

# MESILLA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY



## ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

VOLUME 21, No. 3 MAY/JUNE 1999

### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Ed Mayfield

Jennifer Atchley and I attended the New Mexico Audubon Council meeting on Saturday, April 10 at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. The meeting was very effective, setting new goals for the Council. The Council is going to change in two ways. First, it is going to be more responsive and supportive of the Audubon chapters in the state. Second, it is going to take specific actions representing the chapters on major statewide issues. Another meeting to be held June 19 will define and adopt special projects for Council activities. The projects will be: 1) Helping develop more expertise in the local chapters, 2) Developing an action alert program to let chapters know about items that need immediate action, 3) Improving legislative activism, and 4) Working on statewide conservation projects.

Some of the items that will be coming up: the Important Bird Area Program to locate, define, and publicize areas of important bird activity in New Mexico; the "Silvery Minnow" program concerning the Rio Grande water distribution system to protect this endangered species; a State parks program to help improve our parks by inventorying and documenting bird species, identifying needs for protection, and developing interpretive/educational programs for park visitors.

I invite anyone interested in the Council's activities to attend the next meeting. The Council is changing and we need input from the chapters. Our money goes to support the council and up until now, very little has been done to support the chapters. It is going to be an important meeting so please attend and support your organization. Your input is very important and much needed. If interested, please contact Jennifer Atchley at 526-1320 or me at 382-0715 or [mayfield@greatwhite.com](mailto:mayfield@greatwhite.com)



**Audubon  
Needs  
You** !

### BIRDATHON!

#### IT'S HERE AGAIN

#### WHAT IS IT?

Our yearly fundraiser to support our Audubon Adventures program, other educational programs, our state office at the Randall Davey Audubon Center in Santa Fe, and conservation activities.

#### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Each participant raises money by asking sponsors to pledge money per bird species seen in a 24-hour period.

#### HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

You can participate either as a birder to raise funds or as a sponsor of someone else.

#### WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

Birdathon is scheduled for May 8. You may join a team of birders, bird on your own, or pledge funds.

Call Tim Lawton  
522-2056

For more information and to sign up

## DID YOU KNOW?

There are some great birding areas in or near Las Cruces.

Visit:

Aguirre Springs  
Apodaca Park  
Burn Lake  
Dripping Springs  
Leasburg State Park  
Levee Roads Along the Rio Grande  
Old Refuge  
Percha/Caballo State Parks

If you don't know where these are, call any board member or officer. We will be glad to give you directions.

## BURROWING OWL REPRISÉ

By Carol Finley

Now is the time that Burrowing Owls start migrating back to this area. I am still compiling information to add to the statewide list of Burrowing Owls.

I am encouraging everyone to document the date and location of any Burrowing Owl sightings and report them to me at 525-8327 or e-mail at rcampbell@zianet.com



## BIRDFINDING IN SOUTHWESTERN NM

MVAS would like to publish a guide to finding birds in the southwest part of New Mexico. We have formed a committee to consider the format of the guide and would like suggestions from interested members of the birding community. We want to know about any places that you think are good birding areas.

We need individuals who would like to contribute ideas, drawings, photographs, or have writing or map making skills. Please call Ed Mayfield at 382-0715, if you wish to participate in this project.



## FIELD TRIPS

Please be prepared for Southwestern Summer weather with a hat, sunblock, and plenty of water for all field trips.

### May 15. Chiricahua Mountains, AZ.

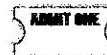
Perhaps the jewel of all the southwest's "sky islands," the Chiricahuas offer an incredible variety of bird species, as well as gorgeous surroundings. Species we hope to see include Acorn and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Black Phoebe, three kinds of flycatchers, Scrub and Mexican Jays, Bridled Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Bell's Vireo, Painted Redstart, and three species of warblers. This is also the premier U.S. habitat for the Elegant Trogon. This is an overnight trip. Meet at Sunny Flat Campground at 7 A.M. Saturday. A social gathering will be held at the campground on Friday night. Contact Ed Mayfield (phone: 382-7015 or e-mail: mayfield@greatwhite.com) for more information on the trip, how to get there, and where to stay.

### June 19. Leasburg Dam State Park. Join

us for a fun day trip to see many shore and wading birds along the Rio Grande, including herons, egrets, and kingfishers. Come and see a number of varieties of swallows, warblers, tanagers, orioles, thrashers, hummingbirds, and sparrows. Meet at 7 A.M. at the Mayfield High School parking lot on Valley & Hoagland. Contact Susan Beck (phone: 524-6723 or e-mail: susabeck@lib.nmsu.edu) for more information.

**Weekday Field Trips.** Can't come to Saturday field trips? Want to bird a nearby spot where MVAS hasn't been recently? Are you free during the week? MVAS will be offering weekday field trips for those who would like to bird the "off time". Contact Susan Beck (phone: 524-6723 or e-mail: susabeck@lib.nmsu.edu) for more information. Watch this space for future weekday field trip announcements.

## PROGRAMS



Programs and meetings are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month, September through April, at the Las Cruces High School Library, 1755 El

Paseo Rd. Programs begin at 7:30 P.M.

Announcement, news, and information begin at 6:45 P.M. preceding the program.

### Annual Potluck. Wednesday, May 19.

This year's potluck will be at the Dripping Springs Natural Area in the La Cueva Group Site picnic area. The festivities will commence at 5:30 P.M. and end at 7:30 P.M. Dripping Springs closes at sunset (they will lock the gate at 8 P.M.) Please bring your own main dish and beverage, and your own plates, glasses, and utensils. Also bring a dish to share (salad, side dish, or dessert). Barbecue grills are available at the site. The chapter will furnish charcoal.

The featured event will be awarding of the first ever NM Audubon Council Aldo Leopold Conservation Award. The presentation will take place at about 6:30 P.M. In addition, we will have a silent auction of the Birdathon prizes, which include binoculars, feeders, solar sippers, and a variety of other items. Bring your checkbook! The auction will begin at 5:30 P.M. and end at 7:15 P.M.

Remember there is a \$3.00 fee per car which is payable at the entrance to the La Cueva picnic area. Come early, bring your "binos", carpool if you wish, and be ready to enjoy the evening. For more information, call Jennifer Atchley, 525-9537 or Bill Jacobson, 382-6877.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

William & Elizabeth Blohm  
Lynn Lubamersky  
Nicholas Miller  
Rosemarie Melon-Sanchez  
Donna Wood



## HERPS BILL FAILS IN NM LEGISLATURE

By David Henderson

Excerpted from the Randall Davey  
Newsletter

Audubon's legislative agenda was small, but important. We were very involved in two critical pieces of legislation that directly address the need to protect the diversity of New Mexico's wildlife and habitat. Our priority issue, as identified by the New Mexico Audubon Council, is the protection of the state's reptiles and amphibians, which are not currently protected from commercial collection by state law. We were able to secure the sponsorship of Representative Ray Begaye of Shiprock, a freshman representative who quickly became a strong supporter of the issue. The bill made it through the House with some amendments in committee.

The Senate side was a different story. Like two years ago, the bill reached the Senate with little time left in the session. In Senate Conservation the bill was debated and ultimately tabled (effectively killing it) for drafting (language) problems.

Though once again we have fallen a bit short of our goal, we make a very good showing and have laid the groundwork for another run in two years. For all of you who helped by calling your Representatives, thank you.

### FIELD TRIP REPORTS

#### Hatch and the Uvas Valley, March 13.

High water on the Rio Grande and an extremely dry winter changed the bird distribution dramatically for this third annual trip to Hatch. Numbers of raptors and sparrows were dramatically reduced in the high country beyond the river valley, and water birds were absent because the ponds of the Uvas Valley were all dry. We saw 46 different species, with highlights that included Common Goldeneye on the river at Hatch, a Ferruginous Hawk and singing Western and Eastern Meadowlarks together in the Uvas Valley, and early swallows (Barn, Rough-winged, and Violet-green) on Swan Pond north of Leasburg. A birding hot spot discovered on this trip is the Hatch Community Big and Little Peoples Park, excellent for both lunch and birds.

### BIRD NOTES

Song Sparrow	Mar 5	Las Cruces	LS, SH, WH
Turkey Vulture	Mar 6	Mesilla Park	CB
Cliff Swallow	Mar 6	Picacho Hills	KS
Barn Swallow	Mar 11	Burn Lake	LS
Greater Yellowlegs	Mar 11	Burn Lake	LS
Common Goldeneye	Mar 13	Hatch	Field Trip
White-throated Swift	Mar 13	Leasburg	SH, WH
Long-eared Owl	Mar 14	Mesilla Park	CB
N. Rough-winged Swallow	Mar 13	Leasburg	SH, WH
Western Sandpiper	Mar 13	Leasburg	SH, WH
Least Sandpiper	Mar 13	Leasburg	SH, WH
Turkey Vulture	Mar 18	Las Cruces	BG
Violet-green Swallow	Mar 19	Burn Lake	LS
Double-crested Cormorant	Mar 21	Burn Lake	JM, NS
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Mar 24	Las Cruces	SH, BG
Western Wood-Pewee	Mar 24	Percha	L/JS, S/WH
Hooded Oriole	Mar 25	Las Cruces	SH, WH
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Mar 28	Las Cruces	TL
Bronzed Cowbird	Mar 29	Las Cruces	LS
Bullock's Oriole	Mar 31	Las Cruces	LS
Hooded Oriole	Apr 2	Las Cruces	LS
Grasshopper Sparrow	Apr 3	Percha St. Pk.	MS, JZ
Long-billed Curlew	Apr 3	Percha St. Pk.	MS, JZ
Osprey	Apr 3	Percha St. Pk.	MS, JZ
Barn Owl	Apr 3	Percha St. Pk.	MS, JZ
Scott's Oriole	Apr 3 + 6	Las Cruces	SH, BG
Western Kingbird	Apr 6	Las Cruces	SH
Hammond's Flycatcher	Apr 7	Las Cruces	TL
Costa's Hummingbird	Apr 11	Las Cruces	KL
Wilson's Warbler	Apr 13	Leasburg	LS, SH
Black-headed Grosbeak	Apr 13	Leasburg	LS, SH
White-throated Sparrow	Apr 13	Leasburg	LS, SH
American Avocet	Apr 13	Leasburg	LS, SH
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Apr 18	Las Cruces	TL
Vesper Sparrow	Apr 24	N of Las Cruces	SH, LS
Lark Sparrow	Apr 24	N of Las Cruces	SH, LS
Chipping Sparrow	Apr 24	N of Las Cruces	SH, LS
Lesser Nighthawk	Apr 24	N of Las Cruces	GE, TL
Lesser Nighthawk	Apr 24	Las Cruces	SS

Observers: Craig Benkman, Gordon Ewing, Bill Glenn, Sue Hill, Wally Hill, Tim Lawton, Kevin Leftwich, Jim Mulhauser, Nena Singleton, John Schulte, Lorraine Schulte, Marcy Scott, Storm Sermay, Ken Stinnett, Jimmy Zabriski.

Please report any early, late, or unusual sightings to Tim Lawton  
e-mail: [tlawton@NMSU.edu](mailto: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
Secretary	Sue Hill	382-9758
Treasurer	Mary Lou Wallace	522-0684
Board (97-99)	Wally Hill	382-9758
Board (97-99)	Maxine Perkins	524-1529
Board (98-00)	Susan Beck	524-6723
Board (98-00)	Jennifer Atchley	526-1320
Board (99-01)	Harold Harrison	522-6199
Board (99-01)	Charles Townley	526-8750

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Audubon Adventures	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Audubon Council	Jennifer Atchley	526-1320
Delegates	Ed Mayfield	382-0715
Conservation	Jennifer Atchley	526-1320
Education	Maxine Perkins	524-1529
Field Trips	Susan Beck	524-6723
Membership Records	Mary Anne Thibodeau	524-4126
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 PM at the Southwest 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**

**MVAS PRESENTS AWARD**

*By Joy McFarland*

The third annual Lorraine Schulte Award for Excellence in Teaching was awarded at the April MVAS meeting to Barbara J. McLemore, a speech teacher at Loma Heights Elementary School. The \$100 award is given annually to an elementary or mid-school teacher for his/her efforts in environmental education.

Although Ms. McLemore is not a classroom teacher, in her work with small groups of children, she uses environmental themes to teach the children correct oral and written language. Due to illness, Ms. McLemore was unable to be present to receive the award, but sent a folder of student work which included both factual and poetic material (including pictures and animal tracks) written by the children about birds and animals. Her school principal regards Ms. McLemore as a leader in environmental issues at Loma Heights.

**MEET TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

**Harold Harrison** has been an active Audubon member since 1982 and continues to enjoy participation in all MVAS activities. His pet project is Audubon Adventures. This year, Harold has accepted Membership Committee responsibility, and he challenges each of our 300+ members to recruit one new "Auduboner" (someone who won't rue the "Audubon they audubon," per Ogden Nash.)

Currently, Harold works at the NASA White Sands Test Facility (WSTF) as an environmental scientist. Prior to WSTF, he spent 26 years teaching biology and coaching wrestling at Las Cruces High School. He and his wife (and birding partner) Barbara, live and feed birds in southeast Las Cruces.

**Susan Beck** moved to Las Cruces two years ago from Corpus Christi, Texas where she became an avid backyard birder. She is head of Humanities and Social Sciences Services at NMSU Library.

Although this is Susan's first year on the board, she has taken on the big task of organizing our field trips.

*Roadrunner Ramblings* is published six times a year: January, March, May, July, September, and November. Contributions are welcome. Please e-mail copy to: ssermay@zianet.com, or call for mailing information. **Next deadline: June 26**

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