

# BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

DECEMBER 1986 - JANUARY 1987

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, DEC. 18 - Regular Meeting

No meeting will be held in December.

#### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20 - CHRISTMAS COUNT

The Albuquerque count. See "Christmas Count" article for time, place, and compiler.

#### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21 - CHRISTMAS COUNT

The Bosque del Apache NWR count. See "Christmas Count" article for time, place, and compiler.

#### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27 - CHRISTMAS COUNT

The Sandia Mts. count. See "Christmas Count" article for time, place, and compiler.

#### MONDAY, JANUARY 12 - Board Meeting

The CNMAS board will meet at 7:30 P.M. at the Sunwest Bank meeting room, northeast corner of Central and Washington, N.E. EVERYONE IS WELCOME AT THE BOARD MEETINGS.

#### THURSDAY, JANUARY 15 - Regular Meeting

Our January program will take us to Poland, where we will view the natural world of the Carpathian Mts. south of Krakow. We will also study the birds of the Baltic coast in the north.

Our guide is Dr. Celestyn Brozek, who before immigrating to the United States five years ago, earned master's and doctoral degrees in Genetics. He now is an immunologist with Lovelace, but he says he is really a naturalist at heart. See Welcome Paragraph for time and place.

#### SATURDAY, JANUARY 24 - Field Trip

Cranes and geese will be "staging" for their spring trip north. A lot of them gather in the Los Lunas-Belen area, particularly the state game refuges in the area. We will explore these areas via back roads in the company of leaders George & Evelyn Price (266-4028). Meet at the Valley Cafe and Auction, 7715 Broadway, S.E., 3 1/2 miles south of Rio Bravo, for coffee/breakfast/lunch at 11 A.M. We will carpool from there, leaving at about 11:30.

#### SATURDAY, JANUARY 31 - NMAC meeting

The New Mexico Audubon Council will meet at 1 P.M. in the Owl Cafe meeting room in San Antonio, NM. The Council deals with environmental issues of importance to New Mexico. Everyone is welcome.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1 - Field Trip

The Bosque del Apache NWR will be the location of this morning's trip. Meet at refuge headquarters at 7 a.m. Call Evelyn Price (266-4028) or Lew Helm (821-8586) for more information.

COMING ATTRACTIONS: California will be the subject of the February program; Hawk migration will be the topic for March. Watch your OWL for all the details.

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I greatly enjoyed attending the National Audubon Society Southwest Regional Conference held at Mo Ranch, Kerville, Texas, on November 7-9. The SW Region, headed by Dr. Dede Armentrout, is made up of New Mexico, Texas, and Louisiana. Talks by national officers, including President Peter Berle, were given at the plenary sessions. Workshops were offered on environmental and educational issues ranging from the importance of saving our wetlands and rain forests to more effective methods of using our Audubon Adventures program in our schools. Attending this conference was a renewing experience for me; exchanging ideas and concerns with others will enable me to give our own program a new impetus. I wish to thank the membership for its part in making it possible to attend the conference.

Al Ball, 881-0951, has a courier service which takes him to Socorro Monday-Friday. He goes past Bernardo Wildlife Refuge each time and would welcome riders who could visit the refuge while he is in Socorro. Call Mr. Ball for hour and other details.

T-shirts available in gold or beige displaying our own Burrowing Owl logo (front AND back!) are available at \$6 each from Margie Amato (298-3227), Donna Broudy (242-7108), or Marge Carrick (266-0191). A great big "Thank You" goes to one of our former presidents, Barbara Hussey, for creating the design. Would make a fine Christmas gift for anyone in the family!

## CHRISTMAS COUNTS ARE COMING TO TOWN!

The three Christmas Bird Counts sponsored by CNMAS have been scheduled for the weekends before and after Christmas. We hope that many of you will participate this year. Remember, you need not be an expert birder to become involved. You do need, however, to bring \$3, the fee required to help defray the cost of publication of the count results in American Birds.

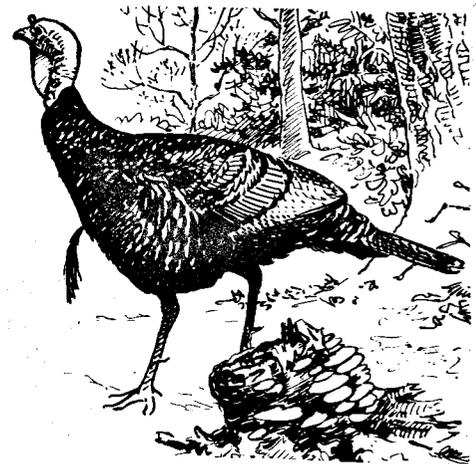
Meeting places and times for the start of each count, as well as the compiler's name and number, follow. Plan to be there at the appointed time; or better yet, contact the compilers so that they may better plan ahead for the count.

The Albuquerque count is scheduled for Saturday, December 20. Count compiler is Hart Schwarz (266-1810). Meet at the Corrales Shopping Center (NW corner of Coors and Corrales Road NW) at 7 a.m.

The Bosque del Apache count will be the next day, Sunday, December 21. Compiler is Chuck Hundertmark (897-2818). Meet at Refuge headquarters at 7 a.m.

The Sandia Mountain count will be on the Saturday after Christmas, December 27. Kay Anderson (821-1606) is the compiler for the mountain count. Meet at the parking lot of "Pete's Home of the Halfbreed" at 7:30 a.m.

—Dale Stahleker  
Christmas Count Coordinator



Western Foundation for  
Raptor Conservation  
8903 Menaul Boulevard, NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87112



# WESTERN NORTH AMERICAN RAPTOR MIGRATION PROJECT



***for the conservation of  
birds of prey and their  
habitats***



Raptors are birds of prey, such as eagles, falcons, hawks and owls. Their populations in western North America are being increasingly threatened by several human-caused changes in the environment, including acid rain, pesticides, logging, and agricultural and urban development. Funds for research are needed to assess the impact of these activities on raptor populations and to help reverse declines.

This project is especially important to all of us because major declines in raptor populations signal vast environmental damage which, if left unchecked, could not only threaten the survival of many raptor species but our own quality of life as well.



## BACKGROUND AND GOALS

The Western North American Raptor Migration Project began in 1979 when biologist Stephen Hoffman discovered an unusual concentration of migrating raptors in the Goshute Mountains of northeastern Nevada. Mr. Hoffman realized that this discovery provided an outstanding opportunity to monitor the health of our environment by studying these magnificent and threatened birds.

*The goal of this project is the conservation of raptor populations and their habitats in western North America. It accomplishes this by:*

- Monitoring raptor population trends.
- Determining raptor movement patterns and habitat use.
- Identifying nesting areas and monitoring reproductive success.
- Investigating the causes of raptor population declines and seeking ways to reverse those declines.

## RESULTS TO DATE

Studies over the last six years have provided important information about western raptor populations. To date 5,000 raptors have been captured, banded and released. Birds banded in the Goshutes have been found from Canada to southern Mexico. Results so far suggest that most birds of prey in the West spend the winter in Mexico. Nesting areas of the Goshute raptors are not yet fully known. Since 1983, with financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 7,000 to 10,000 raptors comprising 16 different species have been counted migrating over the Goshutes each fall. Additional counts are needed to document population trends.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Migration counts, like the one being conducted in the Goshute Mountains, are the best way to monitor raptor populations and environmental changes over large geographic areas. A similar study begun in 1934 at Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania revealed major declines in several raptor species in the 1950's and 1960's. This information was instrumental in documenting the severity of DDT contamination and contributed to the nationwide ban on DDT use in 1972. Unfortunately, similar information is not available for western North America. The enormous value of these migration counts for environmental protection and conservation cannot be overstated.

This project is unique—no other large scale raptor conservation projects are being conducted in western North America. Trend and movement information for most western raptor populations is virtually nonexistent. The project is designed to fill this void.

## NEEDS

To date the project has depended solely on the energetic commitment of dedicated volunteers. Financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, *Earthwatch* and other organizations and individuals has contributed greatly to the project's success. Through effective use of volunteer help, the project has operated on very little money. However, some funding is essential, and the project's continued success is now being jeopardized by lack of funds. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is no longer able to support the raptor count in the Goshutes due to unexpected budget cuts. Funds are needed to continue the project at a minimum level—money to purchase equipment, supplies and food for volunteers is urgently needed.

For more information on the project, including a 16mm or video movie (available for the cost of return postage), or if you would like to volunteer your services on the project, please contact:

Steve Hoffman  
P.O. Box 1382  
Albuquerque, NM 87103  
(505) 291-9224

## CONTRIBUTIONS

We are in the process of setting up a nonprofit organization to support the project. At this time tax-deductible contributions for the project are being accepted by Bridgerland Audubon Society of Logan, Utah. Please give generously—your contribution is needed to further this important work. Persons or groups donating \$15 or more per year will receive our annual newsletter, issued in early spring. Thanks for your support!

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:  
Bridgerland Audubon Society

Mail to:  
P.O. Box 3501  
Logan, Utah 84321

**Please be sure to indicate on your check that the contribution is for the Western North American Raptor Migration Project.**



## CONSERVATION NOTES

The President Uses His Veto. We were disappointed to learn that President Reagan used a pocket veto to kill the 1986 Clean Water Act. This bill had been unanimously passed by both houses of Congress and would have gone far to further efforts to restore water quality in our streams and lakes. Congressional leaders promise another attempt early in the new session, so let your Congressmen know how you feel.

Protecting the Escarpment and Petroglyphs. A major effort is underway to assure preservation of a most unique resource in the Albuquerque area. The Conservation Alliance (of which CNMAS is a member) is spearheading a push to get public support. In addition, two studies are being made to provide a basis for action. One of the studies is by a consultant for the City of Albuquerque, while the other is by the National Park Service.

The City study aims to document the array of conflicting land use plans, zoning problems, and other possible barriers to designating at least a significant part of the area as open space. The NPS study, which was funded largely through the efforts of our Congressional delegation, will set the stage for establishing (we hope) a National Monument status for the escarpment and the volcanoes on the West Mesa. A lot of work remains to be done, and we will continue to support this important concept.

Cadillac Desert. The catchy title of this new book is only an opening to tell the story of water management and mismanagement in the American West. The book documents the growth and influence of the Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps of Engineers in the West and the myriad of structural projects to harness water. Despite the billions of dollars spent by the federal government, the West's water shortage and soil depletion has only worsened. This book is recommended reading for all

persons interested in the natural resources of New Mexico and the West. Get it at your bookstore or at the library. Cadillac Desert by Marc Reisner. Living Penguin, Inc., 1986, 582 pp.

Litter Control and Recycling. Another effort is being mounted to convince the New Mexico legislature to pass a so-called Bottle Bill. CNMAS has joined a coalition of conservation and consumer groups in support of the cause. Anyone who has traveled through a state which has a bottle/can deposit program knows the benefits, such as cleaner highways, parks, and city streets. Did you know that it takes an aluminum can 500 years to biodegrade, a glass bottle 1 million years, and plastic containers never? In addition to litter control, a deposit program would result in recycling of tons of metal, glass, and plastics which now go to waste. CNMAS urges all its members and friends to contact their State Senators and Representatives to show our concern for a cleaner and safer environment.

## AMATOS RETURNING TO WISCONSIN

Mark and Margie Amato have been members of CNMAS for the past two years. During that period they have given unsparingly of their time, talent, and energy to the Audubon cause. The list is long: Chairmen of Hospitality and Publicity. As Trail Bosses, they single-handedly maintained our adopted 2-mile trail in the Sandias. They assisted at the Endangered Species Fair and chaired the booth at the Sandia Mountain Day. Using their birding expertise, they led several field trips: Mark has 400 species on his life list. Many hours were spent promoting the Audubon Adventures program in the schools, including giving bird slide shows accompanied with bird call tapes which they compiled. Their most recent project was working on the T-shirt sale with Donna and David Broudy. Our sincere thanks and good wishes go with the Amatos as they return to the Milwaukee area in January. Their place in CNMAS will be very difficult to fill.

## CHRISTMAS GIFTS WITH AUDUBON MOTIF

The gift shop at the Randall Davey Audubon Center on Canyon Road in Santa Fe (983-4609) has calendars, books, and other items suitable for gifts. Stop in if you are in Santa Fe, or give them a call.

WESTERN RAPTOR MIGRATION PROJECT  
NEEDS YOUR HELP

Enclosed you will find a brochure describing the raptor migration project. The importance and scope of the project are detailed in the brochure. This is a vital project that needs your support. Please look over the brochure carefully.

STATEWIDE PETITION DRIVE NEEDS  
YOUR HELP

The 400-acre Corrales Bosque Nature Preserve, a joint project of The Nature Conservancy and the Village of Corrales, protects for posterity one of the finest surviving remnants of the once extensive middle Rio Grande broadleaf woodland, an endangered and irreplaceable native southwest ecosystem.

The Corrales Bosque, and also the sensitive riverside Bosque within the Rio Grande State Park between Corrales and the Oxbow wilderness area just below the old University of Albuquerque, is seriously threatened by an ill-considered proposal by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to enlarge the western levee along the Rio Grande. To get sufficient dirt for the levee work, the Army Corps' proposal, a typical "pork-barrel" project, calls for the digging of massive "borrow pits" every two miles along the 12.5 mile stretch of the river, extracting nearly 800,000 cubic yards of soil from the Bosque floor. The huge "borrow areas," the extensive clearing of vegetation, and the building of construction roadways for earth hauling within the Bosque would seriously segment the fragile cottonwood forest,

resulting in several small, isolated blocks of woodland where once stood a continuous, uninterrupted riverside forest. As proposed, the Army Corps' project would destroy the essential continuity and extent of habitat vital to several native wildlife species and would unacceptably stress the regenerative capacity of the native cottonwood forest ecosystem.

The Army Corps' ill-conceived proposal has sparked a statewide petition drive that has reached mandate proportions in the Corrales area and has gained the enthusiastic support of environmentalists throughout New Mexico. Although the Corps' proposal has been challenged in Congress (as well as in Corrales) as unnecessary and wasteful, the "Save the Bosque" Petition merely asks that "borrow pits" not be dug in the Rio Grande Bosque (suggesting that fill material for any needed levee work can and should be brought in from outside the Bosque area).

When complete, the Petition will be presented to the members of the New Mexico Congressional delegation before Congress reconvenes in January. Although an authorization bill has already passed Congress, the Petition is expected to influence upcoming appropriations legislation affecting actual construction monies for the Corps' proposal.

Please help save our Bosque. Please sign and help circulate the enclosed Petition (and read the good article by Rhonda Hillbery on the back of the Petition). If you can help, please mail signed Petitions by December 20 to: SAVE THE BOSQUE PETITION, P.O. Box 117, Corrales, NM 87048.

BIRDWATCH, GOLF, HIKE, SWIM, LEARN,  
RELAX IN JAMAICA

Join the NM Zoological Society from March 22 to April 2, 1987, for an extraordinary trip and "hands-on" field experience at the Hofstra University Marine Laboratory at St.



# Corrales To Celebrate Efforts To Preserve Riverside Habitat

By Rhonda Hillbery

JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

**CORRALES** — The heavy-duty steel gates leading to the bosque are new, but the goal behind them is not — protecting the wooded 400-acre Rio Grande tract.

Finished this spring, the gates and fencing are designed to do more than stop vehicles from illegally driving through the Corrales Bosque Preserve.

They also symbolize breaking the area's legacy as a trash dump and convenient spot to pillage trees.

A dedication Saturday will note the preserve's role as a nature project area and the village's legal agreement with The Nature Conservancy's New Mexico chapter to manage it.

The private, non-profit group has kicked in more than \$27,500 to the cause through a statewide fund drive. The money, mostly contributed in small checks from individuals, was used for an endowment whose interest will pay for fencing, gating and increased Corrales police patrols.

The agreement dates to 1984, but toasting it was postponed until the vehicle barriers on access roads were completed.

The public is invited.

Those who attend the 10 a.m. event should drive north on Corrales Road and just before the road heads up the mesa, take a right on the Corrales Main Canal ditch road to the river.

Guided hikes are planned after speeches by John Egbert, New Mexico director of The Nature Conservancy, and Corrales Mayor Laura J. Warren.

Hiking is the sort of activity the bosque caretakers have in mind for the preserve, said to contain the best remaining unbroken stretches of the Middle Rio Grande cottonwood forest.

Its bounty includes the Rio Grande cottonwood and such birds as the willow flycatcher, brown thrasher, yellow warbler and the red-headed woodpecker, which is listed as endangered in New Mexico.

The bosque also is a breeding and migratory area for songbirds and water birds, including water fowl.

This all gives conservationists pause, because the plants and wildlife found in the bosque once were common up and down the river.

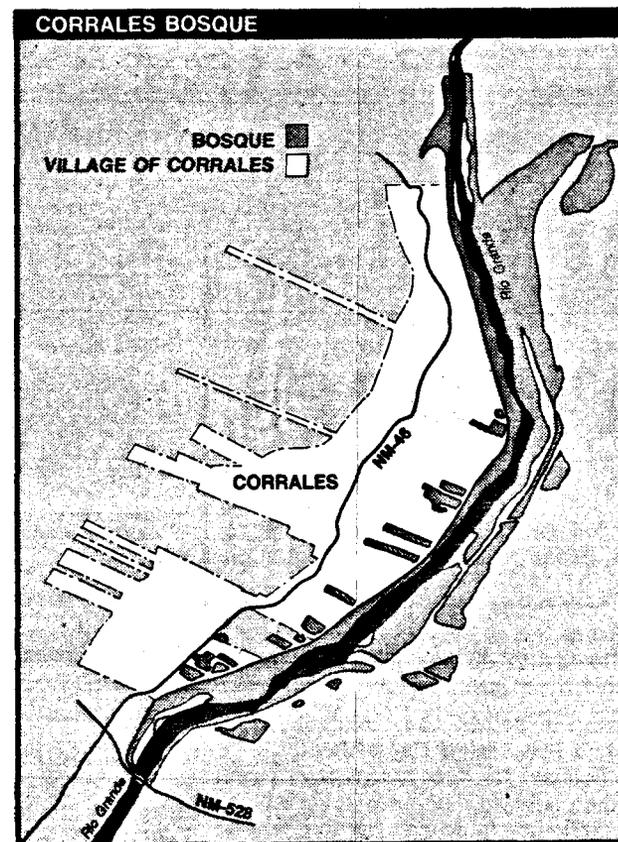
The unbroken stands of cottonwoods once seen throughout the area are now scarcer, because the building of dams and levees diminished the likelihood that new cottonwood seeds could germinate in large numbers, Egbert said.

"Flooding is essential for regeneration of cottonwood trees," he said. "If you don't have new sandbars created by flooding, you don't get new cottonwoods."

Many bosque-watchers, including The Nature Conservancy, oppose an Army Corps of Engineers proposal to raise flood-protection levees in Corrales, claiming it will damage the bosque.

Long a cause celebre in Corrales, the preserve was declared a protected area in 1980. Officials at the agencies with an interest in the bosque said it's impossible to say exactly who owns the land, which was annexed by Corrales in 1975.

"Preservation of the bosque is not new to us in Corrales," said Nathan Gifford, member of the Cor-



rales Bosque Commission. "We have been working on it for years — not with a lot of money, but with a lot of love."

The Nature Conservancy would like to see local schools and universities use the bosque as an outdoor laboratory, Egbert said.

"The Nature Conservancy is saying, 'Enjoy the Corrales bosque, but walk softly and leave only footsteps.'"

Anne's Bay, 8 miles west of Ocho Rios. Some of the things to be explored with a naturalist staff member are tidal pools, mangrove swamps, barrier reefs, bat caves, a Hibiscus nursery, snorkeling, and a climb alongside a 600-foot waterfall. \$1200 for 11 days includes all airfaire, double room with private bath, 3 meals a day, minibus transportation, captained diving boats, some tours, \$100 donation to the NM Zoological Society, a partial bird list, and much more. Visitors can extend their stay to see more of Jamaica's wonders on their own. Call NOW to reserve your place and receive more information. Contact Ruth or Bill Stamm, 255-2640.

1986 FALL RAPTOR MIGRATION  
THROUGH THE MANZANO MOUNTAINS  
by Jim Daly

For the second consecutive year, daily observations of the fall raptor migration were conducted in the Manzano Mountains southeast of Albuquerque. Last fall 2917 raptors (birds of prey) were recorded from the observation point near Capilla Peak. This fall 4019 raptors (8.7/hr.) of 16 species were counted as they migrated south; most, we suspect, heading for Mexico; some going as far as South America.

Observations began 23 August, two weeks earlier than in 1985, and while the migration was not strong at that point, Turkey Vultures, Red-tailed Hawks, and American Kestrels were already moving south. The intensity of the migration did not increase significantly until mid-September, with the first 100+ day coming on 18 September. Two days later on 20 September, the Audubon field trip attracted 19 interested birders to the lookout, where they saw 234 migrating raptors (12 species) moving south on strong winds. At that point it seemed that this would be the peak flight of the season. But on 29 September, with strong winds and weather conditions varying from clear skies to brief rain and snow showers, a record single day

count of 618 raptors (72.7/hr.) was recorded, including 42 Red-tailed Hawks, 152 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 167 Cooper's Hawks, and 215 American Kestrels (the previous single day high was 343 total raptors on 22 September 1985). This exceptionally large flight was probably due in part to a large cold-air mass that pushed south out of Canada several days before, bringing snow and record cold temperatures to the central and northern Rocky Mountains.

After that the flight remained strong through the first week of October, averaging over 110 raptors a day. Bad weather in the form of fog and heavy snows hampered observations during mid-October, and also caused observations to end on 31 October, five days earlier than planned. When observations ended, Golden Eagles, Red-tailed Hawks, and Sharp-shinned Hawks were the only species regularly being observed.

The species' totals for the season were: 120 Turkey Vultures, 12 Osprey, 36 Northern Harriers, 1303 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 882 Cooper's Hawks, 20 Northern Goshawks, 33 Swainson's Hawks, 528 Red-tailed Hawks, 15 Ferruginous Hawks, 124 Golden Eagles, 755 American Kestrels, 16 Merlins, and 7 Prairie Falcons. Highlights of the season included a single Zone-tailed Hawk on 30 September, and two adult Broad-winged Hawks, one each on 1 and 7 October.

Since the Manzano Lookout is currently the only fall raptor migration site along the eastern Rocky Mountain flyway where daily, season-long counts are conducted, we hope to continue observations for several more years. The information gathered in the Manzanos, along with data from other sites discovered by Steve Hoffman where season-long counts are conducted (see enclosed brochure on Goshute migration), will greatly increase our understanding of raptor migration in the West, and provide valuable data

for monitoring long-term trends in Western raptor populations.

For the second year this project was funded entirely by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish Share with Wildlife Fund. We thank the Share with Wildlife Committee for their continued support, and we also thank all those who participated in the count this fall and helped to make the season such a success.

NOTE: For those who are interested in participating in observations during the spring raptor migration watch in the Sandia Mountains this spring, observations will begin in mid-February and continue into May. About 3000 migrating raptors, including 430-450 Golden Eagles, have been counted each of the last two springs. For more information on the spring migration, contact Steve Hoffman at 291-9224 or Jim Daly at 298-2748.

ROSS' RAVIN'S  
By Ross L. Teuber

Hi Folks! It hardly seems possible, but Christmas is upon us! That means this will be the last column for 1986, or the first for 1987, depending upon how you look at it. With Christmas comes the Christmas Bird Counts. I urge you, if you possibly can, to get out and participate in one or more of these counts. I'm sure that many of you live within the 15-mile diameter circle that comprises the count area for the Albuquerque count. If you just can't get up and get out to take part in the field, contact the compiler and arrange to be a feeder watcher. Contact the count compiler for details.

By now you have probably seen your last hummingbird for the year, taken down your syrup feeders, and started your winter seed and suet feeding program. Remember, it is just as important to have a supply of clean, unfrozen water, and escape and resting cover, as it is to have seed and suet.

One approach is to have a water container under an outside water tap which is adjusted to drop constantly. Birds enjoy dripping water, and the dripping prevents freezing, except in the very coldest of weather.

Which brings something else to mind. It seems that the time is ripe for another WARNING. A few days back, before the hummingbirds had all left, I received a call in a roundabout way about someone who had seen a hummingbird at her feeder and thought it looked cold and weak. Since it was late in the season, she proceeded to catch it in a dip net. The question was, "Should she take it down to Bosque del Apache and release it, so it could catch up with the ones that had left earlier?" The answer is a resounding NO! In the first place, regardless of how good one's intentions may be, it is illegal for any unauthorized person to catch and have in possession any wild bird, part of a bird, feathers, eggs, or nests. Anyone who does so is in violation of Federal and State law, and subject to a fine of up to \$500, six months in jail, or both. Both Federal and State permits are required, and certain specifications must be met to obtain such licenses. In the second place, most amateurs are not capable of determining whether such birds actually are in need of help, and can do more harm than good by interfering. If you are really concerned, get in touch with Wildlife Rescue of New Mexico (344-2500) and let one of their qualified and trained people make the decision. Or, as a last resort, call me (265-8962).

With that, let's get off of my high horse and back to the bird talk. It is time for the Whooping Cranes to be coming back. Bird watching is certainly not over for the year. The period since the last column has been an interesting one for birders, with some extremely interesting reports. Thanks is certainly due, and is herewith given, to all you folks who

called and let us share your exciting sightings.

Several people called in to let us know when they had the last hummingbird at their feeders. The very latest, and several days beyond the usual departure date, was an immature female at George Worley's feeder in the NE Heights on Armistice Day (or should I say Veterans', or Armed Services Day? It is all so confusing.) From previous conversations, it seems likely this was a RUFIOUS.

There is both good and bad news on the WHOOPING CRANES. There was an excellent hatch in the natural flock at Wood Buffalo National Park. From 26 eggs, 23 chicks were hatched, 18 were banded, and a total of 20 fledged. All of these were seen on August 13. This is an all-time recent record. The other two aspects of the Whooping Crane Recovery Program are not as encouraging. No eggs were laid at the Patuxent research center this year. Two of four eggs received from the wild flock did hatch. It is my understanding that of the eggs received at Gray's Lake, due to unfavorable weather, predators, and accidents, only two chicks were raised to fledging. There were also four losses of older birds during the winter. This year, instead of having 31 Whoopers in the middle Rio Grande Valley, as we did last year, we have a possibility of only 29, and with anticipated losses we will most likely end up with only about 27 birds.

The first WHOOPING CRANE arrival this fall was a single adult at Bernardo on October 23. Three more adults were seen by Jim Findley flying over Corrales on October 25. The last word I have had, two birds arrived at Bosque del Apache that same weekend, and one is believed to have overflowed the refuge. The one from Bernardo is thought to have gone on down to Bosque del Apache. As of November 17, only two birds were known to be at Bosque del Apache, and my reporters tell me

they are very hard to see. It could be the goose hunt has caused them to avoid their usual haunts on the refuge.

LATE NOTE: On November 20 Liz Broemel called to ask about a bird she had seen at Bosque del Apache on an AAUW field trip on Tuesday, 11/18. She said at that time the bulletin board in the Visitor Center indicated that refuge personnel have now counted 6 Whooping Cranes on the refuge. However, no one on the field trip saw any of them!

Undoubtedly, the most exciting recent bird report was a call from Pat Basham at Socorro that she had a RUFIOUS-BACKED ROBIN at the feeder, actually in the water, in her yard. This is a Mexican species which sometimes wanders across the lower Rio Grande into Texas, and occasionally into southern Arizona and California. Paul Steel and I went down the next morning, and after about half an hour of searching and impatient waiting, we were fortunate to have the bird once more come to the feeder. The bird came back that afternoon and again the next day, but was not seen after that. A few concerned people were notified, but were not able to find and record the bird. Pat did manage to get one picture, which hopefully will be sufficiently definitive to constitute documentation of the occurrence. If so, this will be the first record of a new species for the state.

Also of considerable interest was what amounted to a minor eruption of eastern BLUE JAYS. On the afternoon of October 15, Mary Lou Arthur called and said she had a flock of five of these birds in her backyard with a flock of black birds which she assumed to be Starlings. As soon as I could get there, I went over and spent over an hour driving the streets, walking and listening, but was unsuccessful in locating them. The next morning I returned and within less than one-half hour spotted one of the jays within about a block and a half of Mary Lou's

house. I wound up seeing at least two in with a large flock of BREWER'S BLACKBIRDS. On October 19, John Durrie called and told me a nonbirding friend had reported a BLUE JAY on Sunningdale, about a mile north of where Mary Lou's birds were ranging. A letter from Ross Rasmussen reported seeing a BLUE JAY at Bosque del Apache on October 16 and one at Rio Rancho on October 25. Then at the Audubon Council meeting on the 25th of October, I learned that Eleanor Espinosa had seen two BLUE JAYS near Espanola the previous weekend, and Chris Rustley had seen one the same Saturday at Costilla up near the Colorado line.

Also of considerable interest was a report from Bill Howe on October 3 of two LESSER GOLDEN PLOVER in a flock of about 30 MOUNTAIN PLOVER at the Grassland Turf Farm north of Los Lunas. On October 18, Paul Steel came onto a flock of 18 MONTEZUMA QUAIL just north of the New Mexico state line near Guadalupe Mountain National Park. The same morning he had seen a large covey of NORTHERN BOBWHITE near Jal. He also found a first winter LAUGHING GULL, as well as first-year CALIFORNIA and FRANKLIN'S GULLS (one of each) at the outlet to Cochiti Dam on October 31. On November 12, at the pond up near Sandia Park, he saw briefly what he was positive was an immature, first winter RED-NECKED GREBE. However, he was unable to get a picture when he went back with Larry Smith and a camera the same evening, or when he and I went back the next morning. This species has never been verified in the state, so without documentation it must remain hypothetical on the state list.

Many other birds have been reported or come up in conversations with various people on various occasions. If not unusual, it is always a matter of interest to know who is seeing what, and when and where the birds were seen. For at least two months, people have been telling me of flights of SANDHILL CRANES high overhead and

moving south. The earliest was a report from Ben Reybold on September 22, of four on the pond at the Tanoan Country Club.

On October 1, Delores Carlson called to tell me she had seen the BROWN THRASHER, possibly the same one we had seen earlier at her bird feeder. Pat Basham also had one at her place in Socorro on October 29, as well as some CEDAR WAXWINGS.

Ross Rasmussen had written on the 16th of October and reported 2 WESTERN GREBES, 2 AMERICAN BITTERNs, and a FALCON at Bosque del Apache. On the 26th of October, he reported seeing a WINTER WREN, TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRES, CASSIN'S FINCHES, and at least 23 GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS along the Piedra Lisa Trail.

On October 2, I visited the east side of the Sandias in preparation for a field trip with the Sandia Mountains Wildlife Conservation Association. Some of the more interesting birds seen included RED CROSSBILLS, OSPREY, 3 CASSIN'S KINGBIRDS (late), MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE, PLAIN TITMOUSE, RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, WESTERN BLUEBIRD, TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE, YELLOW-RUMPED and TOWNSEND'S WARBLERS, BROWN TOWHEE, DARK-EYED (GRAY-HEADED) JUNCO, and EVENING GROSBEAK. We saw most, but not all, of these on the field trip, but did have the added pleasure of seeing a SHARP-SHINNED HAWK.

A trip to Bosque del Apache on October 9 was not too productive. The water had just been turned in to reflood the marshes a little over a week before, and most areas were not up to par. However, we did find the first 4 SNOW GEESE, a few DUCKS, of four species, about 400 SANDHILL CRANES (at least one pair of which were of the Lesser race), but no WHOOPING CRANES were in yet. There were still a few remaining BARN SWALLOWS, a flock of AMERICAN CROWS, and 4-6 CHIHUAHUA RAVENS, 3 LESSER YELLOWLEGS, and a single SOLITARY SANDPIPER. There were several

kinds of SPARROWS: LARK, VESPER, SAVANNAH, our first WHITE-CROWNED of the season, and three small flocks of LARK BUNTINGS. On the way down we stopped at the Grasslands Sod Farm and found a SAGE THRASHER and several WATER PIPITS.

Peggy Melton called on October 21 to tell me a RED-TAILED HAWK, possibly the one that has wintered the past several years near their home in Glenwood Hills, has returned. Brownie Hibbins also called a few days later to let me know they had a pair of EVENING GROSBEAKS at their feeder. This is unusual, especially that early in the fall. On the 25th, George Cohn called to tell of a POORWILL which his wife and daughter are tending for the Rio Grande Zoo. These are fascinating little birds, and much can be learned from being around them. Thanks again to all the good folks who have called in to share their bird observations and experiences with us.

Paul Steel has taken several short trips around the state and has had some interesting sightings in addition to what has been cited above. On the 7th of November at Rock Hound State Park, he found a BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER, and the next day at Old Refuge (south of Las Cruces), he came on a flock of 9 EASTERN BLUEBIRDS. On the 14th and 15th, respectively, he found 2 COMMON LOONS at Cochiti Dam and one at Jemez Reservoir.

When I saw Jim Aubrey on November 11, he told me of a subadult GOLDEN EAGLE on the Sandia Base which he had seen the previous week. What have you been seeing lately? I'm always glad to have folks call and chat about birds.

By now, I'm sure all of you are busy with preparations for the Christmas, Hanukkah, New Year's holidays. Greetings and best wishes from your Ravin' Reporter. Y'all have a good time, and see lots of exciting birds, and may the year ahead be the best ever.  
—R.L.T.



*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 any thing and he have  
two wings, he 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*

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Albuquerque, New Mexico 87190 - 0002

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