

Drive to a Volcano and an Ancient Metropolis | Jail Can't Hold Lawman

# ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

APRIL 2006

## Back to Nature

11 Wildlife  
Viewing  
Trips



A Plumage of Myth

Odd Mating Habits  
of Birds  
and Birders

Saving Desert Eagles

Apaches Reveal  
Secret Landscape

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**BACK COVER** Pacheta Falls spills 131 feet toward the Black River on the White Mountain Apache Indian Reservation. Charles Bowden and Jack Dykinga take a stunning, Apache-guided ecotour through usually hidden sacred land. See story, page 20. JACK DYKINGA  
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This month on our Web site, we answer the call of the wild with trips to our favorite destinations for viewing Arizona's unique wildlife. Go to [arizonahighways.com](http://arizonahighways.com) and click on our "Nature Travel Guide" for:

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**TRAVEL THROUGH TIME** Arizona's imaginary town lives on.

**EXPERIENCE ARIZONA** Use our statewide calendar of events.

**GUIDING LIGHT** [this page] The sun casts a ghostly spotlight into the Navajo hogan of Andrew Henry, a skilled silversmith, best known for his storytelling bracelets depicting life in Canyon de Chelly. COLLEEN MINIUK-SPERRY



**Recruiting Younger Readers**

Meadow Jones and her parents (our daughter and son-in-law) love visiting us in Arizona, and they get a gift subscription to *Arizona Highways* from us. The magazine is Meadow's favorite reading material while practicing her potty skills. Her vocabulary has been considerably enhanced with cactus, condor and many other words.

*Emma and Jeffrey Burch, Fountain Hills, AZ*

This month, *Highways* is 81 years young and counting, and with readers like Meadow, we expect to be here another 81 years at least. Can you say "ecotourism," sweetie? —Peter Aleshire, Editor

**Why I Read *Arizona Highways***

I was born in Bisbee [Brewery Gulch] and spent my younger years there. My father worked in the mines and died when I was 11 and my brother 14.

Our uncle took us on a camping trip across Arizona to help us with our loss after my father died. So the three of us and an old dog went on a two-month trip. The only rules were not to drive on a paved road unless there was no other way and to leave our camping places like we were never there. We got to see, feel and live in some wonderful backcountry. We also met people who treated us like family on and off the reservations.

Now that I'm in my senior years, I cannot just now go back to Arizona to feel the warm sun, see the sunsets and live in the places that helped me learn how to deal with my loss. But I can just for a little while, when I get your magazine. I hope someday to take my son and grandson to Arizona so that they can see for themselves why I read *Arizona Highways*. Thank you.

*James Combel, Baine, WA*

It is for letters like yours that we work at *Arizona Highways*. —Ed.

**Digital Tunnel Vision**

Director of Photography Peter Ensenberger's tunnel-visioned approach to digital puts him in the 19th century. Let's get up-to-date, folks! I'm not canceling my subscription, as I still think you put out a great publication.

*Richard C. Lutgen*

**Lighten Up, Guys (Preferably Late Light)**

Marty Hulsebos ("Dear Editor," January '06) uses the term "enhancement." Whether an image is enhanced is a matter of opinion. Of course film manufacturers use focus groups to see what may be popular with viewers. The camera (film or digital) "sees" images in a different way than the human eye. No film or digital

media has ever reflected "reality." I would like to say to all involved in this debate—don't take yourself and the images you produce so seriously! Have some fun!

*Jerry Sieve, Phoenix*

*Arizona Highways contributing photographer*

**Almost Like a Humor Page**

My father moved us to Arizona when I was a young girl. He had been a medic during World War II and did not often speak of his experiences there. One night in France, he and a buddy found themselves wandering through an old farm. Dad heard a noise and called out, "Bite the dirt!" They both dove into a pile of manure. They lay there silently, making sure all was safe. When they got up, my dad's buddy reported that he had lost his dentures. They searched through the manure, fished out the teeth and rinsed them off in the watering trough. As my dad's buddy placed the false teeth back in his mouth, dad joked "Hey, when I said bite the dirt, I didn't mean it literally."

*Maribeth Senner, Tucson*

**Go to the Little Boys Room**

I must say that I am astonished that neither you nor the State of Arizona can spell "MOJAVE" correctly—and in a state where the Spanish influence is extreme. What is next? Navajoe, Haysus, Haveleena and Hopee? And your editor's column (January '06)—"Dave is really cool...I look as cool as my big brother...I haven't got any, like, sibling rivalries." What scintillating prose! You need to expand your vocabulary. You need to go to the little boy's room and take a Time Out. And while you're there, read Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, in particular Cyrano's exchange with Valvert. And also study several languages such as English, Spanish and French.

*Jack Rowley, Aberdeen, ID*

Whoa. Way harsh, dude. —Ed.

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**highways on tv**

*Arizona Highways* magazine has inspired an independent weekly television series, hosted by Phoenix TV news anchor Robin Sewell. For channels and show times, log on to [arizonahighways.com](http://arizonahighways.com); click on "DISCOVER ARIZONA"; then click on the "*Arizona Highways* goes to television!" link on the right-hand side.



**THRILL RIDE**  
 Running Grand Canyon's Lava Falls Rapids is a lot like editing a magazine.  
 KERRICK JAMES

Passing Through the Maelstrom With Hope and Help

CRAIG, THE ADONIS ideal of a boatman, pivoted the unwieldy pontoon boat deftly into the gyre of quiet water behind the primordial monolith of the Anvil. We could hear the ravenous roar of Lava Falls Rapids downstream.

I trembled with 200 miles worth of anticipation of the most violent Grand Canyon rapid, but I still had not decided whether to sit on the front of the pontoon for the plunge into the rapid or stay safely in the "chicken coop" in the center.

Craig launched into a witty discourse, like a Disneyland jungle-boat driver on a river with real hippos and headhunters. The furious rapids were all that remained of an extinct volcano's foolish attempt to thwart the Colorado River, and we had anticipated the upcoming five minutes of fear and fury for a week. I can perfectly recall the pounding of my pulse in earshot of Lava, with my pride and my hopes and my sons perched precariously on the pontoon tip.

Kind of reminds me of how it felt to sign on here as editor.

Can you believe that it's been a year?

It seems like the right moment to touch the flood-smoothed sides of the Anvil, report on our journey and consider the import of the roar sounding up out of the canyon ahead.

This month, *Arizona Highways* celebrates its 81st birthday with this incrementally redesigned magazine. The departments have a different, more flexible look. You've probably noticed other changes we've made as we've paddled along. We're still hopelessly in love with landscape photography, but now we include more information about how our photographers make such stunning images. We still spin great yarns, but also include more, shorter stories. We've retained a clean, handmade design, but include more travel tips and information.

I'd like to tell you it's been a catered raft trip with soufflés in the Dutch oven. In truth, we've been bouncing off boulders. A year ago, we faced problems with our circulation, newsstand sales and bank balance. We were afraid we would have to cut pages or the size of the magazine. We'd already had to drop several features treasured by many readers.

So we lashed down the load and strapped ourselves to the pontoon.

when you write to point out some blunder. Clearly, you love this luminous and lyrical magazine as much as I do. Coming to work is a joy.

Of course, I worry I'll puncture a pontoon. I love this magazine so much that it would break my heart to hurt it.

But then I remember how much Lava Falls frightened me just before my son crawled out onto the front of the pontoon and gripped the ropes for the descent into the pit of Lava. As you have done, he gave me the courage to swallow the lump of my heart and climb onto the bright blue tip of the pontoon.

The maelstrom of water sucked in the great raft like a scrap of hope. The raft plunged, slid, rose, trembled, bent, folded, shuddered, then plunged again. We clung to the rope as our fingers purpled, screaming, spitting and laughing in a chaos of sound and water. The pontoon slammed into a wet white wall and doubled back, wrenching my right hand loose. I slid sideways, but sitting behind me was a woman whose bout with breast cancer had convinced her to fulfill a lifelong dream and raft the Grand Canyon. She grabbed my slicker until I regained my grip.

So I passed through Lava with hope and help. It changed me, for we are defined by the things we fear and the things we dare.

So here is your magazine, which Win has made solvent and Barb has made beautiful, and Beth has made graceful, and Pete (the other Pete) has made luminous, and Richard has made aesthetic, and Randy has made credible, and Sally has made accurate, and Billie has made cool and everyone has made better. I hope you love it as much as we do. But if you don't, I hope you will tell me so we can fix it. In the meanwhile, please forgive me my fumbles.

For you are the river and have changed me irrevocably.

I thank you for that.

editor@arizonahighways.com

# Nature Photography Leads to the Wild Side of Life

THE GREAT JOY of wildlife photography is realized when months of planning meet a moment of opportunity. Sometimes that opportunity reveals the unexpected.

Photographer Tom Vezo silently stalks wildlife with a camera. He wants his photographs to tell us something new about a wild species. Sensitive to the rhythms of the moment and armed with in-depth knowledge of his furred and feathered subjects, he hopes to document rarely seen behavior.

"Documenting the lives of birds is a hunt without a gun," Vezo says. "It's challenging and exciting. You never know what images you will come home with. Over time I have gained an extreme interest in the lives of birds, almost to the point of becoming scientific about my findings."

Seldom has one photographer so dominated an issue of *Arizona Highways* that he or she scores the front cover and three exclusive byline stories inside. Vezo photographed both bald eagle stories—our cover story about eagle myths, "Swoop and Soar, Death and Rain," beginning on page 8, and "Devoted Nestwatchers Nurture a Comeback," on page 16. He also shot our story on Arizona's birding boom, "The Odd Language of Love Among Birds and Birders," starting on page 32. And to top it off, his dramatic image of a bald eagle in flight was selected as this issue's front cover, the most important and sought-after photo position in the magazine. It's the culmination of months of travel and hard work for a city-boy-turned-nature-photographer.

You might say wildlife photography led Vezo to the wild side of life. Born in Brooklyn, New York, hardly a hometown to inspire a nature-lover, he discovered the wonders of the natural world through photographs he saw in books and calendars.

One book in particular played an important role in Vezo's early development: *The Birds of North America* by Eliot Porter, the person who inspired him to pursue bird photography in the first place. "What I love most about Porter's bird photography is how he captured the beauty of these wonderful creatures with their lifestyle and habitat in his vision," says Vezo. "He added spirit, a sense of place and realism to his images."

Realism is an important element of wildlife photography, but sometimes things can get too real.

On a recent trip to finish up work on his new book, *Wings of Spring: Courtship, Nesting & Fledging*, Vezo traveled with a professional filmmaker into Canada's old-growth forests to find two great gray owl chicks nesting high up in a tree. For three days they observed and photographed as the adult owl cared for the fledglings.

When they returned to the nest on the fourth day, the chicks were gone. Fearing predation, they were lamenting the sad outcome in hushed tones when suddenly they heard the cry of one of the chicks perched on a nearby branch.

"What a relief," Vezo said. "After doing a little research, we found out that great gray owl chicks jump out of their nests at a certain time in the breeding cycle."

They waited patiently for the adult to come in to feed the chick, and they weren't disappointed. "She came back with a mouse. Our motor drives were smoking as she continued to feed and preen her baby for 15 minutes. What a magical moment! The only thing missing was the other chick," Vezo said.

On the fifth morning of their trip, Vezo's filmmaker friend returned alone to the nesting site, hoping to get more footage of the owls. Later that day when Vezo met him for lunch, the friend hinted that he had documented something special on his morning shoot. "I followed him back to his camper where



A great gray owl preens its fledgling chick on a branch high in a Canadian forest. TOM VEZO

he showed me the video he'd shot that morning," Vezo said.

He was not prepared for what he saw on the tape.

"When the adult owl came back to feed her baby, we were astonished to see that, this time, she brought with her the carcass of the missing chick," Vezo says. "She proceeded to feed it to the surviving chick, and then finished the remainder herself. The missing chick must not have survived the jump from the nest."

Months of planning met a moment of opportunity. And even though Vezo wasn't there to capture the finale to this natural history episode, he knows that the next time he enters the owls' world there'll be more opportunities. Because nature's saga always carries the addendum "to be continued."

"There is so much more to learn about bird behavior, so much that is still unknown," Vezo says. "Every time I go out into the field, I learn something new from the creatures I photograph. But this experience was over the top. It's too bad I wasn't there to document that behavior. Or, maybe not . . ." ■

## taking the off-ramp

### Piece of Cake

THE ONCE-BITTER TALE of Tovrea Castle and the surrounding Carraro Cactus Garden, located near Phoenix's Papago Park, is getting sweeter every year. Completed in 1930, the historic "wedding cake castle" resort and its sprawling 277 acres quickly sold as a private residence. In 1969, twice-widowed owner and occupant Dell Tovrea passed away leaving the splendid estate to die a slow death while the surrounding acreage fell

victim to a thriving metropolis. Between 1993 and 2003, the city of Phoenix purchased the castle and a remaining 44 acres. Restoration is currently under way and the area is scheduled to open as a multiuse public park in 2009.

Though the castle is currently closed to the public, curious "cake" lovers can get a taste of it from the road. 5041 E. Van Buren St.; (602) 262-6862; [www.ci.phoenix.az.us/PARKS/tovhist.html](http://www.ci.phoenix.az.us/PARKS/tovhist.html). — JoBeth Jamison



RICHARD MAACK



### Eaglets vs. Africanized Bees

WHEN A RAMBUNCTIOUS raptor attempted to take flight from a branch that housed a hive of Africanized bees, the situation got ugly. The young bald eagle that prompted the attack, as well as another eaglet, received stings from the angry swarm. One eaglet died.

Arizona Game and Fish Department staff found the surviving eaglet in the Bartlett Dam area of the Verde River and handed her over to Scottsdale's Liberty Wildlife Rehabilitation. While there, volunteers taught the feisty female how to "fly, hunt for food, avoid predators and carry out other behaviors of an adult bald eagle." The eaglet was eventually returned to the wild after rehabilitation.

The 2005 bald eagle breeding season produced 37 nestlings from the 39 known breeding pairs that call Arizona home. Due to the hard work and dedication to preserving our national emblem by Arizona Game and Fish and Liberty Wildlife Rehabilitation, another bald eagle may one day produce eaglets of her own. —Clint Van Winkle



### I Love You, Eeyore

SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS interact with animals that have been neglected, abandoned or have physical abnormalities at Whispering Hope Ranch in the ponderosa pines east of Payson. The result, according to founder Diane Reid, is a special kind of healing.

"I know the power of human-animal interaction because I've experienced it in my life," says Reid. "Studies have shown that animals enhance the immune system, lower blood pressure and produce a general calming."

One example: Reid tells of an autistic girl who could speak only five phrases her parents taught her. After interacting with a ranch donkey, she suddenly blurted out, "I love you, Eeyore" —the first words she'd spoken spontaneously in 10 years.

Today, Whispering Hope is home to more than 100 animals—emus, llamas, peacocks and more, and has expanded to create a year-round "Arizona-style" retreat for kids sent by children's health organizations throughout the state.

"This is about serenity, unconditional love and changing lives," says Reid. The ranch is open to visitors by appointment.

Information: (877) 478-0339.

—Leo W. Banks

### Next Stop, Willcox

WHEN THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD rolled into Willcox in 1880, it changed the sleepy tent city of Maley's Camp into the busy town of Willcox. Ranchers could then easily ship cattle to market, and Willcox quickly became the "Cattle Capital of the Nation."

Today, the railroad depot has been restored and is the only remaining Arizona depot built between 1871 and 1880 on the southern transcontinental railroad route. It is the only known, original, on-site passenger depot still existing on this route between Los Angeles and Chicago. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the stick-style wood-framed building is covered with redwood.

Two Railway Express Agency wagons, original to the station, are outside; inside, visitors can watch a video on the railroad narrated by Rex Allen, singing cowboy movie star from Willcox. Children will enjoy pulling the rope to make the train whistle blow. Part of the building serves as city offices.

Located at 101 S. Railroad Ave., open Monday through Friday, 8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. except holidays.

Information: (520) 384-4271.

—Janet Webb Farnsworth

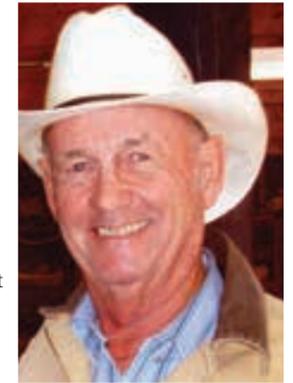
### Best of Burden

SOMETIMES IT'S GOOD to be a burden. If you're Dana Burden, Arizona's top trail maven, it's even better. Throughout his life, the Wickenburg native has juggled many job titles, including caballero, congressional aide, counselor, "Arizona Culturekeeper," ranch owner, manager and entrepreneur. So beloved is Burden by the people of his hometown that they have officially, proclaimed November 21 as Dana Burden Day, and they even named a local hill in his honor. But Burden's true identity rests in the trails and tributaries of his home state.

Raised on Remuda Ranch, the former dude ranch established by his father in 1926, Burden learned the lay of the land as a child, how to maneuver canyons, run rivers and plot desert passage, how to "know you're okay on your own," he says.

Burden's exploring expertise led to successful business ventures such as Wickenburg Jeep Tours, Adventure Trails of Arizona and Wickenburg Clean and Beautiful, Inc. Now the footpath aficionado has taken on the role of author, putting his decades of desert know-how in a new guidebook entitled *Desert Hiking Out Wickenburg Way*. The hiker handbook features no-nonsense, detailed trails and directions, and includes a CD with topo maps, points of interest, GPS coordinates, colorful photos and equally colorful legends and lore. While wandering out Wickenburg way, this is a Burden you'll definitely want to carry. [www.adventuretrailssofarizona.com](http://www.adventuretrailssofarizona.com).

—JoBeth Jamison



### Cocopah Museum Preserves a Tiny Tribe's Heritage

LEARN HOW Lower Colorado River Indian tribes lived and thrived at the Kwapa Navnee U'as Ilusaav, or Cocopah Museum. Located 10 miles south of Yuma, the museum illustrates the traditions and ancient lifestyle of the Cocopah people.

Outside the museum stands a model of a traditional Cocopah home. The ramada-style dwelling is constructed from arrowweed, mesquite and other local

materials. Inside the museum's exhibit room, visitors see professionally curated dioramas depicting traditional tribal life handcrafted by local tribal members. The exhibits detail the daily activities of a people defined by their relationship to the cycles of the Colorado River and the natural environment, including the Sonoran Desert and the river delta.

The museum also showcases

recent tribal history, including a prominent display by the small tribe's U.S. military veterans.

A gift shop features beadwork, including intricately beaded capes, other tribal arts and crafts, Native American music CDs and cassettes, and souvenirs.

The Cocopah Museum is open Monday through Friday. Admission is free.

Information: (928) 627-1992.

—Debra Krol

### No Britches Allowed

IN THE DAYS when even the legs of chairs and pianos were draped, Victorian-era Tucsonans passed a prim and proper law making it illegal for women to wear pants. Even though times have changed since then, this obscure prohibition still sits on the books—proving that some laws are meant to be broken.

—Carrie M. Miner

Two Railway Express Agency wagons, original to the station, are outside; inside, visitors can watch a video on the railroad narrated by Rex Allen, singing cowboy movie star from Willcox. Children will enjoy pulling the rope to make the train whistle blow. Part of the building serves as city offices.

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—Janet Webb Farnsworth



# Swoop and Soar, Death and Rain

BY CARRIE M. MINER PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM VEZO

## 5 EAGLE MYTHS

Mysterious and majestic, the eagle soars through Native American myths, associated with rain and thunder, death and rebirth, sickness and healing—awe alternating with fear.

Hopi lore considers the eagle a divine messenger, which is why some clans gather young eaglets and raise them respectfully on elevated platforms to be sacrificed in May or June in the Niman Katsina ceremony marking the return of the kachinas to their otherworld homes for the rest of the year.

According to Frank Waters in *The Book of the Hopi*, “The Kachina Father then delivers his farewell to the kachinas: ‘Now it is time that you go home. Take with you our humble prayer, not only for our people and people everywhere, but for all the animal kingdom, the birds and insects, and the growing things that make our world a green carpet. Take our message to the four corners of the world, that all life may receive renewal by having moisture . . . May you go on your way with happy hearts and grateful thoughts.’” After the ceremony, their feathers are plucked for future use and the eagles are buried in special cemeteries.

Following are some Native American eagle tales. In some cases, different versions of a single story have been combined.

### AIR MAIL

Look familiar? Deemed a divine messenger by Hopi ancients, the eagle has also made its heralding mark in modern America. When the Post Office Department reorganized under the Nixon administration in 1971, the country bid farewell to the running pony that had symbolized the service for more than 140 years and replaced it with the national airborne icon. A 1990s redesign of the logo eliminated the eagle stance (similar to the one seen here), leaving its head as the lone image for the USPS logo still in use today.





**BIRDS OF A FEATHER**

Not unlike humans, these white-headed wonders become so with age. In the bald eagle branch of the hawk family tree, this most noticeable mark of maturation generally happens between the ages of 4 and 5. Later, their remaining feathers grow darker, while their eyes, feet and clawlike bills turn bright yellow. Until then, eaglet bodies, which can grow up to 14 pounds, are almost entirely brown, as seen on the left. Unlike humans, however, the eaglet females typically become the bigger, more dominant birds and the better hunters.

**Eagle Welcomes Hopis to the Fourth World** (Hopi)

After they arrived in the Fourth World, the Creator directed each Hopi clan to travel throughout the world before returning to live at the Center of the Universe. When they climbed a high mountain, they encountered an eagle. Two spokesmen for the tribe, insect-people resembling the locust, asked the eagle if he would share this new land with the Hopi clans.

“If you pass the tests that prove you worthy you may stay,” the eagle said.

He beckoned the first locust forward.

“I am going to poke an arrow into your eyes. If you keep them open, I will consider your request.”

The brave locust stood fast and refused to even blink as the eagle tested him with a sharp arrow point.

“You are a people of great strength,” the eagle admitted. “One more test and I will allow you to stay.”

A second locust stepped forward, and the eagle shot an arrow through its body. In response, the locust lifted his flute and began to play a sweet melody. The eagle shot the other locust in the same manner, and this locust, too, began to play his flute.

“Well you are even more powerful than I had thought,” the eagle exclaimed. “Now that you have stood both tests you may use my feather any time you want to talk to our Father Sun, the Creator, and I will deliver your message because I am the conqueror of the air and master of height.”

Since that time, Hopis have revered the eagles’ feathers as sacred symbols.

**The Legend of Man Eagle** (O’odham)

The O’odham say that in the early days of creation, a man was beguiled into drinking a magic potion of *pinole* tainted with ground-up eagle feathers. Immediately, pinfeathers sprouted all over his body, and before long he was transformed into a large eagle. He flew up into the wild mountains of Apacheland, where he made his home in a large cliff. His huge appetite soon decimated the herds of deer, and he began to kill people for food. He also carried off a beautiful young girl and forced her to become his wife. The people waged war on Man Eagle, but could not kill the wicked “shape-shifter.” Finally, the people went to Elder Brother for help.

“I will go to that mountain myself against Man Eagle,” said Elder Brother. “If you see clouds rise over the mountain you will know I was successful.”

Elder Brother scaled the cliff to reach the cave, where he found Man Eagle’s wife. She agreed to help him, and so Elder Brother turned into a fly and hid under the pile of corpses Man Eagle had killed. Man Eagle’s wife then lured her husband to sleep and whistled to Elder Brother four times. At the summons, Elder Brother emerged and cut off the head of the evil Man Eagle. So great was Man Eagle’s power that the whole mountain shook with thunder and clouds gathered over the peak. Elder Brother brought the corpses back to life, and these resurrected people made a litter filled with eagle feathers. They carried Elder Brother down the mountain singing:

*On my litter of feathers  
I look big and wise like a medicine man.  
On my bed of downy feathers I am lying  
And my heart is light as the wind.  
Thunderclouds went out from me  
And covered the mountain.*

## The Tale of Monster Slayer and the Giant Birds (Navajo)

When the world was young, Monster Slayer traveled Navajoland to destroy the evils that had sprung up because of the transgressions of the First People. Among these evils were the Giant Birds, the offspring of eagle plumes. They carried people to their mountain home to feed to their monstrous brood. Monster Slayer went to the home of the Giant Birds, where the male monster plucked him up and flung him at the sharp rocks in his nest. However, two magic feathers saved Monster Slayer from the fall, and he tricked the mighty bird by smashing a bag of blood he carried around his neck to make it seem that he had died.

The two nestlings cried a warning to their father, but Monster Slayer hushed the young monsters. When the Male Rain and its accompaniment of thunder and lightning came, Monster Slayer killed the father bird with one of his lightning arrows. On the next night, the gentle shower of Female Rain brought the monstrous mother and Monster Slayer slew her as well.

Upon seeing their parents felled from the sky, the young birds cried in fear. "Will you slay us, too?"

"Had you grown up here you would have been things of evil; you would have lived only to destroy my people," Monster Slayer said. "But I shall now make you something that will be of use in the days to come."

Monster Slayer took the first nestling and swung it around him four times, telling it to forget its evil origins and furnish plumes and bones for The People. He let go and the eagle soared toward the sky. He did the same with the second nestling, saying that men would listen to its voice to learn the future, and the owl departed in search of the night.

Monster Slayer now searched for a way down, but soon realized only a winged creature could reach the nest. At sunset, he saw Bat Woman walking around the base of the cliff and called four times to her for help.

"Grandmother there is no danger up here for I have killed the Giant Birds," he said. "If you take me down you can have all the feathers from the Giant Birds."

Bat Woman agreed and carried Monster Slayer down from his perch on the high peak. Monster Slayer filled her basket with the Giant Birds' feathers and warned her not to walk through a neighboring field of sunflowers. Despite his warning, she did just that. After a few steps, she heard a fluttering and a little bird flew past her. After a few more steps, a brilliantly colored flock of birds flew out of her basket of feathers, transformed by the magic of the sunflowers. She could not catch them, so she named the little birds until her basket was empty. That is how the feathers of the Giant Birds became a rainbow of color in the sky—the flickers, swallows, starlings, robins, sparrows, wrens, warblers, titmice, juncos, nuthatches and all of the other little birds of the world.



### NUTHIN' BUT TALON

Ranging from 6 to 7.5 feet, the wingspan of a bald eagle rivals the height of some NBA players. By keeping their wings flat, the roving raptors can soar and glide across surfaces at more than 30 mph to grab prey with pinpoint precision. Sensational folklore once held that eagles were prone to snatching up small children, but these creatures generally prefer "fast food" weighing under 5 pounds, like fish, squirrels and rabbits. They also enjoy more relaxed meals of wounded waterfowl, road-kill and other colorful carrion.

# 4

## Killer-of-Enemies and the Eagles

(Jicarilla Apache)

When the world was still young, Killer-of-Enemies made his way into an eagle nest where he acted as a protector for the young eaglets until their parents returned. On the fourth day, the father and mother eagle came down and asked what he wanted. Killer-of-Enemies asked the eagles to take him up to visit the heavens. The eagles agreed. They fitted him with an eagle suit and taught him to fly. After a grueling four-day journey, Killer-of-Enemies finally reached the hole in the sky and entered the home of the eagles.

Here, Killer-of-Enemies learned that the eagles were at war with the bees. A battle began, and the eagles started dying. So Killer-of-Enemies wrapped himself in a buffalo hide and entered the melee. The brave warrior killed all of the bees except two, a male and a female, which he sent to Earth with the command that they not kill any more. The bees agreed, but said, “When people tease us, we will give them a shock”—which is why the myth holds that bees sting when provoked.

“It is a good thing that you came up,” said the eagle chief to Killer-of-Enemies. “You have brought us peace.”

In gratitude, the chief gifted Killer-of-Enemies with a bundle of eagle feathers and an eagle headdress. Killer-of-Enemies gave these things to the neighboring Pueblo people, who still use them in their ceremonies today.

### EAGLE-EYED

Eagles are thought to have the keenest vision of any living animal. Because their eyes are so large, they move very little within their sockets, causing the birds to direct their vision by turning their heads like owls. A series of depressions in the retina called fovea provide the birds with both monocular (lateral) and binocular (forward) vision and enable them to magnify images from great distances. For every square millimeter of fovea, eagles have about 1,000,000 visual cells. Humans have 200,000.

# 5

## Eagle Power (O’odham)

A black-headed eagle  
On a low rock  
Flapped its wings.

A white-headed eagle  
On a low rock  
Descended.

Eagle bird!  
When he alights  
There is a sound of thunder.

Hawk bird!  
When he perches  
There is a flash of lightning.

An eagle is walking,  
Toward me it is walking;  
Its down feathers blow in the breeze.

A hawk is running,  
Toward me it is running;  
Its down feathers ruffle in the wind.

Eagle, my older brother,  
Like a bow, in every direction,  
Your long feathers are bent.

Hawk, my younger brother,  
Like arrows, in every direction,  
Your down feathers are let loose.

The Mountain of Reeds  
Stands up at the west.  
There an eagle cries,  
The flat land resounds.

The Narrow Mountain  
Stands up at the east.  
There a hawk cries,  
The mountains echo. **AH**

Carrie M. Miner has had a fascination with raptors since her first encounter with a golden eagle as a young girl hiking with her father in the Rocky Mountains.

Tom Vezo of Green Valley says photographing eagles is thrilling, difficult and addictive. Most photos for this story were shot with a 600 mm lens from a long distance, using “fast” film. Vezo also photographed the “Nestwatchers” story on page 16 and the “Birds and Birders” story on page 32.

# Devoted Nestwatchers

## Nurture a Comeback

BY RICHARD L. GLINSKI PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM VEZO

### BIRD'S EYE VIEW

The Arizona Game and Fish Department's Bald Eagle Nestwatch Program hires two-person teams to protect eagle nests around rivers and lakes in the central part of the state. Here, nestwatchers Scott Olmstead and Erin Brandt scan a protected wildlife area along the Verde River, near Clarkdale, where bald eagles breed and nest from winter to spring.



# A

bulldozer rumbles toward a snag topped by squawking bald eagle fledglings as their frantic parents wheel overhead.

Floodwaters rise inexorably toward a massive, untidy mound of sticks where a gangly pair of bald eagle chicks perches.

An endangered eagle chick struggles in his cliffside nest, dangerously entangled in a coil of fishing line brought back inadvertently with the fish carcass his mother snatched from the surface of a desert lake.

In these emergencies, who you gonna call? Nestwatchers.

Beset by the eggshell thinning effects of the pesticide DDT, dams, diversion, loss of habitat and human disturbance near their streamside nesting sites, Arizona's population of bald eagles had dwindled to a dozen hard-pressed pairs when a heartening coalition of state, federal and private agencies took action.

On the national front, the federal government banned DDT.

On the Arizona front, the Forest Service spearheaded the Arizona Bald Eagle Nestwatch Program, a volunteer-oriented field study and protection program aimed at rescuing the majestic national symbol from what once seemed sure extinction. By guarding the most vulnerable eagle nests in the state through the spring season, the effort has contributed to a fourfold increase in nesting pairs of eagles. Collectively, federal and state preservation efforts have saved at least 8 percent of the eagle chicks born in Arizona in the past 30 years. As a result, the unique desert-dwelling population of Arizona nesting eagles has flapped backwards from the precipice of extinction.

Clearly, Arizona bald eagles have needed the help, since their nests lie alongside the same rivers and streams human beings seek so eagerly in the spring. People often accidentally spook eagles from nests,



#### EXTREME BIRDING

Whether it's a cozy cliffside dwelling, top, or a towering treetop habitat, right, Arizona Game and Fish bald eagle biologist Jorge Canaca leaves no nest unchecked when it comes to the health and well-being of bald eaglets.

Nestwatch contractors like Chris White and Game and Fish field projects coordinator Kenneth Jacobson, above, weigh and examine the baby birds. If the eaglets have been orphaned, injured or show signs of disease, they are taken out of harm's way and put into rehabilitative or supervised care until they are well enough to return to the wild.

leaving the young unprotected from the hot sun. The nest disturbance, coupled with the naturally high mortality rate for young eagles, meant that the dozen nesting pairs in the state couldn't sustain the eagle population.

The nestwatch program, which now safeguards a dozen breeding areas annually with contributions from 18 different government, tribal and conservation entities, was created by the Forest Service using a small group of weekend volunteers from the Maricopa Audubon Society in 1978.

The program was adopted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1984 and then passed to the Arizona Game and Fish Department in 1991.

Now, Arizona Game and Fish hires about 20 nestwatchers to work in two-person paid teams for four months each spring. Beginning in February, they



camp near the nests in 10-day stints, watching the eagles from sunup until sunset, shooing away hikers, campers and boaters and recording eagle behavior. Each year, they ward off thousands of disturbances by people who usually have no idea the eagles are nearby.

Many nests often require a more drastic intervention. If eaglets show signs of disease or injury, biologists can climb trees or rappel down cliffs to remove the babies and take them to a veterinarian for rehabilitation. Biologists also return nestlings that fall from their nests, or treat them for their injuries. When floods in the 1980s and 1990s threatened to inundate reservoirs, nestwatchers called for the removal of eaglets from endangered nests so biologists could place them in safer ones.

Sometimes, program participants report missing or dead eagle parents so biologists can rescue the orphaned eaglets. At one breeding area, the nestwatchers stopped a bulldozer from knocking down a tree occupied by nesting young.

The program has saved at least 44 eaglets since 1983. "This represents about 8 percent of the number of eagles that have fledged from Arizona nests during this time period. That's a significant contribution to the reproduction of eagles," said James Driscoll, bald eagle management coordinator with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. "We now have 47 nesting pairs of bald eagles in Arizona, and the population is no longer in danger of extinction."

The effort provides heartening evidence that endangered species can make a comeback—with a little help from their friends. ■■

*Richard L. Glinski retired from the Arizona Game and Fish Department, where his duties included leading the Southwest Bald Eagle Recovery Team in the 1980s. He now manages the Desert Outdoor Center at Lake Pleasant for Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department.*

*Tom Vezo also photographed the eagle myths and birding stories in this issue.*

## Where to see eagles



**Verde Canyon Railroad**  
Clarkdale  
(800) 320-0718  
[www.verdecanyonrr.com](http://www.verdecanyonrr.com).

**Jaques Marsh or Woodland Lake Park**  
Pinetop-Lakeside  
(520) 368-6700  
[www.wmonline.com/gamefish/jacques.htm](http://www.wmonline.com/gamefish/jacques.htm); [www.wmonline.com/attract/woodland.htm](http://www.wmonline.com/attract/woodland.htm).

**Mormon Lake**  
south of Flagstaff  
(928) 774-1147  
[www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/recreation/mormon\\_lake/index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/recreation/mormon_lake/index.shtml).

**Luna Lake Wildlife Area**  
White Mountains  
(928) 339-4384  
[www.azgfd.gov/outdoor\\_recreation/wildlife\\_area\\_luna\\_lake.shtml](http://www.azgfd.gov/outdoor_recreation/wildlife_area_luna_lake.shtml).

**Along the Salt River**  
Horseshoe Bend to Redmond Flat and below Stewart Mountain Dam  
(928) 402-6200; (480) 610-3300  
[www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto).

**Tonto Creek**  
(928) 467-3200  
[www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto).

**Lake Pleasant Regional Park**  
Morristown  
(928) 501-1710  
[www.maricopa.gov/parks/lake\\_pleasant](http://www.maricopa.gov/parks/lake_pleasant).



*Misty Morning*

With mist set aglow by the first rays of the rising sun, Christmas Tree Lake lies cradled by the fog-shrouded coniferous forests below Mount Baldy. The lake lies at the confluence of Sun and Moon creeks on the White Mountain Apache Reservation.

■ To order a print call (866) 962-1191 or visit [www.magazineprints.com](http://www.magazineprints.com).

*The Language of the*  
**LAND**

White Mountain Apaches  
Open Sacred Mountain  
to Ecotours

BY CHARLES BOWDEN  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACK DYKINGA

*The sun is down,  
the moon not yet up.*

The map says this place is Christmas Tree Lake because, when Lyndon Johnson sat in the White House, a big blue spruce was harvested here for his 1965 holiday cheer. But I am into other events—an osprey passes with a trout in its talons, a beaver swims past as mist rises against the spruce and fir-lined shore, and Sun and Moon creeks merge and feed the sheet of water before my eyes. The lake sits on the White Mountain Apache Reservation, 1.6 million acres with 400 miles of cold streams, over 15 lakes, endless forests and



canyons, and all this dwarfed by a sacred 11,000-foot mountain that nontribal members call Baldy. That's the rub, the landscape here is splattered with English place-names, but beneath these names rest Apache names and they are not readily given up because . . . the land is the language. In the language, *ni* can mean "mind." Or "land."

A bald eagle flaps by, ducks ride on the water and over there, against the far shore of the 41-acre lake, a great blue heron stands stock-still on the shore. And now, the White Mountain Apaches are considering opening up some of their backcountry to what outsiders call ecotourists. This lake, a legend in trout circles because the world's largest Apache trout is probably feeding right before my eyes at dusk, is one such place. It remains closed to all except a few trout fisherman who pay a high fee for a visit. In early May, this fee can be \$250 a day. But then the monster elk of the reservation can command a hunting fee of \$40,000.

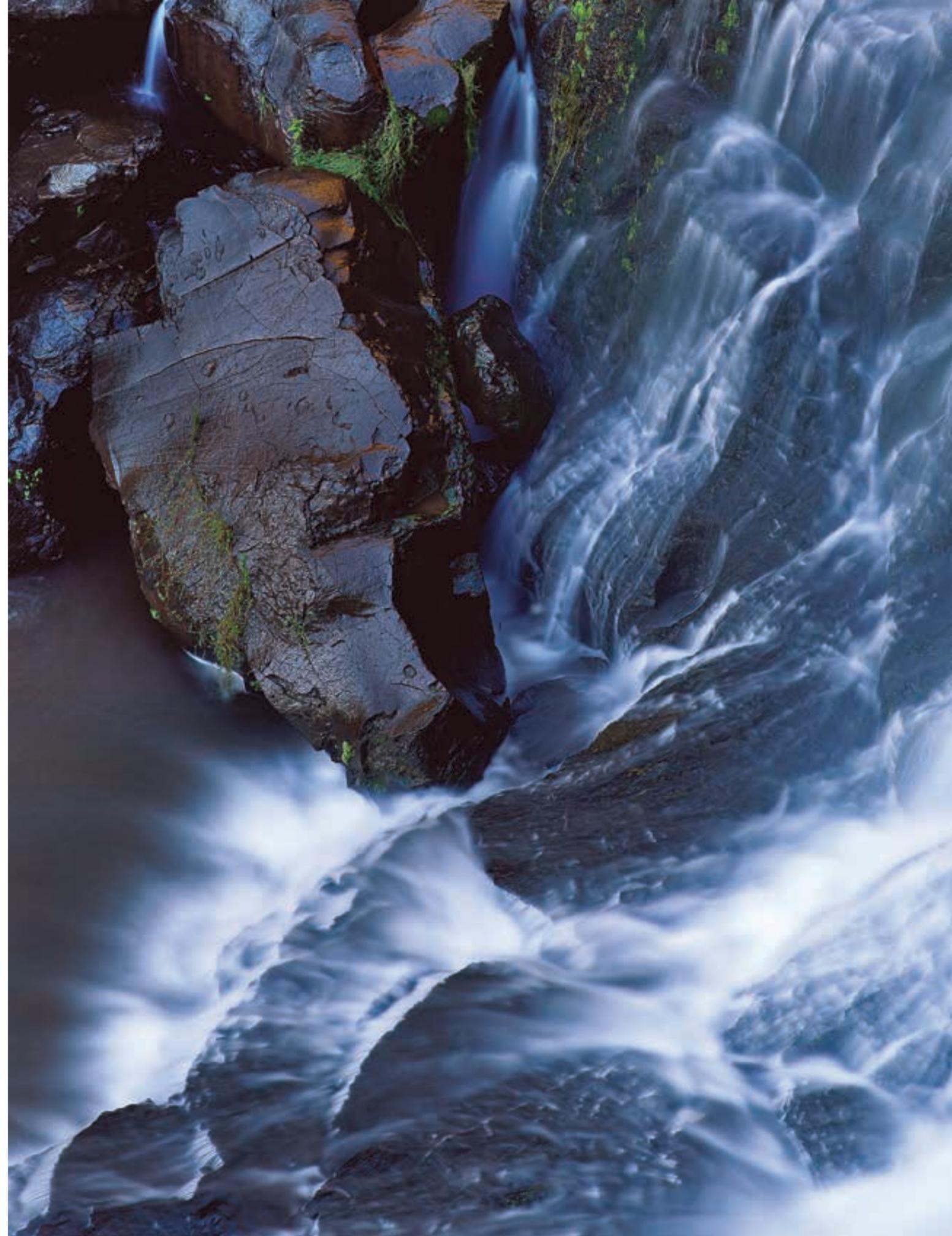
But that's not why I've come. I'm here because the reservation may hold some of the healthiest ground in Arizona and this may be because of the Apache language. Long ago, the gods created life on Earth and grasses and trees became the hair, rocks and mountains the bones, rivers and streams the blood, and the wind became the breath. The wolf has returned here. There are thousands of black bears and elk, countless mountain lions, 15,000 to 18,000 wild turkeys. And a culture has fought the federal and state government and taken back the land-management of their ground. Grazing and timbering are in decline and I'm staring at the result—an emerging Eden.

There is electric green, pale green, lime green, blue green, Kelly green and a green that is almost black when I stare into the stands of blue spruce. A gobbler moves past, five hens trailing him. The forest floor teems with ferns, and ravens croak in the trees. The *tap, tap, tap* of a woodpecker drums through the stand of spruce. Patches of lupines seep blue under the mountain light. (Text continued on page 26)

*Shades of Green and Gold*

Western sneezeweed flowers await the dawn in a dew-soaked mountain meadow near Christmas Tree Lake.

*Rush of Waters*  
Swirling runoff from seasonal rains hurries over the 131-foot-high precipice of Pacheta Falls.





### *Pacheta Falls*

Summer brings monsoon storms to Arizona's high country. Gentle streams may become rain-swollen torrents, charging down mountainsides with dramatic intensity. Here, Pacheta Creek bursts into trailing ribbons of water as it courses over its namesake falls.

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### Scarlet Surprise

An extravagantly colored fly agaric mushroom provides a bright accent for a forest floor covered with ponderosa pinecones.

(Continued from page 22) Christmas Tree Lake is the prettiest body of water I've ever seen in Arizona, it floats before my eyes like a dream. Years ago, the ethnographer Keith Basso made a study of this land and this people. He created a map of the native place-names, one now kept under lock and key at tribal headquarters. One woman he talked with was Annie Peaches, 77 years old back in 1978 when she shared her knowledge. She told Basso, "The land is always stalking people. The land makes people live right. The land looks after us. The land looks after people."

Bats feed overhead, and the slap of trout leaping comes off the lake. A cormorant drifts through, and at my feet wild strawberries rise up from the duff of pine needles. The sky goes pink and the dying sun plays out on the water. The stars come out. I stare at a rising moon now. The sky is a gray bar, the lake a silver bar feeding off the moon, the forest a black bar. And before my eyes the columns of pine and fir and spruce rise like towers. Coyotes sing before their hunt. And then the silence of land stalking people.

Here what you call something becomes what you are and what the ground makes you.

*I move around and poke* into areas normally closed to my kind. Turkeys cross the road, cow elk and calves feed on the edges of the forest. Lakes flit by, and meadows blaze with green. I keep taking forks in the road and wander. I suppose I'm lost but it does not feel like that. I run into no other people. Most of what I see lacks signs and names—at least names available to me.

Tribal members take me to a special place, Pacheta Falls. The surrounding landscape speaks of my kind and of the time when the land was seen simply as lumber and beef. The Apaches with me point out this fact by fingering the place-names on my map: Poker Mountain, Ten of Diamonds Ranch, Pair O' Dice Ranch. The name Pacheta Falls, I'm told, is a corruption of "Pair of Cheaters." No matter. The falls is a roar of water, 131 feet high and maybe 50 feet wide hidden in a slot canyon just above the Black River. Yellow monkeyflowers trail down from the lip. The location is not on my official map of the White Mountains.

The plunge of water comes without warning. The land here is fairly flat, a creek idles through a meadow, and then suddenly there is faint sound, which grows louder until the creek hits the rim and tumbles down into deep pools where trout linger safe from hooks. About a century ago a tribesman told an anthropologist, "Water itself has life; witness the way it ripples and flows in a river, the noise it makes in a flood."

At Pacheta Falls, I believe (Text continued on page 31)

### Rent a Lake From the White Mountain Apaches

The White Mountain Apache Tribe's Wildlife & Outdoor Recreation Division offers two secluded lakes for multiday rentals. The Rent-a-Lake program offers up Hurricane Lake and Cyclone Lake for renters to relax, fish and barbecue in complete isolation.

The 37-acre Cyclone Lake sits in the northeast portion of the reservation, an hour away from Pinetop-Lakeside. At an elevation of 8,300 feet, Cyclone Lake boasts a good chance to hook into top-notch rainbow and Apache trout.

Even though the 19-acre Hurricane Lake is half the size of its rent-a-lake cousin, it earns its own bragging rights. Located in the southeastern part of the reservation, Hurricane Lake is managed as a "trophy Apache trout fishery," so fishermen have an opportunity to pull a lunger out of this high-elevation lake.

Both lakes require a minimum three-day rental, and have a split rental season from May 24 through September 9 and October 13 through November 1. Cabanas, firewood, potable water and barbecue facilities are standard amenities at both sites.

**INFORMATION:** White Mountain Apache Wildlife & Outdoor Recreation Division, (928) 338-4385 or [www.wmat.nsn.us](http://www.wmat.nsn.us) (choose "Recreation," then "Wildlife & Recreation," then click on Rent-a-Lake) or e-mail: [gamefish@wmat.us](mailto:gamefish@wmat.us). —Clint Van Winkle



### Song of Sunlight and Shadow

Afternoon rainstorms are a regular feature of monsoon season in the mountain highlands. Here, clouds build above an ephemeral pond in a secluded meadow.

To order a print call (866) 962-1191 or visit [www.magazineprints.com](http://www.magazineprints.com).



*Fading Majesty*

Clouds from a passing storm disperse reflected sunset colors of gold and magenta in the still waters of Christmas Tree Lake.

■ To order a print call (866) 962-1191 or visit [www.magazineprints.com](http://www.magazineprints.com).



*Tangled Up in Blue*  
Intertwined like thatchwork,  
windblown grasses decorate the  
surface of a seasonal pool in a  
high mountain meadow.

(continued from page 26)

everything the tribesman said so long ago. I'm looking at a kind of miracle. The tribe sued the federal government for mismanagement of its land, won, and put the money into a permanent Land Restoration Fund, one that aims to bring the land back to the condition it was in before the federal government got its hands on it. A board of tribal elders advises the project. And what they speak for is the very creation of their ground. In the beginning was water: "How will it breathe, this earth?" Then came Black Thunder to that place, and he gave the earth veins. He whipped the earth with lightning and made water start to come out." What nontribal culture calls restoring riparian habitat, the tribal elders call "bring life back to the streams," and helping the springs "to breathe again."

I stare at the canyon wall framing Pacheta Falls, a slot of dark brown rock streaked here and there with black stain ending in a riot of ferns below at the edge of the punch bowls formed by the tumbling water. Now I can hear nothing, the roar of water vanishes and I simply melt into the landscape. My side of the canyon is ponderosa pine. Across the chasm is pure spruce and fir. Between the slabs of stone, Pacheta Creek rolls and tumbles and deep pools harbor trout. In the past, Apache cowboys would sometimes descend to the canyon bottom by a rope strung next to the falls and catch a few for dinner. The rope is gone and some other kind of world is being born here.

I sit down amid rotting logs silvered with age. Needles carpet the ground and limbs are scattered like lines in some abstract painting. Young ferns, lupines and columbines poke up like green tongues savoring the sun. I can look at the falls, or at the ground. Part of normal tourism is pulling over at designated vista points where the earth is believed to be camera-ready. I'm past normal. Before me is the most beautiful waterfall I've seen in Arizona. At my feet is a mess of debris. I give them equal time. I'm starting to get the hang of the word *ni'*.



### when you go

**Location:** White Mountain Apache Indian Reservation, approximately 225 miles northeast of Phoenix.

**Getting There:** From Phoenix, take State Route 87 north to Payson. Turn right (east) onto State Route 260 and drive 105 miles to Hon Dah.

**Fees:** Outdoor recreation activities like hunting, fishing, camping, and other activities such as off-road travel on the White Mountain reservation land require permits. Outdoor recreation permits, daily, \$6 per vehicle; individual, \$3; general fishing permits, adult, annual, \$65; daily, \$6; juvenile, annual, \$32; daily, \$3; camping, daily, vehicle, \$8; individual, \$3.

**Lodging:** Sunrise Park Lodge, toll-free (800) 772-7669; Hon-Dah Resort Casino and Conference Center, toll-free (800) 929-8744.

**Additional Information:** Toll-free (877) 338-9628; [www.wmat.nsn.us](http://www.wmat.nsn.us).

*The reservation timber* was devoured for decades and there is hardly a virgin stand left. The forest can look deceptive with its tall trees and green grass. We simply have lost all memory of how it greeted the eye at the end of the 19th century. But there are haunting reminders and one of them is a grove of 1.7 acres just off Reservation Lake, a lens of water and trout at 9,039 feet on the flank of Mount Baldy.

This pocket of trees survived the great cutting. In Apache culture, the word *gozhoo* can mean "healthy ground" or a "healthy person." This grove is *gozhoo* (according to the tribe) and that is telling within the culture. Ancient place-names scattered about the reservation designate wet spots that are now dry. This is taken by the tribal members as a punishment for being greedy and uncaring about their land.

I wander up a slope by a cienega, then take a few steps down. A giant fir looms over me. The trunk is maybe 8 feet in diameter. It is a message from the stands now long gone that once carpeted the reservation. For the Apaches, a stable mind rests on three elements: resistance, resilience and smoothness. They apply the same words in assessing the vitality of what others call an ecosystem. I am staring at smoothness, a grove mixed in species and ages, a place that can handle the roll and tumble of life without a murmur. The tree must be older than the United States and, for all I know, it was a seedling when Columbus sailed. The bark is deep and corrugated with flashes of reddish color against the brown.

Greg Dazan of the tribe's Recreation Division stands by the tree. He explains it takes eight men with arms extended to encircle the fir.

"Imagine," he says softly, "what the forest was like when it was full of big trees."

Such a vision will require centuries. *Gozhoo* takes time and patience. But at the moment, the tribe is opening up some areas to limited visitation. The trick is to get a living from the land without maiming it in the process. As one elder told her grandson, "Go slowly; listen to the land and it will tell you what to do." Here is our chance to eavesdrop on a conversation we need to hear. ■■■

*Tucsonan Charles Bowden says: "I've worked on a newspaper, freelanced, started up and ran a magazine, scribbled 18 or so books and, thankfully, have never quite gotten the hang of it."*

*After collaborating with author Charles Bowden on six Southwestern books and countless Arizona Highways stories, nothing prepared Jack Dykinga of Tucson for the visual feast of the Apache land, which he calls "simply stunning."*



*Ancient Witness*  
Towering over  
surrounding aspen trees,  
this giant old-growth  
ponderosa pine may  
survive for 300 years  
or more.

# Whiskered Owls & Whispering Birders

BY PETER ALESHIRE PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM VEZO

A Man Named Walraven Reveals...

## the Odd Language of Love Among Birds and Birders



Wezil Walraven hits the brakes on the bird-watching van in the middle of the darkening road into Ramsey Canyon, prime habitat for that most peculiar of human subspecies—birders.

“Whiskered screech owl,” cries Wezil, his extravagant enthusiasm for all things feathered exaggerated into a personality trait by decades of professional birding. Raucous as a raven and frenetic as a nuthatch, the gray-thatched, strong-legged, fresh-faced Wezil can shame a mockingbird when it comes to imitating birdcalls, but can't for the life of him mimic nonchalance.

Several befuddled birding couples grab their binoculars and tumble toward the doors of the Casa de San Pedro's bird van, the first stop in a treasure hunt that will yield unexpected insights into birds, birders and their odd mating rituals.

Only Tucson Audubon Director Sonja Macys understands Wezil's bounce-off-the-walls excitement. A blonde-crested, slim-legged, hard-core birder and conservationist, Sonja knows the rare whiskered screech owl lures birders to the Huachuca

Mountains from all over the country.

Behind flit Susan and Larry McKennon, lovebird Army colonels who once invaded Iraq and are now on a campaign to understand the alien culture of birders. McKennon helped build housing for a couple hundred thousand soldiers waiting to invade in the first Gulf War, while Susan ran MASH units. They got married while posted at Fort Huachuca, which once harbored the Buffalo Soldiers of Apache War fame and now protects some of the best blessed bird canyons in North America. Susan and Larry have returned from retirement in Oregon to celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary with a romantic interlude at the bird-obsessed Casa de San Pedro. In all innocence, the colonel couple has now fallen in with a band of birders.

Following them come my wife, Elissa, an artist, and me, a writer, 26 years married and given to unpredictable enthusiasms. I am hoping this night and day tour will reveal the interlocked secrets of birds and birders and so explain why 46 million Americans spend \$32 billion on their dearly daft hobby every year.

Birders migrate to southeast Arizona in flocks to explore famed canyons in the Huachuca, Santa Rita and Chiricahua mountains and lush riparian areas like Sonoita Creek and the San Pedro River. Thanks to sky islands, diverse canyons, migratory flyways and its location on the boundary between the Mexican tropics and temperate

### WELL-DRESSED CAD

A pair of wood ducks quack sweet nothings, but don't let his fancy outfit fool you. These small colorful ducks nest in cavities in big trees like sycamores, but the male plays no role in either picking the nest or sitting on broods of up to 12 eggs.

**ELEGANT TROGON** Males flit up from the tropics and find a nest cavity that will impress arriving females. The parents then each pick their favorites to feed, which means half of those little trogons will turn out to be momma's boys.



**YELLOW-EYED JUNCO** Perhaps nesting on the ground with all the skunks, snakes and clohoppers makes this junco look a little crazed. Then again, perhaps it's raising three sets of chicks a year.



**LOOK, IT'S A BIRD...** Ecotour guide Wezil Walraven points out a preening elegant trogon to a group of bird-watchers on a trip into the Huachuca Mountains.

habitats, the area boasts more than half of North America's bird species.

By the time we escape the van, Wezil has already centered his birding scope on a dark hole in a huge tree set in a V in the road. I focus my binoculars in the gathering dusk.

Nothing.

Sonja peers into the scope. "There's the mother—and the baby," she whispers.

I elbow her aside and the scope reveals the baby, visible only when he opens his haunting yellow eyes and fixes me with a look wise beyond his fluff-feather years. I cannot see the mother.

Susan looks. "I see them," she chirps.

Impossible. I look again. Suddenly, I see the mother perched right on top of the baby, as cleverly camouflaged as a brain twister illustration in a children's nature book.

Wezil dances a jig in his excitement over our astonishment. Then he pied-pipers us down the road in the dark, hooting and ooohing.

Down the hill where pines and sycamores yield to oaks and scrub, he whips out his CD player to reproduce the territorial call of a western screech owl, a hoot that diminishes like a dropped ping-pong ball. A moment later, a ghost owl passes noiselessly overhead and perches indignantly in the cottonwood opposite. Wezil flicks on his 9-volt flashlight and notes that this owl lacks the fringe of face bristles adorning its cousin up the road. The whiskered screech owls use the bristles to funnel flying bugs into their mouths. The larger-taloned west-

ern screech owls, by contrast, snatch up lizards and mice. Such differences in even closely related species make birds nature's Rosetta stone, revealing the complex connection between habits and habitats.

Wezil and photographer Tom Vezo, who has in his files 100,000 pictures of birds of 500 species, then launch into a complex discussion of the local dialects of owls and Mexican whip-poorwills. I eavesdrop, like a plumber listening to a discussion between Albert Einstein and Niels Bohr about whether God does, in fact, play dice with the universe.

Abruptly, Wezil cocks his head.

"Elf owl," he says, reacting to a call I hadn't even heard.

Tom spins and spots the 5-inch-long bump of an elf owl on a branch, thanks to an eye trained by 20,000 hours of birding. A sparrow-sized insect hunter, the elf owl also draws birders from the far corners of North America. Suddenly, the feisty elf owl plunges from its branch and smacks into the back of screech owl's head. Everyone yelps, most especially the screech owl.

The owls curse.

The birders hoot.

Wezil beams.

We chat happily on our way back to Casa de San Pedro, getting to know each other.

Sonja is earnest and expert, although

she gave up keeping her "life list" of birds she has seen after the Mexican federales inexplicably confiscated her only copy during one memorable fiasco in Mexico.

Susan is easygoing and brimming with delight, although baffled by the birder hubbub. Larry is careful as a colonel in a roomful of generals, although his eyes gleam with amusement. He watches Susan with the wordless devotion that prompts soldiers to throw themselves on grenades to save their buddies. She is the happy splash of a stream to his deep ocean current, but they fit perfectly. They found each other in the midst of muddled wars and now seem as content as life-mated eagles.

We declare the owling a great success, but privately consider Wezil odd and Sonja obsessed, especially after Wezil insists we have breakfast by 6 A.M. to get those early birds.

We assemble just past dawn in the Casa de San Pedro dining room for a reassuringly substantial breakfast, then head for Garden Canyon on Fort



**SPOTTED OWLS** Laid-back parents, these big, endangered owls greet intruders with phlegmatic calm and feed their young, like this one, for up to three months after they leave the nest.



**HEPATIC TANAGER** These feathered models of monogamous marriage raise a single batch of up to four babies and warble to one another in sweetly simple songs.

Huachuca, where Wezil has promised us elegant trogons, outlandish, foot-long, parrotlike tropical birds that remain the avian superstars of southeast Arizona. They sport long tails and nine colors, including emerald-green backs, vivid red breasts, bright yellow bills and spooky orange eye rings. A tropical species, they breed in a few lush canyons along the Arizona-Mexico border where they nest in sycamore trees, whose soft, easily broken branches make them a cavity nester's paradise.

The Aztecs believed trogons harbored the spirits of dead warriors, perhaps for their gaudy plumage and eerie calls. Trogons have expanded into Arizona in just the past century, perhaps due to a 3-degree average temperature rise linked to cattle grazing and deforestation. They eat berries, bugs and lizards, nest in abandoned woodpecker holes, reproduce slowly and defend their young fiercely. They often mate in the tropics, but the females can store the sperm inside for weeks before fertilizing an egg. The males migrate first so they can hunt up several nest cavities in hopes one will impress his true love, since they appear to mate for life. When the missus arrives, he leads her from hole to hole, fluttering, croaking and preening hopefully.

Wezil delivers us to a peaceful picnic area in Garden Canyon, where gaggles of birders wait hopefully for a trogon's call. We wander about, appreciating North America's greatest diversity of butterflies and pointing out painted

redstarts, hepatic tanagers, yellow-eyed juncos, whitebreasted nuthatches and even a rare sulphur-bellied flycatcher, to add to a species list that will top 40 by day's end.

Suddenly, we're electrified by the bizarre, swallowed-caw of the trogon, sounding like a turkey reared by mockingbirds on hallucinogens. Delighted, we creep through the woods behind Wezil, druids seeking our fairy circle. The heart-stopping, bright-red breast of the male trogon flashes in the branches. We crane our necks, cry out, shamle through the forest, stumble over tree roots, cross the stream, bumble down the road and return to the picnic area—following the trogon from perch to perch. Two trogons fly back and forth overhead, a delirium of red and green.

Wezil can lie down and nap on his laurels so far as I'm concerned.

Instead, he leads us to the hummingbird heaven of Beatty's Miller Canyon Guest Ranch & Orchard. There we encounter a New York birding guide, an obsessive life-lister with a frightening gleam in her eye who has tallied 736 species in North America, but hasn't glimpsed a new bird in two years. She has brought three wealthy clients to see several rare tropical hummingbirds. Now she haunts the row of buzzing hummingbird feeders, unnerving as Marley's ghost dragging the chain of a life list. In the next hour we see two-thirds of the North American hummingbird species, including black-chinned, broad-billed, blue-throated

and violet-crowned—not to mention rufous, Annas, costas and magnificent.

Still, Wezil has not finished with us, seeing as how Susan is still calling trogons "Trojans." So Wezil resolves to reveal to us the secret hiding place of the threatened Mexican spotted owls, elusive predators of old-growth forests hanging on in a few unlogged canyons, including Scheelite Canyon in the Huachuclas.

So we drive to the canyon and troop nearly a mile up a steep, leafy, bird-thronged trail.

At length, Wezil perches on a rock and tells us to think like a Mexican spotted owl. After much blundering about, I spot a gigantic, drowsy, mottled brown owl high in a nearby Douglas fir.

Moments later, Susan stops in astonishment beneath a branch just 8 feet off the ground that holds a foot-high, fledgling Mexican spotted owl, adorable in his baby feathers. The mother eyes us dubiously from a nearby tree.

Susan shrieks in delight.

"Oh, it's so cute," she cries. "That's it. I'm a birder!"

Wezil chortles like a trogon.

The owl holds my stare skeptically, but I can only shrug.

I cannot explain us, especially when it comes to mating habits.

Even so, I'm proud of our most distinctive field marking: A wonderfully fluffed up sense of wonder. ■■■

*Peter Aleshire is editor of Arizona Highways. Tom Vezo of Green Valley also photographed the eagle myths and nestwatchers stories in this issue.*



COURTESY NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

# Audubon Celebrates a Century Devoted to All Things Feathered

BY RANDY SUMMERLIN

**T**hanks partly to a bunch of precious feathers and a fashion-conscious society that loved plumed hats, the birds of the world are living a little bit happier.

In the early 1900s, the great egret and snowy egret were in danger of extinction because their feathers—at the time reportedly worth twice their weight in gold—were harvested excessively. A group of concerned conservationists soon took flight and won legal protection for the birds—helping to launch the National Audubon Society, which celebrated its 100th year in 2005.

Arizona chapters began forming about 50 years ago in Pima and Maricopa counties. Eight such chapters now exist around

the state, forming the regional backbone for Audubon's work in a state where bird observation and conservation are a high environmental priority—and big business. It's reported that birders spend more than \$800 million in Arizona annually pursuing their passion.

Birds are like the canary in the mine—they're a barometer for the health of the entire environment, says Sam Campana, executive director of Audubon Arizona. She heads Audubon's Phoenix-located state organization, which opened in February 2002 and now has about 15,000 members.

Highlights of Audubon Arizona's activities, research areas and programs include:

**The National Audubon Society Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch.** Near Elgin in southern Arizona, the 7,000-acre tract, which has excluded livestock since 1969, is a native plant and animal sanctuary devoted primarily to grassland research, according to Vashti "Tice" Supplee, a biologist and director of bird conservation, who oversees the Important Bird Area Program. Much of the ranchland was burned in a vast grass fire in 2002, but nearly all traces of the fire have disappeared, according to Campana, who says it has been restored to a condition "better

than it was a hundred years ago." With prior appointment, the public may visit the ranch, considered a "signature" area of importance by the national organization.

Information: Research ranch, (540) 455-5522, or Audubon Arizona, (602) 468-6470; [www.audubon.org/local/sanctuary/appleton/index.html](http://www.audubon.org/local/sanctuary/appleton/index.html).

**The Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center.** At Central Avenue at the Salt River in Phoenix, the 4-acre educational center site adjacent to the Rio Salado Project hosts informative outdoor programs for the public, especially student groups. The center will open in 2008.

Information: Audubon Arizona, (602) 468-6470; <http://az.audubon.org/>.

**The Important Bird Area (IBA) Program.** Twenty-six regions in the state have been designated as having special importance for birds. The areas are used to engage the public and private landowners in conservation, to promote habitat and to encourage partnerships for species protection.

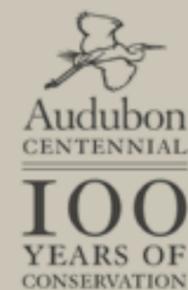
Information: Audubon Arizona, (602) 468-6470; <http://az.audubon.org/>.

**Arizona Watchlist 2004.** A list of 53 bird species—including threatened or near-threatened—is compiled to observe and monitor those needing protection.

**Eight Chapters Statewide.** The work done by the society is mainly a local effort done on the chapter level.

Information: Audubon Arizona, (602) 468-6470; to contact individual chapters, see [az.audubon.org/Chapters.html](http://az.audubon.org/Chapters.html). To join: [https://websvr.audubon.org/forms/updated/new\\_order.html](https://websvr.audubon.org/forms/updated/new_order.html). ■

*Randy Summerlin is managing editor of Arizona Highways and a nature-lover at heart.*



1905 The National Association of Audubon Societies is incorporated in New York State. William Dutcher is named first president. Guy Bradley, right, one of the first Audubon wardens, is murdered by game poachers in Florida.



LEFT AND BOTTOM: RICH PAUL ARCHIVES, NAS

1913-1918 Congress passes a landmark law placing all migratory birds under federal protection. Three years later President Woodrow Wilson re-signs law to include an international treaty provision between the U.S. and Canada.



1953 Audubon adopts a flying great egret, one of the chief victims of turn-of-the-century plume hunters, as its symbol.

1970 The first Earth Day held; Clean Air and National Environmental Policy Acts passed.



1994 Bald eagle down-listed from endangered to threatened.

2005 The ivory-billed woodpecker, presumed extinct, is rediscovered in Cache-Lower White River National Wildlife Refuge in Arkansas.

In the early days of state Audubon societies, female members urged fellow socialites to stop wearing feathered hats.



BY CLINT VAN WINKLE

# Guide to 11 Great Nature Trips

## The Wild Calls You Should Answer

### Where the Buffalo Roam House Rock Wildlife Management Area

North Rim of the Grand Canyon on State Route 67. Stare down 2,000 pounds of fur and horns. And, no we aren't talking about the IRS. A herd of 125 free-range bison browse and glower in northern Arizona, the descendants of a failed 1905 "cattalo" experiment. C.J. "Buffalo" Jones tried to breed cattle with bison, but gave up trying to go commercial with the prickly half-breeds. However, visitors can still view their shaggy descendants in the wild, especially between May and mid-September, when they migrate back to House Rock for calving season. Pronghorns and mule deer also share the range. Information: Arizona Game and Fish Department, (928) 214-1241; [www.gf.state.az.us/h\\_f/game\\_buffalo.shtml](http://www.gf.state.az.us/h_f/game_buffalo.shtml).

### Life's a Beach

#### Willow Beach, Lake Mead National Recreation Area

15 miles south of Hoover Dam off U.S. Route 93. Take a three-hour raft trip on the Colorado River above Lake Mohave to see Arizona's elusive cliff-climbing desert bighorn sheep. The sheepish sheep wander down to the river's edge in the early morning and late afternoon to drink. A national fish hatchery plops plump trout into the river, and desert tortoises have been spotted racing around the area. Information: (928) 767-4747; [www.nps.gov/lame/home](http://www.nps.gov/lame/home).

### Try Talking to the Animals Hassayampa River Preserve

Wickenburg on U.S. Route 60, Mile Marker 114. Dr. Doolittle would love this place for its vast array of wildlife, but you need not talk to the animals to enjoy the javelinas, raccoons, ringtails, mule deer, bobcats, gray foxes and 280 species of birds that frequent

the preserve. Located just south of Wickenburg, the reserve's guided and self-guided walks put visitors into the midst of the menagerie. Now, what was that raccoon saying? Information: (928) 684-2772; [www.hassayampa.org](http://www.hassayampa.org).

### Wake-boarding Wildlife Watchers

#### Lyman Lake State Park

Northeastern Arizona in the White Mountains on State Route 81. What do you get when you cross a bald eagle and a bobcat? When you find out, let us know. In the meantime, visit Lyman State Park's 1,200 acres to see bald eagles, bobcats and waterfowl running amuck in northeastern Arizona. If that bores you, pitch horseshoes, water ski, camp or fish to pass the time away. Information: (928) 337-4441; [www.pr.state.az.us/Parks/parkhtml/lyman](http://www.pr.state.az.us/Parks/parkhtml/lyman).

### Cool Critters Keepin' It Real

#### Aravaipa Canyon East

65 miles northeast of Tucson off State Route 77. This place is so cool the bighorn sheep wear earrings—compliments of the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Other critters, upset because they don't get to wear the bright yellow accessories, include white-tailed deer, coatimundis and gray foxes. Holler a shout-out as you creep by, but stay in your vehicle while journeying through this Arizona wildlife hangout. Information: (928) 348-4400; [www.recreation.gov/detail](http://www.recreation.gov/detail).

### Bilingual Birding

#### Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge

50 miles southwest of Tucson on State Route 286. There's a flock of things to do on this 118,000-acre parcel of land that sits just north of the U.S.-Mexico border. Enjoy birding, guided nature walks,



migratory bird day, a Christmas bird count and a host of other outdoor activities. An amazing 330 bird species, 53 reptiles and amphibians, and 58 mammal species lay claim to the land, so chances are high you will encounter something. Information: (520) 823-4251, ext. 116; [www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/arizona/buenosaires](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/arizona/buenosaires).

### A Haven for Suckers

#### San Pedro Riparian Conservation Area

50 miles southeast of Tucson on State Route 80. A desert sucker isn't just someone who gets stuck on top of Camelback Mountain without water in the summer, but a fish you might see at San Pedro Conservation Area. Don't let the fact that rattlesnakes may be present stop you from catching a glimpse of the other critters that roam these parts. Thirty-five species of raptors and 379 species of birds have been recorded here, so keep your eyes to the sky. Information: (520) 439-6400; [www.blm.gov/az/nca/spnca/spnca-info.htm](http://www.blm.gov/az/nca/spnca/spnca-info.htm).

### A Trip Worth Truckin'

#### Hannagan Meadow Corduoy Creek Loop

Northeastern Arizona in the White Mountains off U.S. Route 191. If you're sick of hanging around and you'd like to travel, try this 62-mile jaunt that begins in Alpine. The long, not so strange trip will have you trucking, like the doodah man, through old-growth forest. The loop also puts visitors close to black bears, mule deer, elk, chipmunks and a wide variety of birds. Information: (928) 333-4301; [www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf).

### Wander the Wetlands

#### Tavasci Marsh

Near Clarkdale and Cottonwood, off State Route 89A. Keep on the lookout for the hordes of animals that call this central Arizona marsh home. Beavers, yellow-billed cuckoos and several species of bats all wander this wetland, which is Arizona's largest freshwater marsh away from the Colorado River. Tavasci Marsh has been designated as an Audubon Society Important Bird Area (IBA). Information: (928) 634-5283; [www.nps.gov/tuzi/pphtml/subnaturalfeatures22.html](http://www.nps.gov/tuzi/pphtml/subnaturalfeatures22.html).

### Antelope Antics Await

#### Prescott Valley Antelope Drive

Prescott, along State Route 89 between State Route 69 and State Route 89A. Giddyup that minivan for an 8-mile drive through Prescott Valley's short-grass prairie. Pronghorns dominate the wildlife-watching here, but prairie falcons and kestrels also call the area home. Unless you have eagle eyes, don't forget the binoculars.

### Snowbirds Flock to Lake

#### Mormon Lake, Doug Morrison Overlook

Flagstaff, Lake Mary Road. There's more than one kind of snowbird in Arizona, and this type doesn't golf. Travelers can glimpse the other form of snowbird at Arizona's largest natural lake, which is also one of the best spots in the state to view bald eagles. From November to April, wintering bald eagles flock to a 9-square-mile area of wetland, open water, grassland, coniferous forest and cliffs, which are all represented. Waterfowl, elk, mule deer, pronghorns, ospreys and peregrine falcons also call this place home. Information: (928) 774-1147; [www.fs.fed.us/outdoors/naturewatch/arizona/wildlife/mormon-lake](http://www.fs.fed.us/outdoors/naturewatch/arizona/wildlife/mormon-lake).



ADDITIONAL READING: Step into the wilderness, explore its beauty and immerse yourself in its solitude with *Arizona Wild & Free*. The coffee-table book draws from former U.S. Rep. and Interior Secretary Stewart L. Udall's experiences in what he terms "Arizona's sanctuary" illustrated by stunning photographs of wild places and animals. Published by *Arizona Highways*, the book (\$14.99 plus shipping and handling) can be ordered online at [arizonahighways.com](http://arizonahighways.com) or by calling toll-free (800) 543-5432.

### CONVERSATIONAL COYOTE

The most vocal of all North American wild mammals, coyotes use a variety of squeaks, yelps and howls to establish territorial boundaries and to communicate within the pack or family unit. PAUL AND JOYCE BERQUIST

# Burt Alvord **Convict** **Constable**

Lawman-turned-robber proves no jail can hold him

BY DAVID M. BROWN ILLUSTRATION BY EZRA TUCKER

**B**urt Alvord came from the right side of the tracks, but he ended up, via the rails, on the wrong side. Hired to catch robbers, he became one instead. A jailer, he broke jail twice. A lawman, he became a model of lawlessness.

A big brawling tough guy, even for gnarly Tombstone of Territorial days, Alvord was, in the lingo of the Old West, “a bad egg” or, in the words of a recent chronicler, “spawn gone wrong: lawman, train robber, fugitive.”

After a spectacular rash of robberies, betrayals, confessions and two daring jailbreaks, the former deputy sheriff and constable finally found himself on the wrong end of a posse, when on February 19, 1904, he was shot twice and captured by County Sheriff Adalbert V. Lewis and a crew near Naco on the Arizona-Mexico border.

But even that didn't end the controversy that dogged the daring and dishonest Albert “Burt” Wright Alvord. He served just 19 months of a two-year sentence for attempting to rob the U.S. mail, and his early release ended up hastening the retirement of Yuma Territorial Prison Warden Jerry Millay.

The clang of the heavy cell door punctuated five years of dark deeds, saloon gossip, blaring newspaper headlines and ceaseless searches. Once a trusted lawman, Alvord had in six months masterminded train robberies at Cochise and Fairbank, broken jail twice in Tombstone

and led posses, sheriffs and Wells Fargo detectives into the mountains of Cochise County and Sonora, Mexico.

As biographer Don Chaput, puts it: “Burt Alvord turned bad.”

Yet, he started good.

He was born Sept. 11, 1867, in Susanville, California, the sixth child of Lucinda and Charles Elbridge Alvord, whose ancestors had originally emigrated from England in the 1640s and fought in the American Revolution. After the Civil War, Alvord's family joined the Gold Rush to California, crossing the country from their home in Missouri. In the placer-rich counties in the Sierra Nevadas, Alvord's father worked as a miner, mechanic and constable, and served as a member of the Company A, Fifth Brigade during the Civil War. Eventually, C.E. Alvord moved his family to Tombstone, Arizona, where he served as justice of the peace and a miner.

His son, meanwhile, was picking up skills as a mechanic, liveryman and driver. Unfortunately, Burt also picked up on the dark side of Tombstone—cockfights, faro, hard liquor, brawls, billiards, brothels and Boot Hill.

Just a block or so from his Toughnut Street home, the young Alvord imbibed the world of the gambling tables, billiard halls, saloons such as the Crystal Palace and the Oriental. Here he would rub up against scoundrels, blackened miners, grizzly gunfighters and easy-virtue gals such as “Crazy Horse Lil,” “Madam Moustache”

and “Lizzette the Flying Nymph.”

Alvord quickly established his reputation as a fighter. He was a muscular 6 feet, with attitude, and a big drinker. For character, or the lack of it, Alvord made “mean” meaner, “nasty” nastier and “ornery” as mean and nasty as tough-town Tombstone ever saw. But, as chroniclers have shown, he also used a big smile to his advantage and was a practical jokester with, as Chaput writes, “a rollicking sense of humor.”

Cochise County Sheriff John Slaughter—who knew tough when he saw tough—appointed Alvord deputy in January 1887. During the next decade, he served succeeding county sheriffs, including famed photographer C.S. Fly. Burt also worked as deputy constable at gold- and silver-rich Pearce. In 1897, he became constable of Willcox Township.

However, working as a lawman wasn't making Alvord rich. He had heard short tales and tall tales of railroad robbers and knew the terrain intimately. So he devised his first, best robbery for the evening of September 9, 1899, hoping to snatch the Pearce mining payroll. At midnight, as he established his alibi by drinking and playing cards in Josef Schwertner's Saloon in Willcox, three accomplices stopped the Southern Pacific train at Cochise, a remote station about 10 miles southwest of Willcox.

His cohorts, Matt Burts, Billy Stiles and Bill Downing, were equally character-challenged—cowboys and even deputies





Slaughter ranch cowboy Billie Hildrath, seated, most likely didn't know that lawman-turned-outlaw Burt Alvord, right, masterminded railroad robberies throughout Cochise County in the early 1900s.

## 'He had . . . a reputation for being a bad man.'

Tucson Sunday Examiner, March 27, 1901

Alvord had recruited from Pearce and Tombstone. The robbery was quick and to plan: Burts covered the engineer and fireman, Stiles held the mail clerk and the Wells Fargo agent, and Downing, a rancher, minded the horses and held people on the platform.

When the Wells Fargo safe exploded, it yielded about \$2,500 in cash and jewelry. The culprits either walked or rode away into the early morning darkness to the Alvord home in Willcox, where they cached their stash in the chicken house. They may also have left some money at Alvord's ranch in Pearce.

In Willcox, Alvord acted surprised by the news. He dropped his cards and whiskey, gathered 30 men, rode out to the site and divvied up the citizenry, including two of the perpetrators who had joined the posse. Stiles went north, Downing went south and Alvord led Sheriff Scott White into the Chiricahuas.

Not surprisingly, Alvord couldn't seem to find the bad guys.

Five months later, on February 15, 1900, the Alvord group tried the same trick at the Fairbank depot, about 45 miles southwest of Willcox. Alvord gathered a motley gang of ne'er-do-wells, since Downing had opted out and Burts had fled the Territory. Alvord's mixed bag of desperados included horse thief "Three-Fingered Jack" Dunlap; Texans George and Lewis Owens; the infamous "Bravo Juan" Thomas Yoas; and Bob Brown, who had heard of the Cochise robbery through Tom Burts, brother of glib Matt. Once again, Alvord would establish his alibi, this time guzzling in a Benson saloon.

The New Mexico & Arizona Railroad train pulled in on schedule at dusk, with universally feared Wells Fargo express

messenger and former Texas Ranger Jeff Milton sitting, unexpectedly, in the baggage car. Lewis Owens and Bob Brown held the engineer and fireman at rifle point. Three-Fingered Jack warned the unflappable Milton to exit. When he refused, the outlaws opened fire, shattering Milton's arm. Milton returned fire with his shotgun, hitting Bravo Juan in the buttocks and Dunlap in the stomach and groin. Then the wounded messenger slammed the baggage door, tossed the keys into a corner and took cover.

Unable to find the keys, the bandits rode off with little more than \$42, Bravo Juan having been wounded in more than his felonious pride. The outlaws abandoned the wounded Dunlap in the desert, and he later died in Tombstone. Before expiring, Dunlap fingered his confederates, including Stiles and Alvord. The Owens brothers and Bob Brown were apprehended; Bravo Juan was captured in Mexico. Burts was also apprehended and readily ratted out his partners.

Downing and Alvord were caught in mid-February by Wells Fargo detective J.N. Thacker, with an assist by Sheriff Scott White and his posse. Stiles won his release by confessing the details of both robberies, which he blamed on Alvord. However, Stiles broke Alvord out of the Tombstone jail less than two months later—"dastardly work," reported *The Tombstone Epitaph* on April 8. The jailbreakers hightailed south to Mexico.

Two and a half years later, Alvord, tired of running, surrendered to Sheriff Lewis in early September 1902, after making a deal to deliver the infamous outlaw Augustine "El Peludo" Chacon to former Arizona Ranger Captain and now U.S. Deputy Marshal Burt Mossman. (Chacon hanged Nov. 21, 1902, in Solomonville.)

Once again, to the embarrassment of Sheriff Lewis, Stiles broke Alvord out of the Tombstone jail in 1903 and, they escaped to Mexico through the Huachuca Mountains. But Alvord again surrendered two months later, although Stiles and a Mexican with him escaped. In the melee, Alvord was wounded twice, in the ankle and the thigh, and was in considerable

pain. The elusive Stiles escaped cleanly, was cornered again and escaped again. One epilogue has it that he ended up as a lawman in Nevada.

Burt Alvord left the Yuma Territorial Prison three weeks earlier than his scheduled October 26, 1905, release. A federal warrant for Alvord's arrest was to be served at his full-sentence release. Millay, who had differently, although innocently, gauged Alvord's release date, ensured that this did not happen, providing Alvord opportunity to trek to Los Angeles to stay with his sister, May Shoultz. Further adding to the confusion, Millay also had not informed other law enforcement officials about the early release, including the U.S. marshal with the warrant. When Los Angeles detectives finally arrived at his sister's home with the necessary extradition papers, Alvord was gone. Millay came under sharp criticism for the mix-up and later apologized for whatever hand he might have had in Alvord's evasion of justice.

Historian Harold L. Edwards has recently written about how the Alvord story ended. In Los Angeles, family friend H.M. DuBois helped Burt Alvord get work on the Panama Canal. There he became Tom Wright (his middle name). With foreman George Wilson, Alvord then moved on to build a railroad along the Amazon River in Brazil, where both men contracted malaria or yellow fever. For recuperation, they were relocated to Bridgetown, British Barbados, but Alvord succumbed and was buried there on November 25, 1909.

The railroad, this time in the tropics, had delivered Burt Alvord, the liveryman, lawman and outlaw—whose epitaph might have quipped that here rested a man who wasn't that good at being bad—to his last stop. ■

*David M. Brown has lived in Arizona physically for 25 years and emotionally all of his life—inexorably drawn here for its elixir of sun, geography, history and lore.*

*Ezra Tucker lives in Monument, Colorado, where he paints Rocky Mountain wildlife and shows his work in galleries in Aspen and Jackson Hole, Wyoming.*

## Seeking Solace Between Baghdad and Bagdad

FROM THE MOMENT I FIRST FOUND BAGDAD on a map of Arizona, I felt called to seek it out.

We fought our way up to that other Baghdad, the one in Iraq, through the desert and down "Ambush Alley." We dodged rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), ducked pop shots and chased the Fedayeen fighters that patrolled the shadows.

That was two years ago, but I still think about it every day. I think about the explosions, the burned vehicles and the way the air smells around the dead. I feel sandstorms and blazing heat in my sleep. I see strange men lurking in alleys and helicopters carrying off the wounded. Most of all, I feel the desert and its expansive nothingness. And now, I miss the desert, the war and my friends.

Perhaps that's why the dot on the map at the end of a three-hour drive beckoned me into the desert, which has always offered sanctuary and enlightenment: Jesus spent 40 days and nights in the Judean Desert; Mohammed meditated alone in the Arabian Desert. I needed to leave the city—needed to make sense of things.

On my original Baghdad excursion, the "mother of all sandstorms" forced us to hunker down for hours, but this time cotton-candy cumulus clouds dominate the baby-blue sky as I pass through the tranquil cities of El Mirage, Sun City and Surprise. No rough-and-tumble cities like



Joshua trees grow only in California, Arizona, Utah and Nevada. These specimens are near Bagdad, Arizona. PAUL GILL



The author, Sgt. Clint Van Winkle, left, and Staff Sgt. David Paxson, right—take a break for a picture atop an amphibious assault vehicle just days before the 1st Marine Division crossed into Baghdad, Iraq, in 2003.

Nasiriyah, Hilla or Kut beset this Bagdad escapade. No ambush alley or RPGs either—just cacti, mountains and tumbleweeds. The throngs of saguaro sentries remind me that I am in a different desert, one from which I will most certainly return. But that only reminds me of the troops in that other desert who weren't so lucky.

Groves of Joshua trees with their upraised, prayerful arms greet me halfway into the drive. It's a desolate area, but I don't feel alone. Instead, I am traveling with the unit again. My platoon sergeant is a few vehicles behind, and his voice crackles through my radio. Corporal Kipper is riding ahead; he looks back and gives me a thumbs-up. It reminds me that we are all in this together.

Mormon settlers named the trees after the biblical Joshua. Passing through the groves, I ask myself a question those settlers would have understood, "Whither thou goest?" I can't answer the question now, but feel something awaits me up ahead.

When we reached the outskirts of Baghdad, Iraq, the bridges were mangled and we had to "swim" our amphibious assault vehicles across the Diyala River to enter that ancient city. Black smoke billowed from various locations. Incoming and outgoing shots danced throughout the sky. Nothing quite as dramatic happens when I enter Bagdad, Arizona. Not even close.

I head to the gas station to forage for a few postcards. I want to send a Bagdad, Arizona, postcard to my platoon sergeant, "Gunny" Yates, to tell him about my strange mission in the wrong desert and give him something to hang up next to his two Purple Hearts.

Pulling out of the gas station, I notice children leaving a small school. They run back and forth playing tag as they cross Main Street. They appear unafraid and careless, just enjoying the moment and what life has to offer them. It is peaceful in this Bagdad, and I think that maybe I now understand. Maybe my Iraq journey somehow helped protect these children from having to endure the sights and sounds of a future Middle Eastern war. And maybe, just maybe, the children of that other Bagdad, the one of my broken sleep, will one day be able to leave school unafraid and careless as well.

On the way home I pass the Joshua trees again and realize this trip had nothing, and everything, to do with Bagdad, Arizona. In that grove of Joshua trees, I see all the Marines I served with, silent guides pointing me in the right direction. It is here I understand that we all have our wars to contend with, and sometimes you just have to venture out into the desert to regroup, think and find peace.

Amid the Joshua trees, I ask myself again, "Whither thou goest?" And while I still can't answer the question, I know that if I just keep moving and watching, the answers will find me—somewhere in the desert, somewhere between Bagdad and Bagdad. ■



# Walk With Ghosts of the Past

WHAT THE TRAIL lacks in trees and shade, ghosts provide. But it takes a while to see them.

The Camp Beale Loop Trail in Kingman leads southwest toward U.S. Route 93, where

traffic noise and shadows of concrete keep the ghosts at bay. However, when the trail turns north and climbs along the slouching basaltic shoulder of the low mesa it traverses, the highway and its

incessant galvanized rubber hum vanish.

That's when the ghosts appear. They're drawn to Camp Beale's Springs down to the south, where the trees and brush are thick, about 200 hundred yards from the trail. It's now a city park.

Lt. Edward Beale may have visited the springs in January 1858 during the second of five trips through the area to build a wagon road along the 35th parallel. On his first trip through the area the previous fall, his expedition included 25 camels.

## when you go

**Length:** 3.2 miles.  
**Elevation Gain:** 476'.  
**Difficulty:** Moderate.  
**Payoff:** Great view.  
**Location:** Kingman.  
**Getting There:** From the Mohave Museum of History and Arts at 120 W. Beale St., drive west on U.S. Route 93 approximately 1 mile and turn right onto the Fort Beale Drive. Continue 1 mile to the turnout to the left to the Camp Beale Loop Trail parking lot.  
**Travel Advisory:** Trail access includes mountain bikes and equestrian trail. Parking available for horse trailers at trailhead parking lot on Fort Beale Drive.

**TRAILSIDE SCENERY** The brilliant pink of a strawberry hedgehog cactus, left, decorates the rocky terrain near Camp Beale Loop Trail. Hikers looking north from the trail at sunrise would get a painless eyeful of cacti, above. The view of basalt boulders, above right, looks south toward Kingman and the Hualapai Mountains.

The 3.2-mile hike begins at an elevation of 3,629 feet and requires a moderate and steady climb for about 2 miles to an unassuming summit at 4,107 feet with a metal bench and a wonderful view. The Hualapai Mountains rise to the east, the Peacock Mountains to the northeast and the Music Mountains to the northwest. To the west, beyond the spires and peaks of the Cerbat Mountains, stand the Black Mountains.

As for the ghosts, that's the Rose-Baley wagon train

making its way to California in 1858, the first immigrants to use the Beale wagon road. They won't make it. The Mojave Indians will kill eight of them and the survivors will return to Albuquerque.

From the summit, the descent is steep in places, but the trail soon follows an arroyo for about a half-mile before the final descent to the trailhead.

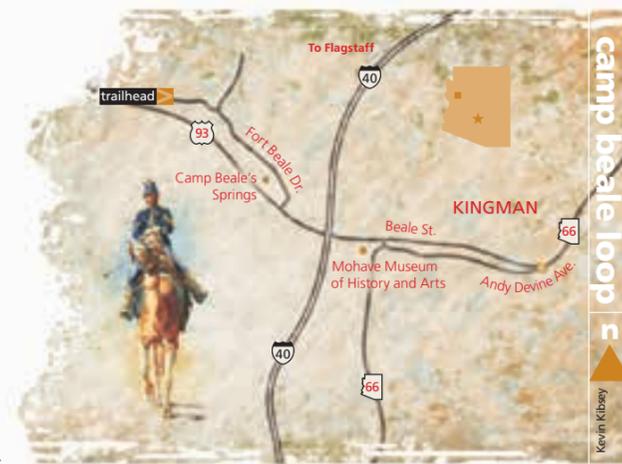
Along the way awaits the ghost of Waba Yuma, a Hualapai chief. His death near here in April 1866, at the hands of a teamster named Sam Miller, sparked the Hualapai War that lasted until 1870. Much of it was fought in these hills.

The rewards of this hike are found far away and up close—there is not much in the middle distance upon which to focus your attention.

At sunset, the Hualapai Mountains assume a hue of purple majesty. At your feet you'll find another purple, the filaree blossom.

There's no reason you can't hike this well-maintained trail even in the summer if you avoid the heat of the day between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M.

Wear a hat and carry plenty of water. Don't get confused by the trail markers. It's easy to follow the wrong trail if you don't keep in mind that this is a climbing hike. Follow the trail leading up hill and you'll be fine—so long as you don't mind walking with ghosts. **AH**



**on line** Before you go on this hike, visit [arizonahighways.com](http://arizonahighways.com) for other things to do and places to see in this area. You'll also find more hikes in our archive.



**VIEW LOT** The three-story Wukoki Pueblo perched on a sandstone outcropping adjacent to a walled plaza was used by ancestral puebloans during the 12th and 13th centuries.

people *Sinagua* (Spanish for “without water”).

My first glimpse of the devastation the *Sinagua* faced, the eerie Bonito Lava Flow, loomed 1 mile past the Sunset Crater Volcano Visitors Center. Initially, I felt grim at the sight of this black lunar landscape of hardened lava, which looked like it cooled only yesterday. But then I spotted delicate red penstemon wildflowers rising defiantly from the black ground, proving that somehow life renews—even in the face of devastation.

Two miles later, the Cinder Hills Overlook provided a dramatic view of the rose-tinted Sunset Crater volcano and a series of red cinder-covered vents. Sunset Crater’s distinctive red comes from the iron in the cinders. A closer look revealed purples, yellows and greens from

gypsum, sulfur and clay, called limonite.

John Wesley Powell, famed explorer and U.S. Geological Survey director, described this colorful volcano in 1892: “On viewing the mountain from a distance, the red cinders seem to be on fire . . . the peak seems to glow with a light of its own.” Powell called it Sunset Peak, a more apt description since most people think of a crater as a hole in the ground, not a hollow mountain.

The volcano’s palette of colors added drama to the black cinder that coats the hillsides like snow. But this color play pales in comparison to what lay ahead at 9 miles: a panoramic view of the Painted Desert—in iridescent shades of red, blue and purple. Suddenly I was filled with a sense of awe and wonder, like a child seeing the ocean for the first time.

With a steady view of the Painted Desert, the road dropped northward and the land became drier. A ponderosa pine forest gave

way to a piñon pine and juniper woodland. Driving about 14 miles past the volcano, I entered Wupatki National Monument, a 35,422-acre parkland that protects about 2,500 archaeological sites left by at least four ancient Indian cultures: the *Sinagua*, *Kayenta Puebloan*, *Cohonina* and *Hohokam*. Here, a Great Basin desert scrub habitat emerges, characterized by the gray sheen of sagebrush. *Yucca*, *Mormon tea*, *snakeweed*, *globemallow* and *Peeble’s bluestar*, a rare flower found elsewhere only in the Little Colorado Valley, dot the landscape underneath wide-open skies.

At almost 16 miles past the Sunset Crater volcano, I turned right on the 2.5-mile road leading to the Wukoki

**LIFE FROM CINDERS** Covering about 2 square miles at the base of Sunset Crater Volcano, the Bonito Lava Flow demonstrates the slow revitalization of the devastated land, which now harbors 166 documented plant species in its arid cinders.

# Cataclysm to Comeback

## Road Runs From Volcanic Sunset Crater to Ruins Built by People Who Thrived on Disaster

SUNSET CRATER and the nearby string of volcanoes in northern Arizona look placid, but they’ve spewed black ash and rivers of molten rock for millions of years. Sunset Crater a thousand years ago offered the most recent performance of a deadly pyrotechnics display, shooting orange fire up to 2,000 feet high.

As I drove north of Flagstaff along the 35-mile stretch of Forest Service Road 545, known as the loop

road that links Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument to Wupatki National Monument, time stood still. I witnessed nature’s dramatic rebirth in an arid land that takes centuries to heal.

My mind turned to the vulnerable people in the volcano’s deadly wake, the *Sinagua* Indians. They lived in pit houses and depended on this land, described by archaeologist Mark Elson as “on the very fringes of survivability.” I wondered

what exactly happened when the volcano erupted from A.D. 1040 to 1100 to these people whose fate was inextricably tied to the earth.

The dramatic tale unfolded with each mile of the scenic highway.

In the first mile off U.S. Route 89, the paved road dropped down through an open ponderosa pine forest into Bonito Park, a wide sagebrush and grass-covered clearing where Maj. Lionel F. Brady, a geologist with the

Museum of Northern Arizona, made a startling discovery in 1930. He found scattered potsherds on the ground that predated the ashfall. That discovery led museum director Harold S. Colton and a team of archaeologists to another groundbreaking find: Earth-and-wood below-ground dwellings called pithouses buried deep under volcanic ash, demonstrating that Indians lived at Sunset Crater at the time of the eruption. Colton called the

### travel tips

**Vehicle Requirements:**

Accessible by regular two-wheel-drive passenger cars.

**Fees:** Entrance to both monuments: \$5, adults; free, children 16 and under.

**Hours, Dates:** Both Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument and Wupatki National Monument are open daily except Christmas.

**Warning:** Back-road travel can be hazardous. Be aware of weather and road conditions. Carry plenty of water. Don’t travel alone, and let someone know where you’re going and when you plan to return.

**Additional Information:** Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument: (928) 526-0502; [www.nps.gov/sucr/pphtml/contact.html](http://www.nps.gov/sucr/pphtml/contact.html). Wupatki National Monument: (928) 679-2365; [www.nps.gov/wupa/pphtml/contact](http://www.nps.gov/wupa/pphtml/contact).



## back road adventure

**A DASH OF RAIN** Dropping from a cloud over Bonito Park southeast of Sunset Crater, some light precipitation may contribute to the area's average of 16 inches of rainfall per year.

Pueblo, a three-story masonry structure perched atop an island of red Moenkopi sandstone. I imagined Lt. Lorenzo Sitgreaves' surprise in 1851, when his party searching for a practical route across northern Arizona stumbled upon this landscape of deserted pueblos. Later, archaeologist Jesse W. Fewkes estimated that one or two families had inhabited Wukoki for several generations. At this pueblo, I decided the inhabitants must have been artists to have fashioned sandstone walls so perfectly fitted that it's difficult to distinguish where wall ends and bedrock begins.

I couldn't imagine a site more enchanting than Wukoki until 5 miles later I came upon the haunting red sandstone pueblo of Wupatki, where the population peaked between A.D. 1100 and 1225. I spent nearly an hour exploring this ancient, four-story, 100-room pueblo, although many rooms haven't been excavated. By 1182, perhaps 85 to 100 people lived in the Wupatki Pueblo, the largest building for at

least 50 miles. The pueblo had one ancient amenity: a ball court enclosed by a banked stone wall.

No one knows for sure what game the Sinagua played here, but archaeologists guess it resembled a highly ritualized sport played by Aztecs and Mayans in similar courts. Players tried to keep the ball in the air without using their hands or feet, while they vied to knock the ball through a stone ring.

Along with recreational facilities, this ancient subdivision came with a whale of a geological feature: a blowhole. Blowholes act as natural barometers, with air blowing out when atmospheric pressure is low and streaming back in when

pressure is high. On this particular day, air blew out like a cooling fan.

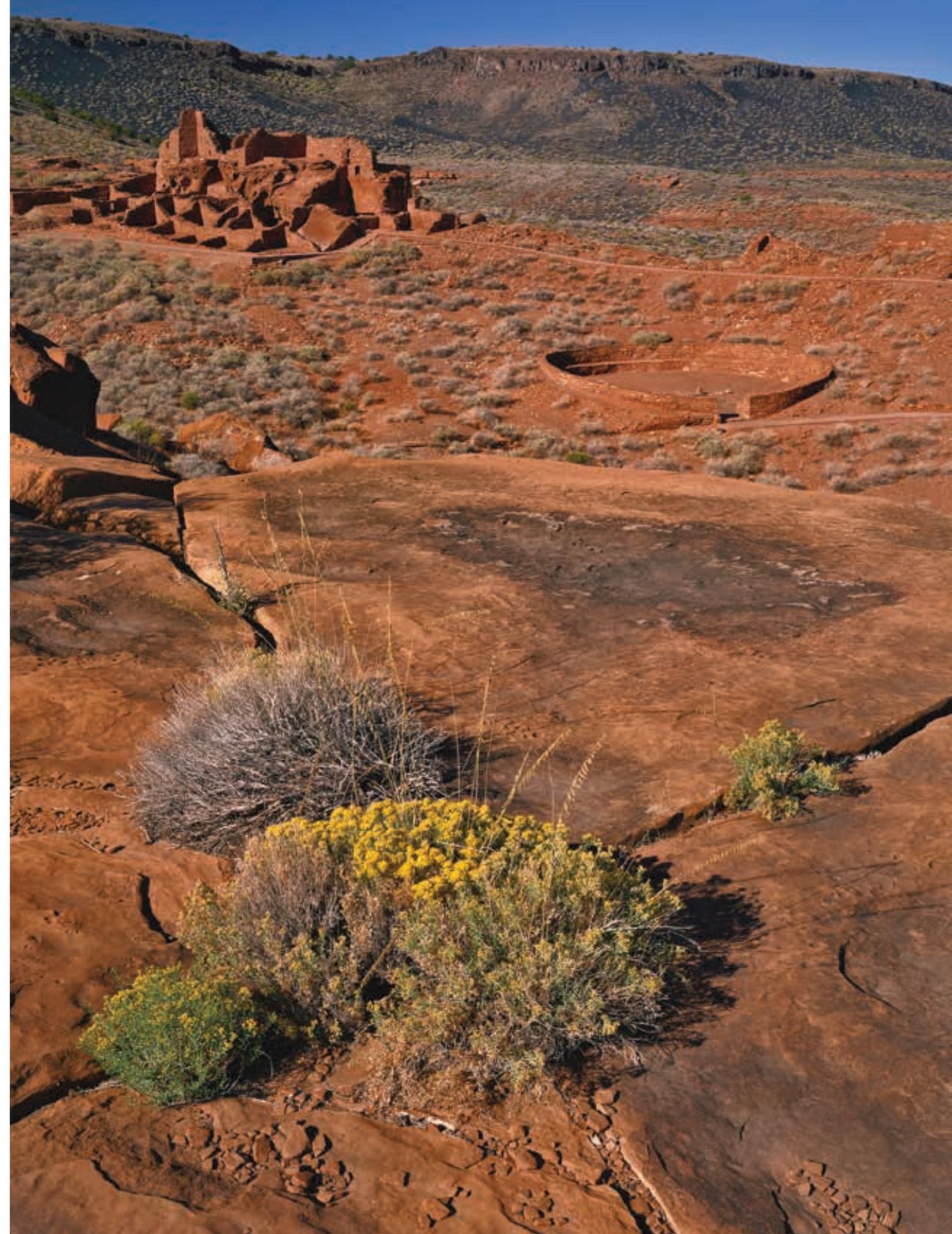
At the blowhole, I looked out over the blanket of cinders that still covers the stark sagebrush-studded desert. Ironically, the volcanic cataclysm may have actually led to a population boom Wupatki and elsewhere on this plateau. Archaeologists believe the Sinagua left Wupatki after being alerted by Sunset Crater's pre-eruption earthquakes. The layer of volcanic ash settled all across the plateau and acted as mulch, capturing rainfall and slowing evaporation. This extended the growing season by several weeks and proved a boon for their crops. Years later, archaeologists say, the Sinagua people drifted back

**CITY RUINS** Having gained a toehold in rimrock overlooking Wupatki Pueblo and its community room, broom snakeweed, right, displays its tenacious ability to survive.

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to the area around Wupatki and newcomers may have arrived, introducing new ceramic styles and large, multistoried pueblos.

With a renewed respect for a civilization that not only survived—but thrived—in the face of catastrophe, I drove away from the ruins and connected with U.S. 89 14 miles beyond Wupatki Pueblo. I headed home to Phoenix with renewed faith in the inimitable human spirit and our remarkable ability to adapt, even in times of unthinkable adversity. **AM**



## route finder

Mileages and GPS coordinates are approximate.

- **Begin at the intersection of U.S. Route 89 and Forest Service Road 545**, which is about 16 miles north of downtown Flagstaff. Turn right (east) onto FR 545 and drive about 4.4 miles to Sunset Crater volcano. (35°22.16'N; 111°30.41'W)
- **From the volcano, continue driving northeast about 16 miles** to the road leading to Wukoki Pueblo. To go to Wukoki, turn right; it's about 5 miles round-trip to Wukoki and back to 545.
- **From Wukoki, return to 545 and turn right (northwest);** drive less than a half-mile to Wupatki Pueblo.
- **From Wupatki, drive about 14 miles northwest** on 545 to U.S. 89. (35°34.50'N; 111°31.84'W)

