

the ROADRUNNER



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

Editors: Jane Fowler - Jo Nagel

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October 1985

GENERAL MEETING

MON., OCTOBER 21, 1985, 7:30 PM, Garden Center, 3105 Grant in Memorial Park. Robin Dalton, Curator at El Paso Zoo, will discuss Ornithology and Aviculture, 2 separate sciences of birds, different yet similar. Mr. Dalton will bring several live birds of his choice. Bring yourselves and your questions if you care for an excellent evening.



FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

COUNTRY CLUB/RANDALL'S POOL
SAT., OCT. 5. Leader: Joyce Davis
581-9740. Start at the cross-roads pond at 7:30 AM and drive to various water areas in the neighborhood, i.e. Gary Lane and the Willows, etc.

DOG CANYON (GUADALUPE MTS.)
SAT.-SUN., OCT. 19-20. Leader Tom Baker (562-9461). Meet in the Bella Napoli parking lot on Montana at Yarbrough on Sat. at 7:30 AM. We will stay overnight in the Dog Canyon camping area near the Ranger Station. Good trip usually for seeing fall colors, late migrant and resident winter birds.

NORTHEAST OXIDATION PONDS
SUN. OCT. 27. Leader: Bob Johnson (751-0125). Leave from the K-Mart parking lot on Dyer at 7:30

AM. There is still plenty of open water area at the ponds. Many migratory birds can be expected. After touring the ponds we will travel to the Electric Co. power plant for lunch and more birding.

W. COTTONWOOD SPRING
SAT., NOV. 2. Meet at 7:30 AM at the entrance to the Tom Mays Area of Franklin Mts. St. Park, along Transmountain Rd. on the w. side of the Franklins. Early indications are we may have a good winter for montane birds. On this trip, we'll see what the canyon to W. Cottonwood Spring has to offer. Plan to walk 2 miles, some of it steep, on the trip to the spring and back. Those who want more exercise will have the option of continuing from the spring to the top of N. Franklin Peak. Leader: John Sproul, 545-5157.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON., OCT. 14, 1985, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet at the home of John Sproul, 601 W. Yandell #25, El Paso (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w). All members are welcome.



The deadline for the November Roadrunner is Oct. 24.

ON THE MOVE

Two dedicated and effective conservation professionals well known to El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon members moved to new jobs this summer:

● Rhea Copening, Natl. Audubon's Southwest Regional Representative, resigned to take a position with J.B. Goodwin Realtors in Austin, TX..

● Bill Dunmire, Superintendent of Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mts. natl. parks since 1981, retired from the Natl. Park Service and joined the staff of The Nature Conservancy in Albuquerque, NM, as New Mexico Public Lands Coordinator.

We wish both Rhea and Bill well in their new endeavors. Natl. Audubon hopes to announce its new Southwest Regional Representative soon.

AUDUBON COUNCIL OF TEXAS
The Fall Meeting of the Audubon Council of Texas (ACT) takes place Nov. 15-17 at the Univ. of Texas Research Science Park, near Buescher St. Park 40 miles east of Austin. Bastrop County Audubon Soc. is the host chapter. The meeting will feature: sessions on lobbying and conservation issues; a keynote address by Robin Doughty, Univ. of Texas geography professor and author of Wildlife and Man in Texas: Environmental Change and Conservation; an evening of song with environmental songwriter Bill Oliver; a variety of field trips; and the Bastrop County chapter's boundless hospitality. Contact chapter ACT delegate John Sproul (545-5157) for registration details.



AMERICAN BIRDS:

WORTH YOUR SUPPORT

We're all familiar with Audubon the excellent bimonthly magazine that all Natl. Audubon Society members receive. How many of us know the Society's other major journal, American Birds?

Too few, apparently. Increased operating deficits and reduced subscriptions have caused Natl. Audubon to take a hard look at the future of American Birds. Earlier this year, the air was rife with rumors this publication might be canceled. The ensuing outcry from loyal readers prompted Natl. Audubon to state that, though cancellation was indeed one of several options being considered, for now publication of American Birds will continue.

What is American Birds? Why are its readers so fiercely loyal to it? Greg Lasley of Austin, currently South Texas Regional Co-editor for the magazine, describes it this way:

"American Birds, formerly Audubon Field Notes, is in its 39th year of publication. Published by the Natl. Audubon Society 5 times per year, American Birds contains numerous articles on many ornithological topics plus regional reports from all areas of the United States and Canada. There is an issue for each season, plus the giant Christmas Bird Count issue, which is published each summer or fall. American Birds fills a niche between the purely technical journals and the backyard-oriented publications. It is easy and fun to read for anyone with a basic knowledge of birds, yet the articles can be of significant scientific value. Contributors from all over each region send in their own seasonal reports to the regional editors, who put

together the regional report. These reports form the only database for seasonal bird distribution covering the entire United States. Such reports are invaluable for researchers in the future as well as the birders of today, for they discuss the significance of rarities, document unusual breeding records, and study seasonal populations in various locations."

There is no other publication like it. Its loss would be a big one for North American ornithologists and active field observers

American Birds remains in publication, but unless its financial situation improves its future is precarious. It needs new subscribers. If you aren't familiar with American Birds, plan to make its acquaintance. The current issue is on display at all EP/TPAS general meetings. Subscriptions are \$25 per year, checks payable to: American Birds, 950 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022.

FEATHER LAKE NEWS

WORK DAY: Sat., Oct. 12, 8 AM until - as long as you can stay. There is always something that needs to be done and it isn't all heavy work. Bring your gloves, water and snack and join us.

OPEN HOUSE: The annual open house at Feather Lake starts Sun., Oct. 6. We hope to continue this throughout the winter. There is water in the Lake and we expect lots of visitors, both drive in and fly in. The schedule for Oct. is as follows:

SUN, OCT 6	4-7 PM
SAT OCT 12	8-11AM
SUN OCT 20	4-7 PM
SAT OCT 26	8-11AM
SUN NOV 3	4-7 PM



October 1985

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S EYRIE

At the general meeting Sept 16 we had a splendid presentation on pigeons (fancy ones) given by Don St Clair, President of the West Texas Pigeon Assoc. If you would like to see and learn more about pigeons they will be having a show in Album Park on Nov 30.

Mark Nov 10 on your calendar. That's the evening of the Awards Dinner. Time, place and other details in the Nov Roadrunner.

Please don't forget your (and your neighbor's) ALUMINUM CANS. Bring to the meeting or to any field trip because every few cents help. If you would like a pickup at your home, call Bob Johnson (757-1876/751-0125).

Our chapter display has been scheduled at Cielo Vista Mall on Oct 25, 26 and 27. If you would like to help attend the booth for a couple hours call Bob Johnson. Stop in and visit anyway, the hours are 10 AM to 9 PM.

Come to the monthly meeting at the Garden Center on Oct 21 at 7:30 PM. A new regular feature for meetings will be introduced.

A special introductory membership has been authorized by Natl. Audubon. Sign up a friend or neighbor for only \$20. This is for all new memberships which includes anyone who lapsed prior to 1985.

THE ROADRUNNER is sent to all members of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society. Nonmembers can subscribe for \$4 per year. Make checks payable to "El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society" and mail to: RR Editor, P.O.Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986. Send any changes or corrections in name, address or telephone # to this address. Please Note: Bulk mail is not forwarded. Save us 22¢ in return postage by notifying us before you move.

CONSERVATION CAPSULES

TEXAS NONGAME STAMP: 1985, declared Texas Nongame Wildlife Awareness Year by Gov. Mark White, is fast running out of months. Very soon, the 1985 Texas Nongame Stamp and Decal will be replaced by their 1986 counterparts. If you don't have your 1985 stamp or decal yet, better hurry. They're \$5 each, and the funds raised go directly to support the nongame wildlife and endangered species programs of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (TPWD). The stamps and decals are available through EP/TPAS (see ad on p. 6), at Hueco Tanks St. Park and all other TPWD offices and at Insights-El Paso Science Center.

NONGAME SLIDE SHOW: What's nongame wildlife? The term refers to wildlife that is not hunted or taken for commercial purposes. In Texas, some 88% of all wildlife species fall in this category. To help introduce citizens to this rich resource, TPWD has prepared a classy 8-minute slide presentation on nongame wildlife in the state. Want to have it shown to your school class or another group? Contact your nearest TPWD Law Enforcement office (in El Paso, 1170 Westmoreland, Suite 106, phone 778-7438) and make arrangements to have a game warden present this and perhaps other TPWD slide programs. Three cautionary notes: 1) the wardens need a minimum of 2-3 weeks lead time to get necessary projection equipment, 2) the scheduling of the program has to be compatible with the warden's schedule and 3) during hunting season, wardens have very busy schedules.

FRANKLIN MTS. I: On Sept 1, the TPWD at long last gained the authority to spend state funds for operation and maintenance of Franklin Mts. St. Park (RR, June). Two days earlier, on Aug 30, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission (TPWC) had made such funds availa-

ble when it approved TPWD's operating budget for Fiscal Year 1986 (which began Sept 1), a budget that includes \$105,000 for the Franklins. Those funds are intended to provide for a park superintendent, 2 rangers, 2 seasonal workers, vehicles, communications equipment and a temporary office. As yet, TPWD has not selected a site for the office nor has it begun accepting applications for the staff positions.

FRANKLIN MTS. II: Also at its Aug 30 meeting, the TPWC gave the TPWD the go-ahead to begin developing a master plan for Franklin Mts. St. Park in FY 1986. The master planning process, which could start as early as this fall, is critical to the future of the Park. The master plan will spell out the management philosophy for the Park. It will address, among other issues, what sort of development will occur and where, what activities will be permitted and where, and what resources will have top priority for protection. There will be several opportunities for public participation during development of the master plan. You're encouraged to take part.

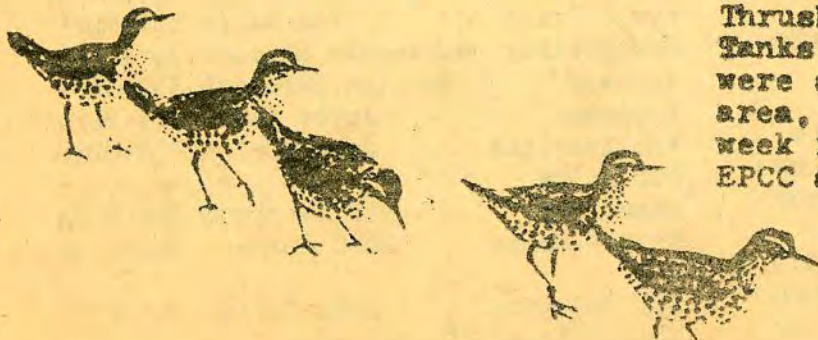
FRANKLIN MTS. III: The Las Cruces District of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has started a review of all BLM lands in Dona Ana Co., NM, to identify lands that might be suitable for disposal from BLM ownership. The review was prompted by an offer from the State of New Mexico to exchange State land within White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) and within BLM's Organ Mts. Recreation Lands for a 10,062-acre parcel of BLM land east of Las Cruces. The State, mandated to manage its lands to raise income for its public school fund and other purposes, ultimately is expected to sell this 10,062-

acre parcel to developers. BLM is undertaking a county-wide review because the State may also want to exchange additional lands within WSMR for other BLM lands in Dona Ana Co. in the future. Among the priority areas the State is eyeing: lands between WSMR and the Texas-New Mexico state line, including the New Mexico portion of the Franklin Mts. El Paso's Wilderness Park Coalition, to which EP/TPAS belongs, is participating actively in the review process and hopes to convince BLM that the New Mexico portion of the Franklins is not suitable for disposal and should be protected.

RECYCLING I: If you live in El Paso, remember that Fridays are recycling days. Depending on what part of the City you live in, you can put your recyclables (newspapers, cans, corrugated cardboard) at curbside by 7:30 AM for pickup on either the 1st and 3rd or 2nd and 4th Fridays each month. To learn what recycling zone you are in, contact the Sanitation Dept. (594-8625).

RECYCLING II: Effective Sept 1, Dickshire-Coors terminated its program for recycling glass bottles in El Paso, little more than a year after it was started (RR, May 1984). Company representatives say the program was operating at a loss. Further, the breweries that bought glass from Dickshire-Coors were discontinuing their purchases. There are no plans to resume the program.

/John Sproul/



OBSERVATIONS

Aug. 22 - Sept. 23

Fall migration appeared to be in full swing during this period with many species moving through the area at earlier than normal dates.

LOONS - FALCONS

Hundreds of Cattle Egrets were noted feeding in a freshly mowed alfalfa field near the Anthony Country Club 9/4 & 9/7 (fide SJD). A Green-backed Heron was at the Northeast Oxidation Ponds (NEOP) 9/8 (BJ). An imm. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron that had suffered a broken wing was picked up near Chamberino 9/22 (fide HB). Several White-faced Ibis were seen in the upper valley 9/7 (SJD, et al). An Osprey was observed off I-10 near Redd Rd. 9/10 (BJ) and another 1 at the El Paso Country Club (EPCC) ponds 9/14 (JoD). On 9/8, 3 Northern Harriers were at NEOP as was 1 Swainson's Hawk (BJ).

QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

A Semipalmated Plover was at NEOP 9/8 (BJ). A Black Tern was there that same day (BJ) A Belted Kingfisher was seen at NEOP 9/8 (BJ) and 1 heard near EPCC 9/14 (JoD).

FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

An Olive-sided Flycatcher was observed at Hueco Tanks 9/9 (RW). A Scrub Jay was seen in a canyon near Transmountain Rd. 9/14 (JS). A White-breasted Nuthatch at Hueco Tanks 9/13 (RW) was the first reported this fall. Single House Wrens were in e. El Paso 8/31 & 9/14 (BR). The first fall Hermit Thrush reported was at Hueco Tanks 9/13 (RW). Cedar Waxwings were appearing very early in the area, in e. El Paso the first week in Sept (fide JN) and the EPCC area 9/14 (JoD)

WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

A Yellow Warbler at Horizon City 9/13 (MG) was the only 1 reported. A Black-and-white Warbler (casual in fall) was observed at Hueco Tanks 9/19 (KB, LB). A female Summer Tanager was at Horizon City 9/13 (MG). On 9/2, a male Lazuli Bunting was seen in n.e. El Paso (JN1). Twelve Lincoln's Sparrows were at NEOP 9/8 (BJ), and several very early White-crowned Sparrows were at Hueco Tanks 9/9 (RW). Bronzed Cowbirds were still in Mt. Park at the end of the period as were 2 female Hooded Orioles (JB).

CONTRIBUTORS: Ken & Lois Beno, Helen Bigelow, Janet Brockmoller, Joyce Davis, Sarah Jane Dotts, Madeline Gavit, Bob Johnson, Jo Nagel, John Nielson, John Sproul and Ray Waite.

NOTE: In the recently published "Thirty-fifth Supplement to the AOU Check-list of North American Birds", three changes are of special note as they would affect observations in our area.

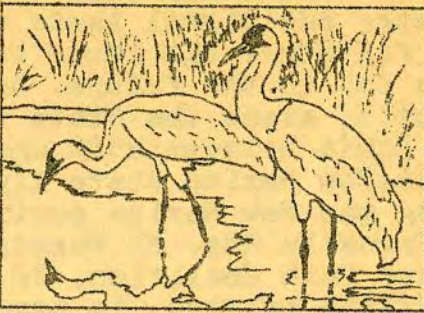
Pacific Loon *Gavia pacifica*
Formerly a race of the Arctic Loon and now considered a distinct species. This is the species most likely to occur in our area but would be accidental.

Clark's Grebe/Aechmophorus clarkii
Formerly the light-phased "color north" of the Western Grebe. The two "color norths" are now considered distinct species. The dark-phased is now Western Grebe, *A. occidentalis*. Both can occur here.

Red-Naped Sapsucker/
Sphyrapicus nuchalis
Formerly a race of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and now considered a distinct species. This is the one more frequently seen in our area, the eastern Yellow-bellied, *S. varius*, is quite rare but can occur.

/Bettie Roberts, Observations
Editor (591-0421)/

Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.



1985 Nongame Decal \$5.00

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

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TEXAS WATER: AUDUBON SAYS "NO" TO PROPOSITION 1

After a long and careful look at the package of water legislation passed this spring by the Texas Legislature and with full recognition of the state's very real need to plan for growth and provide water in a sane and systematic way, the Natl. Audubon Soc. announced Sept 3 that it opposes Proposition 1 on the November general election ballot.

Why? Let's back up a bit. To 1969. In that year and twice since, most recently in 1981, Texas voters rejected massive spending proposals for statewide water development. The proposals were rejected because of their questionable fiscal soundness and because they totally ignored water management, water conservation and environmental protection.

In 1983 and 1985, the Texas Legislature tried to fashion water legislation that would provide for statewide water development and also avoid the shortcomings of the previous proposals. The 1983 attempt failed. In 1985, though, water was the Legislature's top priority, and under pressure from Gov. White, Lt. Gov. Hobby and House Speaker Lewis not to come up empty again, a wide-ranging water package was passed.

For the water package to take effect, Texas voters must approve 2 constitutional amendments on Nov 5 (see box). For the first time, Texans will be voting on a water proposal that is not just a water-development proposal. The Legislature's water package has both good features and bad. It addresses important water-conservation and environmental-protection issues. But simply addressing an issue is not the same as addressing it effectively.

Audubon looked at both the positive and negative aspects of the water package and concluded that the benefits of the package have been overstated by its supporters. On balance the package is not in the best interests of Texans or their natural resources, particularly

wildlife. At her press conference announcing Audubon's position, Southwest Regional Vice-president Dede Armentrout cited 3 major areas of concern:

Environmental Shortcomings - Though the water package addresses issues such as groundwater management, water conservation, agricultural water use, instream flow and protection of bays and estuaries, it doesn't address them effectively. The provisions in these areas are weak. Too often, rather than requiring measures for conservation or environmental protection (for example, requiring water-project promoters to analyze environmental impacts of their projects), such measures are left to the discretion of the 3-member Texas Water Commission or the 6-member Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), both made up of political appointees. If the members of these bodies are of a mind to ignore environmental concerns, they are totally free to do so.

Roll Out the (Pork) Barrel - Historically, by voting on bond issues for

THE WATER AMENDMENTS

Proposition 1. This constitutional amendment would authorize up to \$980 million in state bonds for dams and reservoirs, water-transport systems, sewers and water-treatment facilities, desalination plants and flood-control projects. It would create a \$250-million program for insuring water-project bonds of local governments. It would authorize the Legislature to create some special funds by appropriation for a number of water assistance programs. And it would make effective the provisions in the Legislature's water package concerning water conservation, establishment of groundwater conservation districts, protection of bays and estuaries, maintenance of instream flows and other issues. Audubon opposes Proposition 1.

Proposition 2. This amendment would conditionally authorize \$200 million in state bonds for agricultural water conservation, subject to approval by 2/3 of both houses of the Legislature in a subsequent legislative session and provided the bonds are issued and sold within 4 years of passage of the amendment. The Natl. Audubon Soc. does not oppose Proposition 2. However, because of the wording of the Legislature's water package, the provisions of Proposition 2 will take effect only if Proposition 1 also passes.

specific projects, Texans have decided at the polls which water projects should be built and which should not. Proposition 1 creates a \$980 million Water Development Fund and leaves it to the Legislature and the TWDB to decide how the fund is used. The potential for pork-barrel politics -- legislators trading support for one another's home-district projects, however ill-conceived or inappropriate, to create an image of "bringing home the bacon" -- is great.

Fiscal Shakiness - Proposition 1 sets up a system of loans and bond guarantees to fund water development but has no safeguards to ensure timely repayment of loans. Defaults on loans or guaranteed local bond issues would be covered from the state's operating funds. If there is no surplus to cover this contingency,

either taxes go up or services go down.

Though clearly not pleased with the funding provisions of the water package, Audubon had been willing to accept those provisions, provided they were coupled to strong programs for water conservation and environmental protection. It wasn't to be. Audubon appreciates the efforts of the Texas Legislature to develop a comprehensive water package. It understands the anxiousness of state leaders to begin implementing a state-wide water plan. But in its eagerness to pass some form of comprehensive water legislation in 1985, the Legislature compromised too severely its commitment to environmentally sound water legislation. For this reason, the Natl. Audubon Soc. opposes Proposition 1.
/John Sproul/

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
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Yes, I'd like to join. Local Chapter:

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W10 7XCH

Membership Category desired:

Individual/\$30 (H) Senior Citizen
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