



FEBRUARY EDITION 2022

Out on a Limb by Mary Ellen Bittorf (Retired President, WMAS): Caring for What Matters

When Cathy Steele told me she wanted to start an Audubon Chapter in the White Mountains, I was very excited about joining. From the first meeting up to today, some of my greatest pleasures have been watching birds. From learning to identify the birds by their beautiful feathers to learning to identify the birds from their flight pattern to listening to their beautiful songs and calls, I have realized how important it is to spend time with people with whom you share your passions and joys.

It's not only watching the birds, but the wonderful friendships and memories associated with all the hundreds of hours of spending time with people who love the same thing you love. From the field trips to Greer, Alpine, Tucson, Phoenix, local areas such as Rainbow Lake, Woodland Park and the memorable trip to St. John's when a Robin decided to honor me with a big poop on top of my head, without a doubt and unforgettable event, the experiences and memories are burned into my mind. The everlasting love I have for the people I have known and spent so much time with and care so much about is an important part of my life.

A fact that I am so well aware of is that all creatures must have food, water, shelter and space for survival, including humans, and so I have come to realize that nothing exists in a vacuum. I feel very strongly that the name of Audubon always needs to be symbolic in the realization that many parts of our environment do not have a voice, and therefore, we must be the voice that speaks up for the vulnerable and for those who can't speak up for themselves. I hope we will always be the voice that cares for what matters. In the over 30 years of bird-watching, I thank you all for the wonderful memories and I wish you all many more years of enjoying birding and the wonders of nature.

Enjoy Birding!

Below: Wintering Bald Eagles & a drake Mallard at Woodland Lake Park (Photos by Mary Freemon)



White Mountain Audubon Society (WMAS) 2022 Chapter Officers:

President: Mary Williams	480-235-1792
Vice-President: Tom Jernigan	928-532-1510
Secretary: Liz Jernigan	928-532-1510
Treasurer: Tom Jernigan	928-532-1510
Field Trips: Rob Bettaso	928-368-8481
Newsletter: Rob Bettaso	928-368-8481
Membership: Susie Walker	480-205-6119
Webmaster: Alan Vickers	

2022 Board Members:

Mary Williams, Tom Jernigan, Liz Jernigan, Mary Freemon, Susie Walker & Rob Bettaso.



President's Corner by Mary Williams:

Greetings Birders! Have you thought about accessibility lately? Snow and ice and mud-covered trails can make even the most athletic birders pause. I am delighted with the recent emphasis National Audubon has placed on birding for those with handicapping conditions. I'm also delighted with the number of good birding spots in our area that meet most of the 'birdability' criteria.

If you or someone you know needs an easy walk, needs handicapped parking adjacent to bird walks, or a place to use a walker or wheelchair – or push a baby stroller, or avoid mud! – check out these birding hotspots:



Woodland Lake Park in Pinetop has a mostly-level, wide paved trail of about a mile around the lake that is very close to parking. Benches and restrooms available.



The closed campground at Rainbow Reservoir off Hwy 260 in Lakeside is along the level, paved and little-used Rainbow Lake Lane which ends at the dam. Birders can walk across the dam to or from the paved parking area at the boat launch off Lakeside Lane.



Fool Hollow State Park in Show Low has numerous paved day use parking areas on both sides of the lake, where there is access to both paved paths and roadways and more challenging trails and steps – as well as to numerous picnic tables and restrooms. (Entry fee.)



Pintail Lake off Hwy 77 north of Hwy 60 in Show Low has a level concrete walk of about .5 miles from a concrete handicapped parking pad. It leads to a viewing platform and to a covered shelter with benches.

Bird Counts

It's most likely impossible for any of our White Mountain birders to accurately log a Red-bellied Woodpecker as pictured in the national promotion for the annual Great Backyard Bird Count from February 12 to 15. But there are at least four other possible and frequent woodpecker sightings here, and all were spotted during the WMAS recent annual Timber Mesa Christmas Bird Count. (Acorn, Lewis's, Hairy and Downy).

Although the weather on the first Saturday in January was prohibitive or limiting for our volunteers, 1,875 birds of 56 species were reported on our official count day to the National Audubon Society for their 122nd CBC massive citizen science project. (We added 11 more species during count week.) 78 species were logged in last year's count when our overall numbers were higher on a beautiful calm sunny winter day! A Bonaparte's Gull sighted by the Wilsons at Little Mormon Lake was a rarity this year.

Thanks to count week volunteers Sue Sitko, Ann Hilliard, Ken McByrd-Bell, Carla Whalen, Susie Walker and especially to Rob Bettaso, Jon Orona and John and Betsy Wilson who braved snow and ice-covered roads and trails on a cold and cloudy New Year's Day. Do submit your yard and neighborhood ebird lists on Valentine's Day weekend for another effort by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the Audubon Society to document our bird populations.



OTHER RECENT EVENTS:

As some Newsletter readers may recall, I have been on the look out for someone to assist (or preferably, replace) me as the Field Trips Coordinator. Additionally, because our Board is currently well represented in the older demographics, I have been hoping to find someone who not only is a proficient birder, but who is also of a younger generation. While I haven't yet found a person who has sufficient free time to lead ALL of our monthly birding trips, I have recruited an exceptional birder who thinks he will have time enough to at least assist me on a regular basis. As such, on our January field trip, we were joined by Jon Orona, a highly skilled birder who has a gift for not only bird identification but is also an excellent communicator/educator. So, I've asked Jon if he would be willing to write-up a summary of our most recent field trip and I think you will find it fascinating reading. Jon's summary report is a stand alone file but can be found side by side with this Newsletter; both as attachments to Liz Jernigan's monthly email to our Newsletter readers. And remember, monthly outings now run year round, so give me a call to sign up for future walks and join Jon and/or me as we seek out the most rewarding bird habitats in the White Mountains area (Rob 928-368-8481).

CALENDAR:

We have completed our monthly programs until April of 2022 but remember, when we start up again in 2022 we expect that all **monthly programs** will continue to begin at **6:30 pm on the first Wednesday of the month (except in January, February & March)**. Our program meetings venues may change in 2022 so stay tuned for more information in that regard. The programs are free and open to all. You may call **Liz Jernigan (928-532-1511)** for more information on monthly programs and special events.

February 19th Monthly WMAS Birding Field Trip: Monthly bird watching field trips on the 3rd Sat of every month (for the 2nd year, including the winter months). If you are interested in attending, feel free to give me a call (Rob 928-368-8481) and leave a message so that I can return your call to give you the details for the upcoming trip.

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. Dues are for the year in which they are paid and not necessarily good for 12 months following payment (unless you pay in January).

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 can 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 position! And remember, you can be on the Board without being an Officer.

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.

Snazzy WMAS T-shirts for sale (money from sales goes exclusively to our WMAS's operating budget). If interested, call Rob at 928-368-8481; supplies limited (a great gift idea).



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**