



Birding Club of Sun City



Vera Markham



Above: it's no Millennium Falcon!

On the cover:

Vera photographed and identified this fairly uncommon **Sage Sparrow** on the Paloma trip. They seem to be doing quite well this year and showing up at most suitable sites with grasslands or sage.

Peregrine Falcon forage fodder get a 20 foot statue in of course New York City. This is a good read for the fans of flying Rats as New Yorkers call them. [Click on the link below.](#)

The Falcon's Roost

Hi Birders,

We are looking forward to the end of the Snowbird migration back to Sun City in time for the November 13th meeting at Fairway. A few things to note on upcoming field trips. The Hassayampa trip is on a Thursday this month on the 14th. Hassayampa has switched to its winter opening time to 8am so we will be meeting in the parking lot at 7:30. There are two trips I am still working on and will announce later, one to The Gilbert Preserve and the other is an evening trip to Paloma Community Park to bird and observe the spectacle of 100 cows and 20 donkeys at the water tanks. On that one I have to get the times right as it gets dark much earlier now.

All you ever wanted to know about the great bird renaming project is on the following page along with [a link to the article](#). But wait, there's more on the Epic Rock Pigeon statue on the next page too.



[Jurassic pigeon looms large over Manhattan, sheds light on bird wars](#)

Pigeons and species renaming



Marvel at the staggering size and detail of it

[North American Birds Will No Longer Be Named After People | Defector](#)

This article is an informative and shocking (?) view into the reasoning behind re-naming of human named species. Thick-billed Longspurs were formerly known as *McCown's Longspur*



Administriva page



Upcoming 2024 meetings



Upcoming meetings

Wednesday November	13th	2024	10am	Fairway Arizona room 1&2
No meeting in December				
Wednesday January	8th	2025	10am	Fairway Arizona room 1&2
Wednesday February	14th	2025	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.

Upcoming November trip quick-list

Full details on trip Ad pages later in this newsletter

Rio Vista Community Park

When: Wednesday November 6th 7:30 am Leader - Tom L.

Email Tom to join the group locascio2000@hotmail.com

Hassayampa River Preserve

When: Thursday November 14th at 7:30 am Leader - Tom L.

Email Tom to join the group locascio2000@hotmail.com

Riparian Area at Gilbert Water Ranch

When: TBD.

Email Tom for more information locascio2000@hotmail.com

An evening at Paloma Community park with 200 Cows and twenty Donkeys

When: TBD.

Email Tom for more information locascio2000@hotmail.com

Maricopa Regional Parks/Audubon field trips

Estrella Mountain Regional Park

When: Saturday November 9th at 7:30 am Leaders Joe and Tom

Cave Creek Regional Park

When: Saturday November 16th at 7:30 am Leaders Joe and Tom

White Tank Regional Park

When: Saturday November 23rd at 7:30 am Leaders Joe and Tom

Upcoming November 2024 field trips

Rio Vista Community Park

When: Wednesday October 6th at 7:30 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 arriving every day from the Northern USA & Canada. A great spot for photography.

Meet at: The open area just South of the Bridge (see **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.



Upcoming November 2024 field trip

Hassayampa Regional Park

When: **Thursday November 14th at 7:30 am** Leader - **Tom L.**

The third best birding spot in Maricopa county with 293 species observed. In Taxonomical order we may see Wood ducks, Broad-billed Hummingbirds, Cooper's, Sharp-shinned, & Red-shouldered Hawks, Kingfishers, three kinds of Sapsuckers (very lucky), Empidonax Flycatchers, Cardinals, Hutton's, Cassin's & Plumbeous Vireos, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Bridled Titmice, White & Red-breasted Nuthatches, a variety of Wrens, Robins, Hermit Thrushes, and Cedar Waxwings, Anything could show up here and some of our members usually can pick up a lifer or two.

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

We will bird the 2 parking areas, empty and quite birdy, until the gates to the preserve open at 8am. Next month and through the winter the preserve will open at 8am. I will send you directions for highway or (streets) if you request them when you sign up. See carpool info on page 4.

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

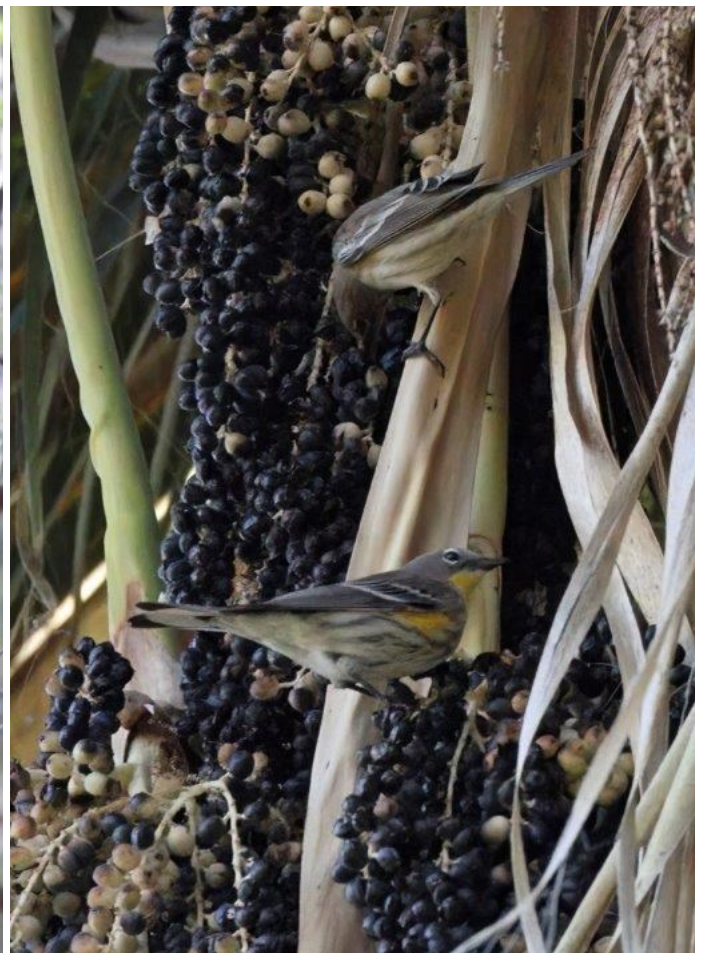
Difficulty: A two or less mile walk on mostly flat land.

Northern Cardinal at the Hassayampa feeders

Yellow-rumpers Warblers enjoy palm fruit



Julie Wahlert photos



Paloma field trip report 10/4/24



We Observed 34 different species. Close proximity to birds make this a great site for photos. **Vera Markham's** fine photographs are featured on this and the next page of this report.

Upper left: Cactus Wrens will happily pose for you and are always watching you on site.

Upper right: You will see a Rock Wren on about half of your visits here. They, like the Cactus Wrens, are not shy to show off their abundant cuteness for you. This week I saw 5.

Lower left: The Green-tailed Towhee is a large Sparrow, but is the smallest of the Towhees. The light was not quite ideal to see it's rufous crown or his spectacular green highlights.

Lower right: Here all year round, the Black-throated Sparrow will often strike a pose for you.



Puzzle page



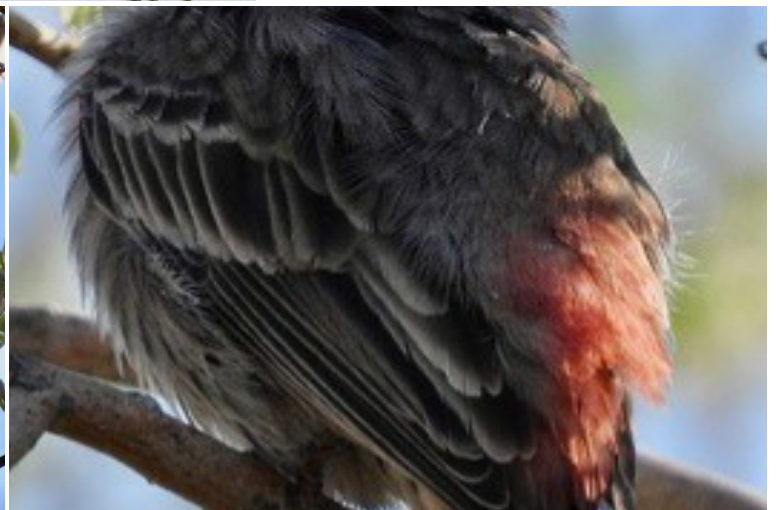
On the top:

This Thrasher is perhaps the same bird as the one in the middle photo. I was reluctant to call this one in the field. One choice could be the ubiquitous **Curved-billed Thrasher** that is quite common here. I usually see 3 or 5 on each visit. The other is the Thrasher I see here maybe every 10th visit, the **Bendire's Thrasher**, another one of those soon to be renamed species. Here is the description of the Bendire's as published in **eBird's "Explore Species" feature**: "Dusty-brown bird with long tail, found in shrubby deserts and grasslands. Tail dark with small white corners; undertail coverts warmer orangey. Eye yellow. Very similar to Curve-billed Thrasher. Subtle differences include smaller, more triangular-shaped markings on breast, and shorter, straighter bill." I have at times confirmed Bendire's using the Merlin App. bird call feature.

Which do you think this is?

Lower Photos:

Who is this headless LBJ?

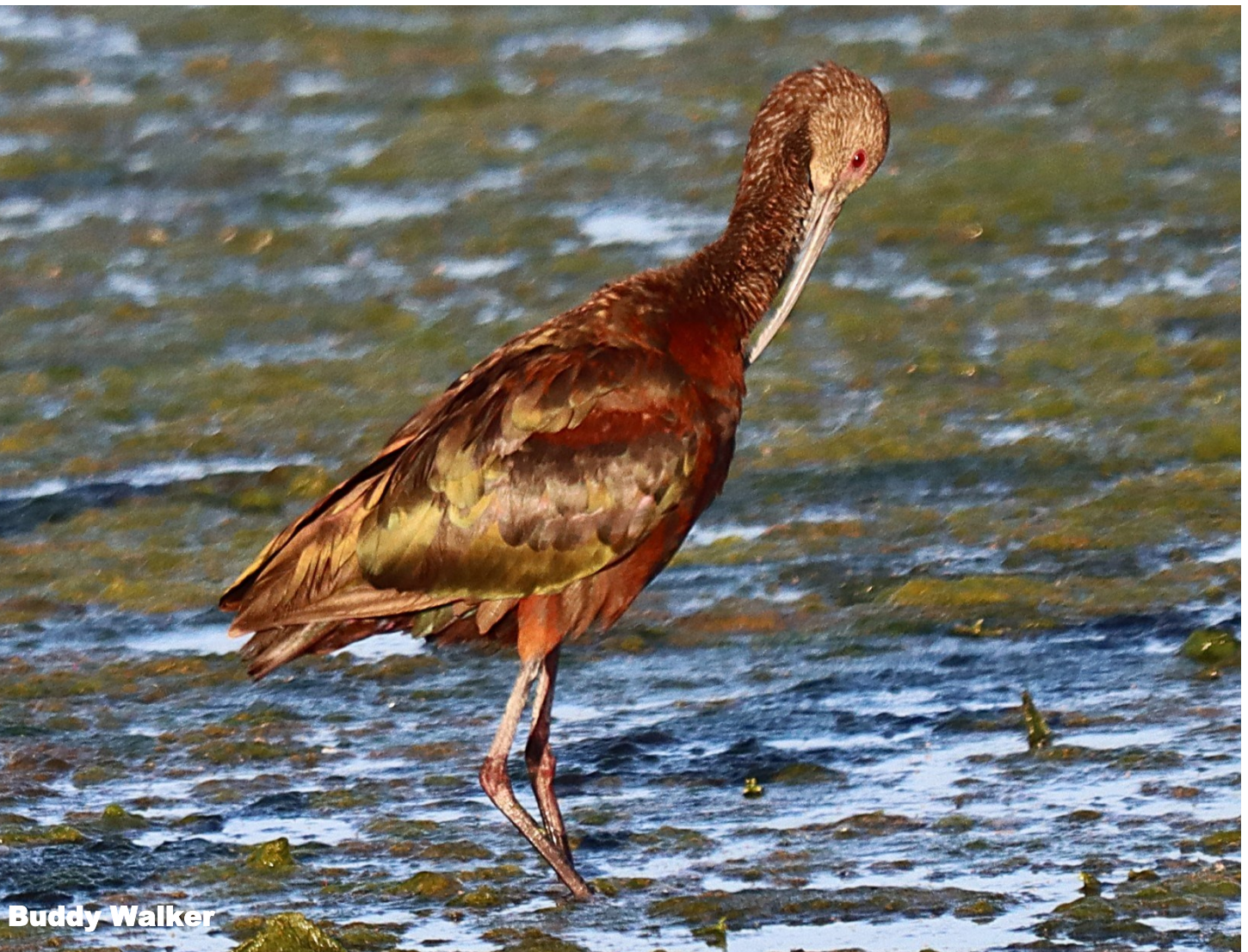


Glendale field trip report 10/16/24



Above: Quite a few species to pick through here. A scope and folding chair would facilitate that.

Below: A preening **White-faced Ibis** taken at the golden hour. With daily changing water levels in the 6 basins, the possibilities of your discoveries are in a perpetually flux of mystery.





Buddy Walker

Above: When the water is low enough, and the proper supply of tasty Aquatic Invertebrates are in good supply, shorebirds the like the Long-billed Dowitcher will arrive sometimes in mass quantities.

Below: Having stilts for legs like these Black-necked Stilts, higher waters are waded with style.



Buddy Walker



Buddy Walker

Above:

Sage Sparrow

Don't overlook honing your Sparrow ID skill set because you are at the "Ponds".

Furtive and difficult to ID on the move and at times when staring right at you. Take the time to research what type of sparrow you might encounter here.

On the right:

Vesper Sparrow

Other Sparrows common here are:

Song, Lark, and White-crowned

Devise your own Sparrow ID toolkit before you bird.



Buddy Walker

Tres Rios field report 10/25/24



All photos by Vera Markham



Top two rectangles: The **American White Pelican** is an elegant flying Dinosaur and is a gregarious creature. We saw over 50 of these magnificent birds. The swimming Pelicans are the result of the beasts not letting us get as close as we usually can to the relaxing, lounging, and preening throng denying us unique photo and wing tag observing opportunities. The Pelicans were on the concrete spillways shown on the third photo from the top when we crossed their threshold.

Last two rectangles: In South America these **Snowy Egrets** are called "Golden Slippers" Oh, I forgot, note the **Double-crested Cormorants** swimming with the Pelicans. **Above** is a great look at foraging adapted curved bill of the **White-faced Ibis** in flight. At times, flocks of hundreds are seen.



On the top:

Spotted Sandpiper now off of breeding duty, has lost his spots. He will still wag his tail downward regularly to help you ID him sans spots.



In the middle:

Common Gallinule split from the **Common Moorhen** by the American Ornithologists' Union in 2017. Same family as the **American Coot**, but not closely related enough to share a Genus. **Differences:** The **Coot** is 1 1/2 inches longer, It's bill and Shield are white where the **Gallinule's** shield is red with a yellow tip like a candy corn. The **Coot** has black sides and the **Gallinule** has white wing edges. The **Gallinule** is a forage diver. The Coot just tips over to forage.



All photos by Vera Markham

On the bottom:

Western Grebe A welcome visitor in smaller numbers locally but counted in the hundreds at Saguaro Lake and in good numbers at Lake Pleasant. If you enjoy David Attenborough nature shows, you may have seen the mating rituals of these Grebes such as dancing on the water and swimming along with the chicks on it's back. A very similar Grebe would be the **Clark's Grebe** where the white extends over the eyes.





All photos by Vera Markham



Top Left:

Osprey They can immerse themselves in up to a foot of water when they dive for fish. They can only carry a payload of 4 to 5 pounds and still be able to fly away with their catch. Their feathers often look disheveled and a day of hard diving without preening will do that.

Top right:

Song Sparrow Most likely to be found near water. Seen in good numbers at Hassayampa as well.

Bottom:

Belted Kingfisher One of 2 Kingfishers in AZ along with the **Green**. The **Ringed** is readily seen in Texas.

November 2024 Regional Parks trips

Estrella Regional Park & Sonoran Audubon

When: Saturday November 9th 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 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 IN NATURE CENTER: “Turkeys, The Thanksgiving bird”

Cave Creek & Sonoran Audubon

When: Saturday November 16th at **7:30 am** Leaders - Joe & Tom

Meet at: **7 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, “Canaries in the Coal Mine”

White Tank Mt. Park & Sonoran Audubon

When: Saturday November 23rd at **7:30 am** Leaders - Joe & Tom

Meet at: **6 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 IN NATURE CENTER---“Ratites”

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

October field trip bird list links

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

Paloma Community Park October 4th 2024

[eBird Checklist - 4 Oct 2024 - Paloma Community Park - 34 species \(+1 other taxa\)](#)

Estrella Regional Park October 12th 2024

[eBird Checklist - 12 Oct 2024 - Estrella Mountain Regional Park - 30 species](#)

Glendale Recharge Ponds October 16th 2024

[eBird Checklist - 16 Oct 2024 - Glendale Recharge Ponds - 36 species](#)

Cave Creek October 19th 2024

[eBird Checklist - 19 Oct 2024 - Cave Creek Regional Park - 13 species \(+1 other taxa\)](#)

Hassayampa Preserve October 23rd 2024

[eBird Checklist - 23 Oct 2024 - Hassayampa River Preserve - 23 species](#)

Tres Rios Wetlands October 25th 2024

[eBird Checklist - 25 Oct 2024 - Tres Rios Overbank Wetlands \(permit required\) - 50 species](#)

White Tank Mountain October 26th 2024

[eBird Checklist - 26 Oct 2024 - White Tank Mountain Regional Park - 15 species](#)



The End

Vera Markham