



Thursday Birders Debut Virtual Trips

By Perrienne Houghton

For the last three months Glenda Morling, Sarah Peterson and I have been working on plans for future Thursday Birder outings. We have brainstormed both short- and long-term ideas.

Our long-term proposal for group trips is not finalized, but we do have a new blog on the CNMAS web site:

cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org.

Choose Trips in the black box under the photos, then click on Thursday Birders, which takes you to the blog.

Joe Schelling is the blog administrator.

To post to the blog e-mail BlogCNMAS@gmail.com. Photos should be e-mailed as separate .jpg files.

In addition to the new blog, TBs' page for each season now has suggested destinations, including links for directions and general information. This is not intended for organizing actual group walks.

Happy and safe birding to all!



Fall Programs (with a new look)

CNMAS programs will be virtual, conducted via Zoom, for the foreseeable future. To register, send an e-mail to CNMASreg@gmail.com and you will receive the link for the meetings.

7 p.m. Thursday, September 17

Dr. Michael Andersen

Towards a Stable Taxonomy of Birds

Ever wonder why the order of birds in your field guides keeps changing? On-going advances in DNA sequencing have led to new understandings of the relationships between bird families and how they evolved. Dr. Andersen is assistant professor of biology and curator of genomic resources at the UNM Museum of Southwestern Biology.

7 p.m. Thursday, October 15

Kathy Granillo

Sneak Preview of Bird Finding Guide

This fall the New Mexico Ornithological Society will publish the fourth edition of its popular guide. Kathy Granillo, NMOS president and Sevilleta NWR manager, will give us an early look at some of the birding locations in this edition.

7 p.m. Thursday, November 12

Dan Collins

Sandhill Crane Research Update

Dan Collins is the migratory bird coordinator for Region 2 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Albuquerque. Recent concerns about the Rocky Mountain population of the Greater Sandhill Crane have led the USFWS to undertake a wintering ecology study to determine habitat use, movement and resource selection in the Middle Rio Grande Valley.

Masking Up for Birds

Glenda Morling and Sarah Peterson have made another big contribution to CNMAS: face masks.

Two hundred masks in cheerful prints of birds and flowers have been sold and the profits—\$1,100—donated to the chapter.

Sarah and Glenda are grateful to those who bought the masks, and the CNMAS board will consider Glenda's suggestion to donate the money to a conservation cause.



Bosque del Apache to Host Virtual Event



With the annual Festival of the Cranes at Bosque del Apache cancelled this year, the refuge's friends group has stepped up with a virtual event November 19–21.

There will be educational webinars on topics like bird identification. In addition, the morning flyout of cranes and geese will be presented with virtual exhibitors offering photography and optics webinars. Details will be available on the web site friendsofbosquedelapache.org.



Forest Service Day Passes Now Available Online

Day-use passes for the Cibola National Forest and Grasslands can now be purchased anywhere there is cellular connectivity.

They can be used at developed recreation areas on the Black Kettle and Sandia ranger districts for which a day-use fee is charged.

At www.recreation.gov select Passes, then Site Passes. Enter Cibola National Forest in the search box. From there select Buy a Pass and enter the number of passes you want. The form will ask for your name and e-mail address, date of your visit, vehicle type and license number.

Click Add to Cart to proceed to payment and confirmation.

If you purchase in advance you can print a copy of the pass to display on your vehicle. If you purchase on the day you visit your license plate number will be available to enforcement officers.

The fee is still \$3 per day and the pass can be used at all sites on the ranger district on the day purchased.

You can still buy passes at sites with cash or check or display a federal recreation pass.



Audubon Releases Water into Rio Grande

By Paul Tashjian

Director of Freshwater Conservation,
Audubon New Mexico

To address the Rio Grande's crippling drought and one of the driest water supplies in more than 50 years, Audubon is doing its part to create solutions that work for people and birds.

Through long-term funding from the Bonneville Environmental Foundation, Audubon secured 250 acre-feet per year for the next eight years, allowing us to store water during wetter years—such as 2019—and save it for dry times such as now.

This year we are releasing 530 acre-feet of this water into the Rio Grande near Los Lunas. The effort is coordinated with water managers and biologists. Through partnerships with water managers, cities and farmers, Audubon is working on solutions to provide water for key sections of the Rio Grande south of Albuquerque.

These locations are part of the “string of pearls” strategy of the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. This management strategy takes advantage of irrigation infrastructure to efficiently deliver water to key habitat locations. We believe these partnerships are essential components of any lasting solutions.

If you asked Rio Grande water managers in January what this summer would be like for the river, they would likely have said “average.” One expert was quoted as saying that this is “the goldilocks year”—not too wet, not too dry—just right. With a decent snowpack in the upper basin, and regular storms, we all felt we were in for a decent run-off and a reasonable supply.

But fast forward four months and—like

all things 2020—normalcy is absent from the Rio Grande. The feast or famine cycle for the Rio Grande is nothing new; it's just that now the feasts are less frequent and the famines much harder. And our inability to predict these cycles makes water management more difficult. As I write this in July 2020, all eyes are on the southwestern monsoonal season. If the rains

come in spates, we could get through 2020 unscathed. If the monsoons sputter, the stresses on our farmers and rivers will be significant.

Resilience is the operative word these days for managing our climate crisis and this year gives our water managers another chance

to practice and prepare. Resilience implies an ability to bounce back and absorb stress with critical functions remaining intact.

For our farming communities, this means an ability to manage through crop shortfalls—to come out the other side of 2020 with the farm intact and hope for future revenue. For our river this means an ability to survive drying and associated stresses to plants and animals.

Along Albuquerque's Rio Grande, farming and habitat are interconnected. If farmers in the Middle Rio Grande don't have water, the river drying increases and persists; if the river goes dry in Albuquerque, downstream farmers will be looking at unplanned fallowing. Where the false narrative of “fish vs. farmer” persists to this day, now is the time to look beyond our silos: we all are impacted by the drying river and only together can we find a way forward for all of the businesses, farms, people and habitats that rely on a flowing Rio Grande.

For more information visit the Western Water Action Network under Conservation at the az.audubon.org home page.



The New Audubon Southwest

By Jon Hayes

Vice President and Executive Director
Audubon Southwest

We are excited to announce a major advancement in our work to protect birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow. As of July 1, 2020, our statewide programs in New Mexico and Arizona have joined to form a single regional program under the title of Audubon Southwest. Audubon Southwest brings together a team of leading biologists, hydrologists, policy experts and educators under a shared banner to advance the cause of bird conservation through on-the-ground conservation, scientific advancement, education and policy change.

As fires burn and rivers run dry, it has never been more apparent that climate change has arrived in our communities and that sound management of our resources and our planet is becoming a fight for survival in a region where life already exists on the margins. The creation of Audubon Southwest is how we plan to meet the urgency of this moment by becoming more efficient and more effective.

At our three Audubon facilities—Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center in Phoenix, Randall Davey Audubon Center & Sanctuary in Santa Fe and the Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch in Elgin, Arizona,—we will forge connections between our communities and the natural world, engage in scientific discovery and education and care for the wildlife habitat which we steward.

With this move we also form a membership base of 12 independent chapters and more than 40,000 members. And we achieve this while reducing overhead costs and improving operational efficiency, allowing us to invest in scaling our conservation programming to elevate the collective voice of our membership to meet the immense challenges faced by human and natural communities in the Southwest.

COVID-19 has laid bare the consequences of disregarding sound science and public investment in human well-being. And the ongoing protests of systemic racism in our country following the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and the racist incident against birder Christian Cooper provide further reminders that Audubon has to fight harder to make outdoor spaces safer for Black, Indigenous and other People of Color. It is time to recognize that the environment—clean water, clean air, healthy land—and its enjoyment by all is a matter of social justice.

The recent win for the Gila River showed us that progress is possible when we invest our time and effort in making change happen. At Audubon we don't believe in sitting idly by as the world spins. Instead we will embrace change by adapting and transforming to meet the moment. The creation

of Audubon Southwest will allow us to do just that. So please join us in this effort to restore and protect what makes the Southwest such an iconic and unforgettable landscape. Together we can ensure this place remains one where birds thrive and people prosper.



CNMAS Directory and Contacts

Central New Mexico Audubon Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit 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.

Mailing address CNMAS, P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque NM 87190-0002

The CNMAS membership form is on the web site:

<http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org>.

Click "About Us" on the home page.

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<http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org> About Us

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