

Central New Mexico Audubon Society



The Burrowing Owl

Volume 51, #1

Spring 2022

An Audubon Southwest Chapter

Spring Programs, Virtually

Each person receiving this newsletter will receive a link to the virtual program by e-mail a week before the event.

Pinyon Jay Monitoring Project

March 17 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Cathy Wise, Community Science Manager,
Audubon Southwest

Audubon Southwest has joined forces with the Great Basin Bird Observatory, federal and state level resource managers and Audubon chapters across the Southwest to collect basic information on Pinyon Jays across their range.

The Pinyon Jay, an iconic and well-loved denizen of Pinyon-Juniper forests, has declined in the last decade and immediate action is required.

By understanding the needs and movements



Nancy Radice photo

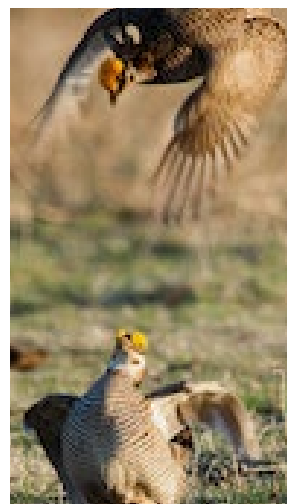
of the species, we will be better equipped to conserve and protect it. Come learn more about this remarkable bird and how communities are stepping up to help.

Lesser Prairie Chicken 101

April 21 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Amy Erickson, Avian Biologist, and Jon Hayes,
Executive Director, Audubon Southwest

Join us as Amy and Jon present the ecology, life history and peculiar behaviors of this unique species. They will also discuss the loss of North America's grasslands and what measures are being taken to conserve these landscapes and the species that depend on them.



Brittany Meagers photo

Meet the CNMAS Board, Installment 1

Hello fellow readers and birders! I'm Jodhan Fine, an 18-year-old nature enthusiast currently pursuing a degree in biology at Occidental College in Los Angeles.

I started serving on the CNMAS Board in September 2020 and took up the role of managing the Facebook page. Several weeks later, after getting approval from the board, I created an Instagram account for CNMAS, and recently fellow board member Glenda Morling came up with the idea to create a Twitter account.

Working to increase our on-line presence, CNMAS now has accounts on three major social media platforms.

You can get to each platform by clicking on its icon at the bottom of the home page of <http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org>.

While Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have different functions, the general purpose of our posts remains consistent. We post about CNMAS events such as Thursday Birders, on-line presentations and meetings, as well as community events including habitat



restorations, festivals and citizen science efforts like the Great Backyard Bird Count and Audubon's own Christmas Bird Count.

Besides important events we value simply reposting beautiful images or educational posts from other social media accounts among the broader science and nature community.

Activism is perhaps the most important function of our social media presence. With a relatively large platform it is our duty to share important petitions, fund-raisers and information pertaining to the conservation of birds and their ecosystems.

Coming Soon: CNMAS Birdathon And Membership Meeting

When: June 18

Where: Rio Grande Nature Center
Education Building

Time: 8:30–11:30 a.m.

Agenda:

- president's report on chapter achievements
- election of officers and board members
- one-hour birdathon with prizes for participants and teams
- refreshments



NMOS Meets March 26

The 59th annual meeting of the New Mexico Ornithological Society will be held via Zoom on the last Saturday in March.

Details, including the call for papers, are available at www.nmbirds.org. Registration is on the web site or by mail to Megan Ruehmann, 609 Copper Street, Silver City, NM 88061.

The agenda includes a business meeting, science sessions and a keynote address. The new edition of *New Mexico Bird Finding Guide* will be available until March 21 at a discount price of \$30 including shipping.

Backyard Birding in Our New Tucson Home

By Michele Weisz

In November 2021, my husband Reuben and I moved from Albuquerque's Northeast Heights (approximately 5600 feet elevation) to Northeast Tucson (approximately 2600 feet). We are closer to the Santa Catalina and Rincon Mountains than we were to the Sandia Mountains in Albuquerque.

Some of our backyard birds here are the same as those we had in Albuquerque, but many are different. House Finches, House Sparrows and Lesser Goldfinches were the most frequent users of our feeders in Albuquerque, and we see them here too.

Here are some of our current backyard visitors.

One of the first birds I photographed was a Phainopepla perched on top of a mesquite tree.

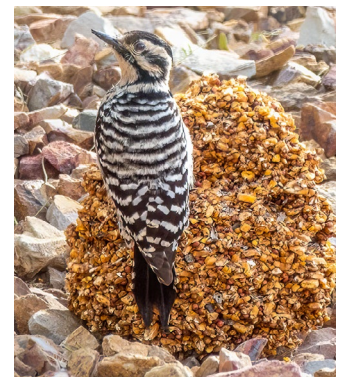


Hummingbirds are here year-round. I didn't put out feeders in Albuquerque, but I couldn't resist doing so here. This male Broad-billed is a frequent visitor, and a few days ago he, a Costa's and an Anna's were here within a few minutes of each other!

Gila Woodpeckers are here every day. They love this Hummingbird feeder. Look at his tongue in the nectar.



While Gambel's Quail are in the Albuquerque area, I never had them in my yard, but they are plentiful here. They love the seed block I bought for them, as do a Ladder-backed Woodpecker, a Cactus Wren and others.



. . . More Tucson Bird Photos

It does rain occasionally in Tucson. This Mourning Dove seemed quite content perched on our fence in the rain. Mourning Doves are here year-round, while White-winged Doves are here in the summer. In Albuquerque, we had White-winged Doves in our yard year-round. I haven't seen a White-winged Dove yet in Tucson.



A Gila Woodpecker and a Harris's Antelope Ground Squirrel argued over who would claim the seed block. The ground squirrel won.

An immature Cooper's Hawk visited and wondered where his dinner went.



A House Sparrow and a Northern Cardinal had a nice visit at the feeder I call the Red Roof Inn.

I love birding in our backyard here in Tucson. I'm looking forward to seeing what spring migration brings!



The Pyrrhuloxia likes the Red Roof Inn too.



2022 Birdathon Will Look Familiar

By Kathy Carson

Like the movie *Groundhog's Day*, we're doing a repeat of the 2021 Birdathon this year. We want to preserve some of the best things about Birdathon while protecting ourselves and others from Covid-19.

Give yourself or your team a Birdathon name and choose one 24-hour period between May 8 and May 15 to record all the birds you see in New Mexico, whether from your home or farther afield. May 14 is Audubon's Global Big Day, so you can also be part of that effort.

We will count your lists to find the winning individual and team that see the most species.

Each individual and team can solicit pledges of donations, often based on number of species seen. Again this year our proceeds will go to Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area.

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

New Mexico Rivers Getting Some Help

A bill funding the state's Strategic Water Reserve died in committee in the legislative session that ended on Feb. 28, but other projects are on-going.

The reserve fund, established in 2005, allows the Interstate Stream Commission to acquire water rights to meet the Rio Grande Compact with Texas and to offset loss of water used for habitat restoration. The fund was used for a major project on the Pecos River and later for a few efforts on the Rio Grande, but has not been funded in recent years.

Current New Mexico water projects include new riverside habitat off Corrales Road. Cottonwoods and willows are being planted in storm- and waste-water channels treated to break down pollutants.

In Las Cruces a plan is being developed to divert treated waste water to a Rio Grande channel for aquatic and floodplain habitats. The city is partnering with the U.S. International Boundary Commission.

The New Mexico Nature Conservancy's Rio Grande Water Fund has a goal of restoring 600,000 acres of forests. Harvested wood is used in local economies; a student monitoring



crew is part of a watershed restoration effort in Taos County and 700,000 trees have been planted in Albuquerque.

An early victory for rivers came in November 2020 when Audubon New Mexico was awarded the first in-stream-flow permit for a privately owned water right. As Audubon Southwest reported, the "permit represents a historic step forward for New Mexican rivers and now allows private water right holders the option to lease or sell their water for environmental purposes."

Threatened, Endangered, Extinct. Forever.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently proposed to officially declare 23 animals and plants extinct, including the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker, a ghostly bird whose long-rumored survival in the bottomland swamps of the South has haunted seekers for generations. Other species pushed over the brink include eight birds, one bat and a plant found only on Pacific islands. The newly extinct species are the casualties of climate change and habitat destruction, and the official declaration exposes what scientists say is an accelerating rate of extinction worldwide.

The Ivory-Billed Woodpecker was one of the first animals recognized in the United States as facing extinction, and its decline helped spur Congress in 1973 to pass the Endangered Species Act. Among the animals the act is credited with saving are icons such as the bald eagle, brown pelican, gray wolf and American alligator.

Here are excerpts from a personal account commemorating the extinction of another North American bird, the Great Auk. The essay, by Daniel Hudon, recently appeared on the website *The Revelator*:

A few years ago, after traveling more than 1,500 miles by plane, car and boat, I finally found myself on Newfoundland's Fogo Island. I was there to visit the Great Auk—or at least its memory. A gentle and curious diving bird, much like a penguin, the Great Auk once thrived in the North Atlantic and numbered in the millions. Awkward on land, it was a strong swimmer capable of accelerating underwater, then shooting above the ocean's surface onto an island ledge, where it would hop ashore to find a mate. The largest colony was at Funk Island, about 30 miles northeast of Fogo Island.



To know where certain animals thrive is to know something special about our world. The Great Auk I went to visit was a five-foot-tall bronze sculpture created by artist Todd McGrain for his Lost Bird Project. A handmade sign pointed the way to the sculpture, an hour's walk along a grassy trail, with the sound of terns calling in the wind and waves crashing against granite rocks. For millennia Great Auks swam here, catching fish, resting on the rocks. But when European fishing vessels came to Newfoundland in the early 16th century, they seized on the birds as a source of fresh meat, as well as oil for lamps. Their feathers became pillows and mattresses, and their eggs were collected for food. By 1800 no Great Auks remained on Funk Island, and they were soon gone from Fogo Island, too.

When I arrived at the sculpture, I found myself struck by its elegance. I couldn't help but run my hand over its smooth lines. I thought about the facts that I knew: Great Auk partners both tended to their single large egg laid on bare rock; they took turns going into the ocean to feed; eggs had unique marbled markings. The last pair of Great Auks was strangled off Iceland in 1844 while incubating an egg.

Before leaving I felt I needed something to signify our visit, some sort of ritual. I grabbed my water bottle and poured some water into my cupped hand and let it drip onto the sculpture's head. In that moment, the ritual caught me and suddenly felt significant. It was a moment of honoring the memory of the Great Auk and grieving its loss.

Reprinted with permission from the Mountain Chickadee newsletter of the Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society.

Pandemic Changed Birds' Lives Too

By Dana Koblinsky

Nicola Koper had been studying the impacts of human development and traffic on wildlife for decades, often creating manipulative experiments to test how noise affects different species. When COVID-19 lockdowns began, she realized, so did the perfect natural experiment.

"We had this great tragedy for many people," she said. "But it also made me feel morally obligated to learn from it." Koper realized the reduced traffic across the United States and Canada offered her the chance to look at human disturbance on wildlife at a larger scale than she could ever conduct a field study on.

A professor of conservation biology at the Natural Resources Institute at the University of Manitoba, Koper is the senior author of a paper published in *Science Advances* looking at how mandates to control the pandemic among humans affected birds.

Since she and her colleagues were also in lockdown and couldn't collect their own fieldwork, they turned to eBird citizen science data, allowing them to look at bird presence throughout the two countries.

The team analyzed springtime records of more than 4.3 million birds—from hummingbirds to eagles—for the years of 2017 to 2020, allowing them to look compare bird numbers before and after the lockdowns.

They found that almost all the species they studied—80%—changed their habitat use during the lockdown. Most began increasing in abundance in more human-altered places, like urban areas or within tens of kilometers of highways, compared to previous years.

That included most warblers and New World swallows, whose species make up about half the 3 billion birds lost in the last five decades. "So, it's really relevant that those very ecologically important groups all benefited from decreased traffic," Koper said.

Even species that seem adapted to humans, like the American robin (*Turdus migratorius*), increased their use of human-altered places. "They increased in abundance in urban areas and within tens of kilometers of airports and

major roads," Koper said. In the pre-pandemic period, traffic had clearly kept them from using these resources, she said.

A few species decreased their

use of human-altered landscapes during the lockdown. Red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) moved farther from major roads during the pandemic, which may be due to less roadkill. But overall, most birds increased their presence in these human-altered areas.

Koper hopes to find out what it is about traffic that affects birds, and if there are mitigation measures, like sound barrier walls or quieter pavements, that could make a difference.

This article appeared on the Wildlife Society web page on October 25, 2021. Dana Koblinsky is the associate editor at the Wildlife Society and was a co-author of the paper



Thursday Birder Schedule

March 3

Elena Gallegos Open Space 8:55—11:30 a.m.

GPS coordinates (35.162725, -106.470204)

Meet in the parking lot by Pino Trailhead.

Difficulty level: one and a half miles on slight incline, firm trails

Note there is a \$1 charge to enter the area.

Leader: Perriane Houghton

March 10

Tingley Ponds and Bosque 8:55 a.m.—12 noon

GPS coordinates (35.088596, -106.677003)

Meet at the north end Tingley Beach parking lot.

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

Leader: Lefty Arnold

March 17

Pueblo Montano Open Space 8:55 a.m.—12 noon

GPS coordinates (35.147886, -106.684174)

Meet in the trail head parking lot on the south side of Montano Rd NW, just east of Coors Blvd NW.

Difficulty level: two miles. flat with some uneven trails

Leader: Sarah Peterson

March 24

Alameda Open Space 8:55 a.m. —12 noon

GPS coordinates (35.189354, -106.646350)

Meet in the parking lot south of Alameda Blvd NW.

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

Leaders: Leah Henzler and Joe Cairns

March 31

Spring Break: no Thursday Birders trip

April 7

Rio Grande Nature Center and Bosque

8:25—11:30 a.m.

GPS coordinates (35.1295, -106.6820)

Meet at the wetland blind in the northeast corner of the Nature Center parking lot.

Note you will need a \$3 parking fee, State Parks Pass or Friends of the RGNC pass.

Difficulty level: one and a half mile on flat, even trails

Leader: Bob Wilcox

April 14

Cochiti Lake

7:50 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

GPS coordinates (35.173016, -106.582308)

Meet at 7:50 a.m., northwest corner of Target parking lot at I-25/ Paseo del Norte.

Secondary meeting place 8:40 a.m. at Pueblo Gas on NM 22, west of Santo Domingo exit off I 25.

GPS coordinates (35.473288, -106.307357)

The group will walk in Pena Blanca, then go to Cochiti Lake for lunch.

There will only be space for six cars.

Please arrange to carpool and e-mail us at

thursdaybirders@gmail.com by April 7 to reserve your spot and to let us know at which location you intend to join the trip.

Difficulty level: 100 miles, driving and stopping to bird, with short, mainly flat walks at stops.

Please bring a picnic lunch.

Leader: Judy Liddell

Please consult the web site for last-minute changes.

<http://cnmas.audubon.org>

More Thursday Birder Trips

April 21

Sulphur Canyon 8:25–11:30 a.m.

GPS coordinates (35.172724, -106.376006)

Meet in the lower parking lot of Sulphur Canyon.

You will need a \$3 parking fee or federal pass.

Difficulty level: one and a half miles, partly steep incline, downhill return

Leader: Bob Wilcox

April 28

Corrales Bosque 7:55—11:30 a.m.

Meet at 7:55 in the parking lot north of Boxing Bear Brewery, 10200 Corrales Rd, Albuquerque.

GPS coordinates (35.203801, -106.644975).

Carpool to East Ella Drive entrance to the Corrales Bosque trail, as there is limited parking at the trailhead

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

Note there are no restrooms at this site.

Leader: Lefty Arnold

May 5

Coyote del Malpais Golf Course

6:50 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

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

GPS coordinates (35.106843, -106.659484).

Secondary meeting place 8:00, Sky City Travel Center Express, I-40, exit 89

GPS coordinates (35.086117, -107.770001)

Bring picnic lunch or buy lunch in clubhouse.

There will only be space for 15 people. Please e-mail us at thursdaybirders@gmail.com by April 28 to reserve your spot and to let us know at which location you intend to join the trip.

Difficulty level: 150-mile drive plus three-mile walk on hilly, unpaved, mainly even trails

Leader: Ken Zaslow

May 12

Embudito Canyon 8:25–11:30 a.m.

Directions: east on Montgomery from Tramway. Turn left on Glenwood Hills, continue 0.4 of a mile. Turn right onto Trailhead Road to parking lot.

GPS coordinates (35.136202, -106.481973)

Difficulty level: one and half miles, medium incline out and downward return, some uneven ground

Note there are no restrooms at this site.

Leader: Steve Siegel

May 19

Calabacillas Arroyo 8:25–11:30 a.m.

GPS coordinates (35.187058, -106.650795).

Directions: go east onto Westside Dr. from Coors Blvd., north of Paseo del Norte. Follow Westside 0.2 mile. Take open gate on left to arroyo and parking lot.

Difficulty level: 2 miles on flat, sandy trails

Note there are no restrooms at this site.

Leaders: Sara Jayne Cole and Shannon Caruso

May 26

Los Poblanos Open Space 8:25—11 :30 a.m.

GPS coordinates (35.142891, -106.660624).

Meet in trail parking lot off Montaña Rd.

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

Leaders: Maxine Schmidt, David Watkins and Angela Hawthorne

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, PO. Box 30002, Albuquerque NM 87190-0002

The CNMAS membership form is on the web site:

<http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org>



Officers

President	Perrienne Houghton cnmaspresident@gmail.com
Vice President.....	vacant
Treasurer	Lee Hopwood
Recording Secretary	Jamie Wells
Education Chair (interim)	Lee Hopwood
Program Chair.....	Kathy Carson
Field Trip Chair	Kim Score
Bird-safe Building Coordinator.....	vacant
Conservation Coordinator	vacant
NM Audubon Council Representative.....	Sara Jayne Cole
Social Media Coordinator.....	Jodhan Fine
Directors at Large.....	Shannon Caruso, Laniya Howe, Katrina Hucks, Marissa Loya, Glenda Morling, Robert Munro



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