



Central New Mexico Audubon Society

The Burrowing Owl



Statement from the CNMAS Board

A special meeting of the Central New Mexico Audubon board was held on August 10 to determine how to move forward after Perrienne Houghton completed her three-year term as board president in June.

After some discussion about the demands of this position and the difficulty the board has had filling leadership positions, the board voted to appoint a board president and vice president who will work closely together as a team, providing each other with support to promote the success of the board and serve the community and all interested parties. The board also voted to create a shared position for the office of secretary. Following these unanimous votes, board officers are now as follows:

President Jamie Welles

Vice President Denise Jones

Treasurer Lee Hopwood

Secretaries Glenda Morling and Katrina Adamczyk

Board members include Perrienne Houghton, Sara Jayne Cole, Robert Munro, Kathy Carson, Asher Gorbet, Bob Wilcox and Jodhan Fine.

The CNMAS board is grateful to Perrienne Houghton for her work as president and to board members and volunteers who help to make CNMAS a successful and active chapter.

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Upcoming CNMAS Programs

September 15, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Sustainable Agriculture: Good for Birds and Good for the Planet

Jamie Wells, Executive Director, Rio Grande Community Farm

This will be an in-person meeting at the Rio Grande Community Farm, 1701 Montaña Rd NW. For those not able to attend, a video that includes a farm tour will be available on <http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org> the next day.

Rio Grande Community Farm is a non-profit organization operating at the city's Los Poblanos Fields Open Space in the North Valley and has been part of the community for 25 years. Its mission is to connect people, earth, water and wildlife in an urban setting by farming sustainably, enhancing wildlife habitat, educating our community and providing fresh, naturally grown food to diverse populations.



Short-eared Owl
by Laurel Ladwig



Photo by
Holly Merker

October 20, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Ornithery: For Mind, Body and Soul

Holly Merker, environmental educator and birding guide

Watching birds is not only fun, it's good for you! Learn why your daily dose of Ornithery is just what the doctor ordered. Ornithery leads to a more mindful approach to the observation of birds.

November 10, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

The Southwestern Willow Flycatcher in the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico

Dave Moore, Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Mr. Moore will present the biology and ecology of the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, its recent population expansion along the Rio Grande and insights he and his team have gathered over more than 20 years of research.



Photo by
Shannon Caruso

Note: the October and November programs will be on Zoom. CNMAS members will get an e-mail link; others can request a link at cnmasreg@gmail.com.

Grand Opening and Birthday Party Set for Sept. 10 at Valle de Oro

Southwest's First Urban Wildlife Refuge is Ten Years Old



Photos by Teresa Skiba, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

By Melissa Howard

A building and a lot of people will be celebrated at Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge on Sept. 10, says refuge manager Jennifer Owen-White.

“The community, our partners and the staff have accomplished so much to secure our vision of an urban wildlife refuge,” says Owen-White, who was the refuge’s first employee.



The celebration, from 10:00 a.m. to noon, marks the grand opening of the Visitor Center and the refuge’s tenth birthday. There will be presentations by dignitaries, docent-led tours of the Visitor Center, games and activities outside, live music and food.



The Friends helped plan the visitor center and its exhibits. Now they welcome visitors, run the gift shop and oversee the ABQ Backyard Refuge program. They are preparing for their eighth annual fundraiser: online from 8:00 a.m. Oct. 30 through 5:00 p.m. Nov. 6.



Besides the interactive exhibits—called “awesome” by one 10-year-old—the Visitor Center includes a nature shop, offices, a meeting room and a classroom. Outside are a pond, a demonstration wetland, four trails and native plants that use reclaimed water. Rainwater is piped from the roof to the pond.

The building is made of steel and reclaimed beetle-killed wood. There are solar panels and dark-sky lighting fixtures. The outsides of windows have lines made of ceramic brick that have so far prevented bird collisions, Owen-White says.

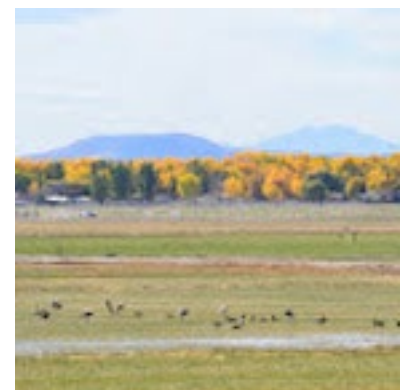
All told, the building qualifies for a “silver” rating by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program.

The Backyard Refuge program has certified 78 acres with 200 individual and business participants. The goal is to equal Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge’s 570 acres.



White-faced Ibis

Photo by Joe Schelling



Autumn Birding Opportunities Nearby

Hawks and Falcons of the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge

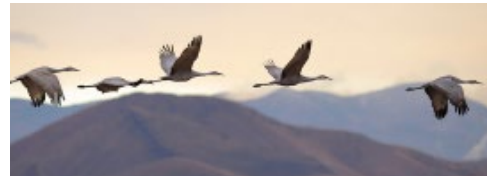


Matt Mitchell with a captive-born Gyrfalcon-Peregrine Falcon hybrid

Saturday, Sept. 17, 2-4 p.m.

Join falconer and bird rehabilitator Matt Mitchell for a presentation on the hawks and falcons that live on the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. Matt will bring some of his hawks and falcons for up-close viewing. He will also talk about how he rehabilitates injured birds. After the talk, Matt will stay for another hour to answer your questions and show you more of these magnificent animals.

The free event is sponsored by Amigos de la Sevilleta.



Crane Fiesta to Celebrate Bosque del Apache

Friends of Bosque del Apache invite everyone to join them from the comfort of home for the third annual virtual Crane Fiesta Nov. 18 and 19.

The group will partner with education, conservation and

photography groups to present live webinars and pre-recorded videos.

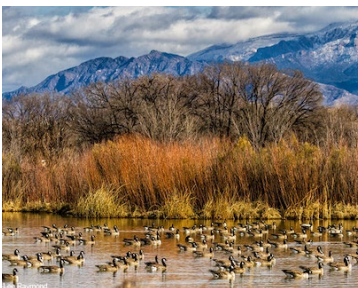
There will also be a preview of Festival of the Cranes, the first in-person version since COVID-19 hit, coming Dec. 1-3. Registration for the general public begins Sept. 15.

Rio Grande Nature Center

Bird walks begin at 8:30 on Saturdays and Sundays. Registration is required: call (505) 344-7240.

A guided nature walk is scheduled for 10:30 Sept. 10, Oct. 8 and Nov. 12. Call to register.

“Stories Under the Cottonwoods” for kids age 5 to 10 will begin at 10:30 Sept. 17, Oct. 15 and Nov. 19.



Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area grounds are open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Audubon Camp “Fired my Ambition,” Says Scholarship Recipient

Story and Photographs by Owen Sinkus

Hog Island Audubon Camp was one of the best weeks of my life. I had never been birding east of Texas before, so almost every bird was new and exciting. When I arrived on the island, it was cloudy and cool. I inspected the collection of cabins and old barns and was directed up steep, rickety wooden stairs to my room, which featured two double beds, a nightstand and a window that overlooked the dock.

Eager to explore, I hurried back outside. I found some bird feeders with chairs nearby so I sat down. Not more than a minute passed before a beautiful male Purple Finch dropped in. A common bird to Maine residents,



but to me a long-awaited lifer. Its head and upper body were a deep pinkish maroon, a color I had never seen on a

bird before. He was the first of more than twenty lifers I got at Hog Island.

I was also able to interact with people who were doing what I want to do in my life. Each night the campers gathered in an old fishing house to listen to a presentation. I won't lie, I fell asleep during a couple of them, but the ones I stayed awake for were truly inspiring. The first night, a man talked about the tools used for tracking work on Arctic Terns on Egg Rock.

They had put a tracker on an Arctic Tern that bred on Eastern Egg Rock and taken it off when the bird returned. They found that those Egg Rock terns



traveled up to the North Atlantic, south of Greenland, before heading down to Antarctica, making stops off the coasts of Portugal and Africa and on to Argentina for the winter. I knew the Arctic Tern has the longest migration of any bird but I had failed to wrap my head around it: a bird that weighs about as much as an onion and is only a foot long travels the world every year.

These and other findings at Hog Island fired my ambition for a career learning about birds and finding ways to protect them and their habitats.

On the third morning of the camp, all the teens boarded the Snow Goose III and rode about eight miles into the Atlantic to Eastern Egg Rock. On the way we saw Black Guillemot, Common Eider and Roseate Tern, and I spotted a Red-throated Loon, rare for the area at that time.

Approaching the island we started to see Atlantic Puffins, the reason most birders visit coastal Maine, flying around and floating in the water. Some swam close to the boat. They were joined by more Black Guillemots, Razorbills and even a Common Murre. It was seabird central out there.

Egg Rock is managed as a nesting area, so there is nowhere for a boat to land. We stepped into a rocky wooden dinghy and landed on seaweed-covered rocks. There were people at every stage of the journey to make sure we didn't slip and fall or flip the boat, which

I am grateful for, since neither my body nor my camera would agree with sixty-degree saltwater.

Next we hiked through the tern colony to the research station. At 6' 3" I was the tallest in the group, so I was the main target for the Arctic Terns that struck me with bills, feet and wings. I don't know if you've ever seen a tern bill, but they are used for spearing fish in the water, so you can imagine they're not blunt.

Nicknamed the Hilton, this shack was maybe big enough for five or six people to have room to breathe, and that was where the team of researchers on Egg Rock hung out, compiled data and cooked their meals. There was an outhouse for a bathroom and the researchers slept in tents outside. One of the researchers, a college-age girl with light hair and green eyes, gave me and a few other people a tour of the



Hilton. Something about it drew me. I imagined cooking rice and beans on the one-burner stove as the sun set over the Atlantic. We talked a bit about the research and

life on the island, and then we got to photograph seabirds and see Leach's Storm-petrels in their burrows.

During the week I spent time with people my age who shared some of my interests and passions—not something common in today's world. I spent the most time with a small group of guys from all around the country, all around my age and all phenomenal birders and photographers.

more on the next page

... more on Hog Island Audubon Camp

We crowded around a picnic table at dinner, making jokes and talking birds. We went on the optional early-morning bird walks instead of sleeping in.

The moment I remember best was on the last night. We had eaten a lobster dinner and were sitting on a balcony that overlooked the Muscongus Bay. The sun had set and a storm front was rolling in. Occasionally there was lightning on the horizon and the air smelled like rain. We sat in the dark, talking and taking in the moment. I think none of us wanted the week to end.

Now we have a text group chat where we share bird sightings and our photos and talk about our adventures. One

of the guys, Isaiah, has pioneered a “lifer dance.” Traditionally, they are improvised on the spot, but you can incorporate elements of past dances to tie them together. We performed many lifer dances at camp, and we are carrying on that tradition virtually. For me the thing that stands out about the lifer dance is its uniqueness.

Things like the lifer dance are why I love the birding community and I love connecting with people my age who have so much creativity and ingenuity. The week felt *freeing*.

CNMAS scholarships are funded by the Ryan Beaulieu Memorial Education Fund.

Enjoy a Beer and Help a Bird



“Oh Hey, Pinyon Jay” might sound like a song, but it’s a limited-edition wheat beer introduced this summer by New Mexico’s Bosque Brewing Company.

It is brewed with juniper berries, prickly pear and local honey. The label features a link to groups working to preserve both the bird and its habitat: <https://act.audubon.org/a/pinyon-jay-monitoring-1>

“The Pinyon Jay is an iconic bird of the intermountain west, but what does it have to do with beer? Two things: water and climate,” says an Audubon Southwest posting.

Noting that the birds need both reliable water and nearby agriculture, the posting announces Southwest Audubon’s new conservation program.

“To get the data we need to inform Pinyon Jay conservation efforts, we need a huge community of people to head outside, observe their local Pinyon Jay flocks and share their data,” the Audubon Southwest posting says.

Strategic Water Reserve Funding Sought

In late July Audubon Southwest, along with eleven other organizations, asked New Mexico’s governor and legislature to include \$15 million in funding for the Strategic Water Reserve in the budget for the next fiscal year, along with funding for two additional employees to administer the program.

The Strategic Water Reserve is an innovative tool created in 2004 that

“Great Views” on Field Trip to Bosque del Apache

By Bob Wilcox

A nice group of Albuquerque birders drove down to Socorro in July to check out Bosque del Apache. On Friday evening we reviewed the herons, egrets and bitterns as a group. They are most closely allied with cormorants and pelicans these days. These birds are stunning in variety of color and plumage, but all possess the predatory nature reminiscent of bipedal dinosaurs.

We ran a mock Breeding Bird Survey on Saturday morning after entering the refuge. Using mostly our ears we were able to ID up to 15 species in three-minute stops. At every stop we heard Blue Grosbeaks, Common Yellowthroats, Bell’s Vireos and Yellow-breasted Chats. These birds were common in the brushy terrain of the south loop.

We had great views of Swainson’s Hawk fledglings, and at the marsh boardwalk came the day’s highlight: several Least Bitterns at the edge of the reeds or flying. Green Heron was identified by call, White-faced Ibis flew by and American Avocets foraged on the far shore.

A little over 50 species were turned in to eBird.

Sara Jayne Cole's Priorities: Conservation and Birding and Leadership

Our chapter's stalwart activist Sara Jayne Cole agreed to an interview for the Burrowing Owl's "meet the board member" series. The first question from B.O. was "What were some of your early experiences with birds?"

S. J. C. My interest in birds began when I was 11 and my parents took me to see friends who owned Birdsong Plantation in the pine forest south of Thomasville, Ga. When we arrived the host was preparing the bodies of songbirds he had gathered early that morning from the base of a recently installed TV transmission tower.

Although we got to see many other birds in his yard, including a ruby-throated hummingbird that came close to the window to drink from a home-made feeder, it was those tiny, beautiful birds the host was processing that stayed in my memory.

B.O. When did you decide to be a serious birder?

S. J. C. For many years I was a backyard birder with a collection of field guides. After our move to Albuquerque in 2011 I decided to devote myself to learning about birds so I could participate in bird conservation.



B.O. What about La Joya made you choose it for your e-mail address?

S. J. C. I chose it after doing a bird survey for New Mexico Game and Fish at La Joya Wildlife Management Area. The translation from Spanish is "the jewel."

B.O. Was there an early encounter with CNMAS that made you decide to join?

S. J. C. I started attending the Saturday and Sunday bird walks at the Rio Grande Nature Center. I met Lefty Arnold who told me about Thursday Birders.

B.O. How did you start working on bird conservation?

S. J. C. I tried to make my back patio a place for birds but the neighbors' cats kept coming over the fence to sit under the feeder. That is when I got interested in the American Bird Conservancy's Cats Indoors campaign. Mikal Deese and I



volunteered to run this campaign for CNMAS. I became a member of the Conservation Committee and a few years later the chair and then a board member in 2014 and president in 2017–2019.

B.O. What skills, attitudes or habits do you have that make you a successful board member?

S. J. C. When I was a member of the Conservation Committee, I could choose approaches to the Cats Indoors Campaign and present them to the board. I learned that it is a good idea to listen to all board members, even the quiet ones.

B.O. What are some important events or decisions by CNMAS during your term as chapter president?

S. J. C. CNMAS got a new look to the web site thanks to Joe Schelling who continues to do a great job keeping the site current.

I believe the most important thing I learned from being president is once you have delegated a task you must let it go, and although it may not be done as you would have it might be a better approach.

B.O. What are your goals for the chapter's conservation mission this year?

S. J. C. CNMAS is a partner with the Valle de Oro's ABQ Backyard Refuge program.



The Conservation Committee works to teach people that when you invite birds to your yard it is your responsibility to make the yard bird friendly: free of pesticides, with pets away from feeders and recommended window collision deterrents.

I have come back to conservation because I enjoy having a booth or tabling at grower's markets or events like RGNC Herb Fest. CNMAS has 15 tabling volunteers so there are always people to sign up for shifts. Educating the public about birding and conservation is always a rewarding experience.



Sara Jayne Cole

Photo by Margaret Larson

Report from Rio Grande Bird Research Inc. In Rio Grande Nature Center State Park

Stories and Photos by Jason Kitting

This striking After Second Year male Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) was a highlight from our last MAPS (Monitoring Avian Survivorship Program) session. These birds spend most of their time hidden in thick riparian vegetation, so it's easy to forget just how beautiful they really are.



Yellow-breasted Chats (YBCHs) are one of the most common breeding birds along the middle Rio Grande valley, especially in willows along the river bank. Most of the time they stay hidden but displaying males will fly from high perches while puffing out their bright yellow breasts and singing furiously. Even when not displaying, these birds are often heard instead of seen.

YBCHs are an interesting species taxonomically speaking. They used to be considered the largest member of the warbler family (Parulidae) but are now considered to be the only member of a completely separate family (Icteriidae). These birds are actually more closely related to new-world blackbirds than to warblers.

Super Babies

The last week of MAPS was full of young birds or, as we were calling them, super babies. This Hatch Year House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) was one of the cuter ones.



Pheasants and other precocial birds are completely covered in thicker down and rely as much on it as they do on their parents. The down can double as camouflage outside the nest.

Many young birds have hair-like down or natal down covering their bodies when they hatch. The main purpose of these feathers is to retain heat but the amount of down on the chicks can vary among species.

House Finches and many other altricial birds don't develop much down because they rely more on their parents for warmth.

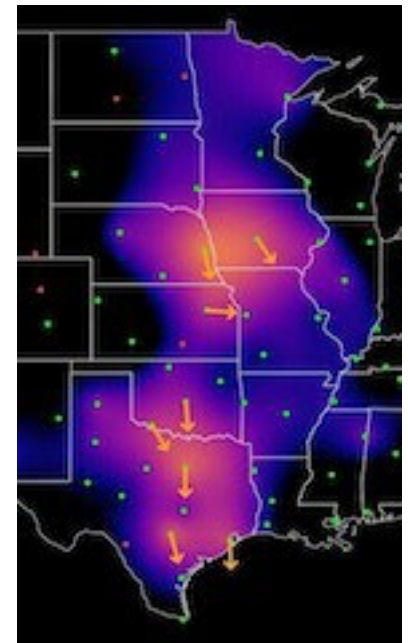
Other super babies we encountered were Back-chinned Hummingbird, Blue Grosbeak, American Robin and Bewick's Wren. We even caught our first early migrant: an After Hatch Year female Western Tanager.

Web Site Tracks Migrating Birds

The fall newsletter of the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society describes <https://birdcast.info>, a program of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, University of Massachusetts/Amherst and Colorado State University, the western home base.

“Birdcast is based on the same radar technology that allows weather forecasting around the U.S.,” the article says. “The radar terminals can document the number of birds flying in any area of the country, with numbers in the millions of birds per night, broken down by hourly totals. It gives data on the elevation of the flying birds and the direction of flight.”

This portion of a birdcast.info map shows the largest concentration of migrating birds in the U.S. at 10:50 p.m. Mountain Time on August 25, 2022.



Thursday Birder Trips

September, October, November 2022

September 1

Albuquerque Open Space Visitor Center, 9:30 –11:30 a.m.

Meet in the center's parking lot on the east side of Coors Boulevard.

GPS coordinates (35.165311, -106.673068)

Difficulty level: two miles on flat trails, some uneven and sandy

Leader: Sara Jayne Cole

September 8

Otero Canyon, 8:25–11:30 a.m.

Due to limited parking at Otero Canyon, meet at 8:00 a.m. at Sandia Ranger Station.

GPS coordinates (35.074106, -106.384020)

Carpool to Otero Canyon 3.3 miles south on NM 337.

The only restrooms on this trip are at the Ranger Station.

Leaders: Glenda Morling and Angela Hawthorne

September 15

Tijeras Arroyo, 8:20 –10:30 a.m.

Meet at the edge of the East Tijeras Canyon Open Space.

GPS Coordinates (35.052945, -106.508369)

From Central, head south on Juan Tabo to the "Y" where it splits from Elizabeth SE. Continue south over

the arroyo. Take the first left onto Monarchos to the U turn at the edge of the Open Space to park.

Difficulty level: some slight inclines, sandy trails with shrubs and brush

No restrooms

Leader: Susan Hunter

September 22

Belen Marsh and Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area, 8:20 a.m.–12:00 noon

Meet at 8:20 a.m. for an 8:30 departure from the parking lot of Embassy Suites, 1000 Woodward Place NE.

GPS coordinates (35.094668, -106.635956)

Secondary meeting place: 9:00 a.m. at Belen Marsh, exit 195, east one mile, park behind Taco Bell.

Bird here then proceed to Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area where we will have a talk from Laura McCann, environmental education program manager, and be introduced to raptors that Laura takes care of.

Difficulty level: one and a half miles on flat trails, some uneven

Leader: TBA

September 29

Tingley Ponds and Bosque, 8:25–11:00 a.m.

Meet at the north end of the Tingley Beach parking lot

GPS coordinates (35.088596, -106.677003)

Difficulty level: one and a half miles, flat with sandy trails

Leader: Mary Rajé



October 6

Ojito de San Antonio Open Space, 8:55 a.m.–12 noon

GPS coordinates(35.101973, -106.380139)

Difficulty level: one and a half miles, slight incline with some uneven trails

Meet in the parking lot behind the church, not in church parking lot.

Leader: Ginny Davis

more on the next page

Scheduled trips may be changed or canceled. For updated information check the Thursday Birders page on the CNMAS website (<http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org/trips/thursday-birders/>) or email thursdaybirders@gmail.com.

. . . more Thursday Birder Trips

October 13

Fourth of July Canyon, 8:50 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Meet at the Sprouts parking area of Four Hills Shopping Center

GPS coordinates (35.066927, -106.499012)

Secondary meeting place: Tijeras Senior Center, 9:15 a.m.

GPS coordinates (35.079603, -106.391288)

High-clearance vehicles recommended for seven miles of rough road. U.S. Forest Service parking fee is \$7 per vehicle or \$3.50 with federal pass.

Difficulty level: 92 miles round trip with some driving and walking at the canyon

Bring a picnic lunch

Leader: Barbara Hussey

October 20

Coyote del Malpais Golf Course, Grants, 6:50 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

There will only be space for 15 people. Please e-mail us at thursdaybirders@gmail.com by October 13 to reserve your spot and to let us know at which location you intend to join the trip.



Meet at 6:50 a.m. for a 7:00 a.m. departure from the southeast corner of the parking lot at Lowe's Home Improvement on I-40 and 12th St NW.

GPS coordinates (35.111292, -106.647267)

Secondary meeting place and break / snack stop: 8:00 a.m., Sky City Travel Center Express off I-40, exit 89

GPS coordinates (35.086117, -107.770001)

Bring picnic lunch or buy lunch in clubhouse

Difficulty level: a 75-mile drive then three-mile walk on mainly even turf

Leaders: Peter Neils and Sue Chavez

October 27

Michial Emery Trail, 8:55 a.m.–12 noon

Sandia Foothills Open Space east on Spain at Tramway, then south on High Desert

GPS coordinates: (35.146198, -106.482345)

Difficulty level: two and a half miles on medium to fairly steep incline

Leader: Bob Wilcox

November 3

Los Poblanos Open Space, 8:55 a.m.–12 noon

Meet in trail parking lot off Montaña Road

GPS coordinates (35.143470, -106.659605)

Difficulty level: one and a half to two miles on flat, even trail

Leaders: Maxine Schmidt, David Watkins and Angela Hawthorne

November 10

Valle De Oro, 8:25–11:30 a.m.

Meet at the refuge parking lot.

GPS coordinates (34.979651, -106.670435)

Difficulty level: two miles on flat gravel and sandy trails

More details to come on this trip

Leaders: Mary Rajé and Susan Chaudoir

November 17

Embudito Canyon, 9:00 a.m.–12 noon

Meet in the trailhead parking lot.

GPS coordinates (35.136202, -106.481973)

To reach the canyon, drive east on Montgomery from Tramway, turn left on Glenwood Hills, continue 0.4 mile, turn right on Trailhead Road to parking lot.

Difficulty level: one and half miles, slight incline, some uneven ground

Leader: TBA

November 24

Thanksgiving—no TB trip

CNMAS Directory and Contacts

Central New Mexico Audubon Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit 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 and Directors

President	Jamie Welles cnmaspresident@gmail.com
Vice President.....	Denise Jones
Treasurer	Lee Hopwood
Secretaries.....	Glenda Morling and Katrina Adamczyk
Education Chair (interim)	Lee Hopwood
Program Chair	Kathy Carson
Field Trip Chair (interim)	Bob Wilcox
Bird-safe Building Coordinator	vacant
Conservation Coordinators.....	Katrina Hucks and Sara Jayne Cole
NM Audubon Council Representative.....	Robert Munro
Social Media Coordinator.	Jodhan Fine
Board Members	Perrienne Houghton, Sara Jayne Cole, Robert Munro, Kathy Carson, Asher Gorbet, Bob Wilcox and Jodhan Fine

Past Presidents

Beth Hurst-Waitz, Raymond Van Buskirk,
Karen Herzenberg, Sara Jayne Cole,
Perrienne Houghton