



JUNE EDITION 2026 (Courtship, Nesting, Fledge; Repeat)

“Out on a Limb” by Ron Pedersen (White Mountain Audubon Board Member):

Being a landlord never appealed to me. The thought of dealing with people in those kinds of situations filled me with anxiety. But, for some reason, I chose to be a landlord for birds. Although it is rewarding and exciting, it also fills me with anxiety. This year is no exception.

We’ve ended up with four different species in nesting boxes I’ve constructed and placed on our half acre -- none without some sort of drama. Pygmy Nuthatches pecked a hole through our siding a few years ago. Before they settled in, I placed a nesting box over the hole and they used it without hesitation. Last year things got more complicated. They started pecking another hole in the siding about 4’ from their current home. In addition, a gang of Violet-green Swallows came in and drove the established nuthatches out of their box.

In an attempt to preclude that from happening again this year, I placed a new nesting box over the new hole they had pecked. Some research revealed that the smallest hole a Pygmy Nuthatch will use is 1” and the smallest the swallows will use is 1.25”. The new box has the 1” hole. The good news is that the nuthatches were able to fight off the swallows this year and remain in their original box. The bad news is that 1” hole in the new box seems unappealing to the nuthatches.

Last year the swallows also drove the Western Bluebirds out of the box they were established in. Again, I built a new box and placed in a location that I thought would be good for the bluebirds. Luckily, the bluebirds took to the new box and swallows kept the one they stole last year. But, all that settled out only after a week or two of battle with the swallows. I think the swallows should be renamed Viole(n)t-green Swallows because they come in and harass other birds seemingly just for the fun of it. They’ll fight for nesting boxes that they never end up using.

Lastly, our Ash-throated Flycatchers returned this year to their same nesting box. Although both the male and female were around initially, it appears that the female has lost her helpful mate. We’re holding our breath to see if she can make it alone without her mate who would normally feed her as she sits on the eggs. She appears to leave a couple of times a day, presumably to feed. Live mealworms are on order to hopefully make her life easier and make it easier for her to feed her chicks. In all, it’s been thrilling to see birds utilize the boxes; but, it’s also nerve-racking to watch the process and it’s not over yet. If all goes well, there could be as many as 25 hatchlings from these four boxes. Hopefully, the fledging process goes well and there won’t be too many casualties.

Photos below, clockwise: Pygmy Nuthatch bringing food to his mate. Violet-green Swallows building a nest. Western Bluebird and Violet-green Swallow fighting over a nesting box that neither took. The widowed Ash-throated Flycatcher. Photos by **Ron Pedersen**.



White Mountain Audubon Society (WMAS) 2026 Chapter Officers:

President: Vacant

Vice President: Vacant

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

2026 WMAS Board Members:

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

White Mountain Audubon Society Calendar etc.:

For 2026, we expect that all monthly Audubon speaker programs will continue to happen on the first Wednesday of the month. We will expect to have our monthly meetings from May thru Oct and they will start at **6pm**. The programs will be free and open to all. Monthly meetings are held at the White Mountain Nature Center, 425 Woodland Road, Pinetop-Lakeside.

June 3, 2026 at 6 p.m. Mary Williams will give a presentation entitled “The Birds, the Bees, and....” As mentioned above, the presentation will be at the Nature Center.

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 (**Rob 928-368-8481**) and leave a message so that I can return your call to give you the details for the upcoming trip.

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

In May, I was joined by a total of 12 birders as we explored local trails on several beautiful spring mornings. There were many “FOY’s” (First Of Year) sightings including 11 species of warblers, Blue & Black-headed Grosbeaks, and 8 species of raptors, truly wild and flying free. What we did not see is many of waterfowl species (either those that usually remain throughout the warm-season or those that often remain in the area until slightly later in spring when they head north to breed). Given the paltry levels of water in our local reservoirs, perhaps the waterfowl have simply passed us by on their quest for greener aquatic pastures....

BONUS PHOTOS:

Below: (Left) an unusual and interesting angle on a Wilson’s Warbler; (Right) a humble Western Tanager allowing his brilliantly colored plumage to be obscured by dense foliage. Photos by **Millie Emerson** near her home in the Florence area.



Below: (Left) an adult Bald Eagle and one of its young hunkering down in the nest; (Right) an adult Bald Eagle and one of its young that has recently fledged (fledging means that the young have left the nest and are learning to fly). Both photos by **William Waldron**, who has been a designated and dedicated Bald Eagle Nest Watcher for many years in the Pinetop area. Thank you Bill!!



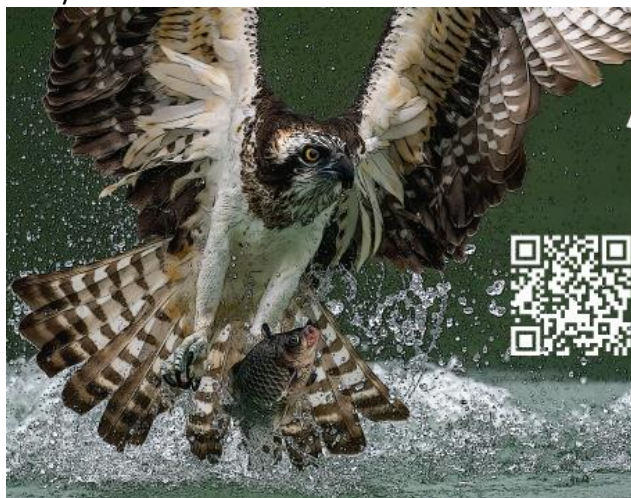
UPDATES & REMINDERS:

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.



White Mountain
AUDUBON SOCIETY
www.whitemountainaudubon.org
MONTHLY PUBLIC PROGRAMS
Monthly meetings are held at the
White Mountain Nature Center (May-October),
425 south Woodland Rd., Pinetop-Lakeside, AZ.
Meetings are the first Wednesday of every month
and start at 6:00 p.m.
A variety of speakers give presentations.
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



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.

You can also pay by Zelle scanning the QR code below:

