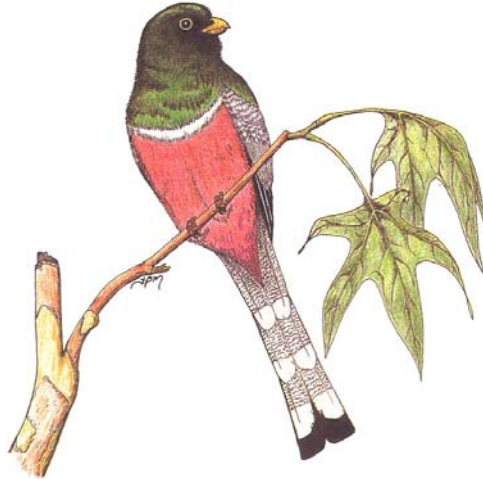


THE TROGON NEWS

HUACHUCA AUDUBON SOCIETY
Post Office Box 63, Sierra Vista, Arizona 85636
Volume XXXII Number 5, May 2004



President's Message

Water Is Still For Fightin'

Water is still a key issue here in the desert, for the future of migratory bird habitat, for humans, and for Fort Huachuca's future. There will be some meetings in May that I'm asking for some help with!

May 6 in Benson, there will be a water forum with some staff from the Arizona Department of Water Resources and possibly other folks. Linda Stitzer, Statewide Planner, and Jan Ronald from the legal section will answer questions related to the Gila Indian adjudication process, the pros and cons of an Active Management Area (AMA), grandfathered water rights, and the distinction between surface and ground water. I don't have all details as of press time, so stay in touch with Sandy Kunzer to find out when and where. I would go myself but am heading out of town that day.

May 18-20, the Upper San Pedro Partnership is hosting public meetings to talk about what is being done and proposed on water management in the valley. Meetings will be held in Bisbee, Tombstone, Sierra Vista, and Palominas, so there's one reasonably close to you. Both Bill Branan and I have devoted literally hundreds of hours attending meetings for the past 5 years and now we need YOU to attend one of these meetings. Give us and the river 3 hours of your time PLEASE! You can help, you truly can make a difference, and this is it. The time is now! Look for info in the Sierra Vista Herald and/or check the [USPP website](http://www.usppartnership.com/). My gratitude in advance.

Make sure you have the afternoon of June 12 reserved for our annual picnic potluck. It will be at Gray Hawk Nature Center again, with early evening a good time for a bird walk to the river.

Local Programs and Events

May 25th - HAS meeting, 7:00 p.m., Mona Bishop Room, Sierra Vista Public Library. Bill Radke will be the speaker at our May meeting. Bill was refuge manager at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge for seven years prior to coming back to Arizona. The 25,000-acre Bitter Lake NWR is located in eastern New Mexico along the Pecos River near Roswell. Because it is located on the edge of the Great Plains, it is a good place to see many typical western and eastern bird species at the same time. Its wetlands provide an important refuge for shorebirds, waterfowl, and sandhill cranes, and are crucial remaining habitats to several endemic fish and invertebrates. Due largely to its location and varying aquatic habitats, this refuge has the highest diversity of dragonflies in the country. Come and hear about New Mexico's "other great wildlife refuge."

Field Trips

May 1st, Saturday, 7:00 a.m. HAS birding trip to San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge. See April Trogon News for more information.

May 9th, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro River Inn.

May 12th, Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro House.

May 15th, Saturday, 8:30 a.m. Wildflower walk. See details below.

May 22nd, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro House.

May 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th, Sunday's, 8:00 a.m. Sierra Vista Environmental Operations Park bird walks.

Jun 7th, Monday, 7:00 a.m. HAS birding trip to Huachuca Mountains, Reef Campground and Comfort Spring. Meet at the Perimeter Trail parking lot in lower Carr Canyon to carpool. Some hiking involved in looking for the higher elevation warblers and flycatchers. Call Leader - Mike Guest 378-0667 with any questions.



Wildflower Walk

On Saturday, May 15, a wildflower ID walk will be given by Cochise County Herbarium botanists Mimi Kamp and Dr. Lumer. We will meet at the UA South, 1140 N. Colombo at 8:30 a.m. to go to various locations. There is a \$5 fee, but no need to register. Everyone is encouraged to bring water, a hat and a light snack or lunch. The walk will not be strenuous.

Carr House Opens 2 May

Carr House officially opens on Sunday, May 2. Hours are 9 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The visitor center will be open on Saturdays and Sundays through October 3. Every second and fourth Sunday at 1:30, Carr House will feature nature-related programs that are open to the public and offered at no cost. Chuck and Nancy Aley will offer bird walks on the third Saturday of the month through September. Walks are free and open to the public. Birders will meet at 7 a.m. in the Carr House parking lot.

The Carr House is located approximately seven miles south of Sierra Vista. Travel Highway 92 and turn right (west) on Carr Canyon Road. Continue on for approximately 2.4 miles. The pavement ends at the forest boundary but the dirt road is suitable for passenger vehicles. Turn left where the road forks to enter the parking lot area. Call Rosemary Snapp at (520) 378-9351 for details.

2nd Sunday Bird Walk – 11 April 2004

Our intrepid group of participants embarked on the 2nd Sunday Bird Walk from the San Pedro River Inn. Rain the prior day left the air fresh and bright green foliage swept the panorama along the river. Immediately, we saw not two, but now THREE, female Hooded Mergansers in the pond. They appear to be more used to people since they didn't take flight even while participants chatted and moved away from the blind. As we headed away from the ponds, we spotted a male Hooded Oriole perched on a wood pile - an odd place for such a bird, but perhaps he was looking for nesting material (I've noted the Scott Orioles pulling strands off the edges of Hesperaloe leaves, for example, to use as nest material).

While winter sparrows were less conspicuous, the colorful migrants and breeding birds made their presence felt along the river. We encountered male Summer Tanager, Bullock's Oriole, and even a lone Scott's Oriole 100 yards away from the riparian area in a hackberry tree. Lucy's Warblers were common along the river along with Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warblers in their spectacular breeding plumage. A Great-Horned Owl stood on a branch high in a cottonwood over the river.

We also enjoyed viewing Swainson's Hawks underwing as they soared high overhead; surely they are one of the most beautiful raptors in our area. Vermilion Flycatchers were hard to miss, as were Black and Say's Phoebes. In willows by the marsh pond, an early male Blue Grosbeak perched conspicuously much to the delight of the group. A skulking pair of Green-tailed Towhees was somewhat harder to see. All in all, a pleasant Sunday morning filled with the colorful birds of spring!

The next 2nd Sunday Bird Walk is scheduled to depart from the San Pedro River Inn at 8:00 a.m. on May 9, 2004.

-Robert Weissler

Needed: Volunteers for Wildlife

Due to the drought over the past seven years, and for continued survival of Fort Huachuca's wildlife population, ongoing maintenance of 32 watering devices on post is critical. The Fort Huachuca Wildlife Office is seeking volunteers to maintain these devices. All parts for maintenance will be provided. Volunteers only need to donate their time to adopt and examine a wildlife drinker a minimum of twice a year, preferably at six-month intervals. This is an ideal volunteer opportunity for hunters, birdwatchers, hikers, and anyone who spends time in the field or likes to be outdoors.

Individuals who volunteer will be provided locations of devices to be maintained, or they may choose a favorite location. Some drinkers in remote, rugged locations present a more challenging volunteer opportunity, as water may have to be manually hauled in. Volunteers should also be prepared to weed around drinkers, if needed, and to report date of inspection and repair status of the drinker.

For information, call Karl Welker, program coordinator, at (520) 533-2603 (days) or (520) 378-3391 (evenings).

Gould's Turkey Release Planned on Fort Huachuca

The Arizona Game and Fish Department and the National Wild Turkey Federation have captured five male Gould's turkeys in the Huachuca Mountains in March of this year and subsequently released them in the Chiricahua Mountains. They have also captured 43 Gould's turkeys from Mexico that are currently in quarantine in the Chiricahua Mountains. As part of the planned strategies, AZGF hopes to release three male Gould's turkeys from Mexico into the Huachuca Mountains. These turkeys have already tested negative for Avian Influenza, salmonella, and Newcastle's Disease, and a second test has been conducted. The release will not occur until a second negative test is confirmed for each of these diseases. The planned release is scheduled for April 22 early in the morning at a yet-to-be-determined location. AZGF appreciates the cooperation they have received from Fort Huachuca personnel in their continuing efforts to ensure the restoration and conservation of Gould's turkeys in southeastern Arizona, according to Brian Wakeling, AZGF big game management supervisor.

Hug'N'Hanger Inc is pleased to announce a new way for members to support the Audubon Society. Anyone purchasing from the Hug'N'Hanger website at www.hughnanger.com can direct that 10% of the product sales be donated by Hug'N'Hanger Inc to the Audubon chapter of their choice. (Hopefully that will be HAS!)

This is our way of supporting the Audubon Society. For all the details, please visit http://www.hughnanger.com/Audubon_Society.htm

Hug'N'Hanger is the **easiest way possible to hang bird feeders** and other objects from trees, posts and poles. For more information about this great new product that birders will love, please see our [new product announcement](#) and visit our website at www.hughnanger.com.



Birds, Birds, and More Birds!

Plan now to attend The Montana Birding Classic, May 28-June 1, 2004. This birdwatching adventure includes migrating and nesting birds along the Missouri, Milk and Yellowstone Rivers, as well as the prairie grasslands, sage brush, and pothole habitats. Proceeds go to the Audubon Community Naturalist Program at the Billings Conservation Education Center. Hosted by the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society, Billings, Montana. Space is limited. For more information contact Billie (Kathryn) Hicks at 406-962-3798 or lonsluv@tgrsolution.net.

Help Save One of the Last Unspoiled Rainforests in the World

Join WildLaw (a non-profit environmental law firm), Jul 31 through August 8, on the first-ever ecotour to visit Gabon in Central Africa. Gabon is leading the way towards sustainable development in the Congo Basin by choosing to preserve their forests through ecotourism. Sadly, if ecotourism does not succeed in Gabon, the government will be forced to increase timber concessions to make up for a growing national debt and decreasing oil revenue. Wildlaw has been the first organization to step up to the plate and organize an ecotour to Gabon, and you can be part of the creation of this very important model of sustainable development. Participants in this ecotour will be able to see wild silverback gorillas, forest elephants, and a host of other animals in one of the most beautiful and unspoiled environments in the world.

You can find out more about our trip by clicking on Destination Gabon on our website, www.Wildlaw.org. For further information, email Sandra Nichols at Sandra@wildlaw.org or call (334) 396-4729. A reduced price is available for any groups of people who would like to go together.



Water CONSERVATION Making a Splash

Is there something missing from the Upper San Pedro Partnership Water Management Plan?

Several key issues are missing from the Upper San Pedro Partnership's Water Management Plan. The USPP is a group of municipalities and other organizations in the Sierra Vista subwatershed of the Upper San Pedro River Basin dedicated to maintaining adequate groundwater supplies for both the San Pedro River and its surrounding communities. About 4 million birds representing 250 species use the river as a migration corridor with one hundred species nesting there. The San Pedro River also hosts over 80 mammal species and 40 reptile and amphibian species in its riparian habitat and shares its underground water supply in the Sierra Vista subwatershed with about 66,000 humans. The current USPP water management plan suggests that, in addition to conservation measures already in place, importing water from surrounding areas could mitigate the deficit in ground water supplies. A deficit occurs when more water is pumped out of the aquifer than is returned through rain and recharge. The USPP plan sounds sensible until you consider that the surrounding areas are also located in the desert and that the plan has omitted examination of other, perhaps more rational, ways to mitigate the water overdraft.

Here's what is missing in the USPP plan:

- 1) USPP does not consider the impact of development and the growth of the thirsty human population on the subwatershed aquifer. In a parallel to the adage, "Build the roads and they will come", we could say here, "Bring the water and they will come". It is highly likely that the more water imported, the higher usage will become. Imported water may, paradoxically, add to the decline of the aquifer. The obvious necessary step that should precede water importation is creation of a mandated, rational plan for growth and development.
- 2) The second obvious missing step is to make all the water conservation measures supported by the Partnership mandatory, and, additionally, to take advantage of improved technology to increase the number and range of conservation measures required.
- 3) The third missing step is to establish a benchmark for current water levels in the aquifer. A benchmark is a standard by which something can be measured. Before we import water, we need to know what the current water level is and how much water is currently being used in order to determine what amounts need to be imported and then, to evaluate whether the importation of water is helping the aquifer. We have first to know where we are going, how well we are doing in getting to our destination, and when we arrived.

With these thoughts in mind, we have a grand opportunity to make a splash in the water conservation effort. The USPP is holding community meetings where staff will explain the Partnership plan and will ask for community response to the plan. The Partnership has already surveyed some folks in the area. Over half of the surveyed group is concerned that the community might face water supply problems in the future, while three fourths of the sample think that the actions of individuals are important in meeting future water demands. More than three quarters of the sample think it is important to save water in their homes. The top four reasons for saving water are to save both the San Pedro River and Fort Huachuca, to take account of the fact that we live in a desert, and to save money on pumping costs and water bills. The survey is a good start on including public opinion when making decisions about water conservation. Let's take it a step further, really make a splash, by attending the community meetings where we can propose reasonable and sensible alternative plans for water conservation. There will be four community meetings as follows:

Tuesday, May 19, 6:00 p.m.	Bisbee	Bisbee Woman's Club, 7 Ledge Avenue
Wednesday, May 19, 10:00 a.m.	Tombstone	Scheiffelin Hall, 4 th & Fremont
Wednesday, May 19, 5:30 p.m.	Sierra Vista	Ethel Berger Center, 2950 E Tacoma
Thursday, May 20, 6:00 p.m.	Palominas	Valley View Elementary, 6849 S. Highway 92

For more information on the water management plan, visit the USPP website at www.usppartnership.com . To respond with suggestions, phone 520/452-7087 or mail to Upper San Pedro Partnership, 1011 N. Coronado Dr., Sierra Vista, AZ 85635.

-Sondra Gardner, Chair, Conservation Committee



Spend an Audubon Summer in Maine!

For more than 65 years, Audubon has touched the lives of thousands of adults and young people by offering them engaging opportunities to enjoy and learn about nature at summer camp in Maine. In 2004, we continue that tradition, inviting you to join exceptional programs led by naturalists and educators – at some of the very sites Roger Tory Peterson, Rachel Carson and Andrew Wyeth declared favorites. Go on your own or with friends. Send the kids for an adventure. Or savor time relaxing with your children or grandchildren at a session of family camp. By participating in an Audubon camp or trip in Maine, you'll also help support Audubon's work for wildlife conservation in the state. Some of the programs offered include: Field Ornithology for Adults, Natural History of the Maine Coast, Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens, Birding Downeast Maine, and Exploring the Maine Coast by Schooner. For more information call toll free 1-888-325-5261, ext 215 or check our website at www.maineaudubon.org.

Don't forget to check the amazing progress of Arizona's California Condors at http://www.peregrinefund.org/notes_condor.html

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Please notify the Membership Chairman if you stop your mail and again when you restart it.