



SEPTEMBER EDITION 2023

Out on a Limb by Gerry Hodge (WMAS Board Member): Birding Show Low Creek

Birds like water. If you seek to stay near the Pinetop/Lakeside/Show Low corridor and want to see the most birds 'in the wild,' there is no better place than the public lands that shadow Show Low Creek. All these locations have parking and most are very low traffic. I'll begin above Show Low Lake and end just above Fool Hollow Lake.

Above Show Low Lake: **Difficult.** The parking lot is at the hexagonal intake structure in the lake at **34.180237, -110.003040**. It is at the far south end of the lake on Show Low Lake Rd. Walk beyond the gate and where the road bends to the left, keep going straight through the woods and follow the path along the lake until you reach the running waters that flow into the lake (and a tall fence). Special sightings may be Kingfishers and an occupied Eagle nest. Maximum round trip distance is 1.75 miles.
Sitgreaves Rd and 32nd St. **Moderate.** This location is directly behind the Hospital. Limited parking at **34.202732, -110.007152**. Follow the path toward the creek and always take a right whenever the path forks. The only uneven terrain is the 100 feet that drops down to the creek, but is very doable with care. When you arrive at the creek you can easily go downstream for ¼ mile (to an occupied Osprey nest) then return and go upstream to a beautiful meadow not far below Show Low Lake Dam. Maximum round trip distance is 1.5 miles.

The Bluff Trail: **Easy.** 0.7 mile north of Woolford Rd. on HWY 260. **34.242984, -110.024496**. Several options: Take the paved path along the creek or cross the bridge and walk along the path at the base of the ridge or hike up onto the ridge or take a left after crossing the bridge for some different habitat. Keep your eye out for Bluebirds and Meadowlarks. Maximum round trip distance is 2 miles.

Thornton Rd on East side of creek near Navajo Public Works Building: **Very difficult.** **34.265230, -110.029771**. Where the road ends, head down the steep hill toward the creek. You can go left for 100 yards and scope out the pasture upstream. Return, back to the steep path and go down to the creek and follow cow trails downstream for 2/3 mile. Varied habitats produce a large variety of birds. There are Raven nests and a small Blue Heron rookery. Maximum round trip distance is 1.25 miles.

End of N 6th Street beyond Show Low Sewer Plant: **Moderate.** **34.271442, -110.034024**. Go through the side opening in the gate and walk the fence line for 250 feet to the west for good birds in the pasture and trees. Head back to the path going toward the creek and you will come to an old road that used to cross the creek. Pick your way carefully down to the creek and head downstream for ½ mile. This is a good place for Red-Tailed Hawks, nesting Cassin's Kingbirds, and Phainopepla. Maximum round trip distance is 1.25 miles.

End of N 16th Av., off Old Linden Rd.: **Difficult. 34.272796, -110.059387.** This is the locked back gate to Fool Hollow Lake State Park. Instead of going into the park, make your way upstream and along the cliffs to where Show Low Creek empties into the lake. You will encounter an almost eye-level osprey nest and eventually a wetland where the creek transitions into the lake. Maximum round trip distance is 1.25 miles.

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:

Did you know that 375 species of birds have been logged on eBird in Apache County? White Mountain Audubon Society is attempting to get more people involved in birding in the far northeastern county of our state with its amazing diversity.

Know anyone in the Eagar, Springerville, Greer, Alpine, Vernon or St. John's areas of the White Mountains who wants to learn more about birds? A new Northland Pioneer College birding class that focused on the Becker Lake Wildlife Area, the #1 hotspot in Apache County, was offered on August 25, with a bird walk at Becker Lake the next morning.

The series will continue Friday, September 22, from 3:00 to 4:30 at the Round Valley Library in Eagar, with a bird walk at Lyman Lake for those who attend. Another class will be on October 27 with a bird walk at the Little Colorado River - South Fork.

The last of the summer series of birding classes at the Show Low Library is on Monday, September 11, at 6:00 PM. The focus will be on species likely to be found in the Lee Valley Recreation Area of Apache County. People may attend the field trip if they are unable to attend the class, and anyone may attend the class even if they are unable to go birding the next morning.

We will convoy/carpool from the Show Low Library at 6:30 AM on Tuesday, September 12. Those who wish to meet us at our first stop, Lee Valley Reservoir, should arrive around 7:30. Take Hwy 260 through the White Mountain Apache Reservation to the Sunrise turnoff, Hwy 273. Go past the right-hand turns to the ski slopes, West Baldy Trail 94, and Sheep Crossing to the Lee Valley Reservoir's paved road to the lake parking area. (There is an outhouse.)

We will bird at locations named above. Anyone who wishes to join me at the primitive Winn Campground across from the Reservoir for an overnight stay is welcome. The roads and the campsites are gravel and accommodate small RVs as well as tents. Picnic tables, fire rings and outhouses are near sites. \$20.00/night, cash or check, but reduced with a national access pass number. There is surprisingly good birding nearby and within the campground area. Dusky Grouse? Canada Jay? Clark's Nutcracker? Williamson Sapsucker? Red-breasted Nuthatch? Dippers down at the River too?

To serve the growing number of people in Apache County interested in Audubon activities, our First Thursday bird walks in September and October will be at more of our higher elevation hotspots. Meeting at the Nature Center Parking lot at 6:30 to convoy/carpool, September 7 will take us to Greer. Those who wish to meet there can start at the Bunch Reservoir parking lot of Greer Lakes around 7:30. Overnights may join me at the primitive Benny Creek Campground in Greer.

The October 5 trip will be to the Sipe Wildlife Area. Those who wish to meet us there can drive the 5 mile road down to the lovely AZGFD restored ranch house visitor center. Let's go birding!

Wishing you many blessings, Mary

And below are some reminders of Mary's on-going and new class schedules:

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

FOR AGES 12 & UP. CHILDREN UNDER 16 MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT.
PRESENTED BY WHITE MOUNTAIN AUDUBON SOCIETY (PRESIDENT: MARY WILLEMS)



Becker Lake 2023 Photos by Fely Earl
Let's Go Birding!
with the White Mountain Audubon Society
PowerPoint Presentations by Mary Williams, President
Round Valley Public Library
Fridays 3:00 – 4:30
August 25, September 22, October 27
2024: April, May, June, July, August, September, October



Becker Lake 2023 Photos by Jerry Earl
whitemountainaudubon.org

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WMAS AUGUST 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.**



September 6: Wings over Water - Lorna McNeil-Cox will give a presentation about this area's bald eagles and ospreys. Learn more about the life and legacy of these amazing fishermen and where you can see them in the local area. By knowing more about them, you can help ensure the survival of these beautiful creatures.

The Regular Monthly WMAS Birding Field Trip: Monthly bird watching field trips on the **3rd Sat of every month**, alternating 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. The **next outing is Sept 16th.**

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 Sept 23rd.** Feel free to give me a call if you're interested (Rob: 928-368-8481).

MOST RECENT 3rd & 4th SATURDAY FIELD TRIPS (Rob Bettaso):

For our 3rd Saturday outing, 9 bird-watchers enjoyed a walk around Woodland Lake with its paved trail that is mud-free even during our rainy season. Rather than describe the birds here, you can look at Gaston's wonderful photos down below to have a feel for how enjoyable our outing was.



Clockwise starting from top left: A Lewis Woodpecker stares down and chases off an Acorn Woodpecker; "affection" in the world of 2 ravens, perhaps parent & young; an Osprey's diagnostically crooked wings deeply bowed in flight; W. Bluebird, this time of year some birds are in molt; Canada Goose (molting) with a species of bistort (an aquatic flowering plant) in the background. All photos by **Gaston Porterie**.

And for our 4th Saturday “Fitness Birding” outing, I happily turned over the organization & leadership of the August field trip to Sue Sitko who took 6 of us to various High Country sites, where we saw plenty of birds and got some good exercise as well. Below are 2 photos Sue took but she also plans to write up the outing in a special report that I will send out to you all at some point in the future. Thx Sue!



Left: a skulking MacGillivray's Warbler; Right: a Green-tailed Towhee, creekside. **Photos by Sue Sitko.**

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:

Clockwise from top left: Board members Gerry, Susie, & Carol at a Community Garden's recent event (**photo by S. Walker**); our August presenter, Margaret Dykeman, spoke about the birds of Flagstaff & Northern AZ (**photo by S. Walker**); a hummer feeding (**photo by C. Axford**); researchers at the Hummingbird Festival at Sipe's Wildlife Area -- an AZGFD property (**photo by C. Axford**).



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 and visit our website.

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.