

# Sulphur Springs Valley Young Birders Club



## THE SSVYBC QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2014 (NO. 1)

After starting off the summer with *The Big Year*, the Sulphur Springs Valley Young Birders Club has become an established group with monthly outings and meetings. To date we have met five times, with two field trips that felt like they ended too soon.



In this short time span we have observed over 35 species! In early fall we watched American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts preening in the shallow waters of Cochise Lake. Two months later we put scopes on a "Prairie"

Merlin and studied the fine details between the subspecies and later examined the plumage subtleties of a Ferruginous Hawk while admiring its impressive gape during the raptor field trip to Kansas Settlement. There is more to come! See our schedule on back!

### FIELD GEAR

The SSVYBC has already received many generous donations to help the young birders have more resources at their fingertips. More than \$500 worth of field guides have been donated, along with hummingbird feeders, optics cleaning supplies, and hats. Many thanks go out to the Tucson Audubon Society, Borderland Tours, and R.W. Morse Company. In addition, Cindy Traylor and Homer Hansen have both purchased a total of ten KOWA 8X30 binoculars for use as loaners to kids and adults both while out birdwatching. SSVYBC really, really appreciates our wonderful birdwatching community!



### NOTABLE SIGHTINGS

A calling Tropical Kingbird observed on November 22nd was more than likely the same bird that was observed during the August 9th field trip. It is very notable to have a Tropical Kingbird this late into the winter, especially in Willcox. Look for it near the wetlands pond by the south end of the golf course.



### FUN FACTS!!

Phalaropes, like these Wilson's Phalaropes we saw on the August 9th field trip, will swim in small rapid circles to create a "whirlpool" in order to raise food from the bottom of a lake or pond. Phalaropes are also unique with their switched roles in breeding, with females being more brightly colored and males incubating eggs and tending the nest. We see these birds at Cochise Lake from April to October, with hundreds of them in spring and fall as they stopover along their 5,000 mile migratory journey.



### FEATHERS WORKSHOP (by Rebecca & Jonathan)

On November 8th, we met and learned interesting facts about feathers: bird wings are similar to airplane wings, owls have fringed feathers so they can fly silently, feathers have Velcro-like barbules/hooklets to hold each segment together, and some crane feathers can be 12 to 15 inches long. Feathers are cool!

### YOUNG BIRDERS CAMP

Southeast Arizona is one of the top five birding destinations in the United States! There are many species of breeding birds that are only found in this part of the country, such as the Red-faced Warbler. So, why not take advantage of this wonderful opportunity in our own backyard!



This summer the SSVYBC will hold a weekend Young Birders Camp in the Chiricahua Mountains. Presently we are in the organizational stage and we will discuss all the details further during our meetings, but the general plan is to depart Friday afternoon and return on Sunday, with a full day of birding, hiking, reading, and more on Saturday. This will be a great opportunity to see some of our "southwestern specialties," meet other birders, and learn more about the area we live in. Come to the meetings for more details!

SSVYBC aims to provide expert guidance and resources for both young birders and mentors to connect and learn about birds. The club allows young birders to meet, learn, and bird together while developing skills in leadership, peer mentoring, community involvement, and conservation ethics. Young birders may contribute trip reports, species profiles, poetry, sketches, photographs, or other content for use with this newsletter. Visit us at [www.the-cranes.org](http://www.the-cranes.org)

# SSVYBC Activities Calendar

## DECEMBER 2014

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

### Monthly Activities:

**WHAT:** Cranes & More Field Trip  
**WHEN:** Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup>  
 9:00 – 11:30 am  
**WHERE:** Meet at Kiosk by Cochise Lake  
**BRING:** Binoculars, field guide, hat, water, snacks



*Sandhill Cranes appreciate both the grain and insects found in the fields.*

## JANUARY 2015

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

### Monthly Activities:

**WHAT:** Meeting and Wings & Flight Workshop  
**WHEN:** Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup>  
 9:00 – 11:30 am  
**WHERE:** Meet at Willcox Library  
**BRING:** Field guide, photos on CD or flashdrive

*Engaged in a close examination of the raptor flight feathers.*



## FEBRUARY 2015

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

### Monthly Activities:

**WHAT:** Owls in my Backyard Field Trip  
**WHEN:** Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>  
 9:00 – 11:30 am  
**WHERE:** Meet at Kiosk by Cochise Lake  
**BRING:** Binoculars, field guide, hat, water, snacks



*Western Screech-Owl can be a guest in a homemade nest box.*