

# Burrowing Owl

December 2018 and January–February 2019

Vol. 47, No. 4

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

[cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org](http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org)

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

## Habitats Abroad and at Home Are Program Topics

Thursday, January 17

Ecotourism: a Conservation Incentive

Terry Lawson Dunn, EcoTripMatch.com

Ecotourism is more than travels outdoors or reusing your towels in a hotel. Terry will define ecotourism, describe some examples of where it's working and explain why she believes it may be one of the best conservation tools available—while taking you on a visual journey of some amazing places around the world.



Programs start at 7:00 p.m.  
at the Adelante Community Room,  
3900 Osuna Road NE.

Thursday, February 21

Flood Control and Habitat Restoration:  
a Win for Birds and Birders

Jerry Lovato, Albuquerque Metropolitan  
Arroyo Flood Control Authority

To address flooding in the South Valley, AMAFCA has built surge ponds to take and store storm water from the Isleta Drain and slowly return it to the drain. These sites, including Raven Pond and Laguna de Cuervo, are planted with natural vegetation and are attracting birds and other wildlife. We'll learn about these sites and other work AMAFCA is doing to benefit birds.



### 'TIS THE SEASON FOR CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Be a part of the longest-running citizen science project in the country! Now in its 119th year, the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count will take place from December 14, 2018, through January 5, 2019. Every citizen scientist who has ever braved snow, wind or rain (or New Mexico sunshine!) to take part in the Christmas Bird Count has made an enormous contribution to ornithological history and conservation. Come count birds with us—it's fun, it's important and it's free!

See the list of counts in central New Mexico on the next page.



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# Christmas Bird Counts in Our Area

Details about central New Mexico counts are listed below. For additional counts please visit <http://nm.audubon.org/conservation/audubon-new-mexicos-christmas-bird-count> to contact a compiler and join a count near you.



## Sevilleta NWR

Friday, December 14

The Sevilleta count area covers much of the west side of the refuge plus portions of the Rio Grande and associated riparian areas. Much of the west side is shrub-steppe and juniper woodlands. Please meet at the refuge visitor center at 6:30 a.m. Contact Steve and Nancy Cox at 505-345-2385 or [sora@spinn.net](mailto:sora@spinn.net) for more information.

## Valle de Oro NWR

Saturday, December 15

Please join us for our sixth CBC. We will set out at 7:00 a.m. from the education classroom at the refuge, 7851 Second Street SW, Albuquerque, 87105. RSVP with Ariel Elliott if you wish to participate: [vdcbc@gmail.com](mailto:vdcbc@gmail.com) or 505-933-4924. The compilation dinner will be celebrated at Abuelita's New Mexican Kitchen, 6083 Isleta Blvd SW, at 5:00 p.m.

## Bluewater Lake

Saturday, December 15

Join the second year of this CBC! Head west to visit one of Cibola County's hot spots. Volunteers will meet nine miles west of Grants at Bowlin's Bluewater Outpost and Dairy Queen off Interstate 40 (exit 72). Only an hour and 10-minute drive from Albuquerque! Contact John Trochet at [trochetj@gmail.com](mailto:trochetj@gmail.com) or Kim Score at [firefinch@usa.net](mailto:firefinch@usa.net) if you wish to participate, and for more information. Carpooling from ABQ can be arranged. The compilation dinner will be celebrated at the Wow Diner in Milan.

## Bosque del Apache

Saturday, December 15

Join Dave Hawksworth for the BDA CBC. Contact Dave at 505-507-5343 or [dlhawksworth@gmail.com](mailto:dlhawksworth@gmail.com) if you want to participate and for more information.

## Five Points

Wednesday, December 19

The Five Points Count area covers much of the east side of Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, including the grasslands and Chihuahuan desert portions of the refuge. Meet at the refuge visitor center at 6:30 a.m. Contact Steve and Nancy Cox at 505-345-2385 or [sora@spinn.net](mailto:sora@spinn.net) for more information.

## Albuquerque

Saturday, December 22

Please contact the count compiler, Dave Mehlman, (505) 350-3616, [mehlmnd@earthlink.net](mailto:mehlmnd@earthlink.net) if you wish to participate and meet at the Flying Star Café, 10700 Corrales Rd NW, Albuquerque, 87114, by 7:00 a.m. The compilation party will be at Rob's Place at the O'Niell's Pub in Nob Hill (4310 Central Ave SE, Albuquerque, NM 87108). Dave has reserved the space from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. and you are welcome to arrive any time after 5:00 p.m.

## Sandia Mountains

Wednesday, December 26

Please contact the compiler, Nick Pederson, at 505-417-8665 or [ndpederson83@gmail.com](mailto:ndpederson83@gmail.com), if you wish to participate and for details on where and when to meet.

# Winter Weekend Field Trips

## Percha Dam and Caballo Lake

Sunday, January 6

Join Kim Score for a trip down to Sierra County to visit the Percha Dam and Caballo Lake State Park areas, located 2.5 hours south of Albuquerque. We will be birding both parks, and depending on level of interest we may also visit other nearby hot spots at Elephant Butte Reservoir. In addition to a variety of wintering waterfowl, we are likely to find a few interesting *Zonotrichia* sparrows, gulls, loons and mergansers. *Phainopepla* and *pyrrhuloxia* are residents here, and rare species such as purple finch and Lawrence's goldfinch could also be possible. Bring your spotting scope, camera and walking shoes, along with a day pack with water, snacks and lunch. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Percha Dam State Park entrance near the pay station kiosk. Please contact Kim at [firefinch@usa.net](mailto:firefinch@usa.net) to RSVP and with specific questions. Also, let her know if you're interested in carpooling from Albuquerque. Camping is available at both parks, and hotel accommodations can be made on Saturday night in Truth or Consequences, 20 miles to the north. It's a great time of year to warm up in the local hot springs!



## Maxwell NWR

Saturday, February 2

Join Jim Mosley on a trip up to Maxwell National Wildlife Refuge to target wintering raptors and waterfowl. Hopefully some other surprises will be found as well, like swans and American tree sparrows.

Meet at the refuge headquarters at 8:00 a.m. This is a great birding location, but there are limited amenities in the nearby town. Please come prepared and bring plenty of water and snacks for the day. Warm clothing is a must, and spotting scopes are also very beneficial at this location. The trip should finish before noon; however, the group may want to stop at Las Vegas NWR on the way back. Please contact Jim at [nmbirder1964@gmail.com](mailto:nmbirder1964@gmail.com) to RSVP and with specific questions. Also, let him know if you're interested in carpooling from Albuquerque.

## Ladder Ranch Tour Discounts Offered

Birding tours at Ted Turner Expeditions' Ladder Ranch will be available to CNMAS members at a discount beginning this spring.

Near Truth or Consequences, the area includes Las Animas Creek, an Audubon Important Bird Area, where spring and summer residents include Common Black Hawks, Zone-tailed Hawks, Peregrine Falcons, Elf Owls, Yellow-billed Cuckoos and others. The ranch's Chihuahuan Desert grasslands are home to Horned Larks, Cassin's Sparrows, Black-throated Sparrows and Burrowing Owls.

Details are available at <http://tedturnerexpeditions.com>. Reservations can be made by calling 1-877-288-7637.



## Owl's Pick for Bird of the Quarter:

Osprey near Pena Blanca

by Michele Weisz



# Conservation Corner



By Bruce Dale, Conservation Action Committee  
Chair

✿ With the midterm election behind us we will soon have several new faces in public office. We are hopeful that we will find receptivity among local, state and federal officials to conservation matters of importance to our membership.

One issue that has been a longstanding concern is the condition and status of the Melrose Woods migratory trap in Roosevelt County, one of Audubon New Mexico's priority Important Bird Areas (IBA). Many of you have been amazed at the diversity of warblers and other migrants it attracts. Unfortunately, the site has been degraded by wildfire and misuse in recent years. We believe that conditions may be right for an effort to restore and secure Melrose Woods for the future through engagement with the land commissioner, the leaseholder and other stakeholders, with the support of Audubon New Mexico.

✿ One of our members, Susan Chaudoir, has brought to our attention an urgent conservation concern in Albuquerque: an application by a developer to build 73 homes on the historic Poole estate at the end of Namaste Road east of Coors Boulevard. This property sits directly above, and connects to, the San Antonio Oxbow, a 60-acre wetland across the river from the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park. The Oxbow is important habitat for a variety of waterfowl and migratory passerines, and this development would be a major disturbance. The City of Albuquerque's Environmental Planning Division will hear the application on December 13, 2018, at 8:30 a.m. at Plaza Del Sol, 600 Second Street NW. Members, especially those who live on the West Side, are encouraged to attend. Neighborhood associations and individuals have submitted comments in opposition. For more information, e-mail Susan at [edu.chaudoir@gmail.com](mailto:edu.chaudoir@gmail.com).

## Conservation Action Tip: 'Cides

By Mikal Deese, CAC Member

Pesticides, from a wild bird rehabilitator's perspective:

I would like you, I mean you personally, to think about the consequences of our dependence upon 'cides. Pesticides, including insecticides, herbicides and rodenticides, are all chemical compounds intended to kill some form of life.

I could remind you that the insecticide spray accumulates through the food chain. The dying bug is eaten by a songbird, which is eaten by a Cooper's Hawk.

Or I could tell you that some studies have found that 90 percent of raptors test positive for rat poisons.

I could remind you that the EPA allows commercial and agricultural interests to broadcast chemical 'cides that are deemed too dangerous for sale to the public. Unfortunately, there is very little application oversight or research on the effects.

Or I could simply invite you to sit with me as I attempt to ease the suffering of a Raven having terminal convulsions because he's eaten the poisoned corn intended to kill pigeons. Or at another moment when I'm trying to save the life of a majestic Red-tailed Hawk that is currently reduced to lying on her side, gasping for breath, unable to move. The bewildered bird looks into my eyes as a trickle of blood escapes her mouth. In the absence of trauma, that is a tell-tale sign of death by rodenticide. You will remember the experience and be changed.

So, choose a non-toxic garden spray.

Try a wasp trap that attracts and drowns rather than poisons.

Use snap-traps for rodent control, never ever baits.

Question what the maintenance worker is spraying where your kids play.

The soul you save may be your own.

# News from Our Partner Organizations

## Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge

Geology of San Lorenzo Canyon

Friday, December 7, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Join Refuge staff and Geologist Dave Love for this exploration of San Lorenzo Canyon. Learn about the forces that shaped this complex landscape. Reservations are required to assure you a place on this scenic hike. Hiking boots, water and lunch recommended. Don't forget your camera. Call (505) 864-4021 to make your reservations.

Amigos de la Sevilleta Annual Meeting

Saturday, January 12, 12:30 to 4:00 p.m.

There will be a short business meeting and a talk by Justin Stevenson about the bats of New Mexico. Justin will have a couple of live bats along for the audience to meet. Must be current members of the Amigos; you can join or renew at the event.

Christmas Bird Counts

Please see the CBC schedule on page 2.

## Winter Climate Watch Surveys

The slogan for National Audubon's science-based climate change initiative is "It's Time to Give a Flock." Audubon citizen scientists from across the country will once again fan out and conduct five-minute point counts of bluebird and nuthatch species between January 15 and February 15.

CNMA's volunteers, coordinated by Judy Liddell, have been participating since the initiative's inception in 2016. "We have not expanded into Socorro County or southern Tarrant County and would welcome volunteers interested in surveying in those areas," said Liddell.

Individual volunteers, or teams of two or three, pick one day during the four-week period to conduct their 12 point counts, tallying all birds seen or heard, in addition to their target species of either bluebirds or nuthatches, and then entering their tallies into eBird.

To learn more, please email [jliddell@msn.com](mailto:jliddell@msn.com).

## Valle de Oro NWR

Eat Pizza and Support the Friends

Please stop by California Pizza Kitchen in ABQ Uptown any time during business hours on Wednesday or Thursday December 12 or 13 and 20 percent of your purchase will be contributed to the Friends of Valle de Oro NWR!

Transformation Thursday

Every Thursday we post updates on all that is happening on the refuge and in the neighborhood that week so people can follow along, watch the refuge grow and plan their visits. You can follow us on Facebook or sign up for emails at [vdolistens@fws.gov](mailto:vdolistens@fws.gov).

Christmas Bird Count

See the CBC schedule on page 2.

## Rio Grande Nature Center

<http://www.rgnc.org/home.htm>

## Belen Marsh Fall Clean-up

On October 27 a group of seven volunteers came out and helped pick up trash around the Belen Marsh. The Belen Marsh Committee would like to thank them, and we'd like to thank CNMAS for the publicity. We would also like to thank the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area staff who picked up the filled trash bags and hauled them to the dump.

We were dismayed by the amount of trash in the area. It seems a dirt road south of the Taco Bell and across the road from the marsh has been used as a dump site by residents of the area. It would take a front-end loader and a large clean-up crew to make a dent in the piles. We did our best and decided to make authorities aware. A number of photos were sent to area officials requesting assistance.

Our next clean-up day will take place in April 2019, and details will be on the CNMAS web site.

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# AUDUBON THURSDAY BIRDERS SCHEDULE

## Winter 2018–2019

### DECEMBER 6

Walk along through the bosque from the Paseo del Bosque, Shining River Access Point, followed by a holiday potluck, with Rebecca Gracey: 505-362-5095, [maryrebeccagracey@gmail.com](mailto:maryrebeccagracey@gmail.com). Meet at 10:00 a.m. in the parking lot located directly south of Paseo del Norte on the west side of Rio Grande Boulevard. If coming from the east or west sides of town, there is no exit from Paseo del Norte to Rio Grande.

After the walk, the group will go to the nearby home of David Watkins and Maxine Schmidt. Directions will be handed out after the walk. The hosts will provide soup, and the guests should bring other dishes and beverages to share with the group. The lunch should end by 2:00 p.m.

### DECEMBER 13

Walk in Calabacillas Arroyo with Maurice Mackey: 505-897-0415, [moemackey@comcast.net](mailto:moemackey@comcast.net). Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot on the west side of the Rio Grande. The area is reached by driving north on Coors, past Paseo del Norte and Irving Boulevard, turning east on Westside Drive, 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 lane and turn onto Westside Drive. The walk will end before 12:00 p.m.

### DECEMBER 20

Walk around the Tingley bosque ponds with Lefty Arnold: 505-514-9398, [wanderingtattlerja@yahoo.com](mailto:wanderingtattlerja@yahoo.com). Meet at 8:57 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, then turn left on Tingley Drive. Take the first right from Tingley Drive, and then turn right again 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 and will end before 12:00 p.m.

### DECEMBER 27

Walk around the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park with Leah Henzler: 505-280-2085, [lfcairns@gmail.com](mailto:lfcairns@gmail.com). Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Candelaria wetland blind in the northeast corner of the Nature Center parking lot. A \$3 parking fee, State Parks pass or Friends of the RGNC pass is required per car. The visitor center opens at 10:00. After that time one may use the restrooms and/or purchase either parking pass. The walk will be about one mile in length and will end before 12:00 p.m.

### JANUARY 3

Walk the perimeter of Poblanos Fields Open Space with Sarah and Tom Peterson: 505-228-8091, [spetersoninabq@gmail.com](mailto:spetersoninabq@gmail.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. It will be an easy 1.5-mile walk ending before 12:00 p.m.

### JANUARY 10

Drive to see raptors on the eastern plains of Torrance County with Bonnie Long: 505-379-1985, [cantrade\\_1@yahoo.com](mailto:cantrade_1@yahoo.com). Meet at 8:20 a.m. for an 8:30 departure from the Tijeras Senior Center on NM 333/old Route 66. To reach the parking area, turn north on Tijeras Avenue, just west of the Tijeras Library. A secondary meeting place is the Pilot Travel Center located on north NM 41 after taking the second Moriarty exit from I-40. Meet there at 9:00 a.m. The group will drive south of Moriarty to look for raptors. Lunch will be at the Chili Hills Restaurant on the far west side of Moriarty, just west of the closed McDonald's. The group will be back in Tijeras by 2:00 p.m. For those not driving the shared gas expense is \$5 at five cents per mile.

### JANUARY 17

Walk in the Alameda Open Space in the North Valley with Barbara Hussey: 505-385-1165, [brhussey@flash.net](mailto:brhussey@flash.net). Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the open space parking lot on the south side of Alameda Boulevard, just east of the Rio Grande. The one-mile walk will end before 12:00 p.m.

*continued on the next page*

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# THURSDAY BIRDERS CONTINUED

## JANUARY 24

Visit Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge with Linda Otterson: 505-280-3123, [lotterson300@comcast.net](mailto:lotterson300@comcast.net). Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the refuge entrance 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 Broadway. Turn south on Broadway and drive to Desert Road. Drive west on Desert to Second Street and go south to Valle de Oro. The group will drive to different areas of the refuge and then take short walks in the bosque. The trip will end before 12:00 p.m.

## JANUARY 31

Visit the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area in Belen with Linda Heinze: 505-270-1779, [manzanogal@gmail.com](mailto:manzanogal@gmail.com). Meet at 8:50 a.m. for a 9:00 departure from the parking lot behind the Hawthorn Suites on Gibson and University Boulevard or 9:45 at WWCA on NM 47. The walk will be about two miles in length. Lunch will be at The Moltos Italian Cafe, 143 Highway 314 SW in Los Lunas. For those not driving the shared gas expense is \$4 at five cents per mile. The group will back in Albuquerque by 2:00 p.m.

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## *Feathered Dreams: a Book Review*

By Judy Liddell

*Feathered Dreams*, a book of poems, stories and images by CNMAS member Janet Ruth, captures the souls of the birds that frequent her Corrales garden, as well as those she studied as an ornithologist and some of the exotic birds she encountered on her international travels.

Who could resist a poem titled "Wheet, Wheet," which describes the antics of a Curve-billed Thrasher? The journal essay "Living With Otis" chronicles a year in the life of a Western Screech Owl and its offspring that took up residence in her yard, providing a rare glimpse into the life of a small owl that most of us can only glance at. Ruth's essay "When I Stop Counting" reminds us what we discover when we stop to observe a bird's behavior, rather than just tick it off our list.

This book will bring us closer to the wonders of nature.

## FEBRUARY 7

Visit Pueblo Montano Open Space for a walk along the bosque with Glenda and Jim Morling: 269-420-8322, [glendamorling@gmail.com](mailto:glendamorling@gmail.com). Meet at 9:30 a.m. in the parking lot that is located on the south side of Montano and one block east of Coors. It can be accessed from either street. This will be a two-mile walk ending before 12:00 p.m.

## FEBRUARY 14

Visit the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge with Judy Liddell: 505-220-7998, [jliddell@msn.com](mailto:jliddell@msn.com). Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure from the parking lot behind the Hawthorn Suites on University Boulevard and Gibson. A secondary meeting place will be McDonald's in Socorro at 9:15 for a quick rest stop and just enough time to get food to go. Please tell Judy by February 13 if you plan to meet the group in Socorro. The group will depart for the Bosque del Apache at 9:30. Bring lunch. A \$5 entrance fee or federal pass is required per car. The group should be back in Albuquerque by 5:00 p.m. For those not driving the shared gas expense is \$10 at five cents per mile.

## FEBRUARY 21

Tour Bernardo Waterfowl Management Area (part of the Ladd S. Gordon Waterfowl Complex) with Ken Zaslow: 512-576-5309, [kzaslow88@gmail.com](mailto:kzaslow88@gmail.com). Meet at 8:20 a.m. for an 8:30 departure from the parking lot behind the Hawthorn Suites located on the north side of Gibson and east side of University Boulevard. The area is 50 miles south of Albuquerque on I-25, taking exit 175, then driving on the east frontage road and going north for a short distance to the entrance. Bring lunch. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$5 at five cents per mile. The group should be back in Albuquerque by 3:00 p.m.

## FEBRUARY 28

Walk in the Durand Open Space in the South Valley with Becky Purvis: 505-877-2517, [rpurvis3@yahoo.com](mailto:rpurvis3@yahoo.com). Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the open space parking lot at 4736 Isleta SW. From I-25, exit on Rio Bravo, drive west on Rio Bravo and turn south onto Isleta Boulevard. Drive two miles to the property on the east side of Isleta. The walk will be about one mile in length and will end before 12:00 p.m.

# 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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