

BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

December 1981 / January 1982

CALENDAR

WELCOME! CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY MEETS THE THIRD THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 7:30 P.M., ST. TIMOTHY'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, COPPER AND JEFFERSON, N.E. NONMEMBERS ARE WELCOME AT ALL MEETINGS, FIELD TRIPS, AND SPECIAL EVENTS.

Thursday, December 17--Regular Meeting

Lawrence Smith of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will present a slide program entitled "Arctic Patrol", aerial photographs of the Arctic National Wildlife Range.

Saturday, December 19--Christmas Bird Count

The Sandia Mountain counters will meet at 6:30 a.m., San Antonito School. Ross Teuber (265-8962) compiler. \$1.50 fee.

Saturday, December 26--Christmas Bird Count

The Bosque del Apache NWR counters will meet at refuge headquarters at 7 a.m. Chuck Hundertmark (266-9402), compiler. \$1.50 fee.

Saturday, January 2--Christmas Bird Count

The Albuquerque Area counters will meet at Corrales Shopping Center, 7:30 a.m. Jim Karo (294-2777), compiler. \$1.50 fee.

Thursday, January 7--Board Meeting

Butch and Edith Johnson will host the January Board meeting at 917 Truman, N.E. (255-0307), 7:30 p.m. All members are welcome at Board meetings.

Saturday and Sunday, January 9 and 10--NMAC Council Meeting

The New Mexico Audubon Council will meet in Roswell, January 9 and 10. Call the Prices (242-6604) for details.

Sunday January 10--Field Trip

Hart Schwarz will lead a half-day hike to the ever popular Three Gun Springs Trail. Meet at the Aladin Motel parking lot at 7:45 a.m. Call Hart (266-1810) for more information.

Thursday, January 21--Regular Meeting

Edith Johnson will present a slide program of the eruption of Mt. St. Helens. See inside for graphic details of the photography.

Saturday, January 23--Field Trip

Work party to our adopted trail in the Sandias, meet at 2 p.m. at the cattle guard on the road to Juan Tabo picnic area where it intersects Tramway Blvd. about one mile north of the turn off to the tram. Bring a canteen, a snack, and

(next page)

work gloves. PLEASE contact Barbara Hussey (292-5626) by Thursday, January 21, if you plan to go so sufficient picks and shovels can be checked out from the ranger station. Trip is subject to cancellation in inclement weather.

Monday, January 25--Audubon Wildlife Film

7:30 p.m. at UNM Popejoy Hall. Tom Diez will narrate, "East African Adventures" and "Adventures Into the American West." Discount tickets available from Edith Johnson (255-0307) or Dot DeLollis (299-5384).

Wednesday Through Sunday, January 27-31--Exhibit

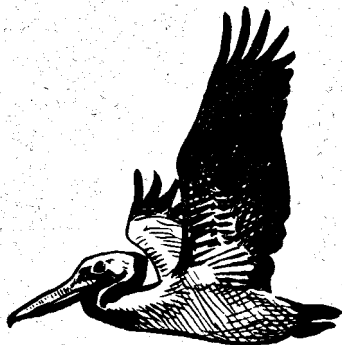
The AUDUBON ARK, National Audubon's traveling mini-museum on endangered species will be moored at Coronado Center. Diana Tominac and Tom Troy of the NAS staff will need our help setting up, "manning," and taking down the exhibit. Sign up at the December or January meeting or call Barbara Hussey (292-5626). Also, anyone interested in providing lodging for ARK staff, call Barbara.

Thursday, February 4--Board Meeting

The Board meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Bev Grady, 1004 Matador, S.E. (296-5108).

Sunday, February 7--Field Trip

The Bosque del Apache NWR should be at its winter best for this field trip led by Dustin and Sue Huntington (831-5755). Meet at the parking lot of Physics-Astronomy Building, Lomas and Yale, N.E. at 7 a.m. Bring lunch.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

November was the month of the Citizens Mobilization Campaign kickoff. A workshop was held in Albuquerque where speakers informed the audience of how, when, where, and why needed action is achieved. All interested parties to the rapid loss of the 1970's gains in safeguarding our life support system--the environment--are urged to join the campaign. There are three special areas of interest right now:

Endangered Species--Ross Teuber
Air Quality--Barbara Hussey
Water Quality--

If you are not part of the campaign now, and would like to be, contact any of our specialists: Kay Andersen, Elizabeth Broemel, Barbara Hussey, or Ross Teuber, and get on the mailing list for pertinent information from Washington.

Don't forget the Christmas Bird Counts! The more people who participate, the easier the job and the better the area is covered. The counts last all day, but each person participating does not have to participate all day. If you have helped gather the important data before, please come out again. If you have always been going to, but have not made it out yet, let this be the year you join us.

May your holidays be rich with the wonders of the season.

Kay Anderson

THE AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILM SERIES

Still time to get a season ticket--four more films left to see.

Season tickets may be used in any combination--one person for six shows, two persons for three shows, etc.

Call Dot DeLollis--299-5384; Edith Johnson--255-0307 or 277-2236; or Craig Andrews--881-9837.

All shows start at 7:30 p.m. at Popejoy Hall.

Next film--Monday, January 25, 1982.

WE WIN SOME, LOSE SOME,
ON THE ENERGY FRONT

Conservationists won a solid victory in the fight to preserve tax incentives for solar energy and energy conservation, but lost two out of three environment-related energy measures in a Senate appropriations bill.

The good news about tax incentives came in response to President Reagan's earlier announcement that he intended to repeal energy tax credits, such as the 15 percent credit for residential energy conservation, in order to increase federal tax revenues. Environmentalists immediately launched an all-out lobbying campaign--including an Action Alert from National Audubon Society's Washington office--that brought letters, telephone calls, and visits to Senators and Representatives.

The administration has not yet completed its proposal or sent any implementing legislation to the Congress. Meanwhile, resolutions opposing repeal of the tax credits have been introduced. More than half the members have signed in both houses: 251 Representatives and 59 Senators.

The Senate passed an appropriations bill for the Interior Department and related agencies, and the floor action included three important energy votes. An amendment by Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin to delete \$135 million from a synthetic fuel project in Newman, Kentucky, was defeated 40-57. National Audubon Society supported the amendment, contending that synfuels are a questionable answer to the nation's energy problems and that they are being greatly overfunded in comparison to the more promising answers of solar power and conservation.

Also defeated was a proposed amendment by Senator George Mitchell of Maine to increase funding for grants for weatherization of homes by low-income homeowners. His amendment, to raise the appropriation from \$112 million to \$150 million, lost 46-49. National Audubon lobbyists noted that weatherization grants cost far less in the long run than fuel assistance to heat leaky buildings.

But an amendment by Senator Robert Dole of Kansas to gut the Residential Conservation Service was beaten 17-77. This program requires large electric and gas utilities to offer homeowners on-site energy audits of their homes, including estimates of the costs and savings of specific conservation and renewable energy measures.

JANUARY MEETING SHOWS ACTUAL PHOTO STORY

On May 18, 1980, I was reading a book in my camper ten miles northeast of the summit of Mt. St. Helens. At 8:32 a.m. a yell from some fellow campers caused me to glance at the mountain. As I watched, the entire north side of Mt. St. Helens was sliding down in a massive landslide. I couldn't believe what was happening until a small puff of ash started to issue from the summit and I knew this was it! I grabbed my camera and started taking pictures. As I stood there, the cloud rushed towards me sweeping over first one then the second ridge that I had thought would protect me. It was only 90 seconds and the cloud was no more than three miles distant and still coming. I left that viewpoint in a controlled panic at 50 MPH down a narrow dirt logging road. Three miles down the road, since the cloud was not descending upon me yet, I felt I had time to take a few more pictures. I switched to a wide-angle lens as the cloud was too immense to be captured in a normal lens. As I took the vertical ash cloud photograph, golf-ball sized rocks began to impact the road near me leaving small craters in the dust. It was time to go! Gradually the ash began to fall. It got darker and darker to the point where I could see no more than ten feet even with my headlights on. I had to stop! After ten minutes of waiting in the darkness listening to the ash fall, a logging truck came up behind me. They were able to continue their escape only because they had men walking in front of their truck to find the road for them. I followed them out, staying five feet behind them the whole way.

I hope these slides will convey to you some of the awesome drama of witnessing a volcanic eruption, first hand, as I did.

Keith Ronnholm,
Photographer

CITIZEN ACTION WORKSHOP HELD HERE

The National Audubon Society sponsored a two-day workshop at UNM Law Building, November 14 and 15. Several CNMAS members were in attendance as well as Auduboners from around New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas, plus interested persons from other groups.

The workshop was presented by Dede Armentrout, NAS Southwest Regional Vice President, Ken Berline, NAS Washington Office Lobbyist, and Rhea Copening, NAS Southwest Regional Representative. Guest speakers were Max Coll, New Mexico State Representative, Harold Olsen, Director of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Minda Spillings of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ross Teuber of CNMAS and formerly the U.S. Forest Service, and Raphael Harpaz of the New Mexico Clean Air Coalition.

Topics covered were lobbying fundamentals such as effective letter writing, lobbying laws, publicity techniques, forming coalitions, and fund raising.

Interested persons who were unable to attend can obtain information packets by calling Barbara Hussey (292-5626). Also, the excellent National Audubon Society Citizen Action Guide will be available at the December CNMAS meeting for \$2.50.

AUDUBON ARK TO VISIT ALBUQUERQUE

The Audubon Ark will arrive in Albuquerque on Wednesday, January 27, 1982.

A traveling mini-museum devoted to informing Americans about our endangered birds and other animals, the Ark will be moored at Coronado Center through Sunday, January 31.

Piloting the Ark are environmental educators Tom Troy and Diana Tominac. They will be up with the birds on Wednesday morning to set up--with help from CNMAS members--an extensive exhibit that pictures and describes the plight of imperiled American wildlife. The exhibit and exhibitors will also explain how concerned citizens can help save these animals from extinction.

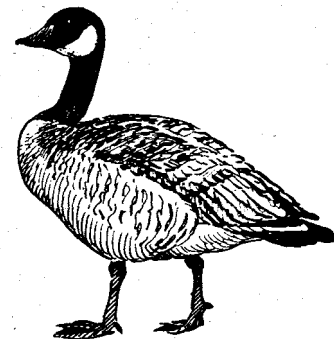
While the problems of disappearing species is global, the Audubon Ark focuses on species that are listed as endangered or threatened in the lower 48 states. These creatures include whales, alligators, grizzly bears, mountain lions, black-footed ferrets, Indiana bats, and salt marsh harvest mice. Prominent among beleaguered bird species are the California Condor, Peregrine Falcon, Bald Eagle, Brown Pelican, and Red Cockaded Woodpecker.

The Ark's basic message, being brought to cities and towns throughout the United States, is this: "By learning to respect the complexity of nature and to consider the consequences of our actions, we can ensure a safer future for all living things, including ourselves."

The Audubon Ark is an educational program of the National Audubon Society, made possible through a grant from the Celanese Corporation.

As mentioned above, the Ark needs help from us setting up the exhibit, as well as taking it down and "manning" it during its five-day stay. Set up will be after 9 p.m. on Tuesday night and before 9 a.m. on Wednesday. The exhibit will be taken down at 5 p.m. on Sunday. Two people will be needed each time. We also need "exhibit watchers" with duties much like those during the state fair for three-hour shifts from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, and from 12 noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday. CNMAS will have a sign-up sheet at the December and January meetings.

Also needed is separate lodging for the two Ark staff members, Diana and Tom (Tuesday through Sunday nights). If you are interested in sharing your home with a National Audubon staff member or would like more information, call Barbara Hussey (292-5626).



IDENTIFICATION OF NEW MEXICO BIRDS

Dustin Huntington

Accipiter Hawks

One of the most persistent and debated problems of hawk identification is that of the Accipiter Hawks (sharp-shinned, Coopers, and Goshawk).

There are some hawk watching experts who seem to almost infallibly call accipiter even at long range. This ability seems to come from enormous experience under standard conditions (e.g., same hawk watching spot) that allows them to identify the species by subtle comparative differences in shape, flight, etc. Attempts to describe these characteristics to other birders have led to much debate about the actual usefulness of various characteristics in field identification.

Three articles discuss accipiter identification and are recommended to anyone interested in this subject, and the first article is "must reading" for anyone who believes all accipiters can be called in the field.

1. American Birds--May 1979--
Mueller, Berger and Allez
2. American Birds--March 1980--
Pramstaller and Clark, p. 216
3. Birding--November-December
1976, p. 386

The following is a summary of the characteristics described in these articles:

In general the only problems are sharp-shinned/Coopers and Coopers/ Goshawk. The size difference between sharp-shinned and Goshawk is so great as to prevent sharp-shinned/Goshawk problems.

Size

Size is the single most definitive characteristic in separating the three species. A sharp-shinned is a small hawk (between the size of a robin and a flicker); a Coopers is a medium hawk (a little smaller than a crow) and a Goshawk is a large hawk (substantially larger than a crow). There is also size varia-

tions between the sexes (with females larger). However, there is essentially no size overlap between the species.

Unfortunately, size can often be misleading or difficult to judge, but when the size of the bird can be determined by comparison to known objects, it is often the most useful characteristic in species identification.

Head

The Goshawk often shows a conspicuous broad white superciliary line, but absence of such a mark does not rule out Goshawk as it is not always present.

In deciding between Coopers and sharp-shinned, relative eye size and placement can be of help in sitting birds. The Coopers has the eye forward on the side of the head and the eye takes up a relatively small amount of facial area. In the sharp-shinned, the eye is more centrally located on the side of the head and takes up a considerable portion of the facial area. The Coopers is also generally darker capped than the sharp-shinned.

Body and Wings

Coopers show finer breast barring as adults than sharp-shinned. As immatures, the Coopers have finer breast streaking showing much white on the breast. The immature sharp-shinned has teardrop shaped streaks which are broader than the Coopers and show less white on the breast.

Adult Goshawks are easily separated from others by their fine gray (rather than Rufous) breast streaking and light undertail. In immature Goshawks, the undertail coverts are always streaked or spotted.

The sharp-shinned is proportionally longer winged than the Coopers.

Tail

Much has been written about accipiter tail shape. As demonstrated in the May 1979 American Birds article, tail shape is not definitive. In general sharp-shinneds have a square end to the tail and Coopers a rounded end, but wear, feather growth, and variation make

this unreliable. Tail shape can be used to help build a case for one species or another, but should not be used alone.

Goshawks tend to have proportionately shorter tails than Coopers. In Goshawks, the tail length is about one and one-half times wing width. In immature Goshawks, the bars on the tail are in the shape of a "v" while in Coopers they are straight across. This gives an immature Goshawk a zig zag appearance when it spreads the tail.

Flight

In flight, the sharp-shinned has the most rapid wing beat. The Coopers is slower and the Goshawk quite slow and powerful. Wing beats also depend on the birds' activity (migrating, hunting, etc.) and are variable.

Much has also been made of head position. The sharp-shinned often has the head and wings held such that the head is not beyond the leading edge of the wings which in the Coopers the head does project beyond the leading edge of the wings. This characteristic is apparently useful at hawk watching lookouts watching migrating birds, but may not be reliable for non-migratory or hunting birds.

Habitat

Goshawks are typically birds of the mountains. Coopers also tend to prefer higher elevations with sharp-shinned more common in lower areas. On migration all can occur anywhere.

Overall, accipiter identification is difficult. Size is most useful if it can be determined. Sometimes an accipiter sighting can definitely be identified to species. Many can be identified as "probably a _____" with varying levels of confidence. It is important to remember that many sightings will be impossible to narrow down to more than sharp-shinned/Cooper or Cooper/Goshawk or just "accipiter species."

RIGHT TO WRITE

Surprisingly few people ever write their Senator or Congressman--the person they elected to represent them in Congress. Here are some suggestions that apply to all Congressional mail:

Address it properly. (See names and correct addresses on page 8.)

Identify the bill or issue by number if you know it, by the commonly known title, or by the sponsor or co-sponsors.

The letter should be timely while there is still time to take action.

Concentrate on your own Congressman or Senator.

Be reasonably brief and legible.

Student letters are welcome.

Write your own views in your own words. A personal letter is far better than a form letter or post-card.

Give your reasons for taking your position and be constructive with your suggestions.

If you have special expertise in a subject, share it with your elected official.

Say "well done" with a thank you when it is deserved.

Don't make threats or promises, berate your elected official, pretend vast political influence, or be a pen pal on every issue.

From "The Right to Write" by Congressman Morris K. Udall of Arizona.



BIRD SIGHTINGS

As of November 12, four Whooping Cranes had arrived at Bosque del Apache and one more had just left Monte Vista NWR in Colorado according to Ross Teuber who keeps in touch with the official crane watchers. Other news from Bosque del Apache was a Common Tern reported by Dustin Huntington on October 18. This year New Mexico has been receiving a lot of reports of unusual Laridae including a Caspian Tern at Bitter Lake in late August and a Sabine's Gull at Isleta Pueblo sewage ponds in late September.

The only other valley report was from the banding crew directed by Chuck Hundertmark. They seem to have mist-netted the same Gray-Headed Junco three years in a row at the Rio Grande Nature Center at Candelaria and the river.

Dustin Huntington had a single Bushtit, away from its usual habitat, at his home on the west mesa in October. George and Evelyn Price reported a Loon (SP) at a pond five or six miles west of Grants, New Mexico on November 15.

An immature Golden-Crowned Sparrow was seen by Gary Parker and Hart Schwarz, near the stone cabin in the canyon along the road to Juan Tabo picnic area, on November 8.

Reports from the Tijeras Canyon area have been exciting. A photo-documented Anna's Hummingbird stayed at a private residence near the Three Gun Springs Trailhead from September 23 through October 16. A Winter Wren was seen at Hondo Canyon Travertine formation from October 12-15 by Gary Parker, Hart Schwarz, and Marta Deutman.

Sandia Crest continues to be one of our birding hotspots. On November 15 Gary Parker and Hart Schwarz avoided stepping on a very tame flock of Gray-Crowned Rosy Finches (including one Hepburn's or gray-headed race) near building 31F north of the crest towers. Hart also reports seeing Golden-Crowned Kinglets seven different times this fall on or near the Crest trail from the tram to North Peak. Wheeling flocks of Red Crossbills are still being seen on the

Crest this fall, often at arm's length feeding in Douglas Fir. Sage, Crissal, and Curve-Billed Thrashers, Rufous-Crowned Sparrows, and Cassin's Finches are being reported regularly from the Sandias this fall.

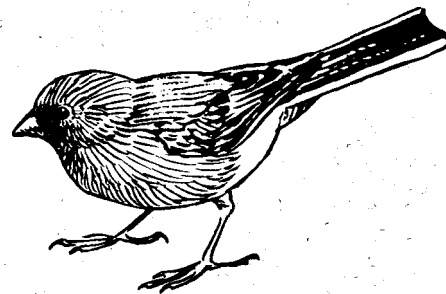
Three CNMAS sponsored Christmas bird counts will be held December 19, 26, and January 2. PLEASE try to get out for one or more of them. They are always fun and a great way to meet birders and learn more about birds. See the CALENDAR for specifics.

Keep reporting sightings to me at 292-5626.

Barbara Hussey

MIXED REPORT

Michigan Audubon Society passes on the news that the rare Kirtland's Warblers, which nest only in a small area in northern Michigan, lost a little ground this year. The 1981 Census found 232 singing males, down from 243 a year ago. On the other hand, early reports indicate Michigan's Bald Eagle nesting population, which did exceptionally well last season, is having another good year.

**HAVE YOU REGISTERED LATELY?**

Yes, we know the big election season is past and you are no doubt registered to vote, but there are other very important places where you should register. **Every time** you visit a National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) it is **very important** that you sign the guest register. Funding allocations are based on visitors' use of the refuges. For example, if more hunters register than birders and wildlife observers, more funding will go toward hunting activities. Congressional funding has been based on visitor-use records. So next time you visit the Bosque del Apache or any other NWR, take that 60 seconds and sign the register. All of the above applies to state and federal parks, monuments, etc. as well. □

**APPLICATION FOR JOINT MEMBERSHIP
IN THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
AND THE
CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY**

Joint membership offers you full membership in both the National Audubon Society and the Central New Mexico Audubon chapter at the **same** rate as membership in the national organization only.

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The **Honorable Manuel Lujan, Jr.**
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The **Honorable Joe Skeen**
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RARE BIRD ALERT—Report sightings to: 265-8962, 292-5626, or 898-2568

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