

# BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

FEBRUARY - MARCH 1984

Welcome! Central New Mexico Audubon Society meets the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 P.M., St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, Copper and Jefferson, N.E. Nonmembers are welcome at all meetings, field trips, and special events.

#### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16 - Regular Meeting

Dr. Scott Altenbach of UNM will present a film of bats and bat flight. Dr. Altenbach has filmed for the British Broadcasting Co. He is reported to be one of the most fascinating lecturers around, keeping his always-full classes both informed and entertained. See above "Welcome" for time and place.

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25 - Field Trip

Visit the Oxbow with Bruce Halstead in the morning and, if your energy and the weather hold out, the West Mesa or the Corrales bosque in the afternoon. This should be a good opportunity to find some of the interesting sparrows seen on the Christmas Count, including Tree, Fox, Lincoln's and Swamp. Meet at 8:00 A.M. in the Physics-Astronomy building parking lot at Lomas and Yale. Bring a lunch in case the day turns out to be a long one. If you have questions, call Bruce at home (299-9397) or at work (766-2174).

#### FRIDAY EVENING, MARCH 9 - Field Trip

For something really different, join Dale Stahlecker on an owling expedition to the Corrales bosque. He will try to get enthusiastic responses to his taped calls from Great Horned, Long Eared, and Screech Owls. Meet at 7:00 P.M. (yes, P.M.!) in the First National Bank parking lot, located on 4th Street, one block north of Candelaria. Count on the trip lasting about three hours, but call Dale (345-2827) for more explicit details.

#### THURSDAY, MARCH 15 - Regular Meeting

Chris Garcia of Optimal Corp. and Vic Brown, our president, will present a program concerned with optical and other equipment relevant to birding. Video-tapes will illustrate equipment and techniques, with all kinds of binoculars, scopes, cameras, etc., on display. See "Welcome" paragraph for time and place.

#### SATURDAY, MARCH 31 - Field Trip

If you feel that hawk migration passed you by last fall, Steve Hoffman will give you another opportunity to do some serious hawk watching -- this time in the Sandias. Last spring he discovered a promising site along the southern

escarpment, where a variety of hawks became conspicuous during their northward flight. The 3-4 mile hike to the lookout will begin in Hondo Canyon and involve an elevation gain of over 2000 feet. Meet at the Mountain View Hotel at 7:00 A.M. and come prepared with warm clothing, adequate footwear, and something to snack on. In case of outrageously bad weather, this field trip will be postponed to the following Saturday, April 7. Call Steve at home (243-6044) or at work (766-3972) for additional information or to confirm date.

Note: Steve will be making frequent trips to the above-mentioned lookout during March and April, mainly on weekends, but occasionally also on weekdays. If you are interested in joining him, give him a call; he would welcome your company and your assistance.

#### SATURDAY & SUNDAY, APRIL 7 & 8 - NMAC Meeting and Field Trip

The New Mexico Audubon Council will meet in Socorro on April 7 with a field trip to the Bosque the morning of April 8. You are all welcome to either or both events. Call Darwin Miller (265-6361) or Evelyn Price (242-6604) for more information.

#### SUNDAY, APRIL 15 - Field Trip

Help Hart find the first Grace's Warbler of the season in Cienega Canyon. We will look for it in the Ponderosas, the trees so intimately linked to its destiny here in the Southwest. Since 1975, when I began keeping records, the date of arrival for this warbler in the Sandias averages April 19, with April 13 being the earliest. Our slightly early effort, therefore, will carry no guarantees, except that we will have a good time. Meet in front of the former Sandia Park post office at 8:00 A.M. For more information, call Hart at 266-1810.

#### COMING ATTRACTIONS

Look forward to programs this spring, including:

- 1) Dr. Randy Thornhill and the controversial subject of sociobiology.
- 2) Slides and sounds of Argentina by local birders who recently returned from a trip to this country.
- 3) BIG BIRD BASH - the first annual New Mexico Bird Fiesta - last part of April or first part of May.

#### PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Several days ago Darwin Miller and I went to Socorro, New Mexico, and paid a visit to the mayor and the editor of the local newspaper. The issue concerning the possibility of a steel mill to be built just north of the Bosque del Apache NWR was the point of our visit. From Socorro we drove to San Antonio, New Mexico, located just a few miles southeast of Socorro, and spoke with the owner of the famous landmark called the Owl Bar and Cafe. Again the issue was the proposed steel mill. Darwin Miller and I both feel the proposed building of a steel mill is not acceptable to the residents of these towns.

We cannot see how the presence of a steel mill will help maintain a good ecosystem for the wildlife at the Bosque.

From San Antonio, Darwin and I drove to Bosque del Apache and spoke with the refuge personnel, showing our concern about the steel mill. We then proceeded to drive the circular route around the large ponds and fields of the Bosque and did some real bird watching. What a sight to see thousands of birds on the ground and many others in flight. In one area with many sandhill cranes, we saw a coyote come running across the road in front of us with a bird in its mouth. They have to eat, also. A roadrunner went dashing along a path parallel to our road, and a huge flock of red-winged blackbirds flew in formation making maneuvers in unison. What impressed me



the most was the fact that we saw all this in about 20 minutes. A visit to the Bosque is a real must to any birder.

A videotape of the above small adventure can be seen at regular meetings of the Central New Mexico Audubon Society.

Now for the bad news.

As I was typing this short newsletter, I received a phone call from a concerned birder and she mentioned that a Whooping Crane was found at Bosque del Apache with several lead pellets in its body. The bird is in very poor health and is now in the care of an Albuquerque veterinarian trained in handling wildlife. Let us hope we do not lose a Whooping Crane and let us hope we find the thoughtless person that fired the gun. It has also come to my attention there are other missing Whoopers. A thoughtless shooter or a steel mill are unacceptable.

Recently I paid a visit to the Sierra Club and mentioned the steel mill problem. The Sierra Club is also against the proposed building of the steel mill near Bosque del Apache. I am now asking for other conservation groups to join with Audubon and Sierra Club to stop the building of a steel mill near Bosque del Apache. I know many Audubon members are also members of other conservation groups, so please speak out and let's unite in a common effort.

Some time ago I mentioned we should write to our public officials about the proposed steel mill. Have you written yet?

What does it mean when we no longer show concern for a piece of pristine land or cannot see the beauty of a flock of birds on a sunset sky? I feel Henry Beston best describes this loss: "When the Pleiades and the wind in the grass are no longer a part of the human spirit, a part of very flesh and bone, man becomes, as it were, a kind of cosmic outlaw, having neither the completeness and integrity of the animal nor the birthright of a true humanity."  
—Vic Brown



## ONE OF "OUR" WHOOPING CRANES DIES OF LEAD POISONING

### NAS Urges End to Hunting on the Bosque NWR

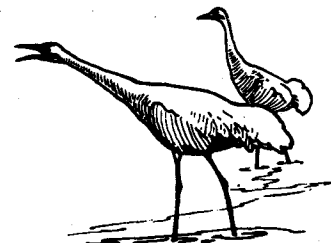
Thanks to fine coverage by our newspapers and local TV stations, the death of the crane should be no surprise. The fact that the Whooper had been wounded by gunshot was also well reported.

What has not been brought out in the media is the effect of the Snow Goose hunts on the Whooping Cranes in the Bosque del Apache NWR, aside from the ever-present danger of shotgun fire. With each of the four succeeding hunts, more Whoopers move off the Refuge to widely scattered locations up and down the Rio Grande Valley, thus increasing the danger to the cranes from power lines, shotguns, predators, etc. As of the last hunt, only five of the 28 cranes in the Valley were on the Refuge. Given sufficient food on the Refuge, an end to hunting would allow more Whooping Cranes to winter safely on the Refuge where they can be carefully watched.

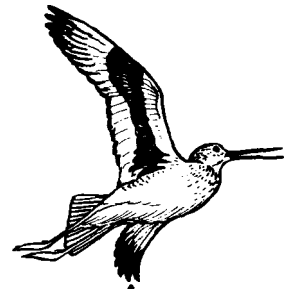
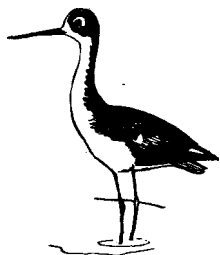
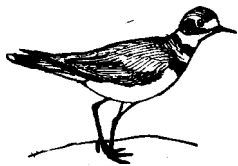
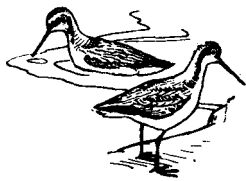
According to Dede Armentrout, Vice-President and Southwest Regional Representative of the National Audubon Society: "The confirmation of a shotgun-wounded Whooping Crane collected at the Bosque del Apache NWR on January 21 causes us (NAS) grave concern.

"We are prepared to demand an end to Snow Goose hunting on the Bosque Refuge and will heighten our efforts to convince the State Game and Fish Department of the need to immediately institute hunter education programs to prevent future shootings."

Let's do all we can to protect this magnificent bird.



SHOREBIRDS



H E G B S G E L W O L L E Y R E T A E R G A A  
 I R E D E N O T S N R U T Y D D U R J K R M M  
 C E T I W A N D E R I N G T A T T L E R E L E  
 U P I P E R T O O C D A T T R E L M K R V N R  
 R I K P S N O T S N R U T Y D D U R I E O D I  
 L P S E T O E S A N D P I P E R R C L V L O C  
 E N P R E N P R E T E W A D E R A F L O P N A  
 W R O D R I B F R U S I Q V O N I R D L D L N  
 E E T U N T N O S Q S L O R O O L U E P E I A  
 L T T N S G E L W O L L E Y R E S S E L T N V  
 R S E K A Y C K A W P E S V T E T U R O A U O  
 U E D L N Z K A N Y N T B U U F I O N C M D C  
 C W S I D E R G W X E I R L R F L K R A L E E  
 D A A N P H I O I R Z T B U B F D D E J A P T  
 E D N M I L N X C K L D S O I E B R R E P I P  
 L E D N P S Z A O K I L L E R N P I O R I P S  
 L R P V E U T T T I W D O G D E L B R A M I L  
 I W I X R C E K Q Y E P I N S R Z E A D E T E  
 B W P C H F A C U R L O W I G W H G E C S B R  
 G R E E N B L A C K N E C K E D S T I L T I T  
 N E R Q E P O L N A M Y G L K E J W I L L O T  
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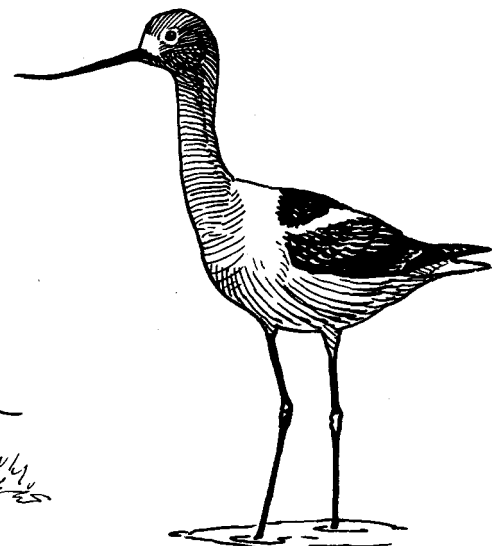
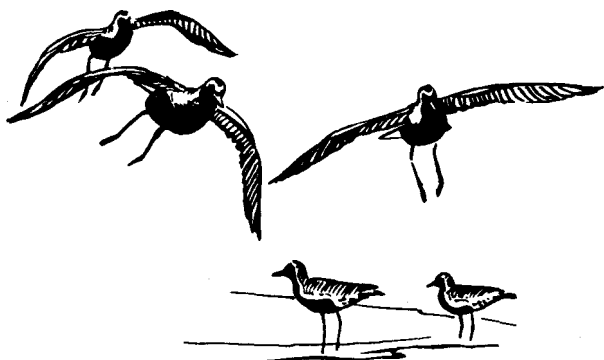
Find the hidden shorebirds in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Unlisted clue hint: WHAT HUNTERS DO

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER  
 SEMIPALMATED PLOVER  
 GREATER YELLOWLEGS  
 WANDERING TATTLER  
 LESSER YELLOWLEGS  
 BLACK-NECKED STILT

SNOWY PLOVER  
 SURFBIRD (2)  
 DOTTREL  
 RED KNOT  
 DUNLIN  
 WILLET  
 RUDDY TURNSTONE

SPOTTED SANDPIPER  
 WESTERN SANDPIPER  
 LONG-BILLED CURLEW  
 LEAST SANDPIPER  
 AMERICAN AVOCET  
 MARBLED GODWIT



RESULTS OF CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Below are the totals for species seen on the three Christmas Bird Counts sponsored by CNMAS during the holidays. CBC's are in many ways the highlight of the birding year throughout the country, indeed, the continent. Well over a thousand counts are conducted each year, from the Alaskan Arctic to the Panamanian Tropics. Such a large volume of data understandably requires considerable effort and time to combine and will not be available until late summer in American Birds. Thanks to the cooperation of the compilers of three counts, Jim Karo (Albuquerque Count), Chuck Hundertmark (Bosque del Apache Count), and Kay Anderson (Sandia Mountain Count) and Editor Evelyn Price I have been able to provide CNMAS members with the results now instead of waiting six months. Enjoy browsing the results and consider joining in next year! Participation is still much lighter here than in similarly sized Audubon Chapters in other parts of the country; it would be nice to really get good coverage of the count circles and see just how well we can do.

SPECIES	ALB.	BOSQ.	SAND.
Pied-billed Grebe	2	9	
Eared Grebe		26	
Double-crested Cormorant		7	
Olivaceous Cormorant		22	
American Bittern		1	
Great Blue Heron	19	40	
Great Egret		4	
Black-crowned Night Heron		5	
Tundra Swan		*	
Snow Goose	*	28600	
Canada Goose	307	450	
Wood Duck	*		
Green-winged Teal	11	500	
Mallard	1353	7500	1
Northern Pintail	1	900	
Northern Shoveler		1100	
Gadwall	15	800	
American Wigeon	23	80	
Canvasback	3		
Ring-necked Duck	30	*	
Bufflehead		19	
Hooded Merganser		3	
Common Merganser	30	24	
Ruddy Duck		59	
Bald Eagle		5	

SPECIES	ALB.	BOSQ.	SAND.
Northern Harrier	9	49	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	3	
Cooper's Hawk	3	8	1
Northern Goshawk	2		
Accipiter species		1	1
Red-tailed Hawk	21	39	1
Ferruginous Hawk	*	1	
Rough-legged Hawk		2	
Golden Eagle		1	
American Kestrel	18	10	3
Prairie Falcon	*		
falcon species (large)			1
Ring-necked Pheasant	17	11	
Wild Turkey		31	
Gambel's Quail	54	182	
Common Moorhen		1	
American Coot	20	245	
Sandhill Crane		10220	
Whooping Crane		5	
Killdeer	5	59	
Greater Yellowlegs		3	
Western Sandpiper		3	
Long-billed Dowitcher		*	
Common Snipe		3	
Bonaparte's Gull		8	
Ring-billed Gull	8	5	
Herring Gull		1	
Rock Dove	294		10
Mourning Dove	9	94	*
Greater Roadrunner	7	6	
Great Horned Owl	2	1	1
Belted Kingfisher	12	5	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	*		2
Williamson's Sapsucker	2		1
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	4	6	1
Downy Woodpecker	5		
Hairy Woodpecker	1	3	2
Northern (Red-sh.) Flicker	148	63	62
Black Phoebe	5	4	
Say's Phoebe	3	9	
Horned Lark	390	322	8
Steller's Jay			33
Scrub Jay	35	2	58
Pinyon Jay			98
Clark's Nutcracker			2
American Crow	4074	1	26
Common Raven	25		16
raven species		1	
Black-capped Chickadee	11		
Mountain Chickadee			37
Plain Titmouse	18		10
Verdin		1	
Bushtit	50	1	96

SPECIES	ALB.	BOSQ.	SAND.
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4		18
White-breasted Nuthatch	4		
Brown Creeper	*	*	5
Rock Wren	2	1	
Canyon Wren	3		6
Bewick's Wren	12	2	5
Marsh Wren	2	18	
Golden-crowned Kinglet			15
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	17	3	11
gnatcatcher species		1	
Western Bluebird	40		217
Mountain Bluebird	35		82
Townsend's Solitaire	30	2	34
Hermit Thrush	4		1
American Robin	265	1	879
Northern Mockingbird			2
Sage Thrasher	5		
Crissal Thrasher	2	9	2
Water Pipit	4	*	
Cedar Waxwing	2		1
Loggerhead Shrike	1	33	
European Starling	2829	381	23
Yellow-rumped Warbler	75		2
Pyrrhuloxia		2	
Green-tailed Towhee		1	
Rufous-sided Towhee	76	14	39
Brown Towhee	21	1	29
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	2		2
American Tree Sparrow	2	1	
Brewer's Sparrow		4	
Black-throated Sparrow	1		
Sage Sparrow	*	70	
Savannah Sparrow		8	
Fox Sparrow	1		
Song Sparrow	83	32	
Lincoln's Sparrow	1		
Swamp Sparrow	1		
White-throated Sparrow	2	4	
White-crowned Sparrow	373	1566	31
Dark-eyed Junco (unid)	573		247
Slate-colored			2
Oregon	316	1122	518
Gray-headed	15	13	663
Red-winged Blackbird	27	4855	
Western Meadowlark	118	165	
meadowlark species		24	
Yellow-headed Blackbird		252	
Brewer's Blackbird		120	
Great-tailed Grackle	40	50	
blackbird species		1415	
Pine Grosbeak			10
Cassin's Finch	30		206
House Finch	83	153	42

SPECIES	ALB.	BOSQ.	SAND.
Red Crossbill			18
Pine Siskin	45	460	175
Lesser Goldfinch	10	88	
American Goldfinch	51	322	1
Evening Grosbeak	*		4
House Sparrow	271	50	2
<hr/>			
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	12528	62807	3767
NO. OF SPECIES	81	91	52
ADDITIONAL RACES	1	1	2
ADDITIONAL FORMS		1	1
ADDITIONAL SPECIES SEEN			
COUNT WEEK (+3 days)	8	5	1
[marked with * above]			

A combined total of 137 species were seen on the three count days. Four more species were seen during count week but not on one of the counts. Winter birding in central New Mexico can be pretty good! Get out and enjoy. Dale Stahlecker



SHOREBIRDS

Solution

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S G E L W O L L E Y R E T A E R G A
E N O T S N R U T Y D D U R R M M
W A N D E R I N G T A T T L E R E E
E K R V R
S I O I
S T R C L L C
P E W E A L P A
W O D R I B F R U S I V N D D N
E T N L O O E E A
L T S G E L W O L L E Y R E S S E L T V
R E A P E S R O A O
U D N Y T U N M C
C S D W E R K L E
D A P O R F D A T
E N I N C E B P
L D P S A R I I
L P E T T I W D O G D E L B R A M L
I I R C D E E
B P H S R
G E E B L A C K N E C K E D S T I L T T
N R T O
O L L E A S T S A N D P I P E R N I L N U D
    
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Answer to unlisted clue: KILLDEER

MOUNTAIN LION DECISION SOON

The moment of decision on mountain lion policy is just around the corner. By the time you read this article, the Department of Game and Fish will have made its recommendations on cougar and other big game regulations to the State Game Commission. It is up to the commissioners to make the final decision on what the regulations will be.

Mountain lion kills in New Mexico have increased markedly in recent years. In the past decade we have killed as many cougars as in the total preceding half-century. The average take in the last three years has been double that of the early 1970s, and in addition, hunter success ratios have dropped dramatically. The weight of these and other facts suggests that lion populations are declining in many regions of the state. With this evidence in hand, we hope that the Commission will not bow to pressure from ranchers and hunting guides to make merely cosmetic changes in cougar hunting regulations.

Now is the time to send your statement to a Commission member, urging him or her to enact conservation regulations for the cougar, including a shortened hunting season, reduced bag limit, and most important, the establishment of permanent refuge areas throughout the state where cougar hunting is prohibited. It is also very important to make a strong showing at the Commission hearing on February 23 or 24 in Santa Fe. Car pool transportation will be available from Albuquerque. Please call the Sierra Club office for details (265-5506).

Selected NM State Game Commissioners:

Mr. J. W. Jones  
8800 Susan Ave., S.E.  
Albuquerque, N.M. 87123

Mr. Harold Olson  
Director, NMDGF  
State Capitol  
Santa Fe, N.M. 87503

--Courtesy of the Sierra Club

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SPOT?

Have you a favorite birding spot you could share with others? Hart Schwarz, Field Trip Chairman, says: "We are always in need of people willing to lead field trips. If you are interested in this activity or have any questions about it, please call Hart at 266-1810."

Hart really outdid himself this month with exciting field trips. Let's keep the ball rolling.

ROSS' RAVINS

Hi Folks! Here we are well into 1984, the Christmas Bird Counts are behind us, but not forgotten. We are into the season for feeding and watering the winter birds and awaiting the arrival of the first spring migrants. All of this brings a number of things to mind.

First the Christmas Bird Counts. It is not my intention to dwell too much on specific results. (I understand these are covered elsewhere in this issue of the Owl.) From talking to the other compilers, it appears that this was an average or above year on all three counts, although the weather for the Sandia Mountains Count could have been more pleasant. While some interesting observations were made, none were especially outstanding, and no "first time ever" count species were found. Several species usually tallied were not seen. Sometimes what isn't seen is more interesting, curious, or significant than what is seen. I believe all of us encountered some of these cases. All the details for these counts and all others in the country (and out) will be published in the July 1984 issue of American Birds. If you are interested, single copies of that issue may be obtained at \$9.50 each from AMERICAN BIRDS, 950 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Of interest, at least to me, was the fact that not a single feeder-watcher participated in the Sandia Mountains Count for the first time in the 13 years I have

been involved in it. Of even more interest is the fact that in the same period, in only one year was there a feeder-watcher on the Albuquerque Count.

I have often wondered about this. Here we have a CBC circle that includes most of Albuquerque north of UNM, east of the Volcano Cliffs, south of the highway junction northwest of Corrales, and west of Tramway, where the majority of our members live, and we've had only one feeder-watcher one year in the last 13 years. Could it be that most of you didn't know that you don't have to get out and battle the elements from daylight until dark in order to participate in a CBC? It is possible to participate by sitting inside, in the comfort of your own home, and count the birds that come to your feeder for as long or as short a time as you wish, and still contribute valuable inputs to the count. This is also a good way to find birds in the count area, during the count week (3 days before and/or after the count day), but not seen on the count day. Birds missed by the field parties can be, and often are, found in this way. Surely we have some members who regularly feed birds, at least during the winter, who would like to do this.

Another possibility is to get together with one or more birding friends and census suitable areas such as parks, cemeteries, golf courses, school campuses, river or ditch banks near your home. After all, the very first CBC was done by a small group in Central Park, N.Y.C., in 1900. Of course, if you plan to do this, you should discuss it with the compiler for the count area within which your proposed census area lies, and work out the necessary details.

Feeding and watching bird feeders during the "off" birding season can yield other interesting results. Some of the most interesting discoveries of rare bird visitors were made at home bird feeders. Remember, wild birds need not only seed, but water, suet, and gravel, and of course resting and escape cover. Small

bits of fresh or dried fruit are also relished by some kinds of birds. In theory at least, provided you are in an area where there are birds nearby, the more variety of food provided, the more likely you are to attract a variety of birds. Have you considered buying milo, millet, and sunflower seed (oil seed or large striped variety) in 50# lots from your local feed store? Generally, it will be cheaper and better quality than you get in the ready-mixed seed sold in drug or grocery stores, and you can mix it in the proportions you find most suitable.

Speaking of rare birds, we've had a couple exciting reports lately. Jeff Hill, one of our biology grad students at UNM, reported seeing what he thought to be a STREAK-BACKED ORIOLE at Bosque del Apache on January 10. He was in hope that someone would be able to relocate it and verify the sighting. This would be a first sighting of the Mexican native species for the state if it could be verified. Hart Schwarz, Dale Stahlaker, and I all went down and spent quite a while trying to locate the bird in the area where it was seen, but were unsuccessful in spotting it. We also had a report from Bill Howe that a friend of his traveling across the state the last week in December had spotted a first-year GLAUCOUS GULL at Lake Sumner among a flock of HERRING GULLS. If the report could be verified, it would be only the third record of that species in the state.

Other recent reports include TREE and WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS, and single FOX, FIELD, and an immature HARRIS SPARROW at or near Pat Basham's place in Socorro. She also has RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEES, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS, and a HERMIT THRUSH. Paul Steel also reported an immature HARRIS SPARROW at the Rio Grande Nature Center, and a TREE SPARROW in San Gabriel Park. There have been up to five BALD EAGLES and 3 GOLDEN EAGLES at Bosque del Apache, along with four GREAT EGRETS and at least two HOODED MERGANSERS. There was also a female DOWNY WOODPECKER there on January 13, which is always a rare





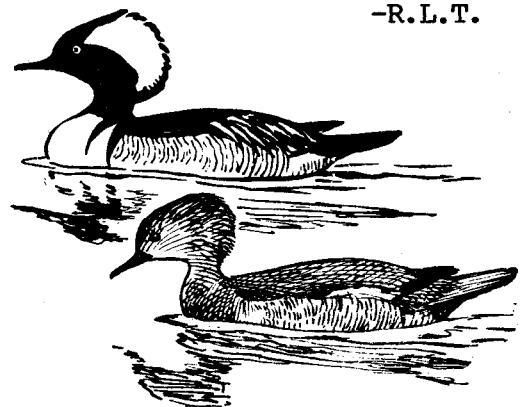
bird there near the extreme southern limit of its range. The most recent report of a rare bird at Bosque was a TUNDRA SWAN on January 16. Two adult BALD EAGLES were seen in the Estancia Valley during the National BALD EAGLE Survey, and 3-5 GOLDEN EAGLES over the Manzanos the same day. Bitter Lake also had a GREAT EGRET and four HOODED MERGANSERS on January 7. Unusual was a NORTHERN HARRIER at Cedar Crest on the day of the Sandia Mountains CBC, and three each GREATER YELLOWLEGS and WESTERN SANDPIPERS at Bosque del Apache on the day of the CBC there. On the day before the CBC I saw a SAVANNAH SPARROW and a TREE SPARROW at Bosque. Unusual so late in the year was an ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER in my yard on December 21. A SHARP-SHINNED HAWK made a pass at the sparrows on my feeder on January 13. Paul Steel saw two PYRRHULOXIA and a BLACK PHOEBE at Bosque del Apache January 7. Surely some of you bird other places than Bitter Lakes and Bosque del Apache; how about giving me a call and sharing your findings with our fellow members?

Remember Dave Lange, who was president of this chapter in 1977-79? In a note on his Christmas card he mentioned that he was one of the fortunate people who were privileged to get down to Nantucket and see the WESTERN REEF HERON that spent the summer there. More recently he enjoyed the rare spectacle of watching a GYRFALCON attacking a SNOWY OWL at the Plum Island NWR. He participated in the Nantucket CBC on January 1, 1983, and was among those who saw a JACKDAW, many KING BIDERS, And BLACK-LEGGED KITTYWAKES as well as RAZORBILL and BLACK GULLIMOT. He discovered a rare bird there, which would have been very common here -- a WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW. He is in town this week, and I had a most enjoyable chat with him last night. He would like all of you to know there are one-day pelagic trips sponsored by a local group once a month from May through October. If you can get over that way (Massachusetts), these trips are exciting. I speak from experience!

The most recent figures on WHOOPING CRANE numbers show the world population of Whoopers is now 144 birds. On December 9, 1983, there were 75 at Aransas, 68 adults and 7 young. The Bosque del Apache, "Our Whooping Cranes," totals 32, of which 19 were hatched this past spring at Gray's Lake. There are a total of 34 captive birds at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland, two at the San Antonio Zoo, and one at the International Crane Foundation in Wisconsin. When the Whooping Crane Conservation Association was founded to foster the recovery of these birds, the world population was less than 20 birds. See me if you are interested in joining this remarkable organization. They will be holding their annual meeting at Grand Island, Nebraska, March 20-22, in hopes of observing the spring migration of Whoopers along the Platte River.

Finally a reminder that migrating birds frequently fly into picture windows, cars, or stationary objects and are injured or killed. If those birds can be salvaged while they are still alive, or before they become badly decomposed, they can often be rehabilitated or saved as scientific or teaching or study specimens. I understand UNM no longer makes it a practice to collect specimens. This makes it more important that available specimens be salvaged. For that reason I have once again renewed my state and federal permits to pick up and transport dead, injured, sick, orphaned or otherwise incapacitated birds. Call me (265-8962) and I'll be glad to pick up such specimens and see that they are properly taken care of, as appropriate to their condition. If you have any bird news to share, please give me a call. So long and good birding to all of you.

-R.L.T.



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