

BlackHawk Watch

Newsletter of the Northern Arizona Audubon Society

Volume XLVIII • Number 3 • January-February 2020

January Programs

Sedona only
Wednesday, January 22, 6:00 pm



A bird's-eye view of the Verde Valley

Ted Grussing, professional photographer and pilot, will delight us with his breathtaking aerial photos of our verdant valley and of some of the birds that live here. He'll show us an angle of the world we don't often see. You will be delighted with his images and stories. Ted, who lives in Sedona, has been taking photos professionally since the age of 14. His

other professions include: attorney, business owner, custom gem cutter and jewelry designer, author, public speaker, soaring pilot, and a lover of black cats. He has been flying the skies of Arizona since 1996.

Flagstaff only
Tuesday, January 28, 7:00 pm

Protecting and Restoring Northern Arizona Springs

Threatened by overuse and sensitive to disturbance, springs are among the most imperiled ecosystems on the Colorado Plateau. At the **January Flagstaff meeting**, **Cerissa Hoglander** will present a program on springs ecosystems. These biodiversity hotspots are culturally significant and key components of overall landscape health because they provide critical water resources and, on public lands, are often shared among human, wildlife, and livestock uses. Despite their importance, many of the springs across the Colorado Plateau are impacted by pollution, trampling, non-native species invasions, and extensive water diversions.

With increasing water demands and intensifying drought driven by climate change, efforts to protect and restore springs are paramount. Central to the work of the Grand Canyon Trust is the protection and restoration of the Colorado Plateau through advocacy, partnerships, and on-the-ground action. The Trust has collaborated with land management agencies, a rancher, and many, many dedicated volunteers to collect information on hundreds of springs across northern Arizona and to complete restoration work on ten riparian areas. This important work has been a true team effort.

Cerissa is a conservation professional focused on public lands restoration and climate change adaptation. Through her role at the Grand Canyon Trust, she works with land and wildlife managers, researchers, a rancher, volunteers, and other public lands stewards to plan and implement on-the-ground research and conservation actions. Outside of work she seeks to connect with the incredible wild places and communities supported by our public lands through trail running, backpacking, and other adventures.

February Programs

Flagstaff, Tuesday, February 25, 7:00 pm
Sedona, Wednesday, February 26, 6:00 pm

How Gilded and Red-shafted Northern Flickers Respond to Playback

Come to learn a lot about flickers as Becky Lausch presents her findings on how these two flicker species respond to recordings of their own voices and their sister species voices. Two species, Gilded and Red-shafted Northern Flickers, sometimes overlap in their

ranges and sometimes they don't. Lausch was interested in how their responses to each other's calls differ where they overlap and where they don't. Are their responses isolating mechanisms in their reproduction?



Becky is a PhD candidate at NAU in Biological Sciences. Originally from Pennsylvania, she came to Arizona in 2015 for grad school after working a summer on the Mogollon Rim on a bird field crew. Her dissertation work revolves around Gilded and Northern Flickers. She is broadly interested in bird ecology, behavior, and conservation. In her spare time she goes birding and volunteers for the Ark Cat Sanctuary in Flagstaff, for whom she also fosters kittens.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY PROGRAMS

Sedona: Wednesday January 22, 6:00 pm Sedona Only

Guest Speaker - Ted Grussing - "A bird's-eye view of the Verde Valley"

Flagstaff: Tuesday, January 28, 7:00 pm Flagstaff Only

Guest Speaker - Cerissa Hoglander - "Protecting and Restoring Northern Springs"

Flagstaff: Tuesday, February 25, 7:00 pm

Sedona: Wednesday, February 26, 6:00 pm

Guest Speaker - Becky Lausch - "How Gilded and Red-shafted Northern Flickers Respond to Playback"

Flagstaff meetings are on the fourth Tuesday at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church/Benson Hall

Sedona meetings are on the fourth Wednesday at the Sedona Public Library

Come 15 minutes early to socialize and enjoy some refreshments.





President's Message

Dennis Tomko

Have you seen the Canary in your coal mine lately? For that matter, have you seen your coal mine? Of course, I'm speaking metaphorically and as a population biologist. You see the "Canaries" every day; they are Steller's Jays, Nuthatches, Red-tailed Hawks and all the rest of the birds we know and love. We have lots of "Canaries", but only one coal mine and that is our world. Many years ago, if the miners got their canary out of the coal tunnel and the bird was not quite dead, but not very healthy either, they knew that the mine presented an unhealthy environment which was caused by toxic fumes.

Now expand that image and consider the health of the "Canary" as the decline in bird species numbers and diversity. We are being given the same message about our world-wide habitat and the message is a bit disconcerting. The coal mine had a single issue, but our planet is

not nearly so simplistic. If we consider our planet's health, which is also our health, the birds become more than they seemed at first to be. We all love birds or we wouldn't be here reading this. However, this same large group of species has a value or dimension far beyond our own perceived enjoyment because they quantify some hard truths. Birds become practically useful. This is why Audubon has launched long term studies of population dynamics of species such as Bluebirds and Yellow Warblers and this is why your input is so valuable as we become increasingly aware of issues such as climate change. It is sad to see that climate change – formally "global warming" – has become a political football. The reality of it can be seen in the health of our "Canary". I encourage you all to look again at the landmark Audubon study called "Survival by Degrees" which can easily be found on the national website: www.audubon.org. Once you get past the impact warming will have on your favorite bird species, consider the physical and biological changes that cause the distribution shift. You and I live in the same habitat as the birds, but they are moving away. How does that speak to you?

The benefits of bird feeders

Ruby Hammond, NAAS Secretary



If you are reading this article, chances are you are one of the 50% of Americans who enjoy watching birds at their feeder. Whether you're trying to catch a glimpse of a rare hummingbird visitor, or watching Pygmy Nuthatches boss around those innocent little Mountain Chickadees, you know how time gets away from you while watching those interactions take place in your own backyard. But, did you know that by watching birds at your feeder you

may be fostering a deep bond with nature that benefits you and the natural environment?

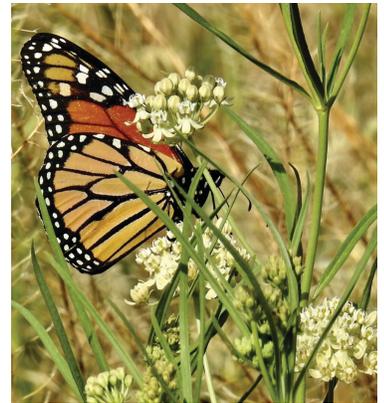
Studies over the last three decades show that when people spend more time with nature in a variety of ways (e.g., from walking around the neighborhood to going on a backpacking trip) they tend to be more connected to nature. What is connection to nature, you ask? It's complicated... but, essentially it gets at how much you identify with nature, or see yourself and nature as being intimately intertwined. Additionally, people highly connected to nature tend to adopt more pro-environmental behaviors. So, to break this down, when people interact with nature more, they take better care of the Earth. But, this isn't the only good thing we get from interacting with nature... it's also good for our health! Studies show that taking a break in nature (even city greenspaces) can have health benefits such as reduced blood pressure and depression, and increased self-esteem. Having a natural landscape view from your hospital room can reduce blood pressure, need for pain medication, and recovery times (as can the sound of birdsong!).

The Northern Arizona University Biological Sciences Department completed a study last fall showing people who own bird feeders are more connected to nature. NAU also found that when feeders were given to adults for the first time, their connection to nature increased after owning the feeder for one month! In fact, becoming a new owner of a feeder improved people's connection to nature by about the same amount as visiting zoos or natural history museums. What is really cool about this is that because people from low-income communities and urban areas have difficulty accessing places like parks and zoos, feeders are a great way to help people interact with nature more often regardless of location and income. Thus, bird feeders may provide a feasible way to break the barriers that keep people from interacting with the natural world, increasing the prevalence of pro-environmental behavior, and human health.

Not Just a Monarch Waystation

Denise Gibbs, Monarch Conservation Specialist, monarchwatch.org

The Audubon-sponsored garden planted for Monarch Butterflies at Page Springs Fish Hatchery in August 2018 has lured in 28 species of butterflies as well as many other wildlife species. While male Monarchs have visited the garden to nectar on the native wildflowers during spring and fall migrations, a female has yet to lay eggs on the native Arizona milkweeds during the summer breeding season. However, the milkweeds have hosted the caterpillars of Queen Butterflies and Milkweed Tussock Moths, and have supported their own community of insects, including milkweed beetles, milkweed bugs, and Oleander aphids. Predators in the garden have included a resident tarantula, a praying mantis, dragonflies, jumping and crab spiders, and ambush and assassin bugs. Skunks have visited the garden at night and helped us by digging out the beetle grubs. A deer pruned the asters when they got too tall. A javelina helped loosen up some hard-packed soil. Robins foraged for worms, Anna's Hummingbirds nectared on flowers, Lesser Goldfinches plucked seeds, and a Common Black Hawk regularly perched above the garden.



Visiting people also are enjoying the garden. Cindy Dunn, the Manager of the Hatchery told me that she has received many positive comments about the garden from the visiting public. She has added the garden to the self-guiding hatchery tour, as indicated by a new fish-shaped sign. On Thursday mornings from March to November, our ten volunteer gardeners take turns maintaining the garden and are happy to educate visitors about Monarchs. This past summer, a banner with information about the Monarch's life cycle and migration was installed on the front wall of the garden. There is also a new garden bench with a plaque in memory of Dena Greenwood.

Our dedicated volunteer gardeners who plant, water, weed, and prune the garden are: Susan Meyer, Pat Neyman, Colleen Peck, Paula Burns, Bev Hagerman, Maggie Young, Nita Marlette, Donna Momeyer, Rob Gibbs, and myself. Visitors and staff appreciate their expertise, time, and hard work.

Come for a visit. Sit on the bench. Think about how Dena inspired you. Listen to the music of moving water, watch the birds, and drink in the beauty.

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

Note: Directions to most of the field trip locations can be found on the website (northernarizonaaudubon.org) under Conservation or Birding.

SEDONA WETLANDS

January 12 (Sunday) 9:30 am-12:00 noon

Meet at the Sedona Wetlands parking lot at 9:30 am. Look for ducks and other winter birds. Rich Armstrong will lead. richarmstrong@q.com, 928-282-3675

PAGE SPRINGS

FISH HATCHERY/BUBBLING PONDS

January 19 (Sunday) 9:00-11:30 am

We will be walking two miles of riparian and mesquite bosque habitat along Oak Creek. Meet at the parking lot (GPS: 1600 N Page Springs Rd.). Bring water, binoculars, a hat, and good hiking shoes. Trail will be flat but uneven in places. Restrooms available. Call or text Chip Engemann at 724-599-7000 for more information.

BUBBLING PONDS PRESERVE

**January 24 (Friday) 9:00 am-12:00 noon
and
February 21 (Friday) 9:00 am-12:00 noon**

We will be walking 1.8 miles of riparian, mesquite and grassland habitat along Oak Creek and the ponds. Meet at the dirt parking lot at 9:00 am. Bring water, binoculars, field guide, a hat, and good hiking shoes. Trail will be flat but uneven in places. No restrooms. Call or text Lisa Grubbs 928-592-3684 for more information.

SEDONA WETLANDS

January 26 (Sunday) 9:30 am-12 noon.

February 9 (Sunday) 9:30 am-12 noon.

February 23 (Sunday) 9:30 am-12 noon.

Meet at the Sedona Wetlands parking lot at 9:30 am. Look for ducks and other winter birds. Leader to be determined.

CLEAR CREEK CAMPGROUNDS

February 16 (Sunday) 9:00-11:30 am.

We will be walking 2.25 miles of riparian and grassland habitat along Clear Creek. Meet at the Day Use parking lot at the end of the road at 9:00 am. Bring water, binoculars, a hat, and good hiking shoes. Trail will be flat but uneven and rocky in places. Restrooms available. Call or text Chip Engemann at 724-599-7000 for more information.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FIELD TRIPS BELOW THE RIM

Lisa Grubbs was joined by eight people in October at Bubbling Ponds. Highlights were a late Common Black-Hawk, Wood Ducks, and Cedar Waxwings.

Rich Armstrong did two Sedona Wetlands one hour trips. Highlights were an albino Northern Shoveler, Eared Grebes, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow.



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

Christmas Bird Count

Patti Greenelch, NAAS Education Chair, led students from Clarkdale-Jerome Elementary and Mountain View Preparatory School on the Jerome/Cottonwood Christmas Bird Count on December 14.



Northern Arizona Audubon Society

northernarizonaaudubon.org

Tell your friends



Buy Shade-grown Coffee for the Birds

Phyllis Kegley

The benefits of shade-grown coffee farms to birds are well-known to birders but probably not to others. I often ask for shade-grown coffee in various places that I shop at in Flagstaff. Usually I get a puzzled expression because the person has no idea what I am talking about. So I am writing this article partly because I hope that we all will do a better job of education the public about it.

Most birders know that the coffee plant originally was a shade plant but was modified to grow in the sun so that the cherries (name of coffee fruit) would mature faster and that the plant would produce more cherries. The consequence of this is that rain forest trees were cut down to make room for this new way of producing coffee. We all know this is not a good thing. It certainly hasn't been good for the birds that migrate to Central and South America hoping to find food and shelter.

But maybe you are not convinced that paying a little more for shade grown coffee really helps the birds. I refer you to an article from the Smithsonian Zoo website, "Ecological Benefits of Shade-grown Coffee" It gives statistics on the number of birds in shade-grown coffee farms compared to sun-grown farms. Here's one example: "In a study of shade versus sun coffee comparisons in Guatemala, overall bird abundance and diversity were 30 percent and 15 percent greater, respectively, in shaded farms than sun farms (Greenberg et al. 1997)." It also lists the benefits of the plants that shade the coffee plants as well as benefits to bees and other insects and the soil itself. <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/migratory-birds/ecological-benefits-shade-grown-coffee>

Birds need our help. Read the landmark study by National Audubon, "Survival by Degrees", to see the "canary in the coal mine" as President Dennis Tomko refers to it in his President's Column. The report can be found at www.audubon.org and I encourage you to read it.

With fewer businesses offering shade grown coffee, I have found it difficult to buy it locally except at Flagstaff's Farmers Market. When the Farmers Market is closed, I have been purchasing it online. The business I get it from will deliver it free to my front door. And there are other sources which mail it to you.

A question that you may want answered is if all organic coffee is shade grown. The answer is some is; some isn't. How about fair trade coffee? Again the answer is some is; some isn't. So look for the certification that it is shade grown. Best of all purchases is coffee that is shade-grown, organic and fair-trade.



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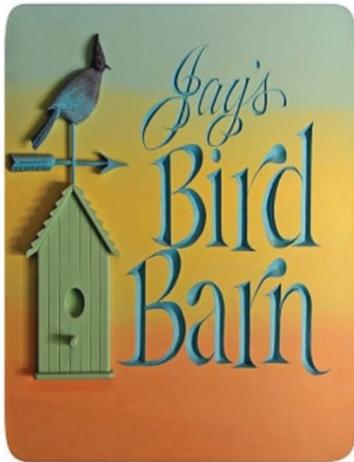


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FINDING YOUR WAY

Directions to many of our field trip destinations can be found on the NAAS website under Conservation; checklists also are available. northernarizonaaudubon.org



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 phylkeg4@gmail.com. Deadline for copy is the 15th of the month.



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

Northern Arizona Audubon Society
PO Box 1496, Sedona, AZ 86339



BLACKHAWK WATCH

Have you visited our web site?

northernarizonaaudubon.org

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Please enroll me/our household as a Chapter Member of Northern Arizona Audubon Society (NAAS).

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If you prefer to join or renew on line, please go to our website at <http://www.northernarizonaaudubon.org/>membership>

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I am interested in Volunteer opportunities

Check here if this is a change of address

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**NAAS is Sellin Donated
John McBride Paintings**

John McBride, long time Sedona resident, long time birder, and long time landscape and bird artist, died recently at 90. He donated 35 paintings to NAAS and NAAS is selling them as he was hoping they would raise a little money for the chapter. Contact Rich Armstrong (richarmstrong@q.com) if you are interested.

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