

# Burrowing Owl

April/May 1999 Issue

Volume 28 No. 3

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



## The Society's Mission and the Audubon Wetlands Campaign

The Central New Mexico Audubon Society is devoted to the protection, preservation and enjoyment of the environment, with a particular emphasis on birds. We are also involved in environmental education and grassroots conservation activities. The Audubon's Wetlands Campaign to save and restore one million acres of wetlands nationwide fits nicely with these goals.

The Campaign sprang from grassroots participation by Audubon's volunteers and field staff all around the country. Audubon chapters, state field offices, sanctuaries and other programs have saved 600,000 acres of wetlands since 1990 by focusing the Campaign on influencing national policy. Audubon's efforts have met with resounding success as it helped defeat the "Dirty Water" bill in the 104th Congress, stall the proposed weakening of the Army Corps of Engineers' Nationwide Permit 26 (we wrote about this in our August/September Burrowing Owl issue), and preserve EPA's wetland authority.

As we celebrate International Migratory Bird Day, we are once again reminded of the importance that wetlands play in the survival of the neotropical migrants who travel through New Mexico. Dwindling wetlands mean these birds will have fewer places to rest and refuel on their long journeys back to Spring and Summer nesting sites.

What can we do? We can work together to defend the Clean Water Act, and encourage Congress to fund President Clinton's Clean Water Action Plan and Better America Environmental Bonds, among many other federal policy priorities.

Although we may feel that we are helpless to alter the course set by powerful developers and developer-friendly laws, we can be much more influential than we think. MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) was started by one individual who passionately advocated changing traditionally lenient DWI laws to stricter enforcement. As a result of her courage, we now have much safer roads.

You can make a difference by getting involved even if it's only through staying informed and emailing or "snail" mailing your state and federal government representative (see our back page for addresses). The internet has a wealth of information on anything you might want to learn and even if you do not have a computer, all our public libraries have free use of computers hooked up to the internet. Be part of this grassroots effort and find out more about Environmental Bonds, Nationwide Permit 26 and "mitigation banking" by logging onto [www.audubon.org/campaign/wetland](http://www.audubon.org/campaign/wetland).



## International Migratory Bird Day

The planet's biggest party for the birds kicks off on Saturday, May 8, 1999 with the seventh annual International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD). Share your passion for birds with a friend when IMBD rolls out the red carpet for migratory birds as they return to their nesting grounds after a winter in the tropics.

All across America, bird clubs, nature centers, National Wildlife Refuges, conservation organizations, wild bird retail stores, and countless other groups will celebrate the return of migratory birds. Locally you can visit the Rio Grande Nature Center and Bosque del Apache NWR and check with our local bird stores for information on special events.

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## Hummingbirds in Winter?

by Hart R. Schwarz



Once, not very long ago on a day in January or February, an Albuquerque birder revealed an extraordinary experience: Her Broad-tailed Hummingbirds had returned! Since the timing was about two months ahead of schedule and thus as likely as Elvis showing up at the door, I, naturally, felt compelled to ask a few questions, including the obvious one, "Have you actually seen a hummingbird?" The expected but still astonishing answer was, "No, but I keep hearing them," referring, of course, to the wing trilling produced by the male. I can't be sure what was heard, perhaps an insect or some intermittent mechanical sound, but it was almost certainly not a hummingbird. As reluctant as any of us are to admitting it, our senses do quite frequently betray us.

Now, having just debunked the return of Broad-tailed Hummingbirds in the middle of winter, it is, in fact, true that hummingbirds can and do sometimes visit central New Mexico at that time of year, i.e., from December through February. However, the two most common familiar hummers in our state during the breeding season, the Broad-tailed and Black-chinned, are the **least** likely to occur in winter, not only here, but anywhere in the United States.

Although virtually all hummingbirds are out of the state by the end of October, many seemed reluctant to make a timely exit last year (1998). Perhaps deterred by an unusually mild fall and winter, some lingered well into December in and around Albuquerque; however, only the following three local cases could be recorded for posterity by dint of being banded by Joan Day-Martin, the "hummingbird lady."

**1. Broad-tailed Hummingbird (immature female):** This little visitor adopted the yard of Hal and Amy Wagon in the Northeast Heights for several weeks. I first "studied" it on 11-18 and Joan applied the band on 11-27. Even though the Wagnons went to great lengths to facilitate survival, the bird, nevertheless, deserted on 12-8.

**2. Rufous Hummingbird (adult female):** This bird also was from the Northeast Heights, where it was banded on 12-12 and last seen on 12-30.

**3. Rufous Hummingbird (adult male):** When I checked out this hummer at a home in Placitas on 12-6, it seemed like summer all over again: an energetic male in full regalia buzzing around the feeder. Joan banded him on 12-15, but alas, he could not tarry beyond 12-26.

Generally, wintering hummingbirds are not as numerous as they were last year, but now and again they tempt fate and Mother Nature, depending on tiny insects and the good will of humans to keep them alive. While most of these pioneering—or perhaps suicidal—hummers of early winter go unreported, I can recall three from the years prior to 1998. In December of 1977 a Magnificent Hummingbird regularly visited a feeder in Sandia Park. On 12-16-1990 a Northeast Heights yard contributed a female Anna's Hummingbird to the Albuquerque Christmas Count, but she succumbed five days later to a fierce winter storm and the coldest temperatures

## 1999 Hummingbird Connection

The New Mexico Hummingbird Connection, now in its fifth year of study, is sponsored by the New Mexico Audubon Council, Randall Davey Audubon Center, Share with Wildlife, and Partners in Flight. Through the participation of hummingbird watchers throughout the state, the sponsors hope to learn much more about these wonderful, energetic jewels in our gardens.

The study requires you to observe your hummingbirds for a short time on at least two days a week and note the species and number of birds. Anyone can participate by contacting the Hummingbird Connection. They will happily supply you with survey forms, observation tips, nectar formulas and other hummingbird information.

To become part of this fascinating study you need only send your name, address, and county of residence along with a stamped self-addressed envelope to: New Mexico Audubon Council, 26 Dogwood Lane, Los Lunas, NM 87031. A \$5.00 donation to New Mexico Audubon Council is suggested to help with the printing costs of the newsletter and other materials you will receive.



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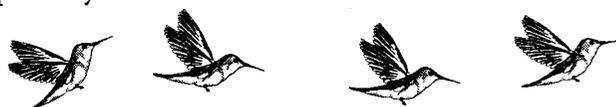
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Lori Korngut  
Joel Korngut  
505-243-0800

## Hummingbirds in Winter? cont'd

of the year. And then there was an immature male Rufous in the Sandia foothills, which banded on 2-7-96 and stayed until 2-17. This particular hummingbird is the only one I know of which probably spent the entire winter among us and lived to tell the tale from the Land of Enchantment.

Barring any immediate, dramatic acceleration in global warming, winter hummingbirds in central NM will continue to occur only sporadically, with Rufous being the most likely and the Anna's coming in a distant second. As for Broad-tails and Black-chins in the Albuquerque area, look for them during the last week in March and the second week in April, respectively.





April/May 1999

**Merlin Magic**  
by Edbirdman

Here, in New England, where the towns and villages scrunch up against one another, where the houses stand shoulder to shoulder, like people strap-hanging on a subway during rush hour, here where it all began, this America, it is hard sometimes for a bird to make a living.

Route 114 runs west from the sea, connecting Salem to Peabody to Danvers, and in the meantime connecting all the North-South routes, I-95 and Rt. 1 to New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, and Rt. 128 to Cape Ann, all this within a couple of miles. It seems at times that the rush-hour on 114 is 24 hours long and lives on the very edge of gridlock.

Centered in this clot of traffic is "the mall." Acres of parking, often totally filled, with access jammed. Across 114 from "the mall" sits the wonderful bookstore, the one that also sells all the CDs one could hope and wish for. In the stunted tree somehow growing in its parking lot, perhaps the only tree alive in this vast expanse of concrete, last week, resided a falcon, a merlin. Somehow in passing, he discovered an otherwise unvisited buffet of English sparrows residing in the scrub ditch surrounding the literary parking lot.

The book-buying people were mostly oblivious to his presence. Just a couple of sparrows a day didn't seem to attract much attention. Even the downward float of the plucked feathers, drifting above the mark-down tables, went unnoticed. Several literate birders did notice, however, and the local RBA was advised. The resulting increase in traffic was hardly note-worthy, but those staunch birders who got to see the master hunter, capably doing his "thing," while completely unconcerned with all the marvels of twentieth century trafficking, car-phones, turn-signals and expresso coffee, were delightfully impressed. I was.

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Send this application and your check to:  
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Chapter Membership Data Center  
P.O. Box 30002 • Albuquerque, NM 87114-1710

**LOCAL CHAPTER**

Central New Mexico Audubon Society

Local Chapter Code— Q51

7XCH8

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-Waitz, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., 87114-1710

**New Mexico Audubon Council**

The New Mexico State Audubon Council is comprised of members from the boards of the five Audubon chapters in New Mexico. The date for the next Council meeting is Saturday, April 10 at the Sevilleta NWR, north of Socorro. Audubon members are welcome. The facilities of the Sevilleta Refuge will be open to us both for the meeting and for housing. Terms for housing are \$10/person/night plus \$10 if you want bedding. Let Tom Jervis know if you want housing and which nights. E-mail him at jervidae@aol.com or phone him at (505) 662-5287 to RSVP. The meeting will start at 10:00 AM, and we're planning on a potluck dinner that evening. Please call Beth Hurst-Waitz for more information, 243-7029 or 898-8514.

**Burrowing Owl Subscription**

You can subscribe to our newsletter without being a member of our chapter. In fact, if you live outside our region you will have to subscribe separately in order to receive the newsletter. 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. Send checks to: Central New Mexico Audubon Society, P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87190-0002



### Audubon Field Trips

Everyone is welcome on field trips: Audubon members and nonmembers, novice and experienced birders.

#### April Trips

**Saturday, April 3** Bosque del Apache. Meet at 7 am at the UNM Physics parking lot on the corner of Yale and Lomas N.E. Bring lunch.

**Saturday/Sunday, April 24-25** Roswell and Carlsbad shorebirds at Bitter Lake and passerines (Buntings, Grosbeaks, Flycatchers, Orioles, Tanagers, etc) at Rattlesnake Springs. Overnight at Carlsbad. Meet at the Four Hills Shopping Center at 6:45 am. Call Sei at 266-2480 for details.

#### May Trips

**Saturday/Sunday, May 22-23** Palo Duro Canyon, a first for CNMAS field trip. Palo Duro Canyon is 30 miles south of Amarillo, Texas. The latter is 280 miles east of Albuquerque via I-40. Target birds are Golden-fronted Woodpeckers, Painted Buntings, Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Carolina Wrens and Mississippi Kites galore. Campsites available at Palo Duro Canyon. Meet at 6:45 am at the Four Hills Shopping Center. Call Sei at 266-2480 for details.

#### June Trips

**Saturday, June 5** Jim Black's annual Water Canyon Bird Count. Meet at 7 am at the Water Canyon Campground 20 miles west of Socorro on US 60. Owlars may join Jim on Friday at dusk. Call Sei at 266-2480 for details.

### Audubon 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.

#### April

**Thursday, April 8** *Warbler Identification Class*  
Bill Howe, Migratory Bird Specialist for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will help us learn to distinguish the many different species of warblers. This is the last of three bird identification classes offered by CNMAS this Spring. With migration upon us, this should be another very interesting class. Starts at 7:30 pm, \$5.00 class fee. Come early for refreshments and socializing.

#### May

**Thursday, May 20** *Annual Meeting & Dessert Potluck*  
We'll start early with our desserts at 6:30. Please bring a dessert to share. After tasting our wonderful dolces, we will introduce our Science Fair Winners, who will give a brief explanation of their science projects. Following the Science Fair presentations, David Henderson, director of NM State Audubon Office, and Randall Davey Audubon Center, will update us on the bills passed by New Mexico's legislature and tell us what is happening statewide on conservation.



#### 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.

## The natural alternative

Backyard birding is an increasingly popular entertainment option. Share it with you friends and family, and enjoy 15% off any bird feeder with this ad.



### Wild Bird Center

The Promenade Shopping Center  
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(Just East of Marie Callender's)  
332-4737

**REMEMBER**  
**1999 EARTH DAY — SATURDAY, APRIL 24**

#### Why Birdathon?

Sparrows and shorebirds and warblers — and springtime trips to go look at (or at least FOR) them! We wanted to match your overwhelming response to our Audubon Birding Academy with the opportunities to go birding this spring that would help the greatest number of people see the greatest variety of birds over the best times of the season, with the most inclusive of habitats, with some of the best bird trip leaders in our state. Thus, with great appreciation to our trip leaders, we're excited to offer a venue of five birding teams that you can join and/or support and have fun with and learn from — four of the top five reasons to join and/or pledge to a Birdathon team. And the #1 reason is, of course — the birds themselves! Birding — what a great sport!



April/May 1999



**Birdathon 1999**



The CNMAS Birdathon is an annual event to raise money and have fun in the process. It's a great race to count as many bird species as possible. You can join any of the following teams on their Birdathon outing but be sure to call and confirm with the team leaders. Carpooling is available for most outings but check with leaders.

We ask you to pledge a minimum of \$5.00. Your tax-deductible pledge can be a flat rate or an amount per species (75 species at 10¢ each is a \$7.50 donation). Join one or more teams, pledge to one or more, and support your Audubon Chapter's education and conservation activities right here in New Mexico.

Remember to bring you binoculars, field guide, water and lunch. We recommend wearing layers of clothing to be comfortable in changing temperatures and of course comfortable shoes.

**Team 1**

**Saturday/Sunday, May 1-2 Silver City** Sei Tokuda leads this team. Target birds are Verdins, Lucy's, Olive, Red-faced Warblers, Vermilion Flycatchers, Hooded Orioles and Black Hawks. Overnight at Silver City or McMillan and Cherry Creek campgrounds. Meet at the UNM Physics parking lot at 6:45 am. Call Sei at 266-2480 for car pooling and accommodations info and to confirm.

**Team 2**

**Thursday, May 6 Bosque del Apache NWR** The Thursday Birders invite you to rendezvous with them at 6:45 a.m. at the south parking lot of the Plaza Inn, on top of Medical Arts Hill east of I-25, south of Lomas. Destination, Bosque del Apache, where we'll board vans or buses and share a daylong tour of this mecca of springtime birding. Contact person is Madge Wallen at 291-1595.

**Team 3**

**Saturday, May 15 Three Gun Spring Canyon** Explore the Sandia Mountain birding attractions with Dr. Celestyn Brozek (266-9225). Earlybirds will meet at 7:00 a.m. at Smith's parking lot at Central and Tramway, near the mailboxes, to carpool to Three Gun Spring Canyon. Come along OR join us there to see Crissal Thrasher, Scott's Oriole, and Black-chinned Sparrow. From there, we'll head to Doc Long Picnic Ground, where non-

**Team 3 cont'd**

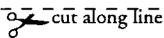
earlybirds may join the group around 9:30 a.m. The day's outing will continue to Capulin Spring and toward the Peak, hopefully to include Pygmy Nuthatch, Grace's and Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Tanager, and Green-tailed Towhee.

**Team 4**

**Saturday, May 22 Escondida** Meet Hart Schwarz (266-1810) at 8:00 a.m. at the north end of the Village Inn Pancake House on Yale south of Gibson. The morning's destination is Escondida, north of Socorro, where Barn Owl, Phainopepla, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Lucy's Warbler, and Verdins are among good possibilities. Later, we'll travel to Water and Copper Canyons, where we hope to increase the warbler tally with Red-faced, Virginia, Grace's, and Black-throated Gray Warblers.

**Team 5**

**Saturday, May 22 Water Canyon•Bosque del Apache** Jonalyn Yancey will lead a birding team to Water Canyon, Bosque del Apache, and north along the Rio Grande. We'll begin our day at sunrise at the mountain summit above Water Canyon. Please call Jonalyn at 286-2949. If you are interested in pledging to the highest-species-count team, this may be the one for your money. Jonalyn's invitee list of team members is impressive.



**To make a pledge or to make your tax-deductible donation,  
return this form by May 26, 1999.**

- I will sponsor Team # \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ per species (75 species at 10¢ each is a \$7.50 donation)
- I would like to make a flat contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for Team # \_\_\_\_\_.
- I am part of birding Team# \_\_\_\_\_. I will sponsor myself for a minimum of \$5.00.

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Send your payment to CNMAS, c/o Ron Waitz, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., 87114-1710



**Trip Reports by Charlotte Green**

**Dec 6. Bosque del Apache.** Our day at the Bosque was pretty good. The best sighting of the day, of course, had to be the Whooping Crane. We also saw lots of geese, Sandhills, and ducks. There were some Bald Eagles and Ibis.

**Jan 30-31. Maxwell and Las Vegas.** Twenty of us had a great weekend at Maxwell. We had good looks at lots of Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks. They were very cooperative. We also saw a few Bald Eagles, not as many as in other years perhaps because of the warm winter. Included on the list were Tree Sparrows, a Prairie Falcon, Common Merganser and was that a Jaeger we saw chasing a Gull?

**Feb 14. Conchas.** Eighteen people tramped through the tall grass to see the LeConte's Sparrow. Some of us actually saw it, but just a fleeting glance. It was pretty windy, but we had a nice close look at a Horned Grebe and Tree Sparrows.



**Arizona Audubon Conference  
May 7-9, 1999 Sierra Vista, AZ**

This conference, sponsored by the Audubon Chapters of Arizona, will be an opportunity to meet with other Auduboners and discuss issues affecting Arizona, the Region, and the Nation. The conference will include field trips (Friday, Saturday & Sunday); rededication ceremonies of the San Pedro National Conservation Area; guest speakers; and workshops.

**Theme:** Neotropical Migratory Birds: Status and Conservation in Arizona

**Registration Fee:** \$30.00/Person (on or before 5/1/99)  
\$35.00/Person (after 5/1/99)

**Hotel Rooms:** Thunder Mountain Inn (800) 222-5811.

**For more information:** contact Scott Burge at (602) 968-5141 or Tricia Gerrodette at (520) 378-4937 or email her at wjfaust@primenet.com

The focus will be Neotropical Migratory Birds in Arizona and we will be celebrating International Migratory Bird Day. Some of our guests from Audubon besides John Flicker, will be: Dan Beard, Director of the Government Relations Office and former Rocky Mountain Regional VP; NAS Board member, Ruth Russell; and John Bellmon, our new Rocky Mountain Regional Representative to the Board. **We are reaching out to our neighbors to the east and inviting the members of the New Mexico Audubon chapters too.**

**Special Appeal for Your Help!**

Audubon Adventures is an excellent program for educating school age children about habitat conservation and wildlife preservation and we would like to expand the program wherever we can. Unfortunately, we are just not getting enough new Audubon Adventure teachers and we really need your help. As parents or grandparents you may have favorite teachers or know of "special" teachers who would be willing to offer Audubon Adventures in their classrooms. Almost all of the classes that currently have Audubon Adventures resulted from Cindy Clark or Julie Goodding personally contacting each teacher and explaining the importance and value of conservation education. We know that Audubon Adventures is effective, but now we need to inspire our members to help us find new teachers who will welcome AA into their curriculum.

It may be that you know of someone, but are not comfortable contacting them yourself. If that is the case, rest easy because we can do that part, but we would appreciate your recommendations. Put on your thinking cap! We really need your help. Our future is in the hands of our children and only through conservation education like Audubon Adventures, will we be able to insure that our planet will be a healthy place for all our creatures, including us. As Martha Stewart says "It's a good thing." Help us out here. Please contact Cindy Clark at 822-1467 or at work 332-4737.



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.



April/May 1999

99th Christmas Bird Count Sandia Mountains, NM

Count Date: Jan 2, 1999 Count Leader: Jonalyn Yancey Number of Participants: 14  
2069 total birds reported count day. 54 species reported count day (unofficial number).

Species	Number	Species	Number	Species	Number
Mallard	1	American Crow	349	European Starling	71
Northern Harrier	2	Common Raven	26	Spotted Towhee	17
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Mountain Chickadee	99	Canyon Towhee	27
Cooper's Hawk	1	Juniper Titmouse	15	Song Sparrow	6
Northern Goshawk	cw	Bushtit	22	White-crowned Sparrow	35
Red-tailed Hawk	11	Red-breasted Nuthatch	11	Dark-eyed Junco (form?)	266
Ferruginous Hawk	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	6	Dark-eyed	
American Kestrel	10	Pygmy Nuthatch	1	(Gray-headed) Junco	41
Wild Turkey	1	Brown Creeper	2	Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	80
Scaled Quail	1	Canyon Wren	1	Dark-eyed	
Rock Dove	39	Bewick's Wren	7	(Pink-sided) Junco	15
Mourning Dove	3	Golden-crowned Kinglet	4	Dark-eyed	
Great Horned Owl	1	Western Bluebird	183	(Slate-colored) Junco	1
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	2	Mountain Bluebird	34	Eastern Meadowlark	1
Downy Woodpecker	1	Townsend's Solitaire	61	Western Meadowlark	9
Northern		Hermit Thrush	1	Cassin's Finch	5
(Red-shafted) Flicker	21	American Robin	249	House Finch	47
Steller's Jay	21	Sage Thrasher	4	Pine Siskin	39
Western Scrub-Jay	40	Curve-billed Thrasher	1	American Goldfinch	6
Pinyon Jay	133	Crissal Thrasher	5	House Sparrow	20
Clark's Nutcracker	5	Cedar Waxwing	7		

*US = Flagged as an unusual species*

Important Information

Wildlife Rescue

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

Rare Bird Alert

In Albuquerque is 323-9323. e-mail: Pinyonjay@aol.com

Bat in Trouble? (Talking Talons)

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

Central New Mexico Audubon Society assumes no responsibility for injuries, personal or otherwise, incurred while attending society-sponsored activities and will not be held liable for such accidents. You attend at your own risk.

New Mexico Wildlife

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has posted the updates for all the wildlife bills considered during the 1999 44th New Mexico Legislative session. You can review these summaries at: [http://www.gmfsh.state.nm.us/PageMill\\_TExt/Publication/legislation.html](http://www.gmfsh.state.nm.us/PageMill_TExt/Publication/legislation.html).

Also, don't forget to check off **Share With Wildlife** contribution on your New Mexico State tax return this April.

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Burrowing Owl Deadline

Information and articles to be included in the June/July 1999 issue of the Burrowing Owl must be received by May 17. Contact Browning Coke at 256-9130 or email [bcohenm@aol.com](mailto:bcohenm@aol.com).

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