



## November-December 2014

### OUT ON A LIMB WITH YOUR PRESIDENT

I hope all of you are enjoying this colorful fall with the changing leaves, the wild flowers, and the migrating birds. As winter approaches you may see some Cassins Finches, Oregon Juncos, Brown Creepers, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Don't forget the December meeting Christmas party that starts at 6:00 p.m. Look for more information about the party in this newsletter.

I want to thank Warren Goff, Pete and Betty Bengston, Lois Huffman, White Mountain Women's Club, Gus Hollenbeck, Liz Wise, Barb Davis, Mary Rose Redding, and AZ Game and Fish for your generous contributions to Audubon in 2014, as well as all of you who paid or renewed your memberships. These donations help us provide Audubon Adventures, scholarships, Beginning Birders Workshop, and extra programs like the Trek West program we did some time ago. Any of you who would like to serve on the board, or help in some other way, would be welcome. Just let me or any board member know.

On October 25<sup>th</sup> Chuck, two of our daughters and our grandson, and, I traveled to the "Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary" in New Mexico for their "Howl- o-Ween" program. This was a different way to spend a day, watching the wolves, coyotes, dingoes, and foxes enjoy their pumpkin treats. The pumpkins were filled with goodies that the animals loved. I had to laugh because there is no sharing with wolves. It is definitely every man for himself with them. The sanctuary is very nice and all the animals have room to move around and explore their surroundings. On our way home, we stopped at El Morro National Monument. The monument has quite a history and it is in beautiful surroundings. The visitors' center is very nice. This proved to be a very nice experience. The drive over there is easy, about three hours.

I hope you all have a happy holiday season, and a happy new year.

Enjoy birding.....

Mary Ellen Bittorf

### Calendar

All monthly meetings begin at 6:30 pm at the Pinetop-Lakeside Town Council Chambers. Fieldtrip times and meeting places vary; see below or please check the website. You may call 367-2462 for more information.

#### Meetings and Programs

**Nov. 5:** Dr. Paul Green (Tucson Audubon President) will talk about birds and climate change in southeast AZ.

**Dec. 3:** Christmas Party Potluck, 6pm, Rm. 16, Pinetop-Lakeside Town Council Chambers. Program: Sue Sitko will share here journey down the Amazon.

Last names A-I: bring appetizers/salads

Last names J-R: bring main dish

Last names S-Z: bring dessert

#### Field Trips

Jan. 3: Christmas Bird Count- meet at 7am at Bobbi Jo's Café, next to Pinetop Post Office, to discuss field count assignment.

#### Your Officers

**President:** Mary Ellen Bittorf 367-2462

**Vice-Pres.:** Tom Jernigan 532-1510

**Secretary:** Liz Jernigan 532-1510

**Treasurer:** Chuck Bittorf 367-2462

**Programs:** Loretta Pena 368-3380

**Field Trips:** Kent Schipper 537-7569

**Editor:** Jody Inman 369-3240

**Membership:** Position open

**Website Manager:** Richard Inman 369-3240

**Board Members:** Kent Schipper, Jody Inman and Richard Inman

Reach us at: [www.whitemountainaudubon.org](http://www.whitemountainaudubon.org)

## ANNUAL WHITE MOUNTAIN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT PLANNED FOR JANUARY 3<sup>RD</sup>, 2015

From December 14 through January 5, tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists go out on an annual mission - often before dawn. For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house during the Holiday season.

Each of the citizen scientists who annually braves snow, wind, or rain, to take part in the Christmas Bird Count makes an enormous contribution to conservation. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations - and to help guide conservation action.

From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition -- and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation.

To join White Mountain Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count, just show up at Bobbi Jo's Café (next to Pinetop Post Office) at 7am, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, prepared with warm clothes, binoculars, field guides, pencil and paper, and snacks and water for the day. Novice's are welcome- we'll pair you up with a more experienced birder. (It's how our newsletter editor, Jody Inman met her husband, Richard, way back in '92!)



[www.whitemountainaudubon.org](http://www.whitemountainaudubon.org)



*Giant Cottonwood by Tom Jernigan*

## GILA RIVER FESTIVAL

Tom and Liz Jernigan attended the annual Gila River Festival which is held this time of year in Silver City, New Mexico. The Gila River is the last major wild undammed river in New Mexico. It enters Arizona at Duncan and flows west through our state. Certain people are trying to change that by proposing a diversion dam (it means a 60-80 foot structure with conveyance canals and access roads throughout the River valley).

The Festival is attended by many interesting people, most of whom oppose the dam. Ornithologists, attorneys, hydrologists, photographers, professors and others provided informal presentations and field trips. What a beautiful valley. The Gila runs through it as it exits the Mogollon Mountains. Sycamores, Cottonwoods, Hackberries, New Mexico Locusts, Willows and other trees line the river banks. This foliage provides habitat for Belted Kingfishers, Black Hawks, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Coopers Hawks, Vermillion Flycatchers, Southwestern Willow Flycatchers (endangered) and Yellow-billed Cuckoos (also endangered) and other species. By the way, if you want to see that Yellow-billed Cuckoo you best return in June-August, as they nest for a short time before returning to Argentina. If you visit in the winter, the fields and ponds are busy with Sandhill Cranes and ducks of all kinds.

It's only a 3 ½ hour drive and well worth a visit. If you have a concern about our continuing loss of water in our rivers and riparian areas, look up Gila Conservation Coalition or write a protest letter to Governor Susana Martinez in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

## BIRD SIGHTINGS

Not many bird sightings were reported from the September and October meetings, but all sightings are important to Audubon. The Bittorfs reported the usual bird feeder visitors, including White-Breasted Nuthatches, Pygmy Nuthatches, Mountain Chickadees, Acorn Woodpeckers, Hairy Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, and Steller's Jays. What stands out in their sightings, though, is the battle over the sugar water feeder between the Broad-tailed Hummingbirds and the bees. Hopefully, both came out OK. Making their presence known by sound, but not seen at the Bittorfs, was a Brown Creeper; always a welcome visitor. The Inmans had the same feeder visitors as the Bittorfs, with the exception of the Brown Creeper. The Inmans also had an unexpected sighting of Western Kingbirds as well as Allen's Hummingbirds and a Red-tailed Hawk at their son's house in Oceanside, CA. Jody Inman added to that her sightings of Wild Parrots, Black Phoebes, Northern Mockingbirds, and Bushtits at her other son's house in Garden Grove, CA. Mary Freemon saw hummingbirds, juncos, and chickadees around town, while another birder on a visit to the high country in the White Mountains, was lucky to see Blue Grouse and Clark's Nutcrackers.

*I think the world is going to be saved by millions of small things.*

*~Pete Seeger (1919-2014)*

## CONSERVATION

### Ending Lead Poisoning of Wild Birds

(article from American Bird Conservancy, [www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org))

Lead is a deadly toxin that continues to be a mortality threat to birds. Despite a 1991 federal ban on lead shot for waterfowl hunting, lead poisoning remains a problem for birds through the hundreds of tons of lead deposited in the environment annually by upland game bird hunting; deer, elk, bear and other mammal hunting; and fishing. With several good alternatives to lead available on the market, it is simply not necessary to continue using lead.

An additional lead threat has emerged from paint peeling from federal buildings on Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, which is threatening the world's largest breeding colony of Laysan Albatrosses.

The primary birds impacted from lead poisoning are raptors, including Bald and Golden Eagles, California Condors, Mourning Doves, and waterfowl including Trumpeter Swans, Loons, Ducks, and Geese.

ABC believes that all lead shot and bullets for hunting and fishing weights should be phased out in favor of those made from less-hazardous alternatives such as copper, tin, and tungsten. These alternatives are readily available, and although they are more costly, the price will come down significantly as production increases.

Hunters can choose one of eight types of non-toxic shot for hunting. Although the federal ban on lead does not stretch to upland game hunting, making the change to alternative forms of shot will prevent the poisoning of millions of birds.

Lead-free fishing sinkers and jigs are also widely available, and where used will prevent the needless deaths of waterfowl such as Trumpeter Swans, loons, ducks, and geese.

So, let's spread the word- go lead free- and save our birds.

If you find distressed songbirds, raptors including eagles, waterfowl and small mammals, please contact Susan Taggart at (928) 242-5796. If you are unable to reach her and need assistance immediately, you may call the White Mountain Animal Hospital in Lakeside at (928) 368-8425 or Alta Sierra Veterinary Clinic in Show Low (928) 537-2880. Susan works in conjunction with the animal hospitals and is sub-permitted through the Arizona Game and Fish Department to care for injured and orphaned wildlife as a community service.

## White Mountain Audubon Society Membership/Donation Form

White Mountain Audubon Society membership dues are: **Individual \$15**, or **Family \$25 per year**. Please renew your membership. Your tax-deductible membership supports our on-going programs and activities, as well as future new projects. Your membership and donations do make a difference!!!

MEMBERSHIP \_\_\_\_\_ DONATION \_\_\_\_\_

Individual \_\_\_\_\_

Family \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Send this form and your dues or donation to:

**White Mountain Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 3043  
Pinetop, AZ 85935**

You may use this form for either your Membership renewal or a Donation to WMAS. Please designate above which you are doing. **Thank you very much for your support of White Mountain Audubon Society!**

### WHERE TO WRITE

President Barack Obama  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.  
Washington, DC 20206  
202-456-1111

U.S. Sen. Jeff Flake  
B85 Russell Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510  
www.flake.senat.gov/contact

Gov. Jan Brewer  
Executive Tower  
1700 W. Washington  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
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Rep. Albert Hale  
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U.S. Sen. John McCain  
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Rep. Peshlakai  
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[www.whitemountainaudubon.org](http://www.whitemountainaudubon.org)

**White Mountain Audubon Society is dedicated to the enjoyment of birds and other wildlife by providing environmental leadership and awareness through fellowship, education, community involvement, and conservation programs in the White Mountains and surrounding areas.**

**White Mountain Audubon Society  
P. O. Box 3043  
Pinetop, AZ, 85935**