



OCTOBER EDITION 2022

Out on a Limb by Jon Orona (WMAS Member & Field Trip Guide):

Jon has contributed a beautiful photo essay based on their recent travels to WA & MT. Please see the other document attached to the email from Liz containing this Newsletter. Thank you. --Rob

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:

Who? Gerry, Revone, Jan, Chris, me.

What? Field Trip to Apache County looking for high-elevation specialty species. Scored a Canada Jay in the parking lot as we were leaving, but we were initially uncertain about a high-soaring raptor at a fork of the Little Colorado River.

Where? Sheep Crossing/Mt. Baldy Trail #94.

When? Thursday, September 8, 8:10 to ~10:30.

Why? Uncertainty when practicing 'citizen science' by entering sightings on eBird is good! It is also good to make every effort to correctly identify species.

How? Process of elimination. Both being familiar with most AZ raptors, Gerry and I sat on a log, pulled up various apps on our phones and compared thoughts. Conversation went something like this: Definitely was not a Raven, Crow, Osprey or TUVU. Did not see the distinctive tail-banding of a Zone-tailed. Too small to be a Red-tailed or Swainsons; too big to be a Coopers. A Red-shouldered would be way out of range, as would some of the even rarer hawks. This is a known location for the often-hard-to-find Northern Goshawk. It was a Northern Goshawk!



Northern Goshawk, the largest and bulkiest accipiter is almost the size of buteos. It is known to breed in the White Mountains of Apache County and along Billy Creek in Navajo County. Photo from allaboutbirds.org.

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.**



October 5: Gerry Hodge, 6:30 PM at White Mountain Nature Center, "The Armchair eBird Primer." Read more about Gerry and his talk further on down in the Newsletter.

October 6: Meet Mary W. at White Mountain Nature Center parking lot at 7:00 AM to convoy to the Greer area in Apache County. Option to spend the night at the primitive Benny Creek Campground for more birding late in the day and the next morning. Below: photo of a 3 Toed Woodpecker, a target species in the Greer area.



Photo by Sue Sitko

And take note below (call Mary Williams at 480-235-1792 if you are interested in participating):



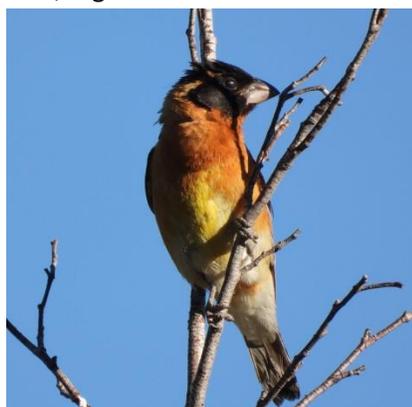
October 15th The Regular Monthly WMAS Birding Field Trip: Monthly bird watching field trips on the 3rd Sat of every month and alternate between Rob Bettaso & Jon Orona. If you're interested in attending, feel free to give me a call (Rob: 928-368-8481) and leave a message so that I can return your call to give you the details for the upcoming trip.

Also, I have added another type of field trip and on the fourth Sat of each month I will lead a "Fitness Birding" outing that combines more strenuous activities (longer hikes, bicycling, paddling, X/C skiing) with birding. The next **Fitness Birding trip will be October 22nd**. Feel free to give me a call if you're interested (Rob: 928-368-8481).

MOST RECENT FIELD TRIP:

On Sept 17th eight of us birded the Bluff Trail in Show Low. The Bluff Trail runs along both sides of Show Low Creek (it's paved along the south side so is a good option during the rainy season when dirt trails are muddy) plus there is also a third trail higher up on the ridge. This area can be excellent birding for 3 habitat types: field, riparian, & forest. The attendees were treated to a wide variety of exquisite birds including several representatives of the following bird groups: buntings, finches, corvids, & swallows. –Rob

Bluff Trail bird photos by Gaston Porterie (Left: Say's Phoebe, Right: Black-headed Grosbeak)



Member Profile: Gerry Hodge – Bird Watcher, Star Gazer, & Educator

By Rob Bettaso

I had heard Gerry's name mentioned several times before I ever met him. Gerry is an active "e-birder" and for over a year, a few of the e-birders I know were telling me that there was a new guy around who seemed to be posting his bird lists frequently on the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's public database website. I am not an e-birder but I do occasionally check the website to see what birds are being seen and where. As such, I also usually notice who is doing the seeing and the reporting and therefore, understood that Gerry was an avid birder long before I ever met him.

Eventually, Gerry started joining some of our Audubon meetings, classes, and field trips but it still took quite a while before I finally got a chance to go birding with him. At some point this summer, Gerry talked with Mary Williams (chapter President) about possibly joining the Audubon Board and so I finally decided to give Gerry a call and see if we could get out birding together.

In late August, Gerry and I walked a trail on the Apache-Sitgreaves (A/S) Forest that leads to Show Low Creek. During that 2+ hour stroll I finally got to learn a bit more about him than just the fact that he is a frequent e-birder.

Gerry spent much of his life in Washington state; including such significant milestones as childhood, college, marriage (his wife Terry is also an avid birder), career (Gerry and Terry were teachers in the public school system), and as a sea kayaker (Gerry was the founder and first leader of the South Sound Area Kayakers -- which grew to be the most active sea kayaking club in the United States).

Gerry and Terry live part time in Tucson (~Oct to April) and the other half of the year here in Lakeside. During their time in Tucson, Gerry leads some of the birding walks for the Tucson Chapter of the Audubon Society. Gerry is also active with Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association, doing over 40 outreach events per year as well as being certified telescope operator at the organization's dark sky complex.

The Hodges have birded all around the United States and have birded Costa Rica, Ecuador, Belize, Netherlands, New Zealand, and have recorded 80% of the species that visit Iceland. In 2023 they plan to be birding in Panama to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

Toward the end of morning's birding near Show Low Creek I asked Gerry if he had a favorite bird. He gave the question some thought and then said that instead of a favorite bird he recalls the sighting that got him hooked on birding: a Great Gray Owl up near Washington's border with Canada. It's certainly easy to see how that species could spark an interest in birding and I am also happy to report that during our walk, he was also very enthusiastic when we spotted many of the common, but much less glamorous, species that occupy our A/S lands.

Before Gerry and I parted ways that day, I mentioned to him that my priority for the White Mountain Audubon Society has been (and continues to be) the recruitment of new generations of bird lovers into the chapter. Like me (and all of the Board and many of our active members), Gerry is no "Spring Chicken," and so I asked him if he had any ideas as to how we might bring birders below the age of 60 into the fold. Gerry's answer was encouraging in that while he said that he had not thought of that issue before, he did see how it should be a focus for our chapter. Sometimes, just recognizing the importance of an issue can be a major step forward.

Below: Gerry in his natural habitat -- along a birding trail (photo by Rob Bettaso)



And remember, on October 5, Gerry will give a presentation: ***The Armchair eBird Primer*** in which you will learn:

How to use eBird on a home computer to expand awareness of what the birds are up to and/or to prepare you for your next trip into the field.

We'll attack eBird by: (1) Looking at the characteristics of specific bird species; (2) Looking at geographic birding locations locally and globally; and (3) Stalking specific birders by tracking where they are going and what they are reporting.

Along our journey, we'll feature several local birds that are a little less common, but still often seen. Handouts will be provided to guide you later in your own Armchair Adventures.

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**