Audubon Adventures, an environmental education program targeting third- to fifth-grade students, was well-received by teachers and students again this past school year.

Thanks to donations from members, friends and Birdathon funds we will have eighty-seven classrooms enrolled again next year in Las Cruces, Alamogordo, Truth or Consequences, and Arrey.

Audubon Adventures subjects for the 2008-2009 school term will focus on “Feats of Nature” including “Migration,” “Animal Builders,” “Animal Defenses,” and “Plants.”

Audubon Adventures is inquiry-based and fun for teachers and students alike. Audubon Adventures is aligned to national and state learning standards and helps students form positive attitudes toward the natural world in the local community.

Teachers use Audubon Adventures to enrich their science and language arts lessons.

Individuals who gave Birdathon donations, and other members and friends who have helped keep this excellent program going include the ever-generous Charles Osgood, Lucia Wilcox, Robert Tafanelli, Mary Williams, Charlotte and Carl Martens, Ruth Wiser, Robert (Tito) Meyer, Daison Taylor Glace and Mark Glace, Geri Tillett, Nancy Stotz, Rob and Wendy Davis, Ann Anderson, Mary Lou Wallace, Darrell Mott, Barbara Rodriguez, Grant Brick - Marketing Director, Citizens’ Bank, Helga and Abe Mendoza, and Lorraine Schulte.

That's all for now. I'll see you at the next chapter meeting on July 16 or field trip on July 19, and if you're new to MVAS be sure to come up and say hi. Best wishes. And oh yea, Bring on the rain!
**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.

Pinos Altos Mountains. **July 19.** Possible overnighter. This trip will take us to even higher elevations and cooler climes than our June trip and we’ll visit the following Grant County hot spots: McMillan Campground, Cherry Creek Campground, and the road up to Signal Peak. These areas offer opportunities to observe many of the southwest’s specialty species such as Greater Pewee, Mexican Jay, Painted Redstart, and Red-faced and Olive warblers.

Trip length will be all day to possibly overnight (for some members). We will try to carpool with two types of trip in mind: those who wish to bird for the day (and return by evening); and those who wish to camp at the McMillan or Cherry Creek Campgrounds, or stay at some other local hotel the night before or the night of the trip.

Easy to moderate walking for those in the campground areas; moderate to strenuous for those hiking up the Signal Peak Road (wear appropriate/suitable footwear).

**Note:** this trip includes Point #’s 23 & 24 along the Southwest NM Birding Trail. For logistics, see “Both trips” below.

Sacramento Mountains. **August 23.** Possible overnighter. This trip will bring us up about 4,000’ from Las Cruces into the pines and spruce-fir zone and cooler temperatures. We’ll visit locations like the village of Cloudcroft, the Rio Peñasco Valley, and Bluff Springs, which should yield montane species such as Mountain Chickadee, Evening Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, Western and Mountain bluebirds, Wild Turkey, MacGillivray’s Warbler, and Green-tailed Towhee. And we may get lucky during the day and see something truly special like Magnificent Hummingbird or maybe even a Northern Goshawk.

Trip length will be all day (or possibly overnight for some members). We will try and carpool with two types of trip in mind: those who wish to bird for the day (and return by evening); and those who wish to camp at the Bluff Springs CG or other location, or stay at some other local hotel the night before or the night of the trip.

**Note:** At the time of newsletter publication the Lincoln National Forest was closed to recreation due to extreme fire danger; we may reschedule or cancel the trip if closures are still in place in August.

Both trips depart at 6:00 AM from the Arroyo Plaza parking lot at 2001 E. Lohman Ave (meet near Wild Birds Unlimited). For participants choosing the overnight options, camping supplies, food, US Forest Service permits, fees, etc. are the sole responsibility of the each participant. For both day-trippers and overnighters, bring snacks and/or a lunch, plenty of water, sun protection and be prepared for variable weather conditions and the possibility of monsoon storms. Both trips will include walking and most areas are readily accessible to most people, but because of the elevation (about 7,500’ to over 9,000’) and some possible rough terrain, members should be prepared (wear appropriate/suitable footwear) and use caution and common sense when moving about.

For more information on either field trip, contact David Griffin at 382-2080 or griffinbio@gmail.com.

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## 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):**

**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.

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## Programs

Membership meetings and programs are held each month, 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.

### How Hummingbirds Thrive in the High Andes. **July 16.**

Hummingbirds seem poorly suited for high-altitude environments given their exceptionally small body size, high metabolic rate, and energetically demanding mode of flight. Yet one quarter of the 325 species of hummingbirds occur at elevations 3000 meters or above, where oxygen availability is reduced by 30% relative to sea level. The ancestor of modern hummingbirds occupied the lowland tropics, but numerous lineages independently shifted from lowland to montane habitats during the last 20 million years. This talk explores the evolutionary changes that accompanied the colonization of the high mountains, using data collected on five field expeditions to the Peruvian Andes between 2006 and 2008. Presented by Dr. Chris Witt, University of New Mexico.

### Aplomado Falcon Release Project in New Mexico. **August 20.**

Angel Montoya of the Peregrine Fund will describe efforts to increase the population of this endangered species in New Mexico, through releases of falcons raised in captivity.
**Field Trip Reports**

**Mesilla and Vicinity, May 24.** Sixteen people attended the trip to Mesilla to look for migrants. Although it was a bit late this year for most migrants, we were treated to large numbers of flycatchers and had great looks at singing Summer Tanagers, Bullock’s Orioles and Black-headed Grosbeaks. Other highlights included Great Egret, and an abundance of flycatchers—Olive-sided, Gray, Willow, and Cordilleran flycatchers as well as numerous Western Wood-pewees, which gave us a good chance to compare different individuals and their differing plumages.

In Mesilla Park, Valerie spotted a lone Great Horned Owl, which was perched in a large pecan tree along the canal. A little way down the canal trail I was able to refind a resident female Black-chinned Hummingbird, which was nesting above the canal. Most of the group had good scope views of the tiny nest, which was nearly hidden by the camouflage pattern of the intricate material it was constructed of. On our walk back along one of the small streets, we stopped to look at the giant trees of one residents’ yard, and Valerie once again spotted owls: this time it was two recently fledged Great Horned Owls. A pair of owls has nested in the neighborhood for years and many of the locals usually know where they are, and cherish and keep an eye on “their” owls. Last year the Black-chinned Hummingbird nested within 10 feet of the Great Horned Owl’s nest, and it was a real treat to see these extreme examples of avian diversity at one time!

**Aguirre Springs, June 21.** Fifteen people attended the trip to Aguirre Springs National Recreation Area to try and beat the heat and look for local montane species. Although we didn’t cover a lot of ground and never made it up into the ponderosa pines, we were able to see or hear a couple of montane species such as Hepatic Tanager and Juniper Titmouse. Other highlights included singing Gray Vireos, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-chinned Sparrow, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow.

About half of the group met at WBU and carpooled to the east side of the Organ Mountains, where we met the rest

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(continued on page 4) **Trip Reports**

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**New Mexico Rare Bird Hotline 505-884-3269** or [http://www.nmosbirds.org](http://www.nmosbirds.org)

Rare Bird Alerts for NM and other states: [www.birder.com](http://www.birder.com)
of the participants. We were fortunate that the area was open to the public—because of the recent fire at Dripping Springs, it had been temporarily closed. Every now and again we would catch a faint whiff of the burned area over on the other side of the mountains.

Shortly after we began to hike the Pine Tree Trail we came across a singing Rufous-crowned Sparrow. Wally was able to quickly get the bird centered in his scope, and we all had good looks while we studied the song. White-winged doves came dive-bombing down the slopes on their way to lower elevations, and someone noticed White-throated Swifts foraging high overhead—one or twice a swift would come swooping down the nearby canyon. Around the next bend half of the group found a bright male Hepatic Tanager perched in an oak tree. Eventually we all had great looks, and we saw this male a few more times while we stayed in the shade of a nearby oak.

Over a rise, we discovered a singing Gray Vireo, which we were able to watch from across the canyon. This uncommon species is listed as Endangered by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and is a "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" under their Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico. It is a rare breeder in Doña Ana County and for the last few years there have been 1 to 3 pairs of Gray Vireos on the slopes along the Pine Tree Trail.

Thanks to all who attended and shared the use of their vehicles; we’ll see you next time! A full list of species observed is available, just contact David Griffin at 382-2080 or GriffinBio@gmail.com.