

## **Self-guided birding trips in the Las Cruces Area** – thanks to David Griffin and Mesilla Valley Audubon Society

When you open the maps, be sure to zoom in and out for better looks at things, click on the 'push pins' and other features - for many push pins there is text with descriptions, comments, suggestions.

1. [\*\*Day Trips from the Mesilla Valley\*\*](#). This includes some of the better places to bird and visit while you're in the Mesilla Valley/Las Cruces area. Some of these areas have their own information/maps below.
2. [\*\*Holloman Lakes Important Bird Area\*\*](#). About 1 hour drive from Las Cruces. Good waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, passerines. At the time of the NMOS meeting there should be breeding/paired Snowy plovers on Lake Stinky (easily viewable).
3. [\*\*West Dona Ana County Grasslands\*\*](#). This is a very nice mixed grama/sporobolus grassland with specialty wintering species (Grasshopper Sparrow, Sprague's Pipit, longspurs), plus other grassland species and raptors. Takes maybe 20-30 minutes drive from Las Cruces, easy walking, good scenery, quiet.
4. [\*\*Dams, Ditches, and Driveways: May Migrants in Mesilla\*\*](#). This is one of the standard May field trips for MVAS, but is good at any time of year. Each of these places offer great migrant opportunities and people should keep their eyes peeled for interesting raptors (Gray Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Black hawk have all been seen at this time of year) and passerines like flycatchers, vireos, and warblers (e.g. Buff-breasted Flycatcher in 2005, Red-eyed Vireo in 2008).
5. [\*\*Leasburg Dam State Park\*\*](#). Good migration season place along the Rio Grande about 30 minutes north of Las Cruces. Bell's Vireo, Lucy's Warbler, orioles, flycatchers, plus waterfowl, raptors, hummingbirds and migrant warblers (e.g., Painted Redstart, Red-faced Warbler). Entrance fee is \$3-5 per vehicle.
6. [\*\*Swan Pond, Leasburg Dam, and Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park\*\*](#) (\$5/vehicle fee). This trip was developed for the El Paso Audubon Chapter...lots of information (text). Note that Swan Pond is nearly all filled with cattail and may not be "so good", but it may be good for secretive marshbirds (rails, herons, bitterns).
7. [\*\*Las Cruces Grassland Birding Areas\*\*](#). Some of these sites are included in the above maps, but this one also has some the grasslands off of Jornada Rd that are always worth checking out.