

THE TROGON NEWS

HUACHUCA AUDUBON SOCIETY
Post Office Box 63, Sierra Vista, Arizona 85636
Volume XXXI Number 9, November 2003



President's Message

The holiday season is really picking up speed and I hope the time is enjoyable for everyone. Please take the time to participate in one of the many bird counting efforts, such as Thanksgiving or Christmas Bird Counts.

The past few months have been quite a struggle, off and on, over the Renzi amendment. I still have deep concerns about the amendment, in whatever form it might pass, and how it will affect efforts to protect the SPRNCA. Knowing the history of thought and action in this area, it's hard to see the amendment as boding well for the riparian area's future. What a shame it was brought back, putting Senator McCain in such a difficult position.

My personal thanks go to Mike Guest for keeping the Smitty remembrance on track. On October 18, HAS dedicated a plaque honoring Smitty on a boulder at the entrance to Scheelite Canyon. Take a moment to admire it (I don't think you can miss it!) the next time you're there. Thanks also to Tom Cochran at Fort Huachuca for assisting in getting the plaque secured in place. Remember Smitty and his passion for protecting the owls, as well as his enthusiasm for sharing knowledge of their presence with others.

Mike Guest has also worked hard, along with Dutch Nagle, Ted Mouras, Tom Wood and Sheri Williamson, to get special access for birders to Sierra Vista's wastewater treatment ponds. Escorted tours are now available into the area every Sunday morning, with no pre-arrangement necessary. If you haven't gone yet, take advantage of this sometime. If it goes well (and we hope it does), there may be some point in the future when the area will be even more accessible to all.

Local Programs and Events

Nov 4th The November HAS meeting will be back in our old haunts, the **Oscar Yrun Community Center auditorium**. The time is different, too - **7:30 p.m.** for our start. Children's gymnastics have the auditorium until 7 p.m., then the staff has to clear the equipment and set up for our meeting. So you can start gathering around 7:20 for our program.

Field Trips

Nov 9th 8:30 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro River Inn.

Nov 12th 8:30 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro House.

Nov 14th – Nov 17th HAS field trip to Bosque del Apache. See article below.

Nov 22nd 8:30 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro House.

Nov 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th 8:00 a.m. EOP bird walks.

Dec 11th HAS field trip to Patagonia Lake State Park. See article below.

Field Trip to Bosque del Apache

HAS is planning on visiting Bosque del Apache one week before the Festival of the Cranes. We will car pool and drive from Sierra Vista, Friday, November 14 and bird during the afternoon prior to checking into the motel in Socorro for three nights. We'll bird all day Saturday and Sunday and return back to Sierra Vista on Monday, November 17. We have booked 7 double rooms for 3 nights at a discounted rate. Let's fill them up with local birders and have a good time. Harry Bergtholdt, 459-4627 will be the trip leader. However, he will be traveling and birding (of course) until the end of October, so please call Mike Guest, 378-0667 for reservations or questions until October 27.

Patagonia Lake State Park Birding/Boat Trip

HAS is repeating one of our most popular early winter trips on Thursday 11 December 2003 (Please note the date change from the early warning in the last issue). The trip to Patagonia Lake State Park will include a boat trip on the lake, masterfully captained and expertly guided by Ron Hummel. Please also bring about \$15 in small bills to pay for gas (if you do not drive), Park entry fee and boat fee. Since the boat will comfortably carry only 9 people plus our experienced guide, the trip will be limited to a total of 18 people. The first group of 9 will embark at 0830 while the other group of 9 will bird from the shore. The two groups will switch at about 1030. Meet at the Sierra Vista City Hall at 0700 to carpool to the State Park. Bring warm clothing, lunch, water, binoculars and your enthusiasm. Reservations, on a first-come-first-served basis, can be made with Sandy Kunzer, 803-8490, the answering machine at that number or at sbkunzer@theriver.com.

Conservation Corner

There will be a screening of the excellent professionally-produced film by the nonprofit Lincoln Institute, "Phoenix, A Sense of Place" on Monday, November 3 at the R & M Cinema at 300. East Wilcox Drive. Registration for the screening, which is sponsored by the Sierra Vista Chamber of Commerce, is at 5:30 p.m. The film will be shown at 6:00 p.m. This hour-length film provides a very clear and balanced presentation of the many and varied interests and factors that have impinged on development in Phoenix. The Lincoln Institute is a think tank that deals with land use issues and legal issues related to land use. In the past, the institute has primarily served as a resource for legislators. Recently, the institute has expanded into the educational field with the goal of providing individual citizens with a better understanding of the forces at work in the development and/or conservation of land. The Lincoln Institute plans to produce other such films for several major cities in the United States.

–Sondra Gardner, Conservation Chair

**San Diego Bird Festival
February 4-8, 2004**

The eighth annual San Diego Bird Festival spotlights the natural diversity of the region with birding trips to the Anza-Borrego Desert, Cuyamaca Mountains, San Elijo Lagoon home of the California Gnatcatcher, San Diego Bay, Coronado Islands and San Felipe in Baja California. More than 480 species of birds have been seen in San Diego County, a bird haven along the Pacific Flyway and home to many exciting winter birds.

The Festival highlights include: Friday night mixer with Adrian Binns' talk on Origin of Bird Names, Saturday night dinner with Kenn Kaufman and a variety of classes pertaining to birds, bees, butterflies and the technology of digiscoping, plus 16 birding trips. For younger birders there will be the ever-popular Salt Marsh School House and a Sunday morning bird and bike trip along the bay.

Space, as usual, is limited so register early on line at: www.sandiegonaturefestivals.org If you wish to receive a brochure e-mail: registration@sandiegonaturefestivals.org and list your name and address. See you at Marina Village on Mission Bay in February. Come and enjoy fantastic birding and a chance to visit with friends from across the USA and beyond.

**2nd Sunday Bird Walk
12 October, 2003**

The arrival of winter visitors amongst lingering migrants characterized the most recent 2nd Sunday bird walk. Eight participants met at the parking area of the San Pedro River Inn to walk around the ponds, along the mesquite lined trail to the river and along the river itself. Among the late migrants were Blue Grosbeaks and a Bullock's Oriole. Cassin's and Western Kingbirds were still present, but their numbers will decline as winter approaches. Numerous Barn Swallows circled over the ponds as a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds alighted in the cattails lining the ponds. Resident Curve-billed Thrashers and Gila Woodpeckers could be heard and seen in the mesquite tangles along with Loggerhead Shrikes.

Winter sparrows are growing in number and variety including many White-crowned, Vesper, Savannah, and Brewer's seen along the trail to the river. Several Pyrrhuloxias and a Green-tailed Towhee were colorful additions to the avian landscape. A female Vermilion Flycatcher remained around the ponds where Black Phoebes were perched at the water's edge and nearby Say's Phoebes moved about fences and structures.

The walk took place at our new venue of the San Pedro River Inn. Once again, note that the 2nd Sunday bird walk will meet at the San Pedro River Inn for the foreseeable future. The next 2nd Sunday bird walk is scheduled for 8:30 am on Sunday, November 9.

Please join us for this regularly scheduled bird walk along the river on the 2nd Sunday of each month throughout the year (check the newspaper or calendar of events for start times of future walks).

-Good Birding! Robert Weissler

Thanksgiving Bird Count

November is the month to participate in the Thanksgiving Bird Count, started in Virginia in 1966. In 1992, Dr. John Hewston at Humboldt State University took over the western states portion of this count. A number of people from around here participated last year and greatly increased Dr. Hewston's species count. Let's help him again this year!! I will have the count forms with me, at the November meeting and other places. It only takes one hour and is done at home - pretty simple.

-Tricia Gerrodette

Audubon Adventures

Audubon Adventures is the environmental education program put together by National Audubon Society. It gets placed into as many classrooms locally as we can find interested teachers and as we can afford. Teachers have participated for years and are very enthusiastic and appreciative. HAS could use your help in making this program more widely available. It costs \$42.50 to put this into a classroom for one year. Your donation to make this happen is tax deductible, as HAS is a 501(c)(3). Please give for local education and give yourself a tax break!

Wings Over Willcox

The 11th annual Wings Over Willcox Sandhill Crane Celebration will take place January 15-18, 2004. Dr. James Rising, nationally recognized expert on grassland sparrows and New World orioles, will be the keynote speaker at the Saturday night banquet. A schedule and descriptions of tours and seminars can be viewed at www.wingsoverwillcox.com. Call 1-800-200-2272 to request printed materials. Early registration deadline is December 20.

Discount Shopping

Special shopping event at the Mall the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Free refreshments and entertainment, door prizes, special discounts, and free gift wrap. Just buy an admission ticket for \$5, all of which goes to Huachuca Audubon! Call Tricia or stop by Wild Birds Unlimited for your ticket.

Newsletter Format

As you can see, we're trying a new full page format in this month's issue. I would really like to hear from you if you have any comments or suggestions on our newsletter. Do you prefer columns or full page format? Should the type be bigger/smaller? More artwork? Would you like to see more on local issues, environmental news? We want to make the reading and enjoyable as easy as possible! Contact me (Renell Stewart) at 378-6318 or email stewartr3@mindspring.com. Thanks!

Migratory Patterns of Western Sandpipers

Dear Arizona Bird-lovers,

I am appealing to you (and to your group) for help with a project on the migratory patterns of Western Sandpipers (*Calidris mauri*). At Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, we are compiling available data about stopover use by Western Sandpipers on their northward and southward migrations. Our goal is to produce a report to a government agency about use of their lands by migrating Western Sandpipers, focusing on western North America. We hope that this will be used to preserve these areas for shorebirds.

Your knowledge of habitats in Arizona used by these peeps will be very valuable to our endeavor. I have attached a survey and hope that you will take a moment to describe how Western Sandpipers use your favorite shorebirding sites. Please then return this survey to me via email (aniehaus@sfu.ca) or to the address below. I am also happy to address any questions.

Thank you very much for your time!

Best wishes,

Amanda Niehaus

SITE USE BY MIGRATING WESTERN SANDPIPERS (*Calidris mauri*)

Since its inception 10 years ago, scientists at the Centre for Wildlife Ecology at Simon Fraser University have been studying the breeding, migratory and wintering patterns of Western Sandpipers. Currently, we are attempting to catalogue sites in western North America used by this species during migration, so that we can better understand migratory patterns and protect these areas. We appreciate your help!

SITE NAME:

LOCATION:

HABITAT TYPE:

ABUNDANCE ON NORTHWARD MIGRATION¹:

ABUNDANCE ON SOUTHWARD MIGRATION¹:

ABUNDANCE OTHER¹:

TIME OF NORTHWARD MIGRATION²:

TIME OF SOUTHWARD MIGRATION²:

TIME OTHER²:

YEARS SEEN AT SITE:

REGULARITY OF OBSERVATIONS AT SITE³:

OTHER OBSERVATIONS⁴:

YOUR NAME AND AFFILIATION:

¹Counts and/or general categorizations, such as "rare, scarce, occasional, common, very common, abundant"

²Dates and/or general timing, such as "April to May"

³For example, "Regularly present, irregularly present, only seen once"

⁴For example, age or sex classes, numbers captured, molt status

Please return your survey by email or regular mail to:
Amanda Niehaus (aniehaus@sfu.ca) or Dr. Ron Ydenberg,
Centre for Wildlife Ecology, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia V5A2K6
Phone (604) 291-3988; Fax (604) 291-3496

Arizona IBA Program—Seeks IBA Nominations for “First-Cut” of Sites by End of 2003

Audubon’s Important Bird Area Program in Arizona is compiling a site database and catalog of the most critical habitat for birds in Arizona. Identification of this “first-cut” of sites will result in a portfolio of sites prioritizing where conservation/protection of Arizona’s most critical avian habitat should occur. Many members of Arizona’s eight Audubon chapters have already participated in nominating Important Bird Areas (IBAs). Out of some 25 nominations, our Scientific Review Committee has approved 16 IBAs, including many of our internationally important migratory and breeding bird habitats, e.g., the San Pedro River NCA, Salt-Gila River, Verde River, sites along the Colorado River, and Oak Creek (at Page Springs).

Now, we are moving into high gear to assemble a full catalog of potential sites to review as our “first cut” leading to an eventual publication of Arizona’s IBAs. ***This open nomination period will end on December 15, 2003.*** We need your assistance to help us put species occurrence and numbers to potential sites. Check out our “Quick ID” IBA Nomination form or the official Arizona IBA Nomination form, and the list of approved, nominated, and potential sites to nominate on our web site. Sites qualify as IBAs based on four criteria:

1. Sites important to special status avian species (see the AZ IBA web site for a list of species). Qualifying numbers for individual species will be determined by our IBA technical committee.
2. Sites with significant concentrations of birds (in any season), >1% State population or:
 - Waterfowl (2000+)
 - Shorebirds (100+)
 - Raptors (1000+ in migration, 200+ wintering, breeding #s evaluated by IBA tech. comm.)
 - Cranes (2000+)
 - Waterbirds (significant concentrations will be evaluated by IBA technical committee)
 - Wading birds (evaluated by IBA tech. comm.)
 - Landbirds (#s, density, or diversity, evaluated by IBA tech. comm.)
3. Sites that contain unique habitat or an exceptional representative ecological community type, and hold bird species largely restricted to the habitat or community type.
4. (Supportive) Sites important to long-term avian research or supporting educational programs focusing on birds.

Sites benefit in many ways from IBA identification: higher ranking for federal wildlife grants, recognition resulting in increased value of wildlife resources in agency land use planning documents, and greater awareness by federal and state governmental entities in land use decisions.

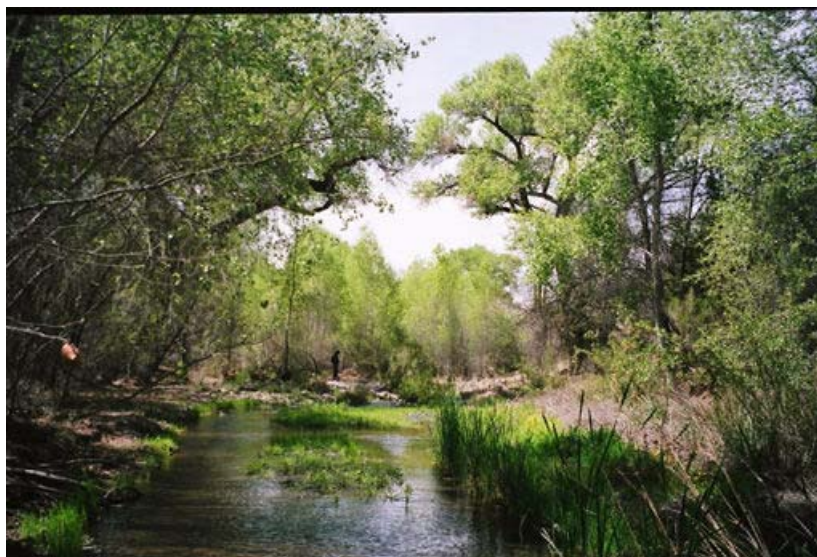
There are additional ways to become involved in the IBA Program! We need citizen-scientists to adopt a site, and form IBA Science Teams to collect bird and habitat data. This is especially needed for sites that are known as important to birds, but which have had limited or no formal surveys, or where changes in habitat now support species of conservation status or significant concentration of birds. In north-central Arizona, the Anderson Mesa lakes are one such example. In southeast Arizona, White

Water Draw Wildlife Management Area is another example. The Arizona IBA Program coordinates citizen-science IBA surveys throughout the state.

Lastly, the Arizona IBA program partners with landowners and land management agencies to promote conservation at IBAs. The IBA Program drafts or advises others on writing Avian Conservation Plans, and the implementation actions to protect IBAs. The IBA Program also works directly with landowners at IBAs to protect, conserve or enhance birds and their habitat, three examples are: 1) On the lower San Pedro River, the facilitation of a land deal between private landowners and the Salt River Project, Inc.(SRP). This resulted in 125 acres of riparian habitat in permanent conservation protection owned and managed by SRP to provide mitigation habitat for the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and Yellow-billed Cuckoo, while providing life estate access rights to the private landowners; 2) On lower Oak Creek, a private landowner supported bird monitoring and nest box program on their land to benefit cavity nesting birds and Wood Ducks along the creek, and 3) at the Huachuca Mountains, in partnership with Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Natural Resource Conservation Service, continued assistance to private landowners to secure wildlife enhancement grants for riparian habitat fencing, wetland enhancement, and grassland restoration.

We hope you can help as we focus of completing our “first-cut” catalog of IBAs in Arizona, and we appreciate however you can contribute to our success in protecting Arizona’s most critical avian habitats! Remember to contact us and **nominate an IBA by Dec. 15!**

Scott Wilbor, Arizona Important Bird Areas Coordinator
Tucson Audubon Society
(520) 622-2230
www.tucsonaudubon.org/azibaprogram



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New Member - \$20, two years \$30, basic rate - \$35, senior citizen or student rate - \$15, non-subscribing rate (membership without magazine) - \$20. Please contact the treasurer if you are interested in this option. Make check to National Audubon. Send to Huachuca Audubon Society, PO Box 63, Sierra Vista, AZ 85636. For membership changes and status call 1-800-274-4201. Trogon News subscription only - \$10 USA, International - \$15 (Make check to Huachuca Audubon Society.)

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