

Honorable Mention Photography – Age 14-18
Elise Becker – Colorado Springs, CO



Burrowing Owl

Location: Chico Basin Ranch, Pueblo County, Colorado

Date/Time: Mid-morning, June 27

Optics Used: Sony Cyber-shot Digital Camera (5 Mega pixels, Sony Lens/Optical 3x) Scope- Leica APO-Televid (62, 20x-60x zoom lens), mounted on a Bogen-tripod

This day (27 June) turned out to be great for photos. I was out in the field with Bill Maynard at Chico Basin Ranch, a place where I don't normally get to bird. I learned a lot about photography from Bill on this occasion, and since *he* birds there often, he knew where all of the good birds were and how best to approach them too.

The short-grass prairie habitat offered a lot of

good birds that can't be found elsewhere around the city of Colorado Springs, and we focused on those. Burrowing Owls happened to be one of the specialty birds, and Bill warned me that we had to be as stealthy as possible around these ones, because they were shy. Since we knew about their habit of flying away if approached on foot, we experimented with digi-scoping from the car (or rather, opening the car door and setting out the scope, and sitting inside the car while snapping pictures).

We tried this for two different owls, and though both eventually flew off, we both got some stellar shots (however, as I was on the better side for the sunlight, I found Bill's camera thrust into my hands for a few pictures).

I chose this picture for the contest because I liked the way it was composed, with the bird perched on the top of the cactus. Of *course* it wouldn't perch on one of the pretty, blooming ones. Oh well.