

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

www.mvaudubon.org

Volume 38 No. 2, Mar-Apr 2016

Don't Miss Exciting Spring Speakers

March Part 3 of the *Birds in Art Series*

Our special guest will be Kami Koyamatsu. Raised at the foot of the Cascade

Mountains in Washington State, Kami is a scientific illustrator and artist with a strong interest in the natural world.



After studying Wildlife Conservation of the U of W, as well as receiving a certificate in science illustration, Kami made her way to the Southwest. Learn more about the process, techniques and inspiration that influence Kami as she makes her way in this remarkable field. (*Her artwork is displayed with permission.*)

April Every April our program focuses on the research of the annual Richard Bischoff Scholarship winner at New Mexico State University. This year's recipient, Matt Gould, a PhD student in Department of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology, will present his research on American black bear populations. His talk will touch upon genetic variation in fragmented bear populations of the Intermountain West, Southwest and northern Mexico.

Local Audubon Offers Graduate Scholarship

The Mesilla Valley Audubon Society (MVAS) is offering a \$500/per semester scholarship to a graduate student in Department of Fishery and Wildlife Sciences, Department of Biology, or Geography Department at NMSU. Applicants must maintain a 3.5 GPA and explain how their research is related to natural resource conservation.

Please send applications to Mesilla Valley Audubon Society, Box 1645, Las Cruces, NM 88004. Applications will be accepted no later than March 15. A final decision will be made by April 15. All candidates will be notified after that date. For more information contact Bob Tafanelli, 526-9380, or btafanel@zianet.com.

By maintaining a 3.5 GPA during the first semester of the scholarship, the recipient will receive another \$500 for the second semester.

The mission of MVAS is to be 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".

Percha Dam State Park, Saturday, March 19

Meet in the east end of the K-Mart parking lot off US 70 in Las Cruces at 07:15 to leave at 07:30 a.m. for the approximately 60 mile trip. Carpooling can be arranged on the spot.

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society March Field Trip

"Percha" is almost always a great birding spot. In the past, we have seen a leucistic (the inability to produce pigment) Ladder-backed Woodpecker, as well as normally colored Cooper's Hawks, Vermillion Flycatchers, Eastern and Western Bluebirds, Eastern Phoebes, Ash-throated Flycatchers, Common Black Hawks, and various other wonders. We will stop for lunch at either the Arrey Café or Sparky's in Hatch. For more information call Mark Pendleton at (575)635-8711.

MVAS Monthly Beginner Bird Walks Dates: March 16 and April 20

Join MVAS for our bird walk at Tellbrook Park on the 3rd Wednesday of every month. Birding will be done from the paved path that winds through the park, with short, optional excursions into the surrounding desert. Meet at 7:45 a.m. at the entrance to Tellbrook Park at 4290 E. Winchester Rd., Las Cruces. The walks last about an hour, but may go longer if there is enough interest.

These walks are appropriate for beginners and you do not need prior experience to fully enjoy them. However, intermediate and advanced birders will also find them rewarding. Dress appropriately for the weather, bring drinking water and especially bring your curiosity and thirst for the outdoors.

For more information contact Jay Wilbur at [\(512\) 632-4196](tel:5126324196) or by email at jwilbur@jaysplanet.info

Time to Sign Up for MVAS/DACC Spring Birding Class

MVAS again will offer a Spring class on bird watching through the Dona Ana Community College's Community Education Program. The class will involve three Tuesday evening lectures at DACC and three Saturday morning field trips to local birding hotspots.

The three lectures, from 6:30-8:30 p.m., will be given on April 5, 12, and 19, at the East Mesa campus. The specific times and locations for the field trips, April 9, 16 and 23, will be announced during the first class.

This semester the class will focus on bird identification techniques, including vocalizations. So if you want to refine your birding skills a bit, come join instructors CJ Goin, Mark Pendleton, Wayne Treers, Barb Rodriguez and Jay Wilbur as we explore the diversity of local and migratory birds. To register through DACC, visit their website <http://dacc.augusoft.net> or call (888)330-9487. The name of the class is "Intermediate Bird Watching," but no prior birding experience is required to fully appreciate the material. Most of all, we'll have fun looking at some great birds this Spring.

Sandia Crest House

Frenzy at the Feeder

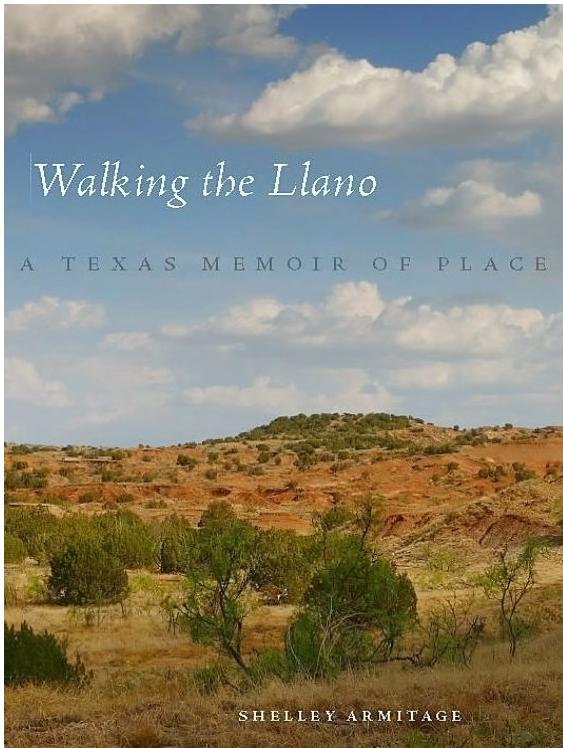
On Saturday, Jan. 23, five intrepid MVAS birders led by Mark Pendleton braved the cold weather and Albuquerque traffic to visit Sandia Crest House in hopes of viewing Rosy-Finches. The balcony of this chalet, with an elevation of two miles, provides both fantastic views of the city and occasional glimpses of bird species that prefer the altitude high and the temperature low.

Feeders can be watched through floor to ceiling balcony windows from the comfort of a small dining area. These feeders attract many montane birds. But the most famous of these without a doubt are the three species of Rosy-Finches. It's a dependable location for finding all three species, which migrate here from different breeding grounds to form mixed flocks in winter. Birders from all over the world also come here to add these three birds to their life lists.

Our MVAS contingent had a great morning. Not only were the Rosy-Finches plentiful, there were also appearances by Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Dark-eyed Junco, Hairy Woodpecker, and Stellar's Jay. All were seen from the comfort of the chalet while sipping coffee and pouring over Sibley.



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Dr. Shelley Armitage Publishes New Book

MVAS chapter member and Las Cruces resident Dr. Shelley Armitage just published “Walking the Llano: A Texas Memoir of Place,” a lyrical eco-memoir. It is set in the Texas Panhandle connecting prehistoric and historic aspects of the larger Southwest.

Though not a birding book, Dr. Armitage discusses the Llano’s persisting wonders: dynamic mesas and canyons, vast flora and fauna, diverse wildlife and rich human histories as she walks down the Middle Alamosa Creek from her family farm.

Dr. Armitage is professor emerita at the University of Texas at El Paso. She is author of eight books and over 50 articles. She writes widely about the environment as reflected in the arts, literature, and studies of the natural world. For more information, visit her website at shelleyarmitage.com.

Results of Christmas Bird Count

Fifty two spotters participated on Dec. 19 in the annual Christmas Bird Count, compared to 48 in 2014. Six participants were feeder observers, vs. 11 a year ago, according to Wayne Teers, CBC coordinator. No nuthatches were seen. Overall, it was an average year for our circle but with a somewhat low species count.

TOTAL BIRD COUNT: 33,770 (last year: 35,117)

UNUSUAL SPECIES: 6 (Broad-billed Hummingbird -1; Harris's Hawk -5; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher -2; Brown Thrasher -1; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker -1; Grace's Warbler -1)

HIGH COUNTS: 11 (9 of them set new record highs - Mexican Duck, Great Egret, Harris's Hawk, American Kestrel, Eurasian-collared Dove, Red-naped Sapsucker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Say's Phoebe and Curve-billed Thrasher)

LOW COUNTS: 8 (one of them set a new record low - Dark-eyed Oregon Junco; 3 tied for record lows — Ring-billed Gull; Great Horned Owl and Vesper Sparrow).

TOTAL SPARROWS (excluding Towhees & House Sparrows): **2,233** (last year: 3,547)

WHITE-WINGED DOVE: 8,859 (last year: 8,947)

AMERICAN CROW: 7,039 last year: 9,530)

COUNT WEEK SIGHTINGS (not seen during CBC): Eastern Bluebird; Greater Yellowlegs

TOTAL SPECIES COUNT (including subspecies): 120 (last year: 131).

MVAS Leadership ** 2016

Name	Position(s)	Phone
Officers		
Jennifer Montoya	President	(575) 526-1320 h
Ken Stinnett	VP, NM Council Alternate	(575) 649-3781 c
Jay Wilbur	Secretary, NM Council Rep	(512) 632-4196 c
Diane Moore	Treasurer, Finance Chair	(575) 528-9164 c
Board members and chairs		
Gill Sorg	Past President, Director 2016-18, NM Council Rep	(505) 358-3773 h
Mark Pendleton	Director 2014-16, Field Trips	(575) 635-8711 c
CJ Goins	Director 2014-16, Education	(575) 202-1354 c
Judi Schultz	Director 2015-17, Publications-Newsletter Editor	(937) 361-7952 c
Aaron Lucas	Director 2015-17	(575) 520-0124 c
Wayne Treers	Director 2016-18, CBC Coordinator	(575) 528-8696 c
Bob Tafari	Conservation	(575) 526-9380 h
Judy Wilbur	Membership	(512) 560-4717 c
Barb Rodriguez	Webmaster	
Cheryl Fallstead	Publicity	(575) 405-7133 c
Vacant	Program	

Step Up and Join In

MVAS is conducting out our annual membership drive. Your membership and support really mean a lot to our local Audubon Chapter. As you may know if you are a member in the National Audubon Society only your first-year membership fees benefit our chapter. Subsequent years of national dues do not. Funds raised through your local membership campaign directly support our many activities. These include:

- Audubon Adventures, an environmental education program for fourth graders, including field trips for under-served schools
- Richard Bischoff Scholarship for NMSU students researching conservation
- Lorraine Schulte Excellence in Teaching Award
- Roadrunner Ramblings Newsletter issued every other month .

Please join or renew your membership. Complete this form today.

Enjoy this newsletter as a full-color PDF via email. Contact Judy Wilbur at jkwilbur@gmail.com or (512)560-4717.

Roadrunner Ramblings is published six times a year — January, March, May, July, September and November. Submissions welcome; please email copy to Judi Schultz, judi626@earthlink.net. Next deadline: August 15. Printed by **insta-copy printing**. Image credits: roadrunner, Dale Zimmerman; clipart, IMSI's Master Clips/Master Photos© Collection. Photo credits: Jay Wilbur.

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 _____

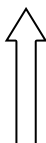
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