

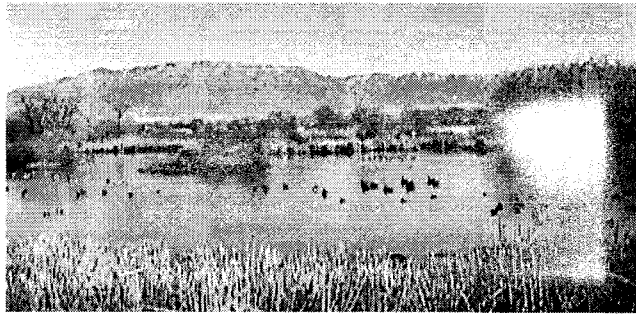
Burrowing Owl

June/July 1999 Issue

Volume 28 No. 4

Welcome to Central New Mexico Audubon Society! Come join us. All our meetings and field trips are free and open to the public

Important Bird Area Program



Habitat loss is the leading cause of the declines of many bird populations in the United States and around the world. The Important Bird Areas Program is a coordinated worldwide response — a comprehensive effort to identify and protect essential habitats for birds. Important Bird Areas are sites where significant populations or an exceptional diversity of birds occurs. These sites include public and private lands, and may be protected or unprotected. IBAs are selected using standardized criteria. Once designated, IBAs become targets of focused conservation strategies, ranging from willing-seller land acquisition and

conservation easements to working with land owners and managers to maintain high-quality habitat.

National Audubon Society established the first state IBA Program in the United States in 1995 in Pennsylvania, and the second in 1996 in New York. Other IBA Programs are underway in California, Idaho, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Audubon works in partnership with other conservation groups—including the American Bird Conservancy, which is leading the effort to identify nationally and globally important sites — and as a member of the Partners In Flight coalition.

Audubon encourages all interested birders and volunteers to participate in the IBA Program. Throughout the Central New Mexico Audubon region are numerous areas worth considering and CNMAS members can help identify these sites. Some spots that come to mind are Isleta Marsh and the Petroglyphs area, but now is the time to let us know about your favorite park, meadow or trail where birds live permanently or which are frequented by migratory birds. Please send your suggestion to CNMAS, P.O. Box 30002, Albuquerque, NM 87190-0002.



Land & Water Conservation Fund Conference

On Saturday, June 19, there will be a LWCF Conference at the Albuquerque Hilton Hotel from 9a.m to 4p.m. followed on Sunday, June 20, with conference field trips.

This should be a very informative conference and easily attended by members in the Albuquerque area. In order to better appreciate the importance of this conference you should know something about LWCF.

LWCF History and Facts

Congress established the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 1964 to provide for purchase of public lands to meet Americans' needs for open space and outdoor recreation. This money was to be spent via Congressional appropriations but has annually been rebudgeted to other projects.

➤ Every year \$900 million from offshore oil and gas drilling is deposited in the LWCF to acquire public wild areas such as national parks and urban green spaces.

➤ Over the last 15 years Congress has diverted more than \$11 billion of LWCF away from wilderness and urban space purchases because of budget deficits.

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CNMAS at Work by Beth Hurst-Waitz

Chapter Members: Your membership dues and special contributions support our Chapter's projects and outreach programs in many ways. The following articles highlight two of these worthwhile programs. Besides extending congratulations to these winners, give yourselves a pat on the back for your help and generosity!

Audubon Judges Choose Science Fair Winners

Outstanding entries in this year's State of New Mexico North West Regional Science Fair gave our Audubon judges a worthy and difficult field from which to choose our four winners —two from the Senior Division and two from the Junior Division. Congratulations to the winners of this year's \$50 savings bonds:

Senior Division

Nathan T. Booker, "A River Runs Through It: A Study of the Riparian Ecosystem Along the Rio Grande"
Alex V. Santillanes, "Are Birds Capable of Thought?"

Junior Division

Michael M. Miller, "How Does the Rattlesnake Round-up Affect the Western Diamondback Population?"
Bevin F. Driskill, "Turtle Tracks Phase II"

Congratulations, also, to the teachers of these award-winning students for the encouragement and support they give. The teachers have been awarded a year-long membership in National Audubon Society, with a subscription to both "Audubon" magazine and the "Burrowing Owl."

Teachers

- Kathleen Percy - Los Lunas High School
- Julianne Green - St. Pius X High School
- Katherine MacDermott - Los Lunas Middle School
- Blake Learmont - Van Buren Middle School

**Rocky Mountain Adventure
Workshop Scholarship**

Central New Mexico Audubon Society has chosen an outstanding representative of the Audubon ethic of conservation and environmental education to receive this year's full scholarship to the Audubon Ecology Camp in the Rockies. Congratulations to Helen Haskell, who will participate in this year's program encompassing natural history instruction, environmental education skills, and activist tools and messages at the Audubon field ecology session in the Wyoming Wind River Mountains.




Helen is one of the instructors at the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center, which is a joint venture between the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and

Albuquerque Public Schools. The Ecology Field program in the Sandias is attended by all fifth-graders within the APS school system, and many other local districts — some 8,000 students and 1,000 teachers a year! The Sandia Mountain Center itself recently received the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 Regional Administrators award for Excellence in Environmental Education. We know that the benefits Helen will derive from attending the camp will, in her own words, "be a fulfilling experience for me as an individual, but more importantly, enhance my skills as a teacher, benefiting the students and adults that I teach in New Mexico."

A Reminder to Teachers

To help further the environmental education of young people, we encourage you to contact Cindy Clark, our Education Chairperson, at 332-4737, to enroll in the Audubon Adventures program, a curriculum recommended for 4th through 6th graders. Each subscription includes work kits for 32 students, the teacher's instruction manual, and classroom poster. The cost is borne by Central New Mexico Audubon Society. Give Cindy a call now to get enrolled for the new millennium school year, 2000-2001!

Audubon Adventures

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 _____

Help support this educational outreach program! Send your check payable to CNMAS with this form to Ron Waitz, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., Albuquerque, NM 87114.



June/July 1999

Land & Water Conservation Fund cont'd

Even though last year only \$328 million went to land purchases, over the past thirty five years LWCF money has bought more than five million acres of land and water resources, made over \$3.2 billion in matching funds available to states, and developed more than 37,000 parks and recreation projects.

LWCF is critical to expanding and preserving the national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and public lands owned by the American public. Big Sur in California, Denali National Park in Alaska—to name just two spectacular nature areas—and thousands of local parks have benefited from LWCF purchases.


If President Clinton's Land Legacy Initiative is funded, the Land and Water Conservation Fund will be fully funded for the first time. With that in our future, it is important to begin thinking about how New Mexico could benefit from this newly available money. The conference will be an opportunity for people to discuss these issues.

New Mexico Audubon Council

All five New Mexico chapters as well as two State Audubon representatives attended the April New Mexico Audubon Council in Sevilleta. Together they outlined the Council's future role, identifying four key areas of focus:

- ① Habitat Projects (e.g. Palomas Marsh in Mesilla Valley)
- ② Legislative Activities (e.g. Herp Bill)
- ③ Birding Projects (Important Bird Areas, Festival of the Cranes at Bosque del Apache NWR, NM Hummingbird Connection, NM Birding Trail)
- ④ Most importantly the Council will be working harder to support New Mexico's five chapters—which is a new role.

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National Audubon Society

Chapter Member 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.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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 30002 • Albuquerque, NM 87114-1710

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 correction in your Burrowing Owl label. Nonmembers can receive the Burrowing Owl by sending your name and address with \$12 to CNMAS, c/o Beth Hurst-Waitz, 804 Guadalupe Circle, N.W., 87114-1710



Monitoring Frogs for Fun & Science

Frogwatch USA was established in February 1999 to help researchers track populations of frogs and toads. It is modeled after the Frogwatch Ontario program. Volunteers across the United States collect data on their local amphibian populations by choosing and periodically monitoring a wetland site for calling frogs and toads.

To participate in Frogwatch, you will need to:

- 👉 Learn to identify your local frog and toad species by their mating calls.
- 👉 Visit your site regularly and stay for 10-15 minutes each visit. Two visits per week is ideal, but even a few times per year may provide us with useful information. Visits are made at least one-half hour after sundown.
- 👉 Collect information, during your visits, on frog calls and on local weather conditions.
- 👉 Enter your data online, or mail in your data sheets.

If you are interested in volunteering you can find FrogWatch USA information including: lists of amphibian species in New Mexico; frog call identification training; materials lists; and data sheets you will need to participate in the study, on their web site at:

<http://www.mp2-pwrc.usgs.gov/FrogWatch/frogwatch.htm>



Audubon Field Trips

Everyone is welcome on field trips: Audubon members and nonmembers, novice and experienced birders.

June Trips

Saturday, June 12 *Water Canyon and Bosque del Apache*
Meet at 6 a.m. at the UNM Physics parking lot on the N.E. corner of Yale and Lomas Blvd. Bring lunch. We will quit at 6 p.m. or after counting 100 species of birds. Call Sei at 266-2480 for details.

Sunday, June 27 *Chama*
Meet at 9 a.m. at the Elkhorn Lodge on the south end of Chama. Target birds are Bobolink, Lewis' Woodpecker, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Veery and Gulls. Call Sei at 266-2480 for details.

July Trips

Saturday/Sunday, July 10-11 *Las Vegas and Maxwell NWRs*
Meet at 7 a.m. at the Far North Shopping Center on the N.E. corner of Academy and San Mateo. This can be a day trip or overnight trip. Target birds are Lark Bunting, Vesper, Savannah and Grasshopper Sparrows, Eastern Kingbirds and Waterfowl. Call Sei at 266-2480 for details.

August Trips

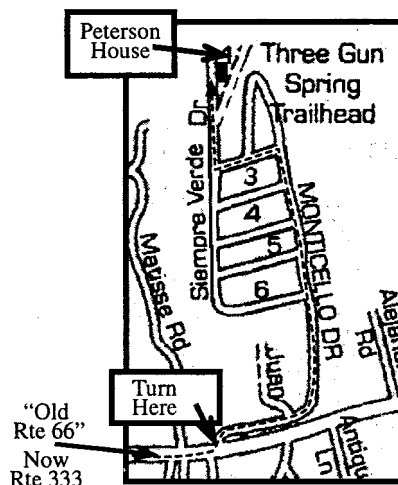
Saturday/Sunday August 14-15 *Fort Sumner and Roswell*
Meet at 7 a.m. at the Far North Shopping Center on the N.E. corner of Academy and San Mateo. We will overnight in Roswell. Target birds are Red-headed Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Mississippi Kite and migrating shore birds. Call Sei at 266-2480 for details.

Audubon Programs

Thursday, June 17, 7:00 p.m. *Potluck Dinner and Poorwill Fieldtrip: CNMAS' First and Last Tenacity Award.* We are honoring Louise Waldron and her efforts to preserve Tres Pistoles Canyon. Our gracious hosts, Don and Adair Peterson, welcome us to their home, only steps away from Tres Pistoles Canyon (Three Gun Spring for you gringos) where we will look for Poorwill after dinner. This promises to be a wonderful get-together on a warm New Mexico evening at a most beautiful location.

Provided: Beer, wine, napkins, utensils, paper plates, hospitality.

Bring: Drinks, hot/cold drink container, dish of your choice, folding chair, warm coat, and flashlight.



Area Map of Monticello and Tres Pistoles

Directions: Take I-40 East to the Carnuel Exit (Exit 170) in Tijeras Canyon. Continue East on Rte 333 (Old Rte 66) crossing over I-40, to just past the 3-mile marker. Turn left into the Monticello subdivision (sign at entrance). Bear right up the hill. Near end of road, turn left on Alegre Street. Alegre deadends and you turn right onto Siemra Verde Street. Siemra Verde deadends at the front yard of Peterson's neighbor. Here the street becomes Tres Pistoles. Go to 19 Tres Pistoles, the last house on the left. Park anywhere in yard, but do not block the road.

July —No meeting.

Bosque Del Apache NWR Program "Chief of the Night"

June 12, 8:00-12:00 p.m. Amy Estelle will introduce visitors to the summer night sky of Native American constellations and stars such as "Rabbit Tracks", "First Big One", "Follows the Sun" and "Awaits the Dawn." Telescopes will be available. Meet at the Visitor Center.

The natural alternative

Backyard birding is an increasingly popular entertainment option. Share it with you friends and family, and enjoy 15% off any bird feeder with this ad.



Wild Bird Center

The Promenade Shopping Center
5200 Eubank NE (Eubank at Spain NE)
(Just East of Marie Callender's)
332-4737



June/July 1999

Wildlife Rescue

*I've found a baby bird out of its nest, on the ground.
Now what do I do?*

Uninjured Nestlings (naked or with pinfeathers)

- Put it back! The mother has not abandoned it and will not reject it because of human handling.
- Can't find the nest? Make one! Punch drainage holes in a margarine tub and line it with tissue. Then nail it to a tree, out of the sun where you think the original nest might be. Watch for return of the parent bird, if no parent appears after several hours, follow transport procedures outlined below.

Uninjured Fledgling (fully feathered but not flying)

- Young birds learning to fly often end up on the ground, but parents are probably nearby feeding it. Put the bird in protective shrubbery and keep dogs and cats out of the area.

Injured Nestlings or Fledglings

Call Wildlife Rescue (505) 344-2500.

- Put the bird in a covered cardboard box (no holes, no water, no food) and place in a warm, dark, quiet place like a closet.

Why no food or water?

Any creature that has sustained an injury (or disease) will enter a "shock" state. The body shifts over to maintaining a basic metabolism—and the function of most organs temporarily shuts down. Eating or drinking anything might push the creature over the edge. Rehabilitators are trained to know when and what kind of food or water can be administered.

Why a dark box?

Find a quiet place where the creature isn't constantly startled by TV's, ringing phones, or the kids' favorite rock group. Garages are generally too chilly. Remember that the best thing you can offer until later rehabilitation is a totally warm, dark, quiet place in which the creature can sleep—it must overcome the extreme stress caused by the situation that injured it in the first place, as well as the trauma caused by you when you trapped, caught and "rescued" it. Once you have found a quiet, warm place—**leave the box alone.** Resist your desire to constantly check on it. This dark box reduces visual stimulus which reduces stress for the injured bird and peeking at it every few minutes will only increase stress.

Thursday Morning Birding Group

For information on weekly birding outings (every Thursday), call Julie Goodding at 255-9366. Meeting time and location, as well as duration, vary.

Code of Birding Ethics

1. Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.

1(a) Support the protection of important bird habitat.

1(b) To avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming.

Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds, and never use such methods in heavily birded areas or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, or of Special Concern, or is rare in your area.

Keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas, and important feeding sites. In such sensitive areas, if there is a need for extended observation, photography, filming or recording, try to use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover.

Use artificial light sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.

1(c) Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird, its surroundings, and other people in the area, and proceed only if access can be controlled, disturbance can be minimized, and permission has been obtained from private land-owners. The sites of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities.

1(d) Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist; otherwise keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

2. Respect the law and the rights of others.

2(a) Do not enter private property without the owner's explicit permission.

2(b) Follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad.

2(c) Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behavior will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike.

3. Ensure that feeders, nest structures, and other artificial bird environments are safe.

3(a) Keep dispensers, water, and food clean and free of decay or disease. It is important to feed birds continually during harsh weather.

3(b) Maintain and clean nest structures regularly.

3(c) If you are attracting birds to an area, ensure the birds are not exposed to predation from cats and other domestic animals, or dangers posed by artificial hazards.

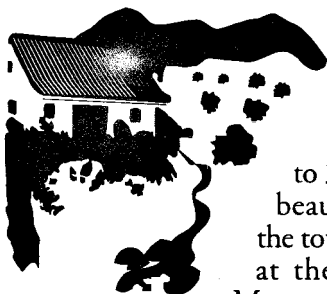
4. Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care. Each individual in a group, in addition to the obligation spelled out in Items #1 and #2, has responsibilities as a Group Member.

4(a) Respect the interests, rights, and skills of fellow birders as well as those of people participating in other legitimate outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience, except where code 1(c) applies. Be especially helpful to beginning birders.

4(b) If you witness any unethical birding behavior, assess the situation and intervene if you think it prudent. When interceding, inform the person(s) of the inappropriate action and attempt, within reason, to have it stopped. If the behavior continues, document it and notify appropriate individuals or organizations.

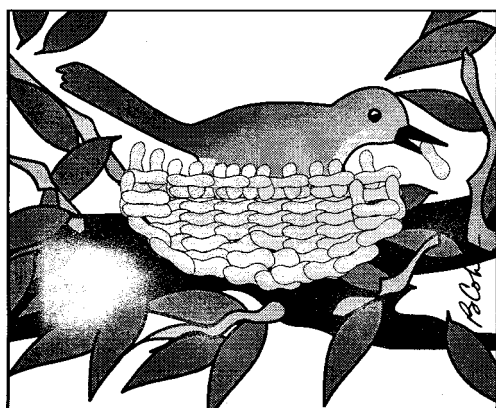


Placitas June Garden Tour



The Third Annual Flowering Desert Garden Tour will be on Sunday, June 6, 1999 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Tickets are \$15. Five beautiful Placitas gardens are on the tour and you can purchase tickets at the Coldwell Banker Parnegg Metro office on Rte 165 which is just off of I-25 heading east from the Placitas exit. The Tour is a fundraiser to benefit preservation of open space in the Placitas area. This year, refreshments will be served at the Anasazi Fields Winery which will be opening a new wine to celebrate this Tour.

The Third Annual Flowering Desert Garden Tour will be on Sunday, June 6, 1999 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Tickets are \$15. Five beautiful Placitas gardens are on the tour and you can purchase tickets at the Coldwell Banker Parnegg Metro office on Rte 165 which is just



What jays have been doing with all those peanuts.

Burrowing Owl Deadline

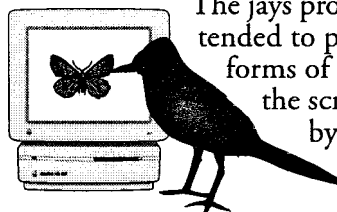
Information and articles to be included in the August September 1999 issue of the Burrowing Owl must be received by July 16. Contact Browning Coke at 256-9130 or email bcokenm@aol.com.

Fishing in the Wind

by Rotten Robin

We know members of the family corvidae are supposed to be smart, but computer games? Well, it seems that scientists at the University of Nebraska have trained six blue jays to peck at "virtual" moths on a computer screen. With each successful peck, the jay is rewarded with a piece of mealworm (wouldn't work for me).

The purpose of the experiment was not to bring the jays into the computer age, but rather to test the theory of "apostatic selection." This theory predicts that predators (to wit, the jays) will go after the most common varieties of prey (in this case, the video moth, not the hapless mealworm), and often overlook the rarer varieties. This may also explain the otherwise inexplicable success of fast food franchises.



The jays proved the scientists right. They tended to peck at the most common forms of computer moths present on the screen at any one time (which by the way changed over time so that the original rarer ones soon become the most common ones). But would you trust your scientific reputation to a blue jay on the take? On the other hand, what if the federal grant money included buying some fancy binoculars?

Perhaps the success of this experiment will inspire you to design one of your own. Mine's going to involve whether our yard birds can be "house-trained" to poop in our neighbor's trees.

Burrowing Owl Study

This is the time of year that Burrowing Owls will be returning to our area and we would like to remind you about Carol Finley's Burrowing Owl project to determine the number and distribution of these owls statewide. Please document the date and location of any Burrowing Owl sightings and report them to her at 505-525-8327 or email her at rcampbell@ziane.com.

Important Information

Wildlife Rescue

If you find a sick or injured bird, call 344-2500.

Rare Bird Alert

In Albuquerque is 323-9323.e-mail: Pinyonjay@aol.com

Bat in Trouble? (Talking Talons)

Call before you intervene. 281-1133 or 281-1515

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.

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June/July 1999

Cowbirds Vindicated?

In recent decades, many land managers, conservationists and citizens have argued that parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds is a major threat to North American songbird populations and that cowbird parasitism is responsible for the range-wide population declines currently shown in a number of songbird species, particularly neotropical migrants. In response, various federal and local government non-game agencies have initiated programs to control cowbird numbers over the past 25 years. Now there are new studies that paint a more accurate picture of the impact cowbirds are having on bird populations.

Impact of Cowbird Parasitism

• **Cowbird populations are declining across the continent.** Except for Florida and some local areas, the Breeding Bird Surveys show cowbirds declined about 1% per year between 1966-1996, dispelling the notion of the public, and even scientific community, that cowbirds are increasing.

• **Rates of nest parasitism vary locally:** when rates are high, parasitism may harm local populations of some species.

Examples:

- **Black-capped Vireo and Golden-cheeked Warbler:** 90% of nests parasitized in open canyon woodlands on Fort Hood, Texas (Eckrich et al.).
- **Bell's Vireo and Yellow-breasted Chat:** 80-90% of nests parasitized in desert riparian habitat in the lower Colorado River valley (Averill et al.).
- **Lazuli Buntings:** 50% of nests parasitized in shrubland prairie habitat in western Montana (Greene and Muehter).

• **Host species often renest and are able to make-up reproductive success lost to parasitism.** There is often little net loss in host reproductive success over an entire breeding season. Hosts with short breeding periods and those that begin the season raising cowbirds may not have enough time to renest.

• **Cowbird parasitism probably is not responsible for the continent-wide declines of many North American songbird species.** Conservationists and the public tend to overestimate the significance of parasitism as a major cause of declining songbird populations.

• **Rates of parasitism depend on the proximity of cowbird feeding sites to host breeding sites.** Cowbirds search for hosts near woodland edges and feed in agricultural and residential spots like grazing yards, grain silos and home bird feeders. The closer such cowbird foraging areas are to host breeding habitats, the more likely hosts will suffer cowbird parasitism.

- **Rates of parasitism sometimes correlate poorly with numbers of cowbirds counted in an area.**
- **Cowbird control can reduce rates of parasitism on a local scale:**

Examples:

- **Southwestern Willow Flycatcher:** parasitized nests down from 64% in 1993 to 11% in 1996, and host nest success increased from 20% to 61% during same period (Enos et al.).
- **Black-capped Vireo:** parasitized nests reduced from 90% in 1987 to <25% in 1996, and host nest success increased from 3.0% to >40% during same period (Weinberg et al.).

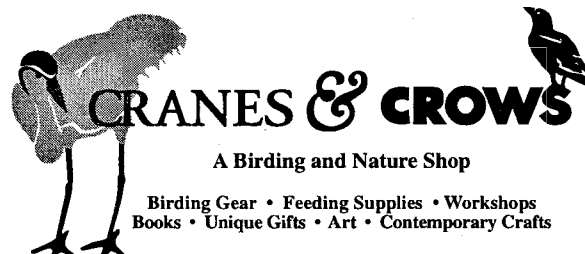
Scientists now agree that although cowbirds may impact some songbird populations, habitat degradation as a result of agriculture, grazing and development is the real threat to songbirds — *Summarized from the Audubon web site.*

Destroying active swallow nests without proper permits can result in a \$5,000 fine or up to six months in jail.

Mud on Your House

It's not Capistrano, but the barn and cliff swallows have returned and are building their mud nests on our homes and structures. Did you know that it is a federal crime to disturb or destroy active swallow nests? Active nests cannot be disturbed until the birds are finished raising their young and have abandoned the nest.

It is legal to remove nests in the early stage of nest construction, before the parents have laid eggs. If you have question about removing swallow nests, or if you need to report the illegal disturbance of swallow nests, contact the US Fish & Wildlife Service Law Enforcement Division at (505) 346-7828.



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Bosque del Apache NWR
(505) 835-1828

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

Sandia Ranger District
US Forest Service
Clifford Dils, District Ranger
11776 Highway 337
Tijeras, NM 87059
(505) 281-3304

**New Mexico Department
of Game and Fish**
Villagra Building
P.O. Box 25112
Santa Fe, NM 87503-0001
(505) 827-6681
<http://www.gmfsh.state.nm.us>

DIRECTORY

CNMAS Phone Number: 255-7622
CNMAS Home Page: <http://www.rt66.com/peacmyer/cnmas>

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