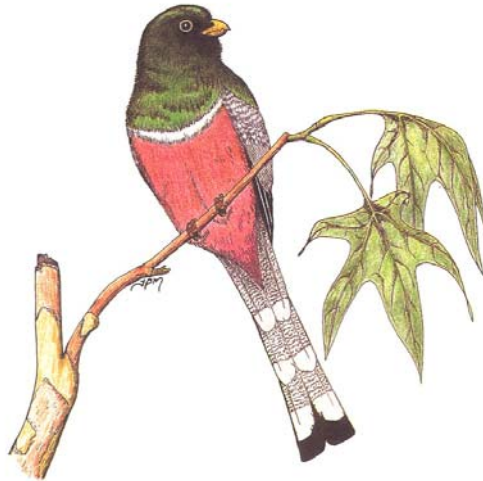


THE TROGON NEWS

HUACHUCA AUDUBON SOCIETY
Post Office Box 63, Sierra Vista, Arizona 85636
Volume XXXIII Number 3, March 2005



President's Message

Spring officially arrives this month and it should be a pretty one this year! All this winter rain will undoubtedly give us a great wildflower show, which should be good news for insects and birds.

March 12 has been designated as Arctic Action Day. Although I failed to pull together any activity for the day, I hope you will take a few minutes to read about the struggle to protect the Arctic Refuge. You may know that revenue from drilling in the refuge is part of balancing the budget. The administration seems to be overlooking the fact that there is no revenue from drilling there and that Congress, particularly the Senate, has consistently refused to authorize it. The people don't want it and fortunately our own Senator McCain steadfastly fights the proposal.

And much closer to home, across the state line in New Mexico, oil and gas drilling has been proposed (maybe approved) for Otero Mesa. Although I haven't been there, accounts consistently describe it in glowing terms as habitat for wildlife. Since these activities only perpetuate our dependence on fossil fuels and add to our global warming woes, rather than putting us on the path to renewable energy, I hope this proposal will also be defeated.

I expect to actually be in attendance at the March membership meeting, so I hope to see many of you there!!

Local Programs and Events

Mar 3rd, Thursday, Westerners meeting, 7:00 p.m., Senior Citizen's Center, Collins Road, (first left off Naco Highway, south of Safeway) Bisbee. Dan Fischer, author of "History of Ornithology in the West" will be guest speaker. Public is invited to this free event. For more information, call Pat Mosteller, 432-4105.

Mar 15th, Tuesday, SEABA meeting, 7:00 p.m., Tucson Botanical Gardens, 2150 N. Alvernon Way, Education Room. Guest speaker is Priscilla Brodtkin, photographer and co-author of "Butterflies Of Arizona: A Photographic Guide", will speak on Butterflies of the Andes. Free. For more information, please call 520/742-0071 or see our website at www.naba.org/chapters/nabasa/home.html.

Mar 22nd, Tuesday, HAS meeting, 7:00 p.m., Mona Bishop Room, Sierra Vista Public Library. Brian Prescott will present a talk and slide program on Iceland. Brian has photographed over 1300 species of birds on seven continents over the last thirty years. Many thousands of seabirds nest on the cliffs of Iceland. Some of the birds we will see are Atlantic Puffin, Northern Fulmar, Black-legged Kittiwake and Great Skua. Other features that will be discussed are glaciers and some of the geology of this unique island nation.



Mar 25th, Friday, Southeastern Arizona Volunteer Education program, 6:30 p.m., Cochise College. Join SAVE for "The Greatest Good" - a special video presentation celebrating the USDA Forest Service's centennial and framing the epic story to manage a nation's resource amid global change. "Conflicting interests must be reconciled, the question will always be decided from the standpoint of the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run." - Gifford Pinchot, chief forester, 1905.

Field Trips

Mar 9th, Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro House.

Mar 12th, Saturday, 7:00 a.m. HAS birding trip to Patagonia. See details below.

Mar 13th, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro River Inn.

Mar 26th, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro House.

Mar 30th, Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. SEABA butterfly walk to Catalina State Park. Meet on the street edge of the parking lot in front of Trader Joe's on the southeast corner of [Oracle and Magee](#) on the northwest side of Tucson.

Mar 6th, 13th, 20th, and 27th, Sunday's, 8:00 a.m. Sierra Vista Environmental Operations Park bird walks.



HAS Birding Trip to Patagonia

On March 12 we will have a birding trip to Patagonia to look for remaining winter birds and maybe a few early migrants. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the city hall parking lot on Coronado Drive, to travel to Patagonia and begin birding along Harshaw Creek and Harshaw Canyon Roads. We'll then move to Bog Hole Wildlife Area in the San Rafael valley, a small lake with a nice riparian area. If a scouting trip shows the lake is dry we may visit the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve (entrance fee). High clearance vehicles will be needed to drive to Bog Hole Wildlife Area. Plan on taking snacks or light lunch. We should be back to Sierra Vista by 2:00-3:00 p.m. For more information and to finalize the availability of transportation, please call Harry Bergtholdt at 520 249-3369 or email he4berg@cox.net.

2nd Sunday Bird Walk –February 13, 2005

Once again participants on the 2nd Sunday bird walk were treated to outstanding winter weather. The rain of the prior several days gave way to sunny skies, but the effect was still present: the San Pedro River was rushing at a vigorous pace indeed and a few waterfalls could be seen cascading from the heights of the Huachuca Mountains in the distance. Highlights of the walk included a Merlin perched high in a cottonwood tree, a pair of Great Horned Owls nearby, and a Gilded Flicker cavorting with a red-shafted Northern Flicker.

Besides numerous flickers, there were plenty of other woodpeckers seen and heard throughout the walk, namely the usual Gila and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers. There were plenty of Pyrrhuloxia in thickets of mesquite, while along the river there were many Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warblers, some starting to molt into their alternate (breeding) plumage. On the river itself, four Gadwall were seen. Meanwhile, both Vesper Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrow were well represented. Curve-billed Thrashers were seen and heard in several places near the inn. As for towhees, a Green-tailed Towhee turned up along with many Canyon and Abert's Towhees.

Michael Marsden noted hearing a Curve-billed Thrasher in the distance as we hiked toward the river. From January to March, these thrashers begin singing before dawn, announcing the approaching breeding season. In March, the northward spring migration will be underway in earnest, so we should soon be seeing Vermilion Flycatchers dotting open areas along the river with splashes of red.

The next 2nd Sunday Bird Walk is scheduled to depart from the San Pedro River Inn at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 13, 2005. Once again, birders of all levels of experience are welcome to join us!

-Robert Weissler

Birding Basics

Audubon has launched "Birding Basics", a new feature on Audubon.org. It provides useful tips for beginning birders. These include information on buying binoculars, how to select and use bird guides, where to look and how to listen for birds, and opportunities to get involved with birding and more through Audubon Chapters, Centers, and Citizen Science projects. Visit "Birding Basics" at www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/bird_watching/index.shtml.

Arizona's Three Wild Hatched Condor Chicks Doing Well

The only three endangered condor chicks hatched in the wilds of Arizona in more than 80 years are doing well as we enter a new year. "The California condor chicks are becoming more independent," says Susan MacVean, an Arizona Game and Fish Department biologist. "In fact, one that hatched last year and just took its first flight in November is already flying more than a mile from its nest." Just 22 California condors were left in the world in 1982, but efforts to save and breed the species have resulted in nearly 250 of the birds now living in both the wild and in captivity. Condors are periodically released in Arizona, California, and Mexico. Reintroduction began in Arizona in 1996, and 45 condors now live in the wild in our state, including the three chicks.

The two chicks that hatched last May in Arizona both began flying on their own in late November. The one at the Grand Canyon has been venturing up to a mile and a half from its nest cave. Its parents frequently visit and feed it. However, the other new chick, which hatched at Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, is just now doing better, after having some health trouble. "Biologists found the chick dehydrated and a little underweight in early January," says Kathy Sullivan, a condor biologist with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. "The bird was taken to The Phoenix Zoo, where talented staffers have successfully treated condors before. The chick underwent surgery for an obstruction in its gizzard, and a mass of sticks and hair was removed. The chick was then tagged, fitted with a transmitter to monitor its movements, and vaccinated for the West Nile virus."

"We had some concerns about separating the chick from its parents at this early age," says Chris Parish, a biologist with The Peregrine Fund, "but the chick spent time recovering in a pen in northern Arizona, and its parents even tried to feed it through a fence. When biologists finally did reunite the chick with its parents, the cheers could probably be heard for miles. The parents fed the chick within just 20 minutes. The fledgling was released back into the wild on Jan. 20 and appears to be doing well with its parents in its nest area."

Arizona's other condor chick hatched in 2003. That chick is making its way further and further from its nest. However, it is still visited by its parents and not fully independent.

Biologists are already getting ready for this year's nesting season. They're hopeful that at least two pairs of condors that have never bred before will produce chicks.

California condors are the largest flying land bird in North America. They can weigh up to 26 pounds and have a wingspan of up to 9 1/2 feet. The species has been listed as endangered since 1967. The condor reintroduction in Arizona is a joint project of many partners, including 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.

-Article reprinted from Arizona Game and Fish Wildlife News dated 11 Feb 05



2005 RCCBC

It's always a good idea to plan ahead, so mark your calendars for the 2005 Ramsey Canyon Christmas Bird Count! The date is Sunday, December 18.

Annual Gould's Turkey Survey

The annual Gould's Turkey survey will be held on April 9 and 10, 2005 in the Huachuca Mountains. As in past years, two camps will be set up. The southern-most camp will be located in Little Scotia Canyon (FS Road 8020), while the northern-most camp will be located in Lower Garden Canyon Picnic Area and Campsite on Fort Huachuca. Setup is to be completed on the afternoon of Friday, April 8. A total of 32 standardized routes need to be completed during these 2 days. Therefore, any and all assistance is welcome no matter your experience level. If interested in surveying a certain area, please advise us so we can reserve specific routes for you. If you have certain limitations on the length or topographical difficulty of a route please let us know and we will find routes suitable to your needs. This year I am asking for all volunteers planning on attending to contact Sheridan Stone or me, depending on survey area, prior to arriving for the survey. Contact Sheridan Stone, Fort Huachuca Wildlife Biologist, at sheridan.stone@hua.army.mil or at 520-533-7083 if you have questions about access, camping, or turkey survey routes on the fort. I can be reached by phone at (520) 803-7535 (home), by email at jm35ab@theriver.com, or by mail at 9035 Chandler Lane, Hereford, AZ, 85615. Thank you for your continued support and I look forward to visiting with you during the survey.

-John Millican, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Wildlife Manager, Sierra Vista

Solar Electric

Have you been contemplating adding some photovoltaic power to your house? Well, SSVEC is finally in the business of providing cash incentives to do so. Their program is called SunWatts and is how they will participate in the state's renewable energy program. SSVEC will pay \$4 per installed watt, up to 2000 watts, up to 50% of the total cost.

Want to support renewable energy but not install PV yourself? You can contribute to the SunWatts program on a monthly basis through your bill. Contact the SunWatts customer service rep at SSVEC for more details on either way to support more renewable energy in Arizona.

Traveling Birders

Almost four years ago after spending some time in British Columbia, Knud Rasmussen got the idea for a website where birdwatchers could find local contacts when they travel. Today Birdingpal is well established with more than 2000 contacts in 177 countries, United States, and Canadian Provinces/Territories. Thousands of people use it every day to plan their travel. New friendships can be made, and birdwatching can be safer and more productive with a local birder as your guide. Check it out at <http://birdingpal.org/>.

New Jaguar Photos Confirm Presence of Two Jaguars in Arizona

Non-profit organizations Defenders of Wildlife and the Sky Island Alliance issued a joint press release on Oct 18, 2004 regarding new jaguar photos distributed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

These photos, taken over the summer of 2004 in remote locations in the wilds of Southern Arizona, confirm the existence of a resident male jaguar previously photographed in 2001 and 2003. The new photos also show the presence of a second cat and suggest there may be a third jaguar – possibly a female – in the area. In sum, the photos clearly indicate there may be a small population of jaguars residing in Arizona.

“This is tremendous news, a page in conservation history – it heralds the return of the American Jaguar” said Scotty Johnson, representative for Defenders of Wildlife and chairman of the Jaguar Conservation Team’s outreach committee. “One hundred years ago jaguars roamed as far north as the Grand Canyon. These new photos by Humboldt University Researcher Emil McCain confirm we may have a resident population in Arizona – they are coming back.”

“The last six jaguar sightings in the United States come from the Tumacacori Highland area. The presence of these magnificent creatures speaks volumes to the importance of this area. As a part of our natural heritage, we have a responsibility to ensure their continued success” says Matt Skroch, Programs Director for the Sky Island Alliance.

Jaguars are elusive and shy cats that were once more common in Arizona and New Mexico. Throughout the early and mid-1900’s, they were persecuted for their pelts or perceived danger to livestock. A decade had passed without confirmed evidence of jaguars in the United States until 1996 when two males were photographed in separate locations in southeast Arizona. Since then, 6 more photographs of the cat have been documented. Seven of the last eight jaguars were photographed in the vicinity of the Tumacacori Highlands. Jaguars are the largest cats in the western Hemisphere and are often associated with the tropical climates to the south, although their northern range does include the Sky Island region of the United States.

“These new photos present both a success and a challenge to jaguar conservation,” says Johnson. “It celebrates how people cooperating together under the safety net provided by the Endangered Species Act can precious and endangered wildlife. It also calls upon us to increase our conservation efforts. The place where these cats now reside is under immense pressure.”

“The American Jaguar is the flagship of rare and beautiful wildlife found in the Tumacacori Highlands” says Skroch. “While Tucson Electric Power would rather build massive powerlines through this area, people recognize that the Tumacacori Highlands are worth much more as wilderness than as a conduit for corporate profits.”

“With responsible planning and appropriate stewardship we can ensure a home for the Jaguar,” said Johnson. “By continuing our collaborative efforts to protect jaguar habitat and by ensuring that the Endangered Species Act stays strong, we can pass this legacy along to future generations. It all depends on where we go from here.”

“A strong coalition of businesses and organizations around southern Arizona – the Friends of the Tumacacori Highlands - are working with Congressmen Grijalva, Kolbe, and Senator McCain to

provide lasting protection for the Tumacacori Highlands by incorporating it into the National Wilderness Preservation System” Skroch adds. “As designated Wilderness, we will further ensure that jaguars have room to roam and people retain their outstanding opportunities to enjoy the Tumacacori Highlands long into the future.”

For additional information and photos, see http://www.azgfd.com/artman/publish/article_195.shtml



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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.

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