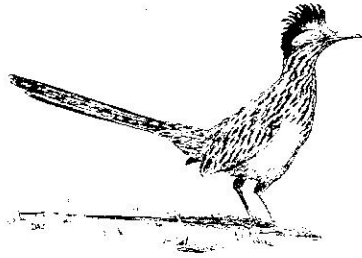


MESILLA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS



VOLUME 21, No. 5 SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1999

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Ed Mayfield

Hello Birders. Welcome to the second half of the year for our Audubon association. We have had a great first half year and are looking forward to an interesting and rewarding fall and winter season.

There are a number of issues and projects that will keep us busy in the coming months. These are local and national issues and projects. One of the issues, of statewide and national concern, is the effort to get funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund through our federal government. We will see a number of riparian restoration projects, including the Las Palomas project. We will work with a coalition of river and wildlife interests to make sure the Rio Grande gets the water necessary to keep the silvery minnow and other aquatic life alive and to maintain the Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge.

Locally we have projects coming up that will require effort and dedication to accomplish. Our organization is growing in numbers with an increase in the number of people who have interests in active participation. They want to move. Some of the projects are the increase in the field trips to be scheduled, the book on birding in southwestern New Mexico, the State Parks birding program, the upcoming Christmas Bird Count. We are going to need participants to accomplish these projects along with the current ongoing ones. I know we can count on help from our members.

We have changed our meeting place to "The Village at Northrise." The facilities are excellent and the welcome which the staff at the Village has extended is very nice. The Village is located at 2880 N. Roadrunner Parkway. There is plenty of secure parking, and the meeting facilities are very nice and very accessible. Please see the directions on page 4.

I am going lead a field trip to the Chiricahuas in October. The July/August newsletter had the date October 16, but in order to make sure that we see the Trogons before they head south to Mexico I have changed the date to October 9. Please call me for information on the trip.

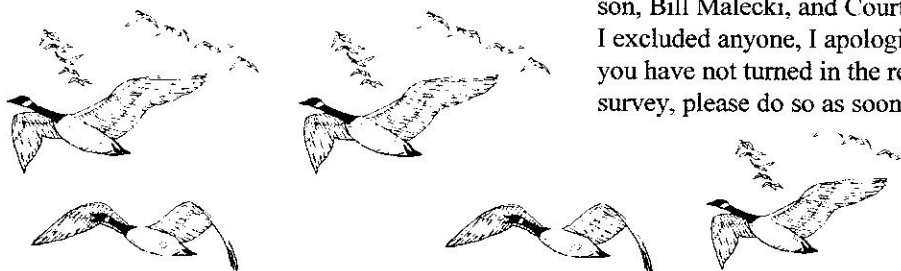
Harold Harrison gave a talk at the Grey Feathers Lodge on July 17, and I wish all of you could have attended. He was good, entertaining and made a wonderful evening for everyone attending. Activities like this make us, the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society, the most active and interesting chapter in the State of New Mexico. Thanks Harold.

PALOMAS MARSH NEEDS YOU!

By Bill Jacobson

One of Mesilla Valley Audubon Society's projects is the monitoring of a 40 acre enclosure at Palomas Marsh. We are doing this in conjunction with the BIM and Hot Springs High School, and have collected two years worth of data. Our role is to monitor the bird usage of the site throughout the year. At the end of the third year (September 2000) we will print a bird list for the area. We check the site at least one day a month and are currently seeking volunteers to help with the project. Palomas Marsh is approximately a one hour drive north of Las Cruces. It takes about an hour to monitor the site. The day of the month and time of day are up to the individual observer. You may volunteer by calling, e-mailing, or writing Bill Jacobson at 382-6877 or bfrog@zianet.com, or 2424 Sunridge Dr, Las Cruces NM 88012. There will also be a sign-up sheet at the September meeting. Volunteers will be provided with directions to the site and a reporting sheet. **VOLUNTEER NOW** while you still have a good selection of months.

I wish to thank all of you who participated this last year. The list includes Darrell Mott, Ed Mayfield, Gordon Ewing, Storm Sermay, Ed Fredrickson, Sue and Wally Hill, Lorraine Schulte, Ann Heying, Joyce and Earl McFarland, Wendy and Rob Davis, Walt Whitford, Harold Harrison, Bill Malecki, and Courtney Blood. If I excluded anyone, I apologize. Also, if you have not turned in the results of your survey, please do so as soon as possible.



CONSIDERING CONSERVATION

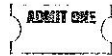
By Jennifer Atchley

Audubon is a critical organization for wildlife protection in New Mexico. The New Mexico State Office continues to be active on several fronts:

- ◆ **The Land and Water Fund**
Please refer to the president's column (this newsletter and last) for details on the Fund. Helga Schimkat has been hired to help the state chapters disseminate information that will promote a "clean bill" for the fund in congress.
- ◆ **Rio Chama and Comanche Creek**
In Northern New Mexico, Audubon has received grants to restore riparian communities and has planted over 100 cottonwoods and willows.
- ◆ **Rio Grande**
As a member of the Rio Grande Heritage Alliance, the state office has been advocating for a "wet river" to benefit aquatic life and riparian communities.
- ◆ **Forest habitat and health**
The state office co-sponsored field trips and workshops with Senator Bingaman to open up dialog on how best to restore the southwest forests, which are suffering from fire suppression, overgrazing, road building, and logging of old growth trees. The Senator is considering legislation that would provide grants to local groups to participate in forest restoration.
- ◆ **Endangered Species**
Priority species for the state office are Lesser Prairie Chicken, Aplomado Falcon, and SW Willow flycatcher. Dave Henderson participates in planning, funding, and recovery committees for these species.
- ◆ **Two Mile Property**
A recovering riparian area, along the Santa Fe River and across the road from the Randall Davey Audubon Center, is currently owned by PNM but is up for sale. David Henderson is developing partnerships between the City of Santa Fe and the County of Santa Fe in an effort to purchase the land for open space, recreation, wildlife habitat and education.

(Continued on page 3)

PROGRAMS



Programs and meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, September through April, at the Village at Northrise, 2880 N. Roadrunner

Pkwy Programs begin at 7:30 pm. Announcements, news, and information begin at 6:45 pm preceding the program.

Please note new meeting place.

Directions on page 4

September 15. Bats of the Southwest.

Mark Hakkila of the Bureau of Land Management will present a program and slide show on the life histories of the approximately 25 southwestern bat species.

October 20. Important Bird Areas

(IBA). The New Mexico IBA Coordinator, Christopher Rustay, will present a talk on the National Audubon program of IBA's. The state IBA program is starting and your help is needed to nominate areas that should be included. The focus of this talk will be New Mexico's priority birds and habitats and the criteria for site nomination. This will be an interesting evening with slides of New Mexico landscapes and birds.

"FRONTLINE NEWS" from FOREST GUARDIANS

NM Farmers and State Engineer File Critical Habitat Challenge. The New Mexico State Engineer and the state's largest and most politically powerful agricultural organization, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, have challenged the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's designation of 160 miles of the Rio Grande in NM as critical habitat for the endangered Rio Grande Silvery Minnow. The suit claims that keeping the Rio Grande flowing for minnow critical habitat will bankrupt the state, and if successful will mean almost annual drying up of large stretches of the Rio Grande.



FIELD TRIPS

Please be prepared with plenty of water, layered clothing, and good walking shoes.

Saturday, September 25. San Andres

Mountains. The San Andres Mountains are a prominent feature of southern New Mexico, dividing the Jornada del Muerto and the Tularosa Basins. The geological diversity and variations in altitude results in diverse vegetation and avian habitat. A recent bird count of the area lists Cordilleran, Hammond's and Olive-sided Flycatchers, Black-headed Grosbeak, Orange-crowned Warbler, Red-naped Sapsucker, plus 98 additional species. Those who have high clearance 4WD vehicles, please bring them, as roads can be rough after summer rains. Meet at the Shell Station at Jornada Rd. & Hwy 70 at 7 A.M. This will be an all day trip so bring plenty of food and water. Contact Ed Fredrickson, 646-1301 or efredric@nmsu.edu, for more information.

Saturday, October 9. Chiricahua Mountains, AZ

If you missed out on the May field trip (fantastic!) here's your chance to visit one of the best birding spots in the country. We should see Scrub and Mexican Jays, Bridled Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatches, Acorn and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, and many other species. This is an overnight trip. Contact Ed Mayfield 382-7016 (mayfield@greatwhite.com) for more information.

Saturday, October 16. Holloman Lakes

Shorebirds are the main attraction here but we may also see hawks, flycatchers, and other riparian species. John Mangimeli, Chief Interpretive Ranger at White Sands National Monument, will be our trip leader. Meet at the Kmart parking lot on N. Main St. at 7 A.M. Call Susan Beck at 646-6171 for more information.

Saturday, November 13. Bosque del Apache NWR

The Bosque is a favorite destination for birders nationwide. We will see a wide variety of shorebirds and waterfowl that are returning to winter here. We might spot Bald Eagles and, if we're lucky, Whooping Cranes. Contact Ann Heying 521-4215 for more information and trip details.

(Continued from page 2)

Considering Conservation

Closer to home, MVAS is continuing its efforts to increase the size of Palomas Marsh. The 40 acre grazing & mowing exclosure on the bank of the Rio Grande, upstream of Caballo Lake, is responsible for the recovery of native marsh vegetation. Board and MVAS members have established a log of photos and species lists from monthly visits and these demonstrate the shift in types and numbers of species found in the area. The area was once primarily a grazed and mown flat of rushes and grasses supporting Killdeer, Common Snipe, and Horned Lark. Now the exclosure is a dense *cienea* of tall cattails, cottonwoods, bulrushes, and sedges. The marsh is dominated by obligatory wetland species such as Marsh Wren, Mallard, and the elusive Virginia Rail.

The next step in increasing the rare *cienea* (or marsh) habitat that the exclosure has created is for MVAS to become involved in the Bureau of Reclamation's Resource Management Plan. The Bureau is in the process of creating a plan, so, through this avenue of public participation we can propose that the Palomas area be managed for wildlife values. By stating that *cieneas* should be a priority, MVAS influences the strategies the Bureau must create for their operations, such as reservoir draw-downs, downstream irrigation, local grazing, and efficient water delivery to Texas. The Bureau strategies should be designed so that the altered floodplain habitats are improved or restored. We will keep you updated.

BIRD NOTES

Bird	Date	Location	Observer
Rufous Hummingbird	Jun 29	Las Cruces	TL
Calliope Hummingbird	Jul 4	Las Cruces	LS
Peregrine Falcon	Jul 12	Isaack's Pond	S/WH L/JJ
Wilson's Phalarope	Jul 12	Isaack's Pond	same
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Jul 12	Isaack's Pond	same
Northern Cardinal	Jul 12	Isaack's Pond	same
Cassin's Sparrow	Jul 12	Isaack's Pond	same
Blue Grosbeak	Jul 12	Isaack's Pond	same
Eared Grebe	Jul 12	Isaack's Pond	TL, SW
Western Grebe	Jul 12	Isaack's Pond	TL, WS
Solitary Sandpiper	Jul 12	Isaack's Pond	SH, WH
Baird's Sandpiper	Jul 12	Isaack's Pond	GE, TL, S/WH
Semipalmated	Jul 12	Isaack's Pond	GE, TL, S/WH
Black Tern	Jul 23	Isaack's Pond	KS
Least Tern	Jul 25	Isaack's Pond	KS
Long-billed Curlew	Jul 25	Isaack's Pond	KS
Stilt Sandpiper	Jul 31	Isaack's Pond	TL
Montezuma Quail	Aug 2	Mimbres	LS, JS
Sage Sparrow	Aug 7	Lake Holloman	LS, JS
Baird's Sandpiper	Aug 7	Lake Holloman	LS, JS
Painted Bunting	Aug 21	La Mesa	MS, JZ
Lazuli Bunting	Aug 21	La Mesa	MS, JZ
Upland Sandpiper	Aug 21	La Mesa	MS, JZ
Yellow Warbler	Aug 22	Las Cruces	TL
Willow Flycatcher	Aug 22	Las Cruces	TL
Northern Waterthrush	Aug 22	Isaack's Pond	TL
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	Aug 24	Las Cruces	TL
Cassin's Kingbird	Aug 24	Isaack's Pond	GE, SH, WH
Lazuli Bunting	Aug 24	Isaack's Pond	GE, SH, WH
Prairie Falcon	Aug 24	Isaack's Pond	GE, SH, WH

Observers: Gordon Ewing, Sue Hill, Wally Hill, Tim Lawton, Lorraine Schulte, John Schulte, Marcy Scott, William Seager, Ken Stinnett, Steve Wust, Jimmy Zabriskie.

Please report early, late, or unusual sightings to Tim Lawton
e-mail tlawton@nmsu.edu or phone 505-522-2056

New Mexico Rare Bird Hotline 505-323-9323



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	Ed Mayfield	382-0715
Vice-president	Ann Heying	521-4215
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Treasurer	Mary Lou Wallace	522-0684
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Board (97-99)	Maxine Perkins	524-1529
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Membership	Harold Harrison	522 6199
Newsletter Editor	Storm Sermay	382 3348
Programs	Board at Large	
Publicity	Ann Heying	521 4215

Board meetings are held, September through May, on the Thursday before the 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 at the South west Environmental Center, 1494A S. Solano Dr., Las Cruces NM 88001. All Audubon members are welcome.

JOIN NOW!

I would like to join the **National Audubon Society and Mesilla Valley Audubon Society** for the introductory rate of \$20

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____

Q54
7XCH

Membership includes the publications *Audubon* and *Roadrunner Ramblings*.

Send this application and your check (made payable to NAS) to:

Membership, MVAS, PO Box 3127, Las Cruces NM 88003

FIELD TRIP REPORT

By Jennifer Atchley

Pecos River Field Trip: 24 April 99

This early spring morning broke gray and misty over Roswell. The six desert dwellers were ill equipped for the bracing wind that greeted us along the Pecos River, 30 miles north of Roswell, on a section of BLM land that flanks the river. The drive into the river was lovely (because we were warm, in our cars) through rolling short grass prairie that mixed with Chihuahuan Desert. Swainson's Hawk, Western and Eastern Meadowlark, Loggerhead Shrike, Western and Cassin's Kingbird, and Lark Bunting were all abundant. We expected to see and hear early breeders in the cottonwoods along the Pecos, but either it was too cold, too early, or just too inhospitable.

The group purchased 25 UFO postcards, which is five times more than the number of birds we saw. We counted five (yes, that's 5) species in almost two hours: Northern Mockingbird, Common Flicker, Orange-Crowned Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and White-faced Ibis. But, not to be disappointed after making such a long journey, we headed to Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge and birded from our cars, out of the wind. We ended up having a very enjoyable morning with a much longer look at many more species (but still not quite as many species as postcards!). We saw close up views of the ibis, plus Wilson's Phalarope, Great Egret, American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, plus waterfowl in breeding plumage, including Cinnamon Teal, Blue-winged Teal, Pintail. The wildflowers were profuse in the grasslands and I would recommend this area for any na-

(NEW MEETING PLACE!)

Our new meeting place is at the Village at Northside, 2002 N. Roadrunner Pkwy. This is located on Roadrunner almost at the corner of Hwy 70 (N. Main St. going east on Hwy 70, turn right on Roadrunner Pkwy (the next cross street after 1st Hwy). On Roadrunner, turn left at the traffic light and then at the cross street turn right onto the complex. Follow that short street down the hill to the stop sign and turn right again. Our building (the Piedmont Building) will be on the right. There is a small parking lot in front and parking on the south side of the street. We will be meeting in the Meeting Room which is on the ground floor (come straight from the parking garage). There are

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