Talks Range from the Arctic to Our Rio Grande

Thursday, March 17:
The Disappearing North
Presented by Raymond VanBuskirk

Join us as Raymond transports us to the frozen waters of the Arctic Ocean where for two summers he lived on a research boat and conducted seabird surveys for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Raymond will talk to us about his research, Arctic conservation, climate change, and what each of us can do to help fight global warming. It is his hope that through his stories, photographs and memories you will be inspired to learn more—and maybe even visit—this unique and incredibly threatened ecosystem.

Thursday, April 21:
Flycatchers and Cuckoos
Presented by Vicky Ryan

Rangewide Status and Local Characteristics of the Endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and the Threatened Yellow-billed Cuckoo

The Southwestern Willow Flycatcher was listed as endangered in 1995. Since that time, the population has increased significantly within the Middle Rio Grande. We’ll discuss habitat changes over time that have supported this increase and what threats the flycatcher will face in the future.

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo was listed as threatened in 2014. We’ll discuss the rangewide status and characteristics associated with the fun yet elusive cuckoo.

Vicky Ryan is a Wildlife Biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and has an extensive knowledge of the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and threatened Yellow-billed Cuckoo within the Rio Grande valley dating back to 2002.

New Role for Birds in Movie
The Messenger
Saturday, March 19, 1:00 PM
The Guild Cinema, 3405 Central Avenue NE

The showing is sponsored by CNMAS to benefit its Conservation Committee.

“The Messenger shows birds as the physical prophets of what we are doing to the environment, as messengers showing us our own future. It is not a film of maybe, could be, or might, but a story of strong words: have lost, are losing, will lose.”—Todd Simmons
Birds Offer Citizen Science Opportunities

CNMAS Pilots Bluebird Survey for NAS Climate Watch

Report and photo by Judy Liddell

Seventeen volunteers from CNMAS participated in piloting the protocol for surveying bluebird species for the National Audubon Society’s Climate Watch citizen science project over the Martin Luther King holiday weekend. In addition to New Mexico, chapters from Iowa, Wisconsin, and New York also participated. New Mexico was the only chapter that was able to survey for all three species.

While volunteer surveyors from New Mexico were blessed with sunny weather, volunteers in some of the other states braved zero degree temperatures and strong winds.

Climate Watch is a new citizen science project from the National Audubon Society. The goal is to document one or more species’ responses to climate change by looking for birds where Audubon’s climate models project they should be in the 2020s. The Audubon climate model looked at 17 climate factors and bird occurrence (including CBC data) and modeled the relationship between the distribution of each species and climate. Then, drawing on climate estimates described by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Audubon used the model to forecast future species distribution.

Each volunteer/team did 10 point-counts in the assigned grid. Twelve grids were surveyed. While some were disappointed that they did not document any of the three bluebird species, even the absence of species will help tell the story of bluebird wintering habitat.

Volunteers Also Needed for Thrasher Survey

For the second year, Audubon New Mexico will be collaborating with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and New Mexico State University to survey and map territories of the Bendire Thrasher, a species of conservation concern. The results of the multi-year survey will help to develop best management practices to support the populations of this species in New Mexico.

Additional volunteers will be needed this spring to run transects located all over the western part of the state. There are transects volunteers can survey in Rio Arriba, Mckinley, San Juan, Santa Fe, Hidalgo, Grant, Luna, Dona Ana, Otero, Sierra, Socorro, Lincoln, Catron, Cibola, Torrance, Valencia, Bernalillo, and Sandoval counties. All surveys are done independently but are set up in cluster where two people can each survey a transect that is in the same area. A survey is typically a two day commitment. The level of physical exertion can be pretty high, hiking 2-3 miles on uneven ground, with potential of having to cross fences and arroyos. Some transects can be a lot easier than others.

Citizen science volunteers will be trained in the identification of this cryptic bird by sight and sound, the point count survey protocol and the delineation and mapping of territories.

For more information or to volunteer, contact Cody Bear Sutton at cbear@nmsu.edu.

Prairie Chicken Routes Need Surveyors

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish is seeking volunteers to survey six new routes along county roads in eastern New Mexico between April 4 and 29.

Roadside transects are eight miles long and can be completed in just over one hour. Surveys begin 30 minutes before sunrise.

Survey protocol training will be offered on March 15, 16, 17, 21, or 22.

Volunteers should e-mail Beth Bardwell, director of conservation for Audubon New Mexico, at bbardwell@audubon.org by March 7.
The birding community said goodbye to another person who contributed so much to so many individuals and organizations, including Central New Mexico Audubon Society (CNMAS), when Sei Tokuda glided into the next life on January 2.

Beth Hurst Waitz, President of CNMAS for many years, wrote in the Burrowing Owl in 2002, “Mention the name Sei Tokuda, and there is instant recognition—by us Audubon folks, by Rio Grande Nature Center folks, by visiting birders-to-New Mexico-folks, by Bosque Del Apache Festival of the Cranes folks, by Hawks Aloft folks. Sei was as treasured as the rare Buff-breasted Sandpiper, as familiar as the Red-shafted Flicker, and as beloved as the cheerful Chickadee.”

Sei was a regular field trip leader for CNMAS for many years. In fact, he was Field Trip Chair for 10 years, and those who went on his trips cherished the memories.

He was also a founding member of the Rio Grande Nature Center and was involved with Hawks Aloft since its inception.

Beth Hurst Waitz wrote: “He was my friend. He thanked me every year for my commitment. He included me among the many people he loved, and he always let me know it.”

During his memorial service on January 16, John “Lefty” Arnold summarized the words that were repeated over and over about Sei: tranquility, serenity, and wisdom.

Some of his long-time birding friends shared the following memories:

Sylvia Fee disclosed, “I scarcely know how to begin with happy memories of my friendship with Sei. What comes to mind is his capacity to rejoice in the good fortunes of others. I never heard a bad word about anybody. He was endlessly curious, our last conversation was about after his death. I loved this guy.”

Melissa Howard reminisced, “What I will always remember about Sei is his smile. It lit up his whole face and made you as happy as he was.”

“Sei was one of the most considerate, charming, and caring persons I have ever known,” Bonnie Long declared. “If he hadn’t heard from me in a while, he would e-mail me to say ‘how about lunch?’ He always showed an interest in my adventures, particularly birding adventures.

“Another thing I remember about Sei,” Bonnie laughed, “was his fondness for taking cat naps when we were on a bird outing.”

“What I really appreciated over the years was his quiet way of sharing information,” said Judy Liddell. “I liked to stand near him on a trip to glean new insights from his years of observation.”

Liddell also noted that it wasn’t just older birders who appreciated him. Raymond VanBuskirk shared this memory: “I first met Sei some 15 years ago, when I was an enthusiastic young birder. He was within moments of cancelling a CNMAS field trip due to rain, when I appeared with my field guide and over-sized binoculars at his car door. And like that, the trip was back on. Sei swept me under his wing, and we were off on our first of many adventures. Since day one Sei has been an inspiration, a role model, a mentor, and a very dear friend to me (and to many other young birders). We shared many great birds together over the years, and from here on out not a feathered figure will pass that will not bring Sei to my mind and a smile to my face. Since Sei’s passing I’ve had the most beautiful images of him and Ryan birding together again; laughing, smiling, and enjoying heavenly birds that we could only dream of.”

Pat Folsom, Sei’s former lab assistant from Vermont who had kept in touch with the family, started birding with Sei in 2000. In September 2015 they “eloped” to Los Lunas, and Pat stayed by his side caring for him until the end.

“He was such a strong influence on the birding community that he will remain in our memories for years to come,” she said.
Spring Weekend Field Trips

March
Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge
Saturday, March 19, 8:00 AM (Sunrise 7:09)

Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in March could bring winter birds as well as early migrants/summer residents. The irrigation season begins March 15, so we may have newly flooded fields drawing in waterfowl and waders, shorebirds and swallows. Swainson's Hawks begin to show up around this time but Bald Eagles may still be present.

We will meet outside the refuge’s front gate. From there we can drive around the grounds and then walk in the bosque and/or along the adjacent ditch. The walking portion will probably be about one mile round trip on the gravel levee road or sandy trails in the bosque. We will wrap up by noon.

The refuge is located three miles south of Rio Bravo on Second St. in the South Valley. There is no entrance fee, but the Friends of Valle de Oro welcomes your membership and volunteerism. Restroom facilities are available.

For more information and to sign up, please contact the leader by email or phone.
Karen Herzenberg
karen.herzenberg@gmail.com or cnmaspresident@gmail.com
505-563-0387

April
Alameda Open Space/Alameda Bridge
Saturday, April 16, 7:30 AM

We will meet at 7:30 in the parking area of the Alameda Bridge Open Space and walk along the west side of the river, welcoming back migratory birds and looking for year-round residents in the bosque.

The walk will start at 7:45 and end at 9:45. We can end the field trip at Flying Star for breakfast and compile our bird list from the walk.

Please feel free to contact Lee Hopwood at plhopwood@gmail.com with questions.

May
Clayton Lake State Park
Saturday, May 21—Sunday, May 22

Meet Christopher Rustay at the State Park Visitor Center at 7:00 AM on Sunday, May 22. The normal fee for entering a State Park is required. I expect this trip to be a half-day but with the possibility of visiting other nearby locations in the afternoon. The park is approximately 13 miles north of the town of Clayton. Overnight fee camping (along with showers and restrooms) is available at the park, or one may stay in one of several motels in the town of Clayton.

We will bird the lake and drive to the nature trail which is approximately 3/4 mile and requires walking on a few very short but moderately rocky hills (the rest of the walk is easy). This is a relatively poorly explored area during spring migration, and the trip is timed for a greater possibility of seeing eastern vireos and warblers as well as White-rumped Sandpipers depending upon water levels.

There is also the possibility of visiting a location for Mountain Plovers about one hour away which could occur in the late afternoon on the 21st, if folks contact Christopher ahead of time.

Save the Date: June 9
CNMAS annual meeting and potluck—watch the web site for details: cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org.
Truth or Myth: What Helps Birds?

**Myth:** Putting up a single hawk silhouette will prevent bird window collisions.

**Truth:** A single hawk-shaped window decal will not frighten birds. The shape of a window decal is inconsequential, as is the use of multiple window decals. Unless the bird is headed for that spot it will not be alerted to danger. For information about birds and glass go to http://www.flap.org/residential_new.php

**Myth:** If I return a baby bird to its nest, the mother will reject it.

**Truth:** Unlike mammals and reptiles, most birds have a very poor sense of smell (except for Vultures) and cannot detect human scent. Parent birds have a lot invested in their young and will not reject or hurt a baby bird that has been touched by a human.

http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/fact-or-fiction-birds-abandon-young-at-human-touch/

**Myth:** Putting a bell on a cat keeps it from killing birds.

**Truth:** Pet cats, if allowed to roam free, eagerly kill and eat songbirds and small wild creatures. Some cat owners put a bell on their kitty’s collar to alert the prey. However, it has been discovered that belled cats can improve their stalking behavior to avoid detection. The best way to protect backyard birds is to keep your cat indoors.


Zimmerman Publishes Africa Memoir

*By Abe Villarreal*

© Western New Mexico University

Dr. Dale Zimmerman’s life experiences are as colorful as the birds documented in a new memoir, Turaco Country: Reminiscences of East African Birding.

Zimmerman’s memoir details a half-century of ornithological investigations in East Africa, researching bird life and wild habitats through decades of change in the country which he considers a second home.

“I have been in love with Africa since I first went there in 1961,” said Zimmerman. “The memoir details my experiences from 1961 to 1992 where I made over 20 trips to the country.”

While a professor and head of the biology department at Western New Mexico University, Zimmerman was awarded a national science grant allowing him to explore bird life, at a time when the subject material had seen little investigation.

He often traveled with his wife Marian, also an ornithologist and botanist, and the couple’s adventures are brought to life in more than 900 photos.

*Turaco Country* has received praise for capturing the sights and sounds of what is described as a vanishing world. The book can be accessed online at skysilandpress.com.

RGNC Herb Fest

**Coming up**

When: Mother’s Day Weekend, May 7 & 8, 10 AM—4 PM

Where: The Rio Grande Nature Center State Park, 2901 Candelaria NW, Albuquerque

What:

• speakers both days on nature topics of interest
• guided bird walks: both days, 8:30 and 9:00 AM
• nature walks: Saturday 10:30 AM and 1:00 PM; Sunday 10:30
• wildflowers, herbs and native plant sales: both days
• arts and crafts, including crafts for kids
• Biofacts Table
• garden tours, raffle, refreshments, live music

Myth: Cats control mice.

**Truth:** Cats do kill mice, but they also kill birds, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians. More than likely, when a cat is employed to keep pests at bay, she is also harming native wildlife. A study published in 2004 by Hawkins, et al. stated: The presence of homeless house cats that received supplemental food had a negative impact on native California rodents and birds. ... and the exotic house mouse was found to be more abundant in areas where cats were being fed.

“What Can You Do to Help Birds See Glass?”

The question was answered by Sara Jayne Cole: “Make a Zen wind curtain to make your home bird-safe.”

Cole led a CNMAS workshop on the craft of making exterior panels that allow birds to see glass as a solid object without obscuring the view from inside.

See related story on page 5.

Good for Us, Good for Them

BRANT Nature Tours will donate $25 to CNMAS for every CNMAS member who registers for one of their Albuquerque based Field Workshops this year. Their next event, “Peeps and Plovers,” will take place April 22—23.

Check out BrantTours.com/tours/workshops for more information on this and other workshops.

Application for New CNMAS Membership

Name ____________________________________________
Address __________________________________________
__________________________________________________
Telephone ________________________________________
E-mail address_____________________________________

Dues are $15 a year. Please send checks to:
CNMAS, P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque, NM 87190

You will receive the Burrowing Owl newsletter by e-mail unless you request a printed copy here. ______________

For information about membership in the National Audubon Society go to www.audubon.org

Owl’s Pick for Photo of the Quarter:
Killdeer by Laurel Ladwig
Audubon Thursday Birders
Spring Schedule, 2016

To check for possible trip cancellations, visit the Audubon web site: http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org. Click on TRIPS, then click on THURSDAY BIRDERS.

March 3
Walk the perimeter of Poblanos Fields Open Space with Rebecca Gracey: 505-242-3821, maryrebeccagracey@gmail.com. Meet at 9:00 in the open space parking lot. To reach the fields turn north from Montano Boulevard to Tierra Viva Place, east of the Rio Grande.

March 10
Walk in the Willow Creek Bosque in the Rio Rancho Bosque Open Space with Lefty Arnold: 505-514-9398, wanderingtattlerja@yahoo.com. Meet at 8:57 in the parking lot. Those coming from the east side of the river should go north on I-25 to the Bernalillo/US 550 exit. Drive west on 550 to the traffic light at NM 528. Go south on 528 for 1.8 miles. Turn east at the traffic light on Willow Creek Road. Drive four blocks to the entrance just past Spruce Mountain Loop on an unpaved road that follows an arroyo to the parking lot.

March 17
Visit Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in the South Valley with Becky Purvis: 505-688-1998, rpurvis3@yahoo.com. Meet at 9:00 in the parking area on 2nd Street by the refuge sign. To reach the refuge, drive south on I-25 and take the Rio Bravo exit. Drive west on Rio Bravo to 2nd Street. Turn south on 2nd and drive 3.2 miles to the entrance.

March 24
Walk in the Albuquerque Open Space Visitor Center and nearby bosque with Joe Schelling: 505-797-9018, joeschelling@msn.com. Meet at 9:00 in the center’s parking lot on the east side of Coors Boulevard. The entrance road, Bosque Meadows Road, is located north of Montano Road and south of Paseo del Norte.

March 31
Hike the Copper Trailhead Open Space at the east end of Copper Avenue NE, east of Tramway Boulevard, with Barbara Hussey: 505-385-1165, brhussey@flash.net. Meet at 9:00 in the small parking area. There is also parking along Copper. This will be a one-mile walk that winds uphill and downhill on disintegrating granite.

April 7
Drive to Pena Blanca, NM, and Cochiti Lake with Judy Liddell: 505-220-7998, jliddell@msn.com. Meet at 7:50 in the middle of the parking lot in the Far North Shopping Center on the west side of San Mateo and north of Academy Boulevard. Carpooling is encouraged since it could be challenging to the residents of Pena Blanca to have a caravan driving through their village. If you want to meet the group west of I-25 on NM 22 to Santo Domingo and Pena Blanca, contact Judy before April 7.

April 14
Hike Embudito Canyon with Lannois Neely: 505-890-7881, lfnecely@aol.com. Meet at 9:00 in the trailhead parking lot. To reach the canyon, drive east on Montgomery past Tramway, then turn left on Glenwood Hills. Continue 0.4 of a mile, turn right on Trailhead Road and continue to the parking lot.

April 21
Hike Rinconada Canyon in the Petroglyph National Monument with Sara Jayne Cole: 505-503-5599, birdlajoya@gmail.com. Meet at 8:30 in the trailhead parking lot on the west side of Unser Boulevard NW where Unser intersects with St. Joseph’s Avenue. The walk will be two miles long on a flat, sandy trail.

April 28
Travel to the Belen Marsh and the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area with Linda Heinze: 505-565-1441, manzanogal@gmail.com. Meet at 7:50 in the parking lot behind the Hawthorn Suites on Gibson and University SE or 8:30 at the marsh. To reach the marsh, take the first Belen exit from I-25, Exit 195, drive east one mile, turn south and park behind the Taco Bell. After birding at the marsh, the group will visit the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area on NM 47.

continued on next page
Birdathon: Fun and Funds

On May 5 and 6 the CNMAS Thursday Birders will again sponsor a Birdathon to raise funds to support the conservation efforts of both Central New Mexico and New Mexico Audubon—while enjoying 24 hours of birding fun.

The Birdathon will commence Thursday, May 5, at 10:00 AM at Bitterlake NWR and will include birding there and at Rattlesnake Springs, as well as other area hot spots. The group will reconvene at 6:00 Friday morning back at Rattlesnake Springs and count birds until 10:00.

Accommodations are available at White’s City outside of Carlsbad. There is a Rodeway Inn (575-785-2148), a campground and an RV park. Accommodations fill up fast, so early reservations are important.

The last time the group held the Birdathon on this route was in 2009 when it was led by Sei Tokuda and Cheri Orwig, so the event will honor Sei’s contribution to New Mexico’s birding community.

To confirm participation in the Birdathon and receive a detailed itinerary, contact Bonnie Long: 505-379-1985, cantrade_1@yahoo.com or Judy Liddell: 505-220-7998, jliddell@msn.com by April 28.

You can support the Birdathon fund-raising efforts by sending a check made out to CNMAS to P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque, NM 87190-0002 and writing Thursday Birder Birdathon in the memo (lower left hand side) of your check. Thank you for your support!

TB Donations Top $1,000

Thursday Birders donate one dollar on each of their trips. Recipients in 2015 included:

- Friends of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge: $75
- Friends of Rio Grande Nature Center State Park: $75
- Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge: $75
- Friends of Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area: $75
- Hawks Aloft: $100
- On a Wing & A Prayer Wildlife Rescue: $75
- Randall Davey Audubon Center: $75
- Rio Grande Bird Research, Rosy-Finch Project: $160
- Wildlife Rescue, Inc. of New Mexico: $75
- Belen Marsh Project: $75
- Share with Wildlife: $100
- Albuquerque Open Space: $75

Total: $1,035

...TB Schedule continued

May 5 & 6
Birdathon: see story on this page.

May 12
Visit Carlito Springs, a Bernalillo County Open Space, on the southeastern face of Sandia Mountain with Leah Henzler: 505-280-2085, lfcairns@gmail.com. Meet at 8:20 in the parking lot on the west side of the Tijeras Senior Center on NM 333/Rt. 66 (just west of the Tijeras Library). The walk will be 1.5 miles in length on a good trail that is steep in places.

May 19
Walk in the Pueblo Montano Open Space with Maurice Mackey: 505-897-0415, moemackey@comcast.net. Meet at 8:30 in the parking lot on the south side of Montano Road and east side of Coors Boulevard. There is an entrance from both of those roads.

May 26
Walk in the Doc Long Picnic Area with Gale Owings: 505-255-8333. Meet at 7:20 in the far west side of the Four Hills Shopping Village located on the south side of Central Avenue, between Juan Tabo and Tramway Boulevard. The walk will be on an asphalt trail about a mile long. A $3 fee or federal pass is required per car.
Central New Mexico Audubon 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.

Central New Mexico Audubon Society (CNMAS):
  Phone (505) 255-7622
  Mailing address CNMAS, P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque, NM 87190-0002
  Website http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org

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NM bird listserv https://list.arizona.edu/sympa/info/aznmbirds
Birding Hotspots of NM books http://birdinghotspotscentralnm.com
Rio Grande Nature Center State Park: 2901 Candelaria Road NW, Albuquerque NM 87107; (505) 344-7240. Guided bird walks each Saturday and Sunday at 8:30 AM; day-use permits are $3.00 check or exact cash; admission free with NM State Parks or Friends of RGNC passes

Living With Wildlife
Bird rescue (Corrales, Rio Rancho, Sandoval County): On a Wing and a Prayer, (505) 897-0439
Bat rescue: Talking Talons, (505) 281-1133 (bats: call before you intervene!) http://www.talkingtalons.net/home/?page_id=22
Urban wildlife: call 311 for City of Albuquerque Environmental Health Department or visit their website, https://www.cabq.gov/environmentalhealth/urban-biology/urban-wildlife-common-wildlife-and-how-to-respond
Bears: (505) 281-9282 http://www.sandia mountainbearwatch.org/living_with_bears.html#
Turtles: Rio Grande Turtle & Tortoise http://www.rgttc.info/contact.html
Snakes and other reptiles and amphibians: NM Herpetological Society http://www.nmherpsociety.org/contact/index.html Living with Large Predators: (505) 476-8000 ; toll-free (888) 248-6866
NM Department of Game and Fish http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/publications/wildlife/Living-with-Large-Predators-in-New-Mexico.pdf
Creating habitat for birds, other wildlife Cornell Lab of Ornithology http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/attracting/landscaping/land_tips
National Audubon Society www.audubon.org

Political Action
National Audubon Society: see above
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