



## MARCH-APRIL 2011

### South Texas Sightings

Planning our vacation a couple of months back, we noticed that nearly every town, county and state around the nation advertises itself as a "birding hotspot." We thought to ourselves, "How could every place be a hotspot?" So we were a little skeptical that the place we chose would be as great as it was cracked up to be. Wow! Were we surprised –South Texas will knock your birding socks off—at least it did ours.

We saw 26 new life birds and a total of 66 different species. The life birds that thrilled us included: Roseate Spoonbills, Green Jays, Great Kiskadees, Tropical Kingbird, Reddish Egrets, Tricolored Herons, Little Blue Herons, Long-billed Curlews, White Ibises, Crested Caracaras (all over the place), Black Skimmers, Forster's Terns, Orange-crowned Warbler, Black-necked Stilts, Ruddy Turnstone, Lesser Yellowlegs, White-tailed Hawks, Black Vultures, Savannah Sparrows, Long-billed Thrasher, Vermillion Flycatcher, Olive Sparrows, Willets, Eastern Meadowlarks, Great-horned Owls, and Northern Bobwhites.

We stayed at an RV Park in a small town on the edge of the Laguna Madre. This place was approximately 40 miles from Mexico. Laguna Madre is the salt water lake between the barrier island (Padre Island) and the mainland. It runs more than 100 miles along the Gulf coast. The water is only 1 to 4 feet deep, except for the channels that were cut out for shipping. We zoomed along in a boat while 10 feet away birds were standing in inch deep water. So we got some pretty close up looks at them.

The RV park was adjacent to the famous King Ranch, at 800,000 acres one of the largest in the world. Much of it is still in a wild state. It was a daily occurrence to see herds of white tail deer wandering through the RV Park and the town, as well as turkeys and javalina too. Every evening just before dark, a pair of Great Horned Owls settled into nearby palm trees or on top of an RV and gave a hoot.

There are several wildlife refuges in the area and one really nice new birding center on South Padre Island. The birding center is state owned and has a mile or so of boardwalk with viewing stands over the tidewater marsh.

Since this trip happened in January, we were not there for the migrations of February and March. So, we are already planning our next trip!

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Lloyd Pentecost reported at our last Board meeting that the new website that he and the WMAS Board have been working on will soon be up and running. He says there will be a rotating space for WMAS member photos to be displayed. So pick out your favorites and Lloyd will let us know just how to submit them. We will have a few of our Texas bird photos ready.

Remember, as the Audubon yearly events get underway, to save time for the Beginning Birders Workshop, Birdathon (May), June Campout & Potluck, and the Birdwatchers Retreat at Beaver Creek in August. Exact dates TBA.

Happy Birding,  
Tom & Liz

### CALENDAR

**All monthly meetings begin at 7:00 pm at Pinetop-Lakeside Town Council Chambers in Lakeside. Fieldtrips meet at Pinetop McDonald's at 7:00 am, unless stated otherwise.**

**March 2<sup>nd</sup>** -Regular monthly meeting speaker will be Miles Gilbert, archaeologist, who will give a program on John James Audubon.

**March 19<sup>th</sup>** -Fieldtrip to "Jewel of the White Mountains" Woodland Lake Park. Meet at Pinetop McDonald's at 7:30 am.

**April 6<sup>th</sup>** - Regular monthly meeting speaker is David Newlin, Watershed Director for Little Colorado River Plateau, who will speak about water in the area.

**April 16<sup>th</sup>** - Fieldtrip is the "Spring Fling" to Pintail/Telephone Lakes. Meet at 7 am at Pinetop McDonald's or 7:30 am at Show Low McDonald's.

### Your Officers

<b>President:</b> Mary Ellen Bittorf	367-2462
<b>Vice-Pres.:</b> Tom Jernigan	532-1510
<b>Secretary:</b> Liz Jernigan	532-1510
<b>Treasurer:</b> Chuck Bittorf	367-2462
<b>Programs:</b> Loretta Pena	368-3380
<b>Field Trips:</b> Kent Schipper	537-7569
<b>Editor:</b> Loretta Pena	368-3380
<b>Membership:</b> Mary Gordon	537-0447

**Board Members:** Mary Gordon, Steve Gordon, Kent Schipper, Lloyd Pentecost and Doris Raspa

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

## SIGHTINGS

Since we don't meet in January and February these sightings are from emails received during the fall and winter. Eric Hough stated:

"On October 28th 2011 my mother, Elaine, saw and heard at least three **MEXICAN JAYS** near the intersection of Artists Draw Rd. and Pine Rim Drive in Heber. This is only the third time anyone in my family has had this species above the rim. My mom checked our records to find that we had one on August 27, 2000 and one on June 25, 2003 both visiting our feeders. In each case the single birds were tagging along with a flock of **Pinyon Jays**. I think this individual bird must have gotten lost and tagged along with the Pinyon Jay flock after they had an irruption below the Rim. I have not heard of any other reports of Mexican Jays occurring above the Rim. Do any of you know of any past incidences? Below the Rim we've found them from Carrizo across to Pine/Strawberry. I've read reports of them being in the Blue Range Primitive Area too. While these birds my mom just saw may have been a result of post-breeding dispersal, it would be interesting if they undergo a range expansion above the Rim. Keep an eye out for these guys over in Show Low/Pinetop/Lakeside!"

In November, Eric reported a "**Red**" **Fox Sparrow** and a male **Merlin** in the Heber area on Thanksgiving Day.

On 11-27-10, he and his family sighted a **Northern Shrike** at Becker Lake Wildlife Area. At Wenima, they found a lone **Snow Goose**, a **Common Yellowthroat** and a **Belted Kingfisher**. At the Gabaldon Campground near Big Lake they saw **Gray Jay** and unfortunately 8 **Western Grebes** stuck far out on the ice.

In December, Eric reported over 100 **Pine Siskins**, a **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, and **Cassin's Finches** in the Heber area and **Cassin's Finches** in Flagstaff also.

Eric turned in some other sightings also; a pair of **Sandhill Cranes** was seen in January along the LCR near Woodruff. A **Rough-legged Hawk** was reported west of Eagar and 3 **Wilson's Snipes** and an **American Dipper** were seen in Greer.

Gus Hollenbeck reported **Red Crossbill**, **Merlin**, **Red-naped Sapsucker**, the resident **Red-tailed Hawk**, **Hermit Thrush**, **Sharp-shinned Hawk**, **Acorn, Hairy**, and **Downy Woodpeckers**, **Northern Flicker**, **Mountain Chickadee** in Linden. He also saw a **Golden Eagle** while driving near Vernon.

Pat Yovonovitz has sent in a list of life birds seen on her travels in various places in Texas. They are: **Golden-fronted Woodpecker**, **Brown Thrasher**, **Marsh Wren**, **Great Crested Flycatcher**, **Ringed Kingfisher**, **Olive Sparrow**, **Plain Chachalaca**, **Altamira Oriole**, **Green Jay**, **Long-billed Thrasher**, **Clay-colored Robin**, **Black-crested Titmouse**, **White-tipped Dove**, **Green Parakeet**, **Red-crowned Parrot**, **White-tailed Kite**, **Anhinga**, **Least Grebe**, **Pauraque**, **Buff-bellied Hummingbird**, **Tri-colored Heron**, and **White Ibis**. Some wonderful sightings, Pat!

Thanks very much everyone!

## Migration Celebration

<b>DATE</b>	Saturday, April 09, 2011
<b>TIME</b>	9:00 am – 3:00 pm
<b>WHERE</b>	<u>Nina Mason Pulliam Río Salado Audubon Center, 3131 S Central Avenue, Phoenix</u>
<b>COST</b>	FREE
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Join us for our annual nature festival, Migration Celebration! Explore the world of bats, butterflies, and birds as you stroll along our nature trail. See live hawks and hummingbirds up-close and make your very own wings. Crafts, food, activities, and family-fun for everyone! FREE admission. Nina Mason Pulliam Río Salado Audubon Center, 3131 S Central Avenue, Phoenix—just two miles south of downtown!
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<u><a href="http://riosalado.audubon.org/">http://riosalado.audubon.org/</a></u>

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

## White Mountain Audubon Local Chapter Membership Form

Dues for White Mountain Audubon Society membership are: **Individual- \$10.00** and **Family- \$15.00**. Your tax-deductible membership supports our on-going programs and activities, as well as future new projects. **Your funds make a difference!!**

Please renew my annual Chapter Membership. Enclosed you'll find my dues.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Send this form and your dues to:

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

**PLEASE NOTE** that in our January and March newsletters, you will find this annual membership dues form. In our other newsletters (May, July, September, and November), you will find our "general donation" form, which will now be used for donations above and beyond your \$10 or \$15 dues. Please use this form only for your dues. **Thank you very much!**

### Update on our Members

Mary Ellen was released from the hospital in mid-February after heart surgery and is recuperating at the home of her daughter in the Valley. She is getting stronger, takes walks, and even went birding at a riparian area nearby. She says, "I want to thank everyone for the cards, letters, thoughts, and prayers. I look forward to seeing everybody when I get home!"

Chuck is in Utah with family members and is progressing well and taking walks every day.

I am happy to report that Doris Raspa is home and recovering well from her second stint in the hospital and at Sierra Blanca also.

A note came from Sally Walker and she is doing well from her recent hip surgery and was able to take in several events at the Wings over Willcox event in January.

**We are thinking of each of you and send well-wishes to all!**

(Thank you to Tom and Liz Jernigan for filling in for Mary Ellen and contributing the great article about Texas birding on the first page.)



## WHITE MOUNTAIN AUDUBON SOCIETY 2011 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### March

**2<sup>nd</sup> - Monthly Meeting** Speaker will be Miles Gilbert, archaeologist, who will give the program on John James Audubon.

**19<sup>th</sup> - Field trip** is to the "Jewel of the White Mountains" Woodland Lake Park. Meet at 7:30 am at the Pinetop McDonald's.

### April

**6<sup>th</sup> - Monthly Meeting** Speaker will be David Newlin, LCR Watershed Project Director, who will speak about water in our region.

**16<sup>th</sup> - Field trip** is the "Spring Fling" to Pintail Lake/Telephone Lake. Meet at 7 am at Pinetop McDonald's or 7:30 am at Show Low McDonald's.

### May

**4<sup>th</sup> - Monthly Meeting** Speaker will be Lloyd Pentecost, photographer, who will do the program on photographing wildlife.

**14<sup>th</sup> - Field trip** is the "Riparian Retreat" at Wenima Wildlife Area and Becker Lake. It is combined with the North American Migration Count for Apache County. Meet at 7 am at Pinetop McDonald's or 7:30 at Show Low McDonald's.

**14<sup>th</sup> - North American Migration Count** for Navajo and Greenlee Counties (See article in this newsletter.)

**20<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> Birdathon** This is our biggest fundraiser of the year, where people get pledges from friends, family, co-workers and then attempt to see as many birds as possible in the 4 day period.

### June

**1<sup>st</sup> - Monthly Meeting** Speaker will be Dewain Bartimus, herpetologist, who will talk about native reptiles and amphibians.

**17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> - Campout** will be at Burnt Mill Springs on the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest. Campout speaker is unknown at this time.

### July

**13<sup>th</sup> - Monthly Meeting** Speaker will be Dan Kipp of Continuous Raingutter who will inform us about ways to collect rainwater.

**30<sup>th</sup> - Annual Hummingbird Banding** with Sheri Williamson and Tom Wood at Sipe Wildlife Area.

### August

**3<sup>rd</sup> - Monthly Meeting** Speaker is unknown at this time.

**23<sup>rd</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> - Birdwatcher's Extravaganza** at Beaver Creek Guest Ranch in Alpine.

## September

**7<sup>th</sup> - Monthly Meeting** Speaker will be Anthony Cooley, who will give a program on the life of his grandfather, Col. Corydon Cooley.

**17<sup>th</sup> - Field Trip** will be "Silver Creek Reflections" at Silver Creek Fish Hatchery. Meet at Show Low McDonald's at 7:30 am.

## October

**5<sup>th</sup> - Monthly Meeting** Speaker will be Stephanie Rainey, videographer and photographer who will talk about her work creating the outdoor TV program titled "Stepping Outdoors".

**15<sup>th</sup> - Field Trip** is "Apachelands" at Williams Creek Fish Hatchery & Kinishba Ruins. A permit is required which costs \$5.

## November

**2<sup>nd</sup> - Monthly Meeting** Speaker will be Jo Baeza, writer and historian, who will talk about her experiences on Forest Service Lookout Towers over many summers.

**19<sup>th</sup> - Field Trip** will be to Fool Hollow Lake and Show Low Treatment Plant. Meet at Show Low McDonald's at 8:30 am.

## December

Dates for the Christmas Potluck and Christmas Bird Counts will be determined at a later time.

**MEETINGS** are held at 7:00 pm at the Pinetop-Lakeside Town Council Chambers on Neils Hansen Lane. Programs Coordinator is Loretta Pena.

**FIELD TRIP** times vary on this schedule. Field Trip Coordinator is Kent Schipper. Call him at 537-7569 for times, if none is listed or for more information. Bring binoculars, bird guide, water, and a bag lunch. For more information, go to [www.whitemountainaudubon.org](http://www.whitemountainaudubon.org)

**CHANGES AND UPDATES** to this schedule will appear in the *Osprey Overlook* on the website, in the *White Mountain Independent* and on the website at [www.whitemountainaudubon.org](http://www.whitemountainaudubon.org)

## CONSERVATION Feral Cats

(Washington, D.C., December 1, 2010) A new, peer-reviewed report titled, Feral Cats and Their Management from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, has put the annual economic loss from feral cat predation on birds in the United States at \$17 billion. Study authors are Hildreth, VanTassel and Hygnstrom. The report analyzes existing research on management of the burgeoning feral cat population - over 60 million and counting -- in the United States, including the controversial practice of Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR). "This report is a must read for any community or government official thinking about what to do about feral cats. It encapsulates the extensive research on this subject and draws conclusions based on that data. Not surprisingly, the report validates everything American Bird Conservancy has been saying about the feral cat issue for many years, namely TNR doesn't work in controlling feral cat populations," said Darin Schroeder, Vice President for Conservation Advocacy for American Bird Conservancy, the nation's leading bird conservation organization. "Communities seeking a solution to their feral cat problems need to consider the science on the issue and the well being of animals impacted by feral cats as well as the cats themselves. These other animals - birds especially - don't deserve to die at the hands of a predator introduced into their environment by irresponsible pet owners. A humane decision-making process on this issue must also recognize that feral cats live short, miserable lives because of disease, other predators, severe weather and traffic hazards. Thus their life expectancy is about one third as long as owned cats," Schroeder added. A key finding of the report was the statement by the authors that they do not recommend the TNR method to eliminate colonies of feral cats. In their extensive research, they were unable to find a single real-world example of TNR succeeding in eliminating a feral cat colony. Some of the many findings of the report include:

- \*Feral cats are invasive and pose a threat to native fauna and public health.
  - \* Three separate studies showed that most feral cats (62 to 80 percent) carry the parasite responsible for toxoplasmosis - a condition of special concern to pregnant women.
  - \* Cats are responsible for the extinction of at least 33 species of birds.
  - \* Feral cats kill an estimated 480 million birds in the U.S. each year (the study did not address the question of bird predation by owned cats. Studies suggest that there are 80 million owned cats in the U.S. and that 43 percent have access to the outdoors. Total cat predation on birds is likely around one billion birds per year, though some analyses suggest much higher figures.)
  - \* Feeding feral cats encourage them to congregate which encourages the chances of diseases being transmitted.
  - \* The supplemental feeding of feral cats should be prohibited.
  - \* Cats kill far more native wildlife species than nuisance (invasive) species.
  - \* Cats will kill wildlife no matter how well they are fed.
  - \*One reference to TNR success claimed that one particular feral cat colony numbered 920 cats before TNR, and then 678 after. However, when migrations and births were factored in, the colony had actually increased in size -- to 983 cats.
  - \* The life expectancy of a feral cat is 3-5 years as opposed to 15 years for owned cats.
- The report can be viewed by going to the following website and then scrolling to report EC1781:  
<http://elkhorn.unl.edu/epublic/pages/index.jsp?what=subjectAreasD&subjectAreasId=38>

American Bird Conservancy (**Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**) conserves native birds and their habitats throughout the Americas by safeguarding the rarest species, conserving and restoring habitats, and reducing threats while building capacity of the bird conservation movement. ABC is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit membership organization that is consistently awarded a top, four-star rating by the independent group, Charity Navigator.



## Help Needed on Navajo and Greenlee County North American Migration Counts (NAMC), May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Dear White Mountain Audubon,

This year I will again be the compiler and organizer of Navajo County's North American Migration Count (NAMC) which will be held on Saturday, May 14th. This count has existed in Arizona since 2004 (in Navajo County since 2005) and operates similar to the Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) in that all individual birds of every species found are counted. However, unlike the CBC's, this count is FREE! Just because it is a "migration" count does not mean we are only interested in migrants; we want ALL birds counted. In general, the objective is to cover as much ground and sample as many habitats as possible (dividing into smaller counting groups to increase coverage helps accomplish this). Even counting birds in your yard helps with the count though. Navajo County contains diverse habitats, with northern and southern distributions of species converging along the Mogollon Rim. In the past, areas within Navajo County that have been surveyed on the NAMC have included Show Low, Pinetop-Lakeside, Whiteriver, Carrizo, Heber-Overgaard, Aripine, Zeniff, Snowflake-Taylor, Woodruff, Holbrook, Joseph City, and Winslow. Last year we finally got coverage up to the Rez lands north of I-40, but there are lots of great places that could use future coverage on the Navajo and Hopi lands, such as Keams Canyon and Navajo National Monument. Last year we had 2,334 individual birds representing 124 species, with highlights including Zone-tailed Hawk, Three-toed Woodpecker, Mexican Jay, Hooded Oriole, and Evening Grosbeak. Contact me at [thebirdwhisperer22@yahoo.com](mailto:thebirdwhisperer22@yahoo.com) if you are interested in participating. Your help for any amount of time on that day would be greatly appreciated!

Furthermore, Greenlee County (which borders the southern edge of Apache County) is also in dire need of birders for this count. This county has only had counters on the NAMC for a couple of occasions and is one of the least visited counties in the state. There is a lot of habitat diversity in this county, ranging from the high elevation mixed conifer forests at Hannagan's Meadow to the riparian zones and pine-oak woodlands along the Blue River, and desert riparian areas around Duncan. As of yet there is no compiler for Greenlee County, so if you have the desire to fulfill this role or simply just want to count and submit your numbers, please contact Troy Corman (the state coordinator for the NAMC) at [aplomado@cox.net](mailto:aplomado@cox.net). There is a lot to learn about the avian diversity of this under-birded county.

Good birding,

Eric Hough  
[thebirdwhisperer22@yahoo.com](mailto:thebirdwhisperer22@yahoo.com)

"The human spirit needs places where nature has not been rearranged by the hand of man."  
~Author Unknown

## Where to write

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

U. S. Sen. Jon Kyl  
730 Hart Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510  
202-225-3121 or  
1-888-355-3588

Gov. Jan Brewer  
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1-800-253-0883

Rep. Brenda Barton  
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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.**

**White Mountain Audubon Society  
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