

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 33, No. 1. Jan.-Feb. 2011

Beginning Birdwatching Course

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society is partnering with the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park to offer our annual Beginning Birdwatching course in February.

If you're new to the area, or simply mystified by all those little brown jobs running around under your feeder, join us for a comprehensive introduction to the birds of our region. Through classroom sessions and field trips, we'll help you start identifying local birds, and you'll also have a chance to visit some of our local birdwatching hotspots.

We'll give you some tips for attracting birds to your yard, information on optical equipment, and a review of various birding publications. The final class will be a trip to the Vertebrate Museum on the NMSU campus in order to get a close-up look at specimens of some of the birds seen on class field trips.

The course's classroom sessions will be Tuesday, February 8, 15, 22, and March 1, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. We'll go on half-day field trips Saturday, February 12 and 19 and a full-day field trip on February 26.

The cost for the class is \$40. Space is limited, so register now. For more information or to register for the course, contact Nancy at 575-521-8087.

Willow Planting at Broad Canyon Ranch

February is for tree planting!

Come join Audubon for our fourth TogetherGreen volunteer event at Broad Canyon Ranch to plant thousands of Goodding's willows (*Salix gooddingii*). Goodding's willow is our largest floodplain willow providing extremely important wildlife habitat for birds, butterflies, and other critters. Goodding's willow poles will be arriving weekly and Audubon will be coordinating volunteers to assist with planting throughout the month of February.

Volunteers, whether individuals or groups, who can work on weekdays will be greatly appreciated. No experience necessary: just bring gloves and a hat.

To sign up, or to obtain more information, contact Beth Bardwell at bbardwell@audubon.org or call 575-522-5065.

Gulf Recovery Update

Eight months after the BP Deep Horizon well started gushing oil into the Gulf of Mexico, the National Audubon Society is still working across the Gulf region. More than 35,000 people have registered as volunteers through Audubon's national website and thousands more have donated to Audubon's response effort, making it one of the largest and most highly visible volunteer mobilization and habitat conservation programs that Audubon has been involved in to date.

Since the first days of the BP disaster, Audubon volunteers played key roles in supporting the emergency response. When official crews called, they were there at a moment's notice—keeping injured and oiled birds calm, logging vital data and providing support that made them vital links in the bird rescue and rehabilitation chain.

Committed Audubon volunteers are now gathering data across the Gulf region to determine how birds and entire ecosystems are responding to the disaster. Among the efforts to collect valuable data on bird populations are the Coastal Bird Survey, a citizen science program created in response to the BP disaster, and the Waterbird Watch program, which helps monitor bird activity on National Wildlife Refuges. Volunteers will also be compiling extensive data on species numbers and locations as part of the 111th Christmas Bird Count.

Tens of thousands of systematic observations will give scientists their first detailed look at possible changes in species populations and location. They may provide early indications of whether imperiled species like the Brown Pelican are now at greater risk or whether they continue to rebound in spite of the disaster. Monitoring during next year's breeding season will show whether populations return to nesting grounds and if species heavily affected by oil will breed successfully.

In October, Audubon released a report that highlights the potential long-term impacts on birds in the Gulf Coast region. There is still ample evidence of oil and habitat disturbance, and it is often found in the very places birds are most plentiful. The conclusion is sobering—the future of birds and the region's ecosystems remains uncertain because oil and other threats are still too close for comfort. These findings leave no doubt that ongoing work in the Gulf—both in direct response to the spill and to address long-term environmental threats facing the region—is more important than ever. For the Gulf itself, Audubon and conservation colleagues have issued a Louisiana restoration prescription that will aid birds, other wildlife, and local communities by improving the health of coastal ecosystems.

Electronic Newsletter

Help MVAS save resources by signing up to receive *Roadrunner Ramblings* electronically, instead of in printed form. To sign up, email Nancy Stotz at

nstotz1@comcast.net

As each issue goes to press, you will receive an email with a PDF of the new issue attached. The PDF is also available at our website

www.mvaudubon.org

JOIN NOW!

- National Membership (one year): Join **both the National Audubon Society and Mesilla Valley Audubon Society** for the introductory rate of \$20 (a \$15 savings!). You'll receive both *Audubon Magazine* and *Roadrunner Ramblings*. Make check payable to National Audubon Society (NAS).
- Chapter Membership (one year): Join just **Mesilla Valley Audubon Society** for \$15. You'll receive *Roadrunner Ramblings*. Make check payable to Mesilla Valley Audubon Society.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

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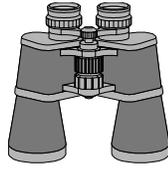
Send this form and your check to:

Membership, MVAS
P.O. Box 1645
Las Cruces, NM 88004

RENEWALS

National Members: NAS will send you renewal notices.

Chapter Members: Check your mailing label. If you see a C followed by a month and year code, you are a Chapter Member. The month and year code indicates the month your membership expires.



Field Trips

Field trips are free and open to the general public. Entry fees to some areas may be required and driving costs are shared. On all field trips wear appropriate clothing and bring water and binoculars.

Shalem Colony Bridge. January 8. This month it will be MW2SBW—Mark and Wayne's 2nd Saturday Bird Walk—since the first Saturday is New Year's Day. So, 8 January instead of 1 January. We'll visit the area up and down the Rio Grande from the Shalem Colony Trail bridge. We can't promise that we'll see all these birds, but a partial list of species we have seen there includes Varied Thrush, Merlin, Vermilion Flycatcher, Eastern and Western Bluebirds, Phainopepla and more. We'll meet in the SW corner (closest to the Border Patrol Station and Walgreen's) of the Lowe's on N. Main parking lot at 7:30 and plan to leave by 7:45. If interested in the fun, contact either Mark at 575-635-8711 or mpendleton@zianet.com or Wayne at 575-528-8696 or way1mike@yahoo.com.

Corralitos Road. February 5. Meet at 7:30 at the NE corner of Branigan Library (200 E. Picacho Avenue) parking lot (closest to Johnson Park). We'll plan to leave by 7:45 (sunrise is about 8:15) so we'll get out there—about 10 miles from the Library on US 70 and I-10 and then off to the NNE—in time to (hopefully) see some early morning avian activity. Last year on the North American Migration Count, Wayne and I saw (among other birds) a Peregrine Falcon, Loggerhead Shrikes and Horned Larks here. There is also a chance of seeing Golden Eagle(s). Interested in coming along? Contact either Mark at 575-635-8711 or mpendleton@zianet.com or Wayne at 575-528-8696 or way1mike@yahoo.com.

Kent Halla
P. Madden
Patricia Brooks
Adelina Willem
Nicholas Santantonio
Jackie Barris
Charlsie McClain
Nancy Berg
Grant W. Price
September Berlemann

Jennifer Minter
Thomas Ferguson
Sandra Abernathy
Ken Szelazkiewicz
Pat A. Jonker
Harold Wm Smith
Marge Swenson
Vicky B. Ludwig
Lisa Giles

MVAS Programs

Membership meetings and programs are held each month at the Village at Northrise, Hallmark Building, 2882 N. Roadrunner Pkway.



Meetings begin at 7:00 PM. Programs begin immediately following the business meeting and announcements.

Soils and Ecosystems. January 19. Dr. William Lindeman, a professor of Plant and Environmental Science at New Mexico State University, will join us to explain how soils fit into an ecosystem. Dr. Lindeman has studied numerous aspects of soil ecology, including how soil microbial processes influence plant growth and how to reclaim disturbed and contaminated lands.

Hummingbird-based Engineering.

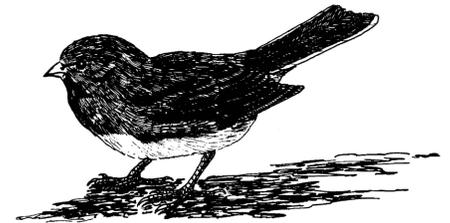
February 16. Dr. Mingjun Wei, a professor in Mechanical Engineering, is designing small planes based on research on hummingbird wings. He will explain how he is trying to design flapping wings for propulsion based on the flight mechanics of hummingbirds.

ANNUAL ELECTIONS

At our January 19 program meeting, MVAS will hold its annual elections. The nominating committee has developed the following slate of candidates.

Vice-President: Gill Sorg
Secretary: Valerie Endruweit
Treasurer: Barb Rodriguez
Board: Sean Barham
Mark Pendleton
Lorraine Schulte (to complete Valerie's term)

Welcome New Members



Steven D'Amato

**Help Support Audubon
Adventures
2010-2011**

Bird Notes

Species	Date	Location	Observers
Rufous Hummingbird	10/21-11/23	Las Cruces	LS
Black-chinned Hummer	10/21	Las Cruces	LS
Wood Duck	10/27	MVBSP	CJ
Grasshopper Sparrow	10/28	Aguirre Springs	NS, DS
White-tailed Kite	10/30	MVBSP	CJ
Anna's Hummingbird	11/1; 11/26	Las Cruces	SWH; NS
Gadwall	11/3	MVBSP	CJ
American White Pelican	11/4	Caballo Lake	BLP
White-crowned Sparrow	11/5	Las Cruces	LS
Surf Scoter	11/5	Holloman Lakes	NS, DS
Red-breasted Merganser	11/5	Holloman Lakes	NS
Red Phalarope	11/5	Holloman Lakes	DS
Common Loon	11/6	Las Cruces	DG
American Pipit	11/8; 12/1	MVBSP	CJ; BLP
Blue-winged Teal	11/8	MVBSP	CJ
Northern Pintail	11/16	MVBSP	CJ
Pink-sided Junco	11/23	Las Cruces	LS
Lark Bunting	11/25	Corralitos Ranch	DG
Golden Eagle	11/25	Corralitos Ranch	DG
Loggerhead Shrike	11/25	Corralitos Ranch	DG
Merlin	11/25	Corralitos Ranch	DG
Northern Harrier	11/25	Corralitos Ranch	DG
Vesper Sparrow	11/25	Corralitos Ranch	DG
Brewer's Sparrow	11/25	Corralitos Ranch	DG
Harris's Hawk	11/28; 12/20	Alamogordo; MVBSP	CJ
Cooper's Hawk	12/8	Las Cruces	LS
Whooping Crane	12/12	Las Uvas Valley	CM
Lincoln Sparrow	12/14	Las Cruces	LS
Ferruginous Hawk	12/20	MVBSP	CJ
Swamp Sparrow	12/20	MVBSP	CJ
American Goldfinch	12/22	MVBSP	CJ
Gray Catbird	12/22	Las Cruces	BT

Observers: CJ Goin, David Griffin, Sue & Wally Hill, Clark Myers, Bruce & Linda Pearson, Lorraine Schulte, Donna Simonetti, Nancy Stotz, Bob Tafanelli

Please report interesting sightings to Robert Hull at
575-523-8009 or rwhull@zianet.com

New Mexico Rare Bird Hotline
<http://www.nmbirds.org>

Rare Bird Alerts for NM and other states: www.birder.com

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society continues to provide Audubon Adventures kits to classrooms in numerous schools in our region. This year, we have provided these award-winning, environmental-education kits to schools in Las Cruces, Mesquite, and Arrey. Though most often used in 4th and 5th grade classrooms, this year, a middle school has also requested a kit.

The theme for this year's kits is *Wildlife on the Move*. In a unit on insect migration, the continent-crossing migration of monarch butterflies is studied, with help from a detailed map and a presentation of many facts about monarchs and the challenges they face on their arduous journey.

Bird migration is studied in a unit entitled "On the Wing." This unit includes sections on flyways as migratory bird highways and the amazing spectacle of the fall hawk migration at Hawk Mountain. Audubon's Light's Out Project, and what can be done to help protect species that migrate at night, is also covered.

The third unit "Water Riders" has sections on Traveling Turtles, Life at Sea, The Whale's Trail, and Safe Haven for Turtles.

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society continues to offer these kits to local schools as our primary education project, with the help of generous MVAS members and friends. The cost of each kit is \$45.00. Any donation toward this program is greatly appreciated. Use the form below to help local school children learn to appreciate the wonders of the natural world.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES DONATION FORM

Checks should be made out to
Mesilla Valley Audubon Society,
and sent to

Lorraine Schulte
Chairman/Advisor, Audubon Adventures
1740 Mariposa Drive
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Donation Amount: _____

Great Backyard Bird Count: February 18-21

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society, is a conservation and natural history organization in southern New Mexico that promotes appreciation and conservation of birds, other wildlife, and habitat, through environmental education, issue advocacy, and natural history experiences.

OFFICERS AND BOARD

President		
Vice-president	Alan Krueger	532-1036
Secretary	Frankie Lerner	373-0857
Treasurer	Barb Rodriguez	523-1548
Past President	Gill Sorg	541-0577
Board (08-10)	John Douglas	541-0133
Board (08-10)	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Board (09-11)	Carol Campbell	640-1660
Board (09-11)	Sue Hill	382-9758
Board (10-12)	Valerie Endrueit	373-0530
Board (10-12)	Ken Stinnett	649-3781

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Audubon Council	Gill Sorg	541-0577
Delegates	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Conservation	Bob Tafanelli	526-9380
Education		vacant
Field Trips		vacant
Programs	Katie McLane	523-6317
Membership	Guy Powers	373-1891
Membership Records	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Newsletter Editor	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Publicity	Storm Sermay	382-3348

Board meetings are held, September through May, on the Thursday before the 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 PM at the Southwest Environmental Center (on the downtown mall). All Audubon members are welcome.

Visit our website at www.mvaudubon.org

The 14th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will be held from February 18 through 21, 2011. The GBBC is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent and in Hawaii.

Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from novice bird watchers to experts. Participants count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org.

Each checklist submitted by these “citizen scientists” helps researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society learn more about how the birds are doing—and how to protect them and the environment we share. Last year, participants turned in more than 97,200 checklists online, creating the continent’s largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded.

On the www.birdcount.org Web site, participants can explore real-time maps and charts that show what others are reporting during the count. The site has tips to help identify birds and special materials for educators. Participants may also enter the GBBC photo contest by uploading images taken during the count. Many images will be featured in the GBBC website’s photo gallery. All participants are entered in a drawing for prizes that include bird feeders, binoculars, books, CDs, and many other great birding products.

Please visit the official website at www.birdcount.org for more information.

Roadrunner Ramblings is published six times a year: January, March, May, July, September, and November. Submissions welcome; please email copy to nstotz1@comcast.net, or call for mailing information. **Next deadline: February 15.** Printed on 100% PCW recycled paper by **insta-copy printing**. Image credits: roadrunner, Dale Zimmerman; clip art, IMSI’s Master Clips/Master Photos® Collection.

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