

# the ROADRUNNER



NEWSLETTER OF  
EL PASO-TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY  
published at  
4220 Wallington El Paso, Texas 79902

February, 1976

Lucretia Chew, Editor

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wednesday, February 18  
7:30 p. m.  
REGULAR MEETING  
El Paso Garden Center  
3105 Grant

Program previously announced on the Trans-Alaska Oil Line cannot be presented due to the absence of Bill Hoppes. In its place we will have a film, "Atonement," dealing with endangered species. The film was produced by the Canadian Wildlife Service.

A short presentation in bird identification will be given by Kevin Zimmer.

Saturday, February 21  
7 a. m.  
FIELD TRIP  
Mineralogy

Field trip with emphasis on mineralogy. Meet at the first curve on Trans-Mountain Road at 7 a. m. on the east side. Probable spots are Indian Springs and other nearby canyons. Field trip leader is Ed White.

Thursday, March 4  
7:30 p. m.  
BOARD MEETING  
5816 Vista Clara

Meeting of the officers, directors, and committee chairmen at the home of President Charlie Jensen, 5816 Vista Clara.

Saturday, March 6  
7 a. m.  
FIELD TRIP  
Hueco Mountains

Field trip to the Hueco Mountains. This should be a good opportunity to see hawks and possibly migrating sparrows. Meet at the Bordertown Theater at 7 a. m. Geth White is leader.

Wednesday, March 17  
7:30 p. m.  
REGULAR MEETING  
El Paso Garden Center  
3105 Grant

We are hoping that Bill Hoppes, who could not be in El Paso for our February meeting, will be able to present the program on the construction of the Trans-Alaska Oil Line.

## FEATHER LAKE

The contract with the local society and the City of El Paso allowing us to manage Feather Lake as a wildlife sanctuary and educational center was approved by the City Council. Several of our Directors were present at the City Council meeting on February 12 for the formal presentation of the contract. This approval will allow the society to begin planting at the lake to attract even more wildlife than is now present, and which will also provide screening. Plans for obtaining utility hoops and for constructing restrooms and an open-type building at the lake are under consideration.

Your help in planting, financing, constructing, or simply in being present at the lake during those hours that it is open to the public will soon be needed. Bill Hunt is chairman of the Feather Lake Project.

## EDITOR'S CORNER

I can see all kinds of beneficial side effects developing from our bird listing contest. Perhaps the most obvious one is that by January, 1977, we will have a far better record of species in the Trans-Pecos area than ever before. Data taken from the individual quarterly lists coupled with various verbal reports should give us considerable new information. In that connection, a revision of the checklist based on the new information will probably be forthcoming.

I suspect we will also discover some new birding areas, and I'm positive the participants will be much better birders. I, for one, have learned a great deal about bird identification in these past two months. Certainly the field trip attendance is up considerably; no one wants to let anyone else get ahead.

And then of course there are some more subtle benefits--things like the fellowship and camaraderie from more time spent together birding, perhaps better physical condition, and a more active interest in conservation.

On the negative side, however, as Roadrunner editor I found people more reluctant to give material for the Bird Sightings page.

Some aspects of my personal life are suffering as well. I've completely given up all thought of weekend housework and/or cooking, everything really except birding. And during the week I have this recurring desire to take my Shakespeare class on a field trip--to Ascarate Lake to survey the duck population. I've had to give up Johnny Carson viewing on Friday nights in order to be at the appointed place for early Saturday fieldtrips. I can envision all manner of additional difficulties in households where only one spouse or the other is a gung-ho birder.

If I dared to take a weekend off (and in so doing let those "other" birders get even farther ahead of me!), I would dearly love to go to Midland. The Phalarope, newsletter of the Midland Naturalists reports some pretty exciting species for late December and January: Red-necked Grebe, Heerman's Gull, Black-necked Kittiwake, Common and White-winged Scoters, White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, American Bittern, and Black-crested Titmouse, to name a few.

## BIRD SIGHTINGS

Many of the unusual sightings since the last newsletter are reported in connection with the Field Trips on page two. Below are a few additional species reported.

3 BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS on Montoya St., January 24, by the Chews.

The WHISTLING SWAN has continued to be sighted throughout the month at Los Nogales and at the small lake near the Boy Scout Camp.

By Kevin and Barry Zimmer at Tornillo Lake on January 31, 2 HERRING GULLS.

11 BUFFLEHEADS at Ascarate Lake on February 4 by the Whites. A COMMON MERGANSER was seen there the following day by Steve and Lucretia Chew.

SWAMP SPARROW at the United Farms Preserve neary McNary by the Zimmers in early February.

Over Mission Hills Park on February 8, TURKEY VULTURE by the Chews.

HORNED and EARED GREBES at the Fort Bliss Sewage Ponds by the Chews on the same day.

## JANUARY MEETING

The new year got off to a fine start for Trans-Pecos Audubon with an excellent, well-attended program in a new meeting place. Approximately 75 people, including many guests, were present at the El Paso Garden Center for a delightful slide show and talk by Dr. Rod Drewien about the new foster parent program for whooping cranes, and by Dick Rigby, manager of the Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge where some of the young whoopers are wintering.

The foster parent program is, to date, a success. The sandhills hatched as many whoopers as did the corresponding whooper parents at their nesting site in Canada. Currently two of the young are wintering at the refuge near Albuquerque and two others are on private land nearby. Two more have not been located, and it will perhaps be necessary to wait for their return to the northern breeding grounds in Idaho to determine whether they successfully survived the winter. Dr. Drewien is hopeful that the program will be continued in 1976 with the addition of more eggs for the formation of a western flock. However, years of waiting remain before the project can be termed a success. Only when these new whoopers reach maturity, mate, and produce young can the real rejoicing begin.

### LOCAL OFFICERS

Preceding the program, officers were elected for 1976. These officers, board members, committee chairmen, their addresses and telephone numbers are listed below. It is hoped that you will clip this listing and keep it for future reference.

PRESIDENT FINANCE/PROGRAM	Charlie Jensen	5816 Vista Clara	584-7626
VICE-PRESIDENT NEWSLETTER	Lucretia Chew	4220 Wallington	532-6410
SECRETARY/TREASURER	Dorothy Williams	1307 Idlewilde	772-4940
DIRECTOR	Carl Jones	5308 Santa Teresa	584-4652
DIRECTOR	Ed White	2906 Silver	566-2328
DIRECTOR	Eddie Chew	4220 Wallington	532-6410
DIRECTOR PROGRAM/CONSERVATION	Bill Hoppes		584-8942
DIRECTOR FEATHER LAKE	Bill Hunt	493 Borrett	591-5630
DIRECTOR/PUBLICITY FIELD TRIPS/PROGRAM	Kevin Zimmer	8911 Galena	751-0552
HOSPITALITY	Bertha/Berttye Barnhart	2200 Febrero	592-3651
MEMBERSHIP	Geth White	2906 Silver	566-2328
EDUCATION	Linda Jones	5308 Santa Teresa	584-4652



## NEWS NOTES FROM NATIONAL

NEW THREAT TO WHOOPING CRANES ON MATAGORDA ISLAND. The state of Texas is seeking title to a 19,000-acre tract of federal land on Matagorda Island, which is within the wintering range of the endangered whooping crane. There is a National Audubon sanctuary on Matagorda Island only about five miles from Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Also seen on the tract--which the state wants to develop for recreational purposes--are green and ridley turtles (see next item), peregrine falcons, and southern bald eagles. The Air Force used the area to practice bombing maneuvers until 1974, when National Audubon and the Interior Department got them to stop.

This area should be preserved for all time as necessary habitat for a wide variety of wildlife and protected from incompatible development. Conservationists who want to express their views on protecting this tract, which can be preserved under two federal laws, should write to Governor Dolph Briscoe, State Capitol, Austin, Texas 78711 or Senator Lloyd Bentsen, U. S. Senator, Washington, D. C. 20510, who backs the transfer.

TURTLE PROTECTION. An informal public hearing on a proposal to add three species of sea turtles to the "threatened" list (species likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future) will be held in Washington on February 25. Proposed additions are the green, loggerhead, and Pacific Ridley turtles; two species are already on the endangered list. For further information, or to send in written statements (The record will remain open until March 8.) address your letter to: Director, Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Washington, D. C. 20235.

FOUR-DAM WATER PLAN FOR CENTRAL ARIZONA. The Bureau of Reclamation has planned a four-dam multi-billion dollar irrigation project for central Arizona which would pump water up hill for miles into the interior of Arizona from the over-allocated Colorado River to give extra water where the population already has water to spare. The project, on which construction has not yet begun, would be a waste of energy, water, and money. It would also destroy valuable nesting sites in cottonwoods and willows and thus deprive the state of its few gray hawks--the only population of of this species which nests in the United States--as well as populations of other hawk species and three pairs of endangered bald eagles. A coalition of environmentalists, including the Maricopa Audubon Society, is fighting this project in the courts.

EMERGENCY APPEAL. The Conservation Library of the Denver Public Library, a national repository of books, historic manuscripts, photos and other invaluable records of the Conservation Movement will have to close unless \$45,000 can be raised to save it. Colorado Audubon leaders are among those working to do so. Checks payable to the Denver Public Library Foundation, Inc., Conservation Library Account, may be sent in care of the Rocky Mountain Center on Environment, 1115 Grant Street, Denver, Colorado, 80203. ROMCOE is coordinating the fund-raising campaign.

MAJOR SPORTING EVENT. According to Bartlett Hendricks who writes a column for the Pittsfield, Mass. Berkshire Eagle, more outdoor people participate each year in a bird count than in the qualifying round for the U. S. Open Golf Tournament or any other event in the wide world of sports. This past December approximately 30,000 persons took part in the National Audubon sponsored annual Christmas Bird Count.

NEW AUDUBON CHAPTERS. Among the National Audubon chapters recently chartered were two in Texas--Ilano Estacado in Lubbock and Coastal Bend in Corpus Christi. This makes a total of 364 national chapters and 194 affiliates, a membership at the national level of approximately 335,000.

BIRD LISTING CONTEST

Here is an update of the standings on the first quarter of the bird listing contest which were available to the editor at publication time; only a few people were contacted and perhaps there are others whose lists are longer.

We have a new name in first place this month; Kevin Zimmer gets the top spot with 120 species. Younger brother Barry is right behind the leader with 116, and President Charlie Jensen has slipped into third place by just one bird, having a total of 115. Grouped together about ten birds behind are Steve Chew with 107 and Geth White and Lucretia Chew with 105 each.

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FIRST CLASS MAIL



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