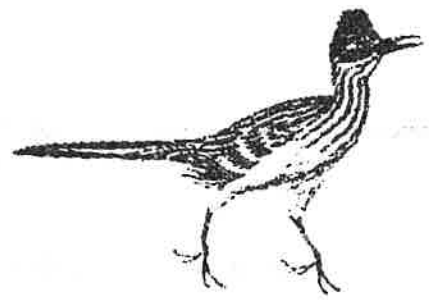


The Roadrunner



Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

Volume 27 No.6

December 1997- January 1998

General Meetings

December 8, 1997 7:30pm

Wildlife Studies in Asia and Northern Mexico

Dr. Raul Valdez will discuss resource management of native species and domestic livestock grazing in Mongolia. He states, "Wildlife is an economically important natural resource that has not realized its full potential in Mongolia... the rural populace must benefit from this resource." Dr. Valdez is presently Professor of Wildlife Services at New Mexico State University. He graduated with B.S. in Biology at UTEP in 1965 and is the published author of many, many wildlife studies books. He has field experience in the U.S., Mexico, Central America, Mongolia, Pakistan, Kirghizstan, Kazakhstan to name a few countries. It is a program that should not be missed.

January 19, 1998 7:30pm

Birds of Madagascar

Come hear Barry Zimmer, world traveler, avian pundit, and expert photographer, tells and show us about the birds of Madagascar, the fourth largest island in the world, is home to an incredible array of fascinating and bizarre species. It has the highest rate of endemism in the world with over 50% of its bird species being found nowhere else. Five endemic bird families, thirty surviving lemur species, many chameleons, baobab trees, and over a thousand species of orchids are just some of the highlights of this unique country. Unfortunately, few places in the world are as threatened as the native environments of Madagascar.

From the eastern rain forests to the spiny deserts of the southwest, native habitats and native species are being lost at an alarming rate. Learn more about Madagascar and its fascinating wildlife at our January meeting.

State Park Needs Volunteers

Franklin Mountains State Park, at almost 24,000 acres, is a big park with a very small staff. As the park's programs expand and it becomes better known, that staff is getting stretched to the limit. How about giving them a hand? As a volunteer, you can make a big difference in protecting park resources and allowing the park to reach its full potential. Areas where volunteers support is most needed include trail work, resource monitoring, tours and interpretation (especially helping with school classes during the week), maintenance, and visitor reception and registration. Do you enjoy spending time afield in El Paso's greatest natural treasure? Want to make an important personal contribution toward stewardship of that treasure? Call the Park office at 566-6441 to volunteer.

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The President's Corner

The General meetings are always a good time to get together with your fellow bird watchers and to enjoy a good presentation. I look forward to seeing you at these meetings each month. Invite a friend to come as well!

ELECTION SEASON NEARS

Chapter elections take place at our January meeting. We will be choosing a president-elect, secretary, treasurer, and three directors.

The new officers and directors will be installed at our Annual Meeting in February. That meeting will also feature the presentation of our Meritorious Service and Conservation awards. The Meritorious Service Award goes to a chapter member who has made outstanding contributions to El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon and its programs. The Conservation Award goes to an individual, organization or other entity outside the chapter who has done exceptional work on behalf of the environment in Trans/Pecos Texas.

The Annual Awards Dinner

Mark your Calendar for Sunday, February 15th. Complete details about the cost and location of this event upcoming in the February Roadrunner

NEW MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

We have published a new chapter directory, our first since 1992. It is now available at general meetings. We are asking for a \$1.00 donation to cover printing costs. If you can't attend meetings, but would like a copy, send a check payable to "El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon", P.O. Box 9655, El Paso 79995. Please include an additional \$1.00 to cover the postage. Special thanks to Kathy and John Kiseda for all their work putting the directory together.

El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society Board of Directors:

President	Elizabeth Chase	591-5119
V-President	John Kiseda	833-6212
Secretary	Betty Fisbeck	581-0174
Treasurer	Larry Jordan	833-5969

Committee Chairs:

Conservation	John Kiseda	833-6212
Education	Weldon Fisbeck	581-0174
Field Trips	Bob Johnson	757-1876
Hospitality	Betty Pagel	772-2686
Membership	Jane Fowler	598-2448
Programs	Nancy Wilson	833-3907
Publications	Kathy Ditlevson	751-2005
Publicity	Hector Montes	565-4032
Sanctuary	John Sproul	545-5157

About the Roadrunner:

Roadrunner is your newsletter. We welcome your contributions. The next deadline is on Jan. 18, 1998. For further information, you may contact Elizabeth W. Chase:
W: 857-4323
fax: 857-4324
email: echase @ socorro.k12.tx.us



Are you interested in serving as an officer or director? Do you wish to suggest a candidate? Want to nominate someone for one of our chapter awards? Please contact a member of the nominating committee: They want to hear from you.

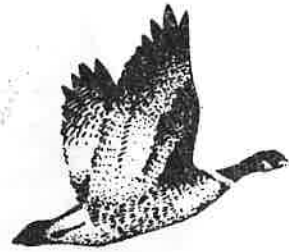
Fall is Golden at Feather Lake by John Sproul

As the cottonwoods ringing Feather Lake in stature, fall is growing increasingly golden at our sanctuary. Once again, the mix of fall beauty, pleasant weather and lots of birds make November a popular month at Feather Lake with school classes, garden clubs, scout groups and others. We do our best to accommodate the many groups requesting tours, and my thanks go to all the folks who have helped in 1997; Mary Lou Alcorn, Lupe Barrera, Craig Braginton, Betty Fisbeck, Jane Fowler, Bob Johnson, Betty Pagel, Charles Simpson, Weldon Fisbeck and Elizabeth Chase. If you are interested in helping lead future tours, please contact John Sproul (545-5157) or Weldon Fisbeck (581-0174).

Also enjoying fall at Feather Lake were the 29 participants at our potluck picnic on October 11. Thanks are due to Dayle Edwards for providing the barbecue grill; Betty Pagel for securing hamburgers, hot dogs and related supplies; and all the talented chefs who attended.

The fall colors that grace Feather Lake today are a direct result of our past habitat-management efforts. That work continues. In recent months, Eagle Scout-candidate Aaron Love and fellow scouts in Troop 90, students at St. Clement's School, students in the New Directions program at Del Valle High School and girl scouts on Troop 109 all have helped with trash clean-up and removal of non-native salt cedars and tumbleweeds at our sanctuary. Many thanks to all! Thanks also to Jean and John Quail for the wheelbarrow they recently contributed.

Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux in El Paso's lower valley. It is open every Saturday, 8:00am to noon and every Sunday, 2:00pm to dusk. Admission is free.



The El Paso Zoological Society presents "Holiday Lites" at the Zoo

The El Paso Zoo will be transformed into a winter wonderland of fanciful lights on December 12, 13, 19, 20, 21, 22 & 23 from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Please make plans for your journey through the Zoo's Winter Wonderland

Admission: \$2 (13 over) \$1 (3 to 12 years)

* Musical Entertainment

* Zoo Restaurant & Gift Shop will be open

* Only selected animals will be on display

For more information call (915) 532- 8156

**Next Feather Lake Appreciation Day:
Join us Saturday, January 17 to help
with habitat management at Feather
Lake. We'll start work at 1:00pm.
Bring a lunch and come early if you
wish; once the work is done, plan to
stick around and view the birds at the
day's end.**

CONTRIBUTIONS

The El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society gratefully acknowledges recent donations to our organization from these thoughtful friends:

For Feather Lake

Richard Sproul
Austin Terrace Garden Club



**Donate living X-mas trees for planting at Zoo
Daily 9:30 am to 4:00pm
beginning December 26, 1997 Zoo front gate.**

Cherly Garing, Horticulturist at El Paso, invites the public to donate living Christmas trees to be planted on the grounds following the holiday season. The Zoo will accept containerized live trees at the front gate beginning December 26, 1997 during normal business hours (9:30am to 4:00pm daily).

Many people in the El Paso area buy living trees for the holidays. However, not everyone successfully plants their living trees and many die and are discarded.

Cherly Garing advises the following:

- * plant your living tree within three weeks of purchase**
- * keep well-watered and in a protected area such as a garage or porch for one week to acclimate the tree to the outdoors before planting**
- * the hole dug for the tree should be twice as wide and deep as the container**
- * do not fertilize at planting**
- * if you do not expect to plant your living tree, donate it for planting on the Zoo grounds**
- * the Zoo also accepts donations of some other type of trees and plants (call Cherly at 521-1850 for information about the types of trees and plants needed)**
- * if you buy a cut tree, shred it for use as mulch or take it to a recycling center**
- * Watch the paper for the tree shredding location near you**

Cherly Garing has been the horticulturist at the El Paso Zoo since May 1994. She is responsible for botanical aspects of the zoo including plants, trees and irrigation. Her goals include educating the public about horticulture and encouraging the propagation of rare plants. Trees and plants on the zoo grounds are to be labeled with educational information as are the animal exhibits.

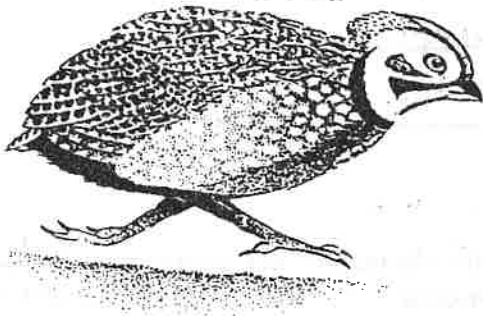
Feather Facts

presented by
Eastwood Heights Elementary
Cuckoo Conservation Club

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo by Joshua Larkin

The Yellow-billed cuckoo has a more common name, "rain crow", given to him by farmers who believe his harsh calling on a summer day brings rain. It is a raucous sound; unlike that of any other bird and is a great help identifying the yellow-billed cuckoo. Other names given to it are storm crow, chow-chow and kow-kow. The "rain crow" is a graceful flyer moving through the tree tops like a heavenly spirit. It has a reputation for destroying the eggs of other birds. According to experts, its preferred food is tent caterpillars. Observers have reported a single cuckoo eating up to fifty in less than ten minutes. Other food taken consists of locusts, gypsy moth caterpillars and May flies.

The yellow-billed cuckoo has a long, slender body and is richly dressed in a soft grayish-brown coat. With binoculars, the yellow bill can be easily seen as can the black tail feathers adorned with white patches. Unlike its European counterpart, the American version builds its own nest, but does not spend much effort on it. A few loose sticks and twigs are woven together so sparsely thin that often the eggs are visible through the nest.



National Audubon Society *Christmas Bird Count*

What is the Christmas Bird Count?

An annual hemispheric early-winter bird census. Volunteers count every individual bird and bird species over one calendar day (from midnight to midnight), within well-defined geographic areas.

When did it all begin?

In 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman was disturbed, as were many conservationists, at the slaughter of birds in the annual holiday event called the "side hunt." The team that shot the most birds and other small animals was the winner. As a protest, Chapman organized 27 friends in 25 locations on Christmas Day, 1900. Instead of shooting birds, they counted them.

Why?

Birds are indicators of the overall health of our environment. Christmas Bird Count data over time in any given area can provide valuable insights into the long-term health of bird populations and the environment.

Count rules are simple:

Each bird count is a circle 15 miles in diameter -- approximately 177 square miles. Bird counters try to cover as much of the circle area as possible within a 24-hour calendar day, counting each individual bird and species they see or hear in their designated sector of the circle.

Representatives from each counting group meet at the end of the day to compile the master list and eliminate double-counting of birds. Bird feeders within the circle are also censused.

The National Audubon Society
has a new Web address:
<http://www.audubon.org>

Today

Over 45,000 people from all 50 states, every Canadian province, the Caribbean, Central and South America and the Pacific Islands (all areas where the breeding birds of North America spend their winter) participate in about 1700 counts held during a two and one-half week period

The Christmas Count itself has evolved into the largest and longest-running wildlife survey ever undertaken.

Sauer, J. R., S. Schwartz, and B. Hoover. 1996. The Christmas Bird Count Home Page. Version 95.1. Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, MD: <http://www.mbr.nbs.gov/bbs/cbc.html>

Are you interested in becoming involved in the Christmas Bird Count?
We are looking for counters.
Contact Bob Johnson or John Sproul for more information.

NATIONAL CONVENTION '98 IN COLORADO

The 1998 Audubon Convention will be held from July 6-12, 1998 in Estes Park, Colorado, at the 860-acre YMCA of the Rockies. In the tradition of past Audubon conventions, field trips to scenic natural areas with expert leaders will be offered, as well as chapter leadership training and a learning lab. There will also be activities for children! For more information, contact the Audubon Convention information hotline at (303) 499-3622. Send a fax (303) 499-0286 or send an e-mail:

convention@audubon.org.

We'll keep you posted on program details.

Special Features

Special Thanks to John Kiseda for the insert

The Joy and Wonder of Birdwatching

A View From Here

by, Lucie Hunt at Harlan & Gschwind
Part 1 of 6 parcels

From this vantage point in my "big backyard," it is easy to accommodate all of the five senses, and maybe even get a sixth sense in gear. My hearing has been my most keen sense, I believe, based upon 66 years of music and laughter and further happiness in kindergarten-teaching, reaching back even to the womb where my mother was attuned to similar sharp-ear pursuits. Now, as I am doing daily desert walks, the volume control is of course up and over! This excerpt exercises the height of hearing things from my happy homeland here now. Whoo! Just what wonder are we hearing on some HARVEST MOON nights? It is NOT just my play among myriad memories and imagination, for HULA! My tom cat runs from my covers to our window sill, braces up and howls right back. And my dogs create a brave pack, ready to attack right back as they bark and bark-all-about-it, by the back gate. It has happened a lot lately and I love it! Don't we just like to share our space with likes of wild creatures? Since my first encounters with such sounds on summer nights, when I became too afraid to turn off my sprinkler, I have analyzed them as two distinct ones. There is that yip-yip bark of a dog or coyote; and there is the definite caterwaul of some (BIG!) wild cat. At this writing I am hunting down and recording tracks; This story will continue on.

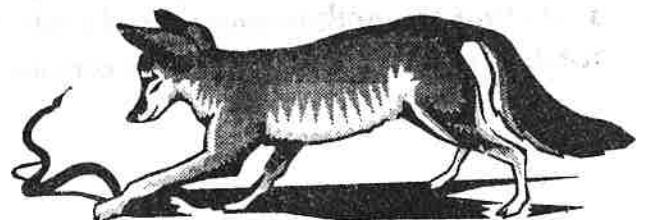
Northeast El Paso has enjoyed a good rainy season this year so that we could have some puddles form that lingered a week or ten days duration and luckily our Vector Control (mosquito eradicators) never came

upon them. So, my secret meadows could resound with courses of toads and frogs overnight, together with our regular serenade of crickets. I do enjoy my crickets so much that I've even set some free (nice big favorite ones and cutest babies!) which I purchased at the pet shop for my terrarium creatures to feed on. Now, they reward me with their nightly chorus. It sounds better to me than most TV.

I don't believe man is only the enemy of wild ecosystems. Some we do help fulfill their destinies. Some birds appear to be so happily sharing our human habitats! The hummingbirds converge upon our feeders and vines and cobwebs. The song sparrows sing upon our bushes and our homes. And just listen to that coving covey of doves along the electric wires, or at times that surprising operatic chorus of meadow larks up there also. Likewise the flicker and the woodpecker love the electric hole to browse for bugs. The hawk and who knows what else will take transmitters for nesting sights. My favorite bird this year has been my macho mockingbird performing in morning (gig) each day from his light-pole song-dash perch, which celebrates life over my pools of water. Cactus wrens fuss about when I walk my dogs past their cholla stand. And I say: "Yes! We are having fun!"

Those were all pleasant deserts sounds. I know have to mention one unpleasant fact-of-life here. More than once this year, our neighborhood has awakened to that awful scream-of-death which is the only time a rabbit a rabbit ever musters speech. At dawn it can be a rude awakening for me and my pets; Wow! What a scream that is! Oigam!

Next time: Glories that Greet our Eyes Here.



ON THE TRAIL

DRIPPING SPRINGS

Meet LARRY JORDAN (833-5969) on Sunday December 7th, 7:39AM at Trans Mountain and I-10. Good birds can be found at the "Old Refuge" on the river in Mesilla, then a trip up the Organ Mountains, for some higher altitude birds. Bring lunch to eat at the A.B. Cox Visitors Center and La Cueva Picnic Area. This is a Bureau of Land Management area, managed with the Nature Conservancy.

BIRD COUNTS

Hope your interest has been piqued by the article on Christmas Bird Counts. We need people to help us, in the field and at their yard feeders. The count dates will be:

Saturday December 27th - Hueco Tanks

Saturday January 3rd - El Paso

Call BOB "Wildbirder" JOHNSON - compiler - (757-1876) to get your name on one or BOTH lists.

Count down - after the counts are completed, we always get together to determine what was seen and enjoy the fellowship of the BIRDWATCHERS. This year we will have our POT-LUCK dinner at the Environmental Center, 800 South Piedras.

this is at the junction with Piasano. This will held on Sunday January 4th at 6 PM.

OTHER BIRD COUNTS

The following Bird Counts will be held in nearby areas:

Sat. Dec. 20th, McNary - Barry Zimmer- (821-6737)

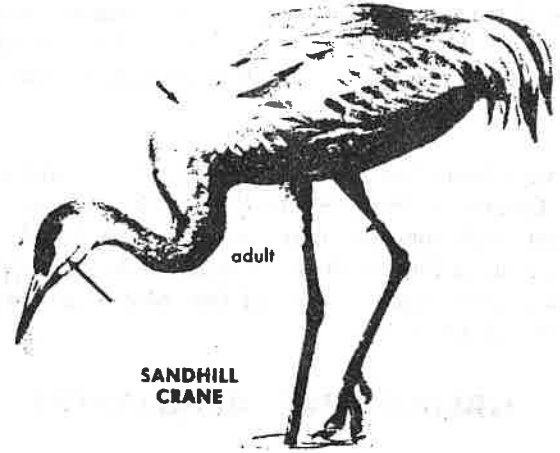
Sat. Dec. 20th, Balmorhea- Kelly Bryan-(915-426-3897)

Sat. Dec. 20th, Las Cruces- Gordon Ewing(505-522-3934)

Sun. Dec. 21st, Fort Davis- Kelly Bryan-(915-426-3897)

Sat. Dec. 27th, La Luz - John Mangimelli

Fri. Jan. 2nd, Caballo - Barry Zimmer - (821-6737)



WHOOPING CRANES

Perhaps you have read about the new Whooping Cranes that flew, behind an ultra-lite, into the BOSQUE DEL APACHE National Wildlife Refuge early in November. If not, you will hear about this new experiment and see them, plus the many thousands of Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese that come every winter.

Many other good bird sightings always occur here, good ones are of Ross's Goose and Hooded Mergansers. During our visit last January, they had over 60 eagles, mostly Bald. We also had a pair of Common Goldeneyes. A private tour has been set up for our chapter, this will take us into the closed areas and is always good for Wild Turkeys.

During the Weekend of January 10 & 11 your gracious hostess will be NANCY WILSON (833-3907). Call for itinerary that includes meeting times and places. Many good Motels in Socorro (12 miles to the North) most will stay at the Motel 6.

NUTHATCHES

Every winter Red-breasted and some White-breasted and occasionally Pigmy Nuthatches and numerous other mountain birds show up in the El Paso Country Club area. On Nov. 19 a Golden-crowned Sparrow was found nearby, maybe it will be still around. We are hoping the Red-crossbills will show up again this winter. TOM BAKER (877-3365) will try to help you find the hot spots in the valley. Meet Tom on Sun. Jan. 25th, time - 7:44 AM at the crossroads ponding area

Observations

August 16, 1997 to November 15, 1997

Uncommon, Rare, and Casual sightings

A very rare sighting has the full entry *italicized*, **bold** and underlined. Some of the listings may not be considered RARE, but because of the season or habitat (date and/or location **bold** and underlined) they are unusual. The listing of birds here is determined using the checklist "Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas" 7th Edition, October 1987. If you are unsure of a sighting, don't hesitate - report it, to Bob "WILDBIRDER" Johnson 757-1876 (recorder).

Observers: Mary lou Alcorn; Elizabeth Chase; Jane Fowler; Beth Garcia; Richard Hermosillo; Sallie Homan; Hugh Jameson; Bob Johnson; Larry Jordan; John Kiseda; Flora Pitard; Patricia Russell; Susie Schnieder; John Sproul; Jimmy Zabriskie; Barry Zimmer. ft-Field Trip; Mob-Many Observers; Var-Variou; yd-yard.

Locations: ArP/Arryo Park; BgB/Big Bend; Can/Canutillo; Dtn/Downtown; Emy/Emory; FLk/Feather Lake; FBP/Fort Bliss Ponds; FtH/Fort Hancock; FMt/Franklin Mountains; Kil/Kilkenny; Lom/Lombardy; PtD/Painted Dunes; Sod/Sod Farm; SRS/Stn Roberts Sr.; TgE/Tiger Eye; Tor/Tornillo; Wgw/Wedgewood.

GREBES THRU MERGANSERS

<u>Horned Grebe</u>	<u>11/13</u>	<u>BZ</u>	<u>FH</u>
Western Grebe	10/29	BZ	FBP
<u>Brown Pelican (2-Adult)</u>	<u>11/5</u>	<u>BZ</u>	<u>FH</u>
Double-crested Cormorant	11/4	JS	FLk
Great Egret (29 on Nov. 8)	All	JS	FLk
White-faced Ibis	<u>11/8</u>	JS	FLk
<u>Oldsquaw</u>	<u>11/10</u>	<u>BZ</u>	<u>FBP</u>
<u>Surf Scoter</u>	<u>10/26</u>	<u>Mob</u>	<u>FBP</u>
Hooded Merganser	11/11	BZ	FBP
<u>Red-breasted Merganser</u>	<u>11/13</u>	<u>BZ</u>	<u>Tor</u>

OSPREY THRU FALCONS

Osprey	9/14	BG	SRS
	9/23	PR	FBP
	Var	JS	FLk
Mississippi Kite	<u>9/25</u>	MLA-yd	Emy
Harris' Hawk	All	BJ	PtD
Golden Eagle	9/17	PR	FMt
(2 Adults)	11/1	BJ	SRS
<u>Peregrin Falcon</u>	9/5	PR	FBP
	9/12	BZ	FBP
	9/25	SS	DTn
Prairie Falcon	11/4	EC	Wgw

SORA TO AVOCET

Sora	11/5	PR	FBP
Sandhill Crane	10/11	JZ	Can
	10/19	PR	FBP
	10/21	JS	FLk
Black-bellied Plover	<u>11/9</u>	SH	Sod
Black-necked Stilt	<u>11/8</u>	JS	FLk
American Avocet	11/8	JS	FLk

CURLEW TO SAPSUCKER

Long-billed Curlew	9/1	JK	FBP
	9/12	BZ	FBP
<u>Marbled Godwit</u>	8/16	PR	FBP
	8/24	HJ-ft	FBP
Bairds Sandpiper	8/24	HJ-ft	FBP
Franklin's Gull	10/21	JS	FLk
Bonaparts Gull	11/11	BZ	FBP
Black Tern	8/27	JS	FLk
	9/5	PR	FBP
Barn Owl	8/24	HJ-ft	FBP
	10/7	JZ-yd	Can
<u>Long-eared Owl</u>	11/2	SS	ArP
Lesser Nighthawk	<u>10/12</u>	JZ-yd	Can
Red-naped Sapsucker	9/17	PR	FBP
	9/28	JZ-yd	Can

FLYCATCHERS TO SWALLOWS

Olive-sided Flycatcher	8/28	SH	Lom
	8/31	PR	FBP
	9/25	SS	ArP
Willow Flycatcher	8/19	JS	FLk
	8/24	HJ-ft	FBP
Gray Flycatcher	9/1	SS	ArP
Vermillion Flycatcher	10/22	RH	FBP
Ash-throated Flycatcher	<u>9/28</u>	SS	ArP
<u>Eastern Kingbird</u>	<u>8/24</u>	<u>HJ-ft</u>	<u>FBP</u>
<u>Purple Martin</u>	<u>9/15</u>	<u>BZ</u>	<u>FBP</u>
Violet-green Swallow	<u>10/12</u>	JZ-yd	Can

Continued on page 9

Observations continued from page 8

On the Trail continued from page 7

JAY TO VIREOS

Scrub Jay	10/11	SS	ArP
<i>Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher</i>	8/30	SS	ArP
<i>Gray Catbird</i>	10/17	BZ	FBP
Sage Thrasher	10/19	JS	FMt
Brown Thrasher	11/5	PR	FBP
Cassin's Vireo	8/30	SH	Lom
Warbling Vireo	10/5	JZ-yd	Can

WARBLERS

Nashville Warbler	8/24	HJ-ft	FBP
Virginia's Warbler	9/10	JZ-yd	Can
	10/11	SS	ArP
<i>Northern Parula</i>	9/29	BZ	FBP
Black-throated Gray Warbler	9/7	PR	FBP
	8/17	JZ-yd	Can
Townsend's Warbler	9/7	PR	FBP
	9/17	PR	FBP
Northern Waterthrush	8/31	HJ	FBP
	9/8	JZ-yd	Can
Common Yellowthroat	11/12	BZ	FBP

NORTHEAST EL PASO

One of the best locations to find birds in the northeast part of town is at the Fort Bliss Ponds (check the observations page). Good winter water birds and quite a few raptors, often a Barn Owl and sometimes a rarity as the Oldsquaw in November. Meet BOB JOHNSON (757-1876) in the parking lot of the closed Walmart store (NORWEST Bank in the corner) 9825 Dyer St. at 7:33 AM on Saturday February 7th

FRIENDS OF HUECO TANKS

Activities this winter:

Rock Art Tours - Every Sat. & Sun. 10 AM & 2 PM.

Bird Identification Tours 8 AM - Sun. Dec. 21st

- Sun. Jan. 18th.

Slide shows starting again in February.

Park entry fees are \$2.00 per person / \$1.00 ages 6-12.

Tours fees are the same.



♂
HEPATIC
TANAGER

TANAGERS TO GOLDFINCH

<i>Hepatic Tanager</i>	8/22	SH	Lom
Summer Tanager	9/1	IF-yd	Kil
Northern Cardinal	All	HJ-yd	BgB
Black-headed Grosbeak	8/30	SS	ArP
Blue Grosbeak	10/11	SS	ArP
Painted Bunting	9/1	PR	FBP
Dicksissel	9/1	LJ	Tor
	9/14	BZ-yd	TgE
Spotted Towhee	9/28	JZ-yd	Can
	10/11	FP-yd	Hor
Clay-colored Sparrow	9/9	JZ-yd	Can
Lesser Goldfinch	9/9	JZ-yd	Can

GNATCATCHERS AND COWBIRDS

Many species have evolved defenses against parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds, including egg ejection and nest abandonment. According to recent research into the relation between cowbirds and blue-gray gnatcatchers, the small birds have a different way of dealing with the unwanted eggs. Nancy Matthews and Christopher Goguen of the University of Wisconsin report that in at least some cases, the gnatcatchers not only abandon the nest after the cowbird has laid an egg in it, they take the nest with them. They observed cases in which the gnatcatchers dismantled the nest and moved it to a different location, leaving the cowbird egg behind. The researchers speculate that this tactic increases efficiency because it reduces the amount of time spent collecting construction material for the new nest. They report that one pair moved their nest four times in an effort to eliminate parasitism. The story appeared in the *Chattanooga Chat*, the newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society.

From BWD Skimmer, August 1997.

Dates to Remember

December

Dripping Springs

Sunday, December 7 at 7:39am

Meet Larry Jordan at

I-10 & Trans Mountain

Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 27 Waco Tanks

Saturday, December 3 El Paso Area

January

Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge

Weekend of Jan. 10 & 11

Call Nancy Wilson 833-3907

El Paso Country Club Area

Sunday, January 25 at 7:44am

Meet at Crossroads

January

Fort Bliss Ponds

Saturday, February 8 at 7:33am

Meet at the old Walmart, 9825 Dyer



Friends of Hueco Tanks

Birding Activities at Hueco Tanks

Pictograph Tours

Every Sat & Sun 10:00am & 2:00pm

Many
Thanks
to:

Dr. Joseph Leach for his presentation on Costa Rica, its beauty and its birds.

Dr. Phil Zwank for his presentation on the rehabilitation program of the Apalmado Falcon.

National Audubon Society

Chapter Membership Application

Local Chapter Code 7XCHA

Yes, I'd like to join.

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