

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 27, No. 2. March-April 2005

Birdathon 2005

Mark your calendars! Spring is nearly here and the time is coming for Birdathon 2005, our yearly fundraiser.

This event, which will be held during the first two weeks in May, raises the money to support our local educational projects such as Audubon Adventures. We have also been able purchase bird books for the library and would like to do more for the schools. With the reduced share that we receive from the dues paid to National Audubon, Birdathon is more important than ever before.

We need help from everyone in the Chapter either as a birder or sponsor. Let's make this a record year! Birdathon is not only a great contribution to your local Chapter, it's also lots of fun.

How does Birdathon work? Each participating birder collects pledges from sponsors. The sponsor can pledge an amount of money per bird species or pledge a flat amount. (All contributions are tax deductible.) Sponsors in the past have pledged \$.10 to \$1.00 a bird. And many teams see more than 100 species! Don't want to ask friends or co-workers for money? Pledge to yourself or ask relatives. A surprising number of people are happy to have been asked.

During the Birdathon weeks, the birder chooses a 24-hour period to count as many species as possible, either birding alone or with a team. Birdathon can be done in any location. If you expect to be traveling at that time, plan to set aside a few hours to bird. You probably will anyway. Right?

Please help support your chapter by birding and raising funds, or by pledging to someone you know. Contact Walt Whitford, Barb Rodriguez, or Valerie Endruweit (phone numbers listed on page 4 of the newsletter), if you would like to participate or if you want more information. Teams are forming now! Don't be left out!

Annual Potluck & Silent Auction May 18

Please plan to attend our annual Spring Potluck, to be hosted once again by charter member Lorraine Schulte. During the potluck, we will also have a silent auction, with proceeds going to support MVAS's Audubon Adventures program which brings environmental education to more than 80 fourth-grade classrooms in southern New Mexico.

The potluck will begin at 5:30 at Lorraine's home, 1740 Mariposa (phone 524-7029). Bring a main dish, side dish, or dessert, and a spare folding chair or two if you've got them. Table service, iced tea, and coffee will be provided; BYOB for other beverages.

If you've got items you'd like to donate for the auction, you can either bring them with you to the potluck or call Lorraine to arrange for an earlier drop-off time.

Public Meetings on BLM Management Plan

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has begun updating its management plans for Doña Ana, Sierra, and Otero counties.

In all three counties, a number of conservation issues are likely to be addressed, including the designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, public access, natural resource protection, and recreation (including off-highway vehicle management).

To provide input to the BLM about how they should protect our public lands, attend one of the public scoping meetings listed below, or visit their website at www.nm.blm.gov/lcfo/tri_county/tricounty.html.

Las Cruces
March 15, 2005
6:30-8:30 PM
Las Cruces Field Office
1800 Marquess

Alamogordo
March 16, 2005
6:30-8:30 PM
Otero County Courthouse
1000 New York Ave

Truth or Consequences
March 22, 2005
6:30-8:30 PM
Civic Center
400 W. 4th Street

Anthony, NM
March 23, 2005
6:30-8:30 PM
Women's Intercultural Ctr.
303 Lincoln Street

Welcome New Members



Martha Stephens
 Timothy Wright
 Roberta Hirschhorn
 Holly Vuong
 Cara Joos

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 _____
 Q54
 7XCH

Send this form and your check to:

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

RENEWALS

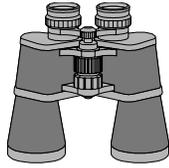
National Members: NAS will send you renewal notices.

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. To renew, please fill in your name and address above, check the renewal box below, and send a \$15 check and this form to the MVAS address listed above.



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.



Animas Creek Canyon, Palomas Canyon, and Palomas Marsh. March 26.

Animas Creek drains part of the Black Range and empties into the north end of Caballo Reservoir. The floodplain has a wonderful sycamore woodland and oak-savanna uplands. This trip should be a good opportunity to see warblers, towhees, juncos, robins, blackbirds, and hawks. Special birds seen in Animas Creek in other years include Acorn Woodpecker, Bridled Titmouse, and Wild Turkeys. Palomas Canyon is a rural area with patches of native woodland and desert interspersed with small farm fields. Palomas Marsh is a MVAS restoration project area with a nice cottonwood bosque and cattail marsh. Meet at K Mart parking lot off Hwy. 70 at 7:00 AM. For more information, contact Walt Whitford at 521-1358.

Bosque del Apache. April 23. If you have never visited the Bosque del Apache in the spring, this is the trip for you. At this time of the year, there are migratory ducks that we do not usually see in winter like Blue-winged Teal and Cinnamon Teal. Also there are usually numbers of migrating birds that stop at the Bosque: Wilson's Phalaropes, White-faced Ibis, Black-

necked Stilts, American Avocets, Long-billed Curlews etc. Meet at K Mart parking lot off Hwy 70 at 7:00 AM. Bring a lunch - we should be returning to Las Cruces between 3 PM and 4 PM. For more information, contact Walt Whitford at 521-1358.

Programs

Membership meetings and programs and meetings are held each month, September—April, 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.

Bird Art. March 16. Tom Cyr's hobby is carving birds. When he retired from NMSU he devoted much of his time to this hobby by doing lots of studying and working with experts in the field. He has studied John James Audubon, learning how he worked to paint birds and their habitat. For this program, he will bring samples of his work and different pieces of the woods that he uses, and he will tell us how accomplishes his outstanding representations of birds and their habitats.

West Nile Virus and Birds. April 20. Ms. Holly Vuong (new member of MVAS and a graduate student in the Fisheries and Wildlife Science Department at NMSU) will give a presentation on her studies of the prevalence of West Nile virus in local bird populations (both resident and migratory birds).

Special Events at NM State Parks

These events are free with a valid park pass. For up-to-date information on programming to be offered, phone Regional Interpreter Eric Weisman at 505-744-5998, or visit www.nmparks.com.

Rockhound State Park, Desert Alive April 9th & 10th

Thanks to this wet winter, the desert will come alive this spring with fantastic wildflowers, which should attract bountiful butterflies. There will be two full days of walks, talks, hummingbird banding, and special programs about the natural history of the desert offering something for young and old alike. Rockhound State Park is located 8 miles east of Deming.

Percha Dam, Migration Sensation April 30 & May 1

Spring is a great time to view birds as they migrate along the Rio Grand flyway. Percha Dam State Park offers great birding because of the large number of habitats - river, pond, bosque, and open field - in a small area. Come out for guided walks, demonstrations, and workshops for birders both experienced and just getting started. Percha Dam State Park is located off Exit 59 on Interstate 25.

Field Trip Reports

Percha/Caballo. January 22. Twenty-five people enjoyed a scheduled half-day field trip to Percha and Caballo state parks. The weather was pleasant, although cool and breezy.

Highlights included a Great Horned Owl on the road between Percha and Caballo, and a full-sized Bald Eagle at Percha. The same or another Eagle was also seen flying over Caballo. Other highlights included several flocks of Cedar Waxwings, as well as Belted Kingfisher,

Eastern and Western Bluebirds, Brown Creeper, and American and Lesser Goldfinches. The group disbursed at 11:30 AM and Harold's car returned to Las Cruces on old Hwy. 85 with stops at the Arrey Dairy and Swan Pond. This group was treated to a Great Egret, a Black-Crowned Night Heron, and several species of ducks. Forty-three species were recorded by the field trip group.

A portion of the group, led by Walt Whitford, continued on in the afternoon to Animas Canyon, Lake Valley, and Barendra Canyon. Highlights of this afternoon

group included Eurasian Collared Doves in Animas Canyon, and Ruddy Ducks, Canvasbacks, and Bufflehead at Lake Valley.

Harold Harrison

South Texas. February 19-20. A group of ten enthusiastic birders met in Harlingen, Texas for two tiring but great days of birding in the southern Rio Grande area. On Saturday we birded Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge and Bensten State Park. At Bensten one can take a shuttle bus into the center of the park by the lake where the feeders are located and where most of the birds hang out this time of the year. We were treated to Altamira Orioles, Ringed Kingfisher, Green Kingfisher, Great Kiskadee, Long-billed Thrasher and some in the group saw Rose-throated Becards.

On Sunday we toured Laguna Atascota National Wildlife Refuge where we saw a large number of Crested Caracara plus special hawks: Short-tailed Hawk, White-tailed Hawk, and Black-shouldered Kite. Other special birds included Reddish Egret, Tri-colored Herons, Little Blue Heron, and Roseate Spoonbills. We drove to South Padre Island for an early dinner and returned to Harlingen around 7 PM. The participants were unanimous in the opinion that it was worth traveling to this part of Texas for the birding.

Walt Whitford

Bird Notes

Species	Date	Location	Observers
Ruddy Ground-Dove	1-2	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Fox Sparrow	1-7	Organ Mountains	MS/JZ
Painted Redstart	1-8	White Sands	WW
Anna's Hummingbird	1-10	Las Cruces	LS
Ring-necked Duck	1-11	Burn Lake	PT
Bronzed Cowbird	1-11	NMSU	WW
Olive Warbler	1-15	Mesilla Park	CL
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1-15	Mesilla Park	CL
Black-throated Gray Wblr	1-15	Mesilla Park	CL
American Bittern	1-15	Swan Pond	WW
Hutton's Vireo	1-17	Mesilla Park	CL
Eurasian Collared-Dove	1-22	Animas Creek	WW
Golden Eagle	1-22	Las Cruces	KR
Peregrine Falcon	1-23; 26	Las Cruces	BR, LS; NS
Marsh Wren	1-23	Swan Pond	BR, LS
Eastern Bluebird	1-25	Radium Springs	JZ
Cattle Egret	1-30	Mesilla	DM
Bald Eagle	2-5,16;2-7,20	Radium Springs	JH; MS/JZ
N. Rough-winged Swallow	2-14	Las Cruces	NS
Great Kiskadee	2-14	Las Cruces	MR
Red-naped Sapsucker	2-19	Las Cruces	GS
White-throated Swift	2-19, 20	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Tree Swallow	2-20	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Violet-green Swallow	2-20	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Cave Swallow	2-20	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Sandhill Crane	2-20	Radium Springs	MS/JZ

Observers: John Hyndman, Carl Lundblad, Darrell Mott, Minerva Rivera, Barb Rodriguez, Lorraine Schulte, Marcy Scott/Jimmy Zabriskie, Gill Sorg, Nancy Stotz, Paul Turner, Walt Whitford

Please report early, late, or unusual sightings to Sue Hill at
505-382-9758 or hillco@zianet.com

New Mexico Rare Bird Hotline 505-884-3269
or <http://www.nmosbirds.org>

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

Slide Show & Fund-raiser

Lorraine Schulte will be doing a fund-raiser for Audubon Adventures, April 9, at Enchanted Gardens 2-4 PM. Her slide show will feature images of hummingbirds, orioles, swallows, flycatchers, grosbeaks, and many other beautiful birds.

Help spread the word!



Prairie Chicken Festival

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	Walt Whitford	521-1358
Secretary	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Treasurer	Barb Rodriguez	523-1548
Board (03-05)	Alan Krueger	532-1036
Board (03-05)	Sue Hill	382-9758
Board (04-06)	Tim Lawton	522-2056
Board (04-06)	Valerie Endruweit	373-0530
Board (05-07)	Robert Hull	523-8009
Board (05-07)	Richard Bischoff	894-6083

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Audubon Council	Richard Bischoff	894-6083
Delegates	Guy Powers	373-3843
Conservation	Bob Tafanelli	526-9380
Education	Donna Wood	525-8704
Field Trips	Walt Whitford	521-1358
Programs	board at large	
Membership	Guy Powers	373-3843
Newsletter Editor	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Publicity	Jackye Meinecke	524-1886

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.cybermesa.com/~mvas/.

One hundred lucky wildlife enthusiasts will witness one of New Mexico's most fascinating rites of spring — the unique mating dance of the Lesser Prairie-Chicken — during the fourth annual High Plains Prairie-Chicken Festival April 9-10 in the grasslands near Milnesand.

Participants are urged to register early, as attendance will be limited to the first 100 people who send in a registration form and \$60 per person fee. The registration deadline is March 25, but all spots often are filled by then. Registration forms and more information about the festival are available on the Department's web site at www.wildlife.state.nm.us or by calling (505) 476-8000.

The festival is sponsored by the community of Milnesand, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and other partners. Activities include trips to lek sites to observe the mating rituals, photography, and educational programs about prairie-chickens, prairie dogs, birds and the ecology of playa lakes. Experts will talk about the archaeology, plants and history of eastern New Mexico. Meals will be catered by the Community of Milnesand.

Newsletter Notice

The next issue of *Roadrunner Ramblings* will be included in the summer issue of the New Mexico Audubon statewide newsletter. Watch for the newsprint style newsletter, with information about Audubon activities throughout the state, which should arrive in your mailbox in early June.

Roadrunner Ramblings is published six times a year: January, March, May, July, September, and November. Submissions are welcome; please email copy to nstotz@zianet.com, or call for mailing information. **Next deadline: May 11.** Printed by **insta-copy printing** on 10% kenaf, 90% PCW recycled chlorine-free paper. Images, except Dale Zimmerman's roadrunner, are from IMSI's Master Clips/Master Photos® Collection.

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