At our next meeting…. Wednesday, November 9, 2011, at 7 p.m.
David and Diane Reesor—Botswana

This program takes us to Botswana and the Okavango Delta. Botswana is a landlocked country bordered by South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and just touches Zambia. The Kalahari Desert covers 70% of this country of two million people. The Okavango Delta is the world’s largest inland delta formed where the Okavango River empties onto a swamp in a basin in the Kalahari Desert. It truly must be one of Africa’s most enchanted places: a swirl of lushness in the desert of Kalahari sand; a remarkable phenomenon. It owes its origins to the emergence of a rift valley across the course of the Okavango River. The images of kingfishers, bee-eaters, woodpeckers, barbets and many other birds along with wild animals like the sable should make this a very enjoyable program.

David and Diane Reesor are well traveled having been in more than three dozen countries. If you saw the last program they gave us, you know their skills as photographers of wildlife and scenic beauty. Both consider themselves to be very fortunate to have photographed in many of the world’s special places and they both enjoy sharing their love of travel and photography. David has also co-authored a book "Predator – Life and Death in the African Bush" with African safari guide Mark Ross.

Come out for an evening of enchantment.
What’s Happening in our Chapter
By your Editor, George Wall

Your Board met on Wednesday, October 5, 2011, with 11 members. The attendees were George Wall, Tim Cullison, Rich and Carol Schooler, John Arnett, Eleanor Campbell, Joe Ford, Haylie Hewitt, Karen LaFrance, Andrée Tarby, and Jerry Theis.

The minutes were approved and then committee reports were given.

The current membership was given as 840 members of which 124 are SAS Friends. 67 of these are Friends only and not a member of the National Audubon Society.

Field Trips remain the same until the next meeting. There is only one field trip in December due to the Christmas Bird Counts.

Programs are set through February of 2012. We have a program for April if our readers submit some stories, events, etc. See the article on page 3. This will leave only the months of March and May to fill.

The chairperson of the Education Committee, Rich Schooler, gave us a surprise. He and his wife Carol (our current Treasurer) will be moving to Prescott in December. The November board meeting will be their last one. This leaves a big hole to fill on the Education Committee. The Conservation Committee has been merged into the Education Committee.

Carol will continue to be Treasurer until the move to Prescott. Haylie Hewitt will then take over as Treasurer until next election.

Our next annual picnic will be on Saturday, March 31, 2012. It will be held at Horseshoe Ranch.

Karen LaFrance summarized a recent meeting with AZGFD and leaders of other groups who donated to the Horseshoe Ranch purchase. She said we must remain vigilant in shaping the plan for the ranch.

She also reported that the Upper Agua Fria Watershed Partnership recently decided to use Together Green funds to develop and launch a website for them to promote the partnership’s “Points of Pride initiative."

Karen reminded the Board that SAS has a contract through 2014 with AZGFD to continue monitoring for avian influenza while doing the Important Bird Area surveys.

The membership meeting on October 12th drew 42 attendees. Tom Gaskill gave a great program on bird watching in India. Thanks to all who attended.

2011 Field Trips—Fall/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.

Thursday, November 3, 2011
Badger Springs
Leader: George Wall, 623-875-7057
gwall5@cox.net

Enjoy both desert and a unique riparian habitat at one of our national monuments. Petroglyphs enhance the scenery of the site. Badger Springs is a part of the Agua Fria National Monument with a variety of habitats there including a desert and mesquite area, a cottonwoods stand, and a trail leading down to the Agua Fria River where the river runs all year long at this location.

Difficulty: 1-2 We'll be eating lunch at the Roadrunner Restaurant & Saloon in New River. They have great hamburgers.

Meet at the Burger King just off of 101 on Thunderbird in Peoria to leave at 6:30 a.m. or at McDonald's at I-17 & Carefree Highway at 7 a.m.

Wednesday, November 16, 2011
Gilbert Water Ranch
Leader: Rich Schooler, 623-930-8904
raschooler@cox.net

Visit the Gilbert Water Ranch located at the SE corner of Guadalupe Rd. and Greenfield Rd. (go east on US 60, then south to Guadalupe Rd.) and park in front of the library. A bird list of more than 140 species has been compiled there including more than 50 species of water/shorebirds including Black-necked Stilts and American Avocets.

Difficulty: 1

Meet at the Wal-Mart parking lot at Northern and 55th Ave. to leave at 7 a.m.

Tuesday, December 6, 2011
Tres Rios Hayfield Site
Leader: Vera Markham , 623-974-1110
vjmsaint@cox.net

This is a morning trip only first to the old familiar Tres Rios Hayfield site where the ponds usually show up nice ducks and sometimes a Sora or Least Bittern.

Difficulty: 1

Meet at the Burger King just off of 101 on Thunderbird in Peoria to leave at 7:30 a.m.
Thank You

We have several new Sonoran Audubon Society members who joined the National Audubon Society or transferred into our area which automatically makes them a member of our chapter. I am going to start including their names in this “Thank You” column. New members are: AA & PJ, Betty Baker, Wayne Barkley, Frank Beutier, Will Ennis, Patricia Grothe, Nancy Guy, Allana Hollander, Patty Horn, Arlene Iwanski, Ruth Kennedy, Christa Kortuem, Graham Lant, Joyce Larsen, Janet Nagle, Ann Ninlos, Josephine Pearson, Karen Rominski, Suzanne Pens, Dylan Powell, Carol Veigel and Sally Walsh.

Have You Got a Story?

We are planning on having a program in April, 2012 featuring you—our members. All you have to do is submit a true story of how you got into bird watching or a personal reminiscence of something that happened to you while bird watching. We hope you have some pictures that we could also include in the presentation. Send them to Darnell Kirksey at dkirk38338@aol.com and Haylie Hewitt at haylie.hewitt@cox.net.

They will review the entries (hopefully a lot) and chose the ones that would interest us most in the April meeting. They may even take a video of you. This is your chance to help make a program that you star in.

Help Wanted

One of the hallmarks of the Sonoran Audubon Society has been to offer an interesting mix of activities to get as many members "involved" as possible. Following the Board of Directors' recent strategic retreat, the chapter would like to increase our impact in these four areas:

**Social Media:** Are you knowledgeable about Twitter, Facebook, YouTube? Can you help get us started with these social media?

**Conservation:** The National Audubon Society is placing much more emphasis on protecting the environment. Our chapter would like to significantly expand our conservation and educational activities. Want to get involved?

**Youth Outreach:** We want to do more youth education. In-school presentations and collaboration with Boys and Girls Clubs are two possibilities. Got some extra time?

**Field Trips:** We're always looking for new leaders and for trip committee members.

If you would like to get more involved in Sonoran Audubon activities contact George Wall at 623-875-7057 or gwall5@cox.net.

(Continued from Page 2)

**2011 Field Trips—Spring**

**Friday-Sunday, April 27-29, 2012**
**Brown Canyon Ranch & Area**
**Leader: George Wall, 623-875-7057**
gwall5@cox.net

This is a special trip that we have arranged with Buenos Aires National Wildlife Preserve. We have reserved the Brown Canyon Environmental Education Center. This is a 7 bedroom ranch house that sleeps 14 on the second floor. This means there will be room mates. It has 2 bathrooms on the upper floor and a bathroom on the bottom floor. There is a large kitchen with refrigerator and oven and a very large meeting room with a huge table to seat everyone.

This ranch house is located on a dirt road quite a distance from the paved road. A canyon wash (sometimes with water) leads up into the mountains to an archway. Birds abound especially if there is water. Not only will we bird here, but also at nearby spots like the preserve and Arivaca.

There is limit of 14 people. The cost for renting is $560 for the two nights. This means if we get 14 people (which I anticipate easily), the cost will be $40 for the two nights plus your travel costs. You have to bring your own linens for your bed or a sleeping bag, towel, and any other toilet necessities. We chip for the suppers (usually spaghetti/meatballs, salad and dessert one night and hot dogs, potato salad, baked beans and dessert the next). You bring your own food for breakfast and lunches.
Annual Retreat

The Sonoran Audubon Society’s Retreat was held on Saturday, October 1, 2011, at the Hassayampa River Preserve. Attending were John Arnett, Gail Bliss, Eleanor Campbell, Tim Cullison, Joe Ford, Haylie Hewitt, Chuck Kangas, Darnell Kirksey, Bob McCormick, Rich Schooler, Donna Smith, Andrée Tarby, Jerry Theis, George Wall and Karen LaFrance (Facilitation and Notes).

Prior to the “Retreat” we had a bird walk which produced some great birds including a Magnolia Warbler. We continued to look for birds during the day and altogether, a total of 37 species were seen. After the walk, the “Retreat” group had a nice breakfast that Eleanor Campbell had set up. This was followed by introductions and then a celebration of what we accomplished this past year. The attendees then separated into two groups for the remainder of the day.

These celebrated accomplishments included:

An increase in SAS membership as we now have 826 members as of August 2011 and 125 Friends (67 are Friends only) versus last years 773 members and 89 Friends. The Year End special Horseshoe Ranch request for donations exceeded $3000.00. We had Great Programs all Year! The Audubon Round Up was a total SAS leadership endeavor. The Together Green-third grant was achieved for Yavapai County/Agua Fria River planning. A new Database manager was recruited (Lauren Bosch). The annual picnic was a success at Robbins Butte with 40 to 45 persons including new people attending. The Girl Scout program: 5 Girl Scouts, 50 Brownies and 10 parents were involved - two Brownie programs are planned for 2012 (4 Board members involved). We started putting a Member Spotlight in the Newsletters.

We had a great Estrella Mountain Park program consisting of Family Bird Walks, Nature Walks and Talks. For the Estrella Mountain Park activities, attendance was good when the scouts are camping! The walks are led by Bob McCormick and Andrée Tarby on Sundays; Rich Schooler and others on Saturdays, but now taken over by Joe Ford who also does the talks after the bird walk.

Tres Rios Nature Festival: SAS is a founding member, Bob McCormick is the liaison; planning for 2012 is already underway, as the festival is now “on the map”. We had tables at PMPC/Grand Re-opening of North Mountain Visitor Center; Table Mountain; International Migratory Bird Day at Audubon AZ; Sonoran National Monument 10 year anniversary; Sportsmen’s Show in Sun City West. The Important Bird Area (IBA) monitoring, an integral part of our chapter, is continuing along with Christmas Bird Counts.

Strategic Goals:

Adult Education: In 2012, we plan on having basic bird tips linked to our web site, workshops and experts recruited for the workshops. We need field trip training for in town and away.

Youth Education: We hope to contact more youth groups, use a laptop at tables with programs designed to attract youths and also adults, and start a Facebook spot for our chapter. Possibly more youth activities at festivals.

Stewardship/Environment: On our website and in newsletter, we need to recruit people to help our core group. We also must establish a stronger Conservation Committee; backyard bird habitat recognition; speakers relating to habitat including plants in relationship to birds.

Membership: Recruit new board members; recruit membership in new geographic areas like Surprise, Wickenburg, Goodyear, Hassayampa, etc.; offer to give programs in these areas; call new members and new Friends; pass out newsletters everywhere; provide a welcome packet to visitors; greet as many people as possible – make people welcome.
Retreat Pictures

Member Spotlight  
By Eleanor Campbell

Although Kathy Wheeler is a relatively new Sonoran Audubon member she was indoctrinated in the world of birds as a child by her father, a self-taught naturalist, in Westchester County New York. She attended his lectures at Audubon meetings and got to know the Eastern birds well. She couldn't escape the natural world with a father who also lectured at Columbia University and the New York Botanical Garden and was curator of the Trailside Museum.

Between her early days and her move West 43 years ago she attended Idaho State University. The school closed down during potato harvest time and the students were obliged, and got paid, to bag the spuds...some outdoor experience!

Later she studied to teach at Pace University in Pleasantville, New York, and more recently, took paralegal courses at Phoenix College. After raising two children she had a 20 year career with Maricopa County where she had the unique position of Garnishment Administrator and was moved through the Treasury, Finance and School Superintendent's Departments. She developed systems and software as the state laws changed.

Today Kathy volunteers at the Westside Food Bank and serves on the Heritage Elementary School Site Council Committee as a community member. The Site Council advises and supports school personnel in the daily school operation. She also helps with the City of Glendale in maintaining the Heritage Neighborhood Park which is similar to a blockwatch.

With any time left she is an avid member of the Glendale Hiking Club and has hiked the Grand Canyon rim to rim several times. She's a frequent cat, goat, and yes, horse caretaker when her neighbors are away. She has three dogs and two cats and many bird feeders. Sunflowers are planted all around her house making lots of Lesser Goldfinches happy.

Kathy has been on many Maricopa and Desert Rivers Audubon field trips as well as Sonoran's. She retired two years ago and enjoys exploring Arizona and visiting family back in New York. Her two children and two grandchildren live nearby.

FAMILY BIRD WALKS AT ESTRELLA  
Sponsored by the Sonoran Audubon Society

Estrella Mountain Park is located on the south side of the Gila River in Goodyear on Vineyard Rd near Bullard Ave.

These walks are held the second Saturday of each month. The next walk will be on Saturday, November 12, 2011. Meet at the visitor’s center parking lot at 8:00 a.m. The walk will last approximately 2 hours. For further information, contact Joe Ford: 623-792-8154 lford25@cox.net.

There is a $6.00 per vehicle charge for entering the park; however, the bird walks are free of charge.

We thank Rich and Carol Schooler for handling the Saturday bird walks for the past few years. They provided excellent leadership in planning and organizing the walks. Joe Ford who handled the summer bird walks at Estrella Mountain Park has willingly stepped in to take over where they left off. Joe also provides excellent programs at the visitors center when the Saturday walk is completed.

On the Saturday bird walk held on October 8th, 14 people participated and 33 species of birds were seen.
ARIZONA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SCHEDULE [2011-2012]
By Walter Thurber

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. A $5.00 participation fee defrays a portion of the cost of tabulating and publishing the overall count results. 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 10/6/11
EVENTS IN AND AROUND THE VALLEY

Adobe Mountain Wildlife Center

On Saturday and Sunday, November 19-20, 2011, the Adobe Mountain Wildlife Center is having an Open House. This is a free event with wildlife displays, educational programs and a self-guided tour of the facility.

Directions to AMWC: Take I-17 to Pinnacle Peak Rd. (Exit 217). Head west and turn north at the first street (less than 1/4 mile) into the Adobe Mountain School. Follow the signs through the parking lot to the event.

Gilbert Water Ranch

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 the website http://sites.google.com/site/birdsofthegilbertwaterranch/

Boyce Thompson Arboretum

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/

Desert Botanical Garden

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.

Birds in the Garden. This is a year-round activity every Monday and second Saturday, October through April starting at 8 a.m. and then every Monday, May through September starting at 7 a.m.

Our own Andrée Tarby leads the walk along the Garden trails. Everyone is welcome, including first-time birders. Wear a hat, sunscreen and comfortable shoes, and bring binoculars if available.

Festivals

Central Valley Birding Symposium

Stockton - CA, November 17-20, 2011
The Central Valley Birding Symposium Speakers: Ornithologists of International Renown. Field trips, workshops, panel discussion, and birding camaraderie. (209) 369-2010, e-mail cpillsbury@softcom.net
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.

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: Carol Schooler 623-930-8904
raschooler@cox.net
Secretary: John Arnett 623-695-0953
treerunner@yahoo.com

Board Members—Directors at Large
Eleanor Campbell: 623-977-7639 ercamp@juno.com
Joe Ford: 623-792-8154 lford25@cox.net
Haylie Hewitt 623-581-1180 haylie.hewitt@cox.net
Darnell Kirksey 602-938-6174 dkirk38338@aol.com
Karen LaFrance 602-788-9646 klaf@cox.net
Rich Schooler 623-930-8904 raschooler@cox.net
Andrée Tarby 602-421-9425 awtarby@gmail.com
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:
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@mindspring.com

Database Manager: Lauren Bosch 520-603-3652
lmsfreebird@aol.com

Upper Agua Fria Watershed Community Planning Project:
Karen LaFrance 602-788-9646 klaf@cox.net

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

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

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
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.

Scheduled Programs:
- November 9, 2011: David and Diane Reesor—Botswana
- December 14, 2011: Joel Pearson—The Life of a City Park
- January 11, 2012: George Wall—A Month in Kenya, Africa
- February 8, 2012: Kendall Kroesen—Gardening for Birds
- April 11, 2012: Members—Adventures in Bird Watching

Other Dates of Interest: November 2, 2011, at 7 p.m. there will be a Board Meeting at the West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, corner of 59th Ave. and Cholla in Glendale.

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