

The



Roadrunner

VOL. 21 (6)

EL PASO/TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Dec.¹ - Jan., 92

GENERAL MEETING

Monday, Dec. 9, 7:30 PM - The general meetings are normally held on the third Monday of the month. Because of the holiday season approaching, the December meeting is held on the second Monday of the month.

Our subject for this meeting will be the Christmas Bird Counts. This is the single most important data collection event of the year. The information gathered during the Bird Count is used by ornithologists and other scientists, as well as policy makers to guide future decision making.

During the period, December 14 through January 2, over 1500 counts will take place in North and Central America. The meeting on December 9 will cover the mechanics of the two counts (El Paso and Hueco Tanks) that will be conducted in our area. The leaders of the counts are people who know the birds as well as the territory. Newcomers are strongly urged to join in and help, as the more eyes the better, and it is a good learning experience working with the veterans on the team. Participants are asked to pay a \$5 fee to defray the cost of printing the results in AMERICAN BIRDS. This year our chapter will pick up \$3 of this fee, leaving each individual having to contribute only \$2.

There is more information on both area counts on page 3 (ON THE TRAIL). Please attend the December 9 meeting to learn how you can participate. If that is impossible then contact Bob Johnson at 751-0125 or 757-1876.



GENERAL MEETING

Monday, January 20, 7:30 PM - Bob Graham of Wildlife Associates will be presenting "FLYING CLIFF DWELLERS", a videotape production of the Golden Eagle. Wildlife Associates is a non-profit wildlife education organization from Albuquerque. This video was produced entirely by that group and it features the magnificent Golden Eagles of the New Mexico area.

Bob Graham has traveled extensively throughout western North America and is an accomplished photographer. He is one of the photographers for "Flying Cliff Dwellers" so he will not only present a fascinating video, but also share his insights and experiences in photographing birds and wildlife. This is a meeting that will be rewarding and informative and is not to be missed.

CONSERVATION

MATAGORDA GRAZING ISSUE RESURFACES

In June 1991, the last of the cattle were removed from Matagorda National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) on the Texas Gulf Coast, something conservationists had worked almost 10 years to accomplish.

Activities such as cattle grazing may be permitted on a national wildlife refuge only if compatible with the purpose for which the the refuge was established. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determined in 1989 that grazing was incompatible with Matagorda Island NWR's purpose of protecting endangered, native and migratory wildlife, particularly the Whooping Crane.

That determination survived three administrative appeals and an effort last year by the local congressman to get legislation passed mandating that grazing be a permitted use on the island. The grazing lessee received several extensions of the deadline to remove his cows. But finally last June they were gone.

Now they might be back. The lessee has asked Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan to reverse the decision to remove the cows. And Lujan, with his unique perspective on endangered-species issues is considering it. He has convened a high-level committee within the Interior Department to re-visit the grazing issue.

He needs to hear in the stongest possible terms that the decision to remove cattle from Matagorda Island does not need to be re-evaluated and should stand. It was based on sound biological data and was fully in keeping with the USFWS's responsibility to protect national wildlife refuges from incompatible uses. Please call or write Secretary Lujan at 202/208-7351, Department of the Interior, 1849 C St., N.W., Washington, DC 20240 and let him know your views.

//John Sproul//

HELP THWART GE BOYCOTT

Audubon's TV Special "The New Range Wars" has evoked controversy among businesses and ranchers. As a result of airing this special in June, the National Inholders Association and Multiple-Use Land Alliance, which represent western live-stock interests, have launched a nationwide boycott of Audubon television sponsors.

GE has received hundreds of angry calls and letters, and will soon make a decision on whether or not to continue its underwriting of Audubon TV Specials. Loss of sponsorship could threaten our television programming on vitally important issues. Please help keep Audubon on the air by getting your chapter members to send letters to Jack Welch, CEO of GE, thanking GE for underwriting Audubon TV Specials.

John F. Welch, Jr.
Chairman of the Board
General Electric
3135 Easton Turnpike
Fairfield, CT 06431

//NAS Chapter Networker//

DONORS

Recent donations by the following individuals/organizations are gratefully acknowledged by the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society.

FOR AUDUBON ADVENTURES

- Joyce Davis
- Jane Fowler
- Jo Nagel

ON THE TRAIL

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: EL PASO

Saturday, Dec. 14 - This count is centered on the south end of the Franklin Mts. It covers three states (Chihuahua, New Mexico and Texas). This circle has been divided into eight sectors which means we need at least 40 pairs of eyes. However, if you are unable to be in the field you can record birds in your yard (feeder watch). The compiler for the El Paso count is Bob Johnson and he should be contacted for more information. Bob can be reached at 751-0125.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: HUECO TANKS

Saturday, Dec. 28 - Five teams will travel the trails and dirt roads of this circle that takes in the State Park. A variety of interesting birds are always seen here. We need a minimum of 25 people for adequate coverage of this area. So please put this on your calendar. If at the last moment you find you can participate meet the leaders at the flying saucer building at 7:30 AM. The compiler for the Hueco Tanks count is Joyce Davis and she can be reached at 581-9470 or 544-6772.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: POT LUCK DINNER

Sunday, Dec. 29 - Meet at 6:00 PM at the Garden Center in Memorial Park, 3105 Grant St. A fun get-together for all, including feeder watchers, and all others who were unable to count. Come enjoy the congeniality of the EP/TPAS.

UPPER VALLEY

Sunday, Jan. 12 - Every year the Upper valley provides a wide assortment of

birds as well as a pleasant excursion through the "country". Meet Joyce Davis at the Crossroads Pond (Doniphan at Mesa) at 7:30 AM. Contact Joyce at 581-9470 for more information.

FT. BLISS PONDS

Saturday, Jan. 25 - This collection of settling ponds goes by a variety of names, not all of them nice. But the birds don't care, since they congregate here in large numbers. We can expect to see large flocks of ducks and shorebirds, perhaps some hawks and a few birds who come by just for the party. The surrounding desert may turn up thrashers and roadrunners. Meet at the parking lot of Furniture Country on Fred Wilson Rd. at 7:30 AM. The leader is Nancy Wilson, 833-3907.

"ON THE TRAIL" THANK YOU'S

Thank You To:

Paul and Matt Bingham for the successful trip to the Ft. Bliss Ponds. Many birds were seen with your help.

To Hugh Jameson for the magnificent montane trek up the West Franklins. Birds, tarantulas, snakes and mammals were seen. You made mountain climbing fun.

To Jo Nagel for leading an enjoyable and exciting journey around central El Paso. A very pleasant day.

To John Sproul for going above and beyond the call of duty for leading a trip to Acuirre Springs and for being a gracious host to the New Mexico Audubon. Thanks also to Betty Pagel's sweets that helped the New Mexico birders feel at home at Feather Lake.

More in the next issue! //Field Trip Chair: Nancy Wilson//

FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS STATE PARK

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) has completed its series of public workshops that was the first step in the process leading to a management plan for Franklin Mountains State Park. Thank you, everyone who took part. The workshops generated a lot of good ideas and brought into clearer focus the issues the public sees as most important for the future of the Park.

Maybe you weren't able to attend one of the workshops, or maybe you did but have more ideas you want to convey to TPWD. The workshops were not the only opportunity for public input. The TPWD is accepting written comment until January 30, 1992. Send your views on future Park management to Carolina Ramos, Park Superintendent, Franklin Mountains State Park, P.O. Box 200, Canutillo, TX 79835-9998.

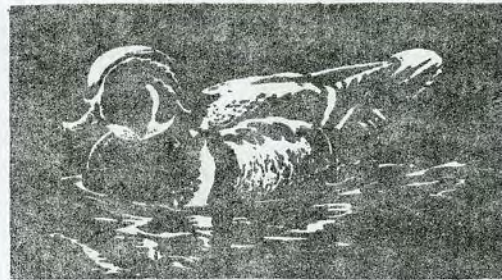
The TPWD expects to release a draft of the management plan in late spring 1992.
//John Sproul//

CHANGES AT AUDUBON REGIONAL OFFICE

Two mainstays of Audubon's Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), Regional Representative Jane Lyons and Office Manager Cheryl Williams, resigned their positions in October to pursue new opportunities. We thank them for the good work they have done for Audubon and wish them well in their new endeavors. Actually, Jane is still with Audubon and still based in Austin at the SWRO, though she now reports to the Washington office. She coordinates a new National Audubon project to research and analyze human-population impacts on wildlife, water resources and land use in four U.S. states and 12 foreign countries.

Jane and Cheryl's departures create two job openings in the SWRO. If you are interested in applying or know someone who might be, the person to contact is Regional Vice-President Dede Armentrout (512/327-1943).

//John Sproul//



EL PASO ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

The El Paso Environmental Center, located at 800 S. Piedras (Piedras at Paisano), continues to grow as an important community resource. Come to our Board of Directors meeting at the center on January 13 and see for yourself!

The recycling program at the Center is now taking two new items: magazines and plastic grocery bags. The magazines are for schools for classroom assignments. Age of the magazines is not important, but the subject matter should be appropriate for the classroom: current events, travel, nature, youth, family, science. No catalogs, please. The plastic grocery bags must be clean but can be from any store. (Jewel, Osco, Smith's, and Sun Harvest all take plastic grocery bags, too. Take your bags to them if that is more convenient.)

The Center continues to accept:

- newspapers,
- aluminum cans,
- steel cans,
- corrugated cardboard,
- white office paper/stationery, and
- used computer paper. Newspapers should be dry and free of discarded mail, advertising inserts or other contaminants.

Volunteers are what keep the Center operating, and more are desperately needed. Can you help? Please contact Center Director Linda Mahlow at 532-9645 or me at 545-5157.

//John Sproul//

ACT FOR WILDLIFE IN '92
JUNE 13 - 18, 1992

Audubon is planning its first ever national convention in Washington, D.C., in June 1992. Entitled "Act for Wildlife in '92: Endangered Species Need You!", this convention is scheduled to enable Audubon members to join forces at a critical time for wildlife in the nation's capital. Not only is it an election year, but 1992 will be one of the biggest ever for environmental legislation affecting wildlife and wildlife habitat. The Endangered Species Act is up for reauthorization in 1992, and next June will be a critical time for decision making on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge legislation, Clean Water Act, and the Ancient Forest bill.

At least 1,000 Auduboners are expected to come to Washington, D.C. next June to learn about the threats to wildlife and the Endangered Species Act and to make their views known on this and the other environmental bills before Congress. "Act for Wildlife in '92" will open Saturday, June 13 at American University. It will include three days of workshops on issues, lobbying and organizing skills, a day on Capitol Hill topped off with a Congressional reception, both day-long and multi-day field trips to outstanding natural areas in the Mid-Atlantic region including the Chesapeake Bay, Canaan Valley (a unique subalpine ecosystem tucked in the mountains of West Virginia), historic Harpers Ferry, The C&O canal, and birding in little-known, local wetland areas--not to mention the many museums, cultural and historic sights of Washington, D.C.

A brochure giving details on program, registration, lodging and field trips will be available during January 1992.
//NAS Chapter Networker//

AUDUBON ECOLOGY CAMPS

FREE: A trip to an Audubon Ecology Camp. The EP/TPAS is offering a scholarship and travel funds to an interested person. This can be an educator, public service provider or anyone willing to share the experience with others.

These camps are the foremost training ground for modern ecological methods and they are held in beautiful natural surroundings. There are three camps located in Wyoming, Wisconsin and Connecticut.

Brochures with dates and sites are available from Peggy Reide, 833-4881. The deadline for submitting applications is January 31, 1992.

//Joyce Davis//

National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to join.

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

My check for \$20 is enclosed.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Please make all checks payable to the National Audubon Society.

Send this application and your check to:

National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center
P.O. Box 51001 • Boulder, Colorado 80322-1001
LOCAL CHAPTER



El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Soc.
PO Box 9655
El Paso, TX 79986

W10
Local Chapter Code
7XCHA

In the vaunted works of Art / The master stroke is Nature's part.
-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

GOING PLACES?

Don't forget that when you make travel arrangements through P.S. TRAVEL, this agency donates 2% of the total you spend to our Audubon chapter. It's a great way to help Audubon while "getting away from it all." You can contact P.S. Travel at 6593-A Montana, El Paso, (915) 779-5403, Fax (915) 772-2631. Be sure to use account number 2006 so Audubon will get credit for your travel.



One thing I have learned in a long life: that all our science, measured against reality, is primitive and childlike - and yet it is the most precious thing we have.

- Albert Einstein



RUMMAGE: THE SEQUEL

It has been over a year since our last rummage sale, and we know your closets are getting crowded. If you have unwanted saleable items you wish to get rid of, please consider giving them to Audubon. We plan to hold our next sale in February. We can sell most items that are clean and in good repair or are repairable. Please contact Bob Johnson (757-1876), Jane Fowler (598-2448) or John Sproul (545-5157) if you have discards to deliver or want to arrange for our handy pick-up service. Thanks!
// J.S.//

MAKE A COMMITMENT TO
TEXAS (nongame) WILDLIFE!

Fall weather means that the deer and duck hunters are out in full force. But it also means that they are purchasing licenses that add to the money available to Texas Parks & Wildlife for the management of game (hunted) species. What about all the other species of wildlife that live in Texas -- the non-game species? Who is going to help them with a few dollars?

Would you be willing to donate \$5?

In 1984, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department established the Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund. Money from the sale of artwork, stamps and decals is placed in the fund, which is used to support the nongame programs within TPWD. All sales are voluntary, since this stamp is not a required purchase as are the familiar duck and saltwater stamps.

All but \$0.50 of your \$5 purchase price goes directly into the Conservation Fund. Your \$5 is a donation to help the wildlife of Texas and the stamp is an added bonus.

Since 1989, four acquisitions have been made possible by these funds. The first was 207 acres on Galveston Bay. Then Conoco donated a 151-acre island in the Bay that will help Texas qualify for matching federal funds. Mexican free-tail bats will benefit from the purchase of 10.5 acres that includes an old railroad tunnel. And 3.5 acres of Native vegetation in the Lower Rio Grande valley have been added to the state Wildlife Management Area system. As the fund grows, better assessment of the needs of nongame and endangered species can be made and met.

Nongame stamps are available at state parks, TPWD offices or at the next Audubon meeting. To purchase your TPWD Nongame stamp by mail, send check or money order payable to El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society, P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986. Enclose \$5 for each stamp ordered.
//ACT//

Sept. 15 - Nov. 9, 1991

Uncommon, rare and casual sightings

AP - Arroyo Park
 FB - Ft. Bliss Ponds
 FH - Ft. Hancock Reservoir
 FL - Feather Lake
 LH - La Hacienda Restaurant
 MP - Memorial Park
 McN - McNary Area
 WM - Westside Marsh
 WSC - Whispering Springs Canyon

Sightings by field trip member are noted by a (+) after the leader's initials; sightings in an observer's yard or area are indicated by an (*) after his/her initials.

LOONS - FALCONS

Horned Grebe - 11/2 FH (JS+)
Western Grebe - 11/2 FH (JS+)
Clark's Grebe - 11/2 FH (JS+)
White Pelican - 11/1-2 FH (JS+)
Least Bittern - 9/20, 9/23 FL (JS, JF)
Great Egret - 11/1-2 FH (JS+)
Snow Goose - 11/1-2 FH (JS+)
Ross's Goose - 11/1 FH (JS)
Canada Goose - 11/1 FH (JS)
Bufflehead - 11/2 FH (JS+)
Red-breasted Merganser - 11/2 FH (JS+)
Harris Hawk - 9/15 McN (JS, JF)
 11/1 FH (JS)

QUAIL - WOODPECKER

Sora - 9/22 (JD), 9/23 (JS), 9/23 FB (BZ)
Sandhill Cranes - 10/10 (JD*), 10/17 (JC*)
Lesser Yellowlegs - 11/2 FH (JS+)
Red Phalarope - 9/19 FB (JS, BZ), 9/21 FB (JS+)
Franklin's Gull - 9/15, 9/21 (JS)
Bonaparte's Gull - 11/1-2 (JS+)
Common Tern - 9/15, 18, 20 FL (JS, JF)
Eastern Screech Owl - 9/17-19 (A/MG*)

Western Screech Owl - 9/19

Copper St. (HB)

Anna's Hummingbird - 10/20 (TS*)

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - 9/25, 10/15, 11/3 (A/MG*); 10/5-7, (L/KB*)

FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

Olive-sided Flycatcher - 9/15 AP (SS)

Least Flycatcher - 9/15 LH (MP)

Brown-crested Flycatcher - 9/17 MP (JS)

Cassin's Kingbird - 9/21 FB (JS*)

Tree Swallow - 10/10 FL (JS)

Cliff Swallow - 10/10 FL (JS)

Cave Swallow - 10/10 FL (JS)

Brown Creeper - 10/15 (L/KB*), 11/1 (A/MG*)

Hermit Thrush - 10/8 (AA*)

Sage Thrasher - 9/30 HT (A/MG)

Warbling Vireo - 9/15 AP (SS)

WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

Nashville Warbler - 9/19 WSC (JS)

Black-throated Blue Warbler - 10/26, 11/3 (TW*)

"Myrtle" Yellow Rumped Warbler - 10/24 (A/MG*)

Black-throated Gray Warbler - 9/19 WSC (JS)

Yellow-breasted Chat - 9/18 (AA*)

Black-headed Grosbeak - 9/15 AP (SS)

OBSERVERS: Art Arteaga, Lois and Ken Beno, Helen Bigelow, Jeanette Cole, Joyce Davis, Jane Fowler, Al and Madeline Gavit, Mathew Ponton, Susan Schneider, Ted Segara, John Sproul, Barry Zimmer
 //Observations Editor: Joyce Davis, 581-9470//



AUDUBON AWARDS

Each year for the past eight, our chapter has presented awards to recognize outstanding achievement both within and outside of the chapter. Nominations are now being taken for these awards.

Meritorious Service Award - This award is given to the chapter member who has distinguished him or herself in outstanding service to the chapter and the National Audubon Society.

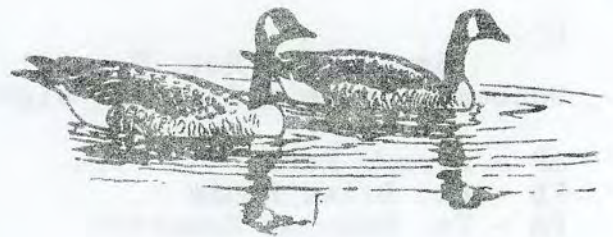
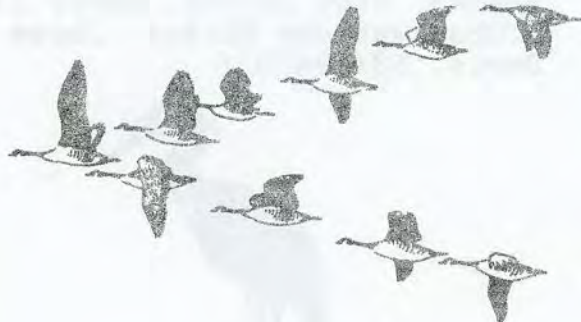
Conservation Award - This award is given to the individual or organization outside of the chapter who has made significant contributions to conservation and the Audubon cause.

Nominations for either award should be made in writing with supporting documentation to:

Betty Bowen
6228 Constellation
El Paso, TX 79912 or

Joe Leach
735 De Leon
El Paso, TX 79912

The awards will be presented at the annual dinner meeting in February. A list of previous recipients of these awards will be posted at the general meetings.



CHAPTER ELECTIONS

With the state and city elections over, our attention turns to voting for our chapter officers and directors for 1992-93. Election night is Monday, January 20, at our general meeting. We will be electing a vice-president, president-elect, secretary, treasurer and three directors.

Nominations are now open. You may enter your own name in the race or suggest other candidates by contacting one of the Nominating Committee members:

Bob Johnson - 751-0125
Betty Roberts - 591-0421
John Sproul - 545-5157

//Joyce Davis//

THE NAME GAME

The July 1991 issue of THE AUK, journal of the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU), includes the 38th supplement to the AOU Check-list of North American Birds. This supplement presents changes to the AOU Check-list adopted between March 1989 and March 1991.

* **NEOTROPIC CORMORANT.** The name of the Olivaceous Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax olivaceous*) has been changed to Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasiliensis*).

* **BURROWING OWL.** The scientific name is once again *Speotyto cunicularia* (changed from *Athene cunicularia*).
//J.S.//



The EP/TAS Wildlife Sanctuary is located at 9500 North Loop.

Our Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary is at its peak right now, but the water level has dropped steadily since September, and optimum conditions may not last as long this winter as they did in 1990-91. So plan to pay Feather Lake a visit soon. Hours are 8-11 AM on the first and third Saturdays each month and 3:30 PM to dusk each Sunday afternoon, major holiday weekends excepted. The calendar on the back page shows when Feather Lake will be open this December and January.

Of course, we can always use more volunteers to staff the sanctuary when it is open to the public. Can you help? Good! Please contact Betty Pagel (772-2686) and schedule a day or days that would be best for you.

To make sure you have time for the Christmas Bird Counts, and maybe even other holiday activities, we'll do no scheduled maintenance work at Feather Lake in December. Your next chance to help with sanctuary maintenance will be Saturday, January 11. Come at any time during the morning. You'll be glad you did.

//John Sproul//



A NOTE ABOUT YOUR NEWSLETTER

Your chapter has purchased a used computer -- a venerable Apple IIe that is currently resting on the editor's desk. The principal use for the computer will be THE ROADRUNNER and this is the first issue to be composed on this equipment.

The El Paso Times is also installing a new computer system, albeit somewhat more sophisticated than the Apple IIe. We mention that because the Times recently ran an editorial apologizing for whatever "glitches" the readers may detect. We feel it would be prudent to extend the same courtesy to the readers of THE ROADRUNNER.

Until a few weeks ago, the editor was computer illiterate, and to a great extent, still is. But we have made progress with the computer, the new word processing program, and the printer. For example, it took a while to figure out how to transfer 10 pitch print from the monitor to 12 pitch print on the printer. You can see the difference between the two styles by comparing the print used for the Observations page to the print used for most of the other articles. There are advantages and disadvantages to both, but until we can justify the cost of professional typesetting these are our only choices.

Since the vast bulk of each issue must be composed and typed within a short period, mistakes will occur. The computer will help us to catch the errors before the newsletter gets to you. Please bear with us until we get a better handle on the new system.

Perhaps, at some time in the future, we can improve the newsletter further with better software for the computer. The biggest improvement that we could make would be to leave the mimeograph behind and get professional printing. Once again we feel that the money can be better used on the many other projects sponsored by your chapter. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy THE ROADRUNNER and continue reading in the years ahead.

//G.B.//

CALENDAR

DECEMBER

- Mon., 2 - Board Meeting at Nancy Wilson's home, 123 Mahogany, 833-3907, 7:30 PM
- Sat., 7 - Feather Lake open, 8 - 11 AM
- Sun., 8 - Feather Lake open, 3:30 PM to dusk
- Mon., 9 - General Meeting, see page 1
- Sat., 14 - Christmas Bird Count, see page 3
- Sun., 15 - Feather Lake open, 3:30 PM to dusk
- Sat., 28 - Christmas Bird Count, see page 3
- Sun., 29 - Pot luck dinner, see page 3

JANUARY

- Sun., 6 - Feather Lake open, 3:30 PM to dusk
- Sat., 11 - Feather Lake work day
- Sun., 12 - Field trip to the Upper Valley, see page 3
- Sun., 12 - Feather Lake open, 3:30 PM to dusk
- Mon., 13 - Board Meeting at the El Paso Environmental Center, Paisano at Piedras, 7:30 PM
- Sat., 18 - Feather Lake open, 8 - 11 AM
- Sun., 19 - Feather Lake open, 3:30 PM to dusk
- Mon., 20 - General Meeting, see page 1
- Sat., 25 - Field trip to the Ft. Bliss Ponds, see page 3
- Sun., 26 - Feather Lake open, 3:30 PM to dusk



EL PASO/TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY
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El Paso, Texas 79986

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