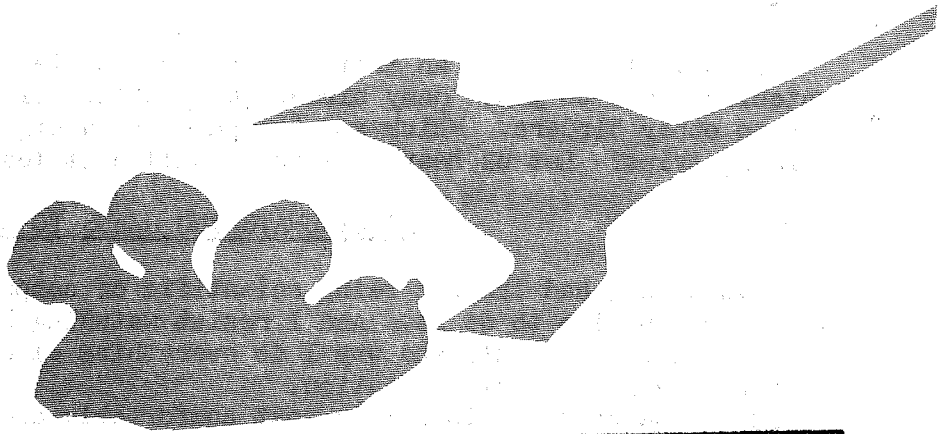


The Roadrunner

NEWSLETTER OF
EL PASO-TRANS PECOS
AUDUBON SOCIETY
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Vol. II, September, 1972

Geth Osborn White, Editor

CALENDAR

Sat.-Sept. 16
7:00 A. M.

FIELD TRIP down the lower Rio Grande Valley to see the bosque proposed as an outdoors learning center and wildlife sanctuary by the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of El Paso.

Wynn Anderson, who is familiar with the plants of our region, will identify the many-blooming flowers which are especially abundant with the heavy summer rains. Hawks may be seen along the levee and shorebirds and possibly some early ducks at the nearby sewage treatment plant.

Rendezvous at the tennis courts at Memorial Park. Return by noon.

Mon.-Sept. 18
7:30 P. M.

REGULAR MEETING AT THE CENTENNIAL MUSEUM. Ray Arras, Director of the El Paso Zoo, will speak to us about the activities of the zoo, its contribution to the community, its need for expansion, its animals and birds.

Summer vacation slides from members who have some beautiful landscapes, birds or animals, limit to 15 slides so we can all share.

Sat.-Sept. 30
7:00 A. M.

FIELD TRIP to Aguierre Springs in the Organ Mountains. Rendezvous at the parking lot at Coronado Shopping Center. Take Highway 70 north from Las Cruces toward the pass, watching for the marker for Aguierre Springs. We will explore Pine Springs Trail. The Organs are rich in birds and plant life, primarily high desert scrub with small stands of Ponderosa pine. The trail is an easy climb. Return by noon.

UPCOMING

Oct. 21-22

FIRST SOUTHWEST REGIONAL WORKSHOP of the National Audubon Society, Sea Gun Inn, Rockport, Texas. Area societies include Texas, New Mexico and Louisiana. We're invited to attend to discuss mutual problems, exchange ideas and receive guidance from National Audubon personnel. Dr. Elvis Stahr, President of National Audubon Society, will address the banquet audience.

Oct. 28-29

WILDERNESS WORKSHOP will be held in El Paso, sponsored by the Centennial Museum. Conservationists in the Southwest region will attend sections devoted to conservation of scenic rivers, hiking trails, local natural areas, underground wilderness and wilderness per se.

We would like to run an article , or even series of articles, on what bird-watching means to you. Many birders keep a life list; this is always interesting to other birders. Which species gave you a big thrill? How about memorable birding trips? Let us hear from you. Bill Hunt leads off in the article below.

WHAT BIRDWATCHING MEANS TO ME.

I've always had trouble being scientific or compulsive about birdwatching. I just plain like to do it. And I resist watching birds by the clock or by the calendar because that's the way I do everything else! In a word, birdwatching is for me a hobby, not a vocation.

It is one of the things I do most comfortably and unselfconsciously -- I can lose myself beside a meandering stream. All the world is for a moment gathered up in the coaxing of a marsh wren from the cattails or in the surprise of flushing an owl from a dense-growing tree.

"You ought to get a telephoto lens for your camera so that all of your discoveries won't be wasted," my wife once commented after a successful morning in the field. While I would enjoy bird photography, and while the official compilers are insisting more and more on photographs to substantiate rarities, by no means are my unphotographed observations wasted.

I have discovered a world which has a way of its own, which does not exist because I say so, or because it is useful to me, but just because it is. The adaptations of the gallinule, the phoebe and the yellowlegs supply their own justifications. There is an order and beauty in their ways to which man by his wisdom can add little.

I find more interest, too, in a spot of local mini-ecology than in the flashy birdlife of a distant land. Like a gossip in a small town, I enjoy most knowing the comings and goings of my nearest neighbors. And I would rather make one good friend than a dozen casual acquaintances, even among birds. -- Bill Hunt.

SUMMER ROUND UP OF BIRDS

June Records - 14-16th: Observations of breeding birds by actual sighting of the nests or territorial singing by male birds were made by Joan Pierce, Wanda Joyce and Geth White in conducting an ecology class in the field for the Girl Scouts at Camp Pioneer in the Upper Valley. An asterisk indicates on the nest. Species noted were Mississippi Kite*, Sparrow Hawk*, Killdeer, Mourning Dove*, Inca Dove*, Black-chinned hummingbird*, red-shafted flicker, Western Kingbird*, Say's phoebe, barn swallow*, Cliff swallow*, verdin*, mockingbird*, curve-billed thrasher, loggerhead shrike, starling, yellow-breasted chat, red-winged blackbird, boat-tailed grackle, brown-headed cowbird, pyrrhuloxia, blue grosbeak, house finch, brown towhee, and a late-lingering migrant, white-crowned sparrow.

Down the Valley at Horizon Girl Scout Camp Ruby Allen, Sarah Dodds and Helen Barto led the ecology class in the desert scrub community which had no irrigation drainage ditch to enhance the bird attractiveness. They had a nesting western kingbird and cactus wren to show to the children and an unusual find was the blue-grey gnatcatcher.

Mundy's Canyon in the Franklin Mountains, ranging in elevation from 4,000 to 7,000 feet with a small seep spring at about 6,500 feet, on June 27, observed by GO and EW, the following species: mourning dove, roadrunner, scaled quail, white-throated swift*, black-chinned hummingbird*, red-shafted flicker, western kingbird, ash-throated flycatcher, olive-sided flycatcher, western wood pewee, verdin*, cactus wren*, canyon wren, rock wren, mockingbird, curve-billed thrasher, crissal thrasher, loggerhead shrike, Virginia's warbler, Scott's oriole, pyrrhuloxia, Cassin's finch, house finch*, green-tailed towhee, brown towhee, rufous-crowned sparrow, black-throated sparrow, black-chinned sparrow.

Earlier in the month migrating warblers, MacGillivray', Virginia's and Wilson's and the solitary vireo were seen in this canyon.

July Records - Rita Ward observed a large flock, 30-40 birds, of band-tailed pigeons in the Cloudercroft area in July; in the same month on a trip to Patagonia she had the thrill of seeing the rare rose-throated becard at the nest.

On July 23 in the Cloudercroft area, GOW and EW observed two red-faced warblers feeding with flocks of pygmy nuthatches and other migrating birds flocking in to feed on heavily infested Ponderosas.

August Records - August 18, while driving on the Texas coastal plain near Angleton, GOW and EW saw 25 poor-wills in a few miles, sitting on fence posts and wires, obviously in migration. An early migration, perhaps? At Rockport on the 21st they had the good fortune to see two Magnificent Frigatebirds from Fulton Beach. Waterspouts had occurred in the gulf that week, accounting for this bird of more tropical waters to be so far north, probably.

On the 19th of August Bill Hunt reports a black-crowned night heron and several lesser yellowlegs at a small drainage ditch in the lower valley near Clint.

Most unusual was the observation on August 30th of two Kiskadee flycatchers, a Mexican species, by Mary Lou Boyce. She has another record of these birds in July, 1962, when they appeared after a heavy storm.

Please call Geth White if you have an unusual bird. She will drop everything and come a-running with long lens camera to try for a photo. New TOS rules require photographic verification of rarities.

HUMMINGBIRDS: The Pettigrews on Love Street in the Upper Valley have for years put out eight or ten feeders and drawing as many as 50-75 hummingbirds in the summer months. We saw them in June, all black-chins. They started getting rufous in mid-July and a few broad-tailed. Biggest concentration around the feeders was just before dusk. Allen's hummingbird (10) and rufous, (6) were seen in Mundy's canon on September 5 by Geth and Ed White, feeding on all the profusely blooming creosote bush flowers in preference to all the many blooms in the canyon. If this is their choice, they've a marvelous supply in the vast Chihuahuan desert.

In the lower valley at the bosque near Socorro a male blue-throated hummingbird was watched for about 10 minutes feeding on the pollen of salt cedar. GOW & EW.

September Records- Birds of note in Mundy's canyon on September 5 by GOW & EW, John Black of Montreal: gray vireo (4) solitary vireo, pinyon jay (6) black-chinned sparrow juveniles at much lower elevation than usual (3) Scott's orioles carrying food as if to fledglings. Abundant food supply may mean second and third broods, something to watch for.

PUBLIC LANDS. Legislation now before Congress, H. R. 7211, will make administration of public lands a most confusing problem. Special interest groups such as grazers, minerals, and lumbering will have much more opportunity to control for their own use land now belonging to all citizens. As you know, much of this land is in nearby New Mexico and other western states.

Wildlife refuges, units of the National Park system, and many great national forests of the West are in jeopardy. Lands withdrawn by executive order are threatened, including some units of the National Park system. Read the "National Outlook" column in the July issue of Audubon magazine. Write your comments to Congressman White.

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY HAS NEWSLETTER FOR AUDUBON ACTION. Edited by John Spinks, who, in his witty way, will keep his region informed of environmental matters of special concern to Southwesterners. Concerning PREDATORS, I quote:

"Just as reliable as the report of Little Red and Grandma leaping from the wolf's stomach to offer tea, cake and jam to the brave hunter who killed the beast, alleged predator losses leave one in breathless amazement at the fertility of human imagination.

The prize in this category goes to Congressman W. R. Poage who reports

voracious predators in South Dakota gobbling up 49 million of that state's 50 million pheasantsCongressman Poage introduced a bill to reimburse livestock producers for livestock lost to predators, estimated to cost the government \$50 to \$100 million annually. This led one Congressional wit to remark that 'anyone with a sick sheep ought to go out and hire a coyote.' The Texas legislature removed some \$200,000 from urban rat control for application to predator obliteration."

There is a bill on predator reform, passed by the House with two bad provisions allowing "emergency" use of poisons. Hopefully, the Senate will correct the bill either in Committee or when the bill comes up for a vote.

THEY'RE STILL SHOOTING EAGLES IN THE TRANS PECOS. Old traditions are hard to shake. Especially so in the West which was founded by strong individuals who looked after their own affairs and solved their own problems, so often with a gun.

If you meet ranchers in the West talk to them about birds. Let them know that most migrating Golden Eagles are not present during peak lambing season and not guilty of preying on newborn lambs. There is a Federal law protecting hawks and eagles. It's unfair to use a plane to shoot eagles as they sometimes do. One of the saddest sights I know is to see this noble bird stretched on a barbed wire fence, mute display of prejudice and ignorance.

Officers of El Paso-Trans Pecos Audubon Society:

- President:** Mrs. Edmund White
- Vice-president:** Eddie Chew
- Treasurer:** Mrs. Clarence Shelfer
- Historian:** Mrs. Jack Ponder


Dues are \$12. individual, \$15. family, payable to Treasurer, Mrs. Clarence Shelfer, 3050 A Chandler, El Paso, Texas 79904.

EL PASO AUDUBON SOCIETY
3123 FEDERAL AVE.
EL PASO, TEXAS 79930




TO ALL MEMBERS OF NATIONAL AUDUBON IN OUR REGION:

WE NEED YOU!



We need for many reasons to have you express to the National Audubon Society your wish to affiliate with our El Paso-Trans Pecos Chapter. There is strength in numbers, we would like to have lively on-going programs of interest to the chapter and to serve the community, including the larger territory of Trans Pecos, by promoting more awareness to conserve our natural resources, protect our wildlife, interpret and enjoy our natural world.

Without your statement that you wish to affiliate with our local chapter, we will not receive a dues split from National. We need this money to operate the chapter. It will cost you nothing and will entitle you to receive the newsletter which schedules meetings, field trips and contains environmental action news.



If you joined the National Audubon Society through the local Chapter last year you will not need to fill in the coupon below. If all others would fill in the coupon, we should appreciate your doing so. Then, one last thing, if you would let Membership Chairman, Mrs. Leigh Wilcox know you have sent off the coupon by phone or by card, she can keep the record straight.

Please mail in the coupon today or bring to the next meeting and we will mail it for you.

R.S.V.P. Mrs. Leigh Wilcox 565-6001
3133 Federal Avenue
El Paso, Texas 79930

Mr. John Meyerling
Director of Membership
National Audubon Society
950 Third Avenue
New York, New York 10022

I wish to affiliate with the El Paso-Trans Pecos Chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Name _____

Address _____

Street

City

State

Zip

