

cnews...

Guess Who's Living On Campus?

By: Xanthe Skjelfjord

The burrowing owls who reside on our campus have caught the attention and won the hearts of many members of our community. However, these long-legged little owls who live in burrows in the ground are just one of the many species who can call the SCC campus "home". Indeed, biodiversity (the variety of life) is rich on our 160 acres. To discover who else is living on our campus, visit our brand new biodiversity website, created and developed by CNUW staff, student employees, and volunteers.

Simply go to: <http://www.scottsdalecc.edu/cnuw/SCCsite.html> which brings you to the main biodiversity webpage for SCC. Then click on any of the red buttons (there is one for each major category of animals - birds, mammals, reptiles, etc.) to see a list of species seen at SCC. To make this even more fun, we invite you to participate in a little game – try to identify all nine species shown on this page and the next page. Use the SCC biodiversity site to help you find the answers. You will win a special CNUW prize if you are one of the first 10 people to submit your answers via email to cnuw@sccmail.maricopa.edu.

The vision behind this biodiversity website originated with biology professor Roy Barnes, co-founder and current Director of CNUW. As Barnes explained at the recent Global Sustainability Conference at the District Office, "this website serves as a photographic record of what species exist at selected sites today. With this baseline data, future biology students will be able to take species inventories and measure trends over time."

One of our goals at CNUW is to acquaint the community with what species are sharing our environment, so that we may begin to appreciate them and promote their survival. In taking care of wildlife, we help our own species, too. As humans we benefit from the vibrant biodiversity of our surroundings. As Barnes always says, "When you go for a walk, would you rather see 20 different birds, or 20 gray pigeons that all look the same?"

Our natural environment provides not only aesthetic value and a soothing respite from the hustle and bustle of city living, but there are many other benefits for us in preserving biodiversity.



continued on next page...



Humans are intricately connected to the web of life; indeed we depend on many species for food, shelter, and medicine. There are economic and ecological implications for us if we allow biodiversity to continue to decline. Unfortunately, species loss is irreversible: we cannot bring a species back to life once it is extinct (unless of course we are fictional scientists working at Jurassic Park). Therefore, prevention is the best approach.



One of the ways we can preserve our current biodiversity is by landscaping with native plants, thus affording homes, food and shelter to our native animals. One such example can be found right here on campus - the Wildlife Demonstration Gardens - where you can enjoy a peaceful stroll along guided paths. Another way we can support Sonoran Desert biodiversity is by preserving riparian habitats (environments adjacent to rivers, streams, lakes, etc.). Water is a scarce resource in Arizona. We can help sustain many species by saving existing riparian habitats and including small ponds, like the pond on campus, in our landscaping schemes.



These pages include just a few of the many species residing in the gardens and at the pond, and elsewhere on campus... how many can you name?



A GUIDE TO THE CNUW WEBSITE

- **Read About Us:** a dozen newspapers and magazine articles about CNUW.
- **Biodiversity Education:** read about our fun and adventurous program for valley fourth graders.
- **CNUW Facilities:** explore Toad Hall, the Greenhouse, and more...
- **CNUW Art & Literature:** collaborations with the Art and English Departments at SCC. Get involved with CNUW by taking pictures or sending us your writings about nature.
- **CNUW Newsletters:** all issues can be downloaded right here!
- **Cave Creek RAYA:** read about our involvement in rescuing a vulnerable frog species and breeding them here at SCC!

Meet Your Desert Neighbor:

Feature: Say's Phoebe

By: Xanthe Skjelfjord

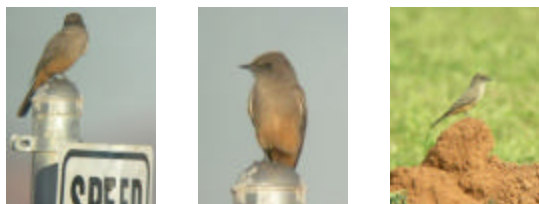


Photo: female Say's Phoebe with four young in her nest at Scottsdale Community College, April 21, 2007. Elastic spider web threads allow the nest to expand as the brood grows.

Spring is the season of love! Baby birds abound! The Say's Phoebe is no exception. Just two weeks ago I saw a pair mating right outside Toad Hall, and behold - a nest of babies has recently been spotted outside the Language & Communication building (photos above and to the right). For more pictures of the baby birds, please visit our Say's Phoebe webpage:

www.scottsdalecc.edu/cnuw/saysphoebe.html

This member of the tyrant flycatcher family is known for perching in open areas (golf courses and grasslands are favorites), from which it launches on short bursts of flight to catch aerial insects in its large wide bill. After grabbing an insect it returns to the same post, or to another nearby perch, thus avoiding wasting too much energy flying all over the place. Great perching spots on campus include sign posts and mounds of dirt in the ploughed fields, as demonstrated by the photogenic models below:



It's a fun flycatcher to watch, with its characteristic flicking motion of the tail and endearing facial whiskers. These so-called "rectal bristles" help the Say's Phoebe in sensing insects, and may even protect the birds' eyes while catching insect prey.

Say's Phoebes live year-round in southern Arizona. On campus we do notice a decline in their numbers during the summertime, and their territory is partially taken over by Western Kingbirds. We suspect some of the Say's Phoebe migrate to higher elevations up north.



Say, what's in a name?

- Say's Phoebe was not named after the female character in the TV show "Friends," but after the 19th century American naturalist and ornithologist Thomas Say, who founded the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.
- Thomas Say had several species named after him, in honor of his significant contribution to zoology. Indeed, he identified more species than any other individual before him. He discovered many species of wildlife during his explorations of the Rocky Mountains, including the Say's Phoebe.
- The word phoebe refers any of the several medium-sized birds of the genus *Sayornis*. Phoebes are brown/black North American birds belonging to the family Tyrannidae (tyrant flycatchers) and the order Passeriformes, or "perching birds."
- The scientific name for Say's Phoebe is *Sayornis saya*, which literally translates to Say's Bird Say.

Meet the Members of CNUW: Feature Bio: Jim Evans

In this issue of “cnews” we’d like to introduce you to a very special person who has volunteered at CNUW for years.



Photo: Jim presenting a poster board on CNUW facilities at the Global Sustainability Conference at District Office on April 13, 2007.

Jim is a passionate and knowledgeable tour guide for our fourth grade visitors who come from around the valley to tour CNUW facilities. We are deeply grateful to Jim for the countless hours he has contributed throughout all seven years of CNUW’s existence.

Originally from New York, Jim served four years in the US Air Force (mostly in the Far East) before moving to Southern California to complete his college education. He earned his Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology and completed Masters work in Behavioral Science. Later, he lived in Northern California, before finally settling in Arizona in 1990.

How he discovered CNUW:

“After volunteering at Out of Africa in Fountain Hills from 1994 to 1999, I met Johanna Pluntkey [an SCC student who painted the Toad Hall mural] at Goldies Restaurant in 2000. She told me about

her involvement with CNUW. It sounded interesting so I contacted and subsequently visited with Director Virginia Korte and received an introduction to CNUW and a tour of its facilities. I was sufficiently impressed and wanted to become a part of the organization. I started as a docent in training and as a member of the Fundraising Committee. After about three tours with Mark, Stacy, and Roy, I was on my own, and the rest, as they say, is history.”

That history being: Jim was one of the first non-student volunteers with CNUW, and completed over 100 tours in the last seven years (and who knows how many 4th grade students!). Jim states that being a docent has been an extremely rewarding and satisfying experience.

Looking ahead:

“I look forward to continuing my involvement with CNUW for as long as I’m able to make a positive contribution. I feel strongly that since we have the intelligence, the resources and the ability to take care of the planet and all its inhabitants, we humans have a *responsibility* to do so.”

Jim is now retired from a career in the computer industry as a programmer, analyst, and manager dealing with internal support systems. He retired from Motorola in 1998 as a Systems Manager.

In his spare time, Jim enjoys being with family (he has three children and nine grand-children). He also likes golf and travel. Jim and his wife currently live in Arizona seven months of the year and in Southern California the other five.

We owe special thanks to Jim for everything he has contributed to CNUW.

Thank you!
CNUW Staff