



## OCTOBER EDITION 2021

### Out on a Limb by Tom Jernigan (WMAS Vice President & Treasurer)

Have you ever wondered if there is a local bird that could be considered as top of the pecking order, a bird king of the mountain, el bird numero uno, or a big tweet kahuna?

I hadn't thought much about that until over time I realized what was taking place at our own bird feeder. We have a platform feeder for sunflower seeds right out of our living room window.

At first I thought that the bird bully I was observing would eventually run (fly) when the right opponent arrived. Maybe a big band tailed pigeon or a scrub jay would scare it off.

But no, in the past few years there has been only one top dog (bird). What is it? Well, it has a red cap and a hard head. It buries sunflowers seeds in the cracks of our house trim. Yep, it is the Acorn woodpecker. These birds work together as a family. We call it a gang. Whenever a squirrel gets onto the platform feeder the gang lines up on a nearby branch and takes turns dive bombing the animal. The squirrel pulls its fuzzy tail over its back for protection but the birds keep diving and actually hitting the tail until finally it can take no more and jumps down.

Every bird we have seen gives deference to these woodpeckers. Blue jays, flickers, towhees, orioles, grosbeaks, and even the Band Tailed pigeon which is a few times bigger than the woodpecker.

Only one bird is brave enough, and this is when the woodpecker is in a compromised position, will dive at it. That's when the woodpecker is hunched over on our hummingbird feeder. I think it is the Rufous hummingbird. His diving doesn't seem to bother the bully that much.

Photos below by Sue Sitko: Left, an American Pipit & Right, a Green-winged Teal (both at Whitewater Draw, AZ)



## **White Mountain Audubon Society (WMAS) 2021 Chapter Officers:**

President: Mary Williams	480-235-1792
Vice-President: Tom Jernigan	928-532-1510
Secretary: Liz Jernigan	928-532-1510
Treasurer: Tom Jernigan	928-532-1510
Field Trips: Rob Bettaso	928-368-8481
Newsletter: Rob Bettaso	928-368-8481
Publicity: Mary Freemon	928-205-8597
Webmaster: Alan Vickers	

## **Board Members:**

Mary Williams, Tom Jernigan, Liz Jernigan, Joan Patrick, Mary Freemon, Rob Bettaso, Mary-Ellen Bittorf, Susie Walker.

## **President's Corner by Mary Williams (WMAS President):**

Greetings Birders! Now that the equinox has passed, the nights are becoming longer and colder and migration in Navajo and Apache Counties is slowing. So, I decided to schedule a quick trip on the last day of summer to the #1 Navajo eBirding hotspot – Hidden Cove Golf Course in Holbrook. Took my camper van up in the late afternoon to spend the night there, with permission, and enjoyed a slow early-morning walk around the irrigation pond in the agricultural area adjacent to the Golf Course. Was happy with sighting 31 species, including a brief but diagnostic look at my AZ First-Of-Year Crissal Thrasher and a good close-up look at one of the bobbing and spinning birds in a small flock of winter-plumage Red-necked Phalarope – also an FOY and number 185 for the county and 235 for the state on my 2021 species lists.

Other summer highlights included good views of a Black Tern at Telephone Lake and both male and female MacGillivray's Warblers in Shumway in August. Membership Director Susie Walker and I enjoyed watching a flock of Wild Turkeys at high-elevation Lee Valley Reservoir and adding more species to our Apache County lists at the beautiful peaceful Sipe Wildlife Area on trips in September. (See photo.)

Those of you who have attended my "Birding the White Mountains" classes (see photo) might recall a slide that asks "Why do we bird?" and answers "Look. Listen. List." I'm adding "Learn." Along with all the information on their website, the listing function of the eBird app from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology citizen science project enhances the pursuit of birds for many of us. I try to best my own records from previous years and the app keeps track for me.

It's fun too to look at what other birders are finding at various hotspots and there's an element of competition when we check individual recordings for those places as well as for the year. Happy to report that, as of this writing, 185 makes me the #3 eBirder in Navajo. John Wilson, our guest speaker at our August meeting is #1 with 216! I'm at #2 now in Apache County with 144 species listed. (#1 has 163!) Also happy that I'll most likely exceed last year's stats. (I had recorded 185 and 142 for the two White Mountain regions by the first day of autumn in 2020.) A few of our chapter members who list on eBird are close behind me. Let's keep up the good work!

Below: AZ Game and Fish has done beautiful work preserving and restoring an old ranch at the Sipe Wildlife Area south of Eagar. WMAS Membership Director Susie Walker and President Mary Williams (with Chihuahua Petey) recently spent a day birding there. They enjoyed a picnic with dozens of hummingbirds on the porch of the old ranch house – now the visitor center.



Below: The “Birding the White Mountains” field trip group visited Jacques Marsh outside Lakeside on August 28. Ken, Hinde, Doug, Rhonda, Judy, Susie, Gerry, Barbara, Chris and Chuck represented half of the group who attended the session the previous evening. The final PowerPoint Presentation was September 24, but there are plans to start another series in April. (Photo by Mary Williams)



## OTHER RECENT EVENTS

On Rob's most recent WMAS Field Trip (Sept 18<sup>th</sup>) participants saw and/or heard 18 bird species at the E. Lane trail (Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest). The Band-tailed Pigeon and Olive-sided Flycatcher were new species for several people and numerous W. Bluebirds and Yellow-rumped Warblers were in the vegetation surrounding a pond used by local cattle & wildlife for water. A hatch of Arizona Treefrogs was also occurring at the time of our visit and we think we were able to avoid stepping on the tiny froglets; they are the State Amphibian, after all....

Below: Sept 18<sup>th</sup> field trip participants include: Chuck, David, Yolanda, Jeanette, Leslie, Hinde, Karen, Susie, Kathy, Ron, Sandy, and Ken. You can see from the photo that birds bring smiles to our faces. (Photo by Rob Bettaso).



## September 1<sup>st</sup> WMAS General Meeting and Presentation

At our most recent program for the public, Lorna McNeil-Cox gave an excellent presentation on the Weird and Wonderful Wildlife of Fool's Hollow State Park. Thank you Lorna for a very enjoyable and informative show!

## CALENDAR

All **monthly programs** begin at **6:30 pm on the first Wednesday of the month (except in January and February)**. Meetings are at the Pinetop-Lakeside Town Council Chambers, 325 W. White Mountain Blvd until future notice. The programs are free and open to all. You may call **Liz Jernigan (928-532-1511)** for more information on monthly programs and special events.

### Here's what's happening in October 2021:

**Oct 6<sup>th</sup> Monthly Meeting & Program Presentation, Barb Davis**, a local nature photographer and writer, will show her short movie entitled Sonoran Desert Birds & Bighorns. Her description is as follows: Land and life are one in the Sonoran Desert. As the sun rises over the rugged mountain peaks, sharp clear melodious bird songs carry through the dry desert

air. Thanks to caring people in the Valley of the Sun, pristine areas of flora and fauna still exist in spite of a population of 1.6 million people right next door.

**Oct 16<sup>th</sup> Monthly WMAS Birding Field Trip**, Rob Bettaso leads bird watching field trips on the 3rd Sat of every month. If you are interested in attending, please call him at 928-368-8481 and leave a message so that he can return your call to give you the details for the trip(s) that you would like to attend.

**Also in October**, Cornell Lab will invite participants on another Big Day event, this one scheduled for **Oct 9<sup>th</sup> 2021**. If you are interested, you can Google: [ebird.org/octoberbigday](http://ebird.org/octoberbigday) for more information (just don't expect to see the Variegated Fairywren, depicted below, in our White Mountains area).



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

Have you paid your annual membership dues? If not, a friendly reminder that WMAS relies on membership dues for such important Chapter actions as our annual Scholarship Awards to White Mountain area graduating seniors who have expressed an interest in pursuing a career in natural history, conservation, and other related fields. Thank you for helping us to continue to make such programs a regular part of our Chapter mission. Note that the Donation form is at the end of every Newsletter. Dues are for the year in which they are paid and not necessarily good for 12 months following payment (unless you pay in 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 should 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 or Officer position!

## 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.

Dazzling WMAS T-shirts for sale (money from sales goes exclusively to our WMAS's operating budget). If interested, call Rob at 928-368-8481; supplies limited (a great gift idea).



**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**