

Hummer House News

Winter 2014

Volume 2 Issue 1

Cathy's Notes

For many years, Dan and I leased the Mill Pond place just to the north of our property. The lease allowed our guests to enjoy the spring and the old homestead that are located at the Mill Pond acreage. It is with deep regret that I inform each of you that we have lost access to the Mill Pond. In November that acreage was sold. Dan has been a wonderful neighbor to Ms. McGill and had hoped to purchase her property. In the end....LOTS of pesos won out and we were not the top bidder. Charles Floyd has relocated his banding locations to accommodate the changes. He will be doing his research around the river dam, the orchard and across the highway from our cottages. A few changes will be made to our golf cart pathways, which will now include a few acres across the highway. We are committed to being respectful of our new neighbor so absolutely no exceptions will be made for anyone to access the Mill Pond property.

We are hosting two "**Breakfast & Birds**" events this year. A limited number of guests will be allowed to sign up for one of two breakfast and bird bandings. Startup time is 8 am and the session generally lasts until about 11 am. The dates are May 10th and June 7th. Group size is limited to 20 people and the cost is \$20.00 per adult and \$10.00 per child. Email Cathy at cathy@hummerhouse.com

Reservation confirmation letters were mailed on January 16, 2014. After receiving confirmations from everyone, available dates for each of the cottages will be posted on website.



New Bird Species for Hummer Ranch in 2013

There were 5 new bird species banded at the Hummer Ranch in 2013. Warbling vireo, Western Bluebird, and Brown Thrasher are pictured above. Not pictured are the Acadian Flycatcher and Spotted Sandpiper that were also new species for the ranch.

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Dan and Cathy Brown

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Want to learn more about birds?

The Hummer House will be hosting two birding classes this year. These classes are taught by Charles Floyd, master bird bander. Classes are informal and free to the public. Due to limited seating, reservations are required. Email Cathy at cathy@hummerhouse.com or phone Cathy at 325.255.2254 for reservations.

Birds of the Concho Valley 101 on March 17, 2014 6:00 p.m.

Hummingbirds 101 on March 24, 2014 6:00 p.m.

For those of us that spend lots of time at the Hummer House, it is easy to take the thousands of birds residing on the ranch for granted. Having banded birds on the ranch for some years, I often concentrate on a particular species for one of my projects and fail to appreciate the truly incredible numbers and the wide variety of bird life present there throughout the year. At the end of the 2013 season, 154 species of birds and two hybrids have been banded there. Unless something unforeseen occurs, we will reach 50,000 birds banded on the ranch before 2014 is very old. We will also exceed 16,000 hummingbirds soon after they return from their annual trip to Mexico for the winter. The ranch continues to host the largest concentration of Black-chinned Hummingbirds and Painted Buntings in the United States. Although the numbers are impressive, the variety is just as impressive. Besides the large numbers of species banded on the ranch which are mostly songbirds and hummingbirds, there are many other species of raptors, waterfowl, and others that are not targeted for banding. They are not part the figures noted above. They are, however, present much of time on the ranch. Because the ranch is located in an area visited by eastern and western birds, we will continue to add to our total of banded birds for the ranch. Where else could you visit and see Eastern, Western, and Mountain Bluebirds in the same place? Where else would you have the possibility of seeing eastern warblers, Western Tanagers, and Black-headed Grosbeaks all in the same stretch of the South Concho River? If you love birds or just love the outdoors, we hope that you have opportunity to share in the birds of the Hummer House this season. Remember the Hummer House is a private ranch and birding is by invitation. **The Observation Room will be open on Saturdays from 10 to 4 starting in May through August.** Please call to make arrangements to visit this unique place and enjoy the wonders of nature.

Charles Floyd