

BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

APRIL - MAY 1986

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.

SUNDAY, APRIL 13: Spend the day with Steve Hoffman (work 766-3972; home 242-0291) watching and counting migrating raptors along the western face of the southern Sandias. Many species are possible, including Osprey and Swainson's Hawk. Since the 1000 foot climb to the lookout is somewhat strenuous, plenty of time will be allowed to cover the two-mile stretch. Bring water and lunch and meet at 7:15 A.M. at the Mountain View Inn parking lot (Tramway and Central). In case of very unpleasant weather, the trip will be postponed until the following Sunday. Feel free to call Steve to confirm date or regarding any other queries you might have.

MONDAY, APRIL 14, BOARD MEETING

The CNMAS board will meet at 7:30 pm in the home of David and Donna Broudy, 510 Laguna, SW. All members are invited to attend. All members are welcome. Your input would be appreciated.

THURSDAY, APRIL 17 - Regular Meeting

Dustin Huntington, a past president of CNMAS and present president of the New Mexico Ornithological Society, will present a program on his recent trip to Kenya, Africa. He has taken many slides and always gives an outstanding program.

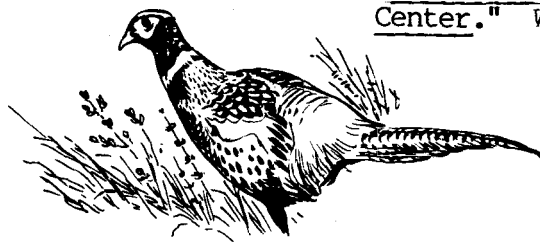
SATURDAY & SUNDAY, APRIL 19-20 - N.M. Audubon Council Meeting and Field Trip

Saturday, 1 pm - Meeting at NMIMT Campus
7 pm - Dinner

Sunday, 6:30 am - Field trip to the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. Call the Prices (831-5028) or any of the Council members listed in Directory on back page for more information. Everyone is welcome.

SATURDAY, APRIL 26 - Spring Celebration, Randall Davey Center

Spring is coming, and to welcome it the Randall Davey Audubon Center has planned a day of outdoor activities. John James Audubon's birthday, April 26, has been chosen for our Celebration of Spring. We will be premiering the Center's new Interpretive Trail Guide and the video, "Birds of the Randall Davey Audubon Center." Wildlife artists Brian Long and

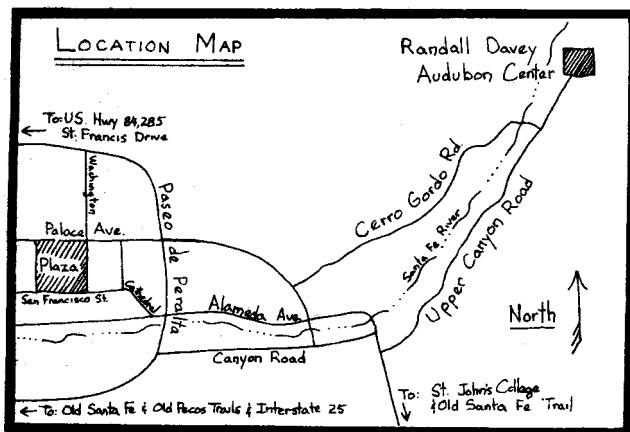


Dick Hanna will be displaying their beautiful water colors and pen and ink drawings, as well. Dick is the illustrator/designer of our Center's brochure and new interpretive guide.

Other activities on April 26 include:

- 9 am - Bird walk with Pat Insley.
- 11 am - Children's Workshop, "Make Your Own Birdfeeder."
- 1 pm - Plant walk with Bill Isaacs.
- 9 am) Bird feed and native plant seed
- 4 pm) sale. Gift and bookshop will be open with many new offerings.

Call Marge Carrick (266-0191), Evelyn Price (831-5028), or the Center (988-1762) for more information.



SUNDAY, APRIL 27 - Wildlife Film:
"Animal Antics," Kent Durden

Kent Durden knows animals and their behavior intimately. Come behind the scenes as he films wildlife players for movies and television programs. The delightful animals in his book, "A Fine and Peaceful Kingdom," come alive as he records their antics. The famous golden Eagle, Lady from "Gifts of an Eagle," appears in never before released footage in comical and entertaining sequences. Otters, raccoons, flying squirrels, prairie dogs, the bobcat, coatimundi, mountain lion, sandhill crane, trumpeter swan, and many other outdoor creatures are featured in Kent Durden's humorous and lively film encounters with our wildlife neighbors.

FRIDAY, SATURDAY, & SUNDAY - MAY 2, 3, 4,
BIG BIRD BASH, Silver City, New Mexico.

See enclosed pink flyer for details.

SUNDAY, MAY 11 - Annual Spring Count

If you wish to see large numbers of species in their finest nuptial attire, this is the premiere event of the season. Call Dustin or Sue Huntington (836-4109) if you want to count in the Valley; or meet Hart Schwarz (266-1810) at 7:30 am in the Mountain View Inn parking lot if you prefer the Sandias. Bring water and lunch.

THURSDAY, MAY 15 - Annual Meeting & Potluck

Come celebrate the 15th anniversary of CNMAS. Honored guests will be past officers and members. The Washburn Award will be presented. Election of officers, door prizes, and our Regional Vice President, Dr. Dede Armentrout, are among the expected treats. Potluck at 6:30. Bring food for yourselves and six more, plus plates and utensils.

Mary Lou Arthur will be collecting and wrapping door prizes. If you have "white elephants," call her at 256-7359 or bring them to the April meeting. Mark and Margie Amato (298-3227), our hospitality chairmen, are in charge. Call them if you can help or if you know of a former member who should be contacted.

SATURDAY, MAY 17 - Dedication Picnic

For our May Birthday Celebration we would like to dedicate our trail with a picnic. Bring your lunch and join us. We'll arrive at 10 am at the La Cueva Picnic Area. To get to the trail and picnic grounds, take Tramway to the Juan Tabo picnic area. Turn right at first road and follow it to the picnic grounds.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, May 24 & 25: Overnight camping trip to Heron Lake, a few miles southwest of Chama. Accommodations will be available, but bring sleeping bag, food, and utensils. Northern N.M. birds should provide a welcome contrast to the familiar

ones in our own neighborhood. Participation will be limited to about 10 or 12 people; so if you are interested in this exploratory venture, make your reservation with trip leader Hart Schwarz (266-1810) as soon as possible. Departure time will be about 7:30 am on Saturday.

SATURDAY JUNE 7: Half-day beginners' field trip with Karen Peterson (296-6262) to Capulin Springs in the Sandias. A fine variety of montane species from the resplendent Western Tanager to the demure Hermit Thrush can be observed here at close range. Meet at 8 am in the Mountain View Inn parking lot.

COMING ATTRACTIONS:

July 8 - August 4: American Birding Association Convention; Tucson, Arizona.

August 4 - 10: Rocky Mountain Regional Conference, NAS; Sierra Vista, AZ.

CNMAS - FILM COMMITTEE AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

Again this year, our Chapter is awarding scholarships to the Audubon Ecology Camp in the West. The camp is located in the Wind River Range of Wyoming. The scholarship recipients will study ecology, particularly of the West, and bring back their new knowledge to us and to young people in the schools.

All three recipients are APS teachers. Cindy Simmons is a science teacher currently on loan to UNM. Rolene C. Barnett is an English literature and language arts teacher at Jefferson Middle School, and Katherine Wieseman teaches life, physical, and earth sciences at Hays Middle School. Alternates will be Elaine Prairie, teacher in the gifted program at Highland High; and Julie Wurner, a physical education teacher at Atrisco Elementary School. The Committee was pleased with the quality of the applicants.



CONSERVATION NOTES

Reauthorization of the Superfund: The House has passed a fairly strong reauthorization bill, but the Senate version leaves a lot desired. Senate Bill 52, called the Superfund Improvement Act of 1985 (sic), contains an amendment introduced by Senator Baucus of Montana which would weaken this very important legislation. The Bill is now in Conference Committee and we need prompt action to forestall adverse effects on the environment. Under the amendment, much of the toxic waste runoff from mine sites would be exempt from cleanup under the Superfund. There are at least 100 abandoned uranium mines in New Mexico, many of which are actually eroding into surface water drainages. Contaminants include heavy metals as well as radioactive decay products of uranium. If the amendment is passed, it would be impossible for the sites to qualify for cleanup using Superfund monies. Please write at once or call Senator Domenici to let him know the Audubon Society is opposed to the amendment.

National Wildlife Refuge System EIS: Now's our chance! The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is preparing a new environmental impact statement for operation of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Public comments are being solicited in regard to wildlife management, forest management, agricultural activities, recreational activities, and more on the refuges. A public meeting

was scheduled to be held in Albuquerque on April 2, 1986, as one step the FWS will use to gather facts and opinions for consideration in developing the draft EIS. Written comments are due by May 3, 1986, and should be sent to:

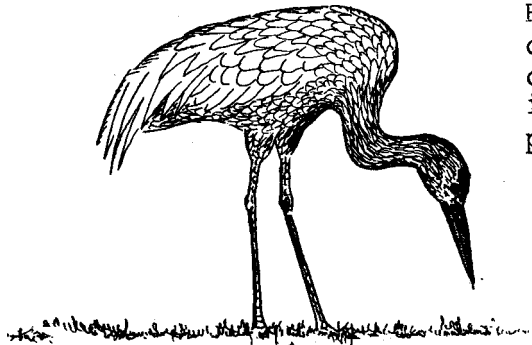
National Wildlife Refuge EIS Team
U.S. Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Washington, D.C. 20240

No doubt we will have another opportunity to comment during the review process of the draft EIS.

Meeting on the Outdoors: Mark your calendars for the 2nd New Mexico Meeting on the Outdoors, which will be held June 27, 28, and 29 at the Frank Rand Boy Scout Camp which is located up toward Chimayo. Look for informational leaflets and news announcements for more details. The next Burrowing Owl will have additional information, also.

THE CNMAS RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The CNMAS Research Committee was established in October of 1985 by the CNMAS Board of Directors to provide financial, organizational, and moral support for appropriate research on New Mexico wildlife. The Committee and the Board have and will work together to encourage, fund, and solicit tax deductible contributions to fund such research. The first research project supported by CNMAS is the study on crane migration summarized below. The Board, with the recommendation of the Committee, also provided funds for the ongoing study of spring hawk migration in the Sandias, on which an interim report also appears in this Burrowing Owl. The Committee encourages persons considering research on New Mexico wildlife to work with us. Donations to the Committee will be gladly accepted. The two following articles are reports of the activities sponsored by the Research Committee.



THE 1985 FALL CRANE MIGRATION

During the fall of 1985, CNMAS, along with the New Mexico Audubon Council, Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society, and the South-eastern New Mexico Audubon Society, supported my study of the migration of Sandhill and Whooping Cranes between the San Luis Valley, Colorado, and the wintering grounds south of Albuquerque. The principal goal of the study was to document use of the area north of Albuquerque by cranes as an overnight stopover and to determine factors that caused cranes to stop instead of making the journey in one day.

Rod Drewien reports that there are an estimated 21,800 Sandhill Cranes in the Rocky Mountain population. There are also between 30 and 40 Whooping Cranes from the experimental flock associated with the native Sandhill Cranes. Nearly 5,500 Sandhill Cranes, or about 25% of the total population, were counted arriving at or departing from overnight roosts along the Rio Grande and Jemez Rivers during the fall of 1985.

Weather plays an important part in the dynamics of migration. Those cranes migrating with tailwinds, probably most of the remaining 75% of the Rocky Mountain population, completely overflowed the study area, reaching the wintering grounds in one day. Approximately 4,000 cranes were observed passing over Albuquerque, often 1000 to 2000 feet above the city, in mid-to late afternoon. Many more cranes probably migrated over Albuquerque in the afternoon but were not recorded. Large flights occurred after the passage of cold fronts; the cranes get a "push" from the northerly winds that occur after frontal passage. Thus, if cranes pick the right weather to migrate in, they can easily make the journey from Colorado to central New Mexico in one day.

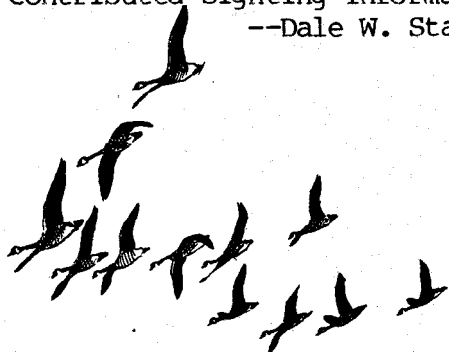
However, impending bad weather can induce cranes to migrate under less than ideal conditions. Cranes can sense an approaching front, probably by changes in air pressure, and may choose to leave Colorado

ahead of the storm. It is usually sunny several days before a front arrives; this provides thermals cranes use to soar up during migration, and cranes start out from Colorado. However, an approaching front usually has associated light (5-10 mph) southwesterly winds which are against the migrating cranes. Under these conditions cranes are not able to travel as fast or as far, and if a large number of cranes leaves Colorado on such a day, they are likely to arrive in this area late in the day. Rather than fly after dark to reach the wintering grounds, they stopover north of Albuquerque for the night.

Large stopovers of cranes north of Albuquerque occurred twice during the fall of 1985. On the night of October 26, 950 cranes roosted north of Albuquerque; and on November 16, an additional 2,440 cranes stopped there. These cranes were seen over Albuquerque the following mornings (October 27 and November 27, both Sundays - check your notes and see if you witnessed this sight!). These two nights account for 71% of the cranes counted in the primary roost and 63% of all documented roosting cranes in the study area during 43 nights of the study. Both October 26 and November 16 had good but less than ideal migration weather associated with approaching cold fronts.

In summary, the 1985 study documented that a significant portion (25%) of the Rocky Mountain crane population required two days to complete this stage of their fall migration. Further, the weather conditions associated with a "fallout" of cranes north of Albuquerque were documented. Further studies are needed to determine if these conditions can in fact be used to predict when large numbers of cranes will roost north of Albuquerque. Many thanks to all who contributed sighting information.

--Dale W. Stahlecker



1986 SPRING RAPTOR MIGRATION THROUGH THE SANDIA MOUNTAINS

During 1985 a project was initiated to study the spring raptor migration through the Sandia Mountains. Observations from a lookout at the south end of the Sandias produced 2806 migrants of 17 species in 74 days of observations. This spring, daily coverage of the migration began on 11 February and will continue through the first two weeks of May. The Sandia Lookout is the only spring raptor migration study being conducted along the eastern Rocky Mountain flyway, and it is hoped that the daily observations taken this spring, along with those from 1985, will provide valuable baseline data for monitoring future short- and long-term changes in raptor populations along this flyway.

When observations began in February 1986, the Bald and Golden Eagle migrations were already underway. As of 23 March, 32 days of observations had been recorded yielding 555 migrating raptors. Up to this point 299 Golden Eagles (with a single day high of 23 individuals on 20 March) have passed the lookout, comprising 54% of the total migrants observed. While the Golden Eagle migration will begin to slow, the Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned, Cooper's and Red-tailed Hawks are just beginning their migrations north during the last week of March and will peak during the first half of April. Some 600+ Turkey Vultures are expected to pass the lookout before observations end in May.

Species totals as of 23 March: 299 Golden Eagles, 33 Bald Eagles, 111 Red-tailed Hawks, 6 Ferruginous Hawks, 23 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 18 Cooper's Hawks, 8 Goshawks, 18 Prairie Falcons, 13 American Kestrels, 10 Turkey Vultures, and 9 Northern Harriers. Of note were a single Broad-winged and Rough-legged Hawk on 20 and 22 March, respectively. As in 1985, April promises to be our most productive month. Large flights of Turkey Vultures and accipiters are expected, and the first Osprey and Swainson's Hawks will be



observed passing the lookout early in the month.

This year marks the second spring that a contract with the N.M. Department of Game and Fish is providing funding through the Share with Wildlife Fund to conduct the daily counts. We would also like to thank the Central N.M. Audubon Society for its financial support of the project for the second year. Anyone interested in taking part in observations during the remainder of this spring's migration can contact Jim Daly at 298-2748 after 6:30 p.m.

--Jim Daly & Steve Hoffman

CNMAS GIVES AWARDS FOR SCIENCE FAIR

Each year, CNMAS gives cash awards to students whose projects are judged to be especially worthy in the environmental, conservation areas. Judges Elizabeth Broemel and John Durrie chose the following students for awards:

\$25 each to David Hayden, St. Pius High School; and Tom Sebring, Fatima Middle School.

Junior Awards: \$15 each to Cindy Mercer, Los Lunas High School; and Kimberly Williams.

\$10 each to Kevin Wainwright; and Tricia Austin, Estancia Elementary.

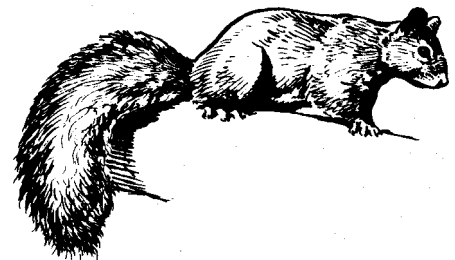
TRAIL NEWS

In April we will spend a few weekends maintaining and repairing our trails in the mountains. These trails are the La Cueva, Spar, and Tramway Trails -- approximately 2 1/4 miles. The work consists of building water breaks and raking and removing stones and large rocks. Please call if you would like to help us at 298-3227.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP

We would like to thank the following Audubon members for donating their time, money, or baked goods for our refreshments at our past meetings: Edith Johnson, Jim Karo, Bob and Georgia Costleger, Nancy Briggs, and Mr. and Mrs. Lagant.

--Mark and Margie Amato
Hospitality Chairpersons



ROSS' RAVIN'S
By Ross L. Teuber

Hi Folks! It seems only yesterday we were talking about the Christmas Bird Counts and looking forward to the first sightings of WHOOPING CRANES moving northward to their summering grounds. Now here we are smack, dab into spring migration. There are several items of interest that we should mention before we get into the reports of recent sightings.

Once again it is time to get your hummingbird feeders up and ready for the arrival of the first individuals. Remember, a 4:1 mixture of water to sugar, brought just to a boil and cooled, is just right for our little visitors. Put out only one feeder and a small amount of syrup until the birds arrive.



Mallards

Then put out amounts in keeping with how much is used. Not more than a two-day supply should be put out at any one time, and wash the feeder thoroughly between fillings, just with hot water and a bottle brush. DO NOT USE DETERGENT OR CLOROX!!!

Unfortunately, many migrants fly into picture windows or other solid objects, especially when they are migrating at night, a common occurrence. Sometimes they are only stunned; and if wrapped in a light cloth wrapping and kept in a box in a dark quiet place, they will recover in two to three hours. Should they start to recover while being handled, sometimes just a few drops of Gatorade from a medicine dropper will help to speed their recovery. WARNING! DO NOT FORCE IT. IF THEY NEED IT, THEY WILL TAKE IT.

Should they fail to recover, once again I have renewed my Federal and State permits, and if you will call (265-8962), I will be glad to come, pick them up, and take them to the UNM Department of Biology, or make other proper disposal as is appropriate. Dead birds should be handled gently; smooth the feathers back and drop them head first into a paper cone. A single sheet doubled, or half-sheet doubled makes a cone about the right size for songbirds. Larger birds such as owls may require two or three full-size sheets, for strength. The cone should be taped together and labeled with the name of the bird (if you can identify it), a brief statement of what happened to it, the date, time, and location where it was found, and your name and address, as the donor. Then slip the whole thing into a plastic bag, seal it, and put it in your freezer until I can come and get it.

The Birding for Beginners class seems to be coming along nicely. We have an attendance of 20-22 each evening, and have now completed one-half of the lectures and two of the five field trips. Most of the feedback has been positive, and so far no one has thrown any rotten vegetables, so it must be going tolerably

well. On our first field trip we logged 25 species of birds, including DOWNY WOODPECKER, HOODED MERGANSER, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, RUFIOUS-SIDED TOWHEE, STELLER'S JAYS, and KILLDEER. On the second field trip we saw and identified about the same number of species. The highlights of the trip were GREAT HORNED OWL and BLACK PHOEBE. There was also a good deal of interest in a GREAT BLUE HERON, which put on a good display for us. Classes will continue through April, with lectures each Wednesday evening from 7-9 p.m., and field trips on April 5, 12, and 19.

The latest word on the endangered CALIFORNIA VULTURES, according to Natural History Magazine, only five of these birds still exist in the wild. This reflects a dramatic drop of 15 wild birds, including two breeding pairs in 1985. On January 18, 1986, one of the two remaining wild females died of lead poisoning, after having been trapped and taken to the San Diego Animal Park for treatment. There are now 21 of these condors in captivity, 10 at the San Diego facility and 11 in Los Angeles. The future for the survival of this species is indeed dark. The really sad part of the whole story is, while the fate of the entire population of this species hangs by a slender thread, "conservation" (????-These question marks are mine!) groups and wildlife administrators quibble over whether the few remaining wild birds should be trapped and kept in zoo facilities where they can be closely monitored and cared for, or left in the wild to provide wild models to train released, captive raised birds in the art of survival. The acquisition by the U.S. Government of a tract of privately owned land vital to the survival of condors in the wild appears to be the main bone of contention. It seems to me that it's time to forget our differences and save the remaining remnant of wild birds. Under the present administration, the acquisition of the critical tract of land is, at best, doubtful. With at least four adult birds which have already been trapped from the wild, and with all the remaining wild birds having had experience

at subsisting in the wild, it appears to me that we would be better off to capture the remaining wild birds, and when the time comes to release the captive raised birds, release a couple of the remaining and presently captive adults with them. There is no point in acquiring the land if we have no birds to release. If there is no suitable site for release of the birds when the captive population becomes sufficient to insure survival of the species, at least we will have prevented their extinction. A bird in the hand is still worth two in the bush.

There is an interesting article in the April 1986 issue of Natural History on research finding of the ancient history of these birds. It is well worth your time to obtain a copy of this issue and read it. I would also recommend keeping up with the media news releases, including but not limited to your personal copies of Audubon Action. (See the February 1986 issue.) I cannot tell you how to think, but I do urge you to keep informed.

Once again, if you have never been to Silver City to participate in the Big Bird Bash and SWNMAS spring count, and if you can possibly get away for that weekend, by all means try to go. It is a great experience!

Now for an update on reported sightings. On January 11, Paul Steel and I saw both PRAIRIE FALCON and FERRUGINOUS HAWK in the Estancia Valley. PRAIRIE FALCONS were again seen there on January 30. David Dale and "Mac" McHarney saw a single GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE at Bosque del Apache on January 24, and 5 of them near Los Lunas on February 5. In both instances they were mixed in with large flocks of LESSER SNOW GEESE. On February 5, Paul Steel and I also saw a GREATER WHITE-FRONTED, in the company of a large flock of CANADA GEESE, at the B-Square Ranch in Farmington.

On that same three-day trip, which included several locations in the vicinity of Farmington, we saw, among

other things, a number of BALD EAGLES, both adult and immature; many species of ducks, including but not limited to GREEN-WINGED and CINNAMON TEAL, NORTHERN SHOVELER, GADWALL, AMERICAN WIGEON, REDHEAD, RING-NECKED DUCK, GREATER and LESSER SCAUP, many COMMON GOLDENEYE, and COMMON MERGANSER. Most exciting was a beautiful, adult NORTHERN GOSHAWK. Other raptors included NORTHERN HARRIER, RED-TAILED HAWK, FERRUGINOUS HAWK, two GOLDEN EAGLES (adults), and many AMERICAN KESTRELS. We also saw a large flock of RING-BILLED GULLS, and the ubiquitous AMERICAN COOTS, MOURNING DOVES, NORTHERN FLICKERS, HORNED LARKS, SCRUB JAYS, BLACK-BILLED MAGPIES, AMERICAN CROWS, COMMON RAVENS, WESTERN and MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD. Less numerous but still of interest were TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE, SAGE THRASHER, WATER PIPIT, CEDAR WAXWING. Of course, many of the other common resident species were present. All in all, it was a most enjoyable experience, in spite of getting snowed on every night.

Joanne Phillips called to let me know that on February 14-15, "her" GREAT HORNED OWLS were back nesting in the same tree for, I believe, the sixth straight year. By March 10, there was some evidence that the owlets may have hatched. On our BFB field trip on March 22, the old bird was still sitting at the nest.

Dale Stahlecker told me he had had numerous reports of large flocks of SANDHILL CRANES flying north over town. I received no reports of WHOOPING CRANES passing northward as they left for more northerly climes. Some of my notes seem to have mysteriously disappeared. However, although there were 28 to 30 up and down the middle Rio Grande Valley, the peak number on the Bosque del Apache NWR was only 11, just a few days before all of them departed. I believe it was on February 18, my reporter for the Bosque told me he had seen only 5 individuals there. On my last trip to Bosque del Apache, on February 25, there were none there; nor, as nearly as I could determine, were there any at Bernardo or Belen. They apparently did not pause to

stage out of the Belen refuge as they have in years past.

On a trip to Bosque del Apache on March 25, some of the species seen were both DOUBLE CRESTED and OLIVACEOUS CORMORANTS, all three TEAL, REDHEAD, BUFFLEHEAD, and COMMON MERGANSER. Also an adult BALD EAGLER, SHARP-SHINNED and COOPER'S HAWK. Others of interest were KILLDEER, LEAST SANDPIPER, RINGBILLED GULLS, BLACK and SAY'S PHOEBE, CHIPPING, SONG and WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS. At Pat Basham's there were WHITE-THROATED and HARRIS' SPARROWS.

Delores Carlson called on February 26 to tell of a SHARP-SHINNED HAWK that had visited their feeder. She said the BROWN THRASHER listed in the last column was still in the vicinity. Wouldn't it be interesting if there is indeed a pair of these birds, and they have decided to establish residence? We must keep tabs on them and see if perhaps this does happen.

On the NMOS field trip to Shady Lakes and Indian Lakes on March 2, highlights of the trip were a male and two female WOOD DUCKS and an early TURKEY VULTURE. Also seen were the HORNED OWL mentioned several times above, BELTED KINGFISHER, DOWNY WOODPECKER, STELLER'S JAY (still in the Valley!), BROWN CREEPER, RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, YELLOW-RUMPED (AUDUBON'S) WARBLER, and DARK-EYED (SLATE-COLORED RACE) JUNCO. In fact, all three races were seen. Paul Steel also reported seeing a SLATE-COLORED along the Corrales ditches on March 5.

John Durrie called on March 6 to report he and Paul Fitzsimmons had sighted a HARRIS' SPARROW along the Corrales ditches. This went out on the Rare Bird Alert, and at least some of the folks (i.e., Jean Dilley) reported finding it where reported, "just like from the Lane Guides." On the same date, Jim Aubrey reported having seen the first BURROWING OWL at Sandia Base (Sandia Industries now?). On March 8 Paul Steel reported finding the first returning MOUNTAIN PLOVER at the Grasslands Sod Farm.

When I talked to Pat Basham on March 17, she said on the way home from the NMOS meeting she had seen CANVASBACKS at Isleta Marsh, SCALED QUAIL in the fields north of Bernardo; and on March 15, three early TURKEY VULTURES near Socorro.

On the BFB field trip to Rio Grande Nature Center on March 15, at least 25 species of birds were seen, discussed, and identified. Some of the most interesting were a female HOODED MERGANSER, DOWNY WOODPECKER, STELLER'S JAYS, and MOUNTAIN CHICKADEES (still in the Valley), WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, and RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE. In the BRB class on the 19th, Kathleen Killorin reported seeing three WHITE PELICANS at Bosque del Apache on the preceding weekend. Ralph Fitz told me he had also seen these birds there on March 17, as well as a "big flock" of CATTLE EGRETS north of the Refuge. Just as I was wrapping up the writing of this column, Marge Amato called to report she and Mark had seen two pair and a single BURROWING OWL along Southern between Eubank and Wyoming on the way to work yesterday morning.

That about winds it up for this time, and we are right back where we started, smack dab into spring migration. Barring unforeseen emergencies, and if the creek doesn't rise, I hope to get to the revision of the Rare Bird Alert calling chain in the next few weeks. In the meantime, keep your eyes peeled, and if you have any interesting or unusual sightings, let me know (265-8962) and I'll see that they get passed on. So long for now, good luck, and good birding. Will I see you at the BIG BIRD BASH in Silver City on May 3?

--R.L.T.



**APPLICATION FOR JOINT MEMBERSHIP
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AND THE
CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY**

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