



MARCH-APRIL 2012

Calendar

All monthly meetings begin at 7:00 pm at the Pinetop-Lakeside Town Council Chambers. Fieldtrip times and meeting places vary, so please check the website or call 367-2462 for more information.

March 7- Regular monthly meeting speaker is Dave Cagle of AZ G & FD who will give a program on Birding Opportunities within AZ G&F Dept's Wildlife Areas.

March 17- Field trip to Show Low Sewage Ponds and Fool Hollow Lake; meet at SL McDonald's at 7am. Leader: Kent Schipper

April 4- Regular monthly meeting speaker will be Miles Gilbert, archeologist, who will give a program on John James Audubon.

April 21- Field trip to Pintail & Telephone Lakes; meet at SL McDonald's at 7am. Leaders: Jody & Richard Inman

Your Officers

President: Mary Ellen Bittorf	367-2462
Vice-Pres.: Tom Jernigan	532-1510
Secretary: Liz Jernigan	532-1510
Treasurer: Chuck Bittorf	367-2462
Programs: Loretta Pena	368-3380
Field Trips: Kent Schipper	537-7569
Editor: Loretta Pena	368-3380
Membership: Mary Gordon	537-0447

Board Members: Mary Gordon, Steve Gordon, Kent Schipper, Jody Inman and Richard Inman

Reach us at: www.whitemountainaudubon.org

~Out on a Limb with Your President~

I have received some sad news about one of our members. Paul Gomben has passed away. Paul was an important member of our group. He made a lot of nest boxes for us and then contacted Boy Scout troops to set up nest box trails, and he made sure they were taken care of. Our prayers and condolences go to Mrs. Gomben. Paul will be missed.

Last week we saw our first Robin of 2012. It was only seen one day and we haven't seen it since. We participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count, and there was one sighting that was very interesting. We saw 75 Common Mergansers at Rainbow Lake. I could hardly believe my eyes. They were all over the place! There were both males and females. What pretty birds they are.

Your board is still working on the Nature Film Festival and I will tell you more when I can.

Get ready to start your "Big Year". It will begin on April 1, 2012 and go through to March 31, 2013. We only need the names of the bird species, but we are asking \$5.00 per person that takes part, so get out those binoculars and note pads and be ready to start your "Big Year". You can count any birds you see anywhere in Arizona for one category, or what you see anywhere in the world if you travel.

We have our list of field trips, and I hope all of you will try to join us in the field trips. We have some good leaders this year, and they should be fun. Also, remember the June campout. Hopefully we won't have a fire problem this year. Bart Stegman will lead the Saturday am. field trip, and that will be fun, so mark your calendar.

I had a call from Lorna at the Forest Service that a Greater White-fronted Goose was spotted at Fool Hollow Lake. Chuck and I drove there, but it only stuck around for one day and we missed it. I think this was a first for this area. Maybe it will come back. One of the joys of bird watching is that you never know when you will see something outstanding, so keep your eyes open and your binoculars close and ...enjoy birding

~Mary Ellen~

White Mountain Audubon Society

Membership/Donation Form

White Mountain Audubon Society membership dues are: **Individual \$10**, or **Family \$15 per year**. Please renew your membership by March 15th. 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 doing. Thank you very much for your support of White Mountain Audubon Society.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

It is time once again to renew your membership in White Mountain Audubon Society. Please see the form above and send it to the address listed there.

Many **thanks** to returning members:

Liz & Tom Jernigan

Sally Walker

Warren Goff

Chuck & Mary Ellen Bittorf

Welcome to new member:

Chuck Toland

The Birdathon is Coming!!

In May, White Mountain Audubon Society sponsors the Birdathon, which is the primary source of funding for our programs, events and scholarships. This year it will be 4 days, from May 18th-21st. Having it for 4 days gives us all a chance to see more birds and raise more dollars for WMAS.

Please consider participating this year. You may ask your friends, neighbors and coworkers to sponsor you; then bird each day if possible and collect the amount people pledged to you. Your sponsors may wish to pay a certain amount for each of the species seen or donate a flat amount. You will turn your sightings in to Mary Ellen and the money collected to Chuck Bittorf. In past Birdathons, we have collected enough money to give \$1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors for several years now. We also provide a great science program to local schools called Audubon Adventures. **White Mountain Audubon needs your help!** Thanks to each and everyone who supports this very worthwhile, fun, event.

WHITE MOUNTAIN AUDUBON SOCIETY
Schedule of Events
2012

MARCH

- 7th- Monthly meeting speaker will be Dave Cagle of AZ G&F Dept. whose program will be Bird Watching Opportunities within AZ G&F Dept.'s Wildlife Areas.
17th- Field trip to Show Low Sewage Ponds & Fool Hollow Lake. **Meet at SL McDonald's at 7:00am.** Leader is Kent Schipper

APRIL

- 4TH- Monthly meeting speaker will be Miles Gilbert, archeologist, who will give a program on John James Audubon.
21st- Field trip to Pintail & Telephone Lakes. **Meet at Show Low McDonald's at 7:00am.** Leaders are Richard & Jody Inman.

MAY

- 2nd- Monthly meeting speaker will be Fred Peters giving a program on Bald Eagles.
9th- "Walk with the Birds" at Woodland Park. Meet Mary Ellen at 8:30am at the tennis courts
19th- **North American Migration Count** for Apache and Navajo Counties.
18th-21st- **Birdathon**- fundraiser for WMAS programs.
23rd- "Walk with the Birds" at Woodland Park. Meet Mary Ellen at 8:30 am at the tennis courts.
26th- ***Beginning Birder's Workshop** at 9:00am at the Nature Center.

JUNE

- 6TH- Monthly meeting speaker will be Bob Herrman whose program is titled "Birds, Blooms, and Butterflies".
13th- "Walk with the Birds" at Woodland Park. Meet Mary Ellen at 8:30am at the tennis courts.
15th, 16th, 17th- ***Annual WMAS CampOut** at Burnt Mill Springs
27th- "Walk with the Birds" at Woodland Park. Meet Mary Ellen at 8:30 at the tennis courts.

JULY

- 11th- Monthly meeting speaker is Barb Davis. She will give a program on "Warblers of the White Mountains".
11th- "Walk with the Birds" at Woodland Park. Meet Mary Ellen at the tennis courts at 8:30am.
25th- "Walk with the Birds" at Woodland Park. Meet Mary Ellen at the tennis courts at 8:30am
28th- ***Hummingbird Banding** at Sipe Wildlife Area at 8:00am

AUGUST

- 1st- Monthly meeting speaker will be Gail Morris who will give a program on butterflies.
8th- "Walk with the Birds" at Woodland Park. Meet with Mary Ellen at 8:30am at the tennis courts.
11th- *** Avian Ambassadors** co-sponsored by WM Nature Center & White Mountain Audubon at the Nature Center.
25th- ***Field trip to Williams Creek Fish Hatchery & Kinishba Ruins** Meet at 7:00am at Pinetop's McDonald's

SEPTEMBER

5th- Monthly meeting speaker will be Dannette Weiss of AZ G&F Dept. Program will be on wind farms impact on birds.

12th- "Walk with the Birds" at Woodland Park. Meet Mary Ellen at 8:30am at the tennis courts.

15th- Field trip TBA at a later date.

26th- "Walk with the Birds" at Woodland Park. Meet Mary Ellen at 8:30am at the tennis courts.

OCTOBER

3RD- Monthly meeting speaker will Susan Taggart who will speak about wildlife rehabilitation.

5th, 6th, 7th-* 1st Annual Nature Film Festival

20th- *Field trip to Boyce Thompson Arboretum near Superior

NOVEMBER

7TH- Monthly meeting speaker unknown at this time.

10th- Fieldtrip to local lakes. **Meet at 7:30 at Pinetop McDonald's.**

DECEMBER

5th- Christmas Potluck- time and place to be determined.

15TH- *Christmas Bird Count

An * means there will be a fee charged.

MEETINGS are held at 7:00pm at the Pinetop-Lakeside Town Council Chambers on Neils Hansen Lane. Programs coordinator: Loretta Pena

FIELDTRIPS meet at various times and places. Please check the newsletter or website for more information. Bring binoculars, water, and lunch. For more information contact Mary Ellen at 367-2462 or maryellen12@cablone.net

WALK WITH THE BIRDS at Woodland Park in Pinetop led by Mary Ellen Bittorf meet at 8:30am at the tennis courts from May-September on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month.

CHANGES AND UPDATES to this schedule will appear in the Osprey Overlook, the White Mountain Independent and on the website whitemountainaudubon.org or call 367-2462.

White Mountain Audubon Society's

The Big Year

April 1st, 2012 - March 31st, 2013

White Mountain Audubon is sponsoring "The Big Year." The person or team that identifies the most bird species during the specified time will be the winner. There are two categories: Bird species identified in Arizona and bird species identified worldwide. Individuals or teams can register at any time from April 1st, 2012 through March 31st, 2013. There is a \$5.00 registration fee for *each* person (even if on a team). Registration forms are available in the WMAS newsletter, at the WMAS General meetings, or on this flier (see below). Submit the form at a WMAS General meeting or mail to WMAS, PO Box 3043, Pinetop, AZ, 85935. Winners will be recognized by the White Mountain Audubon Society and receive a plaque or trophy. Participants will be provided with a species recording form—everyone is on the honor system.

WHITE MOUNTAIN AUDUBON SOCIETY BIG YEAR REGISTRATION FORM

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____
E-MAIL: _____ PHONE: _____ DATE: _____
INDIVIDUAL: () TEAM: () TEAM NAME: _____
ARIZONA: () ANYWHERE: () PAID: \$ _____

PARTICIPANTS PAY \$5.00 PER PERSON, EVEN IF A MEMBER OF A TEAM.
MAIL CHECKS TO: PO BOX 3043, PINETOP, AZ 85935

BIRD NOTES

For several weeks in the first part of 2012, Bob and I spent time in Green Valley and had the opportunity to bird nearly every day. From the house we occupied we could walk ¼ mile to the park for that neighborhood. The park is located parallel to a large pecan orchard and near the dry Santa Cruz River. In this park area, we saw many species, but the one we looked for and loved watching was the Vermillion Flycatcher male. It was there almost every time we walked in the area. Our last week in Green Valley, we saw the female for the first time and realized we would have had a hard time with identification had the male and female not been together.

Vermillion Flycatcher is a small flycatcher of approximately 6 inches, with a large head and thin, sharply pointed bill. The male is brilliantly colored with a red crown, throat, belly and under parts and has a dark mask and eye line extending to the nape, with dark wings, back and tail. It often wags the tail. The female is grayish brown above with a black tail; the throat and breast are whitish and streaked with gray. The belly and under-tail coverts are pinkish.

Perched on low hanging, exposed limbs, they fly off short distances to catch insects in the air and come back to the limb. They perch upright and continuously repeat this behavior, not minding at all that they are being observed rather closely. They inhabit somewhat open areas in trees or shrubs in agricultural areas, riparian woodlands and desert areas of the Southwestern United States and Mexico and farther south.

In nests made of twigs, stems, and roots lined with fiber or hair, they lay 2-3 whitish eggs. The female incubates them for from 14-15 days. Generally they fledge in 14-16 days.

(Info for this article is from Stokes Field Guide, Sibley Guide to Birds and USGS.gov)

Whooping Cranes 2012

Did you know that Whooping Cranes have been migrating from their wintering grounds on the Gulf Coast of Texas to their breeding grounds in Canada since the time of the dinosaurs? In 1941, their numbers had dropped to only between 15-21 migrating birds. Last year the total population rose to approximately 391 birds. The long term recovery goal is to have at least a thousand Whooping Cranes in North America by 2035.

There are two flocks of migrating Whooping Cranes, because in 2001, scientists realized the risk of having only one flock. They are the Western and the Eastern Flock. In order to start the new flock, scientists took the eggs from Whooping Cranes that had been bred in captivity. These first chicks were hatched in 2001, and raised by humans in special costumes. They learned the fall migration route by following pilots flying ultralight aircraft. The pilots from *Operation Migration* led the birds to their wintering grounds in Florida. Since 2001, *Operation Migration* pilots have led the new group of captive bred chicks on this same Eastern route from Wisconsin to Florida.

Another effort was started in 2005 called Direct Autumn Release (DAR), to grow the flock. Each fall, captive-hatched costumed raised chicks are set free among older cranes in Wisconsin. At migration time these chicks follow the older birds to learn the route. Wild hatched chicks in the new flock are learning to migrate by following their own parents.

Many cranes did not make it to their wintering grounds in 2011/12; approximately ½ of the Eastern Migratory Population shortened their southward migration by hundreds of miles. Those cranes in the Western Flock that migrate from Canada to Texas also shortened their trip, stopping in Nebraska and Kansas instead. A long drought in Texas has made freshwater and blue crabs harder to cranes to find. This means they have had to move around more and look to look for food and water.

Biologists are working hard to establish more Whooping Crane populations in Wisconsin (migratory) and Louisiana (nonmigratory). The recovery of a species is a long term challenge. *Journey North* celebrates the stories of survival as they follow the annual cycle of this endangered species.

(Info for article is from www.learner.org, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Saving Cranes.org & International Crane Foundation)

CONSERVATION

A new, translucent adhesive tape, which tests show can significantly reduce bird collisions with glass windows and doors, is now available to the public. The product is being sold by American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and production of ABC; BirdTape is made possible through the generous support of the Rusinow Family Foundation.

Birds can't see glass and don't understand the architectural cues, such as window frames, mullions, and handles, that alert people to the hazard. Experts estimate that up to one billion birds may die each year from resulting collisions. Unlike some sources of bird mortality that predominantly kill weaker individuals, there is no distinction among victims of glass. Because glass is equally dangerous for strong, healthy, breeding adults, it can have a particularly serious impact on populations. Studies have shown that even small windows can be dangerous to birds that are accustomed to flying through gaps between trees and shrubs.

To learn more about ABC Bird Tape, go to: www.abcbirdtape.org. ABC has produced a [video](#) that demonstrates how to install the bird tape.

(info is from the American Bird Conservancy website)

Gulf Oil Spill

On April 20, 2010, BP's Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded off Louisiana's coast, unleashing an undersea volcano of oil and natural gas that would ultimately gush into the Gulf of Mexico for three months. Audubon staff sprang into action; our [Louisiana Coastal Initiative](#) and [Mississippi River Initiative](#) staff were first on the scene to assess the impacts and help guide and coordinate the emergency response.

Hundreds of volunteers took on critical response activities, assisting with oiled and injured bird transportation, protecting beach-nesting bird colonies, and making nets, cages and other materials used in bird rescue. Others helped monitor bird populations and health through citizen science initiatives, including the Coastal Bird Survey, a program that continues to this day.

Short-term and Long-term Impacts

After three months of desperate attempts, BP finally sealed the gushing well. By then, thousands of birds had died from contact with oil, the nesting season had been disrupted, and oil had reached 17 Important Bird Areas from Louisiana to Florida.

Only time will reveal the full toll of the largest oil spill in U.S. history. Unprecedented amounts of oil, natural gas and dispersants entered the gulf in what amounts to an uncontrolled chemical experiment with unknown consequences.

In April 2011, Audubon staff continue to report disturbing findings: oil oozing out of marshes where Seaside Sparrows nest, weathered oil still washing up on barrier islands and ongoing cleanup activities threatening nesting success of at-risk birds like Wilson's Plover for a second year.

Other threats are not as easy to see. Birds may go hungry as oil reduces the availability of prey, including fish, marine worms, oysters, and crustaceans. Audubon's researchers found marine worms that shorebirds eat burrowing in tar balls on a barrier island in Louisiana. Analysis by our partner Millsaps College confirmed that these tar balls contain oil by-products that pose risks to birds' health.

Much more research is needed before the full effects of this disaster can be understood, but what is clear is that birds, habitats and communities continue to be harmed. Restoration and recovery must get underway quickly.

Hope for the Gulf

With a century-long legacy of conservation along the Gulf Coast, Audubon is committed to helping this vital region recover – from the BP oil disaster and also from decades of other environmental assaults. ([See some of the places we are working.](#)) Together, we can create a vibrant, sustainable gulf region for birds, for people and for the future. (article from NAS website)

Where to write

President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20206
202-456-1111

U. S. Sen. Jon Kyl
730 Hart Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
202-225-3121 or
1-888-355-3588

Gov. Jan Brewer
Executive Tower
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007
1-800-253-0883

Rep. Brenda Barton
House Wing
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007
602-542-5219
bbarton@azleg.gov

U.S. Cong. Paul Gosar
504 Cannon HOB
202-225-2315
Washington, DC 20515

U.S. Sen. John McCain
241 Russell Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-2235

Sen. Sylvia Allen
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007
sallen@azleg.gov

Rep. Chester Crandall
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007
ccrandal@azleg.gov

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.

**White Mountain Audubon Society
P. O. Box 3043
Pinetop, AZ 85935**