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The ROADRUNNER

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue

October General Meeting

General Meeting - Monday, October 16, 7:30PM -

The Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue provides a critical service to injured and orphaned wildlife in the El Paso/Las Cruces area. This service is carried out by a group of extraordinary people who have some truly astonishing stories to tell about their work. At the October general meeting, we will have two members of the CDWR speaking to us. Anne Hussman is the Education Specialist, past President, current Vice-President, and she served as a member of the founding committee. Last year she visited schools in the El Paso/Las Cruces area and spoke to over 2000 children about the CDWR and wildlife. Marcia Wheatley had eighteen years experience as a wildlife rehabilitator before joining the CDWR and she is now a board member. If you care at all about the wildlife in our area, then this is a meeting that should not be missed. The meeting will be held in the Garden Center, 3105 Grant in El Paso.

Christmas Bird Count

November General Meeting

General Meeting - Monday, November 20,

7:30PM - Every year we conduct two Christmas Bird Counts in the El Paso area, and counts are conducted throughout North America. So who uses that data? At the November general meeting, Andy

Vliet will be discussing some of his research into the colonization of the European Starling in North America. He conducted most of his research as part of his doctoral work at the University of Oxford utilizing Christmas Bird Count data. Andy will also discuss the history of the CBC and its usefulness for certain large-scale studies of ecological theories. The meeting will be held at the Garden Center, 3105 Grant in El Paso.

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No More Fish in the Sea?

Audubon Activist

Congress is debating changes to the Magnuson Fisheries Conservation and Management Act, the most important federal law governing conservation of our nation's living marine resources and the management of domestic fishing activities. HR 39, the House Resource Committee bill has passed and is awaiting floor action, probably in early October. HR 39 falls short in addressing and correcting two of the major problems facing our marine fisheries: overfishing, and "bycatch" (the unintentional catching and killing of nontarget fish and other marine wildlife in commercial fishing gear). In the meantime, the Senate Commerce Committee is working on a draft bill and may take action on it sometime in October.

Action: Call or write your Representative and tell him that a strong Magnuson Act will revitalize fishery dependent jobs and help to repair marine ecosystems damaged by overfishing and bycatch. Insist that Magnuson be reauthorized this year. This important legislation has been delayed time and again. Stress that our marine fisheries are worth billions of dollars to the national economy, but that many are in such poor condition they are costing the government money, rather than fulfilling their economic potential. Contact: Marilyn England, National Audubon Society, 516-859-3032 (mengland@audubon.org).

Audubon's Strategic Plan "Creating a Culture of Conservation"

After more than a year's work, the National Audubon Society has completed a strategic plan that will take us well into the 21st Century. The process that led to the plan encompassed interviews, focus groups, and surveys that involved all of Audubon's staff and trustees, dozens of leading environmentalists, 700 Audubon chapter leaders and nearly 1,300 randomly selected Audubon members.

The resulting plan maps Audubon's course for the next 25 years, dedicating the Society to bringing about a "culture of conservation." As approved by the Board of Directors, the plan mandates that Audubon focus its campaigns and resources on the conservation of birds, other wildlife, and their habitats.

The plan also calls for expansion of the Society's educational programs to nurture appreciation of nature and promote understanding of the essential link between ecological health and the well-being of human civilization.

The final component of the plan specifies that Audubon will invest in growing and strengthening its chapter network and field operations, so that they can serve as the primary tool of the organization's advocacy.

When it is available, a summary of the strategic plan will be published in *The Roadrunner*.

Bird Numbers Build at Feather Lake

By John Sproul

Feather Lake News

Our Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, located at 9500 N. Loop in El Paso's lower valley, is again open and awaiting your visit! Check the back page of this newsletter for October-November dates and hours. Admission is free. Want to help staff the sanctuary during visitor hours on one or more days this fall or winter? Please contact Craig Braginton (877-4138) to volunteer.

Duck numbers are now building steadily at Feather Lake. Large numbers of Cattle Egrets and Yellow-headed Blackbirds are already roosting there in the evenings. Early September saw the lake reach its highest levels in many a year, due to a combination of high volumes of both excess irrigation water and storm runoff. The islands in the basin were completely underwater. El Paso's Streets Department removed accumulated sediment from the lake outlet in mid-September, and the water was back to more typical levels at month's end.

Once again, we're navigating the high seas at Feather Lake! Glenn Brown responded to our plea in last month's newsletter by donating a small boat for use at our sanctuary. Thank you, Glenn!

A great day to visit our sanctuary will be Saturday, October 28, when our always popular Dinner at Feather Lake takes place (see "On the Trail" for details). Also ever-popular is our final workday for the year. This year, it will be Saturday, November 18. Gates open at 8 AM. You can come anytime during the day, but you risk not finding parking if you arrive too late.

Attention Birders

Looking for Color Tagged White-faced Ibis

A substantial number of juvenile and adult White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) have been color-tagged in the northwest Great Basin as part of a long-term breeding ecology study. Five color combinations have been used depending on colony location. Combinations consist of a red tag (on a USFWS band) with different colored terminal margins. In addition, each tag has a unique three number code. The code is read from the bottom up (i.e. from the colored terminal margin up).

If you spot a color-tagged White-faced Ibis, record the date and location of the sighting, the color combination, and, if possible, the number on the tag. The color combinations are: Red-Yellow; Red-White; Red-Gray; Red-Black; Red-Red.

If you should sight an Ibis sporting one of these tags, contact:

Eric P. Kelchin
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge
Fallon, NV 89406-1236
(702) 423-5128

Festival of the Cranes

Among the most awe-inspiring sights in nature is the annual fall migration of tens of thousands of sandhill cranes and snow geese to their wintering grounds on the Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge near Socorro, New Mexico. Wildlife enthusiasts of all ages will enjoy the spectacle of these migrating flocks.

The eighth annual Festival of the Cranes is scheduled to begin Thursday, November 16. By the last day, November 19, an estimated 12,000 people from around the world will have traveled to Socorro, swelling the population to twice its usual size.

In total there are more than one hundred scheduled activities listed in the 1995 Catalog of Events. Included are demonstrations, workshops, guided tours, exhibits, and an Artisans Fair. The 1995 Festival features keynote speakers Karen Hollingsworth, Arthur Morris, and Victor Emanuel.

Many events will of interest to bird enthusiasts - from free workshops and demonstrations to a "Breakfast with the Birds" tour. Led by enthusiastic guides and featuring a gourmet breakfast basket, these tours will concentrate on looking for the rare and unusual bird species on the refuge.

To amateur and professional photographers, a key benefit enjoyed during the Festival is having access to areas in the 57,000-acre refuge that are usually closed to the public. Of special interest to photographers are photography workshops, a photography contest, and the keynote speakers who are nationally known photographers.

In addition to wildlife and conservation related activities, the 1995 Festival of the Cranes will spotlight the Socorro area's rich environmental diversity, geology, and history with several guided tours. Destinations will include the Kelly Ghost Town and Waldo Mine, the Chihuahuan desert terrain of the Quebradas Backcountry Byway, bird-rich Water Canyon, the historical First Craig and Battle of Val Verde areas, and Native American petroglyph sites.

Theme t-shirts and sweatshirts for this year's Festival, designed by Socorro artist Vivian Olsen, will feature Sandhill and Whooping Cranes in flight.

Advanced registration for the Festival is highly recommended, as most events have limited capacity. Festival information and tickets are available from: Festival of the Cranes, P.O. Box 743-NR, Socorro, NM 87801; (505) 835-0424.

Help Needed: Partners in Frequent Flight

You can support the migratory bird work of our Audubon colleagues in Latin America by donating your frequent flyer tickets. Tickets will be used to help Latin American environmentalists attend meetings in Latin America and the US, and help send volunteer professionals to work with chapters on training, leadership development, bird surveys and other projects. For more information, contact Audubon's Southwest Regional Office at (512) 327-1943 or e-mail: 71634.20@compuserve.com. To donate a certificate or ticket, contact Audubon's travel coordinator, Sandy Clough, at (212) 979-3180 or e-mail: sclough@audubon.org.

Help Wanted: Inquire Within

One of the most important jobs in getting the newsletter out to our members has nothing to do with writing it. After the text is prepared and the copy sent off the Superior Copy, the pages must be collated, stapled, folded, and mailed.

Up to now, this job has been handled by Jane Fowler and some friends. Unfortunately, Jane will no longer be able to help us out. So we are looking for someone to help get the newsletter out to our members. All we need is someone to collate the pages of the newsletter,

staple them together, fold the newsletters, and take them to the post office. The newsletter is issued six times a year and there are about 600 copies to be assembled and mailed.

If you can help your chapter, please give the editor, George Barnett, a call at 581-1829.

Site Guides

John Kiseda, a man who knows a good area for birding when he sees one, has provided us with site guides to a couple of his favorite places.

Sunland Park Race Track

To reach this site, drive south on Sunland Park Dr. towards The State Line Restaurant (for those coming from out of town on Interstate Highway 10, exit on the Sunland Park exit and go south away from the shopping malls). Cross Doniphan Dr. and the RR tracks and continue on, checking the pastures for birds (especially when the fields are "flood" irrigated in the spring and summer). At about the 1/2 mile mark you should be at an irrigation canal overpass and can pull-in on the left and park as soon as you cross over the canal.

From there, you can check the man-made lake for waterfowl and shorebirds with a spotting scope; during the spring and fall months, Black-necked Stilts are quite common. During the fall migration Wilson's Phalaropes and American Avocets are commonly seen and Red-necked Phalaropes are occasionally seen. You can also walk through a large gap in the fence and walk along the irrigation canal. Warblers and passerines are often found in the Saltcedar that rows along the far side of the canal, during the spring and fall migrations.

Various species of herons and waterfowl can be seen in the canal throughout the year, but there is usually not much variety; Green herons, Black-crowned Night Herons, Ruddy Ducks and Coots are common. "Scoping out" the lake from the canal path usually provides you with a glare-free early morning view of the lake and allows you to get closer to the far end of it.

Observations

August 16, 1995 - September 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 continued to have a number of very rare sightings (full entry underlined) this period. Some of the listings may not be considered RARE, but because of the season or habitat, 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, don't hesitate - report it, to Bob "WILDBIRDER" Johnson 757-1876 (recorder).

(Observers: Richard Hermosillo, Hugh Jameson, Bob Johnson, Larry Jordan, Fay Kincaid, John Kiseda, David Ogle, Al Olivas, Patricia Russell, John Sproul, Marcia Wheatly, Scott Wilson, Barry Zimmer, -yd at yard feeder)

Ant-Anthony; CEP-Central El Paso; Cor-Coronado; FLk-Feather Lake; FBP-Fort Bliss Ponds; HTk-Hueco Tanks; Lom-Lombardy; McN-McNary Area; Mem-Memorial Park; MPk-Mountain Park; NEE-Northeast El Paso; Sod-AG Sod Farm; TWs-Tennis West Area; Tor-Tornillo Area; WSp-Whispering Springs.

GREBES to RAILS

<u>WESTERN GREBE</u>	8/31	(LJ)	McN
<u>CLARK'S GREBE</u>	8/31	(LJ)	McN
Canvasback	8/23	(AO)	FBP
Ring-necked Duck	9/13	(BZ)	FBP
Sharp-shinned Hawk	9/4	(JK)	FBP
<u>PEREGRINE FALCON</u>	9/6	(AO)	FBP
	9/14	(BZ)	FBP
<u>PRAIRIE FALCON</u>	9/4	(JK)	FBP
Sora	8/20	(RH)	HTk



PLOVERS to PHALAROPES

<u>SEMIPALMATED PLOVER</u>	9/11	(BZ)	FBP
	9/12	(BZ)	Sod
<u>WILLET</u>	8/27	(JS)	FLk
<u>UPLAND SANDPIPER</u>	8/25	(LJ)	Tor
<u>SANDERLING</u>	9/12	(BZ)	Sod
	9/17	(JK)	Sod
<u>SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER</u>	9/4	(JK)	FBP
	9/11	(BZ)	FBP
<u>PECTORAL SANDPIPER</u>	8/27	(BJ-ft)	FBP
Common Snipe	9/4	(JK)	FBP
<u>RED-NECKED PHALAROPE</u>	9/12	(BZ)	Sod

HUMMINGBIRDS to FLYCATCHERS

<u>ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD</u>	8/29	(DO-yd)	MPk
	8/30	(FK-yd)	Ant
Belted Kingfisher	8/27	(JS)	FLk
Olive-sided Flycatcher.	9/14	(BZ)	Mem
Willow Flycatcher	8/20	(RH)	HTk
<u>LEAST FLYCATCHER</u>	9/11	(BZ)	HTk
	9/14	(BZ)	Mem
Dusky Flycatcher	8/31	(LJ)	Tor
	9/14	(BZ)	WSp
<u>GRAY FLYCATCHER</u>	9/4	(LJ)	Lom
<u>ASH THROATED FLYC.</u>	8/29	(LJ)	Mem
<u>GREAT-CRESTED FLYC.</u>	9/3	(BZ-yd)	NEE

SWALLOWS to VIREOS

Bank Swallow	8/27	(JS)	FLk
<u>SCRUB JAY</u>	8/16	(JS-yd)	CEP
	9/7	(HJ-yd)	MPk
Marsh Wren	9/15	(PR)	TWs
<u>BLACK-TAILED GNATC.</u>	8/20	(BJ)	HTk
	9/11	(BZ)	HTk
<u>SWAINSON'S THRUSH</u>	9/13	(BZ)	WSp
<u>RED-EYED VIREO</u>	8/25	(LJ)	Tor

WARBLERS to SPARROWS

<u>BLACK-THRTD GRAY WBLR</u>	9/14	(PR)	TWs
Townsend's Warbler	8/31	(LJ)	Tor
	9/10	(JK-yd)	Cor
<u>BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER</u>	9/13	(BZ)	FBP
<u>AMERICAN REDSTART</u>	9/4	(BZ-yd)	NEE
Northern Waterthrush	8/25	(RH)	HTK
	9/6	(AO)	FBP
<u>PAINTED REDSTART</u>	8/27	(SW)	Mem
Yellow-breasted Chat	9/11	(BZ)	HTk
Lazuli Bunting	8/20	(BJ)	HTk
	8/20	(LJ)	Mem
Painted Bunting	8/20	(RH)	HTk
	8/20	(LJ)	Mem
<u>SWAMP SPARROW</u>	9/4	(JK)	FBP

CALENDAR

October

Sun., 1 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.
Sat., 7 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sun., 8 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.
Mon., 9 - Board Meeting, 7:30 PM
Sun., 15 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.
Mon., 16 - General Meeting, see page 1.
Sat., 21 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sun., 22 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.
Sun., 22 - Field trip to the Guadalupe Mtns., see page 6.
Sat., 28 - Feather Lake annual picnic, 5:30 PM, see page 6.
Sun., 29 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.

November

Sat., 4 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sat., 4 - Field trip to Hueco Tanks, see page 6.
Sun., 5 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.
Sat., 11 - Field trip to McNary Reservoir, see page 6.
Sun., 12 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.
Mon., 13 - Board Meeting, 7:30 PM.
Thu., 16 - Sun., 19 - Festival of the Cranes, see page 3.
Sat., 18 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sat., 18 - Feather Lake workday.
Sun., 19 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.
Mon., 20 - General Meeting, see page 1.
Sun., 26 - Feather Lake open, 2:00 PM to Dusk.
Sun., 26 - Field trip to Sunland Park area, see page 6.

December

Sat., 2 - Feather Lake open, 8:00 AM to Noon.
Sat., 2 - Field trip to Old Refuge, see page 6.
Sun., 3 - 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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