

T H E R O A D R U N N E R

NEWSLETTER OF
EL PASO AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Geth Osborn White, Editor

Saturday,
May 8
BIG DAY COUNT

Dawn to dark, name your own time, but birding is best early before the sun gets too hot. Traditionally, Audubon Societies have a Big Day count at the peak of migration following the Christmas census circle. In El Paso this circle centers at the top of the Franklins, includes Ascarate Lake on the south, proceeding north along the Rio Grande, including Cement Lake and the Sunland Park Lake, on to Canutillo up to Tom Mays Park, mountain canyons east and west of the Franklins, open desert, parks and wooded city streets and lawns, cemeteries. Irrigation ditches have their own little biomes and cattle feed lots are a special attraction for blackbirds and sparrows.

If you possibly can, join a party and list the species and numbers of species in one of these count areas, coming in at the end of the day to the Ed Whites, 3123 Federal, to turn in the records and help collate the data. If you need a checklist, call 565-1024.

If you can do no more than observe the birds in your neighborhood during the day, please make a record and telephone or bring the list. If we can have a spring Big Day count every year for a number of years, we will get some real data on bird population and movements in El Paso environs.

Saturday, May 15
Sunday, May 16
SACRAMENTO MOUNTAINS

An overnight campout trip to the Sacramentos near Sunspot at the cottage of the Ed Whites.

Our cottage is located in a high mountain meadow and can sleep a limited number of people and has the amenities of indoor plumbing and a wood stove. Call us if you want to make the trip.

Sunday morning if you are driving from El Paso meet at the roadside park at Valmont near Alomorgordo at 8:30 to go back into Dog Canyon to explore for birds. Bring a picnic lunch. It is about a mile's walk in the lower canyon, and 3 or 4 miles up the rock face to the upper canyon for those who would like to make the climb.

Dog Canyon is a stronghold of the Apaches and a storied place. Quoting from "Tales of the Tularosa" "The wall is hung with cool green moss; underfoot a trickle of mountain water ripples from one sink hole to another, nourishing the overhanging cottonwoods."

Monday, May 17,
7:30 P. M.
REGULAR MEETING
Centennial Museum, UTEP

This is a participation meeting by members. If you have color slides of birds and want to be a part of the program, please bring them. David Johnson, member of Bill Hunt's church, has some beautiful slides of hummingbirds. He will be a guest speaker and will give us tips on photography of birds. Madeline Linderg has a collection of color slides taken with her long lens; Grace Thompson is a professional photographer specializing in close-ups of "critters." Geth White has a small collection and Steve West has good pictures. These will be birds of the region and we can learn from the slides as well as by studying the bird in the Museum collection on the second floor of the Centennial Museum.

Saturday, May 22
6:45 A. M.

Meet at Memorial Park near tennis courts for trip to Horizon Lake, about a half-hour's drive east. The Shelfers have seen a good many birds here.

BIRD RECORDS

- April 3 - Black-chinned hummingbird in yard, 3123 Federal, Geth White.
April 9 - Black-tailed gnatcatcher, white-throated swift, myrtle warbler, Audubon's warbler, rock wren, in canyon on Rim Road by Bill Hunt and the Ed Whites.
April 9 - Common gallinule, phyruloxia, Brewer's sparrow, in Upper Valley irrigation ditch by Mrs. Jack Ponder, Bill Hunt and the Whites.
April 10 - 1 long-eared owl still present in the bosuqe on the Rio Grande in the Uppver Valley, 1 great horned owl, by field trippers.
May 1 4 water pipits, clay-colored sparrows in numbers, Brewer's sparrows in numbers, chipping sparrows, 9 willets, 2 Baird's sandpipers along the Rio Grande for the shorebirds, irrigated orchard and ditches for the others by Bob and Helen Barto and Geth White.
May 2 Black-chinned hummingbird trying to steal raveling ffrom twine in house finch's nest on porch of the Ed Whites. Reading in Bent's Life Histories found they often use strange materials in building nests other than plant down, a nest reported containing tiny bits of eucalyptus bark, a scrap of dry leaf, several long human hairs, a small feather of a linnet.
May 2 - Green-tailed towhees - a first for her yard - remaining for 2 weeks in Upper Valley, Mrs. J. K. Rose.
May 2 - 2 Phainopeplas and vesper sparrows, near Durling farm in Upper Valley, by Ruby Allen and Mrs. J. K. Rose.
May 2 & 3 6 Wilson's Warblers, 1 hermit warbler, 4 orange-crowned warblers, 1 Nashville warbler, 1 black-throated grey warbler, 2 Audubon's warblers feeding in blossoming mesquites in Memorial Park by Geth and Ed White. Chipping sparrows moving through, grey-headed juncos present along with cedar waxwings.

WE'RE ON TV. KROD - Channel 4 - is running a series of public service announcements during the day (unscheduled) using Grace Thompson's extraordinary color shots of animals and birds and our 40 second captions giving the message for conservation and en-

vironment, Audubon activities. If you see one and care to comment to the station, it would be good public relations.

REPORT ON BIG BEND TRIP From El Paso the Shelfers, the Ray Paynes with their children, Lisabeth Lovelace and the Ed Whites shared the birds of the Big Bend with 40-50 birders from West Texas, Dallas and Massachusetts. Lesser nighthawks crossed the road on the way down to the Rio Grande Village just before dawn. The wooded park area seemed to be filled with red birds, summer tanagers ringing out glad tidings, vermillion flycatchers sallying out in small ellipses from low perches in the acacias. The much-wanted Black-vented oriole was not to be seen, but the crowd watched a tiny hummingbird hollow out a spider-webbed cup of a nest with her body, working like a potter with clay, moulding with her body and shaping the sides of her nest with her tiny bill, working with instinctive craftsmanship.

Ro Wauer, Chief Naturalist, who led the trip, took us to a small lagoon heavily margined with cattails where the American bittern remained motionless, bill pointed to the sky, while the photographers clicked shutters a few feet away. Highlight of the afternoon hike down to the window occurred at the end of the trip (and the day): a pair of elf owls nesting in a hole high in a tree chose to fly out to a telephone wire to mate in view of the watchers.

The 7 mile hike up to and back from Laguna Meadow yielded the Solima warbler, rare bird of the Park. A beautiful specimen in full plumage flitted about for all to see. Hutton's vireo was also a first for many people who hiked to the meadow.

Ro Wauer is the kind of naturalist who not only knows which area a bird is to be found he knows which tree. His book, Birds of the Big Bend will be published this year and will be an aid to ornithologists, amateur and professional, who visit this spectacular land of high mountains and vast canyons.

TEXAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY meeting at Texhoma was one of the best ever with over 200 people in attendance. Setting was beautiful Tanglewood Club overlooking the lake with bird trips scheduled in nearby woods and at Hagerman Refuge. Birds were not abundant, even the shorebirds being present in small numbers, though a respectable aggregate count over 150 species was tallied.

Chandler Robbins presented charts and graphs which represented with is done with birds counts made by groups like ourselves over the country, with the help of computer science. His second slide show of pelagic birds in island refuges in the South Pacific gave an opportunity to observe nesting behaviour of birds rarely seen on land.

Peter Alden's color slides made one long for Mexico's tropical woods and exotic species.

Business meetings acquainted the group with progress or lack of it on legislation for environment in Texas.

Dr. John Baker, of Dallas, showed a slide program and expressed his concern over little known areas in Guadalupe National Park, particularly a virgin stand of Ponderosa Pine in "the Bowl." Newly-elected President George Newman of Abilene, is working on a study of the birds of the Bowl.

Membership in the TOS costs \$5 per year and you get a lot for your money in valuable information about birds and bird clubs around the state, scientific papers and treatises, spring and fall field trips, a monthly newsletter, and hosts of congenial friends. Send checks to Mrs. I. D. Acord, Treasurer, 1911 Cherry Street, Amarillo, Texas 79106.

CONSERVATION: LIFE DAY AT AUSTIN. Environment is at crisis in Texas. The Legislature has not passed a single major environmental bill in either House. Only 4 bills have gotten out of sub-committee. Some of the organizations (Sierra Club, League of Women Voters, etc.) have decided that action most likely to break the stalemate is a convergence upon Austin to influence legislation, not merely to study it.

LIFE DAY SCHEDULE

Assemblies at the Downtowner Motel, Austin Texas.

9:30 a. m. Assemble and arrange legislative assignments

10:00 a. m. Review of legislative status

10:30 a. m. Visit legislators in lobby

12:30 p. m. Lunch with Legislators (invite yours to lunch)

1:30 p. m. Visit Legislators in offices or observe committee hearings

2:30 p. m. Governor, Lt. Governor, Speaker, Land Commissioner

3:30 p. m. Pass Resolutions (individual participants only)

4:30 p. m. Adjourn

Information evaluations at Scholz's afterward.

LIFE DAY ON MAY 19th IN AUSTIN should be an interesting experience for anyone concerned with his local environmental situation and an opportunity to see his elected officials at work, perhaps even to influence them.

El Paso Audubon Society invites your membership. Dues are \$5. per year for a couple or individual and checks payable to El Paso Audubon Society should be mailed to

Mrs. James Lindberg, Treasurer

9816 Bomarc

El Paso, Texas 79924

President: Mrs. Edmund White

Vice-president: Bill Hunt

Treasurer: Mrs. James Lindberg

Historian: Mrs. J. Owen Allen

Field Trips: Edmund White

Name

Address

City

Zip

Membership includes the newsletter which may be subscribed to separately for \$2. per year for those who wish to receive the newsletter without joining the society.

EL PASO GOLF AND COUNTRY SOCIETY
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EL PASO, TEXAS 79980

EL PASO, TX
PM
6 MAY 24
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