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The ROADRUNNER

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

The Mexican Wolf

Craig Braginton, Programs Chairperson

General Meeting—October 17, 1994—7:30 PM Just recently, the El Paso Zoo opened the Mexican Wolves exhibit as part of the Zoo's Endangered Species program. Although the program's network is worldwide, there is a particular emphasis on regional endangered species like the Mexican Wolf and the Thick-billed Parrot. Our October program will be given by Mr. Hector Montes, Public Affairs Coordinator for the El Paso Zoo. Mr. Montes will be speaking about the program and its work with Endangered Species of regional importance. Have any other questions about the zoo? Bring them with you to the October meeting. The meeting will be held at the Garden Center in Memorial Park, 3105 Grant, El Paso.

It's Not Even Winter Yet!

Craig Braginton, Programs Chairperson

General Meeting—November 21, 1994—7:30 PM Is it time to start thinking about your spring birding trips already? I guess it is never to early. This month's speaker may have the information you need for that birding vacation. Our own Bob Johnson will be here to tell us about a trip he took last April to south Texas, along with several of our fellow members. Bob will have information on where to go, ideas for developing your itinerary to get the most out of your time, and slides documenting the trip. And Bob loves to answer questions. If you have never been birding in south Texas, it is a trip well worth considering. If you have been to the region, it is a rip worth considering again. Come to the Garden Center hear what Bob has to say.

Inside...

Feather Lake Begins New Season	2
Book Bargains	2
Celebration of Our Mountains	2
Latin American Conservation	2
The Elf Owl Nest Box Study	3
Texas Hummingbird Round-up	3
A.C.T. Meets in El Paso Oct. 14-16	4
Officers of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society	4
Agenda Audubon Council of Texas Fall 1994 Meeting	5
Of Importance To All Members	6
Trouble in Texas for Rare Warbler	6
Fun Birding on the Texas Coast	7
A Correction	7
On The Trail	8
Observations	9
Calendar	10

Feather Lake Begins New Season

By John Sproul

Feather Lake News

Once again, it's showtime! Our Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary is open, and the bird numbers are building up. Visitor hours are every Sunday afternoon, 2 PM to dusk, and the 1st and 3rd Saturday mornings each month, 8 AM to Noon. Feather Lake is located at 9500 N. Loop, between Zaragosa Road and Americas Ave., in El Paso. Fall is a wonderful time to visit, and we hope you will. Admission is free.

During visitor hours, we always have at least one Audubon volunteer on duty to greet people, field their questions and generally keep an eye on things. Can you help us in this way in 1994-95? It's an ideal opportunity to get acquainted with Feather Lake and an important way to contribute to our chapter's educational programs. Please call John Sproul (545-5157) if you can help.

You'll have many chances to visit Feather Lake these final months of the year but only two more chances to join the elite sanctuary-workday team: Saturday, October 29 and Saturday December 3. Learn all about the intricacies of sanctuary maintenance! October 29 will be an afternoon session; plan to arrive at 2:30 PM and work up an appetite before our annual potluck picnic at the lake (see "On the Trail" for details). On December 3, workday activities will begin at 8 AM.

Book Bargains

Rainbow in a Tree Publications is having an inventory-reduction sale that should interest Audubon members. It is offering significant discounts on all titles in stock, including *THE FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS: BEGINNING OF THE ROCKIES* (\$20 discount price), *UNION OF EAGLES* (\$40),

LAND OF THE SUN (\$30), *JUÁREZ: MIRACLE OF THE NORTH* (\$20), and *RANCHIN'* (\$10). To place an order, contact Rainbow in a Tree Publications, 1315 Montana, P.O. Box 3516, El Paso, TX 79923 (544-6011). All major credit cards accepted.

Celebration of Our Mountains

If the Audubon Council of Texas meeting isn't enough to fill your October 14-16 weekend, you can also join in the first "Celebration of Our Mountains". It will feature activities at local museums; field trips in West Texas, Mexico and New Mexico; and additional events celebrating the unique contribution the Franklins and other local mountain ranges make to the quality of our lives. Among the activities: Scott Cutler will present our "Birds of El Paso" slide program at 2:00 PM on October 15 at UTEP's Centennial Museum, and Bob Johnson will speak on "Birds of the Franklin Mountains" at 10:00 AM on October 16 at the Wilderness Park Museum. Watch the newspapers for the full schedule of "Celebration" events. Information: Philip Goodell, Geological Sciences, UTEP, 915/747-5593.

Latin American Conservation

Fairfax Audubon Society (Northern Virginia) needs your help in collecting used binoculars for financially-strapped conservation/education groups and institutes in Latin America. As many of you may know, conservationists in the tropics desperately need binoculars for environmental education. Even an old pair of binoculars can easily cost more than a month's salary in Latin America, far beyond the reach of most students or groups. Your help in this project

also means helping to conserve neotropical bird migration and reproduction here in the U.S.

So far, this project has donated over 150 binoculars, several telescopes and copies of Birds of Columbia books to needy conservation/education groups in Columbia, Costa Rica, Chile, and Mexico. But there are pending requests for well over 100 more pairs of binoculars and a score of books, with new requests coming in almost every month. Volunteers have a local optics expert check and repair the donated binoculars. Then they recruit responsible travelers to Latin America to hand-deliver the binoculars to donor recipients. All recipients are recognized universities and respected conservation groups.

To help out, you can send binoculars to Fairfax Audubon Society binoculars project coordinator Gary Filerman, 1322 Banquo Ct., McLean, VA 22102. For more information on this project, contact either Gary Filerman (703) 356-9033 or Jack Peckham (703) 892-4026.

Muchas Gracias

The Elf Owl Nest Box Study

*Bonnie R. McKinney, Nongame Specialist
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Reprinted from Flyway*

The Elf Owl (*Micrathene whitneyi*) is the smallest owl in the world. Much of their range includes the hot arid lands of the desert southwest. They are insectivorous and inhabit environments that provide cavity nest sites and an abundance of insects. They occur from 2,000 foot elevations in the desert to 7,000 foot pine-oak woodlands.

In the lower Chihuahuan Desert region of west Texas, the Elf Owl is totally dependent on the Ladderback Woodpecker (*Picoides scalaris*) for nest cavities. Because of the scarcity of trees in the lower Big Bend

region, power poles are heavily utilized. Previously this worked well, but due to the advancement of modern technology in the communications world many miles of power poles are being removed and replaced by underground cables. The loss of significant numbers of power poles could potentially impact the nesting population of Elf Owls as well as Ash-throated Flycatchers (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) and Ladderbacked Woodpeckers.

Consequently, a two-year nest box study, funded by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Nongame and Urban Program, is being conducted on the Black Gap Wildlife Management Area, approximately 58 miles south of Marathon in Brewster County. The area is typical Chihuahuan Desert and supports a large population of Elf Owls.

Research during the two-year study will focus on site fidelity, pair fidelity, return of young to natal sites to breed, longevity rate, migration information, pellet analysis to determine diet and food habits, nesting chronology in the Chihuahuan Desert and use of artificial nest sites.

Texas Hummingbird Round-up

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Those of us who participated in the 1994 Hummingbird Round-up already know that the Round-up has received some exciting calls about migrating hummingbirds in Texas. For example, there is one feeder in the Davis Mountains that has reported no less than ten species so far this year.

If you would like to participate in the 1995 Hummingbird Round-up, fill out the form below, include a stamped, self-addressed envelope (legal-size, 4" X 9 1/2") and a \$5 donation (make checks payable to TPWD Nongame Fund). Mail to:

Texas Backyard Hummingbird Survey
Nongame and Urban Program
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, Texas 78744

In the meantime, keep your feeders clean and full for the migrating birds. This is a very important time for the hummingbirds to have plenty of energy for migration. Maintain your feeders until you see no more birds.



Officers of the El Paso/ Trans Pecos Audubon Society

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A.C.T. Meets in El Paso Oct. 14-16

By John Sproul

Representatives from Audubon chapters throughout the state will gather in El Paso October 14-16 for the Fall 1994 Meeting of the Audubon Council of Texas (ACT). It promises to be a full and exciting weekend, and we hope you'll be part of it.

Speakers? Come to the Garden Center at 1:00 PM Saturday and hear U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Special Agent Doug McKenna discuss illegal predator-control activities in the western U.S. If you missed Doug's eye-opening presentation at our April general meeting, you'll definitely want to hear him at the ACT meeting. Or join us for a Mexican buffet dinner at 6:30 PM Saturday night at La Hacienda Cafe, 1720 W. Paisano. After dinner, we'll relive some of El Paso's wild-west history through the words of renowned local historian Leon Metz.

Field trips? Join us Saturday in Memorial Park or Sunday at Hueco Tanks State Historical Park. Meeting time for both trips is 7:30 AM. We'll meet at the Garden Center on Saturday and at Avila's restaurant,

10600 Montana at Yarbrough, on Sunday.

Audubon action in Texas? ACT will hold workshops on fundraising and on strengthening Audubon's grassroots effectiveness. It will discuss the Audubon Foundation of Texas, look at the upcoming 74th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature and hold sessions on the activities and conservation concerns of Audubon chapters around the state.

You're invited to take part in any or all of these events. The registration fee for the full meeting is \$20. Just want to attend the dinner Saturday night? It's \$10. The Memorial Park field trip and Doug McKenna's talk Saturday are free; for the Hueco Tanks trip, there is a \$2 per person park entrance fee. To register for the full meeting or make a dinner reservation, contact Nancy Wilson (833-3907) or John Sproul (545-5157).

We'll need help in several areas to ensure a successful meeting. If you can help with transportation of out-of-town visitors, please contact Charles Simpson (598-2274). If you can help with food preparation and serving, call Betty Pagel (772-2686). If you can help with registration and meeting arrangements, call Nancy Wilson (833-3907). See you at the ACT meeting!

Agenda Audubon Council of Texas Fall 1994 Meeting

Friday, October 14, 1994

- 6:00 p.m. Registration and dinner
- 7:30 p.m. ACT board meeting

Saturday, October 15, 1994

- 7:30 a.m. Birding in Memorial Park
- 8:00 a.m. Registration and light breakfast(Garden Center)
- 9:00 a.m. Welcome
- 9:05 a.m. ACT / AFT business meeting
- 10:00 a.m. National Audubon board report
- 10:15 a.m. Break
- 10:30 a.m. Workshop: How can Natl. Audubon best use its \$3 MM grant for increasing grassroots effectiveness?

- Noon Lunch (Garden Center)

- 1:00 p.m. "Who's Poisoning the West?" (Doug McKenna, Special Agent, USFWS)
- 1:45 p.m. The Environmental Fund for Texas (Dede Armentrout/Sandra Skrei, Audubon SW Regional Office)
- 2:15 p.m. Chapter reports
- 2:45 p.m. Break
- 3:00 p.m. The 74th Texas Legislature (Dede Armentrout/ Sandra Skrei)
- 4:00 p.m. Conservation issues
- 5:00 p.m. Adjourn

- 6:30 p.m. Dinner (La Hacienda Cafe)
- 7:30 p.m. "A Brief History of El Paso" (Leon Metz, noted El Paso historian)

Sunday, October 16, 1994

- 7:30 a.m. Field trip to Hueco Tanks
- 1:00 p.m. Fundraising workshop (Environmental Center, 800 S. Piedras)

Of Importance To All Members

Date: September 19, 1994
To: All Staff
From: Peter A. A. Berle
Subject: Future

At the Audubon Board of Directors meeting this past weekend, I read to the Board and staff participants the following letter which I gave to Board Chairman, Donal O'Brien:

September 18, 1994

Dear Don,

Next summer I will have completed ten years as President and CEO of the National Audubon Society. It has been a blast! But by ten it will be time to give someone else a chance. Consequently will resign as of August 7, 1995.

In the meantime I look forward to helping lead a zesty strategic planning process and an efficient transition.

Peter A. A. Berle

Between now and next August, I will continue to serve as CEO with all the energy and intensity which I possess. I am proud that Audubon is in a position of strength on many fronts - membership, finance, program. Our membership numbers are exceeding projections. As a result of hard work and sacrifice on the part of everyone, we are producing both the savings and revenue called for in our fiscal program. Plans are underway for a campaign, launched by a major challenge grant, to expand our Corkscrew Sanctuary. State Department Counselor Tim Wirth, heading the U.S. Delegation to the UN Conference in Cairo singled out Audubon in a conference before the world press as an example of a nongovernmental organization having an impact on national policy and providing leadership to volunteer organizations around the globe. At a recent convention of independent scientists Audubon's Restoration Plan was heralded as the most credible and viable means of saving the Everglades.

Now that we are coming out of a period of hard choices and personal sacrifices on everyone's part, we are in a good position to define Audubon's future. As you know, we have secured a substantial grant to help us plan our future and strengthen our institution. This is the kind of opportunity that presents itself only about once a decade. I plan to work hard to see that we make the most of it. I want to liberate the best ideas and create the consensus and enthusiasm from all elements in Audubon. to strengthen this institution and ensure the regeneration that a healthy organization must go through if it is to continue to thrive. I look forward to your continuing support and will be asking you to give Audubon your best as we begin a crucial year in the life of one of America's most important institutions.

Trouble in Texas for Rare Warbler

reprinted from Audubon Activist

**Audubon
Activist**

Texas politicians, fed misinformation by "wise use" groups and other opponents of the Endangered Species Act, have jumped on the tiny golden-cheeked warbler in an effort to undermine the act.

The golden-cheeked warbler—a neotropical migrant that nests in the hill country of central Texas and winters in Mexico and Central America—was declared endangered in 1990. Perhaps as few as 8,000 pairs remain. Half of the warblers historic habitat of mixed juniper and hardwood forest has been cleared, largely for expanding cities like Austin and San Antonio.

In July, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plan to assess critical habitat for the warbler was leaked to the press. Misleading headlines such as "Bird Habitat Would Cover 33 Counties" touched off a firestorm of protest orchestrated by anti-environment "wise use" groups.

"We don't need more federal regulations and intervention," wrote Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock. "The property

Observations

August 16, 1994 - - September 15, 1994
 Uncommon, RARE, and CASUAL sightings

Some birds listed here may not be considered rare, but because of season or location it makes them unusual. The reporting of these birds is determined using the El Paso Audubons checklist "Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas" 7th Edition, October 1987 and "Birds of Hueco Tanks State Historical Park" 10/90.

(Observers: Mary Lou Alcorn, Helen Bigalow, Craig Braginton, Doug Enkalns, Richard Hermosillo, Sallie Homan, Bob Johnson, Bruce Neville, Al Olivas, Russ Parker, Jim Paton, Patricia Russell, Susie Schnieder, John Sproul, Dennis Taylor, Rae Thomas, Marcia Wheatley, Barry Zimmer.)

HERONS to TERNS

<u>TRICOLORED HERON</u>	9/3-9/15	(JS-ft)	CCA
CANADA GOOSE	9/12	(MA)	LwV
OSPREY	9/14	(DT)	FBP
SEMI-PALMATED PLOVER	9/4	(BJ)	FBP
UPLAND SANDPIPER	8/17	(DE)	STA
	9/6	(SH)	STA
LONG-BILLED CURLEW	9/6	(SH)	STA
Baird's Sandpiper	9/4	(BJ)	FBP
RED-NECKED PHALAROPE	9/13	(BZ)	FBP
COMMON TERN	9/15	(BZ)	McN

OWLS to KINGBIRDS

<u>N. SAW-WHET OWL</u>	9/	(MW)	NEE
<u>RUBY-THROATED HUMMER</u>	9/14	(JP-yd)	Sun
Calliope Hummer	8/16	(PR-yd)	STA
Greater Pewee	8/23	(RP-yd)	CoA
Willow Flycatcher	8/17	(DE)	HTK
Dusky Flycatcher	8/17	(DE)	MPk
	9/12	(DT)	HTK
GRAY FLYCATCHER	8/16	(AO)	HTK
	8/17	(DE)	HTK
	9/12	(DT)	HTK
<u>EASTERN KINGBIRD</u>	9/15	(BZ)	McN

JAYS to VIREOS

Scrub Jay	9/3	(JS-yd)	CEP
	9/13	(AO)	McR
	9/13	(HB-yd)	Ant
<u>PYGMY NUTHATCH</u>	9/2	(SS-yd)	CEP
Marsh Wren	9/5	(BJ)	HTK

Ant-Anthony area; CnA-Canutillo Area; CEP-Central El Paso; CoA-Coronado Area; CCA-Country Club Area; EEC-East El Paso County; FBP-Fort Bliss Ponds; FkM-Franklin Mts; HTK-Hueco Tanks; LwV-Lower Valley; MPk-Memorial Park; McR-McGreggor Range; McN-McNary Area; NEE-Northeast El Paso; STA-Santa Teresa Area; Sun-Sunland Park area.(yd-yard; ft-field trip; mob-many observers)

<u>BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER</u>	9/15	(BZ)	FBP
<u>BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER</u>	9/17	(DE)	STA
SAGE THRASHER	8/17	(DE)	STA
	9/8	(AO)	McG
<u>YELLOW-THROATED VIREO</u>	9/10	(CB-yd)	CnA

WARBLERS

TOWNSEND'S	8/28	(PR)	FkM
<u>HERMIT</u>	9/13	(BZ)	FBP
BLACK AND WHITE	8/29	(PR)	HTK
	9/14	(BZ)	FBP
AMERICAN REDSTART	9/13	(BZ)	FBP
NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH	8/17	(DE)	HTK
	9/9	(BZ)	FBP
	9/10	(RH)	HTK
<u>LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH</u>	8/16	(AO)	HTK
MacGillivray's	8/18	(HB-yd)	Ant
	8/19	(PR-yd)	STA
<u>RED-FACED</u>	8/16	(JP/BN	
		-yd)	Sun
YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT	9/14	(DT)	HTK
	9/15	(BZ)	HTK

GROSBEAKS to TOWHEES

Black-headed grosbeak	8/26	(RT)	EEC
Lazuli Bunting	8/16	(SH)	STA
	8/16	(AO)	HTK
	8/29	(PR)	HTK
DICKCISSEL	8/17	(DE)	HTK
	9/15	(BZ)	FBP
Green-tailed Towhee	9/6	(HB-yd)	Ant

Report your sightings to Bob Johnson 7571876

CALENDAR

October

Sat., 1 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 M to Noon.
Sun., 2 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to dusk.
Sat., 8 - Field trip to Feather Lake and the Lower Valley, see page 8.
Sun., 9 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to dusk.
Mon., 10 - Board meeting at Peggy Riede's home, 7:30 PM, 5508 Amberwod, 587-7208.
Fri., 14, Sat., 15, Sun., 16 - ACT Meeting, see pages 4 and 5.
Sat., 15 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sun., 16 Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to dusk.
Mon., 17 - General Meeting, see page 1.
Sat., 22 - Field trip to Ft. Bliss Ponds, see page 8.
Sun., 23 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 to dusk.
Sat., 29 - Feather Lake workday.
Sat., 29 - Feather Lake Dinner, see page 8.
Sun., 30 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to dusk.

November

Sat., 5 - Field trip to West Cottonwood Springs, see page 8.
Sat., 5 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sun., 6 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to dusk.
Sun., 13 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to dusk.
Mon., 14 - Board meeting at Mary Lou Alcorn's home, 4331 Emory; 7:30 PM; 584-8768.
Sat., 19 - Field trip to Ft. Hancock, see page 8.
Sat., 19 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sun., 20 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to dusk.
Mon., 21 - General Meeting, see page 1.
Sun., 27 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to dusk.
Sat., December 3 - Field trip to the Upper Valley, see page 8.

El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

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