

# BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

APRIL - MAY 1985

## 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.

### THURSDAY, APRIL 18 - Regular Meeting

Carla and Ross Ward will present a slide show, "Australian Adventure." This couple from Sandia Park spent December 1984 traveling Australia and Tasmania. They met her brother there, who is sailing on his sailboat around the world! They bought a car and traveled "all over." Don't miss this exciting program. See Welcome paragraph for time and place.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, April 20 & 21 - New Mexico Ornithological Meeting, Las Cruces, New Mexico:

Saturday, April 20 - A.M., Field trips. P.M., Meetings and papers, dinner at an East Indian restaurant.

Sunday, April 21 - Field trip to Percha Dam.

Dinner reservations due by April 15. Call Dustin or Sue Huntington (836-4109) or Ross Teuber (265-8962) for more information.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 27 - Field Trip

Join the Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society for a trip to the Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge. Meet at 9 A.M. at Old Round House on US 85 on west side of Las Vegas. Leader: Erika Hesse (454-0064). CAR POOL from Santa Fe, meet at 7:30 on the east side of the PERA parking lot on Paseo de Peralta, across the street from the Fenn Gallery.

### SUNDAY, APRIL 28 - Wildlife Film

Tom Stirling will present Quebec Whales and the wildlife of the tundras and boreal forests of Labrador. Call Craig Andrews (881-9387) for ticket information. 7:30 P.M., Popejoy Hall.

### SATURDAY & SUNDAY, May 4 & 5 - 2nd Annual Big Bird Bash

A complete schedule on orange sheet is included in this newsletter.

### SUNDAY, MAY 12 - Albuquerque Spring Bird Count

We need lots of participants for this annual event. Meet Dustin and Sue Huntington (836-4109) at the Corrales Shopping Center at 7 A.M. if you would like to count in the Valley.

If you prefer the Sandias, Hart Schwarz (266-1810) will meet you in the Mountain View Motel parking lot, also at 7 A.M.

THURSDAY, MAY 16 - Annual Meeting and Pot Luck Supper

6:30 - Pot Luck Supper ( see inside for details.)

7:30 - Meeting and program. Scott Brown will show us more about the "Project Wild" program of the NM State Game & Fish Department. St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, Copper and Jefferson, Northeast.

SATURDAY, MAY 18 - Field Trip

Mary Lou Arthur will lead a leisurely half-day walk to Three Gun Springs. Curve-billed and Crissal Thrashers, Bewick's Wrens, Scott's Orioles, and Black-Chinned Sparrows are just some of the birds you will probably see. Call Mary Lou at 256-7359 for more information. Meet at Mt. View parking lot at 6:30 A.M.

SATURDAY, MAY 25 - Field Trip

Bandelier National Monument is the destination of the Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society. Meet at 8 A.M. at Monument Headquarters. Frijoles Canyon is lovely in the spring and usually very "birdy" -- warblers, tanagers, vireos, etc. Leader: Pat Insley (982-0796). CAR POOL from Santa Fe: Meet at 7 A.M. at DeVargas Mall (north end of parking lot).

SUNDAY, MAY 26 - Field Trip

Let Arch McCallum (262-0874 in Albuquerque) be your guide in his Zuni Mt. study area. Some of the nesting birds found there but not in the Albuquerque region include Savannah Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow, and Gray Flycatcher.

Meet Arch in the Zunis at 9 A.M., allowing about 2 1/2 hours' driving time. Here are the directions: Destination, Cottonwood Gulch, base camp of a summer expedition camp, south of Thoreau. Drive west on I-40, 110 miles. Leave I-40 at Thoreau exit (Exit 53). You will come to a stop sign at the exit road. Turn left. After 1/4 mile, you will come to another stop sign (4-way). A Chevron station will be on your right. Turn left, go under I-40. Continue on paved road about 2 miles through open country, another 3

miles up a shallow canyon, and 2 more miles down into Las Tusas Valley. In this valley you will pass on your right a huge stack of pinon logs. 6.5 to 7.0 miles from the Thoreau exit you will go over a little rise (with a 25 MPH sign) and down a short grade to a small bridge over a minuscule creek, which is lined intermittently with cottonwoods. Just beyond the bridge, the road curves sharply left. No more than 50 meters from the bridge are a black mailbox and a driveway to the left. That driveway will take you to an adobe house which is visible from the road. THAT'S IT! (The paved road leads from Thoreau to the south side of Blue-water Lake. Don't be misled by a sign on I-40 to Blue Water Lake State Park. Exit at Thoreau.) Telephone at the house in the Zunis is 862-7503. Bring lunch and water.

NEW POLICY - 20-MINUTE MEETING

In order to give more emphasis to our fine programs, the CNMAS Board of Directors has instituted a policy of limiting the regular meetings to 20 minutes. Any single announcement will be limited to three minutes. It is hoped the membership will enjoy the meetings and programs more because of the new policy. As a well-known New Mexico educator once said, "The mind can absorb only what the seat can endure."

We must emphasize that there is no intention of shutting members out of decisions and debates important to the Society. All members have always and will continue to be welcome at all board meetings. The phone tree (see last issue of the OWL) will continue to keep us informed. Your input is welcome and will be carefully considered at any time. Just talk to anyone listed in the Directory on the back page.

In other actions, the Board:

- 1) Registered a protest against the proposed steel mill near Socorro.
- 2) Elected to donate money to the Nature Conservancy for the Corrales Bosque and other New Mexico projects.

- 3) Will send three APS teachers to the Audubon Camp of the West.
- 4) Will send 20 underprivileged children to the APS Summer Camp in the Jemez Mts.
- 5) Will donate subscriptions to the Audubon Magazine to the local high schools.

#### CNMAS CELEBRATES 14th ANNIVERSARY WITH POT LUCK

Come to the 14th Annual Meeting on May 16 at 6:30 at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church. Bring plates, utensils, and a generous pot luck dish. Drinks will be provided.

Barbara Hussey will be Pot Luck Chairman. Give her a call (292-5626) to let her know that you can help set up before the supper.

#### AUDUBON MAGAZINES NEEDED

Running out of room to store your Audubon magazines? The chapter can use your donations for recruitment and publicity. Please call Marge Carrick (266-0191) or bring the magazines to a meeting.

#### DOOR PRIZES NEEDED

We need your "white elephants" as door prizes for our annual meeting. The door prize giveaway always adds to the fun. Call Barbara Hussey (292-5626) if you have something (serious or silly) to donate.

#### ELECTIONS TO BE HELD AT ANNUAL MEETING

The May meeting brings election of officers to CNMAS. If you have a suggestion for an officer, call any member of the Nominating Committee: Lew Helm (821-8586), Edith Johnson (255-0307) or Evelyn Price (831-5028). Nominations may also be made from the floor.

#### AGRICULTURAL LAND LOSSES ASTOUNDING!!

If the United States were losing its national defense capability at one-thousandth of the rate it is losing its food-producing ability, there would be near panic at all levels of government and immediate action to solve the problem. But because food supplies are adequate now, there apparently is not enough concern in government to make the hard decisions to solve the country's most serious and basic problem: losing the ability to feed itself.

"Every hour, with 200 new Americans to feed, the U.S. loses 220 acres of our food-growing farmlands to townhouses, shopping centers and coal mines. And every day, 26 square miles of U.S. topsoil wash and blow away from the farmland that is left. At that rate, it could take less than 100 years for us to lose every single acre of cropland now farmed in the U.S." That startling statement highlights a new book by soil conservationist R. Neil Sampson titled FARMLAND OR WASTELAND: A TIME TO CHOOSE (available for \$16.95 from Rodale Books).

As a barometer of farmland conditions, wildlife has been sounding the alarm for more than a decade. Wildlife populations on the nation's farms and ranches have been declining dramatically. Efforts by wildlife managers to stem the tide have been largely fruitless. But now experts are able to foresee the time when people as well as wild animals will pay the terrible price for mining and degrading once abundant, productive lands.



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RESCUE WILDLIFE? THINK CAREFULLY

It will, unfortunately, happen again this year. A well-intentioned person will "rescue" a young wild creature from the wild, take it home, and try to care for it. The bird or animal may die. And chances are it needed no "rescue" in the first place, according to Department of Game and Fish biologists.

Young birds must leave their nest when learning to fly, and they need no human interference in most cases. You may return a fallen baby bird to its nest--parents will not disclaim it after you've handled it--but a fledgling with developing feathers will probably try to fly again. If a bird is in the middle of a road or there is a cat around, move him underneath a bush and go away. If the cat is yours, keep him inside for a couple of days. The bird's parents may be nearby, hunting for food or hiding until you leave.

Antelope fawns may appear helpless, but their mother may be only a short distance away. A mistakenly "rescued" fawn may be returned to the wild within about one day, and its mother may resume caring for it. Without the doe's special milk, the fawn would probably sicken and die. Antelope fawns are generally born in late May and early June.

Bear cubs are already up and about. Elk calves arrive in June. Deer fawns are born in early July, and may often be encountered while walking in prime habitat cover--grass, mountain mahogany, and river bottom areas.

Baby rabbits are alone in their nest most of the time, while the mother is foraging for food or resting. If you find a disturbed nest, cover it with grass as best you can, and leave it alone. If you have to chase a baby rabbit to catch it, it is not an orphan.

Many young creatures carry diseases, such as rabies or plague-carrying fleas. Skunks, coyotes, foxes, and raccoons especially carry rabies and may not show symptoms.

In general, an animal is not orphaned if its eyes are open and it is not visibly injured; it runs from you or defends itself; it is in a natural setting.

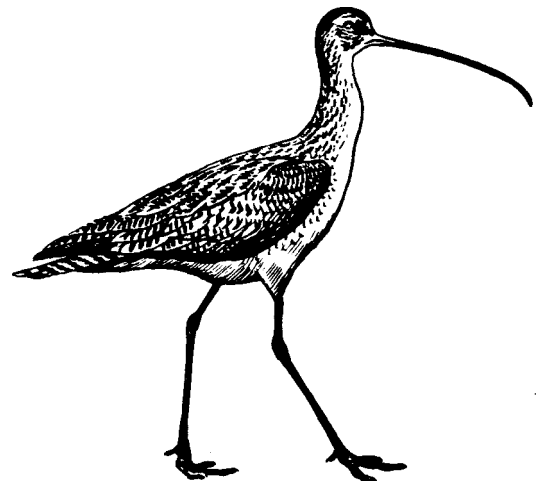
However, in a small percentage of cases, an animal may be in distress. A storm may have blown a bird nest down; you may come

simplest and most realistic thing to do is to walk away. In nature, many babies will not survive until the next season. You may only prolong the inevitable by trying to feed them at home, where their diet may be improper and where they may become dehydrated or sicker. They may never be able to readjust to the natural world, even if they survive with your help.

If you aid any migratory bird, the federal government requires you to have a migratory bird permit. [Editor's note: Please see Ross' Ravin's for more on this subject.] You cannot legally keep a dead hawk or owl that you find by the side of the road. You may contact your local state conservation officer or appropriate U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agent if you really think the situation warrants. Don't render assistance until you know what you are doing.

Normally, to leave the bird or animal alone is the best course to follow. Reptiles can take care of themselves once they are born, so they don't benefit from being taken to your home, either. It's been estimated that 75 percent of all "orphans" in the wild were not orphans at all. If you should come across a rescue situation, think carefully about how much assistance you will really be providing.

--By the New Mexico State  
Game & Fish Department





### The Owl

once on a time there was a owl  
 The owl live in old oak tree in make  
 a nest and some Owl is in the dug  
 ground and make a nest and  
 live in there no cold I think it very  
 warm The owl is two great eyes  
 he see every thing and he have  
 two wings, make a fly and  
 he have one tail and he can  
 said whoo whoo That is all talk  
 about the owl

John Bull walks Behind

ROSS' RAVIN'S  
 By Ross L. Teuber

Hi Folks! Spring is in the air. Trees, shrubs, and bulbs are bursting with new life. Each day as I walk around the neighborhood, I see more flowers coming into full bloom, buds on the fruit trees are showing color, and the brown grass of winter is sporting green spots for St. Patrick's Day. To a birder this indicates only one thing: spring migration is underway. So on we'll be seeing hundreds of our transient avian friends, whose bright colors and gurgling songs we've been impatiently awaiting for many weeks. The bulk of our wintering water-

fowl have left in spring migration. I look forward to many calls (265-8962) sharing those exciting spring sightings with me and the readers of this column.

A big THANK YOU to all of you who called to report seeing WHOOPING CRANES among the SANDHILLS heading northward to the San Luis Valley, Colorado, and eventually to Gray's Lake, Idaho. Most of the calls came from the Corrales area. Wendy Osorno called three times, twice in a single afternoon, to report WHOOPERS passing over Old Town. on Sunday, March 3, only five WHOOPING CRANES remained at Bosque del Apache, and by Tuesday, March 5, it was down to three. No reports have come to me since March 6.

For those of you whose interest extends beyond the confines of New Mexico, or who just enjoy bird books with lots of excellent pictures, the January-February issue of NEBRASKALand Magazine (Vol. 63/No. 1/Jan-Feb 1985) was a special issue, devoted exclusively to birds! Not only is it filled with many full-color photos, but there are a score of interesting writeups about these birds and their place in the scheme of nature in Nebraska. Single copies of this issue can be purchased from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, P.O. Box 30370, Lincoln, NE, 68503 for \$6.00. It can also be obtained as a part of a one-year subscription to NEBRASKALand Magazine at \$9.50, from the same address. Or if you are a collector of bird checklists, there is one for Nebraska, listing over 400 species (annotated), available from the same source for 50¢ each.

Also, in recognition of the Audubon Bicentennial, the front cover and about 25 pages of text in the April 1985 issue of Natural History (American Museum of Natural History) are devoted to John J. Audubon, his works and travels. You might enjoy getting a copy and reading three very interesting articles.

Speaking of checklists, the new Birds of New Mexico Field Checklist is off the press and awaiting distribution. Where, when, and how they may be obtained awaits a determination by the New Mexico Audubon Council. In the meantime they are sitting

in my den in three big boxes. The list consists of 449 species whose occurrence in New Mexico has been verified. It also lists an additional 47 races or color phases which can be recognized in the field. It will serve as the basis for reporting unusual sightings to the Central New Mexico Rare Bird Alert. So far, returns of the questionnaire for the Rare Bird Alert have been slow. If you wish to be included on the telephone network for rare bird reports, whether you are currently on it or not, please return the questionnaire from the February-March Burrowing Owl. If no questionnaire is received, it will be assumed that you are no longer interested in being included. People outside the Albuquerque telephone calling area should indicate whether they are willing to accept collect calls for rare bird reports.

Now for the good stuff! Here are the bird sightings that have been reported. Late January reports include two DARK-EYED (SLATE-COLORED) JUNCOS at Sandia Park on January 18; a GOSHAWK in lower Juan Tabo on the 19th; two BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHERS found on the Sevilleta NWR on the 22nd while censusing birds with Refuge Manager Ted Stans. Nedra Randall called on the 23rd to report a flock of CEDAR WAXWINGS in her yard in the NE Heights. Paul Steel and I were pleased to find and have a good, close-range look at a NORTHERN SHRIKE at Corona in the course of a winter road count of hawks in the Estancia Valley, on January 28. On the 29th Pat Basham and I found a GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE on the south marsh at Bosque del Apache. The same day we observed a partial albino SANDHILL CRANE on the north end of the refuge. Some of you have probably seen this bird. It is known to refuge personnel and wears a wide, yellow, plastic collar. As I headed home from Socorro that day, a LEWIS WOODPECKER was sighted near the extreme south limit of the range for this species in the state. The last day of January, Diana Kinney called to tell of two YELLOW-RUMPED (AUDUBON) WARBLERS in her yard with a

flock of DARK-EYED JUNCOS. Earlier she'd had RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS and STELLER'S JAYS. We don't see many STELLER'S in residential Albuquerque.

Since the first of February, and still present on March 15 have been one or two pair of CASSIN'S FINCHES at my feeder, along with a jillion or so HOUSE SPARROWS and many HOUSE FINCHES. Near the end of February there was a single WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW, and from time to time there have been a few DARK-EYED JUNCOS, including OREGON, GRAY-HEADED, and on March 16 an individual of the SLATE-COLORED race. Paul Steel had a SLATE-COLORED in his yard on March 10. He lives only about a mile from here; could this be the same bird?

Joanne Phillips called on February 4 to report her HORNEED OWL was back looking for a nesting sight, and on February 2 she had a flock of MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS. On Feb. 26 the HORNEED OWL was on its nest. She had also had an exciting experience when she watched a GOSHAWK kill a male MALLARD there at Shady Lakes. At the time of her first call she had just returned from a vacation trip to Texas and the Lower Rio Grande Valley. She had added 12-15 species to her life list, and of course, she had seen all the Lower Rio Grande specialties: GREEN JAY, ALTAMIRA ORIOLE, GOLDEN-FRONTED WOODPECKER, WHITE-TIPPED DOVE, PLAIN CHACHALACA and GREAT KISKADEE. She also saw OLIVE SPARROW and CRESTED CARACARA. While she was there, there was a CURLEW SANDPIPER at Laguna Atascosa, and CLAY-COLORED ROBIN and BLUE BUNTINGS at Santa Ana. Unfortunately she did not get to see them.

On February 10 I talked to Eleanor Wooten in Las Cruces. She'd had a GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW at her feeder for two weeks. About the same time John Durrie called to say a friend, Mrs. Finley, had seen a PHAINOPEPLA in her yard two weeks earlier. This is considerably north of the regular area of occurrence, and especially unusual in winter!

Three TUNDRA SWANS were reported at Bosque del Apache on the weekend of February 9-10.



Marty Meyers called to report a male HOUSE FINCH with white patches in the wings at her feeder on the east side of the Sandias on January 26. This was the only report of such oddities other than the ones at my feeder.

On February 16 at 12:15 P.M., Lynn Rogers called in the first report of a WHOOPING CRANE over Corrales headed north with a flock of SANDHILL CRANES. On the same date we saw a male HOODED MERGANSER on the south display pond at Bosque del Apache, as well as four BALD EAGLES and two adult GOLDEN EAGLES on other parts of the refuge. Three days later a flock of about 10 RED CROSSBILLS were seen on the lower slopes of the east side of the Sandias.

Paul Steel and I also took a trip to the Lower Rio Grande Valley the last week of February and first three days of March. Several of you, I'm sure, remember Nita Fuller, who was assistant manager, and later manager, at Bosque del Apache. She is now manager at the Santa Ana NWR. Paul and I went down as volunteers to help her and her wildlife biologist, Steve LaBuda, with the revision of the bird checklist for that refuge. We accomplished that mission and managed to squeeze in enough birding to compile a trip bird list of over 160 species. Each of us added five "life birds" to our lists, but not the same five! Mine were RINGED and GREEN KINGFISHERS, BROWN JAY, WHITE-EYED VIREO, and OLIVE SPARROW. I'm not positive what all of Paul's were, but the one that excited him the most was the COMMON PAURAQUE! Of course, we saw the usual specialites of the area mentioned above, and like Joanna Phillips we missed the BLUE BUNTINGS, CLAY-COLORED ROBIN, and WHITE-COLLARED SEEDEATER. The CURLEW SANDPIPER had left before we arrived. If you've never visited Santa Ana and Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuges, and all the other nearby bird-finding locations, I highly commend these as target areas to dream of for future birding expeditions.



While we were gone, an anonymous report came in of a GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE at the Rio Grande Nature Center. Bev Grady reported hearing a WESTERN KINGBIRD at Four Hills on February 18 and seeing it on February 20. That is very early for that species this far north. Early in March there was another interesting anonymous report of an encounter between an AMERICAN KESTREL and a SHARP-SHINNED HAWK. It seems that it took place at the Rio Grande Nature Center, when observers watching through the big window overlooking the lake, saw a SHARP-SHINNED HAWK capture a RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD, taking it to the ground and performing the mantling behavior typical of raptors. The AMERICAN KESTREL then flew down, drove off the SHARP-SHIN, and took over the kill, proceeding to pluck and eat it. This is one of those exciting behavioral events which many bird watchers seldom, if ever, get to witness.

Last-minute reports include a call from Evelyn Jones to report a good-sized flock of yellow, black, and white birds near Juan Tabo and Lomas, which from her description must have been EVENING GROSBEAKS. The same day, March 18, Ralph Fitz and his wife "Eddie" saw a flock of about 200 WHITE PELICANS, a flock of 22 WILD (RIO GRANDE) TURKEYS, and several large rafts of CINNAMON TEAL at Bosque del Apache.

Unfortunate though it may be, many migrating birds fly into buildings, towers, wires, and windows and fatally injure themselves, or die of exhaustion. Once again this year I have renewed my Federal and State permits so I can pick up any such casualties and turn them over to educational or research facilities, where they may serve a useful purpose. Should you find any such specimens in salvageable condition, please call 265-8962, and I'll come and pick them up. Have a good time with your birding activities during this spring migration period, and feel free to call and share. Remember, it's time to put out your hummingbird feeders. Please let me know when your first hummers arrive. So long and good birding.

--R.L.T.



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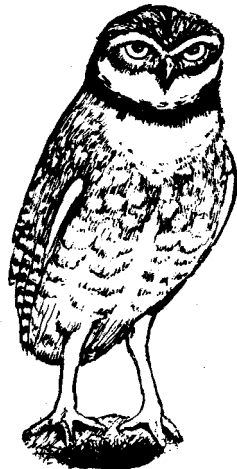
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292-5626, or 898-2568**

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