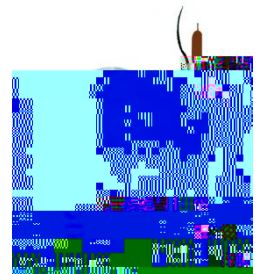


THE WILD SIDE

The birds at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park have provided many surprises lately. After almost 2 years with no new species detected at the park, we added **Short-eared Owl** on 31 March and **Gray Catbird** on 27 June. Next, after a winter and spring with long absences, only sporadic sighting

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THINKING LIKE A RIVER

The main water channel at Rio Bosque traces the alignment of a former bend of the Rio Grande cut off when the river was channelized in the 1930s. But today's rebuilt channel is a very different water course than the historic Rio Grande. Before dams and channelization, flooding associated with spring snowmelt played a key role in shaping river-valley ecosystems, including cottonwood-willow forests. The flooding scoured and opened areas. As flood waters receded, they exposed moist soils favorable for seed germination and establishment of these trees. Our challenge today is to find ways to mimic, on at least a limited basis, some of these processes that once shaped native river-valley ecosystems.

Last year, Rio Bosque received Rio Grande Project irrigation water for the first time, delivered from the Riverside Canal. At the point where this sediment-laden water discharged into the park's old river channel, a sediment delta began to develop, as might happen at an arroyo discharging to a river. Under low-flow conditions, mudflats emerged, with the water in the channel cutting a winding path through