

The Roadrunner

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

Volume 28 No. 16 August & September 2000



General Meeting

A double feature

**K A P P A - What's new !
and "Your Favorite Pictures"**

Monday, September 18, 2000

Memorial Park Garden Center

3105 Grant Street 7:30 PM

Bernie Sargent will give us a short update on the latest happenings with K A P P A (Keystone Archaeological Protective and Preservation Association), and how the fund raising is going. We will also be presenting them with a check. This is money that was raised by our recent BIRDATHON.

Part II

Now about your favorite pictures. **Please everyone** bring from 5 - 8 pictures to the meeting. Those that you have taken this year, these may be slides or photos. Maybe you took them on vacation or a weekend jaunt, even to a local spot, could be you were just out for the afternoon.

These can be scenic shots of the Franklins or the Andes. If your favorites are not scenic, they could be of animals, a wild tiger or your pet dog or birds, your Parakeet or the Black-throated Magpie Jay or the House sparrow at your feeder, you can make them a combination of anything.

For the photos we will have a cloth covered board set up to pin them on, and we will show the slides on the big screen. The good part is that you will not be required to stand up in the front and describe them, if that is your pleasure.

GREAT TEXAS COASTAL BIRDING TRAIL

The great Texas Coastal Birding Trail has been completed! The \$1.4 million dollar wildlife driving trail is 600 miles long and highlights over 300 individual birding sights along 600 miles of the Gulf Coast.

The Trail starts with number 01, Tony Houseman SP and WMA, just west of the Louisiana State line on I-10, swings up through the Big Thicket, then down to the coast to 024 Sabine Pass Battleground SHP. These numbers are in the upper Texas coast map.

It continues down the coast through the central map to the lower map 42, Sable Palms Audubon Center and Sanctuary. It then goes up the Rio Grande to 88, TxDOT Zapata County Rest Stop, just south of Larado.

To receive any of the three maps contact Texas Dept. of Transportation or visit the Tourist Information Center in Anthony. You may also contact Texas Parks and Wildlife, 1-800-792-1112

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From the Presidents Aerie

Another very rare bird has shown in the area. A *Swallow-tailed Kite* (last one was recorded in 1951) has been observed by quite a few bird watchers in the Country Club area. It was first reported by Betty Fisbeck flying over her house on Sunset, this was on July 30th and was last reported on Aug 10th. Call for further details.

More and more people are getting on the internet, if you are try our web page its address is:
<http://www.whc.net/cdwr/tpashome.htm>
From it there are many links to interesting birding data, one is the Rare Bird Alert, which has a link to each state.

Coming up in October, our annual picnic at Feather Lake, which will be held in the evening on Oct. 14, details in the Oct/Nov issue of the Roadrunner.

Also in October the Annual Interpretive Fair at Hueco Tanks, this will be on the weekend of October 21/22. The many activities include Indian Drummers and Dancers, Buffalo Soldiers, Cowboy Poets and Singers, Rides, Demonstrations and Special Tours, food for sale and much more.

Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson; Pres.

COOPERATION

Potential conflicts between environmentalists and landowners do not always have to end up in court. An example of how cooperation can work in some cases comes from Texas, thanks to a note reprinted in *Audubon News*, the newsletter of the San Antonio Audubon Society (3006 Belvoir, San Antonio, Texas 78230-4410). Near Killeen more than 30 landowners, mostly ranchers, have been recruited to help control cowbirds in areas where two endangered species, Black-capped Vireo and Golden-cheeked Warbler, nest. The landowners put out and monitor Brown-headed Cowbird traps under a program coordinated by Texas Parks and Wildlife and sanctioned by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The idea was originally proposed by the Cattleman's Association and has been cheered both by property rights advocates and environmentalists, groups that often find themselves on opposite sides. The program has also become a tool for teachers: Students from 10 schools in five counties have been making the traps. Both Black-capped Vireos and Golden-cheeked Warblers have declined, in part because of habitat loss, but also because of cowbird parasitism, which has grown in the area. Long term preservation plans for the two species include cowbird removal, just as the efforts for Kirtland's Warbler.



Texas Parks & Wildlife's Master Naturalist Program

The Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept. (TP&W) and the Texas Agricultural Extension Service have developed the Texas Master Naturalist Program, in order to develop a learned, experienced, statewide group of individuals that are interested in helping the people that live in their communities learn about and appreciate Texas's natural resources. As a Master Naturalist, you will be able to increase your knowledge and appreciation of nature, while helping your community.

Master Naturalist's will enhance their current love of nature and knowledge, by receiving in-depth training in wildlife and natural resource management focused on the ecosystem you call home. Advanced training in special subject areas, will also be available.

In return for your training, you will be expected to provide volunteer service to your community by conducting demonstrations, making presentations, acting as a guide at a local nature center, building nature trails, etc.

If you are interested in becoming a Master Naturalist, contact EL Paso's TP&W Urban Biologist, Lois Balin @ 834-7070 for more information.

Desert Winds

by, John Kiseda

Texas Parks & Wildlife's Hummingbird Roundup

The Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept. (TP&W) has had this program ongoing since the early 1990's. Participants survey the hummer activity at their homes and report these activities to TP&W. The Trans-Pecos region (our region) is currently of special interest to TP&W.

Participants donate \$6 to offset the cost of the project printing & postage costs, and in return, receive survey forms, Texas hummer info, feeder care info, a packet of favored hummingbird plant seeds and the annual TX hummer newsletter.

For more information, call 1-800-792-1112 [ext. 4644] or contact El Paso's TP&W Urban Biologist, Lois Balin @ 834-7070 for more information.

A Texas Wildscape at the El Paso Zoo!

In conjunction with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept. (TP&W), the El Paso Zoo has modified its existing hummingbird/butterfly garden into a designated Texas Wildscape Garden! The garden was designed following guidelines laid out in the Texas Wildscapes Program of TP&W. Wildscape gardens must provide year-round food, water and cover for wildlife. The gardens must also have a variety of plant species and types, and must be planted with at least 50% native plant species that can survive in natural conditions [except in severe drought].

Be sure to visit the zoo's Wildscape Garden if you want to get some gardening ideas for your garden!

If you are interested in turning your garden into an official Texas Wildscape, contact EL Paso's TP&W Urban Biologist, Lois Balin @ 834-7070 for more information.

El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

Board of Directors

President	Elizabeth Chase	591-5119
V-President	Weldon Fisbeck	581-0174
President Elect	Betty Fisbeck	581-0174
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Programs	Nancy Wilson	877-4600
Publications	Kathleen Whelen	751-2408
Publicity	Roxanne Schroeder	534-7019
Sanctuary	John Sproul	545-5157

About the Roadrunner:

Roadrunner is your newsletter. We welcome your contributions. Contact Bob Johnson 757-1876 or Kathy Whelen 751-2408 email: whelenk@aol.com

Birdathon 2000 - An Update!

Approximately \$7700 has been raised (due to Great Work by our sponsors and counters)! The total number of species observed during the "official" count days is now at 173 species (all but ~ a dozen of these species were seen in the El Paso "region"). As usual, our Birdathon potluck dinner & wrap-up event was chock full of good food, conversation & bird stories!

The winners of our Birdathon sponsor prizes were as follows:

--Rick Ponsford (a very enthusiastic Birdathon sponsor for a number of years & a great family dentist, by the way) won a pair of Pentax 8 x 42 binoculars!

--Mr & Mrs Allan Mills won a very nice looking set of coffee/soup mugs and a Grizzly Bear T-shirt!

--Eleanor Sullivan won the wonderful "Vanishing Songbirds" book and a Lenspen!
--H.R. Moyer won a glass and pitcher set that had a nice tropical bird motif.

--The youngest Birdathon counter also won a special prize at the event; 4 yr old Joshua Ditlevson won a very ornate birdhouse, for his efforts!

FEATHER LAKE NOTES

by, John Sproul

At Feather Lake

In 1999-2000, we had a record 24 volunteers who staffed Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary during our visitor season. We'd like to do even better in 2000-2001.

Opening Day this year at Feather Lake will be Sunday, October 1. How about volunteering to staff the sanctuary on one or more dates during our October-through-April visitor season? It is easy, enjoyable work in a beautiful setting. If you can help, please contact Charles Simpson at 598-2274.

As a bonus, if you do volunteer you'll earn a special patch we have created exclusively for people who help at Feather Lake. It features a Snowy Egret, found at the lake year-round. As last season's volunteers can attest, it looks great!

There are also other ways to earn the Feather Lake patch. You can help lead educational tours of the sanctuary for school classes, scout groups and others. If you're interested, please contact Mary Lou Alcorn at 584-8768. Or you can take part in one of our regularly scheduled workdays. The next one, to get ready for Opening Day, will be Saturday, September 23. The gates open at 8 AM.

Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop, 0.3 miles west of Américas Ave. From October through April, it is open 8 AM to Noon on Saturdays and 2 PM to sunset on Sundays. It is closed from May through September.

Workday at Feather Lake
Saturday, September 23, 2000
8:00am

RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK TOURS

UTEP's Center for Environmental Resource Management offers free walking tours twice each month and also holds monthly community workdays at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park in El Paso's Mission Valley.

Coming up:

- * 8 a.m. Sat., Aug. 5 (Introduction to Rio Bosque)
- * 8 a.m. Sat., Aug. 19 (Workday)
- * 7 a.m. Sat., Aug. 26 (Rio Bosque Birds)
- * 8 a.m. Sat., Sept. 9 (Introduction)
- * 8 a.m. Sat., Sept. 16 (Workday)
- * 8 a.m. Sun., Sept. 24 (Birds)

For all of these activities, the meeting place is a bridge crossing Riverside Canal. To get there from I-10, take Américas Ave. (Loop 375) to Pan American Dr., turn left onto Pan American and travel 1.5 miles to the bridge. Please be prompt.

Information: (915) 747-8663.



Support Local Wildlife Conservation Organizations

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

KEYSTONE MARSH

Contact: Carol Miller at 584-7088

Visit the KAPPA website at:

www.keystonepark.org

**note: Keystone web address correction

ON THE TRAIL

KEYSTONE MARSH

This trip will give you a chance to see the Wetland and gain an understanding of What KAPPA is trying to do at this location. We have a number of nesting ducks and some shore birds nesting here and at this time of year quite a few others are migrating through. The nesters include *Ruddy Ducks, Mexican Mallard, American Coot, Killdeer and Black-necked Stilts*. Migrants that should be seen are *American Avocets, Least and Western Sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitchers, Spotted Sandpipers and Cinnamon Teal*. Usually some *Snowy Egrets* are also present. A *Long billed Curlew* was seen recently. This would be a great trip for beginners and younger birders

The Date: **Sun. August 27, 2000**
The Time: **7:30 AM**
Meet at: Doniphan Drive opposite
Frontera Rd.
Leader: *Bob Johnson (757-1876)*

CROSSROADS / SOD FARM

Migrating passerines are starting to come through, so we should catch some warblers and who knows what else. The tour includes stops along Lombardy and Meadowlark. Maybe *Plumbeous and Warbling Vireo, Orange-crowned, Townsend's, and Black-throated Gray Warblers, Black-headed Grosbeak, Tree and Bank Swallows, Northern Harrier, Prairie Falcon* are good possibilities and even a *Peregrine Falcon* could show up.

The date: **Saturday, Sep 9, 2000**
The time: **7:30 AM**
Meet at: Crossroads ponding area.
Doniphan and Mesa.
Leader: *Bob Johnson (757-1876)*

DOWN THE VALLEY

McNary, Fort Hancock and Tornillo Reservoirs are usually good for *Clark's and Western Grebes, Gulls, Ducks, Egrets, Cormorants*, also *White Pelicans* could be present. We might catch a few passerines and most likely some birds of prey, probably a *Harris' Hawk* and sometimes a *Peregrine Falcon* has been around. Bring something to eat as we will lunch at the Tornillo Rest area.

Date: **Saturday Sep 30, 2000**
Time: **7:30 AM**
Meet at: Feather Lake
Leader: *Bob Johnson (757-1876)*

HAWK ALLEY AND THE PONDS

Good birds have been showing up at the ponds and along HAWK ALLEY, I saw a couple dozen *Swainson Hawks* recently also a *Prairie Falcon* and 2 adult *Golden Eagles*. Last week at the ponds I had 14 species of wading birds including a *Marbled Godwit*, also a couple *Black Terns*.

Date: **Sunday, October 8, 2000**
Time: **7:30 AM**
Meet at: Walmart, 4530 Woodrow
Bean/TransMt. Rd.
North end of parking lot.
Leader: *Bob Johnson (757-1876)*

FRIENDS OF HUECO TANKS

Admission: Hueco Tanks State Historical Park - \$4.
\$2 for Seniors 65 and older. Children under 12 FREE

Bird Identification Tours
Sunday August 20 7 AM
Sunday September 17 7 AM
Sunday October 15 8 AM

OBSERVATIONS

May 16, 2000 to July 15, 2000

Uncommon, Rare, and *Very Rare* 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 the date and/or location will be **bold** and **underlined**. The listing of birds is determined using the checklist "Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas" 7th Edition, October 1987. Leave sightings at (757-1876) Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson, E-mail BobWildbirderJ@cs.com.

Observers: Sallie Homan; Bob Johnson; John Kiseda
Kathy Kiseda; Jim Paton; Ross Rasmusson; Patricia
Russell; Marcy Scott/Jim Zabriskie. Var-Variou; Mob
-Many observers; -yd at the yard feeder; (L) Late.

Locations: Bos-Bos dairy; BSc-Boy Scout; Can-
Canutillo; FBP-Fort Bliss Ponds; FHc-Fort Hancock;
HTk-Hueco Tanks; Ken-Kenyon Joyce; Lov-Love
Road; McN-McNary; McC-McCombs; STA-Santa
Teresa Area; Tor-Tornillo.

GREBES thru DUCKS

Clark's Grebe (Breeding)	Var	JP	McN
<i>Little Blue Heron</i>	<u>5/20</u>	<u>JP</u>	<u>McN</u>
	<u>5/21</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>FBP</u>
<i>Tri-colored Heron</i>	<u>6/7</u>	<u>JP</u>	<u>McN</u>
Blk-crwn Night Heron	7/16	PR	STA
American Wigeon (L)	6/7	JP	McN
	<u>7/14</u>	JP	FHc
Blue-winged Teal	6/2	JP	FHc
Northern Pintail	6/11	RR	McN
Green-winged Teal (L)	<u>6/11</u>	RR	McN
Lesser Scaup	6/2	JP	Tor

Spotted Sandpiper	5/26	JP	FBP
Long-billed Curlew	<u>5/26</u>	JP	FBP
	7/9	RR	FBP
Marbled Godwit	7/14	JP	FHc
Western Sandpiper	5/21	RR	FBP
	6/14	JP	McN
Semipalmated Sandpiper	7/14	JP	FHc
<i>White-rumped Sandpiper</i>	<u>5/21</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>FBP</u>
Baird's Sandpiper	5/26	JP	FBP
	6/7	JP	McN
<i>Sanderling</i>	<u>5/30</u>	<u>JP</u>	<u>FHc</u>
Stilt Sandpiper	7/14	JP	McN
Wilson's Phalarope (L)	<u>5/21</u>	JP	FBP
	6/12	BJ	FBP
	6/25	RR	FBP

BIRDS of PREY

Northern Harrier (L)	5/21	JP	FBP
Swainson's Hawk (25 Juveniles all sitting on ground in a 200 acre field)	6/16	BJ	McC

SHOREBIRDS

Snowy Plover	5/26	JP	FBP
(L)	<u>6/7</u>	JP	McN
Greater Yellowlegs	7/14	JP	FHc
Lesser Yellowlegs	7/9	RR	FBP
	7/14	JP	Bos
Solitary Sandpiper	<u>6/25</u>	RR	FBP
Willet	7/3	JK	FBP
	7/14	JP	FHc

GULLS and TERNS

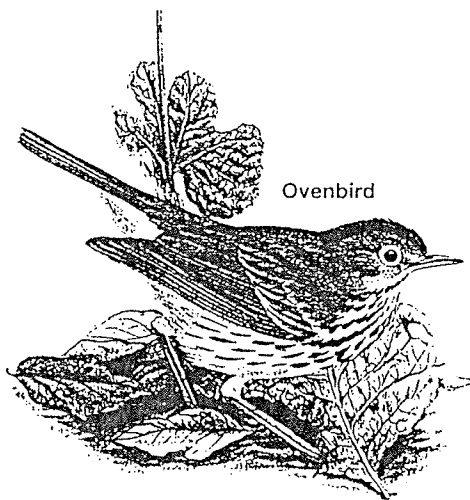
Ring-billed Gull	6/7	JP	Tor
<i>Caspian Tern</i>	<u>7/14</u>	<u>JP</u>	<u>FHc</u>
Foster's Tern	6/2	JP	McN
	6/25	RR	FHc
	7/14	JP	Tor
Least Tern	6/7	JP	McN
Black Tern (32)	5/30	JP	McN

HUMMINGBIRD to GNATCATCHER

Rufus Hummingbird	7/5	KK-yd	Ken
Olive-sided Flycatcher	5/21	JP	FBP
Western Wood Pewee	5/21	JP	FBP
	6/4	JP	FHc
Plumbeous Vireo	5/21	BJ	HTk
Warbling Vireo	5/21	BJ	HTk
	5/21	RR	FBP
Bank Swallow	7/14	JP	Tor
Blk-tailed Gnatcatcher	6/25	RR	FBP

WARBLERS

Yellow Warbler	5/21	JP	FBP
Yellow-rmpd Warbler	5/21	RR	FBP
<i>Prothonotary Warbler</i>	6/6	SH-yd	Lov
<i>Ovenbird</i>	5/17	SH-yd	Lov



TANAGERS to GOLDFINCH

Summer Tanager	5/21	BJ	HTk
Hepatic Tanager	5/18	JP-yd	BSc
White-crwnd Sparrow	5/21	JP	FBP
	6/4	BJ	FBP
Northern Cardinal	7/12	MS/JZ	Can
Rose-breasted Grosbeak(F)	5/21	BJ	HTk
Blk-headed Grosbeak	7/16	PR	STA
Lazuli Bunting (F)	5/21	BJ	HTk
Yellow-head Blackbird	5/30	JP	McN
Bronzed Cowbird	5/19	JP-yd	BSc
	7/15	PR-yd	STA
Orchard Oriole	7/14	JP	Tor
Lesser Goldfinch	6/22	PR-yd	STA

SOUTHEAST ARIZONA

What a Memorial Day Weekend it was!

This year's trip to SE Arizona was once again full of great birds and fun! Over thirty people went on the trip that mostly revolved around the Sierra Vista area.

More than 130 species of birds were seen, including many of the typical SE Arizona birds such as Strickland's Woodpecker, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Abert's Towhee, Gila Woodpecker, Mexican Jay, Bridled Titmouse, Band-tailed Pigeon, Common-ground Dove, Pygmy Nuthatch, and Grace's & Olive Warblers.

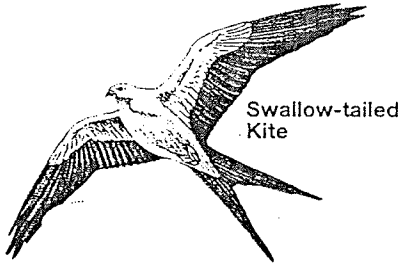
Some of the highlights of the trip were:
Sierra Vista area - Ramsey Canyon; male and female Berylline Hummingbirds (with the female incubating eggs, right in front of the visitors center), Painted Redstarts, Magnificent Hummingbirds and a Plumbeous Vireo sitting on a nest at eye level and within 10 feet.
Garden Canyon; Great views of male and female Elegant Trogons checking out nest holes in the upper picnic grounds, Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers a Bewick's Wren going in and out of her nest hole and the clown of woodpeckers - the Acorn.
Patagonia; Adult and juvenile Gray hawks, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Cordilleran Vermillion and Dusky-capped Flycatchers, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Summer Tanager.
Kino Springs; Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, Tropical Kingbird, and a Gray Hawk at a nest.

John and Kathy Kiseda continued on after the main trip and had some more great sightings. Arivaca Cienega - Fledgling Great Horned Owls, Montezuma Quail, and Thick-billed Kingbird. Buenos Aires NWR - Pronghorn Antelope, many Bullock's Orioles, and Bronzed Cowbirds. Arivaca Lake - "weasel" type mammal (seen at a great distance through a spotting scope). Casa Bella B&B - Young Roadrunner with parent.

CALENDAR

Aug 2000

- Mon. 14 - Board Meeting - El Paso Zoo, 7PM
- Sun. 20 - Bird ID Tour- Hueco Tanks.
- Sun. 27 - Field Trip - Keystone Marsh



Sep 2000

- Sat. 9 - Field Trip - Crossroads
- Mon. 11 - Board Meeting - ??
- Sun. 17 - Bird ID Tour - Hueco Tanks SHP
- Mon. 18 - General Meeting - Garden Center- 7:30 PM
- Sat. 23 - Help us at Feather Lake Sat.
- Sat. 30 - Field Trip - McNary

CHAPTER WEB SITE

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

Do you want to send a message to Bob.
E-mail bobwildbirderj@cs.com

Oct 2000

- Sun. 8 - Fort Bliss Ponds & Hawk Alley -
- Mon. 9 - Board Meeting - ??

HUECO TANKS STATE HISTORICAL PARK

Rock Art Tours: Every Sat. & Sun. at 9 AM & 11 AM.

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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