



NATURE AND LEARNING ISSUE

Birthright to a Natural Life

by Dr. Paul B. Mohr, Jr.
Superintendent, Murphy School District

My most vivid memory of discovering my kinship with nature was when I was in first grade in St. Petersburg, Florida. Because I had a bout of polio, which rendered my right leg semi-paralyzed, I was confined to wearing a brace and told by my physician that I should not run. My teacher was given instruction to have me stay in a conspicuous corner of the playground while my classmates enjoyed themselves on the playground equipment and in participation in field games.

That first day was the longest day of my life. Feeling ostracized and abandoned, I began to contemplate my sense of loss until the Banyan tree I stood next to beckoned to me. It was such a sweet, silent "Hello." I took notice of its unusual form and had an exhilarating feeling of wonder of how it was naturally sculpted. I spoke to my new-found friend with my thoughts: "Just how many trunks do you have?" I began to count them. "You have eight trunks! You must be two years older than me."

I treated my tree like an "older brother" and asked it a multitude of questions each day at the appointed hour of my recess. Soon I discovered the living things that were sheltered by my "older brother." My first catch was a lizard. Later, I caught a scorpion. All the things that my "older brother" revealed to me sparked my interest in such a way that my teacher and my mother provided me with books on insects and reptiles. As I began my daily encounters with nature, my inclinations became rooted to this wonderful world. As a result, my mother provided opportunities for me to go on camping trips and join science clubs. It was through these experiences that I was enriched beyond belief.

These early interests and experiences formed the basis for my efforts as an educator to facilitate children's sense of wonder and appreciation for their natural surroundings and all that they sustain. I recall the yearly science camp that Mesa School District sponsored for all the sixth graders. When I was principal of Adams Elementary, I would accompany the sixth grade teachers and students to a campground in the Tonto National Forest near Payson.

Located at about 6,500 feet elevation, the campgrounds were near the Tonto Creek Fish Hatchery. In addition to visiting the hatchery, I was assigned to teach the students "stream studies." My first experience with sixth grade students in this setting revealed to me that they were habituated to city life and were limited to "hiking" from the television to the refrigerator.

My goal was to introduce them to the macro invertebrates inhabiting the stream. Yet their idea of "stream studies" was to splash water on each other and pretend to be amazed at what I pointed out to them. I noticed they were too restless to see the movement of living things crawling slowly at the bottom of the stream. I came to the conclusion that in order for them to see, hear, and feel Nature in all of her splendor, they would have to be in a calm place, mentally. I chose to prepare them by guiding them through a meditative exercise. I had them sit on the ground and told them to close their eyes and take a few moments to just listen. I then began to have them describe what they heard. After a few more moments of silence, I had them open their eyes and describe something, within their view, of which they took special note.

After this exercise we then, silently, went to the stream. I told them to just stand still and look at the bottom of the stream and identify any forms of life. Lo and behold, the silence was punctuated with expressions of excitement from one student after another. "I see something moving!" As time went on, the students finally focused on what was being taught to them in their natural classroom. I could tell that the same sweet, silent hello had beckoned my students as it had beckoned me when I was a lonely, little first-grader.



PHOTO BY SARAH PORTER

Dr. Paul B. Mohr, Jr., at the Río Salado habitat near Murphy School District in South Phoenix.

MISSION STATEMENT

To connect people with nature, using science, education, and advocacy to protect Arizona's birds, other wildlife, and their habitats.

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This newsletter is printed on recycled paper with soy based ink.
Questions may be directed to Marcia Halstead at mhalstead@audubon.org.

LEADERS' CORNER

DESERT SPRING

by Sarah Porter
Associate Director / Audubon Center Director

On a family hike last week in the Eagletail Wilderness, we took joy in the early wildflowers—reminders of abundant winter rains, and harbingers of a glorious Sonoran spring.

Those little flowers bravely blooming on that cool desert morning filled me with the same sense of gratitude and hope that the Río Salado Center project evokes in me these days. We have successfully completed our Center capital campaign. We are just weeks away from breaking ground and a scant year away from opening the Center's doors. We are well into our fourth semester of pilot education programming and have made countless new friends in our Center neighborhood.



Desert Heliotrope

PHOTO BY LEROY ELLISON

This is an apt moment to reflect on what we have learned and seen in our work on the Río Salado Center. Most gratifying of all is the tremendous eagerness and enthusiasm our community shows for the nature experiences Audubon has to offer. We could not feel more welcome. The community is also an able teacher, challenging us to confront the many obstacles and time constraints that conspire to prevent schools and families from participating in our programs. We have responded by breaking our core four-day school curriculum into more manageable

half-day modules, and we have launched Science Takes Wing, a bird science program that we bring to schools through teacher training workshops. We are also working to develop after-school, vacation time and weekend programs that respond to our community's need for extracurricular enrichment and opportunities for shared family experiences. We remain steadfast in our belief that repeated experiences in a natural habitat are the best means of fostering individuals' deep connections with nature—and we are eager to find ways to make such experiences possible.

Our greatest asset is our community. It is only through collaborations with community leaders, neighborhood centers, agencies, and schools that we have been able to put down strong roots. Our selfless volunteers are another invaluable community resource, enabling Audubon to reach vastly more children and families than would be possible if we were going it alone. (And as we expand our outreach and programming, our need for volunteers is greater than ever!)

We have much to be thankful for and much to look forward to. Come share our joy as we watch the Nina Mason Pulliam Audubon Center bloom at Central Avenue and the Salt River!



Poppies

PHOTO BY LEROY ELLISON

Correction: The Fall 2007 newsletter contained an error in its donor listing. The correct listing is John D. Wintersteen in honor of Marjorie Eckman.

EDUCATION

Blackboard Aviary

A group of people stroll through a park space, some fumbling with borrowed binoculars, and suddenly stop, transfixed by the distant sound of birdsong. "Is that a curve-billed thrasher?" one woman gamely asks.

Yes, their leader confirms. They break into smiles.

Such was the scene at a recent Bird Discovery workshop offered by Audubon Arizona, and the fledgling birders involved were elementary school teachers. To date, some fifty teachers and education volunteers have participated in Bird Discovery workshops, which provide training in Bird Sleuth, an award-winning curriculum developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Science Takes Wing, a curriculum developed by Audubon Arizona that focuses on common urban and suburban birds of Central Arizona.

Designed for use in the classroom and schoolyard and aligned with state academic content standards, Bird Sleuth and Science Takes Wing can enhance life science instruction by using observation of birds (including their behaviors and their habitats) to awaken curiosity, hone data gathering skills and improve students' ability to engage in scientific inquiry. Workshop participants receive instruction manuals, lessons, and reproducible materials, and, thanks to a collaborative partnership between Audubon and Arizona State University's Ask-a-Biologist project (<http://askabiologist.asu.edu/>), they can download PowerPoints and audio material for their Science Takes Wing lessons. What's more, they receive training in using eBird (www.ebird.org), which allows students to submit their avian monitoring data and to use it and other data to build and interpret species range maps and frequency graphs.

Teachers report that what they value most about the Bird Discovery curriculum are the opportunities for giving students hands-on field experiences. According to teachers, hands-on experiences are key to engaging students in science. Unfortunately, today's teachers are typically pressed for time, so opportunities to travel out of the school for field experiences are limited. The avian monitoring in Bird Sleuth and Science Takes Wing can take place in the school yard and does not require a large investment of time.

For more information about Audubon Arizona's Bird Discovery workshops, click the Education tab at <http://az.audubon.org> or contact Audubon's Education Programs Coordinator, Cathy Wise, at cwise@audubon.org or 602-468-6470.



Educators participate in a Bird Discovery workshop at Willow Bend Nature Center in Flagstaff.

PHOTO BY CATHY WISE

Nesting

Spring, the time of year when birds search out the best locations and settle down to the hard task of building their nests. What better time than spring for Audubon Arizona to start building its own nest?

On Saturday, April 12, Audubon Arizona will break ground on the Nina Mason Pulliam Río Salado Audubon Center. Located at Central Avenue and the Salt River, the Audubon Center will be a

focal point of the Río Salado Habitat Restoration Area and ideally situated to provide environmental education and enrichment to communities of south and downtown Phoenix.

The groundbreaking comes on the heels of Audubon Arizona's successful \$6.9 million capital campaign. Funds raised in the campaign will be used not only to build the four-acre Audubon Center, with its 7,000 square foot LEED-certified building, demonstration wetlands, and interpretive trails, but also to help ensure a source of operating funds in the first two years of the Center's operation.

The Audubon Center groundbreaking ceremony will coincide with an International Migratory Bird Day event at the Río Salado habitat. Offered by Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department in partnership with Audubon, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and Liberty Wildlife, the event will feature guided bird walks, children's activities, informational presentations, and outdoor fun.

For information about the groundbreaking or the International Migratory Bird Day event, contact Audubon Arizona's Donna Sauer at dsauer@audubon.org or 602-468-6470.



The Nina Mason Pulliam Río Salado Audubon Center

WEDDLE GILMORE ARCHITECTS

Something to Celebrate

A Little Bit of Water, a play commissioned by Audubon Arizona and Childsplay theatre company, celebrates Phoenix's Río Salado Habitat Restoration project, the future home of the Nina Mason Pulliam Río Salado Audubon Center. Written by Dwayne Hartford and produced by Childsplay, *A Little Bit of Water* is now touring Arizona schools and in June will play on Childsplay's new main-stage home, the Tempe Center for the Arts.

The play's production is the culmination of an effort that started two years ago, when a group of donors came forward to support the creation of "a play about a river in the desert." Thanks to their generosity, Arizona school children now have a unique and exciting way to learn how rivers sustain life in the desert.

In *A Little Bit of Water*, a world-famous storyteller and her two young assistants, Liz and Enrique, use puppets (including a heron!), projections, and theatre magic to bring to life the story of a desert river and how it has served and been changed by the people who came to settle along its banks. As the play unfolds, Liz and Enrique come face to face with a water allocation dilemma of their own. Eventually they realize that the solution to their problem—and the future well-being of the river and the wildlife it supports—lies within their power.

A Little Bit of Water is an innovative way to introduce elementary school aged children to the issues of water use and habitat in the arid southwest. Avoiding both the didacticism and doom-and-gloom so often associated with environmental programs for children, Hartford's play is a wild romp through the millennia—there's even a spaceship! Youngsters who experience *A Little Bit of Water* will be challenged to honor the rivers that have made life possible in the desert and to take personal responsibility for their protection.

For information about public performances or school tours, go to www.childsplayaz.org or contact Childsplay's Robyn Silverberg at rsilverberg@childsplay.org or 480-350-8104.



YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT BY JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

"See" Birds as Audubon Did

Audubon Arizona and Scottsdale Artists' School are joining forces this fall to teach beginners how to record birds the way John James Audubon did—by drawing. Three weekend classes in sketching, watercolor, and scientific illustration are offered at \$150 each. For details, go to <http://www.ScottsdaleArtSchool.org> or <http://az.audubon.org> or call Scottsdale Artists' School at 480-990-1422.



PHOTO BY RYAN HAGERTY/USFWS

The Northern Mockingbird, source of beautiful song and sleepless nights in spring.

What Do I Do?

Spring is here in Arizona, and desert birds have taken full advantage of the wet winter. The Abert's Towhee, Gilded Flickers and Curve-billed Thrashers are already sitting on eggs and feeding young. Verdins are very busy building nests, and Mockingbirds are starting to sing. You can find the answers to The Big Five Spring Bird Questions on our web site, <http://az.audubon.org>

- What can I do about woodpeckers pecking my house? Do I have bugs?
- What is this bird that is singing at night? It is driving me crazy!
- I found a baby bird. What do I do?
- What do I do with a nest that blew out of my tree?
- What do I do with an injured or orphaned baby bird?

A Dubious Distinction

Forty-eight birds that spend at least part of their year in Arizona have earned a dubious distinction: They have been included on WatchList 2007, the newest and most scientifically sound list of America's birds at greatest risk—identified by Audubon and the American Bird Conservancy as in need of top-priority conservation attention to ensure their continued survival. Unlike those on Audubon's recent survey of Common Birds in Decline, these species are often rare and limited in range; consequently, they face a more imminent threat of extinction. Of these, eleven are red-listed, which indicates the highest level of concern. Species found on the WatchList need immediate help while there is still time to save them.

Arizona WatchList birds in greatest jeopardy:

California Condor. These magnificent birds have been brought back from the brink of extinction through conservation efforts by wildlife agencies, conservation organizations, and zoos. In Arizona, the recovery of the California Condor is led by the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the Peregrine Fund, and the Phoenix Zoo. A major cause of mortality is the ingesting of lead bullet fragments.

Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. This Federal endangered species requires dense habitats along flowing rivers and streams, making the protection of Arizona's flowing rivers essential for the continued existence of this bird in our state. Conservation efforts supported by the Endangered Species Act are helping to stabilize and increase populations.

Bell's Vireo. Bell's Vireo requires the thorny thickets of desert understory vegetation mixed with willow and mesquite that grow along water courses and can be found wherever riparian habitat exists in southern and central Arizona. Threats to Bell's Vireo include drought, water diversions, urban development, and heavy grazing that results in loss of the understory and riparian obligate tree species.

California Black Rail. California Black Rail is a Federal endangered species, and the only Arizonan populations can be found in the marshes of the lower Colorado and Gila Rivers near Yuma. Some of the best habitat for this small, elusive marsh bird can be found at Mittry Lake, an Arizona Game and Fish Wildlife Area north of Yuma.

"Yuma" Clapper Rail. A Federal endangered species, the Yuma Clapper Rail is a marsh bird that can be found on the lower Colorado, Gila, and Salt Rivers. A secretive bird, it is best found in the spring when its "clatter" calls can be clearly heard in the marsh habitats along these rivers. This species nests on the Gila River west of Phoenix and can sometimes be seen at the Arizona Game and Fish Department Arlington, "B and M" and Powers Butte Wildlife Areas.

Gilded Flicker. Gilded Flicker is the largest woodpecker that nests in cavities of the saguaro cactus. Found only in the Sonoran desert, the appearance of this bird on the red list is alarming. Unlike the Gila Woodpecker and the Red-shafted (Northern) Flicker,

the Gilded Flicker seems to have low tolerance for encroaching suburbia. Desert wildfire fueled by exotic grasses further threatens saguaro cactus habitats that are home for this uniquely Sonoran desert bird. Also on the WatchList, but still in the "yellow" category, is another cavity nester that uses saguaro cactus and riparian trees for nest sites, the Elf Owl.

Scaled Quail. A new addition to the WatchList, the Scaled Quail is calling a warning that southwestern grasslands are disappearing. Scaled Quail disappear when grasslands become brushy or broken up by houses and trees. Other grassland birds on the WatchList include southeastern Arizona's Rufous-winged Sparrow and Montezuma Quail. Also listed are wintering Chestnut-collared Longspur, Brewer's and Baird's Sparrows.

Pinyon Jay. This fascinating jay is highly gregarious, typically seen in flocks even during the breeding season. Dependent upon the seeds from pinyon trees, the Pinyon Jay remains a bird of concern as pinyon pine declines as a result of drought, wood cutting, wildfires, and beetle infestations. Another WatchList bird, the Gray Vireo, shares similar habitat with the Pinyon Jay. Recent survey data shows populations are stable for this small gray bird.

Virginia's Warbler. Virginia's Warbler is closely tied to pinon-juniper and oak woodlands during the breeding season. Habitat alteration to improve livestock grazing and big game habitat can disturb the Virginia's Warbler nesting and feeding grounds. The bird has a seemingly adverse reaction to controlled burns. In addition, populations could be declining due to habitat changes from global warming and Brown-headed Cowbird nest parasitism.

Spotted Owl. The "Mexican" subspecies of the Spotted Owl is a bird of deep forest canyons, and nesting populations can be found throughout the mountains of central and eastern Arizona. Threats facing this species are primarily related to loss of old growth forests and wildfires.

To learn more about Audubon Arizona's work protecting these and other species, visit <http://az.audubon.org>. The full continental WatchList materials are now available to the public online at <http://stateofthebirds.audubon.org/watchlist/>.

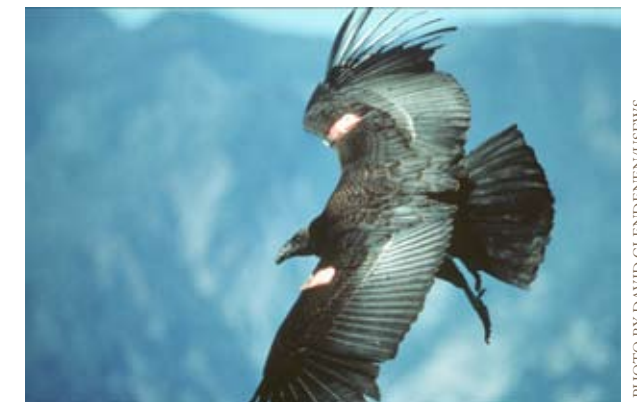


PHOTO BY DAVID CLENDENEN/USFWS

California Condor

CAUGHT - on Film

For more than a century photography has provided awe-inspiring glimpses of the natural world. But it wasn't until the last few decades that trail camera technology became commercially available—and greatly expanded researchers' ability to collect data on wildlife. Trail cameras take photos of animals when a "heat-in-motion" sensor is triggered. Older versions use an invisible beam of light or a pressure plate, but newer versions use a sensor that is similar to the motion sensor often used for security or patio lights. Trail cameras have been used for many years in all parts of the world to document the presence of wildlife, from tigers in India to jaguars in Belize and pine martens in the Sierra Nevada. Provided the target animals are recognizable from unique markings, the cameras can be used to estimate how many animals are in an area.



A bobcat is caught on camera at the Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch in Elgin, Arizona

At the Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch, trail cameras were first used to try to estimate the number and species of skunks in the northern part of the Ranch (which due to a recent die-off was about zero—but the cameras did a decent job of counting the local bobcat population!). More recently, the cameras have been used to document what squirrel-sized or bigger mammals are using different habitats on the Ranch. In the last 14 months, the cameras have confirmed the presence of three mammals that were known from areas near the Ranch, but had never been documented here: ring-tail, Sonoran opossum, and Arizona gray squirrel. Recently cameras were added to the southern part of the ranch, which is higher, wetter, and more wooded, to see how far animals might be moving out of the Canelo Hills and Huachuca Mountains. Audubon's goal is to collect preliminary data from which to develop a protocol for using the trail cameras and track surveys to monitor wildlife use of the Research Ranch, determining where to set the cameras and for how long, which lures to use, etc. This may allow Audubon staff to correlate wildlife movements and numbers to habitat changes, perhaps due to drought, wildfire, or changes in immigrant traffic or recreational use.

The latest versions of trail cameras have a number of useful features. They are digital, requiring fewer financial and environmental resources for film and developing, and capable of running on rechargeable batteries. They have an infrared flash, which means night shots are illuminated in a spectrum not visible to our eyes or the eyes of most of the wildlife. Thus, wildlife should be less bothered than by a typical flash camera. And, most fun of all, they can take short video clips. These video clips have provided a lot of information on how the animals react to the cameras (which, it turns out, is not much) or to the stinky lure put out to slow the animals down long enough to take their photo. Audubon now has a number of video clips of coyotes rolling and urinating on the lure, as well as bobcats marking rocks nearby, and has even been able to see the response of animals to different kinds of lures.



Trail cameras documented the presence of ringtails.

Trail cameras have turned out to be a very useful tool in wildlife research and management. They are expanding knowledge of species' habitat use, behavior, and distribution in a minimally invasive way that does not involve handling or marking the animals. With good trail cameras available for \$250 or less, they constitute another tool for citizen scientists to contribute information about wildlife.

For more information about the research, conservation, and educational programs at the Research Ranch, check out the newly re-designed website at www.audubon.org/local/sanctuary/Appleton.



A familiar face: the coyote.

All chapters welcome new members. To find out more, go to <http://az.audubon.org> and click on the "Centers" tab at the top of the page or use the individual web addresses below. Reservations are required for most field trips and other activities; contact information is provided below.

Desert Rivers Audubon Society
1121 N. Terrace Rd., Chandler, AZ 85226
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Website: www.desertriversaudubon.org

Greetings from the Desert Rivers Audubon chapter! This last quarter was an exciting time of continued growth for the chapter in terms of new members and corporate donors, and we look forward to some exciting developments during the remainder of the year, for both the chapter and its relationship to other groups.

The Rio Salado Audubon Center will soon be breaking ground in Phoenix, and Desert Rivers is busy recruiting and training volunteers to work at the Center in a variety of programs. We anxiously await the opportunity to be involved with teaching literally thousands of children at the Center at the Rio Salado habitat.

Desert Rivers Audubon continues to provide programs and activities to our members and the public that have been well-attended and enjoyed by all. Our Gilbert Birdwalks program at the Riparian Preserve in Gilbert continues to attract around 50 people per event, with about one-third of those being children who are guided around the wonderful ponds at the Preserve with loaner binoculars and our "Bird Bingo" cards. Liberty Wildlife continues to bring three to five live raptors and teach about their wonderful birds and programs, and Bass Pro Shops held an "Optics Expo" at the last birdwalk with sample binoculars and scopes for the public to examine and try out. We will be starting another monthly birdwalk program soon in the City of Chandler at their new water recharge facility, modeled after our program at the Riparian Preserve, and anticipate reaching hundreds more with an outdoor nature experience.

We have introduced to our members and the public a new series of weekly discussion courses led by the Northwest Earth Institute, including such titles as Global Warming—Changing Course, Voluntary Simplicity, Healthy Children—Healthy Planet, Choices for Sustainable Living, and Discovering a Sense of Place, to name a few. Our first course on global warming filled up immediately, and we will offer courses throughout the year to acquaint people with conservation and life-style issues and personal applications. You can learn more about the Northwest Institute and its offerings at www.nwei.org

Our newsletter grew from ten to twelve pages, which allows us to publish more on local issues of importance, such as the Verde River water allocation issue in central Arizona. The June newsletter will dedicate four full pages to acquainting our members and the public with this most important issue of water use in the Verde Valley. The chapter is emphasizing participation in this critical issue and hopes to affect future decisions that will determine the fate of the Verde River. You can see more on this issue on the Prescott Audubon website at www.prescottaudubon.org and soon on our

website at www.desertriversaudubon.org.

By the time this newsletter is in your hands, the Tres Rios Nature Festival will have happened (March 15 and 16), and Desert Rivers will have attended this terrific nature festival and provided nature guides to walk the public around the habitat. Last year's attendance was about 6,000 people—this year even more are expected. The festival is located at the Phoenix International Raceway, which is south of the I-10 Freeway on Avondale Blvd. The other significant festival will be the Feathered Friends Festival at the Riparian Preserve on March 29. Desert Rivers will be there with children's activities, book sales, and birdwalks for the public. The Preserve is located on the southeast corner of Greenfield and Guadalupe Roads in the city of Gilbert.

Huachuca Audubon Society
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Website: www.huachuca-audubon.org

Join Huachuca Audubon Society for the following outings:

Monday, April 21, to San Pedro River Area, led by Alan Blixt (alanblixt@hotmail.com) and Erika Wilson (terika88@cox.net). Spring migration in full swing in prime riparian habitat. Field trip covering the river, Green Kingfisher and Black Phoebe Ponds, and adjacent grasslands. We can expect 60-65 species, including many neotropical migrants, especially flycatchers and warblers, on our 2.5 mile walk. Bring binoculars, sun hat, and water. Meet at San Pedro House at 7am. Trip is free and open to the public.

Monday, April 28, to Garden Canyon, Fort Huachuca, led by Erika Wilson (terika88@cox.net) and Alan Blixt (alanblixt@hotmail.com). Spring migration in full swing in prime mountain habitat. Field trip covering ponds, grasslands, and riparian areas in lower Garden Canyon. Target birds will be Elegant Trogon, warblers, and tanagers. Bring binoculars, sun hat, and water. Meet at Gateway Park at 6:30 am to carpool. Photo identification is required to access Fort Huachuca. Trip is free and open to the public.

Monday, May 12, to St. David Monastery, led by Alan Blixt (alanblixt@hotmail.com). Field trip covering the monastery grounds, ponds, and adjacent San Pedro River. Meet at Sierra Vista City Hall 7 am to carpool. Trip is free and open to the public.

Thursday, May 29, to Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve/Patons, led by Erika Wilson (terika88@cox.net) and Mike Guest (mwguest@juno.com). Field trip to the Nature Conservancy's Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve plus. Meet at Sierra Vista City Hall at 7 am to carpool. Bring lunch and water for a flat, easy three-mile stroll around the preserve, looking for Patagonia specialties such as the Gray Hawk, Thick-billed Kingbird, Black Vulture and Northern Beardless Tyrannulet. We'll also stop at the Patagonia Rest Area for lunch and a second chance at the kingbird, and then at the Paton's yard for hummingbirds, such as the Violet Crowned Hummingbird. Trip is free and open to the public, but standard preserve entrance fees apply: \$5/person non-members, \$3/person members, plus a donation at the Paton's to help maintain the feeders.

Sunday, June 8, to Carr Canyon/ Comfort Spring, led by Robert Weissler (weissler@aves.org). Field trip to the high Huachuclas.

ARIZONA CHAPTERS

Meet at the Perimeter Trail parking lot, Carr Canyon at 7:30 am to carpool. Be prepared for a two-mile hike at a relaxed pace; the trail is rough with some steep sections, so bring water and sturdy shoes. We will be looking for high elevation specialties such as Greater Peewee, Virginia's and Olive Warblers, and the Buff-breasted Flycatcher. Trip is free and open to the public.

Maricopa Audubon Society

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Maricopa Audubon Society has had a busy winter. The Chapter now sponsors birding classes at the Southeast Regional Library in Gilbert, at the Desert Botanical Gardens in Phoenix, and at Tempe Parks and Recreation's Pyle Center in Tempe. We continue a full slate of interesting and diversified field trips and educational and entertaining meeting programs on the first Tuesday of each month at Dorrance Auditorium at the Desert Botanical Garden, September through April.

Coming up in April are our annual board elections closely followed by our annual banquet and celebration at Shalimar Golf Club in Tempe on the first Tuesday in May.

Meanwhile our conservation committee is taking a proactive role in efforts to save Oak Flat Campground and its surrounding environmental treasures in Superior from development as a new copper mine, at the same time fighting for the unique and critically threatened Bald Eagles that nest and breed along the Salt and Verde Rivers.

A recent program featured MAS scholarship recipient Tyler Loomis, who used a PowerPoint presentation to relate his experiences at a birding camp in Cape May, New Jersey, that he attended together with about thirteen other young people. Last but far from least, we continue to work *mano a mano* with CEDO, a Tucson-based environmental group, striving to save the irreplaceable natural resources found in Rocky Point, Mexico, and in the surrounding area.

Northern Arizona Audubon Society

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Northern Arizona Audubon Society is gearing up for a busy spring season with the Verde Valley Birding and Nature Festival at Dead Horse Ranch State Park on April 14-18, Earth Day Celebration in Sedona on April 19, and Birdathon in May, as well as ongoing conservation projects.

A co-sponsor of the birding festival, NAAS provides many of the field trip leaders and has an information booth there. This year's festival theme is "Cultivating Habitat," and the event will focus on local wineries and organic farms that practice healthy, alternative growing techniques that conserve natural resources. Jeff Schalaus

from the University of Arizona Agricultural Extension Office will be the keynote speaker. Earth Day, sponsored by the City of Sedona, will focus on the theme "Healthy Planet/Healthy Living," and NAAS will use the new brochure supplied by the Arizona Audubon Council titled "An Invitation to a Healthy Home."

Habitat improvement continues at Page Spring/Bubbling Ponds Nature Trail and at Logan's Crossing on the East Rio de Flag near Flagstaff. At the Nature Trail, NAAS continues to remove invasive plants such as Russian Olive, Salt Cedar and Tree of Heaven and to replace them with natives. At the March 8 work day, volunteers donned gloves and wielded pruning shears and shovels to remove blackberry brambles (very carefully).

At the Rio de Flag site, April 5 will find volunteers removing invasive thistle and cleaning up trash. NAAS adopted this site because of its diverse habitat where 150 bird species have already been documented. The chapter has asked the US Forest Service (Coconino National Forest) to nominate this site as one of their "special areas." The site also is part of the proposed Rio de Flag IBA.

Surveys of bird species at the proposed IBA resumed in February. Organizers Bea Cooley, Jodi Griffith, Jim Logan, and Lauren Harter hope to have enough data to develop the IBA designation proposal by the end of September.

NAAS's first Volunteer Picnic was held on March 2 at the new ramada at Page Springs/Bubbling Ponds. A second volunteer picnic is tentatively planned for September at The Nature Conservancy's Hart Prairie Preserve. A big thank-you to Kathie Satterfield, Volunteer Coordinator, for organizing both events.

Jim Logan and Bea Cooley are teaching their second Beginning Birding Class, this time through Coconino Community College. Topics to be covered include how to select binoculars and birding guides, how to identify our local birds, and where to go birding in Northern Arizona.

Recent and upcoming programs for the monthly member meetings include "Close Encounters of the Reptilian Kind" (Dennis Jex), "Polar Bears of Churchill Manitoba" (Harold and Paula Ables), "Freshwater Biomonitoring for Water Quality: How do bugs tell us how clean our water is?" (Dave Smith), "The Arizona Bird Conservation Initiative: Benefiting Arizona's WatchList Bird Species" (Edwin Juarez), and "Tales of Convergent Evolution Among Birds" (Tad Theimer).

Prescott Audubon Society

P.O. Box 4156, Prescott, AZ 86302
Contact: Karen O'Neil, Vice President
Phone: 928-778-3018
Email: kwojo@northlink.com
Website: www.prescottaudubon.org

Please consult Prescott Audubon Society's website for information on upcoming activities.

Sonoran Audubon Society

P.O. Box 8068, Glendale, AZ 85312
Contact: Bob McCormick, President
Phone: 623-939-6181
Email: mcbobaz@aol.com
Website: www.sonoranaudubon.org

ARIZONA CHAPTERS

A Retreat was held on Saturday, February 2, at the Hassayampa River Preserve. Thirteen people met to look at the goals set at the previous Retreat and review what was accomplished. They then prepared plans for the coming year. Some of these plans included ways of increasing membership, better publicity for meetings and events, and a strong emphasis on education. There will be a booth set up at the Hassayampa River Preserve on Saturday, May 10, for International Migratory Bird Day. There were discussions on the progress of the IBA counts. Teams and schedules for 2008 IBA counts were established.

Here is the upcoming schedule for the General Membership meetings:

Wednesday, April 9—Rich Ockenfels: South African Adventure
Wednesday, May 7—Rob Smith: Global Warming

The following trips will be hosted by both the Sonoran Audubon Society of Glendale and Birders Anonymous of Sun City:

Friday, April 11 at Hassayampa River Preserve, led by George Wall (623-875-7057 or gwall5@cox.net).

There will also be a trip to Rio Salado on **Saturday, April 19**, but details are not available at this time.

Since the fall issue, 20 fields were held including one to Rocky Point and a Sparrow Workshop.



Northern Parula at Gilbert Water Ranch

Tucson Audubon Society

300 E. University Blvd., #120, Tucson, AZ 85705
Contact: Paul Green, Executive Director
Email: pgreen@tucsonaudubon.org
Contact: Herb Trossman, President
Email: herb62@earthlink.net
Website: www.tucsonaudubon.org

Institute of Desert Ecology

In its 38th year, Tucson Audubon's Institute of Desert Ecology will take place in Catalina State Park between April 17-20, 2008. Space is limited, so apply now. The spectacular northwest face of the Santa Catalina Mountains forms the backdrop for our event. Our study focuses on Sonoran Desert ecosystems with emphasis on relationships between plants, animals, and the physical characteristics of the desert. Our days start early, and optional activities such as owling, blacklighting for insects, and star talks extend into the evening. Participants and faculty interact in small groups during the first three days. On Sunday, a final hike ties together the experiences of earlier sessions for the entire group. Desert washes,

canyons, and bajadas contain a vast array of desert plants and wildlife. More details at <http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/education/ide.htm> or email Matt Brooks at mbrooks@tucsonaudubon.org.

Ironwood Festival celebrates International Migratory Bird Day

This year we combine our annual celebration of the unique Ironwood forest habitats, and the flowering of the Ironwood trees, with International Migratory Bird Day on May 10. Spring-birding counters will start the day early, and we have education activities throughout the afternoon and a party with live music among the Ironwoods in the evening. All will be held at Tucson Audubon's Mason Center on the Northwest Side of Tucson. More information at <http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/masoncenter/ironwood.htm>.

Owls on Mt. Lemmon with Rick Taylor, a fundraiser

We will offer an evening of night birds on Mt. Lemmon with Rick Taylor in early July. (Be advised—the event is strictly limited in number to 14 people.) There will be food stops throughout the evening, and good company. Minimum donation \$500. Please contact Vivian MacKinnon at (520) 629-0757 for more details of this unique event.

Free Field Trips every week

Tucson Audubon offers free birding trips every week. For details please see our website <http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/fieldtrips/index.htm>, or contact Vivian MacKinnon at (520) 629-0757.

So many events

Whether you want to go birding, learn how to count birds, volunteer to help with habitat restoration, or learn more about birds in general, you can find out current offerings on our website at <http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/tasevents.htm>

White Mountain Audubon Society

P.O. Box 3043, Pinetop, AZ 85935
Contact: Mary Ellen Bittorf, President
Phone: 928-367-2462
Email: birds@whitemountainaudubon.org
Website: www.whitemountainaudubon.org

Field trip chairman for 2008 will be Pat Yovonovitz. She is enthusiastic and very knowledgeable. For questions, contact her at 928-205-8223 after 3:00 p.m.

On **March 5**, White Mountain Audubon Society will hold the first meeting of 2008. Our speaker will be Jody Peddie talking about Bald Eagles. The program promises to be very interesting.

The field trip for **March** will be on the **15th**, and it will include visits to local lakes. We meet at 7:00 am at McDonalds in Pinetop and carpool from there.

On **April 19** we will travel to the Petrified Forest and Five Mile Draw.

May 16, 17, and 18 will be the annual Birdathon.

On **May 17** will be the Migratory Bird Count along the Little Colorado River.

On **June 20-22** we will sponsor our annual Camp Out. We are presently planning to camp at Burnt Mill Springs, unless fire restrictions require a change. Please RSVP to Liz Jernigan at 928-532-1510, or email at lizjern@hotmail.com. This is always an enjoyable activity and a chance to get out of the valley heat!! Come and join us.

On **July 19** we will visit high-altitude lakes.

July 26 is the annual Hummingbird banding at Sipe's Wildlife

ARIZONA CHAPTERS

Area. As usual, this will be conducted by renowned expert, Sherri Williamson. It is always such a thrill to see these beautiful birds up close and learn about them. Mark your calendars.

White Mountain Audubon meets the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm in the Pinetop-Lakeside Council chambers.

One last note: The White Mountain Nature Center that many of you have heard us talk about will have its first event on the property on **April 19**. We will celebrate Earth Day with a clean-up of the site and some guided tours to talk about plans for the Center. We are excited about this event, and we hope some of you will be able to join us.

We are looking forward to a busy year at White Mountain Audubon, and as always we hope you all . . . enjoy birding!!!

Yuma Audubon Society

P.O. Box 6395, Yuma, AZ 85366

Contact 1: Cary Meister, Conservation Chair
Phone 928-782-3552

Email: yasconservation@yahoo.com

Contact 2: Patricia Rather, President

Email: yaspresident@yahoo.com

Website: www.southwestbirders.com/audubon.htm

Please consult Yuma Audubon Society's website for information on upcoming activities.

Crafty Plan Succeeds

Some thought it was a mistake, the absence of February 29th from the 2008 calendar published by the Arizona Audubon Council and Audubon Arizona. But the missing date was welcomed by others as a gift and recognized by still others as a brilliant PR strategy. First, Audubon Arizona received a thank-you call from an executive assistant in Tucson who realized that she and her boss had a meeting-free day. Then John Mills, majority policy advisor for the Arizona House of Representatives, called to say that the calendar was "the talk of the Legislature" (but reassured Audubon that work was going forward as usual).

Indeed, public response to the missing date was so enthusiastic that Audubon will consider omitting the entire month of February from its 2009 calendar.

2009 seems far away, but now's the time to put in your order for an Arizona Audubon calendar. Contact Donna Sauer at 602-468-6470 or dsauer@audubon.org or call your local chapter. Bulk orders welcome!



PHOTO BY JIM BURNS

The real secret to the popularity of the Arizona Audubon calendar is the amazing bird photography by Jim Burns.

It's a Bird! It's a Plane!

If you can tell the difference, you'll enjoy

Audubon's 2008 Birdathon.

Like participants in a fund raising walk, Birdathoners raise money for Audubon's programs just by asking friends and family to make a pledge. Instead of miles walked, however, Birdathon teams count the species of birds seen within a 24-hour period in April, May, or June. Some Birdathoners have had great success in their own back yards; others use the occasion to visit wilder locales.

(According to one expert, driving up a mountain makes for a high Birdathon count since different species prefer different altitudes!) To register your team and receive event materials, contact Donna Sauer at 602-468-6470 or dsauer@audubon.org. Novice birders? Let us know, and we'll find you a guide (subject to availability, of course).



PHOTO BY LAURA L. WHITEHOUSE/USFWS

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

For many people, making a simple bequest doesn't seem so simple—and that's why they put off doing it. Even tax attorney Anne Durning, the newest donor to Audubon Arizona's planned giving program, had a question. Durning, an Arizona resident for most of her life and an Audubon member for more than 20 years, had put Audubon in her will long ago, but decided recently that she wanted to make sure that her gift stayed in Arizona. "I think people should take into account our local habitat and local birds and local issues when making a bequest of this sort," Durning said.

Durning's question is a good one: How can you make sure that money given to a national organization will stay in your state? The answer is surprisingly simple. Those wishing to make a bequest to Audubon Arizona in their estate planning should say:

I bequeath \$___ [or ___%] of my residuary estate to the National Audubon Society, Inc. a not-for-profit environmental conservation organization with its headquarters located in New York, NY, for its Arizona state office.

The italicized phrase above, naming the Arizona state office—Audubon Arizona—as your intended recipient, ensures that your gift will stay in the state, protecting Arizona's birds, other wildlife, and their habitats and teaching children to love nature for generations to come.



PHOTO BY GINNY TEMPLE/DIRECT CURRENT PRODUCTIONS

Your planned gift to Audubon Arizona will help to protect our state's unique natural heritage for the future.

For more information about making a planned gift, please contact Marcia Halstead at 602-468-6470 or mhalstead@audubon.org.

THE RIVER'S TALE

With a little help from Audubon, the Salt River speaks

As part of a public awareness campaign, Audubon is offering free **presentations and habitat tours** to professional and community groups across the Valley. If your group is interested in learning more about the restored Rio Salado habitat in the heart of Phoenix and Audubon's exciting work there, please contact Donna Sauer at 602-468-6470 or dsauer@audubon.org.

The River's Tale is funded in part through generous gifts from American Express and Employees Community Fund of Boeing Mesa.

YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

GROUNDBREAKING

for the Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center

Saturday, **April 12th, 2008**—9:00 am to 10:00 am
Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center Site
Central Avenue at Salt River Bridge (southeast side)

Witness an historic moment—the groundbreaking of Audubon Arizona's first environmental education center! Then cross the bridge and enjoy International Migratory Bird Day activities until noon with the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department, Audubon Arizona, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and Liberty Wildlife. Admission is free, but **please let Audubon know if you plan to attend the ground breaking**. RSVP to Donna Sauer at 602-468-6470 or dsauer@audubon.org.

The groundbreaking will be sponsored by **CH2M HILL** and **SRP**.

A LITTLE BIT OF WATER

A Little Bit of Water, commissioned by friends of Audubon Arizona and Childsplay and written by Dwayne Hartford, will open at the Tempe Center for the Arts on Sunday, June 15th and run through June 22nd. Produced by Childsplay, the play has been touring schools statewide since January. To purchase tickets, please call 480-350-2822, go to www.childsplayaz.org, or stop by the Tempe Center for the Arts box office at 700 West Rio Salado Parkway. (Donors to the project will receive an invitation to a free performance and celebratory reception.)

A Little Bit of Water will be sponsored by **SRP**.

ANNUAL NATURE FILM FESTIVAL

Mark **Wednesday, June 18**, on your calendar and watch for your invitation in the mail! It's time for Audubon's annual nature film festival, and we are working right now to get the rights to perhaps the most exciting and provocative film we've ever shown! So plan to join us at Harkins Camelview 5 (7001 East Highland Avenue Scottsdale, 85251) at 5:30 pm for a silent auction filled with unique treasures, a picnic supper, popcorn, and a soda, and, at 7:00 pm, two great nature films. The cost is \$25 per person or \$100 for VIP seating and express auction check-out. (\$75 of each VIP tickets is a donation to Audubon Arizona and deductible to the extent allowed by law.) To purchase tickets, contact Donna Sauer at 602-468-6470 or dsauer@audubon.org.

Exercise Your Right to Vote . . .

for Audubon Arizona

Go to www.azpbs.org/bemore and cast your vote for Audubon Arizona! Audubon is a candidate for the People's Choice Award, one of the Be More Awards offered by Eight, Arizona PBS. Be More Award winners will be included in extensive Eight public relations and media campaigns as well as on a primetime television special—publicity that will introduce Audubon's mission and programs to a much larger audience than it can reach on its own. Please help Audubon win the recognition it deserves by casting your vote before **April 15, 2008**.



By the time you read this

Audubon will be just two months away from its June 30th fiscal year end. If you haven't made a contribution in the past 10 months, we hope you'll consider doing so now. If you have already given, your extra gift now will help Audubon to finish the year in good financial shape, despite the challenges of today's economic climate. And a gift made now will count towards the Earth Friends Wildlife Foundation Challenge—see the insert for details!

To make giving easier, Audubon Arizona has instituted online giving—just go to <http://az.audubon.org> and click on "Donate" in the green box on the left of the home page. If you prefer to give in installments, just print out a pledge form from the "Support" page of our website, fill it out, and mail it back! For more information on giving, contact Marcia Halstead at 602-468-6470 or mhalstead@audubon.org.



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