

WINGTIPS

A Publication of the Prescott Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

September, October & November, 2016



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Prescott Audubon Society

The mission of Prescott Audubon Society is to preserve and protect our environment for all who inhabit it. The Society pursues these goals through education, field work, social activities, and activism.

Membership dues are \$20.00 per address. Click [here](#) to go to the Join-Renew-Donate page of the PAS website. Otherwise, make check out to Prescott Audubon Society and mail to:

Membership Chairperson Prescott Audubon Society, PO Box 4156, Prescott, AZ, 86302.

Dues may be paid at Chapter meetings as well.

Meetings

All are welcome to attend Prescott Audubon Society monthly meetings that take place, unless otherwise stated, on the 4th Thursday of each month, September through May, at 7 p.m. at the Trinity Presbyterian Church, on the NW corner of Park Avenue & Copper Basin Rd. (630 Park Avenue), Prescott, Arizona. The November & December meetings are combined with the date to be announced. The Board of Directors meets on the 4th Thursday of each month at the same location, at 5 p.m. Audubon members are always welcome to attend Board meetings.

Wingtips

Wingtips is published five times a year. Prescott Audubon Society members receive *Wingtips* by e-mail. Subscriptions for print copies are \$10.00 for five issues. Click [here](#) to go to the Join-Renew-Donate page of the website to order a print subscription or send payment, name(s) and address to:

Wingtips Subscriptions
PO Box 4156
Prescott AZ 86302

Print subscriptions may also be paid for at Chapter meetings.

Submit items for publication in *Wingtips* any time; the deadline for the next issue is 5 p.m., Friday, 25th November, 2016. Please send submissions to David Moll at: wingtips@cableone.net.

Photographs submitted for publication should be full size, uncropped, files.

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Prescott Audubon Society
Website
prescottaudubon.org

Field Trips

Please contact the trip leader to register for a particular trip. (This does not apply to bird walks at the Highlands Center for Natural History.) Weather, road or trail conditions may cause modifications or cancellations.

Field trip tips include:

- stay behind the leader
- wear neutral clothing
- bring water, food & sun screen
- avoid loud noises including slamming of car doors
- don't forget binoculars!

Participation in Prescott Audubon Society (PAS) field trips is voluntary; any injury or illness while on an outing is the responsibility of the participant. Food, drink and other items are not provided by PAS. Car pooling is done so fewer vehicles are driven. PAS assumes no liability for accidents, injuries, damage to vehicles or loss of property while on field trips. Suggested compensation for drivers of private vehicles is .20¢ per mile round trip, the total divided among the passengers. This compensation is meant to cover vehicle depreciation, routine maintenance, as well as gasoline.

Cover



Balanced between summer and autumn, this hatch-year Western Bluebird has learned to feed on Canyon Grape, Arizona's lone grape species.

Activities & Announcements



SEPTEMBER

Saturday, 10th, 8 a.m.: Highlands Center Bird Walk.

For our monthly Highlands Center for Natural History bird walks, meet Nancy McMahon & Kathy Wingert in the Highlands Center parking lot, 1375 S Walker Rd., Prescott. Access is easy and all are welcome.

Sunday, 11th: Watson Woods Important Bird Area Survey.

This is counting birds in the morning followed by debriefing and sustenance at Wildflower Bread Company. Contact Karen O'Neil at jandkoneil@gmail.com for information and to sign up.

Thursday, 22nd, 5 p.m.: Board of Directors Meeting; 7 p.m.: Prescott Audubon Presents: Windows on Nature: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, San Bernardino Wildlife Refuge & Leslie Canyon Wildlife Refuge Manager, Bill Radke.

Bill will speak about general birding opportunities in SE Arizona including birds specific to the two refuges he manages along the Arizona-Sonora border.

Wednesday, 28th: Field Trip: Page Springs Fish Hatchery.

We will be visiting the always-interesting Page Springs State Fish Hatchery located along Oak Creek between Cottonwood and Sedona. We will be looking for migrants, raptors, returning ducks and more. Contact the leader, Rich Schooler, at (928) 379-5953 or d8@prescottaudubon.org for meeting time and place. Bring a lunch as this is a most-of-the-day trip. Limited to 12 birders.

OCTOBER

Saturday, 1st, 8 a.m. to Noon: Field Trip: Hawk Watching in Chino Valley.

Early October is prime hawk migration time, and the Chino region can be a magnet for raptors. Norma Jenkins and Nancy Silacci will lead this morning trip. Contact Norma at (928) 925-7221 for details.

Saturday, 8th, 8:30 a.m.: Highlands Center Bird Walk.

For our monthly Highlands Center for Natural

History bird walks, meet Nancy McMahon & Kathy Wingert in the Highlands Center parking lot, 1375 S Walker Rd., Prescott. Access is easy and all are welcome.

21-23: Arizona Field Ornithologists annual state meeting.

Yuma. [Web site.](#)

Thursday, 27th, 5 p.m.: Board of Directors Meeting; 7 p.m.: Prescott Audubon Presents: Windows on Nature: "Penguins to Polar Bears: Adventures of a Wildlife Photographer" Beth Davidow.

NOVEMBER

Saturday, 12th, 9a.m.: Highlands Center Bird Walk.

For our monthly Highlands Center for Natural History bird walks, meet Nancy McMahon & Kathy Wingert in the Highlands Center parking lot, 1375 S Walker Rd., Prescott. Access is easy and all are welcome.

Saturday, 19th: Field Trip: M R Ducks!

Join us for a morning at Willow Lake to enjoy some of Prescott's winter riparian birds, including ducks in all their finery. Contact trip leader Cathy LeVine at celex47-glider@usa.net for information and to register.

DECEMBER

Thursday, 1st: Annual Potluck & Volunteer Recognition Night.

5p.m.: set-up, 6p.m.: dinner, 7p.m. awards ceremony, Carl Tomoff Master of Ceremonies.

Sunday, 4th: Watson & Willow Lakes Ecosystem IBA Survey.

This is the first of four scheduled Lakes surveys. Teams survey from different vantage points for one hour in the morning, usually with a stop for coffee and refreshments afterwards, often at Wildflower Bread Company. Contact Karen O'Neil at jandkoneil@gmail.com to join a survey team.

Tuesday, 6th – Tuesday, 13th: Coastal Sonora Birding Adventure with Mark & Micah Riegner.

See below.

Continued on next page

Monday, 19th: Chino Valley Christmas Bird Count. Contact Russell Duerksen (928-925-5567, duerksen@msn.com) for information and to participate.

Wednesday, 21st: Prescott Christmas Bird Count. Contact Carl Tomoff (928-778-2626, tomoff@northlink.net) for information and to participate.

Wednesday, 28th: The Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge Christmas Bird Count. Contact Kathleen Blair (928-667-4144, kathleen_blair@fws.gov) for information and to participate.

Thursday, 29th: Havasu National Wildlife Refuge Christmas Bird Count. Contact DeeDee DeLorenzo (928-758-2707, deeedelorenzo@yahoo.com) for information and to participate. 🐦

COASTAL SONORA BIRDING ADVENTURE

December 6-13, 2016

with Mark Riegner, PhD (PC Faculty) and Micah Riegner, BS (PC Graduate)

Explore mangrove estuaries, and take boat trips to observe seabirds and marine mammals with biologists at the Prescott College Center for Cultural and Ecological Studies in Bahia Kino.

Price: \$1250

Includes van transport from Prescott, all activities, hotel (single room, if you like) in the town of Kino Bay and en route (Motel 6 Nogales, AZ), and breakfasts and lunches in Kino Bay. Space is limited to 10 participants. We will leave Prescott on Dec. 6 and arrive in Kino Bay mid-day on Dec. 7. We will leave Kino Bay on Dec. 13 and drive back to Prescott in one day.

A \$400 deposit is due by Oct. 1; make checks payable to "Prescott College" and send them to Mark Riegner, Prescott College, 220 Grove Ave., Prescott, AZ 86301. Contact Mark first to make sure there are still spaces. Full refunds before Oct. 1 but non-refundable after Oct. 1. Balance due by Nov. 4. Gear list, confidential dietary and medical questionnaire, liability release, and further details will be emailed upon receipt of deposit.

Contact Mark at mrriegner@prescott.edu or Lorayne Meltzer (Station Director) at lmeltzer@prescott.edu.

Hasta la vista!

Election of the Prescott Audubon Board of Directors

At the September 2016 General Meeting, we will have a voice vote of the members attending to elect or reject the following individuals as members of the Prescott Audubon Board of Directors. If you are unable to attend the meeting but want to cast a vote, please send your vote by mail to Prescott Audubon, PO Box 4156, Prescott, AZ 86302, and we will include your vote in the total. Election is by majority of votes cast.

One Board Member position is for a first-time two-year term ending June 30, 2018.

Rebecca Davis

Five Board Member positions for a third two-year term ending June 30, 2018.

Russell Chappell DeeDee DeLorenzo Kathy Malm Suzette Russi Richard Schooler

Prescott Audubon Society's Year in Review

By Sue Drown, PAS President

For most of us, the rhythm of seasons plays an integral part in the joy we get from birding. In winter, we have ducks on the lakes and White-crowned Sparrows at our feeders. Spring brings migrants; summer breeders sing in our yards. When autumn arrives, we see young birds fledge, then we bid them farewell until next spring. I believe we find a comfort in observing this predictable pattern unfold. And yet it's never the same, exactly. Maybe I get a new rarity in my yard, like the nesting Curve-billed Thrashers who arrived this spring. Perhaps the drought is responsible for a year with fewer birds in our yards. We birders like this, the pattern of a year, never static but reassuringly predictable.

Seventeen of us Prescott Audubon folks gathered last month to think about our Chapter's past fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) with an eye to planning what's next. We listed all the programs and services that Prescott Audubon offered this year. And it struck us that, while what happened last year was predictable—field trips, newsletter, website, Important Bird Area (IBA) surveys, meetings, Feed the Feeder, Stricklin Park support, water conservation and open space efforts, “Audubon Adventures,” scholarship & science fair awards, Prescott Junior Audubon Nature Club, the Birdathon, Christmas Bird Counts—we'd actually enriched everything. We had a year of good rain; we grew deeper roots. This was not a year of a big new direction or a new grant effort. We had no 100-year flood or landmark event. But nothing was static; we tweaked and reworked everything we do.

For example, we all know our monthly meetings come around each year, same time and place. Our vision for them has broadened, however, into a community-wide offering we now call "Prescott Audubon Presents: Window on Nature." And we've made these talks available for streaming or viewing on Channel 64, for all who missed the live event or who want to review a talk they enjoyed.



Can never have too many scopes. PAS President Sue Drown leading a field trip earlier this year.

Anyone who uses our website or our Facebook page has surely noticed that they are both livelier than before, as we respond to the interests and needs of our members and friends. And our newsletter, *Wingtips?* We've published it for many seasons, but our readers know just how much richer it has become this past year with more articles, quality photos, and a much larger audience reach.

So, while this past year's programs might feel reassuringly familiar, they are subtly changed. We have a much wider ripple effect throughout our community. I hope all of our members are as excited by this and as proud as I am. From the number of people attending our "Window on Nature" presentations, to the number of schools we support with *Audubon Adventures*, to our revamped scholarship program, our field trips, and our Facebook "likes", our stats are good, exceptional actually, for a little, all-volunteer Audubon Chapter. It amazes me that we expect all this from our Chapter every year, and we deliver. Never static but reassuringly predictable—that feels just right to us birders. 🐦

Time to Renew Memberships

Once again, Prescott Audubon membership renewal season is upon us! Memberships run from September to the following August. Our policy is simple—dues are \$20 per physical address per year. Please renew—WE NEED YOU!!

To renew, please mail your \$20 to Prescott Audubon, PO Box 4156, Prescott, AZ 86302, or look for Kathy Malm, Membership Chair, or Laura Rhoden, Treasurer, at the September “Prescott Audubon Presents” meeting. You can also renew on our [website](#) using PayPal. Your support keeps Prescott Audubon running—you will see in the Financial Summary how your dues are put to work. You can download a [renewal form from the website](#), or pick one up at the meeting, particularly if you have a new email or physical address. For those of you who prefer receiving a paper copy of *Wingtips*, please include an additional \$10 per year for printing and mailing—just note your request on the renewal form. If you would like to know whether your dues are paid up, please contact Laura Rhoden at treasurer@prescottaudubon.org or at 928-776-4514.

By the way, if you are a member of National Audubon, part of your National dues comes back to Prescott Audubon and you are automatically a PAS Chapter member. You can join Prescott Audubon separately to add your financial support, if you choose.

Fry’s Community Rewards Program—Time to Re-enroll

We received about \$210 from this program last year! In order to continue having a donation made to PAS whenever you shop at Fry’s using your V.I.P. card, you must renew your pledge annually. To re-enroll, please go to your Fry’s online account and follow the steps under the “Community/Fry’s Community Rewards” tab. If you haven’t signed up yet, please see the instructions at the end of this newsletter—it is indeed an easy way to support PAS.

Thanks to Our Supporters

Special thanks to all of you who have been supporting members, by volunteering, contributing to the Birdathon, and sending in a bit extra with your dues. Please add your energy to Prescott Audubon by joining us at one of our monthly “Prescott Audubon Presents: Window on Nature” presentations, or on a field trip or IBA survey; by writing an article for *Wingtips* or *5Enses*; or by suggesting a special project that is meaningful to you. We’re looking forward to some terrific programs, outings, and involvement in education and conservation this year.

Birdathon Recap

The Birdathon was very successful this year, in many ways:

- We had five dedicated teams in the field, who collectively saw 195 species.
- The teams' supporters donated \$3,009. This is 50% more than last year’s \$2,005 AND it breaks the ten-year record for Birdathon contributions!
- In the last *Wingtips*, Doug Iverson,

DeeDee DeLorenzo and Carl Tomoff entertained us with tales of the teams' adventures: the long day, many miles covered, and the joys of sighting new birds even as the count day drew to an end.

To review, the Birdathon is our major fund-raiser for the year. The proceeds support our Education Fund, including our classroom program: the “Audubon Adventures” kits; awards at the Tri-City Prep Regional Science Fair; scholarships; and the Prescott Junior Audubon Nature Club at Abia Judd. It is a time of gentle competition, vying both to find the most birds and to raise the most funds.

Congratulations and sincere thanks to all the Birdathon teams and their supporters. We appreciate all those who worked hard to find the birds and those who sponsored a Birdathon team or two. With respect to funds raised, the Monday Women Birders (75 species) came in first, followed closely by the Mohave County Chick-a-deedees (102). Third place was a virtual tie between the Sullivan Count team (135); Dr. Carl Tomoff’s team (153), a surprise last-minute entry to the field; and the Prescott Junior Audubon Nature Club at Abia Judd (21).

Many thanks to Birdathon supporters who contributed since our last *Wingtips* issue: Sue Burk, Sue Gabosch, Doug & Diane Iverson, John West, and anonymous.

Recent Contributors

A big thank-you, too, to our supporters who contributed over the summer months:

General Fund: Karen O’Neil, Leslie Quenichet, and anonymous. 🐦

Financial Summary of the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2016

By Laura Rhoden, Treasurer

As you have read in Sue Drown's Year in Review, while we had no large efforts such as improving Stricklin Park this year, our chapter had a multitude of smaller achievements. It's all due to our members, contributors, volunteers, committee chairs and board members—thank you all! Our financials echo this theme: we did not have the large expenses of Stricklin Park, but we did, to quote Sue, “tweak and rework.”

Overall, our income was \$10,324 and our expenses were \$8,377, resulting in a net income of \$1,947. The table at right shows revenue.

As you can see, the Birdathon is a very important part of our revenue. The remainder is primarily from memberships, contributions, and the dues rebate from National Audubon. "Gifts In Kind" represents the generous donation of birdseed to our "Feed the Feeders" program; this donation was created when Jay's Bird Barn surveyed their customers with dormant seed storage accounts. “Other” consists of proceeds from the Silent Auction at the December Potluck & Rewards Dinner, Fry's Community Rewards and AmazonSmile.

Revenue		
Birdathon	\$ 2,846	27.6%
Membership Dues	\$ 1,930	18.7%
Gifts In Kind	\$ 1,839	17.8%
Other Contributions	\$ 1,736	16.8%
National Audubon dues-sharing	\$ 1,430	13.8%
Other	\$ 543	5.3%
Total Income	\$ 10,324	100.0%

This year, our main expense was Education, which included 39 “Audubon Adventures” kits and expanded publicity for our scholarship offering, as well as our other initiatives. The next largest category is Membership/Program Services. This covers our monthly “Prescott Audubon Presents” programs (rent, publicity, liability insurance). We immediately converted the “Gifts In Kind” donation to an expense for “Feed the Feeders.” Some of the “Operating Expenses” are our P.O. Box rental and the cost to print our new rack cards, which we needed to replace our dwindling supply of brochures. We place these at the Chamber of Commerce and many other locations around town to publicize our chapter. “Outreach” includes our memberships in the Prescott Chamber of Commerce and Prescott Media Center (Channel 64: publicity and replay of the videos of our presentations). “Conservation” consists of our membership with the Friends of the Bill Williams River and Havasu National Wildlife Refuges and sponsorship of Prescott Creeks' Granite Creek Cleanup.

Expenses		
Education	\$ 2,217	26.5%
Membership/Program Services	\$ 1,935	23.1%
Donation to “Feed the Feeders”	\$ 1,839	21.9%
Operating Expenses	\$ 1,267	15.1%
Depreciation	\$ 401	4.8%
Outreach	\$ 468	5.6%
Conservation	\$ 250	3.0%
Total Expenses	\$ 8,377	100.0%

It is important to note these two things:

- Funds and grants which are designated for education or conservation can be used only for those purposes. They are never diverted to our general fund.
- Virtually all of our expenses directly support our various programs. Your dues and donations are working hard! Much of our overhead/administrative expenses are covered by volunteers' time and non-cash contributions from the board and other members, which are not tracked in the Revenue section. 🐦

Prescott Audubon Society Scholarship Update

By Mary Trevor, Chair, Scholarship Committee

Prescott Audubon Society has rejuvenated our Environmental Scholarship. PAS will still give \$1000 to a deserving student who is passionate about the environment and conservation. But starting this October, the scholarship is being offered to continuing college students, instead of graduating high school seniors. Over the eleven years that we offered the environmental scholarship, more and more high school students were undecided about their college studies, and so less inclined to apply for a scholarship that had such a specific target audience.

Therefore, the PAS Board accepted the recommendation of the scholarship committee to direct this scholarship to underfunded college students. After consulting financial aid officials at area colleges, the committee discovered that there are fewer private scholarships for continuing students than there are for first-time freshmen. This was the major reason for the shift in our focus. We also decided to change our application process to correspond with the annual start of the college financial aid cycle. We believe this will help publicize the PAS scholarship to area college students.

To be eligible for the scholarship a student must be from Mohave or Yavapai County, or attend a college or

university operating in Mohave or Yavapai County. An eligible student must also have successfully completed at least one semester of college. All applicants will be required to submit an essay making a compelling argument about how their major course of study can contribute to environmental conservation; and to explain how he or she intends to use the funds towards this end. The entire process will be conducted online, which is consistent with other scholarships offered to college students. In addition to postings at area colleges, the PAS Environmental Scholarship is listed in the Peterson Online Scholarship Guide.



Guidelines and instructions are available now on the [PAS website](#). The application period runs from October 1 through December 1, 2016. The online application form will be "open" during that

time frame. The successful applicant will be notified by December 15, in time for next semester's tuition! Please share this information with students or parents and friends of students who might qualify, and direct them to the [scholarship page](#) on the PAS website. We look forward to a successful launch of our revamped scholarship program. 🎓

Prescott Junior Audubon Nature Club Report

Hi All,

Once again, I just wanted to send a huge thank you and shout-out to all of the amazing and generous naturalists who have donated an hour or two to the PJANC at AJ this past school year and Yavapai College for Kids this summer!

In June and July, 2016 at Yavapai College for Kids, I offered both classes—Prescott Junior Audubon Nature Club and PJANC presents "The Grand Canyon" and both were huge successes. Some of the highlights from the 2 summer classes at Yavapai College for Kids:

Once again, Russ Chappell (Prescott Audubon Society/Prescott Astronomy Club) did an 8 hour turn-around with all of the young naturalists name badges for both classes! They absolutely love taking them home forever and it's a great aid for our visiting outreach volunteers to be able to recognize and converse with them on a first name basis during their presentations. Dianne Olson (Highlands Center for Natural History) led a wonderful pine cone bird feeder activity, along with bringing her frozen feathered friends, so the students could handle the birds up-close and study their anatomy. Matt Buchholtz (Yavapai Humane Society) presented his amazing presentation on the similarities and differences in domesticated and wild canines/felines in the Central Highlands of AZ for both classes, along with bringing his friendly boxer, Faye. The kiddos were taught proper canine etiquette with Faye—she rewarded them with lots of slurpy kisses! Mr. Wilson, (Great Horned Owl) visited us for both classes—the students love him and of course, Leah Wacks (Heritage Park Zoological Sanctuary) and Cathy Palm-Gessner (HPZS/PAS/SW

Monarch Study/AZ Native Plant Society) did another fabulous presentation as Mr. Wilson's human guides. Killian Lord (Yavapai College, Del E. Webb Family Enrichment Center and Prescott College) did an interactive Grand Canyon backpacking activity and slide show that the students loved—setting up a tent, learning about backpacking essentials, climbing into a snuggly bag and checking out the Grand Canyon through Killian's adventures.

Sue Drown and Laura Rhoden (Prescott Audubon Society) used the club's binoculars for a children's Goldwater Lake activity in late May, as well as Jeff Schalaus, (University of AZ Yavapai County Director—Agriculture and Natural Resources) for an outdoor youth hiking program this summer.

So...as you can see, our young naturalists have been busy with Mother Nature and have been engaged by all of you! Speaking of which....

My two PJANC classes are starting for 2016 Quarter 1, next week, 8/22-10/7/16. My Prescott Junior Audubon Nature class is on Tuesday afternoons and my PJANC-

The Grand Canyon will be held on Friday afternoons, both from 2:45-4:00 p.m. If anyone has the interest or desire to educate these young naturalists for an hour or two— please, let me know! They really look forward to our guest speakers and are ready to absorb your knowledge. We can do a presentation on site, in the class room, in our newly renovated Secret Garden at AJ (through the HCNH Habitat Grant) or over at the Community Nature Center.

Many, many thanks and warm regards,

Sue Lord, Abia Judd, Yavapai College faculty. 🐦



Mohave County Bird Sightings: Late May – August, 2016

Compiled by DeeDee DeLorenzo

All sightings in this report are tentative as they have not been confirmed except by the individual reporting them to DeeDee DeLorenzo. Report Mohave County sightings to DeeDee DeLorenzo at (928) 758-2707 or deededelorenzo@yahoo.com

Abbreviations: Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas (Atlas); Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge (BWRNWR); Havasu National Wildlife Refuge (HNWR); Bullhead City (BHC); Lake Havasu City (LHC); Lake Havasu (L. Havasu); Lake Mohave (L. Mohave); Lower Colorado River Valley (LCRV); FOS (First of Season)

A **Tropical Kingbird**, located in a cottonwood tree in the Riparian Corridor (RC), HNWR, was first reported by DeeDee DeLorenzo 25 May. Several Tropical Kingbirds have been seen in the RC throughout the summer with the most recent sighting occurring 30 Aug. This is the sixth consecutive year the Tropical Kingbird has been observed in the RC area since it was first reported in 2011.

Glenn Klingler reported two **Clark's Nutcrackers** in Hualapai Mountain Park, 29 May. This species, found in the high-elevation mountain ranges of western North America, was not detected in the Hualapais during the Atlas survey period between 1993 and 2000.

A **Long-billed Curlew** was spotted with 6 Black-necked Stilts by DeeDee DeLorenzo along the bank of the Colorado River, Bullhead City, 4 June. The Long-billed Curlew can be found in the LCRV between mid-March and early May and again from early July to late September, so this find is noteworthy.

A lingering **Osprey**, north of the Inlet Canal on Interior Rd., HNWR, 6 June, was reported by Lauren Harter. This species is usually gone from the LCRV by early May, but are uncommon transients from mid-August through mid-October. Two Osprey were reported by DeeDee DeLorenzo 25 August in HNWR, one at Beal Lake and the other on Topock Marsh near the Beal

Pump Station. Whether one of these is the "lingering" bird from June is unknown.

A possible early fall transient, one **Caspian Tern** was spotted at Willow Beach, Lake Mead NRA, 20 June, by Ryan Seppala.

The western **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was listed as threatened by the USFWS in 2014, so it is encouraging that Lauren Harter found four, 11 June, in the Beal Lake Conservation Area of the HNWR. On 21 July, Karina Cocks and DeeDee DeLorenzo observed one Yellow-billed Cuckoo at the Riparian Corridor near Pintail Sough, HNWR.

A **Bronzed Cowbird** was reported at Rotary Park, LHC, 1 July by Lauren Harter. This species is a rare local summer resident and breeder. The Bronzed Cowbird prefers to parasitize oriole nests, particularly those of the Hooded Oriole. Its summer range appears to be expanding north and west as is the range of the Hooded Oriole.

One **Worm-eating Warbler** was caught and banded at Beal Lake Conservation Area 8 July by Joe Kahl. There are only three previously documented reports of Worm-eating Warblers in Mohave County.

A single **Common Merganser** was spotted by Gabriel Sandoval at Davis Camp, BHC, 20 July. This may be a



Tropical Kingbird by DeeDee DeLorenzo

lingering bird since this species is usually only found in the LCRV between November and February.

Two FOS **Long-billed Dowitchers** were reported by DeeDee DeLorenzo 21 July at Pintail Slough, HNWR.

On Levee Rd. just before the Beal Lake turn-off, HNWR, 21 July, Gabriel Sandoval located a **Long-eared Owl**. This report is noteworthy since this species is seldom seen or heard in the HNWR.

Gabriel Sandoval observed 121 **White-faced Ibis** flying over Levee Rd., HNWR, 21 July. Then on 12 Aug, DeeDee DeLorenzo counted 250 heading north over Courtwright Rd., Mohave Valley. Not to be outdone, Don Glasco reported a high count of 900 White-faced Ibis at Pintail Slough/North Dike, HNWR.

A **Black Tern** was discovered by DeeDee DeLorenzo and photographed by Karina Cocks as it flew around the south end of Topock Marsh, HNWR, 21 July. David Vander Pluym and Lauren Harter reported 31 Black Tern on L. Havasu, North end viewpoint 23 Aug.

One male **Lazuli Bunting** and one male Indigo Bunting were found feeding on seed in the middle of Interior Rd. just north of Glory Hole, HNWR, 21 July by Karina Cocks and DeeDee DeLorenzo.

An early male **Gadwall** was found among a small flock of Cinnamon Teal and Blue-winged Teal in Moist Soil area 3, Pintail Slough, HNWR, 29 July by DeeDee DeLorenzo.

Flying near Revegetation area 5, HNWR, an adult female FOS **Northern Harrier** was observed by

DeeDee DeLorenzo and Karina Cocks on 29 July.

Jim Sumler photographed a **Louisiana Waterthrush** in a private yard on Joshua Drive in the Dolan Springs area, 14 August. This species is a casual transient in Arizona and is only the second or third Mohave County record. (It is not known if the 1977 sighting in the Bill Williams River area was in Mohave or La Paz County.)



Exceedingly rare for the Lower Colorado River Valley, this Worm-eating Warbler was photographed by Joe Kahl, 2016-07-08.

Helen Howard observed one **Sandhill Crane** heading south, 15 August, as it flew over Davis Dam. This is an early FOS date since this species does not usually begin to arrive in the LCRV until late Sept.

Two juvenile **Stilt Sandpipers** were located at the North end viewpoint of L. Havasu 15 Aug. by David Vander Pluym and Lauren Harter. There is only one other record of Stilt Sandpipers in the LCRV and that was in 1979 (Rosenberg, et al).

An early **Savannah Sparrow** and two **Horned Lark** were found at the island sewage treatment plant, LHC, 15 Aug. by Lauren Harter and David Vander Pluym.

A possible migrant or early winter resident, one **Belted Kingfisher** was observed along Old South Dike by DeeDee DeLorenzo 25 Aug.

John West observed five FOS **Greater White-fronted Geese** 29 Aug on the Bill Williams River NWR Delta.

Uncommon from late August through December in the LCRV, three **Cedar Waxwings** were observed at Glenn Klingler's home in north LHC 29 Aug., and DeeDee DeLorenzo discovered one in the Riparian Corridor, HNWR, 30 Aug. 🐦

Important Bird Area Update : Yellow-billed Cuckoos

By Karen O'Neil, Prescott Audubon Society IBA Coordinator

You may be wondering why the Important Bird Area Update has a subtitle when usually it discusses a variety of species. This report is focused on this species because most of the surveys since the last report have been specifically designed to ascertain the presence or absence of Yellow-billed Cuckoos in each of the survey transects in the Upper Verde River Wildlife Management Area. The reason for this major activity focus is because in the Fall 2014, the western population of this species was listed as threatened in accordance with the Endangered Species Act. Numerous surveys have been conducted throughout the western United States along riparian habitats for the last 20 or so years. Prescott Audubon volunteers had even done a few along the Upper Verde off and on since about 2007. These surveys have demonstrated that the western population of this species has shown serious decline. The most likely reasons are loss of habitat most likely due to both development and drought.

However, the Yellow-billed Cuckoo as a species is spread across at least the lower 48 states during its breeding season. And, those individuals in the west are even currently understood to be the same sub-species as those in the east. The species is not thought to be in decline east of the Rocky Mountains. So how does it work when a species that is not a subspecies is in decline in one part of the country but not in the rest of the country? The Endangered Species Act has a designation called "distinct population segment" to allow for listing as threatened or endangered in a designated location, but

not in other locations. It is also possible that further genetic research into this species may find other distinctions. The current scientists working on the Yellow-billed Cuckoo freely admit that more genetic research would be very useful in furthering scientific understanding of this species.



So what, you may ask, does all this have to do with Prescott Audubon Society and the Upper Verde River Wildlife Management Area IBA? Mostly, it is important to appreciate the amount of dedication and work that our Chapter's volunteers did this summer in

regard to this species. First, in 2015, two volunteers (Norma Jenkins and Karen O'Neil) spent a day of classroom training in Phoenix and a morning of field

training in the Agua Fria National Monument in order to qualify to lead others in the effort to survey this species along the Upper Verde River WMA IBA. In 2015, the volunteers did one survey and with the assistance of Noel Fletcher, biologist with the US Forest Service and some of her interns, covered three of the four transects along the Upper Verde River. The two volunteers and Noel were also "permittees" as a permit is required from both the Arizona Game & Fish Department (AGFD) and the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Federal agency charged with managing for threatened or endangered species. A big Thank You as well to Audubon Arizona for the work they do (it is a lot of paperwork!) to obtain these

permits and put volunteers from various Audubon Chapters around our state on these permits.

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Surveyors have to keep sharp eyes and ears open to detect the stealthy Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

In 2016, four more volunteers (Cathy Levine, Dave Frechette, Laura Rhoden, and David Moll) took the in-class and field training, and now they are also "permittees." So Prescott Audubon has a total of six "permitted" volunteers for four transects. This training is necessary as there is a very specific protocol that must be followed which includes using a GPS and doing "broadcasts," i.e. playing a recording of Yellow-billed Cuckoo vocalizations every so many meters along the length of a transect. At each broadcast, the GPS reading is recorded. Additionally, if an individual Cuckoo responds or is seen (or both), that is recorded along with where the bird is located (sometimes an educated guess), about how far away it is from the volunteers, the compass direction in degrees, what kind of vocalization it made, and any other noteworthy information such as behavior (if actually seen). Then, all this information is sent to Audubon Arizona, and a dedicated staff member in the Phoenix office enters all this information into a computer database. Additionally, each PAS volunteer "permittee" also completes a habitat survey form of the transect, takes photos if possible, and completes an end-of-season summary form, all of which are sent via email to Audubon Arizona. In turn, Audubon Arizona sends all this information to the appropriate staff in the USFWS. And, the four surveys are conducted during the heat of the summer (late June, twice in July, and early August) at 4,000 feet elevation (1,000+ feet lower than Prescott) early in the morning. Also, whenever possible, the volunteers attempt to notice what other species are also present along each transect—somewhat the way they would do in a regular IBA survey.

Why are these surveys conducted in the heat and humidity of the summer? Because the Yellow-billed Cuckoo has a short breeding season in Arizona's riparian areas (it is a "riparian obligate"). Individuals arrive in early June, and leave by mid-to late August. They migrate to spend the rest of the year mostly in South America, some as far south as Argentina!

Readers might also be interested to know that Yellow-billed Cuckoos do build their own nests (kind of

flimsy things like Mourning Doves') and raise their own young—unlike most members of the Cuckoo family in other parts of the world. They are sneaky and may sometimes follow surveyors (usually unbeknownst to the surveyor) a ways. They also may be present, but may not respond to the broadcast, so they may not be detected. They make a variety of vocalizations, some of which sound quite similar to Yellow-breasted Chats, and at least in 2016, Chats were everywhere!! In fact, often the Chats would answer the "broadcast" calls. The Cuckoo may also sound something like a Mourning Dove. Or they can sound like a Roadrunner. It is also important that the surveyors know whether or not any predators are around, especially Cooper's Hawks. If a C. Hawk (or any other potential predator) is noted, the broadcast is not played.



When predators are detected, like this hatch year Cooper's Hawk on the Granite Creek transect, surveying immediately halts and resumes only when clear of threats to cuckoos.

All in all, doing Yellow-billed Cuckoo surveys requires many, many hours outside of the actual survey time, a healthy knowledge base about this species' vocalization, time in training, using a GPS, and leading a team of other volunteers. On one occasion, David Moll even did the entire thing by himself! So readers, please give these volunteers a special thanks the next time you see them. They deserve it! There were also helpers who braved the heat and humidity. PAS volunteers included Sue Drown, Doug Perkins, Mary Curran-Perkins, Joe & Judy Alston,

Barbara Indra, Sharon Brooks, Katie Benson, Matt Sullivan, and Kumara MacLeod. AGFD sent biologist, Stu Whitmore, and Interns, Melissa Folsom, Austin King, and Trent Rohrer. They were most helpful with the GPS work and helping PAS volunteers learn how to manage the GPS work themselves. AGFD also loaned us their GPS units when they were unable to participate. A HUGE THANK YOU to all!!

One more thing: This winter, it is time for us to again survey Watson and Willow Lakes for wintering waterfowl, waders, shorebirds, etc. If you are not yet an IBA volunteer, please contact Karen O'Neil at jandkoneil@gmail.com. If you are, the dates for the "Lakes" surveys are Dec. 4, 2016, January 8, February 5, and March 5, 2017. Mark your calendars! 🍷

Bushtits and Their Fellow Travelers; or the Warbler Time Warp

By Laura Rhoden

Photographs by David Moll

It happened again this morning. It started with a flock of Bushtits. In their midst, I spotted a Black-throated Gray Warbler. I heard a Yellow Warbler singing, and then my eye was caught by three warblers gleaning in a shrub. Much study yielded enough information to call them “Nashville.” A *chip/tick* sound from another shrub pulled me away, and the eye-arcs and hood said MacGillivray’s.

Motion in clumps of Ponderosa needles, scrub-oak, cottonwoods, willows; glimpses of yellow, white, black; wing bars, eye rings, eye lines, cheek shadows. Fighting the urge to look at my field guide, trying to memorize what I’m seeing. And then it’s quiet. I’m dizzy, my neck and shoulders ache, and I’m full of delight.

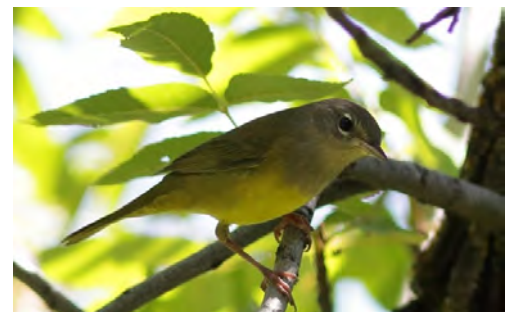
Curious, I check my watch; somehow, forty minutes have slipped by.

Some days, I try to find this phenomenon; on others, it catches me by surprise. To improve my chances, I consider time of year, weather, habitat, time of day. Wood-warblers are moving through our area now as they migrate south. Expert birders have noted that they seem to come in waves, coincident with weather fronts. A mix of trees and shrubs, perhaps near a creek, provides the insects these hungry migrants are seeking. As for time of day, I’ve found that things pick up once the insects are active in the sun’s warmth, and slow down mid-day. These all sound obvious, but they weren’t to me when I first began birding. I’m so grateful to the experienced birders who have been generous in sharing their knowledge, in teaching me the awareness that leads to moments like these.

It’s migration: get out and lose yourself in your own Warbler Time Warp! 🐦



Bird species that are permanent residents such as Bridled Titmouse, Mountain Chickadee and this Bushtit make a good matrix in which migrating bird species can embed themselves, forming a mixed-species flock of great value to bird and birder alike.



Left to right: Black-throated Gray Warbler; do you recognize this confusing fall Yellow Warbler? In late summer and fall, many warblers, like this Nashville Warbler, may be found among the Annual Sunflowers, and MacGillivray’s Warbler.



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That should do it!

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