Spring Forward for Programs

March 21
Kathy Granillo, Refuge Manager, Sevilleta NWR

Cool Research on the Gray Vireo

The Gray Vireo is a little-known southwestern songbird listed as threatened within the state of New Mexico.

One of the places where you can find this confiding songbird is on the Sevilleta NWR in the juniper savanna-dominated portions of the refuge. For the last eight years, Kathy and UNM students have investigated various aspects of the Gray Vireo’s breeding biology, cowbird parasitism and habitat characteristics.

April 18
Paul Tashjian, Audubon’s Associate Director of Freshwater Conservation

The Natural History of the Rio Grande near Bernardo

Come learn about the natural history of the Rio Grande near Bernardo, New Mexico, and how this relates to the remarkable habitat found at Bernardo and La Joya Wildlife Management Areas. This discussion will provide a framework for understanding current conditions while pointing towards future habitat improvements.

Who is this handsome creature?

See the May 1–2 trip in the Thursday Birder schedule in this issue.

Photo by Silas Fischer

Photo by Paul Tashjian

Photo by Joe Schelling
CNMAS Spring Weekend Field Trips

Saturday, March 30
Prairie-Chickens and Eastern Migrant Traps
with Patrick Collins and Kim Score

This is a special joint birding adventure with the United Field Ornithologists (UFOs!) of Roswell, co-led by Patrick Collins and Kim Score. Participation is limited to 10 people from CNMAS, so please RSVP soon.

We will be visiting Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek sites to witness these charismatic birds in full breeding display, and then target various local hotspots to look for early migrants and eastern specialties.

Prepare for a long day with a very early start! We will meet at 5:00 a.m. at the Enchanted Farm Retreat (1804 E. College Road, Roswell, 88201) to carpool to the Prairie-Chicken leks. Afterwards, we plan to visit Waldrop Park rest area, Conoco Pond and Maljamar rest stop before a late lunch in Artesia. Possible stops after lunch may include migrant traps at the Artesia Cemetery, Lake Van, the Dexter Fish Hatchery and South Park Cemetery. The trip will conclude around 3:00 pm.

Contact Kim for questions and to RSVP: firefinch@usa.net.

Photo by Grant Beauprez

Sunday, April 28
Socorro and Water Canyon
with David Buckley and Adrienne Warner

Visit Turtle Bay on the New Mexico Tech campus, Water Canyon and The Box on US 6 west of Socorro. We will be in search of migrating and breeding songbirds, including Red-faced Warblers in Water Canyon. We should also see Acorn Woodpeckers, various raptors, sparrows and possible early Gray Vireos.

The trip is limited to 14 people and carpooling is encouraged. Because the roads can be a bit rough, we are hoping to take high-clearance cars or SUVS up the canyon. Meet at 6:15 a.m. for a 6:30 departure from the parking lot behind the Hawthorn Suites on Gibson SE and University Boulevard in Albuquerque. There will be a secondary meeting place at the McDonald’s in Socorro at 7:30 a.m. and a departure from there by 7:45.

There will be short walks at the various stops. Bring water, snacks and lunch. The trip should end by mid-afternoon.

Contact David at buteo412@gmail.com to RSVP. Please let him know by April 21 if you plan to meet the group at McDonald’s.

Saturday, May 18
Quarai Ruins and Manzano Pond
with Jim Mosley

Join Jim Mosley on a spring birding walk at Quarai Ruins, Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument. We will be targeting neotropical migrants and resident breeding songbirds. The stream bed and riparian habitat provide an ideal location for warblers. Great Horned Owl is also a very good candidate.

This will be an easy walk on well-maintained, front-country hiking trails around the monument. The walk will conclude around noon, although a side trip to Manzano Pond will be available for those interested. Bring water, snacks and lunch.

We will meet at the Salinas Pueblo Visitor’s Center at 8:00 a.m. to begin the day. Carpooling is encouraged from the Sprouts Market parking lot in the Four Hills Shopping Center at the southeast corner of Central and Tramway in Albuquerque.
This is the time of year when we look forward to seeing songbirds returning north, stopping here and there along the way to rest and forage, often in our backyards. It should also be the time of year when we reassess the safety of our yards and homes to assure that birds will have safe passage to resume their migration journey. As part of our community outreach for conservation, CNMAS will give a talk to the Albuquerque Xeric Garden Club on “Attracting Birds and Keeping Them Safe.” We will discuss the importance of native plants and water for attracting birds and show how to reduce hazards such as reflective glass, outdoor cats and garden poisons. The talk is free and open to the public: Saturday, March 16, 10 a.m., at the Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Blvd NE.

Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge has approved a conceptual architectural design for its visitor center. The design is intended to qualify for the LEED Pilot Credit No. 55, Bird Collision Deterrence, offered by the U.S. Green Building Council. We recently provided information to the architectural firm on options for bird-friendly glazing based on testing by the American Bird Conservancy. We expect that the Valle de Oro visitor center may be the first facility intended for wildlife viewing to be awarded this credit and a national model for bird-friendly nature center design. See https://www.formativearchitecture.com.

Conservation Action Tip

If you have ever had a bird die by colliding against a window at your home, you know how distressing that can be. Unfortunately, decals and UV-reflective stickers commonly available in stores have not been shown to be effective in tests by the American Bird Conservancy when applied in accordance with product instructions. But several easy and inexpensive ways to reduce the hazard of reflective glass do exist. Download an information sheet with specific options from the Conservation link on the CNMAS web site, http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org/. Take action now, since migration is already under way!

Owl’s Pick for Bird of the Quarter:

Swainson’s Hawk near MacIntosh

by Bonnie Long
A Rosy Picture: Rosy-Finches in New Mexico

By Amber West

Every winter, three species of pink-blushed Rosy-Finches make the trek from their summer breeding grounds in the mountains of western North America to the southernmost tip of their wintering range at Sandia Crest in Bernalillo County. It is unknown how long they have been doing so—the earliest records in the New Mexico Ornithological Society’s archives show a flock of 40 was seen at the Crest on 26 November 1955.

Their presence has made Sandia Crest an international hotspot. But like most mountain finches, they tend towards irruptive patterns, and for several years in the late 1990s none were seen. When they returned in late 1999, Ken and Mary Lou Schneider scattered seed for them in the parking lot. With the combined efforts of the Schneiders, the U.S. Forest Service, CNMAS, the Sandia Crest House and Lee Hopwood, feeders were installed at the Crest House on February 4, 2002, and the birds have been seen every winter since then.

Starting on January 4, 2004, through the efforts of then-high school birders Ryan Beaulieu and Raymond VanBuskirk, Rio Grande Bird Research (RGBR) under the auspices of Steve and Nancy Cox began a banding project at the Crest. Since then, a staggering 3,260 have been banded by RGBR.

The Rosy-Finches at the Crest seem to have a high rate of site fidelity, as not only does RGBR often recapture the same birds throughout the winter, but since 2004 Rosy-Finches banded in previous seasons have been recaptured over 250 times, a rate of about 7.6%. In comparison, recapture rates for near-passerines and passerines as a group for North America is around 1.3% (BBL, 2019).

The composition of the flocks varies from year to year. Over the 16 years almost half of those banded have been Black Rosy-Finches. About 30% were Brown-capped and the remaining 20% were Gray-crowned. Two subspecies of Gray-crowned, the Interior race and the Gray-cheeked or Hepburn’s race, winter in the Sandias.

Although Black Rosy-Finches are the most common overall, each species has been the most common for at least one season, such as in the winter of 2016–17 when Brown-capped Rosy-Finches were almost 80% of the banded birds. In the winter of 2006-07, Hepburn’s Gray-crowned actually outnumbered their Interior race cousins.

The size of the wintering population in the Sandias is also quite variable. In the bumper winter season of 2006-07, 802 birds were recorded. On the other end of the spectrum, only 12 were recorded in the winter of 2013–14. A typical year will run somewhere between 100 and 200.

The reason for these large swings is not well understood. A current hypothesis is that the severity of the winter in the Rockies determines how many Rosy-Finches brave such a long and dangerous journey, as well as which species is more prevalent. RGBR hopes to answer this question by correlating banding data with weather reports and by analyzing hydrogen isotopes to determine specific breeding locations.

So far this winter, RGBR has banded 170 Rosy-Finches, 144 of them Black, 17 Brown-capped and nine Interior Gray-crowned. And on December 2, 2018, RGBR caught a male Black Rosy-Finch (above) first banded in January 2011 as a “second calendar year” bird, making him eight years and six months old, just two months shy of the national record!

Weather permitting, RGBR will continue banding at the Crest on Sundays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. until the end of March or until the birds leave. Our master bander Steve Cox and all of our volunteers will be happy to answer your questions and help you identify these tricky birds. We hope to see you there!
I attended the 2018 Audubon Texas Assembly which was held in Bastrop, Texas, on the weekend of November 3. Desiree Loggins, the Network Regional Manager/TX, NM, working out of the Audubon New Mexico Chapter, was the organizer. I have worked with Desiree on the Western Rivers Bird Count and the Restore the Flood Plain work day at Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge. I knew that this would be worthwhile if Desiree had planned it.

My personal “take away” is that Central New Mexico Audubon Society ROCKS! Thanks to Judy Liddell, former V.P. and program chair, our chapter is ahead of others by being the test chapter for the Climate Watch Survey protocol. This winter marks the beginning of the fourth year Judy has organized the survey teams. The survey generates important data used to document the effects of climate change on birds. Surprising none of the chapters at the assembly had participated in the National Audubon program.

Thanks to Bruce Dale, chair of the Conservation Action Committee, we are ahead of others with an effective Window Collision program. Through the American Bird Conservancy, Bruce is now able to give “continuing education credited” workshops to architects. He has given many community talks. One such talk resulted in the installation of collision deterrent film on the windows at the ABQ Bio Park and Zoo.

Several chapters were interested in the CNMAS Cats Indoors Campaign which has helped the City of Albuquerque reduce the number of free-roaming cats. This has been the result of our tabling at events and distributing educational literature to veterinary clinics and Animal Welfare as well as privately owned pet stores.

CNMAS may not have our own “Plants for Birds” program but we collaborate with Friends of Valle de Oro in developing a Backyard Refuge Certification program and are founding members of the Albuquerque Urban Bird Coalition.

You can see why I am so proud of our all-volunteer chapter. New Mexico has only four Audubon Chapters. Someday I would like to see these chapters hold their very own Assembly to share resources and experiences.

Below is the summary of the 2018 Audubon Texas Assembly.

Sixty guests attended which includes chapter members, youth leaders from Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, staff, presenter, and other guests from around the Network (chapters, members and allies on the ground). Together, we addressed municipal, state and federal advocacy and bird conservation opportunities. Half of the 20 active chapters in the state were present and through a series of group activities, we came to the following conclusions:

- The Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Land Conservation were the top three policy issues that the Audubon Network and state program should work on together.
- The Network is successful at engaging in school programs, connecting with key decision makers, advocating through sign-on letters and land acquisition.
- The Network is successful at sending letters to decision makers, partnerships and land acquisition.
- The Network is challenged by successful fund-raising, lack of diversity in age and race and understanding who can support them at the state and national level.
- The Network would like to see regular policy calls, templates and talking points for priority issues, more peer-to-peer sharing and support, connectivity with centers, an improved chapter-to-state relationship, speakers for monthly meetings and regular trainings and skill building.
Spring Belen Marsh Clean-Up

The next Belen Marsh Clean-up will take place on April 13 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Take the first I-25 exit into Belen and head east approximately 1.5 miles and you will see a Taco Bell on your right. The Marsh is located directly across the street from Taco Bell on Don Felipe Road.

Participants will be given trash bags, safety vests and gloves. Water and snacks will also be provided. Please come out and see an amazing place to bird and take a little time out of your day to make it beautiful. If you have any questions contact Eileen Beaulieu at (505) 249-7929 or dulcebeaulieu@comcast.net.

For more about Belen Marsh, see the May 1–2 Birdathon listing in the Thursday Birders schedule in this issue.

Historical Notes: the Thursday Birders

The following is an excerpt from the full history compiled by Thursday Birder members Reuben Weisz, John “Lefty” Arnold, Rebecca Gracey, Joe Schelling and Mary Lou Arthur. For the rest of the story, follow this link to the CNMAS website: http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org/?page_id=2777.

The Thursday Birders is a group of dedicated, inquisitive, jovial and friendly birdwatchers that is affiliated with the Central New Mexico Audubon Society in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

As the name implies, the Thursday Birders, which is open to anyone interested in birds regardless of their experience, embark on field trips on Thursdays throughout the year. Exceptions to this every-Thursday schedule are some holidays and the annual Festival of the Cranes at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge south of Socorro, New Mexico.

This group of birders—and their field trips to nearby and far-flung destinations within New Mexico—began in 1988 and has continued to the present. During its 30-plus years, the group has amassed an impressive list of 302 bird species that have been identified on its field trips.

Allene Kleweno on a Thursday Birder tree-decorating outing in November 2001
Photo by Walter Kleweno

Bonus!

Owl’s Second Pick for Bird of the Quarter:

Spotted Towhees by Tom Brahl
News from Our Partner Organizations

Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge

Spring Schedule of Events

Spring full-moon hike, Tuesday, March 19, 4:30–8:00 p.m. Join Amigos de la Sevilleta volunteer naturalists on this guided hike. No reservations required.

Native plants, Friday, April 5, 8:45 a.m.–3:00 p.m. Reservations required: https://www.amigosdelasevilleta.org.

Pino Rim cactus hike, Tuesday, April 30, 8:45 a.m.–3:00 p.m. Explore Sevilleta and its spring blooms on this strenuous hike with staff and naturalist. Reservations needed (see above).

Wildflower hike with a volunteer naturalist, Friday, May 10, 9:30 a.m. No reservations required.

World Migratory Bird Day, Saturday, May 18, 8:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Join Refuge Manager Kathy Granillo for a hike in the riparian area. Reservations required. For more information on World Migratory Bird Day, visit www.birdday.org.

Hummingbird banding, Saturday, June 15, 8:00–10:00 a.m. Join Ann Adams and learn some fascinating facts about these tiny birds. No reservations required.

Upcoming from BRANT:

Peeps & Plovers and Owls

April 27: Shorebirds are perhaps the most inspiring migrants on the planet, completing unimaginable physical feats. But these champions of flight are also champions of all looking alike! Join BRANT and we’ll teach you to sort out these confusing masters of migration.

May 18: Owls are among the most mysterious and sought-after families of birds in the world, but heading out to find them can be intimidating. Not to worry, BRANT will teach you the skills you need to make your next night out a night to remember.

Registration fee for each workshop is $175, with $25 donated to local conservation, research or outdoor education.

To learn more about these workshops, visit BrantTours.com/tours/ or call 708 87 BRANT.

Author of The Feather Thief to Speak April 30

Kirk Johnson, author of The Feather Thief, will give a talk April 30 at 7:00 p.m. at the UNM Continuing Education auditorium, 1634 University Blvd. SE, Albuquerque NM 87102.

CNMAS is co-sponsor of the event with the UNM Museum of Southwestern Biology (MSB).

The Feather Thief is a true story about a thief of historic bird skins and the art of tying Victorian salmon flies.

The book will be sold on site by Bookworks. MSB will also display bird specimens that relate to the book.

To learn more about the book and how New Mexico fits into the story go to an interview with Kirk Johnson by Sean Cole, Chicago Public Radio: https://www.thisamericanlife.org/ and click on “view archive.”
MARCH 7
Visit Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in the South Valley with Linda Otterson: 505-280-3123, lotterson300@comcast.net. 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. Then west on Rio Bravo to Second Street, turn south on Second and drive 3.2 miles to the entrance. The group will drive to different areas of the refuge and take short walks from there. The trip will end before 12:00 p.m.

MARCH 14
Walk in the Corrales bosque with Perrianne Houghton: 505-321-2015, Perrianne_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. The walk should end by 12:00 p.m. Lunch is planned at Village Pizza in Corrales.

MARCH 21
Walk around the Tingley bosque ponds with Leah Henzler: 505-280-2085, lfcairns@gmail.com. Meet at 9:00 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 12:00 p.m.

MARCH 28
Visit the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge with Rebecca Gracey: 505-362-5095, maryrebecca.gracey@gmail.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. 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.

APRIL 4
Drive to Pena Blanca and Cochiti Lake with Barbara Hussey: 505-385-1165, brhussey@flash.net. Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure from the parking lot on the south side of Sprouts in the Far North Shopping Center on the east side of San Mateo and north of Academy Boulevard NE. If you want to meet the group west of I-25 on NM 22 to Santo Domingo and Pena Blanca, contact Barbara by April 3. Bring lunch. The group should be back in Albuquerque by 2:00 p.m. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is $5 at five cents per mile.

APRIL 11
Hike Embudito Canyon in the Sandia Mountain foothills with Lefty Arnold: 505-514-9398, wanderingtattlerja@yahoo.com. Meet at 8:27 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 12:00 p.m.

APRIL 18
Travel to the Coyote del Malpais Golf Course at 2001 George Hanosh Boulevard, in Grants with Ken Zaslow: 512-576-5309, kzaslow88@gmail.com. Meet at 6:20 a.m. for a 6:30 departure from the northwest corner of the parking lot of the Hotel Albuquerque, 800 Rio Grande NW. To reach the hotel from I-40, take the Rio Grande exit and drive south to the first stop light at Bellamah NW. Turn east toward the hotel and enter the parking lot on the right. From Albuquerque the group will travel west on I-40 for 75 miles. Take exit 89 from I-40 and stay on the service road to the service station on the north side of I-40 (600 McBride Road), for a bathroom break and snacks. If one plans to meet the group there, tell Ken before April 18. The group will walk approximately three miles around the golf course and the many ponds there, and then have lunch in the club house. One may bring lunch and eat outside on the porch, or buy lunch at the snack bar. For those not driving the shared gas expense is $7.50 at five cents per mile. The trip will end by 3:00 p.m. back in Albuquerque.

continued on the next page
THURSDAY BIRDERS CONTINUED

APRIL 25
Travel to Manzanos pond in Manzano 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 north side of the Sprouts parking lot in the Four Hills Village Shopping Center on Central Avenue and Tramway Boulevard 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. The group will be back in Albuquerque by 2:00 p.m.

MAY 1–2
Regular attendees of Thursday Birder outings are invited to join the Vermilion Flycatcher team for the Thursday Birder Birdathon led by Rebecca Gracey: 505-362-5095, maryrebeccagracey@gmail.com. Contact her if you would like to be a member of the team.

The group will be going to locations near Carlsbad: Rattlesnake Springs, Washington Ranch, Slaughter Canyon and Brantley Lakes.

The money raised by Birdathon participants will be used by Central New Mexico Audubon Society to help preserve the Belen Marsh. The land is owned by the Valencia County Fair Association, which would have made a parking lot of the marsh in 2008 if not for actions of CNMAS and local residents.

The goals of the Birdathon are to see as many bird species as possible in a 24-hour period, to see species found in only this part of New Mexico and to raise money. All participants may solicit pledges from their friends and family and/or make a donation themselves. Suggested pledges are $0.50–$1.00 per bird, or a special pledge of a larger amount for life birds. Donations are tax-free, and gifts from non-participants are welcome. Send your check to CNMAS, P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque, 87190.

The team will be staying at Washington Ranch the nights of May 1 and 2. Rebecca has reserved all the available rooms there. Those rooms are all taken, she will direct people to the Rodeway Inn (575-785-2148) in White’s City, only 15 minutes from Washington Ranch.

The Birdathon will take place on May 2. Team members should arrive the afternoon of May 1 to check into their rooms before a picnic dinner at 6:00 p.m. at the Rattlesnake Springs picnic tables to make plans for the following day.

The drive from Albuquerque is about five hours. Rebecca will send you details when you contact her.

MAY 9
Travel to the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area and Belen Marsh with Linda Heinze: 505-270-1779, manzanogali@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 8:45 at Whitfield, located at 2424 NM 47. After a 1.5-mile walk around the Whitfield perimeter, the group will go to the Belen marsh. Participants are invited to have lunch together at the Sakura Japanese Hibachi Grill and Sushi Bar located at 1400 Main Street, Los Lunas. The group should be back in Albuquerque by 2:00 p.m. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is $3.50 at five cents per mile.

MAY 16
Walk in the Pueblo Montano Open Space with Susan Chauvoir: 985-302-2878, s.chauvoir@mac.com. 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 those roads. It will be an easy two-mile walk ending before 12:00 p.m.

MAY 23
Visit Water Canyon and The Box on US 60 west of Socorro with Judy Liddell: 505-220-7998, jliddell@msn.com. Meet at 6:50 a.m. for a 7:00 departure from the parking lot behind the Hawthorn Suites on Gibson SE and University Boulevard. There will be a secondary meeting place at the McDonald's in Socorro at 8:15, and a departure from there at 8:30. Let Judy know by May 21 if you plan to meet the group at McDonald's. Bring lunch or buy lunch to go at McDonald's. The trip will end back in Albuquerque at 4:00 p.m. For those not driving, the shared gas expense will be $10 at five cents per mile.

MAY 30
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. 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. Follow Westside 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.
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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The CNMAS Membership Form is on the web site: cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org

Click “About Us” on the home page