Central New Mexico Audubon Society

Burrowins Owl

February/March 1999 Issue

Volume 28 No. 2

Welcome to Central New Mexico Audubon Society! Come join us. All our meetings and field trips are free and open to the public

Make a January Resolution to Get Involved

Filling the gap between Christmas Bird Counts and Spring Migration will be easy this year — the New Mexico legislature goes into session, and that can command all your birdwatching skills of observation, diligence, patience and perseverance! That is why we're asking you to get involved and insure that legislation enacted protects our wildlife.

Contact your state representative and senator and voice your SUPPORT for the following issues:

• The continued existence of the Conservation Services Division. No other agency in the State is as important to the nongame species in New Mexico — from their monitoring to their protection to their recovery. This program is currently funded by a general fund appropriation from the state legislature. Threats to "umbrella"its funding under Game and Fish amount to its nonfunding — i.e., nonexistence. Why? Because there is a group of constituents who believe that hunting and fishing (game and fish) are the ONLY legitimate concerns of a "Game and Fish" Department. Use your voice to urge

a consciousness of conservation by rallying political and economic support for the Conservation Services Division.

② Legislation known as the "Riparian Enhancement Act": a non-regulatory bill which would set up a grant, education, and technical assistance program which would result in restoration and maintenance of healthy riparian areas statewide.

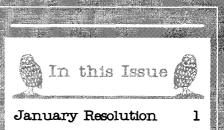
Degislation known as the "Reptile and Amphibians Protection Bill": a bill which would prevent the commercial exploitation of New Mexico's native populations of the "herps." Currently without protection, reptiles and amphibians are being collected and exported from New Mexico without any regulation whatsoever. Our experience in the past with other species should tell us how often the yellow flags of "threatened" or "endangered" go up when such practices are not mitigated.

• Also please write to Governor Johnson to support the nomination to the New Mexico State Game Commission of Ellery E. Worthen for District 5 (Bernalillo County) and Dr. Sanford D. Schemnitz for member-at-large. Stress the importance of having qualified people serve on the commission who have educational training and/or experience in wildlife management.

Want to get more involved? Follow issues more closely? Know just when to contact a key committee member? Call Dave Henderson at Randall Davey in Santa Fe, 983-4609. Meet with Conservation Voters Alliance and other enviro groups every Wednesday starting January 27 at 11:30 - 1:00 at State Land Office located in Santa Fe, 827-5760. To receive special notices about issues, send your e-mail address to bcokenm@aol.com. Visit the NM Legislature web site at http://legis.state.nm.us, and see what they are up to.

Oh, and one last thing: Check off **Share With Wildlife** contribution on your New Mexico State tax return. After all, when it's voluntary, it's not tax, is it?

—Beth Hurst-Waitz, president



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Great Backyard Bird Count

The Second Annual 'Great Backyard Bird Count' takes place on February 19, 20, 21 and 22 this year. This is an easy but wonderful opportunity to participate in a continent-wide count of backyard birds. Co-sponsored by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society (and supported by Wild Birds Unlimited and Ford Motor Company), the GBBC requires only that you observe birds in your own backyard for 15 to 30 minutes on any one of the four days (you can of course observe longer and more often if you wish), count the birds and submit your results directly on the Internet to the BirdSource website at http://birdsource.cornell.edu.

How to Count:

Each day that you observe, count the highest number of each species that you see at any one time. For example, if you see three American Robins and two Western Scrub-Jays at one moment, and after they leave, you see one Robin and four Scrub-Jays at another time, your report would indicate that you saw three Robins and four Scrub-Jays.

What to Count:

There are 140 species included on the GBBC checklist for New Mexico, many of whom are unlikely visitors to your backyard. You can view the checklist at the BirdSource website. You have the option to include all of the 140 species that you see or you can limit your count to just some of the species.

How to Report:

You need to do a separate report for each day you observe. Do not combine the count of Scrub-Jays for one day with Scrub-Jays seen on the other days, and do not use the highest total observed on one day as your total for another day unless you see that same number on the other day.



Alert: New Bird Disease

A new disease called Coot and Eagle Brain Lesion Syndrome (CEBLS) is caused by a neurotoxin that creates lesions in the brains and spinal cords of bald eagles and coots. It is being tracked by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. If you see coots or eagles displaying impaired motor function, such as bobbing, weaving, and erratic walking and swimming movements, report these sightings to researchers listed on the CEBLS Web site at: www.mvk.usace.army.mil/od/odm/cebls.htm

Chapter N	lember Application
local chapter to the address	me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of m Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership car
NAME	
ADDRESS .	
CITY	STATE ZIP
Pleas	make all checks payable to the National Audubon Society.
1	Send this application and your check to: National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Data Center P.O. Box 30002 • Albuquerque, NM 87114-1710 LOCAL CHAPTER Central New Mexico Audubon Society
Local Chapter	

Use the above form for new subscriptions only. Contact Membership Chairperson for changes of address or correction in your Burrowing Owl label. Nonmembers can receive the Burrowing Owl by sending your name and address with \$12 to CNMAS, c/o Beth Hurst-Waitz, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., 87114-1710

GBBC cont'd

If you do not have your own access to the Internet, you can still participate by entering your counts at a Wild Birds Unlimited store or at most public libraries. Entry is a simple fill-in-the-blanks process. You can also count birds in your neighborhood park or other nearby place where birds regularly visit. For more information, visit the very helpful and easy to use BirdSource website.

Important Information

Wildlife Rescue

If you find a sick or injured bird, call 344-2500.

Rare Bird Alert

In Albuquerque is 323-9323.e-mail: Pinyonjay@aol.com

Bat inTrouble? (Talking Talons)

Call before you intervene. 281-1133 or 281-1515



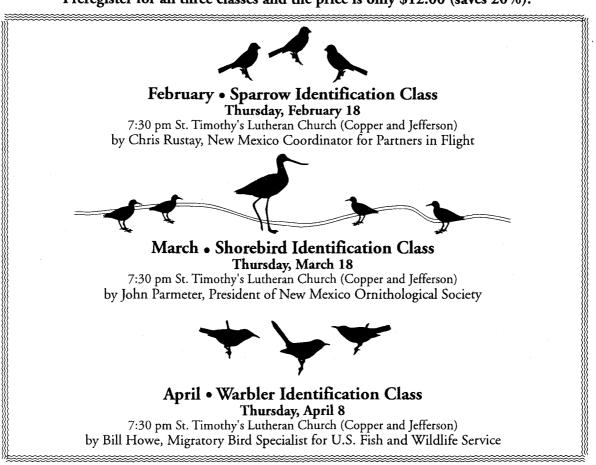
Programs: Audubon Birding Academy

For the next three meetings, in place of our regular meetings, Central New Mexico Audubon Society will offer a series of bird identification classes conducted by some of New Mexico's most accomplished birdwatchers.

Just in time for Spring migration, learn or refresh your memory about the basics of behavior, habitat preference, and physical characteristics of Sparrows, Shorebirds, and Warblers found in our state. Get in the spirit of birding and bring along your binoculars and field guides to use during the slide shows.

All classes will be held at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church located at the corner of Copper and Jefferson NE. Please arrive early, doors open at 7:00 pm, to enjoy refreshments and meet other members. Classes will start promptly at 7:30 pm. Preregistration is requested. For more information, call Pat at 856-7443..

The cost is only \$5.00 per class payable in advance or at the door. Preregister for all three classes and the price is only \$12.00 (saves 20%).



cut along line			
SPARROW \$5.00	SHOREBIRD \$5.00	☐ WARBLER \$5.00	☐ ALL THREE \$12.00
NAME		ADDRESS	- //
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	TO		



Audubon Field Trips

Everyone is welcome on field trips: Audubon members and nonmembers, novice and experienced birders.

February Trips

Sunday, February 14 Conchas Lake. Wintering sparrows, raptors and waterfowls. Meet at the West entrance to the Four Hills Shopping center on Central Avenue S.E. at 6:45 am. Dress appropriately for weather conditions and bring food, water and snacks for all day outing. Call Sei 266-2480 for details.

March Trips

Saturday, March 6 Montecello Point, Caballo Dam and Percha Dam. These sites often provide sightings of vagrant birds; and Percha Dam is one of the best year-round birding sites in New Mexico. Meet at the UNM Physics parking lot at the northwest corner of Yale and Lomas Blvd. at 6.45 am. This can be a day or overnight trip. Call Sei 266-2480 for details.

Saturday, March 20 Mystery Trip. Join Jim Place and Hawks Aloft for a trip to be determined by weather conditions and/or recent bird sightings. Meet Jim at the UNM Physics parking lot at 7 am. Call 883-1253 for details.

April Trips

Saturday, April 3 Bosque del Apache. Meet at the UNM Physics parking lot at 7 am for a full day of birding. Call Sei at 266-2480 for details.

The natural alternative

Backyard birding is an increasingly popular entertainment option.

Share it with you friends and family, and enjoy 15% off any bird feeder with this ad.





Wild Bird Center

The Promenade Shopping Center 5200 Eubank NE (Eubank at Spain NE) (Just East of Marie Callender's) 332-4737

Christmas Bird Count Report

The information for the following compilations of the Albuquerque count and the Bosque del Apache NWR count was provided by Hart Schwarz and Steve Cox. Hart's group of 49 found 105 species (21,057 individuals). Steve's group of 25 found 115 species (65,360 individuals). You can review the results of other New Mexico counts at www.birdsource.cornell.edu.

Bird Specie	12/20/98 Albuquerque Hart Schwarz	12/19/98 Bosque del Apache NWR Steve Cox
Pied-billed Grebe	9	15
American Eared Grebe	•	3
Western Grebe	•	1
American White Pelican	•	cw
Double-crested Cormorant	1	10
Neotropical Cormorant	•	10
Great Blue Heron	29	36
Great Egret	•	4
Green Heron	2 3	•
Black-crowned Night-Heron	3	2
White-faced Ibis	•	8
Tundra Swan	•	cw
Greater White-fronted Goose	1	•
Snow Goose	370	21,096
Snow Goose (blue form)	•	23
Ross's Goose	•	70
Canada Goose	640	316
Wood Duck	192	3
Gadwall	183	220
American Wigeon	843	9
Mallard	3,737	25,629
Mexican Duck	•	4
Northern Shoveler	114	626
Northern Pintail	19	956
Green-winged Teal	23	23
duck species	•	16
Canvasback	3	18
Redhead	•	12
Ring-necked Duck	55	9
Lesser Scaup	3	4
Bufflehead	6	19
Common Goldeneye	•	3
Hooded Merganser	53	42
Common Merganser	53	17
Cinnamon Teal	•	1
Ruddy Duck	28	66
Bald Eagle	5	18
Northern Harrier	10 14	50 8
Sharp-shinned Hawk		11
Cooper's Hawk	21	
Accipiter species	25	1 45
Red-tailed Hawk	35	
Harlan's Hawk	•	3
Ferruginous Hawk	• -	. 1
Rough-legged Hawk	• 	ring count week
	.w=nnservea.au	II LILV LUWILL WEEK

cw=observed during count week

Burrowing Owl Subscription

The Burrowing Owl Newsletter is published six times a year, February, April, June, August, October and December. Subscription is free to Central New Mexico Audubon Society members, \$12 to nonmembers. Central New Mexico Audubon Society, P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque, NM, 87190-0002.

February/March 1999

Marsh Wren

Golden-crowned Kinglet

Bird Specie	12/20/98 Albuquerque Hart Schwarz	12/19/98 Bosque del Apache NWR Steve Cox	Bird Specie	12/20/98 Albuquerque Hart Schwarz	12/19/98 Bosque del Apache NW Steve Cox
Buteo species	•	1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	49	88
Golden Eagle	•	3	Western Bluebird	115	
American Kestrel	21	46	Mountain Bluebird	46	
Merlin	1	3	Townsend's Solitaire	21	
Prairie Falcon	1	$\tilde{2}$	Hermit Thrush	14	,
Peregrine falcon	•	1	American Robin	1,013	
falcon species		1	Sage Thrasher	1,013	
Ring-necked Pheasant	6	5	Curve-billed Thrasher	14	
Wild Turkey	•	13		14	
			Crissal Thrasher	2.926	216
Scaled Quail	226	•	European Starling	2,826	
Gambel's Quail	27	38	American Pipit	6	
Virginia Rail	6	2	Cedar Waxwing	243	
American Coot	63	2,225	Yellow-rumped Warbler	121	*4
Sandhill Crane	389	5,998	Pyrrhuloxia	•	2
Whooping Crane	•	. 2	Green-tailed Towhee	•	
Killdeer	6	2	Spotted Towhee	24	2
Greater Yellowlegs	•	9	Canyon Towhee	39	51
Long-billed Dowitcher	•	40	Rufous-crowned Sparrow	1	
Common Snipe	1	7	Brewer's Sparrow	1	
Bonaparte's Gull	•	28	Black-throated Sparrow	2	
Ring-billed Gull	212	13	Sage Sparrow	1	•
Herring Gull	1	•	Savannah Sparrow	6	
Rock Dove	444	39	Song Sparrow	180	
White-winged Dove	5	•	Lincoln's Sparrow	100	23
Mourning Dove	63	155	Swamp Sparrow	3	
Inca Dove	2	133		4	
			White-throated Sparrow	4	
Greater Roadrunner	10	4	Harris's Sparrow	J. 701	1.05
Western Screech-Owl	1	5	White-crowned Sparrow	731	1,05
Great Horned Owl	7	7	Golden-crowned Sparrow	1	
Burrowing Owl	1	•	Dark-eyed Junco	1,102	*483
Belted Kingfisher	10	6	Red-winged Blackbird	1,948	2,057
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	•	4	Western Meadowlark	57	44
Red-headed Woodpecker	cw	•	meadowlark species	•	86
Downy Woodpecker	10	2	Yellow-headed Blackbird	•	1,663
Hairy Woodpecker	1	1	Brewer's Blackbird	72	168
Norhern Flicker	73	68	Great-tailed Grackle	5	16
Black Phoebe	15	4	Common Grackle	•	
Eastern Phoebe	•	i	Brown-headed Cowbird		
Say's Phoebe	10	8	blackbird species		90
Loggerhead Shrike	.3	16	Cassin's Finch	6	
Western Scrub-Jay	37	10	House Finch	637	35
		•		37	2
Pinyon Jay	65		Pine Siskin	31	
American Crow	2,676	201	Lesser Goldfinch	106	0.7
Chihuahuan Raven	•	. 2	American Goldfinch	106	
Common Raven	8	. 9	House Sparrow	346	40
raven species	•	2		* co	mbined subspecies
Horned Lark	116	•			
Black-capped Chickadee	47	•			10
Mountain Chickadee	4	•			
Juniper Titmouse	9	•			75 .
Verdin	•	7	CRANES	Sy and	
Bushtit	51	· 9	I WILKANES	(5 CK	NM2
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	•			
White-breasted Nuthatch	31	3	A Birdii	ng and Nature Sho	p
Brown Creeper	2	2		Feeding Supplies • W	
Cactus Wren	3	•	Books • Unique Gi	fts • Art • Contempo	DEATY CEATTS
Rock Wren	cw	1	 グブ		
Bewick's Wren	19	16	1		
House Wren	•	1	400-B San Felipe NW		Lori Korngut
March Wren	٥	40	Old Town		Joel Korngut

cw

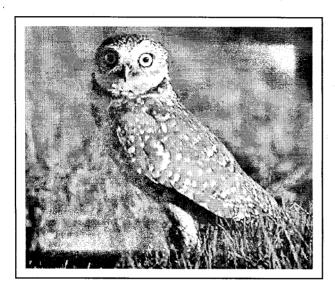
rkshops ary Crafts Lori Korngut Joel Korngut 505-243-0800 400-B San Felipe NW Old Town Albuquerque, New Mexico 87104



Owls and Dogs

We're not talking about canines here, but prairie dogs. One would assume that these industrious earth moving rodents would be a good snack for a raptor but they play a much more important role in the lives of Burrowing Owls.

Burrowing Owls are small ground-dwelling owls found in open, dry grasslands, agricultural and range lands, and desert habitats from Canada to Mexico, and in some



southern states including Louisiana and Florida. They are opportunistic feeders, consuming mostly beetles and grasshoppers; mice, rats, gophers, and ground squirrels are also important food items; and lizards, scorpions, young cottontail rabbits, bats, and birds, such as sparrows and horned larks, are eaten as well. When one reads how far and wide the Burrowing Owl has adapted and how varied their diet is, it is surprising to learn that their populations are shrinking in many areas. Why? Pesticides and destruction of grasslands are contributing factors, but active programs for killing off prairie dogs are destroying more than their food source. Since the owls will eat just about anything they can carry off and they coexist well in some urban areas, it is becoming evident that the Burrowing Owl's Achilles heel is its dependence on ready-made nesting burrows supplied by ground squirrels and prairie dogs. So much so that, in Minnesota, Burrowing Owls have not bred since 1991 which is thought to be because of an active prairie dog eradication program by the U.S. and Canada.

Fortunately, in New Mexico, Burrowing Owls are faring better than in the northern states. Prairie dogs are being "managed" here as well, but not as extensively and

several groups are working to monitor Burrowing Owl populations to better understand what can be done to protect these small owls in the Southwest.

Auduboners can contribute to the knowledge on the Burrowing Owl distribution in the Southwest by looking for Burrowing Owls whenever you are out on field trips. Carol Findley is a graduate student in the Fishery & Wildlife Science Dept. at NMSU, and she is conducting research on the distribution and population dynamics of the Burrowing Owl. In your travels in New Mexico, Texa, Arizona, Sonora, or Chihuahua, you should record your Burrowing Owl sightings. A paragraph with date, location (highway mile marker, maps, or descriptions), number of birds, whether or not there is an obvious burrow, and general habitat should be emailed to rcampbell@zianet.com or mailed to Carol Findley, 1941 Mahogany Drive, Las Cruces, NM 88001.

One last note. Concern about the loss of nesting burrows has also inspired some creative designs for building artificial nesting structures for the owls. A California group has posted their plan on the web at: www.srcsd.com/about/about_envir/envir_casebur/nestsite.html. These artificial burrows are quickly adopted by owls when positioned nearby owl colonies. Maybe we should be building Burrowing Owl condos.

Thursday Morning Birding Group

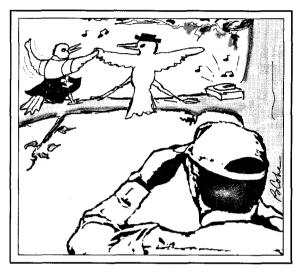
For information on weekly birding outings (every Thursday), call Julie Goodding at 255-9366. Meeting time and location, as well as duration, vary.

Audubon	
Enclosed please find my check for \$	dventures lucational
I choose to designate	
Name	
Address	
City, State, Zip	

Help support this educational outreach program!Send your check payable to CNMAS with this form to Ron Waitz, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., Albuquerque, NM 87114.



For Your Amusement



Scientist discovers unrecorded courtship dance.

37th Annual NMOS Meeting

The 1999 New Mexico Ornithological Society meeting will be held at the San Juan College in Farmington, on Saturday, February 20. The registration fee is \$5 per person(students are exempt) and \$16 per person for the banquet. Please contact Bo West, 10 Katchina, Los Alamos NM 87544, phone (505)662-7343 to register or for more info. Here is a schedule of some of the activities.

Friday,	Feb.	19
7:00-9:	00pn	n

Pom Registration at Best Western Inn & Suites, 700 Scott Avenue, Farmington

Saturday, Feb. 20

Early morning Field trip along Animas River Trail

starts from Best Western Inn

10:30-noon Registration continues

11:00-11:45 am Business meeting

1:00-5:00 pm Paper Session, presentation of

research papers

6:30pm Banquet at San Juan College in

Sun's Dining Room

8:00pm Banquet Speaker: Dr. Tim Reeves

"SanJuan County Birds: Recent

Research and Discoveries"

Sunday, Feb. 21

Field Trip B-Square Ranch, Tom Bolack's Ranch

Field Trip NAPI farms
Field Trip Morgan Lake

Newsletter Deadline

Materials to be included in the April/May issue of the Burrowing Owl must be received by March 15. Contact Browning Coke at 256-9130 or email bcokenm@aol.com.

Thank You!

We at Central New Mexico Audubon Chapter have been the recipients of a cornucopia of kindness recently, and we want to extend a cornucopia of thanks in return:

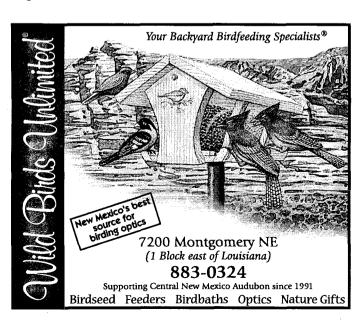
Jim Lewis, long-time member and teacher of the popular course at UNM on natural gardens and use of native edible plants, kindly donated a screen for use at our monthly meetings and school demonstrations. This is especially welcome now that the church's walls are painted green! Thanks, Jim, for your timely and oft-used gift.

Ina and Maynard Miller donated the book, "Birds of Israel," signed by the author. This is a comprehensive book that goes beyond art into science, with its in-depth research and compendium of statistical data and facts. As part of our CNMAS library, this book is available for any member to borrow. Let Donna Thatcher know if you're interested. Thank you, Ina and Maynard, for this lovely gift.

Rupert McHarney is an avid photographer who has pursued both birds and his art while on nature adventures throughout the U.S., Canada and Mexico. He recently donated 297 color slides to Central New Mexico Audubon Society, including a unique series of 19 slides of young burrowing owls off the nest—a rare experience! Thank

you from all of us!

The neat thing about "Thanks-Giving" is we never really run out of people to thank. Our litany here wouldn't be complete without thanking Lynda Geron at the West Side Wild Birds Unlimited and Geni Krolick at the Wild Birds Unlimited on Montgomery for publicizing our Chapter events in their newsletters. Thanks for helping us get the word out!



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Washington, DC 20500
(202) 456-1111
e-mail: President@WhiteHouse.gov

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New Mexico Office David Henderson, Randall Davey Audubon Center P.O. Box 9314 Santa Fe, NM 87504 (505) 983-4609

Bosque del Apache NWR (505) 835-1828

US Fish and Wildlife Service 500 Gold Avenue, SW Albuquerque, NM 87102 Regional Director (505) 766-2321 Refuges and Wildlife (505) 766-2036 Habitat Conservation (505) 766-2914

Sandia Ranger District US Forest Service Clifford Dils, District Ranger 11776 Highway 337 Tijeras, NM 87059 (505) 281-3304

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish Villagra Building P.O. Box 25112 Santa Fe, NM 87503-0001 (505) 827-6681

DIRECTORY

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Sei Tokuda 3008 Marble Avenue NE 87106 phone 266-2480

NEW MEXICO COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE/PARTNERS IN FLIGHT REP Jonalyn Yancey 860 State Road 344, Edgewood, NM 87015 work 884-6807 home 286-2949

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