



Gambel's Tales

The Newsletter of the Sonoran Audubon Society

Volume 4 Issue 2

October 2002

West Nile Virus: It's Headed Our Way

Elisabeth Lawaczeck, DVM
Vector-borne & Zoonotic Diseases
Arizona Department of Health Services

Scientists have been surprised at the rate that West Nile virus (WNV) has been spreading across the United States. Primarily a wild bird disease, WNV has been found in more than 80 avian species and 9 mammalian species since its arrival in this country. In 1999, WNV was first identified in the U.S. in New York City as the cause of an outbreak of encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) in humans and the death of thousands of birds, especially crows. Previously, the virus had never been detected in the Western Hemisphere. By the end of 1999, WNV activity had been detected in 4 states. Since then, the virus has been detected in 12 states in 2000, and in 27 states and the District of Columbia in 2001. In 2001, a total of 4,604 crows and 1,497 other birds with WNV infection, the vast majority found dead, were reported in 27 states and the District of Columbia. The virus has also been confirmed in Canada and in the Cayman Islands, which are south of Cuba.

WNV is transmitted through the bite of mosquitoes, with birds being the primary reservoir. The virus multiplies well in the blood of certain species of birds. Mosquitoes become infected with WNV while feeding on infected birds, and then transmit WNV to humans and other animals while biting them to take blood. Species most susceptible to WNV include the Corvid family, raptors, and certain exotic avian species such as those at zoos. Arizona has a large number and variety of migratory birds, which may play a role in the geographic spread of WNV. Migration patterns of several bird species in eastern and western states overlap during winter migrations into Central and South America, thus creating the potential for WNV introduction into western avian species. Experts estimate that WNV will reach the western U.S. in the next one or two years.

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At our next meeting....

Wednesday October, 9 at 6:30 p.m.

“The Birds of Hudson Bay and Eastern Canada”

Presented by Tom Gatz



Northern Gannet on Bonaventure Island, Quebec

Photo by Tom Gatz

Tom has been interested in birds since he was 15 years old when he identified his first species: a dark-eyed junco in a vacant lot on a cold and gray Chicago morning. Since then, he and Barbara have enjoyed natural history travel to many parts of the world. Their most recent “casual birding” trip was to Scotland this past summer to visit his sister Nancy who lives on the Isle of Skye with white-tailed sea eagles. Tom’s other interests include desert landscaping their backyard for birds, butterflies, tortoises, toads and lizards. Their “neighborhood” bird list in Moon Valley totals 93 species identified within walking distance of their home, including nesting Orange Bishops. When not birding, traveling or gardening, Tom helps to conserve threatened and endangered plants and animals in his job with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

His slide presentation on Oct. 9 will show visits to Churchill, Manitoba on Hudson Bay in Manitoba in search of the elusive Ross’s gull and tundra-nesting shorebirds, and to the incredible seabird colonies on Ile de Bonaventure in Quebec and Machias Seal Island off the coast of New Brunswick.

(Continued from page 1)

West Valley Virus : It's Headed Our Way

The Arizona Department of Health Services has partnered with the Arizona Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, county health departments, and other agencies in conducting surveillance for WNV infection in birds. You can assist public health officials in surveillance for WNV by reporting dead or dying birds to your local or state health department, preferably from April through October. The most important criteria for submission of a bird for WNV testing, is freshness; necropsy results are best when the bird has been dead less than 24 hours. For further information please contact the Arizona Department of Health Services, Vector-Borne & Zoonotic Diseases at (602) 230-5932, or visit the following websites:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>

U.S. Geological Survey, National Wildlife Health Center-
<http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov>

New York State Department of Health West Nile Virus Page-
<http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/westnile/index.htm>

National Wildlife Health Center -
http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/research/west_nile/west_nile.html

Since this article was written WNV has been found in all but eight states. Arizona is one of those states but we can expect it to occur soon.

Hassayampa Nature Preserve

By Charles Kangas

Much has happened concerning Hassayampa during the summer and the last several weeks. As many of you know the preserve was closed from the month of June through the summer and we have just found out that it won't open until October. We were first told by Mike Rigney that it was due to financial restraints but when we went to pre-arranged field trips we saw a sign at the front gate that said the preserve was closed due to fire dangers.

Roxie Campbell, one of our members was concerned at things that were happening and wrote a letter to Pat Graham and it caused a fire storm. I am enclosing the letter she wrote. Roxie came to the last Sonoran Audubon Society meeting and passed out copies of her letter. Many of us then wrote letters to Nature Conservancy including SAS. There was a reply by Mike Rigney which is also enclosed.

Hello Pat,

I am writing in concern about something very near and dear to my heart, the Nature Conservancy's Hassayampa River Preserve. As you may remember, I was the Volunteer Coordinator at Hassayampa until the end of 2001. My husband, Carl and I are Conservation Partners and members of the Legacy Club. Since 1999, we have donated between \$8,000 to \$10,000, in cash and materials. In addition, we have put in several thousand hours as volunteers, Our feelings for this diverse and special "Last Best Place" run deep.

I am writing in hopes that you will either confirm or deny some disquieting talk going around town that TNC will be selling off a portion of the preserve to the Desert Caballeros Western Museum. I just finished assisting at a children's day camp which was held at the Museum and at Hassayampa. During that short four weeks, I witnessed some unusual activities.

- While at the Preserve, Peter Booth (DCWM's Director of Education), brought an applicant he was interviewing for a museum position to the preserve to "show him around" .
- Also, there were surveyors flagging areas around the Visitor Center and Palm Lake.
- Carl was approached to teach a crafts class in the coming winter for the Museum and was told that he would be using the Preserve facilities.
- Peter Booth quizzed me about our December Luminaria Event; ticket prices, basic logistics, etc.
- Numerous Museum staff and volunteers were there several times to "look around" and take photos.

After witnessing these odd activities I can only conclude that the rumors are true. Please tell me that the Arizona Chapter, who just last year assured us all that HRP was to be preserved "in perpetuity", is not going to sacrifice this area and allow it to be turned into a Cowboy Theme Park. Please say it isn't so.

What happened to the basic tenet of Conservation by Design which is "Integrity Beyond Reproach"? If these negotiations are really taking place, why haven't the members and volunteers, who gave their hearts, souls, time, AND money to save HRP for future generations been told. Is TNC embarrassed or ashamed? Well they should be. I'm willing to bet that if these covert actions were known to the general membership, there would be a furor to say the least. The donations given to HRP and TNC were not intended for supporting degradation of habitat but for protection!

Remember the various forms of support given to HRP are also given to the Arizona Chapter.

I look forward to hearing from you very soon.

Sincerely,

Roxie Campbell

The Nature Conservancy
333 East Virginia Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85004
Attn: Pat Graham, TNC State Director
Mike Rigney, HRP Program Manager

Dear Sirs:

A portion of the Mission Statement of the Sonoran Audubon Society that was written and approved by unanimous vote of our membership states that we support the “conservation, preservation and restoration of natural ecosystems and of biological diversity”. It is in the interest of this tenet that we have written this letter to you about the following matter.

We are deeply concerned to hear that The Nature Conservancy is negotiating the sale of 35 acres of the Hassayampa River Preserve (HRP) in Wickenburg. Even though the public details of this transaction are minimal at this time, we felt that we must express our concern for the future protection of this land and the reputation that HRP has earned within the community.

The Sonoran Audubon Society has felt great respect for the staff and volunteers of HRP and the enormous work that they have done to take care of the land within the boundaries of HRP, its Visitor Center, and other buildings at the preserve. We feel that the HRP staff and volunteers have demonstrated the highest environmental ethics to the HRP visitors and to the community at large. The proposed owners and custodians of the 35 acres of HRP are a group whose main priorities do not include protection of the environment. We believe that such a group will not continue the high quality of environmental ethics and care of the land that has been demonstrated in the past. Additionally, a group whose primary interests are the cultural aspects of the “Old West” will certainly present a very different atmosphere to visitors and to the community at large. The owners of the property will set the tone that is felt by each visitor.

The sale of TNC preserve land to a non-environmental group will most certainly cause many to doubt (has already caused) the “preserve and protect” tenets of TNC. If wide-ranging rumors are correct, this sale will take land that has not been populated with livestock (cows and horses) and change it to land that is populated with livestock. Even if the conservation easements limit the numbers of livestock to relatively small numbers, this will set a very bad example for the public; indeed it will be seen as an endorsement of maintaining livestock on such land. This is certainly a move in the wrong direction.

We are also concerned that this action by TNC is representative of a TNC philosophy of giving priority to business use of preserve land at the expense of the grassroots members of the environmental community.

The sale of the “Visitor Services” responsibility to a non-environmental organization will certainly drive apart the close knit environmental community that has consisted of HRP volunteers, the Friends of HRP, SAS members and others.

There is sound scientific data that shows that smaller and smaller islands of preserves lead to lower biological diversity within the preserves and puts already stressed species at greater risk. Even though the 35 acres of HRP that TNC is planning to sell is described as the disturbed area, it has still been beneficial to many species. A prime example is the endangered Southwest Willow Flycatcher, which has nested in this area. Red-shouldered Hawks have also nested in this area – previous to this there had been only one confirmed breeding record in Arizona (in 1981 along the Colorado River).

The 35 acres in the negotiated sale has also acted as a buffer to the rest of the undisturbed 298 acres of HRP. There is sound scientific data that buffer zones are very important to the health of diverse biological ecosystems. If the 35 acres are further developed or used in such a way as to impact the adjacent HRP land, it can cause immense harm to the biological community that relies on HRP. For instance, the Hassayampa River often runs very close to the 35 acres in question. Increased noise levels and activity on the 35 acres might well impact the nesting of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo and other riparian birds along the river. With further development and construction, there is the real possibility of adding pollution to the river.

On behalf of the Sonoran Audubon Society, we urge you to reconsider the sale of any portion of HRP to Desert Caballeros Western Museum. We strongly encourage you to consider partnering with an organization whose primary tenet includes preservation and protection of the environment. We strongly agree with John Sawhill, past President of The Nature Conservancy, when he said “In the end, our society will be defined not only by what we create but by what we refuse to destroy”. We would like to re-state this: “In the end, an organization and its leaders will be defined not only by what it creates but by what it refuses to destroy”. We urge the leaders of TNC to carefully consider the risk of destroying or damaging the Hassayampa River Preserve by fragmenting it and placing it in the care of custodians who are not environmentalists.

Sincerely,

s/s Charles Kangas

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Letter From Mike Rigney on Hassayampa

Sept. 13, 2002

Dear Valued Volunteer and Supporter,

As a volunteer and valued friend of the Hassayampa River Preserve, I invite you to meet with The Nature Conservancy's state director, Pat Graham and Desert Caballeros Western Museum Executive Director Michael Ettema, on Saturday, Sept. 28 at 11:00 a.m. at the Wickenburg Community Center's conference room, 160 N. Valentine Street, in Wickenburg. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss an option we are considering at the preserve to provide enhanced visitor services while directing more of the Conservancy's time and effort to its conservation mission -- to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth.

As the Conservancy's Hassayampa Watershed Program Manager and your neighbor, I hope that your experience as a volunteer and friend of the preserve has shown you how seriously The Nature Conservancy takes its mission to defend the integrity of the places it protects. Hassayampa is no exception to the rule. Some of you may recall our last volunteer meeting at the preserve where we talked about the Conservancy's renewed commitment to protecting the Great Places on Earth through the scientific planning approach called Conservation by Design. With Conservation by Design as our blueprint for accomplishing more and better conservation on the ground, all state chapters and all programs within our chapter reevaluated how we have been working to ensure that we are making the best possible use of our resources for conservation. Building effective local partnerships is one of the best ways we know to make that happen.

This is why the Conservancy approached the Desert Caballeros Western Museum this summer to begin discussing creative and mutually beneficial ways to collaborate at the preserve. The Museum responded favorably and expressed its wish to use a small portion of our property as an "experiential museum" linking cultural history and the environment. We have not been able to discuss this proposal freely with the volunteers or the public because it has taken all summer to begin to develop the specifics and we are not done yet.

One thing cannot be emphasized too strongly; The Conservancy is firmly committed to protecting the riparian habitat at Hassayampa River Preserve. The Conservancy will be guided by the best available science in determining the activities that are compatible with its mission and those that will not be allowed. Specifically, we are proposing to sell approximately 35 acres (of the 333 acres) of the preserve to the Museum. These 35 acres will comprise the disturbed upland area between the highway and the Visitor Center, the Visitor Center and associated buildings and Palm Lake.

This is land that the Conservancy has always considered less ecologically sensitive and most suitable for visitor activities.

The Conservancy is negotiating a strong conservation easement for the sale property and a use permit for the preserve that will protect habitat values on the sale property and ensure that no activity will negatively impact the remaining 298 acres which will remain as The Nature Conservancy's Hassayampa River Preserve. A conservation easement is a legally binding agreement a property owner makes to restrict the type and amount of development activity that may take place on the property. The conditions of each conservation agreement are unique, but in every case, The Conservancy negotiates for the specific protections that are most appropriate to the plants, animals and habitats found there.

Once the conservation easement agreement between the Conservancy and the Museum has been reached, the Conservancy proposes to sell the 35-acre parcel to the Museum. Proceeds of this sale, and additional fundraising efforts required of the Museum, will provide a substantial endowment fund for the Conservancy. This endowment fund will be used to support conservation activities both at the preserve and within the greater watershed. The Museum proposes to assist the Conservancy by providing volunteer coordination. The Conservancy and the Museum will work as collaboratively to develop new exhibits and displays linking the history of the area with environmental options for the future. The 298 acres of riparian habitat will continue to be managed by Conservancy staff and volunteers for the benefit of the plants and animals that inhabit the river and the surrounding Sonoran desert.

The Nature Conservancy initiated this partnership with the Desert Caballeros Western Museum as a means to link its conservation activities with a high quality locally based cultural institution. The museum is seeking to develop a broader role for its programs (linking cultural history and the environment) within the community. We believe that the natural assets of the Hassayampa River Preserve and those of the greater watershed area that sustains it will benefit from this partnership. We also believe that this alliance will benefit the people of Wickenburg and the many visitors who are drawn to the area for its rich cultural heritage.

We look forward to seeing you at 11:00 a.m. on the 28th. If you are unable to attend this meeting and would like to learn more about this collaborative effort, we are developing a fact sheet that we will be happy to email or mail to you. This fact sheet will also be available at both the Preserve and the Museum.

We welcome your written comments (either by email to mrigney@tnc.org or by mail) by October 4th. Our goal is to bring this issue to TNC's Board of Trustees for tentative approval at their meeting on October 18th with the final decision being made by TNC's State Director Pat Graham and the Museum's Board and Executive Director Michael Ettema.

Sincerely,

Mike Rigney, Hassayampa Watershed

Program Manager

A message from your president...

There certainly is a lot of material in this newsletter on Hassayampa. I think you can all understand the reason for our concern. We have had many field trips to the preserve and also a number of joint work shops held at Hassayampa. I hope all of you carefully read all three letters: Roxie Campbell's, the Sonoran Audubon and that of Mike Rigney. I think after comparing the three letters you'll find areas of disagreement. Mike says, "we are proposing to sell approximately 35 acres (of the 333 acres) of the preserve to the Museum. These 35 acres will comprise the disturbed upland area between the highway and the Visitor Center, the Visitor Center and associated buildings and Palm Lake. This is land that the Conservancy has always considered less ecologically sensitive and most suitable for visitor activities." He doesn't mention the fact outlined in the SAS Board's letter that: even though the 35 acres of HRP that TNC is planning to sell is described as the disturbed area, it has still been beneficial to many species. A prime example is the endangered South-west Willow Flycatcher, which has nested in this area. Red-shouldered Hawks have also nested in this area – previous to this there had been only one confirmed breeding record in Arizona (in 1981 along the Colorado River). Also this is the area that has many Robins in the winter along with visiting Rufous-backed Robins. Also many unusual water birds have stopped to rest at Palm lake during their migration south.

Those of us opposed to the sale believe all the increased activity in the area sold to the Desert Caballeros Western Museum will result in the disappearance of those species from the preserve.

Mike says that "the Museum proposes to assist the Conservancy by providing volunteer coordination." Lots of luck! I don't know of any of the present volunteers who will work for the museum.

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 e-mail 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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Frogs Enjoy the High Life at Bed & Breakfast

From Arizona Game And Fish

The recent summer rains and some TLC have helped create a baby boom of sorts. These babies aren't the sort that most people would find cute and cuddly – unless maybe you're in search of the legendary fairy tale prince charming.

The Beatty family may not be kissing each frog, but they are helping with conservation efforts. They're part of a voluntary multi-party conservation effort to help the Ramsey Canyon leopard frogs found near their business – Beatty's Bed-and-Breakfast – in the Huachuca Mountains near Sierra Vista.

The late summer rains and the family's quality care have produced a bumper crop of the frogs, with 57 egg masses (a cluster of approximately 600-1200 individual eggs) laid in August and September. This is more than twice as many as were produced in the same time period last year! And this is good news since the Ramsey Canyon leopard frog is one of the rarest frogs on earth, slipping to the brink of extinction in the mid 1990s and existing only within a three and a half mile radius on the east slope of the Huachuca Mountains.

In addition to the boost from rain, the Beatty family has been instrumental in helping the Arizona Game and Fish Department's efforts along by building several new ponds. So, now the frogs and the human guests all have a cozy place to stay at the family's bed-and-breakfast.

So, if you're a frog enthusiast, plan a trip to Miller Canyon, drop in on the Beatty family, and see all these tadpoles that will be changing into little frogs next spring. We hear these frogs don't like to be kissed so we suggest taking your prince with you!

Sierra Vista Field Trip Sep 18-20

By George Wall

The Sierra Vista trip (18-20 Sept, 2002) was a fun trip. We had a good turn out consisting of George & Maria Wall, Chuck & Phyllis Kangas, Harold & Kathy Huffman, Marge Eckman, Nancy Reed, Jayne McNeil, Helayn Aranguena, Vera Markham, Lisa Jokimaki, Ralph & Donna Smith and their 2 friends from California – Karen & Larry Seeley

On the way down I-10, several of us saw an immature White Ibis fly over the highway toward Tucson. Some of us thought it was a White-faced Ibis until others pointed out that it had a white breast. Thus it had to be a White not a White-faced. We found out later we should have called it in to the Tucson Rare Bird Alert.

On Wednesday afternoon, 10 of us stopped at the Sierra Vista Sewage Treatment Plant. They've really made this a nice picnic and viewing area that is open from 7am to 3pm. While there we saw a Harrier Hawk, Red-winged Blackbirds, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Brewer's Blackbirds, Violet-green Swallows, Barn Swallows, Turkey Vulture, Great Egret, Mexican Mallard, Mourning Dove, and a real treat with a Bobolink.

We all met Thursday morning at Ramsey Canyon. Naturalist Mark Pretti gave us a very informative talk and then led us on a birding and nature walk. While with Mark we saw Anna's, Violet-crowned, White-eared, Berylline and a Hybrid Hummingbird, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Brown Creeper, Vaux's Swift, Wilson's Warbler, Northern Flicker, Bridled Titmouse, Acorn Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, White-breasted Nuthatch, Painted Redstart, Mexican Jay and Lesser Goldfinch in no particular order. Mark Pretti thinks that the Hybrid hummer we saw was a cross between the Magnificent and Berylline.

After this, we drove down Keeling Rd hoping to see the Scaled Quail, but all we saw was an Olive-sided Flycatcher and a Western Kingbird. Most of us then adjourned for lunch at the Country Kitchen.

After lunch, we traveled to Garden Canyon. The birds were few and far between as we only saw the Lesser Goldfinch, Acorn Woodpecker and Western Wood Pewee. We did have some excitement though that made the trip worthwhile. Kathy Huffman had a Mohave Rattlesnake shake its rattles at her. We all got a very close look at this snake that had just eaten its prey and was very slow in moving away into the brush.

Mohave Rattlesnake in Garden Canyon

Photo by George Wall



Most of us then traveled to Miller Canyon and Tom Beatty's Guest Ranch and Orchard where he has dozens of hummingbird feeders hanging at various spots. Here we saw the Anna's, Rufous, Calliope, Blue-throated and Magnificent Hummingbirds by the dozens. In his local pond, Leopard Frogs abounded. Several of us left there with a bag of varied apples that were for sale at 50 cents a pound.

After leaving Beatty's, a few of us went back to Keeling Road and found a covey of the Scaled Quail, a truly beautiful bird.

Friday morning we all caravanned over to Sandi Anderson's Gray Hawk Nature Center. We had an interesting time walking through Johnson grass that was as tall as me and eight weeks previously wasn't even there. Due to the number of people and the denseness of the area, not everyone saw all the species seen which were the Barn Swallow, Wilson's Warbler, Summer Tanager, White-breasted Nuthatch, Black-headed Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Belted Kingfisher, a tree full of Turkey Vultures, Song Sparrow, Mourning Dove, Gila Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Common Yellowthroat, Green-tailed Towhee, Canyon Towhee, Black Phoebe, Dark-eyed Junco, Western Kingbird, House Finch, and a Curve-billed Thrasher. Our guide then showed us an immature White Ibis that had been injured and brought into the preserve, some Spotted Skunks and several snakes including a large Boa Constrictor.

Chuck and Phyllis Kangas stayed at Beatty's Guest Ranch and while there added to the trip list with, Costa's Hummingbird, Scrub and Piñon Jays.

All in all, we saw a total of 56 different species. We could have seen more species if we had combed the grasslands but we were all happy with what we saw.

The Education Committee Is On The Move

Carol Cross, Ph.D.

When you look to the right or the left when you looking for that elusive bird for your life list; do you see any young people? Are the people you are birding with the same old people you've known for years? Have you wondered what it would feel like to have some young enthusiastic birders, full of life and excitement about seeing birds, next to you on your next field trip? Isn't it about time we start building the future of our club by bringing in some young people? Or how about some additional programs that would attract more than the 120 to 150 members who come to meetings. After all we have over 800 members. How do we get them involved in the club?

When the Sonoran Audubon Society was incorporated, there were two areas the society wanted to emphasize:

- a) conservation
- b) education

Carol Cross is the educational director of the SAS and would like to share with you the results of her recent meeting with Charles Kangas. Together they brainstormed ideas for creating a viable educational program for SAS. They came up with these ideas for program development:

A. Youth Mentoring Program

This kind of program is being developed by Audubon Societies around the country. If there is interest, we will work to develop some funding by tapping into some grant writing programs such as Intergenerational funds and others. This program will involve SAS members to spend very little time because the program will be divided into very small increments. Some of the different ways a person could mentor and be recognized as a Certified Mentor would include:

1. Writing a module on one specific bird
2. Drawing photos of a bird
3. Drawing habitat pictures
4. Learning to use the binoculars
5. Learning to use bird guides
6. Learning about Arizona issues
7. Evaluate the module produced by another member
8. Preparing materials such as flip charts, study cards
9. Serving on the mentoring committee
10. Serving on the recognition committee
11. How to run a field trip
12. Teaching a course
13. Getting the most out of a field trip
14. How to understand field marks

I think you understand that the youth mentoring program is in the initial planning stage. We welcome your suggestions and ideas. We'll have to get more people together and do some more brainstorming. I'm sure many of you will have many valuable ideas.

B. Develop a beginning bird class

When new birders come to our chapter, many times they get discouraged and do not stay.. Why? They don't know how to bird. It's up to us to develop the courses they need to learn. We would like to develop the content, flow and materials to develop a beginners course that could be offered several times a year. Here's what we think it should include:

Develop a Beginning Bird Class Where we will share with New Birders Who Come Into The Club:

How To Use Binoculars

Recognizing 20 Common Birds

- How To Use Field Marks
- How To Recognize Different Habitats
- How To Identify Different Common Trees
- How To Identify Birds By A Combination Of Habitat, Trees And Field Marks
- Going On A Field Trip With An Expert Birder Who Points Out Important Things For The Beginner to Learn
- Practice Bird Identification On Their Own
- Talk About Problems With Mentor
- Selecting And Using Bird Books
- Selecting Binoculars
- How To Review Bird Books

C. Develop An Advanced Birding Course

This advanced birding class is designed for experienced birders who want to expand their birding know how. When members are in the club for years, they may begin to get bored. That is why we must keep them growing and learning more about birds. Some of the suggested courses include:

1. Shore birds
2. Sparrows
3. Fly catchers
4. Warblers
5. Birds of Prey
6. Photography
7. Hummingbirds
- 8.

We plan to incorporate education with fundraising so we will have the money to develop attractive materials to use in our educational outreach. In addition, we plan to get sponsors for the youth mentoring program so we will end up with a positive flow of funds for later expansion.

An education committee is presently being developed. If you feel like you would like to be a part of this new program, call Carol Cross at 602-564-9241.

Fall 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. Sonoran Audubon strongly encourages carpooling on all outings!

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

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.

Saturday, October 19

Seven Springs and Camp Creek

Leader: Eleanor Campbell

ercamp@juno.com Campbell 623 977-7639

Stop in desert and chaparral habitats before arriving at the riparian site in the Tonto National Forest. Canyon Towhee, Sage Thrasher, and Hermit Thrush were seen on past trips.

Difficulty: 1 Bring lunch. Call leader for time and meeting place.

Entrance fee: \$4.00 per car.

Wednesday, October 23

Tres Rios Wetlands

Leader: Carolyn Modeen 623 972-6273

ctmodeen@juno.com

This wetland complex at 91st Ave. on the Salt River is among the best places to find birds in the West Valley. Expect to find several species of herons, raptors, and wintering waterfowl--often in great numbers.

Difficulty: 1 Morning only. Bring spotting scope if possible.

This is a combined trip with Birders' Anonymous. Meet at Sun Bowl, 107th Ave., Sun City at 7:30 a.m. OR at the site. Contact leader for details.

Saturday, October 26

Spur Cross Conservation Area

Leader: Bob Gaulden 480 488-6623

Explore this newly-protected wilderness area in Cave Creek with its Interpretive Ranger. Habitats include desert, a riparian section, and national forest. It's possible to see Cooper's and Harris's Hawks, Peregrine and Prairie Falcons, and nesting owls.

Difficulty: 2 Morning only. Wear sturdy shoes or boots. Bring water. Take Cave Creek Rd. to Spur Cross Rd. and drive to the public parking area at the end to meet the leader at 8:00 a.m. Entrance fee: \$3.00 per person.

Tuesday, November 5

Thunderbird Park, Glendale

Leader: George Nation 623 362-2392

This is a good in-town site to see desert birds such as thrashers, gnatcatchers and wrens. The pond annually hosts Hooded Mergansers, Common Mergansers, Lesser Scaups, Redheads and Ruddy Ducks.

Difficulty: 1 Morning only. Call leader for time and meeting place.

Friday, November 8

Hassayampa River Preserve

Leader: Lorraine Thompson 623 546-2103

The Nature Conservancy's Preserve on the Hassayampa River in Wickenburg is always a premier birding spot. Red-shouldered Hawks have nested there for several years. Brown Creeper, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-naped Sapsucker, and Ladder-backed Woodpecker can usually be seen.

Difficulty: 1 Morning only. Call leader for the time to meet at the Preserve on Route 60 about three miles south-east of Wickenburg, about 50 miles west of Phoenix

Saturday, November 16

Prescott Forests and Lakes

Leader: Ken Larsen 928 443-5778

Explore Watson Woods Conservation Area and lakes in Prescott's unique Granite Dells. Look for resident pygmy nuthatch, woodpeckers, and hawks plus a variety of wintering ducks.

Difficulty: 1 Morning only. Meet at Denny's Restaurant in Ponderosa Plaza at the corner of Gail Gardner Way and Iron Springs Rd., Prescott at 8:00 a.m. Call leader to register.

Friday, November 22

Vulture Peak, Wickenburg

Leader: Ann McDermott 623-584-3088

Combine a hike with bird watching away from visible Civilization. This trail ascends an isolated peak home to Black-throated Sparrow, Canyon Wren and Black-tailed Gnatcatcher. Black Vultures are often present.

Difficulty 4+ Bring lunch. Wear hiking boots. Call leader for time and place.

SAVE THESE DATES:

March 17-31, 2003

Oaxaca, Mexico

Leader: David MacKay

Contact: Daniela Yellan for more information – at the bottom of the page

For the second year we are excited to team up with High Lonsome Eco Tours to offer this very special tour to the Mexican state of Oaxaca! No other trip to Oaxaca offers such a range of habitats and opportunities to see this many species.

The Mexican state of Oaxaca lies at the western edge of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the narrowest part of the North American continent. Two mountain ranges come together on this narrow neck of land, the Sierra Madre Oriental and the Sierra Madre Occidental. In between them lies the valley of Oaxaca, where the city of the same name is located, at an elevation of 5000 feet. Within the political boundaries of the state you can experience rugged Pacific beaches, humid pine and oak forests, Mexico's largest cloud forest, arid valleys, and the tropical lowlands of the Gulf of Mexico. More than 700 species of birds have been recorded within Oaxaca's borders, including 40 Mexican endemics.

As rich as it is in habitat and avi-fauna, Oaxaca is equally rich in cultural diversity. Twelve distinct indigenous groups inhabit the area around Oaxaca City, and the city's depth of history is evident on every corner and in the surrounding countryside. Although we will be concentrating on the birds of the state, we will certainly be stopping to experience and enjoy the human side of this wonderfully rich place. There will be ample time to explore Oaxaca city and its experience wonderful architecture, markets, and history.

Numerous important and extensive pre-Columbian ruins ring Oaxaca City, evidence of its many centuries of importance as a human habitation. The city itself has a population of over 800,000, yet it retains a small town feel in its large number of neighborhood plazas and parks. Even its importance as a tourist destination, for foreigners and Mexicans alike, has not negatively influenced the very Mexican feel of the city. The innocence of this city is completely enjoyable.

The pace of our trip is relatively relaxed, but unlike some other tours that emphasize the city and valley of Oaxaca, we will be doing a fair bit of moving to get us to the wide variety of habitats available in the outlying regions of the state. To help lessen the chore of changing hotels, we have given ourselves multiple nights in the various locations to help smooth the transitions.

None of the birding areas that we will visit on this trip will require anything more than casual walking, however there will be periods when we are walking for upwards of two miles at a leisurely pace, which may mean being on your feet for extended periods of time. There will be a couple of optional walks that are on steeper terrain, however the footing is never poor. Although we will be making frequent stops to look for birds, there will be some extended periods of driving. All participants should be comfortable, willing and able to occupy any seat in the vehicle for periods of up to two hours and a time. Our route will be taking us through some very remote areas with very limited facilities on numerous occasions during the tour.

Whether you are an experienced birder looking to add some Mexican endemics to your life list or a beginner who wants add a couple of hundred new birds to your list, our birding tour to Oaxaca has everything to make it your Mexican birding trip of a life time!

Small group size of 16 maximum with a minimum of two guides. Tours led by bi-lingual, long time Mexico residents and bird guides. Downtown hotel location in Oaxaca City for easy access to local sites. Excellent variety of wonderful food at local restaurants throughout the trip. Upwards of 40 Mexican endemics are possible along our route. 370 species were seen on the spring 2002 tour. Group flight offered from Phoenix, Arizona a reduced cost. Tour dates were determined to coincide with the most optimal bird activity. Visits to the most important archeological sites are included in the tour.

Tour price is \$2650 per person, and is all inclusive of meals, rooms, ground transportation and guides starting with dinner on the first night in Oaxaca City, through dinner on the last night in Oaxaca City. The price does not include airfare to the trip which starts in Oaxaca City, any departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. If the tour does not have a significant number of registered participants, it may be necessary to charge a small fee for the experience of going with a more personalized group. A single supplement of \$450 will be charged if you choose to room alone. If you prefer to share and we cannot provide a same sex roommate, we will split the additional supplement fee with the participant.

Christmas Bird Counts (Full list in next newsletter)

Tres Rios Dec 17, 2002 Contact Daniela Yellan at
dyellan@aol.com 602-942-7791

Salt Verde Dec 19, 2002 Contact Josh Burns at
josh_a_burns@yahoo.com 602-468-3002

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.

Oct 9, 2002 Tom Gatz "The Birds of Hudson Bay and Eastern Canada"

Nov 13, 2002 David Wilcox "Fortified Hilltop Sites in West Central Arizona, A.D. 1100 to 1450"

Dec 11, 2002 Shawneen Finnegan "The Magic of Cape May"

Jan 8, 2003 Southwest Forest Alliance "Old Growth Forever"

Feb 12, 2003 TBA

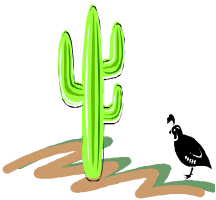
Mar 12, 2003 Sandy Anderson, Director, Gray Hawk Nature Center "The San Pedro River-Avian Paradise"

Apr 9, 2003 TBA

May 14, 2003 TBA

Other Dates of Interest:

Oct 2, 6:45 p.m. Board Meeting at Glendale Library. All SAS members welcome.



Sonoran Audubon Society

P.O. Box 8068

Glendale, AZ 85312-8068