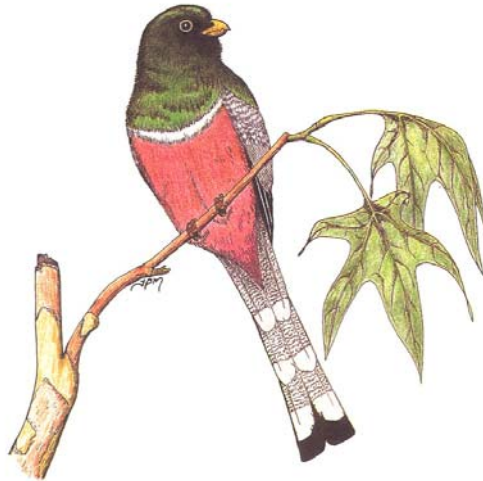


THE TROGON NEWS

HUACHUCA AUDUBON SOCIETY
Post Office Box 63, Sierra Vista, Arizona 85636
Volume XXXII Number 8, October 2004



President's Message

Fall is definitely in the air, apparently to stay. Have you caught most of the migrants headed south? I saw Swainson's Hawks, which I just love to look up at, fairly late in the season, I thought. But I have to confess I don't pay as much attention to when birds can be found as many of you more dedicated birders do.

For October, join us for popcorn and a movie! In the police station, no less! We have to meet in the police meeting room for October 26, which is at 911 N. Coronado, next to Sierra Vista City Hall. We'll be showing "Pale Male", the highly acclaimed movie about a pale Red-tailed Hawk in New York City.

Our November meeting will be 2 days before Thanksgiving, so take a break from the preparations, if you're still in town, and join the crowd back at the Mona Bishop Room. For December, we'll have a special holiday meeting on Sunday December 12. Plans are still under discussion for just what form the party will take, but be sure to save that afternoon.

November is also when Dr. Hewitt asks people to participate in the Thanksgiving Bird Count. It's very very easy, taking just one hour of your day and covering your backyard. I'll have forms at the October and November meetings. I know some people have participated in the past, greatly expanding the species number for this count, and I hope you'll continue this year. New observers are always welcome too! I'll also have the forms available at Wild Birds Unlimited. Isn't it great to have such a supportive business in the area??!

Local Programs and Events

Oct 14th, Fodor in Benson, see article on page 4 for more information.

Oct 15th, Mexican Wolf Adaptive Management Work Group Meeting, 1:30-5:30 p.m., Springerville, AZ. Contact Arizona Game & Fish for more information.

Oct 26th - HAS meeting, 7:00 p.m., Police Meeting Room, 911 N. Coronado, next to City Hall. Movie "Pale Male" about Red-tailed Hawk in New York City.

Field Trips

Oct 9th, Saturday, HAS birding trip to Villa Verde, see details below.

Oct 10th, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro River Inn.

Oct 13th, Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro House.

Oct 23rd, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro House.

Oct 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st, Sunday's, 8:00 a.m. Sierra Vista Environmental Operations Park bird walks.



Villa Verde Here We Come

As announced in previous issues of your Trogon News, again HAS has the opportunity to visit a close but relatively unknown portion of the San Pedro Valley. Villa Verde, a lake and riparian area less than 20 minutes from Naco, AZ, is the destination on Sat., 9 Oct. "Relatively unknown" because it is to the South, between Naco and Cananea, Sonora, Mexico. Our guide will be Juan Caicedo of Corridor Calibri who is working with the owners of the land to develop eco-tourism and other sustainable enterprises. We will leave from the Safeway in San Jose (Bisbee) at 7:30 a.m. to car pool across the border. The trip is limited to the first 15 applicants. The cost per person is \$30 to cover access and guide fees which both help with the development process. Payment to those who drive and need to buy insurance is also expected. To sign up and also to indicate whether you are willing to drive (we should car pool) please e-mail Sandy Kunzer at sbkunzer@theriver.com or call 520-803-8490.

We Came, We Saw, We Were Enthralled!

One of the problems for outdoor devotees in this area is having to choose among so many fun things to do. On Saturday, 28 August, there was a bird walk from the San Pedro House, a plant identification workshop at the herbarium and, of course, our trip to the headquarters of the Southeast Arizona Bird Observatory (SABO). Those of us who chose to go to SABO were treated to: excellent birds and birding; comfortable accommodations; tasty, fresh-brewed coffee; Krispy Kream donuts and fascinating commentary on birds and their natural history from the inimitable Sheri Williamson and Tom Wood. While the species count was less than 30, the views through the center's clean glass were sparkling and at close range. Each species and individual was discussed in detail until a more unusual, impressive or aggressive species rocketed into view, enticed by a wide variety of sugar-water, seed, suet, peanut or peanut butter feeders.

Even if the HQ is not open, Sheri and Tom encourage visits just to watch the feeders from the open patio. The habitat is different enough from the popular stops in the Huachuca's to make this a great addition to your birding itineraries. Donations are not only welcome but are depended on, not only to feed the objects of our interest but to carry out the work of enhancing our knowledge of them. I thank them for a most enjoyable time and hope that they will allow us to return at a different season to their excellent facility.

-Sandy Kunzer

Attention Birders! Interesting trip!

Anyone interested in a low cost, birding trip to Turkey in May of 2005, please contact me for full details via e-mail. Fifteen days for \$2350 plus an available 6-day extension for \$650. The Trip is NGO non-profit sponsored and being arranged in this country by a Stanford University biologist/birder from Turkey. Sandy Kunzer. 520-803-8490, sbkunzer@theriver.com

Technical Help Needed

In conjunction with our transition to electronic format, we need help from a person who will develop and maintain the e-mail membership list. Once compiled, this list should take a minimal amount of time to maintain. Help! Please! We can not save money, paper and effort without YOU! Please contact Renell Stewart, 378-6318, or stewatr3@mindspring.com, and sign up to help out.

Attention Members!

Second Alert!

At the July 27th Board of Directors meeting, we decided that paper copies of the Trogon News will cease production after the Dec. 2004 issue, except for those members who are willing to state that they do not have access to the Internet. Those without such access will continue to get a paper copy but the BoD is not sure how long this privilege can continue. This difficult decision was prompted by rising production costs, the difficulty in finding volunteers willing to help in the processing of each issue and the perception that we will be better stewards of the environment by using less paper. Full details of how you will get the electronic copy will follow later this fall.

-Sandy Kunzer, Director, For the Board

2nd Sunday Bird Walk -12 September 2004

The ten participants in the 2nd Sunday bird walk enjoyed a variety of migrants, lingering summer breeders, and early arrivals of some winter residents on the most recent walk. Among notable migrant songbirds, a Cassin's Vireo and MacGillivray's Warbler were found in the willows along the river. Near the Inn, we saw two juvenile Gray Hawks perched on telephone lines south of the ponds. An uncommon sight down near the river, a House Wren on the grounds of the Inn was interesting. Meanwhile, two Green-tailed Towhees, one along the river and another in a hackberry tree near the Inn, are early arrivals for winter. Lazuli Bunting, Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers were other migrants encountered during the 3 hour walk.

As for other colorful birds near the river, Northern Cardinal, Summer Tanager, and the ubiquitous Vermilion Flycatcher added a dash of brilliant red, while Blue Grosbeak, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Green Heron completed the rainbow for our group. One member of the group found a Lesser Goldfinch nest 20 feet up in a cottonwood tree -- and it was occupied! This is certainly a very late date for nesting, however not unprecedented as Lesser Goldfinch is known for both winter and fall nesting attempts in southern Arizona.

Too many other birds were seen to name them all here, but suffice to say that September provided a terrific taste of fall migration. And next month will bring many arrivals of winter birds with perhaps an odd vagrant thrown in for fun!

The next 2nd Sunday Bird Walk is scheduled to depart from the San Pedro River Inn at 8:00 a.m. on October 10, 2004. Birders of all levels of experience are welcome to join us!

-Robert Weissler

Field Trip to Environmental Operations Park

On a clear warm morning at the Sierra Vista Environmental Operations Park, eleven of us enjoyed the ongoing migration on September 10th. Do you like sandpipers? We saw: Least, Western, Baird's, Solitary, Spotted and Semipalmated. A Semipalmated Plover was a nice find as was a Vaux's Swift. Lots of swallows were flying and on the ground including a Bank Swallow. A total of 48 species were seen.

Thanks to Michael Mardsen, Jack Whetstone and Dieter Kamm for helping us rookies try to separate the Sandpipers. Thanks to the city for allowing all of us privileged views of their wetlands. Thanks to Nancy Aley for co-leading the trip.

-Harry Bergtholdt

Fodor in Benson!

No, not the travel Fodor but Eben Fodor, author of "Better, Not Bigger". Eben is a nationally known planner based in Oregon, who presents information on the myths, costs, and impacts of growth. He'll be in Benson the evening of October 14. Save the date and watch for more details!

Mark Your Calendars - HAS Xmas Party with Silent Auction!

Sunday, December 12th, at the Mona Bishop Room, Sierra Vista Library, HAS will have their annual Xmas party, but this time with an added holiday treat! Following our festive food offerings, please tell one and all to join us for a special silent auction to benefit HAS. Invite your neighbors and friends to attend! Please contact Kate Scott at katescott@birdlandranch.com. 520.455-5190, if anyone would like to help with the auction or has any creative suggestions for auction items.

2004 Ramsey Canyon Christmas Bird Count

The 2004 Ramsey Canyon Christmas Bird Count (RCCBC) will be held on Sunday, 26 Dec, so please mark your calendars. This year I'll be assisted by Robert Weissler as our secondary compiler, so feel free to contact either of us although the focus of Robert's efforts will be on the "feeder watchers" and on arranging the breakfast and compilation dinner. You may also have the ability to perform "on-line" registration this year (they've had some problems with this at the website www.audubon.org/bird/CBC) although you'll still need to contact Robert (803-0794) or me (803-0221) in order to work out the details of where you will bird and when and where we will meet for breakfast and dinner. The details on this year's RCCBC will be provided starting in late September/early October.

Ted Mouras
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Sky Island Alliance Seeks Volunteers to Help Protect Wildlife

Sky Island Alliance's unique and nationally recognized Wildlife Monitoring Program trains volunteers to monitor wildlife movement through the Sky Island region. Working within scientific protocol developed by the Alliance's staff and science committee, volunteers monitor the movement of large mammals such as black bears, mountain lions, wolves, jaguars, and other important native species between mountain ranges by looking for and recording their tracks. The movement of species through these wildlife "corridors" is crucial for maintaining viable populations. "The importance of biological connectivity is magnified here in the Sky Island Region," said Matt Skroch, field program director for Sky Island Alliance. "Because of the relatively small mountain ranges separated by wide valleys,

populations of large mammals such as mountain lion and black bear depend upon the ability to move from range to range in response to environmental fluctuations, food availability, and mate-searching. These populations are fluid – isolation decreases the stability of local populations.”

Volunteers attend an intensive five-day training workshop. Regional wildlife experts join Sky Island Alliance staff to teach tracking techniques and wildlife sign recognition – such as the difference between canine and feline tracks. Participants learn where to look for sign and learn about the ecology and behavior of local mammal species. After completing a workshop, volunteers adopt a transect, monitor it once every 6 weeks, and report regularly to our program coordinator. Volunteers must follow strict guidelines and adhere to a six-week survey interval to ensure the scientific validity of data. Transects are 1 to 1.5 mile walking routes located in possible wildlife movement corridors, such as along washes, ridgetops, or backroads between mountain ranges. Current project areas are: Peloncillo Mountains, Cienega Creek Corridor, Dagoon/Whetstone Corridor and Tumacacori/Santa Rita Corridor.

The fall training workshop will be held October 22, 23, 24 and December 4-5 at The Nature Conservancy’s Lichty Center along the Gila River near Cliff, New Mexico. Overnight accommodations are provided during the workshop at the Center. This beautiful spot offers ample opportunities for tracking with instructors and for exploring on your own. Don’t miss this exciting opportunity to use your skills toward accomplishing critical conservation goals. If you are interested in this workshop, you must request an application by contacting: Janice Przybyl -- Wildlife Monitoring Program Coordinator - janice@skyislandalliance.org or call 520 624-7080 x203.

Audubon Moves Puffin Cam into Thriving Puffin Colony

Hog Island, Maine, Thursday, July 1, 2004 - Today, Audubon announced that on July 4th, the Project Puffin seabird camera will beam live-streaming video of Eastern Egg Rock's nesting puffin colonies, just off the Maine Coast. The tiny island is home to the world's first restored puffin and tern colonies and it is the largest colony of endangered Roseate Terns in Maine. This is the fifth year that the camera has beamed real time video to the web: to watch click on www.projectpuffin.org <<http://www.projectpuffin.org>>.

Currently on camera, Eastern Egg Island's tern population can be seen incubating eggs and some have begun to hatch. When the camera is moved to its new location within the puffin colony, viewers will have close-up views of puffins, guillemots, terns, and Laughing Gulls. A special microphone also permits viewers to hear the sounds of the seabirds. The camera operates on an automatic tour from dawn to dusk, but staff manually controls it from 9-11 a.m. daily to insure close-up views. Later in the summer, interns on the island will occasionally provide on-line, narrated talks directly from Egg Rock's bird blinds.

The National Audubon Society started Project Puffin 31 years ago this summer. Visit <http://www.audubon.org/news/press_releases/0604-Puffin_Cam.html> for more, and go directly to <http://www.projectpuffin.org/eeer_cameras.html> to watch live.

Above article from: Audubon Newswire, Volume 2, Number 13, Thursday, July 1, 2004

Two of HAS' favorite members, Karen Blumenthal and Mark Pretti, are off on an adventure at Brazil's Cristalino Jungle Lodge where they're serving as birding and natural history guides for a few months. Luckily for us, they're being kind enough to update us on their experiences. You'll definitely want to check out www.cristalinolodge.com.br after you read their first installment:

Adventures in the Amazon – Chapter 1

After two weeks submerged in one of the richest habitats on Earth, we've surfaced briefly here at the Hotel Floresta Amazonica in Alta Floresta to pick up some lodge guests, find a few more birds, and communicate with all of you. You don't need to speak Portuguese to deduce that Alta Floresta means high forest, which refers to the city's location in southern Amazonia where there is, or was, lots of high forest. This frontier town was founded less than 30 years ago, but already has a population of about 50,000 people. Such growth, especially when fueled by intensive logging and ranching, leaves few trees in its wake.....but such is the legacy of humans on most of planet Earth, and the "nuked" look of the local landscape hasn't come as a surprise. Interestingly, the scattered fragments of forest that remain, some only a few hectares, others, up to 20,000 hectares, harbor quite a bit of wildlife; the 240-hectare fragment here at the hotel is home to four species of primates, at least four species of macaws, and other tropical delights. But it's a shadow, at best, of the real thing that we are fortunate to be living in at Cristalino.

Today the southern Amazon in Mato Grosso, bordered by a growing arc of deforestation, begins about an hour's bumpy drive north near the Teles Pires River (which, for you geography buffs, flows into the mighty Tapajós and then the mightier Amazon). The road leading to the river is a figurative and literal portal to another world where one can find jaguar, tapir, tayra, 8 primate species, anaconda, white-lipped peccary, giant river otter, over 500 species of birds, thousands of show-stopping butterflies, and a botanist's dream (or nightmare, depending on your skills) come true.

The last two weeks can best be described, for lack of a better cliché, as two hungry, sugar-addicted kids in a candy store with lots of money and no parental supervision. From the small luminescent click beetles that rain down from the canopy as darkness cloaks the forest each night to gracefully swimming Brazilian tapirs to a brief but certain sighting of a JAGUAR !! (Karen saw it a little better, getting even for my better tayra sighting) yesterday afternoon, it has been one sweet experience. The timing of our dry season arrival seems to be ideal; weather has been perfect, warm and humid for sure, but deliciously cool at night, with a few soothing night rains. There have been a few times in the field, particularly on the hill tops and atop the 50-meter canopy tower, when we're just about soaked through with sweat and crawling with mineral seeking sweat bees. These interesting little critters, as well as various butterflies and several wasp species, are stingless and harmless, but they can be thick as they home in on the mother of all mineral deposits in a habitat in which such fountains of sodium, potassium, and the like are fiercely competed for. Climate acclimation has been pretty painless, especially as we began our trip in an Arizona August and when we find new natural treasures on a daily if not hourly basis.

The lodge is comfortable, the food excellent (somehow made more tasty by not having to prepare food or clean up after ourselves), and the staff amazing. Imagine being a kid again and having a mom and several big brothers to look after and take care of you, all with big smiles. Such are Francisco, Jorge, Rosa, and the other hard-working 'functionarios' at the lodge. It's been a challenge not to feel too guilty as there have been few clients the last two weeks. But we've been working hard learning birds, plants,

mammals, insects, etc. and getting our interpretive rap down. The honeymoon and any feelings of guilt end this afternoon as it looks like we'll be working pretty much every day for the next 6-8 weeks.

We have to mention the canopy tower; this creation rises above the canopy such that you have a 360 degree view of unbroken forest for as far as your eyes will take you. Parrots and toucans, already feathered explosions of color, seem to break the color-o-meter when viewed from above. The sunrises and sunsets are superb, and those impossible to see canopy species can finally be viewed. You're looking eye to eye with white-whiskered spider monkeys as they dine on Brosimum fruits. Our first ascent had us both unusually frightened, especially as we passed the comfort of the canopy itself and continued climbing into thin air. Now it's a race to the top.

Wildlife highlights so far have been; about 250 species of birds (including puffbirds, motmots, jacamars, many antbirds, flycatchers, cotingas, 11 species of parrots, a tawny-bellied screech owl, etc.), of course the jaguar, tayra, Brazilian tapir, boa constrictor, silvery marmoset (and four other primates), collared and white-lipped peccaries, off-the-charts insects and arthropods (including a huge dead-leaf-mimic katydid, a 10-inch wingspan bark-mimic moth, a few army ant swarms, tailless whipscorpion, and countless butterflies), abundant tree frogs and several toads, and wonderful plants (the spider monkeys have been exceptional teachers about edible and tasty fruits as they are ripe-fruit-eating specialists). The white-lipped peccaries are especially interesting as they can occur in large groups (100+) and have a (questionable) reputation for being aggressive and supposedly chasing people up trees and hurling insults and then burning them at the stake and/or disemboweling them if they get a chance or some such nonsense. So far, they're the ones who have gone running for the hills; whether that means that they really aren't that aggressive or whether we smell worse than them needs further investigation.

What is perhaps best of all here is that the owner of the hotel and lodge, Vittoria da Riva Carvalho, is a conservationist who puts her time, money, and energy where her mouth is. Working with Fauna & Flora International (based in the UK), she's helped protect about 50,000 hectares of land just south of the lodge and Cristalino State Park (which surrounds the lodge), has instituted an environmental education program for local residents, and, again with FFI, is now working in the headwaters of the Rio Cristalino on forest protection. She has pretty much single-handedly attracted the attention and efforts of groups like FFI as well as many researchers (mostly conservation biologists) who use the lodge as a base for their studies.

Oh, almost forgot, the Rio Cristalino swimming is world class; perfect cool temperature, a nice, steady flow, and an occasional macaw fly-by. Jungle running is great, too. That's it for now; computer access and time is limited. We miss you all, wish you were here, and hope to be in touch again in a few weeks.

Love,
Mark & Karen



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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.)

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