

# BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

APRIL - MAY 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, Copper and Jefferson, N.E. Nonmembers are welcome at all meetings, field trips, and special events.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 23--Field Trip

Sally Douglas will lead a trail maintenance group on Saturday, April 23, starting at 8:30 A.M. until around noon. Meeting place is at the corner of Tramway and the Forest Road to the Juan Tabo picnic area, about one mile north of the turnoff to the Tram. Bring water and a snack. Sally must know who is coming before April 22. 821-5551, evenings.

### SATURDAY-SUNDAY, APRIL 16 & 17--New Mexico Ornithological Society Meeting and Field Trips

The NMOS will hold their annual meeting in Silver City this year. There will be a slide show on April 16 at 8:30 followed by a meeting and presentation of papers until 5 P.M. Lunch will be \$2. The 7 P.M. banquet will be \$6.

Sunday field trips will be to Redrock and the Gila Valley, possibly Cherry Creek. Call Sue Huntington, 831-5755, for more information. For dinner reservations write Bruce Hayward at Route 8, Box 160, Silver City, NM, 88061.

### THURSDAY, APRIL 21 - Regular Meeting

Two UNM biology students will present a dual program:

(1) Luke George will present a slide program of ornithological research in Baja, California.

(2) Nancy Joste will give us inside information about the colorful Acorn Woodpeckers of New Mexico, illustrated with slides.

### FRIDAY, APRIL 22 - Field Trip

Half-day bird walk with Hart Schwarz in lower Embudito Canyon to get acquainted with breeding sparrows, including the Black-Chinned. Meet at 7:30 A.M. near the stile at the entrance of the canyon. From the intersection of Montgomery and Tramway, go east 1/2 mile to Glenwood Hills Blvd., then 1/2 mile north to the stile. Call Hart at 266-1810 for more information.

### SATURDAY-SUNDAY, APRIL 23 & 24 - New Mexico Audubon Council Meeting

The NMAC will meet at 1:00 P.M. in the Visitors Center at the Bosque del Apache NWR. More information should be available on the Randall Davey property

acquisition. Field trip on Sunday morning, meet at 7:00 A.M. at Refuge headquarters. Call Evelyn & George Price (242-6604) or Darwin Miller (265-6361) for more information. All members are welcome at either the meeting or the field trip.

#### SATURDAY, APRIL 30 - Field Trip

Visit Priest Canyon in the southern Manzanos with Darwin Miller. This all-day trip should produce many interesting migrants. Meet at the UNM Physics & Astronomy Building parking lot, Yale & Lomas N.E., at 7:00 A.M. Bring lunch and water. Call Darwin at 265-6361.

#### THURSDAY, MAY 5 - Board Meeting

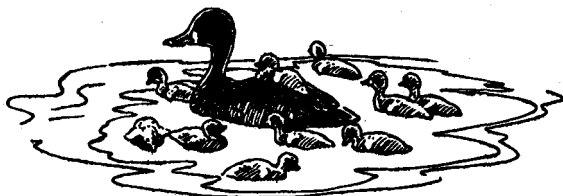
Board meeting at 7:30 P.M. at the home of Sally Douglas, 6325 Colleen, N.E.. All members welcome.

#### SATURDAY, MAY 7 - Field Trip

A very special trip to the Zuni Reservation led by two local experts, John Trochet and Father Terrance Rhodes. Numerous small lakes attract an unusual array of shore and water birds at this time. Meet at the R.V. Campground at Black Rock and allow at least 45 minutes to get there if you spent the night either in Gallup or the El Morro National Monument Campground. Donna Broudy (268-9647) will gladly answer any questions you might have.

#### SUNDAY, MAY 8 - Field Trip

This half-day trip to El Morro can be an extension of the previous day's birding or it can be done separately. Meet leader Arch McCallum at 8:00 A.M. at the Visitor's Center. He knows the Zuni Mts. well and will be able to show us areas in the Monument not ordinarily open to the public. Lewis' Woodpeckers and a variety of raptors are expected. Arch's long-distance number is 862-7503. Donna Broudy can also give you information.



#### SATURDAY, MAY 14 - Spring Bird Count

Albuquerque Annual Bird Count. Many volunteers at all levels of expertise are needed to cover the area adequately. Please call Hart Schwarz (266-1810) if you would like to count birds in the mountains, Dustin Huntington (831-5755) if you could count in the valley.

#### THURSDAY, MAY 19 - Annual Meeting

Annual Meeting of the Central New Mexico Audubon Society at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church. Potluck dinner starts at 6:30 P.M., meeting and election of officers at 7:30 P.M.

The Washburn Award will be presented. Bring a generous portion of your favorite dish and tableware for your own use. Beverages will be provided. Call Hospitality Chairwoman, Evelyn Jones (298-9130), if you can help with the setup, decorations, etc.

The program will be presented by biologist John Spaulding, who will show us slides of his trips to Galapagos.

#### THURSDAY, MAY 19 - Deadline for Burrowing Owl material.

#### THURSDAY-SUNDAY, MAY 19-22 - Cooper Ornithological Meeting

The annual meetings of the Cooper Ornithological Society and the Western Bird-Banding Association will be held jointly on May 19-22, 1983, at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. CNMAS is one of the sponsors of the meeting. The program will include papers, demonstrations of banding techniques, motion pictures, and field trips. Ornithologists from all parts of the country will be in attendance.

CNMAS members are welcome to attend paper sessions free of charge. Field trips, banquet, etc., will need a registration fee. Call Mary Alice Root (277-3411) or Evelyn Price (242-6604) for more information. If you can help with registration/



host activities on May 20 (Friday), please call the above numbers.

#### SATURDAY, MAY 28 - Field Trip

Spend an evening in the Sandias near Waterfall Canyon and maybe beyond. The Poor-Wills should be calling, with Whip-poor-wills and owls being possibilities. Meet by the intersection of Tramway and the Forest Road going up to the Juan Tabo picnic area at 5:00 P.M. and be prepared to stay until 10:00 P.M. Bring flashlights. Leader: Hart Schwarz (266-1810).

#### THURSDAY, JUNE 2 - Annual Board Potluck

Potluck dinner for past and present board members and spouses starts at 6:30 P.M. at the home of Barbara Hussey, 3708 Gen. Chennault N.E. (292-5626). Bring food to share and folding chairs if you have them. Meeting starts at 7:30 P.M.

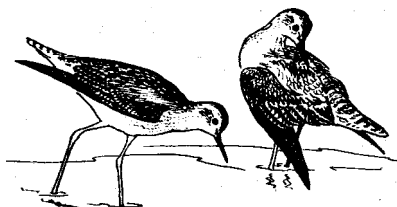
#### FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JUNE 3-5 - Breeding Bird Survey

During the first weekend in June NMOLuZZ conducting its second site survey, this time on Mt. Taylor. The purpose of this effort is to catalog the breeding birds of a particular area, with special emphasis on some of the lesser known species. For more information contact Arch McCallum (1-862-7503).

#### PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

April and May are among the most active months for our chapter.

-The nominating committee will be looking for candidates for officers and committee members. If you have any nominations or would like to help CNMAS in some small way yourself, please call one of the nominating committee members: Edith Johnson (255-0307), Helen Riddell (294-6096), or Hart Schwarz (266-1810).

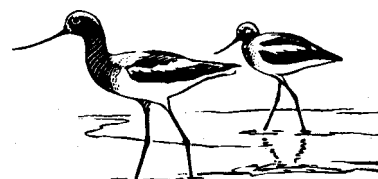


- The Washburn Award may be given to a government employee who has been outstanding in wildlife conservation.
- The annual meeting is planned for May 19. We need help setting up tables, providing cut flowers from gardens for table decorations, and ideas or donations of door prizes. Call Evelyn Jones (298-9130).
- The Spring Bird Count will be in May (see calendar). Call Hart Schwarz for information (266-1810).
- Spring is also the time for extra birding field trips and trail maintenance parties. Sally Douglas (821-8551) has very kindly consented to be our new "Trail Boss" for our adopted trail in the Sandias. Thank you, Sally!
- Also on May 19-22, we are one of the sponsors of the Cooper Ornithological Society meeting being held at UNM. Details in this issue.

I am very unhappy to report that the Gallup Area chapter has disbanded. The money left over in their treasury was donated to us and we have turned it over to the NM Audubon Council's Sanctuary Fund. (Sanctuary Fund donations can be sent to Jim Karo - address and phone number on Page 8). We hope that sometime in the near future the Gallup chapter will again be back!

In March, Rhea Copening, National Audubon Society Southwest Regional Representative, was in Albuquerque to present our March program as well as a field trip leaders workshop at the Rio Grande Nature Center, sponsored by NAS and CNMAS. The workshop was well attended by CNMAS members, teachers, and Nature Center docents who are volunteers helping with activities for the public there. Although it rained much of the day, the participants were still able to get outside for part of the highly useful and informative session.

Mike Brown, assistant director of the center, also attended the workshop. He expressed his appreciation to CNMAS and NAS as well as Rhea for bringing the



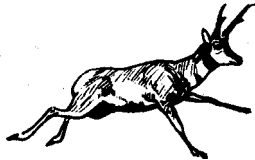
workshop here so the docents at the center could benefit from it. CNMAS thanks Mike and the RGNC staff for allowing us to hold it there!

One last note: It's time to start thinking about summer vacations. The National Audubon Society will hold its biennial convention in Estes Park, Colorado, this summer. See Audubon Magazine for further details.

Barbara Hussey

#### DOOR PRIZES NEEDED

Part of the fun of our annual meeting and potluck supper is the awarding of door prizes. Can you contribute a door prize to add to the fun? Both serious and silly prizes are needed. Call Evelyn Jones (298-9130). Evelyn can also use help with setup, decorations, etc., for the May 19th meeting.



#### BREEDING WARBLERS OF THE SANDIAS

Hart R. Schwarz

Almost everyone finds delight at the sight of a member of the warbler tribe because of its vivid colors and graceful movements. Though here in New Mexico we don't witness the spectacular migration waves of the East, we have our good share of nesting warblers as well as interesting vagrants. Birders, looking for the thrill that only an extreme rarity can provide, usually find it among the warblers. In fact, over a period of time, the extraordinary warblers greatly outnumber the ordinary ones, so that in the Sandias, for example, there have been at least 20 of the former and about 8 of the latter. The state's first and only Louisiana Waterthrush was discovered in Cienega Canyon three years ago and stands as the quintessential example of the "impossible."

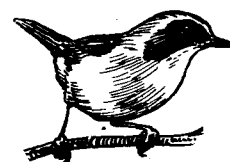
In the following annotated list, however, I am including only the breeding warblers

in the Sandias, briefly touching upon where and when they might be found. A few comments relating to songs will also be added, but since these are often difficult to describe or to transliterate, my interpretation is only one among many possibilities. However, if an attempt is made to attune one's awareness to the pervasive but unobtrusive singing of warblers, it will definitely facilitate the work of finding them in their various niches of concealment. It will also help in picking our rarities when something totally unfamiliar is heard.

1. ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER: Seen from April 18 to October 22, this bird is uncommon in spring and summer, but close to abundant in the foothills during September and early October, when Rabbitbrush becomes a favorite food. During summer the Orange-Crowned is usually found near 9000 feet or higher in brushy habitat such as can be found at Capulin Spring, Osha Spring, and halfway up the Tree Spring trail. The song is fairly easy to recognize, consisting of a feeble but rapid trill, which varies only slightly in pitch towards the end.

2. VIRGINIA'S WARBLER: This abundant warbler shows the least variation in migration times, appearing punctually on April 18 and departing on September 28. It gradually works its way up the mountain until nearly every oak-covered hillside resounds with his joyous but monotonous melody from about 7000 feet all the way up to the crest. Cienega Canyon is as good a place as any to find this warbler, but then that can be said about almost any other location in the Sandias. The song is basically two-parted and may be rendered as "CLEE-CLEE-CLEE-CLÚ-CLÚ-CLÚ," with the second half usually lower in pitch, but maintaining an even tempo.

3. YELLOW-RUMPED (AUBUDON'S) WARBLER: This is the only warbler likely to be found in New Mexico in the winter, but in the Sandias I have records only from April 11 to December 10. Its altitudinal range is similar to that of the preceding species, but it does show a decided pref-



erence for the conifers of the Canadian and Hudsonian zones. One of the best places to observe Audubon's warblers is at Capulin Spring, where they frequently descend onto the hollow log for drinking and bathing. As for the song, its loose and variable structure makes remembering it difficult. Perhaps one could describe it best as a laid-back kind of warble which falters in the end for lack of energy.

4. BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER: This handsome bird of the juniper-pinyon forests occurs from April 18 to September 24. Though widespread in its preferred habitat, it is never common, even becoming rare by September. When seen or heard, the Black-Throated Gray is particularly welcome as the animating spirit of the pinyon woodland where relatively few birds dwell. It can be observed with ease in Hondo Canyon, along the nearby Mystery trail, and, on the west side of the Sandias, along the Piedra Lisa trail. This warbler belongs in the "gifted" category, having at least two very different songs. Perhaps to give the birder a break, the primary song is a cinch to remember & often heard throughout the better part of the day. Transliterated, it might look like this: "tzee-tzee-tzee-tzee'-tzee"; the fourth syllable is accented and stands at the apex of a little crescendo.

5. GRACE'S WARBLER: This bird appears on territory as early as April 13 and is gone again by September 28, though very few individuals are seen during the last month of their sojourn here. It is extremely rare, even in migration, to find a Grace's very far from a Ponderosa pine, so intimately is it associated with this indicator tree of the Transition zone. It must be a brave little bird indeed, returning as early as it does when the chill of winter still lingers in the air and patches of snow still cling to a soggy earth. That is surely the time when an almost forgotten song can cheer the heart that yearns for spring to arrive at last. Usually I look for and find the first Grace's warbler in Cienega Canyon but not before I hear it singing. The song is of two parts and energetically executed. It sounds like this: "chē-ché-ché-chē chi-chi-chi-chi-chi-chi." The first part is somewhat slow

and emphatic--the second much faster and on a higher pitch, though not so fast as to run into a trill.

6. YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: There is at least one record of a chat nesting in the Sandias, but this may have been an isolated occurrence. I have not seen the bird there during the past nine years.

7. MCGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER: I have not yet had an April sighting of this bird in the Sandias. The earliest date so far is May 3 and the latest October 10. During migration in May and September these warblers are fairly numerous wherever scrubby groundcover obtains, but by June they have established themselves on the upper tier of the mountain, usually between 8500 feet and 9500 feet and usually near water. I have had a few summer sightings in places such as Cienega Canyon (7600'), but that is the exception to the rule. Capulin and Osha Springs, on the other hand, provide excellent habitat for this secretive, ground-dwelling species. Initially, the song, "CHAY-CHAY-CHAY CHI-CHI-CHI," can be somewhat confusing because it bears a resemblance to the Virginia's song. However, in the first part the notes have a slight burry quality and the second half usually rises a little in pitch while the tempo remains even.

8. RED-RACED WARBLER: Found nesting in 1982 near Canoncito Spring, this brightly colored warbler is a welcome recent addition to the Sandia list. Previously, the Magdalena Mountains west of Socorro had marked the northern limit of this bird's range. Last year it also honored April 18, the day when many warblers make their first appearance here; it was not seen after July 9, but that particular date may not necessarily signify the approximate time of departure. This spring the bird will be eagerly searched for not only at Canoncito but in other similarly situated canyons which lie between 7000 and 8000 feet. However, only time will tell whether the Red-Faced will increase and multiply or whether it will go the way of the chat. Certainly, hearing the following sounds would be a good sign: "Zwi-Zwi-Zwi (fast) Zwi'-shi (higher) Wee-si."

CNMAS AWARDS SCHOLARSHIP WORTH \$640

Michael Loughrey, teacher at West Mesa High, is the recipient of the 1983 Central New Mexico Audubon Society Teacher Scholarship to the Audubon Ecology Camp in the West.

He will attend the two-week camp this summer in Dubois, Wyoming, where he will participate in seminars, workshops, and field trips on ecology and the environment. Michael's scholarship and the other scholarships we have awarded in the past were made possible from proceeds from the sale of season tickets to our Audubon Wildlife Film Series at Popejoy Hall. Congratulations, Michael!

Audubon's four ecology camps and 13 other workshops and field seminars will be held around the country in the next year. They are open to the public. Costs vary from \$340 to \$790 for the ornithology seminar in Mexico. Information is available at meetings or call 292-5626 for brochure.

AUDUBON SANCTUARY

Randall Davey Sanctuary Update: The open house for Audubon members on March 12 was well attended. The National office has not yet made a final decision to accept this property, but information from Dede Arementrout, Regional Vice President, indicates that the prospects are quite good. We hope that a decision will be made before our April 23 Council meeting. Those of you who would like more information please call Darwin Miller, 265-6361.

NOMINATIONS STILL OPEN

Nominations are now being taken for the following offices: president, vice president, treasurer, corresponding secretary, recording secretary, and director for 1983-87. All terms of office are for one year (except director).

If you would like to nominate someone (including yourself) or would like to serve on the nominating committee, please contact Barbara Hussey (292-5626). Elections will be held on May 19 at the CNMAS annual meeting.

ROSS' RAVINS

Hi folks! It appears that the time has come. "Time for what?" you say. Well, it's the time for several things: for spring migration; for putting out your hummingbird feeders; for reporting unusual sightings (to me, 265-8962); for me to come and pick up casualties (dead or injured birds) of the spring migration (I still have Federal and State permits); for me to write another column; and for me to acknowledge and correct an oversight in my recent article on name changes implemented by AOU Supplement 36, in the July 1982 issue of AUK Magazine.

First, to some of the recent sightings and gossip about birds. On March 14 I had a call in regard to a rumor that there is a wild COMMON CRANE somewhere in New Mexico, and had I heard or seen anything about it? The answer, of course, was no. Since this bird is an Eurasian and African species, its appearance here would indeed be unusual. My first reaction was: if such a bird were indeed here it would have to be an escapee from some zoo or private collection. However, my caller pointed out that there are three or four records of this species in the U.S. east of the Rockies, and one record was in New Mexico. This crane was reported from Chavez County in March 1963. That would probably be at Bitter Lake NWR or somewhere in the Pecos drainage. Dr. Hubbard considers this sighting "probable," although it is listed as hypothetical in his Annotated Checklist of the Birds of New Mexico, 2nd Edition, 1978. Whether this latest rumor proves to be true remains to be seen.

All that makes the HOUSE FINCH at my feeder this morning, which was lemon-yellow where "normal" HOUSE FINCHES are some shade of red or orange, seem very tame indeed. Of course, there are many variations in HOUSE FINCHES, and this bird isn't all that unusual.

We have had some interesting sightings this winter. A single, male GREATER SCAUP has been seen repeatedly at Bosque del Apache NWR, between January 21 and the end of February, as have a group of three (1 male, 2 female) HOODED MERGANSERS. Dustin and Sue Huntington also saw two DUNLIN there on February 6, which were still there when I went down on February 8.

Hart Schwarz reports there has been a flock of 10-12 CEDAR WAXWINGS in the Sandias all winter, as well as CASSIN'S FINCHES, CRISSAL, CURVE-BILLED, and SAGE THRASHERS, BLACK-THROATED, SAGE, BREWER'S and CHIPPING SPARROWS. He says GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROWS have been common this winter, with no less than 11 sightings since November. The nesting pair of GOLDEN EAGLES are still in the Sandias. More unusual was a RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER in the Juan Tabo area early in December, a pair of EASTERN BLUBIRDS at Monticello on February 21, and a WHITE-WINGED type DARK-EYED JUNCO at a feeder there on February 10.

Hart further reports that a pair of WOOD DUCKS were at Shady Lakes February 24-27, and the BLACK PHOEBE returned on February 11, and he saw the first NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW there on February 24.

Dustin and Sue Huntington saw CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPURS behind their home on February 5, as well as as a WOOD DUCK and a GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW near Corrales Bridge on the same date.

In addition to the sightings at Bosque del Apache reported above, there have been one or two GOLDEN EAGLES, one to three BALD EAGLES, and many NORTHERN HARRIERS and RED-TAILED HAWKS there during all of my recent trips. Others of interest include a PECTORAL SANDPIPER, VIRGINIA RAIL, PYRRHULOXIA, VERDIN, BLACK

and SAY'S PHOEBES, WHITE-CROWNED, CLAY-COLORED, BREWER'S, SAVANNAH and SONG SPARROWS. Small numbers of shorebirds, such as LEAST SANDPIPER, COMMON SNIPE, LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER, KILLDEER, GREATER and LESSER YELLOWLEGS were seen at various times between January 24 and February 24. By the later date only three SANDHILL CRANES were seen on the refuge, SNOW GEESE were down to perhaps 5-7,000, several CANADA GEESE and about 11 species of ducks were also observed.

Between February 21 and 27, Katherine Burr of Los Lunas called 4 or 5 times to report sighting 10 WHOOPING CRANES passing north with flocks of SANDHILL CRANES. The last two she saw together at the Jarrales State Refuge near Belen.

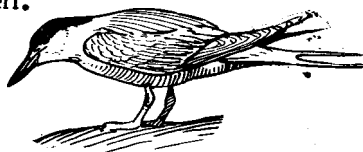
As for the HUMMINGBIRDS, be sure to let me know of your first sightings. BROAD-TAILS should precede BLACK-CHINNED by a few days, and both should be here before the middle of April. Start out gradually presenting only a small amount of syrup, and changing it before it has a chance to sour or ferment. I prefer a four parts water to one part sugar mixture, just brought to a boil and then cooled. It isn't necessary to add red coloring. Once the hummers arrive, more feeders and syrup can be added as needed, but not more than can be used in one or two days, or more than they will use in one day after the weather gets warm. And wash the feeders with plain warm water each time before refilling. Do not use any detergent!

FLASH! I just had a call from Joanne Phillips (March 16, PM), and her HORNED OWLS are back nesting at Shady Lakes again this year. With good luck, she's looking forward to owlets about a week after Easter.

In my recent article on changing the common names of birds, I overlooked three changes. The GREEN HERON is now designated GREEN-BACKED HERON and the LOUISIANA HERON is now designated TRI-COLORED HERON. The American Birding Association did not agree with the American Ornithologists Union to incorporate these changes into their latest checklists. The third, the MEXICAN JAY, is now called the GRAY-BREASTED JAY. After the article was written and submitted I learned that advance reservations for the AOU Checklist of North American Birds, 6th Edition - Annotated, may be ordered from Allen Press, Inc., P.O. Box 368, Lawrence, Kansas, 66044, at \$28 per copy. When the book is published and becomes available for general purchase, the price will be \$35.

That seems to about cover all the "time fors." Present prospects are for good birding during the next couple of months, so get out and enjoy it, and please share your sightings with me, so I can pass them on to all our fellow Auduboners. So long, and good birding.

R.L.T.



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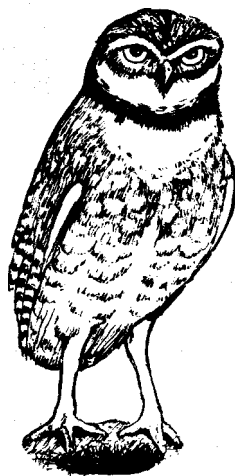
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