

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 31, No. 3. May-June 2009

President's Message

by David Griffin, MVAS President

"When dandelions have set their mark of May on Wisconsin pastures, it is time to listen for the final proof of spring. Sit down on a tussock, cock your ears at the sky, dial out the bedlam of meadowlarks and redwings, and soon you may hear it: the flight song of the upland plover, just now back from the Argentine."
- Back from the Argentine, by Aldo Leopold

We all have our own proof of spring: warm temperatures and long days, flowers blooming, high winds. But when it comes to birds in southern New Mexico, to me there is one that stands out. Mid-April marked the return of my final proof of spring, the Western Kingbird. It seemed like this year I saw my first Kingbird on a Saturday, and by Sunday they were everywhere and already getting rowdy by chasing and scolding each other and trying to stake claims on high tree tops or power poles. Now two weeks later, they've paired up and begun to make their pre-dawn wake up calls. And when the kingbirds wake up an early bird like me—I know spring has finally arrived!

Spring is the time of year we have our annual Pot Luck dinner in lieu of our monthly chapter meeting (on May 20th). Look for more details in this newsletter—I encourage you all to attend and get to know each other!

As many of you know, for some time I've been relatively busy with my bird survey work over a much of southern New Mexico. It's been easy to lose track of the days, but I've managed to take a day or two off in between trips, and next week I plan on doing something fun and worthwhile: Birdathon! Funds raised by this year's Birdathon go toward the purchase of our Audubon Adventures program for over 80 grade schools in southern New Mexico. It's not too late for you to get involved by pledging or participating in this year's Birdathon. Contact us for more information.

I also encourage each of you to take a break from your busy lives this spring and summer and visit one of the Important Bird Areas (IBA) in New Mexico. The IBA program is a partnership between Audubon and BirdLife International and is a global effort to identify and conserve areas that are vital to birds and biodiversity. The goals of the IBA program are to: (1) identify and designate key sites for the birds; (2) establish conservation priorities with land managers; (3) activate public participation in bird conservation; and (4) provide public education and outreach. We have 62 IBAs in New Mexico, some of which, like Percha Dam/Caballo Lake/Palomas Marsh, and Holloman Lakes are within an hours' drive of Las Cruces. Visit Audubon New Mexico's website at http://nm.audubon.org/NM_birding/iba/iba.html for information about the New Mexico program. There you can explore a map of the IBAs and read a bit about each one and why they were designated. If you decide to visit one of the IBAs, I encourage you to record your bird observations and the number of each bird species you see (like doing a Christmas Bird Count), note the date and times of your visit, then share your results with us. We're trying to get a better understanding of the birds that use these sites and one of the best ways is to have chapter members record their observations when they visit IBAs.

Teacher Award Winner

Samuel Hernandez, a 5th grade teacher at Booker T. Washington Elementary School was selected as the winner of the 12th Annual Lorraine Schulte Excellence in Teaching Award. Presented by MVAS at our April meeting, the award recognizes a K-12 teacher who encourages students to appreciate and care for our environment.

Students in Mr. Hernandez's classes have participated in special programs on both energy and water conservation, and they reinforce what they've learned in those programs when studying topics as diverse as mathematics and social studies. This year, they will be attending workshops and going on field trips to learn about native wildlife along the Rio Grande. Mr. Hernandez also applied for and received a travel grant that will enable 55 students to visit the Gila Cliff Dwellings.

Calling All Photographers!

Audubon Magazine's Photography Awards

Entries Accepted
May 15-July 15

Professional, Amateur
& Youth categories

For details visit

www.AudubonMagazinePhotoAwards.com

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

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 _____

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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.



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.

Annual Potluck. May 20. See below.

Natural Resource Restoration & Conservation on a Private Ranch. June 17. Learn how a dedicated couple has been restoring and conserving their diverse ranch and returning species "lost" in the surrounding area. A.T. and Cinda Cole have been restoring a rare perennial stream and its associated riparian area, and grassy uplands, on the historic Pitchfork Ranch in Grant County. A.T. will tell us their goals and objectives and share with us what they've learned and accomplished to date. The Coles have been restoring the Burro Cienega and have reintroduced aquatic species like the Gila chub, Gila top minnow, and Chiricahua leopard frog. The flowing Burro Cienega is a rare gem in the desert that provides habitat for a huge diversity of species.

Annual Potluck May 20

at Lorraine Schulte's home,
1740 Mariposa (phone 524-7029)
5:30 PM

Bring a main dish, side dish, or dessert; and a couple of folding chairs or TV tables if you've got them. Table service, iced tea, and coffee will be provided; BYOB for other beverages.

Welcome New Members

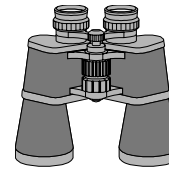
Kathryn Kleitz
Richard Panzer
Felice Green
Jamie Kruse
Van Nordquist
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Caryl Hammel
Anita Thomas
Marialice M. Lean



Daniel S. Kilby

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.



Florida Mountains & Vicinity. May 16.

The trip will include Spring Canyon State Park, Rockhound State Park and Deming Cemetery. We will be looking for migrant birds and nesting species in the mountain area. You never know what rare species may show up at the cemetery.

Trip will depart from the Wild Birds Unlimited parking lot at the Arroyo Plaza 2001 E. Lohman Ave. at 6:30 AM. The trip will last until early afternoon. Please bring a snack, water, sunscreen, and good walking shoes. The areas are suitable for passenger cars and State Park fees are to be expected. We will try to car pool.

To register for this trip, notify John Douglas at 575-541-0133 or email jliddouglas@zianet.com

Sierra County Gradient. June 20.

We'll explore along an elevation gradient in Sierra County from 4,000' to 8,000'. We'll visit riparian areas, pinyon-juniper areas, Ponderosa pine and spruce-fir forests. Our first stop will be along the Rio Grande at Percha Dam SP, then we'll head to Hillsboro where local MVAS residents may help us find some birds, then on to Forest Rd 157 near Kingston, and if there's time on up to Emory Pass.

We'll likely encounter southwestern specialty warbler species like Lucy's, Red-faced, Olive and Painted Redstarts, and we'll see orioles, grosbeaks, flycatchers and kingbirds, nuthatches and woodpeckers, and maybe even some Wild Turkeys!

Trip will depart at 6:45 AM from the Wild Birds Unlimited parking lot at Arroyo Plaza, 2001 E. Lohman Ave. The trip will last until late afternoon. Bring a snack and/or lunch, water, sun protection, wear sturdy shoes and be prepared for variable weather conditions. **NOTE:** easy to moderate walking, but at increasing elevations (4,000' up to 8,000'), and not always on trails.

To register for this trip notify David Griffin by June 18 at 575-382-2080 or GriffinBio@gmail.com.

Field Trip Reports

Bird Notes

Species	Date	Location	Observers
Slate-colored Junco	2/28	Las Cruces	LS
Mountain Bluebird	3/01	LC Dam	NS
Scott's Oriole	3/03	Las Cruces	SWH
Red-breasted Merganser	3/05	MVBSP	JD
Black-chinned Hummer	3/07	Las Cruces	JD
Hooded Merganser	3/07	Leasburg	JH
Red-naped Sapsucker	3/08	NMSU Fabian Garcia	HH
Violet-green Swallow	3/08	San Andres Mt.	GS, BT
American Bittern	3/14	MVBSP	BR, CJ
Cliff Swallow	3/14	MVBSP	CJ
Common Merganser	3/14	MVBSP	BR, CJ
Wood Duck	3/14	MVBSP	CJ
Turkey Vulture	3/17	Mesilla Park	PA
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	3/19; 22	Las Cruces	SWH; SS
Magnificent Hummingbird	3/19; 31	Good Sam	MH; JD
Swainson's Hawk	3/22	NMSU Golf Course	PA
White-tailed Hawk	3/22, 4/2	NMSU Golf Course	PA, WW
Common Black Hawk	3/23	Las Cruces	JH
Painted Redstart	3/23; 4/2	Burn Lake, Leasburg	PT; FJY
Rufous Hummingbird	3/23	Las Cruces	LS
Zone-tailed Hawk	3/23	MVBSP	GP
Red-naped Sapsucker	3/24	Las Cruces	SWH
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	3/26; 4/16	Dona Ana, Las Cruces	DG; LH
Costa's Hummingbird	3/26	Dona Ana	DG
Rufous Hummingbird	3/27; 4/16	Dona Ana, Las Cruces	DG; SWH
White Pelican	3/27	MVBSP	CJ
Barn Swallow	3/28	MVBSP	LS, BR, DW
Common Yellowthroat	3/28	MVBSP	LS, BR, DW
Orange-crowned Warbler	3/28	Las Cruces	SWH
N. Rough-winged Swallow	3/28	MVBSP	LS, BR, DW
Sora	3/28	MVBSP	LS, BR, DW
Anna's Hummingbird	3/30	High Range	NS
Hooded Oriole	4/02	Las Cruces	MW
Painted Redstart	4/02	Mesilla Park	JM
Red-faced Warbler	4/02	Leasburg	LS, VE
Bronzed Cowbird	4/08; 21	NMSU Golf Course; Las Cruces	DG; LH
Northern Goshawk	4/11	NMSU Pond	CJ
Wilson's Warbler	4/11; 12	MVBSP; Tortugas	JD; JMRH
Ash-throated Flycatcher	4/11	MVBSP	JD
Lucy's Warbler	4/11	MVBSP	JD
White-throated Sparrow	4/12	MVBSP	CJ
Western Kingbird	4/12	Tortugas area	JMRH
White-faced Ibis	4/13	Snow Road	GS
Long-billed Curlew	4/13	Snow Road	GS
Gray Catbird	4/16	MVBSP	JD
Gray Flycatcher	4/16; 18	MVBSP	JD; RH
Bullock's Oriole	4/16	Las Cruces	JD
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	4/18	MVBSP	RH
Grace's Warbler	4/18	MVBSP	RH
Summer Tanager	4/20	Burn Lake	PT
Townsend's Warbler	4/22	Las Cruces	LH
Willet	4/23	Leasburg	SWH

Observers: Phil Alkon, John Douglas, Valerie Endruweit, CJ Goin, David Griffin, Mark Hakkila, Harold Harrison, Sue & Wally Hill, Landy Hinesley, John Hyndman, Clare Kapner, Jane Madrid, Jackye Meinecke & Robert Hull, Guy Powers, Barb Rodriguez, Lorraine Schulte, Storm Sermay, Gill Sorg, Nancy Stotz, Paul Turner, Donna Wood, Mara Weisenberger, Walt Whitford

Please report early, late, or unusual sightings to Robert Hull at
575-523-8009 or rwhull@zianet.com

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

Holloman Lakes. March 21. Twenty-one people spent a half day visiting one of the best wetland complexes in New Mexico: Holloman Lakes Important Bird Area (IBA). This area earns the IBA designation by being one of the top 5 important wetlands in NM and the southwest, and offers some of the best and diverse birding opportunities in southern NM. On this first full day of spring we scanned the open waters for wintering waterfowl and other water birds, searched the skies for raptors, and encountered migrating shorebirds and passerines. A total of 53 species was observed for the day—most were seen at Lagoon G, although both Lake Holloman and Stinky Lake had many birds. Highlights include: American Avocets, Western and Least Sandpipers, Snowy Plovers, Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, Loggerhead Shrike, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Eastern Phoebes (5!), Prairie Falcon, Great Egret, Cinnamon Teal, Bufflehead, and Long-billed Curlews.

Mesilla Park & Dam. April 18. Sixteen people spent a half day at one of our most interesting and "birdy" neighborhoods: Mesilla Park and the nearby Mesilla Dam area. In Mesilla Park, the group had great looks at an adult Great Horned Owl sitting on a nest with 3 half-grown nestlings. And we watched in amazement as a large roost of nearly 30 Turkey Vultures lifted off and circled high into the sky. We had great looks at Orange-crowned Warblers and compared Cassin's and Plumbeous Vireos side by side. A short drive to Mesilla Dam brought us back into heavy duty bird activity. Swallows were foraging and drinking along the Rio Grande, and Wilson's Warblers were everywhere! A Green Heron flew overhead, and a few people caught a glimpse of a Common Moorhen as it swam in an irrigation ditch. By far, the most exciting observation came at the end of our visit: a few people noticed a Swainson's Hawk soaring high overhead. We then watched as it was joined by two very white Red-tailed Hawks and next by a Peregrine Falcon, and finally by a Cooper's Hawk!

Thanks to all who shared the use of their vehicles we'll see you next time! A list of species observed is available by contacting David Griffin at 382-2080 or GriffinBio@gmail.com.

International Migratory Bird Day

IMBD celebrates one of the most important and spectacular events in the life of a migratory bird — its journey between its summer and winter homes. Join MVAS at the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park's IMBD event on Saturday, May 9, from 7:30 AM to noon. We'll have a booth and lead bird walks to look for migrants and greet summer residents who have just returned from their wintering grounds.

Rummage Sale Success

The MVAS Rummage Sale on 4/11/09 was quite a success. \$550.00 was raised for Audubon Adventures. Thank you very much to everyone who donated items, helped price items and let us borrow tables. Special thanks to those who helped to sell, sell, sell. Guy Powers, Lorraine Schulte, Bob Tafanelli and his visiting cousin Joy, Carol Campbell, Sue Hill, Carl Martens and Barb Rodriguez.

Earth Day

MVAS members sponsored a table at the 2009 Earth Day celebration at Young Park. Many people stopped by to learn about Audubon Adventures, Birdathon, Bird ID classes, field trips and monthly programs. We helped several people identify birds (Green-tailed Towhee, White-faced Ibis and Red-tailed Hawks, just to name a few), and passed out literature and newsletters. Thank you to those who helped set up and man the table: Gill and Christine Sorg, Valerie Endruweit, Sue Hill, Denise Anstine and Barb Rodriguez.

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: June 27.** Printed on 100% PCW recycled paper by **insta-copy printing**. Image credits: roadrunner, Dale Zimmerman; clip art, IMSI's Master Clips/Master Photos® Collection.

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 (07-09)	Valerie Endruweit	373-0530
Board (08-10)	John Douglas	541-0133
Board (08-10)	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029

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Education	vacant	
Field Trips	David Griffin	382-2080
Programs	board at large	
Membership	Guy Powers	373-1891
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Publicity	vacant	

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

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