



Gambel's Tales

The Newsletter of the Sonoran Audubon Society

Volume 8 Issue 4

December, 2006

At our next meeting....

Wednesday, December 13, 2006 at 7 p.m.

Verde River—Conservation in a Rapidly Growing State

With more people moving into the area of desert and grassland that once supported only a few, water is the pivotal issue for the Verde watershed. In this dry region of desert and grassland, life follows the tendrils of precious water.

Some of the largest individual pronghorn antelope in Arizona live in healthy bands in the upper Verde grasslands, but their wide-open range is becoming increasingly broken by roads and residential subdivisions as the area's human population swells. Likewise, new development over taps the watershed's groundwater supply, which in turn decreases surface flow in the Verde itself which affects the riparian habitat as a whole.



Patrick Graham

Patrick Graham, State Director for The Nature Conservancy in Arizona, will be discussing The Conservancy's efforts to engage the Verde watershed area community in water resource planning, as well as other efforts that aim to leave grassland habitat unbroken and more water in ground and stream.

(Continued on Page 2)

What's Happening in our Chapter?

By Your Editor

The Sonoran Audubon Society board meeting convened at 7 p.m. on November 1, 2006. Here are some of the items discussed by board members Bob McCormick, Karen LaFrance, Loretta & Chuck Richards, Suzanne Cash, Dick Fogle, Andrée Tarby, George Wall and Alvin and Arlene Scheuer. Also present who had input was Tice Supplee.

1. After approval of the minutes and discussion of the treasury report, Committee Reports were made.

A. **Field Trip:** The Field Trip Committee had met earlier in November. Trips were lined up through May of 2007.

B. **Membership:** There are currently 631 members. 69 members were dropped from the rolls due to non-payment of dues and 36 new members were added. This is a net loss of 33 members since last month. This is normal and the number of members can fluctuate drastically from month to month.

C. **Conservation:** We signed on to the Sandy Barr Forest Service Letter.

2. Here are a few of the other items discussed at the board meeting:

A. The "Retreat" date was discussed and it was approved to hold it on Saturday, January 20, 2007.

B. The Membership Picnic was a success. 40 attendees enjoyed all the food that was either brought or cooked on the grill. It was a great camaraderie experience. This will be a yearly event.

At the General Membership meeting on November 8, 2006, a great program was presented by Jo Miller on the Xeriscape Garden at the Glendale Library.

With over 600 members, it's a shame that more people didn't attend.

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Verde River—Conservation in a Rapidly Growing State

Pat joined The Nature Conservancy as State Director for the Arizona chapter in July 2001. As executive director of overall conservation activities, he leads the Conservancy's statewide staff and programs to conserve Arizona's natural diversity, working in conjunction with interested citizens, agencies, and landowners. The Conservancy goals are to create a more secure and sustainable water future for Arizona, creating a network of protected areas for the benefit of people and nature and restoring the health of our lands and waters.

Prior to joining The Nature Conservancy, Graham served in a variety of leadership positions for the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in Montana from 1977 to 2000. In 1993 he was named Director of the department by then Governor Marc Racicot. In addition to his role as head of Montana's Fish, Wildlife and Parks, he was selected president of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in 1994 and president of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in 2000.

EVENTS IN AND AROUND THE VALLEY

Rio Salado

www.phoenix.gov/riosalado. They have bird walks, nature programs and other items of interest. Their location is 2439 S. Central Ave., Phoenix.

The bird walks are every Saturday starting at 7:00 a.m. You meet at visitors' plaza on the north bank at Central Ave. Everyone is welcome and no need to make reservations in advance. There are several resident birds like the Belted Kingfisher, Peregrine Falcon and Burrowing Owl among others. On one of our bird trips in October, we saw or heard 43 species. This area is improving all the time.

Desert Botanical Garden

Each Monday morning from now through April, 2007, there will be bird walks from 8 a.m. to approximately 10 a.m. There will be additional walks on the second Saturday of each month at the same time. They see as many as 40 birds during these walks.

Desert Botanical Garden entrance fees of \$10.00 (\$9.00 seniors) apply unless you're a DBG member. Membership is \$55 a year. See their website at www.dbg.com for further information.

Hassayampa River Preserve

On Saturday, December 9, 2006, from 9-11 a.m. or 1-3 p.m., there will be a program entitled "Close Encounters of the Reptilian Kind." Get up close and personal with **non-venomous** snakes.

There will be the Bird Banding basics class on Saturday, December 9, 2006, from 7-11 a.m. This will be repeated again on Sunday, December 17, 2006, from 7-11 a.m.

On Saturday, December 16, 2006, there will be an Interpretive Walk from 8:30-10 a.m. Enjoy winter resident birds and an array of autumn colors on a leisurely walk.

Reservations may be required for some events. Entrance fees are \$5, TNC members \$3 and children 12 and under are free. To make reservations call 928 684-2772 or e-mail: bmccollum@tnc.org

Normal visiting hours are Wednesday—Sunday from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Birders' Anonymous

Birders' Anonymous, a group of birdwatchers, has their monthly meeting from 10—11:30 a.m. They meet on the third Friday of each month all year around at the Church of the Palms on the corner of Boswell and 103rd Ave. in Sun City in King Hall.

The Meeting for December 15, 2006, will be a Potluck Dinner along with fun and games.

Boyce Thompson Arboretum

Boyce Thompson Arboretum is now in their Fall/Winter schedule. Their hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. The price of admission is \$7.50 for adults and \$3 for children ages 5-12.

This is an ideal place to bird with two miles of trails. If you don't feel like birding, there are plenty of other things to do.

A guided "Plants of the Bible" walk is offered twice this month on the first Sunday and again on the third Saturday (December 3 and 16, 2006), departing the visitor center lobby at 1:30 p.m. This leisurely tour features Bible scholar and Arizona State Parks Volunteer David Oberpriller as special guest tour guide.

For driving directions or other details, call 520-689-2811 or visit their website at <http://arboretum.org> where you can see all their scheduled events.

Join the National Audubon Society

New adult or family membership: \$20.00

Seniors and students: \$15.00

Renewal fee for seniors and students: \$15.00

These fees cover membership in the National Audubon Society and a subscription to Audubon magazine. An application form for National membership may be obtained from the chapter at the regular meeting or by contacting <chuckkan@mindspring.com>.

Each year all National members in the Sonoran Audubon chapter area receive the September *Gambel's Tales* that describes major chapter activities for the year. All monthly issues of *Gambel's Tales* may be obtained free from the chapter website <www.sonoranaudubon.org> or by mail for \$10.00 per year. If you wish to get the newsletter by mail, please contact chuckkan@mindspring.com or by mail to: Sonoran Audubon Society, P O Box 8068, Glendale, AZ 85312-8068. For information or questions call 623-939-6181.

SAS Web Site: www.sonoranaudubon.org

Arizona Audubon Web Site: www.az.audubon.org

Friends of Audubon Arizona Web Site:

www.friendsofauudubonarizona.org

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

January 10, 2007-Catherine, the Herb Lady

February 14, 2007-Sean Saville, National Outreach Coordinator for National Audubon in the DC Policy Office

March 14, 2007-Rich Ockenfels, Pronghorn Antelopes

April 11, 2007-Bill Grossi, Adventure & Birding in Peru

May 9, 2007-Andy Holycross, More Snakes!

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BIRDING SPOTS

By George Wall

This is the third in a series about birding spots in our area. This month the spot is:

Butcher Jones/Saguaro Lake/Coon Bluff/Phon D. Sutton Site & Granite Reef

All of these spots are in the Tonto National Forest and are excellent places to observe several types of birds.

Your first stop on the Bush Highway is the Butcher Jones Recreation area. There are some cottonwoods, mesquite and other trees that are home to wrens, woodpeckers, phoebes, juncos, and sparrows as well as flycatchers. Since it touches a small inlet from Saguaro Lake, you can also see various waterfowl here.

Go on down Bush Highway and turn into the Saguaro Lake entrance. There is a parking lot at the restaurant as well as other parking areas. From there, you can observe all types of waterfowl especially during winter.

After leaving Saguaro Lake, go on down the road to the Coon Bluff Recreation Site on the Salt River. Here there are lots of mesquite trees as well as others. You are bound to see lots of birds. This is a favorite spot of Vermilion Flycatchers when they are coming through.

Continue on down the Bush Highway and quickly stop at the parking lot of the Phon D Sutton Site. Look across the river into the big cottonwoods off in the distance, You should see Bald Eagles that nest there.

Return back to the Bush Highway and continue on down to the Granite Reef Recreation Area. Here is a good spot to have lunch while watching birds in the trees and various waterfowl on the large body of water that has been backed up by Granite Reef Dam.

When you head back the way you came, always be on the lookout for Peregrine Falcons that sometimes nest in the cliffs at one of the restroom stops.

It's easy to get to Bush Highway. Get on 101 and get off at the Shea Blvd exit. Turn back under 101 and go down Shea until you hit 87 (Beeline Hwy). Turn left on 87 and go to Bush Hwy which is about 9 miles from Shea. Turn right onto the Bush Hwy.

Here are some of the species counts, at what time of year and one of the birds seen during the day.

- 41 - March 20, 2001 – Golden Eagle
- 43 - April 3, 2002 – Bald Eagle
- 44 - February 18, 2003 – Phainopepla
- 52 - March 18, 2004 – Belted Kingfisher
- 40 - May 3, 2005 – Vermilion Flycatcher
- 58 - March 4, 2006 – Eared Grebe

A HERO'S AWARD



John Hardison

John Hardison, a professional photographer and member of the Sonoran Audubon Society, received a Community Hero Award from Safeway stores on October 16, 2006. He received a framed Document, Gold lapel Pin and \$1000 check which he had them make out to the AHA (Arizona Herpetology Association).

What was this Hero's award for? It was for a simple task—at least to him—removing and relocating rattlesnakes and other reptiles.

It all started 40 years ago when his family was always hunting, camping and fishing. He would see an occasional rattlesnake and would dispatch it. Over the years, he stopped killing the rattlers and just moved them out of the way. Using the experience of handling rattlesnakes, he volunteered relocating rattlesnakes and other reptiles for the Arizona Herpetology Association. In the last three years, he has taken about 30 rattlesnakes a year out of people's yards. For the last two years, he has been a volunteer for the Arizona Game and Fish Department and has a special wildlife license which lets him relocate endangered reptiles such as the Gila Monster.

His area is far NW Phoenix. Most of his hotline calls are around 67th Avenue and Happy Valley Road, but can range to the Verde River to Buckeye and Estrella Mountain ranches.

See some of his pictures at <http://www.outdooreyes.com/list/thegallerys.php3?photoid=1041&first=first>

FRIENDS OF THE SONORAN AUDUBON SOCIETY

Friends of the Sonoran Audubon Society provide the principal financial support for the chapter and its activities. SAS operates with a minimum overhead (chapter administration and insurance) in order to make revenues go as far as possible.

THE FRIENDS

I would like to become a Friend of the Sonoran Audubon Society. Friends can contribute at four levels (please indicate your choice of level):

- Gambel's Quail** \$20.00 to \$49.99 per year
- Gambel's Quail Seniors** rate \$15.00 to \$49.99 per year
- Zone-tailed Hawk** \$50.00 to \$99.99 per year
- Desert Bald Eagle** \$100.00 or more per year.

All Friends contributions are fully tax-deductible.

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RECEIVING GAMBEL'S TALES

Gambel's Tales is the newsletter of the chapter, published monthly from September through May. The newsletter is available via the Internet in PDF (Acrobat Reader) format; we encourage chapter members to use this service.

I would like to receive *Gambel's Tales* via the Internet, my e-mail address is

I would like to receive *Gambel's Tales* by mail (enclose \$10 to cover costs).

I do not wish to receive *Gambel's Tales*.

Please enter amounts: for Gambel's Tales mailing \$ _____

For joining the Friends \$ _____

Total and enclose a check, payable to **Sonoran**

Audubon Society, for this amount \$ _____

Please contact me about participation in SAS activities (telephone or e-mail)

Please send me information about membership in the National Audubon Society

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE AND ZIPCODE _____

Send to **SONORAN AUDUBON SOCIETY, P O Box 8068, Glendale, AZ 85312-8068**

ARIZONA (& VICINITY) CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SCHEDULE [2006-2007]

The National Audubon Society has conducted Christmas bird counts since 1900. Volunteers from across North America and beyond take to the field during one calendar day between December 14 and January 5 to record every bird species and individual bird encountered within a designated 15-mile diameter circle. These records now comprise an extensive ornithological database that enables monitoring of winter bird populations and the overall health of the environment.

Participants are typically assigned to teams based on their bird identification skill level and endurance. Many counts hold a compilation dinner at the end of the day where results are tabulated and stories shared. A \$5.00 participation fee defrays a portion of the cost of tabulating and publishing the overall count results. Help is needed on most of these counts, so find one that interests you and contact the compiler for more information.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Count Name</u>	<u>Compiler</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>E-Mail</u>
12/14	Th	Salt-Verde Rivers	Kurt Radamaker	480-837-2446	kurtrad@mexicobirding.com
12/14	Th	Pipe Spring Nat. Monument	Andrea Bornemeier	928-643-7105	andrea_bornemeier@nps.gov
12/14	Th	Sedona	Compiler Unknown		
12/15	Fr	Buenos Aires NWR	Bonnie Swarbrick	520-823-4251	bonnie_swarbrick@fws.gov
12/16	Sa	Avra Valley	George Montgomery	520-682-8530	diamond@dakotacom.net
12/16	Sa	Mormon Lake	Elaine Morrall	928-526-1022	elaimorr@npgcable.com
12/16	Sa	Hassayampa River	Vanessa Montgomery	623-465-0012	hassayampacbc@hotmail.com
12/16	Sa	Nogales	Michael Bissontz	520-577-8778	seetrogon@comcast.net
12/16	Sa	Puerto Penasco, Sonora, MX	Steve Ganley	480-830-5538	sganley@cox.net
12/16	Sa	Yuma-Mittry Lake	Henry Detwiler	928-343-8363	henrydetwiler@earthlink.net
12/17	Su	Santa Catalina Mountains	Bob Bates	520-296-5629	batesr@u.arizona.edu
12/17	Su	Timber Mesa	Jimmy Videle	928-337-2466	moonrise@wmonline.com
12/17	Su	Chino Valley	Russell Duerksen	928-925-5567	duerksen@msn.com
12/17	Su	Jerome-Cottonwood	Betsy Feinberg	928-203-0676	betsyfpub101@catharon.com
12/17	Su	Patagonia	Thomas Arny	520-394-0146	tarny@theriver.com
12/17	Su	Tucson Valley	Susan Birky	520-743-9390	snnbirky@yahoo.com
12/18	Mo	Elfrida	Tom Wood	520-432-1388	tom@sabo.org
12/19	Tu	Phoenix-Tres Rios	David Powell	602-441-5508	vireo@vireos.com
12/20	We	Prescott	Carl Tomoff	928-778-2626	tomoff@northlink.com
12/22	Fr	Saint David	Tom Wood	520-432-1388	tom@sabo.org
12/23	Sa	Ajo-Cabeza Prieta NWR	Curt McCasland	520-387-4992	curtis_mccasland@fws.gov
12/23	Sa	Appleton-Whittell	Robert Whitcomb	520-455-5522	whitcomb@dakotacom.net
12/27	We	Gila River	Troy Corman	602-482-6187	aplomado@cox.net
12/28	Th	Green Valley-Madera Canyon	Reid Freeman	520-625-9895	wallcreeper@cox.net
12/28	Th	Havas NWR	Norma Miller	520-578-1399	n8urnut@comcast.net
12/29	Fr	Bill Williams River NWR	Kathleen Blair	928-667-4144	kathleen_blair@fws.gov
12/29	Fr	Sierra Pinta-Cabeza Prieta NWR	David Griffin	505-382-2080	ripley@bluefrog.com
12/30	Sa	Dudleyville	Tracy McCarthy	602-451-4179	tmccarthey@msn.com
12/30	Sa	Flagstaff-Mount Elden	Terry Blows	928-774-8028	terence.blows@nau.edu
12/30	Sa	Portal	Larry Gates	520-558-1020	hummers@vtc.net
12/30	Sa	Ramsey Canyon	Ted Mouras	520-803-0221	tedmourast@mindspring.com
12/31	Su	Camp Verde	Betsy Feinberg	928-203-0676	betsyfpub101@catharon.com
12/31	Su	Peloncillo Mountains, NM	Alan Craig	520-558-2220	narca@vtc.net
1/2	Tu	Carefree	Walter Thurber	480-483-6450	wathurber@cox.net
1/3	We	Glen Canyon	John Spence	928-608-6267	john_spence@nps.gov
1/4	Th	Superior	Cynthia Donald	480-283-4515	planres@earthlink.net

If you want to see the various sites on a map, Maricopa Audubon has the info. Go to www.maricopaaudubon.org

Winter 2006/2007 Field Trips

An * indicates a Birders' Anonymous planned trip

Saturday, December 2, 2006

Boyce Thompson Arboretum

Leader: Donna Smith 623-556-9535

rms15247@cox.net

Boyce Thompson is near Superior on Queen Creek. The variety of plants there attracts many birds, the Rufous-backed Robin may be found here in the winter. There is a fee to enter the gardens.

Difficulty: 1 - Bring a lunch.

Meet at the Sun Bowl parking lot on 107th Ave. just S. of Peoria Ave. in Sun City to leave at 7:00 a.m.

Saturday, January 13, 2007

Estrella Park & P.I.R. Area

Leader: Donna Smith 623-556-9535

rms15247@cox.net

Donna Smith and Ranger Patricia Armstrong do bird walks every 2nd Saturday of the month at Estrella Mountain Park. We'll do a hike along the Gila River and also through the park. Last January, 61 species were seen.

Difficulty: 1

Meet at the Sun Bowl parking lot on 107th Ave. just S. of Peoria Ave. in Sun City to leave at 7:30 a.m. or call the leader for alternate meeting places. The park opens at 8 a.m. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee.

***Thursday, January 18, 2007**

Arlington Valley

Leader: Donna Smith 623-556-9535

rms15247@cox.net

Arlington Valley, west of Phoenix with its fields, ponds, canals and wildlife areas provides a variety of habitats to search for birds. Burrowing Owls, Sandhill Cranes, many species of shorebirds as well as rarities like the White Ibis and White-tailed Kite may be seen. You may even see a Crested Caracara.

Difficulty: 1 - Bring a lunch.

Meet at the Sun Bowl parking lot on 107th Ave. just S. of Peoria Ave. in Sun City to leave at 7:30 a.m. or call the leader for alternate meeting places.

Friday-Sunday, January 26-8, 2007

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Leader: Andrée Tarby 480-948-1074

atarby@cox.net

Wintering rosy finches at Sandia Crest above Albuquerque are the target species for this trip. Last year all three species were present at the feeders around Crest House, the concession there. We will also spend time at Rio Grande Nature Center State Park in Albuquerque itself. Cackling Goose occurs regularly along with many ducks.

Difficulty: 3 - This is because of the distances involved and high altitude.

We will leave Phoenix early on Friday morning. Contact leader for details. We intend to carpool, but weather is definitely a factor that we will be assessing.

***Friday, February 2, 2007**

Tres Rios

Leader: George Wall 623-875-7057

gwall5@cox.net

The Tres Rios Constructed Wetlands Project located on the 91st Ave. is a haven for many bird species. The habitats include open water ponds, running stream, marsh, desert and woodland which provide a good environment at any time of year for ducks, shorebirds, and migrating passerines.

Difficulty: 1 - Morning only.

Meet at Sun Bowl parking lot on 107th Ave. just south of Peoria Ave. in Sun City to LEAVE at 7:00 a.m.

AUDUBON ARIZONA

There's an Arts & Crafts sale to benefit Audubon Arizona. It will be held Friday, December 8th from 5pm-9pm at Janie Ellis's Historic Cattle Track Compound, 6105 N. Cattle Track (North of McDonald Dr. opposite Miller Rd.). Please call Donna at 602-468-6470 to make your reservations. (\$25 per person, all-inclusive i.e. Wine Reception.) Audubon Arizona gets 10% of all sales.

If you can't make that one, there is a **No Entrance Fee** date on Saturday, December 9, 2006 from 10am-4pm. This is an exciting outdoor arts and crafts sale at a historic artists' compound. Meet artists who find inspiration in nature for their ceramics, paintings, jewelry, photographs and clothing. There will be over 20 artists.

SPECIAL EDITION FUND RAISER

Dear Sonoran Audubon Society Member/Friend of Sonoran Audubon Society,

This letter is a reminder to our Members and Friends of the Sonoran Audubon Society that we hope you will continue to support us by renewing your "Friend" membership or apply to be a "Friend." If you've done this recently, we thank you.

As many of you are aware, things changed in the National Audubon Society. We no longer get that good percentage of membership dues. As a result, if we don't have some type of fund raiser, our expenditures will gradually outpace our income. This could happen down the line.

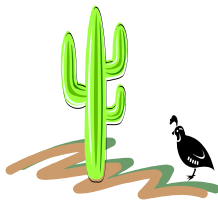
We'd like to continue to support such things as the "Burrowing Owl Project", Butterfly Garden, IBA surveys and whatever else comes up that would help in the way of conservation. In October, 2006, we donated money to help in the "Yes" vote for proposition 106 and the "No" vote for proposition 207—both vital issues to our cause.

The Sonoran Audubon Society has a lot of big plans for the future with more involvement in such things as the Rio Salado Project in downtown Phoenix, Tres Rios Festivals and other worthwhile efforts. It takes money and effort to realize future goals.

Please help us by filling out the enclosed form with your contribution and mail it to the address on the form. The form also has information about viewing or receiving Gambel's Tales.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

From your Board and Committee Members



Sonoran Audubon Society

P.O. Box 8068

Glendale, AZ 85312-8068