

BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 1983

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, OCTOBER 20 - Regular Meeting

Michael Loughrey will present slides and talk on "Bug s, Bighorn and Blisters - Camp of the West." Come and see what your purchase of Wildlife Film series tickets from CNMAS offers our scholarship winners. See Michael's letter inside for more about his experiences at the Audubon Camp of the West. 7:30 P.M. at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, Copper & Jefferson, N.E.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22 & 23 - NEW MEXICO AUDUBON COUNCIL MEETING

All meetings are at the Socorro Electric Co-op, 215 Manzares, Socorro.

Saturday, October 22:

9:00 A.M. - Fund Raising Seminar: Janeen Wallace of the Audubon national office will give us many ideas for fund raising. All are urged to attend. Fund raising ideas are good not only for Audubon but for other groups as well.

1:00 P.M. - Council meeting and annual Audubon Conference. Election of officers.

7:00 P.M. - Dinner at the Vagabond Motel restaurant.

Sunday, October 23:

7:00 A.M. - Field Trip, Bosque del Apache NWR.

For information on any of the above activities, call Darwin Miller (265-6361) or Evelyn Price (242-6604) or any Council officer listed in the directory.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29 - Field Trip

"Trail Boss" Sally Douglas will lead a trail maintenance group on Saturday, October 29, starting at 8:30 A.M. until 11:00. Meeting place is at the corner of Tramway and the Forest Road to the Juan Tabo picnic area, about one mile north of the turnoff to the Tram. Bring water. Sally must know who is coming before Oct. 28. 821-8551, evenings. FREE DONUTS!

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30 - Field Trip

Attend a potluck lunch with Fred and Bea Leckman at their cabin in lower Cienega Canyon. B.Y.O. plates and silverware. Preceding the lunch, Hart Schwarz will lead a five-mile field trip up Armijo Canyon and back along Cienega Canyon. Those not wanting to hike can watch the birds congregating around Fred's feeders. Meet at the old Sandia Park post office at 8 A.M. For more information call Bea (266-6354; 281-2353) or Hart (266-1810).

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17 - Regular Meeting

The delightful WINTER WREN will be the subject of Dr. Bea Van Horne's illustrated program. Dr. Van Horne is an ecologist who has become hooked on birds! 7:30 P.M. at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17 - Deadline

Material for the Burrowing Owl is due. Call Evelyn Price (242-6604) if you have questions.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19 - Field Trip

Warm up for the Bosque del Apache Christmas Count on this late fall visit. Waterfowl should be abundant, including SNOW GEESE and SANDHILL CRANES in the thousands. Be the first to see a WHOOPER! Meet at the Refuge Headquarters at 7:30. Trip leader will be Dale Stahlecker (345-2827).

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27 - Field Trip

This is a half-day beginner's trip to Shady Lakes and adjacent Indian Lakes. Joanne Philips will be your guide through her and her neighbor's property. You can call her at 898-2568 for additional information.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

At the last general meeting of the Central New Mexico Audubon Society, it was decided (voted) to give three students from the University of New Mexico the sum of fifty dollars each. This money will help each student attend an upcoming conference. For further information contact Mary Alice Root.

About two weeks ago an informal dinner was held for Mr. Rupert Cutler, a National Audubon Vice President. After the dinner Mr. Cutler spoke about the future direction of the National Audubon Society. He told of the many goals set for the society, one being the possibility of a magazine for young people.

It would be similar to the well-known Ranger Rick publication. For further information contact Mr. Darwin Miller.

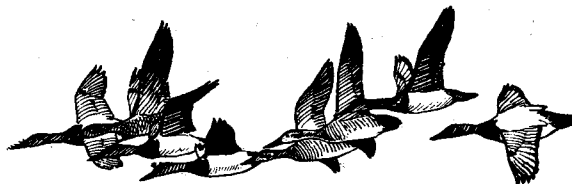
At the last general meeting (Sept. 15, 1983), the program scheduled for the evening was not given. It appears there was a slight breakdown in communication, and your president was left to frantically putting together a slide show for that evening. I don't mind doing this, but my slide collection is finite. There is a lesson to learn from this. Let's do more communicating. This breakdown in communication is also a danger sign to the viability of the society.

An idea has been passed around lately that sounds good to me. We are hoping to have informal meetings at various restaurants in the Albuquerque area. This would not be an official gathering of the CNMAS; it would just be Audubon friends having a good dinner and exchanging ideas. If interested, please call me. Perhaps this would help toward better communications.

I feel we should have another board meeting in October. To attract our members, it is my hope to have this as an outdoor picnic meeting in the mountains. By the time you read this, I will have picked a location and date for this meeting. If interested, please call (888-4661). Remember all CNMAS people are welcome to this meeting.

Have you tried our library? It is full of many wonderful books. It has come to my attention that some of these books have been in the possession of members beyond their return date. Please return those overdue books so others may enjoy them. Carol Davis is our librarian and she is doing an excellent job, so please help her out.

In the recent past I gave a slide show to Ladera Nursing Home. It is a real joy to see others enjoy the beauty of nature. I feel more CNMAS members should get their slides in order and visit one of these homes and give a little joy to those less fortunate.



I have enclosed in my report the minutes of the last board meeting and I also wish to thank Barbara Hussey for recording these minutes:

MINUTES OF THE CNMAS BOARD MEETING
September 8, 1983

"The meeting at the home of Jean and Neil Dilley was called to order at 7:40 P.M. Present were Vic Brown, Jean and Neil Dilley, Barbara Hussey, Evelyn Jones, Darwin Miller, and Ross Teuber.

Vic reported that he had presented a slide talk in both English and Spanish at the Ladera Nursing Home.

Darwin reported on the meeting at the Sandia Pueblo to discuss the pueblo's claim on part of the Sandia Mountains. He extended an invitation to the pueblo to attend our meetings and left copies of the BURROWING OWL and wildlife film series brochures. Also at the meeting were representatives from several outdoors groups: Sierra Club, NM Mountain Club, Albuquerque Open Space Task Force (Jay Sorenson), and others.

Vic wants the chapter to go ahead with the purchase of the lumber, etc., to construct a portable Audubon display to be used in shopping centers, etc. The basic design will be several panels 2' by 6' tall with a slot down the middle so displays can be inserted. These can be reused and are small enough to be moved easily. Suggested exhibit locations were Winrock, Coronado Center, UNM, Univ. of Albuquerque, public and private schools, and the community cable channel. Vic estimates we will need to spend \$50 to build two initial trial panels. Neil Dilley volunteered to do the carpentry work.

Darwin asked CNMAS to nominate someone for president of the NM Audubon Council. Elections will be held at the NMAC annual meeting in October.

Ross reported on the meeting he attended concerning the sale of Tucumcari Lake to

the State. The area covers about 456 acres and some of it could be used as a wildlife refuge. If the sale is made, CNMAS needs to convince the NM Dept. of Game & Fish to manage part of it for wildlife observation, fishing, and other low-impact uses. The lake is the only known place in NM where white-faced ibis nest and is an important feeding and migration area for waterfowl and shorebirds.

Darwin mentioned that the NM Dept. of Game & Fish would like someone from CNMAS to attend all their meetings.

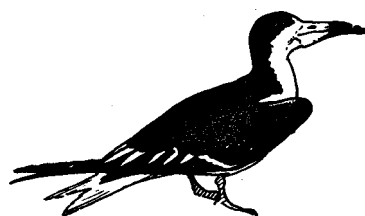
Ross reported on the meeting of the Whooping Crane Conservation Association he attended this summer near Wood Buffalo Park in Canada. A proposal was made at the meeting to start a second foster parent flock with sandhill cranes wintering in Florida. This year 23 whooping crane families nested, producing 38 eggs. In June there were 13 whooping crane chicks at Wood Buffalo.

Eleven eggs were taken to foster nests in Grays Lake, Idaho, plus two from captive pairs in Patuxent, Maryland. Twelve hatched in Idaho. Ross mentioned two films that were shown at the meeting and recommended CNMAS obtain these to show at our meetings. Ross also said that Larry Smith, leader of the Whooping Crane Recovery Team, lives in Albuquerque and can also give us a program.

Barbara Hussey volunteered to revise the Rare Bird Alert telephone chain. Anyone interested in being on the chain should call her now.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 P.M."

As you can see, our last board meeting was fruitful. I wish to thank Jean and Neal Dilley for having the meeting at their home.



—Vic Brown



HAVE YOU PURCHASED YOUR TICKETS FOR THE
1983-1984 WILDLIFE FILM SERIES??????????

THE ADDRESS MAN

Lew Helm has officially taken over as Membership Chairman of CNMAS after a few months of taking over for the Carricks in their absence. Many thanks to Dave and Marge for a fine job.

Lew will be handling all mailing labels. If you have a problem with your OWL, a change of address, etc., give Lew a call at 821-8586. If you change addresses, it is wise to let Lew know, as the national office can be very slow in letting the chapters know about address changes. The postal service will not forward BURROWING OWLS.



AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

The results of the 83rd (1982) Audubon Christmas Bird Count are out! As usual, it was another banner year. There were a total of 1453 counts, including 1241 within the continental United States, 190 from Canada, 13 from Middle America, eight from the West Indies, and one from South America. In all, 93,963,639 individual birds were tallied, and the total number of participants was 36,426, including 2,880 at feeders.

The West Coast Canal Area, Philippine Republic, topped the count with 306 species. The highest number of species on any single count was 222 species counted at Freeport, Texas. The Las Cruces count topped the 18 counts for New Mexico, with 112 species.

It isn't too early to start planning to participate in this year's count. The count period will include three weekends and will encompass the period December 17, 1983, to January 2, 1984, inclusive. Specific dates for central New Mexico Audubon Counts have not been established yet, but will be announced at the regular meeting in November. To aid you in long-range planning, the 1984 CBC will fall between Dec. 18, 1984, and Jan. 2, 1985; and the 1985 CBC will fall between Dec. 18, 1985, and Jan. 5, 1986.

--R.L.T.

GET OUT THE COUNTERS!

This OWL includes approximate dates for the 1983 Albuquerque, Bosque del Apache NWR, and Sandia Mountain Christmas Bird Counts. This note is a little pep talk to get more Central NM Audubon Society members involved in these counts.

Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) are fun. This is a wonderful opportunity for beginning and intermediate birders to bird with and learn from the experienced birders in our midst. There is not a competition among the birders, but a team effort to push up the area total. I recently reviewed the last 15 years of CBCs for our three counts. In general, when the number of counters has been low, the count has been low also. For example, when there were only two counters at Bosque on two occasions, the number of species seen was less than 60; while good years, with moderate coverage, the number of species is always in the 80s or 90s. The point of all this is that recently the number of counters has been low, and the species total has been affected. It would be nice to set some goals for our CBCs, say 60 for Sandia Mountain (the high count for the last 15 years was 59), 90 for Albuquerque (last year we surpassed 80 for the first time with only 10 counters), and 100 for Bosque (best is 97 + 3 count week birds). These goals would add an element of challenge that would make the CBCs more fun. Come out and join the FUN!

—Dale Stahlecker

GULLS MAKE COMEBACK

An estimated 16,500 California gulls hatched this season on islands in Mono Lake, where falling water levels had eliminated virtually all of last season's gull chicks. It was the runoff from heavy winter snows that came to the gulls' rescue, not the efforts of conservationists to reduce the Los Angeles water department's excessive diversions from the lake's headwaters. Meanwhile, the legal victory won by conservationists last winter in the long fight to curb the diversions has brightened the future prospects of Mono's gulls and other wildlife.



SCHOLARSHIP WINNER
RELATES PLEASURES OF CAMP

Every year CNMAS awards a scholarship to a deserving New Mexico teacher. The scholarship is to the Audubon Camp of the West. Michael Loughrey, our 1982-83 Scholarship Winner, has this to say about Camp of the West:

"Dear Central N.M. Audubon Society, I am presently down in Silver City attending a bus driver's institute so that I will be able to use our school van to do some of the field experiences that I learned about at the Audubon Camp of the West.

While in Wyoming attending the camp, I was equally impressed with the location as well as the expertise of the instructional staff.

I applied for the scholarship so that by attending the Camp I could learn about ecological interrelationships that I could then pass on to my students in the public schools and on summer wilderness adventures in the Rockies. I also needed to become more familiar with the aspects of the natural environment and to learn hands-on techniques to teach these concepts to my students.

I feel my expectations were more than satisfied. The enthusiasm and concern of the Wyoming staff was contagious and the curiosity and questioning strategies were invaluable lessons.

I am very grateful that you offer an annual Scholarship and that I was the 1983 recipient. I have no doubt that my students will be the ones who will benefit from the attitudes, strategies and knowledge that I gained at the Camp.

I will look forward to presenting a slide show at your October 20 meeting.

Sincerely,
(Signed) Michael Loughrey"



FIELD TRIP REPORT

A dozen people now know where Pete's Restaurant is, the gathering place for our birding expedition to San Pedro Wash on September 10. Beginning our trek almost precisely on the Bernalillo-Sandoval County line and just to the east of Highway 14, we walked south for about a mile, in or near the heavily eroded arroyo that runs through much of this private domain. Although dry at the beginning, the arroyo eventually became a respectable waterway, bordered by dense brush and trees of substantial stature, such as willows, cottonwoods, and Russian olives.

Among the almost 50 species of birds collectively seen were relatively large numbers of AUDUBON WARBLERS, WESTERN TANAGERS, and ROCK WRENS, the latter happily exploring the various nooks and crannies generously provided by massive sandbank formations. Other birds who cooperated with us by allowing a close approach included the CASSIN'S SOLITARY VIREO (similar in appearance to the eastern form), WESTERN WOOD PEWEE, BUSHTIT, ORANGE-CROWNED WRABLER, LARK SPARROW, LAZULI BUNTING (the only elusive one in the group here enumerated), SAGE THRASHER, and RED CROSSBILL.

Incidentally, anyone wishing to overdose on CROSSBILLS can do so simply by being anywhere along the eastern slope of the Sandias from Sandia Park to the Crest. Attracted by maturing cones of virtually every local species of conifer, these birds have reached a peak of abundance unprecedented during my nine-year experience here. They are easy to observe lined up on utility wires, clustered near the tops of spruce trees knocking off cones, drinking and bathing in mud puddles, or just flying back and forth incessantly calling "kip-kip-kip."

The trip came to a delightfully refreshing denouement when we had lunch at the house of Ruth and Van Luhrs at nearby Sandia Knolls.

—Hart R. Schwarz



RARE BIRD ALERT

The CNMAS Rare Bird Alert is being re-organized. If you are interested in hearing about rare birds immediately after they are discovered, and are willing to make two calls to others, please call Barbara Hussey 292-5626 NOW!



ROSS' RAVIN'S

Hi Folks! It seems as if it was only yesterday that I was reporting early spring sightings, and asking for reports of nesting birds within your scope of observation. Now summer is gone, and fall migration is well underway. Steve Hoffman tells me he and his crew have already banded over 100 migrating hawks. He observed his first southbound PEREGRINE on August 28. Bill Stone of Santa Fe reported substantial numbers of hawks along State Road 41 north of Moriarty in late August, and Wayne Prentice called to say he had seen an enormous number (estimated at 2000) of large buteos, possibly FERRUGINOUS HAWKS, along the ditch south of Bosque del Apache. After Labor Day I saw four adult

GOLDEN EAGLES between Las Cruces and Bosque del Apache on September 7th.

On recent visits to Bitter Lakes and Bosque del Apache, good numbers of shore-birds were present. Most numerous were AVOCETS, BLACK-NECKED STILTS, SNOWY EGRETS, GREATER YELLOWLEGS, WILSON'S PHALAROPES, LEAST & WESTERN SANDPIPERS, GREAT BLUE HERONS and WHITE-FACED IBIS. Less numerous were SPOTTED SANDPIPERS, SOLITARY SANDPIPER, LESSER YELLOWLEGS, a single OSPREY, a SANDERLING, and two NORTHERN PHALAROPES at Bitter Lakes, as well as RING-BILLED GULLS, FORSTER'S TERN, and two LEAST TERNS, and at Bosque del Apache a small flock of BLACK TERNS.

The most exciting recent report was a call from Kathy Wood of the Bitter Lakes Refuge staff on September 2nd that she had spotted a ROSEATE SPOONBILL that day on Unit 16. Hal Hallett called on Labor Day to say the bird was still there, and several Roswell birders had seen it, but so far none had managed to get a good picture. This is a first sighting for the state, but can be listed only as hypothetical until it can be adequately documented. Dustin and Sue Huntington were there on Sunday, but did not find it among the 150-200 SNOWY EGRETS feeding on the Unit. I also went to Roswell on Tuesday, arriving at the refuge at 7:30 A.M. For five hours I searched diligently, but to no avail. Lee Marlette, the refuge manager, and several others told me they had seen the SPOONBILL several times during the weekend. However, no one had seen it, or reported seeing it, up until 12:30 P.M. on September 6th. There is not much room to question that it was there, undoubtedly an accidental occurrence as a result of the earlier tornadoes in the Gulf area. But it would be great to have a good photograph to support the sighting.

The banding operation at the Rio Grande Nature Center confirms the passage of the first waves of fall migrants. By far the predominant species being netted are immature sparrows of the Spizella genus. As might be expected, CHIPPING SPARROWS



are most numerous, but there is a good mixture of CLAY-COLORED and BREWERS SPARROWS in about equal proportion. There is also a sprinkling of warblers: WILSON'S, ORANGE-CROWNED, and VIRGINIA'S. We've also banded a few LAZULI BUNTINGS, a couple of GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS, and an AMERICAN KESTREL. Of course, we see many birds that do not get into the nets, such as SHARP-SHINNED and COOPER'S HAWK, NORTHERN HARRIER (MARSH HAWK), NIGHT-HAWKS, GREATER ROADRUNNER, and many others which we may or may not net in small numbers.

Among the unusual things reported were RED CROSSBILLS at Harms Ranch near Sandia Park early in August. This is pretty low for them. A RUSTY BLACKBIRD reported by Darwin Miller at Chama was both early and west of where they have been previously reported. And a NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH in Les Hawkins' yard, away from water, in the far N.E. Heights. Not as unusual, but still interesting were a LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER in Ethyl Ringer's apple tree; EVENING GROSBEAKS at a seed feeder, and a NORTHERN ORIOLE at a hummingbird feeder in the Sandia Park area, reported by Barbara Sutti. Pat Basham has had a pair of PHAINOPEPLA in her yard all summer. Joanne Philips had an immature VIRGINIA RAIL at Shady Lakes, and Rita Nicholas called to say the SCALED QUAIL have returned to the area behind her trailer after having been absent for several years. In mid-August Darwin Miller spotted a TOWNSEND'S WARBLER at Capulin Spring. Finally, the week I was in Canada, Pat Basham spotted a CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD at my feeder. When I got home the hummingbirds were more numerous than they had been all summer, mostly because of the arrival of immature RUFOUS. I still have both immature and adult BLACK-CHINNED and RUFOUS at the feeders. But I have still to spot a CALLIOPE this year in my yard.

Speaking of the Canadian trip, it was GREAT! The weather was warm and sunny (almost too warm for comfort), the food and accommodations very good, the people very helpful and friendly, and the



program outstanding. The birds were no different than one might expect to see here, with one or two exceptions. Fort Smith is the home of the northernmost and only river nesting population of WHITE PELICANS on the North American continent, and of course, Wood Buffalo National Park encompasses the nesting grounds of the natural flock of WHOOPING CRANES.

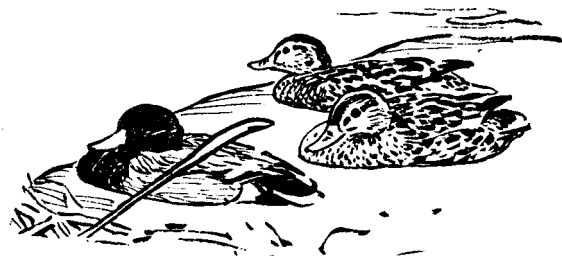
We had both air and ground trips to the accessible portions of Wood Buffalo NP, and saw a number of pairs of WHOOPING CRANES and some of their chicks. There is much I would like to share with you about that trip. I'll try to get something written up about it in time for the next BURROWING OWL.

The California trip was mostly occupied with family activities, so very little time was spent in birding. We did travel to Northern California along the coast and were pleased to spot PIGEON GUILLEMOTS and BRANDT'S CORMORANTS again. And, of course, it is always awe-inspiring to wander among the giant COAST REDWOODS. Although we saw over 80 species of birds, we saw no new ones. We've come to expect and enjoy seeing the YELLOW-BILLED MAGPIES in the central valley. They were not too numerous at that season.

Let me know what you see during the fall migration, and remember I have the necessary permits to pick up any dead or injured birds. Call me anytime at 265-8962. That's it for this time. So long, and good birding.

--R.L.T.

P.S. I still have on hand a small supply of the Huntingtons' Rare and Unusual Birds, Hubbard's Revised Checklist of the Birds of New Mexico, and most of the Lane Bird Finding Guides. See me if you would like to obtain copies of any of the above.



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AND THE

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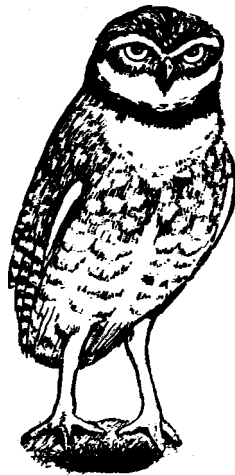
House of Representatives
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The Honorable Joe Skeen

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The Honorable Bill Richardson

House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515



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

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