

# The ROADRUNNER



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VOL. 22 (7)

EL PASO/TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Feb.-Mar. '93

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The El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society conducts General Meetings on the third Monday of each month, September through May. Meetings are held at the Garden Center in Memorial Park, 3105 Grant, El Paso, Texas. The public is cordially invited.

## AUDUBON'S SOUTHWEST REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

**Monday, February 15, 7:30 PM - General Meeting** - The guest speaker at the February General Meeting will be Ms. Sandra Skrei. Ms. Skrei is the Southwest Regional Representative of the National Audubon Society. Her presentation will focus on endangered species legislation presently being debated. This is obviously of great concern to all of us, wherever we may live. Ms. Skrei will be giving us information on the bills currently in discussion as well as legislation yet to come. She will be looking for our support and, since she is relatively new to this position, this is our opportunity to show her that famous El Paso hospitality.

## BOB JOHNSON, TRAVELER

**Monday, March 15, 7:30 PM - General Meeting** - The tireless Bob Johnson will be our featured speaker at the March General Meeting. Bob travels on birding outings throughout the year and is a good source of information for anyone wanting to plan such a trip. Bob sees more species in a year than most people do in a lifetime. At the March meeting Bob will be covering one such trip he made through Arizona, Nevada, California, Oregon, over to Idaho, and back through Utah and New Mexico. On this "loop" he visited Lake Mead, Death Valley, Sequioia and Yosemite National Parks, Crater Lake, the Salt Lake area, and the Four Corners. Included in the presentation are slides of the trip. This is an opportunity to get a lot of good ideas for your birding trip in one evening. No, you don't have to take Bob with you.

Statewide Legislative Watch Group Forming. Join in the Action!

by Sandra Skrei, Regional Representative

The 73rd Session of the Texas Legislature is upon us. We expect intense activity, both good and bad, on environmental issues. In order to be as effective as possible on influencing the outcome, we need timely action from as many Audubon members as possible. One way to do this is to form a statewide "Legislative Watch Group." Each member will receive information on the basics of effective letter writing and phone calling, and specific information for each action.

The Audubon Society is most effective when staff visits with the legislators are backed up by letters and phone calls from Audubon members in their districts. The combination of your involvement, an Audubon presence in Austin during the session, and the knowledge that there are thousands more Audubon members in Texas will be a powerful tool for championing our environmental causes.

We have identified 14 environmental issues we expect to see introduced this session. Each chapter board has been asked to identify their top 5 priority issues, which will be the focus of the activities from the Legislative Watch Group. We will also keep everyone updated on all environmental happenings. We hope to have a telephone tree for issues needing immediate attention, and at least a bi-weekly mailing to everyone in the Legislative Watch Group.

In some cases, especially issues that our representatives don't have a special interest or financial stake in, they can be persuaded with as few as 12 calls or letters! Your efforts really do make a difference. I urge each and every Audubon member in Texas to join our Legislative Watch Group, so that together, we can make an even stronger showing than we have in the past. If you can commit yourself to at least one action per month during the Session (January through May, most action is expected in April and May), please fill out the form we've provided and send it to our Southwest Regional Office in Austin. If you have any questions call Sandra Skrei at 512/327-1943. Thank you!

Please add me to your Legislative Watch Group.

\_\_\_ State Issues \_\_\_ Local Issues (you will be contacted by your local Audubon chapter)

You can count on me for:

\_\_\_ Letters - \_\_\_ (number per week or month) \_\_\_ Phone calls - \_\_\_ (number per week or month)

\_\_\_ Visit(s) to legislator's \_\_\_ local office \_\_\_ Austin office

\_\_\_ I am interested in attending a 2 day session on how to lobby including training and a visit to a legislators's office.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX number: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call: \_\_\_\_\_

Evening phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I would prefer to be contacted by FAX or mail only.

\_\_\_ I would prefer to be contacted by phone and I have an answering machine.

\_\_\_ I am interested in joining Audubon's electronic mail system through Compuserve.

If you know the following information please inform us:

\_\_\_ State Representative District Number \_\_\_ State Senate District Number

\_\_\_ Congressional District Number

Send this form (or a copy) to National Audubon Society, Legislative Watch Group, 2525 Wallingwood, Suite #1505, Austin, Texas 78746.

*To enjoy he must possess, invade, appropriate. Hence the wideness that he cannot personally see has no value to him. Hence the universal assumption that an unused hinterland is rendering no service to society. To those devoid of imagination, a blank space on the map is a useless waste; to others, the most valuable part.*

- Aldo Leopold, 1887 - 1948

# ON THE TRAIL

## FT. BLISS PONDS

Saturday, February 13 - Meet us in the parking lot of Furniture Country, at the corner of Fred Wilson and Railroad Drive. We'll travel into Northeast El Paso to the Ft. Bliss ponds to see a wide variety of ducks, shore birds and other waterfowl. With luck, we may see the elusive Sora. Since recent decisions of the El Paso Water Utilities may make these lakes a thing of the past, this trip should be on your schedule. We'll start at 7:30 AM. The trip leader is Kyle Reidland, 584-1710.

## HUECO TANKS

Saturday, February 27 - Meet at 8:00 AM at the corner of Montana and Hueco Tanks Park Road. We'll start the trip by picking up litter along the stretch of highway that we have been responsible for cleaning. After the trash pick-up, we'll go into the Park for some serious birding. If you haven't been birding in the Park before, then this is your chance to see some of the more unusual birds that visit our area. Expect to spend up to three hours in and about the Park. Bring water and lunch if you like. The leader will be John Sproul, 545-5157.



## FT. HANCOCK, ETC.

Saturday, March 13 - This trip will last most of the day as we will be visiting the Tornillo rest stop and various other spots along the highway east of El Paso before arriving at the Ft. Hancock reservoir. We can expect to see birds that visit the Rio Grande Valley, but never make it as far west as El Paso. We'll start at Feather Lake at 7:30 AM. Be sure to bring lunch and refreshments. A leader has not been chosen yet, but you can get more information from our Field Trips Chairperson, Hugh Jameson at 751-7952.

## HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE

Saturday, March 27 - Meet in front of the Popular Store in Northpark Mall at 7:30 AM for this all day excursion to the lakes around Holloman AFB. If the rains continue, these lakes should have plenty of water to attract the spring migrants. Lunch and refreshments are recommended. Contact Hugh Jameson for the details.

## MORE TO COME...

Coming up in April and May are trips to Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge near Roswell; the Alamogordo area; El Paso parks; and the biggie to the Chiricahua Mountains in S.E. Arizona. Stay posted.



*The EP/TPAS wildlife sanctuary is located at 9500 North Loop Dr., El Paso.*

By late November last year, Feather Lake was over 95% dry. But thanks to a lot of cooperation by a lot of different people, plus a timely storm, it's now a lake again.

The Texas Department of Transportation, the Dan Williams Co. (contractor for the North Loop expansion), the El Paso County Water Improvement District, and City Representative Jay Armes' office all played roles in making water available to our wildlife sanctuary in early December. So did the big storm of December 4-5, which hit just after the temporary dam at the lake inlet was breached for a special water delivery.

Now, the dam is back in place and the lake level is again dropping, but some water should remain until deliveries can resume in late winter. Well done, all!

Also well done was the recent Eagle Scout service project organized at Feather Lake by Danny Magana of Troop 279. Last year, a beaver visited the lake and chewed down many of the young trees we had worked to establish along the shore over the past five years. On January 16 - 17, Danny's crew brought in 31 Goodding willow poles (young limbs 8 - 12 feet long pruned from mature trees), planted them, and circled each

with a beaver-proof cage of hardware cloth. The scouts had a lot of fun and contributed in a meaningful way to our efforts to establish a native riparian woodland at Feather Lake. Thanks, Danny and Troop 279!

Don't forget: You too can help with habitat restoration work at Feather Lake! Our next sanctuary workdays are February 20 and March 20. The gates open at 8:00 AM, but you can come any time during the day that is convenient.

Remember also our public visitor hours. Through the end of April, Feather Lake will be open 2:00 PM to sunset every Sunday and 8:00 AM to noon the first and third Saturdays each month. Come on down for a visit!

// John Sproul //

#### EL PASO ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

The Sierra Club recently hired Phyllis Caves to serve as Office Manager at the El Paso Environmental Center. She is doing an excellent job, but funding for the position will run out at the end of April unless we can find new income sources soon. The Center's participating organizations (Habitat for Humanity, Sierra Club, Audubon) have applied for several grants to help get the Center on more stable financial footing. If you know of any good grant prospects we might have overlooked, please contact Phyllis Caves (532-9645) or John Sproul (545-5157).

Enclosed with this newsletter is a flyer describing the recyclable items the Environmental Center currently accepts and how they need to be prepared. Income from recycling helps offset the operating costs of the Center, and

we encourage you to contribute your recyclables. When you do, be sure to come inside, visit with Phyllis, and see what else the Center has going on.

// John Sproul //

### FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS COALITION

Last year was an eventful one for the Franklin Mountains, and 1993 promises to be equally so. You can keep informed about issues relating to the Franklins and contribute in an important way to ensuring their lasting protection by joining the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition. Dues are: > \$3/Student, > \$5/Regular, > \$25-100/Contributing and > over \$100/Sustaining. Checks, payable to "Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition", may be sent to Jane Fowler, Treasurer, FMWC, 3212 Kilkenney, El Paso, TX 79925.

### EL PASO BIRD COUNT

I want to thank all who contributed to the success of the Christmas Bird Count on January 2. We had 34 people in the field and 10 counting the birds in their yards. A total of 94 species were identified as compared to our 10 year average of 97. Total birds were 27,576, compared to a 10 year average of 20,270. This year was the second highest in the last 10 years, the top being 30,337.

Two of the rarest birds were a White-fronted Goose at Ascarate Park, and a Golden-crowned Kinglet in the Country Club area. Other rare sightings, based only on past counts, not necessarily rare to the area, were Double-crested Cormorant, Common Merganser, Sora, Black-necked Stilt (last two years

only, all winter at Doniphan Marsh), Brown Creeper, Brown Thrasher, and Eastern Meadowlark.

High numbers in a specie and our 10 year average were as follows:

Northern Pintail	49 - 17
Cinnamon Teal	10 - 4
Scaled Quail	116 - 44
Greater Yellowlegs	27 - 6
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	9 - 4
Chihuahua Raven	45 - 9
Marsh Wren	5 - 1
Curve-billed Thrasher	11 - 3
Phainopepla	14 - 4
Starling	1020 - 202
Canyon Towhee	32 - 11

Highest numbers ever recorded:

Rock Dove	1,903
Cedar Waxwing	140
White-winged Dove	832

(We could have the highest count in North America for the White-winged Dove. Last year, that honor went to Las Cruces at 559.)

Another unusual point was that we had 0 counts in the following species: Eared-Grebe, Northern Harrier (first 0 since 1944), Least Sandpiper, Scrub Jay, American Pipet (since 1969), Rufus-sided Towhee (since 1969), and Brewers Sparrow (since 1973).

Again, THANKS TO ALL and I hope you enjoyed these statistics. If you desire more data, please call me.

// Bob Johnson //



### MAKING TRAVEL PLANS?

If you have plans for a business trip or a family vacation, then we would encourage you to make your arrangements through P.S. TRAVEL. This agency has pledged a monthly donation to EP/TPAS equal to 2% of the total spent. This is an excellent way to help your chapter while "getting away from it all."

Contact P.S. TRAVEL at 6593 A Montana, El Paso; (915) 779-5403; Fax (915) 772-2631.

Be sure to use account number 2006 so our chapter will receive credit for your travel.

### ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The chapter newsletter, **THE ROADRUNNER**, is published six times a year by the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society. The annual subscription rate for the newsletter only is \$5.00. The newsletter is included with your membership in the National Audubon Society.

Chapter members are encouraged to submit articles for publication in **THE ROADRUNNER**. The articles may be of any length and in any format, but the editor reserves the right to modify submissions to fit space available.

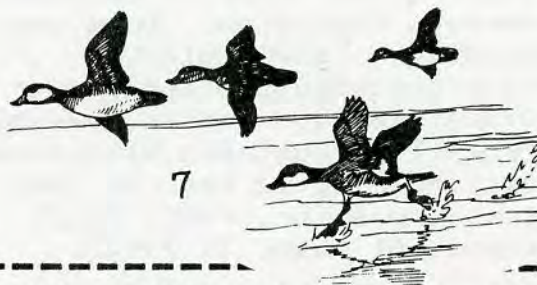
Articles may be submitted to the editor:

George Barnett  
600 Espina Dulce  
El Paso, TX 79912

Day: 779-3835  
Night: 581-1829  
Fax: 778-2808

### WELCOME TO OUR NEW OFFICERS

New officers for the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society were voted on at the January General Meeting. Dayle Edwards has been the Education Chairperson for the past year and he is now the chapter Vice-President and Ways and Means Chairperson. Our new chapter Directors are Francis Gutierrez, Mary Bradley, and Mary Ann Vernon. Continuing as Secretary is Caroline Brown and continuing as Treasurer is Betty Roberts. We send our congratulations and, above all, our thanks to the new officers.



## National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Application

**Yes, I'd like to join.**

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

My check for \$20 is enclosed.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make all checks payable to the National Audubon Society.*

**Send this application and your check to:**

**National Audubon Society**  
Chapter Membership Data Center  
P.O. Box 51001 • Boulder, Colorado 80322-1001  
**LOCAL CHAPTER**



El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Soc.  
PO Box 9655  
El Paso, TX 79986

**W10**  
Local Chapter Code  
7XCHA

## OBSERVATIONS

September 20, 1992 - January 15, 1993

Uncommon, RARE and CASUAL sightings.

Hueco Tanks and El Paso Christmas Bird Counts not included.

This report includes a 4 month period, due to the RR publishing problems encountered with the last issue.

(CCA-Country Club Area; Can-Canutillo; Cor-Coronado; C/F-Clint/Fabens; DMr-Doniphan Marsh; Ewd-Eastwood; FBP-Fort Bliss Ponds; FtB-Fort Bliss; FHC-Fort Hancock; FLk-Feather Lake; HTk-Hueco Tanks; MLk-Madden Lake; NEP-Northeast El Paso; RnP-Randel's Pool; StT-Santa Teresa; Tor-Tornillo; Xrd-Crossroads)

## GREBES TO MERGANZERS

HORNED GREBE: 1/1, Xrd (CB)  
WHITE PELICAN: 10/29-11/22, FLk (JS, M.ob)  
GREAT EGRET: 9/27-11/22, 1/10 FLk (JF, M.ob)  
 Canada Goose: 10/17, FHC, (JS-ft)  
WOOD DUCK: 9/27, RnP, (JS-ft)  
CINNAMON TEAL: 11/12-1/5, DMr (BJ, CB)  
 1/12 & 17, FLk (JS)  
HOODED MERGANZER: 12/21 & 1/5, Xrd (BJ)  
 Common Merganser: 12/25, FBP (BJ)  
 1/13, FHC (BZ)  
RED-BREASTED MERGANZER: 1/13, FHC (BZ)

## BIRDS OF PREY

OSPREY: 9/24, DMr (BJ)  
 Mississippi Kite: 9/25, DMr (JK)  
HARLENS HAWK (Red-tailed): 11/8, Tor (HJ-ft)  
 Ferruginous Hawk: 11/3, 11/14, 12/12, Can (BJ)  
 Golden Eagle: 11/10, DMr, (BJ)  
 11/29, C/F, (KR)  
MERLIN: 12/30, FtB, (BJ)  
 1/13, C/F, (BZ)  
 Prairie Falcon: 11/24, CCA, (BJ)  
 1/10, FtB, (BJ)

## CRANES TO GULLS

SANDHILL CRANE: 10/10, FBP, (BJ)  
 10/17, FLk, (JS)  
 Black-necked Stilt: All Period, DMr (M.ob)  
LESSER YELLOWLEGS: 11/10, DMr, (BJ)  
MARBLED GODWIT: 9/22, 9/26, FBP, (KR, TZ)  
SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER: 9/26, FBP, (TZ)  
RED-NECKED PHALAROPE: 1/11, Can, (JZ)  
RED PHALAROPE: 10/3, FBP, (DE)  
BONAPARTS GULL: 1/13, SSP (BZ)

## HUMMINGBIRDS TO THRASHERS

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD: 9/27, Cor, (TZ-yd)  
 Red-naped Sapsucker: 10/21, HTk, (BJ-ft)

WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER: 1/3, CCA, (BJ)  
 Willow Flycatcher: 9/21, HTk, (KR)  
 Dusky Flycatcher: 9/21, HTk, (KR)  
EASTERN PHOEBE: 11/6, HTk, (BJ)  
VERMILLION FLYCATCHER: 9/27, RnP, (JS-ft)  
BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE: 11/23, CCA, (MA)  
HERMIT THRUSH: 12/6-12, Ewd, (AA)  
 12/30, Ant, (HB)  
GRAY CATBIRD: 10/20, HTk, (DE)  
BROWN THRASHER: 10/17, Ewd, (JF-yd)  
 12/25, FBP, (BJ)

## VIREOS TO SPARROWS

Warbling Vireo: 10/11, FBP, (BJ)  
 Orange-crowned Warbler: 12/25, FBP, (BJ)  
 1/12, CCA, (BJ)  
MAGNOLIA WARBLER: 9/21, HTk, (KR)  
BLACK-THROATED GRAYWARBLER: 10/10, HTk, (BJ-ft)  
 10/11-12, Ewd  
 (BR-yd)  
PALM WARBLER: 10/3, FBP, (DE)  
OVENBIRD: 10/8, StT, (PR-yd)  
GRASSHOPPER SPARROW: 10/20, HTk, (DE)  
SAGE SPARROW: 11/26, FBP, (BJ)  
SWAMP SPARROW: 11/1, FBP, (BJ)  
 11/26-27, FBP (KR)  
 White-crowned sparrow (ALBINO)  
 11/8, MLk, (HJ-ft)

FUJI FILM BLIMP: 11/15, FLk, (M.ob)

**Observers;** Art Arteaga, Mary Lou Alcorn, Helen Bigelow, Craig Braginton, Doug Emkalns, Jane Fowler, Hugh Jameson, Bob Johnson, John Kiseda, Kyle Reidland, Bettie Roberts, Patricia Russell, John Sproul, Jimmy Zabreski, Ted Zegarra, Barry Zimmer. -ft field trip leader, -yd in yard, M.ob many observers.

The reporting of Uncommon, RARE or CASUAL birds will be determined using the El Paso Audubons checklist "Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas" 7th Edition, October 1987 and "Birds of Hueco Tanks State Historical Park" 10/90.

If you do not have a copy of the El Paso checklist, which is on sale at each general meeting and at Feather Lake for \$0.50, contact Bob Johnson or any chapter officer. The Hueco Tanks checklist is available at the entrance building to the park.

REPORT YOUR SIGHTINGS TO BOB JOHNSON 757-1876 (recorder)







# CALENDAR

## FEBRUARY

Sat., 6 - Feather Lake open, 8 AM to Noon.  
Sun., 7 - Feather Lake open, 2 PM to Dusk.  
Mon., 8 - Board Meeting at Mary Ann Vernon's home, 6808 Escondido, #A, 581-1389, 7:30 PM  
Sat., 13 - Field Trip to Ft. Bliss Ponds, see page 3.  
Sun., 14 - Feather Lake open, 2 PM to Dusk.  
Mon., 15 - General Meeting, see page 1.  
Sat., 20 - Feather Lake workday  
Sat., 20 - Feather Lake open, 8 AM to Noon.  
Sun., 21 - Feather Lake open, 2 PM to Dusk.  
Sat., 27 - Field trip to Hueco Tanks, see page 3.  
Sun., 28 - Feather Lake open, 2 PM to Dusk.

## MARCH

Sat., 6 - Feather Lake open, 8 AM to Noon.  
Sun., 7 - Feather Lake open, 2 PM to Dusk.  
Mon., 8 - Board Meeting at Dayle Edwards' home, 3408 Running Deer, 7:30 PM, 592-0868.  
Sat., 13 - Field trip to Ft. Hancock, see page 3.  
Sun., 14 - Feather Lake open, 2 pm to Dusk.  
Mon., 15 - General Meeting, see page 1.  
Sat., 20 - Feather Lake workday.  
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