OCTOBER EDITION 2025 (TREES SHED LEAVES; BIRDS GET SEEN)

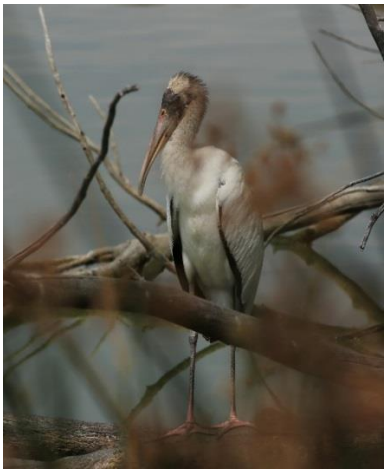
"Out on a Limb" by Millie Emerson – White Mountain Audubon Society (WMAS) Board Member:

Since its inception, my husband, Bob, has always referred to Facebook as "The Devil." In many respects, I cannot disagree with him. However, there *are* times when I find some very interesting news items posted, whether it is about family or friends, or something exciting in the birding world! It was through Facebook a few months ago that I learned of the Mandarin Duck that had been seen at a park pond in Queen Creek, AZ. I thoroughly enjoyed going to visit the pond, seeing such a rarity as this beautiful bird in the "wild" (I do realize this was an anomaly and an atypical habitat for him; speculation has it that this Mandarin Duck was likely an escapee or a release from some local entity or individual, but nonetheless, it was still exciting to see him!).

Well, in late August, I saw a post on Facebook about a Wood Stork that had been seen at a pond in the Denver area. Why did this catch my eye and why did I find this so intriguing, you might ask? Wood Storks are wading birds that stand over three feet tall and are typically only found in a few areas in the United States in wetland preserves or wildlife areas along the coasts of Florida, South Carolina and Georgia (allaboutbirds.org). The last documented sighting of a Wood Stork in Colorado was in **1934,** *91 years ago!* (Thoughts about this specific bird were that it was a juvenile that had either been blown off course after a major storm or possibly just made a mistake and got lost, as some juveniles are known to do.)

The day after seeing the original post, I saw the Wood Stork was then being seen at a pond in Broomfield, a Denver suburb of 27.45 square miles with a population of almost 74,000 people. As it happens, we have a very dear friend who lives in Broomfield, and with a little research, I found that he lives a mere three miles from the Alexx and Michael's Pond where the Wood Stork had been sighted! Now, granted, I wouldn't ask this of just anyone, but Bob and I have been the best of friends with Dreux for over 40 years. So, I had no qualms about contacting him and asking him if he would be willing to go by the pond to see if he could spot the bird and if he would take a few pictures for me—thereby allowing me to live vicariously through his photos! Dreux, being the good friend and retired professional photojournalist that he is, welcomed the challenge of going in search of the stork; he said that ultimately, it was pretty easy to locate with its newfound celebrity and the number of people who were there to see it! Dreux fulfilled my desire to see this beauty, and after perusing the 143(!!) pictures he sent, I *almost* felt like I had been there to see it myself!

Wood Stork at Alexx and Michael's Pond, Broomfield, CO. **Photos by Dreux DeMack**



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 WMAS Board Members:
Mary Williams, Millie Emerson, Mary Freemon, Susie Walker, Ron Pedersen, & Rob Bettaso.

President's Corner by Mary Williams:

Did you enjoy the fall migration? I'm writing this editorial on September 15, enjoying it at one of my favorite places to bird – knowing that by the time you read it so many of the 2025 migrants will have returned to their winter homes.

I just watched a female Summer Tanager perched with a large tasty-looking worm or caterpillar. And I thought, good for her; fuel for that long journey to Central America! And then thought, will she find enough food and water to return to breed again here in May of 2026?

I'm writing this in a spot where I stop frequently and have been blessed to bird with permission from the land owners. I have gasped at the brilliance of the male SUTA frequently for the past few years too.

Will they return? Reading about the alarming decline in the populations of insects, worms and caterpillars makes me realize that the probability of their return becomes lower every year. So sad.

Keep in mind that many birds, such as these tanagers, seldom benefit from bird feeders. The seed and suet eaters that do come to our feeders – like hummingbirds to our sugar water – rely on insect populations to feed their young. Feeders in nesting season, I believe, keep the parents going as they look for the decreasing protein supplies for their nestlings. Below is from a recent post I shared on our Facebook page by Home & Garden Tips. (That's a lot of caterpillars!)

When I express my gratitude to the landowner here, I always talk about the importance of his habitat and encourage him to let areas stay wild. Leave the dead trees and snags and fallen leaves. Allow the seed-bearing weeds and wildflowers to propagate too. Don't use insecticides or herbicides on the mown areas or in the water. (And, of course, encourage the neighbor to keep her cats indoors!)

Will you all please do all of the same? Wishing you good birding and many blessings, Mary

💥 *Seeds don't raise baby birds - insects do*
One clutch of chickadees needs 6,000+ caterpillars. Your feeder has zero.
💥 *Native plants feed 500x more birds than feeders*
One oak tree supports entire food webs. Feeders create bird fast-food addiction.
💥 *Feeder dependency makes birds vulnerable*
When you go on vacation, "your" birds starve because they forgot how to forage.
💥 *$4 billion could restore 80 million acres of habitat*
Instead, it props up the bird-feeding industrial complex.
THE FEEDING REBELLION:
Plant native trees and shrubs. Create real habitat, not artificial dependency.
#BirdFeederScam #4Billion #NativePlants500x

White Mountain Audubon Society Calendar etc. (Rob Bettaso):

For 2025, all monthly Audubon programs will continue to start at 6:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of the month. We 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.

Oct 1st WMAS Speaker: Weds from 6:30 to 7:30 pm – **Lorna McNeil-Cox** will give a PowerPoint presentation at the White Mountain Nature Center. Her presentation entitled Ocean-Front Property in the White Mountains will be shown to the public for the first time at our WMAS meeting.

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 **Oct 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 **Oct 25th.** Feel free to leave me a message if you're interested (Rob: 928-368-8481).

OUR WHITE MOUNTAIN AUDUBON SOCIETY (WMAS) SEPT FIELD TRIPS:

For the Sept field trips I had 12 folks join me for birding outings. We visited local wetlands and arid highlands and saw a diversity of birds including some large groups of Pinyon Jays and Sage Thrashers (especially on our most recent excursions, so watch for them now in the pinyon/juniper habitats; in the case of the jays, they are often heard before they are seen). Flocks of warblers are also calling and large foraging groups of Yellow-rumped Warblers are a common sighting. The most unusual species I saw this month was on a solo outing along the Rim Road when I looked up to ascertain what a group of nuthatches and chickadees were vocalizing about and there, in their midst, was a beleaguered N. Pygmy Owl, enduring their taunts but clearly focusing on me as his primary threat (he was misguided in perceiving me, individually, as a threat, but, of course, quite right to be concerned by having a human only 50' below his perch in a bare and exposed snag). I did not linger and he stayed put until I was soon out of sight; I did not see him the next day nor on subsequent days.

BONUS PHOTOS (clockwise from top left): A Sora working a White Mountain marsh (**photo by Terri Rieser**); along the WA coast, a hunkering Short-eared Owl (**photo by Nikko Van Wyck**); a local, wild and free Red-tailed Hawk (**photo by Susie Walker**); and a Lewis's Woodpecker in a snag within our local Ponderosa Pine forest (**photo by Carol Axford**).

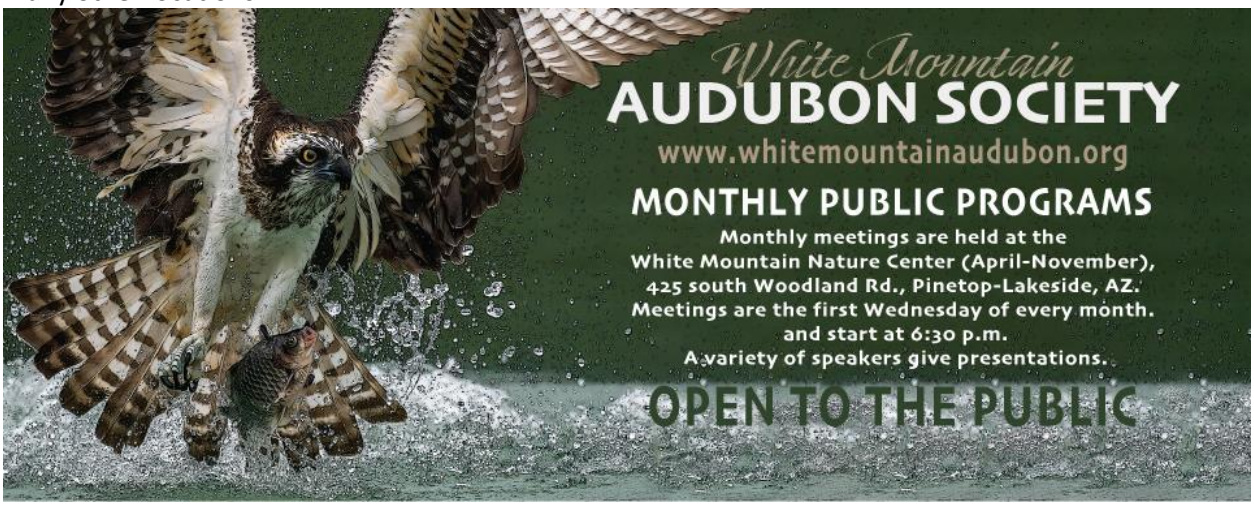
UPDATES & REMINDERS:

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 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 85935You 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.