



AUGUST EDITION 2026 (Monsoons=Bugs=Birds)

“Out on a Limb” by Rhonda Forsha (White Mountain Audubon Board Member):

After spending 24 days traveling throughout Panama, I can honestly say I have a new appreciation for Arizona’s “dry heat!”

Panama’s tropical climate lives up to its reputation. Hot, humid, and frequently wet, it creates ideal conditions for an incredible diversity of wildlife. While the humidity took some getting used to, the payoff was well worth it. Everywhere we went the forests were alive with birds, mammals and insects. One of the highlights of our trip was staying at a coffee-growing lodge, near La Amistad National Park, that hosted an active Resplendent Quetzal nest. Even more surprising was its location—only about 75 feet from the lodge’s coffee bean hulling workshop. The machinery runs for approximately three hours each day and is remarkably loud, yet the quetzals appeared completely unfazed.

We spent several hours watching and photographing both parents. The male, with his green plumage and long tail feathers, was magnificent. During our observations, the adults delivered a large lizard and later a walking stick insect to the chicks. Unfortunately, the chicks remained hidden inside the nest cavity, as each feeding visit lasted only a few seconds before the adults were off again.

Another outing from the same lodge was hiking to a lek of the Three-wattled Bellbird. The hike was steep, warm, and humid, but the birds were unforgettable. Watching the males display with their three facial wattles and listening to their amazingly loud metallic “BONG” calls made every step worthwhile. It became one of my favorite experiences of the trip.

Later, we rented a home in the Cerro Azul region bordering Chagres National Park. Near there, we met a couple who had transformed their five-acre property into a remarkable birding destination. Following advice from the husband’s cousin—a birder from Arizona—they spent two years developing feeding stations and observation areas designed to attract specific species.

We enjoyed outstanding views and photo opportunities of several species that would have been extremely difficult to find in the surrounding forest, including the Bicolored Antbird, Spotted Antbird, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Yellow-crowned Euphonia, and the beautiful Crimson-backed Tanager. It was nice to see that several places have restored the natural forest for wildlife.

Panama's insect life also deserves mention. The sheer variety was astounding. While they may not rival tropical birds in brilliant color, insects offered fascinating subjects for photography, with intricate patterns, unusual shapes, and behaviors.

This Panama trip provided a chance to experience an extraordinary diversity of wildlife. From watching Resplendent Quetzals bring food to their young to hearing the unmistakable call of the Three-wattled Bellbird echo through the cloud forest, the trip was filled with moments that we will never forget. It is a destination I would gladly visit again.

Left: A 3-wattled Bellbird (only the males have the fleshy facial projections); Right: The Red-legged Honey Creeper is a passerine in the Tanager Family. Both photos by **Rhonda & Doug Forsha**



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.

On **Aug 5, 2026** at **6 p.m.** **Margaret Dyekman** will give a presentation for our Audubon chapter at the White Mountain Nature Center entitled: "Raptors, Waterfowl, and Waders." Margaret is a Board Member with two different Audubon chapters in AZ and her presentations to our chapter are always very interesting and popular.

Photo below: The WMAS display at the recent Hummingbird Festival at the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Sipes Wildlife Area. See also the separate attachment in the email that contained this Newsletter for additional information about the Hummer Fest.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:

Our good friend Loretta Pena often donates books to WMAS for us to raffle (as a Chapter fund-raiser) at our monthly meetings. Earlier this year, she gave us an excellent DVD on all aspects of the 3 bluebird species found in the U.S. The DVD provides such information as building bluebird nesting boxes and placing them in appropriate locations in the field. There is also lots of bluebird biological information on the DVD.

Because of this new DVD, we have an excellent opportunity for anyone who wants to learn more about bluebirds and help conserve them in Arizona. In addition to learning how to build and/or place nesting boxes in the field, you will also get to monitor the bluebirds at their boxes and keep important records of what you observe. In short, you will play a vital role in this particular volunteer commitment to "citizen science."

If you are interested, the DVD can be borrowed by calling **Dan Groebner at 928-532-2308**. Dan is a wildlife biologist for the AZ Game & Fish Dept and he will also serve as the coordinator between the Game & Fish and our Audubon chapter.

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) JULY FIELD TRIPS:

In July, I was joined by a total of 22 birders as we explored local trails on several beautiful mornings. One of the hikes was an annual nature walk that Ron Miller (TRACKS) leads on the "Crossover Trail" in the Baldy Wilderness. For the past few years, Ron has invited me join the hikes to point out birds and other wildlife while he focuses on trees and other plants. Since the Wilderness restricts group sizes to 12 people, Ron takes half the group and I take the other (we stagger our departure times by ~10 minutes) and then when we get to our lunch spot we switch groups. For those of you who aren't already aware of TRACKS, you can look them up on-line where you will learn about the important trail construction & maintenance work that they do plus various hikes, mountain biking outings, cross-country skiing, and the many other activities and events in which they are involved! They are a super group and we should all be very grateful for the hard work they regularly do on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest's authorized trails (better yet, sign up to help TRACKS in whatever way you can). --Rob

THIS MONTH'S BIRD PHOTOS:

Below are four photos taken by **John Jung** during our birding outing to the Becker Lake area: Clockwise from top/left is a vociferous Yellow-breasted Chat; a species of whiptail lizard (eating winged termites as they emerge from their nest); a beaver plying the Little Colorado River; and a colorful male Vermillion Flycatcher.





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.

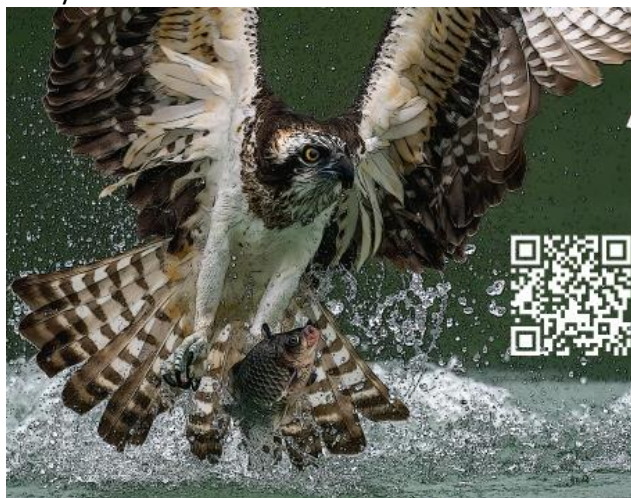
And remember, you can always feel free to offer your assistance to the Board. For that matter, there are some on the Board who are interested in moving on from the Board to focus on other aspects of their lives, so, we are always interested in hearing from anyone who might want to accept the fun challenges 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).

BONUS PHOTOS:

Clockwise from top/left: A House Finch and an American Goldfinch near the WA/Canada border (both **photos by Nikko**); a Green Heron at Rainbow Lk (**photo by Susie Walker**); a splendid Resplendent Quetzal in Panama (**photo by Rhonda & Doug Forsha**).



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:

