

# Burrowing Owl



February - March 2001 Issue

Volume 30 No. 2

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

## Status Report - Reptile and Amphibian Protection Bill

by Dave Henderson, Audubon State Director

AS WE GO TO PRESS, the bill is drafted and we have identified sponsors in both the House and Senate. The House sponsor will again be Rep. Ray Begaye from Shiprock. The Senate sponsor will be Sen. Michael Sanchez. As it stands now, we will start the bill on the House side. A piece of good news is that not only do we have the support of the Game and Fish Department, but we have just learned (in mid-January) that the Governor is okay with this legislation and will allow the Department to speak in favor of it in Committee.

I am currently working on identifying a lobbyist to help us with the bill. It is not too early to be letting our Representatives know of our interest in this legislation and get them to support it.

You can view the bill, as currently written, on the CNMAS website at <http://www.rt66.com/peacmyer/cnmas>. The bill is simple, giving the Department of Game and Fish the authority to regulate the take of Herps, but not requiring them to do so.

*"The battle we have fought, and are still fighting, for the forests is a part of the eternal conflict between right and wrong... So we must count on watching and striving for these trees, and should always be glad to find anything so surely good and noble to strive for."*  
- John Muir, Nov. 23, 1895



## THE THIRD ANNUAL AUDUBON BIRDING ACADEMY Presented by Expert Birders

February 15



Warblers: Beyond Identification  
Dr. Celestyn Brozek, past president, CNMAS

March 15



Wing Off: Waterfowl Identification  
Upside Down and Sideways  
Surprise Speaker

April 19



Thrushes and Thrashers (Oh My!)

Bruce Neville, NM Ornithological Society

The cost is \$6.00 per class payable in advance or at the door. Preregister for all three classes and the price is only \$15.00. Mark your calendars and register early.

New This Year: A Raffle of Birding Gear, including videos, books, totes, backpacks, and more! One free raffle ticket to every registrant! Drawing date to be announced.

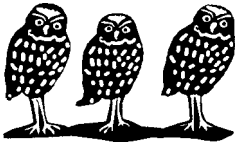
All classes take place the 3rd Thursday in February, March and April, at 7:15 p.m., St. Timothy's Lutheran Church (Copper and Jefferson).

Fill out the Registration Form on page 2.

The Christmas Bird Count compilations are in  
See page 6.

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### Audubon Field Trip Reports by Sei Tokuda

**Sunday, December 3, 2000: Bosque del Apache**  
Twenty-one birders were out on one of the most beautiful December days in New Mexico - clear skies, clear roads and little wind. The sights of the day included great looks at Merlin's and Prairie Falcons, a Ferruginous Hawk, four Bald Eagles of varying ages in one binocular field, Verdins, etc. The bird of the day was the Rusty Blackbird that everyone saw in bright sunlight and from several vantage points. We saw over 75 species.

**Sunday, January 14, 2001: Cochiti Lake**  
Eighteen birders showed up on a day that was supposed to be blustery and cold. It was cold, but with clear skies and very little wind. The major sightings were Bald Eagles, Common and Hooded Mergansers, Buffleheads, Western and Eared Grebes and Common Goldeneyes plus excellent views of a Curve-billed Thrasher. We saw over 35 species.

### Audubon Adventures

There's still time! National Audubon Society still has Audubon Adventures kits available for teachers. We are trying hard to boost the numbers of teachers in central New Mexico who receive the kit. Do you know of any teacher who may be interested? CNMAS has some funding available still this school year. Please contact Helen Haskell for more details.

Please use the following coupon to help support this program.



**Audubon Adventures  
2000-2001**

Enclosed please find my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Each \$41.95 will sponsor one classroom in the Audubon Adventures Program. Any amount you contribute will benefit our educational activities.)

I choose to designate \_\_\_\_\_  
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(designation is optional)

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City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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 87114-1710.

### Audubon Birding Academy Registration Form

I/we would like to register for the following classes (check boxes):

- Warblers (Feb. 15).....\$6
- Water Fowl ID (Mar. 15).....\$6
- Thrushes & Thrashers (Apr. 19).....\$6
- ALL THREE CLASSES (preregistration only) .....\$15

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Send your check, payable to CNMAS to:  
Ron Waitz, Treasurer  
804 Guadalupe Circle N.W.  
Albuquerque, NM 87114-1710

Feel free to make copies of this registration form.

CNMAS 1/01



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February - March 2001



## Audubon Field Trip Schedule

**Saturday, February 3, 2001 - Las Vegas & Maxwell NWR**

This can be a day trip or an overnight trip staying over in Springer, NM. The target birds will be the wintering raptors such as Rough-legged and Ferruginous Hawks, Bald Eagles, and Prairie Falcons as well wintering Tree Sparrows. Dress accordingly and bring lunch for Saturday. We will meet at 8 AM at the Far North Shopping Center behind the Village Inn at the NE corner Academy and San Mateo Blvd. Call Sei (266-2480) for details.

**Saturday, March 10, 2001 - Monticello Point, Palomas Marsh & Caballo Dam State Park**

This area is one of the most interesting birding place in NM. Birding is almost always good and finding unusual species is not uncommon. Bring lunch and dress accordingly. Rebecca Gracey will lead this trip. Meet at 7 AM at the UNM Physics Department parking lot (NE corner of Lomas and Yale Blvd NE). Call Rebecca (242-3821) or Sei for details.



**Saturday, April 7, 2001 - Bosque del Apache**

This is the first full weekend that the seasonal road at the refuge will be open to the public. The target birds will be the early spring migrating shorebirds. Meet at 7 AM at the UNM Physics Department parking lot for a full day of birding.

## 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.

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.

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## Conservation Corner

by Jeff Myers

The end of President Clinton's term has not been as advantageous as hoped. The Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) was passed and signed only in a very watered-down form. It was to have placed spending from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) off-budget at a guaranteed level each year. In the watered-down version, spending is authorized at a certain level and for a certain amount, but Congressional appropriators still must approve all spending.

However, certain victories occurred as well. President Clinton approved a board of trustees for the former Baca Ranch (Valles Caldera / Valle Grande) that looks to be quite good. At the other end of the continent, he has added the Tongass National Forest to the wilderness roadless area policy enacted under his administration, which will provide protection against road building and logging as mandated for other wilderness areas.

As to the Bush administration, he has nominated Gale Norton for Secretary of the Interior. She was Colorado's Attorney General from 1991 to 1999. CNN further describes her as follows:

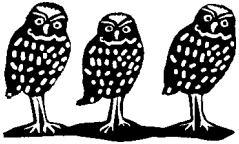
"A libertarian-leaning conservative who opposes most government regulation, Norton worked with controversial Reagan administration Interior Secretary James Watt in the Interior Department and earlier, at the conservative Mountain States Legal Foundation. During her prior work at Interior, she directed the legal staff of the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service."



## Mapping The Birds Of Summer

The New Mexico Breeding Bird Atlas Project needs volunteers of all birding abilities. If you are interested in being a volunteer please contact Stephen Fettig at (505) 662-6785 or [osprey@cybermesa.com](mailto:osprey@cybermesa.com) for more information. Volunteers will be able to select atlas blocks on a first come basis.

Atlas fieldwork will focus on observations that document breeding. For example, observations of adults feeding recently fledged young are some of the most valuable observations because they confirm breeding. Observations of courtship are also important, but only show that breeding is probable. Observations of singing males only suggest possible breeding. The target for the atlas is to confirm breeding in 50% of the species in all 500 blocks.



# 4th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count

February 16-19, 2001



A joint project of  
National Audubon Society &  
Cornell Lab of Ornithology

<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>

**WE WANT TO KNOW WHERE  
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**GIVE SOMETHING BACK TO  
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Visit <http://birdsource.cornell.edu/gbbc> to get the details on how to count your backyard birds on February 16,17,18 and 19.

Need help? Check with the bird stores in our newsletter. They can answer questions, provide GBBC forms and help with filing your counts.

## Festival of the Cranes, Bosque del Apache November 2000

Peering through the 'port-hole,' a cloud of white and black rose up in front of me, circling around like smoke from a fire. Loud honking noises filled the air, white and black against the blue sky. As many thousand snow geese took off in front of me, I stood in the new Phil Norton blind at Bosque del Apache and thought about how lucky I was to be in such a beautiful place. Beyond the cloud of snow geese, the mountains rose up, the November sun starting to warm up the day, battling with the wind, while mergansers and bufflehead dove down for their food just beyond the reeds.

This year CNMAS volunteers were responsible for manning two areas at Bosque del Apache; the Phil Norton blind, and the Audubon tent. Highlights included the large numbers of wintering raptors and many thousands of geese, cranes, and ducks. Many thanks to all the Audubon volunteers who contributed their time and expertise in helping visitors locate and identify birds. We hope that you all will join us this coming fall at the refuge for this wonderful festival.

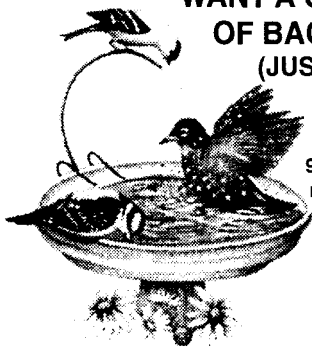
### AND THE WINNER IS ...

hard to choose among the creative and thought-provoking entries of Science Fair participants! But it's fun and rewarding, and we need your help! Come join other CNMAS members as judges on Friday, March 16, to choose the winners of the four cash awards that CNMAS presents. Please call or e-mail Helen to volunteer: 281-6453, [helenm@yahoo.com](mailto:helenm@yahoo.com).

Thanks!

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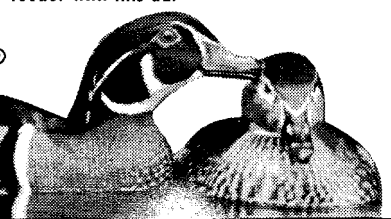


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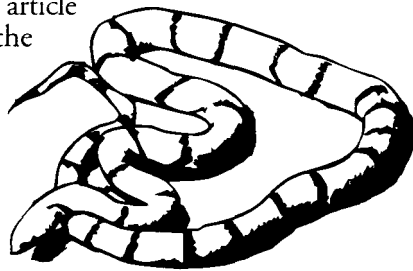
February - March 2001



**"SNAKES ALIVE" ...**

...is the title of an article by Jane Susan MacCarter in the Fall issue of *Update*, the newsletter of the Share With Wildlife program. Although the newsletter is published by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), the Share With Wildlife program receives no funds from the NMDGF and is supported by donations only. It is dedicated to the conservation of ALL New Mexico's wildlife.

Jane's article caught our eye (and apparently, we caught hers!) when she reported that, after a State Game Commission ruling in March 2000, the Gray-banded Kingsnake became officially listed in New Mexico as an Endangered Species. The article continues: "Except for the new Game Commission ruling that prohibits 'take' (collection) of this species in New Mexico, our state has no law to protect other reptiles and amphibians... from widespread collection or habitat destruction. But these important and interesting animals do have friends in New Mexico, including the Department of Game and Fish, the Randall Davey Audubon Center, the New Mexico Audubon Council, and Animal Protection of New Mexico, all of whom promote conservation of native reptiles and amphibians." Folks, we have the opportunity to present a united front for a win-win proposition. Voice your support for the proposed legislation protecting Amphibians and Reptiles. The "herps" will thank you - and we thank Jane.



**Save Those Stamps**



Don't forget to save your stamps for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Help RSPB preserve wetlands by trimming 1/8 inch around canceled stamps and sending your collections to Allison Leon, 283 El Conejo, Los Alamos, NM 87544. She'll deliver them to England on her annual trip. Take your own trip by visiting [www.RSPB.org.UK](http://www.RSPB.org.UK).

## JOIN AUDUBON TODAY

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**WALKING IS FOR THE BIRDS**

The Friends of the Bosque del Apache has received permission to hold a noncompetitive 5K walkathon on the Bosque del Apache NWR. The event will be held on Saturday, March 3, 2001. The purpose of the walk is to raise funds for the Friend's educational and school outreach programs. The Board of Directors of the Friends asks for your help by sponsoring one of the walkers. Please call Steve Green at (505) 835-1828 for pledge forms and additional information.

### DO YOU HAVE A KITTY COMPANION?

Each year, thousands of cats die on the roads or are injured in fights outdoors, and hundreds of millions of birds and small mammals are killed by free-roaming cats. Cats live happier, healthier, longer lives indoors.

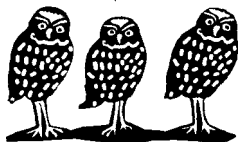
For more information: [www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org)

CATS INDOORS!  
The Campaign for Safer  
Birds and Cats

**Burrowing Owl Deadline**

Information and articles to be included in the April - May 2001 issue of the Burrowing Owl must be received by **March 15**. Contact Turtle-Bear at 265-6094 or [turtlebear@jensenbear.com](mailto:turtlebear@jensenbear.com). For advertisement inquiries, please contact Beth Hurst-Waitz.





### Christmas Bird Count 2000 Compilation

◆ Albuquerque, party of 60 (121 party hours), 123 species, compiler Hart Schwarz (266-1810).

◆ Sandia Mountains, party of 37 (95 party hours), 66 species, compiler Nick Vaughn (nickavaughn@netzero.net).

◆ Bosque del Apache NWR, party of 16 (47.5 party hours), 117 species, compiler Steven Cox (345-2385, swcox@flash.net).

◆ Sevilleta NWR, party of 14 (35 party hours), 110 species, compiler Steven Cox (345-2385, swcox@flash.net).

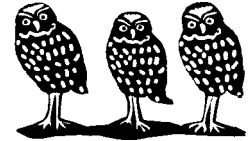
*cw* = Observed during count week

*US* = Flagged as an unusual species

*HC* = Flagged as an unusually high count

Bird Species	Schwarz 12/17	Gracey 12/30	Cox 12/16	Cox 12/20
	ABQ 123	Sandias 66	BdA 117	Sevilleta 110
Pied-billed Grebe	9	•	17	1
Eared Grebe	•	•	2	1
Western Grebe	1 US	•	•	•
American White Pelican	•	•	1 US	•
Neotropical Cormorant	•	•	cw	•
Great Blue Heron (Blue form)	30	•	20	4
Great Egret	•	•	10	•
Snowy Egret	•	•	3 US	•
Black-crowned Night-Heron	3 US	•	3	•
Snow Goose (blue form)	•	•	104	29
Snow Goose (form?)	68 US	•	17,400	4,565
Ross's Goose	•	•	517 HC	19
Canada Goose	2,335	•	250	412
Wood Duck	248	•	•	1
Gadwall	161	•	365	19
Eurasian Wigeon	cw	•	•	•
American Wigeon	492	•	18	6
Mallard	2,101	3	2,498	115
Mexican Duck	---	---	2	---
Cinnamon Teal	•	•	cw	•
Northern Shoveler	85	•	1841 HC	152
Northern Pintail	1	•	2,123 HC	27
American Green-winged Teal	36	•	440	11
Canvasback	16	•	6	1
Redhead	2	•	4	31
Ring-necked Duck	55	•	12	93
Lesser Scaup	1	•	•	36
Bufflehead	3	•	32	5
Common Goldeneye	•	•	3	3
Hooded Merganser	•	•	33	•
Common Merganser	48	•	97	16
Red-breasted Merganser	•	•	3 US	•
Ruddy Duck	25	•	31	96
Bald Eagle	10	•	35	2
ABQ: Adults = 9, Im. = 1, Unk. = 0				
BdA: Adults = 17, Im. = 18, Unk. = 0				
Sev: Adults = 2, Im. = 0, Unk. = 0				
Northern Harrier	15	1	32	14
Sharp-shinned Hawk	13	3	2	10
Cooper's Hawk	19	4	4	8
Northern Goshawk	1 US	1	•	•
Harlan's Hawk	1 US	•	4	•
Red-tailed Hawk	42	21	55	31
Ferruginous Hawk	•	1	1	2

Bird Species	ABQ	Sandias	BdA	Sevilleta
Rough-legged Hawk	•	•	1	•
Golden Eagle	•	•	1	1
BdA: Adults = 0, Im. = 1, Unk. = 0				
Sev: Adults = 1, Im. = 0, Unk. = 0				
American Kestrel	30	10	30	9
Merlin	•	•	•	2
Peregrine Falcon	1 US	•	1	•
Prairie Falcon	2	•	1	2
Ring-necked Pheasant	11	•	3	5
Wild Turkey	•	•	5	•
Scaled Quail	55	27	•	1
Gambel's Quail	91	11	84	20
Virginia Rail	2	•	2	•
Sora	•	•	1	•
Common Moorhen	•	•	1 US	•
American Coot	145	•	310	662
Sandhill Crane	249	•	9,800	206
Whooping Crane	•	•	1	•
Killdeer	12	•	6	1
Greater Yellowlegs	•	•	4	•
Spotted Sandpiper	1 US	•	•	1
Least Sandpiper	•	•	2	•
Long-billed Dowitcher	•	•	158 HC	•
Common Snipe	8	•	7	2
Ring-billed Gull	117	•	41	1
Herring Gull	•	•	1	•
Rock Dove	1,081	91	22	22
Eurasian Collared-Dove	1 US	•	•	•
White-winged Dove	54	•	9	•
Mourning Dove	216	26	36	7
Inca Dove	5 US	•	•	•
Greater Roadrunner	14	2	7	5
Western Screech-Owl	2	•	3	•
Great Horned Owl	5	2	5	1
Burrowing Owl	2	•	1 US	•
Belted Kingfisher	14	•	2	3
Lewis's Woodpecker	1	•	•	•
Williamson's Sapsucker	•	2	•	•
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	•	1	•	•
Red-naped Sapsucker	•	2	•	•
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	1	6	6	3
Downy Woodpecker	22	8	2	•
Hairy Woodpecker	2	10	•	•
Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker	212	100	87 HC	95
Northern (Red-shafted x Yellow-shafted) Flicker	•	•	•	1
Black Phoebe	11	•	11 HC	1
Eastern Phoebe	•	•	1	•
Say's Phoebe	16	•	30 HC	7
Vermilion Flycatcher	1 US	•	•	•
Loggerhead Shrike	2	•	16	10
Northern Shrike	•	•	1 US	•
Steller's Jay	5	57	•	1
Western Scrub-Jay	110	262	13	36
Pinyon Jay	61	335	•	97
Clark's Nutcracker	•	1	•	•
Black-billed Magpie	4	•	•	•
American Crow	4,762	496	625	100
Chihuahuan Raven	1 US	6	5	7
Common Raven	43	133	14	24
Horned Lark	346	87	166 HC	64
Tree Swallow	2 US	•	•	•
Barn Swallow	1 US	•	•	•
Black-capped Chickadee	69 HC	•	•	1
Mountain Chickadee	81 HC	159	4	1
Juniper Titmouse	5	81	•	14
Verdin	•	•	8	7
Bushtit	160	103	33	23



February - March 2001

Bird Species	ABQ	Sandias	BdA	Sevillaeta	Bird Species	ABQ	Sandias	BdA	Sevillaeta
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2	18	•	•	Lesser Goldfinch	28	•	33	27
White-breasted Nuthatch	79 HC	34	3	1	American Goldfinch	274	47	54	39
Pygmy Nuthatch	•	32	•	•	Evening Grosbeak	96	38	•	16
Brown Creeper	20	2	1	•	House Sparrow	303	27	63	16
Cactus Wren	2 US	•	•	4	duck sp.	---	---	19,000	79
Rock Wren	17	•	•	2	scaup sp.	2	---	---	---
Canyon Wren	3	6	•	1	Buteo sp.	---	---	---	2
Bewick's Wren	67	11	6	19	large falcon sp.	---	---	---	1
Marsh Wren	15 HC	•	33	24	Accipiter sp.	3	---	---	---
Golden-crowned Kinglet	•	1	1 US	7	sapsucker sp.	---	---	1	---
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	86	1	24	10	raven sp.	8	---	4	20
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1 US	•	•	cw	bluebird sp.	2	---	7	---
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	•	•	•	1	cave or cliff swallow	1 US	---	---	---
Eastern Bluebird	1 US	2	•	7	gnatcatcher sp.	---	---	---	1
Western Bluebird	84	435	1	4	sparrow sp.	---	---	24	2
Mountain Bluebird	65	547	95 HC	463	meadowlark sp.	2	---	67	7
Townsend's Solitaire	15	243	7 HC	79	blackbird sp.	---	---	79	51
Hermit Thrush	43 HC	2	1	5					
American Robin	2,542	822	52	2,807					
Northern Mockingbird	•	•	•	1					
Sage Thrasher	•	•	•	2					
Brown Thrasher	1 US	•	•	•					
Curve-billed Thrasher	20 HC	7	1	1					
Crissal Thrasher	7	12	2	2					
European Starling	1,727	84	185	50,000					
American Pipit	9	•	9	2					
Cedar Waxwing	61	6	11	4					
Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler	173	•	•	44					
Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler	2	•	•	3					
Yellow-rumped Warbler (form?)	14	•	•	2					
Common Yellowthroat	1 US	•	•	1					
Green-tailed Towhee	1 US	•	•	1					
Spotted Towhee	100	17	32	30					
Canyon Towhee	54	85	71 HC	46					
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	3	4	•	2					
American Tree Sparrow	1	•	•	•					
Chipping Sparrow	1	•	•	•					
Brewer's Sparrow	•	•	3	2					
Black-chinned Sparrow	•	1	•	•					
Vesper Sparrow	•	•	2	•					
Sage Sparrow	74	•	30	62					
Savannah Sparrow (form?)	•	•	56	1					
Song Sparrow	418	5	155	90					
Lincoln's Sparrow	•	•	1	3					
Swamp Sparrow	3	•	1	3					
White-throated Sparrow	2	2	•	•					
Harris's Sparrow	2	•	•	•					
White-crowned Sparrow	1,058	52	1,345	172					
Dark-eyed Junco (form?)	304	---	699 HC	130					
Dark-eyed (Gray-headed) Junco	119	233	9	3					
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	1,665	786	509 HC	248					
Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco	11	11	8	3					
Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco	1 US	1	•	•					
Chestnut-collared Longspur	•	•	3	•					
Pyrrhuloxia	•	•	6	2					
Red-winged Blackbird	1,096	•	982	280					
Eastern Meadowlark	1 US	•	•	8					
Western Meadowlark	116	34	48	8					
Yellow-headed Blackbird	•	•	72	4					
Brewer's Blackbird	54	•	137	373					
Great-tailed Grackle	124	•	4	•					
Brown-headed Cowbird	•	•	1	•					
Streak-backed Oriole	1 US	•	•	•					
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	•	4	•	•					
Cassin's Finch	13	33	•	•					
House Finch	1,004	317	50	52					
Pine Siskin	64	168	52	7					

## Some Comments About the Albuquerque Christmas Count

by Hart R. Schwarz, compiler

This was a remarkable count in many ways; not only did we turn up more species than usual, but participants also came in droves, numbering in excess of 60, when feeder watchers are added in. There were at least a couple of discernible trends. Mountain birds descended into the valley, driven, in part, by lack of food. We had a modest array of "winter finches," but these did not constitute the bulk of the invasion, which mainly consisted of chickadees, nuthatches, creepers and even Steller's Jays.

The other even more surprising trend, especially during this more normal and wetter winter, was the tendency for several species to stay farther north than expected. Among these were a Common Yellowthroat and a Vermilion Flycatcher at the Rio Rancho Golf Course, and three species of swallow along the river, each one of which was without precedent on the Albuquerque Count.

Of course, the most spectacular "First" was a Streak-backed Oriole at a seed feeder in Corrales, that was first observed on December 9th and stayed on until about year's end. This is a Mexican species, only occasionally seen in Arizona and California, and now documented for NM as well, by several good video tapes.

Reports at feeders help us keep pace with the diversification of dove species in Albuquerque, but probably reflect only a small fraction of the "invasion" in progress. White-winged Doves are now widespread and well established, while Inca Doves are on the increase and present the year-round. The Eurasian Collared-Dove has been on our list for the second straight year, but is as yet only sporadic in Albuquerque.

The internet address for accessing all Christmas Counts is <http://www.birdsource.org>.



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