

The Mountain Chickadee

Newsletter of the Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society
Volume 48 Number 3, September, 2019



Photograph by Tom Taylor

Upcoming Activities Mark your Calendar

Illustrated Evening Programs

Wednesday, September 11
Wednesday, October 9
Wednesday, November 13

See next page for details, or check our [Website](#)
or anticipate an Eblast!
(Sign up for Eblasts on our [Website](#))

Field Trips

Every Saturday
Randall Davey Audubon Center

Saturday, September 14
Rio Grande at Buckman

Saturday, October 5
Cochiti Lake

Sunday, October 27
Valle de Oro NWR

Sunday, November 3
Back Roads of Las Vegas NWR

November 20-23
**Festival of the Cranes : Bosque del
Apache NWR**

December 14, 2019 – January 5, 2020
Christmas Bird Counts

Details on next page,
or check out our [Website](#)

Watching New Mexico's Birds Like a Hawk

More than 30 years ago, HawkWatch International set up an observation project in the Manzano Mountains, about 80 miles south of Santa Fe, to monitor migrating raptors. Some 175,000 birds later, members of the group are still counting, banding and recording biological data on the wide variety of hawks, eagles, falcons and vultures that migrate through the site each fall.

There are seven other HawkWatch sites in the western U.S., but the Manzano site, on 9,195-foot-high Capilla Peak, is one of the best. The mountains there comprise a relatively narrow and well-defined north-south range, which creates beneficial updrafts and serves as a distinct flight path for migrating raptors, explained Jessie Watson, a research biologist for HawkWatch. "The concentration effect of the Manzano range is further enhanced by the absence of parallel ranges nearby to serve as alternate flight paths," he wrote in an email. In addition, the Sandia Mountains to the north are among several mountain ranges that help create a long chain of isolated ridges for migrant raptors to use as they head south across New Mexico.

HawkWatch aims to track long-term population trends of diurnal raptors throughout western North America, Watson said. Raptors can serve as important biological indicators of ecosystem health, and long-term migration counts are one of the most cost-effective and efficient methods for monitoring the regional status and trends of multiple raptor species. Long-term datasets like HawkWatch's are also the best way to identify shifts in migration patterns and timing resulting from climate change.

About 10 percent of the migrating birds are trapped and banded with the aid of mist nets and remotely triggered bow nets. The HawkWatch five-member, volunteer crew measures each bird's mass, wing size and tail length, and, when possible, estimates its age and sex based on molt patterns and other evidence.

Last year the group counted a total of 4,865 raptors, including 1,511 Sharp-Shinned Hawks (the most common) and 777 Cooper's Hawks. Of



Peregrine Falcon
Photo by Tucker Davidson

(Cont. on P. 3)

Audubon Activities

Illustrated Evening Programs

Wednesday, September 11

The History of Los Luceros and Local Bird Ideologies, Ethan Ortega

People have lived along the Rio Grande river at Los Luceros for over 600 years consecutively. This lecture will discuss the diverse history of the site and the local culture's complex relationship with birds.

Wednesday, October 9

Conserving habitat on the Rio Grande, Paul Tashjian, Director of Freshwater Conservation, Audubon, NM

Audubon New Mexico is working to build climate resiliency for habitat on the middle Rio Grande. "The Ribbon of Life Initiative" includes environmental water transactions, habitat restoration projects and educational activities.

Wednesday, November 13

Santa Fe County Open Space, Peggy Darr, Open Space Resource Management Specialist for Santa Fe County

Santa Fe County owns and manages a diverse assemblage of open spaces; nearly all are beautiful and/or ecologically important. Join Peggy Darr to learn about recreation and conservation opportunities in these special places.

Evening programs will be held at 6:30 on the second Wednesday of September, October and November, with illustrated talks on bird conservation and other topics concerning the natural world, in the new Henderson Pavilion at the Randall Davey Audubon Center and Sanctuary at the end of Upper Canyon Rd. in Santa Fe. Abundant parking is available; **bring a flashlight**. Everyone is welcome. There is no charge and the building is wheelchair accessible, and limited parking is available at the pavilion. 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 14

Rio Grande at Buckman

Leader: Chris Chappell, 505-310-3205
chris.chappell4@gmail.com

On this half day trip, we will walk north from the Buckman diversion on the Rio Grande through recently restored (and not-so-restored) riparian bosque habitat and pinyon-juniper woodland, all set in the spectacular White Rock Canyon less than half hour drive from the Santa Fe Plaza. Hiking is easy to moderate.

Waterfowl are possible and a wide variety of migrant and resident landbirds are expected. We may stop at Diablo Canyon on the way back as well. Meet at 6:30 AM. Trip limit of 15, Contact leader for trip status and meeting place.

Saturday, October 5

Cochiti Lake

Leader: Chris Chappell, 505-310-3205
chris.chappell4@gmail.com

We will bird both Tetilla Peak Recreation Area on the east side of the lake, where there is extensive cottonwood and willow riparian vegetation, and Cochiti Lake Recreation Area on the east side, and areas in between. At this season, migration will be in full swing with potential for interesting passerines in the riparian habitat: Scaled Quail, grebes, waterfowl, and even, if we are

lucky, a few shorebirds. Meet at Dillard's, Santa Fe Place Mall at 7 AM. This trip will end early to mid afternoon. Trip limit of 15; email leader to sign up.

Sunday, October 27

Valle de Oro NWR

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 farmland, riparian birds, and some lingering migrants. Contact trip leader for meeting time and place. Limit of 15 participants. Bring plenty of water and snacks. We'll be finished by noon.

(Cont. on P. 6)

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 their [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. Click [here for registration and more details](#).

Owls at the Davey Center

On Thursday, September 19 at 6 PM in the Pavilion, the Santa Fe Raptor Center will present a short educational program on owls and then release some barn owls.

Garden Party on the Lawn

Join us Sunday, Sept. 22 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Randall Davey's arrival in Santa Fe with a garden party on the lawn at the Randall Davey Audubon Center and Sanctuary. The festivities take place from 2 PM to 4:30 PM and include croquet, a silent auction and live music.

New Mexico Ornithological Society Meeting

Saturday, Oct. 12, Rodeo, NM
www.nmbirds.org

(Cont. from Page 1)

the 18 species seen, Zone-Tailed Hawks (3) and Rough-Legged Hawks (1) were the rarest. Watson noted that throughout North America the number of migrating Golden Eagles and American Kestrels has been declining in recent years. HawkWatch is studying these species, but "as the climate changes... migration routes may change, may be shorter, or birds may not migrate at all," he wrote.

The Manzano HawkWatch site is open to visitors from August 27 to November 5. Peak migration occurs September 10 through October 26. Last year nearly 200 visitors came; most were from New Mexico, but others journeyed from as far away as California and the East Coast. Visitors to the site see raptors in flight and in hand prior to release; they also learn about raptor migration ecology, and what banding and counting efforts can tell us about regional raptor populations and the health of the landscapes they use. A 1.2-mile trail leads up to the site from the main road to Capilla Peak. Migration counts are not conducted during heavy rain, so check the weather before you go. For more info: www.hawkwatch.org

Gordon Smith

Heat Wave Melts Greenland Ice

This summer's scorching heat wave in Europe subsequently moved north over Greenland, causing the surface of the island's vast ice sheet to melt at near-record levels. The ice sheet covers about 80 percent of the island, and analysis of satellite data by the National Snow and Ice Data Center in Boulder, Colo., showed that at one point, melting extended across 380,000 square miles, or about 60 percent of the total ice area. But while the extent of melting has been higher than average this year, it is less than the record 2012 melt season, when warm temperatures persisted for much of the summer.

Greenland's ice sheet is nearly two miles thick in places, and if all of it were to melt, global sea levels would rise about 24 feet. Melting has increased in recent decades because of climate change and has been outstripping accumulation from snow, resulting in a net loss of ice. Estimates vary, but a 2018 study found that the ice sheet has been losing an average of nearly 300 billion tons of ice per year this decade, contributing a total of about one-quarter of an inch to global sea level rise over that time.

New York Times

Environment News

Even Unhatched Birds Communicate

On Sálvora Island, off the coast of Spain, thousands of yellow-legged gulls nest on the grassy cliffs from April to late July. And when the adults notice a predator, such as a dusky-coated mink, they utter a characteristic alarm call — ha-ha-ha. These acoustic cues reach not just young and adult gulls but unhatched embryos, too. In 2018, researchers found that when gull eggs hatch, the ones that were exposed to alarm calls were able to crouch and hide from predators a couple of seconds faster than others.

But embryos aren't receiving wisdom only from their parents — they seem to also receive cues from nearby unhatched siblings. On Salvora Island, each day researchers removed two eggs from a clutch and exposed them to audio recordings of adult gull alarm calls. Other eggs were removed but not exposed to any sounds. The researchers then created groups of eggs in which two siblings had been "informed" of possible predators, with a third "naïve" egg, just as if the three eggs had been laid a day or two apart in the wild.

All three embryos soon exhibited the same adaptations. The two "informed" embryos made fewer peeping noises while in the egg, but so did the third embryo, even though it hadn't been exposed directly to the gull calls. Vibrations from the two "informed" eggs had transmitted information about gull alarm calls to the third egg. And once the chicks hatched, all three showed stunted growth, higher levels of stress hormones and faster reflexes than a control group, responding to alarms by crouching and hiding more quickly.

"Paying attention to cues from the outside is important for survival," said Jose C. Noguera, an evolutionary ecologist at the University of Vigo in Spain, who led the study.

New York Times

1000th Condor Chick Born

Zion National Park biologists confirmed a California Condor chick in a nest on the cliffs just north of Angels Landing. This is the 1,000th chick born in an effort to recover the species and keep these magnificent birds flying free. Biologists estimate the egg was laid mid-March and hatched beginning of May .

The parent female condor hatched in 2006 at the San Diego Zoo and was released at the Vermillion Cliffs in 2008. The male condor hatched in 2009 at The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise,

ID and was released at the Vermillion Cliffs 2011. The birds have been together for two years since the female's first mate died from lead poisoning in 2016. This would be the



female's third confirmed chick. This 1000th chick is the product of the united efforts of citizens, biologists, government and non-government agencies to keep these magnificent birds flying free.

Lead poisoning is the primary cause of condor mortality and a remaining obstacle to the recovery of the population. Hunters and others are helping to reduce the amount of lead in the environment, improving chances for condor survival. On July 1, 2019, California finalized a complete ban on the use of lead ammunition for any hunting purposes anywhere in the state.

DesertUSA.com

Why Did a Pesticide Kill Goldfinches?

Wildlife researchers in California had a mystery. On March 17, 2017, residents in the town of Modesto reported a number of dead American Goldfinches. Researchers at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Wildlife Investigations Laboratory found the birds died from ingesting a nicotine-derived pesticide called Imidacloprid. The day before, city workers had applied the pesticide to the base of trees along the street, although they had reportedly followed the directions on the packaging. So why did the birds die? Researchers determined they likely ingested fallen elm seeds that had been contaminated during the application. The event revealed a previously unidentified risk, they concluded. If seeds or insects are present during application, they could represent contamination threats to wildlife, even if the pesticide is being applied correctly.

The Wildlife Society

Young Climate Activist to Address UN

Swedish teenager and climate activist Greta Thunberg arrived safely in New York in late August after sailing across the Atlantic to speak at the UN Climate Action Summit on Sept. 23. Thunberg, 16, traveled on a zero-emissions yacht to reduce the environmental impact of her journey. She has become the figurehead of a burgeoning movement of youth climate activists after her weekly protests inspired student strikes in more than 100 cities around the world.

CNN

Climate News

Buying Online - The Environmental Cost

Giant online retailers like Amazon often tout their options for next-day delivery. But faster is definitely not better when it comes to the environmental cost of shipping the items you buy online. "The time in transit has a direct relationship to the environmental impact," says Patrick Browne, director of global sustainability at UPS. "I don't think the average consumer understands the environmental impact of having something tomorrow vs. two days from now. The more time you give me, the more efficient I can be."

In theory, e-commerce can be greener than a bunch of shoppers making personal trips in their own cars: Consolidating products and delivering them on one route to a bunch of homes requires fewer miles on the road. In a 2012 study, University of Washington professor Anne Goodchild found that grocery delivery can cut between 80% and 90% of carbon emissions, for example, compared to consumers going to pick up their items on their own. However, she says, that calculation changes significantly if items are coming from further away and have to be sent immediately, which creates fewer opportunities for lumping deliveries together.

In 2017, UPS disclosed that the e-commerce boom had decreased the number of packages it dropped off per mile, leading to more trucks on the road and higher greenhouse gas emissions. In the worst-case scenario, with one delivery per trip, the carbon emissions can be as much as 35 times greater than they would be for a fully-loaded delivery van.

Inefficient delivery routes are not only more carbon-intensive — they're also more expensive for the shipper. If fast delivery is free, it's only because the retailer is subsidizing that delivery to fight for customers at a time of fierce competition and rapid growth. That means consumers aren't feeling the true cost — either environmental or financial — of getting their e-commerce goods super quickly.

Amazon denies that it's speeding up deliveries at the environment's expense, saying that by forecasting regional demand for certain items, it can cut down on transporting things by air, which emits far more carbon than ground transportation. But forecasting demand is still an inexact science. Amazon itself has offered consumers a new option, called "Amazon Day," to help them consolidate their deliveries into one drop-off per week. The company also offers discounts and rewards when shoppers choose "no-rush shipping," which gets people their packages in six business days.

But about those packages - shopping online is seven times

more cardboard-intensive than picking up items from a store. The good news is that Amazon has an 85-person team working on improving and reducing its packaging. "If people paid the true price of delivery, they would ask themselves if they really needed it sooner," says Goodchild. "I think that the fundamental idea of really paying for what it cost in terms of traffic congestion and emissions is something we don't do right now."

CNN

Living on a Knife Edge

The highly localized and endemic Ethiopian Bushcrow (*Zavattariornis stresemanni*), is sensitive to excessive daytime temperatures. It is a noisy, charismatic bird that lives only in a 7800-square-kilometer patch of acacia bush, similar to the savanna that stretches across much of East Africa. The reasons for their strangely restricted range are unknown. They are generalist feeders, apparently lack competitors, and are perfectly able to fly long distances.

Researchers knew that the bushcrow's distribution was described almost exactly by a climate envelope model of



cooler and drier conditions. However, behavioral studies in the field, comparing the bushcrows with similar-sized starlings that have extensive ranges across East Africa, showed that bushcrows live on a physiological knife-edge. When it gets hotter than 30°C (86 F), the bushcrows move into the shade, leaving the starlings to feed in the sun. But even under cover, bushcrows start panting and are unable to feed. Sadly, as the climate warms, it seems inevitable that the Ethiopian bushcrows will disappear.

Ibis 161, 546

Reviewed in Science



President's Column

Tom Jervis

With this issue of the Mountain Chickadee, Gordon Smith is taking over the reins as editor. I have been editor for over 25 years, ably assisted by Carlyn, who was the editor for 10 years before I took over in December of 1993, back in the days when the newsletter was typed, offset printed, and mailed to each of our members. How times have changed; printing and mailing the newsletter became an insurmountable cost (fortunately) just as the Internet became ubiquitous, allowing us to continue to publish 4 times a year, though only in electronic form. It has been a good long run and looking back at some of my early newsletters, I am struck by how little has changed in terms of the kinds of articles presented.

I have tried, over the years, to present a range of articles—about science, the environment, and how we can all help defend the natural world. It was true then and continues to be so, that knowledge of the environment leads to a desire to protect it. Gordon, recently Assistant Editor, will no doubt put his own stamp on the Chickadee going forward. His extensive background as a newspaper reporter and editor, and communications director for a large nonprofit organization, bodes well for the future.

I will continue to work with Gordon as he takes over, but fully intend that whatever legacy I leave, he is free to change the publication as he sees fit. He plans to make few changes initially, but I'm sure that will evolve as he figures it out. I wish him the best and hope everyone will support him as you have supported me. Thank you for this opportunity to be of service to Sangre de Cristo Audubon.

Gila River Festival This Month

The Gila Conservation Coalition (www.gilaconservation.org) will host the 15th annual Gila River Festival September 19-22 in Silver City and along the Gila River. The festival is designed to foster a deeper intimacy with the Gila River, New Mexico's last wild river and named America's #1 Most Endangered River of 2019 by the group American Rivers. Events include river outings, expert-led hikes, music and field trips.

(Cont. from P. 2)

Field Trips

Sunday, November 3

Back Roads of Las Vegas NWR

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 20-23

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>.

December 14, 2019 – January 5, 2020

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 sites:

Sangre de Cristo Audubon; <http://www.SantafeAudubon.org>
Audubon New Mexico; <http://www.nm.audubon.org>
New Mexico Ornithological Society; <http://www.nmbirds.org>

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



Political Issues

Let Your Representatives in Washington
Know How You Feel!
See contact info on the next page!

Gila River Diversion Project - Circling the Drain?

New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham recently appointed seven new members to the nine-member New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, which has the authority to recommend whether to continue with or cancel the misguided Gila River Diversion Project. There's no telling how they'll vote yet, of course, but Lujan Grisham is opposed to the project, and earlier this year line-item vetoed \$1.7 million earmarked for it. The project is also opposed by the state's entire Congressional delegation; U.S. Sen. Tom Udall has called it "fatally flawed." The Interstate Stream Commission could take up the issue this month.

Santa Fe New Mexican

New Mine Proposal Threatens Pecos

In Terrero, near the Pecos Wilderness, 2 million tons of ore were excavated in the 1920s, leading to the contamination of nearby wetlands and \$28 million in remediation and environmental clean-up costs partially paid by taxpayers. Now a new mining proposal threatens to repeat history.

Comexico LLC, a Colorado subsidiary of Australian mining company New World Cobalt Ltd, wants to start prospecting in the area for gold, copper and zinc. It has secured the rights to 20 federal mining claims on 400 acres in the Jones- Hill and Macho Canyon areas of the Pecos Ranger District in Santa Fe and San Miguel counties, and has secured interest in 4,300 acres of surrounding national forest.

In June, Comexico submitted a plan of operations to the Santa Fe National Forest and the state Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department's Mining and Minerals Division. It also applied for an exploratory permit for core drilling operations on up to 2.2 acres. The company states that drilling could begin as early as October. However, Santa Fe National Forest Service Geologist Larry Gore says that's a highly unrealistic timeline, partly due to the

complexities of the terrain and wildlife habitats of the area and public pushback, but also because Comexico "keeps changing their proposal," delaying the process.

Julie Anne Overton, the Officer of Public Affairs for the Forest Service, points out that the 1872 Mining Act prohibits the Forest Service from stopping any mining activity on federal land. Overton says the Forest Service is in the process of deciding what level of assessment will be required for the new Terrero mine site.

One possibility is that Comexico could sell its mining rights before it does any exploratory drilling – or afterward, if the site looks promising. The Upper Pecos River Watershed Association is leading a coalition to stall or stop the permitting process by demanding rigorous environmental and cultural review assessments called for by law under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Santa Fe Reporter

Court Battle Over EPA Attempt to Weaken Regulation of Coal Plants

A coalition of 29 states and cities sued last month to block the Trump administration from easing restrictions on coal-burning power plants. The lawsuit could determine how much leverage the federal government has to regulate the nation's heavily polluting power plants - major producers of greenhouse gases. It's also a challenge to the Trump administration's efforts to roll back former President Obama's regulations to reduce the United States' contribution to global warming. The lawsuit argues that the Trump administration's EPA had no basis for weakening a rule that set first-ever national limits on carbon-dioxide pollution from power plants.

New York Times

Bird Safe Buildings Act Hearing Held, Committee Vote Pending

U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL) and Rep. Morgan Griffith (R-VA) have reintroduced the Bird-Safe Buildings Act H.R. 919. Both Representatives testified in support of the bill at a Committee hearing, setting the stage for an upcoming vote in the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. This bipartisan bill is designed to reduce bird mortality by calling for federal buildings to incorporate bird-safe building materials, design features and lighting. As many as a billion birds a year die in collisions with buildings in North America alone.

American Bird Conservancy

Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society
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Sangre de Cristo Audubon Board of Directors 2019

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[Visit our all new and informative Web site](#)

We recognize that Sangre de Cristo Audubon represents a landscape that has been occupied for millennia by peoples of diverse cultural backgrounds. We honor that diversity and believe that just as we strive to protect biodiversity, we must include and respect the diversity of the many people and cultures that call northern New Mexico their home.

New Mexico Rare Bird Alert is on the Web

[New Mexico Rare Bird Alert](#)

Matt Baumann, Compiler
mbaumann22@gmail.com

Report sightings to
505-264-1052 (leave a message) or contact the compiler

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>).

Es de nuestro reconocimiento que la Sociedad Audubon de Sangre de Cristo es digna representante de un precioso pedazo de tierra que ha sido ocupado durante milenios por personas de raíces culturales diversas. Respetamos profundamente dicha diversidad y creemos que del mismo modo bregamos por la protección de biodiversidad, debemos incluir y honrar la diversidad de los muchos pueblos y culturas que reconocen el norte de Nuevo Mexico como su propio hogar.

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

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