

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 22, No. 3. May/June 2000

Birding the Oilfields

by Victor Burgett

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(continued on page 4) See *Oilfields*

President's Message: Have A Great Summer!

by Ed Mayfield, MVAS President

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Beginning September, we will have several wonderful challenges facing us and I want us to be ready to tackle them and make our mark on the community and the environment, while making our organization an even better one than it is. We are nationally recognized and a major chapter in our state. Have a great summer and be ready to enjoy some interesting programs and to tackle some new issues when we return in the fall.

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Annual Birdathon Potluck

Date: May 17, 2000

Place: Residence of Lorraine and John Schulte, 1740 Mariposa, Las Cruces, phone 524-7029.

Time: 6 PM.

Bring a main dish, salad or dessert. DRINKS AND TABLE SERVICE WILL BE PROVIDED. Bring 1-2 folding chairs if you have them available. The speaker will be David Henderson from Randall Davey Audubon Center in Santa Fe, NM.

Welcome New Members

Monroe and Betty Van Swerengen
Robert and Barbara Dickenshied
Sam and Stella Palm
Judy Fredrickson
Dr. Linda Burton
Martha Desmond
Lucia Wilcox
Lori Hungate
Tracy Mader
Jack Davis



JOIN NOW!

I would like to join the National Audubon Society and Mesilla Valley Audubon Society for the introductory rate of \$20.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Q54
7XCH

Membership includes the publications *Audubon* and *Roadrunner Ramblings*.

Send this application and your check (made payable to National Audubon Society) to:

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

Field Trip Reports

Holloman Lakes. Cancelled due to poor weather.

Caballo Lake State Park. The weather was at least a bit warmer but quite windy. We saw White-crowned Sparrows, a Western Grebe, and a distant cormorant. Not wanting to waste the day, we went to Animas Creek where the pickings turned out to be much more exciting. There were the ever present White-winged Doves and White-crowned Sparrows, along with Gambel's Quail and Great-tailed Grackles. We spotted a Bell's Vireo, several Western Meadowlarks, American Robins, many Ravens, a Phainopepla, a couple Scrub Jays, Starlings, Canada Geese, Acorn Woodpeckers and one Great Blue Heron. There were also several hummingbirds gamboling around. The catch of the day, for me anyway, was a Vermilion Flycatcher. My first. He was absolutely gorgeous.

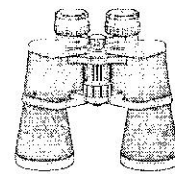
Carole Shirreffs

Greyfeathers Lodge in the Gila. About a dozen birders participated in this weekend trip which included birding around the lodge and along Sapillo Creek. Some of the group also birded at Lake Roberts.

We saw approximately 40 species. The highlights included a Peregrine Falcon, Western Bluebirds, nuthatches (Pygmy and White-breasted), bushtits, swallows (Violet-Green and Northern Roughwing), and jays (Steller and Scrub). We also saw thousands of Pine Siskins, sparrows (Sage, Lark, Lincoln's, Chipping, and Savannah), Phoebes (Say's and Black), Vermilion Flycatcher, and Townsend's Solitaire. We were serenaded by a long-winded Canyon Towhee, as well as Canyon Wrens and Warbling Vireos. Visitors to Lake Roberts were treated to two Osprey fishing, Painted Redstarts, and abundant Buffleheads.

Greyfeathers Lodge offers an escape from civilization (cell phones don't work there!), great food (our group enjoyed a four berry + rhubarb pie), and fantastic birding (you don't even have to leave the porch if you don't want to). Check them out at stay@greyfeathers.com.

Harold Harrison



Field Trips

New Mexico's spring weather is variable. Please be prepared with layered clothing, sunscreen, and plenty of water.

Holloman Lakes. Thursday, May 18. Since the March field trip to Holloman Lakes was a washout because of the weather, why don't we try it again? Meet at K-Mart on No. Main at 8:00 AM. Gordon Ewing has agreed to lead this half-day trip. We could see Great Blue Herons, Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, lots of ducks, Marsh Wrens (if we are quick), and maybe a Wilson's Phalarope. There is also supposed to be a Great-horned Owl hanging around in the tamarisk.

Vertebrate Museum, NMSU. Saturday, June 10. Jeff Brown of NMSU's Biology Department is going to give us a tour of the birds in the vertebrate museum. Meet at Foster Hall at 8:00 AM. (Foster Hall is on the southeast corner of the NMSU Horseshoe, south of Hadley Hall.) Jeff would like to know what we are most interested in for the tour. We have choices of warblers, raptors, shorebirds, foreign birds, and many of the newest birds he has mounted (some of which were provided by MVAS members Ed Mayfield, Gordon Ewing and Lorraine Schulte). Let me know which you would like to see and I will tell Jeff. This sounds like a very special morning.

Future trips. I would appreciate your suggestions for future trips and volunteers to lead them. If you have a favorite place that you would like to share with others, please let me know.

Carole Shirreffs

521-0079 or its_herself@yahoo.com

Programs

Programs and meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. September - April.



See you in September

Audubon Council Meeting

The next NM Audubon Council meeting will be held at Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge on 21 May. In addition, an Audubon Refuge Keepers Workshop will be offered 20 May. Contact Ed Mayfield (382-0715 or mayfield@greatwhite.com).

Birding Hot Spot: Palomas Marsh

by Bill Jacobson and Donna Wood

Bird Notes

Species	Date	Location	Observer
Hermit Thrush	Feb 27	Las Cruces	TS
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Feb 28	Las Cruces	SH, WH
Lesser Goldfinch (2 types)	Mar 3	Las Cruces	TS
Pine Siskin	Mar 3	Las Cruces	TS
Long-billed Curlew	Mar 4	Vado	MS, JZ
Western Screech Owl	Mar 5	Mesilla Park	CB
Turkey Vulture	Mar 6, Mar 15	Mesilla Park, Las Cruces	CB, BG
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Mar 8	Las Cruces	TM
Lucy's Warbler	Mar 9	Caballo SP	LS, JS, SH, WH
Northern Shrike	Mar 9	Caballo SP	LS, JS, SH, WH
Brown Thrasher	Mar 11	Caballo Dam	TL, WS
Violet-green Swallow	Mar 11	Caballo Dam, Deming	TL, WS, TM
Black-necked Stilt	Mar 13, Apr 4	Holloman Lake, Las Cruces	GE, TS
Blue-winged Teal	Mar 13	Holloman Lake	GE
Mountain Bluebird	Mar 13	Holloman Lake	GE
Sage Sparrow	Mar 13	Holloman Lake	GE
Snowy Plover	Mar 13	Holloman Lake	GE
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	Mar 15	Las Cruces	KS
Western Kingbird	Mar 15, Apr 6	Jornada, Las Cruces	JS, SH, WH
Common Black-Hawk	Mar 17	Las Cruces	VH, EM
Common Poorwill	Mar 17	Hachita	TL
Scrub Jay	Mar 17	Las Cruces	HH
Black-chinned Hummer	Mar 18, 21	Las Cruces	SH, WH, LS
Red-naped Sapsucker	Mar 18	Las Cruces	TL
Hooded Oriole	Mar 25, 31	Las Cruces	HH, LS
Vermilion Flycatcher	Mar 27	Palomas Marsh	GE
Swainson's Hawk	Mar 31, Apr 1	Las Cruces	GE, SH, WH
Scott's Oriole	Apr 6	Las Cruces	SH, WH
Black-and-white Warbler	Apr 7	Caballo SP	LS, JS, SH, WH
Cliff Swallow	Apr 7	Caballo SP	LS, JS, SH, WH
Common Snipe	Apr 7	Swan Pond	LS, JS, SH, WH
Hairy Woodpecker	Apr 7	Percha SP	LS, JS, SH, WH
Marbled Godwit	Apr 7	Swan Pond	LS, JS, SH, WH
Northern Waterthrush	Apr 7	Caballo SP	LS
Sage Thrasher	Apr 7	Caballo SP	LS, JS, SH, WH
Franklin's Gull	Apr 8	Leasburg	SH, WH
Northern Parula	Apr 8	Leasburg	SH, WH
Wilson's Warbler	Apr 8	Leasburg	SH, WH
Osprey	Apr 11	Leasburg	WS
Long-eared Owl	Apr 14	Jornada	WW, HH
Bullock's Oriole	Apr 15	Las Cruces	SH, WH
Lesser Scaup	Apr 19	WSTF	HH
White Pelican	Apr 19	Las Cruces	TM
Baird's Sandpiper	Apr 20	Ft Bliss Sewage Ponds	LS, JS, SH, WH
Western Sandpiper	Apr 20	Ft Bliss Sewage Ponds	LS, JS, SH, WH
White-rumped Sandpiper	Apr 20	Ft Bliss Sewage Ponds	LS, JS, SH, WH
Worm-eating Warbler	Apr 25	Las Cruces	EM

Observers: Craig Benkman, Bruce Ernst, Moira Ernst, Bill Glenn, Harold Harrison, Vince Hernandez, Tim Lawton, Ed Mayfield, Tim McKimmie, Jim Mulhauser, Minerva Rivera, Lorraine Schulte, John Schulte, Marcy Scott, William Seager, Storm Sermay, Tara Shelton, Nena Singleton, Julie Smith, Ken Stinnett, Walt Whitford, Jimmy Zabriskie

Please report early, late, or unusual sightings to Tim Lawton
505-522-2056 or tlawton@nmsu.edu

New Mexico Rare Bird Hotline 505-323-9323

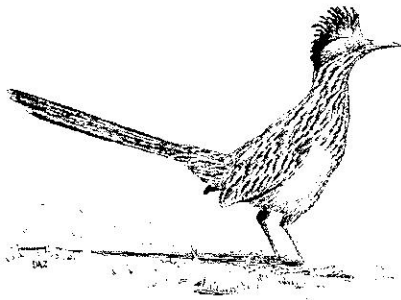
Palomas Marsh is a 40-acre livestock enclosure located south of Truth or Consequences. MVAS has agreed to survey the area and provide the BLM with a list of bird species sighted. In 2 ½ years, we have recorded over 100 different species. The list includes a number of warblers, marsh wrens, blackbirds, waterfowl, various raptors, and numerous other species. One of the more interesting is the Virginia Rail, which can sometimes be seen at the SE corner of the marsh.

Directions: Take I-25 north to Exit 71 (Las Palomas). At the top of the off ramp, turn right and go to boulevard stop (0.7 mi.) and turn left. Go 0.2 miles and turn right on gravel road. Go straight. After 0.8 miles you will cross a road. Bear slightly to your left and then back to the right to cross. You are there; the fenced enclosure is on your left.

Description: The enclosure includes two vastly different habitats. One is the typical mesquite shrub zone (dry) with the other being the marshy area; in addition, the interface between the two can be productive. You can enter the enclosure at the SE corner in the dry area and you can walk down to the marsh by going straight. You can then walk back up and through the drier habitat to the NE corner. The whole walk covers about ½ mile. An interesting sidelight is the emergence of young willows, cottonwoods, and grasses at the edge of the marsh.

There are two other nearby areas worth exploring. 1) A grove of cottonwood trees to the south of the enclosure. You can either walk or drive to this grove where a Cooper's Hawk has been nesting. 2) A farm pond a few miles away. As you return to I-25, go under the interstate and continue for approximately 4 miles. The pond is on private property on the right-hand (north) side of the road. Viewing can be done from the side of the road. At times, the pond will be covered with a wide variety of waterfowl.

Reporting sightings: If you visit the enclosure, please record the different species you see and their numbers and give this information to Bill Jacobson (by mail: 2424 Sunridge Dr., Las Cruces, NM 88012; email: bfrog@zianet.com; or phone: 382-6877).



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