



BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 1982

CALENDAR

Welcome! Central New Mexico Audubon Society meets the third thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m., St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, Copper and Jefferson, N.E. Nonmembers are welcome at all meetings, field trips, and special events.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9 AND 10--NMAC Meeting and Field Trip

The New Mexico Audubon Council presents a VERY SPECIAL conference in Gallup. The theme of the conference is the Bisti Badlands. Please see article inside for more information. You may also call Darwin Miller (265-6361), Jim Karo (294-2777), or the Prices (242-6604).

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16--Field Trip

A hawk watch to Capilla Peak in the Manzanos, including a one-half mile hike. Steve Hoffman, the leader, has studied hawk migration throughout the west. This should be an unusual trip and a chance to brush up on hawk identification. Meet at the Aladin Motel parking lot at 8 a.m. for this all-day trip. Bring water and lunch. For more details, call Steve at home (266-0193) or work (766-3972).

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21--Regular Meeting

Chris Olsen, Recreation Planner at the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, will present a program on the refuge.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21--Regular Meeting

Kay Anderson will have a surprise film for us. She guarantees it will be great. Come see for yourself.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2 (Election Day)--Field Trip

Weekday field trip. Downhill birdwalk in the Juan Tabo area of the Sandias. Beginners welcome! Meet at 8 a.m. at the cattle guard near the intersection of Tramway Boulevard and the forest service road to Juan Tabo Recreation Area (about one mile north of the turn off to the base of the tram). Bring binoculars. Half day. Leader: Barbara Hussey (292-5626).

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4--Board Meeting

Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., at the home of Marge and Dave Carrick, 808 Dakota, S.E. (266-0191). All are welcome.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6--Special Event Field Trip

Join Fred and Bea Leckman at their new cabin in lower Cienega Canyon for a pot luck lunch. BYO plates and silverware; refrigerator space and stove facilities are limited. In the morning, enjoy the birds Fred is attracting to his feeders or join Hart Schwarz for a five-mile loop hike up Armijo Canyon and down Cienega Canyon. Meet at the Sandia Park Post Office at 8 a.m. For more information call Bea (266-6354; 281-2353) or Hart (266-1810).

(continued)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18--Regular Meeting

Dixie Propp, the winner of our chapter scholarship to the Audubon Camp of the West in Wyoming, will tell us about her experience at the camp.

Dennis Heinemann of the UNM Department of Biology will present A View of Alaskan Seabird Communities with slides to illustrate his study.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18--Deadline for Burrowing Owl Copy (Call the Prices; 242-6604)SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20--Field Trip

Trail party to our adopted trail in the Sandias. Meet at 1 p.m. at the cattle guard near the intersection of Tramway Boulevard and the forest service road to Juan Tabo Recreation Area (about one mile north of the turn off to the base of the tram). Call Barbara Hussey by Thursday, November 18, if you plan to go. This time we will put up trail signs as well as water bar maintenance and litter removal.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2--Board Meeting

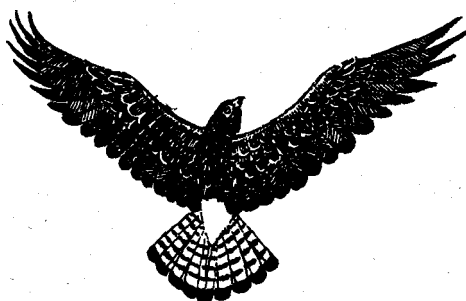
Board meeting, 7:30 p.m. Location to be announced.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4--Field Trip

A field trip to the Bosque del Apache NWR. The waterfowl, including thousands of sandhill cranes and snow geese should be at their peak. Meet leaders George and Evelyn Price (242-6604) at the parking lot of the Physics Building, northeast corner of Yale and Lomas, at 6:30 a.m. Bring lunch, water, and warm jackets.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Future meetings will include a program on Harris Hawks in southeastern New Mexico, and a program by Dr. Randy Thornhill on the controversial new science of Sociobiology.

AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILM SERIES

Have you purchased your film series tickets yet? If not, time is running short. See the enclosed brochure. If you have your tickets, you may want to pass the brochure along to a friend. Audubon Wildlife films are the best bargain in family entertainment!

BIWILDERED BY BISTI BADLANDS

The New Mexico Audubon Council invites you to a workshop covering many aspects of the Bisti. The main theme will be coal mining--pro and con--in the Bisti area. Expert presentations, a panel discussion, an address by Toney Anaya will be among the features of the workshop. Three field trips will be held the day after the workshop.

The program will begin at 11 a.m., October 9, 1982, at the The Inn in Gallup. All meetings are free, though there will be a charge if you care to attend the luncheon. Send \$6.50 to Arch McCallum, Rt 2, Box 3, Thoreau, New Mexico 87323 for each luncheon reservation. He will send you a complete schedule. Write or call Arch (862-7503) and he will send you all the information on the program, motels, etc.!

WILDLIFE'S VALUE

The following statement is taken from a newsletter put out by an organization that knows all about the value of timber, the Society of American Foresters: "It is becoming apparent that the value of wildlife in our forests can be more valuable than the trees themselves." The editor referred to a recent study by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that indicates nearly \$40 billion a year is being generated for the national economy by recreation expenditures related to fish and wildlife. That figure is nearly equal to the dividends paid by all United States corporations in 1979. The newsletter editor suggested that forest managers may sometimes be overlooking options more lucrative than timber cutting.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

This year our state fair exhibit was again in the Industrial Exhibit Hall thanks to funding by the New Mexico Audubon Council. Information and membership applications were distributed from all six Audubon chapters in the state. We made a few improvements over last year's exhibit so we hope we were able to get the Audubon message to even more people this year!

At this writing the fair is still going so I do not have the complete list of those who worked at the exhibit. Your names will be published in the December-January issue. I do want to thank the state fair committee members who helped with the design, construction, art work, painting, setup, engineering, typing and materials supply. They are:

Craig Andrews	Evelyn Jones
Elizabeth Broemel	Jim Karo
Neil Dilley	Evelyn and George Price
Edith Johnson	Dan and Marian Washburn

This year the exhibit encountered a few new problems such as a booth that was a foot narrower than contracted for, a \$5 admission fee for those people who did the booth sitting on opening day, and an out-of-order electrical outlet. However, we survived. We begin planning next year's exhibit now. Call me with your suggestions while they are fresh in your mind.

I am sorry to report we are losing our recording secretary this month. Elizabeth Lee and her husband Al are moving to Santa Fe. Our loss will the Sangre de Cristo chapter gain. Elizabeth has contributed much to our chapter and we are sorry to lose her. Anyone interested in the position of recording secretary should contact me as soon as possible. The job involves taking the minutes at board meetings, typing them up and distributing copies to board members. All materials and expenses are paid for by the chapter.

All of our members are encouraged to attend the 1982 New Mexico Audubon Conference and state council meeting in Gallup on October 9 and 10. Complete details are in this issue.



Work is still needed on our adopted trail in the Sandias. The next trail party is November 20 at 1 p.m. This time in addition to repairing water bars and litter removal, we plan to erect two signs.

CNMA's will sponsor three Christmas bird counts again in December and January. Watch for details in the next issue.

Barbara Hussey
(292-5626)

THE CONDOR PROGRAM:
GOOD NEWS AND BAD

There have been two developments in the California condor field research and captive breeding program. The first condor nestling for captive breeding has been taken from the wild in what biologists described as a "smooth and flawless" operation. But there has been a major setback. The California Fish and Game Commission has drastically cut back its permission to capture additional condors, including those for vital radio tracking studies.

The young condor was taken from its nest because its parents were not feeding it adequately. The reasons for the problem are not clear, but all agencies concerned--the California commission, National Audubon, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service--agreed the chick would die if not taken from the wild. It is at the San Diego Zoo, eating well and apparently quite healthy.

The condor recovery program is operated jointly by National Audubon and the federal agency, but no condor can be taken from the wild without permission from the state agency. Last year the California commission granted permission for trapping up to nine birds, but permits were issued late in the season and no condors were taken. In a surprise announcement this month, the commission cut the coming season's limit to three, or--depending on the sex of the birds taken--even fewer.

National Audubon has objected strenuously to the reduction. "Continuing the radio tracking program at such a low level would be scientifically fruitless, declared Audubon President Russell Peterson. "It could not give satisfactory answers to crucial questions on condor habitat and on factors causing the condors' decline."

SOMETIMES IT ISN'T EASY
(To Get to See A Rare Bird)

Ross L. Teuber

It was enough to make me really prick up my ears and listen when Pat Basham called from her home in Socorro on August 28, to tell me she and Bill had seen a swallow-tailed kite. It had circled over their place for over an hour, and when last seen was slowly drifting northward. Maybe it would come all the way to Albuquerque! The next day she called again. They had seen the kite twice; once very briefly early in the morning, and again for about an hour circling low over the fields and cottonwoods around them, apparently hunting.

The swallow-tailed kite is a striking bird, easily recognized, and once seen never to be forgotten. The largest of the kites, it varies from 17 to 24-3/4 inches long and may have a wing span of as much as 50 inches. That makes it as large or slightly larger than a red-tailed hawk. But it is much slimmer and trimmer soaring, banking, and turning very easily and smoothly just above the tree tops. The wings are long, tapering and pointed and the tail is long and broad with a deeply notched swallow fork. The head, neck, and underbody clear to the crissum and the wing linings are spotless, gleaming, pure white. All the rest of the bird top and bottom is shiny, jet black. A more handsome or graceful bird would be hard to find or even imagine.

These birds are summer residents, primarily along the Gulf Coast and South Atlantic shore, some having been sighted as far north as New Jersey. They are not unknown as far as Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma. However, they occur only accidentally and infrequently in New Mexico. The last reported sighting was 75 years ago near Carlsbad. The only actual specimen from New Mexico was collected at army Cantonment Burgwyn near Taos about August 5, 1859. The badly deteriorated skin resides in the U.S. National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian. So to see and if possible photograph this Socorro bird would be an exciting adventure.

On Tuesday morning, I got an early start and arrived at Pat and Bill Basham's before 8 a.m. After waiting and making a search

in all directions for a mile or two, it did not appear that the kite was going to cooperate and show itself. Maybe it had gone to Bosque del Apache to rest and feed. Or maybe it was hunting along the riparian banks beside the river. It seemed logical to go and check. Not only did I make a thorough search of the open parts of the refuge, I drove and searched along the ditch all the way from San Antonio back to Basham's. Again the search was without success. When I talked to Pat and Bill, they said the kite had shown up as usual around 11 a.m., and circled and hunted for about an hour, then disappeared. I had missed it by about 15 or 20 minutes. This was a real disappointment.

My wife, good helper and strong supporter that she is, was keenly aware of my disappointment and insisted that I go back and try again on Wednesday. To say the least, Wednesday just was not my day. About the time I got to the Rio Bravo exit on I-25 I sensed that something was amiss with the car. I pulled over to the side and stopped, and little puffs of steam slipped out around the edges of the hood. Opening the hood resulted in a dense cloud of steam boiling up. Through the vapor it appeared that a small jet of boiling water and antifreeze was spouting from the left rear side of the engine block.

Panic ensued. Here I was, 15 miles from home, no telling how far from a service station, and no tools or repair materials on hand. A diligent search of glove box, spare tire compartment and under the seats yielded a thin plastic bag, a pair of bandaids, and a short piece of wire. By this time things had cooled off enough that the trouble could be seen. It was a small hole in the top of a short length of hose between the engine block and a thermostat to the heater. Maybe if I folded the plastic bag to make it several layers thick and secured it with the bandaids and wire it would hold until I could limp into a service station. This was accomplished, but not without the expense of several small but painful burns on my left hand. The small supply of water I had on hand for Twink was sacrificed to the radiator.

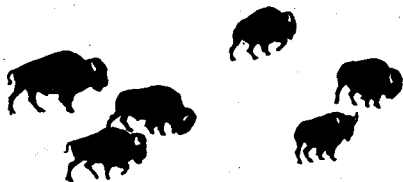
Taking the Rio Bravo exit, I eased along for what seemed an interminable distance to where a small service station was just opening. Actually, the distance was just over 2 miles, but anxiety made it seem like

20. Of course, the attendant had no hose that would fit, but he was kind and removed the makeshift repairs and wrapped the hose with several layers of electrician's tape. That, he said, should hold it until I got to my destination. However, when I said that would be Socorro, he said "No way! Maybe to Belen." So I bought another roll of tape, just in case, and started southward on the highway.

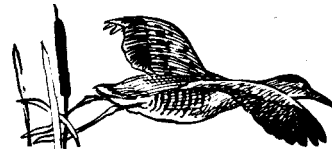
No such luck, after six miles the steam again began to ooze from under the hood, and the reading on the temperature gauge started to rise. By dint of much self-constraint and fervent prayers, I was able to ease into a larger station at Los Lunas. While this station had no hose to fit "offsize foreign cars", the manager did have 100 feet of high pressure hose on a spray rig that had been used to poison prairie dogs and gophers. By this time, time was becoming essential and I was in no mood to bicker. So he pirated a short piece of that hose, attached it with a couple small, sturdy clamps, added a gallon of radiator coolant and an equal amount of water and I was in business again. The time was 9:15 a.m.

Still there was a long way to go and the kite's behavior pattern was to arrive at a little before 11 a.m., stay for about an hour, and vanish. Could I make it? The question was in my mind all the way to Socorro. It was just 10:15 when I took the first Socorro exit, and the road to Pat's had a lot of twists and turns.

Then Eureka! Just as I made the last turn into the lane, one-half mile from the Basham domain I looked up. Lo and behold, there was the bird, floating gracefully just above the top of the roadside cottonwoods! I continued on to Basham's and told Bill and Pat I had seen their prize bird, and it was headed that way. But it did not arrive! So after a decent interval (10 to 15 minutes) I went back to where I had first seen it. Sure enough, it was still circling and wheeling in a breathtaking aeronautic display, but much too fast for good photographic shots. Then he disappeared to the south, behind the trees, and did not return.



Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Why not go down the road in that direction and look? Sure enough, only a few hundred feet, and looking up I spotted him, perched on a dead limb at the top of a tall cottonwood tree. He obligingly sat tight and I was able to take bracketed exposures from progressively closer positions until finally I was right under him, at the base of the tree. Then he took off and did some more of those dazzling aerial maneuvers that must be seen to be appreciated. From then on all was anticlimax. Back to tell Pat and Bill about it, have a cold drink, and head for home. Once more I spotted the kite on the way out to the highway, but far away and circling high above a red-tailed hawk a good 600 feet above the ground and drifting off in a southwesterly direction toward the mountains. Another adventure completed. Was it worth it? What do you think?



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The American Ornithologists' Union has been lumping and splitting again, changing the classification--and therefore the names--of a number of species. In some cases that means two species merged into one, in other cases vice versa. For the ordinary birder who just wants to know what he saw, this means new names to learn, old ones to forget. The new nomenclature will be effective with the 6th Edition of the AOU Checklist, due out next year.

The green heron will become the green-backed heron, lumped with the South American species of that name. The common gallinule is to take the European name for the same species, common moorhen, and the marsh hawk is to be the northern harrier. The black duck and swallow-tailed kite will have "American" added to their names, but the American flamingo will replace its "American" with "greater."

And a couple of tongue-twister names have been simplified. The northern three-toed woodpecker is to be the three-toed woodpecker, and the black-backed three-toed woodpecker becomes the black-backed woodpecker.

ROSS'S RAVINS

Hi folks! Here we are again right in the middle of fall migration. Just the other day I was reading that contrary to spring migration, which usually comes in a big surge or series of surges around the first week of May, fall migration stretches out for a period of several months. Some of the far northern nesters have already raised their broods and headed back to sunnier southern climes before the last stragglers arrive on their northern passage. Some, like the American Goldfinch, may delay nesting until well up into August, and the last stragglers from the north may not get here until late into November. I guess what we are saying is spring migration is a matter of weeks while fall migration is a matter of months. Anyway, my telephone has not been ringing itself off the wall with calls about all the good things you have been seeing. Remember, I still have federal and state permits and will be glad to come by and salvage the casualties that inevitably occur when fatigued migrants collide with picture windows or other solid objects. I did pick up a beautiful road-killed Bar Owl the other day.

Probably the most exciting call I have had for some time was when Pat Basham called on Sunday, August 29, to report that she and Bill had seen a Swallow-tailed Kite fly over. She called again on Monday, and it had been near their home for over an hour. At least six people saw it during the 10-11 days it remained in the area. The last reported sighting of a Swallow-tailed Kite in New Mexico was 75 years ago. The only previous authenticated record from New Mexico is a badly deteriorated skin from a specimen taken at a military cantonment near Taos in August 1859. At least three people to my knowledge took pictures of this bird, so it is a thoroughly documented record.

Also of interest was an immature male Dickcissel netted by a Rio Grande Bird Research, Inc. banding crew at the Rio Grande Nature Center on Saturday, September 4. No, he was not converted to a museum specimen. He was banded, weighed, measured, photographed, and released, all in very good shape, thank you. These birds were everyday visitors to my daughter's farm in Missouri, but they are unusual enough to be worthy of notice here.

At the banding operation at the Rio Grande Nature Center the majority of the birds being netted are sparrows, with Lark and Chipping Sparrows predominating. We have had a few Vesper, Clay Colored and Brewers Sparrows. Others included Indigo and Lazuli Buntings, Blue and Black-headed Grosbeaks, Lesser Goldfinches, Yellow, Wilson's, Orange-crowned and MacGillivray's Warblers, Trail's Flycatchers (not differentiated as to Willow or Alder type), with occasional Robins, Mourning Doves, and others. Some people have reported that their hummingbirds have left, but I still have both Black-chinned and Rufous. I never take my feeders down before the middle of October. Some of the most interesting hummers we have had recently have shown up during the last few days of October. If you feed seed, suet, and nuts or fruit in the fall and winter, it is not too early to get started. Remember, plenty of fresh water is essential!

We went to Bitter Lake NWR on Labor Day and were pleased to see an Osprey, and watch him catch and eat a fish dinner. Also of interest was an adult Mute Swan, swimming serenely in the middle of the big marsh on Unit 15, at the south end. There are no feral Mute Swans in this area, so it had to be a fugitive from a park, zoo, or private collection. A few checks with Audubon friends in Roswell produced an explanation. There is a pair of these swans which normally stay in the lake on the golf course in the city park. When the golfing activity becomes too frantic, as on holidays, they fly over to Bitter Lake. Then when the fishermen get too numerous at Bitter Lake, they fly back to the park. Presto, mystery solved (and I am happy to report that Hal Hallett is making a great recovery from his heart problem). It was interesting to find an odd bird, like that Mute Swan, and worth taking a picture. There were more mud flats and more shallow waters at Bitter Lake than at Bosque de Apache. Among the interesting birds sighted were Black Terns, Snowy Plover, Least and Western Sandpipers, Black-necked Stilts and White Pelicans. There were more!

When Dustin and Sue Huntington went to see the Swallow-tailed Kite, they of course had to go by Bosque del Apache. They found a mud flat toward the south end, where among other things they found Semi-palmated Plover and Stilt Sandpiper.

(continued)

Some of the other reports that have come in include first reports of Calliope Hummingbirds from Sandia Park on July 22 and 23. Pat Basham had a pair of Phainopeplas come in to her place in Socorro in late July, and they were still there at the end of August. Joanne Phillips' Eastern Kingbird was back at Shady Lakes on August 8. Darwin Miller reported an American Redstart in his yard on August 30.

On my last visit to Bosque del Apache, most of the marsh areas were still being dried up so they could be mowed and burned before reflooding for the returning water fowl. As a result, there were few mud flats to attract shore birds. On August 14, we saw Cattle Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Greater Yellowlegs, and Long-billed Dowitchers among other things. On August 31, only the Snowy Egrets of all that group were to be seen. Of course, there were numbers of perching birds, hawks, and a few ducks, Blue Herons, Cormorants and such. Most interesting were five Rio Grande Turkeys, which although resident, are not frequently seen.

I had hoped to be able to alert you to the forthcoming publication of two new New Mexico bird books by the New Mexico Ornithological Society before the end of the year. They are still in the mill, but publication may be delayed. One is a set of location maps and graphs of seasonal sightings for 153 rare and unusual New Mexico birds being compiled by Dustin Huntington. Dustin is also collecting and compiling a book of bird finding locations in New Mexico. Both should be helpful to serious birders, and will probably be in the \$5 to \$6 price range. However, there may be some slippage in publication dates. From what I hear, regardless of when they come out, they will be worth waiting for.

It is not too early to start planning on participating in the Audubon Christmas Bird counts. Firm dates have not yet been established for the three local counts. They will, however, fall within the overall count period of December 18 through January 2, 1983, and very likely will fall one on each of the three weekends. At the last word the participation fee will be \$1.50 per person per count, as it has been the last two years. Watch the next Burrowing Owl, and attend regular meetings for further announcements. So long for now. I will see you in a couple of months.

R.L.T.

VOLUNTEERS RALLY FOR NEW MEXICO'S OUTDOORS

Volunteers for the Outdoors is a recently formed organization dedicated to getting citizens involved in much needed conservation and recreation projects on public lands in New Mexico. This group is a coalition of organizations such as the New Mexico Ski Touring Club, Audubon Society, New Mexico Mountain Club, and others as well as many new faces.

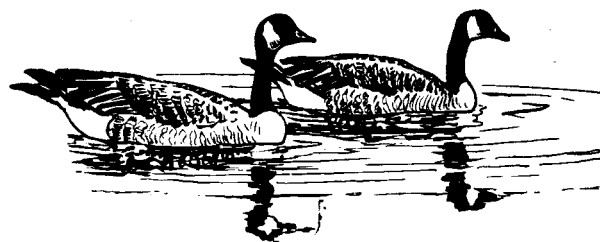
VFO is a very "hands-on" group. A "wish list" of upcoming VFO projects includes trail design and construction, campsite improvement, erosion control, public education and a host of others. We need your ideas and participation. If you would like to participate in VFO or have ideas for worthwhile projects, join us! Contact VFO Coordinator Roger Moore at 299-0275 or 13226 Candelaria N.E., K-4, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87112.

EMBUDO CANYON RECOVERY DAY OCTOBER 30, 1982

The Volunteers for the Outdoors is kicking off its efforts this fall with the Embudo Canyon Recovery Day. The Saturday "work-fest", to be held in conjunction with the Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Department, will happen on October 30 in the Sandia Foothills east of Albuquerque. Participants can expect to learn from experts, improve their City Open Space and National Forest lands, make new friends, and have a great time!

Some of the many possible activities for that day include: erosion control construction, graffiti removal, landscaping, trail improvement, fence and sign repair, cleanup, and much more.

People with questions or suggestions for the Recovery Day and particularly people interested in becoming Crew Leaders for groups of 6 to 12 workers should contact Barbara Hussey at 292-5626. See you there!



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AND THE
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New Mexico Audubon Council Secretary
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**RARE BIRD ALERT—Report sightings to: 265-8962,
292-5626, or 898-2568**

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