



SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2011

Calendar

Sept. 7th -- Regular monthly meeting; speaker will be Anthony Cooley speaking about his family history.

Sept. 17th -- Field trip will be to Silver Creek Fish Hatchery. Meet at Show Low McDonald's at 7:30 am.

Oct. 5th -- Regular monthly meeting; speaker will be Stephanie Rainey who will talk about her "Stepping Outdoors" TV program.

Oct. 15th -- Field trip will be to Williams Creek Fish Hatchery & Kinishba Ruins. A permit is required which costs \$5.

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: Mary Gordon	537-0447

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

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, and 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 decided she liked it. 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 tseet. 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 also some Broadtails. They are always fun to watch and we will miss them when they migrate out. I 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

White Mountain Audubon Local Chapter Donation Form

White Mountain Audubon Society needs your tax-deductible donation to support our on-going programs and activities, as well as future new projects. **Your funds make a difference!!**

YES! I would like to donate: _____ \$10 _____ \$20 _____ \$50 _____ Other

Name: _____ Telephone: _____
Mailing address: _____ E-mail: _____

Please send your donation and this form to:

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

PLEASE NOTE that in our January and March newsletters, you will find our annual membership dues form. In our other newsletters (May, July, September, and November), you will find this "general donation" form, which will now be used for donations above and beyond your regular dues. Please use this form only for donations other than your membership dues.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

"There is nothing in which the birds differ more from man than the way in which they can build and yet leave a landscape as it was before."

Robert Lynd
The Blue Lion and Other Essays.

BIRDATHON MAY- 2011 RESULTS

The Birdathon was held on May 13-16 and the following people participated: Mary Ellen and Chuck Bittorf, Liz & Tom Jernigan and Bob and Loretta Pena. The total amount collected was **\$580**, quite a bit less than normal.

The total species seen was 67. Some of the species seen on the count are: Juniper Titmouse, American Avocet, American Bittern, Black-necked Stilt, Downy Woodpecker, Common Yellowthroat, House Wren, Mountain Chickadee, Magnificent Hummingbird, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Lewis woodpecker, Common Merganser, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Western Wood Pewee, Cinnamon Teal, Green-winged Teal and Say's Phoebe.

Thanks very much for all of the contributions to WMAS that help to make possible the scholarship and other ongoing programs.



Kristen Munson

www.whitemountainaudubon.org

SIGHTINGS

Barb Davis saw a very rare bird for our area... the **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** on July 14th at Horseshoe Cienega. That is great Barb!! Other sightings for July were not available.

At the August 3rd meeting the following were reported: Mary Jane & Pete Milne had **Bullock's Oriole, Hepatic Tanager, Acorn, Downy, Hairy and Lewis Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Cassin's Finch, Broad-tailed and Rufous Hummingbird** in their yard feeders in Lakeside. Bob & Loretta Pena saw **Hairy Woodpecker, Lesser Goldfinch and Broad-tailed Hummingbird** in Show Low. In Linden, Kathryn Melsted sighted **American Kestrel, Nighthawk, and Black-headed Grosbeak**. Also in Linden, another Auduboner saw **Plain Titmouse, Western Bluebird, Nighthawk, Acorn Woodpecker and Northern Flicker**. Pat Calkins has seen **Acorn, Downy & Lewis Woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, nuthatches, orioles, Black-headed Grosbeak and House Finch**. Kent Schipper was on the Gentry Fire Tower from May 22nd to August 1st. He had an unbelievable summer of birding there, everyday seeing probably 20 bird species. He enjoyed for the first time seeing 4 pairs of **Hepatic Tanagers** and 4 pairs of **Grace's Warblers**. Every day he was able to observe adults catching insects in the air or on pine needles and feeding their young. He saw a female nighthawk (acting wounded) fly off of 2 eggs on the bare ground. Then he saw the grown offspring nighthawks fly from the ground where their nest had been. That is great Kent!!! Thanks for sharing your **experiences**.

Thanks very much to everyone for your sightings!!

Gone Fishing!

Green Herons sometimes drop live insects, berries, or other objects onto the water's surface to attract fish. When an inquisitive fish appears, the heron grabs it with a quick thrust of the bill!!

(Info is from AvianWeb.com)

Arizona Treefrog

Hyla eximia

Since early July when the rain arrived, we have been hearing frogs in the yard. We found one in the vegetable garden and one in a pot of flowers. They are both still here and we see them daily.

AZ Treefrog is the state amphibian, adopted August 13, 1986. In 1985, as part of the AZ G & F Commission's "AZ Wildlife Awareness" program, thousands of school kids from around AZ voted for an official state mammal, reptile, fish and amphibian.

First the students studied 800 species to help them determine the best choice in each category. Four finalists were chosen from each category. Amphibian finalists were: Red Spotted Toad, Colorado River Toad, Spadefoot Toad and AZ Treefrog. AZ Treefrog won by a large margin.

Only 2 species of frogs are found in AZ: the other is the Canyon Treefrog.

AZ Treefrog ranges in size from $\frac{3}{4}$ inch to 2 inches. They vary in color from green to gold to bronze. There is a distinct dark black stripe that goes from the head along their back to the rear of their legs. They are whitish on the underbelly with either a greenish or tan throat. Some of the AZ Treefrogs have black spots on their backs. On their feet, they have small pads which cushion their toes and allow them to climb trees.

They are mainly insect eaters, but also eat earthworms, spiders and small invertebrates.

This species reside in oak, pine and fir forests about 5,000 meters above sea level, including the mountains of central AZ, the Mogollon Rim and the Huachuca Mountains in Cochise County. In these areas they can be found in montane streams, wet meadows, cienegas, roadside ditches and yards and gardens; they generally breed in bodies of water.

Their breeding season begins with the start of the monsoon season and lasts 2-3 days. Their mating call is repeated 2-3 times per second until finding a mate. The eggs are laid in small clusters on vegetation. As tadpoles they are about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long; in 6-11 weeks the tadpoles change into frogs.

(Info is from Netstate.com and Reptiles of AZ.org)



CONSERVATION

Birds & Climate Change

Nearly 60% of the 305 relatively widely distributed bird species found in North America in winter are on the move, shifting their ranges northward by an average of 35 miles. Audubon scientists analyzed 40 years of citizen-science Christmas Bird Count data — and their findings provide new and powerful evidence that global warming is having a serious impact on natural systems.

Northward movement was detected among species of every type, including more than 70 percent of highly adaptable forest and feeder birds.

Only grassland species were an exception - with only 38 percent mirroring the northward trend. But far from being good news for species like Eastern Meadowlark and Henslow's Sparrow, this reflects the grim reality of severely-depleted grassland habitat and suggests that these species now face a double threat from the combined stresses of habitat loss and climate adaptation.

It is the complete picture of widespread movement and the failure of some species to move at all that illustrate the impacts of climate change on birds. They are sending us a powerful signal that we need to 1) take policy action to curb climate change and its impacts, and 2) help wildlife and ecosystems adapt to unavoidable habitat changes, even as we work to curb climate change itself.

Browse some species on the move - and some who are not as adaptable - and learn what you can do to help.

More details can be found on the Birds & Climate change web pages, at National Audubon Society.

U.N. World Population Day

By October 2011, scientists predict that there will be *7 billion humans on earth*. That doesn't bode well for the thousands of imperiled plants and animals the Center for Biological Diversity is tirelessly working to protect.

So today, in recognition of the 23rd annual UN World Population Day, the Center is joining governments, universities and public-interest groups the world over to stress the need to stabilize human numbers and bring our species in balance with the rest of the planet.

To highlight this critical threat, we've just launched an exciting public service ad on a 520-square-foot television screen in one of the most densely populated places on Earth: New York City's Times Square (see the ad at ExtinctionCrisis.org). This ad will be seen by more than 1.5 million people and is the latest innovation in our overpopulation campaign. We hope it will help jump-start the national conversation on our booming human population.

The Center is the leading environmental group calling attention to the connection between unsustainable population growth and the loss of plant and animal species around the globe. Since we started our overpopulation campaign in 2010, we've distributed 350,000 Endangered Species Condoms, built up a group of 7,000 volunteer distributors, launched *Pop X* -- our monthly e-newsletter -- and submitted tens of thousands of letters calling for greater access and funding for family planning services.

Now we need your help to keep the momentum going.

- 1) Watch our exciting new public service ad and learn about the impacts of human overpopulation on imperiled plants and animals on our website.
- 2) Take action -- check out our Action Toolbox, sign up for Pop X, and write a letter to the editor (here's a sample).
- 3) Make a generous gift to help the Center continue this critical work to address human overpopulation and the extinction crisis with innovative and powerful campaigns.

It will take all of us speaking out about human overpopulation to save the birds, plants, fish, snails, bears, wolves, butterflies and whales the Center's committed to protect.

Your generous help and action today will support the Center's efforts to bring the human overpopulation and overconsumption problem into the public eye and develop policy solutions to tackle its complexities.

For the wild,
Center for Biological Diversity

Winning Scholarship Essay--- 2011
by Ashton Conner, graduate, of Show Low High School

I have always loved the outdoors. Initially from the desert, when I moved to Show Low I was amazed by the lush landscape of the White Mountains. The immense amount of 'green' and the large abundance of wildlife astounded me and inspired me to strive to conserve the natural beauty that exists beyond my front door, not merely for its vanity, but for its effect on the wildlife that inhabits it as well. I knew there were multiple methods to do this, both on a large and small scale. However, I did not experience a sufficient breakthrough for what I could do to help the environment until I was selected to conduct skin cancer research at the University of Arizona's *Arizona Cancer Center* last summer. My experience doing research wound up an amazing experience for both eye-opening personal growth and learning; I was inspired to become a medical researcher, and I discovered what I could do to sync my personal interests with helping the environment. Throughout my research experiment my mentor and I worked with highly toxic chemicals and material; we often had to dispose of cells and other components of our work in hazardous materials bags and be extra careful not to pour anything down the sink. One day, we were forced to wear goggles and gloves when exposing various types of skin cells to a UVB light, which produced colossal amounts of the harmful type of light mainly responsible for causing skin cancer. Again, we had to take careful measure to dispose of the affected cells properly following our data collection and it made me wonder what would happen if the toxic cells were disposed of improperly and given the chance to enter the natural environment. What would happen? I researched my question and in turn was horrified to learn of the effects of improper disposal of medications and pills on the environment. Disposal of medications---which can be just as toxic as the harmful chemicals and substances we used in the lab---is not well regulated and because of it, the environment is taking a hit. When people dispose of medication improperly, such as flushing it down the toilet, they are exposing our fascinating environment to substances just as caustic as the ones my mentor and I used in the lab, which were abrasive enough to burn through metal. This sad fact startled me---imagine what could happen to the environment if people continue to dispose of hazardous materials so carelessly! As someone who appreciated the environment, I then became exorbitantly interested in helping find an end to this thoughtless act. I have decided that as a college undergraduate next year to get involved in doing research on the harmful effects of medications on the environment, and what we can do to cease the negative outcomes. I love the forest, I adore the desert, and I never cease to be amazed by the wildlife I constantly see enjoying the environment as well. We all must take a stand to protect our surroundings, and I am taking my stand by researching how to eradicate the negative effects of improper medication disposal on the environment.

BIRD NOTES

Common Nighthawk

Recently here in Show Low, where Bob and I live, we saw the Common Nighthawk in the evening just as the sky began to darken. It was high in the sky, flying in its typical erratic manner. It was a new bird for us here; our list is now at 54 birds for our yard, which is postage stamp size. It is amazing to us that we have seen that many bird species in the yard and out the windows.

Common Nighthawks have one of the longest migration routes of any North American bird. They generally migrate in large flocks, arriving late to breeding grounds in spring and leaving early in the fall. They breed in open country across North America, wintering throughout South America to northern Argentina.

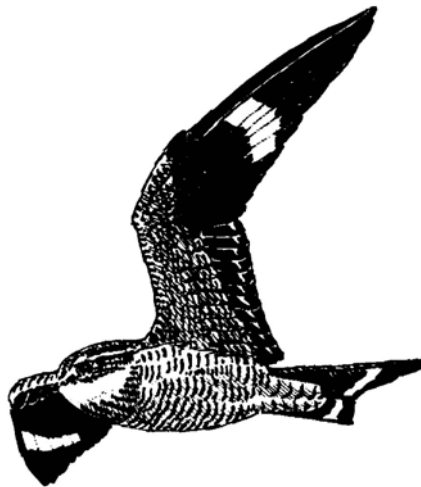
The Common Nighthawk is larger and longer winged than other nighthawks. It is about 9 ½ in length, with a 24 inch wing span. Their colors vary regionally from dark grayish to rufous. The male's throat is white; female's and juvenile's are buffy. It's tail is slightly forked and the male has a white tail band. Wings are long and pointed; both male and female have a bold white bar across primaries slightly closer to the body than the Lesser Nighthawk.

This species does not build nests, but lay their usual 2 eggs on bare ground, at times, in raised locations such as tree stumps or gravel roof tops. Nighthawks began to be seen in cities in the mid 1800's as a result of the gravel roof tops. The incubation period is about 20 days and is tended primarily by the female. Young fledge at about 20 days. In parts of the southern United States they may have a second brood. During courtship the male performs an aerial display, creating a humming, and whooshing 'boom' sound near the end of a steep dive. The sound comes from air rushing through the wing tips. All nighthawks' flight is erratic with deep wing beats, and then they glide on raised wings.

Their mouths are wide, helping these night- hunters to collect flying insects. They mainly forage at dusk and near dawn, but also at night during full moon and around street lights and ball field lights.

Common Nighthawks are best located and identified by their distinctive calls.

(Information came from Birdweb.org, *Nat'l Geographic Field Guide to Birds of North America, The Birder's Handbook.*)



Steven D'Amato

FISHING IN CANADA

Liz described the scene as a cross between a circus and a space landing! My thought was “shock and awe of a marine variety!” What we were trying to describe took place on our last day of fishing off the northeast coast of Vancouver Island.

It was serenely quiet out on Blackfish Sound at noon that day. The water, which is usually moving, was motionless—in between tides. We were two miles from the nearest land. Snow-covered peaks rose above forested slopes off to the north and south. Warm, hazy sun gave a Huckleberry Finn feel to the moment. There were birds – scoters floating here, diving there, gulls flying back and forth, three eagles off to our right diving at a school of bait fish. A pod of dolphins a half mile down the sound were lolling their way across the surface.

We were standing on the back of our boat idly fishing for halibut off the 300 foot bottom—kind of daydreaming on a sea of dreams.

Suddenly, less than 100 feet away, an explosion of air startled us. A huge black form of a humpback whale rose out of the water and slowly curved its way back into the deep. We were still marveling at that, when the same creature, now one-quarter mile away rose up backward and vertically, pirouetting out of the water, then slapped its tail down with a loud “whop” like a giant beaver. The whale continued this display every few moments, sometimes head-first, sometimes tail first, as it moved down the sound—at one time coming completely out of the water like a trout after a fly. We could hear cheers from the handful of other boaters scattered down the sound as they watched this non-stop performance.

We didn't catch any fish that day but caught our limit in scenery and excitement.

~Tom Jernigan

PENNIES for the PLANET

Welcome to Pennies for the Planet! Each year this national campaign focuses on three critical conservation projects around the United States. By inviting kids to collect pennies and other spare change for these projects and to get involved in local conservation efforts, the campaign offers young people fun ways to make a positive difference for the planet. In the process, it demonstrates the value of charitable giving. We hope Pennies for the Planet will spur **families** to work together for a worthy cause, get outside and explore their surroundings, and incorporate Earth-nurturing habits into daily family life. Check out the ideas below. Finally, we'd love to hear from you, so feel free to share your experiences with us on Facebook at [facebook.com/penniesfortheplanet](https://www.facebook.com/penniesfortheplanet) or by sending an e-mail to pennies@audubon.org Seabird chicks on Mississippi beaches need shelter and protection, especially after a tragic event such as the Gulf oil spill. Monarch butterflies need a winter haven in the desert southwest. Migrating cranes need plenty of roost sites along the Platte River. What can you do to help? Join Pennies for the Planet!

Pennies for the Planet is a successful nationwide campaign to help critical conservation projects. It's powered by kids collecting pennies (and nickels, dimes, quarters, and dollars, too!) to help save wild places and wildlife in the United States. Working in groups and troops of all sorts, in school classrooms, **with their families**, and on their own, kids have turned pennies into a gold mine for wild spaces and wildlife in need of protection.

www.whitemountainaudubon.org

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
Executive Tower
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007
1-800-253-0883

Rep. Brenda Barton
House Wing
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007
602-542-5219
bbarton@azleg.gov

U.S. Cong. Paul Gosar
504 Cannon HOB
202-225-2315
Washington, DC 20515

U.S. Sen. John McCain
241 Russell Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-2235

Sen. Sylvia Allen
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007
sallen@azleg.gov

Rep. Chester Crandall
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007
ccrandal@azleg.gov

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**