The February 1st program of Southwestern New Mexico Audubon Society will feature John Moeny from the New Mexico Environment Department. The title of his presentation is “Springs ecosystems in southwest NM – assessing conditions and restoration opportunities.” The program begins at 7 PM in room 219 of Harlan Hall on the WNMU campus at 12th and Alabama.

Springs are broadly defined as locations where the earth’s ground water emerges at the surface. They can be tiny seeps on a sandstone wall that provide water for a single plant or passing bird, or massive, explosive outflows like the geysers of Yellowstone. In New Mexico they are typically diminutive features of the landscape, but their small size belies their heavyweight importance. It has been estimated that springs nationwide support 20% of our country’s endangered species.

This talk will delve into the different types of springs that can be found around the state – their characteristics, threats they face, and the opportunities for their management and restoration.

John Moeny is an Environmental Scientist for the New Mexico Environment Department and works out of the Silver City field office on surface water and wetland protection and restoration. With degrees in botany and rangeland restoration, he has worked in land management and natural resource science for 20 years, plying his trade from Montana to Mexico. Ten years ago he and his wife, Megan Ruehmann, settled in Silver City where they can be found chasing a rare bird or endemic plant, backpacking or planning the next adventure.
Dear fellow Auduboners,

First and foremost, this letter does not include a request for donations. It’s a heartfelt thank you to all the people who have recently joined or renewed their membership. Over the past decade or so that I have been involved in SWNMA, I’ve seen our membership double.

Second, I want to express my appreciation for the financial support we received from so many this past May at Give Grandly and the Birdathon. There were numerous generous people who made an additional donation along with their membership. Thanks to all of you.

Third, I want to share with you some ideas your Board of Directors has for the coming year. This past year we held a strategic planning meeting to review our long-term goals and develop short-term strategies to get there. Here are some highlights:

Protecting the Gila River will always be a goal of this chapter, since it was the reason we were founded 50 years ago. We will continue to be engaged in the process and keep you informed of ways where your help can make a difference.

SWNMA is not an isolated organization; we always strive to build our chapter through regional and community connections. We interact with other organizations in working toward a world in which people and wildlife thrive. Equity, diversity and inclusion is a goal of all of Audubon.

We are proud of the success last year of our Bird, Butterfly and Bee Friendly Silver City initiative, a native plant give-away at Earth Day, and the WNMU swallow monitoring project. We will continue these efforts to create a bird-friendly community and expand it by working with the Arts Council on a Youth Mural that helps convey our goals.

Our past successes are the result of efforts by the Board to build chapter capacity. We will continue those efforts and also seek to build and broaden your Board of Directors. I am immensely grateful for their hard work and dedication and encourage new members to consider joining us. Please contact me, or any member of the Board, if you are interested in becoming more active in SWNMA.

And last, promoting conservation is always at the heart of our goals. With the serious threats facing the environment we all need to do things that make a difference, both globally and locally.

Terry Timme

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**Letter from Our President**

**Upper Gila Watershed Forum Jan 11th**

The second annual Upper Gila Watershed Forum at Eastern Arizona College in the the Lee Little Theater in Thatcher, AZ will be held on January 11th from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. This year’s theme is "Adapting to a hotter and drier future", and features local industry leaders and regional partners discussing how they adapt within their businesses and industries to heat, drought, and uncertainty.

Tickets are available for $35, which covers lunch and field trips included in registration. Registration and map can be found at: [www.eventbrite.com/e/upper-gila-watershed-forum-tickets-48290940503?aff=ebdssbcitybrowse](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/upper-gila-watershed-forum-tickets-48290940503?aff=ebdssbcitybrowse)
From the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

**The Great Backyard Bird Count**
**February 15-18, 2019**

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time.

Now, more than 160,000 people of all ages and walks of life worldwide join the four-day count each February to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds.

We invite you to participate! For at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, February 15-18, 2019, simply tally the numbers and kinds of birds you see. You can count from any location, anywhere in the world, for as long as you wish!

Then you simply tally the numbers and species of birds you see and enter it online at [http://gbbc.birdcount.org](http://gbbc.birdcount.org). There is also a photo contest for people interested in photographing the birds they see.

The count is for anyone interested in spending a little time in nature and looking at what birds they see. Don’t know what species of birds you are seeing? There is an app for that. Cornell Labs has a smartphone app called Merlin that can help identify birds. Audubon also has a free smartphone app to help identify birds. Both are available on either iTunes or Google play.

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document and understand the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time. Scientists use information from the GBBC, along with observations from other citizen-science projects, such as the Christmas Bird Count, to get the “big picture” about what is happening to bird populations.

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**Lack of Red Squirrels Results in Another ABA Checklist Change**

According to the 28th American Birding Association (ABA) checklist committee report, there is a “split” from the Red crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*). This newly separated crossbill is called Cassia crossbill (*L. sinesciuris*). It is recognized as being endemic to the South Hills and Albion mountains of Idaho. Its large bill has resulted from co-evolution with thicker pine cone seeds, mediated by a lack of red squirrels in the region. The scientific name *sinesciuris* translates to “without squirrels.” It will follow Red crossbill on the ABA list, and will be acceptable as being “countable” on your North American ABA area list.
**What is eBird?**

eBird is a bird sightings website, managed by Cornell Lab of Ornithology, that receives over 100 million bird sighting reports every year from around the world. It allows you to enter your data and maintain a personal record of the birds you have seen and where you have seen them. You can even submit photos and audio recordings. Submissions can also be made on the eBird app for Android or Apple.

Are you curious about when and where a certain species of bird has been found? The **Explore** feature allows you to go to a specific county and view illustrated checklists that tell the number of observations each week and a map of where sightings have been made. The same can also be done at the level of wildlife refuge, state, country or region. You can also use **Explore** for specific species and get descriptions, photos, audio clips, and range maps.

Are you traveling and wondering what species you might expect to see and where to look? Again the **Explore** feature is quite useful. For a given county or region there are listings of birding hotspots that may help you plan a vacation that includes birding.

Even if you are not the type of birder who maintains a life list, eBird is worth using for a number of reasons. The data you submit is part of an immense citizen science project that is being used to inform bird research and help make conservation decisions. It is also data that you can easily access.

When you participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count, you will submit your observations online. Their website has a link to eBird so you can register and start having fun using eBird while contributing to this important citizen science project.

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**Gila Wildlife Rescue Program Features Owls**

The December SWNMA program featured Dennis and Denise Miller of Gila Wildlife Rescue. We were treated to wonderful pictures that captured all the hard work that goes into being a wildlife rehabilitator. They have been working to rehabilitate and release animals back into the wild for almost 40 years. Their dedication and concern for their “clients” was obvious.

They showed a smorgasbord of birds and mammals they have recently treated. Their specialty is raptors but they also have had other large birds this year from a Turkey vulture to a Great Blue heron.

They recounted the story of their most famous patient, Thor. He is the Golden eagle that collided with a car six years ago but remarkably suffered no injuries. Thor was fitted with a radio-transmitter that allowed his movements to be followed from his wintering grounds along Highway 180 between Silver City and Deming to his summer home in the far north around the Alaska-Canada border.

Their primary patients this year have been owls. That abundance of owls prompted them to feature them on their 2019 calendar, “A Year of Owls.” This annual fundraiser features the stunning photography of Denise and is available for sale through their Facebook page (just search for Gila Wildlife Rescue on Facebook), or you can call them at 575-590-0118.

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**SWNMA Website Impacts Youth**

We recently received the following email from a proud mother:

“I wanted to send a quick thank you! This past summer I really encouraged my son Trevor to spend more time outdoors instead of just in front of the tv. He’s always really loved animals so one of the things we started doing is bird-watching! I’ve found that it’s a great activity for us to do together. ...The two of us didn’t really know too much so we went online looking for some info to help us out. We found your page ...which had a lot of great info! I wanted to thank you and let you know how helpful it was! :)”

She went on to say that her son had found a website that listed the state bird for each state and that he was trying to memorize each one. A link to that State Bird page is under the category of Useful Links on our website at www.swnmaudubon.org/education. We’re sure Trevor will be pleased to know that he was able to contribute something useful to us. It is certainly wonderful for us to have had an impact on the life of Trevor and his mother.