

Sonoran Audubon Society Ballot 2015

The following SAS members are nominated for re-election to 2-year term positions as listed below:

- Tim Cullison, Vice-President
- Jim Consolloy, Treasurer
- Andrée Tarby, Director-At-Large

The following SAS members are nominated for election to 2-year term positions as Sonoran Audubon Society Director-At-Large:

- Victoria Johnson
- Donna Smith

The following SAS members are nominated for the 2015-2016 SAS Nominating Committee:

- Carol Beardmore (Committee Chair)
- Andrea Nesbitt
- Karen LaFrance

Please place a check on the line next to each name to mark your approval.

If you are not a member of Sonoran Audubon Society and received this ballot, please disregard.

This ballot is prepared and distributed in accordance with the Bylaws of the Sonoran Audubon Society.

If you cannot attend the April 8, 2015, SAS meeting, then please complete and mail this ballot to:

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

Your name and address:

Sonoran Audubon Speakers Bureau Update

By Tim Cullison and Karen LaFrance

On March 12, 2015, Sonoran Audubon Society Vice-President Tim Cullison gave the first “official” SAS Speakers Bureau presentation to the West Valley chapter of the American Association of University Women. Tim introduced the basics of birding and identifying wildlife, and described numerous ecological challenges facing our Valley bird populations. Twelve people attended and were very engaged, according to Tim. The host organization provided SAS with a contribution and Tim got lunch!

"The SAS board views the Speakers Bureau project as an effective form of public relations to spread the word about our chapter and our birds here in the Valley," says Tim. "These talks are also part of the SAS campaign to maintain its diversified funding base as we do request a small honorarium which most organizations are happy to provide."

The SAS Speakers Bureau is planned as a continuing effort which SAS is now ready to publicize and engage in more widely. Currently, Education and Conservation Committee member Joe Ford is presenting a series of talks in conjunction with his bird walks at Estrella Mountain, White Tank Mountain, and Cave Creek Regional Parks; SAS member Sam Insana has helped out as well.

For all of you in Sonoran Audubon Society who are educators and conservation advocates, know that your Education and Conservation Committee is trying to make the Speakers Bureau volunteer effort as painless, interesting, helpful and fun as possible. To that end, the Committee has ready-made PowerPoint presentations contributed by George Wall and Joe Ford. See the full list of programs offered on the SAS Bookmark entitled “Sonoran Audubon Society’s Speakers Bureau” at <http://sonoranaudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/86530-SAS-Speakers.pdf>. This summer, the Committee will purchase a projector that can be transported easily and used for presentations without a laptop or other audiovisual set up.

Please contact Karen LaFrance at klaf40@gmail.com if you are interested in being active in the SAS Speakers Bureau. If you belong to, or know of, an organization or group that may invite and compensate guest speakers for its meetings, please feel free to offer Sonoran Audubon Society’s services.

The WRAN Report

By Darnell Kirksey

WESTERN RIVERS DAY at the state legislature was on March 11, 2015. As your Sonoran Audubon Society (SAS) representative to the Western Rivers Action Network (WRAN), I attended along with leaders from other Audubon Society groups, Trout Unlimited, Arizona Wildlife Federation, and Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation.

Representative Eric Meyer (LD 28), House Minority Leader, welcomed us. Sarah Luna, Arizona Coordinator of the Audubon WRAN, gave us our marching orders.

Before heading out for meetings with legislators, Hunter Moore, Natural Resources Policy Advisor to Governor Doug Ducey, welcomed us. He talked generally about conservation. He seemed especially concerned about the possible federal listing, as Threatened, of the Morafka's (Sonoran) desert tortoise.



Hassayampa River, by Vera Markham

We trekked over to the Legislature for meetings with lawmakers. At both of our meetings, a spokesperson introduced us, explained WRAN's mission, and asked the representative or senator to keep our group in mind when seeking information on water issues. Each legislator received a packet of information about WRAN.

My group met with Senator Katie Hobbs (LD24), the Senate Minority Leader. She seemed very interested in our message. She asked good questions and was knowledgeable. She wondered why WRAN doesn't have a lobbyist at the Legislature like the Sierra Club. We also mentioned our concern over HB 2570, a bill that would prevent municipalities from ensuring sustainable development practices by prohibiting them from requiring native plant salvage and the planting of native vegetation in developed areas. She said she would find out and that the bill would eventually reach her desk.

Back at the conference room, we had lunch and met with Tom Buschatze, chair of the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR). He gave a short, data-intensive talk on the future of the Colorado River.

My group's last meeting was with Representative Rusty Bowers (LD25), Vice Chairman of the House Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee. He seemed to support our mission.

We ended the day in the Senate Gallery where we were introduced by Senate President, Andy Biggs. We stood and received a round of applause. It was a good day. This year's emphasis was on leadership, WRAN leaders talking with legislative conservation leaders. I learned a lot, and hopefully so did the people we talked with. I also enjoyed meeting with other Arizona WRAN representatives.

Please join WRAN and get involved in the struggle to keep our rivers freely flowing. WRAN provides many opportunities for educating yourself about water issues. You can join a series of mid-day webinars about many issues of interest to Audubon members. There are also training and workshop sessions held around the state where you can learn more about WRAN's many activities. Learn more at <http://az.audubon.org/western-rivers-action-network-O> . WRAN can also be found on Facebook.

For more information please contact me, Karen La France, or any other SAS officer.

NOTE: HB 2570 has been pulled which may mean that it will not come up for a vote; thank you to everyone who contacted legislators!

Bird Trip Leader Training: Workshop Phase Completed

By Karen LaFrance

On February 7 and 21, 2015, the three Audubon Chapters in the Valley of the Sun hosted workshops for those interested in becoming a bird walk leader, or in improving their skills as a leader. Besides general invitations to the Chapters, volunteer Bird Walk Leaders from Boyce Thompson Arboretum and Desert Botanical Garden also attended. Each workshop had 25 participants, with some overlap. Funding for this training was provided through a National Audubon Society Collaborative Grant from Audubon Arizona.

Among the attendees were experienced Bird Walk and Birding Trip Leaders like Dave Pearson from Arizona State University and Carl Tomoff from Prescott College, whom the Steering Committee asked to participate in the training. Sonoran Audubon was well represented at the workshops, and we thank Joe Ford, Caleb Strand, and Jim Consolloy for participating. Besides Sonoran, Desert Rivers, and Maricopa Audubon Chapters, the Steering Committee was very pleased to host representatives also from Yuma, Tucson, and White Mountains Audubon Chapters.

Members of the Steering Committee are: Craig Anderson (facilitator for both workshops), Barb Meding and me from SAS; Kathe Anderson, a well-known Bird Walk Leader; Lois Lorenz who spearheaded the project through Desert Rivers Audubon; and Larry Langstaff and Mark Larson from Maricopa Audubon.

The program's next steps are very interesting, we think. Participants will have the opportunity to go on actual birding outings with experienced Bird Walk Leaders around Arizona and at local, easily-accessed sites here in the Valley. The first outing will be with Kathe Anderson as Leader at the Lower Salt River (just north of Mesa). Another local outing will be with me as Leader along the Salt River starting from the Nina Mason Pulliam Audubon Center. The focus for these outings is not to tick off a long bird species list but rather providing guidance on "how to get others 'on the bird' with their binoculars," "planning a bird walk" and "wrapping up an outing with your bird walk participants."

The Steering Committee is asking all Bird Walk Leader Participants to be or become a member of an Audubon Chapter or another conservation organization and to do some rudimentary research on their chosen bird walk location in advance. The plan is for these outings to result in mentorships between participants and more experienced Bird Walk Leaders so that our Chapters will end up with an expanded roster of leaders for their bird walks.

We are very pleased with the high level of interest in this training and hope to offer it again in the future.

Watch for additional opportunities from your Sonoran Audubon to learn about birds, birding, wildlife habitat and conservation activities.

Tres Rios Earth and Nature Festival

By Bob McCormick

Thanks to everyone who joined the Sonoran Audubon Society for the 12th Tres Rios Earth and Nature Festival on March 7 and 8, 2015. It was a beautiful weekend with sunny skies and a light breeze. There were so many highlights that it is difficult to name only a few. The displaying Red-winged Blackbird who got into a fight was very memorable (see photo, below). The Bald Eagle carrying a fish and the swarms of Cliff Swallows feeding their young were also amazing. A feeding Wilson's Snipe was nice, as was an unexpected White-throated Sparrow!

Sonoran Audubon Society receives huge exposure during this festival, and we thank the City of Avondale and Goosebump Marketing for allowing us to speak to the multitudes.



Saturday's hike volunteers were Andrée Tarby, Tom Hildebrandt, Caleb Strand, Dan Bohlmann, and Bob McCormick. Darnell Kirksey and Haylie Hewitt joined them at the booth. Sunday's hike volunteers were Jim Consolloy, Andrée Tarby, Frank Insana, Sam Insana, Tina Bickel, and Bob McCormick. Sunday's booth volunteers were Dave and Ruth Kennedy and Andrea Nesbitt, who brought her Great Horned Owl and Merlin to the great interest of the festivalgoers.

Saturday's attendance was slow and we led only five tours for a total of 21 people. Sunday was much busier with 13 tours and a total of 41 people. In contrast, over 200 people joined our bird walks in 2014. Overall attendance for the festival will be announced later.

Our birders observed 65 species on Saturday, plus 7 more on Sunday, for a very nice total of 72 species as follows: American Coot, Double-crested Cormorant, Neotropic Cormorant, Mallard, Cinnamon Teal, American Wigeon, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Green Heron, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Pied-billed Grebe, Common Gallinule, White-faced Ibis, Greater Yellowlegs, Long-billed Dowitcher, Long-billed Curlew, Spotted Sandpiper, Sora, Wilson's Snipe, Sandhill Crane, White Pelican, Ring-billed Gull, Red-tailed Hawk, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Barn Owl, Bald Eagle, Turkey Vulture, Belted Kingfisher, Gambel's Quail, Mourning Dove, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Rock Pigeon, Cliff

Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Anna's Hummingbird, Costa's Hummingbird, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Verdin, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Marsh Wren, House Wren, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Northern Flicker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Great-tailed Grackle, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Say's Phoebe, Black Phoebe, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Yellow Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Abert's Towhee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Western Meadowlark, Eastern Meadowlark, European Starling, Brown-headed Cowbird, Dark-eyed Junco, Lesser Goldfinch, House Finch, and House Sparrow.

Thanks again to everyone who helped make this festival a great time!



Photos courtesy of Cliff and Rebecca Godley, and Mark Hewitt.