

WINGTIPS

A Publication of the Prescott Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

December, 2016, January, 2017



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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, 27th January, 2017. 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 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 .10¢ 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



An American Robin takes a bath in the Tinney's yard, Photograph by Maxine Tinney.

Activities & Announcements



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.

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.

JANUARY

Sunday, 1st: Field Trip: Start the Year Right! Weather permitting, we'll meet at 9 a.m. and visit the local Prescott hot spots. We may be done by noon, but some may want to bring food and water if the birding is good and we go into the afternoon. Contact Sue Drown at 928-227-3720 or d4@prescottaudubon.org for information and to register. Limit 12.

Sunday, 8th: Watson & Willow Lakes Ecosystem IBA Survey. This is the second 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.

16–19/20: Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico. Thousands of waterfowl, Sandhill Cranes, raptors, good company and more. See information on page 2. Contact Karen O'Neil at jandkoneil@gmail.com or Norma Jenkins at (928) 925-7221 for information and to register. Maximum 12 people.

Thursday, 26th, 5 p.m.: Board of Directors Meeting; 7 p.m.: Prescott Audubon Presents: Window on Nature: Baffin Island—You Can't Bird Any Further North Than This! Brent Bitz.

FEBRUARY

Sunday, 5th: Watson & Willow Lakes Ecosystem IBA Survey. This is the third 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.

Thursday, 9th: Field Trip: Gilbert Water Ranch & Zanjero Park. GWR is a wintertime hotspot

Saturday, 11th, 9 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.

Thursday, 23rd, 5 p.m.: Board of Directors Meeting; 7 p.m.: Prescott Audubon Presents: Window on Nature: Exotic Birding in India. Karen O'Neil

Continued on next page

M A R C H

Sunday, 5th: Watson & Willow Lakes Ecosystem IBA Survey. This is the fourth 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.

Saturday, 11th, 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.

Thursday, 23th, 5 p.m.: Board of Directors Meeting; 7 p.m.: Prescott Audubon Presents: Window on Nature: "John Muir: Watch, Pray & Fight" Doug Humes. 🐦

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge Field Trip: January 16-19 or 20, 2017

We scheduled this trip for January 2016, but decided to cancel it as the weather was too "iffy". We are going to give it another try! However, we are making some modifications in an effort to thwart any "iffy" weather.

On Monday, January 16th we will travel to Socorro, NM, and spend 3 nights and two full days (Tuesday and Wednesday) at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (about 16 miles south of Socorro), for wintering Sandhill Cranes, Snow Geese, lots of other water fowl, and raptors. This flagship National Wildlife Refuge is also known for having eastern vagrants, so who knows what else we might find! On at least one morning we will arrive early (around sunrise) to see the "fly out" of snow geese as they head for the grain fields to forage. Hundreds to thousands of Snow Geese leave in huge flocks producing quite an exciting spectacle! In addition there are usually several thousand Sandhill Cranes in the refuge and many, many waterfowl. And, the waterfowl draw wintering raptors including Peregrine and Prairie Falcons. Once even an American Bittern was observed by a PAS group.

We will drive home on Thursday, January 19, 2017. But, if the weather looks good, and the group is interested, we can go to Albuquerque the night of January 18th, (instead of Socorro), stay in a motel there,

and on Thursday, January 19th, go to Sandia Crest just east of Albuquerque to see three species of Rosy-finches in the warmth of a small restaurant/gift shop with huge picture windows. Albuquerque Audubon folks keep feeders filled to ensure that the rosy-finches stay around. These species are very difficult to see on their breeding territories as they breed either high in the Rocky Mountains and/or Alaska. We can have lunch on Thursday in a restaurant in town, then spend the afternoon at Rio Grande Nature Center State Park on the west side of Albuquerque. We would then stay in a motel on the west side of Albuquerque the night of January 19th, and return home on Friday, January 20, 2017.

This trip will be limited to a maximum of 10 participants (in addition to the leaders). Carpooling is highly encouraged (with riders contributing to travel expenses to the drivers). Price TBD based on lodging and dining. Arrangements for motels in Albuquerque and Socorro will be as soon as the leaders know if there is enough interest, and we have enough drivers for a maximum of 12 people. All expenses are the responsibility of each participant. Please call or email Karen O'Neil to sign up or for more details. (See last page of *Wingtips* for contact information). 🐦



A Big Thank-you to Freddie Cisneros!

Freddie Cisneros recently completed a two-year term on the PAS Board of Directors and decided to "retire", from the PAS board at least. During his term, he volunteered to create the posters which publicize our "Window on Nature" monthly programs. He also generated the flyers for our Stricklin Park improvements, informing the neighborhood near the park about our plans and inviting their participation. Please take a moment the next time you see a PAS poster to appreciate the talent and wit in Freddie's designs!

Freddie, we'll miss your presence at our board meetings: your thoughtful comments, your sense of humor, and your photos of the bobcat who visits your yard (!). Thank you for continuing to create the posters and for keeping an eye on things at Stricklin Park. We look forward to seeing you and Mary Jane at the presentations for many years to come. 🍷



Freddie, an accomplished musician, with his band, the Blasting Caps. Photograph by Mary Jane Cisneros.

Results of the Board of Directors Election

By a majority of votes received at the September 22 Window on Nature presentation, Rebecca Davis was elected as our newest director, and Russ Chappell, DeeDee DeLorenzo, Kathy Malm, Suzette Russi, and Rich Schooler were re-elected.

All terms are for two years, expiring June 20, 2018. 🍷

If you shop with Amazon, go through the AmazonSmile link - another easy way to donate to Prescott Audubon

When you shop at AmazonSmile, you can have a portion of each eligible Amazon purchase donated to our chapter. Simply go to www.smile.amazon.com and designate Prescott Audubon Society as your charity of choice. For eligible purchases at AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to PAS. Same Amazon prices, same shopping experience, but you can support PAS with each purchase when you shop through the AmazonSmile site!

If you have any questions, please contact Laura Rhoden at treasurer@prescottaudubon.org or (928) 776-4514. 🍷



PAS Thanks to New, Renewing and Contributing Members

Thank you all for your response to our 2016-2017 membership renewal season, and welcome to our new members!

Your support is so very much appreciated. In *Wingtips*, we thank those who contribute, but there are also folks who wish to remain anonymous and we hope that they know that these thanks go to them as well. We at Prescott Audubon are very appreciative of all the contributions of our kind members whether financial or in gifts of time—thank you all! We are pleased to recognize our recent contributors:

General Fund: Rebecca Davis & Roger Asay, Natalie Houghton, the Eric Moore family, Karen O'Neil, Jan & Ronald Parrott, Leslie Roby, Nancy & Art Silacci, Barb Stewart, Chas & Crystal Wical, and Anonymous.

Many thanks, too, to Carol Schooler for all of her work to get Audubon Adventures into classrooms.

Good Samaritan Society Prescott Village sends this note of appreciation:

"Thank you so very much for the bird seed. Our residents just love watching them!" 🐦

Prescott Audubon Society Presents: Window on Nature & New Prescott Media Center Broadcasts

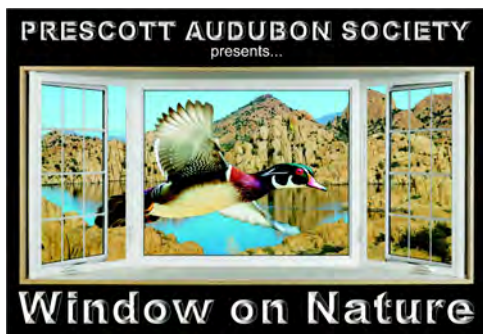
During Prescott Audubon Society's 2016 Summer Planning Retreat, President Sue Drown floated the idea of a catch phrase to spotlight the outstanding programs PAS brings to our members and guests.

There were several suggestions, with the phrase, "Prescott Audubon Society Presents: Window on Nature" being unanimously adopted by the Board, thus PAS presentations now have their own special promotional catch phrase.

Along with this new moniker, the idea of broadcasting PAS presentations was suggested, and the Board voted to give it a shot. The goals are: expand awareness of our Chapter and the Audubon Mission to a larger audience; provide access to presentations for individuals unable to attend meetings; and provide additional public recognition of our outstanding speakers.

This broadcasting opportunity is possible because of the Prescott Media Center (PMC) and Prescott College's Media Manager, Robert Milligan. Robert video tapes the presentations and edits them into one hour programs for submission to the Prescott Media Center. PMC then broadcasts the finalized programs on Thursdays at 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. on CableOne Channels 64 and 65 for a month following the live presentation.

If you do not subscribe to CableOne, each program is also available on the PMC Video On Demand webpage at: <https://prescottmediacenter.viebit.com/> for four months. A direct link to the PMC Video On Demand website is available on the Prescott Audubon Society website using the "Window on Nature" icon.



Our October 2016 program, "Penguins to Polar Bears" by Beth Davidow was the third program recorded, and is now available, along with Eric Moore's, "Beautiful Birds of Belize" and Bill Radke's, "San Bernardino Wildlife Refuges" the first two programs recorded.

We hope you will take a look at this new feature. Providing environmental, habitat and wildlife awareness to folks in our Chapter area is one of our most sacred commitments, so pass this information along to as many folks as possible so they can benefit from the great information our presentations provide.

Also, if you have suggestions or comments regarding this new broadcasting program, or any PAS activity, pass them along to us at (928) 778-6502 or email: contact@prescottaudubon.org. Your PAS Board is honored to serve you and the community, and your input always helps us do a better job. 🐦

Chasing the Lesser Sand-Plover: Or Why We Birders Behave Strangely

By Sue Drown

On Thursday, October 6th, seven of us from Prescott celebrated on the shore of a small desert tank, optimistically named Round Cedar Lake. It's not a lake, exactly. It's a shallow, pool-sized oasis in an otherwise barren landscape of gravel, well-littered with signs of cattle. We spent all morning there just appreciating our once-in-a-lifetime sighting of a tiny, rare shorebird called a Lesser Sand-Plover. The bird had been found and reported earlier in the week by a birder from Flagstaff. In non-breeding plumage, it's a diminutive gray-and-white bird. Smaller and less colorful than a Killdeer, it's a charmingly tame, approachable, and quiet little bird that plucks its meals along the water's edge. The Lesser Sand-Plover breeds along the coasts of Asia and winters from Australia to Africa. In the US, we have a few records from Alaska and the west coast; it is not known to visit Arizona.

I've asked myself why this chase was so satisfying. Many reasons come to mind, each one a part of why birding can be such a compelling, addictive pursuit. First, there's a good chance that what we seek might not be there for longer than a blink. I am certain that everyone reading this knows the thrill of a good sighting, be it bird or butterfly, coyote or wildcat. The effort of the chase itself should not be underestimated, either. In this particular case, we spent two days getting to the site, which was just

northeast of Flagstaff, on the corner of the Navajo Nation. On day one, as we reached Flagstaff, we received word that the site was closed for the day due to a funeral service at a cemetery near Round Cedar Lake.

Reluctantly, we turned for home. Of course, the delay added to the suspense—would our bird still be there another day? I can easily recall the relief I felt when we finally arrived and saw that we were not too late. For me, birding reinforces one of my favorite phrases, "effort brings reward". As any good story from a birding field trip proves, satisfaction comes as much from the adventure as the bird.

I believe there is honor among birders, for the most part. Amazingly, all birders heading for this "mega-rarity" received and respected the last-minute

closure notice, despite the chance that the bird might be gone the next day. The temptation tugged at us; would they really mind if we slipped in for just a moment? Much credit goes to the internet, which now plays a leading role in this sort of bird chasing. The closure notice—like the original sighting itself—was posted on

the Arizona birding hotlines, shared, and heeded. Word came to our car through the ham radio network, from a radio operator/birder who helped get the message out, yet another electronic link in today's world.

Also, I value the quiet social aspect of this birding moment. We met folks from Florida and Alaska, a preacher



Photograph by Sue Drown.



The Prescott Sand-Plover seekers. Photograph by Sue Drown.

from Texas, and more, about a dozen in all. We caught a bit of their stories and their experiences, and we shared our scopes and sightings with them as well. We all stood in wonder over this tiny, two-ounce plover while it snoozed on the shore, seemingly unconcerned. Underlying all this, we recognized that none of it could have happened without the generosity of the Navajo landowner, a quality not to be taken for granted when talking about private property in the West. He joined us for a spell, staying comfortably seated in his pickup. I can imagine his amusement.

In the end, this little plover stayed at Round Cedar Lake for several more days, and many other birders had their moment with it. Surprisingly, this does not diminish the relief I felt when I hurried up there and spotted it. We

all were grateful that this little bird with the innocent countenance was kind enough to linger for a while.

I can see that this entire chase may seem strange, as viewed by a non-birder. But for us birders, it all felt natural. The intensity of pursuit, the internet and modern-day birding, an oddity of migration (in itself unfathomable), property rights and respect, fellowship, and the sand-plover itself—all these wove themselves together into the story of why this chase has more meaning than just another tick on our lists. Birding embraces these many qualities of being alive and of being connected to our world in a way that an ordinary day running errands just doesn't offer. And I find that to be true whether I am out for a moment or on an adventure such as chasing the Lesser Sand-Plover. 🐦

Mohave County Birding: September - November 2016

By DeeDee DeLorenzo

Taking into consideration all the ways birdwatchers are able to access bird sighting information on the Internet, the "Mohave County Bird Sightings" report is going to change to reflect a more relaxed picture of birding in Mohave County. I have renamed the article "Mohave County Birding" with the hope this will provide the kind of information that will be useful to those who either live here or are visiting the area.

Since its inception in 1963, many avid birders have discovered that Lake Havasu City affords great birding opportunities throughout the year. As the Colorado River winds south along the western edge of Arizona, it funnels through Topock Gorge and empties into Lake Havasu. It's at the north end of the lake (and southern portion of the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge) that migrating birds, especially waterfowl, are found in large numbers. There are numerous spots along the top of several small sandy hills that provide great places to

view this part of the lake. Located less than a mile north of Mesquite Bay North on London Bridge Road, visitors may park on the west side of the road where the shoulder is fairly wide. Through a wooden-framed opening in the fence there is access to a beaten path that leads to the viewing areas.

During the fall, notable birds discovered at the north end of Lake Havasu have included Blue-footed and Brown boobies, Parasitic and Long-tailed jaegers, Little Gull, and a conservative count of 64,000 Eared Grebe. In the winter months birders should be on the lookout for Red-throated, Pacific, Yellow-billed, and lots of Common loons, Long-tailed Duck, Black, Surf, and White-winged scoters, and Horned



Blue-footed Booby by John West.

and Red-necked grebes. During the past several months, Sanderling, Short-billed Dowitcher, and Herring, Bonaparte's and Sabine's gulls were observed from this vantage point.

Other great birding spots in the Lake Havasu City area include Mesquite Bay North, the Waste Treatment Plant and Pittsburgh Point (accessed by crossing the London Bridge onto the island), and Rotary Park found just south of the London Bridge. Species reported recently from these sites include Neotropic Cormorant, Green-tailed Towhee, Indigo Bunting, Common Ground Dove, Black, Common, and Forster's terns, and Greater and Lesser scaup.

Keep in mind that two Christmas Bird Counts take place near Lake Havasu City in late December, the Bill Williams River CBC and the Havasu CBC. Although no CBC circle encompasses the city, birders who participate in either of these counts have the perfect opportunity to visit the area. 🐦



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An Easy Way to Donate: Link your Fry's V.I.P. Card to Prescott Audubon

If you have a Fry's V.I.P. card, you can link it to Prescott Audubon: every time you shop at Fry's using your V.I.P. Card, Fry's will donate to us. It costs you nothing except a few minutes to set up the link.

Please note that to link your Fry's V.I.P. card to PAS, you must have an email address and have created an online account for your V.I.P. card using that email address as your Fry's login ID. You will create a unique password for your Fry's account, separate from your email password.

To link your V.I.P. card to Prescott Audubon:

1. Either start at the main Fry's screen (www.frysfood.com) and click on "Community" in the top menu, or go directly to www.FrysCommunityRewards.com.
2. Click on "Sign In" (upper right corner) and enter your email and Fry's password.
3. Click on "My Account" (upper right corner).
4. Scroll down to the Community Rewards section, and click on "Edit".
5. In the Search Box on the "Find your Organization" page, type either "Prescott Audubon" or our number "37295", and click "Search".
6. In the results area, click on the circle to the left of Prescott Audubon Society, and then click "Enroll".
7. When you return to the "Account Summary" screen, you can review your choice; and then Sign out (upper right corner).

That should do it!

If you have any questions, or have difficulty setting up the link, please contact Laura Rhoden at treasurer@prescottaudubon.org or (928) 776-4514.

