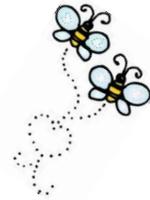




Arizona's Raptor Experience. LLC

May 2018

~Newsletter~



Greetings from Chino Valley!

We hope you are doing well and enjoying time outside with spring flowers, birds and insects. May always brings new visitors to our yard and we are excited to report our first Zone-tailed Hawk and Green-tailed Towhees. We also have new permanent residents – honey bees! Paul has decided to try his hand at bee keeping. More on that later in this issue...

Spring is also baby bird season, which has me thinking about making our bird baths safe for baby quail. It's also time to gear up for the influx of hummingbirds! In fact, there are many things we can do to benefit birds every day. In this issue we'll share a great book with 101 examples.

We hope you all had a wonderful Mother's Day and that you'll enjoy this edition of our newsletter.



P. Schnell photos

We Have Bees!



Did you know that honeybees have pollinated one mouthful of food out of every three that we eat? Fruits, nuts, seeds and oils would not be a part of our diet without honeybees. In fact, these complex insects are important not only for our food crops, but for the maintenance of the natural food chain. Bees are essential for life on earth.

For more than 30 million years, honeybees have existed and evolved along with the flowers they pollinate, forming a mutually beneficial relationship. Through pollination, bees ensure that genetic material is passed from one plant to another and in return bees utilize the nectar from flowers to produce their food, honey.

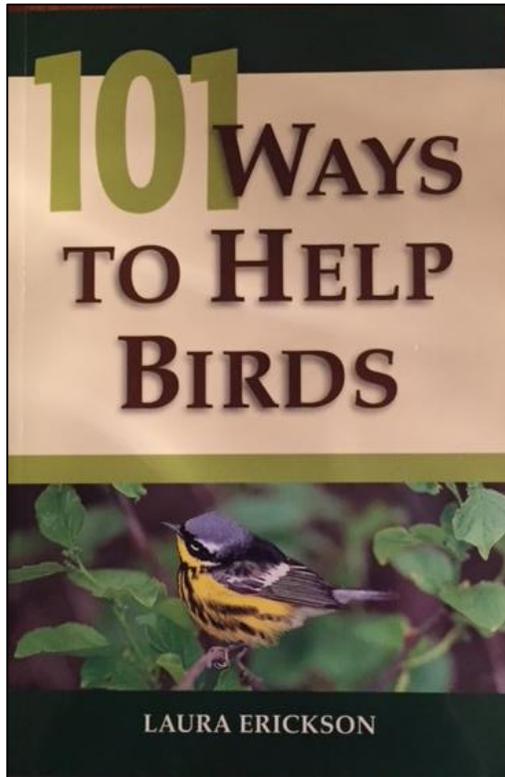
These amazing insects have a very complex social system which makes them fascinating to humans who now must play a role in ensuring their existence into the future. Many challenges face honeybees today including diseases and parasites that can kill colonies. Here in Arizona another concern is Africanized bees which can be extremely aggressive and dangerous. Beekeepers ultimately want to maintain healthy colonies of bees not only because of their role in the environment, but also because of the many products associated with honeybees.

Apiculture, the art of keeping bees, has been practiced since ancient times and as mentioned, is growing in popularity today. Paul's brother David has been keeping bees since the age of 14 (40 years!) and has been a valuable resource for us, as has the Prescott Bee Club (www.prescottbeekeepers.com). So why did Paul decide to become a bee keeper? First, to learn something new about nature. Second, because bee keeping is another way to support the health of the environment. Third, he likes comb honey and hopes to give it to friends once the colony is well established!

“The hum of bees is the voice of the garden.”

~Elizabeth Lawrence





Helping Birds Every Day

When we first moved to Arizona, I learned from friends, neighbors and unfortunately personal experience that young Gambel's Quail will easily drown in bird baths that are too deep. So, as we approach the nesting season I try to reduce this hazard by changing over to shallow water baths and adding rocks that serve as a way for the young birds to get out of the water.

This is a simple solution to one backyard problem that threatens birds. So, how else can we help birds that face so many threats today? Laura Erickson penned the book *101 Ways to Help Birds* in 2006. Some of her ideas are listed below – I encourage you to look for her book and challenge yourself to adopt as many ways as possible to protect *your* backyard birds.

- Make your windows safer for birds: research indicates that more than half of all birds that hit windows end up dying – either from direct trauma, internal injuries or predation while they are stunned. If you have feeders so that you can watch the birds, placing them closer to windows helps (about 3 ft away) because the birds cannot pick up speed fast enough to cause hard impact when they hit. Make your windows more visible to birds. Decals, vertical blinds, etc. can help.
- Keep cats indoors. Of the close to 80 million+ pet cats in the U.S, about 50 million are allowed to roam outdoors. Even if individual cats don't kill many birds, the numbers add up quickly with so many outdoor cats. It is estimated that cats kill upwards of 5 billion songbirds and small mammals a year in the U.S. alone. Not only is this harmful to bird populations, but it reduces natural food sources for raptors and other predators. "Rescuing" birds from cats is rarely effective. Most cat-caught birds taken to rehabilitators die from wounds not readily visible.
- Enhance your yard for birds by creating habitat. Plant an assortment of native plants to provide food and shelter. Reduce or discontinue use of pesticides and herbicides that can be toxic to birds. Provide a water source such as a bird bath.
- **There are 98 more examples in the book!!**



It's baby bird season...here's a few memories of Andromeda, Goliath and Marlee!

