

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 25, No. 6. November-December 2003

President's Message

By Walt Whitford

I missed the September meeting of MVAS because my wife and I were in Rhode Island visiting family. While in Rhode Island, I visited the Rhode Island Audubon Society headquarters in Smithfield, Rhode Island. This facility houses several paid employees, an excellent library that covers environments of southern New England, a fantastic gift shop and lots of information about birding areas, nature walk areas owned by the R. I. Audubon Society and trips sponsored by the R. I. Audubon Society.

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There is a \$5 fee to participate in the CBC. This year, Audubon is planning to set up a website that would allow participants to pay the fee on-line, although the website was not complete at press time (www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html).

Thanksgiving Bird Count

If you're looking for an excuse to take a break and stare out your window on Thanksgiving Day, you might consider volunteering to be an observer for the Thanksgiving Bird Count. Established in 1966, this count requires only a one-hour commitment. Pick a circle, 15 feet in diameter (such as the one surrounding the feeder or water bath in your yard), and tally up the maximum number of individuals of each species seen in the circle (or passing through the imaginary cylinder suspended above it) during the hour.

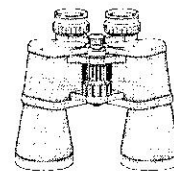
To request a copy of the report form and explanatory letter, contact Nancy Stotz at 521-8087 or nstotz@zianet.com.



7:30 PM. News, announcements, and information begin at 7:00, preceding the program.

Programs

Programs and meetings are held each month, September-April, at the Village at Northrise, Hallmark Building, 2882 N. Roadrunner Pkwy, Las Cruces. Programs begin at



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.

Bitter Lakes National Wildlife Refuge.

November 19. Steve Alvarez, Public Use Specialist at the refuge, will highlight some of the features of this aquatic oasis in eastern New Mexico. Surrounded by Chihuahuan Desert and short-grass prairie, the refuge contains more than 70 sink-holes, which are home to the highest diversity of dragonfly species in the nation. For those who can't make the field trip on November 15, this program should at least give you a taste of the remarkable diversity of this special place.

Bitter Lakes National Wildlife Refuge.

November 15. More than 30 species of waterfowl have been recorded at this refuge, located northeast of Roswell, where many lesser sandhill cranes winter. The refuge is also host to an endangered fish species, the Pecos Gambusia. The field trip will be starting from the refuge headquarters at 8 AM. To reach the headquarters, head north out of Roswell on Highway 285, to Pine Lodge Road; turn east and continue 9 miles on Pine Lodge Road to the headquarters. Contact Guy Powers (heyguy37@juno.com or 373-3843) for more information.

JOIN NOW!

- National Membership: Join both the **National Audubon Society** and **Mesilla Valley Audubon Society** for the introductory rate of \$20 (a \$15 savings!). Includes both *Audubon Magazine* and *Roadrunner Ramblings*. Make check payable to National Audubon Society.
- Chapter Membership: Join just **Mesilla Valley Audubon Society** for \$15. Includes *Roadrunner Ramblings*. Make check payable to Mesilla Valley Audubon Society.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Q54
7XCH

Send this application and your check to:

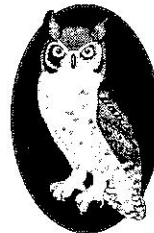
Membership, MVAS
P.O. Box 1645
Las Cruces, NM 88004

Winter Birds of the Mesilla Valley.

December 10. To help us prepare for the upcoming Christmas Bird Count, Lorraine Schulte will review some common, and not so common, winter residents and visitors to southern New Mexico. Tim Lawton will also be on hand to organize teams and leaders for this year's count.

Welcome New Members

Dove Flowers
Lloyd Von Wolff
Kathryn Bardwell



Salton Sea. January 16 – January 19.

This special trip is scheduled for Martin Luther King holiday weekend in order for the largest number of people to be able to attend. The Salton Sea Wildlife Refuge is located on the southeastern edge of the Salton Sea. The nearest town is Brawley, California in the heart of the Imperial Valley. More than 375 species of birds have been recorded in the Salton Sea and Imperial Valley Regions. While shore birds and waterfowl are the most abundant birds at the refuge, there are numbers of raptors including Peregrine Falcons and Bald Eagles. Accommodations in Brawley include the Brawley Inn (\$69.00/night without discounts). Contact Walt Whitford (wawhitfo@nmsu.edu or 521-1358) for more information.

Thank You!

Thanks to all who responded so generously to the article in the last newsletter describing our chapter's financial challenge. A number of you chose to become Chapter Only members, or provided us with an additional donation to supplement your National membership, and the board sincerely appreciates your support.

Also, thanks to all who have given donations for the Sandhill Crane oat crop being planted by the Calle del Norte bridge. In case you missed it, the *Las Cruces Sun News* ran a front page article about this project on October 5. Evidently the cranes read the paper too; on October 26, the Basic Birdwatching class watched a flock of 33 cranes circling over the site!

Bird Notes

There have been many reports of osprey sightings, coming from Burn Lake, near Sonoma Ranch, the Old Refuge, La Llorona Park, Leasburg, and Percha.

Species	Date	Location	Observers
Harris's Sparrow	9-2	Las Cruces	WSH
Clay-colored Sparrow	9-3	Talavera	TL
American Redstart	9-5	WSTF	HH
Long-billed Curlew	9-5	Soledad Canyon	TL
Warbling Vireo	9-5	Talavera	TL
Western Tanager	9-6	Las Cruces	LS
Hepatic Tanager	9-7	Aguirre Springs	NS
Black-chinned Sparrow	9-7	Aguirre Springs	NS
Eastern Phoebe	9-11/10-2	Las Cruces	JD/WSH
Anna's Hummingbird	9-11	Las Cruces	JD
Hooded Warbler	9-13	Talavera	BT
Am. White Pelican	9-18	Caballo	KS
House Wren	9-18	Las Cruces	LS
Baird's Sparrow	9-20	A-G Turf Farm	JP
Grasshopper Sparrow	9-20	A-G Turf Farm	JP
Brown Thrasher	9-20/10-13	Bosque Redondo/Las Cruces	GE,TL/EM
Mississippi Kite	9-20	Bosque Redondo	GE,TL
Blue-winged Warbler	9-20	Melrose Trap	TL
Sage Sparrow	9-20	Melrose Trap	GE
Tennessee Warbler	9-21	Sunset Canal	JP
Chestnut-collared Longspur	9-21	A-G Turf Farm	JP
Painted Redstart	9-23	Radium Springs	MSJZ
Dickcissel	9-23	Las Cruces	RC
Hermit Thrush	9-24	Leasburg	NS, JM
Lesser Yellowlegs	9-24	Swan Pond	NS, JM
MacGillivray's Warbler	9-24	Leasburg	NS, JM
Yellow Warbler	9-24	Leasburg	NS, JM
Lucy's Warbler	9-26	Radium Springs	MSJZ
Broad-winged Hawk	9-27	Sunset Canal	JP
Chestnut-sided Warbler	9-27	Sunland Park	JP
Black-throated-gray Warbler	9-27	A-G Turf Farm	JP
Common Grackle	9-30	Las Cruces	LS
Broad-billed Hummingbird	10-1/9	Radium Springs/Las Cruces	MSJZ/BS
Clark's Grebe	10-6	Caballo	KS
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	10-11	Las Cruces	BS
Sandhill Cranes	10-11/13/15	Old Refuge/Percha/ Radium Springs	MVAS,SWEC/ MSJZ/BR
Gray Catbird	10-14	Radium Springs	MSJZ
Demoiselle Crane	10-15	Bosque del Apache	RK
Lewis' Woodpecker	10-18	Radium Springs	MSJZ
Black-thrted. Green Warbler	10-22	WSTF	HH, AS

Observers: Rick Castetter, John Douglas, Gordon Ewing, Harold Harrison, Wally/Sue Hill, Tim Lawton, Ed Mayfield, Richard Kruidenier, Jennifer Montoya, Jim Paton, Barbara Rodriguez, Bill Seager, Marcy Scott/Jimmy Zabriskie, Lorraine Schulte, Amanda Skarsgard, Ken Stinnett, Nancy Stotz, Bill Thompson

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

New Mexico Rare Bird Hotline 505-323-9323
or <http://mvar.nmsu.edu/nmos/>

Rare Bird Alerts for NM and other states: www.birds.com

Field Trip Report

Katfish Kove. September 20. Ten Audubon members spent a pretty fall day in the vicinity of Katfish Kove N. of Deming and S. of the City of the Rocks State Park. The unanimous decision was that the warbler migration was over and the sparrow migration was in full swing. We saw a total of 55 species, including many raptors along the road (both Prairie and Peregrine Falcons, and a Ferruginous Hawk). The highlights at Katfish Kove were Bridled "Titmouses" and a wide variety of woodpeckers. The dry weather has had an effect on the birding and beauty; however, Katfish Kove is a experience everyone should have. Don't forget to go to the office and pay the \$5.00 fee.

Harold Harrison

"Take Back Audubon" Update

In our last newsletter, the "Crisis in the Boardroom" article introduced the Take Back Audubon (TBA) movement which is hoping to elect a National Board of Directors which would be more sympathetic to the needs of local chapters. National Audubon recently mailed out their proxies, which would be used to elect the slate of candidates chosen by National. TBA has developed an alternate slate of candidates that they believe would be more supportive of chapter concerns. More information about the TBA candidates and an alternate proxy (which you can download and send in to cast your vote) are available at the TBA website (www.smbas.org/tba).

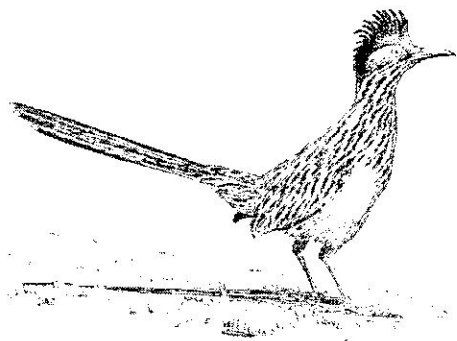


*Festival of the
Cranes
at Bosque del
Apache*

November
18-23

Tours • Lectures • Exhibits

Schedule of Events and Registration
Forms available at
www.friendsofthebosque.org



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