



## DECEMBER EDITION 2023

### **Out on a Limb by Tom Jernigan (WMAS Vice President & Treasurer)**

Winter waterfowl have returned to Woodland Lake in Pinetop. There are a couple of ways to verify this.

- 1) Just look at the clear waters of the lake. The surface throngs with widgeons, shovelers, ringnecks, gadwalls, buffleheads, canvasbacks, mergansers and others.
- 2) Walk around the lake on the paved path---you will be dodging goose poop like a football quarterback.

These birds seem to prefer Woodland Lake over other lakes in the area, although some settle elsewhere as well. Woodland Lake Park is a preferred sanctuary for other animals and wildlife too, and for us people, the ones who like to visit the Park. A generous donation from a local family allowed the town to purchase and protect 107 acres of the park which included the lake. But there are about 400 acres remaining. This acreage currently belongs to the Forest Service. But since it is in the center of the community, they would like to sell or trade the acreage. In some cases, Forest Service lands in and around communities become available for development to accommodate expanding populations.

Those of you who have walked the Walnut Creek trail can attest to the special quality of that area. Most agree that it would be good for the community now and in the future for this area, which lies pretty much in the center of the town, to be preserved.

But how could a small town afford such a large purchase as this. The price would likely be nearly \$7 million dollars. Well--someone has stepped forward and offered to fund the purchase so long as it would remain a protected park. All that is needed now are the funds for the town to be able to maintain the park into the future. That is what the Save our Park committee is working toward now.

Contact can be made with the Park committee at ----- [erickramer102@gmail.com](mailto:erickramer102@gmail.com)



Two recent views of Woodland Reservoir (photos by Rob Bettaso)

**White Mountain Audubon Society (WMAS) 2023 Chapter Officers:**

President: Mary Williams	480-235-1792
Vice-President: Tom Jernigan	928-892-3004
Secretary: Liz Jernigan	928-245-8633
Treasurer: Tom Jernigan	928-892-3004
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:**

Holiday greetings bird lovers! Hoping your Thanksgiving was full of things for which to be grateful and that you are richly blessed throughout this month of festivities.

Upcoming Audubon events include our last meeting of the year on the Dec 6<sup>th</sup>. Those of us who have enjoyed Jon Orona’s excellent presentations in the past eagerly await this one. The December First Thursday Bird Walk, weather permitting, will be at Woodland Lake Park in Pinetop on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Meet at 8:00 at the athletic field parking area.

Although we won’t have meetings with guest speakers again till April, the first Thursday bird walks will continue throughout the year – weather permitting. Don’t hesitate to contact me if you want details.

January 4th plans are for a walk at Cottonwood Wash in Snowflake – where there’s likely to be less snow. If you have not done much winter birding in the White Mountains, you might be surprised at how many species you’ll see – many of which migrate to other locations in Spring to breed.

Another FYI for 2024: second Saturday bird walks beginning in May are planned for various hotspots in Apache County, in conjunction with Friday afternoon meetings at the Round Valley Library. Wishing you good birding and many blessings, Mary



On November 7, Susie Walker and Mary Williams represented the White Mountain Audubon Society at Show Low High School’s annual Scholarship Night. They provided information and applications for the Bob and Loretta Pena Memorial Scholarship to graduating high school seniors and their parents. It will be awarded in amounts of up to \$2000 to qualifying applicants from Navajo and Apache Counties in 2024. Those interested can download the application, due April 5, from the website, [whitemountainaudubon.org](http://whitemountainaudubon.org)

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



**December 6<sup>th</sup> Jon Orona:** Jon will share pictures and stories from his time working in the White Mountains as a fisheries and wildlife technician and now serving as a Forester with lessons in conservation and natural resource management.

**December 30<sup>th</sup> 2023:** The annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will be on Dec 30<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in participating, pls give me a call or send me an email (Rob Bettaso at 928-368-8481; [rhilbe739@gmail.com](mailto:rhilbe739@gmail.com))

**December 31<sup>st</sup> 2023:** You still have until Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2023 to respond to the email pertaining to our slate of 2024 WMAS Board members. Please refer to Mary William's email of Nov 22<sup>nd</sup> (the email is from her account at: [whitemountinaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:whitemountinaudubon@gmail.com)) and respond to her before the 31<sup>st</sup>. Thank you.

**The Regular Monthly WMAS Birding Field Trip:** Monthly bird watching field trips on the **3rd Sat of every month**, alternating between Rob Bettaso & Jon Orona. If you're interested in attending, feel free to give me a call and leave a message so that I can return your call to give you the details for the upcoming trip. The **next outing is Dec 16**. 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 Dec 23**. Feel free to give me a call if you're interested (Rob: 928-368-8481).

### **MOST RECENT 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> SATURDAY FIELD TRIPS:**

Both November field trips were cancelled due to some much-needed rain. The birds sing beautifully after a good rain, and so should we....

## 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).**

## BONUS PHOTOGRAPHS:

Left: A beautiful drake Gadwall (Jon Orona); Right: Two Wild Turkeys (Gaston Porterie)



**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 and visit our website.

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.

**LATE BREAKING PHOTOS:**

The two photos below (sandwiched together in a single screen-shot) by Sue Sitko were taken just this morning (Nov 30<sup>th</sup>) when she and I were looking for a Rusty Blackbird (rare in these parts and recently observed/identified in the Telephone Lk area by Mike Lopez). We found the blackbird but it didn't pose for a picture like the Lincoln (left) and Song (right) sparrows did. By the way, the story of Rusty, the Blackbird, is a good one and one of us may tell it in next month's edition of the WMAS Newsletter. Stay tuned. --Rob



