



ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

www.mvaudubon.org

Volume 37 No. 4, July-August 2015

Birds abound In Summer's heat

For many birders the monsoon months of July and August might seem the ebb of activity for the year. Nevertheless, they provide plenty of opportunities to get in some interesting birding. Our area is blessed with a high diversity of avian environments. Consequently, there is always something happening somewhere nearby. Here are a few things to look for during the next couple of months.

Even though Fall migration doesn't usually peak here until September, some species tend to start their return from summer breeding grounds early. Shorebirds should be moving through our area in August and even late July. Look for Least, Western, Spotted and Solitary sandpipers to visit mudflats along the Rio Grande on their way south. Less common visitors include Baird's Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Wilson's Snipe and Willet. In addition, July usually marks the return of Rufous and Calliope hummingbirds.

August should bring the return of Wilson's and Townsend's warblers. A trip to higher elevations will likely be rewarded with sightings of some of our more colorful summer residents such as Scott's Oriole and Western Tanager. You might even spot a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, which peaks in our area in July, or a Painted Bunting, which peaks in August.

Champion spotters in May and June

Congratulations to C. J. Goin for finding a Common Ground Dove at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park in May. Kudos to Nancy Stotz for spotting an Orchard Oriole at that same park, and for a Northern Waterthrush found east of Las Cruces Dam.

Digital Photography Contest

Submit your photos now for MVAS's second annual photography contest. Winning photographs will be published in a 2016 *Birds of Doña Ana, Sierra, and Otero Counties* calendar. Deadline for submissions is July 15, 2015. For more information email Mark Pendleton at mpndltn@gmail.com.

'Be the Judge!' at Aug. 19 program

We will get to view all of the entries and vote for the winners of the MVAS digital photo contest at the August 19 member meeting in the SW Environmental Center, beginning at 6:30 p.m. The top 13 vote-getters will be featured in a 2016 calendar we will sell to raise funds for the organization. Also expect a quick eBird demonstration to review some of the features of this real-time, online database of bird sightings.

Mystery bird of the month

Our challenge to readers should be easy for those who put out feeders in the Spring. Can you identify the bird in this snapshot by Jay Wilbur? Answer will be in the next issue.



Audubon membership

Follow the Money to Find Out What It Means

By Jennifer Montoya
Part one of three

If you have attended a meeting in the past three months, you have heard our membership chair remind you that while your first year as a member of National Audubon benefits our chapter financially, subsequent years of membership with National do not. We only receive significant dues from your initial membership. This is why you see funding appeals in the newsletter and online for our education and scholarship programs.

The primary expenditure of MVAS is for education:

- Audubon Adventures, an environmental education programs for fourth graders
- Richard Bischoff Scholarship for NMSU students researching conservation
- Lorraine Schulte Excellence in Teaching Award
- MVAS scholarship for summer bird camp for young adults.

The newsletter is the second largest budget item at a little more than \$1,000/year.

When you receive an appeal for fundraising, whether for the upcoming bird-a-thon, a silent auction or the appeal for contributions to education, know that all of your donation is spent directly on programs that benefit people

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.

in our community with the aim of enhancing bird conservation worldwide.

The greater presence MVAS has in southern New Mexico, the more awareness people will have about how they can help improve bird populations and habitat. Each spring we await the return of flocks of ibis, noisy kingbirds and swooping nighthawks. Let's share our enthusiasm and knowledge with those around us so we can secure the future of our remarkable feathered friends.

(Next: Volunteering at MVAS - It's for the Birds)

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 will 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 will receive *Roadrunner Ramblings*. Make check payable to Mesilla Valley Audubon Society.

Nonprofit Organization
US Postage Paid
Las Cruces, NM 88004
Permit No. 609

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1645
Las Cruces, NM 88004