

# the ROADRUNNER . . . . .



Newsletter of El Paso/Trans-Pecos  
Audubon Society - P.O. Box 9655  
El Paso, Texas 79986

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October 1983

## GENERAL MEETING

MON., OCTOBER 17, 1983 at 7:30 PM  
in the Garden Center in Memorial  
Park at 3105 Grant St. Our pro-  
gram this month will be given by  
Mary Dutchover, Supervisor of the  
Visitor Center at McDonald Ob-  
servatory near Ft. Davis, Texas.  
Mrs. Dutchover will present a  
slide show on the observatory  
and a film on The Universe.  
Here's a chance for us to learn  
more about this remarkable ob-  
servatory and to stretch our minds  
to cosmic thoughts. Mrs. Dutch-  
over is driving from Ft. Davis  
to El Paso just for us. Come one,  
come all, to our sidereal soiree!

## FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

SUNSET AT FEATHER LAKE  
SAT., OCTOBER 8. Trip has been  
postponed. Reason is no water  
and no birds.

Davis Mts., Texas  
SAT.-SUN., OCTOBER 22-23. Meet at  
Feather Lake at 7:30 AM Oct. 22.  
Leader will be Joyce Davis (581-  
9470 h, 544-6772 w). Due to the  
drought, few birds are reported  
in this area now. To prepare for  
future trips we will investigate  
the Crow's Nest, Davis Mt. St.  
Park, Madera Canyon and Lake  
Balmorhea. These are some of the  
noted birding sites in the area.  
Campsites with hot showers near-  
by are available in Davis Mt.  
St. Park (Ft. Davis, Tx, 79734) as  
are hook-ups for trailers. Those  
preferring to stay indoors can  
try Indian Lodge (915/426-3254),  
Stone Village Motel or Limpia

Hotel. The Limpia requires a de-  
posit in advance. We will meet  
those who attend the Chihuahuan  
Desert Symposium at the State  
Park about 12 noon C.D.T.

## AGUIRRE SPRING

SAT., OCT. 29. Meet at 6:30 AM  
at the blue spire in Sunrise Sho-  
ping Center, 8500 Syer. Pack a  
lunch. Oak-juniper woodlands and  
stands of Ponderosa pine make the  
birdlife of this popular site in  
the Organ Mts. near Las Cruces  
very different from what we're  
used to around El Paso. Acorn We  
peckers, Steller's and Scrub Jay  
Townsend's Solitaires and Black  
chinned Sparrows all should be  
there. You can walk the 4½-mile  
Pine Tree Trail or a shorter route.  
Leader: John Sproul (545-5157 h,  
541-6126 w).

## SUNSET AT FEATHER LAKE

SUN., NOV. 6. With a whole lot  
of luck from Mother Nature we may  
have water and birds. Come around  
4 PM. Bring picnic lunch if you  
wish.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON., OCT. 10, 7:30 PM. The Board  
will meet at the home of Diane  
Dutton, 4401 Mobile, El Paso (5-  
7306 h, 533-6819 w). All members  
are welcome.



## AUDUBON AWARDS ANNOUNCED

It is with great pride that the  
Audubon Awards Committee announce  
the honorees for this first Aud



bon Award Program in El Paso. These awards programs, started just a year ago, were first suggested by several chapter presidents and Audubon regional staff members to recognize outstanding chapter members and also acknowledge the contributions which particular individuals and other organizations outside of chapters - - government officials, civic organizations, business -- have made to the Audubon Cause. This latter category replaces the Awards to Industry program of the National Audubon Society. And so it was that the Awards Committee was formed last year with Board guidance and approval. It met diligently and as often as members' schedules allowed during the months of February through May.

And now for the honorees! The committee takes special pleasure in announcing the award for outstanding chapter member is (Roll of drums!) none other than (Flourish of trumpets!) the fine and dedicated JOHN SPROUL, our immediate past president. (The committee agreed this is the easiest decision it will ever have for years to come.)

To decide the award for organizations outside the chapter was more time consuming. But it is with great pleasure and satisfaction that the committee announces the recipient to be the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute for its Chihuahuan Desert Film Trilogy. The film series is a project begun three years ago with a grant from the Moody Foundation of Galveston.

Film I, Land of Lost Borders, won the Silver Medal at the New York Film Festival in 1981. Film II, Where Rainbows Wait for Rain, earned the Gold Medal at the 1982 New York Film Festival. The third film, Desert Semaphore, was finished this year. All three films have been awarded the Cine Golden Eagle. Harry Gordon was producer and director of the

series and Marshall Riggan was scriptwriter. /

Berttye Barnhart, Howard Reiquam, Jim Owen, Joyce Davis and Sara Jane Dodds - Award Committee....

ACHTUNG! ATENCION! NOW HEAR THIS!

The date for the Audubon Awards dinner and presentation has been changed from November 4 to November 18, 1983, for the delightful reason that Rhea Copening, our vivacious Audubon Southwest Regional Representative, can attend. Not only can she come to the dinner, she's going to stay over the weekend and give the program at our regular meeting Monday, November 21.

The dinner will begin at 6:30 PM in the Red Room at Gillespie's Steak House, 2819 Montana. The charge for the buffet dinner will be \$9.50 per person. Drink tickets can be purchased for bar service in the Red Room also. Plan to attend this festive special event honoring our John Sproul and the CDRI for its film trilogy. #####

#### AUDUBON COUNCIL OF TEXAS

The Audubon Council of Texas (ACT) the statewide federation of Natl. Audubon Soc. chapters in Texas, will hold its annual meeting in Austin on SAT., OCT. 15. High on the agenda will be discussion of the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund established last spring by the Texas Legislature. ACT's board of directors proposes that development of this fund, through successful sales of nongame stamps/decals, be the council's top priority for the year ahead. Other proposed action priorities:

- Promote wildlife preservation projects by local chapters.
- Participate in the sunset review of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (TPWD).



- Monitor the use of steel shot in Texas.

What are your thoughts on these priorities? Got other ideas? Please pass them along to ACT delegate John Sproul (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w).

The meeting also will feature chapter-activity reports, an introduction to TPWD's nongame wildlife program and a roundtable discussion on chapter-based land preservation strategies. A Chili dinner will wind things up on Saturday, with several tempting field trips set for Sunday. Contact John for more details if you wish to attend.

#### WHAT HAPPENED?

The Sept. 10-11 trip to s.e. New Mexico was lightly attended but offered plenty of variety for those who took part. At Rattlesnake Springs, we learned how feisty a Summer Tanager can be when caught in 1 of Steve West's mist nets. As a thank you to Steve for demonstrating birdbanding techniques to us, we arranged to have an Eastern Kingbird appear for him to find and photograph as he left the springs. At L. McMillan, n. of Carlsbad, we found herons, egrets, ducks and shorebirds by the 100s. In the Guadalupe Mts., we found rain. At Sitting Bull Falls, we discovered a beautiful setting and also 2 tarantulas. And a return via El Paso Gap and Dell City gave us a chance to visit Dog Canyon on the w. side of the Guads. We found 61 bird species in all. Jo and Evan Nagel and John Sproul made the trip. George Ferguson put in a cameo appearance at Rattlesnake Springs.

15 nature buffs willingly followed Clark Champie up a trail to Indian Springs Sept. 17. Along the trail at least 20 flower species were seen including the love-

ly Cleome and Senna. There were attractions overhead also as a Hawk, 2 Golden Eagles and White-throated Swifts soared. Along the trail Virginia's Warbler and Brown and Green-tailed Towhees were seen. Bird species totaled 15. Identification of Flora in the Franklins should be easier now because of Clark Champie's easy, and very informative style. Thanks a lot, Mr. Champie!

The morning of Sept. 25 was cool and nice and 13 birders responded to the call to walk Memorial Park. We were happy to see some new faces joining us. 20 species of birds were seen. These included Pyrrhuloxias, Wilson's Warblers, a Green tailed Towhee, a female Western Tanager and a Western Wood Pewee. A lone Ringed Turtle Dove proved a new sighting for some.

#### CONSERVATION CAPSULES

**AIR QUALITY:** The Texas Air Control Board (TACB) wants to get the lead out of El Paso's air. Studies in 1982 revealed that El Paso at times exceeds the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for lead, with ASARCO, Inc. and motor vehicles the 2 main culprit. As a result, the TACB has proposed revisions to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for lead in El Paso Co. and companion rules to carry out the revised plan. The target of the proposed rules is ASARCO. The proposed SIP revisions and the proposed rules will be the subject of a public hearing in El Paso on TUES., OCT. 11, beginning at 7 PM in the City Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, 2 Civic Center Plaza.

(cont. on p.6)

The deadline for the November Roadrunner will be Friday, Oct. 21.





OBSERVATIONS - August 24 to September 21

A very exciting month of birding (rivaling last fall) was to be had in late August and September. A total of 160 species was recorded, 15 of which were of casual or accidental status (including 1 first record). Noteworthy totals included 16 warbler species and 12 flycatcher species.

LOONS - FALCONS

Three Great Egrets were at the McNary Reservoir 8-27 and 9-3 (BZ). An adult and 2 imm. YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS were seen in amongst 50+ Black-crowns at Tornillo 8-27 (BZ). Two hundred N. Pintail at McNary 9-3 was an extremely high number for such an early date (BZ). An early Am. Wigeon at McNary 9-3 was noteworthy (BZ). Two Harris' Hawks were spotted between Tornillo and Acala 9-3 (BZ). A lone Osprey soared over the river near Randel's Pool 9-12 (BZ).

QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

A winter plumaged Semipalmated Plover was at the Tallmon Dairy Pond (TDP) 9-14 (BZ). Fifty Long-billed Curlew flew over Santa Teresa Country Club (STCC) 9-5 (JD). Upland Sandpipers were once again seen in good numbers this fall with 39 individuals reported between 8-27 and 9-3 (BZ). Solitary Sandpipers were present in good numbers all month at TDP. A high count of 21 was seen 9-7 (BZ). Stilt Sandpipers were also present at TDP from 9-5 through 9-21 with a high of 8 individuals. A lone Pectoral Sandpiper flushed from an alfalfa field in the upper valley 9-2 (BZ). Up to a dozen Baird's Sandpipers frequented TDP throughout the month, and an unbelievable number of 58 was seen on the STCC sod fields 9-17 (BZ,KZ). A SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER (1st fall record) was studied closely on the mudflats at Tornillo 8-27 (BZ). An early Ring-billed Gull was at Tornillo 8-27 (BZ). Four Forster's Terns were at McNary 9-4, while 1 was sighted in the upper valley 9-8 (BZ). A juv. male WHIP-POOR-WILL (3rd record-1st fall) was flushed from the ground at Owen's Farm 8-30 (KZ). Presumably the same bird (also a juv. male) was photographed at Durling's Farm 9-4 (BZ,JD). Common Nighthawks were unusually numerous with 12 individuals being seen from

various localities around El Paso (BZ, KZ,JD). A female Calliope Hummingbird at Randel's Pool 8-29 was noteworthy(BZ)

FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

The only Cassin's Kingbird of the month was at Owen's Farm 9-14 (BZ). Without a doubt, the bird-of-the-month (perhaps bird of the year) was a singing ACADIAN FLYCATCHER at Owen's Farm 8-29 (BZ). The bird was relocated again that same afternoon (BZ,KZ), and the next morning (KZ), but attempts to record its voice were unsuccessful. Numerous close photos were taken and, should they be accepted by the New Mexico Ornithological Society's records committee, would provide a first New Mexico state record!! It should be noted that 2 hurricanes (Alicia & Barry) had hit the Texas Coast area (where the bird is a common migrant) only a few days before. An interesting compilation of empidonax flycatcher reports for the month is as follows: 22 Willow, 21 Western, 9 Dusky, 1 HAMMOND'S, 1 Gray, 1 Acadian, and 11 empid. species. A PURPLE MARTIN fed with Barn Swallows over the Fort Bliss Sewage Ponds (FBSP) 9-18 (JD,BJ). This provides only the 3rd area record - the first for fall. A Curve-billed Thrasher off McNutt Rd. 9-17 was noteworthy (BZ,KZ). Runner-up for bird-of-the-month was a SWAINSON'S THRUSH (2nd record-1st fall) photographed at Durling's Farm 9-17 (BZ,KZ).

WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

A female Black-and-white Warbler fed in the elms at Durling's Farm 9-14 (BZ). Single Nashville Warblers were present at Durling's 9-11 (BZ) and 9-17 (KZ,BZ). A male HERMIT WARBLER was photographed at Durling's 9-9 (4th record) (BZ), and was seen again several hours later in the same location (AG,MG). A Black-throated Gray warbler at Horizon City 9-15 was the only one reported (AG,MG). An OVENBIRD (4th record) was photographed at Durling's Farm 9-14 as it quietly foraged under a Russian Olive (BZ). N. Waterthrushes were, surprisingly enough, 1 of the most common warbler species during the month. A total of 21 individuals on 13 different



dates was reported (BZ,KZ,JD,JN,JoD). Undoubtedly some of these were the same individuals, although birds were seen in 5 different locations. This tops all previous waterthrush records combined over the last 8 years!! An imm. male Am. Redstart was at Durling's Farm 9-16 (BZ). Late Yellow-breasted Chats were at Durling's 9-8 and 9-10 (BZ). Lone Summer Tanagers were seen at Durling's on several occasions (BZ,KZ). Meanwhile, W. Tanagers were widely reported with a high count of 7 at Durling's 9-5 (BZ). A female Indigo Bunting fed in the company of a small group of Lazulis at Durling's 9-8 (BZ). A flock of 3 female Painted Buntings foraged in the weedy growth at Durling's 9-14 (BZ). DICK-CISSELS were reported on 4 occasions: a female at Owen's Farm 8-30 (KZ), an imm. male at Owen's 8-30 (BZ), an imm. male at Owen's 9-11 (BZ), and 2 imm. males at FBSP 9-18 (JD,BJ). Clay-colored Sparrows were numerous for about a week in mid-Sept. at Durling's (BZ,KZ). Three white-crowned Sparrows at Durling's 9-17 provided the earliest fall record ever (BZ,KZ).

CONTRIBUTORS: Joyce Davis (JoD), Jeff Donaldson, Al & Madeline Gavit, Bob Johnson, Jo Nagel, Bettie Roberts, Barry Zimmer, Kevin Zimmer.

NEWS FROM OUTSIDE: Although outside of our checklist area, some very impressive species sighted nearby during the month deserve note: Roseate Spoonbill at Bitter Lakes NWR, NM; Red Phalarope at Holloman Lakes, NM (KZ et al. -photo); Dunlin at Holloman Lakes (KZ-photo); 2 Peregrine Falcons at Holloman Lakes (KZ et al.); an Aztec Thrush at Madera Canyon, Az.; N. Parula Warbler at Percha Dam State Park, NM (BZ,KZ); a Crescent-chested Warbler (1st U.S. record) at Ft. Huachuca, Az.; and a Bobolink at Burn Lake, Las Cruces, NM (Randy Hill et al.).

NOTE: Lest this column become nothing more than the observations of 2 or 3 observers, I beseech all of you to get out in the field as often as possible and report your sightings to me. Please call immediately (545-5184) when you have sighted a noteworthy bird. Time is of the essence in documenting rare species.

I enjoy hearing from all of you - even when you haven't seen a rare bird. So please call with questions or sightings any time between 8am-11pm. If you get no answer, continue calling periodically until you reach me. Thank you.  
/Observations Editor - Barry Zimmer/

#### SECOND CHIHUAHUAN DESERT SYMPOSIUM

Botany, vertebrate biology, invertebrate biology, plant resources and agriculture, archeology and anthropology, parks and recreation, utilization and management of ecological resources: How does each fit into the complex mosaic of the Chihuahuan Desert Region? The 2nd Chihuahuan Desert Symposium, to be held in Alpine, Oct 20-21, should offer considerable insight. For registration and program details, contact: Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute, P.O.Box 1334, Alpine, TX 79831 (915/837-8370) or John Sproul (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w).

#### 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 checks payable to National Audubon Society. Mail to Bob Johnson, 5109 Paris, El Paso, TX 79924.

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5-The Roadrunner



**RECYCLING:** Changes are in the offing once again for El Paso's hard-pressed recycling program. Starting in early Nov, the city's Sanitation Dept. plans to make Friday and Saturday the collection days for recyclables. A crew that collects only recyclables on those days will make all the pick-ups. This approach should avoid the present problem of sanitation workers failing to keep recyclables separate from other, nonrecyclable trash they collect. The recycling crew will work in different zones of the city on different days, and each zone will be visited twice per month. Look for publicity on this new approach in early Oct. Meanwhile, response to Mayor Rogers' pitch last June for neighborhood and civic groups to recycle and keep the profits for their own programs has thus far been underwhelming. The opportunity remains open, though, for any group willing to try it.

**WETLANDS:** Several important bills concerning wetlands acquisition and protection are now before the U.S. Congress. Two, S 1329 introduced by Sen. Chafee of Rhode Island and HR 3082 by Rep. Forsythe of New Jersey, are known collectively as the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1983. Both would:

- extend the Wetlands Loan Act (WLA) for 10 years,
- delete the WLA provision requiring repayment of loans with 75% of the annual receipts from federal duck-stamp sales,
- gradually increase duck-stamp fees from \$7.50 to \$15 by 1988,
- authorize charging an entrance fee at selected national wildlife refuges, and
- authorize up to \$25 million annually for federal wetlands acquisition.

The Chafee bill would provide up to \$50 million annually to states specifically for wetlands acquisition. The Forsythe bill, as amended in subcommittee, would provide these funds to states both for wetlands acquisition and for wetlands management and improvements and would provide them only if Congress appropriates them each year. On Sept 22, the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee reported the Forsythe bill to the full House. The Senate Environment

and Public Works Committee was scheduled to consider the Chafee bill on Sept 28, with a favorable report also expected.

**FOREST SERVICE/BLM WORKSHOP:** Do you realize that the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) proposes to designate the South Fork of Cave Ck. Canyon in Arizona's Chiricahua Mts. a zoological-botanical area and eliminate motor-vehicle traffic and camping from South Fork? That the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes to establish a 8,947-acre Area of Critical Environmental Concern for scenic resources in the Organ Mts. near Las Cruces? Both actions were proposed through the land-management planning processes of these 2 federal agencies. Public participation is a key part of these processes, and to help ensure informed public participation, The Wilderness Society is conducting workshops throughout the nation this fall on USFS and BLM planning. We are fortunate to be having 1 in El Paso, tentatively in mid-November. Watch for details in the November RR.  
/John Sproul/

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