

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 32, No. 6. Nov.-Dec. 2010

MVBSP News and Upcoming Activities

There's a lot going on at the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park these days—here are some highlights MVAS members might find of interest.

New Superintendent: NM State Parks has hired a new superintendent for the park, Jan Kirwan. Jan comes to MVBSP after 25 years of work with the National Park Service and a brief stint as an environmental specialist for Florida Power and Light. She joins the park just in time to keep tabs on 2 large-scale projects.

Salt Cedar Removal: Funded by a wetland restoration grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency, the park will be removing about 30 acres of salt cedar within the next few months. This work will focus on the dense salt cedar stands between Picacho Drain and the river, and will involve 2 different removal strategies. Much of the area will be cleared mechanically, with heavy equipment cutting trunks and branches as well as removing roots from below ground. Woody material will be collected and transported away for composting.

In areas closer to the drain and levee, where below-ground disturbance could damage those 2 structures, hand treatments will be used. Most of the salt cedar in those areas will be cut down just above ground level, with an herbicide applied to the cut stump to kill the parts of the plant remaining below ground. A few of the tallest trees will simply be girdled and remain in place as dead snags to provide perches and vertical habitat for wildlife until native trees and shrubs can fulfill that role. Native cottonwoods and willows will be replanted in the cleared areas, though the exact timing of that work depends on how soon the clearing is completed (the natives need to be planted before they begin to leaf out in the early spring).

Levee Construction: The International Boundary and Water Commission will also be working at the park later this fall/early winter, to complete their project of raising the height of the levee. Previously, they added material to the levee between the entrance gate and the point where the entrance road drops down off the levee; this time, they will be adding material from where the road leaves the levee to where the levee ends, near Picacho Drain. While levee work is underway, you can expect heavy traffic from large dump trucks carrying dirt as well as heavy equipment working on the levee slopes adjacent to the entrance road.

Special Events: In spite of these 2 large projects, the park still has plenty of events scheduled for visitors in the next 2 months. See event listing on page 4.

2010 Christmas Bird Count

Join Citizen Scientists from all over the western hemisphere and participate in Audubon's 111th Christmas Bird Count. This will be MVAS's 33rd year conducting the Las Cruces Christmas Bird Count. This year, the Las Cruces CBC will take place on Saturday, 18 December.

CBCs are simple: we count all birds seen or heard within a 15-mile-diameter circle. The Las Cruces CBC covers all areas from Dripping Springs in the east to the Rio Grande in the west and from grasslands near Jornada Road in the north to agricultural fields in the south. Our count is consistently within the top 5 in the state in terms of number of species observed (about 120+ species).

If you think birding all day may be a bit too much, you can always opt to stay home and count birds at your feeders or in your yard, or you can count with a team for part of the day. We typically have between 30 and 40 participants whose skills range from rank beginners to well-seasoned birders. Upon completion of the day we'll meet for a nice dinner and begin to tally our results.

If you think you might be interested in participating or for more information contact Tim Lawton at tlawton@nmsu.edu or 575-522-2056. I am looking for both team leaders and participants. This is a fun, low-pressure outdoor event; the only prerequisite is enthusiasm. You can even do a partial day if it better fits your schedule.

Be sure to attend the monthly meeting on Wednesday, December 15, when we finalize teams and show slides of local winter birds. There is a \$5 fee to participate in the CBC, although this fee does not pertain to participants who stay home and watch feeders and the yard.

Electronic Newsletter

Help MVAS save resources by signing up to receive *Roadrunner Ramblings* electronically, instead of in printed form. To sign up, email Nancy Stotz at

nstotz1@comcast.net

As each issue goes to press, you will receive an email indicating that a PDF version of the new issue is available for download at our website www.mvaudubon.org

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 **Mesilla Valley Audubon Society** for \$15. You'll receive *Roadrunner Ramblings*. Make check payable to Mesilla Valley Audubon Society.

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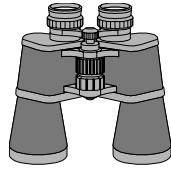
Send this form and your check to:

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

RENEWALS

National Members: NAS will send you renewal notices.

Chapter Members: Check your mailing label. If you see a C followed by a month and year code, you are a Chapter Member. The month and year code indicates the month your membership expires.



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.

Shalem Colony Bridge. November 4. *Note: Thursday field trip.* As the fall migration continues, join us and get hooked on birding! We'll hike along the Rio Grande and its floodplain areas, and try to spot some of our migratory visitors:

Townsend's and Wilson's Warblers, Olive-sided Flycatchers, and Painted Buntings. Also, our winter visitors are already arriving: Yellow-rumped Warblers, White-crowned Sparrows, Cooper's Hawks, and Belted Kingfishers. The field trip will last 2 to 3 hours, and hiking will be very easy with frequent stops. Sunscreen, hat, drinking water, and binoculars are recommended, and insect repellent is optional. Dress for both a cool start to the day and warming by mid-morning. Meet at NE corner of parking lot in front of Lowe's Home Improvement, 3200 N. Main St., by 7:30 AM at the latest. Car pool to Shalem Colony Bridge. For further information, contact Wayne Treers by calling 528-8696 or email way1mike@yahoo.com.

Together Green Service Field Trip to Broad Canyon Ranch, November 20. Help restore riparian bottomlands and wetland habitat at Broad Canyon Ranch on the Rio Grande in southern New Mexico from 8 AM to noon. For more details, see article on page 3.

City Parks and Burn Lake. December 4. As winter approaches the Mesilla Valley, we'll check out some of our City parks (such as Apodaca, Young, and Pioneer Womens') and hopefully observe Dark-eyed Juncos, Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Pyrrhuloxia, and Cedar Waxwings. We'll also make a stop at Burn Lake to see waterfowl: Mallards, Green-winged & Blue-winged Teals, and Northern Shovelers. The field trip will last approx. 3 hours, and hiking will be very easy with frequent stops. Sunscreen, hat, and binoculars are recommended. Dress appropriately for the cold weather. Meet at NE corner of parking lot in front of Lowe's Home Improvement, 3200 N. Main St., by 7:00 AM

at the latest. Car pool to various city parks. For further information, contact: Wayne Treers at 528-8696 (email: way1mike@yahoo.com) or Mark Pendleton at 635-8711 (mpendleton@zianet.com).

Las Cruces Christmas Bird Count. December 18. For more details, see article on page 1.

Caballo CBC. January 2. For more information, contact John Douglas (575-541-0133 or jjddouglas@zianet.com).

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.

Amazonian Ecuador. November 17. Join us for a special adventure as MVAS members Bob Tfanelli and Storm Sermay present a slide show of their trip to the Napo Wildlife Center (NWC) showing pictures of the birds and other wildlife of the Amazon basin. NWC is located in a remote area near the Napo River, a main feeder to the Amazon. Reaching this area, protected by one of the indigenous tribes, requires two boat trips and often some hiking.

CBC and Winter Birds. December 15. We'll organize CBC teams, receive information packets with maps and checklists, and get prepared for the upcoming count. We'll also review a series of bird photos of potential species to be encountered on the count.

ANNUAL ELECTIONS

At our January 19 program meeting, MVAS will hold its annual elections. The nominating committee has developed the following slate of candidates.

Vice-President: Gill Sorg
Secretary: Valerie Endruweit
Treasurer: Barb Rodriguez
Board: Sean Barham
Mark Pendleton
Lorraine Schulte (to complete Valerie's term)

Field Trip Reports

Mesilla Valley Bosque Park. September 4.

Six of us braved the early hours of the morning to check out birds along the Rio Grande from Calle del Norte Bridge to the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. We observed several Great Blue Herons, many Cliff Swallows, a Bullock's Oriole, a few Yellow Warblers and Blue Gosbeaks, and a Yellow-breasted Chat, amongst others. However, the highlight of the trip was seeing about 50 White-faced Ibis flying in a V-formation south for the winter.

La Llorona Trail. October 2. While only three of us came out early to do some birding, we did observe some interesting species: Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Great Blue Heron, Say's Phoebe, several Least Sandpipers, and our first White-crowned Sparrows of the fall. But the highlight of the trip was seeing an Osprey winging its way downstream over the Rio Grande.

Come join Mark and I on our field trips in early November and December as we look for migrants and winter visitors.

Wayne Treers

Audubon to Host Third Volunteer Restoration Event at Broad Canyon Ranch

Audubon New Mexico has received a TogetherGreen volunteer grant to help restore riparian bottomlands and wetland habitat at Broad Canyon Ranch on the Rio Grande in southern New Mexico. Audubon will host six events over the next year including planting of native vegetation, a 24-hour BioBlitz, and more.

At the first volunteer event in September, over 25 volunteers from New Mexico State University and Mesilla Valley Audubon Society pulled ten thousand salt cedar seedlings enhancing a mosaic of native vegetation that supports breeding songbirds and migratory waterbirds. Removal of salt cedar also improves access to riverside recreational areas and decreases wildfire hazards. Volunteer archeologists will help survey about 50 acres of ranchland in October.

A third volunteer event is scheduled for November 20th from 8:00 to 12:00 when volunteers will remove and roll hundreds of meters of barbed wire fence from the historic ranchlands and restore wildlife access throughout the floodplain. Volunteers should bring good gloves and wear long sleeves, pants and sturdy walking shoes. Audubon New Mexico will provide drinks, snacks, extra cotton gloves, fencing pliers and instructions.

To volunteer and get directions, call Beth Bardwell at 575-522-5065 or email bbardwell@audubon.org.

Welcome New Members

John W. Stebbins
Norman Todd
Sherry Hulsey
Jane Holland
Joni Johnson
Linda Leeper
Anita McGee
Edel Fosseen
Joan Woodward
Sharon Silverson
Donald G. Johnson
Dottie La Bree
Mary Ramos
Nancy Cobble
Tracy Carroll
Martha L. Bacon
Prudence A. Thornton



Daniel S. Kilby

Bird Notes

Species	Date	Location	Observers
White-tailed Kite	8/18	MVBSP	CJ
Yellow warbler	8/21	MVBSP	CJ
Cactus Wren	8/23	Las Cruces	LS
Cinnamon Teal	8/23	Tortugas Dam	AT
Semipalmated Sandpiper	8/23	Tortugas Dam	AT
Solitary Sandpiper	8/23	Tortugas Dam	AT
Wilson's Phalarope	8/23	Tortugas Dam	AT
Golden Eagle	8/29; 10/6	Soledad Canyon; MVBSP	LS; CJ
Eastern Kingbird	9/3	Las Cruces Dam	NS
Western Wood Peewee	9/3	Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park	HH
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	9/3	Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park	HH
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	9/3	Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park	HH
MacGillivray's Warbler	9/3	Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park	HH
Townsend's Warbler	9/3	Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park	HH
Violet-green Swallow	9/3	Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park	HH
Virginia's Warbler	9/3	Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park	HH
Virginia's Warbler	9/4	MVBSP	CJ
MacGillivray's Warbler	9/5	MVBSP	CJ
Harris Hawk	9/6	Uvas Valley Playa	BR
Krider's Red-tailed Hawk	9/6	Uvas Valley Playa	BR
Eastern Phoebe	9/9	MVBSP	CJ
Olive-sided Flycatcher	9/11	MVBSP	CJ
Prairie Falcon	9/11	MVBSP	CJ
Painted Bunting	9/15	Las Cruces Dam	NS
Nashville Warbler	9/28, 10/6	MVBSP	CJ
Brown Pelican	9/29	Caballo Lake	LG
Roseate Spoonbill	9/29	Caballo Lake	LG
Western Kingbird	10/3	Las Cruces	LS
Osprey	10/6	MVBSP	CJ
Winter Wren	10/6	MVBSP	CJ
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	10/13	Las Cruces	SWH
Zone-tailed Hawk	10/13	MVBSP	CJ
Scott's Oriole	10/15	Las Cruces	RJ

Observers: Lisa Giles, CJ Goin, Harold Harrison, Sue & Wally Hill, Roberta James, Barb Rodriguez, Lorraine Schulte, Nancy Stotz, Al Trompler

Please report interesting sightings to Robert Hull at 575-523-8009 or rwhull@zianet.com

New Mexico Rare Bird Hotline
<http://www.nmbirds.org>

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

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.

OFFICERS AND BOARD

President		
Vice-president	Alan Krueger	532-1036
Secretary	Frankie Lerner	373-0857
Treasurer	Barb Rodriguez	523-1548
Past President	Gill Sorg	541-0577
Board (08-10)	John Douglas	541-0133
Board (08-10)	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Board (09-11)	Carol Campbell	640-1660
Board (09-11)	Sue Hill	382-9758
Board (10-12)	Valerie Endruweit	373-0530
Board (10-12)	Ken Stinnett	649-3781

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Audubon Council	Gill Sorg	541-0577
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Field Trips	vacant	
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Membership	Guy Powers	373-1891
Membership Records	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Newsletter Editor	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Publicity	Storm Sermay	382-3348

Board meetings are held, September through May, on the Thursday before the 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 PM at the Southwest Environmental Center (on the downtown mall). All Audubon members are welcome.

Visit our website at www.mvaudubon.org

Upcoming Events at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park

For more information on park happenings, see article on page 1.

Bird Walks. Beginning at 8:15 AM, November 6, 13, and 20.

Animal Tracking. Presentation by Kevin Hansen, November 6, 8:30 AM.

Centennial Saturday, December 4. Daylong event featuring living history demonstrations set in the year 1912. Role-playing interpreters will re-enact some of the activities of Women in Action, a historic Las Cruces organization, including the suffragette movement, the temperance movement, and traditional household tasks like adobe making and cooking.

MVBSP Anniversary, December 11. Special event to celebrate the park's second anniversary. Details TBA.

23rd Annual Festival of the Cranes

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge
November 16-21

www.friendsofthebosque.org/crane/



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