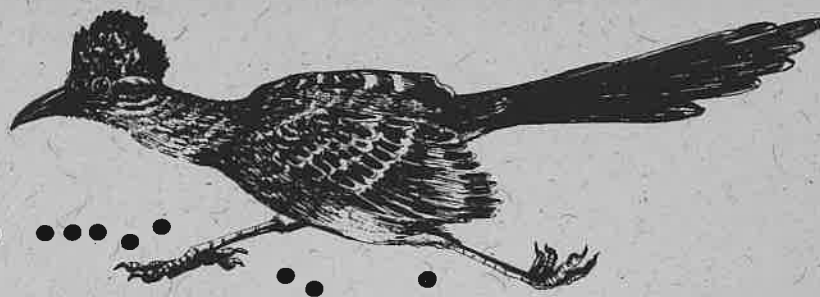


the ROADRUNNER



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

September, 1979, Vol 9, Nr. 6.

CALENDAR

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING:

The next Board of Director's Meeting will be held on the second Monday, 10 September 1979, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Mrs. Elza Gilboe, 1305 Oakdale ph: 772-1942. I thank Mrs. A. E. (Josephine) Nagel for her hospitality during our board meeting on 19 August 1979. I appreciate the presence of those attending. Those who were not able to attend were missed.

PROGRAM:

Monday, 17 September (our usual meeting time - the third Monday of the month) at 7:30 p.m. We do open the doors to the Garden Club Building at 7 p.m. so we can meet those coming to the meeting and we have refreshments to "improve our communications!" The El Paso Garden center is located at 3105 Grant Street, (not far from SEARS in Five Points. Go North From Sears, on Piedras, cross the tracks and turn right on Grant St. The Garden Center is in Memorial Park. We hope to see you there. Our PROGRAM, as previously announced, will be put on by the membership. Members are to bring slides in a Show and Tell type program allowing membership participation. A projector and slide trays will be furnished. Please come and participate.

FIELD TRIPS:

Saturday, 15 September 1979: A trip to the Fort Bliss Ponds. Meet at Furrow's Lumber Company (formerly Barcellona's) at 7 a.m. Furrow's is on Fred Wilson Road across from the entrance to Fort Bliss. We will be looking for a variety of Shore and Water birds and this is one of our best birding areas both for number of species and for species variety--from water birds, shore birds, and adjoining desert birds.

Sunday, 30 September 1979: A trip to Durling's Farm. Meet at the Country Club Bridge on Country Club Road (where we usually met in the past). For newcomers: Take I-10 WEST out of El Paso, drive to the MESA exit, and turn left after exiting the expressway. Mesa turns into Country Club Road and the bridge, crossing the Rio Grande is just ahead. Try to arrive at the bridge by 7:30 a.m.; allow at least 30 minutes for driving time. This is always an excellent birding area and we hope we will see friends from that area coming out to join us regulars.

MEMBERSHIP:

In January ('79), our membership stood at 228 members. The latest membership mailing list shows our membership at 234. (It is progress - just to know your not going backwards!) We do need more membership, a point emphasized by the National Audubon Society, to help support the local and National Audubon projects - conservation and preservation of some habitat for our birds and wildlife. So, help bring in a member whenever you can.

OBSERVATIONS—21 May to 20 August 1979 (Written by Membership Chairman John Sproul.)
(NOTE: My personal thanks to John for his help in providing material for our newspaper—the ROADRUNNER. I have been a very busy person and am finding it difficult to have the time I'd like to have to keep up with "everything" and the writing, typing, stencilling, running-off, assembling, and preparing the mailing for the Roadrunner takes a lot of time and I sincerely appreciate his help in this matter. If you can type, read, write, spell, cut stencils, run a reproduction machine, etc., etc., etc., please call me and let me know that you would like to be our editor; call 591-7261!)

NONPASSERINES:

A pair of Barn Owls has been at Durling's Farm recently. One bird was seen on 14 August and subsequent trips to the area on 16 and 17 August revealed two in the area (EK). For the second straight year a Poor-will (possible two) made regular visits to a northeast El Paso backyard in July (ED). At least four Calliope Hummingbirds were in El Paso on 22 July (JD).

PASSERINES:

Most participants on the 9 June field trip to Tom May's Park got a good look at an Olive-sided Flycatcher in the canyon to Cottonwood Springs (participants). A single Vermillion Flycatcher was at Durling's Farm on 17 August (EK). Hooded Orioles seem to be rare but regular breeders in residential El Paso. Reported from the northeast part of town were a single male on 23 June (WEK) and two adults and three immatures in mid-July (JB). A Baltimore (Northern) Oriole is unusual any time around El Paso, but the one at Tornillo Lakes on 1 July (JD) was doubly noteworthy as probably a very late migrant. This three-month report period catches some migrants both coming and going. For example, a Western Tanager was in Morningside Heights in early June (IS) and another in Kern Place on 19 Aug (BH). Finally, as perhaps the most noteworthy spring migrant, a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak appeared in Morningside Heights for three days in early June (IS).

OBSERVERS: Janet Brockmoller, Joe DiPasquale, Bob Dukes, Bill Hoppes, Early King, W. E. Kuykendall, many observers (participants), and Lucille Swick. Please call John Sproul Ph: Home: 545-5157 or at work 543-6126 with you recent observations.

TELILCO DAM REFUSES TO DIE:

Dig out your May 1979 issue of Audubon and reread the report by Robert Cahn on "The God Committee." It describes the decision of the Endangered Species Committee last January not to allow completion of Tellico Dam. The good guys win, right? Not so fast! Read Cahn's last two paragraphs slowly and carefully, again. On 1 August, the U. S. House voted 253 to 156 to force completion of Tellico Dam. The Senate has rejected such a move twice this year, but both times by a narrow margin. Soon after Labor Day, they will vote a third time, and Audubon's Washington Office is not optimistic. Should the Senate reverse its earlier stand, Tellico Dam, barring Presidential veto, probably will be completed and a bad precedent set. It would pave the way for other projects to seek similar special exemptions rather than undergoing the careful review mandated by the Endangered Species Act.

PLEASE HELP:

I would like for you, the membership, to feel this is your newspaper. If you would like to "inform" the rest of us on some important item of news, please send your article to the Editor at my address, and let us hear from you. And, please, if you will, short articles are always the easiest to use when we have to put things together.

SENATE TO CONSIDER ALASKA--SOONER OR LATER:

As happened last year, the U. S. Senate is taking its own sweet time with Alaska lands legislation. The House passed HR 39, the conservationist-backed bill, on 16 May. The Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee could have begun mark-up on a bill as early as 10 July, but the pressure of pending energy legislation put Alaska on the back burner. Let's hope they give the Alaska lands issue high priority after the August recess. The mark-up vehicle in the committee probably will be S.9 (the same bill reported by the committee last year). Audubon, as part of the Alaska Coalition, calls this bill "unacceptable." S. 222, the Durkin-Nelson-Roth bill, is similar to the carefully balanced House-passed bill and has the conservationists' backing. The victory in the House was satisfying, but the Senate will be a much tougher row to hoe.

INFLATION ** STRIKES AGAIN:

Word has been received, from the National Audubon Society, that all membership dues will be raised again due to the eroding effects on the dollar because of INFLATION. It is stated, in a letter to local Chapter Presidents, that it will take 3.1 million more dollars to maintain the present Audubon programs. Therefore, effective 1 October Family memberships will go from \$21.00 per year to \$25.00 per year. Single memberships will rise from \$18.00 to \$20.00. Other data will be passed to you as it becomes available. We at the local Chapter feel this will hurt membership, especially where many people are already trying hard to cope with "ever rising" costs. But one can see the point: As long as Inflation continues to erode the purchasing power of the dollar, there will always be a need for more dollars to meet the cost of operations.

LETTER FROM TWO TRANS-PECOS MEMBERS: GETH AND ED WHITE:

We miss our birding friends in El Paso. We would like to share this beautiful high grasslands country with you (our members), most especially Sunny Glen Canyon (near Alpine, Texas), where we purchased a five acre tract on which we plan to build a solar home.

The wide grassy valley is encircled by low mountains of volcanic origin at close ranges backed up by higher mountains nearby while the valley stretches out fifty miles or so to a mountainous horizon. Mexican walnuts, hackberry and live oaks follow the watered draws with junipers abundant on the higher elevations. Cactus wrens scold from the chollas and Cassin's sparrows compete for attention, skylarking and singing. This is an overlapping range for cardinals and pyrrhuloxias. Blacked-backed form of the Lesser Goldfinch is a breeding bird as are blue grosbeaks and surprisingly, Eastern meadowlarks. We have noted Vermillion Flycatchers and dozens of Phainopepla competing for insects around the dammed up draw which has created a small lake. Mourning doves and White-wingeds are both very vocal, but the most exciting bird of all is the discovery of a pair of Montezuma quail in the canyon.

There is an active bird club here. Compilation of an Alpine checklist is a current work project and a trip to Balmorra is scheduled for August 25th. You are welcome to come.

In late July a group of us accompanied Tony Gallucci to a sinkhole where hundreds of cave swallows were nesting. Tony banded his one-thousandth cave swallow for this season, quite a feat. In banding swallows nesting under a culvert, he had a weird experience. Instead of the expected swallow nestling, he pulled out an immature bat! He found six others in swallows nests in the culvert that cool morning - apparently existing in harmony with each other.

(I thank Geth and Ed White for sharing this experience with us. We will sorely miss their birding with the El Paso group and we will miss their expertise in the days to come as well as on the big bird day counts. - Bob Bleicher.

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