



# The

# Roadrunner

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

Volume 26 No. 5

October - November, 1996

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## ***Franklin Mountains State Park***

**October  
General  
Meeting**

**General Meeting, Monday, October 21, 7:30 PM** - The State Park that protects our Franklin Mountains now has a Management Plan that was conceived by the people of El Paso through a series of meetings conducted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Those meetings demonstrated that there are a great many demands placed upon the park and the Plan was drawn up to control those demands. Ronald Hillin of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will tell us about the Management Plan as it is now and how it will affect the Park in the future. Those of us who have watched the struggle to get the Park established and have attended the planning meetings for the Management Plan know that this is a meeting that should not be missed. The meeting will be held in the Garden Center, 3105 Grant, Memorial Park in El Paso.

## ***Reptiles and Amphibians of El Paso County***

**November  
General  
Meeting**

**General Meeting, Monday, November 18, 7:30 PM** - You've just finished mowing your lawn and you find a very large snake curled up among the bags of grass clippings. What do you do now? The first thing you should do is attend the November General Meeting to hear John Hanson talk about the reptiles and amphibians of El Paso County. John is an excellent speaker and he will be bringing an excellent program that will include slides and some live exhibits. Do you know which reptiles you can safely ignore and which ones should be given the deepest respect? Even if you do, you should join us at the Garden Center, 3105 Grant for this meeting when we will be introduced to a group of animals often overlooked except when they are making themselves comfortable in our yards.

## The Great Texas Birding Classic

**A**pril 1997 will be the time for The Great Texas Birding Classic and it is being billed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as the biggest, the longest, and the wildest bird watching competition ever. The competition will benefit the conservation of Texas birds and their habitat.

### When is it?

The 1997 Great Texas Birding Classic will begin with the Kickoff event on April 19, 1997, and continue until the Awards Brunch on April 27, 1997. The three official days of competition are April 21, 23 and 26, one day for each section: the Upper, Central, and Lower Gulf coast, and competitors can choose to compete on one or all sections.

### Where is it and why Texas?

Texas has 500 miles of Gulf coast, along which the birding competition will occur. Texas has one of the most diverse avifaunas of any state, and birders at the Great Texas Birding Classic will have the opportunity to observe over 400 species, many of which are found only in Texas!

### Who can participate?

Anyone! Birders have the option of seeking corporate sponsorship for a team and competing at the "professional" level, or of forming non-sponsored teams and competing at the "independent" level. There will also be college and youth

teams competing. For the non-competitive, and on noncompetition days, there are host of other fun activities planned, so come and join the celebration of Texas birds and their habitat!

### What can I win?

Competitors will have a chance at winning the Conservation Cash Grand Prize, money which they will get to designate for avian habitat conservation, as well as a chance to win other wonderful prizes such as binoculars, artwork, and outdoor equipment. All registered competitors will also get tickets to the Awards Brunch and Commemorative Birding Classic T-shirts.

### How do I get more information?

If you would like to participate as an individual or as part of a team, call toll-free 1-888-TX BIRDS (1-888-892-4737).

### Attention Birders

## Have You Seen a Color-Tagged White-Faced Ibis?

**A** substantial number of juvenile and adult White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) have been color-tagged in the northwest Great Basin as part of a long-term breeding ecology study. Ten color combinations have been used depending on the year and colony location. Combinations consist of a red or yellow tag (on a USFWS band) with different colored terminal margins. In addition,

each tag has a unique three number code. The code is read from the bottom up (i.e. from the colored terminal margin up). Note: the red tag may be seen as a dull red/orange due to fading.

### Color Combinations

#### 1995

Red-Yellow  
Red-White  
Red-Grey  
Red-Black  
Red-Red

#### 1996

Yellow-Yellow  
Yellow-White  
Yellow-Blue  
Yellow-Orange  
Yellow-Red

If you sight any color-tagged Ibis please contact:

Eric P. Kelchlin  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Stillwater National Wildlife  
Refuge  
Fallon, NV 89406-1236  
(702) 423-5128

## Jobs Vs. Environment Myth Debunked

*News and Muse, Southwest Region Chapter Updates  
Southwest Regional Office of the National Audubon Society*

According to "Myths of Jobs Versus Resources: Environmental Protections and Economic Growth" by the California Senate Office of Research, March 1996, "the overall economic impacts of the spotted owl protections have

been neutral...it must be remembered that Oregon fisheries, which spawn tens of thousands of jobs, also rely on management of timber harvest to protect fish habitats." The report states that while some jobs were lost, market forces play an even greater role in paring back jobs in the wood-products industry. From 1980 - 1988 finished timber output rose 19 percent, but automation and other productivity improvements cost 14,000 jobs. Shrinking demand for wood products due to the recession spurred layoffs of 20,000 industry workers.

Since January of 1993, when the recession ended, Oregon and Washington have added about 4,600 jobs in the forest products industry according to Washington State employment economists. Oregon has added 100,000 jobs in 1995 - 20 percent in high-tech industries which has now surpassed timber as the state's leading employer. Oregon still remains the nation's timber basket five years after Ancient Forest protection because timber mills have retooled to accommodate smaller logs. Copies of this report are available for \$3,50 per copy from Senate Publications, 1020 N St., Room B-53, Sacramento, CA 95814, 916-327-2155.

### **Position Available - Inquire Within**

*By George Barnett*

I have had the honor of editing The Roadrunner since 1990 and it has been a very enjoyable seven years. Those of you who have been with the chapter that long have seen the newsletter change considerably over those years. Unfortunately, there is a very strong chance that my wife and I will be leaving El Paso after the first of the year for other parts of Texas, and I will have to resign as Editor.

If you feel that you would like to take a shot at editing and composing the newsletter, I would like to hear from you. Having a computer with page layout software would be very helpful. Beyond that, you will have to devote several hours six times a year to producing the newsletter. It is time well spent and can be very rewarding.

The newsletter is the major vehicle for communicating information to the members and the chapter mails in excess of 600 copies of each edition. Your work on the newsletter can have a major impact on the chapter, and you will become a voting member of the Board of Directors. If this sounds like something you would like to look into, please give me, George Barnett, a call. I can be reached during the day at my office number, 585-1257, or at night and on the weekends at my home, 581-1829.

Since our move is rapidly approaching (it's coming much faster than I want it to), I will have to resign my position as editor with the December newsletter. Consequently, I would like to hear from one of our members as soon as possible to move the newsletter into new hands quickly.

#### **Another way to help the chapter**

Another position that is opening up is the one that maintains the chapter's home page on the World Wide Web. We are looking for someone to help maintain that page (and the related pages). Currently, our home page is on the Rio Grande Free Net at <http://rgfn.epcc.edu/users/ac968/eptpashome.html>. The home page is designed to give information about the chapter including Feather Lake and birding sites around El Paso. Once you've seen it you should have no trouble finding ways to improve it. Here's a chance to put all that time that you've spent surfing the Web to good use. Give me a call so we can talk about it.

## Summer Rains at Feather Lake

By John Sproull

### Feather Lake News

Feather Lake, our wildlife sanctuary at 9500 North Loop, is a

stormwater-detention basin we lease from the City of El Paso. We manage it for wildlife consistent with its primary purpose of flood control. This summer, Feather Lake definitely earned its flood-control stripes. Heavy rains socked east El Paso June 29, and the water at our sanctuary rose 4-5 feet overnight. It dropped during the next week to more typical levels, but subsequent storms kept water levels high through most of the summer.

Prior to the storms, Boy Scouts from Troop 4, under the direction of Eagle-Scout candidate George Chamales, had done yeoman work removing saltcedars from the lake's largest island. The storms interrupted this work by putting the island under water.

The storms brought more than water. Over these last few dry years, a dizzying variety of trash had accumulated in the drains upstream of Feather Lake. Guess where that trash is now? We'll be working for the next year to clean it out.

On a more positive note, Wood Ducks have been regulars at Feather Lake the past two winters. Might they stay to nest? Thanks to Paul and Martha Milios, we're going to find out. The Milioses successfully lured woodies to a nest box in their upper-valley yard

this year. When they (the Milioses) moved to Houston in mid-summer, they donated the nest box to Feather Lake. Thanks, Paul and Martha!

Feather Lake opened to the public October 5, and bird numbers are picking up steadily. Through the end of April it will be open every Sunday from 2 PM to dusk and the 1st and 3rd Saturdays each month from 8 AM to 12 Noon. As always, we need volunteers to staff the sanctuary during visitor hours. The work is easy, enjoyable and essential to Feather Lake's role as a community educational resource. Please contact Charles Simpson (598-2274) if you can help.

Remember to join us **Saturday, October 19**, for our always popular Dinner at Feather Lake (see "On the Trail" for details). And if morning is more to your liking, visit Feather Lake for breakfast on **Saturday, November 23**. We'll eat at 8:30 AM, then burn those calories with a few hours of habitat-management work. See you there!

## The Birdlife of Texas

An abundance of native wild bird species contributes to overall health of our natural and agricultural world and provides economic, recreational, scientific and aesthetic values for society. The Birdlife of Texas Symposium is planned to gather support for building coopera-

tive and voluntary habitat management in Texas. With this support we can begin the conservation necessary for maintaining our unique avian diversity.

### Do you Know...

- which birds bring millions of tourist dollars to the state?
- which birds are in your area or do you have an interest in learning about nature tourism?
- how plentiful the birds are on your property, and how you can be sure they will always be there?
- of any changes in the numbers and kinds of birds on your land?

Answers to these questions and tools to help you manage and know more about our winged friends will be presented by a host of well known bird and tourism experts from across Texas. We'll tell you why our birdlife brings people to Texas and share information about the mysterious lives of our avian friends: what they need, where they live and how they are doing in our rapidly changing landscape. We will ask for your ideas and input on actions landowners can and will do.

Bird conservation is a complex challenge and conserving birds and their habitats is beyond the capacity of any one organization or agency. But when many of us work together, and our efforts are fueled by the enthusiasm of millions of bird and wildlife supporters, tremendous results are possible. Become part of the planning team that will build the voluntary bird conservation plan for

all of Texas. Make your reservations now for The Birdlife of Texas Symposium.

### **What you need to know...**

The symposium will be held Thursday through Saturday, November 21-23, 1996 at the Doubletree Hotel, 6505 Interstate Highway 35 North in Austin, Texas. A block of rooms have been set aside and special symposium rates are available. Please make your hotel reservations by calling the Doubletree Hotel before October 21.

Invited guests include Governor and Mrs. Bush, Andrew Sansom, Executive Director of Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Victor Emanuel, VENT Nature Tours.

The symposium is organized by Texas Partners in Flight, a nonprofit organization dedicated to building partnerships for bird conservation.

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### **Newsletter Subscriptions**

**T**he Roadrunner comes to you automatically with your membership in the National Audubon Society, but it is also available by subscription for only \$5.00 a year. The newsletter makes an excellent gift for a friend or relative who wants to keep posted on field trips, what birds are in the area, and local and national environmental news. Perhaps you know of someone who has left the area and would like to stay in touch with chapter

news back home in El Paso. The Roadrunner is the will fill the bill.

Subscriptions are available by sending a check for \$5.00 to:  
Roadrunner Subscriptions  
El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 9655  
El Paso, TX 79986

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### **Donations**

**T**he El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society gratefully acknowledges a donation from **Jean and John Coyle** for continued work at Feather Lake.

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### **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 Pl.  
El Paso, TX 79912

Day: 585-1257  
Night: 581-1829  
Fax: 585-2785  
Internet: labelman@aol.com

### Donations

The El Paso Texas Avian Society is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to the study and conservation of birds in the El Paso area. We are currently seeking donations from local and national avian societies and individuals who are interested in the study and conservation of birds. If you are interested in donating, please contact us at (915) 533-1234.

news back issue in El Paso. The Roadrunner is the only bird journal published in the El Paso area.

Subscriptions are available for a one year subscription for \$5.00. For more information, please contact us at (915) 533-1234. We accept all major credit cards.

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All of Texas. Make your reservation now for the Birds of Texas Symposium.

### What you need to know

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# Observations

August 16, 1996 to September 15, 1996

Uncommon, Rare, and CASUAL sightings

A very rare sighting has the full entry **italicized, bold and underlined**. Some of the listings may not be considered **RARE**, but because of the season or habitat (date and/or location **bold and underlined**) they are unusual. The listing of birds here is determined using the checklist "Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas" 7th Edition, October 1987. If you are unsure of a sighting, don't **hesitate - report it**, to Bob "WILDBIRDER" Johnson 757-1876 (recorder).

(Observers: Helen Davis; Hugh Jamison; Bob Johnson; Larry Jordan; Joseph Kincaid; John Kiseda; John White; Barry Zimmer. ft-Field Trip; mob-Many Observers.)

Locations: Ant-Anthony. DMA-Doniphan Marsh, FBP-Fort Bliss Ponds, LaU-LaUnion, McN-McNary, MPk-Mountain Park, NEP-Northeast El Paso, Sod-Sod Farm, UpV-Upper Valley, XRd-Crossroads.

## CORMORANTS to FALCONS

Neotropic Cormorant	8/27	(BZ)	DMA
<b>WOOD DUCK</b>	<b>8/27</b>	<b>(BZ)</b>	<b>XRd</b>
Osprey	9/8	(ft-mob)	FBP
Cooper's Hawk	9/4	(HD)	NEP
	9/8	(ft-mob)	FBP
Harris' Hawk	8/29	(BJ)	FBP

## PLOVERS to SANDPIPERS

PEREGRINE FALCON	9/2	(BJ)	Sod
Semipalmated Plover	8/16	(BZ)	FBP
	8/28	(BZ)	FBP
Solitary Sandpiper	<b>8/26</b>	<b>(BZ)</b>	<b>FBP</b>
	<b>8/28</b>	<b>(BZ)</b>	<b>FBP</b>
Willet	8/22	(BZ)	FBP
	8/26	(BZ)	FBP
Long-billed Curlew	8/16	(BZ)	FBP
Semipalmated Sandpiper	8/16	(BZ)	FBP
	8/28	(BZ)	FBP
Pectoral Sandpiper	9/3	(BJ)	FBP
Stilt Sandpiper	9/8	(ft-mob)	FBP
Baird's Sandpiper (180)	8/21	(BZ)	FBP
	9/3	(ft-mob)	FBP

## GULLS to KINGFISHERS

<u>Laughing Gull (J)</u>	<u>8/25</u>	<u>(LJ)</u>	<u>McN</u>
FRANKLIN'S GULL	8/21	(BZ)	FBP
Black Tern	8/24	(JK)	FBP
	9/8	(ft-mob)	FBP
ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD	8/18	(JK)	Ant
Belted Kingfisher	9/8	(ft-mob)	FBP

## WOODPECKERS to VIREOS

<u>Acorn Woodpecker</u>	<u>8/30</u>	<u>(JW)</u>	<u>UpV</u>
Olive-sided Flycatcher	8/19	(BZ)	FBP
<u>Eastern Kingbird</u>	<u>8/28</u>	<u>(BZ)</u>	<u>FBP</u>
Bank Swallow	9/8	(ft-mob)	FBP
Cave Swallow (26)	8/28	(BZ)	<u>LaU</u>
Solitary Vireo	8/26	(BZ)	FBP

## WARBLERS to BLACKBIRDS

Virginia's Warbler	8/28	(BZ)	FBP
<b>TOWNSEND'S WARBLER</b>	8/28	(BZ)	FBP
Black and White Wblr	8/22	(BZ)	FBP
<b>AMERICAN REDSTART</b>	9/11	(HJ)	MPk
<b>NORTHRN WATERTHRUSH</b>	8/26	(BZ-yd)	NEP
	8/28	(BZ)	FBP
MacGillivray's Warbler	8/28	(BZ)	FBP
Black-headed Grosbeak	9/8	(ft-mob)	FBP
Painted Bunting	8/19	(BZ)	<b>FBP</b>
<u>Rusty Blackbird</u>	<u>8/29</u>	<u>(BJ)</u>	<u>FBP</u>







## The Roadrunner

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### October

**Sun., 13** - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.  
**Mon., 14** - Board Meeting  
**Fri., 18 - Sat., 19., Sun., 20** - Texas Celebrity Bird Tour - El Paso  
**Sat., 19** - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.  
**Sat., 19** - Chapter picnic at Feather Lake, see page 6.  
**Sun., 20** - Hueco Tanks Interpretive Fair, see page 6.  
**Sun., 20** - Hueco Tanks Bird ID Tour, see page 6.  
**Sun., 20** - Feather Lake open., 2:00 PM to Dusk.  
**Mon., 21** - General Meeting, see page 1.  
**Sun., 27** - Feather Lake open.  
**Thu., 31** - Halloween.

### November

**Sat., 2** - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.  
**Sun., 3** - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.  
**Sun., 3** - Field trip to the Lower Valley Reservoirs, see page 6.  
**Sat., 9** - Field trip to the Upper Valley, see page 6.  
**Sun., 10** - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.  
**Mon., 11** - Board Meeting.  
**Sat., 16** - General Meeting, see page 1.  
**Sun., 17** - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.  
**Sun., 17** - Hueco Tanks Bird ID Tour, see page 6.  
**Mon., 18** - General Meeting.  
**Sat., 23** - Feather Lake work-day.  
**Sun., 24** - Feather Lake open., 2:00 PM to Dusk.  
**Thu., 28** - Thanksgiving.

### December

**Sun., 1** - Field Trip to Hueco Tanks, see page 6.  
**Sun., 1** - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.  
**Mon., 2** - Board meeting.  
**Sat., 7** - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.  
**Sun., 8** - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.  
**Mon., 9** - General Meeting.  
**Sun., 15** - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.  
**Sun., 15** - Hueco Tanks Bird ID Tour, see page 6.  
**Sat., 21** - Feather Lake closed for the holidays.  
**Sun., 22** - Feather Lake closed for the holidays.  
**Wed. 25** - Christmas  
**Sat., 28** - Feather Lake closed for the holidays.  
**Sun., 29** - Feather Lake closed for the holidays.

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#### El Paso Trans/Pecos Audubon Society

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El Paso, Texas 79986

Address Correction Requested

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