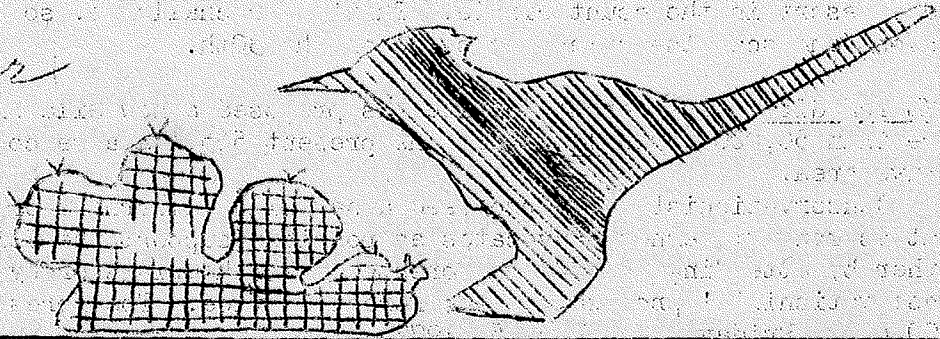


The Roadrunner

NEWSLETTER OF
EL PASO-TRANS PECOS
AUDUBON SOCIETY
3123 Federal Avenue
El Paso, Texas 79930
Subscription: \$2 per yr.



V. II, December, 1972

Geth Osborn White, Editor

CALENDAR

Saturday, Dec. 30 ANNUAL CHRISTMAS COUNT to replace the regular monthly meeting. See last month's bulletin for the count circle.

Ruby Allen will return from Sam Houston State College in time to be the compiler. Clarence Shelfer will assist as coordinator of the count. Leaders will set up time and place to work in the field on territory. See list below. Rendezvous at lunchtime at the Rio Grande Bridge, Country Club Road in the upper valley. At the end of the day bring your records to the Whites, 3123 Federal, have a cup of cheer and share the excitement of the finds of the day.

A fee of \$1 will be turned into National Audubon Society to partially defray the cost of publishing the data compiled from all over the U. S. and appearing in their publication, American Birds. Please see that your leader receives your \$1 fee.

Leader: Bill Hunt: 591-5630. Territory: From Anapra Crossing up the Rio Grande river banks, including Cement Lake to Country Club Road. He will also cover Ascarate Lake since Caroline McClintock is unable to do it this year. Call Bill if you can help in his area.

Leaders: Ruby Allen and Gertrude Rose 584-0171: residential neighborhoods in the Upper Valley, county roads, Durling farm, fee fishing lakes.

Leader: Rita Ward: 565-4414: Memorial Park, residential neighborhoods in East El Paso.

Leader: Clarence and Libby Shelfer: 568-7774: Mountain Park residential areas and canyons.

Leader: Geth and Ed White: 565-1024: Trans Mountain Road Canyons and Phelps-Dodge cooling ponds.

Leader: Joan Pierce 584-1779: Coronado residential areas.

Leader: C. L. Jensen 584-7626: Tom Mays Park.

CHRISTMAS COUNTS - WHY

I quote from the recent musical film, Fiddler on the Roof -- TRADITION! TRADITION. Started by a man of course. He didn't have to keep the refrigerator stocked with goodies for holiday nibbling and hospitality, decorate the house, shop for Santa, and to keep going around in circles without a prescribed Christmas count circle for the birds. Housewife birders have to be careful not to count a Ruffled Spouse around the house.

Seriously the Christmas counts furnish a lot of raw data for American Birds, some of which is being analyzed and put to use within the publication. It gives us a national picture of the distribution and populations of birds.

It's a great sport. Competition has improved the sharpness and techniques of bird-finding all over the country, resulting in longer bird lists and more birds confusing to the pesticide sellers who would prefer to believe that numbers of species are up instead of greater expertise on the part of the birders.

There is a tremendous competition between expert birders who keep a list. Some people feel it is inherently bad, but I feel it is one way of looking at the hobby. If your attitude is one of sharing the presence of a rare bird with as many people as possible, it can be good. Rarities and unusual finds remind us that anything that flies is highly mobile. Add a warm desert climate and swirling wind currents around mountains and you get an exciting area where anything may turn up when there is a concentrated search for birds.

We are the only count area in the nation which has a 7,000 foot mountain, a major river and a desert in the count circle. That's our challenge, so let's beat the bushes, scout the canyons and scan the skies for birds on the 30th.

SAVE THE GILA: The Forest Service has proposed a new Gila Wilderness of 514,678 acres, or more than 50,000 acres less than the present 565,484 acre combined Gila Wilderness and Primitive Area.

Conservationists have proposed a new Gila Wilderness of 614,918 acres. It is imperative that as many wilderness advocates as possible support the Joint Conservationists' proposal either by attending one of the Forest Service Hearings or by writing a letter supporting the Conservationists' proposal to the Forest Service. The Forest Service Hearings will be:

9:00 A. M. Friday, December 15, 1972

FINE ARTS AUDITORIUM
WESTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY
SILVER CITY, NEW MEXICO

9:00 A. M. Sat. Dec. 16, 1972

ACQUA-ZUNI ROOMS
CONVENTION CENTER
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

Bob Barto, Audubon Society Conservation Chairman, Sierra Club President, Wilderness Society Advocate, etc., etc. is organizing a group to attend the hearing at Silver City. Please call Bob at 755-4744 if you can make the trip. Letters should be sent no later than January 16, 1972 to Regional Forester, United States Forest Service, 517 Gold, S.W. Albuquerque, N.M. 87101. When the Forest Service proposed to eliminate 183,000 acres from the Gila Wilderness in 1952, U. S. Senator Clinton P. Anderson said, "This was the first great wilderness area. Aldo Leopold and the men who created it are no longer alive to protect it. We who have enjoyed the sunshine of the Southwest are trustees of the splendid idea which they had in the preservation of primitive areas. It is because of that I oppose any reduction in the size of this wilderness area and hope that it may be forever preserved as it was originally created." Will we be zealous in our championship of it or will we allow it to be slowly chipped away? For the sake of yourself, your children and the wild Gila country, please attend one of the hearings or write a letter in support of the Joint Conservationists' Proposal for a 614,918 acre Gila Wilderness.

THE TRINITY AGAIN: Explorer Alonso de Leon named the river in 1690, "La Santisima Trinidad," translated the most holy river. Centuries later an unholy trinity, The Trinity Improvement Association, the Texas Water Plan and the Corps of Engineers, with a supporting cast of thousands, is at work with plans to modify the Trinity by a series of reservoirs and a great ditch to enable it to accommodate barge traffic and to link Dallas and Fort Worth to the sea. The cost would be so stupendous as to consider it gold-plated. It would be somewhat like the huge project in Oklahoma linking Tulsa to the sea by a series of reservoirs and channeling of the Verdigris River, this boondoggling miracle having been accomplished primarily through the efforts of the late Senator Kerr. It is good, but it seems to have very little use from casual visits to this part of Oklahoma.

The Trinity River Project offers a tangible target unlike the Texas Water Plan. The Houston Audubon Society is a leader in a legal battle against it. Your support and any contribution should be sent to Mr. Charles P. Merrill, Vice President, Houston Audubon Society; 4509 Teas Street, Bellaire, Texas 77401.

JOHN SPINKS LAUDS THE LADY LEADERS in his Southwest Regional News of the Audubon cause. On the Society's staff he salutes Cynthia Wilson, our Washington correspondent. Holding a master's degree in journalism, before joining the Society Cynthia served in the White House on Mrs. Lyndon Johnson's staff. Finding her way through a maze of bureaucratic snarls and agency tangles, she proves an invaluable asset in providing essential information for chapters and New York staff. Dr. Margaret Sullivan, a pediatrician at M. D. Anderson Hospital, is president of the Houston Audubon Society, largest chapter in the region soon to reach one thousand members. From saving Armand Bayou to fighting the Trinity River Project, Houston Audubon ably represents the Society and serves its community. Dr. Carolyn Morillo, holding a doctorate in philosophy and teaching at Louisiana State University, New Orleans campus, ably leads in environmental decision making in Louisiana. Myra McCormick, president of the Southwestern New Mexico Audubon Society in Silver City, has inspired the organization of other chapters in Santa Fe and Albuquerque; through incessant collecting of aluminum cans, the chapter sponsors the Audubon Wildlife Films, open to the public at no charge in Silver City. He tips his hat to these leading ladies.

AUDUBON SUMMER INSTITUTE 1973. Field studies in desert ecology August 4-12, sponsored by the Tucson Audubon Society in cooperation with the University of Arizona to be held at the Tanque Verde Guest Ranch east of Tucson at the foot of the Rincon Mountains in an area rich in plant and animal life. Enrollment fee is \$50. plus a special rate of \$168. for eight days with 24 meals. John Spinks will direct and a team of naturalists from the University will carry out the objective of enriching and increasing one's knowledge and appreciation of the desert environment. In the summer rainy season all nature unfolds in an acceleration unmatched anywhere outside of desert areas. (Editor's note: I enrolled in a similar course given by the University of Arizona in 1968 and found it most rewarding). If you need a registration form you may write to Audubon Institute, 2504 East Lee, Tucson, Arizona 85716.

DUCKS, GREBS, PELICANS, HERONS WANTED by checklist revision chairman Bill Hunt. Dig into your records and bring to the next meeting any sightings of the water birds at the beginning of the checklist. At the last meeting Bill asked us to join in this cooperative effort to revise the checklist and update it. Last edition was brought out in September, 1967. Records since that date are needed. If you would like to mail your records to Bill Hunt, 8365 Beverly, El Paso, 79907, he will appreciate it.

NOVEMBER BIRDS

Anna's Hummingbird	Wilcox's residence on Federal	11/6/72.
	This is the fourth season for its appearance. This time there was no feeder out, Robert Wilcox's conscience bothering her about enticing hummingbirds in El Paso with our cold winter nights. The bird let her know he wanted it, fussing and flying around complaining in the accustomed area. It is still here, roosting, at least on one observation, under the insulating skirts of a nearby palm.	
Cassin's Kingbird	Mundy Canyon	11/9 GOW & EW
Scrub Jay (6)	Federal Street	11/6 GOW & EW
Stellar's Jays 1 to 6	" "	11/2 - 12/8 GOW & EW
House Wren (4)	Munday Canyon	11/9 Lexie & John Mudd GOW & EW
Winter wren (1)	"	11/9 " "
Bl. tted Kingfishers (6)	Upper Valley	11/30 - 12-2 Jim Koons
Cedar Waxwings (35)	East El Paso	11/30 - 12-2-6 Jim Koons
Spotted Towhees 10-12	Mountain Canyons unusually abundant	11/6 - 11/26 GOW & EW
Sharp-shinned hawk	Rim Road Area (eating house sparrow)	12/6 Margaret McDaniel

BIRDING IN THE SAN CARLOS BAY AREA OF GUAYMAS, MEXICO. On Mexico's west coast, a hard day's drive from El Paso, is a paradise of brooding rocky mountains tumbling down to an unbelievably crystal clear sea. Seals and sea lions frolic in the mild surf of the Gulf of California and sun on the rocky islands which dot the bays, sharing them with thousands of sea birds. It is possible to look over an Arctic Loon from a six foot distance and thieving Pelicans on the docks make away with part of the catch of fish from the unwary.

Behind the high dunes are tangles of fragrant woody shrubs providing cover and food, especially for the hummingbirds. We saw Costa's, Violet-crowned, Red billed, White-eared and Black-chinned species. Shorebirds are numerous on the mudflats and the nearby Sonoran desert hosts such species as the Gila Woodpecker, desert sparrows, chipping sparrows. Ospreys perch on the contorted saguaro cactus, being especially numerous. The Hardaways and daughter, Joania, Geth and Ed White recommend the fishing also -- 250 pounds in two hours of mad, fast reeling in of snapper and yellowtail.

Thanks to Eddie and Lucretia Chew for running off and mailing the newsletter and to Helen and Bob Barto for assistance at meetings.

OFFICERS:

- President: Mrs. Edmund White (Get)
- Vice-president: Eddie Chew
- Secy/Treasurer: Mrs. Clarence Snelfer (Libby)
- Historian: Mrs. Jack Ponder (Helen)

El Paso-Trans Pecos Audubon Society
 dues are \$12 individual, \$15 family;
 includes subscription to Audubon magazine
 local newsletter, participation in eco-
 action matters, field trips and activities.

COMMITTEES:

- Conservation: Bob Barto
- Field Trips: Ed White
- Membership: Mrs. Leigh Wilcox (Roberta)
- Education: Mrs. Carl Jones (Linda)
- Checklist Revision: Bill Hunt

Please mail check to Mrs. Clarence
 Snelfer, 3050 A Chandler, El Paso, Texas
 79904.

Name _____
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