

PATON CENTER FOR HUMMINGBIRDS

Vincent Pinto Leads the Way for Seven Saturdays in Patagonia

Keith Ashley, Coordinator: Paton Center for Hummingbirds

Patagonia resident Vincent Pinto of Ravens-Way Wild Journeys has graciously agreed to guide the Paton Center's 2015-16 *Seven Saturdays in Patagonia* bird and biodiversity hikes, and Tucson Audubon members are in for a treat! Vincent has blazed a unique career path combining formal academic work in wildlife biology and environmental studies with outside-the-box nature adventures and earth stewardship. He is a visionary, hands-on conservationist, a local bird expert, a passionate interpreter of the Patagonia wilds... and more.

Together with his wife Claudia, Vincent owns two southeast Arizona nature and wildlife sanctuaries: the 50+ acre Raven's Mountain in the Chiricahuas and the 42-acre Raven's Nest by Patagonia Lake. Based at Raven's Nest, Vincent fulfills his mission to educate and inspire people of all ages about the wonders of our natural world.

A barefoot boyhood exploring the Pennypack Woods near Philadelphia set Vincent on a path that has included scientific research on formerly dwindling populations of Gould's Wild Turkey. From his study site in the Peloncillo Mountains of the New Mexico-Arizona border, he developed an insatiable taste for the Sky Islands' biodiversity that has only grown stronger through the years.

In his 28 years of experience since first encountering southeast Arizona, Vincent has learned to combine his love for the Sky Islands with a passion to protect the region. He approaches this challenge through every possible avenue. He teaches and lectures across Arizona in ethnobotany, natural history, wilderness survival skills, and astronomy. He actively practices

ecosystem management on his own land and connects others with the beauty and excitement of nature through the unique programming of his Ravens-Way Wild Journeys.

"The future of conservation in the Sky Islands region is inextricably linked in large part to birds," Vincent explains. "More than with any other faunal group, people have proven time and again that they are willing to travel long or short distances and collectively spend millions of dollars to observe and enjoy birds." He further notes, "Protecting bird habitat obviously also safeguards the same wild-lands for all of the other species inhabiting them, thus bolstering regional efforts at keeping entire ecosystems functioning properly. Dedicating time, money, land, and expertise to conserving birds is a true long-term investment in both our ecology and economy."

Vincent reasons that the short-term gains of misusing resources fly directly in the face of eco-tourism as a sustainable economic venture. He asks: "When is the last time you spent good money to see an open pit mine, a maze of unnecessary dirt roads, or a dry, depleted river system as part of your hard-earned and much anticipated vacation?" Vincent has a vision of our Sky Islands region becoming a World Biosphere Preserve. "This would send notice to Arizonans, Americans, and foreign visitors alike that we value all of nature and are not willing to destroy it to line a few pockets. As part of this effort, we need to better communicate to would-be birders that visiting our Sky Islands is a unique, affordable, exciting, and commendable thing to do." ■



Vince Pinto; Vince Pinto leads a tour; both images by Claudia Campos

SEVEN SATURDAYS IN PATAGONIA

For seven Saturdays, October through May, Vincent will be sharing his gifts with Tucson Audubon members on a free monthly hike that leaves from the Paton Center in Patagonia. Hikes will be followed by a relaxed lecture offered by one of southeast Arizona's experts on a topic related to birds, birding, conservation, science, or natural history. You can learn more about Vincent and Ravens-Way Wild Journeys at ravensnatureschool.org and more about the Seven Saturdays in Patagonia 2015-16 season at tucsonaudubon.org/paton.



The Paton Center now has a suet cam to go along with the original hummingbird cam! Check in on the bird action from any location at tucsonaudubon.org/paton.