

BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

FEBRUARY - MARCH 1982

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY-MARCH 1982

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.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6--Field Trip

Field trip to Las Vegas NWR & MacAlister Lake. Meet at the old roundhouse off Highway 85 in Las Vegas at 9 a.m. Leader: Erika Hess (454-0064, Las Vegas).

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7--Field Trip

The Bosque del Apache NWR should be at its winter best for this field trip led by Evelyn and George Price (242-6604). Meet at the parking lot of Physics-Astronomy Building, Lomas and Yale, N.E., at 7 a.m. Bring lunch.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18--Regular Meeting

Barbara Hussey will present a short program on the National Audubon Society's Citizen Mobilization Campaign. This will be a "stationery potluck." Bring a few pieces of letter stationery with envelopes to trade with others. We will write brief letters to legislators during the meeting. Before the program, Barbara will show slides of our chapter's participation in the Forest Service Adopt-a-Trail Program.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20--Field Trip

Work party to our adopted trail in the Sandias. Meet at 2 p.m. at the cattle guard near the intersection of Tramway Boulevard and the road to Juan Tabo Picnic Area (about one mile north of the stop sign at the turnoff to the base of the Tram). Call Barbara Hussey (292-5626) by Thursday so she can get sufficient tools from the Ranger Station.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21--Audubon Wildlife Film

"Land of the Shortgrass Prairie," narrated by Lorne Wallace, 7:30 p.m. at Popejoy Hall. Call Edith Johnson (255-0307) or Dot DeLollis (299-5384) for tickets.

THURSDAY, MARCH 4--Board Meeting

7:30 p.m. Place: TBA.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, MARCH 6-7--NMOS Meeting and Field Trip

The New Mexico Ornithological Society will hold its 20th Anniversary Meeting at the Biology Building on the UNM Campus.

March 6, 8 a.m. registration. Papers presented all day. Graduate students in the museum all day for the inspection of bird skins. 12 noon--catered lunch, \$2.

(next page)

6:30 p.m.--dinner honoring the society's founders, approximately \$8.

March 7, Field trip to Bosque del Apache NWR. Call Mary Alice Root (277-3411) by March 3 for lunch and dinner reservations.

SUNDAY, MARCH 14--Field Trip

Bill Howe will lead us on a trip to the Rio Grande bosque on and/or near the Isleta Indian Reservation. Bill is a wildlife biologist doing an extensive survey of the bosque. Meet at 7 a.m. just off I-25 at the Broadway (Highway 47) exit. Call Bill at 256-7856 for more information.

MONDAY, MARCH 15--Audubon Wildlife Film

"A Naturalist Afield--Part II," narrated by Steve Maslowski. See February 21 for ticket information.

THURSDAY, MARCH 18--Regular Meeting

Blaine Donner will show a film "Plants and Animals of the West Face" (of the Sandias).

SUNDAY, MARCH 28--Field Trip

Half-day walk up Embudito Canyon on the west face of the Sandias. Leader Hart Schwarz (266-1810) expects to see the resident Rufous crowned sparrows, perhaps some early arriving black-throated sparrows among other birds. Meet at 8 a.m. at the style to Embudito Canyon. Directions from the corner of Montgomery and Tramway: go east about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to Glenwood Hills Drive, north on Glenwood Hills past Desert Hills Place to the style (about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile).

THURSDAY, APRIL 1--Board Meeting

7:30 p.m. Place: TBA.

SATURDAY, APRIL 3--Field Trip

Spring migration should be in full swing at the Bosque del Apache NWR. Meet at 8 a.m. at refuge headquarters. Bring lunch. Leaders: George and Evelyn Price (242-6604).

MONDAY, APRIL 5--Audubon Wildlife Film

"Inside Passage to Alaska," narrated by Norm Wakeman, 7:30 p.m., Popejoy Hall, UNM. For ticket information, see February 21.

SATURDAY, APRIL 17--Field Trip

Las Vegas NWR. See February 6 for details.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, APRIL 24-25--NMAC Meeting

The meeting will be held in Silver City. Birding should be super there. Mark your calendars. More details in the next OWL.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Much is happening on the city, state, and federal levels to weaken the environmental regulations which have been developed over the past years. Please keep yourself informed of the changes being proposed.

At this time of year, every year, the chapter looks to its membership for new leadership. If you would like to help with the search or would like to fill a position, please call Barbara Hussey or Kay Andersen. The chapter has need of people with some spare time and all sorts of talents. Please let us know about you and a spot can be found for your talent and ability.

-Kay Anderson



NOT TOO LATE FOR SEASON
PASSES TO WILDLIFE FILMS

Two of you can still attend the last three Audubon wildlife films on one season pass. A look at the calendar will tell you that the remaining films are very interesting indeed. Call Edith Johnson (255-0307), Dot DeLollis (299-5384), or Craig Andrews (881-9387) who will see that you get your tickets promptly.

ADMINISTRATION SEEKS TO POISON COYOTES

The Reagan Administration wants to revoke President Nixon's ban on poisoning coyotes and has cancelled the 1978 order against gassing and shooting coyote pups in their dens. The regulation permitting wildlife agents to return to the controversial practice of "denning" coyote pups has already gone into effect, and the Department of the Interior has announced plans to ask the EPA to permit "experimental" use of Compound 1080 for poisoned bait in the wild to control predators.

On the basis of earlier attempts by the government to restrict and supervise use of 1080 in the field, National Audubon Society believes that permitting experimental use of this poison would be virtually equivalent to revoking the ban entirely. Colorless, odorless, tasteless Compound 1080 is one of the most lethal and broadly destructive poisons known to man.

The National Wool Growers Association contends that coyote populations have exploded since 1972, the year 1080 was banned, and that losses to coyotes are now costing sheep ranchers \$100 million a year. The ranchers made the same claim to EPA in 1978 in a petition to have the ban revoked, and EPA turned them down for lack of evidence. National Audubon believes there is still no convincing evidence that the ban caused an increase in coyote predation.

The society, a leader in the long fight for the ban, recognizes that some coyotes are sheep killers and that ranchers have a right to protection against them. What the society has objected to is wholesale slaughter of coyotes and other wildlife to get rid of the small percentage of coyotes that are livestock killers.

In a statement decrying the Administration's action as "another backward step toward the environmental dark ages, Audubon President Russ Peterson made the following points:

- Compound 1080 in its previous use resulted in the death of thousands of nontarget animals, including eagles, hawks, bobcats, bears,

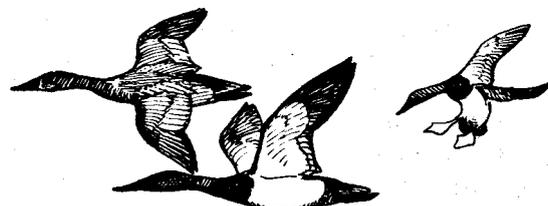
badgers, foxes, racoons, and dogs, along with a great many coyotes that had never been a threat to sheep.

- The chief reasons for the long and continuing decline of the sheep-raising business have been foreign competition, the rise of synthetic substitutes for wool, and, in many cases, inefficient management practices. Coyotes are being made the scapegoat for the industry's problems.
- Poison and denning are not the only ways to control coyote populations; some 70,000 coyotes are still trapped and shot annually by the Fish and Wildlife Service, and an additional 200,000 a year are taken by fur trappers.
- Legalizing 1080 for predator poisoning will neither eliminate the coyote nor improve the sheep ranchers' fortunes. What it will do is poison the public rangeland and needlessly destroy wildlife.

Far from being a threat to ranchers, the great majority of coyotes perform a valuable service. They prey mostly on rabbits and rodents, and by keeping the populations of these grass-eating animals in check, they protect the range on which the ranchers' livestock graze.

Audubon Society members are urged to protest this latest Administration assault on wildlife. Write to President Reagan at The White House, Washington, D.C. 20500, and send copies to your senators (U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510) and your representative (U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515).

Editor's Note: Hearings will be in session as you receive this newsletter. Write immediately!



SHARE WITH WILDLIFE

Share With Wildlife is the theme of a drive to raise funds for wildlife via donations from New Mexicans' state income tax refunds, according to Game and Fish Department Director Harold Olson.

The 1981 Legislature authorized the program, which opens the way for New Mexicans with a state income tax refund due them this year to donate all or any part of the refund to wildlife work in the state.

"Traditionally, in New Mexico and throughout the U.S., hunters and anglers have been the primary source of funding for wildlife restoration and management," Olson said. "The income tax refund donation is an easy and painless way for virtually everybody--whether or not they hunt or fish--to share in financing wildlife assistance."

Species being considered as possible beneficiaries include bighorn sheep, Rio Grande cutthroat and Gila trout, the bald eagle in New Mexico, and others.

"We can't at this time specifically earmark money from the tax refunds to particular programs, because we won't know for some time how much we'll have to work with," Olson said. "We are committing the money to work with non-game species, endangered species, or species that are rare even though they may be classified as game animals or fish."

The amount individuals donate this year, designated by them on Line 23 of their New Mexico state income tax return, is deductible from 1982 state and federal income taxes, due next year.

Condor Habitat. The state of California has moved to acquire and protect a 590-acre tract just outside the Sequoia National Forest that is the only known major roosting area of California condors in the northern part of their range. The state had frozen all spending for such land acquisition, but was persuaded to make an exception after the Tulare County Audubon Society and others brought the importance of the roosting area to official attention.

AN UNSUNG HEROINE

Every organization such as CNMAS depends on a lot of people to get the necessary work done. Some are highly visible, some are more behind-the-scenes workers. Dot DeLollis has been such a worker since our chapter first began over ten years ago. For the last four years, Dot has been membership chairman, a vitally necessary job. Dot keeps membership rolls up to date, makes address corrections, sees that the labels are printed for the Burrowing Owl and other mailings, and dozens of other details to keep the organization running smoothly.

After ten years of service, Dot is resigning so that she and her husband can do some traveling. We give Dot our grateful thanks for all she has done and wish her great amounts of joy in her "retirement."

ZOO OFFERS INTERESTING PROGRAM
PLUS A TRIP TO KENYA

The New Mexico Zoological Society will present a program of special interest to Audubon members:

THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS AND ECUADOR

A Slide Show Presented by

Mina and Don Carnicom

of the

New Mexico Zoological Society

Thursday, February 25, 7:30 p.m.

Hospitality Room at the Albuquerque

Federal Savings and Loan

4901 Central Avenue, N.E.



Mina and Don will show us finches; gulls; flamingos; herons; frigate birds; penquins; and the red, blue, and olive footed boobies, along with many other birds. The hundreds of three-foot-long marine and land iguanas blend right into the rugged lava cliffs, and the giant tortoises and sea lions will fascinate you as well as the lush plants, flowers, lagoons, cacti, manta rays, and reef sharks.

Call the Stamms (255-2640) if you'd like more information.

The society is sponsoring a 19-day trip to Kenya starting August 18. Please call Tippy Sneddon at the zoo office for itineraries and other information.

NEWS RELEASE

The twelfth annual INSTITUTE OF DESERT ECOLOGY, sponsored by the Tucson Audubon Society, will be held April 30 through May 3, 1982, at Camp Cooper in the Tucson Mountain foothills. Sixty participants from all over the nation will engage in field studies of the Sonoran Desert under the leadership of five professional staff members. During the first three days, participants will explore interrelationships of animal and plant life and the physical characteristics of the desert in the foothills surrounding the Institute site. The fourth and optional day will offer an all-day field trip to a riparian environment to compare its unique plants and animals. Camp Cooper, at an altitude of 2,850 feet, typifies the Arizona Upland Zone of the Sonoran Desert. It is surrounded by ten miles of hiking trails through abundant desert vegetation and is the habitat of numerous animals, including birds, deer, foxes, coyotes, and javelinas. The first weekend in May normally coincides with the peak of the migratory bird season and the advent of the cactus blooming season. All meals during the Institute are catered and participants are housed in eight dormitory-style cabins at the site. Registration includes meals and lodging and costs \$157 for three days or \$191 for four days. One unit of college credit is available from the University of Arizona for an additional fee. The Institute is open to all adults 18 and over. Participants do not need to be members of the Audubon Society to attend. For registration or brochure write: Desert Ecology Institute, Tucson Audubon Society, 30-A North Tucson Boulevard, Tucson, AZ 85716.

NOTICES

WASHBURN AWARD. CNMAS is looking for government employees (local, state, federal) who have been actively involved in conservation and wildlife preservation to receive the chapter's Washburn Award. If you know someone who might be eligible, please send your nomination to CNMAS at Post Office Box 30002, Albuquerque, 87190.

CHAPTER ELECTIONS. New officers will be elected at our annual May meeting. If you have a nomination for any chapter officer, please call the Princes (242-6604).

IDEOLOGICAL EUNUCHS??

An old memo being circulated in Washington casts light on the attitudes of the man who has been promoted to chief of conservation for the U.S. Geological Survey--the Interior Department Office responsible for regulating oil and mineral development on federal lands. He is Andrew V. Bailey, who in a lower post in that agency in 1976, signed a memo chiding its environmental section for using the word "disturbed" to describe strip-mined lands.

"Inflammatory words such as disturbed, devastated, defiled, ravaged, gouged, scarred, and destroyed, should not be used," the memo reads. "These are words used by the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, environmentalists, homosexuals, ecologists, and other ideological eunuchs opposed to developing mineral resources . . . Certainly there should be a better word than 'disturbed' to describe land utilized and altered in production of coal."

Most people who have seen unreclaimed strip mines will agree there are better words than "disturbed" to describe them.



Texas Coast Wildlife. A remarkable book of photographs of the plant, bird, and animal life of the Texas Gulf Coast has been published through the sponsorship of Conoco, the company that for 35 years has been producing oil in the area where the endangered whooping cranes winter. The foreword, by Audubon President Russ Peterson, praises the company's commitment to wildlife protection, and comments: "Many readers may be surprised to find such an abundance of wildlife and natural areas on a coast that has seen industrial and energy development." A NATURAL COLLECTION, by Steven C. Wilson and Karen C. Hayden, is available for \$11.50, including postage and handling, from the Marketing Division, at Audubon headquarters in New York.

IDENTIFICATION OF NEW MEXICO BIRDS

Dustin Huntington

Bald Eagle/Golden Eagle

It is always a thrill to see an eagle and even non-birders are easily impressed by the power and majesty of the bird. New Mexico is fortunate in that every winter a small number of Bald Eagles winter in New Mexico. Locally, the best spots to look for Bald Eagles are Cochiti Lake and Bosque del Apache NWR, with Bosque being the most reliable (over a dozen may be found at Bosque in a good winter).

Adult Bald Eagles with their white head and tail are not easily confused with any other New Mexico bird. However, the great majority of the Bald Eagles that winter in New Mexico are immatures which can present identification problems. The bird most often confused with the immature Bald Eagle is the Golden Eagle (a permanent resident in New Mexico).

Eagles can be separated from all other raptors by their overall size and shape. Both eagles are very large and massive--even the largest Buteo Hawk is much smaller. Eagles also appear much longer winged than the Buteo Hawks and typically show more splayed primaries at the wing tip. The flight of an eagle is extremely powerful. On a windy day when other hawks are having difficulty, an eagle will still be in total control. The wing beats are relatively slow. With some experience there should be little difficulty in separating eagles from other raptors.

Once one has decided a bird is an eagle, the next question is which one. Both eagles take several years to reach adult plumage. Immatures can be quite variable, especially immature Balds.

Most eagles will be seen flying and the key characteristics to look at are underwing pattern, head size, wing position when gliding, and tail.

Underwing--Immature Bald Eagles have mottled white patches on the underwing coverts and often belly. Immature Golden Eagles also show white in the

wing, however, it is in the base of the flight feathers, not in the underwing coverts. Adult Golden show no white in the underwing.

Head--Bald Eagles are much larger headed than Golden. In a Bald Eagle the length of the head and tail appear about the same length. In a Golden, the head appears much shorter than the tail.

Wing Position--When gliding, a Bald Eagle will usually hold its wings flat or slightly below horizontal. A Golden will often hold its wings slightly above the horizontal.

Tail--The tail patterns of the immature of both eagles can be confusing; however, if the bird has an all white tail with no black terminal band, it is a Bald Eagle.

If the bird is sitting and none of the above characteristics can be seen, bill and head size are most useful. A Bald has a very large, heavy beak giving it a different head shape than the smaller billed Golden.

Eagles in New Mexico are all too often shot at and are justifiably wary. It is rare to get a close look at either species, but even at a distance they are among the most impressive birds in New Mexico.

AN AUDUBON SANCTUARY IN NEW MEXICO??

Negotiations are proceeding well for the National Audubon Society to acquire a sanctuary in the Sacramento Mountains of southern New Mexico. Dede Armetrout, Southwest Regional Director, announced that negotiations had advanced from top secret to very hopeful. This sanctuary will be a habitat-type sanctuary rather than a species protection-type sanctuary.

The New Mexico Audubon Council is being asked to consider funding possibilities, and all chapters and members will also be involved. An endowment fund will be a necessity. This is a really exciting event for our state! Put your thinking caps on for funding possibilities.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

The main birding events for the last two months were our three Christmas Bird Counts (CBC). Ross Teuber, compiler for the Sandia Mountains CBC, reports a total of 51 species were seen. The group found a CANYON WREN for the first time on a Sandia CBC. Dustin and Sue Huntington sighted a mixed flock of about 30 ROSY FINCHES (at least 1 was a GRAY-CROWNED).

Chuck Hundertmark's Bosque del Apache CBC came up with a total of 92 species. Some of the highlights were a HERMIT THRUSH, 3 COMMON GALLINULES, and 2 new species for the count: 2 LESSER YELLOW-LEGS and a GREATER SCAUP. The greater scaup has only recently been documented as a New Mexico bird.

The Albuquerque CBC had an all-time high total of 76, plus 3 more species seen in the count area during the count week, according to compiler Jim Karo. Some of the more interesting birds seen were a pair of GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS and a HOUSE WREN found near the Oxbow by Dustin and Sue Huntington. Also seen was a BALD EAGLE being chased by CROWS in the Corrales bridge area. All-time high numbers of 21 RED-TAILED HAWKS and 1,122 ROBINS were also reported.

Sightings from the valley in the last two months include another BALD EAGLE seen near Bernalillo by Bill Howe. Bill also reports a RUSTY BLACKBIRD in early December and an EMPIDONAX, a NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH, and a COMMON YELLOWTHROAT in early January, all at Isleta. In mid-January, Isleta was the location for sightings of a WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, SWAMP SPARROW, TREE SPARROW, and WOOD DUCK. Some of these species would not be notable in summer but are rather unusual in winter.

Valerie Hink found a SAW-WHET OWL in Corrales bosque on January 11. The report was sent through the Rare Bird Alert, but it coincided with a snowstorm and few people even tried to look for it.

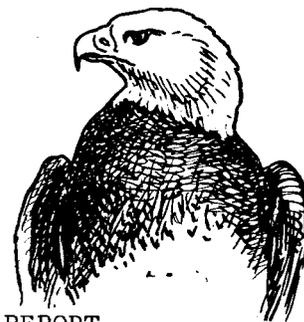
Joanne Phillips had a BAND-TAILED PIGEON at Shady Lakes from December 15-23 and her next-door neighbor had a WHISTLING SWAN over the holidays.

Reports from holiday trips to Bosque del Apache were: 4 EARED GREBES and 5 WESTERN GREBES. If you've been to Bosque del Apache recently, you may have noticed the SANDHILL CRANE numbers are rather low this year: only 3,000-4,000, while other years they have had 10,000-12,000. Crane biologist Dr. Rod Drewien, with the Whooping Crane Experiment, explained to Evelyn and George Price that most of this year's wintering sandhills are spending each night in their traditional roosting site along the Rio Grande. Due to repairs on the low flow channel, apparently most of the water is now being diverted into the river instead of the refuge.

Birding news from the Sandias continues to be interesting. Dave Tomasko found another GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW--this time in the Juan Tabo Gorge on January 3. In late November, Dustin and Sue Huntington spotted 2 BROWN-CAPPED ROSY FINCHES at Kiwanis Meadow. Hart Schwarz reported about 12 WHITE-WINGED CROSS-BILLS among a larger flock of RED CROSS-BILLS on December 6. He saw the flock in three places that day: the crest parking lot, Kiwanis Meadow, and at the upper Tram terminal. Incidentally, the upper part of the crest road is still closed to the public starting at Balsam Glade, which is just above the ski area.

This winter we haven't been receiving any reports of EVENING GROSBEAKS or WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKERS. If you know of any, give me a call (292-5626) and keep on reporting those sightings. If you don't want to phone them in, how about writing them? My address is on page 8.

-Barbara Hussey



FIELD TRIP REPORT

Nine people enjoyed a perfect New Mexico winter day for a hike to Three Gun Springs. The 5-hour walk produced 28 species. The curve-bill and crissal thrasers were entertaining, but the most interesting sight was a great horned owl camouflaged in a tree.

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

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

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