



JANUARY- FEBRUARY 2012

Out on a Limb with your President...

I hope you had a very Merry Christmas and that your New Year will be the best ever.

In 2012, we will be trying some new ideas. We need to bring in more money in order to keep sponsoring Audubon Adventures and Scholarships as well as the Beginning Birder's Workshop so one thing we are talking about is sponsoring a Film Festival. We are still working out the details and I will have more information in the next newsletter. We are also talking about having a "Big Year" for our members. There will be several categories such as "In Arizona" "Worldwide" and "Around Your House", we are still working on that. Start writing down what you see and let's make this a "Big Year" for our club.

Your Board members will be working during January and February to plan the schedule of events for 2012. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please let me, or another board member know. We are always open to new ideas.

Our Chapter furnished Audubon Adventures to 25 classrooms and libraries in 2011, and our Beginning Birder's Workshop was held in May at the White Mountain Nature Center. This was probably one of our best-attended workshops with almost fifty people attending.

On Saturday, December 17, thirteen hardy souls met at "Bobbi Jo's" for breakfast and then we scattered to our various areas to conduct the Christmas Bird Count. (This is the 112th year for this international bird count.) The temperature was a balmy 19 degrees. Barb Davis wrote "I was totally taken away by all the hoarfrost (frozen fog). It was stunningly beautiful." Those participating were: Bob & Loretta Pena, Tom & Liz Jernigan, Mary Ellen & Chuck Bittorf, Jody and Richard Inman, Barb Davis, Jan Newton, Sue Sitko, Bart Stegman, and Stephen Dilks. It was nice to have Bart and Richard back. Stephen lives in Springerville and is new to the area. All in all, we saw 3751 birds (49 species) we traveled 170 miles, spent 25 hours birding, and walked 10 miles. Pretty good for a day of winter birding!! Many thanks to everyone who braved the cold and recorded their sightings.

Enjoy the snow, and the beauty of winter and...enjoy birding.

~Mary Ellen

CALENDAR

There are no regular meetings or field trips in January and February.

March 7th-Monthly meeting speaker is Dave Cagle of AZ G&F Dept. who will give a program on Birdwatching Opportunities within Arizona's Wildlife Areas.

April 4th- Monthly meeting speaker will be Kathy Hemenway of Snowflake who will speak about proposed potash mining in Navajo County.

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, Richard and Jody Inman

Reach us at: www.whitemountainaudubon.org

White Mountain Audubon Local Chapter Membership Form

Membership dues for White Mountain Audubon Society are: **Individual- \$10/year** and **Family- \$15/year**. Please pay dues by March 31, 2012. Your **tax-deductible** membership supports our on-going programs and activities, as well as future new projects. **Your funds do make a difference!!**

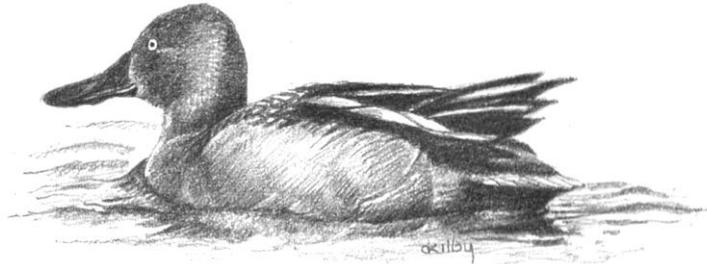
Please renew my annual Chapter Membership. Enclosed you'll find my \$10 or \$15 dues.

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 \$10.00 or \$15 dues. Please use this form only for your dues. **Thank you very much!**



Daniel S. Kilbey

November 19, 2011 Fieldtrip

Mary Ellen, Chuck and I met at McDonald's in Show Low for the last field trip of the year. It was very windy and a cold 40 degrees at 8:30 am. Our first stop was at the city of Show Low sewage ponds on 6th Street. The ducks did not seem to mind the weather; here we saw Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Raven, Lesser Scaup, Ringed-necked Duck, Canvasback, Red-winged Blackbirds, Crows, American Wigeon, Pied-billed Grebe, Northern Flicker and Mourning Doves. Next we traveled to Fool Hollow Lake and stopped first near the south end of the lake. We saw several Western Grebes out in the central part of the lake and off to the side Cinnamon Teal. The wind was stronger here in the open and the birds seemed to have taken cover. On the east side, we saw Mallard, and Wigeon. Our final stop was at the far north part of the lake where we saw only Coots and a lone Western Grebe meandering through the Coots. Kestral was sighted on a wire as we were driving out.

We had coffee back at McDonald's and had a nice visit. The fieldtrip was good preparation for the Christmas Bird Count coming up next month.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

February 17- 20th, 2012

Please join us for the 15th annual count!

December 2011--As movie-goers watch the stars of *The Big Year* in their quest to count birds, some may be motivated to try the hobby for the first time. The annual Great Backyard Bird Count is the perfect opportunity. The event is hosted by Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada. The results provide a snapshot of the whereabouts of more than 600 bird species.

Anyone can participate in this free event and no registration is needed. Watch and count birds for at least 15 minutes on any day of the count, February 17-20, 2012. Enter your results at www.birdcount.org, where you can watch as the tallies grow across the continent. The four-day count typically records more than 10 million observations.

"When thousands of people all tell us what they're seeing, we can detect patterns in how birds are faring from year to year," said Janis Dickinson, director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "The Great Backyard Bird Count is a perfect example of Citizen Science," says Audubon Chief Scientist, Gary Langham. "Like Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, volunteers help us with data year after year, providing scientific support that is the envy of many institutions. It's also a lot of fun."

"We're finding that more people are taking part in our bird count programs every year--and the more that take part, the better it is for the birds," says Richard Cannings, Senior Projects Officer for Bird Studies Canada. The 2011 GBBC brought in more than 92,000 bird checklists submitted by participants from across the United States and Canada. Altogether, bird watchers identified 596 species with 11.4 million bird observations. Results from the 2011 GBBC included:

- Increased reports of Evening Grosbeaks, a species that has been declining;
- A modest seasonal movement of winter finches farther south in their search for food;
- The Eurasian Collared-Dove was reported from Alaska for the first time, more evidence of an introduced species rapidly expanding its range.

Although it's called the Great "Backyard" Bird Count, the count extends well beyond backyards. Lots of participants choose to head for national parks, nature centers, urban parks, nature trails, or nearby sanctuaries. For more information, including bird-ID tips, instructions, and past results, visit www.birdcount.org.

The count also includes a photo contest and a prize drawing for participants who enter their bird checklists online.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is made possible in part by sponsor Wild Birds Unlimited.

It's as easy as 1, 2, and 3!

- 1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count.** You can count for longer than that if you wish! Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like—one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate checklist for each new day. You can also submit more than one checklist per day if you count in other locations on that day.
- 2. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time.** You may find it helpful to print out your regional bird checklist to get an idea of the kinds of birds you're likely to see in your area in February. You could take note of the highest number of each species you see on this checklist.
- 3. When you're finished, enter your results at www.birdcount.org.**

WHITE MOUNTAIN AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DECEMBER 17, 2011

On a cold, foggy morning thirteen people met at Bobbi Jo's in Pinetop for breakfast. After breakfast we divided into teams and went to our designated areas within our circle. Areas visited by birders were: Edler's, Woodland, Rainbow, Show Low and Fool Hollow Lakes, Big Spring, old town Lakeside, Forest Service Campground in Lakeside, Jacques Marsh, Lake of the Woods, City of Show Low sewage ponds, NPC Campus, Show Low City Park, Pintail and, Telephone Lakes, Scott's Reservoir, Show Low Bluff and Silver Creek Golf Course. Feeder counts were also included from various locations.

The total number of birds seen was 3,751 of 49 different species. Birds seen were: Horned, Pied-billed, Clark's, and Western Grebe, Ross' and Canada Goose, Mallard, Mexican Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, American Coot, Rock and Eurasian-collared Dove, Hairy, Acorn and Lewis Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Stellar's Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Juniper Titmouse, Mountain Chickadee, White-breasted and Pygmy Nuthatch, American Robin, Starling, Dark-eyed, Red-backed and Oregon Junco, White-crowned Sparrow, Red-winged and Brewer's Blackbird, House Finch, Pine Siskin, House Sparrow, and Northern Shrike

Thanks to Mary Ellen & Chuck Bittorf, Barb Davis, Sue Sitko, Jan Newton, Jody & Richard Inman, Bob and Loretta Pena, Bart Stegman, Liz & Tom Jernigan, and Stephen Dilks for their participation.

OPEN VERTICAL PIPES ARE DEATHTRAPS FOR BIRDS AND WILDLIFE

Open top vertical pipes are a hazard to birds, lizards, small mammals and other wildlife that get into these pipes and are unable to get out. Birds looking for nest cavities, animals escaping from predators or lizards just scampering into open pipes are frequently trapped. This leads to a miserable death from starvation and exposure, which is completely unnecessary.

Last fall on a property adjacent to the Kern River Preserve, a 20 foot tall by 8 inch diameter vent tube on an abandoned irrigation system rusted and fell over. When Audubon stewardship staff picked up the pipe they were shocked to find inside a 7 foot long, black mass composed entirely of decomposed carcasses of **hundreds** of dead birds and animals including kestrels, flickers, bluebirds and fence lizards. The date etched into the concrete at the base of this vent pipe showed that it had been in place for over 50 years. All that time animals had been silently suffering and dying in this trap as unsuspecting people went about their business nearby.

After learning about this problem, Kern River Preserve staff started seeing open topped pipes all over the landscape on our Preserve and on neighboring lands. We were disgusted by the senseless loss of life in pipes as small as **1 inch and up to 10 inches** in diameter. We immediately began to remove, cap or screen open topped pipes found on our preserve as well as neighboring properties – there is still a lot of work to do.

Please look around and you will find open top vertical pipes on signs, fence posts, survey markers, buildings and irrigation systems. All responsible landowners should cap, close, remove or screen all open topped pipes on their property. (from Kern County Audubon, CA)



Kirsten Munson

November Sightings

Chuck and Mary Ellen Bittorf had **Band-tailed Pigeon, Robin** and **Pygmy Nuthatch** in their yard in Pinetop. Loretta Pena sighted a **Golden Eagle** on Highway 61 near Concho. In Show Low at the Native New Yorker Restaurant, Kent Schipper was able to see and photograph a **Prothonotary Warbler**. The bird was seen in a Silver Maple tree outside the window of the restaurant. In Show Low, Jan Newton saw a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** and while in Tucson saw a **Cooper's Hawk**. Dave Cagle reported **Peregrine Falcon** and **Bald Eagle** at Jacque's Marsh. In Show Low, the Hutchinsons had juncos and near Rainbow Lake they saw **Bald Eagle**.

Great sightings everyone!! You may email me any sightings that you see at lbpena1@cableone.net
Thanks!

Planning Meeting is 1-23-2012

On Monday 1-23-2012, the officers and board members of White Mountain Audubon will meet to plan programs, field trips and special events for the coming year. New ideas and suggestions are welcome and if you are able to attend please contact Mary Ellen at 367-2462 for time and location.

CONSERVATION Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

An Irreplaceable Treasure

Called "America's Serengeti" for its tremendous biological productivity and diversity, the coastal plain of Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of the most intact and untouched ecosystems in America. The refuge is home to 42 mammal species, including more than 120,000 head of caribou; 36 species of fish, and over 160 species of birds. Many of these birds migrate to and from all fifty states and from six continents to feed and reproduce, taking full advantage of the burst of biological growth which blossoms here in the long days of the Arctic summer.

The Refuge as a Target

The refuge was established in 1960 under President Dwight Eisenhower, and while much of Alaska remains open to oil and gas drilling, oil and gas interests continue to lobby hard to drill in the refuge. In recent years, special interests have persuaded their supporters in Congress to force several votes to allow energy extraction in the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge, putting at risk the incredible array of wildlife that rely on the refuge for their survival. While they have gotten close, conservation groups like Audubon have held firm and helped prevent this pro-drilling legislation from moving forward in Congress.

You Can Help Protect the Arctic

For the first time in more than 20 years, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service is conducting a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The final CCP will help direct management of the Refuge for the next fifteen years! Now is your chance to help influence this important planning process by commenting on the Draft CCP to help ensure the final management plan includes a Wilderness recommendation for the Coastal Plain, the biological heart of the Arctic Refuge. The comment period ends November 15th, so act now to help ensure that the Refuge's most biologically productive region, the Coastal Plain, is managed in a manner that maximizes its unparalleled biological values and maintains its unique Wilderness character for future generations.

Congress has introduced legislation to permanently protect the coastal plain—the biological heart of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and preserve this pristine wildlife habitat for generations to come. Ask your members of Congress to support permanent protection for the Arctic Refuge by cosponsoring this critical legislation. You can send a letter to your U.S. Senators and Representatives at the Audubon Action Center. See numbers and addresses at the end of the newsletter.

The Search for Lasting Energy Solutions

Drilling is a dirty and dangerous business that has historically always resulted in spills and harmed the environment. In addition, it feeds the nation's dangerous addiction to oil, which is also a major cause of climate change. Major and minor spills occur almost daily in Alaska oil fields, and these occurrences can cause lasting damage to the environment.

In addition to the threat of spills, if drilling were allowed in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge the network of roads, pipelines, gravel mines, and heavy machinery that would be needed to produce oil would industrialize the pristine wilderness of the refuge. Despite what drilling supporters have claimed, energy extraction in the Arctic Refuge would do virtually nothing to bring down energy costs or increase energy security, and new supplies of oil would not arrive for years. According to government estimates, oil from the refuge would lower prices at the gas pump by a little more than a penny/gallon and not for 20 years.

There are better solutions to our energy problems that can both protect the pristine habitat found in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and make us less dependent on oil. Audubon endorses raising fuel efficiency standards, energy conservation, and responsible development of renewable energy sources like properly-sited wind farms and solar power.

(Article is from National Audubon Society)

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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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