

In 2023 NAAS led 62 field trips, ranging from 1 to 11 field trips per month to 20 destinations (1 to 9 different destinations per month).

Field trip destination	Month										
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Sep	Oct	Nov	
Armstrong's back yard			1								
Beaverhead Flats		1									
Big Sit at Mingus Lake					1			1			
Camp Verde Library - Birding 101			1								
Bubbling Ponds		1	1	2					3	1	
Casner Canyon								1			
Cave Springs Campground					1			1		1	
Clear Creek campground				1		1					
Dead Horse State Park	1							1	1	2	
Grand Canyon HawkWatch									1		
Humphries Peak Trailhead						1					
Jail Trail				1		1	1	1	1	1	
Kachina Wetlands								1	1		
Oak Creek Valley Big Sit	1										
Page Springs Bubbling Ponds								1			
Picture Canyon					1						
Sedona Wetlands	1	2	3	5	1			3	2	4	
Stransky backyard BIG SIT			1								
Verde Village Preserve									1		
Woods Canyon Trail								1			

The most visited destinations were Sedona Wetlands, Jail Trail, and Bubbling Ponds.

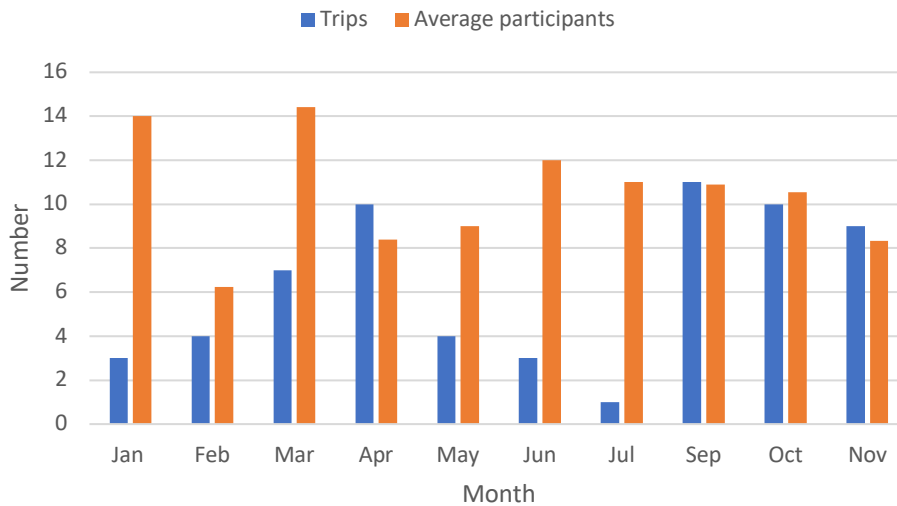
Thirteen trip leaders:

1. Harrison Jones
2. Janie Ward-Langley
3. Kay Hawkle
4. Kristen Rothrock
5. Laura & Kip Stransky
6. Lisa Grubbs
7. Mark Philippart
8. Nanette Armstrong
9. Rich Armstrong
10. Sky Schipper
11. Tim Weber
12. Tom Hedwall

13. Tom Linda

The most active leaders were: Rich Armstrong, Kay Hawkleee, and Janie Ward-Langley.

Attendance ranged from 0 to 35 participants with an average of 10 participants per field trip.



The end of the year (Sep – Nov) and April seem to be the most active with the highest number of trips per month.

Facebook posts

Post Jan 17

I was joined by 19 folks on January 14th at 10 AM for a 1 hour walk at the Sedona Wetlands. Weather cooperated, but birds didn't. Scope views of the normal ducks & Say's Phoebe & Townsend's Solitaire, but many more misses. It seems starting at 10:00 got people from Flagstaff and others, but less birds. We then went down to Spring creek tank 9571, but only a Black Phoebe was at the tank. Despite the lack of birds, many enjoyed the field trip!

Rich Armstrong

Post Feb 1

I was joined by 9 folks at Dead Horse State Park armchair birding on January 25th to enjoy the morning chill and the birds at the feeders. Twenty birds were observed or heard. A lively conversation revealed distinguishing details among Cassin's Finches, House Finches, and Pine Siskins. Gila Woodpeckers and Northern Flickers pulled our attention away to distant trees. A v-formation of Canada Geese announced themselves overhead while Dark-eyed Juncos scurried at the base of the feeders. Participants shared their knowledge as we identified the birds as a team. --Kristen Rothrock

Post feb 2

January 31st was a special day as NAAS was invited by resident Noreen Ireland to visit this lovely gated community and 14 people joined me. The weather broke just in time to witness much activity. The birds were hungry and were there to feast at Noreen's feeders. The Oak Creek Valley residents with some young ones in tow as well as folks who had seen the notice on the new NAAS website showed off many sharp pairs of eyes. We had a White-breasted Nuthatch and a Bridled Titmouse show off their black and white plumages at the suet. Western Bluebirds flitted among us while a distant Townsend's Solitaire called from the hillside. Song Sparrows, Abert's and Spotted Towhees rustled in the reeds right beside us. Gila and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers clamored from the cottonwoods. A Red-tailed Hawk perched on a far telephone pole waited while we discussed its size, shape, color, to rule out other raptor possibilities. After the big sit hour, we walked along beautiful Oak Creek passing a lone Bufflehead. to a hidden quiet backwater where we saw at least twenty Wood Ducks, some Mallards, and Ring-necked Ducks. Excluding these ducks, we saw 28 species in our hour, which is the new record for an NAAS Big Sit! --Kristen Rothrock

REMINDER! Oak Creek Valley Big Sit, Tuesday, January 31 from 9-10 am. Meet at corner of Oak Creek Valley & Willow Point to carpool into the area. From 89a between Sedona & Cottonwood take Oak Creek Valley Rd about .9 miles and park in dirt lot on left. Bring binoculars and warm clothes and maybe bring a thermos of hot tea. A restroom is available. We will look for winter residents and surprise visitors. Noreen Ireland will host and Kristen Rothrock will be leader, 928-634-3633.

Post Feb 7

I was joined by 6 folks on a cool, windy February 7th big sit at the Sedona Wetlands. Everyone had scope views of all the normal ducks, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, and American Pipit. Highlights were a flyover adult Bald Eagle, a close cooperative Rock Wren, 21 Common Mergansers, male Northern Pintails, and a close female Common Goldeneye. The wind made land and flying birds scarce and we only got 24 species, but good conversations and study.--Rich Armstrong

Post Feb 20

I was joined by 2 people on February 16th as bright sun and low winds assuaged cold temperatures on our walk into the hills at Beaverhead Flats. Tina identified a Chihuahuan Meadowlark in a flock of 30 Westerns and we were treated to great looks of a Golden Eagle that slowly soared away on the light wind currents. There were lots of Chipping Sparrows and Lesser Goldfinches, fewer White-crowned Sparrows, and a couple Black-throated Sparrows. The cattle tanks produced a couple of American Pipits and a Yellow-rumped Warbler, and we had a few Robins. Biggest surprise was the topography and beauty contained in this canyon that leads to House Rock. --
Tim Weber [photo by Eric Gofreed]

Post feb 21

As part of the Sci-Tech Festival 2023, and in conjunction with the Sedona Library and its Youth Services Department, several NAAS members held a bird event for the youth on Saturday Feb. 11. Titled, 'Bird Walk, Talk & Make,' about 10 children with their families showed up to participate. Viviane the librarian read a fun book about birds. Nanette followed

with a short lesson on what is a bird. Kay and Dana handed out binoculars to the children. After a quick optics lesson, the group walked outside to find birds, stopping at the feeders that Sally had put up prior to the event. Back inside the kiddos made bird feeders with pine cones, shortening, and seeds which apparently Yellow-rumped Warblers find tasty. Thanks to all the NAAS volunteers that helped with this successful outreach to the youth. The article is from the Red Rock News. Other photos by Kay Hawkee.

Post feb 25

I was joined by 9 folks on February 24th at the Sedona Wetlands for a 1 hour walk. The 1st birds were 2 breeding plumage Double-crested Cormorants. Then an adult Bald Eagle circled and landed for scope views. It was interesting to see which ducks scattered and which did not care. Other highlights were about 20 Redheads, over 10 male Common Mergansers, 2 male Northern Pintails, at least 3 Common Goldeneyes, at least 2 Cinnamon Teal, an unfortunately very distant Least Sandpiper, and a pair of Northern Cardinals on the walk out. It was a challenge to show people the goldeneyes as they would come up for 2 seconds before diving again, but all who wanted got a 1 second scope view. --Rich Armstrong

Post mar 8

Eight ladies joined me at the Bubbling Ponds on February 27 on a chilly morning with the promise of a beautiful day. We were greeted immediately by the Common Black Hawk on "his perch" checking things out. Winter migrants are still around, but fewer of them – on the ponds we had 30 Green-winged Teal that have been here all winter. Other waterfowl included Cinnamon Teal, Gadwall, Ring-necked Ducks, and some stunning Lesser Scaup that have also made this spot a favorite this winter. Pecking around the mud were Wilson's Snipe and one lone American Pipit. Other winter birds seen were Western Bluebirds, Hermit Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Yellow-rumped Warblers. A nice surprise was a very exhausted Northern Rough winged Swallow and a cheer went up for our first look at the returning Osprey that nest close by at Dancing Apache. The locals were getting a jump on breeding season with singing and courtship. A couple of Lincoln's Sparrows were followed by a lone Brewer's Sparrow. With great spotters and bionic ears, we had a total of 46 species. --Lisa Grubbs

Post mar 8

The February 22, 2023 meeting of Northern Arizona Audubon Society was a record breaker with over 120 in attendance. Dr. Emily Cory with her White-necked Raven, Shade, was our featured speaker. Her talk, "The Bird Who Watches You Back," pertained to her research on Family Corvidae and their abilities. Emily, with Shade perched on her arm, delighted the audience with her research on ravens, her tales of Shade's intelligence and antics, and how she came to live with Emily. We learned how Shade can become bored with her work, stubborn at times, but is always listening and learning. Emily continues ongoing corvid research with Shade. Emily and Shade have a children's book written about them: Shade a story about a very smart raven, by Diane Phelps Budden.

Post march 10

I was joined by 17 people on March 8th for a trip around the entire Sedona Wetlands area. The group included a dozen locals and birders from Missouri, Minnesota, Ohio, and Ontario. Unfortunately, there were no birds of interest on the helicopter & back ponds; but we did have a very nice collection of ducks on the big pond: numerous Common Mergansers,

Common Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, Gadwalls, and Cinnamon Teals. We also had two Lesser Scaup, a Redhead, a Canvasback, and an Eared Grebe. We ended up with 36 species in all. --Mark Philippart [photo by Eric Gofreed]

Post March 19

On March 13th we hosted our 2nd 1-hour Stransky backyard BIG SIT. We were joined by 9 birders and spotted a total of 26 species. Highlights were 3 Turkey Vultures (1st for our yard for this year), a female Common Merganser on the creek, and 10 Cassin's Finches. Other species included 2 Lincoln's Sparrow, and a Chipping Sparrow. People enjoyed our backyard adjacent to Wet Beaver Creek and sharing the bright sunny morning birding time together. We even gratefully used our neighbor's back patio for watching his huge Cottonwood trees. Some folks enjoyed still-warm fritters as surprise treats with their coffee thanks to Sue Meyer! --Laura & Kip Stransky

Post March 21

I was joined by 13 folks at the Bubbling Ponds Preserve March 14th on a lovely morning where we were treated to lots of singing. Most of our winter waterfowl have left the area with the exception of some stunning Redheads, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Ducks and one Green-winged Teal. All the ponds have water, so there was no muddy habitat for those birds who specialize in foraging there. One lone Canada Goose flew over chatting loudly. A lot of winter migrants have left but there were still a few Hermit Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, White-crowned Sparrows, Townsend's Solitaires and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Summer birds are here and arriving - Common Black Hawks, Osprey, Northern Rough-winged Swallows and a real show of White-throated Swifts feeding and drinking low over the ponds. Love is in the air with residents exhibiting courtship and visiting nest sites including Abert's Towhees, Black Phoebes, Bewick's Wrens, and Verdin. A nice raptor show with the Black Hawk, Osprey, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, and of course some Red-tailed Hawks. Total of 42 species.-- Lisa Grubbs

Post mar 23

After months of hearing about Evening Grosbeaks at many places including Red Rock State Park which is only .8 miles from our yard, they found our yard. With as many as 26 at one time regularly for 3 days I invited everyone to come to see and/or photograph them. On March 12th 10 folks came over and all saw very close at least 10+ Evening Grosbeaks, male & female Cassin's Finches, Bridled Titmouse, Ladderback & Gila Woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, Lesser & American Goldfinches close to each other for comparison, Yellow-rumped Warblers, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet eating suet, Bewick's Wren, and some saw a White-throated Sparrow. Everyone loved being so close to the birds! --Rich Armstrong (pictures by Kelly Isley)

Post march 27

I was joined by 12 people on a surprisingly cold March 26th for a 1 hour walk around the Sedona Wetlands. Highlights were 14 Red-breasted Mergansers, 23 California Gulls that we saw on the pond and later circled overhead, a singing Marsh Wren, 1st of season Barn Swallows & a Common Yellowthroat, a very cooperative Townsend's Solitaire, and close looks at Rock Wren and American Pipit. A visitor from Chicago and a 1st timer both got life

birds! --Rich

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Rich Armstrong

Post Ap 2

I was joined by 10 inquisitive birders for a beautiful morning at Montezuma Well Picnic Area. We had three ladies from Flagstaff and several from Cornville. So there was a variation of birders' home habitats. This led to a good discussion about the elevational migration of many species that leave the Verde Valley and head to higher elevation near Flagstaff at some point in the spring. We gathered our questions during the walk and delved into the books at the picnic tables where we learned:

The only North American cavity nesting warblers are Lucy's and Prothonotary.

Great Blue Herons are able to see 180 degrees. Which allows them to appear to be looking upward, while tracking a meal underneath it.

Zone-tailed Hawks have a dark trailing edge on their wings.

Hutton's Vireos have an affinity for Oak Trees.

"Sample", roosting, summer, winter and breeding nests of the Verdin

Highlights during the field portion were a calling Cooper's Hawk and Verdin.

It was a successful, fun first BB&FF experience. --Kay Hawlee (photo by Bernadette).

Post ap 5

I taught 30 folks a 2 hour Birding 101 class on March 31st at the Camp Verde library. Then on April 1st I had 10 of them bird Rezzonico Park and the Camp Verde STP. Then on April 2nd I had another 12 of them bird Rezzonico Park and the Camp Verde STP. Highlights were singing Lucy's Warbler, Abert's Towhee, close views of both male & female Vermillion Flycatchers, a very cooperative Hutton's Vireo, Cliff Swallows going in and out of nests, Great Horned Owls on a nest and next to it, and scope views of all 3 male teal species, Greater Yellowlegs, and Wilson's Snipe. --Rich Armstrong

Post ap 10

I was joined by 11 folks at Bubbling Ponds Preserve (BPP) for the Big Sit on April 6th from 9-10:00. This trip would have been the perfect "Trick or Treat" day – because we were treated to surprise Painted Redstarts flitting around the trees to the West of the first pond. And we were tricked by the absence of usual species: Abert's Towhee, Lucy's Warbler, Mallards and Red-tailed Hawks. We were joined by three Prescott birders and we all had a lovely "shortest hour in all of history" as we sat under the large Cottonwood and saw 28 species. Fun species left over from the winter months were Ring-necked and Redhead ducks. However, it was the migrating warblers that stole the show. Bright Yellow Warblers just arriving were joined by bright Yellow-rumped Warblers who will be leaving for Flagstaff

and beyond soon enough. Migrating swallows were plentiful and we got good looks at the vibrant green of Violet-green Swallows. It just means that another Big Sit at BPP needs to happen in order to break the tie! --Kay Hawkle
[photo by Eric Gofreed]

Post ap 14

I was joined by 15 folks including people from PA, CO, OR, and my Birding 101 class on April 8th for a 1 hour walk around the Sedona Wetlands. Highlights were scope views for all of a posing Loggerhead Shrike, a posing Black-crowned Night Heron, and our 1st Western Kingbird. We also had very close cooperative Lucy's Warbler and Northern Cardinal. A large flock of Violet-green Swallows came and drank and left in what seemed like 2 minutes. We still had 9 duck species. Spring seemed to arrive the last 15 minutes of the walk. --Rich Armstrong [photo by Eric Gofreed]

Post ap 21

I was joined by 9 folks including people from PA, FL, and CO on April 16th for a 75 minute walk at the Sedona Wetlands. Highlights were breeding plumage Eared Grebe, a preening male Cinnamon Teal, decent looks at both Sora & Virginia Rail, and a decent variety of ducks. The only migrant was a fairly cooperative Cassin's Vireo, but other than Yellow & Yellow-rumped Warblers, passerines were disappointing. Weather was great and some got life birds! --Rich Armstrong {photo by Eric Gofreed}

Post ap 21

I was joined by 10 people on a finally decent weather March 29th for a 1 hour walk around the Sedona Wetlands. Highlights were breeding plumage Eared Grebe, Lucy's Warbler, Marsh Wren, Juniper Titmice, and close looks at Rock Wren and American Pipit.
Rich Armstrong [photo by Eric Gofreed]

Post ap 22

I was joined by 2 other birders on April 11th on a warm weather day at the Bubbling Ponds. We had 49 species which included the bright neon Vermillion Flycatcher, many Bell's Vireo's singing, Cassin's Vireo, Plumbeous Vireo, lots of Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warblers, a Myrtle Yellow-rumped Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Nashville Warbler, and several Townsend's Solitaires. It was a great bird walk as migration has begun. --Janie Ward-Langley [photo by Eric Gofreed]

Post ap 23

I was joined by 10 others on Thursday April 13th at the Clear Creek Campground for a bird walk in this diverse habitat, first along the flowing creek and then in the more dry desert section. It started out a little slow and quiet, but had some hotspots of groups of birds coming through. Our total was 32 species. The highlights were the beautiful Black-throated Sparrow, Bell's Vireo, Hooded Oriole, Bald Eagle, Common Black Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Hammond's Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher and Common Raven on a nest. For some in the group many of the birds were Lifer birds and it's exciting to be a part of sharing that joy with others. --Janie Ward-Langley

Post ap 24

I was joined by 9 others on Tuesday April 18th for a Bird Walk at The Jail Trail in Cottonwood. The Verde River has experienced a huge runoff of water this year and the

habitat has changed quite a bit. It was somewhat windy but we still managed to see 25 species. Great looks at our always special Common Black Hawk, which was calling and soaring in all its glory. We had the Great Horned Owl sitting on a nest. Gorgeous Summer Tanagers have arrived. We saw a small flock of Evening Grosbeaks still here in the valley, perched for everyone to see. Also Cassin's Finches, an Osprey hovering over the river, Bridled Titmouse foraging in the trees, and everyone heard the Common Yellowthroat singing witchety-witchety-witch. A fun bird walk down the Jail Trail. --Janie Ward-Langley

Post ap 25

I was joined by nobody on April 24th for a big sit at the Sedona Wetland's platform? Everyone missed a great hour? Heather H. was there just to bird and helped me to a new record 50 species!!!!!!! And this was with no Raven or Turkey Vulture or Red-tailed Hawk or Song Sparrow or Lesser Goldfinch. Highlights (all through a great scope) were 7 breeding plumage Franklin's Gulls with 45 Ring-billed Gulls, 23 Willets, a breeding plumage Long-billed Dowitcher, a Solitary Sandpiper, continuing Baird's Sandpiper with 7 Least Sandpipers, 7 breeding plumage White-faced Ibis, 2 Red-breasted Mergansers with the Common Mergansers, a Snowy Egret, a Yellow-headed Blackbird, 3 Black-necked Stilts, a close Cassin's Kingbird, a breeding plumage Myrtle Warbler, a male Lazuli Bunting, continuing breeding plumage Eared Grebes, male Redhead, Blue-winged Teal, and still a lot of wintering duck species.
Rich Armstrong

Post ap. 26

I was joined by only 4 birders, 3 from CA, on April 20th for a 75 minute walk of the Sedona Wetlands. Highlights were 5 swallow species lined up on the fence next to the big pond including Bank Swallows, a close Solitary Sandpiper, a Virginia Rail out in the open for 10 seconds, a male Bullock's Oriole, and close looks at Yellow Warblers. The California folks loved a close male Northern Cardinal singing.--Rich Armstrong [photo by Eric Gofreed]

Post ap 27

I was joined by 9 Prescott birders for a special request full tour of the Sedona Wetlands on April 22nd. Highlights were close scope looks for everyone at White-faced Ibis, Willet, Baird's & Least & Spotted Sandpipers, all 3 teal, male Redhead & Lesser Scaup & Eared Grebes, Black-crowned Night Heron, Virginia's Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Ladderback Woodpecker, Savannah Sparrow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Western Kingbird, Lucy's Warbler, and Brewer's Blackbird. We added 5 species in the parking lot doing a countdown to get to 64 species! Rich Armstrong

Post Ap 27

We were joined by 15 people in our yard on April 25th for a 1 hour sit. The stars were Evening Grosbeaks which were uncooperative for the 1st 45 minutes before all coming to feeders. The colorful were Summer & Western Tanagers and Hooded & Bullock's Orioles. The surprises were a 1st of season male Black-headed Grosbeak, an American Goldfinch (we had not had one in over 10 days), and a very late Ruby-crowned Kinglet. The cutest were Bridled Titmice. The misses were no Red-winged Blackbird or Eurasian-collared Dove or Red-tailed hawk or Brown-crested Flycatcher (heard earlier in day) or Spotted Towhee (at feeder earlier). We still had a respectable 26 species!
Nanette & Rich Armstrong

Post may 7

I was joined by 4 folks for a Big Sit at Mingus Lake on May 5th. Not included in the Big Sit was a stop at the Jerome Overlook where we had fantastic looks at MacGillivray's Warbler in a sparse bush 5' away. Here we heard and saw the season's first Western Wood-Pewees and many other warbler species. At Mingus Lake we had 13 species with House Wrens continually singing their "rapid, harsh and squeaky chatter, churr and rattle" song. Our thought was that we are a little ahead of the main migration period for warblers and with abundant water resources, they were not as focused at the drip coming off Mingus Lake. But it was a beautiful morning nevertheless! --Kay Hawkle

Post may 9

I was joined by 8 folks for the last Sedona Wetlands trip of the season on May 7th. Highlights were scope views of adult & immature Black-crowned Night Herons, Barn & Cliff & Northern Rough-winged Swallows lined up on a fence, Summer Tanager, Spotted Sandpiper, male Ruddy Duck with blue bill, and ducks that have not left yet - male Redhead & Cinnamon Teal & female American Wigeon. --Rich Armstrong

Post may 19

12 folks joined me at Cave Spgs Campground where we saw 38 species. Painted redstarts and Red-faced Warblers were only heard, but not seen. The volume of bird songs/calls was daunting at first, but we worked our way through until we were able to isolate certain species songs. Highlights were a Yellow-breasted Chat displaying and then sitting on a telephone wire... best looks ever! A vireo nest was found by Gisela and Plumbeous Vireos were lurking in the tree; along with, a Cassin's Vireo. Crowd favorites were a singing Indigo Bunting and Cordilleron Flycatchers. Parking was a challenge as anticipated. But we persevered! By Kay Hawkle. Photo by Eric Gofreed.

Post may 21

NAAS 2nd Annual Picnic report: I was joined by 7 folks at the Northern Az Audubon annual picnic at Montezuma Well on a beautiful spring day May 20th for a nice stroll through a riparian area by Wet Beaver Creek. This included a dry mesquite, cat claw habitat adjacent to the creek - so a nice variety of birds. Most of the group were excellent, experienced birders with good spotting and listening skills. We had lots of rambunctious Brown-crested Flycatchers as well as the gentle Ash-throated Flycatchers. Nice array of summer residents with good looks at Summer Tanagers, Yellow-breasted Chats, Black-chinned Hummingbirds, Blue Grosbeaks and a special treat - an Indigo Bunting. The usual cast of canopy frolicking warblers - Lucy's and Yellow - and joining them were nice looks at Warbling Vireos. A brief glance at the Bullock's Oriole as well. Always a treat to see the Common Black Hawk and we had two soaring together. We also saw a Virginia Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak and numerous Western Tanagers. Several Bell's Vireos singing but as usual, tucked away from our sight. Year round resident birds did not disappoint: Northern Cardinals, Gila and Ladderback Woodpeckers, Abert's Towhee's, Bewick's Wrens, American Kestrel and a soaring Red-tailed Hawk. Total count: 41 species.-- Lisa Grubbs

About 20 people attended the Northern Az Audubon annual picnic at Montezuma Well. Besides Lisa's field trip and the great food, the picnic area had a Lucy's Warbler entering and leaving a nest cavity and a pair of Juniper Titmice. And after eating we had scope views

of Indigo Bunting, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Summer Tanager, and Blue Grosbeak. --Rich Armstrong

Post may 26

I was joined by 12 birders on a 4 hour bird walk into Picture Canyon on 5/20. We enjoyed pleasant weather while tallying 53 species. Highlights included Northern Waterthrush and Swamp Sparrow as well as great views of colorful Hepatic Tanager and Blue Grosbeak. Life birds were had by many in the group. I continued on with 3 people to a spot that I knew had nesting Lewis' Woodpecker where we weren't disappointed. It was a fun outing with fun people. --Tom Linda

Post June 7

I was joined by 20 people on the Jail Trail on June 4th hoping to hear a Southwest Willow Flycatcher. We got to the right habitat - thick willows - but we did not find the bird. No matter, because as we were standing there a Common Black Hawk flew low over us carrying food for its nestlings (later found by Janie). Earlier Tonie Hansen had guided us all to see an adult Great Horned Owl with two fledglings peeking from the same high branches. Everyone had great views of the owls from a good distance. However, one of our target birds, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, flew high, fast and silent overhead, and was spotted by Janie Ward-Langley but, sadly, not everyone got a look. No vocalizations of either SW Willow Flycatcher or Yellow-billed Cuckoo were heard. Even though there were 20 sets of eyes, we were all very quiet and stealthy while listening for those birds. Indigo Buntings were seen on the way back to the parking lot and thanks to Kristen Rothrock, we didn't mis-identify a Ladderback Woodpecker as a Hairy Woodpecker (while it faced us); even though the bill appeared to be very large. Much discussion was held and the verdict became clear after comparing facial patterns and barring on the underneath of the tail by use of Pat Neyman's photo. It was a super fun morning for all. --Kay Hawkle

Post jun 8

I was joined by 8 folks at Clear Creek Campground on June 7th in search of Yellow-billed Cuckoos . But the Cuckoo was elusive - as they tend to be. No matter. We heard and saw many species including Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Summer Tanagers, and tons of Yellow Warblers. Birds were clearly either "On Nest", as several were spotted carrying food or actively feeding begging fledglings who had flown the nest. A couple of species of hummingbirds were seen several times feeding on Desert Willow flowers. No cuckoo spoke up while we were there, but the birders were pleased anyway. And now they know where to go to find them. It's a matter of being in the right place at the right time. Just makes us all want to go again! --Kay Hawkle

Post jun 10

I was joined by eight folks who hiked a short way up the Humphries Peak Trailhead in search of woodpeckers. In the meadow before the trail, a Green-tailed Towhee greeted us from atop a distant rock. Several Vesper Sparrows sang from the tops of Mullens. We heard and saw many Northern Flickers, but no American Three-toed woodpeckers made an appearance; although we thought we possibly heard one?! The stars of the show were: 1. A House Wren feeding nestlings in cavity where one participant saw the nest poking out from under the bark. 2. A cooperative Cordilleran Flycatcher. 3. Eye-level adult Red-tailed Hawk soaring to a tree top. 4. Band-tailed Pigeons flying by. It was a cool morning for all of us in more ways than one! --Kay Hawkle (photo by Eric Gofreed)

Post jul 3

Jail Trail report of July 1, 2023

Eleven bird watchers moved quietly along the Jail Trail in hopes of hearing a SW Willow Flycatcher and/or a Yellow-billed Cuckoo. We were rewarded when twice we heard the "... distinctive series of hollow, wooden-sounding ka-ka-ka-ka-kow-kow-kowlp-kowlp-kowlp-kowlp syllables" of Yellow-billed Cuckoos: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/.../Yellow-billed.../sounds> However the cuckoo was true to this eBird description because we never saw one: "Stealthy and shy in dense forests and riparian areas, often sitting motionless for long periods of time." <https://ebird.org/species/yebcuc>

However, it was encouraging to know that they still visit the same trail year after year. Cornell's "All About Birds" website says that they will "... even hunch[ing] their shoulders to conceal their crisp white underparts, as they hunt for large caterpillars." Well, they concealed themselves from us too! So, we turned to extreme measures even holding a "stakeout" of sorts at several tent caterpillar sites with our fingers and toes crossed. But the stealthy birds didn't come for their treats. Still exciting, were good views of several Brown-crested Flycatchers as they sat still in bare branches for all to see. These Myiarchus flycatchers were indeed very "raucous" all morning – even out-singing the annoying, but beautiful, Yellow-breasted Chats! By Kay Hawlee

Post sep 4

I was joined by 6 butterfly enthusiasts on August 4th at Crescent Moon Ranch for the International Monarch Monitoring Blitz. All, including a couple visiting from San Diego, were excited to participate in an international community science event in hopes of finding Monarchs in all four of their life cycles (egg, caterpillar, chrysalis and adult butterfly), as well as their host plants, Milkweeds (Genus: *Asclepias*). Along the trail near the community garden, all three teams found an abundance of Horsetail Milkweed plants; over a hundred total. Unfortunately, there was no evidence of Monarch eggs, caterpillars or chrysalids to be found on or near the plants. Monarch butterflies are typically in the Verde Valley by some time in July, but we did not see any. We weren't disappointed though as we had a few other butterfly species to enjoy watching, including Checkered White, Reakirt's Blue, Common Checkered Skipper, and over a dozen Queen butterflies. And on the bird front, we were treated to a juvenile Common Black Hawk calling incessantly to its parents to be fed. Although the outcome of the morning was not what we all hoped for, we all agreed it was a beautiful day, in beautiful surroundings!

Becky Hardy

Post sep 5

I was joined by 12 people on September 2nd for a 1 hour walk around the Sedona Wetlands. Highlights were scope views for all of Brewer's Sparrow, 2 Wilson's Phalaropes, Mexican Duck, Redhead, and distant Western & Least Sandpipers. The phalarope was a life bird for a few! We also got to study female Green-winged & Cinnamon Teal.-- Rich Armstrong

Post sep 13

field trip report from Tom Hedwall - NAAS Kachina Wetlands Bird Walk - Saturday, September 9, 2023:

We enjoyed a beautiful late summer morning for a bird walk at Kachina Wetlands. Eighteen participants joined us in the search for migrants among the ponds and fields of sunflowers. We found a nice variety of warblers and sparrows, good numbers of Western Bluebirds and Lesser Goldfinches, and a large flock of Violet-green Swallows feasting in preparation for their southward migration. A couple of highlights included an American Kestrel right at the start, a handful of Western and Least Sandpipers, and three very cooperative Virginia Rails that showed nicely along the north edge of Pond 5. Everyone had a chance to view the rails in Margaret's spotting scope.

We also had some fun discussions about birds: Who knew that Lesser Goldfinches are such impressive mimics, with records of dozens of different birds they have been known to imitate? We learned why the ducks do not look like we might expect them to, as many of the male Mallards and Cinnamon Teals were still in their subdued eclipse plumage. The young Western Bluebirds also looked disheveled as they molt into their adult feathers.

It was a great morning with a fun group of birders! by Tom Hedwall

Photo by Eric Gofreed

Post sep 13

I was joined by only 1 on the September 7th Woods Canyon Trail trip. Phainopeplas & Woodhouse Scrub Jays were everywhere along the trail. Highlights included a Green-tailed Towhee, a Black-throated Gray Warbler, a Northern Mockingbird, 3 Gray Vireos and a flock of Bushtits. We ended up with 23 species in total. --Mark Philippart
{Green-tailed Towhee}

Post sep 24

I was joined by 11 folks on September 17th for a 1 hour walk around the Sedona Wetlands. Highlights were scope views of Redhead, Northern Pintail, Eared Grebe, female Cinnamon Teal, and Black & Say's Phoebes. A flock of White-throated Swifts put on an aerial show. But unfortunately there were no migrants, and Common Yellowthroat and Brewer's Sparrow were very uncooperative.

Rich Armstrong

Post sep 25

NAAS's Migration Game at the Dark Skies Coalition Star Party was a thrilling success. Pictured here, a Mom who acted as a cat waiting to pounce on unsuspecting birds as they migrate. Children acting as "birds on migration" learned experientially about the dangers that migrants face: cats, storms, cars, windows and buildings on their long journey at night during the Dark Skies! 20+ children and their accompanying parents navigated the migration gauntlet on Saturday night, Sept. 23rd, 2023.

Post oct 9

I was joined by 6 other birders at the Jail Trail in Cottonwood on Monday Sept 11. It was a beautiful day with a checklist of 19 species including Summer Tanagers, Blue Grosbeaks, Lazuli Buntings, Orange-Crowned and Wilson's Warblers, White-winged Dove, Gila and Ladderback Woodpeckers, and the highlight and total surprise was the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Towards the end lots of cicada noise, it's that time of year. Also many butterflies as the sun came out. I hope to see you on the birding trail.

Janie Ward-Langley

Post oct 10

I was joined by 11 folks on September 24th for a 1 hour walk around the Sedona Wetlands. Highlights were scope views of 29 American Avocets & about 7 Yellow-headed Blackbirds. 5 swallow species were very hard to see. Redhead & Eared Grebe were still there. Rich Armstrong. pictures by Kelly Isley

Post oct 11

I was joined by one brave soul on September 20th for a bird-hike which included fording Oak Creek before ascending Casner Canyon. A sturdy log supported me across the creek and up we went. The steep trail with loose rocks appears to get little use or maintenance. However, the scrub habitat is dense, healthy, and extensive. Spotted Towhees and Woodhouse's Scrub-jays were everywhere. It was very wren-eee, as Canyon's sang in the distance and a Rock Wren approached us. I swear I had a migrating House Wren which looked so strange in south-facing scrub. Lots of Rufous-crowned Sparrows and one Black-chinned. Some arriving robins, departing tanagers, a glance at a Townsend's Warbler, and Orange-crowned Warbler as well. An unlucky (13) cauldron of crows summited before us. Finally, an Osprey, Black Phoebe, 2 Western Wood Pewees, and Hutton's Vireos by the creek. 27 species altogether. An unintentional swim in the creek should make me reconsider such endeavors.

Tim Weber

Post oct 11

The trip to Grand Canyon turned out to be a Yo Yo experience. She's looking at us... looking at her. Wow! What a great day. HawkWatch International hawkwatchers, Josh - spotted it; and Andrew - looked up its info: "Yo Yo" is Condor #958; female 4 yrs 6 mos old. Hatched at Oregon Zoo in March of 2019.

Also saw Golden Eagle, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, Swainson's Hawk, Clark's Nutcracker, upside down Common Ravens playing with each other and warning the plastic owl to get the heck out of its area. Forest birds were visiting a puddle: Williamson's Sapsucker - both female and male; Red Crossbills, Red-breasted Nuthatches.

We saw a large flock of Pinyon Jays on the way home and felt really good about eBirding them, so that their presence can be noted. By Kay Hawlee

Post oc 12

We were visited by 35 folks at Dead Horse State Park on September 30th for our Verde River Day big sit. The wonderful highlight was that everyone saw a Western Screech Owl posing in a Cottonwood tree hole. Also many had scope views of American Kestrel. Rich Armstrong & Kristen Rothrock. [picture by Kelly Isley]

Post oct 13

I was joined by 10 others on Sept 29 at Page Springs Bubbling Ponds. We had an impressive list of 32 species which included Wood Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, Sora, Phainopepla, Verdin and a couple lingering Summer Tanagers. The first highlight was the stunning Bald Eagle that graced our presence at our arrival at the parking lot and again on the trail. Then last but not least was our mascot bird the Common Black Hawk. We first saw an adult in the mesquite bosque and then at the end of the walk we had a juvenile perched in a tree (see photo). The adult was also perched quite a ways away, the two were calling

each other, and then the juvenile took flight and soared above us (see photo). You couldn't ask for a better day. --Janie Ward-Langley
pictures by Janie

post oct 14

I was joined by 8 folks on October 7th for a 1 hour walk around the Sedona Wetlands. The highlight was 2 White Pelicans just swimming along fairly close!. Other highlights were Red-naped Sapsucker, 6 male Redheads, and identifying female Blue-winged Teal. A shock was zero Northern Shovelers? --Rich Armstrong
pelican picture by Polly Cullen

post oct 15

I was joined by 4 on October 3rd for a crisp beautiful morning bird walk on the Jail Trail in Cottonwood. We saw many birds, wildflowers and butterflies. There were 23 species on our list with many woodpeckers, including Gila, Ladderback, Northern Flicker (red-shafted) and a Red-naped Sapsucker. We had Brewer's, White-crowned, Song and Lincoln's Sparrows, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Bridled Titmouse and a Wilson's Warbler. Fall migration still has a few passing through. We heard a Canada Goose calling.
Janie Ward-Langley
picture by Janie

post oct 31

14 birders showed up on a cold crisp morning at the Kachina Wetlands, but it warmed up quickly and was a very birdy morning. We ended up with 37 species. Some highlights were great looks at a juvenile Sharp-shinned Hawk, and a huge flock of Western Meadowlarks.
By Sky Schipper

post nov 9

I was joined by 6 folks on September 4th at for a big sit on Mingus at the Butterfly trail pond. Sadly the tank was only a puddle. However, we had good looks at Red Crossbill, Hepatic Tanager, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Hermit Thrush. -- Kay Hawkle [Hepatic Tanager photo by Eric Gofreed]

Post nov 10

I was joined by 9 folks on September 8th at Cave Springs Campground. There were people from Pennsylvania and students from NU. Highlights were good looks at Canyon Wren and Townsend's Warblers. Kay Hawkle [Canyon Wren photo by Eric Gofreed]

Post nov 13

I was joined by 13 folks on October 15th for a 1 hour walk around the Sedona Wetlands. The highlight was a Western Grebe! The pelicans were apparently there at 8 but gone by 9 when we got there. We had Chipping Sparrows, a Redhead, and a cooperative American Wigeon. --Rich Armstrong pictures by Kelly Isley

Post nov 14

I was joined by 10 birders on October 18th for a late afternoon stroll around the Bubbling Ponds. We had 28 species. Highlights included the Common Black Hawk, Osprey and Sharp-shinned Hawk. We had a nice study of all three of our teals: Green-winged, Blue-winged and Cinnamon. Winter migrants included singing White-crowned Sparrows and

Wilson's Snipe. The usual resident Black Phoebes, Red-winged Blackbirds, Virginia Rail, Lesser Goldfinch were seen, and a nice showing of a Phainopepla. The surprise was a couple of Lazuli Buntings hanging with a flock of White-crowned Sparrows. And we enjoyed some nice butterflies and dragonflies as well. --Lisa Grubbs

Post nov 15

I was joined by 13 folks on October 20th for a leisurely walk through the riparian Verde Village Preserve. We saw or heard 27 species. The highlight of the morning was an adult Common Black Hawk and two juveniles who circled above, their calls quite audible. Within minutes, a Red-tailed Hawk joined them in the sky followed by an American Kestrel. As the morning heated up, we switched from birding to butterfly/caterpillar identifying. We saw quite a variety. Additionally, we came upon a visible ant lion larva in its trap swishing sand about, something none of us had ever seen before. A fun morning! --Kristen Rothrock

Post nov 16

I was joined by 8 folks on October 25th for a 1 hour big sit at Dead Horse State Park. Of 12 species that appeared, a Northern Cardinal, a Dark-eyed Junco and an American Kestrel, not to mention the nocturnal Western Screech-Owl, were greatly appreciated. Participants searched on their own for the owl. We shared the challenges of our backyard feeders. After the hour, some went to the lagoons to hopefully see the twelve American Avocets recently seen flying overhead. -- Kristen Rothrock

Post nov 17

Bird Walks in the fall are always fun and it turned out to be that on October 27 at the Bubbling Ponds IBA that day. I was joined by 7 others as we walked the ponds and the Black Hawk trail and along the creek. We had 35 species. Wintering waterfowl are slow to arrive but we did have American Wigeon, Pied billed Grebe and stunning Wood Ducks. Our mascot bird the Common Black Hawk graced us with its presence perched over the ponds. A Belted Kingfisher is always a fun bird to hear and see. Lots of sparrows, White-crowned, Chipping, Song and a Lincoln's. A surprise Green-tailed Towhee still hanging around. When the warmth of the sun came out we still had some butterflies to study with Becky Hardy to help with identification. Our highlight was 7 or so Wilson Snipes in the mud flats and hiding in the foliage around that pond a lifer bird for some.--Janie Ward Langley [photo by Eric Gofreed]

Post nov 17

I was joined by 18 birders at the Bubbling Ponds on a brisk October 30th lovely fall afternoon. We strolled around the ponds and saw and/or heard 25 species. Highlights were, of course, the Common Black Hawk. We had a real show with hundreds of Red-winged Blackbirds and some European Starlings arriving, circling overhead and then dropping like bullets and disappearing into the reeds to roost. Nice look at a female Vermillion Flycatcher along with the Black Phoebe. Little winter waterfowl but some: American Wigeons, Ring-necked Ducks and Green-winged Teal. Fairly good numbers of White-crowned Sparrows. One lonely Pied-billed Grebe and only two Yellow-rumped Warblers. We heard a Virginia Rail and Sora and our parting bird was an American Kestrel.--Lisa Grubbs [photo by Eric Gofreed]

Post nov 18

I was joined by 7 folks on November 2nd as we walked the Dead Horse State Park for a cool morning of birding. We had a good number on the checklist of 34 species. Some birds were lifers for some such as the Myrtle Yellow-rumped Warbler, Pine Siskin, Sharp shinned Hawk, and Green-tailed Towhee, great looks at all of these birds. A spectacular Bald Eagle was perched off a trail just inside the wood line with fabulous looks at the bird and it looking down at us, what a treat that was. The Western Screech Owl has taken residence on Owl Rd and greeted us as we arrived at the armchair birding area. It didn't seem to mind us oohing and awing at him as it was happily preening itself. Another delightful day out on the birding trailing. --Janie Ward Langley

Post nov 21

Northern Arizona Audubon Society

Harry was joined by 6 birders who wanted to see an American Dipper and did! As expected the bobbing, dunking bird was seen in Oak Creek just South of the welcome hut. It flew up and down the creek allowing us to watch it fly low to the water. It was very quiet at Cave Spgs Campground until we ran into a mixed flock of nuthatches that were in a kerfuffle. We searched without finding an owl that we hoped was disturbing 3 species of nuthatches. Overall it was gray and only sprinkled until it began to rain mixed with snow pellets. But it worked out because we were already by the cars! (by Kay Hawlee)

Post nov 18

I was joined by 7 folks on November 5th for a perfect weather 1 hour walk around the Sedona Wetlands. Highlights were scope looks at 2 close Western Grebes, very close Eared Grebes, and 1st of season Buffleheads, Canvasbacks, and Western Bluebirds. --Rich Armstrong

Post nov 19

I was joined by 5 others on November 7th for a gorgeous morning on the Jail Trail in Cottonwood. We had a total of 26 species. All had great looks at Lincoln's Sparrow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and lots of wintering White-crowned Sparrows. A cute little House Wren vocalized to a Bewick's Wren. All had a nice view high in the trees of a Red-naped Sapsucker. The all too cute Bridled Titmouse is always a treat. And the highlight of the day was not one but two Belted Kingfishers on the river. Hope to see you at the Christmas Bird Counts in December. --Janie Ward Langley

Post nov 20

I was joined by 15 folks including New York, Minnesota, Phoenix, Flagstaff on November 11th for a 75 minute walk around the Sedona Wetlands. Highlights were scope views of a White-shielded American Coot found brilliantly days before by Heather Hofling, a Greater Yellowlegs, 2 Western Grebes, an American Pipit, and 2 Black-crowned Night Herons together. Canvasback & Say's Phoebe were life birds for some as well. And a probably male Sharp-shinned Hawk soared for good views. --Rich Armstrong

Post nov 21

I was joined by 7 folks on November 15 at Dead Horse Ranch State Park for an hour big sit at the bird feeders. We kicked up loads of Oregon Juncos as we made our way to the bird feeding station. Our Big Sit goal became to see more birds than people and we did that by tallying 10 species plus a Ground Squirrel. A spirited Ruby-crowned Kinglet danced

overhead and the usual suspects arrived for seed and a drink at the plate to wash it down. A Sharp-shinned Hawk perched in a not too distant tree, probably keeping the numbers down. No owl today, but we had beautiful weather and great birding conversation. --Nanette Armstrong

Post nov 22

I was joined by 8 folks including 2 from Florida on November 18th for a not quite rainy 75 minute walk around the Sedona Wetlands. Highlights were scope views of the continuing White-shielded American Coot, a Western Grebe, Eared Grebes, and a Black-crowned Night Heron. --Rich Armstrong [photo by Eric Gofreed]

Post nov 27

I was joined by 13 folks at the Bubbling Ponds on November 22nd, an absolutely perfect for birding. Included were several local expert birders who, no doubt, added to the count, which was 43 species. We had a group of 5 from around the country who, having never birded here before, acquired 13 lifers! Winter waterfowl continues to be dismal with a dribbling of Ring-necked Ducks and American Wigeons. We had a pleasing two Green-tailed Towhees with good looks at one of them. One Green-tailed Towhee in my book is always good! Other highlights were ten friendly Ruby-crowned Kinglets, a continuing Great Egret, Wilson's Snipe, Orange-crowned Warbler, Red-naped Sapsucker, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, a surprise Brewer's Sparrow, and singing White-crowned Sparrows. Locals entertained as well with Phainopepla, Verdin, Belted Kingfisher, both Say's and Black Phoebes, and a pair of Cooper's Hawks. Lisa Grubbs [photo by Eric Gofreed]