

The Roadrunner

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society
Volume 28 No. 12 December 1999 & January 2000



General Meetings

Memorial Park Garden Center
3105 Grant Street 7:30pm

Monday, December 13, 1999

WILDLIFE OF KENYA

John Kiseda, El Paso Zoo Animal Curator

Plan to come to our last meeting of the 20th century. John Kiseda will talk about his summertime trip to East Africa. Join us for some great slides from the trip and learn about the wildlife of Kenya! A good time will be had by all. In keeping with the Spirit of Christmas, we will be giving away some door prizes. Hope to see everyone there.

Monday, January 17, 2000

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

Lois Balin, Wildlife Biologist

Lois Balin, the Urban Wildlife Biologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife, was formerly in the medical profession. She received her B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science in 1993 at the University of Arizona, Tucson and her M.S. in Wildlife and Range Science at Texas A&M University in 1996. She spent several years researching neotropical migratory birds at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, the White Sands Missile Range, and for Arizona Game and Fish prior to accepting the Urban Wildlife Biologist position in El Paso. She will discuss the Texas Wildscapes Program. The program's goal is to create more good wildlife habitat in urban and suburban areas by providing the public with the tools to create, understand, and appreciate backyard wildlife habitat. The program focuses on creating wildlife habitat using native plants that are "wildlife and environmentally friendly."

CONGRATULATIONS to us!

Our El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society Chapter won the following awards for the 1999 Birdathon:

*Most Species Seen By Region

*Best Report Letter

*Honorable Mention for

Medium Size Chapter

Good Work Birdathon Participants!

UPCOMING ZOO CONFERENCE

The El Paso Zoo will be hosting the American Zoo & Aquarium Association's Western Regional Conference during the April 5-8, 2000 time period. Much help will be needed in diverse aspects of conference planning, management and logistics (from leading bird watching trips, to being an AV aide at conference sessions, to helping be a zoo host on Zoo Day). Please contact Program Chair, John Kiseda, at 521-1850 for more information if you are willing to help out.

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PRESIDENT'S AERIE

* Election of Officers is scheduled for Jan. Please volunteer. Or if you know someone interested call me (757-1876)

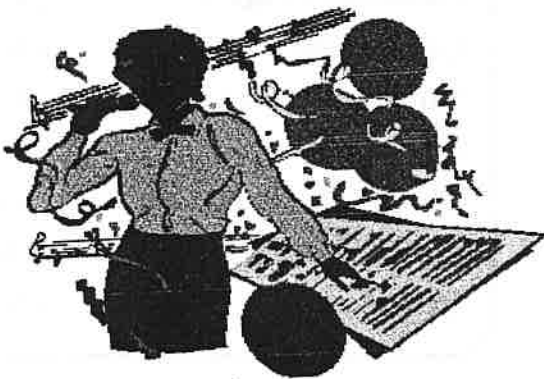
* Awards for the year are now under consideration.

* Can you suggest a place for our annual dinner to be held in Feb? This is when the awards will be presented and officers installed.

Dates will be either the 19th, 20th or 21st.

* Good ideas for Christmas presents are the "National Geographic Field Guide to Birds of North America" and an Audubon Calendar 2000. Call Craig B. (877-4138) or come to the December meeting (Dec. 13) and check the sales table.

***Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson is going to the TOS (Texas Ornithological Society) Fall/Winter meeting in McAllen, TX. January 6-8, 2000. Call him if you want to tag along.



HIGHLIGHTS OF PREVIOUS FIELD TRIPS

The hawk watch trip to the Monzano Mountain Lookout was as spectacular as always. This was held on October 2nd & 3rd, and 15 people enjoyed the scenery as well as the raptors, some even got to release a bird. Probably the best bird was a Broad Winged Hawk, as they are rare in the West. The best day was Saturday, as over 300 raptors were counted.

The November 6th beginners ID at the crossroads ponding and keystone marsh was attended by 10 people including 2 youngsters, 4 were more experienced birders.

Six birders made the trip down the valley to McNary & Ft. Hancock Reservoirs on Sunday, November 14. Best bird being an Osprey sitting on a snag. Also 5 Snow Geese in the water and a flock of 15 flying over. Western & Clark's Grebes were plentiful and over 100 Cormorants were at Hancock. A Ferruginous Hawk was spotted on a pole as the group was heading toward Tornillo.

The Bird Identification Tour at Hueco Tanks, on Sunday, November 21st was attended by 6 people (including two youngsters) two of the people were from Houston. Good birds were an Eastern Phoebe, Sharpshinned Hawk, Black-Chinned Sparrow and Scrubjay.

Conservation Corner



by, John Kiseda

Conservation Committee

HELP!!! I need help (as if you couldn't tell, and on so many levels, so watch out with the wise cracks)! I am supposed to have put together a stalwart, hard-working committee to help the chapter plan and achieve its conservation goals, but as of yet this is still a committee of one. Many EP/TP board members and officers help out in many ways, but this active group is a very small one and is not getting any desperately needed "new blood". Please give me a call and let me know that you give a "darn" and want to help out! Believe it or not, I am not actually a tyrant to work with (I only behave as any minor despot would)! Without the good conservation work you can help perform for our community and our chapter, the coming year will not be as productive and fun as it could be. Contact John Kiseda in the evenings at 533-4615 (phone and fax). Be cool and make a commitment to local conservation, join the Conservation Committee!

If you have not heard, over the summer, our chapter relieved over a thousand dollars for "conservation projects" at our Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary. These funds were made available via the help of the Texas Audubon Office and through the Texas Natural Resource and Conservation Commission (TNRCC). Hurrah for Feather Lake and your conservation committee!

BIRD CHECKLISTS

A call for your reports on bird sightings at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, Keystone Marsh and the Fort Bliss Sewage Ponds:

If you go birding at these sites, please contact me and let me know what birds you saw during your trips. I am still attempting to "add to" the bird checklists that have been compiled for these two areas and there are still many gaps in the lists. For example, I have not been able to document that anyone has seen a ladderback woodpecker or any species of oriole, towhee or goldfinch at Keystone Marsh and I would think that some of these birds should have been observed using this site. I have received information from only a very few people and am still in need of whatever information YOU may have! Please send me information that you have regarding bird species seen, the dates of the observations, the numbers of individuals observed, etc. Contact John Kiseda in the evenings at 533-4615 (phone and fax). Thanks for your help.

Keystone Marsh

The marsh continues to maintain fairly good water levels & a good number of black-necked stilts, coots and killdeer are still at the marsh. On a recent EP/TP field trip that include the marsh, a red-tailed hawk, a snowy egret, a great blue heron and numerous shorebirds were seen; the "coolest" sighting of the morning was a Prairie Falcon.

Protection efforts for the wetlands & archaeological site continue, but nothing has yet been finalized. If you want to help with the efforts to preserve the Keystone Marsh & archeological site, contact Bernie Sargent at 581-7099 or Carol Miller at 584-7088. You can also check out their web site at www.keystone-site.org.

Ramsey Canyon Preserve

The Nature Conservancy's (N.C.)

Ramsey Canyon Preserve renovations are going well. The visitor center is being used & visitation is ongoing. Remediation of the natural areas continues. If you want to get more information regarding this significant project at the Ramsey Canyon Preserve, contact Paul Hardy, Upper San Pedro Program Manager at 27 Ramsey Canyon Rd. Hereford, AZ 85615 Ph#:(520)378-2640 Fax#: (520) 378-2785.

El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

Board of Directors:

President	Bob Johnson	757-1876
V-President	John Kiseda	533-4615
Secretary	Betty Fisbeck	581-0174
Treasurer	Hugh Jameson	751-7952
	Craig Braginton	877-4138

Committee Chairs:

Conservation	John Kiseda	533-4615
Education	Elizabeth Chase	591-5119
Field Trips	Bob Johnson	757-1876
Hospitality	Jane Fowler	598-2448
Membership	volunteer needed	
Programs	Nancy Wilson	877-4600
Publications	Kathleen Whelen	533-6630
Publicity	Roxanne Schroeder	534-7019
Sanctuary	John Sproul	545-5157

About the Roadrunner:

Roadrunner is your newsletter. We welcome your contributions. For further information, you may contact:

Bob Johnson: 757-1876
Kathleen Whelen 533-6630
Elizabeth Chase:
email: echase@socorro.k12.tx.us

FEATHER LAKE NOTES

by, John Sproul

Feather Lake, A Popular Spot

Water levels are dropping at Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, and, as they do, shore- and wading-bird numbers are climbing. come on down and enjoy the show! Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave. Admission is free.

When Feather Lake is open to the public, we have binoculars and spotting scopes available for visitors to use. Our optics collection has grown this past year thanks to generous donations from Lynn Moseley, Dennis Taylor and Barry Zimmer. Many thanks to all! Thanks also goes to the 4th graders at El Paso country Day School who have a great job raising funds for our sanctuary.

How are we doing in our campaign to get 30 volunteers to staff Feather Lake on the 60 weekend dates this visitor season? So far, 13 individuals have volunteered to cover 19 dates. On 2 dates (Christmas and New Years Day), we'll be closed. That means we still have 39 dates open and need at least 16 more volunteers. You can be one of them! Please call Charles Simpson (598-2274) to find out what dates are still available and to sign up for a couple. It's an easy, enjoyable way to support our sanctuary.

We also offer great exercise opportunities at Feather Lake. You can get a fantastic workout while helping with sanctuary maintenance and habitat management. Our next session will be Saturday, January 29, starting at 2:00pm. Plan to join us!

**Workday at Feather Lake
Saturday, January 29, 1999
2:00pm**

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Store

Christmas is on its way and your El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society Store has a variety of items to choose from. Surprise your favorite birder this holiday season. We have the new 3rd Edition of the National Geographic "Birds of North America" (20.00). The 2nd Edition is selling at a reduced price. Choose from five different varieties of the Audubon 2000 wall calendars (12.45) and the recently published "A Birder's Guide to the Rio Grande Valley" is available in the store (24.0), two of the four co-authors being our own Jim Paton and Barry Zimmer. In addition, we also have two different bird song audio tapes and several issues of Texas Parks and Wildlife Non-game species decals and stamps (5.00).

The store is open at every meeting.
Hope to see you there.

Support Wildlife Conservation Organizations

The El Paso Herpetological Society

The El Paso Herpetology Society now meets at the El Paso Zoo on the first Wednesday (previously Thursday) of each month at 7:00pm. For more information contact Stella Ramirez at 751-3772 or Al Dominguez at 747-5844 or 566-3598. No December meeting will take place due to hot & heavy holiday schedules.

Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue, Inc.:

Board Meetings are all "open" meetings and held at the El Paso Environmental Center at 800 S. Piedras.

Visit the CDWR website at:
www.whc.net/cdwr

Visit the El Paso Zoo website at:

www.whc.net/epzoo

DONIPHAN MARSH

Contact: Carol Miller at 584-7088
Visit the KAPPA website at:
www.keystone-site.org

Mission Possible

Mission Possible, a partnership of community organizations, was created to heighten environmental awareness, to bring recognition for environmental efforts and achievements in our Paso del Norte region, and to encourage further efforts to protect our environment. The Mission Possible committee is asking industry, business, public and private organizations, or individuals, to send information on effective programs having an impact on our land, air and water and thereby affecting our health and quality of life.

Entries should be sent by December 10, 1999 to Mission Possible, c/o El Paso County Extension Service
1030 N. Zaragoza, Suite A
El Paso, Texas 79907

Email to rj-saldana@tamu.edu or Fax to (915) 860-0331.

Projects will be honored at the 4th annual MISSION POSSIBLE Environmental Conference on Saturday, January 22, 2000. The most significant achievements will receive special recognition. The event will be held at the Tomas Rivera Conference Center at UTEP from 8:30am until 1:00pm.

Carol Browner, EPA administrator, has been invited to be keynote speaker. Simultaneous translation into Spanish will be provided. Many exhibits and refreshments will be available. There is no admission charge.

Preceding the conference, an Environmental Fair for children will be held on Friday, January 21, 2000 to honor the winners of a poster contest, open to all grades in area schools. Posters are to demonstrate the relationship of environment and health. Hours are 8:30am to 1:00pm. Place: Thomas Rivera Conference Center, UTEP. Educational exhibits and activities will be offered to third grade students of participating schools.

MISSION POSSIBLE started in 1997 as an environmental conference called CHERISH OR PERISH, which was sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Texas. The next years saw a growing partnership between the League of Women Voters - El Paso and other organizations. This year's major sponsors are the Paso del Norte Health Foundation, the Center for Environmental Resource Management at UTEP and the El Paso Community Foundation. Also participating are the El Paso County Extension Service, the El Paso Community College, the Environmental Defense Fund, El Paso City-County Health & Environmental District, the International Boundary and Water Commission, the Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue, and NMSU Cooperative Extension Service. A donation was received from the El Paso Optimists for the Children's Environmental Fair and Poster Contest.

For more information call Inga Groff (915) 755-2957, Marion Truxal (915) 755-2821 or Diana Billingslea (915) 877-7372.

Birdathon 2000

Believe it or not, due to the new publishing schedule of the newsletter, it is already time for me to ask you for help in participating in the coming year's Birdathon! We can use help in pre-event planning, mailings, counting, etc. Please participate as fully as possible in making this important chapter event a continued success.

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon's 1999 Birdathon "Bird Stuff" Results

169 species were seen &/or heard during
Birdathon 1999

*birds seen in Birdathon 1999, but not in 1998's
Birdathon

*Snow Goose at Ascarate Lake
*Ross's Goose at Ascarate Lake
*Greater White-fronted Goose at Ascarate Lake
*Osprey : at Ft. Bliss Ponds & Old Madden Lake
*Merlin: at Ft. Bliss Ponds
Mississippi Kite: along Girl Scout Lane
Ferruginous Hawk: at Hueco Tanks SP
Virginia Rail: at Ft. Bliss Ponds
Baird's Sandpiper at Keystone Marsh
Willet: at McNary Reservoir
*Long-billed Curlew, down river
Semi-palmated Plover: at Ft. Bliss Ponds
*Bonaparte's Gull: around Tornillo Reservoir
Orchard Oriole, down river
*Monk Parakeet
Long-eared Owl: near Mrs. Owens in the bosque
Vermilion Flycatcher, down river
*Purple Martin, down river
Swainson's Thrush
*Brown Thrasher: at Ft. Bliss Ponds
Bell's Vireo, on the road, on the way down river
Summer Tanager at Ft. Bliss Ponds
Black-headed Grosbeak: near Madden Lake
*Lazuli Bunting at Santa Teresa CC
Indigo Bunting at Ft. Bliss Ponds

Some other birds that were seen/& or heard
during Birdathon 1999, but not in Birdathon 1998

Lesser Scaup	Tree Swallow
Bewick's Wren	American Goldfinch
Lazuli Bunting	Marsh Wren
Townsend's Warbler	Dark-eyed Junco
Clay-colored Sparrow	
Black-throated Gray Warbler	

Birds that were not seen during Birdathon 1999

+ = not seen in the 1998 or 1999 Birdathon

^+ seen in Birdathon 1998, not in Birdathon 1999

+Northern Pintail	^Canvasback
^Bufflehead	^Golden Eagle
^Peregrine Falcon	+Sora (rail)
^Least Bittern	+Belted Kingfisher
^Common Poorwill	^Greater Peewee
^Blue-grey Gnatcatcher	Cedar Waxwing
^Nashville Warbler	Painted Bunting
Spotted Towhee	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
^Song Sparrow	^Eastern Meadowlark
^Hooded Oriole	

Contact John Kiseda, Birdathon Coordinator,
at 533-4615 (phone & fax) if you would like a
list of the species seen/& or heard in 1999.

ON THE TRAIL

BEGINNERS BIRD IDENTIFICATION

This fall we are going to give a different spin to a couple of field trips. We will primarily be working with new birders, especially young people, but everyone is welcome. These will be conducted at the Crossroads ponding area and Keystone Marsh. We will spend an hour plus at each location with scopes and binocular, pointing out key identifying features.

Date: Sun. Dec. 5, 1999

Time: 8:00 AM

Place: Crossroads Ponding Area
(Doniphan & Country Club)

Instructor: Bob Johnson (757-1876)

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

It's time for our annual bird count and were hoping for a record year. In North America over 1700 counts will take place between December 7, 1999 and January 3, 2000. As usual we will sponsor 2 of these, Hueco Tanks and El Paso. The compiler for both of these counts is Bob Johnson (757-1876). The count area is defined as a 15 mile diameter circle (about 115,000 acres), we sub-divide this circle and a team is assigned to each sub. They spend the day counting every bird seen or heard. Each team will have at least one experienced birder to help in identification, so do not be bashful and say "I'm not any good at telling one species from another, so I will not go out and help". We need your eyes and/or ears to help find them, someone else will try to figure out what they are. If you cannot be out all day come for a few hours in the morning or afternoon.

Hope your interest has been piqued by this explanation of Christmas Bird Counts. We need people to help us, in the field and at their yard feeders.

The count dates will be:

El Paso

Saturday December 18, 1999

We do not have a common meeting spot for this count, so you will meet your sub-area team leader at a spot that person designates. To be assigned to a team call Bob Johnson (757-1876) you can call as late as Friday evening.

All participants are asked by National Audubon to pay a \$5.00 fee. Your chapter will pay this fee for the El Paso Count. This money goes to defray the expense of publishing the results of the counts. Come to the meetings and see a copy of last years issue "AMERICAN BIRDS". Its quite a document and you will see the need for this fee.

Hueco Tanks

Sunday January 2, 2000

We'll meet at the Flying Saucer Building, US62/180 and FM 2775 at 7:33 AM.

For additional information on the Bird Counts come to the Board meeting at the Environmental Center, 800 South Piedras at 7PM on December 6th or the general meeting at The Garden Center at Memorial Park, 3500 Grant Street on Monday December 13th.

Call BOB "Wildbirder" Johnson, compiler (757-1876) to get your name on one or both lists.

BOSQUE DEL APACHE

AFTER THE COUNT-DOWN
After the counts are completed, we always get together to determine what was seen and enjoy the fellowship of the BIRDWATCHERS. This year we will have our dinner at a local diner, place to be announced later.

Friends of Hueco Tanks

Admission: Hueco Tanks State Historical Park is \$4, \$2 for senior 65 and over, children under 12 free.

Dec. 19 Bird I D Tour 8:15 AM
Jan. 16 Bird I D Tour 8:15 AM

Rock Art Tours

Every Sat & Sun at 10:00am & 2:00pm
RESERVATIONS ARE RECOMMENDED
Telephone 857-1135

NUTHATCHES

A couple short walks in hopes to find the elusive Red-Breasted Nuthatch. I call it elusive because every Winter we get some down from the mountains, but last year none were reported.

Date: Saturday , Jan. 15, 2000
Time: 7:52 AM
Meet: Crossroads Ponding (Doniphan & Mesa /Country Club)
Who: John Kiseda (533-4615)

After checking the pond for ducks, etc., drive to then a short walk along Lombardy. Next drive to and walk around the meadowlark area.

One of the most popular National Wildlife Refuges in the country is where you can see some great birds. How about 20,000 Snow Geese, 15,000 Sandhill Cranes and Bald Eagles. There are also plenty of ducks and some good passerines. We are hoping to tour at 1:00 PM on Sat. into the back area where Wild Turkeys and Porcupines are often found.

This is a good way to start your 2000 bird list, if you have already started it, its a good way to add many species. This trip will take place during the weekend of Jan. 22nd and 23rd. Most birders will be staying at the Motel 6 (1-800-466-8356) in Socorro (about 12 miles North up I-25), or other motels in town. Also Birders RV Park is available just North of the Refuge Boundary.

Meet at I-10 and Transmountain Rd. at 7:38 AM on the 22nd or at the Refuge Visitors Center parking lot at 11:07 AM. On Sunday the return trip will include a stop at Percha/Caballo Dams State Park where other good birds are always present, usually a rare Gull and some Loons. Last year we had a Golden Crowned Kinglet and both Eastern & Western Blubirds. The coordinator for this trip will be Nancy Wilson or call Bob (757-1876).

NORTHEAST EL PASO

One of the best locations to find birds in the northeast part of town is at the Fort Bliss Ponds (check the observations page). Good winter water birds and quite a few raptors, (often a Barn Owl and sometimes a rarity as the Oldsquaq in November). Meet Bob Johnson (757-1876) in the parking lot of the old former Walmart store (Norwest Bank on the corner) 9825 Dyer St. at 7:33 AM on Saturday February 7th.

HOLIDAY TREES AND PLANTS A WAY TO KEEP THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON ALIVE YEAR 'ROUND



If you usually purchase a real Christmas tree during the holiday season, consider getting a live, containerized one that can be planted after the holidays are over. The tree can be planted on your property or you may want to consider donating it to the zoo or some other worthy organization.

If you want to plant your tree and see it grow....
Keep your tree well watered while it is
"above ground"

**Plant your living tree within three weeks
of purchase*

**Dig the hole for the tree twice as wide
and deep as the container*

**The week before you plant the tree, place
it in a protected area where it can
acclimate to "real outdoor type
weather", such as a garage or porch;
this will help prevent shocking it*

**Do not fertilize at planting*

If you are interested in donating your tree to the zoo and would like to find out what types/species of holiday trees or plants the zoo prefers (ie. native species such as piñon or Mondale pines) contact the zoo's horticulturist, Cheryl Garing at 521-1850.

P.S. If you usually purchase a cut, live tree, be sure to recycle it by...

1. using it on your property as a place for wildlife to use
2. taking it to a designated city drop-off point (it will be shredded for garden mulch)
3. shredding it yourself for use in your garden

EL PASO ZOO INFORMATION

Visit the El Paso Zoo website at www.whc.net/epzoo The El Paso Zoological Society is planning a 2nd trip to Kenya in the year 2000! This will be a great opportunity to add many, many birds to your lifelist! See fantastic birds such as secretary birds and marabou storks, & "up close & personal" views of many animals such as zebra, impala, cheetah, crocodiles, monitor lizards & more....OH MY!!!

Destination: Kenya, East Africa
Date: May 27 through June 9, '00
Cost from Miami is \$3,250 (which is even less than last year's extremely well priced trip!)

Local leader: John Kiseda EP Zoo Animal Curator/EP-TP Audubon Conservation Chair. John led the 1999 trip to which included locales such as the Maasai Mara & Lake Nakuru.

On the 1999 safari, the group saw more than 40 species of mammals, including the "Big Five"-elephant, lion, rhino, (both white & black), cape buffalo & leopard. Almost 200 species of birds were also observed & identified (there were also a number of "unknowns")

An informational meeting will take place at the zoo's Paraje building at 6:30 PM on the eve. of Thurs., Jan 13, 2000. Call John Kiseda at 521-1850

Healthy Bird Feeding, Watering & Hanging Out at Your Home

by, John Kiseda

Now that the fall/winter season has arrived (according to the calendar, at least) it seems to be a good time to remind ourselves that we need to put some extra effort into keeping our feathered friends that visit us healthy and whole.

Bird baths and feed stations concentrate numerous birds in a small area, and birds being birds, they have no way to prevent themselves from going to the bathroom wherever they tend to spend time. Don't hold this against them, they can't help it; they just don't have the internal body parts to "hold it in" till they reach a more appropriate place for a "toilette". This means that birds that utilize our feeders and baths tend to come into frequent contact with feces and other items that can be sources of disease.

Other unpleasant and harmful things such as molds, fungus, etc., can arise from the buildup of old, wet, uncollected food items and seed husks at feeders or feed areas. With the potent and deadly spread of avian diseases such as salmonellosis and trichomoniasis in the past few years, it behooves us to do our best in maintaining clean feeding and watering areas. Many southwest doves, orioles and finches have died in the recent past due to the spread of these or similar diseases. Here are some suggestions on how to keep the little guys that are nice enough to visit us healthy.

Water

Bird baths should be scrubbed, cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis. Bleach, if used diluted as directed, is the disinfectant of choice because of its effectiveness, safe use and low cost. For my wife and I, this means at least twice a week in the fall/winter months. Use of a scrubbee pad or a similar scrub/sponge pad really helps in removing those "stubborn patches".

Solid Food

If possible, try to replace seed in your feeder only when its practically empty. This makes it much easier to do a "quick whisk" or similar on a daily basis without having to throw out much good seed.

Seed gravity feeders, platform feeders and similar devices should be regularly cleaned out, but soap/water washed and bleach disinfected irregularly. Start by removing all old seed husks and any food that appears unfit to be eaten. Then, depending on your feeder type, the amount of birds that visit your feeders, the weather, and possibly try to envision yourself eating food out of that device in judging this, clean with soap and water and then disinfect. Be sure to let your feed device dry thoroughly before placing food in it or

you will be creating a nice humid area for horrible things to multiply and wreak havoc. Also, don't forget to regularly clean those areas near and around your feeders where hulls, seeds, bread, fruit, etc. fall and build up (such as the ground underneath your feeder).

Sort of Solid Food

If you feed suet, be sure to regularly check that it hasn't gone rancid, and clean/disinfect the funky device that holds the suet as needed. One way to cut back on your clean-up time and effectiveness with suet holders is to purchase ones that have a plastic coating. These are pretty cheap even with the suet price included and can be easily found. Or you may try the flexible plastic net bags that produce is sometimes packaged in.

Liquid Food

For those of you who still have hummingbird feeders out, be sure to clean (use a bottle brush, a soft scrubbee pad or similar to remove residual sugar build-up) and disinfect them on a regular basis. Every four days should be safe at our current "high" temperatures. Also be sure to rinse the feeders very well before reuse.

Those of us that live near the foothills tend to have hummers "about" year round and most of the recent articles that I have read reinforce my own inclination that it is okay to keep feeders up even in the winter. At home and at the zoo, we keep feeders active for any individuals that have decided for whatever reason not to migrate further south and for any latecomers that may straggle past on the heels of a cold weather front.

Miscellaneous

Also be sure to routinely clean those areas where your birds really like to hang-out, roost and perch, such as a favorite rock wall, branch or bush. These areas will also be a source of concern due to fecal build-up. My wife and I favor the "blast it with the hose" technique.

Happy Holidays from the Big Guy!!

On a personal note, have a wonderful and fun filled holiday season with your friends and families! I heartily thank those of you who have helped me in the past year with the numerous endeavors of our chapter and our committee. I look forward to working with and getting to know even more of you in the coming year! Have a safe, glorious and grand holiday season!

With all that being stated (yeesh!), have an enjoyable, wonderful time feeding and watching your feathered friends in the coming months!

EP AUDUBON WEB SITE

Check it out at:

<http://www.whc.net/cdwr/tpashome.htm>

There is information for our chapter about upcoming events, Feather Lake, local birding, and links to other web sites of ornithological interest in Texas and New Mexico. There are other possible improvements; e-mail us your ideas through the web site.

Dates to Remember

See page 6 & 7 for details

December

Sun. Dec 5 - Beginner ID Tour
Mon. Dec 6 - Board Meeting
Mon. Dec 13 - General Meeting
Sat. Dec 18 - X-mas Bird Count
Sun. Dec 19 - Hueco Tanks ID

January

Sun. Jan 2 - X-mas Bird Count
Mon. Jan. 10 - Board Meeting
Sat. Jan. 15 - Nuthatch Trip
Mon. Jan 17 - General Meeting
Jan 22 & 23 - Bosque del Apache

February

Sat. Feb. 7 - Northeast El Paso

Friends of Hueco Tanks (see p.7)

Rock Art Tours

Every Sat & Sun 10:00am & 2:00am

Birding Activities at Hueco Tanks

Bird Identification Tours & Slide Show Presentations

National Audubon Society

Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to join.

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

My check for \$20 is enclosed.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Please make all checks payable to the National Audubon Society

National Audubon Society

Chapter Membership Data Center

P.O. Box 51001

Boulder, Colorado 80322-1001

EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

W10

Local Chapter Code

7XCHA

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