



## JULY EDITION 2023

### **Out on a Limb by Carol Axford (WMAS Board Member):**

As a novice birder I appreciate exploring new places to hike to identify new species. Such was the case in a recent hike I took to a canyon off Woodruff Road north of Snowflake. A new friend took me to a private land he had access to where he cleans graffiti off petroglyphs as a Site Steward. We descended down steep rocky steps to the canyon walls and viewed several panels of the petroglyphs. Tough going over boulders and high grass to reach Silver Creek to hike upstream. The canyon widened to a large area and we were able to hike on bedrock near the walls.

It was quiet as we had the place to ourselves, not hearing many birds at 9:30 am. Farther in I noticed quite a few birds flying high near the canyon walls, circling with loud cries. Using my binoculars I could see their black color with pale brown underneath. They were flying to the mud homes they made on the walls. I took a video of them and compared to the sound on the Merlin app. Cliff Swallows! Highlight of the hike! I also saw a large raptor size bird high in the sky, mostly white but could not identify-too far away. Only other wildlife that day were lizards.

Hiked for 2 miles and called it quits as my socks and boots were covered in stickers and weed sticks. All in all quite the adventure!

Below: Carol explores the area near Woodruff, AZ.



Below: Cliff Swallow nests on the canyon wall.



## White Mountain Audubon Society (WMAS) 2023 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	

## 2023 Board Members:

Mary Williams, Tom Jernigan, Liz Jernigan, Mary Freemon, Susie Walker, Gerry Hodge, Carol Axford, & Rob Bettaso.



### President's Corner by Mary Williams:

Where are your ERAs? (Emotional Rest Areas!) On May 18, as administrator of the WMAS Facebook page, I shared an article that resonated with me. It was posted by noted AZ outdoor writer and photographer Jim Burns. In one of his "Bird is a Verb" postings, he introduced the ERA idea and wrote – and I concur – "Birders can relate."

Can you think about the places where you experience feelings of relaxation, peace, joy, mindfulness, thankfulness? As I pondered this, I realized I have some criteria. (And some of you will think 'picky, picky.')

Weather? Calm, sunny, 60s and 70s. Low 80's if there's shade.

Aromas? Best is sun-warmed Ponderosa, followed closely by various blossoms. Wild roses – yes!

Sounds? Birds singing, of course. But also flowing water or lapping waves and gentle breezes rustling the pines or aspen or cottonwoods or sycamores.

Sights? Lots of birds and all the above that produce aromas and sounds, with mostly solitude and little or no human intervention. Billowing clouds are nice too.

Amenities? Shady rock or log or bench. Water bottle. Cell phone service. Camper van nearby with food, change of shoes and clothing, rest room, nap site. Very very picky, picky here. (You do realize I'm laughing at myself as I write this, right?)

Perfection? Petey in his pack on my lap. (See photo above, taken by Susie Walker at Hidden Tank along the road out of Heber to Black Canyon Lake where I have enjoyed several ERA stops and strolls.)

I want to share a few other memorable emotional rest areas where I have experienced those relaxed and peaceful, often nostalgic, feelings that invoked the nature imagery of some of the 19<sup>th</sup> century poets: James Russell Lowell's "What is so rare as a day in June?" or Robert Browning's "The lark's on the wing; the snail's on the thorn; God's in his heaven – all's right with the world!"

Like Jim Burns, Madera Canyon is one of my ERAs. Also South Fork west of Eagar, Upper Sycamore Creek, Coon Bluff along the Salt River, Rattlesnake Point at Lyman Lake State Park, Fool Hollow State Park early in the morning before lots of people are out and about. Sheep Crossing too. Where are your ERAs?

Wishing you good birding and many blessings, Mary



On the birding trip convoy to Apache County on June 8, carpooling leaders Mary Williams and Susie Walker were joined by John Wilson – who will be the July 5 meeting guest speaker. Here are Carla, Jan, Joyce, Susie and John enjoying a variety of high-elevation species at Sheep Crossing. Joyce, Susie and Mary spent Thursday night in Greer and saw a good variety of birds there too. (Photo by Mary Williams. Contact her if you would like to participate in two-day field trips. Also mark your calendar for First Thursday 6:30 AM bird walks. July 6 will be at the Nature Center and Big Springs.)

#### **WMAS CALENDAR:**

For 2023 we expect that **all monthly programs** will continue to start at **6:30 pm on the first Wednesday of the month (except in January, February & March** when there are no meetings). 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. Monthly meetings are **held at the White Mountain Nature Center, 425 Woodland Road, Pinetop-Lakeside.**



**July 5 John Wilson - Yellow-billed Cuckoo.** John Wilson, who was granted the WMAS Continuing Education Scholarship in 2022, worked with a birding project last summer before beginning his Wildlife Biology degree at NAU. John says “My presentation is going to encompass the field work I did with Yellow-billed Cuckoos. It will be an overview into the work done to monitor Yellow-billed Cuckoo populations.” Also, John will include basics of Southern Arizona biodiversity as seen firsthand. It should be an interesting all-around naturalist presentation.

**June 17<sup>th</sup> - The Regular Monthly WMAS Birding Field Trip:** Monthly bird watching field trips on the **3rd Sat of every month** and alternate between Rob Bettaso & Jon Orona. If you’re 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.

Also, on the **fourth Sat of each month** I lead a “Fitness Birding” outing that combines slightly strenuous activities (longer hikes, bicycling, paddling, X/C skiing) with birding. The next **Fitness Birding trip will be June 24<sup>th</sup>.** Feel free to give me a call if you’re interested (Rob: 928-368-8481).

### **MOST RECENT 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> SATURDAY FIELD TRIPS:**

On June 17<sup>th</sup> two of us watched birds along the Old Hatchery Trail (a mile loop adjacent to Billy Ck, near the Game & Fish office) and saw 27 birds including the Red-faced Warbler. We were joined by 4 more birders at Williams Ck Hatchery where we encountered a Cordilleran Flycatcher (and 28 other species). The Red-faced Warbler, which is a Southwestern U.S. specialty, seems to be fairly common this year as we have found them at many of the sites that we have visited throughout the White Mountains area; just the opposite with C. Flycatcher, which seems to be less common this year. It is important to note the use of the word “seems” since our field trips do not qualify as scientific studies. P.S. Apologies to 2 other bird watchers who had planned to join us but, due to last minute technical difficulties, missed the outing. We hope to see you the next time!

From June 23-25, Bill W. asked if we would be interested in joining him at the Bald Eagle nest site that he monitors for the Game & Fish Department. Bill was worried that due to the hot-air balloon flights scheduled to fly that weekend, that an off-course balloon might spook the lone, young eagle from its nest tree. Since the eagle had not yet fledged (in other words: had not had its first flight), Bill thought it would be a good idea if we stationed our birding group near that nest so that we would be able to assist Bill if he needed to corral the grounded and spooked young eagle so that Bill could capture it and hold the bird until the Game & Fish could return it to its nest. Happily, the nest was not disturbed by any wayward balloons and the young eagle held his position until he had his first flight the very next day (June 26)! Great job Bill in keeping tabs on the young bird and now that the eagle is mobile, your job is going to get much more challenging.

Below are some of the many photos that capture a small part of Bill’s daily monitoring of the eagle’s nest.

Left: Having just learned to fly, the young eagle perhaps found it easiest to land on the tippy-top of a snag.  
Right: In the early morning Bill & Cindy have to stare into the sun to watch the juvenile eagle.



Left: One day prior to fledging, the eagle exercises his young flight muscles.

Right: Earlier in the nesting cycle (mid-April), a parent bird stands in the nest with the hatchling near the adult's feet.



#### **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 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! **We are especially keen to recruit diverse candidates to be a part of WMAS, including more people below the age of 60 (so that we can plan for our Chapter's future) and also more people that are representative of the various demographic groups found in the White Mountains. And remember, you can be on the Board without being an Officer – in fact, you can even just attend a Board meeting as a guest. Please feel free to join us (call Rob: 928-368-8481).**

**BONUS PHOTOS (BY GASTON PORTERIE):**

Below Left: Spotted Sandpiper



Below Right: Cinnamon Teal



Below Left: Baby Robins



Below Right: Dragon Fly



**REMINDER BELOW:**

**BIRDING CLASSES**  
with *White Mountain Audubon Society*

LEARN MORE ABOUT BIRDS BY ATTENDING ANY OF THESE PRESENTATIONS WITH BIRD WALKS THE FOLLOWING MORNINGS :

- **JUNE 19**  
*Birding Basics*
- **JULY 17**  
*Hotspots: Birding Pintail Lake*
- **JULY 31**  
*Hotspots: Birding White Mountain Nature Center*
- **AUGUST 28**  
*Hotspots: Birding Rainbow Reservoir*
- **SEPTEMBER 11**  
*Hotspots: Birding Lee Valley Reservoir*

**Mondays**  
**6:00-7:30 pm**  
at **Show Low Public Library**

181 N. 9th St., Show Low, AZ  
928-532-4070  
[www.showlowaz.gov/library](http://www.showlowaz.gov/library)

FOR AGES 12 & UP. CHILDREN UNDER 16 MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT.  
PRESENTED BY WHITE MOUNTAIN AUDUBON SOCIETY PRESIDENT, MARY WILLIAMS



**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.

**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**