President’s Message
Krys Hammers

Winter News from DRAS

We're heading into the best birding season of the year. Winter migrants have returned - both the birds and our winter visitors. It is so nice to see all those faces that we haven’t seen since last year. Our activities are in full swing. We have a full slate of field trips. Our monthly programs have been very well attended and we have some terrific speakers lined up. Our monthly birdwalks at the Gilbert Riparian Preserve on the 3rd Saturdays and the Veterans Oasis Park in Chandler on the 1st Saturdays are a favorite for families, beginners, and seasoned birders. The Early Birds, our club for children seems to be growing by leaps and bounds. It’s amazing what good birders these children have become. It gives you hope that an appreciation for birds, wildlife, and habitat will continue through the next generation.

Our year-end appeal was very successful, raising funds to help us continue our programs and projects. The generosity of our members and supporters, and the donations that match from our employers, is so much appreciated. Additionally, we received a $5,000 donation from the Arizona Medical Network, as directed by Charles and Merion Saffell. We have been fortunate to have received significant donations from this group over the years. This year, we've also received a grant from the Phoenix Coyotes for $2,500 which will be used to purchase an equipment trailer to haul our gear to our events and activities. I can’t tell you how much of us who have been loading, unloading and storing our equipment appreciate it. So give a great loud howl for the Coyotes Charities organization.

We also received a $2,500 Together Green grant this year from National Audubon and Toyota. This grant enabled us to supply the materials to build 100 burrows for Burrowing Owls. We had 81 volunteers turn out on that very warm October day to install the burrows. These volunteers worked really hard and did a great job! Pepsi also donated Pepsi products to quench the thirst of those parched volunteers.

We would not be able to accomplish all that we do without the help of some very industrious volunteers. We are so grateful to the volunteers who address envelopes, write grants, keep the books and records, tend our Hummingbird Habitat, sell books, lead birdwalks, help with children’s programs, write articles, schlep equipment, plan and promote our activities, work with community leaders and help shovel dirt for owl burrows.

Audubon at Home
Krys Hammers

Closing the Recycling Loop

We're all pretty familiar with recycling and most of us are probably avid recyclers. Most of us are lucky to live in areas where we have curbside recycling. It is just as easy to throw recyclables into the blue can instead of the trash can. We're all familiar with the benefits of recycling, but are you closing the recycling loop? Are you also choosing to buy products made from recycled materials?

One of the best success stories of closed-loop recycling is that of the aluminum can. According to recycling-revolution.com, a used can which is recycled can be back on the grocers' shelf in as little as 60 days. More aluminum is used for cans than any other product. We use over 80 trillion aluminum drink cans every year! Because so many of them are recycled, aluminum cans account for less than 1% of the total U.S. waste stream, according to EPA estimates. Desert Rivers will help you recycle your aluminum cans. Just bring your cans to a meeting or event and we’ll recycle them for you. Not only does it keep them out of landfills, but it helps to fund our organization.

It costs us a little more to print this newsletter on recycled paper, but we feel it’s important to walk the talk, not just talk and walk. Again according to recycling-revolution.com, in 1993 U.S. paper recovery saved more than 90,000,000 cubic yards of landfill space. Each ton (2000 pounds) of recycled paper can save 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, three cubic yards of landfill space, 4000 kilowatts of energy, and 7000 gallons of water. This represents a 64% energy savings, a 58% water savings, and 60 pounds less of air pollution. Those 17 trees saved can absorb a total of 250 pounds of carbon dioxide from the air each year. Burning that same ton of paper would create 1500 pounds of carbon dioxide. The construction costs of a paper mill designed to use waste paper is 50 to 80% less than the cost of a mill using new. Paper products made from recycled paper are readily available. Please look to make sure to pick up the printer paper or greeting cards that are made from recycled paper.

It’s a little more difficult to know when you are buying products made of recycled plastic. Few products advertise that they are made from recycled plastic. There are some construction materials, such as a type of lumber. Because plastic is particularly slow to degrade and because it is made from petroleum, it is a particularly significant problem. In our hot, dry climate we need to drink a lot of water. Many buy water bottled in plastic on a regular basis. According to recycling-revolution.com, Americans use 2,500,000 plastic bottles every hour! Most of them are thrown away. Our best line of defense is to reduce our use of plastics in the first place. We are much better off drinking our water in reusable BPA-free bottles. We should bring our own reusable bottles and coffee cups instead of using plastic and Styrofoam. We also need to get in the habit of using our reusable shopping bags instead of using plastic bags at the grocery store. I know that it’s easy to forget them in your car or at home, but the more that you remember to bring them, the more it reminds other people too.

In the case of plastics, it is important to reduce and reuse. For other product, please recycle, but don’t forget to close the loop and buy products made from recycled materials.
The recent stories of jaguars and ocelots being spotted in Arizona got me thinking about the historic role that our desert rivers played in wildlife population distribution. My thoughts wandered to the impact the "dang fence on the border would have in limiting the future distribution of these tropical species back into Arizona. I also got to thinking about how our modern system of canals has come to partially replace the role that our desert rivers historically played in wildlife distribution, especially here in the Gilbert, Chandler, Tempe, and Mesa area.

For those that missed the news reports, the Arizona Game and Fish Depart

ment confirmed through photographs that a mountain lion hunter treed a jaguar southeast of Tucson. The Arizona Daily Star also reported that in June a helicopter pilot for Homeland Security spotted a jaguar loping down a forested hillside in the Santa Rita Mountains of southern Arizona. Arizona Game & Fish also reported that a further five reports by hunters have been confirmed and the department is now attempting to determine through photographic analysis how many jaguars may be roaming about southern Arizona. The Game & Fish believe that these individuals represent the most northern part of a population of jaguars living in Sonora, Mexico.

We were also recently briefly regaled with the story of a sighting of an ocelot. Upon further analysis, the Game and Fish Department believes that the cat was more likely a serval, or serval hybrid, an African cat popular in the pet trade. However, there were two other confirmed sightings of ocelots earlier in the year, both in the Huachuca Mountains. These are only the third and fourth reports of ocelots in Arizona since the 1960's. It was generally agreed by most wildlife observers that the ocelot was extinct in Arizona until one was found dead along the highway in the Globe area in 2010 and one was photographed in 2009 by a trail camera belonging to the Sky Island Alliance. (http://www.skyislandalliance.org/news.htm) There is a small remnant population of ocelots in Texas and the rest of the range was believed to be much farther south in Mexico, but now Arizona has to be added to the list of locations where the species is still holding on to some territory.

Historically, Arizona's desert rivers have been corridors for wildlife. Although the exact locations of the traditional corridors used by jaguars and ocelots remain uncertain, there is good evidence that the prey species of both cats were originally found in abundance along our desert rivers. For these species to survive, movement corridors need to be maintained. Conservation efforts are crucial as habitat becomes more fragmented and isolated. The Sky Island Alliance is one organization working to maintain the connections north and south of the border through their Wildlife Linkages program.

One threat to the continued efforts to conserve both of these species is the proposed border fence. The Center for Biological Diversity (http://www.biologicaldiversity.org) has been warning of the environmental catastrophe that the border fence would be for wildlife populations for five years. Back in 2006, the Center said: "More border walls, militarization, low-level aircraft and roads would further damage already-stressed wildlife species, such as the Cactus Pygmy Owl and Sonoran Pronghorn in Arizona, Flat-Tailed Horned Lizard and Peninsular Ranges Bighorn Sheep in California, Jaguar and Mexican Gray Wolves in New Mexico, and the Rio Grande River, Ocelot, and Big Bend National Park in Texas. Triple walls are harmful to wildlife blocking critical migration corridors and destroying valuable habitat.

The distance of the triple wall – 370 miles – is approximately the distance of the entire border in Arizona.”

With two Arizona desert rivers having their headwaters in Mexico, the border fence will affect wildlife distribution. It seems clear that the northernmost range for the ocelot and jaguar would be cut off from the population in Mexico and stop any natural repopulation of these species in Arizona.

Closer to home, our canal system is the wildlife corridor for coyotes and other mammals. In the southeast valley, the four SRP canals (Consolidated, Eastern, Western, & Tempe) plus the Roosevelt Water Conservation District canal are regular coyote corridors. When we add in the Eastern Maricopa Floodway, we have a wildlife corridor that stretches from the San Tan Mountains in the south to the Salt River Recreation Area. So the next time you see a coyote in one of the East Valley riparian areas, or a coyote loping through a southeast valley neighborhood, remind yourself that it is the same mode of transit that wildlife has always used in the southwest: our riparian desert rivers. And, if you want your children and grandchildren to someday see jaguars and ocelots in the wildlands of Arizona, let your opinion be known to our elected officials the next time they start talking about building "the dang fence".

www.desertriversaudubon.org
Zanjero Park Project Day

Saturday, October 29, 2011, Desert Rivers Audubon embarked on their largest volunteer project yet, the Burrowing Owl habitat installation at Zanjero Park, Gilbert. This project was made possible by a grant from TogetherGreen, a joint initiative of The National Audubon Society and Toyota “to fund conservation projects, train environmental leaders, and offer volunteer opportunities.” Under the direction of Wild At Heart’s Burrowing Owl conservationist, Greg Clark, and with the trenching completed by the Town of Gilbert, over 80 volunteers gathered from 7am to 2pm to install burrows in anticipation of the release of the owls at the site in the Spring of 2012.

Reporter Srianthi Perera featured the project the week before the event in the Valley & State section of the Arizona Republic. Volunteers included National Honor Society students from McClintock High School and Service Learning students from Mesa Community College. Desert Rivers Audubon members and online recruits from Desert Rivers Audubon’s profiles on VolunteerMatch.org and SignUpGenius.com.

Guided by team leaders who had attended a training session with Clark on Friday, volunteers graded the entries to the burrows to 45 degrees, cut & attached tubing to the bucket burrows, installed protective PVC pipes over the entries, and dog-proof chicken wire to the exposed entrances. Arizona Republic photographer Yaf Yossifor documented the process while spending the morning interviewing volunteers.

The project required the help of dozens of volunteers to finish on time.

After breaking for lunch provided by the Desert Rivers Audubon Board of Directors and a visit with a rescued Burrowing Owl courtesy of Wild At Heart, the volunteers completed the installation of 100 burrows as well as the construction of the proposed release site in Zanjero Park. The release site will be tented and fenced in late January to aid the acclimation of the owls to the town. The event and the installation was a great success due to the overwhelming support and hard work of the volunteers, bringing new people to Audubon as well as building a relationship with Wild At Heart and the Town of Gilbert. Wild At Heart continue their burrow installation projects in January 2012; contact them at stevekthomas@cox.net for more information. Desert Rivers Audubon will need more volunteers this spring to care for the owls on the Zanjero Park site as well as donations of fencing and perch material. Stacy Bulleigh, a recent graduate in wildlife habitat management from Arizona State University, and a new Desert Rivers Audubon volunteer, is writing our research/observation protocol for the owl habitat. Students and birders will soon join Stacey this spring in documenting the owls on site.

Greg Clark assembling one of the 100 man-made “burrows” at the new complex.
Insects - We can't Live without them!

Dr. David L. Pearson, ASU School of Life Sciences

Why is it most people cringe or even scream when they see an insect or bug? What in our early years gave us such a prejudice against six-legged creatures that we lose all sense of logic and automatically run from or squash these fantastic animals? We probably paint the “to be killed” sign on insects because of the few really bad members among the class Insecta. Bedbugs, termites, cockroaches, mosquitoes, lice, bot flies, boll weevils, killer bees and their ilk are at best grizzled pests. At their worst, disease carriers and crop destroyers, but these villains make up less than 2% of the 10 million or so species of insects in the world.

Insects, like humans, make music, communicate with symbolic language, grow their own crops, and enslave each other, and fight wars. They also help humans so much that we have become much more dependent on them than on us. If all insects were to suddenly vanish overnight, says Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson, it’s likely humans would be endangered. Insects pollinate plants, including 80 percent of the world’s 94 major food crops. They break down dead animals and the waste that animals and plants produce, from dung to discarded skin, feathers, hair, fallen leaves and rotten wood. They protect our harvests by eating the pests and the weeds that would destroy them. They are food for frogs, reptiles, fish, and mammals—including humans. Most birds, including seed-eating finches and nectar-feeding hummingbirds, catch insects to provide protein to their nestlings. Insects aerate and enrich the soil by digging burrows and carrying nutrients down from the surface, which in turn, helps prevent erosion and runoff into rivers and streams. We also harvest products like honey, beeswax, and silk from insects. Perhaps 20 to 30% of the medicines we use today are thanks to plant-eating insects. To protect themselves from the grasshoppers and caterpillars that would otherwise destroy their leaves and stems, many if not most plants have developed chemical poisons that they place within their foliage. These plant toxins deter, disable or even kill herbivores trying to make a salad out of the tree or bush. Have you ever wondered why the common landscape bush, Oleander, is so dangerous to eat? Its acute toxins kill insects that take a single bite out of a leaf. However, some of these plant chemicals, by coincidence, have beneficial impacts on human physiology. The ancient Greeks learned 1000’s of years ago that chewing the bark of a willow tree can help cure pains and headaches—we now call that chemical from the willow bark aspirin. Caffeine in your coffee or coke helps stimulate you when you are tired. Quinine in the bark of a rain forest tree produced the first effective medicine against malaria 100s of years ago. Today there are at least 120 distinct chemical substances derived from plants that are important drugs currently in use. They include anti-depressants, anti-tumor agents, laxatives, diuretics, sedatives, analgesics, cardiac stimulators, antibiotics, anti-fungals, dental plaque inhibitors and sedatives. And we haven’t even looked at 90% of the plants and trees to see what other anti-herbivore chemicals they might reveal to improve the quality of our lives.

The next time you are faced with an evil-looking grasshopper or a monstrous palo verde beetle, think twice. Consider that instead of immediately squashing the bug because it looks so ugly, you should bend down with respect and say thanks for all that it and its cousins have done to improve and perhaps make possible the life we live and share here on this planet.

www.desertriversaudubon.org
Audubon President Demands Protection of Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

A historic opportunity to protect the Arctic Refuge for future generations.

Statement from David Yarnold, President & CEO of Audubon

Today, on behalf of our 500,000 plus members, Audubon joined hundreds of thousands of Americans to call on the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to recommend the Coastal Plain Wilderness Study Area be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Audubon strongly supports this recommendation and believes that the Refuge’s Coastal Plain— which serves as the “biological heart” of the Arctic Refuge— should be managed in a manner that protects its unparalleled biological values and maintains its special Wilderness character.

With the release of a draft revised Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the FWS made an important decision to formally consider Wilderness for the crucial Coastal Plain. As part of this plan, a full Wilderness Review was done for the Arctic Refuge Coastal Plain for the first time ever— presenting a historic opportunity to protect the Arctic Refuge for future generations.

Audubon and our grassroots supporters, along with many other dedicated conservationists, have worked long and hard to keep the Arctic Refuge safe from oil and gas drilling. Now, we call on the FWS to take this historic opportunity in finalizing the CCP for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, to recommend Wilderness for the Coastal Plain.

Due to its size, remote location, wilderness character, and diversity of values, the Arctic Refuge is an irreplaceable treasure that provides a globally significant benchmark of ecological integrity in the Arctic. Audubon especially appreciates that the CCP expressly recognizes climate change as a fundamental challenge for the Arctic Refuge and encourages the FWS to incorporate new scientific information pertaining to climate change into future management decisions. Audubon supports climate change-related efforts on the part of the FWS focused on scientific research and monitoring, sharing of traditional knowledge, and public awareness.

Protecting wild Alaska was bold and audacious 50 years ago. Defending it today is even more important. The Ike Eisenhower administration’s establishment of the Arctic National Wildlife Range in 1960 and recognized the importance of “America’s Serengeti” to both wildlife and the human spirit. It was a visionary act—not only in the protections that it has provided for more than 180 species of birds, 36 species of land mammals, and nine marine mammals, but in its awareness that future generations deserve and need an opportunity to be inspired by the enduring presence of wilderness.

Techniques Pioneered by Audubon for Maine Puffins will Help other Species 3,300 Miles Away

Audubon and Partners Launch International Effort to Restore Seabird Nesting Colonies on Baja California Islands

Over the last 38 years, techniques developed by Dr. Stephen Kress, Director of Audubon’s Seabird Restoration Program and Project Puffin, have restored breeding Atlantic Puffins and other seabirds to Maine’s coastal islands. Beginning this spring, the innovative approach, which uses decoys, mirrors, and recordings to attract birds to suitable nesting sites, will be implemented on the Baja California peninsula.

The California Brown Pelican, Cassin’s Auklet, Ashy Storm-Petrel, and Xantus’s Murrelet—at-risk seabirds that will benefit from this collaborative effort involving Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas (GECI), and the Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature (MFCN). The five-year program will be made possible by $4 million in funding from The Monro Trust and Lucifer Trustee Councils and Mexico’s government; plus matching funds from the Natural Protected Areas Commission from the government of Mexico and the MFCN. The program will be administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The islands selected for the project are located off the Pacific coast of the Baja California peninsula and provide breeding sites for 17 seabird species. Decoys, mirrors, and broadcast seabird calls will be used to attract birds to islands that have been cleared of introduced predators over the past decade. The conservation partners will also restore habitat, prevent human disturbance on the islands, and provide environmental education programs with a focus on seabird conservation to the surrounding communities.

“It’s rewarding to see that our work to help puffins on the coast of Maine will now help at-risk seabirds in Mexico,” said Dr. Kress. “I am especially pleased that two of the Mexican leaders, Marisa Felix and Marlene Rodriguez from GECI, both served as Project Puffin interns. Now they’ll be using skills acquired in Maine to help seabirds in Mexico.”

Audubon’s Seabird Restoration Program has trained hundreds of interns since 1973; many are now professional conservation biologists working with seabirds. For more information, visit www.projectpuffin.org.

The collaborative effort in Baja will be critically important for seabirds that live along the California Current (from Canada to Mexico). As many as 2.5 million seabirds breed on the islands where work will occur: Coronado, Todos Santos, San Martin, San Jeronimo, Natividad, Ascension, and San Roque Islands. This is at least half of the total breeding seabirds in the California Current.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Park Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, California Department of Fish and Game, California State Lands Commission, and California Department of Parks and Recreation are also providing essential support for this initiative. For more information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (in English and Spanish), visit http://bit.ly/1ApqmR
City Washes

It's a suburban wash unmarked on any map, although you might guess its presence by the odd dead-ended streets in its vicinity. Certainly, dog-walkers know about it. Neighborhood kids have built a few forts, fashioned paintball obstacles, and mounded dirt into bounding bicycle courses there. But in eighteen years, I've never met another birder in this hidden oasis.

To facilitate drainage, the city scours the wash bottom about every three years, oblivious to the damage wrought to mesquites, palo verdes and wildflowers. A couple of snags bear witness to root systems so scarred by heavy machinery that the trees could not survive. Still, the government has not seen fit to install a concrete channel, and the wash remains quite wild and impenetrable in places.

Cottontails and coyotes are the most common mammals, but a hapless javelina showed up once. Last spring, the bobcat seen frequently on the neighborhood streets probably sought refuge in the wash.

I walk the wash for the birds, and have for years. I used to keep good records, but abandoned those efforts except for a few weeks last spring.

Inspired by sighting an American Robin in late March, I decided to walk the wash as often as I could over the next several weeks. From the last day in March to May 22, I made thirteen forays to this site—all of one hundred yards from my front door, as the Thrasher flies, but about three minutes' stroll for the fit-challenged.

Each walk lasted a little over an hour. All but two days, I walked in the morning. My evening walks weren't quite as productive, but that's when I saw...
Desert Cranes & Geese

Photos: Denny Green

Sandhill Crane taxonomy is a vexed issue nowadays, with some experts recognizing up to six races and other authorities declining to slice discreet subspecies out of what they deem continuous variation across the species’ range. For us, the names and precise sub-specific designations of Bosque’s Sandhill Cranes aren’t important. What does matter is that the wintering flock in central New Mexico has two different geographic origins.

Most of the Sandhill Cranes wintering in New Mexico are large birds from the Rocky Mountain population, conventionally identified as the Greater Sandhill Crane Grus canadensis labbati, these short-distance migrants breed in the Intermountain West of Idaho, Montana, Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming. They are joined by long-distance passage birds from western Canada, Alaska, and Siberia; these birds, usually designated Lesser Sandhill Cranes, Grus canadensis canadensis or G. c. cygnoides, return to their Arctic breeding grounds by way of Nebraska’s central Platte River Valley, where they provide a small stop in the great stream of half a million cranes that stage there each spring.

What this means for the birder is that the potential for a truly fly-by along with the Bosque cranes is doubled. In the 1950s, the Rocky Mountain cranes regularly brought with them several Whippoorwill Cranes from the small, ill-starred population reintroduced in Idaho. The loss of those great white birds didn’t really set a decade ago now, but with the heartening increase in the wild population, it remains well worth knowing for a truly fly-by Whippoorwill Crane to once again wander west to Bosque.

Another sand crane, its English name notwithstanding—exciting possibility for the observant observer. The Common Crane is a large, black-necked species breeding across northern Europe and Asia. Its nesting grounds extend from the Russian Far East to Europe, with those of Cranes, and it seems likely that individual become associated with those of its accompanying them south to their wintering Platte. These latter wanderers can be found in large flocks of cranes, with the most elegant field character, the black and white neck is generally invisible when the bird either over to dig in its belted corn stubble, and those birds who have managed to find a Common Crane in New Mexico have supplemented a little good luck with a great deal of patient scanning. The massive increase in the Old World species population means that vagrants are likely not to continue but to become more frequent whenever Lesser Sandhill Cranes are found.

Interestingly enough, it is apparently as hard for a stray Common Crane to find another one as it is for us humans. Over the years, records of Common and Sandhill Cranes have been discovered in Nebraska, Indiana, New York, and New Jersey. As in many large birds, the family bond is a long-lasting one in cranes; the young birds stay with their parents through much of their first year of life, and so it is possible to find small groups comprising a “pure” Common parent, a “pure” Sandhill parent, and hybrid or infraspecific young.
Volunteer Aerie

Marion Saffell

This edition, we are presenting Jerry Lang, PhD, our Volunteer of the Quarter. Jerry and his wife Alison are among our more active winter visitors. We always look forward to their arrival from their cold Michigan winters. To be close to their two adult children and AZ grandchild, they spend half the year in Michigan, and half in Arizona. When here, Jerry leads bird walks on our Free Family Bird Walk days at the two preserves. In addition, Jerry also provides us with another facet of his talents; even when at home in Michigan, he writes feature articles for our newsletter. We’ve enjoyed such articles in the past, as “The Greater Roadrunner,” “The Common Raven, Nevermore,” and “Getting a Grip on Bird Feet.” Jerry earned his B.S. from Ohio’s Miami U., and his Master’s and PhD at Ohio State in Medical Entomology. This field is the branch of zoology related to the study of insects. Jerry served in the Air Force over 20 years, where he worked on mosquito biology, Agent Orange, and in Occupational Environmental Health. After retiring, Jerry then worked 16 years as a senior environmental scientist with an architectural, engineering, and planning firm in Dayton, Ohio. Jerry’s only been into serious birding for six years, but when he was young, he had to clean out his family’s Purple Martin house, and chase out the starlings and sparrows, to make way for the arrival of the Martins. Jerry’s family fed all the birds in winter, and in summer, he would put back the baby Martins who had fallen out of the nest, while dodging the parent birds. Hunting at an early age, Jerry soon decided that it was wrong to kill wild birds and wildlife. Jerry loves sharing birding with others at our Gilbert and Chandler preserves, he believes in giving back to the communities where he lives. He’s working with his Michigan Audubon chapter to begin providing Family Bird Walks to young couples and children, to help young people earn an appreciation of the birds and wildlife of the area. Jerry says, “I’ve thoroughly enjoyed being part of DRAS, and participating in field trips, meetings, and the family bird walks. Desert Rivers Audubon is a dynamic organization that is living up to its mission of educating the public on birds and the environment.” And, thanks to volunteers like Jerry, we are able to make this possible to the communities we serve. Come be a part of this, by volunteering with DRAS!


Desert Rivers Audubon is an Arizona SciTech Festival Community Collaborator. “Spearheaded by the Arizona Technology Council Foundation in partnership with Arizona State University and Arizona Science Center, the Arizona SciTech Festival is a grass roots collaboration of over 200 organizations in industry, academia, arts, community and K-12, geared to excite and inform Arizonans ages three to 103 about how science, technology and innovation will drive our state for the next 100 years.” From February through March of 2012, Desert Rivers Audubon’s events will be co-listed in the Arizona SciTech Festival official program (available from Desert Rivers Audubon) as well as on asctechfes.org. In addition, Desert Rivers Audubon will co-sponsor Science Cafe three evenings at Bookmans Entertainment Exchange, 1066 South Country Club Drive, Mesa in association with Mesa Takes Flight, celebrating Arizona’s Centennial with a year-long exploration of flight, and the Arizona SciTech Festival:


February 28th— Roger Mancheville, Faculty Associate, Department of Technological Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management, Arizona State University, “Air Traffic Control: The Technology of Making Every Trip a Round Trip;”

March 6th—“All Winged Things Considered: Birds and Life on the Wing.”

Guest TBD.

Events & Field Trips

JAN - FEB - MAR

Check DRAS website for additions and changes
Make reservations with Susie Vaught, Field Trips Director; azvaughts_2@msn.com Home, 480 898-7564.

Sonoran Desert Monument: Birds, Bees & Archaeology
Tue, January 10, 2012, 7:00pm – 8:30pm Gilbert Community Center, 130 N. Oak Street, Gilbert, Arizona. Thom Hulen, Executive Director, Friends of the Sonoran Desert Monument will speak about the flora, fauna & archaeology found in the Sonoran Desert Monument and the threats these resources face.

Field trip to Santa Cruz Flats with Claudia Kirscher - Sunday, Jan 15, 2012. Journey with us once again, down to Santa Cruz Flats with Claudia Kirscher and Susie Vaught. Bring snacks/lunch, water, and carpool $ . This trip will be limited to 3 cars, 12 participants. We will plan to return to the meeting site by 4 or 5 p.m. Meeting time and site TBA. Reservations Susie Vaught azvaughts_2@msn.com 480 898 7564.

Field trip to Payson with Kathe Anderson - Monday, Jan 16, 2012. I’m hoping to see some of the great winter birds I’ve seen in the past there, including mergansers and wood ducks, scrub and Stellar’s jays, juncos, acorn woodpeckers and red-naped sapsuckers, titmice, and whatever else shows up. We’ll leave Fountain Hills about 7am, have a bag lunch in Payson (unless its predicted to be really cold, then we’ll probably look for a good restaurant), and return by about 2pm. Limited to 8 people. Please register with Kathe Anderson at Kathe.cool@cox.net.

Gilbert Family Birdwalk
Sat, January 21, 2012, 8am – 12pm

Field trip to Glendale Recharge Ponds with Claudia Kirscher
Sat, January 28, 2012, 6am – 12pm. The Glendale Ponds are becoming a reliable area to spot migrating shorebirds as they stop over and rest up for the next leg. Allow 3 hours to complete the loops around the ponds. A scope is helpful. Bring water and light snack. Meeting time TBA. Carpool site: TBA. Limit 12. Contact Susie Vaught at azvaughts_2@msn.com 480 898 7564.

Environmental Day at the Capitol - Tuesday, Jan 31, 2012. 1700 W. Washington St, Phoenix, AZ. For more info, contact: Sandy Bahr, sandybahr@sierrarclub.org, (602) 253-8633

Field trip to Alamo Lake & Harquahala Valley, led by Tom Gaskill - Saturday, Feb 4, 2012. We’ll go to two excellent birding sites that are rarely visited; and will include a few other good spots along the way. We could easily see 100 bird species, including bald and golden eagles, vast numbers of waterfowl, an incredible variety of sparrows, huge flocks of blackbirds, and some singing LeConte’s thrashers. Leave at 5:30 am return at 5:30 pm Reservations - Susie Vaught azvaughts_2@msn.com 480 898 7564.

Chandler Family Birdwalks - Sat, February 4, 2012, 8am – 12pm
Veterans Oasis Park, 4505 E. Chandler Heights Rd, Chandler
Every first Saturday of the month, November through April, come out with the kids to walk around the water recharge ponds at the City of Chandler’s Veterans Oasis Park at 4505 E. Chandler Heights Rd in Chandler. (NE corner of Chandler Heights and Lindsay Rd.)

Field trip to Tempe Town Lake with Kathe Anderson - Friday, Feb 10, 2012. We’ll meet up behind Tempe Marketplace and explore that area before moving on to the Arts Center and new bridge across the lake. Start about 7:30 and wrap up about 10:30. Limited to 8 people. Please register with Kathe Anderson at Kathe.cool@cox.net.

Field trip to the Arlington area with Claudia Kirscher - Sunday, Feb 12, 2012. Wonderful time to bird for our migrants in the Arlington area. More info to come. Reservations Susie Vaught azvaughts_2@msn.com 480 898 7564.

Continued on Page 12
From the AZ Field Ornithologists. See complete listing and details on the AZFO website at: www.azfo.org - see “Documentation page.”

Blue Jay (Cyanocitta cristata), Cave Creek Ranch, Portal, AZ, Cochise County. This Blue Jay was discovered by Reed Peters on 6 November 2011 and photographed by Jackie Lewis on 07 November 2011. Blue Jay is casual in Arizona with only 4 previous records. Unmistakable and striking jay.

Groove-billed Ani (Crotophaga sulcirostris), Sierra Vista Cochise County. This Ani was photographed by Virginia Fairchild on 03 November 2011. A rare vagrant to Arizona, mainly in the fall. With fewer than 20 accepted records for the state. The bill makes this bird unmistakably an Ani. This is probably a young bird and the photos demonstrate how hard the grooves can be to see. Although Smooth-billed Anis is probably impossible to tell apart from Smooth-billed from Groove-billed is very tricky, especially because small billed, Smooth-billed Anis can have faint grooves on the bill. The combination of a straight lower mandible without a pronounced gonyaonal angle and the extensive bare skin around the eye are the best marks for Groove-billed.

Reddish Egret (Egretta rufescens), Paloma Ranch, Maricopa County. This Reddish Egret was discovered and photographed by Bill Grossi on 07 November 2011. This Egret is a rare and rare visitor, particularly to southwestern Arizona. There are 16 prior Maricopa Co. records. Uniform blue-gray heron with some reddish highlights, dark gray legs and long, heavy dark bill identify this as an immature Reddish Egret.

Eastern Bluebird (Sialia sialis), Tres Rios Wetlands, Maricopa County. This Eastern Bluebird was discovered and photographed by Tommy DeBardeleben on 1 December 2011. This is the first record for Maricopa County. The pale Mexican subspecies of Eastern Bluebird (S. s. fulva, often called Azure Bluebird) is a permanent resident of far southeastern Arizona. Eastern Bluebird is casual elsewhere in SE Arizona in winter. Since fulva is nonnominate, these other records are likely the nominate eastern race (S. s. sialis) and the few that have been collected belong to this race. This pattern of distribution suggests that this bird is most likely also S. s. sialis. Male distinguished from Western Bluebird by combination of the clean blue back and scapulars, rufous throat and sides of neck and white belly.

Scarlet Tanager (Piranga olivacea), Rio Rico, Santa Cruz County. This Scarlet Tanager was discovered by Joshua Stewart on November 13 and photographed by Chris McCready on 15 November 2011. Scarlet Tanager is a casual transient in Arizona with about 25 accepted records. Note a small yellow to yellow-green tanager and lack of yellow coverts of a Western Tanager. This bird appears typical of a young male with black wing coverts but browner flight feathers.

Mew Gull (Larus canus), Glendale Recharge Ponds, Maricopa County. This Mew Gull as discovered and photographed by Tommy DeBardeleben on 17 November 2011. Also photographed by Pierre Deviche on 18 November 2011. A rare transient and winter visitor with fewer than 15 previous state records. Small size and thin small dull pink bill with a black tip. Largely brown, white, and gray gull with brown smudged underparts, brown tail, heavily brown flecked uppertail coverts, and brown unpatterned underwing coverts.

Pomarine Jaeger (Stercorarius pomarinus), Rotary Park Thompson Bay, Lake Havasu, Mohave County. This Pomarine Jaeger was photographed by John West on 13 November 2011. Pomarine Jaeger is a casual transient along the Lower Colorado River. There have been six previous records for the state. This is a large, bulky, barrel-bellied gull with broad wings with extensive white in the primaries and the bases of the underprimary coverts.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper (Tryngites subruficollis), Mohave County. This Buff-breasted Sandpiper was discovered by Lauren Harter and photographed by David Vander Pluym on 03 October 2011. There are five previous records for Arizona. Note the unmarked buffy breast, long yellow legs, scaly upperparts.

To right:

Lapland Longspur (Calcarius lapponicus), Evergreen Turf Farm, Pinal County. This Lapland Longspur was photographed by Virginia Fairchild on 19 November 2011. Lapland Longspur is a casual migrant and winter visitor in Arizona with fewer than 20 accepted records. Winter 2011 appears to be a good year for Lapland Longspur as reports are coming in from various locations around the state. Large obvious reddish patch in wings (greater coverts) and rufous tinged tertials; strong facial pattern with black face to auriculars, white malar, buffy supercilium, and reddish nape. Long wings with long primary projection; pink bill. Dark streaked back with white stripes. White tail restricted to outer feathers. Streaked sides and flanks.

www.desertriverssaudubon.org
Desert Cranes and Geese, continued

Snow Geese, too, usually stay in family groups during the fall and winter, making it easy each year to gauge the preceding summer’s breeding success. Young Snow Geese are noticeably darker than their parents, with sooty gray plumage on head, neck, and back; the bill is dark in juveniles, gradually growing paler over the first year until it attains the bright pinkish of adults.

The largest flocks of Snow Geese may contain one or two very dark birds. These are Blue Geese, long considered a separate species but now recognized as a distinctive color morph of the Snow Goose. Adult Blue Geese are extremely handsome birds; dark bluish gray with brightly contrasting white necks and heads, giving them the old nickname “Eagle Goose.” The large pink bill is like that of their white counterparts. The dusky juveniles, with dark bills and necks, can be a puzzle at first sight, but they share the bulky, blocky shape of their parents, in whose company they are most often found in any event.

In the Southwest, any substantial flock of Snow Geese may be accompanied by small numbers of Ross’s Geese. This thick-necked, stub-billed Snow Goose look-alike was known as a rare bird for more than a century following its discovery at Canada’s Great Slave Lake 150 years ago this year. The population of Ross’s Goose has grown astonishingly in the past half century, and while that species is still outnumbered everywhere by its larger, heavier cousin, it is now common in many areas where just a generation ago it was a much sought rarity—and today it is merely scarce even as far east as the mid-Atlantic. Unlike young Snow Geese, juvenile Ross’s are nearly as white as their parents, with just a dusting of pale gray on the back and crown, and it sometimes takes a good look to be sure of the age of a mud-grubbing bird.

One of the great desiderata of any birder is the blue Ross’s Goose. Like the Snow Goose, this species has a dark morph, but blue birds are much scarcer among Ross’s than among Snow Geese. The neatly set-off white face, as if the bird were peeking out from behind a blue-black visor, adds beauty to scarcity to make this rare bird a real prize no matter where it is found.

The most familiar goose in North America, the Canada Goose is relatively uncommon in most of the southwest. This group of easily recognized white-cheeked, black-necked geese has become more interesting to many birders in the past decade with the recognition that the “honker” actually comprises at least two different species. The Canada Goose in its new, narrow sense is the larger bird; the Cackling Goose differs in size and structure in ways that are analogous to the differences between Snow and Ross’s Geese.

In Arizona, the Cackling Goose remains a very rare bird. Most detected here are very small, very short-billed dark-breasted birds that are immediately and obviously different from the long-necked, swan-headed pale Canada Geese usually encountered. The identification of white-cheeked Branta—the clearest term available to indicate Canada and Cackling Geese as a group—is notably more complicated in New Mexico, where both smallish Canadas and largish Cackling Geese can occur, often enough in the same flock. Refugees like Bosque del Apache offer an unparalleled opportunity to study at close hand the sometimes subtle differences in head and neck shape and bill morphology that may permit the separation of these very challenging middle-sized geese. I intentionally write “may,” as the status of all these different Canada-like geese is still imperfectly understood, and there is every possibility that certain populations now allocated to one of the “new” species could be re-assigned to the other. It is not inconceivable even that further species might be sliced out of the group, though most birders probably hope that such extreme formulations as that of Harold C. Hansen are rejected; the notion of 15 species comprising 181 subspecies of Canada and Cackling Geese is enough to overwhelm even the most ambitious (or the most credulous) lister.

The taxonomy of another regionally uncommon goose seems almost simple in comparison. The Greater White-fronted Goose appears in small numbers each fall and winter, often mixed with other waterfowl species; this Arctic breeder is a remarkably early autumn migrant, with the first small flocks usually reaching Arizona and New Mexico in September. The brown body plumage and pink bill of these birds is distinctive, even in non-white-fronted juveniles; the only serious source of misidentification is the domestic Graylag Goose, which is gray, heavier, and more raucous of voice. It can be a challenge to detect a tone white-front in a large flock of grazing Canada Geese, but experienced birders know to ignore head and neck patterns, which is often frustratingly difficult to glimpse, and concentrate instead on foot color: the bright orange feet of a Greater White-fronted Goose are instantly conspicuous among the dusky tarsi of surrounding Canadas.

As the populations of these and several other goose species continue to increase, the chance of discovering a real vagrant increases. Black Brant, normally restricted to the Pacific Coast and the Gulf of California, are increasingly frequent in the inland southwest. Even rarer strays have occurred in goose flocks on the central Great Plains; Nebraska has well-documented records of Emperor, Pink-footed, and Taiga Bean Geese. It’s just a matter of time—time to enjoy the sometimes surprising waterfowl of the southwestern deserts.

Rick Wright

Photos: Cindy Marple

As movie-goers watch the stars of The Big Year in their quest to count birds, some may be motivated to try the hobby for the first time. The annual Great Backyard Bird Count is the perfect opportunity. The event is hosted by Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada. The results provide a snapshot of the whereabouts of more than 600 bird species. Anyone can participate in this free event and no registration is needed. Watch and count birds for at least 15 minutes on any day of the count, February 17-20, 2012. Enter your results at www.birdcount.org, where you can watch as the tallies grow across the continent. The four-day count typically records more than 10 million observations. "When thousands of people all tell us what they’re seeing, we can detect patterns in how birds are faring from year to year," said Janis Dickinson, director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "The Great Backyard Bird Count is a perfect example of Citizen Science," says Audubon Chief Scientist, Gary Largham. "Like Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, volunteers help us with data year after year, providing scientific support that is the envy of many institutions. It’s also a lot of fun." "We’re finding that more people are taking part in our bird count programs every year—and the more that take part, the better it is for the birds," says Richard Cannings, Senior Projects Officer for Bird Studies Canada.

The 2011 GBBC brought in more than 92,000 bird checklists submitted by participants from across the United States and Canada. Altogether, bird watchers identified 556 species with 114 million bird observations. Results from the 2011 GBBC included: Increased reports of Evening Geesebeaks, a species that has been declining; A modest seasonal movement of winter finches farther south in their search for food; The Eurasian Cirlated-Dove was reported from Alaska for the first time, more evidence of an introduced species rapidly expanding its range. Although it’s called the Great “Backyard” Bird Count, the count extends well beyond backyards. Lots of participants choose to head for national parks, nature centers, urban parks, nature trails, or nearby sanctuaries. The count also includes a photo contest and a prize drawing for participants who enter their bird checklists online. The Great Backyard Bird Count is made possible in part by sponsor Wild Birds Unlimited.

For more information, including bird-ID tips, instructions, and past results, visit www.birdcount.org.

Arizona Native Plants

Whitethorn Acacia (Acacia constricta)

In Arizona, it is found throughout the southern half of the state, extending southward throughout Sonora. In the Sonoran Desert, Acacia constricta is usually found in arroyos and washes, where it blooms in late spring (April-May), with a second round of blooms in July-October. The bloom depends on having a minimum amount of rain, followed by a period of warmth. The flowers offer no nectar and little pollen, and so tend to have few visitors, and have a subtle, unique aroma that is a real pleasure to smell. The seed pods are relatively long and thin, up to 12 cm long but only 3-6 mm wide. It is a large shrub or small multistemmed tree, can be trained to single stemmed tree and is deciduous. Size about 6-20 ft with equal spread.

Desert Rivers Events, continued

DRAS Monthly Meeting - Feb. 14th, 7:00pm, speaker Paul Wolterbeek from the Boyce Thompson Arboretum on birds and wildlife at ‘BTA’. Gilbert Community Center, 130 N. Oak Street, Gilbert.

Gilbert Family Birdwalk - Sat, February 18, 2012, 8am – 12pm, Gilbert Riparian Preserve 2757 E. Guadalupe Road Gilbert, Arizona. The Gilbert Family Birdwalks are held every third Saturday of the month, October through March at the Gilbert Riparian Preserve, on the southeast corner of Greenfield and Guadalupe Rds in Gilbert.

Chandler Family Birdwalks - Sat, March 3, 2012, 8am – 12pm, Veterans Oasis Park, 4050 E. Chandler Heights Rd, Chandler. Every first Saturday of the month, November through April, come out with the kids to walk around the water recharge ponds at the City of Chandler’s Veterans Oasis Park.

Field Trip to Sweetwater Wetlands with Claudia Kirscher - Sunday, Mar 11, 2012. This urban riparian area is located along the Santa Cruz River in north Tucson. A reliable area for a variety of wintering ducks, vagrant shorebirds, sparrows, warblers, wrens, and an occasional hunting raptor. Bobcat and grey fox have also been seen. Bring spotting scope, snack/lunch, and water. We will return to Phoenix 2-3 p.m. Meeting time and carpool site TBA. Limit 12 Reservations Susie Vought azvaughts_2@msn.com 480 898 7564

DRAS Monthly Meeting – Mar. 13th, 7:00pm, speakers from Liberty Wildlife with a variety of live raptors. Bring your friends and children for a unique close look at owls, hawks, and possibly a vulture! Gilbert Community Center, 130 N. Oak Street, Gilbert.

Gilbert Family Birdwalk - Sat, March 17, 2012, 8am – 12pm, Gilbert Riparian Preserve 2757 E. Guadalupe Road Gilbert, Arizona. The Gilbert Family Birdwalks are held every third Saturday of the month, October through March at the Gilbert Riparian Preserve, on the southeast corner of Greenfield and Guadalupe Rds in Gilbert.

2 day field trip to Tucson and Mt Lemmon with Kathe Anderson, Mar 25 - 26, 2012. We'll probably make 2 full days out of this trip, starting about 5:30am from the East Valley, jump starting our list at Sweetwater Wetlands outside of Tucson, then exploring some Tucson sites before our night at a reasonably priced hotel near the Mt. Lemmon Highway. On Monday, we'll wind our way up through the life zones of Mt. Lemmon, with the hope of making it all the way up to the ski area for a late lunch, before heading back down and back home. I'm hoping to catch some early migrants as well as typical desert/transition zone/high elevation residents in the several areas we'll visit. We should get back to the Phoenix area by 7pm. Limited to 8 people. Please register with Kathe Anderson at Kathe.coot@cox.net

www.desertriversaudubon.org
The Family Album
Family: Cardinalidae
Article and photos: Cindy Marple

Donors and Gifts
Desert Rivers Audubon recently received significant contributions from these companies and individuals in support of our work and mission:

- LPL Financial
- Coyotes
- Intel
- Arizona Medical Network

Desert Rivers also thanks Mr. BJ Shortridge for a significant donation.

Our appreciation goes to the following corporate donors who have given to support a program or overall operating costs of the Desert Rivers Audubon Society from November through December, 2011:

- Bass Pro Shops for use of their meeting room for monthly Desert Rivers Board meetings in the Phoenix store, Dobson Road and the AZ 202 Freeway.

Wild Birds Unlimited - David Covey and MaryAnne Kenelec for their donations of great raffle items at our monthly meetings. Please visit their store for your birding/nature needs at the northeast corner of Baseline and Gilbert Roads in Mesa.

Corporate Members: Salt River Project, Bass Pro Shops, Wild Birds Unlimited, Arizona Medical Network

New Members
- Victor Peterson
- Diane Mase
- Keith Nixon
- Cher Hansen
- Diane Ochs
- Laurel Leathers
- James Smith
- Shirley & Allen Garber
- Martha Jo Billy
- Lynne Miller
- Angela Malcolm
- Rick & Judy Cooper
- Susan Fisburn
- Mary Martin
- Amy Manning
- James & Susan Janssen
- Judy Johnson
- Patricia Yononovitz
- Jim Scoglenkpsi
- Richard Tetrault
- Barbara Hasenkamp

Boyce Thompson Arboretum Event with Rick Wright

Boyce Thompson will host a 'Bird Sit' with Rick Wright, senior leader with WINGS. Make a New Year’s resolution to get out and see more birds in 2012! Rick Wright will lead a sedentary 'Bird Sit' January 12 (Thursday) at 8:30am.

Winter/Spring guided birdwalks resume February 4 with Arizona Audubon's Cathy Wise and also John Ray as our guides; author Jim Burns is here February 12 and acclaimed photographer Richard Ditch February 18.

Bird walks at 8:30 from the breezeway lobby of the visitor center, continuing February 26; March 3, 11, 17, 25, and also April 7, 8, 21 & 22.
One of the wonderful things about birding is the opportunity to participate in citizen science projects like the Christmas Bird Count. For many birders, however, the CBC is not something they can consider. For some it’s time, for others it’s a lack of skill (real or perceived), and for some it’s just beyond the scope of their interest in birding. And there’s the additional challenge that the counting areas, especially those with openings, are often not local. Finally, the CBC really is not geared for kids, especially younger ones. There is no shame in citing any of these reasons – heck, I’ve used at least three myself. However, there is an alternative that is geared to folks who would like to participate in a bird-counting citizen science project, but which is generally more flexible in process and time commitment than the CBC. It’s the Great Backyard Bird Count or GBBC. The GBBC is a 4-day annual event (2012 is the 15th year) sponsored by the National Audubon Society, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Bird Studies Canada. The goal, to quote their website, is to “engage” bird watchers of all ages to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent.” All skill levels are welcome to participate and it is ideal for kids to participate. This year’s GBBC is scheduled for Friday, February 17 through Monday, February 20, 2012 (President’s Day weekend). Last year, observers from all over the United States and Canada submitted more than 92,000 checklists which provided (in total) observations of 596 species. The data included, among other things, the first reports of the Eurasian Collared Dove in Alaska. For Arizona, 243 species were reported across 1043 checklists from around the state. The process is really simple. The organizers have tried to make this as easy as possible by asking participants to count birds for at least 15 minutes on one day, or as long as they want for as many days as they want, and report their counts online. The reporting process is simple, and the date is available immediately so you can see where people are reporting from and what they are reporting. Do you have to count in your backyard? You can if you want to, but there’s no reason not to bird your favorite local or state park, or nearby riparian preserve. Or take the opportunity to bird somewhere you’ve never birded before. The key is to go out and bird, record your sightings, and report them back on the GBBC website. Oh yeah, and have some fun!

For more information on the GBBC, including participation details and reporting processes, please visit the GBBC website at http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

**Puzzle**

For this quarter’s puzzle, a variation on a puzzle published before in the Newsletter, and something we do when we bird all the time: tell the girls from the boys. In this case, we have a selection of nine birds with two pictures of each. Your job is to identify each bird and then label which of the two is male and which is female. Most are pretty easy, but the last two are tougher and deserving of extra congratulations if you get them right. For each bird, identify the species, then note which is the male and which is the female of the species.

---

Credits: Photos (and ideas) – Cindy Marple
MONTHLY MEETINGS
Meetings are held at the Gilbert Community Center in Gilbert, at 130 N. Oak Street, on second Tuesdays at 7 to 8:30pm, September through May. Doors open at 6:30PM, and everyone is welcome. The center is 2 blocks north of Elliot Rd and two blocks west of Gilbert Rd, near “downtown” Gilbert. See the DRAS website under “Events” heading for listing of topics and speakers. Refreshments provided.

GILBERT / CHANDLER BIRDWALKS
The Gilbert Family Birdwalks are held every third Saturday, October through March, at the Gilbert Riparian Preserve, at 2757 E. Guadalupe Road, Gilbert at 8:00am. The Chandler Family Birdwalks are held every first Saturday, November through April, at Veterans Oasis Park, 4050 E. Chandler Heights Road, Chandler at 8:00am. Binoculars provided, walks are free. See website for complete details.

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. In your web browser, go to: http://listserv.arizona.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=birdwg05&A=1

Read the instructions to subscribe and receive daily emails.

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 signing up on our Members Page online, and receive the bi-monthly Audubon magazine. Most Audubon chapters also have a “Friends” membership which entitles you to our quarterly newsletter, event priorities, and discounts on products and services.

Students / Seniors (65+) Membership ................................ $20.
Individual Membership ................................................. $25.
Senior Couples Membership ..................................... $35.
Family Membership ................................................... $40.
Corporate Membership .............................................. $300+

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 audubon@emailcustomerservice.com and asking them to “hard-code” your membership to Chapter B08.

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 Krys Hammers at krys.hammers@cox.net

Newsletter Editor and Design: Michael Rupp, mikeruppe@gmail.com
Contributing Photographer/Writer: Cindy Marple, clmarple@cox.net
Printing: Arrington Graphics