



# ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

MESILLA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

[www.mvaudubon.org](http://www.mvaudubon.org) Vol. 40, No. 1, Winter 2018

## A-Spear Ranch Selects MVAS for Study Of Its Unique Riparian Setting for Birds

By J.R. Absher  
Co-Owner, A-Spear Ranch



J.R. Absher

Last October, Mesilla Valley Audubon Society led a field trip to beautiful Las Palomas Creek on the A-Spear Ranch, LLC, in Sierra County. This was the kick-off for a year of field visits by MVAS in order to build a bird list for this incredible example of a southwestern riparian gallery forest. Thanks to the efforts of C.J. Goin and other MVAS board members, we were able to post bird lists on eBird and the number of species observed and confirmed at the A-Spear currently stands at 106.

In 2017, nests and subsequent fledglings were observed, including for Common Black-Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel, Barn Owl and others. Mammal species thrive and proliferate on the ranch as well, with trail cameras capturing young elk, black bear, mule deer, bobcats and mountain lions.

In coming months, the ranch hopes to move forward with a conservation easement for the riparian area as well as further habitat improvements. This will include working with representatives from Bosque del Apache NWR to plant Monarch butterfly-friendly milkweed.

In addition, the owners of A-Spear hope to continue working with MVAS to develop projects that can be mutually beneficial to the ranch, MVAS, and, of course, the birds.

### LAS CRUCES CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT ON DEC. 16

Our Las Cruces Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will be held on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2017, from sunrise to sunset. Mesilla Valley Audubon Society (MVAS) has sponsored this CBC for 43 years. Our CBC circle encompasses a varied habitat for birds – from a riparian corridor to agricultural fields to suburban areas to desert scrubland. This diversity often has yielded more than 130 species sighted during the CBC.

MVAS will hold a pre-CBC meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 7:00 PM at the Southwest Environmental Center (SWEC), 275 North Main Street on the Downtown Mall. The meeting provides an opportunity for team members to discuss final arrangements for the count day.

We have 13 teams of birders that cover the Las Cruces CBC circle. Please consider joining us in locating and counting birds on Dec. 16 and make a big contribution to citizen science. If you are new to the CBC, we will find a team that you can bird with. If interested, contact Wayne Treers (coordinator and compiler for the Las Cruces CBC) at [way1mike@yahoo.com](mailto:way1mike@yahoo.com) or phone him at 575-528-8696.



# 1st Place Photo

Avocets in Flight at Elephant Butte Lake State Park, Frank K. Wilson



## ***Mark Calendar Now for Winter Field Trips***

**November 14-19:** As we have for the past several years, MVAS encourages folks to attend the Festival of the Cranes at the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in San Antonio NM (near Socorro) for the November field trip. Register now as accommodations fill up quickly. Dates are Tuesday November 14 through Sunday November the 19. This is an opportunity to see some spectacular flocks of ducks, geese and cranes as well as other wildlife.

Visit: <http://www.friendsofthebosque.org/festival-of-the-cranes-1.aspx> .

**December 16:** Saturday December 16 from sunrise to sunset is the 43<sup>rd</sup> annual Las Cruces Christmas Bird Count! (see Page 1) Take part in one of the longest running Citizen Science events going! There are 13 teams of birders that cover the 15-mile diameter, Las Cruces Circle. To participate, contact Wayne Treers at

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.

Board meetings are held on the Thursday before the 3rd Wed

[way1mike@yahoo.com](mailto:way1mike@yahoo.com) or 575-528-8696

**January Upcoming:** Watch your e-mail for more details. We're currently discussing destinations, and will announce it when we've decided. To receive MVAS birding and meeting notices, make sure that Judy Wilbur [jkwilbur@gmail.com](mailto:jkwilbur@gmail.com) and or Mark Pendleton [mpndltn@gmail.com](mailto:mpndltn@gmail.com) have your e-address (and phone number is good, too) so they can send notices to you.

**Photo Contest Rules:** Photos submitted must have been taken in our local area, i.e., Sierra, Otero, or Dona Ana Counties only, and during the past 12 months. Our publications committee judges entries based on photo quality, subject interest, and subject variety. Please include the location taken and name of species in your email. Our newsletter editor makes the final selection for publication. From these, one is chosen as the First Prize winner.

By submitting your photo you automatically grant Mesilla Valley Audubon Society (MVAS) publication rights for one year. MVAS may use your photo in any of our publications, including newsletters and our annual calendar. Photos should be submitted electronically as a high resolution jpg file to this email address [judi626@earthlink.net](mailto:judi626@earthlink.net).

at 5:30 pm at the Southwest Environmental Center on the downtown mall. All Audubon members are welcome.

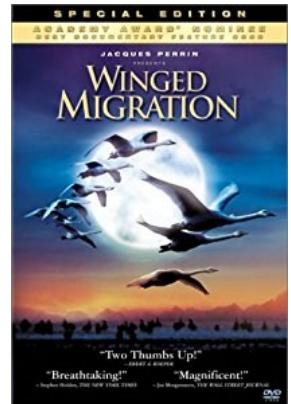
*Roadrunner Ramblings* is published quarterly. Submissions are welcome. Please email copy to Judi Schultz, [judi626@earthlink.net](mailto:judi626@earthlink.net). Next deadline: Oct.15, 2017. To be added to the distribution list, contact Judy Wilbur, [jkwilbur@gmail.com](mailto:jkwilbur@gmail.com) or 512-560-4717.

## Three Enticing Programs Feature the Rio Grande, 'Winged Migration'

**November 15 - Restoring the Rio Grande.** Tyler Rogers of the San Andres National Wildlife Refuge, will discuss the work being done on the Rio Grande floodplain that benefits bird habitats. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in partnership with private and state landowners, has enhanced habitat from Leasburg to Las Cruces.

**December 13 - Christmas Bird Count Coordination Meeting** (see article on Page 1) for details). NOTE: This is the second Wednesday of the month, rather than the third Wednesday.

**January 17, 2018** - Movie night features the 2003 award-winning documentary, "Winged Migration." The movie was filmed over the course of four years on all seven continents using in-flight cameras, so that viewers appear to be flying alongside birds of successive species, especially Canada geese. They traverse every kind of weather, covering vast distances in a flight for survival. This spectacular film follows all manner of avifauna through their miraculous journeys. Hot toddies and popcorn will make this a perfect winter outing. All meetings begin at 7 p.m. with a social hour at 6:30 p.m. This is also our annual meeting and officer elections (see below).



## Upcoming Officer Elections, Annual Meeting

In anticipation of the January 17, 2018, annual meeting and election of officers, the Nominating Committee of the current board is creating a slate to fill four officer and two director positions. All chapter members are encouraged to self-nominate or suggest other candidates. Please contact any board member.

The Board consists of the four officers — president, vice president, treasurer and secretary — six directors, and the Past President. Outgoing President Jennifer Montoya will serve as Past President for one year.

Besides Montoya, current officers include treasurer Diane Moore,

vice president Ken Stinnett and secretary Jay Wilbur. Current directors include CJ Goins and Mark Pendleton, whose terms expire in 2019. Gill Sorg and Wayne Treers, elected in January 2016, are serving terms through 2018. Terms of Judi Schultz and Aaron Lucas expire in 2017 and are open for nominations to a new three-year term running through 2020.

CURRENT BOARD		Terms
President	Jennifer Montoya	2017-2020
Vice President	Ken Stinnett	2017-2020
Secretary	Jay Wilbur	2017-2020
Treasurer	Diane Moore	2017-2020
DIRECTORS		
	CJ Goin	2017-2019
	Mark Pendleton	2017-2019
	Gil Sorg	2016-2018
	Wayne Treers	2016-2018
	Aaron Lucas	2016-2017
	Judi Schultz	2015-2017



## 2018 Calendars

### Now on Sale

Some of the best Mesilla Valley bird photography is available in the 2018 MVAS 2018 calendar. Mesilla Valley Audubon Society members submit their most stunning work year-round for newsletters and the annual calendar. Their level of expertise truly has to be seen to be believed. Purchase copies while supplies last at upcoming monthly membership meetings or contact a board member directly.

# Honorable Mention



Rufous Hummingbird in Organ  
Mountain Desert Peaks National  
Monument by Nagamany Nirmala-  
khanan.

## Schedule of Guided Bird Walks for Beginners

Beginner bird walks continue in November, December and January at Tellbrook Park on the third Wednesdays of the month, skipping December.. Guides will be a member of the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society. Meet at 7:45 a.m. at the entrance to Tellbrook Park, 4290 E. Winchester Rd. This is a residential neighborhood with limited parking. Be courteous and do not block driveways. You do not need prior experience. Although not necessary, a pair of binoculars will improve how well you see birds.

### JOIN AUDUBON NOW!

- National Membership (special for new members only): Join both the National Audubon Society and Mesilla Valley Audubon Society for the introductory rate of \$20 for your first year of membership. This is a \$15 savings. You'll receive both *Audubon Magazine* and *Roadrunner Ramblings*. Make check payable to National Audubon Society.
- Local Chapter Membership: Join, or renew your membership in, Mesilla Valley Audubon Society for \$15 per year. You'll receive *Roadrunner Ramblings* and be eligible for member-only events such as bird identification classes. Make check payable to Mesilla Valley Audubon Society.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Send this form with your check to:

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

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