

THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE NEW MEXICO STATE OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

JOYAS VOLADORES, “FLYING JEWELS,” AT THE RANDALL DAVEY AUDUBON CENTER

By: Maryam Miller

It's summertime, which means the hummingbirds are back and we're watching them!

As many of you may know, the Randall Davey Audubon Center & Sanctuary was chosen as a hummingbird monitoring site, due to its distinction as an Important Bird Area as well as factors such as elevation and vegetation types that create the habitats for many species of birds and wildlife, including hummingbirds. The Important Bird Areas Program (IBA) is a global effort to identify and conserve areas that are vital to birds and other biodiversity.

In addition to visitor interest in watching these magnificent tiny birds, Audubon has recognized, with many other partners, that we need to learn more about these birds, particularly when species such as the Rufous Hummingbird appear to be in such sharp decline. In 1970, only 40 years ago, there were an estimated 12 million Rufous Hummingbirds. Today, the global population is estimated at 5 million.

This 58% percent decline in global population of Rufous Hummingbirds was highlighted in Audubon's *Common Birds in Decline* report in 2007. This report was Audubon's unprecedented analysis of forty years of citizen-science bird population data from our own Christmas Bird Count plus the Breeding Bird Survey revealing the alarming decline of many of our most common and beloved birds.

With the help of devoted volunteers, hummingbird feeders were monitored every week last summer at the Audubon Center, beginning July 23rd through September 25th, 2010. This year we've gotten an earlier start, having already monitored feeders

starting in May. We plan to carry on throughout the summer, every other week and within an hour of sunrise.

With devoted volunteers making the feeder watches happen weekly, Audubon is learning more about these special little birds. Last summer alone, dedicated volunteers assisting Audubon staff with the monitoring effort represented over 60 volunteer hours.

Please contact Dana Strang, our Director of Education, at dstrang@audubon.org or (505) 983-4609 if you'd like to join our volunteers!

Our study builds on information gathered at numerous locations throughout the western United States, Canada, and Mexico to understand hummingbird trends in partnership with the University of Arizona and the Hummingbird Monitoring Network's (www.hummonnet.org) on-going monitoring and training activities.

Effective monitoring is the backbone of any conservation plan. Additionally, these efforts are part of the larger Western Hummingbird Partnership in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service.

Last summer, peak numbers of hummingbirds arrived at the Randall Davey Audubon Center in August, with more than 350 visits to feeders recorded every week! Four species of hummingbirds were observed (Black-chinned, Broad-tailed, Calliope, and Rufous), with Broad-tailed being the most numerous, followed by Rufous and then Black-chinned. Calliope hummingbirds were only recorded during 2 of the sessions.

On several mornings, male Rufous hummingbirds dominated one or both feeders, aggressively defending the feeders from other hummingbirds.



Rufous Hummingbird, USFWS, Image Library

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MISSION STATEMENT

Audubon New Mexico's mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S PERCH:

YOUR TIME VOLUNTEERING (AND BIRD-WATCHING!) IDENTIFIES CRITICAL BIRD TRENDS

As described in our cover story on hummingbirds, it has been a natural extension of Audubon's Christmas Bird Counts and Great Backyard Bird Count for the Randall Davey Audubon Center & Sanctuary to participate in a feeder watch and count of hummingbirds in a partnership program across the western United States. Through this seasonal feeder watch program, Audubon is collecting data on hummingbird numbers with a focus on Rufous Hummingbirds.



The more we can identify places important to birds and understand the trends in their population and habits, the better chance we have of protecting them long into the future. This June, Audubon joins the Nature Conservancy and the Canyon Neighborhood Association to celebrate the final 99-acre donation to the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve from Ralph Brutsche, which will expand our Randall Davey Audubon Center Important Bird Area to include the Aztec Spring's drainage.

As with all of our operations across the country, Audubon relies on volunteers to understand the trends in bird populations, to conduct these watches and counts, and even to assist in operating our network of nature centers across the country.

Won't you support our work by volunteering some of your time? If you don't live near Santa Fe, connect with your local Audubon chapter in your community.

With your help and by working with partners globally, Audubon is setting science-based priorities for habitat conservation and promoting positive action to safeguard vital bird habitats. Please consider supporting our conservation and education work through a donation to Audubon New Mexico or the Randall Davey Audubon Center. It's making all the difference.

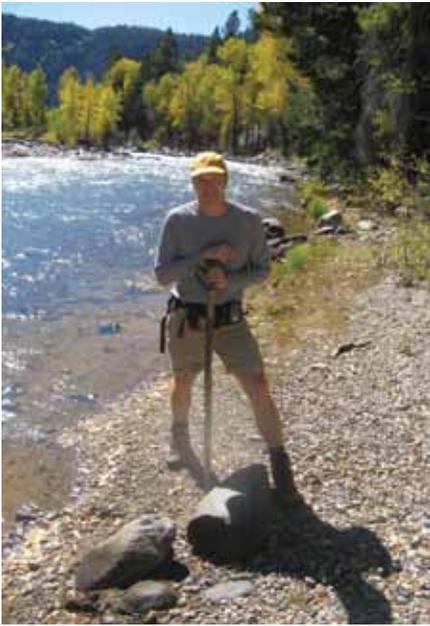


Karyn Stockdale
 Vice President and Executive Director

P.S. There have been several staff changes in the past few months at Audubon New Mexico. We recently said goodbye to Michelle Miano, our Development Associate and wish her luck on her new endeavors. Thankfully, New Mexico will keep this rising star as she enters UNM Law School in the fall. Carl Beal received a well-deserved promotion to Operations Manager - congrats, Carl! We are welcoming two new staff members: Maryam Miller our Administrative Assistant and Ron Langs our Facilities Maintenance Coordinator. Also, congratulations to Staci Stevens who had a new baby girl, Siena Rose Valentino, on May 7th!



WELCOME TO THE AUDUBON BOARD, REED BENSON



A special welcome to Reed Benson who recently joined Audubon New Mexico's Board of Directors! Reed Benson comes to Audubon from the University of New Mexico law faculty, where he contributes from his broad background in environmental work, including five years as executive director of WaterWatch of Oregon. In addition to teaching natural resources classes, Professor Benson serves as Faculty Editor-in-Chief of the Natural Resources Journal. Prior to coming to UNM, he spent six years on the faculty of the University of Wyoming College of Law, where he taught courses in environmental law, legislation, water law and administrative law, and served as faculty adviser to the Wyoming Law Review. Mr. Benson's writing focuses on water law and environmental issues facing the West. His most recent publications examine such topics as the application of the Endangered Species Act to federal water projects, the efforts of western cities to ensure adequate water supplies for recreation, and the scope of federal deference to state laws governing water allocation and management. He has a Bachelors of Science from Iowa State University and his J.D. from the University of Michigan. A member of both the Colorado and Oregon Bars, he previously worked as a staff attorney for the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies, an attorney for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and an associate for the Colorado law firm of Hutchinson, Black & Cook.

BIRDING AT BOTTOMLESS LAKES

By: Blake Ingram, Park Ranger, Bottomless Lakes State Park

Bottomless Lakes State Park is a true bird watching paradise. If you ever get the chance to visit southeast New Mexico, a quick trip out to Bottomless Lakes State Park will be well worth it. Located 15 miles east of Roswell off of U.S. Highway 380, the park is home to many feathered friends. No matter what season, some binoculars and a pair of hiking boots will equip a visitor just fine for a quality excursion down the hiking trails.

The fall season brings a popular attraction to the area as hundreds of Sandhill Cranes paint the sky at dawn and dusk during their daily flights. Many different species of waterfowl can be seen dabbling and diving for food in all eight lakes during winter months. In the spring, male songbirds can be heard throughout the park working on their repertoire to impress their mates. Swainson's Hawks soar high in the summer sun as Greater Roadrunners dart from bush to bush. The rare Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Scarlet Tanager have even stopped in for a quick bite. Visitors also might like to take a hike down the raised boardwalk which includes three wildlife viewing blinds overlooking open water pond habitats created during the Bottomless Lakes Wetlands Restoration Project. Bird watching opportunities are endless

and a great way to spend a fun-filled day at Bottomless Lakes State Park.

Bottomless Lakes State Park is included in the Roswell Artesian Wetlands which received a Ramsar Designation on January 20, 2010. Ramsar, short for the "Convention on Wetlands of International Importance", is an international treaty signed in Ramsar, Iran that promotes world-wide wetland conservation. The Roswell Artesian Wetlands are a partnership between

Bottomless Lakes State Park and Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge and the first to be designated in New Mexico.



Environmental education program at Bottomless Lakes/Ingram

The park is an excellent outdoor classroom for the study of ornithology as well. Audubon New Mexico has partnered with Park Rangers from Bottomless Lakes to host educational programs that teach students about the amazing world of birds. Audubon Director of Education Dana Vackar Strang and Environmental

Education Specialist Amy Roberts have made several field trips with local elementary schools to the park. "We are always excited to host Audubon and the schools when they visit our park for field trips. We are honored to have this opportunity," said Park Superintendent Joe Kasuboski.

Please contact the park office at 575-624-6058 for more information.

Hummers: continued from cover

The Rufous hummingbird is well-known as the “feistiest” in North America. Due to their small, yet proportionate size, they’re quicker and can out-fly all other species and they almost always get their way at the expense of slower, less-maneuverable hummers.

Activity at the feeders generally peaked about 30 minutes after sunrise and then dipped as the birds visited flowers more frequently later in the day as the sun warms the plants and nectar production is stimulated.

Rufous hummingbirds have the longest migration route of all U.S. hummingbirds, as they breed farther north than any other hummer. They fly more than 5,000 miles per year, from Central Mexico to Alaska and back. You can look for them here in New Mexico in July to early fall as they make their annual circuit of the West.



Rufous Hummingbird/Robert Shantz



Volunteers from left to right: Bernard & Dawn Foy, Rachel McCaffrey, Karen Ford, and Rocky Tucker



Audubon IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

RANDALL DAVEY AUDUBON CENTER PART OF GLOBAL NETWORK OF IBA'S

As part of Audubon New Mexico's network of over 60 Important Bird Areas or IBAs across our state, the Randall Davey Audubon Center & Sanctuary was recognized as an IBA in 1999 primarily because of the breeding and resident bird species and the public education focus at this nature center. The Important Bird Areas Program (IBA) is a global effort to identify and conserve areas that are vital to birds and other biodiversity.

Officially called the Randall Davey Audubon Center/Santa Fe Canyon Preserve IBA, this IBA along the Santa Fe River encompasses both the 135 acres of piñon/juniper, ponderosa pine and mixed spruce-fir owned by the Audubon Society and the 525 acres of the Nature Conservancy's Santa Fe Canyon Preserve with a thriving bosque of cottonwood and willow trees and several beaver ponds. Home to more than 140 species of birds, the Randall Davey IBA also provides public education

Fun Hummingbird Facts!

Hummingbirds belong to the family *Trochilidae*, which means “small bird.”

Hummingbirds are the 2nd largest family of birds with 343 species, and are only found in the Americas.

Their migration routes are also called nectar corridors. On average, hummingbirds flap 50 times per second, but during courtship, they can flap up to 200 times a second.

Normal flight speed is 25-30 mph, but they can dive up to 60 mph.

Their tiny feet are only good for perching. If they want to travel even a couple inches they must fly!

They can fly up, down, right, left, backwards, and even upside-down!

Hummingbirds eat every 10 minutes, consuming over twice their weight in nectar and insects every day. On average, they weigh about as much as a single penny!

They lay 2 eggs that are 1/2 inch long, and their nests are about the size of half a walnut shell!

The average lifespan of hummingbirds in the wild is 3-6 years, though the record is over 12 years.

This volunteer hummingbird monitoring project has two goals: to provide a baseline inventory in our efforts to better understand the species utilizing this IBA and to provide data about hummingbirds visiting this specific site to determine if the Randall Davey Audubon Center qualifies as a possible banding site in the future.

Last summer, Audubon asked for help to fund a \$500 scholarship to help train a Master Bander, to oversee observation and hummingbird banding in the Santa Fe area. Your generous contributions surpassed this goal! This year, we need more volunteers to help with the monitoring so we can keep our eyes on these “joyas voladoras - flying jewels.”

BIRDS OF A FEATHER AROUND NEW MEXICO

By: Steve Cary, Community Naturalist



Students from Rio Grande Elementary, Hatch, NM

Share with Wildlife funds from the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish enabled Audubon New Mexico to bring its *Birds of a Feather Explore Together* environmental education program to Rio Grande Elementary School in Hatch during May 10-13, 2011.

Audubon New Mexico's Education Director Dana Strang and Naturalist Steve Cary visited Hatch's four 4th grade classes last month, and a more receptive audience could not have been imagined. Helpful, enthusiastic teachers and curious, smart students combined to produce educational programs that were extremely rewarding to all. Time in class was spent

investigating bird adaptations such as feathers, beaks and feet, and owl pellet dissections were a big hit. An equal amount of time was spent outside at Broad Canyon Ranch, owned by New Mexico State Parks, playing migration games and walking trails, where kids investigated raccoon tracks, coyote scat, a bull snake sunning itself, a painted bunting, and vermilion flycatchers. It may not be too great an exaggeration to say this was a life-changing experience for many of the students.

Audubon also brought its *Bird of a Feather Explore Together* environmental education program to Roswell and Las Cruces. We had a great time in the classroom and exploring the outdoors!



Students from Las Cruces, NM

AUDUBON NEW MEXICO WELCOMES OUR NEW INTERNS



Luke Pierpont, policy intern, is a second year law student at the University of New Mexico, where he is focusing on water and environmental law.

As a life long resident of Santa Fe, Luke is keenly aware of the value of water and is enjoying delving into the arcane and illogical world of the law that governs our most precious resource.

Luke is a 1998 graduate of the Colorado College with a degree in English, where his love of adventure and the western environment was invigorated. He continues to seek adventure where he can and looks forward to this opportunity with Audubon to contribute to its work protecting some the west's most endangered rivers.

Luke lives in Santa Fe with his wife Sarah and two daughters Leila and Irene. Welcome to Audubon, Luke Pierpont!



Luke Smith, education intern, grew up in the Northwoods of Wisconsin, where he probably spent too much time wandering around the woods and playing in the snow!

After graduating from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Luke went west to California. It was there that he developed a true love of the outdoors. He turned this passion into what some people would refer to as a "job" and started coaching grade school basketball and leading cycling tours outside of Santa Barbara, CA.

After some time in Alaska, Luke started working at Camp Whittle Outdoor Science School in Big Bear, CA. Luke's career path has been broad and exciting, and he finds Outdoor and Environmental Education to be an amazingly rewarding way to share his love of the outdoors. Welcome to Audubon, Luke Smith!

GIVE A HOOT FOR OUR BIRDATHON 2011 TEAMS



The Red-naped Sapsucker Birdathon Team

A special thanks to all of our teams for participating in Birdathon 2011! Everyone had a wonderful time, spotted lots of birds, and raised funds for Audubon New Mexico's conservation and education programs.

STATE TEAM

Our state team spotted 145 birds in and around Socorro – from Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge to almost 10,000 feet above Water Canyon. Despite the windy conditions and extreme temperatures, they were able to find two Olive Warblers, a Hooded Warbler, a Hepatic Tanager taking a bath, Franklin's Gulls and migrating Swainson's hawks.

SAPSUCKERS

The Red-naped Sapsucker team spotted 101 birds, starting at the Santa Fe Ski Basin and ending at the Randall Davey Audubon Center. Despite some windy conditions, they were able to find the hoot of a Northern Pygmy Owl, a pair of mating Swainson's Hawks and a group of Wilson's Phalaropes in their breeding colors.



Great Horned Owl on Nest/Evalyn Bemis

PRAIRIE FALCONS

The Prairie Falcon team spotted 84 birds. Highlights included the Red Crossbills, the Peregrine Falcon dining on a bird at the edge of the water at the Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge, and the Great Horned Owl on a nest at the ranchito with two large babies.

BIRDATHON CONTEST WINNERS

Best fundraiser: Ruth Burstrom

Best birding story: Steve Thompson

Best bird photo (see bottom left): Evalyn Bemis

And the great news is, we surpassed our fundraising goal! At the beginning of Birdathon, our goal was \$16,000. We are still expecting a couple more gifts, but as this goes to print, we raised over \$18,600! Everyone did an exceptional job gathering sponsors this year and Audubon New Mexico and the Randall Davey Audubon Center are financially stronger because of it. Thank you!

CREATE YOUR LEGACY WITH AUDUBON

A gift through your will can be an appealing way to make a lasting difference for the cause you care about. Your gift is made only with the money that is left after your lifetime needs have been met.

Consider putting aside a percentage for a charitable gift to Audubon New Mexico. Percentage bequests are particularly convenient because you will not know the total value of your estate in advance. By using a percentage, the dollar amounts will automatically adjust to the size of your estate. All gifts made to Audubon New Mexico will stay in New Mexico for the benefit of in-state programs.

Sample Bequest Language:

"I bequeath ___% (or \$____) of my residuary estate to the National Audubon Society, Inc., a not-for-profit conservation organization located at 225 Varick St., 7th Floor, New York, NY 10014, for its New Mexico state office known as 'Audubon New Mexico.'"

Audubon's federal tax ID number is: 13-1624102.

CONGRATULATIONS, CARL

Congratulations to Carl Beal in his new role as Operations Manger! Carl will be responsible for the planning, operating, and managing of the Randall Davey Audubon Center and the New Mexico State Office to carry out the mission of Audubon New Mexico. In addition to overseeing the facilities, land, and grounds of the Randall Davey Audubon Center, his position will provide administrative, fiscal and clerical support to the Executive Director and other staff and ensure smooth and efficient operation of the office. We are excited to have Carl in his new position!

WILDLIFE ART SHOW



Art Show Opening Reception. From left to right: Cate Moses, Mary Ristow, Natasha Isenhour, Karyn Stockdale, Kevin "Ernesto" Van Wicklin, Margi Lucena

The Third Annual Randall Davey Invitational Wildlife Art Show opened on May 20th to a wonderful crowd. The show features a variety of work from artists around New Mexico who have generously agreed to give a portion of sales to Audubon's education programs in New Mexico. Stop by the Randall Davey Audubon Center Gallery before the show ends on June 30th and look at the beautiful work on display!

WELCOME, MARYAM MILLER



Maryam Miller, our new administrative assistant, is a New Mexico native who grew up in Santa Fe. She is a graduate of American University in Washington, D.C., with a degree in Foreign Language & Communications Media. Maryam has traveled extensively, and lived in several different cities and

countries. She recently returned home, and has been looking to get involved in local issues and learn more about the conservation of New Mexico's precious resources.

Maryam has held a variety of professional positions. She most recently lived and worked in Honduras for two years as a scuba diver and as a dolphin and scuba camp director, helping to educate children about their natural world. Maryam's time in Central America re-awakened her passion for protecting the environment while seeing the effects of rapid development on water quality. As Maryam is discovering what path she'll choose next, she has decided to explore the non-profit working world in conservation with Audubon.

BEYOND BACKYARD BIRDING

July 16th: Burnt Mesa, The Jemez Mountains
 August 20th: Santa Fe Ski Basin
 September 17th: Galisteo River, Cerrillos
 October 15th: Las Campanas, Santa Fe
 November 19th: Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge
 December 10th–11th: Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge
reservations are required

Each trip will be led by experienced, volunteer guides, with the emphasis placed on spending time in the field learning to identify birds in various habitats throughout northern New Mexico. Field trips are \$10 for non-Audubon members and \$5 for Audubon New Mexico members and are limited to 15 people (reservations are required). Please email beyondbackyardbirding@gmail.com for more information and/or to reserve your spots today!

SUMMER CAMP SPACES STILL AVAILABLE

Our summer camp has started and we still have spots available in some of our camps. Please see our website for a current schedule of openings and register today!



WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Randall Davey House Tours: Tours of the historic home and studio of Santa Fe artist Randall Davey are held every Friday at 2pm. Call ahead to reserve your tickets today.

Bird Walks: Join us every Saturday morning at 8:30am for a hike with expert birders.

The Nature Store & Visitor Center: open from 10am - 4pm every day.

Explore our trails every day from 8am until dusk.

Ask a Master Gardener starts in June and runs throughout the summer. Join us for this event every Friday from 10am - 12pm.

SAVE THE DATES!

July 21st & July 23rd
 Family Nights at the Randall Davey Audubon Center

NOTE: Due to low attendance, the AuduBon Voyage & AuduBonanza monthly classes and lecture series have been cancelled through October. Please look for our upcoming special events, which may include topics and presenters from these series on our website.

SAVE THE DATE!
Women in Conservation Luncheon
September 30, 2011

*This newsletter is printed on recycled paper. Please share with friends!
Audubon New Mexico and the National Audubon Society
are nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations.*

Bank and many others!
Thanks for the support TogetherGreen/Toyota, Wells Fargo

Broad Canyon in the coming year!
Thanks to everyone who joined us, and look for more events at
high, and we had a great turn-out for our Sunday open house.
comparison with museum specimens. Public participation was
the more challenging species are identified via microscope and
over the 24-hour period. That number will grow as some of
Ranch's decided acreage

Thank you to our experts!
Nancy Storz: birds
Dr. Dave Lightfoot: invertebrates
Jim Stuart: mammals
Dr. Jennifer Frey: mammals
George Cox: botanicals
Kelly Allred: botanicals
Russ Kleinman: botanicals

Altogether, 27 plant
and wildlife experts
volunteered their time
to inventory plants and
animals. Collectively,
they identified close to
300 different species of
plants and animals on the
Ranch's decided acreage

RIO GRANDE BIOBLITZ WRAP-UP

On May 14-15, 2011 Audubon New Mexico and New Mexico
State Parks collaborated on a BioBlitz for Parks recently
acquired Broad Canyon Ranch property in northern Doña
Ana County along the Rio Grande. Audubon's Freshwater
Conservation Director Beth Bardwell assembled a team
of scientists to conduct this lightning, 24-hour, biological
inventory effort.

Painted Bunting/Maria Weisenberger



Kangaroo Rat/Ray Bowers

