

NEWSLETTER OF

EL PASO-TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Geth Osborn White, Editor

COMING EVENTS

Thursday, 8th of February Informal birding group meets either Wednesday or Thursday for a morning outdoors at a place agreed upon each week. If you'd like to join the group, call Joan Pierce at 584-1779. Places visited have included the levee and old drainage ditch on the Rio Grande in the upper valley at Frontera Road and Horizon lake and surrounding desert. Discoveries have been a northern shrike and a Lazuli bunting over-wintering on the levee and large flocks (over a thousand) wintering lark buntings near the lake at Horizon.

Saturday, 10th of February, 7:30 A. M. Field trip to Hueco Tanks. Rendezvous at Memorial Park for 25 mile trip to Hueco Tanks State Park which has a \$1 admission fee. Please let Geth White have master checklist of birds seen this day as the Society is cooperating with State Parks and Wildlife Commission in the compilation of a checklist of the birds of the Park.

Sunday, February 18 at 1:30 P. M. Field trip to Tom Mays Park to explore washes and canyons for birds. This is a repeat of a trip last month which was marred by high cold winds. Higher canyons will have desert sparrows, curve billed thrashers, verdins, rufous-crowned, Brewer's and clay-colored sparrows, green-tailed and rufous-sided towhees for example. Children are welcome on these outings.

MONDAY, 19th OF FEBRUARY, 7:30 P. M. REGULAR MEETING at Centennial Museum, UTEP campus, to be presided over by newly-elected president Eddie Chew. Terry White, son of Ed and Geth White, will show a selection of his slides from a trip last year to Africa. He and his companions, traveling by Volkswagen van, made their way through East Africa, coming by boat down the Red Sea to enter Ethiopia, thence through the bush to Capetown, from Capetown to Angola, by freighter to Lisbon, and back to Morocco in north Africa, for a good look at the game animals and the peoples and the fascinating countries. He has condensed 6 months of travel pictures to an hour and a half slide show.

Saturday, 24th of February, 8:15 A. M. Joint regional conference on environmental problems co-sponsored by the Elementary Science Teachers Association and the Environmental Conservation Education Council, drawing science teachers and interested people from the Trans Pecos area. Featured speaker will be Allen Morgan, vice-president of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, environmental speaker who travels country-wide and abroad speaking to industry and to environmentalists alike. His subject: "Conservation Is Common Sense." Session lasts till noon. Environmental film previews will take up part of the morning. Sample titles are: OUR CROWDED ENVIRONMENT PROBLEMS OF CONSERVATION: FOREST AND RANGE WATER FOR ALL LIVING THINGS WATERFOWL: A RESOURCE IN DANGER and many others. Dr. Jim Milson, president of ECEC will speak on "Outdoor Classrooms -- the Ultimate Goal."

MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT First I want to thank Geth White for her outstanding job as President. We all owe her our appreciation for the considerable time and effort she has given to the Society. Certainly the healthy, growing and purposeful state of the organization is due in large part to her dedication.

I want to express my thanks to the members for selecting me as your new President, for the confidence that this implies. I am aware of the difficult task that I face. It will be hard to guide the Society as ably as Geth has. However, you have also elected an excellent set of officers to aid in this task.

I am sure that together we can continue to work toward the goals of our Society and the National Audubon Society. May we look forward to a year of enjoyment of the outdoors and its beauty, of fellowship together, and of learning how better to conserve that which we value.

.....Eddie Chew.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD with new faces in old places. Officers elected in January to take their two-year term are President, Eddie Chew; vice-president, Bill Hunt; secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Clarence (Libby) Shelfer; Historian, Mrs. Jack (Helen) Ponder; Board Members, John and Lexie Mudd, Mrs. Jack (Margaret) McDaniel. The outgoing president and the new president also serve on the Board according to the by-laws. New committees will be announced next month. If you would like to work in any capacity, let Eddie know of your interest for this is the way we get things done.

A LITTLE BIOGRAPHY OF ALLEN MORGAN who comes to speak to the Regional Conference of the Trans-Pecos Teachers and ECEC on the 24th of February:

He is Executive Vice-President of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Since 1957 when he assumed this position, Mr. Morgan's vision and leadership have guided the Society's growth from a modest natural history education group to a 24,000 member conservation organization dealing effectively and responsibly with the complex environmental challenges of post World War II technology and social change.

Interested in natural history as a child, he was assistant to the Curator of Birds at the Boston Society of Natural History at age 14. After graduating from Bowdoin College with a biology major, Mr. Morgan entered the life insurance business, maintaining his vocational interest in environment. He was instrumental in forming in 1952 the Sudbury Valley Trustees Inc. which led the state in open space preservation, playing a major role in establishing the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge.

Mr. Morgan is active in many private and public conservation efforts and has served over the years on scores of committees, boards and commissions. Currently he directs the Citizens Committee on Environmental Affairs, which is monitoring a comprehensive reorganization planning process for the state Office of Environmental Affairs. In 1972 he received the Outstanding Citizen Award of the New England Chapter, Public Relations Society of America.

An outstanding photographer and convincing speaker, Mr. Morgan is expert at communicating the Audubon message to any audience and at helping people to understand as simply as possible the interdependence of our environmental problems and their implications for man.

NATIONAL WATER COMMISSION HEARING IN NEW ORLEANS. Dr. John Mudd gave a report on the voluminous 1122-page draft Report containing over 300 recommendations for shifts in national water resource policy at the last meeting. Hearings will be held regionally -- for our area it was held in New Orleans. Spoken and written public opinion will help formulate policy of unprecedented magnitude on future water resource developments. Written comments must reach the commission no later than February 15. Write National Water Commission, Room 405, 800 N. Quincy St., Arlington, Va. 22203. National Audubon Society has Report No. 3 entitled "Some Environmental and Economic Implications of the National Water Commission's 1972 Draft Report," which digests it. Copy available from Eddie Chew

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT lambasts the Trinity River Project as wholesale devastation at a December 14 public hearing held at Fairfield. East Texas newspapers were surprised and offended at its stand. Let your Department know you appreciate its stand by writing to Clayton T. Garrison, Executive Director, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, John H. Reagan Building, Austin 78701.

BACKYARD BIRDWATCHING

by Helen Ponder.

If you can't be a hardy, hiking birdwatcher, you can join my husband and me and enjoy your own yard. These are really your birds as you attract them, water and feed and protect them to the best of your ability. They, in turn, provide a show all their own.

We sit in the den armed with binoculars and watch the bird world go by our sliding glass doors. Two or three hanging feeders with glass sides provide an eating place for the acrobats of birdom. They shove each other, hang upside down, daring one more bird to find a safe perch. Our other feeders are round, hooded metal discs on poles. A basket type which holds real goodies like suet and cake type concoctions is very popular as a snack bar. A Christmas gift of a long cylinder with perches opposite the feeding holes is just beginning to catch on.

I have found that my trading stamps have been useful in providing some of these feeders as shown in Green and Royal Stamp Catalogs.

I'll grant you, your big crowd are sparrows, but did you ever notice the very large family these birds belong to? There is the fox sparrow, white-crowned, song sparrow, vesper, cassin's, rufous-winged, black-throated, black-chinned, to name a few. We argue a lot about which is which, but that's part of the fun.

The big thrill comes when a flash of blue heralds the arrival of the blue bird and the Stellar's jays. They perch on the bird baths in the sunlight and their beautiful blue feathers fairly shine. We always get excited when the sleek, sophisticated Cedar Waxwings or Bohemian waxwings fly in. Among our visitors are flickers, robins, cowbirds, doves, mockingbirds, towhees, Wilson's warbler, House finch, bluebirds and jays. Once we had off-the-track road-runner, really out of his element in the walled-in backyard. Also a strange phenomenon, cornered by our over-anxious cockerpoo, a pheasant. Where it came from we'll never know. We're glad we had an obedient dog so that it was able to fly out of the yard.

As April comes, so do the loveliest of our feathered friends -- the hummers. They are a joy to watch as they use each of the many feeders hanging from the house and trees. At least once during the summer one tiny, militant hummingbird will attempt to take over all the feeders at once and the noise those little creatures make about six in the morning is unreal. Battles rage, without referees. We never know exactly who wins.

We like the hanging or pole feeders, especially those with tops as it keeps the grain, seed and bread dry and gives some protection from the wind. Many of the larger birds prefer to ground feed and are content with the leavings below the feeders or forage for my numerous insects. It's hard to tell who gets the bread crumbs, sunflower seeds and grain that constantly fall off the feeders -- the birds, the ants or the mice. Mice and smaller birds do co-exist. The larger birds consider the mice a tasty morsel, which doesn't mean they keep the mice under control -- they don't. So put your feed in metal containers and find a way to get rid of the mice without killing birds, dogs and cats.

One morning as I passed through the den on my way to the kitchen, I saw to my horror, one of the hanging feeders tilted at a 45-degree angle and a long, bushy tail trailing beneath it. I rushed out to scare the wits out of a pesky cat. Nothing ran, but around the corner peered a very fearless squirrel. He looked at me in disdain and then casually walked up a tree limb, over the back wall and disappeared. So I guess if you watch a lot you'll see all kinds of happenings.

We have taught our dog to keep cats out of the yard. Now we have to figure a way to control him further because when bird action is at a peak, he wants to join the fun.

This is not the most inexpensive hobby in the world when you provide the food -- we have very hungry birds. Even though we feel we are not the best-informed birdwatchers, we are having fun. Try it -- you'll like it.

BIRD RECIPES

(Not original, but gathered here and there by Helen Ponder)

BASIC PUD Take seeds, peanuts, cheese, oatmeal, dry cake and scraps. Put them in a container, pour hot melted suet over the mixture until it is covered and leave it to set. Turn out onto a plate, hang from tree or place on feeding board. Rough quantities: one pound of mixture to $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of melted suet.

BIRD CAKE. Mix 2 lbs. self-raising flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. margarine and a little sugar with water and bake like a large bun. (From the Hungry Bird Book by Robert Arbie and Tony Soper).

SHISHKABOB String pieces of bread, doughnuts, cornbread, meat scraps, biscuits, apples, orange sections, raisins or any type dried fruit on 3 or 4 foot lengths of twine. Drape over tree branches. From Mr. and Mrs. Earl Atkinson, State Bird Chairmen, Salt Lake City, Utah.

MAGIC MIX FOR BLUEBIRDS. Mix beef suet, peanut butter and cornmeal. All kinds of nutmeats and crumbled cornbread, but no grain or seeds. Offer magic mix in bite-size lumps on feeder trays. From Mrs. Billee Martin, Mountain Home Arkansas.

Keep your water fresh, clean and attractive in hot or cold weather. Place away from bushes for the safety of the birds. Nothing exceeds running water for your guests. Keep your water shallow. Stress cleanliness -- your feeders and bird baths must be kept clean. Feathered friends can have diseases, too.

BIRD RECORDS

1/2/73	Hermit Thrush	East El Paso	Florence Wipf
1/13	Phainopepla	Federal Street	Lena McBee
1/13	Northern Shrike	Levee, south from Frontera	Birding group, GOW
1/17	Northern Shrike		Birding group, GOW
1/13	Lazuli Bunting	Levee, River Bend	Yerbys, Wanda Joyce
1/17	Lazuli Bunting	Levee, River Bend	Yerbys, Wanda Joyce
1/14	Black-chinned Humming bird, male & female	Federal St. feeder	GOW & EW
through Jan.			
1/14	Female Anna's hummingbird	Federal St. feeder	GOW & EW
through Jan.			
1/14	Townsend's Solitaire	Federal Street	GOW & EW
1/15	Townsend's Solitaire	Federal Street	GOW & EW
1/15	Bald Eagle	Biggs Air Base	Frank Davis
From 1/7	Mountain Bluebird	East and west side of mountains, calls almost every day. Flocks up to 50.	
through Jan.			
1/31	Ring-necked Pheasant	Crossing from Memorial Park to Wilcox's yard	GOW.
2/4	Chukar	Doniphan Road vicinity	GOW, EW, & TW

EL PASO-TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY dues are \$12 individual, \$15 family; includes membership in National Audubon Society, ATG magazine and our local newsletter; participation in eco-action matters; field trips, and activities.

Please mail check to Mrs. Clarence Shelfer, Treasurer, 3050A Chandler, El Paso, Texas 79904.

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