

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 34, No. 1. Jan.-Feb. 2012

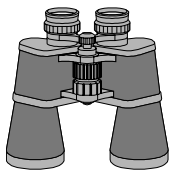


MVAS Programs

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.

Sex, Lies, & PowerPoint Slides: The Secret Lives of Common Birds. January 18. MVAS member Nancy Stotz will describe some of the fascinating behaviors of a few of our most common birds. You might be surprised by what's going on in your own backyard!

Broad Canyon Ranch BioInventories. February 15. MVAS member Ray Bowers will share photos of some of the plant and animal species documented at Broad Canyon Ranch during biological inventories held in May and October of 2011.



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, sunscreen, and binoculars.

South Valley Hotspots. January 21. On this trip we'll visit some of the wetlands and other birding hotspots of west El Paso and southern Dona Ana County. Our exact itinerary will depend on where the best birds are reported in the days leading up to the trip, but likely destinations will include Crossroads Pond, Keystone Heritage Wetlands, and the Sunland Park river park. Bring along a snack and water, and be prepared for variable weather conditions. Since heavy traffic could complicate a lengthy caravan, we'll carpool as much as possible, and participation is limited to 15. To register, and for more info, contact Nancy Stotz at 575-521-8087 or nstotz1@comcast.net.

Fillmore Canyon. February 18. This Dripping Springs-area trail has some moderate to difficult terrain. We'll meet at the Milagro Coffee end of the Pan-Am Plaza on E. University Ave. in Las Cruces at 6:30 AM and leave at 6:45. This will give us enough time to stop and explore some areas on the way up to the picnic area. Dripping Springs is a fee area, and it's \$3.00 per vehicle to get in. Water and sturdy footwear as well as sunscreen and a hat to shade you from the sun's rays are advisable. Those wanting to can make an entire day of it can explore the arroyo near La Cueva, the area around the Visitor's Center and other locations in Dripping Springs Natural Area. For more info, contact Mark Pendleton (at mpndlt@gmail.com or 575-635-8711).

Newsletter Changes

Due to changes at the Las Cruces Post Office, our newsletter mailing costs are increasing significantly. To compensate, we are going to be switching to a 2-page format. We also are encouraging members to sign up to receive the newsletter electronically instead of in printed form (email Nancy Stotz at nstotz1@comcast.net for details). As our electronic communications continue to grow (see below), we may be looking to phase out the mailed newsletter entirely.

Beat the rush, and switch to the electronic newsletter today!

MVAS on Facebook, Web

MVAS now has a Facebook page. You can find us by going to

<https://www.facebook.com/MesillaValleyAudubonSociety>

The MVAS Facebook page is a place to share your bird observations, post photos or videos, ask questions about bird identification, or find out about places to go birding. We'll also use the page to announce MVAS field trips, programs, and special events.

The site will be an accessory to our website—www.mvaudubon.org—which will remain the best place to find more details and information about MVAS. There you'll find information about upcoming field trips, monthly natural history programs, special events, and more. And be sure to check out the MVAS Blog, where from time to time, MVAS past President David Griffin will share stories and insight about birds, wildlife and natural history.

Christmas Bird Count Highlights

The 36th MVAS Las Cruces Christmas Bird Count was held 17 December. There were many surprises to this years' count, including 4 new species for the count: American White Pelican, Glaucous Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, and Williamson's Sapsucker.

Not only that, we had all-time "High Counts" for at

(continued on page 2) **CBC**

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 the **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 _____ C2ZQ540Z

Send this form and your check to:

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

Questions about your membership status? Contact Nancy Stotz at 575-521-8087 or nstotz1@comcast.net.

least 10 species, including Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Say's Phoebe, Curve-billed Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, Brewer's Blackbird, House Finch, and Lesser Goldfinch.

We also had "Low Counts" for a number of species including Loggerhead Shrike (only 7), Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, and Vesper Sparrow. And we completely missed 3 species for the first time ever: Common Gallinule (formerly known as Common Moorhen), Horned Lark (seen during count week), and Black-chinned Sparrow. About 25 to 30 species had numbers less than their 35-year average; however, about 40 species had counts higher than their 35-year average. These included Gambel's Quail (1.6x average), White-winged Dove (1.5x average), Cooper's Hawk (2x average), and Black-throated Sparrow (1.4x average).

And now for the biggest surprise of all (more of a shock really)—this was one of the best counts ever, with at least 120 species and 44,596 birds observed, plus 11 additional species during count week! I was completely taken by surprise while I tallied numbers and compared them to historic lists. For a full report of the results and for a little insight as to a couple of reasons why we may have ended up doing so well, be sure to check out the MVAS website where I hope to post a report very soon. Thanks again to everyone who participated!

David Griffin, CBC Compiler

Calling All MVAS Artists: March 2012 Downtown Ramble

Mesilla Valley Audubon would like to extend an invitation to submit your bird artwork for display and sale during the March 2012 Downtown Ramble. MVS Studios will be featuring the work of Hank Sprouse, an artist who carves decorative decoys, shorebirds and songbirds. MVS Studios has graciously offered to also show 12 pieces of artwork from our members. The artwork, featuring birds, can be any medium: photos, sculptures, carvings, etc. All pieces will need to be available by February 1, when 12 pieces will be selected for the March 1 ramble event. For more information, please visit www.mvaudubon.org or contact Barb Rodriguez at bkrod1@comcast.net.

Annual Elections

The nominating committee will announce the slate of candidates for officer and board positions at the January MVAS program meeting. The annual election will be held at our February meeting.

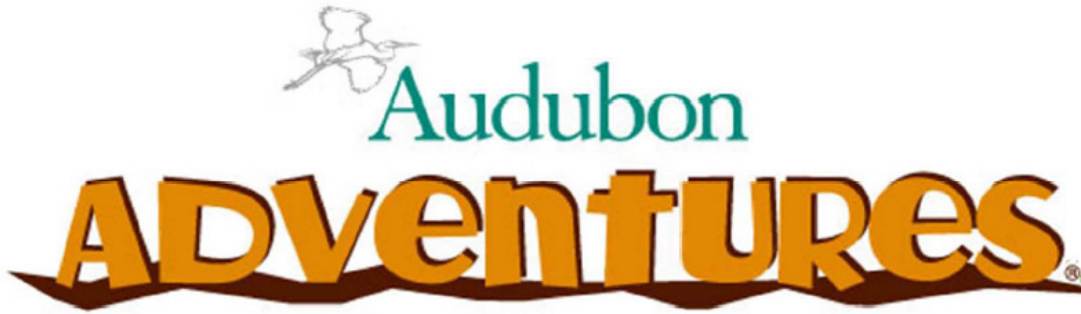
Roadrunner Ramblings is published six times a year: January, March, May, July, September, and November. Submissions welcome; please email copy to nstotz1@comcast.net. **Next deadline: Feb 15.** Printed on 100% recycled paper with soy-based inks by **insta-copy printing**. Image credits: roadrunner, Dale Zimmerman; clipart, IMSI's Master Clips/Master Photos® Collection.

Visit the MVAS website at
www.mvaudubon.org

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The logo features a stylized bird in flight above the word "Audubon" in a teal, serif font. Below "Audubon" is the word "ADVENTURES" in a large, bold, orange, sans-serif font with a dark brown shadow underneath.

With the help of your generous donations, Mesilla Valley Audubon Society continues to provide *Audubon Adventures* environmental education kits to interested 4th grade classrooms in elementary schools in Las Cruces and surrounding areas of southern New Mexico.

The title for the 2011-2012 classroom kit is “Feathers, Fur, Fins, and You.” Topics covered in the classroom materials include *Pollinators* (featuring hummingbirds and bees), *Wild Alaska*, *The Flow of Life* (featuring the rivers of North America), and *Caring for Our Planet*—a special Action for Planet Earth edition focusing on ways that young people can actively participate in conservation activities through Audubon.

Continuing to provide this excellent material to teachers and students in the local school districts 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, along with support from the High Hopes Garden Club. 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: _____



Audubon Adventures donation amount: _____