

New Mexico Burrowing Owl

Working Group Goals

- Document presence and general distribution of Burrowing Owls statewide
- Establish a statewide volunteer monitoring effort to better document owls
- Facilitate communication among researchers, agencies, and the public
- Enter sightings into a protected database
- Maintain a web page to provide information to the public and promote Burrowing Owl conservation

Owls In Your Neighborhood

Burrowing Owls often nest in urban areas, and you might see them in your neighborhood. Perhaps in the arroyo behind your house, the abandoned lot near the office, or the park where you jog. As our communities

grow and habitat patches are developed, some burrows will be destroyed. Your observations can help us ensure that adults or nestlings are not destroyed

in the process. We work cooperatively with companies to establish protective buffers around active burrows or propose scheduling alternatives for activities in sensitive areas. As a last resort, we can work with regulatory agencies to rescue and relocate owls.



Burrowing Owls



David Powell

Adult—breast has brown and white barring



Jerry Goffe

Juvenile—breast buffy

What You Can Do To Help!

We welcome your participation in the New Mexico Burrowing Owl Working Group. Volunteers can help by submitting Burrowing Owl observations (see form on reverse), attending meetings of the group, and promoting Burrowing Owl conservation in your community. Contact us at the address below and check out our website for current updates!

Hawks Aloft, Inc.

P.O. Box 10028

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87184

(505) 828-9455

E-mail: mstake@hawksaloft.org

www.hawksaloft.org/burrowing.html

David Powell



Banded Adult

WANTED!



Have You Seen One Of These?

David Powell

New Mexico Burrowing Owl Working Group

The **New Mexico Burrowing Owl Working Group** is a partnership of non-profit organizations, government agencies, private enterprises, and individuals with a common goal of promoting Burrowing Owl awareness and conservation in our state. Concerned over apparent local population declines in New Mexico, the group was formed in 2001 as a means of sharing data and information among researchers, agencies, and the public. Your observations can improve our knowledge of general distribution and help us protect Burrowing Owls. Volunteer monitoring can also provide an indication of local population trends.

Burrowing Owl Observation Form

(Please copy this form as needed)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this observation form. Your information will provide valuable data to the New Mexico Burrowing Owl Working Group. We are compiling statewide data on populations of Burrowing Owls. If you are unsure of any information, leave that section blank.

Return your form to: Hawks Aloft, Inc., Attention: Burrowing Owl Working Group, P.O. Box 10028, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87184.

Observer name _____ Date of observation _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Location: Provide as much information as possible. We appreciate UTM coordinates (NAD 27) but accept any descriptive locations. Indicate distance and direction from nearest named town. Maps are helpful _____

County _____ UTM _____ Datum (e.g., NAD 27) _____

Land ownership _____

How many owls did you observe? _____

Were you able to determine the ages of the birds? Yes No (check one)

If so, how many were adults? _____ How many were juveniles? _____

Were the owls in an urban or rural habitat? _____

Were prairie dogs also present? _____

Were any of the owls banded? If so, indicate whether bands were on the left or right leg and indicate any color sequence or number _____

Is this burrow in danger of being destroyed? _____

Describe the length of time of the observation and any behavior observed _____

Is there anything else you would like us to know about this observation? _____

Facts About Burrowing Owls (*Athene cunicularia*)

Size: 9½ inches (wingspan 20-24 inches)

Breeding Range: Western North America. There is also a population in Florida.

Prey: Insects, rodents, reptiles, small birds, and bats.

Habitat: Grasslands, open areas, often near human habitation (e.g., golf courses and airports).

Mating and Nesting Behavior: Courtship includes ritual feeding, calling, and displays.

Nesting: Pairs use old mammal burrows (which they might enlarge) and often nest in small colonies. Females incubate 7-9 white eggs, which hatch in about 30 days. Males feed the female and young in the burrow. The young emerge about two weeks after hatching. Families stay together until fall.



Status in New Mexico: Widespread. The Burrowing Owl is protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Threats: Persecution and loss of prairie dog populations might limit the availability of nest burrows. Human development reduces available habitat for Burrowing Owls.