

THE TROGON NEWS

HUACHUCA AUDUBON SOCIETY
Post Office Box 63, Sierra Vista, Arizona 85636
Volume XXXIII Number 8, October 2005



President's Message

It's just barely turned fall and yet the end of the year seems to be rushing at me. So many things happening on so many fronts, some fun in the field activities, some not so fun proposals in DC. I do hope many of you are staying tuned to the environmental issues, most of them to thrash and trash our wildlife areas, like ANWR, or our successful protection laws, like the ESA. It's so easy to stay informed with Audubon Advisory and they make it easy to take action too! Go to Audubon's home page <http://www.audubon.org/> and sign up for the Advisory now! Do your part to help the birds be there in our future.

Upcoming events start with the Big Sit, a fun thing started by Bird Watcher's Digest, on Sunday October 9. That's to get you warmed up for the Thanksgiving Bird Count, which actually does occur on - Thanksgiving! And both of them should have you fully warmed up for the Christmas Bird Count, which does NOT occur on Christmas day. This year, Ted Mouras has scheduled it for December 18. And mark your calendars for Sunday, December 11, for our annual holiday party. We'll head for the Research Ranch in Elgin and spend most of the afternoon there; details will follow.

And in between these 'big' events, our hardworking field trip committee has put together a nice schedule of local and regional trips. And then there are all the 'regular' trips that volunteers offer, like the EOP, San Pedro House, San Pedro River Inn, etc. Hope to see you at something, somewhere.

Welcome to New HAS Members!

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest HAS members: Mary Alice Adamczyk, Linda Bennington and Marianne McWilliams, all of Sierra Vista, Francisco M. Galaz of Douglas, Lisa Outland of McNeal, Fred Hayes and Robert Lujan of Benson, and Vincent Breslin of Huachuca City.

Local Programs and Events

Oct 25th, Tuesday, HAS Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Room 1 at the Oscar Yrun Community Center on Tacoma Street. Sonora Safari - Travel along with Betsy and Sandy Kunzer to the wilds of northern Sonora. This Mark Pretti guided adventure took place in May 2005 and included habitats from Sonoran desert to montaine, between Hermosillo and Yecora. While only a few hundred miles south this is a completely different world than our own sky islands. Birds, of course, but also reptiles, spiders and other fauna and flora will be shown and discussed. The program is presently planned for Room 1 at the Oscar Yrun Community Center and because of the small space a standing room crowd is expected.

Field Trips

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

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

Oct 10th, Monday, 7:00 a.m. HAS field trip to Amerind Foundation/ Willcox Ponds/. Bird the Amerind Foundation grounds en route to the Willcox ponds. Meet at the Sierra Vista City Hall parking lot at 7:00 a.m. to arrange car pools. Carry water and lunch. Leader: Erika Wilson, 234-4359. Assistant leader: Alan Blixt, 515-9458. Note: due to the particularly high price of gas, car pool passengers are expected to provide adequate compensation to their drivers, about 8 cents per mile.

Oct 22nd, Saturday. SEABA field trip to Garden Canyon on Fort Huachuca. Meet in the Target parking lot at the corner of the SR 90 bypass and Fry Boulevard in Sierra Vista at 9 AM. This can be reached by exiting I-10 south on SR 90 and turning left at the first signal in Sierra Vista to follow the SR 90 bypass. The parking lot is on the NE corner of the bypass and Fry Blvd. Bring drivers license, auto registration and proof of insurance for access to the Fort. Dress for the field; wear sturdy shoes & hat, bring water, close-focus binoculars, sunscreen and lunch. \$5.00 donation requested. For trip details please see our website at <http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabasa.home.html> or contact 742-0071 (Tucson) or 803-9700 (Sierra Vista).

Oct 22nd, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. FSPR bird walk. Meet at San Pedro House.

Oct 27th, Thursday, 7:30 am. HAS field trip to St. David's Monastery/ San Pedro Cienega. Leave from Sierra Vista City Hall parking lot at 7:30 a.m. prompt. Carry snacks, should be back for a late lunch. Leader: Dieter Kamm, 582-8811. Note: due to the particularly high price of gas, car pool passengers are expected to provide adequate compensation to their drivers, about 8 cents per mile.

Oct 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th, Sunday's, 8:00 a.m. Sierra Vista Environmental Operations Park bird walks. Tours will be limited to 20 participants plus 2 docents.



Birding By Ear

Rick Romea invites us back to the classroom for four consecutive Monday evenings commencing October 31 to listen to his secrets of birding by ear. Classes, limited to 15 participants, will be held at the Ramsey Canyon Nature Conservancy Preserve from 4:30 to 6:00 pm, plus one or two field trips to practice what we've learned. Total cost will be \$12 to Ramsey Canyon volunteers, \$16 to all others. RC volunteers will also have preference in reserving a place until October 20th. Proceeds will be donated to HAS.

Note, this class is not for beginner birders. A certain degree of previous birding experience is needed. Rick will not be using any visuals ... the idea will be to concentrate on using the ears. For further information including a detailed itinerary, or to make reservations, please contact Rick at 520-803-1160 or e-mail: rickerindy@hotmail.com.

2nd Sunday Bird Walk
11 September 2005

Twelve participants, including several attending the Audubon Arizona celebration in Sierra Vista, were treated to a terrific day of birding under crisp, clear skies along the rushing waters of the San Pedro River. September offers the allure of unexpected fall migrant birds, lingering summer visitors, and early winter arrivals, so a wide variety of birds potentially can be seen. And what a variety! Among the highlights of the walk were an adult Painted Redstart, both male and female Broad-billed Hummingbirds, a Common Black Hawk, a flock of White-faced Ibis, and a Eurasian Collared-Dove.

Green Heron and Common Yellowthroat were at the upper pond with many juvenile Barn Swallows perched on the telephone line above. As we approached the river, a Gilded Flicker flew across our field of view. At the river, it became apparent how much it had rained during the summer monsoon as the vegetation was overgrown and the mud slippery. The beavers will have much work ahead of them rebuilding their dams! My compliments to all the enthusiastic participants who braved the bushwhacking along the river - August and September are good months to remember to bring rubber boots for these walks!

Among migrants and early winter arrivals, Brewer's and Chipping Sparrows were conspicuous along with three House Wrens, Lazuli Bunting, and Green-tailed Towhee. Many migrant warblers were seen including Orange-crowned, Wilson's, and perhaps a MacGillivray's with the conspicuous broken eye-ring.

Lingering summer breeders included colorful Blue Grosbeaks, Summer Tanagers, Bullock's Orioles, and Vermilion Flycatchers in the gallery forest of the San Pedro. Gray and Swainson's Hawks soared overhead. White-winged Doves were still around in good numbers. Botteri's Sparrows sang from perches scattered through the grassland. Cassin's and Western Kingbirds occupied many fence posts and tree tops. Say's and Black Phoebe, Gila and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Canyon and Abert's Towhees, and Curve-billed Thrasher were common residents throughout the area. A Common Ground-Dove gave its simple, haunting call. Loggerhead Shrike, Bewick's Wren, White-breasted Nuthatch, Lesser Goldfinch, Eastern Meadowlark, and Northern Mockingbird rounded out the usual suspects. We finished the walk with a bright male Cardinal near the hay barn. What a great way to finish a rewarding bird walk!

The next 2nd Sunday Bird Walk is scheduled to depart from the San Pedro River Inn at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, October 9, 2005. Once again, birders of all levels of experience are welcome to join us!

-Robert Weissler

Help Protect Desert Tortoises

Each year during monsoon season, your odds of seeing a desert tortoise go way up because it's the animal's most active time of year. Arizonans can take steps to protect these creatures as they move through our cities during the summer. People can also apply to adopt a desert tortoise that is already in captivity and give it a good home. We want to make sure that every desert tortoise that comes into our rehabilitation facility receives great care and an appropriate home," says Sandy Cate, coordinator at the Arizona Game and Fish Department Wildlife Center, which often adopts out tortoises. "However, if you see a tortoise in the wild, let it stay wild." For the rest of the story, go to http://www.azgfd.gov/artman/publish/article_378.shtml

2005 Ramsey Canyon Christmas Bird Count

It seems hard to believe, but once again it's time to mark your calendars for the RCCBC. We'll be holding the count on Sunday December 18th and I'm hoping that we'll do even better than last year's 147 species. We have 14 count areas within our circle, so we should have something for everyone and, as always, feeder watchers remain an important part of the count. Robert Weissler has again agreed to assist me as our secondary compiler this year and you may contact either of us if you have questions. Robert will focus on coordinating our "feeder watcher" support and arranging the breakfast and compilation dinner; he prefers to use weissler@aves.org for his RCCBC email.

We'll be meeting for breakfast at 6:30 a.m. when we'll hand out checklists and maps and such. We still haven't nailed down where we'll have the breakfast and dinner, but Robert will send that information later this fall. The participation fee, for participants 19 years and older, remains \$5.00, check payable to the National Audubon Society. I can pick this up at the breakfast or dinner. Please let me know if you are interested in participating and if you have a preference as to where you would like to "count." If you wish to watch your feeders, please let Robert know where those are located. Also let me know if you are interested in rising early to listen/look for owls. Contact me via email at mourast@saic.com or at 803-0221. Robert can be reached at 803-0794.

-Ted Mouras, Compiler, RCCBC

Hummingbird Banding on Fort Huachuca

The Hummingbird Monitoring Network and Fort Huachuca Wildlife Office invite the public to observe hummingbird banding and monitoring from 6:15 – 11:15 a.m. on Sunday, October 16, 2005 at the Public Affairs Office. The installation is on a migratory flight path the tiny birds use, making the fort's habitats an ideal project location, according to Sheridan Stone, wildlife biologist. Best viewing time is around first light through 8:30 a.m. Those who plan to attend should bring binoculars for viewing from a distance, and water. Dress comfortably. Banding location is in front of Brayton Hall, Building 21115, at the west end of historic Brown Parade Field, across from the gazebo. To minimize project impact and bird disturbance, visitors should park in the large parking lot adjacent to Huachuca Creek, at the intersection of Christy Road and Adair. From there, it's a short, uphill walk to the banding session. Maps to the banding area are available at the Welcome Center just outside the main gate. All visitors not in possession of a valid DoD automotive decal must stop at the Welcome Center and show a valid driver's license, proof of insurance, and vehicle registration or rental agreement, in order to get a temporary visitor's pass. The driver of any vehicle and all passengers 18 and older will need to show a valid photo ID issued from a recognized Federal or State governmental institution (e.g. Dept of Motor Vehicles) as they pass through the checkpoint. For more information, call 533-7083 or 533-2622.



Peregrine on the Pole

A few weeks ago, Elaine and I had the pleasure of observing a peregrine falcon perched on top of a telephone pole consuming its prey. With the aid of a telescope, this was done from our backyard in a densely settled neighborhood of Sierra Vista. Although it is easy to become depressed over our current lack of progress in addressing critical environmental problems, this incident was a clear reminder of how far we have come over the past three decades.

By the mid-1960s, peregrine falcons had become extinct in the lower 48 states due to the devastating impact of DDT on their reproductive systems.

Following the banning of the use of DDT in the United States in 1972, the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology began operation of its "Peregrine Palace" in upstate New York. In 1973, 20 falcons were hatched by three fertile captive pairs which had been imported. Adaptation to the natural environment was accomplished by employing standard falconry practices. The birds were allowed to roam free, but were fed by humans upon returning to their nesting sites.

In 1976, 24 breeding pairs, equipped with radio transmitters for monitoring, were released into the wild. Each of the pairs survived and reproduced. A second center was established shortly thereafter at Fort Collins, Colorado with similar positive results.

Today, peregrine falcons can be observed throughout the United States, thanks to past efforts of the federal government and a renowned state university during more enlightened times that we all hope will return in the not too distant future.

On September 12th we, along with many others, attended the Governor's Growing Smarter Community Listening Session held at the Sierra Vista City Council chambers. The sincere interest expressed by the Governor's representatives in protecting our water resources and air quality and preserving wildlife, plant communities and other natural environmental assets in the face of growth which is expected to double the state's population in the next 25 years was, to say the least, very heartening. The same was true for the very positive comments and suggestions made by our citizens. From this kind of grass-roots base, there appears to be the possibility of ultimately overcoming the greed-dominated anti-environmental focus of the current federal administration and supporting members of Congress.

President Nixon strongly supported the banning of DDT, as well as passage of the Endangered Species Act and other progressive environmental legislation. The values held dear by the Republican party of that era and the present Democratic administration of our state are one and the same. If you support these values and the legislation necessary to make them a reality, we encourage you to e-mail your suggestions and comments to guidingprinciples@azcommerce.com or call (602) 771-1128. To view results of public input at Growing Smarter Community Listening Sessions across Arizona or to fill in an online survey to relay your suggestions, go to <http://www.azcommerce.com/CommunityPlanning/guidingprinciples.asp>.

-Conrad and Elaine Moore, Conservation Committee, Co-Chairs

Arizona Bird Conservation Initiative Statewide Meeting

Thursday October 20th, 2005 Phoenix, AZ
Hosted by The Arizona Game and Fish Department

BRIEF AGENDA

Session I

9:30- 9:45 Welcome and Introduction – Edwin Juarez, AGFD

9:45-10:15 ABCI Goals and Strategies – Edwin Juarez

10:15-10:45 Coordinated Bird Monitoring, the next step – Troy Corman, AGFD

10:45-11:00 Break

11:00-11:20 Arizona Important Bird Area Program – Scott Wilbur, Tucson Audubon Society

11:20-11:40 Sonoran Joint Venture – Carol Beardmore, SJV

11:40- 1:00 Lunch on your own

1:00- 1:20 Intermountain West Joint Venture – Bob Vahle, IWJV

Session II

1:20- 1:35 Status of Regional Committees – Bill Burger, AGFD R. 6, Dave Cagle, AGFD R. 1

1:35- 2:00 Breakout Session

How should we define the roles and functions of the Regional Committees?

2:00- 2:15 Summarize and discuss suggestions

2:15- 2:30 Break

Session III

2:30- 2:45 The Hummingbird Monitoring Network: Building a conservation program for Hummingbirds – Susan Wethington, HMN

2:45- 3:00 ABCI supported bird conservation project

3:00- 3:15 ABCI supported bird conservation project

3:15- 3:30 ABCI Funding for Bird Conservation Projects FY06-07 – Edwin Juarez

3:30- 3:45 Closing Remarks: What's next?

Purpose of the meeting:

- ◆ Present and reaffirm Arizona's Bird Conservation Initiative goals and strategies
- ◆ Overviews on the Arizona Important Bird Areas program and the Regional Joint Ventures
- ◆ Discuss the status and roles of the ABCI regional committees
- ◆ How to Apply for ABCI grants

Meeting Location:

La Quinta Inn, 2510 W. Greenway Rd. Phoenix, AZ 85023

Vista Room, hotel phone: (602) 993-0800

No Registration Fee:

An RSVP is strongly encouraged for planning purposes

RSVP/Questions: Edwin Juarez, ABCI Coordinator, (602) 789-3516, ej Suarez@azgfd.gov

The Big Sit!

is almost here! Register today for this fun and easy bird-watching event.

The 13th annual Big Sit! will take place on **Sunday, October 9, 2005**. So far, more than 60 teams from 33 states and seven countries have registered. Will your bird-watching clan join the fun? We hope so.

The Big Sit! is an annual, international, noncompetitive birding event hosted by *Bird Watcher's Digest* and founded by the New Haven (CT) Bird Club. Every team that observes this year's "Golden Bird" has a chance to win \$500. We hope bird watchers from around the globe will unite on this special day by participating in this event (it's free!).

Don't delay! Participating teams must register prior to October 9, 2005, by visiting the *Bird Watcher's Digest* website: <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/site/funbirds/bigsit/bigsit.aspx>.

Lights, Camera... Puffins! The Puffin Cam is Now Live

Matinicus Rock, Maine, August 5, 2005 - Today, Audubon announced that researchers, students, and bird lovers worldwide will have the chance to get intimate views of puffins and other Maine seabirds. The Project Puffin seabird camera is now beaming live-streaming video from Matinicus Rock-Maine's largest colony of Atlantic Puffins and Razorbills. Matinicus Rock is located 22 miles south of Rockland, Maine. This is the first year that that Matinicus Rock seabirds will appear on the web - to watch, click on www.projectpuffin.org.

The robotic camera was funded by grants from MBNA Foundation and the Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund. The video signal is beamed by microwave 25 miles to Rockland where it is linked to an Internet connection at the site of the future Project Puffin Visitor Center.

When the Center opens, a unique camera feature will allow visitors to pan all directions, zooming in and out for closer views, visitors will be able to operate the camera. The camera is an invention of Daniel Zatz of SeeMore Wildlife Systems of Homer, Alaska.

To read the full release, visit www.audubon.org/news/press_releases/index.html.

Rescued Eaglet Returned to the Wild

An eaglet rescued from its nest, after being attacked by killer bees, was successfully placed back into the wilds of Arizona on Sept. 14. The 27-week-old bald eagle is one of two eaglets rescued by Arizona Game and Fish Department biologists back in May, after an Africanized bee attack in the Bartlett Dam area of the Verde River, southeast of Cave Creek. The other eaglet actually prompted the bee attack by accident, while trying to learn how to fly on a branch that contained a beehive. That eaglet did not survive. However, this one is doing well. It spent more than three months recuperating at Liberty Wildlife Rehabilitation in Scottsdale. For the rest of the story, go to http://www.azgfd.gov/artman/publish/article_385.shtml

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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. 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.