

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 33, No. 4. July-Aug. 2011

Doña Ana County North American Migration Count Report

by Marcy Scott

We had an excellent team of 15 participants this year (and some evening help from the BioBlitz crew) and were able to cover most of the key areas of the county pretty well, with the notable exception of the recently burned Organ Mountains. Wind kicked up and was a factor for the majority of participants, but even so we topped last year's species total by one, to 133.

The rarest bird seen was unquestionably the female Blackpoll Warbler seen by Jimmy Zabriskie east of La Mesa. Other rarities were Rufous Hummingbird (female visiting feeder, Radium Springs), Gray Catbird (Radium Springs), Swainson's Thrush (Shalem Colony Bridge area), and Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Broad Canyon Ranch).

Highlights were numerous, and included Neotropical Cormorant (Sunland Park), Virginia Rail (MVBSP), Sora (4, Swan Pond), Osprey (2), Mississippi Kite (Sunland Park), Prairie Falcon (Broad Canyon Ranch), Black-necked Stilt (7), American Avocet (7), Broad-tailed Hummingbird (North Valley), Vermilion Flycatcher (pair, Broad Canyon Ranch), Horned Lark (75, Corralitos Road area), Marsh Wren (Swan Pond), and Hooded Oriole (female, Radium Springs).

Other notables included Common Moorhen (5), Common Nighthawk (16), Black-chinned Hummingbird (214), Olive-sided Flycatcher (12), Western Wood-Pewee (32), many Empidonax flycatchers including Willow, Hammond's (2), Gray (3), Dusky (5), and 13 unidentified, Bell's Vireo (only 1, Broad Canyon Ranch), Common Raven (Corralitos/Uvas), Lucy's Warbler (13), Townsend's Warbler (3), Northern Waterthrush (3), Green-tailed Towhee (16), Spotted Towhee (7), Lazuli Bunting (4), Indigo Bunting (2), Painted Bunting (2, Broad Canyon Ranch), Bronzed Cowbird (3), and American Goldfinch (3).

Late or latish birds included Blue-winged Teal (16), Cinnamon Teal (14), Northern Harrier (2), Tree Swallow (3), Vesper Sparrow (3), Song Sparrow (7), Lincoln's Sparrow, and Yellow-headed Blackbird (Swan Pond).

Broad Canyon Ranch BioBlitz Report

by Nancy Stotz

The six members of the Bird Team tallied a grand total of 102 species on the roughly 900 acres of deeded land at Broad Canyon Ranch during the 24-hour period of the BioBlitz, May 14-15. Team members split up and covered loops targeting different habitat types at the Ranch: 1.5 miles of the Rio Grande and its floodplain, the 30-acre permanent wetland known to local birders as Swan Pond, and more than a square mile of Chihuahuan Desert uplands featuring numerous rocky outcrops.

Though the floodplain proved to be the most productive habitat in terms of species (72 species vs. 45 for Swan Pond and 62 for the uplands), each habitat contributed unique species to the count. Floodplain highlights included both Painted and Indigo buntings, nesting Vermilion Flycatchers, and a lovely, unexpected, Eastern Kingbird that showed up just as we were compiling our results near the end of the event. Not surprisingly, Swan Pond yielded the only Soras of the event, as well as late migrant Bank and Tree swallows and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Upland specialties documented during the event included Prairie Falcon, Scaled Quail, and Scott's Oriole.

Flycatchers and warblers were both well-represented in the final tally, which included eleven species from each group. Not to be outdone by the flashy colors of Yellow and Townsend's Warblers, plenty of other bright songbirds enhanced the scene: Summer and Western Tanagers, Blue and Black-headed grosbeaks, and Bullock's Orioles. Perhaps most significantly, the Bird Team recorded the presence of 22 Species of Concern, including Bell's Vireo (listed as Threatened by the State of New Mexico) and a dozen of Partners in Flight's Priority Species for New Mexico that are likely or confirmed breeders at the site (including Lucy's Warbler, White-throated Swift, Swainson's Hawk, and Crissal Thrasher).

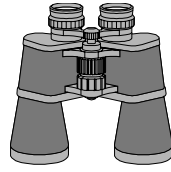
All in all, it was an exhilarating, if exhausting, 24 hours. Thanks to all the other members of the Bird Team, whose hard work made this tally of species possible: John Douglas, Missy Powell, Donna Simonetti, Ken Stinnett, and Hira Walker.

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



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.

Percha Dam State Park. July 23. Meet at the Lowe's parking lot (SW end—nearest the Border Patrol Station) on N. Main in Las Cruces at 06:45 and plan to leave at 07:00 AM sharp. Bring binoculars, hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, and plenty of water. Five dollar/vehicle entry fee, or free with annual pass. For more information contact Wayne Treers at 575-528-8696 or way1mike@yahoo.com.

Leasburg Dam State Park. August 20. Meet at the Lowe's parking lot (SW end—nearest the Border Patrol Station) on N. Main in Las Cruces at 06:45 and plan to leave at 07:00 AM sharp. Bring binoculars, hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, and plenty of water. Five dollar/vehicle entry fee, or free with annual pass. For more information contact Wayne Treers at 575-528-8696 or way1mike@yahoo.com.

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.

Harold's Bird Stories. July 20. MVAS member and master story-teller/bird impersonator Harold Harrison will share tales from some of his many birding adventures, as well as some tips about several good birding destinations.

Doing Wildlife Research in Israel.

August 17. Phil Alkon, an adjunct faculty member in the NMSU Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Ecology, will discuss his experiences as a member of the ecology group at Ben Gurion University, studying the birds and mammals of the Negev Desert.

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.

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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.

Additional Field Trip Notes

ANNOUNCED TRIPS SUBJECT TO CHANGE: Due to the vagaries of weather, bird migration, and other forces in the universe, announced trips are always subject to change. To get the latest info on an upcoming trip, check the MVAS website at www.mvaudubon.org or contact the trip leader. Better yet, sign up for e-mail notification (see below) to receive updated info about all our trips.

E-MAIL NOTIFICATION: If you'd like to get e-mail notification about upcoming MVAS field trips, please notify Mark Pendleton. Just send an e-mail to: mpndlt@gmail.com and put MVAS field trips in the subject line. Put your name and e-mail address in the message, and Mark will sign you up to get the e-mails he sends out about these birding opportunities. If you have already done this, you need not do so again.

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July Events at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park

Bird Walks every Saturday, starting at 7:30 AM.

Presentations, starting at 10 AM in the classroom:

July 9th: **Cacti of the Trans-Pecos Area:** Join author Ad Konings and learn about the cacti of western Texas and southern New Mexico.

July 16th: **Desert Creatures:** Join State Entomologist Dr. Carol Sutherland and learn about arthropods found in the Mesilla Valley.

July 23rd: **Night Fliers—Birds of the Gloaming and Darkness:** Owls aren't the only birds that fly at night. Join Master Naturalist Sylvia Hacker and learn about other summer birds you may see at twilight.

July 30th: **The Gila Monster and Other Endangered Animals:** Come see a real Gila Monster!! Richard Quick from the Museum of Natural History will share his knowledge about Gila Monsters. Learn how we can help keep Gila Monsters and other endangered animals from becoming extinct.

Field Trip Reports

Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. June 18. The June field trip was a combination of substitutes. Due to the high fire danger in and closure of the national forests near Cloudcroft and the illness of the announced leader, the MVAS field trip was combined with the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park Saturday morning bird walk. Eleven enthusiastic souls braved the warm temperatures for a two-hour tour of the Park's hot spots. They enjoyed one another's company and garnered a surprising 46 species. The highlight of the morning was the two strikingly beautiful White-tailed Kites. They were spotted between the entrance and the visitors center. The trip disappointment was the obviously absent Little Blue Heron that had frequented the large cottonwood snag on the main trail during the previous week.

Harold Harrison

Bird Notes

Species	Date	Location	Observers
House Wren	4/16, 28	Las Cruces	SWH
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	4/17, 5/3	Las Cruces	SWH, DG
Gray Flycatcher	4/17	Las Cruces	TM
Snowy Plover	4/17	Holloman Lakes	MP
California Gull	4/17	Holloman Lakes	MP
Thayer's Gull	4/17	Holloman Lakes	MP
Black-necked Stilt	4/18	MVBSP	CJ
Tropical Parula	4/18	Mesilla Park	PA
White-faced Ibis	4/19	Mesilla	SD
Bullock's Oriole	4/20, 23	Mesilla Park, Las Cruces	BLP, LS
Baird's Sandpiper	4/23	Leasburg Dam SP	CJ
Black-throated Gray Warbler	4/23	Leasburg Dam SP	CJ
Wilson's Warbler	4/23, 24	MVBSP, Las Cruces	HH, JMRH
Vermilion Flycatcher	4/23	MVBSP	HH
Orange-crowned Warbler	4/23	MVBSP	HH
Bronzed Cowbird	4/25	Las Cruces	SWH
White-throated Sparrow	4/28	Las Cruces	SWH
Black-headed Grosbeak	4/28, 5/8	Las Cruces, Mesilla	SWH, SD
Brewer's Sparrow	4/28	Las Cruces	SWH
Cassin's Vireo	4/28, 30	Las Cruces, Talavera	SWH, TL
Osprey	4/29	Las Cruces	SWH
Lucy's Warbler	4/29	Leasburg Dam SP	NS
Virginia's Warbler	4/29	Las Cruces	LS
Hermít Thrush	4/29, 5/1, 5/19	Las Cruces	SWH, LH, LS
Peregrine Falcon	5/01, 5/08	Las Cruces, MVBSP	LH, CJ
Orchard Oriole	5/01	Radium Springs	MS
Lazuli Bunting	5/02, 5/08	Río Grande, Las Cruces	CJ, TM
Indigo Bunting	5/03, 5/7	Las Cruces	CHM, LH
Hooded Oriole	5/04	Four Hills Park	DG
Scott's Oriole	5/04	Four Hills Park	DG
Swainson's Thrush	5/04	Four Hills Park	DG
Red Crossbill	5/04	Four Hills Park	DG
Dusky Flycatcher	5/04	Four Hills Park	DG
Yellow-breasted Chat	5/04	Four Hills Park	DG
Pine Siskin	5/04	Four Hills Park	DG
Lazuli Bunting	5/04, 13	Four Hills, Las Cruces	DG, CHM
Baltimore Oriole	5/04	Radium Springs	MS
Warbling Vireo	5/04	MVBSP	CJ
Macgillivray's Warbler	5/06	Las Cruces	JMRH
White-tailed Kite	5/07	MVBSP	NS
Green-tailed Towhee	5/08	Mesilla	SD
Plumbeous Vireo	5/08	MVBSP	CJ
American Avocet	5/11	Río Grande	CJ
Vermilion Flycatcher	5/12	Broad Canyon Ranch	CJ
Painted Bunting	5/12	Broad Canyon Ranch	CJ
Long-billed Dowitcher	5/14	MVBSP	CJ
Virginia Rail	5/14	MVBSP	CJ
Hooded Warbler	5/25	MVBSP	CJ
Common Nighthawk	5/26	Las Cruces	LS
White-tailed Kite	6/04	MVBSP	NS
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	6/04	MVBSP	NS
American Avocet	6/08	MVBSP	CJ
Little Blue Heron	6/11	MVBSP	CJ

Observers: Phil Alkon, Sharon Dorfman, CJ Goin, David Griffin, Harold Harrison, Sue & Wally Hill, Landy Hinesley, Tim Lawton, Charlotte Martens, Tim McKimmie, Bruce & Linda Pearson, Mark Pendleton, Lorraine Schulte, Marcy Scott, Nancy Stotz

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

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

Check out our
updated website!

WWW.MVAUDUBON.ORG

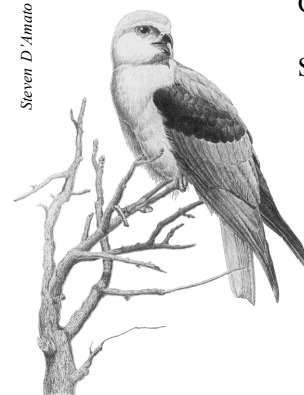
It's finally here. MVAS has a new web site. We hope you will take a look and like what you see.

To get your bird sightings posted at the website, when you send your sightings to Robert Hull for newsletter publication, also
CC: your email to
mvaudubon@comcast.net

Welcome New Members

Christine Covington
Carol Babington
Christine Laney
Susan Alderman
Margaret Hird
John Sanford
Marie Small

Steven D. Amato



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.

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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

Audubon Adventures 2011-12

by Lorraine Schulte,
Audubon Adventures Chair

With your help, MVAS continues its support of the environmental education program Audubon Adventures. The title for 2011-2012 Audubon Adventures classroom kit is "Feathers, Fur, Fins, and You." The new kit will contain four new editions of the Audubon Adventures material, covering the following themes:

- Pollinators, featuring hummingbirds and bees,
- Wild Alaska,
- Rivers of Life, and
- Caring For our Planet—a special "Action for Planet Earth" edition focusing on ways that young people can participate in Audubon.

Joy McFarland and I have been in contact with people at the Las Cruces Public Schools Administration Office who are quite interested in helping us get this information to principals in the 23 Las Cruces schools. The person we talked with put the information on the LCPS website. We also have two out of town schools wanting the kits again.

We will be needing some more volunteers to help us make contact with the schools. If interested, please contact me at 524-7029 or mjls47@gmail.com.

The Las Cruces Tour of Gardens group continues to support the Audubon Adventures program with a generous donation. Two days ago I received a check for \$400. Hi Hopes Garden Club sent me a check for \$100, and one couple who are members also gave me a check for \$100. Donations to pay for the purchase of Audubon Adventures classroom kits are welcome at any time. Checks can be mailed to MVAS, PO Box 1645, Las Cruces, NM 88004.

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

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