

# BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

APRIL - MAY 1982

## CALENDAR

### Thursday, April 15 Regular Meeting

APRIL-MAY

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.

### Friday-Sunday, April 16-18 Regional Conference

The Southwest Regional Conference will be held this year in Rockport, Texas, home of great birding.

### Saturday, April 17 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).

See inside for plans for a campout, potluck supper.

### Saturday, April 24 Field Trip

Field trip to Madrone Ponds. Bill Howe (256-7856 will lead a trip to this little known area near Belen.

Meet at the parking lot of Physics-Astronomy Building, Lomas and Yale, N.E., at 6 a.m. Bring lunch.

### Saturday-Sunday, April 24-25 NMAC Meeting

The New Mexico Audubon Council will meet Saturday afternoon in Silver City. A Sunday morning field trip will be held to nearby areas. Call Evelyn and George Price (242-6604) for more details.

### Saturday-Sunday, April 24-25 Bird-a-Thon

The second annual Bird-a-Thon will be held this weekend to commemorate John J. Audubon's birthday. Call Kay Anderson (898-2968) for more information.

### Sunday, May 2 Field Trip

Field trip to Sandia Park, the pond, pastures, and Cinega Canyon, for spring migrants and summer residents. Meet at the Sandia Park post office at 7:30 a.m. Bring lunch and water. Call leader Hart Schwarz (266-1810) for more information.

### Thursday, May 6 Board Meeting

7:30 p.m. Board meeting will be at the home of Bev Grady (296-5108). Everyone is welcome to attend.

Saturday, May 8Field Trip--Bandelier National Monument

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at headquarters.  
 Leader: Pat Insley (Santa Fe 982-0796).  
 Car Pool from Santa Fe--Meet at 7:00 at DeVargas Mall Shopping Center (north end of parking lot).

Saturday, May 15Albuquerque Spring Bird Count

As details are not yet solid, please call Barbara Hussey (292-5626) to get more information as date gets closer.

Sunday, May 16Sangre de Cristo Spring Bird Count

Call Pat Insley (982-0796) before May 9 if you would like to participate.

Thursday, May 20Annual Meeting

Annual Meeting of the Central New Mexico Audubon Society at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church. Potluch dinner starts at 6:16 p.m., meet and election of officers at 7:30 p.m.

Program: A slide show compiled by Manzano High School students entitled "What we Leave Behind."

The Washburn Award will be presented. Bring a generous portion of your favorite dish and tableware for your own use. Beverages will be provided. Call Hospitality Chairman, Evelyn Jones (298-9130) if you can help with setup, decorations, etc.

Friday-Monday, May 29-31Field Trip

Field trip to Guadalupe Canyon. Meet in canyon about 4:00 p.m., Saturday. Campout Saturday and Sunday, leave for home Monday. Directions: Start at 15th Street and U.S. 80 in Douglas, Arizona. Go east on 15th (Geronimo Trail) for 23 miles. Then turn right on Guadalupe Road and go 9.5 miles to first campsite in canyon. Note: Do not turn right at Slaughter Ranch, which is only 16 miles east of Douglas. Total distance is 440 miles--allow nine-ten hours. Call leader Jim Karo (294-2777) for more details.

Thursday, June 3Annual Board Dinner Meeting

At the home of Barbara Hussey (292-5626), 705 Monte Alto, N.E. "Get acquainted" potluck supper starts at 6:30 p.m., for past and present board members and spouses. Bring food. If you can, bring tables and chairs, call Barbara. Board meeting starts at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 5Beginner's Birdwalk to Shady Lakes and Corrales Bosque

Meet promptly at 7:30 a.m. at the entrance to Shady Lakes Fishing Resort, 11033 Highway 85, N.W., Alameda. Call either Barbara Hussey (292-5626) or Joanne Phillips if you plan to go. Bring binoculars. Veteran birders are encouraged to bring extra binoculars to share. Half day.

Sunday, June 6Field Trip

San Cristobal area. Meet at 9:00 a.m. on Highway 3 at the San Cristobal and D. H. Lawrence Ranch--turnoff about 14 miles north of Taos.

Leader: Walton Hawk (San Cristobal 766-2357). Car pool from Santa Fe--Meet at 7:00 a.m. at De Vargas Mall Shopping Center (north end of parking lot.)



## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If you change your address or have not received your Burrowing Owl, call our New Membership Chairmen, Marge and Dave Carrick (266-0191). The past office will not forward bulk mail, so getting a new address to the Carricks is important.

## A PHONE FOR CNMAS?

Would you like to see Audubon listed in our telephone directory? It is too expensive for our chapter to provide this private business listing. BUT, if there is an Audubon member who has an answering service that could double for Audubon too. How about that? Tell Kay Anderson, our President (898-2968).

## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Field trips are an important part of any Audubon Chapter. The membership of our chapter is very large and diverse. It has been the aim of the field trip chairman to try to please as many people as possible. The reason for field trips being offered on Saturdays and on Sundays to give the membership a choice and a chance to go birding as a chapter. We do have members who cannot go on Saturdays and those who cannot go on Sundays. In the last Burrowing Owl, there were four Saturday trips and three Sunday trips. If more members would volunteer to be leaders, at perhaps their favorite spot, maybe the needs and desires of the whole membership could be better met. Please be understanding of the situation.

Another matter plaguing the chapter is members willing to contribute their time/talents to the membership. So often the remark "somebody should. . ." is heard. We need more somebodies! Currently we need:

Nominations for the Washburn awards--Kay Anderson (883-4545)

Centerpieces for the annual meeting--Kay Anderson (883-4545)

Leaders and participants in weekday field trips. We need to know who out there is interested in going or in leading--Hart Schwartz (266-1810)

Volunteers to begin a study of the birds which frequent the Tramway area--Barb Hussey (292-5626)

Volunteers for the Bird-a-Thon in April--Kay Anderson (883-4545)

Volunteers for the State Fair Booth. Designer, letters, coordinator, workers housing, etc.--Evelyn Price (242-6604)

Let's stop thinking of what SOMEBODY can do for us, but rather what we can do for SOMEBODY.

Kay Anderson



## SCHOLARSHIP TO BE AWARDED

WE WILL SOON HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

Acceptance of applications to the Scholarship Committee has been closed. Eligible teachers will be judged for background, experience, potential benefit and opportunity.

The winner will receive one week at the Audubon Ecology Camp in the West, which is located in Wyoming's Wind River Mountains. The valley is adjacent to the Fitzpatrick Wilderness and part of the Whiskey Basin Big Game Sanctuary. The winner will be exposed to field trips, nature seminars, photography groups, and plenty of fresh air and good food.

The second and third place runners up, will receive a copy of:

James Fisher - Roger Tory Peterson's  
WORLD OF BIRDS

Prizes will be awarded at the last Audubon Wildlife Film of this season, Monday, April 5, at Popejoy Hall. (You will ALL enjoy Norm Wakeman's Inside Passage to Alaska.)

We wish to thank those of you who bought season tickets for our Audubon Wildlife Film Series. You made it possible for us to give this Scholarship. We hope you will continue your support of this worthy cause.

When you purchase a SEASON ticket from the Audubon Society, EVERYONE IS A WINNER!

The films are all personally narrated by the photographer; so you get first-hand information on their exciting experiences. (You even get a chance to talk to the speaker during intermission or after the show, if you wish.)

Thank you

Edith Johnson  
Chairman, Wildlife  
Film Committee

## AGRICULTURAL LAND LOSSES ASTOUNDING!

If the United States were losing its national defense capability at one-thousandth of the rate it's losing food-producing ability, there would be near panic at all levels of government and immediate action to solve the problem. But because food supplies are adequate now, there apparently is not enough concern in government to make the hard decisions to solve the country's most serious and basic problem, losing the ability to feed itself.

"Every hour, with 200 new Americans to feed, the U.S. loses 220 acres of our food-growing farmlands to townhouses, shopping centers, and coal mines. And every day, 26 square miles of U.S. topsoil wash and blow away from the farmland that is left. At that rate, it could take less than 100 years for us to lose every single acre of cropland now farmed in the U.S." That startling statement highlights a new book by soil conservationist, R. Neil Sampson, titled Farmland or Wasteland: A Time to Choose (available for \$16.95 from Rodale Books).

As a barometer of farmland conditions, wildlife has been sounding the alarm for more than a decade. Wildlife populations on the nation's farms and ranches have been declining dramatically. Efforts by wildlife managers to stem the tide have been largely fruitless. But now experts are able to foresee the time when people as well as wild animals will pay the terrible price for mining and degrading once abundant, productive lands.

EPA WANTS TO RELAX  
TOXIC DUMPING BAN

There has been news from the Environmental Protection Agency this winter that sounds like a lagoon. Unfortunately, it is serious. EPA wants to relax the regulation that prohibits burying liquid hazardous wastes in landfill dumps. And the President has appointed the former public relations chief of one the nation's worst polluters as assistant administrator in charge of hazardous waste clean-up.

The proposed new regulation would allow dump operators to use up to one-fourth of their space for burying barrels of most kinds of toxic liquids. Meanwhile, EPA is suspending the present ban entirely during the 90 days the new proposal is under consideration. The suspension amounts to challenge to dump operators to see how much poisonous liquid they can bury in that time.

The new assistant administrator is Rita M. Lavelle, whose former employer, Aerojet-General Corporation, has been charge by the state of California with pouring as much as 20,000 gallons a day of toxic wastes--including arsenic, phenols, and carcinogenic substances--into unlined ponds and swampy areas.

Another piece of hard-to-believe news comes from a recent hearing on the administration's proposed revisions of the Clean Air Act. EPA Administrator Anne Gorsuch cautioned a congressional committee not to believe the exaggerated claim that the revisions would result in a five-fold increase in air pollution in national parks and recreation areas. They would only double the pollution, she said.



**T**o save a flower it may be necessary to rescue a planet. If we must all become politicians to do this, let us begin.

## LOPSIDED STAFF

Eleven of the top 16 officials of the Interior Department have worked for the five major industries regulated by the department, according to Who's Minding the Store?, a guide prepared by Common Cause. Ten of them reported conflicts of interest which they had to resolve--by selling large holdings of stock or by other measures--before they could legally take office. The 80-page guide is available for \$4 from Investigative Studies, Common Cause, 2030 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

## GARRISON DECISION REVERSED

The Garrison Diversion Unit is back in business. An appeals court judge has stayed the injunction National Audubon Society won last summer prohibiting further construction of the billion-dollar irrigation project in North Dakota. It is probably the most severe setback yet suffered by the society in a seesaw legal battle that began in 1976. Although the society has not given up hope for eventual victory in court, at this juncture the best opportunity for halting this costly piece of political pork barrel lies with Congress. Although the House of Representatives last summer voted down an amendment to kill the 1982 appropriation for Garrison, the count was so close that a switch of only ten votes could have passed the amendment.

the prairie marshes of North Dakota produce more ducks per year than are produced in any other state except Alaska. Garrison would damage or destroy 13 national wildlife refuges there. It would pollute water draining into Canada, in violation of a treaty. And all to irrigate six tenths of one percent of the agricultural land in North Dakota.

## ENERGY STUDY

A report just completed by the Energy Conservation Coalition concludes that conservation--not an increased supply of energy--is the principal reason the United States has been able to increase its Gross National Product 18 percent during the eight years since the Arab oil embargo. Energy conservation has met 88 percent of the nation's requirements for new growth since 1973, according to the report, while new supply contributed only 12 percent. Copies of the report are available without charge from: Energy Conservation Coalition, 1412 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

## STIFF SENTENCE

A 43-year-old Idaho man, Cody Strand, has been sentenced to five years in prison, and a woman accomplice, Celita Frieria, was sentenced to two years, for illegal sale of eagle feathers. Thirteen other persons received lesser sentences in the case, which was broken last summer by undercover agents.

## NEW EDITION COMING

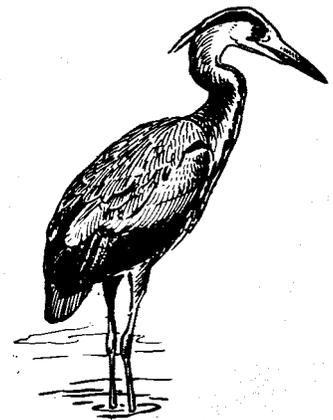
Nature Guide, sponsored by Tajoma Audubon Society in Tacoma, Washington, is a directory that lists persons who are knowledgeable about birds and other fields of natural history in their areas and who are willing to guide or advise visiting birders and nature enthusiasts. This year, the guide's foreign section is being expanded and the editor is seeking names of potential volunteers overseas. Information on likely candidates should be sent to Ilene Marckx, 43915 4th Avenue South, Federal Way, Washington, D.C. 98003.

## SHOPS RAIDED

California wildlife agents raided a half-dozen fashionable stores in Beverly Hills last month and confiscated \$58,000 worth of shoes and accessories made from the skins of crocodiles, pythons, and other endangered species.

## GARBAGE POWER

Although there have been some setbacks and disappointments in development of facilities to use refuse as fuel for electric power plants, the double-barreled advantage of saving fuel costs while getting rid of garbage is proving increasingly attractive as techniques improve and as the costs of fuel and garbage disposal rise. The Commonwealth Electric Company in Massachusetts announced plans this month to build a \$124 million garbage power plant near Plymouth. It will be the largest such facility in the country built with private capital.



## DOOR PRIZES NEEDED

Part of the fun of the annual meet and potluck supper is the awarding of door prizes. Can you contribute something to be used as prizes? They could be serious or silly. Call Barbara Hussey (292-5626).

## A WEEKEND IN LAS VEGAS?

Well, not the Las Vegas of gold and glitter, but the Las Vegas of birds and historic buildings. Plans are being made for a campout and potluck supper on April 17 in conjunction with a field trip to the Las Vegas NWF. We will need to make reservations at the Las Vegas KOA for camping so we can reserve a special spot. The campground is a lovely place in pinon-juniper country, nice view, plenty of birds. You could participate in the potluck supper Saturday evening even if you do not camp at the campground. To make reservations, get more information, etc. call Evelyn Jones (298-9130) or Evelyn Price (292-6604).

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

## Bosque del Apache NWR

Six intrepid birders braved a below zero wind chill factor for a field trip on February 7 to the Bosque del Apache NWR. We were greeted at the refuge headquarters by a busy White-Breasted Nuthatch and a Pyrrhuloxia among others. Greater Scaups were of interest to the party as well as the usual winter sights. No whooping cranes were found at the Bosque, so the group decided to take the back roads home, visiting La Joya, Bernardo, and Belen State Refuges. The Belen Refuge was full of sandhill cranes with three whoopers also in the refuge. The trip ended at the Isleta Ponds as dard descended with 60 species seen.

## Madrone Ponds

Ten people explored the Madrone pond and found 45-50 species including Rough-Winged and Tree Swallows, Virginia and Sora Rails, Black-Crowned Night Heron, Long-Billed Marsh Wren, White Throated Lincoln's Sparrows, and Lark Buntings.

## THE NEW MEXICO ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Invites you to enjoy "Cottonwoods and Capybaras," a slide show presented by Greg Smith, Horticulturist, Thursday, April 22, 1982; 7:30 p.m., hospitality room at the Albuquerque Federal Savings and Loan 4901 Central Avenue, N.E.

Greg will talk on the botanical aspects of the Rio Grande Zoo with its 330 species of plants and over 3,000 specimens, including the experimental palm and eucalyptus trees. Learn about their importance to the visitors, displays, and the zoo animals and birds. Call the Stamms (255-2640) if you would like more information.

Don't miss the Society's sponsored 19-day trip to Kenya starting August 18. Please call Tippy Sneddon (766-7823) for itineraries and other information.

The zoo sponsored a number of educational programs, among them a "Wildlife Safari" for fourth and fifth graders on April 7. Call Catherine Hubbard, Education Coordinator at 242-8550.

HOW MUCH ARE VOLUNTEER WORKERS WORTH?  
\$64½ BILLION A YEAR!

If you have spent long, unpaid hours at chapter jobs--arranging field trips, planning programs, working on conservation projects, signing up new members, helping with the newsletter, or whatever--don't let anyone call you "just" a volunteer. The dollar value of time volunteered by Americans is now estimated at a record-high \$64.5 million a year, reports Independent Secor, a national organization formed to encourage support of not-for-profit organizations.

The value of time contributed by volunteers is far greater than the amount of actual dollars they give. Total private contributions to nonprofit groups like to Audubon Society in 1980 were \$47.74 billion, and that includes bequests and gifts from corporations and foundations as well as from individual donors.

In the study, dollar value of volunteer time was computed on the basis of hours worked in four age/education categories, from teenager up through college graduate.

AUDUBON SOCIETY SUMMER VACATIONS  
OFFER KNOWLEDGE, TRAVEL, AND FUN

Despite the doubts some of us have had this icy winter, summer is only a few months away. It is none too soon to start planning your vacation, and the National Audubon Society has scheduled a number of trips and workshops that offer learning and enjoyment for people interested in natural history and the environment. First, there's the old standby--better than ever--the Audubon Camps in Wyoming, Wisconsin, Connecticut, and Maine. Brochures have already been mailed to all Audubon members. Further information is available from Camp Department, National Audubon Society, Suite 5, 4150 Darley, Boulder, Colorado 80303.

A wide selection of trips in the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa is available through National Audubon Tours, 40 Hunderford Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106. Some additional trips and seminars are offered by the Society's Field Seminar Program; for information, write to the program at the Colorado address above.

Two Audubon centers are sponsoring trips that might fit your vacation plans. The Greenwich Audubon Center (613 Riversville Road, Greenwich, Connecticut 06830) has trips to Great Britain and to Mexico and Yucatan. The Western Education Center (376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon, California 94920) is holding two one-week "Sea to Sierra" workshops, traveling from San Francisco Bay to Yosemite, and some birding and natural history excursions, including trips to Hawaii, Alaska, and Mexico.



## ARK EXHIBIT A SUCCESS

The National Audubon Society's Mobile Education Program on Endangered Species, the Audubon Ark, has completed its southwestern tour after being seen by thousands of people here in New Mexico. It spent five days each at shopping centers in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Gallup, Las Cruces, and Silver City. It was at Coronado Center from January 27-31.

The exhibit was covered by TV Channel 13 and at least three newspapers. Numerous Audubon membership applications were distributed to the public. A lovely limited edition print of the bald eagle went on sale at the Ark. Proceeds were split between National and each chapter where they were sold--our chapter received \$87.50.

CHMAS wishes to thank the people who helped with the exhibit:

Kay Anderson	Edith Johnson
Craig Andrews	Evelyn & Ollis Jones
Elizabeth Broemel	Darwin Miller
Carol Davis	Evelyn Price
Dot DeLollis	Martin Kuoss
Bev Grady	Phyllis Schmidt

CHMAS gives extra special thanks to Ross and Clara Teuber for providing free room and board for the Ark educators, Tom Troy and Gloria Hanley. Extra thanks also goes to Jim Bednarz and Tom and Barbara Hussey for helping Tom and Gloria set up or take down the exhibit. Thanks also goes to Jeremiah Johnson for displaying two of his hawks at the exhibit which of course drew fantastic crowds on Saturday afternoon!

National Audubon is thinking of doing more of this type of traveling exhibit. If you think it is a good idea, let us know.

FIRST ANNUAL NMOS SITE SURVEY  
SANDIA MOUNTAINS

On May 29-30, the First Annual NMOS Site Survey will take place in the Sandia Mountains. The survey is intended to survey as completely as possible the breeding birds of the area in a systematic way.

The current plan is to have small groups cover relatively limited areas in a more thorough and detailed manner than is usually possible on a CBC or Spring bird count. Despite the Sandia's proximity to Albuquerque, there are still many unanswered questions about bird distribution there. This survey may help to answer some of these questions.

Special emphasis will be placed on breeding Empidonax distribution, sparrow distribution on the west side of the mountain, breeding birds of the crest and the distribution of nocturnal birds.

In addition, there will be an Empidonax identification session and perhaps other identification sessions. Weather permitting, there will be a picnic Saturday evening followed by an (almost certainly successful) search for Flamulated Owls.

The survey is open to all birders, one does not have to belong to NMOS, and there is no fee. The birding then should be excellent.

Anyone interested in participating should contact Dustin Huntington, 11 Calle Pueblo Pinado, N.W., Albuquerque, NM 87120 (505) 831-5755.

## IDENTIFICATION OF NEW MEXICO BIRDS

Dustin Huntington

## Dowitchers

Virtually all of the dowitchers that pass through New Mexico are Long-billed Dowitchers (LBD), however, it appears that at least a few Short-billed Dowitchers (SBD) also go through Shorebird studies along the Pecos and Rio Grande rivers have consistently found small numbers of SBD suggesting that they are occurring regularly and are being overlooked. Unfortunately the standard fieldguides are of relatively little use in separating the two Dowitchers and tend to give the impression that the birds cannot be separated in the field. While the identification is often difficult, it is certainly possible in most cases. One complicating factor is that it is not a simple case of differentiating between two birds, along with the LBD there are different subspecies of SBD (although only *L. G. hendersoni* is expected in New Mexico) and each species has three distinct plumages with gradations between plumages. Fortunately, detailed work has been done on the Dowitchers. This article is based on a good article that appeared in the winter 1981-1982 Birding News Survey by M. C. Newlon and T. H. Kent; the excellent Guide to the Identification and Aging of Holarctic Waders by Prater, Marchant and Vuorinen; communications with Jon Dunn and Claudia Wilds and personal observation.

Several generally available books have good photos or illustrations of Dowitchers. The following books are referenced by number in the article and should be looked at while reading to illustrate the fieldmarks described.

1. Peterson--Field Guide to the Birds East of the Rockies (The new edition) page 125.
2. Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds--Western Edition (photos 212 and 213).
3. Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds--page 792.
4. Prater, Marchant and Vuorinen--Guide to the Identification and Aging of Holarctic Waders--plate 9.

The Newlon and Kent article has side-by-side black and white photos of skins of the two species in various plumages.

**CALL**--Fortunately call is a characteristic that is always reliable and can be used to identify a Dowitcher in any plumage. The LBD makes a sharp "Eek" or "Keek" call, which may be given in groups "Eek-Eek-Eek." The SBD has a softer more mellow musical call, usually given in rapid groups of three, "Tu-Tu-Tu." Both species are also reported to have a "Pik-Pik-Pik" alarm call, but this does not seem to be often used. It is NOT the number of notes in the call, but the quality of the call that is important. The Peterson records demonstrate these two calls well. With a little practice, Dowitchers can be readily identified by their call. If at all possible, without harassment to the bird, a suspect SBD

should be made to call to confirm the identification.

**BILL AND BODY SHAPE**--Bill length is useful in identifying SBT but is NOT definitive. In Dowitchers, like many shorebirds, the females have longer bills than the males. In LBD, the females' bill is much longer and that species may be sexed by bill length. On the average, SBD have shorter bills than LBD, however, a SBD and a male LBD may have bills the same length and in extreme cases, SBD, can have bills longer than some male LBD. A male LBD in with a group of female

LBD will appear short billed and some LBD males do have very short bills. Despite these problems, looking for birds with shortish bills is a help in trying to find SBD.

The SBD is also a somewhat shorter legged, smaller and slimmer bird than the LBD. As with bill length, these characteristics are variable but can be used to help spot potential SBD in mixed flocks.

In mixed flocks the SBD often do not associate closely with the LBD. If most Dowitchers are flocked closely together and one seems to be ignoring them and feeding on its own, it is worth checking the individual bird closely.

**PLUMAGES**--To understand the visual identification of Dowitchers, it is necessary to understand their plumage cycle. Both species have a breeding plumage (alternate plumage) and a winter plumage (basic plumage). Migrating adults often show parts of each of these plumages due to their molts being in progress. In addition, the fall birds hatched that year and making their first migration have a distinct juvenile plumage which gradually molts into a winter plumage.

In the spring, Dowitchers are in breeding plumage, perhaps with some old winter feathers remaining. In the fall the adults return south first and show very worn tattered breeding plumage. Some may show indications of molting into winter plumage. Later the juveniles move south. These will look very fresh and clean compared to the worn adults. Later in the fall these juvenile birds also start molting into winter plumage.

SBD migrate earlier than LBD and should be looked for in the early part of the fall migration.

**BREEDING PLUMAGE**--Almost all shorebird identification problems are easiest in breeding plumage birds and Dowitchers are no exception. The visual difference between breeding plumage SBD and LBD is quite pronounced. The LBD have a darker and less contrasty overall impression; the breast and belly are rich chestnut color and the back feathers have restricted light edges. (See references 1, 2, and 3).

The SBD is a buffy pink color on the breast and, depending on the subspecies, the belly. The tone of this color is much brighter and lighter than in the LBD. The back feathers of the SBD have more extensive buffy edges giving an overall impression of a much more patterned and contrasty bird. A breeding plumage SBD in with LBD stands out as different. (This is well shown in reference 2).

Several other more subtle characteristics are also useful in separating the two Dowitchers in breeding plumage. The LBD has light edges to the dark breast feathers, often with a dark subterminal band, giving the breast a scaly look. (See reference 3). These light edges to the breast feathers wear away quickly. The SBD lacks this pronounced light edge to the breast feathers, but may have a very narrow light edge.

The dark markings on the side of the breast of the LBD tend to be much longer than wide giving the appearance of bars. The dark marks on the side of the breast of the SBD tend to be round. A SBD may have a spotted looking breast but it will not appear barred or scaly. (See references 1 and 2.)

The flank feathers of the LBD have a dark band on them which forms bars on the flanks. In the SBD, the marks on the feathers are rounder and do not have the tendency to form bars, but rather make irregular dot patterns. Contrary to some field guides, the SBD can have pronounced markings on the

flanks but they will generally not be bars. The SHAPE of the spots on the side of the breast is more reliable (round in SBD and elongated in LBD). (See references 1, 2, and 3.)

The tail of a LBD in any plumage generally has wider dark bars than light. In SBD, the tail has equal dark and light or more light. This is hard to see and subject to subspecific variation, but can be used to help build the case for SBD.

SBD tend to have more pronounced white superciliary lines than the LBD adding to the SBD's more contrasty patterned look. (See reference 2.)

While some of these fieldmarks are difficult to see except at close range or with very powerful optics, they are all useful.

The overall appearance of SBD in breeding plumage is distinct enough that they are probably not occurring regularly in the spring and being overlooked. As of 1982, there had been only one New Mexico spring record of a SBD reported to the NMOS, so while breeding plumage is the easiest to identify, it is also probably the least common plumage in New Mexico's SBD.

**JUVENILE PLUMAGE**--Almost all New Mexico records of SBD are from the fall. Most of these are probably juvenile birds on their first migration that have gotten off course.

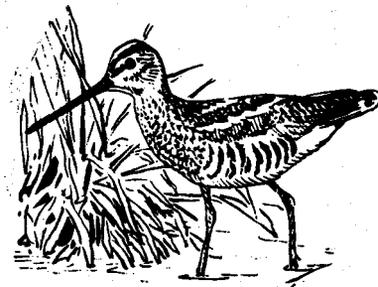
Juvenile Dowitchers are somewhat more difficult than adults but are quite possible to identify. The characteristics of call, bill, body size, and adult tail pattern apply to juvenile as well.

The juvenile plumage of both Dowitchers is characterized by broad light edges to the back feathers and no pronounced barring or spotting to the side of breast or flanks and fresh unworn feathers in the fall.

As in the adults, the juvenile SBD is a brighter and more patterned bird, but the difference is less pronounced. (A note of caution: a juvenile LBD in with worn adult LBD will appear bright and more contrast). The tertials of a juvenile SBD are brightly and conspicuously tiger striped black and orange and are an excellent fieldmark. (See reference 3.) The tertials in the LBD are not conspicuously marked and the LBD juvenile is overall a drabber and less patterned bird. (See reference 4.)

The back feathers of both Dowitchers have light edges, but in the SBD there are extensive irregular light markings going into the center of the feather from the edges. (See references 3 and 4.)

The neck and breast of the LBD are darker and grayer than the SBD with more dark on the belly. The SBD is buffy on the breast, sometimes with dark speckling, and a white belly.



## BIRD SIGHTINGS

Many people reporting to me for this time period mentioned this winter's birding has seemed slow. Others were enthusiastic about their sightings. It must have been a normal winter, then--at least for birding.

Valley reports being with Joanne Phillips' Great Horned Owl nesting at Shady Lakes. The owl was first spotted on February 14 and was still there at this writing. On February 17, Bill Howe found an immature Harris' Sparrow with a flock of White-crowned Sparrows on an island in the middle of the river about a mile south of Bernalillo. Bill saw a Double-crested Cormorant flying with three Olivaceous Cormorants offering excellent comparison near the Los Lunas bridge in late February. For three hours, Gary Parker experienced wave after wave of thousands of Sandhill Cranes and one Whooping Crane flying north near Isleta on February 27. The next day, Ruth Snyder spotted a flock of about a hundred cranes as she hiked lower Frijoles Canyon at Bandelier National Monument. She was lucky enough to see a beautiful white Whooper leading the flock. Other valley sightings include a Hooded Merganser at Caballo Dam spillway reported by Pat Snyder on March 3, and some early Tree and Rough-Winged Swallows at Isleta reported by Bill Howe during the first week in March.

The only news I received from Bosque del Apache was from Mrs. Frank Hibben who reported seeing a Loon on the east side of the refuge in early March. Pat Basham had a Fox Sparrow in the yard in Socorro in mid-March. She and Ross Teuber are still debating whether it was the eastern or western race. Pat also had both Inca and White-winged Doves in mid-March.

Cochiti Lake was the site of a report of a California Gull on February 18. The weekend before, Dustin and Sue Huntington found a small flock of Tree Sparrows in a marshy area on the east side of the lake. On February 18, Allen Nelson had a flock of Bohemian Waxwings in his yard in Farmington. Several people from Albuquerque traveled to see them, but I haven't heard of any success.

Billie Johnson was surprised to see a flock of Steller's Jays at her home near Indian School and Wyoming Boulevard in Albuquerque on February 15.

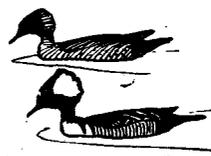
Last article, I asked for Sandia Mountains sightings of Evening Grosbeaks and Williamson's Sapsuckers. After an assumed absence of about four months, Evening Grosbeaks were seen by Hart Schwarz at Sandia Park on February 28. Hart found Williamson's Sapsuckers on March 7 also at Sandia Park. Sue Huntington reported a single early White-Throated Swift at Three Gun Springs on February 28. It seems unusually large numbers of Golden-Crowned Kinglets have been reported all winter from Sandia Park and Hondo Canyon.

Montecello, a village in Tijeras Canyon at the base of Three Gun Springs trail seems to be a good place to compare the songs of the Curve-billed and Crissal Thrashers. They are reported to begin nesting there in the residential area in mid-February. Pinon Jays are also reliably found there after mid-March when they begin nesting.

On January 31, Hart Schwarz and Gary Parker spotted a female Northern Three-toed Woodpecker on the crest trail near the upper tram terminal. They were able to get close enough to count the toes; they noticed a definite pattern to the holes the woodpecker was drilling and decided to look for similar holes elsewhere. Sure enough, they found more. The Northern Three-toed Woodpecker has now been found all along the stretch of the crest trail between the tram and the TV towers.

Call (292-5626) or write me your bird sightings!

Barbara Hussey



## A BOOK FOR BIRDERS

For "bird enthusiasts"--a sensible, intelligent, witty guide to the basics of bird attraction (as winter feeding, boxes, atlases, etc.) and the major birding events of the year (Christmas bird count, the Big Day, etc.) there is this new bird book:

Pistorius, Alan. The Country Journal Book of Birding and Bird Attraction. N. Y. Norton, 1981, 274 pages, beautifully printed and illustrated, \$15.95.

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