



# REFUGE UPDATE

January 2022

Published quarterly by the Amigos de la Sevilleta

*The Annual Meeting of the Amigos is on  
Saturday, January 21, 2023.  
See President's Message on Page 6 for details.  
All members are welcome.*

## Refuge Manager Notes

Jeff Sanchez, Refuge Manager

It's amazing how quickly time flies and seasons change. I have found throughout my career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the only constant is change. As the seasons transition from one to the next, so do the lifecycles of plants and animals. It has now been a year since I first arrived here at Sevilleta NWR and still to this day, I have not visited all corners of this large everchanging landscape. This is an amazing place with many hidden natural treasures. One thing that holds true in most environments, including this beautiful landscape, is that the spring season is a critical time of year that is either life giving or life taking for almost all wildlife.

In spring, as plants just begin to green up, leaf out and take hold, the animals that rely on such plants for sustenance welcome this transition as they have endured a long and sometimes difficult winter, with dwindling food resources. These life-giving resources sometimes do not recover until late April when we tend to receive at least one precipitation event in between the gusts of wind.

This typical New Mexico weather pattern makes the months of February and March especially difficult for most wildlife. During that time, animals are at their most dire body condition and some animals perish. With loss, however, comes opportunity. Predators and scavengers would not survive if this seasonal pattern did not hold true. This annual life cycle/balance changes from year to year ensuring that not one season is the same as the previous and proving again that the only constant within natural ecosystems is change. It's funny how we humans often strive for consistency and comfort, not realizing that the times when we experience the most meaningful growth are usually when we are challenged by change, just as is true in a natural setting.

I have learned to eagerly welcome the spring season as I know that time of renewal is to follow. We again will welcome those animals that have adapted evolutionarily to migrate to areas of plenty, more favorable weather, and to return to this desert system when their cycles require

renewal. I feel that spring is a time of opportunity for everything (and everyone) to take a sigh of relief and look forward to a new beginning.

As we move toward a promising new year in 2023, we also welcome a special milestone for Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge was established in 1973, therefore, this year marks our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!! We have been providing natural opportunities for plants and animals for 5 decades now and would love to celebrate this time with you.



I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to the refuge on Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, to experience this special time of renewal at our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sevilleta Spring Fiesta. As the birds and other animals migrate to this special place, we would like to host you, your families and especially kids to learn about and experience (hands on) how special this refuge really is. Families and kids will

enjoy an environmental treasure hunt, bird banding, experience up close wildlife interactions, and learn what Sevilleta NWR is all about. We will also be hosting several tours throughout the year showcasing some amazing places on the refuge that harbor natural ecosystems and wildlife. It is an understatement for me to say that there are very few places left in this world set aside to maintain “naturalness” and utilize “research” to focus human



efforts on everchanging climates. I am really excited to share this special treasure during a time of year when wildlife and animals are returning and beginning their new seasonal journey. See you in May and/or during one of our scheduled tours.

For more information, please visit <https://www.amigosdelasevilleta.org/> and click on “Fiesta”

## President's Message

Colin Barnett, Board President

Many National Wildlife Refuges devote at least one day out of the year to host an event designed to present to the public displays, activities and talks centered around the mission of the refuge. These have various names such as Festival, Fair and even Family Fun Day. Sevilleta is no exception; we've had a Fall Family Fair for many years, halting it during the Covid pandemic.

The hiatus is over. We will again have an event in 2023. That year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the refuge. To celebrate, we are planning a fantastic Sevilleta Spring Fiesta, scheduled for May 20. There will be guided nature walks, arts & crafts, a Discovery Road, exhibits, 10-minute talks on local history and scientific research,

live animal demonstrations, food vendors, and gifts and souvenirs for sale at the Nature Store. This will be a free family event. We hope to see you there!



The Amigos supports to other organizations by staffing a table at their festivals and fairs. In April, we participated in the Earth Day Science Fiesta held at Whitfield Conservation Center. I recommend a visit to this beautiful location near Belen. Although fire damaged much



Visitor Services Manager Jeannine Hunter shares information with a young visitor at the Whitfield Earth Day Science Fiesta. Present but not pictured were Amigos President Colin Barnett and Board Member Alesia Hallmark.

of the vegetation a couple of years ago, the forest and fields are recovering nicely. It's a great place for a hike.

In November, the Amigos and volunteers staffed a table at the Bosque del Apache Festival of the Cranes. This event is, without a doubt, the best attended refuge event in the state, attracting visitors from all over the country due to the magnificent opportunities to observe and photograph the Sandhill Cranes and snow geese. Our table was in a tent along with tables from Valle do Oro, and the National Fish & Wildlife Service, to name just two of the many groups participating.



Cat meets coyote  
at the Sevilleta NWR booth.



Our booth able at the Festival of the Cranes included hand-outs as well lots of materials show the rich native fauna of Sevilleta and the breath of activities that occur there.



Volunteer Kathy Imel talks with visitors to the Festival of the Cranes at Bosque del Apache. Amigos Vice President Sandy Barnett and Volunteer Claudette Tilley (blue jacket) were also staffing the Seville table. Present but not pictured were Maria Trunk, Amigos President Colin Barnett, and Board Members Chuck Kooshian, Rex Myers and Susan Richardson.



## 2023 Annual Meeting of the Amigos de la Sevilleta

Each January, the Amigos hold their Annual Meeting, to which the public is invited. The highlight of this year's meeting will be a report by Refuge Manager Jeff Sanchez on what has happened on the refuge in 2022 and a preview of plans for 2023. There are several new refuge initiatives that you will definitely find interesting.

**The meeting is on January 21 from 2-4.** You are welcome to join via Zoom or in person; if you attend in person, you can partake of savory and sweet snacks, meet the Board Members, and peruse new items for sale in our Nature Store. (Masks optional)

Starting at 2:10, we will open with:

- Review of Amigos activities in 2022 and plans for 2023, Colin Barnett (Amigos President)
- Financial Report, Penny Lommen (Treasurer)
- Review of the Refuge's 50th Anniversary plans, Jeannine Hunter (Visitor Services Manager)

At 2:45 Jeff will speak, followed by questions from the audience, concluding at about 3:30.

If you will be attending via Zoom, you may join at any time. A link to the Zoom meeting will be sent to members via email on January 10

This is a public meeting so please pass on this information to anyone you think might be interested. We hope to see you there.



The Board of the Amigos de la Sevilleta cordially invites you to the 2023 Annual Meeting. We will all be there to meet you in person! L-R: Alesia Hallmark, Colin Barnett, Sandy Barnett, Ann Adams, Chuck Kooshian, Penny Lommen, Allan Sauter, Susan Richardson, Rex Myers, Steve Randall.

# Christmas Bird Count 2022

by Rex Meyers

Twenty-one volunteers from Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge joined more than 100,000 other volunteers from around the world in Audubon’s annual Christmas Bird Count this year – December 14, 2022 to January 5, 2023. Begun in 1900 with 27 dedicated birders, this count has grown to

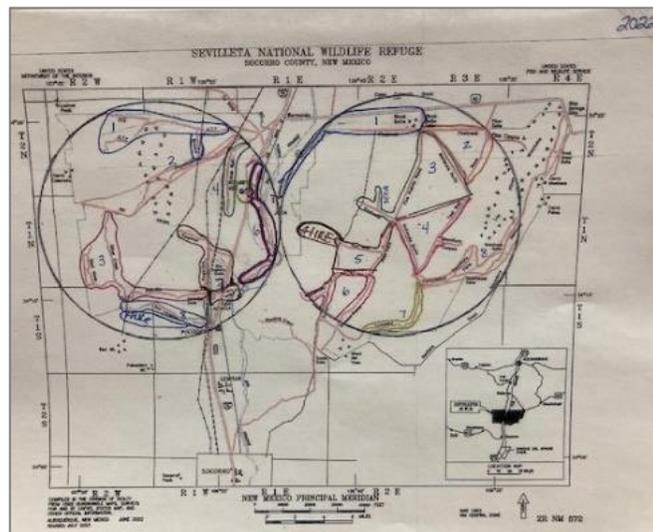


become the largest and longest citizen science event in the world. The Count provides valuable information on what’s happening to birds; changing population patterns; successes and concerns.

Local counts take place on a single day and focus on circles that are 15 miles in diameter. There are

two circles on Sevilleta – one east of the Rio Grande (counted on December 14th); the other to the west (counted December 16th). World-wide, there are approximately 2500 circles with more than 1800 circles in the United States. Binoculars in hand, birders count both separate species and total birds observed. Sevilleta totals for the December 14th count were 47 species and 764 total birds; on December 16th, 78 species and 3102 birds. Thank you, thank you to all those who volunteered this year.

Volunteers: Nancy Cox, Steve Cox, Michelle Dent, Silas Fischer, Dave Hawksworth, Jeannine Hunter,



Kathy Imel, Jason Kitting, Chuck Kooshian, Jim Lommen, Rex Myers, Dennis Prichard, Susan Richards, Jeff Sanchez, Trisha Sanchez, Claudette Tilley, Danny Tipton, Maria Trunk, Rachel Walkup, Amber West, and Laura West.

Sound interesting? You can add your name to the list in 2023. Contact Jeanine Hunter (see p. 9)



## Facebook Activity

by Susan Richards

We currently have 880 followers up 8 people, so our exposure continues to grow you use FB, please share our posts and encourage your friends to follow us.



## Contacts

Amigos website

<https://www.amigosdelasevilleta.org/>

Amigos on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/amigossevilleta>

Refuge website

<Http://www.fws.gov/refuge/sevilleta>

Jeannine Hunter

Visitor Services Manager

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## Editor's Note

Items for consideration in the *Refuge Update* are encouraged.

Please email your submission in Word format to [sdrandll72@gmail.com](mailto:sdrandll72@gmail.com)

Past editions of this Newsletter are available at the Amigos website

<https://www.amigosdelasevilleta.org/contacts>

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