

the ROADRUNNER



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

Editors: Jane Fowler - Jo Nagel

Volume 16 (10)

\$4.00 per year

December 1986

GENERAL MEETING

MON., DEC. 15, 1986, 7:30 PM at the Garden Center, 3105 Grant St. in Memorial Park. BIRD IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP and CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS planning meeting. You will learn how to identify some of the common (and not so common) birds of the El Paso and Hueco Tanks areas.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

The Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) are fast approaching. There are approximately 1500 other CBCs taking place during the count period, Dec 18 - Jan 5. By tradition the "count area" is a circle 15 miles in diameter or roughly 177 square miles. It takes some planning and strategy to collect, in a single calendar day, the biggest bird list possible in the designated area. Each count compiler selects leaders to cover a given sector. The leaders divide the participants into teams which fan out to count the number of individual birds as well as number of species. Leaders are generally people who know the birds and the territory. Newcomers are more than welcome and will have an opportunity to learn from veterans on a team. All participants are asked to pay a \$5 fee; this helps defray the cost of printing the results in AMERICAN BIRDS. After the CBCs, we will have a joint count-down and pot-luck dinner at the Garden Center on Jan 4 at 6 PM. Plan to come and enjoy the good company and good food.

SAT. DEC 20 - HUECO TANKS COUNT: Five teams will travel the trails and dirt roads of the count circle that takes in Hueco Tanks State Park. A variety of interesting birds are always seen on this count. If you wish to take part but are unable to attend the Dec 15/16 meeting, contact compiler Joyce Davis (h 581-9470/ w 544-6772).

MORE THAN 16
DEC 15
JOHN 2
SAT. JAN 3 - EL PASO COUNT: This count is centered on the s. end of the Franklin Mts. It covers 3 states (Chihuahua, New Mexico, Texas) and 2 countries - Mexico and U.S. Last year, we tied our 1975 total (104) for most species seen since the counts started here in '39. We had 36 counters in the field and 5 feeder watchers. With a few more participants and good weather, we can top last year's total. If you can't be out in the field, you can record birds seen in your yard. Also keep a record of your sightings 3 days preceding and 3 days following count day; if a species isn't seen on count day, we are still able to report the sighting as occurring during count week. If you are unable to attend the general meeting but wish to take part, contact compiler, Bob Johnson (h 751-0125/ w 757-1876). Also let Bob know if you plan to be a yard counter and he will bring you the proper form.

MESILLA VALLEY AUDUBON CBCs

Serious CBC enthusiasts in the El Paso area also have 2 New Mexico counts to look forward to. The Mesilla Valley Audubon Society (MVAS) will hold its Caballo CBC in the Percha Dam-Caballo Lake area on Dec 18 and its Las



Cruces CBC on Jan 4. Now entering its 3rd year, the Caballo CBC is already one of the premier counts in New Mexico. Its 123-species total from 1984 is the current state record. The Las Cruces count is also of consistently high quality. So, are you ready to do 4 CBCs this year? Call Barry Zimmer (821-6737) for MVAS count details.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON., DEC. 8, 1986 at 7:30 PM the Board will meet at the home of Jean and John Coyle, 7917 Morley Dr., El Paso (778-7238). All members are welcome.

AUDUBON ECOLOGY CAMP SCHOLARSHIP

The El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society is pleased to extend to local educators an invitation to attend a session at one of the 3 Audubon Ecology Camps next summer. We would like to make it possible for local teachers and educators to participate in the unique learning adventures at one of the camps in Maine, Connecticut or Wyoming. Our scholarship program will give teachers, naturalists, community leaders and students the opportunity to take part in challenging learning programs and share concerns about our natural world.

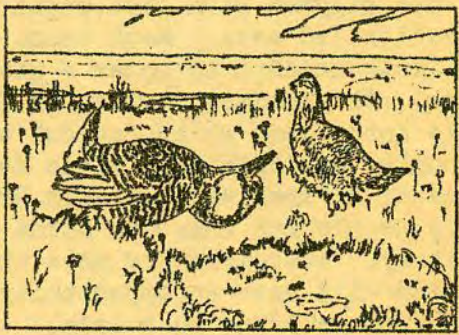
The Scholarship Fund for Conservation Education offers half, three-quarters, and full scholarships which will cover the costs of enrollment, except for a \$50 registration fee and travel to and from the camp. Besides offering a terrific educational experience, university credit is offered in the various camp programs, especially beneficial to teachers and students.

To qualify, applicants must be involved in the community as an educator, and /or be pursuing a career in the field of education. Interested applicants are to write a letter explaining why they would like to attend a camp, and how they plan to use this experience to fur-

ther ecological understanding in our local community, Audubon chapter or schools. A selection will be made by March 23, 1987 so that the proper transportation and vacation plans can be made by the recipients. Also, recipients will be required to do something in return for their scholarship, such as: teach in one of our schools, give a slide program to our local Audubon chapter, join one of our chapter committees (i.e. Education Committee or Scholarship Selection Committee) for the following year or write an article for The Roadrunner to let others know about their experiences and how fun the camp is.

Obtain an application by writing to Gloria Woelfel, 615 Frontera, El Paso, TX 79922. Completed applications must be returned by Feb. 23, 1987. Again, we are pleased to extend this scholarship grant to enable educators and individuals to benefit from their association with Audubon by attending one of our camps.

/Gloria Woelfel, Ed. Chair/

Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.		1986 Nongame Stamp \$5.00
	YES, I want to help support the nongame wildlife and endangered species programs of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Please send me _____ 1986 Texas Nongame Stamp(s) at \$5 each. Amount enclosed: _____	
Name _____		
Address _____		
Zip _____		
Please make checks payable to: El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986		

CONSERVATION CAPSULES

SPORTS COMPLEX: Intensive educational work by the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition (FMWC), its member groups and friends paid off Nov 18, when El Paso's City Council backed away from a motion to go on record as favoring a site near Transmountain Road and the North-South Freeway for El Paso's future city sports complex. Some sports-complex backers had previously identified Castner Range land at the n.w. corner of this intersection as their preferred site for the facility (RR, Nov). The FMWC believes this land should instead be included in Franklin Mts. St. Park. The motion, introduced by Rep. Pat Haggerty, generated plenty of heated discussion among the council members, with most favoring a careful study before any site or area is selected for the sports complex. Rep. Haggerty ultimately withdrew his motion, but not before stating that he merely favors a site somewhere in n.e. El Paso and that the Castner Range site is a "dumb" one for many reasons. It now appears likely a special committee will be formed to study the various siting options. Thanks are due everyone who attended the Nov 18 council meeting to show support for the FMWC's position. The strong turnout sent council a clear signal that the public doesn't want the city sports complex on Castner Range.

GILA RIVER DAM: The U.S Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) announced in October that proposals to build a large main-stream dam on the Gila R. in s.w. New Mexico are no longer viable and, therefore, the Conner and Hooker damsites will be eliminated from the agency's Upper Gila Water Supply Study (UGWSS) (RR, Nov 1985). Two factors caused the agency to walk away from its long-standing proposals to dam the Gila:

- the high cost to Silver City water users of any water supply developed in this way; and
- the recent listing of the spikedace and loach minnow, both found along the Gila in New Mexico, as threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The USBR originally

planned to release a draft environmental impact statement on the UGWSS in September 1986, but the release date has now slipped to April 1987, to give the agency time to identify and study new alternatives with fewer environmental impacts and lower costs. Conservationists are understandably pleased with this turn of events but will continue to monitor the issue closely.

BLACK-FOOTED FERRET: Some 17 black-footed ferrets are currently in captivity, after the Wyoming Game and Fish Dept. and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decided Aug 29 to capture all ferrets still in the Meeteetse, Wyoming, area (RR, Sep). At least one animal is believed to remain in the area, home of the only known wild population of this highly endangered species. Surveys for wild ferrets will continue, both near Meeteetse and in suitable habitat elsewhere. Meanwhile, the captive animals are all healthy, and a concentrated effort is underway to encourage their successful breeding in captivity. The ferrets' short annual mating season begins in February.

CALIFORNIA CONDOR: Trapping efforts are also underway to bring the last 3 known wild California Condors into captivity (RR, Sep). At press time, none of the 3 birds, all adult males, had been captured yet.

TEXAS NONGAME STAMP: What if they held a Christmas Bird Count and there was nothing to count? The nongame wildlife and endangered species programs of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (TPWD) help ensure the continued existence of the full range of Texas' diverse wildlife heritage. These programs deserve your support. Please buy a Texas Nongame Stamp today (see p.2).

TEXAS AUDUBON LOBBYIST: The National Audubon Society and the Audubon Council of Texas (ACT) are now accepting applications for the position of State Environmental Lobbyist for Texas. This individual will promote Audubon's legislative priorities during the 1987



Regular Session of the Texas Legislature. What are those priorities? At its recent Fall Meeting (see below), ACT identified its top 5 as: • stronger state groundwater protection and management; • adequate funding for hazardous-waste management and enforcement programs of the Texas Water Commission; • passage of a Texas Wetlands Protection bill; • adequate funding for TPWD's non-game wildlife program; and • passage of a Texas Rivers Conservation bill. To date, ACT has raised \$12,140 to fund the lobbyist position, of which our chapter has contributed \$400. The position will be temporary (January through May 1987) and part time (probably 20 hours per week). The closing date for applications is Dec 31. For a copy of the Position Description, contact John Sproul (545-5157).



Belted Kingfisher

REGIONAL CONFERENCE A HIT

From an inspiring opening speech by National Audubon Society President Peter Berle to a lively closing performance by the children in attendance, Audubon's Southwest Regional Conference was charged with enthusiasm and marked by excellence. You shoulda been there.

It all took place Nov 7-9 at Mo-Ranch, along the Guadalupe R. near Kerrville, Texas. Some 300 Audubon members and friends gathered to learn about regional conservation issues (Whooping Cranes, sea turtles, predator control, wetland protection), hear about Audubon's national programs (education, sanctuaries, international issues, population, AUDUBON magazine, energy) from the staff

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members involved in them, learn effective lobbying techniques, be entertained (by Jim Bones' photography, Bill Oliver's environmental songs and David McKelvey's skill at imitating bird and other natural sounds), meet with Texas and federal agency personnel (including Garry Mauro, Texas General Land Office; Rick Lowerre, Texas Dept. Agr.; Susan Rieff, TPWD; and Mike Spear, Regional Director, USFWS), develop photographic skills (under the tutelage of Jim Bones), share ideas and experiences, and enjoy a beautiful Hill Country setting.

Whew! Congratulations and thanks are due Dede Armentrout, Ellen Bryant, Karen Copeland, Janie Cox, David Henderson and Murray Walton of Audubon's southwest regional staff for putting this exciting weekend together and making it work.

For Audubon Council of Texas (ACT) members, the weekend was especially full. In between (and sometimes during) regular conference activities, ACT conducted its business. Highlights included: election of David Carson, Bastrop Co. Audubon, as new ACT President; nomination of outgoing ACT President Wilma Anderson, Prairie and Timbers Audubon, as a candidate for Audubon's national board of directors; praise and kudos to Wilma for her superb job as ACT President these past 2 years; discussion of the Texas Audubon Lobbyist position and legislative priorities for 1987; and reaffirmation that habitat protection in the Lower Rio Grande Valley is ACT's top conservation priority.

Next spring, ACT meets in Lubbock. Next fall, it meets in El Paso. /John Sproul/



THE ROADRUNNER is sent to all members of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society. Nonmembers can subscribe for \$4 per year. Make checks payable to EPTPAS and mail to: RR Editor, PO Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986. Please send any changes or corrections in name, address, or telephone # to this address.

Note to Editors: Articles appearing in THE ROADRUNNER may be reprinted without prior permission. Credit is appreciated.

OBSERVATIONS

October 20 - November 20

Some reports from earlier dates have been included in this report.

CP - Crossroads Pond
DP - Doniphan Bayou FH - Ft. Hancock
FL - Feather Lake HC - Horizon City
HT - Hueco Tanks NEOP - NE Oxidation
Ponds O - Owens PP - Plantation Pond

LOONS - FALCONS

A Common Loon was spotted at NEOP 11/16 (BJ, et al.). Pied-billed and Eared grebes were seen at CP, DB, NEOP from 10/21 to 11/16 (DT, JoD, BJ, et al.). Great Blue Herons were reported at DB 10/26 & 11/9 (JoD). Five Cattle Egrets were at FL 10/31 (JS). A Green-backed Heron was seen at CP 10/24 (DT) & 10/26 (JoD, et al.). Canvasbacks were reported at CP 10/24 (DT), 11/16 (JoD) & NEOP 11/16 (BJ, et al.). Several Redheads were seen at CP from 10/21 to 11/16 (DT, JoD). Ring-necked Ducks were found at the PP & DB 10/25, 11/9 (JoD). Lesser Scaup were spotted at PP 10/25 (JoD) & NEOP 11/16 (BJ, et al.). Bufflehead were seen at DB 10/26 (JoD, et al.). A late Turkey Vulture was spotted over the Memorial Park area 10/22 (BJ). Sharp-shinned Hawks were seen at HT 11/8 (JC, et al.) and in an e. El Paso yard 11/10 (BR). Cooper's Hawks were spotted at O 10/26 (JoD, et al.) & NEOP 11/16 (BJ, et al.). A Golden Eagle was soaring in the FH area 11/16 (SS). A Peregrine Falcon was perched on a powerline pole near Magnetic and Alabama 11/15 (JL). A Prairie Falcon was seen along McNutt Rd. 10/26 (BV) and one was spotted downtown 10/23 over Hotel Dieu (TB).

QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

A Common Snipe was found at CP 10/26 (JoD, et al.). A Bonaparte's Gull was reported from Furrow's Pond 11/14 (BJ). A Ringed Turtle-Dove was seen on Lombardy Lane 11/2 (BV). A Burrowing Owl was seen at CP 10/25 (DT). Belted Kingfishers were reported at CP & DP 10/25, 10/26 (JoD). Rufous Hummingbirds were reported at 2 feeders 11/9 ad. male (BJ), 11/10 imm. male (BR). An Acorn Woodpecker was seen 10/23 and again in Nov in a Mt. Park yard (JB).

A Red-naped Sapsucker was found at O 10/26 (JoD, et al.). Scattered reports of a magpie were confirmed by a sighting of a Black-billed Magpie in e. El Paso 11/15 (AA). A Cactus Wren was seen with nesting material at O 10/26 (JoD, et al.). A House Wren was seen in HC 10/4 (MG). Several Townsend's Solitaires were found at HT 11/16 (BV). A Hermit Thrush was reported at HC (MG). Two hundred Am. Robins were seen at HT 11/2 (BV) and others were reported in yards 11/10 (BR, JB). A Sage Thrasher was found at HT 9/20 & 9/21 (AG, MG). A Brown Thrasher was seen in HC 10/4 (MG). Cedar Waxwings were reported from n.e. El Paso 11/14 (RH, JB).

WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

An Orange-crowned Warbler was seen at FL 10/31 (JS). A Blackburnian Warbler was studied at close range for about an hour at HT 10/23 (IP). A Black-and-white Warbler was seen in HC 10/3 (MG). Fifty Wilson's Warblers passed through HT 9/20 (AG, MG) and 4 Dickcissals were also seen there 9/20 (AG, MG). A Green-tailed Towhee was reported at HT 11/8 (JC, et al.). Lark Sparrows were found at O 10/28 (JoD, et al.). Lincoln's Sparrows were reported from HC 10/4 (MG), Durling's 10/28 (JoD, et al.), HT 11/8 (JC, et al.).

OBSERVERS: Art Arteaga, Tom Baker, Janet Brockmoller, Jean Coyle, Joyce Davis, Al & Madeline Gavit, Richard Hermosillo, Bob Johnson, Jerry Liles, Iola Pennington, Bettie Roberts, Sid Shepperd, John Sproul, Dennis Taylor, Brad Vaughn.

/Joyce Davis, Observations Editor/
(581-9470)

ELECTIONS

The Nominating Committee is seeking your nominees for the positions of Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer, and 3 elected Directors for the Jan election. Please call John or Betty Bowen (584-6750) or Anne Hussmann (584-4081) with your suggestions.



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S EYRIE

NEW MEMBERS

Thanks to all of you who made our rummage sale a success; we raised about \$395. During the holidays, you may receive some gifts which will replace some older items in your possession. Put these articles aside for next fall's sale, or call -- I'll pick them up and store them.

We wish to extend a hearty welcome to the following new members: Mrs. Helga E. Alvarez, Mrs. Marilyn Berryhill, G. E. Chaplain, Diane Dunn, John A. Hansen, Ms. T. N. Hewitt, Terry Johnson, Walter W. Jones, Angela Melton, Mrs. Susan M. Pannell, Mr. W. H. Peters, John Patrick Riley, and Jim R. Waddle.

Our Budget Committee will meet Dec 3. If you have chapter income or expenses to report, get the information to Jean Coyle, Tom Baker or me.



The chapter Awards Dinner will be Feb 22. There will be good food and an interesting program; plan to attend. More later.

I heard a bird sing
In the dark of December
A magical thing
And sweet to remember.

NAS will be conducting a telemarketing fund-raising campaign this coming year. If you get a call and have a complaint about the caller's behavior, put down the details (date, time, name of caller, etc.) and let us know.

"We are nearer to Spring
Than we were in September,"
I heard a bird sing
In the dark of December.

Oliver Herford

We have The Bird Watcher's Digest available as a new subscription (not renewals) for \$15 a year. It would make a good Christmas gift. Contact me for more info.



SEASON'S GREETINGS

Another feather in the cap of our Birdathon Committee, and 2 feathers for Tom Baker, Birdathon Chair. We were recently notified that we ranked 2nd in the country for total dollars raised during the '86 Birdathon. A chapter in Anchorage, Alaska was # 1 and the Minnesota River Valley chapter took 3rd place. Ninety chapters participated this year.

The deadline for the Jan. ROADRUNNER is Dec. 30.

Thanks to Alice Miskimins (5114 Thornton) we now have a drop-off-point for aluminum cans on the west side. Turn right on Thornton off Country Club Rd; hers is the middle house in 1st cul-de-sac on the right. Leave cans in the yard under the trees (fastened, plastic bags, please).

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Here's wishing all a Joyous Holiday Season! See you on the Bird Counts.
/Bob Johnson, 751-0125/

Ed. note: Field Trips Follow-up will be included in Jan's Roadrunner.

ROBERT S. JOHNSON
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