

The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society
Volume 47 Number 3, September, 2018



Photograph by Tom Taylor

Upcoming Activities Mark your Calendar

Illustrated Evening Programs

Wednesday, September 12

Bandelier's Park Flight Program

**Note the location at the Randall Davey
Audubon Center and time: 6:30 PM.**

Field Trips

Every Saturday

Randall Davey Audubon Center

Saturday, September 15

Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area and Belen Marsh

Sunday, September 23

Stubblefield Lake & Maxwell National Wildlife Refuge

Sunday, October 28

Valle de Oro National wildlife Refuge

Sunday, November 4

Back Roads of Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge

Details inside.

Success for Kirtland's Warbler

Thanks to an intensive, decades-long effort from many partners in the wildlife conservation community, the [Kirtland's Warbler](#) is an Endangered Species Act (ESA) success story. Bordering on extinction with a population of approximately 200 singing males in the mid-1970s, this habitat specialist, which breeds on large tracts of young jack pine forests in the Great Lakes region and winters in select areas of the Bahamas, has rebounded to include more than 2,000 breeding pairs today.

This progress doubles the original goal set by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). As a result, the USFWS proposed removing the species from the Endangered Species List earlier this year. Delisting is an indicator of the Kirtland's Warbler's hard-fought recovery, but the species will require long-term habitat management and ongoing support to continue to thrive.

American Bird Conservancy is working with a range of agency and nonprofit partners to develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses the full life-cycle conservation needs of the species after delisting.

"Delisting the Kirtland's Warbler means the loss of ESA funding for conservation initiatives, so we're grateful to the Towsley Foundation for providing leadership and support to define a long-term strategy," said Shawn Graff, ABC's Vice President for the Great Lakes Region. "This species is conservation-reliant, meaning that continued management efforts are imperative for the population to hold its ground and continue to expand. That's what makes this work and Towsley's investment so critically important."

The Michigan-based Towsley Foundation is funding a three-year effort to develop a Kirtland's Warbler Business Plan that will define and coordinate essential conservation and research activities, along with a fundraising strategy to ensure this work continues in the future. Meanwhile, the establishment of a Kirtland's Warbler endowment will allow concerned citizens and organizations to invest in the bird's long-term recovery.

Kirtland's Warbler was among the first species listed when the ESA was enacted in 1967. At that time, the warbler was found only in a few isolated areas of Michigan's Lower Peninsula during the breeding season. The species has surpassed recovery goals for the past 16 years and continues to increase in its stronghold in Michigan's Lower Peninsula, while expanding its breeding range into areas of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Wisconsin, and Canada.

The Kirtland's Warbler success story is an excellent example of how innovative partnerships among state and federal agencies, NGOs, and private philanthropy interests can redefine how real conservation programs work on the ground. The broad support for removing this iconic species from protections afforded by the ESA is a testament to the commitments of all the parties interested in the long-term well-being of this unique population of songbirds.

American Bird Conservancy

Audubon Activities

Illustrated Evening Programs

Wednesday, September 12

Bandelier's Park Flight Program

Two interns from Bandelier National Monument will discuss their work in the summer bird-banding program at Bandelier.

Evening programs with illustrated talks on bird conservation and other topics concerning the natural world are held in the Education building at the Randall Davey Audubon Center and Sanctuary at the end of Upper Canyon Rd. in Santa Fe. Abundant parking is available. Everyone is welcome. There is no charge and the building is wheelchair accessible. A short update of environmental issues and chapter activities precedes the program.

Field Trips

Every Saturday

Randall Davey Audubon Center

Every Saturday, a naturalist will lead a walk around the RDAC grounds, an Audubon Important Bird Area, at 8:30 AM. Binoculars can be provided. Dress appropriately. All welcome. For information, call: 983-4609.

Saturday, September 15

Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area and Belen Marsh

Leader: Linda Mowbray, 505-989-8295
BirdingLinda@Yahoo.com

The Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area in Belen is rapidly developing as a mini-Bosque del Apache, and the Belen Marsh is an excellent spot for ducks, shorebirds and rails. Linda Mowbray has agreed to lead this trip. She will be assisted by a volunteer from Whitfield. Contact the Leader for details and carpooling information.

Sunday, September 23

Stubblefield Lake & Maxwell National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: Roger Clark, 505-231-7369,
rogercarolclark@gmail.com

This should be a wonderful time of year to observe a wide variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, summer residents, neotropical migrants and arriving winter residents. This is an all day trip so folks will

need to bring food, plenty to drink and sunscreen. Some walking but easy. After a quick check at Springer Lake, mid to late afternoon, we'll head back to Santa Fe. Meet at The Agora Plaza in Eldorado at 5:15 a.m. Sunrise is at 6:58 and it's approximately two hours from the Agora (distance is 138 miles). There is lodging in Raton less than 30 minutes away from Maxwell for those that wish to stay overnight there. I can arrange a meeting time and place in Maxwell for anyone who stays in Raton. Contact the Leader for details and meeting places and times.



Gila River Festival "Gathering the Gila" September 21 – 24, 2017 Silver City, New Mexico

The 13th annual festival, Gathering the Gila will engage participants in an exploration of the bountiful native foods, plants, and medicines found throughout the Gila River and its watershed. Presented by the Gila Conservation Coalition, the Festival will feature dynamic presentations and hands-on activities designed to foster a deeper intimacy with the Gila River, including river outings, field trips, workshops, storytelling, cooking, and foraging. Full schedule and on-line registration available at www.gilariverfestival.org

Sunday, October 28

Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: Joanna Hatt
802-318-7181, joanna.hatt@gmail.com

We will visit this new urban wildlife refuge. Lots of walking on level surfaces seeking both farmland and riparian birds. Contact trip leader for meeting time and place. Limit of 15 participants. Bring plenty of water. We'll be finished by noon. Contact the Leader for details and carpooling information.

Sunday, November 4

Back Roads of Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: Roy Stephenson
505-500-6413, respidear@comcast.net

This half-day trip will focus on the rarely-opened back roads of Las Vegas NWR. Expect to see migrating waterfowl and raptors. Contact leader for meeting time and place.

November 13 – 18

Festival of the Cranes : Bosque del Apache NWR

The festival offers many tours, classes, exhibits, and even a wildlife art show. The Bosque is an Audubon Important Bird Area. For information call the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge at 575-835-1828 or visit: <http://www.friendsofthebosque.org>

Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society Field Trips are designed to promote understanding and appreciation of wildlife and their habitats. Our aim is to cultivate awareness of outdoor ethics in an atmosphere of friendly companionship. Field trips are free and open to the public. Some area entry fees are required and driving costs are shared. Participants are expected to carpool whenever possible. On all field trips, wear walking shoes and clothing appropriate for the weather. Bring water, lunch, and binoculars. No pets, please. Always call the trip leader before the trip. Trips may be cancelled for a variety of reasons.

Audubon New Mexico

Randall Davey Audubon Center and Sanctuary

The grounds at the Randall Davey Audubon Center are open Monday to Saturday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, closed Sundays (and in January). Stroll the gardens as birds visit the birdfeeders, or walk the trails and enjoy the natural beauty and serenity of the 135-acre wildlife sanctuary. Additionally, the Davey Center is an environmental education center and offers a variety of educational events. Please check the [website](#) for details.



The Center is located at the end of Upper Canyon Road on the far east side of Santa Fe.

Historic House Tours

Step back in time as you stroll through the old Santa Fe style home (originally a lumber mill built in 1847 by the U.S. Army) of the artist Randall Davey (1887-1964). This docent-led tour will give you an opportunity to view some of Davey's most spectacular works of art, as well as a beautiful collection of Spanish Colonial and European antiques. Tours are held each Friday at 2:00 PM. Reservations are recommended. Cost is \$5 per person. For information call 505-983-4609.



December 15, 2018 – January 6, 2019

Christmas Bird Counts

The National Audubon Society began the Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) in 1901. These counts provide important information about wintering bird populations. There are close to 30 counts held in the state of New Mexico and the Sangre de Cristo Chapter participates in 10 counts in its area. The CBCs will be held between mid-December and mid-January. Novices are welcome and will be paired with more experienced birders. For information, check the web site: [New Mexico Ornithological Society](#)

Contact the leaders of each count you want to participate in to make count arrangements.



Keep Your Feeders Clean!

Breeding birds can be a great source of joy, but feeders can increase the risk of disease transmission in the birds we love if feeders are not cleaned adequately. What's the best cleaning method to prevent the spread of disease? According to an article published in the March issue of *The Wilson Journal of Ornithology*, researchers at Kutztown University in Pennsylvania recently conducted a study to determine the most effective way to reduce levels of *Salmonella enterica enterica* bacteria on wild bird feeders.

The researchers gathered data from two sets of feeders: a set that had gathered debris from normal feeding activity and a set of unused, clean feeders. They applied cultures of *Salmonella* to the entire perch and seed well areas of each feeder and then measured the concentration of bacteria on the feeder. The researchers tested three cleaning methods: scrubbing feeders with soap and water, soaking them in a diluted bleach solution for ten minutes, and scrubbing them with soap and water followed by a soak in bleach solution. The feeders were tested again to determine how much bacteria remained.

The researchers found that all three cleaning methods reduced the amount of *Salmonella* on the feeders. However, in both feeder types, the two methods that involved a bleach soak were more effective in reducing *Salmonella* bacteria than simply scrubbing with soap and water. Additionally, they found that feeders with debris had more bacteria after cleaning than new feeders, regardless of the cleaning method used. Furthermore, the debris-laden feeders that received only the soap and water treatment still had enough *Salmonella* to risk disease transmission.

So what does this mean for FeederWatchers? We recommend that, at minimum, when you clean your feeders you soak or scrub them with a dilute bleach solution, rinse them thoroughly, and let them dry before adding bird feed. If your feeders have visible debris, be sure to scrub them as long as necessary to remove all visible debris before cleaning them. Remember that prevention is the key to avoiding the spread of disease and that you should regularly clean your feeders even when there are no signs of disease. For more information, visit our [Sick Birds and Bird Diseases web page](#).

Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

Environment News

New Clues Give Insight into the Hummingbird's Origins

Hummingbirds have captured the imagination of people all over the world for thousands of years. Native to the Americas, it comes as no surprise that the oral traditions and narrative forms of many indigenous cultures set out to explain the local origins and behavioral characteristics of these tiny flitting birds.

Recent scientific discoveries, however, suggest that the hummingbird's origins might be traced back to another part of the world—where today there are no nectar-feeding species. [Learn more](#) about the work a team of scientists is conducting to help fill this gaping hole in hummingbird history.

National Audubon Society

Lesser Prairie-chicken Status and Conservation in NM

In 2017, Lesser Prairie-chickens (LEPC) were surveyed audibly and visually along public roads and on State Game Commission-owned prairie chicken areas (PCAs). Twenty-eight leks were detected on 18 of 52 (35%) roadside routes surveyed. Trend analysis of the total number of leks detected has shown a slight decrease from 1998-2017 along these routes, although not significant. Thirty PCAs were also surveyed. Forty-seven leks were detected on or near PCAs, and 397 LEPC were observed on 33 of those leks. Average lek size was 9.79 birds/lek with an estimated minimum spring breeding population of approximately 4230 birds. This is a 27% increase from 2016. Drought contributed to declines in LEPC populations in east-central NM between 2011 and 2014, although populations have increased each year since 2014 with increased rainfall. In the southern periphery of the range, restoration and reclamation of previously developed areas and long-term planning efforts for re-establishing LEPC populations are on-going. Despite these conservation efforts, the current occupied range of LEPC in NM is substantially reduced from the historic range. Given that LEPC numbers remain below historic averages, we recommend that continued emphasis and commitment be placed on habitat improvement projects in this area.

Grant M Beauprez, Abstract of paper presented at NMOS meeting annual meeting, March 24, 2018

How Long Was Your Thanksgiving Dinner?

Most articles written about U.S. politics in the past few years have mentioned the increasing polarization of the electorate. But is this real, or does it merely reflect the increasing polarization of the media? Now researchers estimate that in 2016, Thanksgiving dinners in which the hosts and guests lived in oppositely voting precincts were up to 50 minutes shorter than same-party-precinct dinners. That is, family members, adjured to avoid talking about contentious subjects, may have simply talked less.

Science, 1 June, 2018

Jones Beach Legal Settlement Provides Safety for Endangered Birds

Based on a judicial order and settlement entered on August 6, the Piping Plovers that nest annually at Jones Beach State Park in New York will no longer face the risk of predation from feral cat colonies inside the Park's boundaries. The plover, a small shorebird, is federally protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as a Threatened species in the Atlantic Coast region, and is listed as Endangered under New York law.

A lawsuit filed by American Bird Conservancy (ABC) in March 2016 alleged a violation of the ESA based on a concern that New York State Parks was not doing enough to ensure that feral cats do not harm the protected Piping Plovers and their chicks. Subsequent discussions between ABC and New York State Parks led to a settlement that provides protection to the plovers from cat predation.

Under the order and settlement, the cats currently living in colonies at Jones Beach will be humanely trapped and removed from the park by the end of the year to a sanctuary where they will be cared for. If the cats cannot be humanely relocated immediately, a limited number of cats will temporarily remain in a fenced area at the park. State Parks has also agreed that any new cats found in the park will be trapped and removed so new cat colonies do not exist at the park in the future. The agreement means that the plovers and their chicks will no longer face the possibility of predation from cats.

Rose Harvey, Commissioner, New York Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, said, "Jones Beach State Park is simply not an appropriate place for stray or abandoned cats. We are pleased this agreement with American Bird Conservancy strikes a sensible balance between protecting the Piping Plover and relocating the feral cats that have been dropped off in the park in as humane a manner as possible."

"Cats make wonderful pets but harm wildlife when allowed to roam outdoors," said Grant Sizemore, Director of Invasive Species Programs at ABC. "Every year, cats kill an estimated 2.4 billion birds in the U.S. alone. Feral cats, listed among the world's most harmful invasive species, are particularly problematic. As a result of this settlement, we're thrilled that the Piping Plovers at Jones Beach State Park will be better protected from feral cats."

American Bird Conservancy



Environment News

Colder Siberian Winters in a Warming World

Siberian winters are becoming colder, despite global warming. Winters have been more severe in Siberia over the past decade, even while loss of sea ice indicates dramatic warming of the Arctic. One hypothesis proposed to explain this apparent paradox is that Arctic sea ice loss forces a change in atmospheric circulation patterns that leads to colder Siberian winters. Using comprehensive atmospheric circulation models, researchers demonstrated that late autumn sea ice loss in the Barents-Kara Seas should result in a colder climate in Siberia the following winter. Their experiments also suggest that changes in the stratosphere, particularly shifts in and weakening of the stratospheric polar vortex owing to a reduction in sea ice, contribute substantially to the severity of winters in Siberia.

Sci. Adv. 10.1126/sciadv.aat6025 (2018).
Science 27 July 2018



California Birds Nesting Earlier to Offset Rising Temperatures

Yellow Warblers and Western Meadowlarks are two species of California birds that are nesting a week earlier than they did 70 to 100 years ago, apparently in response to rising temperatures. Earlier nesting offsets about a two-degree temperature rise they would have experienced had they not accelerated nesting times. This study reveals broad-scale climate change adaptation not previously recorded in birds. The discovery of this startling news is due in part to meticulous records kept by Joseph Grinnell in statewide surveys he led a century ago.

NY Times

Most Economic Forecasts Have a Big Blind Spot: Climate Change

Climate change is having a real impact, not just on the environment but on the economy too. And a growing body of research by economists and climate scientists shows that extreme weather will weigh on economic growth even more so in the future. But almost no mainstream economic forecasting model takes that into account, in an omission that some economists say could affect the accuracy of economic predictions going forward.

The most recent study to quantify the economic impact of the carbon emissions that spur climate change was featured in August in a brief by the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. By evaluating the performance of state economies in previous years, the report found that every one degree increase in average summer temperatures decreases annual state-level output growth by between 0.15 and 0.25 percentage points.

That snowballs over time. If meaningful action isn't taken to curb emissions, US economic growth will be a third lower than it would otherwise have been by the end of this century — or sooner, if warming accelerates even faster than scientists currently anticipate. Theoretically, that means Americans will be poorer and have lower living standards as a result (on top of the the general disruptions to daily life caused by extreme weather events). [Read More](#)

CNN Money

Ozone Progress in Doubt

Emissions of a banned, ozone-depleting chemical, CFC-11 have climbed 25 percent since 2012, suggesting someone may be secretly manufacturing the pollutant, despite the chemical being part of a group of ozone pollutants that were phased out under the 1987 Montreal Protocol.

It's a distressing result, amid what is widely seen as a global environmental success story, in which nations—alarmed by a growing "ozone hole"—collectively took action to phase out chlorofluorocarbons. The ozone layer is slowly recovering, and ozone-depleting substances are still declining. But the apparent increase in emissions of CFC-11 has slowed the rate of decrease by about 22 percent. This, in turn, will delay the ozone layer's recovery and, in the meantime, leave it more vulnerable to other threats.

Officially, production of CFC-11 is supposed to be at or near zero—at least, that is what countries have been telling the U.N. body that monitors and enforces the Montreal Protocol. But with emissions on the rise, scientists suspect someone is making the chemical in defiance of the ban. Somebody's cheating. The scientists don't know exactly who, or where, that person would be. An observatory in Hawaii found CFC-11 mixed in with other gases that were characteristic of a source coming from somewhere in eastern Asia, but scientists could not narrow the area down any further.

Washington Post, 5/17/2018



President's Column

Tom Jervis

New Website Coming!

Later this fall, we are hoping by October 1, Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society will have a NEW website. The Board of Directors, recognizing that our presence on the World Wide Web was grossly inadequate, authorized the development and purchase of a professionally prepared web site. It has been delayed—we were hoping to be able to announce it on September 1—but it is coming along.

We reached out to our members who are photographers and obtained a number of spectacular photographs that will adorn the site. These are professional quality images and could just as well be on the National Audubon website, which is famous for the quality of its photography.

The site will also include information about Programs, Field Trips, and Special Events as well as the Newsletter and other information about the Chapter and its activities. One of the features is that it should be easy for us to update, which the old website was not, so we hope it will be more timely and useful to the membership.

Look for the new site soon. In the meantime our old site has no current information. We'll announce the new one with an eblast!

An example of what we have to work with is given below, a photograph of an Indigo Bunting by SdC member Myrna Brock.



Global Suicide

Did humanity blow its chance to prevent some of the worst outcomes of climate change? Um, yeah.

"Planet Doom." "Point of no return." "We're all gonna die."

These were just some of the headline ideas we kicked around for a story which opens with an evacuation scene at the Carr fire in Redding and hopscoches around the globe seeking an answer to this question: Did humanity blow its chance to prevent the worst outcomes of climate change?

You don't need a weatherman to tell you which way the wind blows, and you don't need me to tell you what it looks like outside your window.

As of Tuesday, August 13th, 11 large wildfires were still raging across California and some 12,500 firefighters were girding for the arrival of another unhelpful stretch of punishing heat. California's largest wildfire in history is burning right now in Mendocino County. More than 2,000 structures have been destroyed and over 740,000 acres scalded. Many people have died. Many more will continue to do so.

This is the "new normal" that fire officials say should actually be known as just "normal." Fire tornadoes and massive, year-long conflagrations that devour whole neighborhoods and leave the sky a permanent orange-gray are now the best case scenario going forward. In the not too distant future, we're looking at catastrophic losses of life.

Welcome to California. Welcome to the world. We broke it. Now we own it.

We could've stopped this. We can't anymore, but we can still mitigate some of the hairier effects. We won't, of course. Because why start being sensible now?

If there's a silver lining to all of this, it's that history won't remember mankind's profoundly stupid collective suicide. There won't be anyone left to write it down.

NewsReview.com, Sacramento, CA

Political Issues

ESA Under Frontal Attack

It's a one-two punch that packs deadly intent. First, Republicans in Congress snuck riders that would harm the Endangered Species Act into must-pass bills. Now, the Interior Department, led by Trump-appointed Ryan Zinke, has proposed radical changes that would gut the Act and drive imperiled animals and plants closer to extinction.

Together these actions represent the worst onslaught the Act has ever faced.

The Interior Department's proposed changes would weaken protections for hundreds of endangered animals and plants and the places they live, putting polar bears, borderlands jaguars and other species in even deeper peril than they already face.

The proposed changes would also mean that hundreds of other at-risk species waiting to be granted protection under the Act — like the monarch butterfly — would face existence-threatening delays or be denied the safeguards they deserve.

Will you speak up for wildlife? Tell the Interior Department to immediately withdraw its disastrous proposal.

[Take Action](#)

Center for Biological Diversity

Come November, Don't forget to

VOTE

Everything that involves the natural world—birds, wildlife, open space, public lands, clean air, clean water, you name it, it is under attack. If there is a choice between protection and conservation or exploitation and despoilation, this Administration and its apologists and beneficiaries have come down in favor of sacrificing nature for profit. In New Mexico we are fortunate that our Congressional representatives—with the exception of Mr Pearce—are on our side. Support the good guys, It's important.



Trump Targets California, Arctic for More Drilling, Fracking

The Trump administration this week pushed ahead plans to open more than a million acres of public lands in central California to oil drilling and fracking. The move would end a five-year moratorium on leasing federal public land in the state to oil companies — won largely by the Center for Biological Diversity and allies.

Meanwhile Trump also took a major step toward opening Alaska's National Petroleum Reserve — the largest roadless area in the United States — to new, industrial-scale oil development. The project threatens [polar bears](#), caribou and migratory birds in the ecologically rich reserve.

"We desperately need to keep these dirty fossil fuels in the ground," said the Center's Clare Lakewood. "But Trump is hell-bent on sacrificing our health, wildlife and climate to profit big polluters."

Center for Biological Diversity

Trump's Newly Released "Dirty Power Plan" is a Fantasy

The Trump administration unveiled its rewrite (read: gutting) of the Clean Power Plan one of President Obama's signature efforts to curb the carbon pollution that fuels climate change. Dubbed by environmentalists as the "Dirty Power Plan." Trump's changes would sabotage U.S. climate goals, prop up failing coal power plants, and endanger public health through increased air pollution. The proposed plan relies on outdated data and discredited studies and simply does not reflect how our nation's electric grid actually works.

Despite Trump's claims to the contrary, the Clean Air Act gives the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency the authority—and the obligation—to regulate climate-harming emissions, and the 2015 standards are both attainable and inexpensive to meet. The proposal would hand off regulatory authority to the states and allow them to set weak standards for coal plant pollution—or let plants off the hook entirely. Ultimately, experts say, the plan, which insists on looking backward toward the dying coal industry, would cause carbon pollution to go up. As California congressman Ted Lieu put nicely on Twitter: "Coal is not coming back for the same reason 35mm film is not coming back. Cheaper, cleaner, better alternatives were discovered."

NRDC

Vote for the Environment November 6th!

To contact your Representatives and Senators, see next page

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Coming soon: An all new and informative Web site

WHERE BIRDS THRIVE, PEOPLE PROSPER

New Mexico Rare Bird Alert

is on the Web

[New Mexico Rare Bird Alert](#)

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Audubon en Español

Audubon ha lanzado su sitio web en español para conectar con las audiencias hispanas y disfrutar juntos de la naturaleza y la protección de las aves y sus hábitats. Visita Audubon en Español (<http://www.audubon.org/es>).

Contact your Congressional Representatives
Let them know that protecting the environment is important to you!

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