

BURROWING OWL



CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY
OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 1994
UPCOMING CHAPTER ACTIVITIES -- MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!!

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

PROGRAMS

OCTOBER 20 - WILDWATCH: Global status of Endangered Species. Educators Steve and Denise Blake traveled for six months during 1993 and 1994 to India and Nepal, documenting and photographing Asia's large mammal habitats, and will bring their findings and adventures to us. Come see and hear first-hand accounts of elephants, tigers, rhinos and lions (oh, my!)

NOVEMBER 10 (One week early, so you won't miss a minute from Festival of the Cranes!) We're thrilled that PHIL NORTON, Manager of the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, will share his vast knowledge of the Refuge's birds, habitat, and wildlife. His beautiful slide show will give us a preview of what to expect at Festival of the Cranes!

FIELD TRIP NEWS AND NOTES

WELCOME! Feathers and flowers to Sei Tokuda and Charlotte Green for stepping forward to share the position of Field Trip Coordinators. Our appreciation is equaled only by our anticipation!

TELL US YOUR FAVORITE PLACE TO SEE BIRDS - By Charlotte Green

Anyone that can help us out with suggestions for good birding trips, let us know. We want to know your favorite place and what birds you've seen there. Please call Charlotte Green at 345-1271, and Sei and I will schedule a trip. You don't have to lead the trip if you don't want to. Of course, we would also appreciate anyone who would like to lead a trip, one we have scheduled or one of your own.

Sat., Oct. 8 - Isleta Marsh and Willie Chavez State Park. Meet at 8:30 at the Physics Parking Lot at Lomas and Yale. Bring lunch; be back about 3:00 p.m. Hope to see Black Necked Stilt and Lewis Woodpecker.

Sat., Oct. 22 - Otero Canyon (the lovely canyon east of Tijeras Canyon and about 3 miles south on old State 14). Meet at 8:30 at Four Hills Shopping Center by Baskin Robbins. Bring lunch; be back about 3:00.

Sat., Nov. 5 - Bosque del Apache. Meet at 8:00 at the Physics Parking lot at Lomas and Yale. Bring lunch. Be back about 4:00 unless you want to stop at the Owl Bar for supper. We'll see lots of water birds and hawks and, if we're lucky, a coyote or deer.

Sat., Nov. 12 - Sandia Mtns., the Crest for Rosy Finches. Meet at 8:00 at the Physics Parking Lot at Lomas and Yale. Bring lunch and dress warmly. Be back about 4:00.

THURSDAY MORNING BIRDING GROUP -- For information on Thursday morning outings to nearby areas, call Tamie Bulow at 298-9116.



OCTOBER ODYSSEY IN THE CIBOLA FOREST

Led by Hart Schwarz (266-1810)
Sponsored by Rio Grande Nature Center (344-7240)

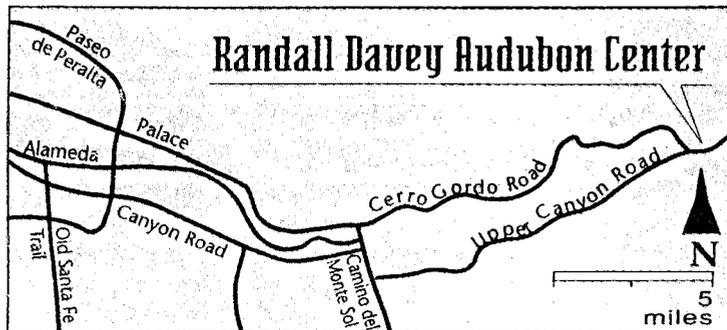
These trips require preregistration and payment of a fee.

Sat., Oct. 1 - North Peak in the Sandias, a five-mile hike.

Sat., Oct. 8 - Bosque Trail to the Crest in the Manzanos, a five-mile hike.

Sat. & Sun., Oct. 15 & 16 - Zuni Mountains & Zuni Mountain Lodge. An overnighter, including Zuni Canyon, Paxton Spring, and Rice Park.

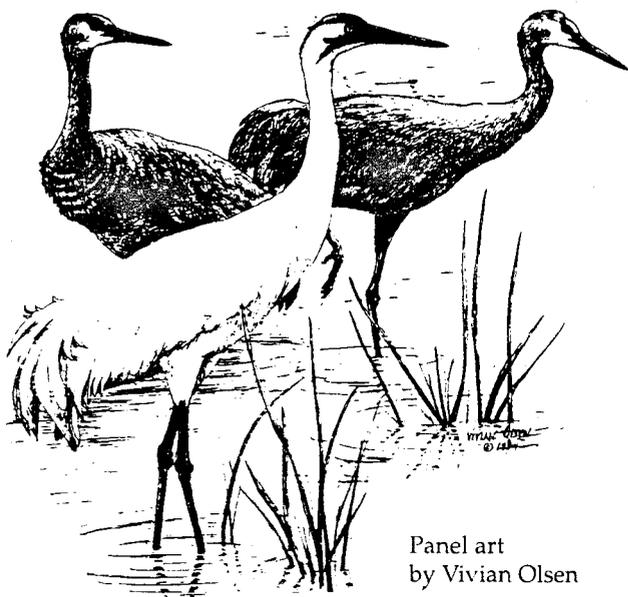
Sat., Oct. 22 - Copper Canyon to the Crest in the Magdalenas, an eight-mile round trip.



BIRDS OF A FEATHER

A Family Feathered Weekend at
Rio Grande Nature Center
Saturday and Sunday
October 22 and 23
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Bird Seed Sale
Bird Talks - Slide Shows,
Beginning and Advanced
Attracting Birds to your Backyard
Bird Banding
Bird ID in the Pond Room
(Call Tamie @298-9116 to volunteer)



Panel art
by Vivian Olsen

phone us at the Socorro County Chamber of Commerce, (505) 835-0424.

1994 Festival of the Cranes

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge
Socorro, New Mexico
November 17, 18, 19, and 20

Keynote Speakers

- Peter Dunne • Jim Bones
- Steve West • Chandler Robbins

Sponsors: • Bosque del Apache
National Wildlife Refuge
• City of Socorro
• Socorro County Chamber
of Commerce



THE COUNCIL CORNER

By Bernie Foy

The 27th annual meeting of the New Mexico Audubon Council was held on September 9-11, 1994. The location was the Tres Rios center at Black River Village near Carlsbad, NM. The focus of the presentations was the impact of industrial development on wildlife in southeastern New Mexico. Steve West of Carlsbad outlined the history of problems at the Salt Lakes, where dumping of oil production and potash mining effluents has resulted in the death of vegetation and the elimination of shorebird and heron populations. A field trip to the area with a BLM biologist made the devastation indelibly clear. Industry pressure on BLM and regulatory agencies has acted to forestall protective measures. Some recent positive action was the installation of protective cones on some "heater-treater" stacks, which will prevent the deaths of thousands of birds and bats. Problems persist, however, with birds killed in open evaporation pits that are inadequately covered. It is clear that continued pressure on BLM and the State to enforce regulations will be necessary to protect the wildlife of the area.

In other actions, Tom Wootten and Christopher Rustay raised local concerns on an Aplomado Falcon recovery plan, wetlands at Holloman Air Force Base, and wilderness designation for the Angostura unit of the Carson National Forest. David Henderson gave an update on grazing reform legislation, which looks stymied in Congress, and mining reform, which is somewhat more encouraging. Audubon members and other interested citizens should continue to express concerns to their congressional and state reps.

The conference closed with an exciting birding trip to Rattlesnake Springs, where a number of fall migrants were seen, including Great-crested Flycatcher and Nashville Warbler.

ABOUT THOSE HEATER-TREATERS ...

In an open letter, Ray Powell, NM State Land Commissioner, states: "We at the New Mexico State Land Office have recently made significant progress in our efforts to prevent deaths of migratory birds and bats by toxic emissions from oil well processing equipment, so-called heater treaters.

"At our most recent consultation with the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association and the New Mexico Independent Petroleum Association on August 2, 1994, we revisited the issue . . .

"At the meeting, leaders of the industry groups gave us their verbal commitment that they would work to see that their members installed protective devices on their oil field equipment. There were no objections to the commitment. . .

"So I pledge that, having obtained the industry's commitment, we will now monitor the voluntary compliance. If we find that the industry is not taking steps to prevent bird and bat mortality, we will elevate our efforts in a more formal way." -- Commissioner Ray Powell, Commissioner of Public Lands, 310 Old Santa Fe Trail, PO Box 1148, Santa Fe, NM 87504-1148

And we will monitor the Land Commissioner's adherence to his written pledge.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

With pesticide and herbicide season, the City of Albuquerque, Public Works Department and the Environmental Health Department would like you to be aware that the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center is available for your old and unused pesticides and herbicides. Pouring such toxins down the drain or in the street (both ways end up in the river) could keep the city from meeting EPA regulations. The Collection Center is at Rinchem, 6133 Edith Blvd. NE. Call 345-1650 for hours of operation.

(Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted from The Scissor-tail, Chapter newsletter of Llano Estacado Audubon Society, Lubbock, Texas, September 1994)

Oil & Gas Exploration Threatens Aransas Refuge - By Leigh McCarthy

Aransas National Wildlife Refuge is under threat from proposed seismic oil and gas exploration by Conoco. The 55,000-acre Refuge has earned international prominence because it provides critical wintering habitat for the world's only wild flock of endangered Whooping Cranes. Established in 1937, the Refuge also provides an extremely important stop-over site for migratory songbirds and shorebirds.

When the Refuge was established, USFWS bought the land but did not acquire the subsurface rights that Conoco now leases from a third party. The company has proposed conducting a comprehensive seismic survey to locate deep gas reserves on 46,455 acres of the Refuge. In Texas, the owner of the mineral estate has the dominant legal right to develop it, but this does not allow Conoco free rein to harm the Refuge or exempt the company from compliance with the Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, or wetlands protection laws.

If the survey proceeds, Conoco would use mobile shot hole drills, airboats, swamp buggies, four-wheel drive trucks, vans, large boats, and heavy transport vehicles over a period of 180 field days. Several million gallons of water would be used to drill over 5,000 shot holes on the Refuge, which would be spaced at 220-foot intervals throughout the Refuge.

USFWS has prepared an Environmental Assessment on the decision of whether to issue a Special User Permit to Conoco. The Service's draft decision was to issue a "Finding of No Significant Impact"

for the issuance of the permit, reasoning that Conoco would explore without a permit. The National Audubon Society has opposed this position and is urging Conoco to "do the right thing" and leave the Refuge. According to a provision in the USFWS's deed to the Refuge, if mineral production ceases for more than 60 days, the Service would obtain the mineral rights.

ACTION: Please write to Conoco and urge them not to explore on the Aransas Refuge and to "donate" the mineral interests to the USFWS when their current wells run dry. You may wish to tell them that you appreciate their environmental concern expressed in their advertising -- Conoco was the first company to implement double-hulled tankers, for example. Inform them of your concern for the integrity of this international treasure.

Constantine S. Nicandros
President and CEO, Conoco, Inc.
Building P.E. 3034
600 North Dairy Ashford Road
Houston, TX 77079

Send copies to:
Jim Fielder
Public Relations Manager
Conoco, Inc.
P.O. Box 2197
North Dairy Ashford Road
Houston, TX 77252



The Honorable Mollie Beattie
Director
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Department of the Interior
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THE TUCSON AUDUBON SOCIETY
sponsors the following events:

*Institute of Marine and Coastal Ecology, Oct. 5-10, introducing participants to the terrestrial and marine ecology of the Sea of Cortez in Sonora, Mexico.

*Institute of Tropical Ecology, Oct. 28-31 and Nov. 1-3, for field studies of the tropical deciduous forest in the vicinity of Alamos, Sonora, Mexico.

These are college-credit, expert-led field trips which require registration and deposit. Contact Tucson Audubon Society, (602)629-0757.



National Audubon Society
&
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The World of Audubon 10th Anniversary Special

Join hosts Lauren Hutton and Richard Dean Anderson on this remarkable adventure, featuring Audubon's most powerful and controversial films of the last decade.

Premieres on TBS SuperStation
Sunday, November 20, 1994
at 9:00PM (EST)

Encores: Monday, November 21 at 12:00AM (EST)
Saturday, November 26 at 10:05AM (EST)
Monday, November 28 at 2:35AM (EST)

BE SURE TO WATCH!

"Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on
the trees,
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the
bees;
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through
the haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the early autumn days
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock--
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in
the shock."

--James whitcomb Riley

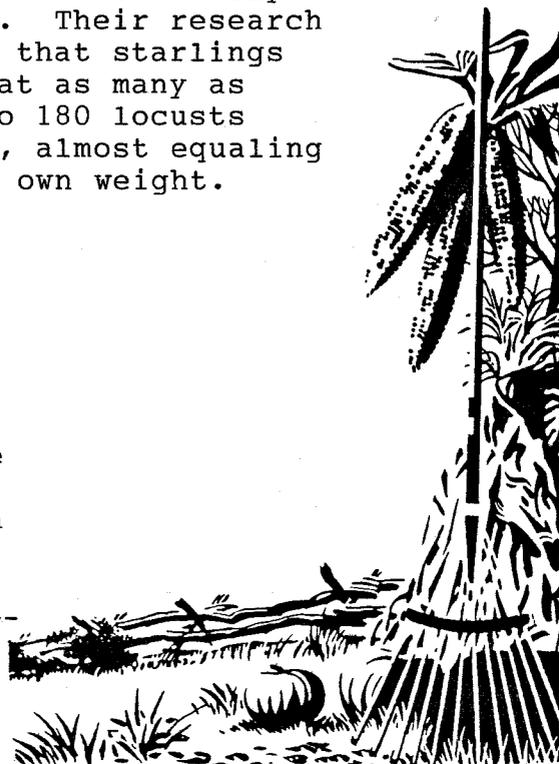
STARLINGS HELD ERADICATE PESTS
(The following article appeared in
the magazine China Today,
July 7, 1994)

Starlings, migratory birds, have been helping farmers in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to fight locusts since 1986.

Officials from the regional locust control headquarters said a huge population of starlings in the Ili, Tacheng, Hami, and Altay areas is protecting some 130,000 hectares of pastures in these former locust-stricken areas. The official claims that their effort is so far the largest anti-locust operation worldwide and that it has been very successful.

The traditional way of locust control by chemicals not only renders the locusts resistant, therefore demanding the use of more chemicals at higher costs; it also kills the natural enemies of locusts and causes damage to the environment.

Scientists began to explore the possibility of using starlings for locust control in the early 1980s. Their research found that starlings can eat as many as 120 to 180 locusts a day, almost equaling their own weight.



THE BARN OWLS OF TORRANCE COUNTY

By Sharyl S. Holden
Estancia, New Mexico



The fifth annual Thursday Birder tour of the Torrance County barn owls was held on July 28. This was the biggest tour to date, with 15 members present. For a tour that almost did not take place, it was as unique as any year previous.

After one of the driest summers in my memory, two nights before the tour, we received a nice shower. The night before the tour, we got an additional half-inch of rain. Though the county roads stay in fair shape, the road down to my house can become a literal swamp. After watching my husband leave for work, I decided to play it safe and called Jean Dilley to meet me at the road to the barn instead of coming down the quagmire. When she heard my voice, she just knew I was calling to cancel at the last moment, but she quickly agreed to call from the meeting place in town and to meet me at the road to the barn.

On the drive up, my two youngest children and I were surprised to see three Swainson's hawks enjoying the sunny morning on the old windmill tower. I gave them plenty of leeway in hopes that they would still be close by when the Birders arrived.

From the road, the hawks were small dots on the tower as everyone arrived. New faces and familiar ones smiled happily as they crawled through the four-wire fence. As we started up the road, two of the hawks circled and flew to a safer distance. The newest hawk stayed to enjoy the spectacle of us watching him. It was the first time the tour had such a good look at one of the hawks.

The barn itself had two surprises this year. First, we didn't have to crawl through a four-foot by two-foot hole. The door actually opened and we could walk inside without contorting our bodies like Houdini.

The adult Barn Owls left almost as soon as we entered. From the nest, a youngster would peek out, then duck back down. Then, the second surprise: On the floor, huddled in a corner, sat one of the owlets. It was the first time we had ever seen one down low. He guarded his corner, lowering and shaking his head threateningly, as we watched him and tried to catch glimpses of the ones in the nest.

Behind a cross beam, the tail feathers of something were apparent, but none of us could figure out what it was. On Sunday, our bull was missing, so we ran up to the barn to check. No bull, but the Barn Owls were out practicing their flying. When we entered, one shy owl flew back to the cross beam and hid. All you could see was his tail. My husband and I got a final count of six live chicks and their parents. Not bad for such a dry year.

As the tour was leaving, the young hawk was still watching us from his perch. I couldn't help but smile at how different each tour had been. This one was very special. I want to thank you all for coming, and I hope to see you next July. I can't wait to see what they have in store for us next year. You all come.



WHAT IS "PARTNERS IN FLIGHT"?

By Tamie Bulow

Through the National Audubon Society's BIRDS IN THE BALANCE campaign, much attention has been paid to the declining numbers of Neotropical migratory birds (birds that breed in Canada and the U.S. and winter in Mexico and points south). Its policies and programs have helped conserve priority bird habitats while local chapters have developed and participated in local initiatives, habitat protection, monitoring, education and international partnerships.

Other organizations concerned with the declining songbird population have established similar programs to gather information and protect critical habitats. Governmental organizations such as US Fish & Wildlife, Forest Service, BLM, Bureau of Reclamation, National Parks Service, EPA, many state agencies, and various nongovernment groups such as local Audubon chapters, HawkWatch International, American Birding Association, Cornell Labs, Nature Conservancy (just to name a few!) have all joined efforts to form PARTNERS IN FLIGHT.

The New Mexico PIF Group has met for the past two years to share information, talent and expertise. Committees have been formed to address a variety of issues and educational endeavors. CNMAS has participated in these meetings from the onset, as well as representatives from Randall Davey Audubon Center and New Mexico Audubon Council. Our hope is to be involved in the process of ensuring the survival of the birds we share -- the Neotropical migrants.

National Audubon Society

Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to join.

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

My check for \$20 is enclosed

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ADDRESS _____

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Please make all checks payable to the national Audubon Society



Send this application and your check to:
National Audubon Society
 Chapter Membership Data Center
 P.O. Box 51001 • Boulder, Colorado 80322-1001

LOCAL CHAPTER

Central New Mexico Audubon Society

Local Chapter Code — Q51

7XCH8

Use the above form for new subscriptions only. Contact Membership Chairperson for changes of address or corrections in your Burrowing Owl label. Nonmembers can receive the Burrowing Owl by sending your name and address with \$10 to CNMAS, c/o Beth Hurst, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., 87114-1710.

Bear Mountain Guest Ranch

6250' Elevation



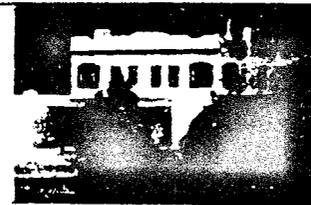
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RARE BIRD ALERT

To learn about sightings all over the state or to report a rare sighting, the number in Santa Fe is 662-2101.

BAT IN TROUBLE?

Call Talking Talons before you intervene.

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Whom to Contact:

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Washington, DC 20500
Clinton-Info@Campaign92OrgSubject.
(Information Only)
President@WhiteHouse.GOV.
(Comments for President)

Hon. Pete Domenici
(202) 224-6621
(505) 766-3481

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Secretary of the Interior
18th & C Streets, N.W., Rm. 6151
Washington, DC 20240
(202) 208-7351

Hon. Jeff Bingaman
(202) 224-5521
(505) 766-3636

U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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Hon. Joe Skeen

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Washington, DC 20515

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(512) 327-1943

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(505) 983-4609

US Fish and Wildlife Service
500 Gold Avenue, SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Regional Director — (505) 766-2321
Refuges and Wildlife — (505) 766-2036
Habitat Conservation — (505) 766-2914
New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Villagra Building
P.O. Box 25112
Santa Fe, NM 87504
(505) 841-8881
Sandia Ranger District
US Forest Service
Floyd A. Thompson III, District Ranger
11776 Highway 337
Tijeras, NM 87059
(505) 281-3304

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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.

Central New Mexico Audubon Society

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