

The Roadrunner

Volume 18 (4)

EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

May 1988

GENERAL MEETING

MON., MAY 16, 7:30 PM in the Garden Center, 3105 Grant in Memorial Park. Robin Baxter, manager of The Nature Conservancy's Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Sanctuary (PSCS), will present a program on birds and wildlife of s.e. Arizona. Robin has managed the PSCS since 1980 and also manages the nearby Canelo Hills Cienega. The PSCS, though, with its highly diverse birdlife (over 200 species) is his main focus of attention. PSCS consists of 312 acres of deciduous riparian woodland along a 1.5-mile stretch of Sonoita Creek. Fremont cottonwoods, some 100 feet tall, are the dominant trees. It's the home of bobcat, javelina, badger, coati and more. But the main attraction is its birds, many of them Mexican species found in the U.S. only in s.e. Arizona. Birders from all over the world come here.

If you intend to go on the May 28 field trip, this program is a must. And even if you can't make the trip, plan to attend. We're delighted to have Robin as our guest speaker. This is our last general meeting until fall. Did we save the best for last? Come and find out.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON., MAY 9, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet at the home of Jane Fowler, 1594-B Bengal Dr. (598-2448). All members are welcome.

SANCTUARY WORKDAYS

May 22

June 25

BOOK FAIR COMIN' UP SOON

Saturday, May 7, is the day to buy those books at B DALTON Bookseller, Cielo Vista Mall. Plan to come, browse and BUY. Chapter members will be "on duty" at the table in front of the store.

YOUR HELP NEEDED

This is wildlife rehabilitator Helen Bigelow's busiest time of year. In addition to sick or injured birds, she is now overwhelmed with young birds that have fallen from nests and, for whatever reason, can't be reunited with their parents. This is the time of year when Helen has many hungry mouths to feed and feed and feed---from early morning 'til bedtime (the birds', not Helen's).

How can you assist this wonderful lady? By acting as a courier and getting the birds to her so that her very full hours can be spent as efficiently as possible. If you can help, please call Helen (882-2910) or Jane Fowler (598-2448) and leave your name and phone number. We'd like to have a list of drivers; if one isn't available, another can be called quickly. Sometimes a driver is needed on short notice---often life or death is dependent on how quickly the young bird can be fed. Helen lives in Anthony, New Mexico and is one of our area's few licensed wildlife rehabilitators. When you meet her, you'll never forget her! Please call and offer her a hand during her nonstop spring.

FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

RIO BOSQUE PARK

SUN., MAY 8. Meet at Feather Lake (9500 N. Loop) at 3:45 PM. We'll see some migrants and possibly Painted Buntings. The Socorro sewage ponds should provide water birds. Leader: Al Gavit (852-4217), Asst. Leader: Pat Brasfield (584-8739).

MEMORIAL PARK

WED., MAY 11. Meet at the Garden Center (3105 Grant) at 7 AM. We'll be looking for spring migrants, especially warblers. Total time--about 2½ hours, but feel free to leave earlier if you wish. Leader: Jane Fowler (598-2448), Asst. Leader: Jo Nagel (566-2143).

SPOTTED OWL SURVEY, LINCOLN NATL. FOREST
SAT.-SUN., MAY 14-15. The discovery last July of breeding Spotted Owls on a timber-sale tract in the Sacramento Mts. prompted the U.S. Forest Service to begin a status survey for this species on the Lincoln Natl. Forest. On this field trip, we'll see what the survey work is like, maybe even find some owls. Saturday morning, we'll drive to our campsite along the Sacramento R., where we'll meet our Forest Service hosts. We'll spend the day visiting timber-sale tracts and riparian-area management projects, looking for Sacramento Mountain salamanders (a State-listed endangered species) and doing no small amount of birding. After dark, we'll search for Spotted Owls. More birding will be in order Sunday morning before a return to El Paso that afternoon. This trip is limited to 20 participants. Leader: John Sproul (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w). Please call John for reservations and information.

UPPER VALLEY

SAT., MAY 21. Meet at I-10 and Transmountain Rd. at 7:30 AM. A memorable trip along the river in Anthony and on to Vado to observe the egret rookery. We plan a stop at Helen Bigelow's home and will see where this tiny dynamo performs her miracles. The group must be limited at Helen's, so call the trip leader if you wish to go. Leader: Sarah Jane Dodds (533-4150), Asst. Leader: Robert Doss (581-8090).

MEMORIAL PARK

WED., MAY 25. A repeat of May 11--same time, same place. Leader: Jo Nagel (566-2143).

RAMSEY CANYON/PATAGONIA-SONOITA CREEK SANCTUARY IN S.E. ARIZONA

SAT.-MON., MAY 28-30. Driving time to Sierra Vista is approximately 5 hours. Campers will be staying in Miller Canyon (no facilities) which is 7 miles s. of Sierra Vista. Some mobile home parks will accept over-nighters. There are several good motels; two possibilities are Motel 6 (1-505-891-6161) and Best Western, Thunder Mountain Inn (1-800-528-1234). For those driving in on Saturday, we'll check the San Pedro R. which is a good area for Abert's Towhees. In the afternoon, we will go into Huachuca Canyon where the Elegant Trogan and Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers have been seen. On Sunday morning, a trip to Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Sanctuary is scheduled. This area could produce the Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet and the Rose-throated Becard. Monday morning--it's on to Mile Hi and Ramsey Canyon Preserve to see the Blue-throated, Magnificent and Broad-billed hummingbirds and more! If you wish to go on this fun-filled weekend, call Bob Johnson (751-0125 h, 757-1876 w) for meeting times and map. A.L.: Ray Waite (751-1849).

FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS

SUN., JUNE 5. Meet at the Crossroads Pond (Doniphan and Country Club Rd.) at 7:30 AM. The trip will be an introduction to waterfowl and some summer residents and will last about 3 hours. Leader: Larry Jordan (833-5969), A.L.: Joyce Davis (581-9470).

SAT., JUNE 11. West Franklins (John Sproul).

SAT.-SUN., JUNE 18-19. Gila Natl Forest (Tom Baker).

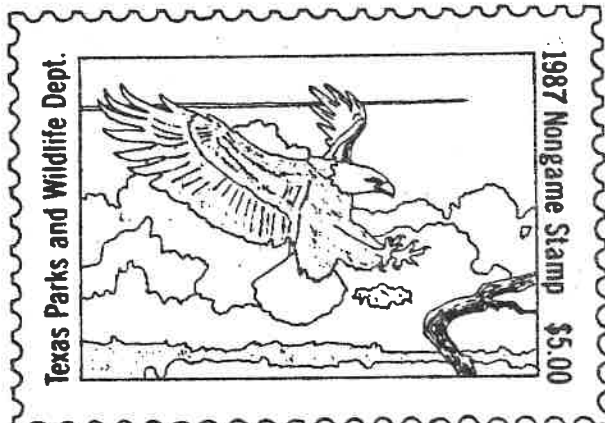
SAT.-MON., JULY 2-4. Santa Fe/Randal Davey Audubon Center (Bob Johnson)

(see Bird Banding, cont. on p. 5)

TEXAS NONGAME STAMP, DECAL AND ART PRINT

A pair of American Kestrels by noted Texas artist Charles Beckendorf of Fredericksburg will be featured on the 1988 Texas Nongame Stamp and associated limited-edition art print. Also, the Texas Nongame Decal will make its return this year, back by popular demand!

You can place orders for the print through the publisher: Collectors Covey, P.O. Box 568448, Dallas, TX 75356-8448 (800/521-2403). The price (one stamp included) is \$140. Since 1985, royalties from nongame print sales have added \$315,000 to the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (TPWD). Interested in placing an order? Don't wait too long: the edition size will be limited to the number of orders received by June 30.



Are nongame wildlife and endangered species important Texas resources? You bet! So give 'em the support they deserve: buy a TEXAS NONGAME STAMP. You'll be contributing directly to the nongame wildlife and endangered species programs of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

	Qty.	Each	Total
1987 Nongame Stamp		\$5	
1986 Nongame Stamp		\$5	
Amt. Enclosed			

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Please make checks payable to:

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

The 1988 nongame stamp and decal will be available in August. Meanwhile, you can still get the 1986 (Attwater's Prairie-Chicken) and 1987 (Bald Eagle) stamps at our general meetings or by using the order form below. All proceeds from our stamp sales go to TPWD's Nongame Fund.

FEATHER LAKE NEWS

Our April workday at Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary (9500 N. Loop, 0.3 mi. w. of Americas Ave.) saw lots of activity: We installed an artificial burrow for Burrowing Owls, did battle with tumbleweed and saltcedar seedlings, cleaned the tool shed, planted honey mesquite and tornillo seeds and picked up trash. Thanks go to Paul Bingham, Jeannette Cole, Joyce Davis, Jane Fowler, Jo Nagel, John Sproul, and Ginny, Tom, Sara, Mary, Katie, Leah and Sunny Baker for their help. Upcoming workdays are Sun., May 22 and Sat., June 25. The May session starts at 8 AM. Will the fence bordering the inlet be installed this time? Come and find out. /John Sproul/

AUDUBON COUNCIL OF TEXAS SPRING MEETING

The Frontera Audubon Society invites all you beach lovers and birdwatchers to the tip of Texas on May 20-22 for the Spring 1988 meeting of the Audubon Council of Texas (ACT). The Rio Grande Valley is considered one of the 10 best birding areas in the U.S., with 3 national wildlife refuges, several State parks, and Mexico just across the Rio Grande.

Meetings will be held at the Holiday Inn. Attendees will hear what is being planned to promote the Texas Nongame Fund and how ACT will participate in that program. You will visit the Pan American Univ. Marine Lab and hear from Dr. Frank Judd, Director, about some of the ecological problems of Padre Island and the Laguna Madre. National Audubon Society 1987 Conservationist of the Year, Cyndy Chapman, will describe what is being done (and needs to be done) to preserve this valuable natural area.

The members of Frontera Audubon hope you will join them for a weekend of fun and

fellowship on South Padre Island! They promise many birds and delicious seafood! For registration information and other details, contact chapter ACT delegate John Sproul (545-5157).

KAY THURMAN WINS 1988 SCHOLARSHIP

Our 1988 scholarship recipient? She's Kay Thurman, a science teacher at St. Clement's Episcopal School in El Paso. Kay will use her scholarship to attend an Introductory Field Ecology course for educators at the Audubon Camp in Greenwich, Connecticut this summer. Congratulations, Kay!

The tasks of organizing this year's scholarship program, reviewing applications and selecting a recipient fell to our able scholarship committee chaired by Jeanne French and including Pam Henderson, John Sproul and Gloria Woelfel. Thanks to all for a job well done. And thanks, of course, to you for making our scholarship program possible. It's your participation in the annual Birdathon that puts dollars in our Scholarship Fund.



AUDUBON ADVENTURES

Take an Audubon Adventure
Into the world of nature,
And see the world of nature
From nature's point of view.

-Bill Oliver

Audubon Adventures, the youth education program of the National Audubon Society, gives over 200,000 children in over 6,500 classrooms nationwide a chance to "see the world of nature from nature's point of view." Geared for kids in grades 3-6, the program is built around Audubon Adventures, a newspaper issued bimonthly during the school year. Each issue features a different natural history theme. This year, for example, marine mammals, spiders and snakes, endangered species, weather and microclimates, songbirds, and the Arctic tundra have been the subjects. An en-

rolled class gets up to 32 copies of each issue, plus a companion Leader's Guide of background information and activity ideas for the teacher. Each student also gets a membership card and sticker.

For each of the last 2 school years, our chapter has enrolled 15 Trans-Pecos classrooms in the Audubon Adventures program. We hope to expand our efforts in 1988-89. Our recent Birdathon will fund some classrooms. But for others, we'll need to seek sponsors among our members and friends.

The enrollment fee for the 1988-89 school year remains \$25 per class. How about sponsoring your child's or your grandchild's elementary school class? Or maybe the class of that teacher friend of yours? Or any one of the Trans-Pecos classes that seek enrollment in Audubon Adventures through our chapter? There is no better investment.

If you would like to sponsor a class or want more information about Audubon Adventures, please contact our Audubon Adventures coordinator Peggy Riede (833-4881). /John Sproul/

EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY Officers

President	Tom Baker	877-3365
President-elect	John Sproul	545-5157
Vice-president	Sid Shepperd	566-2162
Secretary	Ann Schultis	584-7382
Treasurer	Bart Rumaker	544-6432
Elected Directors		
	Anne Hussmann	584-4081
	Paul Bingham	755-9496
	Larry Jordan	833-5969
Committees		
Conservation	Gloria Woelfel	833-7523
Education	John Sproul	545-5157
Field Trips	Bob Johnson	751-0125
Hospitality	Anne Hussmann	584-4081
Membership	Neil Keith	778-5937
Programs	Nancy Wilson	833-3907
Publications	Sarah Dodds	533-4150
Publicity		
Sanctuary	Sid Shepperd	566-2162
Ways & Means	Larry Jordan	833-5969
ACT Delegate	John Sproul	545-5157
Clean Air Coalition Representative	Joyce Davis	581-9470
Franklin Mts. Coalition Representative	Gloria Woelfel	833-7523

(cont. from p. 2)

OBSERVATIONS

BIRD BANDING

If enough people are interested, we can schedule a trip to the Carlsbad area to work with Steve West on bird banding. We could go to the caverns during the summer for Cave Swallows or to a rookery near Loving, NM in the latter part of June for herons. If interested, call Bob Johnson (751-0125 h, 757-1876 w).

LOWER RIO GRANDE ON TV

The National Wildlife Federation's 2nd "Conserving America" television special airs Wed. evening, May 4 on public television. Check local listings for the viewing time. It's titled "The Rivers", and one featured subject will be conservation efforts in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

NEW TEXAS RARE BIRD ALERT

Houston Audubon Society has a new state-wide rare bird alert, the Lone Star Rare Bird Tape. From in Texas, call 800/TBT-BIRD. From out of state, call 713/747-8826.

Other Texas rare bird alerts:

Austin	512/451-3308
Corpus Christi area	512/364-3634
Ft. Worth	817/237-3209
Rio Grande Valley	512/565-6773
San Antonio	512/733-8306
Texas Coast	713/821-2846

CHAPTER DISPLAY

We wish to express our appreciation to those who volunteered their time throughout the weekend at our display in Cielo Vista Mall. Several chapter activities were featured including the Birdathon, Project WILD and Feather Lake. Thanks go to these good folks who told shoppers what Audubon is all about: Tom and Ginny Baker, Dayle Edwards, Marilyn Fankhauser, Jane Fowler, Elza Gilboe, Anne Hussmann, Bob Johnson, Neil Keith, Bart Rumaker, John Sproul, Norma A. Vargas and Nancy Wilson. And a special thanks to Neil Keith for his time and effort organizing and transporting the display and materials.

March 21 - April 17

Sightings by a field trip member are noted by a "+" after the leader's initials. Sightings in an observer's yard are indicated by an "*" before his/her initials. Some birds are nesting now, so please call me on any observations of nesting species.

CR - Crossroads Pond
 DP - Doniphan Playa (remains)
 FB - Ft. Bliss Ponds
 FL - Feather Lake
 GL - Gary Lane Pond
 IHS - Indian Hot Springs
 ML - Madden Lake
 MtS - Mt. Shadows Lake
 QL - Quitman levee

LOONS - FALCONS

The rarest sighting so far this year was a PACIFIC LOON which dropped, exhausted, into a resident's yard 3/31. It was taken to local veterinarian Jim Koschmann, who identified it and turned it over to Helen Bigelow. She released it at GL where the bird remained through 4/6 (JS, JF, NH). An Eared Grebe was seen at CP 4/3 (JD). Double-crested Cormorants were found at IHS 3/27 (JD+). Twelve to 15 Great Egrets and several Snowy Egrets were spotted at QL 3/27 (LJ). Black-crowned Night-Herons were found at IHS 3/27 (JD+), ML 4/4 (JD) and FL 4/17 (JS). White-faced Ibis were seen near Durling's farm 4/9 (TB). Wood Ducks were sighted at GL 4/1 (JS) and 4/3 (JS, JF). A pair of Blue-winged Teal was found at FL 4/17 (JS). Buffleheads were spotted at ML 3/27 (JD+), CP 4/3 (JS) and ML 4/4 (JD). A Common Merganser was seen near IHS 3/27 (JD+). Two pairs of Harris' Hawks were found near Ft. Hancock 3/27 (LJ). A Golden Eagle was seen in the Franklins 4/5 (TB). A Peregrine Falcon was sighted at FB 4/3 (LJ).



QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

Black-necked Stilts were found at DP 4/6 (JD) and FB 4/10 (JS). Greater Yellowlegs and a Spotted Sandpiper were seen at FL 4/17 (JS). A Whimbrel and a Long-billed Curlew were spotted at MtS 4/13 (A&MG). A curlew was also at FL 4/17 (JS). Wilson's Phalaropes were found at ML 4/4 (JD), FB 4/10 (JS) and MtS 4/13 (A&MG). A Bonaparte's Gull was found at MtS 4/13 (A&MG). Two Burrowing Owls were seen at FL 3/27 (JD,AS,JS) and near Zaragoza Rd. 4/2 (JS,JF).

FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

Two Vermilion Flycatchers were seen on the road to IHS 3/27 (LJ). A Blue Jay was reported from the westside 4/10 (*LR). Single Bewick's Wrens were found at IHS 3/27 (JD+) and 4/17 FL (JS). A House Wren was spotted at FL 4/17 (JS). Marsh Wrens were heard at DP 3/26 (JD) and FL 4/2 (JS). Cedar Waxwings have been in the Mt. Park area several weeks (*JB). Four Phainopeplas--one on a nest--were seen on Jordan Dr. 4/5 and 4/7 (JD).

WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

A male Lucy's Warbler was seen at Memorial Park 4/5 (LJ). A female N. Parula was spotted at FL 4/17 (JS). A MacGillivray's was reported from Randel's Pool 4/9 (LJ). Male N. Cardinals were reported in n.e. El Paso (*BJ)(*JB). Rufous-sided Towhees were found near Zaragoza Rd. 3/27 (JS), Horizon City 4/13 (*A&MG) and e. El Paso 4/14-15 (*BR), also in e. Franklins 4/9 (JG+). A flock of Lark Buntings was seen at FL 4/17 (JS). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were sighted at DP 3/31(JD) and MtS 4/13 (A&MG). A Hooded Oriole is still being seen in Mt. Park area (*JB). Pine Siskins were seen on Lombardy 4/5 (JD).

OBSERVERS: Tom Baker, Helen Bigelow, Janet Brockmoller, Joyce Davis, Jane Fowler, Al & Madeline Gavit, Joe Guinn, Nuala Heitzman, Bob Johnson, Larry Jordan, Jim Koschmann, Linda Riviera, Bettie Roberts, Ann Schultis, John Sproul.
/Joyce Davis, Observations Editor/
(581-9470 h, 544-6772 w)



JUST A REMINDER

Be saving those white elephants and any saleable items for our rummage sale this fall. Call Bob Johnson if you have items to be picked up and stored.

project WILD

A Project WILD Teacher-In-Service Workshop is scheduled for May 14, 9 AM - 4:15 PM at H. E. Charles Jr. High, 4904 Trojan. It will be applicable for 6 hours of teacher-in-service credit or 1 hour of credit at UTEP. The workshop will be led by Gloria Woelfel and Jeanne French, Project WILD Facilitators for Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept. No fee is required for the workshop. Participants will receive a Elementary/Secondary Project WILD manual, supplementary materials and will tour the Franklin Mountains State Park. For additional info, please call: Gloria Woelfel (833-7523) or Jeanne French (592-1660).

PROJECT WILD IS.....

- * an understanding of wildlife
- * learning by doing and experiencing
- * student enthusiasm
- * thoughtful stewardship of our wild heritage

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the following new members: Joyce Anderson, David I. Ausderau, Russell Barker, Mrs. Graham Blair, Bryn Ebert, M. Eppler, Thomas Evans, Russell Farr, Charles Hall, Christopher Hatch, Kim Leonard, E. Lindke, Velvie O'Neill, Judy Pester, Jesus Rodriguez, Victoria Sieber, Bryan Slayton, Jack Sumner.
Transfer into chapter: Joanne Chapman.

SHRIMP BOYCOTT IN EFFECT

Texas environmental leaders are calling for an immediate boycott of all shrimp and shrimp products originating from Texas and Louisiana. This action results from U.S. District Court Judge Patrick Carr's ruling that the laws requiring shrimpers to use Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) on their nets will not be enforced.

H.E.A.R.T. (Help Endangered Animals - Ridley Turtles), H.A.R.T. (Houston Animal Rights Team), and the Houston Audubon Society are joining forces to declare Texas a "shrimp-free zone" until TED regulations are fully implemented. A Louisiana shrimper's organization filed suit with the U.S. District Court in New Orleans, demanding that they be exempted from the Endangered Species Act which protects sea turtles who are killed in shrimping nets. The shrimpers' case was dismissed for lack of merit. The shrimpers appealed this decision and asked for an injunction allowing them NOT to use TEDs while waiting for the appeal to be heard. Judge Patrick Carr of the U.S. District Court granted the injunction.

In February, 1987, an agreement was reached by all concerned parties - including shrimpers, environmentalists, and the National Marine Fisheries Service - that allowed for a one year delay in implementing TED regulations on a phased-in basis. Even before that delay expired, Texas and Louisiana shrimpers reneged on the agreement. As the regulations have come into effect around the rest of the country, the regulations have been accepted and complied with.

"We urge all friends of the environment to refrain from purchasing Texas and Louisiana shrimp until there is total enforcement of the TED regulations," said Jane Scheidler, spokesperson for H.E.A.R.T. Houston Audubon Society president Ted Eubanks thinks this issue is much broader than just shrimp and turtles. He says, "Any challenge to the Endangered Species Act is a threat to the most basic principle of environmental protection". Sean Hawkins, president of the Houston Animal Rights Team, adds, "If there is no protection for sea turtles under the Endangered Species Act, then what line of defense is there for the bald eagle, the wolf, or the grizzly?"

PAST FIELD TRIPS

On March 19-20, John Sproul and Steve West showed 14 interested members The Nature Conservancy's Gypsum Dunes Preserve, located east of Dell City. In the afternoon, we went on to Carlsbad Caverns and assisted Steve in catching and banding some of the Cave Swallows. We drove to Rattlesnake Springs on Sun morning and saw a Brown Thrasher, Eastern Bluebird, Carolina Wren and Eastern Phoebe. Our last stop was Lake McMillan where we spotted numerous White Pelicans. Our thanks to Steve for a most interesting weekend.

Joyce Davis led the trip to Indian Hot Springs on March 27. Twenty-seven species were seen by 7 birders including a Common Merganser and Double-crested Cormorants.

Joe Guinn took 6 birders into the canyons of the East Franklins on April 9. They ended the morning at Apache Springs. Eighteen species were seen that morning, Crissal Thrashers and Rufous-crowned Sparrows among them.

Bob Johnson was guide for the Big Bend tour April 15-17. Ten tireless people made the 7 hour drive to the Park and saw many great birds. The Elf Owl, Bell's Vireo,

Ms. Scheidler, Vice-President, Environmental Affairs, Houston Audubon Soc., says each of us can help by:

- calling the Texas Shrimp Association (512-476-8446) and telling them you won't buy shrimp until the TED regulations are complied with;
- informing your U.S. Senators and Representatives that you are joining the boycott of shrimp products. Ask them to support strict enforcement of the TED regulations and the Endangered Species Act; and
- share this article with friends and ask for their help also.



(Past Field Trips cont.)

Golden-fronted Woodpecker and Long-billed Thrasher were among the favorites. /Bob Johnson, Field Trips Chair/

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
Membership Application

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of its local chapter, El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society. Send AUDUBON magazine and membership card to:

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....Zip.....

Membership category desired:

Introductory Membership (1st year only)/\$20

Individual/\$30

Family/\$38

Student/\$18

Senior Citizen

Individual/\$21

Senior Citizen

Family/\$23

Please make checks payable to National Audubon Society. Send check & this form to AUDUBON, % N. Keith, 1525 Meadowview, El Paso, TX 79925. Send your renewals directly to Natl Audubon Soc.

LOCAL CHAPTER

EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS

W10

7XCH

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society
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El Paso, Tx 79986

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W10
NOV88

Put 'Em Back!

What to do when your child adopts a baby bird

by Gail Lawrence from *The Beginning Naturalist*
and again in the 1980 May/June issue of *Bird Watcher's Digest*.

Every spring the "baby bird crisis" occurs. By May many birds have hatched their first broods and are feeding them as the nestlings grow their feathers and learn to fly. Baby birds have a way of tumbling out of their nests, and children have a way of finding them and bringing them home. What should a family do if faced with this "crisis"?

First, take the bird back to the exact spot where it was found. Look carefully for a nearby nest. If it is accessible, put the bird gently back into the nest. Contrary to popular belief, the mother bird will not reject a baby that has been handled by human beings. If you find the nest and return the baby, you have done the best you can do.

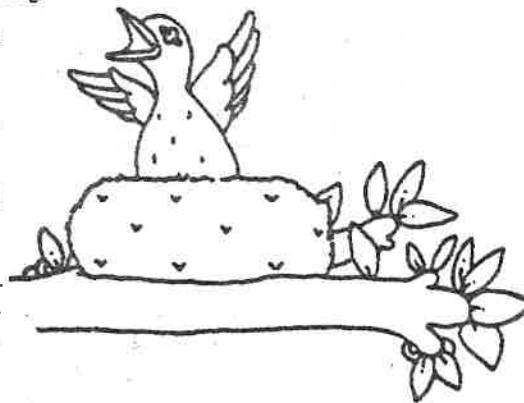
As a next-best measure, tie a small box onto a branch of a tree or shrub near where the bird was found, and put the baby bird in the box. Off the ground, the bird will be out of the reach of neighborhood cats and dogs.

The third best thing you can do is simply to leave the bird in the exact spot where it was found. Parent birds are accustomed to having their young out of the nest, and they will feed them on the ground. Of course, the baby bird is more vulnerable on the ground than it is in the nest or in a box, but it still stands a better chance of surviving under its own parents' care

than under human care. If the baby is found near a house it is better to keep dogs and cats indoors than to bring the bird in to protect it.

The adoption of a baby bird will probably result in failure. It might even cause a death that would not have occurred had you left the baby bird where it was. The ethical impulse that motivates your actions might be the best kind, but you should know that even experienced veterinarians have a low success rate in caring for wild animals.

Perhaps the most important thing a child or adult can learn from an encounter with a baby bird is the difference between wild animals and domestic pets. Whereas puppies and kittens warm to human attention and become a part of the family, a wild bird never will. Attempting to make a pet out of a wild animal is a serious disservice to that animal--so serious, in fact, that there are laws against it. Life in the wild does not consist of friendly humans, readily available meals, and a protected environment. Wild animals must remain wild to survive.



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