

Volume 9 Issue 4

April 2025

Birding Club of Sun City



Vera

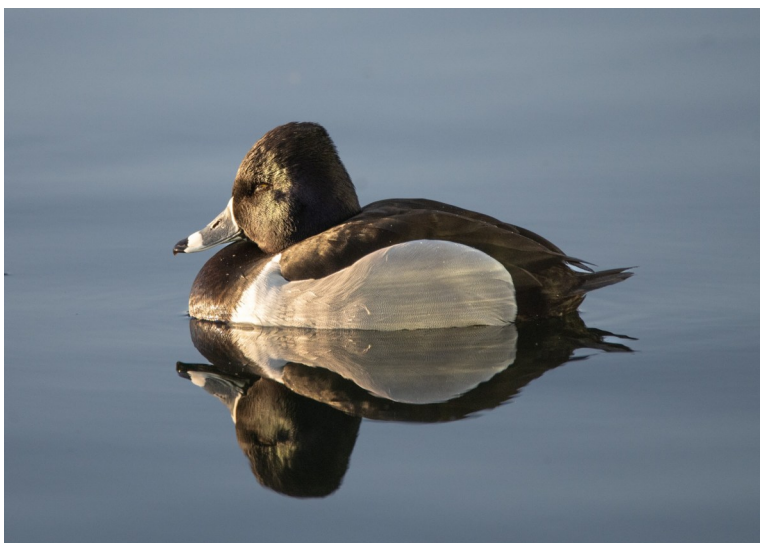


It's no Millennium Falcon!

On the cover:

American Avocet coming into it's breeding plumage taken by **Vera Markham** last month on the **Gilbert Riparian Preserve** field trip.

Mr. and Mrs. Ring-necked Duck below were also taken at Gilbert Riparian by **Sue Rawleigh**.



The Falcon's Roost

Hi Birders,

Spring birds are arriving as evidenced by White-winged Doves, Robins, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Ash-throated Flycatchers. I'm still sorting out trips to Tres Rios and Boyce Thompson Arboretum but our feature trip to the Page Fish Hatchery and Bubbling Ponds Preserve is ready to go and just needing commitments from participants and drivers as it's 143 miles away. This would have car pools leaving at 5:30 am. This is one of my favorite birding spots and the Club hasn't been here since 2019. We will visit Bubbling Springs first, if time, then the Fish Hatchery. Black Hawks are common here and Wood Ducks have their young here about this time. Flycatchers like WEWP and Olive Sided too.



This Yellow-headed Black Bird, What else could it be called? This YHBL visited Barb Zanoni's backyard.

**Our next Meeting is:
April 9th 10am**

**The main program will be:
April & May field trips & Bird ID
Short program:
Charli's Birds at home photos**

Upcoming April trip quick-list

Full details on trip Ad pages later in this newsletter

Rio Vista Community Park

When: Monday April 7th 6:30 am

Leader - Tom

Email Tom for more information locascio2000@hotmail.com

Glendale Recharge Ponds

When: Wednesday April 16th 6:30 am

Leader - Tom

Email Tom for more information locascio2000@hotmail.com

Hassayampa River Preserve

When: Wednesday April 23rd at 7:30 am

Leader - Tom

Email Tom to join the group locascio2000@hotmail.com

Bubbling Ponds Preserve

When: Sunday April 27th Carpool leaves at 5:30 am **Leader -Tom**

Email Tom for more information locascio2000@hotmail.com

Tres Rios Riparian Area and/or Boyce Thompson Arboretum

When: April TBA

Leader - Tom

Negotiation with Phoenix Water ongoing at time of publication.

Boyce Thompson Arboretum in planning phase.

More information before or at meeting.

Maricopa Regional Parks/Audubon trips

Estrella Mountain Regional Park

When: Saturday April 12th at 7:30 am

Leaders Joe and Tom

Cave Creek Regional Park

When: Saturday April 19th at 7 am

Leaders Joe and Tom

White Tank Regional Park

When: Saturday April 26th at 7 am

Leaders Joe and Tom

Administriva page



Upcoming 2025 meetings



Upcoming meetings

Wednesday April 9th 2025 10am Fairway Arizona room 1&2

Summer break

Wednesday October 8th 2025 10am Fairway Arizona room 1&2

Wednesday November 12th 2025 10am Fairway Arizona room 1&2

No meeting in December

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 RT miles \$5 minimum).

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.

White Tank Wildlife Ponds 3/9/25 part 1



Above: Charlotte Auman, also credited as Charli in her photos, caught 2 Curve-billed Thrashers exiting stage left.

Below left: Caught in song either to claim stakes to a territory or perhaps pleading his case for a partner.

Below right: Two American Kestrels converge on a Saguaro top photographed at quite a distance by Charli.



White Tank Wildlife Ponds 3/9/25 part 2



Tom W.

On top: The tiny **Verdin**. Barely larger than a Hummingbird. This Likely immature male would have small rufous patches on his head & wing and stronger yellow color on his head If he was an adult. Only seen in 5 western states and Mexico, they love small one flower Hummingbird feeders.

Below: We saw two species of Gnatcatcher on this trip. This **Black-tailed** was observed at the Visitor Center where we were treated to quite a few of them. The **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was seen at the Wildlife Ponds and eluded all efforts to be photographed.



Tom W.

Gilbert Riparian Preserve 3/16/25 part 1



Vera

Top: Anthropomorphically musing, the **American White Pelican** glances fondly at the sleeping American Avocet.

Below: **Cinnamon Teal** or *Spatula cyanoptera*, have a lineage that began to evolve millions of years before the K/T extinction event approximately 66 million years ago. The duck-like creatures survived due to size and food supply through water foraging.



Vera

Gilbert Riparian Preserve 3/16/25 part 2



Vera

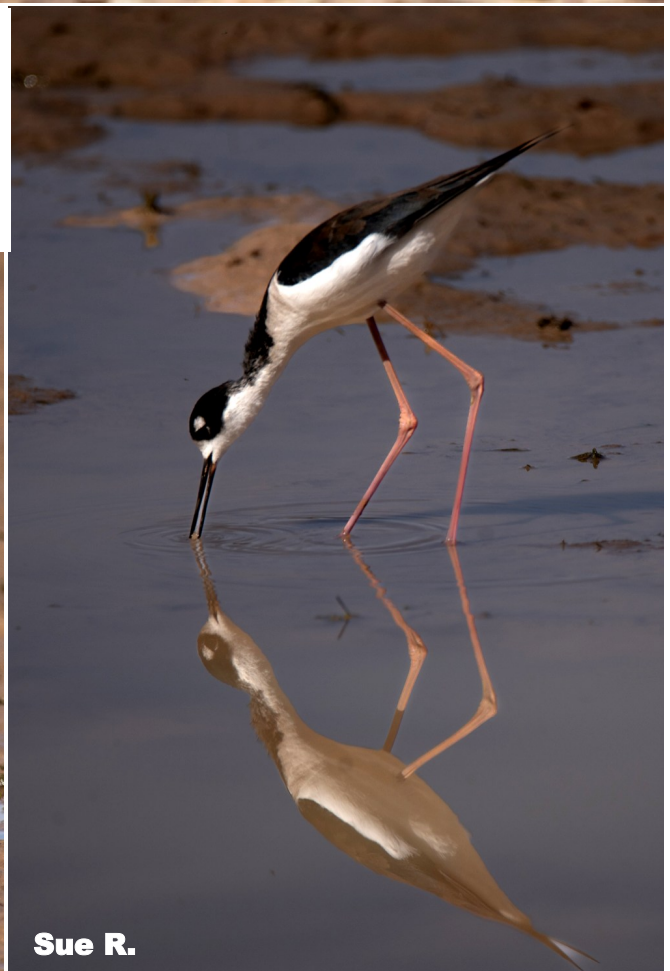
Above: This **Wilson's Snipe** was very close and not very shy.

Below: The American Avocet (left) and Black-necked Stilt are the only 2 members of the Recurvirostridae family in the U.S. They however do not belong to the same Genus.

American Avocet or *Recurvirostra americana* or AMVA
Black-necked Stilt or *Himantopus mexicanus* or BNST



Sue Rawleigh



Sue R.

Gilbert Riparian Preserve 3/16/25 part 3

eBird Rare Bird Alerts You may not be aware that eBird has a daily rare bird alert service driven by eBirder listings. This is a free service and if you are a birder that loves finding a “life bird”, one new to your life list, this will help you to find them. Life lists are not for everyone and there is no requirement to keep a list of species you have seen, but some of us enjoy the chase. Below is an example of an eBird Alert that shows an early migrator that is rare by its early arrival. I have attached an example below with an entry generated by our Gilbert Riparian Preserve eBird listing. The first part below is a list of rare birds generated by an eBird listing determined from the previous days birding lists. Note Black-and-white Warbler listed. After that they list a description of each rare bird's details such as its name, date, time it was reported, and who submitted the observation. On the third line it has map/location information so you can drop everything and go find the bird. Finally checklist link and comments are listed.

[eBird Alert] Maricopa County Rare Bird Alert <daily> Inbox x

ebird-alert@birds.cornell.edu

to me ▾

*** Species Summary:

- Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal (hybrid) (2 reports)
- Ruddy Ground Dove (1 report)
- Common Loon (1 report)
- Golden Eagle (1 report)
- Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet (3 reports)
- Hutton's Vireo (1 report)
- Bushtit (1 report)
- Fox Sparrow (1 report)
- Chihuahuan Meadowlark (2 reports)
- Black-and-white Warbler (1 report)
- Pyrrhuloxia (1 report)

Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) (1) CONFIRMED

- Reported Mar 16, 2025 07:00 by Tom Locascio
- Riparian Preserve at Gilbert Water Ranch, Maricopa, Arizona
- Map: <http://maps.google.com/?ie=UTF8&t=p&z=13&q=33.3614502,-111.7339478&ll=33.3614502,-111.7339478>
- Checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S218986695>
- Comments: "Observed foraging in the Mesquites along the path to the hide at Owl cove."



Clicking on the link that follows, you can subscribe to this daily list. [Alerts - eBird](#)

Everyone on the Gilbert trip observed this warbler going about its foraging routine in a Mesquite tree. On the Hassayampa field trip we heard the nesting Grey Hawks calling but couldn't find the nest they were building. A few of Arizona's top birders took photos that you can find here: [eBird Checklist - 26 Mar 2025 - Hassayampa River Preserve - 50 species](#)

Glendale Recharge Ponds 3/19/25 part 1



Above:

Long-billed Dowitchers

Feeding on delicious Aquatic Invertebrates. They probe the soft sand in a sewing machine like motion.

Overseeing his domain, perched on a rock like the passerine he is, the **Brewer's Blackbird** wonders if humans are intelligent.

Blackbirds seen:

Great-tailed Grackles

Starlings

Red-Winged Blackbirds

Brown-headed Cowbirds

Brewer's Blackbird

To the right:

A stately, stoic, and statuesque fellow draped in his wait for courting finest. The same filament feathers or "lacy plumes" are also seen on the smaller **Snowy Egret**.



Great Egret

Tom Worcester

Glendale Recharge Ponds 3/19/25 part 2



Tom Worcester was determined to get photos of the dozens of swallows flying frantically above us. They rapidly changed direction to consume insects employing long evolved evasive maneuvers. His photos yielded ID-able diagnostics achieved thanks to Tom's persistence. Not pictured here were the much more numerous **Northern Rough-winged Swallows**.

Clockwise from top left & right:

Violet-green Swallow - Very white below, vivid green on top with white saddle bags on rump.

Cliff Swallow - Cream colored rectangle on the forehead and rufous over tail coverts,

Tree Swallow - similar to the Violet green but without the rump white saddle bags.



Hassayampa River 2/26/25

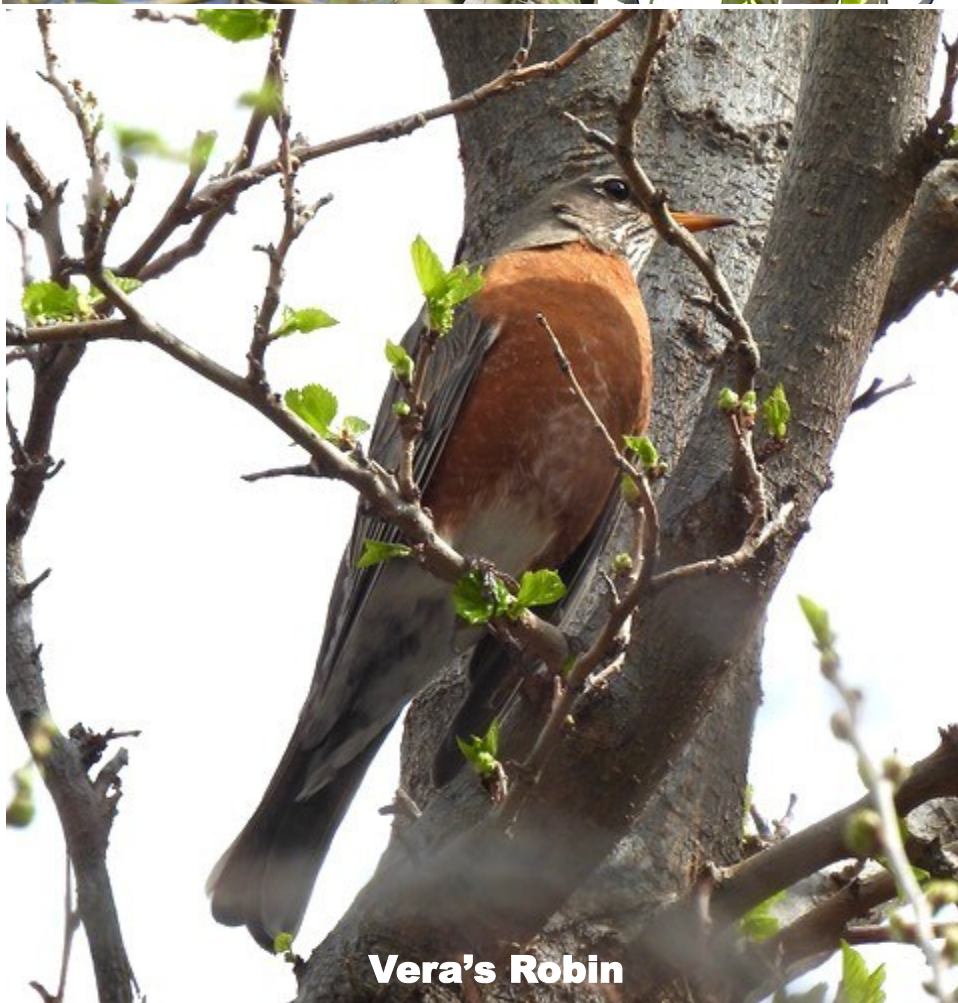
Part 1



Clint



Clint



Vera's Robin

Top left:

Gila woodpeckers were one of the more audible and visible birds. Nest prep in progress.

Top Right:

Clint spotted this Ash-throated Flycatcher on the Mesquite Meander Trail. It was hiding from us and Clint eventually got this photo.



Ash-throated Flycatcher range

Hassayampa River 2/26/25

Part 2



Top: We often see **Lesser Goldfinches** here. These were drinking at the Mighty Hassayampa River.

Middle left: We only saw Anna's Hummingbirds but additional species are coming like the Black-chinned Hummer.

Middle right: There were plenty of **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. We also saw Lucy's, Wilson's, and Yellow Warblers.

Lower left: and right: Mr. & Mrs. **Vermillion Flycatcher**. Good news, more here now than in the previous 2 years.



Upcoming April 2025 field trip

Rio Vista Community Park

When: Monday April 7th at **6:30 am** **Leader - Tom Locascio**

We can expect to see 25 or more species. Shorebirds, Raptors, Green and Blue Herons, 99 Great-tailed Grackles guaranteed, and the usual Riparian and Desert species. Ducks and Cormorants are a constant, and a Roadrunner pair are a welcome site. Great spot for photography.

Meet at: The open area just South of the Bridge (**X** on map below)

Cost: No cost

Difficulty: A 1 1/2 or less mile walk on flat ground

Carpooling: No carpooling available on local trips at this time.

I saw 30 species including a Peregrine Falcon on my last visit here. Migration is slowly proceeding. I'm hoping the two **Greater Yellowlegs** that usually show in the catchment basin south of the pedestrian bridge Will be present and take the **Wilson's Snipe** with them. As usual, on the back page, there are links to the previous months field trips on listed on eBird.



Upcoming April 2025 field trip

Glendale Recharge Ponds

When: Wednesday April 16th at **6:30 am** **Leader Tom**

Arrive at: **6:15** as group leaves at **6:30 am**

Sign up: **Tom:** locascio2000@hotmail.com

This is the best “close” birding venue to us and one of the two best birding hot spots in Maricopa County with 299 species. You will observe waterfowl & shorebirds like Stilts and Avocets, as well as desert residents and migrants. In addition Gulls, Terns, Geese, Eagles, and Falcons may be seen. A large variety of ducks are present. **Last month we saw 40 species. Check last page details.**

The water levels and feeding opportunities change daily and the species present reflect that.

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

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



Buddy Walker

Upcoming March 2025 field trip

Hassayampa River Preserve

When: Wednesday April 23rd at 7:30 am **Leader - Tom Locascio**

The third best birding spots in Maricopa county with 290 species. Rare to Maricopa County birds are likely to show up here as it presents a unique habitat that seems to emulate a higher elevation and is a Riparian area. Passerines like the White-breasted Nuthatch and genus brother Brown Creeper may show as well as the flocks of Western Bluebirds and Cedar Waxwings. Hutton's Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Northern Red-shafted Flickers are here. There will be of course Coots, our favorite Pied-billed Grebe, and the possibility of a Heron or Egret of sorts lurking in the reeds. As usual, we will bird the **rewarding** road between parking lots until the gate opens

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.

Carpooling: Contact Tom W. via suncitybirders@gmail.com to sign up to drive or ride

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



Barb Zanoni

Upcoming April 2025 field trip

Page Springs Fish Hatchery - Bubbling Ponds Preserve

When: Sunday April 27th carpool leaving at **5:30** to meet up at the Bubbling Springs parking lot at **7 am** **Leader - Tom Locascio**

Meet at: The Bubbling Springs parking lot at **7 am**

Carpooling: Is worthwhile but you may drive yourself if you prefer. Those who carpool will need to be at the Bell Center parking lot at **5:15** to leave at **5:30** sharp. Those who need a ride or can provide one should let Tom W. at suncitybirders@gmail.com Know. Please help drivers out with gas keeping in mind it is a 286 mile round trip.

Difficulty: Pretty flat and could be paved. Two miles or less on flat land if memory serves.

Why you want to go: Mr. Common Blackhawk seen below will be there and I've seen them each visit there, last time clutching a snake while in full View. Oak Creek runs between the Hatchery and Bubbling springs. In the past some members stayed overnight to check out the wineries in the area. Click on link the below to view the list from the May 2019 club trip.

[eBird Checklist - 27 May 2019 - Page Springs Fish Hatchery--Bubbling Ponds Preserve - 33 species \(+1 other taxa\)](#)

Young Wood Ducks are made here. Birds of interest: Western Wood-Pewee, American Crow & Ravens to compare, Northern House & Bewick's Wrens, Kingbirds, Tanagers, Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chats and Cardinals. Finally a slew of Herons, Egrets, ducks and more.



April 2025 Regional Parks trips

Estrella Regional Park

& Sonoran Audubon

When: Saturday April 12th at **7:30 am** **Leaders - Joe & Tom**

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: **7:00 am** around the Visitor Center for early pre-walk birding.

Difficulty: A mile and a half of walking

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

Program: to follow inside the Nature Center: “Bird Weirdness III”

Cave Creek Regional Park

& Sonoran Audubon

When: Saturday April 19th at **7 am** **Leaders - Joe & Tom**

Meet at: **6:30 am** behind the Visitor Center for early pre-walk birding.

Difficulty: A mile and a half of walking

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

Program: to follow inside the Nature Center: “Rattlesnakes”

White Tank Mt. Regional Park

& Sonoran Audubon

When: Saturday April 26th at **7 am** **Leaders - Joe & Tom**

Meet at: **6:30 am** next to the Visitor Center for early pre-walk birding.

Difficulty: A mile and a half of walking

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

Program: to follow inside the Nature Center: “Flowers that fire the imagination”

Following the 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

March field trip bird list links

Click on the link under each trip for the bird list.

Estrella Regional Park

March 8th 2025

[eBird Checklist - 8 Mar 2025 - Estrella Mountain Regional Park - 30 species](#)

White Tank Mountain

March 9th 2025

[eBird Checklist - 9 Mar 2025 - White Tank Mountain Regional Park - 17 species](#)

White Tank Wildlife Pond

March 9th 2025

[eBird Checklist - 9 Mar 2025 - White Tank Mountain Regional Park--Wildlife Pond - 12 species](#)

Cave Creek

March 15th 2025

[eBird Checklist - 15 Mar 2025 - Cave Creek Regional Park - 14 species](#)

Gilbert Preserve

March 16th 2025

[eBird Checklist - 16 Mar 2025 - Riparian Preserve at Gilbert Water Ranch - 58 species \(+1 other taxa\)](#)

Glendale Recharge Ponds

March 19th 2025

[eBird Checklist - 19 Mar 2025 - Glendale Recharge Ponds - 40 species](#)

White Tank Mountain

March 22nd 2025

[eBird Checklist - 9 Mar 2025 - White Tank Mountain Regional Park--Wildlife Pond - 12 species](#)

Hassayampa Preserve

March 26th 2025

[eBird Checklist - 26 Mar 2025 - Hassayampa River Preserve - 32 species](#)



The End