

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear SAS Friends and Supporters:

The weather is cooling off and I have heard from some of you who have returned after being away for the summer. I hope you came to our program last month and enjoyed Nathaniel Smalley's photos and stories from his travels. Join us Wednesday, November 12th to learn about Seabirds from our speaker Cindy Marple (her favorites are Albatrosses and Penguins). She will tell us about pelagic birding trips: how to prepare, what to expect, and where to go to find a trip on the open ocean.



Photo: Stacey Lindsay

I would like to thank the following people who participated in Make A Difference Day October 25th at the Tres Rios Wildlife Recreation Area: Joe Ford, Tom Lazzelle and Bob McCormick. Tom Hildebrandt, who volunteers with our IBA Surveys, also participated in the work, which included lots of trash pickup, clearing trails, and putting up signs to discourage cars from driving into the area.

SAS is fortunate to have many talented people in our midst. Elsewhere in this newsletter you'll find review of a book written by SAS Friend Ann McDermott. Another accomplished author is Barbara "Babs" Buck who has attended many of our SAS field trips, though she lives way out in Apache Junction. Her book, SUN MOON SKY, contains Classical Haiku (3 lines). Here is an example:

Best dressed
Among Easter picnickers
Vermilion Flycatcher

The SAS Bookstore has a few copies of Babs' book, so stop by and check it out at the next meeting.

Please continue to let me know if you are not receiving Constant Contact email messages from SAS. This includes the monthly newsletter, meeting reminders, field trip announcements, etc. The "Developmental Website" (dev.sonoranaudubon.org) with all the current information will soon be accessible by using our familiar www.sonoranaudubon.org address. Thank you for your patience during this time of so many changes. If you have any questions, please let me know.

See you November 12th,

Haylie

haylie.hewitt AT cox.net; 623-581-1180

DESERT FABLES: BEDTIME STORIES FOR THE CHILD WITHIN

A book review by Darnell Kirksey

Ann McDermott's recently published book, *DESERT FABLES: BEDTIME STORIES FOR THE CHILD WITHIN*, is a natural for birders. Many of you probably know Ann. She is a long-time friend of the Sonoran Audubon Society.

She has created fables and myths featuring the plants and animals of the Sonoran Desert. Her knowledge of and love for this land shines in the stories she tells. The author exhorts us in the Prologue to read the book like you would read bedtime stories - one or two a night. That is what I did, and I admit it was good to drift off to sleep with the colors, scents, and sounds of the desert in my head.

The stories all begin, "It is said that there was once a time when.....", and then unfold into tales of how animals and plants get their particular traits - physical or behavioral, or how natural phenomena came to be. These stories are quite original, though Ann has kept the familiar persona of Coyote in a few stories.

In the author's mythology, Day and Night are the prime creators of the world and have parts in many of the stories, such as the tale of "How the Raven Lost his Stealth". Night and Day had created Raven to fly stealthily like the Owl. This caused a lot of problems for the other animals such as theft, nest robbing, and mean pranks. He was so stealthy the others couldn't protect themselves. Night and Day work with the animals to make Raven noisy and less furtive. In other stories you will learn how White-winged Dove got its white wing edges; how Black-throated Sparrow leads in overcoming Chaos; and why sparrows of several species flock together in the winter. These are just a few of the many myths the author has woven from her observations of life in the Sonoran Desert. I have focused on bird stories, but there are stories of plants, insects, mammals and other denizens of the desert.

The myths, Ann says in the Epilogue, "...remind us who we are...(they) connect us to our larger identity...connections to each other, to the Earth, to the universe at large, to divinity in all the ways we struggle to understand that."

I enjoyed the book very much. It is well written and poetic. It is not a book to read all at once. Ann is right, one or two stories a night worked fine.

You can contact Ann at [annfmcdermott AT gmail.com](mailto:annfmcdermott@gmail.com) for information about the book.

Trip Report

Lockett Meadow (San Francisco Peaks) on September 25, 2014

By Dan Bohlmann

The weather was perfect with temperatures in the 70's and fluffy clouds overhead. We hiked around the campground road for about ½ mile through the beautiful Lockett Meadow surrounded by fir, spruce and aspens. There is also a small pond which usually attracts a number of birds looking for a drink. We stayed there for quite some time watching all the hawks circling overhead. Our youngest member Caleb (age 15) with eagle-sharp eyes pointed out a Golden Eagle soaring low over the trees. He also spotted the bird of the day flying into a tall fir. It was a new species for him and all the rest of the group – a Northern Pygmy-Owl.

We also went about a mile up the Inner Basin Trail and saw several families of Red-Breasted Nuthatches (8 total) and 3 Brown Creepers. The Steller's Jays (20) and Mountain Chickadees (15) were everywhere sounding off to get our attention. We saw Clark's Nutcrackers (8) flying on missions to get the juiciest pine cones they could find, but they never stopped to give us a good look.

The seven participants - Nancy Mac, John & Judi Heath, Paul Doucette, Caleb Strand, Dan Jacob, and leader Dan Bohlmann - saw the following 19 species: Golden Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Steller's Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, Common Raven, Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pygmy Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco.

A full trip list and other details can be found online at the Sonoran Audubon Society eBird account <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S19982992>

ARIZONA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SCHEDULE [2014-2015]

By Walter Thurber

The National Audubon Society has conducted Christmas bird counts since the year 1900. Volunteers from throughout the Western Hemisphere go afield 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 skills and endurance. Many counts hold a compilation dinner at the end of the day where results are tabulated and stories shared. There is no longer a participation fee. Help is needed on most of these counts, so find one or more of interest to you and contact the compiler for information.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Count Name</u>	<u>Compiler</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email*</u>
12/14	Su	Grand Canyon	Brian Gatlin	928-638-7968	brian_gatlin at nps.gov
12/14	Su	Jerome	Julie Wills	928-300-9775	jwills282 at hotmail.com
12/14	Su	Saint David	Tom Wood	520-432-1388	tom at sabo.org
12/14	Su	Tucson Valley	Rich Hoyer	520-325-5310	birdernaturalist at me.com
12/15	Mo	Chino Valley	Russell Duerksen	928-925-5567	duerksen at msn.com
12/15	Mo	Salt-Verde Rivers	Kurt Radamaker	480-585-1606	kurtrad at mexicobirding.com
12/17	We	Green Valley-Madera Canyon	Clark Blake	520-625-1015	mcblake at nas.com
12/18	Th	Patagonia	Abbie Zeltzer	520-604-6320	amindajar at gmail.com
12/18	Th	Prescott	Carl Tomoff	928-778-2626	tomoff at northlink.com
12/18	Th	Sedona	Rich Armstrong	928-282-3675	richarmstrong at q.com
12/19	Fr	Elfrida	Tom Wood	520-432-1388	tom at sabo.org
12/20	Sa	Ajo-Cabeza Prieta NWR	Kim Veverka	520-387-4987	kim_veverka at fws.gov
12/20	Sa	Avra Valley	Mary Lou Cole	520-578-0114	birdingnana at msn.com
12/20	Sa	Hassayampa River	Vanessa Montgomery	623-465-0012	hassayampacbc at yahoo.com
12/20	Sa	Mormon Lake	Terry Blows	928-774-8028	terence.blows at nau.edu
12/20	Sa	Nogales	Michael Bissontz	520-577-8778	seetrogon at comcast.net
12/20	Sa	Santa Catalina Mountains	Brian Nicholas	520-760-3583	weehawker2 at yahoo.com

12/22	Mo	Phoenix-Tres Rios	Marceline VandeWater	602-689-4356	marceline at ermaroni.net
12/26	Fr	Superior	Cynthia Donald	480-283-4515	planres at earthlink.net
12/27	Sa	Flagstaff-Mount Elden	Terry Blows	928-774-8028	terence.blows at nau.edu
12/27	Sa	Portal	Jackie Lewis	520-558-2287	winjac12 at vtc.net
12/29	Mo	Bill Williams Delta	Kathleen Blair	928-667-4144	kathleen_blair at fws.gov
12/30	Tu	Gila River	Troy Corman	602-482-6187	aplomado at cox.net
12/30	Tu	Havasu NWR	DeeDee DeLorenzo	928-758-2707	poncho at citlink.net
01/02	Fr	Atascosa Highlands	Jake Mohlmann	610-390-2424	mohlmann2 at yahoo.com
01/02	Fr	Carefree	Walter Thurber	480-483-6450	wathurber at cox.net
01/03	Sa	Appleton-Whittell	Robert Weissler	520-234-1792	weissler at aves.org
01/03	Sa	Martinez Lake-Yuma	Henry Detwiler	928-247-3098	henrydetwiler at earthlink.net
01/03	Sa	Payson	Dave Hallock	928-474-9475	eldoradh at rmi.net
01/03	Sa	Timber Mesa	Mary Ellen Bittorf	928-367-2462	mcbitt30 at cableone.net
01/04	Su	Buenos Aires NWR	Bonnie Swarbrick	520-240-3737	bonnie.swarbrick at gmail.com
01/04	Su	Camp Verde	Bea Cooley	928-526-5069	bea.cooley at gmail.com
01/04	Su	Dudleyville	Doug Jenness	520-909-1529	d_jenness at hotmail.com
01/05	Mo	Glen Canyon	John Spence	928-608-6267	john_spence at nps.gov
Unknown		Pipe Spring NM	Paula Ogden-Muse	928-643-7105	paula_ogden-muse at nps.gov
Unknown		Ramsey Canyon			

Nearby New Mexico Count

12/28	Su	Peloncillo Mountains	Nicholas Pederson	505-417-8665	ndpederson83 at gmail.com
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Issued 10/21/2014

*Change **at** to **@** and delete spaces before sending

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

By Eleanor Campbell

The Christmas Bird Count is the longest running Citizen Science survey in the world. Every year since 1900 tens of thousands of participants....bird-watchers, conservationists and friends spend one day from mid-December through early January counting birds.

Christmas Bird Count began at the turn of the last century when people gathered for a tradition going afield on Christmas day with guns. Whichever group brought in the biggest pile of feathered quarry won. Bird feathers and stuffed birds themselves were important adornments for ladies hats at that time.

Conservation was just beginning early in the 20th century and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. In 1900 Frank Chapman, an officer in the budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition....a Christmas Bird Count rather than a hunt. So Christmas Bird Count (CBC) began. Twenty-five counts were conducted by 27 individuals that Christmas at 25 locations from Toronto, Canada, to California.

In the 2011-12 CBC, the 112th year of the count, 50,000 participants counted in 2,000 locations. The number of birds counted reached 36,139,768. The data are today compiled by the Audubon Society and the collected information allows researchers and conservation biologists to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America and other continents.

In the 2012-13 count, the 113th, 2291 counts were completed resulting in 62,834, 240 birds counted. Locally a count was held at the Hassayampa River where 36 participants counted 94 species. This count is centered near Wickenburg and offers undeveloped land at the Nature Conservancy's Hassayampa River Preserve. At the Phoenix-Tres Rios area 44 participants, in 133 hours spent, 147 species were counted including such high numbers as 29 American Wigeons, 429 Northern Shovelers, and 630 Neotropic Cormorants. The count takes in the three major rivers found here---the Gila, the Salt, and the Agua Fria as well as Estrella Mountain Regional Park and the Tres Rios Wetlands. The count typically records about 140 species.

Another nearby one, the Carefree CBC includes the towns of Carefree and Cave Creek and the north end of Scottsdale. Cave and Camp Creek, both sometimes flowing streams, Spur Cross Ranch Conservation area, and Cave Creek Regional Park are found here. The count typically records about 100 species. The latest, the 21st year of this CBC, a record high number of 109 was found according to Walter Thurber who has conducted this count for years and is instrumental in coordinating all CBCs of the area.

Other nearby counts included the Salt-Verde Rivers count that encompasses Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, portions of Fountain Hills, and McDowell Mountain Regional Park. It includes Saguaro Lake. About 140 species count is typical here. Also local is the Gila River CBC which covers unincorporated Arlington, Palo Verde and part of Buckeye. The Gila River winds through and Robbins Butte Wildlife Area is an added feature. Here, too, about 140 species are counted.

CBCs are a great opportunity to spend a day (or more) in the field observing birds....but they're more than that. The protocol for conducting a CBC has been standardized and the data are a rich source of information about avian populations and behavior. With other surveys, such as the Breeding Bird survey, the CBC provides a picture of how the continent's bird population has changed in space over the past 100 years. For example it can indicate habitat fragmentation or signal environmental threats such as water contamination. Scientists look at the changing habits of birds in drought which will predict future needs as the climate gets warmer and drier.

Recently, using 40 years of CBC information, they examined changes in range of 305 species. Linked with temperature data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a pattern emerged. There was a northward shift of species abundance of more than 30 miles. Average winter temperatures in the same time frame have increased. So....the Christmas Bird Count can be fun, but is scientifically functional. The combined efforts of many volunteer observers have provided a powerful tool for scientists.

West Valley Birding Brochure: Now Available! by Karen LaFrance

Sonoran Audubon Society teamed up with Tommy De Bardeleben, a birder with extensive experience documenting birds in Maricopa County, and a local advertising agency to produce a four-color brochure that highlights bird-watching spots in the West Valley. You may find this brochure in your favorite visitor's center or library or you may look for the PDF version on the Sonoran Audubon website (www.sonoranaudubon.org).