

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 32, No. 1. Jan.-Feb. 2010

President's Message

by David Griffin, MVAS President

Well another year has passed...

In my President's Messages last year I focused on the work and writings of Aldo Leopold. My theme of tying Leopold's observations of the natural world through a year with my own observations was my way of celebrating the 100th Anniversary of his arrival in the Southwest and the origins and development of his "Land Ethic."

I hope you enjoyed reading some of the thoughtful passages I quoted from his classic book, *A Sand County Almanac, and Sketches Here and There*, and I hope that you were compelled to go out and purchase your first copy or pick up that old dog-eared copy off your shelf and read it once again. I find myself reading it about every 3 years. I always glean more thought-provoking wisdom from the pages even though I know what is written on the next page. I also seem to read it more slowly as the years go by—a page here, a chapter there, one passage, then another.

I love history, and I guess Leopold's descriptive writing helps take me back in time to see how things were in the Southwest. It also helps me focus my own conservation ideas and thoughts about Wilderness and wildlife, and about the human appreciation for wild places and the way we enjoy them. I haven't yet decided on a "theme" for my messages in 2010, but there's no rush...

MVAS By-Laws Revisions: The board and officers met in early December to review our bylaws and hold a planning session. The By-Laws were last reviewed in 2003, and the officers and board felt it was time to take a look again to help ensure the chapter was staying focused on our mission. They made minor revisions to some items, as well as a few changes and updates. These items will be presented to the general MVAS membership for review and a vote at a future chapter meeting in 2010.

Officers and Board of Directors Elections: Our annual elections for officers and board members will be coming up at our February 17th chapter meeting. If you are interested in becoming more involved with MVAS as an officer or board member or would like to nominate another MVAS member, please contact a member of the Nomination Committee. For more information see announcement inside.

Beginning Birdwatching

Are you new to the area, or perhaps just mystified by the birds you see in your yard and neighborhood? Come join us for our spring Basic Birdwatching Class!

The course, offered through Doña Ana Community College's Community Education program, provides a great introduction to the birds of our region. Through classroom sessions and field trips, we'll help you start identifying local birds by their shape, size, sound, behavior, and habitat, and you'll get an introduction to some of our local birdwatching hotspots.

We'll also give you some tips for attracting birds to your yard, information on optical equipment, and a review of various birding publications. The final class will be a trip to the Vertebrate Museum on the NMSU campus in order to get a close-up look at specimens of some of the birds seen on class field trips.

Our 4 classes will be on February 9, 16, and 23, and March 2, from 7-9 PM, with field trips on February 13, 20, 27. For registration information contact the DACC Community Education program at 527-7527, and be sure to mention our Course Code, HL101.

ACTION ALERT! Protect the Rio and Robledos

There is a proposed plan to locate a sewage treatment plant at Hope Road along the Rio Grande—yes, next to the river, at the base of the Robledos Mountains (proposed for Wilderness protection). Many violations have already occurred and have resulted in land clearing operations that have destroyed bird habitat along the river. The plan for this sewage treatment plant is too close to the river, and there are much better alternatives. Letters are urgently needed before January 19, 2010. For more information please go to mvaudubon.org and click on Conservation Issues, or contact MVAS Conservation Chair Bob Tafanelli at btafanel@zianet.com or 575-526-9380.

Electronic Newsletter

Help MVAS save resources by signing up to receive *Roadrunner Ramblings* electronically, instead of in printed form. To sign up, email Nancy Stotz at

nstotz1@comcast.net

As each issue goes to press, you will receive an email indicating that a PDF version of the new issue is available for download at our website

www.mvaudubon.org

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.



Programs

Membership meetings and programs are held each month at the **Village at Northrise, Hallmark Building, 2882 N. Roadrunner Pkwy.**

Meetings begin at 7:00 PM. Programs begin immediately following the business meeting and announcements.

Conserving Rivers & Wetlands in New Mexico. January 20. Presented by Beth Bardwell, Director of Freshwater Conservation for Audubon New Mexico. In the arid southwest one of the greatest impacts Audubon may have on conserving birds and wildlife is to improve the health of our rivers and water. Audubon New Mexico recently added Beth to head their freshwater conservation program to develop and implement freshwater conservation strategies, river and wetland habitat protection and restoration, and water policy reform in New Mexico. Beth will share with us some of the programs she is currently working on statewide and more "close to home" along the Rio Grande in Selden Canyon.

Birds of Wrangell, Alaska. February 17. Presented by Kate McLane, MVAS Member. Join us to hear of Katie's birding trip to Wrangell, Alaska in May 2009. At our monthly chapter meeting last March, Katie was the lucky winner of a free trip prize giveaway by Jim Silverthorn of Alaska Waters, Inc. Alaska Waters is central southeast Alaska's premier tour and charter company—they offer sightseeing, fishing and birding tours along the beautiful Stikine River. Come find out what birds and other wildlife Katie saw on her Alaskan Adventure!

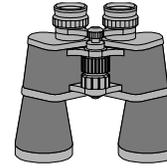
ANNUAL ELECTIONS

Prior to the February 17 program, MVAS will hold its annual meeting to elect officers and board members. The nominating committee has developed the following slate of candidates:

President: David Griffin
Vice-President: Alan Krueger
Secretary: Frankie Lerner
Treasurer: Barb Rodriguez
Board: Valerie Endruweit
Katie McLane
Ken Stinnett

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.



Rio Bosque Wetlands (El Paso) & Vicinity. January 23. We'll explore this restored wetland complex in southern El Paso and visit other birding spots along the NM/TX border such as Heritage Wetlands, Randel's Pool, Sunland Park Racetrack, and the turf farm in Santa Teresa. We'll be looking for wintering waterfowl and waterbirds, gulls and raptors, and perhaps some wintering sparrows at the turf farm.

To register for this trip or for further information, contact David Griffin by January 21 at 575-382-2080 or GriffinBio@gmail.com.

Percha & Caballo State Parks, Las Palomas Marsh. February 20. These sites are all Audubon Important Bird Areas along the Rio Grande. At these diverse locations we'll be looking for wintering waterfowl, rails and raptors, woodpeckers, and rare wintering flycatchers like Hammond's Flycatcher and Eastern Phoebe. These are stops 34, 35 & 36 along the Southwestern NM Birding Trail!

To register for this trip or for further information, contact David Griffin by February 18 at 575-382-2080 or GriffinBio@gmail.com.

Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. If you can't make either of the MVAS trips, or you just want another opportunity to go birding close to home, be sure and check out MVBSP's 1st Saturday of the Month Bird Walks. Many are guided by MVAS members; meet at MVBSP on January 2 and February 6; walks start at 8:15 AM.

Thanks!

MVAS would like to acknowledge the generous donation of 100 dollars' worth of 100% recycled (100% post-consumer waste) newsletter paper by the Greenline Paper Company.

www.greenlinepaper.com

Field Trip Reports

Otero Mesa. November 21. Nine people made the full day trip to the grasslands of Otero Mesa. Overall we did not see many birds—about 25 species, and very few wintering grassland species. I must say it was the least "birdy" day I've ever had there. That's not to say we didn't have any highlights, in fact we had a stupendous *bird watching* day with highlights such as Golden Eagle, Merlin, Prairie Falcon, Western Bluebirds, Great Horned Owls and Red-tailed Hawks. The owls and Red-tail

allowed very close approach, and everyone watched and took photos in the beautiful warm, late-day light.

And let's not forget the expansive ocean of grasslands! For many on the trip this was their first time to Otero Mesa, but it is sure not to be the last. After traveling through miles of wide open country and stopping at a Prairie Dog town, seeing Pronghorn, a Coyote and a Crevice Spiny Lizard, plus the cultural richness with petroglyphs and historic sites—I was not

surprised at the end of the day when one participant stated, "Now I know why everyone's been fighting to protect this place." All came away with an appreciation they never had before and a better idea of why MVAS has been working with other groups to protect it! Thanks to all who came and shared use of their vehicles for the trip.

Las Cruces CBC. December 19. Unfortunately the Newsletter went to press before the Christmas Bird Count results were tallied, so be sure to check out our website www.mvaudubon.org

in the "Newsletter" section for a full report.

David Griffin

Bird Notes

Species	Date	Location	Observers
White-throated Sparrow	10/24	MVBSP	CJ
Wilson's Snipe	10/24	Swan Pond	LS
Pied-billed Grebe	10/24	Swan Pond	LS
Northern Shoveler	10/24	Swan Pond	LS
Gadwall	10/24	Swan Pond	LS
White-throated Swift	11/01	Doña Ana	DG
Anna's Hummingbird	11/01	Las Cruces	DG
Sage Sparrow	11/01	Doña Ana	DG
American Goldfinch	11/01	Las Cruces	DG
Rufous Hummingbird	11/02	Las Cruces	SWH
Juniper Titmouse	11/02; 11	Las Cruces	SS; LH
American Robin (flock)	11/02	Las Cruces	DG
Lesser Nighthawk	11/03	Doña Ana	DG
Pine Siskin	11/04	Las Cruces	DG
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	11/04	Las Cruces	DG
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	11/04	Las Cruces	DG
Western Scrub Jay	11/04	Las Cruces	DG
Black-chinned Hummer	11/06	Las Cruces	LS
Orange Bishop	11/07	Las Cruces	DG
Gray Catbird	11/09	Las Cruces	MO
Prairie Falcon	11/13; 12/7	MVBSP; LC Dam	CJ; NS
Oregon Junco	11/16	Las Cruces	RJ
Snow Goose	12/01	Mesilla Park	BLP
Golden Eagle	12/02	Dripping Springs	AT
Crissal Thrasher	12/02	Dripping Springs	AT
Black-chinned Sparrow	12/02	Dripping Springs	AT
Anna's Hummingbird	12/03	Las Cruces	SS
American Bittern	12/03	MVBSP	CJ
White-throated Sparrow	12/06	Las Cruces	NS
Black Tern	12/10	MVBSP	CJ
Snow Goose	12/10	MVBSP	CJ

Observers: CJ Goin, David Griffin, Sue & Wally Hill, Landy Hinesley, Roberta James, Mary Ann Owen, Bruce & Linda Pearson, Lorraine Schulte, Storm Sermay, Nancy Stotz, Al Trompler

Please report early, late, or unusual sightings to Robert Hull at 575-523-8009 or rwhull@zianet.com

New Mexico Rare Bird Hotline
<http://www.nmbirds.org>

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

SNOWBIRDS:

Please don't forget to let us know when you need to do a temporary address change.

Contact Nancy Stotz
at
575-521-8087
or
nstotz1@comcast.net

Welcome New Members

Dale & Bonnie Jo Wright
Barbara Massengill
Michelle Campbell
Craig Kirland
Delores Manatt
Frank Overbeke
Murray Kugler
Harley Shaw
Mary Bird
J. Villalobos
Trudy Buck
Sue Claxton
Michael Hays
Karen Trujillo
Wayne Treers
Martha Dozier
Pamela Angell
Javier Rodriguez
Shirleyann Amos
Fred & Helen Paganucci



Steven D'Amato

Great Backyard Birdcount: February 12-15

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	David Griffin	382-2080
Vice-president	Alan Krueger	532-1036
Secretary	Frankie Lerner	373-0857
Treasurer	Barb Rodriguez	523-1548
Board (07-09)	Valerie Endruweit	373-0530
Board (08-10)	John Douglas	541-0133
Board (08-10)	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Board (09-11)	Carol Campbell	640-1660
Board (09-11)	Sue Hill	382-9758
Board (09-11)	Gill Sorg	541-0577

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Audubon Council	Gill Sorg	541-0577
Delegates	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Conservation	Bob Tafanelli	526-9380
Education	vacant	
Field Trips	David Griffin	382-2080
Programs	board at large	
Membership	Guy Powers	373-1891
Membership Records	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Newsletter Editor	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Publicity	Storm Sermay	382-3348

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.mvaudubon.org

Bird watchers coast to coast are invited to take part in the 13th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, Friday, February 12, through Monday, February 15, 2010. Participants in the free event will join tens of thousands of volunteers of all levels of birding experience to count birds in their own backyards, local parks or wildlife refuges. Each checklist submitted by these "citizen scientists" helps researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society learn more about how the birds are doing—and how to protect them. Last year, participants turned in more than 93,600 checklists online, creating the continent's largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded.

Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from novice bird watchers to experts. Participants count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org.

On the www.birdcount.org website, participants can explore realtime maps and charts that show what others are reporting during the count. The site has tips to help identify birds and special materials for educators. Participants may also enter the GBBC photo contest by uploading images taken during the count. Many images will be featured in the GBBC website's photo gallery. All participants are entered in a drawing for prizes that include bird feeders, binoculars, books, CDs, and many other great birding products.

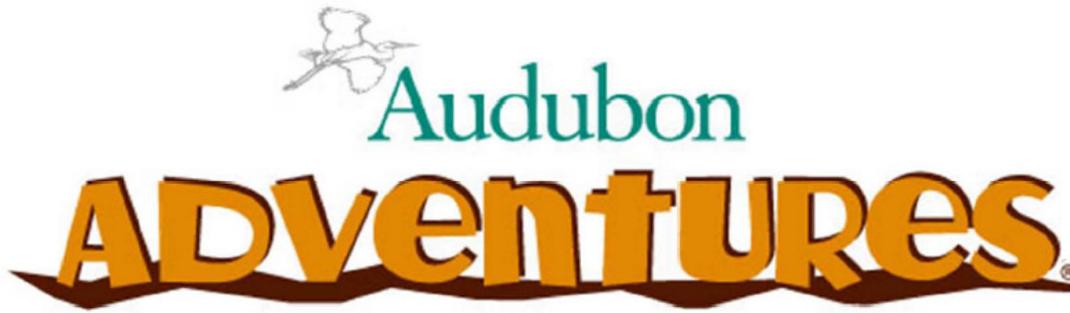
For more information about the GBBC, visit the website at www.birdcount.org. Or contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at (800) 843-2473 or gbbc@cornell.edu, or Audubon at citizenscience@audubon.org or (215) 355-9588, Ext 16.

Roadrunner Ramblings is published six times a year: January, March, May, July, September, and November. Submissions welcome; please email copy to nstotz1@comcast.net, or call for mailing information. **Next deadline: February 15.** Printed on 100% PCW recycled paper by **insta-copy printing**. Image credits: roadrunner, Dale Zimmerman; clip art, IMSI's Master Clips/Master Photos® Collection.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society
 P.O. Box 1645
 Las Cruces, NM 88004



Mesilla Valley Audubon Society continues to provide Audubon Adventures kits to 4th grade classrooms in the elementary schools in Las Cruces, Alamogordo, Truth or Consequences, and Arrey. Seventy-eight of these environmental education kits have been delivered to these schools to use during the current school year.

Subjects that this year's kits cover are *At Home in a Habitat*, *Caretaking Our World's Water*, and *Power from Our Planet*. The fourth item for study, *Pennies for the Planet*, will be sent out later in the year. This unit will contain wall posters, classroom activities, project ideas, student handouts, penny-collection labels and information about participating in collecting pennies to fund important conservation projects.

Continuing to provide this excellent material to teachers and students in the school districts listed above is Mesilla Valley Audubon Society's primary education project. Many generous MVAS members and friends have helped make this possible. Again this year a generous grant was received from the Tour of Gardens. Funds raised by our spring Birdathon also go into the Audubon Adventures Account.

The cost of an Audubon Adventures kit for one classroom is \$50. A donation of any amount will be greatly appreciated.

Checks should be made out to Mesilla Valley Audubon Society, and donations should be sent to:

Lorraine Schulte
Chairman/Advisor, Audubon Adventures
1740 Mariposa
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Amount: _____