

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 23, No. 5. September/October 2001

President's Message

by Bill Jacobson, MVAS President

While there are no general meetings during the summer months, the Board meets in July. We took the following actions at that meeting: (1) We renewed our support for the Junior Duck Stamp Program. Guy Powers spearheads this effort and keeps us in touch with what is happening. Last year's result were excellent. (2) Lorraine Schulte and Sue Hill are arranging a special Alumni Field Trip for all previous participants in the Bird ID Class. (3) Wendy Davis, working with Bill Glenn, DABCC, has scheduled another Bird ID class for this fall. (4) The Potluck has been rescheduled for October 3rd, and (5) our chapter is supporting the publication of a New Mexico supplement to be distributed with the Audubon Adventures materials to the schools.

A group of us met to discuss this project with Helen Haskell, Albuquerque Chapter Audubon Adventures Chairperson, and Lauren Parmelce, Director of Education for Randall Davey Audubon Center. After much discussion and reviewing of other state publications, we decided that the production of a state-wide New Mexico supplement was both appropriate and feasible. Lauren will be the project co-ordinator and will communicate with the state chapters as well as contacting some of the other states that produce a supplement. This project will be on the agenda of the State Audubon Council meeting in October. We will also be contacting local teachers for their input. I think this can be a real plus for our state.

There are a number of interesting events to look for this fall and winter. The migrants have started to arrive, we have our rescheduled Potluck, the Christmas Birdcount takes place December 15, and we elect Board Members and Officers in January. Please give strong consideration to serving your chapter. Volunteerism plus new ideas help keep this a vibrant chapter. Speaking of which, I hope you have noticed how nice 'our median' looks. Thanks to all the volunteers who have helped keep it clean.

Birdathon 2000

I am proud to report that Birdathon this year raised \$2855.35. These funds will help support our local education and conservation initiatives. Much of the money will go toward the Audubon Adventures program. Although we are no longer required to give half the funds to a National Audubon cause, the board voted to make a contribution of \$500 to the Randall Davey Audubon Center in Santa Fe. This is our state office and educational center. Thanks to our birders: Tim Lawton, Harold Harrison, Amanda Skarsgard, Walt Whitford, Lorraine Schulte, Tara Shelton, Sue and Wally Hill, Donna Wood, Ed Mayfield, and Vince Hernandez. And last but *never* least, thanks to all our sponsors who made Birdathon such a success. See you all next year!

Storm Sermay

Special Events

Potluck, October 3

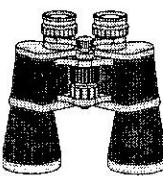
Our annual Potluck, which had to be cancelled in May, has been rescheduled. Once again, charter member Lorraine Schulte has volunteered to host the event. Special guests will be David Henderson, State Director from the Randall Davey Audubon Center in Santa Fe, and Tom Jervis, President of the New Mexico Audubon Council, who will speak briefly on statewide Audubon programs. The potluck will begin at 5:00 at Lorraine's home, 1740 Mariposa (phone 524-7029). Bring a main dish, side dish, or dessert, and a spare folding chair or two if you've got them. Table service, iced tea, and coffee will be provided; BYOB for other beverages.

Bird Identification Class Alumni Field Trip, October 13

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society is offering a field trip on October 13, to Percha State Park and Caballo Dam, to anyone who has previously participated in a Bird Identification Class through the Doña Ana Branch Community College. At the end of the morning we will have lunch together (bring your own). Drinks and snacks will be provided.

The cut-off date for signing up to participate will be October 9.

Call Lorraine Schulte at 524-7029, or Wally or Sue Hill at 382-9758 to put your name on the list and get departure information including time and meeting place.



Field Trips

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

San Andres Mountains. September 8.

Ed Fredrickson will once again be leading us into these mountains northeast of Las Cruces, which are normally closed to public access. Bring your lunch, water, and favorite hat as we venture into the San Andres Mountain Range for a full day of birding. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are required as we pass through several distinct habitat types. So, please bring your four-wheel-drive vehicle and room for a friend. We will meet at Shorty's Shell Station at the corner of Highway 70 and Jornada Road at 7:00 AM. Expect to return to Shorty's by 3:00 PM. Several short hikes through an arroyo system and upper-elevation savannah systems are planned so bring your hiking boots.

Welcome New Member



Lucille Goding

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 National Audubon Society) to:

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

Percha Dam. September 22. This trip will explore some of the riparian habitats and bosque protected along the Rio Grande in this state park north of Hatch. The trip will depart from the K-Mart on Highway 70 at 7 AM, returning around 2 PM. The trip will probably involve about 3 hours of birder-paced walking. If the birding is slow at Percha, a side trip up to Animas Creek Canyon may be added. Contact Walt Whitford (521-1358 or wawhitfo@nmsu.edu) for more information.

Dripping Springs. October 6. Tucked at the base of the Organ Mountains, Dripping Springs offers spectacular views as well as interesting birding. We've got a good chance to see some foothills specialties like Black-chinned and Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Townsend's Solitaires, and Scrub Jays. We'll be leaving from the Bank of the Rio Grande at the corner of Telshor and University at 8:00 AM. Plan on being out until mid-afternoon and walking about 3 miles of well-maintained trail through somewhat hilly terrain. For more details, contact Nancy Stotz at 521-8087 or nstotz@zianet.com.

Chiricahua Mountains/Southeast

Arizona. October 20. These spectacular "Sky Islands" of the southwestern U.S. host many bird species which are rarely seen north of Mexico. Because of travel time (approximately 4 hours, one-way from Las Cruces), most folks will do this as an overnight trip, camping in one of the Forest Service campgrounds along Cave Creek, or staying at lodging available in Portal, AZ. Contact Ed Mayfield (382-0715, mayfield@zianet.com) for details, directions, and lodging recommendations.



Programs

Programs and meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, September - April, at the Village at Northrise, Hallmark Building, 2882 N. Roadrunner Pkwy, Las

Cruces. Programs begin at 7:30 PM. News, announcements, and information begin at 6:45, preceding the program.

Ravin' About Ravens. September 19.

Danielle D'Auria, working towards her master's in wildlife science at NMSU, has been studying the Chihuahuan Raven for 2 years with her advisor Don Caccamise. This corvid, found only in the southwest US and Mexico, is quite abundant and conspicuous throughout the Mesilla Valley. Despite this, there is still much to be learned about their basic biology and behaviors. About to finish up her second and final field season, she is eager to share what she has discovered about their breeding biology and social system, and how this compares to other North American corvids.

America's Redrock Wilderness. October 17. Bob Brister, of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance will present a slide show highlighting the rugged beauty of the redrock country, and describing how these lands are under threat from mining, drilling, and ORV abuse. The program will also describe America's Redrock Wilderness Act which would grant Congressionally designated wilderness protection to 9.1 million acres of BLM land in Utah. New Mexico's Senator Bingaman is Chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and SUWA is hopeful that he could become a co-sponsor of this important legislation. Come and learn what can be done to save this immense and challenging landscape.

Mark Your Calendars

November 15-20. Festival of the Cranes at Bosque del Apache. Keynote speaker: Pete Dunne. Details forthcoming at www.friendsofthebosque.org.

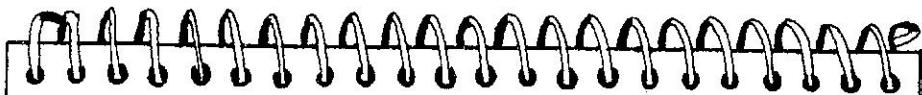
December 15. MVAS Christmas Bird Count. Details will be announced at future meetings and in the next issue of *Roadrunner Ramblings*.

Field Trip Report

Burn Lake. July 21. We were unable to check for birds at Burn Lake because the area was closed to all except participants in a special track meet. It was a very hot day, but eight brave souls participated in a drive to Mesilla and down the west river levee north of the Picacho Bridge. We

found 26 species which is not too bad for the middle of July in the Mesilla Valley. There were 12 Burrowing Owls at Mesilla, and many Blue Grosbeaks were happily singing in the corn fields along the river. We would like to thank those who came to bird. We had a great group!!!

Sue and Wally Hill



Bird Notes

| Species | Date | Location | Observers |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Mississippi Kite | 6-21 | Las Cruces | TM |
| Yellow-headed Blackbird | 7-6 | NASA | HH |
| Rufous Hummingbird (M) | 7-8 | Las Cruces | TL |
| Rufous Hummingbird (M) | 7-11 | Palomas | FL |
| Calliope Hummingbird | 7-15 | Las Cruces | SWH |
| Rufous Hummingbird (F) | 7-16 | Las Cruces | BDJ |
| Yellow-billed Cuckoo | 7-16 | Las Cruces | KS |
| Broad-tailed Hummingbird | 7-17 | Las Cruces | SWH |
| Painted Bunting | 7-22 | Swan Pond | JZ, MS |
| Bell's Vireo | 7-22 | Swan Pond | JZ, MS |
| Solitary Sandpiper | 7-22 | Las Cruces | TS, SWH |
| Least Sandpiper | 7-22 | Las Cruces | TS, SWH |
| Wilson's Phalarope | 7-22 | Las Cruces | TS, SWH |
| Little Blue Heron | 7-23 | Rio Bosque | JZ |
| Bank Swallow | 7-24 | Leasburg | BDJ |
| Anna's Hummingbird | 7-25 | Las Cruces | GE |
| Baird's Sandpiper | 7-25 | Las Cruces | SH, LS |
| Painted Bunting | 7-25 | Las Cruces | TM |
| Common Poorwill | 7-26 | Las Cruces | KS |
| Reddish Egret | 7-27 | Rio Bosque | JZ, MS |
| Indigo Bunting | 7-28 | La Mesa | JZ, MS |
| Yellow-billed Cuckoo | 7-28 | Leasburg | SH, LS |
| Least Tern | 7-28 | Burn Lake | BR, BH, HH |
| Possible Allen's Hummer | 7-29 | Palomas | FL |
| Lark Sparrow | 8-1 | Las Cruces | NS |
| Vermilion Flycatcher | 8-3 | Ft. Bliss Sewage Ponds | SWH |
| Stilt Sandpiper | 8-3 | Ft. Bliss Sewage Ponds | SWH |
| Lazuli Bunting | 8-4 | Afton Road | JZ, MS |
| Olive-sided Flycatcher | 8-4 | Ft. Bliss Sewage Ponds | JZ, MS |
| Little Blue Heron | 8-6 | NASA | HH |
| Red-faced Warbler | 8-7 | Springtime Campground | BG |
| Gray Catbird | 8-10 | Old Refuge | BS |
| Red-eyed Vireo | 8-10 | Old Refuge | BS |

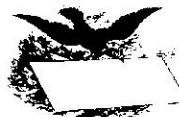
Gordon Ewing, Bill Glenn, Barbara Harrison, Harold Harrison, Sue and Wally Hill, Bill and Donna Jacobson, Tim Lawton, Frankie Lerner, Tim McKimmie, Barbara Rodriguez, Lorraine Schulte, Marcy Scott, Bill Seager, Tara Shelton, Ken Stinnett, Nancy Stotz, Jimmie Zabriskie

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

New Mexico Rare Bird Hotline 505-323-9323

Bird Identification Course

Do all ducks look alike to you? Do little brown birds confuse you? Can't tell a hawk from a falcon? MVAS can help! A Bird Identification Course for adults will be offered again this fall through the Community Education Program at Doña Ana Branch Community College. Taught by knowledgeable members of Mesilla Valley Audubon Society, the 3-week course will give participants a good introduction to the birds of southern New Mexico as well as general information about bird watching. The classroom portion will be held Tuesday evenings, October 23, 30, and November 6, from 7-9 PM, at Good Samaritan Village Social Center. There will be 2 half-day Saturday field trips on October 27 and November 3, and an all-day trip to the Bosque del Apache on Saturday, November 10. Contact DABCC at 527-7527 for registration information or Wendy Davis (527-4551) for more details.



Contacting Your Federal Representatives

Just in case the latest news coming from Washington D.C. has given you the urge to write a letter to your elected representative(s)...

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Vice-President Richard Cheney
Old Executive Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Senator Jeff Bingaman
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-3102

Senator Pete Domenici
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Joseph R. Skeen
2302 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Jr. Duck Stamp Program

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 | Bill Jacobson | 382-6877 |
| Vice-president | Guy Powers | 373-3843 |
| Secretary | Barb Rodriguez | 523-1548 |
| Treasurer | Walt Whitford | 521-1358 |
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| Board (99-01) | Charles Townley | 526-8750 |
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| Board (00-02) | Sue Hill | 382-9758 |
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| Board (01-03) | Nancy Stotz | 521-8087 |
| Past President | Ed Mayfield | 382-0715 |

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------|
| Audubon Adventures | Lorraine Schulte | 524-7029 |
| Audubon Council | Jennifer Atchley | 526-1320 |
| Delegates | Ed Mayfield | 382-0715 |
| Conservation | Board at Large | |
| Education | Wendy Davis | 527-4551 |
| Field Trips | Ed Mayfield | 382-0715 |
| Membership Records | Mary Anne Thibodeau | 524-4126 |
| Membership | Harold Harrison | 522-6199 |
| Newsletter Editor | Nancy Stotz | 521-8087 |
| Programs | Nancy Stotz | 521-8087 |
| Publicity | Charles Townley | 526-8705 |

Board meetings are held, September through May, on the Thursday before the 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 PM at the Southwest Environmental Center (1494 S. Solano). All Audubon members are welcome.

Visit our website at www.cybermesa.com/~mvash/.

The Junior Duck Stamp Program has many benefits. It introduces school age children to an important and fragile part of the natural world. It instills a sense of individual responsibility in the maintenance of our environment. And it benefits waterfowl and their habitats as well as all migratory birds and hundreds of plants and animals that share wetlands habitats.

I attended the Junior Duck Stamp Workshop at the Bosque del Apache August 8-9, which was attended by people from all around the state. I will be delivering to the K-12 art departments of the Las Cruces schools packets explaining the program. I will also receive the Jr. Duck Traveling Trunk. This is a trunk full of things to help the student understand wildlife and habitat: posters, prints of duck feathers, bird books, slides, bird calls and much more. MVAS can present this program to the different classes to help the students better understand wildlife. I could really use your help in presenting this trunk to the classes that request it. Please give me a call at 528-2424 or email me at heyguy@steinborn.com. Thank you for your help.

Guy Powers

Leasburg State Park: Progress Report

I wish to thank everyone has sent me reports of their sightings at Leasburg. I have compiled the lists for the last six months and the results are exciting. Over 100 species have been sighted including a number of uncommon and/or rarely seen species for this area. It will be interesting to see what the fall migrations bring. I urge you to visit the park as it is not only a good birding spot but is only 15 miles from Las Cruces. If you do visit, please send me a listing of the birds you see. Be ready to grab your favorite month as I will be asking for volunteers at the September meeting. A big THANKS to the following for their reports: N. Singleton, J. Mulhauser, S. and W. Hill, B. and H. Harrison, D. Jacobson, J. McFarland, A. Doss, L. Schulte, B. Rodriguez, R. Preszler, G. Neavoll, the Bird I.D. Class, J. Atchley, N. Stotz.

Bill Jacobson

Roadrunner Ramblings is published six times a year: January, March, May, July, September, and November. Submissions are welcome. Please email copy to nstotz@zianet.com, or call for mailing information. **Next deadline: 26 October.** Printed by **insta-copy printing** on 50% kenaf, 50% PCW recycled chlorine-free paper. Images, except Dale Zimmerman's roadrunner, were obtained from IMSI's Master Clips/Master Photos® Collection.

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1645
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