

# THE TROGON NEWS

HUACHUCA AUDUBON SOCIETY  
Post Office Box 63, Sierra Vista, Arizona 85636  
Volume XXXI Number 7, September 2003



## President's Message

Welcome back from our summer break. I was certainly busy and know at least some of you were as well. I hope to see a good turnout on September 2, to hear Alicia and Dieter Kamm, and to catch up on what everyone has been up to.

I was in Globe August 14-16 for a conservation summit with the Arizona Conservation Alliance. That was pretty exciting, as lots of people from around the state came together on various conservation issues. They are putting together a "green" agenda for next year that they will present to the state legislators. They expect to have it ready for presentation and lobbying in February - and wouldn't it be great if a few of us from here could show up to lobby for state environmental protection. (See page 4 for related article.)

By now, we should have had our first press conference in quite some time. About the San Pedro, of course, and its precarious future. Plenty of groups and people in the state and around the country have been paying attention and helping us raise awareness about river issues. We need to be visible as well; it's our backyard after all!

We have a fired-up conservation committee, some new and enthusiastic board members, and exciting new ideas being presented, like our fundraising raffle. There are still some openings for volunteers, so raise your hand. The business of the HAS only occurs because some members take it on themselves to volunteer and make it happen!

-Tricia Gerrodette

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## 2003 Ramsey Canyon Christmas Bird Count

Hard to believe, but it's time once again to mark the RCCBC on your calendars. This year we will hold it on Sat 27 Dec. We had great weather and a great count last year and hope to once again. As always feeder watchers were a big part of last year's success and are again invited to participate. We also had a nice turnout of folks from outside Cochise County and continue to welcome their participation. If you are interested in joining one of our teams or watching your feeder(s) for us, please contact me at (520) 803-0221 or via email at [m-t1@mindspring.com](mailto:m-t1@mindspring.com). I'll provide a follow-up notice in a couple of months with more detailed information.

-Ted Mouras

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## Local Programs and Events

**Sep 2<sup>nd</sup>** 7:00 p.m., Mona Bishop Room in the Sierra Vista Public Library. HAS program – “A Taste of Costa Rica” Join Alicia and Dieter Kamm for an informative chat about traveling in Costa Rica. They will share with you 10 years' experience in leading birding, nature and language school trips. This is a good opportunity to ask questions about touring this beautiful and tourist friendly country. A few slides will be shown.

**Sep 7<sup>th</sup>** 1:30 p.m., Carr House. “Hooray for Herps – Snakes, Lizards and More”. Tom Miscione, herpetologist, brings live specimens to this popular program. Learn not to fear. Enjoy petting a snake and loving a lizard! Come early!

**Sep 25<sup>th</sup>** 7:00 p.m., Ramsey Canyon Preserve. Mark Pretti, naturalist for the Ramsey Canyon Preserve, and the Nature Conservancy will host a Bat Program at the Preserve for the September SAVE program. Due to space constraints, the program will be limited to about 25 people. To reserve a space, call Mark at 378-2640. It will be first come, first served. Ramsey Canyon Preserve is located at the end of Ramsey Canyon Road, off S Highway 92.

**Sep 28<sup>th</sup>** 1:30 p.m., Indoor program at Carr House. “Arizona Mammals – Past, Present and Future”. Mark Fredlake, BLM wildlife biologist, will share slides of mammals now extinct in SE Arizona, those that currently reside in the area, and will discuss future reintroduction of mammals that once lived here.

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### HAS On-Line!

Look out for our new Website at <http://has.hypermart.net>. Find out where and when HAS is hosting birding trips during the summer months, and what we have planned for the remainder of the year.

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## Field Trips



**Sep 4<sup>th</sup>** 6:30 a.m. HAS-Hummingbird Meccas. Meet at Wild Birds Unlimited parking lot. Donations for sugar funds will be expected! Call Mike Guest at 378-0667 for more info.

**Sep 6<sup>th</sup>** 7:00 a.m. Bird Walk. Meet at Carr House.

**Sep 10<sup>th</sup>** 7:30 a.m. Bird Walk. Meet at San Pedro House.

**Sep 14<sup>th</sup>** 7:30 a.m. Friends of the San Pedro Bird Walk. PLEASE NOTE: the 2nd Sunday bird walk will meet at the San Pedro River Inn from September onward until further notice. Directions: The San Pedro River Inn is located east of the San Pedro River on Hereford Road about 3 miles north of State Highway 92. Look for the Inn's sign on the left as you drive north on Hereford Road. (Note that because of the bridge collapse on Hereford Road, the only access to the San Pedro River Inn is from the south via Highway 92.) Turn left and drive downhill toward the Inn. There is limited parking to the left by the cabins, but there is additional parking on BLM property to the right by the hay barn if needed.

**Sep 20<sup>th</sup>** 7:00 a.m. Bird Walk. Meet at Carr House.

**Sep 27<sup>th</sup>** 7:30 a.m. Bird Walk. Meet at San Pedro River Inn.

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### Electronic Trogon News

As mentioned in previous Trogon News, HAS is heading toward offering our newsletter via e-mail or website to save both money and resources. If you would like to officially convert from receiving a hard copy newsletter by mail to receiving the electronic version, please send an email to Renell Stewart ([stewatr3@mindspring.com](mailto:stewatr3@mindspring.com)).

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### **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.

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### **Sierra Vista, Eat Your Heart Out - Birds and Birdwatchers Flock to Willcox**

It was no dream when during the field trip advertised on the internet we were treated to hundreds of phalaropes swirling through the air in unison and then joining again at the water's edge sandpipers, dowitchers, stilts, avocets, herons and gulls. A huge congregation of five different swallow species was fattening up for the migration to the south with no border formalities anticipated by them. The rarest bird on this August 2<sup>nd</sup> outing? A well-observed semipalmated sandpiper. The most beautiful one? Drake stiff-tailed ruddy ducks still in their black, white, blue and ruddy breeding plumage. Driving out we slightly detoured through St. David and easily found a Mississippi kite kiting happily in the sky. There were four other carloads of birdwatchers - I have never even seen one other birdwatcher at the \$7.5 million Environmental Operation Park in Sierra Vista. Happy birding Dieter Kamm and thanks to Harry Bergtholdt for his leadership.

-Mike Guest

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### **San Pedro River Clean-Up**

The BLM is sponsoring two days of clean-up on the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area. If you're available to help out on either September 27<sup>th</sup> (7:00 a.m.) or October 18<sup>th</sup> (8:00 a.m.), please contact Chris Hartman or Monica Sierra at 520-439-6400.

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### **2nd Sunday Bird Walk 13 July 2003**

The participants in the most recent 2nd Sunday bird walk were treated to a colorful array of summer birds, including Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Vermilion Flycatcher, Lucy's Warbler, Common Ground-Dove, Bridled Titmouse, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and White-winged Dove, among others. The walk took place at our interim venue of San Pedro House owing to the relocation necessitated by the collapse of the Hereford Road bridge.

-Robert Weissler

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### **National Public Lands Day**

Coronado National Memorial will host a park clean-up day for the nation-wide National Public Lands Day Saturday, September 20, 2003, from 7:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Volunteers will work with national park staff to clean up litter in the memorial. This event allows families and groups of all ages to "give something back" to America's millions of acres of public lands. Gloves and trash bags will be provided. Drinking water will also be supplied. Lunch for all participants will be provided at noon following the morning activities. More detailed information to follow in the coming weeks. For further information or to register, call (520) 366-5515 ext.23.

-Frank Torres

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### **League of Conservation Voters Hosts**

## Annual Conservation Summit

Aiming to improve conservation policy in Arizona and hold government officials accountable for their environmental decisions, conservationists and others interested in preserving Arizona's natural resources and quality of life met August 14-16 in the White Mountains. Hosted by the Arizona League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, this is Arizona Conservation Alliance's second annual summit to develop policy objectives and strategies to educate lawmakers and others about the importance of conservation to Arizona's future.

Last year, nearly 100 participants representing over 60 organizations throughout the state of Arizona and the Southwest, began discussions at the summit to identify priorities and create a conservation agenda to distribute to members, elected officials, media and the public. The 2003 Conservation Agenda, the product of this effort, represents the issues that the Alliance supports. "The Arizona Conservation Alliance ensures that the majority of Arizonans, who want to protect the quality of land, air, water and life for future generations have an advocate in the policy arena," said Stephanie C. Sklar, executive director of the Arizona League of Conservation Voters. "Our natural beauty and fragile resources are key components of any long term vision for the quality of life and economic success of the state". Conservation groups were successful this legislative session in securing results on agenda items, Sklar said. Agenda successes included:

**WILDLIFE, HABITAT AND RESOURCE PROTECTION**— protecting the funding system for the Arizona Heritage Fund to preserve the environmental and cultural heritage of the state. RESULT: With Conservation Alliance support, Gov. Janet Napolitano line-item vetoed the Legislature's raid on the fund, although legal action by the legislative leadership is still pending.

**GROWTH MANAGEMENT**— opposed so-called "takings" legislation that would curb local communities' ability to plan effectively. RESULT: With Conservation Alliance opposition, a measure to limit local control on planning issues was defeated.

**ENERGY**— supported cost effective efforts to develop solar and renewable energy use in Arizona. RESULT: With Conservation Alliance support, lawmakers passed legislation establishing energy use reduction targets and required state agencies to use energy efficient equipment when cost-effective.

**VOTING AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**— opposed efforts to undermine the initiative and referendum process created by Arizona's founders. RESULT: With Conservation Alliance opposition, legislation that would have required a 2/3 vote to pass any initiative or referendum was defeated.

"Our goal this year is to build on this success and foster a cycle of accountability," Sklar said. "Ultimately, conservation progress in the Legislature and at the governor's office must translate to the ballot box—and that's where the value of this summit will come to fruition." The League of Conservation Voters Scorecard will be used to ensure that voters have the information necessary to hold lawmakers and the governor accountable for their votes and actions on conservation issues, Sklar said. The Scorecard, which the League produces annually, rates lawmakers on their conservation and voter participation efforts. The 2003 Scorecard ranked lawmakers based on their support of habitat preservation, clean air and water and other issues important to Arizonans. For a full copy of the Scorecard, to find out how your lawmakers fared log onto the League's website: [www.azlcv.org](http://www.azlcv.org). To find out more about the Arizona Conservation Alliance, log onto the Arizona League of Conservation Voters Education Fund website at [www.azlcvedfund.org](http://www.azlcvedfund.org).

-Tom Collins

## **The Raffle: Good News, Bad News and a Request for Help!**

The good news! The fund raising raffle is on it's way! With tickets available for the first time during Southwest Wings, the website ([www.has.hypermart.net](http://www.has.hypermart.net)) loaded with information and the first flyers posted locally we are well on our way to what we hope will be a major new source of revenue for our educational and other efforts. International magazine advertising is being developed and should start to appear in October. The bad news! As of this writing we have not yet sold our first ticket.

Help! For those of you planning to travel to festivals, conventions, meetings and any other outdoor-oriented events, please consider requesting posters, flyers or even tickets to take along for promotion. In addition, while board members are barred by statute from purchasing tickets, the general membership is NOT! Think of it. As an individual you could give 3 of your friends or relatives a wonderful visit to you and your surroundings for only \$50 and you wouldn't even have to feed them and house them. As a couple you could still accommodate 2 people and then join them on this fabulous trip. Buy now for Christmas, Birthdays, Anniversaries and for no better reason than to support the Chapter's efforts.  
-Sandy Kunzer

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### **Arizona Trail Stewardship Project**

Richard Corbett, AZ Trail Segment Steward, invites outdoor-oriented individuals to participate in an Arizona Trail Workday on September 20. Volunteers will work on the east end of the Canelo West Passage. For more info, contact Richard at [kc7ovm@dakotacom.net](mailto:kc7ovm@dakotacom.net) or 520-623-0017.

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## **Cochise County - America's Birdiest (Inland) County**

It's official: Cochise County is one of America's "birdiest" counties. In fact, it was named the birdiest inland county in the U.S. in a nationwide competition to see which city and county could identify the most species of birds within their boundaries in a 24-hour period. Cochise County finished with 226 species, well ahead of second place finisher Inyo, California.

In Cochise County, 45 participants spent all or part of May 4 counting species for the competition. Local count coordinator, Tom Wood, co-director of the Bisbee-based Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory, said, "The count was a great success due to the participation of people all across the county, ranging from professional guides with groups to local folks just watching their backyards".

Though many of southeastern Arizona's most famous birds are residents of the deserts and "sky island" mountain ranges, Wood estimates that the list would have been at least 50 species poorer without habitats such as the San Pedro River, Cochise Lakes at Willcox, and Sierra Vista's wastewater wetlands. Two of the most unusual birds were seen at Sierra Vista's new Environmental Operations Park. A group visiting the viewing platform spotted a crested caracara, a bird of prey rarely seen in the county. Another group granted special access to ponds not visible from the platform discovered a Eurasian collared-dove, an introduced species that recently arrived in Arizona. More information on the count and a listing of species seen and participants can be found on the bird observatory's Web site: [www.sabo.org](http://www.sabo.org).

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## **Program Announces New IBAs & Applauds IBA Science Teams in Action!**

By Scott Wilbor, Arizona Important Bird Areas Coordinator/Conservation Biologist, Tucson  
Audubon Society

Arizona's Important Bird Area (IBA) Scientific Review Committee of 14 biologists and ornithologists met April 18 at the Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge\* to review IBA nominations submitted last fall and winter. Five new IBAs were approved as "Identified" Arizona Important Bird Areas, they are:

1. Upper Little Colorado River Watershed
2. Marble Canyon (where the condors are making home!)
3. Chiricahua Mountains
4. Santa Rita Mountains
5. Sycamore Canyon (southern Arizona)

Particularly notable was the nomination and avian information compiled for the Upper Little Colorado Watershed IBA. The data gathered by White Mountain Audubon members Lorraine Wiesen and Jimmy Videle were outstanding and provided the first ever comprehensive avian catalog of bird species and their numbers for five major sections of this approximately 60 mile long IBA! They used sources like the Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas, Forest Service surveys, Endangered Species surveys, Heritage Grant surveys, Bald Eagle surveys, Christmas Bird Counts, the North American Migration Count, and their own Audubon chapter and personal field surveys to put together their most comprehensive IBA nomination.

So what did they find? Highlights from their data summary include: 24 Bald Eagles, 6 Ospreys, 7 Northern Goshawks, 2 Peregrine Falcons, 10 Mexican Spotted Owls, 16 Red-naped Sapsuckers, 16 Southwestern Willow Flycatchers (!), 19 Cordilleran Flycatchers, 65 Pinyon Jays, 5 Gray Catbirds, 31 Virginia's Warblers, 14 MacGillivray's Warblers, 13 Red-faced Warblers, not to mention rare occurrences of Mountain Plovers, American Dippers, Veerys, Sage Thrashers, American Redstarts, and Pine Grosbeaks. Their research covered from 1976 to 2002, but primarily the 1990s to present (numbers are the maximum observed per season). They documented a total of 255 species, of which 134 are known to breed in the watershed! Wow, what a real gem of important avian habitat that up to now was never fully documented! Great job Lorraine and Jimmy! Now the hard news, there are planned developments (housing/recreational facilities) along the lower sections of this IBA, and thus far appeals by White Mountain Audubon to the State Land Trust and Apache County Planning and Zoning have not protected this important habitat (your voice for protecting this area is needed!). Contact: Lorraine Wiesen (928-337-2466) or Sue Sitko (928-368-6832).

Now for an update on our IBA Avian Science Initiative. IBA Science Teams are collecting avian inventory data for IBA site recognition and conservation planning. A Sonoran Audubon Society IBA Team partnering with the Bureau of Land Management at Agua Fria National Monument (north of Phoenix) is now conducting its second year of surveys. In the Verde Valley, Doug Van Gausig of Northern Arizona Audubon Society leads survey efforts at the Tuzigoot IBA complex near Cottonwood. On Oak Creek, Roger Radd, of Northern Arizona Audubon, conducts surveys for the IBA Program at Page Springs Fish Hatchery IBA, as well as on private land along Oak Creek. Our Oak Creek surveys are part of our efforts to document

bird species and numbers to identify a future larger Lower Oak Creek IBA, and gain coordinated protection and management from all who own or manage land along this stretch. At Tuzigoot and Oak Creek additional citizen-science volunteers are needed for water quality sampling and a nest box program respectively, as well as for additional bird surveys in this region.

The Tubac & upland Tumacacori Team, comprised of Tucson Audubon members Sally Johnson and Norma Miller, have surveys underway along 2.4 and 1.1 km routes in riparian and bosque habitats of the Santa Cruz River. Our Tumacacori Team of Sue Carnahan and Curtis Smith has begun surveys along a 4 km route in riparian habitat along the Santa Cruz River. Both these Santa Cruz teams are providing exceptional data that will be used for conservation planning for this critical stretch of the Santa Cruz, and to recognize the Santa Cruz riparian corridor as an International Continentally Important Bird Area of both Mexico and the U.S.

Yes, there is plenty of need for your participation! We need new IBA Teams to adopt and conduct bird and habitat surveys for the Salt-Gila River Ecosystem (west of Phoenix), the Gilbert Riparian Preserves, Sycamore/Slate & Tonto Creek areas (northeast of Phoenix), the Watson/Willow Lake IBA (Prescott), the Santa Cruz River, Cienega Creek, Sabino Creek, the Patagonia area, the Lower San Pedro, the White Mountains, and in Flagstaff. Although, the IBA Program is gathering this needed data statewide, we work hand in hand with the Conservation Chair or local IBA contact of each Audubon chapter to meet our common conservation goals!

Please give the Arizona IBA Program office at Tucson Audubon Society a call to set up your participation in an IBA Science Team (520-622-2230). Your help with our Avian Science Initiative will be used to put together great IBA nominations and data as was done for the Little Colorado River IBA. Most importantly, your participation will provide needed bird and habitat information that will help direct conservation efforts at these critical avian habitats! Finally, check our IBA web page now and especially in mid-August as we open up a third and final IBA nomination period for 2 ½ months (August to November). Look for a new, quick *AZ IBA identification Nomination*, as an easy way to help us identify sites, or use the complete *AZ IBA Nomination*, to help us compile a final “first-cut” of sites for our AZ IBA catalog ([www.tucsonaudubon.org/azibaprogram](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/azibaprogram)). We hope to complete Arizona’s first Important Bird Areas publication and database in 2004! Use your birding skills (or other skills) to help us along the way!

\* A special thank you to Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge staff. They manage an incredibly rich avian habitat, which will be reviewed for IBA status in the near future!



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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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