has not been recorded previously in the lowlands in summer in the county. A Western Tanager was seen at Whittow Dam on the late date of June 27 QBa). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was found at BTA June 27 (JBA). Early individual Black-headed Grosbeaks were seen in a n. Phoenix July 3 (BD) and at the heron nesting colony July 6 (TC). A Lazuli Bunting was observed in a Scottsdale yard on the early date of July 19 QBa). A male Indigo Bunting (a rare summer visitor) was found at Whittow Dam June 20 (JBA).

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Mt. Ord July 25 (BD, AV, RWd). A late
Willow Flycatcher was observed in
Cave Creek June 9 and an early
migrating individual was seen there
July 27 (WT, HB); one found at the
Roadside Rest Area in Wickenburg
June 15 (PM, CD) may have been
summering or nesting in the area.
Hammond’s Flycatchers were
considered to be uncommon in late
August, but it was found to be
common on Mt. Ord Aug. 26 (SG).
A late Pacific-slope Flycatcher was
observed in a Scottsdale yard June
15-18 (JBa). Individual “Western
“type Flycatchers were seen on the
late dates of June 9 in Cave Creek
(WT), and June 13 and June 27 at
Whitlow Dam QBa). A Brown-crested
Flycatcher, found in a n. Phoenix yard
July 20 (CB), was unusual in an urban
area away from it’s breeding locale.

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

Individual late-staying N. Parulas
were observed in Watson Woods,
P Prescott June 18 (CT) and at Whitlow
Dam (JBa). A male Tropical Parula
was observed at Mesquite Wash June
2 (PM, CD), providing the first
record for Maricopa County and only
the third record for the state. A
Townsend’s Warbler was seen at the
Wickenburg Roadside Rest on the late
date of June 9 (PM, CD). A Black-and
white
seen off and on during the summer
in the vicinity of Barfoot Park at least
until Aug. 27. An immature Purple
Gallinule, discovered at Sweetwater
Wetlands July 26, remained until
Aug. 14 and was the first to be
recorded in the state since 1993. At
least one pair, and perhaps two pairs
of Buff-collared Nightjars were
discovered in California Gulch in mid-
June. A Plain-capped Starthroat
frequented a feeder in Ash Canyon,
Huachuca Mts. from mid-July until
Aug. 28. Two Magnolia Warblers
were discovered: one at the Empire-
Cienega Ranch June 19 and one in
lower Carr Canyon June 23. A
Baybreasted Warbler was found near
Anivaca June 21. Individual
Kentucky Warblers were observed
in French Joe Canyon June 3 and in
Whitail Canyon June 23. The pair of
Rufous-capped Warblers in
French Joe Canyon nested
successfully again - two young were
seen with the adults Aug. 1. The
Flamecolored Tanager remained in
Miller Canyon at least until Aug. 22.
(Records from s.e. Arizona courtesy
of the Tucson Audubon Society
weekly bird tape compiled by Bill
Scott).

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

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

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

pointed bill; and a long tail. The bill is
reminiscent of the waxwing in our
previous crested quiz, and the length
of the tail suggests this bird may be
adapt at flight, perhaps even catching
insects on the wing- a berry and bug
specialist.

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

There are only two crested passerines
of uniform color with a colorful eye.
Bronzed Cowbird with it’s demonstral red
eye against black plumage (or grey-
brown in the female) may come to
mind, but even with it’s ruff distended,
it would not display a crest of this
shape, and cowbirds have heavier bills
and shorter tails than our bird. This
is one of tow members of the
Ptilogonatidae family recorded in the
U.S. This is a “black cardinal,” a
Phainopepla, photographed in
Tucson’s Agua Cairente Park in March,
1999.

Since this is a female (the solid black
male, with solid black throat and no
wingbars, would have appeared much
darker in this black and white
rendition), I guess technically it is a
our deserts, but this bird is neither
seen nor expected, and you haven’t
encountered it as you flip the pages of
our field guides unless you have a
Mexican book. This second member of
the Ptilogonatidae family has
turned up north of Mexico only twice
in my birding lifetime.

This is the male Gray Silky-
Flycatcher which sojourned in El
Paso in the winter of 1994-95. Two
 winters ago another was discovered
in Southern California and was seen
for several weeks. Both birds were
initially considered possible escapees
from the Mexican bird trade.

I almost used a different crested
bird for this slot in the quiz – a
species somewhat more familiar, a
very similar species of which I have
very similar crummy photographs –
Red-whiskered Bulbul. You would
have fared better because you have
at least a little more stored memory
of bulbuls from your guide books
even if you haven’t been to south
Florida, and bulbuls have more
pattern and contrast than any of the
birds in this quiz. It is fun and
informative form time to time in this
feature to step outside your memory
bank. We’ll do it again.
What's with the Dues Share and Why Should I Be Concerned?

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

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

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

"What does all this have to do with the dues share?", you ask. Here's the connection. When you join the Audubon Society, the semi-annual, twenty-page, thoroughly entertaining and comprehensively informative, Cactus Wren-dition, and certainly some portion of our members who are currently participating in, and contributing to, our various activities, learn about these activities by reading about them in the Wren-dition. Sadly, at least in my opinion, however, many of the positive benefits of the Wren-dition can be accomplished in a much less expensive way via our web page.

"What does all this have to do with the dues share?", you ask. Here's the connection. When you join the Audubon Society, the semi-annual, twenty-page, thoroughly entertaining and comprehensively informative, Cactus Wren-dition, you are netting about $2.38 a member. So, when not the chapters $5.50 per member, they were actually going in the hole on their dues operation. Having concluded thusly, they notified the chapters that they were dropping the $5.50 index figure and were going to start using the net figure, which will be recalculated each year. On the last dues share we received, the figure used was $2.61. We have been told that it is possible that this number could come out to zero or less, down the road, and it is something over which we have no control.

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

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

Are you still with me? Well, bless you for hanging in there, because I'm now coming to the point of this long epistle. Maricopa Audubon can no longer afford to start using the net figure, which will be recalculated each year. On the last dues share we received, the figure used was $2.61. We have been told that it is possible that this number could come out to zero or less, down the road, and it is something over which we have no control.
National Audubon Society, and each year that you renew your membership, National Audubon sends a portion of your dues that you send to NAS to the chapter to which you have been assigned, based upon your Zip Code. This is known as the "NAS Dues Share". How much they send is based upon a complicated formula, which they've followed for at least the past 25 years. Simply stated, though, it came to about $5.50 a year for each new member and renewed member, plus $20 for each chapter-generated new member. Since 1991 it has averaged about $15,000 a year.

Oddly, although our membership numbers grew steadily over the last decade, dues shares were all over the map—from a low in '92-'93 of $13,288 to a way above average $24,418 in NAS's fiscal year '99-'00, the year that the other local chapter was formed. The following year our membership went from 3,300 to about 2,100, and our dues share dropped to $13,139. National Audubon Society formed a taskforce, which discovered that when National Audubon subtracted its cost of obtaining new members and of renewing old members from the dues it longer send out even four issues of a newsletter to our 2,100 joint members that costs about $2,200 an issue, when we only receive about $6,000 total from National Audubon to provide all sorts of services to these 2,100 joint members! In addition to the newsletter we provide free monthly membership meetings, free field trips, and a public information phone line for our members. We also fund extensive conservation and environmental education activities.

Where do you think we should cut back? Those few of us who are willing to put time and effort into fundraising for the chapter, or into donating our precious spare time in other ways, would far rather see the fruits of our labors be used to educate youth and save our environment than we would to see the money go to financing a flashy newsletter that goes out to the 2,100 members of National Audubon assigned to our chapter, the vast majority of whom we'll never see, and will never be able count on to help our chapter volunteers save birds, other wildlife, and their habitats.

So, please be prepared for major changes in the near future in the Cactus Wren-dition itself and in the way we furnish it to you.
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<td>1</td>
<td>Sierra Pinta-Cabeza Prieta NWR</td>
<td>David Griffin</td>
<td>445-9302</td>
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<td>Wednesday, January 1, 03</td>
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<td>Chino Valley</td>
<td>Russell Duerksen</td>
<td>928-636-6944</td>
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<td>Friday, January 3, 03</td>
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<td>Buenos Aires NWR</td>
<td>Bonnie Swarbrick</td>
<td>520-823-4251</td>
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<td>L Glen Canyon</td>
<td>John Spence</td>
<td>608-6267</td>
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<td>Saturday, January 4, 03</td>
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<td>Baviácora, Sonora, MX</td>
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<td>Tracy McCarthy</td>
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<td>520-682-8530</td>
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