Central New Mexico Audubon Society Burrowing Owl March, April, May 2003 Issue Volume 32 No. 2

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

Drawing by Steven D'Amato

Birding For Bucks and Bucks For Birds Birdathon! 2003

This year's CNMAS Birdathon! teams are already studying the maps and envisioning checkmarks on their lists!

What is Birdathon!? It's top-flight birding during the height of migration, with high-flying teams led by eagle-eyed birders. And it's the most successful (and only) fund-raiser we conduct here at your favorite Audubon chapter.

All your tax-deductible donations fund...

- Audubon Adventures program for local elementary schools. Do the math: 50 classrooms at \$41.95 per kit is our goal. Right now we're funding 17 classrooms. (Help those baby birds fledge!)
- Tuition Scholarships to Audubon ecology camps for one area educator and one youth birder you're making an investment in the future! (You'd travel miles to spot these rare birds!)
- Randall Davey Audubon Center in Santa Fe a treasure that belongs to every New Mexico Auduboner. Two thousand school children a year go through their indoor/outdoor classroom environmental education programs. (Now, that's a flock!)

Join us in person (pick a team and bring your binoculars) or in spirit (through your pledge.) Turn your love of birding into something other than buying birdseed. *You'll find the Birdathon coupon on page 2*.

Team 1: Youth Without-A-Driver's-License Team Saturday-Sunday, April 26-27

We're so excited about this team that we're dipping around like swallows over a buggy lake! Our first-ever Youth Birdathon Team, headed up by Andrew Rominger and Ryan Beaulieu, will assemble their own team of – other youth birders! THIS is the team to pledge if your past rah-rah'\$ have gone to Sei – this year, he's throwing his support to these tremendous talented teens. The only thing adults will be doing is driving them (that's the "without a driver's license" part) – to Percha Dam and Bosque del Apache on Saturday, then to Water Canyon and the Plains of San Augustin the next day. They planned their own trip, they're taking plenty of junkfood, they're camping out – and they're doing this for us. Let's give back to them – think "Youth Ecology Camp. Scholarships."

Birdathon continued on page 2

•• Audubon Programs •• One Down Two To Go: Audubon Birding Academy

March 20: Taking Field Notes:

Many folks have requested a session on what to do when you see a bird in the field that 1) you can't identify or 2) you have identified as a rare bird for the state and want to have folks believe you. Audubon member

Christopher Rustay, and also, Ranger Rob Yaksich (many of you know him from his "duck butt" class) will go through a few pointers on taking notes in the field, how to write your notes up for the rare bird committee and also go through a short session on field drawings for documentation.

April 24: Icterids:

A strange word for a group of birds which includes all the blackbirds, meadowlarks and orioles. Dave Krueper, a renowned bird biologist, now US Fish and Wildlife will explain the identification subtleties of the group of birds which many folks think are easy to identify. Do you know the differences between Eastern and Western Meadowlarks by sight? What about female orioles? April is a great time to study this group of birds as a few wintering species may still be around while summering birds are just arriving!

The Birding Academy classes are held at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, NW corner of Jefferson & Copper NE, 7:15pm. The cost is \$6 per class.

Fill out the registration form on page 3 🦜

In this Issue



Birdathon continued from page I

Team 2: Thursday Birders Plus Thursday-Friday, May 15-16

The Thursday Birders are making – and breaking – tradition! This is another 24-hour 'thon, starting on their namesake day, Thursday, and ending 24 hours later. Plan on an overnight stay at a motel in Socorro and on getting as many birds as possible per mile and per hour! Last year's group of 12 tallied 124 species in the Manzanita Mountains, at Manzano Pond and Quarai, Bosque del Apache and Riverine Park, and at Water Canyon. Folks, there are over 80 names on the Thursday Birders e-circulation list – and we'd encourage ALL 80 of you to support this group of volunteers who offer their time and talents to all of us every Thursday. Meet at 9:30AM at Four Hills Shopping Center at Tramway and Central, across from the Travelodge, to carpool. Contact Karen Boettcher, 281-6726, nmkestrel@aol.com, to sign up.

Team 3: Celestyn's Successful Successors Saturday, May 17

Is it a challenge? Is it a contest? Or is just simply an excellent opportunity to bird Bosque del Apache and environs once again, following in the flyway of the Thursday Birders Plus Team from Thursday and Friday? This year, Celestyn "comes down from the mountain" (the Sandias, that is, where we birded last year) and treats his team — that's you, whoever wants to join us! — to birding at the Bosque. Early Birders, plan to meet Celestyn at 6:00AM at the Visitor Center at Bosque del Apache. Sleepyheads, we'll rendezvous with you at 9:00AM at the Visitor Center. Plan on a full day of birding, with excursions to wherever the "hot" birds are and wherever Celestyn's excellent instincts take us. Call him at 925-8611 so he knows how many people will be counting birds with him.

If you can't join us in person with your binoculars, please join us in spirit with your fully tax-deductible contribution (*see coupon below*). We'll have fun!

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.

CNMAS Field Trip Reports Sei Tokuda

Saturday, November 2, 2002: Bosque del Apache

Art Arenholz led this trip with 17 birders. It was a comfortable day at the refuge and the memorable birds included an American Dipper, Harris', and Harlan's Red-tailed Hawks, Belted Kingfisher, Merlin, Prairie Falcon, Greater Yellowlegs, and Snow and Ross' Geese.

Sunday, November 10, 2002: Las Vegas, NWR

Art Arenholz led this trip. Fourteen birders included five (5) teenagers, and all enjoyed great birding held on a day when the back roads to the refuge were open to the general public. They especially enjoyed seeing Common Loons, Canvasbacks, Redheads, Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers, Bonaparte's Gulls, Mountain Bluebirds, Ferruginous, Rough-legged and Red-tailed Hawks, and Bald Eagles. The Bald Eagles were also soaring and interacting overhead.

Saturday, December 7, 2002: Bosque del Apache

Fourteen birders enjoyed having a mild December day and seeing a good number of birds. The lone teenager, Raymond, was the first to spot several of the birds, such as the Ruddy Ground Dove, Dunlin, Red-naped Sapsucker and a Cooper's Hawk. Other notable birds sighted included Dipper, Mountain Bluebirds, Hooded Mergansers, all three dark morphs of the Red-tailed Hawk, and a Bald Eagle hunting ducks.

Saturday, January 4: Bosque del Apache

Art Arenholz led this trip. He noted that two Audubon members from California reminded him how lucky we are to live in NM. They said, "In 12 twelve years of birding, our 3-day visit to the

Reports continued on page 10

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.

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.

To make a pledge or to make your tax return this form by May I will sponsor Team # fo I would like to make a flat co I am part of a birding group, I will collect pledges and sen	15, 2003. or per species (75 species ontribution of \$ for Team Team# I will sponsor n	a #
NAME		Please make all checks payable to CNMAS.
ADDRESS		Send your payment to:
CITY	ZIP	CNMAS, c/o Ron Waitz 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W.
PHONEEMAIL		Albuquerque, NM 87114-1710



CNMAS Field Trip Schedule http://www.newmexicoaudubon.org/cnmas/trips.html

Saturday, March 8 - Las Vegas Wildlife Refuge

This will be a day trip to see some of the early migrants. Bring water, snacks and lunch, and dress according to the weather. Meet 7 AM at the Far North Shopping Center (NE corner of San Mateo and Academy) behind Winchell's Donuts. Please call Sei (266-2480) for details.

Weekend of March 14-16 - The National Wildlife Refuge System celebrates its Centennial

See our National Wildlife Refuge Bulletin Board on page 4 for details about field trips and other events.

Saturday, March 22 - Socorro, NM

This trip should end about 1 PM and will include New Mexico Tech, Riverine Park and possibly Luis Lopez. Target birds will include the Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird and other strays. Meet 7 AM at the UNM Physics Department parking lot on the NE corner of Yale and Lomas Blvd. Call Sei (266-2480) or Glen Finley (872-0775) for details.

Saturday, April 5 - Bosque del Apache NWR

This will be a day trip on the first weekend of the year that the seasonal road at the refuge will be open. The target birds will include Vermilion Flycatcher, Phainopepla and shore birds. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Meet 7 AM at the UNM Physics Department parking lot. Call Sei (266-2480) or Art Arenholz (298-1724) for details.

Saturday-Sunday, April 12-13 - 2nd Annual High Plains Lesser Prairie-chicken Festival - Milnesand, NM

Contact NM Department of Game and Fish, Denise Archuleta, at (800)862-9310 or (505)476-8006 or visit their web site at http://www.gmfsh.state.nm.us. (See enclosed flier.)

Saturday-Sunday, April 19-20 - Bitter Lake NWR and Rattlesnake Springs

This trip will focus on shore birds at Bitter Lake east of Roswell and on passerines at Rattlesnake Springs south of Carlsbad, NM. We will overnight in Carlsbad. Bring water, snacks and food for lunches. Meet 7 AM at the Four Hills Shopping Center

Audubon	Birding	Acad	emy	Regi	istration	Form	
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(check boxes):
☐ Taking Field Notes (Mar. 20)\$6
☐ Icterids (Apr. 24)\$6
Name/s:
Address:
City: Zip:
Phone:Email:
Send your check, payable to CNMAS to: Birding Academy 804 Guadalupe Circle N.W. Albuquerque, NM 87114-1710

(Central Avenue SE and across the street from the Travelodge Motel). Call Sei (266-2480) for details.

Friday-Sunday, April 25-27 - Great Bend, Kansas

Join Sei and his friends at the Wing 'N Wetland Weekend to go birding at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area and Quivira NWR. There is a \$75.00 fee that provides 4 half-day guided birding tours, 2 evening receptions, 2 full buffet breakfasts, a buffet dinner and three educational workshops. The event starts at 2 PM Friday and ends at 11 AM Sunday. For information call (602)792-2750 or email cvb@visitgreatbend.com. Call Sei (266-2480) for registration forms.

Saturday-Sunday, April 26-27 - Youth Birdathon (See article.) Sunday, May 4 - Petroglyph National Monument Bird Hike

With Hart Schwarz, Neotropical Bird Specialist - Participants will meet at the Petroglyph National Monument Visitor Center located at Unser Blvd. NW and Western Trail at 8:00 AM and carpool from there to Rinconada Canyon for the hike. This is our 3rd year for this popular hike. Hart will share his extensive knowledge of the bird population of Petroglyph National Monument and will discuss the impact the drought conditions have had on the local bird populations. This is a free event, but you must call (505)899-0205 ext 337 to register.

Friday-Saturday, May 3-4 - Percha Dam SP and Silver City Christopher Rustay will lead this trip and will start 10 AM at Percha Dam SP and continue on to Kingston, Emory Pass, Iron Creek CC and other areas on the way to overnight at the Spirit Canyon Lodge; (505)536-9459 for reservations. Alternate lodgings can be found in Silver City or in the nearby Grey Feathers Lodge. The next day's birding will include the Lake Roberts area and the Cherry Creek and McMillan Campgrounds, with birding concluding about 1 PM. Targets include Painted Redstart, Olive Warbler and Greater Peewee. Individuals may want to meet Christopher at Percha Dam at 10 AM Saturday or meet Sei and/or Glen at 7 AM at the UNM Physics Department parking lot on the NE corner of Lomas and Yale Blvd. The drive from Albuquerque to Percha Dam should be close to 3 hours. Please contact Christopher (255-7786) or Sei (266-2480) or Glen Finley (872-0775) for details.

Thursday-Friday, May 15-16 - Thursday Birders Plus Birdathon (See article.)

Saturday, May 17 - Celestyn's Bosque Bonanza Birdathon (See article.)

Sunday, May 18 - Fort Sumner

Christopher Rustay will lead this trip. Meet Christopher at the Fort Sumner Allsup's at 7 AM and the group will work its way to the Melrose migrant trap, Bosque Redondo and Fort Sumner Lake. Targets are spring migrants. Reservations for Saturday night can be made at the Coronado Motel (505-355-2466) or the Super 8 Motel (505-355-7888) in Fort Sumner. Please contact Christopher (255-7786) for details.

Friday-Saturday, June 6-7 - Water Canyon Bird Count

Andrew Rominger will lead this annual Bird Count. For those interested in owling, please meet Andrew at the Water Canyon campground on Friday at 6:30 PM. Otherwise meet at the campground on Saturday at 6:30 AM. The campground is located about 20 miles west of Socorro via US 60. Campsites are available, but there is no potable water. Please contact Andrew (243-7355) for details.



National Wildlife Refuge Bulletin Board - Centennial Celebration

http://refugedata.fws.gov/databases/events.taf?function=form

Celebrating a Century of Conservation March 14, 1903 - March 14, 2003

Special celebrations are being held at all refuges across the country on March 14, with special events and commemorations continuing all weekend long.

Beginning in 1903 with President Theodore Roosevelt's protection of a tiny island for birds in Florida, today's National Wildlife Refuge System spans more than 535 wildlife refuges and thousands of small prairie wetlands where waterfowl breed. This magnificent collection of special lands is steadfastly cared for by experts with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, numerous conservation partners, including our own Central New Mexico Audubon Society chapter, and thousands of dedicated volunteers, who ensure America's dwindling natural places can contribute to support bountiful wildlife for future generations to value and enjoy.

Visit a refuge today and be reconnected with Nature!

Sevilleta NWR

The Refuge invites the public to a series of field trips and events in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System. When President Theodore Roosevelt set aside tiny Pelican Island on Florida's east coast as a refuge for birds nearly a century ago, he began a conservation legacy that now spans 93 million acres across the United States and its territories. The National Wildlife Refuge System is America's only network of federal lands dedicated specifically to wildlife conservation, representing a steadfast commitment to protecting our wildlife heritage. Wildlife of virtually every variety finds a home on the National Wildlife Refuges.

Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge is unique among the 7 national wildlife refuges in New Mexico. It is not only the largest, at 230,000 acres, but also has a unique mission. In addition to being managed for the benefit of wildlife, the Refuge also serves as a research station for scientists from the University of New Mexico and around the world. The majority of the Refuge is closed to general public use.

The Centennial Celebration Series offers the public a unique opportunity to visit the Refuge's back-country areas while being escorted by expert guides in a variety of fields. Series field trips are offered to the public free of charge, but reservations are required and space is limited on some trips. For information and reservations call Kim King-Wrenn (505)864-4021.

2003 Sevilleta Centennial Celebration Series

March 22	Cactus Workshop
	Hawk Watching Field Trip
*	Canyon Birding Field Trip
	Refuge at Night Field Trip

Maxwell NWR, Maxwell, NM

March 14 - Open House - Contact Kay Plotner (505)375-2331

Education and Exploration
Bosque del Apache NWR

Call (505)838-2120 for information & to make reservations February 15 - Saturday, 1-3 pm: Visitor Center

• Tom Vezo signs his book of Extraordinary Photographs

March 15- Saturday, 10am-4pm: At the Refuge

 Celebrating 100 years for the National Wildlife System - A Party for Families with Children - Animals, Games, Music, Refreshments, Favors and FUN

April 5 - Saturday, 1-3 pm: At the Refuge

• Principles of Flight - Kites Galore - Contests with Prizes - Kids, Bring Your Parents - Classes on How and Why Birds Fly

April 12 - Saturday, 7pm: Meet at Visitor Center

• A Moonlight Hike with Amy Estelle

April 19 - Saturday, 10am-4pm: Meet in Pavillion

• Laura Jean Deal Desert Arboretum Dedication - Ribbon cutting 10am followed by guided arboretum tour, refreshments and cactus workshops. Call to reserve for Guided Refuge tour 2pm following Arboretum tour.

April 26 - Saturday, 10am - 2pm: In T or C, New Mexico

• Working with Natural Materials - Paula & Steve Green -Construct Fences, Screens & More with Local Materials - Bring lunch; bev. provided. *Limit 16 - call to reserve your place*

May 10 - Saturday, 8am-3:30pm: Meet at Visitor Center

• International Migratory Bird Day Celebration w/ Daniel Perry

May 17 - Saturday, 9am-5pm: Meet at Visitor Center

• Wildlife Photography w/ Jerry Goffe, Professional Photographer & Bosque Guide. Limited - call to reserve your place

Las Vegas NWR

The newly formed group, "Friends of Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge" invites you to join us for special events on Saturday, March 15. Our theme is "Discovering Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge: The Refuge in Your Backyard." Our schedule of events follows; call (505)425-3581 for more details.

9:00am Experience spring migration on back road auto tour loop12:30pm Last car allowed through the gate for the auto loop

1:00pm "LVNWR: The Refuge In Your Backyard" slide show 2:00pm "Aldo Leopold: Becoming More Aware" presentation

3:30pm Guided exploration at the Gallinas nature trail.

5:00pm Thanks for a great day!

Bitter Lake NWR, Roswell, NM

On Friday, March 14, Bitter Lake NWR and Friends of Bitter Lake NWR will celebrate the Centennial with a ceremony at the refuge which will include ground breaking for our Environmental Education and Visitor Center. Go to www.bitterlake.com or call (505)622-6755, ext. 16 to make plans to join us for this tribute of support to us locally and the NWR system nationally.

International Migratory Bird Day: May 10, 2003 By Hart R. Schwarz

For the 6th straight year the Cibola National Forest will team up with the National Park Service to celebrate the return of migrant birds at Quarai – the little cottonwood oasis with the 17th century Franciscan church, which is located about eight miles north of

Mountainair, NM. A program of activities will begin at 8:00 AM with a bird walk and continue until at least 4:00 PM. Already, ninety-two species have delighted visitors at Quarai on previous IMBD gatherings. Every year a central theme is chosen as a focus for conservation-oriented activities and discussions. Last year it was "Important Bird Areas" and the year before that, "Shade-grown Coffee."

Please come and join us at Quarai on Saturday, May 10th, for a day devoted to the birds. Should you desire more detailed information as it becomes available, as well as a confirmation of the tentative program mentioned above, please contact Hart Schwarz via e-mail (hschwarz@fs.fed.us) after April 1.

Please note that IMBD is entirely distinct from the Spring Migration Count, although both happen to occur on the same day. IMBD is a celebration of birds and an opportunity to raise awareness about this treasured resource and the urgent need for its conservation. The Migration Count, on the other hand, is a citizen-science activity very similar to the Christmas Count.

The Hummers Are Coming!!

Be ready for the return of our favorite hyperactive hummers around the first week in April. Remember to keep your feeders safe and attractive by providing a 4:1 mixture of sugar water. Boil the nectar, refrigerate unused portion, and avoid harmful food coloring. NEVER use honey to feed hummingbirds, and wash your feeder regularly with warm soap and water. For you green-thumbed birders, a Southwestern hummingbird wildflower garden could include Indian paintbrush, skyrocket, larkspur, pink wild snapdragon, lupine, scarlet bugler, beebalm, Rocky Mountain penstemon, toadflax, scarlet runner bean, desert beardtongue, and Rocky Mountain columbine. Enjoy!

HawkWatch Observations

http://www.hawkwatch.org/

Observation at the Sandia hawkwatch will begin on February 22 and run through May 5. This year banding will be conducted only on weekends and on days when field trips have been scheduled. If you would like to help with the set-up for banding early in March, please call Bobbie at 255-7622.

The Annual HawkWatch Garage Sale will take place on Saturday, March 15 at 3707 Camino Don Diego NE.

Other Area IMBD Events

Rio Grande Zoo: May 10, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Learn about migration pathways and the plight of

Find out why keeping your cat indoors is a good idea, how buying shade grown coffee can help save important habitat for birds. Make your own bird feeder.

Call 764-6245 for more information.

Bosque del Apache NWR: May 10, 8:00 am - 3:30 pm

International Migratory Bird Day Celebration with Daniel Perry, Refuge ORP and naturalist.

Call (505)835-1828 for more information.



Festival of Hummingbirds - Tucson

The Festival of Hummingbirds, is to be held in Tucson, Arizona April 4-5-6, 2003. There will be talks from hummingbird experts from all over the world as well as custom tours to view some of Arizona's diverse hummer species. If you are interested in this festival you may contact the Hummingbird Society at (800)529-3699 or on the web at www.hummingbird.org.



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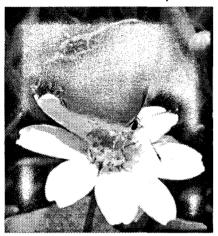
Urban Habitat Development: Southwest Gardening

What we can do for the world and a better yard

The two greatest threats to native species around the world are 1) habitat loss, and 2) invasive non-native species. Even though we often feel helpless to make a difference in the world, we can all make a huge difference simply by what we do in our yards.

Simplify, beautify your yard and life

To increase wildlife habitat in your yard, you can reduce your lawn area each year and replace it with native plants. The initial investment of time and money to reduce lawn area will be more



than offset by no longer having to mow or water your yard. Native plants can attract between 10 and 50 times as many wildlife species as most non-native plants. Natives do not require supplemental water after helping them get started during the first year. You can help to grow" butterflies by planting their larval food plants in your garden.

Visit the Albuquerque Garden Center (10120 Lomas Blvd. NE, 505-296-6020), or join the Native Plant Society (Albuquerque Chapter - Beth Herschman, President - (505)892-2230) to learn more about our huge variety of native plants in New Mexico. The Native Plant Society has plant sales in the Spring and Fall at the Garden Center. Dates of the sales can be found on their web site,

[http://npsnm.unm.edu/chapters/albuquerque.htm].

Other Albuquerque Area Resources:

Council of Albuquerque Garden Clubs

[http://www.nmmastergardeners.org/Council/ABQ.htm]

Albuquerque Area Master Gardeners, Hotline: (505)292-7144

[http://nmmastergardeners.org/]

The Native Plant Society [State - http://npsnm.unm.edu/] Bernalillo County Extension Office, (505)243-1386 Sandoval County Extension Office, (505)867-2582

Help to reduce habitat loss in your community Vegetation adjacent to waterways provides valuable wildlife habitat. What may look like a brushy, weedy area may actually be prime habitat for wildlife, especially if it is near water. Dragonflies love to perch on dead vegetation, and birds are better able to hide from predators and find insects in tall vegetation. Vegetation along channels and lakes also improves water quality and acts as a buffer zone for the water body. Unfortunately, cities often receive calls from residents asking them to mow down this critical waterside habitat. Cities will tell you that requests for more mowing often come from residents who fear snakes near waterways. Snakes are not going to be eliminated by mowing the waterside vegetation, but mowing

may eliminate habitat of prey species such as birds, frogs, lizards, and other creatures along our waterways, which in turn may reduce the snake population that feeds on those creatures. Eliminating wildlife habitat is probably not the intention of people who call cities with concerns about snakes, so you can help by educating your neighbors about habitat value of vegetation near waterways. Creatures that live around this vegetation are well-hidden and often very small, so people may not realize how many hundreds of creatures live there. If you want to help preserve wildlife, please contact your City and other responsible entities and let them know of your concerns.

Bugs keep our yards healthy

At first it may be hard for some people to change their paradigm regarding bugs in the garden. Not all insects are blessed with physical beauty, and some are surrounded by myths and bad press, especially from the pesticide industry. There are nearly 800 species of butterflies, 5000 species of native bees, and 11,000 species of moths in the United States, and you can attract hundreds of these and other insects to your yard. Insects are the primary food source for all wildlife, including frogs, toads, lizards, birds, and even other insects, such as dragonflies. Many species of birds do not eat seeds from feeders, but can be attracted to your yard by providing a small water source like a birdbath or pond. They'll also enjoy feasting on insects in your yard, especially if they are nesting in your yard and feeding their young.

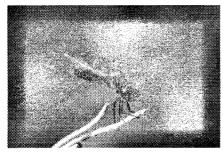
Keep alive the wildlife you have

Few people are aware that chemicals from home lawns are one of the primary reasons for water quality impairment of downstream rivers and lakes, and of course your backyard pond. Even synthetic fertilizers cause harm, since they result in excessive vegetation in streams and lakes, where dissolved oxygen then drops in the night-time hours, causing the death of aquatic organisms and fish. It is important to minimize use of pesticides and herbicides, as these chemicals will harm the wildlife you are trying to attract. Pesticides are estimated to kill far more than 50 million birds per year. Wildlife passing through a chemically treated yard not only absorb chemicals directly, but they ingest the chemicals by eating poisoned plants and insects, and then may retreat to a secluded area to die. Granular pesticides are particularly dangerous to birds, who mistakenly ingest the granules thinking they are food or small rocks that aid in digestion. Even 3-5 granules of diazinon will kill a bird. Pesticides and herbicides also mix with rainwater or are carried with particles down to streams and lakes, where countless aquatic organisms are killed. One U.S. study found that even if only

4% of homes used diazinon at the recommended rate of application, the level of the chemical found in the stream collecting the rainwater from the neighborhood exceeded the concentration known to be lethal







to aquatic organisms. Sale of diazinon for home lawn use will be prohibited by the EPA after Dec 31, 2003. You can help to save wildlife now by not using outdoor pesticides, and buying organic food will make

you feel good by knowing pesticides weren't used to make your food, saving the lives of many creatures. You can also purchase organic cotton clothing, and I also now make organic cotton dog toys.

Humans often feel the desire to help plants that are being attacked by insects, but relationships between plants, insects, and other wildlife have been established over millions of years. Humans often do more harm than good, although our intentions may be good. Simply waiting a few weeks and giving time for beneficial insects and birds to find their food source is often all that is needed. Caterpillars and other insects that feed on leaves will make plants look less than perfect in our eyes, but allowing nature to exist with minimal human intervention can lead to wonderful things, such as the butterflies and moths that caterpillars will become. Birds will also come to your yard to gather caterpillars, grasshoppers, and other insects to feed their young babies. If you have a plant that cannot survive without pesticides, it is probably in the wrong location and you can just let it die and replace it with an appropriate native plant better suited to the conditions of that location.

Invasive plants damage wildlife and native plants Even though many non-native plants can also provide food and shelter for wildlife, some of these plants may be spread into natural areas, outcompeting native species. For example, the Russian-olive can now be found throughout large areas of New Mexico. Some of the other "worst-offenders" in our area include Salt-cedar (Tamarisk), Russian knapweed, toadflax, and Puncturevine (goat head).

Invasive non-native predators are also a huge threat Non-native wildlife also out-competes native species. The domestic cat is one of the worst offenders in the United States. The native species in the United States did not evolve with cats, and even well-fed house cats with bells on their collars can kill approximately 100 small animals, birds, and lizards per year. Cats kill countless baby birds each year, as well as adult birds such as hummingbirds that feed on low flowers or come to bird feeders. Encourage cat owners to use a cat enclosure if they want to let their cat outdoors, for the safety of both cats and other wildlife. You may also help by working for local ordinances that would require cats to be kept indoors or in a confined area. Cats endure many injuries and even death when allowed to roam free, so this type of ordinance is not only to help native wildlife, but the cats themselves.

Most importantly, enjoy your habitat You might start out by simply walking more slowly from the car into the house when you arrive home each day. Spend a few minutes each day to let your eyes follow an insect flying quickly past. When it lands you may find it is a tiny butterfly or interesting native bee. Following a butterfly until dusk can reveal the location it chooses to stop at for the night. Children will find endless hours of entertainment once introduced to the exciting and diverse species that will come to your habitat. Make it your goal each year to expand an existing bed or add one new bed of native plants. Within a few short years, your yard will be transformed into a habitat for wildlife, and your mowing and watering chores will cease to exist. You can also have your habitat certified by the National Wildlife Federation (800)822-9919,

http://www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat/certifyyourhabitat.cfm or the Rocky Mountain Natural Resource Center, Boulder, CO (303)786-8001.

This article was originally published by Jenny Rasmussen with a Texas twist and is presented here in its modifiedd state with the author's permission. Find the original article at:

<http://www.birdcrossstitch.com/garden/TexasGardening.html>. This article was also published in the Sept. 2002 Signal Smoke, the newsletter of the Travis Audubon Society, Central Texas.

Don't Let Pumpkin Be A Pouncer



Each year, thousands of cats die on the roads or are injured in fights outdoors, and hundreds of millions of birds and small mammals are killed by free-roaming cats. Cats live happier, healthier, longer lives indoors.

For more information: www.abcbirds.org

The Audubon Society's Video Guide to Birds of North America . . .

is now in the CNMAS library, thanks to the generosity of Norm Broemel. Norm is honoring the memory of his wife, Elizabeth Hunt Broemel, who was a lifetime birdwatcher, by passing along her love of birds and nature.

There are five VHS tapes in the Audubon Society's Video Guides to Birds of North America, which are excellent for self-education or just for entertainment. They may be checked out as a group or individually by calling CNMAS at 255-7622.

Vol. I - 116 species of loons, grebes, pelicans and their allies, swans, geese and ducks, hawks, vultures and falcons, pheasants, grouse, quails, ptarmigans.

Vol. II - 105 species of water birds, including herons and egrets, cranes, shorebirds, gulls, terns and alcids.

Vol. III - 77 species of pigeons and doves, cuckoos, owls, nighthawks, hummingbirds and swifts, trogons, kingfishers and woodpeckers.

Vol. IV (Songbirds I) - 98 species of flycatchers, larks, swallows, crows and jays, titmice and chickadees, nuthatches, creepers, wrens, thrushes, waxwings, shrikes, thrashers and vireos.

Vol. V (Songbirds II) - 109 species of warblers, orioles and blackbirds, tanagers, grosbeaks, finches, buntings and sparrows.



World-Class Birding Atop Sandia Mountains

Birders from all over the world come here to add three new species to their lists - Black Rosy Finch, Brown-capped Rosy Finch, and Gray-crowned Rosy Finch. Ken and Mary Lou Schneider have been the two "U's" in "Audubon," with countless volunteer hours and boundless enthusiasm vested in this project. Visit their website at http://home.att.net/~kschneider/rosy.html for the "virtual" field trip. Viewing may be getting sparse by March (depending on snowfall), so you might want to check the web page for current info before you hop in yours cars and drive up to the Crest.

We especially want to acknowledge the hospitality that has been extended to birders by the on-site management and staff of the Crest House. It is a privately owned building with a long-term lease, on Forest Service property. Since the feeders are located on the leased land, we are especially grateful for such accommodation. Birders, please remember this if you're there on a crowded day, and remember that "paying customers" must be afforded great courtesy.

Rosy Finch Report By Ken Schneider

I arrived at Sandia Crest, NM at 1:00 PM Sunday, January 5 to tend the Rosy-finch feeders.

Two high school students, Ryan Beaulieu and Raymond VanBuskirk, were hard at work on a project designed to document the flocking behavior and species mix of Rosyfinches. They carefully observed the time of arrival and departure of each flock, recording flock size and species mix over a two hour period. They plan to repeat their observations every two weeks until the Rosy-finches depart.

My personal sightings included about 5 flocks with a maximum flock size of about 50 birds, with up to 20 Black, 12 Brown-capped and 6 Gray-crowned (one Hepburn's/Coastal race) over a two hour period.

Ryan and Raymond's records will be more detailed and accurate. I was impressed with their integrity in classifying as to species only those birds with clear plumage characteristics.

Nearly half of many flocks include "indeterminate" cool brown birds that resemble Sibley's illustration of the first winter female Brown-capped. I call them "Buffies," and feel that since the M:F ratio of Rosy-finches is skewed 1:6 in favor of males, it is unlikely that they are all female Brown-capped. Indeed, on close inspection in good light, some show blackish bases to their contour feathers, and other show a faint gray crown under the buffy feather tips.

The work these young men are doing could be ground-breaking in clarifying the progression of plumage in these species. I have observed that as the winter progresses, the relative number of clearly identifiable Gray-crowned and Brown-capped individuals seems to increase, in tandem with a decrease in the proportion of "Buffies." See further discussion of plumages at the Rosy-finch Web site: http://home.att.net/~kschneider/rosy.html

The Northern Pygmy Owl reappeared on December 31 at its usual perch opposite the base of the Sandia Ski Lift, and

Herbfest at RGNC a spring celebration

Saturday & Sunday, May 17 and 18

The Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center offer speakers, guided walks, plants for sale, kids' crafts, and garden tours. Admission is free!

For more information, contact: Jean Mason, urch@webtv.net

2901 Candelaria NW Albuquerque, NM 87107 (505)344-7240 or (505)265-1164 http://frgnc.org/

Subject: Are you a Birder?

Answering "yes" to any of the following questions qualifies you as a true birder.

- 1. Someone yells DUCK! and you look up and shout "Where"?
- 2. You criticize television programs and commercials that depict a bald eagle but play a red-tailed hawk call.
- 3. One of your kids is named, Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine or Phoebe.
- 4. Your spouse says, "It's either me or the birds," and you have to think about it.
- 5. You pay a neighbour's kid \$20 to play dead in a field while you search the sky for vultures.



another was seen Sunday right off the deck of the Crest House, ten minutes after I departed! See website for details.

Kenneth C. and Mary Lou Schneider
PO Box 66
Cedar Crest, New Mexico 87008-0066
Voice:(505)281-6470 Mobile: (505)263-4955
kschneider@att.net - http://home.att.net/~kschneider/



New Mexico Habitat Stamp Program

Recognizing wildlife habitat is the key to increased wildlife populations, in 1991 the New Mexico State Game Commission approved the statewide implementation of the Habitat Stamp Program. Finally, thanks to sportsmen from whom a mandatory \$5 fee is collected, there have been substantial funds available for wildlife habitat improvement. Every year sportsmen purchase approximately \$900 thousand dollars worth of Habitat Stamp validations before they go afield to hunt, fish, or trap on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands in New Mexico.

Since New Mexico has many dry areas, the creation of additional sources of water for wildlife has been a top priority. A total of 324 trick tanks, spring developments, earthen tanks, and wells costing \$1.2 million have been constructed around the State.

While watering devises are expensive and require high maintenance, manipulating the habitat itself is can be very cost effective. If we are to improve our deer herds for example, we must treat huge tracks of overgrown forests and juniper-dominated habitats to place them back to a state that deer prefer. The most cost-effective treatment is the use of fire, but in some situations, the use of chainsaws and herbicides are necessary. Over 287 thousand acres been improved with \$1.6 million in Habitat Stamp funds (federal agencies have matched an additional \$1.2 million in this effort).

With some projects 15 years old, over \$455,000 has been expended to maintain the initial habitat investment. Maintenance might include replacing float valves on wildlife water units, repair of fence lines, or maintenance burning of vegetation.

Other projects include road/access management, and riparian, watershed, and fishery improvements. Funding may also be utilized for projects that are not directly related to habitat improvement such as law enforcement, wildlife transplants, surveys and research.

In the 15-year life of the Program, 1,147 wildlife habitat projects have been funded at a level of \$9.4 million. In this effort HSP has contributed \$5,591,078 and federal agencies have spent an additional \$3,843,864 in matching funds in the form of cash, costs of planning, fiscal tracking, NEPA documenting, and obtaining archeological/cultural clearances. Other organizations have contributed uncalculated dollars and time to this effort.

Volunteers are invaluable to the program and allow HSP dollars to go even further. Each year, school children, sportsmen's groups, civic and environmental organizations drive to remote locations, roll up their sleeves, and go to work.

Those of us within the Department of Game and Fish, U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management want to wholeheartedly thank you for your financial and volunteer support of New Mexico's wildlife habitats. I hope we have met your expectations and that the New Mexico Habitat Stamp Program is helping wildlife where it counts . . .where wildlife lives!

You Can Help New Mexico's Wildlife

You can help endangered species research and recovery, raptor migration counts, wildlife rehabilitation, and other wildlife projects.

Your donation goes directly to wildlife projects across New Mexico. No contributions are used for administrative costs. Please complete this form below and mail to:

Share with Wildlife

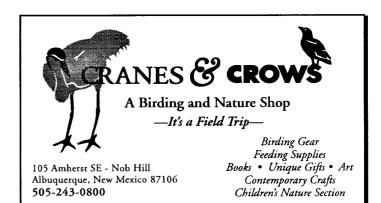
New Mexico Department of Game and Fish P. O. Box 25112 Santa Fe, NM 87504

Please accept my	contribution of \$ _	
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City	State	Zip

Please make checks payable to Share with Wildlife.

A Message from Dave Henderson Director, Audubon - New Mexico

Everyone: I want to wish you all a Happy and Healthy New Year. In addition, I want to tell you before you hear this information from someone else, that I have been offered and I have accepted a position on the New Mexico State Game Commission. As you can imagine, this is quite an honor and a big responsibility. Serving on the Commission is a voluntary position (as if I need more to do) and will certainly require a fair amount of my time. Serving will allow me to voice ideas and hopefully create a climate for change on issues and concerns important to Audubon that involve the wildlife heritage of the state. I could hardly say "no" considering this appointment will put me in a position to, hopefully, do what Audubon does, advocate for sound and scientific management of wildlife, a resource that this state has been generously blessed with. We have a tremendous staff in place at the state office and the center and I am confident that working together we will all be able to accomplish all that we have set out to do. Thank you all for being so supportive of Audubon New Mexico.





103rd Christmas Bird Count Reports

CBC Compiled Results can be viewed at http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/

Sandia Mountain Christmas Bird Count Compilers: Rebecca Gracey and Nick Vaughn

We had a wonderful count this year, thanks to good weather and good birders who were repeat participants. Thirty-eight people participated on December 29, including three people under the age of 18 and three people from out of state. A record number of species was seen at 69. The previous highest number was 65 from 2000. There were several uncommon birds seen including Northern Goshawk, Blue Jay, Goldencrowned Kinglet, White-throated Sparrow, Black-throated Sparrow, Bald Eagle, Sandhill Crane, and all three Rosy Finch species. The only bird seen that was a first for this count was the Savannah Sparrow spotted in upper Three Gun Springs. One species missed on the count was the Greater Roadrunner.

Bosque del Apache - December 14 Compilers: Steve and Nancy Cox

Fourteen volunteers plus three feederwatchers canvassed Bosque del Apache on December 14, a mild sunny day. The count tallied a record high of 125 species, with a total of 75,915 individuals. When you think of the Bosque del Apache CBC, remember that it covers desert shrubland, not just water areas.

First-ever sightings for CBC were Cactus Wren, Winter Wren, American Dipper, and Prothonotary Warbler. An unusual sighting was the Orange-crowned Warbler. Countweek highlights were Dusky Flycatcher, Northern Shrike, and Yellow Warbler. All in all, a great year for counting warblers! Next year we could use more help — it's a big area. Who knows how many more birds we can get with more sets of eyes?

Albuquerque - December 15 Compiler: Hart R. Schwarz

Black-crowned Night Heron, Peregrine Falcon, Spotted Sandpiper, Eurasian Collared Dove, Inca Dove, (Eastern) Blue Jay, Chihuahuan Raven, Cactus Wren, American Dipper, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Pine Warbler, American Redstart, Brewer's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Goldencrowned Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark were the rare or difficult-to-identify birds included in the 112 species seen on the Albuquerque Count, totaling 23,746 birds. 49 (wow!) people took part in this annual ritual dedicated to the understanding of our environment through "Citizen Science." The Pine Warbler and the American Redstart were entirely new to the Count, reflecting an influx of warblers throughout the state during this El Niño winter. Most amazing was a Ruddy Ground Dove, which spent a couple of weeks in a Northeast Heights neighborhood. Although seen Count Week, it failed to materialize on Count Day - or thereafter.

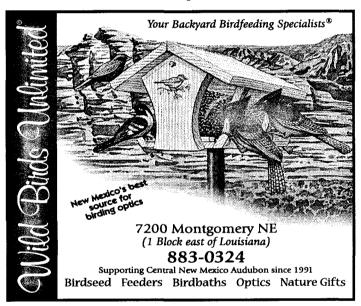
Sevilleta NWR - December 17 Compiler: Steve Cox

This count covers the west side of this large refuge and includes La Joya wetlands. Twelve participants braved 30-mile-perhour winds for results of 74 species, a low number for a count area that often yields 90-plus species. Total number of birds

was 8,896, all of which were familiar and expected – but rare and exciting to our two guest counters from Scotland, who considered the winds mild and the birds unusual.

Five Points - December 21 Compiler: Nancy and Steve Cox

Five Points is an area of mostly grassland on the eastern side of Sevilleta NWR. Seventeen people recorded unusual sightings of Sprague's Pipit, Cassin's Sparrow, Lark Bunting, Grasshopper Sparrow, Baird's Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, and large numbers of Chestnut-collared Longspurs. Findings like this emphasize two things: the correlation of healthy grasslands with the bird populations that rely on them; and number two, the value of many experienced birders helping in these citizen science projects. Total number of species was 64, comprised of 7,041 individuals – another record high count.



Reports continued from page 2

refuge was by far our most spectacular birding." In all, there were 16 birders on this mild, sunny winter day. We had two teenagers, Ryan and Raymond, and they helped find the Dipper, Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagle, and the Harlan's Hawk. A number of Snipes and at least 9 Bald Eagles were also seen.

Saturday, January 18: Bernardo Refuge

Rebecca Gracey led this trip to the Ladd Gordon Waterfowl Complex in Bernardo, with 7 CNMAS members in attendance. Thirty species of birds were observed on a beautiful, sunny day. Some of the highlights of the day were the flights of Light Geese overhead, close up views of Sandhill Cranes and a large flock of Mountain Bluebirds.

Sunday, February 2: Corrales Bosque

There were 18 birders on this beautiful day in the Corrales Bosque. Close to 40 species of birds were recorded. Some of the highlights of the day included a pair of Black-billed Magpies perched next to an immature Bald Eagle, two immature Bald Eagles interacting in the air and a flock of Western Bluebirds. A few of the birders met at the Rio Grande Nature Center where they had a great view of a Western Screech Owl.

Audubon Adventures...

...continues to be loved by teachers from around Central New Mexico. Here's what teacher, Ms. Simpson, has to say about the newspapers contained in Audubon Adventures:

"The Audubon Newspapers have been a wonderful addition to our Reading and Science curriculum. I used the newspapers as a supplementary Guided Reading Material. While learning about our environment and various endangered animals the children are also improving their critical reading skills. Each lesson is preceded by questions to find what the children already know about the subject. Next I guide the class through reading certain informational parts of the article by asking them to find specific information and then read it aloud to the class. We discuss the article as we go along. Following this large group session, the children work with partners to find and record important points on a worksheet I have designed around the newsletter. We have a great time and the children really enjoy the activities!"

So far this school year, 17 teachers have the kit. Teachers can be signed up for the kit at any point during the school year, provided that they are still available. This year kits can be found in the following schools:

Albuquerque

Apache Elementary (2) Arroyo del Oso Elementary (2) Carlos Rey Elementary Collet Park Elementary Hodgin Elementary Whittier Elementary Zuni Elementary Jefferson Middle Wilson Middle

Other

Dow Yalanne Elementary -Zuni Rio Grande Elementary -Belen Stapleton Elementary (3) -Rio Rancho Laguna Middle School -Laguna

Our thanks go to Birdathon participants and independent contributors to Audubon Adventures who this school year include: Jerry Goffe, Sei Tokuda, Thursday Birders, Lillian Tenopyr, Brave_E, Inc., Dr. John Tyson, Dorothy Rogan

Do you have a teacher that you know that could use Audubon Adventures? Just let Central New Mexico Audubon Society know and we'll try and get them one.

Support this program by sponsoring a Birdathon team this year!



A Note About Your Burrowing Owl Subscription

Beginning in September of 2002, CNMAS members began receiving the Burrowing Owl on a quarterly basis. Two of the issues will be encompassed within the New Mexico State Audubon newsletter which includes news from all the state Audubon chapters.

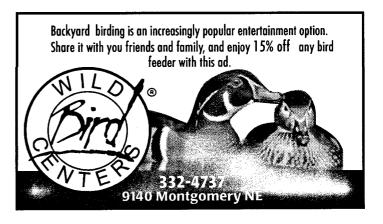
This present Burrowing Owl covers March/April/May 2003. Following that will be the State issue: June/July/August; Burrowing Owl Sept/Oct/Nov; and to wrap up the year and being anew: the State issue for Dec/Jan/Feb.

We do hope you enjoy news from our other state chapters!

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Paper Free Audubon Renewal Program

Audubon Magazine has published a notice of a new option for renewing Audubon memberships. Instead of receiving multiple renewal notices, members can call (800)274-4201 to sign up for Audubon's Paper-Free Renewal Program. Those who sign up will have their membership automatically renewed each year and will receive only one bill approximately 2 months in advance of your membership expiration date. Another way to eliminate those pesky notices is to renew for 2, 3, 4 years – you already know you're committed to Nature for life! Of course, you can cancel at any time. Save paper and simplify your accounting!



Burrowing Owl Deadline
Information and articles to be included in Jun/Jul/Aug 2003 issue of the Burrowing Owl must be received by May 10. 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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Our missions: "To appreciate, experience, and conserve birds, other wildlife and their habitats. To encourage and support environmental education in New Mexico."

WHOM TO CONTACT

National Audubon Society Membership Hotline (800)274-4201, chadd@audubon.org Activist Hotline

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

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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 http://www.gmfsh.state.nm.us

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

Rare Bird Alert

Albuquerque: 323-9323, Pinyonjay@aol.com http://mvar.nmsu.edu/nmos/hotline.html http://www.virtualbirder.com/vbirder/realbirds/rbas/NM.html

Bat in Trouble? (Talking Talons) Call before you intervene: 281-1133 or 281-1515

DIRECTORY

CNMAS Phone 255-7622 Email jmyers@peacocklaw.com Webpage http://www.newmexicoaudubon.org/cnmas/ CNMAS, P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque, NM 87190-0002

Beth Hurst-Waitz 804 Guadalupe Circle NW 87114-1710 home 898-8514 work 243-7029 fax 242-7343 brave_e@juno.com

PUBLICITY CHAIRPERSON Sylvia Chattin 294-4073

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MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON (for change of address only) Ed Dover 1421 San Carlos SW 87104-1040 242-5427 edover@juno.com

Ronald Waitz 804 Guadalupe Circle NW 87114-1710 898-8514

AUDUBON ADVENTURES CHAIRPERSON Helen Haskell home 281-6453 work 281-5259 helennm@yahoo.com

FIELD TRIP CHAIRPERSON

Sei Tokuda 3008 Marble Avenue NE 87106 266-2480 stokuda@juno.com Art Arenholz 2014 Hoffman Dr. NE 87110 298-1724

NEW MEXICO COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE Ruth Burstrom 856-2901 rburstrom@aol.com

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