



The Roadrunner

NEWSLETTER OF THE EL PASO-TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY
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Geth O. White, Editor

CALENDAR

May 20
7:30 P. M. MONTHLY MEETING at Centennial Museum, UTEP campus. GEORGE MORRISON, Chief Naturalist, White Sands National Monument, will present a program, From the Everglades to the White Sands, a study in contrasts from a former assignment in one of the country's unique watery wilderness to the singular desert environment of White Sands National Monument.

May 25-27 Field trip to the Chiricahua Mountains in southeastern Arizona. Camp in the National Forest or stay at Cave Creek. Reservations in advance are necessary. Hummingbirds of several species and the Coppery-tailed Trogon should be seen. Please let Charlie Jensen know if you plan to attend.

June 15
6:30 P. M. Picnic -- an all family affair -- will be the last Audubon event until fall. Please bring a picnic for your family or guests. Beverage and homemade ice cream will be furnished. Remember to bring your hand-made item to be auctioned as a benefit for Audubon. It can be as simple as home-made fudge to as complex as a dish garden -- let yourself go. The place: Mary Moore's garden, 4613 E. Yandell.

Don't forget to keep your "neighborhood bird records" for the contest beginning June 1 - ending August 31. Let's see who has the most species in that time period. Put the trophy on your mantel until somebody bests you.

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Eddie Chew, President
Charlie Jensen - vice-president
Secretary-Treasurer - Linda Jones

Directors:
Berttye Barnhart, Helen Barto,
Al Gavit, Jack McDaniel, Clarence
Shelfer, Weldon Yerby.

May 23, 7:30 P.M. Board of directors meeting, 4220 Wallington.

GARDEN SHOW

We had a handsome exhibit at the GARDEN SHOW, thanks for the creative efforts of Sue and Luis Santaella who received the recognition of a ribbon of merit. Hand-colored birds of life size perched on the appropriate plants which provided either food or shelter. Sue created a handsome basket of flowers and macrame pots and handsome posters by Carl Jones completed the exhibit. Black's Nursery lent the plants and City Parks and Recreation Department transported them. Thanks also to Helen Ponder, Herttye Barnhart and her Mother and Helen Barto for staffing the space. Mary Moore also assisted in this capacity.

BIG DAY COUNT MAY 4

We were lucky in several respects: the birds were moving through in numbers in migration and we had enough people in the field to give respectable coverage. Perhaps it was the inspiration we received at Charlie Jensen's supper party so beautifully served by Marcie or maybe it was the phalaropes spinning on the ponds and the warblers flitting around mesquite blossoms that fanned our enthusiasm. Eighteen people reported a total of 142 species to hang up a record for spring counts in El Paso County.

Luis and Sue Santaella spent the better part of the day at Fort Bliss Sewage Pond, crossing over the Franklins on Trans Mountain Road about 4:30 in the afternoon. A mature Golden Eagle was circling lazily over the high ridge as they approached. At Durling Farm, even in late afternoon, Sue was first to spot a rare Olive Warbler which may be the third sighting in Texas. (Ro Wauer reports two other records in Big Bend National Park in his book, Birds of Big Bend. The Santaellas had a total of 83 species for the most birds seen by one party.

Bill Hunt said they saw in his party birds he had never seen in Texas before as they made their way down the river from the diversion dam to the Socorro Sewage Ponds. Highlights of his and Jack McDaniel's trip were an osprey, 7 avocets, 1 solitary sandpiper, 30 long-billed dowitchers, and an American Bittern at the water table lake on Zaragosa Road.

It's a good day any time you see six Phainopeplas, the tally Charlie Jensen and Sarah Jane Dodds made, plus 56 green-tailed towhees which were abundant everywhere.

Helen Ponder had never seen a horned lark in her yard before, but she was glad he chose that day to drop by along with numerous other sparrow visitors.

Mary Moore, Geth and Ed White checked 12 warbler species in the day, most of them in Memorial Park which was jumping with migrants, especially in blooming mesquites. Orioles, warblers, buntings and sparrows were all feeding on the pollen and insects on the trees. Cement Lake did not turn up a single duck or water bird but was good for warblers and flycatchers.

BIG DAY COUNT

May 4, 1974

Eared Grebe	1	Ring-necked Duck	1
Pied-billed Grebe	2	Lesser Scaup	2
Green Heron	7	Bufflehead	1
Snowy Egret	1	Ruddy Duck	53
American Bittern	1	Turkey Vulture	1
White-faced Ibis	6	Cooper's Hawk	1
Snow Goose	1	Swainson's Hawk	1
Mallard	3	Golden Eagle	1
Gadwall	2	Marsh Hawk	1
Pintail	2	Osprey	2
Green-winged Teal	4	American Kestrel	31
Blue-winged Teal	9	Scaled Quail	12
Cinnamon Teal	18	Gambel's Quail	15
American Wigeon	7	Common Gallinule	13
Northern Shoveler	21	American Coot	39

BIG DAY COUNT
May 4, 1974

Continued:

Semi-palmated Plover	4	Robin	2
Killdeer	11	Catbird	6
Long-billed Curlew	1	Hermit Thrush	3
Spotted Sandpiper	23	Swainson's Thrush	1
Solitary Sandpiper	1	Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	1
Willét	3	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2
Lesser Yellowlegs	2	Water Pipit	18
Pectoral Sandpiper	6	Phainopepla	8
Least Sandpiper	3	Loggerhead Shrike	1
Long-billed Dowitcher	60	Starling	7
Western Sandpiper	17	Hutton's Vireo	1
American Avocet	16	Gray Vireo	1
Wilson's Phalarope	1, 040	Solitary Vireo	3
Franklin's Gull	8	Orange-crowned Warbler	2
Forster's Tern	1	Nashville	1
White-winged Dove	6	Virginia's	2
Mourning Dove	462	Lucy's	3
Inca Dove	21	Yellow Warbler	11
Roadrunner	16	Black-throated Grey	2
Burrowing Owl	1	Townsend	11
Lesser Nighthawk	3	Hermit	1
White-throated Swift	1	Grace's	1
Black-chinned Hummingbird	21	Northern Waterthrush	1
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	1	MacGillivray	8
Rufous Hummingbird	1	Yellowthroat	1
Common Flicker	3	Yellow-breasted Chat	2
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	2	Wilson's Warbler	24
Western Kingbird	58	American Redstart	1
Ash-throated Flycatcher	2	Olive Warbler	1
Eastern Phoebe	2	House Sparrow, est.	200
Black Phoebe	2	Eastern Meadowlark	1
Say's Phoebe	1	Western Meadowlark	7
Traill's Flycatcher	3	Yellow-headed Blackbird	58
Dusky Flycatcher	2	Red-winged Blackbird	50
Gray Flycatcher	1	Hooded Oriole	1
Western Flycatcher	2	Northern Oriole	10
Western Wood Pewee	11	Brewer's Blackbird	57
Olive-sided Flycatcher	3	Great-tailed Grackle	158
Horned Lark	1	Brown-headed Cowbird	13
Rough-winged Swallow	51	Summer Tanager	1
Barn Swallow	133	Pyrrhuloxia	7
Cliff Swallow	55	Black-headed Grosbeak	2
Verdin	4	Blue Grosbeak	1
White-necked Raven	1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1
House Wren	6	Purple Finch	2
Cactus Wren	3	House Finch	171
Rock Wren	2	Green-tailed Towhee	71
Mockingbird	80	Rufous-sided Towhee	1
Curve-billed Thrasher	2	Brown Towhee	2
Crissal Thrasher	1	Lark Bunting	9
		Baird's Sparrow	1
		Lark Sparrow	15
		Rufous-crowned Sparrow	7
		Cassin's	2

BIG DAY COUNT
MAY 4, 1974

Continued:

Black-throated Sparrow	11
Dark-eyed Junco	2
Gray-headed Junco	19
Chipping Sparrow	110
Clay-colored Sparrow	7
Brewer's Sparrow	39
White-crowned Sparrow	61
Lincoln's Sparrow	1

Participants in the count included Charlie Jensen, Sarah Jane Dodds, Bill Hunt, Jack and Margaret McDaniels, Al Gavit and Chris Gavit, Mary Moore, Sue and Luis Santaella, Helen and Jack Ponder, Marilyn Fankhauser, Bob Bleicher, Janet Brockmoller, Eddie Chew, Geth and Ed White.

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MIGRANT WARBLERS
By Luis Santaella

On May 4, 1974, between 5:30 and 6:00 P. M. in a wooded area of the Upper Rio Grande Valley (Durling's Farm) of El Paso County, Texas, about 2 miles from the river, my wife and I observed a warbler with which we were quite familiar in the high mountains of southeastern Arizona. The warbler was about $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, had a beautiful tawny head and upper breast, a black eye patch, 2 well-defined white wing bars, grayish upper parts and whitish abdomen.

The bird was observed in good light feeding along the upper branches of various trees and once descending to the ground where it appeared to pick up something before returning to the treetops.

My wife and I were both simultaneously certain that we were observing an Olive Warbler (Peucedromus taeniatus) The bird ultimately disappeared and has not been seen again, although it was probably heard by another observer on the following day. Sharing the treetops with the Olive Warbler were American Redstart, Wilson's and Yellow-rumped warblers. In the immediate vicinity were Olive-sided Flycatcher, Northern Oriole (Bullock's form), Phainopepla, House Wren, Mockingbird and American Kestrel.

The warbler migration through El Paso this spring has been absolutely incredible. Besides the traditional western warbler species numerous eastern species have also been observed. These include American Redstart, Black and White, Mourning and incredibly, a Prothonotary Warbler (Prothonotara citrea) seen by four experienced observers, including ourselves on May 8, 1974 around 9:00 A. M. This was a female, characterized by a bright yellow head and breast with contrasting blue-gray unmarked wings, white abdomen and undertail coverts. It searched for insects along the main trunk and ground surrounding a blooming mesquite tree which attracts hordes of insects. A female Black and White Warbler was investigating every nook and cranny of the same trunk. Other warblers in the immediate vicinity included Yellow, and again, American Redstart.

It might seem to be too much of a coincidence to see such unusual warbler species within the same week, but these sightings of eastern warblers have been made by observers familiar with species in their usual haunts. Also the astounding number of species (19) of both western and eastern warblers migrating through the El Paso area this spring suggests extraordinary weather conditions. This week we have had high winds and heavy storm clouds with traces of rain following a low pressure area to the northwest.

It is logical to assume that birds breeding in the mountains of southeastern Arizona and southern New Mexico should occasionally, if not regularly, migrate through El Paso. The Rio Grande Valley is a well-known migratory route. Sightings of eastern warblers is harder to explain, but it is a well-known fact that increasingly larger numbers of eastern warbler species are being observed in California and in the far west.

PLANTS FOR ATTRACTING BIRDS IN EL PASO REGION

BASIC NEEDS FOR BIRDS

SUNLIGHT AND SHADE
COVER AND FOOD
WATER AND SAFETY

Your choice of trees, shrubs, vines, perennials and annuals in landscaping around your home might as well provide the necessities of bird life.

Amply crowned trees, well-rounded clumps of shrubbery, luxuriant vines on walls or in thickets, well-grassed openings all combine to make a home where birds thrive in numbers and variety and where birds passing in migration may pause for refreshment.

FOR SEED EATERS

GOLDFINCHES
SISKINS
JUNCOS
SPARROWS
FINCHES IN GENERAL

Cosmos, marigolds, the many sun-flower species including desert natives, thistles, asters, Princesfeather, California poppies, Iceland poppies, portulaca and zinnias.

CROSSBILLS
SISKINS
FINCHES

Conifers give protection from the wind as well as seeds from cones. Arizona cypress flourishes in our climate, as do many junipers and the Aleppo pine.

PINE GROSBEAKS
EVENING GROSBEAKS
CEDAR WAXWINGS
WARBLERS

Winged fruits of ashes and boxelders opened and eaten by many birds. The tough Siberian Elm which survives when nothing else can, produces the earliest crop of tree seeds and are spring cafeterias for migrant birds, including many small warblers who find insects around the seeds. The mesquites in bloom attract warblers.

WOODPECKERS
JAYS

Plant a cluster of live oaks adapted to live here to keep wintering jays in your yard. They also like the fruits of the Chinaberry tree which has dense foliage and beautiful lavender flowers in spring.

BLUEBIRDS
PHAINOPEPLA
ROBINS
QUAIL

Pyracantha is much used throughout the city for landscaping, is heavily used by bluebirds coming in when snow covers the higher altitudes. Quail will come in from the desert to eat fruit on the low-growing pyracantha.

Juniper fruits are relished by robins and Townsend's solitaires.

Netleaf hackberry is a good tree for the high desert, providing food relished by many species.

FOR FRUIT EATERS

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEES
MOCKINGBIRD
PYRRHULOXIA
RED-SHAFTED FLICKERS
WESTERN Tanager
BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAKS

One of the most valuable of the tree-shrubs as a food plant is the almost indestructible Russian olive. Its silvery grey foliage is beautiful on the landscape. It holds its fruit, oily and nutritious, almost all winter and is widely used by wildlife refuges in our area. 50 species of birds and several mammals relish its fruit.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH
HERMIT THRUSH
GREY-CHEEKED THRUSH
MOCKINGBIRD
HOUSE FINCHES

For flute-like solos in the spring, have a fruiting mulberry planted away from paving and walks. White-fruited species make a less visible stain and the birds find them as well.

Mexican Elderberry is a beautiful specimen tree like a huge bouquet in spring which produces clusters of autumn fruit.

Silverleaf Cotoneaster is almost evergreen and holds its bright red berries over the winter. Robins and mockingbirds quarrel over it.

HOODED ORIOLE
OWLS
DOVES

Palm trees give a lot of shelter to birds who take refuge in the skirts in winter. The Hooded Oriole has built its long pendant nest on the underside of a palm fan for two successive recent years.

SCOTT'S ORIOLE
CACTUS WREN

Yuccas are favored by the cactus wren for wintering roost nests as well as brood nests. Scott's orioles use them also.

FLOWER SEEKERS

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD
BROAD TAILED HUMMINGBIRD
ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD
CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD
COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRD
BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD

Migrant hummingbirds will come to your garden if you flag them down with red, tubular flowers, 1st choice, then purple, then yellow, in that order. Some nectar-producing flowers which do well here are: Red salvia four o'clocks, petunias, beebalms and honeysuckles; red cannas, common lantana and flowering jasmines are attractions.

Of the shrubs, red flags of ocotillo are sought out and the red hibiscus is sure-fire. The mimosa with its delicate pink powder puffs in late summer are very attractive to hummers. Hummers will buzz after the orchid trumpets of the desert willow.

WATER THE BIRDS!

EL PASO-TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

4220 Wallington

El Paso, Texas 79902



FIRST CLASS

Mr. & Mrs. Eddie Chew

4220 Wallington

El Paso, Texas 79902