



ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

www.mvaudubon.org

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Mesilla Valley Audubon Society Newsletter

Greater links among chapters

Weinstein of Audubon New Mexico discusses 2016 plans

Executive Director of Audubon New Mexico Julie Weinstein visited the Mesilla Valley in early December. She met with members of the MVAS leadership and Beth Bardwell, director of conservation for Audubon NM.

Julie said a recent policy shift in both the state and national Audubon organizations now means Audubon New Mexico will beef up state support of local Audubon chapters, including MVAS. For example, she is very interested in how Audubon New Mexico can assist MVAS with our Audubon Adventures efforts, especially the field trips we offer to Las Cruces elementary school classes this spring.



She also announced that the state organization intends to add a staff position to foster greater communications among New Mexico chapters.

The visit wasn't all business, however. Julie and Beth found time to do some birding with MVAS Vice President Ken Stinnett and board member Jay Wilbur, along with his wife Judy Wilbur. As usual, Tellbrook Park provided ample sightings of our local avian species.

PHOTO BY Judy Wilbur: L to R, Jay Wilbur, Julie Weinstein, Beth Bardwell, Ken Stinnett at Tellbrook Park

Southwest Senior Needs You!

MVAS member Cheryl Fallstead, writer/editor at the *Southwest Senior*, features a monthly "Bird of the Month" column. MVAS sponsors—and members write—the column. She need writers. Submit copy by the 25th before the next month's issue. In 600-650 words, describe a local bird that can be seen during the month in which it appears. Submissions should go to **cfallstead@hotmail.com** with a copy to Mark Pendleton at **mpndltn@gmail.com**.

2016 MVAS Calendar Available

Our 2016 MVAS Calendar, featuring photographs of local birds taken by some of our best local photographers, sold out within one month. It is still available online and can be ordered directly from the printer Go to www.magcloud.com/browse/issue/985386?r=605713. Or, find the site by searching keywords Magcloud, MVAS or calendar.

www.mvaudubon.org

www.facebook.com/MesillaValleyAudubonSociety

Winter Field Trips Galore

Winter in southern New Mexico is a birder's paradise — not too hot, not too cold — and plenty of seasonal sightings to entice you outdoors. Mesilla Valley Audubon Society's first-quarter lineup features trips for every type of birder. In addition, our sister chapter, central New Mexico (ABQ, based in Albuquerque) invites you to consider one of their January or February field trips. Take a look!

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society Beginner Bird Walks

Dates: Jan. 20, Feb. 17 and March 16

Join MVAS birders for a beginner walk at Tellbrook Park on the 3rd Wednesday of every month. Birding will be done from the paved path that winds through the park, with short, optional excursions into the surrounding desert. Meet at 7:45 a.m. at the park entrance, 4290 E. Winchester Rd., in Las Cruces. For more information, contact Jay Wilbur at (512) 632-4196 or by email at jwilbur@jaysplanet.info.

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society Monthly Field Trips

For information on these or other MVAS Field Trips, please contact Mark Pendleton at (575) 635-8711 or send an e-mail to mpndltn@gmail.com and put MVAS FIELDTRIPS in the Subject Line. First quarter scheduled trips include:

JAN. 23, 2016

Sandia Crest House to see the Rosy Finches. This can be an overnight trip or an up-and-back-in-one-day experience. It's up to you! You can find all kinds of info about the Rosy Finches at <http://www.rosyfinch.com/>. Sandia Crest House doesn't open until 10 am, so schedule accordingly.

FEB. 20, 2016

Sandhill Arroyo. Plan to meet at 07:45 a.m. at Mark Pendleton's house (4186 Seneca Drive in Las Cruces) to take off walking the Arroyo—almost at his back door—at 8 a.m. For directions, e-mail mpndltn@gmail.com with MVAS FIELDTRIP FEB2016 as the subject line. There is plenty of parking, hot caffeinated (or not) beverages and toilet facilities at the Pendleton's. Plan to spend about three hours walking along a sandy arroyo that is fairly easy going. We have seen Lark Sparrows, Cooper's Hawks, Chihuahuan Ravens, Sage Thrashers, Cactus Wrens and more.

MARCH 19, 2016

Percha Dam State Park. Meet in the east end of the K-Mart parking lot off US 70 in Las Cruces at 07:15 to leave at 07:30 a.m. for the approximately 60 mile trip. Carpooling can be arranged on the spot. "Percha" is almost always a great birding spot. In the past, we have seen a leucistic (the ina-

bility to produce pigment) Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Cooper's Hawks, Vermillion Flycatchers, Eastern and Western Bluebirds, Eastern Phoebes, Ash-throated Flycatchers, Common Black Hawks, and various other wonders. We will stop for lunch at either the Arrey Café or Sparky's in Hatch.

Selected ABQ Chapter Field Trips

Can't get enough field trips? Consider any of these sponsored by the ABQ Chapter, which graciously has extended this invitation to the MVAS.

Sunday, Jan.17, Sandia Crest

Join Jason Kitting (jason1991.bnow@gmail.com) at the Sandia Crest to hunt for the three species of Rosy-finch from the comfort of the warm crest house! Rio Grande Bird Research will also be at the crest banding rosy-finches so you will get an up close and personal look at these amazing mountain birds. We will also make a trip out along the crest trail to look for other mountain specialties such as Cassin's Finch, Red Crossbill, Evening Grosbeak, and American Three-Toed Woodpecker. We will meet in front of the Starbucks at Tramway and Central at 8am and the crest house around 10am. There is food available at the crest house and please respect their no outside food rule. Trip will be over by 1pm.

Thursday, Jan. 21, Whitfield WCA

Visit the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area in Belen with Linda Heinze: 505-565-1441, manzanogal@gmail.com. Meet at 8:50 a.m. for a 9:00 departure from the parking lot behind the Hawthorne Suites on Gibson and University Boulevard or 9:45 at WWCA on NM 47. The walk will be about 1.5 miles in length. Lunch will be at Henrietta's in Los Lunas, located at 740 Main St. NE. The trip should end mid afternoon. For those not driving, the shared gas expense is \$4 at five cents per mile. **(Continued on Page 3)**

Inspired by Birds

Our winter series explores artwork inspired by birds and the natural world around us. The beauty of birds, and their ability to fly and sing, are among humanity's first inspirations for artwork itself. Join MVAS each month this winter as we learn the techniques behind the artisans' crafts.

Cast in Flight

Jan. 20, 7 p.m. Ben Hoffacker creates beautiful bird jewelry pieces in gold, silver and bronze. His talk will take us through the steps of creating these pieces and he will demonstrate a variety of tools and equipment. Ben began work in the Bethlehem steel mills of Harrisburg during & after completing high school. At the end of the 60s, Ben relocated to northern New Mexico and began apprenticing with local sculptors and foundries. In 1986, Ben joined the New Mexico State Parks Division as a Park Ranger. During hours of lake patrol at Elephant Butte, Ben's awareness & appreciation for the bird life and beauty of this desert lake grew. A sixteen piece "Birds of the Bosque" collection in sterling silver was conceived & completed during this period. Ben has also completed an "Upland Hunting" series depicting pointing dogs & the game birds they pursue. His exquisite work can be viewed at www.benhoffacker.com.

Bird Portraits- from far and near

Feb. 17, 7 p.m. Nirmal Khandan will share his approach to bird photography and shooting techniques for producing clean and compelling bird portraits. The first part of his presentation will cover challenges in shooting different types of birds and some solutions that have worked for him. In the second part, he will share the behind-the-scene details of selected images. In the third part, he will present some results/examples.

Khandan is self-taught photographer with interests in birds, nature, wildlife, and travel. He is a member of the Dona Ana Photography Club, where he has presented on HDR techniques, travelogues, and bird photography at their annual symposia and general meetings.

Coming Up...In March

We will host archaeologist Marilyn Markel, noted authority on the pottery of the Mimbres people.

ABQ Trips

(Continued from Page 2)

Saturday, Jan. 30, Embudito Canyon

Join Judy Liddell (jliddell@msn.com, (505) 220-7998) to explore Embudito Canyon. Species seen regularly in January include Cactus Wren, Curve-billed and Crissal Thrashers, Ladderbacked Woodpecker, Rock and sometimes Canyon Wrens, Canyon Towhee, Townsend's Solitaire and White-crowned and Rufous-crowned Sparrows. The canyon often attracts rarities. We will only be exploring the base of the canyon. Meet at 9 am in the trailhead parking lot. We will be back to our cars before noon.

Thursday, Feb. 4, Bosque del Apache

Visit the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge with Judy Liddell: 505-271-0912, jliddell@msn.com. Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure from the parking lot behind the Hawthorne Suites on University and Gibson. A secondary meeting place will be McDonald's in Socorro at 9:15 for a rest stop and food to go. The group will depart for the Bosque del Apache at 9:30. Bring lunch. A \$5 entrance fee or Federal pass is required per car. The group should be back in Albuquerque in the late afternoon. For those not driving the shared gas expense is \$10 at five cents per mile.

Saturday, Feb. 13, Alameda

Lee Hopwood (plhopwood@gmail.com, (505) 259-0581) will lead this field trip which in February can be surprising with winter birds and the occasional "what are you doing here" bird. We will meet at the parking area to the open space on Alameda. From there we walk in the bosque and/or along the adjacent ditch. The walking portion will probably be about one mile round trip in the bosque and on the ditch. We'll wrap up by 11:00 am. Restroom facilities are available at the parking area. For more information and to sign up, please contact me by email or phone.

Thursday, Feb. 18, Sandia Crest

Drive to Sandia Crest to look for the Rosy-Finches with Barbara Hussey: 505-385-1165, brhussey@flash.net. Meet at 9:50 a.m. for a 10:00 departure from the west side of the Four Hills Shopping Village located on Central Avenue between Tramway and Juan Tabo. Snacks or lunch may be bought at the Crest House restaurant as the group waits inside for the Rosy-Finches to arrive at the feeders. A \$3 parking fee or Federal Pass is required per car.

2016 Slate of Officers and Directors

The following nominees will be voted on by members at the January 20 Annual Meeting

OFFICERS		
President	Jennifer Montoya	
VP	Ken Stinnett	Incumbent
Secretary	Jay Wilbur	
Treasurer	Diane Moore	Incumbent
DIRECTORS		
Term 2014-16	CJ Goin	Incumbent
Term 2014-16	Mark Pendleton	Incumbent Past President
Term 2014-16	Gill Sorg	Incumbent
Board 2016-18	Aaron Lucas	
Board 2016-18	Judi Schultz	
Board 2016-18	vacant	

Enjoy this newsletter as a full-color PDF via email. Contact Judy Wilbur at jkwilbur@gmail.com or (512)560-4717.

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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 the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society for \$15. You'll receive *Roadrunner Ramblings*. Make check payable to Mesilla Valley Audubon Society.

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