



THE RAVENS

Newsletter

Southwestern New Mexico Audubon Society
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

swnmaudubon.org

May – June – July – August 2008

Vol. 40, No. 3

PROGRAMS

Friday, MAY 2, 2008 ~ 7 PM

MEXICAN WOLVES:

“No Lobo Left Wild?”

The first reintroduced Mexican wolves stepped out of pre-release pens into the snowy Arizona forest on March 29, 1998. In the ensuing ten years, the lobos have successfully hunted elk, established territories, and whelped dozens of pups. Yet after ten years, the wild population still lags far behind projections made in the final environmental impact statement.

In her presentation entitled “*No Lobo Left Wild?*”, Jean Ossorio will address the reasons for the shortfall, the implications of stagnant wolf numbers for the genetic integrity of the wild population, and some possible solutions to the problem. Ossorio is a retired teacher who



USFWS PHOTO

has closely followed the Mexican wolf reintroduction program since its inception. One of her hobbies is keeping detailed charts on individual lobos and their fates.

Join us for this last program of the season, in Harlan Hall at WNMU at 7 PM in the upstairs room. All welcome. SWNMA will resume its first-Friday of the month programs in September.

Annual Grant County Migration Count May 10, 2008

CHRISTMAS IN MAY?

By Jerry Bird

IN A WAY, it may seem that we are repeating the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Birders will be out counting and recording every bird that they see, whether in their yard, neighborhood or given birding territory. The results will give us a snapshot of the birds present in Grant County for a particular day in the spring (May 10 this year) just like the Christmas Count in December. Both the CBC and the migration count take place over a single day and are annual events. The main difference between the two (besides time of year) is that the migration count covers the entire county, not just the 7.5 mile radius circle that is the counting area of the CBC. Because of this we need more birders to cover bigger areas. All birders are welcome to take part.

Bob Wilcox has compiled the results for the last few years but this year I will be taking over the compilation of the results. If you would like to take part in the count, contact Jerry Bird by phone (575-534-4940) or email silvercitypearl@yahoo.com. Even if you can't take part

in the actual count, you can help in organizing the count. Information about where we can find particular birds or favorite birding sites is very useful.

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, June 21, 2008

Birding Cherry Creek

Southwestern New Mexico Audubon's June field trip will be exploring the breeding birds in and around Cherry Creek in the Gila National Forest.

Meet at the south parking lot of the WNMU Fine Arts theater at 8:00 AM Saturday, June 21st to carpool to Cherry Creek.

Field trips will resume in September. Enjoy the summer months—and keep birding!

UPCOMING EVENT:

SWNMA's Annual Meeting

Keep Friday, September 5, 2008 open so you can attend our Annual Meeting. Everyone will be welcome to join us with food and friendly folks. The event will take the place of our monthly program meeting and the September *Ravens* will have more details.

UPCOMING EVENT:

4th Annual Gila River Festival September 18 – 21, 2008

Mark your calendars for the next upcoming Gila River Festival slated for Thursday through Sunday, September 18–21st. The theme for the festival is “*Celebrating the Gila River as a Source of Inspiration.*” Featured events will include hikes, field trips, workshops, natural history, museum tours, children’s activities and evening speakers and entertainment.



DONT!

Feeding Deer Does More Harm Than Good

SILVER CITY—People who feed deer may have good intentions, but giving deer food outside their natural diet could kill them, biologists with the Department of Game and Fish said.

The Department is reminding residents of Silver City and other communities in deer country not to feed deer that may be hanging around near houses. Deer have difficulty digesting non-natural foods such as grain, hay, vegetables, fruit or pet food, and can actually die with full stomachs.

Eating non-natural food can cause deer to have poor body condition, increased stress and disease. Artificial feeding often causes deer to congregate in small areas, making them more likely to be struck by vehicles. Large numbers of deer also can damage personal property and attract predators such as mountain lions.

It is unlawful in New Mexico for any person to cause a nuisance game-animal problem by baiting, feeding, or otherwise enticing game animals to an area. The best thing to do if you see deer in your neighborhood is to leave them alone and let nature run its course.

People who have problems with deer or other wild animals are encouraged to call the nearest Department of Game and Fish office. The Southwest office is in Las Cruces; Luis Rios, Supervisor, 2715 Northrise Drive, Las Cruces, NM 88011. Phone: (575) 532-2100 Fax: (575) 522-8382.

Modify Your Bird Seed For Warmer Weather

Q: *Should seed mixes in bird feeders be different during warmer months?*

A: With milder temperatures making more natural-food sources available, your feathered friends won’t be dropping by the bird feeder as often. But shortages can occur year-round, so you will still want to set out some food.

Winter seed mixes are intentionally high in fat to help birds stay warm. Come springtime, your feeders should reflect the birds’ changing natural diet, which now relies more on protein.

Sunflower seeds make an excellent filler, as they attract so many types of birds. Millet is also good; the tiny yellowish seeds will bring in a steady flight of small-beaked ground feeders, such as quail, sparrows and towhees. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Web site (www.birds.cornell.edu) suggests seeds that will appeal to other species.

During hot and humid days, it’s important to keep your feeders clean. Plastic ones are the easiest to maintain. You can usually take them apart and scrub the crevices with an old toothbrush and hot, soapy water. If mildew is a problem, soak the parts in a bucket filled with water and a capful of chlorine bleach; rinse thoroughly and reassemble.

Calcium is also important for birds during spring, their breeding season. You can make a homemade supplement from crushed eggshells; bake them in an oven at 350 degrees for 10 minutes to kill bacteria before adding them to a packaged seed mix. Pulverized oyster shells are a second calcium-rich option.

Nectar is also a component of birds’ spring diet. For an alternative that’s easy to make, mix 1/4 cup of sugar and 1 cup of water. Add it to a hummingbird feeder. (Do not substitute honey, which turns moldy and toxic quickly in warm weather.)

You can also make a concoction to replace suet cakes, a winter staple that goes rancid quickly in the summer heat: Combine one part peanut butter, a favorite of woodpeckers, with five parts cornmeal. Use the mix to fill drilled holes in a hanging-log feeder or crevices of large pine cones.

FROM www.courier-journal.com

Looking for Birding Observation Lists?

Custom Birding Maps?

Try eBird at:

www.ebird.org

SOUTHWESTERN NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY

Chapter (only) Membership Application

Includes membership in SWNM Audubon Society, *THE RAVENS* Chapter Newsletter, the Statewide Audubon Newsletter, programs, field trips, bird counts, education and volunteer opportunities.

A 1 (one) Year Chapter Membership is \$15. and the total amount is used here in our local Chapter.

Make checks payable to: SWNM Audubon Society

New Member Renewal

Mail to:

SWNMAS
T. Timme, Membership Chair
811 Oak Street
Silver City, NM 88061

Date _____ Phone# _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Do you wish to receive the Chapter's twice monthly "*Bird Sightings Report*" via e-mail?

Yes ___ No ___ Already on list ___

40/3

America Celebrates Endangered Species Day

On May 16, 2008, America will celebrate endangered species success stories, including the American bald eagle, peregrine falcon, gray wolf, grizzly bear, humpback whale and many others. This will be the third consecutive year for this national celebration of America's commitment to protecting and recovering our nation's endangered species. Events are held across the country to highlight endangered species.

This year, Endangered Species Day will raise awareness about the threats to endangered species—including global warming—and the success stories in species recovery. It will provide an opportunity for schools, libraries, museums, zoos, botanical gardens, agencies, businesses, community organizations and conservation organizations to educate the public about the importance of protecting endangered species. It is also an opportunity to highlight the everyday actions that individuals and groups can take to help protect our nation's wildlife, fish and plants. Because 2008 has been designated as *The Year of the Frog* by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, a special focus will be on the threats faced by declining amphibian populations.

With more than 1,800 species now listed as threatened and endangered, and thousands more threatened with extinction unless they receive Endangered Species Act protections, all public education efforts are extremely valuable. Help celebrate Endangered Species Day by looking in our local papers for events taking place near you.

FROM WWW.ORG

IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS (IBA) Site Profile for the Gila Bird Area

State: US, NM, Grant County. Site Status: Identified
Site Description: The Gila Bird Area runs along the Gila River (and associated valley) from the Gila National Forest boundary below Bill Evans Lake downstream through Gila Bird Area into the Middle Box (BLM) to the southern limit of BLM ownership near Redrock NM. The area supports extensive areas of SW riparian habitat, including much protected land and many restoration projects. The landscape varies from broad valley to narrow canyon.

Directions: From Silver City, drive 25 miles nw on US 180. Turn left at Bill Evans Lake Road. Go 3.4 miles to the fork in the road. Continue straight on the gravel road for 1.5 miles. The Gila NF is marked by a cattle guard. The gravel road leads to the bird area.

Ornithological Summary: Restored and recently protected areas support large area of southwestern riparian woodlands and assorted avifauna. Breeding Willow Flycatcher (8 pairs), Common Black Hawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Lucy's Warbler, Brown-crested Flycatcher. Federal agency ownership assures long-term commitment to preservation. Surveys by R. Shook (1996-2000) include over 200 species that use the Gila Bird Area alone. Only riparian birds were well-documented; upland species numbers and abundance are not known.

Conservation Issues: Upstream, invasion of exotic yellow starthistle becoming problematic - still very rare here, but may become a problem. Because of incisement upstream, some problems with bank erosion. Gila NF has stabilized banks using bio-techniques. IBA Historical Results available at www.audubon.org/bird/iba



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