

News Release

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Albuquerque Receives Prestigious Urban Bird Treaty City Designation *Free Community Celebration Planned for October 23*

Albuquerque – The City of Albuquerque and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today that Albuquerque has been designated as an Urban Bird Treaty City. This notable distinction is part of the Service’s Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds, often referred to as the Urban Bird Treaty. There are fewer than 25 cities nationwide with this designation.

Albuquerque will receive \$100,000 to enhance habitats and reduce hazards for birds, engage citizens in conservation, foster environmental education, and manage harmful invasive species. Albuquerque and Denver, Colorado are the only two cities in the nation this year to become Urban Bird Treaty Cities.

“We are delighted to honor the City of Albuquerque with a Urban Migratory Bird Treaty designation. The Urban Bird Treaty program is a unique, collaborative effort between the Service and participating U.S. cities that brings together private citizens; federal, state and municipal agencies; and non-governmental organizations to help create effective urban sanctuaries for birds and other wildlife,” said Benjamin Tuggle, the Service’s Southwest Regional Director. “We welcome the City of Albuquerque as the 20th Urban Bird Treaty city in the country.”

Tuggle also noted that Albuquerque’s middle Rio Grande corridor supports hundreds of species of birds, mammals, fish and reptiles, and provides water for human consumption, agriculture, cultural, religious and recreational purposes.

“The middle Rio Grande valley is growing rapidly. It is critical that we work together to balance all the demands on the river while conserving the important natural resource we so highly value in New Mexico.”

The City and the Service are already working with a variety of local partners to implement the Program and have planned a public kick-off celebration on Thursday October 23 at the Albuquerque Open Space Visitor Center located at 6500 Coors NW. The event will take place from 3:30pm to 5:30pm and will include a variety of family friendly hands-on activities, exhibits, games, live birds of prey, refreshments and a special screening of the film "Winged Migration." At 4:00pm a Special Designation Ceremony will take place in the court yard. All activities, including entrance and parking, are free and open to the public.

“It is an honor to receive this prestigious designation from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Albuquerque is pleased to be recognized among the country’s best birding cities and to celebrate the beauty and important wildlife habitat of our Rio Grande Bosque Open Space,” said Mayor Richard J. Berry. “We will continue with our efforts to ensure the Bosque is well managed and sustainable for future generations.”

The bird habitat in and around Albuquerque attracts more than 200 species of birds. For the vast majority of people – especially in urban areas – birds represent their most frequent contact with wildlife. Birds are a valuable resource, contributing aesthetically, culturally, scientifically, and economically to America's citizens. They play an integral part in our lives, providing important – sometimes irreplaceable – functions including pollinating plants, dispersing seeds, and providing non-toxic insect pest control.

“The quality of life for citizens is linked to healthy bird populations,” said Tuggle. “Birds are a critical link in the food web, and are considered indicators of the health of our environment.”

The Urban Bird Treaty Program was created by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1999 to help municipal governments conserve migratory birds through habitat improvement, education, and conservation activities. Communities are able to apply and through a rigorous application process must demonstrate its ability to implement and support the Program.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service.

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