



Central New Mexico Audubon Society

# Burrowing Owl

March - May 2012 Vol. 41, No. 2

Welcome to the Central New Mexico Audubon Society! A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.  
Come join us. All our meetings and field trips are open to the public.

## BIRDING ACADEMY 2012

### Birds in the Field

### Birds in the Guides

Birding Academy classes will begin at 7:15 p.m.  
at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church

New members: Join National Audubon for \$20 and get the Birding Academy included for free! Current members or non-members - \$6.00 per class in advance or at the door. Questions? Visit [cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org/](http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org/) or call Beth at 508-4942.



### March 15 – Raymond VanBuskirk and Judy Liddell *New Mexico's Migration Hot Spots*

Judy Liddell will highlight some of her favorite locations featured in Birding Hot Spots of Central New Mexico and Raymond VanBuskirk will share information about the "little-known" migration hot spots of eastern New Mexico.

### April 19 – Cole Wolf

### *Splits, Lumps, and Hybrids: Why Field Guides Keep Changing*

Birders often complain when they find that their field guides are quickly outdated as species are split and names change. Why can't taxonomy (the science of naming and classifying living things) stay the same? We'll investigate some of the fundamental questions ornithologists struggle with every day: what makes a species? How are new species formed?

## !!BIRDS and BEERS!!

We're excited to announce a new event for those interested in birds and birding in the Albuquerque area! This is an informal, social event – an opportunity for people to gather and talk about birds, share photos, have fun, and enjoy good food and beer. Some of you may be familiar with similar events in other locations (e.g., the Birds and Beer event in Tucson, AZ that is occasionally noted on the AZ-NM Birding list-serve). Although this event is not officially organized by either the New Mexico Ornithological Society (NMOS) or Audubon New Mexico, we see this as an opportunity to work together and improve communications between our organizations. Our goal is to host the event once a month on the last Tuesday of the month; but this is our first effort and we'll see how things go. Come and join us!

**WHO?** Anyone who is interested in birds and birding

**WHAT?** Birds and Beers, Informal gathering – bring bird photos on a jump drive if you have some to share; be prepared to share with your peers; be ready for fun (like bird I.D. quizzes and contests); come hungry and thirsty!

**WHERE?** O'Niell's – Event Space, 4310 Central SE (Nob Hill) Albuquerque, NM 87108 <http://oniells.com/> (park around back off of Washington St.)

**WHEN?** Tuesday, 28 February 2012 - 5:00 p.m. - ??? (any planned activities will start at 6:00)

**FROM:** Dave Krueper, New Mexico Ornithological Society, Janet Ruth, New Mexico Ornithological Society, Beth Hurst-Waitz, Central New Mexico Audubon Society (CNMAS), Robert Munro, CNMAS and O'Niell's

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## Teacher Resource Grant

MESA (Math, Engineering, Science Achievement) at Truman Middle School in Albuquerque, was the proud recipient of a Teacher Resource Grant from CNMAS. Every year the club has a MESA Family Night, in which students invite their families for an evening of hands-on activities. Using our grant, we were able to bring in Exotics of the Rainforest, a local organization owned by Carolyn and Sparky Newell. We had 57 attendees for this magical evening. The students watched a video on the rain forest, a puppet presentation by Sparky, and then they were able to interact with a menagerie of parrots and reptiles from the tropical rain forests and deserts of the world. The dynamics of these types of presentations have changed over the years, as students with cell phones were snapping up photos of these beautiful animals as soon as they were presented to the audience. The parents were enjoying the show as much as the students and many lingered long afterwards to get a better glimpse of the lizards and snakes.

MESA is truly appreciative of the grant we received from CNMAS to expand environmental educational opportunities not only to our students but to our community.

*Submitted by Lynn Schuler, MESA advisor*



## CNMAS 2012 Birdathon Teams!

*Please pledge, join, support, or just plain DONATE because it's our major fundraiser!!!!*

### Earth Beat, Birdathon!

This year, Raymond VanBuskirk, and Michael Hilchey, with help from some other young birders, will be conducting a closed birdathon. The youthful team plans on birding dawn till dusk during the first week of May. They'll be starting the day looking for owls in far Southwest New Mexico and ending the day near Socorro. The group will have the ambitious goal of breaking the current New Mexico Big Day record by seeing more than 205 species in one day! Please help support CNMAS and Audubon New Mexico by pledging per bird, or a lump sum to this Birdathon team! Please contact Michael Hilchey ((505)228-7439, leucosticte@gmail.com), or Raymond VanBuskirk ((505)217-8514), newmexico-birder@gmail.com) with your pledges!

### The Thursday Birder Birdathon! May 3rd

Led by Rebecca Gracey. See details on page 4 and join the fun!

### Field Trip Reports

#### January 28: Maxwell NWR with Jim Mosley

The day was beautiful for birding: bright and sunny with little to no wind. After meeting and introductions with the 14 participants at the visitor center, the group traveled to Lake 13 and we were greeted with a flock of Wild Turkeys, Bald Eagle and Ferruginous Hawk before even reaching the Lake. The Lake was for the most part ice free. We had Common Golden Eye, Northern Pintail, Common Merganser and a pair of Lesser Scaup. Other birds that kept our interest were a mixed flock of passerines that included at least eight American Tree Sparrows with American Goldfinches. There were seven Bald Eagles in the area as well and it was good to see the plumage differences in the age groups. After a short break to check for Owls most everyone decided to go to Las Vegas NWR on the return. After leaving Maxwell most of the group spotted two Golden Eagles.

At Las Vegas Visitor Center pond we saw an impressive number of Canada Geese with a few Cackling mixed in. Also we saw Canvasbacks, Common and Hooded Merganser, Bufflehead, Common Golden Eye and a Ross's Goose.

At Crane Lake we had five Tundra swans, a Prairie Falcon, Snow Geese, Sandhill Cranes and a Ferruginous Hawk. McAlister Lake was the lowest I have seen it. The group at this time started to go their separate ways. On the way out I spotted a flock of western bluebirds. It was a perfect ending to the day.

#### February 11: Alameda Open Space with Judy Liddell

Five participants joined Judy Liddell at the Alameda Open Space for a morning of enjoying the wintering birds. After stopping at the wetlands where we saw pairs of Wood Ducks, Northern Shovelers, Mallards, a Common Merganser and a Canvasback, we headed over to the river to scope out the gulls. In addition to more than 300 Ring-billed Gulls, we spotted the breeding plumage Franklin's Gull and a possible 1st cycle Thayer's Gull. Walking through the bosque we enjoyed Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch and Downy Woodpecker. Twice we watched a Bald Eagle stir up the gulls roosting north of the bridge. From the bridge we spotted a Great Blue Heron and 3 Black-crowned Night-Herons on the west shore of the river. While we didn't see the hoped for Winter Wren along the drain north of the bike trail, we were treated to a Marsh Wren that was in full view taking a drink along the drain, as well as Black Phoebe, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Song Sparrows and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. As we were about to head back, a Sharp-shinned Hawk zoomed along low over the drain and landed briefly on a branch over the water. Our species count for the morning was 33.

**Find CNMAS on Facebook and visit our beautiful website!**



[cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org](http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org)

## New Mexico Ornithological Society 50th Anniversary Meeting

The New Mexico Ornithological Society (NMOS) will hold its 50th Annual Meeting on Saturday, 31 March 2012 at the Best Western Rio Grande Inn, located just north of the "Old Town" historic district of Albuquerque.

This meeting will include an NMOS business meeting, celebration of our 50th Anniversary, an NMOS general science session, and an evening banquet with a keynote speaker to be announced later.

Further details on the meeting, including the Call for Abstracts and Registration information, will be posted on the NMOS website (<http://www.nmbirds.org>) and published in upcoming issues of the NMOS Bulletin, as they become available.



## Bag the Single-Use Plastics

By Holly Casman, Manager, ABQ BioPark Aquarium

*This article was first published in the Winter 2011 issue of BioScape magazine and appears courtesy of the New Mexico BioPark Society.*

### Q: How can I be more environmentally responsible with the items I use every day?

#### A: "Just one word... plastics."

Remember this famous quote from the 1967 film, "The Graduate"? It foreshadows the incredible rise of the plastic industry, which took off like a runaway train shortly after its release. Now, over 40 years later that train is about to run off the tracks. We produce way too much plastic, it never goes away, recycling it is inefficient and it is toxic to the environment and ourselves. This train needs to change direction.

#### Plastics by the Numbers

The world currently produces over 200 million tons of plastic per year, half of which is thrown away in less than a year. Imagine eight football fields thickly covered in plastic bottles... this is what the US throws away every five minutes! Now, imagine a line of plastic water bottles going around the planet five times... this is just one week's worth of plastic water bottles! One billion plastic grocery bags are distributed every day.

#### Break it down

Plastics are forever—they do not biodegrade. Instead they break down into smaller and smaller pieces, eventually becoming toxic chemicals that contaminate soil, waterways and oceans and enter the food chain. Plastic which makes its way to the ocean is of particular concern. In the North Pacific there is a floating gyre of plastic, roughly twice the size of Texas and growing, known as The Great Pacific Garbage Patch. The plastic which floats and swirls in the currents like a plastic soup is often ingested by marine life, from tiny zooplankton to great whales.

While certain plastics have done much good in the world, the so-called disposable plastics such as grocery bags, water bottles, straws, lids, cups, etc., designed to be used just once and then thrown away are the culprit in most of the ocean's plastic pollution. These plastics are cheap and convenient but also tough and buoyant, creating a deadly hazard for marine life. Sea turtles mistake floating plastic bags for jellyfish, a part of their natural diet. The bags clog their digestive tracts, eventually leading to starvation. Albatross chicks have been found with their stomachs filled with colorful plastic bits, fed to them by the parent birds. Many other species such as whales, dolphins and seals are being killed and entangled by deadly plastic debris as well. Some fish, by ingesting plastic contaminated zooplankton, krill and smaller fish which has worked its way up the food chain, have become so toxic themselves they are no longer safe to eat.

In the U.S. we throw away about 185 lbs. of plastic per person per year yet very little is recycled. Recycling plastic is not yet sustainable—it is expensive and does not slow the production of new plastic. Plastic sent to recycling centers is not turned into new, similar objects in the way that aluminum cans and glass bottles are made into new aluminum cans and glass bottles. Plastic is turned into other products such as doormats, textiles and plastic lumber.

Bio-plastics are plastics made from plants. They are touted to be a green alternative to conventional plastics but they are not necessarily so. Plastic is the result of a process called polymerization. Building blocks for this process are atoms of carbon and hydrogen, obtained from oil, gas or plant materials. Then other chemicals are added. The use of plants does not necessarily mean it's greener, depending on the other additives. You can make non-biodegradable and toxic plastic out of organic corn. Still there is hope here if more manufacturers can be convinced to produce truly biodegradable plastics and more consumers demand them.

#### Plastics as Poison

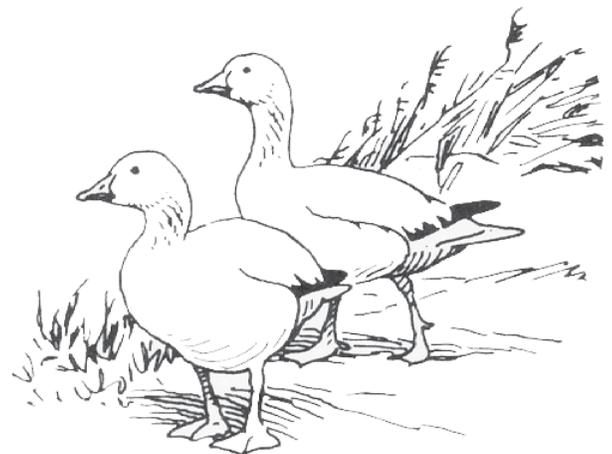
It is a shocking fact that most of us are partly made of plastic these days. Bisphenol-A, PCB's, tributyltin and phthalates, all plastic chemicals have been found in measurable levels in human blood and tissue, probably entering our bodies through the food chain as well as leaching from the everyday plastics we come in contact with, such as water bottles and plastic packaging. These toxins can cause cancer, premature puberty, hyperactivity, obesity, asthma, schizophrenia and more. We are literally poisoning ourselves with plastic!

#### Our Actions Matter

So what is a responsible, green-minded citizen to do? The problem is not with the plastic itself but rather how we make and use it. In today's world we need plastic and indeed plastic has benefited humans in many ways. We simply need to stop wasting it. We need to look at alternatives to single-use, disposable plastics.

Bringing about a change of culture can be a long slow process but it can be done. Several progressive cities have already banned plastic bags and more are in the process. We, as citizens and consumers can put pressure on our elected officials as well as the retailers who carry and distribute single-use plastics. We can avoid purchasing products with excessive packaging such as plastic bottled beverages. We can buy items in bulk, we can carry our own mug for coffee instead of accepting a plastic cup. We can re-use our shopping bags or bring tote bags from home. And we can re-cycle the plastic that we do use. All these actions can help make a difference and the most important thing is to spread the word. Education and awareness are key. Just say NO to single-use, disposable plastics! And remember, our actions matter!

<http://plasticpollutioncoalition.org/>



Andrew Rominger



## AUDUBON THURSDAY BIRDERS SCHEDULE for SPRING 2012

### SUPPORT THE THURSDAY BIRDER TEAM IN THE CNMAS BIRDATHON!

This is a fund-raising effort for Audubon. Mail your check to CNMAS, PO Box 30002, Albuquerque, NM 87190. Your contribution is a tax-deductible donation.

#### MARCH 1

Hike the Open Space at the east end of Copper with Lannois Neely: 890-7881, lfneely@aol.com at 9:00 a.m. It will be an easy 1.5 mile walk ending before noon.

#### MARCH 8

Bosque del Apache NWR with Rebecca Gracey: maryrebeccagracey@gmail.com, 242-3821. Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure from the back parking lot of the Hawthorne Suites on Gibson, just west of University Blvd. Very little walking is involved, as the group will view the refuge mainly by car. Bring lunch. There is an entrance fee if the driver has no Duck Stamp nor Golden Age Pass. The group should return in the late afternoon. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$10 at five cents per mile.

#### MARCH 15

Visit the extensive research collection of western North American birds at the Museum of Southwestern Biology with Judy Liddell: jliddell@msn.com, 271-0912. Because it is difficult to park on the UNM campus, the group will meet in the parking lot next to Sunflower Market at San Mateo and Lomas at 8:20 a.m. We will take the bus across the street at 8:37, get off at 8:46 and walk approximately two blocks to the museum. The cost of the bus is \$.35 (exact change) each way for those 62+ (with ID) and \$1.00 for those under 62. Our host at the museum will be Chris Witt. After our tour of the museum, the group can check out the birds at the duck pond before taking the bus back to San Mateo around noon. People need to contact Judy if they plan to attend so that she may let the museum know the number of people to expect.

#### MARCH 22

South Valley birding with Becky Purvis: 877-2517, rpurvis3@yahoo.com. Meet at 8:20 a.m. for an 8:30 departure in the southeast quadrant of the Rio Bravo and Coors S.W. intersection near the Panda Express. The group will drive to various locations from there. The trip will end before noon.

#### MARCH 29

Walk the bosque east of the Coors and La Orilla intersection, north of Montano, with Paulina Inigo: Cell 269-8963, Home 899-9316, cpinigo@yahoo.com. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the southeast corner of the church parking lot on La Orilla. The one-mile walk will end before noon.

#### APRIL 5

Pena Blanca and Cochiti Lake with Gary Shirk: 717-330-7063, gshirk748@gmail.com. Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure in the middle of the parking lot in the Far North Shopping Center, north of Academy and east of San Mateo. A secondary meeting place will be at 8:40 at the Phillips 66 gas station on NM 22 just after exiting I-25. Bring lunch or buy a sandwich at the Stone Kiva Bar and Grille at the Cochiti Golf Course Clubhouse where the group will be birding. For those not driving the shared gas expense is \$5 at five cents per mile.

#### APRIL 12

Tingley bosque ponds south of Central SW on Tingley Drive with Lefty Arnold: 514-9398, wanderingtattlerja@yahoo.com. Meet at 8:27 in a parking lot south of the fishing ponds parking area. The lot is south of Lead Avenue SW and across from the blue zoo building on the east. Lunch afterwards at the Red Ball Café on 4th Street.

#### APRIL 19

Alameda Open Space with Kathleen Rhoad: 225-9747, kathleen.rhoad@gmail.com. Meet at 8:30 in the open space parking lot on the south side of Alameda Boulevard, just east of the Rio Grande River. The group will also look for birds in the new Bachechi Open Space located nearby where Kathleen is a volunteer in the arboretum. The walk will end before noon.

#### APRIL 26

Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area and Belen Marsh in Belen, NM, with Linda Heinz: 565-1441, manzanogal@gmail.com. Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure in the parking lot behind the Hawthorne Suites on Gibson and University or 8:45 a.m. at WWCA on NM 47. Lunch at Teofilo's in Los Lunas on Main/NM 6, near the intersection with NM 314. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$3.50 at five cents per mile.



#### MAY 3, The Thursday Birder Birdathon

Led by Rebecca Gracey: 242-3821, maryrebeccagracey@gmail.com. Meet at 4:50 a.m. for a 5:00 departure in the parking lot behind the Hawthorne Suites on Gibson and University, or at 6:15 a.m. at the McDonald's in Socorro. This will be an intensive day of birding that will end at dusk. The itinerary will be Turtle Bay on the NM Tech campus, Water Canyon in the Magdalena Mountains, the Box on US 60 and the Bosque del Apache. At 7:30 p.m. the group will have dinner at Sofia's Kitchen in Socorro to tally the number of species seen. After dinner participants are on their own to either spend the night in Socorro or return to Albuquerque that evening. The shared gas expense is \$10.

Anyone planning to be on the team should contact Rebecca and she will email you plans for the birdathon and any possible changes that might arise.

All members of the team are encouraged to make a financial contribution to Central New Mexico Audubon Society in this fund-raising effort to benefit education and conservation projects in New Mexico.

#### MAY 10

Manzano pond and Quarai National Monument with Bonnie Long: 379-1985, cantrade\_1@yahoo.com. Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure in the Four Hills Shopping Center from near the Carl's Jr. on the south side of Central between Tramway and Juan Tabo, or at 8:50 a.m. at the junction of Highway 337 and Highway 55. Bring lunch. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$5 at five cents per mile.

#### MAY 17

Birding along NM 41 east of Moriarty and Galisteo creek and bosque with Rebecca Gracey: 242-3821, maryrebeccagracey@gmail.com. Meet at 6:50 a.m. for a 7:00 departure from near the Carl's Jr. in the Four Hills Shopping Center on the south side of Central between Tramway and Juan Tabo. The group will make a brief stop at McDonald's in Moriarty at 7:30 for those wanting to meet the group there. Bring lunch. The trip will end in mid afternoon. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$6 at five cents per mile.

#### MAY 24

Hike Otero Canyon with Gale Owings: 255-8333. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Sandia Ranger Station in Tijeras, NM, located on NM 337 to car pool to Otero Canyon. There will be a 1.5 mile walk ending before noon.



MAY 31

Hike Embudito Canyon with Donna Royer: 869-6882, dlroyer@earthlink.net  
Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the trailhead parking lot. To reach the canyon, drive east on Montgomery past Tramway, then turn left on Glenwood Hills. Continue .4 of a mile then turn right on Trailhead Road. Drive to the parking lot. This is an easy 1.5 mile walk.

### Thursday Birder Trip Reports

Judy Liddell's blog: [www.wingandsong.wordpress.com](http://www.wingandsong.wordpress.com)  
Joe Schelling's blog: <http://joeschelling.wordpress.com>  
and photo website: [www.sandianet.com](http://www.sandianet.com)  
Matt O'Donnell's blog: <http://abqbirding.wordpress.com>  
Phil Trine's photographs: [www.flickr.com/photos/thbirds](http://www.flickr.com/photos/thbirds)  
NM Rare Bird Alert [www.nmbirds.org](http://www.nmbirds.org) click on "Hotline"  
Rare Bird Alerts for all states [www.birdingonthe.net](http://www.birdingonthe.net)  
To report NM rare birds, contact Matt Baumann at [mb687@yahoo.com](mailto:mb687@yahoo.com), 264-1052.

### Other Spring Birding Opportunities

#### 11th Annual Prairie Chicken Festival

April 20 - 22, in Milnesand, NM. Information available at [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us). Click on "recreation". The contact person is Tish McDaniel: 575-762-6997, [chickenfestival@yahoo.com](mailto:chickenfestival@yahoo.com). The number of participants is limited to 100 people and the quota is quickly filled.

#### Tuesday Morning Guided Bird Walks

in the Sandia Mountains sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service  
May through October. Birders meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Sandia Ranger Station, 1176 Highway 337, in Tijeras, N.M.

#### Weekend Bird Walks at the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park

Join Saturday and Sunday morning bird walks at the RGNCSP, located at the far west end of Candelaria Road in Albuquerque's North Valley. The walks begin at 8:30 a.m. in March and April, 8:00 in May. There is a \$3 day use fee if you do not have a state parks pass or a Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center day use pass. Both may be purchased after 10:00 a.m. in the Center.  
Call 344-7240 or visit [www.rgnc.org](http://www.rgnc.org) for more information.

#### Herb Fest at the Rio Grande Nature Center

Saturday, May 12th  
A springtime celebration of herbs, wildflowers and native plants. Events include guided bird and nature walks; rare and unusual plants for sale; a lineup of booths offering arts and crafts; garden tours; live birds displayed by Wildlife Rescue; a speaker program; performing musicians; and activities for children.  
For more details visit [rgnc.org](http://rgnc.org)

#### International Migratory Bird Day(s)

Saturday, May 12th  
• Judy Liddell will lead a walk for Bernalillo County Open Space - at Ojito de San Antonio Open Space - 8 a.m. [www.bernco.gov/openspace/](http://www.bernco.gov/openspace/)  
• Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area, [www.whitfieldwildlife.org](http://www.whitfieldwildlife.org)  
Sunday, May 13  
• Dwayne Longenbaugh will represent CNMAS with a *Wonderful World of Birds* program at the Bio Park (Zoo) at noon on Sunday  
• Judy Liddell will participate in the Botanical Garden's IMBD activity - *Migration Hotspots of Central New Mexico*

### CNMAS Weekend Field Trips - Spring 2012

Check for updates or additional field trips on our website:  
[www.newmexicoaudubon.org/cnmas](http://www.newmexicoaudubon.org/cnmas)

#### Saturday, May 5

##### Percha Dam State Park and Animas Creek

We'll spend most of the morning at Percha where we hope to find good numbers of migrants along with the resident Vermillion Flycatchers, Lucy's Warblers, and Phainopeplas. After checking Caballo Lake and below the dam we'll bird Animas Creek (time permitting) in hopes of seeing Acorn Woodpecker and Bridled Titmouse. Meet at Percha at 9:00 AM, or those interested in carpooling from Albuquerque should meet at 6:00 AM at the southwest corner of University and Lomas. Bring a lunch, we do not expect to get back to Albuquerque before dark.  
Leader: Robert Munro, [robert.munro@earthlink.net](mailto:robert.munro@earthlink.net)

#### Sunday, April 15

##### Shorebirds & other Migrants at Bosque del Apache

Meet at 6:30 AM at the southwest corner of University and Lomas, or meet the group at Turtle Bay park in Socorro at 8:00 AM. We'll check the park for migrant songbirds before continuing on to Bosque. At the refuge we'll focus on getting good looks at shorebirds and other waterbirds. Depending on the weather we may check a few spots on the way back to town, most likely Bernardo WMA and/or Belen Marsh.  
Leader: Cole Wolf, [colejwolf@gmail.com](mailto:colejwolf@gmail.com)

#### Friday - Sunday, April 20-22nd

##### Warblers, Shorebirds, and Prairie -Chickens, OH MY!

Raymond VanBuskirk and Michael Hilchey will be leading a weekend trip to the southeastern plains of New Mexico from April 20th through the 22nd. Rattlesnake Springs, Brantley and Avalon Lakes, Tatum Sewage ponds, and Melrose Trap are among the many places we plan to bird on this trip. We will also be visiting an active Lek near Tatum for some up close and personal looks at Prairie-Chickens! Targets for the trip (besides Prairie-Chickens of course) will be Painted Bunting, Orchard Oriole, Brown Thrasher, Snowy Plover, Least Tern, and as many migrants as we can get our bins on!

The leaders will be leaving on Friday (4/20) at 1pm from the Four Hills Shopping Center (Central and Tramway). Participants are encouraged to meet the leaders there at 12:45pm for carpooling. We plan to bird Bitter Lake NWR in Roswell on our way down. We will spend Friday night in Carlsbad, and start birding Saturday morning at Rattlesnake Springs south of Carlsbad around 8am. From there we will make our way to Tatum where we will be staying on Saturday night. Sunday morning we will start very early at a nearby Prairie-Chicken Lek and from there we will bird our way back towards Albuquerque, arriving home sometime early Sunday Evening.

Anyone not able to carpool is encouraged to call and meet up with the group anywhere along the way. Contact the leaders for times and locations to meet up.

Please contact one of the leaders for more info and to RSVP  
Michael Hilchey (505)228-7439, [leucosticte@gmail.com](mailto:leucosticte@gmail.com)  
Raymond VanBuskirk (505)217-8514, [newmexicobirder@gmail.com](mailto:newmexicobirder@gmail.com)

**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.*



### Sandia Mountains Christmas Bird Count Report

The Sandia count was held on Monday, December 26, 2011, with 43 people participating in the count. In spite of several inches of snow on the ground, the total number of species seen was 74, only two less than the all time high number of 76 seen last year. Four species were seen in the circle that had never been reported before. They were Lincoln's Sparrow, Pacific Wren, Band-tailed Pigeon and Great-tailed Grackle. Three species seen that have become unusual in the circle in the past four to six years were the Horned Lark, Red-winged Blackbird, and Western Meadowlark. Other spectacular sightings were the Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon and Golden-crowned Sparrow. Two new breeding birds in the Sandias were reported, the Cactus Wren and the Three-toed Woodpecker. The wrap-up party at O'Niell's pub was a perfect ending to a good day of birding.

Rebecca Gracey – count organizer  
Nick Pederson – count compiler



### Bosque del Apache NWR Christmas Bird Count Report

The 2011 Bosque del Apache NWR count was held on Saturday, December 17th, with 14 participants. 104 species were found this year, which is a little below average for recent years. While the number of species was low, numbers of individual birds were not. As usual, dazzling numbers of Snow Geese and other waterfowl, Sandhill Cranes, and raptors were enjoying winter accommodations at the refuge. And as always, a number of unusual species highlighted our day. Highlights this year included: Winter Wren (new for the count), Lark Bunting (2nd time), McCown's Longspur, Phainopepla, and Harris's Sparrow. Thanks to all who participated and I hope to see you all again this year!

Dave Hawksworth - compiler

### Learning Look-Alikes Order Form

Own the entire series from the *Burrowing Owl!*

Contacts: Laurel Ladwig at BUROWLnm@gmail.com

Beth Hurst-Waitz at 505-508-4942

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Learning Look-Alikes \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping and handling \$7.00 per notebook \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity \_\_\_\_\_

*The sale of this collectible edition is a fund-raiser for CNMAS, and part of the proceeds will go to the Ryan Fund.*

### Albuquerque Christmas Bird Count Report

Over 50 people turned out to count birds on the Albuquerque Christmas Bird Count, which was held on December 18, 2011. The group managed to total an astonishing 118 species in the count area. Some of the most interesting sightings included Rusty Blackbird, Brown Thrasher, Green Heron, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Phoebe, Peregrine Falcon, Common Goldeneye, Chestnut-collared Longspur, and multiple Eastern Winter Wrens. One of our biggest misses was Loggerhead Shrike, which has become very hard to find in the last five years. Another surprise was the absence of any gull species besides Ring-billed Gull. Overall the count was a great success and we would like to thank everybody who showed up to count birds. We would also like to thank Hart Schwartz for his many years as the count compiler. Happy Birding in 2012 and we look forward to seeing everybody again in December!

Raymond VanBuskirk - count compiler

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*Muchísimas gracias to Melissa Howard for her superb proofreading skills! I am solely responsible for any errors that remain. - Editor*

### Burrowing Owl Deadline

Information and articles to be included in Spring 2012 issue of the *Burrowing Owl* must be received by May 5, 2012.

Contact Laurel Ladwig at 505-362-6871 or [BUROWLnm@gmail.com](mailto:BUROWLnm@gmail.com).

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*Our missions: "To appreciate, experience, and conserve birds, other wildlife and their habitats;  
and to encourage and support environmental education in New Mexico."*

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