

# 50! Burrowing Owl

Central New Mexico  
Audubon Society

Volume 50, #1  
Spring 2021



CNMA is 50 years old in 2021.  
See the next pages for glimpses  
of its first years.



## Spring Programs on Zoom at 7:00 p.m.

Visit [CNMASreg@gmail.com](mailto:CNMASreg@gmail.com) to register and receive the link.

### March 18

Katie McVey, Deputy Refuge Manager:  
Valle de Oro Visitor Center

From long before it became a National Wildlife Refuge, Valle de Oro, in Albuquerque's South Valley, has been a place for community. Katie McVey will share photos of the new Visitor Center and talk about the design, sustainable features and exhibits. Using the standards of an Urban National Wildlife Refuge, Valle de Oro gathered ideas from community members to guide the exhibits. Staff worked to reduce barriers and increase ease of use through language, physical elements and design.



*The visitor experience at Valle de Oro will begin with a walk among native landscaping.*

Photo by Joe Mackey/USFWS

### April 15

Debbie Pike, Northern NM Wildlife Refuges Visitor Services Manager:  
Mission Monarch

The population of Monarch butterflies has declined an estimated 90% in the last several years. As with bird populations, herbicides, development and lack of food have taken their toll. Debbie Pike is involving students and community groups in efforts to restore habitat and track Monarchs in New Mexico.



*Monarch Cocoon*  
Photo by  
Debbie Pike

#### A Note from the Program Chair

Have you heard a great talk about the natural world that others might enjoy too? Is there a nature topic you've been wanting to learn about? Do you have a presentation you'd like to share with your Audubon friends?

The current Zoom format makes scheduling easy.

Share your ideas by e-mailing  
[cnmasreg@gmail.com](mailto:cnmasreg@gmail.com).

*From The Albuquerque Journal's  
Action Line column on April 1,  
1971.*

Q. Isn't it a shame that Albuquerque with its size and such a multitude of gorgeous birds has no Audubon Society? —B.W.

A. Yes, but it's not going to be a shame much longer. Mrs. R.S. Tuttle (265-3274) tells us an organizational group to form such a society will meet at 7:30 p.m. April 15 at the First National Bank East. Mrs. Tuttle says there is a possibility that Mrs. Myra McCormick, president of the Southwestern New Mexico Audubon Society may be present for the initial meeting. John Spinks, regional president of Audubon groups, might also attend the April 15 meeting.

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## Co-Founder Mary Lou Arthur Looks Back

Six people sat at a bank's meeting-room table on April 15, 1971, to organize a chapter of the National Audubon Society.

"It was a good turnout, and it was exciting," recalls Mary Lou Arthur. At the table with her were Esther and Dick Tuttle, Marian and Dan Washburn and Martha Milton.

The Tuttle's had recently moved to Albuquerque from Roswell, where they (and Marge Williams, later a Thursday Birder regular) had helped to form a chapter. Esther was the founding president of the Albuquerque (later Central New Mexico) chapter and wrote



the first by-laws for approval by the national board.

Monthly meetings, day trips and field trips were the new group's priorities. In 1978 Mary Alice Root led a spring trip to Guadalupe Canyon on the Mexican border that is still one of Mary Lou's favorite memories.

"We saw the Harlequin Quail, my first," she says. "It's called Montezuma Quail now, but that's okay."

Mary Lou, a stalwart camper and hiker with her husband Jim and their four children, found leading day trips the most rewarding. Some regular destinations were Shady Lakes, Dixon Apple Farm and Bosque del Apache. She also led walks for beginning birders.

## Best Birding Buddies

By Cindy Harris

The photo of Mary Lou Arthur (above) was taken by Tamie Bulow. Mary Lou, Tamie and I plus Mary Hewitt made about 17 birding trips together.

We four always got along famously. Tamie was the navigator and she and I shared the driving. One winter trip was to Minnesota to see a Snowy Owl; another was to Nova Scotia, where Tamie took this photo. Mary Lou, a great friend to everyone she meets, is on the left. I'm in the middle, and Mary

Hewitt, who has about 10,000 species on her life list, is on the right.

Tamie Bulow started the chapter's Thursday Birders group in the mid-1980s. It was casual back then, sometimes only one carload of us scouting for rarities. Unfortunately for us Tamie moved to Colorado and then to Texas, birding all the way.



# From the Record

Thanks to a succession of chapter secretaries (see below) there is detailed information about CNMAS in the 1970s and '80s.

Monthly meetings were held in the Physics and Astronomy Building at UNM, at First Unitarian Church and then for many years at St. Timothy's Church. They featured Audubon Wildlife Films, trip reports, education talks, many by UNM ornithology professor David Ligon, and often a guest speaker. For example, in 1973 Florence H. Ellis presented "Birds in Indian Life and Religion."

In February 1983 the "Chapter went on record as supporting the conservation position in the Gila Wilderness; opposed additional clearing of salt cedar in the Rio Grande Narrows and Elephant Butte area; and voted to support any action against the Corps of Engineers which cut off water to the APS study area east of La Luz."

The first field trip, on August 15, 1971, was to Sandia Pueblo in search of

Red-headed Woodpeckers.

The leader was Charles Hyder. Later destinations included the

Rio Grande bosque and Sandia Mountains, as well as Bosque del Apache, the APS education center in Cedar Crest and, in June 1972, Cave Creek Canyon in Arizona in search of the Coppery-tailed Trogon (now called the Elegant Trogon).

The Burrowing Owl published its tenth issue in 1981; editors were Evelyn and George Price. Five years later its mailing list topped 1,000.

In the fall of 1985 Dale Stahlecker recruited members to count Sandhill Cranes and Whooping Cranes over Albuquerque. The migration study was still going on in 1988.



## Chapter Presidents

- 1971 Esther Tuttle
- 1972 Chuck Hundertmark
- 1973 Jim Karo
- 1974 Jacque Hohlfelder
- 1975 Dan Washburn
- 1976 Craig Andrews
- 1977 Dave Lange
- 1978 Dave Lange
- 1979 Dustin Huntington
- 1980 Barbara Hussey
- 1981 Kay Anderson
- 1982 Barbara Hussey
- 1983 John V. Brown

## Christmas Count Leaders

- Albuquerque/Corrales ..... Alan Engberg, 1972–1976
- Sandia Mountains ..... Ross Teuber, 1972–1980
- Bosque del Apache ..... Chuck Hundertmark, 1972–1980
- Albuquerque ..... Jim Karo, 1976–1980
- Albuquerque ..... Hart Schwarz, 1988–

## Recording Secretaries

- |                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Mary Alice Root     | Sue Huerty      |
| Virginia Fedder     | Phyllis Schmidt |
| Helen Riddell       | Jean Dilley     |
| Charlotte Rodriguez | Elizabeth Lee   |
| Melinda Ebert       | Irene Walkiw    |
| Karen Peterson      |                 |

# 2021 Birdathon: Do It Your Way

By Kathy Carson

In 2020 we tried to preserve some of the best things about Birdathon while protecting ourselves and others from Covid-19. What about this year?

Right now it looks like small groups may be allowed and travel may be less restricted. Again, each of us will decide to participate as an individual or a team.

Choose one 24-hour period between May 1 and May 8 to record all the birds you see in New Mexico, whether from your home or farther afield. May 8 is Audubon's Global Big Day, so you can be part of that effort if you choose.

We will tally your lists to declare two winners: the individual who sees the most species and the team that sees the most species. Two modest prizes will be awarded, as well as bragging rights.

Each year the Birdathon proceeds go toward conservation and education projects in central New Mexico. Individuals and teams can raise pledges

or make a donation. Again this year our proceeds will go to Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area in Valencia County. Whitfield is doing important work not only restoring and preserving valuable habitat but reaching young people and families who might have few other opportunities to experience nature.

For more information on the Birdathon and on how to submit your checklist, see the Birdathon page on the CNMAS website. From the CNMAS home page (see below), click on the Events link. Be sure to include your team name too.

Gifts can be made on the CNMAS web page, <http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org>, with a note that the donation is for Birdathon. Checks can be mailed to CNMAS, P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque, NM 87190-0002, again with a note.



*Cactus Wren*

Photo by  
Joe Schelling



## Backyard Refuge Certification Coming

Developing resources to create patches of habitat to support wildlife is the goal of the ABQ Backyard Refuge Program.

It is a collaborative effort by dozens of partners, including Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge and CNMAS.

The certification process is launching this spring. When your habitat is certified you will receive a metal sign to display in your yard. You will also receive a sticker of a backyard species each year that your yard is certified. LWren Walraven (the artist responsible for the CNMAS Burrowing Owl logo) created all the art.

The website [www.abqbackyardrefuge.org](http://www.abqbackyardrefuge.org) has a plant list and an introductory guide, as well as a short

survey and instructions to join the network to receive access to resources and announcements of events.

Also on the website is a workbook that details the habitat elements and yard management practices necessary for the required elements of certification: food, water, shelter and space.

There are three levels of ABQ Backyard Refuge Certification:

- **Contributing Habitat:** Ideal for smaller spaces including patios, balconies or small courtyards
- **Connector Habitat:** Ideal for smaller yards, side yards or large decks.
- **Core Habitat:** Ideal for larger yards and community spaces where you can focus on providing a diversity of the key elements.

Contact Partnership Coordinator Laurel Ladwig ([laurel@friendsofvalledeoro.org](mailto:laurel@friendsofvalledeoro.org)) with questions or if you'd like to volunteer.

# The Value of rees in ur World

The Tree Mural recently completed for Hawthorne Elementary School was born as the result of a collaboration between elementary school teacher Lynn Schuler and artist Judith Shaw. The two, both interested in nurturing students' understanding of the natural world, were brought together by Kateri Sava, the APS school garden specialist, in the spring of 2020.

Shaw began work with Schuler's science club, MESA, with a visual presentation on the importance of trees to our world, both scientifically and culturally, and then helped the students create their own tree painting. Shaw used their paintings to inform the mural design. Feedback and approval were given. But the day she finished putting the design on the wall in March 2020, Governor Lujan Grisham gave the order to close the schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shaw began her Tree Mural project as a call to action concerning the destruction of our natural world. Ironically, COVID-19, which kept the students from hands-on painting, may have emerged



as a result of climate change. Climate changes cause habitat loss, which pushes wild animals closer to human settlements and could contribute to novel disease spread from animal to human.

Said Schuler, who is also education coordinator for CNMAS, "Now more than ever it is important to foster an understanding of the importance of trees to the ongoing survival of life on this planet."

## Albuquerque Christmas Bird Count 2020 Summary

By David W. Mehlman, Compiler

The Albuquerque Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was a success, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. I extend my thanks to all the participants, especially those who volunteered to lead and/or coordinate sectors.

The CBC was held on Sunday, December 20, a date roughly similar to that in other years. The number of species seen (124) equaled our previous high count (in 2018), and is well above the 59-year average of 93.2. An additional seven species were found during count week.

The total number of birds counted was 30,301, and 82 people participated. The numbers of participants and total party hours were above average, continuing recent trends.

Two new species for the cumulative CBC list were found: Northern Saw-whet Owl (found by Chris Witt, Ethan Gyllenhaal, Moses Michelson, and Lisa Barrow in the westside bosque south of Montaña) and Dusky Flycatcher (found by Nancy Hetrick, Deanna Nichols, Christopher Rustay and Mike Shoop at UNM). We also added a "new" species this year with the elevation of Mexican Duck to species status. These additions bring Albuquerque's cumulative CBC species list to 211 since 1961. Other interesting species found were Blue-winged Teal and American Woodcock, both on the count for the second year.

*American Woodcock*  
farmanddairy.com



# A New Partnership for Bird-Friendly Night Skies

By Albert Shultz

Light pollution is an unfortunate fact of life in modern night skies. It is the glare from an unshielded bare-bulb porch light that makes it hard to see into the shadows of driveway shrubbery. It is the upward-

directed light from parking lots, billboards and buildings, which makes even a cloudless sky too bright to see the



stars. (Most people in Europe, North America and the rest of the developed world cannot see the Milky Way from where they live.)

It is a problem not only for astronomers and stargazers but also for birds and other animals whose nocturnal movements are disoriented by artificial light. And it's likely that it also affects human health by disrupting sleep cycles and neurosensory activity.

National Audubon Society has announced a new conservation partnership with the International Dark Sky Association (IDA), aiming to reduce light pollution by providing organizations and the communities they serve with tools and resources to protect the night sky for birds and people. Light pollution is a major problem for all wildlife near urbanized areas, especially birds migrating at night, which die by the millions every year in collisions with needlessly illuminated buildings and towers. The IDA is a global leader in educating the public and promoting designs and policies that protect the natural nighttime environment, and Audubon has partnered with cities nationwide in the Lights Out program since 1999 to reduce problem lighting during migration, so the new partnership is actually a rededication of shared interests.

One activity of IDA is designating Dark Sky Places, of which there are already eight in New Mexico, including Chaco Canyon and Fort Union. Bandelier National Park and Valles Caldera National

Preserve are in the process of applying for this status, too, and have active outreach programs for expanding appreciation of the dark night sky. In addition, the recently formed Jemez Mountains Night Sky Consortium is dedicated to reducing light pollution in Los Alamos and the surrounding area through a variety of means that include revision and updating of local ordinances to regulate outdoor lighting.

Reducing light pollution can be a relatively simple fix. No action is too small, every bit helps, and results are immediate. So why not commit to a small action at your own home?

- Eliminate unnecessary outdoor lights, especially those shining upward
- Shield or re-direct essential lights to reduce "light trespass"
- Whenever possible, use the least amount of light necessary, and of a low-color temperature (less than 3000K)
- Spread the word—promote night-friendly lighting among your friends and neighbors.

For more information, please see:

- International Dark-Sky Association
- National Audubon Society
- Santa Fe Stargazers

Reprinted from The Mountain Chickadee,  
Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society

## "How Many Birds Do You Need?"

This documentary by Steve Siegel will air March 9 at 8:00 p.m. on Albuquerque Public Access Channel 27.

Says the film maker, "You will see how birding can be a sport, just like football or golf. Then meet the men who started it all." Siegel, a CNMAS member, uses close-up video to portray birds' lives.

Consult your television provider to find the program.

# CNMAS Directory and Contacts

Central New Mexico Audubon Society 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.

Mailing address CNMAS, P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque NM 87190-0002

The CNMAS membership form is on the web site:

<http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org>.

## Officers

President .....	Perrienne Houghton <a href="mailto:cnmaspresident@gmail.com">cnmaspresident@gmail.com</a>
Vice President .....	vacant
Treasurer .....	Lee Hopwood
Recording Secretary.....	Jamie Welles
Education .....	Lynn Schuler
Membership .....	Marj Longenbaugh <a href="mailto:centralnmaudubon@peoplepc.com">centralnmaudubon@peoplepc.com</a>
Bird-safe Building Coordinator.....	Bruce Dale
Program Chair.....	Kathy Carson
Conservation Committee Chair .....	vacant
Director at Large .....	Robert Munro
Director at Large .....	vacant
New Mexico Audubon Council Representative .....	Sara Jayne Cole

## Past Presidents

Beth Hurst-Waitz, Raymond VanBuskirk,  
Karen Herzenberg, Sara Jayne Cole