



Volume 24 (4)

September, 1994

The ROADRUNNER

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

Welcome Back

It's another season at El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society, and we hope you've enjoyed your summer. Like most of us, you are probably looking forward to autumn and winter, and not just for cooler weather. Feather Lake will be opening soon and there is a new draft master plan to go with it. John Sproul has done his usual incredible job of writing the plan. More information can found on page four

Once again our chapter has proven that we are the best in our region, and among the best in the country. Birdathon '94 was another resounding success for our chapter. Craig Braginton and John Sproul have documented that success for us. Their articles can be found on page two.

Our first meeting of the season is highlighted below. Be sure to bring your non-disposable cup for refreshments. We'll see you there!

Audubon Scholarship Recipient

Craig Braginton, Programs Chairperson

September General Meeting

General Meeting - Monday, September 19, 1994 - Come to the September general meeting and meet Irma Hernandez. Mrs. Hernandez is this year's recipient of our Audubon ecology Scholarship. She is the fourth grade teacher at Coldwell School in the El Paso Independent School District. Mrs. Hernandez is the first person in a few years to attend the Audubon Ecology Workshop in Greenwich, Connecticut. She will at the meeting to share her experience with us, as well as her perspective on how this experience will be included in her classroom teaching.

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AUDUBON BIRDATHON

Once Again, The Best

By Craig Braginton

Congratulations and a sincere thank you to everyone involved in Birdathon '94! Our 29 counters, through the graciousness and generosity of their sponsors, raised \$5,537.00 to be divided among the four designated beneficiaries. We have received a letter from Sandra Skrei, Southwest Regional Representative, congratulating the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society for once again raising the most money in our region.

There were a lot of hours and effort put into spotting a total of 159 species. The day started early and finished late for our counters, but what a way to raise money - doing something that we would probably be doing just for fun anyway. To get a good idea of species seen, read the accompanying article by John Sproul.

The post-Birdathon potluck dinner was, as always, the best meal in town. The company and conversation was good as well, and a good time was had by all in attendance. This year's raffle prizes were all won by sponsors, and the winners were:

1. Grand Prize - Kay Sarrow, Painting by Dave Parker
2. Yolie Arreola - Columbia Jacket
3. Al Weisenberger - Binoculars
4. Pamela Lynn Hahn - Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition T-Shirt

Once again, thank you counters, sponsors, Birdathon committee members, and everyone who donated their time generously to our efforts. We are still tops, thanks to you all.

A Full Weekend

By John Sproul

The weekend of 14-15 May was a great one for birding, and our 28 Birdathon counters took full advantage of it. Most concentrated their activity in the El Paso checklist area, but some ventured as far afield as Bosque Del Apache in central New Mexico and the San Pedro River in southeast Arizona.

Locally, top bird for the weekend was a Yellow-throated Vireo that Doug Emkalns and Bruce Neville found in Memorial Park. It was just the second spring record of this species for the El Paso area, the first for a Spring Count/Birdathon. Other Birdathon firsts were a White-rumped Sandpiper at the Ft. Bliss Ponds, a Monk Parakeet in El Paso's upper valley, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo along the Rio Grande below Ft. Quitman and a Western Screech-Owl at the Tornillo rest stop.

Good stuff, but hardly the only highlights for the weekend. Our intrepid counters also found a Tricolored Heron at Ft. Hancock reservoir, a late Greater White-fronted Goose at Ascarate Park, a late Snow Goose near Ashley's Ponds in Northeast El Paso, several Ospreys in the lower valley, a Peregrine Falcon at Ft. Hancock Reservoir, Virginia Rails at a west El Paso marsh, a Common Tern at the new McNary Reservoir, a Brown Thrasher at Hueco Tanks, a Lucy's Warbler in Memorial Park, an Indigo Bunting in the upper valley, and much more.

This year's Birdathon was our latest ever. The mid-May date gave us a far better chance to find birds like the White-rumped Sandpiper and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. It also meant we missed some winter residents like Rufous-sided Towhees and early migrants like Tree Swallows.

On balance, though, it was a very productive weekend. In the El Paso checklist area, we found 159 species, short of our all-time high of 167 in 1990, but a large increase over the meager 126 reported last year.

One reason for having the Birdathon at a later date this year was to coincide with the North American Migration Count (NAMC), a nationwide one-day "snapshot" of the progress of spring migration. My thanks to all of the Birdathon counters who recorded data by county for the NAMC. Species totals for the three counties in our checklist area were: El Paso, 138; Hudspeth, 92; and Dona Ana, 55. Calhoun County, Texas led the nation with 211 species. The most common species recorded in our checklist area were American Coot (200), Mourning Dove (187), Ruddy Duck (180) and Cliff Swallow (171).

The Essential Activist

Compiled by Fred Baumgarten
Audubon Activist

Audubon
Activist

The Red-Headed League?

This year, New Jersey became one of a handful of states to issue a custom license plate benefiting wildlife. The

"Wildlife Conservation License Plate" features a full-color illustration of the Red-headed Woodpecker, a state threatened species. Eighty percent of the \$50 fee on each set of plates goes toward the Garden State's endangered and non-game species program. The beautiful illustration was done by long-time Activist Doreen Curtin. Gift certificates available; for information, call 1-800-WPLATES.

License To Live

Speaking of license plates: The National Audubon Society has just produced two new bumper stickers with which activists can show their support for the Endangered Species Act. One resembles a license plate and says, "LICENSE-2-LIVE;" the other has an illustration of a Bald Eagle and the words, "LOVE IT OR LOSE IT." To order, send \$1 each to ESA stickers, NAS, 700 Broadway, New York, NY 10003.

Loggers We Like

Audubon's Minnesota State Council has taken steps to reward loggers who follow responsible forestry practices. Legislation introduced in both houses of the state legislature and developed by Audubon would certify and compensate environment-friendly "master loggers." For information, write Don Arnosti, NAS, 26 East Exchange St., Ste. 207, St. Paul, MN 55101.

Eye Opener

Quiz: How much money did mining industry PACs give to political campaigns in 1991-1992? To answer that question, get a free subscription to Capitol Eye, the new and indispensable newsletter of the Center for Responsive Politics, which tracks political contributions and their effect on policy. (Answer: \$1.1 Million). Capitol Eye, CRP, 1320 19th., NW, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 857-0044.

Oh, Baby!

Earth General, the Brooklyn, NY, eco-store, is now offering "Eco-Friendly Baby Gift Sets" to get baby off to a good start. The gift contains items such as organic-cotton baby clothing, "unpetroleum jelly," and organic, cruelty-free skin-care products. Perfect for baby showers! Other items available include a hooded, natural terricloth blanket and a "do-it-yourself baby food grinder." Earth General also has an eco-wedding registry. Call 1-800-562-2203.

From the Editor's Disk

If you want to be up on the environment without adding to its problems, try The GreenDisk - Paperless Environmental Journal. This computer compendium of environmental news has text of press releases, action alerts, and reports, and indexes leading publications, including the Activist. Available by subscription, six times a year, on both Mac and IBM compatible disks, as well as through the Internet. Call 1-800-484-7616 (code DISK); CompuServe: 70760,2721.



Feather Lake Opens Soon

By John Sproul

Feather Lake News

High water persisted all summer at Feather Lake, leading to much shoreline erosion and loss of many young cottonwoods. Still, the overall trend in riparian vegetation at our sanctuary is positive, with cottonwoods, willows, tornillo and other native trees and shrubs growing increasingly prominent along the shore.

We recently completed a 2nd draft of a master plan for Feather Lake. The plan will provide overall guidance and direction for our habitat management, education and public-use programs at the sanctuary. For a copy, please contact John Sproul (545-5157) or pick one up at our next general meeting.

As always, progress at Feather Lake depends on volunteers. One action item identified in the master plan is to develop more educational displays for the sanctuary and change the displays at regular intervals. We need a creative person to head this effort. How about you? Please contact John if interested.

Also, Feather Lake re-opens to the public October 1, and once again we need your help staffing the sanctuary during visitor hours. Please let John know if you can assist.

Finally, there is much we need to do to get ready for Opening Day. Thanks to Charles Simpson and his trusty paint brush, the picnic tables and education shed are in great shape. But lots of other tasks remain, so plan to join us for our next workday, Saturday, September 17. Gates open at 8 AM.

El Paso Environmental Center

By John Sproul

The El Paso Environmental Center, in which our group participates, is exploring the possibility of

starting a series of public seminars on current environmental topics. An individual is needed to oversee this series. Initially, the position will be volunteer, but it has the potential to become a paid position if fundraising efforts are successful. If you are interested, please contact the Center (532-9645) for more information.

ACT to Meet in El Paso

By John Sproul

It's hard to believe, but it has been a full seven years since we last hosted a meeting of the Audubon Council of Texas. We're looking forward to doing so again October 14-16. Representatives of Audubon chapters throughout Texas will gather in El Paso that weekend to plan for the next session of the Texas Legislature, generate ideas for increasing Audubon's grassroots effectiveness, address key conservation issues, share successful chapter programs, and enjoy a variety of presentations, field trips and distinctive El Paso meals. We invite you to take part in some or all of the events. More details will be in the next ROADRUNNER.



Travel Plans?

If you have plans for a business trip or family vacation, then we would encourage you to make your arrangements through P.S. Travel. This agency has pledged a monthly donation to EP/TPAS equal to 2% of the total spent. This is an excellent way to help your chapter while "getting away from it all."

Contact P.S. Travel at 8838 C Viscount, El Paso; (915) 598-6188. Be sure to use account number 2006 so our chapter will receive credit for your travel.

In addition, P.S. Travel will give \$50.00 off to anyone from Audubon who books any seven night cruise before December 31, 1994. So what are you waiting for?

Preventing The Hurt

A new brochure, What You Can Do To Help Prevent Injuries to Wild Birds, is available for the cost of mailing from:

The Raptor Trust
1930 White Bridge Road
Millington, NJ 07946

Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request (donations are appreciated, of course).

About the Newsletter

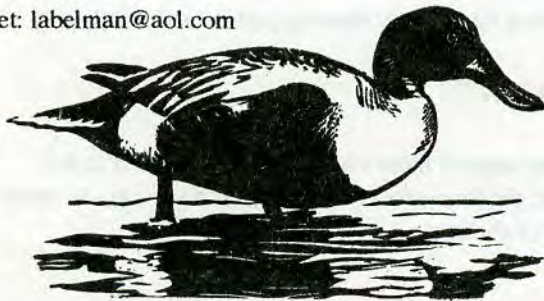
The chapter newsletter, THE ROADRUNNER, is published six times a year by the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society. The annual subscription rate for the newsletter only is \$5.00. The newsletter is included with your membership in the National Audubon Society.

Chapter members are encouraged to submit articles for publication in THE ROADRUNNER. The articles may be of any length and in any format, but the editor reserves the right to modify submissions to fit space available.

Articles may be submitted to the editor:

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Environmental Fund for Texas

The Environmental Fund for Texas is 28 environmental groups working together to raise money for our environmental programs through employee payroll deduction campaigns. One of the groups involved is the Audubon Foundation for Texas. This is the first year that state employees will be able to use payroll deduction to give to a wide range of charities through the State Employees Charitable Campaign. This with the Combined Federal Campaign gives us the opportunity to raise a lot of money with little effort.

Some state employees may not be aware of their payroll deduction campaign. If you are one of those, or know somebody who is, call 1-800-TX-GREEN for more information.

To give you an idea of the potential fund raising power of this campaign, there are 200,000 state employees. To participate they have to pledge a minimum of \$1.00 per pay period (\$12.00 per year). A 10-15% participation will bring in \$3 million. Environmental funds typically receive 3 to 5% of the campaign pledges, which could mean \$120,000 for EFT. Out of that money Audubon Foundation of Texas gets approximately 1/28th less the 15% administration fee by EFT, plus whatever pledges are designated to go specifically to AFT.

Officers of the El Paso/ Trans Pecos Audubon Society

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President-Elect
Craig Braginton 877-4138

Vice President
Dayle Edwards 592-0868

Treasurer
Larry Jordan 833-5969

Secretary
Mary Lou Alcorn 584-8768

On The Trail

Sep 94

Upper Valley

Meet at the Crossroads Pond (Doniphan at Country Club Rd.) at 7:30 AM on Saturday, September 3 for a refreshing tour of El Paso's Upper Valley. We can expect to see many swimming birds at the Crossroads Pond and then we may see towhees, Wood Ducks, Rufous Hummingbirds and other migrants as we make our way through the Upper Valley. This is always a good trip, so plan to be there.

Manzano Mountains and Hawk Watch

If the sight of scores, if not hundreds of hawks, appeals to you, then this is the trip for you. Hawks from the western part of the country migrate through the Manzanos on their way to Central and South America. This gives interested watchers the chance to observe and, more importantly, take a census of the various species that move through the area.

This is an overnight trip over the weekend of September 24 - 25. A trip leader and itinerary have not been chosen at this time, but if you think that you may want to make this trip, give Nancy Wilson a call at 833-3907.

The hawk watch is located on the east side of the Manzanos, 55 miles southeast of Albuquerque. Camping is available nearby and hotels are available in Albuquerque. Call Nancy for more information on the hawk watch or contact Gordon Vickery, P.O. Box 1595, Tijeras, NM 87095, (505) 281-8271.

Feather Lake and the Lower Valley

Feather Lake should have many of its winter residents by Saturday, October 8. Meet at the lake at 7:30 AM to begin this trip into the Lower Valley area of El Paso. We can expect to see many swimming and wading birds like numerous ducks, Great Egrets, Great Blue Herons and several species of shorebirds. The valley

can usually be counted on to turn up several unusual finds such as owls and various migrants.

To get to Feather Lake, take I-10 to Americas Ave., exit south, turn right at the first traffic light (North Loop), and look for the entrance about 1/4 mile on the left. Bring refreshments as this trip will last for several hours.

The time and date for this trip may change to coincide with the ACT meeting to be held the following weekend. More information will be given in the next newsletter. If you have any questions before then, give Nancy Wilson a call at 833-3907.

Ft. Bliss Ponds

Even with the reduced water levels at these ponds, we can expect to see a variety of birds, sometimes unexpected ones. There should be lots of ducks and numerous wading birds like Dowitchers, Phalaropes, and Yellowlegs. There is always the possibility of gulls and hawks. Meet at 7:30 AM on Saturday, October 22, in the parking lot of Furniture Country, 4801 Fred Wilson (at the corner of Fred Wilson and Marshall Rd.). We'll be back before noon, so no lunch will be needed, but liquid refreshment is always a good idea.

West Cottonwood Springs

This hike into the Franklin Mountains is over a "trail" of loose rocks and is moderately steep. Stout hiking boots are recommended. Meet at the entrance to the Wilderness Park Museum at 7:30 AM on Saturday, November 5. The scenery alone is worth the trip, but we can also expect to see many birds and other wildlife. Golden Eagles may show up just to brighten the day.

Note...

Since most of these trips do not have leaders at this time, please contact Nancy Wilson if you plan to make any of the trips.

Observations

May 16, 1994 - - August 15, 1994
Uncommon, RARE, and CASUAL SIGHTINGS

(Observers: Paul Bingham, Jane Chalmers, Doug Enkalns, Richard Hermosillo, Sally Homan, Bob Johnson, John Kiseda, Kathy Kiseda, Gay Kozusko, Steve Lea, Bruce Nevelle, Al Olivas, Patricia Russell, John Sproul, Chad Wayne, Barry Zimmer)

GREBES TO DUCKS

<u>CLARK'S GREBE</u>	6/25	(JS-ft)	Tor
(Mixed pair, Clark's and Western nesting)	7/11	(BZ)	McN
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (nesting)	7/11	(BZ)	McN
<u>LEAST BITTERN</u>	7/10 & 24	(JS)	FLk
GREAT EGRET (nesting)	7/25	(BZ)	McN
<u>SNOW GOOSE</u>	All	(Mob)	FBP
<u>CANADA GOOSE</u>	6/12	(BJ)	FBP
GREEN-WINGED TEAL	6/12	(BJ)	FBP
	6/18	(JS)	FLk
NORTHERN PINTAIL	6/25	(JS-ft)	Tor
GADWALL	6/12 & 18	(JS)	FLk
AMERICAN WIGEON	6/12 & 18	(JS)	FLk
<u>BUFFLEHEAD (F)</u>	5/14-7/4	(JK)	Dma

BIRDS of PREY

<u>NORTHERN HARRIER</u>	7/31	(BJ)	FBP
Golden Eagle	6/27	(BJ)	FkM
<u>PEREGRINE FALCON</u>	8/3-6	(SH)	CnA

SANDPIPERS to TERNS

Solitary Sandpiper	8/15	(SH)	Dma
SPOTTED SANDPIPER	7/10	(BJ)	FBP
LONG-BILLED CURLEW	7/11	(BZ)	FBP
	7/14	(AO)	FBP
STILT SANDPIPER	7/24	(BJ)	FBP
BLACK TERN	7/14	(AO)	FBP
	7/24	(BJ)	FBP

CUCKOOS to FLYCATCHERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo	6/26	(SH-yd)	CCA
CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD	7/19	(SL-yd)	CCA
	7/26	(KK-yd)	CoA
RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD	7/3	(SL-yd)	CCA
	7/5	(PR-yd)	StA
<u>ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD</u>	8/15	(JK-yd)	CoA
<u>CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER</u>	8/6	(SH)	HTk

VIREO'S to WARBLERS

BELL'S VIREO	7/10	(PR-yd)	StA
WARBLING Vireo	8/7	(SH/RH)	FBP
<u>NORTHERN PARULA</u>	8/6	(CW)	HTk
YELLOW WARBLER	8/5	(SH)	HTk
	8/6	(BN)	HTk
YELLOW-RUMPED WBLR	8/6	(BJ)	HTk
<u>TOWNSEND'S WARBLER</u>	8/7	(SH)	FBP
WILSON'S WARBLER	8/7	(RH)	FBP

CARDINAL to SISKIN

NORTHERN CARDINAL

All spring into June	(JC-yd)	EwA	
LAZULI BUNTING	8/3-15	(SH)	StA
	8/6	(DE)	HTk
Painted Bunting	8/6	(AO)	HTk
LARK BUNTING	7/24	(BJ)	FBP
Yellow-headed Blackbird	7/21	(GK)	HTk
BRONZED COWBIRD	5/21	(PB-yd)	NEE
	6/12	(PR-yd)	StA
	7/4	(BJ)	CnA
HOODED ORIOLE	8/4	(SH)	UTP
<u>PINE SISKIN</u>	6/18	(PR-yd)	StA

CnA-Canutillo Area; CCA-Country Club Area; CoA-Coronado Area; Dma-Doniphan Marsh; EwA-Eastwood Area; FBP-Fort Bliss Ponds; FkM-Franklin Mts; HTk-Hueco Tanks SP; McN-McNary Res; NEE-Northeast El Paso; StA-Santa Teresa Area; Tor-Tornillo Area; UTP-Univ. Area.

CALENDAR

September

Sat., 3 - Field trip to Upper Valley, see page 3.
Mon., 10 - Board Meeting at Betty Pagel's Home, 7:30 PM, 6328 Osage, 772-2686.
Sat., 17 - Feather Lake workday.
Mon., 19 - General Meeting, see page 1.
Sat. - Sun., 24-25 - Field trip to Manzano Mountains, see page 3.

October

Sat., 1 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sun., 2 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to dusk.
Sat., 8 - Field trip to Feather Lake and the Lower Valley, see page 3.
Sun., 9 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to dusk.
Mon., 10 - Board Meeting at Peggy Riede's home, 7:30 PM, 5508 Amberwood, 587-7208.
Fri., 14, Sat., 15, Sun., 16 - ACT Meeting, see page 4.
Sat., 15 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sun., 16 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to dusk.
Mon., 17 - General Meeting
Sat., 22 - Field trip to the Ft. Bliss Ponds, see page 3.
Sun., 23 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to dusk.
Sun., 30 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to dusk.
Sat., November 5 - Field trip to West Cottonwood Springs, see page 3

El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

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