November 2023 Updates

This Month's Features

- About the Climate Team
- An Effort to Promote Environmental Justice for the South Valley
- Save the Birds from Excessive Light
- The importance of eBird
- Sandia Crest Recreation Complex Renovation Project
- Have you joined the Audubon chapter?
- Photo(s) of the Month
- What is this bird?

Thursday Birders

November 2nd
Mariposa Basin Park – 8:30AM – 11AM

November 9th
Copper Trailhead Open Space – 9:00AM – 11:30AM

November 16th
Los Poblanos Open Space – 8:55AM – 12 noon

November 23rd
THANKSGIVING NO BIRD WALK!

November 30th
Paseo del Bosque Trail: Alameda Trailhead – 8:30AM – 11:00AM

BE SURE TO CHECK THE WEBSITE AS SCHEDULES CAN CHANGE
http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org/trips/thursday-birders/
The Climate Team is a new CNMAS project created to raise awareness of climate change and environmental threats and to engage in actions to address these issues.

We are aligning our project with national Audubon climate action and conservation guidelines, generating ideas for climate resilience in Albuquerque and surrounding areas, and collaborating with other organizations that share our environmental values.

It is rewarding to work with others on challenges like these. We’re now in the process of forming groups for specific issues and projects. If you’d like to join your CNMAS friends in this new effort, contact dana@cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org

Driving south out of Albuquerque, it’s hard to overlook the industrial eyesore just west of I-25, a stretch of storage tanks and concrete junk that seems to go on and on. It borders the Rio Grande, which is so vital to not only diverse wildlife but also for its positive impact on people. South Valley neighborhoods, once green and quiet, are home to polluting industries such as asphalt plants, a sewage treatment plant, auto salvage yards, and a Superfund site. All day big trucks rumble in and out, adding to the noise and poor air quality.

Lack of oversight and a regulatory system that permitted polluting industries have advanced environmental and social injustice in this neighborhood for years, and residents of the Mountain View neighborhood and the Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge have organized to improve this negative situation. Represented by the New Mexico Environmental Law Center, these concerned parties have proposed the Health, Environment & Equity Impacts (HEEI) regulation, which would allow the City of Albuquerque Environmental Health Department and the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Air Quality Control Board to deny air pollution permits to facilities proposed in communities, such as the South Valley, that already are overburdened by air pollution.

Central New Mexico Audubon Society supports the HEEI proposal, which is good for humans and also for birds. We encourage the Albuquerque- Bernalillo County Air Quality Control Board to help create conditions in which the air and water are clean throughout the county and to fully support the proposed HEEI Regulation. A hearing is scheduled for December 4-8 at the Albuquerque Convention Center.
**Save the Birds from Excessive Light**  
--CNMAS Climate Team

It's almost funny, the idea of a giant, electric tumbleweed glowing in the dark as part of Albuquerque's developing new Rail Trail plan. But when you think about the proposed tumbleweed, the invasive plant that chokes habitats, feeds wildfire, and is involved in traffic collisions, you might question why the City of Albuquerque is choosing to glorify it. The city calls tumbleweeds "native plants" and "fantastic creations that lay down firm roots, keeping moisture in the soil for grasses." Not true! They're a wild west stereotype, they aren't native, and they compete for moisture like any other plant.

And what about the birds? How much artificial light will the giant electric tumbleweed add to an already glowing sky? Flying across the skies at night, birds are disoriented by bright lights, which cause them to crash into buildings and other structures at alarming rates, especially during migration, when thousands are soaring overhead, all night long.

We hope the Rail Trail's plans will include protection for birds along its seven-mile circle, including the tumbleweed stretch. We hope the lights will be dim and shielded, without excessive glow. CNMAS has contacted the city with our concerns and is collaborating with the newly formed chapter of DarkSky International in New Mexico to monitor the plan and demand that it consider the needs of insects, trees, and people, and that it be safe for birds.

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**The Importance of eBird**

Birders, inexperienced or experienced, can play a vital role in scientific research and conservation efforts by contributing their observations to eBird from Cornell. Every sighting matters, and your data can help researchers understand and protect bird populations globally. Watch how your growing life list can be a powerful tool for conservation and study:  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKh9L6hjdlM

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**Calendar**

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<th>Nov 4th</th>
<th>November 9th</th>
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<td>10:30am- 12pm (noon)</td>
<td>7:00pm - 8:30pm</td>
<td>9:00am to 5:00pm</td>
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<td>Rio Grande Nature Center State Park</td>
<td>Bernalillo County Co-Op Extension Office and on ZOOM</td>
<td>Open Space Visitor Center</td>
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<td>The Language of Birds! talk by Nathan Pieplow, the author of the Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds.</td>
<td>Dr. Megan Friggens, of the U.S. Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station, will be discussing climate change in the Southwest and its recent responses and future impacts for bird populations.</td>
<td>Come join us for a FREE community event as we celebrate the return of the Sandhill Cranes!</td>
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Sandia Crest Recreation Complex Renovation Project
By Robert Munro

The Central New Mexico Audubon Society has expressed its concerns and recommendations in response to the proposed Sandia Crest Recreation Complex Renovation Project, linked below. In our official comments, addressed to Recreation Staff Officer Julie Padilla, we highlight the potential disruption of high-elevation specialist bird species during the nesting season due to the project’s nature. We strongly urge the implementation of mitigation measures to protect nesting bird populations. Our concerns encompass the scale and timing of the project, compliance with environmental regulations, the potential impact of ground disturbance, alignment with the Dark Sky’s initiative, and the opportunity for partnership with organizations like Rio Grande Bird Research to enhance mitigation strategies. We emphasize the importance of responsible development and the preservation of the region's natural environment and its inhabitants.

https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=61358

Have you joined our Audubon chapter?
A message from CNMAS President, Glenda Morling

If you have not yet joined us, please consider doing so – we need you and, more importantly, our birds need you too! It is easy to join: go to the About Us page of the CNMAS website, or click on the National Audubon Society membership link, https://act.audubon.org/onlineactions/DH8fxTkoC0qHjXF9fZCtRw2 and choose Central New Mexico Audubon Society under the Chapter Donation Designation dropdown box.

If you join our local chapter, we can track how many people in our region are NAS members and use this data in news articles and letters to officials and other organizations to show the amount of support that we have!

In addition, when you designate Central New Mexico as your local chapter, your name and contact information is added to our secure roster so we can send you important local updates, such as the Burrowing Owl quarterly newsletter, the new Monthly Updates news bulletin and action alerts from NAS that are most relevant to central New Mexico.

By the way, we do not receive your membership dues: these go directly to NAS who send us the same annual donation out of their coffers each year irrespective of our membership numbers. So if you want to make a donation directly to our chapter, please use the donation area on the CNMAS website on the home page. https://donorbox.org/donate-to-central-new-mexico-audubon-society-1
If you have any questions, contact us through this link or on the CNMAS website: https://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org/

Thank you!
Members' Photos of the Month

This Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, normally found in the southeastern US, was fishing from the edge of the South Pond in the Tingley Bosque in mid-October 2023, providing a rare opportunity for Albuquerque birders and photographers. Photo By: Deanna Nichols

Calling CNMAS Photographers

We would love to show off your bird photos!

For the "December Update" we want to see your pictures of Sandhill Cranes, American Pipits, Pinyon Jays OR any rare/stray birds like the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron that showed up at Tingley Beach.

Email your photos to Jordan Graham- thisnomadiclife@gmail.com
PLEASE PUT "CNMAS DEC PHOTO - 'YOUR NAME'" as the header/subject!

*not all pictures can be posted. I might have to do some minor cropping for formatting and layout. By sending us your pictures you give the Central New Mexico Audubon Society permission to use said photos with credit in their newsletters and on their website.
What is this bird?

Are you new to birding? Here are two sparrows to look out for this winter in our region and a couple details that will help you tell your little feathered friends apart.

This month we're looking at the White-throated Sparrows vs White-crowned Sparrows

White-throated

- Adults: They have a white throat and a yellow spot between the eye and the bill (called a lores).

- Crown: White stripes on the head, which are less prominent than those of the White-crowned Sparrow.

- Body: Grayish-brown overall with subtle streaks on the underparts.

- Breast: A noticeable white patch on the throat and upper breast.

- Bill: Pinkish or yellowish.

[Link to Audubon Field Guide]

White-crowned

- Adults: They have distinct white stripes on the crown (top of the head), which is one of their most prominent features.

- Throat: Usually gray or pale, lacking the prominent white throat patch found in White-throated Sparrows.

- Body: Grayish-brown with prominent black and white stripes on the head, especially the crown.

- Bill: Usually pink or orange.

[Link to Audubon Field Guide]

Did you know?

Geese are believed to be the first domesticated bird. Scientists believe that geese might have been domesticated almost 2000 years before chickens.