

This is the MVAS webpage posting used when the MVAS Bird Survey Project was a work in progress. A revision was posted on 10/31/2020 to reflect the completion of the survey and changes in the setting that occurred on the last 12 months. sfw

MVAS Bird Monitoring and Conservation Project

MVAS is monitoring the bird population on the Rio Grande. The federal government plans to create a new riparian habitat on the river in 2020. MVAS has an opportunity to document bird populations before and after the intervention to determine how much of an impact it really has. The information will also contribute to the ongoing Western Rivers Bird Count by the National Audubon Society.

Background: The US International Water Boundary Commission (US-IWBC) is responsible for maintaining the Rio Grande for all who use it, including native plants, fauna and birds. For the last 100 years, the local section of the Rio Grande has required total shutdown of flow for much of the year to allow for seasonal irrigation of cropland in the spring and summer and natural habitat has been drastically curtailed. The USIWBC has an opportunity in Las Cruces to divert the flow of treated water from the Las Cruces Water Treatment Station that currently is dumped into the Rio Grande Basin continuously via a cement canal. At eight million gallons annually, this volume will serve a newly created riparian habitat when the project is completed in 2020. It is anticipated the change from the dry, barren area currently in place to a much different habitat with continuous water availability for flora and fauna will have a dramatic impact. The worksite location is six acres on the East side of the river, just north of where I-10 crosses the Rio Grande.

Project Description: Interested MVAS members have formed a group which, as individuals, will conduct bird surveys of the study area over the next 52 weeks. Data collected will be recorded on eBird.com at a specified Hotspot ([Rio Grande- Las Cruces: Treatment Water Canal South to I-10](#)). All checklists submitted for this site by group members will be downloaded by the group for further study. The data will be evaluated to develop a bird abundance database that can be compared to future data collections at the work site or to current collections of data elsewhere along the Rio Grande. A spreadsheet documenting our progress is included in the references below.

Besides the basic recording of our observations, MVAS plans to use this opportunity to perform community outreach. It is in the process of applying for a grant that will allow for teaching interested members how Audubon monitors bird populations in its Western Rivers Bird Count and to include the public with this information so that a broad section of interested residents can help participate in this project.

Anyone wishing to join the group may use the [contact page](#) in this website to be placed on a mailing list announcing future meetings of the group and to participate in data collection.

References:

1. [Observing Protocol \(downloaded document can be printed for field use\)](#).
2. eBird study site "Hotspot": [Rio Grande- Las Cruces: Treatment Water Canal South to I-10](#).
3. Audubon's Western Rivers Bird Count: <https://www.audubon.org/western-rivers-bird-count>.
4. Data from completed survey 10/18/2020
 - a. [Final Summary Spreadsheet \(PDF format\)](#)
 - b. [Final complete data compilation \(Excel format\)](#). Extensive detail.
 - c. [eBird summary of the year's data](#)