





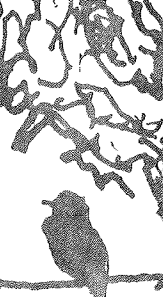



THE ROADRUNNER

Newsletter of  
EL PASO AUDUBON SOCIETY  
3123 Federal Avenue, El Paso, Texas 79930

Vol. 1, No. 8, November, 1971

Geth Osborn White, Editor

CALENDAR

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- Monday, Nov. 15, 7:30 P.M. REGULAR MEETING at Centennial Museum, U.T.E.I. Campus. Members' slide show of summer vacation pictures with the accent on birds and scenery. Please bring your color slides and limit your presentation to 15 minutes. We can count on seeing Lisabeth Lovelace's trip on the river run through the Grand Canyon; the Whites and Hardaways combining slides of pictures of birds in San Blas; Mary Moore has a pictorial record of her trip to the Big Bend. Call Mary at 565-8065 (evenings) and let her know you can be a part of the program.
- Saturday, Nov. 13, 7:00 A. M. FIELD TRIP to Upper Valley along the Rio Grande. Meet at the bridge on Country Club Road. Science teachers in the elementary grades have been invited to meet with us there to learn some of the techniques of birding in the field. If you want to volunteer to help them on this morning, it will be appreciated, or if you want to go along as a member of the group, that is fine. We will furnish them checklists and books and if you have extra binoculars to lend, they may be used.
- Friday, Saturday, Nov. 19,20 FIELD TRIP to Caballo Lake State Park, a trip of about 110 miles. Campout for those who wish it. Meet at the Campground below the dam. The Park is 14 miles south of Truth or Consequences and is one of the Reclamation Dams and reservoirs of the Rio Grande Watershed. Water birds should be good and trees in campground area hold wintering land birds. Those who want to drive up Saturday can join us at the Campground at 8:00 A. M. Take I 25 north from Las Cruces.

TEXAS ORNITHOLOGY SOCIETY annual fall trip to be held in Houston over Thanksgiving weekend, 25th, 26th and 27th. Registration: Mrs. Jerry Baker 6430 Jefferson Dr., Houston, Texas 77023. Field trips are scheduled Friday for Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge and a boat trip for pelagic birds in the Gulf. This is a statewide organization of birders which publishes a monthly newsletter to keep members current on birds and activities concerning us. Two field trips are held each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. They are well organized and present an opportunity to meet top birders. Speakers are often national figures in ornithology. It's well worth \$5. annual dues.

TRIP TO MCKITTRICK

Our October 23rd trip brought vistas of scarlet maples and good sized herds of Mule Deer racing across brushy fields as we threaded our way around boulders and into ruts on the badly washed ranch road leading to the entrance to McKittrick Canyon. Desert and Chipping Sparrows were feeding around the desert vegetation and a pair of Scaled Quail scurried across the road.

Unanticipated by us, we were a part of an escorted tour to see the Canyon in its fall splendor, and there were 75 of us, accompanied by a young lady Ranger who gave interpretive talks at intervals.

Falling behind the group, some of us birders saw Hermit Thrush, Townsend's Solitaire, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Red-shafted Flicker, Orange-crowned, Yellow, Townsend's, Audubon's and Wilson's Warblers and a Phainopepla. A few White-throated Swifts were circling high above us at the top of the canyon.

The presence of water is an obvious delight to the wildlife and makes for its abundance in this dry country. Limpid pools of the slow-moving stream fed by springs reflected overhanging cliffs. A clump of ferns here, a bit of cactus there clinging to rock surfaces added to the charm of the scene. A deer lowered his muzzle to drink while birds bathed in the shallows.

Some of us camped out overnight at Pine Springs and walked up the canyon. Grace Thompson, Ed and I discovered six Swainson's Thrushes eating the beautiful red berries of a single Madrone Tree. Grace had plans to try for photographs the next day and I hope she was successful in capturing the beauty of this unusual tree with its peeling red bark, glossy green leaves and brilliant scarlet fruits.

The higher we ascended in the canyon, the more colorful were the trees, Big-toothed Maples shading from pure red to orange tones in sharp contrast to white limestone washes.

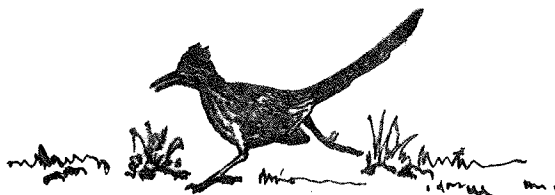
Our group also explored Frijole Canyon, hiking up to Smith Springs, a rare beauty spot which is an important watering place for all the wildlife in the region.

People making the trip were Mrs. Faye Miller, Mrs. Mary Lou Boyce, Mrs. Ruby Allen, Mrs. Mary Moore, Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Nagel, Sgt. and Mrs. Clarence Shelfer, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Barto, Mr. and Mrs. Carlisle Navidowski, Clayburn Peeples, General and Mrs. Robert Hardaway, Geth and Ed White, Grace Thompson.

BIRD RECORDS

<u>Species</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer</u>	<u>Location</u>
Pigeon Hawk	10/14	Geth White	3123 Federal*
Dickcissel, 4	10/17	Ruby Allen	Upper Valley
Clark's Nutcracker	10/21	Caroline McClintock, Mary Belle Keefer	Federal Street
Mearn's Quail (road kill)	10/17	Geth and Ed White	Cloudero't city limits, New Mexico
Western Grebe	10/30	Bill Hunt	Horizon Lake
Scissor-tailed <del>Cormorant</del>	"	"	"
Flycatcher, 2	9/27	James Koons	Hueco Club, Carlsbad Highway,
	9/28		El Paso County

\*This bird was in our fig tree near the back door, catching sparrows as they came in our feeder, crashing into our window and injuring itself as I came out the door. It was subsequently found dead in the alley; a second pigeon hawk was sighted 11/5.



### SEED-GATHERING FIELD TRIP

Richard Reed and Phil McPherson of the Soil Conservation Service led us on a trail of discovery to the lower valley. One of the interesting stops was a shallow lake with grasses growing in it and ducks resting and feeding on the Loop Route of the Ysleta cut-off. The lake is actually a water table and looks like a good potential for public recreation land. We would appreciate it in the Audubon Society if it could be held as a natural area with birdwatching and fishing as recreation. We observed a cut-over alfalfa field dotted with blackbirds, red-wings, Brewer's, Boat-tailed Grackles and a few Yellow-headed Blackbirds feeding. They identified Dropseed grass, Barnyard Grass, Night Shade, Amaranth. Proceeding on down the valley we looked longingly at a little Bosque which would make a marvelous bird sanctuary and wildlife sanctuary if this little bit of natural desert scrub with its mesquites, Salt Cedars, wolfberry shrubs could be retained as such. It is located very close to the Water Treatment Plant which in itself is quite an attracter for water birds.

We drove on out to Horizon Lakes area where we added a few more plants to our collection, the Mesa Dropseed, Sand Sage, Indian Mallow, the Snake Bush which is a legume and would make a dandy landscape plant, the Tarbush, Snakebush and a handsome shrub which looked white at a distance called Winter Fat.

We had some new faces on our field trip including Mrs. Gin Terrian who brought along four junior highschoolers who were interested in collecting seeds of plants useful for birds food or cover, and Lorenzo Cuesta, who is a university student at U.T.E.P. We are indebted to our guides for giving of their time on a Saturday morning and furnishing us with such valuable information on plants and soils of the lower valley.

### THE ETIQUETTE OF BIRDING

Anita Carter sends us this article in National Gardening and it is quoted herewith:

"Many qualified people are reluctant to lead bird walks because the people who come do not observe or do not know field trip etiquette.

"Never go ahead of the leader or wander off the trail. When a bird is heard or sighted, remain quiet until all have seen it; it may be a first for somebody in the group.

You must dress properly to enjoy a bird walk. High heels or dress shoes are a no-no and mark you as a novice. Sturdy shoes or boots will keep feet dry and warm.

"Clothing should be of materials which will not snag on brambles or collect weed seeds. Long sleeves will protect arms from scratches and insects. Slapping mosquitoes on bare arms or legs can frighten birds into the next county.

"Clothes should be warm because a bird walk is not a strenuous exercise but a leisurely walk where you take time to appreciate the shape of a tree or the pattern of a leaf. You will see more birds if you walk slowly, stop often -- and listen.

"When a bird is located in a tree or bush, it can be pointed out to others in the group by giving the location as on an imaginary clock face. Example: On the white oak -- halfway out the branch at 3:00 o'clock.

"Many bird walks are ended abruptly because some participants would rather talk to each other than listen for bird calls. Personal conversations should be restrained until the walk is over.

"If you are a beginner in bird study, get a good bird identification book and set up a feeding station outside a convenient window."

P. S. It's like fishing -- you don't catch a fish without keeping your line wet and you don't see birds if you don't get out and look with binoculars.

NEW BOOKS ON ENVIRONMENT

Lisabeth Lovelace, Librarian at the Main Public Library, lists some new titles which you might find interesting reading: 1) Water Lords, by James M. Fallow, a Ralph Nader study on this aspect of our environment. 2) The Arch Druid by John McPhee 3) Unfit for Human Consumption by Ruth Hanner 4) The Stream by Robert Murphy 5) Environment and Man by Wagner.

PLANTING FOR THE BIRDS AND BEAUTY  
THE RUSSIAN OLIVE

The Russian Olive has come to town, bringing birds with it. Long used for field windbreaks in the country, hedgerows, living fences, gully and streambank plantings, city dwellers have discovered what a beautiful tree it is when planted alone and pruned and allowed to become a shade tree up to 40 feet high.

A native of Europe and Western Asia, it is adapted to the Western and Great Plains States. Few other trees have such wide adaptation to soil and climate. Its silvery foliage and graceful irregular shape make it an attractive plant for many kinds of landscape plantings.

The plant is a spreading, shrubby tree that grows up to 20 feet tall under normal rainfall conditions. It grows larger when it has extra water and fertility. When allowed to grow without pruning its lower branches spread to 20 feet in diameter. When planted with close spacing and proper pruning, Russian-olive makes a dense attractive hedge. It also makes a fine shade tree up to 40 feet high when all but one of the lower stems is removed and it is kept free of branches close to the ground.

Plantings are well cared for and watered produce seeds in 3 to 5 years. Fragrant small yellow flowers appear in early summer. Whitish or silvery fruits mature in the early fall and remain on the tree for several months providing food for birds during winter months. Salt tolerance of the plant is surpassed only by saltcedar.

Birds and mammals known to eat Russian Olive Fruit are:

Mallard	Eastern bluebird	Cottontail
Blue grouse	Mountain bluebird	Fox squirrel
Sharp-tailed grouse	Townsend's solitaire	Ground squirrel
Grey partridge	Bohemian waxwing	Elk
Bobwhite	Cedar waxwing	Deer
Scaled Quail	Phainopepla	
California Quail	Starling	
Gambel's Quail	Brewer's blackbird	
Ring-necked pheasant	Common grackle	
Chukar	Cardinal	
Wild Turkey	Evening grosbeak	
Mourning dove	House finch	
Roadrunner	Pine siskin	
Red-shafted flicker	House sparrow	
Black-billed magpie	Lesser Goldfinch	
Common crow	Green-tailed towhee	
Mockingbird	Rufous-sided towhee	
Catbird	Slate-colored junco	
Brown thrasher	Oregon junco	
Sage thrasher	White-crowned sparrow	
Robin	Song sparrow	

QUAIL BLOCKS, QUAIL BLOCKS

If you live near the desert have fun watching quail come to these 25 pound blocks of grain, meal and minerals. Research has established that 300 per cent increase in quail production has been obtained where the blocks have been used. Each block is sufficient to feed a good-sized flock of quail for about 3-4 weeks. Talk it up to your friends and help us make a little money for the Society and give the birds a hand in lean winter months. Quail block is stored at the Colonial Terrace Hotel, 1413 Montana Avenue and may be picked up there. We've already sold ten!

THE HEARINGS ON GUADALUPES SCHEDULED

Two separate hearings are scheduled as follows:

- Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Master Plan Proposal, 9:00 A. M. Nov. 22
- Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Master Plan Proposal, 1:00 P. M. Nov. 22
- Guadalupe Mountains National Park Wilderness Proposal, 9:00 A. M. Nov. 23
- Carlsbad Caverns National Park Wilderness Proposal 1:00 P. M. Nov. 23

at the Airport Holiday Inn in El Paso.

Briefly, the Master Plan proposes a mechanical lift to the rim of the escarpment with an upper terminus shelter for visitors and a paved trail leading to Pine Top Mountain two miles away, and another to McKittrick Canyon Overlook a mile and a quarter distant. Interpretive efforts will be directed to this facility. Appropriate trails will lead from various points into the wilderness which can be explored by the hiker prepared to make these trips. Parking facilities and service center will be placed at the bottom near the highway which runs parallel to the Guadalupe Escarpment. All of McKittrick Canyon will be carefully controlled to ensure that this fragile biological area is not destroyed by those who come to enjoy it.

Carlsbad Caverns Master Plan proposes to move the administrative facilities to the city of Carlsbad; to make changes in the elevator shaft to contain the cold cave air; to provide self-guided walking tours to reduce peak loads of visitors into the cave; to change the lighting; to provide more hiking trails and primitive campground within the area; to open a "wild cave" for escorted tours. This should be an interesting hearing. Just for the record, we have sent a letter with a statement that we hope the use of the Wilderness Park is never allowed to become over-use. Anyone wishing to see the Master Plan for both parks may borrow it from our Audubon files.

OF PEOPLE

Mrs. Marguerite Wright, who was active in El Paso Audubon activities for a number of years, having been president for a term, died last week in Carlsbad where she had resided in late years. Her many friends remember her good works.

Ruby Allen, who is a science teacher in the El Paso system, has been taking fifth graders on field trips to study rock samples, using the school bus and letting the children have lunch outdoors after their field studies. This is a first time for field studies in her school and she reports the children are crazy about it.

We welcome new members Mr. and Mrs. Clayburn Peoples which include old members joining National Audubon Society and us, such as Rev. Bill Hunt. Our first year is about concluded, and hopefully, old members will join our El Paso chapter of the Audubon Society by sending in dues. We must think about electing officers in January. Welcome to members of the National Society. We would love to have you at our meetings and field trips.

President: Mrs. Edmund White  
Vice-pres. Rev. Bill Hunt  
Treasurer: Mrs. Clarence Shelfer  
Historian: Mrs. J. Owen Allen  
Programs: Mrs. Mary Moore  
Newsletter: Mrs. Robert Barto  
Field Trips: Edmund White  
Conservation: Ray Payne  
Liaison: Mrs. Robert Hardaway, Mrs. Leigh Wilcox,  
Lisabeth Lovelace

Dues: \$12 individual, \$15 couple, \$6 student.



El Paso Audubon Society  
3123 Federal Avenue  
El Paso, Texas 79930

FIRST CLASS

Dec 18th