

Media Migration

Greetings members and friends! Sonoran Audubon Society is changing how we communicate with you and with the world. Our goal is to make it easier and faster for you to find the information you need in order to stay involved with your Audubon chapter. Sonoran Audubon's membership is diverse and evolving, and we think you deserve new outreach tools to meet your changing needs. This article describes our "media migration."

We will no longer produce a monthly newsletter (Gambel's Tales) that we will post online and provide as a hard copy. All the valuable information that was in Gambel's Tales will now be in emails sent via Constant Contact, in monthly articles that will retain the well-known Gambel's Tales moniker, and at our excellent new website

You may have been directed to this online article from our first monthly email newsletter. Each month we will send an email with short summaries and clickable links to new articles for the month. The new Gambel's Tales articles will be online for easy reading, or you can print them for reading later.

In addition to the monthly Gambel's Tales articles, we will continue to send timely Constant Contact emails with notices of upcoming field trips, meetings, and other events. Though clearly we hope you enjoy receiving information through email, you can unsubscribe at any time; just look for an unsubscribe option at the bottom of the email.

We are particularly excited about our new website that has enhanced functionality and organization. Currently the new site is in developmental form. When construction is complete, the site will include all the information you found useful at the old website. We hope the new site's streamlined organization will make it easy for you to find the content you need. Perhaps the greatest improvement is an interactive calendar tool. The calendar will be featured at the website's home page and it will be linked with other webpages that contain detailed information about upcoming events. Sonoran Audubon is driven by your participation at field trips, meetings, and special events, and the new calendar gives you a single resource to see what's going on and to stay involved.

Once a year we will publish an annual report. We plan for it to be an attractive, informative brochure that reflects the quality and dedication of your Audubon chapter. Features will include summaries of past accomplishments, goals for the upcoming year, and the annual financial report.

Finally, your feedback will help us navigate our media migration. We have created an online survey with just a few questions and space for you to provide comments. A link to the survey was provided in the September 2014 Constant Contact email. After spending some time exploring the new website and outreach media, please complete the survey.

You are the foundation of Sonoran Audubon, and we look forward to growing and progressing with you. For more information please contact Tim Cullison, SAS Vice-President and Publicity Committee Chair, at [tcullisonaz \[AT\] gmail.com](mailto:tcullisonaz@ATgmail.com)

Upcoming Events

September marks the beginning of a new season of monthly meetings highlighted by outstanding guest speakers. On September 10, join us for Mat Dry's "virtual safari" titled *The Serengeti: A Bird's-Eye View*. After completing a two-month tour of South Africa, Mat fell in love with Africa and has spent the last seven years leading safaris.

SAS members are welcomed at our annual strategic planning retreat. This year our retreat will be on Saturday, November 1, at the Hassayampa Nature Preserve near Wickenburg.



We hope you will join our upcoming field trips that accommodate birders of all skill levels. Our monthly bird walks at Estrella Mountain Regional Park and other nearby locations are a great way for you to meet other birders, to learn about birds and their habitats, and to hone your birding skills. Join SAS for a trip to the Hassayampa River Preserve, always a birdy area, near Wickenburg on October 29.

SAS also travels to excellent birding destinations throughout Arizona and even to other states and countries! We are sponsoring a special trip, guided by Mexico birding specialist David MacKay during September 1-5, to find beautiful and rare Thick-billed Parrots and other specialties in the mountains of northern Mexico. On September 25, join our trip to Lockett Meadow near Flagstaff to enjoy the cool weather and an assortment of forest birds.



Sonoran Audubon often participates at regional events, such as the Tres Rios Nature Festival, and hosts educational events and workshops. Please check the website's calendar for updates.

We hope to see you soon!

SONORAN AUDUBON SOCIETY GOES eBIRDING!

By Karen LaFrance, SAS Consultant

SAS's Board President Haylie Hewitt was amazed at the capabilities of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's "eBird" website. On Thursday, August 7th in the Audubon Arizona library, Haylie and I, plus 11 other bird watchers, Important Bird Area monitors, trip leaders and other volunteers, joined Audubon Arizona's Tice Supplee to learn the history, capabilities and advantages of using eBird online. We were all so impressed, SAS is definitely "going eBirding" (www.ebird.org)!

eBird.org is a website that is a "portal" to an immense database. It provides a way to document your bird sightings and counts on your computer when you get home or, for some of you who might be more technologically curious, you can keep your lists in the field through a smart phone "app". These capabilities on eBird—like the very cool birds' migration mapping—are awesome, to use an awesomely over-used word.

Interestingly when one thinks of the rigors of scientific data-gathering and research, the Cornell Lab invites us amateurs to keep lists on eBird. In fact, eBird may be one of the most powerful, and addicting, citizen science tools ever created. Here is the reasoning, derived from mathematical principles in statistics: there are so many of us amateurs providing so much data on so many birds in so many locations that inevitable mistaken identifications or inaccurate counts of birds become lost in the statistical mists. There IS quality control through eBird reviewers who scrutinize entered sightings if they pop up as REALLY unusual.

At the training, we practiced entering data. I worked with SAS's Trip Leader Extraordinaire Donna Smith to enter her observations from SAS's July 24th trip to the Tonto Fish Hatchery. We actually got the whole list entered including a warbler sighting—a Nashville—which eBird immediately "tagged" as not "usual". Donna entered a description of this bird including how it differed from similar species. Not surprisingly, her good field notes helped her to pass the eBird inspection protocols.

Donna's Nashville Warbler illustrates the kind of data that eBird gathers and stores to be used to document birds' challenges as they seek ways to deal with changing climate. Nashvilles usually migrate in the Eastern U.S. but this individual was making its way south a) early and b) not in "usual" pathways. Who knows? In a few years, continued meanderings of some of these "unusuals" may become commonplace and reveal trends.

Bottom line: through eBird, we can all contribute to conservation research while we have fun bird-watching. To promote the use of eBird, SAS recently created its own eBird account where we enter observations from our field trips, IBA surveys, and special events. SAS urges Bird Walk Trip Leaders, Important Bird Area monitors, our many Back Yard Birders and our members to take more careful notes and to accurately document sightings in eBird—especially your observations of Birds of Conservation Concern (www.sonoranaudubon.org).

For problem-solving, Expert Birder and Wildlife Biologist John Arnett ([treerunner \[AT\] yahoo.com](mailto:treerunner@yahoo.com)) and SAS IBA Coordinator Bob (“McBob”) McCormick ([mcbobaz \[AT\] aol.com](mailto:mcbobaz@aol.com)) are two SAS resident eBird experts. They are happy to help you out as you learn how to navigate eBird. SAS will have additional trainings in future, so keep your eye on the website. Others who attended the August 7th training arranged through the SAS Education and Conservation Committee included: SAS Trips Committee Chair Dan Bohlmann, SAS Conservation & Education Committee Chair Darnell Kirksey, Hawk Handler Andrea Nesbitt, SAS’ IBA Volunteer of Volunteers Andrée Tarby and SAS Membership Database Manager Tom Lazzelle along with birders/volunteers Kathe Anderson, Lois Lorenz, Tim Flood and Jackie Anderson.