

BURROWING OWL



CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

August-September 1980

CALENDAR - AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

WELCOME!

CNMAS meets each month on the third Thursday at 7:30 P.M. at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, Copper and Jefferson N.E. Meetings are open to the public. Non-members and beginners are welcome on all field trips. For membership application call Dot DeLollis (299-5384).

Thursday August 7 BOARD MEETING. No Board meeting is scheduled for August.

Saturday August 17 FIELD TRIP to Tree Spring Trail in the Sandias. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at Sandia Park Post Office. Bring lunch and water for a 2-mile hike to see the Townsend's Warbler. Leader, Hart Schwarz (266-1810).

Thursday August 21 REGULAR MEETING of the Central New Mexico Audubon Society, 7:30 PM at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, Copper & Jefferson NE. Program will be a panel discussion between representatives of Public Service Co. of NM and the Save the Jemez group. Topic of discussion will be geothermal energy development in the Jemez Mountains.

Thursday September 4 BOARD MEETING at the home of Natalie Hechter, 1721 Ross Place SE (268-9290).

All CNMAS members are welcome at all Board meetings.

September 10-21 NM State Fair. CNMAS will again have a display in the Flower Building. Call Tom Bidell (243-3319) or Natalie Hechter (268-9290) to sign-up for a booth shift.

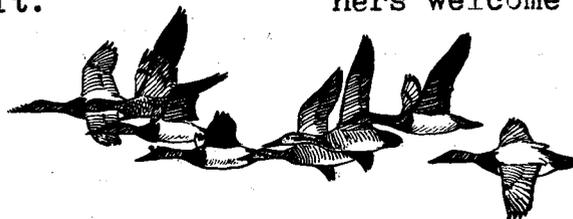
Saturday Sept. 13 FIELD TRIP to the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. Meet at 7 A.M. at the Physics & Astronomy Building on UNM campus for carpooling. Leaders Sue and Dustin Huntington will meet us at 9 A.M. at the Refuge Headquarters. Fall migration should be in full swing by this time, with some interesting shorebirds, among others. Call Dustin or Sue (831-5755) for further information.

Thursday Sept. 18 DEADLINE for submitting copy for the October-November issue of the Burrowing Owl. Contact Editor Evelyn Price, 503 8th St. NW, 87102 (242-6604). Copy submitted after this date will not necessarily be published.

Thursday Sept. 18 REGULAR MEETING of the Central New Mexico Audubon Society, 7:30 PM at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, Copper & Jefferson NE. Tentatively scheduled, we will have a presentation by a representative of the Atlantic-Richfield Company on Wilderness - A Choice for the Future.

Thursday Oct. 2 BOARD MEETING. Volunteer hosts please call Barbara Hussey (292-5626) You do not have to be a board member to host or attend board meetings.

Saturday October 4 BEGINNERS' BIRD WALK at Alameda and Corrales bosque. Meet at 7:30 AM at the gate to Shady Lakes, 11033 Highway 85 NW, Alameda. Non-beginners welcome too!



PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Thanks are in order to all those who helped make the 1980 Southwest Regional Audubon Conference at Ghost Ranch a success. Despite a few problems namely the heat wave and a minor 'flu epidemic, our regional representative Dede Armentrout and assistant rep. Rhea Copening conducted the conference very smoothly. (See Ghost Ranch Report in this issue).

CNMAS is most grateful to Dave Lange who has coordinated preparations for the conference during the last two years since we first agreed to host the meeting. Dave engineered all the field trips, published the information guide and helped with nearly all aspects of the event. He left Albuquerque last week for his new staff position with the Department of Geological Sciences at Harvard University. We wish him well and will miss him and all he has done for our chapter in the last five years as president and conservation chairman.

During the conference our chapter conducted a sale of a signed and numbered, limited edition print of the California Condor by Dustin Huntington. We still have prints left and are offering them for \$5.00. All proceeds from the sale will be donated to the Condor Recovery fund. Five dollars is a very reasonable price for a signed print and in addition you'll be helping an endangered species. Call me if you're interested (292-5626)

I have enjoyed the past two years as editor of the Burrowing Owl, but I am very pleased to announce that Evelyn Price has agreed to take over the job with this issue. Please welcome her and give her your support as you gave me.

Welcome also to Dave Tomasko who has consented to serve as director until 1982 finishing the term for Jacque Hohlfelder. Jacque regrets that he cannot devote time to CNMAS because of family and job commitments.

A third welcome goes to Natalie Hechter who took over as Hospitality Chairman with the June meeting. She will arrange for refreshments, chair setter-uppers and pass out name tags among other duties. She may be calling on you to help so please give her your support.

The Council of Albuquerque Garden Clubs for the fourth year invited CNMAS to exhibit in the Flower Building at the 1980 NM State Fair. Tom Bidell is our chairman -- he will appreciate your help and suggestions. We need volunteers to sit at our booth for three-hour shifts during the fair, Sept. 10-21. Sign-up at the August meeting or phone Tom (243-3319).

The conservation and education committees still need help. If you are interested in doing small tasks please give me a call.

Barbara Hussey

FIELD TRIP REPORT

The July 13th field trip to Oso Pass in the Southern Sandias proved to be a most enjoyable outing for the seven people who completed the eight mile hike, as well as for six others who trekked as far as the nearest, irresistible mountain stream.

In traversing three life-zones, by going 6,200 feet to 8,400 feet, we were rewarded with a great variety of birds from the Scott's Orioles and Black-chinned Sparrows characteristic of the lowlands to the Olive-sided Flycatchers and House Wrens of the higher altitudes. Particularly thrilling was the sight of a Golden Eagle as it passed in front of us and then landed on a nearby rocky slope. But our attention was also absorbed by such relatively common birds as Grace's Warblers and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. These birds' sprightly antics and lively singing made them particularly conspicuous that day. Of the 48 species seen, the most unusual was the Hepatic Tanager at Oso Pass. Though we never glimpsed the colorful male, we had a good look at a female, noting the absence of wing-bars, the dark bill and the intensity of yellow in the throat area. It was most certainly an encounter of a rare kind in the Sandias.

Hart R. Schwarz

GHOST RANCH REPORT

The regional conference started on Saturday, June 21, when 19 people met in Farmington for the San Juan Coal Story pre-conference trip. The sights visited included the Bisti Badlands, Fossil Forest, Chaco Canyon National Monument, Navajo Mine and San Juan Generating Station. On Monday, this group joined over 200 other people for the week-long conference at Ghost Ranch. Each weekday about 100 people set out on various fieldtrips to Burford-Stone Lakes, Bandelier National Monument, the high mountains, Los Alamos Scientific Lab tour and a Rio Chama float trip. During the conference 75 species of birds were seen on the Burford-Stone Lakes trips and 55 species on the high mountain trips.

On Saturday and Sunday, workshops by the National Audubon Society staff were given; these included membership, whooping crane status report, Audubon Magazine, Audubon goals and priorities, publicity, fund raising and wildlife films. Russell Peterson, president of NAS gave a keynote address following Saturday's lunch.

Following the panel discussion on the whooping crane issue, everyone was asking what the controversy, referred to by the panel, was all about. Considerable progress apparently has been made recently in private sessions among the agencies involved. Many of us are pleased with the progress towards resolution of this conflict and we hope that all of the issues can be resolved without all the sparks generated this spring. (See article in June-July 1980 Burrowing Owl).

The conference concluded on Monday with one last float trip and a tour of several solar homes in Santa Fe. Upon arrival in Santa Fe for the tour we found that the bus company had reserved a bus for us on June 31. June 31??

A slide show on the conference is presently being assembled and will be given at one of the monthly meetings in the near future. (Watch the OWL for details).

I would like to thank all of the people who made the Ghost Ranch Conference one of the largest, longest and best regional conferences ever.

The youth program headed by Alana Gallagher and Kay Anderson and the child care co-op coordinated by Barbara Hussey was excellent and very well received. The National Audubon staff thought these types of programs should be offered at all of the regional conferences and the national convention. We've heard that Alana and Kay have been asked to put on a youth program for next year's convention at Estes Park.

The field trip leaders were:

Marj Cash	Karen Peterson
Marj Cromer	Bill Stone
Betty Harrington	Clara Teuber
Walton Hawk	Ross Teuber
Chuck Hundertmark	Woody West
Barbara Hussey	

Helpers wherever they were needed, the above plus:

Barbara Baker	Kellye Schum
Roland Goodman	Harvey Williams
Alan Rawcliffe	Ruth Williams

Production staff for the New Mexico Information Guide:

Jackie Allen	Dan Washburn
Barbara Hussey	Marian Washburn
Mindy Mayfield	

Many of these people are from the Sangre de Cristo chapter which co-hosted the conference. We are very thankful for their help as we would have had a very difficult time hosting the conference alone. I hope that I have not left anyone out, but in case I did, thank you.

In addition, those of us who worked on the conference would like to thank:

New Mexico Solar Energy Association
 Los Alamos Scientific Laboratories
 National Park Service
 Bureau of Land Management
 Utah International
 Public Service Co. of New Mexico
 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
 N.M. Dept. of Game and Fish and
 Ghost Ranch



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GHOST RANCH REPORT CONTINUED

Dede, Rhea and the three secretaries they've had in the past year including Jo Schum did a tremendous job from the Regional Office and at the conference.

It was a real pleasure for me to head up the local organization for the 1980 southwest regional conference. Though at times it was very frustrating. But those frustrations were forgotten as field trip by field trip fell into place and we could see the glow on people's faces as they saw a life bird or mammal.

As many of you know, I have accepted a staff position at the Department of Geological Sciences at Harvard. Over the past five years that I have been a member of the Central New Mexico Audubon Society it has been a great pleasure working with you towards the chapter goals and to serve as your president for two years. It was a very great honor for me to receive the chapter's highest award, the Washburn Award last year. I also wish to thank you for the beautiful T-shirt with the Gambel's quail painting by Dustin and the eastern field guides which will soon become as worn as my western guides. It is with a tear in my eye that I leave New Mexico and all of the good friends I've made here. I hope that many of you will look me up if you are in the Boston area and I'll show you New England's birding hot spots. I wish the chapter the very best in this your 10th year of existence and the best of birding to all of you.

With warmest regards,

David Lange



NEWS RELEASE - SPECIAL TO THE BURROWING
OWL - FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION X X X X

July 21, 1981



WILDLIFE FILMS! Audubon Wildlife Films will be back in Popejoy Hall this Fall and Winter, with Central New Mexico Audubon Society as Co-Sponsor.

Five excellent films are scheduled, the most attractive being one presented by Olin Sewall Pettingill entitled "Another Penguin Summer". Mr. Pettingill is a well known film-maker, author of numerous books on birds and bird-finding, and was one of the first photographers to show films under the auspices of the National Audubon Society.

"Another Penguin Summer", to be shown on Monday, February 2, 1981, was made in the Falkland Islands, East of the Southern tip of South America. It has been hailed as one of the most entertaining films shown in the Audubon series.

Other films to be shown this season are: "National Wildlife Refuge System", Burdette White, Tuesday, December 9, 1980; "Okefenokee, Land of Trembling Earth", Dennis Holt, Monday, November 10, 1980; "Kookaburra Country", Fran Hall, Monday, January 12, 1981; and "Wilderness Trails", Charles "Ty" Hotchkiss, Wednesday, March 11, 1981.

Prices have gone up this year. Season tickets (five admissions) will be \$10.00 for adults, and \$7.00 for students, senior citizens, and UNM staff members. Season tickets are available from the Central New Mexico Audubon Society by calling Prof. Jeff W. Froehlich, 344-5671, or Craig Andrews, 881-9387.

If you can keep your shirt on for a couple of weeks, a detailed description and order blank will be mailed to all members. And at that time you will learn that all members of CNMAS will get a discount on their tickets: \$9.00 for adults, \$6.00 for students, senior citizens and UNM staff members.

Looks like a fine Wildlife Film Season coming up! Start saving your lunch money now, so you can be there.

A GUIDE TO BIRD IDENTIFICATION OF NEW MEXICO BIRDS

By Dustin Huntington

This is the first of a semi-regular series of articles on bird identification problems that are encountered in New Mexico. There is an extensive amount of information on detailed aspects of bird identification available in various magazines and books and from experienced birders. I hope to compile some of this information relevant to birding problems in this state. When possible, references will be given to other articles or books for more detailed or extensive information.

Since this is the Fall issue of the Owl, "peep" identification seems like a good subject to start with.

Peep Identification

There are three regularly occurring "peeps" in New Mexico -- Least, Western and Baird's Sandpipers. In addition, there are two peeps rarely encountered: White-Rumped and Semipalmated Sandpipers. These two species will not be covered in this article.

Least Sandpiper. Overall, this seems to be the most common peep in New Mexico. If there is a mixed flock of shorebirds, the Least will appear noticeably smaller than the other birds. The overall shape of the Least is very compact. They always seem active; even when not feeding, they tend to walk rather than rest. (Naturally, they do rest at times, but not as often as most shorebirds.)

The field guides say the bill of the Least is short; this is true as far as its measure length goes. However, it is very thin (toothpick-like), sometimes with a slight droop at the tip. The thinness of the bill, coupled with the small size of the bird, can make the bill appear proportionately long.

The legs of the Least are yellowish; however, mud, light conditions and optics can make light legs look dark and vice versa. Consequently, leg color should be used when it seems reasonable, but it should not be relied upon.

The breast streaking on the Least is very useful in identification, being heavily streaked in all plumages (less so in winter plumage). The streaking is so heavy

in summer-plumage birds that it appears as almost a solid dark brown color. The streaking, however, is limited to the breast and has a well-defined demarcation line between the streaking and the white of the belly. (This break is useful in separating Least and Westerns.)

The overall color of the Least is brown. It develops some rufous in the feathers in the summer, but not as much as the Western.

Western Sandpiper. This is also a quite common shorebird in New Mexico on migration and is the one most often confused with the Least. However, there are several good fieldmarks to use to separate the two.

The legs of the Western are black; however, the comment above about leg color holds here also.

The bill of the Western is much longer than that of the Least. In addition, it is much heavier, with a pronounced taper between the base and the tip, which is typically downturned. The bill of the Western does not give the impression of thinness that the bill of the Least does.

The breast streaking on a summer-plumage Western is heavy, but is clearly on a white ground color and does not form a solid patch of color. The streaking is also not confined to the breast and continues down the flanks as it fades into the white of the belly. The streaking on the flanks is very useful in separating the two species.

The summer-plumage color of the Western tends to be brighter rufous than the Least and forms bands of rufous and black on the back unlike the Least's more spotty appearance. The Western also carries more of the rufous into winter plumage.

Continued on next page



PEEP IDENTIFICATION CONTINUED

Baird's Sandpiper. Baird's is a relatively uncommon sandpiper in New Mexico in the Fall and is rare in the Spring. In new plumage a Baird's is a distinctive chestnut buff color which is very different from the other New Mexico peeps. The problem arises in Fall adults that are in faded and worn plumage. These birds, while still somewhat warm brown-buff, are not as distinctive and other characteristics must be relied on.

The Baird's is a very slim-looking shorebird. This is largely due to its very long wings, which extend well beyond the end of the tail. The overall size is slightly larger than a Western, but the bird appears to be much more horizontal than the Western.

The bill is fairly heavy, medium length and straight.

The breast streaking is on a buffy ground, forming a solid area on the breast and is confined to the breast.

There are noticeable size differences among the peeps and comparison of the size of an unknown peep with other shorebirds can help to narrow the possibilities.

Peeps are naturally covered in both of the standard field guides. Singer pictures more of the various plumages in Robbins' "Birds of North America" than does Peterson. However, in my opinion,

Peterson's colors and shapes seem more accurate. Anyone seriously interested in shorebirds should attempt to get "The Shorebirds of North America" by G. D. Stout, illustrated by R. V. Clem. This is not field-guide size, but has unexcelled paintings of shorebirds in all plumages. Unfortunately, I understand, this book is now out of print and may be difficult to obtain.

Peeps present some problems, but are distinctive when studied. With a little time spent watching and observing under good conditions, they can be recognized under much less ideal conditions. Shorebirds, once learned, represent one of the most interesting and rewarding of all bird groups.

SUMMARY

	<u>Bill</u>	<u>Breast Streaking</u>	<u>Shape</u>	<u>Color</u>
Least	Thin	Heavy, dark, confined to breast, forms dark area	Very compact	Brown, some rufous areas Legs yellow
Western	Heavy, down-turned tip	Medium on light ground color, extends to sides of belly	Compact	Brown, some light rufous/ black bands Legs black
Baird's	Heavy, straight	Buffy, forms buffy area, confined to breast	Slim, horizontal	Buffy-brown Legs black

HELP!!

Although our CNMAS library has no set policy concerning length of time a book may be kept, some books have been out as long as two years! If you have materials checked out for more than a couple of months, please return it as soon as you can. Librarian Elizabeth Broemel (265-9481) will be happy to assist you if you haven't been able to attend meetings. Let's share the wealth!

SLIDES WANTED

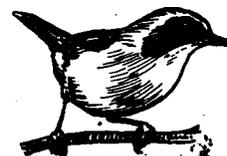
Anyone with slides of the conference at Ghost Ranch Lodge or of the buildings and surroundings at Ghost Ranch taken at anytime is requested to call Ross Teuber (265-8962).

MOVING?

Please notify membership chairman Dot DeLollis (299-5384) if your address changes. The post office will not forward the Burrowing Owl.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Albuquerque Freedom University, 105 1/2 Dartmouth SE, P.O. Box 40122, Albuquerque 87196 (266-7619) will begin classes on September 8. Registration begins August 19.



ROSS'S RAVIN'S

Hi folks! Well here I am back, regardless of the change of editorial staff and minimal response to my plea for feedback. Those of you who didn't get to attend the Regional Conference at Ghost Ranch, missed out on a terrific conference, some really great field trips, interesting workshops, and most of all an opportunity to meet, get acquainted with, and go birding with some really nice people from Louisiana, Texas, and several other places. On Sunday morning, June 29, I even had the privilege of going on a morning birdwalk, along with several others, with our national Audubon president, Russ Peterson! Of course, it was fun to renew old acquaintanceships with our fellow Auduboners from the other New Mexico chapters. A couple of times I got so involved in visiting I completely missed the sessions I had gone to attend.

On the Burford-Stone Lake tours in three days we compiled a composite list of 74 species sighted. Of most interest to our visitors were the western and eared grebes, cinnamon teal and yellow-headed blackbirds. Karen Peterson and her group found a bobolink at Parkwood Hatchery!

We did get some very interesting updates on the status of the whooping cranes, both the natural and foster parent flocks. Although none of the Gray's Lake chicks have paired off, 3 of the 1975 and '76 birds, all males, have established nesting territories the last 3 years. Unfortunately the oldest females are from the 1978 class, a little too young for breeding. In the Wood Buffalo-Aransas flock three 3-year old birds paired off with older birds and nested, but as frequently happens with first attempts, all three nestings failed.

Thirteen eggs from Wood Buffalo Park, and three eggs from Patuxent, Md. were received at Gray's Lake, ten of the Canadian eggs and one Patuxent egg hatched. Conditions at the Gray's Lake marshes are the best this year they've been since the experiment started, and they got the fewest eggs.

At Wood Buffalo Park there were 19 nests, where 36 eggs were produced. The 23 eggs left after supplying Gray's Lake produced 17 chicks. But conditions are bad. They have been in a 23 year dry cycle, so the outlook is not too good. At Patuxent two females produced 6 eggs of which only 2 were fertile. No young were produced there this year.

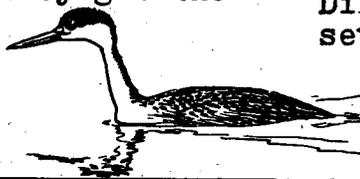
So it looks like there will be a modest increase in the Aransas flock, if any, and hopefully we should have a fair increase in the experimental flock, barring accidents and excessive predation before the chicks fledge. So maybe we can look forward to 20 or more birds at Bosque del Apache this fall and winter. Start looking for arrivals after the first of October, and let me know when and if you see any great white birds flying over.

Although reports have been rather slow, there has been considerable evidence of nesting and rearing of young birds. Specifically mentioned were curve-billed thrashers, northern and Scott's orioles, western tanagers, black-headed grosbeaks and black-chinned hummingbirds. One pair of black-chins has nested in the same location in Wayne Prentice's yard for 8 summers, and another pair for four years. Speaking of hummingbirds, the rufous and calliope are back, but apparently in limited numbers. Rufous were reported starting July 3 in the Sandias, with July 12-14 the first sighting dates in Albuquerque. The first calliope was reported by Hart Schwarz in the NE heights at a feeder on July 13. I still haven't had any at my feeders. Don't give up! Unusual was a nest of mallards in a tree at Shady Lakes.

I had a lot of fun picking up and helping an orphaned screech owl. Jeremiah Johnson (remember him?) nurtured it (along with two others) to near maturity, and Chuck Hundertmark banded it. As of this writing it is on the verge of being reintroduced into the wild state, near to where it was first found.

Other interesting reports include a burrowing owl and a phainopepla reported from the West Mesa by the Dilleys, rose-breasted grosbeaks from several spots in the Sandias, an

Continued on next page



ROSS'S RAVIN'S CONTINUED

orange-crowned warbler (late) at Tree Springs, Clark's nutcrackers from the west side of the Sandias, yellow-billed cuckoo in town, and a green heron at Shady Lakes. Joanne Phillips' red-headed woodpeckers were back on May 19. Hart Schwarz and Gary Parker found a red-faced warbler and an hepatic tanager at Water Canyon on July 4. Thanks to all of you for the reports. Please keep them coming (265-8962).

The first couple of weeks in August, I expect to be off to California, hopefully adding a few new species to my Nevada, California and possibly my life list. Maybe I'll have a goodie or two to report to you next time. In the meantime, the van of the fall migration is upon us as

indicated by the return of the first rufous and calliope hummers. Keep your eyes open for returning warblers, shore and water birds. I'll need your input for the next column. Don't forget about the moon-watching on and around August 26th and September 24th for silhouetted fall migrants. See you next time -- good birding.

R.L.T. 7/17/80

EDITOR'S NOTE:

My thanks to Ross for continuing to write his great column for the Burrowing Owl. The more reports of sightings you call into him the more we can all share and enjoy happenings in the wonderful world of birds. ERP

ADDRESSES

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Pete V. Domenici
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Hon. Harrison H. Schmitt
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Hon. Manuel Lujan, Jr.
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Hon. Harold Runnels
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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Director	Ross Teuber, 1612 Kentucky NE 87110	265-8962
Director/Wildlife Film Chm.	Craig Andrews, 3416 Sierra Dr. NE 87110	881-9387
NM Audubon Council Rep.	Jim Karo, 1621 Cedar Ridge Dr. NE 87112	294-2777

RARE BIRD ALERT - Report sightings to: 265-8962, 292-5626 or 898-2568

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY
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