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# NEWSLETTER NMOS

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BIRDING AT BOSQUE  
by Gary R. Zahm

The Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, nestled along the Rio Grande 20 miles south of Socorro, New Mexico, was established November 28, 1939. The refuge was created primarily as a wintering area for ducks and geese, plus the largest winter concentration of greater sandhill cranes in North America.

The refuge covers 57,191 acres, 13,000 acres of which are intensively managed bottomlands with the remaining acreage being mesas and foothills. The refuge encompasses all of the old Bosque del Apache land grant, awarded November 28, 1845, by the Mexican governor, Manuel Armijo, to Antonio Sandoval for his military service.

Bosque del Apache goes back much further in history than the land grant. Piro culture pueblo indians commonly camped along the Rio Grande while nomadic Apache tribes used to gather in the groves of mistletoe-hung cottonwoods. These groves, called "bosques" by the Spanish, also probably provided shelter from winter storms.

The current refuge bird list contains 281 species (in accordance with the Fifth A.O.U. Check-list as amended). Thirty of the 281 species are classified as accidental visitors (seen only once or twice since 1940). Ninety-eight species have been recorded as nesting on the refuge, while ninety species are classified as year-round residents.

Due to a 15-mile, self-guided tour route which traverses the

very heart of the managed bottomlands, birdwatching on the Bosque has been made into a simple task.

An information booth, containing tour guides, maps, bird lists, etc., marks the start of the tour route. All visitors are requested to register at the information booth.

Two small display marshes, lying on either side of the tour route, mark the first truly great refuge birding areas. The year-round avian diversity of these shallow marshes is quite remarkable. Plan on spending a good deal of time birding around these areas.

Farther along the tour is an observation tower which provides visitors with an over-all panorama of a fall and winter impoundment. The sunrise feeding flights and sunset roost flights of waterfowl and cranes over this area can be of a spectacular nature.

The permanent marshes near the southern end of the tour route contain many nesting species. Canada geese, various species of ducks (including the rare Mexican duck), sora and virginia rails, snowy egrets, green and black-crowned night herons, coots, common gallinules, avocets, great-tailed grackles, red-winged blackbirds, and yellowthroats all nest in the thick cattail-bulrush stands.

The south-eastern loop of the tour offers visitors views of both Gambel's and Scaled quail, Ring-necked and the introduced Afghanistan White-winged pheasants, Roadrunners, various species of hawks, owls, and eagles, plus warblers and sparrows.

A marsh walk trail, located near the mid-point of the tour, sometimes offers glances of stooping Peregrine and Prairie falcons preying on the waterfowl flocks. Crissal Thrashers, Yellow-breasted Chats, Western Meadowlarks, Black-headed and Blue grosbeaks, plus Rufous-sided and Brown towhees can often be seen in woody areas near the end of the trail.

The northern tour loop winds through farmland, riparian woodlands, plus mesquite/grassland. Hawks of all varieties and color phases are common in this area. The numerous drainage ditches attract a tremendous variety of warblers, grosbeaks, goldfinches, towhees, thrashers, and sparrows. To fully explore these areas, the best birding is usually done on foot.

A "bosque" foot-trail leads into the heart of a cottonwood-salt cedar woodland. This trail is especially worthwhile during the spring and early summer months, when migrant warblers and sparrows are common. Great Horned Owls, Mourning Doves, Common Flickers, Western Kingbirds, Western Wood Pewees, Mockingbirds, Northern Orioles, Summer Tanagers and Blue Grosbeaks are among the nesting birds in this area.

To observe species such as the Verdin, Ground and Inca doves, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, White-necked Raven, Bushtit, Canyon and Rock wrens, Curve-billed and Sage thrashers, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Black-throated, Sage and Black-chinned sparrows, birders should venture into the upland areas on both sides of the river bottom.

Roads into these upland areas are of limited access, but wide expanses are available to those willing to walk. Interested birders should inquire at the refuge office for information concerning these areas.

Camping is prohibited on the refuge; however, a KOA campground is available at Socorro. Picnicking facilities are also lacking, but visitors can find plenty of areas along the tour route to pull off and eat.

The tour route is open every day during daylight hours, except during rare hazardous or extremely wet conditions. The refuge office is open Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Further information is available by writing: Refuge Manager, Bosque del Apache NWR, P. O. Box 278, San Antonio, New Mexico, 87832.

#### BIRD NEWS FROM AROUND NEW MEXICO

##### NORTHWESTERN NEW MEXICO

No news was received this issue. If any of the Farmington birders want to help, it would be greatly appreciated! Let me know.—Row

##### NORTHEAST NEW MEXICO by Lorraine Hartshorne, Los Alamos

The Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society sponsored a number of summer field trips this year. Two of the most successful were to Jemez Springs and Swain's Sueno on June 23 and to Cumbres Pass on July 21.

Bandelier National Monument produced its share of excitement during the summer. A pair of Cooper's Hawks nested in the picnic area, and four young birds were well on their way to adulthood when last seen August 1. Other nesting birds nearby included Warbling Vireos, Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, Violet-green Swallows, and Western Bluebirds. Late in June and early July, a Broad-billed Hummingbird was seen by many birds and photographed at a feeder at the Bandelier Visitor Center.

On May 17, Pierra Hartshorne photographed nesting Virginia Rails at Riverside Park in Espanola, including one of the downy black chicks.

##### SOUTHEASTERN NEW MEXICO -by Marge Williams, Roswell

We were very happy to have a few Red-headed Woodpeckers in Roswell again this summer (none were seen last year). An immature red-head was seen on August 3. Other August sightings of interest include Upland Sandpipers in East Grand Plain on the 3rd, and several Long-billed Curlews at Bitter Lake.

An Orchard Oriole at Bitter Lake and a Yellow-crowned Night Heron in an irrigation pond were two of the highlights on recent weeks. Seven species of warblers (Yellow, Virginia's, Townsend's, Black-and-white, MacGillivray's, Wilson's and Northern Waterthrush) were seen on Labor Day weekend.

Two members of the Southeastern New Mexico club visited Rattlesnake Springs, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, on September 7, and reported three Northern Waterthrushes and a Great-crested Flycatcher, an accidental bird for New Mexico.

The club has taken trips to Bonita Lake and Bitter Lake this summer. Fall plans include trips to Mescalero Sands and Phelps White Ranch.

#### CENTRAL NEW MEXICO -by Dot DeLollis, Albuquerque

Ross Teuber, field trip chairman, plans two local birdwalks in October--one in the north valley along the ditches and one in the La Luz area of the Sandia Mountain foothills. In November there will be a day at Bosque del Apache NWR. In December the society will sponsor Christmas Counts in Albuquerque and in the Sandia Mountains, and Ross hopes to find a leader to organize the count at the Bosque. In January he will try something new for the group, a caravan of cars through the Estancia Valley to look for hawks and eagles.

Central NM Audubon has its regular meetings on the third Thursday evening of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the UNM Physics and Astronomy building. Visitors are always welcome. Program chairman, Craig Andrews, reports commitments are mostly tentative at this time. The December meeting will feature a talk on bird photography by member, Jim Karo. Jim is a professional photographer at Sandia Labs but enjoys his hobby of photographing birds and other wildlife.

#### "Sightings from the summer and other exciting records"

The most interesting event of the summer in our area was the appearance of Mississippi Kites. Barbara McKnight saw one at Cedar Crest on June 11th and for about ten days thereafter. This was the first sighting of a Kite in the Sandias. Owen Van Buskirk, who lives in the Albuquerque southeast heights, first saw several Kites on July 11th and these returned to feed in the trees late afternoons for the next three weeks. There were at least two adults and one immature. Kites were also sighted in other areas of the city during this period.

Pat Basham reported an abundance of Screech Owls breeding in the north valley with at least three nests in that area. Oleta Saunders, in the southeast heights, was visited by a Barn Owl at

dusk on June 5th and 6th and photographed it. Al Moore had an interesting albino Bullock's Oriole in the north valley around the 4th of July. It had a white body, golden head and tail, and pink eyes, beak, and legs. (Seen by several other NMOS members at his home.)

Yellow-Billed Cuckoos seemed to have been especially numerous this year and were reported in all sections of Albuquerque--probably due to a heavy infestation of tent caterpillars in the cottonwoods. A Cuckoo was also seen at Cedar Crest from July 28th to 31st. Another valley bird which appeared at Cedar Crest was an immature male Summer Tanager. He stayed in the area from July 27th until August 31st, during which time he changed in color from golden to mottled gold and red.

A LIFER IN YOUR OWN BACK YARD  
by Marge Williams

What a thrill to be able to add life bird 550 (or 561, depending on new or old classifications) in your own back yard! On August 30, a warbler note drove me from my morning coffee and outside in my housecoat to find what was in the tree of my neighbor, two doors down. I first saw the yellow rump from the alley and thought of the familiar Audubons, but I hadn't caught other markings and wanted to be sure. I crossed my neighbor's yard to get a better view of the tree. A Ladder-backed Woodpecker and a Wilson's Warbler sought to distract me from the bird I never quite saw enough of, but suddenly, there it was. But wait, all gray, except for those bright yellow under-tail coverts. But that was the Virginia's Warbler I was trying to get this summer in Rocky Mountain National Park--and never did. A very pale yellow in the breast, white eye ring. After a good study of the bird, I went into the house to check out every possibility. I knew that Virginia's were sometimes seen here in migration, but never thought of seeing them first that way. I studied every other possibility to no avail and went out again. Luckily, the bird was still there. I even saw the little red on the top of his head and confirmed him as a Virginia's.

This experience convinced me to spend Labor Day right in the Roswell area instead of going to the mountains or down the Pecos. In the next three days, within a radius of 20 miles of Roswell, I saw another Virginia's Warbler, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, six other species of warblers, a Spotted Towhee, and a Yellow-crowned Night Heron. Fall migration is surely the time for surprises!

NEW MEXICO BIRDERS

In the last issue of the NMOS NEWSLETTER was a request for New Mexico bird listers to submit their totals for publication in this issue. The following totals were submitted. They represent some of the state's most active birders. Of a total New Mexico list of 410 possible species, Dale Zimmerman leads with 340. He is followed by:

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2. Steve West-321       | 7. Ro Wauer-242       |
| 3. Pat Snider-318       | 8. Marge Williams-239 |
| 4. John Durrie-305      | 9. Dot DeLollis-231   |
| 5. Marian Zimmerman-302 | 10. L. G. Hawkins-216 |
| 6. Ross Teuber-264      |                       |

The February issue will carry another list of totals. If you want to be included, please submit your totals.--RoW

HAWK COUNT INVITATION: The Southwestern New Mexico Audubon Society is extending an invitation to all N.M.O.S. members to participate in a hawk count on Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving, November 29-30, 1974. The center of this count will be Deming. Please contact either Tom Brake (Rt. 10, Box 22, Silver City, 88061) or Bruce Haywood (Rt. 8, Box 160, Silver City, 88061) if you want to participate.

#### MOUNTAIN PLOVER IN NEW MEXICO

The Mountain Plover may well be on the road to extinction. It is rare or no longer occurs on most of its former range within the states of Montana, North Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico. In New Mexico, it "Summers locally in the eastern plains and westward to the vicinity of the Rio Grande Valley, the San Augustin Plains, and Animas; rare to fairly common, breeding in grassland. Most regular east of Roy and the Pecos Valley and south of the Sacramento Mts..." (Hubbard, Check-list of the Birds of New Mexico. 1970. N.M.O.S. Publ. No. 3).

John Durrie, of Albuquerque, recently wrote me that Mountain Plovers have been seen regularly during the past 5 or 6 years on Route 22. John and Paul Fitzsimmons find the species each June along this dirt road that branches east off of Interstate 25 opposite Santa Domingo. He writes, "It's only necessary to go a mile or less off the Interstate before being able to spot them with binocs. Then one can walk pretty close. I've also seen them near Moriarty and the Willard area in the Estancia Valley." --RoW

#### AUDUBON SOCIETY "CITATIONS TO INDUSTRY" PROGRAM WILL BALANCE BRICKBATS WITH BOUQUETS

Encouragement of industrialists who do right by the environment, says our National Audubon Society, may accomplish just as much as angry protests against those who do not. In short, headquarters has seen the value of accentuating the positive.

So the Society has established guidelines for a Citations to Industry Program through which local Audubon chapters can give individual industries a public pat on the back for outstanding environmental actions and accomplishments. Nine chapters, so far this year, have voted such citations; the recipients include a steel plant that installed an advanced type of water pollution

control equipment, a paper company that has organized a major recycling program, and a radio station that has consistently backed conservation causes in its broadcasts.

The guidelines of the new program ask Audubon chapters to give citations only for specific acts and accomplishments by "identifiable segments of industry" in the chapter's own community. It is stressed that such a citation is not necessarily an endorsement of the entire plant or operation, much less of an entire corporation or industry. And the chapters are warned against public relations "'snow jobs'" when the corporation is only carrying out environmental protection measures required by law.

Audubon President Elvis J. Stahr said it was hoped that the program might, for example, give help and encouragement to an industrial administrator who "sticks his neck out and insists on spending corporate dollars to do more than a minimal job of pollution abatement (or reclamation, or natural area protection, or what have you) and who would feel severely let down if his company got little or no public credit, even from the segments of the public who claim to be most interested in the environment." The chapters are urged to publicize their citations as widely as possible.

Stahr added that the program for giving industry credit where credit is due doesn't mean that the Society will be any less ready to assign blame when industry is at fault.

For example an award by the Knob and Valley Audubon Society, Lanesville, Indiana, went to the Floyd County School District in recognition of its outstanding environmental education program, and in Minnesota, the Austin Audubon Society cited the Austin City Council, the Cedar Valley Rehabilitation Workshop and two private garbage collecting concerns for the establishment of a recycling project "possible only because of the cooperation of all four groups."

Praising is always more pleasant and more fun than scolding...with children or with our neighbors who share our environment. Who could we single out for one of these citations? - Taken from The Ravens News Letter, SW Audubon Society

#### NEW MEXICO WARBLERS

How many warblers have been recorded in New Mexico? How many have you seen? According to John Hubbard's "Checklist of the Birds of New Mexico," 36 species are recognized, and 5 more are regarded as hypothetical. The 36 warblers, authenticated by specimens or photographs, include the Black-and-white, Prothonotary, Blue-winged, Tennessee, Orange-crowned, Nashville, Virginia, Lucy, Parula, Olive, Yellow, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Gray, Townsend, Black-throated Green, Hermit, Blackburnian, Grace, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Palm, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Kentucky, MacGillivray, Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Red-faced, Hooded, Wilson, and American, Painted and Slate-throated Redstarts. The five hypotheticals include: Worm-eating, Golden-winged, Cape May, Cerulean and Yellow-throated Warblers.

If you have data to change these warbler statistics, please pass them on to me.—RoW

#### CHIHUAHUAN DESERT SYMPOSIUM

A symposium on the biological resources of the Chihuahuan Desert region of the United States and Mexico will be held on October 16–18, 1974, at Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas. The three-day meeting is being sponsored by the Southwest Regional Office of the National Park Service in Santa Fe and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Co-chairmen are Ro Wauer (N.M.O.S. Bulletin Editor) and David Riskind, Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Papers will be presented on a number of interested topics. Sessions include quarternary environments, botany, mammals, birds, herptiles, and fish. The bird session is scheduled for Friday, October 18, and include the following titles: "Desert Bird Populations in Zacatecas," by J. Dan Webster; "Distributional Relations of Breeding Avifauna of Four Southwestern Mountain Ranges, by Ro Wauer and J. David Ligon; "Effects of Habitat Attrition on Vireo Distribution and Population Density," by Jon C. Barlow; "Temperal Changes in Northern Chihuahuan Desert Bird Communities," by Ralph J. Raitt and Stuart L. Pimm; "Changes in the Breeding Avifauna within the Chisos Mountains," by Ro Wauer; "The Significance of Wilderness Ecosystems in West Texas and Adjacent Regions in the Ecology of Nesting Peregrines," by Grainger Hunt; and "Summary of Avian Resources in the Chihuahuan Desert Region," by Allan R. Phillips.

At 2 PM on Friday, following the papers, Myron Sutton, National Park Service International Relations, will chair a panel discussion on the significant biological resources. Two key-note addresses are designed to make recommendations on preservation.—RoW