



BIRD ALLIANCE BULLETIN

March/April 2025

The 2025 Great Backyard Bird Count

By Lee Hopwood

Every year from February 14-17, bird enthusiasts across the world act together to observe, record and celebrate birds in their local areas. This annual event plays a vital role in helping scientist understand bird populations and to make plans in the conservation of bird habitats.

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) was first conducted in 1998 in the United States as a community science project. It is supported by the National Audubon Society and Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the counters for 2025: Kelly Aldridge, EJ Selva, Michael McGovern, Lefty Arnold, Lee Hopwood, Phil Dickinson, Brian Anderson, and Perrienne Houghton.

The results for 2025 included 80 species or subspecies, one unidentified buteo 2,712 individuals and covered Bernalillo and Sandoval counties.

SPECIES	COUNT
American Bald Eagle	1
American Coot	16
American Coot Red-shielded	9
American Crow	53
American Goldfinch	2
American Robin	25
American Wigeon	14
Bald Eagle	1
Buteo species	1
Black Phoebe	2
Black-capped Chickadee	2
Black-crowned Night Heron	2
Bluebird sp.	2
Belted Kingfisher	1
Bewick's Wren	1
Brewers Blackbird	20
Bushtit	56
Cackling Goose	6
Cactus Wren	2
Canada Goose	135
Canvasback	4
Canyon Towhee	7
Common Raven	5
Coopers Hawk	3
Curved-billed Thrasher	12
Dark-eyed Junco--Oregon	41
Dark-eyed Junco	59
Dark-eyed Junco - cismontanus	2

SPECIES	COUNT
Dark-eyed Junco - Pink Sided	67
Dark-eyed Junco - Slate colored	1
Downy Woodpecker	2
Eurasian-collared Dove	21
European Starling	49
Gadwall	9
Great Blue Heron	1
Greater Roadrunner	8
Great-tailed Grackle	35
Green-winged Teal	5
Hairy Woodpecker	2
Hermit Thrush	1
Hooded Merganser	9
House Finch	217
House Sparrow	87
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	11
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1
Lesser Goldfinch	61
Lesser Scaup	3
Mallard	261
Mallard x Mexican Duck (Hybrid)	1
Mountain Bluebird	1
Mountain Bluebird	1
Mountain Chickadee	1
Mourning Dove	19
Neotropic Cormorant	90

SPECIES	COUNT
Northern Flicker - Red Shafted	11
Northern Harrier	1
Northern Shoveler	25
Pied-billed Grebe	7
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1
Red-tailed Hawk	3
Red-winged Blackbird	30
Ring-billed Gull	301
Ring-necked Duck	14
Rock Pigeon	156
Rock Wren	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2
Ruddy Duck	1
Sandhill Crane	405
Say's Phoebe	3
Song Sparrow	17
Spotted Towhee	14
Western Bluebird	22
Western Screech-Owl	1
White-breasted Nuthatch	19
White-breasted Nuthatch - Interior West	10
White-crowned Sparrow	71
White-crowned Sparrow - Gambel's	28
White-winged Dove	70
Wood Duck	38
Woodhouse's Scrub-jay	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	13

MEMBERS' PHOTO GALLERY



WESTERN Bluebird, Perrienne Houghton



Western Screech-Owl, Lee Hopwood
Los Lunas NM



Great Blue Heron, Lee Hopwood
Alameda pond



White-breasted Nuthatch., Perrienne Houghton

We would love to showcase your photos

Email your photos to Lee Hopwood at leehopwood@bacnm.org
Please include your name, location of the photo and the name of the bird in your email.

A Backyard Refuge Report

By Glenda Moore

Watching birds in our yards is something many of us enjoy. My yard has several feeders and gets lots of birds, especially in the winter. But my water features have attracted the most birds to my yard.

Birds need a fresh supply of water for drinking and bathing all year long, so I have



provided them with various water features. In doing so, I have learned that some birds that don't visit the feeders are drawn to my yard because of the water.

One feature that appeals to many of the birds is a ceramic saucer on the ground. It has a gentle slope and is shallow enough for them to drink and bathe. Moving or dripping water is a great attraction and some solar devices can be set up to add that feature. A concrete birdbath I have provided has developed cracks, but it still attracts birds.

The water feature that draws the most birds is the boulder with a hole drilled in it that uses a pump. The sound of moving water draws in the birds, and with temperatures of less than 20 degrees, the birds still drink and bathe even with the ice. If a heavy boulder doesn't work, fiberglass boulders that mimic real rock are available. Some local landscape supply places sell these rock-like features, but they are not cheap. Real boulders can be expensive too.

Adding native plants also attracts birds, as well as insects, and butterflies to my yard.

Native plants are better suited to survive our warming climate and they are an important resource due to declining pollinator populations. The ABQ Backyard Refuge Program, managed by the Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, is a great program for those who want to provide and support wildlife habitats.



Climate Watch - A Citizen Science Project

By Perrienne Houghton

If you ever participated in a National Audubon Society (NAS) Christmas Bird Count (CBC), or in the Great Backyard Bird Count, or you use the eBird app and database, and if you go on Bird Alliance of CNM (BA) Thursday Birder walks, you know about citizen science and you are a citizen scientist. But you may not be as familiar with another important contribution to bird conservation, NAS's Climate Watch Project.



The Climate Watch project was launched in 2016 to document some key target species' responses to climate change, and Bluebirds were the primary target species.

NAS developed climate models projecting where target birds should occur in the 2020s. The model was based on 17 climate factors and occurrences of birds, including data collected on CBCs. NAS researchers then evaluated the relationship between climate and species distribution to predict bird ranges in the future.

Organized by then Central NM Audubon Society (CNMAS) chapter Vice President Judy Liddell, NM represented one of four states in the country participating in the 2016 pilot project, and was the only chapter to survey for all three bluebird species.

The project consists of 12 point-count surveys conducted one morning between January 15 and February 15, and one morning between May 15 and June 15, with data entered into eBird. That first year, 17 CNMAS volunteers conducted surveys.

In 2017, 27 volunteers participated. Nuthatches were included as a target species in NM in 2019 and by 2020, 35 BA chapter members, a teacher and students from Albuquerque Academy, and two other NM Audubon chapters conducted the surveys. In 2024, BA chapter member Angela Hawthorne assumed the arduous task of organizing the Climate Watch project from Judy Liddell. Climate Watch counts now are conducted by Audubon chapters throughout the US, Mexico, and Canada.

Since 2019, NAS summarized data from Climate Watch counts and other observations documented by birders and scientists in a report titled "Survival by Degrees." The report concluded birds are shifting their distribution ranges in both winter and summer because of climate change. Analysis predicts as many as two thirds—389—of North American bird species are at risk of becoming extinct if climate change trends continue. Efforts to slow global warming and conservation measures, however, may also show positive trends for 76% of species. Continued participation in Climate Watch and other citizen science projects will contribute to monitoring positive trends.

Anyone, a novice or very experienced birder, can participate in the Climate Watch counts by contacting the [Bird Alliance](#) before the summer surveys begin in May.

Resources for information about the Avian Flu

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - <https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/index.html>
- US Department of Agriculture - <https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/situation-summary/data-map-wild-birds.html>
- American Veterinary Medical Association - <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-health/avian-influenza>

Discover Community Science

By: Dr. Laura Banks

President, Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico

Have you ever wondered how your love of feathered friends could contribute to scientific discoveries and conservation efforts? The answer lies in community science—a growing movement that invites people to collect and share observations of the natural world.

Community science (also known as Citizen Science) refers to the collaboration between lay people and professional scientists to collect data, conduct research, and solve real-world problems. For bird lovers, this means observing and documenting birds in your backyard, local park, or favorite nature reserve.

With the help of technology, these observations are compiled into large datasets that scientists use to understand bird populations, behaviors, and conservation challenges.

Examples of Community Science:

- The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC): Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the GBBC was the first online participatory science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in [near real time](#).
- The Christmas Bird Count (CBC): This is one of the longest-running community science projects in the world, coordinated by the National Audubon Society. Each year, between December 14 and January 5, volunteers count every bird they see within designated areas. The CBC has been running for more than 120 years and provides invaluable data on bird population trends over time.
- iNaturalist: A joint initiative of the California Academy of Sciences and National Geographic Society, iNaturalist allows users to document all kinds of wildlife. Observations are verified by a community of naturalists and researchers, and the data contributes to biodiversity studies worldwide.
- NestWatch: This project, also by the Cornell Lab, collects information about nesting success, providing scientists with insights into how birds are adapting to environmental changes.

Many other agencies sponsor community science activities. Visit our website's [Community Science](#) page to learn more about projects through the U.S. Forest Service, NASA and NOAA. The data collected through community science initiatives is vital for ornithologists and conservation scientists. For example, trends from the CBC have revealed declines in certain species, such as the Rusty Blackbird, prompting targeted conservation efforts. eBird data has been used to map migration patterns, leading to better protection of critical stopover habitats. These projects also help detect shifts caused by climate change, such as birds breeding earlier in the season or shifting their ranges northward.

The Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico has been an active participant in community science initiatives for decades.

Bird Alliance CNM has an eBird site.

You can share your eBird reports with us at [BirdallianceCNM](#) on eBird



Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico

BIRDATHON 2025

May 1 through May 20



BACNM.org

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

Here's how you can participate:



- Plan how you want to enter: As an individual or team (2 or more)
- Sign up by sending your name/team name to our Birdathon Coordinator at leehopwood@bacnm.org. The deadline to enter is May 20.
- Choose one 24-hour period between May 1 and May 20 to get out and bird anywhere in New Mexico; backyard birding is encouraged!
- Collect pledge promises from friends, neighbors, or organizations, or pledge a fixed amount for yourself. You can ask for pledges based on the number of birds, number of species, amount of time spent birding, or a fixed amount for your efforts.
- Report your results by sharing your checklists on eBird with **BirdallianceCNM** or submit a list to Lee Hopwood by email or mail.
- Collect your pledges and then submit the total amount raised by using the **Donate** button on our website (BACNM.org - check the box in the form to provide a comment to confirm your Birdathon participation). Or you may send a check.

Help us reach our goal to raise \$3,000!

We will announce the winners on our website and newsletter, including the most birds counted, the most species counted, and the largest amount raised.



Submit results and pledges by mail/email to:

leehopwood@bacnm.org

Bird Alliance of CNM

PO BOX 30002, Albuquerque, NM 87190-0002

Find Thursday Birders field trips, instructions, last minute changes, and updates at:

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

The Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico is a not-for-profit chapter of the National Audubon Society. Our mission is to protect and conserve birds and wildlife habitats in our region, support responsible stewardship of land, promote environmental education, and welcome all communities to join us in the love and appreciation of birds.

Please visit our website at www.bacnm.org.

Melrose Woods

It is time to renew our Melrose Woods lease agreement with the State Land Office. Not only will we renew this lease but also, we will continue to care for this special place in New Mexico. We ask all of those who visit the site to observe the conditions of the area. If you see something that needs our attention, please drop us a note through our [Contact Us](#) page on the website. Thanks for visiting Melrose Woods!

The Program schedule can be found on our website at:

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