

73-74

The Burrowing Owl

NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY

April-May 1974

CALENDAR FOR APRIL AND MAY

THURSDAY
April 11

Sierra Club Conservation Forum for Mayoral Candidates, UNM Anthropology Building Auditorium, 7:30 p.m. (See following article.)

SATURDAY
April 13

Field trip to the San Pedro Wash area. Meet at the church in San Antonito on Highway 14-10 at 8 a.m. and we will go from there.

THURSDAY
April 18

Regular meeting of the CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, 7:30 p.m. in the UNM Physics/Astronomy Building.
Nelson Bernard of the Forest Service will talk and show slides on Southwestern Wildflowers. Mr. Barnard is in charge of the Basal Information Branch of the Forest Service, is President of the Association of Interpretive Naturalists and has been for 25 years in the Forest Service and is head of the Division Information Service. A professional forester, he will be able to make the subject interesting even to those of us who know very little about the flora of our Southwest.

Fri., Sat.
Sun., April
19, 20, 21

Spring Wilderness Workshop, sponsored by the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee, the Sierra Club, the Central New Mexico Audubon Society and other conservation organizations, at the Holiday Inn East in Albuquerque.

Backpacking equipment and survival techniques will be shown; guides and outfitters will be there and there will be many interesting doings, even for those who do not care to go out and wrestle with Nature. See or call Mary Alice Root, 298-1135, for details.

SATURDAY
April 27

Field trip to San Gabriel State Park. This will be an easy one -- it's right in Albuquerque! Take Mountain Road west to the end -- it dead-ends right at the park. Meet there at 7:30 a.m. It should be excellent birding this time of year.

SAT.-SUNDAY
May 4-5

Gila River Bird Count, Silver City area. Jim Karo has contacted Ralph Fisher (whom many of you will remember from a program a year or so back, when he presented beautiful slides of New Mexico birds) and he has agreed to meet us on Highway 180 where it crosses the Gila River, at 8 a.m. and lead us back into the woods from there.

Myra McCormick, hostess of the Bear Creek Guest Ranch, has repeated her gracious and generous offer to entertain ten or more birders at the Ranch for \$12 each per night, bed and board if there are ten who attend the Count. Anyone who has been there before (and many who have only heard about it) know that Mrs. McCormick does right well by her guests, both in cuisine and in birdly entertainment.

Esther Tuttle is Mrs. McCormick's "agent" in Albuquerque. Contact her if you can see your way clear to treating yourself. She can give you all details; her number is 265-3274.

THURSDAY
May 16

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY. This is an important meeting, and we hope for a large attendance. It will be in the nature of a potluck supper, as we have had in the past, and full details will reach you by a special mailing, after they have been worked out.

Program Chairman Craig Andrews has once again whopped up a good program: MARILYN AND MARTIN RUOSS presenting the story of their AFRICAN SAFARI. You've seen these on TV, now see Africa through the eyes of two of our own members.

SATURDAY
May 25

Field trip to Water Canyon Campground. Take I-25 south to Socorro; go into town and turn west on Hwy. 60. Watch for the Water Canyon Road sign about 15 miles out; turn left on the Canyon road for about 7 miles, ending in the campground. Meet in the parking lot at 9 a.m.

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE AT WORK

Once again it's time for the Nominating Committee to scratch its collective head and try to come up with a slate of officers who are willing to serve for the next year in the positions necessary for the ongoing of the Chapter. The three brave souls who have agreed to serve are Ross Teuber, Chairman; Dot DeLollis and Pat Basham. If they come to you and ask you to serve, it is because they believe you will be able to do a good job; if you possibly can, say "yes" when asked to serve in a position. They are already at work and may, as we go to press, have finished their job. We hope so, because that will mean they have received your cooperation.

SAVE THE DATE

Mark on your calendar -- now, before you forget to do it -- the date of May 13, for the Annual Meeting at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church at Jefferson and Copper. Matters of menu, hour, etc., etc. will reach you later (hopefully about the first of May) but do plan to attend.

The program will be a "first" -- Marilyn and Martin Ruoss will tell us about their trip to Africa last Fall -- the first time we have had such a program by a member. You shouldn't miss it!

CONSERVATION FORUM FOR CANDIDATES FOR MAYOR

The Sierra Club is organizing a forum of special portent to anyone living in Albuquerque. On April 11 at 7:30 p.m. at the UNM Anthropology Building Auditorium, they plan a forum to which they have invited all candidates for mayor to appear and discuss their ideas on conservation as it applies to Albuquerque.

There will be opportunities to question the candidates after they have presented their views, and discuss with them any ideas forthcoming as a result of the forum. It should be interesting and informative -- plan to attend.

DID YOU EVER SEE A PURPLE DUCK?

Should you be out birdwatching, hunting or just passing by, and your eyes light on what is unmistakably a duck shape but is a most un-ducklike color, fear not, you are not taking leave of your senses.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Department is studying the life of the redhead and some other ducks currently in short supply and getting shorter. In order to study effectively, they need input from observers everywhere. Should you see such a duck, make special note of (1) the time and place of sighting -- date, approximate hour; (2) the number of birds in the flock (approximately -- it isn't necessary to count the legs and divide by two); and (3) the color of the duck (if it isn't duck-color). Then send your information to Audubon Central Midwestern Regional Office, Route 1, Box 19, Mauckport, Indiana 47142. Or you may notify one of your Chapter officers, who will see that the information is forwarded. Our Central Midwest Representative, Myron Swenson, is aiding the Fish and Wildlife people in the study and he will coordinate input from Audubon people.

In fact, should you sight one of these oddities, you might also call Dot DeLollis, head of our Rare Bird Alert (299-5384) who will put it on the Alert -- because what could be rarer than an all-green, all-purple or all-orange duck?

BORROWED EDITORIAL

The following was "borrowed" from THE RAVENS, Newsletter of the Southwestern New Mexico Audubon Society. Time did not permit requesting permission, so so Ye Ed extends apologies -- and thanks. We quote:

"PLEASE -- let us all urge Congressmen Harold Runnels and Manuel Lujan, Jr. to support the surface mining legislation in House Bill 11500. As conservationists we are -- or we should be -- familiar with this bill which is acceptable if no substitute versions are permitted to weaken it.

"Because of our energy crisis, an almost-certain attempt will be made to amend the bill unfavorably, to postpone action, or even to eliminate the legislation. Reasonable people recognize the need for coal mining, but can we accept the rape of the earth which too often accompanies it?

"So please, TODAY, write to our Congressmen, Harold Runnels and Manuel Lujan, Jr., both of them members of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, asking them to keep House Bill 11500 intact. You can address them at: House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. Your voice counts!"

"Purpose of HR 11500, for those not yet familiar, is to assure the

establishment of a nationwide program for the regulation of surface coal mining to reduce environmental impacts and to provide for the reclamation of previously mined and unreclaimed lands."

HERE'S A THOUGHT

Almost 83 years after its establishment, the U. S. still doesn't own all of Yosemite National Park. Or Rocky Mountain, Grand Teton, Everglades, Zion or Death Valley. And these are material inholdings, not scattered tracts such as those still existing even in Grand Canyon and Yellowstone.

In all, Uncle Sam needs \$100 million just to acquire properties in existing parks. Coupled with \$22.7 million to buy recently authorized areas, \$236 million for "priority" new areas, and \$160 million to satisfy legislative proposals, the bill could run to \$720 million. And this does not include development or operation.

If lands with boundaries of national forests and wildlife refuges are considered, the total figure could approach \$2 billion. Meanwhile, land prices are escalating.

-- National Wildlife, Aug.-Sept. 1973

SOMETHING ABOUT WHOOPING CRANES

While whooping cranes per se are just a little out of our territory, as an endangered species, there is much of interest about them. The following is an excerpt from the Spoonbill, publication of the Ornithology Group of the Outdoor Nature Club of Houston, Texas.

"David Blankinship, National Audubon Society Wildlife Biologist, has made an intensive 3-year study of the cranes, undertaken because the previous and definitive study by Robert Porter Allen, made in the 1940's, didn't take into account the radical changes in the birds and their habitat since then. The cranes have doubled in number, their wintering habitat altered, surrounding industrial and agricultural areas have boomed, and oil field development and drilling increased. Now barges and pleasure boats jam the Intracoastal Waterway, which slices through the middle of the cranes' wintering grounds at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. In addition, each new manager at the Refuge brought a new approach to whooping crane management; old ways were discarded and new methods tried. Clearly, a new study of the feeding, mating and territorial habits of the birds was needed to sort out the conflicting views and practices.

"Blankinship began his study in September of 1970, took the most basic approach to the science of bird study: He has spent most of his working time watching the birds at close range. Whooping cranes are one of the few birds to establish territories outside of breeding and nesting time. Normally...they defend their family group territories with menacing displays of their great wings, scarlet head skin drawn back, and lunging advances toward the intruder. The crane may clap its wings together with a sharp report to emphasize the point....The practice of grain baits on the Refuge, now stopped, seems to have caused a change in the territorial defense, for several family groups will share in the grain feeding which they will not do under normal feeding conditions. The grain poses a far more serious threat than territorial habit changes. Ducks, geese, sandhill cranes and some mammals also share the grain bait, contaminating it with droppings and parasites which are a source of serious fowl disorders."

Lack of space dictates that we continue this article in the next issue; there is considerably more interesting information which we will reproduce in the June-July Owl.

SLIDES WANTED

The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology is wanting original slides that might be donated and that would be used for duplication. If you would like to offer your name for immortality, label the slide with your name as photographer, the place and date taken and any other descriptive information which seems pertinent or interesting. Be sure to send an accompanying statement for the file, granting the Laboratory permission to make duplicates for sale or to reproduce for publication. If you wish to place any restrictions on use, please stipulate it clearly to prevent any misunderstanding. The original slides become the property of the Laboratory. With your permission, slides not incorporated in the permanent file are made available to graduate students and serious laymen. Send slides to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14850.