

the ROADRUNNER.....



newsletter of the
El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

November 1981

Editor: Sarah Dodds

Volume 11, Number 9

GENERAL MEETING

MON. 16 NOVEMBER, 7:30 PM, Garden Center, 3105 Grant St., in Memorial Park. This is the meeting we've long been waiting for. Here is everyone's chance to show off their photographic talents by participating in our all-members' slide presentation. We'll see some great slides, some just good ones, and others just plain bad. We welcome them all. It's going to be a fun evening and you won't regret coming out. Bring your sense of humor and no more than five slides per member. /Peggy Heisel/

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON. 9 NOVEMBER, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet at the home of Jo Ellen Warolin, The Meadows Apartments, 8404 North Loop Rd., Apt. A-6, El Paso. Her new phone number is 594-7318. Her apartment is directly across from Black's Nursery. ##

FIELD TRIPS

SUN. 8 NOVEMBER. Hueco Tanks State Park. Meet at 7:00 AM at the Bella Napoli Restaurant. Bring food and drink. Leader: Jane Fowler (772-6296). (This is a repeat notice.)

FAT. 21 November. Lower valley. Meet at 7:00 AM at Feather Lake, 2500 N. Loop Rd. (.3 miles n.w. of Ave. of the Americas). From there, we will travel to various spots along the river. Various migrants and winter residents will be in evidence. Pack a lunch. Leader: Al Gavit (852-3119). /Jeff Donaldson/ # # #

SPECIAL MEETING!!!!

SATURDAY, 31 OCTOBER!!! On this special day the Audubon Council of Texas is meeting in El Paso. Members and friends of our chapter are welcome at any or all of the activities. Except as noted on the agenda, all activities will take place at the Garden Center, 3105 Grant St. in Memorial Park. This is the first time in living memory the ACT has met in El Paso. We extend a warm welcome to all the delegates.

We will have two SPECIAL PROGRAMS for this meeting, one local and one from out of town. Both will be well worth attending. The local program will be given by John Green and Joan Duncan on Franklin Mts. State Park. John's slide presentation is uniquely memorable and beautiful. Mrs. Duncan is the forceful and successful leader of the Wilderness Park Coalition's efforts to achieve state park status for the upper reaches of our beloved Franklin Mountains.

Coming from the California Condor Research Center is our out of town evening speaker. We are most grateful to Dr. Noel Snyder for fitting El Paso into his busy schedule. Dr. Snyder is a research biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and one of the lead scientists at the condor research center, where he plays a key role in its field studies and in carrying out the recovery program. He is cautiously optimistic about the future of this endangered bird. # # #

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ACT AGENDA

FEATHER LAKE (cont.)

Sat. 31 October

- 9:00 AM - Noon ACT business
Noon - 1:30 PM Lunch, birding in Memorial Park
1:30 PM - 2:00 PM ACT business
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM JOHN GREEN and JOAN DUNCAN on FRANKLIN MTS. STATE PARK
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM ACT business
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM No-host dinner at Carlos and Mickey's, 1310 Magruder (near Bassett Center)
7:30 PM - 8:30 PM NOEL SNYDER, on THE CALIFORNIA CONDOR: THE FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL

Sun. 1 November

- 6:30 AM Meet at Bella Napoli Restaurant for birding at Hueco Tanks. Bring water and lunch also if you plan to stay till noon. Bella Napoli is at 10600 Montana.

The above business meetings and programs take place in the Garden Center, 3105 Grant St. in Memorial Park. All members and interested persons are welcome.

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ACTIVITY AT OUR FEATHER LAKE SANCTUARY

The next red letter day in the saga of Feather Lake is the 2nd of November when a Young Adult Conservation Corps work project will begin. Local youths between the ages of 16 and 23, male and female, will go to work for Audubon to accomplish these changes: plantings for bank stabilization and wildlife-habitat improvement, an expanded irrigation system, a sheltered picnic area, a bulletin-board educational display, observation blinds, a nature trail, clearing of some cattails, and more.

(continued in next column)

Next time you see Joe Guinn or Sid Shepperd, make it a point to thank them. They are our members who did the most work to get this project started. (We can thank Geth White, now of Alpine, for giving the project its initial impetus. Chapter presidents who followed her were Lucretia Chew and Charlie Jenson; both moved out of town after working hard to keep the young project going.)

Thanks are also due Don Davis of El Paso's Department of Human Development, who sold the idea to Texas Department of Community Affairs administrators in Austin.

Without Joe Guinn, Sid Shepperd and Don Davis' enthusiasm, we'd still be talking about all these good things instead of doing them.

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CITIZEN ACTION WORKSHOP

The response to a recent Citizen Mobilization Campaign appeal from Audubon's President Russell Peterson has made area workshops through-out the nation possible. In our area we will have a workshop in Albuquerque on November 14-15.

The workshop will focus on basic "how to's" of effective citizen action in influencing the political process in state and national government.

If you can attend, please call our Southwest Regional Office in Brownwood, Texas (915-646-6586) or John Sproul at (O) 541-6126, (H) 545-5157.

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VOTE ON NOVEMBER 3!

Proposition 4, creating a Water Trust Fund over which local voters have no control, should be defeated. Try to spread the word, NO to Proposition 4!

ARE WE PROUD OF JOHN? YOU BET!



El Paso/Trans-Pecos Auduboners come in all sizes and shapes, ages and opinions. But there's one thing we all agree on - - John Sproul is a wonderful chapter president. The following is an article John wrote which was printed in the El Paso Herald Post last summer. For those of you who may have missed it, here it is again. Those of us who read it in the paper will enjoy re-reading John's lucid article.

FRANKLINS DREAM NEAR REALITY

by John Sproul

Seventy-five years. Seventy-five years ago the idea of protecting the Franklin Mountains emerged. The idea alternately gathered momentum and faded but over the years was never forgotten. Then, in 1978, the bulldozing of a road to the top of North Franklin Peak spurred El Pasoans to bring this idea to fruition.

The Wilderness Park Coalition took the lead. It marshaled support for the Franklins and found in Representative Ron Coleman a person willing to champion the protection idea in the Texas legislature. He guided a bill through the House of Representatives. Tati Santi-

FRANKLINS DREAM (cont.)

esteban got it through the Senate. And in June 1979, Governor Clements signed HB 867 to create the Franklin Mountains State Park.

The Franklins are a special, a dramatic backdrop to our daily lives. For those who take a closer look, they are a place of rugged canyons, elusive wildlife, surprisingly diverse plant life and endless beauty. El Paso's physical setting would be ordinary without them.

The efforts of 1978-1979 that finally led to the creation of the Franklin Mountains State Park were special, too, an affirmation of a fine aspect of American life. Concerned citizens and conscientious public officials worked together for the welfare of their community.

More recently, the city and county have demonstrated their commitment to the park with important donations of land. They deserve congratulations! We can all take pride that we have acted to protect this resource for present and future generations.

When complete, the Franklin Mountains State Park, with the Castner Range addition, will cover approximately 30,000 acres, some say the largest urban park in the world. But it is not yet complete. We should not get complacent and feel we have achieved final protection for the Franklins.

The work continues. One more step towards a completed park was taken on June 18, 1981, when the governor signed SB 1273. This bill revises the park boundaries and allows certain existing facilities, such as communication towers and the McKelligon Canyon buildings, to remain within the park. Once again, Rep.

FRANKLINS DREAM (cont.)

Coleman and Sen. Santiesteban played key roles legislatively.

That accomplished, what needs to happen next? In my opinion:

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) must complete land acquisition for the park posthaste. The longer it takes, the more it will cost. Until the land is acquired, the threat of development that would damage the park remains.

The next Texas legislature must delete from the statute that created the park the phrase, "The (TPWD) shall not expend any funds for the operation and maintenance of Franklin Mountains State Park." This provision was forced on El Paso's legislative delegation by a legislator from another part of Texas. As long as it stands, the park cannot be managed properly.

We must keep development of the park compatible with park purposes. From the start, the concept has been that of a natural area, a "wilderness park," where natural values have highest priority. To this end, developments other than trails--for example, picnic areas or nature interpretive facilities--should be in dispersed sites around the park perimeter at the lower elevations. Already developed areas, such as the Tom Mays and McKelligon Canyon areas, are prime sites for such development.

When the Assistant Attorney General now in charge of land acquisition for the park retires this fall, the Attorney General must replace him with an individual committed to carrying out the legislative mandate for the Franklins.

The U.S. Army must begin to de-dud the portion of Castner Range that is to be added to the

FRANKLINS DREAM (cont.)

park. Congressman White supports acquiring this land for the park and will be the key to getting the Army to begin decontamination process.

Seventy-five years. Seventy-five years from now a new generation will be living in a different El Paso. In one way, though, the character of the city will be as we enjoy it today. The raw, rugged massif of the Franklins will still be El Paso's centerpiece, adding uniquely to the city with its stark grandeur. The visitor to these mountains will still be enchanted by the canyons, the wildlife, the plants, the desert beauty.

Given El Paso's projected urban growth, the Franklins' value as a natural environment, as an outdoor laboratory for teaching and research, as a tourist attraction, will grow with each passing year. We should keep our present momentum and properly complete the Franklin Mountains State Park. El Pasoans 75 years from now will thank this generation for its foresight.

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BOOKS! BOOKS! BOOKS!

Christmas is coming (quicker than you think) and what better gift for that hard to please Uncle Max or your sweet Aunt Lucy than a book. And what better time to buy that book than at B Dalton Book-sellers, Cielo Vista Mall, on November 7th at our Bookfair.

Members of the chapter will be in B DALTON'S all day to promote Audubon and nature-related books in the store. In return for generating business, we will get a percentage of the day's earnings, to be used to defray travel expenses for Dr. Noel Snyder (see p. 1).

FIELD TRIPS FOLLOW - UP

On September 26, twenty-one participants took part in a nature walk, observing the native flora of the east Franklins, led by Clark Champie, a local botanist. Many thanks to Clark for both the field trip and the fine program he gave to us earlier in the week. There were also 18 species of avifauna observed, among them a Scott's Oriole, a Cassin's Kingbird and a Scrub Jay.

On the October 11th trip to Durling's Farm, eight birders observed a total of 35 species in and around the area. Among these species were Snowy Egrets, American Widgeon, a Cooper's Hawk, and a Great Horned Owl, as well as several of the small "peep" species of Sandpipers. John Sproul led the group in a short but effective clean-up routine in the area across the canal from the Durling's tree-filled "yard".
/Jeff Donaldson/

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OBSERVATIONS 9/22 - 10/19

If you have an outstanding sighting Jeff Donaldson welcomes your phone calls FROM NOON TO 5 PM. Call him at 755-2455 from noon on.

GREBES THROUGH FALCONS

There were 5 Snowy Egrets perched in a tree at the Ft. Bliss Ponds on 9/22 (JD,BZ). On 9/27, another group of 5 Snowy Egrets were seen in a flooded area near Owen's farm (JD, BZ). Small flocks of American Widgeon and Blue-winged Teal were observed at the Ft. Bliss Ponds on 10/10 (EP,SP). At least 70 Turkey Vultures were still in the Hueco Tanks area, as of 10/8 (JD,BZ). An adult Cooper's Hawk was seen at the Ft. Bliss Ponds on 9/22, as well as a single

OBSERVATIONS (cont.)

adult bird at Hueco Tanks on 10/8 (JD,BZ). A late Swainson's Hawk was spotted over east El Paso on 10/12 (JF). An immature Golden Eagle was observed at Hueco Tanks on 9/26 (BZ,KZ), as well as an adult bird that was seen north of El Paso on 10/2 (AG). Two birds fitting the description of Merlins flew west of Santa Teresa Country Club on 10/11 (JD).

QUAIL THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A Bobwhite Quail was seen and heard in an east El Paso yard, on and off from 9/25 - 10/17 (BR). (This was most likely an escaped or released cage bird, ED.) A single Sora Rail was observed at the Ft. Bliss Ponds on 9/22 (BZ). On 9/22, at the Ft. Bliss Ponds, a bird strongly matching the description of a Laughing Gull in winter plumage was observed (JD, BZ). (While not totally confirmed, it would be a record, and a rare treat for this coastal species to reach El Paso, ED.) At Feather Lake on 9/26, an immature Common Tern was seen (KZ). A male Anna's Hummingbird was observed in a west El Paso yard from 9/29 - 10/16 (EK,PK). On 10/3 the Observations Editor both observed this bird and heard its song. Also on 9/29 a female Anna's Hummingbird was visiting a feeder in a Mountain Park yard in n.e. El Paso (JB). Still another male Anna's Hummingbird appeared in this same yard on 10/13 (JB). Belted Kingfishers showed up at the Ft. Bliss Ponds on 9/22 (JD, BZ), and at one of the Hueco Tank ponds on 10/8 (JD,BZ). A solitary Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was observed at Hueco Tanks on 10/8 (JD,BZ).

PASSERINES

A lone Cassin's Kingbird was seen on the east side of the Franklins on 9/26 (JS). A late Dusky Flycatcher was spotted at Hueco Tanks

PASSERINES (cont.)

on 10/8, as well as a possible Gray Flycatcher in the same area also on 10/8 (JD,BZ). This seems to be a year for Scrub Jays, with sightings coming in from all about the checklist area. A single bird was seen in the desert in northeast El Paso on 9/24 (JD, BZ). ON 9/26, 3 Scrub Jays were seen in downtown El Paso near an apartment complex (JS), while on 10/8, six birds of this species were seen at Hueco Tanks (JD,BZ). A Brown Thrasher was sighted in Mt. Park on 10/17 (JB). Cedar Waxwings might have been heard in a northeast El Paso yard on 10/15 (JD). On 10/5 a report of a possible Yellow-throated Vireo came in from the Horizon City area (AG,MG). A female Black-throated Gray Warbler was observed at Durling's Farm on 9/27 (JD,BZ). ON 10/1 in a Horizon City yard, a female American Redstart was sighted (AG, MG). Top honors for a warbler go to a female Hooded Warbler, first seen in a yard in east El Paso on 10/11, and which stayed until 10/17 (BR). (This is only the second recorded time this eastern Warbler has visited El Paso.) A female Hooded Oriole was seen in a Mt. Park yard on 10/6 (JB). A late male Scott's Oriole was observed in Hueco Tanks on 10/8 (JD,BZ). On 10/4, in west El Paso, a male Hepatic Tanager was seen (SJD). A female Blue Grosbeak was in Hueco Tanks on 10/8 (JD,BZ). All three species of Towhees expected in this area were observed at Hueco Tanks on 10/8. There were a few Brown Towhees, but the the Green-tailed and Rufous-sided were in fairly good numbers. (JD,BZ). A single Cassin's Sparrow was also seen on 10/8 at Hueco Tanks (JD, BZ). There were 5 Clay-colored Sparrows at Hueco Tanks on 9/26 (BZ,KZ), and again at Hueco Tanks on 10/8, when over 5 were seen in a flock of Brewer's and Lincoln's Sparrows (JD,BZ). On 10/1 in central El Paso a dead immature Dick-

OBERVATIONS (cont.)

cissel was found (EG). This was the first area record for this species in some years.

OBERVERS: Janet Brockmoller, Sarah Jane Dodds, Jeff Donaldson, Jane Fowler, Madeline and Al Gavit, Elza Gilboe, Earle and Paula King, Ed Pierce, Shawn Pierce, Bettie Roberts, John Sproul, Barry Zimmer, Kevin Zimmer.

NEW MEXICO OBSERVATIONS

Even though the area of Las Cruces to Elephant Butte lies outside the El Paso check-list borders, several observations were made by brothers Barry and Kevin Zimmer which were very interesting.

On 10/3, at least 15 Western Grebes were seen on Caballo Lake, as well as 600 White Pelicans in the same area. A lone Olivaceous Cormorant was seen at Elephant Butte Dam, as well as a single Osprey. One Pectoral Sandpiper was observed at Radium Springs, and a very probable Pomarine Jaeger flew over Elephant Butte. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo (very late) was observed at Caballo Lake State Park, and a single male Black-and white Warbler was seen near Percha Dam. This bird was a late and casual eastern migrant. (All these observations were made on the same day at the Elephant Butte and Caballo Dams area.)

The following observations were made all on 10/15 in the Aguirre Springs area by Barry Zimmer. 25 Sandhill Cranes flew over the area going south. There were 2, possibly 3 Pygmy Owls in the area as well as 10 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. 45 Acorn Woodpeckers, 40 Scrub Jays and 5 Stellar Jays; 3 Townsend's Solitaires, 2 Hepatic Tanagers, 8 Pine Siskins and as many Black-chinned Sparrows were seen this day.

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/\$25 __ Family/\$32

__ Sr. Citizen, Individual/\$17

__ Sr. Citizen, Family/\$19

__ Student/\$15

This is a __new__ renewal membership.

Please make your checks payable to National Audubon Society.

Mail to Jo Ellen Warolin, 8404 North Loop Rd., Apt. A-6, El Paso, Texas 79915.

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CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

SAT. 19 DECEMBER 1981. EL PASO

SAT. 2 JANUARY 1982. HUECO TANKS

Mark your calendars and plan to take part in at least one count. We welcome newcomers (see membership blank above); 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 (565-2969) 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.

FEED THE BIRDS

Now's your chance to buy our local chapter's own premium wild bird see mix.

Five lb. bags (packaged with TLC) of select seed: red and white millet, rape, canary seed, milo, and black oil and striped sunflower seed. Price \$2.00.

Give your wild birds a treat, buy a bag for a friend who's interested in birds, pass out tiny bags of bird seed on Halloween (instead of the usual candy), toss bird seed instead of rice at your next wedding reception.

The seed will be on sale at our general meetings, or you may contact Jane Fowler (772-0296) and place your order.

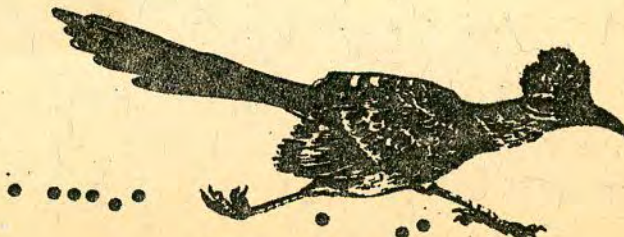
(How can you resist this refreshingly original announcement? Give Jane Fowler all the credit. Ed.)

RAFAEL SCHULLER CLEAN-UP TRIP

SAT. 28 NOVEMBER, 9 AM - NOON, Tom Mays Picnic Area off Transmountain Road, west side of the Franklin Mts. Highlight of our recent field trip to West Cottonwood Spring was the number of migrant songbirds.

Lowligh was the litter in the Tom Mays area. The Sierra Club is going to do something about this mess, and welcomes the help of other concerned and offended people.

Bring a trash bag, a pair of old gloves, whatever refreshment you may desire and join the Sierrans on their annual Rafaela Schuller clean-up outing.



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