

Burrowing Owl

August/September 1998 Issue

Volume 27 No. 5

Welcome to Central New Mexico Audubon Society! Come join us. All our meetings and field trips are free and open to the public.

Alert: New Proposal Threatens Wetlands

The following is an alert posted on the Audubon website and can be reviewed at www.audubon.org/campaign/aa/aa980629.html. Please note that the period for public comment on this proposal ends locally August 7 and ends nationally August 25.

The Army Corps of Engineers released a controversial new proposal on Friday, July 26th, to establish "quick permits" allowing the dredge and fill of wetlands. The new permits will replace Nationwide Permit 26 (NWP 26), which the Corps had promised to phase out by the end of this year.

NWP 26 currently allows the destruction of up to three acres of isolated or headwater wetlands. The Corps had promised to rewrite NWP 26 so that it would reduce impacts on wetlands and streams. The Corps' new proposal would allow dredge and fill permits in more wetlands and streams than the current permit.

The new quick permits would allow up to 3 acres of any non-tidal wetland to be destroyed for development or farms, and up to 10 acres of any non-tidal wetland to be destroyed as part of a "Master Planned Development." For some impacts the Corps will not have to be notified, while for others only a brief notice to the Corps will be needed to proceed with construction. The traditional requirement that wetlands be avoided where possible will not be applied. Additionally, resource agencies will not be given time to review the potential impacts of each permit and no public input will be allowed. Mitigation will be required for some but not all impacts caused by the permits.

The Corps is also seeking public comment on a "regional conditioning process," whereby the Corps district offices would place additional restrictions on the use of these new permits. The public has until **August 7** to make suggestions to their local Corps office (*in Albuquerque 342-3432*).

The national comment period for the new "quick" permit ends **August 25**. For more details please contact Julie Sibbing 202-861-2242, or jsibbing@audubon.org.

Alert: Baca Location Ranch Acquisition

The Future in Whose Hands? from Beth Hurst-Waitz, President

On Friday, July 17, I joined other Audubon representatives in a special tour of the Baca Location Ranch. This nearly 100,000-acre property, situated in the heart of the Jemez Mountains in northern New Mexico, features the caldera, or Valle Grande, of a collapsed volcano and numerous resurgent domes, the loftiest being Redondo Peak at 11,000+ feet. It is an area of current geothermal activity and the site of a Geothermal Resource Research Area. The ranch has been admirably managed. Cattle grazing has been decreased even as the elk herd has increased. Estimates hover around 7500 elk — the largest herd in NM. With nearly 30 miles of pristine trout streams, the Baca Ranch contains the upland watershed and primary headwaters for the Jemez River. Two of our most precious coldwater resources, the Rio San Antonio and the East Fork of the Jemez River, originate on the Baca Ranch and depend on its clean snow and on that undeveloped and unspoiled watershed.

For the first time in years, this jewel is available for federal acquisition. The sellers are willing and the Clinton Administration has included \$50 million in their budget for acquisition. Senator Jeff Bingaman's bill (S-1210) to authorize the purchase of the Baca Ranch is moving slowly through the Congress.

Failure to acquire this land in its entirety could precipitate another kind of invitation — to a conglomeration of developers. The thought of
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How to Prevent Bird Window Deaths

Deb Novak of Hawks Aloft has written an informative article in that organization's newsletter on birds hitting windows. She notes that over 100 million birds die each year in the United States as a result of striking windows. The accidents are thought to occur because windows reflect the sky and surrounding scenery and birds do not realize the windows are solid until too late. Even birds that do not die immediately from the impact usually die later from brain swelling and other injuries. She points out that hawk decals are not effective except in small windows.

What can you do to reduce this hazard? Deb passes along the following suggestions:

1. For windows that are relatively small, try to place netting over the backside of the windows.
2. For larger windows, uniformly cover the entire window with tightly spaced (2 to 4 inches apart) objects or patterns, visible from the outside. *We thought that wood/plastic lattice or strips of tape simulating the lattice pattern might work well. You can also paint or stencil patterns on the interior glass surface with washable transparent type paints available from any art supply store.*
3. Move attractants (such as feeders, baths, etc) away from windows to avoid strikes or place very close to windows (one foot or less) so that the birds can't build up enough speed when leaving the attractants suddenly.
4. Use windows with frosted or with low reflection, tinted glass or install glass at an angle so that it reflects the ground.

Deb's article can be found on page 7 of Vol.5, No. 1, 1998 of Aloft, The Journal of Hawks Aloft Inc.

If anyone has an ingenious solution or product that will help solve this problem, please contact us at bcokenm@aol.com or 256-9130, and we will get the word out.



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Alert: Baca Location Ranch cont'd

piecemeal parceling can lead the imagination to places it doesn't want to go. Let's just suggest a murky picture of the sprawl of mobile homes on one-and-a-half-acre ranchettes— exactly the kind of checkerboard picture current zoning would allow!

Your help is needed to make sure this acquisition proceeds in a timely manner. The Rio Arriba and Sandoval County Commissions, the Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce, and officers of the Northern New Mexico Stockman's Association, along with virtually all sportsmen's and environmental groups, support this acquisition. Senator Domenici and House members Redmond and Wilson need to know how important this issue is to us—to you!

Now is the time that continuing letters and phone calls are most important. Call or write today, even if you have already done so.

Please, urge your Senators and Representatives to respect our wishes today for our posterity tomorrow.

See addresses and phone numbers for these people under the Whom to Contact list on the back page.

National Audubon Society

Chapter Member Application

Yes, I'd like to join.

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below

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Chapter Membership Data Center
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Central New Mexico Audubon Society

Local Chapter Code— Q51

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Use the above form for new subscriptions only. Contact Membership Chairperson for changes of address or correction in your Burrowing Owl label. Nonmembers can receive the Burrowing Owl by sending your name and address with \$12 to CNMAS, c/o Beth Hurst, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., 87114-1710

Burrowing Owl Subscription

The Burrowing Owl Newsletter is published six times a year, February, April, June, August, October and December. Subscription is free to Central New Mexico Audubon Society members, \$12 to nonmembers.

Central New Mexico Audubon Society

P.O. Box 30002

Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87190-0002



August/September 1998

New Bird Species Discovered

Robert S. Ridgely was in the Ecuadorian mountains recording bird songs last November when he and a fellow ornithologist heard a strange call. The odd call led them to a large bird with unusual white facial markings, which he knew right away was "one of the most distinctive new birds to be found in a while."

What Robert Ridgely, 52, and the young Ecuadorian expert, Lelis Navarrete, heard and eventually saw high in the Andes Mountains was the discovery of a lifetime—a new bird species. To put this in perspective it is important to realize that only about one new bird species is discovered every year.

The newly discovered bird has been identified as a member of the Antpitta species. Antpittas are very reclusive, long-legged, non-migratory birds that hop on the forest floor, feeding on large insects. At 10 inches, including its short tail, this new bird is the second-largest known Antpitta. Its most striking feature is a broad white facial stripe that arches below the eye, contrasting with a black crown.

In January, a team of ornithologists netted and photographed four of these birds which were then sacrificed for scientific study.

Ridgely and other ornithologists have set up a foundation to raise money to buy land to protect the bird's habitat, much of which has been cleared for cattle grazing.

"It underscores the importance of the Andean mountaintops as refuges of very rare, isolated, biodiversity that is being discovered," John W. Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in Ithaca, N.Y. said. "If a big bird is out there being discovered, imagine how many bugs and plants are out there."

This column is a summary of an article reported by the Associated Press which is copyrighted and could not be reprinted.



Sometimes birds are alot like humans.

Audubon Adventures

Welcome Cindy Clark!

Welcome to Cindy Clark, our new Audubon Adventures Coordinator. You'll be hearing more from Cindy as she gets to know you better. For now, with our last solicitation for next school year (1999-2000), we thought we'd share some encouraging and appreciative words for all of us:

"We do a natural communities unit; the information has been helpful. THANKS!" Jane Adolf, Manzano Day School

"I use it as a resource for my Science Classes, grades 3-4. I am able to use it for 135 students." Wayne Prentice, Apache Elementary

"It is absolutely great! It enriches Science & Social Studies." Judy Vinyard, Arroyo del Oso Elementary

"Yes, I use the program. I think it is a great help to my students. They enjoy it very much. I do share it with other classes. Thank you very much." Carl Simpson, Kirtland Elementary

"[I use it for] Science & Reading Enrichment. Perfect level [4th]. Kids really enjoy the many scientific insights and information. Excellent package! Thank you!" Joyce Simpson, Arroyo del Oso Elementary.



Enclosed please find my check for \$ _____
(Each \$35 will sponsor one classroom in the Audubon Adventures Program. Any amount you contribute will benefit our educational activities.)

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Help support this educational outreach program! Send your check payable to CNMAS with this form to Ron Waitz, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., Albuquerque, NM 87114.



Programs

Programs begin at 7:30 p.m. Light refreshments are served from 7:15. Come to St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, northwest corner of Copper and Jefferson.

Thursday, August 20 Jim Bailey from the NM Game and Fish Department's Conservation Services Division will show slides and discuss the current status of the Lesser Prairie Chicken in NM. In the past we've enjoyed observing this bird during the month of April near Roswell. This is now when most of the research on it is carried out. In NM alone, the Lesser Prairie Chicken is missing from 70% of its former range. It is now gone from 90% of its original range, which covers parts of NM, CO, TX, KS and OK. Come to find out what this study, now in its second year, indicates is the reason for this decline. Is the Lesser Prairie Chicken going to appear on a state or federal endangered species list? What kind of habitat management exists at present? Why do NM ranchers have such an interest in this study? Bring yourself and your questions to this informative meeting.

Thursday, September 17 Gail Garber, a founding member of Hawks Aloft, will be with us with an update on the interesting projects being undertaken by this very active local organization. If you are interested in Golden Eagles, Burrowing Owls on KAFB, Ferruginous Hawks, Willow Flycatchers, Flammulated Owls, or raptor and breeding bird surveys, here is a good chance to find out what sort of research is being done in NM. Gail and associates, a non-feathered researcher and a feathered friend in the education business, will be present to fill us in on all aspects of Hawks Aloft efforts in the field.

Audubon Field Trips

August Trips

Saturday & Sunday August 29-30 Bitter Lake, Roswell. Great for shore birds this time of year. Call Sei (266-2480) or Charlotte (345-1271) for info on accommodations and transportation. Meet at Four Hills Shopping Center by the video store at 7:00 am.

September Trips

Saturday & Sunday Sept. 12-13 Percha Dam and Caballo. Over night or long day trip to look for migrating warblers and sparrows. Meet at 7:00 am at the Physics Bldg parking lot, Lomas and Yale. Bring your lunch. Call Sei (266-2480) or Charlotte (345-1271) for info on accommodations and transportation. There is camping at Percha or motels at T or C.

Saturday, Sept. 26 Hawkwatch & Quarai. Join us on our visit to Quarai and the Hawkwatch site in the Manzanos to see migrating hawks. Bring a lunch and warm clothes. It can be cold at the Hawkwatch site. Meet at Four Hills Shopping Center near the video store at 7:30 am.

Welcome to Cafe Audubon!

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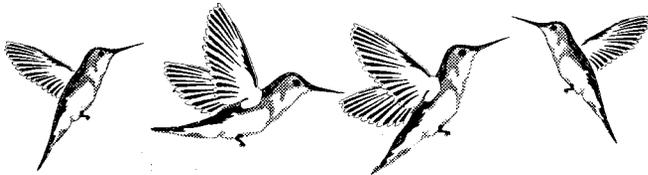
Wild Bird Center

The Promenade Shopping Center
5200 Eubank NE (Eubank at Spain NE)
(Just East of Marie Callendar's)
332-4737



August/September 1998

Hummerfest 98



**Fifth Annual Hummingbird Festival
"The Hummers, Friends of Rio Grande
Nature Center, Audubon, and You!"
Saturday, August 8
at the Rio Grande Nature Center**

Activities run from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Admission is free. Be a volunteer with us at the pond room. Help folks ID humming and other birds, and treat yourself to a couple hours of fun! Contact Sei at 266-2480 for a one or two hour time slot.

Important Information

Wildlife Rescue

If you find a sick or injured bird, call 344-2500.

Rare Bird Alert

To learn about sightings all over the state or to report a rare sighting, the number in Albuquerque is 323-9323. e-mail: Pinyonjay@aol.com

Bat in Trouble?

Call Talking Talons before you intervene.
281-1133 or 281-1515

Thursday Morning Birding Group

For information on weekly birding outings (every Thursday), call Julie Goodding at 255-9366. Meeting time and location, as well as duration, vary.

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**Feathers for the Future
The Junior Duck Stamp Contest**



The National Junior Duck Stamp Contest is the recent offspring of the Federal Duck Stamp Program, which was authorized by Congress in 1934. The Federal Duck Stamps are purchased annually by art enthusiasts, stamp collectors and conservationists, as well as hunters, for \$15 each. Ninety-eight cents of every dollar goes directly into the conservation fund to purchase wetlands.

The Junior Duck Stamp Design Contests provide conservation and wildlife education for young people. They are held in every state for children in grades kindergarten through twelfth. In New Mexico, the program is administered by Deb Davies from Bosque del Apache, with help from trained volunteers (more about that later). Entries in New Mexico jumped from 600 two years ago to 900 entries this past year—and 205 of those came from the Albuquerque area. The outreach program was able to make presentations to 49 schools in New Mexico—and 11 of those were in Albuquerque. One of the goals for the outreach program is to come up with more trained volunteers.

If you can imagine any way that you might be willing to jump in the pond and help these young conservationists, call now! We can use people to do many things:

- ☞ We need people who are willing to help staff public exhibits in the Albuquerque area.
- ☞ We need more outreach presenters to go into the classroom.
- ☞ We need sponsors or donations in order to make awards to our New Mexico winners.

Participating in the Junior Duck Stamp Program heightens students' awareness of the value of the environment and wetlands. It is our hope that they will begin to care and become our future environmentalists. Help us reach more children in Albuquerque! There are thousands of them, and we have only been able to contact a few hundred.

Helping is creative, interesting and fun! For more information or to volunteer, call Deb Davies at Bosque del Apache, (505) 835-1828.



Birdathon Teamwork Raises Over \$1,500

If success is measured in units of fun, this year's Birdathon topped the chart! And as you'll see from the following reports, the trips were popular, the birds cooperative, and our contributors generous. Thanks to all of you, whose donations tallied \$1,597.30! Half of the CNMAS Birdathon proceeds will fund five (possibly six) bus tours to Bosque del Apache for school kids. The other half of the proceeds support ongoing environmental education and local issue activism of Randall Davey Audubon Center, our New Mexico State office. Thank you, Store Sponsors, for your enthusiasm and support! Applause and appreciation, Liz Miller, for your cheerful help. And Feathers and Flowers to our intrepid trip leaders for their gifts of time and talent. Thank you, one and all!

Team 1 at Bitter Lake NWR, Silver City, Water Canyon, Zuni Sei Tokuda and Charlotte Green, Mike and Cindy Clark, Wild Bird Center - Sponsor, Christine K. Nyce, Helen L. Haskell, Stephen & Darlene Batson, Mary Alice Root, Matt Baumann, Rebecca Gracey, Dorothy R. Rogan, Jack W. Courtin, Nancy Joste, Barbara Kroening, James E. Raquet, Paul McConnell, Betsy A. Gray, James Karo, Les Hawkins, Lee Danielson, Ruth Burstrom, Ronald & Luayne Pisk, Andrew Rominger, John & Arlene Ward, Jean Dilley, Dianne C. Cress, James & Martha Bromberg, Dianne M. Maughan, Tamie Bulow, Joe & Sara Alexanian

Ruth Burstrom conducted a "mini" birdathon with an outing to Bitter Lake NWR. Ruth, on her own, tallied a whopping 105 species and garnered over \$100 in pledges!

May 16, Silver City, starting at Percha Dam where we always see lots of great birds like Phainopepla, and Warblers. Around Silver City we saw a Common Black Hawk nest, more warblers including the Redfaced and Painted Redstart. We saw 87 total birds on the trip, plus a fox.

June 7, four of us found 70 birds. It was very windy and the birds were hiding. We saw a few Warblers, including Grace's and Black-throated Gray, Swallows, Flycatchers, Woodpeckers and Vireos in Water Canyon. At the Bosque we saw lots of water fowl including a beautiful Little Blue Heron in breeding plumage.

June 27, Zuni Mountains. Thirteen of us met Dave Cleary for a tour of the Zuni area. Boy can he find the birds! We walked a little ways up a canyon and kept hearing this loud screeching sound. Through the scope we saw not one but four Peregrine Falcons who were just about ready to leave the nest. The oldest was doing a pretty good job of flying but had some difficulty landing. We also saw both parents. Six Peregrines in one stop! We saw a total of 50 birds including Bullock's Oriole, Solitary Vireos and Lazuli Bunting. We had a wonderful day, the Peregrines taking top billing.

Team 2 at Bosque del Apache, May 14

Julie Goodding, Mary Lou Arthur, Geni and David Krolick, Wild Birds Unlimited (Montgomery) - Sponsor, Mary Hewitt, Cindy Harris, Melinda Davenport, Michele Nuss, Jean Davis, Elisabeth B. Moon, Holly Hodgkin, Margaret L. Wallen, Karen & Gary Boettcher, Browning Coke & Robbie Heyman, Eileen McInerney, L.M. Klingman, Mickey Gibson, Sally B. Burke, Marjorie J. Williams, Paul McConnell, Jean Dilley, Dianne C. Cress, James & Martha Bromberg, Dianne M. Maughan, Tamie Bulow, Joe & Sara Alexanian

The Thursday Birders didn't blow away the competition, but they almost got blown over! Baby killdeer at Grasslands were too cute to believe. Farther on the way, we found a freshly mown field abuzz with birdlife: orioles, mockingbird, yellow rumps, and lazuli buntings. We might have stayed there all day, but we had an 11:00 a.m. date at Bosque del Apache.

The winds were "brisk" by that time, and by noon we had a definite "windy" day. Our team of 20 was toured around the refuge backroads by Daniel Perry and Sondra Williamson. All our thanks for their great help. Team 2 didn't crack 100 like we had promised ourselves, but 94 species is still good for us, especially considering it was too windy for scopes. Since a windy day birding Bosque del Apache still beats a day at home, we finished up dusty but happy.

Team 3 at Percha Dam State Park, April 25

Celestyn Brozek, Lori and Joel Korngut, Cranes & Crows - Sponsor, Katherine B. Hauth, Julie Dragg, Yvonne Gonzales, Marian S. Washburn, Beth and Ron Waitz, Mary Loughran, Jean Dilley, Dianne C. Cress, James & Martha Bromberg, Dianne M. Maughan, Tamie Bulow, Joe & Sara Alexanian

The morning air seemed to be hung with a velvet curtain of sound — the incessant cooing of the White-Winged Doves. And that's how our Birdathon day at Percha Dam State Park started, on April 25. There was the full-view, open-eyed Great-horned Owl who didn't need his binoculars to check us out. We gasped at our luck in observing the pair of diminutive Inca Doves tending their nest. Chasing the Townsend's Warbler through the Russian olives rewarded us with a great look at this shy bird's bold markings. The Green Heron in the leafless tree against the blue sky was not a painter's picture, but the palette itself.

Yes, the winds picked up — but so did our species count when we motored up to Bosque del Apache in mid-afternoon. Immediately we added a dozen species as we ticked off Egret and Duck names. Persistence and Celestyn's expertise helped us identify a respectable number of shorebirds, including Virginia Rail and Black-bellied Plover. The Merlin's protracted posing brought out the voyeur in all of us. The Wild Turkey and the Forster's Tern gave us allegories for land and sky. By day's end, we'd tallied 107 species. We'll soon forget the number and long remember the day.

Team 4 Albuquerque West Side, May 30

Hart Schwarz, Lynda Geron and Joseph Shumate, Wild Birds Unlimited (West Side) - Sponsor, Carol & Will Parker, Mary Lou Arthur, Paul McConnell, John Tyson, Vivienne Jackson, Mary Alice Kerrigan, Four Points Associates, Jeffrey Myers, Annette Turk, Paul Adams, Vickie R. Wilcox, George & Lavelle Walker, Deborah Peacock & Nathan Korn, Vanessa Dargain, Bob Cates, Lyle Lininger, Paula Mortensen, Mike Parsons, Verna Parsons, Marjorie Williams, Carolyn R. Sanborn, Jean Dilley, Dianne C. Cress, James & Martha Bromberg, Dianne M. Maughan, Tamie Bulow, Joe & Sara Alexanian

This last of the local Birdathons, held on May 30, yielded a virtual absence of migrants but, conversely, evidence of considerable nesting activity -- and an enthusiastic entourage of 15 birders! Hart chose four West-side locations: Calabacillas Arroyo, Rinconada Canyon in Petroglyph National Monument, the western lakes of the Rio Rancho Golf Course, and the bosque east of the Rio Grande and north of Paseo del Norte.

Of the 48 species, highlights included the large nesting colony of Bank Swallow at Calabacillas Arroyo. This colony, numbering several hundred, may be the only one remaining in the Albuquerque area. Their habitat is very much endangered by development and recreation. In addition to seeing the birds swarm like bees near their nesting holes, we also saw them foraging along the clear ditch just north of Paseo.

Near the southern end of our bosque walk, where the cottonwoods tower over a thick underbrush of New Mexico Olive, the Yellow-breasted Chats greeted our arrival with a medley of quirky sounds. A few birders even saw this oversized yellow-bellied warbler, but it was entertaining merely to listen.



August/September 1998

Birds for a Purpose

Birds for a Purpose is an outreach program to rural schools. Amy Stix is the program administrator and presenter. She teaches students about birds, their biology, behavior and habitat needs. This program demonstrates the connection between healthy wildlife habitat and human communities. If you are interested in knowing more about this program, contact Amy in the fall through the Santa Fe office at 505-983-4609.



Partners in Flight Web Site

Last year, Audubon began a program identifying bird species that were in need of immediate attention. This new program, Partners in Flight WatchList, is now on the web at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/watch/>. Each of the approximately 90 WatchList birds at risk is given its own page explaining the PIF conservation priority score and the science behind its score. This new site has become central to Audubon's bird conservation campaigns. The WatchList site is an informative and user-friendly site linking over 180 useful pages. By making this information interesting and accessible to everyone, the message of imperiled birds is more far reaching and not limited to the birding community. For example school children can easily find information for projects and reports here. For those of you who have not yet taken advantage of the world wide web, it's time to give it a try; it's easier than most people think.

Email Addresses

If you are interested in receiving news about birding issues and trips that don't make it into the newsletters, please send your email address to bcokenm@aol.com. Also don't forget to check our CNMAS web site:

www.rt66.com/peacmyer/cnmas.htm

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Just A Few Web Sites

National Audubon Society/Partners in Flight WatchList
(for updated information on birds at risk before they require federal listing):
<http://www.audubon.org/bird/watch/>

Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology BirdSource
(a "weather map" of bird distributions, population, and migratory movements):
<http://birdsource.cornell.edu>

New Mexico Ornithological Society:
<http://biology.unm.edu/~nmos>

The Peregrine Falcon Fund
(for continuing information on the Arizona Condor population):
<http://www.peregrinefund.org>

Share with Wildlife nongame protection program of New Mexico Department of Game and Fish:
<http://gmfish.state.nm.us> (Click on "Nongame")

Hawks Aloft
<http://www.rt66.com/~hawkssnm>

HawkWatch International
<http://www.info-xpress.com/hawkwatch>

The Hummer/Bird Study Group, Inc.
<http://home.judson.edu/hbsg>

Hummingbirds interesting site
<http://www.derived.com/hummers/>

Bosque del Apache NWR
<http://bluegoose.arw.r9.fws.gov/NWRSFiles/RefugeSystemLeaflets/R2/NewMexico/BosqueNWR/BosqueNWR.html>

Rio Grande Nature Center
<http://www.unm.edu/~natrcent>



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