

# THE TROGON NEWS

HUACHUCA AUDUBON SOCIETY  
Post Office Box 63, Sierra Vista, Arizona 85636  
Volume XXX Number 3, September 2008



## President's Message

Hello again, Yes, I and the rest of the slate of officers were accepted without dissent at our June picnic meeting. We still lack Chairpersons for Conservation and Programs, I'll be pleased to talk with anyone with an interest in either of these positions. I am happy to see a few new names coming forward - welcome Anne, Catherine, and Sandra and I hope you'll all stay awhile. Upon completion my annual report showed 25 people had donated 1,500 hours to run HAS last year, that was impressive but I anticipate even greater numbers this year. Help prove me right.

It is unfortunate that SW Wings was again held during the first week of school, this severely reduces the number of attending youngsters, for whom, thanks to Ginny Bealer we again offered a challenging Bird/Mammal quiz. We received a total of **four** entries and awarded book prizes to only two of the three proposed age categories - the winners were sisters on vacation from Cape May, New Jersey. Of the twenty bird box kits we sponsored in conjunction with Ramsey Canyon Preserve, only nine attracted new owners! We will have to reconsider our participation in next year's Wings.

Remember to mark the "third Tuesday" on your calendars for September, October and November. Programs: "Bats", "Xmas Bird Counts", and "Gray Hawk Nature Center." Our meetings will remain in the Horace Steele Conference Room at Cochise College this fall, but at no cost to our chapter, so no more pleas for donations. December 6<sup>th</sup> we will again hold our annual Holiday Party Potluck at the Research Ranch, courtesy of Linda Kennedy, Director.

Regards, Mike

### **Committee News**

The chairpersons for the chapter committees are as follows: Conservation: <vacant>; Education: Ginny Bealer; Programs: <vacant>; Membership: Ginny Bealer; and Outings: Alan Blixt and Robert Weissler. Please contact the relevant chairperson if you would like to find out more information about the activities of a particular committee.

#### ***Shop at our Marketplace! And raise money for Huachuca Audubon!!***

Help raise funds for the Huachuca Audubon Society by shopping at our online [Marketplace](#). Just click on the shopping bag banner on the left side of the Huachuca Audubon Society home page ([www.huachuca-audubon.org](http://www.huachuca-audubon.org)) and raise money for us! Please remember that ONLY purchases made online at participating merchants accessed by clicking on our website Marketplace banner first will raise money for us. Otherwise, the merchants will **not** be able to return a portion of the purchase cost to Huachuca Audubon.

### **Welcome to New HAS Members!**

We would like to welcome our newest HAS (and Friends of HAS) members: Lavonne and Gary Ackley of Douglas; Virginia Schnell of Klondyke; Nancy Asdell of St. David; and Larry Stone of San Simon.

### **Volunteer Opportunities with Huachuca Audubon: Get Involved!**

New members in particular may be interested in getting involved with our organization. There is currently a vacancy for the Conservation and Programs Committee chairpersons. If you enjoy planning field trips to interesting birding destinations – and there is no lack of those in southern Arizona – then consider taking on this role with our chapter.

We continue to seek an Editor for the Trogon News. Currently, due to a full time job and his other commitments, Robert Weissler can accommodate only quarterly issues. We would prefer to return to our customary monthly publication schedule if an interested person steps forward. Useful skills for this position include document editing and layout using a word processing package like Microsoft Word, OpenOffice (free download), or NeoOffice for the Mac (also free download). Also, modest photo editing skills are helpful, e.g. iPhoto for the Mac.

Help and guidance are readily available for any volunteer position of interest. If you wish to join us, please discuss with Mike Guest or any other officer listed on the back cover of this newsletter.

## Interested in Monitoring Breeding Birds in the Huachucas?!

A new study is in the planning stages to commence next year, namely a project to determine the effects of fuels reduction (thinning the forest, prescribed burns, etc to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and improve forest health) on cavity-nesting birds (especially Whiskered Screech-Owl and Lucy's Warbler) as well as a host of other neotropical migrants and gamebirds. Huachuca Audubon is a partner in this prospective project and plans to organize volunteers to monitor breeding birds in the study area. Stay tuned for more information in the coming months...! -Robert Weissler, [weissler@aves.org](mailto:weissler@aves.org).

## Local Programs and Events

Check the web site (<http://www.huachuca-audubon.org>) for the latest updates to the schedule of events. **HAS monthly meetings will remain in the Horace Steele Conference Room at Cochise College this fall.**

**Sep. 16<sup>th</sup>**, Tuesday, 7:00 pm. HAS Monthly Meeting, **Bats of Southern Arizona.**

**Oct. 4-5.** Arizona Field Ornithologists (**AZFO**) state membership meeting in Flagstaff.

**Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>**, Saturday. **Arizona Audubon Conservation Summit Meeting** in Tucson.

**Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>**, Tuesday, 7:00 pm. HAS Monthly Meeting, **Ted Mouras on Ramsey Canyon CBC.**

**Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>**, Tuesday, 7:00 pm. HAS Monthly Meeting, **Sandy Anderson on Gray Hawk Nature Ctr.**

**Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>**, noon Saturday. **HAS Holiday Potluck Social.**

This event will take place this year once again at the [Audubon Research Ranch](#) at 366 Research Ranch Road south of Elgin. Check out the [map and directions](#) to the ranch. Contact Linda Kennedy for additional information at [sacaton@theriver.com](mailto:sacaton@theriver.com).

## Upcoming Field Trips



**Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>**, Saturday, 7am. HAS Field Trip to **Environmental Operations Park.**

**Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>**, Wednesday, 7:00 am. **FSPR bird walk.** Meet at San Pedro House.

**Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>**, Wednesday, 2pm. HAS Field Trip to **Scheelite Canyon.**

**Sept. 27<sup>th</sup>**, Saturday, 7:00 am. **FSPR bird walk.** Meet at San Pedro House.

**Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>**, Wednesday, 8:00 am. **FSPR bird walk.** Meet at San Pedro House.

**Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>**, Wednesday, 7:30am. HAS Field Trip to **Garden Canyon.**

**Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>**, Saturday, 7am. HAS **Hawk Stalk in Brown Canyon.**

**Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>**, Saturday, 8:00 am. **FSPR bird walk.** Meet at San Pedro House.

**Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>**, Tuesday, 8am. HAS Field Trip to **Grasslands & Del Valle Rd.**

**Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>**, Wednesday, 8:00 am. **FSPR bird walk.** Meet at San Pedro House.

**Nov. 22<sup>rd</sup>**, Saturday, 8:00 am. HAS Field Trip to **Gray Hawk Ranch and Nature Center.**

**Nov. 22<sup>rd</sup>**, Saturday, 8:00 am. **FSPR bird walk.** Meet at San Pedro House.

**Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>**, Tuesday, 8am. HAS Field Trip to **Whitewater Draw.**

**Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>**, Saturday, 8am. HAS Field Trip to **Whitewater Draw.**

**Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>**, Tuesday, 8am. HAS Field Trip to **Grasslands & Del Valle Rd.**

And here is advance notice of local CBCs:

**Dec 27<sup>th</sup>**, Saturday. **Ramsey Canyon Christmas Bird Count**. Contact Ted Mouras for details (e-mail to [tedmouras@mindspring.com](mailto:tedmouras@mindspring.com)).

**Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup>**, Saturday. **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Appleton-Whittell Christmas Bird Count**. Contact Robert Weissler for details (e-mail to [weissler@aves.org](mailto:weissler@aves.org)).

Note: Due to the high price of gas, car pool passengers are expected to provide adequate compensation to their driver, about 8 cents per mile.

#### **Weekly events**

Every Sunday at 7 am April through September (8 am during winter months). **Bird Walk at Sierra Vista Environmental Operations Park**. Limited to 20 participants with two docents.

Every Monday at 7am, **Birdwatching Field Trips to the San Pedro River**.

2-3 hour birding field trips to Gordon Lewis' property on the San Pedro River. Meet at the pull-off just west of the bridge on the north side of Highway 92 (near Palominas, gate numbered 10663).

#### **Monthly events**

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday at 7am Apr-Sep, 8am Oct-Mar **Bird Walk at San Pedro House**.

4<sup>th</sup> Saturday at 7am Apr-Sep, 8am Oct-Mar **Bird Walk at San Pedro House**.

### **Upcoming Vote Key to Future Direction of Corporation Commission**

The Arizona Corporation Commission is a little-known but very important state entity. The commissioners have limited power on water and energy issues but have recently been as strong as they probably can be on promoting water protection and heading towards clean and renewable energy.

But 3 of 5 positions on the commission are up for election and that represents a majority. Some of the candidates are being forthright in their opposition to the renewable energy standard adopted by the commission and state that they would work to repeal it if elected. If you care about trying to halt fossil fuel use and global warming, you need to pay attention to this state race. Please investigate the candidate positions on renewable energy before casting your vote.

The upcoming elections, both primary on September 2 and general on November 4, are important. Please get out and vote!

-Tricia Gerrodette

## **Huachuca Audubon Society 2008 Field Trips**

The HAS Outings Committee has planned many interesting outings for the fall of 2008.

### **Sept 6th - Environmental Operations Park**

Fall migration is underway so shorebirds should be diverse and plentiful at the Sierra Vista EOP. Trip is free and open to the public.

Leaders: Mike Guest (520-378-0667, [mwguest@juno.com](mailto:mwguest@juno.com)) and Kerrie Kirkpatrick ([hawkowl@cox.net](mailto:hawkowl@cox.net))

### **Sept 24th - Afternoon in Scheelite Canyon**

Spend a delightful fall afternoon in this canyon on Fort Huachuca. Meet at Gateway Park on N. Garden Ave. near the main gate of Fort Huachuca. Bring driver's license or other photo ID in order to gain entrance to post. Remember to use good footwear; bring water and hat. Trip is free and open to the public.

Leaders: Alicia and Dieter Kamm (452-8811)

### **Oct 15<sup>th</sup> - Garden Canyon**

Meet at Gateway Park on N. Garden Ave. near the main gate of Fort Huachuca. Bring driver's license or other photo ID in order to gain entrance to post. Trip is free and open to the public.

Leaders: Alicia and Dieter Kamm (452-8811)

### **Oct 18<sup>th</sup> - Hawk Stalk in Brown Canyon**

Meet at the Brown Canyon trailhead at 7am. Trip is free and open to the public.

Leaders: Erika Wilson (234-4359, [terika88@cox.net](mailto:terika88@cox.net)) & Kerrie Kirkpatrick ([hawkowl@cox.net](mailto:hawkowl@cox.net))

### **Nov 11<sup>th</sup> - Grasslands and del Valle Road**

Field trip through the Grasslands along Del Valle Road starting at 8am. From Sierra Vista, take Highway 90 east toward the San Pedro River. Before the river, turn right, pass through the gate, and proceed to the parking area at San Pedro House. Trip is free and open to the public.

Meet: at San Pedro House (SPH) at 8am.

Leaders: Erika Wilson (234-4359, [terika88@cox.net](mailto:terika88@cox.net)) & Alan Blixt (458-0542, [alanblixt@hotmail.com](mailto:alanblixt@hotmail.com))

### **Nov 22<sup>nd</sup> - Gray Hawk Ranch and Nature Center**

The ranch is adjacent to the San Pedro River. Meet at 8am at the ranch. From Sierra Vista, take Charleston Road toward the river, then turn right on Escapule Road and follow it to Gray Hawk Lane. Trip is free and open to the public.

Leader: Sandy Anderson (458-0542, [sandy@grayhawknaturecenter.org](mailto:sandy@grayhawknaturecenter.org))

## Arizona Field Ornithologists' Statewide Meeting in Flagstaff

4-5 October

Active birders, biologists, and others interested in helping to increase the knowledge of bird distribution and identification in Arizona are urged to attend the second annual Arizona Field Ornithologists (AZFO) state membership meeting. The first day's sessions will be held in Room 17 of the Southwest Forestry Complex building on the Northern Arizona University campus in Flagstaff. We will have several informative presentations from different parts of Arizona on bird distribution, identification, and recent research projects; provide updates on our activities and future plans; and hold elections for the board and officers.

The following morning we are planning several half- to partial-day mini-Field Expeditions to less frequented locations that can be reached from the Flagstaff area. Attendance at the meeting will be at no cost to AZFO members. Nonmembers are welcome and encouraged to attend both the Saturday sessions and Sunday mini-expeditions and will pay a \$10 admission fee. This fee can be deducted from your annual dues if you decide to join AZFO that weekend. For more information on hotel accommodations and restaurants, updates on the program and mini-field expeditions, and a preregistration form check the AZFO website at: <http://azfo.org>. In order to get a feel for how many people are coming, we urge you to send the preregistration form by September 25 to Daniela Yellan at: [azpajaros@cox.net](mailto:azpajaros@cox.net).

Saturday presentations will likely include:

- \* Status and ecology of Yellow-billed Cuckoos within the Lower Colorado River Valley
- \* History, challenges, and current status of the California Condor reintroduction effort
- \* Identification challenge of Cackling and Lesser Canada Geese

Opportunities for mini-Field Expedition birding on Sunday morning are:

- \* I-40/Little Colorado River corridor (migrant and vagrant focus)
- \* South Kaibab Forest lakes and other localities (southeast of Williams)
- \* Possibly to Camp Verde area (for those interested in birding on their way back south)
- \* Possibly a ¾-day trip to Navajo and Hopi lands north of Flagstaff

Doug Jenness,

Coordinator for AZFO statewide meeting

More information about registration, places to stay, maps, and meeting details can be found on the web site at <http://azfo.org/meeting/Registration2008.html>.

## Help preserve and protect the San Pedro River

### What Can I Do?

What steps can you take to help preserve and protect the San Pedro River, our special desert treasure? In addition to reducing your personal water consumption as much as possible, with little to no outdoor watering unless it's greywater or rainwater, there's now another action you can take to help.

Current Arizona law does not take into account the health of rivers or the impact on private wells when deciding if there is an adequate supply of water for a proposed subdivision. We the people have the power in our hands and pens (or mouses - mice?) to change that. If you will dash off a quick note to the following address (see below), you would help me immensely in the work I have done for over a decade now to try to protect the San Pedro. I really need everyone's help on this and would greatly appreciate your participation. If you have any questions about this, please contact Tricia Gerrodette at 378-4937 or [triciag2@cox.net](mailto:triciag2@cox.net)).

Thank you!

-Tricia Gerrodette

### Send your letters to:

Arizona Department of Water Resources  
Attention: Doug Dunham  
3550 North Central Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85012

Ask for a modification of the standards for defining physical availability under SB1575 in the Upper San Pedro River Basin to include:

- \* Protection of the San Pedro River
- \* Protection of the Babocómari River
- \* Protection of Fort Huachuca
- \* Protection of existing private wells
- \* Any other ideas you have for aquifer protection

## North America Migration Count Cochise County, 10 May 2008

Twenty-seven birders, many of them HAS members, participated in the NAMC on 10 May 2008, finding a total of 203 species in Cochise County. This outstanding effort was a new high for the county (2005-165 species; 2006-183 species; 2007-202), putting Cochise County in competition with Maricopa County (which has 1 ½ times more area) for the diversity record in Arizona.

Areas covered this year included Huachuca, Sawmill, Garden, Ramsey, lower Carr, and Miller Canyons in the Huachuca Mountains; San Pedro River Inn, San Pedro House, and Escapule Wash sections on the upper San Pedro River; Benson; Cochise Stronghold in the Whetstone Mountains; Whitewater Draw WMA and Lake Cochise in the Sulphur Springs Valley; Portal, Cave Creek Canyon (including South Fork), the Southwest Research Station, Paradise, West Turkey Creek, Rustler Park, and Barfoot Park, in the Chiricahua Mountains. One birder went camping in order to get nocturnal birds and to be in position early in the morning in the mountains. Just as important were the feeder watchers who provided some unique species, listed below.

A summary by bird families follows, with unusual birds in italics. Thirteen species of ducks were found, with four times as many “Mexican” Ducks as regular Mallards. A female *Canvasback* on the ponds in Benson was a bonus, but the most unusual duck, considering the time of year, was a lingering female *Common Goldeneye* at Lake Cochise. The most abundant game birds were Gambel’s Quail, followed by Wild Turkey, then Scaled Quail; no Montezuma Quail were found.

Waterbirds other than ducks included Eared Grebe (no Pied-billed Grebes), Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Cattle Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, White-faced Ibis, and Am. Coot. Two Great Egrets and a Cattle Egret were new birds for this count. Most shorebirds were confined to the three impoundment areas, with eight species recorded. Thirty-five Willets found at Green Kingfisher Pond on the San Pedro River were a big surprise. Twenty-one Black-necked Stilts set a new high for that species; likewise 166 Wilson’s Phalaropes was a new high count. Most disappointing, however, was missing Red-necked Phalarope, seen before and after count day at Lake Cochise. There were five Ring-billed Gulls at Benson.

Eleven species of raptor were tallied, with N. Goshawk, *Short-tailed Hawk*, and Golden Eagle being good finds. Two Short-tailed Hawks were soaring over Barfoot Park; this is a new bird for the NAMC in Cochise Co. The expected pigeons and doves were noted, including Inca Dove for the first time. Fifteen Greater Roadrunner were about and White-throated Swifts were found by several teams. Seven owl species were tallied, mostly by the nocturnal counters, although all three Barn Owls were found during the day. Flammulated Owl and Long-eared Owl were missed this year, but Spotted Owl was tallied in the Chiricahua Mountains. Half a dozen Common Poorwills and Whip-poor-wills were reported, but only three Lesser Nighthawks were found. A report of an early Common Nighthawk was dropped by the state coordinator due to insufficient details. Eight hummingbird species were checked off, including *White-eared Hummingbird* at Beatty’s in Miller Canyon and *Berylline Hummingbird* at Ramsey Canyon Inn in Ramsey Canyon, both of these new for this count. Twelve Elegant Trogons was a good count. No Belted Kingfishers were seen this year, but a dozen Loggerhead Shrikes, and nine Horned Larks were tallied.

Among the eight woodpecker species, the top birds were a *Red-naped Sapsucker* along South Fork in the Chiricahuas, and two Gilded Flickers along the San Pedro River. Flycatchers were in good numbers, with twenty-one species identified, including a *Tufted Flycatcher* at Herb Martyr in the

Chiricahuas, the second record for Arizona. Another addition to this count were three N. Beardless-Tyrannulets along the San Pedro River at Escapule Wash. Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers were missed, a sign of their late arrival this spring. All five expected vireos were seen, with Cassin's Vireos still moving through on migration, and a record 18 Bell's Vireos noted. All five corvids were noted, with most of them being Mexican Jays. The usual Violet-green, N. Rough-winged, Cliff, and Barn Swallows were foraging in the air, joined by two Bank Swallows, adding yet another new species for this count. Counters found all five species of wren that breed in our county, plus a Marsh Wren lingering at Green Kingfisher Pond. In the woodlands, Brown Creeper, all three nuthatches, Bridled and Juniper Titmice, and eleven Mexican Chickadees were checked off. Verdin, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Black-tailed Gnatcatcher were found in small numbers. Eastern Bluebird (but not Western Bluebird), Townsend's Solitaire, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, and American Robin were another suite of woodland birds found during the day.

All four mimids were located, with one Bendire's Thrasher and four Crissal Thrashers being the least common. European Starlings are still relatively uncommon, with a count of 17 individuals, while Am. Pipit and Cedar Waxwing were not found this year. Phainopeplas were found in small numbers. Warblers were represented by sixteen species, many in record numbers. Seven Olive, eight Orange-crowned, eleven Virginia's, three Hermit, four MacGillivray's, and eleven Red-faced Warblers were all excellent counts, but the 115 Yellow Warblers and 88 Wilson's Warblers were record-breakers, and another sign of the late spring. Again this year Western Tanagers were the most common tanager, with 63 individuals counted; but Summer Tanagers were not far behind, with 53 birds counted, and 21 Hepatic Tanagers were noted. A new high of 23 lingering Green-tailed Towhees meant all four towhees made it onto the list. There were twelve sparrow species on the list, with a vagrant **Golden-crowned Sparrow** at Cave Creek Ranch's feeders being the most unusual. Other interesting sparrow counts included four Botteri's and new high counts for Rufous-crowned (13), Chipping (130), Brewer's (10), Lark (50), Black-throated (54), White-crowned (68), and Dark-eyed Junco (14). No Black-chinned Sparrows nor Lark Buntings were found.

A nice list of grosbeaks and buntings included 123 Black-headed Grosbeaks (new high), but no Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were seen. N. Cardinal, Pyrrhuloxia, and Blue Grosbeak rounded out the list, all at new high counts, while 72 Lazuli Buntings was amazing, and two Indigo Bunting added spice to the list. Nine species in the icterid (blackbird) family were counted, including the three orioles—Hooded, Bullock's, and Scott's—and both Bronzed and Brown-headed Cowbirds. House Sparrows, House Finches, and Lesser Goldfinches all came to feeders in good numbers. Last, but not least, were 4 Red Crossbills (compared to 44 last year), and 226 Pine Siskins (compared to 11 last year), nicely illustrating the irruptive nature of these birds as winter visitors. No American Goldfinch was found this year. We counted a total of 5531 individuals, slightly more than last year.

Compiler: Erika Wilson

## Hummingbird Feeders May Be Dangerous For Hummers

Who would have guessed that sugar water feeders could make their intended beneficiaries vulnerable to predation? Certainly not I, as I sat on my porch in the Huachuca foothills, reading, on the morning of May 29. A “whap, whap, whap” sound attracted my attention to an oak tree, where a flycatcher was knocking a prey item against a branch. The bird’s large, presumably insect meal appeared to be something akin to a grasshopper or praying mantis, but what exactly was it?

A better view through binoculars revealed the unfortunate victim to have feathers and tiny, Passerine feet. which were being vigorously pummeled against the tree. In the next approximately 5 minutes I was able to compare the bird’s size, rusty tail, yellow belly and grey chest with illustrations in my bird field guide and come up with an identification of Brown-crested Flycatcher. The last, pesky wing feathers refused to detach from the victim, and the Flycatcher eventually downed the carcass, feathers and all. Something stringy (a toe? a tiny talon?) dangled from the tip of the bird’s beak for a few moments before disappearing down the hatch.

Ben Feltner and Mike Guest helped corroborate my observation, and informed me that it was a rare sighting. It seems that Brown-crested Flycatchers may stake out hummingbird feeders when large insects are scarce. Obviously I’m going to have to stay indoors to get any serious reading done, but that won’t keep me from spending time watching the drama that’s going on outside when books and magazines get boring. Maybe next time, I’ll witness the capture. Now, that would be a sight!

-Virginia Bealer

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY:  \$20 New Member  \$30 Two Years  \$35 Renewal  \$15 Seniors

Make checks payable to: National Audubon Society

FRIENDS OF HUACHUCA AUDUBON SOCIETY:  \$10 Year - Individual Member  \$15 Year - Household

Make checks payable to: Huachuca Audubon Society

TOTAL: \$ \_\_\_\_\_



Mail all applications to: Huachuca Audubon Society • P.O. Box 63 • Sierra Vista, AZ 85636-0063

*Please get involved with Huachuca Audubon Society!*

Check your area of interest:  Publicity  Programs  Conservation  Hospitality  Board of Directors

### **Audubon Adventures: An Opportunity to Participate in Environmental Education**

If you've ever wanted to share your appreciation for the natural environment with youngsters by stimulating their curiosity and discovery of nature, here's your chance. Audubon Adventures is a nationally acclaimed environmental education program of informational brochures, posters, activities and action tips geared for grades 3 - 6.

Teachers who receive the kit get a guide, resource manual and a one-year subscription to Audubon Magazine. Each classroom kit contains materials for 32 students, at a cost of \$45, which includes shipping.

Subject matter and activities in the kits are in alignment with national science and language arts standards. Millions of school children have participated in this program since its inception in 1984.

Following are just two among the many accolades the program has received from teachers. These and other information about Audubon Adventures are posted at the website: [www.audubon.org/educate/aa/](http://www.audubon.org/educate/aa/).

"I have been using the Audubon Adventures educational materials for many years and have always found them to be well designed and appropriate to the educational needs of my students. Young minds always seem to be eager to learn all they can about nature. Audubon Adventures can motivate even the most reluctant learners. "

-Susan Campbell, Fourth Grade, Webutuck Elementary, New York.

"Audubon Adventures reading materials and lesson plans help students understand and respect the natural world around them. We are matching the kit materials with our sixth grade science curriculum. "

-Pasadena Unified School District K-12, Program Specialist, Pasadena, CA

Huachuca Audubon has a list of local teachers who have used Audubon Adventures in the past, and would like to continue to do so, plus several others who would like to receive a package. If you would like to donate a kit to any of these teachers, please send your check to our treasurer, Phil Tucker, HAS, P.O. Box 63, Sierra Vista, AZ 85636-0063. Your donation to Huachuca Audubon for this kit is tax deductible.

If you would like a particular teacher in our area to receive a kit, please include the following information with your payment: a. school name and mailing address, b. teacher's full name and c. grade taught.

Please address any other questions regarding this education outreach project to Sally Rosen at [azcatsally@aol.com](mailto:azcatsally@aol.com).

## Huachuca Audubon Summer Field Trip Reports



### HAS Trip Report: 14 July 2008 at Ash Canyon B&B

Seven HAS members and one guest from the Northern Virginia Audubon Society met at Mary Jo Ballator's garden in Ash Canyon on 14 July 2008 to watch hummingbirds. Our tally was 27 species, with five species of hummers.

Mary Jo's native plantings were in full boom, so the hummers were easily seen at both flowers and feeders. The showy Broad-billed Hummingbirds were ever present, their tails shivering briefly each time they landed. The smaller Black-chinned Hummingbirds dashed in and out, tails pumping, trying to avoid the larger Anna's Hummingbirds. One male of this latter species had a full helmet and gorget of intense rose, burnished with gold. After waiting patiently for over two hours, we were rewarded with a female Lucifer Hummingbird, with her down-curved bill and facial stripes. The last to arrive was a brilliant male Rufous Hummingbird. Much to our surprise, no Magnificent Hummingbirds came to the garden during the morning.

Other birds of interest during the morning included a family of Gambel's Quail, with the chicks mere balls of fluff, and a male Eastern Bluebird that came into the water drip at close quarters. A pair of Black-headed Grosbeaks were equally close and confiding among the other expected species at seed and suet feeders. Finally, a female Bronzed Cowbird, an uncommon bird, made a brief appearance.

Report by Erika Wilson

### Carr Canyon and Comfort Spring, 8 June 2008

Seventeen HAS members and visitors enjoyed fine canyon and montane birding on a warm, late spring day. For the first two hours, we split into two groups to try out a bird monitoring protocol proposed by Glenn Frederick, a wildlife biologist with the Forest Service, for a study to begin next year on the effect of fuel treatments in the Huachucas on wildlife, including cavity nesting birds. We then drove up the reef seeking cooler weather for the remainder of the field trip. Highlights included a red-morph Northern Pygmy-Owl and Buff-breasted Flycatcher.

With Glenn Frederick of the Forest Service joining us for the first part of this field trip, he began with a brief introduction to the objectives of a prospective study to be lead by the Forest Service to determine the effects of fuels reduction (thinning the forest, prescribed burns, etc) on cavity-nesting birds (especially Whiskered Screech-Owl and Lucy's Warbler), as well as a host of other neotropical migrants, game birds, and other wildlife. He then went on to describe the proposed survey protocol and methods for monitoring wildlife. Thereafter, we broke into two groups to try out the protocol as we birded the riparian corridor and adjacent meadow up to Carr House.

Erika Wilson shared her knowledge of bird vocalizations and behavior as we identified birds and evidence of potential breeding. We saw and heard Acorn and Arizona Woodpecker, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, White-winged Dove, Bewick's Wren, Scott's Oriole, and Mexican Jay's, among other birds. The highlight for our group was when Erika found a Hutton's Vireo nest in an Emory oak at the edge of the meadow.



After our two groups completed a trial of the bird monitoring protocol, we reassembled at the Perimeter Trail parking lot to divide into groups to carpool up to Reef Townsite Campground. The campground itself had many American Robins, Western Wood-Pewees, and Black-headed Grosbeaks. Along the dirt road traversing the slope to Ramsey Vista Campground, we added singing Greater Pewee, Yellow-eyed Juncos, and Plumbeous Vireos, plus a target bird, namely Buff-breasted Flycatcher, which proved to give only a fleeting glimpse as it moved through the forest.

As we descended the Comfort Spring trail, we met up with Erika Wilson and Alan Blixt who went ahead of us onto the reef. They shared their excitement of seeing a red-morph **Northern Pygmy-Owl**. They told us where to find the location marked by a cairn they built. Sure enough, we found this lovely owl, a treat to see one so well during the day. At the lush setting of the rushing creek, we found a pair of Painted Redstarts attempting to feed young. The size of our group seemed to keep them from visiting their nestlings, so we backed off to give them some space. We heard Broad-tailed Hummingbirds whizzing by through the trees. Western Tanager joined the chorus of Steller's Jays, grosbeaks, and other birds. Erika reported that they had heard Elegant Trogon in the steep canyon below too.

We plan to have a future program describing the study and offering next spring subsequent field trips oriented to training interested birders in carrying out the protocol. If you are interested in being added to a list of volunteers who might wish to participate, please send e-mail to [weissler@aves.org](mailto:weissler@aves.org).

Report by Robert Weissler

### HAS Field Trip: Patagonia, 29 May 08

Seven HAS members had a rewarding day in Santa Cruz Co. on 29 May 08, tallying 64 species. Our first destination was the TNC's Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, where we walked the loop trail. Highlights here were: a) Great Blue Herons at their nests containing large youngsters, indicating a successful breeding season; b) wonderful views of soaring Gray Hawks, including both adults and immature birds; and c) close, multiple views of Phainopepla, Blue Grosbeak, and Yellow-breasted Chat. We were also treated to a great variety of flycatchers, to wit, Western Wood-Pewee, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Vermilion Flycatcher, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and Brown-crested Flycatcher. We spent some time sorting out the last three species by call, having the luxury of Brown-crested being the most abundant of the three Myiarchus species. A Bronzed Cowbird was seen briefly, while Brown-headed Cowbirds were all too common.

Our next stop was at Paton's garden, with its stocked feeders that attract a wonderful variety of hummingbirds, fruit eaters, and seed eaters. Good birds spotted here included Violet-crowned, Broad-billed, and Black-chinned Hummingbirds, N. Beardless-Tyrannulet, Thick-billed Kingbird, and a late White-crowned Sparrow. Lunch time found us eating in the central park, where we were entertained by noisy Great-tailed Grackles.

On the spur of the moment, we drove west to Kino Springs, hoping to find whistling-ducks on the ponds there. Instead we found a handsome male Blue-winged Teal, the sole duck, and a shy one at that. Other birds of interest here were a) Great Egret at a nest with young; b) a Gray Hawk at its nest;

c) several Common Ground-Doves; d) and three species of swallow. Heading back, we stopped at the Patagonia Roadside Rest, where we had our best views of Gray Hawk for the day, an immaculate adult perched just over the road. It was pretty hot and still by this time, so a brief view of White-throated Swifts was our last good bird of the trip.

Report by Erika Wilson



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