

The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society

Volume 46 Number 2, June, 2017



Photograph by Tom Taylor

Upcoming Activities Mark your Calendar

Illustrated Evening Programs

Wednesday, September 13

Remember to check the [Sangre Website](#) for information. Note the location at the Randall Davey Audubon Center and time: 6:30 PM.

Field Trips

Saturday, June 10

Bandelier: Frijoles Canyon

Sunday, June 18

Orilla Verde

Sunday, July 9

Caja Del Rio

Saturday, August 12

Capulin Springs and Sandia Crest

Sunday, August 27

Santa Fe Ski Basin

Saturday, September 16

Maxwell National Wildlife
Refuge

Details inside. Remember to check the [Sangre Website](#) for information.

Facts Are at the Center of Our Universe

In 1633, the Roman Catholic Church convicted Galileo Galilei of heresy for publishing *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*. In the book, a fool named Simplicius defends the case for earth being the center of the universe, while an articulate philosopher, Salviati, presents astronomical facts accumulated over the previous century proving that earth and the other planets revolve around the sun. Sagredo, a neutral layman, easily spots the flaws in Simplicius's case and concludes in strong support of the evidence for a heliocentric solar system. Forced to renounce the implications of his own writings, Galileo spent the rest of his life under house arrest, and for 200 years his book remained on the church's Index of Forbidden Books. Today it is regarded among the most important books ever published.

The absurdity of Galileo's heresy conviction warrants our attention today, as a disturbing and pernicious malignancy threatens not just environmental policy, but civil society itself. Oxymoronic couplets from "post-truth," "fake news" and "alternative facts" would be laughable were they not reflective of a widespread mistrust of science and outright dismissals of facts, knowledge, evidence, and truth.

Science is neither religious nor political. It is simply a way of conducting, documenting, and organizing human curiosity. For thousands of years, humans have cataloged and strived to understand the elements, relationships, mechanics, and laws of nature. Importantly, we also have systematically found ways to put this understanding to our use. As a result, every person in the world today has gained enormously from the steady accumulation of facts and rigorous, evidence-based testing of ideas regarding what is "true" about the world around us. Science benefits everyone's daily life and longevity, and its cornerstones are facts.

Last century we also began amassing information about how humans alter natural systems, and how to reduce or mitigate these impacts. Again, human society gained immeasurably as science brought us cleaner air, cleaner water, renewable energy, sustainable fisheries, resource recycling, and countless other advances built around stabilizing our relationship with the natural world.

All this progress is threatened by the post-truth reality, which harkens back to Galileo's era: facts do not matter. Mountains of peer-reviewed evidence and robust scientific consensus about profoundly important matters are swept aside or suppressed. In this worldview, "I don't believe in climate change" replaces "let's examine the evidence." But far more dangerous and potentially long-lasting is the underlying attitude that facts, evidence, and science are irrelevant.

For anyone committed to responsible stewardship of earth's natural systems, this approach to environmental policy must be treated as intolerable. For the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, our bedrock currency is accurate information, and our commitment is to public service through dissemination of knowledge—to all who will listen, and even to those who may choose not to.

John W. Fitzpatrick, Director, Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology

Audubon Activities

Illustrated Evening Programs

Meetings with illustrated talks on bird conservation and other topics concerning the natural world are held on the second Wednesday of September, October, and November **at 6:30 PM** 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.

For details, remember to check the [SdCAS Website](#)

Field Trips

Saturday, June 10 Bandelier : Frijoles Canyon

Leader: Joe Fitzgibbon
505-920-4100, fitzgibbon@newmexico.com

This half-day trip to Bandelier National Monument starts at the park headquarters in Frijoles Canyon. We will look for tanagers, warblers, vireos, grosbeaks, and hope to identify several empidonax flycatchers through their vocalization. Suitable for all skill levels with easy but appreciable walking. Lunch optional. Meet at Bandelier entrance station for 7:45 AM departure. The National Park Service entrance fee will be required. Contact leader for trip status and information.

Sunday, June 18 Orilla Verde

Leader: Jerry Friedman
505-753-1946, jerry_friedman@yahoo.com

On this half-day trip we'll be looking for raptors and a variety of songbirds. Participants can informally gather at DeVargas Mall (in front of Starbucks) at 6:45 AM to arrange car pooling before driving to the Rio Grande Recreation Area Visitor's Center in Pilar for an 8:00 AM departure. Contact leader for trip status.

Sunday, July 9 Caja Del Rio

Leaders: Mary Ristow 505-690-7336,
mristow@newmexico.com.
Joanna Hatt 802-318-7181,
joanna.hatt@gmail.com

This half-day trip requires high-clearance vehicles and will not take place if the roads are muddy. Possible bird species include Black-throated Sparrow, Cactus Wren, Gray Vireo, and Crissal Thrasher. Limit of 12 participants. Contact leaders for meeting place and time.

Saturday, August 12 Capulin Springs and Sandia Crest

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

This is a 3/4 day trip to the Capulin Springs area of the eastern Sandia Mountains. We will expect to see montane species such as tanagers, thrushes, warblers, flycatchers, and Band-tailed Pigeons. Bring a lunch. Limit of 12 participants. Contact leader for meeting place and time.

**For Details go to the
[SdCAS Website](#)**

Sunday, August 27 Santa Fe Ski Basin

Leader: Tom Taylor
505-424-3238, tn21tay@comcast.net

This half-day trip is at very high altitude with moderate to steep hiking. However, good birding should readily be found due to the mixed flocks found this time of year. Townsend's and Wilson's Warblers, Warbling Vireos, plus both kinglets and Gray Jays are anticipated. Appropriate for all levels of birders. Meet at DeVargas Mall (in front of Starbucks) at 7:00 AM or at the ski basin at 7:45 AM. Contact leader for trip status.

Saturday, September 16 Maxwell National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: Will Jaremko-Wright
972-800-3950,
wjaremkowright@gmail.com

This full-day trip will require an early start to accommodate the two-hour drive to the refuge. However, the reward will be the chance to explore the refuge ponds and extensive fields, giving a chance to see lingering waterfowl and songbirds, migrating sparrows, and an assortment of raptors. We will be meeting in Las Vegas, so participants must contact the trip leader for the early meeting time and place.

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. 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 offer a variety of educational events. Please check our new [website](#) or call (505-983-4609) for information or to register for events. 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 P.M. Reservations are recommended. Cost is \$5 per person. For information call 505-983-4609.



Randall Davey Center Activities

Call 983-4609 for more information on these Events

Every Saturday, **Bird Walks** at the Davey Center. 8:30 AM

Saturday, June 10. **Birding 101.** Birdwatching (birding) is a fulfilling and engaging way to spend time in nature, but with almost 550 species of birds found in New Mexico throughout the year, it can be intimidating to get started. Join Scot Pipkin, Audubon New Mexico's Director of Community Education, for this two hour class that will provide a broad overview of how to approach the identification of unfamiliar birds, common birds of our area, and how to record your observations as a citizen scientist. We will also spend time in the field, birding the Randall Davey Audubon Center & Sanctuary. Recommended donation: \$10/person

Saturday, June 17. **Nature Walk with Steve Hamp.** Santa Fe Watershed hike, Nichols Reservoir. Start time 9:00 AM

Saturday, June 17 **Watercoloring with Erik Speyer.** Join Erik Speyer, painter, and author of *The Adventures of Kubi*, a children's book about the true story of a dog who befriends a water buffalo in Vietnam. 1:30-4pm, Fee: \$25

Sunday, June 18. **Urban Birding with Scot Pipkin.** Discover the array of birds that live in the City Different! We will meet at the Griego Veteran's park on Paseo de la Conquistadora to explore the Santa Fe River and see if we can catch a glimpse of some breeding birds. 8:30-11am

Monday June 26: **Pollinator Walk With Steve Cary.** Join "The Butterfly Guy," Steve Cary on a walk through the varied habitats of the Randall Davey Audubon Center & Sanctuary and the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve in search of butterflies ranging from tiny blues to swallowtails. Mr. Cary is a font of information and will fascinate you with stories of species' life histories and the habitats they use. Nets, cameras, and close-focus binoculars are welcome. Walking shoes, water, sun protection, and curiosity required. 8:30-11am.

Saturday, July 8. **Birding 101.** See June 10.

Saturday, July 15. **Native Bee Walk** with Dr. Olivia Carril. Join bee biologist and author of *The Bees In Your Backyard*, Olivia Carril, on a walk through the Randall Davey Audubon Center & Sanctuary in search of some of the world's best pollinators, bees. With hundreds of species in our area and two beautiful bee houses, you'll be sure to see several species of bees, learn about their fascinating life histories, and get an opportunity to spend time with a knowledgeable expert. 10am-Noon

Thursday, July 20: **Pollinator Walk With Steve Cary.** Join "The Butterfly Guy," See description for June 26.

Saturday, July 22 **Watercoloring with Erik Speyer.** Join Erik Speyer, painter, and author of *The Adventures of Kubi* a children's book about the true story of a dog who befriends a water buffalo in Vietnam. 5:30-4pm, Fee: \$25

Sunday, July 23. **Urban Birding with Scot Pipkin** Discover the array of birds that live in the City Different! Meet at the Roundhouse north entrance for some birding at the Capitol and a walk toward the Santa Fe River. 8:30-11am.

Saturday, August 12. **Birding 101,** See June 10.

Wednesday, August 16. **Bear Canyon Hike** with Steven Hamp. Bear Canyon on the northeast corner of the Randall Davey Audubon Center & Sanctuary provides a glimpse into the higher elevations of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains with mixed conifer forest dominated by ponderosa pines, seasonal wetlands, and several species of bird that won't be seen on other parts of the property. Join hydrologist, poet, and naturalist, Steven Hamp on a hike to this beautiful canyon and learn more about the complex ecology of our region. 10am-Noon:

Sunday, August 20. **Urban Birding at Monica Lucero Park.** With a combination of open park and arroyo habitats, Monica Lucero Park and the Arroyo de los Chamisos provide great habitat for birding. On this walk, we'll be looking for bluebirds, flycatchers, hawks, and maybe even a few sparrows hiding in the Chamisa. 8:30-noon

Environment News

National Monuments at Risk

In April, President Trump signed an Executive Order calling for the Interior Department to review National Monument designations exceeding 100,000 acres since 1996, with an eye toward reducing or eliminating areas that were protected for their historic, cultural, and environmental importance.

National Monuments protect crucial habitat for threatened birds and other species. This order has the potential to undermine one of the nation's most important conservation tools—one that has benefited endangered birds and provided habitat essential for their recovery. It's a troubling reversal of the conservation ethic established by President Teddy Roosevelt in 1906, when he signed the Antiquities Act "to safeguard and preserve federal lands and cultural and historical sites for all Americans to enjoy."

Across the United States, National Monuments make a crucial difference for wildlife. This review process is a step in the wrong direction. It threatens endangered birds and diminishes the natural heritage of future generations of Americans.

American Bird Conservancy

Tell the Interior Department You Support Our Monuments!

No matter where you live in New Mexico, Rio Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monuments belong to you. Whether you want to watch birds, camp, hike, or just enjoy the land, these public lands are here for you to enjoy.

The recent executive order calls for "evaluating" our monuments. The DOI is now **accepting public comment** about the designations. We must stand together against this attack. Please help us keep these monuments and others around the West intact. We encourage you to **submit a comment** today, telling the DOI that the cultural, scientific, recreation, and economic benefits of these Monuments is important to you.

Comments may be submitted online at <http://www.regulations.gov> by entering "DOI-2017-0002" in the Search bar and clicking "Search," or by mail to Monument Review, MS-1530, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

Written comments relating to the Executive Order must be submitted by mid-July. Do it NOW!

To Scratch or Not to Scratch

Observing someone else scratching themselves can make you want to do so. This contagious itching has been observed in monkeys and humans, but what about rodents? Researchers have found that mice do imitate scratching when they observe it in other mice. The authors identified a brain area called the suprachiasmatic nucleus as a key circuit for mediating contagious itch. Gastrin-releasing peptide and its receptor in the suprachiasmatic nucleus were necessary and sufficient to transmit this contagious behavior.

Science 10 March, 2017



Microtracker Maps a Rare Bird's Migration

Fifty years ago, fewer than 400 Kirtland's warblers were left in their summer habitat in upper Michigan. The species, *Setophaga kirtlandii*, became one of the first beneficiaries of the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Forest managers planted more jack pines—which the songbird needs for its summer nests—and the population of the species increased 10-fold. But even so, only about 40% of the birds survive the annual migration to the Bahamas and back. Researchers wanted to learn more about their round-trip route, so they outfitted 50 warblers with tiny geolocators weighing just 0.5 grams. Every 2 minutes, the geolocators record the intensity of light, a measure of sunrise and sunset that can be used to calculate latitude and longitude. In the fall, the team learned, the warblers headed east over Ontario to the Atlantic coast, then south to the Bahamas. For the spring leg, the warblers flew west and made a stop in Florida before turning north toward Michigan, the team reported last week in the *Journal of Avian Biology*. Each way, they travel about 4500 kilometers in about 16 days. Knowing the locations of those stopovers is a starting point for improving the bird's protection.

Science 10 March, 2017

Earthworms on a Microplastics Diet

Microplastics commonly found in marine environments can cause harm to marine organisms when ingested. Terrestrial environments are also widely polluted with plastics, but little is known about their effect on terrestrial species. Researchers have investigated the effect of polyethylene microplastics in plant litter on earthworms. To provide a realistic exposure scenario, the authors added the microplastics to plant litter deposited on the soil surface. They show that environmentally relevant microplastic concentrations led to reduced earthworm growth and elevated mortality as compared to a control. Furthermore, earthworms may transport microplastics into soils, from which they may leach into surface waters.

Environ. Sci. Technol. 10.1021/acs.est.5b05478 (2016).
reviewed in Science 11 March, 2016

Climate Corner

Wind and Rain Change Breeding Patterns for Swallows

Fewer storms that bring wind and rain may be causing North American tree swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) to lay their eggs earlier in the spring, according to new research.

The impacts of this early egg laying aren't known, but the trend points to what researchers say is an overlooked effect of climate change. Many studies look at the effects of warming temperatures on wildlife, but these researchers took into account the effects that less wind and rain in central Alaska have on the birds.

As part of their study, published in *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, the researchers looked at data collected on swallows in two study sites in central Alaska over the past 15 years. The researchers recorded when the individual birds were laying eggs, hatching and fledging. Then, they reviewed weather station data from NOAA and the National Park Service and took note of climate data including temperatures, windiness and precipitation. In spring when the birds are nesting, their habitat is not warmer at all. But they found that frequent, small spring windstorms, which tend to slow down the breeding process, have become rarer over the past three decades. As the springs have gotten less windy, the birds are laying eggs earlier.

"Birds fine tune what they're doing when there's climate variation year to year," Doak, the senior author on the paper, said. He and the other authors hope to study nest success, fledging and rearing of the species at these sites to determine what effects an earlier breeding time has, but he also hopes the study shows the importance of studying climate change impacts other than temperature. "Climate change really has multiple dimensions," he said. "We've been simplifying it down to the fact that things are getting warmer."

<http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/284/1853/20170412>

Dana Kobilinsky, The Wildlife Society

Expansion of Toxic "Red Tides"

Ocean temperatures in the North Atlantic and North Pacific oceans have increased in recent decades, particularly in coastal areas. This has been associated with increased algal blooms and, where these blooms include algal species that produce biotoxins, the potential for increases in cases of paralytic and diarrhetic shellfish poisoning. Researchers used high-resolution records of sea surface temperature from 1982 to 2016 and temperature-dependent growth rates of two toxic algal species to create models of harmful algal blooms. These models were validated in areas of the North Atlantic by observations in other studies of increased bloom frequency and range that matched predicted locations. This information could potentially be used to predict the future spread of harmful algal blooms and the consequent impact on human health.

Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A. **114**, 4975 (2017)
Reviewed in Science, 19 May, 2017

Planting Trees Will Not Slow Global Warming

Nothing, not even the creation of huge plantations of trees to absorb carbon dioxide, is a viable alternative to drastic cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. If the world's nations really do intend to contain global warming to within 2°C, there is no alternative to drastic cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, according to a new study.

"If we continue burning coal and oil the way we do today, the amounts of greenhouse gas we would need to take out of the atmosphere in order to stabilise the climate would be too huge to manage," says Lena Boysen, from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, who led the study, published in *Earth's Future*.

If the forests were planted on productive land, then humans would lose the soils urgently needed to nourish a population of 9 billion. If the trees were planted on less productive terrain, the necessary costs in water and nitrogen-based fertiliser would be devastating. Either way, natural ecosystems would be irreparably damaged.

And then the trees grown to absorb carbon would have to be stored deep underground, to prevent the carbon returning to the atmosphere to drive global warming rather than limit it.

"Even if we were able to use productive plants such as poplar trees or switchgrass, and store 50% of the carbon contained in their biomass, in the business-as-usual scenario of continued, unconstrained fossil fuel use, the sheer size of the plantations for staying at or below 2°C of warming would cause devastating environmental consequences," Boysen says.

"So this is a positive message. We know what to do – rapidly ending fossil fuel use, complemented by a great variety of CO₂ removal techniques. We know when to do it – now. And if we do it, we find it is still possible to avoid the bulk of climate risks by limiting temperature rise to below 2°C."

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/2016EF000469/abstract;jsessionid=79FB24FD8FB2090EA98EB5772097A08F.fo2to>

Climate News Network





President's Column

Apart from the foot in mouth disease that appears to be reaching epidemic proportions in Washington, there is plenty of real news that is disturbing or worse for those who respect stubborn and irreducible facts and who cherish the natural world. A glance at the next page is enough to bring tears to the eye.

In my December column, when the nature of the carnage that is now all around us was only hypothetical, I said that we should “rejoice in the singular beauty of birds and their endlessly fascinating life histories and resolve to never give up.” Now I am calling you to action. If you are reading this, go to page four and follow the links to the Department of the Interior web site and leave a comment about the “review” of National Monument designations. These are areas that have been set aside for quite specific objectives, generally in consultation and with the cooperation of local communities. They are not “land grabs”—the land was in government hands to begin with—and local communities stand to benefit from the increased visibility of the areas as special lands. Tell the Department of the Interior you support protection for these special places.

In New Mexico, we are fortunate to have many spectacular landscapes and it is easy to think that no more protection is needed. But think of the fact that in much of the nation, there are no large natural landscapes left. Think of Ohio, where a squirrel could once have crossed the state from the Ohio River to Lake Erie without setting foot on the ground, but is now largely agricultural. The same is largely true of the entire eastern seaboard. I recently returned from a trip up and back down the Rocky Mountain front in Colorado, a place I knew in the 1960s as a natural landscape interspersed with occasional small cities. It is now largely an exurb from Pueblo north to Cheyenne, Wyoming. On clear days you can see the mountains, but the sense of the landscape is vanishing.

We must pay attention to the acute threats. Tell the Interior Department that we value our Monuments, write to your Congressman and Senators (see page 8) and let them know how you feel about climate change, clean air, clean water, and the natural world. Let your national (and local) political representatives know that you value the natural world. Doing this will keep you engaged and it will make a difference.

But we also must pay attention to the little things: urban sprawl and the industrialization of natural landscapes as has happened in northwestern and southeastern New Mexico and is now happening in North Dakota. It does sometimes feel overwhelming, but engagement is the key. Pay attention and let your leaders know how you feel. They will follow your lead.

Tom Jervis

Hawaiian Crows Show Their Tool-using Smarts

The clever crows of New Caledonia, long known for their unique ability to make tools, may want to step aside for a distant U.S. cousin. The endangered Hawaiian 'Alalā, a crow that is extinct in the wild and lives only in captivity, has been shown to use sticks to forage for food, [much like New Caledonian Crows](#). The discovery, adds the 'Alalās to a short list of fewer than a dozen bird species known to use tools. To earn that title, 104 captive 'Alalās were tested for their tool-using smarts with a food reward. Without any training, 78% spontaneously picked up sticks placed in their enclosures and used them to extract food from crevices in pieces of wood, much as New Caledonian crows use twigs to pry grubs and insects from rotted logs. Many also shortened the sticks to make more suitable tools. Finally, just like the New Caledonian Crows, some also manufactured their own instruments by cutting sticks from bushes and dead ferns. But because the two species separated from a last common ancestor about 11 million years ago, scientists think the two species evolved their skills independently. The scientists also say that the 'Alalās likely use tools as part of their natural behavior—that's because all the adults adeptly wielded their sticks, and young chicks did so without observing the adults or being trained. Tool use is rare in the animal kingdom. So why did two crow species evolve this ability? The scientists aren't certain, but they say it may have to do with living on remote tropical islands without woodpeckers and fierce bird predators.

Science 16 September, 2016

Water Walkers

The ancestor of all tetrapods (the ancestors of all four-limbed creatures) “walked” out of the water millions of years ago. An intriguing idea, but walking out of water is actually quite a biomechanical challenge. Though some fishes are known to use their fins to “walk” underwater, the movement toward a pelvic girdle that could support the weight of an organism's body out of the water has been seen as a tetrapod innovation. Researchers analyzed the pelvic structure and walking kinematics of a rare cave fish, *Cryptotora thamicola*, which is known to walk up waterfalls using its fins and a tetrapod-like lateral gait, and found remarkable convergence with the tetrapod pelvis. This finding supports the hypothesis that pelvically driven movement on land may have been possible before the evolution of digitated limbs.

Sci. Rep. 10.1038/srep23711 (2016), reviewed in Science, 1 April 2016



Political Issues

Congressional Attacks on ESA Multiply

Twenty-four. That is the number of bills attacking the Endangered Species Act (ESA) that have been introduced to the House and Senate in the past four months. While these bills range in depth and consequences, the message is clear: America's threatened and endangered species are under attack. A flurry of bills attempting to weaken the ESA is nothing new; quite contrarily, it is to be expected to a degree. However, something feels different this time around—as if those bills previously shrugged off as impossible might have a fighting chance in this current political cycle—leaving an unsettling feeling.

To give a taste of what is to come, two bills are worth further examination: Senate bill S.935 and its House counterpart H.R.2134, also known as the Endangered Species Management Self-Determination Act. This Act aims to amend both the ESA and Migratory Bird Treaty Act under the guise of modernization and improvement when in actuality, the Act's real goal is to make it exceedingly more difficult for species to be listed, and remain listed, under the ESA.

It is already a lengthy and burdensome procedure for species to be listed as either threatened or endangered in the United States. If Americans truly want to help, protect, and preserve threatened and endangered species we must speak out and oppose proposed legislation such as the Endangered Species Management Self-Determination Act before it is too late. Contact your senators and representative and ask that they oppose these bills and any legislation that would weaken the Endangered Species Act.

Endangered Species Coalition

Science Advisor for Agriculture Lacks Science Background

The Trump administration is planning to nominate Sam Clovis — the Department of Agriculture's senior White House adviser — as head of USDA's Research, Education and Economics division, according to individuals briefed on the decision. The move would mark a break with recent Republican and Democratic administrations alike, which have previously reserved the high-level position for scientists with expertise in agricultural research.

The job he's now under consideration for, Agriculture's undersecretary of research, education and economics, ranks as a top-level science position that oversees the department's extensive scientific mission. The department's chief scientist also oversees Agriculture's economic bureaus, including the Natural Agricultural Statistics Service and the Economic Research Service. [Read More.](#)

Washington Post, 5/13/2017



A Battle Over the 'Best Science'

Who could object to calls for basing government regulations on the "best available science"? But in Washington, D.C., the phrase has become code for a contentious debate surrounding federal regulatory agencies. Last week, the debate heated up again in Congress as a Senate panel launched a potentially arduous effort to spell out how regulators should identify and use the best science. In a related effort, the House of Representatives science panel approved—for the third time in recent years—controversial bills that would require the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to make the data underlying all new rules publicly available and affect how it picks its science advisers.

The largely Republican backers of the efforts say they are long overdue—and bet any changes have a better chance of becoming law under President Donald Trump, who has promised to streamline and reduce regulation. But observers of the nascent Senate effort—including many scientific societies—are wary, fearing it could end up promoting regulatory paralysis. And critics have blasted the House bills, arguing that they are designed to give industry a disproportionate voice in EPA decisions and cripple the agency's ability to issue rules. The concern is that a lot of this looks like a clever, stealth attempt to create new legal and administrative pathways for slowing agencies down and tying them up in court, rather than genuinely trying to assure the use of the best science in rulemaking,

Science 17 March, 2017

EPA Head Denies Carbon Dioxide Role in Climate Change

Scott Pruitt, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency and the nation's top environmental official, strongly rejected the established science of climate change in March, outraging scientists, environmentalists, and even his immediate predecessor at the Environmental Protection Agency.

"I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do and there's tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact, so no, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see," Pruitt, said.

His comments represented a startling statement for an official so high in the U.S. government, putting him at odds not only with other countries around the globe but also with the official scientific findings of the agency he now leads.

"The world of science is about empirical evidence, not beliefs," Gina McCarthy, the EPA's most recent administrator, said in a statement. "When it comes to climate change, the evidence is robust and overwhelmingly clear that the cost of inaction is unacceptably high. Preventing the greatest consequences of climate change is imperative to the health and well-being of all of us who call Earth home." She added,

Washington Post, 03/09/2017

Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society
P. O. Box 22083
Santa Fé, NM 87502-2083

Sangre de Cristo Audubon Board of Directors 2017

Officers:

President	Tom Jervis	988-1708
Vice President	VACANT	
Treasurer	Carlyn Jervis	988-1708
Secretary	Nancy Brandt	982-2776
Field trips	VACANT	
Membership	VACANT	
Publicity	VACANT	

Committee Chairs:

Conservation	Joanna Hatt	802-318-7181
Newsletter Editor	Tom Jervis	jervidae@cybermesa.com
Program	Joe Fitzgibbon	920-4100
Webmaster	Robert Wall	wallrobert7@gmail.com

Members at Large: Sheila Gershen 988-3143
Adele Caruthers 984-3279
Mary Ristow 820-0906
Tom Taylor 424-3238

New Mexico Audubon Council Delegates:
Mary Ristow 820-0906
Tom Jervis 988-1708

[Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society on the World-Wide Web](http://www.newmexicoaudubon.org/sdcas/)
<http://www.newmexicoaudubon.org/sdcas/>

WHERE BIRDS THRIVE, PEOPLE PROSPER

New Mexico Rare Bird Alert

is on the Web

[New Mexico Rare Bird Alert](#)

Matt Baumann, Compiler
mbaumann22@gmail.com

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!

Senator Martin Heinrich
U. S. Senate
840 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202 224-5521 (office)
202-224-2841 (fax)
Toll free 1-800-443-8658
Santa Fé Office 988-6647
www.Heinrich.senate.gov/

Senator Tom Udall
U. S. Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202.224.6621 (office)
202.228.3261 (fax)
Santa Fe Office 988.6511
www.TomUdall.senate.gov/

Congressman Ben Ray Lujan
U. S. House of Representatives
502 Cannon HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-6190 (office)
202-226-1331 (fax)
Santa Fe Office 984-8950
www.Lujan.house.gov/