

April 2024

Volume 8 Issue 4

Birding Club of Sun City



Shirley Ramaley

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The Falcon's Roost

Welcome to April 2024

The wind is blowing the remaining oranges off of my orange tree as I write this. All sorts of birds usually exit and disappear into this tree. I hope they're hanging on in there.

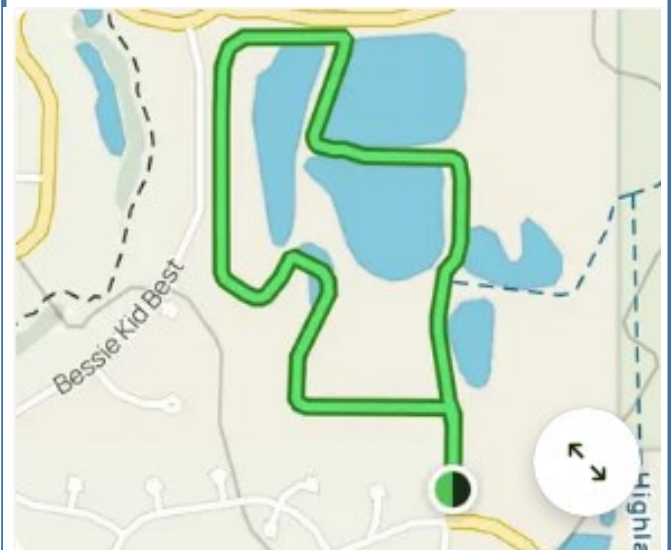
I didn't plan it, but somehow we are again going on field trips to the top four Maricopa County Birding venues this April.

Thursday April 4th Tres Rios #4
Wednesday April 17th Glendale Ponds #2
Sunday April 21st Gilbert Riparian Area #1
Wednesday April 24th Hassayampa #3
And, not rated but fun,
Tuesday April 30th Lake View

Some very nice photos from some of last month's field trips follow the usual filler. As an experiment, a short list of upcoming April field trips appears on the next page as a quick reference. The usual verbose trip descriptions still appear on later pages.

Starting in May when it gets uncomfortably hot, we will continue visiting sites like Hassayampa and the Glendale Recharge Ponds, but we will start an hour or more earlier than the cooler season.

In the warmer months, we will adventure North to sites like Bubbling Springs and the Fish Hatchery. When it gets even hotter we'll go to the Flagstaff Arboretum and nearby Kachina Wetlands Preserve. See map below.



Above: it's no Millennium Falcon!

On the cover:

Trying a new cover scheme after 8 years of the Thunderbird Viewing Blinds motif. The new cover features our club mascot the Green Heron. The old format featured on the second cover page is again the Greenie. Both photos are artfully taken by Shirley Ramaley on last month's Viewpoint lake trip. Opinions?

Wednesday April 10th is our last meeting before the Summer break. Next scheduled meeting is October 9th.

The main program will be my revised

Origins of Flight

This will cover all animal platforms of flight from the Carboniferous Period Of the Paleozoic 400,000,000 Years ago through the Quaternary Period of the Cenozoic Era or our present time. This will take about 12 viewing hours. However with minor editing, I can pare it down to about 1 hour.

Leader training

Looking for a few brave members to be trip facilitators. Not all outings are bird ID intensive. In the past we have visited bird rehabilitation centers. No IDing required. We need folks to plan travel to overnight locations. A boat ride on Lake Pleasant is always fun and requires no bird IDing. If you do a regular birding field trip, our members will be easy on you as they have been with me. Just say "first ID mistake I've made this year". Email me.

Upcoming April trips quick list

Full details on trip page later in this newsletter

Tres Rios Overbank Wetlands (now full)

When: Thursday April 4th at 7:45 am Leader - Tom Locascio

Glendale Recharge Ponds

When: Wednesday April 17th at 7:30 am Leader - Buddy Walker

**Sign up: Buddy Walker: walkerbd@live.com or text only cell:
602-653-1007 ask Buddy if you need directions.**

Gilbert Riparian Area

When: Sunday April 21st at 7 am Leader - Tom Locascio

Hassayampa River Preserve

When: Wednesday April 24th at 7:45 am Leader - Tom Locascio

Lakeview Recreation Center

When: Tuesday the 30th at 7:30 am Leader - Tom Locascio

Maricopa Regional Parks Trips

Estrella Saturday April 13th at 7:30 am Leaders Joe and Tom

Cave Creek Saturday April 20th at 7:30 am Leaders Joe and Tom

White Tank Saturday April 27th at 7:30 am Leaders Joe and Tom

Following all walks, Joe will present a program in the visitor center.

Carpooling is not available for Regional Parks trips.

These are not club events but are led by Joe Ford and Tom Locascio

Administriva page



Upcoming 2024 meetings



Wednesday April	10th	2024	10am	Fairway Arizona room 1&2
Summer meeting break				
Wednesday October	9th	2024	10am	Fairway Arizona room 1&2
Wednesday November	13th	2024	10am	Fairway Arizona room 1&2

Anyone going on a "Club Field Trip" needs to contact the leader of the trip to let them know that they will attend.

Car pooling process

If you need a ride or can give a ride, please send an email to: suncitybirders@gmail.com and indicate whether you need a ride or you can give a ride to one or more. A member of the Carpool Committee will get back to you and let you know if we can accommodate your request. As soon as an "open seat" becomes available, they will notify you with the name of the driver you will be riding with and where the carpoolers will meet. Generally, this will be at the Bell Center. "Open seats" will be filled first come, first served. If a seat is not available, you will be notified prior to the day of the trip. If a person that requests a ride is able to be matched with a driver, it is expected that the person requesting the ride helps the driver to help cover their gas expenses.

Suggested gas expense assistance for short trips:

The Glendale Recharge Ponds \$5 (all rides up to 50 miles \$5 minimum).

Longer trips such as Gilbert Water Ranch \$10, (51-100 miles)

Really long trips such as Boyce Thompson Arboretum could be \$15 or more.

Wanted: Your photos for the newsletter!

To join our club or get information: locascio2000@hotmail.com or text 620-616-7459. Submit photos and information of interest to our newsletter. It is much appreciated to receive accounts of birding experiences or impressions of any of our field trips or activities. They will appear in the newsletter.

Famous birdwatchers

From sources across the web



Jonathan Franzen



Rory McGrath



Paul McCartney



Alison Steadman



David Bailey



Sean Bean



Alex Horne



Bill Bailey



Jimmy Carter



John James Audubon



Fidel Castro



Ian Eagle



Jeremy Clarkson



Laura Bush



Prince Philip



Wes Craven



Daryl Hannah



Ian Fleming



Martin Noble

Castro promised his subjects a chicken in every pot.

John James Audubon collected his specimens by shooting them.

Sean Bean got beheaded in the first episode of the Game of Thrones he was in, taking his life list with him.

I recognized 8 others, but gave up trying to google the remaining celebrities who were unfamiliar to me.

How did you fare?

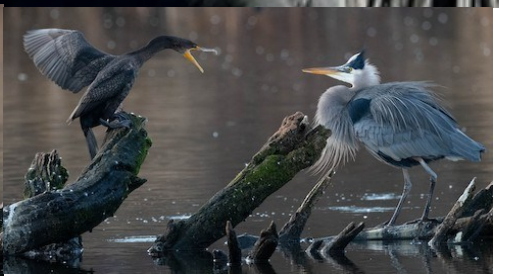


Paloma Community Park

Barbara Dunsmore took this photo on our Paloma trip, here's the backstory. On a previous trip we saw three American Kestrels. Two were on this tree and another male was attacking them. The third wheel took off never to be seen again on subsequent visits. The remaining male had won the lovely but vicious female. The pair frequented this tree while blending in well there to perch and wait for unsuspecting prey. On a later visit, I observed the pair here again, then noticed an increasing number of Great-tailed Grackles landing on adjoining branches. When it got to the point of resembling a scene from Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds", the Grackles prevailed and the Kestrel pair left for less bothersome and distant Saguaro-top perches. On the recent club trip we all observed the spectacle again with one of the Kestrels present. Mr. and Mrs. kestrel have been residents here for a few months now.



Above: Marilyn Cute Photo



Upcoming April 2024 field trip

Tres Rios Overbank Wetlands

When: Thursday April 4th at **7:45 am** **Leader - Tom Locascio**

There should be Mass quantities of Waders, Waterfowl, and shorebirds here in a peaceful and private setting. The usual desert denizens will be here as well.

There is a limit of 12 on each trip as the city of Phoenix is providing a 12 passenger van to transport us into the “closed to the public” part of the wetlands. If too many reserve a spot, there will be a wait list. We have Cliff again to thank for his efforts arranging these trips.

Meet at: Those who take part in carpooling will meet at the SE corner of the Bell Center parking lot where the farmer’s market usually meets at 6:45. We will leave at 7 am sharp. The rest will meet up at the 91st Ave. Wetlands parking lot at 7:45 . I will send more details and maps if requested. Here’s a plus for those non-plussed about driving on the 101 freeway. You can avoid it by taking 99th Ave. south to Thomas road. going east to 91st Ave and going south to the smallish Wetlands parking area.

Restrictions: Here’s the fun part. They have room for 12 people, 1 trip leader and 11 club member only participants.

- 1) First priority goes to members who haven’t been on this trip before. There will be a wait list for other interested members. We almost always have a cancelation or more so don’t hesitate to get on the wait list as it is often used.
- 2) Email me to get on the main list or wait list. Let me know if you haven’t been before. We will rideshare from the Bell Center meeting at the SW corner of the facility
- 3) Another option if the event is full and you want to join in is to walk the fence trail external to the closed to the public area van riders will be traveling. All other visitors to this site enjoy the Wetlands, enjoy the external trail to the not open to the public area seeing some different birds. Email me for more options externally.

Difficulty: Not too much walking as a Phoenix Water Van will drive us to viewing locations. We will have to get off and back on to the van several times.

Sign up: Via e-mail locascio2000@hotmail.com

More info:

[Tres Rios Overbank Wetlands \(permit required\), Maricopa County, AZ, US - eBird Hotspot](#)

[Illustrated Checklist - Tres Rios Overbank Wetlands \(permit required\), Maricopa County, AZ, US - eBird Hotspot](#)

This trip is full but the Wait list is empty. There still may be a good chance to attend if there is a cancelation.

Upcoming April 2024 field trips

Glendale Recharge Ponds

When: Wednesday April 17th at 7:30 am Leader Buddy Walker

Arrive at: 7:15 as group leaves at 7:30 am

Sign up: Buddy Walker: walkerbd@live.com or text only cell: 602-653-1007 ask Buddy if you need directions.

This is the best “close” birding venue to us and one of the two best birding hot spots in Maricopa County. You will observe waterfowl & shorebirds like Stilts and Avocets, as well as desert residents and migrants. In addition Gulls, Terns, Eagles, and falcons may be seen. The water levels and feeding opportunities change daily and the species present reflect that.

Meet at: On the SE corner of basin #6.

Click below to see what's been seen recently:

[Glendale Recharge Ponds, Maricopa County, AZ, US - eBird Hotspot](#)

Carpooling: If you need a ride or can give a ride please send an email to: suncitybirders@gmail.com and indicate whether you need a ride or if you can give a ride to one or more. **Do not request ride info from trip leader.**



Buddy Walker



Additional Buddy Walker photos from the March Glendale Recharge trip.
On the top: Three frolicking American Avocets almost completely in breeding plumage.
Below: Great Egret fly by. Only two seen here that day but we saw 41 other species.

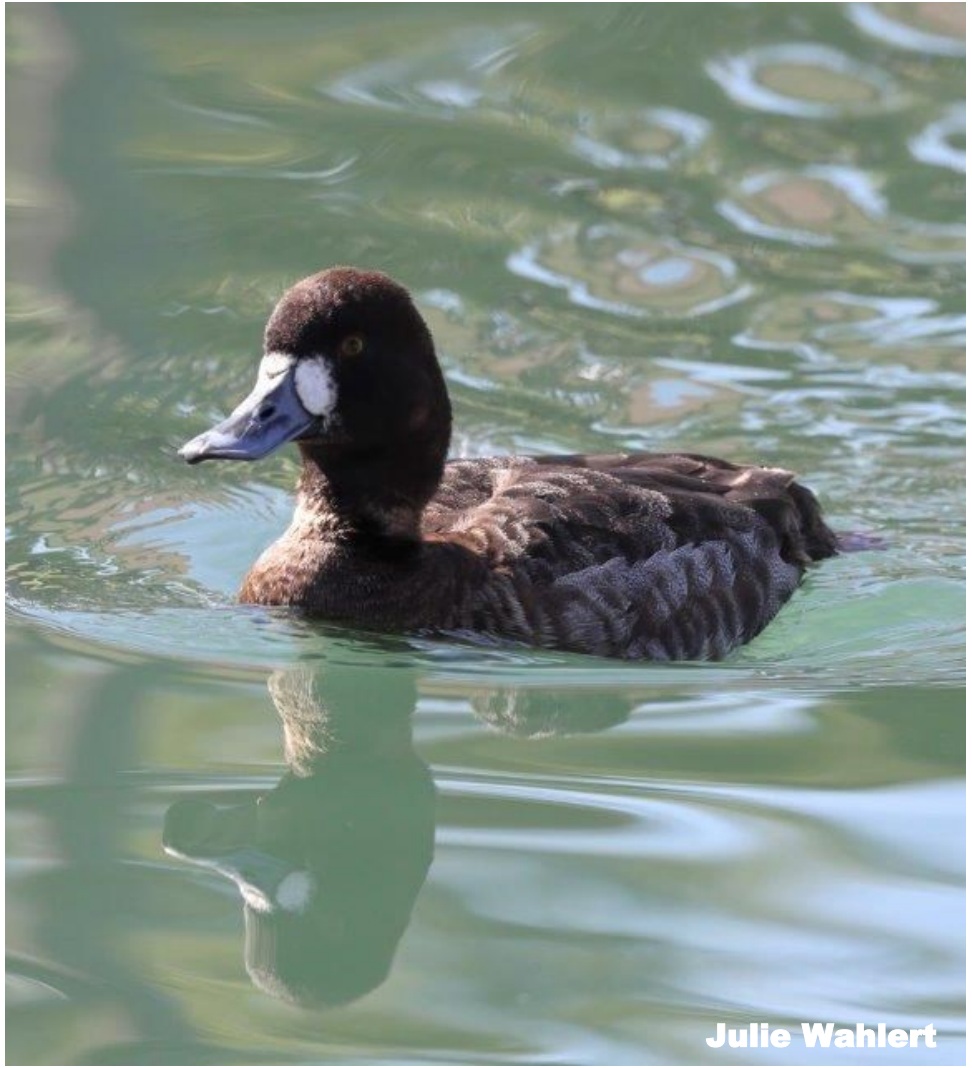


Buddy Walker

Rio Vista Park

Top Right:

The odd duck. Among the ubiquitous Mallards and Ring-necked Ducks was this lone female Lesser Scaup. The male is pictured below.



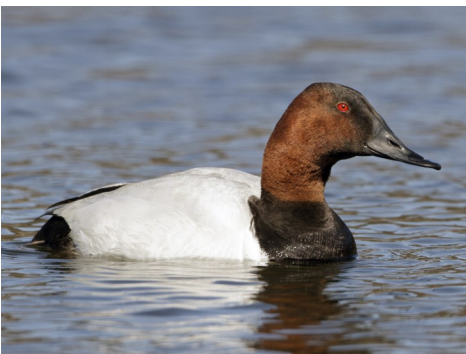
Julie Wahlert



He looks a lot like the Ring-necked Duck on the lower right. In bad light, he may look like a Redhead Duck as well pictured below.



If you squint, it may look like a Canvasback perhaps.



The Canvasback is a stretch, but at distance in poor light?



Marilynn Cute



Julie Wahlert



Marilynn Cute



Tom Worcester

Hassayampa River Preserve

Ten of us enjoyed a fine spring day here. We heard and saw a Gray Hawk by the river and again at the start of the Lion Trail. That view was pretty good and the white and black striped tail showed well.

Upper left:

A couple of days after our trip Julie went back to Hassayampa and took this photo of an Abert's Towhee enjoying some Bearded Palm fruit. She also took the Pied-billed Grebe baby picture on the Hassayampa advertising page on that visit.

Upper right:

A Northern Cardinal of the Conehead sub race. He must be from France. I don't think this was taken at Hassayampa but is well worth a look here.

Lower Left:

A lovely but fairly non-descript Lucy's Warbler. He does have a rufus patch on his head and rump If you can spot it. The black eye and face paler than the head is a good diagnostic here as well..

Upcoming April 2024 field trip

Riparian area at the Gilbert Water Ranch

When: Sunday April 21st 7 am

Leader - Tom Locascio

Worth all your efforts to get there at 7am as this is the best birding hotspot in Maricopa county presenting an optimal spring migration opportunity. We will see remaining ducks, Waders, and waterfowl, as well as desert residents and migrants. There will be plenty of flycatchers, Raptors, and shorebirds to view. We'll be looking for 50- 60 plus species.

Gilbert maintains a beautiful park, (the Water Ranch and Lake) and contained in it is the wonderful Riparian area. Besides the Wonder Bread lake, there are 6 recharge ponds with great vegetation. The pride of Gilbert.

Meet at: The south side of the library parking lot as close as you can get to the lake I will send you directions for highway or streets if you request them when you sign up. Or, have a friend drive you (\$2.50 guest fee) At this point, Our usual 101 to 60 route may be spoiled by 101 roadwork. If that's the case I recommend taking 101 south to I10, then after a few miles get on the 202. Get off at Higley and go north to E. Elliot. Make a right on N. Greenfield Rd. Then take the first entrance to the library before you get to Guadalupe.

I will e-mail an extensive directions packet when the trip reminder goes out. Carpooling may be available by contacting: suncitybirders@gmail.com

Difficulty: Totally flat and paved. Two or three miles. (you could do less)



Vera Markham

Upcoming April 2024 field trip

Lakeview Recreation Center

When: Tuesday the 30th at **7:30 am**

Leader - Tom Locascio

We will checkout recently drained and refilled Viewpoint lake for ducks and Waterfowl. We have seen 25 species here in the past so there is a good amount of passerines or perching birds around. In the past we saw interesting birds like Acorn Woodpecker, Red-naped Sapsucker, and a Hermit Thrush. We had 15 member on this walk two months ago and a good time was had by all.

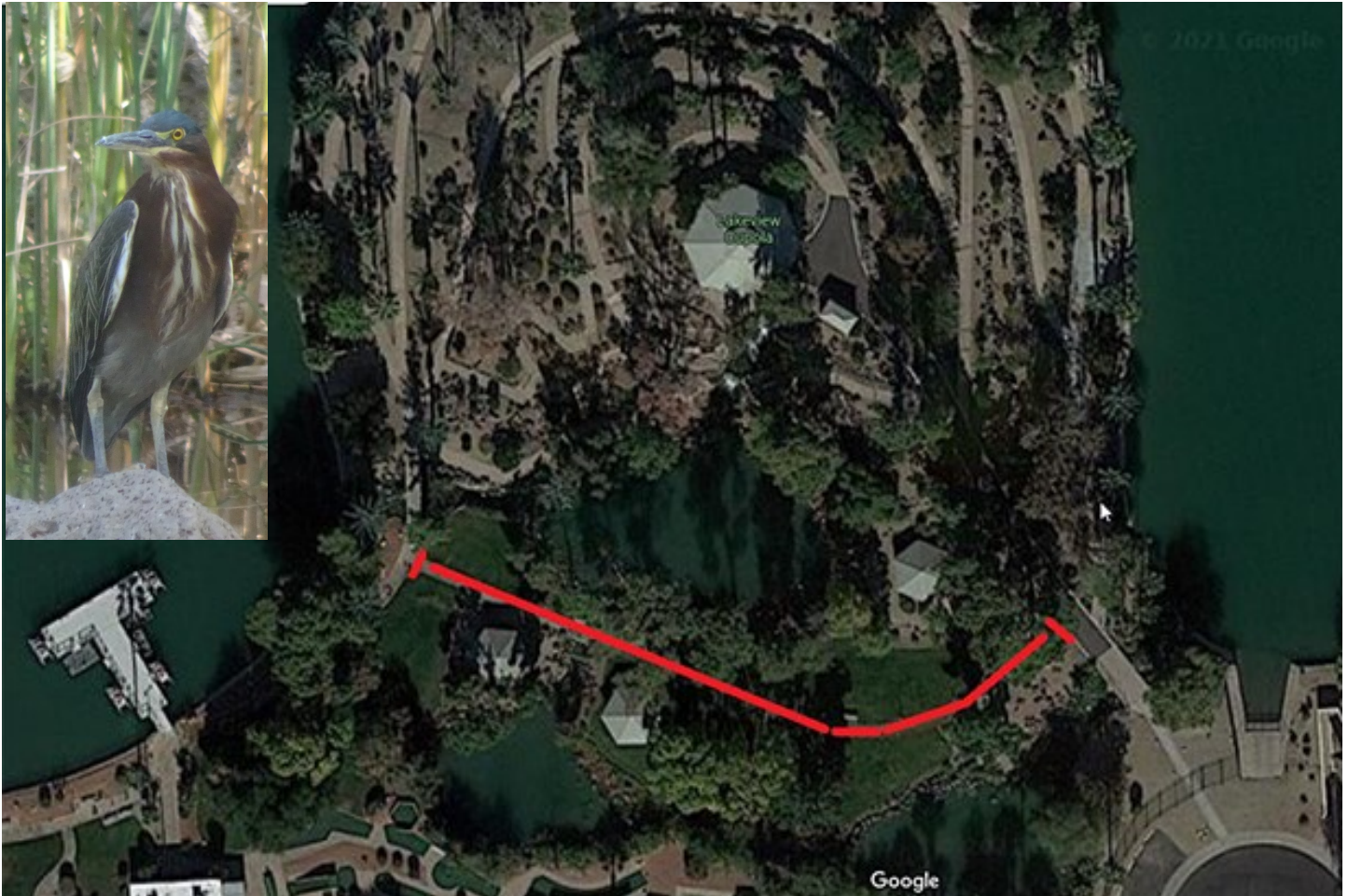
Meet at: **Viewpoint Lake Kiosks.** We will meet in one of the first 2 Kiosks after the pedal boat docks South of red line in overhead photo below.

Cost: No cost

Difficulty: A mile or two on flat ground, with some uphill walking.

Carpooling: No carpooling available on local trips.

Note: Must be an RCSC cardmember to attend.



Upcoming April 2024 field trip

Hassayampa Regional Park

When: April 24th at **7:45 am**

Leader - Tom Locascio

Will be cooler here than in the Valley, you may need to layer.

The third best birding spot in Maricopa county with 293 species observed. We may see Red-shouldered, Cooper's Hawks, Gray, maybe Black hawks, Yellow-rump, Black-throated Gray, Lucy's, and Orange-crowned Warblers. Hermit Thrushes, Dark-eyed Juncos, Cardinals, Hummingbirds, Waxwings, Vireos, & If we are lucky, perhaps a Chat, Bridled Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, or Brown Creeper.

Meet at: Hassayampa Visitor Center Parking Lot or by the feeders in front.

I will send you directions for highway or (streets) if you request them when you sign up. Or, have a friend drive you (\$2.50 guest fee) There is no pure street route but one can drastically limit Hwy 60 travel by taking Lake Pleasant Pkwy to state Hwy 74 then go right onto Hwy 60.

Cost: \$5 per car entry fee. Your Maricopa Regional Parks pass works here!

Difficulty: A two or less mile walk on flat land.

Pied-billed Grebe chick

Julie Wahlert



April 2004 Regional Parks field trips

Estrella Regional Park - Sonoran Audubon

When: Saturday April 13th at **7:30 am** Leaders - Joe Ford & Tom L.

This is a joint Maricopa Regional Parks/Sonoran Audubon endeavor. This park has a wide variety of species due to the generous representation of habitats such as: Mesquite Bosque, open river channels, riparian "stringers", mini grasslands, and of course, Sonoran desert.

Meet at: **7 am around the Visitor Center for early Center birding**

Difficulty: A mile and a half of walking

Cost: \$7 per car entry fee to the park. (or use/buy a yearly pass)

Cave Creek Regional Park

When: Saturday April 20th **7:30 am**

Leaders: Joe Ford & Tom Locascio

The walk: This is a joint Maricopa Regional Parks/Sonoran Audubon endeavor. The feeders at the rear of the visitor center are one of the highlight of our walk. This is a great place to see Canyon Towhee, Rock Wren, Canyon Wren, Cardinal, and Phainopepla.

Meet: **at 7 am** at the rear of the Visitor Center for some pre-walk feeder birding.

Difficulty: A two or less mile hike on flat land with 2 inclines. Wear sturdy shoes.

Costs: \$7 per car entry fee to the park. (or use/buy yearly pass)

White Tank Mountain Regional Park

When: Saturday April 27th **7:30 am** Leaders - Joe Ford & Tom Locascio

This is a joint Maricopa Regional Parks/Sonoran Audubon endeavor.

Meet at: **7 am** at the feeders located on the SW side of the Library/Visitor Center.

Difficulty: A two mile or less hike on flat land.

Costs: **\$7** per car entry fee to the park or buy a yearly pass!

Following all walks, Joe will present a program (TBA) in the visitor center.

Carpooling is not available for Regional Parks trips.

These are not club events but led by Joe Ford and Tom Locascio

See following page for Regional Park addresses and phone numbers as there are many other parks offering bird walks. Try Hassayampa, Lake Pleasant, and User Park. Hassayampa has extremely knowledgeable guides.

March field trip bird list links

[Click on the link under each trip for the bird list.](#)

Estrella Regional Park 3/9/24

[eBird Checklist - 9 Mar 2024 - Estrella Mountain Regional Park - 27 species](#)

Lakeview Recreation Center 3/11/24

[eBird Checklist - 11 Mar 2024 - Lakeview Recreation Center Sun City - 23 species](#)

Cave Creek Regional Park 3/16/24

[eBird Checklist - 16 Mar 2024 - Cave Creek Regional Park - 20 species](#)

Paloma Community park 3/18/24

[eBird Checklist - 18 Mar 2024 - Paloma Community Park - 25 species \(+2 other taxa\)](#)

Glendale Recharge Ponds 3/20/24

[eBird Checklist - 20 Mar 2024 - Glendale Recharge Ponds - 42 species \(+1 other taxa\)](#)

White Tank Mountain 3/23/24

[eBird Checklist - 23 Mar 2024 - White Tank Mountain Regional Park - 26 species](#)

Rio Vista Community Park 3/25/24

[eBird Checklist - 25 Mar 2024 - Rio Vista Community Park/Riparian Area - 31 species \(+1 other taxa\)](#)

Hassayampa River Preserve 3/27/24

[eBird Checklist - 27 Mar 2024 - Hassayampa River Preserve - 25 species \(+1 other taxa\)](#)



Who am I? Not of this ABA area.