

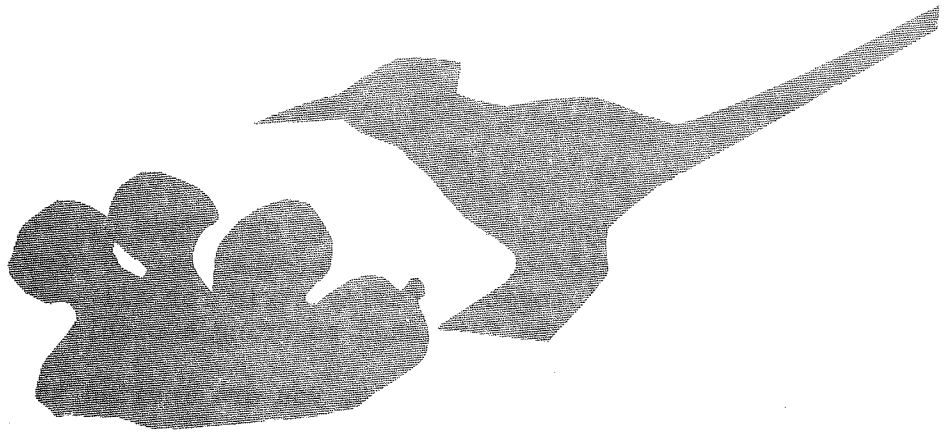
# The Roadrunner

NEWSLETTER OF

EL PASO-TRANS PECOS  
AUDUBON SOCIETY

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EL PASO, TEXAS 79930

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Vol. II, June, 1972

Editor, Geth Osborn White

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## CALENDAR

Sat.-June 10  
6:30 A. M.

FIELD TRIP up a beautiful canyon in the Franklins. From the War Road on the east side count 2.9 miles to canyon which appears to have had an old road leading up as far as you can see. It becomes a trail which crosses the wash and eventually has a small spring about 600 feet from the top of the Franklins. This is an easy climb which takes about an hour and a half and because it is such a richly planted wash, the birdlife is more abundant than usual. See Spring Day Count for partial list.

Fri-Sat-Sun  
June 16-17-18

FIELD TRIP to Lincoln National Forest in Sacramentos to be shared with Sierra Club members. If you want to camp out Friday night plan to be there by 6:30 P. M. Base camp will be at high meadow on West Side Road and you can come Friday, Saturday or Sunday. DIRECTIONS: go to High Rolls, New Mexico; find highway sign to West Side Road just east of postoffice. Take dirt and gravel road which branches shortly after it begins; follow right branch for 23 miles to base camp meadow which is marked by black and yellow metal sign on metal stake standing in meadow to left of road. Wear hiking boots, sweater or jacket for early morning and evenings and equipment desired for activity planned. Bring water and stove for cooking, no open fires permitted. A hike is planned for Saturday morning, leaving base camp at 9:00 A. M. An over-night hike from base camp to Gobbler Point which overlooks Escondido Canyon, Tularosa Basin and mountains to west is planned; possible over-night hike up to Sacramento Ridge to ease of base camp so this outing location offers something for almost everyone at his own pace. If you need more information, call Ed White at 565-1024.

Sat. June 24  
6:30 P. M.

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:	PICNIC - FOR MEMBERS, SPOUSES & CHILDREN, FRIENDS	:
:	<u>NATIONAL AUDUBON MEMBERS ESPECIALLY INVITED</u>	:
:	<u>GET TO KNOW PEOPLE IN YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER</u>	:
:	R.S.V.P. Mrs. Leigh Wilcox 565-6001	:
:	Mrs. Robert Barto 755-4744	:
:	Mrs. Ed White 565-1024	:
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OUR LAST REGULAR MEETING UNTIL SEPTEMBER will be a picnic supper for your family and friends on the patio at the home of Mary Moore, 4613 E. Yandell. Food will be put together family style for all to share. Iced tea, coffee and paper plates will be furnished so bring a picnic supper sufficient for your family and guests.

FOR FUN and as a benefit, you are invited to bring an item for a silent auction, (nothing to sell for more than \$5, preferably something handmade by the donor. (I know of hummingbird feeders made from coke bottles, as an example). It could be a food item, photograph of nature, item for the picnic basket, you-name-it, anything from a plate of fudge to a bird feeder.

### SPRING COUNT, MAY 9

1972

Our Count was marred by poor participation and lack of organization for which your president bows her head. Many of us were away over the weekend attending a wilderness hearing concerning roadless areas in New Mexico, and apparently a week-day is not a wise choice for counting.

It was a beautiful day, clear and sunny with little wind and temperatures rising from the 50's to the 70's.

Geth and Ed White, Helen and Bob Barto were out at Horizon Lake before 8:00 that morning and checked the little bosque at the west end of the lake for land birds first with rather good results.

We observed Orange-crowned Warbler, Virginia's Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Audubon's Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Graco's Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler and Wilson's Warbler for some interesting species in the thicket.

Then on to water birds where we saw a rare one, a Whimbrel, in the company of Long-billed Dowitchers which gave a nice size comparison. We were able to view the bird for a half hour or more, observing its field marks in detail, but alas no photographic record which is a must for unusual species to be officially recorded.

A single Western Grebe held his head high, looking like a periscope on a submarine among the Bared Grebes and the 4 Horned Grebes. Duck species were well represented -- not in any great numbers but a few of several species.

Late in the afternoon, Geth and Ed White went up Trans Mountain Road to try for a few of the birds of the higher elevations.

About 2.9 miles from the War Road is a wash between the mountains which was transformed into a desert garden of rare beauty in the late afternoon sun. Lavishly landscaped by a gargantuan hand, among the boulders and cobbles leaned giant barrel cactus, massed clumps of Engelmann Prickly Bears bearing golden cups. Pricklypoppy's sheer white petals were almost transparent in the late day sun and desert willows were blowing purple trumpets. Sotols were buzzing with bees after the flower stalks bearing dense panicles of creamy flowers. Yuccas had the heaviest bloom and handsome green fruits I have ever seen and the wash was marked as far as the eye could travel up the canyon by bright spring green of the mesquites and sumac. (We explored subsequently and discovered this canyon is watered by a spring near the top of the mountains).

In about an hour we found Ash-throated Flycatchers, Rufous-crowned and Black-throated Sparrows, Crissal Thrasher, Western Flycatcher, Western Wood Pewee, Scaled Quail, White-throated Swifts, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Scott's Orioles, Bullock's Oriole, Green-tailed Towhee and Brown Towhee.

Joan Pierce toured a wash in the Coronado section and reported a number of interesting birds there and in her yard and looking toward the mountains, the most unusual being two Golden Eagles which were also reported by others the first week

of May. She estimated 50 House Finches and 20 Gambel's Quail, 16 Mourning Doves and 15 Mockingbirds live in her neighborhood in addition to other species passing through in spring migration.

Mrs. John Rose reported the doves at her feeder and the hummingbirds which come to her yard regularly.

From reports from several observers bird numbers are down. Either the birds passed over and did not come down to feed, or they came in when no one was afield for the numbers seen could not compare for magnitude to spring, 1971.

Lack of rain (.44 of an inch from January to May 9) plus a prolonged drought the year before is bound to affect wildlife populations. Count list is on separate page.

CONSERVATION CHAIRMAN Bob Barto reports that letters are needed on predator control to members of Congress. One reads the most astounding reports on losses to predators published in newspapers in the west. If an insurance program could be worked out, and losses had to be proved, it might be of great benefit to ranchers as well as to the predators. Purposeful poisoning and shooting of eagles should not be tolerated since they are endangered species. Hawks and owls are now federally protected under a new Migratory Bird Treaty signed with Mexico.

EL PASO-TRANS PECOS AUDUBON VOTES TO GIVE \$15. to the Armand Bayou Fund near Houston. If you're in the area, try to visit the bayou in southeast Harris County. It is one of the few remaining natural bayous along the upper Gulf Coast. Most of them have been heavily altered by man for irrigation or flood control ditches or navigation channels.

The convergence along Armand's Bayou of three different habitats, the southern evergreen forest, the Gulf Coast prairie, and the salt marshes make it exceptionally rich in a wide variety of vegetation and wildlife.

The area is rich in bird life because of the variety of plants found here, because the mud flats and salt marshes of the estuarine area provide an abundant food supply for a large class of birds, and because a number of flyways converge here. Land birds and water birds are to be found in close proximity. Red-eyed vireos, Carolina Wrens, Pileated Woodpeckers, Perengrine Falcon, Osprey, Eastern Bluebird mingle with Snowy Egrets, Louisiana Heron and Roseate Spoonbills.

The tidal flats are rich feeding areas for wading birds and shore birds. Some of the waders nest in nearby rookeries administered by the Audubon Society and this feeding ground is vital to their survival to such species as the Roseate Spoonbill found in few other places in the United States.

It would be well to express your interest in this Park becoming a reality by writing to James U. Cross, Executive Director, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, John H. Reagan Building, Austin, Texas 78701. Let your state legislators know of your interest and urge them to insure that adequate funds for the acquisition of the park on Armand Bayou are included in the 72 budget and appropriation bill. It will be good to have a hand in helping to preserve one of the treasures of this big state.

HEARINGS ON DE FACTO WILDERNESS AT ALOMOGORDO were well attended by El Pasoans representing the Sierra Club and the Audubon Society. It was a good exchange between mining interests, cattle grezing interests, local ranchers and conservationists. Areas up for consideration of study for wilderness inclusion were rather minute segments of the national forests. It is hoped they will be included and that our time was well spent in making a statement for the record.

EL PASO COUNTY  
SPRING COUNTY  
May 9, '72

1. Horned Grebe
2. Eared Grebe
3. Western Grebe
4. Mallard
5. Gadwall
6. Pintail
7. Green-winged Teal
8. Blue-winged Teal
9. Cinnamon Teal
10. American Widgeon
11. Shoveler
12. Ring-necked Duck
13. Canvasback
14. Ruddy
15. Common Merganser
16. Black Vulture
17. Turkey Vulture
18. Swainson's Hawk
19. Rough-legged Hawk
20. Golden Eagle
21. Scaled Quail
22. Gambel's Quail
23. Coot
24. Killdeer
25. Long-billed Curlew
26. Whimbrel
27. Spotted Sandpiper
28. Wilson's Phalarope
29. White-winged Dove
30. Mourning Dove
31. Inca Dove
32. Roadrunner
33. Common Nighthawk
34. White-throated Swift
35. Black-chinned Hummingbird
36. Ladder-backed Woodpecker
37. Western Kingbird
38. Ash-throated Flycatcher
39. Western Flycatcher
40. Western Wood Pewee
41. Violet-green Swallow
42. White-necked Raven
43. Verdin
44. Bewick's Wren
45. Cactus Wren
46. Rock Wren
47. Mockingbird
48. Crissal Thrasher
49. Robin\*
50. Water Pipit
51. Loggerhead Shrike
52. Starling
53. Solitary Vireo
54. Orange-crowned Warbler
55. Virginia's Warbler
56. Myrtle Warbler
57. Audubon's Warbler
58. Townsend's Warbler
59. Grace's Warbler
60. MacGillivray's Warbler
61. Wilson's Warbler
62. House Sparrow
63. Western Meadowlark
64. Scott's Oriole
65. Bullock's Oriole
66. Boat-tailed Grackle
67. Summer Tanager
68. House Finch
69. Green-tailed Towhee
70. Brown Towhee
71. Rufous-crowned Sparrow
72. Black-throated Sparrow
73. Chipping Sparrow
74. White-crowned Sparrow

\* On nest

### A MAN AND HIS BIRD

That they were quite different from a man and his dog was apparent to those who attended the May meeting and heard Col. Kent Carnie speak. It was an insight quite new to most of us.

The sport of Falconry is very old, dating back to the neighborhood of 2,000 B. C. in China, existing in Japan, India, Arabia, Iran and Syria from very early times as well. This recreation of the aristocracy spread to Europe and eventually to England about 860 A. D. and enjoys a continuous following the world over to the present day.

The art of Falconry or Hawking is primarily a sport rather than a substitute method of procuring game. One of the interesting things Carnie told us was that the birds are not considered pets but were wild and very demanding of time, training, proper exercise and food. With all the time spent there was always the realization that the next flight might be the one the bird sailed off in the blue never to return, and that eventually all the trained birds heed the call of the wild.

His color slides of the beautiful Scottish Moors abloom with heather, the eager hunting dogs, the men with their equipment and their prize birds conveyed some of the excitement felt when your bird was circling high over the setters below who were nosing out the grouse.

What kind of birds make for the best sport? In this country the most efficient in the field are the Peregrine, Prairie Falcon, Goshawk and Cooper's Hawk. In all hawk species the female is larger and more powerful than the male. Col. Carnie has a female Goshawk presently. The Golden Eagle and the Bald Eagle are also used in the sport.

Much of Col. Carnie's energies are directed towarded getting better legislation to protect birds of prey and to have laws uniform and fair to all concerned. There are strict laws regarding capture and selection of young birds and the time of year when they may be taken and where they may be taken.

The Carnies are leaving very soon, retiring from the service. They're picking up a camper in Europe and will travel for a year in Europe and the Middle East and North Africa, visiting Mrs. Carnie's family in Copenhagen, catching some fall migrations in Europe, eventually to retire to San Miguel de Allende in Mexico in the autumn of 1973. Bon Voyage, Kent and Benedicta, we're sorry to lose you.  
- - - Ed White.

### BIRD RECORDS

Ruby Allen and Mrs. John Rose saw a Lewis's Woodpecker at Durling Farm on May 13. This bird is rare having a casual status on our checklist. One wintered at Midland this year and was closely observed and reported on, even nick-named "Meriwether" in Midnats, their newsletter. The Mississippi Kite is nesting again in the Upper Valley. Joe Wilcox found nesting Hooded Orioles near Memorial Park. Photo has been taken.

TEXAS BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE has just been formed by the Texas Ornithological Society. There are twelve members serving the various regions of the state. Geth White will have territory which includes El Paso, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Presidio, Brewster, Terrell, Val Verde, Crockett, Pecos and Reeves Counties in West Texas as well as Ward, Winkler and Loving Counties. \$2,000 in funds have been allocated for a State Checklist.

I will appreciate help in the territory in locating records or lists of birds in these sparsely populated counties. Please contact me if you have a local list in any of these counties. Rules for acceptance of records include 1) Documentation by a specimen placed in a recognized collection 2) Photographs either published in a recognized journal or placed in the Texas Photo-Record file at College Station or both; with identification confirmed by a recognized authority. 3) Tape recording where appropriate, and placed in a proper depository.

EL PASO-TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY  
3123 Federal Avenue  
El Paso, Texas 79930

FIRST CLASS