



ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 27, No. 4. Aug.-Oct. 2005

Upcoming Events Highlight Threats to Valle Vidal

New Mexico's Valle Vidal, or "Valley of Life" is often referred to as the "Yellowstone Park of the Southern Rockies" and the place is, literally, full of life.

A trip to the Valle Vidal, northeast of Taos, may find troop after troop of Boy Scouts from states around the nation trekking into and out of the backcountry—the neighboring Philmont Boy Scout Ranch uses the Valle Vidal for "high adventure" outings. Anglers are out and about pursuing the world-class fly-fishing for native Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout. One of the nation's top elk hunting opportunities attracts lucky sportsmen & sports-women from all over the country each fall. Local ranchers move grazing cattle through the high-country grasslands and ponderosa pines. The Valle Vidal is rated one of the top horseback riding areas in the United States—and thousands of people come from thousands of miles around each year to experience what America used to be.

The scores of visitors each year visiting the public lands of the Valle Vidal bring millions of dollars to local communities—a *strong and sustainable economic engine that would be devastated by drilling* (for a full analysis of how local economies would lose out go to: www.vallevidal.org).

The El Paso Corporation of Houston, Texas—an energy giant deep in debt after being implicated for price-fixing in the 2001 California Energy Crisis—has petitioned the US Forest Service to open the "Valley of Life" to coal-bed methane drilling. Coal-bed methane—a high impact form of drilling— would cut apart the long-term economy and local values with a spiderweb of roads, well pads, pipelines and industrial traffic.

Please consider traveling to New Mexico for this opportunity August 18th—21st to take a guided horseback tour of the Valle Vidal—AND meet the local community. On 20th and 21st local volunteers will roll up their sleeves and work on watershed restoration projects—work that has been ongoing for the last 20 years during which time scores of volunteers have worked to slowly rebuild the health of the Valle Vidal from past abuses. Horseback touring opportunities are available the 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st.

Friday and Saturday evenings, a diverse collection of local leaders will speak on behalf of *protecting the Valle Vidal* in community forums. For Friday evening starting at 4 p.m. the Headline Speakers include:

Gary Fonay, *Former President of the New Mexico Oil & Gas Association*

Bill Richardson, *Governor of New Mexico*

Ron Schmeits, *NM Bankers Association President and 2nd Vice-President of the National Rifle Association*

Joe Torres, *President of the Valle Vidal Grazing Association*

Bruce Thompson, *Director of New Mexico Department of Game and Fish*

Mark Stinnett, *Philmont Boy Scout Ranch*

At the event you will also meet the local small town mayor, former Forest Service biologists, local Game Wardens and other representatives from the local community. For more information visit www.vallevidal.org

Intermediate Birding: Learn to listen, visualize and identify behaviors

MVAS will be teaching its first Intermediate Birding class through the Doña Ana Branch Community College this fall.

This class will emphasize Vocalizations, Form and Structure, Bird Behavior and Migration. Learning to listen to bird's calls, visualizing their shapes and recognizing their behaviors will be invaluable to the birder wanting to further develop their skills.

Participants are requested to bring portable tape recorders and blank tapes. Handouts and materials will be provided.

Classes will meet on October 11th, 18th and 25th in the conference room of the East Mesa campus of the DABCC from 7-9 PM. Field trips will take place on Oct. 15th, 22nd and 29th. Cost of the program will be \$40.00. The class will be limited to 8 people.

Contact Lisa Montoya at the E. Mesa Campus of DABCC. Phone: 527-7527

Welcome New Members

Patrick Ryan
Earle Pittman



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:

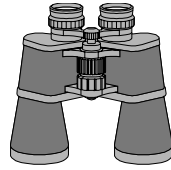
Membership, MVAS
P.O. Box 1645
Las Cruces, NM 88004

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.

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. August 27. Highlights on a late summer trip to these man-made wetlands near Alamogordo should include lots of shorebirds. Breeding Black-necked Stilts and Snowy Plovers should still be around, joined by flocks of migrating phalaropes and many other sandpiper species. Meet at the Hiway 70 K-Mart at 6:30 AM; we should return to Las Cruces by early afternoon. For more info, contact Nancy Stotz at 521-8087 or nstotz1@comcast.net.

Bitter Lake NWR and Vicinity. September 24-25. This overnight trip will visit the Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge plus Bottomless Lakes State Park and the Dexter Fish Hatchery. Hopefully we'll get some of the migratory shorebird stragglers like Black-necked Stilts, White-faced Ibis, and avocets in addition to wintering ducks like golden eyes. In Roswell, there may be Black-shouldered Kites and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers that haven't migrated yet. It's also a great time of the year to take in the diversity of dragonflies at the Refuge. There will be limited walking at Bitter Lake and at Bottomless Lakes State Park.

Meet in the parking lot of the Days Inn 1310 North Main Street Roswell at 7:30 AM on the 24th. Recommended lodging at the Days Inn (phone 505-623-4021) - prices range from \$47-\$75. Contact Walt Whitford at 521-1358 or wlawhitatzianet.com.

Black Range and Headwaters of Percha Creek. October 22. This trip will be a one-half day trip with a moderate amount of walking. The canyon at the headwaters of Percha is relatively flat and pretty easy walking. Hopefully we will see Acorn Woodpeckers, Steller's Jays, and possibly bush tits that are year-round residents. Even if birds are sparse, the canyon is beautiful and there should still be some wildflowers in the canyon. Plan on having lunch in Hillsboro at the Barbershop Cafe (well worth the trip to Hillsboro). Meet at Hwy 70 KMart at 7:30 AM to car pool. High clearance or 4 wheel drive vehicle recommended. Contact Walt Whitford at 521-1358 or wlawhitatzianet.com.

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.

Ecuador: Amazon and Andes. September 21. MVAS member Storm Sermay will present a photo tour of the Ecuador Amazon basin, northeastern high Andes, and the western foothills. This program will present some of the birds, places, and people of Ecuador. Although it is a small country (about the size of Nevada), Ecuador has over 1500 bird species recorded.

West Nile Virus and Birds. October 19. Ms. Holly Vuong (new member of MVAS and a graduate student in the Fisheries and Wildlife Science Department at NMSU) will give a presentation on her studies of the prevalence of West Nile virus in local bird populations (both resident and migratory birds).

Directions...

...to our meeting place in the **Village at Northrise**. Heading east on Highway 70 (North Main Street), turn right on **Roadrunner Parkway** (at the top of the hill east of I-25). From Roadrunner, turn left at the first stoplight (**Northrise Drive**). From Northrise, take the first right through the gates into the Village complex. If the gate is closed, pull up close and wait for the automatic sensor to detect your vehicle and open the gate. From the gate, drive down the hill to the stop sign. Turn right again to get to the **Hallmark Building** where we hold our monthly programs. There is a small parking lot in front of the building and additional parking on the south side of the street. We meet in the **Activity Room**, which is on the ground floor (one floor up from the parking garage and entrance on the south side of the building).

Audubon Adventures - 2005 - 2006

by Lorraine Schulte, Audubon Adventures Chair

Thanks to the generosity of numerous donors, during the school year 2005-2006 students in eighty-four classrooms in Las Cruces, Alamogordo, Truth or Consequences and Arrey will have the opportunity to be enrolled in the Audubon Adventures program. In this year's program, they will learn about "Spiders," "Dragonflies and Damselflies," "Waterbirds," and "Turtles and Tortoises."

Funds raised by Birdathon and contributions from the following people

and organizations have assured the continued success of this excellent program:

Bobolink, Citizens Bank, Enchanted Gardens, Hi Hopes Garden Club, Tour of Gardens, VFW at Elephant Butte, Mary Jo Ballator, Barb and David Baron, Gary Gray/Mary Beauchemin, Laurie Beougher, Sylvia Bizzell, Joel Brown, Susann Brown, Brenda Buck, Collette Bullock, Jeanne Burkhardt, Rita Caccamise, Patricia Cashman, Robert and Beth Czerniak, WM Dickpeddie,

Joseph and Jacqueline Dink, Clifford Edwards, Valerie Endruweit, Richard and Gail Estell, Neil Fuller, Laurence Ganong, Elisabeth Garrison, Katherine Giles, Ann Goode, Patricia Hackler, Lynne Halvorson, Harold Harrison, Sue and Wally Hill, James Horst, Karen Huggins, Bill and Donna Jacobson, Marlys Kleppe, Floyd and Susan Lane, Michaela Lane-Sanchez, Jennifer Lawton, Jonathon Lawton, Rebecca Lawton, Russell Lawton, Tim Lawton, Janice Ludtka, Connie Maxwell, Ed Mayfield, Nancy McDonald, Lisa McKee, Diane McLaughlin, Helga and Abe Mendoza, Robert (Tito) Meyer, Lori Minnick, Darrell Mott, Gerald Mueller, Diane Nelson, Janice Newman, Joe Orduñez, Peter Pache, Cecil Post, Leslye Ramirez, Albert Rango, Bobbie Raub, Barb Rodriguez, Jan Saari, Lorraine Schulte, Storm Sermay, Scott and Melissa Sheward, Janina Singleton, Amanda Skarsgard, Nancy Stotz/Ralph Preszler, Kim Straus, Beverly Sweeney, Robert Tafanelli, Jame Teague, Mary Ann Thibodeau, Leslie Thornberry, Charles Townley, Judith Williams, Mary Williams, Donna Wood, Dorothy Wood, Walt Whitford, Tom and Eleanor Wootten, and Nadia Zucker/Richard Spellenberg.

Bird Notes

Species	Date	Location	Observers
Black Tern	5-29	La Llorona Park	NS
Long-billed Curlew	6-8	Holloman Lake	CL
Least Bittern	6-19	Old Refuge	NS
Rufous Hummingbird	7-1	Las Cruces	SWH; DM
Peregrine Falcon	7-9	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Broad-tailed Hummer	7-10	Las Cruces	SWH
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	7-11	Percha	RH/JM
Bell's Vireo	7-12	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Calliope Hummingbird	7-12;15	Radium Spgs;Dripping Spgs	MS/JZ ;CL
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	7-13	Las Cruces	SWH
Painted Bunting	7-16	La Mesa	SWH,BR,LS,DW
Varied Bunting	7-16	La Mesa	SWH,BR,LS,DW
Yellow-headed Blackbird	7-16	La Mesa	SWH,BR,LS,DW
Burrowing Owl	7-16	Spring Hill Inn, LC	RF/DM
Baird's Sandpiper	7-16	Holloman Lake	CL
Cassin's Sparrow	7-17	Calle del Norte	BR
Great Egret	7-18	Burn Lake	PT
Calliope Hummingbird	7-20	Las Cruces	SWH
American Avocet	7-20	Burn Lake; Holloman Lake	PT; CL
Snowy Plover	7-20	Holloman Lake	CL
Lucy's Warbler	7-23	La Mesa	SWH
Virginia's Warbler	7-23	La Mesa	SWH
Peregrine Falcon	7-30	"A" Mountain	RH
Golden Eagles (4!)	8-7	La Cueva	BR
Lark Sparrow	8-8	Las Cruces Dam	NS

Observers: Ruth Ford/Mawhinney (new to New Mexico), Sue Hill/Wally Hill, Robert Hull/Jackye Meineke, Carl Lundblad, Darrell Mott, Barb Rodriguez, Marcy Scott/Jimmy Zabriskie, Lorraine Schulte, Paul Turner, Donna Wood

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

New Mexico Rare Bird Hotline 505-884-3269
or <http://www.nmosbirds.org>

Rare Bird Alerts for NM and other states: www.birder.com

Dragonfly Festival August 27-28

Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge



- Guided Tours
- Dragonfly Slide Shows
- Wildlife Exhibit Booths
- Animal Sounds Contest

Reservations required for all tours. Refuge will be accepting phone reservations beginning August 1st.
Call 505-625-4011

Festival of the Cranes

The Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge will hold the 18th Annual Festival of the Cranes Tuesday, November 15 through Sunday, November 20, 2005.

Over 100 events are planned including
birding with experts on and off the Refuge;
multiple Refuge tours;
visits to the VLA, the Armendaris Ranch, the brand-new El Camino Real International Heritage Center, the Quebradas and archeology sites;
plus long-lens photography, art, gardens, and field trips with local old-timers;
outstanding keynote speakers (Michael Forsberg, conservationist and award-winning nature photographer, and Wayne Sentman, marine biologist and international traveler);
and so much more.

After September 1, call 505-835-2077 for a brochure, check the website www.friendsofthebosque.org/crane for more details, or write to
Friends of the Bosque del Apache
P. O. Box 340
San Antonio NM 87832.

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

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Programs	board at large	
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Newsletter Editor	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Publicity	Jackye 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/.

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