



# AZFO Youth Scholarship Recipient Essay 2024

## Anna Heveran

This weekend was such a blast! First off, I'd like to thank Maricopa Audubon and Prescott Audubon for sponsoring me with the AZFO Youth Scholarship. Thank you to Mr. Doug Jenness for urging me to apply for the scholarship. Thank you to Ms. Chrissy Kondrat, Ms. Danielle Kaschube, and all of the speakers, field trip leaders, and organizers who made this experience happen. You all dedicated your time and effort into a great weekend for everyone.

The first day was a nice, laid-back introduction to what the weekend would hold. I enjoyed our trip to Mt Lemmon, where we learned about the different ecosystems and the species at each habitat and elevation. We had amazing looks at several Townsend's Warblers and Brown Creepers that I especially liked. Our guide, Mr. Troy Corman, was excellent and very knowledgeable. After the trip, I was really interested in Ms. Kaschube's talk about plumage, ageing, and molting. She was a skilled speaker, and I liked learning about how to categorize each bird that is banded using the correct terminology.

Saturday was a fun day meeting people and listening to their presentations. I especially liked the ones about Burrowing Owls, the dry tropical forest of Mexico, the Motus tags, and hummingbird hybrids. Among all the people I met, Dr. Alfredo Sandoval and some of the local eBird reviewers made an impression on me. They were so knowledgeable. All of the food was excellent as well. I had a lot of fun with the bird ID game, the raffles, book sale, and silent auction. The keynote presentation offered an interesting view of what the military does for conservation.

Sunday morning was exciting for me. We were going to the Santa Cruz River, which I've never been to before! I loved learning about the riparian habitat and how important it is to conserve and study this area. Our guide, Mr. Bill Lisowsky, knew where to look for each species and kept us all engaged. It was so beautiful with the cottonwoods, the river, and the numerous birds, including warblers and hummingbirds.

Again, I'm so thankful that I had the opportunity to attend the AZFO/WBBA joint annual meeting. I learned a lot about a variety of subjects and made connections with birders across Arizona and beyond. I would look forward to attending again in the future.