



# ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 27, No. 5. Nov-Dec. 2005

## ***Birding is Addictive!***

*By Harold Harrison*

Several years ago my mother-in-law, Margaret Stryker, presented me with a pair of 7 x 35 Field and Stream binoculars and invited my family and I to join a camping trip to Portal, Arizona. The binoculars were Margaret's thank you for a surprise gift I had given her a few weeks earlier. The gift, Florence Bailey's *Bird of New Mexico*, circa 1923, turned out to be a rare find for my spunky, amateur naturalist mother-in-law. It also turned out to be a rare "find" for me, as well. South Cave Creek's abundant, colorful avian species opened new worlds. One look at the beautiful Trogon, and I was hooked!

The next logical step was to fill out and send a membership to the *Audubon* magazine and join the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society. I spent a great deal of time studying the colorful pictures when the magazine arrived, but I wanted more. So, the next step was to enroll in the first available Community College class in bird-watching. In those days the classes were taught by an assortment of young men who were working on advanced degrees in biology and wildlife science. Class members were a mixture of neophytes like me and various Mesilla Valley Audubon Society founders, who used the classes as an excuse for a weekend field trips.

For all of us, our interest in birding was fed by the passion of the young, experienced instructors like Kevin Zimmer, who is currently leading trips for Victor Emanuel Tours. Watching Kevin spotting the first Red Knot ever sighted in New and Mexico and running a quarter of a mile for his camera, then chasing the bird for an hour so he could get the perfect picture, was inspiring and exciting. Another memorable adventure with a second early instructor, Randy Hill, was spending an hour climbing through the foaming soap suds in the sewage lagoons of Holloman Air Force Base as we chased an elusive Little Blue Heron, only to finally find the bird back at the car where my wife, Barbara, was watching after Randy's five-year-old son, Adam.

It only takes a few adventures like these and many similar experiences until bird-watching becomes something one starts to crave. Indeed, I get restless if I go too long between bird-watching outings. That's why my wife and I load up the scope, strap on the binoculars (we have, by now, purchased a variety of newer and better equipment!), stick in some water and snacks, and head east to the Sacramento Mountains, west to the Gila Wilderness, north to Percha Dam and Caballo Lake, south to Keystone Park—or simply to the pecan orchards of the Mesilla Valley or banks of Rio Grande River—to see what we can spot today. I have become totally addicted to bird-watching!

## ***The Christmas Bird Count is Saturday, December 17!***

Make plans to participate in this much-anticipated annual tradition. The CBC is an all-day event that involves counting birds within geographic areas of a count circle that extends from the river to Dripping Springs and from the Jornada to the South Valley. We finish up with a no-host dinner at the end of the day, when everyone goes over their list and we figure out the day's total number of species and individuals.

This is a fun, low-pressure outdoor event; the only prerequisite is enthusiasm. You can even do a partial day if it better fits your schedule.

We currently seek team leaders to lead groups into the various areas, as well as team members. If you would like to be involved as a leader or participant, please contact Tim Lawton (522-2056).



## Welcome New Members



Janet Darrow  
Jim and Carol Campbell



## Programs

Membership meetings and programs and meetings are held each month, September–April, at the Village at Northrise, Hallmark Building, 2882 N.

Roadrunner Pkway. Meetings begin at 7:00 PM. Programs begin immediately following the business meeting and announcements.

study looking at the influence of noise on the owl's reproduction and behavior while the German Air Force does training exercises in the mountains. Habitat studies will be also presented, for definition of critical habitat.

### Winter Birds of the Mesilla Valley and CBC. December 14.

To help us prepare for the upcoming Christmas Bird Count, Lorraine Schulte will review some common, and not so common, winter residents and visitors to southern New Mexico. Tim Lawton will also be on hand to organize teams and leaders for this year's count. **PLEASE NOTE** the modified meeting date, the second Wednesday of the month instead of the third.

**The Mexican Spotted Owl in the Gila National Forest of New Mexico. November 16.** Gill Sorg has been working for the past two field seasons on the threatened MX Spotted Owl in the Gila. He has both still and video pictures of the owls' behavior to present. He will show how the owl has been thriving, or not, with the recent weather changes there. The project is a

### JOIN NOW!

- National Membership (one year): Join **both the National Audubon Society and Mesilla Valley Audubon Society** for the introductory rate of \$20 (a \$15 savings!). You'll receive both *Audubon Magazine* and *Roadrunner Ramblings*. Make check payable to National Audubon Society (NAS).
- Chapter Membership (one year): Join just **Mesilla Valley Audubon Society** for \$15. You'll receive *Roadrunner Ramblings*. Make check payable to Mesilla Valley Audubon Society.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Q54  
7XCH

Send this form and your check to:

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

### RENEWALS

National Members: NAS will send you renewal notices.

Chapter Members: Check your mailing label. If you see a C followed by a month and year code, you are a Chapter Member. The month and year code indicates the month your membership expires.

### Special Events

A couple of upcoming special events being offered by other organizations that may be of special interest to birders...

**Movie: *Winged Migration*.** 1:30, Saturday, November 26, at the Farm and Ranch Museum, 4100 Dripping Springs Rd. More info at 522-0286 or 522-4100 (museum).

**Movie Description—*Winged Migration*** (2001, 90 minutes, rated G) While everyone is aware that birds fly south for the winter and return home in the spring, few are aware of just how arduous the journey can be. Jacques Perrin, a noted actor and film producer in his native France, decided to document this process, using flocks of birds who had been trained to ignore the distractions of his camera crew, and employing a variety of state-of-the-art technology to capture as unobtrusively as possible the flight paths of different birds from around the globe. The result was *Winged Migration*, a visually dazzling documentary that records the flight of dozens of different birds as they follow their navigational instincts and make the taxing journey to more temperate climates in the fall, all chronicled without the use of narration. The first directorial effort for Perrin, *Winged Migration* received an Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary

### LCMNH Trip to Bosque del Apache: December 3.

Join the Las Cruces Museum of Natural History on an all-day nature trip to the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife refuge, December 3, 2005. Participants will meet at the museum at 6:00 AM to catch a bus to the wildlife refuge and will return to the museum later that day at approximately 4:00 pm.

The Bosque del Apache is one of the most spectacular refuges in North America. This 57,191 acre refuge straddles the Rio Grande Valley in Socorro County, New Mexico, consisting of upland desert, cottonwood forests, man-made marshes, streambeds, and farm fields. Join the LCMNH on an all day trip to the refuge, which is famous for its wintering flocks of snow geese, raptors, and cranes.

Please call the museum at 522-3120 to pre-register as space is extremely limited. (Minimum number of participants required.) Cost for this trip is \$30 and includes round-trip, motor coach transportation, park fee, refuge tour, and discussion about birds. Participants will provide their own lunch.

- Mark Deming

## Bird Notes

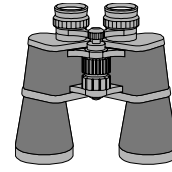
Species	Date	Location	Observers
Apomado Falcon	8-11	Otero Mesa	?
Western Tanager	8-11	Las Cruces	SWH
Yellow Warbler	8-12	Las Cruces	SB
Lazuli Bunting	8-13;25	Talavera; Organ	TL;GP
Olive-sided Flycatcher	8-13;14	Doña Ana;Leasburg	SWH,GP,BR,LS
MacGillivray's Warbler	8-13	Leasburg;Las Cruces	SWH,BR,LS
Plumbeous Vireo	8-13	Leasburg	SWH,BR,LS
Dusky Flycatcher	8-13	Leasburg	SWH,BR,LS
Lark Sparrow	8-14	Mesilla	GP,LS
Orange-crowned Warbler	8-18	Leasburg	JHa
American Redstart	8-18	Leasburg	JHa
Willet	8-19	Holloman	CL
Calliope Hummingbird	9-7	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Clay-colored Sparrow	9-7; 10-2	Radium Spgs; LC Dam	MS/JZ ; NS
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	9-7	Las Cruces	TM
Painted Bunting	9-7	Radium Springs, Percha	MS/JZ
Dickcissel	9-10	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Osprey	9-10	Percha	SB,BR,LS,DW
Bank Swallow	9-10	Percha	SB,BR,LS,DW
Peregrine Falcon	9-10	Percha	SB,BR,LS,DW
Nashville Warbler	9-11	Percha	CL, DSP
Red-headed Woodpecker	9-11	Percha	CL,DSP
Painted Redstart	9-11	Percha	CL,DSP
Eurasian Collared-Dove	9-15	East Picacho	JHa
Streak-backed Oriole	9-16	El Paso	BZ
Red-necked Phalarope	9-16	Holloman	CL
Blackpoll Warbler	9-16	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Townsend's Warbler	9-16	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
White-crowned Sparrow	9-18	Las Cruces	SWH
Black-and-white Warbler	9-18	Percha	CL
Cassin's Vireo	9-18	Percha	CL
Northern Parula	9-21	Holloman	MS/JZ
Pectoral Sandpiper	9-21	Holloman	MS/JZ
Marbled Godwit	9-22	Holloman	CL
Virginia's Warbler	9-22	Holloman	CL
Lincoln's Sparrow	9-22;26	Holloman; Las Cruces	CL;SWH
Forster's Tern	9-25	Isaack's Pond	JHy
Northern Shoveler	9-29	Burn Lake	PT
Anna's Hummingbird	10-3	Las Cruces	BHH;LS
Golden-crowned Kinglet	10-5	Cloudcroft	JHa
Ruddy Duck	10-6	Burn Lake	PT
Franklin's Gull	10-6	Isaack's Pond	JHa,SWH
Prairie Falcon	10-6	Isaack's Pond	JHa,SWH
Solitary Sandpiper	10-6	Isaack's Pond	JHa,SWH
Sandhill Crane	10-7;17	Percha; Isaack's Pond	JHa,SWH
American White Pelican	10-7	Percha	JHa,SWH
Merlin	10-7	Percha	JHa,SWH
Common Ground-Dove	10-7	Radium Springs	MS/JZ
Black-bellied Plover	10-7	Holloman	CL
Sage Thrasher	10-9	Las Cruces Dam	NS

Observers: Sylvia Bizzell, Jannette Hale, Barbara and Harold Harrison, Sue and Wally Hill, John Hyndman, Tim Lawton, Carl Lundblad, Tim McKimmie, Danny/ Sally Paez, Guy Powers, Lorraine Schulte, Marcy Scott/Jimmy Zabriskie, Nancy Stotz, Barry Zimmer

Please report early, late, or unusual sightings to Sue Hill at 505-382-9758 or hillco at zianet.com

## 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.



### Elephant Butte & Vicinity, November 12.

If we are able to obtain permission to bird a property just east of Truth or Consequences and south of Elephant Butte, that will be the main focus of our trip. That area includes some bosque woodlands, farm fields planted with millet to attract birds, and a shallow lake surrounded by dense stands of salt cedar. The area should provide lots of sparrows, juncos, and several species of ducks and water birds. If that does not work out, we will bird the upper part of Caballo Reservoir, Palomas Marsh, and Elephant Butte Dam State Park. We will meet at K Mart on Hwy 70 at 7 AM and should return to Las Cruces in the early afternoon (between 1 and 2 PM). Participants may wish to bring a lunch and we can picnic at the State Park while birding. For more information, contact Walt Whitford (521-1358).

## Festival of the Cranes November 15-20

Bosque del Apache  
National  
Wildlife Refuge



- Guided Tours
- Workshops
- Exhibit Booths
- Lectures

www.friendsofthebosque.org/crane  
or  
Call 505-835-2077

## Field Trip Report

**Black Range and Headwaters of Percha Creek. October 22.** Seventeen birders traveled to the headwaters of Percha Creek in the Black Range for this trip. It was a gorgeous day—sunny and warm with clear blue skies. We saw a total of 23 species—far more species than the trip leader(s) expected! Most notable were a flock of Mexican Jays, a large number of Townsend’s Solitaires, a Red-naped Sapsucker, a small flock of Eastern Bluebirds and several Acorn Woodpeckers. There were still some wild daisies and other flowers in bloom and the foliage of the narrowleaf cottonwoods along the creeks was a brilliant golden yellow. Most of the participants topped off the morning by having lunch at the Barber Shop Cafe in Hillsboro.

-Walt Whitford



## Call for Nominees

During November and December, MVAS will be developing a slate of candidates for next year’s officers and board members. If you are interested in volunteering for an elected position, or want to get involved in one of our committees, please contact one of the current officers listed to the left.

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**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	Gill Sorg	541-0577
Vice-president	Walt Whitford	521-1358
Secretary	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Treasurer	Barb Rodriguez	523-1548
Board (03-05)	Alan Krueger	532-1036
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Board (04-06)	Valerie Endrueit	373-0530
Board (05-07)	Robert Hull	523-8009
Board (05-07)	Richard Bischoff	894-6083

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Audubon Council	Richard Bischoff	894-6083
Delegates	Guy Powers	373-3843
Conservation	Bob Tafarielli	526-9380
Education	Donna Wood	525-8704
Field Trips	Walt Whitford	521-1358
Programs	board at large	
Membership	Guy Powers	373-3843
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/](http://www.cybermesa.com/~mvas/).

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