

Sonoran Joint Venture
And
Western Field Ornithologists
Field Expedition
APFF Sierra de Alamos y Río Cuchujaqui
June 27-July 3, 2010

The Sonoran Joint Venture (SJV) and the Western Field Ornithologists (WFO) are jointly coordinating a bird monitoring expedition to the Área de Protección de Flora y Fauna Sierra de Alamos y Río Cuchujaqui Biosphere Reserve in southern Sonora, Mexico, from June 27-July 3, 2010. The objective of this expedition is to use the collective expertise of WFO members and SJV participants to collect and record natural history information and baseline monitoring data on birds of conservation interest in the APFF. These data will be used by the Reserve staff to manage habitat for the birds of conservation interest.

The elevation of this APFF is from 1,200 feet and almost 5,000 feet. There is an extensive Tropical Deciduous Forest community and riparian area in the lower parts; as well as a pine-oak forest community at the higher elevations. Even though the area around Alamos has been birded for many years, there is no quantitative breeding season data of which we are aware. We have been invited by the APFF to collect data on breeding information and habitat relationships of their bird species, to photograph and obtain vocalization recordings.

This is **not** a guided birding trip or a hike up in the mountains, but a true biological data collecting expedition. This expedition is considered **STRENUOUS**. There will be a variety of methods of transportation including hiking on foot, backpacking, riding in vehicles over rough roads, and hiking with mules. The most likely scenario will be vehicle transportation to base camps, then daily hiking to survey locations within several kilometers of the base camps. Also some participants may backpack in to more remote locations with mules carrying equipment and food. All base camps will be remote and finding survey sites may require orienteering, GIS ability, and bushwacking. It will likely be very hot, potentially quite humid, and we may experience heavy summer rains as well. Expect to camp for 7 days under primitive conditions. Some base camps will have a small structure for cooking, meeting, etc. Our camp will be self-supported and all participants will be expected to share duties and maintain the camp. Participants must be in good physical condition, have experience in back-country camping, bring their own camping and monitoring equipment, and have basic first aid skills.

Each participant will be responsible for paying for and arranging their own transportation to and from Alamos, Sonora, as well as their lodging and expenses while in Alamos. The trip leaders will recommend hotels, and provide contact information of local organizers. There is a fee of \$350-550 for each participant to cover the cost of mules, cowboys, local transportation, permit fees, food, cooks, and other expenses that occur during the actual expedition. We are negotiating the costs and will let participants know well in advance

of the expedition. This fee does not include a donation to WFO, only actual expenses of the expedition. Participants must also be members of WFO. The \$350-550 payment is payable to WFO via the treasurer, Robbie Fischer, 1359 Solano Dr., Pacifica, CA 94044; robbie22@pacbell.net. Also participants must have passports if coming from the U.S. which are valid 6 months past the date of the expedition.

We will look into the availability of birding options with professional and local bird guides before or after the actual expedition days so that you may see more of the interesting birds of the area.

We will meet in Alamos on Sunday, June 27 early in the morning and have a 5 hour orientation and training session to familiarize participants with the logistics, APFF, safety, and monitoring methodologies to be used. This session is mandatory. Then we will travel in our teams to the base camps that afternoon. This will necessitate participants arriving in Alamos on Saturday, June 26. We will leave the APFF on Saturday July 3 and return to Alamos that afternoon. We recommend making arrangements for your return to the U.S. (or other destinations) on the next day, July 4, as it is uncertain as to the exact time we will return to Alamos. (These dates were selected based on published reports of the most breeding activity of the majority of the target birds.)

Each participant will volunteer for specific research activities, be responsible for collecting data, and in some cases be responsible for organizing and/or processing the data. Participants must have some experience in the field monitoring activity they volunteer for (see list and table below) or have experience that would qualify them to carry out the protocols. Participants must also bring the necessary field equipment to accomplish their assignments. Generally skills that are needed include: identification of the birds of southern Sonora; experience with auditory surveys; recording data; obtaining sound recordings and photos of birds; transects; area searches; and/or habitat use surveys. The data will be compiled, analyzed and published with our Mexican partners and participants as co-authors, and all publications and data will be shared with the Reserve. Publishing the accumulated data in the Western Field Ornithologists' journal, *Western Birds*, is our goal.

Each participant will need to submit a statement of qualifications and select their assignments from the table below. Expedition team leaders will form 3 or 4 teams of 4-6 participants. Each team will be responsible for the research activities assigned to their team.

The following research activities are planned:

1. What are the population densities of the target species? What are the population estimates for the target species? What are baseline population levels for a population trend estimate?

- Area search or transect – participants will be doing intensive breeding spot mapping in a measured area. Need: GPS, binoculars; data sheets will be provided.

2. What species are present in various habitats and at various elevations? What species are using pine-oak forest, tropical deciduous forest, tropical evergreen forest, and other combinations of types?

- Transects – participants will be walking elevational and habitat gradient transects and recording birds at stops. Need: GPS, binoculars; data sheets will be provided.

3. What species are breeding? What is the evidence of breeding?

- Nest record cards and other observations – Participants will be looking for nests and other evidence of breeding, filling out nest record cards and gathering other data. Need: GPS, camera, binoculars: data sheets will be provided.

| 4. Documenting target birds:

- Photo documentation – participant should have their own high-quality camera equipment and be able to document species in the field and do follow-up work.
- Song recording – participant should have high-quality recording equipment, process recordings and do follow-up.

5. What habitats are used and specifically what habitat components are necessary for breeding activities of selected species? Results will enable the Reserve to manage the habitats for these species.

- Activity Budget/Habitat Use Study – participants should be able to follow target bird species and record activity and their use of plant species. Need: stop watch and binoculars; data sheets will be provided by the organizers.

We will also need participants to volunteer for camp duties such as, cooking, washing dishes, etc. We want to leave the camp area as clean or cleaner than we find it. A willingness to help with other details such as, assisting with shopping, organizing people flow, etc. will be greatly appreciated.

-We are allowing for 12-24 (3 or 4 teams of 4-6) participants plus at least 1 Mexican biologist per team and 1 Team Leader to make our group a manageable size. Also, a group of this size should have as low as possible impact on the camping areas that we will be using. Each team will be in a different habitat.

-Participants can/should sign up for more than 1 assignment. For example, habitat use in the afternoons and area searches in the mornings.

Assignments	Volunteer's Name	Equipment Needed to Bring	Schedule	Comments
Photo Documentation		Excellent photographic equipment and time to process	No set schedule	Need 1 person at least per team; can be combined with other tasks
1				
2				
Audio Recording		Excellent quality equipment and time to process	No set schedule	Need 1 person per team; can be combined with other tasks
1				
2				
Elevational Transects	Name	Binoculars, GPS, clipboard or similar		Need 2 people per team; can be combined with other tasks
1				
2				
Activity Budget and Habitat Use Study		Binoculars, stop watch clipboard or similar	5-4 hour periods	Need 2 people per team, can be combined with area search
Area Search/Transect		Binoculars, GPS, clipboard or similar	5-4 hour periods	Need at least 2 people per team, Can be combined with activity budget
1				
2				
Breeding activity documentation		Binoculars, GPS, Camera,	All the time	Hope everyone will do this as they see activity
Bilingual assistance	Name	Indicate level of ability		1 per team

Target Bird Groups:

Parrots

Raptors (Laughing Falcons)

Nightjars

Cracids and Turkeys

Swifts

Trogons

All participants must bring the following equipment:

Binoculars

GPS (some can share)

Camera – either DSLR or point-and-shoot for documentation of nests, etc.

2-way radio

Plenty of batteries for the above 3 items

First aid kit

Notebook or clipboard

Camping equipment

Field gear, such as boots/hiking shoes, water bottles, sunscreen, hat, flashlights, etc.

If you have questions please contact Carol. Please send a description of your experience and the selection of jobs you are volunteering for to:

Carol_Beardmore@fws.gov

Indicate if you absolutely have to be on the same team as another participant (monitoring work will be conducted separately).

When you send in your information, we will send further details such as the hotel information, etc.