**Original Conservation page on mvasaudubon.org., from 4/2019-11/10/2019.**

Conservation

The content of this page will include current items of interest to the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society

6/30/2019:  Background Resources for US-IBWC

The US-IBWC issued it's 10 year report that provides background information to help one understand what lead to recommendations for Rio Grande rehabilitation presented at the meetings in Las Cruces this June.  It is 242 pages and very complicated, but is an excellent review of the successes and failures, as well as the controversies, encountered by the US-IBWC for the last 10 years. It is posted on their web site: <https://www.ibwc.gov/Files/Final_Report_TenYear_Imp_RodwAppendices_061719.pdf>

6/13/2019

Public Hearing of the US-International Water and Boundary Commission at Las Cruces City

The [**Rio Grande Aquatic Habitat Restoration Project**](https://7cbf38a1-67e2-4153-97ac-0b3cf0da33fc.filesusr.com/ugd/81262f_953bb9a191f5418aae3c274d83eb7fe9.pdf)(click to download handout from meeting) of the US International Border and Water Commission has progressed to the point where they recommend four sites for construction work to improve the riparian habitat of our river.   At a public hearing they described the two types of intervention planned.  At the Broad Canyon Arroyo and Selden Point Bar sites they intend to recanalize the river flow to increase the backwater area and allow re vegetation of an area currently monopolized by Salt Cedar and other intruding flora.  At the Las Cruces Effluent Site and Downstream of Courchesne Bridge Site (just north of El Paso) they are planning to redirect water entering into the Rio Grande to create a larger area of wetland and ponding that would attract riparian habitat 12 months a year. In addition to comments at their public meeting, they are accepting public input via mail until 7/5/2019--see handout.  The meeting did not address when intervention will begin.

This project represents a step in the right direction for the ecology of the local Rio Grande, which has been impacted so dramatically by urbanization and agriculture during the last 100 years.  Our river is central to life in the Mesilla Valley.  Our job is to tend to its health in any way we can.

6/6/2019

**Government request for Public Input on Rio Grande Canalization Project**

The US International Water and Boundary commission (USIWBC) released its request for public input regarding their plan for river management along the Rio Grande.  A public meeting will be held at the Las Cruces City Hall at 5:00 PM on Wednesday, June 12.  Written input will be accepted from now until July 5, 2019.  For details, see the USIBWC press release:  <https://www.ibwc.gov/Files/Press_Release_060519.pdf>

They are addressing the region of the Rio Grande stretching 105 miles south from Percha Dam, which includes all of Dona Ana County and parts of El Paso County.  They have identified 7 potential sites where their intervention could have a significant environmental impact and hopefully be a benefit to the natural wildlife there.  Restoration actions could include invasive vegetation removal, native vegetation planting, overbank lowering, bank cuts, natural levee breaches, secondary channels, bank destabilization, channel widening, arroyo mouth management, construction of inset floodplains, and use of supplemental water for on-site irrigation.

This could be very important to the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society because of its impact on the bird population along the Rio Grande.  Their project would make a local study of bird abundance before and after their intervention very interesting.

Any of you who are interested in local birding are encouraged to attend the meeting.  A good turnout at the meeting Wednesday June 12 would benefit everybody.

5/15/2019

The National Audubon Society started the **Western Rivers Bird Count**in 2018 and expanded it in 2019 to include two locations on the Rio Grande in Dona Ana County.  It solicits volunteers to sign-up via a web page  and to submit data using their protocol and eBird reporting.  Very straightforward.  Details and sign up page are at this address: <https://www.audubon.org/western-rivers-bird-count>.  It is something that might also be useful for other sections of the Rio Grande in our region.

4/19/2019;

[**Mesilla Valley Audubon Society proposal for conservation study on Rio Grande in Dona Ana County.**](https://7cbf38a1-67e2-4153-97ac-0b3cf0da33fc.filesusr.com/ugd/81262f_330d6ca71c5c494db3cf3a74d272607b.pdf)  (click underline to open link)