

# the ROADRUNNER



Newsletter of El Paso/Trans-Pecos  
Audubon Society - P.O. Box 9655  
El Paso, Texas 79986

Volume 13 (9)

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November 1983

## GENERAL MEETING

MON., NOVEMBER 21, 1983, 7:30 PM,  
GARDEN CENTER, 3105 Grant St. in  
Memorial Park. The National Audu-  
bon Society is divided into re-  
gions for administrative purposes,  
and Texas is in the Southwest Re-  
gion along with Louisiana, Oklaho-  
ma and New Mexico. To administer  
this region the National Society,  
blessings on them, sent as South-  
west Regional Representative vi-  
vacious Rhea Copening. Travel al-  
lowances for the regional repre-  
sentatives have been slashed, and  
we are fortunate indeed to  
have been able to coincide her  
visit to Las Cruces with both our  
Audubon Awards Dinner and our  
monthly general meeting. The to-  
pic of her program will be "A  
History of the Audubon Society -  
Birdwatchers with Clout". Come  
for an enjoyable and informative  
evening!

1983

AUDUBON AWARDS DINNER  
NOVEMBER 18th!

However the expression "pleased  
as punch" originated, it certain-  
ly describes the feelings of the  
Audubon Awards Committee toward  
John Sproul, the winner of the  
Member Award and toward Harry  
Gordon, the talented cinemato-  
grapher who produced and direct-  
ed the award winning film trilo-  
gy of the Chihuahuan Desert on be-  
half of the Chihuahuan Desert In-  
stitute.

The dinner honoring these remark-  
able men will be held on November  
18th at 6:30 PM at Gillespie's

Steak House, 2810 Montana, in the  
Red Room. The price for the buffe  
dinner is \$9.50 per person. Your  
check, made payable to the El Paso  
Audubon Society, should be sent to  
Reservations Chairman, Berttye  
Barnhart, 2200 Febrero, 79935.  
The deadline for reservations will  
be November 11th.

This little article is your per-  
sonal invitation to our chapter's  
big event, the Awards Dinner.  
We wish we could send each of you  
a separate invitation, but it is  
economically impossible. So, con-  
sider yourself invited and ré-  
pondez, s'il vous plait to Berttye  
Barnhart by November 11th. We hope  
to see you there. /S.J.D. and  
Committee

## FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

CLEAN UP DAY AT FEATHER LAKE  
SAT., NOV. 5 See accompanying arti-  
cle.

### COTTONWOOD SPRINGS

SUN., NOV. 6. Meet at 7:30 AM at the  
entrance to Tom May Picnic Area  
westside on Trans-Mountain Rd. This  
is a good trip to gain a closer  
look into the Franklins, and the  
spring sometimes attracts surpris-  
ing birds. You will need good walk-  
ing shoes for uphill hiking, some  
of it steep. Bring water and snack  
Leaders: Joyce Davis (581-9470 h,  
544-6772 w) Gloria Basden (581-2365)

### LOWER LOWER VALLEY

SUN., NOV. 13, 6:30 AM Feather Lake  
Travel will be down I10 to Esperan-  
za then we'll work back up through  
3 ponding areas to Tornillo. Be  
there about 12:00 for lunch and

continued birding. We could see some good birds such as Egrets, Osprey, Harris and Ferruginous Hawks, maybe Vermillion Flycatchers, Snow Geese or Sandhill Cranes and, hopefully, many other species. Everybody come, beginners and old timers. You'll learn a lot. Bring lunch and liquids. Questions? Call Bob Johnson (751-0125).

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON., NOV. 14, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet at the home of John Sproul, 601 W. Yandell #25, El Paso (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w). All members are welcome.



#### FEATHER LAKE

Clean-up day at Feather Lake will be Sat., Nov. 5. Please come out and help pick up trash and burn weeds. For further information call Joe Guinn (566-8438). Gate will be open at 8:00 AM.

For the first time Feather Lake has remained dry well into the Fall migration season. Prospects that it will refill this year are dim. Because of silting, the bottom of the lake is now above the water table and dense growth of salt cedar and rushes has taken place. Unless one - two feet of silt is removed it is unlikely there will be sufficient open water to attract the numbers of water fowl we have had in the past. The city does not have the capability to remove the silt. It is hoped that we will be able to raise enough money through donations, grants and other means to have the silt removed by a contractor. More information next month. / Joe Guinn

#### THE FIELD GUIDES ARE COMING

Christmas must be near, for some long-awaited bird books at last have been published. Three years ago it was RTP4, the 4th edition of Roger Tory Peterson's A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS. This fall, we get twins. Both the Golden Press and the Natl. Geographic Soc. have published field guides titled BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA.

The Golden Press publication is a 2nd edition of the highly popular guide authored by Chandler Robbins, Bertel Bruun and Herbert

RANDEL'S POOL/DURLING'S FARM  
SAT., NOV. 19. Meet at 7:30 AM at the Country Club Shopping Center, Country Club and Mesa at Doniphan. We will drive by the westside storm drainage pond before taking a stroll on the levee by Randel's Pool. Then we will drive out in the valley to Durling's Farm. There should be some winter visitors as well as year round residents. Leader: Joyce Davis (541-9470 h, 544-6772 w.)

BEGINNERS TRIP TO HUECO TANKS  
SUN., DEC. 4. Meet at 7:30 AM at Bella Napoli Restaurant, 10600 Montana. Bring a lunch and plan to walk 2+ miles. This trip will introduce beginners to the basics of participating in a Christmas Bird Count. It's a chance to hone your skills at identifying common El Paso-area birds. Leader: John Sproul (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w).

#### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

It's almost time for our annual Christmas Bird Count and WE NEED YOU! All you need is a love of birds, the outdoors and lively companions. YOU NEED NOT BE AN EXPERT BIRDER.

We will comb the El Paso area on Sat., Dec. 17 and the Hueco Tanks area on Sat., Dec. 31. Our goal is to find and record as many bird species as possible. Our hope is that everyone will join us for this traditional, highly enjoyable event.

Before the count, we will meet at the Garden Center to plan our ventures and divide into teams. We look forward to seeing all of you then... Fri., Dec. 9, 7:30 PM.

Zim, with illustrations by Arthur Singer. For many birders, especially beginners, this has long been the field guide of choice because of its easy-to-use format, its attractive illustrations and its coverage of all U.S. and Canadian birds in just 1 book. It has been 17 years since the 1st edition, though. Changes in bird names and taxonomy, together with advances in our knowledge of the "field marks" that distinguish 1 species from another, have made a new, revised edition long overdue. Now it's here. Best of all, as the ad below indicates, it is available through EP/TPAS, with Audubon members eligible for a 15% discount off retail price.

The Natl. Geographic Soc. turned to a couple of top field birders, Jon Dunn and Eirik Blom, to oversee preparation of its BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA. Some 16 writers and researchers and 16 artists contributed material. This guide uses the popular text-and-range-ops-opposite-illustrations format pioneered by the Golden field guide and also covers all U.S. and Canadian birds. Slightly larger than previous field guides, it shows more plumages and discusses field marks in more detail than any of its predecessors. Currently, this guide is available only as part of a \$34.95 package that also includes an extensively illustrated coffee-table book on birds, a record album of 200 bird songs, and a wall chart. Order it through: Natl. Geographic Soc., 17th and M Streets, NW, Wash., DC 20036.

A 3rd recent publication of note is the 6th edition of the American Ornithologists' Union's CHECK-LIST OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS. Its 877 pages present scientific and common names, describe habitats and distributions, and show taxonomic relationships for almost 2000 bird species found in N. and Central America and adjacent islands. You can order it for \$35

November 1983

(payable to "AOU") from: The Allen Press, P.O. Box 368, Lawrence KS 66044. Or you can find it in the EP/TPAS chapter library.

A Guide to Field Identification  
BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA

The 2nd edition is out--and EP/TPAS has it! This is the popular, easy-to-use "Golden Field Guide," the one that sold over 4 million copies in its 1st edition. Place your order with Jo Nagel (566-2143) or use this coupon:

Field Guide  
P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986

Yes! I would like \_\_\_\_\_ paperback copies of BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA, 2nd ed. Enclosed is my check for \_\_\_\_\_.

Price w/tax Name \_\_\_\_\_  
NAS members Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\$ 7.10  
Nonmembers City \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_  
\$ 8.35 Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Ph \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to "El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society." Non-El Paso residents, please add \$1 for postage and handling.

FIELD TRIP FOLLOW-UP

Nine birders visited Lake Balmorhe MacDonald Observatory and the scenic Davis Mts. area Oct. 22-23. 59 bird species were seen outstanding of which were Western Grebe, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Townsend's Warbler and a Western Kingbird. The weather could not have been better if it had really tried.

FAREWELL, ART AND DONNA

We want to send our best wishes to Art and Donna Arteaga who have recently moved to Mineral Wells, TX. Art has served our chapter well as field trip chair and vice-president. We will certainly miss their cheerful enthusiasm and support at meetings and field trips. Our loss is Mineral Wells' gain, as we know that the Arteagas will be an asset to the local Audubon chapter. Good luck, Donna and Art! We'll miss you.

## OBSERVATIONS - September 22 to October 17

Overall the month was somewhat slow, despite several excellent records. Numbers of many migrants were down, and most pulled out earlier than usual. A total of 138 species was sighted, including two 1st records and 9 species of casual or accidental status. Noticeably absent were any montane species which were so prevalent by this time last year.

### LOONS - FALCONS

Three imm. Double-crested Cormorants were at the McNary Marsh 10-10 (BZ), as was a single Great Egret. A freshly cut alfalfa field in the upper valley was literally covered with 244 Cattle Egrets on 10-11 (BZ). A lone Osprey was seen near Tornillo 10-10 (BZ), while another was at the Fort Bliss Sewage Ponds (FBSP) 10-2 (BJ).

### QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

The first Sandhill Cranes of the fall soared high over northeast El Paso 10-15 (BJ). A very late Black-necked Stilt was near Fort Hancock 10-10 (BZ). A single Pectoral Sandpiper was found at the Tallmon Dairy Ponds (TDP) 10-12 and remained through the end of the period (BZ). Three winter plumaged DUNLIN (1st EP record) were at TDP 9-23 (BZ). Red-necked Phalaropes were seen on several occasions, with a high count of 49 at FBSP 10-1 (BZ,JD,BJ). Without a doubt, the bird-of-the-month was an imm.

SABINE'S GULL found at FBSP 10-1 (BJ). This provides a 1st El Paso record, and one of only a handful of Texas records. The bird remained at the sewage ponds through 10-3, during which time it was seen and photographed by several (BZ,BJ,SW). A COMMON GROUND-LOVE (3rd EP record) was at Durling's Farm 10-15 (BZ,SW). Two FLAMMULATED OWLS were flushed from their roosts in dense hackberry in No-Name Springs 10-13 (JD). A late Common Poor-will hawked insects near the headquarters at Hueco Tanks 10-7 (BZ). Single Yellow-bellied (Red-naped) Sapsuckers were noted on several occasions since late September (JD,BZ).

### FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

An imm. male Vermilion Flycatcher was at Durling's Farm 9-30 (BZ), while 3

were near McNary 10-10 (BZ). A late Cassin's Kingbird was at FBSP 10-4 (JD,BJ). A myiarchus sp. (Great Crested?) was reported from the Franklins 10-7 (TB). Single Brown Thrashers were at Horizon City 9-29 (AG) and Hueco Tanks 10-7 (BZ). Three Sage Thrashers foraged in the campground at Hueco Tanks 10-7 (BZ). A Townsend's Solitaire was at Durling's Farm 10-12 (BZ).

### WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

A male NORTHERN PARULA WARBLER was discovered at Durling's Farm 10-5 (BZ) and remained until 10-12. This was the first fall record for El Paso. An OVENBIRD was photographed at Durling's 9-24 (BZ,KZ), while a female Am. Redstart was seen in No-Name Springs 10-13 (JD). An Eastern Meadowlark was heard singing from an alfalfa field near Durling's 10-3 (BZ) (1st upper valley record?). A late Hooded Oriole at Durling's 9-23 was noteworthy (BZ), as were late Black-headed Grosbeaks at No-Name Springs 10-13 (JD) and a late Western Tanager at Durling's 10-15 (BZ,SW). Two Painted and 1 Lazuli Bunting were at Hueco Tanks 10-7 (BZ). An incredible 8 Dickcissels were noted at Hueco Tanks on the same date (BZ). Lone Dickcissels were also sighted at Owen's Farm 9-24 (KZ) and 10-1 (BZ,JD). Several Black-chinned Sparrows were at No-Name Springs 10-13 (JD). Early Pine Siskins were seen below Owen's Farm 10-11 (BZ).

CONTRIBUTORS: Tom Baker, Jeff Donaldson, Jane Fowler, Al Gavit, Bob Johnson, Scott Wilson, Barry Zimmer, Kevin Zimmer.

/Observations editor - Barry Zimmer/

Ed. Note: Due to a busy schedule at UTEP and several pending out-of-town trips, Barry is resigning his position as our Observations editor. We all owe him a round of applause for the outstanding OBSERVATIONS columns he has contributed since Mar '82. Barry has shown a real talent for pulling all the facts together and giving us a refreshing summary to read. I'm sure he has inspired many of us to

get out into the field to see and enjoy the birds of our area.  
MUCHAS GRACIAS, BARRY!

It is with pure pleasure that we announce that Bettie Roberts has agreed to become our Observations editor. Bettie has written this column in the past when Barry was away on vacation, and she has a tremendous grasp of the present and historical status of birds in our area. Call Bettie at 591-0421 with your sightings.

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\* - Board of Directors

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 same address.

The deadline for the December Roadrunner is November 28.

November 1983

TREASURY ENRICHMENT

Our next rummage sale will take place in early '84. If you are fall house cleaning or making room for Santa's bounty, call Bart Rumaker (544-6432), Jo Warolin (532-4318) or Jane Fowler (772-0296) about donating your odds and ends to our chapter.

CONSERVATION CAPSULES

BOUNDARY PRESERVATION PROJECT: Our lawsuit to force the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) to adhere to its original environmental-protection commitments on the Rio Grande Boundary Preservation Project (RR; Mar, Sept) is moving inexorably towards a court date. In a spirit of compromise, the IBWC and the conservation groups involved had been exploring the possibility of an out-of-court settlement recently. They even got within 5 days of holding a meeting to discuss this possibility in mid-October. At this point, however, Justice Dept. attorneys in Washington stepped in and announced that, even if an agreement were reached, they would not let the IBWC sign a consent order committing the agency to follow the agreement. Since such a consent order is a key part of the relief we seek in the lawsuit, the meeting fell through. Now, we are awaiting an anticipated motion from the Justice Dept. to dismiss our complaint. On the positive side, our hand has been strengthened recently by the decision of the national Sierra Club to join us in the suit.

FOREST SERVICE/BLM WORKSHOP: The workshop on land-management planning processes of the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management, tentatively set for November, has been postponed. The Wilderness Society now says January looks most likely.  
(cont. on next page)



5-The Roadrunner

**NEW MEXICO NATURAL AREAS:** The Nature Conservancy's (TNC's) New Mexico Chapter has launched a New Mexico Critical Lands Campaign to protect key examples of ecological diversity in that state. The initial 5 target areas are:

- $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of stream and floodplain along the Mimbres R. that includes habitat for the Chihuahuan Chub, a Threatened fish species;
- $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of stream at Rattlesnake Springs, the noted birding oasis s. of Carlsbad;
- 1 acre of prime habitat e. of Cloudcroft for Kuenzler's hedgehog cactus, an Endangered species;
- the Jornada bat caves, 40 mi. s.e. of Socorro, site of the largest bat population in NM; and
- 25 acres n.e. of Farmington, donated to TNC on Aug 3 by Public Service Co. of NM, that include 1 of 2 known populations of Knowlton's hedgehog cactus, another Endangered species.

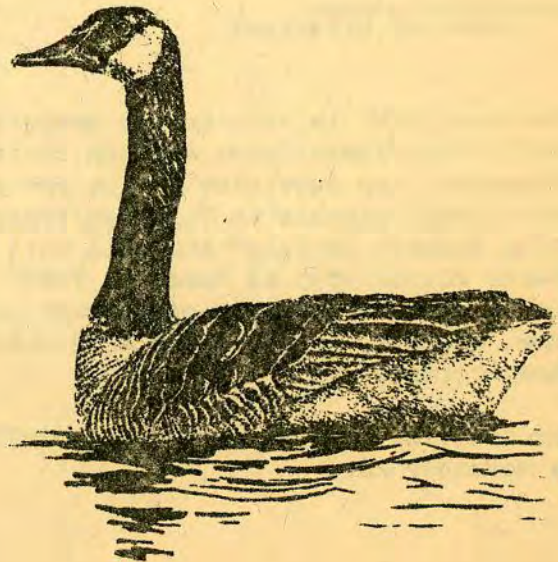
TNC hopes to acquire the 1st 2 sites. For the next 3, it needs money for fencing and stewardship endowments. To succeed, it needs \$50,000 by Dec 31. Feeling generous? Send contributions to: TNC, NM Field Office, 610 Gold Ave., SW, Suite 216, Albuquerque, NM 87102.

**RANDALL DAVEY PROPERTY:** One nice piece of New Mexico land already has been protected this year, for the Randall Davey Foundation recently donated 135 acres to the Natl. Audubon Soc. for use as a sanctuary. This beautiful property, which includes several buildings, is located at the n. edge of Santa Fe, overlooking the Santa Fe R. It becomes the 1st Audubon sanctuary in NM and also will serve as a satellite regional office and as an education center. Fund raising is now underway to provide for sanctuary maintenance. Still feeling generous? Send checks, payable to "National Audubon Society" and designated "for Randall Davey Property" to: NAS, SW Regional Office, 2525 Wallingwood, Suite 1505, Austin, TX 78746.

**RIVERPARK:** The Economic Development Administration has turned down El Paso County's bid for \$1 million in emergency

Jobs Act funds to launch the Omar N. Bradley Memorial Riverpark (RR, Sept). Other border cities with higher unemployment won out in the scramble for this money. The Chamizal Institute Foundation, the group leading the effort to create the riverpark, remains undaunted. It views this as only a minor setback and will continue to pursue funding, both through grants and private donations.

**TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION:** The late-summer concern over new appointments to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission (TPWC) (RR, Sept) has had a positive effect. In early September, Gov. White arranged for representatives of 6 conservation groups, including Audubon, to meet with TPWC members at the governor's mansion. The conservation leaders came away pleased with the commitment the governor and TPWC Chair Ed Cox expressed to "a first-rate parks and wildlife agency." Subsequent action by the TPWC has backed up those words. The Commission has taken several firm resource-protection stands recently, including authorizing continued progress on land acquisition for the Franklin Mts. State Park. Texas conservation leaders hope a new, closer relationship between conservation groups and the TPWC is developing.  
/John Sproul/



FIELD GUIDES REVISITED

At press time, word comes to us that the National Geographic Society's Field Guide to the Birds of North America, referred to on p. 2, is available separately from the American Birding Association. Price: \$15.95 (\$13.95 to ABA members). Order from: ABA Sales, PO Box 4335, Austin, TX. 78765.



FOR SALE

NAS sew-on patches, 4" - \$1.50, 2" - \$1.00;  
 NAS decals - 50¢; blue waterproof nylon  
 daypacks with NAS insignia - \$19.95.  
 Call Jo Warolin (532-4318) or look for  
 these items at our general meetings.

SAVE THE CANS

At the last board meeting, we discussed recycling as a fund raising project and decided to begin by collecting aluminum cans. We realize that the city collects them and many of you probably send yours off that way. If you don't however, we will collect your aluminum cans (do please) at our general meetings. Jane Fowler has volunteered to turn them in; all proceeds will go into the general treasury. If you have some cans and can't make it to the meetings, call me and I will arrange to have someone pick them up. / Jo Warolin 532-4318 /

**SUPPORT TEXAS WILDLIFE!**

Wear the Audubon Council of Texas T-shirt! It's 100% cotton and features a soaring white Whooping Crane with the legend "Support Texas Wildlife." Proceeds go to EP/TPAS and to ACT's campaign to support nongame wildlife and endangered species programs in Texas. Price: \$7 (Non-El Paso residents, please add \$1 for postage and handling). Circle preferences:

Color: Lt Blue Tan Yellow  
 Size: S M L XL



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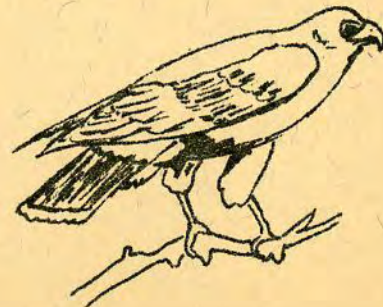
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Name .....

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

Membership Category desired:

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- Sr. Citizen, Family/\$23
- Student/\$18

This is a  new  renewal membership.

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