

July 16: Zoom to a Virtual Meeting

This presentation will include a brief member meeting, as required annually of all non-profit organizations, and will be conducted over Zoom. More information about linking to the meeting will be distributed in early July.

The meeting also will feature Christopher Rustay and Robert Munro updating the story of Melrose Woods, a remarkable migrant trap, with 44 species of warblers reported. Christopher Rustay will share some of his experiences with this magical spot and Robert Munro will provide an update about the CNMAS partnership with the State Land Office to protect the area. More information is provided in Robert's article in this issue.

Board 'Gives' Thanks to Rebecca

By Sara Jayne Cole

The CNMAS Board is thanking Rebecca Gracey for 16 years as Thursday Birders Coordinator with a donation of \$160 to the First Unitarian Church Food Pantry.

Although the CNMAS mission is to conserve wildlife and their habitat, the board felt it would be meaningful to recognize Rebecca by donating to another cause close to her heart. Those who would like to join her in giving to the food pantry may go to <http://uuabq.com>.

As a 501(3)(c) non-profit, CNMAS receives a percentage of dues paid to the National Audubon Society. However, we are an independent chapter and rely on donations to fund our many programs. Donation may be made on the CNMAS home page: <http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org> or mailed to P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque, NM 87190.

TBs' True Leader Is Moving On

By John "Lefty" Arnold

In March of this year, Thursday Birders Trip Coordinator Rebecca Gracey announced that she was retiring from her duties after 16 years in that position.



Rebecca Gracey (center)

By Michele Weisz

But—no surprise here—she did not just announce it. She said if someone came forward to replace her that would be Plan A. If that person would

be willing to schedule two trips each week, that would be Enhanced Plan A. Meanwhile Rebecca suggested Plan B, beginning in the fall. Plan B would be two trips per week with no leaders and no carpooling.

Rebecca's field-trip ideas elicited numerous positive and well-considered on-line responses. As (hopefully) the pandemic under which we all are living becomes less virulent and folks emerge from self-isolation, we can return to the enjoyable and genial art of group birding.

After more than 30 years as a weekly event, the Thursday Birders field trips have increased from a dozen or so birders per excursion to more than 30 people per outing, reducing the ability to ensure that everyone is able to hear about and see each bird the group locates. With Rebecca's retirement and suggestions, the Central New Mexico Audubon board is developing new guidelines for Thursday Birders that will be discussed in the Autumn 2020 Burrowing Owl.

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... Questions and Answers Covering 16 Years

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Here's a Q & A session with Rebecca about her tenure as Thursday Birders Trip Coordinator:

Q: You began your 16-year journey in 2004. Who had been coordinating trips before that?

A: "For the first eight years, Tami Bulow led the trips and the group collectively decided where to go on the next week's outing. Then Julie Gooding and Madge Wallen took the reins in 1996, followed by Mary Lou Arthur from 1998 to 2004. She planned trips two to three weeks in advance, leading many of them herself and asking others to lead trips as well."

Q: Why did you begin to schedule trips three months in advance?

A: "It made it easier for me because once the schedule was done for a season, I didn't have to worry about it for two months. Thursday Birders averaged 50 trips per year."

Q: Was it easy to recruit leaders for these excursions?

A: "I had an average of 13 leaders that I would contact each quarter by email. Most people would say yes, making my job easier."

Q: Did anyone volunteer to lead before she or he was asked to do so?

A: "Once Sei Tokuda contacted me before I started working on the winter schedule and said he would like to lead two trips to the Bosque del Apache, so I put him on the schedule. He was a sweetheart and he loved to show beginners a bird."

Q: How many trips did you attend and did you lead trips yourself?

A: "If there were 800 trips in the 16 years, I might have missed 25. I led 123, about 15 percent of them."



Team leader Rebecca (at her scope) at Bosque del Apache

By Judy Liddell

Q: "Did you ever encounter serious problems on these trips?"

A: "Luckily no one ever got hurt. A couple of times we had to almost carry someone down from the Hawkwatch site in the Sandias, and one time we helped a person in the Manzanos who had a medical condition."

Q: Do you have a favorite trip?

A: "Once Judy Liddell planned a 'Birding by Railrunner to a surprise location' trip. We were met at the train station in Santa Fe, took the shuttle to the Capitol building and then employees from Randall Davey ferried us to their Audubon Center."

Q: As part of your efforts to coordinate trips, you were involved with several Birdathon fundraisers. How were those events?

A: "The Birdathons were always fun. The first one I led was to Turtle Bay on the New Mexico Tech campus, Water Canyon, The Box and Bosque del Apache on April 29, 2010. We had 26 team members and with that many people we broke into smaller groups at Bosque del Apache. That evening, when we met to go over the list, I was pleasantly surprised to learn what each group had seen. We ended up with 135 species. That was the most fun I ever had on a Birdathon because of the worry of not doing well, and then doing great."

Coordinator by the Numbers

March 2004 through March 2020:

- Days: 5,875
- Hours: 141,000
- Minutes: 8,460,000
- Seconds: 507,600,000
- Number of Thursdays: 839
- Number of TB trips: About 800
- Number of TB Coordinators: 1

Unique Birdathon Logs 206 Species

Here are the Birds:

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	Cattle Egret
Ross's Goose	Green Heron
Canada Goose	Black-crowned Night-Heron
Egyptian Goose	White-faced Ibis
Wood Duck	Turkey Vulture
Blue-winged Teal	Osprey
Cinnamon Teal	Mississippi Kite
Northern Shoveler	Sharp-shinned Hawk
Gadwall	Cooper's Hawk
American Wigeon	Northern Goshawk
Mallard	Common Black Hawk
Green-winged Teal	Swainson's Hawk
Redhead	Red-tailed Hawk
Lesser Scaup	Western Screech-Owl
Common Merganser	Great Horned Owl
Ruddy Duck	Burrowing Owl
Northern Bobwhite	Lewis's Woodpecker
Scaled Quail	Red-headed Woodpecker
Gambel's Quail	Acorn Woodpecker
Wild Turkey	Downy Woodpecker
Pied-billed Grebe	Ladder-backed Woodpecker
Eared Grebe	Hairy Woodpecker
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	Northern Flicker
Band-tailed Pigeon	American Kestrel
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Peregrine Falcon
White-winged Dove	Olive-sided Flycatcher
Mourning Dove	Western Wood-Pewee
Greater Roadrunner	Eastern Wood-Pewee
Lesser Nighthawk	Hammond's Flycatcher
Common Nighthawk	Gray Flycatcher
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Dusky Flycatcher
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	Cordilleran Flycatcher
American Coot	Black Phoebe
Black-necked Stilt	Say's Phoebe
American Avocet	Vermilion Flycatcher
Snowy Plover	Ash-throated Flycatcher
Killdeer	Cassin's Kingbird
Long-billed Curlew	Western Kingbird
Hudsonian Godwit	Eastern Kingbird
Baird's Sandpiper	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Least Sandpiper	Plumbeous Vireo
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Warbling Vireo
Long-billed Dowitcher	Loggerhead Shrike
Wilson's Phalarope	Steller's Jay
Spotted Sandpiper	Blue Jay
Solitary Sandpiper	Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay
Willet	Black-billed Magpie
Franklin's Gull	Clark's Nutcracker
Ring-billed Gull	American Crow
Least Tern	
Neotropic Cormorant	
Double-crested Cormorant	
American White Pelican	
Great Blue Heron	
Snowy Egret	

By Kathy Carson

Given the social distancing requirements this spring, CNMAS decided to conduct a different kind of Birdathon with no specific destinations and no teams. This unusual approach



Phainopepla

compiled individual efforts from wherever people were able to bird during the first two weeks of May and combined that information into a joint list.

A total of 23 birders made 54 counts in Albuquerque-area backyards, a cabin near

Las Vegas, a meadow in Angel Fire, a backyard in Socorro, Melrose Woods and Paseo del Rio campground in Truth or Consequences.

Participants pledged cash donations for each bird they logged. The money will be given to the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area in Valencia County. The total is still being compiled but will be available soon on

<http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org/events/birdathon>.



Scott's Oriole



Pygmy Nuthatch

continued on the next page

Photos on this page by Joe Schelling

The Birders

Rebecca Gracey	Kim Score
Bernard Morris	Lannois Neely
Deanna Nichols	Lynn Schuler
Doug Loescher	Melissa Howard
Dwayne and Marj Longenbaugh	Owen Sinkus
Ellen Lenz	Rebecca Helianthus
Jody Addis	Sara Jayne Cole
Jorgen Hog	Sonja Mendoza
Judy Liddell	Susan Hunter
Ken Cole	Virginia Davis
Bonnie Long	Perrienne Houghton



MacGillivray's Warbler
By Deanna Nichols



Vermilion Flycatcher
By Rebecca Gracey



American White Pelicans with Canada Goose
By Joe Schelling



Mississippi Kite
By Joe Schelling

. . . And Even More Birds

Chihuahuan Raven
 Common Raven
 Black-capped Chickadee
 Mountain Chickadee
 Juniper Titmouse
 Verdin
 Horned Lark
 Northern Rough-winged Swallow
 Purple Martin
 Tree Swallow
 Violet-green Swallow
 Bank Swallow
 Barn Swallow
 Cliff Swallow
 Cave Swallow
 Bushtit
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet
 Red-breasted Nuthatch
 White-breasted Nuthatch
 Pygmy Nuthatch
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
 Rock Wren
 Canyon Wren
 House Wren
 Winter Wren
 Marsh Wren

Bewick's Wren
 European Starling
 Gray Catbird
 Curve-billed Thrasher
 Brown Thrasher
 Crissal Thrasher
 Northern Mockingbird
 Eastern Bluebird
 Western Bluebird
 Mountain Bluebird
 Townsend's Solitaire
 Swainson's Thrush
 Hermit Thrush
 American Robin
 Cedar Waxwing
 Phainopepla
 House Sparrow
 American Pipit
 House Finch
 Cassin's Finch
 Red Crossbill
 Pine Siskin
 Lesser Goldfinch
 American Goldfinch
 Cassin's Sparrow
 Chipping Sparrow

Clay-colored Sparrow
 Brewer's Sparrow
 Black-throated Sparrow
 Lark Sparrow
 Dark-eyed Junco
 White-crowned Sparrow
 White-throated Sparrow
 Savannah Sparrow
 Song Sparrow
 Lincoln's Sparrow
 Canyon Towhee
 Green-tailed Towhee
 Spotted Towhee
 Yellow-breasted Chat
 Yellow-headed Blackbird
 Western Meadowlark
 Eastern Meadowlark
 Orchard Oriole
 Bullock's Oriole
 Scott's Oriole
 Red-winged Blackbird
 Bronzed Cowbird
 Brown-headed Cowbird
 Brewer's Blackbird
 Common Grackle
 Common Grackle
 (Bronzed)

Great-tailed Grackle
 Worm-eating Warbler
 Black-and-White Warbler
 Orange-crowned Warbler
 Lucy's Warbler
 Nashville Warbler
 Virginia's Warbler
 MacGillivray's Warbler
 Common Yellowthroat
 Yellow Warbler
 Yellow-rumped Warbler
 Grace's Warbler
 Black-throated Gray Warbler
 Wilson's Warbler
 Hepatic Tanager
 Summer Tanager
 Western Tanager
 Pyrrhuloxia
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak
 Black-headed Grosbeak
 Blue Grosbeak
 Lazuli Bunting
 Painted Bunting
 Dickcissel

Melrose Trap Leased to Chapter

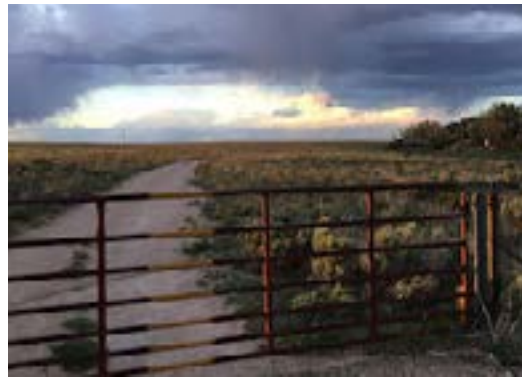
By Robert Munro

For those of you who have been following the Melrose Woods project, we have exciting updates! As of May 8, 2020, CNMAS is the lease holder of Melrose Woods.

To make this challenging conservation project a reality the lease was crafted to fulfill the requirements not only of CNMAS but also of the New Mexico State Land office and the holder of the agricultural lease of the area that encompasses Melrose Woods.

Through collaboration, compromise and a shared vision for the successful conservation of this oasis we hope that our agreement may stand as an example for future conservation efforts.

The State Land Office has selected a contractor to complete the first phase of the project, which includes trail building and debris removal. A huge thank-you goes out to all who participated in the online town hall that preceded the selection of the contractor.



Gate Leading to Melrose Trap

By Jennifer Miller

Here are a few of the participants' comments that were integrated into the plan:

- Some unnatural rocky areas will not be eliminated during the debris removal in order to support migrating and resident wrens.
- Specific attention will be given during the trail building phase to not disturb the understory as it is essential habitat for birds.
- Although some fallen wood will be used for trail marking and bench construction, there will not be any wood removed from the site as it provides vital cover.
- Johnson Environmental, based out of Alamogordo, will be charged with completing this first phase of work. Work will commence in June and wrap up within 30 days.

For everyone's safety, public access to Melrose Woods will be limited to Saturdays and Sundays during the month of June. Please check back with CNMAS on Facebook for any further updates including specific dates of completion.

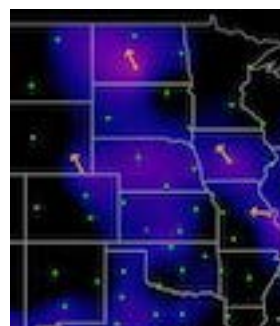
Mysteries of Migration Probed on Your Screen

By Melissa Howard

"Bird migration is the one truly unifying natural phenomenon in the world. . . . That such delicate creatures undertake these epic journeys defies belief." —Scott Weidensaul, *Living on the Wind*, 1999.

Perhaps the most significant development in the two decades since that book appeared is the Internet. The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology is one of many on-line sources of articles, maps and graphics about migration, and much of its

data comes from citizen-science projects like the CNMAS Birdathon report of 74 species seen at Melrose Trap in mid-May.



This is a portion of the Cornell video showing migration data during the night of May 20–21. The middle of the continent shows the most activity, with orange arrows darting in all directions.

Source:
www.birds.cornell.edu/home

Video Marks Earth Day at Whitfield WCA

By Allison Martin

Education Manager for Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District

The 50th annual Earth Day celebration looked a little different this year as Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area was closed to the public.



Instead, Facebook Los Lunas Data Center and the Friends of Whitfield gave us funds to create a video to show off ways that everyone can interact with the Earth in their own backyards.

I put together a lesson at Whitfield demonstrating ways to learn about the plants and the animals in the area. Lindsey Diaz, East Valencia Urban Gardens Program Coordinator, described ways to create compost.

The funding not only paid for the creation of the video; it gave six people

a chance to win five garden starter kits and one iPad by commenting on the video, which received more than 3,000 views, 67 shares and 33 comments. Here is one:

“This is an awesome video with some amazing ideas for our students. Right now we are talking about ecosystems and invasive plants with our 7th graders. We also touched on human impact, and there was a quick backyard activity we had the students do a few weeks back. What I would love to do now is have them watch this video, compare the changes that they see from the first one, and journal their findings. . . .” —Lillian Montoya

The video can be viewed either on the Whitfield Education Programs Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/WhitfieldPrograms/> or the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District YouTube channel.

TBs Donate \$2,046 for the Birds

By Reuben Weisz

For many years Thursday Birders have donated weekly to support birding, wildlife and conservation organizations. Once a year those dollars are distributed to deserving organizations along with matching donations from CNMAS.

This spring, following Covid-19 guidelines advising against group activities and against handling paper currency, the Thursday Birders suspended weekly outings and collections.

Since then, a total of \$2,046 in 2020 collections has been donated to these eleven organizations, with each receiving \$186:

- Audubon New Mexico for the Randall Davey Audubon Center
- Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center
- Friends of Bosque del Apache

- Friends of Valle de Oro
- Friends of the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area
- Hawks Aloft
- Los Amigos de Valles Caldera
- On a Wing and a Prayer
- Rio Grande Bird Research for the Sandia Rosy-Finch Project
- Share with Wildlife
- Wildlife Rescue of New Mexico



Yellow-breasted Chat

By Joe Schelling

A Plea for Help with Hummingbird Count

A note from Sara Jayne Cole

In 2015, when the National Audubon Society introduced the Citizen Science Survey described here, I spent a few hours being annoyed that I could not make it work. This spring I had time on my hands and, wanting to do something of value to birds while “social distancing,” I revisited the website, and this time it worked. Now I can be one of the many birders contributing to this hummingbird study. Please consider joining me in counting hummingbirds at home.



*Rufous Hummingbird
female*

By Joe Schelling

As spring migration is underway, the National Audubon Society invites birders and nature enthusiasts of all ages to help track the health of hummingbirds with Audubon’s Hummingbirds at Home app. This citizen-science project utilizes the power of volunteers to help collect data that provide scientists with crucial information about the bird species and the plants that sustain them.

Every spring hummingbirds visit our yards, looking for nourishment from our gardens and feeders. Many hummingbirds

migrate very long distances and must eat several times their weight in nectar daily to stay alive. Audubon scientists recently released a groundbreaking study that revealed some species of hummingbirds could lose more than 50 percent of their current ranges by 2080 if climate change continues on its current trajectory.

As flowers bloom earlier because of warming temperatures, there is a growing mismatch between flowering times and the arrival of hummingbirds in their breeding areas.

By joining Audubon’s Hummingbirds at Home project, you can help uncover how hummingbirds are affected by climate change and provide the information necessary to protect them. Using the mobile-friendly web portal and smart phone apps for iPhone and Android devices, people from across the United States can report their feeding hummingbird sightings anywhere. These observations will also enable Audubon to make specific, regional recommendations for those who want to enhance the value of their yards and gardens for hummingbirds.

Hummingbirds at Home helps people set up patches in their yard, garden, porch, window box, local park or just about anywhere where they can do surveys to keep track of hummingbirds and on what they feed. Additional sightings also can be logged outside a patch. Participants can get involved by spending just a few minutes or for as long as they wish. Participating and using the free mobile app or website is free and makes it simple to report sightings and learn more about these remarkable birds. For more information visit www.hummingbirdsathome.org.

For tips on how to create a hummingbird-friendly yard visit:

www.audubon.org/content/how-create-hummingbird-friendly-yard.

CNMAS Directory and Contacts

Central New Mexico Audubon Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit chapter of the National Audubon Society, Inc.

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

Mailing address CNMAS, P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque NM 87190-0002

The CNMAS membership form is on the web site:

<http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org>.

Click "About Us" on the home page.

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