



June 2024 Update

This Month's Features

- ✦ Farewell and Thanks
 - ✦ The Bird Alliance Mural Project
 - ✦ A New Backyard Refuge
 - ✦ Water Report: PFAS
 - ✦ VOTE FOR BIRDS
 - ✦ BIG Thanks for a BIG check
 - ✦ Museum of SW Biology Tour
 - ✦ Candelaria Nature Preserve
 - ✦ Hello Muda. Hello Fada
 - ✦ A Visit to Whitfield
-

Thursday Birders

June 6th

Feltz Family Cabin - Jemez Mountains

7:00am-3:00pm

Leader: Self Guided

June 13th

Water Canyon

7:00am-3:00pm

Leaders: Susan and Jim Hunter

June 20th

Sandia Crest

8:00am-11:00am

Leader: George Perry

June 27th

Angostura/ Algodones Diversion Dam

8:00am-11:00am

Leader: Brian Anderson

Please Check

<https://www.bacnm.org/thursday-birders/>

For last minute change and updates

Calendar

June 1st

Bird Alliance Annual Meeting

Doc Long Picnic Area

7562 Sandia Crest Rd, Cedar Crest, NM 87008

11:00am - 12:30pm

Please join us to hear updates of our chapter activities over the past year and to provide your insights into where we should go next! We will discuss our conservation work and community outreach, our progress in support of the National Audubon Society's Flight Plan, chapter management and leadership, and much more. We will also honor the contributions of our volunteers and provide opportunities for anyone interested in pitching in to help us fulfill our mission and goals. Snacks and beverages will be provided. Everyone is welcome!

June 4th

Counting Albatrosses

Sandia Ranger Station

7:00pm

Please plan to join The Friends of the Sandia Mountains on June 4 to hear FOSM member Pauline Ho tell us about counting albatrosses on Midway Island. Complete details and information on page 7!

June 4th

GO VOTE

<https://www.berncoclerk.gov/elections/election-day-voting/>

<https://www.bacnm.org/calendar/>



Farewell and Many Thanks

By Laura Banks

Ohio's gain is our loss. Glenda Morling and her husband, Jim, are headed east to relocate to the Cleveland area. This move will bring them closer to their children and grandchildren for many happy years to come. Glenda, a lifelong birder, has served as a birding and conservation leader in New Mexico since 2019. She helped lead Thursday Birders for several years and has served as the President of the Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico since 2023. Her commitment to conserving the birds she loves has been instrumental in guiding us in exciting new directions. She will be greatly missed, but we will enjoy the thought of her and Jim birding their way through Magee Marsh and along the shores of Lake Erie, with grandkids in tow.



The Bird Alliance Mural Project

From the Climate and Conservation Committee

It seems that each week brings stark new revelations about bird loss. Fewer birds seen on bird walks. Diminished bird song in field reports. *Three billion fewer birds in North America than in 1970. Cornell Lab researchers note that this staggering loss suggests "the very fabric of North America's biodiversity is unraveling."*



The Bird Alliance seeks to call attention to this crisis through its newest outreach: the Audubon Mural Project (audubon.org/amp), a public-art initiative of the National Audubon Society that draws attention to birds threatened by climate change.

Last fall, the Climate and Conservation Committee contacted the National Audubon Society to learn more about the mural project. Since then, National Audubon has offered generous advice and support as we worked to bring the project to New Mexico.

Encouragement came through meetings with the Albuquerque Public Art program and a new Bird Alliance partnership with the ABQ BioPark, which we identified as a possible site for the murals. We submitted a proposal to the City, and in mid-May, the Albuquerque Arts Board formed an Art Selection Committee to develop a call for artists, which should be released in late June after the Arts Board sends its approval of recommendation to the Mayor.

If all goes well, the project will receive final approval from the City this summer, and the first three murals could be completed this fall in the ABQ BioPark Zoo. The murals will be registered with the National Audubon Society online mural site along with information about the birds and how they are threatened. Thousands of visitors will see the murals at the zoo. BioPark volunteers, staff educators and animal care teams can use them as a springboard for conversations about the ways to help both wildlife and planet.

Birds selected for this project will be those familiar to New Mexico and chosen from the National Audubon science report *Survival by Degrees* (<https://www.audubon.org/climate/survivalbydegrees>), which documents birds facing extinction from climate change.

The Audubon Mural Project is an investment not only in Albuquerque aesthetics and education, but also in bird survival, natural habitat, and offers a sense of what the city represents. Without wider recognition of the problem and subsequent action, large numbers of birds almost certainly will vanish. Some will fly to new locations; some will become extinct. Through art, people can better understand what the world stands to lose and help to alter that trajectory.





A New Backyard Refuge

By Christine Clayton

I just recently received my ABQ Backyard Refuge certification! I have been interested in the process for a long time and it felt like the perfect match for me. I have enjoyed selecting native plants that would attract wildlife, especially birds and pollinators, while also implementing practices that provide shelter and cover.

I have had a lot of fun experiences, like watching a Chipping Sparrow take a shower in one of my drip sprinklers, a lizard taking up residence in an old tree branch brought back from a camping trip, a hummingbird visiting a recently planted columbine, a tanager and a grosbeak having a faceoff at the birdbath (the grosbeak prevailed), a monarch butterfly spending five hours on a mistflower, and an oriole eating jelly and an orange at the feeder. I have been amazed at the kinds and numbers of birds seen in my yard this spring here in the middle of the Northeast Heights. I've spotted a Bullock's Oriole, Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak, Hermit Thrush, Chipping Sparrow, Wilson's Warbler, and Spotted Towhee. My plants and feeders are very attractive to them, but I also know that my own yard alone is not responsible for this increase. My yard has become part of the "mosaic of habitat patches" that allow wildlife to survive here and to move through the city during their migrations.



Photo By Christine Clayton

I am grateful to my fellow Albuquerqueans, who help create this mosaic and I encourage everyone to check out the ABQ Backyard Refuge's website for a lot of great information on the kinds of things to do in your own yard. It's a lot of fun and very rewarding. I hope having the sign in my yard will bring attention to this wonderful program.



Photo By Christine Clayton

If you are interested in providing a refuge for birds, native plants, insects, and wildlife, and would like more help, Bird Alliance can help: the Bird Alliance ABQ Backyard Refuge Support Project has volunteers who provide guidance and advice on preparing your yard, and implementing best practices for birds, wildlife, and plants. Contact us at backyardrefuges@gmail.com



FRIENDS OF
VALLE DE ORO
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

<https://friendsofvalledeoro.org/abq-backyard-refuge/>

eBird

<https://ebird.org/about/ebird-mobile/>

Transform your bird sightings into science and conservation.



Bird Alliance Needs Your Help!

It takes a flock of volunteers to run our chapter and keep the community engaged. If you would like to contribute to our mission to protect and enjoy birds [Contact Us](#)

- Participate in conservation and political efforts
- Help with public outreach and education
- Guide bird walks and participate in national bird counts
- Join fundraising events



WATER REPORT: PFAS

By George Perry, Climate and Conservation Comitee

We are getting closer to the November elections. Your vote is important. As you probably already know, Central New Mexico faces considerable issues regarding our local water sources. We have two sources of water: surface and ground water. Surface water nearby is primarily from the Rio Grande river. Ground water comes from nearby subterranean aquifers. You may not know that these two sources are inextricably connected. This means that the level of the river is directly connected to the level of water in the aquifer. The aquifers flow into the river when their higher levels allow them to do so.



The river can get quite low starting in the late summer and remain so until we receive a lot of rain, or spring water from snow melt in the northern mountains of New Mexico and Colorado. We are highly dependent on the aquifers for supplying our water. Importantly, not only are we as humans affected by water levels and quality but so are the birds, other wildlife and plants that share this critical resource with us.

While our current filtration methods are very good, they leave out some important recognized contaminants, namely PFAS. What are they? A few details.

Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of synthetic chemicals that have been used for a large number of purposes since the 1950s.

PFAS have been used in food packaging, cleaning products, stain resistant carpet treatments, nonstick cookware and firefighting foam, among other products. Due to the widespread use of PFAS and the fact that they bioaccumulate, they are found in the bodies of people and animals all over the world, as well as in ground and surface water.

What is being done?

On June 15, 2022, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released four interim drinking water health advisories for PFAS. As of this writing our local water filtration systems are not required to filter these contaminants and federal EPA guidelines have not required them to do so. Thus they meet current federal regulations. These regulations are currently being revised to include these PFAS as contaminants. Here is a link to the details about PFAS and the latest proposed changes to those regulations.

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-announces-new-steps-protect-communities-pfas-and-other>

So progress on this issue is possible.

Please consider your votes this fall as our water quality may depend on it.

VOTE FOR BIRDS

From the Climate and Conservation Comitee



The 2024 elections are crucial and every vote matters. This may be the most consequential election year ever. If you missed early voting, please remember to cast your ballot on **JUNE 4**, election day.

A high voter turnout signals to those seeking election that voters are paying attention and take the democratic process seriously. The primary elections will not only select nominees for President, Senators, and Representatives, but also for County Commissioners. County Commissioners and other elected officials have significant power to improve or degrade the lives of birds and the places they need.

Protecting birds from the myriad threats they face each day is vital and possible. What's the best way to do that? Nominate and elect candidates who will protect them.

**BIG Thanks for a BIG Check**

By Laura Banks

The Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico was nominated by our member, Lisa Scherlacher, to receive a \$500 donation from ERA Cares. We would like to express our appreciation to Lisa and to Laura Garner, owner and broker for ERA Summit Real Estate, for their generosity and the warm welcome we received when we visited their office. We hope to have more fun with all of the staff of ERA Summit, including some birding! Thank you!!

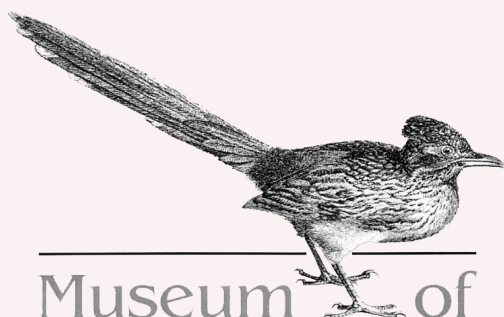


Photo By Sash Sanchez

**Audubon**

Join the Nation Audubon
Society Today

<https://act.audubon.org/onlineactions/DE8fCTkoC0qEgXF9MZ0tRw2>



Museum of Southwestern Biology

Museum of Southwestern Biology Tour

By Glenda Morling

The Bird Alliance got a chance to visit the Museum of Southwestern Biology at the University of New Mexico on May 9th. The museum is a research and teaching facility in the Department of Biology at the university. The museum's Division of Birds maintains a research collection of over 40,000 birds. The event was part of Bird Alliance's monthly education program series.

Dr Chris Witt, Professor of Biology, and Director & Curator of Birds at the museum, provided attendees with an overview of the museum and its work. Then our group walked through the research facility, and viewed a wide

sample of the bird specimens that are used by students in their research. Several students were present with demonstration exhibits. They treated us to an overview of their fascinating research projects. The student researchers included Dr Ethan Gyllenhaal, who has just obtained his PhD. He explained his research into the evolution and speciation of birds that inhabit a group of South Pacific Islands. David Tan, a PhD student due to graduate next year, shared his research into bird collisions in a city in Asia.

It was energizing and inspiring to listen to these and other research students describe their work, and to learn that there are many young people who have such expertise in and passion for birds, their evolution, and their future. Bird Alliance hopes to visit the museum again, and to learn more about the important research taking place in the Department of Biology.

For more information on UNM Department of Biology research into bird life, habitat and behavior, read about this exciting discovery:

<https://news.unm.edu/news/how-miniature-backpacks-led-to-the-discovery-of-the-worlds-largest-hummingbird-species>



Photo: Loi Nguyen/ Audubon Photography Awards

Did you know?

The plumage of the Tundra Swan contains more than 25,000 feathers, more than any other species of bird.



A Test That's Actually Fun

By Laura Banks

Please consider participating in a short, anonymous study to help researchers from the University of Toronto understand how knowledge of birds shapes our perception. Dr. Erik Wing (yes, that's really his name) has invited our members to complete a series of computer-based image recognition tasks as part of his latest study. Participation will take about 15-20 minutes. Please go to their website to learn more:

<http://www.birdingstudies.com/>

Thursday Birders - Candelaria Nature Preserve

By Glenda Morling



Photo By Cheryl Burns
Fledgling Eastern Bluebird

Thursday Birders visited Candelaria Nature Preserve (CNP), on May 2nd. The preserve is open by request only. Jo Strange, Open Space biologist, guided our walk and explained the development of the preserve, as well as plans for its future. The 167-acre CNP property has been owned by the City since 1978, when they purchased the land to create a nature study and preserve area. An updated plan was developed for the area two years ago. Work is now being carried out to ensure the CNP provides a sustainable habitat for wildlife, including planting native trees and grasses, and clearing invasive species. Prior to this new plan, part of the

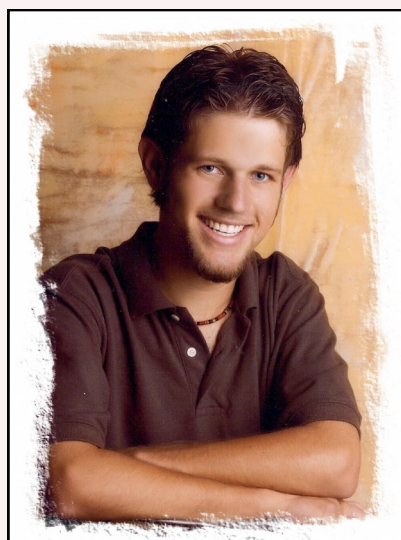
land was used for farming. It consists of open fields lined by shade trees; this terrain, as well as the neighboring Rio Grande Nature Center ponds, provides great opportunities for birding, and our large group of birders recorded 45 species during our visit!

Although all the sightings were much enjoyed, highlights included a female Vermillion Flycatcher, a Great Egret, a Spotted Sandpiper, fledgling Eastern Bluebirds, Lark Sparrows, a Yellow Warbler, and a Summer Tanager.

We are grateful to the City Open Space for their partnership, which allows us to enjoy Thursday Birder and weekend bird walks at the CNP.



Photo By George Perry
Yellow Warbler



Hello Muda. Hello Fada.

By Laura Banks

Did you know that the Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico offers scholarships for youth camps? Well, we do! If you know of a young person between the ages of 6 and 20 who has their heart set on a camp, program or course to learn about birds, wildlife or conservation, please point them to the information about the [Ryan D. Beaulieu Youth Memorial Scholarship](https://www.bacnm.org/join-donate/) on our website. They'll be glad you did!



Support Programs Like This
Join or donate to Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico
TODAY

<https://www.bacnm.org/join-donate/>





A Visit to Whitfield and a Presentation by Laura McCann

By Glenda Morling

Laura McCann, Education Program Manager at Whitfield Conservation Area, guided us around the extended property at Whitfield on May 9th. We were thrilled to find that there is now a footbridge across the acequia that provides access to an excellent and open view of the Rio Grande River.

Across the bridge, Laura helped us spot and listen to a Black Hawk perched in a cottonwood by the river. She also located its mate, sitting in a precariously balanced nest, on the branch of a neighboring tree. The group enjoyed this unusual sighting, as well as many others, including the recently named Western Flycatcher, the sights and sounds of Yellow-breasted Chats, Ash-throated Flycatchers, Western Kingbirds, several varieties of swallows, and a stunningly bright Indigo Bunting.



New Footbridge to the Rio Grande
Photo By: Glenda Morling

After the bird walk, Laura gave a presentation about her rescue work as the creator and director of New Mexico Raptors. Laura introduced us to a Great Horned Owl, with a damaged eye, as well as a Turkey Vulture with a damaged wing. Neither of these birds would survive in the wild and, are safe and well, thanks to Laura's care.



Black Hawk
Photo By: Cheryl Burns



Spotted Sandpiper
Photo By: Cheryl Burns



Rescued Great Horned Owl
Photo By: Cheryl Burns

Counting Albatrosses

Midway Island has an interesting combination of military artifacts and wildlife. We spent Dec 2022 and part of Jan 2023 on Midway Island as volunteers for the annual Albatross Census. Midway is a very important nesting site for albatrosses; the annual counts provide long-term population data for these birds. A team of 12 people walks transects on the island(s) to count all the Laysan and Black-footed Albatross nests. Each nest with an egg represents two adult birds, plus there are juvenile birds hanging around practicing their mating dances. This adds up to well over a million birds on a 2.4 square mile island.

Speaker Pauline Ho is a physical chemist by training who retired from Sandia National Labs in November 2011. She now spends her time traveling, hiking and camping with her husband, Rick Buss, who retired from Sandia 4 years before she did.

You can find out more and join Friends of Sandia Mountains (FOSM) here.

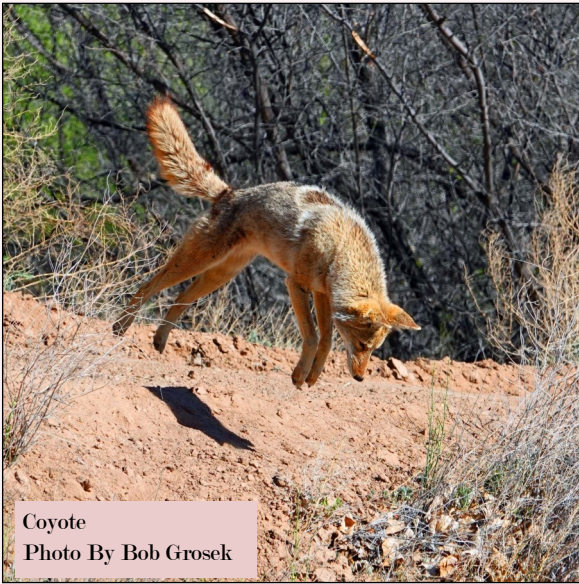
<https://friendsofthesandias.org/>



FOSM Member Pauline Ho



Members' Photos of the Month



Coyote
Photo By Bob Grosek



Great Horned Owls
Photo By Nancy Schutt



Loggerhead Shrike
Photo By Nancy Schutt



Lark Sparrow
Photo By George Perry

We would love to show off your bird photos!

For the "July Update" we want to see your pictures of HUMMINGBIRDS!

OR a bird photo you have recently taken that you would love to share.

You can submit your photos [HERE](#) or email your photos to Jordan Graham- thisnomadiclife@gmail.com

PLEASE PUT "BACNM JULY PHOTO - 'YOUR NAME'" as the header/ subject!

Please submit all photos by June 21st

*not all pictures can be posted. I might have to do some 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.