

The Roadrunner

Volume 18 (1)

EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

February 1988

GENERAL MEETING

MON., FEB. 15, 7:30 PM in the Garden Center, 3105 Grant in Memorial Park. A vigorous debate is now underway in Congress over whether or not to open the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas development. What's at stake? Join us Feb 15 for an Arctic Refuge double feature. Two videotapes -- ARCTIC REFUGE: TREASURE OF THE NORTH, produced by the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, and ARCTIC REFUGE: A WILDERNESS IN PERIL by The Wilderness Society -- will introduce us to the land that has been called "America's Serengeti" and the implications of oil and gas development for it. Protection of the Arctic Coastal Plain is one of National Audubon's top conservation priorities. Come find out why.

This meeting is also our annual meeting, at which we install officers for the coming year.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON., FEB. 8, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet at the home of Sarah Jane Dodds, 4011 Santa Ana (533-4150). All members are welcome.

FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

We have scheduled a trip almost every weekend so there will be something for everyone: short trips, long trips, overnights, morning and afternoon trips. We ask that you consider these suggestions. If possible, please call the trip leader to prevent your being left behind. Or arrive 5 - 10 minutes early.

Be prepared to car pool. In the past, we have had 12 - 15 people riding in 8 or 9 cars, which creates a parade of sorts. People in the last cars have no idea what birds the front-runners are seeing. (BJ)

FT. HANCOCK RESERVOIR/RIO GRANDE LEVEE
SAT., FEB. 6. Meet at Feather Lake, 9500 North Loop, at 7:30 AM. Bring lunch, as we'll return about 2 PM. Previously seen were Swamp Sparrows, Common Mergansers, Herring Gulls. Leader: Bob Johnson (751-0125 h, 757-1876 recorder).

MT. RILEY/KILBOURNE HOLE
SUN., FEB. 14. Meet at Crossroads Pond, Doniphan and Country Club Rd., 7:30 AM. A trip to the desert w. of Santa Teresa: Bring lunch. In the past, Long-eared Owls have been seen here. Leader: Tom Baker (877-3365 h, 566-9461 w).

HOLLOMAN LAKE/ALAMOGORDO ZOO
SUN., FEB. 21. Meet at K-Mart parking lot, 9484 Dyer, 7 AM. This is a full day trip so bring lunch and snacks. In years past, Hooded Mergansers, a Tundra Swan and many water birds were seen. Leader: Art Arteaga (595-8772).

HUECO TANKS STATE PARK
SAT., FEB. 27. Meet at Avila's restaurant, 10600 Montana at Yarbrough, at 7:30 AM. This is a morning trip, but if you wish to stay longer, the leader will also. Should see: Scrub Jays, Phainopeplas, Crissal Thrashers, Great Horned Owls. Leader: John Sproul (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w).

NORTHEAST OXIDATION PONDS

SUN., MAR. 6. Meet at Furrows, 4801 Fred Wilson Rd., 2:30 PM. Spring migration will have begun, but many of our winter visitors will still be here. A good time to see them is late afternoon. This trip always produces many ducks and often a wader that is uncommon to this area. Leader: Jean Coyle (595-2225).

(A list of field trips scheduled through July is located on p. 8)

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

HUECO TANKS: Twenty people in 5 parties covered the Hueco Tanks CBC area on Dec 19. It was partly cloudy with a light breeze. Temperatures ranged from 39 to 52 degrees. Sixty-five species and 3,138 individuals were seen. Unusual sightings included an immature Herring Gull and a Snowy Plover. A large number of Lark Buntings was seen. /Joyce Davis/

EL PASO: Our El Paso CBC held on Jan 3 was partially successful. We reported a new high in species--110, but only 11,837 individuals were seen. This is about 50% of the last 5 year average. We had 30 counters in the field and 9 feeder counters. Unusual sightings were: a Great Egret, 2 Horned Grebes, a Blue-winged Teal, 1 Hooded & 2 Red-breasted mergansers, 11 Mountain Chickadees, 1 N. Cardinal, 1 N. Oriole, a Black-headed and an Evening grosbeak, and 12 Red Crossbills. /Bob Johnson/

FEATHER LAKE UPDATE

Ducks at Feather Lake came through the snows in good condition, and the lake had a temporary gain of about 4 inches of water. Duck population is at its peak; approximately a thousand ducks are on the lake. Green-winged Teal, Mallards and N. Pintails are the most numerous species. They have been joined on occasion by a few Snow Geese and Canada Geese. A flock of Greater Yellowlegs has enjoyed the shallows all winter. A Great Egret and a Great Blue Heron have overwintered also.

The Sanctuary will be open (until the end of April) on Sun. afternoons, 3:30 PM to

sundown, and the first and third Sat. of each month, 8 AM to 11 AM. It will not be open Easter weekend or in case of inclement weather.

* * *

In addition to chapter workdays Dec 6 and Jan 16, recent weeks have seen plenty of other volunteer activity at Feather Lake. Amy Brasfield, home on break from the Audubon Expedition Institute, has helped with planting seeds and pole cuttings of native riparian species. Also, on Jan 9 and 16, the Boy Scouts of Troop 44 in El Paso worked on a variety of sanctuary projects: construction of a blind, planting willow pole cuttings, removing tumbleweeds, clearing trash and removing saltcedar seedlings that are competing with the cottonwood and willow seedlings now growing around the basin. The work of the scouts was orchestrated by Brent White as his Eagle Scout service project. Many thanks to Amy, to Brent and to all the scouts of Troop 44 for making some very valuable contributions to our sanctuary.

Our next workday at Feather Lake will be Sun., Feb 7. Come any time between 8 AM and noon and lend a hand. /Jeannette Cole, John Sproul/

THE ROADRUNNER

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TEXAS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT

Want to add a new and rewarding twist to your birding this year? Volunteer to cover a survey area for the Texas Breeding Bird Atlas Project (TBBAP). This ambitious 5-year effort to document current breeding-bird distributions in our state is now entering its 2nd year. Particularly in far West Texas, its success depends on getting enough folks in the field to provide adequate coverage.



little planning and reconnaissance now will help you cover your area more effectively later.

Would you like to take part in the TBBAP? Would you like more information? If you live in the El Paso area, please contact John Sproul (545-5157). If you live elsewhere in Trans-Pecos Texas, contact Bonnie McKinney, Trans-Pecos Regional Coordinator for the project (Black Gap WMA, Big Bend Route, Box 433, Alpine, TX 79830, ph. 915/376-2216).

Each survey area coincides with a U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic map, or quadrangle. In this part of the state, there are many ornithologically interesting quadrangles just begging for observers to cover them. The field work is fun -- it's birding with an added dimension. While observing birds in your survey area, you look for and record different clues that give evidence of breeding. Gathering such data is just as important for the common birds of your survey area as for the rare ones.

In addition to volunteer field observers, the TBBAP depends on private contributions to cover expenses associated with coordinating the field work, compiling the data and, ultimately, publishing the atlas. The expenses are substantial: \$20,000-\$25,000 per year. Your support would be greatly appreciated. To make a tax-deductible contribution, use the form below. /John Sproul/

EL PASO-LAS CRUCES RARE BIRDS COMMITTEE

Though the peak of the breeding season is several months away, now isn't too soon to get started. Many raptors nest early. Golden Eagles, for example, will begin soon. Some Great Horned Owls may be on their nests already. Also, a

The bird-record files of the El Paso-Las Cruces Rare Birds Committee (RBC) continue to grow. The RBC reviewed documentation for 122 local bird records in 1987. Among the most noteworthy: Surf

TEXAS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Yes, I would like to contribute by pledging a total of \$ _____ for the Texas Breeding Bird Atlas Project by December 31, 1989, payable at \$ _____ per year for 1, 2, or 3 years. (please circle one)

My Commitment _____

My Company's Matching Gift _____

My Company's Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please remind me annually semi-annually.

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____. **PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION WITH A MEMO ON THE CHECK: TEXAS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT.** (All contributions are tax deductible.) Return to: Dr. Keith A. Arnold, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-2258.

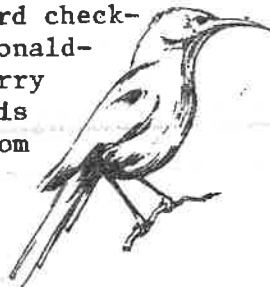
Scoters from Mountain Shadows Lake (Dec 1986), a Piping Plover from the Ft. Bliss sewage ponds (Aug 1987), a Mountain Plover from the AG Sod Farm (Mar 1987), a Black-legged Kittiwake from Burn Lake in Las Cruces (Dec 1986), a Least Tern from Feather Lake (Jun 1987), Ruddy Ground-Doves from the Owen yard (Oct 1987), a N. Saw-whet Owl from the Tennis West area (Aug 1987), a Broad-billed Hummingbird from Las Cruces (Jul 1987) and a Blackpoll Warbler from El Paso's upper valley residential area (Oct 1987).

The RBC files, including both written details and photographic documentation of rare-bird sightings, are maintained at the UTEP Centennial Museum in El Paso and the NMSU library in Las Cruces. Next time you see an unusual bird, the RBC encourages you to write down the details of your sighting (or get a photograph) and submit them for the files. You'll be adding to a valuable data base on El Paso-Las Cruces area birds, much to the delight of present and future students of this area's birdlife.

For a summary of the bird records the RBC reviewed and accepted in 1987 or for a copy of its Review List of bird species meriting documentation, please contact John Sproul, 601 W. Yandell #25, El Paso, TX 79902, ph. 915/545-5157. Thanks are again due El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon for providing the RBC funds for slide duplication in 1987. /John Sproul/

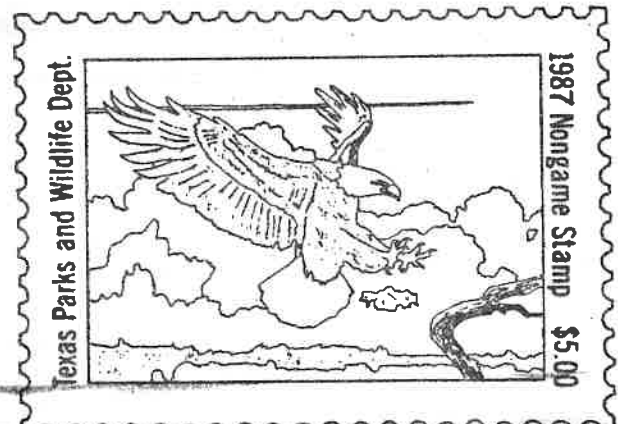
EL PASO AREA BIRD CHECKLIST

The new El Paso-area bird checklist prepared by Jeff Donaldson, Bettie Roberts, Barry Zimmer and John Sproul is getting rave reviews from birders throughout the Southwest. Want additional copies? You can get them for 50¢ each at our general meetings or by writing to: Checklist, EP/TPAS, P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986. On mail orders, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope along with your payment.



1988 AUDUBON ECOLOGY CAMP SCHOLARSHIP

Time's a 'wastin'! If you want to apply for an EP/TPAS scholarship to attend an Audubon Ecology Camp in 1988, the deadline is March 1. Applicants must live or work in Trans-Pecos Texas and be an educator or a ~~student pursuing a career in education~~. These one- and two-week camps in Wyoming, Maine and Connecticut offer fantastic outdoor learning experiences in beautiful surroundings. The purpose of the scholarship is to give the recipient a unique opportunity to enhance his or her environmental education skills. For an application form, contact Jeanne French, 10925-B Sagebrush, El Paso, TX 79936 (915/592-1660) or John Sproul, 601 W. Yandell #25, El Paso, TX 79902 (915/545-5157).



YES, I want to help support the nongame wildlife and endangered species programs of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Please send me:

	Qty.	Each	Total
1987 Nongame Stamp		\$5	
1988 Nongame Stamp		\$5	
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OBSERVATIONS

November 19 - January 18

Sightings from the Hueco Tanks Christmas Bird Count (12/19) and the El Paso CBC (1/2) are indicated by "*H" and "*E", respectively.

A - Ascarate
 AG - AG sod farm
 CP - Crossroads Pond
 D - Durling's farm
 DL - Diez Lagos
 EPCC - El Paso Country Club
 FB - Ft. Bliss Ponds
 FH - Ft. Hancock reservoir
 FL - Feather Lake
 FM - Franklin Mts.
 L - Lombardy
 MP - Memorial Park
 MtP - Mt. Park area
 MtS - Mt. Shadows Lake
 OW - Owen's farm
 RP - Randel's Pool
 S - Socorro sewage ponds

LOONS - FALCONS

Two Horned Grebes were seen at A 1/2 (NK*E). An Am. Bittern was spotted at FL 11/21 (JS). Great Egrets were seen several times at FL between 11/21 & 1/9 (JS) and at A 1/2 (NK*E), S 12/6 (BJ). Cattle Egrets were at FL 11/29, 12/6 (JS). Green-backed Herons were seen at FL 11/21, 11/28, 12/20, 1/6 (JS), CP 11/27, 12/12 (JS), (*E). Black-crowned Night-Herons were seen at FL 11/29 (JS) and at Cement Lake 12/30 (JD). Two imm. Snow Geese were seen at FL 11/21, 11/28 (JS), S 12/6 (BJ), and a flock of 30, including 1 of the blue phase, was at Sunland Park Race Track (*E). A Canada Goose was found at FL 1/9 (JS). Four Wood Ducks were seen at Los Nogales 12/3 (BJ) and 2 males were at Vista Hills Golf Course 1/2 (DC) and 1/6 (JS). A Blue-winged Teal was seen at A 1/2 (SD*E). A female Common Goldeneye and a female Hooded Merganser were found at CP 11/27, 12/12 (JS), 12/8 (BJ,DT), (BJ*E). A Red-breasted Merganser was reported at A 1/2 (NK*E), and a Common Merganser was at FH 1/7 (BJ,RW). Several Buffleheads were seen at FB 12/20 (BJ), MtS 12/20 (JS), CP 1/2 (BJ*E), 1/9 (JD). A Sharp-shinned Hawk was spotted at FL 11/21 (JS). A Golden Eagle was seen in Hueco Mts. 12/19 (JG*H). A

Merlin was found south of S 1/17(LJ).

QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

A rare Snowy Plover was seen and photographed at MtS 12/19 (A&MG*H), 12/20 (JS). Several Greater Yellowlegs stayed around FL 11/21 - 1/16 (JS). A Spotted Sandpiper was found at FH 1/17 (LJ). A Common Snipe was spotted at FL 11/28, 11/29 (JS). A vagrant flock of 8 Bonaparte's Gulls was seen at S 1/17 (LJ). Ringed-billed Gulls were found at FB 12/20 (BJ) and FH 1/17 (LJ). An imm. Herring Gull was seen at MtS 12/19 (A&MG*H), 3 ad., 1 imm. at FH 1/7 (BJ,RW) and 1 imm. at FH 1/17 (LJ). Great Horned Owls were heard at H 12/19 (JS*H) and e. FM 1/2 (JS*E). Several people saw the VIOLET-CROWNED HUMMINGBIRD - the 1st documented record in Texas - on Donnybrook between 12/1 and 12/12. Female Anna's Hummingbirds were still coming to feeders at Donnybrook, MtP, and an e. El Paso yard (H&EM,JB,AB). Male Rufous Hummingbirds came to feeders at Shaver Dr. 11/22 (AB), and during Dec at Donnybrook (H&EM) and Berwick Rd. (LG).

FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

An imm. male Vermilion Flycatcher was found at RP 12/12 (JS). Scrub Jays were seen at FB 11/27 (DT), MtP 12/1 (JB), H 12/19 (JS*H). An Am. Crow was spotted at FL 1/9 (JS). Mountain Chickadees were found at RP and L 12/12 (JS), EPCC 12/3 (DT), and in Juarez 1/2 (TB*E). Red-breasted Nuthatches were seen at EPCC 12/3 (DT) and on L 12/12 (JS). A Brown Creeper was spotted at D 11/27 (JS). A Black-tailed Gnatcatcher was found north of Fabens 1/17 (LJ). Fourteen W. Bluebirds were seen daily 1/13 - 1/20 at Hawkins and Darlina (AB). A Hermit Thrush was seen at OW 11/27 (JS). Curve-billed Thrashers were found at OW 11/27 (JS) and MtP 12/1 (JB). A Phainopepla was seen in MtP 12/1 (JB) and near RP 12/12 (JS). A

male N. Cardinal has been visiting a n.e. yard since 12/13 (BJ).

WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

A very late Orange-crowned Warbler was spotted at EPCC 12/3 (DT). Green-tailed Towhees were seen at D 11/27 (JS), H 12/19 (TB*H), w. FM 1/2 (JS*E). Rufous-sided Towhees were reported from a n.e. yard 11/28 (RW), MtP 12/1 (JB), H 12/19 (*H), upper valley 12/12 and w. FM 1/2 (JS*E). Eight Black-chinned Sparrows were found in W. Cottonwood Spring Canyon 1/2 (JS*E). Vesper Sparrows were seen at OW 11/27, DL and RP 12/12 (JS). A Sage Sparrow was seen in H area 12/19 (BJ*H). Numerous Lark Buntings were reported from FL 11/28, 12/20, 1/6 (JS), MtS 12/20 (JS), H 12/19 (TB*H), and El Paso area 1/2 (BJ*E). Two White-throated Sparrows were found at D 11/27 (JS). A Golden-crowned Sparrow was reported north of DL 12/6 (LJ). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were seen along Border Hwy. 12/6 (JS). A late N. Oriole was seen in a n.e. El Paso yard 1/2 (JG*E). Red Crossbills were seen on L 12/12 (JS) and on 1/2 (BJ*E), also near Radford School 1/2 (KB*E). A Pine Siskin was reported at DL 12/12 (JS). Lesser Goldfinches were found at RP 12/12 (JS) and Three Hills addition 1/2 (JS*E). Two Am. Goldfinches were spotted at AG 11/27 (JS). An Evening Grosbeak was in MP 1/2 (JC*E).

OBSERVERS: Tom Baker, Ken Beno, Anne Bowman, Janet Brockmoller, Daryl Cole, Jean Coyle, Joyce Davis, Sarah Dodds, Al & Madeline Gavit, Linda Green, Joe Guinn, Bob Johnson, Larry Jordan, Neil Keith, Howell & Eve McCullough, John Sproul, Dennis Taylor, Ray Waite. /Joyce Davis, Observations Editor/ (581-9470 h, 544-6772 w)

GRACIAS

Jeff Donaldson recently donated to our chapter a framed print of a Bald Eagle drawn by Arkansas artist Sherry Langford. It looks great, and we appreciate it. Thanks, Jeff!



NEW MEMBERS

We wish to welcome these new members into our chapter and NAS: Paul A. Bingham, Diana Harris and Mrs. J. V. Millsapps. Transferring in are Leigh Ann Gherson and William Todd.

ELECTIONS

New officers elected on Jan 18 are:

- President-elect - John Sproul
- Vice-president - Sid Shepperd
- Secretary - Ann Schultis
- Treasurer - Bart Rumaker
- Directors - Anne Hussmann
Paul Bingham
Larry Jordan

Tom Baker will continue as chapter President.

We thank you all for consenting to serve in these positions and for giving of your time and talents in support of the Audubon Cause. Working together we can make a difference.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
Membership Application

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of the local chapter. Send AUDUBON magazine and membership card to:

Name.....

Address.....

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

- Membership category desired:
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 - Student/\$18
 - Senior Citizen Individual/\$21
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Please make checks payable to National Audubon Society. Mail to Neil Keith, 1525 Meadowview, El Paso, Tx 79925.

LOCAL CHAPTER

EL PASO/TRANS-PECCS
W10 7XCH

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society
1987 FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND 1988 BUDGET

	<u>1987</u> <u>Proposed</u>	<u>1987</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>1988</u> <u>Proposed</u>
INCOME			
NAS dues	\$2000	\$1961	\$2000
Contributions	300	1504	750
Birdathon	3000	2282	3000
Book Fair	200	273	200
Sales	650	129	150
Recycling	-	380	350
Rummage	750	650	650
Newsletter subscriptions	100	137	100
<u>Birdwatchers' Digest</u> subscriptions	-	45	-
Feather Lake caretaker	250	130	250
Christmas Bird Counts	-	129	200
Special events (awards dinner, ACT mtg.)	-	1140	-
Interest	150	214	200
Transfer from EP/TPAS special funds			
Sanctuary	-	-	-
Scholarship	-	750	500
Franklin Mountains	-	-	-
Wildlife Rehabilitators	-	-	1095
	<u>\$7400</u>	<u>\$9724</u>	<u>\$9445</u>
EXPENSES			
Conservation	\$725	\$467	\$1695
Education	300	1354	975
Field trips	20	-	20
Hospitality	20	40	50
Membership	90	103	75
Program	250	88	250
Publications	1100	1054	960
Publicity	20	-	50
Sanctuary	750	1059	750
Ways and means	200	92	200
Birdathon	1500	192	200
NAS regional office	-	1090	1500
Audubon Council of Texas	215	121	245
Special events (awards dinner, ACT mtg.)	50	1058	40
Awards and gifts	1700	176	200
Christmas Bird Counts	-	129	200
Ornithology	-	-	50
General administrative	460	477	485
Transfer to EP/TPAS special funds	-	1090	1500
	<u>\$7400</u>	<u>\$8590</u>	<u>\$9445</u>

(FIELD TRIPS cont.)

- SUN., MAR. 12. Beginners trip to Feather Lake. Leader: Neil Keith
- SAT.-SUN., MAR. 19-20. Gypsum Dunes/Rattlesnake Springs. Leader: John Sproul
- SUN., MAR. 27. Indian Hot Springs. Leader: Joyce Davis
- SAT., APR. 9. East side of Franklins
- FRI.-SUN., APR. 15-17. Big Bend Natl Park
- SUN., APR. 24. Percha Dam
- SAT., APR. 30. Annual BIRDATHON
- SUN., MAY 8. Rio Bosque Park
- WED., MAY 11. Memorial Park
- SAT.-SUN., MAY 14-15. Spotted Owl Research, Lincoln Natl Forest
- SAT., MAY 21. Vado/Anthony, NM
- WED., MAY 25. Memorial Park
- SAT.-MON., MAY 28-30. Sierra Vista/Patagonia, Az
- SUN., JUN. 5. Beginners trip to upper valley
- SAT., JUN. 11. West side of Franklins
- SAT.-SUN., JUN. 18-19. Gila Natl Forest
- SAT.-MON., JUL. 2-4. Santa Fe, NM/Randal Davey Audubon Center

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society
PO Box 9655
El Paso, TX 79986

Forwarding and Address
Correction Requested

**'88 Birdathon:
Bigger and Better Than Ever**

The National Audubon Society wishes to thank all the chapters that participated in the 1987 Audubon Birdathon. Birdathons are an excellent means of involving both members and non-members in an Audubon activity, of raising funds to support the work of Audubon, and of having fun. We salute their success!

Based on the comments and suggestions of a number of chapters, the 1988 Audubon Birdathon will be bigger and better than ever. Materials will be available to help everyone easily plan, organize, and conduct their birdathon. In addition, terrific prizes will be offered to both chapters and individuals. We hope every chapter will participate in 1988. Mark your calendars now—April 1 to May 15—and be on the lookout for more information coming very soon.



The deadline for the
March ROADRUNNER is
February 19!

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