



Gambel's Tales

The Newsletter of the Sonoran Audubon Society

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April 2002

Legislation Could Undo Agua Fria National Monument

Hundreds of archaeological sites threatened

Article furnished by Julie Sherman, of the Sierra Club

A bill introduced by Arizona Congressional Representative Bob Stump would undercut protections for Agua Fria National Monument, restrict the ability of the local Bureau of Land Management office to create an effective management plan, and undermine Presidential authority to create or expand monuments.

According to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), this monument contains one of the most significant systems of pre-historic cultural sites in the American Southwest. Monument designation helps protect the more than 450 known sites, which were being heavily damaged by looting and other human activity prior to designation.

"This is an extremely important complex of spectacular sites with tremendous scientific potential," states professional archaeologist Tom Wright. "Many studies need to be done to understand the cultural history here. We need BLM to manage this monument in a way that will preserve and protect these sites, and make them available for study."

The monument was also created to protect the Agua Fria River, grasslands, riparian forests and sensitive species like the pronghorn, black hawk, desert tortoise and lowland leopard frog. These resources are likewise threatened by human activity.

"Agua Fria is a national treasure. It protects a free-flowing desert river, native wildlife, and cultural sites," says Julie Sherman, Sierra Club conservation organizer. "This bill would undermine all the protections currently in place to preserve these natural and cultural values."

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At our next meeting....

April 10, 6:30 p.m.

"Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl"



Photo of Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl furnished by Jim Burns

Presented by
Fiona Goodson
Environmental
Consultant

The Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl calls parts of Arizona, Texas, Central and South America home. However, in the U.S. it is listed as an endangered species by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. This species is threatened in the U.S. by habitat destruction and water diversion.

This small owl (6 1/2 to 7 inches) hunts most often at dawn and dusk, feeding on lizards, insects, scorpions, and small birds and mammals. It lives in saguaro deserts and wooded river bottoms in the U.S., using hollows in saguaros and trees for its nesting sites. The same nest may be used for many years by this non-migratory owl. The female lays 3 or 4 eggs, which she incubates for about 28 days. The male feeds the female while she is sitting on the eggs. Both parents feed the nestlings. The young fledge from the nest about 28 days after hatching.

Fiona Goodson, a member of SAS, has a B.S. in Ecology from the University of Calgary. She currently works at an engineering firm as an environmental consultant on endangered species and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning. NEPA, passed in 1969 by Congress, requires federal agencies to consider environmental values and factors in agency planning and decision-making.

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Legislation could undo Agua Fria National Monument

Stump's bill could result in the complete dissolution of the monument. If passed, the legislation would recognize every previous authorized use of monument lands, including all uses now prohibited by the monument proclamation. This could make the monument a meaningless designation, allowing new mining, leasing and other activities to decimate the wild lands, waters, wildlife and the cultural heritage it now protects.

"Representative Stump is out of touch with Arizonans on this issue," states Kathy Roediger of Republicans for Environmental Protection. "A poll done last year shows 75% of Arizonans support Agua Fria and Arizona's other new national monuments; and 71% oppose removing monument lands and allowing mining or development."

The bill also opens all designated "trails" to vehicle use, and would permit BLM to open any part of the monument to cross-country vehicle travel for "any purpose." Currently, the monument prohibits vehicle use off road except in emergencies. Any off-road vehicle traffic would threaten sensitive plant communities, wildlife, and ancient, fragile cultural sites.

"This legislation could permit dirt bikes, all-terrain vehicles, and all kinds of machines to tear around anywhere within the monument, ripping up the archeological sites and natural resources the monument was designated to protect," notes Jason Williams, Prescott-based Arizona Wilderness Coalition coordinator. "It would also force hikers to compete with dirt bikes and other all-terrain vehicles for trail space."

The proposed legislation constrains BLM's ability to create a management plan capable of providing real protection for the monument's waters, wildlife and archaeological resources. It requires management plans be created and implemented under the advisement of an 8 member committee appointed by the Secretary of Interior. This committee is not required to have any representatives with conservation interest or ecological expertise.

Monument values and management are further compromised by a water rights give-away. One clause in the bill rescinds current rights maintaining the flow of the Agua Fria River through the monument. This river, currently managed for its wild and scenic qualities, supports populations of rare native fish and other sensitive birds and animals.

Other portions of the bill prohibit any removal of grazing, and declare ranching and recreation to be monument values, contrary to the original proclamation and the Antiquities Act.

Additionally, Representative Stump's bill prohibits any wilderness designations within the monument. "This bill could deny meaningful protection to wild and scenic portions of the Agua Fria River and other wild lands within this monument," says Don Hoffman, Director of the Arizona Wilderness Coalition.

Finally, the bill is a congressional restriction of presidential powers. It prohibits the President from using the Antiquities Act to expand the monument.

Agua Fria National Monument

By Chuck Kangas

I just got back from the monument with a number of people including a reporter and a photographer from the Republic. I hope all of you are able to find the latest article on the monument along with the pictures. I'm hoping that all the publicity that Stump's bill receives will result in it's defeat. Most legislator's feel that the state representatives will introduce bills that have the support of his constituency and will automatically vote for it. I think it's very important for our members to write to Stump and let him know how we feel about his bill.

The Stump bill will be on the agenda of the next board meeting. I'm sure the board will send a letter to Stump concerning his bill.



The Paradise Bakery and Café and Traders Joe's located in Metro Center donate refreshments for our monthly meetings. When you shop at either the Paradise Bakery and Café or at Trader Joe's, please let them know how much we appreciate their donations of their wonderful products.

A message from your president...

We are almost at the end of our current year. There are only two more meetings and summer will be upon us. Shortly, the new program committee will meet and put together the programs for the coming year. I think it's important for all of us to tell Hugh Rodgers what a wonderful job he has done as program chair. I'm sure the new chair, Andrée Tarby, and her committee will continue to provide us with outstanding programs.

Looking back at the last two years, I think we have done a remarkable job. We never accomplish as much as we wish but, nevertheless, we have accomplished a lot. I think that we will continue to go down the same path. There is a problem that will come up very shortly. When we wrote the Sonoran Audubon Society Chapter's by-laws we were very optimistic that we would have a lot of members who would participate. We have term limits for the members of the board. If we don't have members step up to replace the members of the board we will cease to exist. Those of us who have worked so hard to get the chapter off the ground would hate to see all our effort have been done in vain. When you are approached with a request to become more active, I hope you won't turn us down.

We have done quite well financially and many of you have stepped up and helped us stay in existence. Our fund raising has been successful and we have been able to raise enough money to accomplish some of our goals. Our problem is that there are many other goals we wish to accomplish during the coming year. Let us hear from you!

SAS Web Site: www.sonoranaudubon.org

Join Sonoran Audubon Society.....

New Adult or Family membership: \$20.00

Seniors and Students: \$15.00

Renewal fee for Students and Seniors: \$15.00

Mailed Newsletter subscription : \$8.00

Fee includes membership in the National Audubon and your local Sonoran Audubon Societies, and a subscription to the Audubon magazine. Your check should be made payable to the National Audubon Society, along with the membership form, preferably obtained from the Sonoran Audubon Society and containing our chapter ID number B07.

The Sonoran Chapter newsletter, Gambel's Tales, may be obtained free from the chapter website <www.sonoranaudubon.org>, or by subscribing for a mailed hard copy. Web site recipients will be notified when each newsletter is posted if the chapter has your e-mail address. Send your membership name and email address to <chuckkan@mindspring.com>. If subscribing for a hard copy, send check (\$8.00), made payable to the Sonoran Audubon Society, to Sonoran Audubon Society, P.O. Box 8068, Glendale, AZ 85312-8068. Please include your address, and telephone number.

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AUDUBON RECEIVES \$100,000 LEADERSHIP GRANT FROM NINA MASON PULLIAM CHARITABLE TRUST TO LAUNCH ARIZONA STATE PROGRAM

From a press release by the National Audubon Society.

The National Audubon Society received a grant of \$100,000 from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust to launch an Audubon state program in Arizona. The check was presented at a ceremony held March 14 at the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix.

The opening of the Audubon state office in Arizona brings to twenty-seven the number of Audubon state programs. These state programs are the vanguard of a new, decentralized Audubon movement aimed at creating a "Culture of Conservation" through education and outreach to new and diverse audiences. Audubon Arizona will implement this "2020 Vision" by developing a state-wide network of Audubon Centers - community-supported places where people will come to experience and understand nature firsthand. A particular emphasis will be on locating nature centers in urban areas, including in Maricopa County, where they will be accessible to traditionally underserved populations, especially Hispanic and African-American communities. Sam Kathryn Campana, former mayor of Scottsdale, was hired last month as Audubon Arizona's first executive director.

"We are honored and extremely gratified by the visionary leadership and support shown through this grant by the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust," said Audubon's President and CEO John Flicker.

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Audubon Receives a \$100,00 Leadership Grant

“Mrs. Pulliam and her husband were longtime members of Audubon, and now their legacy is leading us into a new era of growth and opportunity.”

Added Ms. Campana, “This is a great way for Audubon to be welcomed into Phoenix and the larger Arizona communities. We couldn’t be more pleased.

April and May 2002 Field Trips

Sonoran Audubon strongly encourages carpooling on all outings!

Please organize your own carpool, consolidate vehicles at meeting places, and/or contact leaders for carpooling assistance.

Field Trips are rated in difficulty levels one, the easiest, to five, the most difficult. It is recommended that passengers reimburse drivers at an agreed rate.

REMINDERS: Don’t forget water, sunscreen, hats and insect repellent. Wear neutral colors. Avoid bright colors. Wear sturdy walking shoes

Wednesday, April 3

Lower Salt River

Leader: Dick Fogle 623 584-3922
rpfogle@qwest.net

This is a BirdersAnonymous/Sonoran Audubon joint trip. Several stops are possible along a ten-mile stretch between Saguaro Lake and Granite Reef Dam. The flowing river and adjacent mesquite bosques make this an excellent area for waterbirds, raptors and migrants. Fee area
Difficulty: 2 Bring Lunch. Contact leader for meeting time and place.

Thursday, April 11

Box Canyon (Wickenburg Area)

Leader: Nancy London 1-520 684-5530
gatto@w3az.net

This is a high walled canyon along the Hassayampa River. This is a stunning natural habitat where migrants and breeding birds may be seen. Difficulty 2-3. Bring lunch.

Contact leader for meeting time and place.

Tuesday, April 16

Lower Agua Fría -Upper Lake Pleasant Area

Leader: John Delventhal 480 998-0078

We will bird the north end of Lake Pleasant Regional Park. A variety of birds may include waterfowl, migrants, and possible Bald Eagle. Difficulty: 2 Bring lunch.

Contact leader for reservation and meeting time and Saturday, April 20

Agua Fría National Monument

Leader: Dwayne Fink 480 967-0202

edna.fink@asu.edu

This will be a venture in archeology as well as birding. The monument is a Sonoran Audubon adopted project Petroglyphs, wonderful habitat and scenery make this outing a must!
Difficulty: 2 Bring lunch. Call leader for meeting time and place.

April 26-April 29 Kino Bay, Sonora Mexico

Leader: Ken Bielek 602-279-0134

This trip will include land birding as well as a pelagic trip. Likely birds will include the **Redbilled Tropicbird, Least and Black Storm Petrels, Boobies, the Magnificent Frigatebird, Black Skimmer, Elegant Tern, Yellow-footed Gull, Mangroove Swallow and many other species.** As a special activity we will have the opportunity to visit the Seri Indians to trade for and purchase their special crafts, such as ironwood carvings and baskets. Group size is limited to twelve.

Tentative Schedule

8:00 AM Friday, April 26

Nogales, AZ to Kino Bay, Sonora (Most people will be staying in Nogales Thursday evening, but those who wish can drive from Phoenix)

Saturday, April 27

Either pelagic birding to Isla San Pedro Matir in the Sea of Cortez, or birding on the Kino Bay estuary (A.M.) & a visit to the Seri Indian village of Punta Chueca (P.M.), depending on the weather.

Sunday, April 28

San Pedro Matir or Kino Bay estuary and Punta

Chueca **Monday, April 29**

Return to Phoenix from Keno Bay.

Accommodations:

We will spend the nights of Friday-Sunday (April 26-28) at Las Olas, on the beach at Kino Bay. The Las Olas houses are two new, modern, side-by-side houses, joined by a common balcony/patio overlooking the beach and Sea of Cortez. Each house includes a modern kitchen with full-sized refrigerator, range, microwave, dishwasher, and washing machine/dryer. Dishes, flatware and utensils, and cookware are included. Each unit has a gas grill on the balcony/patio.

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this seem enough to whet the birder's appetite?

Transportation & Miscellaneous:

Each participant is responsible for his or her own transportation to Kino Bay. Carpooling is suggested. Bring all the water you will drink (although some is provided by the Las Olas owner)

There are about four good restaurants for dinner. Bring food for breakfasts, lunches, and snacks. There are very limited commodities at an extremely small grocery store in Kino Bay.

All accommodations and fees are based on double occupancy. Cost is approximately \$250.00 per person due by March 20th. This includes house rent and boat fee. There might be an adjustment depending on the total number of people going on the trip and the boat. Those persons wishing to go and haven't sent in their fee please contact Ken Bielek.

Wednesday , May 1

Burro Creek

Leader: Eleanor Campbell 623-977-7639

ercamp@juno.com

This is a BirdersAnonymous/Sonoran Audubon joint trip.

Burro Creek is a delightful area north of Wickenburg. I know that many of you have gone over the highway bridge which goes over Burro Creek and probably never noticed it. It's a long way down from the bridge but an easy drive from the highway. We should see many migrants and permanent residents.

Difficulty: 2 Bring Lunch. Contact leader for meeting time and place.

Friday, May 3 through Monday May 6.

Gunnison and Grand Junction, Colorado

Leader: Bob Bradley

Call Chuck Kangas at 623-931-6677 for reservations and information.

This will be a long drive to get there but it's the only way to see the Gunnison Sage Grouse booming. It's at the end of the time to see them but Bob said that there is a very good chance that we will. We wanted to also see the Boreal Owl. This will be a little early but Bob will try to find the nest boxes before we get there to see if there are any early arrivals.

Bob says there is a good chance to see White-winged Crossbills which have been found breeding on Grand Mesa. Other target birds are the Saw-Whet Owl, Three-toed Woodpecker, Pine Grosbeak, Gray Jay and Cassin's Finch

Bob will have scouted out the area and will be able to find

SONORAN AUDUBON TRIP TO COSTA RICA

March 2 – 17, 2002

By Dwayne Fink

I won the prize, offered by Simon Thompson, our trip leader and owner of Ventures, Inc., for the closest guess of bird species our group would ID during the 2 weeks we traveled around Costa Rica. The challenge was given the second day. At the rate we were going then, it seemed we would ID all 880+ species found in the tiny country. I compromised my wild dreams at 410. Everyone else guessed less. Our final list was 420.

And what birds they were: Scarlet Macaw, 7 species of trogons, all 6 of the toucans, tinamous, tiger-herons, wrens and antwrens, antvireos, antpittas and antshrikes - and on and on. Four species of monkeys, sloth, anteater, agouti – and on and on.

The accommodations and food were wonderful. Every meal included exotic juices, fruits and vegetables. It was a small group: Suzanne Cash and Edna and I of Sonoran AS, plus two great chaps from North Carolina, and our driver/saint Alberto, and Simon. Seven – a nice table full at meals. Everyone got lots of individual attention, which is important when you have days, like we did, when you find 129 species – most new. Suzanne was our naturalist, reminding us that Coast Rica is more than birds – much more.

Some birding spots were easy (roadsides and improved trails) and some were difficult. The fittest of the group took them all. Those slightly past their peak, like me, picked and chose. Edna, my bride, had to forgo much of the trail birding. She broke her arm early on. Fell on a tiled patio at a visitor center. Incidentally, the medical care in Cost Rica is top notch. The country spends its limited resources on health and education. There is no army; only saw 5 or 6 police cars; and the roads don't suck up money either.

Our local doctor said Edna's arm had been set well. All he had to offer was a lighter high-tech cast – which will probably cost 10X the original. If you have enough mobility to walk trails, you ought to dare to experience Cost Rica. Expect to be completely overwhelmed with beautiful birds

Oh! The prize? A miniature Resplendent Quetzal. It's perched now in our family room. Sometimes, when the house is quiet, I hear its call – declaring its specialness – and that of its home in the cloud forests of Costa Rica.

Calendar of Monthly Meetings...

**Location: Auditorium, Glendale Public Library, 5959 West Brown Street
(one block south of Peoria Ave. & 59th Ave. intersection)
Time: 6:30 p.m.**

Apr 10, 2002 Fiona Goodson, Environmental Consultant on "Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy -Owl"

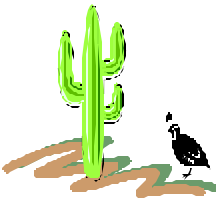
May 8, 2002 Kate Litteral of the Mesa Southwest Museum on "Arizona Dinosaurs A to Z"

We hope to have some of the fall schedule in the next newsletter.

Other Dates of Interest:

Apr 3, 6:45 p.m. Board Meeting at Glendale Library. All SAS members welcome.

Apr 27, 9 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Thunderbird Park program on conservation. SAS will participate with bird walks.



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