

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

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BLM to Revise Management Plan

by Bob Tafanelli & Nancy Stotz

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing to amend its 1993 Mimbres Resource Management Plan, and they will soon (perhaps as early as the end of September) begin asking for public input on how BLM lands are managed in Doña Ana, Sierra, and Otero counties.

In all three counties, a number of conservation issues are likely to be addressed, including the designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), public access, resource protection, and recreation (including off-highway vehicle management). One of the keys to habitat protection is controlling road access—having enough roads, but not too many. If you know of roads that should be closed or areas that need road access, now is the time to comment, because we may have to live with this plan for another decade.

Since the BLM will be soliciting input from a wide-range of users, it will be important for conservationists to speak up to ensure adequate protections for areas with significant wildlife and wilderness values. If you are aware of any areas of critical environmental concern please let us know. These areas can have scenic, biological, archeological, historical or other values, so don't limit your ideas.

In Doña Ana County, additional attention will be given to open space preservation and land tenure designations. In the 1993 plan, the BLM designated roughly 60,000 acres of land—most on the East Mesa between the river valley and the mountains—for disposal (sale or exchange to other governmental entities or private owners). Through the revision, our community will have an opportunity to revisit those designations and comment on how the disposal process is handled. Please help by providing us with your comments and ideas.

In preparation for the revision, a Draft Vision for a county-wide open space and trail system has been developed by the Citizens' Task Force for Open Space Preservation (CTF). The Draft Vision proposes additional protections for several "Open Space and Trail Areas" on BLM land. Currently, CTF is requesting feedback from community groups and individuals about the Draft Vision; ultimately, CTF hopes to be able to gather the support of

Audubon Adventures Update

*by Lorraine Schulte, Chairman
Audubon Adventures*

The Audubon Adventures program that we sponsor and provide to schools in Las Cruces, Alamogordo and Truth or Consequences continues to be one of Mesilla Valley Audubon Society's most important projects. Another classroom in Arrey, N.M. will be included this year.

With the support of members and friends, as well as generous donations from VFW Post 1389 and the Tour of Gardens of Las Cruces, and funds raised by our annual Birdathon, we will be providing 90 classrooms with this excellent study program. The kits will arrive early in October 2004. Randall Davey Audubon Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico, will have ready another New Mexico supplement entitled "New Mexico Salamanders" which we will include in the kits before they go to the schools.

Those who have donated to Audubon Adventures since September 2003 are Hi Hopes Garden Club, Lucia Wilcox, Linda and Walter Whitford, Sue and Wally Hill, Mary Anna McCarthy, Seanna Barton, Lorraine Schulte, Pearl Nickell, Mary Williams, Thomas and Jane Teague, Robert Meyer, Shirley Minge, Bill and Donna Jacobson, Mark and Daison Taylor Glaw, Nancy Stotz and Ralph Preszler, Robert Tafanelli, Ann Goode, John Mangameli, Walter Kazmier, Ruth Wiser, Nina Singleton, Ed and Dianne Nelson, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Tillett, Tim Lawton, Mary Lou Wallace, Darrell Mott, funds raised by Jackye Meinecke at Enchanted Gardens, VFW Post 1389 (in Elephant Butte, N.M.), and Las Cruces Tour of Gardens.

Joy McFarland, who is the teacher-contact for this program, contributes many hours of time, making phone calls and personal contacts with teachers and checking on orders. Our program is successful in great part due to her dedication.

Michelle Santisteban is continuing her project "Proposal for Research on the Audubon Adventures Program," evaluating the effectiveness of this program in educating young students who will eventually become stewards of the environment.

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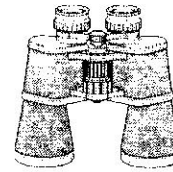
Programs

Programs and meetings are held each month, September-April, at the Village at Northrise, Hallmark Building, 2882 N. Roadrunner Pkway, Las Cruces. Programs begin at

7:30 PM. News, announcements, and information begin at 7:00, preceding the program.

Mexican Spotted Owl Study in the Gila. September 15. MVAS's own Gill Sorg worked as a field biologist this summer for the Hubbs-Seaworld Institute. Gill will tell us about his adventures and share with us some of the findings of the Institute's ongoing study of the effects of low flying aircraft on the behavior, reproduction and more of the Mexican Spotted Owl.

Not just parroting: dialects and duets in the Yellow-naped Amazon of Costa Rica. October 20. Dr. Tim Wright, a new faculty member in the Biology Department at NMSU, has studied behavior and communication in wild Yellow-naped Amazons for over a decade. He will present highlights of this research including his discovery of vocal dialects, in which multiple calls change at the same boundaries, much as found in human language. Video of parrots in action will be presented, including mated pairs engaged in duets at nest sites. Finally, he will discuss conservation issues, particularly the adverse effect of the trade in wild-caught parrots.



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.

Mesilla Valley Bosque Park. September 18. Come check out the site of New Mexico's newest state park. We'll visit the Picacho Wetlands site where ongoing restoration projects are improving habitat for waterfowl and other wetland residents. In the surrounding desert scrub, we should be able to see plenty of desert specialists such as Crissal Thrashers. Meet at Oñate Plaza (corner of Hiway 28 and Calle del Norte) at 7 AM for this half-day trip. Contact Harold Harrison (522-6199, hharrison@zianet.com) for more information.

Field Trip Report

Armendaris Ranch. July 11. Although the sign-up for the Armendaris bat flight trip was disappointingly small, our group was very impressed with the Armendaris Ranch and with the bat flights. We visited several of the prairie dog colonies and enjoyed watching a large number of burrowing owls that inhabit the colonies. We then visited the only natural source of water in the entire Jornada de Muerto basin—an artesian spring oasis that was an important stop for the wagon trains traveling the Camino Real to Santa Fe. There were several birds in the trees around the oasis (western kingbirds, scaled quail, and American kestrels).

We arrived at the collapsed lava tube around 6 PM and were treated to an early flight of bats (before we had settled in for our picnic dinner). The Swainson's hawks did not disappoint us and provided a number of opportunities to watch the hawks capture bat sandwiches. We had our picnic during a lull in the bats emerging from the cave. There was a second flight that lasted for approximately 45 minutes with hundreds of bats forming huge clouds, traveling toward the river valley. The bat flights were made more spectacular by our proximity to the mouth of the cave—sufficiently close for even the auditorily challenged to hear the wings of the bats. The remote location and the beautiful landscape also added to the enjoyment of the evening.

Walt Whitford

Portal/Cave Creek, AZ. October 8-10. The Portal/Cave Creek area is in the Chiricahua Mountains. Called "Sky Islands," they offer numerous noteworthy bird species including Brown-crested Flycatchers, Mexican Jays, Painted Redstarts, and many hummingbird species. The area includes the premier US habitat for the Elegant Trogon. Participants should meet trip leader Ed Mayfield at the Sunny Flats Campground at 7 AM (Arizona time) on Saturday morning. Contact Ed at 382-0715 or mayfield@zianet.com for more information.

Acomodations: Several forest service campgrounds are available, as well as some B & B's (including Portal Peak Lodge at 520-558-2223 and Cave Creek Ranch at 520-558-2334).

San Andres National Wildlife Refuge. November 13. Joint field trip with the Las Cruces Museum of Natural History.

**Space limited:
Reservations required.**

Call the Museum at 522-3120 to reserve your slot. The refuge is surrounded by military land and not generally open to the public, so don't miss this chance to visit!

JOIN NOW!

- National Membership: 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.
- Chapter Membership: 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 _____

Email _____

Q54
7XCH

Send this form and your check to:

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

Use this form for new memberships only.
Renewal notices will be sent to you.

"Basic Bird Watching" Course Offered

Are you a newcomer to Las Cruces and our "Land of Enchantment"? Do you have a friend, neighbor or golfing buddy who is? Do you want to start a new hobby or learn to identify the intriguing birds you see on your daily walk or in your backyard? If so, now is the time to sign up for the MVAS adult education course "Basic Bird Watching."

Offered through the Community Education Program at Doña Ana Branch Community College, the course will include such topics as viewing equipment, birding books, general bird identification tips and backyard birding. Participants will receive a good introduction to the birds of southern New Mexico by seeing slides of southwestern birds and going on field trips to birding hot spots.

Four classroom sessions will be held on Tuesday evenings, October 19 and 26, and November 2 and 9, from 7-9 PM. There will be two, local Saturday morning field trips on October 23 & 30, and an all-day trip to the Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, November 6.

The cost is \$40 per person. Class size is limited to 15, so register early. Call the Community Education Department at DABCC (527-7527) for registration information or contact MVAS Education Committee Chair, Donna Wood (donna.camino@yahoo.com). If you want a fun, educational activity where you meet terrific people, then please join us!

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(continued from page 1) **BLM**

community groups for the final Vision, and to submit it to the BLM as part of the revision process. To check out the Draft Vision and provide feedback, visit the CTF website at www.zianet.com/openspace.

To keep informed about this important opportunity to influence BLM management priorities or to share your ideas or comments:

- Watch the newspaper for articles about public meetings associated with the BLM's planning process.
- Sign up for the MVAS conservation committee list to receive information about this and other conservation issues; email Bob Tafanelli at btafanel@zianet.com or phone 526-9380.
- Visit the CTF website at www.zianet.com/openspace for meeting announcements and other information.

New Mexico Audubon Council Meeting

Saturday, September 18th, 10 AM
Randall Davey Audubon Center,
Santa Fe

All Audubon members welcome.

Bird Notes

Species	Date	Location	Observers
Varied Thrush	7-3	Mesilla	RWD,GP,BR,LS
Rufous Hummer	7-4;5	Radium Spgs;Dripping Spgs	MSJZ; BR
Cassin's Sparrow	7-7	Mesilla	LS
Calliope Hummer	7-9;13	Radium Spgs; Las Cruces	MSJZ;SWH
Calliope Hummer	7-9	El Paso	JP
Western Tanager	7-9	Radium Springs	MSJZ
Vermilion Flycatcher	7-10	Isaack's	HH
Possible Allen's Hummer	7-10;8-3	Las Cruces	DG
Pectoral Sandpiper	7-11	Isaack's	DG
Willet	7-11;22	Holloman;Isaack's	MSJZ; SWH
Long-billed Curlew	7-11;22	Holloman;Isaack's	MSJZ; SWH
Common Poorwill	7-14	WSTF	HH, AS
Black Tern	7-17;8-14	Holloman;Isaack's	BHH;JH,SWH,BR
Pine Siskin	7-21	Radium Springs	MSJZ
Long-billed Dowitcher	7-22	Isaack's	SWH
Common Moorhen	7-22	Isaack's	SWH
Common Ground Dove	7-24	La Union	GP, LS
Hepatic Tanager	7-25	Las Cruces	SWH
Yellow Warbler	7-30;8-19	Ft. Bliss;Las Cruces, Radium Spgs	JP;SWH,MSJZ
Townsend's Warbler	7-30	Ft. Bliss	JP
Hermit Warbler	7-30	Ft. Bliss	JP
Carolina Wren	7-30	Ft. Bliss	JP
Semipalmated Sandpiper	7-30	Ft. Bliss	JP
Baird's Sandpiper	7-30	Ft. Bliss	JP
Stilt Sandpiper	7-30;8-20	Ft. Bliss;Isaack's	JP;SWH
Summer Tanager	8-3	Las Cruces	SWH
Anna's Hummer	8-3	Las Cruces	DG
Upland Sandpiper	8-9;8-14	Isaack's	GE,SWH;JH,SWH,BR
Sage Thrasher	8-9	Isaack's	SWH
Peregrine Falcon	8-9;14	Isaack's;Fairacres	SWH;RP,NS
Black-thrt'd Gray Warbler	8-14	Las Alturas	BB
Grace's Warbler	8-19	Radium Springs	MSJZ
Great Egret	8-20	Isaack's	SWH
Solitary Sandpiper	8-21	Las Cruces Dam	NS

Observers: Beth Bardwell, Rob and Wendy Davis, David Griffin, Jannette Hale, Barbara and Harold Harrison, Sue and Wally Hill, Jim Paton, Guy Powers, Ralph Preszler, Barb Rodriguez, Amanda Skarsgard, Lorraine Schulte, Marcy Scott/Jimmy Zabriskie, Nancy Stotz

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

Sevilleta Open House & Field Trip

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	vacant	
Vice-president	Guy Powers	373-3843
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COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Conservation	Bob Tafanelli	526-9380
Education	Donna Wood	525-8704
Field Trips	Donna Wood	525-8704
Programs	board at large	
Membership	Harold Harrison	522-6199
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/.

Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge's annual open house is fast approaching. It will be October 9th, 2004. There will be speakers, exhibits and field trips of all sorts. The open house is the one time each year that this otherwise closed refuge is open to the public.

Of interest to birders will be the birding trip to Pinyon Canyon on Sunday, October 10th. The trip is from 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM. It includes a bag lunch and transportation to the canyon. This is an excellent guided field trip for the avid birder. We will travel through grasslands and hike up arroyos into the heart of the Los Pinos Mountains with US Forest Service ornithologist Hart Schwarz. This little canyon has a permanent water source and is a popular stop with a wide variety of fall migrants. On past trips we have seen golden eagles, Ferruginous hawk, sage thrasher, burrowing owl, black chinned sparrow, Cassin's finch, Williamson's sapsucker and MacGillivray's warbler, to name just a few. Bring binoculars, dress in layers, and be prepared for a full day of birding in the field.

Cost \$7 per person. Space is limited to 25 participants. Registration is required. Go to <http://southwest.fws.gov/refuges/newmex/Sevilleta> to print out a registration form that you can mail in via USPS. Registrations accepted via US postal mail only.

For additional information contact:

Kimberly King-Wrenn, Outdoor Recreation Planner
Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge
505-864-4021-106

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