

Burrowing Owl

September—November 2017 Vol. 46, No. 3

Welcome to the Central New Mexico Audubon Society!
A 501(c)(3) organization. cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org

Come join us! All our meetings and field trips are open to the public.

Central New Mexico



Audubon Society

CNMA Fall Programs

All three will be held at Adelante
Community Center, 3800 Osuna NE,
beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Valle de Oro

Jennifer Owen-White, Refuge Manager

September 21

Come meet some of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge's staff and celebrate the upcoming fifth anniversary of your refuge. Learn how the refuge got started, what has been happening recently in refuge development, where this exciting project is headed, and how you can be involved.

New Mexico: a Birder's Paradise?

Dwayne Longenbaugh

October 19

Many of us enjoy the numerous and varied bird species we might see on our New Mexico outings, but have you ever thought much about what might have created the conditions that attract so many birds? We all use the normal everyday terms of habitat, climate etc., but in this presentation we will look at geology, paleogeology, biology and perhaps some other -ologies to see and explore the many things that have brought us to the point where we have the fourth-highest state species count in the U.S.

Bring your thoughts, ideas and questions for an open discussion of the things that have contributed to this beneficial situation.

Sparrows of New Mexico

Christopher Rustay

November 9

Ever wonder how to identify all those small, brown and streaky birds that even when they sit still long enough for you to get a good look, still remain a mystery? We will examine the regular sparrows that folks may find during birding outings in New Mexico. Not only will we look at plumage, but also examine how to tell sparrows apart by structure and potential other ID clues like habitat, behavior and timing. Then we will look at potential references to help remind you of field marks and range, birds that are commonly mistaken for sparrows and sparrows that are commonly misidentified.

No pressure, but we will end with a short quiz.



Yes, it's a sparrow. But which one?

Photo by Steve Drilling



Fall Weekend Field Trips for CNMAS

Ranney Ranch, Corona, New Mexico

Sunday, September 17

Join Christopher Rustay (505-414-0342) and Beth Bardwell for a beautiful, moderately strenuous two-mile round-trip walk on Ranney Ranch just east of Corona. We will walk from Ranch Headquarters along the Gallo drainage through shortgrass prairie and pinyon-juniper habitat to observe resident and wintering grassland birds. We may see Grasshopper Sparrows and longspurs. Ranney Ranch grass-fed beef burgers will be served for lunch. RSVP for lunch at ranneyranch@gmail.com. Ranney Ranch (Ranch Owner: Nancy Ranney, Ranch phone 575-849-8144) is New Mexico's first ranch to pursue enrollment in Audubon's Conservation Ranching program, designed to enhance and restore millions of acres of grassland bird habitat across the Great Plains by partnering with ranchers to implement sustainable grazing practices. We will provide a short talk about the Ranney Ranch and the Audubon Conservation Ranching program at lunch.

Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Corona Mini Mart (181 Main St, Corona, NM 88318) located at the intersection of Highway 54 and Highway 247. The trip will end after lunch. No four-wheel drive vehicle required. Carpooling from Corona Mini Mart to Ranch Headquarters (about 13.5 miles) is encouraged.

Camping is available in the National Forest including limited campsites in the Red Cloud Campground 18 miles southwest of Corona via US 54. Motels are available in Mountainair and Carrizozo, both about a 50-minute drive from Corona.

Tetilla Recreation Area at Cochiti Lake

Saturday, September 30

Join Judy Liddell, jliddell@msn.com (505)220-7998, to explore the Tetilla Peak Recreation Area at Cochiti Lake and along Tetilla Peak Road. The road leading to the recreation area is a migration corridor for Sage Thrashers and sparrows at the end of September.

We will bird around the overlook and then the riparian areas along the lake where Eared and Western

Grebes are possible. There is usually a lingering juvenile Osprey. We will eat our lunches along the lake. In the afternoon, we will return to I-25 via Pena Blanca.

Meet in front of the gym at the Far North Shopping Center on the north side of San Mateo and Academy NE at 7:50 a.m. Carpooling is encouraged since there are limited places for cars to pull off along Tetilla Peak Road. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$5 based on 50 cents per mile. We will return by mid-afternoon. If you want to meet the group farther north, contact Judy to confirm meeting place and time.

Lovington Migrant Traps, Lea County

Sunday, October 15

Join Christopher Rustay on a trip to Lea County, NM. This will include a visit to migrant traps in Lovington, near Caprock, and to a newly discovered migrant trap: Conoco Pond near Maljamar. Our targets will be later fall migrants such as Blue-headed Vireo and Black-throated Green Warbler. We may hear Sprague's Pipits but there are no guarantees on this trip! We will meet in at the Lovington McDonald's, 410 S Main, at 7:00 a.m. and from there bird Chaparral Park in town, then head west to Maljamar and then up to Caprock. We will be birding playas and grasslands between these stops.

Walking should be relatively easy. The road in to the Conoco Pond is a dirt track but passable with a passenger car; all other roads are on pavement.

I'm expecting the official part of the trip to end at Waldrop Park near Caprock around 1:00 p.m. From there folks may decide to head back home or continue to Bitter Lake outside Roswell.

Contact Christopher with questions at chrustay@aol.com (preferred) or 505-414-0342 .

There will be no November trip due to the annual Festival of the Cranes at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge.

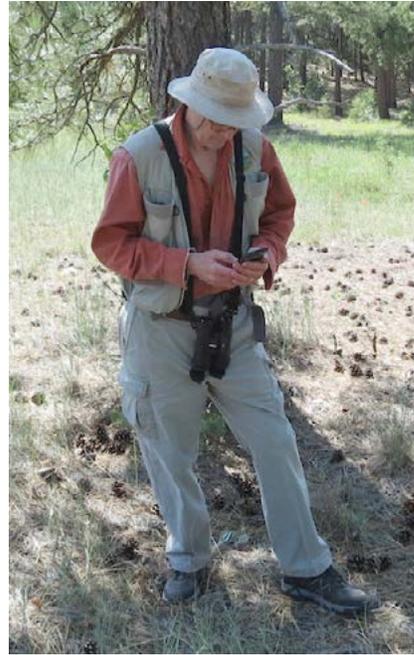
NM Audubon's Climate Watch Count Adds Nuthatches and Counters

During the first two weeks in June, 20 individuals/teams (32 individuals in all) were in the field early to do point counts in their assigned area, recording all of the bird species seen and their numbers as part of the National Audubon Society's Climate Change initiative. One volunteer who conducted her counts before heading to work started at 5:52 am! Their routes—most on foot—were in the bosque, in foothills open space, or in one of the designated mountain or east mountain routes.

Each team was able to pick the day that worked best for them within the two-week count period.

“Audubon's Climate Initiative, the organizational response to this threat, taps into its members' love and commitment for birds to build population resilience and demand solutions to slow the pace of warming,” according to the National Audubon Society's website: <http://www.audubon.org/conservation/climate-change>.

During 2017, National Audubon expanded its target species from only bluebirds to include nuthatches. A number of on-going volunteers expressed an interest in targeting nuthatches. That involved expanding the number of individuals/teams from the 14 who counted in January to 20.



Bruce Dale was one of the 32 totally focused bird counters. Photo by Judy Liddell.

Judy Liddell, who has coordinated the effort for CNMAS, reached out to additional volunteers. The response was overwhelming—each of the new volunteers thanking the organization for thinking of them and being able to do their part.

Since the volunteers count all species they see or hear, not just the target species, it provides a morning of interesting and sometimes unexpected birding. Vicki Dern, who was doing the count along the bosque south of Rio Bravo with Debbie Weissman and Gale Owings, heard a vireo-type call that didn't quite fit any of the likely possibilities. Since they didn't want shirk their duties, Vicki used her iPhone to record its song. After posting it on Xeno-canto later, the mystery' bird turned out to be a Red-eyed Vireo!

If you are interested in participating in the next count (January 15–31), please send an email to Judy Liddell, jliddell@msn.com. She is particularly looking for people to do a count in Valencia County.



Conservation Corner

By Bruce Dale, Conservation Action Committee Chair



Your chapter conservation committee is changing its name to Conservation Action Committee. This is not a mere rebranding: It signals a more activist approach. We plan to be busy, so please join us.

We will continue our work on cats indoors, bird-safe windows, and climate change. We will monitor issues affecting water, grasslands, and key habitats. We are participating in discussions with representatives from Albuquerque BioPark and Open Space, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Valle de Oro NWR, Rio Grande Nature Center, and others on extending the effectiveness of the Urban Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The CNMAS Board asked me to represent the chapter at Audubon's national convention in Park City, Utah, in July. It was so encouraging to be surrounded by 450 people who have a passion for conservation.

One workshop previewed National Audubon's new report, *Water and Birds in the Arid West: Habitats in Decline*. It is an excellent piece of work, focusing on the riparian corridors of the Colorado River basin, which in New Mexico include the Gila and San Juan Rivers. A session on the challenges of grassland birds and National Audubon's Conservation Ranching program was also germane to our state.

A workshop on "Plants for Birds" demonstrated Audubon's native plants database guide now available on its website. Getting more native plants into suburban yards is important as migratory stopover habitat increasingly means suburban landscapes. Users enter a zip code and the guide displays appropriate native plants for their area and the birds they will attract. Audubon chapters partner with local native plants societies to provide content to the database. We would like to participate in this program, so if you love gardening with native plants I'd love to talk to you (drop me an email: CNMASbirdconservation@gmail.com).

In other activity, we collaborated in May with the New Mexico Audubon Council and the American Bird Conservancy to submit a formal comment to PNM's draft Integrated Resources Plan. We supported PNM's proposal to transition away from coal. However, as PNM explores opportunities to access additional wind power resources, we urged them to ensure that planned wind turbine sites are located in areas that do not pose an unacceptable risk to wildlife. Specifically, we cited the Sagamore project in Roosevelt County as an example of poor siting because of its proximity to protected habitat for the Lesser Prairie-Chicken.



Audubon Continues Role in Cibola Forest Plan

During the summer many members of CNMAS attended community meetings held by staff of Cibola National Forest to provide feedback on various parts of the proposed Forest Management Plan. Members of Audubon advocated for inclusion of additional Species of Conservation Concern, as well as provided suggestions for management actions to preserve habitat for birds.

During the past year the Cibola Stewardship Collaborative has met regularly. Its members include representatives of tribal, federal, state, city and county governments, land grants, soil and water districts and community organizations, including CNMAS and other conservation groups, as well as off-road vehicle enthusiasts and industry groups.

A key objective of the collaborative is strengthening the planning process and assuring broad input. Judy Liddell, with Bruce Dale as alternative, have been representing CNMAS.

The planning model adopted by the Cibola was unique and is not being adopted by other forests. According to Elaine Kohrman, forest supervisor, "We have promoted the model of the Cibola working equally as a partner rather than being the center of every issue. This approach has allowed open dialogue, robust and respectful discussions on diverse and historically contentious matters"

The draft plan is tentatively planned for release in spring 2018.

AUDUBON THURSDAY BIRDERS SCHEDULE

Autumn 2017

SEPTEMBER 7

Travel to Manzano pond and Quarai National Monument with Bonnie Long: 505-379-1985, cantrade_1@yahoo.com. Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure from the west side of the Four Hills Shopping Village on Central Avenue between Tramway and Juan Tabo NE or meet Bonnie at the intersection of NM 337 and NM 55 at 8:50. Bring lunch. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$5 at five cents per mile.

SEPTEMBER 14

Walk the perimeter of Los Poblanos Fields Open Space with Linda Otterson: 505-280-3123, lotterson300@comcast.net. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Open Space parking lot. To reach the fields turn north from Montano Boulevard on Tierra Viva, east of the Rio Grande River. There is a sign for Los Poblanos Fields Open Space. It will be an easy 1.5-mile walk ending before noon.

SEPTEMBER 21

Visit Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge with Becky Purvis: 505-688-1998, rpurvis3@yahoo.com. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the refuge entrance on 2nd Street by the refuge sign. To reach the refuge, drive south on I-25 and take the Rio Bravo Exit. Drive west on Rio Bravo to 2nd Street. Turn south on 2nd and drive 3.2 miles to the entrance. The group will drive to different areas of the refuge and take a couple of half-mile walks. The trip will end before noon.

SEPTEMBER 28

Visit the Santa Fe Ski Area and Aspen Vista for birds and fall color with Judy Liddell: 505-220-7998, jliddell@msn.com.

Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure from the center of the parking lot in the Far North Shopping Center on the east side of San Mateo and north of Academy Boulevard. If you prefer to meet the group in Santa Fe, the first stop will be at Little Tesuque Picnic Area on the left just past mile marker 8 on Hyde Park Road (NM 475). PLEASE let Judy know if she should expect to meet you there.



Bonnie Long took this picture at Cochiti Lake of Osprey chicks not quite ready to leave the nest.

Hyde Park Road is designated as the Santa Fe National Forest Scenic Byway and passes through four different life zones. At the Santa Fe Ski Area we will hope to find a Gray Jay or two. Bring lunch and drinking water. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$6 at five cents per mile. The group will return to Albuquerque in the mid-afternoon.

OCTOBER 5

Hike in Embudito Canyon with Lefty Arnold: 505-514-9398, wanderingtattlerja@yahoo.com.

Meet at 8:27 a.m. in the trailhead parking lot. To reach the canyon, drive east on Montgomery past Tramway, then turn left on Glenwood Hills. Continue 0.4 of a mile, turn right on Trailhead Road and continue to the parking lot. This is an easy 1.5-mile walk ending before noon.

OCTOBER 12

Walk around the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park with Gale Owings: 505-255-8333. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Candelaria Wetland Blind in the northeast corner of the Nature Center parking lot. A \$3 parking fee, State Parks Pass, or Friends of the RGNC Pass is required. The walk will end before noon.

OCTOBER 19

Travel to the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area with Linda Heinze: 505-565-1441, manzanogal@gmail.com. Meet at 8:50 a.m. for a 9:00 departure from the parking lot behind the Hawthorn Suites on Gibson SE and University Boulevard or at 9:45 at WWCA on NM 47. The walk will be about 1.5 miles in length. Participants are invited to have lunch together at the Bamboo Express located on Hwy 314 in Los Lunas. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$3.50 at five cents per mile.

OCTOBER 26

Hike Rinconada Canyon in the Petroglyph National Monument with Sara Jayne Cole: 505- 503-5599, birdlajoya@gmail.com.

Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the trailhead parking lot on the west side of Unser Boulevard NW where Unser intersects with St. Joseph's Avenue. The walk will be about two miles long on a trail that is relatively flat but is composed of soft sand. The walk should end before noon.

NOVEMBER 2

Hike in Otero Canyon and Cedro Creek Nature Trail with Rebecca Gracey: 505-242-3821, maryrebeccagracey@gmail.com. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the parking lot of the Sandia Ranger Station on NM 337 in Tijeras. The group will carpool from there to the canyon parking lot, 3.5 miles south on NM 337. The one-mile walk will end before noon. The trails in both locations are uneven so a walking stick might be helpful.

NOVEMBER 9

Walk in the Alameda Open Space in the North Valley with Leah Henzler: 505-280-2085, lfcairns@gmail.com. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the Open Space parking lot on the south side of Alameda Boulevard, just east of the Rio Grande. The one-mile walk will end before noon.

NOVEMBER 16

No trip is planned since this is the week of the Festival of the Cranes at the Bosque del Apache. Enjoy the festival!

NOVEMBER 23

No trip is planned for the Thanksgiving Holiday.

NOVEMBER 30

Walk in the Corrales bosque with Perrienne Houghton: 505-321-2015, Perrienne_h@yahoo.com. Meet at 8:50 a.m. for a 9:00 departure from the shopping area north of Alameda Road/NM 528 and east of Corrales Road/NM 448. The group will carpool from there to one of the bosque locations followed by lunch at Village Pizza in Corrales.



All three photos of Bosque del Apache in this issue are by Dwayne Longenbaugh.

Audubon Sends Two Young Birders to Camp

These articles were written by recipients of CNMAS Ryan Beaulieu Scholarships to the American Birding Association's Camp Colorado this summer.

By *Jack Parlapiano*

Attending this camp at the YMCA of the Rockies was easily one of the best experiences of my life. This trip had innumerable enjoyable moments, but here are a few of my favorites.

On our second day we went birding for the American Dipper in the Endovalley Alluvial Fan Lake area. We hiked about a quarter mile into the woods where we arrived at a waterfall. We caught a glimpse of a medium-sized gray bird flying to the top of the waterfall and then just out of our sight. While we sat hoping for it to come back, out of nowhere an American Dipper landed about 15 feet away. As we shot photos, our team crept closer to the bird until some of us were only about seven feet away.



The next day we were hiking above 11,000 feet trying to find the elusive White-tailed Ptarmigan. One of the campers showed us the inconspicuous bird walking down the mountain. It was a female with four chicks! We watched the chicks jump off small rocks testing out their wings.

And at the end of our "big day" five of us were walking to the dinner hall when my friend Joshua calmly announced "Evening Grosbeak." Three males were perched on a bush. We all jumped up and down because it was a day bird, the first ones sighted on the trip, and a lifer for most of us.

Along with 130 species of birds, we saw a herd of at least 70 elk, marmots that stood and screamed when they detected danger, and a few Pika. While birding for Black Swifts we were surprised to see a moose and her calf; soon after a juvenile male moose wandered within 25 feet of our group. During our van ride out of the

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By *Donovan Hanridge*

I was 10 years old when my parents adopted me. That's when I started birding with them and that was also the time I found out about the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and my local Audubon Society. I was 12 when my family and I went to the Festival of the Cranes in Socorro, New Mexico.

There we met Ashli Maruster Gorbet, a birding guide. She told us about the American Birding Academy's Camp Colorado and encouraged me to go to it, and she said that she would be one of the counselors in the first session. She also told my mom and me about the Central New Mexico Audubon Society scholarship. For the rest of the Crane Festival, I was thinking of that camp and how lucky I would be if I could go.

My mom helped me apply for the scholarship. It took a couple of weeks for the call to come from CNMAS, but when it did, we were all surprised that they had offered to pay for everything. Soon I was getting ready to go.

I got along with all four of my roommates right away, and we became good friends for the rest of the camp. That week was my favorite week of my life: seeing new birds, meeting new people, and learning new things.

One of my favorite times was when we were birding for American Dippers. We saw a Clark's Nutcracker on the top of a tree instead. Everyone was trying to get a good picture of the nutcracker, but I was right under the tree, so I couldn't move. So I waited for the bird to fly off and was lucky enough to get a flight shot of that bird! Later I found out that my closest friend at the camp, Isoo, snapped the same shot as I did!



I learned so many things at camp, too. One interesting thing I learned was actually not about birds, but was about climate change and Pikas, little mammals

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Owl's Pick for Bird of the Quarter: Green-tailed Towhee by Bruce Dale



Parlapiano continued

Pawnee National Grasslands we were lucky to witness an American Badger waddling across a field.

Back at the YMCA, five of us were watching three turkeys with 14 chicks when a security guard came up from behind us and said, "Hey, do you guys want to see a bear?"

Sure, we said, thinking he was going to take us on a hike. But he pointed directly up from where we were standing and in the tree right next to us was a Black Bear mother with her cub perched 30 feet above our heads.

I would like to say thank you to the Central New Mexico Audubon Society for providing me with this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Camp Colorado has inspired me to pursue an education and career related to nature and the environment.



birds&beers
a BRANT initiative

*On Facebook:
ABQBirdsandBeers*

more from Hanridge

endangered by climate change. I learned throughout the whole week how important it is for people to care about climate change in general, to care for birds in particular, and to work to keep birds from going extinct, like some birds already are.

Camp Colorado also taught me how important it is to help my future and my kids' futures some day by protecting the Earth.

I am so grateful to the Central New Mexico Audubon Society for helping me be able to go to Camp Colorado!

News from BRANT

Raymond VanBuskirk reports that the Birds and Beer gatherings will resume at O'Neill's Pub, 4310 Central SE in Albuquerque. "This is the birding hotspot from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on the last Thursday of the month," he said.

BRANT Nature Tours, a local ecotourism company, organized the event through an urban outreach partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Friends of Valle de Oro NWR.

In addition, BRANT is offering a tour to Mexico's Baja California, with \$200 of each registration fee coming to CNMAS. The dates are Dec. 28, 2017, to Jan. 3, 2018. The Xantus's Hummingbird is a possible sighting.

BRANTTours.com or 708-87-BRANT

CNMAS Directory and Contacts

Central New Mexico Audubon is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit chapter of the National Audubon Society, Inc.

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

Central New Mexico Audubon Society (CNMAS)

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Other birding and wildlife resources:

<http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org>