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January, 1996



The ROADRUNNER

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

Franklin Mountains State Park

December General Meeting

General Meeting, Monday, December 11, 7:30 PM -

What is the future of the largest urban park in America? What about the management plan that had been proposed for the Franklin Mountains State Park?

On Monday, December 11, Ron Hillen will discuss where this park is going and the status of the updated management plan. For example, several roads and paths are planned for the Park, but they will be built by hand to avoid disturbing the plant and animal life of the Park. The El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society has been an important factor in the progress made at the Park. In fact, the very first planning meeting for input on the management plan was held at one of our General Meetings. This is a "don't miss" meeting to keep up-to-date on the plans for our Park. The meeting will be held in the Garden Center, 3105 Grant, El Paso.

Workshop in the Rockies

January General Meeting

General Meeting, Monday, January 15, 7:30 PM -

Hector Montes is the Public Affairs Coordinator at the El Paso Zoo and was the recipient of our Chapter's scholarship to the Audubon Ecology Camps. Hector spent a week at the Audubon Camp located in the spectacular scenery of Wyoming. He'll talk to us about that experience and he'll bring slides of the beautiful Grand Tetons, bighorn sheep and the stunning beauty of Wyoming. Those of us who have heard the Scholarship Recipients before know that they bring new insight on nature as well as their personal experiences to the meeting. Be at the Garden Center, 3105 Grant to hear Hector Montes.

The January meeting is also the time for election of officers for the chapter. See page 4 for more information, and we'll see you at the January meeting to cast your vote.

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Audubon's Strategic Plan: Implementing Its Vision

Last June the National Audubon Society Board of Directors adopted a strategic plan for the organization. This strategic plan, which was developed in partnership with Chapter leaders, State Council members and staff, provides an exciting vision for Audubon's future. A vision where Audubon's focus is birds, wildlife and habitat. A vision that puts the emphasis on public policy advocacy and education through increased support and programs to our Chapters, State Councils and Field Offices. A vision which calls for a seamless Audubon where all parts are working together from member to chapter to national board. A vision that makes Audubon the most effective conservation organization in the country whether on a local, state, or national level. A vision that takes us back to our roots and makes us stronger.

In the plan there are many exciting initiatives, from establishment of Audubon centers in communities to state field offices being created across the country; from increasing the reach and capacity of our technological communications to building a solid science program which will reinforce our education and grassroots advocacy campaigns. In these and other areas outlined in the plan, implementation actions must be put forward to turn the plan into a reality.

A Strategic Plan Coordination Office has been established to work with ten implementation committees to get this plan off the shelf and into budgets, staffing and programs. These changes will benefit our work on the ground for birds, wildlife and their habitat. As Audubon President John Flicker points out, "these implementation committees are where the rubber meets the road."

The following ten committees were selected based on major themes in the Plan:

1. Field Implementation Committee
2. Grassroots Implementation Committee
3. Campaigns/Issues Implementation Committee
4. Education Implementation Committee
5. Audubon Centers Implementation Committee
6. Science Implementation Committee
7. Communications Implementation Committee
8. Membership/New Revenue Implementation Committee
9. Human Resources Implementation Committee
10. Finance/Fundraising Implementation Committee

Each committee has National Audubon Society board, staff and chapter representatives. Their charge is simple - to propose specific actions to the full National Audubon Society board which will result in the successful implementation of the plan. Already, early actions have been given the green light. The first prototype field office is scheduled to be established in California this fall. New grassroots communication technologies involving computers and conference calling are being field tested in the States of Washington and New York. A new National Campaign selection process for Audubon is being developed for use prior to our 1996 convention.

Your continued involvement is key. You are invited to participate by sharing your ideas on the specific implementation issues anyone of the committees are facing. Background information on each implementation committee is available as well as progress reports on actions being recommended by contacting David Miller, Strategic Plan Coordinating office, 1789 Western Ave., Albany, NY 12203; 518-869-9731/Fax 518-869-0737; dmiller@audubon.org.

We hope you will join us in this exciting moment in Audubon's proud history. **Help us make the vision in Audubon's Strategic Plan indeed a reality.**



Feather Lake Programs in High Gear

By John Sproul

Feather Lake News

The wetlands and woodlands at our Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary have lured a lot of birds and human visitors this fall. At press time, duck numbers were up over 2000 and over 700 Cattle Egrets were roosting there each evening. In addition to these regulars, we've also had 3 birds new to the sanctuary: Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Scrub Jay and American Robin. Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop in El Paso. Check the calendar on the back page for dates and times when it is open. Admission is free.

Some 33 Audubon members and friends enjoyed the sights and sounds of Feather Lake at our October 28 potluck dinner. For this event, Dayle Edwards provided the barbecue grill; Bob Johnson secured hot dogs, hamburgers and rolls; Betty Pagel and Jane Fowler prepared the dining area; and Craig Braginton was our peerless chef. Many thanks to all.

Also deserving thanks are the Girl Scouts of Troop 209. They recently provided an amazingly comprehensive first-aid kit and a fire extinguisher for our spacious Feather Lake Visitor Center. During late October and early November, we also benefitted from the contributions of 16 hardworking El Paso Community College students. They helped remove several mature saltcedars from the east side of the basin in an area where we'll now plant willow pole cuttings.

Our members also contributed mightily to maintaining Feather Lake in 1995. This year's stalwart workday participants were Lupe Barrera, Craig Braginton, Jean Coyle, Jane Fowler, Richard Hermsillo, Bob Johnson, Jo Nagel, Betty Pagel, Charles Simpson, John Sproul, Nancy Wilson and William Zoochie. Thanks and gold stars to all. Want to add your name to this distinguished list? Our next workday will be Saturday, January 20. Bring your lunch; we'll gather at noon to eat, then start work at 1 p.m.

Do you have a binocular or a spotting scope you are no longer using? Want to see it put to good use by school

groups visiting Feather Lake? Please contact Charles Simpson (598-2274) or John Sproul (545-5157) if you have any surplus optical equipment you can donate to our sanctuary.

El Paso Environmental Center

By John Sproul

The El Paso Environmental Center, in which Audubon participates, is now completing its 5th successful year of operation. The Center provides meeting and office space for a variety of environment-related organizations, houses an expanding environmental library and file collection, runs an increasingly efficient recycling operation, and stores the outdoor gear of the Sierra Club's Inner City Outings program.

Once again, thanks are due the very small and select group who kept the Center humming in 1995: Erika Episcopo, Jane Fowler, Barbara Mertig, Jo Nagel, Betty Pagel, Mike Seidensticker, John Sproul and Vic Ward. The Center needs more volunteers. Please call 532-9645 if you can help one or more days a month. Especially needed is a director; the position has been vacant for 2-1/2 years now.

The Center's recycling program continues to accept aluminum, other metal cans, newspaper, magazines, corrugated cardboard, computer paper, white office paper, and styrofoam packing peanuts and egg cartons. It is also again accepting glass and plastic. Your contributions of recyclable materials pay the Center's operating costs; please keep 'em coming! The El Paso Environmental Center, located at 800 South Piedras, is open Wednesday through Saturday, 9 AM to 2 PM. It will be closed the week before Christmas (December 20-23).



Awards, Elections

By John Sproul

Highlighting our Annual Meeting in February will be the presentation of our Meritorious Service and Conservation awards. We want your ideas on worthy recipients. The Meritorious Service Award goes to a chapter member who has made outstanding contributions to El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon and its programs. The Conservation Award goes to an individual, organization or other entity outside the chapter who has done exceptional work on behalf of the environment and furthering the Audubon Cause in Trans-Pecos Texas.

Also in February, we'll install officers for 1996-97. The elections take place at our January meeting for the positions of president-elect, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and 3 elected directors.

Please give your recommendations for potential award recipients, officers or directors to Craig Braginton, 877-4138. The deadline for nominations is January 5. Want to be an officer or director yourself? Craig would love to hear from you.



Checklist of the Birds of Texas

By John Sproul

Hot off the presses is the 3rd edition of the CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF TEXAS, published by the Texas Ornithological Society (TOS). It supplants the previous edition published in 1984. The 166-page Checklist is a treasure trove of information on status and distribution of Texas birds, incorporating the many gains made over the past decade in our knowledge of the state's avifauna. The new Checklist is thorough, it is accurate, it is up to date, and it is a must for the library of any serious student of Texas birds. Congratulations to the members of the Texas Bird Records Committee of the TOS for a job well done.

Want to join the TOS? Annual dues are \$15, payable to "Texas Ornithological Society" and sent to TOS, c/o Jolene Boyd, 401 Pinn Oak, Ingram, TX 78025.

Donations

The El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society gratefully acknowledges the following donations:

Mary Lou Alcorn made a donation to Feather Lake in memory of Eli Corona.

Correction

In the September Roadrunner, it was noted that a donation was made in the name of Irma Clark. The correct name is Irma Cook.



Officers of the El Paso/ Trans Pecos Audubon Society

President

Craig Braginton 877-4138

Vice President

John Kiseda 833-6212

Treasurer

Larry Jordan 833-5969

Secretary

Jane Fowler 598-2448

Directors:

Charles Simpson

Roxanne Schroeder 534-7019

Bob Johnson 757-1876

On The Trail

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

It's time for the annual *Christmas Bird Counts*, the period this year will run from Dec. 15 thru Jan. 2. Over 1600 counts will take place during this time frame, most are in North America. We will have 2 of these, the Hueco Tanks Count will take place on Sat. December 16th, and the El Paso Count on Sat. December 30th.

The count area is a 15 mile diameter circle, to adequately cover the terrain we need about 40 people, only one time did we have this many. We will divide up into 10 teams and each will be assigned a sector within the circle, all teams will have an experienced birder and the others will help find and tally the numbers. We need your eyes so please **sign up to help**. If you cannot come for the whole day, a shorter session will do, either a 4 hour AM or PM tour will be a great help.

All participants are asked to pay a \$5 fee, this helps the National Audubon Society defray the cost of printing the results in FIELD NOTES. Our chapter will pick up \$2 of this leaving only \$3 to be contributed by you. Come to the general meeting (page 1) on December 11 to learn more about the counts and sign up. You can also sign up by calling Bob "WILDBIRDER" Johnson (757-1876).

BOSQUE DEL APACHE

The most popular National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico is where you will see some great birds. How about 20,000 Snow Geese (some Ross's also), 10,000 Sandhill Cranes, a few Whooping Cranes, and BALD EAGLES. We will have a special Guided Tour of closed areas, where Wild Turkeys and Porcupines are very possible, this will be at 1 PM on Saturday.

A good way to start your 1996 bird list is to come on this trip, it will take place on January 13 & 14. Most Birders will be staying at the Motel 6 (1-800-⁸⁶⁶~~866~~₈₃₆) in Socorro (about 12 miles up I-25 from the NWR), or other motels in town, also Birders RV Park (1-505-835-1366) just outside the NWR Boundry.

Meet at I-10 and Trans Mountain Rd. at 7:33 AM on the 13th or at the Refuge Visitors Center at 11 AM. On Sunday the return trip will include a stop at Perch/Caballo Dams State Park where other good birds are always present. The coordinator for this trip will be Nancy Wilson (833-3907).

CROSSROADS

For those that missed the November trip (if you came again), this gives another chance to see the Upper Valley birds. Read the **Observations** column to see what great birds appear in this part of town. The Lewis' Woodpecker may still be around, if not Red-breasted Nuthatches and Phainopeplas probably will. Your tour will be conducted by Mary Lou Alcorn (584-8768) you can meet her at 7:48 AM parked at the usual meeting spot, Mesa-Country Club / Doniphan on Sat. Jan. 27th.

THE TREATMENT PLANT

The best place in Northeast El Paso to see Ducks (probably a dozen species) and Wading Birds (maybe 1/2 dozen species) is the Fred Hervey Wastewater Treatment Plant, better know to birders as the Fort Bliss Ponds. Quite a few Red-tailed Hawks and Northern Harriers are usually present. Chipping, Song and Brewers Sparrows are always there in the winter. Meet your Guide Bob Johnson (757-1876) in the parking lot of the closed Walmart 9825 Dyer St. on Sunday February 11th at 3:17 PM.

PELAGIC BIRDS

We have had a number of requests to consider another PELAGIC trip. **Talk** to your **friends**, a minimum of eight (8) people would be necessary. The trip would be accomplished by renting one or two vans, according to the number of people going.

1. The last part of July and/or first part of Aug. to Monterey CA. The trip would be 8 days with a birding day at the Salton Sea going out, the Pelagic day, and 2 land birding days on the coast. Traveling will require 2 long (10 to 12 hours) driving days going and 2 returning. **COSTS**; include the boat trip, 7 nights in a motel (double occupancy), vehicle, food (depending on what type eater you are \$12 to \$25 per day) average \$15 - \$18, our **GUESSTIMATE \$500**.

2. First half of Sep. to San Diego, CA. This trip would be 6 days, includes the Salton Sea stop, the Pelagic day, and 1 1/2 land birding days on the coast. Travel will require 1 long driving day each way. **COSTS**, include the same items, but less food and only 5 nights in a motel, our **GUESSTIMATE \$400**. Both **GUESSTIMATES** would be plus your own personal extras, souvenirs, etc.

Please let Bob Johnson (757-1876) know by the **END** of **JAN** if you would be interested, **one specific trip** or **either**. We then can discuss further details, the final decisions and plans made must be accomplished by March 11, 1996.

Observations

September 16, 1995 - November 15, 1995

Uncommon, RARE, and CASUAL sightings

Due to space limitations only one or two sightings are listed, although in some cases more were reported. We are continuing to have a number of very rare sightings (full entry **bold** and underlined). Some of the listings may not be considered RARE, but because of the season or habitat (date and/or location **bold** and underlined) they are unusual. The listing of birds here is determined using the checklist "Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas" 7th Edition, October 1987. If you are unsure of a sighting, don't **hesitate** - **report it**, to Bob "WILDBIRDER" Johnson 757-1876 (recorder). I want to thank everyone that reported this period, we had more people reporting, more sightings from more locations than ever before.

(Observers: Robin Alexander, Helen Bigalow, Craig Braginton, Jeannette Cole, Helen Davis, Doug Emkalns, Betty Fisbeck, Jim Galyon, Al Gavit, Madaline Gavit, Richard Hermosillo, Jewel Hewitt, Sallie Homan, Hugh Jameson, Sally Jameson, Bob Johnson, Larry Jordan, Karen Kaplan John Kiseda, Bruce Neville, Gail Nickel, Al Olivas, David Ogle Jim Paton, Patricia Russell, John Sproul, Jimmy Zebreski, Barry Zimmer)

Locations: Ant-Anthony, ByS-Boy Scout, Can-Canutillo CCA-Country ClubArea, CEP-Central ElPaso, Cor-Coronado, D/O-Durlings/Owens, DiR-Diablo Reservoir, Fbn-Fabens, FBP-Fort Bliss Ponds, FHc-Fort Hancock, FLk-Feather Lake, Fro-Frontera, HTk-Huecco Tanks, Hor-Horizon City, Lom-Lombardy, Msn-Mason's Orchard, McN-McNary, Mem-Memorial Park, 4MD-4 Mile Draw, MPk-Mountain Park, MSL-Mountain ShadowLake, NEP-Northeast El Paso, RdP-Randall's Pool, RvB-Riverbend, Sod-Sod Farm, STA-Sanra Teresa Area, Sun-Sunland Park Area, TnW-Tennis West Area, Tor-Tornillo, UVy-Upper Valley, WSp-Whispering Springs

LOONS to FALCONS

<u>COMMON LOON</u>	10/22 (JP/BZ)	FHc
<u>HORNED GREBE</u>	11/11 (JP)	Tor
Western Grebe	10/9 (AG)	MSL
	10/10 (BZ)	FBP
CLARK'S GREBE	10/15 (LJ)	McN
	11/6 (BZ)	FBP
DBL-CRSTD CORMORANT	11/4 (JS)	FLk
	11/12 (BJ)	XRd
Great Egret	10/17-11/12 (JS)	FLk
Snow Goose	10/30 (RH)	FBP
ROSS' GOOSE	11/6 (BZ)	FBP
Blue-winged Teal	9/17 (AO)	HTk
	11/5 (BJ)	FBP
<u>SURF SCOTER</u>	10/22 (JP/BZ)	FHc
Common Merganser	10/15 (LJ)	FHk
<u>RED-BREASTED MERGANSER</u>	11/11 (BF-ft)	FHc
OSPREY	9/25 (JS)	FLk
	10/20 (BZ)	McN
<u>PEREGRINE FALCON</u>	10/20 (BZ)	Tor
Prairie Falcon	11/5 (PR)	Sod



RAILS to ANI

Sora	9/17 (AO)	HTk
SANDHILL CRANE	10/15 (LJ)	FHc
	10/15 (JK)	FBP
Long-billed Curlew	9/23 (SH)	Sod
PECTORAL SANDPIPER	10/1 (LJ)	Fro
Common Snipe	11/4 (HJ-ft)	HTk
<u>LAUGHING GULL</u>	10/20 (BZ)	McN
Franklin's Gull	10/15 (LJ)	McN
BONAPART'S GULL	11/5 (RH)	FBP
	11/11 (BF-ft)	McN
<u>SABINE'S GULL</u>	9/23 (JP)	Sun
Forster's Tern	9/17 (JS)	FLk
Black Tern	9/25 (JS)	FLk
<u>COMMON GROUND-DOVE</u>	10/27 (RA)	HTk
	10/29 (DE)	Sod
Monk Parakeet	10/22 (MG)	Hor
	11/7 (BZ)	CCA
<u>GROOVE-BILLED ANI</u>	10/14 (BF/GN)	FBP



GROOVE-FILLED ANI

Observations

Continued

OWLS to SWALLOWS

Common Barn Owl	9/23	(SH)	D/O
FLAMMULATED OWL	10/4	(KK-rehaber)	
MAGNIFICENT HUMNGBRD	10/6	(HB)	Ant
ALBINO-Hummingbird	9/25	(JC)	CEP
Anna's Hummingbird	9/23	(LJ)	Cor
COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRD	10/29-11/15	(DO)	MPk
LEWIS'WOODPECKER	10/29	(SJ)	MPk
	11/7-15	(BZ)	Lom
Red-naped Sapsucker	9/19	(JZ)	Can
	10/9	(GN-yd)	Cor
HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHR	9/22	(LJ)	Mem
	10/1	(LJ)	HTk
GRAY FLYCATCHER	9/17	(AO)	HTk
VERMILION FLYCATCHER	10/8	(LJ)	Rnd
	11/12	(BJ)	Msn
GREAT CRESTED FLYCTHR	9/17	(LJ)	HTk
Western Kingbird	10/15	(LJ)	Tor
Tree Swallow	10/15	(LJ)	FHc
<i>Violet-green Swallow</i>	11/14	(BZ)	WSp
N. Roughwing Swallow	10/15	(LJ)	FHc
Cave Swallow	10/15	(LJ)	FHc
Barn Swallow	11/12	(JS)	FLk

JAYS to VIREOS

<i>STELLER'S JAY</i>	10/8	(HJ)	MPk
BLUE JAY	11/1	(JG)	RvB
Red-breasted Nuthatch	11/1	(RB)	Mem
	11/5	(PR-yd)	STA
BROWN CREEPER	11/6	(BZ)	FBP
BLUE-GRAY GNATCTHR	10/1	(LJ)	HTk
<i>EASTERN BLUEBIRD</i>	10/22	(JP/BZ)	Fbn
<i>SWAINSON'S THRUSH</i>	9/17	(LJ)	AMD
WOOD THRUSH	10/8	(BZ-yd)	NEP
GRAY CATBIRD	9/23	(SH)	HTk
	11/8	(JH)	NEP
BROWN THRASHER	10/13	(HJ-yd)	MPk
	10/14	(JP)	Sod
Curve-billed Thrasher	11/9	(JH)	NEE
SPRAGUE'S PIPET	10/21	(DE/BN)	Sod
CEDAR WAXWING	11/7	(BZ)	CCA
Phainopepla	11/14	(BZ)	WSp
Warbling Vireo	9/23	(SH)	Msn
RED-EYED VIREO	9/19	(JZ-yd)	Can
	11/1-6	(PR-yd)	STA



LEWIS'S
WOODPECKER

WARBLERS to FINCHES

LUCY'S WARBLER	9/17	(AO)	HTk
	10/	(DE)	UVI
CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLR	11/5	(DE/BN)	D/O
BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER	11/4	(JP-yd)	ByS
BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER	10/14	(CB-yd)	Can
BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER	11/5	(BZ-yd)	NEP
AMERICAN REDSTART	9/17	(AO)	HTk
	10/17	(BZ)	FBP
<i>OLENBIRD</i>	9/24	(JP)	D/O
	11/5	(PR-yd)	STA
NORTHRN WATERTHRUSH	9/24	(LJ)	HTk
	10/12	(BZ)	FBP
Summer Tanager	9/24	(LJ)	HTk
Western Tanager	10/14	(SH)	TnW
Lazuli Bunting	9/17	(AO)	HTk
DICKCISSEL	9/17	(AO)	HTk
	9/23	(SH)	Msn
Rufus-sided Towhee	10/8	(GN-yd)	Cor
Black-chinned Sparrow	9/17	(AO)	HTk
BAIRD'S SPARROW	10/1	(JK)	Sod
<i>FOX SPARROW</i>	10/17	(BZ)	FBP
WHITE-THROATED SPW.	10/22	(JP/BZ)	DiR
	10/27	(RA)	HTk
GOLDEN-CROWNED SPW	11/13	(BZ)	HTk
LAPLAND LONGSPUR	10/	(DE)	Sod
CHESTNT-COLLRD LNGSPR	10/	(DE)	Sod
Scott's Oriole	10/10	(HJ-yd)	MPk
Lesser Goldfinch	11/9	(HD-yd)	NEE
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	10/8	(LJ)	Rnd

CALENDAR

December

Sat., 2 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sun., 3 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.
Mon., 4 - Board Meeting.
Sun., 10 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.
Mon., 11 - General Meeting, see page 1.
Sat., 16 - Hueco Tanks Christmas Bird Count, see page 5.
Sat., 16 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sun., 17 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.
Sat., 30 - El Paso Christmas Bird Count, see page 5.

January

Sat., 6 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sun., 7 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.
Mon., 8 - Board Meeting.
Sat., 13 - Sun., 14 - Field trip to Bosque Del Apache, see page 5.
Sun., 14 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.
Mon., 15 - General Meeting, see page 1.
Sat., 20 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sat., 20 - Feather Lake workday, see page 3.
Sun., 21 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.
Sat., 27 - Field trip to Crossroads Pond, see page 5.

February

Sat., 3 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sun., 4 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.

El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

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Address Correction Requested

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