

# ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 35, No. 4. Jul.-Aug. 2013

## **North American Migration Count: Doña Ana County Results**

*by Marcy Scott, DAC compiler*

Our terrific team of 16 veteran migration-count participants covered a good bit of the better habitat in the county and, with the help of some pretty decent weather on May 11th, resoundingly smashed seven years' worth of both species totals and numbers totals! We logged a whopping 27 species more than in 2012 and nearly twice as many total birds, for a total of 157 species and 12,226 individual birds.

Migrants were much more in evidence than last year, probably in large part because the extreme scarcity of water throughout the county appears to be concentrating birds in irrigated landscapes and the few wet spots that do exist - where we counters mostly were too. Two observers mentioned numbers of birds feeding upon flying ant or termite swarms, in one location where light rain the previous night had moistened the ground. The Rio Grande was (as it had been for several months) largely dry, save for the springs at Leasburg Dam SP and the few sewage treatment plant inflows near Las Cruces and El Paso (all of which held good numbers and diversity of birds). Swan Pond, Burn Lake, both ponds at Mesilla Valley Bosque SP, most natural stock tanks, and the entire network of irrigation drains and canals throughout were totally dry.

Rarities included Tricolored Heron (continuing bird along the river at Leasburg Dam SP) and Common Ground-Dove (one of a pair of continuing birds at a residence near Radium Springs). Other somewhat rare birds found were Least Flycatcher (Broad Canyon Ranch), Swainson's Thrush (2 near Radium Springs), Brown Thrasher (Swan Pond), Hepatic Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak (this and the former at a fruiting mulberry near Radium Springs), and Clay-colored Sparrow (Broad Canyon Ranch & Las Cruces Dam). Noteworthy (particularly given the parched conditions) were Horned Lark (47, Corralitos Road, where they have bred in recent years). Other nice finds included Neotropical Cormorant (8, Sunland Park), Virginia Rail, Sora (this and the former in the riverbed at Leasburg

*(continued on page 2) See Migration*

## **Upcoming Workshop Introducing Audubon's Western Rivers Action Network (WRAN)**

Audubon is taking a major step to address threats to rivers in the arid west, launching the Western Rivers Action Network, a multistate, grassroots coalition to advocate for rivers and the birds and other wildlife that depend on them.

Please join Audubon New Mexico at a workshop to discuss Audubon's new multi-state effort to save western rivers.

**When:** Saturday, June 29, 9:00 am – 3:30 pm (lunch will be served)

**Where:** Las Cruces Women's Center: 340 N Raymond St, Las Cruces, NM 88005

**The day's agenda** will include:

- Basic New Mexico water law and policy;
- Overviews of critical issues facing western rivers and habitats;
- Presentation about Audubon's policy priorities for the WRAN;
- Key Audubon Chapter presentations about New Mexico river protection efforts to be supported by WRAN;
- An afternoon devoted to effective advocacy and communications AND more!

RSVP via email: [AudubonNewMexicoWRAN@gmail.com](mailto:AudubonNewMexicoWRAN@gmail.com)

Millions of migrating birds representing over 250 species depend on key western rivers for their survival. Over 100 species spend some portion of their life cycle in riparian areas and many of these species are now threatened or endangered. Audubon's Western Rivers Action Network is working across the intermountain west to raise awareness of threats to rivers, promote conservation actions to increase flows and improve habitat, and advocate for sensible water management policies that benefit communities and wildlife.

Sign up for WRAN email alerts at  
<http://aububonaction.org/westernrivers-nm>

Learn more about Audubon New Mexico and Western Rivers at  
<http://nm.audubon.org/rivers-and-water>

## 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](mailto: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](http://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.

(continued from page 1) **Migration**

Dam SP), Black-necked Stilt (35), American Avocet (9), Mississippi Kite (southern Mesilla Valley), Peregrine Falcon, Prairie Falcon (both falcons near La Llorona), Common Nighthawk (2), Broad-tailed Hummingbird (3), Olive-sided Flycatcher (5), Cassin's Kingbird (4), Cassin's Vireo (2), Northern Waterthrush (2, Leasburg Dam SP & Las Cruces Dam), Black-chinned Sparrow (3), single Lazuli and Indigo Buntings, Painted Bunting (a pair in the North Valley), and Eastern Meadowlark (1 singing at La Cueva, 1 at MVBSP).

Some numbers worthy of mention are White-throated Swift (7, compared to 47 in 2012), Black-chinned Hummingbird (207, comparable to last year's 194), Western Wood-Pewee (81, compared to 11 in 2012), Bell's Vireo (8, exactly half of last year's total), Bank Swallow (33), Northern Mockingbird (282, compared to 204 in 2012), Phainopepla (37), Chipping Sparrow (204, compared to 9 in 2012), and Bronzed Cowbird (4, compared to 7 in 2012).

Lucky finds considering the scarce habitat were Cinnamon Teal (2), Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Great Egret, Green Heron (3), White-faced Ibis (17), Lesser Yellowlegs, Long-billed Dowitcher (2), Wilson's Phalarope (16), and Ring-billed Gull.

The unusually large number of late or latish birds tallied included Northern Harrier (4), single Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, Belted Kingfisher (2), Red-naped Sapsucker (very late), Northern Flicker, American Crow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Bewick's Wren (4), Marsh Wren (2), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (2), American Pipit, Black-throated Gray Warbler (7), Spotted Towhee (12), Brewer's Sparrow (177), Vesper Sparrow (4), Lark Bunting (12), Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow (4), Swamp Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco (Gray-headed form), Yellow-headed Blackbird (6), Brewer's Blackbird (13), and Pine Siskin (42).

With their canals and river course largely dry, the only Cave Swallows tallied this year were 8 at Leasburg Dam SP. Notable misses this year include Pied-billed Grebe, Eared Grebe, Great Horned Owl (no parties went owling but typically a few are recorded during daytime counting), and American Goldfinch.

## MVAS Programs



Membership meetings and programs are held each month at the **Village at Northrise, Hallmark Building, 2882 N. Roadrunner Pkwy.** Meetings begin at 7:00 PM. Programs

begin immediately following the business meeting and announcements.

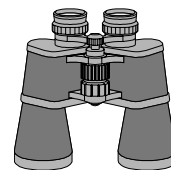
### Climate Change: What We Know and What is Still Uncertain. July 17.

Dr. Constance Falk will discuss the basics of climate science and prospects for the future during this presentation. Dr. Falk is a Certified Climate Leader by the Climate Reality Project, and she taught a senior honors class on Climate Science, Policy, and Politics in spring 2013 at NMSU. She is the M. Eugene Sundt Honors Professor at NMSU, where she's worked in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Business since 1988.

### Lobo in Limbo: The Future of the Mexican Gray Wolf. August 21.

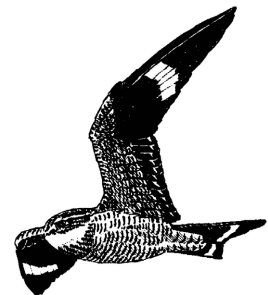
Jean Ossorio, a Las Cruces resident and citizen-advocate who has been working on the Mexican gray wolf issue for many years, will update us on the status of the reintroduction of the wolves in Arizona and New Mexico. Join us to learn the latest on this ongoing political and environmental saga.

## Field Trips



See you in September!

Heat, drought, and their effects on birds (and birders!) led us to put the monthly field trips on hiatus for June, July and August 2013. To receive field trip updates and reminders, sign up for the field trip email list by contacting Mark Pendleton at [mpndlt@gmail.com](mailto:mpndlt@gmail.com)



Steven D'Amato



Mesilla Valley Audubon Society continues to provide Audubon Adventures environmental education materials for 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms in elementary schools in our region. During the 2012-2013 school year, 30 teachers requested and were provided with Audubon Adventures classroom kits, and we are anticipating a similar number of requests for the coming academic year. Each classroom kit covers 4 distinct topics, and for each topic, the kit contains full-color, take-home magazines for each student in the classroom, plus an Educator's Guide to help teachers implement the hands-on activities in the magazines and assess student learning. Audubon Adventures materials are aligned with state and national standards for science, language arts, and social science.

The overall theme for the kits for the 2013-2014 school year is "Sharing Our World with Birds" and individual topics for each newsletter are *Sensational Seabirds*, *Hooray for Hummingbirds*, *Regal Raptors*, and *Caring for our Planet*.

Many generous MVAS members and friends have helped make MVAS's support of this program possible through the years. For the 2012-2013 school year, a generous grant was received from the Las Cruces Tour of Gardens, and donations were received from the following individuals and organizations: Ferne Allan, Denise Anstine, Carol Babington, Rob & Wendy Davis, Desert Daubers, Jane Fenn, High Hopes Garden Club, Tim Lawton, Diane Lilley, Katie McLane, Helga Mendoza, Mesilla Valley Garden Club, Tito Meyer, Darrell Mott, Nina Singleton, T & E Inc., Bob Tafarielli, Geri Tillet, Mary Williams, Donna Wood, and Lisa Yehle. Some of the funds raised by our spring Birdathon are also used to support the Audubon Adventures program.

The cost of an Audubon Adventures kit for one classroom is \$50, and donations of any amount to support this program for the upcoming school year would be greatly appreciated. Checks should be made out to Mesilla Valley Audubon Society, and donations should be sent to:

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

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

## MVAS Awards Scholarship

At our May potluck, the winner of this year's Richard Bischoff Memorial Scholarship was announced. This scholarship helps support graduate student research at New Mexico State University that is consistent with the MVAS mission. This year's winner is Angela Medina-Garcia, who is working on her PhD with Dr. Tim Wright in the Department of Biology. Angela is interested in how mating systems shape sexually selected traits in birds and mate choice, as well as the mechanisms that underlie female mate choice (e.g. social copying and cognition) and multimodal signaling. Her dissertation topic is "Testing Cognitive Abilities in a Neotropical Parrot, the Green-rumped Parrotlet." Her study aims to be one of the first to measure cognitive abilities in free-ranging wild birds, as opposed to traditional studies done in artificial laboratory conditions.

## MVAS Officers & Board Update

At our May board meeting, options for filling in our vacant presidency were discussed. Gill Sorg agreed to move from serving as Vice President to President, and Sean Barham agreed to move from being a board member to the position of Vice President. That leaves Sean's former board position open for the rest of this year. If you are interested in being appointed to serve out Sean's term, contact one of the officers or board members listed to the left. And thanks to Gill and Sean for stepping up to the plate!

**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	Gill Sorg	541-0577
Vice-president	Sean Barham	644-2680
Secretary	Laurie Keaton	522-3710
Treasurer	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Past President	David Griffin	640-0029
Board (11-13)	vacant	
Board (11-13)	Mark Pendleton	635-8711
Board (12-14)	Carol Campbell	640-1660
Board (12-14)	Tim Lawton	522-2056
Board (13-15)	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Board (13-15)	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	CJ Goin	202-1354
Field Trips	Mark Pendleton	635-8711
Programs	Jennifer Montoya	526-1320
Membership	vacant	
Membership Records	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Newsletter Editor	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Publicity	LuAnn Kilday	

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](http://www.mvaudubon.org)

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