

# Burrowing Owl

Celebrating 50 Years of Birds and Birding

Central New Mexico  
Audubon Society

Volume 50, #2

**Zoom in on June 17**

The chapter's 50th annual meeting will begin at 7 p.m. After a brief business session you will hear the names of six new board members, see the winning entries in our photo contest and endorse officers and board members for the coming year.

## We're Back, Outside with the Birds! Year-End President's Report

By Perrienne Houghton

It is with joy that I give our readers an update on the CNMAS chapter. And is with gratitude that I share many of the accomplishments of the dedicated board members and the entire membership over the last 15 months. In spite of the pandemic, you all persevered.

In May 2020, CNMAS entered into a shared lease agreement with the New Mexico State Land Office for the restoration and conservation of the 20-acre Melrose Woods in eastern New Mexico. With board member Robert Munro as project coordinator, Sara Jayne Cole, Christopher Rustay and others developed a restoration plan for this stopover for migratory birds. (See the story on page 2.)

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### Thursday Birders Resume Outings

By Shannon Caruso and Glenda Morling

We will be starting to meet again with our first trip—to Alameda Open Space—on June 17. The first few weeks include well-known local venues that have been visited during this time in previous years and where we can socially distance but still bird together.

During that time, we will ask for members' input for the remainder of 2021.

continued on page 3

Also in May last year, program chairperson Kathy Carson put together our first virtual Birdathon, raising over \$3,000 for the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area. And this year Kathy and Birdathon participants did it again, but probably more enjoyably in small groups, with some Covid-19 restrictions lifted.

Another feat for Kathy Carson and the program committee has been conducting virtual programs on topics ranging from bird nests to butterflies and more, with many viewers.

2021 is the 50th anniversary of the founding of our chapter. In this issue Sara Jayne Cole describes a milestone project developed for the celebration and interviews a former chapter president.

The CNMAS Board of Directors has gone through some changes in the last year. We said farewell to long-time members Lynn Schuler and Bruce Dale. Lynn has been our dedicated education chairperson, a member of the Scholarship Committee and in charge of correspondence for over 12 years. Bruce has been on the Conservation Committee for eight-plus years and has been an invaluable leader in Bird-safe Buildings efforts for the last four years.

continued on page 2

# Parulids Set Records at Improved Melrose

**WELCOME** to Melrose Woods

**THIS QUIET GROVE** of trees was planted long ago by early settlers. Over the years, it has become a vital stopover for migrating birds and this has made it an Important Bird Area (IBA).

Working together, the New Mexico State Land Office Outdoor Recreation Program, the Central New Mexico Audubon Society, and the private rancher who leases this land, have agreed to open Melrose Woods for visitors. Please help preserve our ongoing conservation work by staying on the designated trails and away from plantings. Be cautious of the cattle that share the area and water tank.

Enjoy the birds and this shady refuge!

And please help us promote respectful, enjoyable, and thoughtful birding.

**Birding Etiquette**

- Avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger.
- Turn off all camera sounds.
- Do not use any recorded playback.
- Do not approach too closely and/or flush birds.
- Share information freely with other birders.
- Keep pets on leash.

**Rules**

- No Camping or overnight parking.
- No trespassing on the surrounding private property.
- Minimize habitat disturbance by staying on designated trails.
- Do not use laser pointers.
- No drone photography.
- No restrooms on site. Closest restrooms are in the town of Melrose, 10 miles to the east.
- Take out what you bring in. There are no trash cans.

**Safety**

- Be aware - rattlesnake danger
- Watch for trip and fall hazards
- Falling tree branch danger : in case of high wind please avoid the area
- Fire danger - No smoking. Do not leave vehicles running

To learn about other outdoor recreation opportunities on state trust land, visit: [nmstatelands.org/open-for-adventure-2](http://nmstatelands.org/open-for-adventure-2)

This welcome sign was created by Chris Muselo of Sightworks

By Robert Munro

I'm writing with exciting news about Melrose Woods. With the addition of a Cape May Warbler (24 Oct John Parmeter and Raymond Van Buskirk), an amazing 45 species of parulids (Wood-Warblers) have been recorded there. According to the American Birding Association, this is the highest number seen at any single location in the United States!

Our collaborative conservation project between the agricultural lessee, the State Land Office, and the CNMAS (the business lessee) has been a great success and will continue to improve the site.

Accomplishments thus far include:

- A new interior perimeter fence that allows the agricultural lessee's cattle access to the cattle tank but excludes them from a majority of the important habitat.
- Newly cleared trails that give birders access while minimizing traffic on ground cover.
- A number of benches and chairs made from fallen cottonwoods.
- The planting of many new Cottonwood, Buffalo Berry, Golden Currant, Little Leaf Sumac, New Mexico Olive and Serviceberry trees and shrubs.



Phainopepla  
by Joe Schelling

## ... More 2020-2021 Chapter Highlights

continued from page 1

Jodhan Fine joined the board last fall to manage our social media sites, and in the spring we added six other new board members.

We were sorry to have John (Lefty) Arnold not able to continue as newsletter copy wrangler last fall. And we are grateful for Melissa Howard, who has been editing the articles and creating the layout for our Burrowing Owl since 2016.

Among all the changes and accomplishments for CNMAS in the last year, the return of our Thursday Birders (TB) weekly group walks might be the most anticipated and welcomed. It's been a long haul but thanks to former TB lead organizer Rebecca Gracey, new organizers Glenda Morling and Shannon Caruso and others, we now can pursue our passion for birding, together again, outside with the birds!

# Summer With the Thursday Birders

continued from page 1

We suggest that anyone who would like to act as a guide to a birding site on any date let us know as soon as possible. We hope these guides will know the current status of the site and the route to take for the walk. It will be a bonus if guides have scouted the area for potential bird sightings prior to the walk!

We will follow state and federal COVID-19 protocols. More details (including locations of the scheduled trips) will be sent to members and are on the Thursday Birder page of the CNMAS web site.



## TB Schedule Through July

### June 17

Alameda Open Space, 9:00 a.m. to noon

Difficulty level: 1.5 miles, flat with some uneven trails

Meet in the parking lot south of Alameda Blvd NW

### June 24

Oak Flat, 9:00 a.m. to noon

Difficulty level: 1.5 miles, slight incline with paved and uneven trails

Meet in west most parking lot

### July 1

Willow Creek Bosque Open Space, 9:00 a.m. to noon

Difficulty level: 1.5 miles, flat with some uneven trails

Meet in trailhead parking lot

### July 8

Ojito de San Antonio Open Space, 9:00 a.m. to noon

Difficulty level: 1.5 miles, slight incline with uneven trails

Meet in the parking lot behind the church. Please do not park in the church parking lot.

### July 15

Corrales Bosque, 9:00 a.m. to noon

Difficulty level: 1.5 miles, flat with some uneven trails

Meeting location to be announced.

### July 22

Simms' ranch and Bonnie Long's home, 9:45 a.m. to noon

Bonnie will meet us at 9:45 at the entrance to the Simms' ranch on NM 337, six miles south of Chilili, past mile marker 5. Please bring a sack lunch.

You must call Bonnie at (505) 379-1985 or e-mail her at [cantrade\\_1@yahoo.com](mailto:cantrade_1@yahoo.com) before July 19 if you plan on attending this event.

### July 29

Pueblo Montano Open Space, 9:00 a.m. to noon

Difficulty level: two miles, flat with some uneven trails

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

Please e-mail if you have questions about anything related to Thursday Birders.

Shannon Caruso: [birdpassion52@gmail.com](mailto:birdpassion52@gmail.com)

Glenda Morling: [glendamorling@gmail.com](mailto:glendamorling@gmail.com)



# #BigYearAtHome



## Another Citizen Science Opportunity

A note from Glenda Morling

Last December, I reached out to you with a crazy idea: an urban Big Year with a focus on people who had either discovered birding during the pandemic or were finding birding helped them get through it. The idea has evolved into something bigger, and it kicked off in late April: Big Year at Home.

Here is an abbreviated version of a letter from the acting chief of the Division of Migratory Birds, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Albuquerque.

By Kristin Madden

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with Partners in Flight, Klamath Bird Observatory and other partners to expand birdwatching and participation in bird conservation activities through the #Big Year at Home campaign. It is a participatory, community science challenge that aims to promote birdwatching to increase people’s awareness of bird conservation issues and actions.

The campaign will promote the Big Year as an engaging, friendly and collaborative challenge among urban communities. There will be a variety of outreach and educational opportunities including

bird-watching challenges, eBird checklist challenges and virtual presentations. Each month we will post challenges such as learning about, watching and identifying birds and learning about urban refuges and national wildlife refuges.

The challenges will appear in our web page feed at [partnersinflight.org/bigyearathome](https://partnersinflight.org/bigyearathome) and on Partners in Flight’s Facebook and Twitter pages:

[@partnersinflight](https://twitter.com/partnersinflight). Participants can respond on social media by using our hashtag #BigYearAtHome on posts, photos and comments or by sending a message through the contact form on the web page.

The community science component is taking place through eBird. Users will add the #BigYearAtHome hashtag to the notes section of checklists and/or share that checklist with the #BigYearAtHome eBird account. Learn more about eBird here: <https://ebird.org/about>.

Our goals include presenting a diversity of content while enhancing our collaborative relationships and amplifying our collective ability to encourage bird conservation action. You may join the network at:

<https://partnersinflight.org/bigyearathome-partners/>.

## Back When Looking for Birds Was Suspect

Reprinted from the December–January 1989 Burrowing Owl

### A Christmas Bird Count Long Ago

By EBirdman

December 27, 3:30 a.m., 1950-something

There were four of us in the car. The frost-covered windows were cracked open a little to let out the smoke from each of our habits. The hoot of the great horned owl we knew to be resident in the adjacent woods had not yet happened. These were the early days, when it was called bird-watching, and if it was mentioned at a social gathering that you did it, people moved to the other side of the room, furtively.

We were the CBC team, dedicated, unshaven, dressed in a polyglot of WWII surplus, binocs strung from our necks. Our appearance never occurred to me until the flashing blue light illuminated the inside of the station wagon. I scraped the frost off the inside of the little vent window to get a better view of the outside mirror, and there, silhouetted in the same flashing blue light, was the unmistakable shape of a rather large policeman. . . .

I lowered the window as his flashlight glared in, destroying our night vision for at least a half hour.

continued on page 5

# Birdathon Counters Record 361 Species

By Kathy Carson

Four teams and one individual submitted checklists for this year's Birdathon, a positive sign that folks are feeling more comfortable with group activities as vaccinations increase. The winning team Verdin is described at right.

The Black-throated Blue Warbler team of Shannon Caruso, Doris Eng, Tim Wallace and Christine Clayton were a close second, seeing 86 species in Bosque del Apache, Water Canyon and surrounding areas.

Barbara Hussey and Judy Liddell birded Bosque del Apache and Socorro County and saw 70 species.

The Thundering Titmice (Lannois Neely, Sara Jayne Cole and Leah Henzler) saw 67 species.

Bonnie Long compiled a checklist of 45 species from around her home, Manzano village, Quarai National Monument, Estancia and Lake Roberts.

Congratulations to each of our Birdathon participants! Members of the winning team will receive a book that was included in the ABA's list of best bird books of 2020.

Remember that the purpose of the Birdathon is to raise money, so if you haven't already, please make your donation on the web site home page or mail a check to CNMAS, P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque, NM 87190-0002. This year the Birdathon is supporting Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area.



Sanderling  
By Joe Schelling

Team Verdin, composed of Joe Schelling and Rebecca Gracey, completed 24 hours of birding May 7 on the route that Rebecca had planned for the Thursday Birders Birdathon in 2020, which was canceled because of the pandemic.

The first stop was Animas Creek near Caballo Lake where they saw the unusual Bridled Titmouse, Verdin, Acorn Woodpecker and Brown-crested Flycatcher, and heard a Bell's Vireo. Other stops were Percha and Caballo Campgrounds, Elephant Butte Lake, Mims Lake and Paseo del Rio Campground.

Mims is an oxbow lake of the Rio Grande, and there they saw ducks, herons, egrets, stilts, avocets and ibis. The most unusual birds at Elephant Butte were a Sanderling and a Franklin's Gull. They added species at each stop and ended up with 93.

## ... More About Suspect Birders

continued from page 4

"Is there a problem here?"

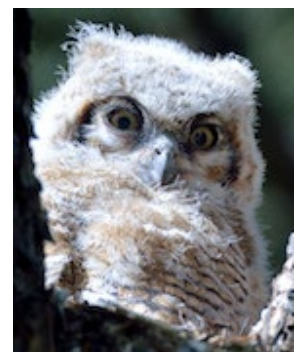
"No, officer, we're bird-watchers. We're looking for an owl."

He backed up a little, signaled his partner to the other side of our car, pulled out his revolver and said, "Yeah! Well, you bird-watchers come out of that car, one at a time, and keep your hands where we can see them."

After an hour of being searched, having our identification scrutinized, the car registration checked, and determining that none of us had outstanding warrants, we were reluctantly allowed go about our

business. We were admonished, however, to take our bird-watching elsewhere.

That night, we sat around a table with the other dedicated and unshaven, creating the record of the count. Our chair-person intoned each species and we each responded with our counts. When he reached "Great horned owls?" there was absolute silence in the room.



Great Horned Owl  
By Joe Schelling

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# Chapter President Looks Back

By Sara Jayne Cole

The May–June Burrowing Owl from 1981 has an article headlined “A Brief History of Central New Mexico Audubon Society” by Barbara Hussey. I called Barbara to see if I could learn more about the article and her first year as president—first because she served a second term in 1982 .

**Q:** Barbara, could you tell me about the Regional Conference that was held in June of 1980?

**A:** CNMAS co-sponsored, with the Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society, the Southwest Regional Audubon Conference at Ghost Ranch near Abiquiu. Back then Audubon structure was different. They had combined Texas, New Mexico and Louisiana with the headquarters in Texas. The three-day conference was attended by over 200 Audubon members from all three states.

As a parent I wanted the conference to be “family friendly.” Our chapter had called for children’s programs during the event, so teachers from CNMAS developed a children’s curriculum. There was even child care at the conference, which was very important to me because my daughter was 3. As it turned out the efforts by teachers and volunteers from CNMAS may have helped convince National Audubon to expand their youth programs at the national convention.



**Q:** Could you talk about how birding and birders have changed since 1980?

**A:** What has not changed is how wonderful and friendly birders are. We all complain that Thursday Birders has grown so large but we just love being together and helping each other see the birds.

Something that has changed: back then New Mexico was a lot wetter and we had a real monsoon season that made birding different.

In the early years, groups like Audubon and Sierra Club spent a lot of time and energy on the Alaska Land Act, trying to preserve the last really wild place. That has not changed either, we are still fighting for the Alaska Wilderness.

**Q:** If it is O.K. with you, I would like to quote your final comment from the Burrowing Owl article.

**A:** What did it say?

**Q:** Let me read it to you. “Now in our tenth year, we begin celebrating our past achievements and look forward to the future. There is still a great deal of work ahead for the Central New Mexico Audubon Society—to complement, on a local basis, the work of the National Audubon Society. As those of us who started interested only in watching birds have discovered, we cannot ignore our environment. CNMAS must continue to do all it can to see that New Mexico and the rest of the world remains a place where all species can co-exist.”

**A:** Yes, that is apropos to today, isn’t it?

## More Tenth-Anniversary Highlights

- Governor Bruce King declared April 1981 National Audubon Society Month.
- The annual meeting featured a potluck dinner and a talk by Dr. John Hubbard, ornithologist for the state Game and Fish Department.
- 1981 was also the tenth anniversary of the chapter’s co-sponsorship of the Audubon Wildlife Film Series. Proceeds funded a scholarship for the Audubon Ecology Camp for youth.
- That year the chapter was among the volunteer organizations that adopted hiking trails for the Forest Service program in the Sandias.
- President Barbara Hussey’s “Brief History” also noted that CNMAS had been the principal plaintiff in a federal court suit against the Bureau of Reclamation’s plan to clear riparian vegetation in the Caballo and Elephant Butte areas. The result was institution of public hearings and new management plans that reduced the amount of land proposed for clearing.

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# CNMAS Highlights 1980—1990

## Newsletter Archive Online for Half-Century Celebration

By Sara Jayne Cole

The CNMAS Board wanted to commemorate the chapter's 50th-anniversary milestone in a special way. To do this during the Covid-19 restrictions led us to think digital. CNMAS meetings are now on Zoom and the newsletter is digital, so why not share our history by scanning the early Burrowing Owl newsletters?

Beth Hurst-Waitz (president 1998–2013) had archived a collection of newsletters from 1971

forward to the digital present. Marj Longenbaugh (CNMAS membership chair) took on the huge project of scanning the printed pages. Halfway through Marj bought a new scanner because some years of newsletters had used legal-size paper. She was so impressed with the resolution of the new scanner that she started over.

Joe Schelling (CNMAS webmaster) has modified the newsletter page on our web site to show a link to the current newsletter and a link to the archive page.



## BURROWING OWL

The six- to eight-page newsletter was printed and mailed every two months. For many issues Beth Hurst was credited for typing and PNM for typography.

Some meetings were held at members' homes, often with potluck suppers. Meetings featured reports on speakers and films, previous outings, bird counts (including spring hawk counts in the Sandias led by Steve Hoffman and Jim Daly, "in which a fairly strenuous hike is involved") and news of local and national concerns and causes. The best-read section was probably the list of upcoming field trips.

Many members of the then-Albuquerque chapter were also active in New Mexico Audubon Council and the Audubon Southwest Region.

"Ross's Ravin's" was a long-running column on by Ross Teuber on topics related to birds.

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## From the Burrowing Owl:

1980

"Presently the California Condor Recovery Program is at a halt due to the tragic death of a nestling during handling by a researcher last June."

1982

Chapter President Kay Anderson wished more members would volunteer: "So often the remark 'Somebody should . . .' is heard. We need more somebodies!"

1983

Seven condors were in captivity in California; one egg had hatched and another was on the way. The rescuers only took eggs or chicks that were "in trouble" and might be lost.

Ross Teuber saw four adult Golden Eagles between Bosque del Apache and Las Cruces.

1984

Seven Whooping Cranes were seen at Bosque del Apache in February, and in November a member of the National Whooping Crane Project counted 19 between Belen and the refuge.

continued on page 8

# ... More Notes from the Burrowing Owl in the 1980s

continued from page 7

Also in 1984: Chapter President Vic Brown urged members to write to public officials to protest the planned building of a steel mill near Bosque del Apache.

1985

George and Evelyn Price were honored for five years as editors of the Burrowing Owl.

Joann Philips invited members to her 11-acre Shady Lakes in the North Valley for a half-day of “leisured birding.”

Dale Stahlecker asked Valley residents to count Sandhill and Whooping Cranes flying overhead from morning until early afternoon.

The chapter was helping raise money to establish an endowment for the 400-acre Corrales Bosque Preserve.

1986

A year-end report noted that the newsletter was being mailed to 1,000 members and that the chapter “introduced Audubon Adventures and gave bird talks in 11 classrooms in the APS system.”

1987

An unnamed author suggested that members write to Senator Pete Domenici to thank him for helping to pass the “improved” Clean Water Act over a presidential veto.

## Chapter Presidents

1980 Dustin Huntington, Barbara Hussey

1981 Kay Anderson

1982 Barbara Hussey, Kay Anderson

1983 John V. Brown

1985 Marge Carrick

1987 Donna and David Broudy

1990 Donna Broudy

1988

Members met in Water Canyon to participate in Jim Black’s bird census in the Magdalena Mountains.

On the 20th anniversary of the chapter’s spring bird count the total number of species stood at 256.

1989

A Burrowing Owl columnist noted the passing of Steve Reynolds, who had served as state engineer for 35 years. His “water policy has served well the interests of agriculture, municipalities and industry,” the column continued, but “fish, wildlife and recreational values have not been recognized.

“The time has come to change our laws and thinking: New Mexico needs strong incentives to conserve water and to maintain instream-flow adequate for wildlife.”

## Christmas Count Leaders

Sandia Mountains

Mary Lou Arthur, 1980

Kay Anderson, 1982–1987

Bosque del Apache

Chuck Hundertmark, 1980–1986

Steve Cox, 1987–1989

Albuquerque

Jim Karo, 1980–1984

Hart Schwartz, 1985–1989



Black-crowned Night Heron  
By Joe Schelling



# 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 . . . . .	Perriane Houghton <a href="mailto:cnmaspresident@gmail.com">cnmaspresident@gmail.com</a>
Vice President . . . . .	vacant
Treasurer . . . . .	Lee Hopwood
Recording Secretary . . . . .	Jamie Welles
Education . . . . .	vacant
Membership . . . . .	Marj Longenbaugh <a href="mailto:centralnmaudubon@peoplepc.com">centralnmaudubon@peoplepc.com</a>
Bird-safe Building Coordinator . . . . .	vacant
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