

BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

DECEMBER 1982 - JANUARY 1983

CALENDAR

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

MONDAY, DECEMBER 13--Audubon Wildlife Film

7:30 p.m. at UNM Popejoy Hall, Willis Moore narrates "Hawaii: An Insider's View." From volcanic beginnings to the coming of the Polynesians and the arrival of Western influences. Wildlife includes the once nearly extinct Nene or Hawaiian goose. Discount tickets from Edith Johnson (255-0307).

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16--Regular Meeting

Nita Fuller of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will present a program on the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. We will also have a Christmas cookie exchange. Bring a batch of your favorite cookies and a copy of the recipe to trade!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18--Christmas Bird Count

Sandia Mountains CBC will meet at 6:30 a.m., San Antonito School (a little north of the junction of NM 14 and NM 44, Cedar Crest). Count leader Kay Anderson (898-2968), compiler Ross Teuber (265-8962). \$2.00 fee.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19--Christmas Bird Count

Albuquerque CBC will meet at 7:30 a.m. at Corrales Shopping Center. Jim Karo (294-2777) leader/compiler. \$2.00 fee.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26--Christmas Bird Count

Bosque del Apache NWR CBC will meet at refuge headquarters at 7 a.m. Chuck Hundertmark (266-9402) leader/compiler. \$2.00 fee.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 6--Board Meeting

No board meeting is scheduled for January. Call Barbara Hussey (292-5626) if you have business that can't wait.

SATURDAY and SUNDAY, JANUARY 15 & 16-- NMAC Meeting

Tentatively scheduled to meet Saturday at 1 p.m., Bosque del Apache NWR headquarters (dining room). Call New Mexico Audubon Council president, Darwin Miller (265-6361) or council representatives Evelyn and George Price (242-6604) for further information. All Audubon members are invited. A tour of the refuge is planned.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16--Field Trip

A birding hike to Juan Tabo Gorge will be led by Hart Schwarz (266-1810). Meet at

8 a.m. at the intersection of Tramway Blvd. and the Forest Service road to Juan Tabo Picnic Area (about a mile north of the turn off to the base of the Tram). Wintering sparrows, including Rufous-Crowned, are expected. Half day.

MONDAY, JANUARY 17--Audubon Wildlife Film

7:30 p.m. at UNM Popejoy Hall, Steve Maslowski narrates "Barren Ground Summer." A rare look at the Arctic of the Northwest Territories; nesting shorebirds and waterfowl, muskoxen, caribou, and wolves. Discount tickets (255-0307).

THURSDAY, JANUARY 20--Regular Meeting

Jim Bednarz of the UNM Department of Biology will present a program of "Harris Hawks of Southeast New Mexico." Jim has studied these beautiful hawks extensively.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3--Board Meeting

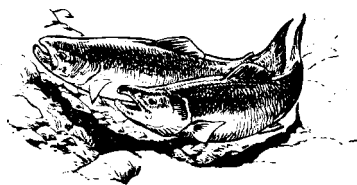
Board meeting at the home of Barbara Hussey (292-5626) 705 Monte Alto Drive, N.E., 7:30 p.m. All are welcome.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5--Field Trip

Half day birdwalk in the Corrales bosque. Long-Eared Owls possible. Meet at 7 a.m. at Corrales Shopping Center. Leader Mary Lou Arthur (256-7359).

SOMETIME IN FEBRUARY--Pelagic Field Trip

Anyone interested in sharing travel expenses to Monterey, California for a pelagic field trip please call Dale Stahlecker at 345-2827.



EAGLE POSTERS FOR SALE

The National Audubon Society poster commemorating the 200th anniversary of the designation of the bald eagle as the official emblem of the United States is available now. Advertised in the first edition of AUDUBON ACTION, the poster sells for \$5. Orders are being taken by Central New Mexico Audubon Society, Post Office Box 30002, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87190, and at the December and January meetings where a sample copy may be viewed.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

I am pleased to announce we have a new recording secretary. Michele Peters has agreed to finish the term vacated by Elizabeth Lee who moved to Santa Fe. We welcome Michele and extend her our thanks for taking over this vital chapter service.

Congratulations go to the new officers of the NM Audubon Council. They are: President--Darwin Miller; Vice President--Pat Insley; Secretary--Helen Riddell; Treasurer--Jim Karo. Pat Insley is from the Sangre de Cristo chapter and the others are members of CNMAS. Darwin Miller is resigning from his job as CNMAS vice president. CNMAS is looking for his replacement. If you are interested or would like to nominate someone, please call me. The job primarily involves standing in for the president when he/she is out of town or otherwise unable to perform presidential duties.

It's time again for awarding our Teacher's Scholarship to the Audubon Ecology Camp in Wyoming. If you know a teacher who would like an application, call me or Edie Johnson (255-0307). All applications must be postmarked by January 13, 1983. The winner will be presented with the scholarship at our Audubon Wildlife Film on February 13, 1983. Runners up will also receive awards.

This coming year, CNMAS will for the first time be presenting awards in Environmental Science to students exhibiting in the Northwestern New Mexico Regional Science and Engineering Fair at UNM on March 18-19. Anyone interested in serving as a judge, contact me.

Also in March, we are co-sponsoring, with Audubon's southwest regional office, a workshop on field trip leadership. Taught by Audubon's southwest regional representative, Rhea Copening, the program will be held at the Rio Grande Nature Center and will be open to the public. Watch the next OWL for details.

And finally, don't forget our three Christmas Bird Counts (see Calendar). You don't have to be an experienced birder to participate. The slogan is: "More eyes see more birds!" I went on my first CBC when I had been interested in birds only six months. I learned much and even better, I met many birders who were most helpful. Try it!

Barbara Hussey

RIDESHARING--A PROGRAM WHOSE TIME HAS COME

Automobiles have been a mixed blessing for us, offering greater personal freedom and mobility, but bringing a host of economic and environmental problems.

One organization in the Albuquerque area working to promote the best use of automobiles is RIDEPOOL, the area ridesharing agency. RIDEPOOL promotes carpooling, vanpooling, bus ridership, bicycling and walking--in short, any alternative to single occupant vehicle trips. It also provides a free matching service to anyone willing to join a carpool or vanpool.

The agency has an areawide file of people who have signed up for free matching so it is able to match people who might not ordinarily come in contact with one another. Many people know their neighbors and co-workers, but not many could easily form a carpool with someone living a half-mile away or working at an office near theirs. RIDEPOOL is able to match those people into carpools saving them hundreds of dollars a year in gasoline, car maintenance, and parking costs.

Air pollution, energy use, and traffic congestion also are problems that can be partially solved by ridesharing. Bernalillo County motorists soon will receive notices informing them when they must bring their cars in for a mandatory vehicle emissions inspection costing \$9.25 a vehicle. Holiday shopping traffic jams, fire-place smoke, and winter temperature inversions all will combine to make Albuquerque's air dirtier during the next few months. RIDEPOOL points out that since more than 90 percent of Albuquerque's carbon monoxide is from automobiles, much of our air pollution could be significantly reduced if more people were to carpool when possible. At present, the agency estimates that about 17 percent of Albuquerque drivers carpool. That's lower than in other cities such as Denver and Tucson.

The ridesharing agency has a 24-hour phone number that's easy to remember: 243-RIDE.

WILDLIFE FILM NEWS

For those of you with Audubon Wildlife Film Series tickets for six admissions, there will be a sixth show on Saturday, January 29, 7:30 p.m. at Popejoy Hall.

Part I--THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

Intermission

Part II--KENYA

This will be a slide show, presented by Mina and Don Carnicom of Sandia Park, New Mexico, well known photographers and travelers.

You may use your sixth admission punch on your season ticket.

For those of you without season tickets, regular single ticket prices of \$3.50 public, \$3.00 students and seniors will prevail.

SCHEDULE YOUR VACATION AROUND THE 1983 CONVENTION: AUG. 28--SEPT. 2

How about a vacation next summer in the beautiful Rocky Mountains of Colorado? Plan it around the biennial National Audubon Convention at Estes Park. The convention starts with a field trip into Rocky Mountain National Park on Monday, August 29 (check-in date is Sunday evening, August 28), followed by three and a half days of panels, talks, and workshops on the society's role in research, education, and action. The convention theme is: "Think Globally, Act Locally."

Field trips and nature study workshops will be offered before and after the convention, including river rafting, wilderness backpacking, and a four-day bicycle trip through Colorado towns. Full details, along with an application blank, will be published in the February issue of the society's new publication, Audubon Action. Meanwhile, circle August 24 through Labor Day, September 5, on your 1983 calendar. Those dates cover the convention plus the pre- and post-convention trips.

WINTER SPARROWS IN THE SANDIAS

Hart Schwarz

Our American sparrows (now placed in the same family with the warblers, i.e., the Emberizidae), though often quite plain, are among our most gifted singers and provide infinite pleasure, not only on that account, but also because they challenge the identification skills of even the most accomplished birders.

During the past three years, I have recorded no fewer than 16 species of sparrows in the Sandias, at least nine of which occur in winter. That season, as defined by American Birds magazine, comprises the months of December, January, and February. Except for the abundant White-crowns and the fairly common but more secretive Rufous-crowns, most of the sparrows occur rather sporadically, being present (or noticed) some winters, but not in others.

Finding unusual sparrows often involves visiting sites that have been productive in the past. One such place is the cholla patch just southeast of the intersection of Tramway and the road leading up to the Juan Tabo recreation area. Currently, it is not unusual to see as many as 20 species of birds there, though it might be necessary to walk the beat several times before their presence is realized. As of November 12, at least three Black-throated Sparrows continue roving about the area, usually accompanied by several Brewer's and Chipping Sparrows. Normally these birds would have left the mountain by the end of October, but their lingering presence lends hope that this may be a good sparrow winter, made possible perhaps by a particularly good grass crop.

The following annotated list of winter sparrows reflects my observations from 1979 to 1982.

1. Rufous-crowned Sparrow. Quite common year-round resident in the west side foothills and canyons. Though usually showing a preference for steep, rocky slopes with a southern exposure, they may descend into nearby arroyos in winter. Embudito Canyon is one of the most reliable places for finding this attractive, often wren-like sparrow. Its loud, nasal "chew-chew-chew" will quickly draw attention to its

whereabouts, as will a high-pitched, wiry "tseep"; however, these notes must be distinguished from certain similar ones rendered by juncos and towhees, respectively.

2. Black-throated Sparrow. The non-pareil sparrow, both in appearance and song. Most leave the Sandias in fall; however, during two of the last three winters, at least one bird survived the rigors of cold and snow at lower Juan Tabo, an area where they are common in summer. Since this sparrow does not have to migrate very far, it is among the first to return in the spring, usually arriving by the third or fourth week in March.
3. Chipping Sparrow and Brewer's Sparrow. I am lumping these two spizellas because they tend to associate with one another during the winter months. These, like the Black-throated, usually winter farther south, but in the winter of 1979-80 both could be seen occasionally, foraging in the foothills where a variety of grasses is available. Separating the two species at that season is not always easy unless one remembers that the Brewer's is essentially two-toned, whereas the Chipping Sparrow is polychrome, showing rufous and buffy on the head. Also, the Brewer's is daintier in form and often more difficult to approach; however, it may burst into a hoarse version of its song at any time--something I have not heard its congeners do.
4. White-crowned Sparrow. By far the most abundant winter sparrow. During migration it can occur as high as the Crest--otherwise, it prefers the lower canyons where the rabbitbrush is densest. The immatures can be mistaken for Chipping Sparrows at first glance, but the former are substantially larger, with more defined head stripes, and the occiput is slightly raised, thus giving the appearance of a long, sloping forehead. White-crowns

begin to arrive in the Sandias during the second half of September (9-19 in 1982), and by the middle of May, virtually all of them will have departed for their more northern nesting grounds.

5. Golden-crowned Sparrow. It may come as a surprise that this bird of the Pacific states is a regular winter visitor in the Southwest. Since 1980, I have encountered it six times in the Sandias from October 25 to April 27, and most of these sightings have been in lower Juan Tabo, in an area between the cabin and the residential road above it. My first sighting this fall was on November 9 in the peach tree hard by the cabin. It was an immature without a trace of yellow, but the crown bore the suggestion of the two black border stripes characteristic of the adult. Seen next to the White-crowns with whom it invariably associates, its larger size was immediately apparent. This nondescript version of the Golden-crowned has often been compared to a female House Sparrow, but it lacks the conspicuous, buffy superciliary and has two easily discernable wingbars instead.

6. White-throated Sparrow. I have seen this handsome eastern relative of the White-crowned twice during the 1980-81 winter, first near Sandia Park pond and then at a feeder in Monticello. Most recently, on November 12, 1982, I quite unexpectedly flushed a bright-lored bird in veritable breeding plumage from a clump of rabbitbrush near the lower Juan Tabo cabin.

7. Fox Sparrow. Really a rare bird, seen only twice in Three Gun Spring Valley near Monticello during the winter of 1979-80. In each instance the bird belonged to a grey race--in contradistinction to the brown and rusty varieties--which suggests an origin somewhere in the western mountains. This sparrow is not known to nest in New Mexico.

8. Song Sparrow. Wintering abundantly in the Rio Grande Valley, this well-known species can be turned up occasionally in the Sandias, almost always near water at the lower elevations as in Tijeras, Canyon.

STATE FAIR REPORT

CNMAS would like to thank the following people who worked on the 1982 State Fair Committee or gave their time to staff the exhibit.

Craig Andrews
Barbara Baker
Elizabeth Broemel
Dave & Donna Broudy
Alma Butler
Dave & Marge Carrick
Carol Davis
Jean & Neil Dilley
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Bev Grady
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David & Michele Peters
Evelyn & George Price
Helen Riddell
Martin Ruoss
Carol Russell
Phyllis Schmidt
Hart Schwarz
Dan & Marian Washburn
Bo West (from Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society)
Terrence Word



Next year the New Mexico Audubon Council plans to again provide the finances for the 1983 State Fair Exhibit. The council assures us they will recruit members from other chapters to help us with staffing. Many of our members had to take multiple shifts this year. Next year if the fair is expanded to 16 days, we will need their help even more!

We will be in the process of preparing next year's booth all this year. Any suggestions should be directed to Darwin Miller (265-6361) or Evelyn or George Price (242-6604).

ROSS'S RAVINS

Hi folks! Here we are right in the middle of the holiday season, and the Christmas Bird Counts are just around the corner. Thanks to all of you who heeded my plea for reports of sightings. Your calls are really appreciated, and the information you give me is the backbone of this column. Please keep the calls coming. I'm always glad to hear from you and to chat about the birds. One of the most exciting calls was a report of a LeConte's Sparrow spotted at Bitter Lake NWR by Chuck Hundertmark on the November 6-7 weekend. Hart Schwarz, Gary Parker, and Dave Tomasko keep a constant vigil on the comings and goings of the avifauna in the Sandias and have had a number of unusual sightings, such as a Worm-eating Warbler on October 3, a Brown Thrasher on October 10, and a Winter Wren on October 29. They also found Sage Sparrows in Embudito Canyon on October 2. Hart heard an Eastern Meadowlark in the Sandias on October 3. Sage Thrashers first showed up in the western foothills of the Sandias on August 1, and will probably continue there in good numbers until February or March. They are now in fresh fall plumage and easy to identify. Crissal Thrashers are also common there. It shouldn't be too difficult to find Black-throated Sparrows, and Hart says Chipping and Brewer's sparrows are still lingering with them. The late fall and winter population of Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, and Marsh hawks and Prairie Falcons are now frequently seen. Liz Broemel reported an Osprey at Cochiti Lake, and a Harris Hawk near Portales. Ruth Luhrs called on November 9 to report that she still had a male Hepatic Tanager from the pair that nested near her home in Sandia Knolls this summer. The male first appeared on Washington's birthday and has been there ever since.

Back to the late Hummingbirds. In September, Diana Kinney had a Calliope on September 7, I still had a male Black-chinned on September 21, and a very late report of a Black-chinned from a feeder in Albuquerque on October 26!

On September 24, there was an unverified report of a Common Loon at Bosque del Apache. The first Whooping Crane, "Ida," returned to Bosque del Apache on October 11. I have made several trips down there since, and as of November 2, there

were still only two Whoopers there: Ida and a chick from this year's hatch. There were at least 75 White Pelicans there on October 19 and at least a dozen remained on November 2. There were also about 2,000 Snow Geese, 1,500 Sandhill Cranes, about 150 Canada Geese, several Cormorants, both Double-crested and Olivaceous, and a relatively small number of ducks. For some reason many of the waterfowl and most of the Whooping Cranes have delayed returning to Bosque. Maybe the current stormy period (11/11-12) will push them on south.

The Rio Grande Bird Research, Inc. banders working at the Nature Center during September handled numerous Chipping, Vesper, Lark, and a few Brewer's and Lincoln sparrows as well as Orange-crowned, Wilson's, and MacGillivray's Warblers, Lazuli and Indigo Buntings, and Blue and Black-headed Grosbeaks. Less frequent were Dusky Flycatchers, House Wrens, and even a single Common Yellowthroat.

During the same period Dustin and Sue Huntington spotted a Black Swift at Maxwell NWR, and Kay Anderson and I saw an immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron at Bosque del Apache. It was in the company of adult and immature Black-crowned Night Herons, so it was easy to make comparisons and recognize the differences. Later, Pat Basham confided that she had a very brief glimpse of what appeared to be an adult Yellow-crowned Night Heron earlier in the week at the same location; and Jean Dilley called on September 18 to report a late male American Redstart at Corrales.

Many of you, I am sure, remember Dave Lange, who was our president for two years prior to Barbara Hussey's first term. Early in October, I had an opportunity to spend ten days in the Boston area. At that time I got in touch with Dave, and we had three wonderful birding trips together. When he learned I was coming, he made reservations for us to go on a whale watch, the last of the season, on a small boat out of Gloucester, off Cape Ann. Not only did we see and hear seven Hump-backed Whales, a Fin-back Whale longer than the boat we were on, and 40 to 50 White-sided Atlantic Dolphins, but also we found three more of the birds I needed for my life list! The new birds to me were a Great Cormorant, Gannet, and Greater Shearwater.


Then, two days later, knowing how close I was to the 500 life list threshold (ABA), he picked me up and took me to the Parker River NWR on Plum Island, near Newburyport, Massachusetts. Enroute we stopped at a salt marsh, (he even provided a pair of rubber-footed boots for me), known as the Plum Bush, and pointed out the Sharp-tailed Sparrows, which abound in that area. One more for the life list! On the way to Plum Island, we stopped at Joppa Flat near Newbury, and he helped me locate a pair of Hudsonian godwits, which had been reported on the Eastern Massachusetts Rare Bird Report. Another bird closer to the magic 500! On to Plum Island and a great day of birding and companionship, including a delightful lunch, which Dave had very thoughtfully prepared. He also brought along some really good licorice flavored herb tea, which I thoroughly enjoyed. We saw many, many interesting birds, some of which I hadn't seen for years, but no new ones. However, we left in time to stop for half an hour or so at the seawall in Newburyport. He set up his telescope and after scanning for several minutes, he picked out a Little Gull sitting on a sail boom on a small sailboat in the marina. Bird number 500 was very cooperative. Every few minutes he would raise his wings, flutter a foot or so farther out on the boom, and remain with wings lifted, clearly revealing the dark gray underwings with a narrow white edge, which is the positive characteristic for separating Little Gulls from Bonapartes. No mistake, I had crossed the 500 bird threshold, thanks mostly to Dave's generous help. Anything else would have been an anticlimax.

The first ten days of October in Massachusetts were delightful. While I was there, the leaves on the hardwood trees, especially the maples, reached the peak of their brilliance. I visited a number of "good birding" spots, including Carlisle Woods, Fowl Meadow, and Great Meadows, the only NWR lying completely within a city (Concord, Massachusetts). I also got to the "Old North Bridge"--"Where once embattled farmers stood and fired the shots heard 'round the world" in the Revolutionary War, and to Walden Pond of Thoreau fame.

Reportedly, there were Black-headed Gulls on the beaches around Cape Cod. So Dave picked me up four hours early, to take me

back to the airport, and we birded many spots, seeking this exotic visitor. But the weather had turned stormy and we were unsuccessful. We did enjoy a great lunch and a last visit together. It is great to have friends like Dave! He sent his greetings and best wishes to all.

So long for now. See you next time, and hope to have a report on my experiences on some California CBCs. Good birding!

R. L. T. 

ZOO SOCIETY HAS LOBO CARDS AVAILABLE

New Mexico's famous lobo, the large gray wolf that once roamed the state, will be seen on the cover of a benefit greeting card, the first issued by the New Mexico Zoological Society.

Designed by Jim Walston, popular local artist and graphic designer at Sandia Laboratories, the card will be sold with or without a Christmas message.

The introduction of the card marks the opening of the James R. Modrall Memorial Wolf Exhibit, new Rio Grande Zoo attraction featuring a pair of the nearly extinct species.

Cards will be sold in packages of 10 for \$4, or single at \$.40. They are available at the zoo gift shop, Galeria Del Sol and Piñon Tree in Old Town, Go-Shoppe Travel Agency, Cantwell's Books and Fine Papers, and Book Fare in the Northeast Heights.

A message on the back of the card states that the Rio Grande Zoo is one of four United States zoos selected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service to receive the wolves as part of a captive breeding program. It is also explained that proceeds from card sales will benefit zoo efforts to help save the Mexican wolf and other endangered species.

Designer Walston, who most frequently sketches Jemez and Cochiti Indians, volunteered his talent for the zoo fund raiser. He has taught numerous drawing classes and has exhibited at Galeria Del Sol in Albuquerque, Tom Carson Gallery in Denver, and the Texas Art Gallery in Dallas.

For further information on cards or outlets, call Judy Elder, 884-7741.

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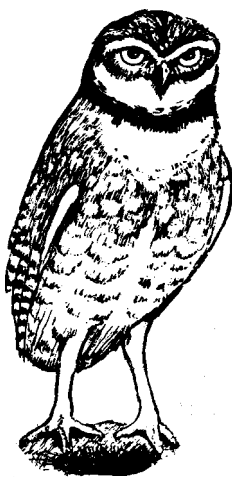
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