



## JULY-AUGUST EDITION 2020

### **Out on a Limb by Mary Williams (WMAS Board Member):**

#### Birding in the Time of Corona

Do you find this time in history to be confusing, stressful, discouraging - perhaps overwhelming? Go birding! We who love birds and support the Audubon Society are glad to see that birding is becoming more popular as a 'stay-home' activity with information about it in places such as the New York Times and on PBS. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology reported that this year's record-setting Global Big Day on May 9 added 9,000 new eBirders.

Stress, along with the boredom, bitterness and cynicism that seem to be affecting many people, can be reduced or eliminated as we explore the beautiful isolated birding hotspots in the White Mountains. Perhaps you too can experience some of the joy and peace I've found in the past few months.

Memories: watching a pair of Chickadees fly in while sitting on a shaded log breathing the almost-intoxicating aroma of sun-baked Ponderosa in the forest near Black Canyon Road; listening to chatting Yellow-breasted Chat and meowing Gray Catbirds while enjoying the beauty and heady fragrance of a bank of wild roses in the bridge area at South Fork; delighting in the bright yellow heads and bright red wing patches of the blackbirds while watching the beavers frolic at Big Springs; gasping at the sightings of colorful male Bullock's Oriole, Hepatic Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak and a Gray Fox within minutes of each other at Fool Hollow; laughing at the Canada Jay scoping and then snacking on my apple core while all we could hear was birdsong, the wind in the trees and the flowing river at Sheep Crossing - looking up at clear blue skies and lofty mountain grandeur.

We are blessed with an interesting and challenging hobby that can easily accommodate travel-limiting and social-distancing decrees while we enjoy the fresh air and exercise that helps healthy people stay healthy. This is especially true since the best birding is in the first hours of the day when not many people are out and it's simple to choose trails where we can step a few yards away from those passing.

Birding is, of course, easily done around our homes and neighborhoods too. If you have not yet done so and if allowed where you live, set up a water and feeding station and identify and record - perhaps with photography - what you see. Internet exploration of birding also is recommended. Check out: [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org)

### Attracting Birds to Your Yard

Remember that you don't need to visit crowded stores to buy birdbaths, houses, feeders and feed. It's easy to order online and have items delivered or take advantage of a store's pickup services. Remember too that feeders must be kept clean and to avoid the red dyes that harm hummingbirds. Simply boil 1/2 cup sugar in 2 cups of water, cooling before filling their feeders. Also be sure that any outdoor cats in your area are kept indoors or reported to animal control.

### **White Mountain Audubon Society (WMAS) 2020 Chapter Officers:**

President: Mary Ellen Bittorf 367-2462  
Vice-President: Tom Jernigan 532-1510  
Secretary: Liz Jernigan 532-1511  
Treasurer: Tom Jernigan 532-1510  
Field Trips: Rob Bettaso 368-8481  
Newsletter: Rob Bettaso 368-8481  
Webmaster: Allen Vicker  
Membership: Mary Freemon 205-8597

### **Board Members (2020):**

Mary Ellen Bittorf, Chuck Bittorf, Tom Jernigan, Liz Jernigan, Joan Patrick, Mary Freemon, Rob Bettaso, Mary Williams.

### **CALENDAR**

All monthly programs/meetings begin at 6:30 pm on the first Wednesday of the month (except in January and February). Please note that all upcoming meetings are at the Pinetop-Lakeside Town Council Chambers, 325 W. White Mountain Blvd until future notice.

You may call Liz Jernigan (928-532-1511) for more information on monthly meetings and special events. For information on field trips please direct your calls to Rob Bettaso (928-368-8481) and leave a message.

Please note: Both the 2020 programs and field trips have been planned & scheduled since late Winter, but, unfortunately, are only being announced close to the date of their scheduled times due to COVID19 concerns and restrictions. Emails will be the most logical way for us to keep you posted as to when we are able to safely follow our 2020 schedule.

## **WMAS Scholarship Program for 2020**

Scholarship Winner Essay by Mary Szabo

The following is an excerpt from Mary Szabo's essay submitted along with her application for White Mountain Audubon scholarship:

As a child, I remember when a friend and I personally "discovered" Billy Creek. Here was a mystical riparian area only several hundred yards from Highway 260, and no one else in the world knew about it. Of course it didn't take long until we saw the unmistakable signs of human presence- trash, old tires, and plastic water bottles. I continued to go there over the years, and even now, as a teenager, still resort to Billy Creek when I need space from my sister. While I still see it as a magical place, I am concerned that it may not be here for future generations. Our water resources are limited here on the mountain, and demand from residents and visitors continues to grow. It is imperative that we find ways to share these limited resources among the many human and natural residents and visitors found here in the White Mountains.

### **UPDATES & REMINDERS:**

Have you paid your annual membership dues? If not, a friendly reminder that WMAS relies on membership dues for such important Chapter actions as our annual Scholarship Awards to White Mountain area graduating seniors who have expressed an interest in pursuing a career in natural history, conservation, and other related fields. Thank you for helping us to continue to make such programs a regular part of our Chapter mission. Note that the Donation form is at the end of every Newsletter.

Also, if you are not a member of the National Audubon Society, we encourage all Chapter members to join the national organization. Information on joining the national organization is easy as you only need to type "National Audubon Society" into your internet search engine to obtain the simple instructions for joining.

And remember, you should always feel free to offer your assistance to the Board. For that matter, there are some on the Board who are interested in moving on from the Board to focus on other aspects of their lives, so, we are always interested in hearing from anyone who might want to accept the fun challenges of filling a Board or Officer position!

### **Some Recent Bird Sightings From Around Our Region:**

The long days of early summer allow us to get out birding by 5AM, if we are so inclined. And while early morning birding is typically more productive than evening birding, we can nonetheless also enjoy evening light and tranquility until nearly 8pm. Bird species and activity patterns vary between these early and later periods of daylight so make the most of your time and get out to revel in the crepuscular birdlife of both dawn and dusk.

Dawn can be a good time to see warblers, finches, tanagers and orioles. Dusk can be a good time to see raptors (including owls), thrushes, waterbirds, nighthawks and poorwills. Generally it is best if you

put the setting or rising sun to your back so that the birds are front-lit for more easy viewing and identification.

P.S. While “e-bird” is generally the most efficient way for our members to learn of bird sightings in our area, you can also feel free to give me a call if you are looking for a particular species or are trying to follow-up on birds that you have heard have recently been reported in the our area (Rob: 928-368-8481 and please leave a message so that I can return your call).

**Special Feature:**

Please note that on a separate attachment to this Newsletter is a special feature: an article and photos by our good friend Sue Sitko. Due to complications in the formatting, I have attached Sue’s article and photos as a stand-alone document rather than incorporating it into this Newsletter.

## Membership/Donation Form

White Mountain Audubon Society chapter membership dues are: Individual \$15 or Family \$25 per year. Please renew your membership every January. 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! LIKE US ON FACEBOOK.

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