



May 2024 Update

This Month's Features

- ✦ Sunflowers in Albuquerque
 - ✦ Legislation Signed Into Law!
 - ✦ World Migratory Bird Day
 - ✦ Skybound Shinobi
 - ✦ Collaboration for Bosque Restoration
-

Thursday Birders

May 2nd

Candelaria Nature Preserve

8:30am-11:00am

Leader: Glenda Morling

May 9th

Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area

8:30am-12noon

Leader: Laura McCann, Education Director

May 16th

Cienega Canyon

8:00am-11:00am

Leader: Perrienne Houghton

May 23rd

Rio Grande Valley SP Riverview and Canopy Loop

8:00am-11:00am

Leader: Brian Anderson

May 30th

Romero Road – Corrales

8:00am-11:00am

Leaders: Susan and Jim Hunter

Please Check

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

For last minute change and updates

Calendar

May 9th

Museum of Southwestern Biology Tour

Meet at 2401 Redondo Drive

4:00-5:30am or 5:30-7:00pm

Registration required. See specific details on page 4!

May 11th

World Migratory Bird Day!

Botanic Garden 2601 Central Ave NW

10:00am-2:00pm

Complete details and information on page 3!

May 11th-12th

Garden Festival and Plant Sale

Rio Grande Nature Center

8:30am-3:00pm

Sponsored by the Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center. Cash sales only. Plants provided by Plants of the Southwest, a local plant nursery and seed store. Plant Sale includes: basil, rosemary, sage, oregano, mint, parsley, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and mixed wildflowers. Day-Use Fee: Cost \$3.00 per vehicle (exact cash or check) Friends of the RGNC permit holders and NM State Parks annual permit holders enter free with valid permit displayed. For more event info, please see our website [rgnc.org](https://www.rgnc.org)

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



Why I love sunflowers in Albuquerque

By Elliott Gordon

The genus *Helianthus* (family Asteraceae) may be the most recognizable flower on Earth. These cheery, yellow flowers are a symbol of sunny summer days. Just looking at pictures of them makes me feel happier.



In New Mexico, there are 11 species of *Helianthus* recognized by *Flora Neomexicana* (Kelly Allred, 2024). Two species – *Helianthus annuus* (common sunflower) and *Helianthus petiolaris* (prairie sunflower) – are found in the majority of counties and habitat types. In fact, *H. petiolaris* is known from 41 states and 4 Canadian provinces, making it one of the most successful plants on the continent. It should be no surprise that it's also one of the most beneficial pollinator plants you can grow.



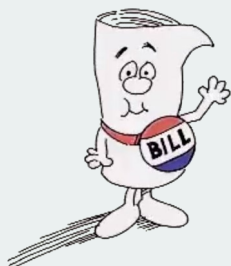
Quick identification tip: *H. petiolaris* tends to have small, lanceolate leaves and lanceolate phyllaries versus large, ovate leaves and ovate phyllaries on *H. annuus* (*Flora of North America*). In addition, *H. petiolaris* usually branches more/wider and the flowers are smaller in comparison.

I love sunflowers because I support pollinators. In the western United States, there is no better plant to support native bees than *Helianthus*, with 101 documented specialist bees (Jarrod Fowler, 2020), and hundreds more generalist native bee species you may see. The bordered patch butterfly requires sunflower leaves for its caterpillars and several moths use them as larval food plants. Sphinx moths, flower flies, blister beetles, ants, and plants bugs are all attracted by vibrant stands of sunflowers. And, when the seeds are ripe, goldfinches won't be far away.

Sunflowers Continues on Page 3

Legislation Signed Into Law, *Thanks to you!*

News from the Climate and Conservation Committee



The Bird Alliance is emerging as a major defender of birds and their habitat in central New Mexico. Recently we asked members and Thursday Birders to speak out in favor of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) by sending an Action Alert, which you received by email and through our April Update. Thursday Birders also sent postcards.

The NMBCA protects the habitats of migratory birds all along their seasonal routes.

Your response was astounding! National Audubon has analyzed and reported on which chapters had the strongest response and made the biggest difference. Sending nearly 100 Action Alerts, **the Bird Alliance led all other chapters nationwide!** Thank you! A big shoutout to all of you for reminding your lawmakers to protect migrating birds! A big thanks to the House of Representatives and to the Senate, who have now voted to pass the NMBCA! *Gracias* to President Biden, who has signed it into law, reauthorizing and enhancing a program that provides funding throughout the Americas for migratory birds and their habitats.

Your actions helped push this legislation over the top. Speaking to lawmakers in a united voice will help birds more than anything else, and we look forward to reaching out to our amazing members on future issues. Together we can protect birds and the places they need.



Another reason I love prairie sunflowers, specifically, is how they fit into my garden. They germinate easily from seed and require no irrigation, shade, or other effort on my part. They bloom early and often - the first *H. petiolaris* flower was May 23, May 20, and May 29 the last 3 years. After the first hard freeze, the plants wilt and die, and it doesn't take long before they dry into brown toothpicks that can remain in place as stem-nesting bee habitat or be collected for mulch, compost, or kindling. Watch your feet around last year's stems the next spring, for sprouts emerge as early as March if it's warm enough.

There are more benefits beyond leaves and flowers for attracting wildlife. Worldwide, more than 30 Aphid species are known to feed on *Helianthus* (Aphids on the World's Plants, web). Aphids on native plants in a garden are one of the best signs of success, ironically. First, it means that your plants are chemical-free, which benefits all animals that may visit. Second, the presence of aphids is a sure sign that "good bugs" are on the way, including: green lacewings, hover flies, lady beetles, aphid flies, aphid mummy wasps (parasitic), and aphid hunting wasps (solitary). Aphids are also a food source for hummingbirds! Did you know that "insects and their importance to migratory birds" is the focus of this year's World Migratory Bird Day? I hope you'll plant sunflowers this year, and please let us know what animals you see.

Elliott Gordon is a volunteer ambassador for the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. He lives in Albuquerque.

Birds, Bugs, and Blossoms
World Migratory Bird Day at the Botanic Garden!
News from the Climate and Conservation Committee

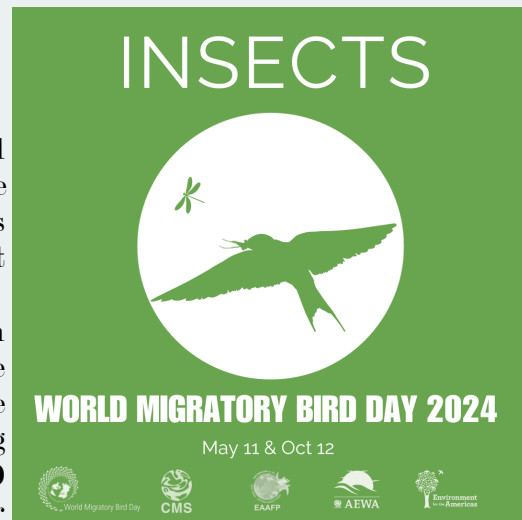
Please join us May 11, 10:00am to 2:00pm, to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day at the Botanic Garden, 2601 Central NW! The price is included with Botanic Garden admission, no reservations necessary. The Bird Alliance will be there with information about the connection between birds, insects, and native plants.

Since 1970, the bird population has declined by three billion in North America alone -- a loss of more than one in four birds. One reason for this decline is the short-sighted killing of insects, the main food source for many birds and **the only food** for land-dwelling nestlings. A chickadee family feeds their babies about 500 caterpillars every day! That's 6,000 to 9,000 caterpillars and other insects to raise one family of baby birds.

Many insects are adapted to live only on native plants. The insects pollinate plants and depend on them as a food source of their own. Birds-insects-native plants: it's a three-legged stool, and if one leg is broken, everything falls apart.

Insecticide and habitat loss are major killers of beneficial insects, and thus, killers of birds and plants, as well. We need to conserve native plants, and we need to replace insecticide with other, smarter ways of controlling bugs.

For the Botanic Garden event, the Bird Alliance is partnering with the Albuquerque chapter of the Native Plant Society, and with the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. We'll have advice about native plants and beneficial insects, and we're promoting sunflowers, one of the easiest-to-grow, loveliest, and most beneficial of plants. We have donated quantities of native sunflower seeds to the ABQ Seed Library program, and we'll be giving away packets of seeds at the Botanic Garden. Let's make Albuquerque a sunflower city! Join us May 11 to pick up your sunflower seeds and to celebrate birds, bugs, and blossoms!





Museum of Southwestern Biology Tour May 9th, 2024

By Laura Banks

The Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico has arranged a special guided visit to the Museum of Southwestern Biology for our members and friends on May 9th. **Two sessions will be available: Session 1 beginning at 4:00pm and Session 2 beginning at 5:30pm.** The visit will last for approximately 90 minutes.

The Museum of Southwestern Biology is a research and teaching facility in the Department of Biology at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. The museum's Division of Birds maintains a research collection of over

40,000 birds. The largest holdings are from the American Southwest and the Andes Mountains. The collection of the birds of New Mexico is heavily used by students, artists, and birdwatchers. The collection grows by ~2000 birds per year, thanks to a dedicated collections staff aided by a cadre of students. The museum is not generally open to the public.

The tour of the museum will be free of charge. There is **NO** free parking, however, on the UNM campus. Visitors may park in the UNM Cornell Parking Structure at 2401 Redondo Drive (\$1.75/hr using a credit/debit card only). If you do not want to park in the structure, please arrange for other parking, carpooling, ride share, or public transportation and plan to meet at the parking structure at your scheduled time. Bird Alliance members will be available to guide tour participants from the garage to the museum, which is a five minute walk.

Registration is required and the guided visit will be available to the first 25 registrants for each session. The deadline to register is May 7th. Confirmation will be provided by email to registrants prior to the event. The registration form will be closed when the event is full.

To Register for Session 1

4:00 - 5:30pm, please click here:
<https://forms.gle/tBwpV64nizNrNTUI8>

To Register for Session 2

5:30 - 7:00pm, please click here:
<https://forms.gle/KpmE7JEVdpwW2DqD9>

If you have questions after you have received your confirmation, or if you need to cancel your registration, please use the [Contact Us](#) form on our website.



Join or donate to
Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico

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





Skybound Shinobi

By Jordan Graham

As May blusters into Central New Mexico, so do tiny, plummy ninjas, stealthily perched amidst the foliage, waiting to strike with lightning speed at unsuspecting victims, executing nimble aerobic maneuvers that would make even the most seasoned martial artist envious. With a flick of their tail and a flash of their wings, they snatch prey from the air with the precision of Mr. Miyagi's chopsticks, leaving behind a trail of bug parts and knocked for six onlookers.

Olive-sided Flycatcher, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and Willow Flycatcher are just a few of our feathered shinobi dispelling the skies of bugs as they make their way through Central New Mexico, or stop here for the summer's mating season. The loss of breeding grounds and diminishing food sources pose significant challenges for our aerial assassins. Here's where you can potentially spot them and how you can contribute to their conservation efforts.

Olive-sided Flycatcher

Considered a near-threatened species due to habitat loss, the Olive-sided Flycatcher prefers open areas near forest edges, bogs, or wet meadows with tall trees for perching and nesting. Planting tall trees, such as conifers or deciduous trees, like aspen or birch, can provide essential perching and nesting sites. Maintaining or creating open areas adjacent to wooded habitats can mimic their preferred edge habitats. Additionally, including water features like small ponds or wetland areas, if possible, can help attract insects for foraging.



Photo By Dan Streiffert
Flickr (CC-BY-NC-2.0)

Dan Streiffert

Cordilleran Flycatcher

Though currently considered a of low concern species, foresting in the western regions is slowly affecting populations. The Cordilleran Flycatcher favors riparian areas with dense vegetation, such as streamside forests or wooded canyons. Planting native trees and shrubs along watercourses can create riparian habitat corridors. Incorporating dense vegetation, such as willows, alders, or cottonwoods, provides essential nesting sites and cover. Maintaining a mix of open spaces and shaded areas can accommodate their foraging and nesting needs.

- ✦ **Engelmann Spruce**
Picea engelmannii
- ✦ **Subalpine Fir**
Abies lasiocarpa
- ✦ **Willow**
alix spp.

- ✦ **Aspen**
Populus tremuloides
- ✦ **Birch**
Betula spp.
- ✦ **Balsam Poplar**
Populus balsamifera

- ✦ **Narrowleaf Cottonwood**
Populus angustifolia
- ✦ **Willow**
Salix spp.
- ✦ **Alder**
Alnus spp.

- ✦ **Boxelder**
Acer negundo
- ✦ **Arizona Walnut**
Juglans major
- ✦ **New Mexico Locust**
Robinia neomexicana



Photo By John Matthews
Flickr (CC BY-NC-ND-2.0)

Skybound Shinobi Continues on Page 6



Photo: Loi Nguyen/ Audubon Photography Awards

Did you know?

American Robins have exceptional eyesight. They hunt for worms by standing perfectly still and watching for the tiniest movements in the soil.



Ash-throated Flycatcher

Skybound Shinobi Continues on Page 5

Considered of low concern, with populations showing stable and slowly growing trends, the Ash-throated Flycatcher is often found nesting in bluebird boxes. It thrives in arid or semi-arid habitats, including desert scrub, oak woodlands, or juniper-pinyon forests. Planting drought-tolerant native shrubs and trees suitable for arid environments, such as mesquite, desert willow, or juniper, can support their habitat needs. Creating brush piles or natural debris provides essential nesting and shelter, while providing elevated perches, such as dead branches or snags, offers flycatchers hunting perches.



Photo By Morris Finkelstein
Audubon Photography Awards

✦ **Desert Willow**

Chilopsis linearis

✦ **Mesquite**

Prosopis spp.

✦ **Arizona Sycamor**

Platanus wrightii

✦ **Oak**

Quercus spp.

✦ **Juniper**

Juniperus spp.

✦ **Pinyon Pine**

Pinus edulis

Willow Flycatcher

Considered as threatened and endangered in the Southwest due to habitat loss along stream sides the Willow Flycatcher is typically found in wetland areas, marshes, or along streams with dense willow or other shrubby vegetation. To support their habitat needs, it is essential to plant willows and other native shrubs that thrive in wetland habitats, creating suitable nesting and foraging areas. Additionally, efforts should focus on maintaining or restoring riparian areas by controlling invasive species and preserving native vegetation. Providing dense vegetation cover near water bodies offers protection from predators and harsh weather conditions.



Photo By Becky Matsubara
Flickr (CC-BY-2.0)

✦ **Willow**

Salix spp.

✦ **Narrowleaf Cottonwood**

Populus angustifolia

✦ **Boxelder**

Acer negundo

✦ **Arizona Sycamore**

Platanus wrightii

✦ **Goodding's Willow**

Salix gooddingii

✦ **Coyote Willow**

Salix exigua

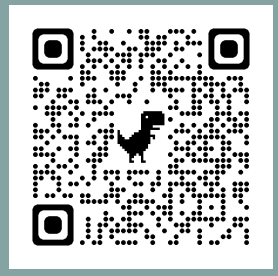
By helping build and restore habitat, and by supporting Bird Alliance's lobbying efforts to stop the spraying of pesticides like Carbaryl in the Rio Arriba County Watershed, we can help ensure that our fledged samurai continue to flourish and recover. Furthermore, fostering a community dedicated to bird conservation through education and outreach initiatives, can amplify our impact, ensuring a sustainable future for both our feathered friends and the ecosystems they inhabit. Together, we can safeguard the natural heritage of Central New Mexico for generations to come!



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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



Fostering Collaboration for Bosque Restoration: The Birth of the Bosque Restoration Advisory Committee

By Robert Munro

In the heart of Albuquerque lies a vital ecosystem, the bosque, cherished for its biodiversity and ecological significance. Yet, recent interventions for wildfire mitigation sparked concerns among conservationists and the public alike, underscoring the need for better communication and collaborative action. In response to these challenges, the Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico spearheaded a groundbreaking initiative, leading to the formation of the Bosque Restoration Advisory Committee.

The City of Albuquerque and Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District's wildfire mitigation project in the bosque raised eyebrows and voices within conservation circles. Many felt blindsided by the extent of the measures taken, highlighting a gap in outreach and participation opportunities. Seeking clarity and a path forward, the Bird Alliance convened with concerned stakeholders and Colleen McRoberts, the City Open Space Superintendent, to engage in constructive dialogue regarding habitat restoration plans.

Out of this dialogue emerged the Bosque Restoration Advisory Committee. This collaborative platform brings together a diverse array of stakeholders, including environmental groups, government agencies, consultants, and community champions, all committed to the stewardship of the bosque. Among the esteemed members are the Sierra Club, the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, City Open Space, MRGCD, NM State Forestry, EMNRD, NM Interstate Stream Commission, Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District, SWCA Consultants, Tetra Tech Environmental Consultants, GSA Analysis, Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program, and numerous dedicated community members.

The Committee's mandate is twofold: to provide expert recommendations and guidance on the restoration efforts within the affected section of the bosque, and to foster improved communication and collaboration among all stakeholders. By bridging the gap between conservation groups, government entities, and the broader community, the Committee aims to ensure that future interventions are conducted with transparency, inclusivity, and ecological sensitivity.

As the author of this piece and a member of the Bird Alliance, I am personally heartened by the willingness of our municipal partners to engage in meaningful dialogue and collaboration. Together, we have a unique opportunity to shape the future of the bosque, safeguarding it as a vital lifeline for countless birds.

Indeed, the bosque is more than just a habitat; it is a lifeline—a sanctuary for migratory birds, a refuge for native plants, and a source of inspiration for all who cherish the natural world. By uniting under the banner of the Bosque Restoration Advisory Committee, stakeholders affirm their collective commitment to preserving this precious ecosystem for generations to come.

As the Committee embarks on its journey, it pledges to hold itself and others accountable for the well-being of the bosque. Through collaboration, communication, and collective action, we stand stronger—together, we can ensure a brighter future for Central New Mexico's beloved bosque.

Inviting Action from Bird Alliance Members

To fellow members of the Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico, I extend an invitation to join us in this critical endeavor. Your support and involvement are vital. Consider volunteering to assist with plantings and other forthcoming opportunities to contribute to restoration efforts. You can start this journey by reaching out to our volunteer coordinator through the contact page on the Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico Website. Simply provide your contact information and include "Bosque Restoration" in the subject heading. Together, let's make a tangible difference in the preservation of our cherished bosque.



Photo By Glenda Morling

Robert Munro discusses the bosque fuel reduction project with Open Space Superintendent Colleen McRoberts, and staff member, Dustin Chavez-Davis.



Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico

BIRDATHON 2024

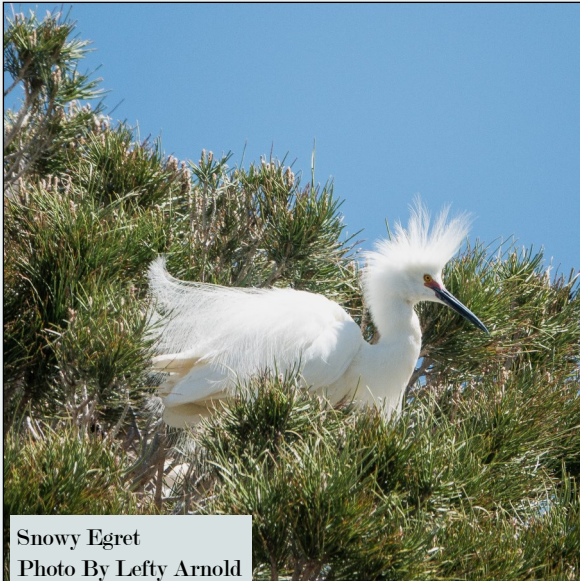
May 1st through May 12th

The time is fast approaching for Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico's primary fundraiser! Individuals and teams of all ages and skill levels are encouraged to get out in nature and count birds around New Mexico. Doing so will help our chapter's continuing efforts to protect birds and their habitats.

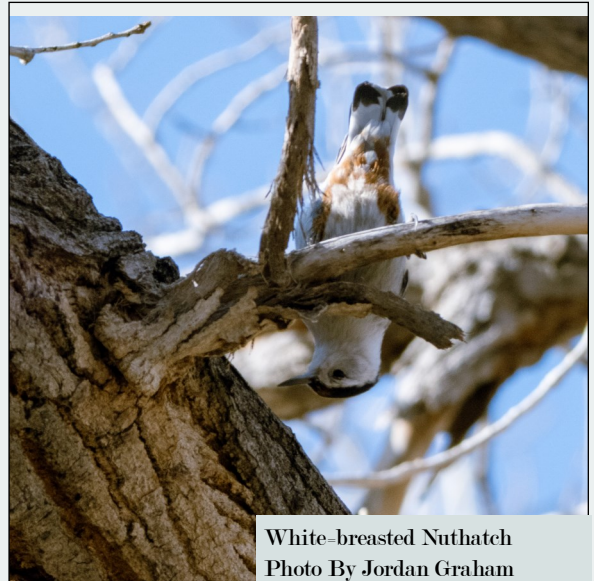
Click here for more information: <https://www.bacnm.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Birdathon2024.pdf>



Members' Photos of the Month



Snowy Egret
Photo By Lefty Arnold



White-breasted Nuthatch
Photo By Jordan Graham

We would love to show off your bird photos!

For the "June Update" we want to see your pictures of Cassin's Sparrow, Gray Vireo, and Cassin's Kingbirds 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- thisnomadielife@gmail.com

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

Please submit all photos by May 24th

*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.



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

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