

EXHIBIT 9

Rainy Christmas bird count keeps bluebirds in hiding but brings out ducks

By KEITH ROGERS

LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Dec. 25, 2010 | 12:00 a.m.

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Gray, overcast skies on the leading edge of four days of persistent rain showers made perfect weather for the annual Christmas Bird Count, if you happen to be a duck.

And there were plenty of ducks to be found at Tule Springs and the Corn Creek count area that included ponds at the Las Vegas Paiute Golf Club Resort.

Take, for example, 157 ring-necked ducks or the 130 American wigeon that were sighted along with numerous mallards, redheads, mergansers, ruddy ducks, canvasbacks, buffleheads and a few shovelers, scaup and teal.

One thing was certain during the Dec. 18 count by Red Rock Audubon Society observers: It wasn't a bluebird day by any means.

Nary a bluebird was seen, not the mountain bluebird, which is Nevada's state bird, nor its cousin, the Western bluebird, a musical blue-throated whistler whose chestnut-colored shoulders distinguish it from the sky-blue-colored mountain bluebird.

Unlike the 2000 count, when 34 mountain bluebirds were tallied at survey locations in Southern Nevada, there probably wasn't enough cold weather and snow to drive them down to lower elevations in search of insects in open, pasture areas.

Weather does play a role in where and when certain bird species will be seen, said environmentalist John Hiatt. He led Red Rock Audubon's Corn Creek count in and around the Desert National Wildlife Range, 30 miles north of Las Vegas.

"Overall the weather was overcast, windy and kept bird numbers down," Hiatt said. The count is a snapshot "of what you see when you're there."

This year's Corn Creek-Tule Springs count turned up 77 species for total of 4,264 birds.

Last year's count had many of the same species, yet there were fewer species (58) and fewer birds, too, (1,185).

Absent from this year's count was a pair of greater white-fronted geese, a Ross goose, a blue-winged teal, three common goldeneye, six cactus wrens, one spotted towhee, a dark-eyed slate-colored junco and 19 Western bluebirds.

But added to this year's list were a double-crested cormorant, a black-crowned night-heron, a great egret, 109 Canada geese, a snow goose, a cinnamon teal, 19 canvasbacks, a pair of sharp-shinned hawks, 11 red-tailed hawks and 119 Gambel's quail.

A killdeer, a ring-billed gull, seven burrowing owls, four Anna's hummingbirds, two ladder-backed woodpeckers, a black phoebe, some kingbirds and an assortment of blackbirds, cowbirds, warblers, sparrows and nine American goldfinches were noted this year but not last year.

One bird that always seems to show up at Corn Creek is a great horned owl. This year, he was well camouflaged, sitting in the fork of a Russian olive tree. Only when he blinked his eyes or slowly turned his head as observers walked by could he be distinguished from the bark of the tree's trunk.

The Corn Creek count dates back to 1942, but counts weren't conducted during a few years in the 1940s and 1950s, Hiatt said.

He and his wife, Hermi, have racked up more than three decades on the local Christmas Bird Count scene.

During the winter season, counts are conducted in 15-mile-diameter circles around Henderson, at Moapa Valley, 45 miles northeast of Las Vegas, and at Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, 80 miles northwest. For some of the locations, this marked the 42nd year for National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count in Southern Nevada.

John Hiatt has noticed an overall decline in raptor numbers that he attributed to 10 years of drought that reduced their prey, rodents.

"Usually there'd be a half dozen red-tailed hawks here, but now there's none," he said, standing on a trail along the marshy, brushy fringe of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Corn Creek station.

At the Paiute golf course, Jack Ruckdeschel observed a loggerhead shrike perched in a Joshua tree and ready to pounce on a little feathered friend.

"They sit there and eat small birds," Ruckdeschel said. "He's like a miniature hawk. He holds them down and gnaws at their bellies. They don't like drumsticks."

Contact reporter Keith Rogers at krogers@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0308.

COMPLETE BIRD COUNT

The annual Christmas Bird Count for Corn Creek at Desert National Wildlife Refuge and nearby locations turned up 4,264 birds Dec. 18 representing 77 species. The list was compiled by Hermi Hiatt of the Red Rock Audubon Society:

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Double-crested cormorant 1

Great-blue heron 3

Black-crowned night-heron 1

Great egret 1

Canada goose 109

Snow goose 1

Green-winged teal 2

Mallard 210

Cinnamon teal 1

Northern shoveler 6

American wigeon 130

Redhead 70

Ring-necked duck 157

Lesser scaup 3

Canvasback 19

Bufflehead 19

Hooded merganser 2

Common merganser 27

Ruddy duck 77

Northern harrier 6

Sharp-shinned hawk 2

Red-tailed hawk 11

American kestrel 2

Prairie falcon 1

Falcon species 2

Gambel's quail 119

American coot 887

Killdeer 1

Ring-billed gull 1

Rock pigeon 430

Mourning dove 149

Eurasian collared dove 97

Greater roadrunner 3

Great horned owl 2

Burrowing owl 7

Anna's hummingbird 4

Red-naped sapsucker 5

Ladder-backed woodpecker 2

Northern flicker 10

Black phoebe 1

Say's phoebe 12

Western kingbird 3

Loggerhead shrike 3

Common raven 9

Horned lark 72

Red-breasted nuthatch 1

Rock wren 1

Marsh wren 3

Ruby-crowned kinglet 14

Townsend's solitaire 1

American robin 19

Northern mockingbird 21

Crissal thrasher 1

LeConte's thrasher 2

European starling 663

American pipit 5

Phainopepla 24

Yellow-rumped warbler 13

Sage sparrow 12

Savannah sparrow 1

Song sparrow 3

Lincoln's sparrow 1

White-crowned sparrow 253

Harris's sparrow 1

Dark-eyed Oregon junco 11

Red-winged blackbird 24

Western meadowlark 63

Brewer's blackbird 102

Great-tailed grackle 130

Brown-headed cowbird 4

Cassin's finch 9

House finch 89

Lesser goldfinch 38

American goldfinch 9

House sparrow 53

Find this article at:

<http://www.lvrj.com/news/rainy-christmas-bird-count-keeps-bluebirds-in-hiding-but-brings-out-ducks-112448329.html>

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Lesser scaup 3
Canvasback 19
Bufflehead 19
Hooded merganser 2
Common merganser 27
Ruddy duck 77
Northern harrier 6

Sharp-shinned hawk 2
Red-tailed hawk 11
American kestrel 2
Prairie falcon 1
Falcon species 2
Gambel's quail 119
American coot 887
Killdeer 1
Ring-billed gull 1
Rock pigeon 430
Mourning dove 149
Eurasian collared dove 97
Greater roadrunner 3
Great horned owl 2
Burrowing owl 7
Anna's hummingbird 4
Red-naped sapsucker 5
Ladder-backed woodpecker 2
Northern flicker 10
Black phoebe 1
Say's phoebe 12
Western kingbird 3
Loggerhead shrike 3
Common raven 9
Horned lark 72
Verdin 9
Red-breasted nuthatch 1
Rock wren 1
Marsh wren 3
Ruby-crowned kinglet 14
Townsend's solitaire 1
American robin 19
Northern mockingbird 21
Crissal thrasher 1
LeConte's thrasher 2
European starling 663
American pipit 5
Phainopepla 24
Yellow-rumped warbler 13
Sage sparrow 12
Savannah sparrow 1
Song sparrow 3

- Lincoln's sparrow 1
- White-crowned sparrow 253
- Harris's sparrow 1
- Dark-eyed Oregon junco 11
- Red-winged blackbird 24
- Western meadowlark 63
- Brewer's blackbird 102
- Great-tailed grackle 130
- Brown-headed cowbird 4
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EXHIBIT 11

Hospital singer strikes chord with patients feeling down

By PAUL HARASIM

LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Dec. 25, 2010 | 12:00 a.m.

When her medical imaging procedure was through Thursday at University Medical Center, Antoinette Moore looked sad. Her shoulders slumped, her eyelids drooped, she inhaled and exhaled deeply.

No, the woman with the sickle cell anemia blood disorder wasn't worried about what the scans might show.

"They'll show what they show," she said.

What really ailed the 48-year-old Moore couldn't be found through a sophisticated X-ray.

"This is my first Christmas by myself," she said. "I don't have any family in town this year. It's hard."

And then, as Moore was wheeled back to her room, her demeanor changed.

A smile replaced her frown. She sat up straight. Her eyes opened wide. No longer did she appear to want to escape the day through sleep.

Eleanor "Paris" Papp, the woman pushing her wheelchair, was singing "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," the song introduced by Judy Garland in the 1944 MGM musical "Meet Me in St. Louis."

And then Papp effortlessly segued into Brenda Lee's "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," her voice a strong and pure instrument that has people who didn't see her wondering where the sound is being piped in from.

The patients and nurses who do see her began to sing the song, too.

Elevator music takes on a whole new meaning when Papp is around.

"Oh, that was wonderful," Moore said when she returned to her room on the fourth floor. "That was so nice. It took my mind off my troubles for awhile. I wish they could do that for everybody here. It makes you feel warm. She can really sing."

At UMC, the 54-year-old Papp has become known as the "Singing Transporter," the woman who takes patients back and throughout the hospital with a song.

"Any opportunity I get to sing, I just go for it," she said as she waved goodbye to Moore.

Papp left Buffalo, N.Y., in 1996 with a friend and all of her possessions in a 5 by 7 foot trailer towed behind their car.

She also had a dream.

"I dreamed I get a big singing career going in Las Vegas," she said. "But the audiences I thought I'd find at the nightspots didn't materialize."

It hasn't stopped her from winning fans at UMC and elsewhere in Las Vegas.

After then University of Nevada Las Vegas boxing coach Frank Slaughter heard Papp sing at a hospital employee function, he asked her if she would sing "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the Palms when UNLV held a boxing tournament there.

That performance of a couple of years ago still sticks in Slaughter's mind.

"She was powerful, very traditional," he said. "The only reason she hasn't made it is she doesn't come across as sexy. That's what you have to be today to get a chance. But she's like Susan Boyle, the English singer who made it last year after people really listened to her" on the reality TV program "Britain's Got Talent."

The head chaplain at UMC, Shelley Anderson, remembers how a family asked if Papp would sing at a family wedding at UMC.

The father of the groom was so ill, the only way he could attend his son's wedding if it was held at the hospital.

"The son wanted him at the wedding, so we had it at UMC," Anderson recalled.

Papp sang Shania Twain's "From this Moment On."

"It was so incredibly beautiful," Anderson said. "The family was so moved by it."

Cindy Roehr, UMC's associate administrator of professional services, said patients often call the hospital after they have been discharged to thank the hospital for having Papp on staff.

"Whole families have called to say how much their days have been brightened by her," she said. "We've had some really good feedback."

Papp, who is of European and Chippewa Indian descent, said her birth certificate lists her name as Eleanor Gabriella Papp, but she likes to go by "Paris."

"My mother wanted to include Paris after Gabriella in my name, but at the last minute she decided that was too long," she said. "I use the name now because it sounds more like an entertainer."

Papp said she can often sense when a patient needs a song. "I can just tell how nervous they are," she said.

If she's not sure that a patient needs a song, she'll ask if they want one.

"Most of them do," she said.

When they find out she knows at least a hundred songs from different repertoires, she'll sing everything from Barbra Streisand to Patsy Cline.

"People who love country just love me to do Patsy's 'Crazy,' " she said.

Papp's immediate supervisor, Steve Kirsch, is always amazed at Papp's effect on patients.

"She just lifts their spirits," he said.

Making people happy through her singing is a dream come true for Papp.

"It really lifts my spirits," she said.

Contact reporter Paul Harasim at pharasim@reviewjournal.com or 702-387-2908.

Find this article at:

<http://www.lvrj.com/news/hospital-singer-strikes-chord-with-patients-feeling-down-112448319.html>

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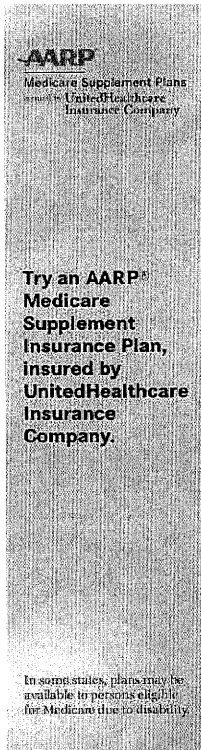
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