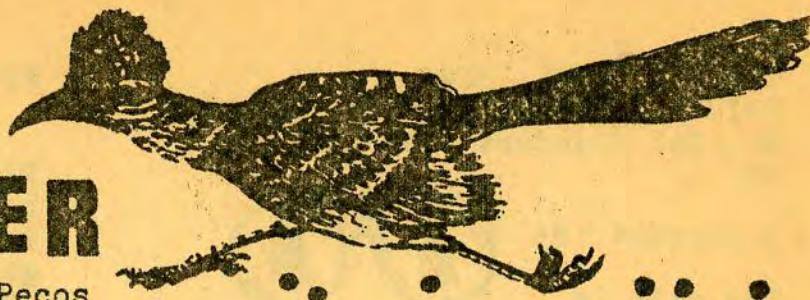


the ROADRUNNER



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

Editors: Jane Fowler -Jo Nagel

Volume 15 (3)

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March 1985

GENERAL MEETING

MON., MARCH 18, 7:30 PM, Garden Center, 3105 Grant St. in Memorial Park. Rick Taylor who has his own tour guide service into Mexico, Borderland Production, and who instructs at Cochise College in Douglas, AZ is to be our March program. Almost exactly a year ago (March 19, 1984) we were privileged to hear him give a program on the Elegant Trogon, the subject of a book he authored entitled The Coppery-tailed Trogon, Arizona's Bird of Paradise. Since we recognize a good man when we see one, Mr. Taylor was invited back for a program on Birds of Mexico. We are real lucky to have him, and all of you readers are urged to come, to enjoy and learn about Mexican birds. This knowledge could come in handy on our side of the border from time to time. See you Monday, March 18th.

FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

HUECO TANKS

SAT., MARCH 2. Meet at Bella Napoli's parking lot at Montana and Yarbrough intersection. Plan to hike through the park and drive to some of the area livestock water tanks. Leader: Bart Rumaker (544-6432). Meet 7:30 AM.

CLAY MILLER RANCH

SAT.-SUN., MARCH 16-17. Meet at Feather Lake at 7 AM (Sunrise will be about 6:25 AM). The trip will take a little over 2½ hrs. There are no facilities (including water), however, there are stone

barracks in which to sleep. Some birders plan to come back Sunday through Balmorhea, TX. Directions to Clay Miller for those who can't meet at Feather Lake: I-10 to Van Horn, So. at U.S. 90, Turn right .7 mile before Valentine. There are signs at the turn off - Chilicote Ranch, Clay Miller Ranch and A.K. Miller Ranch. Go 2 miles then make left rt.-angle turn, continue 1 mile and turn right to follow the most traveled road 7 plus miles towards the gap in the mountains. If you plan to go, call Tom Baker (562-9461). I still need a volunteer to be the leader.

AGUIRRE SPRING

SUN., MARCH 24. Meet at 7 AM at the blue spire in Sunrise Shopping Center, 8500 Dyer. Waiting for us on the e. slope of the Organ Mts. near Las Cruces are Acorn Woodpeckers, Scrub Jays, Plain Titmice, Bushtits, Black-chinned Sparrows and more. We'll enjoy beautiful scenery along the 4½-mile Pine Tree Trail and have lunch perched high above the surrounding desert. Leader: John Sproul (545-5157h, 541-6126w).

EAST FRANKLIN MTS.

SAT., APRIL 6. Leader: Wanted Call Tom Baker (562-9461) Plan to meet at 7 AM in the Wilderness Park Museum parking lot on Transmountain Dr. Hike through the foothills to one of the springs in the area.

BIG BEND NATL. PARK
FRI. - SUN., APRIL 19-21. Leader:
Mr. Hal Flanders. Details next
RR.

BIRDATHON '85



The date is
set - Sat., May
4 - for our annual Birdathon.
Plan now to participate, and
let's make this a record year.
Everyone has fun, raises money
and need not be an expert birder.
If you have any ideas for chap-
ter prizes or wish to be on the
planning committee, call Bob
Johnson 757-1876 or 751-0125.
Full details in April RR.

FEATHER LAKE SANCTUARY MEETING AND WORKDAY

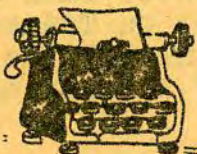
SAT., MARCH 9, 1985. There will be
a discussion of plans for irriga-
tion and improvements at Feather
Lake at 8:30 AM. Please bring
your work gloves to help clean
up the grounds after the meet-
ing.

NEWS UPDATE - The egrets seem to
have left the Lake. Are they rest-
ing at another pond? Will they
return to Feather Lake next win-
ter? Aren't we lucky to have our
own nature study area?

Spring migrants will be showing
up now. A few Yellow-head Black-
birds had arrived by the first
of February. They are our "show
birds" in the spring. Neil Keith,
Helen Barto and snow covered
the lake in January. Betty Rob-
erts, Anna Marie Shields, the
Coyles and the Bakers took turns
in February. Thank you, everyone.
Joyce Davis has volunteered to
be on duty Easter Sunday so that
we can maintain our announced
schedule.

The deadline for the April RR is
March 25.

March 1985



FT. WORTH TO HOST A.C.T. SPRING MEETING

Ft. Worth Audubon Society will
be the host chapter when the Au-
dubon Council of Texas (ACT)
gathers for its spring meeting
April 20-21. In addition to up-
dates on activities of Audubon
chapters throughout the state,
participants will hear 2 spe-
cial presentations planned by
the Ft. Worth group. One will
highlight the proposed Trinity
River Greenbelt in Dallas, the
other will look at efforts to
protect remnant prairie ecosys-
tems in Texas, among the state's
rarest plant communities. Also
high on the agenda will be a
discussion of the Texas Non-
game Stamp program. Representa-
tives from the Information and
Education Division and the Non-
game Section of the Texas Parks
and Wildlife Dept. have been in-
vited to participate. Finally,
a variety of field trips will
cap the weekend. For details on
the April 20-21 meeting, con-
tact chapter ACT delegate John
Sproul (545-5157) or Marilyn
Summer, Rt. 4, Box 213, Roanoke,
TX 76262 (817/491-2382).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON., MARCH 11, 1985, 7:30 PM The
Board will meet at the home of
Bob Johnson, 5109 Paris, El Paso
(751-0125). All members are wel-
come.



EPTPAS wishes to extend a warm
welcome to new members Arturo
Acosta, Thomas L. Brown, Margaret
M. Calof, Maj. & Mrs. William J. Der-
agisch, Douglas B. Evans, Randolph
C. Duff, Alice M. Pinales, Mrs. Lee
S. Evans, Lt. Col. F. M. White (Ret),
Karl L. Vliet, Zella B. McCracken,
Mrs. Harvey Tinkler, Col. M. C. Ste-
vens, Jodi Price, Joseph A. Moore,
F. Ray McCormich, Elvera Hasford,
Lillian K. Harris and Paul W. Her-
man, a transfer into our chapter.

National Audubon Society

BIRDATHON

1985

The El Paso/Trans-Pecos Chapter of the National Audubon Society is announcing its participation in the Birdathon for the fifth year. Birdathon contributions are tax-deductible and this year, proceeds will be divided two ways: one-half will be sent to our regional office to support such issues as reauthorization of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts, wetland habitat protection, the protection of birds and other wildlife, etc. and the remaining half will be kept by our chapter. This year, with your help, we plan to use our portion of the funds we raise to make needed improvements at our Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary in El Paso's lower valley. In fact, the 1985 Birdathon will initiate a long-term fund raising campaign for Feather Lake.

Here's What To Do

A Birdathon is similar to a walkathon or jogathon used by nonprofit organizations to raise funds. Sponsor yourself or another bird watcher for a stated amount per species seen within a 24 hour period. (Count day is May 4.) For example, you sponsor Bob Birder for 10¢ per species; he sees 75 species. Your donation would be \$7.50 and is tax deductible. As a sponsor, you may stipulate a maximum amount to your pledge, if you wish.

Be a counter and get as many sponsors as you can. You don't have to be an El Paso resident or a member of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Chapter to be a counter or a sponsor.

The evening following count day (May 5), we will meet at 5:30PM at the Garden Center, 3105 Grant St. in Memorial Park for a pot-luck dinner and drawing. The Grand Prize for our drawing is an original painting DONATED by wildlife artist Patti Canaris! The second prize is a gift certificate from Prints Charming. All sponsors are eligible for the drawing. Counters with pledges totaling 50¢ or more per species will qualify for other prizes which will be awarded at the general meeting on May 20. Prizes will be given to the persons who raise the most money, see the greatest number of species, and get the most sponsors. Also the new birder seeing the most species will win a prize.

The week following the Birdathon, collect pledges from your sponsors and send them to Bob Johnson, 5109 Paris, El Paso, Tx 79924. Make checks payable to El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society.

Mail in this form by May 4 and have a chance to win the lovely Canaris painting to be given away the evening of May 5 at our pot-luck dinner.

Yes, I will sponsor*.at \$. . . .per species.
(If you desire - maximum amount of \$. . . .)

Yes, I will be a counter. Please send the forms I need.

Signature. Name (please print).

Address. Phone.

*Who to sponsor. Sponsor yourself or the counter of your choice. In the past, counters have seen from 50-100 species on count day.

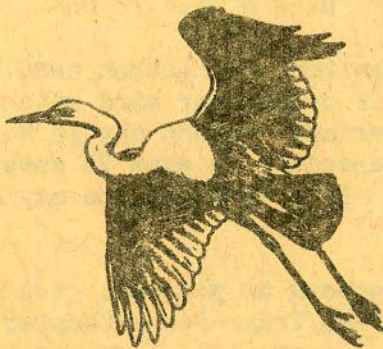
Clip and send this form to Bob Johnson, 5109 Paris, El Paso, Tx 79924.

(Must arrive by May 4 to be eligible for drawing.)

National Audubon Society

BIRDATHON

• 1985 •



El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society
PO Box 9655
El Paso, Tx 79986

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The Wilderness Park Coalition

***** ACTION ALERT *****

BILL TO REMOVE FUNDING PROHIBITION NEEDS SUPPORT

Background

In 1978, El Paso's long-held dream of a wilderness park in the Franklin Mountains was in trouble. A developer had carved a road through the heart of the contemplated park, had scarred the until-then pristine North Franklin Peak and was intimating more damage to come. Protection of the Franklins demanded immediate action, and it came in the form of Ron Coleman's successful 1979 bill to create the Franklin Mountains State Park.

When this bill passed the Texas Legislature, though, it passed with a string attached:

"The [Texas Parks and Wildlife Department] shall not expend any funds for the operation and maintenance of Franklin Mountains State Park."

That provision was included at the insistence of Fred Agnich, who, as chairman of the House Environmental Affairs Committee, had the power to kill the bill. Agnich contended that because the Park was within El Paso's city limits, it should be operated and maintained solely by the City and County of El Paso, not the State of Texas. Unreasonable? Yes. Impractical? Yes. But, given the choice between 1) a bill with this funding restriction and 2) no bill at all, the choice was clear. The land had to be protected immediately; the question of funding for operation and maintenance would have to be addressed later.

Initially, attention was focused on acquisition of lands within the Park boundary; all other concerns were secondary. Eventually, though, the harm the Park suffers from lack of operation and maintenance funds became apparent, and in 1983 State Sen. Tati Santiesteban introduced a bill to remove the funding prohibition. The bill passed the Senate easily but died in the House. It had been referred to Rep. Agnich's committee, and he refused to give it a hearing.

Current Status

The 69th Session of the Texas Legislature is now in progress, and Sen. Santiesteban has again introduced a bill (S.B. 54) to remove the funding prohibition. Rep. Arves Jones has introduced similar companion legislation (H.B. 107) in the House. S.B. 54 was passed overwhelmingly by the full Senate on February 12.

H.B. 107 has been referred to the House Environmental Affairs Committee. Fred Agnich remains the chair of this committee, and he remains opposed to removing the funding prohibition. Without pressure to do so, his committee is unlikely to give H.B. 107 a favorable report to the full House, perhaps not even a hearing. In either case, the bill would again die.

- Texas Legislature -
Useful Phone Numbers

Current status, all bills	1-800-252-9693
Copies of Senate bills	512-475-2520
Copies of House bills	512-475-8454 (Ext. 1139)

Wilderness Park Coalition Position

The Wilderness Park Coalition believes the funding prohibition is wholly inappropriate and should be eliminated. No other State park is subject to such a provision. It prevents proper management and protection of a unique resource. It prevents the public from fully using, enjoying and appreciating the Franklin Mountains.

Until the funding prohibition is removed, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) cannot:

- assign rangers to the Park to protect against such activities as plant and rock theft, unauthorized use of vehicles and illegal use of firearms;
- prepare the master plan for the Park;
- maintain existing facilities; and
- install necessary signs, fences and barriers.

The Franklin Mountains State Park is not your typical "city park". Rather, it is the second largest state park in Texas. The TPWD has the skills and resources needed to manage a 25,000-acre natural area; as the agency with jurisdiction over these lands, it should be given the freedom to administer them properly.

The Coalition recognizes that the legislature needs to be cautious in its allocation of State funds. However, removal of the funding prohibition would not require TPWD to spend any funds; it would simply allow them to do so when necessary; it would untie their hands.

What You Can Do

Using the information furnished in this alert, write a letter to the House Environmental Affairs Committee urging that H.B. 107 be given a prompt hearing and be given a favorable report to the full House. Address the letter to the chairman of the Committee:

Rep. Fred Agnich
Chairman, Committee on Environmental Affairs
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78769

Send copies of the letter to each member of the Committee and to each member of El Paso's House delegation:

Environmental Affairs Committee

Ben Campbell	Cliff Johnson
Frank Collazo, Jr.	Edmund Kuempel
D. Barry Connelly	Mike Millsap
Allen Hightower, Jr.	Ed Watson

El Paso House Delegation

Arves E. Jones, Sr.	Nick Perez
Nancy McDonald	Jack C. Vowell
Paul Moreno	

Rep. _____
Member, Committee on Envir. Affairs
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78769

Rep. _____
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78769

REMEMBER: Politicians pay attention to voters, especially when the views are expressed by individual letters. Such letters do make things happen!

OBSERVATIONS - January 24 to February 20

Although still somewhat slow overall, this period was not without its highlights. Several accidental to casual species appear and one very early spring migrant date.

LOONS - FALCONS

Thirty-three Great Blue Herons were counted in the Madden Lake area and 6 others in other areas of the lower valley 2/2 (BJ,mob), 1 was reported from Canutillo 2/15 (TC), and 6 in the upper valley 2/17 (BJ,RW). Black-crowned Night-Herons were seen in good numbers in the lower valley 2/2 (BJ,mob). At least 5 Ross' Geese were observed at Ft. Hancock Reservoir 2/3 (AG,MG,et al.). A male Wood Duck was noted near Indian Hot Springs 2/2 (BJ,mob). On 2/17, a male Blue-winged Teal was in the El Paso Country Club (EPCC) area (BJ,RW). The 2 female Common Goldeneyes were still present at the Crossroads Pond 1/27 (JoD,mob), 2/14 (BJ), and 2/17 (BJ,RW). Thirty Buffleheads were seen near the river near Indian Hot Springs 2/2 (BJ,mob) and a pair of Hooded Mergansers at the Crossroads Pond 1/27 (JoD,mob). On 2/3, a Harris' Hawk was sighted between Tornillo and Ft. Hancock (AG,MG,et al.). Eighteen Red-tailed Hawks were counted in the lower valley 2/2 (BJ,mob), a Ferruginous Hawk was seen off Fred Wilson near Furrow's 2/13 (BJ), and 3 Golden Eagles in the lower valley 2/2 (BJ,mob).

QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

Twelve Greater Yellowlegs were in the Madden Lake area 2/2 (BJ,mob). A California Gull observed in the Madden Lake area 2/3 (AG,MG,et al.) is of special interest. An imm. male Anna's Hummingbird that had been frequenting a feeder in Thunderbird Heights since early Dec. was last seen 2/10 (FB). Photographs taken were verified on 2/17(*). Two other hummingbirds, possibly an ad. male Anna's and an imm. male Rufous remained at Mountain Park feeders until 2/2 (JB).

FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

Black Phoebes were reported on 2 occasions, 1 in the EPCC area 1/27 (JoD,mob) and 1 in the lower valley 2/2 (BJ,mob). Of note were 9 Tree Swallows observed in

the Madden Lake area 2/2 (BJ,mob). This is a very early date for this species. A Purplish-backed Jay (Cyanocorax beechii), most likely escaped, put in appearances at a Clint feeder from 2/1 - 2/7 (mob)(*). Although very exciting, much consideration has to be given to the origin of species of this type in border areas. A House Wren was at Owen's 1/27 (JoD,mob). W. Bluebirds were in the upper valley 2/17 (BJ,RW). A flock of Mt. Bluebirds was seen near Santa Teresa Middle School 2/11 (JNi), 6 at the Biggs Field entrance 2/13 (BJ), and 8 at Canutillo 2/15 (TC). A Townsend's Solitaire was seen at Durling's 2/17 (BJ,RW). On 2/4, a Brown Thrasher was present at a camping area in Hueco Tanks where 1 had been seen and reported last month (AG,MG,et al.). Cedar Waxwings were still being reported in good numbers throughout the period (mob). A pair of Phainopeplas was at Durling's 1/27 (JoD,mob), 1 at Hueco Tanks 2/4 (AG,MG,et al.), and 3 in the upper valley 2/17 (BJ,RW).

WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

The Orange-crowned Warbler at Horizon City was still being seen regularly through 2/13 (MG). Also on 2/13, it was reported that 1 or more "Myrtle" Warblers had been noted among the group of Yellow-rumped present during the period (MG). A Black-chinned Sparrow was in Whispering Springs Canyon 2/16 (JS). The 1-35 highly probable COMMON GRACKLES that frequented an e. El Paso yard from 1/25-1/27 (JF, BR) are of special note (*). Another 4, which were well described, appeared at another eastside location 2/3 (IG) and might well have been part of the same flock. A Red Crossbill was in the EPCC area 1/27 (JoD,mob), and several Am. Goldfinches were noted in a flock including Lessers at Horizon City 2/13 (MG).

Note: An asterisk indicates reports where documentation has been submitted to the El Paso-Las Cruces Rare Birds Committee. Your help and cooperation by submitting supporting evidence on rarities seen is very much appreciated.

CONTRIBUTORS: Gloria Basden, Helen Bigelow, Flora Bittick, Janet Brockmoller, Tess Cardenas, Joyce Davis, Jane Fowler, Al & Madeline Gavit, Linda Green, Bob Johnson, John Nielson, John Sproul, Ray Waite, Mr. & Mrs. James Wingo.
/Bettie Roberts, Observations Editor/
(591-0421)

CONSERVATION CAPSULES

RAPTOR PROTECTION: Once again this year, our chapter has awarded \$100 grants to both Helen Bigelow of Anthony, NM, and Carole Beach of Chaparral, NM, to help support their wildlife-rehabilitation work in the El Paso area. It takes a special kind of commitment to be a "rehabber". We're extremely fortunate to have 2 good ones in our area. Thank you, Carole and Helen, for all you do on behalf of El Paso area wildlife.

FRANKLIN MTS. ST. PARK: S.B. 54, Sen. Tati Santiesteban's bill to remove the current prohibition against the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (TPWD) spending funds for operation and maintenance of Franklin Mts. St. Park (RR, Feb), passed the Texas Senate easily on Feb 12. Now, the real action begins. As expected, Arves Jones' companion bill (H.B. 107) has been referred to the House Environmental Affairs Committee, where similar legislation died without a hearing in 1983. This year, a hearing appears likely, though at press time one had not yet been scheduled. How can you help get this legislation passed? Read the separate Action Alert enclosed with this newsletter.

NONGAME STAMP: At a recent wildlife-related symposium in Colorado, Dr. Richard G. Walsh of Colorado St. Univ. presented a paper titled "Public Benefits of Programs to Protect Endangered Wildlife in Colorado." Walsh and his co-authors reported on a study designed to determine how much the average Colorado household is willing to pay each year to protect endangered wildlife in the state. Their finding? The average household is willing to pay \$58 per year to:

- see endangered wildlife (\$17),
- maintain the opportunity to see that wildlife in the future (\$12),
- have the knowledge that endangered species exist (\$13), and
- endow future generations with endangered wildlife (\$16).

So, what does this have to do with nongame stamps? Plenty. Texans are just as concerned about endangered wildlife as Coloradoans, right? Well, whenever you buy a Texas Nongame Stamp or Decal, you're contributing directly to TPWD's programs to protect nongame wildlife and endangered species in our state. Five dollars, the price of a nongame stamp or decal, is a small price to pay to help protect something we value so highly.

WILDERNESS WORKSHOP: In New Mexico, almost 1 million acres of Bureau of Land Management land are now being studied for possible addition to the Natl. Wilderness Preservation System. Informed citizen input will play a large role in determining which areas finally make it and which don't. Want to learn the skills needed to fashion a credible wilderness proposal? The El Paso Group of the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society and the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee will conduct a special Wilderness Workshop on Sat., Mar 9 at the Trans-Mountain campus of El Paso Community College. It runs from 9 AM to 4 PM, and the \$5 registration fee covers both workshop materials and lunch. Details: Gary Williams (592-2363).

LAS AVES DE MÉXICO: The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is trying to raise \$15,000 to publish a Spanish-language version of Peterson and Chalif's A Field Guide to Mexican Birds. The WWF hopes the publication will be a strong force in promoting a knowledge and understanding of the Mexican avifauna and in leading to the conservation of resident and North American migratory birds. Gift checks should be restricted to "Mexican Bird Book" and made out to World Wildlife Fund, 1601 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20009. /John Sproul/

APPLAUSE

Our chapter wishes to sincerely THANK:

JOYCE DAVIS who was our energetic chapter President for the past 2 years. Joyce traveled many miles, attended numerous meetings and toiled long hours for the Audubon cause;

BETTY WALLIS for her generous donation to our library of the National Geographic Society's package "The Wonder of Birds"; this includes a beautifully illustrated book, the NGS field guide to birds of N. America and a record "Guide to Bird Songs";

DR. TONY GENNARO for giving a most inspiring program at our meeting Feb 18 on his studies of the Mississippi Kites at Clovis, NM Municipal Golf Course.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S EYRIE

As your new President, I have asked and the Board of Directors has agreed to make Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary our prime concern for the next 2 years. With the loss of the Fort Bliss Sewage Ponds, which will dry up within the next 18 months, we need to assure El Paso of a reliable year-round water area for migratory and resident water birds. We also need the lake as an extension of our expanding education program.

Some of you may be aware that the Army Corps of Engineers is planning a flood control project for s.e. El Paso. The latest information from the Corps is that Feather Lake will continue to be in the flow of drainage. But the possibility of the Corps dredging Feather Lake during construction of improvements in the area is slim to none. As you know, our sanctuary has silted in almost 2 feet in places, and we must remove this silt along with the growth that has covered over 95% of the area.

To do this, as well as make needed improvements in the overall facility, we are going to launch a major fund raising drive in the near future. When this drive is initiated, I will be asking all of you to pitch in and help by making a

donation, writing letters, soliciting contributions from the community and personally coming out to work at the sanctuary.

For starters, come out Sat. March 9 (see p.2) and dig up weeds, plant bushes, clean up trash, etc. There's lots to do. Anyone with ideas for this fund raiser, call me 757-1876, 751-0125 or mail ideas to 5109 Paris, El Paso 79924. /Bob Johnson/

NEW MEXICO BIRD FINDING GUIDE

The New Mexico Ornithological Society has something new to offer: the first edition of its New Mexico Bird Finding Guide. Edited by Dustin Huntington and Dr. Dale Zimmerman, the guide includes contributions by 15 New Mexico birders on 13 prime birding areas around the state. How to get there, how to locate the best sites, which birds to expect, road conditions and other helpful planning details, distribution charts for the most sought-after species -- it's all packed into 132 paperbound pages that cost \$6, plus \$1 for mailing costs. You can send orders to: W. Burton Lewis, P.O. Box 665, Los Alamos, NM 87544. Make checks payable to "New Mexico Ornithological Society".

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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 note: Bulk mail is not forwarded. Save us 25¢ in return postage by notifying us before you move.

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Secretary	Gloria Basden 532-7348
Treasurer	Jean Coyle 778-7238

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Joyce Davis	581-9470
John Sproul	545-5157
Sid Shepperd	566-2162

