

# BlackHawk Watch

Newsletter of the Northern Arizona Audubon Society

Volume XLVII • Number 2 • November-December 2018

## November Programs

### Two Topics! Birding the Rest of Arizona, and Pelagic Birding



Rich Armstrong

Dr. Rich Armstrong is our November presenter. Rich polled the people on his email distribution list with two possible topics he could speak on. People in the Verde Valley voted overwhelmingly for his "Birding the Rest of Arizona" presentation. People in Flagstaff voted very slightly for his "Pelagic Birding" presentation. A few people indicated they would love to see both. Therefore, Rich will do something new. He will give the "Birding the Rest of Arizona" presentation in

**Sedona on November 21**, and he will give his "Pelagic Birding" presentation in **Flagstaff on November 27**.

For the Arizona talk, Rich will take you outside your county to the other reaches of Arizona, talking about the 80 birds he has seen outside of Yavapai County including some misses. For the Pelagic talk, Rich will compare traditional small boat ocean birding with birding from a cruise ship, covering the birds one needs to sail off the west coast to see. Come to both. You're sure to be entertained.

Dr. Rich Armstrong got a PhD in Nuclear Inorganic Chemistry from Stanford. He spent five and a half years in the Army as a nuclear and chemical officer including jumping out of airplanes in Korea, and as a Professor of Chemistry at West Point. He also spent 15 years in the Army Reserves, retiring as a Major. He worked 20 years for Texaco and was part of the team that invented long life coolant. He has been married to Nanette for 32 years and they have birded together in Texas, Oregon, most of North America, and now Arizona for seven years. He is the NAAS steward of the Sedona Wetlands Preserve, and has led many field trips for NAAS.

## What Our Chapter Members Think

Have you ever wondered what the membership of Northern Arizona Audubon thinks about our chapter and what kinds of things they would like to do? Your chapter leadership decided to ask that complicated question, and, in July of 2018, a core group of chapter members met and decided to ask you by using a membership survey. We sent out an e-newsletter to the membership and got back 75 responses. As surveys go, that was a pretty good response and we set about analyzing people's answers and putting them into a format that would be informative and useful. This effort generated the document you can access at:

<http://northernarizonaaudubon.org/Survey2018/Membership%20Survey%202018.pdf>

Another way of finding it is to go to:

<http://northernarizonaaudubon.org>

On the home page click on the "About Us" menu and go to "Membership Survey2018"

As you read the results it becomes apparent that the membership of NAAS has moved past simple birding and into wider bird related fields. Birding remains, of course, the major focus of any Audubon chapter, but people are becoming more aware of the way birds fit into a larger focus.

The summary in text appears on the last two pages. If you would rather not deal with numbers, you might want to skip to that part.

This project occupied many hours of this core group of chapter leaders and we thank Ruby Hammond, Amy Zimmerman, Christina Vojta, and Kristine Follett for the survey design and analysis.

## ATTENTION FLAGSTAFF MEMBERS!!

**FLAGSTAFF MEETINGS ARE NOW ON THE 4TH TUESDAY OF THE MONTH**

## NOVEMBER-DECEMBER PROGRAMS

**Guest Speaker - Rich Armstrong**  
"Birding and the Rest of Arizona"

**Sedona - November 21 (Wed)** - Sedona Public Library • 3250 White Bear Road

**Guest Speaker - Rich Armstrong**  
"Pelagic Birding"

**Flagstaff - November 27 (Tues)** - Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church • Benson Hall • 1601 N. San Francisco St.

*Meetings start at 6:45 pm with social time. Formal meeting begins at 7:00 pm.*



# President's Message

Dennis Tomko - November-December 2018

A few weeks ago, I attended a board meeting of Audubon Arizona which is our state office for National Audubon. This was a planning meeting and I was astonished by the number of potential projects that were "on the table". There were seven pages of them, but one caught my attention more than the others. The project was "Bird Friendly Communities" and I wondered what that meant. When I came home I went to my online source, Audubon.org, and looked for some clues. It was time to be astonished once again by the size of the Bird Friendly Community resource. There were more than two dozen articles dealing with various aspects of Bird Friendly Communities.

Topics included planting a year for birds, lights out at night, planting for water conservation, feeding birds, bird baths, bird houses, green rooftop gardens, and much more. There was even an article for people who don't have a yard and live in a townhome or an apartment. If you live in an apartment and have a small patio, you can set up an enclosed box garden to attract birds. I checked out Home Depot and found the perfect product for this. Will you change the great global world? No, but you will change your own private part of the world. Perhaps that's enough. I encourage you go to online to <http://audubon.org> and mouse over the "Conservation" tab at the top to select "Bird Friendly Communities". With Winter almost upon us, this is a good time to get excited and start to plan for your Bird Friendly Piece of the World. Step out of politics and news and give yourself a vacation.

## Are Wild Birds Attracted by Music?

Phyllis Kegley

This is something I have wondered about ever since I was a child practicing my piano lessons and a Northern Cardinal would perch in a tree outside the window and accompany me. At least that is what it seemed it was doing.



More research and anecdotes can be found about pet birds liking music more than wild birds. My son had a parakeet that liked to dance to the rock music of the time-the 1980's. In studies of parrots, it was found that they like music but their music tastes varied from classical to rock. According to Dr Franck Péron, from the University of Lincoln, each parrot in his study had clear preferences. "One preferred the rhythmic and one preferred the classical," he observed.

But what about wild birds? There is less research here but I did find an interesting study. "PandoraBird: Identifying the Types of Music That May Be Favored by Our Avian Co-Inhabitants," by artist Elizabeth Demaray in collaboration with computer scientist Ahmed Elgammal and Rutgers University's Art and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory. They have created a bird feeder that plays music while a camera photographs and identifies the birds that come to the feeder and how long they stay. "If a bird feeds until the end of a tune, the system will select another one with similar qualities such as rhythm and melody. Demaray is attempting to build a database of the songs preferred by our wild, feathered friends and eventually present a music-discovery service for birds." The research is in its early stages but they did find that "more birds flocked to the feeder when Debussy was playing than when there was silence. Also, Metallica seemed to attract house finches more than house sparrows."

Scientists who have studied the human brain along with birds' brains are learning the similarities between how humans process music and how birds do. "The results of a study conducted by then Emory University undergraduate Sarah Earp and neuroscientist Donna Maney have shown that white-throated sparrows used in the analysis exhibit similar neural activity that humans do when listening to music that is either acoustically pleasurable or a discordant mess that pains the ear drums. However, they also found that during breeding season, male birds can react differently than females to certain tunes. This makes sense to me as females are being attracted by bird song at that time while a male may think that another male is impinging on his territory.

So the answer to the question, "Are wild birds attracted by music?" seems to be probably but more research is needed. It will be interesting to see what Demaray and Elgammal discover as their research continues.

## Results of Global Big Day, Oct. 6

Phyllis Kegley

This is the first year for the Global Big Day in the Fall. The final US tally was 677 participants, made possible by great totals from states like California, Texas, and Arizona. US eBirders also documented 537 species (79% of all birds observed!) with photographs in their eBird checklists, and 84 with audio—quite impressive!

Observers reported four sensitive species: Whooping Crane (2), Spotted Owl (2), Great Gray-Owl (1) and Gyrfalcon (2). Surprising to me were 8800 Tree Swallows, 45,000 Franklin Gulls, 9,011 Broad-winged Hawks, and 20,000 Purple Martins, all reported by individuals.

Yours truly forgot about this Big Day even after writing an article about it in the last newsletter. It may take a while for the participation to grow to what it is in May but it is off to a great start. The fall migration is different from spring migration, somewhat slower and not as direct as birds are not in such a hurry to find their breeding territories. However, the information gathered is just as important as what is learned from the May Big Day so plan to participate next year.



Great Gray Owl  
Photo courtesy of Michael Good



## Christmas Bird Count Dates

(See front page five for more information)

**Jerome: Sunday, December 16**

Contact Tina Greenawalt, [tina\\_greenawalt@nps.gov](mailto:tina_greenawalt@nps.gov)

**Sedona: Friday, December 21**

Contact Rich Armstrong, [richarmstrong@q.com](mailto:richarmstrong@q.com)

**Flagstaff/Mt. Elden: Wednesday, December 29**

Contact Terry Blows [terence.blows@nau.edu](mailto:terence.blows@nau.edu)

**Camp Verde: Wednesday, January 2**

Contact Kay Hawklee, [khawklee@gmail.com](mailto:khawklee@gmail.com)

## Northern Arizona Audubon Society Mission Statement

To promote the understanding and appreciation of birds and other wildlife and the conservation and restoration of their natural habitats.



## Northern Arizona Audubon Field Trips

### Clear Creek Campground

Wednesday, Nov. 7, 8:30-10:30 am

Leader: Chip Engelmann 724-599-7000.

Meet at the Day Use Parking Lot at 8:30 am We will walk the easy trails through grasslands and riparian woods. We should see a variety of sparrows as well as wintering birds. Dress for the weather. Bring hat, water, and binoculars. Good hiking shoes are recommended.

### Sedona Wetlands

Sunday, Nov. 11, 8:30-9:30 am

Leader: Rich Armstrong, 928-282-3675

richarmstrong@g.com

Meet at the Sedona Wetlands parking lot for a short (one hour or less) quick check of only Pond One and the big pond for ducks and other winter birds.

### Bubbling Ponds

Friday, Nov. 16, 8:30-11:30 am

Leader: Lisa Grubbs, 928-592-3684

Meet at the dirt parking lot at 8:30. No restrooms. We will be walking the Black Hawk Trail through a mesquite bosque and the riparian corridor along Oak Creek, finishing up at the ponds – about two miles. We will chase down residents and our wintering birds – hopefully some good waterfowl and if we are lucky - shorebirds. Bring snacks, water, hat, field guide and scope if you like.

### Parson's Park, Camp Verde

Wednesday, Dec. 5, 8:30-10:30 am

Leader: Chip Engelmann, 724-599-7000.

Meet at lower Cliff Castle Casino parking lot just east of old Cliff Castle Hotel at 8:30 am. We will walk a beautiful trail along the Verde River through riparian woods, then return inland through a drier woodland area. We should see a variety of sparrows as well as wintering birds. Dress for the weather. Bring hat, water, and binoculars. The trails will be level with a few small patches of rocky and uneven terrain. Good hiking shoes are recommended. and we will carpool in.

### Sedona Wetlands

Sunday, Dec. 9, 8:30-9:30 am

Leader: Rich Armstrong, 928-282-3675

richarmstrong@g.com

Meet at the Sedona Wetlands parking lot for a short (one hour or less) quick check of only Pond One and the big pond for ducks and other winter birds.

## Celebrate the End of the Year of the Bird by Participating in some CBCs



As always there will be three Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) below the Rim. **Jerome will be Sunday December 16th.** Julie Wills is retiring from being the Jerome coordinator and thanks very much to Julie for doing it these last eight years. Tina Greenawalt, tina\_greenawalt@nps.gov, will be the new coordinator for Jerome and thanks very much to Tina for volunteering. **Sedona will be Friday December 21st.** Rich Armstrong, richarmstrong@q.com, will be coordinator as usual. **Camp Verde will be Wednesday January 2nd.** Holly Kleindienst is retiring from being the Camp Verde coordinator and thanks very much to Holly for doing it these last three years. Kay Hawkle, khawkle@gmail.com, will be the new coordinator for Camp Verde and thanks very much to Kay for volunteering.

Above the Rim, Terry Blows is the coordinator for the **Flagstaff/Mt. Elden Count, which is Saturday, December 29.** If you want to help with this one, contact him at terence.blows@nau.edu. The **Mormon Lake Count** may not happen as no one has volunteered to be the coordinator. If you are interested in being the coordinator, please let Terry know as soon as possible.

### For those not familiar with CBCs they work like this.

- A CBC area is a 15 mile diameter circle.
- The area is divided up into sections and each section will have a leader.
- In each section a group of birders (usually three to four people can go in one car) join the leader and the group birds the section usually from sunup to sundown.
- Birds are counted. This means if you see a flock of hundreds of red-winged blackbirds you do your best to estimate a number. It also means every time you see a raven you put that down and end up the day with a total number.
- with some counts the day ends at a countdown party.

### How can you participate?

- If you are a good birder, you can lead a section
- If you are not a great birder (yes, you can be a new birder), you can join a section - it is like going on an all day fast field trip. Help always is needed to spot birds.
- If you just want to bird 1/2 a day, that can usually be arranged
- If you don't want to be in a group, you can do your neighborhood as long as it is in the circle. If you have feeders in your yard, you can do a FEEDER WATCH that day and report your birds - even if you just watch a feeder for a few hours we would love to have your participation and report. Please let the leader know if you are going to do this to avoid duplicate counting.

If you are interested (or if you have questions), please contact the coordinator and let that person know what you are interested in doing or willing to do.

### FINDING YOUR WAY

Directions to many of our field trip destinations can be found on the NAAS website under Conservation; checklists also are available. [northernarizonaaudubon.org](http://northernarizonaaudubon.org)



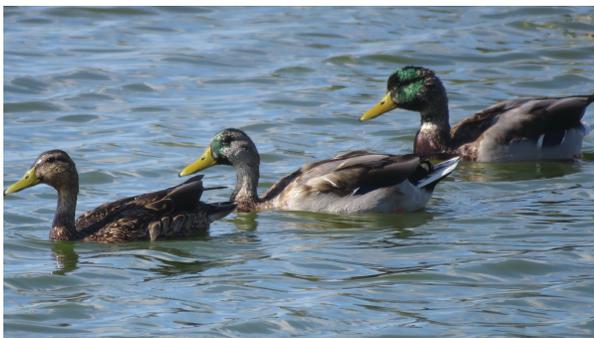
### Field trips

#### Highlights from Sept-Oct field trips

Jeff Tanner had six people and saw seven species of lizards and a diamond-backed rattlesnake on his **Tuzigoot National Monument lizard walk in September**. Lisa Grubbs did two **Bubbling Ponds** trips seeing 31 and 39 species.

Eighteen participants gathered at **Kachina Wetlands** for our September 15 Bird Walk lead by Tom Hedwall. Some came from just across the fence and some came from the Verde Valley and elsewhere. The wildfire smoke in the area didn't settle at Kachina and we had a beautiful day. It was a little slow for songbirds, but fortunately a nice variety of waterfowl had returned to the ponds by then. A couple of Blue-winged Teal and a group of Cinnamon Teal gave us the opportunity to discuss how to distinguish between those species in their nonbreeding plumage. We also had a brief discussion about Mexican Ducks vs. Mallards. How do you identify them? Are they different species or just subspecies? A few of the other highlights were a Black-crowned Night-Heron and a pair of Great Egrets at Pond 1. We saw 38 different species in all and had a lovely morning.

It was a cold windy day at the **Kachina Wetlands** on Oct. 19, but five people joined leader Debbie Brown. They braved the cold and had a grand bird day. One impressive thing about the wetlands is even on cold days you can see great birds, so always take a chance and come to the bird walks; you will be happy you did. The ducks on the ponds were numerous. In less than two hours we saw nine species of ducks, Neotropic Cormorants, a Bald Eagle, and some common passerines. If you get a chance go out and take a gander.



Tom Hedwall took this photo of a Mexican Duck (left) and two Mallards molting into their breeding plumage on his field trip at Kachina Wetlands on October 19.

### Member's Night in February

Calling all NAAS members! The February monthly program meeting is dubbed "member's night." Each member is invited to submit up to five slides and speak for up to five minutes. The slides may be on anything and you may speak on anything. It's your five minutes! This was a roaring success last year. This is your notice to start thinking about your photos. February 20 for Sedona, Feb. 26 for Flagstaff.



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# New & Renewing Members

- |                        |                         |                     |
|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Bill Auberle           | Barbara Hirt            | Phyllis Kegley      |
| Mark Philippart        | Gisela Kluwin           | Michael Erb         |
| John & Sally Sanderson | Marlies Allen           | Ross & Beth Hawkins |
| Ed & Sandy Clark       | Margaret Dyekman        | David Marsh         |
| Jeff Tanner            | Jennifer Schaber        |                     |
| Trevor Hinckley        | Greg & Faith Caffey     |                     |
| Joan Stoner            | Patricia Walton         |                     |
| Cynthia Perger         | Carol Lichtenberg       |                     |
| Elizabeth Bruchman     | Susan Crawford          |                     |
| Gretchen Burgess       | Ann Peterson            |                     |
| Kent Everhart          | Debra Curtis            |                     |
| Eric Gofreed           | Dayton Oslan            |                     |
|                        | Robert & Beverly Brooks |                     |

*To see when your membership expires, look at the date next to your address on your newsletter.*

## NAAS Directory

### Officers

- President - Dennis Tomko
- Vice President - Open
- Secretary - Michele Losee
- Treasurer - Joan Stoner

### Directors

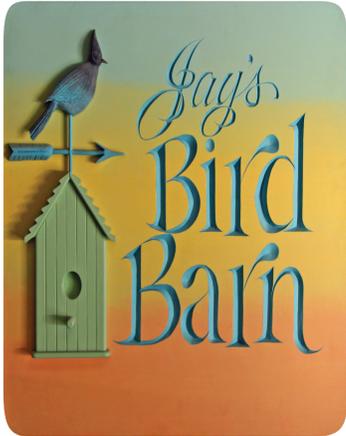
- Brent Bitz
- Karen Slavey
- Ruby Hammond
- Nanette Armstrong
- Trevor Hinckley
- Tina Whitley
- Kristine Follett
- Kay Hawlee

### Committee Chairs

- Conservation: Amy Zimmermann
- Education: Open
- Programs: Nanette Armstrong
- Field Trips: ATR - Open
- Field Trips: BTR - Rich Armstrong
- Membership: Karin Slavey
- Hospitality: ATR - Roy and Janet May
- Hospitality: BTR - Nanette Armstrong
- Publicity/Publications: Phyllis Kegley

### Sanctuary Stewards

- Steward Bubbling Ponds: Rob Grubbs
- Steward Sedona Wetlands: Rich Armstrong
- Steward Kachina Wetlands: Cristina Vojta
- Steward Picture Canyon: Trevor Hinckley



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### HOURS

Monday - Saturday: 8:30 am - 5:30 pm  
Closed Sundays

2370 State Highway 89a, Suite 18  
(in the Safeway Shopping Center)  
**928-203-5700**



NAAS is now on Facebook. Check out our page frequently because there is always new information on it.

### Have a story you would like to share?



- The **BlackHawk Watch** is published bi-monthly September through May.
- Articles are welcome from members and non-members. Send proposed articles by email to Phyllis at keglephyllis.com. Deadline for copy is the 15th of the month.



**Birders, Go to  
northernarizonaaudubon.org  
and check for new  
Field Trips on the calendar!**

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BLACKHAWK WATCH

*Have you visited our web site?*

**northernarizonaaudubon.org**

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Please enroll me/our household as a Chapter Member of  
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If you prefer to join or renew on line, please go to our website  
at <http://www.northernarizonaaudubon.org/>membership>

Enclosed:

Individual \$25  
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change of address

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(Gambel's Quail)

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(Blackhawk)

Please make checks payable to **NAAS** and mail to:  
Membership Chair, NAAS  
PO Box 1496, Sedona, AZ 86339

I am interested in Volunteer opportunities

**Bill Would Make  
New Federal Buildings Bird-Friendly**

Many species of birds fall victim to collisions with glass of large buildings, especially during migration. Lights on these buildings attract or disorient birds at night and, during the day, windows trick birds into thinking they are open space to fly through. It is estimated that more than 300 million birds die each year from these collisions. The species most commonly reported as building kills in the United States include White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Ovenbird, Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Song Sparrow. Several other species of national conservation concern suffer disproportionate casualties, including Painted Bunting, Canada Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, and Wood Thrush.

Federal bills have been introduced in 2015 (The House) and 2017 (The Senate) but so far neither has made it through committee. Both the House and Senate versions of the bill call for the General Services Administration to require new federal buildings to incorporate bird-safe building materials and design features. The American Bird Conservancy has a Glass Collisions Program which is addressing this problem. Go to their website for more information.