

AZFO 14th ANNUAL MEETING SUMMARY

5-7 November 2021 (Online)

Doug Jenness

Due to COVID 19, AZFO conducted the program portion of its 2021 annual meeting online via Zoom on Friday night and Saturday. Four mini-field expeditions were held on Sunday morning throughout the state.

The highlight of the meeting was a presentation Friday night by Philip Unitt, editor of *Western Birds*, on “The Remarkably Rich History of the Collection of Birds and Mammals at the San Diego Natural History Museum: A History with Many Connections to Arizona.” Unitt, who is also curator of birds and mammals at the San Diego Museum, explained why natural history collections are fundamental to



Black-throated Sparrow. Photo: Gordan Karre

biology. Built painstakingly over generations, they are also full of personal stories. He related the history of the collection of birds and mammals at the San Diego Museum—a history, he noted, that has crossed Arizona many times. It is a story of how ordinary people who started with nothing built, over 145 years, one of the major collections of birds of the western United States, including many contributions from Arizona. That collection is still growing, benefiting science and conservation.

Following Unitt’s talk, participants joined one of four “breakouts” (online workshops). The topics and coordinators included: Arizona Conservation Opportunities, Jennie MacFarland; eBird Gaps, Eric Hough and Joe Crouse; How to Become a Better eBirder, Troy Corman and Caleb Strand; Sip on Your Best Bird-Themed Beer and Share Birding Stories and Pictures, Cathy Wise and Edwin Juarez.

Saturday’s program included five presentations on field research related to Arizona birds. Kicking off the session, Sarah Polekoff reported on her study of the physiological and behavioral changes House Finches undergo as they adapt to city life. Polekoff was a 2020 recipient of a Gale Monson Research Grant. She was followed by Francisco Puente Guevara from the Mexican organization, Organización Vida Silvestre A. C. (OVIS). Puente Guevara described new insights on migratory patterns of breeding populations and the effect of predation events on nesting Thick-billed Parrots. AZFO board member, Edwin Juarez, translated the presentation. Jennie

MacFarland, AZFO vice president and Tucson Audubon Society staff member, described recent surveys of Elegant Trogons and their current status in southeast Arizona. The final talk was on assessing the range of Yellow-billed Cuckoos by Dr. Calandra Stanley, Georgetown University. Eric Hough, an AZFO board member, described AZFO's new eBird Gaps project.

The five talks were followed by a report from Troy Corman that two Gale Monson Research Grants were awarded in 2020: Peter Motyka: Birds as hosts for the agents of tick-borne relapsing fever in Arizona and Sarah Polekoff: Adapting to city life: Physiology and behavior of urban and desert House Finches. One grant was awarded in 2021 to Adam Stein, an Arizona State University student who is developing a MAPS station at Hassayampa River Preserve. Each received a \$1,000 grant for their research.

Jim Hoagland made a brief presentation on photographing birds in flight.

The business portion of the meeting began with a summary by AZFO president Carol Beardmore of achievements she oversaw during her term. A highlight for the past year, she reported was launching the eBird gaps project, which aims to fill in white spaces on eBird maps in Arizona. Five initial areas were selected to target. Also, during the Covid period, AZFO hosted monthly webinars about Arizona birds. AZFO also adopted an inclusive statement, now posted on its website. Over the past two years the board held overnight retreat work sessions in addition to quarterly board meetings. In 2019, the AZFO organized three field expeditions and shorebird workshops in Maricopa and Cochise Counties. A field expedition in February 2020 focused on the northern Arizona grasslands.

Treasurer Diana Herron reported that in 2021 AZFO took in 67 memberships (new and renewals), which along with donations brought in \$1,775. Primary expenses in 2021 were for *Arizona Birds* (\$1,406) and web services (\$1,122), including Constant Contact, Zoom, and website hosting. Income and expenses were about equal during the year to date. The account balance as of 31 October was \$8,824. The board has approved allocating \$6,675 for overhauling our website in the next year. She also reported that there is \$2,938 in the Gale Monson Research Grant account. Generous donations have helped maintain our programs and keep us in good financial standing.

Beardmore reported the results of the AZFO board and officer elections held online in late October. Members elected: President: Troy Corman; Membership Secretary, Gordon Karre; Kerrie Anne Loyd, recording secretary; Chris Harbard and Richard Carlson, board members. Diane Drobka was appointed earlier by the president to fill the final year of the board position held by Eric Hough who resigned from the board. Other officers and board members who still have a year left in their terms: Jennie MacFarland (vice-president), Diana Herron (treasurer), Edwin Juarez (board member), and Chrissy Kondrat (board member). Doug Jenness, *Arizona Birds* editor, serves on the board as an unelected member. Thanks were extended to Carol Beardmore, Cathy Wise, and Joe Crouse who retired from their positions. Beardmore reported that the proposed amendment to the AZFO bylaws to raise dues was approved by the membership in the October balloting.

An online raffle and bird quiz were also conducted during the day.

On Sunday the four mini-field expeditions and leaders were Hassayampa Plains (Maricopa County), Eric Hough and Chrissy Kondrat; Black Hills, Altar Valley (Pima County), Tim Helentjaris; Winslow area playas, tanks and grasslands (Navajo County), Joe Crouse and Anne Pellegrini; Lost Dutchman State Park – First Water Trail (Pinal County), Gordon Karre.