

Burrowing Owl

February/March 2000 Issue



Volume 29 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.

CNMAS Birding Academy Begins 2nd Year

The Chapter is pleased to again present its popular Birding Academy. The first Birding Academy, presented last year, was a great success, in terms of interest, attendance, quality of presentations and as a major fundraiser.

This year's Academy again features three experienced and entertaining birders. The first class will be held on February 17. Celestyn Brozek will enlighten us on the basics of woodpecker behavior, habitat preference and physical characteristics. Celestyn teaches "Introduction to Birdwatching" at the UNM-Valencia Campus, as well as numerous birding workshops in the State.

"Flycatchers are an eye-crossing, hair-pulling, puzzling challenge..."

Next, on March 16, Christopher Rustay will try to straighten out one of the more confusing bird groups, the flycatchers, through the use of

slides, diagrams and call notes. Christopher considers this group, which includes phoebes, pewees and kingbirds, an "eye-crossing, hair-pulling puzzling challenge." He suggests that you bring along your field guide (a good idea for each of the classes), and recommends especially the Third Edition of the National Geographic Society's Guide as the best for these birds. Christopher is with Hawks Aloft and is the State coordinator for Partners in Flight and the Important Bird Areas project.

The third session will be conducted by Jim Place, a founding member of Hawks Aloft. This class is now scheduled for April 27 (the previously announced date is no longer correct). Jim will help us identify the birds of Spring by their songs. The mating season usually brings out the best in bird singing, so this should be a lot of fun. Jim says that the methodology he will be using at the class was developed by Jim Travis. *More details on page 2.*

Share with Wildlife Deserves Our Support

Income tax filing is an easy time to make an important contribution to wildlife in New Mexico. By applying a portion of your refund to Share with Wildlife, you can help finance this non-game wildlife program run by the NM Department of Game and Fish. This program, which is entirely supported by donations, provides wildlife education programs, and rehabilitation and research activities for non-game wildlife species. Contributions, which can also be made by sending a check payable to Share with Wildlife to the Department, are tax-deductible.

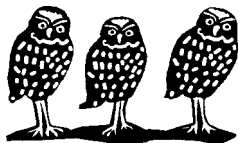


A contribution will also entitle you to receive the Program's informative and well-done newsletter, published three times a year. The newsletter contains interesting articles on the many projects supported by Share with Wildlife.

To learn more about this program, check out their website at www.gmfish.state.nm.us. Click on the "Nongame" button.

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Audubon Field Trips

Everyone is welcome on field trips: Audubon members and nonmembers, novice and experienced birders. Call Sei for more information 266-2480.

February Trips

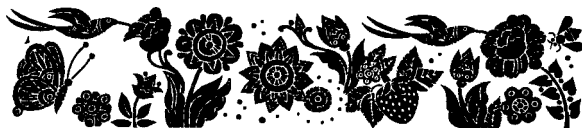
Sunday, February 13 Cochiti Lake. This is a good area for Bald Eagles in the Winter. Also, ducks, gulls and raptors. This will be a half-day trip. Dress accordingly. Meet at 7:30 A.M. at the Far North Shopping behind the donut shop on San Mateo and north of Academy.

March Trips

Saturday, March 11 Mystery Trip. March is an unpredictable birding month. We will decide where we will go after checking the Thursday Rare Bird Alert. Meet at 7:30 A.M. at the UNM Physics Building parking lot on the NE corner of Lomas and Yale Blvd. NE. Dress accordingly and bring lunch.

April Trips

Saturday, April 1 Bosque del Apache. The seasonal road opens on this day and we will be greeting the early migrating shorebirds. This will be a day trip. Bring snacks, water and lunch. Meet at 7 am. at the UNM Physics Building parking lot.



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.

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.

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

Audubon Programs CNMAS Birding Academy

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

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 Beth at 898-8514.

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%).

February Woodpeckers

Thursday, February 17
by Celestyn Brozek, who teaches "Introduction to Birdwatching" at the UNM-Valencia Campus

March Flycatchers Identification

Thursday, March 16
by Chris Rustay of Hawks Aloft

April Birds of Spring by Song

A methodology developed by Jim Travis.
Thursday, April 27
by Jim Place, a founding member of Hawks Aloft

✂ cut along line

Woodpeckers \$5.00
 Birds of Spring \$5.00

Flycatchers \$5.00
 ALL THREE \$12.00

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804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., 87114-1710*



February/March 2000

Adventures in the Rockies by Helen Haskell

The only sound was the loose gravel and rocks kicking up at the side of my car as I slowly drove up the dirt road. A shrub hillside to my right, an open area to my left, with a fast flowing creek and another hillside beyond that. An osprey on its nest, in a large pine, once struck by lightning. In the distance, huge boulders carved by ancient glaciers lead my eyes up to the closest peaks of Wyoming's Wind River Range. This was Torrey Valley, my home for the next week.

Passing through a wooden archway I reached Whiskey Mountain Wildlife Conservation Camp, home of Audubon's Camp in the Rockies. It was June 26, 1999



and for months I'd been looking forward to this experience. I was fortunate to have been chosen and sponsored by CNMAS to attend this camp. A wonderful person, Sei Tokuda, had first mentioned the teacher scholarship to me, and now here I was.

I stepped out of the car, anxious to explore. New plants, animals, geologic stories waiting to be told. The first to arrive, I was encouraged to explore. I laced up my boots, and off I went.

That evening everyone gathered to meet. We were a small group of twenty participants, of whom over half were teachers. Over the next week we had the opportunity to learn about geology, plants, mammals, and birds, in particular those of Torrey Valley. Camp fires, canoeing, a visit to Grand Teton National Park, hiking up Whiskey Mountain, and great discussions on endangered species and Wyoming wildlife laws and practices, enlightened people and helped form lasting friendships and memories.

As someone who was consistently encouraged to be outside exploring as a child, and now, as a teacher of ecology in an outdoor setting, the most exciting part of the week was learning outdoors. Hands-on. Picking up things. Listening. Sharing. Smiling. Learning. Two of the participants, Steve and Sally, were there only because their daughter was working there that summer as a 'ranch hand'. Steve and Sally admitted themselves that their usual vacation involved a very nice hotel, valet service etc.

Over the week Sally and Steve's enthusiasm grew and grew and was contagious. Torrey Valley and the Audubon camp were opening their eyes to the outdoors, the connections in ecosystems, the laws and issues surrounding wildlife and land use. I remember them

getting up in the cold early morning to hunt for the elusive MacGillivray's Warbler, getting animated in a discussion on endangered species, and hiking up high mountains to look for Big Horn Sheep. Steve, shouting in excitement

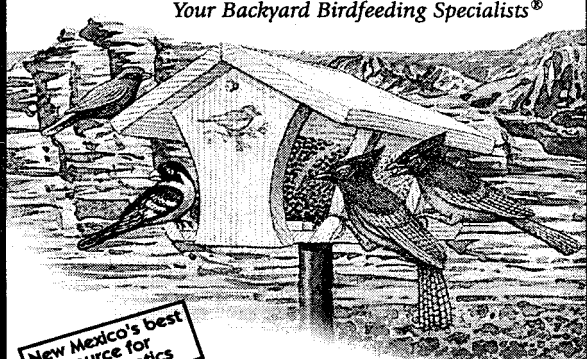
as a bird flew by. Sally, asking questions, the more she learned, verbalizing thoughts she had never had before on environmental issues back home.

For me, Steve and Sally were a favorite part of the week. Affirming for me again that education really does make a difference. We all have the opportunity to not only learn more, but also to teach and to share. I encourage us all to become

teachers, to pass on our knowledge, and in turn, receive knowledge from others. Take your neighbor who doesn't have a car, to a natural place they never thought they would go. Borrow extra binoculars for a child, and help open their eyes to the life around them. Get down on the ground and follow the ant trail around your house. Watch a leaf for a week this spring, as it unfurls from its bud. Marvel. Learn. Smile. Inspire someone. We all can do it. New Mexico has thousands of Torrey Valleys, and thousands of Steves and Sallys, wanting to learn. Many important scientists today say their interest was sparked by one small event by a caring adult. We are those adults.

Thank you to Central New Mexico Audubon Society for providing me with this experience. It is definitely one I will not forget.

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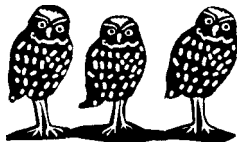


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Trip Reports by Sei Tokuda

Saturday, December 4, 1999 *Bosque del Apache.* This was another good day enjoyed by 12 birders. The weather was good - mostly clear skies with temperatures in the 40's with only occasional slight breezes. Close to 80 species were observed including nine species of raptors, four species of Grebes and three species of Mergansers. Everyone had a chance to see the bright yellow lores and eyebrows of the Savannah Sparrow.


Saturday, January 9, 2000 *Kit Carson Park and Corrales Bosque.* The first weekend CNMAS trip of the 21st Century was led by Les Hawkins. The vegetation along the ditch adjoining Kit Carson was completely cleared leaving the six birders with only four species of birds to be seen. The trip to Corrales was a bit more successful, but the weather turned cold and breezy with less than 20 species sighted. The notable birds were Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Song Sparrow, American Wigeon, Common Merganser and Sandhill Crane.

Hawk Watch Observation

Hawk Watch International will begin observation of the spring raptor migration during the last weekend of February. Banding will begin by the second weekend in March. Please call Bobbie Posy at 255-7622 for a map to the site in the Sandia Mountains or for more information.

Council Corner Meeting

Saturday, February 5, 10:00 *Audubon Council meeting at Sevilleta NWR.* Topics will include the New Mexico Game Commission and its policies, as well as exciting developments at Randall Davey Audubon Center, our State Center. All Auduboners are invited to attend.



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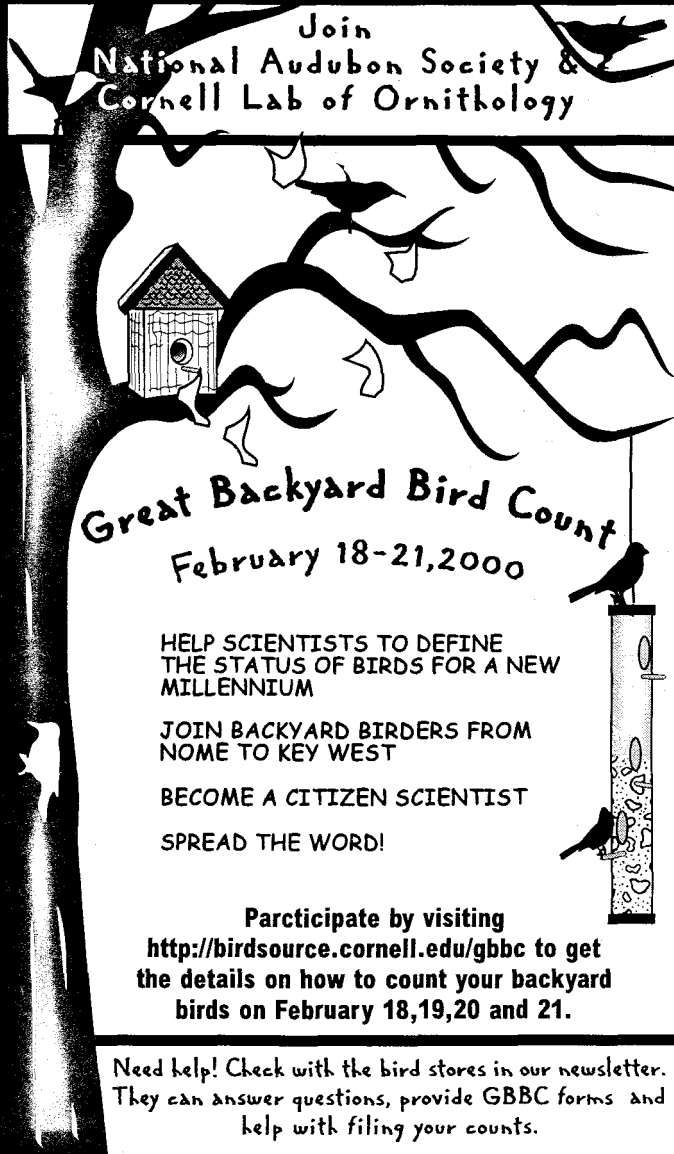
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Burrowing Owl Subscription

You can subscribe to our newsletter without being a member of our chapter. In fact, if you live outside our region you will have to subscribe separately in order to receive the newsletter. 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. Send checks to: Central New Mexico Audubon Society, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., 87114-1710

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Great Backyard Bird Count

February 18-21, 2000

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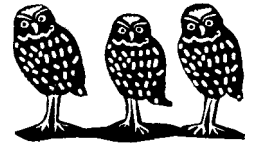
SPREAD THE WORD!

Participate by visiting
<http://birdsource.cornell.edu/gbbc> to get
the details on how to count your backyard
birds on February 18, 19, 20 and 21.

Need help! Check with the bird stores in our newsletter.
They can answer questions, provide GBBC forms and
help with filing your counts.

The Phil Fund

"Thank you's" are swirling, with the donation by Central New Mexico Audubon of \$5,810.60 to build the Phil Norton Photography Blind at the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. In their letter of acknowledgment, the Friends of the Bosque del Apache warmly wrote: "Your honoring of Phil in this way is such a kind and respectful and amazing act. (We) know that this donation and gesture mean a great to Phil." It means a great deal to us, too, and we want to send thanks of our own to our generous contributors to "The Phil Fund." Donations are still being received, and we appreciate the support of each and every one of you. First the funds - we'll accept amazing photographs of birds for the Burrowing Owl later!!!



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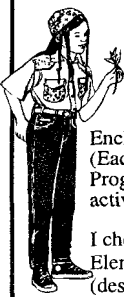
Cougars Need Protection

Central New Mexico Audubon Society, together with various animal protection organizations and environmental organizations, has joined in protesting the New Mexico Game Commission's decision, adopted in July, to implement a cougar-killing program which will allow for the killing of up to 34 cougars per year, for five years, in four bighorn sheep territories, whether or not cougars have killed bighorn sheep.

While there is no question that the state's bighorn populations are in dire straits, the "killing cougars" plan was adopted without the proper environmental analysis. There is no comprehensive bighorn sheep recovery plan. The impacts on the bighorn sheep of grazing, human encroachment, fire suppression, and habitat degradation have not been adequately assessed. The killing will be taking place in at least one Wilderness Area and in three Wilderness Study Areas.

On Tuesday, January 11, the Journal reported on the ruling by U.S. District Judge James Parker of Albuquerque which stops the federal government from killing cougars in New Mexico. The decision affects the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services, the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The ruling, however, has no bearing on the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish plan. Any attempt to halt the department's hunt of those lions would require a separate lawsuit against the state. Grove Burnett, director of the southwest office of the Western Environmental Law Center in Taos, which filed the federal suit, said the Environmental Law Center has not decided if it will take such action against the State.

There will undoubtedly be more actions and counteractions as this controversy continues. For now, the killing of cougars by contractors for the State of New Mexico is continuing. Write the New Mexico Game Commissioners to let them know you disapprove of their decision. Write Governor Gary Johnson to protest wildlife decisions which are not based in sound science and which



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Ron Waitz, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., Albuquerque, NM 87114.

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- A strong voice in Congress.

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\$10 of dues is for AUDUBON magazine. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery of your first issue of AUDUBON

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

don't address the root causes of problems. Ask him to help reform the process by which wildlife decisions are made in New Mexico. Tell him: *New Mexico should have a wildlife Commission, not a game Commission, since most wildlife is not being protected under current state laws; *a wildlife commission should consist mostly of trained biologists and ecologists, not laypeople; *the Department and Commission are not using recommendations from preminent institutions (such as the Hornocker Wildlife Institute) regarding wildlife management.

Write to the following:
Governor

- Gary Johnson**, NM State Capitol, Rm. 400, Santa Fe, NM 87503
NM Game Commissioners
- William Brininstool**, Chair, PO Drawer A, Jal, NM 88252
Gail Jean Cramer 405 San Paula, Farmington 87401
Stephen Doerr, 2106 Aspen, Portales 88130
Bud Hettinga, PO Box 2409, Las Cruces 88004
George A. Ortega, 2908 Calle de Pinos Altos, Santa Fe, 87505
Steve Padilla, 1641 Speakman, SE, Albuquerque 87123
Steven Emery, 13233 Jo Lane, P.O. Box 93665, Albuquerque 87199



February/March 2000

Christmas Bird Count Reports

The information for the following compilations of the Albuquerque, Bosque del Apache NWR and Sandia counts was provided by Hart Schwarz, Steve Cox and Christopher Rustay. Hart's Albuquerque group found 108 species (21,264 individuals). Steve's Bosque del Apache group of 25 found 118 species (81,081 individuals) and Christopher's Sandia group of 32 found 60 species (3,587 individuals). You can review the results of other New Mexico counts at <http://birdsource.tc.cornell.edu>.

Bird Specie	Schwarz 12/19 ABQ	Cox 12/18 BDA	Rustay 1/2 Sandia
Pied-billed Grebe	7	17	•
Eared Grebe	•	1	•
American White Pelican	•	9	•
Double-crested Cormorant	•	2	•
Neotropical Cormorant	•	3	•
Great Blue Heron	21	22	•
Great Egret	•	1	•
Cattle Egret	•	4	•
Black-crowned Night-Heron	•	3	•
White-faced Ibis	•	8	•
Greater White-fronted Goose	2	•	•
Snow Goose	8	25,728	•
Ross's Goose	•	96	•
Canada Goose	2,701	260	•
Wood Duck	223	1	•
Gadwall	114	278	•
American Wigeon	1,006	20	•
Mallard	1,402	18,709	15
Northern Shoveler	202	1,102	•
Northern Pintail	76	1,852	•
Green-winged Teal	33	105	•
Blue-winged Teal	•	1	•
duck species	•	10,000	•
Canvasback	7	12	•
Redhead	4	12	•
Ring-necked Duck	73	130	•
Greater Scaup	•	2	•
Lesser Scaup	12	4	•
scaup species	•	1	•
Bufflehead	6	30	•
Hooded Merganser	•	62	•
Common Merganser	100	2	•
Ruddy Duck	33	31	•
Bald Eagle	6	15	•
Northern Harrier	7	61	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	3	2
Cooper's Hawk	21	7	2
Red-tailed Hawk	34	50	16
Harlan's Hawk	•	4	•
Ferruginous Hawk	•	1	•
Buteo species	•	1	•
Golden Eagle	•	3	12
American Kestrel	28	29	15
Merlin	2	1	•
Ring-necked Pheasant	5	7	•
Wild Turkey	•	37	•
Scaled Quail	139	•	17
Gambel's Quail	17	75	21
Virginia Rail	1	2	•
Sora	1	1	•

Bird Specie	Schwarz 12/19 ABQ	Cox 12/18 BDA	Rustay 1/2 Sandia
American Coot	213	1,059	•
Sandhill Crane	738	12,250	•
Whooping Crane	•	2	•
Killdeer	43	10	•
Greater Yellowlegs	•	15	•
Least Sandpiper	•	2	•
peep species	•	1	•
Long-billed Dowitcher	•	11	•
Common Snipe	8	6	•
Bonaparte's Gull	•	1	•
Ring-billed Gull	222	25	•
gull species	•	3	•
Eurasian Collared-Dove	1	•	•
Rock Dove	957	58	49
White-winged Dove	47	10	•
Mourning Dove	126	46	9
Inca Dove	•	2	•
Greater Roadrunner	11	9	3
Western Screech-Owl	1	2	•
Great Horned Owl	3	6	4
Burrowing Owl	1	•	•
Asio species	•	1	•
Anna's Hummingbird	1	•	•
Belted Kingfisher	11	4	•
Red-naped Sapsucker	•	•	1
sapsucker species	•	•	1
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	4	9	4
Downy Woodpecker	16	•	1
Hairy Woodpecker	1	•	7
Picoides species	•	1	•
Northern Flicker	134	45	55
Black Phoebe	10	9	•
Eastern Phoebe	•	5	•
Say's Phoebe	10	19	1
Loggerhead Shrike	5	16	•
Blue Jay	1	•	•
Steller's Jay	•	•	34
Western Scrub-Jay	35	1	175
Pinyon Jay	1	•	140
Clark's Nutcracker	•	•	3
Black-billed Magpie	7	•	•
American Crow	1,844	3,113	287
Chihuahuan Raven	•	7	•
Common Raven	16	10	1280
raven species	•	9	•
Horned Lark	235	40	•
Black-capped Chickadee	49	•	•
Mountain Chickadee	1	•	136
Juniper Titmouse	9	•	32
Verdin	•	7	•
Bushtit	116	14	98
Red-breasted Nuthatch	•	•	32
White-breasted Nuthatch	38	1	20
Pygmy Nuthatch	•	•	1
Brown Creeper	3	•	•
Cactus Wren <small>cyw=observed during count week</small>	cw	•	•
Rock Wren	26	7	•
Canyon Wren	4	•	3
Bewick's Wren	72	24	1
Winter Wren	3	•	•
Marsh Wren	10	35	•
Golden-crowned Kinglet	•	•	2

February/March 2000



Science Fair Judges Needed

The State Science Fair is coming up and judging will take place at 12 noon on Friday, March 17, at UNM. We need a CNMAS volunteer to judge the exhibits and choose four winners for our CNMAS awards. You do not need to be a scientist to be a judge. It's fun, it's educational, and only requires two or three hours of your time! For information on being a judge, contact Ron Waitz at 898-8514. We really appreciate your help!



Save those Stamps

Don't forget to save your stamps for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Help RSPB preserve wetlands by trimming 1/8 inch around canceled stamps and sending your collections to Allison Leon, 283 El Conejo, Los Alamos, NM 87544. She'll deliver them to England on her annual trip. Take your own trip by visiting www.RSPB.org.UK.

Important Information

Wildlife Rescue

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

Rare Bird Alert

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Burrowing Owl Deadline

Information and articles to be included in the April/May 2000 issue of the Burrowing Owl must be received by **March 15**. Contact Browning Coke at 256-9130 or email bcokenm@aol.com.

Bird Specie	Schwarz 12/19 ABQ	Cox 12/18 BDA	Rustay 1/2 Sandia
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	33	25	6
Eastern Bluebird	•	•	10
Western Bluebird	82	27	177
Mountain Bluebird	2	15	•
Townsend's Solitaire	3	•	35
Hermit Thrush	14	1	2
American Robin	789	6	187
Northern Mockingbird	2	•	•
Sage Thrasher	•	1	•
Curve-billed Thrasher	11	2	4
Crissal Thrasher	5	1	6
European Starling	2,641	210	56
American Pipit	43	84	•
Cedar Waxwing	33	•	•
Yellow-rumped Warbler	58	24	4
Pyrrhuloxia	•	9	•
Green-tailed Towhee	•	cw	•
Spotted Towhee	41	9	8
Canyon Towhee	53	3	64
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	5	2	•
Chipping Sparrow	•	127	•
Brewer's Sparrow	13	290	•
Black-throated Sparrow	2	3	•
Sage Sparrow	102	92	•
Savannah Sparrow	2	46	•
Song Sparrow	224	201	10
Lincoln's Sparrow	4	2	•
Swamp Sparrow	4	3	•
White-throated Sparrow	5	1	3
Harris's Sparrow	2	•	•
White-crowned Sparrow	1,295	844	83
sparrow species	•	4	•
Dark-eyed Junco*	912	147	1,312
Red-winged Blackbird	1,679	1,214	•
Eastern Meadowlark	1	•	•
Western Meadowlark	116	114	3
meadowlark species	•	21	•
Yellow-headed Blackbird	•	1	•
Brewer's Blackbird	27	185	•
Great-tailed Grackle	112	18	•
Common Grackle	•	5	•
Brown-headed Cowbird	•	13	•
blackbird species	•	1500	•
Brown-capped Rosy-Finch	•	•	4
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	•	•	61
Black Rosy-Finch	•	•	7
Cassin's Finch	•	•	29
House Finch	784	29	145
Red Crossbill	•	•	5
Pine Siskin	1	•	39
Lesser Goldfinch	11	30	•
American Goldfinch	57	68	16
House Sparrow	767	4	38

* combined subspecies

Central New Mexico Audubon Society assumes no responsibility for injuries, personal or otherwise, incurred while attending society-sponsored activities and will not be held liable for such accidents. You attend at your own risk.

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