



## WELCOME TO GBBO E-NEWS

:: *This Month* ::

### Welcome to E-News

### Director's Message

### GBBO Projects:

[1. Shoshone OHV Project](#)

[2. New Elf Owl Detectability Project](#)

[3. Death Valley Bird Surveys](#)

[4. Nevada Bird Count](#)

[5. Lower Colorado River Riparian Birds](#)

GBBO E-News is our new, mostly monthly newsletter. Its purpose is to provide regular updates on GBBO's programs and projects to our funding partners, members, and collaborators, as well as interested members of the public. If you have received this volume, you are on our mailing list. As with all GBBO mailings, we never share contact information of recipients without their explicit approval, in order to minimize unsolicited mailings to our supporters. To unsubscribe, click the link at the bottom.



### Director's Message

What a season it has been! GBBO has expanded to a staff of seven, and before we knew it, everyone was off in the field counting birds and tracking transmitters on birds. It was an eventful season for all of us, and this newsletter shares the highlights with you. Because we have been super-busy making sure that all our birds are documented properly, we have not had the time to keep up our e-newsletter over the summer. Now that everyone is back at the office, we will pick up our circulation on a more regular basis again. Also, please check our website for comprehensive updates in the next couple of weeks. We are grateful to all of our supporters and partners for their continued interest in our mission, and for their help in implementing it. We would not be able to be successful without your support. Thank you all!

Elisabeth Ammon, Executive Director

### Acknowledgments

### What is GBBO?

### Contact Information

**Be sure to become a GBBO fan on Facebook !**

### GBBO Project Updates

#### 1. Shoshone OHV Project

A long-distance OHV route is slated for construction over the next few years in the Shoshone Range of Lander Mountain. In spring 2009, the Bureau of Land Management – Battle Mountain District contracted GBBO to inventory and monitor wildlife resources in the OHV trail project area in order to: 1) provide baseline data against which to evaluate future impacts of the trail, and 2) identify high-value wildlife areas and suggest ways to minimize impacts of the OHV trail in these areas. This project, which is nearing the end of its first full field season, involved radio telemetry studies of Greater Sage-Grouse, grouse lek counts, landbird point counts surveys, raptor surveys, and pygmy rabbit surveys. GBBO staff, including Larry Teske, John Boone, Michael Maples, Gustavo Gonzalez, and Jen Ballard, has already generated recommendations to the BLM, and the project is likely to continue in upcoming years, so stay tuned for updates.



#### 2. New Elf Owl Detectability Project

Thanks to a contract recently awarded by the Bureau of Reclamation, GBBO will soon be starting a new project in the Lower Colorado River area. This study will involve capturing and radio tagging Elf Owls in order to better understand how and when they respond to standard call-playback monitoring surveys. Armed with our findings, the Bureau will be able optimize the effectiveness of its ongoing monitoring program, which is intended to determine whether Elf Owls are responding positively to ongoing habitat restoration efforts throughout the Lower Colorado system. The work promises to be challenging; mist-netting and radio-tracking the tiny Elf Owl in the dense riparian woodlands that characterize the study area ---- and all at night!



### 3. Death Valley Bird Surveys



Michael Maples and Gustavo Gonzalez braved extreme temperatures this summer to conduct bird surveys in four key riparian corridors in Death Valley. This work, which was repeated three times over the summer at roughly one-month intervals, was conducted on behalf of the National Park Service. Michael and Gus performed area search surveys to inventory riparian landbirds, with a focus on 3 species of special interest to the Park Service: the Bell's Vireo, Inyo - California Towhee, and Willow Flycatcher. Needless to say, the July survey was especially challenging, with daytime highs nearing 130 F during the period when Michael and Gus were in the park.



### 4. Nevada Bird Count

In mid-July, GBBO finished off another successful season of the Nevada Bird Count. Surveys were scattered across the state, but some of our program hotspots included Clark County, particularly Warm Springs (Moapa) and Las Vegas Wash; Eastern Nevada from Elko to Ely; the Shoshone Range, south of Battle Mountain; and the Truckee and Walker Rivers. Two of the season's highlights included the presence of Indigo Buntings all over Clark County, and the numbers of Le Conte's Thrashers detected. This year we had 15 Le Conte's detected; the past 3 years have been pretty sparse (1 in 2008, 2 in 2007, and 5 in 2006); the last high was in 2005, with ~ 45 detections. While we began a call-playback protocol for Bendire's and Le Conte's Thrashers, to help us boost our detection rates, these numbers are strictly for the point counts, before call-playback was employed. We're curious to see how next year's numbers play out! Many thanks to all our surveyors and partners for their help!



### 5. Lower Colorado River Riparian Birds

Amy Leist and 7 field technicians had a great season monitoring riparian birds on the Lower Colorado River. This year was our second field season in a 2-year grant from the Bureau of Reclamation. From March to June, we had 3 "basecamps" on the river in Lake Havasu City and Yuma (Arizona) and Blythe (California). We traveled from northern Lake Mead to the International Border with Mexico conducting area searches and habitat assessments in riparian plots within the historic floodplain of the Lower Colorado River. Season highlights included watching the sunrise every morning, a reduction in rattlesnake encounters (compared to last season), an unusually high number of Indigo Buntings in the region, and a fantastic variety of spring migrants. We enjoyed identifying over 160 species of birds, and we found many territories of several target species including Yellow Warblers, Bell's Vireos, and Gila Woodpeckers, Summer Tanagers, and Vermilion Flycatchers.



## **Acknowledgements**

**Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!**

GBBO's efforts of 2009 were funded and otherwise significantly supported by the following entities:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. National Park Service, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Nevada State Lands, Southern Nevada Water Authority, Clark County Desert Conservation Program, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Nevada Natural Heritage Program, Audubon Society, HawkWatch International, Otis Bay Environmental Consultants, and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and other tribes in our region.

We would also like to thank all of our seasonal employees, full-time employees, and volunteers who did much of the heavy lifting with GBBO regarding bird surveys, data processing, and logistical support of field work in 2009:

### **What is the Great Basin Bird Observatory?**

The Great Basin Bird Observatory (GBBO) was founded in 1997 as a not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to the conservation of birds and their habitats, with emphasis in Nevada and adjoining regions, through collaborative partnerships, scientific research, and public education. GBBO is an active steward of bird conservation in our region with the goal of maintaining bird diversity for future generations and a public who values birds and their habitats as a significant part of their quality of life.

### **Contact Information**

For more information on GBBO programs and projects, to inquire about memberships or tax-deductible donations, and to become a partner in GBBO programs, here is how you can get in touch: Visit our website [www.gbbo.org](http://www.gbbo.org) Email us at [ammon@gbbo.org](mailto:ammon@gbbo.org) Mail, phone, or fax us at: Great Basin Bird Observatory, 1755 East Plumb Lane #256, Reno, Nevada 89502, ph/fax (775) 323-4226