

Central New Mexico Audubon Society

Burrowing Owl



August/September 2000 Issue

Volume 29 No. 5

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

A Brief History of Sevilleta NWR

Partially excerpted from an article by Ross L. Teuber

In 1928 General Thomas Campbell bought the property, part of the Sevilleta de La Joya Spanish Land Grant, from the County of Socorro, which had itself acquired the land due to nonpayment of taxes. General Campbell was a well-known and successful agriculturist, who ran a major cattle operation on most of the property. However, the Campbell family ceded some of the land along the Rio Grande traditionally used for growing crops to the Town of La Joya.

In 1964, title to the Sevilleta property passed to the Campbell Family Foundation, a nonprofit corporation. Recognizing the need to protect the land, the Foundation stopped all grazing and began a long search for an agency or organization that would assume a management program designed to protect and revitalize the land and its resources in perpetuity. The Foundation also wanted the area open to research by universities and organizations.

Finally, on October 24, 1973, Mrs. Elizabeth Campbell-Knapp made an offer. Basically, the Foundation would convey the property in parcels over a five-year period, for \$500,000. It could be used only for refuge purposes, but would be made available to certain institutions for research. Finally and importantly for tax purposes, the first purchase must be complete by December 31, 1973.

The Nature Conservancy became involved and quickly came to an agreement with the Campbell Family Foundation, on November 20, 1973—The Nature Conservancy would advance the \$500,000 and all 220,000 acres of Sevilleta would be conveyed to The Nature Conservancy, which would immediately convey the entire property to the United States for perpetual use as a wildlife refuge. Sevilleta became a National Wildlife Refuge on December 28, 1973 thereby meeting the December 31 deadline to complete the purchase.



Sevilleta Open House 2000

Saturday, September 9

Refuge Tours • Food • Booths
Mexican Wolf Presentation
Live Animal Exhibits • Hiking Tour

Generally closed to the public, the refuge is open for guided tours only at this Open House event! Reservations are required for tours and most events.

Cost is \$5 per person for guided tours.

Historical Refuge Tour 6:30-9:30am Research Refuge Tour 8:30-11:30am
Hiking/Birding Tour 6-9am Plant Tour 9:30am-12:30pm
Geology Tour West 1-5pm Geology Tour East 1:30-5pm

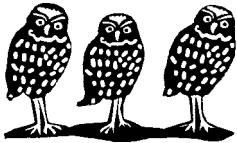
Tours will meet and activities will be held at the La Joya Community Building, located in La Joya, New Mexico
For more info call for a brochure today (505) 835-0424

From the Editor

This is my last issue as editor of the Burrowing Owl. The last two years have flown by, so to speak. After 39 years in Albuquerque, I am moving to Santa Fe. Robbie and I look forward to living in a more rural area where we hope to attract different bird species than we normally see in our Albuquerque backyard. I have learned so much about the issues facing conservationists during my tenure as editor and I hope to continue working for groups that are making a difference. It has been an honor working with all the CNMAS volunteers. — *Browning Coke*

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Audubon Field Trips

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

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.

Saturday-Sunday, August 19-20 *Fort Sumner and Roswell*
Our target birds are Red-headed Woodpeckers and Eastern Blue Jays at Fort Sumner, migrating shore birds at Bitter Lake and Mississippi Kites and possibly Upland Sandpipers in Roswell. This can be a day trip or an overnight stay in Roswell. Meet at 6:45 AM at the middle entrance to the Four Hills Shopping Center on Central Avenue SE, west of Tramway Blvd. Call Sei for lodging information.

Saturday, September 9 *Sevilleta NWR* Join us at Sevilleta's annual open house. See front page for details.

Sunday, September 17 *Albuquerque* This is a half trip to a site or sites to be determined after we scout the area for fall migrants. Meet at 7:00 AM at the UNM physics department parking lot on the NE corner of Lomas and Yale Blvds.

Thursday Morning Birding Group

Weekly birding outings every Thursday. Meeting time and location, as well as duration, vary. Call Margaret Wallen at 291-1595 for details of outings.

Audubon Programs

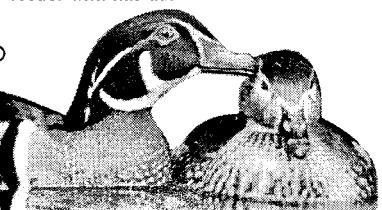
Programs begin at 7:30 p.m. Light refreshments are served from 7:15. Come to St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, northwest corner of Copper and Jefferson.

No meeting in August

September

Thursday, September 21 *Sevilleta in the Spotlight*
Sevilleta personnel will come with slides and fascinating facts about this refuge dedicated to research. Learn about Hantavirus Research and the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Program, as well as a bit of history and geography, plus botany and biology, of this former cattle ranch. The curtain will be raised a bit on this fascinating refuge, more accessible now to the public than ever before.

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

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

Fall Migrations with Hart Schwarz

Sponsored by Rio Grande Nature Center

Two one-day "living classroom" field trips for beginners and veterans alike. Departing RGNC at 7:00 a.m., returning 8:00 - 9:00 pm. Driving and leisurely walking. Feel free to contact Hart (266-1810) for more information, but required preregistration and sign-up fee must be made through RGNC at 344-7240.

Saturday, September 16 San Mateo Mountains, southwest of Socorro, featuring Mount Withington and Beartrap Canyon

Sunday, September 24 San Mateo Mountains, featuring Potato Canyon

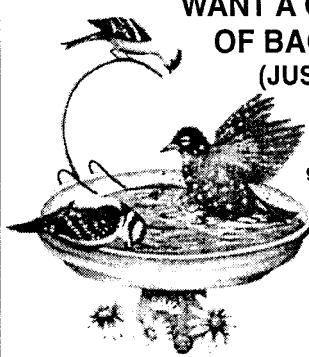


HawkWatch Observation

Join the HawkWatch crew at Capilla Peak in the Manzano Mountains for the fall migration count. Daily during September and October from 9a.m. to 5 p.m, weather permitting. Call Bobbie Posey at 255-7622 for a map or more information.

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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.

August/September 2000



Trip Reports by Sei Tokuda

Saturday, May 27 Socorro, Water Canyon and Bosque del Apache This was our annual long of day birding when we try to identify at least 100 species. Eight CNMAS members were on this trip and the group identified 106 species by 6:00 p.m.. The most exciting bird was the Red-faced Warbler at Water Canyon. Other notable sightings were the Mississippi Kite kiting over the Flight Deck, a baby Pied-bill Grebe riding on its mother's back, and beautiful baby Coots at Bosque del Apache.

Saturday-Sunday, June 10-11 Las Vegas and Maxwell NWR. Seven CNMAS members were on this trip. The weather was very good with temperatures in the low 80s, mostly clear skies and slight breezes. It was a great weekend of birding with 70 species in the total count. Some of the most exciting moments were when we had good long looks at the Cassin's. Grasshopper, and Vesper Sparrows. The views of several hundreds of Yellow-headed Blackbirds of various ages were very impressive. We even saw a Ferruginous Hawk and a Bald Eagle in the same binocular sighting.



Summer Wings Festival

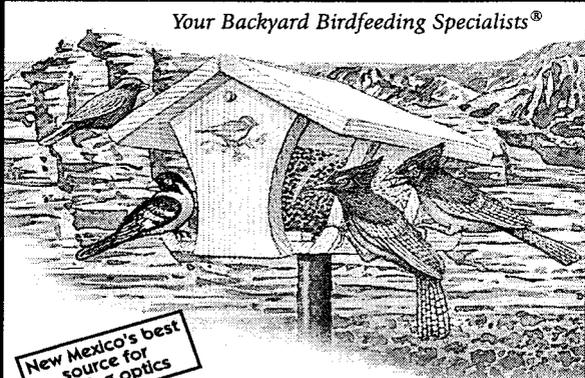
Saturday, August 5 from 8am to 4pm Rio Grande Nature Center is sponsoring a free all-day event to celebrate our hummingbirds, butterflies, dragonflies, and bees. Nature walks, crafts, bird identification by CNMAS.

CNMAS Scholarship Award

Rob Yaksich is this year's deserving recipient of the CNMAS scholarship to the Audubon Ecology Camp in the Rockies. The week-long workshop focuses on natural history instruction, environmental education skills, and effectiveness in using and sharing activist tools and messages.

Rob is currently the interpretive ranger at Rio Grande Nature Center, where his duties include heading up the Junior Rangers nature program for young people. Before that, he was a Science Education Specialist at Explora Science Center and Children's Museum of Albuquerque. We strive at CNMAS to choose a recipient who reaches and influences young people and who sets an outstanding example as a role model for environmental respect and awareness. When Rob writes in his application that "What I wish to bring home is a greater appreciation of Nature's connectedness and how I can help people understand how we impact it and it can impact us," we are assured that we've chosen an outstanding representative for the Audubon ethic.

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From the Past to the Future

Central New Mexico Audubon Society wishes to thank Albuquerque Lodge #461 BPOE (the Elks Club, formerly on University Avenue) for its donation of a remarkable collection of some eighty mounted birds and the handcrafted cases in which they were housed.

The bird collection had been donated to the Elks Club sometime in the 1950s by Mr. Joseph Barnett, a member of the lodge and a well-known sportsman. Its history was traced back as having been assembled by Mr. A.M. Coddington, a pioneer furniture dealer here in Albuquerque. He was a lover of the outdoors and an amateur ornithologist.

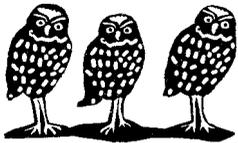
The 80 species represent an amazing diversity, not only of indigenous Southwest species, but also of Mexican and Central American exotics. They are housed in beautiful six-foot tall, glass-and-mahogany cabinets that were handmade by a German cabinetmaker.

The collection is currently housed at the University of New Mexico, but will be travel to Sevilleta NWR where it will be exhibited in Sevilleta's new visitor/education center (to be completed this summer). Afterward the collection will return to UNM.

Thank you to the Elks Club from Audubon, from Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, and from UNM for these historical displays which will continue to delight and educate.

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



Birdathon 2000 Results

Thank you! You birders and your supporters have contributed \$1,012.50 —so far! — to feather Audubon's nest and help us finance our conservation and education projects. Donations are still coming in, so ask someone who knows you're passionate about birds to give YOUR birds a gift —by giving to CNMAS! Our thanks go to our "Audubon Ambassadors," the trip leaders who so generously donated their time and their goodwill, and to the following contributors:

Tara Allen, Art Arenholz, Mary Lou Arthur, Rod Baker, Karen and Gary Boettcher, Tamie Bulow, Ruth Burstrom, Sylvia Chattin, Cranes & Crows by Joel & Lori Korngut, Charles & Leslie Danielson, Vanessa Dargain, Leslie & Gregory Dobbs, John Esterl, Glen Finley, Mary Franklin, Sharon Fullingim and John Gerbracht, Julie Goodding, Rebecca Gracey, Charlotte Green, Les Hawkins, Mary Hewett, Melissa Howard, Nettie Ireland, Frank & Lilian Jaime, Marsha Keener, Dianne Maughan, Andrea Mays, Paul McConnell, Heidi Michaels, Lannois Neely, Brian Pangrle, Deborah Peacock & Nathan Zorn, Peacock, Myers & Adams, P.C., James & Patricia Raquet, Dorothy Rogan, Judy & Andrew Rominger, Sam Sanborn, Robert & Carol Scothorn, George & Joan Sladovich, Sei Tokuda, Annette Turk, Jan Villescas, Ron Waitz & Beth Hurst-Waitz, George & Lavelle Walker, John & Arlene Ward, Marian Washburn

Team 1

May 6-7 Percha Dam/Silver City
Team Leader: Sei Tokuda

Fourteen CNMAS members showed up to be on Team 1 of CNMAS Birdathon 2000 to go to Percha Dam State Park and Silver City. On Saturday, we saw 123 species and on Sunday, we added another 27 species for a weekend grand total of 150 species. We saw four red birds; i.e., the Vermilion Flycatcher, Summer Tanager, Red-faced Warbler, and the Cardinal, plus a great close-up view of White-throated Swifts. Other notable species included Black Hawks, Bridled Titmice, 14 species of warbler, 10 species of sparrows, and 5 species of wrens.

Team 2

May 4 Bosque del Apache NWR
Thursday Birders led by Mary Lou Arthur

The Thursday Birders did an early rise & shine for our birdathon to Bosque del Apache NWR - a group favorite! We had a delightful day scouring the refuge searching for neotropical migrants. Fortunately there were a few ducks hanging around, swallows to eat the bugs that were also there, a smattering of shore birds, and the local residents. The surprise spotting: the crazed Randall Davey birdathon team, led by Chris Rustay, under the tree with the Townsend's Warbler and Cassin's Vireo! Mary Lou Arthur led our adventure to see 111 species; the outing was terrific!

Team 3

April 29 Percha Dam and Bosque del Apache
Team Leader: Celestyn Brozek

Team 3 had the most "mosts": The most people ever on our Birdathon team, the most species ever seen, and the most money we ever raised! Oh, and did we mention the most fun we ever had? Of course, that's one claim we can make every year! Everybody had their personal highlight out of the 101 species that we saw, but we all felt fortunate to hear the haunting calls of two elusive marsh birds, the Sora and the Virginia Rail, both close enough that we felt like we should have seen them! The undulating flights of large flocks of shorebirds were captivating, as they played hide-and-seek with the light and caused ripples in their artist's canvas. Ah, Beauty!

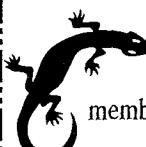
Team 4

May 27 Rinconada Canyon at Mount Taylor
Team leader: Hart Schwarz

In this lush riparian corridor of alder and Gambel Oak, Hart shared treats and treasures with six of us. His joy was evident when he confirmed the return of Hammond's Flycatcher to this southern limit of their NM breeding range, where Hart has documented a breeding colony since 1995. We were excited to find a Cooper's Hawk nest high in a ponderosa, where the female was incubating three eggs. Acorn Woodpeckers were common and conspicuous, entertaining us with their courtship display, pursued with great fanfare and ostentation. And on the way out, we heard a song which even Hart couldn't identify! After investigating numerous rock pools brimming with aquatic life, we admired, photographed, and later identified a pair of Canyon Tree Frogs - the source of the mysterious "song"!

Ruth's Bonanza Birdathon

Ruth Burstrom, who is Audubon Council rep from our Chapter, was in northern Colorado during Team 1's trip, so she did what intrepid, fanatical, dedicated birders do - she went birding and called it her own "mini" Birdathon! She even saw her target species, the Sage and Sharp-tailed Grouse. Contributions from Ruth's supporters make her "team's" donation to Audubon anything but mini!




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August/September 2000



Audubon Adventures by Helen Haskell

The Taos mountains rose up, glacial geology at work. The morning sunshine filtered through the trees. Up high around 12,000 feet the bristlecone pines dug their roots in the rocky ground, surrounded by alpine flowers. Nestled with me in Long Canyon, around 11,000 feet or so, the trees changed, denser and larger. Liz, one of the ten junior high students I had taken backpacking, and I headed towards the creek that flowed down through this canyon. Water filter in hand, I suddenly saw a rather large bird land on a branch in front of us. Grey streaked body and reddish head. Long tail. Liz..Liz...stop..look...on that branch...right in front...shhh....wow...what a great look... It really was. All the other birds I had seen were flying high at 20 mph, just mere glimpses...this was great! Liz stopped and looked. She was happy, but indifferent. Not I! I think it was a Pine Grosbeak...my best look ever. A few minutes later as we were filtering the creek water to make it drinkable, a small rodent swam past. Liz was much more impressed!...

Throughout the year I spend much of my time outside with children. As lead teacher at the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center, field site for the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, I spend much of the school year hiking in the Sandias with fifth grade students from Albuquerque and the surrounding communities. Some of them have never been to the mountains before. In the summers I instruct summer science camps for the museum and help the Field Institute of Taos with their Girls As Leaders program, among other things.

Being outside I think is perhaps my favorite thing ever. Exploring the outdoors with other people comes a close second. Helping others learn about and feel comfortable with the environment is third. Hence why I believe education is so important, in and out of the classroom. I see it with my job. Teachers who utilize good curriculum can make the outdoors come alive inside for students. A good foundation from a good teacher, combined with hands-on experience at home while playing in the back yard, on school field trips, or with grandparents is surely the way to learn. That's why I'm excited to take on and learn more about Audubon Adventures. This curriculum is available for all teachers throughout the United States. Individuals and Audubon chapters sponsor the curriculum in schools. As Audubon Adventures chairperson I hope to understand more how the curriculum is used in the schools, how it benefits the students, and to make it available to more children. I am excited to take on this role, and hope that I can ask for your support in helping New Mexico children become more excited and knowledgeable about the ecosystems they live in.

Please use the following coupon to help support this program.



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New Manager for Bosque del Apache

Bosque del Apache announces the selection of a new Refuge Manager! Welcome and congratulations to Jim Savery, whose start date is August 27. We're also pleased to learn that Gary Montoya, who has been Acting Refuge Manager since Phil Norton's departure in December, will stay on as Deputy Refuge Manager.

Attention, Computer Gurus and Webmaster Wizards!

Jon Morrison, from Friends of Bosque del Apache, needs your help with designing a web page/ site for the refuge. The Friends received a generous grant from the Pathways to Nature Program of Wild Birds Unlimited to fund their Bosque Cam Project which would capture images they hope to make available on the web site. For more info contact Jon at (505)838-0717 jonmorr@sdc.org.



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