



# ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 28, No. 2. Mar-Apr. 2006

## President's Message

*Gill Sorg, MVAS President*

As we enter spring migration your Audubon Society is working to educate people and to conserve our environment. Many members have put in so much time and energy to these goals.

The Bird Watching course at the Doña Ana Branch Community has been a great success with 14 students. Thanks to Donna Wood and the many volunteers to help teach the class.

Once again Lorraine Schulte and Joy Mc Farland have prepared a fantastic Audubon Adventures program for the elementary schools in the area. Many thanks go to them and the volunteers that make the program such a success.

Congratulations go to Guy Powers who has been working hard on the Junior Duck Stamp Program in the schools and who was named Coordinator for District 2 (NM, OK, AZ and TX).

Bob Tafanelli and I have been busy contacting our elected officials commenting on the proposed legislation to designate wilderness and sell off the public lands in the county. Senator Domenici's legislation proposes selling up to 65,000 acres more BLM land (Las Cruces is only about 32,000 acres now) to expand the city without proper planning. And, although the bill would designate some of the existing Wilderness Study Areas as Wilderness Areas, they leave out several areas of habitat for wildlife. Bob has written to our Senators, County Commissioners, City Councilors and others, on behalf of MVAS, urging them not to let our open spaces to be used for development without proper planning. The Board of Directors has voted to join a coalition of groups in Doña Ana County to work towards getting this legislation right for the future. I encourage all members and concerned citizens to make their opinions heard by writing or calling their representatives in government.

I end on a personal note. My first encounter with White-crown Sparrows was in 1968 in Alaska, while working on a small mammal population project. I was camping up near the Arctic Circle when the WC Sparrows visited my picnic table looking for food. They were so friendly I was able to feed one and got a picture of it eating out of my hand. I don't recall seeing the WC Sparrows again until I moved to Las Cruces 6 years ago: a nice reunion and I'm still amazed how far birds travel.

## Council Corner:

### Statewide Meeting & Celebration in Cruces

*by Richard Bischoff*

February 25, 2006 was indeed a Red Letter Day for the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society.

Number one on the list was the meeting of the New Mexico State Audubon Council at the Southwest Environmental Center. This was the first time the group has met in Las Cruces. Council members from northern and central NM attended, as did several members of MVAS. Business was conducted in a timely manner with the meeting adjourning at 4:00 p.m.

You were told it would be a memorable evening; indisputably it was. Lorraine Schulte served as Master of Ceremonies and introduced many of the attendees. Immediate past president and current vice president Tom Jervis said a few words when Lorraine was finished. In his own inimitable way he built up to the primary reason for our get together.... Presentation of the Aldo Leopold Award to Lorraine Schulte in recognition of her long time efforts in promoting the conservation policies of the National Audubon Society, with particular emphasis on Audubon Adventures.

You were promised a memorable evening. Who will forget seeing the expressions on Lorraine's face when Tom presented the award to her (page 2). Congratulations to Lorraine from all of us. It was fitting climax to an eventful day. Thank you all for being a part of it.



Lorraine Schulte, winner of the Aldo Leopold Award, poses with Tom and Eleanor Wooten, long-time supporters of MVAS.

*Photo by Donna Wood*

Who? Me?



Photo by Donna Wood

### 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

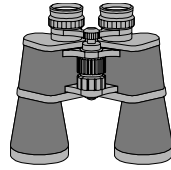
### RENEWALS

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.*



**Lake Valley, Berranda Canyon, Heritage Ranch area. March 25.** We will meet at the K-Mart on Hwy 70 at 7 AM for the drive to the Uvas Valley and the Lake Valley area. We will look for grassland birds on the way into Macho Creek Canyon. In Macho Creek Canyon and Berranda Canyon we will be birding in habitat for jays, woodpeckers, a variety of sparrows, Townsend's Solitaires, towhees, and bluebirds. Previous trips at this time of the year have produced several species of hawks and Golden Eagles. At Heritage Ranch we may be able to pick up some ducks and waders. This will be a half-day trip. Some of us will travel to Hillsboro to get lunch at the Barber Shop Cafe.

**Rattlesnake Springs. April 22.** Join us for an overnight trip to the Carlsbad area. We will meet at Rattlesnake Springs State Park at 7 AM on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup>. After birding the park, we will either travel east to the playa lakes area for shore birds and ducks or head up to Sitting Bull falls and the Guadalupe Mts. There are several good motels that are priced under \$50/night: Carlsbad Inn (505-887-1171); Continental Inn (505-887-0341); Days Inn (505-887-7800). Individuals desiring to ride

to Carlsbad with others on Friday the 21<sup>st</sup> should plan on attending the MVAS meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> and signing up for travel to Carlsbad.

For more field trip information contact Walt Whitford at 521-1358.

### Programs

*Membership meetings and programs and meetings 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.*

### Lesser Prairie Chickens. March 15.

Just in time for this year's Prairie Chicken Festival (see announcement below), Brian Locke will help us learn more about this sensitive species of the grasslands of eastern NM, which he studied as part of his graduate work at NMSU.

**Mountain Lions. April 19.** Curious about how wildlife biologists know the home range size of a cougar? Or determine the genetic flow between panther populations? Or the changing movement patterns of a mother mountain lion? Then come find out about the research methods biologists have come up with to study these secretive felines and learn some biological secrets revealed about these large carnivores. Presented by Donna Laing.

### New Mexico's 5th Annual High Plains Prairie-Chicken Festival April 7-9, 2006 Milnesand, New Mexico

Due to the sensitivity of the lesser prairie -chicken during the breeding season, **attendance to the Festival will be limited to the first 100 people who register.** Cost is \$80 per person and covers the cost of 5 meals (2 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners), coffee & donuts, a commemorative poster, and all field trips. **The deadline for registration is April 1, 2006.** Registrations postmarked by March 15, 2006 will be eligible for an early bird raffle drawing – **please register early!**

For additional information, visit the website

[http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/recreation/prairie\\_ckn/index.htm](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/recreation/prairie_ckn/index.htm)

or contact the Festival Coordinator:

Dawn Davis, Lesser Prairie-Chicken Biologist  
New Mexico Department of Game and Fish  
1421 Hickory Street  
Clovis, NM 88101  
Phone: (505) 762-5127; Email: dawn.davisATstate.nm.us

**Bird Notes**

<i>Species</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observers</i>
Common Ground-Dove	12-29	Las Cruces	DG
Least Grebe	12-31	Crossroads Pond	BJ
Bushtits	1-2;22	Bosque del Apache	SWH, CL; GP, LS
Slate-colored Junco	1-1	Mesilla Park	CL
Glaucous Gull	1-5	Sunland Park	BZ
Dusky Flycatcher	1-9	Percha	GP, LS
Am. White Pelican	1-9	Caballo	GP, LS
Red-necked Grebe	1-14	Elephant Butte SP	CL
Golden Eagle	1-12;2-11	Fort Bliss;Vado	GS; JH
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	1-22	Aguirre Springs	GP, LS
Sage Thrasher	1-22;2-20	Aguirre Spgs; Cruces Dam	GP,LS,NS
Eurasian Collared-Dove	1-26	Palomas	RB/FL
Mute Swan	1-30;2-11	Rio near Stahmann's;Brazito	DM;RH
Varied Thrush	1-31-2-15	Mesilla Dam	CL;BR,DW;JD; MS/JZ;LS;GS
Ash-throated Flycatcher	2-15	Talavera	TL
Canada Goose	2-11;12	Burn Lake	JH;BR
Ring-necked Duck	2-11;25	Burn Lake	JH;PT
Cinnamon Teal	2-11	Burn Lake	JH
Ruddy Duck	2-12	Burn Lake	BR
Golden-crowned Sparrow	2-13; 24	Calle del Norte Bridge; WSMR	BLP;CL
N Rough-winged Swallow	2-14	RadiumSpgs;MesillaDam	MS/JZ;BHH
Tree Swallow	2-16;19	Mesilla Dam	MS/JZ;SWH
American Goldfinch	2-16	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Ruddy Ground-Dove	2-18	Mesilla Park	PSA
White-throated Sparrow	2-20	Snow Road	BHH
Wood Duck	2-22	Mesilla Dam	JD
Bullock's Oriole	2-24	Percha	JH
White-tailed Kite	2-25	MVBP	NM Audubon Council
Neotropic Cormorant	2-25	Burn Lake	PT
Double-crested Cormorant	2-25	Burn Lake	PT
Pied-billed Grebe	2-25	Burn Lake	PT
Northern Shoveler	2-25	Burn Lake	PT
Glaucous Gull	2-26	Elephant Butte SP	CL

**Hummingbird Round-up:** Several Anna's have been reported by DG, BHH, MS/JZ, and LH. EH and BS had Rufous, BS had Black-chinned, while TL had Costa's. Also, Lincoln's Sparrows have been sighted in the yards of LS, SWH, TL and BS during this period.

**Observers:** Phil/Sally Alkon, Richard Bischoff/Frankie Lerner, John Douglas, David Griffin, Jannette Hale, Ray Hale, Ellen Halton, Barbara/Harold Harrison, Sue/Wally Hill, Landy Hinesley, Bob Johnson, Tim Lawton, Carl Lundblad, Darrell Mott, Bruce/Linda Pearson, Guy Powers, Barbara Rodriguez, Lorraine Schulte, Bill Seager, Paul Turner, Marcy Scott/Jimmy Zabriskie, Gill Sorg, Nancy Stotz, Donna Wood, Barry Zimmer

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

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

**Percha and Vicinity. January 21.** Fifteen stalwart birders braved the cold to bird at Percha State Park, Animas Creek and Caballo State Park. Despite the frigid temperatures that made it difficult to stay on the birds, we were treated to Eastern Bluebirds and Yellow-rumped Warblers in the trees at Percha headquarters. The trip up Animas Canyon produced large numbers of Eurasian Collared-Doves, Acorn Woodpecker, and several species of sparrows. We returned to Percha to see Black Phoebes, Spotted Sandpiper, Killdeer, Green-winged Teal, Phainopeplas and a female Vermilion Flycatcher. At lunchtime we moved to Caballo Dam Park where there was a pair of Great Horned Owls - one of which had "long ears" and did not look exactly like a Great Horned but could not have been anything else.

**Gila Box. February 18.** This trip had the largest turnout that I have recorded. We had 33 attendees who bravely roused from bed in the very early AM to rendezvous for the trip to the Gila Box. Thanks to Al Kreuger and Guy Powers who had scoped out the canyon a couple of weeks before the trip. They led the group to the bluffs above the Gila Box where one of the participants, Neil Fuller, gave an interesting talk about the history of the area and pointed out the landmarks. Neil's grandfather homesteaded in the Gila Box and Neil had spent lots of time in the area as a youngster. When we arrived in the canyon, we were treated to close-up looks at sandstone hoodoos, and a broad flood plain of the Gila River with its gallery forest of young cottonwoods and willows. Despite the warm, sunny, windless weather, we saw a very few birds: House Finches, Northern Cardinal, Brown Creeper, and fairly numerous Ruby-Crowned Kinglets. After lunch, we drove to the edge of the bluffs where we had a grand view of the red and white bluffs along the Gila. There most of us had an opportunity to track a Golden Eagle. Other hawks seen above the canyon were Red-Tailed hawks and a Northern Harrier. Despite the paucity of birds, everyone agreed that it was a most enjoyable trip into a remote and very beautiful area of New Mexico.

**Welcome New Members**

Bonnie Eisenberg  
Jean Briseno  
Elaine Kaufman



**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 (03-05)	Alan Krueger	532-1036
Board (03-05)	Sue Hill	382-9758
Board (04-06)	Tim Lawton	522-2056
Board (04-06)	Valerie Endruweit	373-0530
Board (05-07)	Robert Hull	523-8009
Board (05-07)	Richard Bischoff	894-6083

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Audubon Adventures	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Audubon Council	Richard Bischoff	894-6083
Delegates	Guy Powers	373-1891
Conservation	Bob Tapanelli	526-9380
Education	Donna Wood	525-8704
Field Trips	Walt Whitford	521-1358
Programs	board at large	
Membership	Guy Powers	373-3843
Newsletter Editor	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Publicity	Jacky 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/](http://www.cybermesa.com/~mvas/).

**“Birds of the Bosque” Program  
at Local School**

Eileen Everett (the state education coordinator) was here the week of the 6<sup>th</sup> of February presenting the “Birds of the Bosque” program to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Hermosa Heights. The week of the 13<sup>th</sup> of February Tracy Urick (Eileen’s assistant) was here working with the remainder of the classes. MVAS provided volunteers during the birding field trips to Leasburg Dam State Park. The following people from our chapter helped: Sylvia Bizzell, Bruce and Linda Pearson, Lorraine Schulte, Joy McFarland, Sue and Wally Hill, and Donna Wood.

**Hummingbirds and Other  
Spring Migrants**



Slide show  
&  
fundraiser for  
Audubon Adventures

Enchanted Gardens (270 Avenida de Mesilla)

March 25, 3 PM

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