



Gambel's Tales

The Newsletter of the Sonoran Audubon Society

Volume 14 Issue 2

October 2012

At our next meeting.... Wednesday, October 10, 2012, at 7 p.m.

Rich Glinski: Burrowing Owls and Grassland Conservation

Here's your chance to find out about one of Arizona's birds that are in serious decline—the Burrowing Owl. Burrowing Owls are one of the most unique birds found in Arizona. Instead of living in trees, they live underground! Their legs are long running along the ground and standing tall while on the lookout for predators. They construct their burrows in a variety of areas, including farm fields. Since much of Arizona's farmland is being converted to development, the resident Burrowing Owls have to be caught and relocated. There is a dedicated group of Arizona volunteers who have learned how to do this relocation.

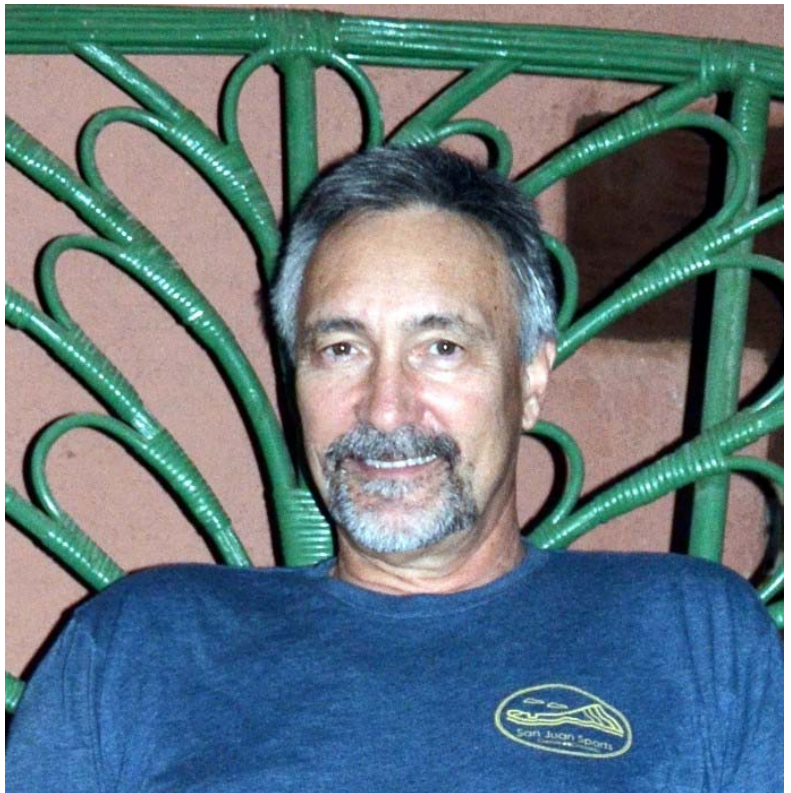


Burrowing Owl—Photo by George Wall

Diversity” which some of you may remember. In this program, he will describe how Burrowing Owls and grassland conservation go together.



The speaker, Richard Glinski, retired after serving twenty years with the Arizona Game & Fish Department. He is a staunch conservationist and an expert on raptors. He wrote the book "The Raptors of Arizona" as well as numerous papers dealing with birds and other wildlife and habitats. Back in January, 2005, he gave a program to us entitled "Raptor



Rich Glinski

What's Happening in our Chapter

By your Editor, George Wall

The Board met for their monthly meeting on September 5, 2012. Attending were Haylie Hewitt, Gail Bliss, John Arnett, Eleanor Campbell, Joe Ford, Darnell Kirksey, Jerry Theis and Andrée Tarby. Karen LaFrance attended as consultant to the chapter.

Haylie Hewitt presided over the meeting since the President and Vice President were absent. After the minutes of the last meeting were approved, the various committee reports were given.

The membership dropped to 827 due to 51 deletions from National and only 13 new members. The Yarnell field trip was cancelled due to bad weather. New trips were scheduled at the trip committee meeting on September 10th. On programs, the Brown Canyon program was changed to January, 2013, and Joel Pearson will give the December program. The Education/Conservation committee had asked for 5-10 minutes of time during the business portion of the monthly meetings in order to explain what they are doing. A motion was made and seconded to allow this. The finance report was passed around and discussed. It was noted that income should improve once monthly meetings started. It was also noted that we would be receiving monies from the Environmental Fund of Arizona and Arizona Game and Fish. The reported was accepted into the minutes.

Other items of Interest:

The National Audubon Board meeting is being held in Tucson September 28-30, 2013. Karen LaFrance will attend on Friday and Saturday. Tim Cullison will attend on Saturday.

The Mababi Ranch trip was discussed and is being looked at for a future trip (see the article on pages 6-7.)

We received a request from the Upper Agua Fria Watershed Partnership for SAS to co-sponsor with Together Green the lunch at the next water workshop at Arcosanti. It will be held in October. Darnell made a motion to provide up to \$200 for a work day for co-sponsorship. It was approved.

Friends of Agua Fria National Monument dues were renewed for \$40.00.

It was agreed to continue with the Welcome Packets at the General Membership Meetings.

It was noted that there will be no 2013 calendars this coming year.

The General Membership meeting was fairly well attended for the first meeting in the fall. 34 people attended and enjoyed the great program that Joe Ford presented.

During the business portion of the meeting, I introduced the new members of the Board that were elected earlier in the year. I expounded on our need for a new Database Manager, another Board Member, Speakers Bureau Coordinator, Field Trip Committee Members and Field Trip Leaders. Darnell Kirksey gave a ten minute talk on what the Education/Conservation Committee is doing.

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.

Saturday, October 6, 2012

Hassayampa River Preserve

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

Hassayampa is always a nice place to take a bird walk as you never know what you'll find. There are nice easy trails to walk around the area and also to the river.

Difficulty: 1

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 8 a.m.

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

Gilbert Water Ranch

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

Visit the Gilbert Water Ranch located at the SE corner of Guadeloupe Rd. and Greenfield Rd. (go east on US 60, then south to Guadeloupe Rd. and turn left.) Park the in parking lot past the library parking. A bird list of more than 140 species has been compiled there including more than 50 species of water/shorebirds like Black-necked Stilts and Green Herons.

Difficulty: 1

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 6:00 a.m. or meet at the 2nd parking lot past the library on Guadeloupe Rd. at the Ranch at 7:15 a.m.

Look for more trips in the November newsletter that we are currently working on. They include Arlington Area, Santa Cruz Flats, San Rafael Grasslands and several more.

What Makes a Backyard Bird Habitat?

By George Wall and John Arnett

Photos by George Wall

When I visited John Arnett's house, I quickly realized he had put a lot of effort in making it not only bird friendly but productive in all aspects. He moved into this house located in Glendale three and a half years ago and he quickly saw that the yards needed a lot of work. He wanted to create a sustainable and multipurpose ecosystem that maximized the functions of what was already on-site, planting mostly native plants, recycling using a compost bin, planting and growing fruit trees as well as others to help shade portions of his house and provide food for him and birds alike, and maintaining a productive garden area. However, the most important part of his ecosystem was the way he utilized water for both the front and back yards. He put up gutters and underground pipes to direct rainwater to plants that required more water. He installed drip irrigation with five zones for groups of plants with varying water requirements. Condensation from two heat pumps goes to a large container with overflow to plants. Swimming pool filter backwash and flow from an outdoor shower are directed to help irrigation. He contoured the front yard to maximize water from rain. He also dug a little trench on both sides of the driveway that act as a rainwater retention basin. I don't know what more he could have done in the watering aspect.



Front Yard

dominated by a swimming pool in the middle (not shown). This is where many of his watering ideas were utilized as the trees, plants and a garden need a lot more water.

Notice the walkway leading from his patio to the pool area. This was made using the concrete that he took from the sides of his driveway. There are plants on both sides of the walkway and then a garden further right.

He planted desert grasses that include sacaton, big galleta, deer grass, and sideoats grama all which produce seeds for birds. He planted flowering vines on large wide trellises that not only will provide food for hummingbirds and insects but create a screen between his house and the neighbors. Also planted were a few deciduous trees that will provide summer shade to cool the house, but will also allow winter sun to warm the house.

(Continued on Page 4)

filter backwash and flow from an outdoor shower are directed to help irrigation. He contoured the front yard to maximize water from rain. He also dug a little trench on both sides of the driveway that act as a rainwater retention basin. I don't know what more he could have done in the watering aspect.

Look at this front yard with mostly local Sonoran native desert adapted plants. There is a very large saguaro that was already there when he moved in, but very little else. He planted ironwood, honey mesquite, screwbean mesquite, desert willow, and an elephant tree all which are native and will provide shade for the house when fully grown. He also planted flowering and fruiting shrubs, cacti, succulents, and self-seeding wildflowers including wolfberry, Condalia, brittlebush, Gooding's verbena, chuparosa, Texas sage, cholla cactus and California poppy. They are all there, but some are on the right side not shown. He made the driveway narrower in order to provide more open surface for plants.

His backyard is a little different as it is



Backyard facing patio

(Continued from Page 3)

What Makes a Backyard Bird Habitat?



Backyard facing house

In the very back are some leaf and brush piles to attract sparrows and towhees. He showed me his backyard bird list and it is awesome. There are 75 species on it that included Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Willow Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat, Lazuli and Indigo Buntings, Lark Sparrow, Hermit Warbler and Hooded and Bullock's Orioles.

He said it was a lot of hard work and hours of fun. Healthy food, new yard birds and daily discoveries makes it all worthwhile.

He still has a lot more ideas that he wants to implement when he has the time.

On the far right side of the back yard (not shown) are a plum tree, apple tree and a peach tree. These trees will not only provide fruit himself, but for birds. He also has a very large fig tree and two other trees that were there when he moved in. The fig tree really attracts a lot of birds.

The compost area is on one side of his house (in the picture the right side) along with several plants. He throws vegetation, vegetable scraps and water from the kitchen into this area. A lot of this will go into his garden. Speaking of his garden, he has planted all sorts of vines and plants like string beans, melons and tomatoes that add to his larder. He lets some plants go to seed not only for the birds, but to use them in the future which reduces his costs.



Backyard—left side facing back wall

Source of Water

By George Wall

John Arnett's backyard featured on the two pages didn't have a water fountain, but with all the systems he used, it didn't matter. However, if you don't have a system like his, then you need some other type of watering system. You could use a bird bath or pan with an agitator to move the water, a water fountain with a small pump to keep the water flowing, or a solar powered system that is expensive but effective. You could even use a drip system into a small bowl. The main thing is to have water available.



Water Agitator



Water Pump Fountain



Solar Powered Fountain

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 **Saturday, October 13, 2012**. For this one time, the walk will start at a different spot. It will begin at the El Rio Project Site kiosk just east of Bullard St. Bridge on Vineyard Avenue which goes by the park entrance. The kiosk is on the north side. It will still start at 7 a.m.

For further information, contact Joe Ford: 623-792-8154 lford25@cox.net.

SUNDAYS: These walks are held the fourth Sunday of each month. The first one of the fall will be on **October 28th** 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 September 8, 2012, wasn't as well attended as some have been in the past. Maybe they thought it was going to rain, but it turned out to be just cloudy with the temperatures in the high 80's to low 90's with little to no breeze. The attendees were Joe Legander, Mark Paulat, Joe and Jean from New Jersey and Joe Ford the leader.

Their route took them from the east side of the park into the mesquite bosque, past eucalyptus trees, a grassy area, desert scrub of saltbush, palo verde and mesquites to the riparian area along the Gila River dominated by tamarisk species. Finally, they arrived into an open area east of BLM where a large body of water body exists along with willows and cattails.

The 38 species they encountered were Mallard, Gambel's Quail, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron (h), Black-crowned Night-Heron, White-faced Ibis, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, probable Peregrine Falcon, American Coot, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Gila Woodpecker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker (h), Verdin, Cactus Wren, Marsh Wren (h), Black-tailed Gnatcatcher (h), Northern Mockingbird, Curve-billed Thrasher, European Starling, Common Yellowthroat (h), Abert's Towhee, Lark Sparrow, Song Sparrow (h), Blue Grosbeak (h), Yellow-headed Blackbird, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch (h) and House Sparrow. Also seen were some unidentified species of small sandpipers and some fast moving hummingbirds.

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 Jason Banks, Raquel Duarte, Adriene Gillenson, Shari Hoggan, Margaret Ishler-Bosse, Arline Konitow, Robert Mander, Lewis Payne, Judith Pepiton, Christine Radway, Beverly Schweighauser and Jean Willoughby. I apologize if I misspelled any of the names, but this is how I received them from National.

We also had a few new "Friends" - Gary Berlin, Judy Pepiton, and Richard Reed. Thank you.

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.

Rancho Mababi

By George Wall and Joe Ford

Representatives of the Sonoran Audubon Society had been invited by Alice and Roberto Valenzuela, owners of Mababi Ranch in Sonora, Mexico, to stay there for two nights without charge. This ranch is normally a hunter's base of operation (see their website at www.ranchomababi.com), but they are trying to expand to include bird-watchers.

Early on morning of Wednesday, August 29, 2012, Joe Ford, Karen LaFrance, Tice Supplee and George Wall headed for Rancho Mababi in Sonora, Mexico. It was an uneventful drive until we got a phone call from Alice saying that her vehicle had broken down on the other side of the border. She was supposed to pick us up in Douglas, Arizona, where we would leave the car. Since this was now not possible, we picked her up on our side of the border and she escorted us across in our car after filling out a lot of paperwork to get us and the car across. We then drove 36 miles to the town of Fronteras that had a population of about 7,500. We left our car in a secure area and were then driven 25 miles on a rugged dirt road to the ranch located in the foothills of the Sierra Madre Mountains. Their ranch consists of 6,500 acres of land with lots of running water and trees. Just a note: Alice's brother-in-law owns the ranch next to them and between them they own 30 square miles of property. Not only this, but the ranch abutted the Reserva Forestal Ajos-Bavispe, one of Mexico's few ecological preserves. Altogether, there are over 100,000 acres of land that we could have access to.

We were assigned nice quarters in separate buildings each with our own bathrooms and kitchens. After settling in, we were served lunch in another building designed for cooking and eating. We then rested for a couple of hours before we explored the area which consisted of lots of oak, ash, sycamore, cottonwood and other trees. We walked down a dirt road among the trees and saw quite a few birds before supper time.



Tice Supplee, George Wall, Joe Ford and a Great Pyrenees sheep dog—Photo by Karen LaFrance

The meals were mostly Mexican fare, but not spicy. We were served tamales, beans, bread, fruit, salads and desserts for supper. The breakfast mainly consisted of eggs, beans and fruit. Lunch consisted of leftovers, soup, beans and fruit. The fruit was mainly papaya and various melons. This was all homemade food and was excellent. At one meal, a couple of us even tried some homemade moonshine.

After breakfast on the second day, we got in a truck that Roberto drove with one of us in front and the other three in the open bed. We drove down the dirt road stopping periodically to look at birds. We did this all the way through his ranch and his brother's and then on into the preserve. The road we traveled was extremely rough. In fact, at one point he had to get out of the truck and fill in a deep rut with dirt so we could pass. We went a long way and saw the drainage of the Sonora River and the Yaqui River Valleys. It was quite a morning.

After lunch and in the afternoon, we went to another part of his and his brother's ranch down another dirt road that led us to a creek and lots of sycamore trees. Again we drove, stopped often and looked for birds. During this portion of our trip, we saw workers making charcoal to sell in Douglas and then sold to places like St. Louis, Missouri. We also stopped at a grave site of Beatrice Paxton who died February 12, 1912. She was the wife of James Thompson, one of the original owners. While we were at the ranch, we were regaled with stories and information about the ranch, animals, area, relatives and many other things that were very intriguing.

During our stay, we saw or heard over 40 species of birds. Some of the highlights were an adult Yellow-billed Cuckoo feeding her young, a kettle of Swainson's Hawks, a female Hooded Oriole feeding two Brown-headed Cowbirds, Western and Cassin's Kingbirds migrating together, Elegant Trogons, many different butterflies, lovely flowers and lush grasslands.

A future trip for the Sonoran Audubon Society?



Tice, Joe and Karen in the truck. Roberto standing outside—Photo by George Wall

Rancho Mababi Photos



Entrance to Rancho Mababi—Photo by George Wall



Lush Grasslands—Photo by Joe Ford



Flowers—Photo by Joe Ford



Juvenile Gray Hawk—Photo by George Wall



Making Charcoal—Photo by George Wall



Grave site of Beatrice Paxton—Photo by George Wall

EVENTS IN AND AROUND THE VALLEY

Audubon Arizona Rio Salado Habitat

Audubon's Birds 'n Beer, is being offered on October 18th 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 Boswell and 103rd Ave. in Sun City. At this meeting, you can share your summer sightings and find out about what is happening at future meetings and trips. There is a trip scheduled for October 24th to the Recharge Ponds of Glendale.

For further information on Birders' Anonymous meetings and trips contact Marshall Esty at 623-977-1637 or at 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 Saturday, October 6th and on Sunday, October 28th starting at 7:00 a.m. Newcomers are welcome; however, if you want to help bird band, you must contact Anne Leight at birdanna-belle@hotmail.com.

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. They start at 8 a.m. October through April and 7 a.m. May through September.

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.

PLANT SALE

The Desert Botanical Garden is have a plant sale October 15-21, 2012. This is your chance to get some of those native plants for your backyard bird habitat. On top of that, there is a used book sale. Who knows, you might find that bird book or plant book that you were looking for. For more information see <http://www.dbg.org/events-exhibitions/bi-annual-plant-sale>.

Arizona Field Ornithologists

AZFO has their 2012 State Meeting at Lake Havasu City, AZ, October 26-28, 2012. Join them this fall on Arizona's legendary "west coast" for the sixth annual state meeting of Arizona Field Ornithologists.

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

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/>.

Tres Rios Fall Nature Festival

Saturday, October 27, 2012

B&M Area

The river is again open at the B&M area where in past years there were some excellent festivals. This is a one day festival and the tentative plan is to have a river clean-up from 8—10 a.m. Then from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. will be the mini festival featuring:

Fishing on the river
Kayaking, canoeing, paddle boarding
Bird watching
Guided trail hikes
Agency booths
Walking photography class
and more



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.desertiversaudubon.org
Maricopa Audubon Web Site:
www.maricopaaudubon.org
Arizona Field Ornithologists: www.azfo.org
National Audubon: <http://audubon.org/>



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>

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 gmbliiss@juno.com

Board Members— Directors at Large

John Arnett 623-695-0953 treerunner@yahoo.com
Eleanor Campbell 623-977-7639 ercamp@juno.com
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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
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Membership: Charles Kangas 623-931-6677
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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 klaf@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

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:

October 10, 2012: Rich Glinski—Burrowing Owls and Grassland Conservation

November 14, 2012: Larry Arbanas—Florida, Bird & Nature Videos

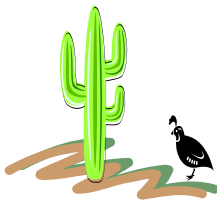
December 12, 2012: Joel Pearson—Lesser Nighthawks Renew Life

January 9, 2012: David Dise/George Wall—Brown Canyon & Area Adventure

February 13, 2013: David & Dianne Reesor—Antarctica

March 13, 2013: Michelle Wiznitzer—Arizona Birding from a Non-birder

Other Dates of Interest: October 3, 2012, 5 p.m. Annual Retreat 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

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