

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

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Spring Has Sprung, Birds Are Singing, Now What?

by David Griffin, MVAS President

Birds should be saved for utilitarian reasons; and, moreover, they should be saved because of reasons unconnected with dollars and cents....

Theodore Roosevelt

Greetings. In last issue's *President's Message*, I explained why last year I used quotes from Aldo Leopold's "A Sand County Almanac" and shared a little of what his writings mean to me. Tonight I'm writing from an historic lodge called the Burro Mountain Homestead, where nearly 100 years ago another of my conservation heroes, Theodore Roosevelt, came to visit and explore the nearby mountains. In fact, I'm staying in the "Roosevelt Room"—where he supposedly stayed—and I can't help but be reminded of the major conservation achievements of President Roosevelt, such as creating the first 51 federal bird preserves (e.g. Pelican Island in 1903), creating 150 National Forests, 4 Game Preserves, 23 National Parks & Monuments, 24 Reclamation Projects and signing into law the Antiquities Act. Young "Teddy" was a keen ornithologist who could identify most birds of his native New York by their songs and calls. He made many tromps in search of birds and wrote professional articles and books about birds.

If you think you know Teddy, but haven't read "The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt" by Edmund Morris, I ask you to find a copy and discover how Teddy's conservation roots developed. He had a strong personality and after reading the book I couldn't help but dislike the guy on personal level, but on a professional level, he was amazing! He lived to be 60 years old, and he accomplished so much that it staggers a modern mind, even with all of our modern conveniences, electronics and digital this & that. Teddy was a relentless go-getter and his energy was boundless. When he saw something that needing fixing or improving, he did it. He wasn't always successful, but he tried and tried again and successes came. Oh, and he was known to "speak softly and carry a big stick"!

Where am I going with this? I am calling on you as a MVAS member to get involved in our conservation and education programs, or use your other expertise to help improve our chapter. I urge you to get outside and not just look at, but study and understand the birds, the lizards, flowers and trees, the mountains, grasslands and the Rio Grande and understand

(continued on page 4) See **Prez**

MVAS Offers Teacher Award

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society wants to recognize the efforts of teachers in encouraging children to care for the environment and is offering the 13th Annual Lorraine Schulte Excellence in Teaching Award of \$200. Any person who is aware of a teacher whom they feel excels in this area can nominate that teacher for the award by completing a brief application. Also, any teacher of kindergarten through grade 12 can submit an application.

Applicants are asked to list the objectives of the program they would like to be considered, with a brief description of teaching techniques and program activities, and a simple evaluation of the outcomes. Application deadline is March 19.

For more information, or to obtain a copy of the application, call Lorraine Schulte at (575) 521-7029, or e-mail her at mljs47@gmail.com.

Birdathon 2010

Birdathon is Audubon's largest annual fundraising event, and the world's largest bird-watching competition with thousands of people participating. MVAS members join to count birds, have fun, and raise funds for our mission of conservation, education, and advocacy. Here's how Birdathon works: people count birds and collect pledges from sponsors based on the number of species they see in a 24-hr period. All you have to do is choose a date and time in May, and start counting. You can do it alone, with a friend or as a team. You don't have to be an expert—some people do Birdathon from their yard, others drive dozens of miles, while others choose to "Go Green" and do their Birdathon by bike. Depending on your effort you may end up seeing 35 to 50 or more species, or rack up over 150 species! The key is to have fun and raise money for MVAS programs.

For more information visit the MVAS website at www.mvaudubon.org or contact David Griffin.

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 indicating that a PDF version of the new issue is available for download at our website

www.mvaudubon.org



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.

The Butterflies of Las Cruces. March 17. Steve Cary, Natural Resource Planner, New Mexico State Parks. Known as one of the expert Lepidopterists in the south-west and author of "Butterfly Landscapes of New Mexico", Steve will discuss our local butterflies, just in time to get us prepared for the upcoming butterfly season.

The Reptiles of Southern New Mexico. April 21. Doug Burkett, Senior Scientist, White Sands Technical Services. Join us for what's certain to be an evening of excitement when Doug, one of New Mexico's expert herpetologists, discusses the reptiles of our region. We're sure to learn about these secretive animals through the wisdom and experience Doug has developed locally, and we're sure to have a laugh or two while listening to Doug's humorous tales.

Election Results

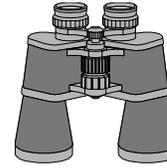
Our annual election for officers and board members was held at our February 17th chapter meeting. For the results you can look on the back page of this newsletter or go to our website at www.mvaudubon.org to get a complete list of officers and board members.

MVBSP Bird Walks

If you can't make either of the MVAS trips or you just want another opportunity to go birding close to home, be sure and check out Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park's 1st Saturday of the Month Bird Walks. Some are guided by MVAS members; meet at MVBSP on March 6 and/or April 3, walks start at 8:15AM.

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.



Holloman Lakes IBA & White Sands Nat'l Monument. March 20. We'll make our annual spring visit to the wetland complex at Holloman Air Force Base, an Important Bird Area, to look for waterfowl, shorebirds, waterbirds, gulls and raptors. If time allows we'll make a stop at White Sands National Monument to explore a small, little-visited and rarely birded area.

To register for this trip or for further information, contact David Griffin by March 18 at GriffinBio@gmail.com or 575-382-2080. Trip limited to 15 participants.

All Audubon Meeting/Milnesand Lesser Prairie Chicken Area. April 24 & 25. Join us for a multi-day trip to the eastern plains of New Mexico during the height of the Lesser Prairie Chicken's mating season. Witness the increasingly rare Lesser Prairie Chicken's fantastic courtship where birds gather at a lek to display and choose a mate. This will be a joint trip between Audubon New Mexico, NM Audubon Council, all NM chapters and other bird clubs.

There will be a meeting to hear updates from each chapter, the state office and the NM Audubon Council, as well as to discuss planning and strategies for Audubon. We'll also volunteer on a work project related to Lesser Prairie Chicken conservation, which will provide a connection between you and the future survival of this declining species.

The best part of the trip will be a pre-dawn visit to one of the leks in the area to witness first-hand the "booming" calls of a courting male and marvel at his inflated burnt-orange air sacs, erect neck feathers and cocked tail, all while he struts and jumps and tries to win the heart of some nearby female!

More specific information about this trip is forthcoming and will be announced at the March and April meetings; check the Audubon NM website at nm.audubon.org and our website for updates.

To register contact David Griffin at 575-382-2080 or GriffinBio@gmail.com.

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 _____

C0ZQ540Z

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.

**Call for Applications:
 MVAS 2010 Richard Bischoff Memorial Scholarship
 Apply by April 15, 2010**

The Mesilla Valley Audubon Society Richard Bischoff Memorial Scholarship was established in 2007 and awarded its first \$1000 grant in 2008. A long-time Audubon member, Richard joined the MVAS board in 2004, bringing many new ideas including the creation of a graduate student scholarship at New Mexico State University.

This scholarship supports graduate student research at NMSU that is consistent with the MVAS mission and promotes

natural resource conservation. Recipients are required to present their research at one of the MVAS regular meetings.

To apply, or for more information, see our website www.mvaudubon.org or contact Carol Campbell, Scholarship Committee Chair at geobird@nmsu.edu or Bob Tafarielli at btafanel@zianet.com

Donations to support this scholarship are always welcome and can be sent to: Mesilla Valley Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1645, Las Cruces, New Mexico, 88004.

Welcome New Members

Cornelia M. Kissack
 Barbara M. Robinson
 Bruce & Nancy Begin
 Martha Stephens
 Margaret D. Boer
 Michelle Nunn
 Sonja Mendoza
 Susan Pinkerton
 Mark Pendleton
 Natalie Harary
 Maria Kruse
 Serena Ford
 Ulrike West
 Peter Maud
 Ione Renaud
 Meg Szegho
 Ione McNeil
 Doris Flint



Steven D'Amato

**Las Cruces
 Christmas Bird Count
 Highlights**

Total species: 131 (a new record high)
 2 new species for our CBC:
 Orange Bishop
 White-tailed Kite
 Record highs (or ties with previous high):
 Say's Phoebe (89)
 Anna's Hummingbird (8)
 Broad-tailed Hummingbird (1)
 Western Scrub-Jay (107)
 Golden-crowned Kinglet (2)
 Cooper's Hawk (30)
 Forster's Tern (4)
 Great Horned Owl (6)
 White-throated Swift (494)
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (1)
 Hutton's Vireo (4)
 Olive Warbler (1)
 Regular or "common" species missed:
 American Wigeon
 Long-billed Dowitcher
 Ring-billed Gull
 Red-naped Sapsucker
 Horned Lark
 Canyon Wren
 Eastern Meadowlark

For a full report of results from the December 2009 count visit the MVAS website at www.mvaudubon.org and look on the "Newsletters" page or request a copy via email from David Griffin at GriffinBio@gmail.com.

Bird Notes

Species	Date	Location	Observers
Prairie Falcon	12/15	MVBSP	FJY/LS
Black-necked Stilt	12/17	Las Cruces Dam	NS
Harris's Sparrow	12/26	Hillsboro	BB
Western Bluebird	12/27	Percha Dam	BJ
Rufous Hummingbird	1/01	Las Cruces	SWH
Spotted Towhee	1/03	Picacho Hill	CK
Black-throated Blue Warbler	1/04	Las Cruces	LM
White-throated Sparrow	1/08	Las Cruces	DM
Ovenbird	1/15	Hillsboro	BB
Varied Thrush	1/16	Rio @ Shalem Colony	MP
White-throated Swift	1/18	Rio @ Shalem Colony	MP
Cedar Waxwing	1/18	Rio @ Shalem Colony	MP
Hermit Thrush	1/18	Rio @ Shalem Colony	MP
Western Bluebird	1/18	Rio @ Shalem Colony	MP
Pine Siskin	1/18	Rio @ Shalem Colony	MP
Western Scrub-jay	1/18	Rio @ Shalem Colony	MP
Eurasian Collared-Dove	1/18	Rio @ Shalem Colony	MP
Merlin	1/18	Rio @ Shalem Colony	MP
Purple Martin	1/23	Shalem Colony	MP
Yellow-headed Blackbird	1/23	Shalem Colony	MP
Western Bluebird	1/27	Mesilla Park	BLP
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	1/27	MVBSP	CJ
Ferruginous Hawk	2/02	MVBSP	CJ
Snow Geese	2/07	MVBSP	CJ
Burrowing Owl	2/07, 15	MVBSP	MP, CJ
Prairie Falcon	2/07	Mesilla Dam	MP
Western Scrub-jay	2/10	Las Cruces	LS
White-tailed Kite	2/13	MVBSP	CJ
Wood Duck	2/14	MVBSP	JMRH

Observers: Bob Barnes, CJ Goin, Sue & Wally Hill, Barbara Jackson, Clare Kapner, Jackye Meinecke/Robert Hull, Lynn Moseley, Darrell Mott, Bruce & Linda Pearson, Mark Pendleton, Lorraine Schulte, Nancy Stotz, Fred & Judy Yellow

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, 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	David Griffin	382-2080
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	David Griffin	382-2080
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

(continued from page 1) **Prez**

your place among those things. Share what you know and learn with others. Take someone along with you on your next outing. Share these things with your children, grandchildren or your neighbor. When you see something that needs to be fixed or improved, go ahead and help fix it. Write letters to your representatives, your senators, your City Council or County Commissioners, and to the local newspaper. At the simplest level I urge you to volunteer for your chapter. We can use help in all areas of our regular operations and it seems that 2010 will be busy! MVAS members: Become active, help others, solve conservation problems, and create solutions by volunteering, sharing, educating, and by doing. Make "Teddy" proud, and remember "Big Sticks" aren't required!

For more info on Theodore Roosevelt visit the Theodore Roosevelt Association website at www.theodoreroosevelt.org/life/conservation.htm

Volunteer Opportunities: Currently we could use help with our Education and Conservation Programs, we need one or more people to attend once-a-month public meetings and take notes, and we're looking for someone to be Birdathon Coordinator. For a "hands-on" conservation and education project join us for the "All Audubon Weekend" in eastern New Mexico (see April field trip).

Birding Network: I've been excited by the network of active local birders who've turned up exciting birds like Black-throated Blue Warbler, Varied Thrush, and Orange Bishop. Keep on getting out there, take notes, take photos, and share the sightings! A network of birders is useful for more than just rare birds—a perfect example occurred in late January when two MVAS members discovered and documented the first nesting of Anna's Hummingbird in New Mexico right here in Las Cruces!

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: April 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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