

# the ROADRUNNER



Newsletter of El Paso/Trans-Pecos  
Audubon Society - P.O. Box 9655  
El Paso, Texas 79986

Editors: Jane Fowler - Jo Nagel

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## GENERAL MEETING

MON., SEPT. 15, 1986, 7:30 PM at the Garden Center, 3105 Grant in Memorial Park. The program, the National Parks of Yugoslavia, is to be given by Dr. Jack Bristol, a professor of biology at UTEP for the past 16 years. He and his wife, Lillian, have just returned from their second study of the natural history and biology of Yugoslavia. Dr. and Mrs. Bristol are the sponsors of Phi Beta, the Biological Science Honor Society, and Professor Bristol is Assistant to the Vice-President of Academic Affairs. This promises to be a uniquely beautiful and interesting program about a country not many of us have had the good fortune to visit. Circle Sept. 15 on your calendar. We hope to see a bright-eyed bunch of birders home again from summer vacations.

## FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

### FEATHER LAKE WORK DAY

SAT., SEPT. 13. Meet at 7:30 AM or as soon thereafter as you can make it. Everyone come.

### GILA - RED ROCK, NM

SAT. - SUN., SEPT. 20-21 (new date)  
All who wish to travel in a group meet at I-10 and Transmountain RD Sat. at 7:30 AM. If you travel separately we will meet you at the junction of U.S. 70 and State Rd. 90, 2.5 mi. no. of Lordsburg, NM at 11:30 AM. Those who'd prefer to spend the night indoors will find a number of motels in Lords-

burg, two of which are HOLIDAY and THE AMERICAN, a Best Western. The campers will travel northeast on State Rd. 90 for about 13 mi., 0.3 mi. beyond Grant/Hidalgo county line, then turn left on dirt road (Forest Rd #859) and continue 0.1 mi. to take a right fork to find a camping area under large trees. We should see warblers, Vermillion Flycatchers, Black and Zone-tailed Hawks, Ground Doves and Abert's Towhee. Leader: Bob Johnson (751-0125).

### WEST COTTONWOOD SPRING

SAT., SEPT. 27. Meet at entrance to Tom May Park in west Franklins off Transmountain Rd. at 7:30 AM. Leader: Tom Baker (877-3365).

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON., SEPT. 8, 1986 at 7:30 PM the Board will meet at the home of Virginia and Tom Baker, 958 Kelso, El Paso (877-3365). Directions to Bakers - From I-10 take the Mesa exit and continue down Country Club Rd. to Westside (Farm Rd 260). Go as far as Gato Rd and turn left. In a little less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  mi. you will turn left on Secretariat and go to Kelso. Bakers live on the corner of Kelso and Secretariat.

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## SCHOLARSHIP FUND

A Scholarship Fund for Conservation Education is in the works for local educators and teachers who would like to attend one of



Audubon's 4 ecology camps (located in Maine, Connecticut, Wisconsin and Wyoming). More info on the camps and where to apply for the scholarship will be in the Oct. RR.

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#### AUDUBON ADVENTURES

This year our chapter is sponsoring 10 classrooms in the Audubon Adventures program. The 5 classrooms that we sponsored last year enjoyed the program so much, we have decided to sponsor some of them again. The 1986-87 recipients are: Helen Carlsson-3rd gr. LBJ; Laura Hinojo-6th gr., Vista del Sol; Robert Martinez-6th gr. Escontries; Becky McChesney-3rd gr., Ysleta; Murray S. McMurray-5th gr., Escontries; Gail Moore-5th gr., Marfa, TX; Gail Neugebauer-3rd gr., LBJ; Cathy Resendez-4th gr., Hilles; Gloria Woelfel-5th gr., Blessed Sacrament; Paula Jo Wulff-6th gr., Hilles. Congratulations and have a great year!

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#### FROM THE PRESIDENT

Many thanks to those who helped with the Book Fair at B. Dalton Bookseller on June 14 (Cielo Vista Mall). Our hats are off to Judy Coons and the personnel of B. Dalton for their continued support and interest in local conservation affairs.

Don't forget, we are moving the annual rummage sale to the fall. We need your saleable junk and castoffs. More details in the Oct. RR (including date).

AGAIN---save those aluminum cans. Thanks to publicity in the EL PASO TIMES, the cans are coming in. But we can always use more. Just call me if you need yours picked up.

Nat'l Audubon has been forced to discontinue Audubon Action (NAS NewsJournal) with the June issue as a budget tightening measure.

A new publication, AUDUBON ACTIVIST, is coming out in Sept., but it will have to be self-sustaining to succeed in these lean times. So be active, involved and informed for only \$6.00 per year---subscribe to the AUDUBON ACTIVIST. If you wish to subscribe through the chapter, call me. We can get a bulk rate of \$5.00 per year if we buy at least 10 subscriptions. /Bob Johnson/

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#### FEATHER LAKE

##### Good news and bad news

First, the good news: The improvements to Mesa Drain (Army Corps of Engineers flood-control project for southeast El Paso) should begin about Sept. 15. Phase One will include the enlargement of the lake bed extending the west bank to the stone wall. The second phase which will include cleaning out vegetation in the lake and canal will begin after completion of Phase One. Hopefully by next winter, we will have open water areas for waterfowl.

A work day is scheduled for Sat. Sept. 13 to move the cactus garden. We need lots of help plus extra pots, boxes and wheelbarrows anyone can lend for transplanting and transportation.

Now, the bad news: Our good friend and resident caretaker, Joe Bornreger, is going to move. We will need someone to take his place, and Joe's shoes are going to be mighty hard to fill. Joe plans to sell his mobile home, so if someone bought it (already located at Feather Lake) and moved in, many dollars could be saved in moving costs. If you are aware of anyone who is suitable and is interested in the position of caretaker, contact Sid Sheperd (566-2162), Tom Baker (877-3365) or John Sproul (545-5157).



## CONSERVATION

### TPWD FUNDING IN TROUBLE

As this issue goes to press, a special session of the Texas Legislature is working on measures to reduce the state's budget deficit. Many of the options considered have included deep cuts in funding for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (TPWD). Conservation groups throughout the state, including EP/TPAS, have worked hard to prevent such cuts, which would be devastating to TPWD, particularly its Parks Division. By the time you read this, the legislature should have acted, we hope with full recognition of the vital work TPWD does in Texas.

### A.C.T. SEEKS FUNDS FOR LOBBYIST

Meanwhile, the next regular session of the Texas Legislature will be here soon. It begins in January, and once again state lawmakers will address a variety of important conservation and environmental issues. TPWD's programs will remain vulnerable. Groundwater protection will be a top priority. More legislation relating to Franklin Mountains State Park is possible. The list goes on.

When the legislature is in session, Audubon's Southwest Regional Office is stretched thin. It devotes as much time and effort as possible to covering Texas legislative issues, but, as a regional office, it obviously has many other responsibilities, too. Some issues just can't be covered as thoroughly as we might like.

This coming session, the statewide Audubon Council of Texas (ACT) is seeking to increase Audubon's effectiveness before the legislature by employing a lobbyist who would focus strictly on Texas legislative issues. It's a tremendous opportunity for Audubon. We'd be better able to make our voice heard before the legislature and state agencies. And our lobbyist would keep us better informed regarding activities in Austin. The

lobbyist would be based in the Southwest Regional Office in Austin and would work under the direction of ACT and the Regional Office.

Fund raising is now in progress. The goal is \$20,000, and, to date, ACT and individual chapters have pledged approximately \$9500. Our chapter has pledged \$300.

We would like to do more. To that end, we are encouraging individual contributions towards our chapter's pledge. If the response is good, we'll increase the pledge. Contributions should be made payable to "El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society" and sent to: Texas Audubon Lobbyist, P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986. Thanks. /John Sproul/

### WASHINGTON REPORT

With the 99th U.S. Congress planning to adjourn in early October, many important environmental bills are still pending. Among them:

Superfund. After 6 months of difficult, often acrimonious debate, the House-Senate conference to hammer out a final Superfund reauthorization bill (RR, May) is in the home stretch. One tiny matter remains: how to fund the \$8.5 billion package. A separate committee is evaluating this issue, and Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D-TX) is one of 3 senators on it.

Want to put in a final plug for Superfund? In addition to several tax mechanisms, the conferees may also look at the option of granting the Environmental Protection Agency authority to borrow from the U.S. Treasury for at least some of the funding. In these times of deep concern over budget deficits, though, actual allocation of such money is highly uncertain. Let Sen. Bentsen (U.S. Senate, Wash., DC 20510) know you want Superfund funded by secure revenue sources such as taxes on chemical feedstocks or hazardous-waste end products,



not by "soft" money such as borrowing authority.

Endangered Species Act. The Endangered Species Act (ESA) reauthorization has also seen its share of delay. The House passed its reauthorization bill in July 1985 (RR, Sept 1985), and the Senate version was reported to the full Senate in December (RR, Jan). But the full Senate has taken no action. Why?

A large part of the blame falls to Sen. Bentsen. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed threatened status for the Concho water snake, a subspecies of Harter's water snake found only along the Concho and Colorado rivers in central Texas. Sen. Bentsen fears that listing this snake as threatened could thwart a pet project of his, Stacy Dam on the Concho River.

Earlier this year, Sen. Bentsen blocked Senate action on the ESA reauthorization in an effort to gain assurances that listing the Concho water snake would not impede construction of Stacy Dam. He has since introduced a separate bill to exempt the dam from provisions of the ESA and is no longer blocking the reauthorization. The momentum the reauthorization bill had, though, before Sen. Bentsen sidetracked it has not yet been regained.

Emergency Wetlands Resources Act. This bill (RR, June 1985) is actually showing signs of life. It had been stalled in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, largely because of lack of enthusiasm for a provision to make \$75 million in federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies available annually for 10 years for federal and state wetland-acquisition programs.

Now, an alternative version without this provision has been drafted and appears to be getting a favorable reception. The new draft still would raise the federal duck stamp price from \$7.50 to \$15 over a 5-year period and authorize entry fees for selected national wildlife refuges. And while it wouldn't target

specific LWCF monies for wetland acquisition, it would amend the LWCF Act to allow federal use of the Fund for wetland purchases to benefit migratory birds and other resources. /John Sproul/

#### CONSERVATION CAPSULES

FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS I: To all counters and sponsors in this year's Birdathon, thank you! You put approximately \$1000 into our chapter's new Franklin Mountains Fund (and a like amount into our Scholarship Fund). We want the Fund to be an ongoing source of support for deserving conservation and education projects involving the Franklins; you've given it good start. Thanks!

FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS II: The Franklin Mountains Fund is already being put to good use. In August, we gave \$100 to the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition (FMWC) to help offset costs of its campaign to convince the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to protect land between the Organ Mountains and the Franklins as a wildlife/recreation corridor. In its draft Southern Rio Grande Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement (SRGPA/EIS) for land-tenure adjustments in Dona County, NM, BLM had identified this land as suitable for disposal from BLM ownership (RR, May). Was the FMWC's campaign successful? The answer will be in the final SRGPA/EIS, expected out in October.

TEXAS NONGAME STAMP: Riparian habitat restoration; Peregrine Falcon re-establishment; endangered fish studies; wetland acquisition; Bald Eagle censuses; interpretive nature center construction; prairie chicken re-establishment. All this and more is going on right now thanks to public contributions to the state nongame wildlife program in ... Colorado. With your help, we can have an equally broad program in Texas. Buy a 1986 Texas Nongame Stamp today (see p.5). The \$5 you pay goes to the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.



**CALIFORNIA CONDOR:** The wild population of California Condors is headed towards 0. At press time, 3 remained in the wild after 2 were captured last spring (RR, Mar). In early June, a federal appeals court in San Diego ruled that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service could go forward with plans to capture the last 3 wild birds, and on Aug 19 the California Condor Recovery Team recommended that this be done as soon as possible.

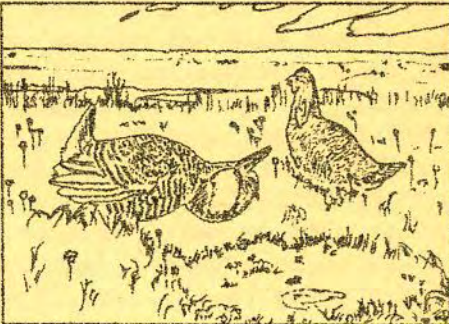
**BLACK-FOOTED FERRET:** Canine distemper may have decimated the only known wild population of black-footed ferrets, but it did not eliminate them. At press time, summer litter surveys in the Meeteetse, WY, area were about 75% complete, and 2 females with 5 young each, plus 3 other individual ferrets had been located. Four of these animals have been captured and added to the 6 already in captivity (RR, Mar). In addition, the Captive Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) has recommended bringing into captivity all of the ferrets found so far. The CBSG, a group of international specialists serving as an advisory team to the captive breeding program for black-footed ferrets, figures at least 20 animals are needed for a viable breeding program.

**CORONADO NATL. FOREST PLAN:** On Aug 4, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) released its final land and resource management plan for the Coronado Natl. Forest in Arizona and New Mexico (RR, Sept 1985). Unchanged from the draft plan: The USFS will recommend designation of 762 acres within the S. Fork of Cave Creek in the Chiricahua Mts. as a Zoological-Botanical Area (ZBA) and 3478 acres in Guadalupe Canyon in the Peloncillo Mts. as a Zoological Area. It will leave the road into S. Fork open and convert the S. Fork Campground to a day-use area. The existing Goodding Research Natural Area (RNA) in Sycamore Canyon west of Nogales will be expanded from 545 to 2015 acres and a new 350-acre Canelo RNA established near Canelo. Conservationists had sought RNA or ZBA status for numerous additional areas and had proposed

ZBA status for 27,140 acres in the Cave Creek drainage.

**USFWS SPECIAL AGENT:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has taken a fresh look at its budget and found a way to fund a Special Agent for its El Paso law-enforcement office (RR, Jun). His name is Vicente Bustamante, and he is scheduled to begin work Sept 1. Thank you, everyone who wrote letters on this issue.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.



1986 Nongame Stamp \$5.00

YES, I want to help support the nongame wildlife and endangered species programs of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ 1986 Texas Nongame Stamp(s) at \$5 each. Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:  
El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society  
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EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
FACILITATES PROJECT WILD!

OBSERVATIONS  
May 28 - August 19

Last April, our education committee members Gloria Woelfel and Virginia Baker facilitated a Project WILD Teacher-In-Service at Socorro High School. Forty-three teachers, university and community college students participated in a WILD learning experience! Guest speakers at the In-Service included retired Nat'l Park Service Ranger Walter Herriman, environmental health official Forrest Sprester, and wildlife rehabilitator Helen Bigelow. Project WILD incorporates wildlife studies into traditional classroom studies. Participants were involved in many Project WILD activities and were also led on an educational tour of Rio Bosque Park. It was an enriching experience which we will not forget, especially since all received a Project WILD manual chock-full of creative activities that can be used in math, science, language arts, social studies, and other classroom studies (K-12).....at no cost!

Some of the comments made by participants:  
"Thanks for the awareness"  
"I enjoyed the workshop; it has left an imprint of the importance of wildlife"  
"Well run, well presented, pleasant"

If you are interested in attending a future Project WILD Workshop or Teacher-In-Service, please contact Gloria Woelfel (833-7523, evenings). Project WILD is funded by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and is also supported by our chapter. /Gloria Woelfel/



*Project WILD*

A number of good sightings were reported this period.

LOONS - FALCONS

A pair of Pied-billed Grebes with young was spotted at the Crossroads Pond 6/15, 7/26 (JoD). An Eared Grebe was reported at the Northeast Oxidation Ponds (NEOP) 7/24 (JS). Immature Double-crested Cormorants were seen at a pond behind Furrow's 6/28 (BJ) and 1 at Tornillo 6/29 (JF, JN). Great Blue Herons were reported at 3 locations: Cement Lake 6/8 (JoD), Tornillo 6/29 (JF, JN), Randel's Pool 7/27 (JoD). A Great Egret was spotted at the Vado rookery (VR) north of Vado bridge 7/19 (BJ, et al.). Five Snowy Egrets were seen at Cement Lake 6/8 (JoD) and a large group was at the VR 7/19 (mob). A rare sighting - an adult and an imm. Little Blue Heron spotted at VR 7/19 (BV, et al.). The most numerous birds at VR 7/19 were Cattle Egrets. Green-backed Herons were reported at Tornillo 6/29 (JF, JN) and Feather Lake 8/3 (JS, JF). Numerous Black-crowned Night-Herons were seen at the VR (mob) 7/19 and were also reported at Ranchos del Rio 6/17, 6/21 (JoD) and at Randel's Pool 7/26 (JoD). A female Wood Duck and 3 young were seen at Randel's Pool 7/26 (JoD). Cinnamon Teal were reported at Cement Lake 6/8 (JoD), NEOP 7/24 (JS), & Feather Lake 8/3 (JS, JF). A N. Shoveler was seen at Cement Lake 6/8 (JoD). Four Am. Wigeon were seen at the Crossroads Pond 6/15 (JoD). Ruddy Ducks were reported on 5 occasions: Crossroads Pond 6/21, 6/29, 7/26, 8/2 (JoD), NEOP 7/24 (JS). Miss. Kites were reported at Lombardy Lane near El Paso Country Club (EPCC) 7/13 (BV), Love Rd. & EPCC 7/27 (JoD, BJ, JS), Ranchos del Rio 7/26, 8/2 (JoD). A Harris' Hawk was spotted 4 mi. west of Ft. Hancock 8/17 (BV). Three Golden Eagles were seen near War Rd. in Aug. (AG).

QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

A Snowy Plover was reported at NEOP 7/24 (JS). Eight Black-necked Stilts, 20 Am. Avocets, a Willet & 2 Spotted Sandpipers were also seen at NEOP 7/24



(JS). A Marbled Godwit was reported at Madden Lake 7/13 (BJ). A close sighting of a Dunlin was reported at Madden Lake 8/17 (BV). There have been occasional sightings since the fall of '83, but previous to that, the last record was in 1953. A large flock of Wilson's Phalaropes was seen at NEOP 7/24 (JS). Single Yellow-billed Cuckoos were sighted south of the Country Club bridge 7/13 (BV) and at Vado 7/19 (BJ, et al.). A Flammulated Owl was picked up in an east El Paso yard and was released after rehabilitation. This is the 3rd spring record. A Great Horned Owl was seen at Hueco Tanks 8/9 (JS, et al.). A Common Nighthawk was seen on the road between Fabens & US 62 5/31 (JoD). An Anna's Hummingbird showed up in a Mt. Park yard in mid-Aug. (JB). An imm. and 2 ad. Calliope Hummingbirds were seen in a Mt. Park yard 8/5 (RG, RW). Broad-tailed Hummingbirds showed up 8/18 (JF, JB). An early Rufous Hummingbird was seen in an upper valley yard 6/27 (TB). Others were seen in El Paso 8/1 & 8/2 (JS, JF). Last year, the 1st fall rufous hummer was seen 7/13 in Sunset Heights. A Belted Kingfisher was seen at Lombardy Lane 7/13 (BV) and Randel's Pool 7/26 & 27 (JoD, et al.).

#### FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

Two W. Wood-Pewees were reported at Hueco Tanks 8/10 (JS, NW). A Black Phoebe was seen at Randel's Pool 7/20 & 7/27 (JoD, et al.). A Rough-winged Swallow was seen at Hueco Tanks 8/10 (JS, NW). A Bank Swallow was reported 1 mile south of the EPCC bridge 7/13 (BV). Cave Swallows nested under the overpass at McNary 7/13 (BJ, et al.). Am. Robins were reported in the EPCC area 6/7, an imm. on 6/14 (JoD), and 7/13 (BV). Curve-billed Thrashers were seen at Rancho del Rio 6/15 and Randel's Pool 7/20 (JoD). Pairs of Phainopeplas were seen at Montoya Drain, RdR and RP during June & July (JoD). Warbling Vireos were reported at Hueco Tanks 7/27 (BV), 8/10 (JS, NW) & RdR 8/2 (JoD).



September 1986

#### WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

A Common Yellowthroat was heard at NEOP 7/24 (JS) and Feather Lake 8/3 (JS, JF). Yellow-breasted Chats were heard and seen regularly at RdR and RP between 6/15 and 7/27 (JoD, et al.). One was heard at VR 7/19 (mob). Single Summer Tanagers were seen at RdR 6/21 (JoD) and Tornillo 6/29 (JF, JN). Pyr-rhuloxias were spotted at Hueco Tanks 8/9 and 8/10 (JS, et al.). A male N. Cardinal was seen at Randel's Pool 7/27 (JoD, et al.). An early Black-headed Grosbeak was reported at RP 7/27 (JS, et al.). A rare Lazuli Bunting was spotted at Durling's Farm 8/17 (TB). A male Painted Bunting was seen at Madden Lake 8/17 (BV). A Dickcissel was seen and heard at Tornillo 6/29 (JF, JN). Lark Sparrows were seen at Hueco Tanks 8/9 & 8/10 (JS, NW, et al.). Several Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported at the Crossroads Pond 7/13 (BV) and RP 7/27 (JoD, et al.). A male Orchard Oriole was seen at the rest stop east of Tornillo 6/29 (JF, JN). Hooded and N. orioles nested in a Mt. Park yard (JB). N. Orioles were seen at Cement Lake 6/8 & Rancho del Rio 6/15 & 8/2 (JoD) & RP 7/27 (JoD, et al.).

CONTRIBUTORS: Tom Baker, Janet Brock-Moller, Helen Bigelow, Joyce Davis, Jane Fowler, Al Cavit, Roger Gore, Jo Nagel, John Sproul, Ray Waite, Nancy Wilson.

/Joyce Davis, Observations Editor/  
(581-9470. There will be an answering machine to take your observations when I am not at home.)

#### FIELD TRIPS FOLLOW-UP

The price of admission to Rio Bosque Park in El Paso's lower valley is removal of 1 bag of trash from the premises. Ten EP/TPAS trashbusters paid this fee on June 8 and were rewarded with sightings of a Common Barn-Owl, a Painted Bunting, 2 very late White-crowned Sparrows and 19 other avian species.

Only 6 made the trip to Santa Fe June 20-22, but those 6 had good birdwatching. Birds seen were: Lewis' Wood-



pecker, Black-billed Magpie, Lazuli Bunting, Black-capped Chickadee, Gray Catbird and many more. To see what you missed, plan to be at the Oct general meeting and see Ray Waite's slides.

On Sat, July 19, 10 lucky birders saw a Little Blue Heron and numerous cattle and snowy egrets at Vado.

Aug 16-17 was a wonderful weekend for 4 participants. Most memorable were Lesser Goldfinches among the tall lavender thistles, the Orange-crowned Warbler in Nogal Canyon and the classiest outhouse ever at the Bonita campground.

**NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
Membership Application

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Send AUDUBON magazine and membership card to:

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....Zip.....

Membership category desired:

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual/\$30	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen
<input type="checkbox"/> Family/\$38	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual/\$21
<input type="checkbox"/> Student/\$18	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen
	<input type="checkbox"/> Family/\$23

This is a  new  renewal membership.

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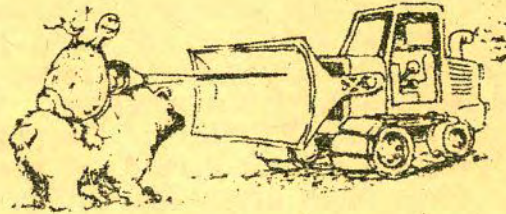
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- |                 |                      |
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| Treasurer       | Jean Coyle 778-7238  |

**KEEP UP THE CRUSADE!**



**P**ick up your lance and stay with those crusading to protect wildlife and the environment. Audubon Action (NAS newsjournal) has been replaced by our new national newsletter, the *Audubon Activist*, to give you all the information you need to slay the dragons. Sign up for the "Activist" corps today. Use the subscription envelope enclosed in the June (final) issue of NAS newsjournal, or send six dollars (for one year) to the *Audubon Activist*, 950 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

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The deadline for the Oct. Roadrunner is Sept. 22.

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