



SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2012

Calendar

All monthly meetings begin at 7:00 pm at the Pinetop-Lakeside Town Council Chambers. Fieldtrip times and meeting places vary, so please check the website or call 367-2462 for more information.

September 5- Regular monthly meeting speaker is Dannette Weiss of AZ Game & Fish who will speak about wind energy and the impact on birds.

September 22- Field trip to Silver Creek Fish Hatchery; meet at Show Low McDonald's at 7:30am.

October 3- Regular monthly meeting speaker will be Susan Taggart. Her program will be on wildlife rehabilitation.

October 5, 6, 7- Annual Nature Film Festival (see article inside the newsletter)

October 20- Field trip to Boyce Thompson Arboretum in Superior. Meet at Pinetop McDonald's at 7:00am.

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: Loretta Pena 368-3380

Membership: Position open

Website Manager: Richard Inman 369-3240

Board Members: Kent Schipper, Jody Inman and Richard Inman

Reach us at: www.whitemountainaudubon.org

Out on a Limb With Your President

It is hard to believe that fall is right around the corner, but that little hint of it is there when you step outside in the morning and the air is clear, crisp, and just a little cool. This is always a pretty time in the mountains with the changing leaves and the wild flowers. This summer Chuck and I were blessed by a little brown bird called a Cordilleran Flycatcher who decided to build a nest under the eave of our front window. She has checked out that location in other summers but she always picked a different spot. This year she liked this spot. She was not alone. Her mate was always close by. I had to get out my books to learn that the way to tell the different sexes is by their call which is a two-note, high pitched tii-seet (the second note is higher) for the male, and for the female a single high-pitched t-seet. Their nest seemed to be made out of grass that was dipped in mud and formed into a cup shape. I don't think the nest was a success because I never saw any little ones. Perhaps this was their first. I will leave the nest alone because sometimes they come back to the same nest. Cordilleran Flycatchers are from the Tyrannidae (Tyrant) family. Their genus is Empidonax. The Cordilleran is a little brown bird with a long tail, a somewhat pointy head and a very distinct eye ring. They seem to be monogamous during one season, and they are sit-and-wait predators. They typically fly out in a circle, catch their prey and fly back to the same place. We were able to observe this behavior during the time they were here. They also flip their tail a lot. I don't know if they will be back next summer to try again, but it has been a great pleasure to watch them this year.

This year we haven't had quite as many hummingbirds as in the past, but we still have some little feisty Rufous hummers and some Broadtails. They are always fun to watch and we will miss them when they migrate out. I always leave my feeders up until there are no more hummers and the wild flowers are gone.

I hope you all enjoy the change of season and ...enjoy birding.

~Mary Ellen

BIRDING EXPEDITIONS TO NORTHERN MEXICO

Are you an active birder interested in helping to conserve bird populations in the Sky Island Region? Join Sky Island Alliance, the Arizona Coordinated Bird Monitoring Program, and Tucson Audubon Society to inventory bird populations in critical habitats located in Northern Mexico. This is a two-part adventure including a training in September of 2012 and a birding expedition in June of 2013. This is a remarkable opportunity for birders to learn new skills and apply their passion to an area of conservation need!

Part I:* on September 14th – 16th 2012 volunteers will participate in a two-day training hosted at a luxury ecotourism ranch high in the oak woodlands of the Sierra la Esmeralda. This ranch, located near Nogales, Sonora, has a long history of partnering with Sky Island Alliance (<http://www.rancholaesmeralda.com.mx/>). The training will cover bird ecology, conservation issues, and specific bird inventory protocols--learning these skills will open doors for participating in other bird inventory work.

Part II: in June 2013 volunteers will travel to the Sierra San Luis to spend a week inventorying high elevation habitats including mountain grasslands, oak woodlands, and pine-oak forests. All sites are located 35 miles southeast of Douglas/Agua Prieta on the Rancho Pan Duro. Data collected on this expedition will fill information gaps for high priority stewardship species and better identify bird conservation priorities in the face of climate change.

Who: Experienced to intermediate birders interested in exploring bird habitats on Sky Island Alliance's partner ranches in Northern Mexico.

Why: Collect critical data on stewardship species in under-studied areas in Northern Mexico.

When: Two separate events include a two-day bird monitoring training held on September 14th - 16th of 2012 and a week-long birding expedition in June 2013.

Where: The volunteer training will be held at an ecotourism ranch in the Sierra la Esmeralda near Nogales, Sonora. The week-long birding expedition will cover numerous high-elevation habitats in the Sierra San Luis, 35 miles southeast of Agua Prieta, on the Rancho Pan Duro.

Cost: \$150 will cover lodging, food, and expert-led training at the Ranch Esmeralda. Food will be provided during the week-long birding expedition in 2013 at Rancho Pan Duro.

Contact Nick Deyo at the Sky Island Alliance for further information and to RSVP.

Email: nick@skyislandalliance.org **Phone:** (520) 624-7080x20

*If you have already been trained in Arizona Coordinated Bird Monitoring Program's area search protocols, the September 2012 training and associated costs are optional.

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STUDY: Urban growth in Arizona may boost temps

Steady growth in Arizona's urban areas could push summertime temperatures higher by as much as 4 degrees Celsius, or 7 degrees as measured on Fahrenheit, scientists at Arizona State University concluded

Researchers examined projected growth rates along the so-called Sun Corridor, which stretches from Prescott south to Nogales, and included the projections in models used to calculate the effects of rising temperatures related to climate change. If the urban corridor reaches a population of 9 million by 2050 as some projections suggest, the buildings, roads, parking lots and other components of bigger cities could lead to summertime temperatures of 2-4 degrees Celsius higher than they are today, according to the study, released recently.

That could transform a 110-degree day, in Fahrenheit, to a 117-degree day.

How much urban growth affects temperatures depends on how cities spread, how much of the natural landscape is paved over and whether cities continue to emit high levels of greenhouse gases, said Alex Mahalov, the study's co-author.

Greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide produced by the burning of fossil fuels, can trap heat in the atmosphere and are considered a leading contributor to climate change.

The study was published in the Aug. 12, 2012 online edition of Nature Climate Change, www.nature.com/nclimate

(Article is from the August 13, 2012 issue of the AZ Republic by Shaun McKinnon. Drawing is by Kirsten Munson)



GOOD NEWS FOR JAGUARS

On August 17th the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service formally proposed to protect 838,232 acres as "critical habitat" for endangered jaguars in southern Arizona and New Mexico -- an area larger than the state of Rhode Island.

When finalized in the next year, and joined with a developing federal recovery plan, **the decision will ensure jaguars return to the wild mountains and deserts of the American Southwest.**

The decision has been a long time coming. The agency listed the jaguar as an endangered species in 1997 following a lawsuit by the Center for Biological Diversity that ended protection delays stretching back to 1978. But to our astonishment, it refused to protect the jaguar's habitat or develop a recovery plan! Instead it declared that jaguars should not be recovered in the United States -- despite the fact that the beautiful cats historically ranged all the way from Monterey Bay, Calif., to Louisiana and north to the Grand Canyon and Colorado.

Refusing to allow federal bureaucrats -- for the first time in U.S. history -- to consign an endangered species to extinction in the United States, we went back to court. In 2009 we won our case: The Fish and Wildlife Service was ordered to protect the jaguar's habitat and create a plan to fully restore the species.

Like wolves and grizzly bears, jaguars were killed en masse by federal trappers and sharpshooters paid to make the West safe for heavily subsidized public-land ranching. By the 1950s jaguars were virtually extinct, but in recent years began to show the first signs of recolonizing Arizona and New Mexico. Individual animals from a Mexican population have been exploring the borderlands of the two states recently. Macho B, the last jaguar to be seen, was killed in a botched capture in 2009 -- the very year we won a court order requiring the species' protection and recovery.

Thanks to all our members who wrote letters, made phone calls, and funded our jaguar protection campaign over the past 15 years. With today's habitat protection proposal and a recovery plan on the way, the full recovery of the American jaguar is finally in sight.

Thank you again for all your support.
(from Center for Biological Diversity website on Aug. 17, 2012)

New Bird Species Discovered in Peru

Ithaca, NY—A colorful, fruit-eating bird with a black mask, pale belly, and scarlet breast—never before described by science—has been discovered and named by Cornell University graduates following an expedition to the remote Peruvian Andes. The Sira Barbet (*Capito fitzpatricki*) is described in a paper published in the July 2012 issue of *The Auk*, the official publication of the American Ornithologists' Union.

The new species was [discovered during a 2008 expedition](#) led by Michael G. Harvey, Glenn Seeholzer, and Ben Winger, young ornithologists who had recently graduated from Cornell at the time. They were accompanied by co-author Daniel Cáceres, a graduate of the Universidad Nacional de San Agustín in Arequipa, Peru, and local Ashéninka guides.

The team discovered the barbet on a ridge of montane cloud forest in the Cerros del Sira range in the eastern Andes. Steep ridges and deep river gorges in the Andes produce many isolated habitats and microclimates that give rise to uniquely evolved species.

Mike Harvey was first to see the new species on October 8, 2008:

"It was sitting about 60 feet up on a bare branch," says Harvey. "At first we thought it was the Scarlet-banded Barbet (*Capito wallacei*), but the more we looked at it, the more we saw obvious differences in its plumage."

Though clearly a sister species of the Scarlet-banded Barbet, the Sira Barbet is readily distinguished by differences in color on the bird's flanks, lower back, and thighs and a wider, darker scarlet breast band. By comparing mitochondrial DNA sequences of the new barbet to DNA sequences of its close relatives in the genus *Capito*, the team secured genetic evidence that this is indeed a new species in the barbet family (Capitonidae). The genetic work was done by co-author Jason Weckstein at The Field Museum in Chicago.

The team chose the scientific name of the new species, *Capito fitzpatricki*, in honor of Cornell Lab of Ornithology executive director [Dr. John W. Fitzpatrick](#), who discovered and named 7 new bird species in Peru during the 1970s and '80s.

"Fitz has inspired generations of young ornithologists in scientific discovery and conservation," says Ben Winger. "He was behind us all the way when we presented our plan for this expedition."

The 2008 expedition was made possible by funding from a special gift to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and donations to the Lab's student World Series of Birding team, Rawlings Cornell Presidential Research Scholars, National Geographic Young Explorers' Grant, and the Explorers Club.

#Note: Michael G. Harvey is currently pursuing a PhD at Louisiana State University; Glenn Seeholzer is in the PhD program at Louisiana State University; Ben Winger is in the PhD program at the University of Chicago

(Article is from Cornell Lab of Ornithology website on August 6, 2012.)

What is Missing?

An article in Cornell Lab of Ornithology's *Living Bird News* magazine explains Maya Lin's new project titled "What is Missing?" Maya, an architect and artist, has created some of America's most powerful, well-known monuments, such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. and the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama. Now she is unveiling what she calls her last memorial, "What is Missing?" which is a tribute to the earth and its vanished and endangered species. This new memorial exists in multiple forms and multiple places. It has appeared in physical exhibits in China, San Francisco and New York City. The multimedia website incorporates audio, visuals and science from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. It is a wonderful website and would be appealing to both adults and children. It is possible also on the site to give your input about something you have personally seen lost or changed in your lifetime.

Go to www.whatismissing.net

HOW BIRDS KEEP THEIR COOL

As temperatures bake much of the United States and the nationwide drought continues, crops wither and fish die. But they aren't the only ones suffering from the blazing summer. Birds are also trying *to keep* their cool. But they don't sweat like humans, or even pant like dogs; instead, they have a variety of unique adaptations to help beat the heat.

In a [study](#) conducted on marsh sparrows in 2011, scientists found that bill size correlates to outside temperatures. Marsh sparrows with larger bills live in warmer climates, for example. The study noted that the [tropical toucan](#) also possesses a large bill, and has the ability to increase or decrease blood flow to its beak to either promote or prevent heat loss.

Laura Erickson of the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#), however, points out that the size of a bird's bill isn't the only factor that keeps it cool.

"In the case of the raven, the further north you go the bigger their bills are," says Erickson. "But they need the bigger bill to chip into frozen carcasses in the winter." Instead, some birds rely on a variety of behavioral adaptations in order to regulate their body temperatures.

Some birds, like the great blue herons that star on the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's [nest cam](#), will open up their wings on a hot day, allowing air to circulate across their bodies and sweep away the excess heat.

"We've watched the adults move their bodies to shade the chicks," says Erickson. Great blue herons will also "droop" their wings in addition to opening them to protect their nestlings from the sun. But researchers can tell that the posture does more than just keep chicks cool, because the birds also do it when they're off the nest.

These are only a couple of behaviors that birds use. When it's hot, some species will also resort to gular fluttering. The bird will open its mouth and "flutter" its neck muscles, promoting heat loss (think of it as the avian version of panting).

"If you think about a dog panting, their tongue isn't only allowing evaporation, but is losing a lot of body fluid," says Erickson. "Birds are much more efficient about water and water loss."

Even so, birds still need to replenish fluids on a hot day. Installing a birdbath can provide feathered friends with a place to cool their heels in the summer, and get a drink. The water level shouldn't be too high—only about an inch deep—and the bottom of the birdbath shouldn't be too slippery. Replenish the water once every two or three days. Otherwise, the stagnant water can play host to algae and mosquito larvae, which can carry the West Nile virus as adults.

Almost as important as water is shade. Temperatures can be far cooler under trees or bushes, and birds often seek out these microclimates. Since a bird's body temperature is much higher than that of humans—a golden crowned kinglet was once found to have a body temperature of 111 degrees Fahrenheit—it's doubly important for them to cool off in a hurry. Proteins that shuttle vital information to a bird's organs begin to break apart at temperatures that are only slightly higher.

Climate change is expected to make droughts more frequent and extreme temperatures more common. And some bird populations are already being affected by the consequences of global warming. A [study](#) published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* reported that tree swallows laid their eggs up to nine days earlier because of warmer temperatures in the spring. Several populations of birds, most notably warblers, have also shifted their home ranges northward, and migration patterns are changing to accommodate the change in climate.

Together, these shifts indicate that birds are learning how to adapt to springs that feel like summers, and summers that feel like scorchers.

(Article is from [Audubonmagazine.org](#))

White Mountain Audubon Society
Presents

Wings & Furry Things Film Festival and Dinner Fundraiser
OCTOBER 5, 6 7, 2012

Presentations/films: Pinetop-Lakeside Town Hall

Friday, October 5, 2012

11:00 Getting to Know Wildlife
1:30 Wolves in the Wild
3:00 Wildlife in the White Mountains
4:30 The Eagle and the Bears

Saturday, October 6, 2012

Dinner: Christmas Tree Restaurant on Woodland Road

4:45 No host bar with CAVU Band
5:45 Buffett Dinner
6:45 Dessert Auction
7:15 Pinau Merlin on "Coming to our Senses"

Sunday, October 7, 2012

2:00 Green Fire
3:30 Lords of Nature
5:00 Anna, Emma & the Condor
6:00 Wolves in the Wild

\$5 per presentation/film or \$30 for all seven

Dinner is \$35 per person, \$30 for 12 years and under

Funds raised will be used by White Mountain Audubon Society to sponsor [The Beginning Birder's Workshop](#), provide [Audubon Adventures](#) for local schools and give a [\\$1,000 scholarship](#) to a local graduating senior.

(Volunteers are needed for various jobs to help with the event; please call Mary Ellen at 367-2462.)

www.whitemountainaudubon.org

Where to write

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Washington, DC 20510
202-225-3121 or
1-888-355-3588

Gov. Jan Brewer
Executive Tower
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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.

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