



**Planning
for
an
Environmentally
Sound
Future**





Mission

The Tucson Audubon Society is a non-profit volunteer organization of people with a common interest in birding, natural history, and the environment. We are dedicated to improving the quality of the environment by providing educational and recreational programs, environmental leadership and information.

Organization

With more than 3,000 members, Tucson Audubon is a largely volunteer organization managed by a board of directors, an executive director and a small staff. Each year more than 150 volunteers lead recreational birding trips, teach as docents or in classrooms, work in the TAS Nature Shop, restore critical wildlife habitat, and participate in many other activities.

In northwest Tucson, Tucson Audubon runs the Mason Audubon Center for Ironwood Preservation & Environmental Education. Visiting community and school groups learn about the disappearing ironwood-saguaro ecosystem and see techniques for resource sustainability in the Sonoran Desert.

TAS maintains an office in Tucson, Arizona, with an extensive nature and conservation library and the TAS Nature Shop where nature-related items are sold to benefit educational and conservation programs.

Action Plan

To achieve our mission, we are acting on five critical priorities:

1. **Conservation:** Preserving Southern Arizona's rich birdlife and habitat.
2. **Education:** Inspiring community members to value and protect nature.
3. **Outreach:** Maintaining and promoting our identity as a high quality organization with a valued role in the community.
4. **Communication:** Maintaining a purposeful communication system to keep staff and membership informed about organization-wide conservation issues, and to disseminate information to the public.
5. **Fundraising:** Developing and implementing a financial strategy to secure resources for ongoing projects, long-term organizational stability, and flexibility for innovation and growth.

For each priority we have developed specific goals, and projects to achieve those goals.



I. CONSERVATION

To conserve southern Arizona's avian diversity and wildlife habitat, we must reduce *threats* to selected habitat in Southeastern Arizona and related ecosystems. We also must *enhance habitat* where possible. Tucson Audubon manages two projects that currently lead toward these goals:

The **Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program**—administered by Tucson Audubon on behalf of the National Audubon Society—aims to reduce threats by identifying and nominating sites throughout the state that provide important habitat to birds. On these sites, TAS helps landowners or managing agencies to develop site-specific management plans that emphasize effective avian habitat management. The IBA strategy is to help develop partnerships, promote local stewardship of priority areas, and promote TAS member involvement in conservation and citizen science opportunities at these sites.

The **Santa Cruz River Habitat Restoration Project** enhances riparian (stream-side) habitat and restores retired agricultural fields in northern Pima County. The project improves habitat for birds and other wildlife using sustainability practices such as rainwater harvesting, mulching, seed pelletizing, and other innovative techniques. The Santa Cruz River riparian corridor is a critical north-south route for migrating birds. The project also reduces invasive nonnative species, seeks to enhance wildlife corridor connections with surrounding habitat such as the Ironwood National Monument, and encourages participation and cooperation with local community groups and schools.

In addition, Tucson Audubon is the fiscal sponsor for the **Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection**, a coalition of 40 conservation and neighborhood groups working with county, state, and federal agencies to promote scientifically based conservation planning in Pima County through the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.

Building upon Tucson Audubon's interest in the US-Mexico Border Region, we recently became the fiscal sponsor for **Corredor Colibri**—a collaborative project that works with communities located in the Mexican portion of the Upper San Pedro Watershed. Corredor Colibri's projects include environmental education and community outreach, research and monitoring, and economic diversification.





3. EDUCATION

To inspire greater public valuation and protection of natural resources, we must increase the number of direct experiences people have with nature. We do this through programs that contribute to a culture of conservation.

Tucson Audubon's **Institute of Desert Ecology** brings together six expert instructors and 60-65 participants for field studies of the Sonoran Desert. The four-day Institute, typically held at a local state park, emphasizes relationships between plants, animals, and physical characteristics of the desert (rather than simply classification and identification). College credit is offered. Participants, whether college students or retirees, leave with a deeper appreciation of the nature of life in the Sonoran Desert. The Institute has run continuously for more than 30 years.

At the **Mason Audubon Center** for Ironwood Preservation & Environmental Education (MAC), we provide opportunities for children and adults to experience a pristine relic of ironwood-saguaro habitat. Each year, our MAC Naturalist Training Program graduates 20 qualified naturalists who go on to teach others about the unique Sonoran Desert environment. Through a relationship with the Sonora Permaculture Guild, MAC has developed a comprehensive plan for water harvesting and sustainable resource use consistent with its teaching mission.

TAS is the premier supplier of **free birding and natural history field-trips** in southern Arizona. Each year we offer more than 125 volunteered trips, open to the public. Through exposure to bird identification, bird behavior, and specific habitat needs, participants become more aware of the threats to rich avian life in southern Arizona. Threats to habitat become more clear as participants experience riparian migratory corridors and learn the specific habitat needs of different species. Trip leaders also inform participants about TAS and offer them the opportunity to become members.





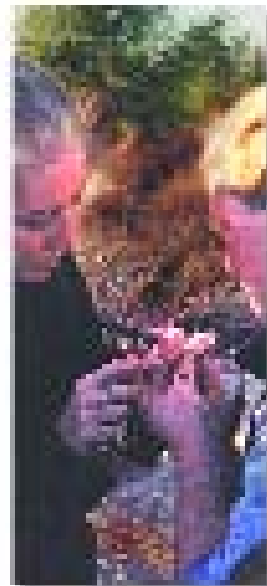
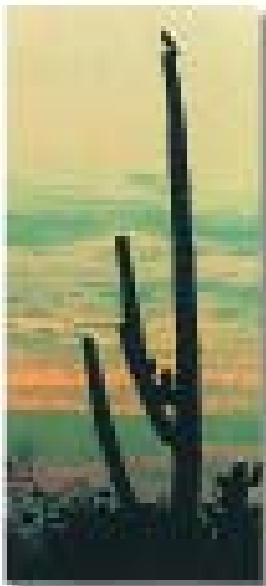
3. OUTREACH

Over 50 years of service to the community have gained TAS a reputation as a community leader in birding, conservation and education. We strive to maintain and promote this unique and high quality image in our community. To do this we will reach out to new audiences, including residents living near the Mason Audubon Center, underserved populations, and families.

Tucson Audubon Family Institutes are a chance for entire families to attend a weekend workshop together, with learning activities appropriate for all ages. Family Institutes take place on the Gulf of California at the Centro de Estudios Desiertos Y Océanos in Puerto Peñasco, Sonora, Mexico and in the sky islands of southern Arizona.

Our **education programs** reach children of all ages in Tucson area schools. Especially important, they engage teenage birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts in a dialog about ecology and conservation. Graduates will not only be more likely to respect and enjoy nature, but will also be potential future Tucson Audubon leaders in conservation.

Tucson Audubon's image in the Tucson area has been one of high quality and trust. However, greater exposure in underserved communities would help extend Tucson Audubon's reach to new populations. **Membership outreach campaigns** and **greater participation in community events** in areas where Tucson Audubon currently has few members will help us to enlarge our profile in these areas.





4. COMMUNICATION

An important aspect of TAS's mission is to provide environmental leadership. To do this, we must development and maintain ways to keep staff and volunteers informed, and to disseminate information to membership and the general public.

Our monthly newsletter, *The Vermilion Flycatcher*, is the tool we use to reach out to our 3,000 members. Through the Flycatcher, monthly membership meetings, and our website, we work to keep members informed about conservation, education, and recreational issues that are of interest to them.

The expanded TAS web site, www.tucsonaudubon.org archives a wide variety of news and information for members to review. It also serves as a resource for, and outreach to, nature enthusiasts from outside the area who plan to visit the region. Many birdwatchers arriving in southern Arizona already know of TAS through our World Wide Web presence.

Over the next few years we will expand lines of communication between staff, volunteers, and membership to make sure that important news and conservation priorities are well publicized. We will enhance general visibility by phone trees, enhanced press contacts, public speaking, e-mail list serves, and stronger individual relationships with public decision-makers.





B. FUNDRAISING

These ongoing and ever expanding projects and programs will help us grow and achieve our mission, but they incur costs. Therefore we are developing a financial strategy to provide for long-term stability and growth. We would like to involve more individuals, foundations and businesses in our mission so that, through partnerships, we can expand Tucson Audubon and help others achieve their goals too. You too can get involved and help us achieve our goals and strengthen Tucson Audubon.

Become a partner with Tucson Audubon: Create and participate in coalitions, share in volunteer efforts, and sponsor fund-raising events.

Consider funding Tucson Audubon activities through donations, grants or bequests that compliment your own goals or those of your organization. Our largely volunteer workforce provides a very cost efficient mechanism for achieving environmental goals.





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