

# Tucson Audubon Society

## Volunteer Handbook



## ***Contact Us***

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Tucson Audubon Society

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## **History of Tucson Audubon**

A group of birders volunteered to form Tucson Audubon Society (TAS) over 60 years ago; their first meeting was held at Tucson High on January 6, 1949. The 25 members elected Florence Thornberg president and set the annual dues at \$1. The first order of business was to organize a birding field trip, and by 1957 regular monthly trips were scheduled. Today, TAS volunteer field trip leaders conduct about a dozen trips per month.

Also in 1957, the Tucson Audubon newsletter took the name *Vermilion Flycatcher*. Today, the *Flycatcher* is more than just a newsletter; it's an environmental education, conservation, and recreation magazine. It has been joined by an online website, bringing Tucson Audubon news and information to a world-wide audience.

TAS continued to grow and extend its reach into the birding community, publishing its first field checklist (*Birds of Southeast Arizona*) in 1958. Two years later, the 60 members undertook a fundraising program for The Nature Conservancy Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve. Now, Tucson Audubon continues to preserve important wildlife habitat at its Mason Center in northwest Tucson, on properties for which we hold conservation easements, with in-lieu restoration contracts, and in participation with other groups in community-wide conservation efforts.

In 1964, Tucson Audubon Society incorporated as a nonprofit and became a chapter of National Audubon. That same year the National Audubon Society convention was held in Tucson and hosted by Tucson Audubon.

Mary Watrous chaired a 1970 committee to explore expanding TAS' adult education; the first Institute of Desert Ecology (IDE) was held at Tanque Verde Guest Ranch in 1971. To assure small group learning activities, only 65 of the 120 applicants were accepted. In 2013, the Institute's format expanded to include other habitat ecology focuses, beginning with the Institute of Grasslands Ecology.

Finally in 1979, having grown to 1,325 members, Tucson Audubon Society needed a home. The first office was opened on Tucson Boulevard. Shortly after, Joan and Bob Tweit began the Tucson Audubon library, which now serves as a member research and reference facility with over 1,000 titles accessible through an online library catalog. The grand opening of the Tucson Audubon Nature Shop occurred in 1983, the same year that Tucson Audubon hired its first executive director.

Within the first three years, the shop grew significantly, and in 1987 moved to its current location at 300 E. University Blvd. Tucson Audubon was the first nonprofit to occupy space at the Historic Y; now, the former YWCA supports over 25 nonprofits engaged in the arts, education, advocacy, and environmental activities.

## Tucson Audubon Society Today

Today, we integrate conservation with education and recreation, providing ways for people to easily graduate from learning about birds during a free field trip to citizen science bird surveys, and much more.

Tucson Audubon engages in conservation work including our Important Bird Area program, restoration, education activities for all ages, recreational birding, and advocacy. Twelve staff members carry out our annual operations and fifteen board members provide oversight and planning. Our membership is 4,000 strong, and we depend upon nearly 600 volunteers to achieve our mission.

Though we work throughout southeastern Arizona, three sites serve as Tucson Audubon headquarters in the city.

- ✓ Our primary nature shop, and communications, education, finance, Important Bird Areas, and operations offices are located at the Historic Y, at 300 E. University Blvd.
- ✓ The Mason Center is a 20-acre saguaro-ironwood nature preserve offering weekly guided bird walks, special events, and employee offices for the Executive Director and development, membership, restoration, and volunteer programs, at 3835 W. Hardy Rd.
- ✓ A small Tucson Audubon nature shop operated by volunteers is housed at Pima County's Agua Caliente Park, located at 12325 E. Roger Rd.

**Mission:** To promote the protection and stewardship of southern Arizona's biological diversity through the study and enjoyment of birds and the places they live.



L TO R: SAN PEDRO NCA IMPORTANT BIRD AREA (JOHN HOFFMAN); WORKSHOP FOR IBA VOLUNTEERS; VOLUNTEERS LEAD A GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT AT MASON CENTER (DORIS EVANS)

## The Volunteer Program

Tucson Audubon offers myriad opportunities to make an impact for conservation of birds and the places they live, through many activity types and skill sets. Three hundred regular volunteers support all program areas in recurring roles throughout the year. Some of our volunteers are seasonal, while others commit to a weekly shift. An additional 300 new volunteers are engaged each year through Saturday morning restoration workdays in the cooler months. Volunteers work at offsite events, at Tucson Audubon locations, and even from home.

The varieties of volunteer positions are as diverse as the volunteers who make our activities possible. Opportunities include:

- nature shops
- library
- bird field trips
- education activities
- habitat restoration programs
- Important Bird Area program
- membership and development activities
- administration
- special events
- photography
- publicity
- community outreach, and much more

TOP TO BOTTOM: SALLY AND ALICE READY TO BEGIN HABITAT CREATION WORK AT ATTURBURY (RICK FLETCHER); DEB VATH INTERACTS WITH KIDS AT HARVEST FESTIVAL (KENDALL KROESEN)



The Volunteer Coordinator and staff members place volunteers in programs best suited to their skills while meeting department needs. Our goal is to maximize the effectiveness of the organization while keeping you happy.

If you start in one role and are unhappy, speak up!

We value feedback on your current role, and want you to find something that you will enjoy.

## ***Time Commitment***

Your time volunteering with Tucson Audubon is flexible and follows some guidelines. Aside from restoration workdays, we require a commitment of at least six months to volunteer. This allows volunteers to become engaged with the organization and ensures the efforts they go through in applying for and being placed in a role are fully realized. Each volunteer position varies in its time commitment, with weekly roles averaging 2-3 hours. It is important to understand the time commitment of a position and consider your other current and upcoming obligations seriously prior to committing to volunteering.

## ***The Application Process***

- ✓ Complete an application form
- ✓ Interview with the Volunteer Coordinator
- ✓ Pick an area of interest
- ✓ Attend a new volunteer orientation
- ✓ Meet with department head for any further training sessions that may be required, instruction, and discussion of your role.

## ***Friend Membership***

In addition to supporting Tucson Audubon Society as a volunteer, joining as a Friend member is important for a few key reasons.

Friend members receive a quarterly copy of the *Vermilion Flycatcher*, monthly membership meetings, and a connection to a large and active membership base. As advocates for Tucson Audubon, many of our volunteer roles involve getting new people interested in our mission and joining as members. A powerful persuasion in this effort is to show that you, too, are a member. Tucson Audubon's programs and services are supported by membership revenue.

Tucson Audubon's membership makes a strong impact. When Tucson Audubon advocates for the most pressing environmental issues to policy makers, businesses, and the public, our voice is as strong as our membership. In every outreach letter, in every comment letter, every time we speak out for wildlife and open spaces, we speak for our membership. Tucson Audubon is engaged in a continuing dialog with citizens, community leaders, and politicians concerning many of the conservation issues affecting southeast Arizona and beyond. Please stand by us as a Friend member.

## **Communication**

Feedback is encouraged at all stages of your time as a volunteer with Tucson Audubon Society. If you have a recommendation for how we could make your role as a volunteer better, or the volunteer program better in general, let the Volunteer Coordinator know! If you have a question about a policy, procedure, or anything else, again, let us know!

## **What to Wear?**

Overall, dress comfortably and wear a nametag when provided. At offsite events, we encourage a Tucson Audubon Society article of clothing. Because the attire varies in many program areas, please ask your supervisor if you have any questions.

## **Attendance and Punctuality**

To maintain a productive work environment, Tucson Audubon depends on its volunteers to be reliable and punctual for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and volunteers and may result in the need to cancel programs at short notice. If for some reason you are unable to perform a promised task, it becomes your responsibility to find a replacement for the day in question. We value your time and want to ensure that scheduled employees and volunteers can rely on being able to start and leave at their designated time.

## **Volunteers are Tucson Audubon Representatives**

Volunteers focus on achieving the Tucson Audubon mission and are a positive reflection of the values of our organizations. Volunteers must remember that our conduct and activities on the job reflects on the organization.

No matter where you might be working, keep the following in mind:

- Ask questions
- Answer questions
- Be respectful
- Be courteous
- Be flexible
- Be patient



- Be interested
- Be informed
- Be positive
- Be enthusiastic
- Be prompt
- And most of all, have fun!

### ***Your Hours at Work***

Tracking your volunteer hours is important for a number of reasons. Tucson Audubon receives significant support from foundation grants, and we can use the number of volunteer hours as part of the in-kind match that adds value to some awards. Further, it's a great measure of the impact that volunteers have on our organization, and, in a larger sense, on birds and nature in southeast Arizona. It is also helpful when assessing program effectiveness and efficiency to consider the full picture of what is involved in a project. The time spent to implement a program would, naturally, include how much time is volunteered. Balancing this among a number of factors helps to inform our current activities and future endeavors, to ensure Tucson Audubon continues to be as effective as possible.

Your volunteer hours can benefit you also, in the form of volunteer "points." Each volunteer hour is equal to a "point" towards discounts at Tucson Audubon. A detailed description of this discount system is available at [www.tucsonaudubon.org/volunteer](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/volunteer).

Since volunteer hours are tracked differently in most program areas, please discuss how to log your time with the Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator compiles volunteer hours and volunteer points for all volunteers, so if you ever have a question related to your hours or points, please direct them to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Thank you for your generous gift of time to Tucson Audubon.

### ***Insurance***

Tucson Audubon Society's insurance will not cover you in the unlikely event of an accident or injury while volunteering. Tucson Audubon's commercial general liability insurance covers claims up to \$1,000,000 against volunteers by third parties, but your own health and property



TIM HELEIN, JARIS AND JANET HENGESBAUGH TABLING AT TUCSON FESTIVAL OF BOOKS (JEAN BARCHMAN)

insurance must cover your claims for bodily injury or loss or damage to personal property that might be incurred while volunteering with Tucson Audubon.

### ***Updating Personal Information***

If you have a change to your contact information, or to that of your emergency contact, please let the Volunteer Coordinator know as soon as possible.

### ***Resigning***

We hope you stay as a volunteer with Tucson Audubon for as long as makes you happy, but when you feel it is time to resign, please notify your supervisor and the Volunteer Coordinator immediately, with as much advance notice as possible.

### ***Media Use***

Every employee and volunteer has a responsibility to maintain and enhance the public image of Tucson Audubon and to use media in a productive manner. Practice discretion and good judgment regarding the number and the nature of personal calls made using Tucson Audubon facilities. Tucson Audubon provides computers, files, Internet and e-mail service that are intended for business use. Adherence to these workplace standards is fundamental to volunteering with Tucson Audubon.

JASON THOMAS LEADS KIDS ON A NATURE HIKE UP MT LEMMON



# **Tucson Audubon Society Employee Policies for Volunteers**

If a conflict arises with one of these policies, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator immediately.

## ***Equal Employment Opportunity***

It is TAS policy to provide equal employment opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, family responsibilities or status as a Vietnam-veteran or special disabled veteran, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local law. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment or volunteering, including, but not limited to, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, recall, transfer, leave of absence, and training.

## ***Anti-Harassment Policy***

All TAS employees and volunteers should be able to enjoy a work environment free from all forms of harassment. TAS expressly prohibits any form of employee harassment by another employee, supervisor, or a third party for any reason including race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or any other status protected by applicable law. Interference with the ability of TAS staff to perform their expected job duties will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of each supervisor to create an atmosphere free of harassment, sexual or otherwise, and to immediately report harassing conduct that may violate this policy. In addition, it is the responsibility of each volunteer and employee to respect the rights of coworkers.

## ***Occupational Safety & Smoking Policy***

TAS is committed to providing staff with a reasonably safe work environment that complies with occupational safety laws. Concerns in this area should be promptly brought to the attention of the Volunteer Coordinator. Pursuant to Arizona law, TAS prohibits smoking in its offices and on its properties.

## ***Employee Ethics and Conflicts of Interest Policy***

All TAS employees and volunteers are expected to adhere to the highest possible ethical standards in the performance of their duties and at all times abide by the law. Any staff member facing an ethical dilemma or possessing knowledge of the inappropriate acts of others must report these matters to the Operations Manager and/or Executive Director immediately. If the Executive Director is the individual committing the breach, then it should be reported to a member of the Personnel Committee. Any suspected ethical breach will be given the highest priority of attention by TAS and no retaliation for reporting such matters will be tolerated. All reports of possible misconduct will be treated confidentially, to the extent possible.

The following is intended to be a guideline to illustrate the highest standards of ethical behavior expected of every TAS staff member:

- **Integrity**—Staff must be honest and maintain the highest professional standards at all times. TAS resources should not be used for personal gain.
- **Fraudulent Acts**—At no time and under no circumstances should staff members engage in any illegal acts, including but not limited to: falsification of business documents, theft, embezzlement, diversion of funds, bribery, or fraud.
- **Confidentiality**—Staff members have an ethical duty not to disclose confidential information obtained during the course of their work at TAS. They have a professional obligation to protect confidential relationships between TAS and its donors and vendors. Staff members should refer any requests for information about current or former staff members (including reference and credit checks) to the Executive Director.
- **Gifts and Favors**—It is unlawful to accept anything of value in exchange for a promise to influence a TAS decision in the selection of a vendor or other collaborator.

## ***Conduct***

TAS strives to provide a safe work environment that is based on trust and mutual respect. In accordance with this philosophy, TAS does not allow weapons in the workplace and will not tolerate any violent

or abusive behavior, actions or words from or towards employees, donors, vendors, visitors, volunteers and Board members.

### ***Public Speaking and Preparing Articles for Publication***

TAS welcomes its staff to participate in public speaking, preparation of articles and other professional activities, unless the time required for such activities detracts from ongoing TAS projects and responsibilities. However, in order to ensure that TAS is being represented in a positive and consistent manner, employees must obtain prior approval of the Executive Director for any speaking engagement, participation in a public meeting or preparation of an article in which the staff member will be explicitly or implicitly representing TAS. Any and all work product resulting from service with TAS, including but not limited to any copyrightable, trademarkable or patentable research or other work product, shall remain the property of TAS, unless alternative arrangements are specified in advance in writing by the Executive Director. Further, income such as honorarium resulting from above mentioned activities should be disclosed and reported to the Executive Director for determination as to whether such payment should be returned to TAS.

### ***Communications on Behalf of TAS***

To ensure that TAS is represented in a positive and consistent manner, all media requests seeking comments on behalf of TAS should be directed to the Executive Director. TAS staff should not provide comments on behalf of TAS to the media without the prior approval of the Executive Director.



MATT AND LARRY BROOKS ON IBA SURVEY (JENNY MACFARLAND)

## **Code of Conduct**

- Volunteers will attend orientation and training sessions as required by Tucson Audubon Society, and will undertake continuing education as needed
- Volunteers will carry out assignments in good spirit and will seek the assistance of their immediate supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator when necessary
- Volunteers will not report for a work shift while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Any degree of impairment from alcohol or drugs while on duty is strictly prohibited and is grounds for dismissal.
- Volunteers will respect the function of Tucson Audubon's paid staff and contribute fully to maintaining a good working relationship between paid staff and volunteers.
- Volunteers will respect and accept Tucson Audubon Society's right to dismiss any volunteer for such reasons as poor performance, poor attendance, unwillingness to accept direction, violation of any State or Federal law, or disregard for values and policies in volunteer handbook.
- Volunteers will abide by employee policies on harassment, discrimination, ethics, fraud, confidentiality, conduct, communications, and public speaking
- If a volunteer feels that a problem has arisen between themselves and Tucson Audubon personnel, they agree to engage in respectful conflict resolution and to seek assistance from the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Volunteers are representing Tucson Audubon Society and should be tactful, courteous, and diplomatic with the public at all times. Providing strong customer service will help audiences have a pleasant experience with Tucson Audubon Society and leave with a positive image of employees and volunteers
- Volunteers will maintain high standards of honesty, integrity, and impartiality, free from any personal considerations, favoritism, or partisan demands
- Volunteers will maintain the confidentiality of information learned while performing volunteer services.
- The volunteer's personal property is not covered by Tucson Audubon if lost or stolen—even if used in the line of duty. Therefore, a volunteer should use Tucson Audubon equipment when available.

# Tucson Audubon

## Responsibilities to Volunteers

1. To assign tasks which are suitable to each volunteer's experience, education, and preference.
2. To provide appropriate orientation to the organization and venues
3. To provide a written position description
4. To provide appropriate training for each position description
5. To provide an open atmosphere of teamwork between volunteers and Tucson Audubon employees
6. To ensure that every volunteer is treated with respect by other volunteers, employees, and visitors
7. To ensure that volunteers are adequately supervised and feel comfortable with their assignments
8. To provide a safe workplace
9. To provide a workplace free of harassment
10. To ensure that volunteers are consulted and fully informed when Tucson Audubon decisions affect their positions and performance
11. To provide conflict resolution if necessary
12. To provide an open and respectful atmosphere for suggestions, questions, and the expression of opinions
13. To provide a wide variety of recognition for the valuable service that volunteers bring to Tucson Audubon Society



YOUNG VOLUNTEERS PLANTING IN RAINWATER HARVESTING BASINS AT BARRO ROEGER LANE (KENDALL KROESEN)

# **Agreement to Perform Voluntary Services**

(Volunteer name) \_\_\_\_\_

may perform volunteer duties starting upon \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

upon the following conditions:

1. Tucson Audubon has provided the volunteer with pertinent Tucson Audubon handbook, information, and policies. The volunteer agrees to abide by all such policies and information.
2. The volunteer understands that they are working at all times on a voluntary basis without compensation.
3. The volunteer understands that they are not covered by Tucson Audubon Society's insurance other than commercial general liability.
4. This agreement can be cancelled at any time by either the volunteer or Tucson Audubon Society.

I hearby acknowledge that I am volunteering my services at Tucson Audubon Society without pay and in order to enhance the mission of Tucson Audubon Society to promote the protection and stewardship of southern Arizona's biological diversity through the study and enjoyment of birds and the places they live.

Signature of Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Volunteer Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

YOUNG VOLUNTEER SETH RENNER AT ESPERANZA RANCH HABITAT RESTORATION WORK DAY (KENDALL KROESEN)



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