



ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 28, No. 1. Jan-Feb. 2006

President's Message

Gill Sorg, MVAS President

It has been my pleasure to be your president for nearly a year now. I have enjoyed working for and with you. But I have had lots of help from many individuals. All of the board of directors and all of the committee chairpersons have done most of the work. This organization can almost run itself because of the hard work from all of them. Let me take this opportunity to thank them.

In the past year we have had many successful projects and activities. Topping the list is the Audubon Adventures chaired by Lorraine Schulte. This program is a tribute to the goal to educate our future generations about conservation of our wildlife. This newsletter is put together and edited by Nancy Stotz keeping us all informed of our happenings. Donna Wood, in charge of education and the birding classes at Doña Ana Branch Community College, has been very successful, adding a new class this past fall. Conservation efforts have been spearheaded by Bob Tafanelli keeping our conservation issues on course. We have been lead by Walt Whitford on many interesting and fun field trips. Where would our finances be without Barb Rodriguez keeping them organized? Guy Powers and Richard Bischoff have served us well as delegates to the NM Audubon Council. Guy is the one who got me to join MVAS when I wanted to learn more about the birds in Southern New Mexico.

My appreciation goes out to everyone.

There are some concerns I would like to bring to members' attention. First is the proposed legislation in congress weakening the Endangered Species Act. On September 29, the House passed a bill sponsored by Congressman Richard Pombo (R-CA) that would significantly weaken the Endangered Species Act, one of America's strongest and most successful laws for protecting biodiversity and saving our most vulnerable birds and wildlife. Similar legislation was introduced in the Senate in mid-December. We need everyone to send emails/letters to Domenici, Bingaman and Pearce to defeat this BAD legislation.

Many members have been active in preventing the oil exploration in the Artic National Wildlife Refuge and I applaud their actions. But we must keep active with messages to our representatives as the battle to prevent exploration in the refuge is still ongoing.

Locally, now that the EA has been written, the new Mesilla

Meeting & Dinner: Statewide Audubon Council Coming to Cruces

The New Mexico Audubon Council will meet in Las Cruces on Saturday, February 25, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. in the conference room at The Southwest Environmental Center, 275 N. Downtown Mall.

The Council is composed of members from all New Mexico chapters and representatives of the state office. The Council sets the environmental policy for the state Audubon organization. At the February meeting discussion will be held on the political and environmental priorities for the coming year. All are welcome to see how we work and join us. Each chapter is represented by two delegates, plus their chapter president.

A dutch treat dinner for Audubon Council and MVAS members is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. that evening at Eddie's Bar and Grill, 901 Avenida de Mesilla. Cost will be \$22.00 per person. A no-host bar will be available.

Dinner will be by reservation with your check payable to MVAS and sent to:

MVAS
Attn. Barbara Rodriguez
PO Box 1645
Las Cruces NM 88004

Deadline for reservations is February 20, 2006.

We urge as many as possible to attend and use this opportunity to meet Audubon members from around the state.

It will be a memorable evening for us all. No long speeches. For further information call Richard Bischoff at 894-6083 or email at frlerner@zianet.com.

Ruth Burstom is the incoming Council president. She succeeds Tom Jervis who has done an outstanding job as president for seven years.

Hope to see everyone there.

Richard Bischoff

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

Welcome New Members



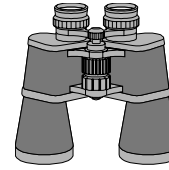
Bruce & Linda Pearson
Margaret Ellen Haltom



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.



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.

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.

Bears, Bears, Bears. January 18. We live in the desert but are there really bears here? What makes a bear a black bear? Or is that a grizzly bear? Rink Somerday, Program Coordinator of the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park will help us learn about bear habits and habitats, characteristics and uniqueness, and what to do if you are lucky enough to meet one face to face.

How to be Adopted by a Penguin Colony. February 15. Dr. B.Z. Siegel, a biological geochemist, will share some of her adventures from a recent research trip to Antarctica. During the course of a volcano-monitoring expedition, Dr. Siegel was marooned for 4 days in a colony of 70,000 penguins. In addition to her immersion in the penguins' daily lives, Dr. Siegel visited active volcanoes and both the geographic and geological South Poles.



Annual Elections

Our annual elections will be held during the business meeting preceding our January program (January 18). All of MVAS's current officers and the board members whose terms are expiring have agreed to serve another term:

President	Gill Sorg
Vice-President	Walt Whitford
Secretary	Nancy Stotz
Treasurer	Barb Rodriguez
Board (2006-2008)	Alan Krueger
Board (2006-2008)	Sue Hill

Percha, Animas Creek and Palomas Canyon. January 21. Join us on this trip for winter birds at some favorite birding areas south of Truth or Consequences. This will be a half-day trip and we should return to Las Cruces by 2 PM. Meet at K-Mart parking lot, Hwy 70 at 7 AM. For more information, contact Walt Whitford at 521-1358.

Gila Box. February 18. Trip to beautiful riparian habitats along the Gila River near Virden, N.M. Meet at NMSU Pan Am Center -north Parking lot at 6:30 AM. This will be an all-day trip. Participants should bring lunch, snacks and plenty of water. Layers of clothing and comfortable walking shoes are recommended. For more information, contact Walt Whitford at 521-1358.

Basic Bird Watching Course

New to the area, or just retired? Think about joining us for our spring Basic Bird Watching Class.

Learn which birds are residents of our lovely southwest landscape. We have an outstanding group of instructors who will talk to you about: waterfowl, perching birds, habitat, tips for attracting and identifying birds, information on optical equipment and various birding publications.

Our classes will be on February 14th, 21st and 28th from 7-9 PM with field trips on February 18th, 25th and March 4th. All our classes are held at the Doña Ana Branch Community College, East Mesa Campus. Look for our class offering in their catalog.

Bird Notes

Species	Date	Location	Observers
Calliope Hummingbird	10-16	Las Cruces	DG
Anna's Hummer	10-17; 24; 26	Las Cruces; Radium Spgs	DG; MS/JZ; LS, BHH
Plumbeous Vireo	10-21	Mesilla Park	CL
Cassin's Vireo	10-21	Mesilla Park	CL
Red-breasted Nuthatch	10-22	Mesilla Park	CL
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	10-22	Mesilla Bosque St. Park	MB
Eurasian Collared-Dove	10-23	Las Cruces	SWH
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	10-23	Las Cruces	SWH
Gray Catbird	10-24	Mesilla Bosque St. Park	MB
Brown Thrasher	10-24	Mesilla Bosque St. Park	MB
Blue-winged Teal	10-24	Mesilla Bosque St. Park	MB
Pine Siskin	10-27	Las Cruces	LS
Dusky Flycatcher	10-31	Percha	CL
Golden-crowned Kinglet	10-31	Percha	CL
Hooded Merganser	11-11, 15	Mesilla Bosque St. Park	MB
Horned Grebe	11-11	Bosque del Apache	LS
Bonaparte's Gull	11-16	Holloman Lake	CL
Harris's Hawk	11-16	Alamogordo	CL
Fox Sparrow	11-21; 12-15	Radium Spgs; Las Cruces	MS/JZ; NS
Rufous Hummingbird	11-22; 12-17	Las Cruces	LS; BHH
Black-chinned Sparrow	11-23	Kilbourne Hole	GS
Costa's Hummingbird	11-29; 30	Talavera	TL; DW
Anna's Hummingbird	11-29; 30	Talavera	TL; DW
Chestnut-collared Longspur	11-29; 12-4	Isaack's Lake; Uvas Mtns.	MB; CL
McCown's Longspur	11-29	Isaack's Lake	MB
Cattle Egrets	11-30	Las Cruces	AP
Broad-tailed Hummer	11-30	Talavera	DW
Ross's Goose	12-1	Mesilla Bosque St. Park	MB
American Wigeon	12-1	Burn Lake	PT
Bufflehead	12-1	Burn Lake	PT
Bullock's Oriole	12-5	Percha	CL
Eastern Phoebe	12-5	Percha	CL
Swamp Sparrow	12-5	Percha	CL
White-throated Sparrow	12-5	Percha	CL
Eastern Bluebird	12-5	Percha	CL
Brown Creeper	12-5	Percha	CL
Bald Eagle	12-5	Percha	CL
House Wren	12-5	Elephant Butte	CL
Osprey	12-5; 7	T or C	CL; WW, AK
Harris's Sparrow	12-5	Bosque del Apache	CL
Golden Eagle	12-5	Uvas Mtns.	CL
Glaucous, Herring, California Gulls	12-6	Sunland Park	JP
Hermit Thrush	12-7	Elephant Butte Dam	WW, AK
Common Goldeneye	12-9	Burn Lake	KS
Franklin's Gull	12-9	Sunland Park	SWH, CL
Hooded Warbler	12-9	Las Cruces	CCM
Vermilion Flycatcher	12-11	S of Percha	WW, ED
Hutton's Vireo	12-15	Mesilla Park	CL
Slate-colored Junco	12-15	Mesilla Park	CL

Observers: Matt Brooks, Eric Druskat, David Griffin, Barbara/Harold Harrison, Sue/Wally Hill, Alan Kreuger, Tim Lawton, Carl Lundblad, Carl/Charlotte Martens, Jim Paton, Avis Payne, Lorraine Schulte, Gill Sorg, Ken Stinnett, Nancy Stotz, Paul Turner, Walt Whitford, Daphne Wirthlin, Marcy Scott/Jimmy Zabriskie

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

Elephant Butte & Vicinity. November 12.
 A total of 8 enthusiastic birders were treated to some spectacular groups of birds, bird behavior and fabulous weather. We took the Derry/Arrey exit from I-25 and approximately 0.2 miles from the exit we experienced close to 1000 Sandhill Cranes wheeling around above a cut corn field, standing in the field and groups of 20-50 cranes gracefully landing with the group already on the field. This was equivalent to the most spectacular flights at the Bosque and we appreciated the great vocalizations of the Sandhills.

After stops for Red-tailed Hawks and kestrels we crossed the Rio Grande and took a dirt road up to Percha past the Price Dairy. At the dairy there were large numbers of blackbirds. Here we saw more than 50 doves, all Eurasian Collared Doves!! Are these doves kicking out the native species.....it sure looks that way.

Farther up the road were groups of meadowlarks, several hawks, Say's Phoebes and a Loggerhead Shrike. As we approached Percha, we encountered a group of approximately 15 Eastern Bluebirds. Stops at Percha and Palomas Marsh provided beautiful autumn landscapes but almost no birds.

We met Sherry Fletcher at the private reserve south of Elephant Butte. Lots of White-crowned Sparrows, some gadwalls, comorants, coots, widgeon and grebes added to our list of birds. Ms. Fletcher provided a history of the private reserve and their management philosophy for our participants.

Walt Whitford

MVAS TEACHING AWARD

- 9th Annual Lorraine Schulte Excellence in Teaching Award recognizes excellence in environmental education with \$200 award (\$50 for runner-up).
- Deadline for Applications: March 1, 2006
- For more information, contact Donna Wood at 525-8704 or donnacamino at yahoo.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	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	373-1891
Conservation	Bob Tafarielli	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	Jackie 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/.

(continued from page 1) **President**

Valley Bosque Park is starting to be developed. We, together with several others, have been very active in getting this park established and now is the time we need to keep active as they progress in its development.

In February we will host the NM Audubon Council meeting. We hope to show the folks from up-state a good time and good birding.

Let me end on a personal note. I didn't know how awesome birds were until I took ornithology at college in Minnesota as a biology major. Like Harold Harrison described in a previous newsletter, it hooked me too. I have had lapses in my birding from time to time, but only to my regret. While on a 3-year tour with the Peace Corps in Ghana, and traveling many places in Africa, I got sent a Peterson's Guide to the Birds of Africa by my ornithology professor. I loved using it and the birding was fantastic. To name a few, I saw Gray Parrots, African Fish Eagle, Red-headed Malimbe and my favorite the Pin-Tailed Whydah. It flew around the school campus I taught at often.

Then I didn't know what a great place for birding eastern Montana was until I left. I lived on the banks of the Missouri river right in the major north/south migration route. I had shorebirds that came from Chile heading to northern Canada. The ducks, geese, and cranes were in the thousands passing through. But my favorites were the songbirds—goldfinches, grosbeaks, chickadees, buntings, warblers, bobolinks, tanagers, towhees, orioles, and sparrows feeding on my deck as I ate dinner. Pheasants and Sharp-tailed Grouse were numerous. Now as I go on field trips I only add to the list of addiction.

Here's to good birding in 2006.

Roadrunner Ramblings is published six times a year: January, March, May, July, September, and November. Submissions welcome; please email copy to nstotz1 at comcast.net, or call for mailing information. **Next deadline: February 24.** 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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