



Huachuca Audubon Society
P.O. Box 63
Sierra Vista, Arizona 85636

June 2011
Volume XXXIV
Number 2

Trogon News

Huachuca Audubon President's Message

Another year of meetings almost over (you will be coming June 11 to Ramsey for our annual meeting, won't you?). But the spring and summer birding seems to just be getting going. This summer will see the 20th anniversary of our own special Southwest Wings festival. We'll have a table there and could use a few extra hands to take an hour or two being friendly. Can you help?

The Memorial Day weekend saw an Elegant Trogon survey in the Huachucas organized by Rick Taylor. Although terribly windy by mid-morning, some trogons were seen, but not a lot. None were seen around the Garden Canyon picnic area, where HAS had an annual meeting and picnic for many years, with always reliable looks at Trogons. Times are pretty tough out there for all the creatures, with very little food as a result of our drought. The upside for birders, as

Erika Wilson points out, is that so many are coming into yards and feeders. There has certainly been an invasion of Western Tanagers by all accounts!

Have any ideas for speakers or programs for next year? We'll start again in September on the third Tuesday evening. Let me know if you can think of something. And there may be a need for bodies, even speakers if you're willing, at some summer hearings. It really looks like we're going to need some help speaking up for public lands protection in the county, including the SPRNCA. I know you all treasure these areas for birding and some action may be needed to keep them healthy. Thanks!

- Tricia Gerrodette



Renell Stewart

Annual HAS Meeting

Join us on June 11 for the Huachuca Audubon Society annual meeting at Ramsey Canyon Preserve. Gather at 5:30pm, dinner and business at 6pm. Potluck - please bring a dish for 8-10 as well as your own plates, utensils, etc. After dinner is the election of board members for 2011/2012.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY: \$20 New Member \$30 Two Years \$35 Renewal \$15 Seniors

Make checks payable to: National Audubon Society

FRIENDS OF HUACHUCA AUDUBON SOCIETY: \$10 Year - Individual Member \$15 Year - Household

Make checks payable to: Huachuca Audubon Society



TOTAL: \$ _____

Mail all applications to: Huachuca Audubon Society • P.O. Box 63 • Sierra Vista, AZ 85636-0063

Please get involved with Huachuca Audubon Society!

Check your area of interest: Publicity Programs Conservation Hospitality Board of Directors

Welcome New Members!

Leslie Baird	Sierra Vista	Don Meyer	Wilcox
James Bratton	Bisbee	Marjorie Nelson	Safford
Gloria Bratton	Bisbee	Linda Organist	Sierra Vista
William Carpluk	Hereford	Austin Puglisi	Benson
Rudolph Dalpra	Safford	Arlene Ripley	St. David
Lora Dodge	Sierra Vista	Alvin Sandler	Bisbee
Faye Douglas	Bisbee	Irene Schwenk	McNeal
Carol Ehrl	Douglas	T. Smith	St. David
Frances Ford	Tombstone	Marjorie Thomas	Sierra Vista
Patricia Garoutte	Hereford	Maria Untalan	Sierra Vista
Madeline Green	Sierra Vista	Laura White	St. David
Beetta Gregory	Hereford	Julia Wilson	Sierra Vista
Laurie Hoffsmith	Sierra Vista	Michelle Young	Sierra Vista

Regular Events

WEEKLY & MONTHLY

Monday bird walks -- on hiatus for the summer.

Friday bird walk 7:30 AM at Ramsey Canyon. Nature Conservancy.

2nd Wednesday bird walk 7 AM at San Pedro House Friends of the San Pedro and HAS.

Saturday interpretive walk 8 AM. Meet at the San Pedro House just west of the river, south of Hwy 90.

Sunday Environmental Operations Park bird walk 7 AM in Sierra Vista. Limited to 20 participants with two docents. Huachuca Audubon, Friends of the San Pedro, and SE AZ Bird Observatory.

4th Saturday bird walk at San Pedro House 7 AM. (South off Hwy 90 just west of the San Pedro River). *More information at www.huachucaaudubon.org and www.sanpedroriver.org*

Montana Film maker Debuts "Mating For Life"

Wildlife Film at SW Wings Nature Festival, 5 August, Cochise College Student Union Community Hall

Veteran documentary filmmaker Cindy Stilwell will be in Sierra Vista for a premiere screening of her new wildlife film, "Mating For Life".



Q: How did you become interested in Sandhill Cranes and wildlife that Mate For Life?

Cindy Stilwell: I became interested in Sandhill Cranes when my dad told me about the Platte River gathering of over half a million Sandhill Cranes. The very same cranes that fly down your way in Cochise County during the winter. We loved to

watch the cranes as they dance their mating dance and, yes, mate for life.

Q: How long did it take to shoot the film?

CS: I have been working on Mating For Life for four years! Part of the reason the film took so long is that I also have a full time job, as an associate professor of film production at Montana State University in Bozeman, MT.

Mating For Life is a hybrid film - a mix of first person essays and a nature film. Because I think so many people find a lot of inspiration and relief from daily life in Nature. That is why Nature channels and shows are so popular. We need this connection to Nature and yet our crazy modern lives take us further and further from any real relationship with the natural world. We have to work to cultivate it in our lives. So this film was a bit of an "ode" to the complex relationship that humans have with Nature as well as my own relationship to Sandhill Cranes.

Q: Explain the concept of human vs. crane “mating for life” (without giving away any spoilers!).

CS: The most obvious similarity between cranes and human beings is the fact that cranes mate for life. It is a romantic idea to us as people, because we have all been taught that human beings also mate for life. And yet I look around me and I see many people who do not. In the film, I use myself as an example of someone who has not yet mated for life and I am already at this midpoint of life. I wonder at the implications of the fact that fewer and fewer of us seem to be finding a lifelong mate. This is sort of the jumping off point for the film. What are we going to leave behind? And how do you answer this question? With the more traditional thoughts of marriage and kids? Yes, the film is about the cranes, but its also about my own search for meaning through studying wildlife.

This line of questioning drew me to the cranes' story. I do not think I am alone in being drawn to wildlife in this way.

Q: Tell us a little about yourself.

CS: I have been making films for many years now; it is my passion. I consider myself an artist, one

who works primarily with film, video, photography and sound.

I am most interested in making films about people and how they relate to Nature, not always in a scientific way, though I am not opposed to using science in my films. I am interested in the way we live alongside animals, plants and landscapes. Thus, I am drawn to films and stories about rural life; how landscapes might effect the humans that live within it; how animals and humans co-mingle while living on the planet together; how humans need Nature for their well being. I find this line of inquiry endlessly fascinating—whether it results in films that are visual meditations, auditory excursions, or traditional narratives, I am open to all of it.

Anyone interested in being one of the first to publicly view this very personal wildlife film, "Mating For Life", tickets are available for \$5 at the door of the Cochise College Student Union Community Hall on Friday, 5 Aug during the Southwest Wings Nature Festival.

- Article from Southwest Wings

Renewable Energy Conference

Renewable energy = good! Impact on habitat = ? As Audubon moves to support renewable energy for the future, we also have to take into account the appropriate siting of projects and transmission lines. How will those things impact our IBAs and other important habitat? Audubon in Arizona, the state office in conjunction with the chapters, is planning a one-day conference to learn about this important topic. The date will be October 1 and the conference will be at the beautiful Audubon Center in Phoenix. Plan to attend!

Celebrity Author Opens 20th Annual Southwest Wings Nature Festival, 3-6 August 2011



Celebrity naturalist and author Scott Weidensaul is coming to Sierra Vista to participate in the 20th Annual Southwest Wings Nature Festival, 3-6 August 2011. Scott is the author of over two dozen natural history books and a Pulitzer Prize finalist for *Living On the Wind: Across the Hemisphere With Migratory Birds*. Scott will present a free seminar on Birding With Hearing Loss, lead a guided birding field trip, and present the keynote address at the closing banquet on Saturday, 6 August at the Cochise College Community Hall next to the library. Here is an exclusive interview with Scott about the surge in popularity of birding, birders in general and his upcoming participation in the 20th Annual Southwest Wings Birding and Nature Festival, 3-6

August 2011.

Q: Birding is one of the fastest-growing outdoor activities in America. A new study report 20% of all Americans describe themselves as recreational birders. It's become a "hip to be square" interest for teens, and is growing in popularity with academic types and retirees. Birding has become a mainstream hobby that is "now cool." In your opinion, what are some of the factors that have contributed to the popularity of this pastime, especially in recent years?

Scott Weidensaul: Birding is a great way to connect with the natural world, and that's something that more and more Americans seem hungry to do. And it's convenient—you can bird almost anywhere, including the biggest metropolitan areas in the country. In fact, some of the best birding spots are the inviting oases of green in the middle of urban landscapes that lure migrant species. You can bird in your backyard (something 85 million Americans do, even if only by watching their feeders), on vacation, or on a business trip. It's the ultimate in portable hobbies.

But the biggest reason is the birds themselves. There are almost 10,000 species worldwide, more than 750 of them in North America. They are dazzlingly colorful, sing like angels, and bring the world right into your backyard. You never know what species may have stopped over in your backyard or local park as they travel the world on their seasonal migrations. Every time I step off the back porch, it's a new adventure.

Q: Serious birders seem to have personalities that are as colorful as the birds they watch and study. Is there something in particular about birds that attracts passionate, sometimes obsessive types to this hobby?

SW: I suspect that if you scratch deep enough in any area of science, you'll find a lot of inspired eccentrics, but the history of bird study certainly has its fair share.

What strikes me, though, is how often people who'd lived aimless, shifting lives became galvanized by birds and went on to make tremendous contributions.

Alexander Wilson came to the United States from Scotland in the 1790s, penniless and a convicted blackmailer; he became the Father of American Ornithology by working himself literally to death, collecting and illustrating new species of birds. And John James Audubon—a marvelously complicated guy, equal parts genius and liar—initially made a shambles of his business career, winding up in jail for debt, before plunging into painting the 435 masterpieces that make up his *Birds of America*.

Q: Where are some of the best places in the country for birding?

SW: The sky islands of southeastern Arizona are one of my favorite birding areas. Rare species like the Elegant Trogon and Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher come up from Mexico and Central America. Dozens of beautiful species come down from the Rocky Mountains, as well as the neighboring Sonora and Chihuahuan deserts. I'm always excited to have a chance to come to Sierra Vista, especially when it's to take part in Southwest Wings, one of the best birding festivals in the country. But you can find birds virtually everywhere on the planet, including both poles and the middle of the emptiest oceans. A good start is any of the more than 500 national wildlife refuges across the country, not to mention national, state, and local parks.

If you enjoy travel, well, the sky's the limit. Colombia alone has 1,700 species of birds, more than twice what's found in all of North America.

Asia, Africa, Latin America, Australia—you could spend many lifetimes and not see it all.

Q: Selecting your first birding field guide can be a bit overwhelming because there are so many books on this topic. As a general introduction, which guides do you recommend for beginners? Which ones would you recommend for children?

SW: The gold standard is the *Sibley Guide to Birds* by David Sibley, published in 2000. It's a pretty intimidating book for beginning birders. I usually recommend the *Kaufman Field Guide to Birds of North America*, which doesn't overwhelm a beginner but covers all the continent's birds. Kenn's guide is illustrated with photographs that have been digitally tweaked to show all of the important field marks. It's easy to use, and small enough to fit in a back pocket. I'd also start all but the youngest kids with Kenn's guide.

Scott, we appreciate you taking the time to share your views and look forward to meeting you in person during the Festival.

Thanks to the generosity of local sponsors, Southwest Wings is able to offer Scott Weidensaul's seminar Birding With Hearing Loss to the public free of charge. Scott will present this seminar 11:00-12:00, Saturday, 6 August at the Cochise College Student Union Community Room. If you would like to join his birding trip or attend his keynote address at the closing banquet, please register at www.swwings.org For group rates please contact Gordon Lewis at (520) 266-0149.

- Article from Southwest Wings

Citizen Science

Don't know the difference between RNA and DNA? That's OK - you may still have a shot at a side career in science. These days, conservation groups and government agencies are turning to average citizens like you and me to help monitor nature. It's called Citizen Science and today I am in Carr Canyon on my first bird count.



Francie Hills

As I wait for the bird-monitoring group near Perimeter Trail the crisp April air and the mental calm of wilderness help ease my fears of looking foolish. But then at the trailhead, I am on the

razor's edge of panic as our leader and birding instructor, Rick Romea, identifies birds from their call. This is not an unusual skill for most really good birders. What makes this so amazing is that he does this while conversing with us new arrivals – perhaps this is the way birders multi-task. But I take several deep breaths to relax and reframe my anxiety. The good news; paired with an experienced birder, this is the perfect way to hone my skills. The bad news; to count bird species you first must be able to identify them. Being a glass half full person, I decide that this will finally focus me in my years- long desire to become a birder and the time is NOW. Besides, my fellow birders are encouraging, friendly and I know that at some time in their birding lives they have been where I am now.

With the nervousness of my first day at school I don my binoculars, meet the other “citizen scientists” and we take off into the wilderness to see what birds we can find. Glenn Fredericks, National Forest Service organizer of this bird-monitoring project takes the pressure off by telling us, “Today does not really count. This morning we are here to teach you our survey protocol.” Count or not, there are plenty of birds flitting about the canyon as we point them out to each other and collaborate on the identification. I quickly learn that even expert birders sometimes have to settle for narrowing it down to a ‘best guess” when the birds screech by or do not generally cooperate in our endeavor.

Soon I forget to be timid. Our training classes start to gel as we get into the spotting. I hear myself saying, "Beneath the Manzanita at 2 o'clock, some kind of Towhee." "That's a Canyon Towhee," says the woman behind me. "Hear his kild ti ti ti call? And there's his mate behind the log".

Never one to turn away from a "teachable moment", Rick, our instructor teases the correct identification out of us by asking the right questions... "You're right, it's a fly-catcher. But which one's call sounds like a police whistle?" "which warbler goes after

insects like that?" "Which wren has the call that sounds like a rotary dial phone?" Before I know it I am enjoying myself on a beautiful morning out in nature and on my way to becoming a "real" birder.

Any birders interested in joining the training and monitoring project for Coronado National Forest Service contact Glen Fredericks, 378-0311.

- Julie Bradley

Huachuca Audubon Society Field Trips

Check the web site (<http://www.huachuca-audubon.org>) for more detail.

June 4, Saturday, 7:00 a.m. HAS "Mississippi Kite" field trip to St. David. Meet at Sierra Vista City Hall to car-pool, or at 8:00 a.m. at Holy Trinity Monastery.

June 22, Wednesday, 7:00 a.m. HAS "Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher" field trip to Ramsey Canyon. Meet at the Preserve parking lot.

June 29, Wednesday, 7:00 a.m. HAS "Rubber Boot" hike from Charleston Bridge. Meet at Charleston Bridge parking lot.

Field trips on hiatus during July.

August 14, Sunday, 7:00 a.m. HAS "Buff-breasted Flycatcher" field trip to Carr Canyon and the Reef. Meet at the Perimeter Trail parking lot in lower Carr Canyon.

August 30, Tuesday, 7:00 a.m. HAS "Shorebird Migration" field trip to Benson wastewater treatment plant and Willcox Twin Lakes. Meet at Sierra Vista City Hall to car-pool.

September 11, Sunday, 7:00 a.m. HAS "Shorebird Migration" field trip to Benson wastewater treatment plant and Willcox Twin Lakes. Meet at Sierra Vista City Hall to car-pool.

September 23, Friday, 4:00 p.m. HAS "Afternoon Birding" field trip to Scheelite Canyon. Meet at Gateway Park/J Landwehr Plaza on N Garden Street.

20th Anniversary
SOUTHWEST WINGS
Birding & Nature Festival



August 3-6
2011
At the Cochise College Campus
Free Talks & Programs
Vendors & Live Animal Exhibits
Top Quality Guided Field Trips



for more Info Visit www.swwings.org

Advance tickets to the Keynote Dinner and Welcome Reception are available to local participants at Ramsey Canyon Preserve and the San Pedro House. These tickets waive the \$10 registration fee reflected on the website registration portal at www.swwings.org

Results of Trogon Survey

Thanks to the Huachuca Audubon Society who organized the event, 14 volunteers surveyed 10 canyons for Elegant Trogons in the Huachuca Mountains yesterday, May 29, 2011. Altogether 14 Elegant Trogons were found, 12 males and 2 females. Both females seen were in proximity to males with whom they were probably paired. Based on vocalizations reported by the observers, probably half of the males found without females were also paired. If this assumption is correct, this spring there are approximately 19 adult Elegant Trogons in the Huachuca Mountains. Efforts to actually see Elegant Trogons yesterday were hampered by strong winds, which were already blowing 10 mph by 6 am when the survey began, and which were gusting over 40 mph by the time the survey ended at 11 am.

Results are as follows:

- Ramsey Canyon: 2 males
- Garden Canyon: 1 male, 1 female
- Sawmill Canyon: 3 males
- Huachuca Canyon: 2 males, 1 female
- Copper Canyon: 1 male
- Sunnyside Canyon: 3 males.

No trogons were found in McClure Canyon, Scheelite Canyon, Ida Canyon, or Oversight Canyon. Several other canyons in the Huachuca Mountains were not surveyed where trogons have been reported in previous years.

To cast the 2011 Huachuca Mountain Elegant Trogon Census into an historic context, in 1979 a similar survey sponsored by Huachuca Audubon Society produced 28 Elegant Trogons. In 1981 there were 33 trogons found.

- Rick Taylor

Directors

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