

Burrowing Owl

September, October, November 2002 Issue

Volume 31 No. 5

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

Lichen on the Nest

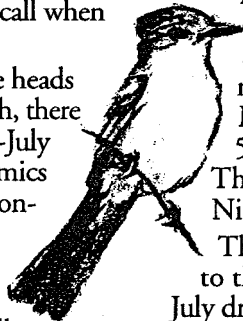
by Beth Hurst-Waltz, CNMAS President

TO ALL OUR MEMBERS, both long-time and new, let this be the "Welcome" banner to you as you read this premier issue of our new quarterly newsletter format. And especially to those of you who called inquiring about your "missing" August issue – thank you! There's nothing more gratifying than to hear that what we're doing is important enough to you that you'll call when there's a gap in the communication.

Because your officers, directors, and committee heads made this decision at our board meeting on May 29th, there was no way to get the announcement into the June-July Burrowing Owl. The decision was driven by economics and was related only by coincidence to National's contemporaneous switch to a quarterly publication.

Another change you'll see is imminent and has exciting potential. At State Audubon Council meetings for over a year, Audubon delegates from all over New Mexico have been talking about implementing a statewide Audubon newsletter. THAT premier issue is to debut in December. Dave Henderson, our State Director at Randall Davey Audubon Center in Santa Fe, and his staff are coordinating this state newsletter representing all five chapters (Albuquerque area, Las Cruces, Silver City, Santa Fe, and the presently dormant Roswell). Each chapter will have its own section, and you will continue to receive news about our programs, meetings, and chapter highlights. But at the same time, you will be linked with the bigger picture of Audubon in New Mexico, offering you even more opportunities for birding, networking, being active, and making a difference for birds and their environments throughout the Land of Enchantment. This change also will benefit each chapter economically and free up more of each chapter's funds for implementation and development of its/our own priorities and initiatives.

Earlier this month, Ron and I felt very lucky to have the opportunity to go birding in Portal with two of our young birder friends and their moms. Birding activity was everywhere,



Wrapping Birdathon 2002 in Bunting

With Celestyn's cheery report below, we're bringing you the wrap-up to this year's fund-raiser and fun-tripper.

Central New Mexico Audubon Society Birdathon 2002, June 8, Sandia Mts. with Celestyn M. Brozek

"Great thanks to everybody for the participation in the Birdathon and for your donations to CNMAS! It was a very enjoyable day. Although the birds were sometime scarce, we saw 72 species! This is the highest number we ever had during Birdathon in Sandia. In May 1999, we found 58 species, and in April 2001 - 51 species. Yesterday, some of us stayed till 11 PM. The only night birds we have heard were Common Nighthawk and Common Poorwill."

Thanks again to ALL of our contributors, and publicly to these folks whose names did not appear in the June-July drum roll of appreciation: Jeff Myers and Vickie Wilcox, Deborah Peacock, Rod Baker, Judith Rominger, Art Arenholz, Barbara Kroening, John Esterl, Melissa Howard, Anne Berlin, Wild Birds Unlimited Westside (Lynda Geron and David Shumate), Doug and Bev Mead, Julie Goodding.

A special feather to each and all of you trip leaders. You're the best!



but I found myself most captivated by two momma hummingbirds – one a Violet-crowned and one a Berylline – on their nests. The aura of serenity evoked by seeing these two normally frenetic birds as they patiently waited for their offspring to awaken to life in the nest was unshakably reassuring. Yet what captivated me equally, if not more, was the beauty and perfection of those two little nests. Each of them was exquisitely adorned with moss and lichen – beautiful, yes, but inherently functional. The symbology, to me, is that it takes the smallest of contributions to hold the foundation, the security, together. So to all of you who are lichen on the nest of Audubon, thank you.

Artwork by Kirsten Munson

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CNMA Field Trip Reports

compiled by Sei Tokuda

Sunday, May 26: Otero Canyon and Quarai

Nick Vaughn's group of six Auduboners counted a total of 47 species of birds. The most significant sightings included nesting Great-horned Owls and Violet-green Swallows, Chat, and Black-throated Gray Warbler. An important finding was the Virginia Rail that was heard, but not seen, at Quarai. Also seen was a nearly full-sized immature Great-horned Owl whose whitish down was being replaced by a few feathers.

Saturday - Sunday, June 22-23: Chama and vicinity

Twelve birders saw a total of 81 species on this weekend trip to northern New Mexico, led by Rebecca Gracey. The highlights were the breeding birds found in and around Chama: Gray Catbird, Lewis Woodpecker, Common Grackle, and Spotted Sandpiper. In addition, a Black Bear and a Red Fox were seen.

Saturday, August 3: Summer Wings Festival, Rio Grande Nature Center

This trip was led by Lannois Neely. There were 10 birders on this trip and the group saw a total of 21 species of birds. The most notable sights were a pair of Cooper's Hawk at close range, Bullock's Oriole, a very cooperative Green Heron that posed for the group, and a female Calliope Hummingbird.



Green Heron photo by Turtle-Bear

FALL PROGRAMS

Welcome one and all! All our fall programs are free to the public and take place at 7:15 p.m. at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, Copper and Jefferson NE. Light refreshments are served before and during the meetings. We'd welcome a contribution of your own favorite munchie or sweet - but even without one, we'll welcome you!

Thursday, September 19

• Mysteries of Bird Migration •



Art Arenholz brings to us his well-received and popular program which has attracted hundreds of appreciative listeners during his presentations at Festival of the Cranes. Bird migration is one of nature's grandest spectacles and most difficult puzzles. With insight and humor, Art presents a slide show that captures the beauty and mystery of this phenomenon. Combining personal experiences and recently published migration studies, he updates us on the latest, sometimes incredible, results.

Thursday, October 24

• Conservation of the Grassland Birds of the Western Great Plains •

David Mehlman, Director of Conservation Programs for the Wings of Americas Program of The Nature Conservancy, will discuss efforts being made through the *Prairie Wings Program* to protect critical habitat for grasslands birds in the western Great Plains, including areas such as Otero Mesa (see article on Otero Mesa, page 4). He will describe the preservation efforts being made by the Conservancy over this large grassland area, extending from southern Canada to northern Mexico, that contains approximately 300 breeding bird species, many of which show significant population decline.

Thursday, November 14

• Feathers in Rock: Bird Portrayals in Petroglyphs •

Some 21,000 images on rocks, from 700 to 1,000 years old, have been counted and documented within Petroglyph National Monument. Gretchen Ward, Cultural Resource Specialist at the Monument, will present a PowerPoint® program which emphasizes bird images in rock art and will talk about their significance to the cultures that created the art, as well as the challenges of interpretation. Juxtaposing ancient birds with existing species, we will have fun recognizing yesterday and today's roadrunner, and be challenged by other identification puzzles.

All Central New Mexico Audubon Society meetings and field trips are open to the public.

The *Burrowing Owl* newsletter is published quarterly in March, June, September, December, by Central New Mexico Audubon Society, PO Box 30002, Albuquerque, NM 87190-0002. Subscription is free to National Audubon Society members, \$12 to nonmembers.

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Sept. - Oct. - Nov. 2002

CNMAS Field Trip Schedule

<http://www.newmexicoaudubon.org/cnmas/trips.html>

Saturday-Sunday, September 14-15 - Dragonfly Festival in Roswell/Bitter Lake NWR

Details on Page 5.

Saturday-Sunday, September 21-22 - Rattlesnake Springs

Meet Christopher Rustay on Saturday, Sept. 21 at 12:30PM at the Rattlesnake Springs parking lot. Rattlesnake Springs is about 25 miles south of Carlsbad and is recognized as one of the most important birding sites in the state. This time of year can potentially be very exciting for eastern vagrants. We'll bird Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. On their own, folks may want to bird Bitter Lake refuge Saturday morning or on the way back Sunday afternoon. The Best Western hotel in White's City is closer to springs, or stay in Carlsbad, which is about 30 minutes away. Call Christopher (255-7786) for details.

Saturday-Sunday, October 5-6:

Auduboners join NM Volunteers for the Outdoors at Bosque del Apache for their annual weekend project to help shape up the trails. Work the trails on Saturday, bird the Bosque on Sunday! Contact Leonard Padilla, (505) 835-3161, to let him know you can help and that you're with Audubon.

Saturday-Sunday, October 12-13 - Open House at Sevilleta NWR

Details on Page 5.

Sunday, October 13 - Quarai National Monument

This trip will be led by Nick Vaughn. Quarai is an interesting habitat with pinon forest, desert shrub, and a small riparian area offering a variety of bird species. Meet at the Four Hills Shopping Center at 7:30AM. This will be at least a half-day trip. Bring lunch or snacks, water, etc. and be prepared for changes in the weather. Call Nick (265-1350) for details.

Saturday-Sunday, October 19-20 - Farmington

Meet Beth Hurst-Waitz at 9:00AM at Far North Shopping Center (NE corner of Academy and San Mateo) behind the Village Inn. We'll caravan up to Farmington for a weekend of fun events organized and/or led by Donna Thatcher. After eating lunch in Farmington, we'll rendezvous at 2:00PM at Travelodge with Les Lesperance and other local birders, who will take us to some local birding hot spots. Later, after dinner with Donna, she will take us on a moonlight walk (we'll still be on Daylight Savings Time), to look for spiders, bats, deer, skunks, raccoons, and OWLS. Sunday morning, we'll assemble at 9:00AM at the Travelodge for an easy bird walk through Riverside Park up to the nature center, where Donna is director. We'll enjoy coffee and feeder watching there before walking a different path back to the Travelodge, for lunch and/or departure no later than noon. Contact Beth (898-8514) for info on lodging.

Saturday, November 2 - Bosque del Apache

This trip will be led by Art Arenholz and it is a great time

to see the early winter migrants and to especially to have a good look of Ross's Goose. Meet at the UNM Physics Department parking lot (NE corner of Yale and Lomas) at 8:00AM. This is an all day trip. Bring food, snacks, water and dress appropriately for changes in the weather. Call Art (298-1724) for details.

Sunday, November 12 - Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge

This trip will be led by Sei Tokuda and will end sometime in the afternoon. On this Sunday (and all Sundays in the month of November), the Refuge allows visitors to enter the back road of the refuge that normally is closed to visitors. Birders will have a chance to see a variety of winter waterfowl and raptors. Dress appropriately for cold and unpredictable weather. Bring lunch, snacks and water. Meet at 8:00AM at the Far North Shopping Center behind the Village Inn (NE Corner of San Mateo NE and Academy). Call Sei (266-2480) for details.

Tuesday-Sunday, November 19-24 - 15th Annual Festival of the Cranes at Bosque del Apache NWR

Details on Page 5.

Saturday, December 7 - Bosque del Apache

This trip will be led by Art Arenholz and would end sometime in the late afternoon. The Bald Eagles are expected to be gaining in numbers and should be easily seen. Meet at 8:00AM at the UNM Physics Department parking lot (NE corner of Yale and Lomas NE). Bring food, snacks, water and dress appropriately for changes in the weather. Call Art (298-1724) for details.

Thursday Morning Birding Group

Weekly birding outings every Thursday. Meeting time and location, as well as duration, vary. Call Margaret Wallen at 341-0928 for details of outings.

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.



332-4737
9140 Montgomery NE

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.



Wilderness or Oil Fields?

At its meeting on January 26, 2002, the New Mexico Audubon Council adopted Otero Mesa as one of its Habitat Priorities for attention in New Mexico. The following article, adapted from a more extensive one written by Nathan Newcomer of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance focuses your attention on the competing demands about to be made on this rare desert grassland. Even more information is available at www.oteromesa.org – check it out!



New Mexico's Greater Otero Mesa area is arguably the nation's wildest Chihuahuan Desert grassland. The diverse landscape in this southwestern region encompasses limestone mountains dissected by deep serpentine canyons, steep escarpments rising thousands of feet to the Sacramento and Guadalupe Mountains, the igneous Cornudas Mountains that emerge dramatically from the desert floor, rolling hills, and one of the largest expanses of Chihuahuan Desert grasslands in New Mexico, totaling 1.2 million acres. These special grasslands and their surrounding landscape provide ideal habitat for a number of species of concern including blacktailed prairie dogs, bald eagles, ferruginous hawks, mountain plovers, and a large, unique pronghorn herd that, unlike other herds throughout New Mexico, is native to the area and not reintroduced. Mule deer, golden eagles, bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, and 250 species of migratory songbirds also call these lands home. In addition, potential nesting habitat for the American peregrine falcon and potential reintroduction sites for desert bighorn sheep and the endangered aplomado falcon exist here.

Steve West, well-known to the New Mexico birding community, has over 20 years' experience in grassland bird surveys in habitat similar to the Greater Otero Mesa area. According to Steve, "Grassland birds of the area include Baird's Sparrow, Loggerhead Shrike, Lark Bunting, Cassin's Sparrow, Mountain Plover, Long-billed Curlew, and many others that depend on the habitat that the Greater Otero Mesa Area provides. A variety of recent studies have shown that grassland birds are declining rapidly across their range in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Yet, Otero Mesa acts as a refuge of much needed habitat for these species."

It's a tantalizing fact that Guadalupe National Park and the surface area of Carlsbad Caverns National park, totaling less than 110,000 acres, represent the only protected Chihuahuan desert grasslands in the U.S. It's also a fact that grassland avian species are recognized as the fastest declining group in the country. Yet, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is moving aggressively to open this fragile and unique desert grassland to full-scale oil & gas development.

Wells drilled in Otero Mesa, totaling about 60 and dating back to 1900, came up completely dry. But in 1998, HEYCO (Harvey E. Yates Company) drilled an exploratory well that struck natural gas. This well was touted as a "commercial success" and

led to oil and gas lease nominations totaling 250,000 acres. Volume of lease nominations and BLM's lack of adequate information led to all leases being suspended until a Resource Management Plan Amendment/ Environmental Impact Statement (RMPA/EIS) could be created. That is what we are petitioning to be put aside until a new, comprehensive wilderness inventory is conducted.



Currently, the net result of oil company claims and BLM studies is that the BLM has created a new alternative that replaced the no-surface-occupancy stipulations with a roving 5 percent occupancy. This plan in many ways replicates one proposed for Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. It is designed to fool the general public into believing that development would only leave a small "footprint." In reality, the impacts of full-scale drilling would cause an unprecedented disadvantage for wildlife and habitat, with hundreds of miles of new roads, power lines, pipelines, drill pads, toxic waste ponds, and fragmentation of the land into an industrial development.

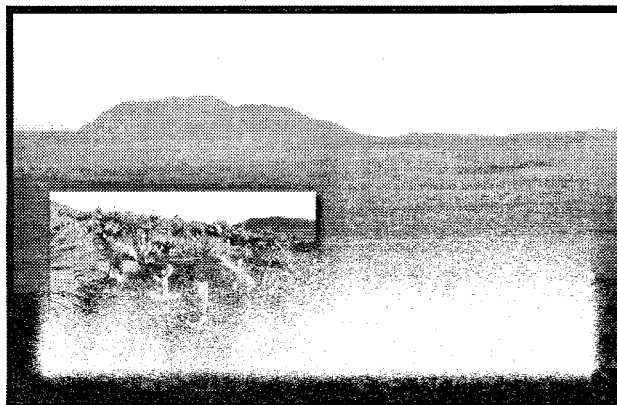
Industry would argue that reclamation of the land would enable plants and animals to thrive after development ended. In an area so naturally dry and in the midst of a five-year drought, the term "reclamation" is merely a false promise designed to placate the public. Perhaps a more desirable term would be "restoration", a goal that, if fully implemented, is intended to ensure

that these grasslands would in time fully recover. Sadly, no real science exists that proves that reclamation or restoration can succeed in this harsh environment.

Why are we pressing for a new inventory? Twenty-five years ago the BLM undertook a wilderness inventory of the Greater Otero Mesa Area. According to records, a considerable portion of this inventory was done with aerial photos, supplemented with limited on-site wilderness reviews and inventories. When the BLM completed this cursory review it recommended 11,000 acres for intensive wilderness review. In the end, the agency and politics decided that none qualified.

Contrastingly, in the summer of 2001, The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance conducted a Citizens' Survey to document the wilderness potential of the area. Several months of comprehensive, "on the ground" fieldwork that followed the tenets of the BLM Wilderness Handbook led to our conclusion that approximately 520,000 acres of the Greater Otero Mesa Area qualify for wilderness designation. Right now, the BLM is attempting to accelerate development, despite these conflicting data.

New Mexico is the state where wilderness was born. Otero Mesa is the largest area studied and, we believe, documented for wilderness designation since the Gila Wilderness' designation in 1964. Drilling for oil and gas in unique, irreplaceable ecosystems is an exhausted idea that does not have the support of the American public. What citizens DO support and what CAN be achieved is energy independence AND protection of natural biologic treasures. If you agree, please send in your postcards now. (See Insert)





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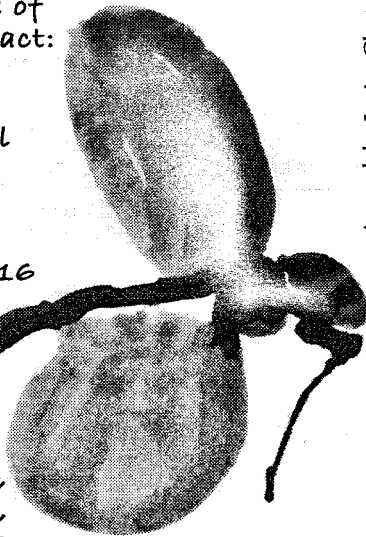
National Wildlife Refuge Bulletin Board

2nd Annual Dragonfly Festival September 14 & 15, 2002 Bitter Lake NWR Roswell, New Mexico

To get your brochure of festival events, contact:

Friends of
Bitter Lake National
Wildlife Refuge
Post Office Box 7
Roswell NM 88202
505.622.6755 ext. 16
www.bitterlake.org

Refuge Tours, Demos,
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Activities for all ages



Artwork by Junior Chavez

Maxwell National Wildlife Refuge

Three hundred forty-five species of birds have been spotted at Maxwell Wildlife Refuge near (of course) Maxwell in northeastern New Mexico. Rick Gooch, the new manager, would like to make improvements that would make the refuge a more attractive site where more people can view more of the birds. He notes that Lake 12, which is currently dry, has a viewing area that is about 500 yards away. That doesn't allow

Maxwell continued on page 6

15th Annual Festival of the Cranes November 19-24 2002 Socorro, New Mexico

Text and art from Friends of the Bosque Festival website:
<http://www.friendsofthebosque.org/crane/>



This is the 15th year that the City of Socorro and the Bosque del Apache have celebrated the return of the cranes with this festival. We invite you to share it with us.

For more information:
505-835-0424

Or pick up a brochure with registration form at CNMAS meetings, RGNC, and birding stores around Albuquerque.

Sevilleta Open House 2002 Saturday-Sunday, October 12-13

Refuge Tours • Food • Booths
Presentations • Live Animal Exhibits

Generally closed to the public, the refuge is open for guided tours only at this Open House event! Reservations are required for tours and most events.

Cost is \$6 per person for guided tours

Tours will meet and activities will be held at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, located off I-25 at exit 169

For more info call for a brochure today
(505) 864-4021

An Invitation To All From Terry Tadano, Sevilleta Refuge Manager

Hart Schwarz will be doing a one-day tour on Sunday the 13th which will be strictly birding. The cost is \$6, which includes a sack lunch and a Sevilleta water bottle. (What a deal). On Saturday there will be a bunch of tours, presentations, exhibits and live animals from Zoo To You, Hawks Aloft, etc. Call us at the Refuge for information or a leaflet on the tours registration, or pick one up at the CNMAS September Program. It is limited seating and first come/first served basis. Call 864-4021 and ask for Virginia or Kim. Come by and visit!

Auduboners join NM Volunteers for the Outdoors at Bosque del Apache for their annual weekend project October 5-6 to help shape up the trails. Work the trails on Saturday, bird the Bosque on Sunday! Contact Leonard Padilla, (505) 835-3161, to let him know you can help and that you're with Audubon.

Volunteers Needed!

Every year at Festival of the Cranes, Auduboners do what they do best – have fun birding, and share that fun and “our” birds with others. Please be one of those friendly folks! We will be staffing two locations on Saturday the 23rd and Sunday the 24th – the Audubon tent and the Phil Norton Photography Blind. Jeff is the keeper of our volunteer list, so please call (998-1502) or e-mail (jmyers@peacocklaw.com) him. This year we're using the bright suggestion that Tamie Bulow offered, to schedule the tent on even-hour increments and the photography blind on odd-hour increments. So now you can work the tent from 8-10, then make it to the blind for your 11-1 shift and even get a restroom break! Thanks for volunteering – we really need you!



Fall Bird Banding At RGNC

Steve and Nancy Cox at Rio Grande Bird Research invite you to join them for fall bird banding at Rio Grande Nature Center. The work is systematic and methodical, but the results can be very exciting! Numbers of warblers banded since August 3 clearly show the migration trend. Can you imagine the thrill of banding a Cooper's Hawk? Or let yourself be amazed – like the “regulars” were when they re-netted the female Blue Grosbeak two weeks ago which had already been banded – on May 3, 1996. Wow! To help with this all-volunteer project on weekend mornings (Sat-Sun), be at the Nature Center Parking lot at 6:00 Sept. 1-21, 6:15 Sept. 22-Oct. 12, 6:30 Oct. 13-26. Then Daylight Savings Time ends, so the work begins at 5:45 Oct. 27 through Nov. 10. Early birds, rise and shine!

Rocky Mountain Whooping Crane Population Report

The last known whooping crane in the Rocky Mountains has not been seen since last winter. I believe it extremely unlikely that it is alive. Thus, I consider the experimental nonessential Rocky Mountain whooping crane population to be extinct (1975-2002).

There are currently about 90 non-migratory whooping cranes in Florida, and 5 whooping cranes in Wisconsin that last year were flown behind the ultralight, wintered in Florida and returned to Wisconsin on their own. Researchers are currently training 17 more whooping cranes in Wisconsin to follow the ultralight this fall.

The Aransas-Wood Buffalo population numbered 173 in the spring of 2002. The nesting season in Canada looked a little below average due to a very late spring, with 50 nesting pairs hatching 33 chicks. Seven cranes were still incubating eggs when we finished production surveys in late June. Probably at least 1/2 of the chicks won't survive to reach Aransas. Since we've been losing about 16 adults annually, I expect at best a break-even year for the population.

Tom Stehn, Whooping Crane Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Aransas NWR, P.O. Box 100, Austwell, TX 77950 (361) 286-3559 Ext. 221; fax (361) 286-3722; email: tom_stehn@fws.gov

Eagle Optics/CNMAS Partnership

We're excited to let you know that we have partnered up with Eagle Optics to help both you and us when you're selecting new birding optics. Next time you're shopping for those binoculars or scopes, log onto our website (www.newmexicoaudubon.org/cnmas) and click the Eagle Optics link. For every sale placed through our website, our chapter receives a 5% commission. That means extra funds for us to commit to Audubon Adventures or educational scholarships or any of the other projects you support through your Audubon/CNMAS membership! Happy birding through better optics!

Saturday, September 21, 1:00pm Butterflies of the Bosque

Steve Cary and Nancy Daniel will present a slide show of the many butterflies that frequent the Bosque del Apache. Then our butterfly knowledge will be put to use on the Refuge where we may anticipate seeing 20 different butterfly species, weather permitting. Insect nets come in handy. Supervised children will have a great time. Meet at the Bosque del Apache NWR Visitors Center. (505-835-1828)

HawkWatch Observations

<http://www.hawkwatch.org/>



Join banders and volunteers at the HawkWatch site at Capilla Peak in the Manzano Mountains for the Annual Fall Migration Count being conducted from August 27 to November 5. Call Bobbie Posey at 255-7622 for more information or check out www.hawkwatch.org for a map to the site.

John DeLong and crew will be banding Flammulated Owls in the Manzano Mountains at the Capilla Peak HawkWatch International site from late August until mid-October, every night of the week. You're invited to come and camp out or just visit. Plan to stay up late to see owls and bats – weather permitting! Remember that snow and rain deter both the birds and the banders. So check the forecast. If it's fair, bundle up (altitude + dark = cold), bring coffee, and join the night owls. No need to call ahead.

John will be the presenter at our joint CNMAS/Hawk Watch meeting in January! Watch for details in the next newsletter.

Maxwell continued from page 5

for the best opportunities to view the birds, so Gooch says he would like to have some camouflaged photo blinds set up near the lakes and other locations.

Please join us in welcoming Rick, who started duties as the new NWR manager in April and who has lots of ideas about making Maxwell NWR a resource that's more utilized and more appreciated by more users. As he and his staff work on putting together a comprehensive conservation plan where they envision the refuge's direction and philosophy for the next 15 years, Gooch says, "I really want to get people interested in the refuge and what can be done to improve it." Besides fishing and birding opportunities, the refuge can serve as a place to study prairie and grassland management. He would like to work with area schools to "match some things we offer here with what the local schools are doing in their classes," Gooch says. "If kids are interested in restoring wetlands or studying wildlife, there's potential for programs in those areas." He adds that partnerships with area agencies and organizations will prove beneficial to the refuge and that "Whatever we can do to make the refuge more attractive, I'd like to look at it."

(Recognition to Bob Morris, Sports Editor, The Raton Range, for quotes and information obtained from his article, and to Dave Cleary for bringing it to our attention.)



Sept. - Oct. - Nov. 2002

Hope Is Our Youth With Feathers

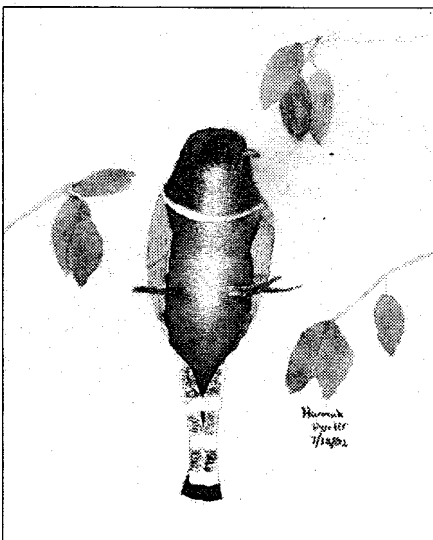
With the following report, we're happy to reintroduce you to young birder Hannah Porter. We at CNMAS have delighted in Hannah's company and talents for about three years now, in which time she has blossomed as an accomplished artist and birder. In the April-May 2002 issue of Burrowing Owl, we showcased her by announcing the Honorable Mention recognition she received in the ABA/Leica Young Birder of the Year Competition in the 10-to-13-year-old category (Hannah is 12 now, was 11 when she entered the contest) for her entries in the Illustration Module and Field Notebook Module.

Besides the top awards, ABA (American Birding Association) also gave partial scholarships to young birders nationwide and in Canada to attend Camp Chiricahua in Arizona. Each young birder had to raise his/her own funds to match the scholarship amount. When Hannah approached CNMAS to help her fundraise, she came to us with two appealing ideas. One was to offer original artwork to members, who would pay her whatever they wished for the bird of their choice that she painted for them. Thank you to everyone who supported Hannah by commissioning your very own bird art! The other was to petition the Board of CNMAS for educational/scholarship funds to help further her birding education at the camp.

The following report by Hannah is her "payback" to CNMAS for the \$100 we gave to Hannah. We think you'll agree the return is worth far more than the investment.

Camp Chiricahua Camp A Report by Hannah Porter

This summer I attended Camp Chiricahua in SE Arizona through a scholarship I received from the ABA. Though I got the scholarship from the ABA, it was a VENT (Victor Emanuel Nature Tour). The camp was from July 9th to 20th (2002). There were 17 kids attending. It was for teenagers 12-18 years



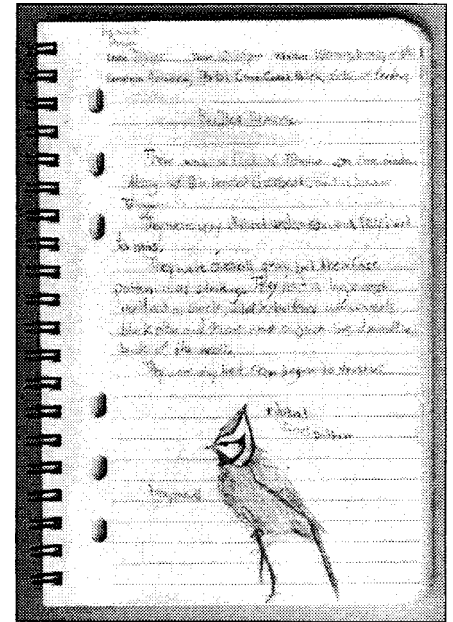
Painting of Elegant Trogon by Hannah Porter

old. And although many of them were older than me, we all treated each other as equals. Of course the birds were very neat but the friends that I met were a big part of how much I enjoyed the camp experience.

- The leaders were Rob Day and Dave Jasper, both very experienced birders, and all-around naturalists. They knew where the birds were and how to see

them.

July 9- Our first stop in Tucson was Sweetwater Wetlands, a misnomer for in fact it was a sewage pond. But of course, that's where the birds are. We got our first Abert's Towhee, Lucy's Warbler, Anna's Hummingbird, Harris's Hawk and lots of water birds. We also managed to find the Least Grebe at one of the ponds. I finally saw my Peregrine Falcon! We also got other neat birds like Green Heron (some really good looks), good looks at Cactus Wrens, Mexican Mallards, Black-crowned Night-Herons, Loggerhead Shrikes, and Gila Woodpeckers.



A page from Hannah Porter's field notebook with drawing of Bridled Titmouse

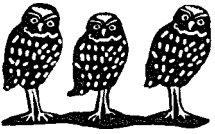
July 10- We left from our hotel to head to Portal, but making a few stops along the way. We stopped at the Sonoran Desert Museum, where we picked up many new species that we didn't see anywhere else, such as Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Costa's Hummingbird, Varied Bunting and some others. We also saw lots of Gila Woodpeckers, Cactus Wrens, White-winged Doves, Verdins and then we started to hear Inca Doves. That would be a new species for our trip. But when we tracked them down we found an aviary. Along with the Inca Doves were Yellow Grosbeaks, Northern Bobwhites, Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, Hooded Orioles, and Black-necked Stilts.

- We made some other stops on the way to Portal, but they were pretty uneventful. But when we stepped out of the vans in Cave Creek Ranch, we immediately saw and heard many Mexican Jays, saw Magnificent Hummer and Blue-throated Hummer. While we were birding later that day we got lots of Acorn Woodpeckers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Summer Tanager, Scott's, Hooded and Bullock's Orioles, Lark Sparrows, Gambel's Quail, and more Abert's Towhees. We also went night owling and found an adult Elf Owl with two young in a nest hole. That was very cool.

July 11- We split into two groups, one going to South Fork and the other just into the Portal desert. I was in the group to go to the desert; the next day we switched.

- While in the desert we saw Blue Grosbeaks, Cactus Wrens, Bell's Vireo, Pyrrhuloxia, Canyon Towhees, Black-throated Sparrows, Violet-green Swallows, Rock Wrens, and some Hooded Orioles. But when we got back and the other group

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Chiricahua continued from page 7

was still out, we got Zone-tailed Hawk, Arizona Woodpecker, Violet-crowned Hummingbird and Bridled Titmouse.

• The group that went to South Fork was very successful. They found Elegant Trogons, Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers, Mexican Chickadees, Hepatic Tanagers, Painted Redstarts, and many others.

July 12- When my group went to South Fork, we saw about the same things. During the four nights at Cave Creek Ranch we picked up things like Whiskered Screech-Owl, Western Screech-Owl, and hearing a few Common Poorwills.

July 13-14- We headed to Rustler Park, where we would be camping for two nights.

The first day there we saw Yellow-eyed Junco, Red Crossbills and Virginia's Warbler. After the first night, we found more birds in the mountains like Flammulated Owl, Red-faced Warbler, Olive Warbler, Montezuma Quail, Grace's Warbler, Mexican Creeper, Pygmy Nuthatch and a possible heard Northern Pygmy-Owl. And on the second day, as one of our best birds of the trip, a Short-tailed Hawk. Neither of the leaders saw it but it was a fairly good look and everyone was positive what it was.

July 15- We headed back down and stopped at the store but didn't see much. We then headed to David Utterback's house, to look for the Lucifer Hummer. We didn't see it, but we did find a Broad-billed and a Calliope Hummingbird.

• On our way to San Pedro, we drove along the State Line Road - half of the road belonging to New Mexico, and the other half belonging to Arizona. We stopped along the road a couple of times to look around. There we saw Cassin's Sparrows, Botteri's Sparrows, Vermilion Flycatchers, Inca Doves (wild ones), another Peregrine Falcon and a White-tailed Kite. Along the road were some coyotes too.



Painting of Yellow-billed Cuckoo by Hannah Porter

• At our destination, the San Pedro River Inn, we immediately saw Tropical Kingbirds and Lazuli Buntings. We also saw lots of Gila Woodpeckers, Rufous Hummingbirds, Cactus Wrens and Curve-billed

Thrashers. During owling we saw Lesser and Common Nighthawks. We also heard Common Poorwills.

July 16- Off to Miller Canyon to look for the reported Flame-colored Tanager, White-eared Hummingbird, and some other possibilities. After heading up the canyon for a while we saw it!!! The Flame-colored Tanager! It was a gorgeous male. Pretty good looks too. We watched it for about 10 minutes until it flew to where we couldn't see it anymore. At the same location were Greater Pewees, Painted Redstarts, Red-faced Warblers and some hummers. As we headed up the canyon, we heard Trogons.

• We also found out that there were some Spotted Owls that have been seen in a certain location regularly for a couple of weeks. When we got near the end of the trail we decided to stop and call for the Spotted Owls. So one of the kids from the camp started calling it in. When he stopped, and we were all listening very closely, we heard it. But at first we thought it was an imitation. We heard it again and knew it wasn't. It was very close, so we started searching. We went down the canyon and up the other side. It was almost as steep as a cliff face, but we all managed to survive. The leader, Dave Jasper, was eventually the one that found it. But when we did find "it," "it" turned into "them." There were two Spotted Owls perched about 25 feet away from us. They were very cooperative and they didn't leave while we were still there. While we all watched them, did field notes of them, and listened to them, we lost track of time. We had to start moving down to the hummer feeders of Beatty's before the monsoon started.



• When we got down to the hummingbird feeders of Beatty's, we were seeing Allen's, Broad-billed, Beryllifcent (hybrid Berylline/Magnificent), Anna's, Broad-tailed, Lucifer, and many others. As we were watching the feeders, we soon encountered the female White-eared Hummingbird. She wasn't nearly as dull as most female hummers are.

• The storm started. We bolted for a tarp to stay dry under. We could all barely fit under it. The storm lasted a little less than an hour. The only hummers bold enough to come out in the rain were Magnificent. No other hummers would come out in the monsoon. When it finished, we were way behind schedule, so we had to head to Ramsey Canyon.

• At Ramsey Canyon, we found a male White-eared Hummer. We also got very good looks at Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers, lots of Black-throated Gray Warblers, and lots of the common hummers.

• When we went to the main feeders to look at hummers, we saw a herd of Wild Turkeys stampeding down the hill. About 20-30 of them. They got to the bottom, very close to us, and then casually walked back up.

• We went back up to our Inn. We went owling that night and we found Barn Owls, and again, heard but not seen, Common Poorwills.

July 17- At Ramsey Canyon today, we didn't see anything

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Audubon Take Action

DID YOU KNOW that lawmakers determine the fate of birds by the laws they pass? It's true. (See Stop the Poisoning, on this page, for an example.) Yet each and every year, our laws fall short in protecting birds, other wildlife and our environment. Audubon is working with lawmakers to try and protect birds, wildlife and the environment, but we can't do it alone - we need your help. And your help can make all the difference.

That's why National Audubon has set up a special website to give you an easy and convenient way to help make a difference. This site will provide you with the latest information on conservation issues, and communicates with your lawmakers about these issues through an online form that you fill out.

On the site you'll find a list of the major conservation issues pending before the U.S. Congress, or awaiting action by the President or other government agency. These are issues we need you to weigh in on if we're going to be successful!

Connect to Audubon's Take Action site at:
<http://www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/>

You can stay up to date on activities in Washington through the National Audubon Society's biweekly Advisory. To subscribe, send email to audubonaction@audubon.org for this handy service.


Stop the Poisoning of Red-winged Blackbirds

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has proposed to kill by poison 2 million blackbirds a year for three years. The program was originally scheduled to start this past spring, but will not due in large part to Audubon's efforts to stop the poisoning. The program was unable to start because the USDA has been required to complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to determine the environmental effects of the program. Until the EIS has been completed, the program will be put on hold. But we're still keeping the pressure on.

Go to this webpage for more information:

<http://www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/contact/default.asp?Subject=41>

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Chiricahua continued from page 8

different. Our other leader, Rob Day, decided to go look at Kartchner Caverns. We spent about 2 hours there. Of course, the day we decided to go into a cave was the day others saw Slate-throated Redstart, Rufous-capped Warbler, and got really good looks at Flame-colored Tanager too.

July 18- We went to the San Pedro River, expecting to see Gray Hawk, and possibly Green Kingfisher. The Green Kingfisher wasn't present and hadn't been seen since February. Noteworthy were some Pied-billed Grebes, Song Sparrows, and a couple of immature Great Horned Owls.

July 19- Our last day of birding. We went to Patagonia and saw Gray Hawk, finally. We also got our first looks at Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, and really good looks at male Varied Buntings. We went to look for the Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, and the Rose-throated Becard, but unsuccessfully.

- Our camp was almost over, just a few more stops were made. One was to the San Javier Mission. We saw many Burrowing Owls perched on top of tombstones, and lots of Cactus Wrens. When we got to Tucson, we found the Rufous-winged Sparrow and a Gilded Flicker. Both just at an arid lot in the middle of Tucson.

- The camp experience was amazing, and I enjoyed every bit of it. All the people were awesome, the birds were awesome and SE Arizona is an amazing place to go for any type of nature experience.



Sky Islands 2002: Restoring Connections

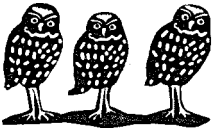
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New and Improved!

The brand-new *New Mexico Bird Finding Guides* are out! Originally published in 1984 by New Mexico Ornithological Society, the first Revised Edition came out in 1992, at 170 pages. This new edition is much expanded - 352 pages long and very complete. It even has an annotated checklist in the back that is terrific. Sells for \$20, and is available at Rio Grande Nature Center, NM Museum of Natural History, both Wild Birds Unlimited stores, and Page One, as well as at Bosque del Apache NWR. Get one for yourself and one for your next birding visitor from out of state!



New Mexico Audubon Council . . .

will meet on Saturday, September 7, at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge in the Conference Room of the new Visitors' Center. All Auduboners are invited, whether you're an officer or committee chair or Armchair Activist or casual birder. We will begin at 10:00AM with the intent of being done by 3:00PM. Our agenda will include news, issues, and updates on: Peregrine take for falconry, Silvery Minnow and Lesser Prairie Chicken, State Birding Trail, Valles Caldera National Preserve, Otero Mesa, State Office activities, debut of Statewide Newsletter, NM Audubon Adventures Supplement, Chapter news, and new business. Come get your activist batteries recharged! Call Beth (898-8514) if you want to carpool.

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West Nile Virus

With the imminent arrival of West Nile virus in the Rio Grande valley, a group of us here at the University of New Mexico, along with the NM Department Health and Johns Hopkins University, are putting together a mosquito research program stretching from El Paso, TX, to Alamosa, CO. I was wondering if the Audubon Society members in New Mexico are numerous enough and organized enough to participate in collecting some bird data -- we'd be interested in finding any dead bird carcasses and testing them for the virus, and also knowing the locations of concentrations of crows, jays and other corvids (particularly along the bosque corridor), and where these birds might be roosting at night. We'd like to set up mosquito collectors near roosts and in places away from roosts to test for virus infection rates. Any Audubon members who might want to participate in something like this, please contact me.

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 Research Associate Professor Phone: 505-277-7619 (UNM Campus)
 Department of Biology FAX: 505-277-5355 (UNM Campus)
 University of New Mexico Phone: 505-277-9370 (Field Station)
 Albuquerque, NM 87131 USA FAX: 505-277-9374 (Field Station)

Potpourri - (or, perhaps, pellet)

by Betty Corvus Moneduloides

Tweeze this article apart like you would dissect an owl pellet, and you might find some little signature piece that's just right for you. Have you read *Red-Tails in Love* by Marie Winn? It's a charming book in story-telling style that's chockful of ornithological, naturalist, and historical facts. Its heart and center is Central Park in NYC.



Did you see the Associated Press article that said that a group of panelists gathered in Tucson for an ecological conference have declared enviros aren't the bad guys to blame for the wildfires burning throughout the West? Even more important -- have Arizona Gov. Jane Hull and U.S. Senators John McCain and Jon Kyl seen it? They're the ones who had blamed the Rodeo-Chediski fire's devastation in the Show Low area on environmentalists' legal challenges to timber sales and prescribed burns.

"Not so," said the panel. The fires are due to poor forest management policies, with roots in the 19th century. They even said environmentalists haven't been around long enough to blame. Let's hope they're around long enough to contribute to the solution, since they didn't cause the problem.



If you see a shiny band on leg, neck, or wing, report it! Note color pattern, left/right bandedness, where, when. Write: USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Bird Banding Lab, 12100 Beech Forest Rd., Laurel, MD 20708-4037. E-mail: bandreports@patuxent.usgs.gov. Phone (800) 327-BAND (2263).



The issue of Population is one of the main planks of National Audubon's observation deck.

President Bush's administration has not been friendly to women's rights. Under his leadership, this administration has decided to de-fund the United Nations Population Fund and has consistently denied women access to life-saving reproductive health services like birth control, checkups, and HIV education and prevention. If that bothers you, then let the President know that you want him to honor the rights of women and support the life-saving programs sponsored by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).



Another newspaper article (boy, I'm well-read, huh?) stated that I, Betty, astonished researchers when I fashioned a tool from a piece of wire so I could get my food out of a tube. They haven't asked me yet, but if they do, I'll tell them what astonishes me: that your species fashions tools to hurt, not to help.



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Featured Creature: The Burrowing Owl!


That headline will be reaching every child in New Mexico who uses the Audubon Adventures kit, thanks to Lauren Parmelee at Randall Davey Audubon Center (RDAC) in Santa Fe and to Melissa Carter, who used her graphics wizardry to design the text and look of this kid-friendly publication. And it's a beauty! This is just the first in a series of New Mexican supplements being created by our State Office for insertion in the kits used in New Mexico. Upcoming issues will focus on other birds and wildlife of our state.

Other exciting news about this award-winning education program produced by National Audubon Society is that the 2003 kit will contain a segment that focuses on deserts, primarily the Chihuahuan Desert. Lauren Parmelee of RDAC and Walt Whitford, President of Mesilla Valley Audubon Society, have assisted Lorin, Elaine, and Amy of the National Office with the production of that publication. The issue even mentions the Bosque del Apache. Imagine – it will reach thousands of children nationwide!

So far this year, four donors have sponsored seven Audubon Adventures kits distributed by CNMAS to schools within our district. Jerry Goffe, Sei Tokuda, Thursday Birders, and Beth Hurst-Waitz, your names are up on the blackboard in recognition and appreciation!

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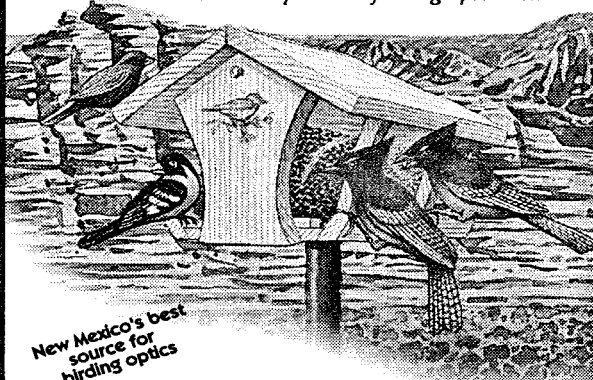


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Contact Membership Chairperson for changes of address or correction in your Burrowing Owl label. Nonmembers can receive the Burrowing Owl by sending your name and address with \$12 to CNMAS, c/o Beth Hurst-Waitz, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., Albuquerque,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



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Information and articles to be included in December 2002 - January/ February 2003 issue of the Burrowing Owl must be received by **November 15**. Contact Turtle-Bear at 265-6094 or turtlebear@jensenbear.com. For advertising inquiries, please contact Beth Hurst-Waitz, 898-8514 or brave_e@juno.com.

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