

The Roadrunner



VOLUME 19(6)

EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

DECEMBER 1989

GENERAL MEETING

The El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society meets the third monday of each month (Sept.-May) at 7:30 PM in the Garden Center, 3105 Grant, in Memorial Park. Visitors are welcome.

MON., DEC. 11, 7:30 PM



Because of the upcoming holiday season, the December meeting has been moved to the second Monday of the month to allow everyone to attend To Tuktoyaktuk and Back. Dr. Joe Leach, retired professor of English at UTEP took a trip to Tuktoyaktuk in the Northwest Territories of Canada. He toured the area around the McKenzie River, the second largest river system in North America. Joe will also present some beautiful panoramic slides of Edmonton and a chilly look at the arctic Ocean. Don't miss this "Refrigerator Revisited".



MON., JAN. 15

Dr. Richard T. Worthington, associate professor of Biological Sciences at UTEP, will be our speaker for the January meeting. His topic will be "Exotic Botany of Malaysian Tropical Forests". Dr. Worthington spent 1987 teaching in Malaysia, and conducted research on plant nectars and fruit juices. He has been at UTEP for 20 years, and for the past 10 years has been gathering information on flora of the Southwest U.S. He has recently published an Annotated Checklist of Nature and Natural-Flora of El Paso County, Texas. Come to the January meeting and experience a tropical rainforest.

EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS

President	John Sproul	545-5157
Vice-president	Larry Jordan	833-5969
Secretary	Jane Fowler	598-2448
Treasurer	Bob Johnson	751-0125
Directors		
	Joyce Davis	581-9470
	Peggy Riede	833-4881
	Norma Vargas	533-8848
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Ways & Means	Larry Jordan	833-5969
Publications	Helen Barto	755-4744
Observations Editor	J. Davis	581-9470
Editor	George Barnett	581-1829
ACT Delegate	John Sproul	545-5157

AUDUBON AWARDS

The time has come to select persons or organizations for special recognition by the Audubon society.

The Meritorious Service Award goes to one or more individuals who have given special service to the chapter.

The Conservation Activity Award is given to a business, government agency, organization, or individual whose efforts have made a significant contribution to conservation.

Nominations for either award should be made in writing to Joyce Davis, 200 N. Mesa Hills Dr., #1505, El Paso, Texas 79912.

AUDUBON ECOLOGY CAMPS

It's that time of year again when you can start thinking about a scholarship recipient for this year's Audubon Ecology Camps. A wonderful experience awaits that lucky person: a great adventure with nature and all its beauty. This person can be someone in education, public service, or anyone you think can benefit from this experience and is willing to share it with others.

The new brochures with this year's dates and sites have arrived. All the camps promise to be very innovative and exciting. For further information and for an application, call Peggy Riede at 833-4881.



Black-throated Sparrow

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Hueco Tanks

On Saturday, December 30, birders will meet at 7:30 AM at the junction of US 62/180 and Texas 2775 (flying Saucer building) to take the annual census of birds. Birders will have a choice of five areas to cover in the 15 mile diameter circle

Leaders and some team members will be selected at the December general meeting (Dec., 11), but anyone can meet the group Saturday morning to participate in the count. Contact compiler, Joyce Davis (h-581-9470, w-544-6772).

Southern New Mexico CBCs

Looking for more Christmas Bird Count opportunities? The Mesilla Valley Audubon Society also sponsors two of these events: The Caballo CBC, premier count in New Mexico; and the Las Cruces CBC. The Caballo CBC will be Sunday, December 17; the Las Cruces CBC will be Wednesday, December 20. Interested in either? Please contact Barry Zimmer (821-6737) or John Sproul (545-5157).



BIRD CALLING CONTEST

The December General Meeting will be the occasion of the Second Annual Bird Calling Contest. This exciting event is open to all, so start practicing that award winning call. And, yes, there will be prizes for the winners.

(Editor's note: The winners will NOT be determined by the number of bird species that show up at the Garden Center).

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

The Christmas Bird Counts are almost here. There are more than 1500 other CBC's taking place during the count period, Dec 16 - Jan 3. By tradition the "count area" is a circle 15 miles in diameter or roughly 177 square miles. It takes some planning and strategy to collect, in a single calendar day, the biggest bird list possible in the designated area. Each count compiler selects leaders to cover a given sector. The leaders divide the participants into teams which fan out to count the number of individual birds as well as the number of species. Leaders are people who know the birds and the territory. Newcomers are encouraged and very welcome to come and join in, it will give you an opportunity to learn about the birds of the area. After the CBCs, we will have a joint countdown and pot luck dinner at the Garden Center on Jan 5 at 6 PM, Plan to come, also the feeder counters and any who could't make the counts, and enjoy good company and good food.

SAT. DEC 16 - EL PASO COUNT: This count is centered on the south end of the Franklin Mts. It covers 3 states (Chihuahua, New Mexico, Texas) and 2 countries - Mexico and the U.S. If you cannot be out in the field, you can record birds seen in your yard (feeder counter). If you are unable to attend the general meeting on Dec 11, but wish to take part give the compiler a call. Bob Johnson 751-0125/757-1876 (recorder).

SAT. DEC 30 - HUECO TANKS COUNT: Five teams will travel the trails and dirt roads of the count circle that takes in Hueco Tanks State Park. A variety of interesting birds are always seen on this count. If you wish to take part call the compiler, Joyce Davis 581-9470/544-6772.



Belted Kingfisher

SUNLAND PARK

The upper valley is always good for some interesting sightings. This day we should see the local flock of wintering Snow Geese and possibly some Wood Ducks. While meeting at the crossroads pond we could see the Hooded Merganser that has been there. Joyce Davis, the leader, 581-9470/544-6772, will meet you there at 7:45 AM on Sat. Jan. 13.

FORT BLISS PONDS

We will be looking for water birds and whatever else may be there. On Sun. the 21st of Jan. meet Bob Johnson at Furniture Country, 4801 Fred Wilson Rd., at 7:45 AM. A long morning, so a snack and liquid are recommended. Bobs phone 751-0125 or 757-1876(recorder).



Spotted Sandpiper

LONG EARED OWLS

Tom Baker (877-3365/566-9461) will again lead us into the desert west of Santa Teresa in search of the Long-eared Owl. Last year we went later in the season and only found evidence that they had been roosting. They have been located in the same place 4 years in a row. This trip will take place on Sat. Jan 27, meet at the usual crossroads ponding area at 7:45 AM. Bring a lunch as return will be about 2PM.

RANDEL'S POOL

start at the crossroads ponding area, this is getting monotonous isn't it, but it sure is good birding in the winter. Then a tour of the Country Club area and end at Randel's Pool which is just west of the river. Meet Pat Brasfield (584-8739) your tour leader at 7:30 AM on Sun. the 4th of Feb.

Just a reminder, **TRASH** pick up, weekend of Feb. 10/11. More next issue.

ANNUAL MEETING DRAWS NEAR

GRACIAS...

It was such a success this year, we're doing it again in 1990! On Feb 18, we'll return to the Coronado Country Club for our Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet. An elegant buffet meal, an outstanding speaker, distinguished awards recipients, lots of friendly folks -- all for only \$15. What more could you ask for? Festivities start at 6 PM. Please make reservations by sending your check, payable to Anne Hussmann, to Anne at 533 Stonebluff, El Paso 79912 by the deadline, FEB 8.

At this event we'll install officers for 1990-91, recognize outgoing officers and directors, and present 2 important awards, our Meretorious Service and Conservation Achievement awards. The Meretorious Service Award recognizes chapter members who, through devotion of time, effort and expertise, have made outstanding contributions to El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon and its programs. The Conservation Achievement Award recognizes government officials, civic organizations, businesses or individuals outside the chapter for specific achievements that have furthered the Audubon Cause in Trans-Pecos Texas.

Award nominations are still open, and we welcome your suggestions. Please submit nominations to Awards Committee Chair Joyce Davis (200 N. Mesa Hills #1505, El Paso 79912, phone 581-9470), then join us Feb 18 for a very special evening.

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

With chapter elections just over a month away, billboards for the office seekers are starting to appear throughout El Paso. The jobs up for grabs: president-elect, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and 3 directors. Can you suggest any good candidates? Want to run yourself? Please contact a Nominating Committee member -- Sarah Dodds (533-4150), Pat Brasfield (584-8739) or Betty Pagel (772-2686) -- with your ideas. The elections take place at our Jan 15 general meeting. Please plan to attend. There will be no absentee voting.

When Georgena Askins' kindergarten class from nearby LeBaron Park School visited Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary on Oct 6, the kids had a wonderful time. So did the adults with them. Wanting to help Feather Lake, they later organized a bake sale. The result? LeBaron Park School recently donated approximately \$120 to our Sanctuary Fund.

We are extremely grateful for this thoughtful contribution. Many thanks to LeBaron Park and its principal, Joe Yrias; to Georgena Askins for spearheading the project; to parents Ceci Flores, Maria Gutierrez, Ana Holguin, Leticia Holguin and Olga Rede, who not only baked goodies but also handled sales at the school; and to all the other parents and children who also helped. We appreciate your kindness and are pleased you enjoyed Feather Lake!

...Y MÁS GRACIAS

We've had lots more help these past 2 months. It's also a pleasure to thank:

- KAY THURMAN and PARRY ZIMMER for excellent presentations at our last 2 general meetings;
- HELEN BIGELOW and HELEN STOUGHTON for providing young fourwing saltbush and desert willows, respectively, for planting at Feather Lake;
- BART RUMAKER for his generous contribution to our Sanctuary Fund;
- JANE FOWLER, BOE JOHNSON and NORMA VARGAS for preparing pages for the previous issue of THE ROADRUNNER while we searched for a new editor;
- GEORGE BARNETT for graciously volunteering to serve as our new editor;
- PETE DIX for contributing a pair of video-cassette players for use in the education programs of our chapter and Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue; and
- AMIT TOREN of Northeast Feed for donation of a 50-pound sack of birdseed for use as a raffle prize at one of our general meetings.

OBSERVATIONS

(uncommon, rare & casual sightings)

AP - Arroyo Park
 CP - Crossroads Pond
 DP - Doniphan Pond
 EF - East Franklins
 EPCC - El Paso Country Club
 FB - Ft. Bliss Ponds
 FH - Ft. Hancock Reservoir
 FL - Feather Lake
 HT - Hueco Tanks
 LA - Lombardy Avenue
 T - Tornillo Reservoir

Sightings by a field trip member are noted by a (+) after the leader's initials. Sightings in an observer's yard or area are indicated by an (*) before his or her initials.

LOONS - WOODPECKERS

American White Pelicans were first sighted at FB 10/10, (BJ), later they were seen at FL 10/20-21 (JC, JF). Double Crested Cormorants were seen at FL, 9/16 (JS) & at FH, 11/5 (BJ+). A Least Bittern was discovered at FL, 9/16 (JS, JF). A Great Egret was sighted at T, 11/5 (BJ+). Cattle Egrets were found at DP, 10/21 & at FL 11/5 (JD). Green Backed Herons were reported at CR 10/1 (PR+), 10/22 (JD) & at FH 11/5 (BJ+). Black Crowned Night Herons were found at FL 9/16 through 11/5 (JS, BJ+). Sandhill Cranes were seen at FB, 10/10 & 11/4 (BJ) & 10/17 (*BJ). White Faced Ibis were spotted at T 11/5 (BJ+). Snow Geese were reported at T 11/5 (BJ+) & Sunland Park Racetrack 11/6 (AH, NW). Canvasbacks were seen at CR 10/24 (BJ). Ring-neck ducks were found at FL 9/10 (JD), CR 10/1 (PR+), 10/15 (JD). Common Mergansers were seen at FH 11/5 (BJ+), & CR 11/10, 11/11 (BJ, AH, NW, JD). An Osprey was spotted at FL, 9/16 (JS) & on Westside RD. 10/15 (TB). Harris Hawks at FB 10/17 (BJ) and FH 11/5 (BJ+).

An immature Golden Eagle was re-reported at Zaragosa & Loop 375 9/30 (BJ). An immature Peregrine Falcon was seen near EL Paso Natural Gas Building over four weeks 10/1 to 11/9 (JS).

QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

A Red-necked Phalarope was spotted at FB 10/10 (BJ). A Bonaparte's Gull was found at FH 11/5 (BJ+). A Herring Gull was seen at T 11/5 (BJ+). A Forster's Tern was found at FL 9/10 (JD). A Burrowing Owl was spotted at FL 11/5 (BJ+).

FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

An Olive Sided Flycatcher was found at AP (NV+). An unusual number of mountain birds are being reported. Steller's Jays were first reported at EPCC 10/2 (AAn) followed by sightings at Horizon (*A/MG) (*JS), Kern Place (*SJD), Public Library (JD), Blanchard (SS), Montoya & HT (BJ). Scrub Jays were also reported at several places 9/17 AP (NV+), 9/25 (*AAn), 10/1 LA (JD), 10/15 (*TB), 10/10 FB (BJ). Mountain Chickadees were found at (*JS) on 10/21, -27, -30, & (*JD) 11/8. Red-breasted nuthatches were seen at (*HB) 9/27 & LA 10/1 (PR+). White breasted Nuthatches were spotted at LA 10/1 (PR+) & Rim Road 10/16 (BJ). A Brown Creeper was reported at (*A/MG) 10/19. A House Wren was seen at Owens 10/1 (PR+), & (*A/MG), A Golden crowned Kinglet was found at LA 10/1 (PR+). Mountain Bluebirds were reported on Casner Range 10/19 (RH). A Hermit Thrush was seen (*A/MG) 10/18 & 28. A Sage Thrasher was found at FB 10/21 (BJ)

OBSERVERS: Aleta Anderson, Art Arteaga, Tom Baker, Helen Bigelow, Jeanette Cole, Joyce Davis, Jane Fowler, Al/Madeline Gavit, Jim Harvey, Richard Hermsillo, Anne Hussman, Peggy Riede, John Sproul, Norma Vargas, Nancy Wilson



FEATHER LAKE NEWS

A dignified pair of American White Pelicans visited Feather Lake from Oct 20-29; it was thrilling to see them gliding in and gracefully circling the lake several times before landing on the water. (FL had a single pelican guest approximately 11 years ago.) The sanctuary was honored to host such a classy duo, and we'll hope for a repeat performance.

Our new maintenance shed is now in place, and since the Nov 4 work day, is sporting a sturdy workbench. Our thanks to Carpenter Bill who was ably assisted by Sid. That day the rest of us pruned trees, planted fourwing saltbush and desert willow, cleaned up trash along N. Loop and cleared away tumbleweeds. THANK YOU to these friends of FL who came out to do the chores in Oct and/or Nov: Jeannette Cole, Jean Coyle, Joyce Davis, Bill Fowler, Anne Hussmann, Bob Johnson, Rafaela Schuller, Sid Shepperd, John Sproul, Helen Stoughton and Nancy Wilson. We don't have an "official" work day in Dec, but the Sierra Club's inner-city outings group will be coming out on Dec 9 for a clean-up project. If you have a few hours to spare and wish to lend a hand, you will be most welcome. Our duck numbers are approaching their peak now, which brings more visitors to FL. Several areas need sprucing up, so please help to make the area presentable for our guests.

As the oftentimes hectic holiday season approaches, we wish you joy, and may peace and prosperity be yours in the new year.
/Jane Fowler, Sanctuary Chair/

IN SYMPATHY

El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon extends its sympathy and best wishes to long-time member Jo Nagel following the recent loss of her husband Evan. A regular participant in outings, Feather Lake work and other chapter activities, Evan will be missed by all.

COMPUTERS ANYONE?

Getting a new computer for Christmas? Upgrading your equipment in the near future? Trying to find a home for an unused computer? We are looking for a computer with monitor and printer for use in the chapter. The machine will be used for, among other things, putting together the newsletter.

It would be nice if the equipment came with some software, such as word processing and spreadsheet. But, hey, why be picky. If you have, or will soon have, a computer you would like to donate to the chapter, please contact any board member or the newsletter editor, George Barnett at 581-1829.

BOARD MEETINGS

Dec. 4 - The December board meeting will be at Larry Jordan's home, 732 Brisa Del Mar, 833-5969

Jan. 8 - The January board meeting will be at Peggy Riede's home, 569 Bluff Canyon, 833-4881.

Members are welcome.

THE ROADRUNNER

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P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX. 79986
Publications Chair - Helen Barto
Publisher - Helen Barto
Editor -

When you join the National Audubon Society you automatically become a member of the chapter in your area. El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society meets on the 3rd Monday each month (Sept - May) in the Garden Center, 3105 Grant. THE ROADRUNNER is published at least 6 times per year and sent to all chapter members. Nonmembers can subscribe for \$4 per year. Make checks payable to EPTPAS and mail to RR Editor at the address above. Also

TEXAS NONGAME FUND USED FOR LAND ACQUISITION

The Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund, created by the Texas Legislature in 1983, is being put to use. On Nov. 2, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission approved purchase of an important 202-acre wooded property on Smith Point beside Galveston Bay. The site is a crucial resting area for spring-migrant songbirds exhausted from their flight across the Gulf of Mexico.

The land will be acquired from Oryx Energy, which is generously donating half the property and selling half to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) for \$92,500, which will come from the Nongame Fund. The TPWD expects these monies to be reimbursed to the Fund through a federal matching-grant program created to encourage conservation of areas such as Smith Point.

In addition to the land acquisition, the TPWD is using \$118,000 from the Nongame Fund this year for 5 management projects involving threatened and endangered species:

- Brown Pelican and Reddish Egret colony protection;
- coastal-waterbird breeding-site enhancement;
- Red-cockaded Woodpecker bachelor-colony augmentation;
- feline-habitat restoration in the Lower Rio Grande Valley; and
- Attwater's Prairie-Chicken propagation, release and habitat enhancement.

Again, the Fund will recover this money through federal assistance programs.

Thanks are in order to the TPWD (Charles D. Travis, Executive Director, TPWD, 4200 Smith School Rd., Austin, TX 78744) for acquiring the Smith Point land and putting the Nongame Fund to good use.

Support for the Nongame Fund is also in order if future significant acquisitions are to take place. Just in time for Christmas, the 1989 Texas Nongame Stamp and Decal are now available.

Featured this year: the ocelot, an endangered species that symbolizes the disappearing wildlands of the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

Audubon's top conservation priority in Texas is completion of Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge, which will protect habitat along the Rio Grande between Falcon Dam and Brownsville for the ocelot and myriad other Valley wildlife species. When you buy a nongame stamp or decal, you are contributing directly to the Nongame Fund. You're contributing to the future of the ocelot and other threatened Texas wildlife. Be sure to get one at our next general meeting or by using the form below. /John Sproul/



Are nongame wildlife and endangered species important Texas resources? You bet! So help ensure their future: buy a TEXAS NONGAME STAMP or DECAL. You'll be contributing directly to the nongame and endangered species conservation efforts of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

	Qty.	Each	Total
1989 Nongame Stamp		\$5	
1989-90 Nongame Decal		\$5	
Amt. Enclosed			

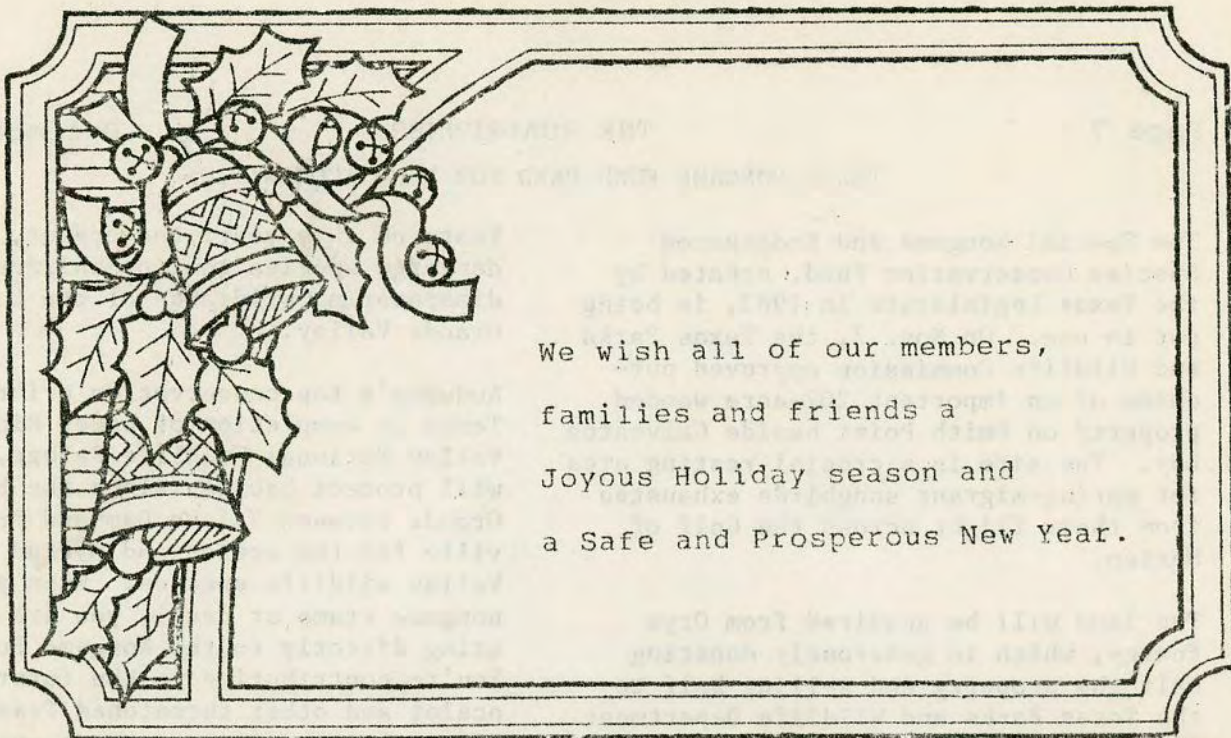
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Address _____

Zip _____

Please make checks payable to:

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society
P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986



We wish all of our members,
families and friends a
Joyous Holiday season and
a Safe and Prosperous New Year.

El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society
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