

the ROADRUNNER



newsletter of the
El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society
P.O. Box 9655, El Pas. TX 79986

Editor: Sarah Dodds

Volume 12, Number 5

May 1982

GENERAL MEETING

Monday, 17 May 1982, 7:30 PM,
Garden Center, 3105 Grant St.
in Memorial Park. Was your last
birding picture a blur? If so,
then our May meeting is just
for you! This will be a photo-
graphy workshop to help individ-
uals understand more about cameras,
photo film and picture taking
techniques. We hope to have
Dave Brown and John Green share
their expertise in this presenta-
tion. They will be glad to answer
your questions, so bring your
cameras and your questions to
this meeting. #

FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

WEDNESDAYS - 5, 12, 19 and 26 May
on 5 (7:00 AM) and 19 (6:00 AM) May
we will meet at the Garden Center,
3105 Grant St. In Memorial Park.
Tom Baker and Art Arteaga will
be the leaders.

On 12 (7:00 AM) and 26 (7:00 AM)
May we will meet at Arroyo Park,
New York and St. Vrain Streets.
Jo Nagel and Art Arteaga will be
the leaders. Come by...perhaps
we'll see your favorite warbler.
Besides, the brisk air will ensure
a great "rest of the day."

SAT. and SUN. 8-9 MAY. CLAY MILLER
RANCH. Meet at Feather Lake (9500
N. Loop Rd.) at 8:30 AM. From the
lake we'll drive directly to the

FIELD TRIPS (continued)

Clay Miller Ranch near Valentine,
Texas. Your time is your own at the
ranch. Many interesting sparrow
species should be seen as well other
passerines. Bring food and sleeping
gear. Call Joe Guinn (566-8438) in
advance if you plan to make this one.

SAT. - SUN. 22-23 MAY. CHIRICAHUA
MTS. Meet at 5 AM at I-10 and Trans-
mountain Rd. on Saturday 22 May. We
will proceed to the "sky islands" of
southeastern Arizona.

This will be a camping trip, although
there are two motels for those of us
less hardy - these are Cave Creek
Ranch (602-558-2334) and Cathedral Rock
Lodge (602-558-2312). Joe Guinn will
be our leader. Please make reservations
ahead, as motel space is at a premium
this time of the year. Last year,
everybody's life list grew fatter with
lifers.

SAT. 15 MAY. BEFINNERS FIELD TRIP
Meet at 7 AM at the Good Time Store, 1098
Country Club Rd. in the upper valley.
The emphasis will be on how to use a
field guide effectively. The pace
will be slow; kids are welcome. We'll
bird the Randel's Pool area, and then
visit Durling's Farm. Those eager for
more can continue to Feather Lake for
lunch and an afternoon of work (see
next page.) Bring your binoculars
and field guides (bird books such as
Peterson's Field Guide to Western Birds
or Birds of North America, (a Golden
Field Guide.) Leader: John Sproul
(545-5157 h, 541-6125 w).
/Art Arteaga/ ###

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AUGUST FIELD TRIP

THURSDAY, 12 AUGUST. PERSEID METEORS/HUECO TANKS. This year we won't have to get up a 3 AM to avoid the moon. After a picnic dinner at Hueco Tanks, we'll watch night--and the mereors--fall. It should be a particularly good outing for kids and our guests. Full details next month.

#

FEATHER LAKE NEEDS YOU

SATURDAY 15 MAY. WORKD DAY AT OUR FEATHER LAKE. The gates open at 7 AM. The recently completed wok project done by the Young Adult Conservation Corps at Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary (9500 N. Loop Rd., 0.3 miles n.w. of Ave. of the Americas) brought many improvements but also increased maintenance responsibilities for us. This work day kicks off what we hope to be a regular program of member participation in maintaining Feather Lake. Come see what has been accomplished and learn what remains to be done.

Bring a picnic lunch. (We'll provide cold drinks.) After a morning of work, we'll inaugurate the new picnic pavillion. Then, if you can stay, it's back to the tasks at hand. What will you be doing? Much of it will be light work that anyone can do. We'll clear tumbleweeds and trash, we'll water the new plantings, learn how to use the pump that delivers to the irrigation system, and more. Many of these things will be on-going tasks through the summer.

We are making steady progress in our efforts to increase wildlife habitat values and public use opportunities at Feather Lake. Now wer're at a critical stage. Further progress requires a regular work program at the sanctuary. It starts May 15th. Come for a full day or for just a few hours. There is plenty to do! Joe Guinn (566-8438) will supervise the day's activities. /John Sproul/ # # #

FIELD TRIP FOLLOW-UPS

OR

YOU SHOULD OF BEEN THERE!

On Saturday, 3 April, Barry Zimmer (leader) and fifteen birders descended on Aguirre Springs and proceeded to pick out forty bird species, such as; White-breasted Nuthatch, Steller's Jays, Violet-green Swallows, Broad-tailed Hummigbirds, and Mountain Bluebirds. It was a perfect birding day!

Al Gavit and a party of six, on Sunday, 18 April, dirded Feather Lake at Tornillo Reservoir area. Sixty species were seen. What a surprise! A Summer Tanager and other very out-of-the-ordinary birds were spotted. Al commented that everybody was in high spirits and a wonderful day was had by all. /Al Arteaga/

#

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MONDAY 20 SEPTEMBER. Some people call this bird a devil; others consider it the most majestic bird in our west Texas sky. The nationally known author who will give our September program counts himself on the majestic side. His last has four letters. Are you getting warm to his identity? His first name has three letters. And that's absolutely the last clue you get until the big announcement in the next Roadrunner.

#

CITY PARKS RIO BOSQUE PROPOSAL

At our May meeting, we will have the bonus. The El Paso Parks and Recreation Department will present for our consideration the City's proposal for development of Rio Bosque Park.

#

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Observation Report

It was a month full of exciting birding. Several species normally accidental or casual in our own area turned up everywhere; two first records were recorded; and many of the migrant species also began moving through in good numbers allowing at least a couple of observers to top over 100 species on two occasions.

LOONS-FALCONS

Snowy Egrets were reported several times (BZ,JD) from various locations in the lower valley with a high count of 9 on 3-30 (BZ). Cattle Egrets were present consistently throughout the period from the Clint area (BZ,KZ,JD). Most notable was a group of 74 on 3-30 (BZ). Many reports of B. C. Night Herons came in from both the upper and lower valleys (BZ,KZ,JoD,JD,JDP,SW,JS, et al.). The first white faced Ibis of the season were a group of 25 at Feather Lake on 4-12 (JDP,SW). A very late Snow Goose frequented Surratt's pond in Clint on 3-25 (BZ, KZ) and 3-30 (BZ). The male Eurassian Wigeon made its final appearance at Tornillo on 3-21 (BZ,JD). An outstanding find was that of a male Greater Scaup studied carefully at Surratt's pond on 3-30 (BZ). Common Mergansers remained at Tornillo and Feather Lake until at least late March (BZ, KZ, JD, JS). The first Turkey Vultures of the spring arrived at Hueco Tanks on 3-20 (BZ). A "Harlan's" Hawk at Rio Bosque on 3-28 was both rare and late (JS). Two very early Swainsons Hawks were seen in the lower valley on 3-25 (BZ, KZ). Bay-winged Hawks were seen on three occasions - one near Tornillo on 3-21 (JD, BZ); one near McNary on 3-30 (BZ); and most noteworthy, a lone bird close to Fabens on 4-4 (AG, MG) - our area. A lone Osprey soared high over Tornillo Lakes on 4-4 (BZ), while another was present at Randals Pool on the same day (JoD). Prairie Falcons were unusually numerous (Hueco Tanks, Ysleta Dump, Santa Theresa Country Club (STCC), Ft. Bliss golf course) throughout the month (BX,JD,AG).

QUAIL-WOODPECKERS

Lone Sora Rails were seen on 3-21 (BZ, JD) and on 3-30 (BZ) at Tornillo and on 4-4 at STCC (JD). Several shorebirds made their first spring appearances: 11 Long-billed Curlews near the Fabens levee on 3-22 (AG), 2 Black necked Stilt at Feather Lake on 4-10 (JS, et al.), 4 MARBLED GODIVITS at the Fort Bliss Sewage ponds on 4-12 (JDP,SW), and 2 Wilsons Phalarope at Feather Lake on 4-10 (TW, BR, JW). Also noteworthy was an unusually large group of 80 American Avocets at Ft. Hancock on 3-30 (BZ). A first record for El Paso and a fantastic find was that of a lone ad. LAUGHING GULL flying overhead at Feather Lake on 4-11 (JS, TW). Four Franklin Gulls were sighted at the Fort Bliss Sewage ponds on 4-12 (JDP, SW). A lone term sp. (probably Forster's) was seen briefly at STCC on 4-1- (JD). In the long line of accidental species sighted this month were solitary BOND-TAILED PIGEON at Hueco Tanks on 3-20 (BZ) and a GROUND DOVE at Tornillo on 3-21 (BZ,JD). Both of these species have been recorded in the El Paso area on only a few previous occasions. Two Long-eared owls were sighted in NE El Paso in an eastside yard on 3-18 (SL) and 1 at STCC on 4-4 (JD). An early Lessen Nighthawk was at Feather Lake on 4-12 (JDP, SW). A male Broad tailed hummingbird frequented a westside back yard on 4-11 (JO). The first black-chinned hummingbird arrived in Mission Hills on 3-22 (EK). A single male WILLIAMSONS SAPSUCKER was spotted in Memorial Park on 3-21 (AB).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING

A west Kingbird at STCC on 4-5 (JD) and an Ash-throated Flycatcher at STCC on 4-4 (JD) were both early. An EASTERN PHOEBE at Owens Farm on 3-21 (BZ, JD) was

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quite unexpected. The first Cliff Swallows arrived at Hueco Tanks on 3-20 (BZ), while several Bank's (the last of the swallow species to appear) were seen at STCC on 4-10 (JD). Scrub Jays thinned out some, but were still reported on four occasions (BZ, JD, EK) with the latest being on 4-11 at Randals Pool (JD). Surprisingly enough, sizable flocks of common crows were still frequenting the lower valley until at least 4-4. A high count of 300 were noted on 3-12 (BZ,JD). Two brown Thrashers were sighted at Tornillo on 3-21 (BZ, JD) while a lone bird was at Durlings Farm on 3-30 (BZ). A Sage Thrasher was observed in NE El Paso on 3-28 (JD), and another at Rio Bosque on the same date (JS). Townsend's Solitaires were frequently reported again this month (BZ, JD) from Hueco Tanks, a westside apartment complex, and Randal's Pool. A lone Hermit Thrush was at Hueco Tanks on 4-6 (BZ). Western Bluebirds were last reported on 3-30 off the Fabens levee (BZ). Very late and unusual, considering this was not an invasion yr., was a single Mountain Bluebird at STCC on 4-5 (JD). Lone Phainopeplas were seen at Tornillo on 3-21 (BZ, JD) and 3-30 (BZ).

VIREOS-SPARROWS

Although the competition was tough, bird of the month honors go to the YELLOW THROATED WARBLER studied carefully as its foraged in an eastside backyard on 3-27 (BR). This represents a first El Paso record. A probable PALM WARBLER at Randal's pool on 4-11 (JD) would be only the second time this species has been recorded. Quite unusual was a male "Myrtle" race of the Yellow-rumped Warbler at Hueco Tanks on 4-6 (BZ). The first Wilsons Warbler was also sighted at Hueco Tanks the same day. One common yellowthroat was seen at Tornillo on 3-30 (BZ) and another at Tamdals pool on 4-4 (JoD) A single brown headed Snow bird was noted at Sunland Park on 3-30 (BZ). Orioles were sighted frequently this month - a male hooded at Mission Hills on 3-28 (EK); a northern at Randals pool on 4-11 (JD), and a probable Scott's at Apache Springs on 4-6 (GR). One American Goldfish was seen at Tornillo on 3-30 (BZ), and a late Pine Sisken was at Hueco Tanks on 3-21 (BZ,JD).

The first Lark Sparrows arrived at Hueco Tanks on 3-20 (BZ), while many cannins sparrows were noted performing their aerial display at Hueco Tanks on the same date (BZ). A high count of 30 were seen on 3-30. One imm. White throated sparrow was observed at Durlings Farm on 3-30 (BZ). Two Swamp Sparrows were at Tornillo on 3-21 (BZ, JD) and four were seen at Feather Lake on 4-15 (Very late - JDP, SW).

Contributors - Ann Bowman, Joyce Davis (JoD), Joe DiPasquele (JDP), Sarah Dodds, Jeff Donaldson, Jane Fowler, Al Gavit, Earle King, Steve Lopez, Jan Owens, George Raley, Bettie Roberts, Bart Rumaker, John Sproul, Scott Wilson, Joan Worlin, Tony Worth, Barry Zimmer, Kevin Zimmer.

#

Gracias! Danke! Merci!

Your editor wants to thank the employees at A.B. Dick for the printing of this newsletter. She especially wants to thank her husband, Ed Dodds, for providing the ink, the paper, and the moral support so generously given.

For this month's issue, most of the pages were typed by the secretary at A.B. Dick. This dear person, who is as nice as she is pretty (and who is going to be a June bride next month) volunteered -- I repeat, volunteered -- to type this newsletter. If there are mistakes in spelling it is because your editor did not have time to go over the copy with her. The deadline for this issue has come at a very awkward time for me, and I can only apologize to you. Please read this newsletter with the same gracious charity with which it was typed. Again, my many thanks to my husband and his staff. #

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

The El Paso/Transpecos Audubon Society has a complex history. Its precursor, the El Paso Bird Study Club, came into being on 4 Dec 1938. Not until 1949 did it affiliate with the National Audubon Society and change its name to the El Paso Audubon Society (EPAS). The EPAS had its good times and bad, but in 1966 it rock bottom. With interest in the group low, its character was re-voked.

The club limped along, barely until Geth White's arrival from Dallas in 1970. Geth revived the group. THE ROADRUNNER, long given up for dead, reappeared, with Geth its editor. The group recruited the required 35 new members, and in May 1972, it received a provisional character as the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society.

All of which makes us 10 years old this month. Happy Birthday!
/John Sproul/ #

MAJOR RUMMAGE EXHIBIT PLANNED FOR FALL

The El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society recently announced that it plans to bring a major rummage exhibit to El Paso this fall. The prestigious Woolco Gallery on Dyer St. will play host to the outdoor exhibition. Some of El Paso's most experienced rummage accumulators already have agreed to contribute unique pieces of junque from their collections. If you want your discards considered for the exhibit contact a member of the Screening Committee: Jane Fowler (772-0296), or Joe Guinn (566-8438) or Peggy Heisel (821-0989).#

SIERRA CLUB PICNIC

The Siera Club invites all Audubon members to attend the Sieran's annual picnic on WED. 26 May. The Sierra Club provides free hamburgers and hot dogs and has beverage for sale. You bring a cup, eating utensils and a food item to share. Call John Sproul (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w) for time and place. #

ON THE WATER FRONT

In Washington

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) has evolved into 1 of this nation's strongest tools for protecting wetlands. With the act up for reauthorization this year, Sec. 404 is under fire.

Section 404 directs the Army Corps of Engineers to control "the discharge of dredged or fill material into the navigable waters." Elsewhere, the CWA defines "navigable waters" as "the waters of the United States, including territorial seas." A major court decision in 1975 affirmed that "navigable waters" in Sec. 404 refers to "all waters of the United States, "including most wetlands.

This broad jurisidiction doesn't sit well with the Corps of Engineers, the Reagan administration and some members of Congress. They want Sec. 404 restricted to a more traditional definition of navigable waters. The result, according to U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service estimates, would be removal of some 125 million acres or 85% of our nations wetlands from Sec. 404's protection. Leading the charge for such a weakening of

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Sec. 404 are John Tower and Lloyd Bentsen, U.S. Senators from a large southwestern state.

They face an uphill battle, though. Conversation groups are marshalling strong support for retaining the current scope of Sec. 404. And Senator John Chafee (R-RI), chairman of the Senate subcommittee that is reviewing the CWA, formly opposes removal other congressional business probably will delay final action. on CWA amendments until 1983.

In Texas

The 1968 Texas Water Plan is a multibillion-dollar blueprint for water development that is heavy on dams and aqueducts and very lean on water conservaion, groundwater protection and other important water-resource issues. Texas voters have consistently rejected schemes that would finance it.

After the last such rejection, the November 1981 defeat of a proposed water-projects trust fund (RR, Jan), Gov. Clements decided a new approach was needed. At this request, the Texas Department of Water Recources (TDWR) is now revising the plan. The TDWR hopes to have a revised Texas Water Plan complete by December 1982 to present to the governor and legislature in early 1983.

The TDWR has been solicitating public input on issues to be considered in revisions of the plan. Conservation groups, including El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon, have stressed the need for a comprehensive water recourse policy that does more than just make ambitious projections about future water demands then propose massive water projects to meet those demands. A draft of the revised plan should be out by July or August. Will water conservation,

groundwater protection of bays and estuaries, and the like get serious attention? Or will we get a retelling of the same old story?

In EL Paso

Construction of the new Northeast Sewage Treatment Plant begins this summer and should be complete by mid-1985. We'll gain an innovative system to extend El Páso's water supplies through wastewater reuse. We'll lose almost 500 acres of productive wetland wildlife habitat---the Ft. Bliss Sewage Ponds. /John Sproul/ #

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The National Audubon Society, Southwest Regional Conference was held at Rockport, Texas, April 16-18. Delegates attending were from New Mexico, Texas, and Louisiana.

The highlight of the conference was the Saturday evening keynote address of Russell W. Peterson, president, National Audubon Society. In his address, Mr. Peterson noted the return of the plume hunters of a century ago with their "use it up now, and to heck with the future" mentality. These plume hunters of the Reagan Administration, such as James Watt, John Crowell, Anne Gorusuch, along with massive budget cuts and re-directed priorities are endangering a whole set of laws designed to protect our enviroment. Legislation, such as the set of laws designed to to protect our enviromental restraint on business and industry are being assaulted. If the administration efforts are successful the air will be dirtier, acid rain will increase, our natural areas and ancient uncut forest could vanish, and wildlife such as the Spotted Owl could disappear.

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1982-83 CHAPTER DIRECTORY

This comes at a time when membership in the Audubon Society has increased in the last year from 413,000 to 460,000 members. Calling for more action at the "grass roots" level, Mr. Peterson urged immediate action by writing to "your two U.S. Senators and your U.S. Representative to tell them to oppose the Luken-Dingell dirty air bill and to get behind the efforts of Congressman Waxman in the House and Senator Stafford in the Senate to pass the strong clean air bill."

Sunday morning, Audubon delegates discussed regionalizing Audubon action, that is, what specific Southwest problem should Audubon work on in Washington. Environmental priorities that were set by the delegates were wildlife as the number one priority, followed by water, land use, energy, pollution, population, and education. /Helen Barto/ #

GOODBYE TO THE LYKINS

Joe and Phoebe Lykins are moving soon (would you believe the first week in May?) to Denver, Colorado, and making our brown eyes blue. Joe has been our conscientious Clean Air Act coordinator, while Phoebe has worn the two hats of chapter Librarian and Cake Decorator, first class. How we will miss them! Thank you, Phoebe and Joe, for all your help with chapter activities. We hate to see you nice people go. #

A DEBT OF GRATITUDE

Dear hearts and gentle readers, your editor wants you to realize that you would not be holding this newsletter in your warm hands were it not for the helping hands of these three modest, marvelous women -- Jane Fowler, Jo Nagel and Marguerite Dunnell. Theirs are the hands that collate, fold, staple, address, bundle and mail this newsletter. We all owe them our gratitude. #

President	*John Sproul	545-5157
Vice-Pres.	*Jane Fowler	772-0296
Sec.-Treas.	*Jo Warolin	594-7318
Pres. elect	*Peggy Heisel	821-0989
Conservation	*Tony Worth	592-4926
Education	*Ginny Baker	562-9461
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Audubon Council		
of Texas	Helen Barto	755-7546
Clean Air Act		
Coordinator		
Endangered Species		
Act Coord.	Diane Dutton	532-7546

* - Board of Directors

FILL IN THE BLANKS

Do you notice the blank spaces in the above list of the Chapter Directory? Volunteers, anyone? #

AUDUBON RECEIVES GRANT FROM
ATLANTIC RICHFIELD FOUNDATION

The National Audubon Society has received a \$50,000 grant from the Atlantic Richfield Foundation to provide basic visitor services at the Society's Sabal Palm Grove Sanctuary in the southernmost tip of Texas, near Brownsville. The Sabal Palm Grove Sanctuary harbors the last wild grove of Sabal mexicana--the only palm tree native to Texas--north of the Mexican border. The grove, covering 34 acres, contains several hundred of these sabal palms, which tower above the bank of an oxbow lake that within the lifetime of the rare trees was the main channel of the Rio Grande. /News from Audubon/ #

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**Yes, I want to join the El Paso/
Trans-Pecos Chapter of the Na-
tional Audubon Society.**

Name

Address

CityState.....

ZipPhone

Membership Category desired:

Individual/\$25 Family/\$32

Sr. Citizen, Individual/\$17

Sr. Citizen, Family/\$19

Student/\$15

**This is a new renewal mem-
bership.**

**Please make your checks payable
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**Mail to Bob Johnson, 5109 Paris,
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