



# ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

## MESILLA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

<https://www.mvasaudubon.org/> Vol. 45, Spring 2023 (February, March, April)

### President's Letter: Elaine Stachera Simon



Dear MVAS Members & Friends:

Although it's sort of late to say Happy New Year, the MVAS new year starts in February when the new board convenes for the first time. We welcome Mark Ryan as vice president and Linda Miller, Dylan Osterhaus, and Marcia Wilson as new board members.

I became president in 2020. The new board and I met in February over lunch and had great conversation about the many things we'd like to accomplish that year. You all know what happened next. Regardless of the pandemic, we got a lot done in the past couple years, and I hope that 2023 allows us to revisit those plans of relationship-building across our own territory (Otero and Sierra counties as well as Doña Ana) and with sister Audubon chapters and other birding organizations in southern New Mexico and West Texas.

I want to take the opportunity to remind everyone that our MVAS mission incorporates conservation, advocacy, and education, and these definitions are broad. They all include positive actions for birds, whether that's creating awareness of birds and the wonders of the natural world in our communities, contacting political representatives about issues relevant to birds, planting native plants, participating in the annual Christmas Bird Count, or any other bird-friendly activity.

MVAS is also about having fun and enjoying being part of our vibrant birding community! Check out the article on the recent field trip to the Bosque del Apache as an example of that. Birds and Beers will continue in the summer months, and we'll start to incorporate some in-person meetings as we can. Of course, bird walks are an important activity, and we'll include mindful birding and nature journaling in upcoming programs and activities.



Cooper's Hawk at Tellbrook Park  
Sid Webb 1/26/2023

As fun as birding is, we must do it responsibly. The new year is a good time for both new and seasoned birders to review the [American Birding Association Code of Birding Ethics](#). For photographers, [Audubon's Guide to Ethical Birding Photography and Videography](#) is a must-read.

Wishing everyone a healthy, happy, and birdy New Year!  
Elaine

## MVAS Election Results

Thank you to everyone who voted in this year's elections! More than 50% of those eligible to vote did so!

We said a fond farewell to Mark Pendleton, who has been serving as vice president, but an enthusiastic hello to Mark Ryan, who takes his place on the board.

The incumbent officers (Cheryl, Diane, and Elaine) retained their positions.

Incumbent board members Annie and CJ retained their positions, and we welcome Linda Miller, Dylan Osterhaus, and Marcia Wilson as new board members.

Aaron Lucas has taken over as our Keep Las Cruces Beautiful (for the Birds!) Adopt-A-Spot cleanup leader (thank you Aaron!). By the way, if anyone has big buckets they are willing to part with (e.g., five-gallon paint buckets, big-box-store buckets), please email MVAS and we'll figure out a way to get it/them from you. They don't need to be in perfect condition, just with a good handle for litter picking.

Here's to a great 2023!

### **MVAS Program List for February, March, April, & one for May...**

#### **February**

February 12 (Sunday): Holly Thomas | Bird Walk & Introduction to Mindful Birding (workshop precursor) | Sagecrest Park, 8–10 a.m.

February 15 (Wednesday): Ken Steigman | Bird Banding Fundamentals, Stories from 40 Years of Banding, and How You Can Be Involved! | Zoom doors open at 6:30 p.m., program begins promptly at 7 p.m.

#### **March**

March 1 (Wednesday): Martine Dumont & Norm LeGault | The International Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) Program at the Institute for Bird Populations: What It Is and How We've Been Involved | Zoom doors open at 6:30 p.m., program begins promptly at 7 p.m.

March 15 (Wednesday): Dylan Osterhaus | Birding Adventures in Costa Rica! | Zoom doors open at 6:30 p.m., program begins promptly at 7 p.m.

#### **April**

Date and details TBD: James Lee | The Reintroduction of the White-tailed Ptarmigan to Northern New Mexico

April 19 (Wednesday): 2022 Bishchoff Scholarship research results (to date) – Dylan Osterhaus |+| Introduction of new Bischoff Scholarship recipient and summary of upcoming research

#### **May**

May 24 (Wednesday): Introduction to Nature Journaling with John Muir Laws | program begins promptly at 7:30 p.m. (please note the different time and that as it is his Zoom meeting room there will be no meet 'n greet)

## Invitation to all Mesilla Valley Audubon Members from Audubon Southwest

*Save the date! From April 23–25, the Arizona and New Mexico Councils of Audubon Chapters will convene in Silver City, NM, for the first ever Southwest Council gathering! Throughout the event, you will have opportunities to meet your fellow Chapter leaders and members, hit the field for some exciting birding trips, and dig into our collective work during a partial-day session of presentations and activities. The presentation session is reserved for Chapter leaders only, and all other activities will be open to chapter members.*

**Great Backyard Bird Count: February 17–20,** (<https://www.birdcount.org/>). This annual birding project encourages birders all over the world to engage in local bird walks in their communities. Over a four-day period, submit to eBird.com as many bird lists as you can muster from your favorite local hotspots, including your own backyard! Even just one submission would be welcome! Details of how to participate and notification of an accompanying online seminar on 2/15/2023 can be found on the website.

### **Scheduled Bird Walks (see the [calendar on the MVAS website](#) for exact dates)**

#### **Sagecrest Park**

Sunday, February 12, 8–10 a.m. Introduction to Mindful Birding (see Programs)

Meet by the MVAS “Keep Las Cruces Beautiful” sign. Your walk leader is Holly Thomas.

#### **Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park**

8–10 a.m. 1st Monday of the month

Meet at the visitor center. Your walk leader is Mark Pendleton. Contact Mark at [mpndltn@gmail.com](mailto:mpndltn@gmail.com) (please put 1st Monday bird walk in the subject line) or call 575.635.8711 by the preceding Friday to let him know you are coming.

#### **Tellbrook Park**

7:45–10 a.m. 3rd Wednesday of the month

Meet at the park entrance. Your walk leader is Mark Pendleton. Contact Mark at [mpndltn@gmail.com](mailto:mpndltn@gmail.com) (please put 3rd Wednesday bird walk in the subject line) or call 575.635.8711 at least three days prior to let him know you are coming.

#### **Sagecrest Park/East of Las Cruces Dam**

8–10 a.m. 2nd Saturday of the month

Meet by the MVAS “Keep Las Cruces Beautiful” sign. Your walk leader is Joel Gilb. The group will proceed to the trail leading west.

#### **Leasburg Dam State Park**

8–10 a.m. Last Saturday of the month.

Meet at the visitor center and plan to carpool to the day-use picnic area on river. Your walk leader is Dylan Osterhaus. The walk goes along the Mogollon Trail for approximately one mile (flat) and based on sightings will return along the same trail or the upper road.

# Bird Blind Ceremony at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park a Rousing Success!



On a sunny, warm, and inviting day, bird enthusiasts swarmed to the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park (MVBSP) to celebrate the ceremonial handover of the Bird Blind and Wildlife Viewing area, which is now complete and under full control of New Mexico State Parks. The blind was a gift from Mesilla Valley Audubon Society and took nearly two years to complete.

The day started at 8:30 a.m. with Joel Gilb leading 17 birders on a walk around the park (26 species sighted), returning to MVBSP headquarters for the 11 a.m. ceremony. By this time about 50 people had assembled for the ceremony. First, Sid Webb and Elaine Stachera Simon described the history of the project and how it meshes with National Audubon's

overall objectives. Park Ranger-Interpreter Alex Mares said a few well-chosen words and introduced the first of two honored guests. First was Jared Langenegger, Field Operation Bureau Chief for NM State Parks, who came down from Santa Fe to see what we do here in the Mesilla Valley. He was very pleased and complimented MVAS on the nature of the bird blind and its positive impact on the MVBSP. Mesilla Mayor Nora Barraza was the second honored guest, and she, too, thanked MVAS for its good citizenship in carrying out the project. The ceremony closed with the unveiling of the sign, which reads, in Spanish and English, *The Mesilla Valley Audubon Society built this bird blind and wildlife viewing area as a gift to the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park in August 2021 with support from a National Audubon Society Western Water and Collaborative Grant*. There was much fanfare and applause from the boisterous audience.

The ceremony was complete, but the day was just beginning. The silent auction for bird art was open and all guests were invited to bid on their favorite piece of art that had generously been donated by local artist Jane Madrid as well as a few other pieces from an individual's collection. More than \$500 was raised through the auction! Thanks to Alex, we enjoyed dancers from the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Cultural Center, and Laura McCann from New Mexico Raptors presented along with two of her educational partners, a Red-tailed Hawk and a Great Horned Owl.

Most importantly, it was an opportunity for local conservationists to gather and have a good time celebrating nature!



Laura McCann with Red-tailed Hawk



One of the paintings from the silent auction

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# Report from the Bosque del Apache Field Trip



Elaine Stachera Simon

On January 7–8, a group of 16 MVAS members and their partners started the birding year off right with a field trip to the Bosque del Apache, the central gemstone in the crown of New Mexico birding hotspots, led by birders extraordinaire Jay and Judy Wilbur.

Newer members may not know that Jay and Judy have been involved with MVAS for many years and in many different capacities. Jay is a former board member and bird ID class instructor for when the class was taught through DACC and for MVAS programs. Judy is the MVAS Field Trip Coordinator and led the inaugural Birds No Boys bird walk, and both consulted on the MVAS bird blind installed at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. Jay's photos grace the MVAS Facebook page whenever I can get him to send me some (hint, hint). Even when they are in town for a while, you can bet that they are planning their next venture to some birding hotspot, local or somewhere across the globe.

The morning of January 7 had several of us a bit worried prior to the 1 p.m. meet-up time—the winds were up! But by the time we got going they had calmed and we were treated to “just another” spectacular sunny day in New Mexico.

The group car pooled/caravanned around the north and south loops, stopping at various points of birding interest. Ron Farrar graciously herded us, taking up the rear and keeping our little group together.

On Saturday, the focus was on the north loop and the Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese. Jay and Judy took advice from the rangers on best viewing spots for the fly-in on Saturday evening, but, well, birds are fickle. As Jay noted, “fly-in on Saturday was kind of a bust.”

After a good Saturday, 14 of us gathered for dinner and socializing at Socorro Springs Restaurant. Sunday morning came around very quickly! For Sunday’s fly-out we gathered at the north pond for a lovely, frigidly cold, and successful fly-out. There weren’t huge numbers of cranes on the pond, but we were close enough to witness some navigating the slippery frozen areas, some with “ice bracelets” around their legs, and the flight leaders making their pre-flight neck stretching displays. Just as the group was getting ready to leave, we stopped in our tracks. Thousands (thousands!) of Snow Geese on a distant pond must’ve done a mass ascension, as in the sky appeared long (long!) skeins of birds against the morning sky, some of which flew over our heads.

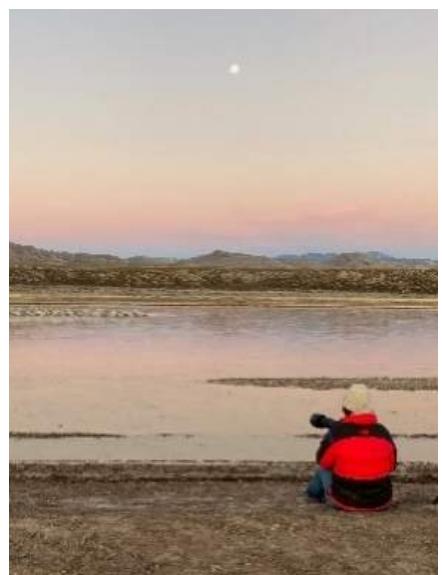


Post-fly-out, Sunday was spent focusing on waterfowl, and most of the waterfowl that Jay covered in his pre-trip presentation were spotted, including Common Goldeneye. We wrapped up around lunchtime, which gave folks plenty of time to visit the nature center and gift shop before heading back home.

Everyone who went may have a different special moment or highlight that they will remember. Just a few that stood out for me (and I know some others) included: mule deer hanging out with the cranes; a covey of Scaled Quail that popped up right in front of several of our cars and gave us an up-close-and personal look at them; a wily coyote sitting right smack out in the open eyeballing a bunch of cranes; a squadron of javelina (I had to look up what a herd of them was called!) hanging out and not minding the many humans watching them (although personally I think a few people—no one in our group—got a little too close for safety and ethics); and in what I think most would consider the most stunning highlight, we saw a convocation of seven Bald Eagles (two adults and five juvenile) sitting on the ground together catching some rays.



**Thank you** to Judy and Jay for arranging and leading this trip and generously sharing their expertise! I also spotted Sonja Mendoza and Mark Ryan helping our group out with identification, which was greatly appreciated. Thank you to everyone who came and proved the point that bird people are very special people indeed!



Photos provided by  
Cheryl Fallstead and  
Elaine Stachera Simon

# The Las Cruces 2022/2023 Christmas Bird Count

by Mark Pendleton, compiler

The 48<sup>th</sup> MVAS Las Cruces CBC was Saturday, December 17, 2022. Teams that started earlier than others encountered some pretty chilly temperatures, but many of us can remember far worse weather on previous CBCs.

Readers who want to get right to the point can skip down five paragraphs and see how many birds we identified this year. Those who want more in-depth background knowledge and appreciate the pleasures of delayed gratification will continue reading.

Special thanks to Kristi Lane of the Las Cruces Wild Birds Unlimited for her donation of a \$25 gift card as a door prize at the post-count get together! Thank you, too, to the now brand-new MVAS board members Linda Miller and Marcia Wilson for organizing the successful gathering at Jason's Deli.

Fifty people participated in the 2022/2023 Las Cruces Christmas Bird Count. These citizen scientists were divided into 13 teams ranging in size from two to seven or eight persons. Smaller teams tended to stay together, while larger teams were more likely to split into more than one party so as to cover territory faster.

All of these observers (that's you) put in a considerable amount of time and effort for this annual event. You walked for a total of 61.75 hours and covered 71 miles. Driving time and distance totals were equally impressive. You drove 469.75 miles in 62 hours at an average speed of a whopping 7.5766129 miles per hour! When we combine walking and driving time and distance totals, we get 540.75 miles traveled in 123.75 hours at an average speed of 4.36969697 mph. Not bad at all!

There were even observers who watched feeders. Six people reported results from this form of birding. Together, they added another seven hours to the total citizen science effort for the day.

Let's now turn to the reason for the CBC—the birds. We identified 99 species this year and the individual number of birds counted was 12,224.

Have you ever wondered how species are counted in the CBC? Only full species, not sp. sightings, are counted *unless* there were no individuals of the "real" species seen on count day. For example, if no one saw any Chihuahuan or Common Ravens on count day, but several people reported *raven* sp. sightings, then we would count that *raven* sp. as one of the species we saw and it would be part of the species total. But several observers saw individuals of both raven species. So, those five *raven* sp. sightings from count day 2022 don't get counted in the species total.

So, why count them at all? Because even though they don't go into the species total, they do count as part of the total for individual birds seen. They are, after all, ravens, and they were seen on count day. The same is true for the 43 *duck* sp., 30 *dove* sp., and 3 *corvus* sp. (*crow* or *raven*) sightings from count day.

Other birds not counted as separate species were the single Harlan's form of Red-tailed Hawk, the single Sharp-shinned/Cooper's Hawk, the 67 Northern Flickers that weren't identified further, the three instances of various forms of Dark-eyed Juncos, nor the 10 Audubon's form of Yellow-rumped Warblers. They were subsumed into the count of their species, or, as in the case of the unidentified accipiter, their family. So, they all get counted, we don't get species overcount, and the data retains its integrity.

We set 16 new records this year; nine lows and seven highs. I could give you the previous records for each of the species mentioned in the next two paragraphs, but mining the information from the database would put me past deadline for this article.

The lows (single birds except for the two Black-throated Sparrows) were Mexican Duck, Great Egret, *accipiter* sp., Long-eared Owl, Plumbeous Vireo, Bushtit, House Wren, Black-throated Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark. The latter is the former Lilian's subspecies, now elevated to full species status as Chihuahuan Meadowlark. It just takes time for large organizations such as Audubon to get taxonomic changes into their system.

I was surprised to discover that this year set any high records, let alone seven. First were 3,534 Rock Pigeons (or Feral Pigeons). Next came 1,875 Eurasian Collared Doves. Then there were two Black-chinned Hummingbirds. The fourth record high count for a species was 68 Eastern Phoebe. Topping that was 72 Woodhouse's Scrub-Jays. The sixth species for which 2022 was a record high CBC year was Juniper Titmouse. This was only the second time JUTI appeared on our count and there were 22 reported. The highest new high-species record was for Verdin: 132!

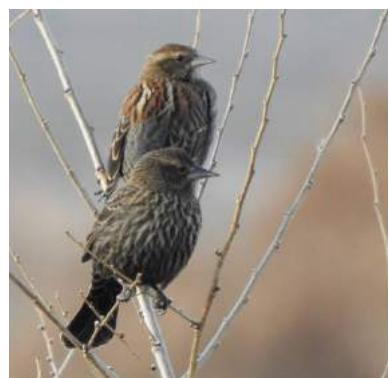
*Thank you for participating in this year's CBC – and looking forward to next year!*

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## **Name That Bird!** by Mark Pendleton



**Photo 1**



**Photo 2**



**Photo 3**

As I sit down to write this, there's a niggling thought in the back of my mind that maybe I promised to use another reader's photo(s) in this *NTB!* column. If I did, and you're that reader, I apologize! Please send me the photo(s) again and I will do a special *NTB!* for the MVAS webpage.

### **Photos 1 and 2**

Sara Kay took the first two photos at the Bosque del Apache NWR last November.

*\*Spoiler alert!\**

*If you want to first try to identify the birds in the photos yourself,  
cover the panelists' responses below.*

**Panelist 1:** Panelist 1 was absolutely certain these birds were female Red-winged Blackbirds. In fact, this MVAS member (all panelists are members) wrote: "If these aren't female RWBL, I'm not as good a birder as I like to think I am."

**Panelist 2:** This panelist agreed that these indeed are female Red-winged Blackbirds. The lower bird

in the photo showing two birds may be an immature female. Most adult females exhibit the plumage seen in the other two photos; immature (first-year) males appear as if they're molting between that plumage and the full adult male plumage.

**Panelist 3:** Panelist three agreed.

So, our panelists were unanimous: These are female Red-winged Blackbirds.

Although female Red-winged Blackbirds very much resemble sparrows, there are differences. In general, female "red-wings" are larger and chunkier-appearing than most sparrows. They also are streakier all over than most sparrows. Red-winged Blackbirds range in size from about 7 to 9.5 inches (18–24 centimeters) while the size range for a Song Sparrow is 5–7 inches (13–18 centimeters). Sparrows are shorter, with shorter tails. Both sparrows and Red-winged Blackbirds eat seeds plus some insects and other bugs, but on the whole, sparrows tend to eat more seeds. So, sparrow bills tend to be shorter and broader. Female "red-wing" habitat can be another clue. Female Red-winged Blackbirds can often be found in marshes, where their "chack" calls will frequently alert you to their presence before you see them. Song and Swamp Sparrows are often found along the shores of marshes, but "red-wings" are more often in the marsh itself.

As with many birds that look similar, it's not just one characteristic that tells them apart, but a whole suite of traits that taken together distinguish them. So a female Red-winged Blackbird will look larger and chunkier, have a longer tail, plus a relatively longer and sharper bill than sparrows. Also, many times she will have faint reddish shoulder patches that remind you of the male's. Also, if you hear or see a male Red-winged Blackbird nearby, that will help you to identify that this is likely the female.

### **Photo 3**

Photo 3 comes from C.J. Goin. He took it on the morning of January 11 this year.

*\*Spoiler alert!\**

*If you want to first try to identify the birds in the photos yourself,  
cover the panelists' responses below.*

We have another unanimous decision about this bird. All three panelists agreed that this is a Swamp Sparrow.

At first glimpse, the reddish cap may suggest a Chipping Sparrow. But look again. A Swamp Sparrow is a bulky, lone skulker in marshy dense cover. Chipping Sparrows are dapper and petite compared with "Swampies." Chipping Sparrows are more often than not seen in groups and are more likely to be in open park-like habitat than Swamp Sparrows. Also, Swamp Sparrows have a more richly patterned face than "Chippers," and their eye-line doesn't extend through the eye to the bill as the Chipping Sparrow's does.

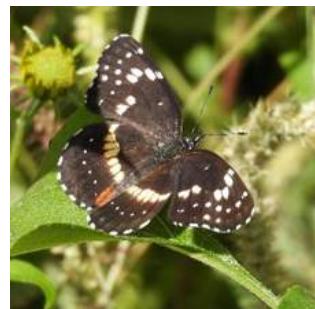
In New Mexico, we see Swamp Sparrows during migration and in the winter. If you're fortunate enough to spot one, you can be forgiven for thinking it might be a Song Sparrow. Both birds have a similar shape and can be found in similar habitats. Song Sparrows, however, have a heavily streaked chest and breast with most also sporting a central breast spot or splotch.

If you get out and go birding at this time of year, you will very likely find both of these species. Look for them in similar habitats—marshy patches with dense undergrowth. With a little bit of perseverance, you should spot both Red-winged Blackbirds (females and males) along with Swamp Sparrows.

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## Today's Butterfly from CJ Goin . . .

“Patches” are members of the Checkerspot (Chlosyne) genus of butterflies. The most common type of patch in New Mexico is the Bordered Patch. They are often abundant in warm weather although numbers vary from year to year. The Bordered Patch is a variable butterfly, as you can see from these photos.



\*\*\*It's not quite butterfly season yet, but if you are interested in getting to know your butterflies, please check out CJ Goin's Facebook page "Doña Ana County Butterflies and Moths." Lots of great photos and information!\*\*\*

## Dylan Osterhaus is the New Bird Walk Leader for Leasburg Dam State Park Bird Walks

On 11/29/2022, Dylan Osterhaus assumed the role of Mesilla Valley Audubon Society bird walk leader for Leasburg Dam State Park, taking over that slot from CJ Goin. We are grateful to CJ for leading many years of great bird walks!

For his inaugural LDSP walk, Dylan was undaunted by the 29-degree temperature when the walk started, nor by the 17 birders who showed up. He did a splendid job and pointed out 36 species throughout the morning. Everybody was happy and much warmer by the end of the walk. Cheryl Fallstead kindly shared a few of her fine photos from that walk.

Photos by Cheryl Fallstead taken 11/29/2022 at Leasburg Dam State Park;



Western Bluebird



Hermit Thrush



Wilson's Snipe in flight



Wilson's Snipe at river's edge

## Water and water in Southern New Mexico

By Gill M. Sorg, MVAS board member and Soil and Water Conservation District supervisor for Doña Ana County.

As I talk to people in Las Cruces, Doña Ana County, and greater New Mexico, water is a topic of concern. People ask, do we have enough water? Is our water safe and clean? During my 12 years as a Las Cruces utilities commissioner, water was a frequent topic with serious planning.

Las Cruces has a 10-year plan and a 40-year plan. It is believed we can rely on adequate water for the city until about 2040 with average use and average expected growth. That's not to say our water source, the groundwater aquifer, will be entirely depleted, but it's guessed that water will become scarcer. Remember that 85% of the water used in Doña Ana County and the Mesilla Valley is used by agriculture, and lots will depend how much agricultural interests use and conserve. Other sources of water have been and are being explored for the future. Of course, legal cases over water rights are ongoing. New Mexico and other Southwest states have been fighting over the water for more than 100 years.

As for wildlife, including birds, it's not the groundwater that affects them so much as the stormwater and rain, which grows the vegetation supporting the fauna. Predictions of that source are very indefinite. Some have said that there will be more storms and more precipitation but others are not so sure. We do need to use stormwater better. The Doña Ana Soil and Water Conservation District and the Stormwater Coalition (a group including agricultural and other water users) are building structures to slow the water down when it rains, helping to prevent flooding, reducing erosion and holding sediment back, promoting the growth of vegetation (thereby wildlife populations), and allowing stormwater to infiltrate the aquifer. We are like beavers damming the water and holding it back with little and large structures in the arroyos to slow the water down. This all takes funding, of course, which we are working to get.

Global warming is getting worse and causing us to lose more water. Our bird numbers are going down, and species of all wildlife are being reduced. When that happens, we all lose. We do know that life will not be the same in 50 years.



Photo by Cheryl Fallstead, Bosque del Apache, January 8, 2023

### Important Bird Areas by Sid Webb

Visitors entering Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park are greeted by a sign "Important Birding Area." What is that? How does a location become designated an "IBA"?

IBAs are an invention of Bird Life International (BLI), a private nonprofit organization whose mission is to "conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people toward sustainability in the use of natural resources." They work with organizations across the globe, with National Audubon Society and American Bird Conservancy being their partners in the United States. Together, using state and local support and expertise, BLI's partners identify areas known for their diversity of avian visitors, the presence of rare species of birds, or areas of unique habitat that have a

history of supporting wildlife of all kinds. They use the IBA label to signal that such an area is to be protected and every means available should be used to ensure it is not abused in any way that might make it less habitable for wildlife of any kind.

Audubon's method for developing IBAs is outlined on its website (<https://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas>). They have designated 2,832 IBAs across the country, 62 of which are in New Mexico. IBAs are prioritized as Global, Continental, or State, depending on their perceived importance. New Mexico has four IBAs classified as "Global" (Bitter Lake NWR, Bosque del Apache NWR, Ladd S, Gordon Waterfowl Complex, and the New Mexico Lesser-Prairie Chicken Complex).

The most recent additions to New Mexico's IBAs are the Corrales Bosque Preserve (north of Albuquerque) and the Lower Rio Grande Bosques (<https://nm.audubon.org/conservation/bosques-are-birds>). The Lower Rio Grande Bosques IBAs include Leasburg Dam State Park and Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, as well as Broad Canyon Ranch, Selden Canyon, and public land grazing areas. Selden Canyon is the only stretch of the Rio Grande south of Percha Dam that has a lengthy portion that goes through natural habitat that has not been modified by levees or other means for redirection of river flow. The areas were chosen as much for the natural habitat they provide as for the numbers of bird species identified. More than 350 bird species have been identified in the Seldon Canyon area and more than 250 in LDSP and MVBSP individually. Of note to those wishing to explore Broad Canyon Ranch and Selden Canyon: Much of the land is privately owned and permission to explore it must be obtained prior to any outing.

In its entirety, the Lower Rio Grande Bosques IBA includes 7,000 acres. It is comforting to know that this area has been set aside for wildlife at a time that so much habitat is being destroyed both here and around the world.

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**Dear MVAS Members,**

**The Dues Hawk thanks everyone who paid their MVAS dues in January as we transition to calendar-year membership. New and renewing members accounted for approximately \$800 in dues and donations and new memberships. Your dues and gifts go toward programs, workshops, the Bischoff scholarship, Zoom and website fees, and insurance. Whoops, you forgot to renew in January?**

**It's not too late to be part of this year's drive.**

**Yours for the birds!**

**Dues Hawk**

# Current Officers and Board MVAS 2023

**President:** Elaine Stachera Simon  
**Vice-president:** Mark Ryan  
**Secretary:** Cheryl Fallstead  
**Treasurer:** Diane Moore

## Directors

Director 2021-2023: Dylan Osterhaus  
Director 2021-2023: Trish Cutler  
Director 2022-2024: Sid Webb  
Director 2022-2024: Gill Sorg  
Director 2023-2025: CJ Goin  
Director 2023-2025: Annie Mitchell  
Director 2023-2025: Marcia Wilson  
Director 2023-2025: Linda Miller

## Committee chairs

Conservation: Trish Cutler  
Education: vacant  
Programs: vacant, currently managed by president  
Newsletter: Sid Webb  
Website: Sid Webb  
Membership: Annie Mitchell  
Field Trips: Judy Wilbur  
Adopt-A-Spot: Aaron Lucas  
Butterflies and Moths: CJ Goin  
Christmas Bird Count: Mark Pendleton  
Facebook admin: Elaine Stachera Simon  
Climate Watch Coordinator: Mark Pendleton

***Roadrunner Ramblings*** is published quarterly and is distributed via [the MVAS website](#) and a copy emailed to all MVAS members and friends. MVAS members are encouraged to submit articles of interest and any bird photograph recently taken. Please email your contributions to [sidwebb@gmail.com](mailto:sidwebb@gmail.com). To be added to the distribution list, contact Elaine Stachera Simon at [mesillavalleyaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:mesillavalleyaudubon@gmail.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.

