

the ROADRUNNER

Newsletter of El Paso/Trans-Pecos
Audubon Society - P.O. Box 9655
El Paso, Texas 79986



Volume 13 (5)

\$4.00 per year

May 1983

GENERAL MEETING

MON., MAY 16, 1983, 6:45 PM, El Paso Zoo, Evergreen and Paisano. Notice anything different? You'd better or you'll miss our trip to the zoo. Ken Knoblock will give us a tour of the El Paso Zoo so come a little early to pick up your popcorn and peanuts. After the tour there'll be a business meeting in the conference room in the Administration building. El Paso has its "Amigo Man", but the zoo has its "Amigo Bird". Be sure to come and meet him!



BIRDING FOR \$\$\$\$\$\$

The place to be now is on the list of counters for the Big Day Count/Birdathon, Saturday, April 30. You can count for 24 hours, for all day or for a shorter period of time. It would be absolutely fine if every member of EP/TPAS would count. The birds will be there so call Bob Johnson and tell him you'll be there, too.

Sponsors are very important folks who pledge a sum of money (.05¢, 25¢, \$1.00) for each bird seen by a counter. It is hoped that every member will sponsor a counter. Bob Johnson can suggest a counter for every sponsor if necessary.

Feather Lake benefits from the money raised. Make a pledge now and even through Sunday, May 1 (up 'til 5pm) by calling Bob to put your name in the pot for the drawings (grand prize is stained glass window) Sunday evening at 5000 Alabama, Hallmark Apts. Fiesta Room. Remember, don't procrastinate! ####

FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

MEMORABLE WEDNESDAY MORNINGS 7 a
May 4-Memorial Park, Garden Center
May 11-Arroyo Park, New York, St.
Vrain Sts.

May 18-Memorial Park
May 25-Arroyo Park

HUECO TANKS

SAT., MAY 7. This is a reminder about the trip to Hueco Tanks with the Mesilla Audubon Society. Meet at Bella Napoli (10600 Montana at Yarbrough) at 8 AM. For information call Joyce Davis (581-9470).

BEGINNERS TRIP TO LOWER VALLEY
SAT., MAY 14. Meet at 6:45 AM at Feather Lake, 9500 N. Loop Rd., 0.3 miles n.w. of Americas Ave. The breeding birds in densely vegetated areas along the Rio Grande are the flashiest part of El Paso's avifauna. Beginning birders will find out why on this lower valley expedition. We'll visit selected areas from Feather L. to below Ft. Quitman. Target species will include: Black-crowned Night Heron, Vermillion Flycatcher, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Blue

Grosbeak, Painted Bunting and "Bullock's" Oriole. Bring lunch and liquids. Leader: John Sproul (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w).

CHIRICAHUA MTS., S.E. ARIZONA
SAT.-SUN., MAY 21-22. Our annual outing to 1 of N. America's birding meccas--and 1 of its most beautiful mountain ranges--is fast approaching. Elf Owl, Elegant (=Coppery-tailed) Trogon, Strickland's (=Arizona) Woodpecker, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Olive and Red-faced warblers, and coati all will be among our quarry. You can stay at a Forest Service campground or opt for the comfort of the Cave Ck Ranch (602/558-2334) or Cathedral Rock Lodge (602/558-2254). Leader: John Sproul (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w). Please call John for details if you plan to go.

Some Chiricahua aficionados will leave for Arizona before Sat.; Others will stay beyond Sun. For those interested, on Mon.-Tues., May 23-24, John will lead a group farther west to Ramsey Canyon in the Huachuca Mts., Sonoita Ck., and Madera Canyon in the Santa Rita Mts. We'll look for Gray Hawk, Montezuma Quail, Broad-billed and Costa's hummingbirds, Rose-throated Becard, Varied Bunting, Rufous-winged Sparrow and more. ##

BREAKFAST AT WILDERNESS PARK MUSEUM, SUN., JUNE 5. We will meet at the Museum (on Trans-Mountain Rd.) at 6 AM and breakfast there and bird in the area. Leader: Joe Guinn (566-8438) ##

LOWER GILA RIVER VALLEY, N.M. SAT. SUN., JUNE 18-19. Bob Johnson will lead this trip (751-0125). Details next month. ###

CARETAKER

We are happy to announce Al and Madeline Gavit will be Feather Lake's new caretakers. ##

NONGAME BILL PASSES HOUSE

HB 1064, the bill to create a Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund for Texas is on a roll.

Following the impressive display of public support for the bill at the March 28 hearing in Austin (RR Apr), the House Environment Affairs Committee reported it unanimously to the full House with only minor amendments. On April 18, it came before the House for its 2nd reading and passed unanimously on a voice vote. The next day, the roll-call vote for its 3rd and final reading saw it pass 143-1. Tom Uher (D-Bay City) was the lone dissenter.

Obviously, all of our trans-Pecos representatives backed the bill. They deserve a note of thanks. If you live in El Paso County, your representative is either Jack Vowell, Arves Jones, Paul Moreno, Mary Polk or Bob Valles. For Hudspeth, Culberson, Reeves and Jeff Davis counties, he is Larry Don Shaw. For Presidio, Brewster Pecos and Terrell counties, he is Dudley Harrison. For each, the mailing address is: Texas House of Representatives, P.O. Box 2910, Austin, TX 78769.

You also deserve thanks. Thank you, everyone who contacted your representative regarding HB 1064. Thank you, all who signed the petition in support of this bill. (If you still have a petition, please get it completed promptly and return it to the Audubon Council of Texas (ACT). If you don't think you can get more signatures, return it incomplete.

Thanks are also due all T-shirt buyers and other contributors to the Support Texas Wildlife Fund, ACT's war chest for its campaign to get the nongame bill passed. (ACT welcomes additional donations, payable to "Support Texas

Wildlife", ACT, P.O. Box 43362, Austin, TX 78745. Note that I gave the wrong Zip code last month.) And, finally, El Paso's Terra Club deserves thanks for helping send our conservation chair, Tony Worth, to Austin for the House hearings.

The scene now shifts to the Senate. Let your senator know that Texas needs an expanded nongame wildlife program and that with the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund it can have one. Remind him that the nongame bill mandates no tax increases or uses of general revenue funds; voluntary contributions and sales of special wildlife art prints, decals and stamps will be the income sources for the Nongame Fund.

Tati Santiesteban of El Paso may sponsor the nongame bill in the Senate. If he does, thank him. ACT also hopes Bill Sims, who represents the rest of trans-Pecos Texas, will sign on as a co-sponsor. Encouragement from his constituents can only help. The Senate mailing address is: Texas Senate, P.O. Box 12068, Austin, TX 78711.

The solid victory in the House is further evidence that increased support for nongame wildlife programs in Texas is an idea whose time has come. With your continued help, it's going to happen. /John Sproul/

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON., MAY 9, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet at the home of Tom and Virginia Baker, 2716 Louisville, El Paso (562-9461). All members are welcome.



SUPPORT TEXAS WILDLIFE

Wear the Audubon Council of Texas T-shirt! It's 100% cotton and features soaring white Whooping Crane with the legend "Support Texas Wildlife." Proceeds go to EP/TPAS and to ACT's campaign to pass legislation creating a nongame/endangered species fund for Texas. Price: \$7 (Non-El Paso residents, please add \$1 for postage and handling). Circle preferences:

Color: Lt Blue Tan Yellow

Size: S M L XL

(No child's sizes right now)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____

Zip _____ Ph _____



Mail checks, payable to "El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society," to: T-shirts, P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986.

WHAT HAPPENED?

On Sunday, April 10, 45 people gathered for a "Sunset" evening at Feather Lake. Ask anybody that went--they all had a marvelous time! Highlight of the afternoon was the flock of approximately 180 White-faced Ibis that flew in to roost for the night. 31 species were seen.

THE ROADRUNNER is sent to all members of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society. Nonmembers can subscribe for \$4 per yr. Make checks payable to "El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society" and mail to: RR Editor, P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986. Please send any changes or corrections in name, address, or telephone # to this same address.

The deadline for the June Roadrunner is May 27.

OBSERVATIONS - March 21 to April 20

Birding was excellent for the month, despite the often horrible weather. Spring migration got into full swing during the end of the reporting period, while at the same time, the numbers of most wintering species declined rapidly. A total of 159 species were recorded, 11 of which were of casual or accidental status. One first record was obtained, as were many early arrival dates.

LOONS - FALCONS

Lone Western Grebes were at the McNary reservoir 3-21 (BZ,KZ,PL) and 4-9 (BZ). Nearly 2000 Eared Grebes at McNary 4-9 were noteworthy (BZ). Four Double-crested Cormorants flew over the Socorro Sewage Ponds (SSP) 4-9 (BZ), while 2 Olivaceous were seen at McNary 3-29 (BJ,KB) and 4-9 (BZ). A single Great Egret was at McNary 3-29 (BJ,KB) and 4-9 (BZ). Cattle Egrets were seen at various locations throughout the month (BZ,KZ,PL,JD,BJ,KB), with a high count of 221 near La Union 4-16 (BZ). Twenty nine White-faced Ibis, the first of spring, flew over Mesa Drive 4-8 (BZ). Meanwhile, numbers as large as 200 gathered at Feather Lake 4-17 (JS). A ROSS' GOOSE was in the company of 2 Snows at McNary 3-21 (BZ,KZ,PL). Turkey Vultures arrived at Hueco Tanks 3-26 (BZ,JaD), while the first Swainson's Hawk was sighted 3-30 (JD). Harris' Hawks continued to be recorded in the lower valley in sparse numbers (KZ,BZ,PL,JD,JaD). Ospreys proved to be unusually common (BZ,SM,MG) with 5 reports of no less than 14 individuals. The high count was 6 in the McNary area 4-9 (BZ).

QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

A Virginia Rail was heard in the Tornillo Drainage 3-21, as were 5 Soras (BZ,KZ,PL). Long-billed Curlews continued to be abundant near Fabens, with groups as large as 500 individuals being seen (BZ,KZ,PL). On 4-9, a lone WHIMBREL (2nd EP record-honorable mention for bird-of-the-month) was photographed in with the curlews off the Fabens levee (BZ). Shorebird arrival dates included - Solitary Sandpiper at the Tallmon Dairy Pond 4-8 (BZ), 12 MARBLED GODWITS at the Fort Bliss Sewage Ponds 4-19 (BZ,JD), 8 Am. Avocets at Tornillo 3-21 (BZ,KZ,PL), 3 Black-necked Stilts at

Feather Lake 4-17 (JS), and Wilson's Phalarope at McNary 3-29 (BJ,KB). Franklin's Gulls were seen at various locations throughout the month (BZ,JD,BJ,KB,JS), while 3 Bonaparte's were at SSP 4- (BZ). The first Forster's Terns of spring were at Tornillo 4-17 (AG). A mostly albino Barn Owl at Owen's Farm 4-10 was of great interest (BZ,JD). Another Barn Owl was at Durling's Farm 4-14 (KZ,BZ). Black-chinned Hummingbirds arrived 3-22 in central El Paso (GB). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in a westside backyard 3-28 was noteworthy.

FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

Arrival dates for this group include: Western Kingbirds at Durling's 4-12 (BZ), Ash-throated Flycatcher off Trans-Mountain 4-16 (JD), Cliff Swallows near Tornillo 3-22 (BZ,JaD), and Bank Swallows at Randel's Pool 4-17 (BZ,JD). An Eastern Phoebe was at Tornillo 3-21 (PL,BZ,KZ). A few late Scrub Jays were still being seen up until the end of the reporting period (BZ,JD,JoD). The Blue Jay in n.e. El Paso was still present in mid-April. About 1000 Am. Crows were seen near Socorro 3-21 (BZ,KZ,PL). Lone Red-breasted Nuthatches were at Memorial Park 4-2 (JN), 4-3 (JN,JP) and 4-6 (BZ). Without a doubt, the bird-of-the-month honors go to a WINTER WREN discovered at Randel's Pool 3-27 (JD). This provides a first El Paso record for this species. At least 1 Brown Thrasher remained at Durling's Farm throughout the month (BZ,PL,JD). A Townsend's Solitaire was at Hueco Tanks 3-26 (BZ,JaD). A single Black-tailed Gnatcatcher was heard at Tornillo 3-21 (PL,BZ,KZ).

WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

Warbler arrivals include: Orange-crowned at Randel's Pool 3-22 (BZ,PL), Nashville at Durling's 4-17 (BZ,JD), Virginia's at Owen's Farm 4-17 (BZ,JD), Black-throated Gray at Owen's 4-11 (BZ) and Wilson's at Durling's 4-12 (BZ). Meanwhile, a WORN-EATING WARBLER (3rd EP record - honorable mention for bird-of-the-month) was at Horizon City 4-13 (MG). A BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (3rd EP record, first spring record, runner-up for bird-of-the-month honors) was seen

and photographed at Owen's Farm 4-14 (BZ, KZ). Oriole arrival dates were as follows: Hooded in Mountain Park 3-27 (JB), Scott's in Mountain Park 4-13 (JB) and Northern at Santa Theresa Country Club 4-16 (JD). A male Northern Cardinal was sighted and photographed at Randel's Pool 4-17 (BZ,JD), while a beautiful male Indigo Bunting (earliest spring record) was in the same area on the same day (BZ). A lone Cassin's Sparrow was seen off Hwy. 62/180 on 3-21 (BZ,PL). Four Swamp Sparrows were in the Tornillo Drainage 3-21 (BZ,KZ,PL). Black-chinned Sparrows were recorded at Hueco Tanks 3-21 (BZ,KZ,PL) and 3-26 (BZ,JaD). A "Slate-colored" Junco at Durling's Farm 4-16 was unusual and late (JD,BZ). An Am. Goldfinch was reported near Randel's Pool 4-17 (JoD).

CONTRIBUTORS: Harry Assad, Ginny Baker, Ken Beno, Flora Bittick, Janet Brockmoller, Joyce Davis(JoD), Jack Dodd(JaD), Sarah Dodds, Jeff Donaldson, Jane Fowler, Betty Frederick, Al & Madeline Gavit, Ed & Elsa Gilboe, Bob Johnson, Michael Kolstad, Paul Lehman, Sandy Martin, Jo Nagel, John Sproul, Scott Wilson, Barry Zimmer, Kevin Zimmer.

Note: Please report any rare or unusual bird sightings to me at 545-5184 immediately. Call anytime between 8AM-11PM. If you get no answer, please continue calling until you do. Time is of the essence in reporting bird sightings. /Barry Zimmer - Observations Editor/

FLASH - - Cape May Warbler seen in Horizon City. Details next month.

#

GRACIAS

Our display at Bassett was very successful. The highlight was John Caraway's visit with his Harris' Hawk, "Taco". We wish to thank all who helped: Ken Beno, Marcia Foster, Mary and George Yelderman, Sunny Wratten, Elza Gilboe, Jeannette Cole, Stella and David Weinstein, Harry Assad, Tony Worth, Madeline Vallari, Joyce Davis, Annamarie Shields, Art Arteaga, Dave Steinbach, Ann Schultis, and John Coyle. (And thanks to Bob Johnson for orchestrating the entire affair. -Ed.)

FEATHER LAKE: READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Wilson's Phalaropes pirouette on its surface. Great Blue Herons stalk in its shallows. Muskrats patrol the water's edge. White-faced Ibis by the dozen and blackbirds by the 1000 arrive at dusk to roost for the night. Feather Lake, our wildlife sanctuary at 9500 North Loop Rd., is looking good this spring.

Can't get down to see for yourself? The find a copy of the latest PASO DEL NORTE magazine and read about this special place. Local free-lance writer John Colburn's profile of EP/TPAS, with emphasis on Feather Lake, appears on page 56-59 of the April issue. Thank you, John, for highlighting our activities so well.

GIVE FEATHER LAKE A HAND

Saturday, May 14 has been declared a Work Day at Feather Lake. Besides your hands, broad shoulders, muscles and lot of elbow grease will come in handy. Cleaning out irrigation ditches, burning tumbleweeds and trash, policing inside and outside the sanctuary grounds and removing dead trees in preparation for planting new trees are projects needing our attention. A good starting time is 8AM. Donate what time you can afford. Bring snacks or lunch. Drinks will be furnished.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Yes, I want to join the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Name

Address

CityState.....

ZipPhone.....

- Membership Category desired:
 Individual/\$25 Family/\$32
 Sr. Citizen, Individual/\$17
 Sr. Citizen, Family/\$19
 Student/\$15

This is a new renewal membership. Please make checks payable to National Audubon Society. Mail to Bob Johnson, 5109 Paris, El Paso, Tx 79924.

SIERRA CLUB PICNIC

The Sierra Club's annual picnic takes place on Wed., May 25, on the west bank of the Rio Grande, approximately 0.5 miles up-river (take the levee road) from the Borderland Rd. bridge. You're invited! The Sierrans provide free burgers and hot dogs, with beverages for sale. You bring a cup, eating utensils and a food item to share. Festivities start at 6PM, but come whenever you can.

MIRE EL GAVILÁN CHAPULINERO

For those of you studying Spanish, here is your chance to combine birding with your studies. Memorize the following:

Milano norteño	Mississippi Kite
Gavilán pajarero	Sharp-shinned Hawk
Gavilán palomero	Cooper's Hawk
Aguililla ratonera	Red-tailed Hawk
Gavilán chapulinero	Swainson's Hawk
Aguililla patas ásperas	
	Ferruginous Hawk
Aguililla cinchada	Harris' Hawk
Águila real	Golden Eagle
Gavilán ratonero	Northern Harrier
Gavilán pescador	Osprey
Halcón café	Prairie Falcon
Cernícalo chitero	American Kestrel

These are often-used (though not the only) Mexican common names for some of the diurnal raptors of our area. Now that you have the raptors memorized, are you ready for the Mexican common names of our other local birds? They're all in NATIVE NAMES OF MEXICAN BIRDS by L. R. Birkenstein and R. E. Tomlinson, Resource Publication 139 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, published May 1981. Request a copy from: Publications Unit, USFWS, Wash., DC 20240. OR find it in the EP/TPAS chapter library at the next general meeting.



DIRECTORY
EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

President	Joyce Davis*	581-94
Vice-president	Art Arteaga*	598-5
Sec.-Treas.	Jo Warolin*	594-7
Awards	Sarah Dodds*	533-7
Birdathon	Tony Worth*	592-4
Conservation	" "	" "
Education	Ginny Baker*	562-9
Field Trips	Art Arteaga	598-5
Finance	Jo Warolin	594-7
Hospitality	Annamarie Shields*	751-7
Library	Lois Beno	755-0
Membership	Bob Johnson*	751-0
Programs	Sarah Dodds	533-7
Publications	Jo Nagel*	566-2
Publicity	Diane Dutton*	562-7
Sanctuary	Joe Guinn*	566-8
Audubon Council of Texas Delegate		
	John Sproul	545-5
Clean Air Act Coordinator		
	Joyce Davis	581-94
ROADRUNNER Editors	Jo Nagel	566-2
	Jane Fowler	772-0

* - Board of Directors

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

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 2440
El Paso, TX

Return Postage
Guaranteed
Address Correction
Requested

