

swnmaudubon.org

THE RAVENS

Newsletter

Southwestern New Mexico Audubon Society
is a Chapter of National Audubon Society, Inc.

November — December 2017 Vol. 50, No. 5

NOVEMBER 3 PROGRAM

Researching Seabirds in the Alaska Maritime NWR

Emily Pollom and John Gorey will talk about their summer research with seabirds on St. George Island, which is located in the Bering Sea and is part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. www.fws.gov/refuge/Alaska_Maritime/visit/pribilof_Islands.html. The presentation will include a brief history of St. George, a description of life on a remote island that is also home to an Alaska Native village. They'll also discuss what their research shows about how seabirds are faring in that area.

The Alaska Maritime NWR encompasses 3.4 million acres and includes the volcanic islands of the Aleutian chain and the seabird cliffs of the remote Pribilof Islands. The refuge provides essential habitat for some 40 million seabirds, representing more than thirty species.

John and Emily have worked throughout the U.S. as ornithological researchers with an emphasis on seabird reproductive biology.

Since 2009 they have worked as field technicians for governmental and non-profit organizations as well as doing environmental consulting. Originally John hails from Nashville, TN and Emily from Louisville, KY, but they have recently decided to make Silver City their home.

The presentation is part of SWNMAS monthly programming and will be held on November 3 at 7:00 pm in Room 219 of Harlan Hall at WNMU, corner of 12th and Kentucky Streets. The presentation is free and the public is welcome. Light refreshments follow.



EMILY POLLOM PHOTO

A banded Least Auklet.

DECEMBER 1 PROGRAM

HERPTILES

and the
Venomous

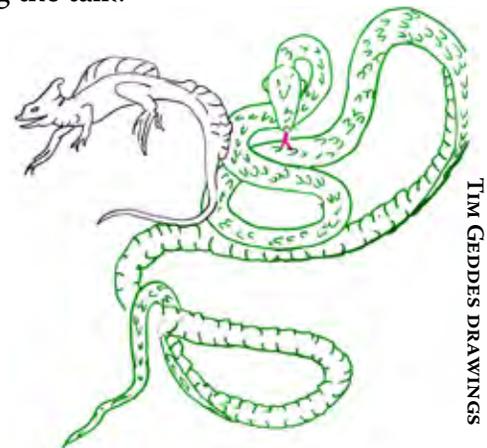
Snakes of southwestern New Mexico

The December 1st program will be presented by Tim Geddes. "Herptile" is shorthand slang for reptiles and amphibians.

His presentation will cover their classification, skin and reproduction, among other aspects of "herps." He'll also discuss reptile venom and the treatment of snakebite. As usual, there will be time for audience questions following the talk.

Geddes, who moved to New Mexico in 2012, is a chapter member who, most recently has been instrumental in founding the non-profit group "Friends of the City of Rocks." He was born in Virginia and attended college in North Carolina and Mississippi. He received a degree in aquaculture.

December 1st, Room 219 Harlan Hall, WNMU, at 7:00 pm. Free and open to the public with light refreshments to follow.



TIM GEDDES DRAWINGS

Birds & Brews ~ on 4th Thursdays!

Informal gathering held in the back room of the Little Toad Creek, at the corner of Bullard and Broadway in Silver City. Capacity limited attendance so you must RSVP to email announcement of program. Chapter members are notified first. Meetings are not held in November or December because of the holidays but resume in January. To be notified of meetings join the chapter or send your email address to swnmaudubon@gmail.com





Crane Festival at Bosque del Apache

November 14 – 19, 2017



An annual event in San Antonio (near Socorro) NM, the crane festival offers a variety of events; tours, classes, hikes, horseback rides, photography classes, wildlife art show and exhibits. This is the 30th anniversary of the festival. For information go to the website; FestivalOfTheCranes.com

Annual Raptor Count is on Saturday, December 2, 2017

Traditionally on the first Saturday of December, this historic count censuses hawks, eagles, shrikes, roadrunners, and owls along the roads of southwestern New Mexico. Contact Roland Shook for an assigned area: 575-590-4731.

Silver City Christmas Bird Count Saturday, December 16, 2017



The Silver City CBC covers a 15 mile diameter circle centered on the Silver City Golf Course. All levels of expertise are welcome, plus there is a need for feeder counters. To sign up and have a territory assigned, please contact Roland Shook several days prior to the count. 575-590-4731.

Help Needed With Pot-Luck Dinner

A post count pot-luck will again be held at the Volunteer Center if someone is willing to organize it. The responsibilities would be to coordinate set up and take down and get the key to the building (SWNM Audubon will pay the deposit and fee). It will take a few people to help set up the chairs and tables and put them up after the pot-luck.

If you are willing to be the organizer or help with set-up or take-down contact swnmaudubon@gmail.com

Gila River CBC is Scheduled on Saturday, December 30, 2017.

This historic Christmas Bird Count, focuses on all of the birds within a 7.5 mile radius circle approximately centered in the town of Riverside, NM. This count covers several portions of the Gila River. The private land portions require a permit, so potential participants need to contact Roland Shook several days prior to the count. 575-590-4731.

From the Cornell Lab of Ornithology



FeederWatch Season Is November 11 to April 13

Project FeederWatch begins its 30th year harnessing the power of backyard bird watchers to track trends among winter birds.

While we are all thrilled by unusual sightings and high counts, it's the everyday observations of common birds that are so important for monitoring bird populations. The 2017–2018 FeederWatch season runs from Saturday, November 11 to Friday, April 13. New participants will be able to log into online data entry and set up their count site on November 1st. The last day to start a two-day count is Thursday, April 12th. The project always starts on the second Saturday of November.

Sign up to be a FeederWatcher at: feederwatch.org

Audubon.org

Hurricane Relief Fund for Bird Conservation

BirdsCaribbean has set up a Hurricane Relief Fund to help people and birds. The funds they raise will be distributed to conservation partners across the islands to help them get back on their feet and replace what was lost in the storm—from notebooks, materials and binoculars to offices and infrastructure.



BirdsCaribbean will also be helping to fund bird surveys to learn the status of threatened endemics, residents, and many migrants, and species recovery and habitat rehabilitation actions by our partners, such as planting native trees that feed birds and provide habitat.

Donate here: <https://www.razoo.com/story/Birdscaribbean-Hurricane-Relief>

SAVE THE DATE:

Olympic Birdfest, April 13-15, 2018

Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours, live auction, raffle, gala banquet, and more. The featured speaker: Claudio Vidal will talk about Patagonia & Chile: Birds & Mammals at the End of the Americas. Join the festival pre-trip: a 3-day, 2-night birding/sightseeing cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 10-12, 2018 or extend your festival with our Neah Bay post-trip on April 16-17, 2018: Two days exploring northwest coastal Washington. To learn more and register, visit www.olympicbirdfest.org

Which Bird Is the Fastest Runner?

Find out how an emu, a roadrunner, and an ostrich would place in a race against each other—and a pair of Olympic sprinters.

“Ladies, gentlemen, and birds: Take your marks!”

Lined up at the starting blocks for the 100-meter dash are the world’s fastest man and the fastest woman. Alongside them are an Ostrich, an Emu, and a roadrunner.

“And they’re off!”

Olympic sprinters are awesomely fast runners. Usain Bolt ran the fastest men’s 100-meter dash ever recorded, reaching a top speed during the sprint of almost 28 miles per hour. Man, that’s fast! And Florence Griffith-Joyner, the fastest woman, ran the hundred just a shade slower. But are they any match for some of the swiftest birds on two legs? In the time it took to explain this, all of our runners have crossed the finish line.

And the gold medal goes to... Africa’s Ostrich! Sprinting across the finish line at an incredible 43 miles an hour. This bird can trot at 31 miles an hour for miles and miles. The Emu from Australia takes silver, easily topping 30 miles an hour. And standing proudly on the podium alongside the big birds, the world’s fastest man and woman. They took bronze just a tick ahead of the roadrunner. I wonder whose picture will appear on the box of Wheaties.

www.audubon.org/news/which-bird-fastest-runner



BACK, L TO R: Terry Timme—President, Lisa Fields—Vice President, Teri Matelson—Webmaster, Allison Boyd—Treasurer/Membership Chair, Nancy Evy—Newsletter distribution. **FRONT, L TO R:** Rachele Bergmann—Secretary, Elroy Limmer—Member at Large, Sara Boyett—Program Chair, Patricia Taber—Newsletter Editor. **Not pictured:** Nancy Kaminski—Conservation Chair, Jackie Blurton—Member at Large. Elected Board members will serve for 2-year terms.

Water and Birds in the Arid West

Although Audubon has been a bird conservation leader in the West for decades, a more comprehensive scientific look into western water was needed. The results, *Water and Birds in the Arid West*, were recently published. The report deliberately focused on landscapes in the West where water scarcity and water quality are the limiting factors for the survival of threatened and iconic bird species. An executive summary and the full report can be read at: www.audubon.org/conservation/western-water.

Global and regional populations of birds that rely on rivers, wetlands, and saline lakes in the American West are in danger due to steep declines in habitat availability and quality. This scientific report clarifies regional threats as well as highlights specific species of concern. It will help focus conservation work and investment in the future.

As bird lovers we all can play a role by advocating for more funding for water conservation programs. Locally, there are millions of dollars available through the Arizona Water Settlement Act that could be used for projects to meet the real and immediate water security needs of Southwestern New Mexico instead of being squandered trying to divert the Gila River to benefit a very small number of irrigators.

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New Mexico Ranch offers Bird-Friendly Beef



TERRY TIMME PHOTO

Christopher Rustay describes some of the species we expect to see on a field trip to the Ranney Ranch.

Several SWNMA chapter members joined 25 people from all 4 chapters of Audubon in NM on a field trip to the Ranney Ranch in Corona, NM. The ranch enrolled in Audubon's Conservation Ranching program, a program to enhance and restore millions of acres of

grassland bird habitat across the Great Plains. This recent initiative will allow cattle ranchers to offer a value-added certification program, "bird-friendly beef," on top of grass-fed certification. More information is available on their website: <http://ranneyranch.com>

PRELIMINARY USFWS SURVEY RELEASED

Wildlife Watching & Fishing Up –Hunting Down

The much anticipated preliminary 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was released last month. It is the thirteenth in a series of surveys conducted every five years since 1955. The purpose of this survey is to collect and report information on the number of people who engaged in outdoor-associated wildlife activity, those activities in which they engaged, and the money they spent on their activities in 2016.

According to the preliminary report, participation in fishing and wildlife-watching went up, but the number of hunters dropped by about 2 million people in the last five years.

The report indicates these wildlife-watching activities increased a meaningful 20 percent from 2011 to 2016,

from 71.8 million to 86 million participants during that time. The survey makes clear that the most significant increases in participation involve wildlife-watching –observing, feeding and photographing wildlife. Birdwatching is understood to account for the lion's share of that wildlife-watching, but most of the birding data have yet to be mined.

We do know that "around the home" bird observers totaled 38.7 million. "Away from home" bird observers –those who travel a mile or more away from home to watch birds - number 16.3 million. Expenditures by wildlife watchers also rose sharply - 28 percent - between 2011 and 2016, from \$59.1 billion to \$75.9 billion.

Comparing some bird-associated and wildlife-associated expenditures between 2011 and 2016 is instructive: optics shot up from \$919 million to \$1.8 billion, cameras and photo equipment went up from \$2.8 billion to \$3.6 billion, but bird food remained about steady at \$4.0 billion.