

BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY

FEBRUARY - MARCH 1996

VOLUME 25 - No. 2

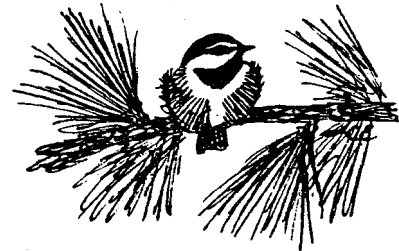
UPCOMING CHAPTER ACTIVITIES -- MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!!

Welcome! The Central New Mexico Audubon Society ^{usually!} meets at 7:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, Copper and Jefferson, N.E. All meetings, field trips, and special events are free and open to the public.

PROGRAMS

THURSDAY, Feb. 16, Usual place, usual time: **GALAPAGOS UPDATE**. Kristina Grant, a biologist associated with the University of New Mexico, has just returned from doing field work in the Galapagos. She will present a talk and slide show reviewing the current status of the birds and other animals of these famous and fragile islands, and will also describe her own ongoing research there.

MONDAY, March 4, 7:00 p.m., Special Time, Special Place! **PEREGRINES AND HAWKS ALOFT** (343-0111). Join us at the NM Dept. of Game & Fish office for a joint meeting with Hawks Aloft to hear a talk by Tom Smylie, who recently retired from USF&W, and his wife, Cherie. Tom has worked for many years doing field research for The Peregrine Fund. He and Cherie will present exceptional slides and an interesting talk about his work banding Peregrine Falcons and studying the migration patterns of the Arctic Peregrine.

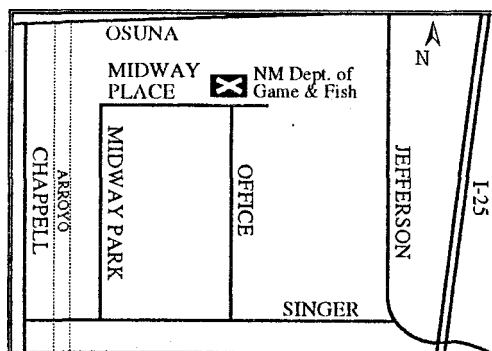


Come one, come all! Everyone is welcome on field trips: Audubon members or non-members, novice and experienced birders.

TRIPS FOR FEBRUARY

Feb. 10-11 - Weekend. **Las Vegas and Maxwell National Wildlife Refuges**. We'll be joining Hawks Aloft, led by Jim Place. Jim is asking a \$10 donation for this trip for those who are not members of Hawks Aloft. Bring your lunch and lots of warm clothing - it can get pretty cold. Will stay overnight in Raton. Advance registration is required and car pooling is encouraged. Call Jim Place (821-5988) to register. This trip is a must to see Hawks and Eagles! Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Far North Theater, San Mateo and Academy.

Feb. 18 - Sunday. **Breakfast for the Bird(ers) and Corrales Bosque**. Meet at Grandma's Restaurant, 141 Osuna, N.W., at 8:00 a.m. for breakfast, then we'll head out to the Corrales Bosque for the rest of the morning. Dress warmly. If you want to sleep in, meet us at Grandma's at 9:00 a.m.



TRIPS FOR MARCH

-----CLIP-A-TRIP-----

March 10 - Sunday. Blue Water & Zuni Mountains. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Physics Bldg. Parking Lot, Yale and Lomas, NE corner. Bring your lunch.

JUAN TABO TURNOFF

Park in the dirt parking lot at the Forest Road turnoff. Walk up the road to the cattle guard area. Look on the hillside for meadowlarks, Black-throated Sparrow, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Scaled Quail, and White-crowned Sparrows. In the wash to the south, look for Canyon Towhee, Scrub Jay, Townsend's Solitaire, both bluebirds. Up the wash, and up towards La Cueva, watch for Ladderbacked Woodpecker, Plain Titmouse, Mountain Chickadee, Sage Thrasher, and Spotted Towhee. Always watch for a Crissal Thrasher, too.

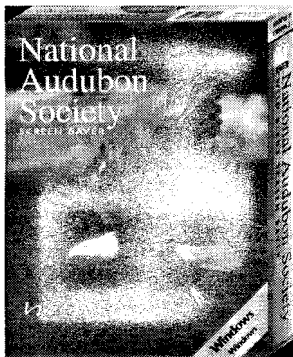
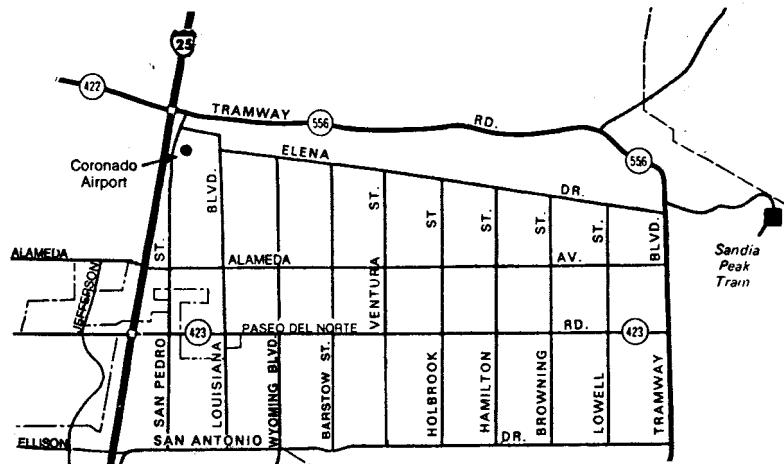
March 23-24 - Weekend. Percha Dam State Park. This is supposed to be the best birding spot in the state. Meet at the Physics Bldg. Parking Lot, Yale and Lomas, at 6:30 a.m. Bring lunch; we'll have supper out. There are campsites at the park or lodging in T or C. Call Charlotte (345-1271) or Sei (266-2480) so we know how many plan to stay overnight.

-----FOLD HERE-----
-PASTE ON 3-x-5 CARD FOR REFERENCE-

ADVANCE NOTICE FOR APRIL

April 13-14 - Weekend. Roswell and Rattlesnake Springs. We'll go to Bitter Lake to see water and shore birds, then head down to Carlsbad to see what we can find at Rattlesnake Springs. We'll stay overnight in Carlsbad. Call Sei at 266-2480 for information on accommodations. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Four Hills Shopping Center, Central and Tramway, at the Video Store.

Take I-25 north out of Albuquerque to Tramway, and go east to the sign for Juan Tabo Picnic Ground.




BOCASoft Inc. introduces the National Audubon Society Wild Birds screen saver for Windows/95 and Windows 3.1. Wild Birds is a multimedia experience of beautiful images, amazing animations, and wondrous sounds of birds in natural surroundings.

Animated habitat scenes feature graceful birds flying across your screen. Listen closely and you may hear the wind as it blows over the mountains in the distance, the frogs and insects of the wetlands, or maybe the far off bell of a seashore buoy.

Listen to your favorite songs and calls, and learn to identify birds by their sounds alone. Learn about Audubon Sanctuaries and the National Wildlife Refuges, their programs, and the birds and habitats they protect. Sound card required for audio.

BOCASoft has provided CNMAS with a special promotional offer by purchasing in bulk: Members can purchase Wild Birds for \$24.95, \$5 off the retail price. To order, send a check made out to CNMAS and (allow four to six weeks):

Name: _____ Address: _____
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AN ODYSSEY OF OUTINGS

Feb. 16-18: **Klamath Basin Bald Eagle Conference** (17th Annual), Klamath Basin, OR. Call 503-883-5732, Klamath Basin Audubon Society.

March 7-10: **Audubon Flocking to the Rio Grande Valley.** National Audubon's Board and the Audubon Council of Texas meet in McAllen, Texas, to focus on the Rio Grande Wildlife Corridor. For an agenda, map, list of area hotels and field trips, call Southwest Regional Office at 512-327-1943 or 17634.20@compuserve.com.

March 16-17: **Festival of the Cranes, Monte Vista NWR, Colorado.** Celebrate the cranes' northerly migration and visit two refuges (Alamosa and Monte Vista) all in one weekend. Call Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce @ 719-852-2731, or Hawks Aloft locally @ 343-0111 if you want to go in a "flock."


March 21-24: **Wings over the Platte** (8th Annual), Grand Island, NE. Call Convention & Visitors Bureau, 1-800-658-3178.

March 22-24: **Attwater's Prairie Chicken Festival**, Eagle Lake, TX. Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce, 409-234-2780.

April 18-21: **Institute of Desert Ecology**, Tucson, AZ. Study Sonoran Desert ecosystems under expert instructors. Emphasis is on relationship between plant life, animals and the physical characteristics of the desert rather than classification and identification. \$275/person, registration necessary. Call Tucson Audubon Society, 602-629-0757.

AUDUBON'S AMERICA

CONVENTION '96



You can help strengthen Audubon's effectiveness!

Participate in this very important '96 Convention, which features: political action, birds, and skills training.

CHARTING THE FUTURE FOR HABITAT PROTECTION

CONVENTION ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

The American University • Washington, D.C.

Friday, June 7	Pre-convention Field Trips
Saturday, June 8	Registration Services / Exhibits / Nature Shop Early Morning Birding Chapter Development, Grassroots Leadership Workshops Welcome Reception / Exhibits / Entertainment Evening Kickoff General Session - Celebrity Speaker
Sunday, June 9	Registration Services / Exhibits / Nature Shop Early Morning Birding Campaign Workshops - Morning / Concurrent Workshops - Afternoon Evening General Session: Address by President John Flicker, Awards, Entertainment "After Hours" Social/Entertainment
Monday, June 10	Registration Services / Exhibits / Nature Shop Campaign Workshops - Morning / Concurrent Workshops - Afternoon Round Tables During Lunch Evening General Session "After Hours" Social/Entertainment
Tuesday, June 11	Capitol Hill Day - Lobby/Rally/Reception/Twilight Tour of D.C.
Wednesday, June 12	All-day and Half-day Field Trips
Wed.-Fri., June 12-14	Learning Lab - Chesapeake Bay
Wed.-Sat., June 12-15	Learning Lab - Important Bird Areas in Pennsylvania

- Meet face-to-face with representatives and senators on Capitol Hill, participate in the rally and special reception.
- Hear first-hand a report from President John Flicker on the State-of-Audubon.
- Enjoy birding opportunities on early morning bird walks with local chapter experts and on the impressive array of all-day and half-day field trips.
- Explore Audubon's Important Bird Areas in Pennsylvania and the culture and conservation of the Chesapeake Bay on two different Learning Labs.
- Learn about future Birds-in-the-Balance Projects.
- Interact with Audubon staff members.
- Return with innovative program ideas from chapters around the country.
- Plan extra days to visit museums and historic monuments.

Registration Materials Available January 1996

Audubon Convention Office
4150 Dorley Ave., Suite 5 • Boulder, CO 80303 • (303) 499-3622 • Fax (303) 499-0286

The Burrowing Owl Newsletter is published six times a year, February, April, June, August, October and December by Central New Mexico Audubon Society, P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87190-0002. Subscription is free to National Audubon Society members, \$12 to nonmembers.

ALBUQUERQUE CHRISTMAS COUNT RESULTS (12-17-95)

By Hart R. Schwarz

In spite of rough weather, we tallied the highest number of species ever in the 34-year history of the Albuquerque Count. Really remarkable were 13 kinds of sparrows, including all four Zonotrichias. The inclusion of the ponds at the Rio Rancho Golf Course yielded ducks as never before. We counted nearly 50 Ruddy Ducks there -- an amazing number, considering their rarity elsewhere in the Albuquerque area. New birds for the count included a Cinnamon Teal at the Rio Grande Nature Center, an Orange-crowned Warbler well seen by Terry Brownell near the Alameda bridge, and two Cactus Wrens about a mile west of Tramway, just south of the Sandia Reservation boundary. When I returned the next day, I couldn't see the birds again, but found an old nest in a cholla, suggesting that they have nested there.



01. Pied-billed Grebe	8	39. Grter Roadrunner	2	76. Sage Thrasher	3
02. Great Blue Heron	22	40. W. Screech Owl	3	77. Curve-b. Thrash.	6
03. Canada Goose	243	41. Grt. Horned Owl	8	78. Crissal Thrasher	5
04. Wood Duck	198	42. Belt. Kingfisher	10	79. American Pipit	6
05. Grn.-winged Teal	31	43. Red-n. Sapsucker	1	80. Cedar Waxwing	18
06. Mallard	1609	44. Ladder-b. Woodp.	2	81. Loggerhd. Shrike	9
07. Cinnamon Teal	1	45. Downy Woodpecker	20	82. European Starling	3878
08. N. Shoveler	20	46. Northern Flicker	179	83. Orange-c. Warbler	1
09. Gadwall	122	47. Black Phoebe	12	84. Yellow-r. Warbler	19
10. American Wigeon	619	48. Say's Phoebe	8	85. Rufous-s. Towhee	70
11. Canvasback	4	49. Horned Lark	226	86. Canyon Towhee	42
12. Ring-necked Duck	75	50. Blue Jay	8	87. Rufous-c. Sparrow	1
13. Lesser Scaup	28	51. Scrub Jay	93	88. Am. Tree Sparrow	10
14. Common Goldeneye	1	52. Pinyon Jay	87	89. Chipping Sparrow	2
15. Bufflehead	6	53. Black-b. Magpie	10	90. Brewer's Sparrow	3
16. Common Merganser	16	54. American Crow	1117	91. Black-th. Sparrow	5
17. Ruddy Duck	46	55. Chihuahuan Raven	1	92. Sage Sparrow	17
18. Bald Eagle	3	56. Common Raven	20	93. Savannah Sparrow	21
19. Northern Harrier	10	raven, species	4	94. Song Sparrow	345
20. Sharp-shin. Hawk	8	57. Black-c. Chickadee	30	95. Swamp Sparrow	3
21. Cooper's Hawk	16	58. Mount. Chickadee	43	96. White-th. Sparrow	4
22. Red-tailed Hawk	34	59. Plain Titmouse	7	97. Golden-c. Sparrow	1
23. American Kestrel	35	60. Bushtit	52	98. White-cr. Sparrow	1020
24. Merlin	1	61. Red-b. Nuthatch	1	99. Harris' Sparrow	1
25. Prairie Falcon	1	62. White-b. Nuthatch	45	100. Dark-eyed Junco	991
26. Peregrine Falcon	1	63. Brown Creeper	11	101. Red-w. Blackbird	687
27. Ring-n. Pheasant	19	64. Cactus Wren	2	102. West. Meadowlark	72
28. Scaled Quail	173	65. Rock Wren	1	meadowlark, sp.	24
29. Gambel's Quail	8	66. Canyon Wren	1	103. Yellow-h. Blackb.	8
30. Virginia Rail	5	67. Bewick's Wren	20	104. Brewer's Blackb.	43
31. American Coot	150	68. Marsh Wren	3	105. Grt.-t. Grackle	278
32. Sandhill Crane	147	69. Ruby-c. Kinglet	48	106. Cassin's Finch	4
33. Killdeer	35	70. Western Bluebird	55	107. House Finch	464
34. Common Snipe	3	71. Mount. Bluebird	195	108. Pine Siskin	81
35. Ring-billed Gull	208	72. Towns. Solitaire	44	109. Lesser Goldfinch	3
36. Rock Dove	812	73. Hermit Thrush	7	110. Am. Goldfinch	149
37. White-wing. Dove	20	74. American Robin	1348	111. Evening Grosbeak	29
38. Mourning Dove	49	75. N. Mockingbird	1	112. House Sparrow	610

SANDIA MOUNTAIN CHRISTMAS COUNT


January 1, 1996

Tamie Bulow - Compiler

1. Sharp-shinned Hawk	1
2. Northern Goshawk	1
3. Red-tailed Hawk	14
4. American Kestrel	9
5. Rock Dove	47
6. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1
7. Ladder-backed Woodpecker	2
8. Downy Woodpecker	2
9. Hairy Woodpecker	11
10. N. (Red-shafted) Flicker	49
11. Steller's Jay	36
12. Scrub Jay	83
13. Pinon Jay	152
14. Black-billed Magpie	1
15. American Crow	181
16. Common Raven	29
17. Mountain Chickadee	98
18. Plain Titmouse	25
19. Bushtit	53
20. Red-breasted Nuthatch	15
21. White-breasted Nuthatch	21
22. Pygmy Nuthatch	1
23. Canyon Wren	1
24. Bewick's Wren	3
25. Golden-crowned Kinglet	4
26. Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
27. Eastern Bluebird	2
28. Western Bluebird	232
29. Mountain Bluebird	51
30. Townsend's Solitaire	172
31. Hermit Thrush	2
32. American Robin	293
33. European Starling	200
34. Rufous-sided Towhee	7
35. Canyon Towhee	52
36. Rufous-crowned Sparrow	6
37. Song Sparrow	10
38. White-crowned Sparrow	4
39. Dark-eyed Junco (form?)	100
Oregon Junco	199
Gray-headed Junco	116
White-winged Junco	1
Pink-sided Junco	52
40. Western Meadowlark	5
41. Pine Grosbeak	3
42. Cassin's Finch	6
43. House Finch	242
44. Pine Siskin	183
45. American Goldfinch	28
46. Evening Grosbeak	61
47. House Sparrow	1
48. Red-winged Blackbird	30
49. Northern Pygmy Owl	1
50. Rusty Blackbird	1
51. Curve-billed Thrasher	1
52. Eastern Blue Jay	3

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WORDS TO ACT ON . . .

"It is more crucial now than at any time in the past decade to let your congressional representatives know that legislation by rider is despicable; that a strong Clean Water Act leads to renewed lakes and rivers; that you want Utah's wilderness to be preserved as a treasure, valued throughout the world, for Americans of all generations to come; that oil development in the Arctic wilderness could spell doom for countless caribou and other wildlife; that we cannot foretell the survival of wildlife in jeopardy if we cut all of the funding needed to study it; and that we cannot tolerate the degradation of public grasslands by excessive livestock numbers."

--Bernie Foy
Sangre de Cristo AS

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 NM Dept. of Game and Fish
 Villagra Bldg • P. O. Box 25112 • Santa Fe, NM 87504

Are You Concerned About Human Population and Resource Consumption Impacts on the Environment, Habitats, and the Quality of Life for Humans?

The National Audubon Society's Human Population and Resource Use Department is recruiting volunteers to hold workshops or discussion groups on a national population policy. Tool kits for holding these sessions are provided and include the following: fact sheets, activities, workshop tips, suggestions for curbing consumption at home and in the workplace, information on past policy, congressional committee lists, and other helpful tools for holding a workshop. Sessions are for chapters and/or members of the community with an interest in population issues. This is your chance to play an important role in the movement toward a "culture of conservationists."

Contact:

Lindsay Aun
National Audubon Society
Human Population & Resource Use Dept.
303-499-5155 daytime or
303-499-2547 evenings



Xeriscape Brochure Available

A new, full-color brochure illustrating the beauty and thrift of water-saving plants is now available from the NM State Engineer Office. The second of two water conservation pamphlets, "Enchanted Xeriscape" offers tips on where and how to use native ground-covers, flowers, shrubbery, and trees to reduce water use in our arid state. The handsome, poster-sized brochure lists a variety of species which thrive in three separate climate areas (north, south, and central New Mexico), and further delineates plants which can be grouped in the yard according to water needs.

The brochure, along with "Agua Action," which gives tips on conserving residential water inside and outside the house, can be obtained by calling the State Engineer Office's Water Conservation Program at 505-827-3879, or 1-800-WATER-NM.

Lions, tigers and bears . . .

as well as spiders, conifers and birds are coming into Albuquerque classrooms through a program sponsored by your generous donations. The program Audubon Adventures is National Audubon Society's very important educational program for the use of teachers and students in classrooms.

Do you plan ahead? If so, a donation you make now will fund a classroom subscription for school year 1996-97. Please make your check payable to CNMAS and send with this form to:

Ron Waitz
804 Guadalupe Cir., NW
Alb, NM 87114
Thanks!



Enclosed please find my check for \$ _____
(Each \$35 will sponsor one classroom in the Audubon Adventures Program. Any amount you contribute will benefit our educational activities.)

I choose to designate _____
Elementary/Middle School for my sponsorship
(designation is optional).

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

**AUDUBON WORKSHOP IN THE ROCKIES
SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS**

Central New Mexico Audubon Society is offering one scholarship for a local educator to attend the Audubon Workshop in the Rockies in Wyoming's Wind River Mountains near Dubois, for one field ecology session. There are six week-long sessions to choose from: June 29-July 5; July 6-12; July 13-19; July 20-26; July 27-August 2; or August 3-9. The cost of each seven-day session is \$750, which will be paid by CNMAS. Transportation must be furnished by the scholarship recipient. Please contact Julie Goodding at 255-9366 for information and application. Deadline for submissions: Postmark by April 1.

Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology scientists warn against using the glycerin and alcohol-like chemicals that have been touted in some publications as de-icers for birdbaths. These products can kill the birds you are trying to help.

Cornell ornithologists point out that in order to lower the freezing point to 15 degrees F, you need a solution of 30% glycerin and 70% water.

Birds ingesting such a heavy solution of glycerin experience elevated blood sugar levels, which can be fatal. Glycerin-laden water also mats feathers, reducing the birds' ability to insulate themselves and causing them to freeze to death.

An electric immersion heater, available at most stores that sell bird products, will keep water liquid in freezing weather and allow you to use a terra cotta birdbath that would crack if the water froze solid.

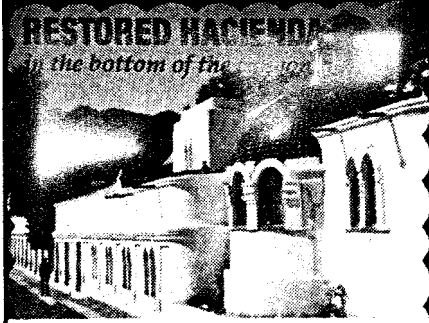
An alternative is to replace your birdbath for the winter with a semi-rigid plastic one, also available from birding stores, or with the 20" plastic plant saucers sold in garden and hardware stores. Place them directly on the ground and fill with warm water.

Birds need water in winter as much as in summer, and ice-free water on a cold day may attract more birds than your feeders. Try putting out a fresh supply first thing in the morning and again just before dusk.

--Sandra Parshall
Fairfax (VA) Audubon

THINK SPRING
THINK EARTH DAY

CNMAS will participate with the Earth Day Coalition of New Mexico in an Earth Day celebration at the Rio Grande Nature Center. Let's introduce more people to our programs and the world of birding. If you can spare a little time, we would love your company. Earth Day 1996 is Monday, April 22; tables and events will go on then, as well as during the weekend. Look for more information in the next newsletter.



RESTORED HACIENDA
in the bottom of the canyon

Hidden in the misty reaches of the Sierra Madres, a little known, only partially explored canyon, deeper and 5 times larger than our Grand Canyon. Called Copper Canyon, inhabited by secretive Tarahumaras, solitary cowboys, and lean prospectors who plunk down solid silver to buy goods, and leave at first light with heavily laden mules. Hidden on the tropical bottom, below the rapids that cascade over huge boulders in the forgotten village of BATOPILAS, is the fabulously restored Hacienda, the dream of American businessman Skip McWilliams. Maintained for a few select guests, who appreciate authenticity, privacy and isolation. At the end of an 8 hour rugged cliff-hanging dirt road, the Hacienda's shady courtyard fountains invite relaxation in another era. The life of the village goes on at it's own pace, just outside the massive adobe walls.

YOU are invited. Call Judy at our U.S. Office.
1-800-776-3942

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HELP THE HERPS

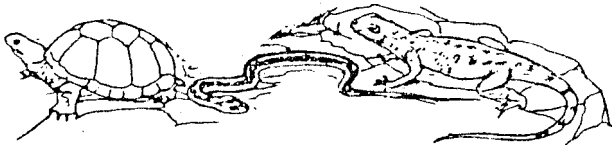
Generously shared by Sangre de Cristo Chapter newsletter

AN AUDUBON INITIATIVE

Welcome to a new feature. For the next several issues, we will try to highlight issues regarding the status of reptiles and amphibians in New Mexico. Reptiles and amphibians, "herps" to those in the know, are unprotected in New Mexico. The cornerstone of North American wildlife conservation, eliminating or tightly controlling commercial uses of wildlife has not been applied to New Mexico's native herps. New Mexico protects most of its wildlife from private commercialization for personal profit. Amphibians and reptiles have not been given this protection and are being collected and sold in alarming numbers. Most of this activity is for the pet trade and is not regulated in our state, as it is in adjoining states.

The New Mexico Audubon Council, a coalition of the chapters around the State, has begun a campaign for a "Herps Bill" in the 1997 State Legislature. A proposed statute that would prevent private individuals from commercially exploiting wild-caught native amphibians and reptiles for personal profit died in the last Legislature. This statute would not have prevented killing rattlesnakes for personal or public safety or the keeping of amphibians and reptiles as pets.

As you learn more about our reptiles and amphibians, resolve to turn that knowledge into appreciation and protection. Let your State Representative or Senator know that you think this is an important issue that deserves his or her support. With education, we can succeed.



THE PET TRADE

To get an idea of the scale of the problem, consider the following:

- In Silver City, collectors are shipping between 200 and 300 live lizards and snakes each month to pet stores in New York State.
- The airline clerk at the Grant County Airport reports that different collectors ship out two to three boxes of live reptiles each week to pet store suppliers in Nevada and Colorado.
- In Deming, collectors checked by Game Department Officials had collected over 100 lizards for resale by midmorning.

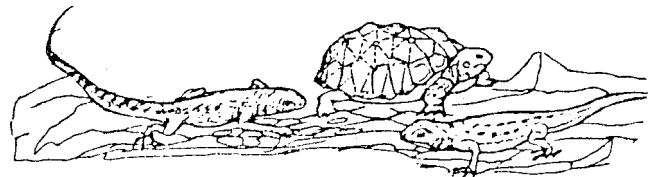
The ecological impacts of this activity are quite large. Although some species commercially exploited are common, others are becoming scarce, and in the absence of any controls, even the common populations will eventually be decimated. There are already many conflicts between people who are utilizing land in New Mexico and people who are trying to protect the land and its biota. Continued commercial collection of amphibians and reptiles will eventually increase the numbers of rare or endangered species and increase such conflicts.



THE DUNES SAGEBRUSH LIZARD

The dunes sagebrush lizard (*Sceloporus arenicolous*) is being extensively studied in southeastern New Mexico, where it is known to occur only in Chaves, Eddy, Lea, and Roosevelt counties. This lizard, which requires shinnery oak/sand dune habitat, is listed as threatened under the state Wildlife Conservation Act because its population has been reduced by spraying programs by the Bureau of Land Management to eliminate shinnery oak over large areas in southeast New Mexico. The New Mexico Game Commissioner recently buckled to pressure and removed the lizard from a proposal to upgrade its status to endangered. The BLM continues to insist that herbicide spraying is an important tool.

The Department of Game and Fish is currently involved in three studies to help biologists understand the current status, distribution, and threats to the species, and to develop conservation strategies. The studies are being done in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association and the University of New Mexico.



LAND COMMISSIONER TAKES ACTION ON HERPS

State Land Commissioner Ray Powell has announced that the collecting of rattlesnakes and other reptiles will not be allowed on state trust land. Powell said a strong partnership between the Land Office and its lessees is the most effective tool for preventing abuses of our state's natural and biological resources. He is asking lease-holders to report any unauthorized gathering of rattlesnakes and other reptiles from trust land.

"We lease this land for grazing livestock. We do not lease it so that individuals can profit from unregulated and unaccountable harvesting of wildlife, which in turn causes long-term damage to our trust lands. This activity directly hurts our leaseholders' ability to remain in business. These abuses will not be tolerated and appropriate legal action will be taken against individuals profiteering from trust lands. Those snakes eat mice, prairie dogs and other animals that carry plague, hantavirus and other diseases. Those species would proliferate and the potential risk to humans is obvious. Besides that, those rodents also consume valuable range grass that is needed for wildlife and livestock. Rattlesnakes are important predators in arid land ecology."

Powell also said he is concerned that indiscriminate methods of collecting rattlesnakes from dens, such as flammable materials, could harm other species, including rare plants and animals, and result in a cumulative loss of habitat. Powell said he believes in the responsible use of natural resources, including hunting. Powell said the situation illustrates the need to consolidate responsibility for all wildlife management in one agency, such as the Department of Game & Fish.

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