



NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2011

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.

Nov. 2nd - Regular monthly meeting speakers are Carol Sletten & Eric Kramer, who will speak about history of the White Mountains,

Nov. 19th - Field trip will be to Fool Hollow Lake & Show Low Treatment Plant. Meet at Show Low McDonald's at 8:30 am.

Dec. 7th - WMAS Christmas Party at Pinetop-Lakeside Town Council Chambers. See *Out on a Limb* for more information at 6:00 pm

Dec. 17th - Christmas Bird Count. Meet at Darbi's Restaurant at 7:00 am. See article within this newsletter for more information.

Your Officers

President: Mary Ellen Bittorf 367-2462

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Secretary: Liz Jernigan 532-1510

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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 and Kent Schipper

Reach us at: www.whitemountainaudubon.org

Out on a Limb with your President

Recently Chuck and I had a chance to see "*The Big Year*" at the White Mountain Entertainment Theater and I would highly recommend that all of you, who can, go to see it. It is a wonderful movie, well worth seeing.

The holiday season is fast approaching so here are some items of interest. The Christmas Potluck will be on Wednesday, December 7 at **6:00 pm** in room 16 at the Pinetop Lakeside Town Center. I will bring a ham and those of you whose name begins with A through K should bring a vegetable dish or appetizer, and those with names beginning L through Z should bring a dessert or salad. I hope to see you all there.

The Christmas Bird Count will be on Saturday, December 17. We will meet at Darbi's at **7:00 am**. to choose our areas. There will be a cost of \$5.00 per person to pay for the survey. We will have this no matter what the weather may be, and I hope a lot of you will help with the count. Be sure to dress in layers and maybe we will luck out and have nice weather!

As I look back over 2011, I feel that our meetings and field trips attendance have been down. I am not sure what the reason is for this, but if any of you have ideas, please talk to any of your board members. We want to hear from you. Also, I want to tell you that we are working on a fund-raiser for next year and when I have a little more information I will let you know. Whatever we decide to do, we will need help from you, our members, so be prepared. I think this will be new, and exciting. Stay tuned...

The year 2011 has had its share of challenges environmentally – nationally as well as locally, and indications are that 2012 will be equally challenging. With major elections coming up, I hope you will all stay informed and be sure to make your voice heard at the ballot box. Our country faces some major decisions in the near future and it is vital that everyone pays attention and votes.

I hope you all have a holiday season full of family, fun, and good memories. Happy Holidays, and Merry Christmas to you all and ...enjoy birding.

~Mary Ellen Bittorf

SEPTEMBER 17, 2011 FIELDTRIP

The fieldtrip on September 17th was at Silver Creek Fish Hatchery and the day was beautiful with good company, birds, butterflies and lots of wonderful wildflowers. It began on the cool side, but soon warmed up and was pleasant. Birds seen on the trip were: Barn & Violet-green Swallow, Cassin's Kingbird, Northern Flicker, Raven, Brewer's Sparrow, Belted Kingfisher, Great Blue Heron, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Pied-billed Grebe, Say's Phoebe and Crow. Flowers we enjoyed seeing were Gaura, Mexican Hat, thistle, Yarrow, Globe Mallow, New Mexico Checker Mallow, Blue Aster, Goldenrod, vetch, Paintbrush, Wild Verbena, different types of penstemon, and Wild Geranium. Butterflies found were Monarch, Common Buckeye and Red Admiral.

Pete & Mary Jane Milne, Chuck & Mary Ellen Bittorf, Pat Calkins, Bob & Loretta Pena, and Betty & Bill Zink were on the outing. Betty took quite a few photos of the wildflowers and butterflies and we hope to display some of them on the Photo section of the website soon.

Fall is a great time to visit Silver Creek Fish Hatchery.



SIGHTINGS

Sightings turned in at the September meeting are: Kay Alderton saw **juncos, Northern Flicker, Pygmy Nuthatch, and Acorn Woodpecker**. Pat Calkins had **Lewis Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Black-headed Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, Lesser Goldfinch, nuthatches, Mountain Chickadee, Band-tailed Pigeon**, and doves. Hutchisons had a large variety of birds including **Robin, Lesser Goldfinch, jays, Western Bluebird, House Finch, Raven, Acorn & Downy Woodpeckers, Western Tanager, White-breasted & Pygmy Nuthatches, Nighthawk, Purple Martins** and **Barn Swallow**. They saw these birds in Show Low and Taylor. Bittorfs reported **Robin, Band-tailed Pigeon, and Acorn & Downy Woodpeckers**. At Rainbow Lake, Kathryn Melsted sighted **White-faced Ibis**. Paula reported **Lesser Goldfinch and Pygmy & White-breasted Nuthatches** in Show Low. The Milnes had **Hepatic Tanager, Northern Flicker, Downy, Hairy, Acorn & Lewis Woodpeckers, Mountain Chickadee, Cassin's Finch, Stellar Jay** and **Raven**. Loretta Pena saw **Forster's Tern** and **Spotted Sandpiper** at Fool Hollow Lake while kayaking.

At the October meeting the following sightings were reported: Bittorfs had **Pygmy & White-breasted Nuthatch, Downy Woodpecker, Oregon & Pink-sided Junco, Northern Flicker, Robin, Lesser Goldfinch, and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds**. Kay Alderton saw nuthatch, junco, **Stellar's Jay** and 2 hummingbirds.

At Pintail Lake, Jody Inman sighted **White-faced Ibis, Gadwall, Ruddy Duck, and Marsh Hawk (Northern Harrier)**.

Larry Langstaff of Chandler & Pinetop reported a **Black-throated Blue Warbler** in the Pinetop Country Club area via the email.

Thanks to all for reporting your sightings!!

OCTOBER 15, 2011 FIELD TRIP

Bob and I were the only attendees on this trip, so we changed the location to areas close by here in Lakeside. First we went to Big Spring and walked to the pond and on into the Nature Center property. In this area we saw Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Pied-billed Grebe, Lewis Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Coot, Mallard and Raven. We continued on to Scott's Reservoir and walked through the campground as there were only a few campers. It was lively in this area, with birds flying every which way. Here we again saw Ruby-crowned Kinglet (lots of them), Juniper Titmouse, Chipping Sparrow, Robin, Northern Flicker, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Red-winged Blackbird and Coot.

As we were driving in to Jacques Marsh, we saw a Red-tailed Hawk sitting on a telephone pole. Hunters were in that area, so we decided to head back home to Show Low.

It was a great day to spend some time outdoors!

Great Backyard Bird Count is Coming ...February 17-20, 2011

www.whitemountainaudubon.org

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!

TIMBER MESA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2011

December 17th

This year will be the 112th year for the Christmas Bird Count. Meet at Darbi's Restaurant in Pinetop at 7:00 am for breakfast. Then participants will be divided up into teams to count species and numbers of species seen. Bring water, snacks, field guide and binoculars---- even if you are not an accomplished birder it is a fun activity and everyone can help. There is a \$5 charge to each participant.

Each citizen scientist who participates makes a contribution to conservation. National Audubon Society and other organizations, as well, use data collected in this longest-running wildlife census. The data collected by observers over the past century allow researchers, conservation biologists, and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, it provides a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred years.

Feeder watchers are welcome and encouraged to participate also. After the count, everyone will give their results to Mary Ellen who will compile them and forward them on to National Audubon Society. For more information, contact Mary Ellen at 367-2462.

CONSERVATION

Whimbrel Migrates through Tropical Storm, Shot in Caribbean

13 September 2011

Editor's note: The press release below is from the Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary – Virginia Commonwealth University, and reprinted here with their permission. Thank you, Machi, for all that you taught us.

(Williamsburg, VA)—Scientists at the Center for Conservation Biology learned today [12 September 2011] that a Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) they had been tracking via satellite for 2 years as part of a migration study had been shot by a hunting party this morning on the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe (French West Indies). The shorebird, named “**Machi**,” had just flown through Tropical Storm Maria and made landfall on Montserrat before flying to Guadeloupe. Machi had been tracked for over 27,000 miles (44,000km) back and forth between breeding grounds in the Hudson Bay Lowlands of Canada to wintering grounds on the coast of Brazil. The bird was tracked on 7 nonstop flights of more than 2,000 miles. During the spring of 2010, Machi flew more than 3,400 miles directly from Brazil to South Carolina. Machi serves as an example of birds that interact with many landscapes and cultures throughout the year and a reminder of how international cooperation is required for their continued existence.

Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Barbados continue to operate “shooting swamps,” some of which are artificial wetlands created to attract migrant shorebirds for sport shooting during fall migration. It is estimated that tens of thousands of shorebirds continue to be taken annually by hunting clubs on just these three islands. This practice is a throwback to more than a century ago when gunners hunted shorebirds throughout the Americas. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act was passed, in part, to protect dwindling numbers of birds that migrate across country borders. Operated as a French overseas department, both Guadeloupe and Martinique are part of the European Union and are not party to the Treaty. Barbados, once a British colony, is now an independent state and also not party to the Treaty. The last Eskimo Curlew known to science was shot on Barbados in 1963. Shorebird hunting within these areas continues to be unregulated to the present time. Conservation organizations continue to work toward some compromise that will reduce pressures on declining species.

Worldwide, many shorebird populations are experiencing dramatic declines. Most of the migratory shorebird species breeding in eastern North America and the Arctic pass over the Caribbean region during the late summer and early fall on their way to wintering grounds. When they encounter severe storms, the birds use the islands as refuges before moving on to their final destinations. Hunting clubs take advantage of these events and shoot large numbers of downed birds following the passage of these storms.

During the 2009 and 2010 fall migrations, Machi did not stop on any of the islands but flew directly from Virginia to Paramaribo, Suriname, before moving on to winter near Sao Luis, Brazil. It appears that the recent encounter with Tropical Storm Maria caused the bird to stop on Guadeloupe.

Machi contributed a great deal to what we know about Whimbrel migration along the western Atlantic. Satellite tracks of this shorebird over 4 full migrations have linked breeding and wintering areas, defined migration routes, identified important migration staging areas, and demonstrated how these birds interact with major tropical systems.

This tracking project is a collaborative effort between The Center for Conservation Biology, The Nature Conservancy, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, and Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences.

Details about the project and several other satellite-tracked Whimbrels are available at The Center for Conservation Biology website.

*For more information, please contact **Dr. Bryan D. Watts**, Director, bdwatt@wm.edu, or **Fletcher M. Smith**, Biologist, fmsmit@wm.edu, Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary, Virginia Commonwealth University; or **Barry Truitt**, Chief Conservation Scientist, The Nature Conservancy, Virginia Coast Reserve Program, btruitt@tnc.org; or **Brad Winn**, Conservation Specialist, Manomet Center for Conservation Science, bwinn@manomet.org*

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The 18th Annual Rio Grande Valley Festival will be held Nov 9-13, 2011 in southern Texas at Harlingen. Go to info@rgvbf.org or call 1-800-531-7346 for more information.

Music by the River to support Audubon AZ's Education Program
Featuring Sergio Mendoza y la Orkesta November 4, 2011 from 5:30- 9:30 pm
Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center
3131 South Central Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85040
RIOSALADO. Audubon.org

Birding the Net is now online!

Audubon released virtual birds on the net yesterday. Join this virtual scavenger hunt, a new way to share our mission with a wider audience. This innovative social media initiative piggybacks publicity for The Big Year opening this Friday. Together they represent an unparalleled moment for Audubon to entice new members.

This is a great opportunity for full Audubon network to leverage the excitement of this unprecedented campaign. Chapters can participate in and benefit from local media outreach, while also cultivating new and current members.

To help you get started, the Communications Team developed a toolkit including: draft press release, tips for maximizing Twitter & Facebook, plus FAQs and Talking Points. These can be downloaded from a private password-protected website. In Windows Explorer or Internet Explorer (or other Web browser), type the following URL in the Address bar: **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** When the login box pops up, enter the username "**chpintftp**" and password "**chpintftp721**" (without quotes). Click on the two files to open or save to your computer.

How to Get Involved

Here's what you can do to "spread the bird" and build the buzz around Birding the Net:

Start playing! The game is live; just go to the [National Audubon Society Facebook page](#) (make sure to "Like" us!) and follow links to play.*

- Post info about the game on your Facebook wall. As you find birds around the Web, please post about it to give your friends clues
- Tweet about the game to your followers on Twitter.
- Email your friends and family with an invitation to play Birding the Net. Include a link to the [National Audubon Society Facebook page](#) in your email.
- On your chapter blog and website, set up a birdhouse so that you too can host a bird. You can easily download the birdhouse script, and get directions, on the [Facebook app](#).
- Tell donors, partners, sponsors, and advertisers about the game, and invite them to start playing. If your sponsors and partners have corporate Facebook pages, blogs or websites, invite them to post info or host a birdhouse.

****unfortunately, Audubon staff and family are not eligible to win the prizes. But you can still play. And spread the word.***

Questions

For any questions about the game, please contact the Birding the Net team leaders:

- Garrison Frost, Director of Marketing & Communications, Audubon California – gfrost@audubon.org
- Jessica Green, VP Engagement, National Audubon Society – jgreen@audubon.org
- Nancy Severance, Director of Marketing & Communications, National Audubon Society – nseverance@audubon.org

THE BIG YEAR
By David Yarnold

The story of "**The Big Year**," which opened in theaters over the weekend, lifts off when three rental cars screech to a halt in south Texas. Owen Wilson steps out, lifts his binoculars - and gasps. Ditto Jack Black. And Steve Martin.

Then we see what they see: a sky boiling with birds. Hundreds of thousands of birds.

I know that look because it washes over me regularly. When a Golden Eagle swoops down in front of our 4x4 in California's Tejon Ranch; when a hundred thousand hawks and turkey vultures soar over Veracruz, Mexico; when I'm on the bayous of Louisiana, surrounded by Great Blue Herons, prehistoric looking White Ibis and Audubon's symbol, Great Egrets - I'm filled with wonder and humility.

Unlike most of my predecessors, I didn't come to Audubon as an experienced birder. But from the moment I arrived a year ago, I've looked at the sky with different eyes.

And what I've seen is just awesome.

Don't take it from me. Listen to the 48 million bird enthusiasts in the United States. They come from all walks of life - from the birding veterans in floppy hats to passionate teen-age Latino guides to "Scream" creator Wes Craven and even Mark Salling, the guy who plays Puck on "Glee."

Even if you're not a birder, you're probably a lot more into birds than you know. Who hasn't been amazed by that slow-motion video of a bald eagle grabbing a salmon out of a lake? And if you remember one image from last year's BP disaster, it was probably a brown pelican covered with oil.

"The Big Year" is about three guys competing to see the most bird species in one year. To be sure, they're to birding what ultra-marathoners are to jogging. But from start to finish, the movie is about birds and the people who love to look at them.

One of the joys of "The Big Year" - for birders and non-birders alike - is watching Wilson, Martin and Black riff on birds. Even if this isn't a true send-up like "Best in Show" was for dogs, the idea of "competitive birding" is a built-in punch line.

But the actors don't just play it for laughs. They - and director David Frankel, who gave us "Marley and me" - seem genuinely interested in capturing the connection birds make between people and nature. In the film, no character does it better than Rashida Jones' Ellie, who follows the birds because she is so taken by their songs.

The first trailers for the movie were bird-free zones, instead highlighting the bucket list story line in the film.

But even that captures something important about birds. One of the joys of birding is the people you meet, the relationships you build with fellow birders.

The best relationship moment in "The Big Year" is a scene where Black and his father spot a great gray owl in the fading light of a snowy forest near their home. I won't give it all away, but the presence of the spectacular bird highlights what's happening between Black's character and his father.

Hyper-critical birders, the keepers of birding's flame, will no doubt find flaws in this film (some of the details around an elusive pink-footed goose will likely fill blogs for years). But I'd like to offer a little advice for these people: Lighten up. The last time Hollywood released a non-animated movie about birders, it was set on Alcatraz and it was in black and white.

While Burt Lancaster earned an Oscar for it, things didn't end so well for his birds or for the bird guy. This one does.

ABOUT THE WRITER David Yarnold is president and CEO of the National Audubon Society. Readers may write to him at: National Audubon Society, 225 Varick Street, New York, N.Y. 10014; email: president@audubon.org.

(This article is from 10-17-2011 of the Miami Herald.)

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BIRD NOTES

Townsend's Warbler *Dendroica townsendi* (Townsend, 1837)

Townsend's Warbler is a new bird to our yard in Show Low. It was seen here on September 19th and again on October 25th. In September, I was holding the hose watering a shrub, when this beautiful little bird appeared. It seemed to be attracted to the water and stayed for some time flitting around nearby so I was able to watch it. The 2nd bird seen in October came when there were Western Bluebirds bathing, Dark-headed Juncos on the ground and a Stellar's Jay investigating the sunflower heads tied to a tree limb near the bird bath. The warbler flitted above the bath in a juniper tree, going back and forth to a ponderosa and a small apricot tree.

This warbler is generally found in coniferous and coniferous-deciduous forest areas. They are mainly insect eaters, also consuming seeds and plant galls. The adult male is striking with a black crown, lateral yellow stripes, a black ear patch bordered in yellow, It's chin and throat are black, olive on the back with black and white streaking on the sides. In a side flying view, as in Sibley, you see the wings and central tail feathers are overall gray. Outer tail feathers are white. It has two white wing bars, a yellow breast and white belly, and is approximately 4 ¾-5 inches in length. Occasionally it hybridizes with Hermit Warbler. It's song is variable with a series of hoarse zee notes.

How did it become named after John Kirk Townsend? John Kirk Townsend was born in 1809 and as a young man studied medicine as well as natural history, but especially bird collecting (shooting & stuffing). In the 1830's, Townsend accompanied Thomas Nuttall on Nathaniel Wyeth's 2nd expedition to the OR Territory. In the book titled *Narrative of a Journey across the Rocky Mountains*, Townsend wrote about this adventure. On that expedition, a male bird was collected by Thomas Nuttall and Townsend along the Columbia River. Thomas Nuttall named the the bird after his friend, John Kirk Townsend. Townsend was responsible for collecting a number of animals new to science including Mountain Plover, Vaux's Swift, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Black-throated Gray Warbler and Sage Warbler. Townsend's Solitaire was named for him as well as several mammals including Townsend's Ground Squirrel, Townsend's Chipmunk, and Townsend's Whitetail Jackrabbit. He died of arsenic poisoning in 1851 at the young age of 41. At that time, arsenic was the main preservative in bird specimens.

(information is from websites: Pacific NWBirder, Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia and Sibley Guide to Birds)

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.
- 4) 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.

(from Center for Biological Diversity website)

www.whitemountinaudubon.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**