

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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November 1984

GENERAL MEETING

MON., NOV. 19, 1984, 7:30 PM, Garden Center, 3105 Grant St. in Memorial Park. The Audubon Regional Conference (held each even-numbered year) met in Many, Louisiana June 1-3, 1984. Your memory serves you well if the names Jean and John Coyle pop up as they were our representatives at this conference. The Nov. meeting gives us an opportunity to hear about the goings-on in the meeting and before and after field trips as well. The Coyles will also give an introduction to the Randall Davey property on n. edge of Santa Fe, NM which is Natl. Audubon's newest wildlife refuge. Please come and bring a friend!

* Answer: We'll all benefit from *
* the new Texas Nongame Fund. *
* Support Texas wildlife -- *
* Buy a Nongame Stamp or Decal! *

FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

NORTHEAST OXIDATION PONDS
SUN., NOV. 4. Remember, next winter these ponds will be drying up. Good birds can be seen at this time such as Golden Eye, Western Grebe, Bonapart's Gull, Savannah, Vesper & Brewer's Sparrows. About 11:30 AM we'll go to the Newman Electric Co. Pond so bring a lunch. Mergansers and Green-backed Heron may join us. This trip requires

no walking. Meet at K-Mart parking lot, 9484 Dyer at 7:15 AM. Leader: Bob Johnson (757-1876/751-0125).

CABALLO LAKE/BLACK RANGE
SAT. SUN., NOV. 10-11. Meet Sat. 7:30 AM at Transmountain Rd and I-10. People who only wish to go for one day are welcome. We will be departing from Caballo Dam State Park on Sun. at 9 AM for the Black Range of the Gila. Sat. we will bird the Rio from Percha to Elephant Butte Dam. A good variety of birds should be seen. Leader: Tom Baker (566-9461 w. 562-9461 h).

LOWER LOWER VALLEY
SAT., NOV. 17. This is a good trip to see wintering waterfowl (swimmers, divers & waders). Last winter there were Canada Geese, Herring Gull, Bufflehead, G.B. Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Egrets, Ferruginous and Harris' Hawks. First stop is Madden Lake near Mc Nary, and from there we work back to Tornillo by noon. Bring lunch. Meet at Feather Lake by 7:15 AM. Leader: Bob Johnson (757-1876/751-0125).

HUECO TANKS
SUN., DEC. 2. This is a preview of birds to be seen on the Hueco Tanks Bird Count, an excellent opportunity for you many participants to prepare for your accurate recording of both upcoming counts. Meet at 7:30 AM in the parking lot of the Bella Napoli Restaurant on the corner of Yarbrough and Montana. Leaders: the Riedes (821-0989)

EL PASO AND HUECO TANKS CHRISTMAS
BIRD COUNTS

SAT., DEC. 15 and SAT., DEC. 29

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON., NOV. 12, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet at the home of Joe and Liz Guinn, 5000 Alabama, Apt. 31 (566-8438). All members are welcome.



CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

MON., NOV. 5, 7:30 PM. The Conservation Committee will meet at the home of John Sproul, 601 W. Yandell #25 (545-5157), to devise fiendishly effective schemes for promoting the Texas Nongame Stamp and Decal program. All members are welcome.

ELECTIONS

The Nominating Committee is seeking your nominees for the positions of Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and 3 elected Directors for the Jan. election. Please call Helen Barto, Chair (755-4744), Jeanette Cole (565-1957) or Sid Shepperd (566-2162) with your suggestions.

WELCOME to the following new members of NAS and our local chapter: Mary J. Pierce, Marilyn Waller.

WAYS AND MEANS

One important way to help out in this good cause is to beg, borrow or steal all the high class rummage you can find which provides us the means to make a profit for EP/TPAS. Spring rummage sale is coming up.

The deadline for the December Roadrunner is November 23.

November 1984

TENTATIVE FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE
FOR EP/TPAS

January 1985 - June 1985

SAT., JAN. 12 Feather Lake/Rio Bosque Park

SAT.-SUN., JAN. 19, 20 Bosque del Apache, NM

SUN., JAN. 27 Durling's Farm (upper Valley)

SAT., FEB. 2 Indian Hot Springs (lower valley)

SAT.-SUN., FEB. 16, 17 Pecos River/Balmoreah Lake

SUN., FEB. 24 Northeast Oxidation Ponds

SAT., MARCH 2 Hueco Tanks

SAT.-SUN., MARCH 16, 17 Valentine, Texas/Clay Miller Ranch

SUN., MARCH 24 Aguirre Springs

SAT., APRIL 6 Indian Springs/White Rock Canyon

SAT., SUN., APRIL 20, 21 Big Bend Park

SUN., MAY 12 Country Club area

SAT., SUN., MAY 18, 19 S.E. Arizona

SAT., JUNE 2 Lower Valley

SAT., SUN., JUNE 16, 17 Gila Cliff Dwellings

SUN., JUNE 24 West Cottonwood Sprg.

FIELD TRIP FOLLOW-UP

Nine members stuck it out in the Guadalupe Mts. through the cool drizzly weekend, rewarded with 27 species of birds, brilliant rainbows, fiery red maples in their finest fall form. We birded from Pine Springs to Rattlesnake Spring with Manzanita and Smith in between, on Sunday. Our most unusual sighting was an immature Red-headed Woodpecker at the Frijole Ranch Historic Site.

BORDERLAND PRODUCTIONS

Rick Taylor, of Portal, Az., gave our memorable program last March

on the Elegant Trogon. He will return early next year to tell us of the birds of Mexico. Mr. Taylor is an ecology instructor at Cochise College in Douglas, Az., an author and an experienced tour guide who has led national and international outings for the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Elderhostel and the Sierra Club. He has 2 tours into Mexico planned for Dec: The Coast of Sonora tour, Dec. 1-4, and In Quest of the Quetzal: Deep Mexico, Dec. 10-21. Here's your chance to give yourself a unique Christmas present. Payment is required 10 days prior to trip departure. For info and registration form contact Jane Fowler(772-0296). Rick Taylor can be reached at Borderland Productions, Box 122, Portal, Az. 85632. Phone (602) 558-2352.



*Singing in the Rain
has been heard coming out
of Feather Lake lately.*

Better come see.

Open Nov. til further notice.

1st Sun. each month 3:30-dark

Remaining Sats. of month 8-11 AM

Groups wishing to visit call

Virginia Baker 562-9461

Jeanette Cole 565-1957

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Chapter

Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to join. Local Chapter:

El Paso/Trans-Pecos

W10

7XCh

Membership Category desired:

Individual/\$30 (H) Senior Citizen

Family/\$38 (J) Individual/\$21 (N)

Student/\$18 (K) Senior Citizen

Family/\$23 (P)

This is a new renewal membership.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....

Zip.....Phone.....

Please make checks payable to National Audubon Society. Mail to Bob Johnson, 5109 Paris, El Paso, TX 79924.

THE ROADRUNNER is sent to all members of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society. Nonmembers can subscribe for \$4 per year. Make checks payable to "El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society" and mail to: RR Editor PO Box 9655 El Paso, Tx 79986. Please send any changes or corrections in name, address, or telephone # to this address.

* * *

We sincerely wish to thank Wallace Stegner for giving us permission to reproduce "The Wilderness is Us" (see p. 4). His sentiments, so beautifully expressed, will certainly touch many like-minded hearts among our readers.

The Wilderness in Us

"Wilderness areas," says William Tucker in a book entitled *Progress and Privilege*, "are essentially parks for the upper middle class." On the evidence of his book, Mr. Tucker knows rather less about wilderness, as fact and as idea, than St. Jerome knew about group sex. To him, environmentalists are suburban elitists bent upon protecting their own privileged turf, and lovers of wilderness are impractical romantics deserving of good-natured contempt.

Books like Mr. Tucker's do one thing—they make us pause and consider our attitudes and priorities. Since there is a constituency of "practical" people who think the wilderness left us should be drilled for oil or strip-mined for coal or opened for the "harvesting" of wildlife, I have to ask myself, "Am I crazy? Are people like me mere hoarders? Are wilderness areas really the exclusive playgrounds that the Tuckers think them? Should they be the resource warehouses that the Tuckers want to make them? Or is untouched, unmanipulated nature the spiritual inspirer, restorer, and healer that I have always thought it? Is it not essential to our individual and national health, an indispensable manifestation of our origins, our traditions, and our national character? Don't we perhaps need to set aside some wilderness as a memorial and a penance?"

Asking myself such questions, I do not come out on the side of William Tucker or James Watt. There are fewer than 80 million acres of land in the United States formally set aside as wilderness. The resources they might provide would be a drop in a very large bucket. Their functions as watershed protection, wildlife sanctuaries, gene banks, and research preserves are collectively far more important than their function as playgrounds for the hardy of whatever social class. And the spiritual resource they represent is fragile, irreplaceable, beyond price.

It is this spiritual aspect that distinguishes wilderness areas from all the other kinds of public lands. National parks, though they also protect watersheds and wildlife, are primarily pleasuring grounds. National forests and BLM lands, though they do something to protect watersheds and wildlife and provide abundant recreational opportunities, are primarily resource warehouses. Wildlife refuges are what the name implies. But wildernesses are for no "practical" use. They express instead attitudes that run counter to our traditional rapaciousness: respect for unmanaged nature, acknowledgment of our membership in the natural order, regret for the heedless damage we have done to all but a remnant of what we were given. Wildernesses are set aside in our time as a prayer, or an offering. Not only do they disregard the economic motive, they repudiate it.

There are historical reasons for the wilderness mystique.

Wilderness in the twentieth century is not the threatening Nowhere, haunted by wild beasts and wild men, that daunted and "be-wildered" William Bradford and the *Mayflower* pilgrims. Our attitude toward wild nature has changed, and so have we. We came to America as one thing, we stayed to become something else. Those who came after the first pioneers, even those who were never within a thousand miles of the wilderness, have been changed by the fact of wild land. Wild land was the grindstone that gave us our edge, the basic condition that shaped first our daily habits and eventually our institutions, laws, literature, art, myths, and heroes. We "tamed" the wilderness, but we were also bent by it, and we have learned late to respect it. Forgetting or destroying the last remnants of it would be like eliminating ultraviolet light from the spectrum. We would be pallid without it.

Our relations with the natural world are not simple, not occasional, but constant and various. As biological creatures we respond to nature with pleasure, gratification, fear, discomfort, or awe; as creatures of an industrial society we exploit it, often without consideration of consequences. The war between the garden and the machine has been our peculiarly American war, and can be brought to an end only by compromise. But those who give up the acceptant, participant biological response in favor of the assertive and arrogant response of the exploiter have given up something profound and important in themselves.

We are nature's creatures. We need nature at many levels. We need it tamed, as pastoral and cultivated and productive land. We need it in little gardens of urban relief—parks, greenbelts, zoos, backyards, the half-acre woods and vacant lots that were the wildernesses of our childhood. We need relief now, not from savage wildernesses, but from our savage cities. We need to know ourselves not only as social and economic creatures but as a natural species, as brothers and sisters of all life, humble participants in mystery. We are joined to other life, whether that other life is a geranium on a windowsill or the wild splendor of Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness. The orange light of sunset is not better than the ultraviolet light of sunburn, but only different, farther along the spectrum, another wavelength of the essential light by which we live.

And any relation of human being to the natural world translates as personal, spiritual experience. Anywhere on the spectrum from tame geranium to wild peaks and forests, nature contains me and I contain it. Going deeply into nature, I find myself. If I forget or repudiate nature, I myself am lost.

Wallace Stegner

OBSERVATIONS - September 22 to October 23

The interesting period that was predicted last month came to pass with some very exciting accidentals appearing in the area. Also of interest, is the return of some montane species notably absent or scarce at this time last year.

LOONS - FALCONS

A COMMON LOON, brought in from the Fort Bliss Range area 10/19, was kept under observation until 10/20 and then released at Singh Pond where it remained until about noon on 10/21 (CB,HB). Eared Grebes were seen at Tornillo Lake 10/6 (AG,MG). On 10/23, a w. Grebe (also from the Fort Bliss Range area) was treated for a minor wound to the right leg and released the same day (HB). Single Great Blue Herons were seen at the Northeast Oxidation Ponds (NEOP) 9/24 (BJ,RW), in the upper valley 10/6 (JoD,mob), and in that same area 10/23 (HB). On 10/6, both Green-backed Heron and Black-crowned Night-Heron were in the upper valley (JoD,mob). Six White-faced Ibis were in the Fabens area 10/4 (AG). Thirty N. Pintail were at NEOP 9/24 (BJ,RW). A Canvasback was seen at Tornillo Lake 10/6 (AG,MG), and a Ring-necked Duck at NEOP 9/24 (BJ,RW). A Swainson's Hawk was observed in the upper valley 10/6 (JoD,mob), and 2 Golden Eagles off I-10 near Fabens that same day (AG,MG). Numbers of Am. Kestrel were in the Rio Bosque Park area 9/22 (TB,mob).

QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

A young King-necked Pheasant that had apparently had an encounter with a predator was being cared for by an e. El Paso family on 10/13 (HJ). It was very tame and certainly an escaped caged bird or pet. On 9/24, a Virginia Rail was observed at the Ashley ponding area in n.e. El Paso (BJ,RW). Am. Coots with "fuzzy" young were at the Crossroads Pond in the upper valley 10/7 (JoD). Fifteen-twenty Sandhill Cranes were noted flying over in the Canutillo area 10/4 (TC) while 100+ were heard and seen flying over the Cielo Vista Golf Course 10/10 (JN). Two Solitary Sandpipers were at a pond back of Durling's and another 1 at a pond back of Owen's 9/23 (BJ,RW), single ones were seen at

Durling's 9/30 (BJ,RW) and at the Anthony Sewage Ponds 10/6 (JoD,mob). A Spotted Sandpiper was seen at Rainbow Lakes that same day (JoD,mob). A large flock of Long-billed Curlews was near Clint 10/4 (KC,AG). A Pectoral Sandpiper was well observed at the Ashley ponding area 9/24 (BJ,RW). A Black-billed Cuckoo, seen and photographed at Durling's a day or two earlier, was heard but not seen there 10/12 (JoD). A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was seen at El Paso Country Club (EPCC) 9/30 (BJ,RW). A Common Barn Owl was noted in the Randel's Pool area that same day (BJ,RW). A nighthawk (sp.) was roosting in a Cottonwood tree at EPCC 10/7 (JoD). On 10/15, a rather late male Calliope Hummingbird appeared at a central El Paso feeder (SW). Single Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were noted in Memorial Park 9/19 and 10/10 (AB), a male was in an e. El Paso yard 10/13 (DT) and 1 was seen at Horizon City that same day (MG). N. Flickers were appearing in unusual numbers all over (mob).

FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

A Black Phoebe was seen in the upper valley 10/6 (JoD,mob). Of special interest, was an imm. Vermilion Flycatcher observed at Rainbow Lakes that same day (JoD,mob). A Scrub Jay was at Rio Bosque Park 9/22 and at least 3 noted at Memorial Park 10/10 (AB,TB, et al.). Red-breasted Nuthatches were seen again at Memorial Park 9/26 and 10/10 (TB,et al.). On 9/17, a House Wren was at Horizon City (MG). Several Am. Robins were at Mountain Park 10/16 (JB).

WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

Most exciting were 2 very rare warbler species that put in an appearance at Horizon City. A MAGNOLIA WARBLER (2nd area record) was first seen and photographed 10/14 (AG,MG,BJ,RW) and observed there again on 10/16 and 10/18 (MG). A male BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER (2nd verified area record in the last 10 years) was first observed 10/10 (MG,CG,AG,BR), observed and photographed 10/11 (BJ,RW), and last seen 10/12 (MG). Single W. Tanagers were

at Randel's Pool 9/30 (BJ,RW) and Memorial Park 10/10 (TB,et al.). Rufous-sided Towhees, rarely seen last year, were appearing in good numbers during the period (mob). On 10/1, a Lincoln's Sparrow was at Horizon City (MG). Numbers of Yellow-headed Blackbirds were in the upper valley 10/6 (JoD,mob) and seen in very large numbers at Feather Lake 10/13 (JoD).

CONTRIBUTORS: Tom Baker, Carol Beach, Helen Bigelow, Anne Bowman, Janet Brockmoller, Tess Cardenas, Kevin Crum, Joyce Davis, Jane Fowler, Al Gavit, Chris Gavit, Howard Jackson, Bob Johnson, Jo Nagel, John Sproul, Dennis Taylor, Ray Waite, Sonny Wratten, Madeline Gavit.

Note: Just a reminder of the importance of your observation data. All records may not appear in the observations column, but all are carefully recorded. I am happy to hear from you anytime.
/Bettie Roberts, Observations Editor/
(591-0421)

CONSERVATION CAPSULES

GENERAL ELECTIONS NOV 6: Vote!

NONGAME FUND DONATION: The Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (TPWD) received its first major donation to the new Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund on Oct 15. The donor? The El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society! Thanks to your generous participation in last spring's Birdathon, we were able to present TPWD Executive Director Charles Travis a check for \$1,000 at our last general meeting. Also on hand for the presentation were TPWD's 2 game wardens for El Paso County, John Rische and Foy White. Thanks are due our special guests for attending, to Rhea Copening of Audubon's Southwest Regional Office for arranging Mr. Travis' appearance, to Ray Waite for recording the event on film, and to all of you whose Birdathon contributions made this donation possible.

NONGAME FUND FACTS: The 1985 Texas Nongame Stamp and Decal go on sale this month. They'll cost \$5 each...They'll be available at all TPWD offices and also through EP/TPAS...Collectors Covey

(15 Highland Park Village, Dallas 75205), the wildlife art gallery marketing the Nongame Stamp art print, is accepting orders for the print now through Jan 31, 1985...Audubon members throughout Texas should soon receive a brochure and order form from Collectors Covey, if you haven't already...As yet, there are no local art dealers handling print orders. EP/TPAS is working to get some local dealers involved...The print image size will be 6½" x 9"; overall size, 12½" x 14"...The print will cost \$135 but will be sold only with an accompanying stamp and decal. Price for the package is \$145...A special edition that includes a silver medallion will sell for \$250...The Nongame Fund gets \$40.50 from each print sold, \$60.50 from each medallion edition and \$4.50 from each stamp or decal. Collectors Covey has guaranteed \$250,000 from print sales...The 1st year of the Texas duck-stamp program (1981) resulted in sales of over 100,000 stamps and 16,000 art prints. Revenue was almost \$1.2 million--\$670,000 from the prints and \$485,000 from the stamps.

FRANKLIN MTS. STATE PARK: Language in the Texas Parks and wildlife Code prohibits the TPWD from spending any money for operation and maintenance of the Franklin Mts. State Park. It's a restriction that keeps this magnificent natural area a park in name only. Efforts to remove the restriction failed in the last session of the Texas Legislature (RR, June '83), but 1985 will present a new opportunity when a new session begins. To prepare for that session, the Senate Natural Resources Committee will hold a hearing in El Paso on Nov 15. The subjects: 1) the Franklins funding restriction and how it affects the park, and 2) whether current rare-plant protection laws in Texas are adequate. Watch the papers for time and place details.



WHOOPING CRANES I: Whooping Cranes are now returning to their wintering areas on the Texas Gulf Coast and in New Mexico. For the Texas flock, 1984 marked the most successful breeding season in 43 years. The 73 cranes that left Aransas Natl. Wildlife Refuge (NWR) last spring hatched at least 19 chicks on their Canadian breeding grounds. This total compares to just 6 chicks last year and 2 in 1982. It's not likely that all of these new recruits survived the summer or their fall migration, but crane numbers at Aransas should still be up significantly from last year.



team and for taking seriously the team's recommendations.

RECYCLING: If you live in El Paso, don't forget that Fridays are recycling days. Depending on what part of the City you live in, you can put your recyclables -- newspapers, cans, corrugated cardboard -- at curbside for pickup on either the 1st and 3rd or 2nd and 4th Fridays each month. Check with the Sanitation Dept. (594-8625) to learn what recycling zone you are in.

WETLANDS: Count the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act (RR; Oct '83, Jan '84) among the environment-related bills that died in the waning days of the 98th U.S. Congress. This was the bill that would have extended the Wetlands Loan Act (WLA) for 10 years, boosted the price of the federal duck stamp from \$7.50 to \$15 by 1988, authorized charging entrance fees at selected national wildlife refuges and made \$75 million in federal Land and Water Conservation Fund monies available annually for 10 years for wetlands acquisition. The addition of a rider authorizing the Army Corps of Engineers to build a controversial \$100 million jetty on the Outer Banks of North Carolina severely slowed progress of this legislation in 1984. It finally came to a House vote on Sept 20. After a motion to delete the jetty rider failed by a narrow 203-194 vote, the bill passed 351-45. Then it was time for action in the Senate. Fat chance. Although the Senate version of the bill had cleared committee and was ready for a floor vote, no vote ever came. The House and Senate did agree in a separate measure to a 2-year extension of the WLA, but for most provisions of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act, it's wait till next year.

NATIVE PLANT INITIATIVE: On Sept 11, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower, Lady Bird Johnson and others announced a new program to encourage state and local governments to use native Texas plants for landscaping public facilities such as

WHOOPING CRANES II: The experimental Whooping Crane flock that winters at Bosque del Apache NWR in New Mexico also is in for a boost, in this case from improved management practices. Following the death of 1 of the Bosque Whoopers last winter (RR, Mar), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the New Mexico Dept. of Game and Fish (NMDGF) established a management review team charged with developing recommendations for the Middle Rio Grande Valley "that will provide the best possible conditions for success of the Whooping Crane transplant program, while recognizing the interests of others (such as sportsmen and farmers) in the valley." The team, which included Natl. Audubon Soc. biologist Dave Blankinship, developed a set of 22 recommendations for the coming winter. Most, if not all, of these recommendations are now being implemented or actively pursued. The New Mexico State Game Commission, for example, acted last summer to expand considerably the nontoxic-steel-shot zone in the Middle Rio Grande Valley and to put New Mexico on a schedule that will lead to required use of steel shot state-wide by 1987-88. The USFWS, for its part, has scheduled this winter's Snow Goose hunt at Bosque del Apache for Feb 13-28, a time by which most Whoopers are expected to have moved north off the refuge. The USFWS is also changing other management practices at the Bosque to benefit Whooping Cranes. Both the NMDGF and USFWS deserve credit for selecting a competent management review

(cont. from p.7)

courthouses, city halls, schools and state offices. Sporting the theme, "Go Native -- Plant Texas", the Texas Native Plant Initiative has gained wide initial support from state agencies. It is based on a recognition that native plants -- when used in their area of adaptation -- require less water and less maintenance than imported varieties, while being every bit as beautiful. The Texas horticulture industry stands to benefit, too. According to Hightower, currently 75% of all landscape materials used in Texas are imported from Florida or California.
/John Sproul/

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