

**15<sup>th</sup> Annual AZFO Annual Meeting Summary**  
**Sky Islands and Desert Waters**  
**23-25 September 2022**  
**Safford, Arizona**



## **INTRODUCTION**

After more than three years of anticipation that included a year with no meeting and one with a virtual meeting due to the pandemic, AZFO was finally able to host an in-person annual meeting in 2022. “From Covid to Corvids” would have been an appropriate theme but we, the AZFO Board of Directors, settled on a theme of “Sky Islands and Desert Waters.” This title perfectly captures the Safford area of Graham County where the Gila River valley dissects the Gila and Pinaleño mountain ranges, and numerous lakes and ponds dot the desert landscape.

Eighty registrants – casual birders, scientists, tour guides, resource managers, and students – traveled from throughout Arizona, and even New Mexico, to attend the Arizona Field Ornithologists 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. And while the organization name may feel intimidating to some, AZFO welcomes everyone interested in birds and birding with no ornithology background required, resulting in a great mix of participants at its meetings.

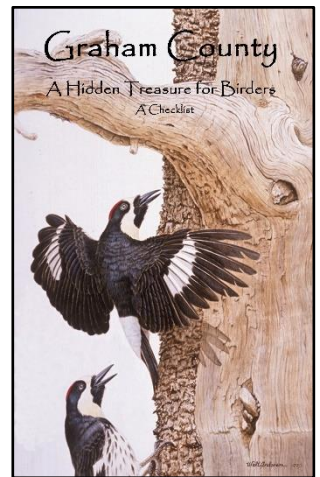




The weekend of September 23-25 was chosen for the event to try to capture the fall migration and it turned out to be a great choice. We were blessed with pleasant weather for our three days together, which began with Mini-Expeditions on Friday and ended with additional trips on Sunday.

These, combined with birders' visits to local hotspots on their own, yielded 177 species for the weekend. Saturday featured a day packed with relevant scientific presentations and closed with a social hour, banquet, and keynote speaker.

The conference artwork was created using colorful tiles created by Mana Pottery in Klondyke. It featured birds that are common in Graham County.



Also, just in time for the annual meeting, work was completed on the updated Graham County Bird Checklist, which is now posted on the [AZFO website](#).

## FRIDAY MINI-EXPEDITIONS – SEPTEMBER 23

All eBird checklists are embedded as hyperlinks with the text below.

### Gillespie Wash and Stockton Pass Campground

Birders met trip leader Kale Van Shaar at 0730 for an early-morning visit to Gillespie Wash, a rather green high-desert wash with sycamore, mesquite, and some oak and juniper. This mixed habitat helps to make Gillespie Wash the most diverse eBird hotspot in the Pinaleno mountain range. The group hiked the ranch road following the wash, finding a handful of migratory warblers and the last remnants of the breeding season, including Zone-tailed Hawk, Broad-billed Hummingbird, and Varied Bunting, with the latter two yielding Rare Bird Alerts (RBAs).

Getting down into the wash, they heard an agitated Broad-billed Hummingbird, and Ryan O'Donnell found it mobbing a Western Screech-Owl hiding in a hackberry; a fantastic – and very quiet – photo shoot ensued and the group headed back out. The [Mini-Expedition](#), plus other [AZFO birders](#) visiting Gillespie Wash that morning, saw a total of 50 species.

Since Gillespie was thriving with life, the group didn't make it to the [Stockton Pass Campground](#) until late morning. As they followed the nearby Shake Trail for nearly a half mile, there were only a few species to find in the heat of the day and they finished up by noon. They were thankful to get Juniper Titmouse, one of the campground's characteristic specialties. It was a memorable morning with great birders!

### Pinaleno Mountains – Twilight Road and Campground



Jennie MacFarland and Richard Fray led ten enthusiastic birders along the [Twilight Road](#) to [Twilight Campground](#), located at around 7,500' in the Pinaleno Mountains. Despite the afternoon birding lull, they were able to locate 25 species, including a few interesting sightings. Species highlights included Band-tailed Pigeon, Zone-tailed Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Hermit Warbler, Olive Warbler, Cassin's Vireo, and Cordilleran Flycatcher.

Notable behavior was observed with hawks a couple times. While watching a mixed flock, a juvenile Sharp-shinned Hawk burst onto the scene and chased an Olive Warbler, looping around a tree twice before the warbler managed to dive into cover. A little later, two Steller's Jays were making even more noise than usual, and the group could tell that the jays had found something they didn't like. They waited awhile until the jays eventually flushed the object of their ire, a roosting Cooper's Hawk.



Jennie and Richard thank all the participants for making this a particularly friendly and enjoyable afternoon trip.

### **Pinaleño Mountains – Noon Creek, Wet Canyon and Arcadia Campground**

A Friday afternoon trip for 15 participants was led by Tracy McCarthy to the Arcadia Campground/Ladybug Trail areas of the Pinaleño Mountains. They started their field expedition with the intention of first birding Arcadia Campground then working back down the mountain to Wet Canyon Creek and Noon Creek Campground.



Due to the heat, they decided to move up to the [Ladybug Saddle](#) trailhead area after birding the [Arcadia Campground](#) and Arcadia Trail. It was a pretty quiet afternoon with only 21 species seen; this was a

new birding area for many of the participants, who enjoyed the scenic views and cooler temperatures. The highlight of the expedition was a great view of a Mexican Spotted Owl pair roosting next to each other in a large deciduous tree.



### **Pinaleño Mountains – Hospital Flat and Snow Flat**

This Mini-Expedition required the longest drive into the Pinaleño Mountains where Chrissy Kondrat, Jim Rorabaugh, Kathleen McCoy and Matt Hayes explored two higher-elevation sites. They began at [Snow Flat Campground](#), where their one-hour, mile-long hike yielded 24 species. Later, on a half-mile walk at [Hospital Flat Campground](#), they observed 20 species.

### **FRIDAY SOCIAL**

The day ended with a Friday-night social at JD's Grill House where 50+ AZFO members and guests enjoyed drinks and dinner on the patio.

A small group ventured over to the nearby Walmart parking lot to assess nightly fall migration which yielded an RBAs for Dickcissel and Grasshopper Sparrow. Birdcast reported that an astounding [6.3 million birds](#) had flown over Graham County that night!





## SATURDAY MEETING

Eighty registrants spent Saturday at Eastern Arizona College's Discovery Park Campus for a combination of organizational updates and scientific presentations. Throughout the day, AZFO members sold raffle tickets for donated prizes, hosted a silent auction, sold AZFO merchandise, and offered used books for sale.



AZFO Recording Secretary Kerri Anne Loyd introduced each speaker starting with President Troy Corman, who welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked those who were involved in the preparations. He recognized the many supporters such as Jay's Bird Barn in Prescott, Tucson Audubon, and Wild Birds Unlimited for donating items for the silent auction and raffle. A special thanks was extended to Eastern Arizona College, for enabling AZFO to host the meeting at Discovery Park's Double D Ranch House at no cost, a real savings for our budget. A full list of acknowledgments was included in the printed program.

Troy then announced the winners of the Gale Monson Research Grant:  
Cydney Yost – Selenium Toxicity in Yuma Ridgway's Rails in the Colorado River Basin  
Victoria (Tori) Wiley – Sonoran Desert Purple Martin Conservation Project

It was noted how Gale Monson, the man many consider "the father of modern Arizona field ornithology" has a little-known link to Safford. According to a 2013 issue of *The Auk*, Gale worked from 1935 to 1936 as a biologist with the Soil Conservation Service in Safford, supervising wildlife work at 24 Civilian Conservation Corps camps and making surveys in the Gila Basin of southeastern Arizona and adjacent southwestern New Mexico.

Loyd then welcomed Abbie Brozich to come forward and be recognized as this year's Student Scholarship winner. Maricopa Audubon Society donated \$350 that enabled her travel to meeting with her supportive father. She later related what an amazing time she had meeting experienced birders at the social, learning about various species from those doing research, sharing field stories, birding for the first time in both Graham and Greenlee counties, and the Sunday trip to the Duncan Birding Trail where she saw her "state lifer" Painted Bunting. AZFO is proud to provide these types of opportunities for young scientists.



The morning talks began with *Getting to Know the Wild Purple Martins* by Jennie MacFarland followed by Chrissy Kondrat's *Bendire's Thrasher Regional Efforts and Pathway Project Preliminary Results*.



Past AZFO President Carol Beardmore then discussed "AZFO in the Field" Updates.

Board member Tracy McCarthy discussed future AZFO Field Expedition locations.



After a 30-minute break, Troy Corman presented Arizona Bird Committee Updates. The ABC is a separate group from AZFO but there is frequent coordination.

Little-known research on *Birds as Hosts for the Agents of Tick-Borne Relapsing Fever in Arizona* was shared by Peter Motyka.



*Advances in Pinyon Jay Conservation Science and the Role of New Technology* was discussed by Elisabeth Ammon.



Olya Weekley closed out the morning with *The Secret Lives of Lucy's Warblers: Tucson Audubon Nestbox Research*.

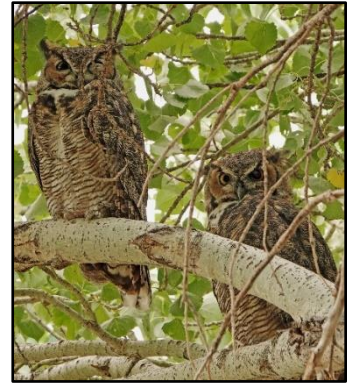
Abstracts of presentations from this and past AZFO meetings are posted, grouped by topic and author, at [http://www.azfo.net/annual\\_meetings/Oral\\_Posters\\_Abstracts.html](http://www.azfo.net/annual_meetings/Oral_Posters_Abstracts.html)



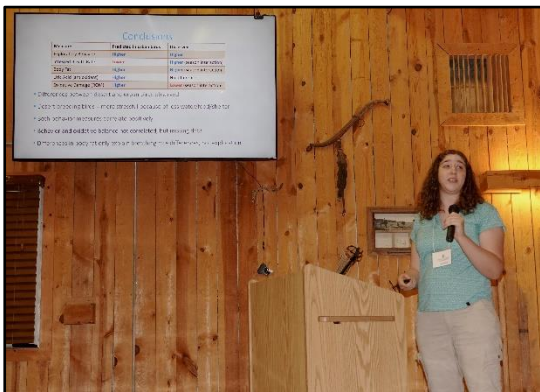
A delicious catered lunch was delivered by Kainoa's Hawaiian Grill and everyone had another hour to explore birds at Discovery Park's Nature's Hideaway, winner of a national wetlands restoration award.



More than 50 species were seen during our lunch break!



After lunch, Ryan O'Donnell summarized a three-year study on the Barry M. Goldwater Range-West, the largest remaining tract of relatively unfragmented Sonoran Desert in the United States. The study documented 111 species of birds, including 43 locally breeding species and 68 migrants.

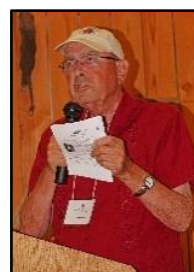


*Adapting to City Life: Physiology and Behavior of Urban and Desert House Finch (Haemorrhous mexicanus)* was the topic of research presented by Sarah Polekoff.

Wild at Heart's Jenohn Wrieden capped off the scientific talks with *Assessing Artificial Burrow Improvements by Evaluating Signs of Burrowing Owl Occupation and Available Burrow Status*.



The business end of the annual meeting included updates from Membership Chair Gordon Karre, a budget summary from Treasurer Diana Herron, a vote on four changes in the AZFO Bylaws that presented by Board member Doug Jenness, and the election of Board members and officers officiated by AZFO Vice President Jennie McFarland.



The afternoon break provided time to view two poster presentations and talk to the creators.

Tim Helentjaris' poster was titled *Lingering Impact of the 2020 Drought upon Bird Populations of Southeastern Arizona* and it drew much attention and conversation about that topic.

## Lingering Impact of the 2020 Drought upon Bird Populations of Southeastern Arizona

Tim Helentjaris Tucson, AZ

[tnhelentjaris@msn.com](mailto:tnhelentjaris@msn.com)

### Introduction

This study was initiated after birders reported difficulty in finding several species after the drought year of 2020. The drought that year was unusually severe across southern Arizona and appeared to have negative impacts upon several bird species. I set out to characterize this loss by using observations in eBird. I first obtained weather data for SE AZ to better understand the context of that year, was it really different from previous years, was it part of a trend, etc. I then downloaded data from the Explore Function of eBird by year to determine which species were affected and by how much, taking advantage of the extraordinary high reporting for this region.

### Methods

Weather data were obtained from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association via the search engine at their website:

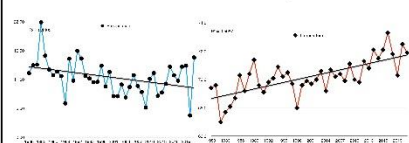
<https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cdo-web/search>

Bird population data were downloaded from eBird via their Explore tab and the Bar Charts function. This produces annual values for the percentage of checklists which reported each species.

<https://ebird.org/GuideMe?cmd=changeLocation>

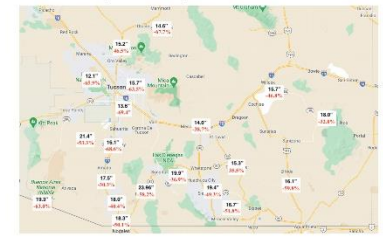
### Climate Data for Southeastern Arizona for 1980 through 2021

Data from Tucson International Airport



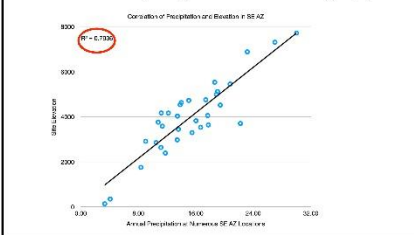
The trends over time are starting with a decrease in average annual precipitation from ~14" to down to ~10" and a corresponding increase in the average temperature from ~69F to ~71.9F, the latter rate well over the global average increase for this period. In part these warmer temperatures are driven by the lack of water/humidity in our area, humidity acting as a buffer against change in temperature. The precipitation for 2020 was also the lowest on record during this period.

### Map of 2019 Precipitation and Loss in 2020



One can see a lot of variation across this region, in the 2019 precipitation for individual sites as well as the loss in 2020.

Variation in Annual Average Precipitation across sites can be explained primarily by elevation. Higher elevations not only get more rainfall on average, they also lost less in the 2020 drought (data not shown), hence any impacts were much less noticeable, on vegetation and wildlife in the upper Sky Islands.



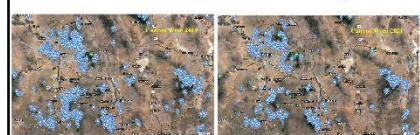
### Effect of 2020 Drought on Bird Populations in Subsequent Years

Data from 3 Counties (Pima, Cochise, & Santa Cruz)

Species/Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	%Change from Pre-Drought 2019
Mourning Dove	1,180	1,110	9,810	2,490	-7.7%
Flammulated Owl	0.1%	0.11%	0.20%	0.00%	-0.30%
Elegant Trogon	2,980	2,130	1,310	2,130	-57.0%
Pink-breasted Noddy	3,720	6,400	3,300	3,300	-11.3%
Hutton's Vireo	6,020	6,810	1,110	3,490	-81.5%
Black-bellied Grosbeak	11.2%	14.88%	5.21%	4.19%	-53.1%
Black-capped Grosbeak	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	-0.00%
Pink Weebill	2,380	8,870	2,310	2,400	-45.8%
Canyon Wren	7,720	2,870	1,540	1,180	-84.6%
Ohio Warbler	1,870	6,870	8,730	1,440	-23.3%
Cassini's Sparrow	1,420	6,730	8,300	1,610	-48.7%
Gray-breasted Sparrow	2,480	6,270	2,210	2,540	-12.1%
Black-chinned Sparrow	0.88%	1.83%	0.48%	0.35%	-55.7%
Pink-striped Sparrow	0.78%	0.42%	0.42%	0.40%	-48.7%
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	1,420	6,470	3,140	2,170	-39.4%
Rufous-capped Warbler	3,420	6,410	3,210	2,420	-26.3%
Chickadee	67,700	79,600	97,800	85,000	-18.0%

Figures in cols. 2-5 represent frequency of checklists reporting target species while cols 6-8 report the change in those values from 2019/pre-drought values.

### Location Loss for Canyon Wren after 2020 Drought

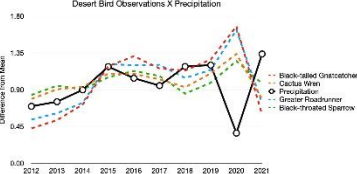


By looking at locations with CanW observations within single years, one can see an apparent loss of territories for this species after the 2020 drought, corroborating changes seen in the frequency data.

These types of data also compare very well with birder reports. For instance, in 2019 I submitted 19 checklists with CanW and 19 again in 2020. But in 2021, I only found CanW in 4 checklists and then 2 so far in 2022.

### Correlation of Species with Precipitation even in non-Drought Years

Desert Bird Observations X Precipitation



Values for both precipitation and species' frequency were recomputed to represent differences from their means to facilitate direct comparison with each other. It can be seen here that all of these species track closely with variation in precipitation, albeit with a one year delay.

So, if smaller species at lower elevations are most affected, why don't we see much effect upon hummingbirds, after all, spring wildflowers were almost non-existent in subsequent years? Is it because much of our eBird data for these species come from locations with multiple feeders (Paton's, Santa Rita Lodge, etc.) and these locations are largely insulated from the effects of the drought?

### Frequency of Hummingbird Reports in Checklists from Sites with/without Feeders

Species	2019	2020	2021	2022	%Change from Pre-Drought 2019
Black-chinned Hummingbird	10,330	12,870	10,120	8,270	-20.4%
Anna's Hummingbird	25,710	26,030	27,370	24,170	-6.2%
Cerulean Hummingbird	6,170	7,610	6,410	7,630	-3.7%
Broad-billed Hummingbird	5,370	5,310	5,390	3,690	-31.3%
White-crowned Hummingbird	21,540	22,790	17,340	17,670	-18.8%
Violet-crowned Hummingbird	3,260	2,940	0.7%	0.5%	-84.3%
Chickadee	67,700	97,240	60,880	88,050	-10.0%

In general, hummingbird observations increased at feeder sites post-2020 drought and decreased at wild sites without significant feeder presence.

### Conclusions.

- Climate
  - Our Southeastern Arizona climate is becoming both hotter and drier, with temperatures increasing above the global rate due to our continuing drought.
  - Variation in Average Annual Precipitation across SE AZ locations is quite large but can mostly be explained due to differences in elevation.
  - The 2020 precipitation level was the lowest on record for the last 40+ years.
  - The effect was most pronounced at lower elevations with much less impact evident upon the vegetation and wildlife of the upper Sky Islands.
- Bird Populations
  - Using eBird frequency data, most species did not exhibit significant losses due to the 2020 drought, but the effect upon some species was very severe.
  - Birds that were most affected were: 1) found at lower elevations, 2) smaller in size, and 3) residents with little proclivity for wandering or migration.
  - These losses were most evident in 2021, the year following the drought, but some have continued unabated into 2022. Again, birds not showing much evidence of recovery are smaller, resident species of desert and foothills.
  - The overall impacts of climate change may seem gradual in nature but could also exhibit "punctuated" losses on a granular level. How much and when, even if, these species recover needs to be monitored.

Annual AZPO Meeting Safford AZ 9/24/22

A poster by Diane Drobka detailed her efforts to create one of Arizona's newest Christmas Bird Counts and the challenges of, approaches to, and results from the Safford CBC. It included many photos taken during the count and a list of the 104 species seen.



# One of Arizona's Newest Christmas Bird Counts

## Safford CBC: Challenges, Approaches, and Results

Diane Drabka, AZFO Board Member





**Getting Organized**

1. The first step in organizing a Christmas Bird Count is to select a location. The location should be accessible to a large number of people, have a variety of bird habitats, and be in an area where birds are likely to be seen. The Safford CBC Count Circle was established in 2018 and covers an area of approximately 10 miles around Safford, AZ.

2. The next step is to recruit volunteers. This can be done through social media, local newspapers, and word of mouth. The Safford CBC Count Circle has a website and a Facebook page where volunteers can sign up.

3. The third step is to plan the count. This includes determining the date and time of the count, the locations to be counted, and the methods to be used. The Safford CBC Count Circle counts are held on the first Saturday of December, from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

4. The fourth step is to conduct the count. Volunteers are assigned to specific locations and are asked to count all birds seen or heard within a 1-mile radius of the location. The counts are then reported to the Safford CBC Count Circle website.

5. The final step is to analyze the results. The Safford CBC Count Circle website provides a summary of the results, including the total number of birds counted, the number of species, and the distribution of birds by location.

**Safford CBC Count Circle**

1. Cliff Ranch  
2. Frye Mesa  
3. Frye Line WTP  
4. Dickey Estates Ponds  
5. Discovery Park  
6. Roger Lake  
7. Darkworth Pond  
8. Mt. Graham  
9. Safford  
10. Safford


























Ryan O'Donnell then hosted an exciting Kahoot game, where contestants used their phones to guess bird species as each slowly appeared as puzzle pieces on a screen. It tested birders' knowledge and quickness, and created friendly competition between the top birders, with Caleb Strand winning and Kale Van Shaar a close second.

To close out the meeting, Jennie McFarlane reviewed the basics for Sunday's Mini-Expeditions.

After that, there was an opportunity to tour the nearby Native Plant Greenhouse with its manager Steve Plath. This cooperative project of the Gila Watershed Partnership, Eastern Arizona College, and Bureau of Land



Management was created to grow vegetation that could be planted along rivers and streams after the arrival of the Tamarisk Leaf Beetle and its defoliation of invasive salt cedars. It also serves the local community, selling native species for landscaping.





## SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET

That evening, a social at the Mt. Graham Golf Club prior to the banquet included drinks and birding. The golf course is actually one of the best and easiest birding spots in town. Several birders explored the ponds while others went to view the Great Horned Owl that is usually in a huge cottonwood near the club house. After an hour, everyone was called inside to begin the meal and presentations.



The first order of the night was the presentation of AZFO's premiere award. Doug Jenness, one of AZFO's founders and a current Board member, was honored with the AZFO Achievement Award recognizing his amazing contributions to Arizona bird research and the publication of field studies.



Janet Witzeman, the 2018 award winner, presented the 2022 Achievement Award to a much deserving Doug Jenness.



After dinner, well-known author and bird guide Rick Taylor led a visual tour through "Six Seasons: A Birding Year in the Land of the Apache." He stayed to chat and sign copies of his newest book, *Birds of Arizona*, a colorful photographic guide to more than 500 species.

## SUNDAY MINI-EXPEDITIONS

### Pima Area - From the Gila River to Cluff Ranch

Troy Corman led an eager team of birders to several eBird hotspots surrounding the Town of Pima. The first early-morning stop was at the [Bryce Road Bridge](#) over the Gila River in Pima.



They encountered a good selection of birds as they exited their vehicles in awesome morning light. Lingering summer breeders such as Gray Hawk, Yellow-breasted Chat, Blue Grosbeak and resident calling Crissal Thrasher were noted. These were joined by migrant warblers, tanagers and sparrows.





Among the 43 species detected, three migrants were new for this eBird hotspot: Spotted Sandpiper, Nashville Warbler and most surprising, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay that are moving through the lowlands this fall.

They then visited the nearby [Pima Wastewater Treatment Pond](#) where Mexican Duck, Swainson's Hawk and a "getting late" Cliff Swallow were noted. They actually added four species to this eBird hotspot: Belted Kingfisher, Curve-billed Thrasher, Western Meadowlark and Common Yellowthroat.

Then off to the south to [Cluff Ranch Wildlife Area](#) and Ash Creek in the Pinaleno Mountain foothills. Given the running water and towering cottonwoods and lush ash, hackberry and mesquite stands, they found the area quieter than expected. They still managed to find migrant Gray Flycatcher, MacGillivray's Warblers and numerous Green-tailed Towhees. Troy was joined by a very diverse and knowledgeable team and, as the morning warmed up so did many species of herps, butterflies and dragonflies that team members soon identified, including some lifers



for most participants. A

stop along the road paralleling Ash Creek provided a thrilling encounter with a large Gila Monster – a long overdue first for several! As they neared the noon hour, their final stop was at [1200W \(Matthews\) Pond](#) just off U.S. 70 west of Pima. Here they had several new species for the day such as Eared

Grebe; among over 60 Barn Swallows, they picked out three Bank Swallows. They also added two new species to this eBird hotspot: Pyrrhuloxia and surprisingly, Northern Mockingbird! It was a great morning with a fun, enthusiastic group.

### **Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area**

Camden Bruner's mini-expedition allowed 12 participants to visit two major locations in the Gila Box. The group encountered a near-flood-level Gila River which limited their ability to walk close to the river and to hear birds in riparian habitats over the rushing waters along the main canyon.



The first stop was the BLM's [Spring Canyon Picnic Area](#), where the group observed 22 species during their two-mile walk along the road and trail.

They spent the majority of the expedition, about two hours, hiking [Bonita Creek](#), a side canyon to the Gila River. Walking in the creek itself, the group stayed cool into the mid-day enjoying more lively birding, 32 species, in the abundant riparian habitat of this tributary.

The expedition had a close encounter with an interesting Red-tailed Hawk, potentially a juvenile of the Southwestern subspecies. Both Hammond's Flycatcher and Western Wood-Pewee were well observed by the group. A White-breasted Nuthatch was spotted, somewhat unusual for the Gila Box. The group had many of the expected riparian birds including five wren species, two species of tanager, Blue Grosbeaks, and two vireo species.



### Willcox Area – Fall Migration and Sparrow Seek

Homer Hansen's group spent a beautiful morning in Willcox. A little bit humid and "buggie" – but unsurprising given that 2.5" of rain had fallen just a day and a half earlier! Four expedition participants spent most of the time birding around [Cochise Lake and Twin Lakes Golf Course](#) ponds. Flyovers of Yellow-headed Blackbirds and numerous swallows were fun to observe, but the shorebirds and waterfowl were a treat, with nearly two dozen species combined.



Three teal species side-by-side made it ideal to compare sizes and field marks. The Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes swimming near each other also provided clear views between the two, sometimes within the same field of view in the scope! Long-billed Curlew, both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, and Least Sandpiper all in close proximity provided a fun look at the size differences, but a Pectoral Sandpiper foraging with Long-billed Dowitchers was the

highlight for the shorebirds. Unfortunately, sparrow diversity and numbers were still quite low and Savannah Sparrows were the only Passerellids to offer up views during the field expedition. However, the grasses in the valley are having an exceptional year and winter sparrows hopefully will be plenty. All in all, another great day birding!



### Duncan Birding Trail



Twelve birders drove 39 miles from Safford to join trip leaders Caleb Strand and Eric Hough on the [Duncan Birding Trail](#). The walk started at the intersection where State Route 75 crosses the Gila River and headed north/northwest following the Gila River riparian corridor and its adjacent agricultural fields.

The incredible migration flights that Strand documented the prior week had waned but the group still managed to see and/or hear 72 species. At least partially due to the farm fields, an estimated 1200 Yellow-headed Blackbirds and 650 Brown-headed Cowbirds were seen in large flocks. Eight-five Turkey Vultures, soon to be

heading south for the winter, were noted.



Raptors were well represented, with five Gray Hawks, two Common Black Hawks, three Swainson's Hawks, four Sharp-shinned Hawks, two Osprey and four American Kestrels. Eight warbler species included Orange-crowned, Lucy's, Nashville, MacGillivray's, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, and Wilson's, plus Common Yellowthroat. Sparrows included Chipping,



Brewer's, White-crowned, Vesper, Savannah, Song, and Lincoln's, plus an amazing count of 17 Abert's and 14 Green-tailed towhees. An unexpected 31 Blue Grosbeaks were seen during the 3.5-hour foray. Lazuli and Painted buntings were a highlight of the day, along with three Dickcissels that are only present here during migration.





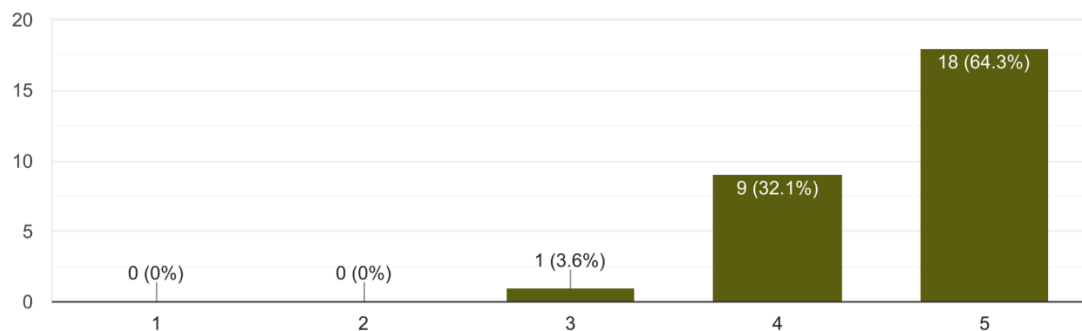
## CONCLUSION

Having our first in-person meeting in three years was a great opportunity to reconnect and/or make new friends, learn about current avian research, experience the Sky Islands and Desert Waters of Graham County, and see some great birds.

The evaluations were summarized and overall rankings were high indicating a successful event. We will use suggestions, such as decreasing the banquet time, to improve our next AZFO Annual Meeting. Survey results:

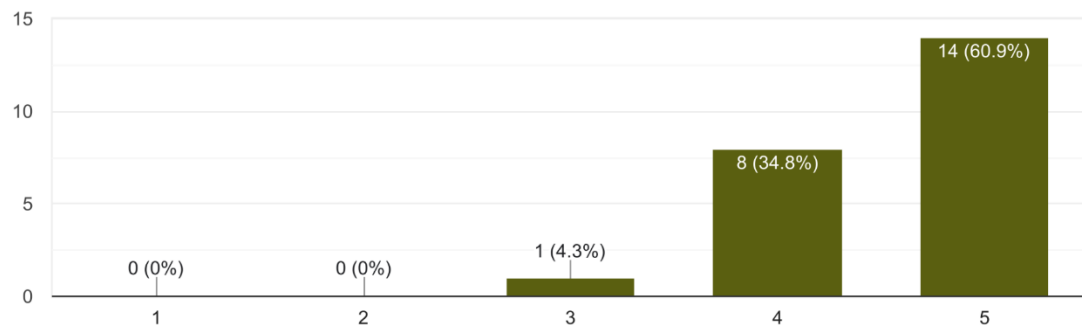
How satisfied were you with the overall event?

28 responses

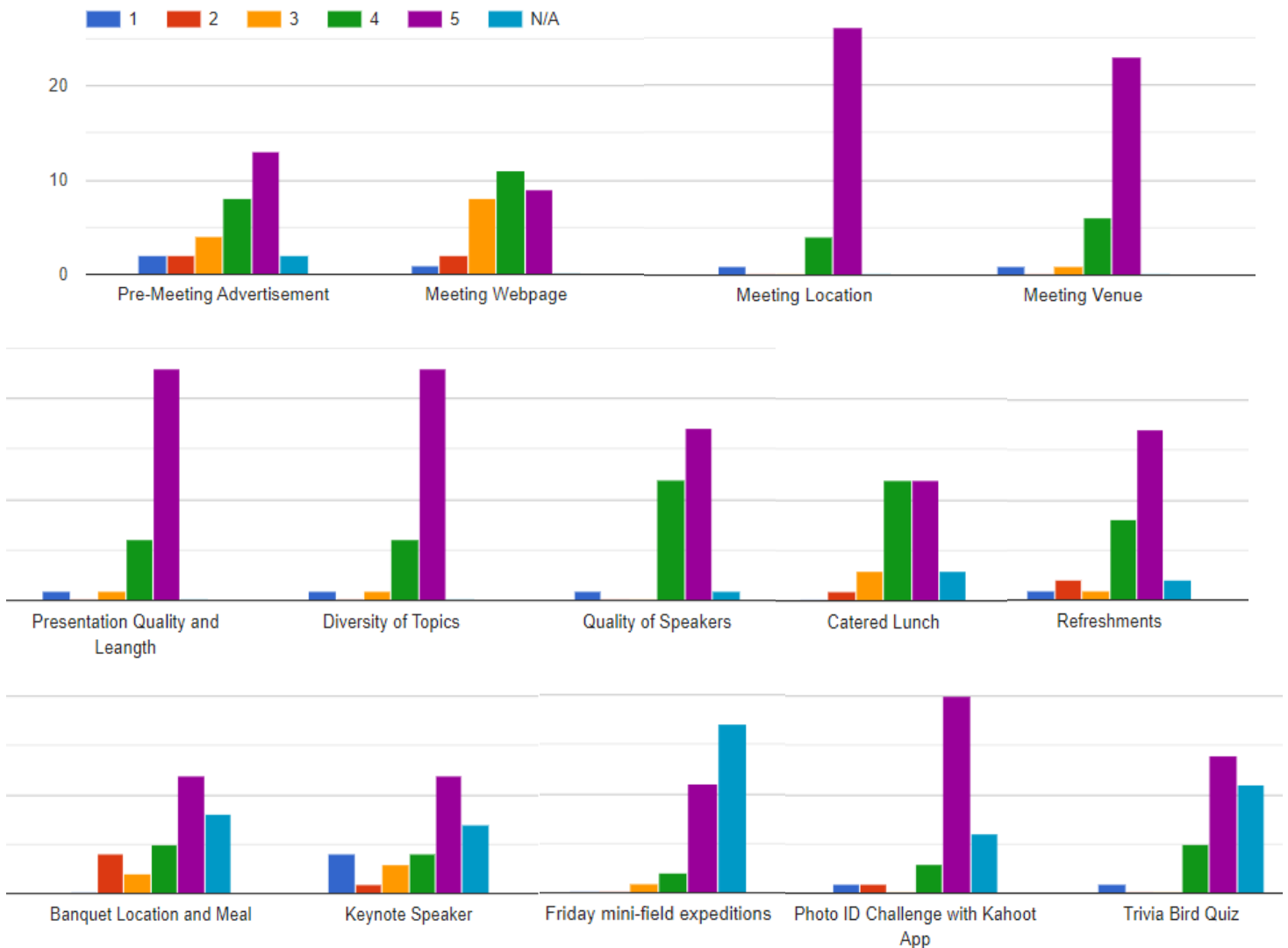


How relevant and helpful do you think the meeting content was for enhancing for your knowledge of Arizona birds?

23 responses



How satisfied were you with the logistics?



A special thanks to everyone who submitted photos for this report:

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**We hope to see everyone again at our  
AZFO 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting  
15-17 September 2023 in Payson**