



MAY EDITION 2024

Out on a Limb by Susie Walker (WMAS Board Member & contact for Membership info):

According to the National Audubon Society, a significant percentage of American birders, if asked to choose their single favorite regional destination, would pick southeastern Arizona. Within a relatively small region here, you can find Sonoran Desert, oak woodland, high-elevation conifer forest, and riparian areas. Some of the areas are the Chiricahua Mountains, San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, Huachuca Mountains, and Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve/Patagonia Lake State Park.

My friend and fellow Audubon member Carol and I met in Sierra Vista to start our southeastern Arizona birding trip. We set out on Monday afternoon for Ramsay Canyon Preserve (a Nature Conservancy property). We hiked up the trail to the overlook. It was a bit more strenuous than the docent let on, but well worth it. We saw beautiful old sycamore and oak trees and some very old structures from the early 1900's. We also saw a beautiful Rivoli's Hummingbird, which was a life bird for Carol. We also added to our list: Bridled Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Pygmy Nuthatch and Painted Redstart.

We started our next day at Patagonia State Park. We sat at the feeders for a while and chatted with other birders. The weather was perfect! We saw Inca, Mourning and White-winged doves; Broad-tailed and Broad-billed hummingbirds. We then drove to the birding trail. There we saw Northern Cardinals, Lucy's Warblers, Vermillion Flycatchers and Gila Woodpeckers. We also saw several species of waterfowl. We also had a surprise sighting of a coatimundi.

Next, we went to Paton Center for Hummingbirds which has reported 252 bird species. We sat at the various areas and enjoyed chatting with other birders about what we were seeing and what we wanted to see! Our highlights were: Broad-billed and Black-chinned Hummingbirds, Zone-tailed Hawk, Curve-billed Thrasher, and Gambel's Quail.

On Wednesday we got up early to join a 7 a.m. bird walk at San Pedro RNCA-San Pedro House and trails. There were five very knowledgeable docents on the 3.5 hour walk. It was another gorgeous spring day. We observed 55 species! Highlights were: Gray, Cooper's, and Red-tailed Hawks; Ladder-backed Woodpecker; Hammond's, Gray, Dusky, Ash-throated, and Vermillion Flycatchers; Canyon, Abert's, and Green-tailed Towhee; Summer Tanager, and Pyrrhuloxia. We also saw several species of warblers. Next was a visit to Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary. We saw beautiful Scott's Orioles, Cactus Wren and a "beep beep" Greater Roadrunner. After our morning of birding we went back to Patagonia for an awesome lunch at "Velvet Elvis." I highly recommend stopping there.

The following day on our way out of town we visited Catalina State Park and Oracle State Park. We saw many more of the same beautiful birds. Carol had a total of 27 life birds on this trip, her fave being the Pyrrhuloxia. My favorite was the Summer Tanager which is an exciting sign of spring for me.



Photos above by Susie Walker (Left: Sonoran Desert habitat; Right: male Northern Cardinal)
Photos below also by Susie (Left: female N. Cardinal; Right male Vermillion Flycatcher)



Editor's Note: additional wonderful photos by Susie can be found later in this Newsletter.

White Mountain Audubon Society (WMAS) 2024 Chapter Officers:

President: Mary Williams	480-235-1792
Vice-President: Tom Jernigan	928-892-3004
Secretary: Ron Pedersen	505-313-9343
Treasurer: Tom Jernigan	928-892-3004
Field Trips: Rob Bettaso	928-368-8481
Newsletter: Rob Bettaso	928-368-8481
Membership: Susie Walker	480-205-6119
Webmaster: Alan Vickers	

2024 Board Members:

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

President's Corner by Mary Williams:

Did you ever enlarge the photo that serves as the mini-illustration for the President's Corner in this newsletter? If not, here is the photo – taken by our friend Susie Walker. I decided to use it for publicity for our May 1 meeting when I will serve as guest speaker. (At the Nature Center at 6:30 and there will be a bird walk on Nature Center trails to the overview of Big Springs on Thursday morning at 6:30.)



Yes, that's me and, yes, that's my Chihuahua in his pack on my lap. It typifies the kind of birding I now do – finding a spot a short distance from the parking area and taking little strolls, sitting and watching for a while. I know it's the type of birding that many of you reading this – as well as those who attend our meetings and classes – are capable of doing, but don't do because you think you won't see much. I want to remind you that you're wrong if you think you must take long trips and long, sometimes grueling, hikes to enjoy birds. When I show slides of some of the 'Best Birds' listed by our meeting attendees last year and at the April meeting, I'll help you learn more about what I call strategic birding. I also will share slides that will be used at my other guest spots and classes that help us remember how to help birds – which is what the poster promoting May 11 surveying is doing with the insects' emphasis.

We continue to look for volunteers for assigned hotspots for that Global Big Day, Saturday May 11. If you don't have a scheduled location from me and wish to eBird in Navajo County that day, call 480-235-1792. For assignments from Apache County coordinator Sue Sitko, call 928-205-1189.

Wishing you good birding and many blessings, Mary



White Mountain Audubon Society Calendar:

For 2024 we expect that **all monthly Audubon programs** will continue to start at **6:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of the month (except in December, January, February & March** when there are no meetings). The programs are free and open to all. Monthly meetings are **held at the White Mountain Nature Center, 425 Woodland Road, Pinetop-Lakeside.**

As Mary W. mentioned above, the Speaker for **May 1st** will be none other than Mary herself (in the flesh; no, she doesn't wear feathers). Mary will show slides of some of the beautiful birds we all saw in 2023. She will also lead a field trip the next day (see info in her President's Corner up above).

The Regular Monthly WMAS Birding Field Trips: Monthly bird watching field trips on the **3rd Sat of every month**, alternate between Rob Bettaso & Jon Orona. If you're interested in attending, feel free to give me a call and leave a message so that I can return your call to give you the details for the upcoming trip. The **next outing is May 18th**. 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 May 25th**. Feel free to leave me a message if you're interested (Rob: 928-368-8481).

APRIL SATURDAY FIELD TRIPS: Well, despite my not sending out an announcement for our regular Saturday field trips, I still had 4 people call me asking where we would go birding on the 3rd Saturday. I decided we should try and find migrating shore and wading birds at Jacquez Marsh, which we did, and had some good, close views of 2 species of "peeps" (probably Western and Least sandpipers) plus a few Willets. Otherwise, the migration didn't seem to be in high gear yet, but we did have a lot of fun and also decided to stop and hike at Scott's Reservoir where we saw not only Ospreys, but also Suzanne spotted a Golden Eagle which we watched streak out of sight below the dam. Later, just Ken and I hiked from the Nature Center to Woodland Lake where we were lucky enough to observe a Franklin's Gull soaring high overhead.

For our 4th Saturday outing ("Fitness Birding") I did not have any calls so I hiked alone and close to home. It had snowed the night before so it was wonderful to look for spring birds in the fresh snow and, like me, they seemed to enjoy the conditions. It is extra special to watch warblers and hummers moving in and through the snow laden boughs of the pines, junipers, and, up high, in the Douglas Firs. I must say though, that I wondered if the hummers were shivering with cold or quivering from their sugary diet.
--Rob

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).

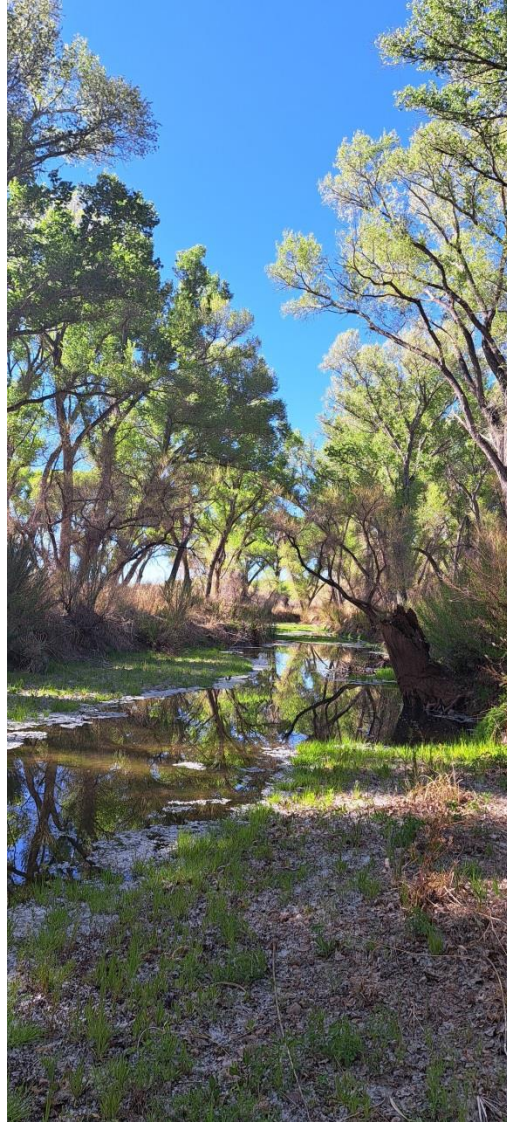
Also, if you are not a member of the National Audubon Society, we encourage all Chapter members to join the national organization. Information on joining the national organization is easy as you only need to type "National Audubon Society" into your internet search engine to obtain the simple instructions 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).**

Photos below by Susie Walker (Left: Rough-winged Swallow; Right: Mourning & Inca doves)

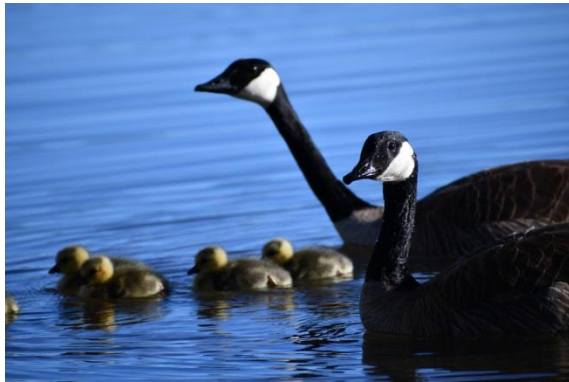


Photos below by Susie Walker (Left: riparian tree with Great-blue Heron nests; Right: San Pedro River – healthy riparian habitats are generally excellent for birds)



BONUS PHOTOS BY JON ORONA:

Clockwise from top/left: Black-throated Gray Warbler, Canada Goose family, Osprey, Yellow Warbler, Barn Swallow (all these amazing photos Jon took locally on the A/S and at Rainbow Lk!!)



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.