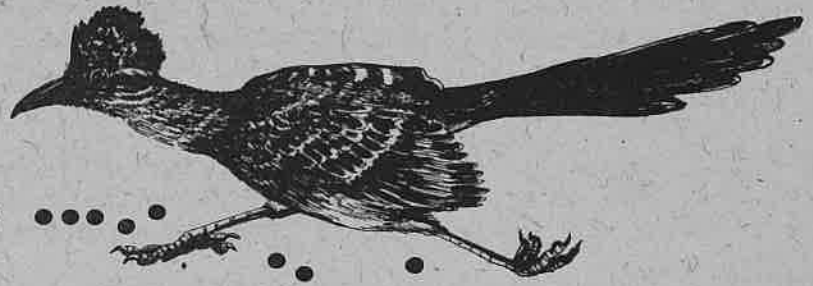


# the ROADRUNNER . . . . .



newsletter of  
EL PASO-TRANS Pecos AUDUBON SOCIETY  
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September, 1975 Vol. V. No. 7

Lucretia Chew, Editor

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Saturday, Sept. 13 7 a. m.  
FIELD TRIP  
Trip to Aguirre Springs in the Organ Mountains. Meet at the Coronado Shopping Center parking lot on North Mesa to car pool. Wear walking shoes; bring lunch and water if you wish.  
LEADER: Bill Roppes 757-0797
- Monday, Sept. 15 7:30 p. m.  
REGULAR MEETING  
GENERAL BUSINESS  
Featured will be a potpourri slide show. Members are asked to bring not more than 20 slides of their recent trips and/or birding experiences. A short presentation on Bird Identification will be made by Kevin Zimmer.
- Saturday, Sept. 27 7:30 -- 11 a. m.  
5:30 -- 7:30 p. m.  
OPEN HOUSE  
PLASTER LAKE  
Much work has been under way to preserve this wildlife sanctuary as as a multi-use educational and recreational facility. (See THE ROADRUNNER, August, 1975, for more background.) The lake is located on North Loop Road just northwest of its intersection with Avenue of the Americas.
- Saturday, October 11 8 a. m.  
FIELD TRIP  
Trip to an unnamed springs off Trans Mountain Road. Meet at Gibson's parking lot, 9817 Dyer for car pooling. There will be some moderate walking required.  
LEADER: Kevin Zimmer 751-0552
- Monday, October 20  
REGULAR MEETING  
Tentative plans include a speaker knowledgeable on the management of the Jornada Range.

## FIELD TRIP TO RIO PENASCO VALLEY

On August 16, eight hardy souls spent a rather cold wet night camped on the Ed White property in the Rio Penasco Valley near Cloudcroft. They were joined the following morning by four more birders. There were, however, rewards for those who braved the uncooperative weather; the wild flowers have never been lovelier or more abundant, and the landscape in general, including a waterfall, was delightful.

A total of 43 bird species were seen, including the broad-tailed, rufous, and Allen's hummingbirds; white-breasted, red-breasted, and pygmy nuthatches; pine siskin, wild turkey, pygmy owl, hairy woodpecker, robin, western tanager, and western wood peewee.

The other prominent wildlife observed was a horse, who fell in love with Sarah Jane Dodds at first sight and thereafter followed her adoringly.

## THE NEW PASTLEAD

We hope you are as pleased as we are about the "new look" of our front page this month. The design was created and prepared by Patty Canaris, already well-known on the El Paso art scene, and we are much indebted to her for this lovely contribution to our monthly newsletter.

CHRISTMAS COUNT REPORT

The AMERICAN BIRDS Christmas Count 1974 issue began reaching us late in August. Thought you might be interested in some information gleaned from its 478 pages of fine print.

This was the seventy-fifth year with 1102 counts this year, representing the efforts of 27,184 people. In the US and Canada 603 species and 79,331,186 individual birds were seen. (That's 293½ birds per birder!)

The brief table below shows the results of 31 counts in West Texas and New Mexico. The number of species is followed by the number of individual birds, and in parenthesis the number of birders participating. Some of the more numerous sightings are detailed at right.

WEST TEXAS

SAN ANGELO 116--512,250 (12) Starlings-186,555; redwing blackbirds--166,758; brown-headed cowbirds-136,160.

ROBERT LEE 111--7574 (13)

DAVIS MOUNTAINS 100--6464 (23)

EL PASO 99--5218 (25)

LUBBOCK 96--14,190 (36) Redwing blackbirds-3250; House sparrows-1800; Shovelers-1800; Green-winged teal-950.

BALMORHEA 93--5419 (11)

LIDLAND 89--28,609 (24) Sandhill crane-1940; House sparrow-1925; Redwinged blackbird-2760; Brewer's blackbird-2802; Brown-headed cowbird-9574; Lark bunting-2052.

NICHITA FALLS 86--10,108 (15) House sparrow-1093; Redwinged blackbird-5519.

SHEFFIELD 83--3623 (8)

MUICO TAMES 75--2401 (21)

LANE THOMAS 72--2340 (4)

STANTON 72--4885 (9)

ALVARILLO 69--9302 (16)

MULESHOE REFUGE 63--156,530 (8) Canada geese-60,400; pintail-12,500; sandhill crane-72,400

ABILENE 54--2238 (13)

NEW MEXICO

ROSELLE 103--2,068,428 (16) Brewer's blackbirds-1,001,000; redwinged blackbirds-1,000,751.

PORTAL, ARL. 97--7988 (25)

BOSQUE DEL APACHE 83--104,528 (16) Snowgoose-lark-800; Redwinged blackbird-59,500; Sandhill crane-7800.

GILA RIVER 81--2476 (19)

GLENWOOD 81--2486 (7)

FARMINGTON 80--27,465 (11) Mallard-8163; Starling-11,887; Redwinged blackbird-2050

SILVER CITY 73-4711 (18)

ESPAROLA 72--17,687 (16) Horned lark-3270; robin-5300; mountain bluebird-1020; starling-2690; dark-eyed junco-1660.

LAS VEGAS 69-7695 (3)

LOVING 64--1743 (4)

RODO 63--4089 (5)

ALBUQUERQUE 58--25,494 (19) Common crow-19,000; starling-3100.

CARLSBAD 56--1725 (6)

SANTA FE 55--4418 (10)

SANDIA MOUNTAINS 40--7753 (13)

CLAYTON 37--1350 (2)

The El Paso group can be appropriately proud of its count. Even though we just couldn't quite squeeze out that hundredth bird, we were close to the top of the list in both total species and in number of persons participating.

Just in case you want to make your plans early, the 1975 Christmas count must be made between December 20, 1975 and January 4, 1976.

## NOTES FROM NATIONAL

Whooping Cranes: A Setback and a Hopeful Experiment. The first captive-bred whooping crane, which was hatched May 29 at the Interior Department's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland, died six weeks later, apparently from a congenital deformity. Another important experiment, however, has fared better. Fourteen eggs were taken from nests of wild whoopers in Wood Buffalo National Park in Canada this spring and put into sandhill crane nests in Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Idaho. (Only one of the two eggs normally laid by a whooping crane in the wild is expected to produce a chick anyway, so Interior wildlife experts have felt that taking the "second" egg for a promising experiment is justified.) Of the 14 eggs taken to Grays Lake, 9 have produced chicks. In this way, wildlife scientists hope to start a new flock of wild whooping cranes.

Pesticides Kill 80 Per Cent of Louisiana Pelicans. Persistent pesticides are threatening to wipe out Louisiana's brown pelicans again. During the past few months about eighty per cent of them have died, and laboratory tests show lethal concentrations of endrin in all birds tested, along with dieldrin, toxaphene, and DDT. The brown pelican, once abundant in Louisiana, was wiped out there after the advent of DDT and other long-lived pesticides. A restocking program using birds from Florida began in 1969 and had brought back about 450 birds when disaster struck this past spring.

Protection for Whales. A system of protective measures for a selective moratorium designed to keep all species of whales safely above endangered levels was adopted at the International Whaling Commission's annual meeting in London in June. The new measures cover, for the first time, all oceans and all species.

For the Traveler. Tahoma Audubon Society's 1975-76 Operation Nature Guide is now available. It's for "nature-seeking travellers who want to see new birds and other wildlife, new habitats and earth forms"; it lists people who can help, places, addresses, and phone numbers coast to coast. For a single copy, send \$1 donation to: Nature Guide, 34915 4th Ave. So., Federal Way, WA 98002. There's a ten per cent discount for quantities of 25 or more.

Pollution Fighter's Handbook. "A Cleaner View: Guide to Industrial Pollution" is 235 fact-filled pages on how to gather and evaluate data on industrial polluters, and what can be done about them. It's available from I.F.O.R.M., 25 Broad St., New York, N.Y. 10004. Regular price is \$4 plus postage, but for Audubon members there's a discount -- \$3.25 plus postage for mail orders.

## WILDERNESS MUSEUM

After various delays due to financing problems, work is in progress on the Wilderness Museum. Flora and path plans and plans for a ramada-type structure have now been approved. These were prepared by a doctoral student from Texas A & M working on a grant. The completed layout will be representative of the various levels in the Chihuahuan Desert -- arroyo, sandy mesa, and higher canyons.

Audubon President Charlie Jensen and members Sarah Jane Jodds and Ed White are active within the committees for this new museum.

## AUDUBON VISITS THE CAMERA CLUB

The Audubon Society has been invited to present a twenty-minute talk at the Sun Country Camera Club meeting on September 19. Our president is preparing a presentation about taking bird pictures -- equipment used, locations, etc.

Audubon members will be welcome at the meeting which begins at 7:30 p. m. at the Garden Club Building in Memorial Park.



from the TEXAS CHAPTER of THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Dear Friend of Nature,

This letter is sent to you in the knowledge that you are a member of an organization that is concerned with conservation of wildlife and natural environments in Texas. Whatever your special interest, I think we can assume that you are interested in habitats, for as Patrick Noonan, President of THE NATURE CONSERVANCY said, "You don't save alligators; you save swamps."

The Nature Conservancy is a member-governed non-profit organization existing for the sole purpose of saving natural areas from damage or destruction by human encroachments. Its nation-wide support comes from private donations of land or money, as well as from membership dues.

The Conservancy is one of the world's most successful conservation organizations. In 1974 alone it completed more than 200 land-conservation projects involving some 300,000 acres valued in excess of \$60,000,000 in 35 states, the Virgin Islands, and Canada. In addition to maintaining its own preserves, it helps local, state, and federal conservation agencies by the intermediate purchase of land for which government appropriations are delayed, thus avoiding price escalation.

The Texas Chapter is one of 30 chapters in the United States. One-half of the income from all membership dues from Texas residents is transferred to the Texas Chapter to aid in the acquisition and management of preserves in this state. We now own seven preserves in Texas and have another one under lease. Others are currently being negotiated.

We earnestly solicit your active participation in our efforts, for there are many natural areas in Texas urgently needing protection. If you decide to join, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to provide future generations of Texans with places where they can see and learn the true nature of the land and its wildlife.

Cordially yours,

John L. Galley, President

Those interested should contact Geth White, 566-2328, for additional details including address and membership blanks.

#### FEATHER LAKE

Feather Lake progress continues. Ed White has been busy getting estimates on the ramada and necessary utility hookups which are planned. Methods of financing the anticipated \$15,000 cost are being explored.

A meeting with City officials on August 29 resulted in agreement on the basic provisions for a lease from the City. More details will be given when the lease is finalized.

Additional work on the incorporation papers has been completed by Carl Jones, and these have been resubmitted to the state for approval.

The fence around the lake seems to have given greater security to its inhabitants, and although coots are still the most numerous, the blue-winged teal have begun coming in, and grebe and gallinule and an occasional ruddy duck and gadwall are in evidence.

Interest in using Feather Lake for educational field trips has already been indicated by approximately 30 high school science teachers who learned of the lake through presentations made by Geth White at their late August in-service meetings.

Eventually volunteers from the local society will be needed to provide information during field trips to the site. If you have the interest and the time available to help with such a project, please contact Geth White. Plans will be made to train these volunteers.

## WORD SEARCH

In the puzzle below are the names of 72 bird species. Words are in straight lines -- horizontal, vertical, and diagonal. As you find the name in the puzzle, mark it off on the accompanying list.

B D K C A B S A V N A C A H L N I B O R P O  
 U R I U B E G E E W A X W I N G L L S N E W  
 F I N C H D E E T I H W B O B U E A W T E E  
 F B G K C R H F X F R S C O E I J C I M P L  
 L G F O Y W E O L E C L O J P K I K F P S R  
 E N I O O A L Y E A A B A G D R I B T A C U  
 H I S T G U C D U F Y Y A K C U D I E G P C  
 E K H L H A L P H U M M I N G B I R D M E F  
 A T E R T I I E G R E T S R U Q U D I A L L  
 D V R C K G N I L R A T S T L T H N J R I A  
 U Y H M E T W D W Z D B E C L G S J T T C M  
 P E Y O E I X E A A O O E U F R N L U I A I  
 R N N C S P A R R O W E V D M O I L K N N N  
 E O T K U I R L B Q L O O N O A P F W A C G  
 K E E I O P M A L L A R D P U D E L O I R O  
 C G C N R S Y N E K R A L Q L R N I R A E O  
 E D O G G H N I R N K N C A C U A C C T P S  
 P I V B L R A D E R D H E R O N Z K S E H E  
 D W A I B I S R S E A T T V B N L E W N O E  
 O Y A R R K W A H T H G I N A E C R A N E W  
 O R X D W E V C O O T U E B E R G F N A B E  
 W H I P P O O R W I L L K A E B S O R G E P

blackbird	mockingbird
blue jay	nighthawk
bobwhite	oriole
booby	pigeon
bufflehead	pipit
bunting	peeps
buteo	peewee
catbird	pelican
crow	phoebe
canvasback	quail
cardinal	rail
chat	raven
crane	robin
coot	scaup
curlew	sparrow
cuckoo	shrike
duck	starling
dove	snipe
egret	swan
flicker	swift
finch	towhee
falcon	veery
flamingo	vireo
flycatcher	warbler
grosbeak	waxwing
gannet	whippoorwill
goose	widgeon
gull	woodpecker
grebe	wren
heron	
hummingbird	
jay	
junco	
kingfisher	
kildeer	
kingbird	
lark	
loon	
kite	
mallard	
martin	
magpie	
meadowlark	

Your editor (and her husband the printer) regret very much the poor quality of this newsletter. The supplier was out of the stencils intended for this machine and we were forced to use a substitute, which is obviously of very poor quality. Please bear with us and we will do our best to have the problem solved before next month.

FORT BLISS SEWAGE PONDS

Although the aroma leaves something to be desired (as Ed White will undoubtedly agree), the Fort Bliss Sewage Ponds have been a favorite birding spot the latter half of the summer.

On August 8, 500 or more WILSON'S PHALAROPES, 50 LESSER YELLOWLEGS, 10 GREATER YELLOWLEGS, 100 or more RUDDY DUCKS including some with young, and many CRISSAL THRASHERS were seen.

On the morning of August 30, a total of 28 species were seen, including the WILLET, WESTERN GREENE, COMMON GREENE, BLACK TERN, BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAR, many YELLOW-HEADED BLACK-BIRDS, SHOVELBILLS, GADWALLS, BLUE-WINGED TEAL, RUDDY DUCKS.

In the evening of September 1 a LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN was observed. (On that occasion we were much upset by the presence of 50 or more hunters, shooting rather indiscriminantly; dead water birds were floating, and a wounded hawk was on the bank. We saw NO DOVE AT ALL while we were there! ED.)

MEXICAN DUCKS, a group of five, were seen on August 1 in an irrigated field in the Upper Valley by Ed and Geth White, Kevin and Barry Zimmer.

About 100 CASSIN'S SPARROWS were seen singing along Highway 180 near the turn to Mueco Tanks by Kevin and Barry Zimmer on August 6. Several small flocks of LARK BUNTINGS on the same day.

El Paso-Trans Pecos Audubon Society  
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FIRST CLASS

Eddie Chew  
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