

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 26, No. 1. January-February 2004

“Basic Bird Watching” Course Offered in February

Are you a newcomer to Las Cruces and our “Land of Enchantment”? Do you have a friend, neighbor or golfing buddy who is? Do you want to start a new hobby or learn to identify the intriguing birds you see on your daily walk or in your backyard? If so, now is the time to sign up for the MVAS adult education course “Basic Bird Watching.”

Offered through the Community Education Program at Doña Ana Branch Community College, the course will include such topics as viewing equipment, birding books, general bird identification tips and backyard birding. Participants will receive a good introduction to the birds of southern New Mexico by seeing slides of southwestern birds and going on field trips to birding hot spots.

Four classroom sessions will be held on Tuesday evenings, February 3, 10, 17, and 24, from 7-9 PM, in the conference room at the new East Mesa campus of DABCC, off Roadrunner Parkway. There will be two, local Saturday morning field trips on February 7 & 14, and an all-day trip to the Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, February 21.

The cost is \$40 per person. Class size is limited to 15, so register early. Call the Community Education Department at DABCC (527-7527) for registration information or MVAS Education Committee Chair, Wendy Davis (527-4551). If you want a fun, educational activity where you meet terrific people, then please join us!

“Brew The Right Thing” with Shade-Grown Coffees

Audubon-News

National Audubon Society and Rogers Family Coffee Companies announce the launch of a new, habitat friendly, socially responsible, shade-grown, organic coffee line certified by the Rainforest Alliance.

Audubon™ Coffee features a full line of new premium products offered at select retail outlets and the Audubon Coffee Club (www.auduboncoffeeclub.com). This premium line of coffee reflects the goal of Audubon, the Rogers Family and the Rainforest Alliance to promote environmen-

Outreach Program Coming to Local Schools

by Wendy Davis, Education Chair

We are pleased to announce that the Randall Davey Nature Center in Santa Fe is bringing its outreach program “Birds of the Bosque” to Las Cruces for a second year. Audubon educator Ken Barragan will teach all 4th grade students at Columbia Elementary School on February 2-6, and those at Hermosa Heights on February 17-20. The program will include classroom instruction with lots of hands-on projects, as well as a field trip to La Llorona Park along the Rio Grande.

Members of our Education Committee will observe some of the classroom sessions and offer assistance, if needed. Ken said that he would welcome any MVAS birders to help the students during the field trips. If you are interested, please contact Wendy Davis (527-4551).

MVAS is grateful to Ken and the Randall Davey Center for offering this opportunity to provide more environmental education to the children of Las Cruces, and we are delighted that these schools have chosen to participate in this fun and educational program.

tally and socially responsible products that protect bird species, wildlife habitat, and dwindling rainforests, and which raise the quality of life for people in the world’s coffee growing regions.

Audubon™ Premium Shade Grown Coffee is made exclusively from carefully selected Arabica beans cultivated by farmers in the world’s premier coffee regions. These exceptional farmers use traditional techniques to grow beans as nature intended—under a lush canopy of tropical trees, habitat for hundreds of bird species such as toucans and migratory warblers, and rainforest wildlife such as jaguars and tree frogs. To boost production, many coffee farmers have switched to full sun farming and destroyed native shade trees, leaving little possibil-

(continued on page 3) See Coffee

Annual Meeting

MVAS will hold its Annual Meeting prior to the program on January 21st (7 PM in the Hallmark Building, Village at Northrise). During the meeting, we will elect officers and board members for next year. The nominating committee has developed the following slate of candidates for the election:

President	Rob Davis
Vice-President	Guy Powers
Secretary	Donna Wood
Treasurer	Barb Rodriguez
Board Members (2004-2006)	Tim Lawton & Nancy Stotz

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



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

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

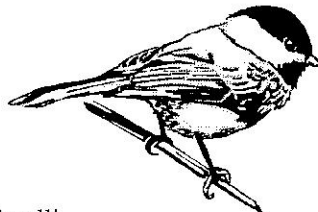
Endangered Fish of the Southwest.

January 21. Come learn more about efforts to save the endangered Rio Grande Silvery Minnow and other southwestern fish species. Our speaker will be Barbara Giesecke, Public Outreach Coordinator for the Dexter National Fish Hatchery. The hatchery, located near Roswell, NM, is dedicated to the conservation of threatened and endangered fishes of the Southwest, and has breeding and research programs focusing on more than a dozen fish species.

The Experience of a Lifetime—Polar Bear Expedition. February 18.

Polar bears, among the largest land mammals in the western hemisphere, inhabit the tundra region of the northern polar region. They weigh 600-1300 pounds but can reach over 2000 pounds. They feed primarily on seals, so they are very dependent on the pack ice. Changes in the timing of freeze up due to global warming are having serious impacts the southern distribution of this species. MVAS members Bob Tafanelli, Lorraine Schulte, and Michelle Santisteban will share with us their adventures in polar bear country around Churchill, Manitoba.

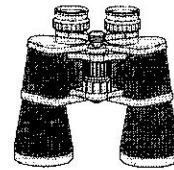
Welcome New Members



Bob Tafanelli
Mary Kenny
William & Pat Munro
Ferne Allen
Nagamany Nirmalakhandan
Bill & Carol Kennedy
David Kutchko

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.



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.

Otero Mesa. February 28. This will be an all-day expedition to one of New Mexico's most endangered landscapes—under consideration for extensive natural gas exploration and development, this vast expanse of Chihuahuan Desert grassland is home to pronghorn antelope, prairie dogs, and numerous grassland bird species. We will meet in the parking lot of the Bank of the Rio Grande on the corner of University and Telshor at 7:30 AM. We will need to carpool in SUV's; although the roads on Otero Mesa are improved dirt for the most part, some are pretty rough. Participants should bring lunches or snacks. We will drive from Las Cruces to Trans Mountain Road in El Paso and take the loop highway to the Carlsbad Highway. We'll head into Otero Mesa on the road that exits the Carlsbad Highway just west of the Immigration Check Station. Our route will go from the southern end of Otero Mesa—the Alamo Mountain area—north to the foothills of the Sacramento Mts. and return to Las Cruces through Alamogordo. The trip will involve a limited amount of walking. For more information, contact Walt Whitford (wawhitfo@nmsu.edu or 521-1358).

ity for wildlife habitation. The introduction of Audubon™ Coffee helps reverse this destructive trend.

Coffee lovers everywhere can now purchase Audubon premium blends certified by Rainforest Alliance that meet its rigorous standards for environmentally and socially responsible coffee farming. Audubon™ Coffee is also 100-percent certified organic and shade-grown. The

product line includes Audubon French Roast, Audubon Breakfast Blend, Audubon Rainforest Blend, and Audubon Decaf blends. These Rainforest Alliance-certified Audubon™ Coffees can be purchased by calling 1-800-770-9381 or online at www.auduboncoffeeclub.com.

Editor's Note: For those who prefer to shop locally, bird-friendly shade-grown coffee also is often available at Mt. View

Market (the natural food co-op) in Las Cruces. Interspersed with the various blends of organic and fair trade coffees they carry, there is typically one blend certified as shade-grown. Read the labels carefully, and if you can't find it, ask! If shoppers let the co-op know they are looking specifically for shade-grown coffee, the co-op is more likely to keep carrying it.

Christmas Count Report (204th National and 29th Las Cruces CBC)

by Gordon Ewing

Our Count was held on 14 Dec 2003. The weather was great, sunny and actually warm in the afternoon. We had 40 participating in the field plus a few feeder watchers.

The total number of species was low. We had 105 species reported, with three of those needing write-ups that have not yet been returned to me and three more species that need further discussion with the people who reported them. We will report somewhere in the range of 99 to 105 species for this year. I will base the following report on 102 species with the understanding that the actual report will be anywhere in the range of 99 to 105. We also have a count week Golden Eagle. Count week birds are not counted but they are listed so that the name remains on our list of birds on the Audubon web-page.

We were sixth from the bottom in the total number of species reported by us in the 29 years that the Las Cruces count has existed. This year's count was the lowest since 1987.

Surprisingly, the total number of birds counted was the highest that we have ever had with 62,000 birds. The count is rounded to the nearest hundred birds because it is still uncertain. The high count is due almost entirely to White-winged Doves. Over two thirds of all the birds reported (42,500) were White-winged Doves!

Rounding out the top ten species (in abundance) were American Crows, Rock Pigeons, White-crowned Sparrows, Mourning Doves, House Sparrows, Brewer's Blackbirds, House Finches, Red-winged Blackbirds, and Great-tailed Grackles.

Bird Notes

Species	Date	Location	Observers
Anna's Hummingbird	10-22;11-19	Las Cruces	LS; WSH
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	10-23,12-6	WSTF; Las Cruces	JiD, HH, AS; JM/NS
Hermit Thrush	10-23	WSTF	JiD, HH, AS
Rufous Hummingbird	10-25	Las Cruces	HH
Lewis's Woodpecker	10-25	Sunland Park	JiP
Western Bluebird	10-31	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Common Grackle	10-31	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Merlin	11-1; 12-5	Las Cruces	CV; WSH
White-winged Junco	11-4	Las Cruces	WSH
White-throated Sparrow	11-5, 30	Radium Spgs, Percha	MS/JZ; NS, RP
Lewis's Woodpecker	11-11, 15	Las Cruces	JH; GE
Golden Eagle	11-11	Leasburg	NS
Bufflehead	11-11	Leasburg	NS
Vermilion Flycatcher	11-11, 30	Percha	NS, RP
White-breasted Nuthatch	11-11, 19	Percha	NS; GE
Swamp Sparrow	11-11	Caballo	NS
Calliope Hummingbird	11-15	Las Cruces	NS
Bushtit	11-15	Baylor Pass	JaP
Eastern Bluebird	11-15	Baylor Pass	JaP
Western Bluebird	11-15	Baylor Pass	JaP
Sandhill Crane	11-15	Las Cruces	GE
Ferruginous Hawk	11-19,30	Percha	GE; NS, RP
Brown Creeper	11-19,30	Percha	GE; NS, RP
Hooded Merganser	11-20	Las Cruces	JoD
Bald Eagle	11-30	Percha	NS, RP
White-tailed Kite	12-6	Katfish Kove	MS/JZ
Eastern Phoebe	12-6	Katfish Kove	MS/JZ
Thayer's Gull	12-17	Sunland Park	JiP
Herring Gull	12-17	Sunland Park	JiP
Mew Gull	12-17	Sunland Park	JiP

Observers: Jim Dawson, John Douglas, Gordon Ewing, Janette Hale, Harold Harrison, Wally and Sue Hill, Jim Mulhauser/Nena Singleton, Jim Paton, Jan Poss, Ralph Preszler, Amanda Skarsgard, Lorraine Schulte, Marcy Scott/Jimmy Zabriskie, Nancy Stotz, Carol Verplough

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.birder.com

State Council Priorities for 2004

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	Walt Whitford	521-1358
Vice-president	Guy Powers	373-3843
Secretary	Donna Wood	525-8704
Treasurer	Barb Rodriguez	523-1548
Board (01-03)	Tim Lawton	522-2056
Board (01-03)	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Board (02-04)	Harold Harrison	522-6199
Board (02-04)	Rob Davis	527-4551
Board (03-05)	Wendy Davis	527-4551
Board (03-05)	Sue Hill	382-9758

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Audubon Council	Rob Davis	527-4551
Delegates	Guy Powers	373-3843
Conservation	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Education	Wendy Davis	527-4551
Field Trips	Ed Mayfield	382-0715
Programs	board at large	
Membership	Harold Harrison	522-6199
Newsletter Editor	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Publicity	Jackye Meinecke	524-1886

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.cybermesa.com/~mvas/.

At its December meeting, the New Mexico Audubon Council established the following list of Conservation Priorities to guide the efforts of the state program for the coming year. Four main categories of issues (in no particular priority order):

A. Species of Concern (In priority order)

Lesser Prairie-chicken
 Silvery Minnow/SW Willow Flycatcher
 Mexican Wolf
 Prairie-dogs (Black-tailed and Gunnison)
 Aplomado Falcon
 Peregrine Falcon
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo
 Mountain Plover
 River Otter

B. Partnerships (In priority order)

Rio Grande Alliance
 NM Dept. of Game and Fish alliances
 Conservation Funding
 Partners in Flight
 Valles Caldera Coalition
 Land and Water Conservation Fund

C. Habitat Protection

(In priority order)
 Otero Mesa
 Salt Cedar Eradication
 Wind Power siting concerns
 Forest Management
 Coal-bed Methane Issues
 Off-Road Vehicle limits
 Other Wilderness issues

D. Audubon Initiatives

Chapters: Christmas Bird Count continuation/support, Bird Monitoring, Audubon Refuge Keepers, Sikes Act participation

State: Important Bird Areas, Birding Trails, CBC, Sikes Act, Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park Spring River Nature Center

Roadrunner Ramblings is published six times a year: January, March, May, July, September, and November. Submissions are welcome; please email copy to nstotz@zianet.com, or call for mailing information. **Next deadline: 27 February.** Printed by **insta-copy printing** on 30% kenaf, 70% PCW recycled chlorine-free paper. Images, except Dale Zimmerman's roadrunner, are from IMSI's Master Clips/Master Photos® Collection.

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