



Gambel's Tales

The Newsletter of the Sonoran Audubon Society

Volume 12 Issue 1

September, 2010

At our next meeting.... Wednesday, September 8, 2010 at 7 p.m.

Dr. David Pearson—Alaska North to South

Join Dr. David Pearson as he covers Alaska from the Arctic Ocean in the north to Prince William Sound and Katmai National Park in the south which is a naturalist's dream. Wildflowers, mammals, birds and fish change dramatically as you move from one extreme habitat to another, and it never turns to night time in June. Bar-tailed Godwits chasing jaegers across the tundra, Hawk Owls calling at you from atop spruce trees, Fork-tailed Petrels and Humpback Whales under your bow in southeastern fjords, and dozens of Grizzly Bears sharing the streams and trails of southwestern Alaska forests are just some of the exciting adventures on this trip to Alaska.



Northern Hawk Owl and Grizzly Bear



Dr. David Pearson is a research professor at Arizona State University School of Life Sciences. He has written hundreds of books and papers including several on his specialty the Tiger Beetle. He has also written a series of wildlife guides for regions in South America. He has traveled extensively throughout the world and is fluent in five languages and able to "get along" in several more.

Available at this meeting, will be some of Dr. Pearson books: Travelers Wild Guides to Ecuador, Peru, Brazil and Thailand and the Field Guide to the Tiger Beetles.

What's Happening in our Chapter?

By Your Editor, George Wall

The Sonoran Audubon Society board of officers and directors met all during the summer and a lot was accomplished.

1. Karen LaFrance was instrumental in getting the Audubon Round Up 2010 off the ground in coordination with Audubon Arizona. It will be held at Saguaro Lake Ranch (a full service guest facility 30 miles east of Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. See www.saguarolakeranch.com). The event will be held from November 11-14, 2010. Assisting Karen in this monumental endeavor is Eleanor Campbell also a member of our board. See the full page flyer on page 4 which gives you all the details.

2. Tim Cullison from our board has coordinated another event with Audubon Arizona entitled All About Birds which will allow Girl Scouts to earn a badge. The event will be at the Rio Salado Center on November 6, 2010, with no more than 60 scouts at a time. There will be six activities, including a bird walk limited to 30 participants plus guides. Scout troops are to make reservations online. Tim hopes Safeway will donate about 300 empty milk cartons to be turned into bird feeders by the scouts. Upon successful completion, scouts will obtain an All About Birding merit badge and an Arizona Audubon Society commemorative badge. SAS obtained \$600 of Audubon Collaborative Funding to support the project, thanks to a grant proposal submitted by Karen LaFrance. There will be an article on this project in the October newsletter.

3. The Annual Retreat is set to be on September 11, 2010, at the Nature Conservancy Hassayampa River Preserve. This will be an all day affair to plan future events, guidelines and agenda for the coming year. All board members, committee members and anyone else of the general membership is invited. The Retreat starts at 7 a.m. with a bird walk and the meeting will start at 8:30 a.m. Karen LaFrance will be the moderator.

4. The Sonoran Audubon Society's future board and general membership meetings will now be held at the West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church located at 5904 W. Cholla St. in Glendale (corner of 59th and Cholla). This is only a few blocks away from our former meeting place, the Glendale Library. It is a much smaller meeting place, but with plenty of parking and all other amenities. The meeting times are the same, the second Wednesday of each month starting at 7 p.m. with refreshments beforehand.

5. Karen LaFrance and Joe Ford, both from Sonoran Audubon Society Board and Peggy Biegler

from Friends of Agua Fria National Monument, attended the Arizona Game and Fish Commission meeting on August 7, 2010. The agenda item they attended for was to enable the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) to continue negotiations for acquisition of Horseshoe Ranch. The agenda item was passed unanimously. Two commissioners had just been to the Ranch and spoke about thinking outside the box for partners and uses...and to "put on the business hat". The Commission was quite clear that they are enthusiastic about the acquisition for all the conservation reasons; they also want a decent management plan. The AZGFD is currently \$575,000 short of the money needed for a) the deeded property and b) the Horseshoe and Copper Creek allotments which total over 67,000 acres. The item will need to come back to Commission at least two more times, they said.

Karen LaFrance gave a brief statement for Sonoran Audubon and underlined our involvement in the Important Bird Area, and with the many partners to preserve this property, a "treasure" in the Agua Fria Watershed. She stated that we would be there with the AZFGD to assist in the next phases including thinking broadly about partners and uses so that the whole project meets the conservation goals and also makes sense over the long term. She thanked the Commission and also said we would continue to count and enjoy birds. She was the only speaker from the public.

6. 2011 Calendars will again be ordered from Audubon Arizona for resale to our members.

7. We've accepted an invitation to have a table at the 10th anniversary of the Sonoran Desert National Monument-National Landscape Conservation System to be held at the Gila Bend Air Force Auxiliary Field on Saturday, December 4, 2010. There will be approximately 40 exhibitors including several Audubon Chapters.

8. A large 9' wide projector screen was purchased and given to the West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church for installation in their ceiling. This was necessary in order to have a screen for our programs.

9. Eleanor Campbell and George Wall have scheduled programs for September 2010 through May 2011. See the schedule on page 10.

10. Looking over the attendance sheets for September 2009 through May 2010, there were six people who managed to make all the general membership meetings. They were Eleanor Campbell, Tim Cullison, Darnell Kirksey, Arlene and Alvin Scheuer and Jerry Theis. Four out of the six were board members. The average attendance during this period was 55. I hope to see you this year.

2010 Field Trips

REQUIREMENT: On all trips, **YOU MUST** make reservations by calling the leader. The leader can then give updated information as to the meeting place, times, etc. Also, some trips are limited in size.

Saturday, September 11, 2010
Hassayampa River Preserve
Contact: George Wall 623-875-7057
gwall5@cox.net

Our “Retreat” will be held this morning at Hassayampa; however, a bird walk is scheduled beforehand starting at 7 a.m. Anyone who wants to participate in this walk is invited. The walk will end at 8:30 a.m. Afterwards, those who want to, can join in on the “Retreat”. This is a planning session to help the Sonoran Audubon Society go forward into the future. A breakfast and lunch will be available.

Tuesday, September 21, 2010
Narrows of Oak Creek Canyon
Leader: Dan Bohlmann 602-938-8244
dansbohlman@prodigy.com

This is a little known section of Oak Creek that has a trail that leaves Grasshopper Point Rec. Area heading west along the north side of the creek. This section is heavily shaded in Sycamore, Cottonwood and Ash trees, has lots of flowing water and ponds and naturally attracts lots of birds. In this area I’ve seen Blue Grosbeaks, Summer & Western Tanagers, Warblers, Vireos, Bullock’s Orioles, Western Bluebirds, Swallows, Lesser Goldfinches, Townsend’s Solitaires, Plain & Bridled Titmouse, Flycatchers, Black & Say’s Phoebe, Hairy Woodpecker, and Scrub Jays. It would be great if I could just get half of them to show up for you.

Difficulty: 2—Bring a lunch

Meet at Fry’s Electronics parking lot at the SE corner of 31st Ave and Thunderbird. We will leave at 7 a.m.



Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo Surveys By George Wall

I hope you noticed that one of the birds that in decline and a candidate for protection under the Endangered Species Act is the Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo. This is a bird that the Sonoran Audubon Society has really focused on during this year and last year. We have made brochures, handouts and bookmarks focusing on this bird and in the past couple of months, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo Surveys have been going on.

At one time, this bird was common in the American West, but now that is not the case. Only a few pairs still breed in Utah, Idaho, Nevada and Colorado. The majority of the breeding occurs in California, New Mexico and with the most found in Arizona. Past surveys have indicated that even these areas declining fast. New surveys were needed.

Kathy Wise of Audubon Arizona help put together teams for nine different survey areas in Arizona—Upper Agua Fria, Middle Agua Fria, Lower Agua Fria, Baby Canyon, Indian Creek (Upper & Lower), Sycamore Creek, Ash Creek and Dry Creek. Eleven people are or were participating in these surveys. Six of them are from the Sonoran Audubon Society and they are Bob McCormick, John Arnett, George Wall, Dick Fogle, Rich Schooler and Joe Ford.

Each survey area required three separate counts scattered at least 2-3 weeks apart. I participated in the Upper Agua Fria Survey that ran along the Agua Fria River for 1 1/2 miles. In a survey conducted a few years ago, this area had several cuckoos that were spotted there. In our first visit, we spotted/heard two birds; in the second visit we found only one; and in the final visit none was found.

The data from all the surveys will be used to help get this species listed as an endangered bird and deserving of protection.



Picture by George Wall—April, 2004

Audubon Round Up 2010
Audubon Chapters' Learning Conference
Hosted by Arizona Audubon Council
November 11-14, 2010

Consider yourself invited!

Join other Auduboners for an unusual learning experience in the high Sonoran Desert along the beautiful Salt River. We will gather at Saguaro Lake Ranch (www.saguarolakeranch.com), a full service guest facility 30 miles east of Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

Event Purpose: Learning opportunities to benefit your chapter's projects and your chapter's sustainability, networking, "down time" for fun and relaxed friend-making and excellent Sonoran Desert birding.

Invitees: Audubon Chapters in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada and Colorado.

Key Participants: Audubon Chapter Members!

Costs: Your costs INCLUDE ALL MEALS: \$140 per person, per day plus tax, single occupancy (8 units or cabins); \$130.00 pp per day plus tax, double occupancy (20 units or cabins); \$120.00 pp per day plus tax, triple occupancy (2 units); \$115.00 pp per day quadruple occupancy (2 units). There is a three-day minimum stay (arrive November 11th, leave on the 14th) for these special event rates. **FIRST COME FIRST SERVED!** If the Ranch is fully booked when you call, you will be referred to the Comfort Inn in Fountain Hills. **You must call Saguaro Lake Ranch to make reservations at: 480-984-2194 and mention "Audubon".**

Camping: Information on camping and RVs at Regional Parks is available.

Registration and Meals: If you are not staying at the Ranch overnight, you may pay for Meal Packages on line. Cost for Complete Three-Day Meal Package: \$168.00 per person.

Registration Fee is \$65.00 per person. Go to www.sonoranaudubon.org and click for paying options with your major credit card or your Pay Pal account. Checks also accepted. Transportation costs to and from the Phoenix area are not included in the above costs. Transport to/from the airport will be offered.

CONTACT: Karen LaFrance, Sonoran Audubon Society, Glendale, AZ, Together Green Fellow and Event Coordinator; klaf@cox.net or 602-809-0947 (cell and voice).

For Further Information and pre-Round Up Updates, go to www.sonoranaudubon.org for links.

Underwriting by Together Green, a program of National Audubon Society

Marvelous Spatuletail

By Dr. Jerry Theis

Of the approximate 335 species of hummingbirds in the world, none is more local, spectacular, and mysterious than the Marvelous Spatuletail, which exists only in a remote valley of northern Peru. In late June, early July, 2010, I saw this bird during a customized tour of central and northern Peru. The birding was terrific and I plan to use this trip as my subject matter for numerous articles.

The Marvelous Spatuletail was discovered in 1835 by bird collector Andrew Matthews. It remained almost unknown into the 1960's, when it was first photographed. The few ornithologists who were able to locate it found it restricted to elevations of 2100-2900 meters on the east slope of the Rio Utcubamba Valley in Amazonas and one site in San Martin, northern Peru.

The Marvelous Spatuletail is medium sized at 5 1/2 inches, not including the rackets. The male is unmistakable! It has a blue crest-like cap, green gorget, and black line down the center of the breast and belly. The rest of the underparts are white and above it is mostly bronzy-brown. The extraordinary tail of the male is reduced to only two pairs of rectrices: a long straight central pair, and a very long, racket-tipped outer pair (violet-blue discs or spatules) that bob independently of body movements. The female is white below, speckled with green. Its tail is much shorter and lacks the highly modified spatules.

The Marvelous Spatuletail prefers forest edge and particularly prefers thorny, impenetrable *Rubus* thickets admixed with *Alnus* trees. Its preferred food plant is the red-flowered lily. The burning of hillside habitat in the Andes of northern Peru has accelerated due to conversion to cash-crops and the loss of its favored flowering trees is devastating to this hummingbird, a species particularly vulnerable to habitat alteration.

Males apparently use the incredible spatules to display at leks (A **lek** is a gathering of males, of certain animal species, for the purposes of competitive mating display for females). Santos Montenegro, the young Peruvian featured in the recent hummingbird television special, had located such a lek near Huembo and it was there that we had spectacular views of this spectacular male hummingbird. We never did see a female, nor did we see this species at a feeder. Ted Parker had reported that full-tailed males were outnumbered by females and the immature (which lack the spatules) by a ratio of more than 5 to 1. At feeders, the Marvelous Spatuletail is often bullied by more aggressive species, such as violetears and sylphs.



This picture was rendered by Eustace Barnes and appeared on the back cover of *A Field Guide to the Birds of Peru* By James F. Clements and Noam Shany

The male Marvelous Spatuletail is unique among all bird species in having just four feathers in its tail. I was fortunate to count them all!

Web Sites

If you like to browse the web looking for bird information, the following sites are some of the best ones I have found.

From Bird Scope - Cornell Lab of Ornithology Web sites – Spring 2010

1. All About Birds: Go to www.allaboutbirds.org to access a wealth of information about 585 bird species.
 2. Celebrate Urban Birds: Go to www.celebrateurbanbirds.org to find a wide variety of activities involving the visual arts, container-gardening, bird feeding and more.
 3. eBird: Go to www.ebird.org to report the birds you see. eBird will keep track of your lists and help find the birds in your locality.
 4. Macaulay Library: Go to www.macaulaylibrary.org which has the world's largest archive of animal sounds and videos.
 5. NestCams: Go to www.nestcams.org to watch the nesting cycle unfold without human disturbance.
 6. CamClickr: Go to www.camclickr.org where you can put your observation skills to a test.
 7. Nest Watch: Go to www.nestwatch.org where you can discover safe ways to find and monitor nests, build nest boxes, and contribute to the knowledge base.
 8. Project Feeder Watch: Go to www.feederwatch.org to find out about and participate in this project that was started in 1987.
 9. Project Pigeon Watch: Go to www.pigeonwatch.org to learn about city pigeons and how to watch them for science.
 10. Birdshare: Go to www.flickr.com/groups/birdshare where nearly 1,200 people post, share, and discuss more than 35,000 pictures of birds.
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Here are some other sites that I like to use:

1. Riparian Institute - Gilbert Water Ranch: www.riparianinstitute.org/birding.cfm
2. Bird Life Int. – Bird Links to the World: http://avibase.bsc-eoc.org/links/links.jsp?page=g_7
3. Find a birding pal anywhere in the world: www.birdingpal.org/
4. North American Bird Songs: www.naturesongs.com/pass.html
5. Arizona Field Ornithologists website for sounds, pics, etc.: www.azfo.org/
6. Bird Alerts from Arizona and New Mexico: <http://birdingonthe.net/maillinglists/AZNM.html>
7. Exotic Birds Photo Gallery: http://www.pbase.com/robert/exotic_birds&page=all
8. Bird Alert from Tucson Audubon Society: <http://tucsonaudubon.org/what-we-do/birding/seaz-rare-bird-alert.html>
9. Here's are terrific sites for flowers if you are into that area: <http://www.delange.org/ArizWFlowers/Wf.htm> and <http://www.fireflyforest.com/flowers/>.

NEW SPECIES OF BIRD DISCOVERED

Researchers have discovered a new species of antpitta in the montane cloud forests of the Colibri del Sol Bird Reserve in western Colombia. A thrush-like bird, the new cinnamon and gray species was, according to a press release by the American Bird Conservancy (ABC), "captured, banded, measured, photographed, sampled for DNA, and then released alive back into the wild".

This is one of only a few incidences in which a new species has been described without 'collecting' an individual (i.e. killing) to provide a model of the species in a museum. The new bird has been named Fenwick's antpitta (*Grallaria fenwickorum*) after the President of ABC, George Fenwick, and his family.



Fenwick's Antpitta - Photo by: ©Fundacion ProAves

Dr. George Fenwick said in a press release. "I am especially pleased that this effort was achieved without the loss of the bird's life. Rare and special birds such as this should not have to be sacrificed to this process."

Colibri del Sol Bird Reserve, founded only five years ago, is managed by Fundación ProAves, a partner of ABC. The reserve is also home to the Critically Endangered (listed by the IUCN Red List) Dusky Starfrontlet that until 2004 hadn't been sighted for 50 years. Its rediscovery prompted the creation of the reserve.

Researchers have proposed that Fenwick's antpitta also be listed as Critically Endangered given that its population appears very small and much of the bird's original habitat has been cleared for pasturelands.

NATIONAL AUDUBON NEWS

Noted Conservation and Communications Executive, David Yarnold, to be President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Audubon Society starting September 1, 2010.



A passionate conservationist, Yarnold currently serves as Executive Director of Environmental Defense Fund and President of Environmental Defense Action Fund. Prior to that, he was a Pulitzer Prize-winning editor at the San Jose Mercury News.

Pinal Peak Trip a Smashing Success!

On August 14, 2010, a Sonoran Audubon Society trip to Pinal Peak just above Globe, AZ, took place. A total of 73 species were seen or heard that included a flock of Red Crossbills and numerous warblers. Dr. David Pearson, a professor from ASU, led the adventure.

Pictured L-R are Tom Lazzelle, Gail Carns, Nancy Kersten, Dr. David Pearson, Chuck Kangas, Dick Fogle, Marge Ray, Donna Smith (hidden) and Vera Markham.



Picture by George Wall

EVENTS IN AND AROUND THE VALLEY

Audubon Arizona Rio Salado Habitat

The Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center is located at 3131 S. Central Avenue in Phoenix. Call 602-468-6470 or e-mail riosalado@audubon.org for more information about their programs and events.

Upcoming events:

Arizona Animal Encounters—2nd Saturday of every month at 11 a.m.

Kathe Anderson's Bird Walk — September 25, 2010, 7-10 a.m.

Birders' Anonymous

Birders' Anonymous has their monthly meeting on Friday, September 17, 2010, starting at 10:00 a.m. at the Church of the Palms on the corner of Boswell and 103rd Ave. in Sun City.

Vera Markham will be showing a PowerPoint program on pictures she took on various birding trips. She will also be leading a birding trip to Tres Rios on September 16th.

For further information on Birders' Anonymous contact Marshall Esty at 623-977-1637 or at mne@juno.com.

Hassayampa River Preserve

The preserve is open mid-May through mid-September Friday - Sunday 7-11 a.m. and mid-September through mid-May Wednesday-Sunday 8 a.m.– 5 p.m.. Entrance fees are \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children. Members fee is \$3.00.

Desert Botanical Garden

Every Monday, May – September at 7 a.m. join expert birders for a morning bird walk along the Garden trails. Everyone is welcome, including first-time birders. Wear a hat, sunscreen and comfortable shoes, and bring binoculars if available.

Desert Botanical Garden entrance fees of \$15.00 (\$13.50 seniors) apply unless you're a DBG member. Membership is \$75 a year. When special events are held, the entry fee could be higher.

See their website at www.dbg.org for further information

Arizona Field Ornithologists

The AZFO's annual meeting will be October 8-19, 2010, at the Prescott College in Prescott. See the AZFO website at www.azfo.org.

Boyce Thompson Arboretum

Bye-Bye Buzzards Day: Saturday, September 25, 2010, starting at 7:00 a.m. September 25 marks the 18th annual observance of our autumnal "Bye Bye Buzzards" event celebrating the Arboretum's summertime migrant flock of Turkey Vultures. Make sure to arrive early on this special event day - Boyce Thompson Arboretum opens at 7:00 a.m. on "Buzzard Day" -- one hour earlier than usual for September so early-bird visitors may join us for a chance to see the Turkey Vultures perched on the magma cliffs in the center of the Arboretum for the first hour or so after sunrise.

Admission is \$7.50 for adults, \$3 ages 5-12. For driving directions or other details, call 520-689-2811 or visit their internet website at <http://arboretum.ag.arizona.edu/>.

HELP IS NEEDED!!!!

Your President

The Sonoran Audubon Society currently has 773 members including "Friends". This is quite a few people; however, most of you are not actually participating in our meetings, birding trips, surveys and other events. This is very discouraging to me and our board.

As you can see by this newsletter, we are involved in a lot of activities – the Round Up, Girl Scout Badges, Important Bird Areas (IBAs), Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo Survey, Birding Trips, Programs, Estrella Bird Walks, Christmas Counts, Tres Rios Nature Festival, and special events (picnics, retreats, etc.). These are the areas we are currently involved with, but who knows what the future may bring.

The four officers, the eight directors at large and some past board members are doing the bulk of all the work. I think I can speak for all of us handling these activities that **WE NEED HELP!**

Surely some more of you can assist us. Can you man a booth, assist in bird walks, take part in surveys and counts, give a program or in help in some other capacity? Maybe you would like to even be a future board member. All you have to do is send me your name via e-mail to gwall5@cox.net.

Even if you can't do any of the above, you can help by becoming a "Friend" or just give a donation to our chapter. On our website www.sonoranaudubon.org, there is a "Friend" form and also on the home page, a "Donate" page. Think about it!

Join the Sonoran Audubon Society

This can be done in two ways: become a friend of the Sonoran Audubon Society or join the National Audubon Society. The difference is as a “friend” all the money goes to our chapter. As a National member, you still become a member of our chapter, but only a percentage of the money goes to our chapter; however, you get the National Audubon Society Magazine. Some people choose to do both. See our website for the applicable forms.

New adult or family membership: \$20.00

Seniors and students: \$15.00

Renewal fee for seniors and students: \$15.00

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 or to be notified when a new issue is placed on the website, please contact chuckkan@mindspring.com or by mail to: Sonoran Audubon Society, P O Box 8068, Glendale, AZ 85312-8068.

SAS Web Site: www.sonoranaudubon.org
Arizona Audubon Web Site: www.az.audubon.org
Desert Rivers Audubon Web Site:
www.desertriversaudubon.org
Maricopa Audubon Web Site:
www.maricopaaudubon.org
Arizona Field Ornithologists: www.azfo.org
National Audubon: <http://audubon.org/>



7480 W. Bell Rd in Glendale and located near 75th Avenue behind Mimi's Café and next to the Souper Salad

Care Centers for Birds

Fallen Feathers
Handles and cares for all birds
9532 W. Cielo Grande
Peoria
Jodie Kieran 623-533-2348
623-566-5302

Adobe Mtn. Wildlife Center
Cares for all wildlife including birds
I-17 & Pinnacle Peak
623-582-9806

Wild At Heart
Raptors only
31840 N. 45th St.
Cave Creek
480-595-5047

Sonoran Audubon Society Officers, Board Members and Committee Contacts:

Officers

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raschooler@cox.net

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Programs: Eleanor Campbell and George Wall—See phone numbers and e-mail addresses above.

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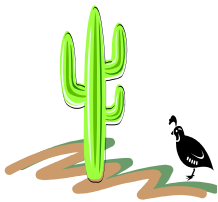
Calendar of Monthly Meetings...

Location: West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, corner of 59th Ave. and Cholla in Glendale — **Time:** 6:30 p.m. for socializing and 7 p.m. for the start of the meeting and program.

Tentative Schedule for the Year:

September 8, 2010: Dr. David Pearson—Alaska from North to South
October 13, 2010: Janice Miano of AZ Heritage Alliance—Postcards from the Parks
November 10, 2010: Mark Siegworth—Namibia and South Africa-Plants & Birds
December 8, 2010: Joe Ford—The Wonder of Plants and Flowers
January 12, 2011: Carol Beardmore—Alamos Bird Survey Expedition
February 9, 2011: David Reesor—Birds of Bhutan
March 9, 2011: Doug Alexander—Birds of New Zealand
April 14, 2011: Amy Leu—Feathered Hearts (live birds)
May 11, 2011: George Wall—Costa Rica and Nicaragua

Other Dates of Interest: September 1, 2010, 7 p.m. Board Meeting at West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, corner of 59th Ave. and Cholla in Glendale. – all SAS members, friends and guests welcome.



Sonoran Audubon Society
P.O. Box 8068
Glendale, AZ 85312-8068