

the ROADRUNNER



NEWSLETTER OF
EL PASO-TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY
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Lucretia Chew, Editor

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOTE NEW DAY! NEW PLACE! It will be our pleasure to have Dr. Rod Drewien, wildlife biologist working with the whooping crane foster parent program, as our guest speaker. Accompanying him will be Dick Rigby, manager at Bosque del Apache Refuge, where some of the whoopers and their sand-hill crane parents are wintering.

The work of Dr. Drewien and others associated with the whoopers is receiving national news coverage, so it will indeed be a special privilege for us to have him here in person. Come and bring several friends -- El Paso Garden Center, 7:30 p. m. Wednesday, January 21.

Hear Dr. Drewien and Mr. Rigby on Wednesday and then join the caravan for a weekend trip to the refuge for a first-hand view of the new whoopers. In addition to the whooping cranes, the sunset flight of thousands of sand-hills, snow geese, Canadas, and ducks is spectacular.

Leader Kevin Zimmer will be staying overnight and birding again on Sunday. No overnight facilities at the refuge, but there is camping in the area or you may secure motel accommodations in nearby Socorro, New Mexico. Those who do not wish to stay overnight may leave the refuge when the gates close at sunset and still be back in El Paso about 8:30 p. m.

Field trip to the old refuge near Las Cruces. There should be opportunity to see lots of wintering sparrows. Bill Principe of New Mexico State has recently reported several special birds in this area. Participants may want to bring lunch and water.

The program will be presented by Bill Hoppes, one of our local board members. Bill, who is an environmental scientist with El Paso Natural Gas Company, will talk to us about the construction of the Trans-Alaska Oil Line. Mark the date on your calendar now.

Wednesday, January 21
7:30 p. m.
REGULAR MEETING
EL PASO GARDEN CENTER
3105 Grant

Saturday, January 24
7 a. m.
FIELD TRIP
Bosque del Apache
Stuckey's West I-10

Saturday, February 7
7 a. m.
FIELD TRIP
Old Refuge--Las Cruces
Stuckey's West I-10

Wednesday, February 18
7:30 p. m.
REGULAR MEETING
EL PASO GARDEN CENTER
3105 Grant

BIRD LISTING CONTEST

We hope you are already started on your personal list for the first quarter birding contest as announced in the December ROADRUNNER. The contest area includes all of Texas west of the Pecos River and also Dona Ana County, New Mexico.

Just to give you a little incentive to work harder, we got totals for a few birders. President Charlie Jensen is way out front with 70 species. (He took a week's vacation!) The next four are clustered very close together. Lucretia Chew has 55; Eddie Chew, 53; Barry Zimmer, 51; and Kevin Zimmer, 50. (The Zimmers have been out of town since January 6, and they still got 50 species!)

We'll give you updates in the February and March newsletters and review the details for submitting your entries in a later issue. Meanwhile be sure to keep accurate records, particularly to substantiate any unusual sightings. Maybe you can be in the top spot in the February report.

CHRISTMAS COUNTS

Christmas count participants finished their December/January counting with rather mixed emotions. Both the bird and the birders had their ups and downs. While the El Paso count made it over what has become the magical 100 mark, the Hueco Tanks-Horizon Lake count was down 8 species from our first-year total of 75. The El Paso count produced a large number of unusual species including the broad-tailed hummingbird, common goldeneye, black-crowned night heron, Mexican duck, common grackle, and white-throated sparrow.

Even the weather was something of a mixed blessing. Both days dawned cold and clear, but the Hueco Tanks count day was preceded by a heavy snowfall (at least for El Paso) which complicated things for birders and perhaps changed the regular habits of the birds. Also in each count, at least one favored water spot was a disappointment. Cement Lake which has been a location for good birding for twenty years or more has been almost completely drained. And Horizon Lake is experiencing a serious leakage problem which has the lake level down by nearly half.

One birding group spent extended periods identifying and photographing a peregrine falcon (which did count) and a parrot (which was lovely but did not), and the same group found the barn owl only through the help of a non-birding acquaintance who was horseback riding in the area. Another party never noticed the whistling swan in the midst of the tame geese until a passerby asked if they'd seen it.

The Hueco Tanks-Horizon Lake count had its amusements and frustrations, too. A party in a large van got chased by the Border Patrol and stopped at gun point, not once, but twice! And then there was the car which got to the noon rendezvous point at Hueco Tanks and refused to budge.

Christmas counting in El Paso is never dull. Just when we think we've got it all figured out and know just where to look to find them all, someone sneaks the word to the birds and they change the rules on us. And this year we'd like to know where all those big flocks of wintering sparrows were -- opted for Phoenix this season maybe?

EL PASO CHRISTMAS COUNT

December 20, 1975

Eared Grebe	4	Belted Kingfisher	6
Pied-billed Grebe	1	Common Flicker	36
Green Heron	4	Ladder-backed Woodpecker	3
Black-crowned Night Heron	1	Black Phoebe	3
Whistling Swan	1	Say's Phoebe	6
Snow Goose	25	Steller's Jay	2
Mallard	16	Scrub Jay	4
Mexican Duck	2	Verdin	4
Gadwall	146	Bewick's Wren	1
Pintail	8	Cactus Wren	23
Green-winged Teal	160	Canyon Wren	2
Cinnamon Teal	4	Rock Wren	19
American Wigeon	153	Mockingbird	20
Northern Shoveler	165	Curve-billed Thrasher	1
Redhead	4	Crissal Thrasher	2
Ring-necked Duck	8	American Robin	53
Canvasback	14	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	14
Lesser Scaup	1	Water Pipit	157
Common Goldeneye	5	Cedar Waxwing	6
Bufflehead	25	Loggerhead Shrike	26
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Starling	105
Cooper's Hawk	2	Yellow-rumped Warbler	67
Red-tailed Hawk	11	House Sparrow	289
Rough-legged Hawk	1	Meadowlark species	162
Marsh Hawk	10	Red-winged Blackbird	53
Prairie Falcon	1	Brewer's Blackbird	814
American Kestrel	26	Great-tailed Grackle	247
Scaled Quail	142	Common Grackle	40
Gambel's Quail	16	Brown-headed Cowbird	1
Common Gallinule	8	Pyrrhuloxia	11
American Coot	80	Cassin's Finch	2
Killdeer	42	House Finch	617
Common Snipe	12	Lesser Goldfinch	27
Spotted Sandpiper	5	Green-tailed Towhee	1
Lesser Yellowlegs	1	Rufous-sided Towhee	6
Least Sandpiper	92	Brown Towhee	5
Long-billed Dowitcher	1	Savannah Sparrow	5
Western Sandpiper	47	Vesper Sparrow	5
Wilson's Phalarope	2	Lark Sparrow	1
Ring-billed Gull	3	Rufous-crowned Sparrow	27
Rock Dove	142	Black-throated Sparrow	230
White-winged Dove	34	Dark-eyed Junco	108
Mourning Dove	115	Gray-headed Junco	4
Inca Dove	33	Chipping Sparrow	295
Roadrunner	6	Brewer's Sparrow	11
Barn Owl	1	Black-chinned Sparrow	2
Black-chinned Hummingbird	1	White-crowned Sparrow	506
Anna's Hummingbird	3	White-throated Sparrow	1
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	1	Lincoln's Sparrow	1
Rufous Hummingbird	2	Song Sparrow	3
Allen's Hummingbird	1		

Total Species: 102

Total Individuals: 6129

HUECO TANKS-HORIZON LAKE CHRISTMAS COUNT

Harlequin Grebe	1	Canyon Wren	24
Pied-billed Grebe	1	Rock Wren	23
Whistling Swan	3	Mockingbird	2
Green-winged Teal	1	Curve-billed Thrasher	13
Redhead	25	Crissal Thrasher	34
Ring-necked Duck	3	Sage Thrasher	1
Canvasback	34	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	18
Lesser Scaup	1	Water Pipit	1
Bufflehead	6	Phainopepla	6
Ruddy Duck	4	Loggerhead Shrike	32
Common Merganser	1	House Sparrow	30
Red-tailed Hawk	8	Western Meadowlark	40
Rufous-winged Hawk	1	Red-winged Blackbird	17
Marsh Hawk	7	Brewer's Blackbird	10
Prairie Falcon	1	Pyrrhuloxia	24
American Kestrel	5	House Finch	287
Scaled Quail	29	Pine Siskin	167
American Coot	86	Lesser Goldfinch	25
Killdeer	4	Rufous-sided Towhee	5
Ring-billed Gull	1	Brown Towhee	102
Mourning Dove	5	Vesper Sparrow	1
Roadrunner	8	Lark Sparrow	1
Great horned Owl	1	Rufous-crowned Sparrow	8
White-throated Swift	2	Black-throated Sparrow	52
Common Flicker	11	Sage Sparrow	23
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	Dark-eyed Junco	322
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	6	Gray-headed Junco	27
Say's Phoebe	13	Chipping Sparrow	12
Horned Lark	238	Brewer's Sparrow	5
Scrub Jay	17	Black-chinned Sparrow	2
Mountain Chickadee	2	White-crowned Sparrow	299
Verdin	16	Song Sparrow	1
Bewick's Wren	4	Golden-crowned Sparrow	2
Cactus Wren	32		

Total Species: 67

Total Individuals: 2173

Observers on Christmas counts. El Paso Count: Ruby Allen, Bertha Barnhart, Berttye Barnhart, Helen Barto, Jack Carpenter, Eddie Chew, Lucretia Chew, Steve Chew, Sarah Jane Dodds, Joseph DiPasquale, Bernice Howe, Bill Hunt, Charlie Jensen, Edna Mae Lyons, Margaret Mc Daniel, Helen Ponder, Jack Scott, Mary Scott, Lucille Swick, Bob Weiss, Ed White, Geth White, Dorothy Williams, Barry Zimmer, Kevin Zimmer. Hueco Tanks Count: Bertha Barnhart, Berttye Barnhart, Helen Barto, Eddie Chew, Lucretia Chew, Steve Chew, Sarah Jane Dodds, Joseph DiPasquale, Bill Hoppes, Bernice Howe, Bill Hunt, Al Gavit, Madeline Gavit, Chris Gavit, Charlie Jensen, Margaret McDaniel, Jack Scott, Mary Scott, Lucille Swick, Ed White, Geth White, Dorothy Williams, Barry Zimmer, Kevin Zimmer.

FIELD SEMINAR ON THE BIRDS OF BIG BEND

The Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute has announced a Field Seminar on Birds of the Big Bend to be held May 10 through May 14, 1976. The seminar leader is Roland Wauer, who will be assisted by Dr. Grainger Hunt.

This seminar is limited to twenty and the cost of registration is \$75. Participants will be expected to provide their own food, lodging, and transportation. The seminar will concentrate on observation of bird species and emphasis will be placed on ecology and ecological changes which have taken place in the area.

Mr. Wauer is presently chief of natural science for the Southwestern Region of the National Park Service and is the author of a book on the birds of the Big Bend where he spent a number of years with the park service. Dr. Hunt is chief scientist for the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute.

Those interested in participating are urged to send their applications immediately to:

Birds of the Big Bend
Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute
Box 1334
Alpine, Texas 79830

AUDUBON INSTITUTE OF DESERT ECOLOGY

The Tucson Audubon Society has announced their sixth annual Audubon Institute of Desert Ecology. There will be two sessions: Spring--May 7-10 and Summer--August 6-15.

The spring session will be conducted in a canyon seventy miles north of Tucson, and participants will need to bring their own lodging. Food will be provided. The summer session takes place at the Tanque Verde Guest Ranch adjacent to Saguaro National Monument. Food, lodging, tennis, swimming, and horseback riding is included in the registration fees.

Both sessions consist of walking field trips led by experts in botany, geology, zoology, entymology, and ornithology. University of Arizona credit is available to those interested.

Those interested in participating should write for further information:

Brochure
Audubon Institute of Desert Ecology
3851 West Redwing
Tucson, Az. 85704

WHERE DOES YOUR AUDUBON DOLLAR GO? SANCTUARIES get 20%. There are more than 40 sanctuaries; field trip studies, research projects and scientific programs are conducted. Some money is needed for land acquisition.

EDUCATION gets 35%. Audubon Centers are operated to develop and disseminate techniques of environmental education. There are mobile vans, and educational materials are purchased or created, printed, and distributed. American Birds is printed and nature-related materials are purchased for resale.

LOCAL CHAPTERS (That's us!) get back 21%. In addition to direct services rendered at national and regional level, affiliated Audubon chapters get back shares of membership dues paid in its area.

MAGAZINE gets 16%. A small, highly creative staff turns out an outstanding magazine six times each year.

ADMINISTRATION gets 5% and DEVELOPMENT gets 3%.

from THE RAVENS, Newsletter of Southwestern New Mexico Audubon