



JANUARY EDITION 2023; HAPPY NEW (BIRDING) YEAR!

Out on a Limb by Carol Axford (WMAS Board Member):

Observations from my Bird Feeders

I have a large forest of trees near my apartment in Show Low. Nearby trees have many bare limbs where birds perch before flying to my covered patio ten feet away to visit.

When the weather gets colder I like to put out a large bird block of seed in a holder with two perches, and suet in a suet cage. I have a plant hook pole with two arms that my holders sit on by my patio ledge where I put a bowl of fresh water nearby each day. This is right by my slider door so I sit inside and birdwatch in warm comfort. I keep my bird books and binoculars handy.

So far in December I've seen Mountain Chickadees, House Finches, Dark Eyed Juncos, Northern Flickers, Nuthatches and Titmouse. It's amazing to see how many small birds can hang on the suet cage!

When we have a big snowstorm I put loose bird seed on my patio floor and watch the birds having a party taking refuge from the storm. Best way to pass the time indoors when it snows.

Photos below by Carol (left: Pygmy Nuthatches eating suet; right: House Finches and Dark-eyed Junco munching seeds)



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, Gerry Hodge, Carol Axford, & Rob Bettaso.



President's Corner by Mary Williams:

Happy New Year! Have you noticed that the days are getting longer again? I'm writing this on the solstice and, as an early riser, eagerly await those quiet early morning bird walks I so treasure.

Do you like statistics? As promised, here are some from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website for some of our Navajo County Top 100 WMAS members who make their Arizona eBird endeavors public as of this first day of winter. Of course, some of our eBirding members who traveled to various locations both in and out of our state and country in 2022 also have added to multiple lists for the year – Gerry and Terry Hodge, Jon Orona, Ken McByrd-Bell, Beth Whittam, Tom Watson, Susie Walker, Hinde Silver, Ann Hilliard, Jan Bonnavier, Chris Bittle, Chuck and MaryEllen Bittorf and their daughter, Carla Whalen, John Wilson and his mother Betsy Wilson. Congratulations to all!

Arizona: Kudos again to our WMAS scholarship awardee John, who worked in SE AZ this past summer on a Yellow-billed Cuckoo project and will report on them and birds of AZ as guest speaker at our July meeting. He earned a #35 spot in the AZ Top 100 with 309 species. His friend Caleb Strand, who leads bird tours around the state, is #1 today with 407! My 248 places me in the 160th spot.

Navajo County: John leads Navajo County for the third straight year with 235 species. Eric Hough logged 207 species for the #2 spot so far this year. He serves as Ranger at Hassayampa River Preserve near Wickenburg and leads Field Expeditions for the Arizona Field Ornithologists. He also is the eBird reviewer for our two counties in the White Mountains and the surveyor here for the Breeding Bird Atlas. I am pleased to have enjoyed 196 species in 2022 in my home county, earning a third place in the stats. Gerry, who winters in Tucson but returns occasionally in winter, logged 185 earning a #4 place. His wife Terry decided to begin eBirding in May and she logged 154 for #8. Betsy was 5th with 170. Our assistant field trip leader and article contributor, Jon, shows a #6 spot with 168. Ken, another active WMAS member who lives in the Vernon area of Apache County but participates in most of our meetings and field trips, logged 157 for 7th. These contributions to 'citizen science' in our area are appreciated!

You might be curious about what birds have been sighted and when, so there's a phone screen shot below of the Navajo top 10 on 12/21/22. Note how the number of checklists submitted varies and there are some interesting rarities and uncommon listings. I encourage you to explore eBird for more information. Although there won't be many changes by year end, some of our volunteers for the Timber Mesa circle of Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count on December 31 will probably add a few species to their annual, Arizona, Navajo County, and hotspots lists. You'll see the CBC results in our next newsletter.

My personal goals always are to try to exceed the number of species logged the previous year. I'm happy about my 196 in Navajo compared to last year's sightings of 186. My 2023 goal is to enjoy finding more than the 205 species I logged in 2020. I enjoyed some fun trips with friends to lower elevations again this year and many relaxing trips to Apache County where I logged 158 species. That not only was an all-time high for me but also earned the #1 position there for the year. If I missed any of you in my search of eBird statistics, do let me know so I can report them next month if you so desire.

Do you too have goals and 'bucket-list' locations to visit for your 2023 birding? Wishing you many blessings and good birding in the new year!

Rank	Name	Species	Count
1.	John Wilson Merlin (Dec 16, 2022)	198	235
2.	Eric Hough Montezuma Quail (Nov 28, 2022)	275	207
3.	Mary Williams Common Loon (Dec 20, 2022)	168	196
4.	Gerry Hodge Greater Yellowlegs (Oct 13, 2022)	197	185
5.	Betsy Wilson Pine Siskin (Nov 23, 2022)	74	170
6.	Jon Orona Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Dec 2, 2022)	66	168
7.	ken mcbyrd-bell Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Dec 4, 2022)	152	157
8.	Terry Hodge Red-naped Sapsucker (Oct 2, 2022)	155	154
9.	Jake Thompson Pectoral Sandpiper (Sep 27, 2022)	14	126
10.	Bill Tweet Mountain Bluebird (Nov 19, 2022)	42	116
11.	Anita Strawn de	24	114

Help Support Scholarships:

Have you renewed your WMAS membership for 2023? Your minimal membership dues and generous donations are used primarily for scholarships.

Last year, we were able to award a higher education scholarship in addition to our traditional \$1000 Bob and Loretta Pena Memorial Scholarship granted to a graduating high school senior. The high school recipient, Aiden Camisa of Snowflake, is in the Environmental Engineering program at NAU. Fundraising through Loretta's Birdathon and with our 2022 101 members made it possible to award John Wilson of Taylor a \$4000 scholarship to continue a degree in Wildlife Biology at NAU. (John will be our guest speaker at our July meeting. Don't miss it!)

Your volunteer board of directors – which was affirmed recently by eblast membership vote (thank you!) – needs to decide soon on this year's amount for the scholarship to help support a student already pursuing a college degree in Ornithology, Wildlife Biology, Forestry, Environmental Engineering, Conservation and Sustainability, Outdoor Recreation, or the Natural Sciences.

These young men and women are the ones who will pursue vocations and avocations that protect birds and enhance our opportunities for birding. If you know of such students in Navajo or Apache Counties, call Liz Jernigan for more information and our application forms. And do renew your membership by going to our website, whitemountainaudubon.org, to find the printable form and the PO Box address to send it. Thank you!

Photo below: John Wilson of Taylor was awarded the WMAS higher education scholarship in 2022. He worked with the AZGFD Bald Eagle Nestwatch and banding program while still in high school and is now pursuing a Wildlife Biology degree at NAU. He will be the guest speaker at the WMAS July meeting.



WMAS CALENDAR:

For 2023 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.**



Bird Walks and February Class with Mary Williams

Weather permitting, Mary W. will lead a bird walk at Rainbow Reservoir on the first Thursday of January, **1/5**. We will meet in the boat launch parking lot at **9am** and walk across the dam and down the dead-end road beside the closed campground. Take Lakeview Lane off Hwy 260 in Lakeside.

Weather permitting, on **Feb 2nd** you can go birding with Mary W. at Pintail Lake at **9am** (photo below left) Take Hwy 60 through Show Low and turn north on Hwy 77. Look for the brown sign on your right after a few miles and take the gravel road to the parking area.

If you would like to attend a PowerPoint series featuring birding hotspots offered at Juniper Ridge Resort off White Mountain Lake Road north of Show Low, contact Mary Williams at 480-235-1792 to get the gate code. The one on **Feb 13, at 3pm** will feature the species found this time of year at Cottonwood Wash in Snowflake (photo below right) and there will be a bird walk there the next morning (weather permitting). We will meet in the parking area on the right side of the bridge on the far north end of Snowflake off Hwy 77 toward Holbrook at 8:30a.



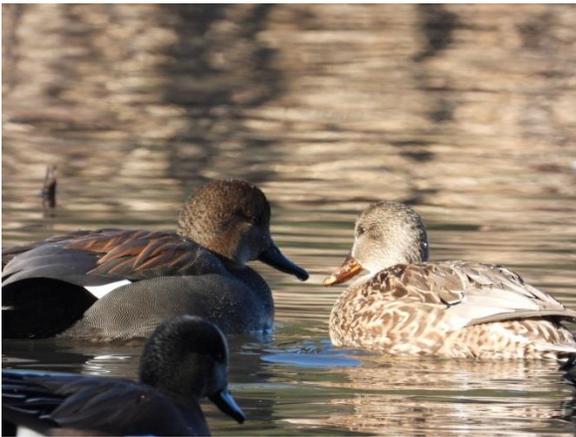
Jan 21st - The Regular Monthly WMAS Birding Field Trip: Monthly bird watching field trips on the **3rd Sat of every month** and alternate between Rob Bettaso & Jon Orona. If you're interested in attending, feel free to give me a call (Rob: 928-368-8481) and leave a message so that I can return your call 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 Jan 28th**. Feel free to give me a call if you're interested (Rob: 928-368-8481).

MOST RECENT 3rd & 4th SATURDAY FIELD TRIPS: On Dec 17th four of us hiked through the snow to watch the birds in the Big Springs area. As is typical in the winter months, Big Springs is a significant draw for waterfowl & other water dependent species (see photos below). Later we hiked from Big Springs to Woodland Lk along the Hitching Post trail and saw most of the common winter woodland species.

Our "Fitness Birding" outing on the following Sat was likewise enjoyable & 2 of us used cross-country skis to explore the area known as Avenue of the Giants (near the Railroad Grade trail) just past the turnoff from Hwy 260 to Sunrise. Birding was slow but the skiing was fun. We had actually seen more bird species two days before when a group of 5 of us skied the same area. —Rob

Field trip photos by Gaston Porterie from our Dec 17th outing (clockwise: Hooded Mergansers, American Coot, American Widgeon & Gadwall; Lewis's Woodpecker; Gadwalls & widgeon; Big Springs):



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.

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**