



ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

MESILLA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

<https://www.mvasaudubon.org/> Vol. 46 Winter 2024 (November, December, January)

President's Letter by Cheryl Fallstead

As the weather continues to cool, we'll be drawn to spend more time outdoors enjoying one of our favorite activities: birding! That is what we all have in common, after all, a love of and fascination for our avian neighbors. We care about birds, the environment, and nature in general.

MVAS currently has more than 100 paid members and hundreds more on our "friends" email list. Let me take a moment to encourage everyone to renew their membership in January, when dues are due, and if you have been only on our friends list, how about joining and becoming a member? It's only \$15 a year and you can join through our website (<https://www.mvasaudubon.org/join>) in minutes!

What does it mean to be a member of MVAS? For one, you have the opportunity to serve on the board and vote in elections. You can go on field trips (and we will have some great ones coming up!). Your membership dues support our many activities, from school presentations to help young people learn about birds to providing binoculars to people who are trying birding for the first time on one of our walks.

Speaking of serving on the board, if you have an interest in taking a leadership position in our chapter, let me know by emailing mesillavalleyaudubon@gmail.com. That could be being part of a committee, like our conservation committee, help with education activities, or serve as a board member or officer. We'll communicate more about the January elections soon, but I wanted to plant a seed for anyone thinking about becoming a more active member of our organization. This is a good time to thank our board members, bird walk leaders, and other volunteers for helping to keep MVAS strong. You are greatly appreciated!

I hope you take time to participate in some of our monthly activities, including four guided bird walks, a park clean-up, a meeting with a presentation, and nature journaling. We could especially use more help at our monthly clean-up at Sagecrest Park. We're only there an hour and unless you're adventurous and want to go clean up the arroyo next to the park (oh, the things we've found in there!), you're walking on flat land and grabbing trash with the handy grabber we provide. Park Clean-up Coordinator Aaron Lucas would love to see you there! We'll be there next on Sunday, November 17, at 8 a.m.

Another upcoming activity that depends on volunteers is the Christmas Bird Count. There are three opportunities to participate that you'll read about in the newsletter. Come be part of community science! There's something for everyone to contribute!

So, in summary, MVAS is a membership organization that provides a wide range of services. We could use your help to keep doing just that!

The NMSU American Kestrel Project

by Laura Steinmann

Our neighbors introduced us to the NMSU American Kestrel Project; MVAS also posted about this project on their Facebook page.

Mid-October 2023

The NMSU Kestrel Team scouted our property, north of Thorpe Rd. in Doña Ana.

They were greeted by a male and female kestrel, so the team chose a pine tree and installed a nest box.

In early spring, the team returned to add some nest material.

They came out every couple of weeks to check for activity, such as scratch marks in the nest material, and saw kestrel activity.



March 26, 2024

Sadly, a Coopers hawk, who had been harrying the Kestrel pair, killed the male.

The team checked the nest box for eggs but there were none. The female stayed in the area, and the team said she might just stay around until the following nesting season; we named her Trooper.

However, after several lonely weeks, we spotted a new male! The team came out and, even though it was a little late in the season, they saw nest activity.

May 5, 2024

With activity noticed, the team started to come weekly to check on the nest. They found Trooper on her nest! Can't tell yet how many eggs in the clutch.



May 12, 2024

Still unsure about the number of eggs, but all seems well within the nest.

We don't see the male much, who we named "Goldie."

The team sees him coming and going in the approx. 1,000 photos they collect each week from this box. He occasionally sits on the eggs, allowing Trooper to get a break and hunt.



May 18, 2024

Four eggs!

We asked about the color variation, perhaps due to different sexes. The team explained that eggs vary in color generally, usually the lighter egg is the final egg and it shows that she has used all the resources she gathered, described as like a printer running out of ink.



May 25, 2024

Trooper just hanging out.

We found a few Kestrel feathers in the yard, which was unusual. The team said the falcon was more relaxed while nesting, and would molt feathers during this time.



May 31, 2024

Four fuzz balls, difficult to see in this picture, but all active.

Mom flies off when she hears the NMSU pickup truck.



June 8, 2024

The four of them are growing, barely getting colors.



June 22, 2024

Time to tag the chicks, who are almost ready to fledge!

Faculty Advisor Martha Desmond and the team collected each chick, and gently put them into a drawstring bag.

There are one male and three females. The team weighed, measured, and tagged the young.

The kestrels fledged a few days later.





The male has a solid black band on the underside of the tail.



The female tail has a spotted underside.

Update September 2024: We continue to see American Kestrels.

Resources

*Diet Habits of The American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) in Arid Agricultural-Desert Scrubland Within Southern New Mexico*
Domonic Jimenez, Martha Desmond, Aaron Young

New Mexico State University Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology

<https://event.fourwaves.com/geg2024/abstracts/42afa7e0-274f-4261-aebd-3ae5c9bb70b2>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/05/climate/american-kestrel.html>

The Mystery of the Vanishing Kestrels: What's Happening to This Flashy Falcon?

By Catrin Einhorn with photographs by Bryan Anselm. June 5, 2023

2024 Christmas Bird Counts

It's time once again for the Christmas Bird Counts (CBC)! We will be conducting La Luz, Las Cruces, and Caballo Christmas Bird Counts in December.

La Luz and Las Cruces CBC's

- * The La Luz CBC will be on Saturday, December 14, 2024. The weekend after that the Las Cruces CBC count will be conducted on Saturday, December 21, 2024. Mark Pendleton is the coordinator for both La Luz count and Las Cruces CBCs.
- * If you would like to participate in La Luz CBC or Las Cruces CBC, please contact Mark Pendleton at 575.635.8711 or mpndltn@gmail.com. If you email, be sure and put **LL 2024 CBC** in the subject line.
- * You need not be an advanced birder to participate in the counts. We welcome any eager birders.
- * Team leaders, please contact Mark as soon as possible to let him know if you can perform the same valuable service again this year.
- * If you are new to the CBC, please contact Mark and you can talk about finding a team for you to join.
- * If you are a veteran counter, please let Mark know if you want to stay on the same team as last year or if you want to be on a different team.

Caballo CBC

- * The Caballo CBC is scheduled for Saturday, December 28, and Wayne Treers is the coordinator and compiler for that count. You can contact Wayne Treers at 575.528.8696 (cell) or way1mike@yahoo.com.
- * We bird by teams in the Caballo CBC and there are 8 teams that cover the Caballo CBC circle. Each team consists of a team leader who directs the team where to bird during the count day.
- * For those of you who have birded in the Caballo CBC in the past, please let Wayne know if you will bird again on December 28 and if you wish to bird on the same team.
- * For those birders who wish to bird on a different team or who are new to our Caballo CBC, let Wayne know. He will find a team for you to bird on.

A New CBC Circle

- * If you want to get in some more birding during the CBC, there is a new CBC called **Turtleback CBC**. It will be held Tuesday, December 17.
- * The circle covers from Las Palomas Marsh north along the Rio Grande and Elephant Butte Reservoir to the South Highlands subdivision along Rock Canyon Rd. If interested contact David Cleary. His email address is: djcleary@bajabb.com

Name That Bird ©2024 Mark Pendleton

Thank you to the individuals who sent in their photos over the past few weeks. Without your photos, this column wouldn't exist. So, please keep sending them in. Please use .jpeg format and send photos to mpndltn@gmail.com, and please put **NTB photos** in the subject line.

Photos don't need to be in focus, or have any artistic merit; just as long as the bird/s is/are identifiable, we can use the photo. In fact, fuzzy photos present a greater challenge to our panelists, and photos with branches and leaves in the way more closely resemble conditions in the field than ones where the bird is clearly visible.

Now for the customary

SPOILER ALERT

The birds in the photos that follow will be identified below the photos. If you want to identify them for yourself, please cover the text that comes after the photos.



Photo 1: We had unanimous agreement among the panelists that this is a photo of a Greater Roadrunner. As an aside, this photo is a perfect example of one that's out of focus, but still is perfectly acceptable for our purposes.



Photo 2: All of our panelists agreed that this is an Egret.

Panelist 1: Snowy Egret

Panelist 2: At first, panelist 2 called this a Great Egret. Then, in consultation with panelist 3, they changed their mind and went with a juvenile Snowy Egret.

Panelist 3: Snowy Egret

Name That Bird (cont.)



Photo 3:

Panelist 1: Chihuahuan Meadowlark

Panelist 2: Panelist 2 was comfortable with identifying this as a juvenile Meadowlark. But whether a Western, or Chihuahuan, he couldn't say with certainty. Judging by the face, he would lean toward the Chihuahua, but the back more closely resembles the Western.

Panelist 3: For panelist 3, this was a Western Meadowlark.



Photo 4: I'm sure our readers will agree with the panelists that this is a female "hummer".

Panelist 1: Anna's Hummingbird

Panelist 2: After going back and forth between a) immature Anna's, b) adult Costa's, or c) adult Black-chinned, this panelist decided on the adult female Black-chinned.



Photo 5:

Panelist 1: Barred or Spotted Owl

Panelist 2: Barred or Spotted Owl. After some deliberation, panelist went with Spotted.

Panelist 3: Panelist 3 thought this looked more like a Barred Owl.

Being as there wasn't unanimity among our panelists on the IDs. I submitted these photos to our outside experts for their opinions. The results are: Snowy Egret, Chihuahuan Meadowlark, Anna's Hummingbird, Spotted Owl.

If you are interested in discussing the considerations behind each panelist's choice, you may email mpndtn@gmail.com and I will pass on your questions and observations.

Project FeederWatch



Black-headed Grosbeak by Robert Shantz

You too can count feeder birds for science! You chose your site, count birds that visit, and enter your data online. The data collected will help understand the distribution and abundance of birds that visit feeders in North America.

FeederWatch is based at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, New York. North America FeederWatch begins on Friday, November 1, of this year and runs through April 30. If you haven't signed up yet, you can join at <https://join.feederwatch.org/>. Remember, you don't need feeders to participate, and you can count for as little time as you want.

There is also a FeederWatch app that is available for your devices. You can use the app to keep track of your counts and submit your counts directly to the database.

The app is connected to the Cornell Lab's All About Birds online guide with detailed species information, including photos, identification tips, natural history, and a range map. You can also access FeederWatch's common feeder birds interactive tool to see which birds prefer which foods in any region of the U.S. All counts, even seeing just one bird, are important.

There are several new updates.

- The mobile app now allows users to start reporting mammals, sick and dead birds, and behavior interactions right in the app.

Taxonomy changes impact names of species reported by feeder watchers.

- The American Ornithological Society updates bird names and bird species lists. For example, the House Wren has been split into several species. The House Wren we see in the U.S. is now called the American House Wren.

Reference: <https://feederwatch.org/welcome-to-feederwatch/>

Looking for a birding trip?

by Linda Miller

In mid-January 2025, MVAS will lead a trip to Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge to see the Sandhill Cranes, Snow Geese, and Ross's Geese and many more species of birds. This will be a two-day trip leaving early from Las Cruces spending the day traveling around Bosque del Apache and watching the fly in on the first night. You will need to make arrangements to stay nearby and get up early the next morning to watch the fly out. We'll be heading back to Las Cruces in the afternoon. Dates and more information to come. Then in March 2025, we'll go birding at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge northeast of Roswell. Located where the Chihuahuan Desert meets the Southern Plains in southeast New Mexico, Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge is one of the most biologically significant wetland areas of the Pecos River watershed system. Established in 1937 to provide wintering habitat for migratory birds, the 24,563-acre refuge plays a crucial role in the conservation of wetlands in the southwestern desert. The unusually diverse wetlands combined with its gypsum karst topography support a variety of plant and animal communities that thrive on the refuge. The native grasslands, vegetated sand dunes, brushy bottomlands, and red-rimmed plateaus provide a sharp contrast to the wetlands of Bitter Lake. Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge is an oasis in the desert. This will be a two-day trip.

This will be followed by a two-day trip in April 2025 to the Gila National Forest.

Dates TBD. If you are interested, please contact Linda Miller at lmbird102@gmail.com



Geese and Sandhill Cranes at Bosque del Apache



Locals Flock to Mesilla Valley Bosque for Migration Day Event

by Whitney Watson

The second annual Migration Day was held on Saturday, September 21, at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. This event was put on by NMSU's Avian Migration Program as a means for members of the local community to learn about fall bird migration and to connect with fellow bird enthusiasts in the area.

Over 100 community members came out to learn more about local birds and see migration in action. Activities included bird walks, a bird banding demonstration, and bird-related games for children and adults alike. Attendees had the chance to view migrating and resident bird species in their natural habitat, witness the banding of birds captured in mist nets up close, and try their hand at matching bird feet specimens to the birds they came from. Participants also had the opportunity to learn about the broad array of avian research going on at NMSU and the various tools used in this research, including radio-telemetry tracking equipment and acoustic recording devices.

The Avian Migration Program (www.migration.nmsu.edu) is a USDA-funded training program for graduate and undergraduate students in the departments of Biology and Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Ecology at NMSU. These students engage in hands-on research relating to bird migration while receiving specialized training for jobs in migration ecology. The first Migration Day event was held in fall 2023 and the event is expected to continue in future years.



Photo credits: top left, top right, and bottom left by Whitney Watson; bottom right by Grace Salmon



MVAS Outreach and Education Activities

by Cheryl Fallstead

How do people find out about the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society? Word of mouth is one way, our website and social media accounts are another, and outreach and education activities are yet another. We've been busy with outreach and education already this year and have more activities coming soon.

The biggest event was the Outdoor Economic Conference at the Las Cruces Convention Center, which brought together leaders of outdoor businesses and nonprofits from around New Mexico and beyond. We had a table where we handed out informational brochures and answered lots of "What bird do you think I saw?" questions. On the last day of the conference, Dylan Osterhaus led a bird walk at Leasburg Dam State Park. We also made connections with other local organizations with which we can collaborate on future activities.

The conference also led to a connection with a student who is the president of the Las Cruces High School Outdoor Club. In a panel discussion, she and other high school students encouraged adults to help guide young people in their appreciation of the outdoors. Since then, I've given a talk about MVAS and our activities for the club and promised to arrange for a bird walk for them.

I've also recently given that presentation to the Las Cruces Rotary Club and a church group. In September, Annie Mitchell, Ellen Jaffe Castello, and I staffed an information table at Birding Bonanza at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park and C.J. Goin led a bird walk for attendees.

On Halloween, C.J. Goin, Ellen Jaffe Castello, and I led more than 80 Tombaugh Elementary School fifth graders in an owl pellet dissection activity. We're scheduled to do a birding activity with a nature-focused home-school group in early December, as well as participate in World Conservation Day at the Museum of Nature and Science on Saturday, December 7.

Our MVAS Nature Journal Club will be participating in another type of outreach and education program in 2025. We'll be part of an art show at the Branigan Cultural Center entitled *Wildlife of the Mesilla Valley*. In addition to having nature journaling pages on display, we'll have a table with information about nature journaling, birding, and MVAS as well as present some talks and hands-on activities about nature journaling. The show opens during the First Friday Downtown Art Ramble on Friday, February 7, and continues through Saturday, May 24.

If you're interested in helping with outreach and/or education activities to help share the love of birds, please contact me at mesillavalleyaudubon@gmail.com. We could use your help!





Newsletter Article Concerning the Game and Fish

Through conversations with Audubon Southwest, MVAS has learned that in the upcoming legislative session, Audubon Southwest will be working on efforts to modernize the Department of Game and Fish. It will be a collaborative effort with other environmental groups.

Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico suggested a series of newsletter articles that will teach members about the issue. Judy Calman, policy director for Audubon Southwest, will write the articles.

In addition to the articles, the Bird Alliance of Central New Mexico plans to develop strategies to involve their members. These plans would be easily transferable to other Audubon chapters, like MVAS.

The issue is somewhat complicated and attempts to change Game and Fish have struggled in the past. There is hope it will be different this time, and with all of our help, maybe it will be!

There is a lot to learn about the issue. Judy's first article (see below) is a good start. Audubon Southwest encourages the chapters to work together to help protect the wildlife in New Mexico!

New Mexico Needs 21st Century Wildlife Management: Part One

by Judy Calman

The State of New Mexico is blessed as the fourth most biodiverse state in the country. Experiencing this wildlife contributes significantly to our economy through hunting and fishing, birdwatching, camping, hiking, and more. Thriving wildlife populations also provide many additional climate, community, and personal health and wellness benefits that are incalculable.

The Department of Game and Fish is responsible for management and protection of most wildlife in New Mexico, including most birds, and the statutes which govern it have not been updated in almost a century. In the meantime, New Mexicans' relationship to wildlife has changed. Hunting and fishing are still essential drivers for the state's economy, providing \$600 million in revenue per year. But today, more New Mexico residents and visitors enjoy watching, photographing, and appreciating wildlife. The most recent federal census on wildlife watching found that the United States has approximately 86 million wildlife watchers, and that they spend approximately \$76 billion per year on equipment, trips, and outings to see wildlife. Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge sees 160,000 thousand visitors per year alone.

The climate and biodiversity crisis has also taken hold, especially in drought-prone states like ours. Using outdated laws under these new circumstances means that the department does not have the tools, the money, or the authority to make decisions about wildlife which will ensure its survival.

New Mexico Needs 21st Century Wildlife Management: Part One (continued)

The department is overseen by a Game Commission whose members are appointed by the governor. This politicized process for appointing and removing game commission members has led to an unstable and ineffective commission, which often lacks a quorum to conduct business, and is subject to extreme swings in ideology with changing administrations. A bill to update the Commission's processes and appointments passed the legislature in 2023, but was pocket-vetoed by the governor.

The department's budget has remained flat even as wildlife management challenges are increasing. Hunting and angling license fees have not increased in New Mexico for nearly twenty years, and in most years the department receives no general fund support, compromising its ability to manage and conserve all species.

Updating rules for the game commission, modernizing the department's conservation mission, and securing additional funding for the department will ensure it can do its job successfully with an eye toward the future. A large coalition of conservation, animal protection, and sportsmen's organizations have come together to advocate for a package in the coming session which will address these issues, and we will keep our membership informed of advocacy opportunities as it moves forward.

Judy Calman is policy director for Audubon Southwest

Sign Up for the Audubon Southwest Newsletter

Do you get the Audubon Southwest newsletter? If not, and you're interested in knowing about regional chapter and National Audubon Society activities, it's easy to sign up! In the newsletter, you'll learn about news, upcoming events, and advocacy opportunities that relate to our area. The newsletter is sent monthly and it's full of helpful and interesting content. Click here for the [Audubon Southwest Newsletter Sign-up.](#)



Nature Journaling: Deepen Your Connection with Nature

by Cheryl Fallstead

This year, co-leaders Julia Osgood, Ellen Jaffe Castello, and I formed the MVAS Nature Journal club and the group is growing every month. What is nature journaling, you may ask. In essence, it is using words, pictures, and numbers to record observations of the natural world.

For some people, that could be sketching a picture of a plant or animal, and then making notes, such as what you notice and any questions you may have about it. Other nature journaling pages may be geology- or geography-focused while some could record celestial events like a passing comet or the recent Northern Lights. Some people enjoy creating one page per month that records a snippet of a natural event observed each day and others may make many recordings in one day, such as during a solstice or eclipse.

Nature Journaling at Sagecrest Park



The MVAS Nature Journal Club gets together each month at a different location. Folks find what they're interested in journaling and spend time observing and recording. Toward the end of the session, we come together to share our pages. Sometimes, we even have a potluck so that we can spend time connecting with each other, too.

Do you have to be a scientist or an artist to take part in nature journaling? Absolutely not! This activity is for people of all ages and artistic ability. One common refrain you'll hear in the worldwide nature journaling community is that "It's the process, not the product." It is really a tool to help form a deeper connection with nature because we learn more by observing, and drawing, in particular, requires a lot of observation!

Be sure to read the article about outreach activities, where you'll see more information about the art show that the MVAS Nature Journal Club is participating in next year.

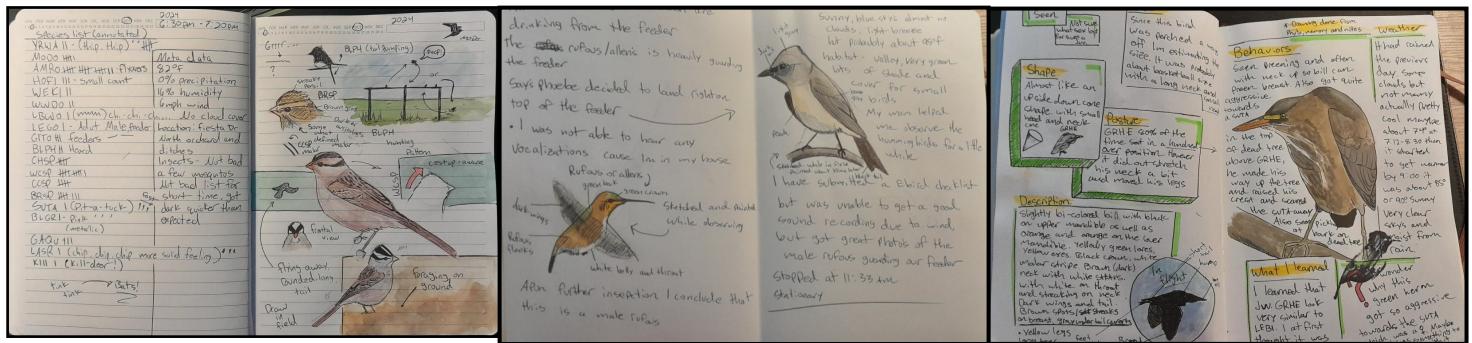
If you'd like to learn more about nature journaling, check out these excellent resources:

- wildwonder.org
- johnmuirlaws.com
- Search YouTube for John Muir Laws or nature journaling for hundreds of videos
- Attend our next nature journaling activity! On November 10, we're taking a field trip to White Sands National Park. We'll meet at the Ashley Furniture parking lot at 1 p.m. to carpool (or you can meet us at the park's visitor center at 2 p.m.). Beginners are always welcome: you just need paper and a pencil to start!

An overview of the National ABA Young Birder Mentoring Program from a local

by David Coalson

On Wednesday, November 20, the MVAS Monthly Meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m at Knox Hall Room 142. David will present a talk on his participation in the American Bird Association Young Birders program.



My name is David Coalson, and I live in Las Cruces. I started birding around the age of 7 when I showed interest to my mom. Now, I am 16 and enjoy birding all around the country but my favorite spots to hit after a long week are local. Last year while researching programs for Young Birders in hopes of finding more people like myself. I stumbled upon a website titled the ABA. ABA stands for American Birding Association, and while exploring their page I found a section about the ABA Young Birder Mentoring Program. I asked my mom if I could join, and she said yes. When I first signed up I was required to take some of their provided modules (courses). They had two major modules: Field note-booking and conservation, and three others: Illustration, Photography, and Writing. To join, I had to pick either both of the major modules or one of the major and two of the other provided modules. I choose the Field note-booking, Illustration, and Photography modules. It was also necessary for me to join a Slack chat. This online chat allowed me to connect and communicate with other young birders who were participating as well as my mentors. The mentors were incredibly friendly and were there to answer students' questions, critique work, and show students what they were looking for. Mentors also shared their experiences and thoughts to further help students. The Slack chat also allowed students to connect. This was one of my favorite parts as we could share work and talk about birds in general. I was able to make valuable connections through the ABA's program. The ABA assigns a deadline for when all work must be submitted, and participants are required to take responsibility and work on their projects throughout the time given and then turn them in on the deadline. The ABA has requirements for each module. For example, I had to submit a certain amount of pages from the field notebook. These pages had to have meta-data, drawings, and written notes. I also had to include a correlated and annotated eBird checklist which had to include photos and audio recordings from my outing. I also mailed my 6 pieces of artwork to the ABA. All projects had to have a slideshow to present my information on. After waiting a few months, I received my artwork back in the mail with other papers among them. These papers were typed by the mentors specifically for my work critiquing it, showing what the mentors loved, what they might have done differently, and giving me suggestions if I were to do it again. This was easily my favorite part as I felt like I was actually connected with them and that the mentors were really trying to help me. Receiving advice from professionals is truly a special thing. Overall, I loved the ABA YBMP. It was beneficial in many ways and helped me to grow in my birding skills even farther. I will be participating in this program for as long as I can! Thank you MVAS for fostering my love of birds.

Note: David earned an honorable mention in the illustration category!

Learn more at <https://www.aba.org/2024-aba-young-birders-of-the-year/>

Fritillary Butterflies

by CJ Goin

Fritillaries belong to a family of butterflies which are often large and brightly marked. The Variegated Fritillary (Left photo) is common in and around Las Cruces during warm weather and if you watch for butterflies you should be able to see some.

The Gulf Coast Fritillary (Center and Right photos) is a beautiful butterfly but usually not as common - the numbers vary from year to year - but they are sometimes present in good numbers. They favor Passionflower so if any Passionflower is present in your neighborhood it's a good place to look for them.



Percha Dam State Park Clean-up



Four MVAS volunteers and two people from Percha Dam State Park cleaned up the common areas and trails at this popular camping and birding destination. It seems that efforts to encourage people to pick up their fishing line are working as a much smaller amount of line and hooks was found. But from broken bottles to broken camp chairs, there was still plenty to be cleaned up by (from left to right) Aaron Lucas, a park volunteer, Cheryl Fallstead, Elaine Stachera Simon, and Dean Ralston on a sunny Sunday in October.



Juvenile Curve-billed Thrasher enjoying pomegranate seeds. Photo taken by Sid Webb at his home in Las Cruces on October 4.

Upcoming MVAS Events

November 5 (Tuesday) at 8 a.m. **Bird Walk** at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. Meet Danny at the visitor center at 8 a.m. Remember \$5 per car for admission or use your state park pass.

November 9 (Saturday) **Bird Walk** at Sagecrest Park. Meet John at Sagecrest Park off Roadrunner Parkway at 8 a.m.

November 10 (Sunday) at **Nature Journaling** at White Sands National Park. The MVAS nature journal club will explore the unique environment of the gypsum dunes at White Sands National Park. Meet at Ashely Furniture's parking lot at 1 p.m. to carpool or meet at the park visitor center at 2 p.m. Be sure to bring your national park pass or carpool with someone who has one, otherwise, admission is \$25 per car. Contact Cheryl at mesillavalleyaudubon@gmail.com to be added to the nature journaling club email group where additional information will be provided.

November 14 (Thursday) **Bonus Mesilla Park Bird Walk**. Meet at 8 a.m. at 3080 McDowell Rd., Wreath Carver's house.

November 17 (Sunday) **Clean-up** at Sagecrest Park. Meet Aaron at 8 a.m. to clean up the park we birded the week prior! He'll have buckets and grabbers. Look for the big yellow Audubon Society banner. If you've done a bird walk recently, how about giving back by helping with the clean up? We could use your help!

November 20 (Wednesday) **Bird Walk** at Tellbrook Park which is located at 4290 Winchester Road. Meet Mark Pendleton at 8:00 a.m. at the park entrance.

November 20 (Wednesday) **MVAS Monthly Meeting** at 6:30 p.m. Our November meeting will feature a presentation by David Coalson about his participation in the American Bird Association's Young Birders program. We will be at Knox Hall Room 142 (The building is on the northwest corner of Frenger and Espina on the NMSU campus). Cookies and punch will be served. Social time is from 6:30 to 7 p.m. and the meeting begins at 7 p.m. Please note that the doors to the building automatically lock at 7 p.m., so be sure to arrive before that time. The Zoom link is <https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/85769843875>

November 30 (Saturday) **Bird Walk** at Leasburg Dam State Park. Meet bird walk leader Dylan at 8 a.m. at the visitor center. Remember \$5 per car for admission or use your state park pass.

December 3 (Tuesday) at 8 a.m. **Bird walk** at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. Meet Danny at the visitor center at 8 a.m. Remember \$5 per car for admission or use your state park pass.

December 7 (Saturday) **World Conservation Day** will be held at the Museum of Nature and Science from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. MVAS will have an outreach table, and the nature journaling club will meet in the classroom to journal animals from the museum's collection.

Upcoming MVAS Events (cont.)



December 8 (Sunday) Sagecrest Park **Clean-up** at 8 a.m. Join other birders to help keep the park clean. Supplies provided by MVAS.

December 11 (Wednesday) In place of the monthly meeting we will have the **Christmas Bird Count (CBC) meeting**. The CBC meeting will start at 7 p.m. on Zoom only. The link is <https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/85769843875>

December 14 (Saturday) **La Luz Christmas Bird Count**. The CBC will be from 8 a.m. to about 5 p.m. Mark Pendleton is coordinator.

December 14 (Saturday) Sagecrest Park 8 a.m. The **Bird Walk** is at Roadrunner and Frontier. Meet at the park entrance on Frontier at 8 a.m. Your walk leader is Jon Brooks.

December 18 (Wednesday) **Bird Walk** at Tellbrook Park (4290 Winchester Road) at 8 a.m. Meet at the park entrance. Your walk leader is Mark Pendleton.

December 21 (Saturday) **Las Cruces Christmas Bird Count** The CBC will be from 8 a.m. to about 5 p.m. Mark Pendleton is coordinator.

December 28 (Saturday) **Caballo Christmas Bird Count**. The CBC will be from 8 a.m. to about 5 p.m. Wayne Treers is coordinator.

December 28 (Saturday) Leasburg Dam State Park. **Bird Walk**. It is held at 8 a.m. Meet at the visitor center and plan to carpool to the day-use picnic area on the river. 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.

January 7 (Tuesday) Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park **Bird Walk**. Meet at the visitor center at 8 a.m. There is a \$5 day use (vehicle) fee at MVBSP unless you have a state parks annual pass.

January 11 (Saturday) Sagecrest Park **Bird Walk** 8 a.m. is at Roadrunner and Frontier. Meet at the park entrance on Frontier. Your walk leader is Jon Brooks.

January 15 (Wednesday) Tellbrook Park. (4290 Winchester Road) **Bird Walk**. Meet at the park entrance at 8 a.m. Your walk leader is Mark Pendleton.

January 19 (Sunday) Sagecrest Park **Clean-up**. Meet at 8 a.m. at park entrance.

January 25 (Saturday) Leasburg Dam State Park **Bird Walk**. It is held at 8 a.m. Meet at the visitor center and plan to carpool to the day-use picnic area on the river. Walk leader is Dylan.

Photos from MVAS members



A Rufous-backed Robin, another rare visitor to our area, from along the Rio Grande near Las Cruces in October. Photo by Dylan Osterhaus



Great-blue Heron in flight at Percha Dam.
Photo taken by Sid Webb on October 12



Cactus Wren photo taken by Linda Miller in her back yard.



Green-tailed Towhee photo taken by Linda Miller in her back yard.



Wood Thrush, a very rare visitor to our area, from along the Rio Grande near Las Cruces in October. Photo by Dylan Osterhaus.

Officers and Board

President: Cheryl Fallstead

Vice-president: vacant

Secretary: Julia Osgood

Treasurer: Diane Moore

Directors (elected with three-year terms)

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

Director 2024–2026 Dylan Osterhaus

Director 2024–2026 Whitney Watson

Committee chairs

Conservation: Sid Webb acting chair

Education: vacant

Field Trips: Linda Miller

Programs: currently managed by President

Newsletter: Marcia Wilson

Website: Linda Miller

Membership: Annie Mitchell

Christmas Bird Count: Mark Pendleton

Facebook admin: Dylan Osterhaus

Climate Watch Coordinator: Mark Pendleton

Roadrunner Ramblings is published quarterly and is distributed via [the MVAS website](#), with a copy emailed to all MVAS members and friends. All members of MVAS are encouraged to submit articles of interest and any bird photograph recently taken. Please email your contributions to Marcia Wilson at sleeping-safe@yahoo.com. To be added to the distribution list, contact Cheryl Fallstead at 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

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