



## FEBRUARY EDITION 2025

### **“Out on a Limb” by Susie Walker (WMAS Board Member)**

Wildlife viewing makes Fool Hollow Lake Recreation Area a popular place in the White Mountains. This recreation area has a 150 acre lake surrounded by towering pine trees. The park was named when Thomas Jefferson Adair moved into the area in 1879 to start a farm. The locals joked that only a fool would try and farm the land, and the name stuck! Fool Hollow Lake in Show Low has many good places to see birds, including the lake, the forest and the river. The area has many habitats that support a variety of birds, including waterfowl, raptors, and other species.

Birding spots at Fool Hollow Lake: Bald Eagles- Look for these birds perched on snags on both sides of the eastern arm of the lake. Waterfowl- Look for diving ducks along the eastern arm of the lake, and dabbling ducks near the nesting islands on the west side. Nesting warblers- Look for Grace’s and Yellow-rumped warblers in the pines. Other birds- Look for Osprey, mergansers, and other diving ducks.

On a beautiful winter morning at the end of January, two friends and I spent a wonderful morning birding Fool Hollow. We started birding at about 9am. We didn’t see much going on since it was a chilly morning and the majority of the lake was frozen. As we wandered around the park among the pines and juniper we started to see and hear more activity. We saw Dark-eyed Junco, House Finch, American Robin, Pygmy Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch and Mountain Chickadee. We then went to a corner of the lake that had some open water full of lots of waterfowl. We saw 50 Canada Geese milling around the shore, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe and many American Coot. We saw approximately 358 ducks in the water and some fly overs! As we were sitting on a bench watching the ducks, we heard the distinctive call of a flock of Pinyon Jay. We had about 15 fly past us. We also spotted a juvenile Bald Eagle and a flock of Western Bluebirds.

What started out as a quiet chilly morning, ended up being a fun and successful birding adventure!  
Happy winter birding!

Photos below by **Susie Walker**: Left – coots on the ice & in the water at Fool Hollow State Park (FHSP); Right – a House Finch atop a conifer at FHSP.



**White Mountain Audubon Society (WMAS) 2025 Chapter Officers:**

President: Mary Williams	480-235-1792
Secretary: Millie Emerson	316-295-6404
Treasurer: Ron Pedersen	505-313-9343
Field Trips: Rob Bettaso	928-368-8481
Newsletter: Rob Bettaso	928-368-8481
Membership: Susie Walker	480-205-6119
Webmaster: Alan Vickers	

**2025 Board Members:**

Mary Williams, Millie Emerson, Mary Freemon, Susie Walker, Ron Pedersen, & Rob Bettaso.



**President's Corner by Mary Williams:**

Are you happy with your eBird lists so far in 2025? Want a volunteer opportunity to add to them at the number two Apache County hotspot?

Lyman Lake State Park Ranger Soren Shelby contacted me to get eBirding volunteers for an AZ State Park project to participate in the 'Great Backyard Bird Count' that is held on President's Day Weekend. This year it's Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, February 14-17.

The GBBC was started in 1998 by National Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Birds Canada and Wild Birds Unlimited are also co-sponsoring the event this year and it has been a global project since 2013. It was the first on-line participatory citizen science project to collect data on wild birds and display results in near real time.

The more data that comes in, the easier it is for scientists to track patterns and similarities across the board for these bird species. This data helps them answer important questions on a variety of subjects, including... climate change and how it affects populations... habitat locations. (info from birdcount.org)

If you're an eBirder and wish to take advantage of the Park's offer of free admission by agreeing to survey and submit checklists sometime that weekend, contact Ranger Shelby at the Park. I'll be watching weather reports in order to spend a night there myself and hope some of you can join me the following morning for a trip out to the point and a good survey of birds there and at other spots throughout the park.

Wishing you good birding and many blessings, Mary



### White Mountain Audubon Society Calendar:

For 2025 we expect that all monthly Audubon programs will continue to start at 6:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of the month but will have our monthly meetings only from May thru Oct. The programs are free and open to all. Monthly meetings are held at the White Mountain Nature Center, 425 Woodland Road, Pinetop-Lakeside.

**The Regular Monthly WMAS Birding Field Trips:** Monthly bird watching field trips on the 3rd Sat of every month; usually led by Rob Bettaso but also by Jon Orona when he is available (and if others would like to lead, pls give me a call so we can discuss). 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 **Feb 15<sup>th</sup>**. 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 **Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>**. Feel free to leave me a message if you're interested (Rob: 928-368-8481).

## OUR RECENT SATURDAY FIELD TRIPS IN JANUARY:

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of this month since I had no callers for a birding field trip, I opted to join Dave C. for a hike of the Timber Mesa trail. We both had our binoculars but since the birds were not particularly active that day, we opted to hike more for the conversation and exercise than for anything else. We were, once again, impressed by the views along the high points of that trail but also discouraged when we observed how many big, very old Alligator Junipers have been removed and/or had large limbs cut from them along that trail.

## 2024/2025 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT (CBC): Coordinator Rob Bettaso; Data Entry Ken McByrd-Bell

Below are 4 wonderful **Jon Orona** photos that he took during this year's CBC. Also, 2 supplements to this month's Newsletter are a spreadsheet prepared by **Ken McByrd-Bell** & a summary that was generated when Ken entered our CBC data into the National Audubon Society's website database. Ken has once again proved to be indispensable in making the CBC a reality; thank you Ken! Despite the very high winds on CBC day, we had a great turn-out of participating birders who I thank most earnestly here and now! See you next year. --Rob

**Photos below** (clockwise): One of our Chapter's expert CBC birding teams (the Orona family, with dad taking the photo); a noble Mule Deer buck (note the large ears, branching antlers, and black-tipped tail which help distinguish a mulie from a White-tailed buck); the simply amazing cryptic colors/patterns of a Brown Creeper; a clown-faced Acorn Woodpecker on a licheny tree limb.





## 2025 EAGLE FEST

Contact: Dan Groebner (928) 532-2308, [dgroebner@azgfd.gov](mailto:dgroebner@azgfd.gov)



The 23rd Annual White Mountain Eagle Fest is scheduled for Saturday, February 8, 2025 at 9 am, hosted by the White Mountain Nature Center, 425 S. Woodland Road, Lakeside, weather permitting. Liberty Wildlife will again bring their ambassador eagle and explain their work to educate people about the needs of all of Arizona's wildlife. The eagle handlers from Liberty will also describe their important work in rehabilitating injured and sick native wildlife so that they can be released back into the wild.

Arizona Game and Fish will provide an update on current eagle populations and management in Arizona, including possible reasons for the record numbers of active nests. Eagle watching tips will be provided, including the best watchable wildlife areas.

After the presentations at the White Mountain Nature Center, participants can have their picture taken with the Liberty Wildlife ambassador eagle. The award-winning documentary describing the work of Liberty Wildlife, "Weight of a Feather" will then be shown concurrently with an optional field trip to a nearby lake to hopefully view eagles in their natural habitat. There will be a repeat performance of the video for those who chose to attend the field trip immediately after the presentations and photo opportunities.

Arizona's White Mountains is a convenient layover spot for migrating eagles from further north. Many bald and golden eagles migrate south just far enough to find the open water in area lakes, which provides waterfowl and fish for a food source.

The number of summer nesting bald eagles in the area continues to rise, and mild winters in the White Mountains are supporting more “snow birds,” so eagle watching is getting more and more productive. In the last few years, 4 new nests have been reported by the public to wildlife agencies, just in the White Mountains alone.

This year’s sponsors include the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Liberty Wildlife, Lazy Oaks Resort on Rainbow Lake, as well as the White Mountain Nature Center. The program is free to White Mountain Nature Center members with a \$10 donation requested of others. For more information call (928) 532-2308.

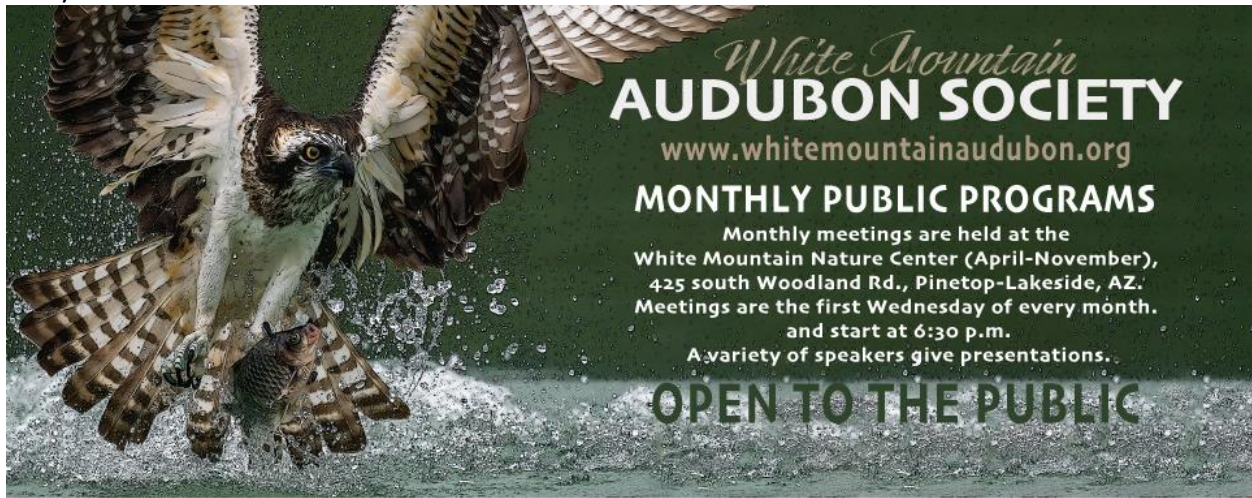
#### **UPDATES & REMINDERS:**

Have you paid your annual membership dues? Thank you if you have and if not, note that the membership form is at the end of every Newsletter. Dues are for the year in which they are paid and are not necessarily valid for 12 months following payment (unless you pay in December or 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).

See our WMAS ad in **Anne Groebner's Outdoors Southwest** magazine (a monthly publication focusing on our White Mountains environment). You can check out Anne's **OSW** at the following website: [OutdoorsSW.com](http://OutdoorsSW.com) or you can pick-up a hardcopy version at the Nature Center, Safeway, Town Hall, and many other locations.



### 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.