



Gambel's Tales

The Newsletter of the Sonoran Audubon Society

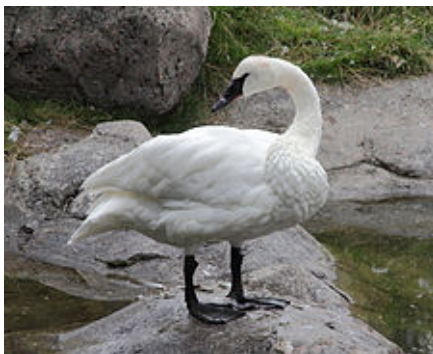
Volume 12 Issue 9

May, 2011

**At our next meeting.... Wednesday, May 11, 2011, at 7 p.m.
A Program on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR)**

The National Audubon Society sent us a program to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Arctic National Wildlife Preserve which was established on December 6, 1960. This program will show you the threats by the oil companies to the area. Pictures were added to the PowerPoint program to show you some of the diverse wildlife. Did you know that this refuge has counted 201 species of birds – 70 of which return each year, 40 species of animals including caribou herds that pass through, 8 species of marine animals, 12 species of fish and an array of wildflowers?

A lot of the Arctic National Wildlife Preserve has Wilderness protection; however the Coastal Plain area does not. This area needs Wilderness protection so that it will be there for future generations without oil development and a web of pipelines. Come out and see how you can help save this area and give it protection.



What's Happening in our Chapter?

By Your Editor, George Wall

I left on March 30, 2011, for Kenya, Africa for a hard-core bird watching trip. I hopefully returned on April 28th which means I had to do this May newsletter back in March. As a result, I can't give you any information about what has happened in our chapter, but I know elections were held. The following people should have been elected:

George Wall—President
Tim Cullison—Vice President
Eleanor Campbell—Director at Large
Darnell Kirksey—Director at Large
Rich Schooler—Director at Large
Andrée Tarby—Director at Large
Jerry Theis—Director at Large

Their terms take effect on June 1, 2011.

We want to thank Dick Fogle for being Vice President these last two years. He provided a lot of help and input including taking over for me when I was absent.

2011 Field Trips—Spring/Summer

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.

Wednesday, May 4, 2011

Clear Creek Campground

Leader: Dan Bohlmann 602-938-8244

dansbohlmann@prodigy.net

Clear Creek Campground is east of Camp Verde on Highway 260. We have stayed there many times over the years and have always noticed a large number of birds in the campground. Clear Creek flowing through the campground, a number of man-made channels running from the creek, an abundance of cottonwood and sycamore trees and other bushes attract numerous birds and wildlife.

Some of the birds I've seen are Blue Grosbeaks, Cardinals, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Spotted and Green-tailed Towhees, Song Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, Bullock's Oriole, Western and Summer Tanagers, Lesser Goldfinches, vireos, warblers and Scrub Jays. After we exhaust ourselves going in circles around the campground, we will try some areas near the Verde River and nearby fields on the river road that goes further south along the west side of the river.

Difficulty: 2 - Bring a lunch.

We will meet at the Fry's Electronics Store at 31st Ave. and Thunderbird Ave. in the Northeast corner of the parking lot at 7 a.m.

Monday, May 16, 2011

Prescott Area

Leader: Kathe Anderson

Contact: Barbara Meding 623-266-1847

barbarameding@yahoo.com

We'll make a quick stop at Fain Park in Prescott Valley, then head to The Highlands Center for a nice walk in the woods. Depending on timing, we'll visit one or more lakes, and probably the Watson Lake Riparian Preserve. We should get a nice collection of higher elevation birds such as Acorn and Hairy Woodpeckers, and colorful summer residents like Yellow Warblers, Blue Grosbeaks and Summer Tanagers.

Friday-Sunday, May 27-29, 2011

St. David/California Gulch

Leaders: Melody Kehl & Donna Smith

623-556-9535 rms15247@cox.net

This is a two night trip coming back on Sunday. We'll be birding along the way. We'll probably stay in Tucson which is central to the birding areas of St. David and California Gulch. We'll bird St. David first and hope to see the Mississippi Kites. Next we'll bird California Gulch to see the Five-striped Sparrows and the Buff-collared Nighthawk.

Wednesday, June 15, 2011

Hart Prairie Road

Leader: Dan Bohlmann 602-938-8244

dansbohlmann@prodigy.net

Get out of the summer heat. There's a nice stand of aspen found along the Hart Prairie Road northwest of Flagstaff, AZ. Should be a lot of birds.

Difficulty 1: Bring a lunch.

Meet at McDonald's just off Carefree Highway taking exit 223 off Rte. 17 to leave at 6 a.m.

Monday, June 20, 2011

Granite Reef/Coon Bluff & other areas

Leader: George Wall 623-875-7057 gwall5@cox.net

Always a great spot for bird watching is the entire area along Bush Highway. We can just about always see a Bald Eagle as well as some other interesting birds.

Difficulty 1: Bring a lunch.

Meet at Denney's in Fountain Hills to leave at 7 a.m.

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2011 Field Trips—Summer

Thursday, July 14, 2011

Forest Road 300

Leader: Donna Smith 623-556-9535

rms15247@cox.net

Take a beautiful drive up in the high country. We'll be traveling on a gravel road, but it is well graded for passenger cars. We always see a lot of birds on this trip.

Difficulty 1: Bring a lunch.

Meet at McDonald's just off Carefree Highway taking exit 223 off Rte. 17 to leave at 5 a.m.

Wednesday, July 27, 2011

Cordes Junction Area

Leader: George Wall 623-875-7057 gwall5@cox.net

We'll be walking down the Agua Fria River with cottonwoods and mesquite on either side. Could see some Yellow-billed Cuckoos in this area as well as other nice birds.

Difficulty: 2-3: Wear good hiking shoes

Meet at McDonald's just off Carefree Highway taking exit 223 off Rte. 17 to leave at 6 a.m. This will be a morning trip only.

Saturday, August 6, 2011

Pinal Peak

Leader: David Pearson

Contact: George Wall 623-875-7057

gwall5@cox.net

Why not go on a trip to the Pinal Mountains south of Globe away from the heat of the valley and into the higher elevations of the Tonto National Forest? The beauty of the area is unmatched and birders should be rewarded with views of nuthatches, woodpeckers and other high forest birds. On the trip last year in August, we saw 73 species of birds. This trip is limited to 11 people (3 vehicles). The drive to the top of the mountain is about 11 miles on a well graded dirt road.

Difficulty 1: Bring a lunch.

Meet at the Burger King just off of 101 on Thunderbird to leave at 4:00 a.m. We'll then travel to the alternate meeting place at the Tempe Public Library 3500 S. Rural Rd. in Tempe. Coming from 60, turn into the first driveway at the library. We'll leave there at 5 a.m. This is a 2 hour drive so car pooling is a must.

Friday-Sunday, August 19-21, 2011

Mt. Graham and Area

Leader: Dan Bohlmann 602-938-8244

dansbohlmann@prodigy.net

I was hiking on Mt. Graham several years ago at the end of August when something I had never seen before occurred. There was a fallout of warblers on top of the mountain as we were hiking up to a lookout tower. There were suddenly hundreds of warblers everywhere. Each tree and bush had its own flock of warblers and they were taking turns descending to a small stream for a drink. I counted eight different types – Hermit, Grace's, Yellow-rumped (Audubon form), Black-throated Gray, Townsend's, Virginia's, Wilson's and MacGillivray's. It was an incredible sight! I don't know what the chances are of catching a fallout like that are again (probably slim) but I'd like to go back and find out if they do that every year at that time. Even if we don't catch a fallout, there are interesting, different sets of birds at each campground on the way up the mountain because you change from 3000 ft. at the bottom to 10,000 ft. at the top going from scrub bushes to juniper, to pine and then to fir and spruce at the top. Riggs Flat Lake is at the top and it is always a great place to bird. We may visit Roper Lake State Park near Safford early Sunday morning before we head for home.

Difficulty: 2

We will drive down to Safford on Friday morning and meet at a time and place most convenient to those that are going. We will stay at a motel in Safford Friday and Saturday night. Saturday morning we will head out for the top of Mt. Graham and spend the day searching for birds on the way up to the top. Bring a lunch on Saturday and we will eat out for lunch on Friday and for dinners on Friday and Saturday nights.



Riggs Flat Lake

Annual Picnic—March 26, 2011

Photos and article by George Wall

It was a beautiful day for a bird walk and picnic. The temperature was cool to start with but gradually increased to perfect weather. Eleven people (Althea & Matt Alderson, Joe Ford, Sam & Frank Insana, Rich Kaiser, Vera Markham, Rich & Rosemary Sedowski, Les & Sharon Sell, George Wall—leader, and Rosemary Zanter) walked the trail. Phainopeplas were everywhere building their nests. 38 species were seen or heard with the best bird of the walk being a Great Horned Owl sitting in a cave high in the cliffs. Another treat was seeing the Leopard Frog in a small man-made pond.

By 11:30 a.m., 34 people were on hand for the picnic. Hamburgers, hot dogs and bratwurst were grilled to go with a myriad of dishes the attendees brought. Nice door prizes were given to lucky ticket holders. All too soon, the picnic was over and everyone was on their way home by 1:45 p.m.



Birding Group



Food



Leopard Frog



Great Horned Owl

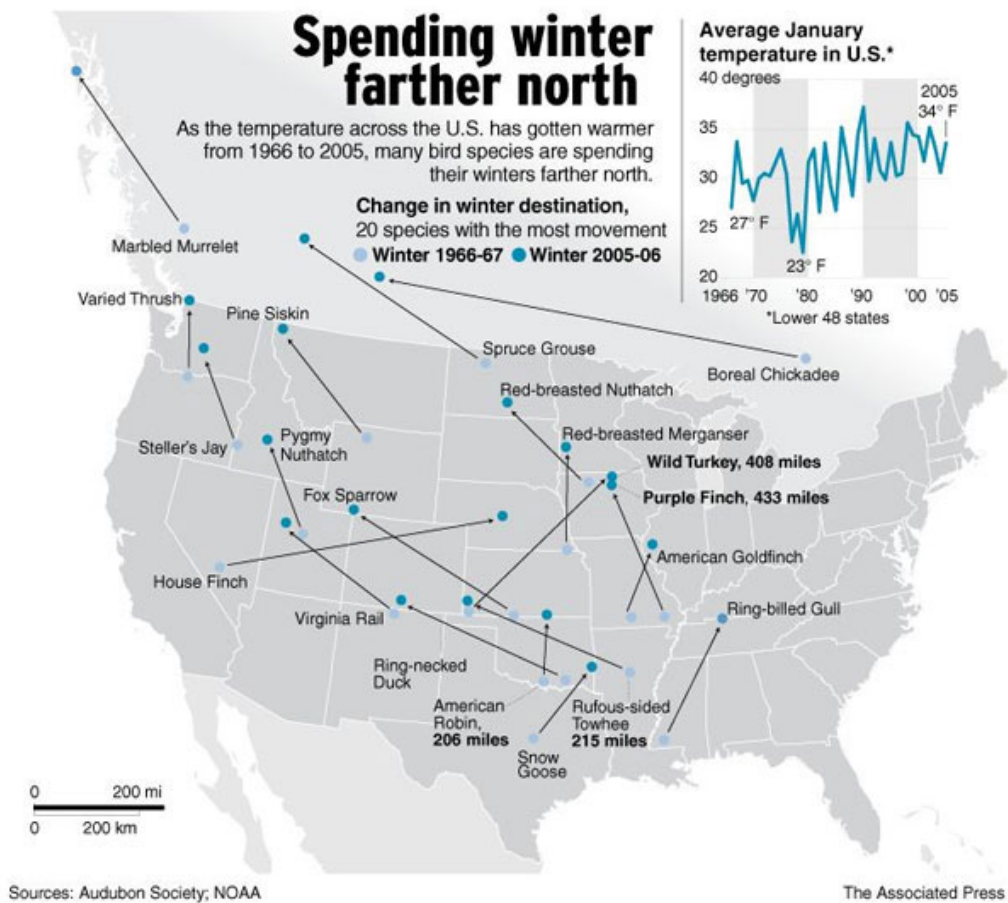
Birds and Climate Change: On the Move

Taken from the National Audubon Newsletter

Nearly 60 percent of the 305 species found in North America in winter are on the move, shifting their ranges northward by an average of 35 miles. Audubon scientists analyzed 40 years of citizen-science Christmas Bird Count data and their findings provide new and powerful evidence that global warming is having a serious impact on natural systems. Northward movement was detected among species of every type, including more than 70 percent of highly adaptable forest and feeder birds.

Only grassland species were an exception—with only 38 percent mirroring the northward trend. But far from being good news for species like Eastern Meadowlark and Henslow's Sparrow, this reflects the grim reality of severely-depleted grassland habitat and suggests that these species now face a double threat from the combined stresses of habitat loss and climate adaptation.

It is the complete picture of widespread movement and the failure of some species to move at all that illustrate the impacts of climate change on birds. They are sending us a powerful signal that we need to 1) take policy action to curb climate change and its impacts, and 2) help wildlife and ecosystems adapt to unavoidable habitat changes, even as we work to curb climate change itself.



We need global warming legislation that will help birds and wildlife survive what is coming by protecting their habitats *and* will reduce global warming pollution 80 percent by 2050 to avoid the worst impacts of a rapidly changing climate. **Tell your lawmakers where you stand on global warming.**

Peruvian Plantcutter

By Dr. Jerry Theis

The Peruvian Plantcutter is an endangered species of bird in the Cotingidae family. As are the other plantcutters, this species is sexually dimorphic and folivorous (leaf-eating). It is endemic to scrub and woodland in NW Peru, and is threatened by habitat loss. In June, 2010, on the same Chupaflor Nature Tour, we saw several plantcutters, although with difficulty, at Bosque de Pomac, Peru. They were usually located by their bizarre call, sounding like a creaking hinge! Its throbbing sad song has prompted locals to nickname it the "toothache bird." The Bosque de Pomac Historical Sanctuary is the only state protected area with the species; however, we saw cattle chewing on trees and locals gathering bundles of firewood within the sanctuary.

The Peruvian Plantcutter has bright yellow eyes and a short crest, but the male is more colorful, with red patches on his lower breast and forehead. The bird's short wings make them agile fliers and their strong feet allow them to grasp their leafy food tightly as they shred it with their tough, ridged beaks. Adapted to the dry environment known as the Tumbesian ecosystem, the plantcutter prefers desert scrub, low woodlands and thickets near rivers. Its habitat is always populated with caper shrubs, acacia trees, *Prosopis* trees and cucumber vines. Although it eats occasional bits of fruit, the plantcutter gets most of its nutrition from the leaves and buds of the *Prosopis* tree. It extracts most of its water from the foliage it eats. The Peruvian Plantcutter is notoriously sensitive to any environmental changes, including noise, light, and contamination.

This songbird lives along Peru's coast from Tumbes to Lima. Until a December 2009 study headed by Gunnar Engblom (a Swedish ornithologist and friend of mine), the plantcutter was only known from four sites, with an estimated 250-1000 birds. His careful study of museum specimens and sightings resulted in a total of 53 sites where the species has been recorded. However, the majority of sites are extremely small, fragmented, and under pressure from degradation and deforestation (mainly firewood collection, goat herding, sugar cane, gold mining, and charcoal production from the *Prosopis* tree). The Peruvian Plantcutters stronghold near Talara is now under threat from a most unusual source. "Squid kitchens," cleared areas where squid are boiled and dried in the sun, represent a potential catastrophe for the plantcutters survival.

Thus, the Peruvian Plantcutter has become a rallying symbol for Peru's emerging conservation movement. Their main goal is to establish the Talara Reserve. There are only three plantcutters in the world and I have been fortunate to score the plantcutter "hat-trick," seeing the White-tipped in Volcan, Argentina in November, 2005 and the Rufous-tailed in

Las Cruces, Chile in Nov, 2004. All plantcutters are uncommon, bizarre, birds that you have to hear to believe.



Peruvian Plantcutter

Photo by George Wall - Taken in Peru in 2003

Birds Falling From the Sky

By George Wall

In the past few months, I have been asked by many people what is causing the birds in Arkansas and Louisiana and other areas to fall from the sky. They come to me because they think I am an authority on birds which of course, I am not.

Serena Castleton saw our web page and sent in a website for us to look at which gave me the idea for this article. The website is <http://www.birdsfallfromsky.com/>. I went out on the internet and found the site extremely interesting. Upon going to some of the other sites referenced at that address, I found quite a few occurrences that have happened in the past.

Birds falling from the sky is a more common occurrence than I realized. In January 2007, thousands fell from the sky in Australia. In January 2009, hundreds fell from the sky in Quebec City, Canada. In September 2009, hundreds fell to earth in New Jersey. In January of this year, thousands of turtle doves fell to earth in Italy. Now here in January, we have had birds fall from the sky in Arkansas and Louisiana. I wonder how many events like this were never recorded because of where it happened.

The majority of the birds falling are “flock” birds like blackbirds, starlings, sparrows, etc. The scientists have explained some of the incidents, but not all. I’m sure we’ll hear more about the subject in the future. Take a look at the website mentioned above.

At the February 9, 2011, general membership meeting of the Sonoran Audubon Society, Sam Insana gave me some information about bird kills that I had no knowledge of until I went to the USDA website and did searches on their site. Wow! Go to this site and see what I mean. Not only were birds killed, but lots of animals. http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/prog_data/2009_prog_data/PDR_G_FY09/Basic_Tables_PDR_G/Table_G-2_FY2009_Euth-Killed.pdf

There have instances in recorded history of fish falling from the sky like on March 2, 2010, in Lajamanu, Australia where hundreds of Spangled Perch fell on the town. This same type of occurrence has happened in South America and several other places. There have also been cases of frogs falling from the sky. All of these occurrences can easily be explained especially if bad weather has been in the area. A tornado can easily suck up fish and toads from ponds.



After looking at the two sites and all the information, I’ll let you and the scientists ponder the birds’ demise.

EVENTS IN AND AROUND THE VALLEY

Audubon Arizona Rio Salado Habitat

1. A stream stroll every Sunday from 10-11 a.m.
2. Saturday bird walks free of charge.
3. Arizona Animal Encounters—2nd Saturday of every month at 11 a.m.
4. Beginning Birder Classes

For any of the above, contact the Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center located at 3131 S. Central Avenue in Phoenix. Call 602-468-6470 or e-mail rio-salado@audubon.org for more information about their programs and events.

Birders' Anonymous

Birders' Anonymous has their monthly meeting on Friday, May 20, starting at 10:00 a.m. at the Church of the Palms on the corner of Boswell and 103rd Ave. in Sun City.

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

Hassavampa River Preserve

Bird Banding: Saturday, May 7 and Sunday, May 8, 2011, starting at 5:30 a.m. Newcomers welcome. However, if you want to help band, you must contact Anne Leight at birdannabelle@hotmail.com at least two days beforehand.

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.

Gilbert Water Ranch

Audubon Family Walks - Desert Rivers Audubon leads bird walks for beginners and families on the third Saturday of each month, through April, running from 8 a.m. until noon. Free, no registration required. 260 species of birds have been recorded at this great place.

The Gilbert Water Ranch is located on the SE corner of Greenfield and Guadalupe Roads in Gilbert, Arizona. From the Superstition Freeway (US 60) exit at Greenfield Road and drive S. on Greenfield for 1.5 miles. Turn east (left) on Guadalupe. The entrance to the parking lot for the Water Ranch is the third driveway on the right. See <http://sites.google.com/site/birdsofthegilbertwaterranch/>

Arizona Field Ornithologists

See their website at www.azfo.org.

Boyce Thompson Arboretum

Boyce Thompson Arboretum opens at 6:00 a.m. \$7.50 for adults, \$3 for ages 5-12. For driving directions or other details, call 520-689-2811 or visit their website at <http://arboretum.ag.arizona.edu/>

Desert Botanical Garden

There are no scheduled bird walks during the summer; however, there are always a lot of activities.

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.

Speeds of Animals

Researched off the internet

I saw a hummingbird zooming by me the other day and I got to wondering – how fast do birds fly?

I think we all know that the Peregrine Falcon is the fastest bird (actually the fastest living creature), but only in its dive. In its dive, they have been recorded at over 251 mph, but what about level flying? Flying at a level speed, the Peregrine Falcon is not even in the top 10 at 62 mph. Surprisingly to me, the hummingbird at 27 mph is way down on the list.

Here's a list I found of birds' speeds in mph while flying level.

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Spine-tailed Swift | 106 |
| Frigatebird | 95 |
| Spur-winged Goose | 88 |
| Red-breasted Merganser | 80 |
| White-rumped Swift | 77 |
| Canvasback Duck | 72 |
| Eider Duck | 70 |
| Teal | 68 |
| Mallard | 65 |
| Pintail | 65 |

Then I thought about animals. How fast can they run?

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Cheetah | 113 |
| Pronghorn Antelope | 98 |
| Lion | 80 |

OK, what about the speed of fish?

| | |
|----------|----|
| Sailfish | 68 |
|----------|----|

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 less money goes to us; however, you get the National Audubon Society Magazine. Some people choose to do both. See our website for the applicable forms.

Adult or family membership: \$20.00
Seniors (60 and up): \$15.00
Students Under 18: \$10.00

All monthly issues of *Gambel's Tales* are free from the chapter website <www.sonoranaudubon.org> or by mail for \$10.00 per year.

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. Ph: 623-773-3000
Website: <http://Glendale.wbu.com>

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

Sonoran Audubon Society Officers, Board Members and Committee Contacts:

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Database Manager: Dave Dise 623-566-4781
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Upper Agua Fria Watershed Community Planning Project:
Karen LaFrance 602-788-9646 klaf@cox.net

Newsletter: George Wall 623-875-7057 gwall5@cox.net

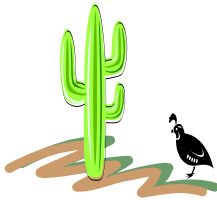
Calendar of Monthly Meetings...

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.

Schedule for the Year:

May 11, 2011: Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR)

Other Dates of Interest: May 4, 2011, 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

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