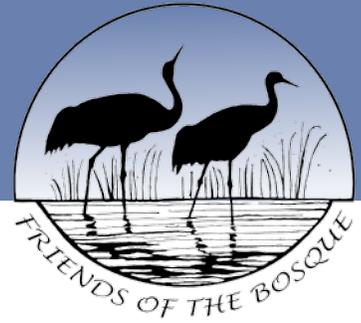


BOSQUE WATCH



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Leigh Ann Vradenburg

*Executive Director, Friends of the Bosque del Apache NWR,
2005 – 2015*

Where are you, Leigh Ann? What are you doing now? It's a fair question. On any given day, at any given moment, Leigh Ann Vradenburg, the Executive Director of the Friends of the Bosque del Apache NWR, could be at any of a dozen different locations, and doing any one or two or three different things, all at the same time. She could be in the Friends House, talking on the telephone and simultaneously writing thank-you letters to donors. Or she could be in the refuge Visitor Center, answering questions from bird-watchers and getting the Nature Store computer back on line. Or she could be at a workshop at another refuge, giving an invited presentation on how to organize and operate a Friends group. Or in Washington, D.C., explaining to our congressional delegation the impact of refuge funding limitations. Always accessible, always ready to help, always looking for new and different ways to support the Friends, Leigh Ann has been the face of the Friends for ten years.



Leigh Ann came to New Mexico from Colorado in 2005 with her husband John, the new refuge Senior Wildlife Biologist – a double dose of good fortune for all of us. That fall, she joined the Friends as the new Supervisor of Operations. Jon Morrison, President of the Friends at the time, recalls that beginning and some of what followed:

...one of the best things I did was to hire Leigh Ann ... and, as they say, 'The rest is history.' She helped us move from an organization that was run by volunteers to the best Friends organization in the country....She put up with the board, especially me, and steered us in the right direction. We no longer tried to do everything at once, not doing them well, but focused on what was most important and getting them done. When I heard that Chupadera Peak might be available to buy for the refuge, she organized the drive to raise the money. It's now a part of the refuge.

In 2007 Leigh Ann's responsibilities evolved. We re-titled her position to be Executive Director, and a generous grant from the Lannan Foundation made it possible for her to take on more responsibilities, including more emphasis on fund-raising and strengthening our educational outreach. After two years, as the grant ran out, the Friends organization was strong enough financially to sustain her position independently. And the Friends has continued to evolve in a still-unfolding story. *continued, p. 2*

Not least among her contributions over the years has been serving as a vital communication link with refuge staff. Shawn Gillette was one of the liaisons between refuge and Friends, and he shares a sentiment echoed by many:

Working with Leigh Ann Vradenburg was a wonderful experience....Managing the Bosque del Apache NWR Visitor Services Program required the cooperation of numerous individuals and institutions, but of all those, Leigh Ann Vradenburg stands out most in my memory. I was particularly indebted to Leigh Ann for welcoming me and assisting me in navigating the sometimes choppy waters that existed between the refuge and its Friends group. Leigh Ann possesses that rare gift of being able to examine a challenge from all points of view and then create a win-win strategy for dealing with it. Her organizational skill, thoroughness, and attention to detail are admirable. But of all the various redeeming characteristics and qualities that she modeled every day, it is her warmth that I miss and will always remember.

She has been a powerful advocate on behalf of the Friends and the refuge. Just recently, the National Wildlife Refuge Association [NWRA] noted that, "...for the past six years the Friends' Executive Director [Leigh Ann] has made presentations to ... legislators to educate them about the issues and economic impact of the refuge. For the past ten years, the Friends group has sent a representative to Washington, D.C., to meet with New Mexico's congressional delegation about the importance of national wildlife refuges to the state and issues affecting public lands." More often than not, this 'representative' was Leigh Ann.

For these efforts among many other achievements, the NWRA in 2015 honored the Friends of the Bosque as their Molly Krival Friends Group of the Year. Look around at what the Friends has become. Many have helped, from generous donors and volunteers to dedicated board members and staff, but it is Leigh Ann that has been our administrative rock, holding the pieces together, and gently pointing us in the right direction. Thank you, Leigh Ann. We will miss you, but you have left your mark and we will always remember.



Staff Change

Our Environmental Educator, Andrea Harris Brophy, left in May with her husband Sean, on a new assignment to the San Luis NWR in California. We miss her already, but she has left us with a sound legacy of resources, contacts, and a curriculum for the ECOLAB Program. We have formed an Education Review Committee that is reviewing the Friends entire educational outreach. A decision about how best to replace Andrea will come after this review is completed.

More Changes

The Board has changed the Friends' fiscal year, the one-year period over which we report on our finances to the IRS as well as to our membership. In the past we have followed the same schedule as the refuge and the federal government, starting our fiscal year on October 1. The reasons for this choice are lost to history, but anyone who has visited the refuge during the "off season" knows that there is a big difference in the activity level between April and October, and not just among the birds. With Festival on the horizon and visitor levels rapidly increasing, fall is a busy time for both the refuge and the Friends. For this and other reasons it seemed sensible to move the inventory process and year-end

accounting to a less busy time of the year. As of this past April, our fiscal year began on April 1 (no April fools jokes, please).

This change will simplify accounting for each Festival of the Cranes since expenses and income will largely occur in the same fiscal year. We will continue to have our annual meeting in October, since that is such a nice time to visit the refuge. Elections for board members and officers will be held at the annual meeting, with details appearing in *Bosque Watch* as in the past. We will probably need to change the procedure for membership approval of the next year's budget . We are evaluating electronic voting, which has the

continued, p. 3

Board Talk, continued

added benefit that more of our far-flung membership will have the opportunity to participate.

Development

With the leadership of Michael Hanauer and the support of the Friends Development Committee, we are charting important priorities for the coming months. We are wrapping up plans for Sustaining Membership and Legacy Club outreach. In cooperation with the Education Review Committee we will be developing a key thrust in the area of Environmental Education, looking especially at partnering with other Friends groups and FWS efforts along the Rio Grande Valley. Also, in partnership with the refuge, we are polishing details of a thrust to support water control and foraging needs on the refuge. Look for more details on these initiatives in the next issue of *Bosque Watch*.

Information Technology

Believe it or not, we're trying to drag some of our operations into the 21st century. We have an Information Technology (IT) Team looking over all aspects of our IT operations, from internet service, to web site design, to online collaboration tools, and even to how we can support remote participation in meetings. Volunteers are also looking at how we can better integrate the software tools we use for record keeping and other administrative tasks.

We appreciate, and are honored by, the NWRA Molly Krival Award to the Friends. But we're not resting on any laurels. The future beckons.



NWRA Award Winners: Paul White, Friends President; Leigh Ann Vradenburg, Friends Executive Director; John Vradenburg, Supervisory Refuge Biologist; John Bertrand, Friends Member & Volunteer; Phil Norton, Refuge Manager (Ret.)

The refuge and the Friends were doubly honored during an awards ceremony and lunch reception on June 24. John Vradenburg won the National Wildlife Refuge Association 2015 Refuge Employee of the Year Award and, at the same time, the Friends of the Bosque del Apache NWR received the NWRA's Molly Krival Refuge Friends Group of the Year Award. The celebration event was held at the Lannan Annex at the refuge Visitor Center, and was attended by about fifty guests, including refuge staff and members of the Friends. Special guests and presenters included Refuge Association President David Houghton, Refuge System Chief Cynthia Martinez, FWS Deputy Regional Director Joy Nicholopoulos, and Refuge Manager Kevin Cobble. Both John Vradenburg and the Friends received special letters of congratulations from Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich. A personal letter of commendation from Representative Steve Pearce was read by District Director Barbara Romero of the Representative's office.

These honors were particularly special as the Bosque del Apache is now the first refuge ever to have received all four NWRA awards. Previous winners have been:

- John Bertrand – Volunteer of the Year (2008)
- John P. Taylor, Jr. – Refuge Employee of the Year (2004)
- Phil Norton – Refuge Manager of the Year (1996)

All (living) past Bosque award winners participated in the celebration.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

A Movable Feast

The Bosque del Apache is not Paris, and I am not Hemingway, but the refuge is nonetheless a movable feast. Not unlike the City of Light, the Bosque is awash with changing images, always murmuring and chattering with sound, and ever bustling with the life of its permanent and transient citizens. It fills the senses. The refuge is alive and always changing.

We're very aware of some of the seasonal changes: colors shift; cranes and geese come in November and leave in February; ponds are flooded and then dry. We're less attuned to the many migrants that pass through the refuge or come to nest for the summer. People also come and go. Many visitors – like our birds – are seasonal regulars, catching their favorites around the tour loop as they pass through New Mexico. Sometimes change is more lasting. With this issue of *Bosque Watch*, we bid farewell to a number of refuge staff. Some are retiring; some are migrating to different habitats. We will miss them all. With both sadness and joy we also bid adieu to the Friends Executive Director Leigh Ann Vradenburg. She has been the smiling face of the Friends for ten years, and we know she will brighten the corner of Oregon to which she is moving. But while Leigh Ann is moving on, we also welcome our new Executive Director, Deborah Caldwell – a new face, a different song, a fresh opportunity for moving the Friends into another season, another phase of its always changing life.

We celebrate change, whether on the refuge or among our Friends. With every sunset, there is a new sunrise coming. Life is constantly renewed. So, come to the refuge in a different season. See it in a different light. Visit the blue grosbeaks dining in the meadows, greet the summer tanager as it passes through, or stop by the Friends House and say hello to Deb. The table is always set. Sometimes those at the table change, but the feast always awaits.

--Paul White

...and introducing Deborah Caldwell



DEBORAH CALDWELL
Executive Director,
Friends of the Bosque del
Apache NWR
2015 -

It is a distinct privilege to introduce Deborah Caldwell as the new Executive Director of the Friends of the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. Those who live near the refuge may already know Deb in her role with the Socorro County Chamber of Commerce. All of us will come to know her better through these pages and through her activities with the Friends in the months and years to come.

We faced a daunting challenge trying to find a successor to Leigh Ann Vradenburg, our outstanding Executive Director for the past ten years. We sought the best, and our search brought us over thirty excellent applicants from coast to coast and border to border. Among these exceptional people, we found a perfect match almost on our doorstep. Deb is from Socorro and, after leaving for college and a variety of jobs, returned in 2010 to be near her family. For the past two years she has been Executive Director of the Socorro County Chamber of Commerce. Before 'coming home' she spent some 26 years with IBM, starting as a technical writer and later serving as a team leader, manager, recruiter, business coach, and executive

continued, p. 5

Deb Caldwell, continued

succession planner in a variety of locations. In the social services area, Deb was for two years the Director of the Healthy Families Collaboration in Pima County, Arizona.

Since her return to New Mexico, Deb has been an active community volunteer, and Secretary and Vice President of the Amigos de la Sevilleta – an association that bodes well for partnering in the future. Her passion for the outdoors, for conservation, and for the restoration of wildlife and habitat comes through in her own words.

As a child, I fell in love with the outdoors, spending time hiking in the bosque and in the Magdalena Mountains. As a young adult, I backpacked in northern California during most summer weekends. For over ten years my husband, Don Boyd, and I have been members of Friends of the Bosque and Amigos de la Sevilleta, enjoying many hikes, workshops and tours in both refuges. It pains us to think that younger generations may not be able to enjoy the environment in the way that we have. We know that people will protect what they hold dear, and thus advocacy and education are key, as is encouraging young people to get outside and experience nature!

Deb's first official day on the job will be August 10. Drop by her office in the Friends House to say hello. She is an outstanding professional, bringing perspectives and new possibilities for the Friends. Leigh Ann Vradenburg helped us build a solid foundation, taking the Friends to new levels of maturity and achievement – exemplified by the NWRA Molly Krivel Award. Now, as Deborah Caldwell joins our organization, we are poised to launch ourselves to even greater heights.

--Paul White

HELP MONITOR CLIMATE IMPACT!

Climate change is having, and will continue to have, a major impact on refuges like the Bosque del Apache. So, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge System is collaborating with the USA National Phenology Network (USA-NPN) to monitor and document cyclical natural events that seem to occur like clockwork every year. The study of such recurring events is called phenology. It is nature's calendar – when trees bloom, when a bird builds its nest, when leaves change color in the fall. Phenological events, like leaf-out and bird migration, are changing in response to rapid changes in the climate. These changes will impact species abundance, distributions and water cycles. The goal is to monitor such phenological events

throughout the refuge system. And tracking events on the Bosque, especially in the parts that aren't being heavily managed, can be an important part of this effort.

This is where the Friends and Friends volunteers can help. The detailed data useful for flora and fauna management goes beyond what refuge staff can acquire without impacting their other responsibilities. But we can fill the gap. We are in the process of developing a site plan for the refuge. It will include collecting data on both birds and plants, and possibly other animals. The NPN already has established protocols for monitoring each species. In the case of plants, for example, a data point in time includes such things as whether there are buds

or flowers on the plant, whether colors have changed, whether leaf drop has occurred, and more. For birds, observations include numbers and active behaviors such as feeding, calling and mating. Once the refuge-specific species have been selected and the site protocols established, anyone with a smart phone or an iPad can input data directly to USA-NPN's App called Nature's Notebook (www.usanpn.org/natures_notebook). The observations do not have to be on a fixed schedule and any visit to the refuge will produce useful data. We'll provide more information in a future issue of *Bosque Watch*. In the meantime, please check out the NPN web site at www.usanpn.org/.

*--Steve Rudnick,
Friends Board Member*

With Gratitude & Best Wishes!

Starting in January 2014 the refuge has experienced a large turnover in staff, and that turnover has accelerated in 2015. There are several reasons for this, including retirement of long time employees and transfers and promotions for younger employees. The refuge and the Friends join in saluting the service of key staff who have left in the last year or so.

Gina Dello Russo, Refuge Ecologist. Gina retired in January 2014 after a long career at the refuge. Gina was responsible for much of the restoration work on areas that were cleared of salt cedar, and for work on the Rio Grande active floodplain. Gina was instrumental in our outreach efforts with other agencies and private landowners to carry our conservation message beyond our boundaries. Due to funding shortages we have not been able to refill the Refuge Ecologist position.

Carl Tafoya, Engineering Equipment Operator. Carl also retired in January 2014 after many years at the refuge. Carl was involved in all of the major restoration projects that occurred on the refuge including removal of salt cedar from thousands of acres of habitat on the refuge. Carl was also involved in road and construction projects throughout the refuge. Due to funding shortages we have not been able to refill this Engineering Equipment Operator position at this time.

Montie Coe, Maintenance Worker. Montie retired in December 2014 after more than twenty years of service. Montie was responsible for facility maintenance, sustaining all buildings and the systems to run them including electrical, water, plumbing, roofing and all other aspects of facility maintenance. We are currently recruiting to fill this position and hope to have a new employee in this position by August 2015.

Ashley [Inslee] Mertz, Wildlife Biologist. Ashley moved to Colorado in November 2014. She had been at the refuge for about five years and was our lead biologist handling endangered species issues, waterfowl work, and surveys (especially endangered species and waterfowl surveys), and work with researchers. This position was filled by Megan Goyette in February, 2015.

Aaron Mize, Deputy Project Leader. Aaron was Deputy here for about four years and transferred to our National Headquarters in Washington, D.C., in February 2015. Aaron is now the Branch Chief of Conservation Planning and Policy in the Division of Refuges. The Deputy position has now been taken by Bernard Lujan who started on June 1.

Sean Brophy, Refuge Wildlife Specialist. Sean transferred to Los Banos, California, to become the Refuge Manager for San Luis NWR in May. Sean was here for about four years and handled a wide variety of assignments. Sean's transfer was a double hit to refuge

programs as his spouse Andrea Brophy, the Friends education coordinator, also left. We are in the process of recruiting to fill Sean's position and hope to have this completed by August 2015.

John Vradenburg, Supervisory Wildlife Biologist. John has been the Senior Biologist at the refuge for about ten years and has done great things with the biology program. This work led to his recognition by the National Wildlife Refuge Association as their USFWS Employee of the Year. John has a level of knowledge of the biology and systems on the refuge that will be hard to replace. John is transferring to the Senior Biologist position at the Klamath Basin Refuge Complex in southern Oregon and northern California. As in Brophy's case, the refuge loss will be a double loss as the Friends Executive Director, Leigh Ann Vradenburg, is going with him. We are in the process of recruiting to fill John's position by late summer.

Despite the turnover of more than a third of our staff, we continue our work to improve programs and provide great and sustainable habitat for wildlife. The refuge has always had a high standard to live up to, and as we refill positions and re-focus our work, we will continue to make Bosque del Apache NWR the standard to which all other refuges are compared. Even as we look ahead, we reflect on the many good years given to the refuge by the people highlighted here – years of service, years of friendship and years of happy memories. Thank you, and bon voyage.

--Kevin Cobble, Project Leader

2015 Festival of the Cranes: UPDATE

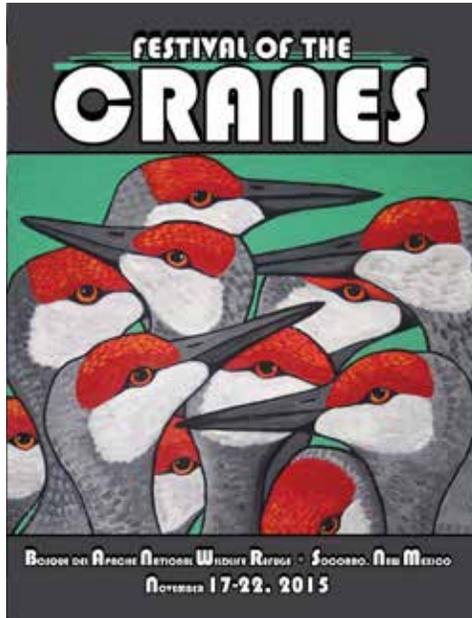
The 28th **Festival of the Cranes** is coming! The expanded Festival brochure will be available in mid-August, and online registration for Festival events starts September 8.

Here's how it works:

Friends of the Bosque members will be given online registration priority for one day starting September 8 at 9:00 AM. Non-member online registration then begins on September 9 at 9:00 AM.

If you want to cash in on this membership perk, it's easy to become a member. Just visit our website (www.friendsofthebosque.org); click the green and blue 'Join Us' button, and in a few minutes you will be part of one of the strongest Friends groups in the country (and you can register early!).

The Friends encourages online registration but realize that this approach doesn't serve everyone. A hard copy registration form is available in the brochure. It can be faxed or snail-mailed to the Friends office. Starting September 9, after 1:00 PM, all faxed and snail-mailed hard copy registrations will be manually processed in the order they were received.



This year's cover art is by Lisa Walraven.

A taste of what's planned:

There are more than 160 event sessions to choose from in over six days—including 47 NEW events, and over 70 special birding events. If you're a serious birder, you'll want to look for the brochure's **Birder's Corner** for information on these events. The BRANT group is back offering even more birding intensives than last year, including the ever-popular Owling Expedition and the new Sparrows Intensive.

In the last few years, Festival has expanded its photography element to the point that many describe Festival of the Cranes as one of the top photography festivals in the country. This year a serious line-up of photography pros is joining us, with Roman Kurywczak, Maxis

Gamez, Russell Burden, David Akoubain, Hazel Meredith, Keith Bauer, Wayne Pope, Kathryn Dow and Stephen Ingraham leading sixty photography sessions. As a very special event, the Friends and the Very Large Array (VLA) are bringing back the VLA Nighttime Photography workshop sponsored by Sigma and led by Roman Kurywczak.

Festival continues to bring you the best of crane and raptor workshops with over 25 offerings. And, no, Land, Sea, and Air did not go away. In fact you will have the opportunity to "bird by boat" four times during the week with one session as an intensive.

Our keynote speaker for the Friends dinner is Rich Beilfuss, CEO and President of the International Crane Foundation.

Our Expo Tent once again expands with more camera, optic and eco-travel exhibitors.

Help us celebrate this national treasure and put the Festival dates of November 17-22 on your calendars. The fun is about to begin!

--Michael Hanauer,
Festival Coordinator

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY IN SOCORRO COUNTY

International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) was originally conceived at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (SMBC). The SMBC is dedicated to creating and spreading a greater understanding of, appreciation of, and protection for bird migration in the Americas. In the early 1990s, SMBC staff recognized that a public program would enable thousands of people to learn about migratory birds, their migrations, and their conservation. The first event, and indeed the first International Migratory Bird Day, was held in 1993 at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. These events have evolved to include all manner of participatory and hands-on activities for the public – adults and children alike. These activities include bird-walks, field trips, lectures, classroom activities, and also a bird count. Similar to the National Audubon Society's well-established Christmas Bird Count (the nation's longest-running

citizen-science bird project, which started in 1900), these IMBD Bird Counts are held on the second Saturday in May in the U.S. and Canada. (In Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean, they are held in October). The goal of the Count is to get a snapshot of the movements and numbers of Neotropical migratory birds – birds that spend the summer on their breeding range in North America, but migrate to Latin America, Mexico, and/or the Caribbean for the winter. IMBD is the only international education program that focuses on the migration of these nearly 350 species of migratory birds between their nesting habitats in North America and their non-breeding grounds in Latin America, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

When combined with other surveys, such as Breeding Bird Surveys, this IMBD Count provides a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and location. Coordination of IMBD at the international level was turned over to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in 1995. The program grew rapidly, particularly in the United States. By 2005, it was clear that the program would need more oversight and dedicated staff, and the search began for a new home. The group Environment for the Americas (EFTA), a non-profit organization that works throughout the Western Hemisphere to share information

about birds and their conservation, has been coordinating IMBD since 2007.

Locally, the Socorro County "Spring Count," as it's known colloquially, began in 1998. The first Count Compilers for Socorro County were Bruce Neville and Doug Emkalns. The Count Compiler's task is to organize birders – both groups and individuals – to cover various parts of Socorro County, and then to collect, review, and compile the numerous lists of birds seen, counted, and reported by each of those groups or individuals. Bruce and Doug organized a team of volunteers, many of whom have become "regulars." For example, Gary Froehlich, who had previously helped with the Eddy County Spring Counts, was persuaded by Doug to abandon that county's efforts, and to help out instead with Socorro County (he argued that Socorro County was much larger, needed more participants, and was also closer to Gary's home in Albuquerque!). In 2000, Bruce and Doug assigned Gary to cover Bosque del Apache and its environs, including nearby San Antonio and Luis Lopez. Gary and his count partners have covered Bosque del Apache on every second Saturday in May since then. Similarly, John Shipman has long covered the birding spots in Socorro itself (such as NM Tech's campus, Riverine Parks, and Sedillo Springs); Dave Hawksworth has long counted birds in parts of the county north of town (such as Sevilleta and La Joya refuges); Pat Basham used to cover her extraordinary, bird-friendly property near the Rio Grande east of Socorro; and so on.



Dwayne Longenbaugh

Bullock's oriole

In 2009, Sonja Mendoza took over as the Count Compiler. She also took over the portions of Socorro County that used to be covered by Bruce and Doug – the high country in the Magdalena and San Mateo Mountains, as well as the desert areas at their bases.

These Counts are often lots of fun, and the camaraderie among the count participants is delightful. But make no mistake – these Counts are hard work! Counters rise before the sun, beginning their tally based on the vocalizations of nocturnal birds, such as owls and nightjars. And they don't simply record which species were seen and identified, they also count the number of individuals of each species – that's where the population data comes from. Trying to count the number of, say, barn swallows as they twist and turn above the water, among five other species of swallows doing the

same thing, can be maddening. But the importance of keeping tabs on the populations and timing of migration for these species is an important indicator of the state of the environment, and that's something all of the participants take very seriously. There is also the ever-present possibility that an individual of some totally unexpected species will show up, which happens nearly every year. Some of the "special" count-day visitors from other parts of the US over the past sixteen years have included yellow-crowned night-heron, both red-necked and red phalarope, whimbrel, Clapper rail, Anna's hummingbird, common black-hawk, rose-breasted grosbeak, hooded and Baltimore orioles, and the following list of warbler species: golden-winged, Tennessee, northern parula, chestnut-sided, Cape May, hermit,

blackpoll, black-and-white, Kentucky, and hooded! Glossy ibis have been found in flocks of the expected white-faced ibis on six of the last eight Count years. Carolina wrens showed up on the Count three years ago, and not only have they been encountered on every Count since then, but they appear to have increased in number, and there is evidence that they nested in our area last year.

Count totals have ranged from a high of 206 species in 2008 (which bested our counterparts in Sierra County that year!) to a low of 156 in 2014. Interestingly, despite the variety of habitats present in Socorro County, the total from Bosque del Apache alone has ranged from about 60% to 70% of the overall total. In fact, count totals from Bosque del Apache – on that second Saturday in May, when many people seemingly believe "all

continued, p. 10

**Socorro County Spring Counts
Multi-Year Totals**

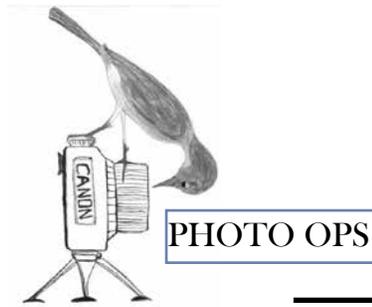
Count Year	County Total	BdA (GKF's) Total	BdA Percentage of County Total	Count Partner	Notable/Exceptional Species on BdA Count
2000	184	108	58.7	Randi (Froehlich) Murphy	Glossy Ibis
2001	181	109	60.2	Billy Brock	Bronzed Cowbird
2002	204	127	62.3	Ann Hodges	Little Blue Heron (2), Black-and-white Warbler, Bobolink
2003	187	118	63.1	Ann Hodges	
2004	178	106	59.6	Ann Hodges	Red Phalarope, Golden-winged Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Northern Waterthrush
2005	192	117	60.9	Ann Hodges	Semipalmated Sandpiper
2006	195	127	65.1	Ann Hodges	California Gull, Burrowing Owl, Northern Waterthrush, Hooded Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Bronzed Cowbird
2007	191	106	55.5	Ann Hodges	Common Gallinule, Yellow-billed Cuckoo
2008	206	133	64.6	Ann Hodges	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Glossy Ibis, Mississippi Kite, Whimbrel, Couch's/Tropical Kingbird
2009	190	126	66.3	Ann Hodges	Whimbrel, Marbled Godwit, Blackpoll Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak
2010	166	114	68.7	Ann Hodges	Glossy Ibis, Clapper Rail, Common Gallinule, Northern Parula, Cape May Warbler
2011	177	106	59.9	Ann Hodges	Glossy Ibis, Anna's Hummingbird, Black-and-white Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, White-throated Sparrow, Hooded Oriole
2012	157	99	63.1	Ann Hodges	Greater White-fronted Goose, Mute Swan, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-necked Phalarope
2013	193	128	66.3	Ann Hodges	Little Blue Heron, Glossy Ibis (2), Red-necked Phalarope, Carolina Wren (2), Tennessee Warbler, Hermit Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Clay-colored Sparrow, Baltimore Oriole
2014	156	107	68.6	Ann Hodges	Glossy Ibis, Common Black-Hawk, Carolina Wren, White-throated Sparrow
2015	191	101	52.9	Ann Hodges	Glossy Ibis, Carolina Wren, Lark Bunting

IMBD, continued

the birds” have left—have reached 126 species (once), 127 species (twice), 128 species (once), and even a remarkable 133 species in 2008! This is testament not only to the variety of habitats found on the refuge, but also to the level of quality to which those habitats are maintained. Of course, in years with low overall count totals, the Bosque del Apache totals were similarly low, with the lowest ever coming in at only 99 species – the only time it’s ever been below 100.

Besides the obvious trends mentioned above, there is much more information contained in the huge volume of data that this Count, and its companion Counts across the country, have collected since their inception. The Christmas Count, despite how long it has been conducted, and despite the number of Count sites that it contains, completely misses those species that leave the U.S. for the winter, so their population trends have historically gone unnoticed, except for anecdotal reports from birders. But now, the IMBD Counts are addressing that issue, which means we will even obtain data indicating the health of the habitats these migrants use for wintering. And with such data there is the possibility of halting habitat destruction and degradation, not just at home, but elsewhere in the Americas, in order to keep these populations of “our” breeding birds healthy, and to keep them coming back.

--Gary Froehlich (Friends member) , Ann Hodges (Friends Board Member) & Sonja Mendoza (Friends Board Member)



BEEP! BEEP!

Photographing the Expressive Roadrunner

Dashing along the sides of refuge roads greater roadrunners (*Geococcyx californianus*) tease refuge visitors. You can almost hear the famous “Beep! Beep!” as they pause momentarily while you reach for your camera or binoculars. Sure enough when you finally get your camera in hand, there is nothing but a cloud of dust as this sneaky member of the cuckoo family darts off.



A greater roadrunner dashes off with a garter snake.

Photographing roadrunners at the Bosque del Apache NWR is easy if you learn the areas they frequent and their behaviors. Good areas to see roadrunners include: (1) between the Farm Deck and the Observation Blind on the north end of the North Loop; (2) on the east side of the South Loop just south of Bosque Road; and (3) along the South Loop by Audio Tour stations #1 and #2. Although roadrunners can be seen anywhere along the refuge roads, these areas seem to be the best.

Roadrunner behavior can provide good photo opportunities. The usual roadrunner-human interaction is that you spot the roadrunner running away from your vehicle and either give up even trying to get a photo, or you keep driving in the direction of the roadrunner (in effect “chasing it”). There is a better approach. When you first see the roadrunner stop your vehicle (on the side of the refuge road so others can safely pass by) and



Although roadrunners live all over the refuge they are conveniently found alongside the auto tour loop roads.

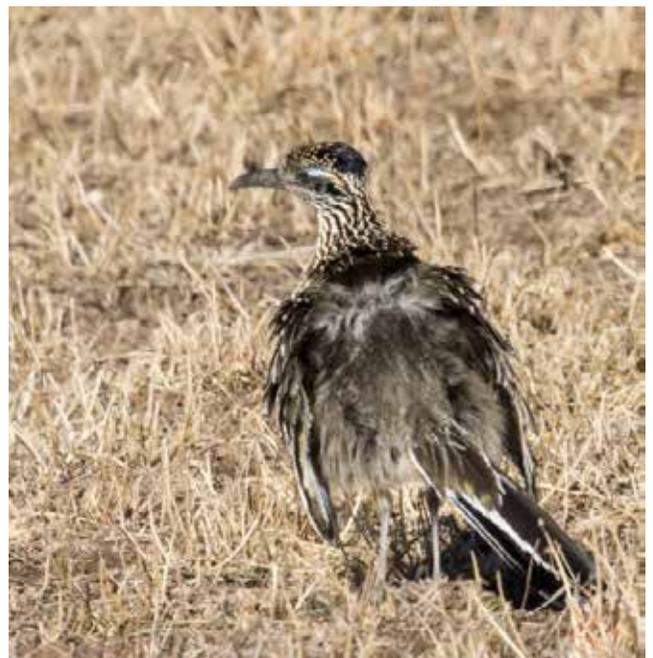
wait. Turn off your vehicle and listen carefully for their “coo call” (low-frequency, downward slurring notes: co-coo-coo-coo-cooooooo). Males usually give this call from an elevated perch – so watch these photo opportunities. Sitting patiently in your vehicle often results in the roadrunner coming back to the area where you saw it initially. Look for roadrunners underneath and alongside brush that is just off the road. Using this method I have had roadrunners approach very close. Trying to follow them will just drive them further away.

The omnivorous roadrunner eats small snakes, insects, adult birds and their young, mice and other rodents, lizards, grasshoppers and other insects, carrion, frogs, and plant material. Their diet is approximately 90% animal based, with the rest being seeds and fruit. In the fields by the Farm Deck you can often watch many roadrunners hunting for grasshoppers and rodents. One spring day I

counted over twenty roadrunners between the Farm Deck and the Observation Blind feasting on grasshoppers!

On cold days roadrunners can be seen sunbathing with their backs toward the sun and wings spread apart to expose black skin and under plumage. I have found focusing directly on these black downy feathers to be difficult.

On cold days you will often see roadrunners sunbathing as in this photo.



Instead I try to focus on their eye or the white and red eye patch.

People identify with the famous “Wile E. Coyote” and “Road Runner” cartoon characters. Roadrunners are very expressive and fun to photograph (similar to burrowing owl photography). When you are able to watch one through your lens you can capture interesting behaviors. Aim for capturing images of it doing its “coo-call”, catching prey and then running with the prey, and strange displays where it will fan or flick its tail. They are big birds (~ 2 feet long) so plan accordingly to keep the roadrunner in the field of view of your lens.

Mated pairs of roadrunners have established territories they hunt in, nest in, and defend. In late spring you can often see them with young. Adults will perform distraction displays to avert attacks on their young. Ideally you will notice a very active roadrunner display, before it notices you, and be able to observe some interesting behaviors from a distance.



A Cooper's hawk tries to catch a male roadrunner, who is distracting the hawk away from a young roadrunner by fanning its tail. The tricky roadrunner was able to out maneuver this hawk by forcing the hawk to continually crash and entangle itself in the brush.

If you have been lucky enough to see a roadrunner up close you were probably surprised by the multitude of bright colors of its iridescent feathers and the bright red, white, and turquoise colors around its eyes. When the sun angle and your position relative to the roadrunner are ideal you can capture these amazing colors of the roadrunner. Remember this in the field. Many times I will find a roadrunner close to my parked vehicle at the refuge and find that a slight change in the bird's position will dramatically change the colors I see.

Roadrunner photography at the refuge is great all year long. Try to time your "laps" as you drive slowly around the refuge so that you have the sun behind you and the roadrunners in front of you. Remember that whenever Wile E. Coyote tried to chase Road Runner he was left in the dust.

The same will be true for you if you try to chase roadrunners (or any wildlife for that matter) to get a "better photo." When you spot a roadrunner, pull your trusty Acme vehicle to the side of the road and wait patiently for the roadrunner to reappear. You will be surprised when the curious roadrunner comes back out from hiding, so

be ready with your Acme camera shutter – click, click,click....

BEEP! BEEP! Hopefully you got some great images.

--Ed MacKerrow

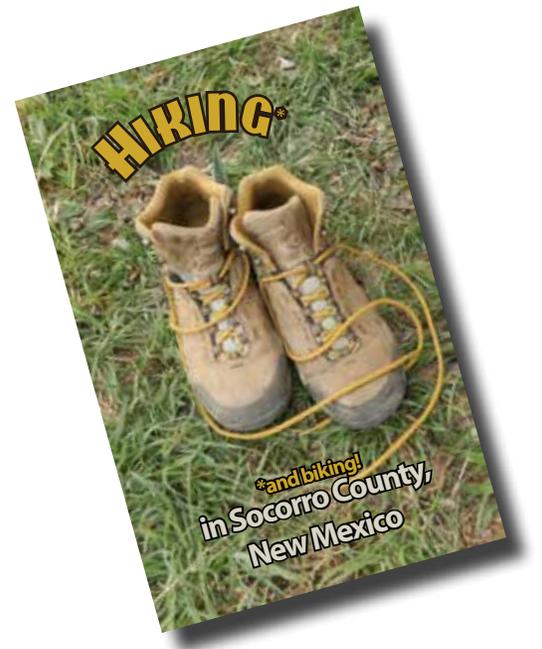
All photos by the author. You can see many more on his website: www.mackerrowphoto.com



Reflected light from a roadrunner's iridescent feathers.

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Summer is the time for getting out and enjoying nature. Robyn Harrison's new book entitled, *Hiking (and biking!) in Socorro County, New Mexico*, is just what one needs for hiking and biking in the Socorro/Magdalena/Quebradas area. This concise book is complete with a description and illustration of 22 trails.

One of my favorite areas is Water Canyon. Using Robyn's book I discovered a world of trails which I intend to trek.

Included in her book is a composite index of all the area trails with information from trail difficulty to whether one can take the dog and bike or hike.

On the back cover is a list of resources for further information. The book is available at the Bosque Nature Store at the refuge. The book also includes the five trails at the refuge.

--Virginia Cuellar, Volunteer

The Friends of the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge is a registered 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporation incorporated in New Mexico. The Friends promotes appreciation and conservation of wildlife and habitat through environmental education and natural history experiences at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge.

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