

the ROADRUNNER



newsletter of the
El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society
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Editor: John Sproul

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CALENDAR

PROGRAM

MON. 17 NOVEMBER 1980, 7:30 PM, Garden Center, 3105 Grant St., in Memorial Park. BIRD CARE. Come to November's general meeting and meet Dr. Jon Esposito, a local veterinarian and Audubon member who specializes in treating sick and injured birds. Have you ever been frustrated by your inability to nurse a bird back to health? With the aid of slides, Dr. Esposito will give us some of the do's and don't's. He'll be glad to answer any questions concerning bird care during the program, a presentation you can't afford to miss. /Peggy Heisel, Program Chair/

FIELD TRIPS

SAT. 8 NOVEMBER. LOWER VALLEY. Meet at Feather Lake on North Loop Dr. (0.3 miles n.w. of Ave. of the Americas) at 7 AM (MST). This will be an easy trip where you may bird from your car with only short walks if desired. We will visit Surratt's Farm, the Socorro Sewage Ponds and the lower valley, possibly as far as Tornillo. Leader: Al Gavit (852-3119).

SUN. 23 NOVEMBER. HUECO TANKS. Meet at Bella Napoli Restaurant, 10600 Montana, at 7 AM. Hueco Tanks is an excellent place to bird. In contrast to 1979, the tanks have plenty of water this year. You can do some moderate-strenuous walking or bird in the area of your car. We may see Scrub Jays, American Robins and a host of sparrows. Leader: Jane Fowler (772-0296).

SAT.-SUN. 17-18 JANUARY 1981. BOSQUE DEL APACHE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

SAT. 20 DECEMBER 1980. EL PASO COUNT. Mark your calendars; plan to participate in SAT. 3 JANUARY 1981. HUECO TANKS COUNT. at least 1 count. We welcome all newcomers; you needn't be an expert to contribute and join the fun. Even if you can't be in the field, you can help the El Paso Count by keeping an eye on your feeder that day. Joe DiPasquale (779-5104) will compile the El Paso Count, with Elza Gilboe (772-1942) assisting as feeder compiler. Al Gavit (852-3119) is compiler for the Hueco Tanks Count. Full details will be in next month's ROADRUNNER.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

FRI. 7 NOVEMBER, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet at the home of Joe Guinn, 5000 Alabama #31, El Paso (566-8438).

FROM THE PEN OF THE PRESIDENT

(Editor's Note: Our Indiana correspondent sent this dispatch in late September.)

For the last few weeks, my wife and I have been guests of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. William K. Nicholson, at Buffalo, in n.w. Indiana. Their back porch is a great place to sit and watch birds, as the view covers a wooded strip of land leading to the Tippecanoe River. One first hears and then sees the Gray Catbird. The Blue Jays are plentiful and noisy and play in the area daily. In the early morning one can hear the whistle of Cardinals and see them passing up- or downstream.

The ever-present House Sparrows compete for food at the bird feeder, but one must watch the turned-up stump nearby and suddenly there appears either an American Goldfinch or a Tufted Titmouse. Not far away, Common Crows "caw" over a wooded area near farm fields, and later Turkey Vultures will be gliding overhead. Near the corner post by the woods, one will see the beautiful Field Sparrow. In the brush along a roadside, one can see the Indigo Bunting and Mourning Doves scatter

from their sitting spots in the low-cut grass.

Many American Robins passed through and paraded on the lawns last week--now they are gone. That pecking in the tall tree may be a Red-headed Woodpecker, a Downy Woodpecker or a "Yellow-shafted" Flicker--they're all here.

The Purple Martins that occupied the martin house departed recently, but the Rough-winged Swallows still fly over the river and roost on the power cable spanning the Tippecanoe. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird was seen a few days ago when we were picking tomatoes in the garden, and on the same day a Great Blue Heron flew casually downstream.

Each evening the Common Nighthawks dart about the sky, and they were seen 1 mid-afternoon when skies turned dark because of an approaching thunderstorm. After dusk and during the night hours, we hear the hooting of the Barred Owl in the nearby woods.

Till I see you again, Happy Birding.
/Bob Bleicher, Chapter President/

OBSERVATIONS - 25 September to 22 October 1980

GREBES THROUGH DUCKS

The HORNED GREBE remained at Santa Teresa Country Club in New Mexico at least through 13 Oct and may still be there (JD). At least 12 Great Blue Herons were in the upper valley 5 Oct. One was roosting in the bosque s. of Randle's Pool with a surprising companion, a probable LITTLE BLUE HERON (JD). No less surprising was the LEAST BITTERN in the irrigation ditch behind the Good Times Store on Country Club Rd. in the upper valley 23 Sep (JD).

El Paso is outside the normal range of the Wood Duck, but this species reportedly has a late-summer dispersal prior to fall migration and can turn up throughout the country at that time. WOOD DUCKS must

have been restless in 1980, for we had a male and female in an irrigation ditch s.w. of San Elizario 3 Oct (JC, JF), a single male at Diez Lagos fishing camp in the upper valley 5 Oct (JD), a flock of 15 flying along the irrigation ditch near Diez Lagos, also 5 Oct (JD), and 2 males and a female flying downriver s. of Randle's Pool 12 Oct (JD).

I jumped the gun on a pair of breeding records reported in the September ROAD-RUNNER. The evidence for the Ring-necked Duck and the Eared Grebe (adults with young in both cases) was highly suggestive but not conclusive. Some serious nest searching next year may remove the uncertainty.

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OBSERVATIONS (Continued)

HAWKS THROUGH FALCONS

A large, strong-flying blue-gray accipiter w. of Randle's Pool 5 Oct matched well the description of an adult GOSHAWK (JD). First of our winter-resident Ferruginous Hawks appeared 16 Oct in the Newman Rd. area of n.e. El Paso (JD). Ospreys have been frequent visitors lately. One grabbed a fish from a Santa Teresa CC pond 29 Sep (JD), 1 was at the Socorro Sewage Ponds 3 Oct (JC, JF) and another was at Santa Teresa 20 Oct (JD). On a less pleasant note, 2 Ospreys have been the victims of indiscriminate shooting. One was killed at the Tennis West complex in the upper valley in early October (fide JC) and another wounded in n.e. El Paso in mid-October (fide JD).

Single Prairie Falcons were in the Newman Rd. area 9 (JD, SL) and 10 (SL) Oct and in the Regal Crest area of the upper valley 17 Oct (DB, fide JD). Another MERLIN appeared recently, a male that flew N across Country Club Rd. 5 Oct (JD). A probable MERLIN was in the Newman Rd. area 16 Oct (JD).

CRANES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

First Sandhill Cranes of the fall were reported 29 Sep, when 3 were flying SSE over Santa Teresa CC with some Turkey Vultures (JD). Migration was well underway by 5 Oct, when single groups of 60-70 Sandhills flew over the upper valley (DB, JD) and San Elizario in the lower valley (JF, EN, JN, JS) and 5 smaller groups (12-25) flew over the desert w. of Santa Teresa (JG). A single Sandhill Crane tarried at the Ft. Bliss Sewage Ponds 11 Oct (GB, mob). We know we have rails around El Paso, but we seldom see them. The adult SORA at Santa Teresa 29 Sep was the first 1 spotted this year (JD).

You don't have to go all the way to the Pacific or Gulf Coast to enjoy a pelagic birding trip. Lake McMillan, n.w. of Carlsbad, NM, was a good substitute 12 Oct, when its waters attracted 2 POMARINE JAEGERS and 2 SABINE'S GULLS (SW, KZ).

In-hand study confirmed identification of the jaegers. Back in El Paso, Forster's Terns continue to be widespread this fall, with 4 at Feather L. (mob) and 1 over the Rio Grande in the upper valley (JD) 28 Sep, 5 in the upper valley 5 Oct (JD) and 1 at the Ft. Bliss Ponds 11 Oct (mob).

A Barn Owl found the area around the El Paso Natural Gas Co. compressor station in n.e. El Paso to its liking 25 Sep (SL). On 12 Oct another Barn Owl roosted in a stand of saltcedar n.w. of Randle's Pool (JD). A "Yellow-shafted" Flicker was consorting with 1 of its "Red-shafted" cousins at the Ft. Bliss Ponds 11 Oct (JC, CT, JS et al.).

PASSERINES

After no reports from the immediate El Paso area last winter, a Scrub Jay near Ascarate Park 11 Oct is worth noting (BM, fide JD). Also notable were the 12 BUSHTITS frequenting mesquite in the desert near Santa Teresa CC 29 Sep (JD). A Brown Creeper creeped through Horizon City 22 Oct (MG).

Elsewhere in the Trans-Pecos, a Gray Catbird called repeatedly from exposed perches in a tree at the Bear Canyon trailhead, Guadalupe Mtns. Natl. Park, 19 Oct (KM, JS). El Paso's first Brown Thrasher of the fall was in saltcedar w. of Randle's Pool 28 Sep (JD), followed by 1 in e. El Paso 3 Oct (BR). Hueco Tanks held 3 Townsend's Solitaires 11 Oct (AG, MG). This fall's 2nd HUTTON'S VIREO was at Durling's Farm 28 Sep (KZ), and a PHILADELPHIA VIREO stopped at Randle's Pool the same day (KZ). The Black-and-white Warbler in Memorial Park stayed through at least 25 Sep (JDiP). Hueco Tanks hosted a Black-throated Gray Warbler 11 Oct (AG, MG) and a female BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER 18 Oct (KZ).

Give the Brewer's Blackbirds and Starlings at the n.e. El Paso landfill a careful looking over. On 9 Oct some 12 COMMON GRACKLES mixed with this crowd (JD, SL), and 1 was there 16 Oct (JD). Two Cardinals were heard 28 Sep near the irrigation ditch

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OBSERVATIONS (Continued)

n.w. of Randle's Pool and 1 male was seen and 1 heard in the same area 5 Oct (JD).

OBSERVERS: Dave Brown, Gary Burleson, John Caraway, Joe DiPasquale, Jeff Donaldson, Jane Fowler, Al Gavit, Madeline Gavit, James George, Steve Lopez, many

observers (mob), Kathy Morrison, Bob Murano, Evan Nagel, Jo Nagel, Betty Roberts, John Sproul, Christos Thomaidis, Steve West, Kevin Zimmer. (Report observations to John Sproul, 601 W. Yandell #25, El Paso 79902; ph: 545-5157 home, 543-6126 work.) #

FIELD TRIPS FOLLOW-UP

After 2 days of rain, our weather cleared 28 Sep and 25 Auduboners had a fine afternoon at Feather L. visiting, eating some delicious food and enjoying the birds. A Great Blue Heron and 4 Forster's Terns put in appearances, and observing them and the lovely sunset made us all thankful we had put in appearances, too. Thanks to Tom and Debbie Gavit for hosting the pot-luck gathering.

On 11 Oct, 19 participants found 41 species at the Ft. Bliss Ponds. Some were truly fortunate to see a stately

Sandhill Crane walking in the cattails at very close range. Also, something can be said for exploring the side roads at the ponds, as a lucky few spotted a "Yellow-shafted" Flicker while thus occupied.

Chilly weather and conflicting commitments cut deeply into the turnout 19 Oct at Memorial Park. Only a faithful troop of 3 turned out in the early dawn to check on any birds also out at that hour.
/Jane Fowler/

MEMBERSHIP

First off, our thanks to those of you whose ROADRUNNER membership-application forms got passed along--so far I've received 3 this month from people wanting to join Audubon.

How can you help our current membership drive? Consider giving gift memberships for Christmas. (Make your shopping easier!) Note the special (bargain) rates for students (\$13.50) and senior citizens (\$13.50-Individual, \$15-Family). Suggest this to friends as well. (Be sure to include your phone number on

student and senior-citizen applications so I can reach you. I will need additional information to include on the application form when I send it in.)

Do you know of a bulletin board at your office, church, etc., where you could post an Audubon brochure? I have plenty and would be happy to mail you some--call me at 533-8731.

I hope to see more of you at our next meeting. Thanks again for your cooperation. /Jo Ellen Warolin, Membership Chair/

AUDUBON COUNCIL OF TEXAS

The Audubon Council of Texas is an alliance of all the National Audubon Society chapters in Texas. It gives us a way to speak with a unified voice on issues of statewide concern. The Fall meeting is 15-16 Nov in Corpus Christi. If you think you might like to attend as our delegate or as an observer, call Jane Fowler (772-0296) as soon as possible.

The business meeting will be Sat. 15 Nov and will feature an address by Ed Harte, publisher of the CORPUS CHRISTI CALLER-TIMES and Chairman of the Board of the National Audubon Society from 1974 to 1979. There will be a Bar-b-que on Padre Island that night, followed by a behind-the-scenes field trip Sun. 16 Nov to Aransas NWR, with an optional boat trip to see Whooping Cranes Sun. afternoon. #

CONSERVATION

ALASKA DENOUEMENT NEAR

Udall-Seiberling (HR 39)...Metcalf-Durkin (S 1500)...Huckaby substitute...Breau-Dingell substitute...Udall-Anderson substitute...Energy Committee bill (S 9)...Durkin-Nelson-Roth (S 222)...Tsongas-Roth substitute (S Amend. 626)...Strengthening amendments...Tsongas-Roth-Jackson-Hatfield substitute...Udall-Evans (HR 8311).

Now we're down to Udall-Evans.. The names and numbers change but not the goal: balanced legislation that provides lasting protection for our natural heritage in Alaska. After the U.S. Senate passed its Alaska lands bill in August, House and Senate leaders met to negotiate a compromise between that bill and the stronger bill the House passed in May 1979.

The talks broke down, due largely to lack of cooperation from key senators. Representatives Udall (D-AZ) and Evans (R-DE) then took the initiative and on 2 Oct introduced HR 8311 in the House. HR 8311 is a package of amendments to the Senate bill. It corrects certain flaws in the Senate bill--such as the failure to designate vital migratory-bird habitat in the Copper R. delta as a wildlife refuge --but leaves the key features of that bill intact. Very much a compromise proposal, it concedes far more to the Senate than it demands.

HR 8311 would give the House its rightful say in the final version of the Alaska National Interest Lands Act. After Con-

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Deadline for the December ROADRUNNER is 26 November.

Not getting your ROADRUNNER regularly? Contact the editor and chew him out.

gress returns for a lame-duck session 12 Nov, the bill should pass the House easily. Then comes the final showdown. Senate passage of HR 8311 will mean the president can sign a sound Alaska lands bill into law.

The Senate was responsible for killing an Alaska bill in 1978. Will it let us down again? Alaska's senators might filibuster, but recall that the Senate--with Sen. Bentsen's support--stopped a filibuster of the Alaska bill in August. Should it stop 1 again and a vote on HR 8311 occur, Sen. Tower probably will oppose the bill. Senator Bentsen (240 Russell Senate Ofc. Bldg., Wash., DC 20510) is harder to predict. In view of his favorable record on 5 of the 6 key Alaska votes last summer, conservationists believe strong constituent input can convince him to vote for HR 8311, the Udall-Evans bill. Bentsen's is 1 of the pivotal votes as the climax of the Alaska lands debate draws near. #

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Yes, I want to join the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Chapter of the National Audubon Society.

name

address

city state zip

phone

Membership category desired:

- ___ Individual/\$20 ___ Family/\$25
___ Sr. Citizen, Individual/\$13.50
___ Sr. Citizen, Family/\$15
___ Student/\$13.50

This is a ___new___ renewal membership.

Make checks payable to National Audubon Society. Mail to Jo Ellen Warolin, 1406 N. St. Vrain, El Paso, TX 79902.

RECYCLING PROGRAM STARTS 5 NOVEMBER

El Paso's City Council voted 7 Oct to try a voluntary garbage-recycling program on a 6-month trial basis. It's about 10 years overdue. Now it's up to us to prove that recycling does work. All El Pasoans should get behind this program.

Curb-side pick-ups of recyclable materials begin 5 Nov and will occur the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month. Keep metal cans in 1 bag, newspaper in another and magazines, cardboard and other paper products in a 3rd. Be sure to keep the newspapers separate from other paper

items. The City gets \$36 per ton for pure newsprint, but only \$10 per ton if it is mixed with other paper. Have everything out on the curb on the right day by 6:30 AM, same as with the newspapers you now recycle. Remember, shopping bags are just the right size to hold about 25 pounds of newsprint.

You'll hear a lot about recycling in the coming months. Just because you see the program promoted everywhere, don't assume everyone knows about it. Encourage others to participate. The City treasury and our environment will thank you. #

TUESDAY 4 NOVEMBER IS ELECTION DAY--VOTE!

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