



ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 29, No. 1. Jan-Feb 2007

President's Message

by Gill Sorg, MVAS President

I hope everyone had a joyous Christmas holiday. Our Christmas Bird Count was interesting and successful.

Last month I attended a technical workshop to discuss management objectives for the Rio Grande Canalization Project, the 105-mile river reach from Percha Dam, New Mexico to American Dam, Texas. It was sponsored by Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID), The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Environmental Defense (ED). The purpose of the technical workshops was two-fold.

First it was to inform us of the scope and results of new studies commissioned by the United States Section, International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) on the Rio Grande's hydrology and hydraulics, flood protection, sediment transport, biology and opportunities for floodplain riparian habitat restoration.

Second, EBID, WWF and ED want to provide you with an opportunity to present your individual comments on the results of the studies and advice on technical decisions influencing future river management to staff of the USIBWC.

The WWF, ED and SWEC are trying to have established riparian habitat along the Rio Grande for wildlife including birds. This should be a very interesting as we go forward. An engineering firm has been contracted to do the study to determine how the vegetation will effect the flooding and irrigation. In May a second workshop will be scheduled to review the study's reports. This action has potential effects through the federal Endangered Species Act, under which several bird species are affected. The Southwestern Willow Flycatcher is one of them.

If anyone has questions or comments contact me so that I can direct them to the right persons or I can send them in.

I just returned from a holiday visit to the east coast of Florida and did a little birding. I saw more than 30 species from Brevard County and the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge (our nation's first NWR), mostly pelecániformes, waders, raptors and shorebirds. The weather was warm and humid.

Highlights of Audubon Adventures 2006

by Lorraine Schulte, MVAS Audubon Adventures Chair

Fourth grade students in 81 classrooms in Las Cruces, Alamogordo, Truth or Consequences, and Arrey have the opportunity to learn about Bats, Nesting Birds, Native Bees, and Birds' Adaptations this school year thanks to the Audubon Adventures educational program supported by the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society.

A special addition to our Audubon Adventures kits this year is the New Mexico supplement on hummingbirds. The material was prepared by hummingbird bander Joan Day-Martin, is printed in color, and includes loads of interesting information on hummingbirds.

Generous donations from local members and friends, our Birdathon drive, the Tour of Gardens, the American Legion in Elephant Butte, and the Elks Club in Las Cruces, have made it possible for Mesilla Valley Audubon Society to make a contribution toward the color printing of the hummingbird supplement. Arrangements for the printing were made by Randall Davey Audubon Center in Santa Fe.

With the organized plan of Joy McFarland, Teacher Contact, and the help of committee members, the distribution of the Audubon Adventures kits and New Mexico Supplements has gone very smoothly.

Fund-raising for Audubon Adventures 2007 has begun; see insert.

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 13th, 20st and 27th from 7-9 PM with field trips on February 17th, 24th and March 3rd. All our classes are held at the Doña Ana Community College, East Mesa Campus. Look for our class offering in their catalog.

Annual Elections

During the business meeting prior to our January program, we will have our annual elections; the nominating committee has developed the following slate of candidates:

President Gill Sorg
 Vice President Alan Krueger
 Secretary Nancy Stotz
 Treasurer Barb Rodriguez
 Board (2007-2009) Valerie Endrueweit
 Board (2007-2009) David Griffin

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
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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, September–April, 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.

Adventures and Birding in Bolivia.

January 17. Ever wondered what it would be like to go birding in South America? Come join us for a program full of bird photos and hair-raising stories as MVAS member Storm Sermay shares some of her experiences from a birding trip to Bolivia last year.

Kodiak Brown Bear Study. February 21.

Mara Weisenberger, a biologist at our local San Andres National Wildlife Refuge, will join us to talk about the Kodiak Island NWR brown bear study. Mara spent 2 months along the Karluk River this fall, helping to document the bears' behavior during the salmon run. Kodiak brown bears are the largest sub-species of brown bear, with males reaching weights of up to 1400 pounds.



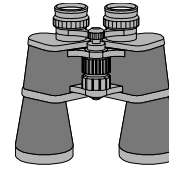
Field Trip Report

Leasburg/Swan Pond. November 18.

Although a duck hunt at Holloman Lakes forced a last-minute change to our itinerary, we enjoyed a warm, sunny morning of birding with a final tally of 40 species. Highlights at Leasburg included a White-throated Sparrow and striking, scope-filling views of a Crissal Thrasher and adult Black-crowned Night-Herons. We also got to watch a pair of kinglets engaged in vicious, albeit tiny, combat, as they locked their feet together and plummeted to the ground, ruby-crowns ablazing. As we approached Swan Pond we were greeted by the spectacle of close to a dozen Great Egrets feeding in the shallows on our side of the pond, and we enjoyed good looks at several duck species and a raft of Common Mergansers.

Nancy Stotz

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.

Percha and Vicinity. January 20.

Meet at the parking lot of the Highway 70 K-Mart (east-side) at 7:00 AM. We will be birding the Rio Grande Valley between Derry and Arrey, Percha State Park and Animas Creek Canyon. We should be back in Las Cruces in the early PM. It is suggested that participants bring plenty to drink and some snacks to munch on. We should have Sandhill Cranes, several kinds of ducks, meadowlarks, kestrels, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and a variety of sparrows. Also possible are bluebirds, Cedar Waxwings, Vermilion Flycatchers and woodpeckers.

Uvas Valley and Vicinity. February 24.

Meet at the parking lot of the Highway 70 K-Mart (east-side) at 7:00 AM. We will be birding the Uvas Valley, Nutt Grasslands and Macho Creek drainage north of Cooks Peak. We should be back in Las Cruces in the early PM. It is suggested that participants bring plenty to drink and some snacks to munch on. These areas have produced a variety of hawks and Golden Eagles in the past. Other notables include Horned Larks, Lark Buntings, Townsend's Solitaires, several species of sparrows, and jays.

For additional information on either field trip, please contact Walt Whitford at 521-1358 or email wlawhit AT zianet.com.



Steven D'Amato

Great Backyard Bird Count

Bird Notes

<i>Species</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observers</i>
Anna's Hummingbird	11/01; 18	Mesilla Pk; Radium Sps	CL; JZ
Bronzed Cowbird	11/01	NMSU Livestock	CL
White-tailed Kite	11/04, 09	Issack's Lake	HH, JD
Cassin's Vireo	11/04	Mesilla Park	CL
Orange-crowned Warbler	11/04	Mesilla Park	CL
Eastern Phoebe	11/04; 09	Leyendecker; MVBP	CL; JD
Dusky Flycatcher	11/04	Leyendecker	CL
Sora	11/04	Leyendecker	CL
White-Throated Sparrow	11/04; 17	Mesilla; Leasburg	CL; NS
Virginia Rail	11/04	Rio @ Mesilla	CL
Sora	11/04; 12/02	Rio @ Mesilla	CL
Snowy Egret	11/07	Davies Tank (WSMR)	CL
Cattle Egret	11/07	Davies Tank (WSMR)	CL
Snow Goose	11/07	Davies Tank (WSMR)	CL
Hooded Merganser	11/07; 12/09	WSMR; Crossroads	CL
Snow Goose	11/06; 16	Mesilla Park; WSMR	BP; CL
Mississippi Kite	11/06	Mesilla Park	BP
Yellow-headed Blackbirds	11/09	Mesilla Valley BP	JD
Bonaparte's Gull	11/16; 12/09	WSMR; Caballo	CL
Eastern Phoebe	11/16; 12/02	WSMR; Leyendecker	CL
Black-bellied Plover	11/16	WSTF	HH
Harris Sparrow	11/16-19	ABQ - Tramway	LS
Gray Catbird	11/17	Leasburg	NS
Barn Swallow	11/17	Swan Pond	NS
Ruddy Ground Dove	11/18	Radium Springs	JZ
Wilson's Warbler	11/18	Radium Springs	JZ
Williamson's Sapsucker	11/21	Broad Canyon	GS
Red Phalarope	11/24	Dona Ana	MS
Hutton's Vireo	11/25	Mesilla Park	HH
Rufous Hummingbird	11/25	Las Cruces	HH
Anna's Hummingbird	11/25; 12/08	Dona Ana; Radium Sps	DG; JZ
Rufous Hummingbird	11/30	Las Cruces	SWH
Great Blue Heron	12/02	Burn Lake	CL
Black-crowned Night Heron	12/02	Burn Lake	CL
White-Throated Sparrow	12/02; 09	Leyendecker; Percha	CL
Wilson's Warbler	12/02	Rio @ Mesilla	CL
Swamp Sparrow	12/02	Rio @ Mesilla	CL
Cinnamon Teal	12/02	Rio @ Mesilla	CL
American Dipper	12/09	Percha	CL
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	12/09	Percha	CL
Osprey	12/09	Percha	CL
Vermillion Flycatcher	12/09; 10	Percha; WSMR	CL
Hooded Merganser	12/09	Percha	CL
Herring Gulls	12/09	Caballo	CL
Ross's Goose	12/09	Crossroads Pond ELP	CL
American Bittern	12/09	MV Bosque Park	MB
Swamp Sparrow	12/09	MV Bosque Park	MB
Lark Sparrow	12/09	Leyendecker	CCB
Long Eared Owls	12/10	La Cueva	RHJM
White-Throated Sparrow	12/10	Leyendecker	CL
Common Mergansers	12/10	WSMR Main Post	CL

Observers: Charles / Chandra Britt, Matthew Brooks, John Douglas, David Griffin, Harold Harrison, Sue / Wally Hill, Robert Hull / Jackye Meinecke, Carl Lundblad, Bruce Pearson, Lorraine Schulte, Marcy Scott, Gill Sorg, Nancy Stotz, Jimmie Zabriskie

Please report early, late, or unusual sightings to Robert Hull at
505-523-8009 or rwhull AT zianet.com

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

This February, the tenth annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, will give everyone a chance to discover the birds in their neighborhood and "Count for the Record." It's fun, it's free, and it takes as little as 15 minutes.

During February 16-19, 2007, people of all ages, from beginners to experts, are invited to join this event which spans all of the United States and Canada. Participants can take part wherever they are - at home, in schoolyards, at local parks or wildlife refuges. Observers simply count the highest number of each species they see during an outing or a sitting, and enter their tally on the Great Backyard Bird Count web site at www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

Visitors to the web site can also compare their sightings with results from other participants, as checklists pour in from throughout the U.S. and Canada. Together, these counts offer a real-time snapshot of the numbers and kinds of birds that people are finding, from Boreal Chickadees in Alaska to Anhingas in Florida.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the GBBC, and Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology are challenging people everywhere to "Count for the Record," by participating in greater numbers than ever before. Greater participation, with more checklists submitted, provides more information about bird population trends - and helps to better inform conservation efforts.

Last year, participants submitted more than 60,000 checklists - and reported 7.5 million birds overall and 623 different species. The count helped chronicle the early spring migratory routes of Sandhill Cranes, documented lingering migrants such as Orange-crowned Warblers and Tree Swallows, revealed the ongoing range expansion of introduced Eurasian Collared-Doves, and recorded declining numbers of American Crows.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is a free event, sponsored in part by Wild Birds Unlimited. For more information, visit the website www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

Wilderness Legislation Update

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 (04-06)	Tim Lawton	522-2056
Board (04-06)	Valerie Endrueit	373-0530
Board (05-07)	Robert Hull	523-8009
Board (05-07)	Richard Bischoff	373-0857
Board (06-08)	Alan Krueger	532-1036
Board (06-08)	Sue Hill	382-9758

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Audubon Council	Richard Bischoff	894-6083
Delegates	Guy Powers	373-1891
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Education	vacant	
Field Trips	Walt Whitford	521-1358
Programs	board at large	
Membership	Guy Powers	373-1891
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/.

At the behest of Senator Domenici, Las Cruces is forging ahead with the formidable task of trying to reach a public consensus about what wilderness legislation for Doña Ana County should look like. The city has developed a process whereby two representatives from eight different stakeholder groups meet twice a week to look for common ground.

Stakeholder groups include conservationists, real estate developers, off-road-vehicle owners, hikers, ranchers, and others. They will take up the questions of what areas should be protected, what level of protection should each area have, should the legislation provide for disposal of land by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and how should disposal revenues be used.

The resulting consensus, or lack of, as the case may be, will be passed on to Senators Bingaman and Domenici for their consideration as they work to develop legislation that will protect some of southern New Mexico's finest natural areas.

If you have specific concerns regarding the issues being discussed, the MVAS liasons to the coalition of conservation groups are Gill Sorg (541-0577, sorg AT zianet.com) and Bob Tafarielli (526-9380, btafarielli AT zianet.com).

The two representatives of the conservation community participating in the city-organized meetings are Kevin Bixby of the Southwest Environmental Center (522-5552, swec AT zianet.com) and Nathan Small of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (527-9962, nathansmall AT nmwild.org).

modified from the Rio Grande Sierran, Jan/Feb 2007

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**. Images, except Dale Zimmerman's roadrunner and Steven D'Amato's eagle, are from IMSI's Master Clips/Master Photos® Collection.

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