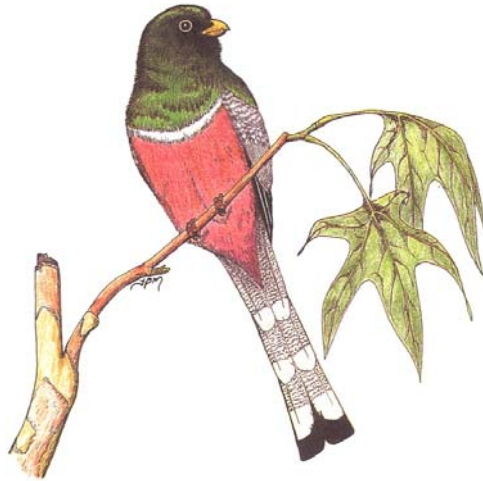


# THE TROGON NEWS

HUACHUCA AUDUBON SOCIETY  
Post Office Box 63, Sierra Vista, Arizona 85636  
Volume XXXIII Number 5, May 2005



## President's Message

May is International Migratory Bird Day, celebrated on the second Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> this year. Although we (HAS) haven't done anything specific for this for several years, it's always a great excuse to get out and go birding.

The first part of May will feature the Fiesta de las Aves, organized by SABO in Bisbee. Check out their website for specific details on what is offered <http://www.sabo.org/index.htm>. And then for our own members' meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup>, Tom Wood from SABO will talk about the hummingbird migration project they are asking for participation in. Come join us!

And be sure to check out our own website for details on the walks and field trips offered by our intrepid volunteers. June will be our picnic and annual meeting, with election of officers and directors. Date and location are not confirmed as of press time, but we'll let you all know as soon as possible.

## Welcome to New HAS Members!

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest HAS members: Alondra Mello and Jim Garno of Bisbee, John Thomas of Benson, Margot Joy of Sierra Vista, Mimi Kamp of Naco, Sara Roethle of Sierra Vista, Xo Terra of Bisbee, Melissa Usrey of Huachuca City, Joshua Chapman of Safford, Louis Lancaster of Benson, Emily Modellmog of Benson, and Heidi Schubert of Sierra Vista.

### Local Programs and Events

**May 1<sup>st</sup>**, Saturday, Carr House Program, 1:30 p.m. Mike Quigley, a staff member and Wilderness Campaign Coordinator for the Sky Island Alliance, a science-based conservation organization based in Tucson which works to preserve native biodiversity of the sky islands in this region will tell the audience the what, where, and why the importance of Sky Islands such as the Huachuca Mountains.

**May 17<sup>th</sup>**, Tuesday, SEABA meeting, 7:00 p.m., Tucson Botanical Gardens, 2150 N. Alvernon Way, Education Room. Guest speaker will be Jim Brock talking about Butterfly Caterpillars, their lives, hardships and the winged beauties that they turn into. Free. For more information, please call 520/742-0071 or see our website at [www.naba.org/chapters/nabasa/home.html](http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabasa/home.html).

**May 24<sup>th</sup>**, Tuesday, HAS meeting, 7:00 p.m., Sierra Vista Police Department community meeting room, 911 N. Coronado. Tom Wood, of the Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory, will talk with us about a hummingbird migration and distribution survey that is being conducted statewide.

### Field Trips

**May 8<sup>th</sup>**, Sunday, 7:00 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro River Inn.

**May 11<sup>th</sup>**, Wednesday, 7:30 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro House.

**May 18<sup>th</sup>**, Wednesday. SEABA field trip to Box Canyon and the Florida Trail in the Santa Rita Mts. For more information, please call 520/742-0071 or see our website at [www.naba.org/chapters/nabasa/home.html](http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabasa/home.html).

**May 21<sup>st</sup>**, Saturday, 7:00 a.m. Friends of the Huachuca Mountains bird walk at Carr House.

**May 23<sup>rd</sup>**, Monday, 6:30 p.m., HAS field trip at Ramsey Canyon Preserve. See details below.

**May 28<sup>th</sup>**, Saturday, 7:00 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro House.

**May 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup>**, Sunday's, 7:00 a.m. Sierra Vista Environmental Operations Park bird walks. Tours will be limited to 20 participants plus 2 docents.



### Crepuscular Critters and More!

Our own Mark Pretti, naturalist extraordinaire, has agreed to lead an: owl/bat/what else can we see and talk about-prowl! Monday evening, 23 May, 6:30 p.m. starting at the Ramsey Canyon Preserve Parking lot. There are 13 spaces left since Betsy and I are going and HAS members will be given preference. I will keep a members list and an "others" list and if members do not fill all the spaces by 16 May, I will allot spaces to others on a first-call first-go basis. There will be a \$5.00 fee for all attendees except Ramsey volunteers who wear their name tags. Volunteers attending will pay \$2.00. This covers admission to the Preserve and a small donation to HAS. Bring a light jacket, water and a small flashlight. For reservations call or write to me: Sandy Kunzer (520) 803- 8490, sbkunzer@theriver.com

### International Migratory Bird Day 2005

International Migratory Bird Day, organized by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, will be held on May 14 this year, with the theme of "Bird Collisions." Organizers will promote awareness of the large-scale avian mortality at buildings, communication towers, and other human-made obstacles during migration. Events and festivals will be held, and education materials made available through [IMBD's Website](http://www.birdday.org/): <http://www.birdday.org/>. This year's IMBD artwork is by noted author and artist David Sibley.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Bird Walk –April 10, 2005**

With the spring migration well underway, our group started the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday bird walk from the San Pedro River Inn with great anticipation. The pleasant weather meant that the birds were not in a great hurry to get going. However, we would not be disappointed with the haul of birds of the season.

As we approached the river, a couple of Swainson's Hawks circled above for fine views. This is simply a spectacular buteo that has come a long way to reach us. Along the river, we encountered a couple of small flocks of song birds. Among them were Black-throated Gray, Orange-crowned, Wilson's, Lucy's, Yellow, and Yellow-rumped Warblers, plus a mystery warbler that eluded identification. A Gilded Flicker added spice to the variety of birds observed. Later, we heard a Gray Hawk calling from across the river near where it has nested in prior years. The canopy is difficult to see into, so we were unable to view it, apart from a possible brief glimpse of a raptor gliding amongst the trees.

The Vermilion Flycatchers which had already returned the month before were joined by more recent arrivals like Western and Cassin's Kingbirds. Curve-billed Thrashers were heard frequently, while Green-tailed, Abert's, and Canyon Towhees were conspicuous in a number of places. Northern Harrier was still coursing over the fields, but we missed the usual Great-horned Owl this time. Kestrel and Red-tailed Hawk were well seen as the morning approached mid-day. Chipping Sparrows, Say's and Black Phoebe, along with Gila and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, were common, but many of the winter sparrows had left, save for a few White-crowned Sparrows. Once we returned to the inn, we had decent views of the Barn Owl sitting in the nest box in a cottonwood tree.

There are a number of migrants that are yet to be seen on the walk this season like orioles, chats, and tanagers, so we still have much to look forward to as spring marches on. Once again a male Northern Cardinal dropped in just before we headed to the cars to depart. That bird is always a thrill so see!

The next 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Bird Walk is scheduled to depart from the San Pedro River Inn a half hour earlier at 7:00 a.m. on Sunday, May 8, 2005. Once again, birders of all levels of experience are welcome to join us!

-Robert Weissler

## **The Environmental Operations Park (EOP) on Paul Revere (Patriots) Day**

Anyone who left the EOP without a thorough auditory understanding of the "wichety, wichety, wichety" song of the Common Yellowthroat was either deaf or not paying attention. The songs were inescapable but even a single sighting was impossible in the lush marsh vegetation. Highlights of the day included: A cattle egret both in the air and searching for food along a pond shore, White-faced Ibis (es?) (i?) in flight and feeding, a good look at a Virginia Rail that was in the open long enough to be seen through several scopes, and of course the camaraderie of fellow birders. In all we saw 40 species of birds in about 2 1/2 hours, proving once again that an average day in Southeast Arizona is as good as or better than many days in many other places. I would also like to extend a thank you to Michael Marsden for agreeing to attend, spot and ID shorebirds. In addition, my and the Society's thanks go to the City Staff for agreeing to this weekday visit to the EOP.

-Sandy Kunzer

### **Audubon Celebration**

You are invited – let's flock together!

September 9-11, 2005

Windemere Hotel, Sierra Vista, AZ

The Arizona Audubon Council and Audubon Arizona State Office invite you to join with friends old and new for a weekend of fun -- including guest speakers, workshops, setting state issue priorities, and, of course, great birding.

Join us for a weekend of opportunity to include the following:

**Friday evening kick-off speaker Brock Evans**, president of the Endangered Species Coalition in Washington, D.C. and a former National Audubon Society Government Relations VP.

**Saturday banquet speaker Kenn Kaufman**, well known ornithologist, author, tour leader, and birder extraordinaire.

**Leadership training for Chapter leaders**, such as fund raising, planning and implementing an education program, attracting new members, etc.

**Discussion of state issues** and setting of annual state priorities.

**A variety of Sunday field trips** in one of Arizona's premier birding areas.

Further details and registration information will be available May 1 by going to the Audubon Arizona website or your Chapter website, or by calling the State Office in Phoenix (602-468-6470) to request the information be mailed to you. Early registration is encouraged as some events will be limited.

### **Recent Land Purchase Proves Cooperation is Good Conservation**

Public support of the Heritage Fund, lottery dollars for conservation, recently allowed the Arizona Game and Fish Department to give \$1.5 million toward purchase of the 2,628-acre Coal Mine Canyon property in southeast Arizona.

Spring-fed pools on the property are home to one of the largest remaining wild populations of the Gila topminnow, which was added to the Endangered Species List in 1967. Other species benefiting from the purchase include the lesser long-nosed bat, Mexican spotted owl and western yellow-billed cuckoo.

Arizona acquired the Coal Mine Canyon property through a cooperative effort between the landowner (First United Realty and the Hudson family), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (which gave \$750,000 to protect habitat for the recovery of endangered species), The Trust for Public Land (which negotiated the ownership transfer), the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and the Arizona State Parks Department (which will manage the area in perpetuity as part of the Sonoita Creek State Natural Area).

-Reprinted from Arizona Game and Fish Department Wildlife News, 7 Mar 05

### **July ABA Convention in Tucson**

For complete information about the upcoming ABA convention in Tucson this July, please check out:

<http://www.americanbirding.org/mtgs/conventions/2005tucson/index.html>.

## Trip Report to Where the Birds Are

Fifty species of hummingbirds seen in three weeks? Well, not quite. I did see 48 along with 414 other bird species. Where is that possible? Ecuador!

I had the opportunity to join seven other birders on a three week trip to Ecuador this past February, planned and guided by Alicia and Dieter Kamm. All of us had been on previous trips to Costa Rica with them. We traveled to the famous lodge, La Selva, in the tropics, Mindo area in the western cloud forest, San Ysidro in the eastern cloud forest, and then over 14,000 feet to the Cotapaxi volcano as well as several other high altitude birding spots.

The numbers of species were overwhelming. Keeping track of more than 450 species required use of the midnight oil but no tapes. Thanks to the excellent local guides, we were constantly in the right place to see birds and were able to name them, the latter was no small feat.

If 48 beautiful hummingbirds weren't enough, I could add 19 species of parrots, 8 species of toucans and 55 species of tanagers all with beautiful colors to admire. Highlights for me included: Powerful Woodpecker, the crazy Hoatzins, Amazonian Umbrellabird, Andean Cock-of-the Rock males at a lek, Purple-crowned Fairy, Sand-collared Nighthawk, and the always graceful Swallow-tailed Kites. Watching an Ornate Hawk-eagle fly directly in front of us, scattering parrots in all direction and then posing in the scope at 50 feet was a special moment. An American Pygmy-Kingfisher in a spotlight was incredibly beautiful. Having an unnamed owl hooting and posing 20 feet from our bedroom was exciting. It was similar to the Black and White Owl but is as yet unnamed and hard to enter in my software. Highlights certainly included watching a Crested Eagle and a Black-and-Chestnut Eagle perched and soaring.

The paramo, cloud forests and tropical habitats were beautiful and exciting to experience. A day in Otovalo, the largest and oldest Indian market was truly enjoyable. The local people were friendly and the food great. All in all I had a wonderful time.

-Harry Bergtholdt



Photos courtesy of Harry Bergtholdt – Hoatzin; Booted Racket-Tailed Hummer, and Harry!

### **AZG&FD Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy**

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is soliciting public comments on their draft Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS). The deadline is May 22nd. This 10 year state plan is required to obtain federal wildlife funding under the State Wildlife Grant Program. Please make your voice heard to the Department, which gets an earful from hunters, agricultural industry and others whose interests are not always aligned with wildlife conservation. If you can't attend a meeting, you may learn about and comment on the plan at the AZGF website. Complete information is at [http://www.gf.state.az.us/w\\_c/cwcs\\_process.shtml](http://www.gf.state.az.us/w_c/cwcs_process.shtml). Open Forum Meetings - public meetings to discuss the draft CWCS and to solicit comments. Each meeting starts at 6 p.m. and is expected to last two hours. Audubon has been a very active participant in the development of this plan that is significantly important for the conservation of birds in Arizona. Please attend these meetings if you possibly can.

April 25, 2005: Pinetop AGFD regional office  
April 26, 2005: Flagstaff AGFD headquarters (Roadrunner Rm)  
April 27, 2005: Phoenix AGFD regional office  
April 28, 2005: Tucson AGFD regional office  
May 2, 2005: Mesa AGFD regional office  
May 3, 2005: Kingman AGFD regional office  
May 4, 2005: Yuma AGFD regional office  
May 5, 2005: Phoenix AGFD headquarters (Roadrunner Rm)

### **Carr House Reopens Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>**

Carr House Visitor Information Center will open from 9 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays starting Saturday, April 30 for the spring season. Picnic tables located outside Carr House invite recreationists to dine al fresco beneath the spreading oaks and observe thirsty hummingbirds and acorn wrens as they sip on nectar at the hummingbird feeders. Every other Sunday at 1:30 p.m., Carr House will feature nature-related programs that are open to the public and offered at no cost. Brochures listing upcoming events are available at the Carr House or at the Sierra Vista Ranger District, Coronado National Forest office at 5990 South Highway 92, Hereford. FOHM volunteers offer bird walks on the third Saturday of each 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.

### **Tri-University Water Conference**

On August 3-5, 2005, Northern Arizona University's Center for Sustainable Environments (NAU CSE) will host a Tri-University Water Conference, in conjunction with the 2005 Southwest Sustainability Expo. The conference is designed to address issues of Arizona water sustainability from several perspectives, including climate variability and change, water management, ecosystems, agricultural and resource economics, urban growth, and water conservation. Later this spring, more information on the conference will be available on the CLIMAS web site (<http://www.ispe.arizona.edu/climas>), as well as the NAU CSE web site (<http://environment.nau.edu/>).

### **Condor Project Loses Historic Bird**

A historic program to bring California condors back from the brink of extinction has suffered a setback in Arizona, but some good news may be coming with this year's breeding season. On March 26, biologists at the Grand Canyon found the dead body of the first condor chick hatched in the wild in Arizona in more than 80 years. The bird was not quite 2 years old, and the cause of death has not yet been determined, but it appears the chick was emaciated. "Although we expect high mortality rates in the early years of a condor's life, it is disappointing to lose the first wild-fledged condor of the reintroduction effort," says Ron Sieg, supervisor of the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Flagstaff regional office.

This particular chick was the first hatched in the wild since efforts to reintroduce the condor in Arizona began in 1996. Two other wild chicks, both hatched last year, are doing well as they begin to explore around their nests at the Grand Canyon and Vermilion Cliffs, and more chicks may be on the way. "Two or three condor pairs may have offspring this year," says Kathy Sullivan, an Arizona Game and Fish Department condor biologist. "The breeding season is here, and we're optimistic."

About 70 people attended the release of five juvenile California condors at the Vermilion Cliffs earlier this spring. Other birds are still in captivity awaiting release into the wilds of Arizona. Only 22 condors were left in the world in 1982, but efforts to capture and breed the birds have been successful, leading up to releases like the ones frequently happening at Vermilion Cliffs. Fifty-three condors now live in the wild in Arizona; 241 condors live in the wild and captivity worldwide. One difficulty for biologists trying to save the condors is lead poisoning. At least six condors have died from lead poisoning, including two this year. The Arizona Game and Fish Department is involved in many proactive efforts to prevent lead poisoning, including public education efforts and encouragement for hunters to use non-lead ammunition when they're in condor territory.

Those wishing to see California condors in the wild can travel to a few places in Arizona this time of year and probably be successful. "Condors will likely start visiting the South Rim of the Grand Canyon on a regular basis in the next few weeks," says Chris Parish, a biologist with The Peregrine Fund. "The birds can also be seen at the Vermilion Cliffs release site." California condors have been listed as endangered since 1967. They can weigh up to 26 pounds and have a wingspan of up to 9.5 feet. The condor reintroduction in Arizona is a joint project of many partners, including the Arizona Game and Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Peregrine Fund, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Kaibab National Forest, and Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

-Reprinted from Arizona Game and Fish Wildlife News, 8 Apr 05

### **Our Water, Our Choice, Our Future: The Status of Water in the Willcox Playa Watershed**

In recent years there has been growing concern about the quantity and quality of water throughout Arizona. The Willcox Playa watershed connects local farmers, ranchers, residents and land managers to each other. An engaged watershed community takes responsibility for understanding their land and water relationships. They work together with scientists to manage natural resources in ways that benefit the whole community. Please join us on Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, at the Willcox Community Center to learn about many of the water issues and concerns in Arizona and the status of the Willcox Playa watershed. We can work together to keep our Willcox Playa Watershed healthy. For more information and registration forms, please see:

<http://www.willcoxchamber.com/willcoxchamber/Documents/WatershedRegistration.pdf>

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### 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](http://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.