

the ROADRUNNER.....



NEWSLETTER of the
El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society
P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986

Editor: Sarah Dodds

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Volume 12, Number 6

GENERAL MEETING

Our next general meeting will not be until MONDAY 20 SEPTEMBER, but it will be well worth the wait!! DAN TRUE is coming from Albuquerque to entertain and enlighten us. Mr. True is the author of A FAMILY OF EAGLES, a chronicle of his experiences studying, photographing and enjoying nesting Golden Eagles in Palo Duro Canyon near Amarillo, Texas. We are most fortunate to have this outstanding man come to El Paso to relive his eagle experiences with us in September.

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FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, 19-20 JUNE. GILA CLIFF DWELLINGS AND GREAT BLUE HERON ROOKERY. This will be a camping trip, however cabins are available within 5 miles at Doc Campbell's (Ph. 505-534-9551). If you have room in your vehicle or need a ride, call Bob Johnson at 751-0125.

Leader Bob Johnson is going up at noon on Friday 18 June. Those coming up Friday look for Bob's light blue station wagon (with luggage rack on top) at Scorpion Corral Campground. This campground is easy to see from the road. For those coming Saturday, meet at 10 AM at Scorpion Corral. Road directions are in next column.

DIRECTIONS TO CLIFF DWELLINGS

Take I-10 to Deming, turn right on US 180 for 25 miles, then right on Rt. 61 for 25 more miles. Cross over Rt. 90, continuing on Rt. 61 north to Rt. 35. Proceed 10 miles on Rt. 35 till you intersect Rt. 15. Turn right on Rt. 15, and after 10 miles you will arrive at Doc Campbell's. 5 more miles on Rt. 15 will bring you to the Cliff Dwellings and Scorpion Corral. All mileages are approximate. Maps of the Gila Wilderness are usually available at Am Camp in Barley Square on Viscount. An ordinary road map should suffice to get you to the Cliff Dwellings.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, 10-11 JULY. SACRAMENTO MOUNTAINS, NM. Meet at 7 AM at K Mart, 9484 Dyer. We can look forward to montane birds and a possible visit to Audubon's proposed new sanctuary in the Sacramentos. Leader: John Sproul (541-5157 h, 541-6126 w). Limit: 12! Reservations required.

SUNDAY, 25 JULY. OLD REFUGE, near Mesilla. Art Arteaga will lead this one. Please contact him for details at 532-6281.

THURSDAY, 12 AUGUST. HUECO TANKS and the PERSEID METEORS. After dinner at the Tanks, we'll watch night and the meteors fall. This is much more convenient than last year's wake-up at 3 AM routine. Bring friends and children. Leader: Tony Worth (593-3777 w, 592-4926 h).

Field Trips (continued)

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, 21-22 AUGUST. LAKE ROBERTS and the GILA FOREST. Details on this adventure are pending. Coordinators for this event are Art Arteaga and John Sproul. Will we find the elusive Spotted Owl again this year? This is the perfect way to end the summer, as anyone who went last year will be only too willing to agree. /Art Arteaga/

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MONDAY, 14 JUNE, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet in the home of Jo Nagel, 3020 Douglas, El Paso (566-2143). All members are welcome. Jo's garden is worth the trip to see how she has utilized desert plants for maximum effect and beauty.

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EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING

There will be and Education Committee meeting on Monday, 21 June at Ginny Baker's house, 2716 Louisville (562-9465). Newcomers are welcome!

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AUDUBON COUNCIL OF TEXAS HAS NON-GAME WILDLIFE LEGISLATION STRATEGY MEETING IN AUSTIN!

Remember all those nice Auduboners who came from all over the state to El Paso last Halloween? They were the AUDUBON COUNCIL OF TEXAS (ACT) and they will meet on Saturday, July 17th, in Austin to discuss strategy regarding passage of a non-game wildlife bill in Texas.

(continued next column)

ACT MEETING (continued)

The Council decided at its April meeting in Rockport that this legislation would be its main goal for 1982-1983.

Many states have taken measures in recent years to promote conservation of non-game wildlife. Texas, with the widest diversity of game and non-game wildlife in North America, needs to take similar measures. ACT hopes to be at the forefront of this undertaking.

All Audubon chapters in Texas should send a representative to the July 17th meeting. Contact one of the persons listed below or our ACT delegate, Helen Barto, for details on meeting, time, place, lodging, etc. A Sunday morning outing to one of Austin's natural areas is also scheduled.

Bill Craighead, 5368 Wonder Drive, Fort Worth, TX 76133.

Becky Lasley, 7402 Shadywood, Austin, TX 78745.

Pat Hartigan, 3312-A Westhill Dr., Austin, TX 78704.

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A DEAR JOHN (BOWEN) LETTER

(John Bowen was the very capable editor of a newsletter for another environmental organization, several years ago. Your editor has high respect for his humor and ability.)

Dear John,

When you tactfully suggested that what our Audubon newsletter needed was some humor, let me assure you the last issue was not what I really had in mind as a response. However, now that it is in the hands of Auduboners from here to Washington, D.C. and even Idaho, let me just say to you that if you don't think that issue had humor, may you never rest your eyes on an American Goldfish again.

Your still smiling editor,

SJD

BIRDATHON REVISITED

May 1st was a day for superlatives --the loveliest of weather, more sponsors for our counters than last year (213 as compared to 163 in '81), and most importantly, more money raised than last year (\$1971.82 at press time) for National Audubon. Our 1/3 of the earnings will be earmarked for our Raptor Protection Plan.

And the Winners are:

Barry Zimmer--for counting the most species (120) won a \$20 gift certificate from B Dalton Bookseller.

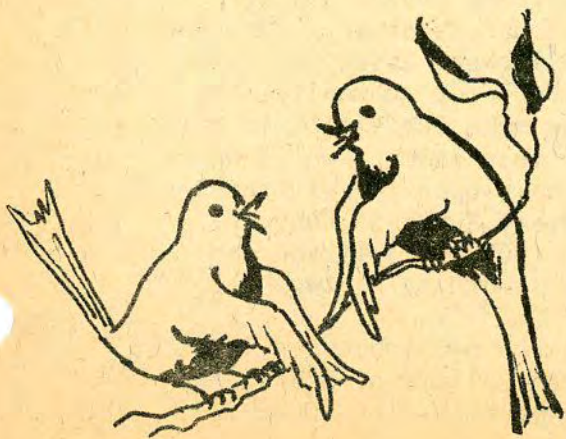
Jeff Donaldson--not only did he raise the most money and obtain the most sponsors (winning a \$20 check and a \$20 gift certificate from AmCamp), but his name was also drawn for our Grand Prize, the Bald Eagle print.

Harry Assad--the new birder to count the most species won Jim Lane's "A Birder's Guide to Southeastern Arizona".

Many thanks to all our generous sponsors and our dedicated counters. You deserve a round of applause.

/Jane Fowler/

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NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVE CAMPAIGN

The 81-82 campaign is over and our chapter has received recognition within the Southwest Region. For the category "Number of New Members Chapter Generated", we had 24 giving us second place. The region consists of 26 chapters, 3 of the largest (Houston, Dallas of Travis) had more membership but failed to meet the minimum eligibility requirement of 5% of membership. We had 8.8%, by actual count we were fifth with 11 chapters having larger memberships. More details on the incentive campaign in September and October as we get ready for 82-83.

1982 BIG DAY COUNT RESULTS

The numbers keep going UP. We had a record 37 El Paso participants for our 1 May Big Day Count, 31 in the field and 6 at feeders. They found an amazing 151 species of El Paso-area birds, up 13 over last year and 1 more than 1975's previous high count. Individually, Barry Zimmer and Jeff Donaldson broke new ground for El Paso birders by tallying 120 and 118 species, respectively. Kevin Zimmer had set the previous Big Day record of 100 in 1980.

(Going farther afield, we also had 2 counters in Arizona's Chiricahua Mts. and 2 at Lake LBJ near Austin. They added 40 more species to give us a grand total of 191.)

As the abundance of 1 May records in the OBESERVATION report indicates, rare birds played a big part in our success. We found several of our rarer residents: Harris' Hawk, Sora, Barn Owl, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher.

Eastern vargrants boosted our El Paso-area warbler total to 14 species (& 1 additional race), a far cry from last year's 8. Ducks increased from 11 species to 13, raptors from 7 to 9, shorebirds from 11 to 13. Our only big decline was in the finch family, where we fell from 23 species to 19.

What made this a record count, rather than just a very good one? Credit the folks who kept an eye on their yards. Yards produces our only Vermilion Flycatcher, some surprisingly late Scrub Jays and our only Hooded Oriole. Such sidespread participation assured an expectational Big Day, made even better by an exceptional Birdathon. /John Sproul/
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HOT AIR ON CLEAN AIR

The debate in Congress over re-authorization of the Clean Air Act (CAA) continues to be long and heated. It may continue into 1983.

In our last installment, the health and Environment Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee was considering two bills for reorganizing the CAA: HR 5555 and HR 5252. HR 555 was a strong bill introduced by Rep. Waxman (D-CA) that had support from the Audubon and other conservation groups. HR 5252, authored by Reps. Dingell (D-MI) and Luken (D-OH), had the support of industry and the Reagan administration. The subcommittee opted for HR 5252.

HR 5252 then went before the full committee, and supporters of strong legislation achieved several key gains through amendments to the bill. Such a turn of events didn't sit well with committee

chair Dingell. After an amendment to strengthen the Prevention of Significant Deterioration provisions of HR 5252 passed 25-13, he abruptly halted action on the bill. That was on 29 April. Since then the Reagan administration and other supporters of HR 5252 have been twisting arms vigorously in an attempt to quash the growing support for maintaining a strong CAA. At press time, it appears the committee may resume action on HR 5252 on 25 May.

Over in the Senate, mark-up of CAA legislation in the Environment and Public Works Committee also should resume 25 May, with key votes imminent on the subjects of acid rain and controls required on western sewer plants. Sen. Stafford (R-VT), the chair of this committee, favors a strong CAA, and the bill that emerges from committee should reflect many of his views. Speaking of views, Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (Senate Ofc. Bldg., Wash., DC 20510) is a member of this committee; he needs to hear yours on the subject of clean air. /John Sproul/

VOLUNTEERS' CORNER

Thanks are due everyone who came to Feather L. for the 15 May work day. It marked the start of what we hope will be an ongoing work program at our sanctuary. Feather L. can be a great asset for wildlife and for our community, but only if we make the effort to maintain it. This summer, we'll have the sanctuary open for willing workers every Sunday. Contact Tom Baker (562-9461) if you can put it in a morning or two.

We have three new inductees into the EP/TPAS Gallery of Stars, including a corporate inductee.

Congratulations and thanks to:

- # Lois Beno, who is our new chapter librarian;
- # Dave Brown, who introduced us to the basics of nature photography at the May general meeting;
- # Chevron USA Inc., which donated oil drums for use as trash cans at Feather L.

We'll gain yet another inductee if we can find a new Clean Air Act Coordinator. Call John Sproul (545-5157) if interested.

FAREWELL, BLEICHERS!

We just lost a former editor of this publication. Also a former field-trips chair, a former vice-president and a former president of our chapter. It all happened when Bob Bleicher and his wife Gretchen moved to Indiana in mid-May. We wish them the best, but the enthusiasm and spirit of participation the Bleichers brought to this group will be sorely missed. Good luck, Bob and Gretchen!

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FALL CLEARANCE SALE

The sale isn't till fall, but the clearance can start now. Want to clear out a garage or closets? We'll gladly accept your discards for our next rummage sale. Call Peggy Riede (821-0989), Jane Fowler (772-0296) or John Sproul (545-5157) and they'll have someone pick up your junk.

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OBSERVATIONS

APRIL 16 - MAY 17

Migration was in full swing throughout the reporting period, but it was not only the normal species which appeared, but many eastern vagrants as well. The best luck was had with warblers, with 21 species being recorded, several of which are rare or accidental in the area. Also noteworthy were the many northern or montane species which hung around extremely late.

LOONS-FALCONS

Western Grebes were seen on several occasions at the Fort Bliss Sewage Ponds (hereafter FBSP) from 4-29 through 5-7 (BJ,JD), and 2 were at the Newman Ponds on 5-1 (JG et al.). A lone cormorant species was at the FBSP on 5-1 (JS et al.). Snowy Egrets were present at almost all water areas throughout the month (BZ,JD,BJ,JS). A lone Cattle Egret frequented FBSP where it was seen by many (BZ,JD,JS, BJ et al.). Solitary Great Egrets were reported on 5-1 from FBSP (BJ et al.) and the Newman Ponds (JG et al.). Black-crowned Night Herons and White-faced Ibis were both numerous throughout the month.

Lone Green Herons were seen at Tornillo on 4-24 (BZ), FBSP on 4-29 (BJ, JD), and Randal's Pool on 5-1 (BZ). Two extremely late Snow Geese were at FBSP on 5-9 (SP,EP). The first Mississippi Kite of the year circled overhead off Fred Wilson Blvd. on 5-8 (BZ). Two, possibly three more, were seen the next day over Memorial Park (JN,JS). Very rare was a dark phase Swainson's Hawk e. of Esperanza off I-10 on 5-17 (BZ,JD). A Bay-winged Hawk was seen near McNary on 4-25 (JS, JC) and 2 were present in the same area on 5-1 (BZ,JD). Single Ospreys were seen in the lower valley on 4-25 (JS,JC) and 5-13 (AG). Golden Eagles were reported often from throughout the El Paso area (BZ, JD, JS, JC, BJ, JP). Prairie Falcons remained at Hueco Tanks until at least 5-1 (BZ,JD,AG, CG). Apparently successful nesting occurred.

OBSERVATIONS (continued)

QUAIL-WOODPECKERS

A lone Sora was sighted in an Upper Valley drainage ditch on 5-1 (EK), while at least 4 were heard at FBSP on 5-7 (BZ, BJ, JD). American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts were common throughout the month. Two Semipalmated Plover were seen s.e. of Esperanza on 4-25 (JS, JC) and 1 was at FBSP on 5-1 (BZ, JD). Long-billed Curlews seemed unusually common all month. The bird of the month was a Whimbrel found and photographed at FBSP on 5-7 (BJ, JD). If photographs confirm the identity, it would represent a first verified El Paso record. As many as 4 Marbled Godwits remained at FBSP through April (BZ, JD, BJ).

The only report of Solitary Sandpiper was 8 birds at FBSP on 4-29 (BJ, JB). The first Willets of the spring were a group of 26 at Feather L. on 4-24 (BZ), and the first Yellowlegs, also at Feather L., were seen on 4-20 (BZ). Four Baird's Sandpipers were reported below Esperanza on 4-25 (JC, JS). Franklin's Gulls and Forster's Terns were both unusually common this spring. As many as 20 Franklin's Gulls could be consistently found at FBSP, while Tornillo and FBSP harbored up to 30 Forster's Terns (BZ, JD, JS, BJ). Only 1 Black Tern was sighted, at FBSP on 5-7 (BJ, JD). Two Screech Owls were heard near the campground at Hueco Tanks on 4-17 (AG, MG). A lone Barn Owl was flushed from the rocks at Hueco Tanks on 5-1 (AG, CG), while another was seen near Santa Teresa Country Club on the same date (BZ, JD). The first Poor-wills reported for the spring were 4 at Hueco Tanks on 5-1 (BZ, JD) although they have undoubtedly been around since mid-March. Unusual was a Broad-tailed Hummingbird at Hueco Tanks on 5-1 (AG, CG).

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FLYCATCHERS-VIREOS

A single male Vermilion Flycatcher was discovered in the unlikelyst of places, a westside backyard, on 4-30 (EL). It was seen again later on the same date (BZ) and on 5-1 (BZ, JD). Three Cassin's Kingbirds were seen near Hueco Tanks on 4-24 (BZ), followed by 1 on 5-3 (BZ). A Black Phoebe seen near Esperanza on 4-25 may have been involved in nest building (JS, JC). The first Dusky Flycatcher of spring was at Hueco Tanks on 4-18 (BZ, JD), the first Western on 5-4 at Memorial Park (JD), and the only Willow at Memorial Park on 5-9 (JS). Western Pewees first appeared at Hueco Tanks on 4-18 (BZ, JD), while an Olive-sided Flycatcher was first seen in the same area on 5-3 (BZ). Several reports of very late Scrub Jays came in as recently as 5-1 from yards around town (JB, FB, BD). Common Crows remained in the lower valley in greatly reduced numbers until late April. A small flock of 8 was seen near Clint in 4-20 (BZ) and a lone bird was heard near Rio Bosque on 4-24 (BZ, JD) and 1 at FBSP on 4-29 (JD, BJ). Townsend's Solitaires were sighted into late April with 3 at Hueco Tanks on 4-18 (BZ, JD) and 1 in the same location on 4-24 (BZ). Sage Thrashers were observed on 2 occasions - 1 off Zaragoza Rd. on 4-18 (BZ, JD) and 1 at FBSP on 4-29 (JD, BJ).

A late Black-tailed Gnatcatcher appeared at Randal's Pool on 5-1 (BZ, JD). Phainopeplas were noted on several occasions throughout the month (BZ, JD). Solitary Vireos were first noted at Hueco Tanks on 4-18, as was a lone Warbling Vireo (BZ, JD). A Bell's Vireo at Memorial Park on 4-24 (BZ) was quite unusual, as was another at Randal's Pool on 5-9 (JD).

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OBSERVATIONS (continued)

WARBLERS-SPARROWS

A singing male Black-and-white Warbler was foraging near the main pond area of Hueco Tanks on 5-1 (BZ,JD,AG,EG). The second El Paso record of Worm-eating Warbler was a lone bird at Diez Lagos on 4-26 (JDP). An adult Tennessee Warbler at Memorial Park on 5-1 provided only a handful of records in El Paso (BZ,JD). The first Nashville Warbler of spring was seen on the westside on 4-25 (JS), while the first Virginia's was at Hueco Tanks on 4-18 (BZ,JD). A probable Lucy's Warbler was sighted at Hueco Tanks on 5-7 (AG,MG). Several Northern Parula sightings occurred - a female at Memorial Park on 4-24 (BZ), and a lone male bird at Hueco Tanks on 5-1 (AG,CG), 5-2 (DT), and 5-3 (BZ) - all presumably the same individual. The first Yellow Warbler was at Memorial Park on 5-4 (JDP). Lone Myrtle Warblers were sighted at Rio Bosque on 4-24 (JS) and near Five Points on 5-1 (JN et al.). Townsend's warblers first appeared at Memorial Park on 5-1 (BZ,JD), while a lone Black-throated Gray was seen at Hueco Tanks on 4-18 (BZ,JD). Subsequently, an incredible number of 12 Black-throated Grays were seen on 4-24 at Hueco Tanks and Memorial Park (BZ). Two Grace's Warblers were sighted: one at Memorial Park on 4-24 (BZ), the other, also at Memorial Park, on 5-4 (JDP). A probable Palm Warbler was observed in Arroyo Park on 5-1 (AA). And Ovenbird was seen in Memorial Park on 5-4 (JDP) and a Northern Waterthrush was at Hueco Tanks on 5-2 (DT). Yellow-breasted Chats were first noted at Tornillo on 5-1 (BZ,JD). MacGillivray's Warblers were at Hueco Tanks on 4-18 (BZ,JD). Single American Redstarts were sighted at Memorial Park on 5-1 (DW, JS et al.), at Horizon City on 5-7 (AG,MG), and on Durlings Farm on 5-16 (m.ob.) Eastern Meadowlarks are apparently breeding for the first time in

OBSERVATIONS (continued)

the El Paso area. As many as 15 individuals have been seen and heard just e. of Hueco Tanks throughout the month, (BZ,JD,AG,EG). The first Western Tanager was a male at Memorial Park on 5-1 (BZ), while the first Summer Tanager was seen on the 4/18 field trip to Tornillo (AG et al.). An early Blue Grosbeak was at Tornillo on 5-1 (BZ,JD) and the first Black-headed was at Durling's Farm on the same date (BZ,JD). The only Lazuli Bunting was a male at Hueco Tanks on 5-1 (AG,CG). Both rare and very late were 3 sightings of Cassin's Finch - the first a male in Mescalero Canyon at Hueco Tanks on 4-18 (BZ,JD), the second, presumably the same bird, was seen and heard in the same area on 4-24 (BZ), the third, a female, was near the same pond area of Hueco Tanks on 5-3 (BZ). Late was a mixed flock of Pine Siskins and American Goldfinches which remained at Durling's Farm until at least 5-11 (BZ). Two late Black-chinned Sparrows were at Hueco Tanks on 4-18 (BZ,JD).

CONTRIBUTORS

Art Arteaga, Flora Bittick, Janet Brockmoller, John Caraway, Joe Di Pasquale, Jeff Donaldson, Robert Dukes, Jane Fowler, Al Gavit, Chris Gavit, Edna Mae Lyons, Madeline Gavit, Joe Guinn, Bob Johnson, Earle King, Jo Nagel, Shawn Pierce, Ed Pierce, Jim Polk, Marie Pragle, Bettie Roberts, John Sproul, Dorothy Tobkin, David Weinstein, Barry Zimmer. /Barry Zimmer/

BETTIE ROBERTS HELPS AGAIN

As Barry Zimmer will be out of town until early August, please report your unusual sightings to Bettie Roberts at 591-0421. Thank you, Bettie, for your capable help!

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Yes, I want to join the El Paso/
Trans-Pecos Chapter of the Na-
tional Audubon Society.

Name

Address

City

Zip

Membership category desired:

Individual/\$25 Family/\$32

Sr. Citizen, Individual/\$17

Sr. Citizen, Family/\$19

Student/\$15

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