



THE ROADRUNNER

Newsletter of  
EL PASO AUDUBON SOCIETY  
3123 Federal Avenue, El Paso, Texas 79930

Vol. 1, No. 9, December, 1971

Geth Osborn White, Editor

Saturday, THE CHRISTMAS CENSUS of the birds will take the place of our regular Dec. 18 meeting and field trips.

All Day Meet in the territory of your choice with the leader of your choice and make an actual count of the species and numbers of birds seen the count area which is a 15 mile circle centering at Sugar Loaf Peak in the Franklins. A clipboard for this is handy, transferring the data to the check-list. A \$1 fee will be collected by each leader and turned in to Compiler Ruby Allen, who sends the money with our records to National Audubon Society which publishes it in American Birds, the scientific journal which publishes six issues a year on regional occurrences and distributional patterns of the birds in North America, plus articles on ornithology of interest to the serious bird student.

The circumference of our circle includes Ascarate Lake, Phelps Dodge cooling lakes, Memorial Park, Highland Park, McKelligon Canyon, Fusselman Canyon, the Rio Grande River from the Electric Company plant to Ascarate and upriver to Canutillo, Sunland Park Lake, Cement Lake, residential yards and gardens on both sides of the mountains, and the Good-Service Dairy.

The rules of the game are: each search party must be led by an experienced birder; those watching at feeders or at home in yards and gardens must have any rare species verified by one other observer of experience. For most effective coverage, parties should be no larger than six. At noon everyone will meet on Country Club Road at the bridge over the Rio Grande to compare notes and have lunch. At the end of the day everyone is invited to come by the Whites at 3123 Federal for the excitement of totaling the lists and for sandwiches and coffee. Don't forget the owls at dusk!

Leaders

Ruby Allen

755-2416

Gertrude Rose

Payne-Taylor Bosque on levee, Upper Valley  
Fee fishing lakes and bosque  
Goggins Road, Good-Service Dairy

Caroline McClintock

565-3566

Elsie Campbell

Ascarate Lake, irrigated farms in this area.

Geth and Ed White

565-1024

Phelps Dodge Lakes, Fusselman Canyon

Rita Ward

565-4414

Libby & Clarence Shelfer

Memorial Park, Highland Park

Leaders

Bill Hunt  
591-5630

Rio Grande from the Electric Plant to Ascarate  
Sunland Park Lake, Cement Lake.

Mrs. D. E. Baker  
778-1983  
Jennie Camp Bailey

Scout Camps, Rio Grande north to Canutillo

Mary Bell Keefer  
565-2583

Owen's Place and Durling Farm (upper Valley)

Jim Koons  
751-3652

Coronado foothills, Tom Mays Park

THE TRADITION OF CHRISTMAS COUNT

When Frank Chapman started the first annual count in 1900, only 25 reports were submitted from bird clubs and only 27 people participated. At that time no one could have imagined the tremendous interest that would develop in this annual cooperative project.

In 1971 a total of 903 reports were published with nine states and one Canadian province contributing nearly half of the reports.

Texas led the nation with 53 counts and was second in number of species, losing by only one species to Cocoa, Florida which had a count of 205 species to Freeport's record count of 204 species.

Last year we had a total of 88 species and about 9,500 individuals with 22 people observing. This is the record we have to better this year, we hope.

It could have been called the Year of the Loon for far West Texas. Caroline McClintock's party identified the rare Arctic Loon at Ascarate Lake, confirmed by other observers; an Arctic Loon was found dead on a landing field at Carlsbad Airport in the fall of 1970 and another was on the Christmas count at Balcones, Texas.

Our count circle yielded some surprising finds last year: Green Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Whistling Swan, Ross's Goose, Golden Eagle, Osprey, Common Gallinule, White-winged Dove, Long-eared Owl, Pinon Jay, Orchard Oriole, Cassin's Finch, Brown Towhee, Rufous-crowned Sparrow and Black-chinned Sparrow. But our humble friend and paisano, lo, our namesake, the roadrunner, was not on our list.

That the Chihuahuan desert is not a biological one we know for sure. If we cover all the habitat types in this fascinating region we will have made the most of a rare opportunity to find birds in many ecological zones. Irrigation drainage ditches are miniature riparian habitats; flooded fields left for a period of time in irrigated lands change the character of that land; desert washes with more available moisture are richer in plants and birds. The distribution of birds is seen to be an expression of climate, landscape, and land use interwoven with the birds' need for food, water and cover and often reflecting its population. We have a tremendous altitudinal change with the Franklin Mountains rising to 7,000 feet from the flood plain of the Rio Grande. We have groomed lawns and beds of shrubbery and introduced plants; we have intensively farmed lands and vast feed lots for cattle all making their impact on the natural world of the wintering birds. The little check mark we make on a list doesn't look important, but it is for it tells us something about populations.

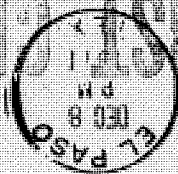
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1971

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	Box 237	04	751-7994
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Mr. & Mrs. Jack Ponder	4010 Flamingo	02	542-0202
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Mr. & Mrs. Monte B. Roberts	201 Hermosa Lane	22	584-0443
Mrs. John K. Rose	805 Del Mar Road	32	584-0171

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EL PASO, TX, TEXAS  
 8123 FEDERAL AVE.  
 EL PASO, TEXAS 79930  
 COMMERCIAL ROSS



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