

Central New Mexico Audubon Society

Burrowing Owl



June/July 2000 Issue

Volume 29 No. 4

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

Wildfires and Wildlife

This May, New Mexico suffered through a terrible series of wildfires, the worst of which was the Cerro Grande fire in the Jemez Mountains, near Los Alamos. There was a tremendous outpouring of aid to humans and domestic animals but wildlife may not have fared so well. Based on our discussions with a few very helpful people at the Conservation Services Division of the State Game and Fish Department, we have learned the following:

The fire's immediate effect on animal species is varied. Usually most mobile animals, like birds and deer, can escape, although this fire was marked by a number of very fast-moving blazes. However, nestlings, which might include the Mexican Spotted Owl, Goshawks and neotropical migrants, probably were caught in the fire. Other animals which burrow had a means to escape immediate death. Even when animals have escaped, the potential lack of replacement habitat is expected to be a serious problem.

The major adverse effect to wildlife is the long-term loss of ponderosa and mixed-conifer forest habitat. The fire was characterized as "stand-replacing" by professionals, unlike most natural fires which tend to burn mostly undergrowth. The fire is expected to ultimately convert much forest land to grasslands. This major change in habitat, while potentially beneficial to some grazing and other grassland animals, is expected to negatively impact many more species (over 110 taxa by one estimate). Among the birds that will fare badly are woodpeckers, owls, flycatchers, vireos, chickadees, nuthatches, tanagers, warblers and finches. Some raptors and sparrows could benefit by the changes in habitat.

As disappointing as this news may be, we still can do something to relieve our sense of helplessness. Wildlife Rescue receives displaced, injured and sick mammals, birds and reptiles/amphibians throughout the year, but has a limited number of volunteers to handle the demand. You can contribute your time or your money, they need both. More details for volunteering are below or you can send a check to Wildlife Rescue, Inc. of New Mexico, P.O.Box 13222, Albuquerque, NM 87192-3222. Also don't forget, your contributions to Share With Wildlife fund Conservation Services Division's work, thereby helping wildlife too.

President's Message : What A Great Year

Thanks, CNMAS members. The past year has been a great one for our chapter. You wholeheartedly supported our Birding Academy classes with your attendance and with your praise. Your donations to Birdathon are still coming in. You got the word out to our legislators about your overwhelming support of full funding of Land and Water Conservation Fund, which now has a very bright outlook under its morph of CARA—the Conservation and Reinvestment Act. You turned out in the highest numbers ever to participate in the Christmas Bird Count. Your support augmented the bequest of the Richard L. Blancho, Sr., Estate to Audubon and made possible the construction of the Phil Norton Commemorative Photography Blind. You've reached hundreds of school children through your generosity to the Audubon Adventures Program, and you'll be reaching hundreds more with the completion of the children's film, "Sandy the Sandhill Crane" — an educational, interpretive film being produced by Bosque del Apache NWR and underwritten, in part, by our chapter.

We've had wonderful speakers and programs, we've had great birding trips, and we've had an outstanding outreach tool through our newsletter. All this is possible because we have great volunteers— Thank you! Each one of you is so deeply appreciated.

And more good news — we've had an increase in membership, too. We welcome you and invite you to come share your talents and interests with us— volunteer! Audubon isn't "them"— it's us! Have a great summer!

— Beth Hurst-Waitz



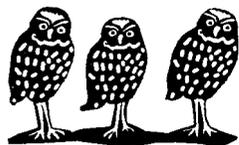
You Can Help New Mexico's Wildlife

Send your contributions directly to Share With Wildlife!

Endangered species, research and recovery, raptor migration counts, wildlife rehabilitation, and other wildlife projects are made possible by voluntary contributions. Send contributions to Share With Wildlife, State of New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, 141 East DeVargas, Santa Fe New Mexico 87501-2701 Please accept my contribution of _____.

Wildlife Rescue Volunteers

Wildlife Rescue is in urgent need of volunteers. WR has set up a wildlife rescue intake center at the Albuquerque Fair Grounds for the summer months and is in need of volunteers to man the center. Their rescue hot line will advise callers to take any birds, mammals or reptiles to this location for evaluation and assignment to rehabilitators. The center will be open 7 days a week for 10 hours each day. Can you spare a few hours? If so they really need your help. Call Ginnie Silva at work 344-7240 or at home 856-4073 (before 9 pm).



Audubon Field Trips

Everyone is welcome on field trips: Audubon members and nonmembers, novice and experienced birders. Call Sei for more information 266-2480.

Saturday/Sunday June 10-11 Las Vegas and Maxwell NWR. This could be a day trip or an overnight stay in Springer, NM. The target birds will be resident waterfowls and Cassin's and Eastern Kingbirds and the sparrows such as Grasshopper, Savannah. Vesper and Lark Sparrows, Lark Buntings, Dickcissel as well as the Prairie Falcon. Meet at 6:30 AM at the Far North Shopping Center (San Mateo and Osuna) behind the Village Inn.

Sunday, August 6 Jemez, Santa Fe or Las Vegas NWR. This will be a day trip and the site will depend on the current Rare Bird Alert. Bring food, water, snacks and appropriate clothing. Meet at the Far North Shopping Center at 6:30 AM. Call Sei for last minute details.

Audubon Programs

No meetings until September. Have a great summer.

Thursday Morning Birding Group

For information on weekly birding outings (every Thursday), call Margaret Wallen at 291-1595. Meeting time and location, as well as duration, vary.



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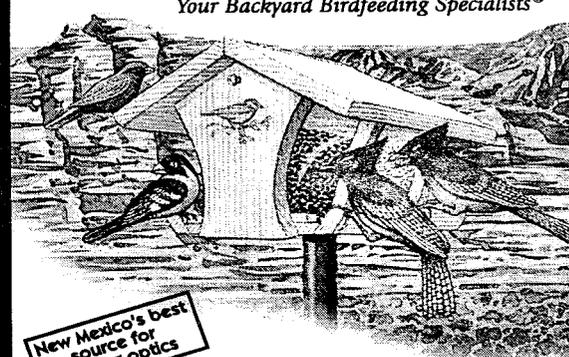
Burrowing Owl Subscription

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

In Memoriam

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of friends and family in memory of Natalie Vytacil who passed away in January. Your gifts will be used for conservation, preservation, and education here in New Mexico.

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Science Fair Winners

How encouraging it was to hear these words from the teacher of one of our Science Fair Award winners: "... your continued support of the Science Fair ... is such a positive reinforcement for the children. I am a sixth-grade math and science teacher at St. Mary's and believe that children need this positive reinforcement, as well as support from the community. I would like to share with you how thrilled my student was, not only with her award, but the Science Fair experience. Upon her return to school she shared her experience with the class. As a teacher, I was thrilled to see her eagerness and enthusiasm — thanks to your organization."

Our thanks and a one-year membership in National Audubon Society, with a subscription to both "Audubon" magazine and the "Burrowing Owl," goes to the following teachers:

Jim Carrie - St. Pius X High School Kathleen Percy - Los Lunas High School Mitch Ross - Roosevelt Middle School Carol Johansen - St. Mary's Middle School

Congratulations and acknowledgment go to this year's Science Fair winners, who each receive a \$50 savings bond and subscription to the "Burrowing Owl":

Senior Division: Nathan T. Tooker: "A River Runs Through It: Study of the Riparian Ecosystem Along the Rio Grande II" Adam M. Fluckey: "Water For the Future"

Junior Division: John C. Davis: "Surface Water Quality in the Manzanos vs. Sandias" Caitlin E. Lanigan: "How Does a Forest Fire Affect Seed Germination?"

We extend sincere appreciation to all the dedicated teachers and idealistic students for their hard work and optimistic investment in the future.

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.

Call For Volunteers

After eight years of service to the CNMAS board, Pat Franklin has tendered her resignation. Pat has served as Secretary, Program Chair, and most recently, Hospitality Chairperson, in charge of coordinating setup and refreshments at our meetings. We will really miss Pat, her help and dedication were such a stable force for many years as she invisibly produced interesting programs and home baked delectables too.

Our next program meeting will be in September and we will need someone to take over the hospitality duties for that program. Pat arrived an hour in advance to make punch, coffee, set a table with refreshments and rearrange chairs and tables, all before attendees arrived. After meetings, Pat was assisted with cleanup by many other helpful members before heading home. How does this sound to you? If you would like to volunteer for this position, please call Beth at 898-8514.

Audubon Adventures News

Besides Pat Franklin, we also say good-bye to Cindy Clark who has promoted and expanded the Audubon Adventures outreach for the past two years. We appreciate the energy and enthusiasm Cindy gave us and thank her for the great job she did!

Helen Haskell is assuming Cindy's duties as Audubon Adventures chair/education outreach coordinator. Helen is one of the instructors at the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center and the winner of last year's CNMAS scholarship to the Audubon Ecology Camp in the Rockies. We welcome Helen and look forward to working with her.



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Burrowing Owl Deadline

Information and articles to be included in the August/September 2000 issue of the Burrowing Owl must be received by July 15. Contact Browning Coke at 256-9130 or email bcokenm@aol.com.

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Regional Director (505) 766-2321
Refuges and Wildlife (505) 766-2036
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Clifford Dils, District Ranger
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