

# BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

DECEMBER 1984 - JANUARY 1985

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, DECEMBER 15 - Christmas Bird Count - The Sandia Christmas Count will meet compiler Kay Anderson (881-4545 office or 821-1606 home) at the parking lot of Pete 's Restaurant 1/2 mile north of the junction of State Highways 44 and 14. See inside for full details.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20 - Regular Meeting

Jim Karo spent a month in late summer in southern Kenya, from Lake Victoria to the Indian Ocean. He photographed many animals and birds and will share these slides with us. Many of you know what a skilled photographer Jim is, and we will all look forward to an outstanding program. See Welcome for time and place.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22 - Christmas Bird Count -Chuck Hundertmark (888-7010 office or 897-2818 home) will lead the Bosque del Apache NWR count, which will meet at refuge headquarters at 7 a.m. Please see inside for complete details.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29 - Christmas Bird Count - The Albuquerque Christmas Count will meet at the Corrales Shopping Center at 7:30 a.m. Jim Karo will compile this count, but Dale Stahlacker (345-2827) will be taking calls. Again, please read the Christmas Count article for complete details.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, JANUARY 12 & 13 - NEW MEXICO AUDUBON COUNCIL MEETING AND FIELD TRIP

The NMAC will meet on the campus of NM Tech at 1 p.m. on January 12. EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO ATTEND THE MEETING AND/OR THE FIELD TRIP.

Bosque del Apache NWR will be the destination of the field trip to meet at Refuge Headquarters at 7 a.m. on January 13.

Please call Evelyn Price (831-5028) or any NMAC officer listed on the back page for details. Dr. Rod Drewlen, the "father" of the Whooping Cranes, will be a leader.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 17 - Regular Meeting

The January program will consist of two parts:

1) A "Show & Tell" of slides by Auduboners. Bring your favorites.

2) Theodora "Teddy" Borrego, a teacher in Valle Vista Elementary School, was our Wyoming Audubon Camp scholarship winner for summer '84. She will give a presentation on her session there. Teddy promises to be a very enthusiastic speaker!

#### SUNDAY, JANUARY 20 - Field Trip

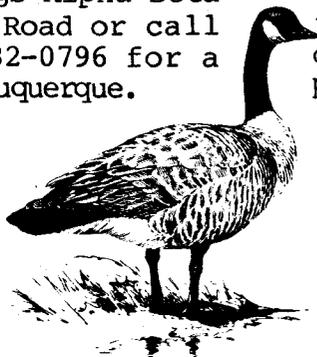
Enjoy a walk down Juan Tabo Gorge with Hart Schwarz for some interesting midwinter birding. Expect to find regulars such as Canyon Wren, Crissal Thrasher, and Rufous-Crowned Sparrow, as well as refugees from higher altitudes such as Cassin's Finch and Golden-crowned Kinglet and perhaps a rarity or two. Meet at the intersection of Tramway Road and FR333 (To Juan Tabo Picnic Area) at 9 a.m. for a 5-hour outing if the weather is pleasant. Call Hart at 266-1810 for more information.

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9 - Field Trip

This field trip will wander the back roads and ditch roads of the Valley as far as Jarales. We will visit the Casa Colorado and Belen State Refuges. The cranes should be staging at these refuges. We will also visit the Isleta marsh and a ditch road or two. Meet for breakfast/lunch/coffee at the Valley Cafe, 7715 Broadway, S.E., at 11 a.m. Call leaders Evelyn and George Price at 831-5028 for more information.

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16 - Field Trip

Join the Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society for a trip to Santa Fe River Nature area and Cochiti Lake. This is a good area for Bald Eagles. 25 were seen last year. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Skaggs-Alpha Beta parking lot on Cerrillos Road or call leader Pat Insley at 1-982-0796 for a meeting place closer to Albuquerque.



#### PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Recently, I received a phone call from T or C. It seems several people are concerned that the Bureau of Reclamation wants to dig a channel in the Rio Grande at T or C. I have been told this channel would destroy the wildlife habitats on both sides of the river; I will keep Audubon informed. For more information, please call.

Our wildlife films have started again, and as usual they are excellent. However, we still do not have a person willing to fill the position now held by Edith Johnson. Edith has been the director of the Wildlife Film Committee for several years and now wishes to step down. Edith is a dedicated volunteer for Audubon and has done an outstanding job organizing the film shows. Now she needs a rest. If you are interested in this position, please contact me at 888-4661.

The Central New Mexico Audubon Society will cease to exist if people don't volunteer. No one can expect the few dedicated members to continually volunteer year after year while the rest of the membership does nothing but pay dues and watch slide shows. You might find this offensive; however, the lack of response by Audubon members on conservation issues, letters to authorities, volunteering, etc., I have found offensive. The new year is around the corner, and don't you think we all could make a few New Year's resolutions?

—John V. Brown

#### CHRISTMAS COUNT SCHEDULE

As you may remember, the dates for the three Christmas Bird Counts sponsored by the CNMAS were published in the last OWL so as to give all of you plenty of time to plan them into your busy holiday schedules. Now that you are all raring to start counting, we will fill in the details on how, when, and where to participate.

First up will be the Sandia Mountains Count on December 15th. This count circle is centered at San Antonito (near the junction of State Roads 44 and 14) and includes most of Sandia Mountain and surrounding areas, including plains, foothills, and riparian areas. Those eager for an early start should meet Kay Anderson at the parking lot of "Pete's Home of the Halfbreed" (1/2 mile north of the above-mentioned junction) at 6:30 a.m. Those less eager for a cold morning start or wishing to cover areas far from the count center should make other arrangements with Kay (office, 881-4545; home, 821-1606). A post-count "Compilation Party" is planned for the evening so that we can compare "Notes." Contact Kay for time and place.

The Bosque del Apache NWR count will be on December 22nd. Counters will meet at the refuge headquarters (count circle center) at 7 a.m. However, some of the field teams will be organized prior to count day, so it would be best to contact Chuck Hundertmark (home, 897-2818; office, 888-7010) early so that he can plan ahead. Perhaps we'll compare totals and assimilate the species list over Owl Burgers!!

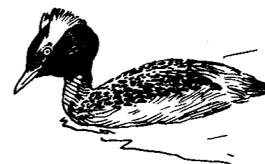
The final count will be the Albuquerque Count on December 29th. Final team assignments will be made at Corrales Shopping Center (NW corner of Coors and Corrales Roads NW) at 7:30 a.m. Since compiler Jim Karo will be out of state that weekend, I will be coordinating field teams. I also hope to have coverage of the major areas planned before count day, so contact me (345-2827) ahead of time, if possible. If you have a favorite area you want to cover, let me know early. I am actively seeking a person or persons willing to locate and count Crows as they leave or return to roosts along the Rio Grande. Special "prizes" are also offered for "staked out" Scaled Quail as well as for any other hard-to-get species! Do some precount scouting to work off that Christmas dinner! Those interested in a preliminary species total will also be

meeting that evening at a yet to be determined time and place.

Now for some of the final logistical information. The count fee has been raised this year to \$3.00. Although there has been a long and ongoing "discussion" on the right or wrong of being charged to birdwatch, this is now standard procedure and a necessity if the counts are to be published each year. And after all, it costs more than that to see a movie, most of which are not nearly as entertaining as a day of birding. So please have your money ready when meeting with the Compiler or their surrogate. The fee is required of all participants, even young people who are sometimes quasi-counters. The only exception is for feeder watchers (and feeder watchers only) who do not wish to have their names published in American Birds. Finally, we are encouraging participation by all CNMAS members and friends, whether for all or part of the day. But it is important that you either meet with the Compilers at the appointed time or speak with them prior to the start of the count so that they may fully coordinate coverage of the count area. Otherwise, they will have an impossible task of determining where overlap occurred, and your effort may be for naught. Let's make this year's Christmas Bird Counts fun for everyone.  
--Dale Stahlecker

#### FALL HAWK MIGRATION COUNT IN THE MANZANOS

Although I had hoped for more complete coverage at the 9200-foot Manzano lookout (near Capilla Peak) this fall, we did manage a count comparable to 1983: 822 hawks of 14 species in 81 hours (18 days) between 3 September and 14 October, for an average of 10.2 hawks per hour. As usual, small accipiters (264 Sharpshins and 208 Cooper's) accounted for 2/3 of the migrants. Kestrel numbers were up from last year (105 versus 64), probably due to better September coverage this fall. Red-tails (63), Golden Eagles (26), and Turkey Vultures (17) were observed in similar numbers to 1983. Local Prairie Falcons may have caused an



exaggerated count of migrants (18 were noted).

Unusual species in this fall's count included 8 Northern Harriers; 5 Osprey (8, 15, & 25 Sept.); 4 Swainson's Hawks (3, 15, and 22 Sept.); 3 Goshawks (25 Sept.; 6 and 13 Oct.); 1 Ferruginous Hawk and 1 adult male Merlin (13 Oct.); 1 adult Peregrine Falcon (22 Sept.); and 17 Sandhill Cranes!

Wayne Gueswell of the Fish and Wildlife Service made a most unusual observation of Swainson's Hawks this fall: On 13-14 October, he estimated 75 to 100 of the birds were sitting around hunting in a meadow at 10,500 feet 30 miles west of Espanola, off Highway 44.

Migrant flights did not really begin in earnest until 20 September, when Dale Stahlecker, Pat Johnson, and Shirley Kendall recorded 15 hawks per hour, including a total of 69 accipiters. Paul Steel documented the "big day" on 1 Oct.: 126 raptors of 7 species, including 101 accipiters. (Last fall's "big day" in the Manzanos was unbelievable: 250 hawks of 12 species, including 200 accipiters, in 7 hours on 16 October.)

Three formal group field trips were made to the lookout: Santa Fe Audubon on 9 September; the New Mexico Natural History Foundation on 16 September; and the Nature Conservancy on 13 October. Several individuals were a great help this fall, including John and Lisa Daly, Gary Grabowski, Bruce Halstead, Pat Johnson, Dale Stahlecker, and Paul Steel. Thank you!

I shall conclude with a puzzling observation: Where do all the Vultures migrate in the fall? The spring 1984 Sandia count yielded 1.6 Vultures per hour and made up 23 percent of the total count of 1,650 raptors. Yet each fall in the Manzanos, average figures are 0.2/per hour, at 2 percent of the total raptor count. What goes north must go south . . . somewhere! Where?

--Steve Hoffman

FIELD TRIP REPORT - BOSQUE DEL APACHE NWR  
September 21 & 22, 1984

According to the Refuge manager, most of the ponds had been drained and would not be flooded until later this fall. This was to minimize the risk of botulism, which was present last year. As a result, only six people attended the trip. Among them was Dr. John W. Hawley, Senior Environmental Geologist of the N.M. Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources, who showed us the area in which the Zia Steel Co. is proposing to build an iron smelting plant. This is directly in the flyway of the Crane and Snow Goose migration, and would almost certainly wreak havoc with the Whooping Crane repopulation experiment, as well as having deleterious effects on the wildlife refuges in the area (Bosque del Apache and La Joya). Please support our efforts to prevent this from happening. You may write to Senators Domenici and Bingaman, U.S. Senate, Washington D.C. 20510; and to Rep. Lujan, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.

67 species of birds were seen during the two days, as well as three deer and a coyote.

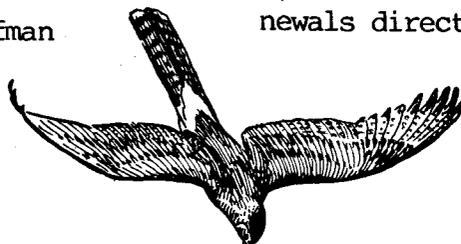
--William Stone

CNMAS GOES COMPUTER

You may have noticed that your mailing label is now in a different format. Our membership list is now computerized. The mailing labels are printed directly from the membership list. We hope the new system will serve our members better. If you have any problems with wrong addresses or of not receiving the Burrowing Owl, call Lew Helm, membership chairman, at 821-8586.

Here are some hints on what you can do to insure receiving the Audubon Magazine, the Burrowing Owl, special announcements, and of course, continued membership in CNMAS:

a) Renew membership promptly. Send renewals directly to the National Audubon



Society, Membership Data Center. (CNMAS is notified automatically.)

b) Change of addresses. Send changes directly to the National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center (CNMAS is notified automatically.)

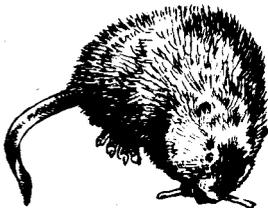
The address of the Membership Data Center is:  
P.O. Box 2664  
Boulder, Colorado 80321

### THE BOTTLE BILL: We Shall Return!

As the 1985 legislative session approaches, our parks, roadsides, and mountains are still littered with cans and bottles. Many of the junk is still where it lay in 1971 when the bottle bill was first introduced in the legislature. Will this be the year when our Senators and Representatives finally wise up and represent us on this issue?

As many of you know, the bottle bill is a proposed law which would place a deposit of at least 5 cents on all beer and soft drink cans and bottles sold in New Mexico. The deposit works as an incentive to bring the containers back to the store and prevents littering.

In the nine states that have the bottle bill, there has been a tremendous reduction in beverage container litter and litter in general (see graph). Solid waste is reduced by up to 6%, which reduces the need for landfills; and energy and natural resources are preserved as recycling approaches 95%. Many people don't realize that the bottle bill also saves tax dollars (by reducing the need for litter cleanup) and creates jobs (over 4000 net jobs were gained in Michigan). Most importantly, however, the bottle bill instills an ethic of conservation that extends to other areas of our throwaway society. The bottle bill can help change the attitude of New Mexicans towards their resources and the land.



The bottle bill is tremendously popular in the states that have it, and surveys in New Mexico show that over 80% of New Mexicans are in favor of the bottle bill. The only reason that the bottle bill is not law is the opposition of the beverage industry and their inordinate power in the legislature.

The beverage companies claim that a deposit recycling system is too expensive and that it would force them to raise their prices drastically. The experience in other states, however, shows that beverage companies can make even greater profits in a recycling system that provides the containers much more inexpensively than manufacturing cans and bottles from raw materials. In actuality, the beverage industry is afraid of the effect the bottle bill will have on competition (i.e., it gives small companies a better chance to compete).

Some small retailers also oppose the bill because they are required to take back the containers, but the new bottle bill reimburses retailers 2 cents for each container they take back. Those willing to learn about the bottle bill are now supporting its passage.

In 1983 the bottle bill came only four votes short of passage. You can help get it passed this year. New Mexico Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) is coordinating a campaign to lobby for the bill. You can help by:

1. Contacting PIRG at 277-2758 to help lobby your legislators or work on the media and education campaign.
2. Sending a financial contribution to help pay for a full-time lobbyist in Santa Fe (checks to PIRG, Box 66 SUB-UNM, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131).
3. Organizing your friends, neighbors, and co-workers to educate the legislature. Information packets are available from PIRG.



We can do what citizens have done from Oregon to Maine. A bottle bill is one of the best things we can do to protect our natural environment and improve our outdoor experiences. Help today!

--Keith Moheban

**IMPACTS ON LITTER IN DEPOSIT LAW STATES**

STATE	SOURCE	REDUCTION OF BEVERAGE CONTAINER LITTER	TOTAL LITTER REDUCTION BY VOLUME
Oregon	Oregon Highway Division (1974)	83%	47%
Vermont	Department of Highways (1975)	76%	35%
Maine	Department of Conservation (1980)	86%	40%
Michigan	Department of Transportation (1979)	80%	41%
Iowa	Department of Transportation (1980)	79%	61%
Massachusetts	Dept of Public Works (1984)		30-35% (estimated)

**ROSS' RAVIN'S**  
By Ross L. Teuber

Hi Folks! Where has this year gone? It hardly seems possible that 1984 is nearly over. Surely it started only a few days ago.

Probably the most exciting recent bird report was of a RUDDY GROUND DOVE discovered by Kevin and Barry Zimmer at Owens Farm about 3/4 mile inside the New Mexico state line from El Paso. This Mexican bird was seen and photographed on October 29 and 31. Several people looked, but only a few were successful in spotting it amid a flock of INCA DOVES. Benton Basham, the country's top birder in 1983, traveled all the way from Tennessee and searched for seven hours, but was unsuccessful in finding it. This is the first documented record of this species in New Mexico!

Other interesting sightings include: At BDA on September 25, good numbers of both DOUBLE-CRESTED and OLIVACEOUS CORMORANTS, BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS, 14-15 WHITE-FACED IBIS, and 4 CATTLE EGRETS (in a

field north of the refuge); 5 early SNOW GEESE, unusually large number of immature (black-headed) TURKEY VULTURES among the adults, COOPER'S and SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS, a stragglng SWAINSON'S HAWK, and numerous NORTHERN HARRIERS. Also present were 2 RING-BILLED GULLS, 2 FORSTERS TERNS, a late WESTERN KINGBIRD, BLACK and SAY'S PHOEBES, and a pair of VERMILION FLYCATCHERS; TREE, NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED, BARN, and CLIFF SWALLOWS; NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRDS, a late COMMON YELLOW-THROAT, many YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRDS and BLUE GROSBEAKS (all females); and VESPER, LARK, SAGE, CHIPPING, BREWERS, WHITE-CROWNED, and SONG SPARROWS.

Late HUMMINGBIRD reports included many RUFIOUS at Pat Turner's on October 3. My last female BLACK-CHINNED was at the feeder on October 2.

Many interesting reports have come in from widely scattered locations. Thanks to all of you who have called to share sightings. In late September, on several occasions Paul Steel saw an albino HOUSE SPARROW in San Mateo Park. On September 30, Rio Grande Bird Research, Inc., netted and banded an immature ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK and 2 LINCOLNS SPARROWS at the Rio Grande Nature Center. On Oct. 6, Pat Basham had YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT, YELLOW-RUMPED, WILSON'S and ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS in her yard, as well as a HERMIT THRUSH. There was also a HERMIT THRUSH in my yard November 1-3. On Nov. 6 or 7 Bruce Halstead found an AMERICAN DIPPER in Embudito Canyon. Pat Basham found a red phase FOX SPARROW in Water Canyon on October 9. While doing the fall road count of hawks in the Estancia Valley, Paul Steel and I were surprised to discover a family (male, female, and 4 young) of WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKERS in the pinyon-juniper area near the rest area between Willard and Cedarvale. In the same area were numerous SAGE THRASHERS, and in the little park at the north edge of Corona were a GRAY CATBIRD, LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER, YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, BUSHTITS, PLAIN TITMOUSE; and on the ridge just above Corona, a nice flock of PINYON JAYS.



On the field trip at the New Mexico Audubon Council meeting in Roswell, one of the most exciting sightings were 5 OSPREY all at one time, 3 on the ground and 2 in the air. Also present at Bitter Lake were AMERICAN AVOCETS, COMMON SNIPE, WHITE-FACED IBIS, GREAT EGRET, PRAIRIE FALCON, FORSTERS TERN, and 3 LEAST SANDPIPERS. Incidentally, those of you who passed up the opportunity to attend that meeting missed one of the best we've ever had!

Still more sightings include STELLER'S JAYS and an HEPATIC TANAGER at Shady Lakes on October 29. The HEPATIC was still there, or back, on November 2. About the same time, Nancy Pasternak saw an EARED GREBE in the pond at Sandia Park and a BROWN CREEPER at Capulin Spring. On October 26 there were 7 WESTERN GREBES, 3 light phase (Clark's) and 4 dark phase, at BDA. Just north of Lemitar we saw two rather late lingering BARN SWALLOWS. On the 1st of November I saw a BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE while walking in the NE Heights, an unusual sight there. On the 3rd, there was a RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET in the same area.

On the 8th, Paul Steel and I went to the Sandia Crest and were pleased to find 2 NORTHERN GOSHAWKS, 2 small flocks of PINE GROSBEAKS, and 2 RED CROSSBILLS. Other birds seen included STELLER'S, SCRUB, and PINYON JAYS; COMMON RAVENS and AMERICAN CROWS, and both WHITE-BREASTED and RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES. Four days later at BDA, we saw many RED-TAILED HAWKS, including 3 dark phase individuals. There were also a single CATTLE EGRET, 4 BONAPARTE'S GULLS and 3 RING-BILLED GULLS, a MARSH WREN; and in Pat Basham's yard, A TENNESSEE WARBLER. During the 13-15 of November at the Las Vegas NWR, Paul saw a female RED-BREASTED MERGANSER, 8-9 GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE, both HOODED and COMMON MERGANSERS, BALD and GOLDEN EAGLES, and a good variety of other waterfowl.

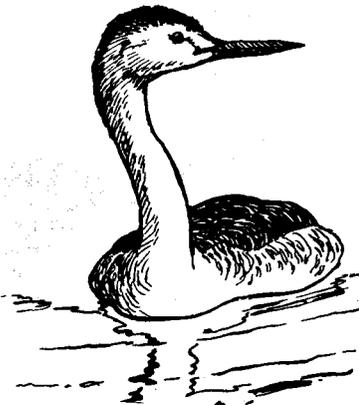
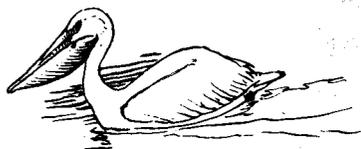
Finally, Evelyn Blisard called to report PINE GROSBEAKS and CLARK'S NUTCRACKERS.

It looks like this may be a good winter to see the less frequent visitors to the Sandias. Who will be the first to report the arrival of ROSY FINCHES? Call me at 265-8962.

The long-awaited NEW MEXICO BIRD FINDING GUIDE is finally off the press and in our hands. Burt Lewis, Secretary of NMOS, is currently mailing out prepublication purchases. If you haven't received your copy yet, you should have it within the next few days. In my opinion, this book is every bit as good, if not better, than the well-known Jim Lane Bird Finding Guides. I have on hand a small supply of these books for anyone who didn't get around to ordering one at prepublication price. The current price is \$6 plus \$1 for shipping and handling. By getting one from me, at home (1612 Kentucky NE) or at an Audubon meeting, you can save the shipping and handling charge. However, I will not be at the December meeting. I'll be in California (I hope) counting birds on one or more of their CBCs. With good luck, the new New Mexico Audubon Council Field Checklist of New Mexico Birds should be off the press in 30-60 days. It will list 449 species verified in New Mexico, plus 47 races or color recognizable phases. Names conform to the AOU Checklist of North American Birds, Sixth Edition, 1983, and are coded to show relative frequency of occurrence. It should prove quite helpful in the field.

That's enough (probably too much) bird chatter and reading about birds for this time. How about getting up out of your easy chair and getting out into the field to see some of these sights for yourselves? Then when you get back, give me a call (265-8962) so we can share it with the armchair birders next time. Here's wishing you the best of luck, Happy Holidays, and good birding. So long.

--R.L.T.



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**RARE BIRD ALERT—Report sightings to: 265-8962,  
292-5626, or 898-2568**

**CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
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Evelyn and George Price

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