

THE TROGON NEWS

HUACHUCA AUDUBON SOCIETY
Post Office Box 63, Sierra Vista, Arizona 85636
Volume XXIX Number 8, December 2006



President's Message

Hello, this has been an interesting quarter. Our monthly meetings at Cochise College are being well attended; and for the first time in years we have a Programs Chair (thanks Kerrie); likewise our monthly field trips continue to be popular - though regrettably we had to cancel the Sonora trip owing to the leader's sudden illness, we do hope to reschedule that trip. Our objection to the Smith Ranch project agreed with the public's view and resulted in its overwhelming defeat. The Palominas "high density housing" project has now been downgraded to 95 houses from 450, and may be dropped altogether if, as proposed, the area is deemed better suitable for water recharge. Unfortunately Proposition 207 passed by a large margin - only time will tell just how badly this will affect Arizona's water and land conservation considerations.

I ask your support for our annual Audubon Adventures appeal, as detailed later in this newsletter. This is our biggest community education outreach project, in excess of \$1,000 this year, towards which at the time of writing we have received only \$132 in donations. Please consider helping.

I wish you all Happy Holidays and hope the majority of you will participate in and enjoy one or more of the local Christmas Bird Counts. Mike.

Reminder: Trogon News is now a quarterly newsletter

With the advent of the web, we have an effective means for reaching our membership in a more timely fashion. As a result, we have moved the schedule of events front and center on the home page of our web site (<http://www.huachuca-audubon.org/>) where it can be updated on a moment's notice. We will continue to offer the newsletter as a vehicle to highlight stories on recent field trips, programs, and other activities of Huachuca Audubon, albeit quarterly instead of monthly.

Welcome to New HAS Members!

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest HAS members: Rosalie Doty and Jon Clark of Bisbee, Jeannine Austin, Donna Boe, Nancy Docherty, Mel and Elaine Emeigh, Joel Fago, Gisela Halley, Susan Haskew, David Higgins, Carol McSally, John Marvin, Gerald Noonan, Diane Perry, Will Troyer and Katherine Zellerbach of Sierra Vista, Edwin Hartshorn of Huachuca City, Mary Newman of Tombstone, Mabel Moran and Shelly Murray of Benson, Mr. And Mrs. James Childress of Portal, Jerry Beale and Clarita Widener of Hereford, and Carol Kamka of Elmhurst, Illinois.

Committee News

The chairpersons for the chapter committees are as follows: Conservation: Tricia Gerrodette; Education: Sandy Anderson; Membership: Ginny Bealer; and Outings: Rick Romea. Note that the new Programs chairperson is Kerrie Kirkpatrick. Please contact the relevant chairperson if you would like to find out more information about the activities of a particular committee.

HAS Vacancies

New members in particular may be interested in getting involved with our organization. Currently we have openings for an Historian and a Board member (previous experience in another chapter would be a plus, but is not necessary. Interest in supporting our goals is more important).

We continue to seek an Editor for the Trogon News. Currently, due to a full time job and his other commitments, Robert Weissler can accommodate only quarterly issues. We would prefer to return to our customary monthly publication schedule if an interested person steps forward.

Help and guidance is readily available for any of these positions. If you have any thought about joining us, please discuss with Mike Guest or any other officer listed on the back cover of this newsletter.

Local Programs and Events

Check the web site (<http://www.huachuca-audubon.org>) for the latest updates to the schedule of events.

Dec. 10th, noon Sunday. HAS Holiday Potluck Social.

This event will take place this year at the [Audubon Research Ranch](#) at 366 Research Ranch Road south of Elgin. Check out the [map and directions](#) to the ranch. Contact Linda Kennedy for additional information at sacaton@theriver.com. Also check out the [announcement!](#) If you are interested in carpooling, please contact Sandy Kunzer via e-mail to sbkunzer@theriver.com. You should indicate if you are willing to drive and, if so, if you are willing to receive calls from potential passengers. The carpool meeting place likely will be Sierra Vista City Hall.

Field Trips



- Dec. 10th**, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. **FSPR bird walk.** Meet at San Pedro River Inn.
Dec. 13th, Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. **FSPR bird walk.** Meet at San Pedro House.
Dec. 16th, Saturday, 7:00 a.m. **Patagonia Lake State Park.** See announcement below for details.
Dec. 16th, Sunday. **Nogales Christmas Bird Count**
Dec. 17th, Sunday. **Patagonia Christmas Bird Count**
Dec. 18th, Monday. **Elfrida Christmas Bird Count**
Dec. 22nd, Friday. **Saint David Christmas Bird Count**
Dec. 23rd, Saturday. Inaugural **Appleton-Whittell Christmas Bird Count.** Contact Robert Whitcomb for details (e-mail to whitcomb@dakotacom.net).
Dec. 23rd, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. **FSPR bird walk.** Meet at San Pedro House.
Dec. 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th, Sunday's, 8:00 a.m. **Sierra Vista Environmental Operations Park** bird walks. Tours will be limited to 20 participants plus 2 docents.
Dec 30th, Sunday. **Ramsey Canyon Christmas Bird Count.** Contact Ted Mouras for details (e-mail to tedmouras@mindspring.com).
Dec. 30th, Sunday. **Portal Christmas Bird Count.**
Jan. 11-14, 2007. Wings Over Willcox.

Tucson Audubon's web site <http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/birding/cbc2006-07.htm> has a complete listing of Arizona CBCs. Including contact info and a map of Arizona with locations marked.

Note: Due to the high price of gas, car pool passengers are expected to provide adequate compensation to their driver, about 8 cents per mile.

Weekly events

Every Sunday at 8:00am October through March (7am during summer months). **Bird Walk at Sierra Vista Environmental Operations Park.** Limited to 20 participants with two docents. Note: Owing to acts of vandalism, public entrance to the EOP is restricted to 7:00am to 3:30pm, Monday to Friday only.

Note: No bird walks at Ramsey Canyon Preserve in December and January. Monday morning **Bird Walks at Ramsey Canyon Preserve** resume in February starting at 9am. In March, walks start at 8am, while in April, they start at 7am. All walks start at the Ramsey Canyon Preserve Parking lot. Walks are free, but admission fee to Ramsey Canyon Preserve is required.

\$3 - Cochise County Resident or Nature Conservancy Member - 1 week pass

\$5 - general admission - 1 week pass

\$25 annual pass

Contact Rick Romea at 520-803-1160 or e-mail to rickorcindy@hotmail.com for further information.

Monthly events

2nd Sunday at 8am Oct-Mar, 7am Apr-Sep. **Bird Walk at San Pedro River Inn.**

2nd Wednesday at 8am Oct-Mar, 7am Apr-Sep. **Bird Walk at San Pedro House.**

4th Saturday at 8am Oct-Mar, 7am Apr-Sep. **Bird Walk at San Pedro House.**

November Field Trip: Huachuca Canyon, November 9, 2006

Seven HAS members met in Gateway Park at N. Garden Ave. on a beautiful clear morning. While we waited for the 8 a.m. start time, the early arrivals did some casual birding around the parking lot and the adjacent edge of Buffalo Soldier Creek. We turned up Chipping Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and then a stunning pair of LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCHES perched in the bare branches of a mesquite along the creek.

Once through the main gate of Fort Huachuca, we pulled off at one of the crossroads in the open grassland dotted with desert broom and mesquite. Here we had American Kestrels, Red-tailed Hawks soaring, a male Verdin carrying a big pile of desert broom fluff (which made him look as if he had a white beard), and a mix of sparrows. Moving on to the mouth of Huachuca Canyon, we stopped in the first picnic area, but it was quite windy and without birds. Our next stop was the last parking area at the stream, where we started our walk proper.

Once past the section of road that often has water trickling over it, we came upon a little mixed group of birds that included a male Townsend's Warbler, the first of four we saw during the morning. About fifteen minutes up the road, just after the first, dry stream crossing, we heard a trogon calling. It was soon located, a handsome male ELEGANT TROGON that made short flights through the oaks. Then several woodpeckers were spotted, with two quickly identified as Red-naped Sapsuckers. The third, however, was mostly black, without white back markings, and this bird turned out to be a male WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER.

A little further on we found another small flock of birds containing a Gray Flycatcher. It was giving its "whit" call and dipping its tail slowly as it sallied from a sycamore along the dry streambed. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were plentiful throughout the morning. We were disappointed to find very little activity at the small dam with its flowing stream and huge sycamores, although we could see the Cooper's Hawk nest there was still intact.

Pressing onward and upward, we found a large madrone with lots of fruit and lots of birds. We spent the next 20-30 minutes watching birds fly in and out of the madrone and adjacent oaks. The best bird here was a TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE among the dozen American Robins and a single Hermit Thrush. The most conspicuous woodpecker was an Acorn Woodpecker, but we soon found several Red-naped Sapsuckers and three more WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKERS, including a female, as well as a Northern Flicker. Calling nearby was a vireo which finally came into view and proved to be a CASSIN'S VIREO, one of two for the morning. Although we walked up higher, we didn't turn up anything new. On the walk back down, we commented on the lack of any Painted Redstarts. Our tally for the day was 34 species.

-Erika Wilson

October Field Trip: Rio Sonora

As all who signed up know, this trip was cancelled due to illness, my illness. My apologies, but my cardiologist insisted that I remain in the hospital. The river is still there and awaits adventurous souls.

-Sandy Kunzer

Remaining 2006 Field Trips

The HAS Outings Committee, Mike Guest (Chair), Sandy Kunzer, Rick Romea, and Erika Wilson have planned a favorite venue for the end of 2006.

Dec. 16th, Saturday, 7:00 a.m. Patagonia Lake State Park. 5th Annual Birding Cruise!

Plan on joining your fellow birders on 16 December 2006 as we cruise Patagonia Lake with expert Captain and birder Ron Hummel. The trip will be limited to 18 people who will divide into two groups for separate cruises. Be prepared to pay a \$7 per car entry, a \$3 per person fee for the cruise and a fair share of the gas to car pool. We will meet at the Sierra Vista City Hall west parking lot at 0700 and expect to arrive about 0830. Bring weather appropriate clothing, including walking shoes, birding equipment, lunch and expect to arrive back at about 1430.

To reserve a place, please call or e-mail Sandy Kunzer, 803-8490 or sbkunzer@theriver.com. Reservations for this very popular trip will be taken on a "first come-first reserved basis".

Burrowing Owl Project

Help reestablish burrowing owls near the San Pedro River!

The Burrowing Owl project is getting underway in Palominas. Wild at Heart (Greg Clark) will be putting in about 18 Burrowing Owl sites on the property just north of HWY 92 and the San Pedro River. He is trying for late November and early December. We need some volunteers (up to 15 per day) to help. We will be working Saturdays and Sundays over two weekends about six hours a day. The owls (80 to 100) will show up in spring and will require another two weekends to set up the tents, so there are two opportunities to help out. If you think you or your organization can help out, please contact Gordon Lewis:

520-366-5560
520-266-0149 (c)
E-mail: ranchogulag@theriver.com
Gordon Lewis
Rancho Gulag
P.O. Box 1327
10658 East Boundary Road
Palominas, AZ 85615



Reminder: Ramsey Canyon Christmas Bird Count (Info on Meals)

This year the Ramsey Canyon Christmas Bird Count (RCCBC) will be held on Saturday, December 30, 2006. We will meet for breakfast at 6:30am at the Lone Star Cafe (see map link at <http://www.huachuca-audubon.org/RCCBC.html>) located at the intersection of Highway 92 and Hereford Road. During breakfast, participants will receive checklists, maps, and other information. The Huachuca Audubon Society will cover the tab for breakfast. We need a rough idea of how many folks will be joining us for breakfast, so please contact us by phone or e-mail address listed below if you plan to attend.

Dinner and the count tally will be held at La Casita (465 E Fry Blvd, again see map link at <http://www.huachuca-audubon.org/RCCBC.html>) on the north side of Fry Blvd west of 7th Street (across the street from Caffe Ole). Dinner service will commence at 5:30pm.

Dinner is the "Holiday Special" menu of baked ham, roast turkey, house salad, potatoes, dinner rolls, vegetables, stuffing, and yams. The dinner costs \$16 per person (including tax, gratuity, and use of the banquet room) and includes your choice of iced tea, lemonade, or coffee. Beverages from the bar cost extra. We have reserved the banquet facilities (note that the entrance is at the rear of La Casita from the parking lot), so we need to pay for the dinner in advance.

Please let us know by phone or e-mail if you plan to join us for dinner and who will be joining you. You can contact Ted via email at tedmouras@mindspring.com (phone: 803-0221) or Robert via email at weissler@aves.org (phone: 803-0794) with the names of members of your party. In addition, we will need payment for the dinner by check in advance.

If you wish to join us for dinner, please send your check (**payable to Robert Weissler**) by Friday, December 15, 2005 to the address below and list each person included in your check (at \$16/person):

Robert Weissler
Re: RCCBC Dinner
P.O. Box 1105
Hereford, AZ 85615

Please forward this email to whomever you feel might be interested in joining us. We look forward to a terrific dinner to cap a satisfying day of counting birds in the field or at home!

Ted Mouras and Robert Weissler

2006 Appleton-Whittell Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

The inaugural Appleton-Whittell Christmas Bird Count (AWCBC) centered southeast of Elgin will be held on Saturday 23 Dec, 2006, so please mark your calendars. Complete details are available on the Huachuca Audubon web site at <http://www.huachuca-audubon.org/CBC/AWCBC.html>.

Robert Whitcomb (whitcomb@dakotacom.net) is the primary point of contact for this new CBC and is organizing groups covering the Audubon Research Ranch, Elgin, the Babocomari Ranch, West Canelo, and other areas in the Sonoita Valley. If you are interested in joining a group covering an area on Fort Huachuca, please contact Robert Weissler (weissler@aves.org).

Audubon Adventures: An Opportunity to Participate in Environmental Education

If you've ever wanted to share your appreciation for the natural environment with youngsters by stimulating their curiosity and discovery of nature, here's your chance. Audubon Adventures is a nationally acclaimed environmental education program of informational brochures, posters, activities and action tips geared for grades 3 - 6. For example, have a look at "[The Buzz about Native Bees](#)".

Teachers who receive the kit get a guide, resource manual and a one-year subscription to Audubon Magazine. Each classroom kit contains materials for 32 students, at a cost of \$45, which includes shipping.

Subject matter and activities in the kits are in alignment with national science and language arts standards. Millions of school children have participated in this program since its inception in 1984.

This year's topics for in-depth study are: "Home is Where the Nest is", "The Buzz about Native Bees", "Bats: Mammals on the Wing", and "Wild About Birds".

Following are just two among the many accolades the program has received from teachers. These and other information about Audubon Adventures are posted at the website: www.audubon.org/educate/aa/.

"I have been using the Audubon Adventures educational materials for many years and have always found them to be well designed and appropriate to the educational needs of my students. Young minds always seem to be eager to learn all they can about nature. Audubon Adventures can motivate even the most reluctant learners. "

-Susan Campbell, Fourth Grade, Webutuck Elementary, New York.

"Audubon Adventures reading materials and lesson plans help students understand and respect the natural world around them. We are matching the kit materials with our sixth grade science curriculum. "

-Pasadena Unified School District K-12, Program Specialist, Pasadena, CA

Huachuca Audubon has a list of local teachers who have used Audubon Adventures in the past, and would like to continue to do so, plus several others who would like to receive a package. If you would like to donate a kit to any of these teachers, please send your check to our treasurer, Phil Tucker, HAS, P.O. Box 63, Sierra Vista, AZ 85636-0063. Your donation to Huachuca Audubon for this kit is tax deductible.

If you would like a particular teacher in our area to receive a kit, please include the following information with your payment: a. school name and mailing address, b. teacher's full name and c. grade taught.

Please address any other questions regarding this education outreach project to Ginny Bealer at vbealer@mindspring.com.

2nd Sunday Bird Walk

November 12, 2006

November is a month of transition as the last of the fall migrants pass through and winter birds establish themselves. The ten participants on the 2nd Sunday Bird Walk were treated to a couple eastern vagrants, namely **White-throated Sparrow** and **Eastern Phoebe** along the river, while winter visitors supplied the bulk of the bird species seen.

With the departure of most of the summer breeding birds, the focus of this walk was on winter birds and a few lingering breeders that might spend the winter here. A Merlin was seen hauling its prey from the inn to a more remote perch. A dark-morph Red-tailed Hawk stood out from the numerous light-morph and immature plumaged raptors. Stunning male Northern Harriers were seen in brilliant sunshine along with females and immatures. Accipiters were also conspicuous as both Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks soared in a nearly cloudless sky, while a couple Kestrels were perched out in the fields.

Remaining in the area, an interesting, immature male Vermilion Flycatcher was seen with patches of red including a crown-spot like a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Adding to numerous Say's Phoebes, a Black Phoebe along the river, not to mention the Eastern Phoebe, gave the group something of a Phoebe sweep! While the gallery forest was quiet, it did yield several Common Ground-Doves, a Belted Kingfisher, Red-shafted Flickers, and Gila and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers. Loggerhead Shrike was perched conspicuously in several locations, but towhees were unusually difficult to find.

A bright male Northern Cardinal and a small flock of Cedar Waxwings at the inn got the walk off to a good start, while a Pyrrhuloxia among the Brewer's and White-crowned Sparrows on our return added variety to the mix. Savannah and Vesper Sparrows were numerous too, while Lincoln's and Song Sparrows also made a number of appearances. Bewick's Wren and White-breasted Nuthatch were seen in the gallery forest, while Eastern Meadowlark and Red-winged Blackbird were encountered in fields on the way. A lone Coot paddled on the upper pond at the inn.



8 October 2006

Lingering summer breeding birds were joined by migrants and the first arrival of winter birds during the 2nd Sunday bird walk. After a summer monsoon with prodigious rain bringing the San Pedro River to flood stage in early August, the landscape of the river has been reshaped and the river itself has altered its course in a number of places. Beavers are busy reconstructing dams and lodges.

The first Brewers and White-crowned Sparrows were seen and heard in good numbers. Meanwhile, male Summer Tanagers and Vermilion Flycatchers added a colorful note with their continued presence before they head south for the winter.

Residents of the river were also among the birds seen during the walk, including Pyrrhuloxia, Gila and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker, Western and Cassin's Kingbirds, White-winged Dove, Bewick's Wren, White-breasted Nuthatch, Loggerhead Shrike, and Canyon and Abert's Towhees. Eurasian Collared-Doves were perched on a telephone line above the ponds, while a very cooperative Green Heron soaked up some sun from atop a small bush at the edge of the upper pond.

Driving back from the inn, three Swainson's Hawks seemed to be migrating through as a group on their way south. One of the most beautiful hawks of the area, they are yet another signal of the changing seasons.

The next 2nd Sunday Bird Walk is scheduled to depart from the San Pedro River Inn at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 10, 2006. Once again, please note that the Hereford Road bridge over the San Pedro River re-opened last May, so access to the inn from Sierra Vista is much easier. Once again, birders of all levels of experience are welcome to join us!

-Robert Weissler

Binocular Donation Acknowledgement

You all may remember my appeal in the April newsletter for a pair of binoculars for a deserving young naturalist in the Kakamega Forest Reserve of Kenya.

Thanks are due Loree Pitts and Alan McCready who each donated a pair. Teresa Miranda offered financial support if needed. Phil Tucker of Wild Birds Unlimited inspected both pairs, cleaned them professionally and offered to send one pair to Eagle Optics for a minor adjustment. Eagle Optics made the adjustment pro bono. Both pairs were hand-delivered to the Kakamega Forest Reserve by a lady from Bethesda, Maryland who works for the World Bank and travels to Kenya a few times each year. She would even be happy to do so again if the need or opportunity exists.

From Kenya we received the following acknowledgement that I copy verbatim as follows:

Dear Dieter and Alicia Kamm,

Thank you very much for a donation of Binocular you send to us. It is very hard for me to explain our happiness through writing since you can't see our faces. But please we are very happy. I'm Benjamin Okalo the chairman Kakamega Environmental Education Program (KEEP) it is a community best organization whose mission is to teach the local people about the wonders of Kakamega Forest and its diversity.

Birding is one of the most interesting activity in Kakamega Forest. With about 400 clif.spp of which 200 are completely forest dependants Kakamega forest is a hot spot and hence teaching the local community about birds is essential. We are about 200 Environmental Educators around the forests and our vision is to have a healthy and welthy environment. Asante sana.

Yours sincerely,

Benjamin Okalo

-Dieter Kamm

Mail Correspondence to:
HUACHUCA AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. Box 63
Sierra Vista, AZ 85636

**HUACHUCA AUDUBON SOCIETY
DIRECTORY**

President, Mike Guest 378-0667
<mwguest@juno.com>
Vice President, Rick Romea 803-1160
Secretary, Sandy Kunzer 803-8490
Treasurer, Phil Tucker 803-8440
Field Trips, Rick Romea 803-1160
Programs, Kerrie Kirkpatrick 803-6889
Conservation, Tricia Gerrodette 378-4937
<triciag@outb.com>
Education, Sandy Anderson 458-0542
Membership, Ginny Bealer 378-6341
vbealer@mindspring.com

Trogon Editor, Robert Weissler 803-0794
<has_admin@huachuca-audubon.org>

Director, Sandy Kunzer 803-8490
Director, Sandy Anderson 458-0542
Director, Alan Blixt 515-9458
Director, Robert Weissler 803-0794
Director, Kerrie Kirkpatrick 803-6889
AZ Audubon Council Rep.
Tricia Gerrodette 378-4937
Webmaster, Robert Weissler 803-0794

Huac Aud Soc
B03
7XCH

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

National Audubon Society - New Member - \$20, two years - \$30, renewals - \$35, Seniors - \$15. Membership includes subscription to *Audubon Magazine*. Make check payable to National Audubon Society. For NAS membership changes and status call 1-800-274-4201.

Friends of Huachuca Audubon Society - Individual - \$10 annually, Household - \$15 annually. Provides no affiliation to National Audubon. Make check payable to Huachuca Audubon Society.

The *Trogon News* newsletter is provided to all members via the HAS web site - www.huachuca-audubon.org. Mailed copies or monthly email notification is available upon special request to HAS editor and/or secretary. Send all checks to Huachuca Audubon Society, PO Box 63, Sierra Vista, AZ 85636.