



DESERT RIVERS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Educating and inspiring our community to protect and preserve birds, wildlife, and their habitats

VOLUME 3 - SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER



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Pyrrhuloxia : Cindy Marple Photo

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Mike Rupp

The Chandler Family Birdwalks are increasing in attendance, the Gilbert Birdwalks are seeing a lot of people become familiar with local birds and birdwatching, our financial condition is good, and attendance at the last couple monthly meetings has been the highest ever. If these things are an indicator of the chapter's progress since receiving its charter only six months ago, we are on a roll. (Of course we had been working for almost two years before)

But there are other parameters by which we should assess Desert River's success, one of which would be, what have we done to impact local conservation issues?

I believe that the hundreds of new birdwalkers that we've taught and inspired have in small ways had their lives changed, and our newsletter and other materials are reaching lots of people, but I want to also point out that the chapter is increasingly engaging in local issues and hopefully will be able to influence conservation outcomes as we chart our advocacy course.

In our last issue, I reported on the Verde River water issue. The City of Prescott received permits from the AZ Dept. of Water Resources to proceed with the Big Chino pipeline plan. Now, I can report that Salt River Project, an opponent of the plan, has filed suit against the City in order to protect its own water rights. By the time you receive this newsletter a rally was held in Prescott to focus more public attention on the issue, and the effects this pipeline and groundwater pumping most likely will have on the Verde River. As mentioned in the last newsletter, I urge you to become familiar with the issue and if in agreement, sign on to a petition originated by the CBD. Go to <http://salsa.democracynation.org/o/2167/t/7011/petition.jsp?petition.KEY=1279> to see the petition. This is one small way that you can personally be involved with this important issue.

In another river related story, Dr. Stephan Sommer from NAU, who spoke at our February meeting, has written about the restoration of Fossil Creek on page 3. It's an inspiring story about how imperiled creeks and rivers can be saved through cooperation between all stakeholders.

Cindy Marple has focused on the Covid family of birds for this issue's Family Album, and provided a great cover image of a Pyrrhuloxia, which are sometimes seen around the valley but are much more common to the south.

Along with the chapter growth mentioned above, comes an increasing amount of opportunity to serve our community through educational, recreational, and advocacy programming. We have experienced an increase in requests for activities and events in each of these areas, and are in need of both a financial boost, and volunteers to staff our programs. For this reason, April has been designated "Membership Month", and over the next six weeks we will be asking members to assist the chapter in very simple ways, but ways that will introduce Desert Rivers to many more people who may join with us as new members. I ask that each of you please consider introducing a few friends to Desert Rivers through a forthcoming email announcement that you can easily forward to your friends, and by asking these same friends to come along on a field trip or our general meeting in April. We are optimistically aiming at getting 50 new members to join with us, but this will only happen if you take a moment to share about the chapter with like-minded friends. Thanks for supporting your chapter in this first-time membership drive!

The sun, with all those planets revolving around it and dependent on it, can still ripen a bunch of grapes as if it had nothing else in the universe to do. ~Galileo

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars. ~Walt Whitman

AUDUBON AT HOME

Krys Hammers

Be Part of the Solution

All of us use fossil fuels every day — for heating and cooling our homes, driving our cars, generating the electricity to power our lights and appliances, and more. In the process we produce the greenhouse gases that are primarily responsible for global warming. Fortunately, each of us also has the power to reduce to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels. Here are some of the most important ways we can all make a difference:

Consider driving less by taking public transportation, walking, bicycling, or carpooling. Drive a more energy-efficient vehicle. When you drive, follow the speed limit and drive at a consistent speed. Take your car in for regular tune-ups and keep your tires properly inflated. Take off any rooftop carriers when not in use.



Plant leafy trees around your house to provide windbreaks and summer shade. Each year, the average yard tree cleans 330 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. An average tree absorbs ten pounds of pollutants from the air each year, including four pounds of ground level ozone and three pounds of particulates.

Try switching from conventional incandescent bulbs to energy-efficient compact fluorescents. Or better yet, try to maximize your use of natural sunlight for daytime lighting needs.



You can reduce your energy consumption a lot by using less hot water. Run your dishwasher only when full, and wash clothes in cold or warm water, never hot. They'll get just as clean! When it's time to replace your washing machine, choose a new high-efficiency front-loader.

You'll see great savings on water, electricity, and detergent, and you'll discover you can more safely wash delicate items, too.



New refrigerators use about 50% less energy than those made just 10-15 years ago. That's a big deal, considering that refrigerators account for between 10 and 15% of total home energy consumption. The next time you buy a new refrigerator or any major or even minor appliance look for the Energy Star label to be sure you're getting a high efficiency model. In the meantime, keep your refrigerator's

thermostat set to the recommended temperature and clean the condenser coil regularly.

Take every step possible to reduce excessive use of home heating and cooling. Try turning up the thermostat in the summer and turning it down a few degrees in the winter. If you have an automated thermostat, program it to adjust temperatures at nighttime. Try installing better insulation throughout the house. Seal up windows, close vents, and clean filters. If you really want to save energy, try to avoid using air conditioning on all but the very hottest days. You'd be amazed at how effective ceiling fans alone can be in making you feel cooler.



As much as possible, buy local produce and other goods. The fewer miles your produce has traveled, the less energy has been used for refrigeration and transportation. Shop at local "farmer's markets" if you can.

How much do your emissions add up to? You can calculate your household's greenhouse gas emissions by using a carbon calculator. Once you've calculated your impact, consider how you can cut back on your overall emissions. You'll be amazed how small steps add up to huge differences in our cumulative impact.



AUDUBON ON WIND TURBINES

Reprinted from National Audubon's website : www.audubon.org

Audubon strongly supports properly-sited wind power as a clean alternative energy source that reduces the threat of global warming. Wind power facilities should be planned, sited and operated to minimize negative impacts on bird and wildlife populations. Rationale: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has clearly stated that the impacts of climate change are here now and will get worse. [1] Scientists have found that climate change has already affected half of the world's wild species' breeding, distribution, abundance and survival rates. [2] By mid-century, the IPCC predicts that climate change may contribute to the extinction of 20-30 percent of all species on earth. In order to prevent species extinctions and other catastrophic impacts of climate change, scientists say we must reduce global warming emissions by at least 80 percent by 2050. Reducing pollution from fossil fuels to this degree will require rapidly expanding energy and fuel

"First, there is the power of the Wind, constantly exerted over the globe.... Here is an almost incalculable power at our disposal, yet how trifling the use we make of it! It only serves to turn a few mills, blow a few vessels across the ocean, and a few trivial ends besides. What a poor compliment do we pay to our indefatigable and energetic servant!"

Henry David Thoreau, from Paradise (To Be) Regained [1843]

efficiency, renewable energy and alternative fuels, and changes in land use, agriculture, and transportation. To avoid catastrophe, we need to do all of these. Wind power is an important part of the strategy to combat global warming. Wind power is currently the most economically competitive form of renewable energy. It provides nearly 15,000 megawatts of power in the United States, enough power for more than 3 million households, and could provide up to 20 percent of the country's electricity needs. Every megawatt-hour produced by wind energy avoids an average of 1,220 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions. If the United States obtains 20 percent of its electricity from wind power by 2020, it will reduce global warming emissions equivalent to taking 71 million cars off the road or planting 104 million acres of trees. Expanding wind power instead of fossil fuels also avoids the wildlife and human health impacts of oil and gas drilling, coal mining and fossil fuel burning. Protecting Birds and Wildlife: While Audubon strongly supports wind power and recognizes it will not be without some impact, production and transmission facilities must be planned, sited and operated in concert with other actions needed to minimize and mitigate their impacts on birds and other wildlife populations. Several federal and state laws require this and the long-term sustainability of the wind industry depends on it. Wind power facilities impact birds from direct collisions with turbines and related facilities, such as power lines. Wind power facilities can also degrade or destroy habitat, cause disturbance and displacement, and disrupt important ecological links. These impacts can be avoided or significantly reduced, however, with proper siting, operation and mitigation. Audubon supports the adoption of federal and state guidelines on the study, siting, operation and mitigation of wind power. Guidelines should provide developers, permitting agencies and conservation groups with the legal, technical and practical steps needed to minimize impacts on birds and other wildlife. Guidelines should provide the following essential elements:

- Minimum pre-permitting study requirements and guidance on study methods, frequency and acceptable data sources to ensure that wind power

is sited in appropriate locations

- Clearly delineated siting criteria that designate areas where wind power should not be allowed, such as Important Bird Areas, major migratory corridors, wilderness areas, national parks, wildlife refuges, and other sensitive habitat such as wetlands and riparian corridors

- Clearly defined monitoring and mitigation requirements in permits, with periodic reviews and requirements for adaptive management if impacts significantly exceed levels allowed by permit

- Guidance on cumulative population impacts assessment and mitigation.

Audubon also encourages wind developers and permitting agencies to consult with wildlife experts, including Audubon staff and local chapters, to help inform study and siting decisions. To view existing state guidelines, see: http://www.fishwildlife.org/agency_science_Siting_wind.html.

[1] Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, published on April 6, 2007 by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change at <http://www.ipcc.ch>. People from over 130 countries contributed to the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report over the previous 6 years. These people included more than 2500 scientific expert reviewers, more than 800 contributing authors, and more than 450 lead authors. [2] Camille Parmesan and Gary Yohe, University of Texas at Austin, as cited in Audubon November-December 2007.

VERDE RIVER UPDATE

The following is a summary of recent events concerning the Verde River water issue, written by Joanne Oellers from the Center for Biological Diversity. You can see more at : <http://savetheverde.org>

January 28th Verde River Awareness Day made a big splash.

It started with a downtown Prescott rally with music, speeches, theater, and more than 60 attendees. At the courthouse, a cardboard river and bulldozer, river songs, and a human-sized Bald Eagle raised the eyebrows of the lunch-time crowd. Then the Bald Eagle and supporters walked to City Hall to present a preliminary set of Keep the Verde River Flowing petitions. The evening event "Big Chino Pipeline and the Verde River - Your Water, Your River, Your Future" featured eight experts covering need-to-know topics on this hot issue.

See January 29 Daily Courier article "Groups Rally for Pipeline Mitigation Plan" for details of this fun and successful event.

February 25th Endorsement and Petition Signature Presentation to Upper Verde River Watershed Protection Coalition made a powerful statement. The Center of Biological Diversity, Sierra Club, Paulden Community Organization, and Citizens Water Advocacy Group cooperatively read the Big Chino Water Pumping and Pipeline(s) Position Statement with twenty-one endorsers, including your group's name. Here is the position statement including the updated endorser list. Next we presented Chairman Karen Fann with over 500 pages of the Keep the Verde River Flowing Petition with over 19,000 signatures.

According to the February 26 Daily Courier article:

We "want the mitigation plan to detail how the municipalities will avoid damaging the Upper Verde River that originates near Paulden."

Next up: presentations at Prescott, Prescott Valley, and Chino Valley council meetings. We invite your participation in future events.

www.desertriversaudubon.org 2

After 100 Years in a Pipe, Fossil Creek is Back!

Dr. Stefan Sommer, Director of Education, Meriam-Powell Center, Northern Arizona University

Many said it couldn't be done, but Fossil Creek is flowing free after 100 years of captivity. Birds and many other species of Central Arizona are celebrating. There are not many free flowing streams left in Arizona and that is why the story of Fossil Creek is so important. Over a period of 15 years and through much controversy many Arizona citizens, including many Audubon members, worked to bring back this beautiful travertine stream. In 2007 the Meriam-Powell Center at Northern Arizona University was given the opportunity to tell the story of Fossil Creek's restoration in the award-winning documentary, *A River Reborn: The Restoration of Fossil Creek*. www.RiverReborn.org Two years in the making, this public television production tells the remarkable story of the decommissioning of Arizona's oldest hydroelectric facility and the restoration of Fossil Creek, a critical watershed in central Arizona. Fossil Creek is among the brightest jewels of Arizona's Rim Country. It stands out as one of the last free-flowing, year-around streams in Arizona, a magnificent ribbon of life in the high desert.

The restoration of this critical watershed has drawn wide attention, not only in Arizona but across the U.S. "Vital lessons are being learned at Fossil Creek," says producer Paul Bockhorst, "lessons that can be applied to environmental restoration projects elsewhere."

A River Reborn is narrated by Ted Danson. The well-known actor grew up in Flagstaff and has a deep interest in environmental issues in his native state. In the narration, Danson says that, "The Fossil Creek story provides a beacon of hope and an inspiring model for the restoration of degraded streams and waterways." Danson also tells viewers that, "Even now, as a work in progress, Fossil Creek stands out as one of the most important and promising environmental restoration projects in the history of the American Southwest."

As described in the documentary, the restoration of Fossil Creek is emblematic of a far-reaching change in the public attitude toward rivers and dams. Today, people in the Southwest and throughout the country are reassessing the use of precious water resources. They are seeking to balance the fulfillment of human needs with protection of the natural systems that support human life. This includes safeguarding rare, threatened, and endangered species of plants and animals. Fossil Creek is a focal point for this reassessment, and it reveals both the challenges and opportunities associated with riparian restoration.

"The Fossil Creek story provides a beacon of hope and an inspiring model for the restoration of degraded streams and waterways. It stands out as one of the most important and promising environmental restoration projects."
Ted Danson

Arizona has 36 native fish species. We have so greatly reduced our State's surface waters that 75% of those species are now listed as endangered by State and Federal agencies. One species already went extinct in the mid 1990's. Fossil Creek is prime habitat for native fish because of its strong, steady flow of about 43 cubic feet per second and because of the rich diversity of pools and riffles provided by the newly forming travertine dams. It is now provides a last refuge for 10 species of native Arizona fish.

Fossil Creek is currently a candidate for Wild & Scenic River status and we hope that the US Congress will pass this Bill in the very near future. This legislation does not come with funding allocations, but it will help Fossil Creek to vie for attention and funding by the responsible state and federal agencies as well as from foundations and other sources. The Senate has already passed this Wild & Scenic designation for Fossil Creek as part of S.22, the bi-partisan Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. Please urge your Representative to pass the equivalent Bill in the House!

A River Reborn chronicles both the natural and human history of the scenic waterway. It introduces scientists who have studied Fossil Creek's outstanding biological and geological features, environmental advocates who have fought

for its restoration, federal and state resource managers who are working to establish it as a refuge for threatened native fish, and officials at Arizona Public Service, the utility that ran the hydroelectric facilities for a century.

One of the most surprising aspects of the story told in *A River Reborn* is that the decision to decommission was reached without litigation. A number of private environmental organizations, state and federal agencies, and Arizona Public Service reached a comprehensive agreement through constructive engagement and dialogue. The result is a notable "win-win" settlement that many now see as a new model for the collaborative resolution of environmental disputes. In explaining his decision to support decommissioning of the hydroelectric facilities, William Post, the Chairman of Arizona Public Service, says in the documentary that, "As we looked at the opportunity to give the residents of the state of Arizona a perennial stream in the desert, there is no option to that. We can find other ways to generate electricity. We cannot find other perennial streams in the desert."

"The decision to decommission had many facets to it. And as we looked at the opportunity to give the residents of the state of Arizona a perennial stream in the desert, there is no option to that. We can find other ways to generate electricity. We cannot find other perennial streams in the desert."

Bill Post, APS

Fossil Creek is also noteworthy for the important role that science has played in the restoration process. Jane Marks, a stream ecologist at Northern Arizona University, tells viewers that, "When I came on board, there was already one report on the table that was done by an environmental consulting firm that suggested that full flows would actually hurt native fish. And so I put together a team of scientists to evaluate what would be the effects of returning full flow on native fish, on the insects, on some of the threatened, endangered species."

Original research conducted by Marks and other scientists demonstrated the negative impact of the dam and water diversion on native fish populations. Their research also predicted recovery of those populations after decommissioning and resumption of full flow. Ongoing research also plays an important role in the adaptive management model being used by state and federal agencies with management responsibilities in the Fossil Creek watershed. Experience gained at Fossil Creek shows that good science is an indispensable ingredient in wise management.

A River Reborn is a joint project of Northern Arizona University, the Museum of Northern Arizona, and Paul Bockhorst Productions. The one-hour documentary

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Chandler Family Birdwalks Program



The Chandler Family Birdwalks have been underway for about four months, and the number of attendees has been steadily growing. With the help of the Environmental Education Center at Veterans' Oasis Park, Desert Rivers is providing birdwatching opportunities to Chandler residents, much as we have been doing in the Town of Gilbert. We anticipate that this birdwalk program will grow in size and equal or surpass attendance numbers at Gilbert.

Liberty Wildlife has again committed demonstration raptors and volunteers to accompany Desert Rivers to each of the Birdwalks. As always, their raptors are a terrific draw and a big hit with the kids who attend. The Chandler Family Birdwalks are held every first Saturday of the month, September through April, at 9AM, and run until 1:00. We provide free loaner binoculars, expert guides, and teaching materials, in addition to

books and nature items for sale in at display tent. Veteran's Oasis Park is located at 4050 E. Chandler Heights Rd, just east of Lindsay Rd on Chandler Heights. We start the walks near the Environmental Education Center, and the Center is open as well to make available restrooms and various nature displays. You can learn more about Oasis Park and their services at : www.chandler.gov/default.aspx?pageid=682

Though new, the site is attracting interesting bird species, like a flock of 30 Redheads this winter on one of the ponds. As foliage and trees mature, this site will surely produce a bird list numbering around 200, as the Gilbert Preserve has. What a terrific place to see and perhaps photograph birds this is! Desert Rivers will be leading groups as well as families, such as the Scouts, Life-long Learning groups, large employer groups, homeschool groups, and special request events.

As these requests increase we will of course need volunteers to assist in all aspects of these activities. If you live in or near Chandler, please consider coming out once a month to help with set up or tear down, leading groups around the ponds, or manning the display tent. You'll find that providing an opportunity for families and others to experience "nature", some for the first time, is a rewarding experience. We will train you wherever needed.

Bottom left-
Laura Irving,
with "Acoma", Liberty's
Red-tailed Hawk

Right-
Linda Scott, with "Elliot",
an American Kestrel
(perched), and "Lance", a
Harris's Hawk.

Other raptors that can be seen are a Great Horned Owl, a Burrowing Owl, a Golden Eagle, a Peregrine Falcon, Western Screech Owl, and a Turkey Vulture.



Here's a comment from a mom who brought her family to a birdwalk, " We had never looked at birds before, but I thought this would be a fun weekend thing to do for my kids. Since coming to the birdwalk, birdwatching is all my kids talk about, and we just *have* to do it every weekend now. My kids are making bird lists and very aware of all the birds they see at home, school, and on our own bird trips."

Desert Rivers believes that providing these kinds of nature experiences sets many families and kids on the road to environmental awareness and an appreciation for our birds and habitats.



BIRDING ARIZONA'S "WEST COAST"

Article and Photos by Mark Stevenson-Reprinted
with permission from the AZFO website www.azfo.org

The lower Colorado River forms much of Arizona's western border and a coastline of sorts. Set amidst the fascinating and severe lower Sonoran desert habitat zone, the river, though severely altered in the 20th century, forms a major bird migration corridor and provides habitats for some species seldom found elsewhere in the state. This includes "pelagic" birds, with records of boobies, jaegers and storm-petrels in summer and diving ducks and loons in winter. If you want to broaden your birding horizons or enhance your state list, trips to Arizona's West Coast are a must. (The Yuma to Cibola NWR stretch, in extreme southwest Arizona, is also fascinating and merits its own coverage.)

Most birders visit Arizona's West Coast between August and April stopping at various locations from Parker in the south to Bullhead City in the north. Historically, August and September have been the best months for truly pelagic species, especially if a hurricane has entered the Sea of Cortez. But those are HOT months. Lake Havasu City and Bullhead City often vie for the nation's hot spot "honors". Winter brings snowbirds in droves. Spring break brings



drunken college revelers and high room rates.

Because of geography (you will be looking west much of the time), most of these areas are best birded in the early morning. Try to check

early the areas that draw afternoon crowds, before the masses rev up their power boats. Paradoxically, the birding below Parker Dam is often better when boating is at its daily peak and the wintering ducks are driven to safe haven below the Dam.

Without doubt, the reference to the area's birds is *Birds of the Lower Colorado River Valley* by K.V. Rosenberg, et al (Univ. of AZ Press, 1991). Covering both sides of the river, the book offers site guides, species profiles, ecological information, and more. It is required reading for any serious Arizona field ornithologist and for anyone who wishes to learn more about bird life and habitat changes on the Colorado River. The bar graphs and species accounts are indispensable to those who wish to be informed birders.

For determining state and county borders, it is important to remember that the state line is generally in the middle of the historic, pre-dam river channel, even where the river has shifted or been drowned. The La Paz-Mohave County line follows the historic curving channel of the Bill Williams River under Lake Havasu. If in doubt, consult a map. A spotting scope is a highly advantageous accessory for viewing birds on the lakes.

This travelogue primarily covers sites along the Parker-to-Bullhead City State Route 95 corridor. Emphasis is placed more on birding locations than on expected species. The more productive areas are given bold face highlighting. Visiting just the highlighted areas may be done in one long hurried day, but it is more enjoyable as a 2 to 3 day trip. Milepost numbers are used so that the directions are less direction-of-travel-dependent. Parker is 170 miles from Phoenix, 280 miles from Tucson, and about 250 miles from Flagstaff. Kingman (an access point to Bullhead City) is 140 miles from Flagstaff, 190 miles from Phoenix, and 300 miles from Tucson via Wickenburg.

This travelogue is intended for use only by individuals who assume full responsibility for their own safety and behavior. It will not keep you out of trouble. It will not be entirely accurate. It will not update spontaneously. Please notify the author of any changes that you encounter. It may not be

BILL WILLIAMS ARM OF LAKE HAVASU

Historically, the Bill Williams River joined the Colorado River north of present day Parker Dam. This area, now part of Lake Havasu, is called the



Bill Williams Arm of Lake Havasu. To bird various spots along the Bill Williams Arm, return to SR 95 and drive north. At milepost 159.4 turn left and proceed to the first stop at the Havasu Springs Marina Resort. Stop in at the rental office and ask for a free pass to the "Public Fishing Area", which has extensive views of Lake Havasu. Once you have a pass, they will raise the draw gate for you to enter. They might also direct you to a boat rental if you wish to boat around the lake.

Back again on SR 95 heading north, there are viewpoints on the left overlooking the lake at milepost 160.3 and 160.6. The Bill Williams National Wildlife Refuge office at milepost 160.9 has recently-improved lake access, trails, a canoe launch site, outhouses and ramadas. It makes a very good viewing area for the lake and is now open 7 days a week. The parking for another very good viewpoint for the Bill Williams Delta at the east end of the Bill Williams Arm of Lake Havasu is on the left just past the large Spanish-style house at milepost 161.1 (and across from Hillcrest Bay Road). Park in the paved lot and walk the use path out to the "No Fires/ No Camping" sign to scope the delta and open water. At this viewpoint, nearly any water bird is possible. Aechmophorous grebes, ducks, cormorants and gulls are likely. Another hidden viewpoint is just up the road on the left just past a little hill at an easy-to-miss rock wall and path.

On the right, at milepost 161.3 is the graded dirt Bill Williams Road. It heads east through the Refuge along the Bill Williams River to lush riparian habitat. This road washed out at 3.3 miles in 1993 and damaged again more recently. For a period it was closed entirely until late 2006. It provides access to a lush riparian corridor set amidst the rocky desert mountains where many rare vagrant birds, seen and unseen, have paused. Much of green areas are protected by dense undergrowth and tamarisk tangles that must be conquered before gaining river access. Once reaching the river, the going is said to be better. A much more pleasant option is to skip the thrashing altogether. Drive along the desert hillsides to the parking space before the gate at 3.3 miles just before the sign that recommends using 4-wheel drive. Walk the sandy path that cuts through the cottonwood, willow and mesquite forest as far as your interest, safety and water supply allow.

SR 95 crosses over the Bill Williams River at milepost 161.6. Just north of the bridge is a parking area on the east side with only fair views of the backwater and its cattails. Farther SR 95 is the well-signed left turn for Cattail Cove State Park (fee) and the private Sand Point Marina. In addition to lake views and some scattered trees, both have a history of occasional rare water birds. For park entry, pay at the entrance. At the Marina, request permission to bird at the marina store.

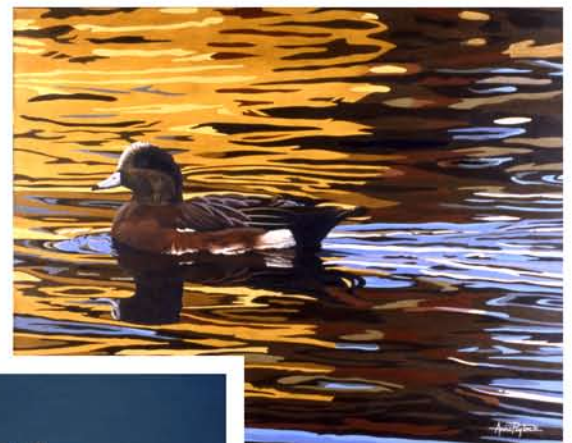
After that, the next main birding attractions are located in Lake Havasu City, an almost mirage-like rapidly-expanding resort/retirement town with flocks of snowbirds in winter and Bacchanalian collegians during the extended spring break period.

Editor's Note : Mark's article on the AZFO website covers five areas on the river, with information on many specific locations- see the full article on the AZFO website at : www.azfo.org



Craig Fischer

THE ART OF *Anne Peyton*



There are two criteria for painting that Anne Peyton places in each of her finished pieces: One is that the final image shows respect for the subject; the second is that viewers can learn something after studying the art.

They are two principles that the artist has carried over to her new career as a wildlife artist, concentrating on birds and avian art.

For 20 years, Anne was one of the most sought after motorsports artists, accurately depicting all types of racing vehicles that drew the attention of drivers, sponsors and enthusiasts alike.

Today, she has turned her eye and hand to the natural world. "In a way, it's closing a circle. Birds and other wildlife were the subjects of my earliest paintings. My grandfather had a number of feeders at his Fort Collins (Colorado) home and he was very proud of the birds that visited his yard. I would spend several hours at the table sketching and painting the birds I saw.

"Painting birds and racing cars may seem to be on the opposite end of the spectrum, but in truth there is a lot of similarity. Both can be brilliantly colored or purposefully drab. Both are technically difficult. The artist must be able to capture and represent the proper attitude of a car at speed or a bird in its natural setting. If you're not correct, there is always someone – a racer or another birder – who will correct you."

An avid birder, Anne has spent countless hours viewing birds around Arizona and the Southwest. "Observing birds and their habits is a way to discover more about their nature – the

motions a Sandhill Crane makes during preening, the way a Golden Eagle walks along the ground instead of hopping or the taking a short flight, or the frantic scolding of a House Wren guarding its nest hole. Each of these actions means something for the bird and it is these actions and their meanings that I want to

convey to the viewer." Anne dedicates several hours each month to volunteering at Liberty Wildlife, a Scottsdale-based rehabilitation and education organization that treats injured animals. Rarely, a bird cannot be released back into the wild. Zoos claim some while others become avian ambassadors for their species at Liberty's presentations. Anne's specialty is assisting hawks and owls to become accustomed to people in educational and group settings.

"Each bird is an individual and behaves differently. Even among the same species, each bird has a distinct personality. That surprised me when I first started working with these amazing creatures, but it is an aspect that has served me well in the field and in my artwork."

Anne Peyton is based in Ahwatukee Foothills, Arizona. She is a Signature Member of the Society of Animal Artists since 2000; a member of the National Oil and Acrylic Painters' Society since 2001 and was honored with Signature Artist's Guild status in 2004; a Signature member of the Artists for Conservation since 2005; an associate member of the National Society of Painters in Casein and Acrylics since 2005; and a Signature member in the American Academy of Women Artists in 2006 and named a board member of the AAWA in 2007. Her art can be seen and purchased through her website at www.annepeytonart.com Anne is a member of Desert Rivers, and brings live raptors to several DRAS events, most often the monthly Family Birdwalks.

THE "POOR MAN'S"

OWL FIX

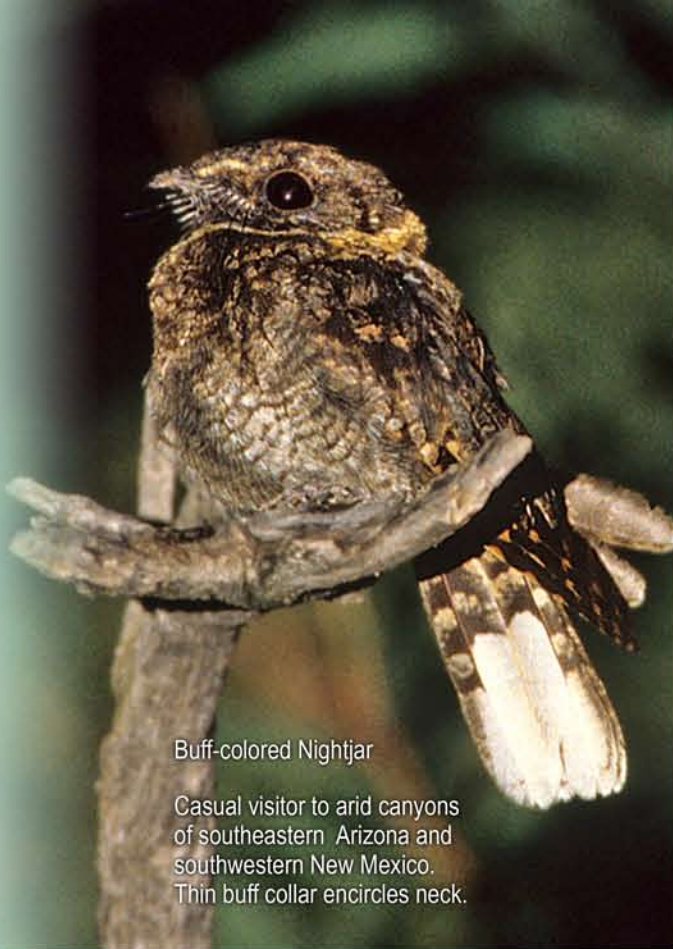
Article and Photos : Jim Burns

If you're an owl lover, as I am, and you're having trouble, as I do, seeing or even hearing enough of your favorite family to assuage your own need, don't forget there's another family of birds out there which is fascinating to many birders for many of the same reasons owls are. And the best season to look, and listen, is on the horizon.

Whichever snicker-inducing name you call it--goatsucker, nightjar, bullbat--the Caprimulgid family has much in common with the nightstalkers we call owls. Like the owls, the goatsuckers are heard far more often than seen and sometimes difficult to identify when they are seen, but quite readily identified by voice. Physical similarities to the owls are their cryptic coloration, large eyes, and the large heads to accommodate those eyes, the latter two adaptations serving well crepuscular/nocturnal species that have evolved to capture prey in dim light.

There are dissimilarities as well. Goatsucker eyes are on the sides of their heads, not forward facing like those of the owls, and they have small beaks, short legs, and weak feet, all form-follows-function characteristics of a family evolved to prey on small insects rather than mammals and other birds. The scientific name of the family, Caprimulgus, is Latin for "goat milker," and comes from the ancient Greek legend, propagated by Aristotol and Pliny, that these birds sucked the udders of goats, by night, causing them to go blind--perhaps the original urban legend.

Seven members of the Caprimulgid family regularly occur in North America. Five of these, the nightjars, are typically identified by voice only and not well seen, but the other two, the night-hawks, are visually familiar to most birders as they are observed hawking insects near bright highway or athletic field lights shortly after sundown in warm weather or on migration. Both nighthawks, distinguished from the nightjars by their long, pointed wings and crepuscular feeding habits, are readily found in Arizona, Lessers from mid-March to mid-October, Commons from late May through September.



Buff-colored Nightjar

Casual visitor to arid canyons of southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico. Thin buff collar encircles neck.

Look for Lesser Nighthawks right here in the Valley on day roosts (on the ground under bushes) in places like Papago Park, the Phoenix Mountain Preserve, or the Salome highway thrasher site. Watch for pre-migratory aggregations of this species in late summer near dawn and dusk around bodies of water such as the lake at Fountain Hills or the stock ponds in the far west Valley. The field mark is the white bar close to the tip of the wing.

Common Nighthawks, though rarely seen in the Valley even in migration, (September is the best month) are common summer residents throughout Arizona's mountains from 4000 up to 9000 feet. In the Sky Islands of the southeast or in the White Mountains listen for them "peenting" as they fly over at sunset and watch for the white wingbar near the base of the primaries, further from the wingtip than that of the Lessers.

Common Nighthawk

(below)

L 9.5" WS 24" WT 2.2 oz

Widespread but generally declining. Hunts from dusk to dawn as well as by day during overcast periods. Especially conspicuous in cities and towns where it nests on flat roofs and hunts in brightly lit areas.



Whip-poor-will

(above)

L 9.75" WS 19" WT 2. oz

Well known if for no other reason than it's provocative name. Has become scarce in many regions. Favors dry woods; declining eastern population in deciduous or mixed woods. "Arizona" in pine-oak forests. Cryptic-roosts and nests on forest floor. A well known voice of the night.

Lesser Nighthawk

(below)

L 9" WS 22" WT 2 oz

A desert Nighthawk, characteristic of vast lowland creosote bush stands. Lesser flies low to ground, barely clearing tops of desert shrubbery. Wingbeats shallower than Common, sometimes seen in flocks.



Nightjar wings are shorter and more rounded than those of the nighthawks, an adaptation for hawking insects in dense vegetation, and their larger eyes, longer rictal bristles, and larger gapes allow them to hunt more exclusively at night than the nighthawks. Three of North America's five nightjar species are summer residents of Arizona and the most common of these, the Common Poorwill, is a common though seldom seen summer resident here in the Valley.

The delightful two syllable, onomatopoeic call of this species is a regularly heard and readily identifiable part of the evening chorus on the Sonoran Desert. Listen for this smallest of our Caprimulgids in the recreation areas along the Salt and Verde Rivers, in McDowell Mountain Park, and in the foothills of Mt. Ord and the Superstitions, and look for it's eyeshine and short-tailed, attenuated shape in the middle of the road in any of these areas.

Common Poorwills are known to enter a torpid state, not strictly hibernation, to conserve energy during inclement weather and periods of low insect availability. This allows some members of this species to arrive on territory early and stay later, and some will remain through mild winters. This may account for the road killed poorwill I found several years ago in late October on my bicycle commute through the Arcadia neighborhood in Phoenix.

A larger, less common nightjar, the Whip-poor-will, is at home, April through September, throughout Arizona's mountains from 5500 up to 9500 feet. Though Whips are better known and more commonly heard in the East, Arizona's subspecies is just as vocal and just as hard to find visually. The Whip-poor-will's signature onomatopoeic call is more ventriloquial than that of the poorwill, and I once had one calling loudly within thirty yards of me along the Vault Mine Trail in Madera Canyon and, though it never moved, I was unable to locate it in half an hour of searching. I have found two Whip-poor-will nests in Arizona, both in the Huachucas, one in Scheelite Canyon on bare rocks under an overhang, one in Sawmill Canyon on leaf litter under a bush.

Of added interest to listers is the fact that the call of our southwestern version of the Whip-poor-will has been transcribed not as "WHIP-poor-WILL," but as "purple-RIP"--different cadence, different accent, different tone. This is Caprimulgus arizonae and may eventually be split into a separate species from Caprimulgus vociferus. Though the two populations are nearly inseparable in the field other than by call, Arizona Whips have considerably less white in their tail, and the two subspecies, Mexican Whip-poor-Will and Northern Whip-poor-will to some, do not overlap.

Lastly, because it is only an occasional and local breeder just north of the Mexican border, but not least, because it is much sought by listers, is the Buff-collared Nightjar. Fairly common in Western Mexico, this Caprimulgid is referred to there as Cookacheea, a mnemonic for its staccato series of rising, accelerating chip notes frequently likened to the sound of a cricket--a very loud cricket sound that carries half a mile through the still desert night. The most recent hotspot for Buff-collareds has been California Gulch, an arid canyon in the Atascosa Mountains west of Nogales. If you are lucky enough to encounter one, the complete, bold, buff collar and the extensive white in the tail are diagnostic.

Common Poorwill

(below)

L 7.75" WS 17" WT 2 oz

Common in arid habitats throughout much of the west. Occurs in low deserts and grasslands but also well into mountains. Frequently seen on back roads around sunset. Can go into a depressed metabolic condition known as torpor.



EVENTS & FIELD TRIPS

APRIL MAY JUNE 2009

3-7 to 5/31, 2009 Spring Butterfly Exhibit at Desert Botanical Gardens
9:30Am to 5Pm Daily, \$3 admission fee in addition to DBG entrance fee. See info at : www.dbg.org

4/11/2009 Field Trip, Saturday, Catalina State Park, near Tucson. Kathe Anderson will be leading this trip to Catalina State park, info to follow soon. Reservations: Charles or Marion Saffell, marisaff@cox.net, 480- 668-9393

4/14/2009 General Membership Meeting.
Gilbert Community Center , Tuesday, 6:30PM 132 W. Bruce, Gilbert. South on Gilbert Rd., past Guadalupe, go over the RR Tracks, turn right at 2nd Street, go to end of street and drive into parking lot, building is on right. Join us before meetings for dinner at Joe's BBQ, 301 N. Gilbert Rd. at 5 pm. (Two blocks N. of the RR Tracks).

4/15-19/2009 Yuma Nature & Birding Festival
Hilton Garden Inn, downtown Yuma AZ, 928-376-0100
See : www.yumabirding.com

4/16/2009 Tucson Audubon Institute of Desert Ecology
See: www.tucsonaudubon.org

4/18/2009 Gilbert Family Birdwalks- SEC Greenfield & Guadalupe Rds
Join us for our monthly Family Birdwalk at the Preserve- one of the premier birding locations in the east valley! Walks begin at 8AM and depart every few minutes in groups of 10-12. Liberty Wildlife is present with 3-5 educational raptors that you and your family can see up close and personal, and learn about them from Liberty Wildlife educators. The event is always free, and we have books and other nature items for sale at our display tent. Loaner binoculars are provided free, and our expert leaders will take you around the seven ponds to see all the bird and other wildlife species that inhabit this facility. This is a great outdoor experience for your family and you!

4/22/2009 Earth Day
Watch for various Earth Day events postings to come.

4/23-26/2009 Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival
At Deadhorse Ranch State Park in Cottonwood See : www.birdyverde.org

4/25/2009 Field Trip, Birds, Butterflies, & Reptiles, Saturday, led by Kurt Rademaker. Meet at the Denny's Restaurant at Shea and El Lago in Fountain Hills. We will leave this area at 7 a.m. Since the construction of the new Beeline Highway, a wonderful section of the old road along Sycamore Creek near Sunflower has been blocked to through traffic and allows for undisturbed and quiet enjoyment of the wildlife there. We will search for Common Black-Hawk and Zone-tailed Hawk and early neotropical migrants. The following species of butterflies may be observed. Pipevine Swallowtail, Two-tailed Swallowtail, Checkered White, Dainty Sulphur, Common Buckeye, Painted Lady, Checkered Skipper, and Spring Azure. Reptiles to look for are Gila Spotted Whiptail, Zebra-tailed Lizard and Chuck walla. Dress lightly in layers, wear boots or comfy walking shoes, bring water, snacks, sunscreen, and a hat, our trip will end at about 2 p.m. Reservations: Charles or Marion Saffell, marisaff@cox.net; 480 668-9393.

5/2/2009 Fiesta de Las Aves Intl Migration Celebration, Bisbee, AZ
May <http://www.sabo.org/activity.htm#flda>

5/9/2009 Field Trip, Saturday, Haunted Canyon Pinto Creek, led by Tyler Loomis. Join Tyler Loomis, for this field trip to a very special place. Pinto Creek & Haunted Canyon is a little more than half-way between Superior and Globe. You turn Left off of Highway 60 towards BHP Copper's Pinto Valley

Mine, and follow the public access road through the mine to a trailhead on Pinto Creek. There is parking at the trailhead for 3-4 vehicles. The road is passable by regular passenger car. The trail is an easy one mile hike (one way, two mile roundtrip), but does require three foot crossings of Pinto Creek which can be more or less difficult depending on the flow. Pinto Creek/Haunted Canyon is a lush riparian area surrounded by chaparral, and oak-pinyon-juniper uplands. One short stretch of the road, perhaps 2-300 yards is rough but still passable. Part of the trail is a dirt road that provides access to mine facilities (wells) sited along Pinto Creek and Haunted Canyon. Pinto Creek is a perennial stream that has been nominated for "unique waters" status, been found eligible for inclusion in the nations Wild and Scenic River system, and has been called a "Jewel in the Desert" by Barry Goldwater. It supports two species of native fish and lush riparian vegetation. An Eared Quetzal was reported in the area about ten years ago and Common Black-hawks nest in the area. Several species of warblers and flycatchers are possible in the area. Coati-mundis are possible although not likely, rattlesnakes are also a possibility. Other features of interest include an old homestead with a still standing cabin that would require a short sidetrip (200 yards) and the mitigation system implemented by the Carlota Copper Mine that keeps both streams flowing. Meet at SW Regional Library parking lot, Greenfield and Guadalupe, 6 AM to carpool, so that we can be on the trail by 7:30. Bring lots of water, snacks and sunscreen, wear comfortable walking shoes or boots. Reservations; Charles or Marion Saffell, marisaff@cox.net; 480 668-9393.

5/9/2009 International Migratory Bird Day at Boyce Thompson Arboretum See : <http://arboretum.ag.arizona.edu/events.html> for information

5/12/2009 General Meeting/ Potluck Dinner - last meeting of season
Our last meeting of the season will again be a BBQ potluck dinner. Once again, the Saffell's are planning to have us in their large back yard. Come enjoy entertainment and night of sharing among friends. 805 N. Grand, Mesa 480-668-9393 Starts at 6PM. Call Marion Saffell for food planning and res.

5/16/2009 Field Trip, Madera Canyon, south of Tucson. Led by Dr. Pierre Deviche This weekend, we'll be once again going to Madera Canyon with Ornithologist Dr. Deviche, ASU professor. Description to follow soon. Reservations; Charles or Marion Saffell, marisaff@cox.net; 480 668-9393.

5/23/2009 Field Trip, Saturday, Pinal Mountain, led by Dr. David Pearson. We will leave at 4:30 am from the Gilbert Library ,parking lot at the SE corner of Greenfield and Guadalupe for Globe/Miami and Pinal Mountain (sunrise will be at 5:20 am). Our first stop will be in the riparian area of the lower chaparral above Globe, where we should have good luck finding males of several specialty species singing on territory, such as Black-chinned and Rufous-crowned Sparrows. As we climb in altitude into the scattered junipers, we will look for Gray Vireo, Scott's Oriole and Juniper Titmouse. Where the Ponderosa Pines begin, we will be high enough for our first Grace's, Black-throated Gray and Virginia's Warblers. Mixed flocks of all three nuthatch species, Bridled Titmouse, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Western and Hepatic Tanagers, Warbling Vireos and Hairy Woodpeckers usually appear as we climb into the Douglas Fir forests. Zone-tailed Hawk, and, if we are very lucky, Goshawk are some of the raptors likely soaring overhead. At the highest altitude (almost 9,000 ft) we will look for Mountain Chickadees, Yellow-eyed Juncos, Orange-crowned Warblers and four species of hummingbirds, including Broad-tailed and Magnificent. The timing of the trip will keep us relatively cool the entire day (70s to high 80s), especially when you think of how hot it is back in Phoenix. The birding will not be strenuous with only short walks along little used roads through the forest. Normally on this trip we can expect to find 60-85 species of birds, as well as several species of mammals, lizards and butterflies. Maximum number of participants is 12 in four vehicles. We will have lunch at a picnic area near the top of the mountain, so bring a bag lunch and drinks. We should return to Gilbert about 3 pm. Reservations; Charles or Marion Saffell, marisaff@cox.net; or 480 668-9393.

NOTABLE ARIZONA STATE SIGHTINGS

From the AZ Field Ornithologists. See complete details and **many** more reports on the AZFO website - www.azfo.org - "Documentation" pg.



Rufous-capped Warbler (*Basileuterus rufifrons*), Florida Canyon above Florida Work Center, Pima County. A pair of Rufous-capped Warblers was discovered by Troy Corman and Ramsay Koury in Florida Canyon upstream of the Florida Work Center in the Santa Rita Mountains on 19 December 2008 and photographed by Troy Corman the same day. Three birds were seen on 27 December 2008 and additional photographs were taken by Laurens Halsey on 28 December 2008. This is the first photo documented report for

this species in Pima County, although one was reported in Pima Canyon in 2003. There are few records for this species in the past several years in AZ (and US). Typically a casual visitor to SE AZ, but several nesting records with some individuals and pairs remaining in the same location for months or even years (e.g., French Joe Canyon). When seen well, identification is pretty straight forward with short black bill, bright yellow throat and breast, reddish crown and auricular region separated by broad white supercilium, black lore and eye-line, and white malar region.

Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorum*), Phoenix Rio Salado, Maricopa County

This Worm-eating Warbler was discovered by Justin Jones on 31 January 2009 at the Rio Salado in downtown Phoenix. It was photographed by Brendon Grice on 01 February 2009. Worm-eating Warbler is a casual transient and winter visitor with a few summer records as well. It is one of the most distinctive warblers and, seen well, it is unmistakable.



Blue Mockingbird (*Melanotis caerulescens*), Slaughter Ranch, Douglas, Cochise County. This Blue Mockingbird was discovered by Richard Webster on 4 February 2009 at the Slaughter Ranch east of Douglas. It was photographed by Michael Moore on 05 February 2009 and by Oliver Niehuis and Doug Danforth on 6 February 2009. There are two previous accepted records for Arizona and two for Texas. Birds seen in California and New Mexico were not accepted due to questions about origin.

Another earlier sight report for Arizona was not submitted to the committee. From Rosenberg and Witzman, 1999, Arizona Bird Committee Report 1974-1996, Part 2 (Passerines). Western Birds 30: 94-120: "Blue Mockingbird: Two records of this "Mexican" specialty have been accepted by the A.B.C. One was along Sonoita Creek s.w. of Patagonia, SCR, 21 Dec 1991-6 Mar 1992 (RNT; ph. DTr, GR: see Am. Birds 46:298 & 332) establishing a first United States record, and the second was at Portal, COS, 4 Jan-4 Apr 1995 (BTa; ph. BSm; Figure 5). The A.B.C. was at first hesitant to accept the record from Sonoita Creek because of the possibility it was of an escaped cage bird. After the Portal record, and new information regarding movements of non-breeding birds into riparian areas during the fall and winter in Sonora (S. Russell pers. com.), the A.B.C. is comfortable accepting both records." Overall blue color, black mask, reddish orange eye, full tail.

Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*), Tempe Town Lake, Maricopa County.

This Grasshopper Sparrow was discovered and photographed by Tyler Loomis on 25 January 2009 at the upstream end of Tempe Town Lake from the overlook behind the Tempe Marketplace Shopping Center. Casual in Maricopa County with about 12 records total. Scaly back and short, spiked tail mark this as an *Ammodramus* sparrow. Grasshopper is the only member of this genus that has an unstreaked breast and pale median crown stripe. Beware escaped female plumaged Orange Bishops which have been seen and formerly bred in marshy areas around Phoenix and that strongly resemble Grasshopper Sparrows.



Eastern Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes hiemalis*), Mesa, Maricopa County.

This Eastern Winter Wren was discovered and identified by Jay Miller at his home in Mesa near Gilbert and University Roads. It has been present since 24 November 2008.

It was photographed by Jay on 22 January 2009 and by Michael Moore and Pierre Deviche on 24 January 2009 and recorded by Pierre at the same time. Access to this private residence is by appointment only. There is very good evidence that Winter Wren consists of two species and it is very likely to be split into Pacific Wren (*T. pacificus*), the western form and the form usually encountered in Arizona, and Winter Wren (*T. troglodytes*) which encompasses the forms in eastern North America and the Palearctic. The status of Eastern Winter Wren in Arizona is unclear. There are about 10 reports since 2001 of this form in Arizona but it is probably underreported. In anticipation of the future split and to clarify the status of this form, the Arizona Bird Committee recently elevated Eastern Winter Wren to a review species. The two forms of Winter Wren are best separated by vocalization but they do differ visually as well. Note especially the pale coloration on the throat and breast, which separates the eastern form from the darker western form. This bird also responded strongly to the playback of an Eastern Winter Wren song.



Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*), Boyce Thompson Arboretum, Pinal County. This Chestnut-sided Warbler was found by Steve Ganley and Roy and Jill Jones on 9 November 2008 in the picnic area at the Boyce Thompson Arboretum near Superior. It was photographed by Brendon Grice on 03 January 2009. Chestnut-sided Warbler is a casual

transient and winter visitor to Arizona. Even when it completely lacks any Chestnut on the sides, nonbreeding Chestnut-sided Warbler is a distinctive bright yellow-green above and unstreaked grayish-white below. It also has wingbars and an eyering. No other warbler has this combination of features.

Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*), Roosevelt Lake, Gila County.

This juvenile Red-throated Loon was discovered and photographed by Troy Corman on 19 January 2009 in a restricted section of Roosevelt Lake. There are about a dozen accepted records for AZ, and this likely a first report for Gila County. First-winter bird in mostly juvenile plumage. In this plumage, the head and neck are darker than in an adult. Distinctly smaller and trimmer proportions than Common/Yellow-billed Loons. Key characteristics noted in images include bill held at a slight uptilted angle, pale speckled back and nape, exposed white flanks, uniform gray neck pattern extending onto lower neck, darker patch on upper throat with slight reddish tint, and white face with narrow white crescent above eye. The only possible confusing species would be juvenile Pacific Loon. However, in all basic-like plumages, Pacific Loon has a strong contrast line between the dark dorsal side of the neck and the white ventral side.



Eurasian Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca crecca*), Tempe Lake, Maricopa County

This Eurasian Green-winged Teal was found by Myron Scott on 9 January 2008 at the east end of Tempe Town Lake. It was photographed by Pierre Deviche on 10 January 2009. If confirmed, this would be the second documented record of this form in Arizona. The first was at Gilbert Water Ranch on 2 March 2008. Currently the ABA and AOU checklist committees consider Eurasian Green-winged Teal and American Green-winged Teal to be subspecies. However, other authorities consider them to be full species. This bird has the bold horizontal white scapular stripe that is the signature field mark of this form. It is clearly visible when the bird is flapping. The white vertical bar of the American Green-winged Teal is absent on both sides. Hybrids between the two forms usually have faint vertical stripes. This bird also has a stronger pale bar in front of the black bar on the vent than is typical for American. (see AZFO website for additional information.)



"HOPE KIDS" BIRDWALK AT GILBERT PRESERVE

Hope Kids is a charity that cares for families of children who have really bad illnesses. Their philosophy is simple; give families and their children a chance to be like normal families and organize events they all can go to and enjoy together. You can find more on Hope Kids at their website: www.HopeKids.org

DRAS met some Hope Kids families at an event at the Arizona Science Center several months ago, and offered to provide a morning's birding with the children. So on January 24th this year 15 volunteers from DRAS gathered to take groups of children around Gilbert Riparian Preserve. Some children came in wheelchairs, some used their little red wagons. Brothers and sisters and volunteers from HopeKids helped to move equipment around for the event, and soon we had 10 groups of families and birders making their way around the preserve. Gilbert is a great place to show first time birders, ducks and geese are very obliging and come up close, Anna's Hummingbirds put on a colorful display and of course each time the children learn that Herons and Egrets are so tall they look at them with renewed respect. We used nearly



"There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as the expectation of something tomorrow"

Orison Swett Marden



Photo: David Drake

every binocular and bird bingo card we own and the children became avid listers of bird species.

At the end of the walks Liberty Wildlife brought four birds for the children to see close up. The children and parents listened to them carefully and then asked

HopeKids®
Restoring Hope. Transforming Lives.



some of the most searching questions we have ever had. Each leader will have a special moment to remember. Mine came after the walk when I was watching some of the children climb the trees near our ramada and remembered Richard Louv's words about the need to connect children with nature in just such a way. By lunch time some of the children were very, very tired but a few found some extra energy to do some of our crafts and took

home lunch bag owls and finger birds. By the time we had cleared up there were some very tired leaders as well. My thanks to all the helpers who gave their time so generously, especially to Marion Saffell for rounding up so many helpers, and to Liberty Wildlife who entranced everyone, as usual, with their education birds.

Hope Kids is supported by individuals and corporate gifts. If you would like to contribute, please see their website for information on giving and volunteer opportunities. Below: Joy Dingley with "hope kid" Emily and her mother.



Article : Joy Dingley
Photos: Mike Rupp

BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

Desert Rivers will hold its second election at the April General Meeting at the Gilbert Community Center on April 14, 2009. The candidates below are up for re-election or first-time election. **Mike Rupp** is up for re-election to the office of President. **Jon Mann** is up for election for the office of Treasurer. **Leslie Vyvial** is the nominee for the office of Secretary, and **Mike Evans** has been nominated for the office of Programs Director.

With this round of elections, DRAS will be on schedule thereafter to stagger board position elections on even-odd numbered years. This practice guarantees continuity on the Board in order to smoothly transition from old members to new members, and maintain the policies, programming, goals, and mission of the chapter.

President- Mike Rupp I am still very interested in seeing this chapter increase its outreach to our community and advocate for issues of environmental concern. I believe we have accomplished a great deal in a short time, and am open to continuing on for another term as your President. I have a vision for the chapter over the next two years that will further development Desert Rivers as a leading chapter in the state and nationally.

Treasurer- Jon Mann Jon Mann is an accountant with a business in the southeast valley, and has a wealth of accounting experience. Jon has been associated with Desert Rivers for about two years, and has both led and attended many field trips and monthly Birdwalks. Jon came to Phoenix from the east, where he was a life-long birder and involved with Audubon chapters.

April is Membership Month!

When you receive this newsletter, Desert Rivers will be undertaking its first "membership drive". We don't have a TV studio and a bank of telephone volunteers to take calls to reach a goal - what we have are current members, most of whom are enthusiastic and supportive of the chapter, hence our rapid growth thus far.

We feel we are at a point where we need to increase our membership substantially to meet the increasing opportunities coming our way. More members not only help financially, but can provide a broader volunteer base, and enrich our "gene pool" by bringing in people from various professional backgrounds with unique contacts and associations.

Won't you please help us to reach our ambitious goal of 50 new members in the next six weeks? If everyone invites a like-minded friend or associate to our next monthly meeting and / or a field trip to acquaint them with Desert Rivers, we could increase our membership dramatically. Please join with us by telling a friend, neighbor, business associate or co-worker, and extended family about Desert Rivers and inviting them to the April meeting or a field trip. We will describe DRAS' mission, goals, and work at the April meeting, and extend an invitation for visitors to join.

We will also be sending out a one-time **Email invitation** to all members that can be forwarded to all of your friends that you feel would enjoy Desert River's activities and programs, especially those friends with kids. Look for that email within the next few weeks, and help the chapter by simply forwarding it on, perhaps with a personal message. Thanks for continuing to help make Desert Rivers an exceptional chapter through your support and participation.

DRAS Elections are April 14!

Terms are for two years, with a two-term limit served consecutively, so each board member can be re-elected once. The Nominating Committee, which is comprised of Marion Saffell, Karen Stucke, and Harvey Beatty, has been searching for possible candidates for these board positions and could have other candidates come forward before April 14th. If you would like to run for election to the Board, or would like to submit the name of someone who does, with their permission, please contact any one of the Nominating Committee members at Harvey Beatty -hbbeatty1@cox.net Karen Stucke-kjstuke@gmail.com, Marion Saffell - marisaff@cox.net

Secretary- Leslie Vyvial Volunteering with two wildlife rehabilitator organizations and working for the US Forest Service has given Leslie Vyvial valuable experience in non-profits and serving the public. Leslie has also been teaching public school kids and has a B.A. from U of A. She has accepted the nomination for Secretary to replace Janice Miano, who is leaving that position. She has been volunteering for about one year and has helped the chapter with the monthly Birdwalks, teaching kids, and special events.

Mike Evans- Programs Mike Evans has been involved with Desert Rivers for 2 years along with his son Aaron, going on field trips, attending DRAS meetings, and helping with the Birdwalks and other activities. Mike served on the Gilbert Town Council and has been politically involved in local politics for some time. Mike currently teaches at Queen of Peace Catholic High School, and has a BA in Poly Sci from U of A, and a Master's degree in Public Admin from ASU. He has served many political and humanitarian organizations, and was also a Peace Corps volunteer in Senegal. Mike is a life-long birder, father of two kids, and has coached high school football and basketball.

FOSSIL CREEK STORY - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

mentary was written and produced by Emmy Award-winning producer Paul Bockhorst. It was photographed by Emmy Award-winning videographer Douglas Crawford. The original music was composed by Paul Morehouse, and Russell Colby did the editing. Support for the production was provided by the National Science Foundation, the USDI Bureau of Reclamation, and the Heritage Program of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, with additional funding from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, the Ecological Restoration Institute, and the Merriam-Powell Center for Environmental Research at Northern Arizona University. A River Reborn continues to be broadcast by KAET Arizona Public Television and over 150 PBS stations across the country. It has been seen by over 110 million viewers to date.

For further information about A River Reborn and related educational materials, please contact: Dr. Stefan Sommer, Executive Producer, A River Reborn Director of Education, Merriam-Powell Center, Northern Arizona University (928) 523-4463 / Stefan.Sommer@nau.edu



Above- Longfin Dace
Right- Desert Sucker
Two endangered fish of 10 fish species found in Fossil Creek.

The Family Album

Family : Corvidae
Article and Photos: Cindy Marple

New World Jays

Jays are part of the large Corvid family, which also includes Crows, Ravens and Magpies. They are large, noisy and bold birds, as anyone who's had a flock of Mexican Jays descend while hiking in the canyons of Southeastern AZ knows! Most of the members of this group are predominantly blue with black or gray. There are a few colorful exceptions in Genus Cyanocorax; not surprisingly these are mostly tropical species. The North American regulars from this Genus are the Brown Jay and Green Jay which get as far north as Texas' Rio Grande Valley. Among songbirds, Jays have particularly long legs and strong feet. Interestingly, the front side of the leg is scaly while the back side is smooth, seen in the Green Jay photo. Jays' bills are large and stout, and except for the Pinyon Jay they have dense nasal bristles as seen in the Steller's Jay photo. They are omnivorous but most eat a lot of nuts, collecting and caching in hiding spots for later use. Finding those caches later on requires a remarkable memory, and is one example of the intelligence of this family. Most will come to feeders and Scrub Jays which are accustomed to human interaction are known to take peanuts (raw of course) out of your hand. Jays are also frequent visitors to campsites and picnic sites where they will scavenge whatever is left. Gray Jays are so bold about it that they have earned the nickname "Camp Robber".



Western Scrub Jay

Mexican Jay



Stellar's Jay - above



Green Jay



ANNOUNCEMENTS



The Nina Mason Pulliam Audubon Center continues to make good progress on the south bank of the Salt River on the east side of Central Avenue. Due to be completed in late summer/early fall, the Center will be a terrific place to visit and learn about the Salt River habitat and Audubon. Teachers can arrange to bring their classes to the Center by contacting Cathy Wise at cwise@audubon.org to reserve a date. If you are interested in joining the teaching team for all the programs and events at the Center, contact Cathy as well. The Center is expected to receive around 8,000 school kids a year, in addition to the general public and scores of meetings and special events throughout the year. Consider becoming a part of this team!

DONORS AND GIFTS

Our appreciation goes to the following donors who have given to support a program or overall operating costs of the Desert Rivers Audubon Society from January to March, 2009.

Our sincere thanks to Salt River Project and Lori Singleton for printing this issue of the newsletter at no cost to the chapter. This is the second printing they have donated to the chapter.



Bass Pro Shops for use of their meeting room for Desert Rivers' Board meetings each month in the Mesa/Phoenix store.

We thank **Eagle Optics** for their donation of an Audubon Vector 8x42 Binocular for the upcoming May raffle at the DRAS General Meeting. Eagle Optics has a full line of optics that can be seen at : www.eagleoptics.com



Bashas' Supermarkets support of the Chandler Family Birdwalks has enabled us to continue to increase participants and develop this wonderful event.

Thanks to the family of **Alma Tfortner**, who passed away Feb. 10th. Alma was an avid birder who enjoyed feeding and watching birds from her home in Peoria since 1994. Donations were received by Desert Rivers from friends in memory of Alma.

Corporate Members : Salt River Project, Arizona Cactus Sales (www.arizonacactusales.com), Bashas Markets, Bass Pro Shops

New Members

Randy & Patsy Akers	Carrol Currie	Eileen Kane
Tyler Loomis	Diane Krpan	Janice Stallard
Dorothy & George Townsend	Joyce Story	Charlotte Howey
Leslie Vyvial	Ruth Fisher & Conor Livingston	

MATCH-UP!

DRAW LINES BETWEEN THE
MALE AND FEMALE BIRDS
OF THE SAME SPECIES



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



I



J



K



L



M



N



O

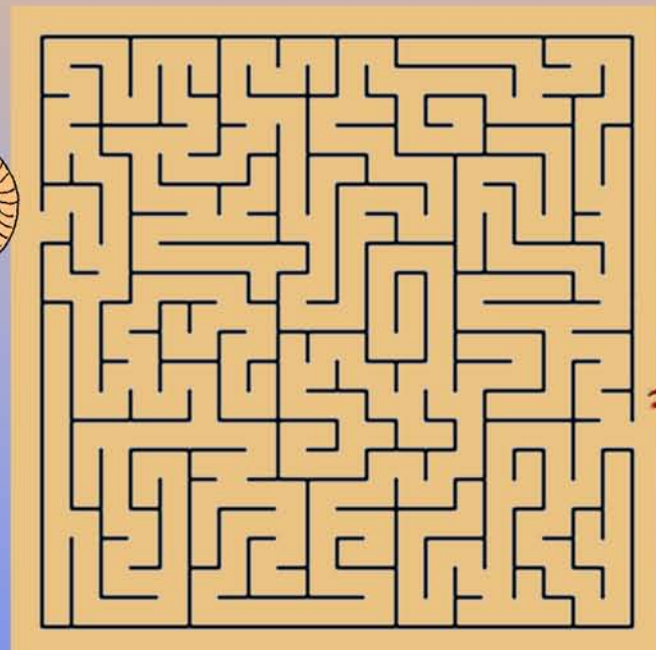


P

KIDS PAGE

"Sexual Dimorphism" is a scientific term used to describe the difference in plumage patterns between males and females of the same species. Have you ever noticed that a male Red-winged Blackbird looks completely different than a female of the same species? How about the bright red male Cardinal? The female Cardinal looks a little like the male, but the overall red color is missing. Why is this? Do you know why some male/female bird species are so different from each other? These differences can be in colors, size, and body structure. Most often, males are much more colorful, and sometimes have special feathers, like the male peacock. *These colors and special feathers are to attract females during the mating season, which is about the time you receive this newsletter!* They also signal to other males that this male is strong and healthy, and this is his territory. The next time you go birdwatching, look closely at how the males are trying to attract females- not only with their fresh, bright feather colors, but also with their songs, and behaviours! Dudes rule!

MIGRATION MAZE!



Check out Audubon's Kids Page- they
have games to play, live bird cams,
and fun activities!

<http://www.audubon.org/educate/kids/>

Male/Female Birds photo answers :
A-J, B-N, C-P, D-I, E-L, F-K, G-M, H-O

Bird Photos : Cindy Marple

Desert Rivers Audubon Society
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MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meetings are held at the Page Park Community Center in Gilbert, at 132 W. Bruce Ave, on second Tuesdays at 7 to 9PM, September through May. Doors open at 6:30PM, and everyone is welcome. Page Park is one block north of Elliot Rd and one block west of Gilbert Rd, near "downtown" Gilbert. See the DRAS website under "Events" heading for listing of topics and speakers. Refreshments provided

GILBERT FAMILY BIRDWALKS

The Gilbert Family Birdwalks are held every third Saturday of the month from October to April, at the Gilbert Riparian Preserve, located on the SE corner of Guadalupe and Greenfield Roads, in Gilbert. (East of library) Walks run from 8AM to noon, and depart every few minutes. We provide loaner binoculars, expert leaders, childrens and adult books, and there is no charge.

BIRD LISTSERV - RARE BIRD ALERT

Bird alert information for rare Arizona and New Mexico birds can be obtained by subscribing to the bird listserv at the Univ. of AZ. This is the most popular method in the valley to know what rarities are in the area, and find out lots of other birding information. To subscribe, go to listserv@listserv.arizona.edu and in the message area type: subscribe birdwg05 your name Do not put anything in the subject area.

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

We welcome your interest in becoming a member and participant of Desert Rivers Audubon. Your membership dues help support our outreach activities. You can join National Audubon and Desert Rivers Audubon by downloading a form from our website, and receive the bi-monthly Audubon magazine. Most Audubon chapters also have a "Friends" membership which entitles you to our quarterly newsletter, and discounts.

<i>Students / Seniors (65+) Membership</i>	<i>\$20.</i>
<i>Individual Membership.....</i>	<i>\$25.</i>
<i>Family Membership.....</i>	<i>\$40.</i>
<i>Corporate Membership.....</i>	<i>\$300+</i>

What is the difference between a Desert Rivers "Friends" membership, and National Audubon membership? National Audubon and chapters are separate entities. All dues and gifts to Desert Rivers are used for local programs. You can be a member of Desert Rivers and also be a member of National Audubon simultaneously, or become a Desert Rivers member without joining National Audubon. You can even be a member of more than one Audubon chapter at the same time, regardless of your home address. If you are a National member, you can help this chapter by designating Desert Rivers as your "assigned chapter" by contacting : kvullis@audubon.org

Desert Rivers Audubon Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization incorporated in Arizona, formed to provide environmental education and conservation opportunities to valley residents and advocate for our environment. For information on planned giving or bequests to the chapter, please contact Carl Matthusen at : cmatthusen@cox.net

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