



# The

# Roadrunner

Newsletter of the El Paso / Trans Pecos Audubon Society

Volume 26 No. 4

September, 1996

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## Welcome Back!

Welcome to a new season with the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society! We hope that everyone had an enjoyable summer and now it is time to get back to work and school and our chapter work. Nancy Wilson has already lined several great programs for the next few months and our first General Meeting of the season is detailed below. Coming up in October is a review of the Management Plan for Franklin Mountain State Park followed in November with a look at the reptiles and amphibians of El Paso County. Mark your calendars: you'll be busy the third Monday of the month.

"When do I take down my hummingbird feeder?" This question comes up every year, so we'll answer it right up front. Leave the feeder up until you no longer see any hummingbirds and don't worry that you will discourage the hummers from completing their migration. The instinctual drive to migrate is far greater than the allure of your sugar water. And there may be late migrants who need to stoke up for the long haul through the desert and into the forests of Mexico and Central America. So leave the feeder in place and enjoy the little guys while you can.

## 1996 Scholarship Award Winner

*Nancy Wilson, Program Chair*

September  
General  
Meeting

**General Meeting, Monday, September 16, 7:30 PM.** Elizabeth Chase attended the Audubon Ecology Camp in Maine as our chapter's 1996 Scholarship Award winner. She will be our guest speaker at the September General Meeting and she will be discussing the bird walks, botany, geology, uses of field journals and the Puffin Project Research that filled the week she spent at the Audubon Camp. Elizabeth will be putting that new knowledge to good use since her goal is "to carry important knowledge to the students of El Paso and the importance of their responsibilities and sensitivities to the environment." She has been a teacher at Sanchez Middle School for eighteen years and is in the process of creating an outdoor program for her students. This promises to be a great first meeting of the season and we'll look forward to seeing you there! The general meeting will be held in the Garden Center, 3105 Grant in Memorial Park in El Paso.

### The MCI Nature Network

The National Audubon Society is part of a special partnership with MCI and the The Nature Conservancy known as the MCI Nature Network. Through The Nature Network, MCI has donated nearly \$400,000 to the National Audubon Society over the past three years. This donation helps to support many of Audubon's national initiatives that impact our local community.

The Nature Network is a partnership designed to benefit both the National Audubon Society's and the Nature Conservancy's efforts to protect our natural heritage. It is a corporate affinity program that gives businesses across the country an easy way to support the preservation and protection of our natural resources through their telecommunications service. When a corporation enrolls in The Nature Network, MCI donates 2 to 5 percent of the company's net long distance usage to either or both the National Audubon Society and the The Nature Conservancy. Today more than 5,000 companies are enrolled in this program.

If you own or work at a company that you think would be interested in information about joining The Nature Network, the National Audubon Society would like to hear from you.

For more information please write or fax:

Barbara Hamlin  
Director of Foundation and  
Corporate Relations  
National Audubon Society  
700 Broadway, 6th Floor  
New York, NY 10003

### Audubon National Wildlife Refuge Campaign Takes Flight

In June, preceding the Audubon National Convention in Washington, DC, the Board of Directors announced that a National Wildlife Refuge Campaign would be one of five newly formed national campaigns resulting from the two-year long planning process. The Board identified these priority campaigns based on results of surveys returned by Audubon chapters nationwide.

Audubon's Refuge Campaign seeks to address an overarching concern that the National Wildlife Refuge System suffers from a narrow national and local constituency, and is in dire need of a broadened base of public support. Audubon plans to kick off its National Wildlife Refuge Campaign during National Wildlife Refuge Week (October 5 - 13). In keeping with the strategic plan, it is our hope that Audubon chapters all around the country will partake in the inauguration of this vital campaign by participating on their local refuges during this week. Additionally,

we view this as an opportunity to reach out to a broader public with our message.

The Refuge Campaign is currently developing materials which will highlight activities and opportunities on Refuge Week. It will also include sample editorials to the press and ideas on how to involve local businesses and others in the community. This is an excellent opportunity to draw attention to the Audubon mission! To receive a National Wildlife Refuge Week packet (which will also include information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), please contact Lora Wondolowski at National Audubon Society, 1901 Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20006, (202) 861-2242, or internet [lwondolowski@audubon.org](mailto:lwondolowski@audubon.org).

### The Changing Face of Feather Lake

By John Sproul

Feather  
Lake  
News

The cattail stands at our Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary are dynamic, advancing in low-water years, retreating in high-water years. We've now had three straight summers of high water, and the cattails are clearly in retreat. The massive stands that took over the east side of the basin in 1993 are now largely a memory.

What does this mean for Feather Lake's birds? For ducks, the lake probably still has a good mix of open water and emergent vegetation. For

birds that roosted in those now-gone cattails, we may see declines. Will there be fewer Yellow-headed Blackbirds this fall? Fewer White-faced Ibis next spring? Come on down and find out!

Feather Lake, located at 9500 N. Loop in El Paso's Lower Valley, opens for the season October 5. Admission is free. Check the back page of this newsletter for October-November dates and hours. Want to visit Feather Lake and help Audubon at the same time? A great way to do so is to staff the sanctuary during visitor hours on one or more days this fall or winter. Please contact Charles Simpson (598-2274) to volunteer.

You'll also have more opportunities to visit: On Saturday, October 19, our always popular Dinner at Feather Lake takes place (see "On the Trail" for details). If morning is more to your liking, join us for breakfast on **Saturday, November 23**. We'll eat at 8:30 AM, then burn those calories with a few hours of habitat-management work. See you there!

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### Newsletter Subscriptions

**Y**ou can subscribe to The Roadrunner for yourself or as a gift for a friend. A subscription is only \$5.00 for a year's worth of chapter and national news.

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

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### An Announcement from the Editor

By George Barnett

**I** have had the honor of editing The Roadrunner since 1990 and it has been a very enjoyable seven years. Those of you who have been with the chapter that long have seen the newsletter change considerably over those years. Unfortunately, there is a very strong chance that my wife and I will be leaving El Paso after the first of the year for other parts of Texas, and I will have to resign as Editor.

If you feel that you would like to take a shot at editing and composing the newsletter, I would like to hear from you. Having a computer with page layout software would be very helpful. Beyond that, you will have to devote several hours six times a year to producing the newsletter. It is time well spent and can be very rewarding.

The newsletter is the major vehicle for communicating information to the members, and the chapter mails in excess of 600 copies of each edition. Your work on the newsletter can have a major impact on the chapter, and you will become a voting member of the Board of Directors. If this sounds like something you would like to look into, please give me, George Barnett, a call. I can be reached during the day at my office number, 585-1257, or at night and on the weekends at my home, 581-1829.

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### Birdathon News

**T**he results are in and the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society has again shown its championship style. The chapter is the #1 money raiser in the Southwest Region of Audubon and has received Honorable Mention in its size category (300 - 999 members). The chapter had 33 counters in the field and they spotted a total of 177 species.

Among the more unusual species sighted over Birdathon weekend were two Soras, Semi-palmated Plovers, Black Tern, Black-throated Blue

Warbler, Common Poorwill, Mississippi Kite and Yellow-throated Vireo. Some birds that might have been expected, but were NOT seen included Golden Eagles, Orchard Orioles and Hooded Orioles.

Congratulations to all of the counters who did such a great job again in 1996. Whether you were a counter or not, be sure to say, "Thanks!" to all of the sponsors who made this another successful Birdathon for the chapter. Certificates for the counters will be distributed at the September General Meeting on September 16.

## On The Trail

### FORT BLISS PONDS

Fall Migration will be going strong, so this should produce quite a few wading birds and some of the ducks could be in. Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs will be there, also Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers could be found. Meet *Bob Johnson (757-1876)* in the parking lot of the old WALMART store, 9825 Dyer St. on Sun Sep. 8th at 7:28 AM



Adult Ferruginous Hawk.

### HAWK WATCH

An overnight trip to the Monzano Mountains will take place on the weekend of Sep. 28/29. This trip will be to "HAWKWATCH INTERNATIONAL" counting and banding site, located at Capilla Peak in the Monzanos. Camping in a National Forest campground about 4 miles below the site or Motels located in Mountainair 15 miles south or Socorro 70 miles Southwest.

The latter part of Sep. is usually the period of heaviest flight, sometimes surpassing 200 birds a day(10 hours). The birds trapped and banded are brought up to the lookout to be released in front of everyone, what a sight. For map and additional information call your leader *Bob Johnson (757-1876)*.

### FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS

The weekend of October 5 and 6, 1996, has been selected for the Celebration of Our Mountains. This is a binational, weekend event highlighting the natural and cultural history of the mountains and includes field trips and museum open houses. This celebration is initiated from the Center for Environmental Resource Management and the Department of Geological Sciences, UTEP. Many field trips are scheduled this weekend to include 2 birding trips. The first will be in the Eastern Franklins on Sat. the 5th, leaving the Wilderness Museum at 8 AM. The second will be in Western Franklins on Sun. the 6th, leaving the entrance to the Tom Mays area at 8 AM. For further information contact any of the Museums or *Bob Johnson 757-1876*.

### CELEBRITY BIRD TOURS

Texas Celebrity Bird Tours will be coming to the El Paso Area during the weekend of 18-20 October. This tour includes transportation, motel accommodations and guide service. If you know of anyone wishing to take part contact John Sproul 545-5157 or Bob Johnson 757-1876.

### PICNIC

Plan now to attend the ANNUAL CHAPTER PICNIC, to be held at Feather Lake on Sat. Oct. 19, starting about 5 PM. Details in the October Roadrunner.

### FRIENDS OF HUECO TANKS

Native American Pictograph Tours, every Sat. at 10 AM.

Bird Identification Tour, 3d Sun of every month starting at 8AM. This month the date is Sep. 21st.

On Sun. Oct. 20 the annual Hueco Tanks Interpretive Fair will be held, many activities, a lot of fun, plan to come.

# Observations

MAY 16, 1996 to AUGUST 15, 1996

Uncommon, Rare, and CASUAL sightings

A very rare sighting has the full entry italicized 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).

(Observers: Mary Alcorn; Victor Emanuel; Richard Hermosillo; Sallie Homan; Hugh Jameson; Bob Johnson; Larry Jordan; John Kiseda; Kathy Kiseda; Paul Millios; Gail Nickel; David Ogle; Jim Paton; Patricia Russell; John Sproul; Jimmy Zabriskie; Barry Zimmer)

Locations: Can-Canutillo; CCA-Country Area; Cor-Coronado; DMA-Doniphan Marsh; FBP-Fort Bliss Ponds; FHC-Fort Hancock; FLk-Feather Lake; KPI-King Place; Lnb-Lindbergh; McN-McNary; MPk-Mountain Park; NEE-North East El Paso; RGL-Rio Grande Levee; STA-Santa Teresa Area; Tor-Tornillo; Zoo-El Paso Zoo.

### GREBES to IBIS

Clark's Grebe	6/15	(LJ)	Tor
Am White Pelican	6/1	(JP)	McN
<u>Brown Pelican</u>	<u>6/1</u>	<u>(JP)</u>	<u>McN</u>
	<u>6/22</u>	<u>(LJ-ft)</u>	<u>FHC</u>
Dbl-Crested Cormorant	7/15	(PR)	DMA
	Var.	(JS)	FLk
Neotropic Corm (12 yng to fledg)	6/1	(JP)	FHC
Great Egret	Var.	(JS)	FLk
<u>Little Blue Heron</u>	<u>6/8</u>	<u>(JS)</u>	<u>FLk</u>
TRI-COLORED HERON	6/15	(JS)	FLk
	8/10	(SH)	DMA
White-faced Ibis	Var.	(JS)	FLk

### DUCKS to CURLEWS

WOOD DUCK (10 eggs in nest box, 6 hatched-Female and young left box on this date)	6/25	(PM)	KPI
Blue-winged Teal	6/8	(JK)	DMA
	6/22	(LJ-ft)	RGL
Cinnamon Teal (1 F/6 Imm)	7/3	(JS)	FLk
American Wigeon (late)	6/22	(JS)	FLk
Harris' Hawk	7/14	(BJ)	FBP
Semipalmated Plover	8/11	(RH)	FBP
Greater Yellowlegs	6/1	(BZ)	FBP
Long-billed Curlew	8/11	(RH)	FBP

### STINT TO TERNS

<u>Rufus-necked Stint (1st Texas Record-bird breeds in NW Alaska and Siberia)</u>	<u>7/17-22</u>	<u>(VE/BZ)</u>	<u>FBP</u>
Pectoral Sandpiper	6/1	(BZ)	FBP
<u>Long-tailed Jaeger</u>	<u>6/12</u>	<u>(JP)</u>	<u>McN</u>
FRANKLIN'S GULL	6/15	(LJ)	McN
<u>California Gull</u>	<u>6/12</u>	<u>(JP)</u>	<u>FHC</u>
	<u>6/15</u>	<u>(LJ)</u>	<u>FHC</u>
<u>Caspian Tern</u>	<u>6/15</u>	<u>(LJ)</u>	<u>McN</u>
Forster's Tern	6/15	(LJ)	McN
<u>Least Tern</u>	<u>6/15</u>	<u>(LJ)</u>	<u>McN</u>
Black Tern	6/15	(LJ)	McN

### CUCKOOS to SWALLOWS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo	6/22	(LJ-ft)	RGL
Calliope Hummingbird	8/3	(RH)	NEE
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	8/2	(KK)	Cor
Rufous Hummingbird	6/12	(DO)	MPk
<u>Hairy Woodpecker</u>	<u>8/8</u>	<u>(HJ)</u>	<u>MPk</u>
Olive-sided Flycatcher	6/1	(BZ)	FBP
Willow Flycatcher	6/1	(RH)	FBP
	8/11	(RH)	FBP
Cordilleran Flycatcher	6/10	(PR-yd)	STA
N.Rough-winged Swallow	6/22	(JS)	FLk

### THRUSHES to TANAGERS

Hermit Thrush	5/16	(HJ-yd)	MPk
Warbling Vireo (1st Sanctuary record)	6/1	(JS)	FLk
Virginia's Warbler	8/11	(RH)	FBP
AMERICAN REDSTART	6/1	(BZ)	FBP
OVENBIRD	6/1	(BZ)	FBP
MacGillivray's Warbler	5/17	(GN-yd)	Cor
<u>Red-faced Warbler</u>	<u>5/16</u>	<u>(SH-yd)</u>	<u>Lnb</u>
<u>Scarlet Tanager</u>	<u>5/16</u>	<u>(MA-yd)</u>	<u>FHC</u>
HEPATIC TANAGER	5/21	(BZ)	FBP

### CARDINAL to SISKINS

Summer Tanager	5/17	(GN-yd)	Cor
Northern Cardinal	6/15	(LJ)	Tor
Black-headed Grosbeak	5/17	(GN-yd)	Cor
	8/11	(RH)	FBP
Lazuli Bunting	8/11	(BJ)	FBP
Indigo Bunting	6/11	(JK)	Zoo
Yellow-headed Blackbird	6/17	(JS)	FLk
COMMON GRACKLE	6/1	(JZ)	Can
Bronzed Cowbird	6/23	(PR-yd)	STA
Hooded Oriole nesting	6/30	(DC-yd)	CCA
PINE SISKIN	8/5	(JZ)	Can

# The Roadrunner

## September

**Sun., 8** - Field trip to Ft. Bliss Ponds, see page 4.

**Mon., 9** - Board Meeting

**Mon., 16** - General Meeting, see page 1

**Sun., 21** - Bird Identification Tour at Hueco Tanks, see page 4.

**Sat., 28 - Sun., 29** - Hawk Watch in the Monzano Mts., see page 4.

## October

**Sat., 5 - Sun., 6** - Celebration of our Mountains, see page 4.

**Sat., 5** - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.

**Sun., 6** - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.

**Sun., 13** - Feather Lake open 2:00 PM to Dusk.

**Mon., 14** - Board Meeting.

**Fri., 18 - Sat., 19 - Sun., 20** - Texas Celebrity Bird Tour, see page 4.

**Sat., 19** - Annual Chapter Picnic, see page 4.

**Sat., 19** - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.

**Sun., 20** - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Noon.

**Sun., 20** - Hueco Tanks Bird Identification Tour, see page 4.

**Mon., 21** - General Meeting.

**Sun., 27** - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.

## November

**Sat., 2** - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.

**Sun., 3** - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.

**Sun., 10** - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.

**Mon., 11** - Board Meeting.

**Sat., 16** - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.

**Sun., 17** - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.

**Sun., 17** - Hueco Tanks Bird Identification Tour, see page 4.

**Mon., 18** - General Meeting.

**Sat., 23** - Feather Lake work-day.

**Sun., 24** - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.

### El Paso Trans Pecos Audubon Society

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Address Correction Requested

THE ROADRUNNER is printed on recycled paper.

