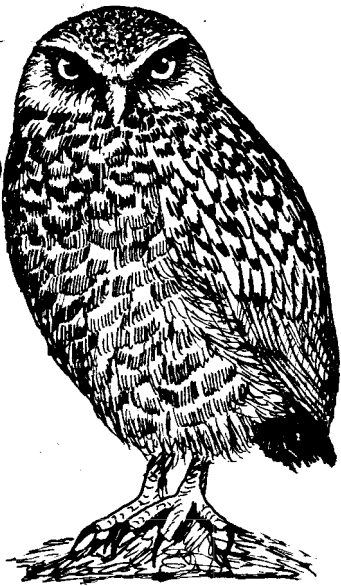


BURROWING OWL



CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO .

FEBRUARY - MARCH 1986

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, FEBRUARY 15 - Field Trip

Join the Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society for a field trip to Cochiti Lake. Woodland birds, waterfowl, and bald eagles are seen at Cochiti this time of year. Migrating cranes are also a good possibility. Meet at the parking lot below the spillway to the dam at 9:30. To reach the spillway, take the Santo Domingo Pueblo-Cochiti Lake exit, go 9 or 10 miles. The spillway will be obvious. Bring lunch. Call Evelyn Price (831-5028) for more information.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20 - Regular Meeting

Donna Broudy, our membership chairman, will show slides and tell of her hiking trip in New Zealand on the Milford Track, the world's first wilderness area. She will also share with us a visit to South Island, which is an albatross refuge.

Donna and David joined our chapter after moving to Albuquerque from Gallup, where they were active members in the Audubon chapter. Donna was a Girl Scout

professional with Chaparral Council for many years and before that served in the Peace Corps. She is an excellent naturalist and will be able to give us an exciting firsthand story of hiking the trails of New Zealand. Time and place in Welcome Paragraph.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22 - Field Trip

Half-day field trip to the Oxbow with Bruce Halstead (work 766-2174; home 299-9397). Even in winter this special segment of the Rio Grande harbors a great variety of birdlife, such as the Marsh Wren, Virginia Rail, Black Phoebe, Swamp and Lincoln Sparrows. Meet at 8 a.m. in the UNM Physics and Astronomy parking lot at the northeast corner of Lomas and Yale.

SATURDAY, MARCH 1 and SUNDAY, MARCH 2 - NMOS Meeting and Field Trips

The New Mexico Ornithological Society will meet on the UNM campus. Saturday will be a day for presenting papers of ornithological interest, followed by a dinner. Various field trips are scheduled for Sunday. Call Ross Teuber (265-8962) for details.



TUESDAY, MARCH 4 - Wildlife Film:
"Wildlife Annals," Allen J. King

Earlier naturalists recorded their findings in journals and chronicles. Allen King records wilderness creatures through the art of motion pictures. Ten years of work on six outdoor film studies highlight his dramatic wildlife annals: The sandhill crane chooses to put its nest in the midst of marsh cattails, elusive mountain goats are depicted against breathtaking backdrops. A 60-foot free-standing scaffold had to be built to film the great horned owl. The strikingly beautiful common loon with its haunting call makes it a star performer. Bull elk lock horns and bighorn sheep butt heads in tests of dominance.

SATURDAY, MARCH 15 - Field Trip

Half-day trip to Piedra Lisa Springs area near Placitas with Margie and Mark Arnato (298-3227). This will be an excellent opportunity to become familiar with some of the resident birds of foothills; hawks and eagles are also a good possibility, as their migration is just getting underway. Meet at 8 a.m. at the UNM Physics and Astronomy parking lot, northeast corner of Yale and Lomas.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20 - Regular Meeting

Chuck Hundertmark, who is a past president and long-time CNMAS member, will present a program of bird migration and bird banding experiences at the Rio Grande Nature Center. Chuck currently heads the Rio Grande Bird Research, Inc. See Welcome Paragraph for time and place.

SUNDAY, APRIL 6 - Field Trip

Half-day trip to Embudito Canyon with Hart Schwarz (266-1810). The emphasis will be on finding the desert sparrows, particularly the Black-chinned, which returns to the northern limit of its range in early April. Meet at 7:30 a.m. by the stile at the entrance of the Canyon which is located 1/2 mile east, then 1/2 mile north of the Montgomery/Tramway intersection.



COMING ATTRACTIONS:

Mark your calendars now for the Third Annual BIG BIRD BASH to take place in Silver City again on May 3-4. There will be activities for birders, semi-birders, and non-birders alike.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A full report of the annual Christmas Bird Count will be found in another part of the Owl, but I want to take this opportunity to thank those of you who braved the cold winter mornings to come out and help in the count. We had one of the largest turnout of "observers" (as counters are technically called) in years! A big thank you is due the media--the newspapers, the radio, and TV--for the excellent coverage before, during, and after the count. Without their help, we could not have spread the word to the community.

You may not have thought of the Bird Count in this way, but Roger Tory Peterson says in an article in the Leader's Guide for the Audubon Adventures program:

"Participating in a Christmas count . . . provides a valuable service to other ornithologists and scientists all over the world. Birds are far more than robins, cardinals, and wrens to brighten the yards. They are indicators of the health of our planet--a sort of 'ecological litmus paper.' Because of their furious pace of living, they reflect changes in the environment--the environment we all share. If they were removed, the balance of nature as we know it would be drastically upset."

The data from our three counts were sent to American Birds, a publication of the National Audubon Society where total results from all counts from the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean are published in a special edition later in the year. The names of our 65 observers will appear, along with all the others who got up those winter mornings to go forth and count birds. Plan to come out and join us next December--it's a fun thing to do!

CNMAS BOARD MEETING

At the Monday, January 13 CNMAS board meeting, funding was approved for the following community projects:

Continued support for the Audubon Adventures program. We now have the program in 10 public schools and one private school.

Camperships for deserving APS students for use in the APS summer camp.

Prize money for the Regional Science Fair at UNM on March 20-21. Judges from our chapter will be Liz Broemel, John Durrie, and Dave Carrick.

Subscriptions to Audubon magazine to the APS senior high schools.

Washburn Award, which is presented to an employee or official of a government agency who has demonstrated interest in promoting programs of environmental protection or education. Given in honor of Dan and Marian Washburn.

Scholarships to the Audubon Ecology Camp near Dubois, Wyoming. These scholarships are funded mainly by CNMAS Film Committee which uses revenue from the Nature and Wildlife Film Series for this purpose.

Other items of business:

Decided to inaugurate a new general meeting format: Program first, followed by business and refreshments. We tried it at the January meeting and it seemed to meet with approval!

Mark and Margie Amato, hospitality chairmen, will be in charge of our 15th birthday celebration to be held May 15, 1986. Contact them at 298-3227 if you can help.

Policy and procedures were put in place for the Scientific Research committee.

A general interest questionnaire which might be sent to membership was discussed, but no action taken.

Next board meeting will be on Monday, February 17, 7:30 p.m. at the Sunwest Bank on Central and Washington. All members are cordially invited to attend.

CONSERVATION NOTES - Lew Helm

New Threat to Juan Tabo Area

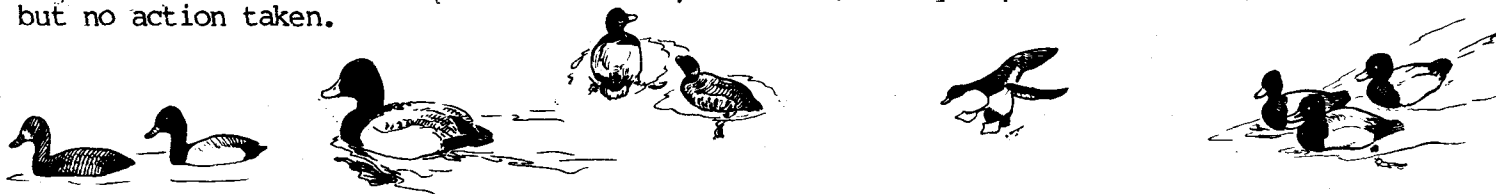
It never ends! A new land development scheme is now proposed to develop some 37 acres in the Evergreen Hills tract just north of the Juan Tabo Recreation Area. The site is at the start of the Piedra Lisa trail. Proposed is subdividing the area into one-acre lots with cluster housing, tennis courts, and riding stable. (Could a Seven-Eleven be far behind?) A new road would be constructed and a \$186,000 power line put in. If this development goes through, the private land immediately south would also be developed, for a total of 160 acres. This threat would be even worse than the proposed development of the La Cueva area. Unless some way can be found to forestall the proposal, bulldozers will roll this summer.

La Cueva-Rounds Estate Exchange

No news is good news? Hardly. The U.S. Forest Service has not yet announced a decision on the trade of the La Cueva Recreation Area of the Cibola National Forest for the boulder-strewn lands on the east limits of Albuquerque. By the time you read this, an announcement may be made. People in the know, however, would bet that the decision will be to approve the trade.

Right-to-Know Legislation

Efforts are being mounted to lobby the New Mexico legislature to enact a law requiring businesses to give employees, emergency personnel, and the public access to information about hazardous chemicals which could impact the environment. Businesses generally oppose this requirement. If you feel strongly about this issue, write as soon as possible to your State Senator and Representative. Further information may be obtained from the Right-to-Know Task Force, P.O. Box 4524, Albuquerque 87106.



CONSERVATION NOTES (Continued)

Rio Grande Bosque Waterfowl and Cranes

This winter has seen unusually large numbers of snow geese and sandhill cranes wintering in the Middle Rio Grande Valley. Anyone who has visited the Bosque del Apache NWR during the last few weeks can verify this. Food supplies both on the refuge and on private lands are running short and may be prompting an extremely early northward movement of the birds. Biologists of the NM Game and Fish Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are studying options which may be necessary next fall and winter. CNMAS will be watching developments closely. One bit of good news is that this year there has been no evidence of fowl cholera or botulism in the dense populations in the Valley.

Selenium Studies

Heavy concentrations of the element selenium resulting from irrigation practices have been shown to be very harmful to waterfowl populations. Last year the Kesterson National Wildlife Refuge in California had to be closed because of the problem. Since the potential for adverse effects is with us in the Middle Rio Grande Valley, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has underway two contract studies to get some answers. No preliminary data are available. However, there is no evidence at present that selenium levels are high enough to pose a threat. The two studies are scheduled to be completed toward the end of this year.

Hats Off Department

The Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Albuquerque is doing a superb job on two important fronts. First, the Elena Gallegos Open Space Park east of Tramway Blvd. and south of Sandia Heights is one of the best planned and managed areas we have seen. Literally thousands of people are experiencing a quasi-wilderness setting right next to the city. Second, the heroic efforts of the Department in cleaning up and managing the Rio Grande bosque are paying off for the many people who visit the river area for birding or just to stroll.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

Twenty or so folks spent a very pleasant day observing the wildlife of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, December 7, 1985. We all became a part of New Mexico's ornithological history when one of the first birds we observed was a Couch's kingbird (*Tyrannus couchii*). Apparently this is the first time this bird has been seen in our state. During the day we observed two endangered species--bald eagle and whooping crane--and a total of 82 different species and races for the day. We had a very amenable prairie falcon that perched in a tree not far from us for several minutes and then decided to glide in circles directly over us several times before determining we were too large to eat and flying off. Speaking of eating, those folks that lasted the entire day, eight of us, enjoyed the usual excellent chili-cheeseburgers at the Owl Cafe in San Antonio before heading home.

THE WASHBURN AWARD

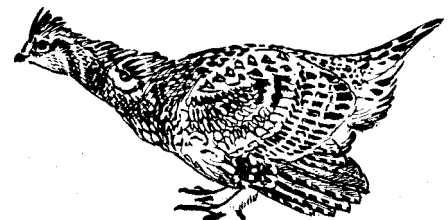
Nominations are due for the Washburn award. This award is given to an employee or official of any government agency or body who has demonstrated special dedication to environmental programs. If you know anyone you would like to nominate for this award, please call Marge Carrick at 266-0191.

"COOKIE BRINGERS" THANKED, MORE NEEDED

A thank you to Phyllis Schmidt, Edie Johnson, and other Audubon members who have donated baked goods for refreshments at our meetings. Any Audubon member who would like to donate baked goods for the upcoming meetings, please call Mark or Margie Amato at 298-3227 any time after 5 p.m.

WANTED: BIRD SLIDES

Our environmental education program in the local schools is growing by leaps and bounds. If you have slides of local birds that could be used in these programs, please give Mark or Margie Amato a call at 298-3227.



ROSS' RAVIN'S

Hi Folks! The Christmas Bird Counts, for us, were brought to a successful conclusion with the Albuquerque CBC on January 4. Although I did participate in three counts, I had unfortunately made commitments for other activities on that day, so had to forego participating in that count. There will undoubtedly be a summary of the results of the three counts conducted by CNMAS elsewhere in this issue of the BURROWING OWL, so I will not comment further on them. It was my privilege to participate again in the newly inaugurated count on the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. For a new count, necessarily limited to only four participants, it turned out quite well. A total of 48 species was reported. Probably most interesting of these were a PHAINOPEPLA, two adult NORTHERN SHRIKES, and a PHYRRHULOXIA.

The response to the questionnaire in regard to a proposed class in Birding for Beginners was much greater than I, at least, had anticipated. Over 30 people indicated an interest in participating in the class. Arrangements have been made, and the class will be held on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. in a classroom in the basement at St. Timothy's. There will be 10 sessions, with one night off on March 26, the week of spring break for the public schools. There will be at least 5 field trips, and possibly 6, for participants in the class only. The first class will meet on February 19 and will be a "Get Acquainted" session, with a review of basics and an overview of what to expect in the followingsessions.

Many of you are also members of the New Mexico Ornithological Society. This year is the year for the annual meeting of NMOS to be held in Albuquerque. The meeting date is March 1 and 2, and the general session will be in Room 139 of the Biology Building (Hostetter Hall) on the UNM campus. The second day of the meeting will be devoted to field trips. All details of the agenda and activities have not yet been worked out, but from

the discussion at the planning session, the meeting should be a good one. If you are not a member and would be interested in details on joining, membership dues, and benefits, please call me (265-8962).

The July 1985 issue of Auk contained the Thirty-fifth Supplement to the A.O.U. Checklist of North American Birds, the first Supplement to the 6th Edition issued in July 1983. This Supplement deals with a number of items, but only three of them are of particular concern to New Mexico birders. The battle of the "lumpers" and "splitters" continues, and in this particular skirmish the splitters were victorious. In the case of the ARCTIC LOON, the pacifica group is now considered to be a separate species and given the common name PACIFIC LOON. This is the species we are the most likely to see here, and that only rarely. The other two recognized groups, which occur primarily in the Arctic or Siberia, will remain in the species designated ARCTIC LOON. As has been expected, the two color phases of WESTERN GREBES have been separated as distinct species. The dark phase continues as WESTERN GREBE, and the light phase will be known as CLARK'S GREBE. That will add a new species to your life lists, if you have kept track of sightings of the light phase. What has been known as the YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER is now considered to be two distinct species. The more northern and eastern species will continue to be designated YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, while the Rocky Mountain species becomes the RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER. Other species continue to be studied, and very likely at some future date there will be additional changes.

This has been an unusually warm winter, I believe the TV weathercaster said the second or third warmest in the 50 years for which we have weather records. This apparently has affected bird life to some extent. As mentioned in my last column, the first WHOOPING CRANE did not arrive at Bosque del Apache until October 29. The others strung out over several weeks.

The most I have heard of being at the



refuge at any one time was 14. A recent article in the Albuquerque Journal quotes Rod Drewien as saying there are a total of 29 WHOOPERS scattered out along the middle and lower Rio Grande Valley, and one is clear down into Mexico. The past few weeks there have been numerous reports of large flocks of SANDHILL CRANES, SNOW GEESE, and CANADA GEESE flying over and headed north. This may be an indication of an early migration movement, or it could be just the result of the large numbers of geese and cranes depleting food supplies further south along the river valley, and daily foraging farther and farther from their habitual feeding area in search of suitable food. I tend to favor the hypothesis that the date of migration is largely related to photo period (i.e., number of hours of daylight in a 24-hour period). The above newspaper article mentioned that Dr. Drewien estimates a population of 60,000 SNOW GEESE in the Rio Grande Valley.

Probably the most exciting and unusual sighting reported was a TROPICAL/COUCH'S KINGBIRD first noted at Bosque del Apache by a team of John Durrie, George Dryden, and Paul Fitzsimmons. This bird was seen, studied, photographed, and tape-recorded by many people in the next several days. The two species are difficult to separate. The TROPICAL KINGBIRD has been reported fairly regularly from Arizona and Western Mexico. COUCH'S KINGBIRD, on the other hand, occurs in south Texas along the lower Rio Grande and in eastern Mexico along the Gulf Coast. This bird showed up shortly after Hurricane Kate hit that area, and according to John Durrie looked quite bedraggled, especially the tail, when they first saw it. While the two species are quite difficult to separate, one means of differentiation is by their song. There was even disagreement among the various observers as to which song the bird sang, although several heard it. I believe John Shipman of Socorro was finally successful in taping a song which proved this individual to indeed be COUCH'S KINGBIRD. This bird remained

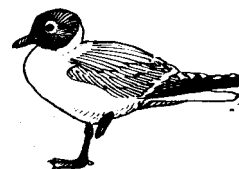


until at least December 2nd. It was not found on the Christmas Bird Count. Incidentally, this is probably only the second confirmed sighting of this species in New Mexico. On the same day, the Durrie party also saw four BALD EAGLES and a MERLIN. There was also an immature NORTHERN SHRIKE not far from the location where the kingbird was, and John Hubbard and John Shipman saw and reported a BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE. (They did not see the kingbird at that time.)

Other reported sightings include on November 25, Paul Steel and I saw a female RED-BREASTED MERGANSER and a PRAIRIE FALCON in addition to most of the birds listed above, with the exception of the BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE. We looked diligently, but never found that bird. We did see 5 WHOOPING CRANES at Bosque del Apache and 6 at Bernardo. On the 29th, in a party, we saw an immature OSPREY (late for that species), 3 immature BALD EAGLES, 1 adult and 2 immature GOLDEN EAGLES, and one or possibly two NORTHERN SHRIKES, and 4 WHOOPING CRANES each at Bosque del Apache and Bernardo. On the same day an oddly spotted, partial albino HOUSE FINCH showed up at my feeder at home.

On November 27 Dustin Huntington reported seeing a THAYER'S GULL at Bosque del Apache. On November 25 Larry Gorbit called to report a large NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD in the Ridgecrest area the previous week. There seems to have been quite a movement of STELLER'S JAYS into the valley. There have been two or more pair at the Rio Grande Nature Center since late in November; Joanne Phillips has had several at Shady Lakes since the 2nd of December or earlier. They were seen there during the CBC. There were still some at the Nature Center on January 16, but Joanne said she hadn't seen any since she got back from her Caribbean cruise on January 18.

On the 4th of January at Bosque del Apache, on a tour with a group, we saw most of the usual species for this time of the year except for CORMORANTS. There



1985 CHRISTMAS COUNT TOTALS

Hello, CBC fans! Hope you had a great time over Christmas counting and will enjoy reviewing the counts side by side, here and now. Those who didn't go, don't you wish you had (or could have)? Congratulations to all who worked so hard for good publicity and a good turnout, Thanks to all who participated, and, well, shucks, THANKS birds, for being there!

	Bosque del Apache	Sandia Mtn.	Albu- quer- que
Pied-billed Grebe	49		1
Eared Grebe	3		
Great Blue Heron	38		11
Great Egret	2		
Bl.-crowned Nt. Heron	18		
Snow Goose	43500		
(Blue Goose)	500		
Ross' Goose	3000		
Canada Goose	340		100
Green-winged Teal	12		1
Mallard	16418		916
Northern Pintail	513		
Cinnamon Teal	1		
Northern Shoveler	152		
Gadwall	309		73
American Wigeon			3
Canvasback	2		
Redhead	1		11
Ring-necked Duck	33		73
Lesser Scaup	1		
Bufflehead	9		
Hooded Merganser			1
Common Merganser	10		36
Ruddy Duck	148		
Bald Eagle	6		
Northern Harrier	44		3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1		3
Cooper's Hawk	5	1	7
Northern Goshawk		1	
(accipiter spp.)			2
Red-tailed Hawk	53	10	30
Ferruginous Hawk	1		
Rough-legged Hawk	2		2
(Buteo spp.)		1	
Golden Eagle	4	3	1
American Kestrel	15	5	34
Merlin			1
Prairie Falcon	1	2	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	5		5
Wild Turkey	33		
Scaled Quail		15	47
Gambel's Quail	43		65
Virginia Rail			1
American Coot	731		8
Sandhill Crane	11000		
Whooping Crane	11		
Killdeer			12
Common Snipe	4		
Ring-billed Gull	16		
Rock Dove		79	422
Mourning Dove	450	1	51
Greater Roadrunner	3		4
Great Horned Owl			4
Belted Kingfisher	2		8
Lewis' Woodpecker			3
Yllw-bellied Sapsucker	2		
Williamson's Sapsucker		1	1
Lddr-backed Woodpecker	3	9	7
Downy Woodpecker	1	2	24

	Bosque del Apache	Sandia Mtn.	Albu- quer- que
Hairy Woodpecker		2	2
Northern Flicker	78	38	164
Black Phoebe			2
Say's Phoebe	2		
Horned Lark	295	16	723
Steller's Jay		34	103
Scrub Jay	3	82	50
Pinyon Jay		103	
American Crow	1077	60	3739
Common Raven	4	25	9
Black-capped Chickadee			10
Mountain Chickadee	15	106	49
Plain Titmouse		24	12
Verdin	5		
Bushtit	2	86	40
Red-breasted Nuthatch		16	
White-breasted Nutha	1	27	30
Brown Creeper		4	5
Rock Wren			9
Canyon Wren		1	11
Bewick's Wren	20	2	13
Marsh Wren	21		1
Golden-crowned Kinglet		4	6
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	19		4
Western Bluebird		221	63
Mountain Bluebird		63	47
Townsend's Solitaire		44	19
Hermit Thrush			2
American Robin	29	342	201
Northern Mockingbird	1		
Sage Thrasher			3
Crissal Thrasher			4
Cedar Waxwing		56	8
Northern Shrike		1	
Loggerhead Shrike	6	2	3
European Starling	205	191	4852
Yellow-rumped Warbler		2	15
Pyrrhuloxia	2		
Rufous-sided Towhee	17	7	60
Brown Towhee		8	11
American Tree Sparrow			4
Chipping Sparrow	1		
Sage Sparrow	1		
Savannah Sparrow	15		
Song Sparrow	96		146
Lincoln's Sparrow			1
Swamp Sparrow			3
White-crowned Sparro	643	12	391
Dark-eyed Junco	100	107	1290
(Slate-colored)		55	
(Oregon)	192	205	
(Gray-headed)		115	
Rd-winged Blackbird	15020		1097
Western Meadowlark	128		86
meadowlark spp.	6		
Yllw-headed Blackbird	118		
Brewer's Blackbird	1021		
Great-tailed Grackle	12		80
(blackbird spp.)	2500		200
Rosy Finch		20	
Cassin's Finch		6	1
House Finch	57	36	178
Pine Siskin	22	85	1
Lesser Goldfinch	2		
American Goldfinch	79		174
Evening Grosbeak		38	
House Sparrow	2	28	256
(sparrow spp.)		1	
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	99,312	2,405	16,150
TOTAL SPECIES	80	48	82
ADDITIONAL FORMS	1	3	0

There were none of either species. However, we did see a male and two female HOODED MERGANSERS. On January 8 Ruth Luhrs called from Sandia Knolls and told me she had seen a male HOODED MERGANSER at Bosque del Apache on December 30. But the most interesting news was the report that Chuck and Delores Carlson on North 14 (at Sandia Haven) had a BROWN THRASHER coming in for water every morning. The bird had been there since January 5, and was still there on January 13. The Carlsons are very gracious, and several of our people were able to see the bird and enjoy coffee and a most pleasant visit with them. While I was talking with Ruth, she also told me of two COMMON LOONS which had suffered trauma and been brought to Albuquerque Animal Rescue. One had fallen on or near Broadway here in Albuquerque. It had a fishhook caught in its throat with the snell protruding from its beak. Wendy Aschelman took it to a veterinarian who performed a tracheotomy and removed the hook. However, the hook had apparently been there long enough to cause a severe infection and interfere with feeding. The combination of circumstances was too much, and the bird did not survive. An autopsy revealed that the individual was a female, it had no fat, although well muscled, and weighed only about four pounds. While I was in the area I stopped to visit with Wendy and she showed me the bird. The second COMMON LOON had a broken wing; it was treated here in town, but unfortunately did not survive.

The Carlsons have a lovely yard and bird bath, with feeder, shrubbery, and special rustic perching places. They attract many species of birds. While there we saw not only the BROWN THRASHER, but a HAIRY WOODPECKER, NORTHERN FLICKER, WESTERN and MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS, AMERICAN ROBIN, DARK-EYED JUNCOS, HOUSE FINCH, PINE SISKIN, LESSER GOLDFINCH, BROWN and RUFIOUS-SIDED TOWHEE, and SCRUB JAY.

As usual, there is much more to write than there is time or space to cover, and all good (?) things must end. Just one more quick note. Before we realize it, the WHOOPING CRANES will be heading back to their summer home in Idaho. If you happen to see any headed in that direction, please give me a call (265-9862). In the meantime, au revoir, good luck and good birding.

--Ross L. Teuber



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