

# the ROADRUNNER.....



newsletter of  
El Paso Trans-Pecos Audubon Society  
published at  
2809 Hector Drive, El Paso, Texas, 79935 (by President: Robert P. Bleicher)

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## CALENDAR

### BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING:

The Board of Director's meeting will be held on the second Monday of November (12 Nov) at the home of Bill and Jane Fowler, 8212 Parkland, EPT, Ph: 772-0296, at 7:30 p.m. This is an important meeting and I hope all members can attend.

### PROGRAM:

19 November 1979, at 7:30 p.m., at the Garden Center 3105 Grant Street, in Memorial Park. Ecologist Kevin Von Finger will present a slide show on the ecology of the El Paso area and give its history back to early prehistoric times. Kevin Von Finger is employed as an ecologist at Fort Bliss and is an "expert" on this area's history. This program will be informative and educational, so please - come join us there. Try to arrive by 7 p.m. for refreshments and a bit of visiting.

December 1979. There will not be a formal program at the Garden Center in December. Instead, as in past years, we will meet in a planning session for our HEUCO TANKS and El Paso Bird Counts. So if you will participate in either of these counts, be at the Bob Bleicher residence, 2809 Hector Drive, EPT, Ph: 591-7261, at 7 p.m., on 15 December 1979 for the planning meeting. Now we must come-up with a place (or places) to tally the count - after each count. So more on this in the Dec issue.

### FIELD TRIPS:

4 November 1979. Meet at the Bella Napoli Restaurant parking lot at 7 a.m. for a field trip to HEUCO TANKS STATE PARK. The meeting place is on the corner of Montana (Highway 62-180) and Yarbrough on the East side of town. We'll hope to see some owls!

17-18 November 1979. A field trip to Bosque Del Apache, near Socorro, New Mexico is planned. This National Wildlife Refuge is a "SUPER" birding area. In past years, we have travelled to this area in January and February; now we want to try November for a change. Correspondence from the Bosque tells us that it's good birding NOW! Those interested in going on this trip should drive to the Bosque on Saturday (17th) where we will do afternoon birding -- till closing time. Then we'll stay in Socorro, New Mexico overnight and resume birding activities on Sunday morning. By Sunday noon, after a lunch break, we'll be returning to El Paso, Texas, (or wherever!). Please call Bob Bleicher, Ph: 591-7261, if you are planning to make this trip. We should know who is going, along with their telephone number, just in case there is an unexpected weather problem at the time (which can happen).

OBSERVATIONS - 23 September to 23 October 1979:

The bird of the month appeared just as this report went to press. Hawking for insects and hitting the feeders in the Cielo Vista area on 22-23 October, was a probable immature male Rivoli's Hummingbird (EG, EIG, BH, TS, JS). Details next month.

WATERBIRDS:

The field trip to the Fort Bliss Ponds on 21 October turned up three Snowy Egrets (Group). Another Snowy Egret was seen at the pond on the Cielo Vista Golf Course from 1 October to at least 23 October. Wary at first, it now allows golfers to approach within five-meters (EG). On 30 September, a white-faced Ibis was flying downriver over the Rio Grande near the country Club Road Bridge (Group). Among the shorebirds at the Bliss Ponds on 21 October were at least three Dowitchers, presumably Long-billed (group).

OTHER NONPASSERINES:

The stock pond along the road into Heuco Tanks continues to be a good place for long-eared Owls. Two owls, at least one a long-eared, were there 6 October (EK). The columbid capital of west Texas (the Gilboe backyard in the Cielo Vista area) had its first Ground Dove of the fall on 15 October (EG), and a Downy Woodpecker was seen at Kern Place on 23 October (BH).

PASSERINES:

A Brown Thrasher visited an East El Paso yard on 2 October (BR). On 21 October we had a Blue-grey Gnatcatcher in the saltbush and mesquite at the Bliss Ponds (BB). And, a Solitary Vireo was at the Randall's Pool area in the Upper Valley on 30 September (JS).

OBSERVERS: Bob Bleicher, Ed Gilboe, Elza Gilboe (EIG), Bill Hoppes, Earl King, many observers (group), Betty Roberts, Ted Sawyer, John Sprcul. (Please report your observations to John Sproul, 601 W. Yandell #25, El Paso, Tx., 79902, Phone: 545-5157 home or 543-6126 at work.)

SENATE ALASKA BILL OFF DEAD CENTER:

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee finally began mark-up on S9, the Alaska lands bill, on 15 October, and may have reported a bill to the full Senate by the time you read this newsletter. S9 is a weak bill, opposed by Audubon and other conservation groups, and the committee is making it weaker. Audubon continues to support S222, the Durkin-Nelson-Roth bill. Passage of any bill during this season remains uncertain, given the tight Senate schedule and the continued threat of a filibuster.

SCOPING THE PLANETS:

Usually we birders are up early with our binoculars and spotting scopes as we monitor the early morning bird activity. Well did you know that you can also observe the planets with your spotting scope? Just prior to the 15-16 Oct. '79, local station KTSM, in their daily program put on by the Mc Donald observatory, alerted us to the appearance of Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, and the crescent moon all to be present in the early morning sky on the 15-16 Oct. The night before I mounted the scope on the tripod, extended the tripod legs, and had it ready for the morning spotting and sure enough the planets were there -- just like those astronomers said they would be -- a fantastic sight. The rings of Saturn are not visible at this time but it was known by its position and brightness.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING:

Elza Gilboe - for her fine job as hospitality chairman at our monthly meetings.  
Ed Gilboe - for his fine observations and the maintenance of a backyard sanctuary.  
John Sproul - for devotion to the Audubon cause, and for help with the Roadrunner.  
Mr. Clark Champie - for a wonderful October program on the plants and wildlife of the Franklin mountains. We had a good turn-out and the program was both interesting and educational. Thanks again for a real fine program.  
Joe Guinn- for continued service as Program Chairman - a most important task.  
Jane and Bill Fowler - Jane for being such a good secretary and treasurer and the both of you for help publishing the Roadrunner.  
My wife Gretchen - who puts up with my having some kind of a project in every room of the house and for the help that makes the impossible possible timewise.  
Joe De Pasqually - whose knowledge of birding and birding areas helps our chapter.  
Kevin Von Finger - for consenting to put on our November program.  
Mrs. Nichols - for faithfully opening the Garden Center building each meeting night.

FROM THE PEN OF THE PRESIDENT:

It takes people volunteering a bit of their time and talent to make any organization work - this Audubon chapter is no exception. Our chapter has lost many of the folks who were willing to give generously of time and talent and now we need others who will take their place and to provide the moral and mechanical help to make the chapter a functional organization. Now that November is here, we are looking for people who will accept office and leadership for the next year. So I am asking members to consider whether they can, and will help - every little bit helps! Please call Bob Bleicher, Ph: 591-7261 or any other board member you may know and volunteer a bit of your time and talent or come to our monthly meeting and talk to us. (Just maybe you didn't realize that I'm just as busy as anyone can be myself.)

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SIGHTINGS AT THE BLISS PONDING AREA: 21 October 1979:

Once again, mother nature, gave us a bad time on our scheduled trip to the Bliss ponding area. This time the wind came up after a couple hours of birding and the dust on the dirt road rendered visibility zero on the return trip to the parking area where we first met. Birds seen were as follows:

Hared Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, Snowy Egret, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, Cooper's Hawk, Marsh Hawks (in abundance), American Coots (as usual), Killdeer, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Dowitcher Species, American Avocet, Tree Swallows, and barn swallows, a Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Western Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Red-winged Blackbirds, Great-tailed Grackel, White-crowned Sparrows and Song Sparrows, and unidentified shorebirds (either Western or Least Sandpipers); This is a good birding area but recently the weather hasn't been too cooperative when we plan to bird here.

We hope you, the reader, will join our birding field trips as we prepare for our big day bird counts. Your knowledge and contribution is needed and important. In helping each birder become a better birder we help the chapter develop better and more accurate birding reports both to type and number of species in the area.



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