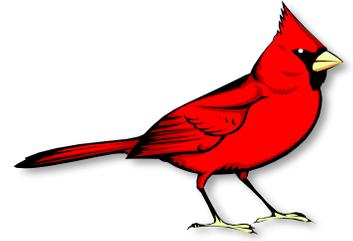


THE OBSERVER

www.whittieraudubon.org



Calendar

September 12. Beginner bird walk at Sycamore Canyon. Meet at the Sycamore Canyon trailhead at **7:00 AM**. The trail is located adjacent to Rose Hills Cemetery gate 17, but note that the trail is not in the cemetery! The entrance to Sycamore Canyon is a driveway just southwest of the entrance to the cemetery. Linda Oberholtzer leads. Rain or recent rain cancels.

September 17. Monthly meeting and program 7:30 PM at the Whittier Community Center. Valerie Sinex, owner of the Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop, will give the presentation, "Birds of Southern California." See page 2 for details.

September 19. Field trip to the Los Angeles River. Meet at the Whittier Community Center at 7:30 AM for carpooling. Larry Schmahl leads; details on page 2.

October 3. Pelagic trip over to Santa Cruz Island. Details TBD; watch the website!

BY JENNIFER SCHMAHL

Southeast Arizona in late July offers hellacious weather in return for spectacular birding. Fanning out from Green Valley, Larry and Joan led us for a week chasing endemics and exotics in some popular birding areas.

Our first day we went to Las Cienegas National Conservation Area looking for sparrows.

Made up of donated land from the Empire and Cienega ranches, along with portions of the adjacent Rose Tree and Vera Earl ranches, the rolling grasslands of the Empire Ranch holdings offer singing sparrows from nearly every shrubtop. We got out of the cars often to coax Botteri's Cassin, Rufous-winged, Black-throated, Chipping, and Grasshopper sparrows to come in and show us their stuff. Along with the sparrows, we found Larkspurs, Crissal and Curve-billed thrashers, Eastern Meadowlarks, Vermillion flycatchers, Blue grosbeaks, Tropical, Western and Cassin's kingbirds, assorted warblers, vireos and the sounds of the Yel-

Southeast Arizona

low-billed Cuckoo.

From the ranch we moseyed over to Patons (a B&B property now maintained by Tucson Audubon) for their specialty, the Violet-crowned hummingbird. The favorite location is the benches in the shade positioned to see most of the hummingbird feeders.

Down the road is the Sonoita Creek Preserve which gave us a Grey hawk and a Black Vulture, along with the antics of at least a dozen Broad-billed hummingbirds fighting for feeder space in the picnic area at the entrance.

Next day we started the day at Ramsey Canyon Preserve. The agile and fit set out for the upper reaches of the canyon to see if the Tufted flycatcher was still around. As it was not reliably found any longer, we concentrated on the Bledsoe loop and found the Flame-colored tanager, with a group of Hepatic tanagers. We heard the squeaky toy call of the Sulphur-bellied flycatcher, but did not get a reliable look at it. While lunching at the picnic tables in the parking lot we were treated to views of an Arizo-

na woodpecker, White-breasted nuthatch, Dusky-capped flycatcher, Plumbeous and Hutton's vireo, Brown creeper, and Bridled Titmice.

As the day was young and consulting with other birders about the state of the road, we decided to try our luck in Carr Canyon, the next canyon east. While the road was rough, challenging and "don't look down" scary, we all made it up to the campgrounds at the end of the road. The Buff-breasted flycatcher was extremely visible in the Reed Townsite campground along with a Western wood peewee and various usual mountain suspects. A lot of our days ended somewhat early so we could get back to base and avoid the thunderstorms every afternoon.

Monday morning, it must be Montoso Canyon. A lesser known cousin of Madera Canyon, the road up Montoso Canyon services the Whipple Observatory. Five-striped sparrows are known to be in this canyon, but once again they eluded us. What didn't

(Continued on page 3)



September Program and Meeting

Valerie Sinex, owner of the Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop, will give the presentation, "Birds of Southern California" at the September meeting of the Whittier Area Audubon Society. The meeting will take place at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 17, at the Whittier Community Center. The Community Center is located at 7630 S. Wash-

ington Blvd. in Whittier. It is located across the street from the Whittier Public Library, on the corner of Mar Vista and Washington Ave. (not to be confused with Washington Blvd) next to a softball field.

Light refreshments will be served. The program is free to the public.



September Field Trip

Our September 19th trip will be going to one of the best places to see birds in the early fall in southern California: the Los Angeles River. Every year thousands of migrating shorebirds find the concrete river channel. It is a great, easy walk to see lots of birds, including possible rarities, such

as the Upland Sandpiper we found on this trip in 2006 (which was a first Los Angeles County record!).

We will start at the Willow Street crossing in Long Beach and drive to one or two other sites where birds

are being seen at that time. Bring water and snacks; we will finish before noon. We will carpool from the Whittier Community Center (Mar Vista and Washington in uptown Whittier) at 7:30 AM. If

"Every year thousands of migrating shorebirds find the concrete river channel."



Southeast Arizona

(Continued from page 1)

elude us was a Yellow-billed Cuckoo that has been making its home here for several seasons. From the picnic area we got excellent views of a courtship dance of a Varied bunting for his lady-love. Looking down into the canyon bottom we saw Blue grosbeaks, Northern Cardinals, Hooded and Scott's orioles among others. We heard Canyon wrens and up at the 2.5km mark we heard Montezuma quail calling in the canyon bottom.

We came down and over to go up Madera Canyon. We went right up to the end of the road and started up the trail that follows the canyon up to the saddle. We found out that the Elegant trogons had finished nesting and were no longer calling. They could be seen at times anywhere along the canyon, but not by us that day. We did cross paths with a feeding flock of Bridled Titmice, Black-throated gray warbler, Painted redstart, White-breasted nuthatch, Brown creeper and the like. Back down the canyon to Santa Rita Lodge to watch the hummingbirds. A Plain-capped starthroat hangs out at the Lodge, but only in the mornings, so we missed

that, too. But there were plenty of Broad-billed, Black-chinned and Magnificent hummingbirds instead. Tuesday was Mt. Lemmon day. We started off the day at General Hitchcock campground with Grace's and Black-throated grey warblers, juvenile Red-tailed and Cooper's hawks begging, and a Sonoran Mountain King Snake twisting in and out of tree cavities. I'm sure he was just bird-watching like us. Further up the mountain to Rose Canyon Lake Area to find Virginia's, Olive, Red-faced and Black-throated gray warblers, Pine siskin, Pygmy nuthatch, Western bluebird, Cordilleran flycatcher and a Black hawk perched in a snag over the lake. We had lunch at Inspiration Point and saw Chipping sparrow, Mountain chickadee, another Olive warbler, Hairy woodpecker and the obligatory Yellow-eyed juncos. We parked at the end of the road and did a quick overlook of the mountain, but WeatherBug told us lightning was close and deciding that discretion was the better part of valor we called it a day.

This time heading to the lowest of the low, we visited the Holy Trinity Monastery

in St. David to see the Mississippi Kites eating on the wing as they soared over the San Pedro River. The Monastery allows polite birding and has set aside a trail down to the river for bird watchers. We had another sight of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo teasing us in the overgrowth as we kept kicking up Common ground doves. On the grounds we saw Lucy's warbler, Black-headed and Blue grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Black and Bronze-headed cowbirds, Vermilion flycatcher, Yellow-breasted chat, Bell's vireo and assorted other usuals. From St. David we went to Wilcox to check out the shorebirds at the Playa (a euphemism for the sewage ponds) Our intrepid group shrugged off the approaching thunderstorm and found Semipalmated plover, Baird's sandpiper, Black-necked stilt, American avocet, Wilson's phalarope, Long-billed curlew, Least, Western and Spotted sandpipers, Long-billed dowitcher and Killdeer.

[Jennifer had more to say but we're out of room! Find her at the meeting and she can tell you the rest of the story — ed]



Northern Beardless Tyrannulet

"...we heard Montezuma quail calling in the canyon bottom."



Montezuma Quail

Whittier Area Audubon

Whittier Area Audubon
PO Box 548
Whittier, CA 90608-0548

Whittier Area Audubon's web site is located at <http://www.whittieraudubon.org>. Our Yahoo group is called whittieraudubon. And we're on Facebook...search for Whittier Area Audubon!



YAHOO!

Bring Your Cans!

Reminder: Bring your aluminum cans to our monthly meetings. We can raise funds by recycling your cans.

Join Whittier Area Audubon Society!

Every membership supports Audubon's vital efforts to protect birds, wildlife, and natural habitats. For \$30 per year you can support Whittier Area Audubon and our local projects and events.

To join our local chapter, make your check payable to Whittier Area Audubon and send it to Whittier Area Audubon, P.O. Box 548, Whittier, CA 90608-0548.

To join National Audubon, make your check payable to Audubon and send to National Audubon Society, PO Box 42250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250. Please include a letter with your name, mailing address, and any other personal contact information you wish to share (e.g., email address, phone number) along with Whittier Area Audubon Society's code, C4ZC170Z. As a member of National Audubon, you will receive Audubon's bimonthly magazine.

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