



ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

MESILLA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

www.mvaudubon.org

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Check out Springtime programs and field trips

Start with the February primer on the ubiquitous sparrow

Board member and serious birder **Jay Wilbur** will present a beginners program on tips to help identify the myriad types of sparrow you are likely to see in Dona Ana County. The program begins with a social hour at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 21 in the Southwest Environmental Center, 275 North Downtown Mall.

Next, plan to join the field trips

February 17

The Great Backyard Bird Count gbbc.birdcount.org/ will occur for the third year in the area to the east of the Las Cruces Dam starting at Sage Crest Park (Roadrunner Parkway and Frontier Drive). Meet at the park at 6:45 a.m. for a morning of birding and walking.

March 24

See why **Sandhill Arroyo/North Las Cruces Park** is a premier local birding area. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at our fearless guide's home, 4186 Seneca Drive, Las Cruces, to start walking the arroyo. Public facilities and beverages are available. The morning includes an easy walk in the sand and on some road surfaces.



April 21

Mark this date for a visit to Percha Dam State Park, one of New Mexico's better birding spots, 45 minutes from Las Cruces on I-25. The group will leave at 7:15 a.m. from the old K-Mart parking lot (end closest to the Chevron Station) off US 70. Bring a NM State Parks day pass if you have one. Carpooling will be available. Some of the wildlife highlights observed at Percha are mountain lion, Osprey, Great Kiskadee, Vermillion Flycatcher and Eastern Phoebe. Contact Mark Pendleton for all trips (575-635-8711) or mpndltn@gmail.com.

2018 Officers elected

The MVAS membership elected 2018 officers at the annual meeting in January. The slate still has some openings for volunteers to help lead this busy and vibrant chapter.

President – nominations open

Vice President - nominations open

Secretary - Aaron Lucas

Treasurer - Diane Moore

Re-elected board members include Wayne Treers, Mark Pendleton, CJ Goin, Gill

Sorg and Jay Wilbur. John Douglas was newly elected. The board is actively seeking nominees for the open positions, which will rotate among current board members for the time being. Please contact Secretary Aaron Lucas at allucasaz@mac.com with nominations.

Electronic newsletter

Starting with this issue, the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society will distribute the quarterly "Roadrunner Ramblings" newsletter electronically to all members via our mail-

ing lists. If you have been receiving the newsletter by mail, continue receiving the publications by providing your email address to the chapter. The board of directors is containing newsletter costs, which is one of the biggest expenses in our annual budget. One of the major benefits will be more money for scholarships and awards. To insure your continue to receive the newsletter, contact Judy Wilbur, jkwilbur@gmail.com, with your email address and any questions you have. And thanks for your continuing support of our activities.

MVAS Teams identify 132 species during Christmas Bird Count

The Mesilla Valley Audubon Society (MVAS) 43rd Las Cruces Christmas Bird Count (CBC). 13 teams of birders (a total of 48 field observers) covered the Las Cruces CBC circle from sunrise to sunset. The weather was perfect for birding with lots of sunshine and no rain nor wind (unlike the previous year's CBC!).

The total bird count was 32,259 which is average for our CBC (last year was 19,959). The total species count was 132 which is second only to 1996's species total of 139 (last year was 101).

Eight unusual or rare birds identified included Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Turkey Vulture, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Cave Swallow, Pygmy Nuthatch, and Black-throated Gray Warbler.

The White-winged Dove count was down 1,273 to 6,205; the American Crow count was up 3,822 to 7,951. Surprisingly, we had a Eurasian-collared Dove



Hairy Woodpecker spotted during December CBC in La Laz Frank K. Wilson

count of 833 which is more than double from last year. The Eurasian-collared Dove first started appearing in this CBC in 2004 and have slowly been increasing in numbers.

The 2017 CBC had 14 high counts (nine were records and two tied the record high). Planning and compilation of CBC details are gratefully performed by Board Member Wayne Treers, field trip coordinator.

Beginners Bird Walks

Are set for next three months

On the third Wednesday of every month, MVAS conducts a beginners bird walk at Tellbrook Park, 4290 E. Winchester Road, in the Las Alturas area of Las Cruces. Guided by a member of the MVAS, this is the perfect opportunity to observe the ever changing birds who live and seasonally visit here. Birding is done from paved paths that wind through the park. Plan clothing appropriate for the weather and bring water and binoculars. We meet at 7:45 a.m. at the park entrance. The next three months scheduled Wednesday walks Feb. 21, March 21 and April 18. Contact [Wayne Treers](mailto:Wayne.Treers@mesilla.org) 575-528-8696 for information.

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.

Photo Submittals Welcome

Photos submitted for publication in this newsletter must have been taken in our local area, i.e., Sierra, Otero, or Dona Ana counties only, and during the past 12 months. Our publications committee judges entries based on photo quality, subject interest and subject variety. In your email submittal, please include the location taken and name of species. Our newsletter editor makes the final selection for publication. All published photos will automatically appear in the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society calendar.

By submitting your photo you automatically grant Mesilla Valley Audubon Society (MVAS) publication rights for one year. MVAS may use your photo in any of our publications, including newsletters and our annual calendar. Photos should be submitted electronically as a high resolution jpg file to [Judi Schultz](mailto:Judi.Schultz@mesilla.org).

Membership meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. in the Southwest Environmental Center on the downtown mall. Board meetings are held the Wednesday before membership meetings at 5:30 p.m., also in SWEC. 275 N. Downtown Mall. All Audubon members are welcome to both meetings.