

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

A Record-breaking Year on Sandia Crest

by Cole Wolf

Our fourth season of Rosy-Finch banding on Sandia Crest ended on March 20, 2007. We banded eighteen new birds, which, when combined with previously banded birds, brought our season total to an amazing 773! Since the project started in January 2004, a total of 1197 Rosy-Finches have been banded at Sandia Crest. The project's original goal was to see if the same birds came back to the crest each winter, but so far the results have been inconclusive. This season twenty-two birds were recaptured from previous years. With such a large number of Rosy-Finches banded, next year should be even better!

Those of you who visited us this season may have seen the new part of the project we are working on. Using isotopic analysis, we are able to find out approximately what latitude the Rosy-Finches come from. We take a small feather sample from each bird, and then send all of the samples to University of New Mexico biology professor, Dr. Blair Wolf. Dr. Wolf looks at the hydrogen isotopes in the feather to determine where the bird grew it. By looking at where these birds come from, we can better understand their migration and wintering patterns. We have gotten some of the results back already, and were surprised to find that some of our Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches are coming from inside the Arctic Circle in Alaska and Canada!

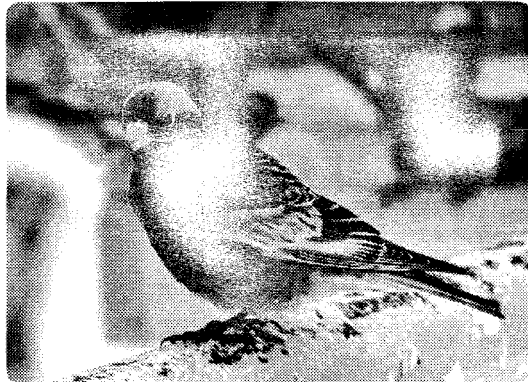


Photo of Black Rosy-finch by Steve Fettig

One of the reasons we were so successful this year was because there was so much snow. Our hardy banders braved subzero temperatures and many inches of snow. We had no serious injuries, but a falling icicle attacked Raymond and I was locked outside for several long and cold minutes. After the big storms our first twenty minutes were usually occupied shoveling snow so we could open the door (we went through a window to get outside) and access the traps. It was worth the effort, however, because we banded the most finches when there was lots of snow on the ground. In fact, on several

Rosy-Finches... continued on page 4

Earth Beat Rocks!

The Earth Beat **Birdathon!** 2007 team consisted of Cole Wolf, Raymond VanBuskirk, and our young-at-heart supervisors, Bill Talbot and Kathy Jutila. We chose Saturday, May 12 for our Big Day. Despite adverse conditions (more on those later), we still ended up with a total of 158 species.

We got off to a late start at 1:30 AM, in Clanton Canyon, where our first bird was a Whip-poor-will. We got all of our nocturnal birds there including Long-eared Owl, Western and Whiskered Screech Owl, Elf Owl, Barn Owl, and Common Poorwill. Some of us got a little sleep around 4:00 at Redrock. We birded there for about an hour, highlights were Common Black-Hawk, Gila Woodpecker, Brown-crested Flycatcher, and Abert's Towhee. We then headed east through the Big Burro Mountains.

Birdathon!... continued on page 2

Nature into Art: The Making Of A Field Guide

Presentation and Book Signing

Saturday, June 9, 1:00PM

Rio Grande Nature Center State Park

Fiona A. Reid spent many years capturing small mammals and drawing them from life for her new book: *A Peterson Field Guide to Mammals of North America*. An

accomplished writer and artist, she has written and/or illustrated numerous guides, including *A Field Guide to the Mammals of Central America and Southeast*



Nature into Art... continued on page 2

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We had just finished cleaning up on our grassland birds and were entering the foothills when our first problem occurred: a flat tire. Once the spare was in place, we got back on track. At a small riparian area we had a Zone-tailed Hawk, a Plumbeous Vireo, and a rather unexpected Rose-breasted Grosbeak. As we pulled into Silver City, we tried to remain optimistic despite our loss of time.

After the tire was repaired, we headed east towards the Black Range. With Kathy at the wheel, the rest of us tried to get some rest before the next stop. When I woke up about fifty minutes later, something seemed strange. We seemed to be heading south, rather than north, and were surrounded by desert. It just didn't look like the mountains. Wait, what's that up ahead? Oh, that's Deming! (According to my teammates I had been assigned the post of navigator, and had fallen asleep on the job. Oops!) We turned around, and headed back towards the mountains (all-in-all, our little "detour" ended up being about ninety miles).

We finally made it into the Black Range around 1:00 PM. We managed to get quite a few species in the mountains even though it rained. From there we headed south to Percha Dam State Park. The mid-afternoon heat kept the birds down, and we only added five new birds to our total.

With daylight running out, we sped north to Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge proved extremely productive, and in less than an hour we added over fifty species to our total. There were good numbers of shorebirds, including a Willet and a Stilt Sandpiper. Raymond also picked out a Glossy Ibis from a flock of White-faced, and I found another in the same group. We ended our day owling in Water Canyon, but only managed to hear a single Long-eared Owl.

Our delays ended up costing us about four hours of birding time. We missed quite a few easy birds, like Hutton's Vireo, many migrant warblers, and the ever-elusive Swainson's Hawk. We still had a great time, and hope to do even better next year. We would like to thank everyone who pledged to Earth Beat, raising money for conservation gives us a great excuse to get out birding!

Nature into Art... continued from page 1

Mexico, The Golden Guide to Bats of the World, Bats of Papua New Guinea, and Mammals of the Neotropics (volumes 1-3).

Through her PowerPoint presentation, Fiona will explain how and why she travelled all around the USA and Canada catching, studying, and painting live mammals to create the plates in her new book. The talk provides some natural history information on a variety of North American mammals, as well as entertaining stories of trapping adventures from Arizona to Alaska. It is illustrated primarily with her artwork and field studies.

This event is cosponsored by CNMAS and the Friends of the RGNC: Rio Grande Nature Center State Park, 2901 Candleria Rd NW, 505-343-1373 (FRGNC), 505-344-7240 (RGNCSP)

"Fiona A. Reid is a Departmental Associate in Mammalogy at the Center for Biodiversity and Conservation Biology at the Royal Ontario Museum, in Toronto, Canada. She has led nature tours for the past two decades, showing ecotourists the mammals and other wildlife of diverse lands from Indonesia to Alaska and Venezuela. She lives on the Niagara Escarpment in southern Ontario with her husband and two children."

Earth's Beat

by Ryan Beaulieu

Listen! Can you Hear?

The Earth speaks.

It speaks to us through its most precious manifestation,
It speaks through nature.

The wind moves, whispering words of wisdom.

The stream moves, giving toward sounds of peace.

The ocean rolls toward the shore,

Turning every pebble,

Each pebble giving its own story.

Listen, the Earth speaks,

The beat of birds singing, calling.

The sounds of leaves falling, insects chewing,

All worries gone with these sounds,

Every problem solved, every answer found.

All it takes is time, just listen.

Akira Literary Magazine, Legends Never Die, Published by St. Pius X High School, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 2005

Other Birdathon Teams: Celestyn's and Thursday Birders

Central New Mexico Audubon Society

Birding For Dollars

For every bird species the team identifies during Birdathon, CNMAS benefits!

Circle your pledge & Audubon can WIN!

10¢	25¢	50¢
\$1	\$2 ⁵⁰	\$5
\$7 ⁵⁰	\$10	\$20

Or if you are feeling extra generous, fill in your Birdathon pledge here

\$

THIS PLEDGE CAN BE DESIGNATED FOR TEAM/INDIVIDUAL

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY & ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

To make a pledge or to make your tax-deductible donation, return this form with your payment made out to:

CNMAS
PO Box 30002
Albuquerque NM 87190-0002

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.



June - July - August 2007

Field Trip Schedule - Including Thursday Birders

CNMAS trips prepared by Celestyn Brozek

Check <http://www.newmexicoaudubon.org/cnmas/trips.html> for field trip updates. Always check with the leader before the trip.

Thursday, June 7: Wildlife West Nature Park, Edgewood, NM
With Sara Mathews (291-3373, smathews38@yahoo.com). Meet at the Four Hills shopping center north of Hollywood Video at 8:00 a.m. or 8:30 at the park. Directions: Take I-40 east for 20 miles, then take exit 187 to Edgewood and Highway 344. Go north under the overpass, then west on the frontage road until you see the sign for the park. There is an admission charge of \$5.00 per person.

Thursday, June 14: Capulin Spring in the Sandias

With Karen and Gary Boettcher (281-6726, nmkestrel@starband.net). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Sandia Ranger Station in Tijeras on Highway 337 in Tijeras, NM.

Thursday, June 21: Sandia Mountain Natural History Center in Cedar Crest

With Melissa Howard (286-9365, nmflicker@netzero.net). Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Four Hills shopping center north of Hollywood Video. There is a \$2.00 per person admission fee to the center.

Saturday, June 23: Villanueva State Park

Meet at the Four Hills shopping center on Central and west of Tramway near Hollywood Video at 7:00 AM. Very little walking will be involved. We will be looking for Cassin's Sparrows, Bullock's Orioles and Yellow Warblers. Bring lunch. We should be back in Albuquerque by 3:00 PM. Directions: east on I-40 for 65 miles, then north on Highway 3 for 20 miles. There is a \$5 entrance fee if you don't have a state parks pass. Contact Rebecca Gracey at (505)242-3821, or mrgracey@earthlink.net for details.

pass. Contact Rebecca Gracey at (505)242-3821, or mrgracey@earthlink.net for details.

Thursday, June 28: Roadrunner Roost B&B in Tome, NM, and Riverside Park in Los Lunas

With Rebecca Gracey (242-3821, mrgracey@earthlink.net). Meet behind Hawthorn Suites on Gibson and University at 7:00 a.m. Directions will be handed out then. If you want to meet us in Tome, Rebecca can email the directions to you. Lunch at Jason's in Los Lunas.

Thursday, July 12: 10K Trail in the Sandias

With Mary Lou Arthur (299-2565, marylarthur@yahoo.com). Meet at 7:00 a.m. in the Four Hills shopping center north of Hollywood Video. This will be a two-mile hike ending in the late morning.

Thursday, July 19: Simms Ranch and Bonnie Long's house in the Manzanos

Leader is Bonnie Long (379-1985, cantrade_1@yahoo.com). Meet at Four Hills shopping center at 9:00 a.m. or entrance to

Field Trips continued on page 4

Fall Programs

The CNMAS programs will resume in the fall. We will have three free presentations for you to enjoy. Our speakers will awe, educate and entertain. Stay tuned and save these dates:

September 20th, October 18th, and November 8th

All programs and presentations are held at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, NW corner of Copper and Jefferson NE, 7:15 PM. For information call Beth, 505-898-8514. For updates, visit our website: <http://newmexicoaudubon.org/cnmas/>

Many thank yous to Jerry Goffe and Bonnie Long for their fine presentations during this years' Audubon Birding Academy!

Bosque del Apache - Learning & Birding

Celestyn Brozek will present a program "Herons, Egrets and other waders" at the Bosque del Apache NWR on 25 August 2007, Saturday, 12:00 noon - 5:00 PM.

One hour presentation at the beginning of the workshop will provide an overview of the family and their biology. We will drive into the refuge and spend several hours spotting and observing herons, egrets, and ibises.

LIMITED SPACE, RESERVATIONS REQUIRED. For more information e-mail cbrozek@unm.edu or call 505-835-1828 for reservations.

CNMAS Field Trip Reports

Saturday, March 3: Bernardo & Bosque del Apache refuges

Leader: Celestyn Brozek. Seven people joined Celestyn on this whole day of exploration. We had a good selection of waterfowl, first spring avocets and tree swallows. A white-throated sparrow was one of several sparrow species. Barn Owl was found at a roost in juniper in Luis Lopez. It was a great day with the total of 70 species!

Sunday, April 29: Bitter Lake NWR

Christopher Rustay lead 18 folks on this trip. We recorded 70 species on this cloudy, drizzly day, before we were hit with a torrential downpour. Highlights were amazing looks at two American Bitterns and Common Moorhens, Good looks at Green Heron, Snowy Plover, Long-billed Curlew, Wilson's Phalarope, and Franklin's Gull. Shorebird numbers in general seemed to be down, though there were certainly enough American Avocet and Black-necked Stilts to entertain. Also seen by some participants were Peregrine Falcon, Cassin's and Swamp Sparrow. The trip was cut short at around 10:30 a.m. Several participants later made their way to the Melrose migrant trap and found excellent migrant landbirds there including Yellow-throated and Red-eyed Vireo and Tennessee and Black-throated Green Warbler.

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.

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



Open Space Initiatives Appeal to Voters

The Board of the Friends of Los Ranchos reports the March 13th bond election results for the purchase of Anderson Fields Open Space as 886 votes for and 473 votes opposed. In 2006 and 2007 legislative sessions, a combined total of \$3,575,000 was



appropriated for open space purchase, with \$2.4 million allocated to the purchase of 17 acres north of Paseo del Norte. The remaining \$1,175,000 was designated for the purchase of Anderson Fields Open Space and will be combined with \$3.6 million

of bond proceeds to begin purchasing land. The Board members and the Village are working closely with the Trust for Public Lands to identify additional sources of money from governmental agencies, with the goal being to attempt to purchase the entire 50-acre tract in coming years. It is estimated that the actual tax increase will be an average of approximately \$4-10 per month per household and that it will appear on the 2008 tax bills. Advocates of the measure see the preservation of these tracts as being important both to heritage and to future generations.

Rosy-Finches... continued from page 2

days we banded over one hundred birds. On those extremely busy days it was hard to even find the time for a green-chile chicken quesadilla!

The Rosy-Finches are long gone for the year, they have returned to their breeding grounds, and some are carrying one of our bands. But come November, we'll be ready for them. We would like to thank everyone who was involved with the project, especially our group of "regulars": Steve and Nancy Cox, Carol Davis, Steve Fettig, Michael Hilchey, Laurel Ladwig, Mary Ristow, Bill Talbot, and Raymond VanBuskirk. Steve and Nancy Cox deserve extra thanks; without all of their hard work, assistance, and supervision this project would not be possible. Big thanks as well to the Crest House staff and management; otherwise we would be out in the cold with the birds! Thanks also to Lee Hopwood and Nicky Love, owners of the Albuquerque Wild Bird Center, for donating literally hundreds of pounds of seed for the Rosy-Finches. Finally, thanks to everyone who has come up and supported or helped out with the project. We hope to see you all next season.



Photo of Michael Hilchey at banding station by Steve Fettig

For further information on the Rosy-Finches and our banding project, visit Ken and Mary Lou Schneider's excellent website: www.rosyfinch.com

Field Trips... continued from page 3

the Simms Ranch on Highway 337 six miles south of Chilili at 9:50 (west side of the highway).

Bonnie's house after for hummingbirds, bluebirds, and a potluck lunch. Bonnie will provide chicken enchiladas and iced tea, and we should bring other food and drink.

Thursday, July 26: Ann Sommariva's property in the east mountains

With Madge Wallen (341-0928). Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Four Hills shopping center north of Hollywood Video or at 8:30 at the Shell station in Cedar Crest at the turn to Frost Road.

Brunch afterwards at the Cedar Point Grille in Cedar Crest.

Thursday, August 2: Corrales Bosque

With Gail Owings (255-8333). Meet in the northeast quadrant of the shopping area on Alameda and Coors/Corrales Road (across Alameda from McDonald's) at 7:30 a.m.

Directions to the bosque: Drive north on Corrales Road for five miles from the meeting place. Just past mile-marker 11, make a sharp right immediately after a yellow guard rail and a horse-crossing sign. Drive east to the parking area.

Lunch at Village Pizza in Corrales.

Thursday, August 9: Capulin Springs in the Sandias

With Lannois Neely (890-7881, lneely@aol.com). Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the Four Hills shopping center north of Hollywood Video.

Thursday, August 16: Ponderosa, NM

With Rebecca Gracey (242-3821, mrgracey@earthlink.net). Ponderosa is on Highway 290 near Jemez Pueblo. Meet at the Far North shopping center at San Mateo and Academy behind the Village Inn at 7:00 a.m. or at the Giant gas station on Highway 550 just before you turn on to Highway 4 at 7:45. We will go to the pond in Ponderosa and then the Paliza Campground. Bring lunch.

Thursday, August 23: Sulfur & La Cienega Canyons, Sandias

With Sally Burke (792-1788). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Four Hills shopping center near Hollywood Video.

Thursday, August 30: Bosque del Apache NWR

With Pat Franklin-Henden (856-7443, pfranklinh@comcast.net). Meet at 7:00 a.m. behind the Hawthorn Suites on Gibson and University. The next stop will be at the refuge headquarters at 8:30. (No stop at McDonald's.) Bring lunch. There will be a stop on the return to Albuquerque at the Belen Wetlands.

Saturday, September 8: Melrose trap and eastern plains

Trip leaders: Laurel Ladwig and Bill Talbot. We'll meet at the Four Hills Dion's parking lot (south side) and will depart promptly at 3:45 AM. We'll be at the trap for sunrise with the warblers, vireos, flycatchers, buntings and sparrows. Hopefully we'll spot Upland Sandpipers and some roosting owls. After Melrose, we'll hit some spots around the Portales/Clovis area before returning home by sunset. Bring snacks and lunch.

RSVP to Laurel Ladwig (pbgrebe@gmail.com, 505-362-6871) to arrange car-pooling.





June - July - August 2007

Sandia Mountain Natural History Center First Saturday Series

The Sandia Mountain Natural History Center is open to the public the first Saturday of every month:

June 2, 9:00am-3:00pm

Geocache / GPS Basics: The SMNHC's four geocaches are great for first timers honing their GPS skills or geocache veterans looking for a new challenge.

July 7, 9:00am-3:00pm

Orienteering: Learn the proper way to use a compass to find your way through one of our many orienteering courses.

August 4, 9:00am-3:00pm

Plant Identification: Ever wonder what the names of all those wildflowers and plants are? Let a SMNHC instructor help you identify the trees, plants, and flowers of the Sandias.

September 1, 9:00am-3:00pm

Insects, Arthropods, and Arachnids: Search for and identify the creepy, crawly bugs of the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center. For more information and directions call 505-281-5259 or visit: http://www.nmnaturalhistory.org/edu_smnhcpub.html

Summer Wings Festival

Saturday, August 4

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

2901 Candelaria N.W

All Free, All Day!



Join the **Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park** as they present Summer Wings, a festival celebrating new Mexico's small but spectacular wildlife: hummingbirds, butterflies, dragonflies, and bees.

Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center,
505-343-1373. See our website
for more information about
25th Anniversary events:
<http://rgnc.org/>



Sandia Ranger District Tuesday Bird Walk

Tuesday Morning Bird Walks, discover birds in several distinct mountain habitats, from spruce-fir forests to riparian woodlands. Locations will be scouted weekly for best viewing. Meet at Sandia Ranger Station Tuesday mornings May 1 - Oct. 30.

Meet at 8:00 am June 5 - Sept. 25

Meet at 8:30 am Oct. 2 - Oct. 30

Sandia Ranger Station, 11776 Highway 337, Tijeras, NM
87059-8619, (505) 281-3304

http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/cibola/recreation/summer_happenings/index.shtml

Council Ranks Conservation Concerns

by Cathy Pasterczyk, NM Audubon Council Representative

The Council met in March at the Bosque del Apache NWR to discuss various conservation issues within New Mexico. Ruth Burstrom, our Council President, led the discussions. The Council voted on the conservation priorities that it would like to see the State Audubon office and Audubon Chapters in New Mexico work on in 2007/2008. We also discussed ideas on how to implement these priorities.

Endangered Species: Especially Mexican Wolf, Southwest Willow Flycatcher, Lesser Prairie-Chicken, will be a focus.

IBAs: The State Office will promote Important Birds Areas, will work with Chapters to identify more IBAs, will work on legislative issues, and will communicate with land management agencies on management plans. The Council can write letters or hold meetings about these issues.

Identified areas of concern include the Gila River, and the Rio Grande River (the lower Rio Grande is going through an Environmental Impact Statement process right now). Establishment of IBA monitoring and encouraging Citizen Science projects will be needed in the Otero Mesa/Shortgrass Prairies, as well.

Bird Population Data: Because of inadequate data, establishment of more formalized IBA monitoring would be a goal. Encourage Chapter members to work on NM Birding Bird Atlas Project., and promote e-Bird within the Chapters.

Audubon in New Mexico would like to see the National Audubon staff focus on:

- Maintenance of the NEPA, ESA, etc. (other environmental laws)
- Restoring the Rio Grande
- Farm Bill Habitat Conservation Programs
- Reforming the 1872 Mining Act

We feel that successful outcomes on these issues will help Chapter members and New Mexicans enjoy the avifauna of our beautiful state well into the future.

The next New Mexico Audubon Council Meeting will take place October 27th, 10:00 AM at Bosque del Apache NWR.

Annual Dragonfly Festival

August 18 -19

Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge
Roswell, New Mexico



For information please call: 505-622-6755

To sign up for Tours call after August 1.

Friends of BLNWR, P.O. Box 7, Roswell, NM 88202-0007

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/newmex/bitterlake/friends.html>



Learning Look-Alikes Four Medium-Sized Shorebirds

by Art Arenholz, drawing by Andrew Rominger

For this issue, let's look at four medium-sized shorebirds that are among the most commonly seen shorebirds in our area. We will ignore the sparrow-sized shorebirds, the "Peeps", as well as the larger shorebirds, such as the Avocet and the Stilt. Our four shorebirds are eight to twelve inches long and all are listed as "Common" here during spring and fall migration.

Let's start with the Common Snipe. (Yes, Virginia, there really is a Snipe.) This elusive bird is 10 inches long and stocky, even plump, short-legged and very long-billed. Snipe are found near mud: in marshes, bogs, shallow ponds and streams. You often will flush one from its hiding place, and it will startle you with a loud, harsh call as it flies away in a zig-zag flight, showing its short, orange tail.

Snipe are distinctive. Bold, light stripes contrast with a dark background on both the back and the head. (These stripes run from front to back.) This bird searches for food by probing deeply in the mud with its long bill, i.e., it "stitches". It usually feeds alone, and only rarely is seen in the open, preferring the cover of grasses and other vegetation. It is much more secretive than its look-alike, the Long-billed Dowitcher. We can find a few Snipe here in winter and even more during migration, when Snipe are sometimes found in small, well hidden flocks.

Our second shorebird is the Long-billed Dowitcher, which is about 12 inches long. It is also stocky and long-billed, but its legs are much longer than the Snipe's legs. Dowitchers do not have the bold stripes of the Snipe. In breeding plumage, a dowitcher is brown above and rusty on the under-parts, (under-parts when the bird is flying), but it lacks any stripes. In non-breeding plumage, it is gray above and light below, but still no stripes.

Dowitchers are found in small to medium flocks, and are rarely seen alone, unlike the Snipe. Dowitchers also feed by "stitching", a sewing machine (up and down) bill motion, much like the Snipe. But the Dowitcher does not like to eat alone, and is usually out in an open, shallow (belly-deep) pool, not hidden in foliage like a Snipe.

Our third shorebird is the Spotted Sandpiper, about 8 inches long. It is the most common sandpiper found alongside the shore of any stream, pond or lake. It nests here, so we can see it during summer as well as during migration.

Spotted Sandpiper has its spots only during spring and early summer. Then, it is brown above and white below, with many thrush-like, dark spots on its under-parts. At other times of the year, it has no spots and is brown above and white below, but it has a distinctive white wedge at the shoulder. (Look at Andrew's drawing.) In spring, the bill is bi-colored: pink with a black tip. The rest of the year, the bill is all dark.

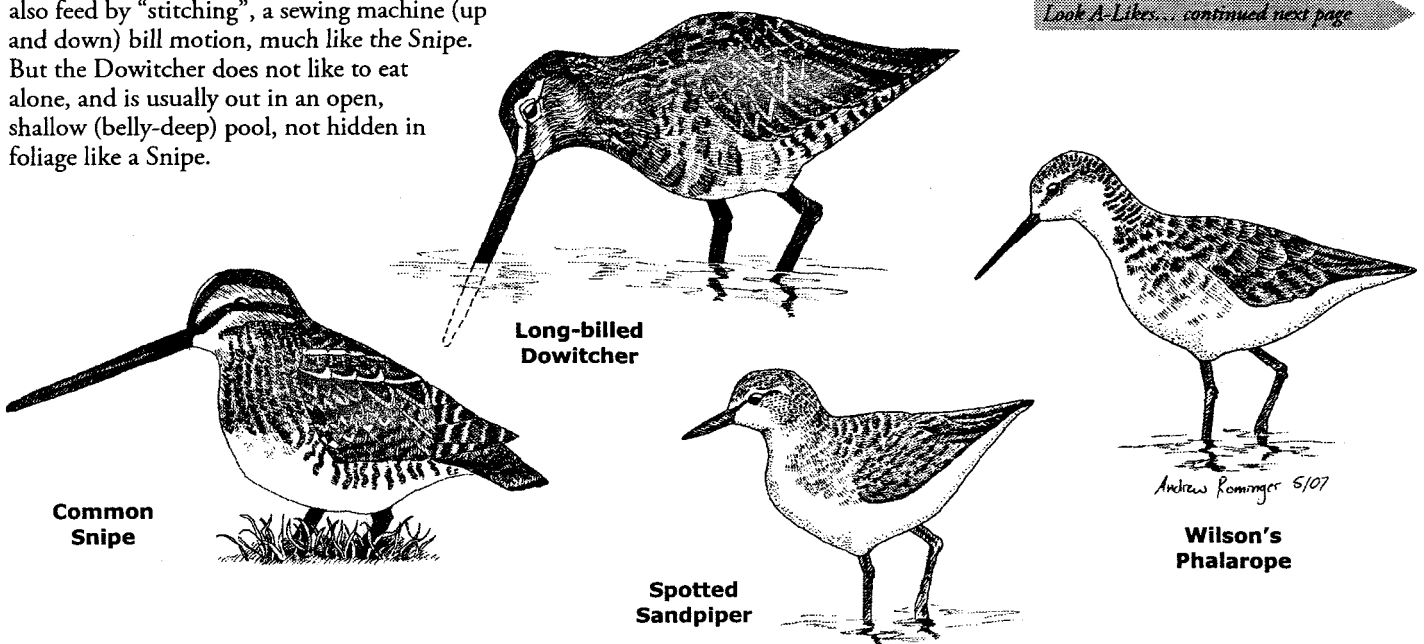
But perhaps the easiest way to identify this plump, short-legged sandpiper is its peculiar foraging behavior. As it walks along the shore, it "teeters" up and down almost constantly, bobbing the rear half of its body as if it were unsure of its balance. Another helpful behavior is its odd and jerky flight style. If you get too close, it flies away over the water with a short, fast series of shallow, stiff wing beats, followed by a short glide on stiff, bowed wings. Most unusual!

Our fourth and final shorebird is the Wilson's Phalarope. It is about 9 inches long with long legs and, unlike our first three shore birds, is slender and has a long, needle-like bill.

Wilson's Phalarope is a bird with a serious role reversal. Unlike most birds, the female is more colorful than the plain male, because he hatches the eggs and raises the chicks. Her neck, head and breast are black, cinnamon and rusty, while he has only a hint of cinnamon on the neck. Compared to similar sized shorebirds in non-breeding plumage, the Phalarope is brighter white below, instead of pale gray, with a white face and a very thin bill.

Once again, feeding behavior is an excellent clue. This shorebird often swims and spins like a top to stir up small food items from the bottom, which it then picks from the surface of the water. When I see a medium-sized bird spinning in tight circles in the water, I think: Phalarope????

Look A-Likes... continued next page



Common Snipe

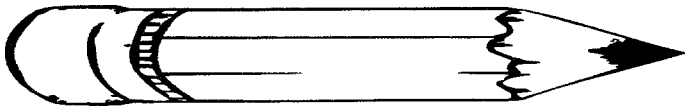
Long-billed Dowitcher

Spotted Sandpiper

Wilson's Phalarope



June - July - August 2007



Report on Tucson Desert Ecology Institute

I would like to thank the Central New Mexico Audubon Society giving me the opportunity to attend the Tucson Audubon Society's 37th annual Institute of Desert Ecology at Catalina State Park in Arizona, April 19-22. Topics of study included mammals, herpetology, entomology, geology, desert plants, birds, and a range of other crazy biological topics that sparked my interest.

During the Institute I discovered that I had answers to some of the most random questions asked by professors such as:

How many stars are there in the Milky Way galaxy?

How many harvester ants live in a single colony?

And what family do skunks belong to?

While, I seldom know where my car keys are and have a hard time remembering algebraic formulas, I am happy to know I have the answers to some of life's most important questions.

The highlight of my trip was getting the chance to go owling. A group from the Institute headed out one night to a well known nesting area for elf and screech owls. After about an hour of distant calls and only brief glimpses we were just about ready to give up and head back to camp. I then heard the faint sound of a twig breaking behind me about ten feet away (no joke!). I asked the guys to spot light the area and sure enough there was a screech owl. Curious, the owl flew low over our heads and landed just on the other side of the trail now only 5 feet from us!!! We stood there for more than fifteen minutes as the little guy perched on a low branch of a mesquite tree. I asked where Carl and Lynn, our trusty professors, had gone to. They had left us all there with a dying flashlight awestruck in the middle of the dark desert.

Another great part of my time at the Institute was on the final day during our last big hike. We were all in a sandy wash checking out a small stream when I heard one of the other students yell, "Skunk!". Of course I was armed with my new Lumix 12x optical zoom digital camera and had an irresistible urge to run in the direction of the skunk! Knowing that you really have to "skunk a skunk" before you're sprayed (at least that is what I have read in

field guides), I approached this black and white fellow snapping away. When I was about 10 feet away, the skunk turned towards me and started walking up to me like a house cat! Now only five feet away I slowly stood up and took a step back. Startled by my movement, the skunk immediately went on his tip toes and raised his tail! That's when I took this really awesome picture!



-Melanie Keithley

The Saguaro People

The Sonoran Desert- 12,000 years old
A youth in geologic progression.

It's strange to think that native peoples
Inhabited this desert-scape

long before
saguaros

stood over them
silent and still.

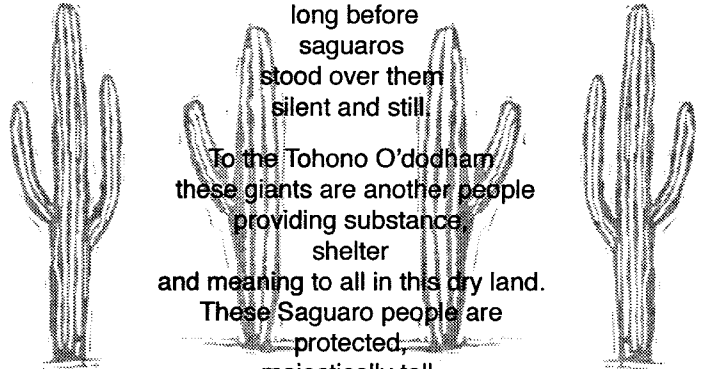
To the Tohono O'dodham
these giants are another people
providing substance

shelter

and meaning to all in this dry land.

These Saguaro people are
protected

majestically tall,
and omniscient.



It is through squinting desert eyes you see
mother and daughter standing tall,
standing together against rugged mountain peaks
just as they have been
for a hundred or more years-
with arms stretched skyward in prayer.

This desert has secrets.

Secrets whispered about rain roots and red fruit,
Pinacate beetles and prickly pear pads.

On an arid desert breeze these secrets float
Through cactus spines and mesquite shadows
they rest in the ears of coyote and jackrabbit.

If you are lucky

they too will rest in your ears
under purple and maroon skies.

Look A-Likes... continued from page 6

As we think back on these four shorebirds, we recognize that both field marks and behavior can help us identify many birds. The stripes on the Snipe's head and back separate it from the Dowitcher, but so does the Snipe's tendency to be secretive and solitary. The teetering walking behavior and odd flight style help us identify the Spotted Sandpiper at least as much as the dark spots on its breast. We often see the Wilson's Phalarope spinning in the water before we can make out the colorful head and neck of the female.

We often have to search carefully for the Snipe, but the Dowitcher, Spotted Sandpiper and Wilson's Phalarope are usually easy to see, and, if you observe their behaviors, all four birds can be easy to identify.

Good places to look in our area include muddy places at Bosque del Apache NWR, Bitter Lake NWR, Alamogordo Lake, along the Rio Grande and in flooded farm fields anywhere during spring and fall migration. 🐦



Science Fair 2007

Imagine ... four CNMAS judges in an endless exhibit hall of teenagers and their labyrinth of exhibits. Our thanks to Ron Waitz, Nancy Murray, Celestyn Brozek, and Garth Graves for being the judges who chose two winners each in the Junior and Senior Divisions, all to be recipients of a \$50.00 savings bond from CNMAS. Interacting with such talented, bright, motivated, and gracious young men and women is, in turn, the reward that our judges take back from this annual youth education commitment of CNMAS. Congratulations, also, and a one-year subscription to each of the teachers. And the winners are...

Kenneth J. Morley - Senior Division

Mr. James Renshaw, Teacher - St. Pius X High School

"A Comparative Analysis of Rio Grande Water Quality as it Transverses New Mexico"

Evaluating water quality on a regular basis is essential to ensure the safety of the people and livestock that rely on the Rio Grande. In this project, water from various points along the Rio Grande was collected and tested, using eight specific tests to determine if the water quality decreased as the river traveled south.

There were two hypotheses for this project. The first was that water quality would decrease as the river traveled south. The second was that the water quality would be worse in cities than in rural areas.

For this project the researcher traveled south to Mesilla, New Mexico, and then worked north up to Taos, New Mexico, taking water samples at predetermined sites. The collected water was immediately put in several sterile accutainer vials. The samples were tested for alkalinity, ammonia, pH, nitrate nitrogen, carbon dioxide, chloride, hardness, and dissolved oxygen. The results were recorded.

(See Data Chart Below)

The hypothesis that stated water quality decreased as the river traveled south was correct. The data showed the southern testing sites did have the worst water quality for the eight tests. The hypothesis stating quality was worse in cities was incorrect, because cities followed the same pattern as the rest of the testing sites, meaning water quality was not worse in cities.

Steven Sessions - Senior Division

Mr. Johnathan Ball, Teacher - St. Pius X High School

"Nitrogen Removal in Wastewater Treatment"

Our goal for this project is to further understand water quality and how it is balanced in the Rio Grande. The Nitrogen Cycle is a main part of our study, so we plan to use the information found to check how healthy it is. If any imbalances are found, we will try to discover the causes. This also includes the discoveries we previously found in water below Albuquerque.

After concluding our tests, we discovered an amount of ammonia in the water below Albuquerque. These traces are most likely caused by pollution entering the water from the city, which cause unhealthy bacteria colonies to grow (specifically, Nitrogen Fixing Bacteria), or cause essential bacteria to die. It's possible that the imbalance could cause ammonia to not be processed naturally.

We then re-studied our data and samples of the river water from our previous testing sites. The water is re-tested for nitrates, nitrites, and other Nitrogen Cycle components. Bacterial samples were collected and cultured to study. In these water tests, we found very few changes with the water quality. Thus, we believe that our hypothesis is correct. Because of unhealthy bacteria in the water south of Albuquerque, the Nitrogen Cycle is imbalanced. No bacteria grew when it was cultured, and the cause of this is still unknown. We plan to do more research with all of our water samples, and others from different parts of the river. Our project was a success, but brought many more questions that we plan to answer.

Gabriel T. Joachim - Junior Division

Mr. Mark Williams, Teacher - Taylor Middle School

"The Effects of Microclimate on the Distribution of Poison Dart Frogs in La Suerte, Costa Rica"

The purpose of my project was to continue to census and determine the location of poison dart frogs in Costa Rica. Data were taken by me in the primary forest fragment and a small disturbed bamboo area at the Estacion Biologica, La Suerte,

Science Fair... continued on page 9

Location	pH	Ammonia	Nitrate Nitrogen	Alkalinity	Carbon Dioxide	Chloride	Hardness	Dissolved Oxygen
Mesilla	7.3	>3 mg/L	0.2	360 mg/L	21	130	360	7 mg/L
Las Cruces	7.2	0.2 mg/L	0	330 mg/L	10	180	450	8.5 mg/L
Hatch	7.2	0.2 mg/L	0	320 mg/L	14	140	380	7 mg/L
T or C	7.1	0.2 mg/L	0	180 mg/L	15	220	210	7.5 mg/L
Bosque del Apache	7.1	0.2 mg/L	0	280 mg/L	15	90	250	7 mg/L
Las Lunas	7.2	0.2 mg/L	0	190 mg/L	15	40	130	7.5 mg/L
Albuquerque	7.2	0.2 mg/L	0	200 mg/L	15	35	180	8 mg/L
Bernalillo	7.1	0.2 mg/L	0	170 mg/L	17	20	140	6 mg/L
Espanola	7.2	0.2 mg/L	0	170 mg/L	10	35	110	7.8 mg/L
Pilar	7.2	0.2 mg/L	0	130 mg/L	10	25	80	5.5 mg/L
Questa	7.2	0.2 mg/L	0	310 mg/L	9	10	75	8 mg/L

(All values parts per million unless otherwise indicated)



June - July - August 2007

Science Fair... continued from page 8

Limon, Costa Rica. In addition to this portion of the project, a new longitudinal data set was started that investigates why these frogs prefer particular areas of the forest. Census and locational data were taken in data books, with a Kestral 3000 Pocket Weather Meter, and with HOBO data loggers. Along with the location of the frogs' habitat type, the presence of prey, predators, other animals and plants essential to the frogs' survival were noted. Also, at each frog habitat type, microclimate data were recorded. Finally, the HOBO data loggers were put around the forest and then set to take climate data for a number of days.

Results showed that some frogs declined in number while others increased from 2004-2006, but that they stayed in the same places year to year. Also, the frogs were found with prey, predators, other animals, and plants. Furthermore, data showed that the different frogs preferred particular habitats with different ranges of temperature but with the same relative humidity. HOBO loggers showed that these habitats had slightly different temperatures and relative humidities across days. Finally, most of the frogs were found between 40 and 100 meters of a water source. So, I believe that the different Dendrobatids prefer different niches within the primary forest, all close to water sources.

John R. Valdez - Junior Division
Ms. Angelica Lopez, Teacher - Rio Rancho Mid High
"CO2 Reduction; Employing Natural Adsorbents"

The experiments performed were designed to determine if common, natural substances could adsorb carbon dioxide. The purpose of reducing CO2 potentially could be used to reduce the concentration of greenhouse gas in the Earth's atmosphere. The experiment's first phase involved designing and building 3 airtight testing reactors: 2 liter soda bottles were selected because of strength to withstand pressure. A CO2 cylinder was connected to the reactors with a pipe and tubing manifold. Drip irrigation fittings were used to connect tubing to the pipe and reactors to the tubing. Epoxy was used to seal the fitting to the reactor substances. It took numerous attempts to produce a functional, airtight working reactor vessel. Each reactor was fitted with a pressure gauge and CO2 gas was injected into the reactor vessel. The system was pressurized to 12.5 psig, pressure readings were recorded every 5 minutes for 250 minutes total. The control maintained a constant 12.5 psig, proving that no CO2 was leaking. The pressure decreased at different rates for each of the natural substances tested. This result indicates the natural substance was adsorbing the CO2. The only way for the reduction of pressure to occur was for the substance to adsorb or remove CO2 from the reactor atmosphere. After completing testing on all 5 materials, the compost adsorbed the greatest amount of CO2, reducing pressure by 30.4%. A potential reason for this may be more surface area for compost allowing CO2 to be adsorbed more easily. All materials tested can adsorb CO2, indicating that natural materials can remove CO2 from the atmosphere. It can be concluded that the greenhouse effect potentially be reduced, thus slowing global warming.

Introducing: Hummingbirds of New Mexico's New Bander...

Bill Talbot has been quietly active in CNMAS for a year and a half now, first as a driver for our bird-chasing youth, then as a member of our Education Committee, and now...Introducing CNMAS's new Vice-President and Hummingbirds of New Mexico's New Bander...

If you stop in at the Hummingbirds of New Mexico home base, you may encounter a new face working with Joan Day-Martin. His name is Dr. William Talbot.

Bill has retired from a successful career as a vascular surgeon and is taking a fork in another direction of his life's path, that caught his attention seriously about five years ago-birding!



All through his life he has been interested in birding and natural history. Bill has volunteered the last two years working with Steve and Nancy Cox's group, along the Rio Grande and up on Sandia Crest at the Rosy-finch banding station. Living in Albuquerque, Bill spends as much as his time allows mentoring young teenaged men and birding in the field with them. Joan Day-Martin says, "I owe the good fortune of having been introduced to Bill two years ago though Ryan and Raymond, (two of my favorite teenaged heroes), as they traveled through this area on one such birding trip.

"After much consideration and conversation with me throughout the fall and winter months, Bill decided he was up for another step along a new path and HBNM officially took Bill under its 'wing' in March. He is currently being geared up with tools of the trade and will begin learning the whole hummingbird banding operational requirements in early May. I believe his dexterity is already there in the tips of his fingers and that as a student he will quickly excel."

Modified from the original - HBNM newsletter, Issue No. 12, Spring 2007

HawkWatch International Sells Donated Land in New Mexico:

Sandia Mountain Wilderness Area will remain open space for Albuquerque

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of multiple interested parties (including HawkWatch International, the New Mexico Land Conservancy, New Mexico Game & Fish, the City of Albuquerque, the Tijeras Canyon Safe Passage Coalition, and others), the 67-acre piece of land donated to HWI in the early 1990s will be sold to the city of Albuquerque this spring. The revenue this sale generates will be a substantial boost to HWI's conservation science and education programs. More details in HWI's Spring 2007 RaptorWatch newsletter.



HawkWATCH



Clicking for Conservation Causes

by Cathy Pasterczyk, New Mexico Council Representative

The internet helps make it easy to stay aware of environmental issues and communicate with appropriate officials. Many environmental organizations not only have websites that provide excellent information about current issues but also allow subscriptions to issue updates. Some of these services permit either "one-click commenting" or a personalized letter to the decision-maker. Although a personal visit is better than a letter and a personalized letter is better than a form letter, all of these are better than nothing. Use these tools to help conserve New Mexico's birds, other wildlife and their habitats.

Audubon Advisory

http://audubonaction.org/audubon/join.html?r=F7sS_CE1D4leE&

Forest Guardians Endangered Species

<http://www.fguardians.org/es/esa-guardian.asp>

Forest Guardians Activist Opportunities

<http://www.fguardians.org/guardians/activist-opportunities.asp>

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

<http://ga1.org/nmwildaction/join.html?r=k73enL11n48qE>

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter Action Alerts

http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/action_alerts/chap_action_alerts.htm

New Mexico Conservation Voters

<http://hq.demaction.org/dia/organizations/CVNM/signUp.jsp?key=532>

Defenders of Wildlife - Wildlife Action Center

<http://action.defenders.org/site/Survey?>

[SURVEY_ID=1220&ACTION_REQUIRED=URI_ACTION_USER_RE QUESTS](http://action.defenders.org/site/Survey?SURVEY_ID=1220&ACTION_REQUIRED=URI_ACTION_USER_RE QUESTS)

National Wildlife Federation

http://online.nwf.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Action_Headquarters

Center for Biological Diversity Biodiversity Activist

<http://actionnetwork.org/BIODIVERSITY/home.html>

Action Network

<http://actionnetwork.org>

Bird Conservation Alliance

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



Electronic Burrowing Owl

Just a short reminder that people who wish to receive the *Burrowing Owl* electronically should contact our Membership Chairman, Ed Dover, and let him know. Email him at whitecliffs@comcast.net

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- For changes of address or correction to your Burrowing Owl subscription, contact the Membership Chairperson (see Directory on the back page of this newsletter).
- If you are in the CNMAS Chapter area, you can receive the *Burrowing Owl* by sending your name and address with \$12 to CNMAS, PO BOX 30002, Albuquerque, NM 87190-0002 - this does NOT include National Audubon membership or Audubon Magazine!
- You can also subscribe to our newsletter without being a member of our Chapter. If you live outside the CNMAS region, send \$15 to the above address.
- If you wish to receive notice of our downloadable PDF newsletter (instead of a hard copy) give us your email address in addition to your name and address. Contact the Membership Chairman.
- Members can call (800) 274-4201 to sign up for National 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.

Burrowing Owl Deadline

Information and articles to be included in Fall 2007 issue of the *Burrowing Owl*, must be received by August 5th. Contact Turtle-Bear at 505-265-6094 or turtlebear@jensenbear.com. We are not accepting commercial advertising at this time.

Support Your Wildlife Refuge

Folks, there's a crisis in a lot of our national public lands institutions, and the National Wildlife Refuge system hasn't been spared. As Jon Morrison, President of the Friends of Bosque del Apache, noted in the Friends' last newsletter:

"Two and a half years ago, the Refuge budget was in fairly good condition. Now, due to federal budget cuts, things are much different. Between 2007 and 2009 in the Southwest Region of the Refuge system, which includes Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas, a total of 38 positions are to be eliminated. This includes six refuge managers, seven biologists, and 12 maintenance positions. Bosque del Apache at the present time is slated to lose one position, but is expected to provide additional administrative and management support for other Refuges."

Please sign and mail these petitions and let your New Mexico delegation know that this is unacceptable. Addresses for Senators Domenici and Bingaman, and Representative Wilson are on the back page of the *Burrowing Owl*.

This is a State Audubon initiative, and we urge and appreciate your participation.

Announcing...

Amigos de la Sevilleta

Amigos de la Sevilleta was founded in August of 2006 by a group of private citizens and refuge employees in order to support the refuge and to promote public awareness and educational activities. The mission of this volunteer, nonprofit group is "to support the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge in the conservation of wildlife and habitats through environmental education and research."

And what a research facility it is! Approximately 230,000 acres in size, this refuge is a vast landscape in the heart of New Mexico. To quote artist Doug West, "The Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge encompasses some of the most spectacular terrain in all of New Mexico. What a perfect setting for furthering our understanding of the natural rhythms of nature." Unlike most NWRs, which are managed for selected species of wildlife, Sevilleta's function is for studying and sustaining the natural processes of flood, fire and succession that continue to create this huge landscape's four functioning ecosystems. There is much more information on the Refuge and an application to become a founding member of the Friends group at our CNMAS Web site, including their first-ever newsletter, a cultural and social history of the landscape, and a tantalizing description of its magnitude and austere beauty. Vamanos, Amigos! And Congratulations, Sevilleta Amigos Founders!



Audubon New Mexico

Dear Senator Domenici,

As New Mexicans, we care about our state's natural heritage, and we value places that provide us with outdoor recreation opportunities and protect habitat for birds and other wildlife. We are concerned about efforts to diminish funding for the National Wildlife Refuges in New Mexico. Please help ensure that these places receive the funding they need to continue to provide wildlife habitat for the enjoyment of all.

Sincerely,

Signature

Date

Address



Audubon New Mexico

Dear Senator Bingaman,

As New Mexicans, we care about our state's natural heritage, and we value places that provide us with outdoor recreation opportunities and protect habitat for birds and other wildlife. We are concerned about efforts to diminish funding for the National Wildlife Refuges in New Mexico. Please help ensure that these places receive the funding they need to continue to provide wildlife habitat for the enjoyment of all.

Sincerely,

Signature

Date

Address



Audubon New Mexico

Dear Representative Wilson,

As New Mexicans, we care about our state's natural heritage, and we value places that provide us with outdoor recreation opportunities and protect habitat for birds and other wildlife. We are concerned about efforts to diminish funding for the National Wildlife Refuges in New Mexico. Please help ensure that these places receive the funding they need to continue to provide wildlife habitat for the enjoyment of all.

Sincerely,

Signature

Date

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Our missions: "To appreciate, experience, and conserve birds, other wildlife and their habitats; and to encourage and support environmental education in New Mexico."

WHOM TO CONTACT

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Membership Hotline
(800)274-4201, chadd@audubon.org
Activist Hotline
(800)659-2622
Audubon Take Action
www.audubonaction.org/audubon/

New Mexico Office
Randall Davey Audubon Center
P.O. Box 9314 Santa Fe, NM 87504
(505)983-4609 newmexico@audubon.org
nm.audubon.org

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tom.udall@mail.house.gov

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(202)225-6316 (505)346-6781
ask.heather@mail.house.gov

Governor Bill Richardson
State Capitol, Room 400
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 476-2200

Bosque del Apache NWR
(505)838-2120
Friends of the Bosque del Apache
(505)835-1828
www.friendsofthebosque.org

US Fish and Wildlife Service
500 Gold Avenue, SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
External Affairs Office (505)248-6911

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

New Mexico Department
of Game and Fish
P.O. Box 25112
Santa Fe, NM 87504
(505)476-8000
www.wildlife.state.nm.us

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

Rare Bird Alert
Albuquerque: 884-3269, Pinyonjay@aol.com
<http://www.nmosbirds.org/hotline.html>

Rosy Finch Project
Fran Lusso & Dave Weaver, flusso@wfbmc.edu

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

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