



NOVEMBER EDITION 2022

Out on a Limb by Rob Bettaso (WMAS Newsletter & Field Trips):

In the spirit of David Letterman, I've written a Top Ten Signs That You May Be A Birding Addict:

10. You've recently purchased a 2nd pair of binoculars to keep in your vehicle so that you're never caught off guard without this vital piece of gear.
9. Likewise, you have 3 different "field guides to the birds" stashed in various locales and each is creased and well used.
8. Your pals have grown accustomed to your slowing them down on hikes while you utter something about "Needing to figure out what bird is in calling from that tall Doug Fir."
7. You've gone your whole life without a Smart Phone but you're considering buying one so that you can use the Merlin App for helping to identify bird vocalizations.
6. In the spring, you have a chronically sore neck from staring into the tall treetops trying to identify various warblers.
5. If you see a new friend cleaning his binoculars with his shirttails you forcefully admonish him and tell him to use a clean, lint-free cloth and approved optical lens clearing fluid.
4. Virtually all of your travel plans are based on places you want to bird.
3. At your annual eye exams you always ask the doc "When will they design bionic, telephoto eye implants?"
2. Your shins are bruised from stumbling into stumps and rocks because you frequently continue walking forward while your eyes are trained on a bird you are trying to identify.
1. Loud traffic, heavy equipment, and other man-made noises are the things you've grown to loath the most in our modern world because they interfere with hearing the bird songs....

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:

Have you noticed how quiet Merlin is this time of year? Or rather, how little 'he' hears that you too can hear compared to last spring? (A touch of anthropomorphism, just for fun.)

Who's Merlin you might ask? If you have not yet discovered this new feature of a birding tool provided by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, do check into the free app and download it to your phone to use when you're out and about. You'll especially enjoy it in the Spring when birds are singing for mates and to establish territories. He can hear the quiet little chip notes they make this time of year too.

He is quite good at helping me find birds and I was surprised as I watched him correctly identify the drumming! of an American Three-toed Woodpecker near the Butler Canyon Trail in Greer and of a Williamson's Sapsucker at the Winn Campground in the Lee Valley Recreation Area last summer. Beautiful birds, but somewhat uncommon.

HOWEVER... never assume he's infallible! I'm 99% sure he's not hearing Yellow-eyed Juncos in the Lee Valley Area as he's tried to tell me a few times. Or some rare European species now and then! Also - for those of you who have not yet laughed with me about an incident I experienced this past summer:

My rescue Chihuahua - Petey - has abandonment issues, so my husband and I agree that he needs to spend most of his time with me. After a morning of birding when he was carried around in his dearly-loved pack (see photo above) and all his needs for food, water and stretch breaks had been met, I stopped at the south end of the Becker Lake Wildlife Area Riverwalk Trail west of Safeway in Springerville. Since rain was threatening, I decided to do a brief walk and leave Petey in his kennel in our van. Got out, locked up, donned hat and bins, started eBird checklist and the Merlin sound app. And my little guy began his pitiful hoarse warbling you're-forgetting-me cry that sort-of sounds like "mommmmmeeeeeee.' Glancing at Merlin, I noted identifying flashes of 'Common Loon!'

Merlin evidently has something of a Chihuahua fetish since just a few weeks ago at the Petrified Forest he identified two barkers of that breed as 'Canada Goose.' And, yes, I scanned the sky for flyovers. None anywhere and he was flashing the yellow identifier in sync with their barks - just as he had done with my little looney tunes!



This non-breeding Common Loon illustration is from Cornell Labs' allaboutbirds.org. Although unusual in our area, there have been random sightings at Fool Hollow Lake in Show Low, Rainbow Reservoir in Lakeside and at Becker Lake north of Springerville - quite some distance from the south end of the River Walk Trail.

WMAS 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)**. 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. Monthly meetings are **held at the White Mountain Nature Center, 425 Woodland Road, Pinetop-Lakeside.**



6: 30p November 2 at the Nature Center: Dan Groebner (AZ Game & Fish) will give a presentation on the native species of leopard frogs found in AZ. Dan will discuss his frog research and conservation management work here in Pinetop and other parts of Northern AZ. This will be a unique, interesting and fun presentation and we hope that you will join us.

November 3: Convoy with Mary W. from WMNC parking lot at 7:00 AM to Heber area (weather permitting) with option to camp at a primitive forest site and bird more on Friday AM. First stop will be Tall Timbers County Park south of Overgaard for those who wish to meet there at 8:00 or so.

November 14: "Birding Pintail Lake" PowerPoint Presentation at 3:00 at Juniper Ridge Resort north of Show Low. (Contact Mary Williams, 480-235-1792, for directions and gate code if you wish to attend.)

November 15: Bird Walk at Pintail Lake with Mary W. Convoy from Juniper Ridge departs at 8:00 or meet around 8:15 at the Pintail Lake parking lot at the end of the gravel road at the sign off Hwy 77 north of Hwy 60.

December 1: 8:00 Bird Walk with Mary W. at Cottonwood Wash, Snowflake. Meet in the parking lot just beyond the bridge north of town on Hwy 77.



Pintail Lake is an easily accessible birding hotspot with a gravel road entrance, handicapped parking, sidewalks and a viewing platform and blind. (photos by Mary Williams).

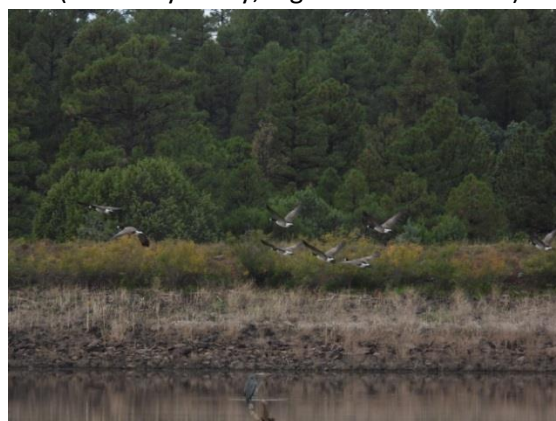
Nov 19th The Regular Monthly WMAS Birding Field Trip: Monthly bird watching field trips on the **3rd Sat of every month** and alternate between Rob Bettaso & Jon Orona. If you're interested in attending, feel free to give me a call (Rob: 928-368-8481) and leave a message so that I can return your call to give you the details for the upcoming trip.

Also, a few months back I added another type of field trip and on the **fourth Sat of each month** I lead a "Fitness Birding" outing that combines slightly strenuous activities (longer hikes, bicycling, paddling, X/C skiing) with birding. So far, these outings have not caught on, so take advantage of our having plenty of room and join the fun! The next **Fitness Birding trip will be Nov 26**. Feel free to give me a call if you're interested (Rob: 928-368-8481).

MOST RECENT FIELD TRIP:

On Oct 15, six of us spent 2.5 hours birding the entire perimeter of Scott's Reservoir. Reservoir levels have dropped from the over-flowing highs of a month or so back but the "lake" still holds plenty of water for the ducks that should be returning, *en masse*, soon. There is a diversity of habitats around the lake including riparian willows, oak/conifer woodlands, scrub, and open fields. As such, we enjoyed seeing a variety of bird species including many passerines but still not too many waterbirds. The local rodents were also busy harvesting the autumn bounty and I focused a bit on distinguishing between bird and mammal vocalizations; noting that some rodents (rock squirrels & prairie dogs, for example) give a loud/piercing call that monotonously repeats on the same pitch for a sustained period of time (bird calls are usually more variable in pitch and don't drone on nearly as long). We didn't hear (or see) any elk or deer but most people are unlikely to confuse ungulate vocalizations with birds (well, a few city-slickers might). Some of the mammalian predators make vocalizations that might very slightly sound like a loon or an owl, but again, you would probably have to be from NEW YORK CITY (!) to confuse them. --Rob

Scott's Reservoir bird photos by Gaston Porterie (Left: Pinyon Jay, Right: Canada Geese)



Member Profile: Carol Axford – A Diverse Background Yields Valuable Perspective

By Rob Bettaso

I recently had the pleasure of birding Jacquez Marsh with one of our newer WMAS members: Carol Axford. We met at Jacquez in the late afternoon and walked around two of the large ponds while enjoying the bird life that congregates at this important local wetland. Carol has lived in Show Low for 16 years and has been involved with several groups; including TRACKS, the AZ Hiking Sisters, and the Nature Center. Last year Carol attended the birding classes offered by Mary Williams and signed up to be a member of our Chapter. Recently, Carol has also expressed an interest in serving on the WMAS Board.

Originally from the Olympic Peninsula of WA, Carol has worked for Edward Jones Investments for 24 years including serving as the Senior Branch Office Manager here in Show Low. When Carol is not busy assisting her many clients with their financial matters, she is an avid hiker, bicyclist, kayaker, and bird-watcher. Both WA & AZ are rich in opportunities for such activities and Carol has also travelled to many other States. When we stopped to admire the sight and song of a Western Meadowlark, Carol told me about her recent trip to Michigan's Mackinac Island, where cars are not allowed and everyone travels on foot or by bicycle.

When Carol is not pursuing outdoor activities, she enjoys reading and has recently discovered a nature writer by the name of Craig Childs and another writer/lecturer by the name of Roger Naylor who writes and gives talks on his experiences in our AZ State Parks. Although I am a big fan of nature writers, both of these individuals were new names to me and that reminded me that having a mutual interest in birds is not the only passion that Audubon members share as they get to know each other. Whether it is birding, reading, hiking, or playing cribbage, Audubon members often get to know each other on many different levels and frequently develop lasting friendships as a result.

Toward the end of our ramble around Jacquez, we stopped to watch a family of beavers as they left their hidden refuge in the cattails and swam out and into the middle of a small flock of mallards. The two species interacted briefly, and peacefully enough, before heading their separate ways. As Carol and I headed back to the parking area, we both agreed that we are fortunate indeed, to have landed in the Pinetop/Lakeside/Show Low area. I asked her what changes she might want to see to happen in our community and without hesitating, she said that the tri-towns area could use more bike lanes. I couldn't agree more and it just goes to show, that people from diverse backgrounds often have overlapping interest just waiting to be discovered.

At the invitation of Mary Williams, Carol would like to join the WMAS Board in 2023. I think that Carol's love of nature and the outdoors will easily qualify her as a valuable new addition to the Audubon Board. Additionally, I think that her diverse life experiences will also provide us with valuable perspective.

Hopefully our WMAS members will agree. You will soon have the chance to demonstrate your confidence, by approving the 2023 slate of WMAS Board members. So, remember to watch your email Inbox for the ballot, which will come to you from Liz Jernigan in the month of November.

Photos below: (Left) Carol on the Timber Mesa Trail, (Right) Carol on Mackinac Island



JUST FOR FUN: Member Ken McByrd-Bell sent me the photo below as a fun & helpful reminder that seeing is not always believing. Ken “photo-shopped” a Laysan Albatross onto the grass near the parking lot of the Show Low Taco Bell (a few thousand miles from where this species typically occurs and in a habitat that is nothing like what the bird occupies). This was Ken’s first attempt at playing with “photo shop” so imagine how realistic such deceptions can be when done by experienced hoaxers. Remember, if it doesn’t seem right, seek to verify by doing some homework. --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).

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
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Pinetop, AZ 85935**