



JUNE EDITION 2023

Out on a Limb by Mary Freemon (WMAS Board Member):

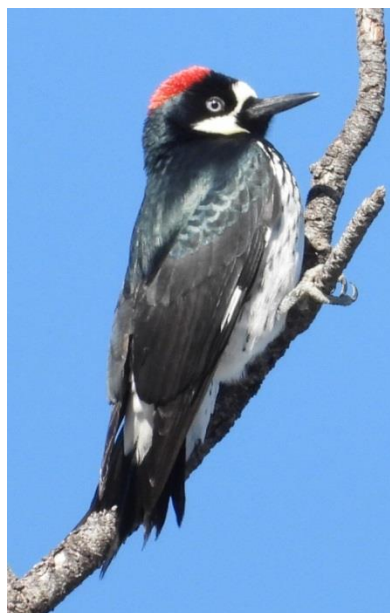
After a lengthy and brutal winter for the birds and myself as well Spring has finally returned to the White Mountains. My neighbor and I are the only full time residents in the neighborhood providing bird seed and suet feeders. Apparently the word was out!! I had an unprecedented amount of winter birds this year, not only the species but the numbers.

There were even a few mallards landing on the little ponds behind my house which are normally dry. I had both White-breasted and Pygmy nuthatches, chickadees, juncos, Steller's jays, Acorn and Hairy woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, Pine Siskins and sparrows of various types as well as both Cassin's and House finches. Even robins and Spotted Towhees showed up off and on, all winter!

Recently the Mourning Doves have returned as have the hummingbirds and the Black-headed Grosbeaks are singing in the trees again. A kestrel was in the backyard the other day but the jays chased it off loudly!

The lilac actually bloomed this year and I have two rhododendron blooms open the deer ate the others last fall. Even the oaks have dared to sprout leaves now. But I still have the snow shovel on the front porch just in case!

Photos below by Gaston Porterie (Left: White-breasted Nuthatch; Right: Acorn Woodpecker)



White Mountain Audubon Society (WMAS) 2023 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	

2023 Board Members:

Mary Williams, Tom Jernigan, Liz Jernigan, Mary Freemon, Susie Walker, Gerry Hodge, Carol Axford, & Rob Bettaso.



President's Corner by Mary Williams:

Ever wonder how helpful to 'citizen science' all the aspects of the eBird data base really are? John Wilson texted me that he had located a rare Orchard Oriole at the Joseph City Wastewater Treatment Ponds on his way home from NAU in Flagstaff the day before this year's Global Big Day. My response – as Navajo County GBD Coordinator – was that it was unfortunate I had not found a volunteer to cover that area. Well... lots of good birders subscribe to rare bird alerts and want to see the bird and add it to lists, so a few people paid attention to John's eBird post and did indeed survey that hotspot. They didn't relocate the OROR, but they were able to add many other good species for our GBD Navajo entries in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology data base!

As I explored the eBird website, I counted 91 checklists that were submitted in Navajo County on May 13 – from the 5 AM logging of a neighborhood Kestrel by Carla to the 7:45 PM yard list of eight species by Rob. (Well over one hundred species were logged that day.) Some rarities are to our credit also.

Thanks to all the participants: Betsy and John Wilson and friend Nate Peterson – who recorded rare Northern Parula, Tennessee Warbler and Dickcissel in Woodruff. Karen Martin and friend Judy – who saw a rare Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Black Canyon Creek. Carla Whalen, Rob Bettaso and Mike Lopez, Terry and Gerry Hodge, Marleigh Freyenhagen, Anita Strawn de Ojeda, Ken McByrd-Bell, Susie Walker with Liz and Tom Jernigan, and Sue Sitko – who led the birding volunteers for Apache County after submitting her own Pinetop yard list.

And then there were non-recruits who submitted checklists that day: Jason Taylor at the Petrified Forest, Jonathan Wright in Kayenta, Ron Joost at Torreón, Joan Spaw at Homolovi Ruins State Park, Spencer Giesemann at the Little Colorado off Woodruff Rd, Eliot and Sky Schipper at Joseph City WTP. Hope we can locate them to recruit for next year's GBD!

So many of the birding spots we visit are so very special. I've already begun my editorial for July. It opens with the question "Where is your ERA?" Curious? Check the White Mountain Audubon Society Facebook page for my May 18 post.

Wishing you good birding and many blessings, Mary



The June 1 First Thursday Bird Walk will be led by Gerry Hodge at Woodland Lake Park. Meet at the athletic field parking lot at 6:30. The May First Thursday walk was at the Nature Center with Gerry and Hinde, as well as Millie and Carol – new WMAS members who participated in the birding classes at NPC. 30 species! (photo by Mary Williams).

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.**



June 7th at 6:30pm at the Nature Center: **Hugh Grinnell** will give a presentation summarizing the lives and accomplishments of **John James Audubon** and **George Bird Grinnell**. Audubon was a world-renowned artist/naturalist (1785-1851) as well as the inspiration for the National Audubon Society. George Bird Grinnell was one of the founders of the Audubon Society (and a distant cousin to our presenter). Some reproductions of John James Audubon's artwork will be shown.

June 17th - 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, 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. The next **Fitness Birding trip will be June 24th**. Feel free to give me a call if you're interested (Rob: 928-368-8481).

MOST RECENT 3rd & 4th SATURDAY FIELD TRIPS:

On May 20th, ten of us watched and listened to birds on a beautiful late afternoon and early evening at Jacquez Marsh. Jon Orona did another fine job of leading our crew and no sooner did he start us down the trail, when suddenly, a juvenile Goshawk exploded from a grove of young cottonwoods in pursuit of prey (the prey was a bird that I didn't pay attention to because I was so engrossed by the hawk). I think the Goshawk was somewhat put off by our presence because he quickly curtailed his sortie and returned to the cottonwoods to perch. Jon set up his spotting scope and we all enjoyed long, close-ups of the fierce predator (reportedly, a Goshawk painting adorned Attila the Hun's battle shield). Later, we also observed Long-billed Dowitchers, Wilson's Phalaropes, and numerous other waterbirds and songbirds.

Some of us stayed late to watch for owls and nighthawks and one nighthawk finally did appear, along with many foraging bats, which fed upon the abundant midges that existed in large cloud-like formations.

For the “Fitness Birding” event on May 27th Darrelyn & Denise joined me and we walked along Billy Creek and observed the birds that are typical of that area. We did have a bit of excitement when 3-4 Western Tanagers began a running battle through the middle heights of a stand of Ponderosa Pines. The 3 birds that I had a good look at were all adult males and so we wondered why they were all clumped up near each other and not on their own territories. According to my subsequent readings, W. Tanagers loiter in feeding areas on their migrations north and, as such, the males we saw may have still been *en route* to northern states, where they would eventually establish territories, mate, and assist the females in the caring of young. Some W. Tanagers do nest in portions of AZ, although they apparently start their breeding cycle later than many other bird species.

JACQUEZ MARSH PHOTOS OF GASTON PORTERIE (left: Yellow-headed Blackbird; right: Red-winged Blackbird).



BONUS PHOTOS: Two of our members sent us many photos this month that document two interesting events in the lives of birds. **Bill Waldron** sent us photos from the day AZ Game & Fish raptor biologists came to the Bald Eagle nest that Bill monitors as part of the Nest Watchers project. Bill assisted the biologists and took photos of the fledgling processing (weighing, measuring, banding, etc). I will include all of Bill's photos on our Audubon website. Thank you Bill for your service to the Bald Eagle Nest Watching Project! Likewise, **Chuck Lanska** sent photos of a hummingbird that nested in his yard and I will also include his photos on our WMAS website. Below is a single photo each, by Bill and Chuck, to whet your appetite for the two, full photo essays (it may take me and the Webmaster, Alan Vickers, a bit of time to get all the photos up on the website but watch for it in the days to come). Thx. –Rob



Abbie Ramsay Awarded Audubon Scholarship



The White Mountain Audubon Society awarded the 2023 \$1000 Bob and Loretta Pena Memorial Scholarship to Abbie Mae Ramsay of Eagar AZ. Abbie will be entering a Wildlife Sciences degree program at Western New Mexico University this fall.

Abbie is a 2023 graduate of Round Valley High School. She was selected for the National Honors Society and undertook advanced level Junior College courses. Her Biology Instructor recommended her as “an outstanding individual who excels in her academic, extracurricular and personal pursuits...It is rare to meet a high school student who is so mature, organized and results-oriented.”

Abbie has a special interest in falconry and carrion birds. She wrote “After graduation, I intend to partner with a bird and join a conservation organization. Working with this organization and our birds of prey, I plan to educate the public about the threats faced by many of these birds.”

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! **We are especially keen to recruit diverse candidates to be a part of WMAS, including more people below the age of 60 (so that we can plan for our Chapter's future) and also more people that are representative of the various demographic groups found in the White Mountains. And remember, you can be on the Board without being an Officer – in fact, you can even just attend a Board meeting as a guest. Please feel free to join us (call Rob: 928-368-8481).**

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**