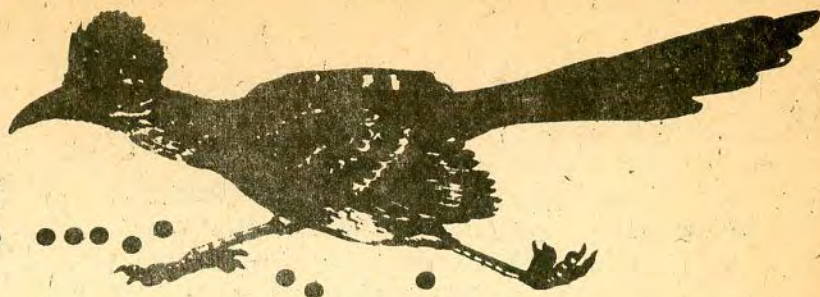


# the ROADRUNNER



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

Editor: Sarah Dodds  
Volume 12, Number 4

April 1982

## GENERAL MEETING

Monday, 19 APRIL, 7:30 PM, GARDEN CENTER, 3105 Grant St. in Memorial Park. Our program will be LAND OF LOST BORDERS, a spiritual journey through the desert in company of an unseen wise old man. This is a fascinating film revealing many intimate portraits of unique plants and animals of one of North America's great deserts.

This film on the Chihuahua Desert, produced and directed by Harry Gordon, is narrated by Burgess Meredith and contains some of the best nature photography you can possibly see.

Come join the Audubon meeting on the 19th of April, and if for some reason you can't make the meeting that night, LAND OF LOST BORDERS will also highlight the Sierra Club meeting on Wednesday, 28 April, at 7:30 PM in St. Paul's Methodist Church at 7000 Edgemere.

/Peggy Heisel/

## FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

Sneak Preview! And you do the sneaking with your own cameras at the May meeting. Get your cameras ready for super action at our May meeting with our resident photographic experts. #

## SEPTEMBER SURPRISE

Thank you, Dave Steinbach, for lining up a great program for our September Meeting. The subject? Next month's RR will give you a clue. /Peggy Heisel/

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MONDAY, 12 APRIL, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet at the home of Bart Rumaker, 4847-B Excalibur, El Paso (544-6432). All members are welcome, but you have to find the place first, so pay attention!

Excalibur Street is off Stanton Street on El Paso's west side. Take Stanton until it ends in a fork. Take the right fork, go up the hill and look for the first left turn. (You will be in the vicinity of Camelot Apartments.) The first left turn will be Vaquero Rd. Take Vaquero and keep bearing right until you come to a fire hydrant on your left and a wire screen on your right. Turn left here onto Excalibur. Go up the hill to the 2nd mailbox on the right. There, you made it! #

## FIELD TRIPS

SUNDAY, 18 APRIL, TORNILLO AREA. Meet at 6 AM at Feather Lake at 9500 N. Loops Rd, .3 mile northwest of Avenida de las Americas. We will leave soon afterward and proceed to Tornillo reservoir and environs.

Be alert for Clapper Rail, Sora, Swamp Sparrow and possible Forster's Tern and Osprey. Brown Thrasher and Harris Sparrow were spotted in this area recently (BZ,JD). Leader Al Gavit (852-3119).

(continued next page)



FIELD TRIPS (continued)

FRI.-SUN. 21-23 MAY. CHIRICAHUA MOUNTAINS, ARIZONA. Already, cabin space is scarce to nonexistent for this weekend. If you plan to stay indoors rather than camp out, you should make arrangements IMMEDIATELY: Cave Creek Ranch (602/558-2334), Cathedral Rock Lodge (602/558-2369), Southwestern Research Station (602/558-2396). Full details on this trip next month. #

MAY DAY BIRDATHON

Please study the pink Birdathon flier for details. If you have any questions, please contact Jane Fowler (772-0296), the chairperson for this most exciting and worthwhile event. Remember, YOU could win a space on Roger Tory Peterson's birding party on the Texas coast! /Art Arteaga/ #

MEMORIAL PARK MIDWEEK MAY

MINI-OUTING AGAIN

WEDNESDAY 5 MAY, MEMORIAL PARK. This long established, mid-city park is a birding treasure our members have used and appreciated for years. In the past we have had midweek outings lasting only a few hours during the spring migration. It is astonishing the number of birds that can be seen. Details for this midweek outing are being worked out. Please read the May newsletter. #

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

OUR CLEAN AIR ACT COORDINATOR URGES PROMPT ACTION

As the Congressional spring recess (April 2-19) ends, action in the House is rising to a climax over two bills to amend the Clean Air Act (CAA). One bill, HR 5252 (Dingell-Luken), severely weakens the CAA as it now stands. The other bill, HR 5555 (Waxman), would maintain a strong CAA, and

CLEAN AIR ACT (continued)

also streamline some aspects of it. Unfortunately, the former is receiving more support than the latter. This is strange, considering that up to 86% of the American public opposes a weak CAA.

In the Senate, one bill, S 1706, calls for a strong program to control acid rain, and other bills are being marked up in committees.

If you favor maintaining a strong CAA, please do the following:

1. Write or call Representative White (800-424-9109 in Washington, 543-7650 in El Paso; Sen. Tower (202-224-2934); Sen. Bentzen (202-224-5922) and tell the staff person who answers the phone that you strongly support the Waxman bill. (You are PAYING THAT PERSON'S SALARY, you know.)
2. Write the editors of the local newspapers telling your support of the Waxman bill.
3. Ask your friends and relatives to do the same.

We need to act soon, and the sooner the better, if we expect our lawmakers to represent us. You might consider the following facts: 1. The President's National Commission on Air Quality (NCAQ) concluded that the effect of CAA on inflation had been insignificant; 2. The President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) found that all federal regulations add less than .3% (0.003) to the rate of inflation. 3. The CEQ also found that pollution control caused a net increase of 400,000 jobs since the beginning of CAA. 4. The average American industry spends only 2.38% of its total investments for pollution control, according to the NCAQ. /Joe Lykins/

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## ARK A SUCCESS

The Audubon Ark has sailed over the horizon, leaving in its wake a heightened awareness of the values of endangered species. All who came aboard during its late Feb. stay at Bassett Center went away impressed. All who helped with the exhibit deserve a round of applause. So take a bow, Art Arteaga, Ginny and Tom Baker, Bertha and Berttye Barnhart, Helen Barto, Bob Bleicher, Jeannette Cole, Jean and John Coyle, Joyce Davis, Sarah Jane Dodds, Mary Pat Dwyer, Marcia Foster, Jane Fowler Elza and Ed Gilboe, Liz Guinn, Peggy Heisel, Bob Johnson, Kris Kohlkoff, Phoebe and Joe Lykins, Jo Nagel, Peter Riede, Sid Shepperd, Dave Steinbach, Lucile Swick, LaVon and Al Warfield, and Stella Weinstein.

Special thanks go to Art Arteaga, Bob Johnson and Jo Ellen Warolin for creating our chapter display that accompanied the Ark; to Sarah Jane and Ed Dodds for housing Tom Troy, the Ark's one-man dynamo; to John Caraway and Aristos Thomaidis for bringing John's Harris' Hawks to the exhibit; to Jan Theus of KDBC-TV, Ted Bender of KTSM and Charles Edgren of the EL PASO HERALD-POST for publicizing the Ark; to the Celanese Corporation for making it all possible; and, last but not least, to Tom Troy for his tireless work on behalf of Audubon and endangered species. #

## FEATHER LAKE REPORT

The Young Adult Conservation Corps project at our sanctuary ended 31 Mar. The picnic shelter, the bulletin board and the nature trails have been completed. Most of the irrigation system is complete. Over 100 trees and several hundred native shrubs were planted.

Several other projects, such as the toilet, storage building and fences, remain to be completed. Also, watering and maintenance of this area will be a continuing requirement. This work must be accomplished by volunteers. If you can help out on a Sat. or other time, please call Joe Guinn (566-8438). /Joe Guinn/ #

## CALLING ALL KEYS

We need to get a handle on who has keys to Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary. If you have one, let Jeannette Cole (565-1957) or Ginny Baker (562-9461) know. #

## FIELD TRIPS FOLLOW-UP

We've had 4 outings since the last report. The 20 Feb. beginners-only trip lured 15 participants to Hueco Tanks. They found 28 bird species, including 1 of the resident Prairie Falcons. The next 2 trips--27 Feb. to Apache Spring and 6 Mar. to Arroyo Park and the Rio Grande downtown--turned up nothing startling. It was encouraging to find Curve-billed Thrashers on both, though, given their recent scarcity in our area. The statistics for Apache Spring: 20 participants, 18 species. For Arroyo Park/Rio Grande: 9 and 27.

What could top a Golden Eagle along Hwy 54; 5 Common Goldeneye at Bottomless Lakes St. Park; American Bittern, White-faced Ibis, avocets and stilts at Bitter Lake NWR; a Virginia Rail, Vermilion Flycatchers and a Brown Thrasher at Rattlesnake Springs; or Long-eared Owls at another Bottomless Lake? That's easy. Try at least 20 Lesser Prairie Chickens all booming and strutting, all puffing and posturing as the sun came up over the sandhills of s.e. New Mexico. Fourteen Auduboners made the trip to enjoy this spectacle on 20-21 Mar. The chickens were among 70 species seen. /John Sproul/ #

## RUMMAGE ON THE HORIZON

Look ahead to Sep. and tell me what you see. You're right, another rummage sale! Take a peek in those closets you haven't opened in a decade. No doubt they are full of things you no longer need. We can sell that junk. Call Jane Fowler (772-0296), Joe Guinn (566-8438) or Peggy Heisel (821-0989), and they'll arrange to have someone collect your discards. Remember, rummage donations to Audubon are tax deductible. #



## NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MONTH

Once again, the City of El Paso, with a gentle nudge from our chapter, has designated April as National Audubon Society Month. Jane Fowler and Jo Nagel received the proclamation at the City Council's 30 March meeting. How can you celebrate? See the Volunteers' Corner. #

## SWARM MEETING IN EL PASO

The Southwestern and Rocky Mountain Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (SWARM for short) will hold its 58th annual meeting 28 April - 1 May at UTEP. The program includes many papers that Audubon members should find of interest. Keynote Speaker for the Zoological Sciences Section (Fri. 30 April at 9 AM) will be Dr. Robert Ohmart of Arizona St. Univ., who will discuss "Riparian Management and Preservation of Riparian Systems in the Desert Southwest." Call John Sproul (545-5157) for more information. #

## PUT THAT ON YOUR LIFE LIST!

Fran Sweeney recently contributed a unique specimen to our study-skin collection. The tag reads: "THE FLATULATED LETTERBIRD (Tin canis beveragia). Similar species: The Red Coca-cola, Aluminas coeri. Habitat: roadside parks, parking lots, rare in garbage cans. Where found: common and widespread. Voice: plaintive repeated wail, oft repeated--'Recycle, recycle, recycle, recycle.' Field marks: flightless, variable plumage. Status: Unprotected, no danger of ever becoming an endangered species." The specimen will be on display at our next general meeting. Thank you, Fran. #

## BIRDER'S GUIDES NOW AVAILABLE

Now you can purchase Jim Lane's birder's guides to s.e. Arizona, the Rio Grande Valley, or the Texas Gulf Coast right here in El Paso. They're on sale at our general meetings. #

## THE EP/TPAS GALLERY OF STARS

Thank you:\* Ginny Baker and Jeannette Cole for preparing the Audubon exhibit to be on

display throughout April at the Cielo Vista Branch of the public library.

\* Jo Nagel, Jane Fowler and Art Arteaga for establishing a hummingbird-feeding program at the Four Seasons Nursing Center. #

## VOLUNTEERS' CORNER

Our traveling display that promotes Feather L. and other chapter activities will be at Cielo Vista Mall 15, 16 and 17 April. Call Bob Johnson (751-0125) if you can help on any of these days.

The Education Committee wants to increase our chapter's work with young children. If a volunteer will step forward to do the writing/drawing/creating, we'll start printing a section for children in the newsletter. Call Ginny Baker (562-9461) if interested.

We now have increased maintenance responsibilities at Feather Lake (see p5) Call Joe Guinn (566-8438) to see where you can contribute.

A large number of field trips will make it harder to find volunteers to help greet visitors at Feather Lake on Saturdays during May. If you will be in town and want to help, call Jeannette Cole (565-1957) or Ginny Baker(562-9461).

## OBSERVATIONS (Feb. 16- Mar. 15)

Birding slowed down a little this month; however, as a whole, it remained very good. Several rare species were seen, a few migrants made early appearances, and two first records for El Paso were recorded.

## LOONS - FALCONS

On 2-23, two Snowy Egrets were present at Tornille Lakes (BZ,JD). Whistling Swans remained at Tornille with 3 birds on 2-16 (JF,EN,JN) and on 2-23 (BZ,JD). Two Snow Geese, hard to find anywhere away from Sunland Park, were seen at Ft. Hancock on 2-23 (BZ,JD). The first Blue winged Teal of the spring was at Feather Lake on 2-23 (BZ,JD). The only report (continued on next page)



## OBSERVATIONS (continued)

of Common Goldeneye for the entire winter came from the Fort Bliss Sewage Ponds with 7 birds present on 3-4 (BJ). Common Mergansers continued to be reported frequently (BB,BZ,KZ), although in greatly reduced numbers in comparison to last month. A Harlan's race of the Red-tailed Hawk was at Rio Bosque on 3-13 (JS). A solitary Bay-winged Hawk was sighted in a small salt cedar bosque near McNary on 2-23 (BZ,JD), and again on 3-14 (JS,JC,JF). A lone Golden Eagle seen near Hueco Tanks on 2-28 (JS,TT) represented the only report for this species for the month. A pair of Prairie Falcons were sighted on numerous occasions at Hueco Tanks throughout the month (BZ,JD,JS,TT,JN,et al).

## QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

Only one Sora and no Virginia Rails could be found on 2-23 (BZ,JD) in a drainage near Tornillo where both species were found consistently last month. Two very early Avocets were at Tornillo on 2-23 (BZ,JD) and again on 2-25 (BZ,KZ). About a dozen Western Sandpipers were seen in the Upper Valley on 3-13 (EK). Thirty Greater Yellowlegs were also noted at Tornillo on 2-23 (BZ,JD). Three Long-eared Owls were seen off-and-on during the reporting period in an eastside backyard (JL,PL). A single Short-eared Owl was sighted in NE El Paso on 2-15 (SB).

## FLYCATCHERS - STARLING

Most of the swallow species made their first spring appearances: 5 Rough-winged were at Tornillo on 2-25 (BZ,KZ), 15 Tree at the sewage ponds on 3-5 (JD,BZ), and 15 Violet-green in the Upper Valley on 3-13 (EK). Scrub Jays continued to be numerous and widespread throughout the reporting period (JD,EK,JS,TT,BZ,JD). A lone Steller's Jay was seen again this month in a westside backyard (MD). An amazing count of 800 Common Crows near Secorro on 2-14 (BZ,JD) was inadvertently omitted from the last report. Two were seen in the same area on 2-23 (BZ,JD) and a flock of 40 flew over Diez Lages on 2-28 (BZ,JD). A lone House Wren was heard at Randel's Pool on 2-28 (BZ,JD). A Brown Thrasher the first reported since Oct., came down to drink at the waters edge in a drainage near Tornillo on 2-23 (BZ,

JD). A Sage Thrasher, the first all year, showed up in a NE El Paso backyard on 3-12 (JD). A Townsend's Solitaire roosted in a small evergreen tree on the west side repeatedly from 2-23 through 3-11 (BZ). Another solitaire was present at Hueco Tanks on 2-23 (BZ,JD). Hermit Thrushes were reported twice with one at Randel's Pool on 2-21 (JD) and one at Rio Bosque on 3-7 (JD,JS). Western Bluebirds remained in reduced numbers throughout the area all month (BZ,KZ,JD,JS). A single Black-tailed Gnatcatcher was heard near Randel's Pool on 2-21 (JD).

## VIREOS - SPARROWS

A lone male Common Yellowthroat in a drainage near Tornillo on 2-23 (JD) was the only one reported. Fifteen Eastern Meadowlarks were seen and heard at Hueco Tanks on 2-23 (BZ,JD). Over 1000 Yellow-headed Blackbirds flew overhead at Feather Lake on 2-27 (BZ,TB,GB).

One oriole sp. was sighted in NE El Paso on 2-16 (JD). A flock of 40 American Goldfinches fed in a large cottonwood along Hwy. 20 near Tornillo on 2-23 (BZ,JD), while 6 were seen at Randel's Pool on 2-28 (BZ,JD). The most exciting birds for the month all came from the sparrow family. On 2-28, a Baird's Sparrow was observed for over a minute as it perched atop a small bush less than 10 feet away in a grassy field near Randel's Pool on 2-28 (BZ,JD). This is the first verified record for this species in the El Paso area. One Slate-colored race of the Dark-eyed Junco at Hueco Tanks on 2-9 (BZ) was also inadvertently omitted from last month's report. A solitary Cassin's Sparrow was sighted at Hueco Tanks on 2-23 (BZ). Rivaling the Baird's Sparrow for bird of the month was a male Harris' Sparrow in the bosque west of Tornillo Lakes on 2-23 (BZ). Again, this was a first record for the El Paso area. Another possible Harris' Sparrow was seen in an eastside backyard on 3-10 and 3-11 (SS). A White-throated Sparrow was heard singing at Tornillo on 2-23 (BZ). Swamp Sparrows were reported twice—one at Diez Lages on 2-21 (JD) and another in the same

(cont. on page 8)



OBSERVATIONS (continued)

area on 2-28 (BZ,JD). A Sage Sparrow near Diez Lagos on 3-13 was also noteworthy (EK)

CONTRIBUTORS- Tom Baker, Ginny Baker, Steve Bilbo, Bob Bleicher, John Caraway, Joyce Davis, Tony DeBona, Sarah Dodds, Mary Ann Dodson, Jeff Donaldson, Jane Fowler, Bob Johnson, Earle King, Joe Lykins, Phoebe Lykins, Evan Nagel, Jo Nagel, Sid Sheppard, John Sproul, Tom Troy, Barry Zimmer, Kevin Zimmer.

Note: If you think you have a rare or unusual bird, please call 545-5184 immediately. Often times with rare birds, time is of the essence in getting someone else to verify it. Feel free to call anytime between 8 AM-11 PM. Please continue calling until you get an answer. /Barry Zimmer/ #

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, PO Box 9655, El Paso, Tx 79986.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

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Membership Category desired:

- Individual/\$25  Family/\$32
- Sr. Citizen, Individual/\$17
- Sr. Citizen, Family/\$19
- Student/\$15

This is a  new  renewal membership.

Please make your checks payable to National Audubon Society.

Mail to Bob Johnson, 5109 Paris, El Paso, TX 79924.

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Apr 82

National Audubon Society's  
SECOND ANNUAL BIRDATHON

Last year the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society was very successful in raising funds during National Audubon's First Annual Birdathon. With your help, we hope to do even better this year. Would you like to enjoy a day of birdwatching and, at the same time, raise money for research on endangered species, for maintaining wildlife sanctuaries and for our chapter's Raptor Protection Plan? How would you like a chance to win a framed print of a Bald Eagle?

Here's What To Do

Sponsor yourself or any bird watcher for any amount per species seen during our Second Annual Birdathon on May 1, 1982. For example, you pledge 10¢ per species and the person you sponsor sees 50 species: your donation would be \$5 to National Audubon, tax deductible. Sponsors may set a maximum limit on money pledged, if they wish.

OR be a counter yourself and get as many sponsors as you can. You don't have to be an El Paso resident or El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon member to be a counter or a sponsor. Participate from anywhere in the U.S.

The following evening (May 2), we will meet at 5PM at the Hillmark Apartments (5000 Alabama) in the Fiesta Room for a pot-luck dinner and drawing. The drawing will be at 6:30PM. Call in your results by 3PM Sun. if you can't attend (545-5157, 772-0296, 566-8438).

During the following week, collect donations from your sponsors and send them to Jane Fowler, 8212 Parkland Dr., El Paso, Tx 79925, along with a list of the birds seen. **BE PROMPT!** This must be in to National Audubon by June 30.

Make checks payable to National Audubon Society.

PURPOSE OF THE BIRDATHON

Indiscriminate and illegal killing of raptors (hawks, owls, eagles, falcons and the like) still persists in some parts of the country. Sadly, the El Paso area is one of them. Why does it happen? Largely due to ignorance. Many people simply do not realize the beneficial role raptors play in our environment. To make people aware of the value of raptors and to stop the unnecessary killing, El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon is developing a Raptor Protection Plan for the El Paso area. One-third of your Birdathon

-----  
Mail in this form by April 26 and have a chance to win a framed print of a Bald Eagle by artist Sherry Langford, to be given away the night of May 2 at our pot-luck dinner.

\_\_\_\_ Yes, I will sponsor\* . . . . . at \$. . . . . per species,  
with a maximum amount of \$. . . . .

\_\_\_\_ Yes, I will be a counter. Please send the forms I need.

Signature . . . . . Name (please print) . . . . .

Address . . . . . Phone . . . . .

\*Who to sponsor. Sponsor yourself, the counter of your choice, or one of our local bird watchers, who should see 50-100 species: Barry Zimmer, John Sproul, Jo Nagel, Bob Johnson, Peggy Heisel, Joe Guinn, Jane Fowler, Jeff Donaldson.

(Postmarks after April 26 are not eligible for the drawing.)

Clip and send this form to Jane Fowler, 8212 Parkland Dr., El Paso, Tx 79925



contribution goes to this project, to prepare pamphlets, signs, slide presentations and other educational material in support of raptor protection. The remaining two-thirds is divided equally between Audubon's National and Southwest Regional offices to support the Society's successful programs in wildlife research and environmental education, its nationwide network of wildlife sanctuaries, its award-winning publications and its vigorous, reasoned advocacy of environmental protection. You'll help Audubon remain one of this country's most respected voices for conservation.

#### ALL ABOUT PRIZES

Locally, our Grand Prize, to be given away Sun. night--May 2--at our pot-luck dinner, is a beautiful, framed print of a Bald Eagle. After seeing the Audubon Ark, National Audubon's traveling endangered-species exhibit, Arkansan Sherry Langford created this lovely pen-and-ink drawing and donated prints to the Society. It was her personal contribution to efforts on behalf of endangered species. All counters and sponsors who mail their forms in by Apr 26 are eligible for a drawing for this unique work of art. Also, the person who:

- \* raises the most money receives a \$20 gift certificate for dinner at Carlos & Mickey's Restaurant.
- \* gets the greatest number of sponsors receives a \$20 gift certificate from AmCamp, Barley Square.
- \* sees the greatest number of species receives a \$20 gift certificate from B Dalton Bookseller.

There will also be a prize for the new birder with the greatest number of species. Each participant will receive a special '82 Birdathon patch.

Nationally, the grand prize, for the individual who raises the most money, is a trip for two on a National Audubon Tour--within the lower 48--including travel costs from the winner's home. The chapter which raises the most money and the chapter which raises the most money per enrolled member each receive a program featuring a top National Audubon Society officer. The person who obtains the most sponsors will win a signed, limited edition print of Coheleach's "Common Egret".

In each of the Audubon Society's ten regions, the participant who raises the most money receives a special edition of Audubon's "Baby Elephant Folio". The top chapter in each region will receive a special trophy of a puffin decoy. The person seeing the most species and the person collecting the most sponsors each will receive an autographed copy of Peterson's "Field Guide to the Birds".