



# BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

December 1980/January 1981

## CALENDAR — DECEMBER AND JANUARY

**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).

**TUESDAY**      **AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILM, 7:30**  
Dec. 9              p.m. UNM Popejoy Hall. Burdette White narrates "Our National Wildlife Refuge System." Discount tickets available from Dot DeLollis (299-5384)

**THURSDAY**      **REGULAR MEETING** of the Central  
Dec. 18              New Mexico Audubon Society, 7:30 p.m.  
at Copper & Jefferson, N.E. Al Rodney from Public Service Company of New Mexico will speak on birds of prey and present a film entitled "Silver Wires and Golden Wings" depicting PNM's program to make transmission lines safer for raptors.

**SATURDAY**      **Sandia Mountains CHRISTMAS BIRD**  
Dec. 20              **COUNT.** Count leader, Mary Lou Arthur (256-7359), needs to hear from you in advance if you plan to go. She will explain meeting places and times. Participation fee: \$1.50.

**SATURDAY**      **Bosque del Apache CHRISTMAS**  
Dec. 27              **BIRD COUNT.** Meet at refuge headquarters, 7 a.m. for assignments. Count leader and compiler: Chuck Hundertmark (266-9402). Participation fee: \$1.50.

**THURSDAY**      **NO BOARD MEETING** is scheduled for  
Jan. 1              January.

**SATURDAY**      **Albuquerque CHRISTMAS BIRD**  
Jan. 3              **COUNT.** Meet at 7 a.m. at Corrales Shopping Center. Count leader and compiler is Jim Karo (294-2777). Participation fee: \$1.50.

**MONDAY**        **AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILM, 7:30**  
Jan. 12              p.m. UNM Popejoy Hall. Fran Hall narrates "Kookaburra Country." Discount tickets available from Dot DeLollis (299-5384).

**THURSDAY**      **REGULAR MEETING** of the Central  
Jan. 15              New Mexico Audubon Society, 7:30 p.m.  
at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church,  
Copper and Jefferson, N.E. John Lehmkuhl, who served as a biologist in the Peace Corps from 1975-77 in Nepal's National Park Office, will present a slide program, "People and Wildlife Conservation in Nepal."

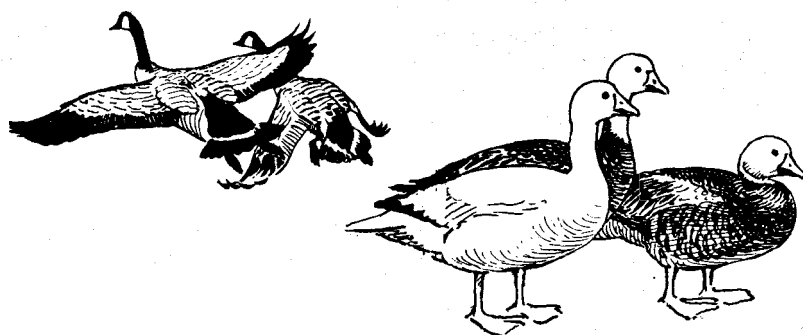
**SATURDAY**      **New Mexico AUDUBON COUNCIL**  
& **SUNDAY**      **meeting** at Socorro. Schedule not  
Jan. 17-18          available at present time, but there will be  
field trips—call early in January (242-6604) for complete schedule and information about field trips.

**FRIDAY**              **Deadline for BURROWING OWL**  
Jan. 23              **material.** It would save some time and  
trouble if you could have your columns  
and information ready by the January 15 meeting—  
Evelyn Price, editor (242-6604).

**SATURDAY**      **Beginner's FIELD TRIP.** Meet at 8:30  
Jan. 31              a.m. at the north side of the Corrales  
Bridge. Call leader Barbara Hussey (292-5626) for more information.

**MONDAY**        **AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILM, 7:30**  
Feb. 2              p.m. UNM Popejoy Hall. Olin Sewall  
Pettingill, Jr., birding guide author and  
former director of Cornell University's Laboratory of  
Ornithology will narrate "Another Penguin Summer."  
Discount tickets available from Dot DeLollis (299-5384).

**THURSDAY**      **BOARD MEETING, 7:30 p.m.** at the  
Feb. 5              home of Phyllis Schmidt (821-5790) 6408  
Pepperdine, N.E. All members welcome.



### 81st Year CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

CNMAS will participate this year in the Audubon Christmas Bird Counts. (See calendar for dates and times.) There will be 1,360 taken in 15-mile diameter circles from Alaska to Venezuela.

This year marks the 81st year anniversary of the original Christmas Bird Count conducted on Christmas Day in 1900 by birders in 25 locations in the northeastern United States. Participation has grown from 27 people in 1900 to an estimated 34,000 this year.

Last year Oakland, California, led the list with 213 species. In 1979 the 18 observers on the Albuquerque count sighted 78 species. The Bosque del Apache count came up with 97 species seen by 16 people, and the Sandia Mountains count recorded 59 species by 22 birders.

The participation fee for each count is \$1.50. This helps offset the cost of the monumental task of compiling, editing, and publishing the results of all 1,360 counts. These results are published in the July issue of *American Birds* (\$7.50 ppd or \$12 per year for six issues from 950 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022).

Apart from its attraction as a social, sporting, and competitive event, the annual counts shed much light on the early winter distribution of bird species. This is an opportunity for all of us to participate in the gathering of valuable ornithological data. Since birds often respond to changes in the environment before other species, we are contributing to environmental knowledge too.

If you have never been on a count, you are really missing something. You do not have to be a bird expert. Less experienced birders can be teamed with more experienced ones. More eyes see more birds! Times, places, and compilers are shown in the calendar. Come join the fun. □

#### NOTE TO CBC BIRDERS

The Christmas Bird Count compilers and regional editors tell us we should be careful in the future to be sure of the identity of all birds counted. Accipters, buteos, juncos, and sparrows are particular problems here. When you are not sure, list "sparrow, sp." etc., rather than guessing. □

#### CNMAS SALES

Condor Prints by Dustin Huntington (proceeds go to Condor Fund)	\$5.00
Birds of New Mexico	\$.03
Field Checklist	10 for \$.27
Four color CNMAS embroidered arm patches	\$2.00

Available at the regular meetings from the CNMAS librarian. Buy now—prices may go up. If you would like any of these items but cannot get to the meeting, give Librarian Elizabeth Broemel a call at 256-9481. □

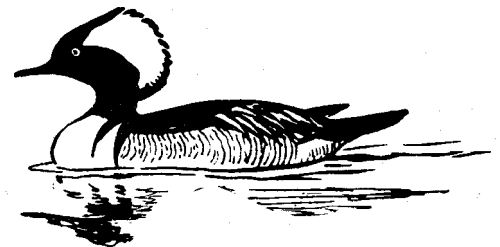
#### PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Check the CALENDAR on page 1 for the date of our three Christmas Bird Counts. (See the article in this issue for details.) This year I will be counting on the Fort Lauderdale CBC while vacationing with my family in Florida. If you are planning a trip over the holidays, check with one of the count leaders listed in the calendar to find out if there is a Christmas Bird Count where you are going.

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish is proposing a nongame wildlife act during the 1981 State Legislature in January. They have invited our suggestions. Let me know if you have any comments.

The Membership Committee needs our help. Due to a new policy of National Audubon, chapters do not receive a portion of the membership dues until the second year of membership on those recruited by NAS. We do get a dues split the first year on all memberships obtained through our own efforts. Therefore, the Membership Committee must get to work! If you plan any gift memberships or know of any prospective members, please send the application to CNMAS (address on page 8).

Finally, reserve April 25 and 26 for the first annual nationwide BIRD-ATHON sponsored by National Audubon. Birders will secure tax-deductible pledges for each bird sighted during a 24-hour period. There will be prizes for individuals and chapters. Funds raised will be split evenly between the chapter, the regional office, and NAS. Details next time. □



#### ALASKA BILL HAS PASSED!

Audubon and all other members of the Alaska Coalition have cause for celebration. The Alaska Lands Bill has passed both the House and the Senate and now goes to the President to be signed into law. Both Senator Domenici and Representative Lujan voted for the bill. They deserve our thanks (addresses on page 8). The final Alaska Lands Bill is not quite as strong as most environmentalists would have liked, but it affords protection to 100 million acres. The bill doubles our national parks and wildlife refuges and triples the nation's wilderness areas—affording preservation to the last great area of wild beauty left in the United States! □

## IDENTIFICATION OF NEW MEXICO BIRDS

by Dustin Huntington



### Field Guides for New Mexico Birding

The articles that appear in this column are, at most, supplements to the existing field guides, so it seems appropriate to discuss some of the available field guides. This is particularly timely with the much heralded recent publication of Peterson's new eastern guide.

I believe all of the major guides have a useful function; however, all also have limitations. If a guide is used beyond its limitations misidentification will likely result.

**Peterson—A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS EAST OF THE ROCKIES:** Peterson's new guide is the most recent major guide to be published. It is intended to cover those birds found east of 100 longitude (east Texas). Many of the species are also found in New Mexico and, while not all New Mexico birds are included, enough are to make this a potentially useful second reference for New Mexico. The book's strongest point is the paintings which are excellent. Proportions, positions, colors, and detail equal and, in most cases, surpass other U.S. guides. The weakest points, unfortunately, are the text and maps.

The maps are in an appendix at the back of the book, making them somewhat inconvenient. Also, despite their larger size and division with state lines, they contain no information on migration, arrival dates, etc., such as is found in Robbins *BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA*. New Mexico is shown on only some of the maps and, since this is an eastern guide, it is not surprising that the data for New Mexico is sometimes inaccurate.

The text is placed opposite the painting, unlike previous Peterson guides, and this makes the guide more convenient to use. To have such an arrangement function successfully requires that the author be able to state all the necessary identification information in a very small space. The arrangement of the information in this guide is rather inefficient and sometimes identification information is sacrificed for superfluous detail. Also, Peterson has retained his conversational, sometimes rambling, style from previous guides. This results in descriptions that often are much too short to present even the minimum information. A section often dropped for the sake of space is the "Similar Species" section (one of the best features of Peterson's system). For example, neither *Dowitcher* has a "Similar Species" section despite their similarity to teach other and superficially to *Stilt Sandpiper* and *Snipe*. Some other species are simply declared to be "difficult to identify" without any information given on how to identify them (even when such information exists in the birding literature).

Very few "new" fieldmarks are discussed that have not appeared in other field guides. Most of those that are presented are drawn from recent articles in the birding literature. There are many more recently discovered fieldmarks that could have been discussed but were not (possibly due to lack of space).

In conclusion, Peterson's new eastern guide has excellent artwork, covers many of the New Mexico birds, and includes a little new identification information. The text, while occasionally incomplete and frustrating, is still quite useful. This is by no means a definitive work, even for the East, but is still well worth having to use as a supplement to a western guide.

**Peterson—A FIELD GUIDE TO WESTERN BIRDS:** This is a very good guide and one of the two choices as a major reference for identifying birds in New Mexico. The paintings are generally quite good, although certainly not as good as the ones in Peterson's new eastern guide. The text does not face the illustration so some flipping back and forth is necessary to use this guide. This can be somewhat inconvenient to use and particularly troublesome for beginners when trying to identify an unknown bird that may fly off at any moment. On the other hand, the separate text section allows the description of a species to be as long as necessary. The descriptions are good, and the "Similar Species" section particularly worthwhile. No maps are used and the verbal range descriptions can be hard to visualize.

Overall, this is a very good guide and the one that many western birders rely on.

**Robbins—BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA:** This is an excellent field guide for any portion of North America, east or west. It is the only single field guide to include virtually all of the regularly occurring North American species. Other guides with limited geographical range can lead to "force fitting" an accidental species into a description of a local species due to the bird not being in the book. The paintings by Arthur Singer are generally very good. More natural positions and more varieties of plumage are shown in this guide than in the others. For some groups the colors and proportions of the birds pictured are not as good as the Peterson guides (the *Spragues Pipit* is particularly bad) but the overall quality is certainly more than adequate for field identification. The text faces the pictures, and efficiently and concisely presents the relevant identification information. Tiny range maps are shown with the text and give information on summer and winter range, migration routes, and average arrival dates.

Overall, this is an excellent guide and the only single guide that includes all New Mexico birds along with the eastern accidentals that occasionally occur here.

**THE AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS, EASTERN REGION, and WESTERN REGION:** These are the photographic field guides. They are "field guides" in name only. Their use in the field for identification is very small. Photographs are used for illustration rather than paintings as found in the other guides. The photos, while often excellent, are of variable quality. Not all species, even common ones, are pictured. Many are pictured in positions that are rarely seen, such as sitting shearwaters. Most species are arranged by color rather than by taxonomic order or family. This can make identification of an unknown species extremely

difficult. In some cases, the color choice seems to have no relation to the color of the actual bird and many birds are simply not pictured. To make matters worse, in at least the early printings of THE EASTERN GUIDE, some photographs were mislabeled.

These books do, however, have some positive aspects. In a few cases the photos show a race of a species not shown in the other guides. For example, THE WESTERN AUDUBONS GUIDE is the only one to show the Northern Three-toed Woodpecker as having a largely unbarred back. Other guides stress and illustrate extensive barring on the back, which is not present on the birds found in New Mexico. The text contains anecdotal information that is often interesting.

The incompleteness and misleading nature of some of the photos in these guides makes the books almost useless for field identification except in special situations. These books are especially inappropriate for beginners. However, the pretty pictures and interesting text makes these books pleasant to look at at home.

Ideally, one would have all of the guides discussed here as each has something to offer. I believe that anyone seriously interested in New Mexico birding should have at least Robbins and the Western Petersons. If one does significant shorebirding, birding in the eastern part of the state, or "vagrant hunting" the new eastern Petersons should be added. For distributional data Hubbard's REVISED CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF NEW MEXICO is excellent and far more useful and up-to-date than the hard to find Bailey BIRDS OF NEW MEXICO.

I understand that Robbins guide is being updated which should make it even more useful. Also, National Geographic is sponsoring a field guide which is currently being written by the outstanding California identification expert Jon Dunn. This should be an excellent book due to Jon's incredible knowledge of distribution and little known fieldmarks.

Field guides are written with different purposes and for different audiences. I have here stressed the negative aspects of the available guides as I believe it is important to remember that none of the guides are perfect or totally accurate. The guides should be used within their limitations and supplemented with the various birding journals (CONTINENTAL BIRDLIFE, BIRDING, AMERICAN BIRDS, NMOS FIELD NOTES, WESTERN Tanager, WESTERN BIRDS, etc.).

**ERRATA:** The "Identification of New Mexico Birds" article from the October/November issue had two major editorial errors.

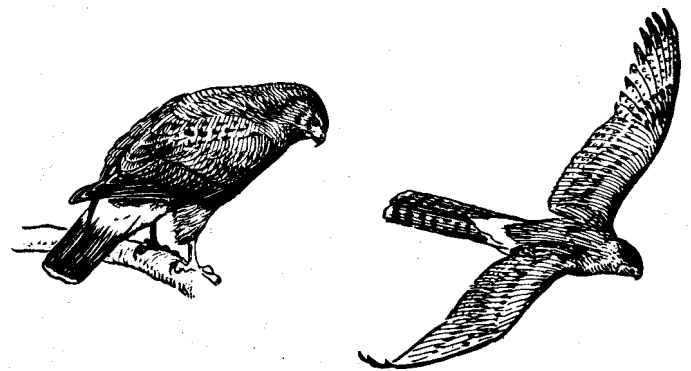
One page 5 at the top of the second column it stated that the Blue-phase Ross' Goose had been reported from New Mexico. To my knowledge, Blue Ross' have never been reported in New Mexico. It should have read "Bluephase Ross' Goose have not been reported in New Mexico, but until recently they had not been reported anywhere."

On page 5, column 2, paragraph 4 it should have read "In July to early August most peeps in New Mexico are adults . . ." □

## FIELD TRIP REPORT

Sixteen members and guests met for the October 18th field trip to La Cienega, Sandia Mountains. The following bird species were seen throughout the morning: Pied-billed Grebe (Sandia Park Pond), Golden Eagle, Turkey (Sound), Band-tailed Pigeon, Common Flicker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Steller's Jay, Mountain Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pygmy Nuthatch, American Robin, Townsend's Solitaire, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Goldfinch (Sandia Park Pond), Lesser Goldfinch (Sandia Park Pond), Dark-eyed Junco, Gray-headed Junco. □

Mary Lou Arthur



## NEWS RELEASE—SPECIAL TO THE BURROWING OWL

Reminder to all members of CNMAS! The next Audubon Wildlife film will be shown on Tuesday, December 9, 1980, 7:30 p.m. at Popejoy Hall. Burdette White will narrate his film "The National Wildlife Refuge System." It will show some scenes taken at Gray's Lake Refuge in Idaho, where our very own whooping cranes spend the summer. The entire show is a sampling of refuges from all parts of the country, and is testimony to the need for a refuge system. Come hear the gospel, and enjoy an outstanding movie.

Also, another reminder. The brochure published by your very own Wildlife Film Committee contains some incorrect dates. The remainder of the season, after the Wildlife Refuge show, is:

Kookaburra Country, Fran Hall, Monday, January 12, 1981

Another Penguin Summer, Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr., Monday, February 2, 1981

Wilderness Trails, Charles T. Hotchkiss, Wednesday, March 11, 1981

Check your tickets to be quite sure the dates and shows are correctly listed. And if you have not yet bought your multiple admission ticket, do so! Five admissions per ticket—bring your friends. Adults, \$10, students and old folks, \$7. If you are a member of CNMAS reduce the price of each ticket by \$1 from above prices. If you are now confused, call Dot DeLollis at 299-5384 for further instructions. She will tell you where to send the money. □

# World's Only Desert-Nesting Bald Eagles Face Extinction

## About the Arizona Eagles:

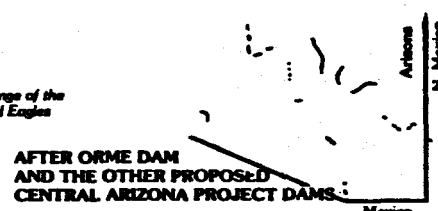
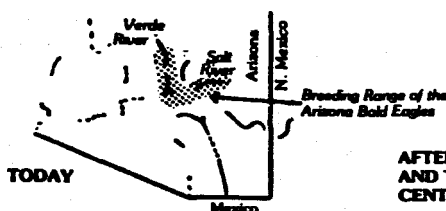
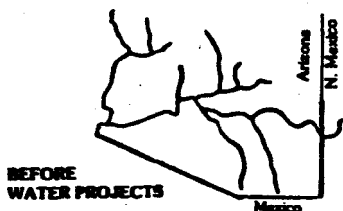
- A geographically isolated population found nesting in the desert along the Salt and Verde Rivers in central Arizona.
- The only self-sustaining population of bald eagles in a vast seven state area of the Southwest.
- Uniquely evolved and adapted for survival in the desert — the nesting cycle begins in November and young are fledged prior to summer heat.
- Population size: 20-25 adults, 8 active nesting territories, approximately 3-5 pairs successfully raise a total of 4-6 young statewide each year.
- Many miles of their preferred river habitat has been destroyed by bathtub-like reservoirs having vegetationally-sterile banks, wildly-fluctuating water levels and heavy recreational use.



## Habitat in Danger

- Orme Dam, whose preconstruction funding is now being considered by the U.S. Congress, would destroy the most productive nesting territories. 50% of the annual reproductive capacity of these unique eagles would be destroyed and they would be unable to sustain their numbers.
- These eagles could not simply move elsewhere because they are only adapted for living in the desert and no other suitable nesting habitat remains.
- Grazing by cattle of young cottonwood seedlings has prevented the regeneration of streamside trees essential for nesting and foraging. Most existing trees are old and dying.
- The Forest Service cottonwood reforestation plan is limited in funds. Reforestation is complicated and costly in the presence of cattle grazing.

## DEATH OF AN ECOSYSTEM



EXTENT OF THE UNIQUE STREAMSIDE ECOSYSTEM OF THE SONORAN DESERT.

## Immediate Action Is Vital!

Congress is again trying to build Orme Dam even though they agreed to delete this Carter "hit list" project in 1977. Write to President Carter, and, if possible, to your U.S. Senator and Representative.

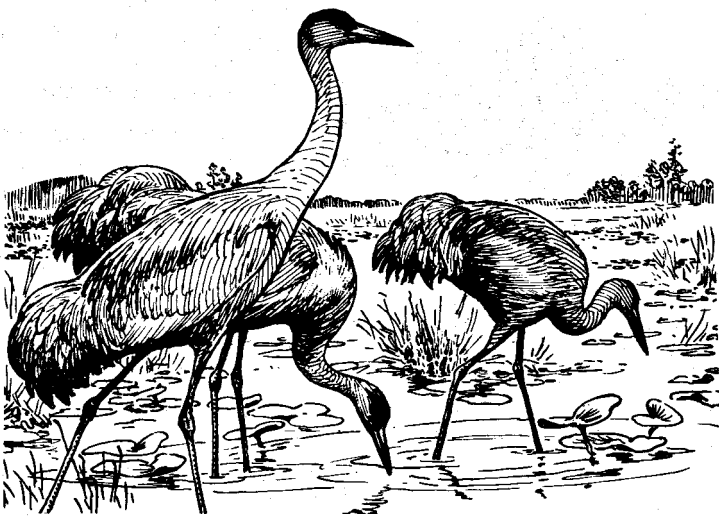
(1) Ask that funding be withheld for Orme Dam until the alternatives study is complete — so

that an alternative may be selected which is both economically and environmentally sound. Many feasible alternatives exist.

(2) Ask for funding for reforestation of the habitat of these eagles on National Forest land in Arizona.

## ALBUQUERQUE GETS NATURE CENTER

After 12 years of efforts by local environmentalists, the city of Albuquerque and the state bids will go out in January to begin building the Rio Grande Nature Center and Preserve. Projected date for completion is the fall of 1981. Plans call for an interpretive building linked to the Bosque and the river by more than three miles of trails. Approximately five acres of ponds and marshes will be developed initially with more to follow. The total acreage owned by the city is 170, formerly known as Candelaria Farms. The state will lease 25 to 40 acres for the building and trails and will restore marshes and develop displays. The city will develop and manage the wildlife crop areas. For more information call 836-6674. □



## WHAT THE HECK IS A DARK-EYED JUNCO?

Several times it has come to my attention that people are confused when a field trip leader or member helping a beginner identifies a bird as a dark-eyed junco, common flicker, or northern oriole. There is not such an animal in the field guide! There are several reasons for this.

First of all the most commonly accepted authority for the names of birds, both common and scientific, is the American Ornithologists Union 1957 Checklist of North American Birds, Fifth Edition, as amended. The most recent supplement (No. 32) was published in AUK 90:411-417 (April 1973) with corrections and additions published in AUK 90:887 (October 1973). Many birders do not have ready access to this information, which covers a large number of changes in both common and scientific names. Many people have taken up birding since that date, or at least use field guides which were published prior to that time. To the best of my knowledge, only the AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS published in 1977, and Roger Tory Peterson's recently revised FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS, Fourth Edition, 1980 have incorporated the new nomenclature. The Peterson Guide, of course, is for birds of eastern and central United States, not the western birds!

## OLD NAME—NEW NAME

Pacific Loon—Arctic Loon  
 Holboell's Loon—Red-necked Grebe  
 Fulmer—Northern Fulmer  
 All Hydrobatid Petrels—Storm Petrels  
 Yellow-billed Tropic Bird—White-tailed Tropic Bird  
 Mexican Cormorant—Olivaceous Cormorant  
 Great White Heron—Great Blue Heron (white morph)  
 Common Egret—Great Egret  
 Wood Ibis—Wood Stork  
 Blue Goose—Snow Goose (blue morph)  
 Tree Ducks—Whistling Ducks  
 Common Teal—Green-winged Teal  
 American Widgeon—American Wigeon (Spelling)  
 Shoveler—Northern Shoveler  
 Common Scoter—Black Scoter  
 Harlan's Hawk—Red-tailed Hawk (Harlan's race)  
 Harch Hawk or Harrier—Marsh Hawk  
 Pigeon Hawk—Merlin  
 Sparrow Hawk—American Kestrel  
 Harlequin Quail—Montezuma Quail  
 Upland Plover—Upland Sandpiper  
 Knot—Red Knot  
 Red-backed Sandpiper—Dunlin  
 Herring Gull—Herring Gull and Thayer's Gull  
 Yellow-shafted Flicker—Common Flicker  
 Red-shafted Flicker—Common Flicker  
 Gilded Flicker—Common Flicker  
 Traill's Flycatcher—Willow Flycatcher ("fitz-bew")  
 Traill's Flycatcher—Alder Flycatcher ("fee-bee-o")  
 Common Bushtit—Bushtit  
 Black-eared Bushtit—Bushtit  
 Catbird—Gray Catbird  
 Robin—American Robin  
 Parula Warbler—Northern Parula  
 Olive-backed Warbler—Tropical Parula  
 Myrtle Warbler—Yellow-rumped Warbler  
 Audubon's Warbler—Yellow-rumped Warbler  
 Yellowthroat—Common Yellowthroat  
 Baltimore Oriole—Northern Oriole  
 Bullock's Oriole—Northern Oriole  
 Boat-tailed Grackle—Boat-tailed and Great-tailed Grackle  
 Purple Grackle—Common Grackle  
 Bronzed Grackle—Common Grackle  
 Ipswich Sparrow—Savannah Sparrow  
 Slate-colored Junco—Dark-eyed Junco  
 Oregon Junco—Dark-eyed Junco  
 White-winged Junco—Dark-eyed Junco  
 Mexican Junco—Yellow-eyed Junco  
 Gray Sea Eagle—White-tailed Eagle

There are, of course, similar changes and more in the scientific names.

Some birders prefer the common names adopted by the American Birding Association, which in many cases are different from AOU common names. So we hear Sedge Wren for Short-billed Marsh Wren, Northern Harrier for Marsh Hawk, etc. This further contributes to the confusion. This is a good subject for a later article. □

R.L.T.

## ROSS'S RAVIN'S

Hi folks! Another two months have slipped by so quickly they are gone with little noted to mark their passing. Would you believe that by mid-November only 5 of the possible 25 whooping cranes had returned to Bosque del Apache? Dr. Rod Drewien told me on November 11 that most of the remaining whoopers were at Monte Vista NWR, and although they were developing considerable migratory restlessness, they had not yet left for Bosque. A single report of one flying south at the head of a flock of sandhills was received from Katherine Burr at Los Lunas on November 16.

Early fall banding operations and Audubon field trips turned up a number of interesting species. Warblers and sparrows dominated the collections from the mist nets, and included Wilson's, MacGillivray's, and orange-crowned warblers along with chipping, vesper, Brewer's, Lincoln's, and grasshopper sparrows and green-tailed towhees. More recently we are getting white-crowned and song sparrows, and both gray-headed and dark-eyed juncos including Oregon type and a slate-colored individual. Of course, there were others like ruby crowned kinglets, robins, and a hermit thrush. Late in September, Hart Schwarz reported a female dickcissel at Sandia Park PO, and in the same vicinity a Lewis Woodpecker, clay-colored sparrows, and a chestnut-sided warbler. He says the sage thrashers came into the Sandia foothills early, and there were still straggling black-throated and black-chinned sparrows there.

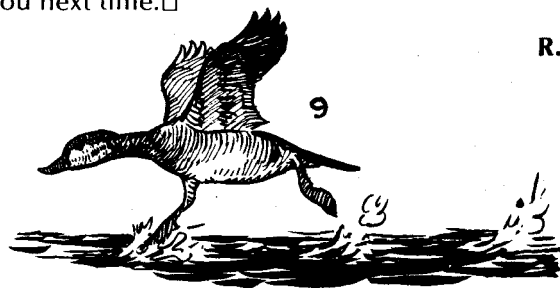
Also of interest were both ruby-crowned and golden-crowned kinglets, Williamson's and yellow-bellied sapsuckers, and mountain and black-capped chickdees, black phoebe, Lincoln's, and song sparrows seen on field trips. Joanne Phillips reported an Osprey at Shady Lakes late in September, and a female wood duck in late October. There has been a pair of western grebes at Bosque del Apache since the last week of October. There was also a report of several white-fronted geese at Bosque del Apache on November 9. There was a late migrating Nashville warbler in my yard on Election Day, and the first dark-eyed junco (slate-colored race) showed up at my feeder on November 13.

Speaking of migrants and winter residents, scientists in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service trapped, banded, and tagged about 1,000 redwinged blackbirds in Canada last May as part of a study of migration routes for this species. There are 517 with blue plastic tags, and 412 with orange plastic tags. Among the millions of migrating and wintering redwings this is like looking for needles in a haystack, or more like picking fly specks from black pepper. So it is extremely important that you look carefully at all redwings, and if you should find one with a tag report it to Denver Wildlife Research Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Building 16, Denver Federal Center 80225 or call me (265-8962) and I will see that the information gets to the proper person. In fact, anytime you see a bird with unusual markings—dye spots, neck collars, leg bands, or other markings it usually means it has been marked as part of some sort of a research project. Detailed notes of the species and markings should be taken. Get them to me and I will make every effort to get the data to the experimenter.

One more thing, now is the time to start winter feeding, if you haven't been at it all year. Remember it is important once you have started to feed that it be continued on a regular basis. The birds become dependent upon this source of feed, and may remain in an area they would normally leave because of lack of feed and water.

Water is just as important as food, both for drinking and bathing, and it is thoughtful to also provide some gravel when normal sources are covered with snow or otherwise unavailable. If you do feed, be sure to be alert for house finches with large white bars or spots on the wings. I am continuing my research on these unusual individuals and would appreciate hearing of any that may be seen. If you can obtain photos, that would be super.

Finally, keep the Christmas Bird Counts in mind. Because of my daughter's wedding, I will not be here for the Sandia Mountains count for the first time in ten years. However, I will be back to do the compiling. Should you have any questions, you may call me anytime before December 12, or Mary Lou Arthur (256-7359) anytime up to the night before the count. Mary Lou would appreciate hearing from as many as possible who plan to participate, as far in advance as possible, so she can plan on area assignments. If you have a preference please let her know. She especially needs to hear from people who are familiar with the area and can serve as party leaders. That is about the size of it for this time. Good birding, good luck on the Christmas counts, and God willing, I'll see you next time. □



## THE DUCK STAMP

The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, or as it is more popularly known, the "Duck Stamp," is a stamp that all migratory waterfowl hunters over the age of 16 must carry when hunting. But, what most people do not understand is that anyone, hunter or not, may purchase this stamp, thereby helping acquire and thus preserve critically needed wetland habitat for all wildlife.

The Duck Stamp is sold for \$7.50 through local post offices and at the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. In 1979, \$197.6 million was received from the sales of the Duck Stamp. It was used to acquire badly needed wetlands for wildlife. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is needed to increase the receipts from sales of the stamps, as land value increases.

The Duck Stamp was authorized by Congress in 1934. Since 1949 an annual art contest has been held with the design for each stamp chosen from the winning entry. Collections of these stamps have become quite valuable—valuable not only to collectors, but to all interested in the welfare of wildlife. More importantly, it is invaluable to wildlife. □

**OPERATION GAME THIEF (OGT)**

OGT is a cooperative citizen—Game and Fish Department program aimed at curbing wildlife law violations by paying rewards for information leading to arrest or citation of violators. Rewards, paid in cash, are generally \$250 for information on big game or endangered species law violations, \$100 in other cases. Rewards as high as \$1,000 to \$2,500 have been authorized by the 16-member advisory committee.

OGT coordinator Dan Pursley said, "The offer of a reward gives people incentive to tell what they otherwise might not tell. And because they are not required to give their names or to testify in court against the defendants, they are protected by anonymity."

"Rewards are paid from a fund established and maintained by donations from individuals and businesses, and the fund is used solely for payment of those rewards."

Donations to the reward fund should be sent to Operation Game Thief, c/o New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, State Capitol, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87503. Toll free number to report wildlife violations is (1-800-432-4263). □

**ADDRESSES****The President**

The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

**The Honorable Pete V. Domenici**

United State Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**The Honorable Harrison H. Schmitt**

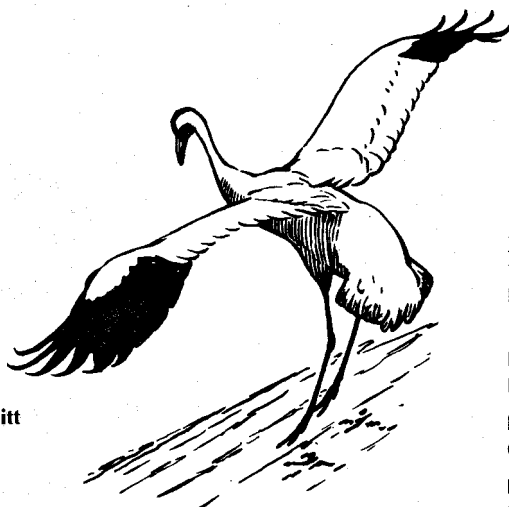
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**The Honorable Manuel Lujan, Jr.**

House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**The Honorable Joe Skeen**

House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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

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