

The Roadrunner



NEWSLETTER OF THE EL PASO-TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

8365 Beverly Place, El Paso, Texas 79907
Subscription: \$2 per year

Vol. III, June, 1973

Bill Hunt, Editor

COMING EVENTS

Saturday, July 7^{7 AM} Field trip to the upper valley, bosque area, river and environs. Meet at the Country Club bridge. This will be the last announced field trip of the summer. Call Charlie Jensen at 584-7626 if you are interested in any special overnight weekend trips. The Whites have an open invitation to their place in the mountains near Cloudcroft with camping in the spruce-fir forest in the Penasco valley.

The Board agreed to host the Texas Ornithological Society fall meeting in El Paso over Thanksgiving weekend November 22, 23, and 24th. An extremely worthwhile organization, TOS is dedicated to the conservation and preservation of birds, publishing a monthly newsletter and meeting twice a year. A scientific journal publishes scholarly articles by the scientist members twice yearly -- all this camaraderie with the 600 members in the big state for a rare bargain at \$5. Geth White, Board member from the Trans Pecos, will rush a membership blank to you if you're interested.

SOCIETY TO BREAK INTO PRINT. El Paso Times has agreed to publish articles on birds prepared by capable members of the local group, accompanied by crisp black and white photos or black and white line drawings of the species. Welden Yerby and Geth White will edit the two-page manuscripts for submission to the editors. We are indebted to Carl Jones and John Mudd for the excellent photos which are being prepared by photographing the colored slides in black and white through rear-view projection technique.

Please write an article for the series which will run for a year once it has started provided there is that much public interest which we feel is there. Your personal observations coupled with good research makes for a good article. Call Welden or Geth for an assignment.

EL PASO SPRING COUNT MAY 12, 1973.

Our day dawned bright and clear. Off to the canyon fed by a small spring about 600 feet from the top of the Franklins. At 7:45 in the morning it was surprisingly quiet -- no flittings of warblers, no trillings of black-throated sparrows. Spring is late this year. Desert willows purple trumpets were locked within their branches and the prickly pear wasn't even in bud through green growth was burgeoning, a result of much fall moisture and some winter snows.

A scaled quail broke the silence from his station on a boulder high above us. Green-tailed and rufous-sided towhees flirted in and out of the acacias and sumacs. As we climbed higher into the netleaf hackberries we began to see a warbler or two -- a Wilson's, a MacGillivray's, a yellow and a Townsend's. A black-chinned sparrow saluted the sun in song as it edged over the canyon's east wall and cascading liquid notes of the canyon wren splashed down the sheer walls. We counted eight of these this spring morning.

Near the top of the canyon at the spring we were startled to see a pair of indigo buntings near a little pool of cool water. A dainty little hermit thrush was picking through damp leaves and duff around another small pool. The Barnharts, Janet Brockmoller, Ed and Geth White made the count in the canyon.

SPRING COUNT CONT'D.

Possibly a new bird for El Paso County were the bobolinks traveling with lark buntings turned up by Bob and Helen Barto out on the open desert near Horizon Lake. Bobolinks were sighted in Dallas County this year for the first time in many years, using Texas on their migration route.

Carl and Linda Jones reported four Mississippi kites in their usual nesting location in the Upper Valley.

Louise and Weldon Yerby had all the cactus wrens on the west side of the Franklins in Tom Mays Park.

It was Bill Hunt who turned up a black-necked stilt in a watery place down the valley. Black-chinned hummingbirds were zipping around all over the place, being reported by every count group. We had a total of 83 species. Perhaps we should have our count nearer the first of May next year for better representation of migrant species which seem to be moving through earlier in the spring. -- Geth White.

SPRING DAY COUNT

May 12, 1973

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|----|----------------------------|----|
| 1. Eared Grebe | 3 | 38. Traill's Flycatcher | 1 |
| 2. Green Heron | 1 | 39. Western Flycatcher | 2 |
| 3. Snowy Egret | 2 | 40. Western Wood Pewee | 4 |
| 4. Mallard | 2 | 41. Olive-sided Flycatcher | 1 |
| 5. Gadwall | 57 | 42. Barn Swallow | 50 |
| 6. Cinnamon Teal | 2 | 43. Cliff Swallow | 31 |
| 7. Shoveler | 8 | 44. Mexican Jay | 1 |
| 8. Canvasback | 10 | 45. Verdin * | 1 |
| 9. Lesser Scaup | 9 | 46. House Wren | 2 |
| 10. Turkey Vulture | 3 | 47. Cactus Wren | 11 |
| 11. Mississippi Kite * | 4 | 48. Canyon Wren | 8 |
| 12. Sparrow Hawk | 6 | 49. Rock Wren | 5 |
| 13. Scaled Quail | 7 | 50. Mockingbird | 40 |
| 14. Gambel's Quail | 10 | 51. Curve-billed Thrasher | 3 |
| 15. Common Gallinule | 1 | 52. Robin | 1 |
| 16. American Coot | 76 | 53. Hermit Thrush | 1 |
| 17. Killdeer | 9 | 54. Water Pipit | 1 |
| 18. Common Snipe | 1 | 55. Cedar Waxwing | 7 |
| 19. Spotted Sandpiper | 2 | 56. Starling | 14 |
| 20. Willet | 2 | 57. Virginia's Warbler | 2 |
| 21. Greater Yellowlegs | 3 | 58. Yellow Warbler | 4 |
| 22. Least Sandpiper | 7 | 59. Audubon's Warbler | 6 |
| 23. Western Sandpiper | 20 | 60. Townsend's Warbler | 1 |
| 24. Black-necked Stilt | 1 | 61. MacGillivray's | 3 |
| 25. Wilson's Phalarope | 28 | 62. Yellow-breasted Chat | 2 |
| 26. Ring-billed Gull | 3 | 63. Wilson's Warbler | 2 |
| 27. Bonaparte's Gull | 1 | 64. House Sparrow | 84 |
| 28. White-winged Dove * | 2 | 65. Western Meadowlark | 4 |
| 29. Mourning Dove | 45 | 66. Redwinged Blackbird | 28 |
| 30. Inca Dove | 3 | 67. Hooded Oriole* | 3 |
| 31. Roadrunner | 4 | 68. Scott's Oriole | 3 |
| 32. White-throated Swift | 8 | 69. Bullock's Oriole | 3 |
| 33. Black-chinned Hummingbird | 16 | 70. Boat-tailed Grackle | 20 |
| 34. Red-shafted Flicker | 4 | 71. Indigo Bunting | 2 |
| 35. Ladder-backed Woodpecker | 1 | 72. House Finch | 56 |
| 36. Western Kingbird | 30 | 73. Green-tailed Towhee | 5 |
| 37. Ash-throated Flycatcher | 2 | 74. Rufous-sided Towhee | 4 |
| | | 75. Bobolink | 14 |
| 80. Chipping Sparrow | 2 | 76. Brown Towhee | 2 |
| 81. Brewer's Sparrow | 8 | 77. Lark Bunting | 10 |
| 82. Black-chinned Sparrow | 1 | 78. Rufous-crowned Sparrow | 8 |
| 83. White-crowned Sparrow | 1 | 79. Black-throated " | 19 |

ENVIRONMENTAL BULLETIN NO. 1 - by Carl Jones.

STOP HARMFUL WATER PROJECTS

Letters are needed to Representative White and Senators Tower and Bentsen urging them to vote for amendments to the Public Works Appropriation Bill which would delete the (1) Trinity River Canal, (2) Cache River Channelization, (3) Central Arizona Project, (4) Garrison Diversion Project, (5) Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, (6) Teton Dam, (7) Nebraska Mid-State Project, (8) Oakley Dam, (9) Central Utah Project, (10) Sprewell Bluff Dam, (11) New Melones Dam, (12) Duck River Dams, and (13) Meramec Park Dam.

These projects are not needed, are environmentally harmful, and are economically wasteful and inflationary.

Stop pork-barrel legislation now! Demand integrity in government.

ENVIRONMENTAL BULLETIN NO. 2

HEARINGS NEEDED

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 allowed five years for the study of a number of specific rivers while protecting them from damming projects which could be licensed through the Federal Power Commission. More study time is needed. Not all specified rivers have been adequately studied. Letters urgently requesting hearings on H.R. 4864 to Representative Roy Taylor, Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Washington, D. C. 20515 and requesting hearings on Senate Bill 921 to Senator Floyd Haskell, Chairman, Subcommittee on Public Lands, Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Washington, D. C. 20510 are needed.

EDDIE CHEW ATTENDS NATIONAL CONVENTION

As your president, I attended the National Audubon Convention in Denver on June 8-10. The theme of this convention was "Public Lands: Our Margin of Environmental Quality." An impressive array of environmental leaders presented speeches, panels and workshops in a well-run program.

Major emphasis was on proper use of public lands administered by various agencies, but comprehensive land-use planning by states was urged. People pressures are increasing on federal lands while the staffs of the agencies are being reduced.

The energy crisis and predator control were workshop topics. Opinions on the energy crisis included: 1. The crisis is real and complex. 2. A comprehensive energy policy is needed. 3. The cost of energy will increase dramatically. 4. Conservation of energy should be encouraged, but it is not a complete solution. 5. Energy resources (like western coal) will be developed, but proper environmental safeguards should be imposed. 6. All energy alternatives have some environmental drawbacks. 7. Orderly development of western resources needs to be accompanied by responsible consumer use in other parts of the country.

During the delegates meeting, stream channelization, predator control, falconry, chapter-national relationships, youth involvement, and a host of other problems were discussed. I found the staff and officers of the national organization to be capable, responsible and enthusiastic.

If you wish further information on the convention or the stand of the National Audubon Society on these issues, please call me.

REPORT ON THIRD NATURAL GAS NUCLEAR STIMULATION EXPERIMENT from Eddie Chew, Nuclear Physicist with El Paso Natural Gas Company Project Rio Blanco on May

17 Early reports indicate that the detonation went as planned, seismic effects and damage claims were less than expected, no radioactivity was released and damage to the environment and wildlife was minimal.

A few cliff swallows were killed in a rockfall and some red-tailed hawk nests fell to the ground. By far the most serious environmental impact was due to the increased number of people in the area for the operation.

CLEARING HOUSE

April and May brought some unusual species to El Paso County. Cattle egrets were present the week of April 1 at Clint where a cattle feeding operation occurs with some of the cattle being pastured. Beginning the first of the year with five birds, the flock increased to 16 cattle egrets. We are watching these to see if they nest.

Six white-faced ibis fed for two days on an irrigated alfalfa field in the Upper Valley, sighted by Carl and Linda Jones and also seen by Geth and Ed White. A long-billed curlew, black-necked stilt accompanied them in the alfalfa field, as well as a large migratory flock of vesper sparrows.

Four Mississippi kites returned to their cottonwood grove near the Girl Scout Camp where they are nesting. Singing male birds on territory in this area this year include yellow-breasted chat, blue grosbeak, painted bunting, robin, white-winged, Inca and mourning dove, killdeer. Robins are nesting in many wooded residential neighborhoods this year, possibly due to our unusually cool spring season.

Common gallinules and coots are nesting in old irrigation drainage canal paralleling the Rio Grande down from the Country Club Bridge. Barn swallows are utilizing a bridge at River Bend to plaster their nests while cliff swallows are partial to the Country Club Bridge.

It appears that Cassin's sparrows are nesting in brushy areas near Horizon Lake, birds being observed skylarking (Bill Hunt, GOW) and carrying nesting material. GOW.

Greater yellowlegs have appeared more often than the usual lesser yellowlegs at Horizon Lake and along the Rio Grande this spring.

On May 20 Geth and Ed White observed two male rose-breasted grosbeaks bathing in the spray with house finches and sparrows in the yard of Janet Brockmoller. Janet has tape recordings of the Clark's Nutcrackers who were steady patrons of food and drink at her place this winter.

Four poorwills were reported this spring, two of them injured, one released after recovery by GOW. Two nests of red-shafted flickers have been seen this spring, a dead one being picked up under the nest hole at Camp Pioneer and used as a study specimen for the nature study group of the Girl Scouts.

HUECO TANKS STATE PARK AND HUECO WILDERNESS AREAS are readying ecological studies for both tracts, including a checklist of the birds. The biologists for Texas Parks and Wildlife and for Texas Land Commissioner have been furnished with our records. They have asked that we report to them seasonally on birds and animals seen, particularly noting nesting records. Please phone Geth White at 565-1024 on species seen when visiting the site. Horizon Lake is included in Hueco Wilderness as many waterfowl and shorebirds are seen approaching the lake over the mountain wilderness area.

PICNIC AT THE CHEWS was a great success. To those who couldn't come, we missed you and you missed a great deal of good food and super-treat of home-made ice cream. Have a good summer and see you in the fall.

EL PASO-TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

- President: Eddie Chew
- Vice-president: Bill Hunt
- Sec'y.-Treas. Mrs. Clarence Shelfer (Libby)
- Historian: Mrs. Jack Ponder (Helen)
- Directors: Mrs. Jack Daniel (Margaret)
- John Mudd
- Mrs. John Mudd (Lexie)
- Conservation: Carl Jones
- Field Trips: Charlie Jensen
- Education: Mrs. Carl Jones (Linda)
- Hospitality: Mrs. C. W. Yerby (Louise)
- Publicity: Mrs. Edmund White (Geth)
- Newsletter: Bill Hunt
- Checklist: Bill Hunt

```

: : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :
: ECO TIP - What can I do?
:   Take your own coffee mug
: to the office; skip the paper
: or disposable plates whenever
: you can. The ideal container
: is like the ice cream cone--
: you can either consume it on
: the spot or come back for a
:: refill.

```

: : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :