

Burrowing Owl

March — May 2018

Vol. 47, No. 1

Welcome to the Central New Mexico Audubon Society, a 501(c)(3) organization.

cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org

Come join us! All our meetings and field trips are open to the public.

Spring Ahead to Spring Programs

Thursday, March 15:

Bluebirds, Nuthatches and Climate Change

To test how specific species are responding to climate change, teams of Audubon members from chapters across the U.S. have been conducting twice-yearly point counts in specific locations to document the numbers of bluebirds and nuthatches present. Starting January 2016, CNMAS was among the first chapters to join the effort, initially tallying Eastern, Western and Mountain Bluebirds. When nuthatches were added as target species, additional teams were recruited to tally White-breasted, Red-breasted and Pygmy Nuthatches.

Please join us to hear Judy Liddell, who has coordinated this effort, and learn more about each of these species, their habitat needs, and what the projections are for central New Mexico.



Mountain Bluebird by Judy Liddell



Thursday, April 19:

Mission Monarch —All Hands on Deck!

The population of Monarch butterflies has declined an estimated 90% in the last several years. As with bird populations, herbicides, development and lack of food have all taken their toll. Army Veteran Debbie Pike, visitor services manager for three northern NM wildlife refuges, is involving students and community groups in efforts to restore habitat and track Monarchs in New Mexico. Come learn about these fascinating insects and what we can all do to help.

Programs start at 7:00 p.m. at the Adelante Community Room, 3800 Osuna Road NE.

The April 19 program will be preceded by a brief CNMAS annual meeting.

CNMAS Thursday Birders' Birdathon Is Coming—Join Us!

The Thursday Birders will venture south on their 2018 Birdathon, starting at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge at 10:00 a.m. on May 3 and continuing until 10:00 a.m. the next day. Participants will raise funds to purchase interpretative signs for the Bill Spring Trail in the Sandia Mountains. Details are in the Thursday Birders Spring Schedule in this issue. To participate contact Rebecca Gracey, Birdathon leader: 505-362-5095, maryrebeccagracey@gmail.com.

Spring Weekend Field Trips

Pena Blanca and Cochiti Lake

Saturday, March 31

Join Judy Liddell, jliddell@msn.com, 505-220-7998, and Barbara Hussey to explore the back roads of Pena Blanca, the Osprey platform along NM-22, and Cochiti Lake. In the flooded fields of Pena Blanca, there may be lingering Mountain Bluebirds and Brewer's Blackbirds, as well as migrating gulls. At the lake early spring often brings a variety of grebes, as well as migrating waterfowl.

Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure from the middle of the parking lot in the Far North Shopping Center on San Mateo, just north of Academy Boulevard. If you want to meet the group west of I-25 on NM 22 to Santo Domingo and Pena Blanca, contact Judy before March 27. Bring lunch. The trip should end in the mid-afternoon. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$5 at five cents per mile.

Coyote del Malpais Golf Course

Sunday, April 22

Join Kim Score on a Sunday trip to Cibola County's newest hotspot, the Coyote del Malpais Golf Course. Located one hour west of Albuquerque in Grants, this beautiful golf course has 16 lakes, which attract numerous breeding birds and many migrating species. In addition to waterfowl, we are likely to find gulls, dowitchers, avocets, stilts, ibis, phalarope, and several species of sandpipers.

Bring your spotting scopes, cameras and walking shoes. Participants will be walking nearly three miles round trip at 6500 feet in elevation. Depending on level of interest we may also visit other nearby hotspots like Acomita Lake and the El Malpais National Conservation Area.

Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the only gas station at exit 89 off Interstate 40. Please RSVP to Kim Score, firefinch@usa.net. Carpooling can also be arranged from Albuquerque.

Navajo Lake State Park

Sunday, May 20

Meet Christopher Rustay at 7:00 a.m. at the Cottonwood Campground entrance at Navajo Lake State Park. Although campers may be present, there are plenty of places to walk. We will explore the riparian forest along the river, view some of the sagebrush habitat on the surrounding mesas, and finish at Simon Canyon.

We can expect migrant warblers, flycatchers and vireos, including the possibility of Gray Vireo. Most walking will be on level ground but we will take a moderate climb up towards the mesa in Simon Canyon.

Bring sturdy hiking shoes and plenty of water. There are no nearby restaurants, so bringing a lunch is advisable. We will end around noon, but there is plenty to see and do in the area if folks want to stay longer. In addition to the campground one may find good motel accommodations in Bloomfield or Aztec, which are each about 40 minutes away. Carpooling may be arranged if folks contact Christopher at least one week in advance. Please be sure to be on time Sunday morning as the group will wait no more than about five minutes for those who respond but do not show up. Please contact Christopher at chrustay@gmail.com. He will answer e-mails up until May 18.



Eared Grebe

Introducing the Burrowing Owl's Conservation Corner

The CNMAS Conservation Committee will report each quarter on issues they are involved in or various conservation news items of concern. We will also include an action you can take that may or may not be related to the Conservation Report topic.



Conservation Corner

By Bruce Dale, Conservation Action Committee Chair

In January CNMAS sent a Conservation Action Alert informing members about the Sagamore wind energy application that is before the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (NMPRC). The project would construct up to 313 turbines on 150,000 acres in Roosevelt County, home to the last remaining habitat of the Lesser Prairie-Chicken in our state. It would also include a 20-mile aerial transmission line and over 100 miles of lower-capacity underground lines that will severely fragment habitat.

The siting of the Sagamore Project is among the worst possible locations in the state for impact on wildlife.

State law requires consideration of “any adverse effect upon the environment and upon the quality of life of the people of the state that may occur due to plants, facilities and transmission lines needed to supply present and future electrical services.” It is on this basis that we urge NMPRC to reject the proposal.

We thank many of you who submitted comments to the Commission. The New Mexico Audubon Council also submitted a statement. An additional hearing is scheduled for March 13, and members of the public may be allowed to make a statement at that time (9:00 a.m., PERA Building, 1120 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe). If you plan to attend, be sure to arrive early and sign in if you wish to make a statement.

In other conservation activity, in December we asked our congressional delegation to support the Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act, which would require buildings constructed or acquired by the General Services Administration (GSA) to incorporate bird-safe materials and design features. We are pleased that Representative Michelle Lujan-Grisham has agreed to co-sponsor the legislation! Please call her local office and leave a message thanking her for that support: (505) 346-6781.



Action of the Quarter

By Tomas Radcliff, Conservation Action Committee

Buy Certified Bird Friendly® coffee, because not all coffee is grown equally! There are currently only a few stores in the Albuquerque area that offer shade-grown, organic coffee, and none that carry Birds and Beans, the Bird Friendly® certified coffee that the Cornell Lab of Ornithology recommends.

La Montanita Coop primarily carries Equal Exchange brand coffees, which are “overwhelmingly shade-grown” according to the company’s website, but do not offer shade-grown certification. If you are a member of La Montanita, you may want to suggest that the coop carry a coffee with Bird Friendly® certification, such as Birds and Beans. Whole Foods’ Allegro Early Bird coffee is certified Bird Friendly®. For more information on the Bird Friendly® certification and why it matters, visit <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/migratory-birds/bird-friendly-coffee>.



News from Our Partner Organizations

Valle de Oro NWR

After a couple years of community-based planning, Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge is now poised for a transformation! There are several projects happening on and near the refuge right now, and although we may not be the lead on many of them our goal is to provide you with the information we have. Local, state and federal agencies are involved, along with private contractors.

Projects outside the refuge boundary:

- Along Second Street a water re-use line is being installed from the Water Reclamation Plant south to the refuge.
- The Flood Control Authority has been working to improve storm water drainage along the northern corner of the refuge.
- The Second Street revitalization project is adding curb, gutter and sidewalk on the west side of the street as well as a multi-use trail with landscaping on the east side.
- In the bosque on the west edge of the refuge a recreation trail will be built just north of the access bridge. The area will be closed to all traffic during construction.

On the refuge property an entrance road will be built for our future visitor center, and our first wetland is under construction. Some of the roads on the refuge will be closed; we will provide an updated map.

Contact information for each of the ongoing projects is on our website: [https://www.fws.gov/refuge/valle de oro](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/valle_de_oro)



Sevilleta NWR

Our spring schedule of events includes:

April 21—Hike the high country of Los Pinos Mountains on the east side of Sevilleta in search of great views, wildlife and blooming cactus. This will be a moderate hike in steep, uneven terrain. 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

May 12—International Migratory Bird Day: a birding hike in the riparian areas along the Rio Grande. This is an easy hike of about two miles. 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

These two tours require reservations but there is no fee.

April 28—Sevilleta NWR volunteer naturalists will lead a hike on the trails around the Visitor Center to see wildflowers. No fee, no reservations required. 9:00 a.m.

For more information and to make a reservation call (505)-864-4021.

Belen Marsh

The Belen Marsh Committee will sponsor its annual spring clean-up on Saturday, April 28, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. We will meet at the Taco Bell across the street from the Belen Marsh on Don Felipe Road in Belen. Take the first exit into Belen and keep going until you see the Taco Bell on the south side of the road. All you have to do is show up—we will provide trash bags, safety vests, gloves, snacks and water.

If you bird at the Belen Marsh you know how full of garbage it gets. So please come out and help us make it even more beautiful by lending a helping hand.

Call or e-mail Eileen Beaulieu if you have any questions. She may be reached at (505) 249-7929 or dulcebeaulieu@comcast.net.

Rio Grande Nature Center

Annual Herb Fest

Mother's Day Weekend

May 12—13 at the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park, 2901 Candelaria NW, Albuquerque.
Call RGNC at (505) 344-7240 for details.

Remembering Sylvia

By Bonnie Long

I first met Sylvia Fee when I joined the Thursday Birders in 2001. Over time, we became good birding buddies and had many fun and interesting adventures. We went to Mexico a couple of times, and to Panama and Trinidad with Mary Lou Arthur. We also went on birding trips to Texas and Arizona, as well as many Thursday Birders outings.

The first international trip we took together was in 2006, when I asked Sylvia to go with me on a birding trip to Teacapan, Mexico, a small fishing village on the Pacific Coast near Mazatlan. We had a wonderful time, saw many great birds, and ate wonderful local food.

After the birding week in Teacapan, we planned to meet up with my husband Don in El Fuerte, Mexico, to go through the Copper Canyon on the train. Instead of flying to meet Don, Sylvia convinced me to take the bus. She was fairly fluent in Spanish so she made all the arrangements. We took a 12-hour bus ride from Teacapan to Guamas, where we boarded another bus to El Fuerte.

Meanwhile, Don drove down from our home in the East Mountains, crossed the border at Juarez, through Chihuahua, to Creel at the beginning of the Copper Canyon where he left my Jeep. He took the train down through the canyon to meet us. Amazingly, he met us 15 minutes after we arrived at our hotel in El Fuerte! The three of us returned on the train through the Copper Canyon going the other way back to Creel, a beautiful, scenic ride. Don drove our Jeep down to the bottom of the canyon to the town of Batopilas where we spent a few days.

Sylvia wanted to visit a Tarahumara Indian village and she made arrangements with a private guide to take us there. Manuel took us in his old pick-up

truck. Don and I sat in the truck bed and Sylvia in the front seat. There was no road up the mountain side to the village, only two barely visible rutted tracks. The villagers walked everywhere, and the track was primarily for outsiders like public health nurses, school teachers etc. It was a rough ride up and down the mountainside to say the least. Sylvia and I bought a couple of grass woven baskets from the local people and talked with some of the school children (in Spanish) who were curious about us. It was an adventure.

Sylvia and I also shared a love of dogs. My dog Sydney was barely a year old when Sylvia got Zorro. Although Sydney (a Shepherd mix) was much bigger than Zorro (a Bichon-Frise), they quickly became buddies. Once I took

care of Zorro for a week when Sylvia went away on a trip. He was so happy here, following Sydney wherever she went, through the woods, grass, dirt, and in my pond. They had a great time together. When Sylvia came to pick up Zorro, she was dismayed at how dirty he was. His beautiful white coat was now a dingy gray color. But he was one happy dog! The first thing she did was take him to the groomer. We celebrated his one-year birthday with a doggy party. Zorro meant a lot to her.

The last few years, Sylvia didn't go out with the Thursday Birders much, but did continue to bird with the Tuesday group, which is much smaller, and with her friends. She was active on the Central New Mexico Audubon Board where she served as Publicity Chair for many years, mailing out press releases before everything was done online. Sylvia was also a regular at Audubon meetings and events.

I will miss her greatly, as will her other dear friends.



*Sylvia Fee (right) and Bonnie Long.
Photo by Don Giles*



Owl's Pick for Bird of the Quarter:

Canvasback at Tingley Pond by Laurel Ladwig



BRANT
nature tours

Shorebirds and Owls: Improve Your Skills

BRANT nature tours has two spring workshops on tap, and as always a portion of the registration fee will be donated to conservation, research and outdoor education organizations.

"Peeps and Plovers" will have a classroom session on the evening of April 27, with a field day at Bosque del Apache on the 28th. The instructor will be Michael Hilchey.

"Whoop Are You?" will be presented by CNMAS and BRANT on May 25. Taught by Raymond Van Buskirk and Sandy Young, it will have a classroom session followed by a night of owl spotting in the Sandias.

Details are on the BRANT web site: BrantTours.com/tours/workshops.



Western Screech-owl



Avocet

A is for Avis, B is for Brew

What's better than birds and beer? Well, not too much. Whether you're into birds, beer, or both, this is the birding hotspot to be from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on the last Thursday of every month in Rob's Place at O'Neill's Pub on 4310 Central Ave SE, Albuquerque, NM 87108.

For more details see the Partner Events tab at http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org/?page_id=914.



birds&beers
a BRANT initiative

THURSDAY BIRDERS SPRING SCHEDULE

MARCH 1

Visit Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in the South Valley with Becky Purvis: 505- 930-3424, rpurvis3@yahoo.com. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the parking area on Second 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 Second Street. Turn south and drive 3.2 miles to the entrance.

The group will drive to different areas of the refuge and walk about a mile. The trip will end before noon.

MARCH 8

Walk in the Corrales bosque with Perrienne Houghton: 505-321-2015, Perrienne_h@yahoo.com. Meet at 8:50 a.m. for a 9:00 departure from the shopping area north of Alameda Road/NM 528 and east of Corrales Road/NM 448. Park by the Boxing Bear Brewing Company where parking is not restricted. The group will carpool from there to one of the bosque locations. Lunch is planned at Village Pizza in Corrales.

MARCH 15

Walk the perimeter of Poblanos Fields Open Space with Lannois Neely: 505-890-7881, lfneely@aol.com. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the open space parking lot. To reach the parking lot, turn north from Montano Boulevard a short distance onto Tierra Viva Place, east of the Rio Grande River. It will be an easy 1.5-mile walk ending before noon.

MARCH 22

Hike the Copper Trailhead Open Space at the east end of Copper Avenue NE, east of Tramway Boulevard, in the foothills of the Sandia Mountains with Barbara Hussey: 505-385-1165, brhussey@flash.net. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the small parking area. There is also parking along Copper. The one-mile walk winds uphill and downhill on disintegrating granite, so a walking stick might be helpful. The walk will end before noon.

MARCH 29

Walk in the Pueblo Montano Open Space with Pauline and Bernie Morris: 505-369-1227, mtnbluebird@verizon.net. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot on the south side of Montano Road and east side of Coors Boulevard. There is an entrance from both of these roads. It will be an easy two-mile walk ending before noon.

APRIL 5

Drive to Pena Blanca and Cochiti Lake with Judy Liddell: 505-220-7998, jliddell@msn.com. Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure from the middle of the parking lot in the Far North Shopping Center on the east side of San Mateo and north of Academy Boulevard. Carpooling is encouraged since it could be worrisome 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 3. Bring lunch. The trip should end in the mid afternoon. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$5 at five cents per mile.

APRIL 12

Walk around the Tingley bosque ponds with Lefty Arnold: 505-514-9398, wanderingtattlerja@yahoo.com. Meet at 8:27 a.m. at the north end of the Tingley Beach parking lot. To reach the area, drive west on Central Avenue past Rio Grande Boulevard, turning left on Tingley Drive. Take the first right from Tingley Drive, and then turn right to the dirt overflow parking lot. This leaves the few parking spots by the concession stand for people who want to fish. The walk will be about one mile in length ending before noon.

APRIL 19

Hike Embudito Canyon in the Sandia Mountain foothills with Linda Otterson: 505-280-3123, lotterson300@comcast.net. Meet at 8:30 a.m. 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. This is an easy 1.5-mile walk ending before noon.

APRIL 26

Travel to the Belen Marsh and the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area with Linda Heinze: 505-270-1779, manzanogal@gmail.com. Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure from the parking lot behind the Hawthorn Suites on Gibson SE and University Boulevard or 8:30 at the Belen Marsh. To reach the marsh, take the first Belen exit from I-25, Exit 195, drive east one mile, turn south and park in the Taco Bell parking lot. After birding at the marsh, the group will visit the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area on NM 47. Participants are invited to have lunch at the Bamboo Express located at 143 Hwy 314 in Los Lunas.

After lunch the group will stop at “Owlvile,” near Los Lunas to look for Burrowing Owls. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$3.50 at five cents per mile.

MAY 3—4

Participate in the Thursday Birder Birdathon with Rebecca Gracey: 505-242-382, Cell 505-362-5095, maryrebeccagracey@gmail.com.

The group will be going to Bitter Lake NWR in Roswell, Brantley Lake north of Carlsbad, Rattlesnake Springs, and Slaughter Canyon. The latter two are south of Carlsbad and not as dangerous as their names imply.

The money raised by the Birdathon participants will be used by Central New Mexico Audubon Society to purchase signs for the Bill Spring Interpretative Bird Trail near the Doc Long Picnic Area in the Sandia Mountains. The goal of the Birdathon is to see as many bird species as the group can observe in a 24-hour period, see the bird species found in only this part of New Mexico, and to raise money for the interpretative signs.

All participants may solicit pledges from their friends and family and/or make a monetary donation themselves. Suggested pledges are \$0.25 —\$1.00 per bird, or a special pledge of a larger amount for life birds seen.

Donations from non-participants are welcome. Send your check to CNMAS, PO Box 30002, Albuquerque, NM, 87109.

The Birdathon will start at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 3, at Bitter Lake NWR where the group will meet. Rebecca can arrange carpooling but otherwise everyone should meet there. From Bitter Lake the group will stop at Brantley Lake for shorebirds, and then on to Rattlesnake Springs where we will bird and eat the picnic dinner we brought. Lastly we will check into the motel for the night.

Early the morning of May 4 the group will go to Slaughter Canyon and then return to Washington Ranch near Rattlesnake Springs for birding until 10:00 a.m. when the 24-hour Birdathon period ends.

The closest motel to Rattlesnake Springs and Slaughter Canyon (and the Caverns so it fills up quickly) is the Rodeway Inn located at 6 Carlsbad Highway in Whites City. The number is 575-785-2148. There are many other motels in Carlsbad, 20 miles away.

Participants should bring food for two lunches and dinner. If not driving, the shared gas expense is \$30 at 5 cents per mile for the 600-mile round trip. Contact Rebecca if you wish to participate.

MAY 10

Travel to Manzano pond and Quarai National Monument with Bonnie Long: 505-379-1985, cantrade_1@yahoo.com. Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure from the west side of the Four Hills Village Shopping Center on Central Avenue between Tramway and Juan Tabo NE or meet Bonnie at the intersection of NM 337 and NM 55 at 8:50. Bring lunch. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$5 at five cents per mile.

MAY 17

Walk in Calabacillas Arroyo with Maurice Mackey: 505-897-0415, moemackey@comcast.net. The group will meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot on the west side of the Rio Grande River. The area is reached by driving north on Coors, past Paseo Del Norte and Irving Boulevard, turning east on Westside Drive. Westside Drive is the first right 0.28 miles north of Irving Boulevard. Follow Westside Drive about 0.2 of a mile to an open gate on the left. Go through the gate and down the arroyo to the parking area. If driving south on Coors from Corrales or Alameda, get in the left turn lane and turn onto Westside Drive. The walk will end before noon.

MAY 24

Hike in Otero Canyon with Gale Owings: 505-255-8333. Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure from the parking lot of the Sandia Ranger Station on NM 337 in Tijeras. The group will carpool from there to the Otero Canyon parking lot, 3.3 miles south on NM 337. The 1.5-mile walk is over an uneven trail. The walk will end before noon.

MAY 31

Visit Ojito de San Antonio Open Space in Cedar Crest with Leah Henzler: 505-280-2085, lfcairns@gmail.com. Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure from the far west side of the Four Hills Village Shopping Center on Central Avenue between Juan Tabo and Tramway Boulevard. Parking for the Open Space is just west of the San Antonio de Padua Church. Take the Tijeras/Cedar Crest exit from I-40, drive north toward Cedar Crest on NM 14 one mile, and make a left turn onto San Antonio Drive just before the church. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$1 at five cents per mile. Lunch is planned at the Greenside Cafe in Cedar Crest.

CNMAS Directory and Contacts

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)

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Central New Mexico



Audubon Society

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and Laurel Ladwig*

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Rio Grande Gorge by Dustin Spengler