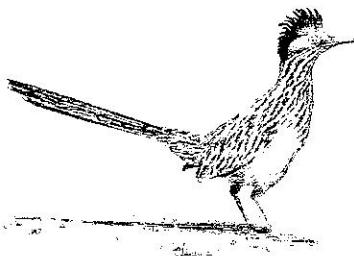


MESILLA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER OF THE



ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

VOLUME 21, NO. 6 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1999

YOU'RE MISSING THE BOAT

By Ed Mayfield, President MVAS

This "President's Message" is directed to the majority of our members who are missing out on many of the great benefits that go with being a member of the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society. We have over 330 members in our organization; approximately 35 to 40 people (about 10% of the membership) attend our monthly meetings. Your membership dollar supports issue advocacy, the conservation of birds, other wildlife, and natural habitat and is necessary to the existence of the Chapter. But if you don't attend the meetings or participate in our field trips you are missing one of the greatest benefits of being a member of MVAS. You are not getting your money's worth, and in this age of consumer protection, please read on.

You are missing the wonderful experience of listening, enjoying and learning from the experts in different fields who speak at our meetings and lead our field trips.

Jennifer Atchley and others have done a remarkable job booking speakers for our meetings. We have been treated to programs on Burrowing Owls, Birds of the South Pacific, Honduras, and Hummingbirds. On September 15, Mark Hakkila, of the Bureau of Land Management presented a great program on the Secret World of Bats. We learned much about these often-maligned animals, which are one of the earth's most valuable assets.

Lorraine Schulte has done wonders promoting humming birds, and she and Joy McFarland have made our Audubon Adventures program the largest and most active in New Mexico. Gordon Ewing and Tim Lawton have made the Christmas Bird Count one of the best and most fun events of the year. Tim Lawton has done outstanding fund raising with Birdathon, another fun filled program. Harold Harrison has developed a great membership recruiting program, and is now coordinating a speaker program (because we have had more and more requests to present speakers for other organizations in the area.) Storm Sermay has done an excellent job with the newsletter. Wally Hill and John Schulte have made our meetings easy to listen to with a new sound system they procured and operate.

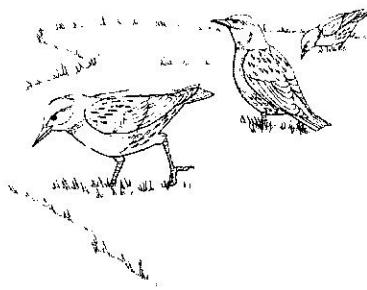
On Saturday, September the 25th, Ed Fredrickson, a research scientist associated with the Jornada Experimental Range led a field trip to the San Andres Mountains. They are located within the White Sands Missile Range boundaries and cannot be visited without special permission. The trip took us through the secured Missile Range boundary and on to Rope Springs. In that portion of the trip, we experienced a great change in vegetation and climate. We birded around the old Rope Springs Ranch, which has been uninhabited since the late 1940's. From there we went North to the ruins of the Goldenburg Ranch, one of the major ranches in the 1800's, then to Lead Camp Canyon, passing other uniquely named springs and old mining sites, including Dead Man's Canyon, Chinch Bug Springs, Horse Camp Draw, and San Andrecito Canyon.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT Saturday, December 18, 1999

The Christmas Bird Count is an event that has been sponsored by the National Audubon Society for over 100 years. In addition to providing a tremendous database on the movements and numbers of wintering birds, it is essentially our capstone field trip for the year. It is great fun — rain, snow or shine.

The count involves going out in teams for the entire count day, or a good part of it. Teams are assigned to an area within a count circle that encompasses Las Cruces, from Dripping Springs to the river, and the South Valley north, almost to Dona Ana. All species and their numbers are tallied during the day. In the evening, we meet as an entire group at the Dynasty Restaurant (6 P.M.) to total the count.

If you are interested in going out with a team, even for part of a day, contact Tim Lawton (522-2056, or tlawton@nmsu.edu) for more information. It's a great way to learn your winter birds and to meet fun people.



See MISSING (Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1) MISSING

Viewing the surrealistic contours of the mountains, the steep drop-off into the Tularosa basin, and feeling and smelling the fresh grass, herbs and plants, along with seeing many different species of birds (37 varieties) and animals totally exposes you to a pristine natural world. This is a world where there are no cows overgrazing, no beer cans under every bush nor trash dumped along the roads. You feel the loneliness of the desert and drink in the beauty of nature. Seeing the birds in the San Andres is treasure you are missing. But, a day like this does have a big drawback. How do you make the following day measure up to the one you just experienced?

Our chapter is THE MOST active chapter in the State of New Mexico. Yes, you are missing out by not joining in with the others who enjoy the fun filled trips and events that our wonderful group relishes. We have a new, comfortable and convenient, meeting place at the Village at Northrise. Come on down and join us. We don't bite.

12th Annual Festival of the Cranes

November 18-21
Bosque del Apache
Socorro, NM

More than 95 workshops
Tours
Exhibits and Demonstrations
Keynote Speeches

For information contact:
Festival of the Cranes
P.O. Box 743-C
Socorro, NM 87801
or call:
505-835-0424

www.nmt.edu/mainpage/festival

THE LAS CRUCES MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY NEEDS OUR HELP!

By Laura Huenekke

For the past decade, the Las Cruces Museum of Natural History has played a vital role in our community. But now, in a crucial transition period for the museum, community help and support are desperately needed.

Located in the Mesilla Valley Mall, and open to all with no admission charge, the Museum has offered quality programming to introduce residents and visitors to the physical and natural environment of southern New Mexico. The Museum has offered educational programs for children and adults, for school classes and for home-schoolers. The Museum provided one of the earliest locations in Las Cruces for citizens to connect to, and explore, the Internet and the World Wide Web. It has offered a children's newspaper program, summer nature camps, and the popular Sky Safari program. And just recently, the Museum planned, found support for, assembled, and is now proudly displaying its first major locally-produced exhibit, "Lobo to Lassie: The Natural History of the Dog."

These are tough times for the Museum, though. Christina Trowbridge, long-time director of the Museum, resigned this summer to pursue other professional goals, and the City of Las Cruces is still searching for a new director. Financial reserves of the Museum and the Southern New Mexico Natural History Foundation, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting the Museum, have been drained by the expenses of exhibit production. The City of Las Cruces is at a crossroads in providing both short-term financial support and long-term strategic guidance for the Natural History Museum. The next 2 months will be critical to the survival and success of the Museum.

What can we do to express our support for the Museum as a vital part of the cultural and educational environment here in Las Cruces?

First, tell the City that you want to see the Museum remain a resource for our community! Contact your city council representative and the mayor, express your

See Museum (Continued on page 4)

PROGRAMS



Programs and meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, September through April, at the Village at Northrise, Hallmark Building, 2882 N. Roadrunner Pkwy, Las Cruces. Programs begin at 7:30 PM. Announcements, news, and information begin at 6:45 PM preceding the program.

November 17. Uses and Needs of Water in Paso del Norte. Dr. Elaine Hampton, the 1999 recipient of the Rosner Environmental Education Award given by the State Land Office, will talk about water issues in this area. This is a subject equally important to people and wildlife. She will also talk about the "Outdoor Classroom Program" which provides teachers and students an opportunity to learn about nature in their communities.

December 15. Winter Birds of New Mexico. Lorraine Schulte will present a slide show of our winter birds to prepare us for the Christmas Bird Count. This is an excellent opportunity to see and discuss fieldmarks of the birds we expect to find on the count.



FIELD TRIPS

New Mexico fall and winter weather is variable. Please be prepared with layered clothing, sunscreen and plenty of water.

Saturday, November 13. Bosque del Apache NWR. The Bosque is a favorite destination for birders nationwide, especially in fall and winter when the Sandhill Cranes return. We will see a wide variety of shorebirds and waterfowl that are returning to winter here. We might spot Bald Eagles and, if we're lucky, Whooping Cranes. The refuge will provide a bus tour for us. Contact Ann Heying, 521-4215, for more information and trip details.

Saturday, December 18. Christmas Bird Count. See details on page 1. This is our traditional December field trip. Even beginning birders will enjoy the challenge of spotting and identifying birds for the count.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

By Ed Mayfield
Trip Leader

Nine people (including two from T or C) went on the Chiricahua field trip and all had a great birding experience. The weather was good and, along with the birds, we had a fine time. We birded in Cave Creek Canyon, South Fork, Cave Creek Ranch, Spofford's, and in the town of Portal. We had a count of 37 birds, but no Trogons. The Trogons are still in the area and still feeding their young. This may be a late hatching. There had been one sighting of a male Trogan feeding the young; apparently something had happened to the female.



BIRD NOTES

Bird	Date	Location	Observer
Aplomado Falcon!	Aug 31	Isaack Pond	S/WH,L/JS
Vermilion Flycatcher	Sep 15	Palomas Cr.	FL, RL
Belted Kingfisher	Sep 15	Palomas Cr.	FL, RL
Prothonotary Warbler	Sep 25	Talavera	JM, EM
Sage Thrasher	Sep 28	White Sands TF	HH
Lesser Scaup	Sep 28	White Sands TF	HH
Red-naped Sapsucker	Sep 29	White Sands TF	HH
Lincoln's Sparrow	Oct 1	Leasburg	LS, JS
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	Oct 1	Holloman	GE
Sandhill Crane	Oct 3	Palomas Marsh	HH
White Pelican	Oct 3	Palomas Marsh	HH
Rufous Hummingbird	Oct 6	Las Cruces	LS
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Oct 6	Las Cruces	LS
Brown Thrasher	Oct 8	White Sands TF	HH
American Dipper	Oct 15	Catwalk	GE
White-throated Sparrow	Oct 20	Old Refuge	GE
Eastern Phoebe	Oct 20	Old Refuge	SH, LS

Observers: Gordon Ewing, Harold Harrison, Sue Hill, Wally Hill, Fran Lerner, Richard Lerner, Earl McFarland, Joy McFarland, John Schulte, Lorraine Schulte

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

NEWS FROM AUDUBON ADVENTURES

By Lorraine Schulte
Chairperson, Audubon Adventures

Seven million children have been connected to nature through Audubon Adventures since 1984.

Every year Mesilla Valley Audubon Society has increased the number of classrooms we sponsor. For the 1999-2000 school year we are sponsoring 81 classrooms, in Las Cruces, Truth or Consequences and Alamogordo. This has been possible due to generous contributions from interested members, and funds from Birdathon.

The 15th anniversary season line-up on topics includes the following: People & Sharing the Earth, Wild Alaska, The Mighty Important Forest, Our One and Only Everglades, American Bald Eagle video, Watchlist for Kids web site, Desert poster and National Audubon Society First Field Guides.

Watch for more information about future plans on Audubon Adventures in the January-February newsletter. We need and want your participation.



AVIAN ECOLOGY COURSE

A new course, Avian Ecology, will be taught by Craig Benkman at NMSU. The course will present an overview of current knowledge and modern research into avian ecology and behavior, and evolutionary ecology. The course will include lectures, readings, laboratory meetings to focus on field research, and four field trips.

The course will be listed in the class schedule as Biol 450-Sec 3 and Biol 550-Sec 2. If this interests you and you have taken Biology 111 or equivalents, then you have the minimum prerequisites. Contact Craig Benkman (Foster Hall 117, 646-2541, cbenkman@nmsu.edu) if you have questions or would like to see a syllabus.

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	Ed Mayfield	382-0715
Vice-president	Ann Heying	521-4215
Secretary	Sue Hill	382-9758
Treasurer	Mary Lou Wallace	522-0684
Board (97-99)	Wally Hill	382-9758
Board (97-99)	Maxine Perkins	524-1529
Board (98-00)	Susan Beck	524-6723
Board (98-00)	Jennifer Atchley	526-1320
Board (99-01)	Harold Harrison	522-6199
Board (99-01)	Charles Townley	526-8750
Past President	Bill Jacobson	382-6877

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Audubon Council	Jennifer Atchley	526-1320
Delegates	Ed Mayfield	382-0715
Conservation	Jennifer Atchley	526-1320
Education	Maxine Perkins	524-1529
Field Trips	Susan Beck	524-6723
Membership Records	Mary Anne Thibodeau	524-4126
Membership	Harold Harrison	522-6199
Newsletter Editor	Nancy Stotz nstotz@zianet.com	
Programs	Board-at-Large	
Publicity	Ann Heying	521-4215

Board meetings are held, September through May, on the Thursday before the 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 pm at the Southwest Environmental Center, 1494A S. Solano Dr., Las Cruces NM 88001. All Audubon members are welcome.

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 NAS) to:

**Membership, MVAS, PO Box 3127,
Las Cruces NM 88003**

(Continued from page 2) **Museum**

support, and encourage the City to complete its search for a talented director with vision.

Second, help to provide the financial assistance needed to get the Museum through this critical transition. Make a donation to the Foundation next time you visit the museum or better yet, become a member.

Finally, stop in the Museum the next time you are near the Mall, and enjoy the Lobo to Lassie exhibit and some of the many planned supplementary lectures and activities.

Browse in the Cenozoic Shop. The deserts, mountains, and river valleys of New Mexico are an integral part of the enchanting appeal of Las Cruces. Let's help ensure that the Museum of Natural History remains in Las Cruces to guide us in exploring and appreciating our natural environment.

Laura Hueneke is a member of the Natural History Museum board and Department Head of the NMSU Department of Biology.

NOTE: The museum also supported Hummingbird Awareness Day, an event put on by MVAS.

ELECTIONS

At our January 19, 2000 general meeting, we will hold our yearly elections for president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and two board members. The officers' terms are for one year and the board members' terms are three years.

In the next newsletter, we will publish the slate of officers from the nominating committee.

If you are interested in running for office, please contact Sue Hill, 382-9758, and let her know. If you have not been active in Audubon previously, being a board member is an excellent learning experience and a great way to get involved.

NEWSLETTER CHANGES

Beginning with the next newsletter, *Roadrunner Ramblings* will have a new editor, Nancy Stotz. It's time for someone else to take up the challenge. I have enjoyed my three years as editor and want to thank all the people who have contributed articles and information and made this job fun. The newsletter schedule will remain the same.

Roadrunner Ramblings is published six times a year: January, March, May, July, September, and November. Contributions are welcome. Please e-mail copy to: nstotz@zianet.com, or call for mailing information. **Next deadline: December 18.** Printed by *insta-copy printing*.

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society
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Las Cruces, NM 88003

Nonprofit Organization
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