

Heard
Nature

Photographers

*"A picture is a secret about a secret, the more
it tells you the less you know."*
Diane Arbus

Next meeting May 11, 2024



Volume 40, Issue 4

<http://www.heardnaturephotographers.com>

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President's Letter

Doug Boone

Now that we've all survived the eclipse and tax filing, we can start looking forward to some great weather for nature photography. The blue bonnets and Indian paintbrush are out in force and I'm sure we'll be seeing more soon.



As we discussed a little bit at the April meeting there's been a lot of work to update the club's bylaws, policies and procedures, putting together a budget, and registering the club as a non-profit organization.

Lee Hatfield has really been driving all this work and I don't want to guess at the number of hours that she and Jackie Ranney have put in working on getting us up to date. Be sure to thank them for the work they've put in working to ensure the club's future by making sure that have a good financial and legal standing. All the board has been working on reviewing and updating the bylaws but Lee and Jackie

have been the people who've really driven this necessary work.

We're still finalizing the changes to the bylaws and policies documents, but as soon as the board approves the draft we'll be sending them out to the membership. We have to send them out by May 1st for the membership to review and comment if we want to hold a vote at the May meeting, and the non-profit registration is dependent on the club approving the updated bylaws.

Be sure to sign up for the upcoming field trips for this year, the September trip to Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge already has 20 people signed up so be sure to make sure you reserve a good place to stay for this trip.



Doug Boone



Jack Twiggs

Good to Know...

Meetings:

The Heard Nature Photographers meet every 2nd Saturday at 10:00 AM.

If you haven't joined the club's FB page yet, please consider doing so! Share your pictures and arrange meetups!

About the Newsletter

The newsletter should be out by the 2nd of the month. It's an interactive Adobe PDF format document, so hyperlinks should be active. If you click on an item in the table of contents, it will take you to the page for that item. Likewise, if you click on the small logo at the bottom of the page it will take you to page 1.

So, where does Anita get the pictures that are featured in the newsletter? Most of them come from our club Facebook page or entries in contests like the Heard contest or the Members' Choice in December.

What does this mean for you? If you want more exposure for your images, just post... enter... or send them to me along with sending them to JD for the GSCC contests. Simple!

Want a magnetic name tag?

It's been a while since we ordered magnetic name tags. These are sturdy plastic rectangular badges as shown above. The magnetic back guarantees that you won't damage your clothing with a pin.



Rather than create a bulk order and deal with collecting everyone's money, We have arranged for you to order your own online. Follow the link to nametagcountry.com, and click Reorder above the Heard Nature Photographers tag. Enter the number of tags you want and click "Begin Order" and then click Next on the following pages. When you get to the page where you can enter the text for Line 1, enter your name. Continue ordering until you get to the shipping information, and add your name and address. Finally, check out.

If you have any problems, please contact me (Anita Oakley) and I'll help you through it.



Robert Darby

Calendar at a Glance

May

5/11/24: Ananth Thiagarajan - Bird Photography

5/18/24: Garland Art Stroll

5/19/24: Contest Awards Ceremony

5/24-28/24: Santa Clara Ranch - Guy Huntley leading

June

6/1/24: Lotus Blossoms and wildlife at the Hagerman

6/8/24: Meeting - Speaker, Ron McCarty

July

7/13/24: Meeting - Speaker, Ben Jacobi

August

8/10/24: Meeting

September

9/14.24: Meeting - Speaker, Russell Graves

9/20-22/24: Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge

October

10/12/24: Kathy Adams Clark - TBD

10/19/24: Whiteright - A nature plus field trip

November

11/9/24: Meeting - Speaker Craig Rowen

December

12/14/24: Members' Choice!



Alex Kostro

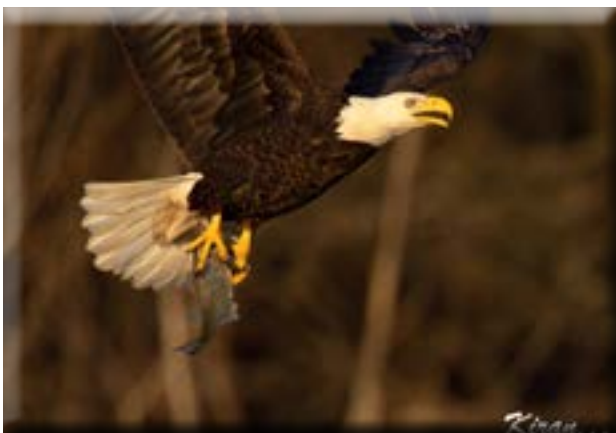


Larry White

April Speaker - Ananth Thiagarajan

David Duckworth

Ananth Thiagarajan, also known as Kiran Photography, is a professional consultant with a passion for photography. He has been practicing travel photography for over a decade and has traveled across India and Europe to capture special moments of people and places. Recently, he has developed a keen interest in bird photography. He regularly visits preserves and parks around North Texas, spending his weekend morning hours on the trails. He enjoys observing and learning about bird behaviors, which helps him to capture their stories through his images.



...Ananth Thiagarajan



Scheduled Speakers

David Duckworth

Date	Speaker	Subject
5/11/24	Ananth Thiagarajan	Bird Photography
6/8/24	Ron McCarty	Seeing and then Creating B&W Nature Images with Lightroom
7/3/24	Ben Jacobi	Night Photography
9/4/24	Russell Graves	My Image Storage Workflow
10/12/24	Kathy Adams Clark	Hummingbird Photography, Simple to Advanced
11/9/24	Criag Rowen	New Features in Lightroom and Photoshop

Past Field Trip - JBS

We were fighting an uphill battle when we visited the John Bunker Sands Wetland Center on March 30th. It was very windy, so there weren't a lot of birds flying. But we were able to capture some nice images in spite of the difficulties.



JD Luttmer

Right at the opening to the boardwalk there were some very cooperative Black-necked Stilts. They were a bit far away, but we were good with long lenses, and George Vardas caught a nice shot of the.

Eagles were nesting on a tall platform, and some of us were able to shoot it. Others found the owls, and captured images of them. There was a worker banding birds, and some of our members watched and were able to ask questions about that project.

There were several types of wildflowers blooming, including Bull-tongued Arrowheads and Hairy Buttercups.

Members who came included Clive Fernando, Ed Underwood, Joe Underwood, Pam Underwood, Terree Stone, Anita Oakley, Jackie Ranney, Doug Boone, JD Luttmer, Linda Grigsby, Doug Boone, George and Linda Vardas, Craig Rowen, Pat McCorick, and Mary Binford.

We left the center about 11:00 for a meal at Wings Over Seagoville. The food was excellent, and the company was even better.



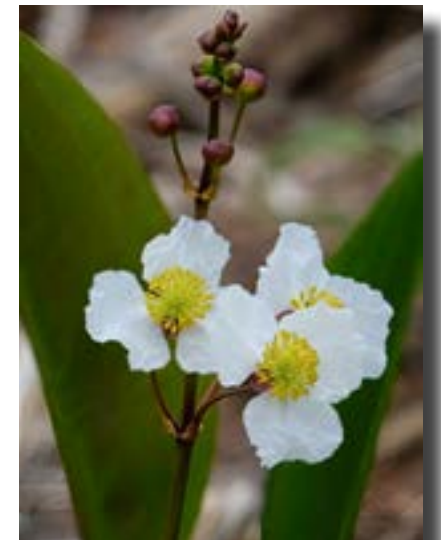
Ed Underwood



Terree Stone



George Vardas



Doug Boone

May Field Trips

May 4th: The postponed LLELA field trip

May 18th: Garland Art Stroll - Nature Plus

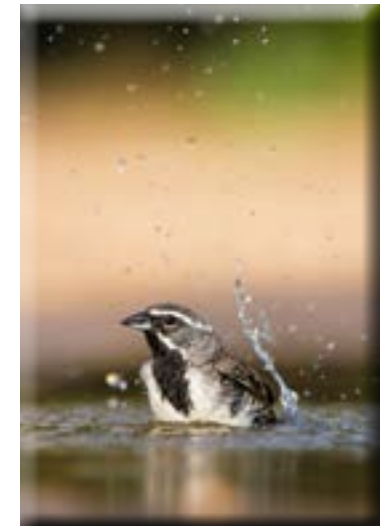
In September 2023, the City of Garland was proud to announce its new designation as an official cultural district.



Garland is one of just two cities to receive this prestigious distinction from the Texas Commission on the Arts in 2023. We will have an opportunity to capture murals, street photography, and architecture, followed by lunch at the Intrinsic Smokehouse & Brewery.

May 24th - 28th: Santa Clara Ranch (1 place left available)

The ranch is a low fenced, 300-acre parcel of native South Texas brush where wildlife roams freely. Beto and Clare Gutierrez purchased the ranch in 2007 and have transformed it into a haven for nature photographers. A conservation easement prevents hunting and ensures that the native brush will remain untouched in perpetuity at the ranch. There are four in-ground blinds by ponds, which are frequented by a large variety of birds, deer, javelinas, armadillo, rabbits, and bobcats. There are also two elevated raptor blinds. There's a bunkhouse with a comfortable living area, a huge dining table and full kitchen. Meals are included!



Future Field Trips

Please keep in mind that the field trip schedule is fluid. Many of this year's trips are tentative at this point.

May 18th: Garland Art Stroll - Nature Plus

May 24th - 28th: Santa Clara Ranch (Limit 8)

See next page for information.

June 1: Hagerman Lotus Blossoms: Dependent on whether the lotus blossoms are blooming then. Terree Stone, Leading

September 20-22nd: Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge

Situated just outside the Lawton/Ft. Sill area, Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge preserves approximately 60,000 acres of mixed grass prairie, ancient granite mountains, and fresh water lakes and streams for the benefit of wildlife and the American people.

October 19: Whitewright - Nature Plus

Historic small town Texas with old buildings, rusty stuff, and interesting compositions.



Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge



Hagerman Lotus Blossoms



Whitewright

GSCCC

J.D. Luttmer

The April year-end GSCCC photo contest competition was judged at the yearly convention. It included all images that have placed in the monthly contests over the prior year. Several HNPC club images were candidates in this annual competition, and one image from the Heard Nature Photographers won - Robert Darby's image's beautiful photograph "Three Brothers Reflected in Merced River" took 3rd place in Nature.

Other clubs that did well included Lafayette Photographic Society, Beaumont Camera Club, Greater New Orleans Camera Club; Louisiana Photographic Society; Cowtown Camera Club, and the Dallas Camera club.

Our GSCCC representative, JD Luttmer, needs additional images for the May contest particularly in the Photojournalism category. Please send your images to him at JDLuttmer@gmail.com.



Robert Darby

Featured Member - George Vardas

After dropping my Kodak point and shoot film camera in early 1990, I decided to upgrade to a Nikon SLR, N8008 with two kit lenses. This SLR purchase allowed me to successfully photograph my younger son's graduation and practice photographing a wedding while the hired photographer shot my daughters wedding during that first year. My love for photography was off to a good running start.



many species of wild flowers, mule deer, elk, moose, fox, coyotes, raptors, and all types of rodents, my interest turned more and more toward nature photography.



Teaching sciences at South Park High School in Fairplay, Colorado gave me the opportunity to sponsor the photography club and help in photographing athletic events, proms, senior portraits, and weddings in the mountains and beyond.

After deciding to put down roots in the mountains, Linda and I built our dream log home on 16-plus acres just eight miles east of the continental divide at an elevation of 10,500 ft above sea level. Living in the mountains provided breathtaking sunrises or sunsets, and the brightest star filled night skies by just stepping out our back door. With



Interesting nature photography classes were taught by a semiretired National Geographic photographer, at the Colorado Mountain College in Breckenridge, just 23 miles from home. Classroom work in the morning, followed by an afternoon of photographing in a 30 mile radius from Breckenridge in the spring and summer helped in developing my skills

in photography. Attending the Colorado Professional Photographers Association meetings and the Professional Photographers Of America meetings were awesome ways to learn and



...George Vardas

improve my photographic skills also.

After 41 years in education, I retired in 2004, giving me time to go trout fishing when I wanted to or set the alarm to get me up at 3:00 AM to drive to the Maroon Bells, near Aspen to photograph the early morning light on the freshly fallen snow and peak fall aspen colors.



where, including the members in our wonderful Heard Nature Photographers Club.

After trying to photograph my first total eclipse, on a newer mirrorless camera, I have decided I certainly can use more help and support from my friends at the

Heard. Murphys law always seems to work well for me.

After more than 34 years in the mountains of Colorado, our daughter, Jackie decided we needed to move from the mountains, back to Texas where there was 30% more O2 to breath. She was right, but it was not easy to leave the mountains for the Texas summers.



Texas has some of the greatest people and friends you can make any-



Should I Go Out for Sunset?

Anita Oakley

Have you ever been on a trip, just itching for a beautiful sunrise or sunset, only to be disappointed by flat grey or completely clear skies? Even worse, have you ever gone out for sunset and given up too soon? You are back in your car, driving away from your composition of choice, when the sky lights up and you miss the shot of your life!

With a little forecasting knowledge you can increase your chances of avoiding situations like this. You will know whether to go out or have a nice dinner and watch a movie in your hotel room. This involves knowing what makes a good sunset, and then how to determine if those conditions are going to be met.

So, what makes a good sunset or sunrise? It's pretty simple. Clearing along the horizon, and clouds at the right height. Humidity, air quality and wind can also be factors.

Different types of clouds give you a different look, so let's address that first. Clouds are classified by height and appearance. Low altitude

clouds don't have a prefix. Medium height clouds are prefixed with "Alto." And high altitude clouds are prefixed with "Cirr" or "Cirro." Low Altitude

- Cumulus – Low clouds. Clouds appear puffy and look like cotton balls, popcorn or cauliflower.
- Stratus – Low clouds, light or dark gray and generally uniform in appearance and covering most of the sky. If there is rain falling from them, they are classed as Nimbostratus.



Stratus clouds - forget it

- Fog is a stratus cloud.
- Stratocumulus – Low clouds with irregular masses of clouds, rolling or puffy in appearance,

sometimes with space between the clouds.

- Cumulonimbus – Large clouds with dark bases and tall billowing towers. These are generally what you see when there is a thunderstorm.



Alto cumulus

Middle Altitude

- Altocumulus – Middle clouds with a puffy, patchy appearance, usually with spaces between clouds.
- Altostratus – Middle clouds, light gray and uniform in appearance, generally covering most of the sky.

High Altitude

- Cirrocumulus – High clouds with a puffy, patchy appearance and small spaces between clouds. Often form wave-like patterns.

...Should I Go Out for Sunset?

- Cirrostratus – High clouds, light gray or white, often thin with the Sun or Moon



Cirrus clouds

seen through them. Usually cover much of the sky.

- Cirrus – High clouds, thin wispy and feathery, composed of ice crystals.

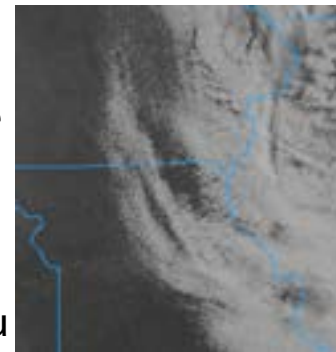
In general, your better sunsets and sunrises will occur when you have middle or high clouds because the light needs to get under them, and low clouds frequently don't allow that. The exception are Cumulonimbus, as they can reach to 10 kilometers, and when they light up they are spectacular.

Cumuluous clouds are usually spaced far enough apart to let in the light. Stratus clouds, on the other hand don't usually make for a good show. For one thing, they are fea-

tureless, and for another, too low to catch the light from the horizon.

There's a great app for determining whether you are going to have high, medium, or low clouds. It's called Clear Outside, and is available for IOS and Android. It breaks the clouds down by the height, the percentage of cover, and even includes visibility, humidity, and dewpoint, hour by hour.

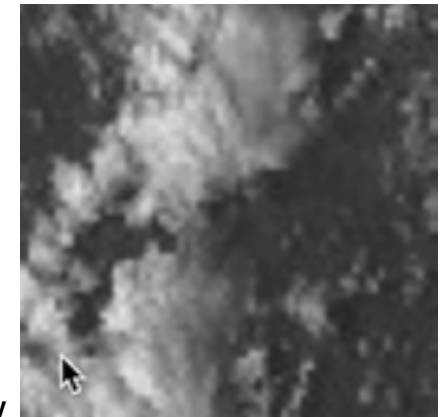
So, how can you predict whether the light from the horizon will be good. This is where checking the satellite images is helpful. A couple of hours before you need to leave for sunset, bring up <https://weather.cod.edu/> and click on Weather Data --> Satellite and Radar. You want to look for clear skies on the horizon to your



west and clouds moving in overhead. (Note: this doesn't work for sunrise because ummm, it's dark outside.) In the satellite image to the left, there are broken clouds over Missouri and Illinois and clear skies to the west - this would indicate a good chance for a beautiful sunset.

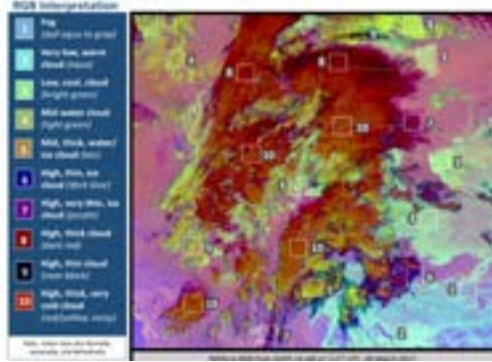
You can zoom in by clicking View Sub-regional on the left panel. You can see what kinds of clouds are over a region. Here we have Cumulous clouds. They look a little like cauliflower, but there is plenty of space between them. Below that we have Cirrus clouds. See how wispy they look? These can make sunset magic.

Interpreting satellite images takes prac-



...Should I Go Out for Sunset?

tice. One great way to learn is to bring up the visible satellite and look at your area. Try to interpret what you see, and then look out the window. Does your analysis of the clouds on satellite match what you see outside? Over time you will be able to tell a lot about what you can expect in the field.



What about sunrise? Two hours before sunrise, you can't see anything on the Visible Satellite images because it's well, DARK outside. You can try using NT Microphysics, though it's harder to decipher what clouds are what:



**Altocumulus clouds
Above some Stratus**

So let's look at some sunset images. Here we have some low Stratus clouds, but there is a break at the horizon and they aren't so solid that the light can't reach the Altocumulus clouds above. This is the bottom of a Cumulonimbus cloud - actually a supercell thunderstorm. There is just enough of a break off the frame to the right for great color.



Some clouds are a cross between two types. these are Stratocumulus.



Here we have

Mammatus clouds lit by the setting sun. These are most often found on the back side of a thunderstorm. They form as the result of sinking cold air at the bottom of a storm cloud, which is the opposite of how clouds normally form by rising warm air.



Finally, we have high cirrus clouds below. I hope you can use this information planning your next sunset shoot, and that you won't be disappointed by the results of your evenings in the field.



Birding Excursions

Stephen Ray

Hi All! I would like to introduce myself; my name is Stephen Ray. I recently joined the Heard Nature Photographers Club in February of this year and have really enjoyed both the club activities and getting to know a few of the members over the last couple of months. I look forward to getting to know more of you as I have the opportunity moving forward.

Just to provide a brief background, my wife (Lisa), my parents (Tom and Carol), and I made a major life change in July of 2023 by moving from Fremont, California (San Francisco Bay Area) to McKinney. One of the key factors in this move was that my youngest daughter and her husband (Rachael and Trevor Davis), had moved here in 2020 and knowing that they were planning to start a family, we wanted to be near when the grandkids starting to come. We have not disappointed, on February 1 of this year, John Thomas Davis was born, and he has been a blessing for all our lives! We have also not been disappointed with our move to the Lone



Star State! We have really enjoyed getting to know many of the people and places of northern Texas. Y'all have been very welcoming to us and have made us feel right at home.

Our relocation to Texas has coincided with my retirement from a 34-year career working for the State of California. One of my goals in retirement was to devote more time to one of my long-time hobbies, photography. I first delved into photography in my early adult years, back in the early 90's. My initial film SLR was a Canon EOS 630 and during the early years, I mainly focused on family and vacation photos. In 2009 I made the jump to digital with my first DSLR, which was a Canon Xsi and more recently, last year, I made the switch to mirrorless with a Canon R6 MkII. Since moving to digital, I have gravitated to nature, wildlife, and travel photography. And I must be quite honest, I really don't like taking pictures of people. My wife chides me about having such a nice camera, but not having very many pictures of people, but thank God (and Apple) for providing her with an iPhone so she can take as many pictures of people she wants!

A recent interest has been to develop my skills in bird photography. So, this last March I had great opportunity work on this area. During that month my wife and I took a cruise to the Western Caribbean, spent a week in Northern California and visited our oldest daughter in Tempe, Arizona. For the rest of this article, I'd like to highlight some of the experiences I had with bird photography during these travels. It was

... Birding Excursions

interesting to see some of the common and different bird species from these various places.

So, let's start with our Western Caribbean cruise, which included ports of call in Cozumel (Mexico), Belize and Roatan (Honduras). For photography opportunities, I only took my camera on the latter two excursions. In Belize we took a river cruise up the Belize River, which provided a great opportunity for birds. One bird we saw which was quite common in North America was the Great Blue



Heron, and I have seen in many places. A species that I had not seen before was the Little Blue Heron (juvenile) which was still mostly white with some blue feathers starting to come in. We also saw a Jabiru, which is a stork that is mainly found between Mexico and Argentina. In the picture I included, he has a friend



In Roatan, an island about 40 miles off the coast of Honduras, we visited an animal sanctuary which had a variety of wildlife, including several types of iguanas, Capuchin Monkeys, and a variety of Macaws. All of the Macaws had been rescued or donated to this facility. Since these birds were very tame and used to being around people, we were able to interact with these birds. They are beautiful birds and certainly have a lot of personality. During our last two days at sea on the way back to Galveston, I noticed several birds flying behind the ship and decided to bring out my camera and try to get some pictures of them. I knew they were sea birds but wasn't quite sure what type. During my post processing, I discovered they were Magnificent Frigatebirds, the largest of the frigatebirds.



After the cruise we were home for a few days before we headed to Castro Valley, California, where my wife still works as the controller for a retirement living community. She works remotely from McKinney most of the time but does



... Birding Excursions

travel back once a quarter to work on site for a week or so. While she is working, I get to play tourist in Northern California and work on my photography skills. During this last visit, I worked on my bird photography in several locations.

The first was Pt. Lobos State Natural Preserve, a beautiful nature preserve just south of Carmel (Monterey Area). This is one of my favorite places in California and beautiful place to hike and see a variety of wildlife among some magnificent ocean vistas. On the day I was there, I saw several sea otters and harbor seals. There were also a multitude of bird species there also. A couple of my favorite bird shots from the day were of a California Scrub Jay and a White-Crowned Sparrow.



My next location was Coyote Hills Regional Park, in Fremont, California, where we previously lived. This is a great nature park which has many hiking trails through rolling hills that are right next to the southern part of the San Francisco Bay. The park has an abundance of wildlife, both

in the hills and the marshland areas. During my hike I saw several bird species ranging from small hummingbirds to some pretty big wild turkeys who were putting on a display during mating season. I've included pictures of a small Marsh Wren and a Wild (Tom) Turkey, who was strutting his stuff!

Another great nature park in Fremont is Quarry Lakes Regional Park, which has several hiking trails around several lakes near a flood control area. It is a great example of a suburban park which hosts quite a range of wildlife, including a wide variety of birds. A couple of my favorite pictures from there were of the Northern Flicker and a Red-Tailed Hawk. I had lived in Fremont for 40 years and don't think I had ever seen a Northern Flicker before, then again, I probably wasn't really looking before recently.

After our week in Northern California, we then flew down to Arizona to spend several days with my oldest daughter, Rebecca, who lives in Tempe, Arizona. While we were there, I had a couple of days to venture out



... Birding Excursions

and find some birds. I had two destinations in mind. The first being The Arizona-Sonoran Desert Museum which is located just outside Tucson, near Saguaro National Park. Since Lisa's parents and family live in the Tempe/Chandler area, we have visited this museum many times in the past, but it never gets old. It contains both a first rate zoological and botanical park, displaying both the flora and fauna of the Sonoran Desert. I specifically wanted to see the Raptor Free Flight Show before it was done for the season. This



show is spectacular and includes a great opportunity for the public to see several species of raptors up close. I have included a picture of a Harris Hawk, a Great Horned Owl, and a Caracara. If you ever have a chance to visit this museum, you will not be disappointed.

Since its creation in 1999, over 300 species of birds have been identified in the park. It is a wonder nature oasis in a fast-growing suburban city. A couple of standouts from this day were the Black-Crowned Night Heron and the Gila Woodpecker. As you can see March was a bit of a whirlwind adventure for us and an exciting time for me to work on my bird photography skills. I still have a lot to learn but have really been enjoying the process. I hope you've enjoyed some of my pictures from this trip and I look forward to getting to know you all better as we share our enjoyment of photography together. Take Care!



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My last outing on this trip took place at the Riparian Reserve at Water Ranch in Gilbert, Arizona, which is not far from Tempe. This is an innovative city park which combines water preservation and variety of wildlife habitats right in the middle of city of Gilbert.



What to Photograph in May

The Rookery at UT Southwestern is in full swing!

Memorial Day celebrations. It's election year; show your patriotism.

This month is great for wildflowers - look for Primrose, Bluebonnets, Paintbrush, and Indian Blanket toward the end of the month.

Sunrise and Sunset - With the low trajectory of the sun at this time of the year, sunrises and sunsets last much longer than the few minutes they last in high summer.

Likewise, the Milky Way is still low in the sky, and you can capture the full arch into June. You just need to get out of town.

May 5-6th: Aquariids Meteor Shower

May 23rd: The full moon

Got Snacks?

We have a time-honored tradition at the Heard of sharing a bite to eat and some great conversation before the meeting. Won't you sign up to bring something to share next month? There's a signup sheet by the food.



Lifetime Members

Several decades ago our club established the Honorary Lifetime Membership award to recognize and honor members who had made substantial (out of the ordinary) contributions to the photo club and to nature photography, spanning over a number years.

Since its inception, we have honored the following people with this award:

- Ernestine Freeman
- Dr. Harold Laughlin
- Harold Green
- Kay Griffith
- Rob Hull
- Ron Marabito
- Jim Ross
- Ed Pierce
- Larry Petterborg
- Terree Stone
- Anita Oakley
- Jackie Ranney
- Peter Gilbert
- Irwin Lightstone

There are details about each person's service on our website.

Who's Who

- **President: Doug Boone**
- **Vice President: David Duckworth**
- **A/V Coordinator: Craig Rowen / Patrick McCormick**
- **Secretary/Treasurer: Lee Hatfield**
- **Membership/Marketing: Guy Huntley**
- **Field Trip Coordinator: Jackie Ranney**
- **Webmaster: Rob Hull**
- **Newsletter Editor: Anita Oakley**
- **GSCCC Representative: JD Luttmer**
- **Photo Contest Coordinator: Anita Oakley**
- **Refreshments: Linda Grigsby**
- **Slideshows: Mary Binford / Terree Stone**

There are links to email board members on the club website. If the person you need to reach isn't listed there, reach out to any board member who is listed.



Alan Abair
PHOTOGRAPHY

The last word... This month's final image was captured by Alan Abair