

the ROADRUNNER



newsletter of the
El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon So-
ciety, El Paso, TX 79986

Editor: Sarah Dodds

January 1982

Volume 12, Number 6

GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY 18 JANUARY 1982, 7:30 PM, Garden Center, 3105 Grant St. in Memorial Park. Rod Drewien's name is synonymous with Whooping Crane management, for he's the man in charge of the effort to establish a second wild flock of this endangered species. In that effort, eggs from Whooping Crane nests in Canada are placed in Sandhill Crane nests in Idaho. The Whoopers from those eggs then migrate with their Sandhill Crane foster parents to Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico.

In 1976, Dr. Drewien visited El Paso and briefed us on the early stages of the experiment. Our January general meeting will bring us up to date. It will include the fast-paced and impressive film, FOLLOW MY LEADER, a 1980 documentary on the Whooping Crane recovery effort. Though Dr. Drewien figures prominently in the film, you won't see him just on celluloid. As our featured speaker, he will introduce FOLLOW MY LEADER, tell us the latest on the Whooping Crane and answer our questions. What a treat we have in store for us!

Also at this meeting we will elect chapter officers for 1982. #

FIELD TRIPS

SATURDAY-SUNDAY 16-17 JANUARY at BOSQUE DEL APACHE NWR. Meet at 9 AM at I-10 and Transmountain Rd.

(continued next column)

Field Trips (continued)

Join us for our annual migration to see the Whoopers. In addition to the Whoopers, over 10,000 Sandhill Cranes, over 20,000 Snow Geese and ducks of 17 species make the Bosque their winter home. Campers can stay on BLM land near the Bosque or at the KOA in Socorro. Non-campers have several Socorro motels to choose from: Best Western Golden Manor (delicious huevos rancheros served last year) Ph. 800/528-1234, El Camino, Ph. 505/835-1500, El Rio, Ph. 505/835-0510, San Miguel, Ph. 505/835-0211. Leader: Joe Guinn (566-8438). Please call Joe in advance if you plan to attend.

SATURDAY 30 JANUARY, FT. BLISS PONDS. Meet at 7:30 AM at Furrow Building Materials (Fred Wilson at Railroad). WE'll look for wintering waterfowl, raptors and sparrows at one of El Paso's most productive wildlife habitats. Leader: Jane Fowler (772-0296). #

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MONDAY 11 JANUARY, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet at the home of Helen Barto, 3312 Moonlight, El Paso (755-4744). All members are welcome. #

ROGER TORY PETERSON ON TV!

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus and this is his gift to us. Watch the Nova program on 24 January at 8 PM, KCOS-Ch. 13. #

CONSERVATION - 1981 TALLY

TEXAS WATER FUND --- The message was clear. By a 58%-42% margin, Texas voters said "NO" to House Speaker Billy Clayton's proposal for a special water trust fund for the state. Thirsty El Paso was definitely in the minority as it supported Proposition 4, 64%-36%. The driving force in the defeat of Proposition 4 was Citizens Against Water Taxes (CAWT). Though outspent 30 to 1 by water-development interests, CAWT parlayed hard work and political savvy into a major economic and environmental victory. They deserve thanks -- and so do all of you who spread the word about this clever ploy to get control of water projects at the state level, rather than have it remain at the local level.

The hard working CAWT group who brought about this victory need help in clearing their \$7,000 campaign debt. If you can assist, do send your contributions to: CAWT, P.O. Box 1931, Austin, 78767.

SNAKE RIVER BIRDS OF PREY

No action on this front. The hearings on legislation to create a permanent Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (BPNCA) have yet to materialize. Nobody has challenged Cecil Andrus' order that designated a 482,640-acre BPNCA and withdrew it from agricultural development for 20 years. A barrage of constituents' mail convinced Idaho's congressional delegation that total opposition to the BPNCA would be politically unwise. National Audubon continues to watch the situation closely. The Bureau of Land Management has a new state director in Idaho. The previous director was a solid supporter of BPNCA; the new director is an unknown quantity.

(Cough! Cough!) ASARCO
The Texas Air Control Board (TACB)
(continued next column)

ASARCO (continued)

decided 20 November that, yes, ASARCO will need a permit to convert one of the furnaces at its EL Paso smelter to burn coal and, yes, further public hearings will be necessary. No date is set for these hearings for a related matter is being addressed first. (Take a deep breath, exhale slowly and know that if you read the next paragraph Santa Claus may bring you another surprise. Ready?)

Specifically, the TACB is considering what should be the permanent ground-level sulfur-dioxide standard for ASARCO. The current statewide standard, which ASARCO doesn't meet, is 0.4 parts per million (ppm) for 30 minutes. However, ASARCO has a temporary variance from that standard and has been operating since 1975 under an interim standard of 0.5 ppm for 1 hour. The TACB staff has recommended making that interim standard for ASARCO permanent. A public hearing on this issue is scheduled for 27 January at 6:30 PM in El Paso's City Council Chambers.

MONO LAKE

The level of Mono Lake (Audubon Magazine, September 1980) fell 18 inches in 1981 to its lowest historical elevation--6372 feet. Its salinity increased another 2%. More islets that California Gulls use for nesting became connected to the mainland and accessible to predators. For reasons not yet clear, the spring hatch of brine shrimp was miniscule; without this food source, over 25,000 gull chicks died--almost a total nesting failure. Los Angeles still resists any reduction in its use of Mono's water.

(CONSERVATION TALLY is continued on the next page)

CONSERVATION TALLY (cont.)

RIO BOSQUE PARK

Audubon's hopes for seeing El Paso's Rio Bosque Park maintained as wildlife habitat got a big boost last fall with the announcement of plans for a proposed Omar N. Bradley Memorial Park. The Bradley Park, as conceived by a citizens' group under the aegis of the Chamizal Institute Foundation, is to be part of the Chamizal National Memorial, administered by the National Park Service. It would be developed in phases. Phase 1 calls for creation of a linear park along the Rio Grande from the Chamizal Memorial to Rio Bosque. Phase 2 would be inclusion of Rio Bosque in the Bradley Park, with Rio Bosque remaining a natural area. At its 9 November meeting, the EP/TPAS Board of Directors endorsed this proposal.

EL PASO RECYCLING

Did you know that the El Paso Sanitation Department is responsible for keeping the city alleys clean? Did you know that for a \$5 fee you can call for a brush and clippings pick-up that costs the department \$15? Those are just two reasons that the pick-up of newspapers and cans has been changed to the second collection day of the week. Metal racks are being affixed to the garbage trucks for newspaper collection, metal cans go in separate bins on the trucks. Recyclables are to be placed adjacent to garbage cans, making pick-up that much more efficient. Enough money was earned last year from the sale of newspaper and metal cans to purchase a new garbage truck. Let's keep up our recycling program! #

WELCOME HOME, BOB!

After a lengthy hospital stay, our past president, Bob Bleicher, is home recuperating from back surgery. We know he's feeling better because he's already submitting bird sightings. We miss you!

WELCOME HOME, BOB! (cont.)

ting bird sightings. Stay healthy, Bob, and don't lift anything heavier than your binoculars for a while. We've really missed you! #

FEATHER LAKE GETS A HAND

The Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC) work at Feather Lake is showing results. Under the watchful eyes of Joe Guinn and Sid Shepperd, the YACC crew has fenced previously unfenced sanctuary boundaries, dug one of the major irrigation ditches, prepared a nature trail, poured concrete pads for a picnic pavilion and a bulletin board, finished a parking area and have done some planting.

With winter bird populations at the lake now peaking, our visitor program is doing well, too. A willing group of volunteers has kept the sanctuary open to the public every Saturday, 8 to 11 AM. Thank you, Ginny and Tom Baker, Berttye Barnhart, Helen Barto, Bob Bleicher, Jeannette Cole, Jean and John Cole, Joyce Davis, Sarah Jane Dodds, Jane Fowler, Bob Johnson (who made attractive and portable sign to set up by the road), Jo Nagel, Lucile Swick and Jo Ellen Warolin, for offering to help visitors at the lake.

Ginny Baker and Jeannette Cole deserve special thanks for coordinating the whole undertaking. They are, of course, always looking for new volunteers. If you want a good excuse to spend a morning at Feather Lake call 562-9461 (Ginny) or 565-1957 (Jeannette). #

THE GEOCOCCYX CALIFORNIANUS

If you're a member, you get it. If you're not a member and want it, send \$3 for a year's subscription to Roadrunner Editor, P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, 79986. Make checks payable to El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society. #

1982 CHAPTER ELECTIONS

The filing deadline is fast approaching. John Sproul will remain as chapter president in 1982, but all other officers change. If you want to suggest candidates (do not forget yourself!) for vice-president, president-elect or secretary-treasurer, contact the EP/TPAS nominationg committeee: Bob Johnson (751-0125), Berttye Barnhart (592-3651) or David Weinstein (584-7985). We will elect the new officers at the 18 January meeting.

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EL PASOAN AT AUDUBON INSTITUTE

El Paso's Gloria Basden is getting a unique look at wild America. Since September, the EP/TPAS member has been part of the Audubon Expedition Institute, an accredited educational program that stresses learning about our natural environment by direct contact with it. The group travels the length and breadth of this nation to experience first-hand the American environment. "Classes" started in Maine and have been shifting south and west as winter approached. The group expects to pass through west Texas-southern New Mexico in late January. Gloria reports that she is making the most of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and she sends her greetings to all. #

BOSQUE DEL APACHE TOURS

If you can't visit the Bosque with EP/TPAS on 16-17 January, consider a trip another weekend. The folks at the refuge are offering four special tours this winter. Enjoy:

- Rapturous Raptors Sat. 9 Jan.
- Banding with a Biologist Sun. 24 Jan.
- Search for a Predator Sun. 31 Jan.
- Search for a Predator Sun. 7 Feb.

To attend, you must make advance reservations with the refuge office (505/835-1828). #

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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WILDERNESS PARK COALITION

The dramatic achievement of a Franklin Mts. State Park is behind us. Ahead is the hard and unglamorous work of protecting the park's integrity. The Wilderness Park Coalition is equal to the task but needs your support. Membership renewals are due now. If you are not presently a member, please consider joining. The dues levels are: Student/\$3, Regular/\$5, Family/\$10, Contributing/\$25, Sustaining/\$100. Make checks payable to Wilderness Park Coalition and mail them to: Joe Guinn, Treasurer, WPC, 5000 Alabama #31, El Paso, 79930. #



Unseasonably warm weather continued in the El Paso area rather late into December possibly accounting for some late reporting dates for some species. It is also interesting to note the reports of large flocks or numbers of some species.

PELICANS THROUGH FALCONS:

On 11/21 a Double-crested Cormorant was seen at Tornillo Lakes (AG,mob). Flocks of Cattle Egret have been reported with 14 seen at Surratt's Pond and 21 counted in a field nearby on 11/27 (JD KZ), while 17 were observed circling Feather Lake and finally coming in for a landing on 12/16 (JS,FJ,BR). A Great Egret was in the Lower valley area on 11/21 (AG,mob). On 11/27, six Snow Geese were seen at the Sunalnd' Park Race Track (JD,KZ), and a surprising Ross' Goose was observed at Tornillo Lakes on 12/8 (BZ,fide JD). The most exciting observation in the El Paso area for this period has to be the male EUROPEAN WIGEON first observed at Feather Lake on 11/27 (JD,KZ) and seen there later on at least two other occasions 12/1 (JS, JF,BR). On 12/8 a male EUROPEAN WIGEON was observed at Surratt's Pond in the Upper valley (BZ,fide JD) and was seen again at the same pond on 12/13 (JD,BZ). Also exciting was the male WOOD DUCK seen at Feather Lake on 12/5 (JG, SS fide JS) and observed there again on 12/13 (AA,DE,fide JS). A hawk fitting the description of a Rough-legged was at the Santa Teresa Country Club on 12/12 (JD). Ferruginous Hawks have been seen on numerous occasions in all parts of the El Paso area with four being observed on 12/5 (JD) and several on 12/13 (JD,BZ). Golden Eagles have been sighted on three occasions with one near Clint on 11/21 (AG,mob), one at Santa Teresa Country Club on 11/26 (JD), and one on 12/8 between Fabens and Tornillo (BZ,fide JD).

A Prarie Falcon was observed casually soaring over an urban area in east El Paso on 11/17 (BR), one was seen in the Upper valley near McNutt Road on 11/27 (JD,EK), and single ones in the Santa Teresa area on 12/6 and 12/12 (JD).

RAILS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS:

A Sora Rail was present at the Little Sewage Ponds near Sunland Park Racetrack on 12/19 (JDIP). Greater Yellowlegs have appeared in numbers with 13 observed on 12/12 on the river south of the Country Club bridge in the upper valley (JD), a surprising 54 at Tornillo Lakes on 12/13 (JD,BZ). and 5 present at the drainage basin corner of Country Club and Doniphan on 12/19 (EK). A Herring Gull was observed on 11/21 at Tornillo Lakes and 11 Bonaparte's Gulls were studied in the same area that same day (AG,mob). A Barn Owl was observed in the Santa Teres area on 12/5 (TD fide JD). On 12/3, four Long-eared Owls were at the Old Refuge near Las Cruces (KZ,BZ,fide JD) and a single one was seen in the same area on 12/5 (JD) On 12/15, another two Long-eared Owls appeared and were observed in a northeast El Paso yard. (BJ.JD.fide JS). The small owl photographed at the Wilderness Park Museum on 11/9 and reported in the previous newsletter, was positively identified as a SAW-WHET on 12/3 (JD). This is possibly the first documented record for this species in the EL Paso area. For the third year in a row, a male Anna's Hummingbird has appeared at a Thunderburd Heights feeder arriving this year on 11/21 (FB. fide JS).

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PASSERINES:

Several very late Barn Swallows were seen in the lower valley on 11/21 (AG,mob) On 12/13, a surprising 300 Common Crows were observed and counted at Tornillo and another 400 between Tornillo and Fabens (JD,BZ). A Red-breasted Nuthatch was present in Memorial Park on 12/19 (AA,DE,HB.DS). On 12/12, two apparently wintering House Wrens were seen at Randel's Pool (JD), and a Brown Thrasher was reported on 12/6 as having been present in a northeast El Paso yard (JB). A rare treat was the estimated 300-400 American Robins observed near the river in the upper valley on 12/12 (JD). Flocks of Western Bluebirds have been reported with 50 seen at the Old Refuge on 12/3 (KZ,BZ,fide JD), and a flock noted in the same area on 12/5 (JD). An estimated 20 were in northeast El Paso on 12/7 (JD), 10 south of the Good Times Store in the Upper valley on 12/12 (JD), and near the same area on 12/13 (BZ). A gnatcatcher species was northwest of Randel's Pool on 11/27 (JD,EK) and one was heard on 12/12 south of Diez Lagos (JD). A single Golden-crowned Kinglet was observed at the Old Refuge on 12/3 (KZ,fide JD). On 11/18 a flock of approximately 75 Cedar Waxwings appeared rather early in northeast El Paso (JD). A very late Orange-crowned Warbler was observed at the Old Refuge on 12/13 (KZ,BZ, fide JD), and a female Hooded oriole tarried late at a northeast El Paso yard on 12/19 (JB). On 12/3, two American Goldfinches were seen at the Old Refuge area (KZ, BZ, fide JD), seven were seen at Tobin Wells Vicinity at Fort Bliss on 12/19 (EG,AW,DW,LS), and on that same day one was observed at Randel's Pool (JDip,EK) Five Red Crossbills were present to be counted in Memorial Park on 12/19 (AA.DE.HB.DS) On 12/12 a Dark-eyed Junco of the "Slate-colored" race (an eastern race occurring infrequently in this area) was

was in an east El Paso yard and an immature White-throated Sparrow appeared in the same yard on 12/5 (BR).

List of Observers: Art Artega, Helen Barto, Flora Bittick, Janet Brockmoller, Tony DeBona, Joe Di Pasquale, Jeff Donaldson, Donna Elliot, Jane Fowler, Al Gavit, Ed Gilboe. Joe Guinn, Bob Johnson, Earle King, many observers, Jo Nagel, Bettie Roberts, Sid Sheppard John Sproul, Dave Steinbach, Lucile Swick, Al Warfield, La Von Warfield Barry Zimmer, Kevin Zimmer,/Bettie Roberts/

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AUDUBON ARK

The Audubon Ark, a professionally prepared exhibit on the Endangered Species is sponsored and paid for by the Celanese Corporation of America. Information we have received from other states indicate the show is excellent, and we want to pass the word around to encourage people to go to Bassett Center in February (specific dates to be announced later) to see it. Volunteers to man the booths are needed. Please contact John Sproul if you are interested in helping. ##

CITIZEN MOBILIZATION CAMPAIGN

President Russ Peterson is calling on all Audubon chapters to carry the National Audubon Society's Citizen Mobilization Campaign to their communities. Below is the logo of the campaign. On the following page is a release from our national office listing reasons for our concern for the environmental protection laws being assaulted by the Reagan administration.



(continued on next column)

Says Peterson, "Each individual can exert a major force, and letter-writing is the key. Time and again it has been shown that a personal letter to a member of Congress from a constituent is a letter read and listened to. A few hundred letters can determine a legislator's position on an issue. A few thousand letters can influence a President."

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EXAMPLES OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTACK ON OUR ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

Below is a partial rundown of the Administration's environmental record, based on the fact sheet being prepared by National Audubon for members to use when they are collecting signatures for the Audubon Campaign--facts and figures to back our stand.

Bad Appointments. Most Administration appointees to high environmental protection posts have been, like James Watt, leaders in the fight to undermine environmental laws. An example is the Environmental Protection Agency, where top jobs have been filled by lawyers who formerly represented polluting corporations against EPA.

Strip Mining. Strip mining controls have curbed the ravaging of our landscapes and the poisoning of our streams. Yet the already hard-pressed inspection and enforcement staffs of the Office of Surface Mining have been cut by almost 70 percent, and all five of OSM's regional offices have been closed.

Endangered Species. The program's budget has been cut 40% and its essential research function nearly eliminated. Not a single new species has been proposed for protection, even though increasing

numbers of animals and plants are imperiled by human activity.

National Forests. Overriding advice from the Forest Service's professional staff, the Administration plans to double and perhaps eventually triple the timber cut in our national forest--a step that would wipe out remaining virgin stands along with many of the birds and other creatures that depend on old-growth habitat.

Wilderness. The Administration is trying to open up federally protected wilderness to mining and oil drilling--a move that could destroy the wilderness character of these areas.

Clean Air. In collaboration with pollution industries, the Administration seeks to lower air quality standards and reduce enforcement of clean air regulations. Acid rain is sterilizing lakes, destroying aquatic life, and harming birds and other creatures on up the food chain. Yet the Administration proposes to permit more sulfur and nitrogen oxide emissions--the principal contributors to acid rain.

Energy. The Administration proposed chopping 70 percent off the budget for solar energy and conservation while seeking to increase subsidies to the nuclear power industry by 35 percent--at a time when the market continues to reject nuclear power as an investment.

Predator Poisoning. The EPA is attempting to lift the ban on Compound 1080 for poisoning coyotes on public lands. This would revive the discredited practice that indiscriminately kills eagles, hawks, foxes, badgers, marten, dogs, and a host of other non-target animals, including non-offending coyotes.

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