



MAY EDITION 2022

Out on a Limb by Dave Cagle (Audubon Member):

I was fortunate in drawing a spring turkey tag, with an opening date of April 22. Rob Bettaso (also with Audubon) joined me for a couple of back-to-back scouting trips in the turkey woods. Scouting for turkeys in the spring entails driving to likely roost areas, and listening for the tell-tale gobbling of tom turkeys. The best time to hear a tom turkey is right at the crack of dawn when they are still on their roost high up in a conifer tree, which meant we left town each morning between 3 and 4AM.

Being out in the woods at first light offers opportunities to experience not just the turkeys, but all the other wildlife species also gearing up for their springtime activities. While driving various roads west and south of Big Lake we observed a wide variety of species. They included over 150 elk, 30 mule deer, pronghorn, coyotes, mountain cottontails, red and Abert squirrels. Bird species did not disappoint as we saw the usual high elevation characters including Steller's jays, yellow-rumped warbler, flickers, American robins, juncos, and purple martins. We stopped at Sierra Blanca Lake where ring-necked ducks, lesser scaup, ruddy ducks and Canada geese were spotted. Raptors seen were American kestrel, Red-tailed hawk, northern harrier, turkey vulture and even a golden eagle. If you want to do a wildlife viewing outing in the high country this spring or summer recommend you leave town in the cover of darkness and experience the new born elk calves and other unique wildlife of the White Mountains as the day breaks.

A tom turkey (photo by Dave Cagle)



White Mountain Audubon Society (WMAS) 2022 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
Membership: Susie Walker	480-205-6119
Webmaster: Alan Vickers	

2022 Board Members:

Mary Williams, Tom Jernigan, Liz Jernigan, Mary Freemon, Susie Walker & Rob Bettaso.

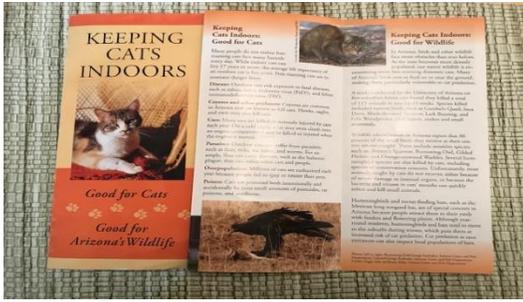


President's Corner by Mary Williams:

Greetings bird lovers. Have you seen my Audubon bumper sticker that reads "Protect birds and we protect the earth?" (It also could read, of course, "Protect the earth and we protect birds" and habitat loss is the #1 reason we are seeing a precipitous decline in bird populations.) So how can we protect birds? As Rob has done in previous issues of this newsletter, let me count some ways.

1. Get rid of cats outdoors. If you have attended any of my meeting announcements or PowerPoint Presentations, you know we must do battle against irresponsible cat owners and unthinking catch-spay-release feral cat lovers. They cause the deaths of billions of birds every year as estimated by the American Bird Conservancy. Cat control is especially important during this season as nestlings fledge and are easily captured by prowling felines. Have a supply of the excellent AZGFD brochure to give to offenders: "Keeping Cats Indoors: Good for Cats, Good for Arizona's Wildlife." They are available at our meetings.
2. If you provide bird feeders, nest boxes and water features, keep them clean. If you see evidence of avian diseases, take them down. Rake and discard old bird seed on the ground. Don't use red dye for hummingbird feeders and keep them clean. Inform your family, friends and neighbors of this too.
3. Always pick up discarded fishing line. Try to use less plastic and carry a garbage bag to pick up other people's discards.
4. Make your home and yard more bird and pollinator friendly and alert public-space decision makers to do the same. Use fewer chemicals, especially those that kill weeds, insects and rodents and also will kill birds. (And most likely are not good for our pets and us!)
5. Make your home and yard more bird and pollinator friendly and alert public-space decision makers to do the same. (Yes, that's an intentional repeat.) Research and treat windows that are susceptible to bird strikes. Look into the 'lights out' programs that are helping birds navigate the hazards of migration.
6. Remove high-upkeep non-native plant species and don't remove native plants or marshy areas on your property. Add water features (and keep them clean) and plant native species of grasses, trees, shrubs and flowers that will provide good shelter and the kind of seeds, fruits, nectar and insects that attract and feed our native species of birds. (And alert family, friends, neighbors and public-space decision makers to do the same.) Come to our May 4 meeting at Buffalo Bill's and learn more from our guest speaker, Vicki Matsumonji with White Mountain Community Garden. Hope to see you there! Blessings, Mary

Below left: AZGFD pamphlet is good to give to people who allow their cats to roam or who feed feral cats.



Above right: Black-chinned Hummingbirds suspected to have died because of a moldy feeder.

CALENDAR:

For 2022 we expect that **all monthly programs** will continue to start at **6:30 pm on the first Wednesday of the month (except in January, February & March when there are no meetings)**. Our monthly program meeting site HAS changed in 2022 so remember to come to the new meeting site at **Buffalo Bill's Tavern and Grill at 1 North Bison Preserve Way in Show Low**. 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.

May 4th White Mountain Community Garden has exciting news regarding attracting birds to the garden. **Vicki Matsumonji** will provide an overview of their new "ornamental garden" through a grant from a horticultural institute. They have an assortment of native plants and an inventory of trees, bushes, and plants specifically to attract birds as well as pollinators.

May 14th Global Big Day: Participants can volunteer to assist in an annual bird species count.

May 21st Monthly WMAS Birding Field Trip: Monthly bird watching field trips on the 3rd Sat of every month. If you are 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.

MOST RECENT FIELD TRIP:

On April 16th Ken & I hiked along Billy Creek in the A-S National Forest just north of Pinetop. In addition to a clear & prolonged look at a Red-faced Warbler (a male, apparently proclaiming his territory) we were also treated to a long period of observation of an adult Northern Goshawk (males and females are nearly indistinguishable from each other) who had initially been down along the creek bottom but flew up as we approached and perched in a Ponderosa limb not more than 20 meters up from the ground. We admired the raptor for a spell before continuing our way upstream, leaving the still perched hunter to watch us as we hiked out of sight. We are hopeful that the presence of the seemingly unagitated goshawk indicates that the nesting pair (that had used that area for several years but were not observed during the period of forest thinning) have not been permanently discouraged by the commotion of heavy equipment and significant changes in tree densities over the past 2 or 3 years and have returned in 2022 to successfully breed again this year and in future years as well. Trivia note: according to scholars, the bird that adorned the shield of Attila the Hun was a goshawk; very appropriate, I should think. –Rob

GLOBAL BIG DAY:



If you'll be in New Zealand on Saturday, May 14, do some eBirding and find some Blue Ducks! If not, submit an eBird checklist for your yard and neighborhood sightings. If you are available to volunteer to conduct surveys at various locations in Navajo County, please contact our Big Day coordinator Mary Williams – mary.williams@arizonachristian.edu (480-235-1792). If you plan to bird Apache County that day, please contact coordinator Sue Sitko – suesitko1@gmail.com

Additionally, Sue has a few details to add for Apache County since it has frequently been under represented by birders on GBD. In her email to me Sue sez:

“We have some volunteers that are covering the Alpine area and Sipe Wildlife Area, and I will be with a couple others birding most of the Little Colorado River from the Wenima Wildlife Area up through Greer. We would be thrilled to have more birders to cover other sites (Sunrise, Baldy area, Big Lake, Crescent Lake, Lyman Lake; there are plenty of site options). If you have any interest at all, please contact me.

Remember, birders must tally all species observed as well as obtain a count of individuals (as best they can), and submit their complete list for the day on ebird. Ebird can be used at home on your computer at ebird.com or directly on your phone through the Ebird app as you bird throughout the day. Ebird's website includes a very good tutorial on how to submit your bird data. Let's get more people into Apache County and look for birds like Canada (formerly Gray) Jay near Sunrise, Gray Catbird at South Fork, or California Quail at Wenima! Dare I hope we could get all three? With your help, maybe that will happen!!!”

And again, you can contact Sue at: suesitko1@gmail.com

MISCELLANEOUS

I had a couple of emails from the Jernigan's and they asked if I would include those emails in this month's WMAS Newsletter. In the first, Tom recounts the following observation: “We found a cormorant sitting on the pavement near our house (quite a way from water). We drove right up to it. There were 10-12 little fish that it had thrown up, laying around it. Finally it took off.”

I agree with Tom, this doesn't strike me as typical cormorant behavior (double-crested or any other species of cormorant). I wouldn't be surprised by any water bird ejecting fish from its gullet should the bird need to make a speedy retreat in the face of an on-coming predator, but that doesn't match with this particular cormorant's unhurried departure. Perhaps the bird was ill in some natural way (a virus; having ingested something that had decayed too long; etc) or perhaps something uncommon and toxic had gotten into the bird's habitat (water) or diet (fish)? If the latter, it

would be interesting to know if other folks around the Pinetop-Show Low area have similar reports. Feel free to contact either Tom or I should you have seen any other cormorants behaving in a sickly fashion.

The 2nd item was an interesting article that Liz emailed to me about mallard ducks using ocean surf to enable a unique means of feeding on a type of sand crab. The link to the article is:

<https://coastalcare.org/2013/09/on-californias-beaches-mallard-ducks-have-learned-to-surf-for-food/>

Additionally, Mary Ellen emailed to remind folks that hummingbirds have arrived in our area and so it is time to put out the feeders. But again, let's remember that all feeders (including hummer feeders) need to be cleaned and maintained with safe nourishment (e.g. fresh, uncontaminated, wholesome) otherwise they can do much more harm than good. If you are uncertain of proper feeds and/or feeder maintenance procedures you can either consult the internet or give me a call.

Lastly, my friend Redge sent me this link that could be your gateway to a world of deluxe birding:

https://www.merlinbirding.com/veracruz?utm_source=sendinblue&utm_campaign=April_2022_Newsletter&utm_medium=email

Thx. --Rob

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 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 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! And remember, you can be on the Board without being an Officer.

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.

Snazzy 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**