At our next meeting…. Wednesday, December 12, 2012, at 7 p.m.

Joel Pearson—Lesser Nighthawks Renew Life

Do you know what a Goatsucker is? If you don’t, I’m sure you are not alone. Nighthawks and another group called Nightjars are collectively known as Goatsuckers. The name comes from an erroneous belief by farmers who suspected them of flying into their barns at night to suckle the goats. Nightjars include the Whip-poor-will and a couple of other species. Nightjars will perch near the ground and fly up to catch insects flying overhead at night. Nighthawks on the other hand fly in lazy circling patterns searching for insects on the wing also at night. Their coloration makes all of these birds difficult to find during the day as they are only active during the twilight hours of dawn and dusk.

This presentation is a slide and video program that will capture the entire period of life on the ground where these birds raise their young. They are fascinating and amazing when seen.

Joel Pearson is a wildlife photographer, but for his presentations, he does something different. He only uses photographs taken within the borders of Phoenix Mountains Park.

It may seem a small point to some, but he feels that it is important to appreciate the lives of the birds that live year round in a single city park or that travel through at different times of the year.

After getting a BSIE (Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering) degree from ASU, he worked at a variety of jobs during the next 40 years. He always had a creative side and he would satisfy that need with a camera on vacations. His most enjoyable times were photographing nature at every destination. Now that he is fully retired, he is able to satisfy his love of photography and the natural world by capturing images of the life of a city park. He figures it will take him at least 10 years to make a significant dent in uncovering all of the mysteries of life in Phoenix Mountains Park!
What’s Happening in our Chapter
By George Wall

There was a Board Meeting on November 7, 2012. Attending were George Wall, Tim Cullison, Haylie Hewitt, Gail Bliss, John Arnett, Jim Consolloy, Joe Ford, Darnell Kirksey, Jerry Theis and Andrée Tarby.

Committees gave their reports: Total membership was reported at 848 with 122 “Friends” among them. Programs are set through May of 2013. A Trip committee meeting is set for December 10th to finalize trips up through the summer. Tim Cullison of the Education Committee reported that the Girl Scout badge earning sessions are set for Saturday, March 2, 2013, and Saturday, April 6, 2013, at the Glendale Library. The next Education Meeting is December 14, 2012. The financial report was reviewed and approved.

Other items of interest included a discussion of where and when to have the annual picnic. It was unanimously approved to have it at Horseshoe Ranch. Two dates were proposed and sent to Karen LaFrance in order for her to see if Game and Fish will approve one of them.

The Board discussed dues once again and it was unanimously approved to raise the dues up to $25 for adults, $20 for Seniors and $15 for Students starting January 1, 2014. Dues requests for the coming year will remain the old amount. It was also decided to send out “Friends” dues requests to all 848 members via regular mail except for those who have e-mail addresses. They will be sent e-mails along with the appropriate forms.

Jim Consolloy reported on the Tour de Birds that he went on that was sponsored by Desert Rivers Audubon Society. It was a great idea, but would take some outside sponsors for our chapter to do.

Jerry Theis gave a report of the Yellow Rails and Rice Festival (YRARF) in Louisiana that he attended.

George Wall and Andrée Tarby gave a report on the mini Tres Rios Earth and Nature Festival. It wasn’t well attended due to a number of reasons including an Avondale parade at the wrong time for our festival.

Haylie Hewitt and I attended the Black Canyon Heritage Park Opening on November 10th. We had a table and filled it with information about the Sonoran Audubon Society and other things. It was very cold with a strong wind blowing. I was going to lead a bird walk, but nobody wanted to do it—too cold and windy.

Membership meeting night was a smashing success as Larry Arbanas presented gorgeous videos of Florida, California and Alaska. The 55+ attendees oohed and aahed the entire presentation.

As an add on to What’s Happening, the dates for the annual picnic will have to be further discussed because of conflicts.

The Trip Committee meeting was changed from the 3rd to the 10th of December.

2012-3 Field Trips—Winter

REQUIREMENT: On all trips, YOU MUST make reservations by calling the leader or the contact person. They can then give updated information as to the meeting place, times, etc. Also, some trips are limited in size. Anyone can do these trips from novice to experts. If a novice, you’ll get plenty of help.

Saturday, December 15, 2012
Arlington Valley
Leader: Donna Smith, 623-556-9535 rms15247@cox.net

Arlington Valley west of Phoenix and south of Arlington with its fields, ponds, canals, a dam, and a desert butte provides a variety of habitats to search for birds. Earlier in January of this year, 58 species were seen with the best being a Smith’s Longspur. You are also always guaranteed to spot a Burrowing Owl along the roadside.

Difficulty: 1  Bring a lunch

Meet in the parking lot of the Wildlife Zoo on Northern Ave. near the aquarium to leave at 8 a.m. Northern Ave. was being heavily worked on in November. Instead of using Northern Ave., you can use Olive Ave. up to Sarival and then turn left straight to the zoo.

Friday, January 4, 2013
Glendale Recharge Ponds
Leader: Joe Ford: 623-792-8154 ljford25@cox.net

This is a repeat of the November 7, 2012 trip, but there should be more wintering ducks. The Glendale Recharge Ponds are included in the top 10 birding spots in Maricopa County. These six basins (two or three may have water) have been beacons for migrants and winter residents. Many rarities show up from time to time including gull species, grebes, terns, raptors, ducks and shorebirds. Once, there was a Roseate Spoonbill. You never know what may show up at this site.

Difficulty: 1  Morning trip only

Meet at the east end of the basins at 8 a.m. Take the west 101 to Camelback in Glendale, turn west to 107th Avenue (light), turn north until you hit gravel, then go east to end of the road. If you want to car pool meet at McDonald’s on the southeast corner of Olive and 91st Ave. just off of 101 at 7:30 a.m.

(Continued on Page 3)
2013 Field Trips

Sunday, January 20, 2013
Santa Cruz Flats
Leader: Claudia Kirscher
Contact: Barb Meding 623-266-1847
barbarameding@yahoo.com

Our first stop will be the Dave White Golf Course in Casa Grande before exploring the agricultural fields in Santa Cruz flats. This is a reliable place for wintering raptors including Ferruginous Hawk, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Merlin, and hopefully Crested Caracara. We will scope the sod farm areas for mountain plover and the fields for Horned Larks, Meadowlarks, Bendire's Thrasher, and Sage. Vesper, Lincoln's, Brewer's, Song and Savannah Sparrows. On one January trip we had over 50 species. There are no facilities in the flats so bring water and a scope if you have one. This trip is limited to 3 cars.

Difficulty: 1  Bring a lunch
Call the contact for the meeting place and other info.

Saturday-Monday, February 9-11, 2013
San Rafael Grasslands
Leader: Melody Kehl
Contact: Donna Smith, 623-556-9535
rms15247@cox.net

The Valley's beautiful wide-open high grasslands are best known for wintering raptors, pipits, sparrows and longspurs. Located east of Patagonia, the valley is the headwaters for the Santa Cruz River. In the winter, Savannah, Vesper and Grasshopper Sparrows are common; less common are Baird's and flocks of Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs.

Melody Kehl will be our leader on Saturday for the valley. We will leave Friday for the Country Inn in Tucson and bird Sweetwater on the way down. We will be close to Madera Canyon and we can bird there on Sunday morning before heading back home. There is a limit of 7-8 people.

Difficulty: 1
Call the contact for the meeting place and other info.

Saturday, March 9, 2013
Estrella Mountain Regional Park
Leader: Joe Ford: 623-792-8154 lford25@cox.net

See the write up for the Saturday Family Bird Walks on the other half of this page.

Difficulty: 1
Meet at the Visitors Center parking lot at 8 a.m.

Thursday-Saturday, July 11-13, 2013
Surf and Birds
Leader: Kathy Anderson
Contact: Barb Meding 623-266-1847
barbarameding@yahoo.com

Huntington Beach, California has some of the nation's best birding areas. We should see gulls, terns (Forster's Least, Elegant, Caspian nest here), Black Skimmer, plovers (Semipalmated, Black-bellied and Snowy nest in the area), sandpipers (including Long-billed Curlews, Ruddy Turnstones and Marbled Godwits), Allen's Hummingbird, Red-shouldered Hawks, White-tailed Kites, and possible California specialties such as the Nuttall’s Woodpecker, Wrentit, California Towhee and California Quail. We leave early Thursday, making stops on the way and plan to arrive in time to stroll the beach before dinner. Friday we will explore our main destinations of Bolsa Chica Wetlands and San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. Saturday we will possibly return to a Friday site we missed in the morning, or explore a couple of parks in the vicinity. On the way home, we will make another stop before arriving late back in Phoenix. This trip is limited to 2 cars and reservations should be made early by February so we can book hotel rooms.

Welcome and Thank You

Since our last newsletter, more people joined or rejoined the National Audubon Society that live in our designated area. This automatically makes all of them a member of our chapter. These members are Stephen Adams, William Adams, Alicia Alarcon, Maria Aranda, The Balogh's, Louis Baremeyer, Kent Brewster, Mildred De Jong, Edward Dempsey, Colleen Fogarty, Ty Fritz, Richard Funari, Susanne Hazelett, Sandra Kehs, Shirley Kinter, Carolyn Lewis, Fred Kuhne, P.M. Lloyd, Louis Marano, Mary Martinez, Betty McDonald, Donald Miner, Judith Nordstrom, Dianne Ramentol, Mary Ridgley, Jim Robinson, Dennis & Karen Slater, Barbara Street, Christopher Tulumello, Nancy Winne and Susan Young. If I misspelled any names, this is the what National sent me. Our new “Friends” are: Mary Woszczyna, Gery Berger and Kathy Heyman.

We welcome all of you to our chapter and we hope you will take part in our activities. Look at our web-site at www.sonoranaudubon.org and you’ll see that we do a lot.
What Makes a Backyard Bird Habitat?
By George Wall

One of the things that help make a habitat for birds is plants. They can provide food, cover and some are very attractive. The following are native plants that are low, very low and no water plants. I tried to list the best and most common for our area.

**Baja Fairy Duster** – This plant produces red-tufted flowers that mature into little seedpods enjoyed by quail. The plant also attracts hummingbirds. This 4-foot-tall, 4-foot-wide shrub is hardy.

**Desert Globe Mallow** - There are several types of mallows. This one is the most common and has bright orange or apricot, 5-petaled flowers that bloom year round. These cup-shaped flowers grow along upper stems to 1 1/2 inches wide. In some forms, petals can have white, pink, purple or bluish hues. A good cover bush for birds.

**Brittle Bush** - This is a plant that grows everywhere in the desert area. It flowers late winter through spring. It can brighten up a backyard. This bush attracts birds and can provide cover.

**Desert Honeysuckle** – There are numerous species of Desert Honeysuckles but most all are shrubs that can get to 5 ft. x 5 ft. This plant has red to orange tube-shaped flowers in summer and fall. It attracts hummingbirds and butterflies and is great cover.

**Wooly Butterfly Bush** – This bush is a striking shrub with velvety, ash-gray foliage that sets off the eye-catching orange flowers from spring to fall. It attracts butterflies.

**Sages & Penstemons** – There are numerous types of these shrubs and flowers that attract birds and butterflies and some provide excellent cover.

**Desert Willow** – This is a 15-40 ft. small tree or large shrub. The blossom is funnel-shaped, 1–1 1/2 inches long, spreading at the opening into 5 ruffled, petal-like lobes. It has several names including the Trumpet Flower. It attracts birds and butterflies.

**Four-wing Saltbush** – This a hardy desert evergreen shrub with gray-green leaves that bears seeds with foliage coming off of them, creating wings for distribution. It can grow 4-5 feet tall with wide with dense branching. It is an ideal cover for birds.

**Red Yucca** – This plant produces several flower stalks each year with abundant tubular flowers that bloom in spring and well into summer. The stalks can grow up to 9 feet high, but most are 3- 5 feet. Hummingbirds are attracted to the flowers.

**Desert Lavender** - This shrub can get up to 15 feet. The flowers are lavender to violet and blooms in spring, summer and fall. Butterflies like this plant and so do people who like tea as the leaves are edible and can be used to flavor tea. The leaves have the strong fragrance of lavender when crushed. The flowers have a faint aroma of honey. Birds often nest in it.

**Desert Hackberry** - This plant can be called a tree or shrub as it can grow to 10 feet. It flowers during the summer with inconspicuous white flowers which are followed by orange berries that birds love and are even edible to us.

**Prickly Pear** - This cactus represent about a dozen species of the Opuntia genus in the desert. All have flat, fleshy pads that look like large leaves. The pads serve several functions like water storage and photosynthesis and flower production. Birds love the fruit.

**Cholla** - There are several species of cholla and they make perfect nesting places for Cactus Wren and Curved-billed Thrashers.

**Ocotillo** - Drive through your neighborhood and you’ll see this plant everywhere. It can grow to 20 feet and has beautiful red flowers that bloom in the spring and late summer. This plant attracts hummingbirds and orioles.

**Saguaro** – This is the largest cactus in the U.S. which can unbelievably grow to 70 feet and live for 150 plus years. Woodpeckers love to make holes in it for nesting. When they leave, owls or other birds will use it as a home. The buds and flowers on the top and limbs also attract birds.

The above are just a very few of the plants that fall into the category of low, very low and no water plants. You can find more at such websites as [http://www.amwua.org/shrubs.html](http://www.amwua.org/shrubs.html), [http://azgfd.gov/w_c/landscaping_desert_wildlife.shtml](http://azgfd.gov/w_c/landscaping_desert_wildlife.shtml), and this one [http://athome.audubon.org/](http://athome.audubon.org/).
What Makes a Backyard Bird Habitat?

- Desert Marigold
- Baja Fairy Duster
- Brittlebush
- Desert Honeysuckle
- Four-wing Saltbush
- Desert Globe Mallow
- Wooly Butterfly Bush
- Desert Willow
What Makes a Backyard Bird Habitat?

Desert Lavender

Desert Hackberry

Ocotillo

Prickly Pear

Teddy Bear Cholla

Saguaro

Purple Sage
The National Audubon Society has conducted Christmas bird counts since 1900. Volunteers from across North America and beyond will take to the field 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 skill level 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.

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Nearby New Mexico Count

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Issued 10/25/12
Hassayampa is open mid-September through mid-May Wednesday-Sunday 8 a.m.– 5 p.m. and mid-May through mid-September Friday - Sunday 7-11 a.m. Entrance fees are $5.00 for adults and $3.00 for children. Members fee is $3.00.

**Gilbert Water Ranch**

This is one of the best places in the valley to bird watch. There are nice easy trails that you can walk that take you around numerous ponds. There is also a nice visitor center.

Take highway 60 to Greenfield Road. Turn right 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 their website at http://sites.google.com/site/birdsofthegilbertwaterranch/

**Desert Botanical Garden**

Each week on Mondays there is a bird walk. The bird walk for December will be starting at 8 a.m.

Desert Botanical Garden entrance fees are $18 for adults, $15 for seniors and $10 for students. DBG Membership is $65 a year ($75 for Families). When special events are held, the entry fee could be higher. See their website at www.dbg.org for further information.

**Arizona Field Ornithologists**

See their website at www.Azfo.org for more details.

**Boyce Thompson Arboretum**

There is a Christmas Bird Count on December 26, Wednesday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. To volunteer with this count and get more information call Cynthia Donald at 480-283-4515 or email planres@earthlink.net

Boyce Thompson Arboretum opens at 8:00 a.m. $9.00 for adults, $4.50 for ages 5-12. For driving directions or other details, call 520-689-2811 or visit their website at http://arboretum.ag.arizona.edu/.

**Festivals**

**Wings Over Willcox in Willcox, AZ**

Birding and nature festival January 16-20, 2013. Tour for birds, geology, local history, and botany. Free seminars, free nature expo with live animals, wildlife art, crafts, children's activities.

Keynote speaker and banquet: 2013 speaker is Kenn Kaufman. Wings Over Willcox is celebrating its 20th anniversary. For more information got to their website at http://www.wingoverwillcox.com.
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.

Upcoming Schedule:

December 12, 2012: Joel Pearson—Lesser Nighthawks Renew Life
January 9, 2012: Mike Quigley—Arizona Desert Heritage
February 13, 2013: David & Dianne Reesor—Antarctica
March 13, 2013: Michelle Wiznitzer—Arizona Birding from a Non-birder
April 10, 2013: Thomas Gaskill—Jays, Nutcrackers and Pines
May 8, 2013: David Dise/George Wall—Brown Canyon & Area Adventure

Other Dates of Interest: December 5, 2012, 7 p.m. Monthly Board Meeting at above location. Members are invited to attend as guests.

Sonoran Audubon Society Officers, Board Members and Committee Contacts:

Officers
President: George Wall 623-875-7057 gwall5@cox.net
Vice President: Tim Cullison 602-863-9744 timcullisonaz@aol.com
Treasurer: Haylie Hewitt 623-581-1180 haylie.hewitt@cox.net
Secretary: Gail Bliss 623-877-3317 gmbliss@juno.com

Board Members—Directors at Large
John Arnett 623-695-0953 treerunner@yahoo.com
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Jerry Theis 623-878-6528 jerry.theis@bannerhealth.com

Committees
Programs: Darnell Kirksey, Jerry Theis and George Wall—See phone numbers and e-mail addresses above.

Education/Conservation: Currently meeting every other month; call Karen LaFrance 602-809-3360.

Field Trips: Dan Bohlmann 602-938-8244 dansbohlmann@prodigy.net

Hospitality: Haylie Hewitt 623-581-1180 haylie.hewitt@cox.net

Publicity: Tim Cullison: 602-863-9744 timcullisonaz@aol.com

Membership: Charles Kangas 623-931-6677 chuckkan@centurylink.net

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

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

Upper Agua Fria Watershed Project: Karen LaFrance 602-809-3360 klafr40@gmail.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
1-17 & Pinnacle Peak
623-582-9806

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

Care Centers for Birds

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/
Friends of the Sonoran Audubon Society provide the principal financial support for the chapter and its activities. SAS operates with a minimum overhead (chapter administration and insurance) in order to make revenues go as far as possible. All Friends contributions are fully tax-deductible.

Membership runs from January 1st through December 31st each year. Keep your membership current.

THE FRIENDS

( ) I would like to become a Friend of the Sonoran Audubon Society. Indicate your choice of level:
( ) Verdin (Adult) $20.00 to $49.99 per year
( ) Burrowing Owl (Seniors) rate $15.00 to $49.99 per year
( ) Cactus Wren $50.00 to $99.99 per year
( ) Gilded Flicker $100.00 or more per year.
( ) Newsletter $10

NAME(S) ________________________________________________________________
ADDRESS __________________________________________________________________
CITY, STATE AND ZIPCODE ____________________________________________
PHONE: ____________________________
E-mail ___________________________________________________________________

Send to SONORAN AUDUBON SOCIETY, P O Box 8068, Glendale, AZ 85312-8068