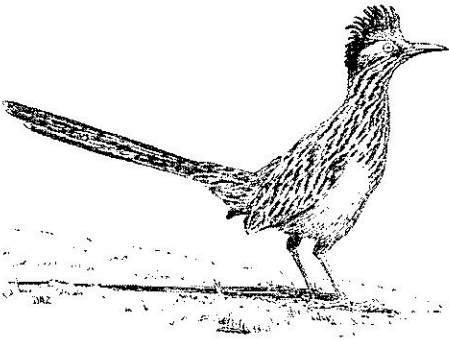


ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 25, No. 3. May-June 2003



Earth Day Studied at Local School

Since its creation 33 years ago, interest in Earth Day seems to have waned throughout the country. In Las Cruces, however, the spirit of Earth Day is alive and well at Hermosa Heights Elementary School due to the efforts of MVAS members Wendy Davis and Donna Wood.

The Davis-Wood team presented a special Earth Day project which combined a lesson about Earth Day and the making of picture collages. They visited 13 classrooms which included kindergarten and grades 2, 4, and 5. The program consisted of an initial teaching presentation about what Earth Day is, what environmental problems are hurting the planet, and what the students can do to help save the Earth.

Each class was then divided into small groups, and each group made its own environmental collage using photos cut out of natural history and wildlife magazines. The photos had been separated into several categories - birds, mammals, plants, wetlands, oceans, rain forests, wilderness, etc.

After finishing its collage, the group created an environmental message to attach to the poster reflecting the theme of the collage, i.e. "Be a Friend to Birds", "Keep Our Oceans Clean", "We Want to Care for Flowers." These colorful works of art celebrating Earth Day and the planet are now decorating the school's corridors.

Old Refuge, Rio Grande Corridor Update

by Carol McCall, Keep Las Cruces Beautiful

Readers familiar with the Picacho Bosque (Old Refuge), south of the Mesilla Bridge, have probably noticed the comings and goings of a lot of heavy equipment. The Picacho Wetland Pilot Project is finally under way, with CMC Construction, Inc., of T or C, breaking ground on April 1st. Outlines of the pond and wet meadow are visible, and an observation hill, created with the excavated dirt from the pond, grows bigger every day.

The wetland falls within the boundaries of the proposed Mesilla Valley Bosque Park, spearheaded by the Southwest Environmental Center (SWEC). The project is the culmination of two years of effort by the City of Las Cruces, SWEC, Elephant Butte Irrigation District, International Boundary and Water Commission, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and the Bureau of Reclamation. These partners in the Rio Grande Corridor Project, funded in part by the Environ-

(continued on page 2) See Corridor

Lorraine Schulte Excellence in Teaching Award 2003

By Donna A. Wood

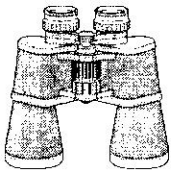
On April 16, 2003, the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society presented the seventh annual Lorraine Schulte Excellence in Teaching Award. The \$200.00 award is named in honor of charter member Lorraine Schulte for her ongoing work and dedication to the chapter since 1978. The prize is given to a teacher who exemplifies excellence in educating and encouraging our youth to care for their environment, which is one of the major commitments of the Audubon Society.

The winner of this year's award is Cherie M. Love, a 4/5th grade Developmental Learning teacher at Valley View Elementary School in Las Cruces. Runner-up is Patricia R. Mihok, a second grade teacher at Jornada Elementary School in Las Cruces.

Cherie's outstanding work involving students with the Service Learning Project "Sowing Seeds For Student Success" has won her this award and many others. Her involvement with this project and her integration of environmental awareness daily in class has allowed her students to help others and to have a positive impact on their community. Mrs. Love believes that this connection helps her students understand that education is relevant to their lives, both in the present and in the future.

This spring her students will be visiting the Bosque del Apache, a place her class has been researching. Students are encouraged to bring in articles from the newspaper relating to conservation/environmental issues affecting their city, Las Cruces. Cherie's students also spend 2 hours a week cleaning up trash, creating projects from recycled material, working in the garden, using the internet to seek information concerning environmental issues and helping their 1st grade and math Lab Buddies, in the garden.

The award committee (Donna Wood, Chair; Wendy Davis; Wally Hill; Tim Lawton; & Nancy Stotz) would like to thank MVAS members, teachers and parents for helping obtain several excellent candidates from whom to select this year's winner.



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.

Old Refuge. May 10. Ken Stinnett will lead this trip into one of the best birding areas along the Rio Grande in the Mesilla Valley, which should be brimming with migrants this time of year. Meet at 6:30 AM at the intersection of Calle del Norte and Highway 28, in front of the fountain.

Percha/Caballo. June 14. Join Sue and Wally Hill as they search for bosque breeders like tanagers and grosbeaks along the Rio Grande north of Hatch. We'll be leaving from the K-Mart on Highway 70 at 6:15 AM.

JOIN NOW!

- National Membership: Join both the **National Audubon Society** and **Mesilla Valley Audubon Society** for the introductory rate of \$20 (a \$15 savings!). Includes both *Audubon Magazine* and *Roadrunner Ramblings*. Make check payable to National Audubon Society.
- Chapter Membership: Join just **Mesilla Valley Audubon Society** for \$15. Includes *Roadrunner Ramblings*. Make check payable to Mesilla Valley Audubon Society.

Name _____

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City _____

State _____

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Email _____

Q54
7XCH

Send this application and your check to:

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

(continued from page 1) **Corridor**

mental Protection Agency, have contributed to the creation of a comprehensive planning document which will help guide future development of the Rio Grande Corridor in such a way that open space and habitat areas are protected and restored.

The wetland project is proposed to enhance riparian habitat by providing additional water from the Picacho Drain, removing salt cedar and excavating ponding areas to form a palustrine wetland and a wet meadow. The constructed hill provides a footpath and bird observation platform. Later in the summer, native vegetation will be planted to replace the salt cedar that is removed.

Construction is expected to be completed by the end of May. SWEC has agreed to assume management of the wetland, and will be developing a public access schedule for guided fieldtrips, outdoor classroom opportunities, etc.

For those individuals interested in learning more about the comprehensive plan and proposed habitat restoration projects, a series of **public meetings** is scheduled at the following locations: Tuesday, **May 13** at East Picacho Elementary School, 4450 N. Hwy 85; Wednesday, **May 14** at Fairacres Elementary School, 4501 W. Picacho; and Thursday, **May 15** at Mesilla Elementary, 2363 Calle del Sur in Mesilla. All meetings are scheduled for 5:30-7:30 PM.

The Rio Grande Corridor Project Comprehensive Plan draft may be reviewed in advance of the public meetings by visiting the Community Development page of the City of Las Cruces website, www.las-cruces.org. For more information about the Rio Grande Corridor Project or the public meetings, contact Carol McCall, 528-3148.



Annual Spring Potluck

On May 20, MVAS will hold a potluck supper at 5:30 PM at the residence of Lorraine Schulte, 1740 Mariposa Dr. (phone 524-7029). Our guest speaker for the 25th Anniversary Celebration, Denver Holt, will be present. This will give us an opportunity to get better acquainted with him.

Drinks and table service will be provided. Please bring along a couple of folding chairs if you have them.

25th Anniversary

MVAS will be celebrating its 25th Anniversary with a banquet to be held May 21 at the Mesilla Valley Inn Best Western. In addition to a social hour, buffet dinner, and raffles, we will enjoy a keynote presentation by our guest of honor, Denver Holt, the founder and director of the Owl Research Institute.

During the banquet, we'll look back over some of the many accomplishments of MVAS, including:

- Monitoring Lake Holloman near Alamogordo for bird species.
- Monitoring Palomas Marsh cattle enclosure, near Truth or Consequences, for bird species.
- Creating a birdlist for Leasburg State Park, north of Las Cruces.
- Education programs in the Las Cruces Public Schools.
- Providing National Audubon Society's excellent study program entitled Audubon Adventures for seventeen years in public and private school classrooms in Las Cruces, Alamogordo and Truth or Consequences. This past year we provided a New Mexico supplement in addition to the material in the Audubon Adventures kits.
- After-school enrichment programs in Las Cruces Public Schools.
- Adult Bird Identification classes through the Doña Ana Branch of New Mexico State University.
- Promotion of Junior Duck Stamp program.
- Involvement in the Mesilla Valley Bosque Project along the Rio Grande south of the Calle Del Norte Bridge.
- Birdathons every spring (fund-raisers for education purposes).
- Annual Teacher Award every year to a teacher in the Las Cruces Public Schools.
- Christmas Bird Counts every year.
- Preparing a bird checklist for the Mesilla Valley Bosque area.
- Supporting the San Andres National Wildlife Refuge.
- Presentation of community outreach programs for Boy Scouts, residents of Golden Mesa Retirement Center, Casa Del Sol Retirement Center, Las Cruces Museum of Natural History, Enchanted Gardens, and Operation Weed and Seed.

Field Trip Report

Percha Dam State Park, March 22. At the crack of dawn twelve birders made the trip to Percha Dam State Park. After a couple of hours at Percha, we moved to the riverside park below Caballo Lake Dam and then the lakeside flats above the dam. It was a beautiful day, the weather

was perfect and we were rewarded with thirty-three different species of birds. A few of the more noteworthy birds were the startlingly red Vermilion Flycatcher, the perky White-Breasted Nuthatch and the shy Brown Creeper. Lakeside we saw a Clarke's Grebe - or was it a Horned Grebe??? A fun day was had by all.

Jack DeLong

Birding Hotspot: Katfish Kove

by Jimmy Zabriskie & Marcy Scott

Katfish Kove is located north of Deming along the lower Mimbres River in Luna County. The approximately 20-acre site is an old gravel quarry and has several cattail-choked ponds as well as a small and relatively young cottonwood gallery forest. This privately owned site is a loose operation and birding is a new venture that we opened up to Lee, the owner, a few months ago. It's \$5 to bird/picnic/camp, \$10 to fish.

I am keeping an "official" list so please e-mail me any sightings. The fledgling list can be viewed at the "what's new" page of my home page (<http://hometown.aol.com/jimmyzabriskie/home.html>). Highlights from the last two months include Hammond's and Gray Flycatchers, Virginia Rail, Eastern Phoebe, Swamp Sparrow, American Bittern, Western Screech Owl, Cassin's and Plumbeous Vireos, Gray Catbird, Virginia's and Black-throated Gray Warblers, Bullock's Oriole, and Broad-winged Hawk.

Directions: From I-10 take Exit 82 in Deming and turn right on US 180, the road to Silver City. Drive about 15 miles and just past milepost 150 turn right on Luna A-10 (Perrin Road). Follow this passable but bumpy dirt road for 6.7 miles to where it intersects with Luna A-11, bear left and keep heading north up the valley for 1.1 miles. Turn left (west) at the sign that says to "check in at the office" and follow the signs.

At the office of what appears to be a salvage yard, honk. If Lee, the owner, is there he'll come out, if not drive back to the entrance road and head west towards the trees. He might be around the ponds or not and if he's not there I have left a note on my car windshield along with \$5. I have been there when he was not around and paid him the next time. There is a portable toilet but I have not used it and can't comment on the facilities.

From Katfish Kove you can keep heading north and it's about another 4 miles north to NM 61, the road to City of Rocks/San Lorenzo. This last section of road is well worth birding as we had Bald Eagle, Eastern Bluebird, and Lawrence's Goldfinch this past winter.

Bird Notes

Species	Date	Location	Observers
Bronzed Cowbird	3-1	NMSU	WSH
Barn Swallow	3-1	Leasburg	Bird ID Class
Violet-green Swallow	3-1, 3-3	Leasburg, Percha	Bird ID, WW, JA
N Rough-winged Swallow	3-1, 3-3	Burn Lk, Leasburg, Percha	Bird ID, WW, JA
Prairie Falcon	3-3	Percha	WW, JA
White-throated Swift	3-1, 4-6	Leasburg, Talavera	Bird ID Class, TL
Orange-crowned Warbler	3-7	Las Cruces	LS
Lewis's Woodpecker	3-9	Deming	MS/JZ
Collared Dove	3-9	Deming	MS/JZ
Long-billed Dowitcher	3-10	Calle del Norte	KS
Turkey Vulture	3-10, 3-15	Las Cruces, High Range	KS, SH, NS
Rufous Hummingbird	3-14	El Paso	BZ
Common Poorwill	3-14	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Hooded Oriole	3-25, 4-11 & 23	El Paso, Radium Spg, LC	BZ, MS/JZ, WSH
Black-chinned Hummer	3-25, 4-2 & 3	El Paso, Las Cruces	BZ, WSH, LS
Fox Sparrow	3-26	Percha	GE, SE
Wood Duck	3-26	Percha	GE, SE
Vermilion Flycatcher	3-26, 4-16	Percha, Caballo, Radium	GE, SE, WSH
White-throated Sparrow	3-28, 4-11	Las Cruces, Katfish Kove	KS, MS/JZ
Gray Flycatcher	4-1, 4-11	El Paso, Katfish Kove	JP, MS/JZ
Marbled Godwit	4-2	Calle del Norte	JD
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	4-3	Las Cruces	LS
Cassin's Finch	4-4, 4-6	Talavera, LC, Radium Spg	TL, WSH, MS/JZ
Ash-throated Flycatcher	4-4	Talavera	TL
Cedar Waxwing	4-4, 4-7 & 8	Las Cruces, Radium Spg	WSH, MS/JZ
Ruddy Turnstone	4-5	River-Mesilla	JD
Swainson's Hawk	4-5	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Western Kingbird	4-5	NMSU, High Range	BG, NS
Cassin's Kingbird	4-5, 4-21	MidValley, N Valley	JD, NS, ZBS
Scott's Oriole	4-6	La Cueva	TL
American White Pelican	4-6, 4-8	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Lawrence's Goldfinch	4-7	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Osprey	4-11	Picacho Hills	RWD, HH
Broad-billed Hummingbird	4-12	El Paso	BZ
White-faced Ibis	4-16, 4-20	Las Cruces Radium Spgs	JD, MS/JZ
American Avocet	4-19	Calle del Norte	BR

John Anderson, Bird ID Class, Rob and Wendy Davis, John Douglas, Gordon Ewing, Steve Ewing, Bill Glenn, Harold Harrison, Sara Hauptmann, Wally and Sue Hill, Tim Lawton, Jim Paton, Barb Rodriguez, Lorraine Schulte, Marcy Scott and Jimmy Zabriskie, Ken Stinnett, Nancy Stotz, Zannah & Bill Stotz, Walt Whitford, Barry Zimmer

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

New Mexico Rare Bird Hotline 505-323-9323
or <http://mvar.nmsu.edu/nmos/>

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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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.cybermesa.com/~mvas/.

Bird Quarantine Includes Southern NM

USDA/APHIS and the NM Dept of Game and Fish recently announced that the following counties are now under quarantine for Exotic Newcastle Disease (END): Doña Ana, Luna, and Otero NM, and El Paso and Hudspeth TX. The quarantine applies to all bird species but does not apply to mammals. The quarantine is in effect indefinitely. Any violation of the quarantine breaks federal and state laws.

As of 15 April 2003 END has NOT been detected in New Mexico, but has been detected in El Paso TX.

Sick or disabled birds should be reported and inquiries made at APHIS: (915) 859-9446 or (301) 734-8073, or the NM APHIS office at (505) 761-3160. DO NOT handle or transport sick or dead birds if you find them.

No movement of birds is allowed WITHIN the quarantine area. Do not move, transport, or carry birds from one location to another within the same quarantine area. This applies to transporting birds to a rehabilitation facility. Also, do not bring sick or dead birds to the Vertebrate Museum at New Mexico State University.

END is a contagious and fatal viral disease affecting most species of birds. It is the most infectious disease of birds, with a death rate of 100% in unvaccinated poultry, with many birds dying before showing any clinical signs. It is spread through droppings, saliva, and mucous of infected birds and can be picked up on shoes, clothing, or vehicles. END can survive for several weeks in manure and warm humid environments, and survives indefinitely in frozen material. It is however sensitive to dehydration and ultraviolet rays.

Peter Houde, NMSU Dept. of Biology

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: 27 June.** Printed by **insta-copy printing** on 50% kenaf, 50% PCW recycled chlorine-free paper. Images, except Dale Zimmerman's roadrunner, are from IMSI's Master Clips/Master Photos[©] Collection.

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