



# BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 1984

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.

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 12 - Field Trip

A field trip to Hyde State Park and surrounding area will meet at 8:00 a.m. at the north end of the DeVargas Mall parking lot in Santa Fe. Call leader Pat Insley (1-982-0796) or Evelyn Price (242-6604) for more information. Sponsored by the Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society.

#### THURSDAY, AUGUST 16 - Regular Meeting

Steve (Hawkman) Hoffman will present a program on Hawk Migration in the West. Steve will show a movie of his research project observing and banding hawks and present slides of most of the Western raptors describing the birds' life histories and identification points. His special emphasis will be on hawk migration in the Sandia and Manzano Mountains.

Steve is a wildlife biologist with the endangered species office of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. He is also an enthusiastic admirer and student of raptor populations. Steve has been

studying western hawks and hawk migration since 1976. His interest in hawks began while he was in school near Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania. See Welcome above for time and place.

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 1<sup>9</sup> - Field Trip

Hart Schwarz will lead a field trip to Silver Hut in South del Agua Canyon in the Sandias. This is a 7-mile round trip of easy walking. We should see Red Crossbills, Clark's Nutcrackers, three species of Nuthatches, Band-tailed Pigeons, Townsend's Warbler, and much more. Meet at the junction of Tramway Road and the road to Juan Tabo Park at 7:30 a.m. Bring lunch and water. Call Hart (266-1810) for more information.

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 - Field Trip

The Espanola area will be the destination of this field trip led by Marj Cromer. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the north end of the DeVargas Mall in Santa Fe or 8:00 a.m. at the Big Rock Shopping Center in Espanola. Call Marj (1-662-3067) or Pat Insley (1-982-0796). Sponsored by the Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society.

#### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 - Regular Meeting

Scott Brown, Education and Information Officer for the NM Dept. of Game & Fish

and Vice-President of QNMAS, will tell us about the Game & Fish Dept.'s PROJECT WILD. PROJECT WILD is "based on the premise that young people . . . have a vital interest in learning about the earth as home for people and wildlife." Time and place in Welcome paragraph above.

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 - Field Trip

The Bosque del Apache NWR is beautiful in September and is also host to a number of migrants. Evelyn and George Price (242-6604) will lead a trip to the refuge. Meet at 7 a.m. at the parking lot of the UNM Physics and Astronomy Building, Yale & Lomas, N.E. Bring lunch and water.

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 - Field Trip

Darwin Miller will lead a trip to Mt. Taylor for birds and fall colors. Red Crossbills and Wild Turkeys are among the possibilities. Meet at UNM Physics & Astronomy Building parking lot at 7 a.m. Bring lunch and water. Darwin needs to know in advance if you are coming, so give him a call at 265-6361.

#### SATURDAY - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20-21 -- New Mexico Audubon Conference

The New Mexico Audubon Conference will be held in Roswell. It begins at 10 a.m. Lunch and dinner will be served on Saturday, and a field trip to the great Bitter Lake NWR will be held on Sunday. Registration fee is \$13.00 (\$15.00 after October 1) and includes both meals and all activities. See flyer in June-July BURROWING OWL for details or call any of the NM Audubon Council on back page for details.

#### HOSTS/HOSTESSES NEEDED AT RANDALL DAVEY

Host or hostess volunteers are needed at the beautiful Randall Davey Audubon Sanctuary in Santa Fe. This is a great opportunity to get to know this enchanted place better and contribute something to it at the same time.

If you could host from 12:30 to 4:30 any day from Tuesday through Saturday, please call Darwin Miller (265-6361) or Mary Noel in Santa Fe (1-982-2866).

#### THE NEW MEXICO AUDUBON COUNCIL

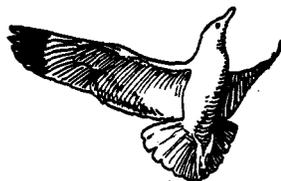
I am sure some of the Chapter members wonder just what the Council is and what it does.

The Council is a coalition of New Mexico Audubon Chapters to facilitate the sharing and dissemination of information between each and to engage in such educational, scientific, and literary pursuits as stated in the purposes of the National Audubon Society.

Many environmental issues are of concern statewide. While each Chapter may concern itself with an issue, even more clout is realized when all the Chapters work together. An example of this is coal mining and wilderness areas in the San Juan Basin. As a result of our participation along with others in these issues, wilderness areas are in the process of being established and existing mining leases are being traded for more appropriate locations. Valuable archeological, scenic, and wildlife areas will be preserved. A very favorable outgrowth of this and other issues is that both private enterprise and government agencies are now asking for our input before they propose any actions. Until the Council gained recognition, action was well on the road before we learned of it.

We have also completely blocked some questionable proposals. We have furnished favorable comment for some projects; for example, the Salinas National Monument rehabilitation project and some Bureau of Reclamation work. There are a number of other such actions we have taken. A Cibola Forest Plan is coming up soon, and we can expect the Santa Fe National Forest Plan to be resubmitted in the near future.

Our activities are certainly not confined to issues. This year we initiated an annual birding event for all Chapters,



this one at Silver City. It was a huge success. It is for all Audubon members. We are going to do it again in 1985. We are planning an annual "camp-out" in areas where the birding is excellent but where there are few if any motels or hotels. We are also now proposing to become more active in educational programs.

The Council was organized several years ago, but it has necessarily taken several years to develop programs. We now have considerable momentum. Full Chapter backing has contributed to the success of the Council; and with continued backing, activities should become even more interesting.

Council meetings are open. Anyone, including nonmembers, is invited to attend the quarterly meetings. These meetings are announced by Chapter Presidents and published in chapter news sheets. There will be a Council Meeting and Annual State Audubon Conference in Roswell on October 20, 1984. All Audubon members are urged to attend. This is your annual conference. Call your Chapter President or your Council representatives or any Council officer. These are listed on the last page of the BURROWING OWL.

#### HUMMINGBIRDS KILLED BY RED INSULATORS

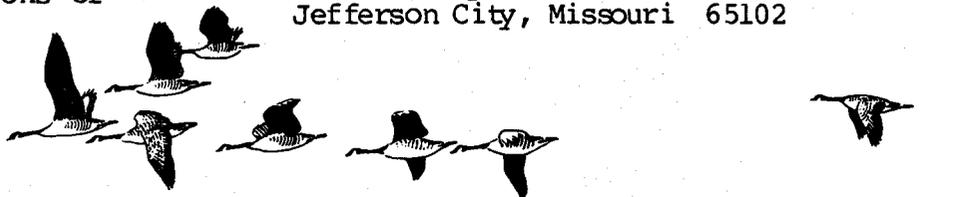
That red is highly attractive to hummingbirds is well known. Red insulators on electric fences are no exceptions. Unfortunately, hummers are electrocuted when they probe these insulators looking for food. Ross Teuber has done a lot of research on this problem and has given the following report:

To date, all reports of occurrences have come from five states: Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado, and California. Missouri has been working on it the longest and has found that in all the verified cases, the offender red insulator has been the "Red Snap'r" manufactured by North Central Plastics, Ellendale, Minnesota. Random inspections of

fences equipped with these insulators revealed one hummingbird death for each five insulators. Most of the deaths are the result of hummers sitting on the wire and probing into the insulator in search for nectar. Most fatalities occur during migration either before nectar-bearing flowers are in bloom or after a particularly dry summer, when there simply are no flowers available. The phenomenon, of course, relates to the high degree of preference of red flowers by hummingbirds seeking a food source.

There appear to be several courses of action which can and should be carried on simultaneously and with persistence:

1. Contact fence owners and urge them to use a different color of insulators, or paint the red ones black.
2. Contact the manufacturer: Albert Berg, Chairman, and/or Howard Langlie, President, North Central Plastics, Incorporated, Ellendale, Minnesota 56026 (Telephone 507/684-3721). Urge them not to offer red insulators on the market and to work toward redesigning the insulators to protect hummingbirds. For example, some sort of cap or plug that could be inserted after the insulator is attached, or possibly some sort of insulated tube that could be slipped over the fence wire for two or three inches each side of the insulator.
3. When you spot a fence with red insulators, contact the farmer and get permission to walk the fence line and look for hummingbirds. Keep notes on the date, time, and location of mortalities. If possible, take photographs. Send information of verified kills to:
  - a. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Laurel, Maryland 20811
  - b. Carroll Henderson  
Box 7, Dept. of Natural Resources  
658 Cedar Street  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
  - c. Jim D. Wilson, Ornithologist  
Box 180, Dept. of Conservation  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102



- d. Write to your representative in both your State Legislature and Congress and urge that legislation be passed outlawing the sale and use of red insulators on fences or for other purposes.

#### MASTER GARDENERS TO HOLD FAIR

The second annual Master Gardeners Fair, August 11 and 12 (Saturday and Sunday) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Albuquerque Garden Center, 10120 Lomas Boulevard, N.E., offers:

- opportunities for "hands-on" learning, under expert supervision, in: do-it-yourself landscaping (using miniature houses, trees, plants, etc.), growing native plants from cuttings and seeds, herbcraft, dividing and planting iris, and much more;
- presentations on insects that plague and help gardeners, on landscaping, and again much more;
- exhibits on such basic subjects as irrigation;
- a display and explanation of soil testing and its importance;
- consultation with experts, both Master Gardeners and Extension Service personnel.

The fair is sponsored by the Council of Albuquerque Garden Clubs and the Bernalillo County Extension Service. Admission is free. Additional information may be obtained by calling the Garden Center (296-6020) or the Extension Service.

#### COW POOP

According to the USDA, as of January 1, 1984, there were roughly 113 million cattle in the United States. Of these, 1,390,000 were residing in New Mexico. That's about 1.2% of the total number.

These are the facts; now for a little speculation. New Mexico is approximately 40% federal land. Subtract 5% from that to allow for park service lands and military lands that are not grazed. That leaves us with 35% of New Mexico. It



be reasonable to assume that New Mexico's cattle are more or less evenly distributed throughout the state. So if we assume that 35% of the cattle are on federal land, we find that there are 486,500 cattle grazing federal land in New Mexico.

This represents .4% of the national total. If we assume a direct correlation between beef supply and price, we find that removing cattle from federal land in New Mexico would increase the price of a pound of beef by 4/10 of one cent. In other words, a 2 1/2-pound package of hamburger would cost one cent more than it does today.

Add to this the fact that the government spends \$3 for every \$1 it takes in on federal grazing programs, and you have to wonder why the cattlemen have so much political clout.

-From The Wit and Wisdom of El Brazo Onofre

#### BOOK REVIEW

Sacred Cows at the Public Trough, Denzel and Nancy Ferguson. Maverick Publications, 1983. This is a factual, careful analysis of the ecological impact of cattle ranching on the public lands of the West. The Denzels conclude, "No industry or human activity on earth has destroyed or altered more of nature than the livestock industry. The slow-talking cowboy and his docile cows rival the H-bomb as instruments of destruction." The book is reviewed in the May/June 1984 issue of Sierra. The Committee has two copies in the Albuquerque office which may be borrowed.

Thanks to the local Sierra Club for the two articles on the disasters of grazing - Editor.

#### DUCK STAMPS

You can support wildlife by buying a duck stamp. Traditionally thought of as being only for hunters, who must buy a stamp to hunt, duck stamps help buy habitat that protects all animals and plants. The stamps cost \$7.50 and can be purchased from the U.S. Postal Service, Philatelic Sales Division, Wash., D.C. 20265.



## ROSS' RAVINS

Hi Folks! We are now well into the bird nesting season. Almost anywhere one goes, small birds at various stages of development can be seen and/or heard. It seems more people than usual are calling about baby birds that have "fallen" out of their nests, and "what to do with them?" In most cases, especially if they are feathered out to fledging or near fledging stage, the best answer is to leave them alone and let the parent birds take care of them. Of course, if they are in danger of being caught and eaten by cats or other predators, it helps to put them up into a dense bush or low tree where they are protected from the predators and from the bright, hot sun. The smaller birds, still naked or downy or in the pinfeather stage, should be picked up and returned to the best. The widely held notion that bird chicks that have been handled by humans will be rejected by their parents is totally erroneous. If this were true, uncounted numbers of birds that have been taken from the nest, banded by researchers, and returned to the nest would never live to fledge and be the subjects of studies lasting sometimes for several years. Don't, however, handle them more than is necessary.

This is also the period when intensive birding activity of the peak migration periods slows to a more leisurely pace. It is true some of the late migrants going north are crossing paths with some of the early, far northern nesting species returning to their wintering area, especially some of the shorebirds. But activity is far below early spring and fall levels. Speaking of the more leisurely pace of birding which allows more time for some reminiscence and meditation, the other day while Clara and I were "house cleaning," we came across some of my old bird records. Among them was a day checklist dated 5/14/35. It was made in the riparian marginal strip along the Missouri River, and had a total of 106 species -- my biggest single day up to that time!



What nostalgic memories it brought back, not only of the birds seen, many of them new to me, but also of my birding companions and of the very kind and helpful seasoned birders in the Des Moines (Iowa) Audubon Society who gave so much guidance and encouragement to two budding, young neophytes. I especially remember with much fondness Toni Wendelberg, who was a composite of Dot DeLollis, Ethyl Ringer, and Barbara McKnight; and George Palas, who in many ways was like our good friend Ralph Fisher of the Southwestern New Mexico Audubon Society.

A great big thank you to all of you folks who called to share your bird sightings, and to those who added kind notes of appreciation for these scribblings to their advance purchases of the New Mexico Bird Finding Guide. I'll have more to say about that later.

First sightings of RUFIOUS and CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRDS are coming in. Ruth Luhrs at Sandia Knolls called on July 4 to tell me of the arrival of her first RUFIOUS; Bill Stone had the first in town on July 5; and Pat Turner's first arrival in the North Valley was on July 11. She said this was unusual for her, usually she had CALLIOPE before RUFIOUS. Her first CALLIOPE arrived on July 15. The same day, John Woodworth had his first two adult, male CALLIOPEs at Tijeras. He'd had an immature and an adult RUFIOUS on July 8. Welcome to our reporting group, John! Pat Basham had her first RUFIOUS on July 2, but it apparently moved on. They showed up on a daily basis by July 13. The next day, Bertha Allen's first RUFIOUS showed up at Sandia Park. Neither she nor Pat have had any CALLIOPEs yet, but they are both still ahead for me. There have been nothing but BLACK-CHINNED and some immature male BROAD-TAILED at my feeders so far. I hope they'll show up here before I take off for the Ozarks.

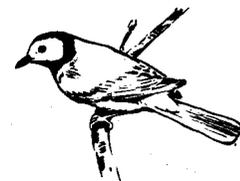
There have been a number of very interesting inputs of bird sightings this past two months. WHITE-WINGED DOVES are always of interest here at the northern periphery of their range. Bill Stone called to tell me of the presence of a pair at the Rio Grande



Nature Center on May 19. Pat Basham tells me they are becoming well established in the Socorro area now, with at least 10 pair nesting on the golf course, and scattered pairs at some other locations near her home.

Most unusual was the reported sighting of a BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER on May 26 at Bosque del Apache by Paul Layman, from California, through Bill Howe. Bob Edens of the refuge staff went out with Layman and his wife and confirmed the sighting. But it was too far away to obtain photographic documentation. Early the next morning Bill Howe and Dustin and Sue Huntington went to Bosque del Apache. Pat Basham joined them there and the four of them searched diligently for the bird for five hours, but were unsuccessful. I met the Huntingtons coming out as I was arriving. They had seen a WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER and a LESSER GOLDEN PLOVER but no BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER. After another three hours of searching, we had the same unsuccessful results. We also saw 12-20 BLACK TERNS, a SNOWY PLOVER, six CATTLE EGRETS (north of the refuge), a CANVASBACK, a male COMMON MERGANSER, several AMERICAN AVOCETS and BLACK-NECKED STILTS, as well as a possible pair of RED-NECKED GREBES. We watched the latter through our telescope for 20-30 minutes, taking notes and attempting to take pictures, but they also were out of range for my 400mm + 2X lens combination. Comparison of size, shape, and color (unfortunately they were not in breeding plumage) with a WESTERN GREBE, an EARED GREBE, and several AMERICAN COOTS in the same vicinity convinced me of the identification. When Bob Edens came along and I stopped looking to tell him about them and tried to point them out to him, they had gotten out of the telescope's field and we could not relocate them, though we looked for some time.

While talking to B. Allen about her HUMMINGBIRD arrivals, she told me she had had a male and possibly a female SCARLET Tanager in her yard on July 8. On the afternoon of July 16, she had a



BLACK PHOEBE. Both of these are rare transients in the Sandias. Although it is a bit late, it is of interest that her usual ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK arrived on May 14, the BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK on April 26, and the BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD on April 10.

Jeff Hill, who is doing some banding at Dr. Ligon's residence near Cedar Crest, called on July 9 to say he had seen a HOODED WARBLER each day for the last eight days. He had also netted and banded a RED-EYED VIREO on July 7, as well as some BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLERS. He also had a TENNESSEE WARBLER and a couple of SWAINSON'S THRUSHES.

On May 20, John Durrie visited Bosque del Apache and spotted a pair of AMERICAN REDSTARTS, a nesting pair of VERMILION FLYCATCHERS, and a MARBLED GODWIT.

Other less spectacular, but still interesting sightings, include a late WHITE PELICAN, EARED GREBES, up to 25 CATTLE EGRETS, 10-20 BLACK TERNS, a late COMMON MERGANSER, BLUE, CINNAMON, and GREEN-WINGED TEAL, a COMMON MOORHEN, and both COMMON and LESSER NIGHTHAWKS at Bosque del Apache on June 2. The same day, we spotted a number of SCALED QUAIL along old US 85 south of Socorro. On June 4, Bosque del Apache also produced VERMILION FLYCATCHER, PYRRHULOXIA, and BLUE GROSBEAKS. On the earlier date, Springtime Canyon yielded ACORN WOODPECKER, PLAIN TITMOUSE, BLACK-THROATED SPARROW, WATER PIPIT, COMMON BUSHTIT, BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER, SOLITARY and WARBLING VIREO, VIRGINIA'S and GRACE'S WARBLERS, and NORTHERN (BULLOCK'S) ORIOLE.

The next day at Water Canyon there were a good sized flock (25+) of BAND-TAILED PIGEONS, NORTHERN (BULLOCK'S) ORIOLE, CHIPPING SPARROW, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, HOUSE WREN, and many others.

The next weekend at Bitter Lake NWR we saw GREEN-BACKED HERON, CANVASBACK, AMERICAN AVOCET, BLACK-NECKED STILT, WILSON'S PHALAROPE, GREATER YELLOW-LEGS, FORSTER'S and LEAST TERN, and both species of

NIGHTHAWK. East of Roswell there were SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER and CHIHUAHUA RAVENS, and at Rattlesnake Springs PAINTED BUNTING, ORCHARD ORIOLE, SUMMER TANAGER, BLUE GROSBEEK, INDIGO BUNTING, BLACK PHOEBE, YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO, BRONZED COWBIRD, and CASSIN'S SPARROWS. At Carlsbad Caverns we were able to spot the CAVE SWALLOWS among the CLIFF SWALLOWS. Lake McMillan was practically devoid of bird life. Our total sightings included 3 SNOWY EGRET, 3 MALLARDS, and 2 BLACK-NECKED STILT. Not even a ROADRUNNER or any AMERICAN COOTS! En route to Carlsbad we did see a PHAINOPEPLA and a PYRRHULOXIA. On June 12 Paul Steel saw a GRAY CATBIRD at the Oxbow, and on the 13th, a YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO at the Rio Grande Nature Center.

It was surprising to find 6 WHITE PELICANS still lingering at Bosque del Apache on July 14. Also unusual for summer was a HOUSE WREN, "just singing up a storm." COMMON YELLOWTHROATS and YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT were also singing in many locations along the tour route. Other commitments prevented me from staying over to participate in the NM Audubon Council's field trip on the 15th, but Darwin Miller called to say that he, Pat Insley, et al, spotted an unusual, dark-colored dove with a very light head and a unique tail pattern among a flock of MOURNING DOVES. They were unable to see the bird's nape to check for markings, but suspected that it might be a SPOTTED DOVE. Such a bird would undoubtedly have to be an escaped cage-bird in this area, although there is an established population of feral birds of this species in the Los Angeles area. Their size, tail, markings, and loud hoo-hoooo-hoo are unmistakable.

There are some rumblings abroad of trying to get a statewide rare bird alert established. This will require a fair amount of organizational effort, and since it involves long-distance telephone calls, a procedure for screening reports must be developed. Parties interested in such an endeavor and willing to accept such calls collect and at



odd hours (rare bird calls almost always come at strange times when birders return from the field), please get in touch with me (265-8962).

At the last report, work on the New Mexico Bird Finding Guide is coming along apace. The write-ups from area authors are mostly all in; final editing, compiling, and layout are being completed; and a printer has been selected. At the last NMOS board meeting, we were privileged to see the dozen black-and-white, pen-and-ink drawings of New Mexico birds that Dr. Dale Zimmerman has so generously prepared and donated to illustrate the book. It is my opinion that these pictures alone are well worth more than the price of the book, even if it were to contain no usable information. But, of course, its main purpose is to guide its readers to the really best bird-finding locations in the state. It will consist of approximately 100 pages of text written in a style similar to that used in Jim Lane's Bird Finding Guides, and compiled by sections of the state, similar to the systems used in the Pettingil Guides to Bird Findings. This will most likely be the last opportunity to offer this publication at the prepublication price of \$5.00 per copy. Make your checks payable to NMOS and send them to me at 1612 Kentucky, N.E., 87110.

As Porky Pig would say, "That's all, folks!" I'm off to the Ozarks and points east. By the time you read this, I will be back, waiting and eager to hear your reports of the great things you are seeing as fall migration gets into full swing. Thanks again for all those calls which keep this column going. There is nothing I enjoy more than chatting with you about birds. So long, and good birding.

--R.L.T.



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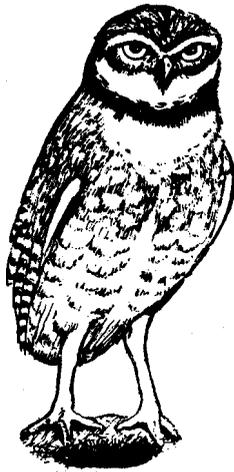
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**Editors, *Burrowing Owl*** - Evelyn and George Price,

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