At our next meeting…. Wednesday, November 14, 2012, at 7 p.m.

Larry Arbanas—Florida, Bird & Nature Videos

In 1989, our speaker, Larry Arbanas was filming promotional videos for home builders and real estate agents. Then the Exxon Valdez oil tanker hit the rocks in Prince William Sound, Alaska. Millions of gallons of raw crude spilled into the icy waters as thousands of marine animals and birds were smothered by the frothy goo. It was a devastating moment for nature in a very pristine place. As Larry watched the drama unfold on the TV in front of him, he pounded his fists on the floor as tears rolled down his cheeks. He wanted to do something to help, but felt powerless, knowing he didn’t have the ability to travel to Alaska to film the devastation and it’s impact mere days after it happened.

The event did have an eventual impact, as Larry decided to give up commercial real estate videos to focus his creative energies on becoming a nature filmmaker.


Since 2005, Larry has been on several filming expeditions for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, capturing images of North American birds for the archive known as the Visual Media Collection at the Macaulay Library. Two summers ago he spent 6 1/2 weeks in Louisiana video documenting the effect of the BP oil spill on the millions of birds living on the barrier islands in the Gulf.

The Cornell Lab is known for it’s immense collection of bird and animal sounds, the largest in the world. If you watch a Hollywood movie and hear a bird or animal, you can bet it probably came from Cornell!

Today Larry will be presenting a diverse collection of bird and nature videos filmed in Florida.

Larry Arbanas

Black-Crowned Night-Heron

Great Egret and Alligator
What’s Happening in our Chapter
By George Wall and Karen LaFrance

There was a Board Retreat on October 3, 2012. Attending were George Wall, Tim Cullison, Haylie Hewitt, Gail Bliss, John Arnett, Eleanor Campbell, Joe Ford, Darnell Kirksey, Jerry Theis, Andréé Tarby, Tice Supplee, Bob McCormick and Ann Durning. Karen LaFrance attended as consultant to the chapter and facilitator for the meeting. She submitted the following notes.

SAS completed a Five Year Strategic Plan in 2010. As a result, this year’s work was about evaluating on-going and new initiatives.

Fund-Raising and Memberships: Chapter fund raising efforts will include solicitations for specific projects, initiatives or needs. Friends’ suggested giving levels will remain the same until there is a compelling reason to change them (on the website).

Celebrations: Board planning sessions usually include celebrating positive things that have happened in the past year: new Board members, excellent work with Girl Scouts, new welcome packet, Backyard Bird Habitat recognitions in the SAS’ excellent Newsletter editions, a great picnic at Horseshoe Ranch including a stunning fly-over by a Golden Eagle, Estrella Mountain family bird walks growing in popularity, FACEBOOK page, Important Bird Areas (IBAs) still monitored by committed volunteers and costs covered by Arizona Game & Fish and a reorganized Education & Conservation Committee working with me, as consultant, to enhance SAS’ program initiatives.

Presentation of Western Rivers Initiative: Tice Supplee reported on the Important Bird Areas in Arizona and New Mexico and the National Audubon Society strategic plan focused on protecting bird habitat. Many “IBAs” are in riparian areas (30 of Arizona’s 42 IBAs) that fit into the idea of comprehensive western rivers protection. The “flagship bird” for this initiative in Arizona is the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. The Agua Fria River, where SAS monitors one of its two IBAs, is a “critical Yellow-billed Cuckoo habitat.”

Besides monitoring, SAS’ collaborations with Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument and the Upper Agua Fria Watershed Partnership are also important in protecting bird habitat. In the Salt/Gila Rivers IBA, the Chapter supports the Tres Rios Nature and Earth Festival, as a founding organization. Former SAS President Bob McCormick continues his involvement along with the Chapter’s participation in two Christmas Bird Counts there.

Tice, Ann Durning (former SAS Board Member & State NAS Board Member), Tim Cullison and I attended the recent NAS Board gathering in Tucson. NAS’ education focus is “Protection of Birds” and “Bird Friendly Communities”—clear calls for conservation.

A Bird Friendly Community: Based upon the work at the retreat, I will develop a draft scenario for a chapter initiative promoting Bird Friendly Communities and will bring these thoughts back to the Board for discussion.

Speakers’ Bureau: The group brainstormed “who, what, why, how, where and when” of this idea. There may be an opportunity to apply for an NAS Collaborative Funding grant for equipment that helps the Speakers’ Bureau—a mini-computer and projector that can be carried from place to place for talks. The Board invites folks to participate in developing the Speakers’ Bureau concept, working with the Education and Conservation Committee. The target date for start up is summer 2013.

At our General Membership meeting, 51 people showed up for the program Rich Glinski presented on the Burrowing Owl and Grassland Conservation program. There were 15 visitors.

2012 Field Trips—Fall

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.

Wednesday, November 7, 2012
Glendale Recharge Ponds
Leader: George Wall 623-875-7057 gwall5@cox.net

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 several gull species, grebes, terns, raptors, numerous duck species, shorebirds, including Roseate Spoonbills. You never know what may show up at this site. Bald Eagles, peregrine falcons, stilts, and several sandpiper types all have been seen stopping by to pick up a morsel or two at these shallow water basins, which are ideal for dabbling ducks, and the muddy shorelines attract the “peeps”, dowitchers, and avocets.

Difficulty: 1—Morning trip only

Meet at the east end of the basins. 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 the Burger King just west of 101 on Thunderbird at 84th Dr. Park in the Lowe’s parking lot by the Burger King. We’ll leave at 7:15 a.m. or meet there at 7:30 a.m. (Continued on Page 8)
What Makes a Bird Habitat?
Photos and Article By George Wall

Continuing Sonoran Audubon’s focus on creating bird-friendly habitats, I visited Bob McCormick’s yards which present good examples. Both front and backyards are designed for birds.

Bob lives on a 1 1/3 acre plot of land in Laveen which was about 30 miles from where I lived. In fact, by the time I got to his place, I was beginning to wonder if I was still in Arizona especially after turning off I-10 and getting on 51st Ave. I only drove 7 ½ more miles, but it seemed like forever. He has lived there for 20 years which at one time was really out in the boondocks. I had to ask him how he got involved in the Sonoran Audubon Society. We can thank Dwayne Fink whose yard I highlighted a couple of months ago. Dwayne and Bob were originally in the Maricopa Audubon when the Sonoran was formed. Dwayne said “Come on and join”, and Bob did, especially since Laveen falls into our zip code area.

At his home, I was immediately struck by the number of cacti and other plants in his large front yard. I could see a big saguaro, five large staghorn cholla, teddy bear cholla, prickly pear, numerous sage, probably a 100 brittlebush and a large variety of other cacti totaling 15 different species not counting numerous other plants. Bob pointed out a unusual native plant called a jojoba also known as goat nut, deer nut, pignut, wild hazel, quinine nut and coffeeberry bush. It had nuts on it which I was told to try. The nut was a little bitter, but crunchy. He said he’d planted most all of the plants that were in the front yard.

The backyard was huge with a lot of open area and then a creek with lots of trees at the far end. In the yard itself, he had five eucalyptus trees, an Arizona willow, palms, mesquite, sage and a few other trees and plants. Besides this, there was a huge 48’ long shed and a large BBQ area. Along the creek there were a 15 year old cottonwood tree, eight ash trees, Texas mulberry, three paloverde, a palm, a sycamore and a pecan tree. In the way of plants, there were wild raspberries, a wolfberry, catclaw and other sprouting bushes.

Not surprising was the number of birds that have nested in his yards – Gila Woodpecker, Curve-billed Thrasher, Abert’s Towhee, Verdin, Gambel’s Quail, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Mourning Dove, Anna’s and Costa’s Hummingbirds, and even nighthawks nest nearby. I saw at least 12 nests of various types not counting the two nest boxes that he had built. His bird list was impressive at 101. (Next month I’ll be focusing on native cactus, plants and trees before continuing yards.)
What Makes a Backyard Bird Habitat?

Backyard

Creek Looking Right

Creek Looking Left

Creek Middle

BBQ Area

Curve-billed Thrasher Nest in Staghorn Cholla
FAMILY BIRD WALKS AND PROGRAMS AT ESTRELLA
Sponsored by the Sonoran Audubon Society

Estrella Mountain Regional Park is located on the south side of the Gila River in Goodyear at Bullard Ave. and Vineyard Rd. There is a $6.00 per vehicle charge for entering the park; however, the bird walks are free of charge.

Join knowledgeable folks from the Sonoran Audubon Society for an easy two hour hike in the park and along the Gila river discovering the bird life of Estrella Park. Between the river habitat, the mesquite bosque, the near by farm fields, and the turf area, over 150 different species have been observed. While we will probably see only around 40 species, herons, egrets, kingfishers, ospreys, hawks, ibis, and stilts are common. When you think about it, everyone is a birdwatcher-you can do it wherever or whoever you are-but it's more fun if you know what they are. Bring your own binoculars and books if you have them; a limited number will be available if you don't. Rain cancels event.

SATURDAYS: These walks are held the second Saturday of each month. the next walk will be on November 10, 2012.

For further information, contact Joe Ford: 623-792-8154 iford25@cox.net.

SUNDAYS: The Sunday bird walks resume this month. The first one of the fall will be on November 25, 2012, starting at 8 a.m. Follow the signs to the dirt parking lot on the east side of the park—the Navy Area. For further information contact Bob McCormick at 602-373-2952 mcbobaz@aol.com or Andrée Tarby at 602-421-9425.awtarby@gmail.com.

The Saturday bird walk held at Estrella Mountain Regional Park on October 13th didn’t have a large turnout. There were only six including the leaders led by Joe Ford. Numbers were affected by the different location to begin the trip and a major event within the park itself. The temperature was in the high 60’s, no wind and clear skies. The river bed was dry except for a small pool 1/4 mile from the kiosk which had a small stream flowing into it. Another pool was further east and a good riparian area with cover and water led to the two large lakes on the sand and gravel operation east of the BLM property.

The trip began at the Sonoran Project kiosk on Vineyard Ave. near the Bullard Ave. bridge over the Gila River. The distance was about 1.5 miles roundtrip. The route traversed riparian area of salt cedar, mesquite, and Goodding’s willow with scrub of saltbush and creosote bush and a few golden rod in bloom.

The 39 species seen or heard were Ruddy Duck, Gambel’s Quail, Pied-billed Grebe, Eared Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Green Heron, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Sora, American Coot, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Mourning Dove, Greater Roadrunner, Anna’s Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Gila Woodpecker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Say’s Phoebe, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Verdin, Bewick’s Wren, Marsh Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, European Starling, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Abert’s Towhee, Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Great-tailed Grackle and House Finch.

Also observed was a mixed flock of icterids, species un determined. The cormorants were in long lines, often in V’s with most flocks moving in a westerly direction. Distance was a problem for positive identification.

Welcome and Thank You

Since our last newsletter, there were some more people who 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: They are Robert Dayum, Diana Deely, Marian Ghee, Marion Giblin, Laura Greenlun, Betty Hobin, Rafael Marrero, Sue Montgomery, Kay Murphy, George Nelson, Marilyn Newberg, Christine Ort, Him Parchert, Joan Rabbot, Bea Raymond, Della Riley, G. Scapito, Carol Schaupner, Carolyn Siburg, Tess Tadaya, Belinda Wade, C. Watkins and Mary Web. I apologize if I misspelled any of the names, but this is how I received them from National.

We also had a new “Friend” - Sandra Bondy

We welcome all of you to our chapter and we hope you will take part in the activities that we have going on. Take a look at our web-site at www.sonoranaudubon.org and you’ll see that we do a lot.
In October, 2000, I was fortunate to visit India as a Citizens Ambassador for People to People International. While in New Delhi, we stayed at the Park Royal Hotel, a luxurious hotel set in the midst of a neighborhood of slums. One morning before breakfast I saw a bird fly over the tall metal barrier separating our lush hotel grounds from the next-door poverty and land on a latticework beam over our hotel’s distant swimming pool. I hurried to my room to get my binoculars, which allowed me great views of a magnificently-colored bird, a White-throated Kingfisher.

The White-throated Kingfisher is one of 93 kingfisher species worldwide and ranges widely from NW India to the Arabian Peninsula to Myanmar, China, Taiwan and the Andaman and Philippine Islands. It lives in cultivated areas, forest edges, gardens, and freshwater and coastal wetlands. It is a tree kingfisher, often found well away from water, where it feeds on a wide range of prey that includes small reptiles, amphibians, crabs, small rodents and even birds (Oriental White-eye, Red-wattled Lapwing, sparrows and munias have been reported). This species perches conspicuously on wires or other exposed perches within its territory. It is a large kingfisher with a bright blue back, wings and tail. Its head, shoulders, flanks and lower belly are chestnut, and the throat and breast are, naturally, white. The large bill and legs are bright red. The call of this kingfisher is a chuckling chake-ake-ake-ake-ake and they are particularly noisy during the breeding season. Their nest is a tunnel in an earthen bank (or even a hay stack). The nest building begins with both birds flying into a suitable mud wall until an indentation is made where they can find a perch hold. They continue digging the nest with their bills. A single clutch of 4-7 white eggs is typical. With a powerful bill and rapid flight, these kingfishers have few predators.

In our hotel, our breakfast consisted of approximately thirty entrees, including local dishes as well as western delicacies. In contrast, I often looked over the aforementioned metal barrier from my room and observed children, pigs, and goats all foraging together for food in rubbish heaps in a dirt field, only 20 yards from our hotel swimming pool. This field also served as a communal bathroom for locals of all ages. Even though the caste system, a social stratification system, was still evident in India, the White-throated Kingfisher repeatedly flew from side to side over the metal barrier, oblivious to the societal inequities that existed. Oh, to be a bird!!
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.

### ARIZONA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SCHEDULE (2012-2013)

**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.

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**Nearby New Mexico Count**

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<td>12/30</td>
<td>Su</td>
<td>Peloncillo Mountains</td>
<td>Nicholas Pederson</td>
<td>505-417-8665</td>
<td><a href="mailto:npederson4088@hotmail.com">npederson4088@hotmail.com</a></td>
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2012 Field Trips—Fall

Monday, November 19, 2012
Thunderbird Park & Area Ponds
Leader: Dan Bohlmann 602-938-8244
dansbohlmann@prodigy.net

This is trip to the ponds of the Arrowhead community on both sides of 59th Ave south of Thunderbird Park. We will meet at 7:30 a.m. on the bridge over the ponds on Melinda Ave. Melinda is last traffic light on 59th Ave before you enter Thunderbird Park. Turn right on Melinda and proceed several blocks to the open area where the bridge crosses the pond. There is plenty of parking on both sides of the wide bridge. Looking south from the bridge is a large lake which usually has a few varieties of ducks, Great Blue Herons, Green Herons and maybe a few shorebirds. Looking North from the bridge is a smaller pond lined with trees on the opposite shore filled with Black-Crowned Night Herons. There are usually a few types of ducks here also.

Difficulty: 1—Morning trip only

Car-pooling meeting place is the Burger King just west of 101 on Thunderbird at 84th Dr. Park in the Lowe’s parking lot by the Burger King. We’ll leave at 7 a.m.

EVENTS IN AND AROUND THE VALLEY

Audubon Arizona Rio Salado Habitat

Audubon’s Birds ‘n Beer, is being offered on November 15th from 5:30-7:30 p.m. with the program beginning at 6:30 p.m. This event is held every third Thursday of the month sponsored by Four Peaks Brewery. Proceeds from the sale of beer go to Audubon Arizona. Local professionals will present a program and give you a refreshing way to learn about Arizona birds and other wildlife.

The Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center is located at 3131 S. Central Avenue in Phoenix and their regular hours except for special events are Tuesday-Sunday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. 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 the 3rd Friday of each month from October through May starting at 10:00 a.m. at the Church of the Palms on the corner of Bowsell and 103rd Ave. in Sun City. At the November 16, 2012, meeting, Gail Morris will present a program on Monarch butterflies. There is a trip scheduled for November 9th to the P.I.R. area.

For further information on Birders’ Anonymous meetings, programs and trips contact Marshall Esty at 623-977-1637 or mne@juno.com or Shirley Fackelman at shirleyfackelman@yahoo.com. Better yet, come to the meeting.

Hassayampa River Preserve

Anne Leight has bird banding programs on Sunday, November 4th and on Sunday, November 25th starting at 7:30 a.m. Newcomers are welcome; however, if you want to help bird band, you must contact Anne Leight at birdanna-belle@hotmail.com.

Birding Class: Basic Raptor ID and bird walk on Saturday, November 10th from 9-11:30 a.m. Raptors aren’t easy, but if you understand basic silhouettes and a few diagnostic marks, you’ll be able to narrow the choices significantly. This will taught by Kathe Anderson. Register with the Preserve by calling 928-684-2772.

The preserve 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 November 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

Sunday, November 11th 9 –11:30 a.m. there will be a bird walk led by Kathe Anderson. No reservations required. Just show up.

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/
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/

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
Eleanor Campbell 623-977-7639 ercamp@juno.com
Jim Consolloy 609-439-8851 jconsolloy@gmail.com
Joe Ford: 623-792-8154 lford25@cox.net
Darnell Kirksey 602-938-6174 dkirk38338@aol.com
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/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
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

Gambel’s Tales
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: November 7, 2012, 7 p.m. Monthly Board Meeting at West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, corner of 59th Ave. and Cholla in Glendale. Members are invited to attend as guests.

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