

Burrowing Owl



June - July 2001 Issue

Volume 30 No. 4

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

Birdathon 2001

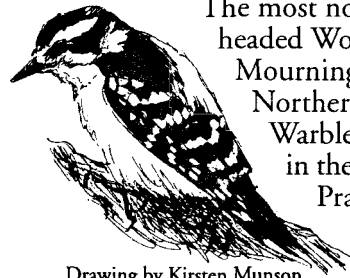
FEATHERS IN OUR CAPS!

Not only do we have folks who love birding – we have very GENEROUS folks who love birding! Thank you for your contributions and support – and special recognition and thanks to the trip leaders around whom we love to flock. After reading Lauren’s news about environmental education at Randall Davey New Mexico Audubon Center (page 4), and hearing from the bright Science Fair winners (page 6), you can congratulate yourselves for all you do to support these education priorities of CNMAS. Fully tax-deductible, your donations and pledges are still coming in, so we’ll have a follow-up in the next newsletter. If your name’s not here and now, we’ll look for you there and then! Thanks to all:

John Tyson, Las Placitas Association, Lillian Tenopyr, Marcia Deleon, Virginia Taylor, Alice Cushing, Art Arenholz, Bob and Carol Scothorn, Dee and Porter Clary, Dick Caldwell, Dorothy Rogan, Eileen Panowski, Jack Courtin, Jean Dilley, John Esterl, Judy Rominger, Andrew Rominger, Kenneth and Mary Lou Schneider, Mary Lou Arthur, Nancy Joste, Pat Folson, Paul McConnell, Ruth Burstrom, Sei Tokuda, Wallace Finley, Lannois F. Neely, Vanessa Dargain, Cheryl Venett, Dianne Cress, Jan and Ernie Villescas, Jo Schuman, Tova Shifberg, Julie Goodding, Karen and Gary Boettcher, M. Rebecca Gracey, Marian Washburn, Marjorie Williams, Melinda Davenport, Sondra Willilamson, Tamie Bulow, Beth Hurst-Waitz and Ron, Barbara Barsky, Eileen McInerney.

Team 1, Saturday-Sunday, April 21-22 Sei Tokuda’s Roswell Ramblers

Fort Sumner, Roswell and Caprock Wildlife Management Area. Eleven birders were on this trip. Although it was quite windy, the group managed to record 90 species of birds.



Drawing by Kirsten Munson

The most notable species were the Red-headed Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Inca, Mourning, and White-winged Doves, Northern Parula, Black and White Warbler and three Long-eared Owls in the Fort Sumner area and Osprey, Prairie Falcon, a Sandhill Crane, Snowy and Semipalmated Plovers, Long-billed Curlew, and Wilson Phalarope at

Bitter Lake. All eleven participants managed to meet at 4:15 AM in Roswell on Sunday morning and went out to see the Lesser Prairie Chickens and a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at the Caprock WMA.

Team 2, Saturday, April 28 Celestyn’s Sandia Seekers

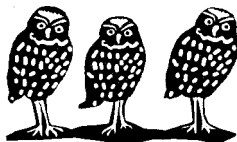
We started our day at Three Guns Spring with lovely close-up views of Scott’s Orioles. Finding the Black-throated Gray Warbler was also very exciting. At that time, we didn’t expect yet that this bird will become one of the most common during our trip. With about twenty species, under our belts we moved to the lovely spot behind St. Antonio de Padua church on NM 14. The place was full of birds, but the most surprising was a Yellow-throated Vireo! The bird was somewhat elusive initially, but after some searching two members of the group were able to get a good look at the vireo which confirmed its identity beyond any doubt. It is probably only the second record of this species in Sandias and it certainly was the highlight of that day.

Further along the road, at Doc Long picnic ground, Grace’s Warblers were very cooperative. One of them flew down and was foraging very low in a tree. Another one took a bath in front of us! From there, we drove up to Capulin Spring but the place was unexpectedly quiet. It seemed that

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Audubon Field Trip Reports

by Sei Tokuda

Saturday, April 7: *Bosque del Apache*

Art Arenholz led this trip. There were 21 birders. The weather turned to be pretty fair with only slight breezes instead of the predicted high winds. The birding was very good with close to 70 species observed. The notable species included the Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Black-necked Stilts, Avocets, Greater Yellowlegs, American Pipits, White-faced Ibis, a tree full of Yellow-headed Blackbirds within 30 feet of us, and an American Bittern. It was a great challenge to find that very well camouflaged Bittern, but everyone got to see it.

Sunday, May 6: *Sandia Mountains*

Seven birders turned out for this trip on a very cool and windy day. This limited the sighting to less than 35 species of birds. The most notable species were the Scott's Oriole, Western Tanager, Evening Grosbeak and American Goldfinch.

Veracruz River Of Raptors October 1-9, 2001

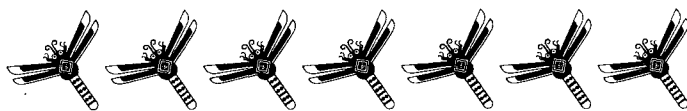
HawkWatch International and Pronatura Veracruz invite you to their annual ecotour to witness the world's largest raptor migration flyway. For information on the 9 day/8 night guided tour to the Mexican state of Veracruz, call 1-800-726-HAWK. Approximately 25% of the price of this tour is a tax-deductible donation that goes to support the Veracruz River of Raptors, a partnership amongst Pronatura Veracruz, HawkWatch International, and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association.

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Audubon Programs

A reminder that we have no meetings in June, July, and August, though the field trips continue. Looking forward to seeing you in **September**, when our first meeting will be a prize: **Bruce Neville will take us on a tour of Australia's Birds!** Looking forward to seeing you then!

October 18, Thursday: *Wild Utah: America's Redrock Wilderness*, a slideshow presentation by Bob Brister, the Outreach Associate for Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. Program begins at 7:15p.m. (refreshments at 7p.m.) at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, (Copper and Jefferson NE).



Bosque del Apache Interpretive Series 2001

Call (505) 835-1828 or visit <http://friendsofthebosque.org>

Saturday, June 16, 9 a.m. - Hummingbirds of the Bosque

Led by Joan Day-Martin, this program includes a presentation followed by field identification. Joan, who is the state's only resident hummingbird bander, began this field work in 1993. Last year she banded the state's 500th species, the Allen's Hummingbird. Joan is currently studying a small population of Lucifer Hummingbirds near Rodeo in southwestern New Mexico.

Sunday, July 15, 2 p.m. - The Art of Joan Stone

Meet Joan and enjoy her wildlife art at her artist's reception.

Saturday, July 28, 8 p.m. - Creatures of the Night

Once the sun sets, the Bosque takes on new life. A chance to see and hear the many bats, birds, and bullfrogs that come out after dark.

Saturday, August 4, 8 p.m. - Moonlight on the Canyon Trail

An interpretive hike led by astronomer, Amy Estelle. This moderately strenuous, two-mile hike takes you to the Bosque Overlook. From here you will see the spectacular full moon rising in the eastern sky.

Saturday, September 8, 1-5 p.m. - Butterflies of the Bosque

Steve Cary and Nancy Daniels will present a slide show of the many butterflies that frequent the Bosque del Apache. Then our butterfly knowledge will be put to use on the Refuge, where we may anticipate seeing 20 different butterfly species.



June - July 2001

Audubon Field Trip Schedule

Saturday, June 2 - Water Canyon Bird Count

Please join Jim Black for his annual **Water Canyon Bird Count**. Meet him at the Water Canyon campground at 6:30AM on Saturday morning. The canyon is located 20 miles west of Socorro. Novice birders will be paired with experienced birders. Jim will also look for owls on Friday evening. Campsites are available but you must bring your own water. Call Jim at 761-0230 for further information.

Saturday, June 9 - Albuquerque Rio Grande

Tim Parker, who is a graduate student in the UNM Department of Biology and a CNMAS board member, will lead this trip. It will be an early morning trip to several locations on the river in and near Albuquerque. The target birds will include Cooper's Hawk, Blue Grosbeak, Summer Tanager, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Meet at 5:30AM in the UNM Physics building parking lot at the NW corner of Lomas and Yale NE. Please call Tim at 924-2296 (home) or 277-3210 (lab) for details.

Friday thru Sunday, June 15-17 - Springer, Maxwell, Raton

David Cleary of Zuni, NM, will be moving to Maxwell in early June and he will lead this trip. The plans are to meet at 5PM on Friday evening and look for birds in the Springer area before supper. On Saturday morning, we will head out to the Maxwell NWR and move on to the Raton area including Sugarite Canyon State Park. Sunday morning's itinerary will be determined by what is seen on Friday and Saturday. Overnight at either Springer or Raton. Call Sei at 266-2480 for details.

Saturday, August 4 - Rio Grande Nature Center

Join Sei and other CNMAS members at the RGNC for the Center's annual **Summer Wings Festival** for a day of bird and nature walks lectures, demonstrations, etc. The RGNC is at the end of Candelaria Road NW, west of Rio Grande Blvd. Call the Nature Center (344-7240) for details.

September 15-16 - Maxwell, Raton, Sugarite State Park

Plans are being made to meet with Dave Cleary for a full weekend of birding in the NE part of NM. Call Sei for details in late May or early June.

... "Birdathon 2001" continued from page 1

Spring didn't reach yet that altitude. We went back down to Hondo Cañon where numerous Black-throated Gray Warblers allowed more excellent views. Toward the evening, the setting sun lit up a strawberry cactus with a Broad-tailed Hummingbird hovering over the flowers! True paradise! We ended up the day with 51 species and many unforgettable memories! Thank you all for coming and sponsoring our team!


Team 3 - Thursday, May 3

Thursday Birders Bosque Trekkers - Sondra Williamson and Karen Boettcher, Trip Leaders

Team 3, the Thursday Birders, braved a very windy day at Water Canyon, Riverine Park in Socorro, and Bosque del Apache as we birded from 5 a.m. until 9 p.m. on May 3, 2001. Highlights of the day for the 11 team members included Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Hepatic Tanager at Water Canyon, the Carolina Wren at Riverine Park, hundreds of Wilson's Phalaropes and a good-sized flock of Willets at Bosque del Apache, and a Flammulated Owl in the Manzanita Mountains. The total for the day was 93 species – with plans already in focus for next year, hopes for a calmer day, and optimism that we'll have 100-plus species in 2002!

Team 0 - Hart's Ghostly Gadabouts

Yup, he's still out there – somewhere! – doing breeding bird surveys and generally being as elusive as a sparrow. But he did flit back long enough to report from Placitas about his survey for the Las Placitas Association (who very kindly supported Hart and us with a generous donation)! We'll let you know of Hart's fall trip as soon as he alights and smooths his feathers.



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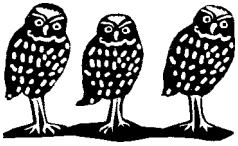
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Thursday Morning Birding Group

Weekly birding outings every Thursday. Meeting time and location, as well as duration, vary. Call Margaret Wallen at 291-1595 for details of outings.



Kids, Birds, and Other Wildlife! Environmental Education at the RDAC

Established in 1983, the **Randall Davey Audubon Center** (RDAC) houses a 135-acre wildlife sanctuary in Santa Fe that includes a beautiful historic home, a nature store, indoor and outdoor classrooms, and hiking trails that meander through pinon/juniper and mixed conifer woodlands. As the New Mexico state headquarters of the National Audubon Society, the Center's mission is to empower New Mexico citizens to make informed decisions about wildlife and habitat protection, and to encourage our state's residents to become active stewards of the planet. This mission is accomplished through education, activism and land stewardship.

RDAC offers a wide variety of natural history programs to schools, community organizations, families, and individuals. One of the best new programs we offer to schools is our four-day 5th grade ecology program. Twenty 5th grade classes from lower income schools in Santa Fe are given the opportunity to increase their understanding and awareness of the natural history and natural resources of Northern New Mexico through a four-day class. Classes actively explore ecosystems around the schoolyard and at the RDAC. Students become scientists as they investigate the biological diversity of each location. They make observations, collect data, classify information, share ideas, and at the end of the week reflect on what they learned about the environment and about protection of resources in their community. A bilingual journal is provided for each student that contains a letter to parents, activity directions, a glossary, and lots of space for notes and drawings. Teachers can use these journals as assessment tools and students keep the journal after the week is over.

Field trips to the Audubon Center have always been popular with area teachers and students. This spring teachers can choose from four topics: insects, native uses of plants, geology, and birds. Each two-hour field trip includes investigations using real tools such as binoculars or butterfly nets; station activities where students explore natural artifacts

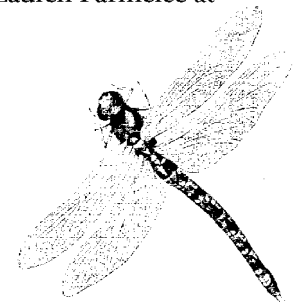
such as nests, bones, and bugs; and lots of time outside on the trails.

Outreach around state is an important part of National Audubon – New Mexico. Next year we will be offering community schools along the Rio Grande the opportunity to participate in our Birds of the Bosque program currently under development. We are also applying for funding to continue bringing our Birds for a Purpose to classrooms that are interested in learning more about local wildlife and habitats, and the pressures that face them. Keep in mind that RDAC educators are always looking to cooperate and collaborate with other EE organizations that are providing communities with good programming!

Our spring programming starts back up the first week in March, but what are we thinking about this week? **SUMMER CAMP!** Audubon Summer Camp is a very important component of our education program hence we begin planning camp in December and don't rest until the end of August. This outdoor natural history summer day camp is for children ages five to eleven years, and campers attend morning and/or afternoon sessions five days per week. Camp programs involve children in thematic investigations of the natural world through hands-on science activities, habitat explorations, stories, and art projects. Youth are hired as paid and volunteer camp assistants. It is a lot of work, but a lot of fun!

If you are visiting Santa Fe and want to meet Audubon staff, observe a program, take a hike, or brainstorm ideas for bettering environmental education in New Mexico give us a call at (505) 983-4609 or email Lauren Parmelee at lparmelee@audubon.org.

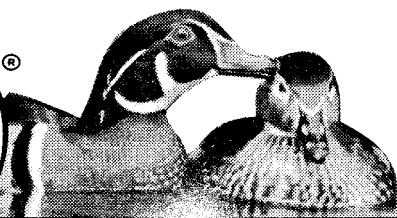
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Randall Davey Audubon Center
PO Box 9314
Santa Fe, NM 87504
(505) 983-4609



Sneak Preview: Dragonfly Festival

Mark your calendars now for a special trip to Bitter Lake NWR in Roswell, where they'll be celebrating their **First Annual Dragonfly Festival** on August 11-12. Our sister Audubon Society in Roswell, Southeastern New Mexico chapter, received an award for their Web page, "The Dragonflies of New Mexico," located at <http://www.rt66.com/~kjherman/odonata/NMdrngnfly.html> And check out the March 2001 issue of *New Mexico Magazine*. The cover features one of "our" Dragonflies, and inside is a six-page article about Bitter Lake NWR and the Odonata Survey, with numerous photos.

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June - July 2001



The National Wildlife Refuge System Is In A State Of Crisis

ON A TYPICAL DAY at the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge in California's Imperial Valley, thousands of fish float dead on the water and dead birds are loaded into an on-site incinerator for disposal. On a bad day, 8 million fish are dead. On the worst of days, hundreds of endangered brown pelicans are incinerated.

Along the path of the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, a blanket of invasive plants, called purple loosestrife, is wiping out wetlands needed by 40 percent of the continental waterfowl population.

At the White River Refuge in Arkansas, a massive dredging project will rip up 260 miles of the riverbed. A second planned project will use river water to irrigate 260,000 acres of rice fields, ruining habitats and harming resident birds and wildlife.

These kinds of crises are occurring not just in Arkansas and California but all across America. Thousands of uncontrolled threats, such as water pollution, invasive species, and limited water supplies, are destroying habitat and harming wildlife on hundreds of national wildlife refuges across the country.

Unequipped to handle the crisis, the Refuge System faces a backlog of \$1.6 billion in unmet operations and maintenance needs. Hundreds of refuges have no staff and no visitor center, no signs, brochures or restrooms, no way to serve the public and few avenues through which to aid resident wildlife populations.

The result is a tragic loss of birds and wildlife in the very areas meant to protect them. At Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge in South Carolina, water pollution has nearly wiped out the American Oystercatcher, which is listed on Audubon's nationwide WatchList of species headed for extinction. Even in the birthplace of the Refuge System, Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida, endangered Wood Storks are threatened by invasive species and habitat loss.

This report describes ten wildlife refuges that illustrate the crisis facing the National Wildlife Refuge System. It builds upon Audubon's America's Hidden Lands report, released in October of 1999, which identifies major problems with administration and management of the Refuge System and calls for the establishment of an independent agency to take control of the refuges.

The ten refuges in crisis are major national or international conservation priorities. These refuges are jeopardized by imminent threats and are failing to protect bird species that are federally-listed as threatened or endangered or are included in Audubon's WatchList of species that could be headed for extinction.

(The full report is available at www.audubon.org.)

Audubon's Policy Director Evan Hirsche (now President of the National Wildlife Refuge Association) says "(the report) *Refuges in Crisis* makes clear that we need to act and we need to act now to save the treasures of our refuge system. It is a call to action."

Congratulations To Friends of Bosque del Apache

The New Mexico Wildlife Society has awarded its "Conservation of the Year" Award to the Friends of Bosque del Apache NWR. Gary Montoya, Assistant Refuge Manager at Bosque, with the assistance of Sevilleta NWR, had commended the Friends of Bosque del Apache to the attention of the New Mexico Wildlife Society, citing the Friends' commitment to the local NWRs, as well as to the national wildlife refuge system. Jim Savery, Refuge Manager at Bosque del Apache, presented the plaque to Emerson Learn, president of FBdA.

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Science Fair Winners' Reports

Bright, young, enthusiastic, energetic – and busy! These winners of our Chapter's Science Fair Awards were thrilled to be invited to make their presentations at our May meeting, but had to decline with regret because of conflicts in their busy schedules. May we introduce you to these young scientists, and to their projects, presented in their own words:

Sources of Arsenic in Surface Water Along the Jemez River System By Ben Gutzler, Taft Middle School

I had heard about the controversy over the arsenic in drinking water regulations, and was curious enough that I decided to do a project on it. I thought that hot springs would be likely natural sources of arsenic, because I thought that the hot water would dissolve materials underground and bring them to the surface. Also, the hot springs are formed by volcanic activities, and arsenic is known to be associated with volcanic rocks. I went into the Jemez Mountains, collected numerous water samples above, below, and at hot springs along the Jemez River. I then took the samples back to the UNM lab of Professor Bruce Thomson, where I analyzed them first for arsenic content and then for electrical conductivity. I found that there was the expected increase in arsenic levels at hot springs, and also a logical correlation between arsenic levels and electrical conductivity. The hot springs I tested at Soda Dam had incredibly high arsenic concentrations (in excess of 2000 parts per billion), and though the levels decreased rapidly downstream, the amounts that remain may still be hazardous to human health in towns that cannot afford a water treatment plant, like Jemez Springs, just downstream from Soda Dam.

(Editor's note: Ben is planning to return to the area next month with Prof. Thomson and some of Thomson's students to do some additional sampling and try to develop this project further for next year's science fair. Ben has really been fired up about science by this work.)

Rio Grande Water Quality By Caitlin C. Davis, 8th Grade, The Menaul School

I decided to do this project after I took a class on stream ecology during our 8th grade retreat in the Jemez Mountains. I was interested in finding if Albuquerque contaminated the Rio Grande. I used a low-cost test kit to test both the Rio Grande and tap water for nitrates, phosphates, coliform bacteria, turbidity, and dissolved oxygen count. During the two-month study, I found that the water downstream of Albuquerque was of slightly lesser quality than the water in and upstream of Albuquerque. This study has made me aware of how the river and the ecosystems it supports are affected by our everyday lives. I have learned that it will take a citywide effort to clean our river. Businesses, homes, and farms will need to work together to pollute less, conserve more, and keep this beautiful piece of New Mexico clean for generations to enjoy!

(Editor's note: Caitlin's cheery personal note makes us all feel good: "Thank you so much for inviting me to your meeting! I am very sorry that I am unable to go. The Audubon Society is a wonderful organization and I hope this project has contributed something to your efforts! Thank you again!")

Change in Vegetation Types Over the Last Century By Sandra A. White, Senior, Manzano High School

I am honored by your recognition of my project at the Northwestern Regional Science Fair. I also enjoy reading the newsletter. Thank you very much!

(Editor's note: And that's unfortunately all we have of Sandra's "own words," because of a problem sending/receiving her emailed attachment report. Sandra (who likes to be called "Sue Andra") went on from Northwest Regional Science Fair to compete in the International Science and Engineering Fair in San Jose, California. She won \$500 from the U.S. Patent and Trademark office for research into changes in woodlands south of Edgewood since the 1930s. Sue Andra used aerial photos taken in 1935, 1952, and 1996 to determine that woodlands have increased in the areas over the years. She is attending New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology in Socorro next year – and met her future roommate, another New Mexico winner who also won honors, at the International Science Fair!)

A River Runs Through It: A Study of the Riparian Ecosystem Along the Rio Grande Bosque - Phase III By Nathan Tooker, Junior, Los Lunas High School

It is with sincere appreciation that I write this letter to thank you for your recognition of my science project. I have enjoyed doing research along the bosque in Los Lunas. Phase I looked at the relationship of vegetation to topography in the Los Lunas Bosque. Phase II studied the arthropod population with regard to vegetation. Phase III examined the difference in the abundance and diversity of the arthropod population in a burned riparian ecosystem versus a relatively stable riparian ecosystem. Results showed the stable ecosystem had the largest total number of arthropods; while the burned ecosystem had a greater diversity. Of the 24 species collected, six were unique to the burned area. These species of arthropods play a vital role in the bosque's recovery, as they assist in pollination, fertilization, and disease control, and become a source of food for returning wildlife.

(Editor's note: Nathan, a 17-year-old who excels in soccer as well as science, shares his enthusiasm in both fields with younger students by volunteering as an AYSO soccer referee and by serving as a student leader for junior high students who themselves participate in Science Fair projects. At the International Science/Engineering Fair, Nathan won a full tuition scholarship to prestigious Drexel University in Philadelphia, worth more than \$73,000.)

"Do Trees Affect Ground Water Recharge?" By John C. Davis was the other Junior Division entry which earned recognition from CNMAS judges. John is (was) a seventh-grader at Roosevelt Middle School. Sorry we missed you, John, in time for this newsletter, but we appreciate your commitment and wish you continued success!

June - July 2001



Upcoming Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society Field Trips

<http://www.rt66.com/peacmyer/scas/>

June 9, Saturday: Pecos Area: Nesting Birds

Leaders: Gary & Karen Schiltz

This half day trip will require some light walking, while we look for birds such as MacGillivray's Warbler, Lewis' Woodpeckers, flycatchers and possible Lazuli Buntings. Meet at the Pepper's Restaurant carpooling location at 6:30AM or the Fina Station just west of Pecos on Hwy 50 at 7AM.

June 24, Sunday: Jemez Mts.: Thrushes, Crossbills

Leader: Martin MacRoberts

This 3/4 day trip will require some walking to find species such as: Northern Three-toed Woodpecker, crossbills, thrushes, warblers, and flycatchers. Meet at the DeVargas Mall carpooling location at 6:30AM, or at the Ponderosa Campground in Bandelier at 7:30AM.

July 15, Sunday: Santa Fe Ski Basin: Blue Grouse

Leader: Tom Taylor

We'll be doing some walking in the high altitude (over 10,000ft.) looking for the birds that specialize in high areas, such as the Blue Grouse, vireos, Gray Jays, etc. This will be a half day trip. Meet at the DeVargas Mall carpooling location at 7AM.

July 20-22, Friday-Sunday: Gila Mts.: Hummingbirds

Leaders: Karen & Gary Schiltz

We'll be staying at Grey Feathers Lodge or camp at Lake Roberts. The lodge has 55 hummingbird feeders with seven to nine species of hummers possible. We'll attend the hummingbird banding. Other species include: Blue Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Montezuema Quail, Acorn Woodpeckers, and Red-faced Warbler. Call (505) 536-3206 or see www.grayfeathers.com to make reservations. Please identify yourself with the Sangre de Cristo Audubon group. For more info & carpooling call Karen at (505) 757-2212.

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Burrowing Owl Deadline

Information and articles to be included in the June - July 2001 issue of the Burrowing Owl must be received by **July 15**. Contact Turtle-Bear at 265-6094 or turtlebear@jensenbear.com. For advertisement inquiries, please contact Beth Hurst-Waitz, 898-8514 or brave_e@juno.com.

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