

## CHARTER MEMBERS OF MESILLA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

The following is a partial list of the 35 charter members.

Pierre Hartshorne	Lorraine Hartshorne Schulte	Norman Richardson
Bill Baltosser	Bernard Steinau	Barbara Steinau
Tom Wootten	Eleanor Wootten	Libby Wallace
Sanford Schemnitz	Ralph Raitt	James Beard
Martha Gooden	Stan Sprecher	Dorothea Beard
Cecil Post		

## PAST PRESIDENTS OF MESILLA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Bill Principe	Lorraine Schulte	Norman Richardson
Sanford Schemnitz	Libby Wallace	Eleanor Wootten
Carol Anderson	Walter Herriman	Storm Sermay
Ken Stinnett	Tim Lawton	Ed Mayfield
Walt Whitford	Bill Jacobson	Rob Davis
Gill Sorg		

Some of these members served more than one term.

## CURRENT OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

David Griffin, President	Alan Krueger, Vice-President
Frankie Lerner, Secretary	Guy Powers, Treasurer

Board Members: Walt Whitford, Sue Hill, Valerie Endruweit, Barbara Rodriguez,  
John Douglas, Lorraine Schulte

Committee Chairs: Audubon Adventures – Lorraine Schulte  
Conservation – Bob Tafarielli  
Membership – Guy Powers  
Field trips – David Griffin  
Newsletter Editor – Nancy Stotz  
Publicity – Jackeye Meineke  
Programs – Board at Large

NM Audubon Council delegates – Guy Powers, 1 vacancy

Education - Vacancy

## Summary of history of Mesilla Valley Audubon Society

Received charter in June 1978 with thirty-five charter members.

Each year MVAS has participated in Christmas Bird Counts in the Las Cruces area.

In 1984 started the Audubon Adventures program in Las Cruces Elementary Schools, TorC Elementary Schools, and Alamogordo Elementary Schools.

In 1995 started offering Beginning Bird Classes through the Dona Ana Branch Community College.

In 1996, Tom Wootten and Gordon Ewing were effective in getting a sewage treatment plant and wetlands area established at Holloman Air Force Base. Eleanor Wootten was lead coordinator developing the arrangement with BLM for MVAS to adopt Holloman Lakes as a chapter conservation project.

Also in 1996 through the efforts of Tom Wootten, Cathie Sandell, Gordon Ewing, Walt Whitford, and David Henderson, director of Audubon's State Office, MVAS signed an agreement for a 40-acre cattle exclosure at Palomas Marsh with BLM and the Bureau of Reclamation. The agreement states that in exchange for their fencing 40 acres of these wetlands, Audubon would agree to monitoring the area and keeping a record of bird species. The fence was built in 1997.. In 3 years 106 species were provided to BLM. This area became known as Palomas Marsh.

Palomas Marsh, Caballo State Park and Percha Dam State Park have been recognized as Important Bird Areas by Audubon New Mexico.

During this same year a student at New Mexico State University, Roger Skaggs, was supported by MVAS , in his research on Spotted Owls in the Sacramento Mountains.

In 1998 the Lorraine Schulte Excellence in Teaching Award was initiated. This award has been given to nine teachers who were recognized for developing effective ways to teach students about the environment.

Recipients of the Lorraine Schulte Excellence in Teaching award and their schools are as follows:

Kristi Edwards Bitch	Gadsden Middle School
Michelle Paz	Alma d'arte Charter High School, Las Cruces
Sara Sue Torres	Sierra Middle School, Las Cruces
Cherrie Love	Valley View Elementary, Las Cruces
Marilyn Bush	Sierra Elementary School – Truth or Consequences
Patsy Jones	Las Cruces High School
Barbara Molemore	Loma Heights Elementary, Las Cruces
Bill Curtis	Vista Middle School, Las Cruces
Ria de Kruf	Ocate High School, Las Cruces

In 2000 MVAS initiated the development of New Mexico supplements to be added to the Audubon Adventures kits – Burrowing Owls, Salamanders and Hummingbirds.

In 2001 MVAS member Guy Powers started handling the Junior Duck Stamp Contest Program in this area.

Each year MVAS has participated in Birdathon. The goal for Birdathon is to raise funds for the Audubon Adventures program.

During January 2001 through May 2003, MVAS members did monthly surveys of bird species at Leasburg State Park. Using long-term data from local members, MVAS compiled and formatted a bird list for Percha and Caballo State Parks.

### **OTERO MESA GRASSLANDS**

The Otero Mesa Grasslands, located mostly in Otero county, is the largest and wildest intact Chihuahuan desert grassland. Although locals were aware of the significance of this area, the difficult access made it relatively unknown until the late 1990's when BLM proposed opening the area to oil and gas drilling. Several conservation groups including MVAS began to look at the area for possible protective designation.

In 2002 the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance identified 420,000 acres that qualified for wilderness protection. MVAS was among several groups and the governor's office that have been very active to protect the grasslands. In 2005, Governor Bill Richardson proposed, and MVAS endorsed a National Conservation Area of about 400,000 acres with no drill provisions. There have been many challenges to this protection but so far only a couple of test wells have been drilled. MVAS will continue to fight for as much protection of the Otero Mesa Grasslands as possible and hopefully in the not too distant future we will see that habitat is protected.

### **DONA ANA COUNTY CITIZENS' WILDERNESS PROPOSAL**

In early 2006 Senator Pete Domenici proposed a wilderness bill for Dona Ana County, which included 220,000 acres of wilderness but also 65,000 acres of BLM land, designated for disposal to developers. MVAS worked with others in the community to propose a Citizens' Wilderness Proposal based on lands identified by the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. This proposal included 330,000 acres of Wilderness, more than 100,000 acres of National Conservation Areas and no land disposal. MVAS was represented at numerous meetings, which were held by public officials and assisted in getting city and county governments to endorse the Citizens' Proposal. Hopefully in 2009 these efforts will result in a good Wilderness Bill for Dona Ana County.

MVAS has been involved in the development of Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. Members have kept track of bird sightings in this area since MVAS was formed in 1978. Through the efforts of MVAS members, valuable information has been passed on to the park officials for the development of the park. MVAS plans to continue being involved in the future with this new State park.

In 2007 MVAS established the Richard Bischoff scholarship for NMSU students. The scholarship was awarded to Martin Moses in 2007, and to Kathy Whitmore in 2008.

MESILLA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, IS A CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION 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.