



# TALE WATERS

A Monthly Publication of

Mesilla Valley Flyfishers, Inc.

P.O. Box 2222

Las Cruces, NM 88004-2222

www.MVFF.org

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Tale Waters Edited by Jim Hulsey — [newsletter@mvff.org](mailto:newsletter@mvff.org)

## Membership Meeting

There will be no MVFF general membership meeting in August. Many members will be fishing and the rest of them should be. The next meeting will be in September. See you then.

## Executive Board Meeting

Monday, 19 August

The MVFF Executive Board will meet on Monday 19 August at 7:00pm in the New Mexico Game and Fish conference room. All members are welcome to attend.

## Liars and Tyers

Liars and Tyers will not meet in August. The next meeting will be in September. See you then.

## Remember

The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual F3T film tour is coming in the fall on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October. Be sure and mark your calendar.

## President's Corner

David Carmichael



### Hidden Waters Notebook: Whitewater Creek

June and July are usually the warmest months in the Mesilla Valley, and it's not hard to convince me to head for the mountains in search of a respite from the heat.

Moreover, I am fortunate to have a wife who considers fly fishing a perfectly reasonable way to celebrate our anniversary. I thought the Inn of the Mountain Gods would make a nice home base for a couple of days of fishing and fine dining, but it was completely booked. So, we opted instead to visit Whitewater Creek in the Gila National Forest near Glenwood, New Mexico. There aren't many lodging choices in Glenwood, but we were very happy with our cabin at Los Olmos Lodge. They have 14 stone cabins, a pool, a pavilion with gas grills, and a small kitchen that will accommodate even large groups. We were fortunate in having the place nearly to ourselves; a Girl Scout troop had checked out a few days earlier, so it was quiet and restful.



Early morning visitors at Los Olmos Lodge in Glenwood, NM

When you visit Glenwood, as you probably will if you want to fish for Gila trout, be sure to bring a cooler with food for at least some of your meals. If you don't, you'll be dependent on the Glenwood general

store across the road from Los Olmos, where the options involve hot dogs, chips, snack bars and frozen burritos. There is a pizza restaurant in town, but it was closed on Wednesday. The “breakfast place” was closed on Thursday. Both are supposed to be good, but we can’t confirm it.

Miriam and I had a good day of fishing on Whitewater Creek, though access to the fish was a bit challenging. There were two other anglers working the section below the Catwalk structure, so we started fishing in the vicinity of the upper bridge and worked our way upstream from there. We had to climb and wade around lots of enormous boulders, seeking out the deeper and more protected plunge pools where the trout were concentrated. The air temperature was in the mid-90’s for much of the day, but water temperatures were about 66–68 degrees, so wading wet felt pretty good. The water was very clear and somewhat low, about 6–8 inches below the high-water marks on the rocks, so moving slowly and keeping a



*Crystal clear plunge pool between massive, pink rhyolite boulders in Whitewater Creek*

low profile was necessary. Most of the fish were concentrated in the deepest and shadiest pools, requiring accurate and creative casts, including bend casts,

bow-and-arrow casts, and even bouncing the flies off the sides of the boulders to get them into the appropriate currents. Practicing short, accurate casts to small targets would be helpful before venturing out onto such small waters and confined casting positions.



*Miriam landing a Gila trout in Whitewater Creek*

The numbers and average size of the fish we saw were smaller than the last time we were here. Clearly, anglers have harvested most of the larger fish that were stocked last January; we saw only two of the large brood stock fish this trip. Nevertheless, we each caught and released more than a dozen Gila trout of various sizes. Most were in the 7 to 8-inch range, and we each caught a few between 8 and 12 inches. The largest was a 16-inch trout that was tucked in a log jam underneath a large boulder. The only way I could fish that lie was to drift a streamer downstream under a strike indicator so I could see the take. The trail is pretty well eradicated a short distance above the upper bridge, but we bush-whacked and waded upstream for another half mile or so, dapping flies into small plunge pools that contained many trout. It was a bit challenging, and I’m glad we had our 7 ft. backpacking rods for casting in such close quarters. I don’t know how far upstream the small stockers were carried in January, but it would seem that they are spreading out and making their way upstream during periods of higher flows. Despite heavy visitation in the Catwalk area, I’m cautiously optimistic that the reestablishment of Gila trout seems to be taking hold. That prospect made for a very rewarding day; it is a real treat to have access to such a rare and special species of trout so close to home.



We met the other two anglers on the water just before lunchtime and learned who they are: public lands proponent Brett Myrick, and fishing writer Jonathan Wright. We chatted with them for a while about the effort to have the Gila River watershed designated as a Wild and Scenic River, and about the spot they fished the day before on lower Mineral Creek. Brett is a former Navy SEAL and public lands activist who has lobbied on behalf of preserving public lands throughout the state. If anyone is interested in supporting his efforts to prevent the proposed diversions on the Gila and San Francisco Rivers, you may do so at his GoFundMe site, [Publiclands/Wilderness/WildRivers](https://www.gofundme.com/publiclands/wilderness/wildrivers). Jonathan is working on an article about Gila trout; I don't know when or where Jonathan's piece will appear, but he writes for *Fly Fisherman*, *Angling Trade*, and a variety of other publications. If you are interested in seeing some of his work, check out his web page at [www.jonathanleewright.com](http://www.jonathanleewright.com).

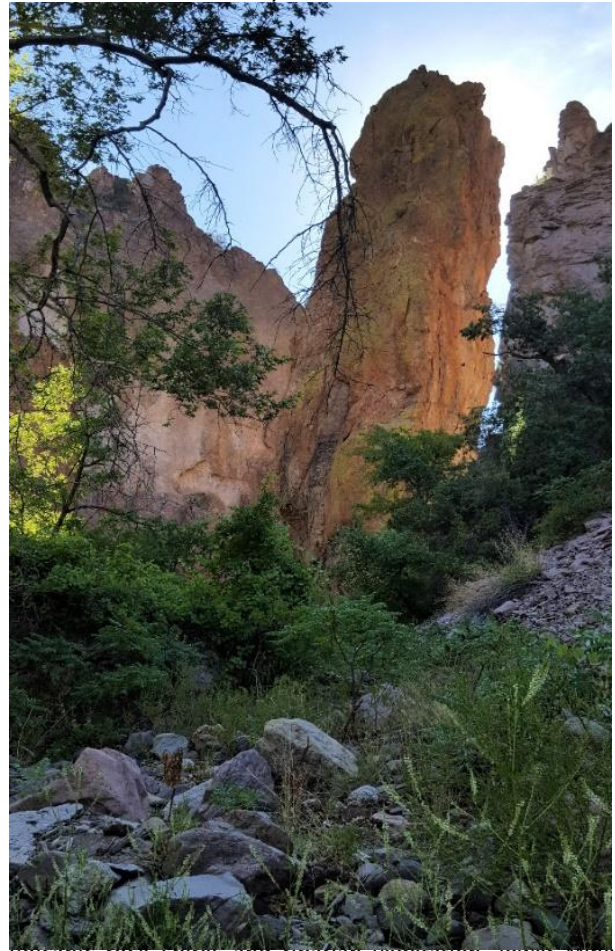
#### Hidden Waters Notebook: Mineral Creek

The next day we decided to check out the lower section of Mineral Creek that Brett and Jonathan suggested we visit. We ended up doing more hiking than fishing, but we're glad we did, because the Mineral Creek drainage through Cooney Canyon is gorgeous. The creek cuts through a stunning array of volcanic spires, multicolored ash deposits and slot canyons; all embellished by the emerald hues and wildflowers of the riparian vegetation along its route.

Even if we had not seen a single fish, or sampled the fresh blackberries along the trail, or eaten lunch in the shade of alder trees along the bank of the creek, it would have been worth the trip. As luck would have it, we did catch a few Gila trout and we learned some interesting things in the process.

We drove northeast from Alma on FR 701 about 5 miles to the trailhead for Trail 201. From there we hiked about 1 ½ miles upstream until we entered a slot canyon with numerous spires formed of eroded volcanic ash. It was among these gigantic towers that we found a series of

plunge pools at the base of several small waterfalls. We fished for only about an hour or so,



*volcanic rock spires and riparian vegetation, lower Mineral Creek drainage*

but we caught seven Gila trout, ranging in size from 8–12 inches. Miriam was successful using a caddis pupa dropper below a foam hopper, and all my fish were caught on a black mini-leech (Landon Mayer's pattern). All the fish we caught were feeding aggressively and recovered immediately upon release,

so I was surprised when I measured water temperatures of 70–74 degrees. Temperatures over 68 degrees are generally considered stressful for brookies, rainbows and browns, but none of the Gila trout showed signs of stress, so I looked up some data on Gila trout after we got home. According to the 2016



*Nine-inch Gila trout in Mineral Creek, showing intact adipose fin of a wild trout. – (Photo by Miriam Carmichael)*

Gila Trout status report prepared by NMGF and its Arizona counterpart, Gila trout require temperatures below 77 degrees for successful spawning, though other research suggests that Gila trout may stop feeding when water temperatures reach 72 degrees. In future visits to Mineral Creek, it will be prudent to go at cooler times of the year, or hike in to the higher reaches of the creek where water is deeper and cooler.

All the trout we caught in Mineral Creek had intact adipose fins, in contrast to our experience at White-water, where they all had clipped fins. Jonathan reported the same observation, and we considered what this might mean in terms of growth rates and evidence for successful reproduction in the wild. We wondered whether the fish in the initial Mineral Creek stocking had been clipped or not, so I contacted Craig Springer of the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Ryder Paggen, Gila Trout biologist with NMGF to find out. According to Craig, the original stocking of Mineral Creek was in 2016, and those fish had intact adipose fins. (See MVFF January, 2017, newsletter for Craig's story about that stocking.) Additional fish stocked in 2017 and 2018 were all adipose clipped. So, it would seem that the larger fish (12 inches or larger) that we caught with intact adipose fins may have been three-year-old fish from the initial stocking, while the smaller ones (in the 7 to 10-inch range) with intact fins are the result of successful reproduction in the wild. This finding is quite encouraging to everyone who's been working so hard to reestablish wild Gila trout.

We observed further evidence of successful reproduction in the form of Gila trout fry that were active and visible in a couple of deep pools at the lower end of the slot canyon. In one case, we watched for several minutes as dozens of small, 2-3 inch fish, tried repeatedly to jump up and over a 2½ ft waterfall. The accompanying photo shows at least five fish in mid-air. Some of them had clear parr marks, and some looked more silvery, but Ryder Paggen assured me that they are indeed Gila trout fry. Young Gila trout often jump to try to get upstream, and they will be successful when rains raise the water level enough to diminish the height of the jump to the next pool. He reports that they have documented Gilas moving more than 3 miles in search of habitat, and that a 5½ ft. drop is necessary to impede their movement up-

stream. Mineral Creek was completely fishless after the fire, and no other native fish have been repatriated to the creek. None are likely to have made their



*Gila Trout fry attempting to jump a 2 ½ ft waterfall, Mineral Creek*

way upstream from the San Francisco River either. In other words, the small fish are young Gilas, not non-trout species. Having the opportunity to see and photograph the young of the year of our special trout species was a real treat.

I hope you'll be able to get out and experience these, or others of our Hidden Waters. New Mexico's small streams, the fauna they support, and the settings in which they occur are enchanting. [↑](#)

## Lady Anglers Update

Mary Hoffman



The Lady Anglers is a group of women MVFF members who love to fly fish and have fun doing it. Information on our fishing trips is made available to women on our Lady Anglers e-mail list and through announcements in the MVFF newsletter and at club meetings. Beginners are welcome and the only requirement for joining us is MVFF membership. To join our e-mail list, or for more information, contact Mary Hoffman at (505) 710-5229 or [westerngirlnm@gmail.com](mailto:westerngirlnm@gmail.com).

**Local Fishing Note:** Nothing new to report except the water levels are dropping and fishing in northern New



Mexico and southern Colorado is excellent in some places. I hope you are getting outside to fish and enjoy the scenery in this very green year. [↑](#)

## Fly Fishing Outreach

Ron Bellerose  
Coordinator



Outreach has been suspended for the summer and has no activities to report.

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For more information about the MVFF Fly Fishing Outreach Program contact Ron Bellerose (575-680-5516), [flyfishnh@hotmail.com](mailto:flyfishnh@hotmail.com), also if you wish to volunteer to help out. [↑](#)

## Gila River: A Wild and Scenic Treasure

*By Jeff Arterburn, President, Gila/Rio Grande Chapter (780) of Trout Unlimited and David Carmichael, President, Mesilla Valley Flyfishers, Inc.*

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**Editors Note:** *This Op-Ed article recently appeared on the editorial page of the Las Cruces Sun-News.*  
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We represent the more than 400 fly anglers and trout conservationists who live and recreate in southern New Mexico, and we enthusiastically support the effort to have the Gila River and its tributaries designated as a Wild and Scenic River. We appreciate that our region is home to the Nation's first designated wilderness, named for the Gila River, which flows unhindered from the heights of the Mogollon Mountains, passing through stunning desert canyons on its way to the Pacific Ocean. The waters of the Gila River, San Francisco River, and their main tributaries on public lands support trout and other native fish populations, and a diverse range of plants and animals that live in the complex ecological zones characteristic of the region. These natural resources support a wide variety of recreational activities that attract locals and visitors from across the country, including fishing, birding, hiking and camping. Outdoor recreation and wilderness experiences create tremendous economic value for the communities in this region, value that will be enhanced by the Wild and Scenic designation.

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers system was created by Congress in 1968 to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, geological, fish and wildlife, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. Wild and Scenic Rivers are those that are free of impoundments, with watersheds that are unpolluted and largely primitive. The Gila River meets all of the criteria for Wild and Scenic designation, presenting outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition. It courses through immense vistas, dramatic chasms and canyons, supporting diverse plant and animal communities. These characteristics have tremendous scientific importance, and the river is a key connection to the historical, cultural and spiritual values of many communities in this region.

The Gila river watershed is the only place to find to one very special and unique native species: the Gila trout. State and Federal agencies working with conservation and angling communities have made recent progress towards recovering Gila trout populations, upgrading the species from endangered to threatened status with special regulations that allow recreational fishing. Other unique native fish including the endangered loach minnow and spike dace also live in these streams, as well as other species with value for recreational fishing that rely on the natural condition of a free-flowing river. Gila trout need cold, free-flowing streams, and they are vulnerable to large-scale forest fire, drought, and increasing water temperatures. The presence of dams or diversions would accentuate the harm from each of these, and must be prevented.

Earlier this year, American Rivers named the Gila River as America's #1 most endangered river for 2019, largely because of the threat of proposed water diversions. Achieving official designation as a Wild & Scenic River would help protect the Gila River watershed from possible future dams and diversions, while ensuring that we and our children's children will have full access to enjoy and experience the river in its present wild state. We urge our neighbors to add their voices to call our congressional representatives in support of the effort make official the Wild and Scenic designation that we know the Gila River and its tributaries deserve.

## Gila/Rio Grande Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Gila/Rio Grande Chapter (780) of Trout Unlimited

Jeff Arterburn, President



We have some beautiful new fund-raising for trout restoration and conservation T-shirts with the GRG-TU logo in colors: green-on-ivory, and peanut-butter-on-black (see photos). These are beautiful, well-made shirts for a great cause at only \$20 each. Please include \$5 for shipping if you want the shirt(s) mailed. These are great stocking stuffers and presents for the holidays! Contact Jeff Arterburn for more details and to sign up as a volunteer: [jeffgilatu@aol.com](mailto:jeffgilatu@aol.com).



Green logo on ivory



Peanut butter logo on black



### Club Outings Planned


The board is now discussing possible future outings and would welcome suggestions from members. Where do you want to go? Let them know. If you have comments or suggestions for additional trips pass them to any of the Board members.

There are no trips currently being planned.

After many years of organizing trips, Chuck Mueller is stepping aside, and we really need someone else to step up and take on this project. Chuck is willing to help someone get started and up to speed, but the Board members can only do so much; we need for other members to help out with planning and leading of some of the activities too. Please think about it and let David or Chuck know if you can help out.



### MVFF Board Meeting Minutes

The board did not meet in July. The next Board meeting will be in August. 

### Equipment Donation

Dr. Douglas Brown, an ex-MVFF member has donated his fly fishing equipment to the Club for use in our Outreach Program; or however else we choose. Douglas was a charter member of MVFF, but has not fished for some time. He took fly tying lessons from Norm Mabie in the early days when Norm was Manager of the sporting goods section at the old Gibson's store. Some of you old timers may remember those days.

The donated material includes several rods and reels, books, a brand new fishing vest, waders, fly tying equipment and materials, and other assorted items.

Thanks Douglas, we appreciate the gift and will try to put them to good use. 

### For Sale

Mike Engelman is selling the rod carrier shown below. He is asking \$300. If interested contact Mike at [engelman2@comcast.net](mailto:engelman2@comcast.net).



**Quick Look Contact Information**

2019 Officers of the Club	
<b>Officers</b>	
• <b>President:</b>	David Carmichael (915) 204-7558
• <b>V-Pres.:</b>	Tom Johnson (417) 684-7075
• <b>Secretary:</b>	Jeff Arterburn (612) 720-3456
• <b>Treasurer:</b>	Chuck Mueller (575) 647-4045
<b>Board Members</b>	
• <b>Position 1:</b>	David Carmichael (915) 204-7558
• <b>Position 2:</b>	Tom Johnson (417) 684-7075
• <b>Position 3:</b>	Jeff Arterburn (575) 524-0773
• <b>Position 4:</b>	Jim Hulsey (575) 524-1880
• <b>Position 5:</b>	Robert Ardovino (575) 589-0653
• <b>Position 6:</b>	Chuck Mueller (575) 647-4045
• <b>Position 7:</b>	Bob Silver (575) 522-6325
• <b>Position 8:</b>	Jim Sorenson (575) 525-1050
• <b>Position 9:</b>	Dillen Martinez (505) 401-3640
<b>Newsletter &amp; Web Page Editor</b>	
• Jim Hulsey (575) 524-1880	<a href="mailto:newsletter@mvff.org">newsletter@mvff.org</a>
<b>Membership Committee Chairman</b>	
• Bob Silver (575) 522-6325	<a href="mailto:membership@mvff.org">membership@mvff.org</a>
<b>NMSU AF Student Representative</b>	
• Dillen Martinez (505) 401-3640	

**Mabie Legacy Scholarship Fund**

The Mabie Legacy Scholarship Fund is an endowed fund at New Mexico State University which is funded by MVFF member donations. Earnings from the fund are used to provide scholarships for students at NMSU majoring in fisheries or related fields.

The scholarship recipient is selected each April by the faculty members of the NMSU Department of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology.

Even though the fund is endowed additions can be made to it at any time. The larger the fund, the more earnings are available for award. If you are interested in contributing please make checks out to the **NMSU Foundation** and on the "for" line of the check, identify "Mabie Legacy Scholarship Fund, for deposit only." All contributions are tax deductible. For any questions please contact one of the MVFF Officers or Board members. If you have not made a donation to the fund please give it consideration and help honor Norm and Donna Mabie.

**Current Email Addresses Needed**

Many of the email addresses in our files are not current as members change to other internet providers. These addresses will not be distributed, but will only be used to relay club information or reminders for club meetings and other club events. Please send your address changes to [membership@mvff.org](mailto:membership@mvff.org).

**Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Print**

Help support the MVFF Habitat Restoration Projects and purchase a limited edition "Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout" print. This beautiful printing of an original watercolor of our native state fish is a limited series of 150 high quality 12 x 18 prints that are numbered and signed by New Mexico artist Michelle Arterburn. The cost of each individual print is \$25.00, with the proceeds dedicated towards habitat restoration projects. If you live out of town and wish the print mailed to you please add \$5 for postage. See the MVFF website for purchase.



**\*\*\*\*\* REMEMBER \*\*\*\*\***  
**MVFF MEMBERSHIPS & NM FISHING**  
**LICENSES EXPIRE ON 31 MARCH**

### Membership Information

Membership is open to anyone who supports the activities of the club. Membership fees are shown below. Members are provided with the opportunity to attend informational monthly meetings, to purchase fishing access permits to the MVFF leased waters on the Rio Peñasco and to participate in other Club activities such as an annual awards banquet, casting clinics, fly tying classes, and Club sponsored fishing trips.

There are several options for the payment of dues. A family is defined as a club member, their spouse and all children 17 years of age or under.

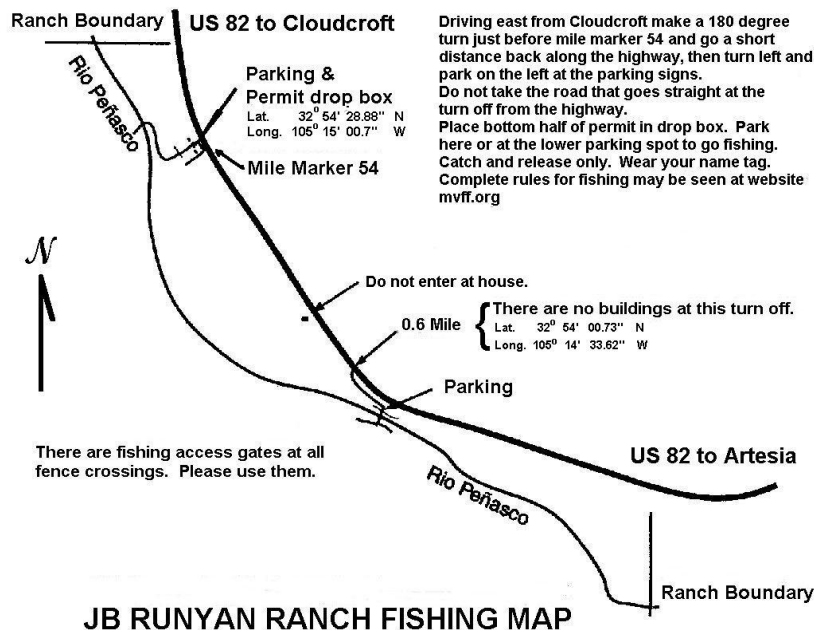
1 Year	\$20	Individual
	\$25	Family
3 Years	\$50	Individual
	\$60	Family
Life	\$400	Individual
	\$500	Family

### Lease Information

Permits to fish the Club leased waters on the Rio Peñasco can be obtained from Jim Hulsey (575-524-1880) or Bob Silver (575-522-6325) in Las Cruces. Permits can be obtained from the land owner, but you should phone (575-687-3362) the night before to ensure someone will be there to sell them to you. Permits can be ordered through the club web page (mvff.org) by filling out the form and mailing as directed or, if you had rather, you may pay through PayPal. Cost is \$25.00 per day. Kids under 18 fish free but must be accompanied by an adult club member with a permit. You must be a current member (current dues have been paid) of MVFF to fish the lease. Please wear your MVFF identification badge while on the property. New or replacement badges can be obtained by contacting Bob Silver. In addition, members may purchase 1-day, 1-time permits for up to 2 guests per trip. Each guest must have a permit. One-time means a person can go as a guest one time only and must be a member to ever go again.

#### Directions to the Lease:

Follow NM 82 east from Cloudcroft, NM or west from Artesia, NM. The turn off to the lease is located on the right side of the road about 100 yards before mile marker 54 coming from Cloudcroft or 100 yards on the left past mile marker 54 coming from Artesia.





MESILLA VALLEY FLYFISHERS, INC.

PO Box 2222

Las Cruces, NM 88004-2222

Membership and/or Permit Application

(Please Print Clearly)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Work/Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a current member? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Do you need a name badge? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

New Membership \_\_\_\_\_ or renewal \_\_\_\_\_?

Membership Categories: Individual Family Circle the one desired.

1 Year \$20 \$25

3 Years \$50 \$60

Life \$400 \$500

For family membership: Name of spouse \_\_\_\_\_ No. of children \_\_\_\_\_

Note: All memberships expire on 31 March. New memberships received on or after 1 January will expire on 31 March of the following year.

Membership fee if applicable \$\_\_\_\_\_
Adult Permits @ \$25 per permit = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Total =\$\_\_\_\_\_

Send remittance with this form to the address shown at top of page.