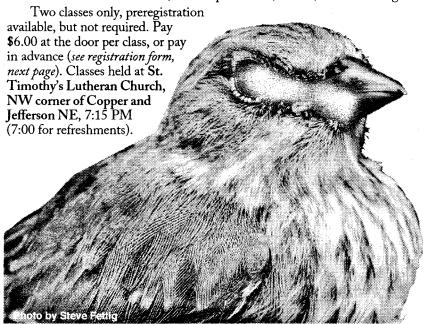
# Central New Mexico Audubon Society

# Burrowing March, April, May 2008

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

New Dates! The TENTH Annual Audubon Birding Academy A Two-Part Study of Sparrows Presented by Central New Mexico Audubon Society March 27 and April 17, 7:15PM

Christopher Rustay and his co-presenter will split the limelight, with one presentation by each, to provide our most in-depth coverage ever of the occurrence, habitat, habits, calls, and identification characteristics of the Emberizine Sparrows and their allies, from Towhees to Longspurs. The subtleties of gray, brown, black, orange, pink, yellow, white, even red, of these often secretive birds will be brought into such focus that what you thought of before as LBJs will be revealed as masterpieces of detail and perfection that (hopefully) will no longer elude your binocular'ed eye. Bring your bird guides, your notebooks, even your binoculars. With 49 species in 17 genera (okay, you can subtract those not seen in New Mexico), if you learn and remember just 10%, that's four-plus birds that you can fall in love with all over again each and every time you see them in the field! Come and have fun, in the spirit of art, nature, and knowledge!



## The 2008 Birdathon!

You have a trio of choices to cheer on during Birdathon 2008. These teams of dedicated birders will scour the New Mexican deserts. grasslands, mountains, and riparian areas, trying to find as many bird species as possible; trying to break their own, and each others', records.

Birdathon is an annual fundraiser and funraiser for CNMAS. We ask that you pledge an amount for one or more of the teams listed. Bring yourself and your contribution for a day's birding with your favorite team(s), send a pledge/contribution if you can't take to the field, and get your friends who know you're a "bird nerd" to support you in supporting the local Audubon chapter!

(See Birdathon 2008 pledge form on next page.)

# Team 1: Thursday Birder Team May 8 & 9

Leaders: Sei Tokuda and Cherri Orwig This year they will be going to Bitter Lake NWR in Roswell and Rattlesnake Spring outside Carlsbad. We will meet at the Bitter Lake Rangers' residences parking area at 10 AM on Thursday, May 8. We will start the count there. We will reconvene early Friday morning and head for Rattlesnake Spring for some more birding. We will end the count at 10 AM. Since the Birdathon is a fund-raising event for Central NM Audubon, a minimum contribution of \$10.00 is required for each participant. Please contact Cheri (994-2685; cherio47@yahoo.com) if you can take passengers or need a ride. For all other information, please contact Sei (266-2480, stokuda@juno.com).

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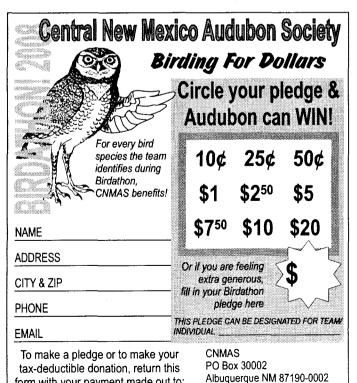
# Team 2: David Buckley's & Celestyn Brozek's Team May 30 & 31

We will drive from Albuquerque to Black Range on Friday, 30 May evening and try for owls and poorwills starting at midnight. A short night will be spent at the Iron Creek campground in Black Range. On Saturday, 31 May, we will start birding in Black Range, and move to Percha Dam State Park. From there we will work our way along Caballo Lake, Elephant Butte Lake to Bosque del Apache NWR. We may try again for the owls at Water Canyon in the evening. You may join us for the evening drive from Albuquerque, at the Iron Creek campground, or later during the day at Percha Dam.

Birdathon is a fund-raising event for the CNMAS. Please, be generous in your donations and secure pledges from your friend and families. We appreciate greatly your contributions! For details contact the leaders: buckedra@earthlink.net or cbrozek@unm.edu

### **Team 3: Young Birders**

This year's young birder team consists of Michael Hilchey, Raymond VanBuskirk, and Cole Wolf. Bill Talbot is our chaperone. Our birdathon last year was plagued by difficulties (flat tire, bad weather, and a wrong turn), but we still managed to find 158 species. This year we're hoping to set a record! It's a twenty-four hour search for as many bird species as possible, with little opportunity for any for sleep. We'll follow our traditional route: owling in Clanton Canyon, dawn at Redrock, birding through the Big Burro Mountains and the Black Range, afternoon at Percha State Park, early evening at Bosque del Apache NWR, and finishing with owling in Water Canyon. This is a closed team, but you can support us by pledging.



form with your payment made out to:

# **CNMAS Field Trip Reports BIG THANKS TO ALL FIELD TRIP LEADERS!**

Saturday, December 8: Bosque del Apache NWR Area Leaders: Jim Mosley and Cole Wolf.

The leaders and four participants endured extremely high winds all day, but persistence paid off and we were able to turn up some good birds. Our first stop was Turtle Bay in Socorro, where we had a Brown Creeper and several Mountain Chickadees down in the lowlands for the winter. From there we headed to Luis Lopez, where the whole group had great looks at a White-throated Sparrow and the leaders caught a glimpse of a Fox Sparrow. At Bosque del Apache there were several dozen Common Mergansers along with good numbers of other waterfowl. A search for Pyrrhuloxias in the desert above the boardwalk pond was almost in vain, but at the last minute a beautiful male perched high in a bush and allowed great views. The leaders and several of the participants were treated to a great fly-in of cranes and geese at Bernardo WMA in the evening.

Sunday, January 20: Sandia Crest

Leaders: Jim Mosley and Cole Wolf.

Eight people braved cold weather on this trip. Although the road to Sandia Crest produced only a handful of hardy winter birds, participants were rewarded at the top of the mountain, where in the warmth of the Crest House, with a cup of hot chocolate in hand, they observed flocks of Rosy-Finches of all three species and participated in the banding. They were joined by a couple of visitors from Maine.

| The 10th Annual Audubon Bi<br>Registration For | -                |  |  |  |  |
|--|------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 2-Part session on Sparrow le                   | dentification    |  |  |  |  |
| O Mar. 27 & Apr. 17                            | \$12             |  |  |  |  |
| O I want to be a new Audubon Societ            | y Member and get |  |  |  |  |
| 2 free Birding Academy classes                 | \$20             |  |  |  |  |
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| O I want to get the Burrowing Owl via t        |                  |  |  |  |  |
| Send your check, payable to CNMAS to:          |                  |  |  |  |  |
| CNMAS Birding Academy                          | CNMAS ABA 2008   |  |  |  |  |
| P.O. Box 30002<br>Albuquerque, NM 87190-0002   |                  |  |  |  |  |
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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



# Field Trip Schedule CNMAS trips prepared by Celestyn Brozek

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

# Saturday, March 22: Sevilleta NWR bottomlands and grasslands

Leader Bob Merkel (bobmerkel@zianet.com). Meet at Sevilleta Visitor Center at 9:00 AM with lunch. The La Joya area on the west side of the Rio Grande is a mosaic of bottomland habitats. We will also visit riverside marshes within the Refuge boundary. The extensive restored grasslands on the east side harbor an interesting variety of prairie birds. Who knows what we may see driving the loop. High clearance vehicles recommended.

### Saturday, April 26: HawkWatch site in Sandia Mts.

Leader: Pat Franklin. Meet at the south side of Dion's in the Four Hills parking lot (south of Central and west of Tramway) at 7:00 AM. We will drive to the Three Gun Spring trail head. From there, we will hike to the HawkWatch site (1.5 miles, 1000 ft elevation gain, about 2 hours slow walk) looking for early migrants and foothill residents (thrashers, sparrows). We will stay at the site till early afternoon observing migrating raptors. If the hawk banding station is open we will visit it as well. You may check the HawkWatch web site http://www.hawkwatch.org/home/ to find out which species of raptors are possible. We will come down early afternoon (depending on the weather and hawk flight). Bring comfortable shoes, sun protection, plenty of water and food. Contact Pat Franklin at 228-8813 (cell) and 856-7443 (home) or pfranklinh@comcast.net

## Saturday, May 17: Quarai (Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument)

Leaders: Jim Mosley and Cole Wolf. Meet at the McDonald's (take exit I-40 exit 194, then and go east for about 1/4 of a mile) in Moriarty at 6:30 AM. We will spend the the morning birding the riparian woods around Quarai. Our main target will be migrants (fifteen species of warblers have been reported here), but we also hope to see



some of the area's breeding birds, including Phainopepla, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Blue Grosbeak. This trip will not involve any long or hard walking, and we will finish up around noon. Contact Cole at colejwolf@comcast.net or 553-4831; Jim at ff1964@msn.com

### Saturday, June 14: Villanueva State Park

Leader: Rebecca Gracey. Meet at the Four Hills shopping center west of Tramway on Central in the parking lot north of Hollywood Video at 7:00 AM to car pool. Directions: east on I-40 for 65 miles, then north on Highway 3 for 20 miles. We will be birding all along Highway 3. The target birds will be Cassin's Sparrows, Bullock's Orioles and Yellow Warbler. Very little walking will be involved. Bring lunch. There is a \$5.00 entrance fee to the park if you don't have a state parks pass.

We should be back in Albuquerque by 3:00 PM. Contact Rebecca Gracey at 505-242-3821 or mrgracey@earthlink.net for more information.

### Saturday-Sunday, June 21-22: Overnight trip to Chama

Leader: Sylvia Fee. The participants will leave from Far North Shopping Center (to the West) at 6:30 AM on Saturday. We will bird along the highway to Chama with stops at selected areas, Heron Lake and other depending on bird reports. Road routes will be available at meeting place. Early Sunday morning we will drive to Apache Creek, some areas there will require high clearance vehicle or 4-wheel drive. Possible birds include Boblinks, Clark's Nutcrackers, Red Crossbills, Lewis Woodpeckers, Evening Grosbeaks, raptors, owls and much more. Bring your lunches and Sunday breakfast. The trip will end around noon in Chama. Information about of the area lodging will be available from the leader in late May. Call or e-mail trip leader, Sylvia Fee, at that time for more details: nmsylvia@peoplepc.com or phone 294-4073.



# Thursday Birders Field Trip Schedule

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

### Thursday, March 6: Corrales Bosque

With Rebecca Gracey: 242-3821, mrgracey@earthlink.net Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the shopping center north of Alameda and east of Coors/Corrales Road (north of McDonald's). The bosque location to be visited is near the center of Corrales on East Ella Street. Lunch afterwards at Village Pizza.

### Thursday, March 13: Los Poblanos Open Space

With Rebecca Gracey: 242-3821, mrgracey@earthlink.net Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the open space parking lot. From east or west bound Montaño turn north on Tierra Viva just east of the river. You'll see a sign for Rio Grande Community Farm. It will be a easy walk of just over one mile. Lunch at Nate and Hanna's on Coors and Montaño.

### Thursday, March 20: Rio Grande Nature Center

With Marge Williams: 262-1646, margiew12@aol.com
Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the Nature Center parking lot at the end
of Candelaria N.W. There is a \$3 parking fee if you do not
have a State Parks pass or Friends of the RGNC pass.

### Thursday, March 20: Rio Grande Nature Center

With Marge Williams: 262-1646, margiew12@aol.com Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the Nature Center parking lot at the end of Candelaria N.W. There is a \$3 parking fee if you do not

Field Trips... continued on page 2

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

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.

## **HawkWatch Observations**

The HawkWatch International (HWI) spring migration count in the Sandias began February 24. The blind should be up and running by March 8 or 9 HWI has been informed by the Forest Service that we will be allowed no more than 10 people in our scheduled field trips. If you plan on going up in a group, please call the office (255-7522)



and let Bobbie know when you will be visiting the site. This way we can avoid the conflict of having too large a group in a wilderness area. There will be an interpreter at observation most days, but there will be times when he or she will have to fill in for an observer or just take a day off.

## HawkWatch Garage Sale

The HWI garage sale will be held sometime in April. We appreciate all of the donations CNMAS members have given us in the past. Please call Bobbie at 255-7622 or Helen at 266-6564 if you wish to contribute one or 100 items. Most of the proceeds will, as usual, be given to our volunteer crewmembers to be used for food, but a portion will go in the NM general fund to help feed our two education birds.



# **Additional Spring Birding Opportunities**

### Tuesday Morning Guided Bird Walks

May through October, in the Sandia Mountains sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service and Central New Mexico Audubon. Birders meet at 8:00 a.m. (8:30 in May and October) at the Sandia Ranger Station, 1176 Highway 337, in Tijeras.

## Weekend Bird Walks

March, April and May, Saturday and Sunday at 8:30 a.m. at the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park.

### Field Trips... continued from page 3

have a State Parks pass or Friends of the RGNC pass.

# Thursday, March 27: Visit two open space areas south of Tijeras

With Rebecca Gracey: 242-3821, mrgracey@earthlink.net Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Sandia Ranger Station on State Road 337 in Tijeras. We will go south on 337 and turn east on Juan Tomas Road to Sabino Canyon County Open Space and east again off Highway 337 on Oak Flats Road to Juan Tomas City Open Space. Bring lunch. We should be back to the ranger station by 2:00 p.m.

# Thursday, April 3: Manzano pond and Quarai National Monument

With Bonnie Long: 379-1985, cantrade\_1@yahoo.com Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Four Hills shopping center north of Hollywood Video or on Highway 337 by Bonnie's gate at 9:00. (six miles south of Chilili between mile markers 3 and 4). Bring lunch.

### Thursday, April 10: Belen and Isleta marshes

With Judy Liddell (271-0912, jliddell5@earthlink.net)
Meet at 8:30 a.m. behind the Hawthorn Suites on Gibson and University or at 9:00 a.m. behind the Taco Bell/Pizza Hut building in Belen. Directions: Drive south on I-25 and take exit 195 to Belen. Drive east one mile. The marsh is southeast of the Taco Bell. Lunch at Jason's in Los Lunas and then a stop at Isleta Marsh on the return trip.

# Thursday, April 17: Hike Otero Canyon on Highway 337 south of Tijeras

With Rebecca Gracey (242-3821, mrgracey@earthlink.net) Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Sandia Ranger Station in Tijeras on Highway 337. Lunch at Dion's Pizza in the Four Hills shopping center.

#### Thursday, April 24: Pena Blanca and Cochiti Lake

With Sylvia Fee: 294-4073, msylvia@peoplepc.com Meet at 6:30 a.m. behind the Village Inn in the Far North shopping center on the northeast side of the San Mateo and Academy intersection. Bring a lunch for this morning trip ending with lunch at Cochiti.

### Thursday, May 1: Coronado State Monument

With Lannois Neely: 890-7881, lfneely@aol.com

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in Corrales in the shopping area east of Coors/Corrales Road and north of Alameda (north of McDonald's) or at 8:30 a.m. at the Coronado Monument. The monument is just west of Bernalillo on Highway 550/44 on the north side of the road. There will be a \$1.00 admission charge.

#### Thursday-Friday, May 8 & 9: Thursday Birder Birdathon

With Sei Tokuda and Cherri Orwig (994-2685, cherio47@yahoo.com). For more info, see front page.

### Thursday, May 15: Hondo Canyon

With Mary Lou Arthur: 299-2565, marylarthur@yahoo.com Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the Four Hills shopping center north of Hollywood Video. Hondo Canyon begins at the Canyon Estates trailhead (go north under I-40 in Tijeras, then right where it says "Private Drive" with a Canyon Estates sign.) Go

Field Trips... continued on page 9





# Bosque del Apache NWR 2008 Schedule of Events & Programs

http://friendsofthebosque.org/educationalevents.html

March 29, Saturday from 10am - 4pm Bosque del Apache NWR Visitor's Center

# Ducks of the Bosque - Identification and Behavior with Celestyn Brozek

(limit 20 participants, reservations required)

Fifteen different duck species can be present at the refuge in March. They are easy to spot and study. One and a half hour presentation at the beginning of the workshop (10:00 - 11:30 AM) will provide a "crush course" in duck identification by color and shape, including confusing females. The interpretation of the duck's elaborate displays will be also discussed. After half an hour break, we will drive into the refuge and spend several hours observing ducks, their behavior and practice identification skills. Celestyn Brozek is a life-long birder, instructor of college ornithology courses, birding guide, naturalist and photographer. Please call 575-835-1828 for reservations.

### April 26, Saturday from 8am - 11am

## Flowers that bloom in the Spring, Tra La with Bob Merkel

(limit 25 participants, reservations required)

Meet at the Canyon Trailhead on NM-1. This walk will be led by naturalist Bob Merkel on and near the Canyon Trail. It is a moderate 2? miles from the sandy arroyo plain, up to the bajada, through the canyon and its exposed geology, and back along the arroyo bottom. Each area has its own assortment of scenic features and plant life which varies throughout the growing season. Bring water, sun protection, hiking shoes, camera, bug spray (just in case). Please call 575-835-1828 for reservations.

## April 26, Saturday at 7:30pm

### Star Stories from Around the World with Amy Estelle

Meet at the Bosque del Apache NWR Visitor's Center. Everyone alive today has ancestors. What did our ancestors name the stars and constellations? Join amateur astronomer Amy Estelle and turn back time on some of the most familiar spring constellations to discover their diverse histories from cultures around the world. From a celestial bear hunt to a people's journey to find a homeland, these stories will fascinate and entertain. As a special bonus, visitors will take home star charts and observe the evening planets Mars and Saturn through telescopes. For ages 8 and up.

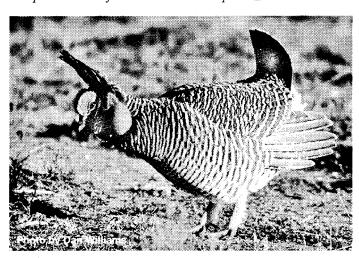
# 7th Annual High Plains Prairie-Chicken Festival Friday-Sunday, April 11-13

Milnesand, New Mexico, may be a small dot on the map, but it is big in the heart of New Mexico's prairie grasslands. Each spring, the Lesser Prairie-chicken, an icon of the Southern Great Plains, congregates on traditional breeding grounds called leks to strut its stuff. Observe and photograph the mating rituals of the Lesser prairie-chicken, birdwatch with some of the best birders in New Mexico, and talk with ranchers and biologists working to conserve the Lesser Prairie-chickens.

Attendance at the Festival is limited to the first 100 people who register. Cost is \$90 per person and covers 5 meals (2 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners, coffee & donuts, commemorative poster, and all field trips. Deadline is April 1, 2008.

Contact: Tish McDaniel, Southern Shortgrass Prairie Project Coordinator, (575) 762-6997, chickenfestival@yahoo.com

http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/recreation/prairie\_ckn/Festival.html





## May 10, Saturday from 8am - 4pm Bosque del Apache NWR Visitor's Center

#### International Migratory Bird Day Celebration

The Bosque Springtime and International Migratory Bird Day Celebration will be May 10th. Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge will be offering three activities each limited to 24 people. Call 575-835-1828 for reservations. Please indicate if you are signing up for one activity or all three.

• Beginning at 8:00 Naturalists will lead a one-hour "birdwalk" around the grounds of the visitor center including the arboretum looking for migratory birds such as warblers,

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orioles, kingbirds, etc. Beginning birders are welcome to join the group.

- From 10:00-2:00 an "arboretum" visit with emphasis on cactus propagation by cuttings will be offered. We will also teach you how to harvest nopals (cactus pads) for nopalitos and how to prepare them. During this time we will break for lunch (bring your own) and give you an opportunity to sample nopalitos prepared in various ways. We will then continue the arboretum tour with desert plant identification and how to plant cacti from plants and cuttings.
- From 2:00 4:00, a "Refuge Tour" in the refuge bus on the refuge to see migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. This activity is limited to 24 people (bus capacity).

Come and enjoy Springtime in the Bosque and International Migratory Bird Day on your National Wildlife Refuge.

## June 7, Saturday from 8am - 4pm Bosque del Apache NWR Visitor's Center

### Hummingbird banding with Bill Talbot

Join in with the Bosque del Apache and attend this unique experience capturing and banding hummingbirds that call this reserve home during the spring and summer months. Enjoy the opportunity to gaze upon these small birds as Bill diligently works with them noting measurements, conditions, sex & age. An added bonus to this expedition may include hearing the beat of their tiny but powerful heart, or a touch of exhilaration at a chance to release back into freedom one of New Mexico's most enchanted creatures.

Bill's will give a slide presentation at the close of each day inside the visitor center. Your hummingbird identifying skills will be sharpened and improved through this easily understood classroom setting.

Information gleaned from the Friends of the Bosque website:

http://friendsofthebosque.org/educationalevents.html

# \*\*\*

# 2008 Hummingbirds of New Mexico Festival Saturday–Sunday, July 19 – 20

Joan Day-Martin suggests we all make our reservations early for this one. Location of the festival is the same place, HBNM home base in Lake Roberts. Joan writes that the Lake Roberts Motel at the base of the driveway is newly reburbished and the closest rooms are for rent. The Lake Roberts General Store & cabins is also near the festival site. A good place to check on available rooms and contact information is www.silvercity.org, the Silver City Chamber of Commerce. Humm on in!

Hummingbirds of New Mexico website: http://hbnm.org/

# Learning Look-Alikes: Five Woodpeckers by Art Arenholz drawings by Andrew Rominger

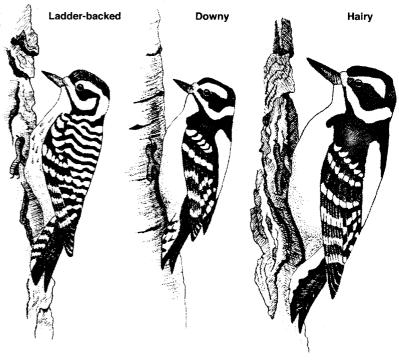
Woodpeckers are often seen (and heard) as they shinny up a tree, probing for insects. To feed in this unusual way, woodpeckers need some non-standard bird equipment. A woodpecker bill is chisel-like and sturdy to help excavate wood or flake off bark. A woodpecker tongue is amazingly long and sticky, to capture prey hidden in crevices and cavities. Woodpecker feet are very strong and the tail is stiff and strong to prop up the bird as it moves about the tree.

These interesting birds are found alone or in pairs in a variety of woodlands. Most do not migrate, so we see them year-round. They nest in cavities, which they excavate anew each year.

Several clues can alert us to the fact that a woodpecker is nearby. The bounding, undulating flight of a woodpecker is quite distinctive. And if that bounding bird lands on a vertical surface, like a tree trunk or a pole, and then clings in an upright posture, start to think: "Woodpecker?" Then if you hear "tap-tap-tap" and see the bird hitch its way up the tree, using its tail as a prop, start using your identification tips to figure out which woodpecker you are watching.

In this issue, we study four look-alikes: Downy, Hairy, Three-toed and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers. At no extra cost, we throw in the Northern Flicker because it is seen so often, even in town.

The Downy Woodpecker is the smallest (6.5 inches long) woodpecker in North America. It is patterned in black and white, and the male sports a red patch on his head. The Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers look almost exactly alike, except the Downy is much smaller and has a much shorter bill. Among our woodpeckers, only Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers have a clear white back and white flanks (sides). Downy prefers deciduous trees for finding food, and even in our conifer





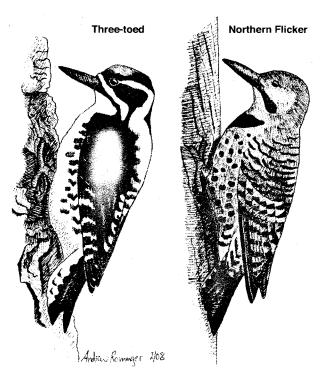
| Woodpecker                            | Size    | Bill size       | Head color                      | Back color                   | Flank color | Behaviors                                 | Habitats                        | Other info  |
|---------------------------------------|---------|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Downy                                 | 6.5 in. | Small           | Black & white                   | White                        | White       | Likes leafy trees                         | Lower altitudes,<br>leafy trees | Only Downy and Hairy have white backs and sides.  |
| Hairy                                 | 9.5 in. | Long            | Black and white                 | White                        | White       | Likes conifer<br>trees                    | Mostly conifer forests          | Both Downy and Hairy males have red cap.  |
| Three-toed                            | 8.5 in. | Med.            | Mostly dark,<br>male yellow cap | Irreg. barred                | Barred      | Often flakes<br>bark from trees           | Conifer forests                 | Moves into areas with recently killed trees.  |
| Ladder-backed                         | 7 in.   | Med.            | Black and white                 | Sharply<br>barred            | Spotted     | Feeds on cactus,<br>weed stalks,<br>trees | Arid country                    | Found only in Western U.S. Male has red cap.  |
| Northern<br>Flicker (Red-<br>shafted) | 13 in.  | Long,<br>sturdy | Brown & gray                    | Brown with<br>thin dark bars | Spotted     | Often eats ants<br>on ground              | Any place with trees            | Shows white rump as flies away.  Male has red moustache. Salmon red under wings and tail. |

covered mountains, Downy is usually found in Aspen trees. Also, a Downy is much more likely to visit your backyard than is a Hairy.

So Hairy Woodpecker is just a larger and much bigger billed version of the Downy. Some birders remark: "A Downy looks like a baby Hairy." Hairy Woodpecker prefers feeding in a conifer (evergreen) forest, and I see mostly Hairy Woodpeckers as I hike in our local conifer mountains.

Three-toed Woodpecker is noted for moving into forests with many recently killed trees, e.g. from a fire or insect infestation. Our local forests have lost many conifers in recent years, due to drought-weakened trees killed by a variety of insects. Local birders have seen more Three-toed Woodpeckers in our mountains recently, and we expect that trend to continue.

Three-toed Woodpecker is similar in size and color to a Hairy, but luckily there are several helpful differences. First, the male Three-toed has a yellow patch on the head, not red like the Hairy and Downy. Second, the flanks of Three-toed are barred black and white, unlike the white flanks of a Hairy and Downy. Third, Three-toed has an irregularly barred back, different from the all -white back of the Hairy and Downy. So overall, the Three-toed is darker than the other two birds, due to the barred flanks and back, and the fact that its head has



thinner white marks than the Hairy and Downy.

A common feeding behavior for Three-toed might help us locate one. Three-toed flakes off pieces of bark from dead trees and over time, often completely removes the bark, littering the forest floor with bark fragments. (Hairy also is known to pry off bits of bark, but not to the extent of the Three-toed).

Ladder-backed Woodpecker is another black and white bird, and is a bit larger than a Downy. But we can separate these two look-alikes in several ways. First, Ladder-back has a distinctly barred black and white back, which differs from the white back of a Downy. Second, Ladder-back has dark spots on its flanks and belly, while Downy is clear white in those areas. Third, Ladder-back prefers arid areas, like desert-scrub. Since Downy prefers deciduous trees, we can use this habitat difference to help separate these two species.

Northern Flicker is a large (13 inches long), mostly brown woodpecker that is found in almost any habitat that has trees. The Flicker has a typical large woodpecker bill, but it has a number of other different, easily identified features. First, during flight, our Red-shafted Flicker has salmon-red color under the wings and under the tail feathers. Its back is brown (not black or white) with several thin, dark lines across it. And when a Flicker flies away from you, it shows a large white rump patch. When seen from the front, this bird shows a black chest patch and many round, dark spots on the belly. The male Red-shafted Northern Flicker has a red moustache, not the red cap of some of the other woodpeckers. Flickers love to eat ants, and so they often flush from the ground rather than from a tree.

These five woodpeckers are fun to find and identify. Look at Andrew's drawings and the summary table, and start looking for and identifying these hard working woodpeckers.

### Influx Of Owls

The winter months here in southern New Mexico have been excellent for viewing groups of Long-eared owls.

In the Gila area there were 6 seen on the Christmas Bird Count; 12 were seen near Pony Hills in Luna County and up to 15 at the City of Rocks. In February there were 14 seen northeast of Deming, south of Cook's Peak.

These owls are often gregarious in winter and the flocks ranging from 2-3 to 15 or more, roost together.



From The Ravens Newsletter, Southwestern New Mexico Audubon Society





# Working to Protect Our Mexican Gray Wolves Friday, March 14th, 7:00 PM—9:00 PM KiMo Theater in Downtown Albuquerque—FREE

Please come be a part of an historic evening and help send a message to Washington that our wild Mexican Gray Wolves need to be protected. With only 23 wild lobos left in New Mexico, the time to act is NOW!

Special guest speakers include: Rick Bass, distinguished author; Dave Parsons, former head of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Wolf Reintroduction Program; Cynthia Wolf, wilderness outfitter and wildlife biologist, local elected officials, plus music and film.

Answer the howl to action and be the difference in saving our lobos! For more information, contact Nathan Newcomer at 505-843-8696 or nathan@nmwild.org, www.nmwild.org

"To a person uninstructed in natural history, his country or sea-side stroll is a walk through a gallery filled with wonderful works of art, nine-tenths of which have their faces turned to the wall."

Thomas Henry Huxley quotes (English Biologist, 1825-1895)

# Raptor River Trip Five Day Birding Adventure June 30th Through July 5th, 2008

This 84-mile float through Desolation Canyon will offer experienced birders a rich display of desert fauna, including highlight species such as the Mexican Spotted Owl, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Peregrine Falcon, Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, and many more.

HawkWatch International is partnering with Colorado River & Trail Expeditions to lead the river trip, while HWI's Conservation Science Director, Dr. Jeff Smith, and a fellow raptor expert will guide the birding experience along the way. Participants will be able to enjoy diverse bird habitats including Cottonwood riparian forests, Willow laden river banks, muddy sand bars, shear and broken cliffs, Pinyon, Juniper and Fir wooded canyon walls, grassy canyon floors, scree and talus slopes, reedy back-waters and sagebrush open lands.

Join us for this rare opportunity to experience raptors of the west in their summertime habitat. To find out more, call Hawkwatch International at 1-800-726-HAWK.

# International Migratory Bird Day at Quarai

Mark your calendars for the eleventh consecutive International Migratory Bird Day celebration at Quarai on **Saturday**, **May 10th**. The annual spring migration count occurs on the same day, but the two events are otherwise unrelated. IMBD at Quarai is sponsored by the Cibola National Forest and Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument.

This all-day event kicks off at 8:00 AM with an easy, identification-focused, three-hour bird ramble (led by Hart Schwarz and Nick Vaughn) to which everyone is invited: young or old, novice or experienced. In past years, from 50 to 100 people have attended and seen over 100 bird species, including fifteen kinds of warblers. In the afternoon Hart will give a presentation on the theme of the day (Tundra to the Tropics), followed by the presentation of prizes, such as T-Shirts, bird guides for kids, the 2008 poster by Eleazar Saez, and much more. Throughout the day, shade-grown coffee and cookies will be served.

Quarai is eight miles north of Mountainair, near the village of Punta del Agua. Call Hart (266-1810) in April if you have questions or send e-mail to hschwarz@fs.fed.us

# International Spring Migration Counts Saturday, May 10

Santa Fe: Sheila Gershen, (505) 988-3143 Los Alamos: Steve Fettig, (505) 662-6785 Taos: Karen Epperson, (505) 758-7035 Colfax: Agnes Gibson, (575) 377-6128 Rio Arriba: Dale Stahlecker, (505) 466-3453

This is a team event. Less experienced birders will be placed with more experienced birders if possible. Talk with a count leader at least one week before.

Information from Sangre del Cristo Audubon Society website: http://newmexicoaudubon.org/sdcas/

# NM Ornithological Society Annual Meeting Saturday, April 12

The New Mexico Ornithological Society (NMOS) will hold its 46th Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 12th, in Albuquerque. For more information on the meeting and associated field trips, visit: www.NMBirds.org

# NM Audubon Council Meeting Saturday, April 19

The next meeting of the New Mexico Audubon Council is at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 19th, at Bosque del Apache NWR. Any member of Audubon is welcome to attend this meeting of representatives from Audubon chapters around the state, as well as from the Randall Davey Audubon Center in Santa Fe, to focus on matters of conservation and concern throughout New Mexico and beyond. If you're an activist looking for focus and people of like energies and sympathies, come join us. Contact Ruth or Lynn in the CNMAS Directory (back page) if you're interested in carpooling.



# Friends of Bitter Lake NWR Working Toward A Ramsar Designation

What is Ramsar? In 1971, an international convention was held in Ramsar, Iran, and participants signed a treaty entitled "The convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat." The Ramsar convention is a voluntary agreement among participating nations to identify and designate



"wetlands of international importance" and to promote the conservation and wise use of these wetlands. More than 150 nations have signed the Ramsar Convention treaty and more than 1,600 wetlands have been designated "Ramsar Sites." Ronald Reagan signed the treaty for the United States in 1987 and we now have 22 designated sites.

What Ramsar does not do: Ramsar is not a regulatory entity, nor is it a United Nations convention. It does not impose restrictions on nations and landowners and does not affect landowner sovereignty rights for wetlands management. Designation of property as a "Ramsar site" is voluntary.

Why Bitter Lake NWR? The Roswell Artesian Wetlands (the proposed site name) are a unique combination of springs, sinkholes, ponds, playa basins, "bottomless" lakes, wet soils, marshes, and streams in the Pecos River floodplain extending from Bitter Lake NWR south to Bottomless Lakes State Park and the Bureau of Land Management's Overflow Wetlands. These wetlands provide varied habitats for endangered and threatened plants and animals, as well as habitat for thousands of wintering, migrating, and nesting waterfowl, sandhill cranes, and shorebirds. The endangered Roswell springsnail, Koster's springsnail, and Noel's amphipod (a small shrimp-like crustacean) are found nowhere else in the world. The wetlands also provide opportunities for recreation and attract visitors from across the United States and the world.

The "Roswell Ramsar Team," a group composed of representatives from federal and state agencies and private conservation organizations, is working to get Bitter Lake NWR, Bottomless Lakes State Park, and the BLM Overflow Wetlands designated as a Ramsar site. The group is planning an outreach meeting in April to inform and discuss the proposed designation with local stakeholders, local, State, and Federal politicians, and other key interested parties. The Friends of Bitter Lake NWR is one of the stakeholders invited to participate in the meeting.

You can keep informed on these events and others affecting Bitter Lake NWR by joining their friends group, Friends of Bitter Lake NWR, 4065 Bitter Lakes Rd, Roswell, NM 88201. Membership is \$15.00 per family. Contact Jim Montgomery at 575-625-4011 with questions.

For more information on Wildlife Without Borders International Wetlands Program:

http://www.fws.gov/international/ramsar/factsheet.htm

# We Won! State Legislature Passes SJM 40

Thanks to your quick actions and dedication, we were successful in passing Senate Joint Memorial 40 this afternoon at the State Capitol!

Senate Joint Memorial 40 will now request that the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Dept. and the Dept. of Game & Fish cooperate in conducting a study of ORV recreation, particularly as it compares to and impacts non-motorized recreation. This Joint Memorial is a critical step forward in dealing with ORV abuse in the Land of Enchantment.

Many volunteers, activists, and local citizens helped to push this effort in curbing irresponsible off-road vehicle abuse. Together, we changed the course on preserving New Mexico's wildlands, wildlife and water resources.

Speaker Ben Lujan, Representative James Roger Madalena, Representative Jeff Steinborn and Representative Peter Wirth should all be thanked for their extraordinary efforts to get this memorial through the legislature.

# **Workplace Giving**

Supporters and members of Central New Mexico Audubon Society have options to contribute to our chapter, which is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. One is that you may designate our chapter when you give your yearly donation to charity through United Way of Central New Mexico. Another option for federal employees is that you can give to our chapter through the Combined Federal Campaign. Check this year's brochure and watch for our campaign name and number. Thank you—we appreciate you!

### **Birds of New Mexico**

Birds of New Mexico taught by Steve Cox is being offered this spring by UNM Continuing Education. Learn to recognize and identify New Mexico birds. Lectures, supported with color slides, will concentrate on identification and distribution of species. Classes start in March at Hayes Middle School and include three half-day Saturday field trips (April 5, 19 and May 3). Binoculars are highly recommended. Required Text: Field Guide to the Birds of North America, National Geographic Society.

http://newmexico.augusoft.net/index.cfm?FuseAction=1071

### Field Trips... continued from page 4

a few miles north on Arrowhead Trail. It will be a walk of two miles round trip on a steep trail.

### Thursday, May 22: Corrales Bosque

With Gale Owings: 255-8333

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the shopping area east of Coors/Corrales Road and north of Alameda. (North of McDonald's) The exact location in the bosque to be determined because of recent closures. Lunch at Village Pizza in Corrales.

# Thursday, May 29: Sandia Ranger Station in Tijeras and Capulin Springs in the Sandias

With Karen and Gary Boettcher: 281-6726, nmkestrel@yahoo.com Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Sandia Ranger Station on Highway 337 in Tijeras, NM. Bring a snack or lunch.

# **Rosy-Finch Project News**

Friends of Rosies: The application below should be something like a wedding bride to you who have been fans since 2003: something old, something new – and we'll get to the blue in a minute!

This is a copy of the application that our three-member Rosy-finch team members put together to apply for a grant given by National Audubon Society to one chapter in each state. The blue is actually green, in that we're gratified to



announce that the Rosy-finch project was selected out a field of very worthy and worthwhile New Mexico chapter candidates as the recipient of the National Audubon Society grant. We want to acknowledge and thank other contributors who have pledged funds for the next phase of the project, as outlined in the grant proposal below: Rio Grande Bird Research, Eileen Beaulieu, Central New Mexico Audubon Society (chapter-level), Robert Munro, Gale Owings, and Wild Bird Center, owned by Lee Hopwood and Nikki Love. Remember that banding continues up at the Crest House atop Sandia Peak, so come join us any Sunday up through March 30. And a continuing and heartfelt expression of thanks to Ken and Mary Lou Schneider for the flagship Rosy-finch website, rosyfinch.com

# Central New Mexico Audubon Society's (CNMAS) Application For Collaborative Project Funding For FY2008

The three Rosy-finch species are some of North America's most sought after and least understood birds. Sandia Crest is the most accessible place in the world where visitors can observe the three species together, while enjoying hot chocolate in the warmth of the crest house. Sandia Crest house has been known as the southern limit of these species' range in the winter, but it is not known if the same individuals return year after year. To answer this question, a research project was needed.

In 2003 Ryan Beaulieu and Raymond VanBuskirk initiated the Rosy-finch Project under the auspices of Rio Grande Bird Research Inc. Other collaborative partners are CNMAS, Cibola National Forest Service, Wild Bird Centers of America, the owners and operators of the Sandia Crest House, and dozens of volunteers. Currently the project is headed up by Raymond VanBuskirk, Cole Wolf, and Michael Hilchey, local high school students. Raymond, Cole, and Michael are currently CNMAS board members.

For the past five winters under permit from US Geologic Service Banding Laboratory and the NM Department of Game and Fish, we have been capturing, banding, and taking many measurements of the birds, then safely releasing them, in hopes that they will return in following years. To date we have banded over 1,000 birds and recaptured 47 from previous years. We plan to continue the banding to better answer our original question; we also plan to expand the project by using radio telemetry to study where these birds are roosting at night, where they go when they are not at the crest house feeders, and their general flocking behavior. To conduct this research \$ 5,500 will be needed to obtain the proper and safe equipment. The equipment includes radio transmitters and receivers, snowshoes, GPS, and two-way radios. We have obtained \$2,000 in funding from other sources, and the money from this grant, in addition to other grants we are applying for, would bring us much closer to our goal.

We plan to attach radio transmitters to three birds of each species, for a total of nine transmitters. All precautions will be taken to ensure the

safety of the birds. Using the snowshoes, GPS, and radios, two teams of three individuals each will maneuver the mountain slopes, while triangulating the birds with the use of the receivers. After we have found the roost sites we will take observations on behavior, temperature of roost site, habitat, etc.

Not only will the data from this research add to ornithological knowledge, but it will also help to educate the public about bird and habitat conservation. Over the past five years the project has attracted dozens of volunteers from around the state, hundreds of birders and Audubon members from all parts of the country, and visitors from as far away as Germany, New Zealand, England, Nicaragua, Ecuador and Australia. Another educational tool that has been utilized by 56,737 "virtual" visitors is the rosy-finch website at www.rosyfinch.com. We hope that these visitors to the Crest House, and the website leave with an experience that broadens their love for the natural world, and a commitment to the importance of saving it.

Proposal for Rosy-finch Budget Receivers-\$1,200

2 receivers

Receiver totals: \$2,400

Transmitters- \$200 9 per year

Transmitter totals: \$1800

Snowshoes- \$100

4 pairs Snowshoe totals: \$400 Radios (walkie talkies)- \$50 2 pairs

Radio totals: \$100

GPS- \$400 2 GPS's GPS totals: \$800

TOTAL COST: \$5,500



# Sandia Mountain CBC Report December 26, 2007 by Rebecca Gracey

We ended up with a total of 68 species for our count. It doesn't beat our record of 70 species, which you set last year, but it comes very close. I want to thank all 40 of you who braved the cold weather and some of whom walked for miles in the snow. Each area contributed a species or two that wasn't seen by another. Some species not seen this year included the Black-throated and Black-chinned Sparrows, Western Meadowlark, Red Crossbill, and Clark's Nutcracker, however all of these are uncommon in our count circle. Some uncommon species seen this year were a Cactus Wren, White-throated Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Northern Saw-Whet Owl, Western Screech-Owl, Northern Goshawk, and all three Rosy Finch species.

We've seen a big change in the frequency of the Rosy-finches being seen due to feeders being installed at the crest in 1999, and thanks to Raymond's good owling skills, we've added the Saw-whet Owl twice in the past four years compared to twice from 1963-1999. We've also seen an increase in the incidence of Curve-billed Thrashers in the last few years. Those of you who had to write them up a few years ago realize they have not always been so common. Between 1963 and 1999 only one was reported and now they are common. The same is true for the Yellow-rumped Warbler; seen only once in the same 33-year time period and is now seen every year. Thank you for your participation. I'm looking forward to the count in 2008.

# Go to http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/ for data from the 2007 Christmas Bird Counts



#### WHOM TO CONTACT

National Audubon Society 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 www.nm.audubon.org

The President The White House Washington, DC 20500 (202)458-1111 president@whitehouse.gov

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

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

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

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

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

Rio Grande Nature Center State Park (505)344-7240 Friends of RGNC friends@rgnc.org, www.rgnc.org

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# **Burrowing Owl Subscription Tidbits**

- 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.
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- 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 Summer 2008 issue of the *Burrowing Owl*, must be received by May 5, 2008. Contact Turtle-Bear at 505-265-6094 or turtlebear@jensenbear.com. We are not accepting commercial advertising at this time.

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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."

### Reminder: Area Code 575 has been added to New Mexico beginning October 2007 - check your local phone company information.

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