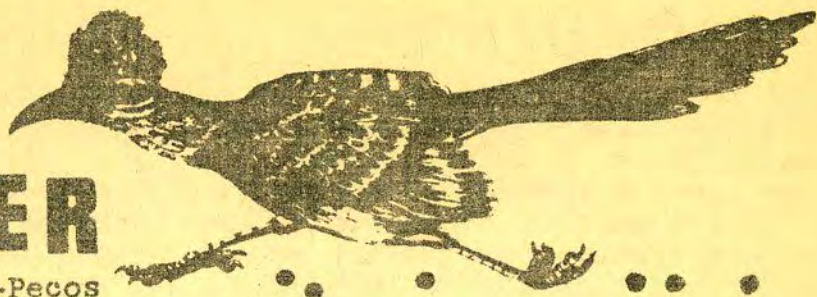


the ROADRUNNER

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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GENERAL MEETING

MON., APRIL 21, 1986, 7:30 pm, Garden Center, 3105 Grant in Memorial Park. The film "The Garden of Eden" will be shown. This gives us a look at some of the best examples of natural diversity that is protected by the Nature Conservancy.

FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

EAST COTTONWOOD SPRINGS
SAT., APRIL 5. Meet at Wilderness Park Museum on Transmountain at 7:30 AM. Proper shoes for hiking and water will be necessary. Leader still needed. Call Tom Baker (562-9461).



SE NEW MEXICO/LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKENS

SAT-SUN, APR 12-13. You've never witnessed the Tympanuchus two-step? Join us and watch some experts perform this intricate ritual dance. We'll spend Sat. afternoon at Bitter L. Natl. Wildlife Refuge, near Roswell, NM, then venture forth early Sun. morning to observe Lesser Prairie-Chickens on one of their most reliable NM display grounds. Weather permitting, we'll also enjoy Halley's Comet in the bargain. Our return to El Paso will include a stop at Rattlesnake Springs, the birding oasis that is a detached unit of Carlsbad Caverns

Natl. Park. Sat. night, you can camp with us at Bottonless Lakes St. Park or stay at a Roswell motel. Leader: John Sproul (545-5157). Call John for reservations, motel phone numbers, Sun. morning wakeup times and other details. John will actually be leaving Fri. to scout the area. If you would prefer to see the chickens Sat. morning rather than Sun., join him Fri.

HOLLOMAN/LA LUZ

SUN., APR 20. A variety of habitat should produce a variety of birds, waterfowl species at the Holloman AFB ponds west of Alamogordo, raptors and desert scrub species before and after, and montane species as we ascend into the pines up La Luz Canyon northeast of Alamogordo. We will meet at 7:30 AM in the K-Mart parking lot on Dyer. Contact Tom Baker (562-9461) for further information.

BIRDATHON
SAT., MAY 3



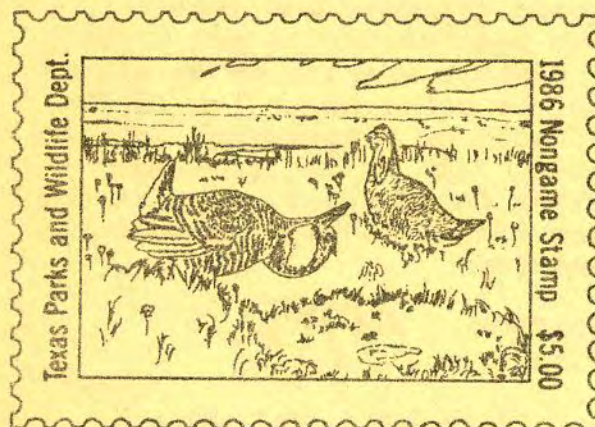
FIELD TRIP FOLLOW-UP

On our lower valley trip to Tornillo 11 observers totaled a count of 35 plus species. We began with a large count (45-50) of Black-crowned Night Herons at Feather Lake. Numerous Blue Herons were seen along the river levee.



CONSERVATION CAPSULES

TEXAS NONGAME STAMP: Apr 15 is almost here, and you know what that means. Right. But in 35 states, it also means a chance for taxpayers to donate part of their state income-tax refund to wildlife programs. And they do. In 1985, for example, Arizonans donated \$250,000, Coloradoans \$398,000, New Mexicans 236,000 and Oklahomans \$159,000 through special "nongame checkoffs" on their state tax forms. Their support made a wide variety of projects benefitting nongame wildlife and endangered species possible. Can Texans match this generosity? With no state income tax, we don't have a nongame checkoff, but we do have another mechanism for helping Texas wildlife. It's the Texas Nongame Stamp program. When you buy a nongame stamp, you contribute directly to the nongame wildlife and endangered species programs of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (TPWD). Please support Texas wildlife. Buy a nongame stamp today!



YES, I want to help support the nongame wildlife and endangered species programs of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Please send me _____ 1986 Texas Nongame Stamp(s) at \$5 each. Amount enclosed: _____.

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Please make checks payable to:

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society
P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986

APLOMADO FALCON: Effective Mar 17, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has listed the Northern Aplomado Falcon as an endangered species (RR, Jun 1985). At present, this subspecies is only known to nest in eastern Mexico. The last documented nesting in the U.S. occurred near Deming, NM in 1952. The first edition (1944 revision) of the El Paso-area bird checklist listed the Aplomado Falcon as a rare permanent resident in our area. In the 2nd edition (1952), it was listed as casual, but it has not been listed since. The only recent report for our area came from Hudspeth County in Nov 1980 (Williams, 1981, Am. Birds 35:199).

FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS: As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, a major beneficiary of this year's Birdathon will be the Franklin Mountains Fund. It will be used to support efforts to protect this magnificent range; to promote recreational, scientific and educational use of the Franklins; and to support TPWD in its administration of Franklin Mts. St. Park. Please support the Birdathon, and help launch the Franklin Mountains Fund in style.

WILDLIFE REFUGE POLLUTION: How serious is the problem of contaminated irrigation-drain water poisoning fish and wildlife at national wildlife refuges (NWRs) and other wildlife-management areas? The problem first surfaced at Kesterton NWR in California, where selenium was the contaminant of concern (AUDUBON, Jan). Now, the U.S. Dept of the Interior is looking at 19 additional areas where concentrations of trace elements, pesticides and other contaminants in irrigation-drain water may be high enough to cause toxic effects. The department announced Feb 21 that it plans to conduct further studies at each

area to find out if contaminant levels are high enough to require corrective action. Among the 19 areas: Bosque del Apache NWR in New Mexico and Laguna Atascosa NWR in Texas.

GUADALUPE ESCARPMENT: The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has changed its mind. In its draft forest plan for the Lincoln Natl. Forest, the agency recommended against wilderness status for 21,251 acres on the Guadalupe Escarpment between Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains national parks (RR, Sep 1985). Wilderness protection for this area has long been a priority of w. Texas-s. New Mexico conservationists, and the initial USFS recommendation prompted objections from many individuals and groups, including EP/TPAS. It appears the USFS listened, for it now says it will recommend wilderness status for the escarpment. Thanks are due the agency for reassessing and changing its previous recommendation. (Write: Mr. James R. Abbott, Forest Supervisor, Lincoln NF, Federal Bldg., 11th and New York, Alamogordo, NM 88310). Special thanks are also due the El Paso Regional Group of the Sierra Club, which has played a lead role since the early 1970s in efforts to protect the Guadalupe Escarpment. Their hard work may at last pay off.

RECYCLING: El Paso's new approach to recycling newspapers -- special dumpsters at local fire stations (RR, Mar) -- lasted all of 5 weeks. The City is now completely out of the recycling business, following a 3-2 City Council vote Mar 18 to accept a \$2,000-per-month offer from the Amaya Corp. for not recycling newspapers. Amaya Corp. has a contract to salvage materials from El Paso's landfills and wants those newspapers in the waste stream. If you still want to recycle newspapers, see the list of groups with recycling programs in last

month's ROADRUNNER. If you want to tell your representative how you feel about his or her vote, Suzie Azar, Alicia Chacon and Ed Eisey voted for ending the City's recycling program, while Jim Goldman and Pat Haggerty voted against the move.

/ John Sproul/

AUDUBON COUNCIL OF TEXAS SPRING MEETING

Texas Audubon members will converge on McKinney, Texas, May 9-11 for the Spring Meeting of the Audubon Council of Texas (ACT). Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society will be the host chapter, with the Heard Natural Science Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary the meeting site.

The meeting will include: ● a panel discussion on the Audubon Society's role in banding and counting U.S. bird populations; ● workshops on successful distribution of Audubon Adventures youth-education materials, on getting and keeping new chapter members and on promotion of the Texas Nongame Stamp program; ● a conservation-issues session; ● field trips aplenty; ● good food; and ● Dr. Robin Doughty, Dept. of Geography, U.T. Austin, speaking on "Audubon in Texas".

In addition, a special field school for children 5-12 years of age will be run concurrently with the meeting. The meeting announcement advises, "Please supply each child with a change of dry clothing," so you know they'll have fun.

For many Texas Audubon members, this gathering will be a first chance to meet Murray Walton, Audubon's new southwest regional representative. Murray comes to Audubon from the Wildlife Management Institute, where he was south central field representative. A trained wildlife

biologist, he has broad experience working on Texas conservation issues and is a valuable addition to the Audubon family. The Texas Outdoor Writers Association certainly think so. In January, it recognized Murray as Professional Conservationist of the year in Texas.

For ACT meeting information, contact John Sproul (545-5157). Pre-registration is required, due by May 1. /John Sproul/

BIRDATHON SENTIMENTS

Who started this crazy birdathon idea, anyway? It was the Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) in California, back in 1978. Today, the PRBO birdathon, which supports PRBO's programs and the effort to save Mono Lake, remains the most successful in the country. It also attracts some creative sponsors, as this post-birdathon note printed in the Fall 1985 PRBO NEWSLETTER attests:

Dear Turkey,

Heron is my chick for your Bird-a-Thon. You must think I'm a gullible pigeon to believe all that bushtit that you saw 115 birds. I won't duck my responsibility to pay you but I'm raven mad and I egret that owl be forced to swallow my pride this time. When I get a chance, just for a lark, I might knock you loony. Probably happen some day when you are wearing your new sapsucker suit and dancing the Virginia rail. It's a good teal easier to sparrow your life and then I'll have something to crow about, but believe me I won't grebe for you. I think you are robin me of \$28.75 but since I can't curlew around my little finger I better stop writing this miserable junco.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

TUES., APRIL 15, 1986, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet at the home of Jane Fowler, 8212 Parkland, El Paso (772-0296). All members are welcome.

April 1986

OBSERVATIONS February 21 - March 20

Although still somewhat slow overall, there was an increase of activity in the field resulting in more reports turned in. No species of accidental or casual status appear, but several items of interest are to be noted.

LOONS - FALCONS

Great Blue Herons were reported on 2 occasions, 3 in the Rio Bosque Park area 3/2 (JS) and 20 counted on the lower valley field trip 3/15 (JoD, JS, mob). Ten cattle Egrets were at Feather Lake 3/15 (JS). Single Green-backed Herons were in the El Paso Country Club (EPCC) area 2/23 (JoD), at the Fabens crossing 3/15 (mob), and 3 noted at the Wil-lows in the upper valley 3/16 (JoD). At least 50 Black-crowned Night-Herons were at Feather Lake 3/15 (JS, JoD, mob). Eleven species of ducks were noted at the Northeast Oxidation Ponds (NEOP) 3/2 (BJ). Of the 10 species seen in the lower valley 3/15, most were in very good numbers with 1,000 individuals at Feather Lake alone (JS, et al.). A Common Goldeneye was at the Crossroads Pond 3/1 (JoD). A Sharp-shinned Hawk was observed at Rio Bosque Park 3/15 (BJ, Jo D, et al.) and a Prairie Falcon soaring just off Airport Rd. in the Fort Bliss area 2/23 (JF).

QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

A Gambel's Quail was observed at Hueco Tanks 2/22 (JS, et al.) and 20 were at Feather Lake 3/15 (JS). Two Am. Avocets at NEOP 3/2 (BJ) were the first reported this spring. Five yellowlegs (sp.) were at the Alamo Alto pond in the lower valley 3/15 (BJ). A Wilson's Phalarope was at NEOP 3/2 (BJ). A Common Barn Owl was observed roosting on different window ledges of a downtown office building 3/6 & (cont. on p 6)

4-The Roadrunner

National Audubon Society

AUDUBON BIRDATHON '86



The El Paso/Trans-Pecos Chapter of the National Audubon Society announces Birdathon '86. This will be our chapter's sixth year to participate in what has become a successful fund-raising effort throughout the country. This annual activity is FUN, and it enables us to raise money for chapter and region. Birdathon contributions are tax-deductible and proceeds are divided between our southwest regional office (where they support high priority Audubon programs such as wetland protection, habitat acquisition and environmental education) and our chapter. This year, with your help, we plan to use our portion of money raised in two ways: (1) to establish a scholarship fund which will enable us to send a deserving individual to an Audubon Ecology Camp each year, and (2) to establish a Franklin Mountains Fund to support protection of the Franklins. We need the support of all members to make this a successful event. Won't you help?

HERE'S HOW

Birdathon day is May 3. On that day, chapter birders (counters) will go out to identify as many bird species as possible in a 24-hour period. Sponsor yourself or another counter for a stated amount per species seen. For example, you sponsor a counter for 20¢ per species; he sees 50 species. Your tax-deductible donation would be \$10.00. As a sponsor, you may stipulate a maximum amount to your pledge, if you wish. Or be a counter and recruit as many sponsors as you can. You don't have to be an El Paso resident or a member of EP/TPAS to be a counter or a sponsor.

The following evening (May 4), we will meet at 6 PM at the Garden Center in Memorial Park, 3105 Grant St., for a pot-luck dinner and drawing. The Grand Prize for our drawing is a limited-edition print of the '85 Texas Nongame Stamp design (two Whooping Cranes in a marsh) by wildlife artist Ken Carlson. The print is framed and has been generously donated by John Sproul. All sponsors will be entered in the drawing.

Return this form by May 1 and have a chance to win the Carlson art print to be given away the evening of May 4 at our pot-luck dinner.

____ Count on me to be a COUNTER. Send details right away!

____ Count on me to be a SPONSOR. I'll sponsor _____ at \$ _____ per species. (If desired, maximum contribution not to exceed \$ _____.)

Name _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Whom to sponsor? Sponsor yourself or the counter of your choice. In the past, most counters have seen from 50-120 (some over 140!) species on count day. Clip and send this form to Tom Baker, 2716 Louisville, El Paso 79930.

In addition to the Grand Prize, several other prizes will be available for the drawing. Persons who raise the most money, see the most species, and recruit the most sponsors will be recognized.

The week following the Birdathon, report your findings to your sponsors and collect pledges. Send checks to Tom Baker (Chapter Birdathon Coordinator) 2716 Louisville, El Paso, Tx 79930. Please make checks payable to "El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society."



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S EYRIE

In last month's RR, I covered some accomplishments of 1985 and said that we hoped to do more in '86. To do more, we are going to need more help, call me and donate a few hours. (751-0125)

Feather Lake work day - Sun, Apr 6, 8 AM - ? (painting, weeding, trash removal, etc.) Call Sid Shepperd (566-2162) or me if you have questions.

Display at Cielo Vista Mall - Fri-Sun, Apr 18 - 20. Tend the display, hand out brochures, answer questions and sign up sponsors for the Birdathon. Call Tom Baker (562-9461) or me to volunteer.

Annual rummage sale - Sun, Apr 27, flea market at Woolco parking lot on Dyer St. We need your JUNQUE. For pickup call Bart Rumaker (544-6432) Tom Baker or Jane Fowler (772-0296) or me.

Birdathon - Sat, May 3. Join in the fun. See flier.

Field trip - Fri/Sat - Mon, May 23/24-26. Ramsey Canyon at Sierra Vista, Az & Patagonia Nature Conservancy wildlife areas in the Huachuca Mts. Details in May RR. Leader BJ.

Advance notice - Sat, June 7, work day at Feather Lake.

Book Fair - Sat, June 14, B. DALTON BOOKSELLER in Cielo Vista Mall. Don't forget to come buy your books then.

Call to volunteer for any of the above (751-0125). It is often difficult to find me at home, but please keep trying. /Bob Johnson/

OBSERVATIONS(cont. from p 4)

3/7 (JS). A Great Horned Owl was at Hueco Tanks 2/22 (JS, et al.). At least 20 White-throated Swifts were at Hueco Tanks 2/22 (JS, et al.). A Red-naped Sapsucker in e. central El Paso 3/1 and 3/17 (LS) was the first reported for awhile.

FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

Single Black Phoebe were in the EPCC area 2/23 (JoD), at Cement Lake 3/1 (JoD), and Tornillo and Rio Bosque Park areas 3/15 (mob). Ten + Violet-green Swallows were at The Willows 3/16 (JoD), and the first spring Barn Swallows were seen in the lower valley 3/15 (mob). A House Wren was noted at Rio Bosque Park 3/15 (BJ, et al.). Single Phainopeplas were

in the EPCC area 2/23 and The Willows 3/16 (JoD).

WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

A "Myrtle" Warbler visited a residence in Thunderbird Heights 2/23 (FB). Six species of sparrows were at NEOP 3/2 (BJ). An E. Meadowlark was heard singing there that same day (BJ). A male Hooded Oriole returned to Mt. Park 3/10 (JB). Two female Red Crossbills seen off and on in e. central El Paso from 2/22 - 3/20 (LS) were the first reported since last May.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Tom Baker, Flora Bittick, Janet Brockmoller, Joyce Davis, Jane Fowler, Bob Johnson, John Sproul, Lucile Swick, many observers.
/Bettie Roberts, Observations Editor/
(591-0421)

FIELD TRIP FOLLOW-UP(cont. from p 1)

For those of you who missed the trip on March 2, I'll tell you what you could have seen from 9 - 11:30 AM at the Northeast Oxidation Ponds: 44 species (including 12 duck and 6 sparrow), highlights were N. Pintail, Bufflehead, Ring-necked Ducks; Vesper, Savannah and Lincoln sparrows; Marsh Wren; Ring-billed Gull; Com. Snipe; E. and W. Meadowlarks; and 2 Am. Avocets.

* * *

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