

the ROADRUNNER



Volume 17 (8)

EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

October 1987

GENERAL MEETING

MON., OCT. 19, 7:30 PM in the Garden Center, 3105 Grant in Memorial Park. Jeanne French and Nan Johnson, the chapter's first scholarship recipients, will share some of their experiences and slides from their adventures at the Audubon Camp in Wyoming. Jeanne participated in the 2-week session on field ecology, while Nan was involved with a 12-day wilderness research backpack trip. They'll have much to tell us, and certainly you'll have questions to ask. Mark this a "Must" on your calendar now.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON., OCT. 12, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet at the home of Bart Rumaker, 4847 B Excalibur Dr. (544-6432). All members are welcome.

FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

GUADALUPE MTS.

SAT.-SUN., OCT. 17-18. Meet at 7:30 AM in the parking lot of Avila's, 10600 Montana, or the entrance to Pine Springs camping area at 10 AM. After securing campsites, we will hike McKittrick. Those not staying overnight are also welcome. Sunday's agenda includes Frijole Site and Smith Springs. If you are going, please call. Leader: Tom Baker (877-3365 h, 566-9461 w).

LA CUEVA

SAT., NOV. 7. Hike in the Organ Mts. east of Las Cruces. Meet at I-10 and Transmountain Rd. at 7:30 AM.

YOUR HELP NEEDED

Dan Robertson, local falconer and NAS member, had a female Peregrine Falcon escape recently on the far east side of El Paso. She has a gold-colored federal band on one leg (# RW080845) and leather bracelets on both legs. If you should see her or hear of a sighting, please call Dan (593-8685) at any time.

PUBLICATIONS UPDATE

The Publications Committee has recently gained 2 new members; Mary Bradley is the new publisher of THE ROADRUNNER, and she will be ably assisted each month by Jean Hagesfeld. We are fortunate to have these ladies take over the important task of printing the newsletter. Our chapter saves hundreds of dollars a year in printing charges by doing the work "in-house". Also, Mary has generously purchased and donated a table for the mimeograph machine. We certainly appreciate this gift to the chapter, and our thanks go to Mary and Jean for accepting this challenging chapter position.

RUMMAGE SALE IN NOVEMBER

Save those items for the chapter rummage sale scheduled for Nov. 22. Ways and Means Chair, Larry Jordan (833-5969) or Bob Johnson (751-0125, 757-1876) would be happy to hear from you if you have articles to donate.

TEXAS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

The Texas Breeding Bird Atlas Project (RR, Oct 1986) now has one field season under its belt. Much has been accomplished, but the project needs our help if it is to realize its full potential.

What is the Texas Breeding Bird Atlas Project? It's a 5-year effort to document current breeding-bird distributions in our state, based on comprehensive field coverage of the whole state. You're familiar with the 7.5-minute topographic maps published by the U. S. Geological Survey? The state can be divided into a mere 4225 such areas, or quadrangles. The project aims to have volunteer field observers cover at least 25% of these quadrangles, spaced evenly across the state, and document which bird species breed within them. The data gathered during the 5-year period will provide the basis for an atlas, a series of maps showing the current breeding distribution for each species nesting in Texas.

The project has the potential to advance significantly our understanding of Texas birdlife. It will produce an invaluable baseline against which to measure future changes. The atlas can be a useful tool in environmentally sensitive land-use planning. It can be a stimulus for identification and protection of sensitive habitats.

It won't happen, though, without broad public support. You can help in 2 ways:

1) Help with the field work. There is a lot of land in far West Texas and, so far, not enough field observers to cover it. Want to volunteer to cover one or more quadrangles? Contact Bonnie McKinney, Trans-Pecos regional coordinator for the project (Black Gap WMA, Big Bend Rt. Box 433, Alpine, TX 79830, ph. 915-376-2216). Even if you can't take responsibility for a specific area, you can still help immensely just by recording nests as you find them and sending Bonnie your data.

2) Make a tax-deductible contribution. The coordinating of the field work, the compiling of the data, the publishing of the atlas -- it all takes money. And right now the project is in serious financial difficulty. It faces the prospect of shutting down temporarily unless it can get increased support. Our chapter recently made a \$100 contribution to this worthwhile project. You can contribute also, using the pledge form below. /John Sproul/

TEXAS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Yes, I would like to contribute by pledging a total of \$ _____ for the Texas Breeding Bird Atlas Project by December 31, 1989, payable at \$ _____ per year for 1, 2, or 3 years. (please circle one)

My Commitment _____

My Company's Matching Gift _____

My Company's Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please remind me annually semi-annually.

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____. **PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION WITH A MEMO ON THE CHECK: TEXAS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT.** (All contributions are tax deductible.) Return to: Dr. Keith A. Arnold, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-2258.

FEATHER LAKE

What would you call people who get up early on a holiday (Labor Day), put on their old clothes and drive out to Feather Lake to labor? You're not sure? Well--- that's precisely what Tom & Ginny Baker, Helen Barto, Joyce Davis, Joe Guinn, Anne Hussmann, Debbie Johnson, Bob Johnson, Jo Nagel, Betty Pagel, Bart Rumaker, Ann Schultis, John Sproul and Nancy Wilson did on Sept 7. I would call them S U P E R ! You would too? That's what I thought you'd say.

Our next work day is scheduled for Oct 10, 8 AM, or when you can get there. We certainly need your help. There's lots of cleaning up to do to make the sanctuary presentable for our winter visitors--- people and water birds. Spend the morning or stay as long as you can. Bring work gloves and any sturdy cardboard cartons you can spare for the rubbish. Also, our wheelbarrows have "disappeared", so if you could bring one out for the day to move heavy objects, etc., it would be helpful.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

The school year has started, the first issue of the Audubon Adventures newspaper for kids is out, and the enthusiastic reviews are starting to come in. During 1987-88, our chapter is sponsoring 15 elementary-school classes in this youth-education program of the National Audubon Society, and the kids and their teachers are already telling us good things about it. New classroom sponsors since our last report are Neil Keith, Jo Nagel, Bart Rumaker and John Sproul. Thanks to all. And special thanks are due Peggy Riede for lining up all of the participating classes and doing an excellent job this year as our Audubon Adventures coordinator. Want to know more about the program? Please contact Peggy at 833-4881.

PAST FIELD TRIPS

On July 25, seven of us hiked the trail to West Cottonwood Spring. The birds were not numerous, but of the 14 species recorded, we were able to get a good look at both Black-chinned Sparrows and Ash-throated Flycatchers. Coming down the trail from the spring, we met park ranger Wesley Leonard, who showed us current improvements they are making at Tom May's picnic areas. /TB/

On Aug 22, seventeen "Lunatics" made the trek via Glenwood's Blue Front Cafe and fish hatchery for a wonderful experience. Mr. and Mrs. Randolph Jenks opened their home to all and shared their wildflower meadows and beaver ponds. They also helped the happy campers (Bob Johnson, Sharon and Jerry Martin, Bart Rumaker, Sid Shepperd, John Sproul and Ray Waite) arrange with the Forest Service for a lovely campsite. Pat Brasfield, Joyce Davis, Jane Fowler, Lonna Fullerton, Betty Pagle and Ann Schultis stayed at the civilized resort with their revered leaders, Nancy Wilson and Anne Hussmann. Jeanne French and George Spozarsky, already in Alpine visiting a friend, joined us at the campground Sat afternoon.

Birds seen on Sun (23) at the Centerfire Bog were Sora, Lewis' Woodpecker, Virginia Rail and many more. John Sproul saw two lifers on the trip-- a Common Black-Hawk and a bobcat! A jolly good time was had by all; several lifers, many good jokes, good companionship and super-delicious food prepared by Chef "Boy R" Fowler. Everyone returned safe, happy and fatter. Our thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Jenks for a memorable weekend./AH,NW/

Ed. note: I would like to thank Anne and Nancy for a great trip and also for towing my car for miles and miles after a mishap en route to Centerfire Bog. Their cool heads and steady nerves saved the day.

A.C.T. FALL MEETING DRAWS NEAR

Plans are firming up for the Fall 1987 Meeting of the Audubon Council of Texas (ACT), to be held in El Paso Nov 13-15. You won't want to miss it.

ACT delegates will hold their working sessions on Sat., Nov 14 at the Garden Center, 3105 Grant, in Memorial Park, beginning at 9 AM. The morning session will concentrate on the ramifications of National Audubon's recent reorganization of its field staff and on new approaches to funding Audubon activities in Texas. The afternoon session will include a workshop on promotion of the Texas Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund. Bruce Thompson, Nongame and Endangered Species Program Leader for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept., will be joining us from Austin for this workshop.

On Sat. evening, El Paso veterinarian Jim Koschmann will speak on the effort now underway to reintroduce the endangered Thick-billed Parrot to the Chiricahua Mts. of s.e. Arizona. Dr. Koschmann is actively involved in this project and gave an excellent presentation on it at our May general meeting. Join us for an equally enjoyable and informative slide-illustrated update.

A catered dinner at the Garden Center will precede Dr. Koschmann's presentation. Lunch on Sat. will also be at the Garden Center, with EP/TPAS members preparing the meal.

As the Schedule of Events shows, we'll offer 4 field trips during the weekend: • Memorial Park, • Feather Lake and the lower valley, • the Franklin Mts., and • Hueco Tanks. Join us for one or more of these outings. Details will be in next month's newsletter.

As noted last month, we'll need help in a number of areas to ensure the meeting is a success. If you can help with transportation to and from the airport, please contact Bob Johnson (751-0125 h, 757-1876 w). If you can provide lodging for out-of-town participants, call Jane

Fowler (598-2448). If you can help with food preparation, contact Anne Hussmann (584-4081).

You're invited to take part in any or all of the meeting activities. The Sat. evening program and all of the field trips are free. The dinner Sat. night is \$8; for a reservation, send your check, payable to "El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society", to Nancy Wilson, 123 Mahogany, El Paso, TX 79922. The registration fee for the full meeting is \$15, meals included. Contact John Sproul (545-5157), Anne Hussmann (584-4081) or Nancy Wilson (833-3907) for a registration form. /John Sproul/

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, 13 November

- 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. Dinner and get-together for Fri. arrivals
8:00 - 9:00 p.m. ACT Board meeting

Saturday, 14 November

- 7:30 - 9:00 a.m. Birding in Memorial Park
8:30 - 9:00 a.m. Registration (Garden Center)
9:00 - 9:15 a.m. Welcome
9:15 - 9:45 a.m. ACT business
9:45 - 10:30 a.m. Discussion - The National Audubon Society reorganization/funding Audubon in Texas
10:30 - 10:45 a.m. Break
10:45 - noon Discussion continues
noon - 1:00 p.m. Lunch (at Garden Center)
1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Workshop - Promoting the Texas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund
1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Field trip to Feather Lake and lower El Paso-Juarez Valley for those not attending afternoon meetings)
3:00 - 3:15 p.m. Break
3:15 - 5:15 p.m. ACT business, continue a.m. discussion
6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Dinner (at Garden Center)
7:30 - 7:45 p.m. Recognize dignitaries
7:45 - 9:00 p.m. Speaker: Dr. James R. Koschmann, "The Thick-billed Parrot Reintroduction Project"

Sunday, 15 November

- 7:00 - 11:00 a.m. Field trips:
1) Franklin Mountains
2) Hueco Tanks State Park

NAS SANCTUARY POSITION OPEN

The NAS has the following staff position open:

Naturalist/Manager position at NAS Sabal Palm Grove Sanctuary in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Full-time temporary position, Nov 1 through Apr 30. Must supply own housing. For more info, contact Jesse Grantham, NAS, 3765 S. Alameda, Rm. 303, Corpus Christi, TX 78411, 512/854-6070.

NONGAME LETTERS NEEDED

Your letter regarding use of the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. is needed now. The Fund was created in 1983 by legislation originating with the Audubon Council of Texas. Along with the legislation, the Council drafted a nongame wildlife plan for the Department. Among the proposals was nongame habitat acquisition with priority given to 1) critical habitat for endangered species, 2) tracts critical to completion of habitat units or corridors, and 3) areas with high value for nonconsumptive use of nongame.

The Fund which comes from the sale of nongame stamps and prints as well as direct donations now contains over \$300,000, however, revenue to the fund has lagged badly the last 2 years. For over a year, the NAS has been requesting an appropriate nongame tract be acquired to aid in marketing stamps and prints as well as for conservation purposes.

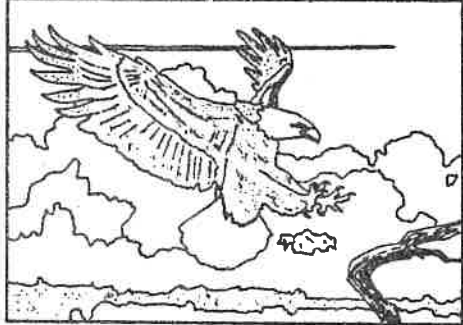
After 4 years of virtually no action in regard to use of the Fund, the Parks and Wildlife Dept. held a workshop on June 3, 1987 and shortly thereafter signed a contract for market research. Correspondence to Audubon from a ranking Dept. staff member indicates he envisions using existing funds for 1) exploring new funding sources, 2) identifying additional management possibilities for multiple species on existing Dept. Lands, and 3) "acquisition, should a critical habitat be identified" (emphasis added). Many critical habitats have been identified for years through the Texas Natural History Survey and more recently the Texas Natural Heritage Program.

If you believe that the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. should move forward now with acquisition of nongame habitat using a portion of the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund, please write:

Honorable Edwin L. Cox, Jr., Chairman
Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission
InterFirst One Bldg.
Dallas, TX 75202

Ask that high priority in use of the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund be placed on acquiring nongame habitat as intended by NAS members and others who helped to establish the Fund.

Thank you
NAS Southwest Regional Office

Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.

1987 Nongame Stamp \$5.00

YES, I want to help support the nongame wildlife and endangered species programs of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Please send me:

	Qty.	Each	Total
1987 Nongame Stamp		\$5	
1986 Nongame Stamp		\$5	
Amt. Enclosed			

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Please make checks payable to:
El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society
P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986

OBSERVATIONS

August 21 - September 20

FB - Fort Bliss Ponds (aka Northeast Oxidation Ponds)
FL - Feather Lake

LOONS - FALCONS

A Western Grebe was spotted at FB 9/6 (BJ). Pied-billed Grebes were seen at Owens 8/29 (JD) and at FL 8/27 (JF,JS). Great Blue Herons were found at FL 8/27 (JF,JS), FB 9/12 (BJ+), and at Lake Willows 9/20 (JD). Green-backed Herons were seen at FL 8/27, 9/7 (JF,JS). White-faced Ibis were spotted between Tornillo and McNary 8/23 (E&EG) and at FB 9/6, 9/12 (BJ+). Black-crowned Night-Herons were found at FL 9/7 (JF,JS+). A N. Pintail was seen at FB 9/6 (BJ) and at FL 9/7 (JF,JS). Blue-winged Teal were found at FB 9/7 (DT).

QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

Four Soras were seen at FB 9/6, and 3 were seen there 9/12 (BJ,RW). Am. Avocets were found at FB 9/6, 9/12 (BJ) and at FL 9/7 (JF,JS), FB 9/7 (DT). Black-necked Stilts were spotted at FB 9/7 (DT), 9/12 (BJ+). Lesser Yellowlegs were seen at FB 9/7 (DT) and 9/12 (BJ+). Red-necked Phalaropes were spotted at FB 9/7 (DT) and 9/12 (LJ,BJ). Forster's Terns were seen at FB 9/6 (BJ,RW). Two immature Black Terns were seen at Owens 8/29 (JD); others were seen at FB 9/12 (BJ+). Belted Kingfishers were spotted at Randel's Pool 8/29 (JD) and FB 9/6 (BJ). A Broad-tailed Hummingbird was still coming to a Mt. Park yard 9/17 (JB).

FLYCATCHERS - WEAVER FINCHES

Bank Swallows were found at FB 9/6 (BJ). A Virginia's Warbler was seen at FB 9/6 (BJ). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were found at Randel's Pool 8/29 (JD) and FL 9/7 (JF, JS). A Black-headed Grosbeak was found at FB 9/6 (BJ). Lesser Goldfinches were seen at a Mt. Park yard 9/8 (JB) and FB 9/12 (BJ+).

OBSERVERS: Janet Brockmoller, Joyce Davis, Jane Fowler, Elsa & Ed Gilboe, Bob Johnson, Larry Jordan, John Sproul, Dennis Taylor, Ray Waite. /Joyce Davis, Observations Editor/ (581-9470 h, 544-6772 w)

Note: Please call me if you see birds that are listed as uncommon or rare on the checklist.

THE ROADRUNNER

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Publications Chair - Sarah Jane Dodds
Editor - Jane Fowler
Publisher - Mary L. Bradley

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 ETPAS and mail to RR Editor at address above. Also, please send us any changes or corrections in your name or address.

Note to Editors: Articles appearing in THE ROADRUNNER may be reprinted without prior permission. Credit is appreciated.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
Membership Application

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of the local chapter. Send AUDUBON magazine and membership card to:

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....Zip.....

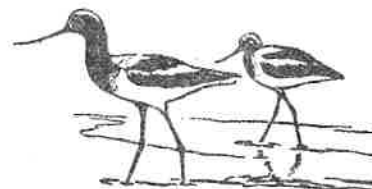
Membership category desired:

- Individual/\$30 Senior Citizen
Family/\$38 Individual/\$21
Student/\$18 Senior Citizen
Family/\$23

Please make checks payable to National Audubon Society. Mail to Neil Keith, 1525 Meadowview, El Paso, Tx 79925.

LOCAL CHAPTER

EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS
W10 7XCH



AUDUBON SANCTUARIES NEED HELP

Human disturbances are wreaking havoc with colonial nesting birds on Audubon island sanctuaries along the Texas Gulf Coast. Though some of the disruptions are unintentional and can be attributed to ignorance of the problems associated with flushing birds from their nests, more insidious activities are occurring. Vandals wantonly destroyed brown pelican nests on Sundown Island during July. Furthermore, egging and taking of young are strongly suspected as the causes for reproductive failure on several sanctuary islands.

Normally ten's of thousands of terns, herons, egrets, gulls and other colonial nesting birds successfully raise their young on approximately 20 sanctuary islands owned or leased by the NAS and the Houston Audubon Society. However, in 1987 few young will be produced due to the interference of people. Compounding the disturbance problems, Audubon wardens in the course of their duties to protect these sanctuaries are being accused of harassing fishermen, a violation of the Parks and Wildlife Code.

To address these problems, on Aug. 26, 1987 the Southwest Regional Office and the Houston Audubon Society petitioned the Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission for rules prohibiting unauthorized persons from approaching closer than 100 feet from the sanctuaries for the period of Feb. 15 thru Sept. 15 of each year. State Senator Carlos Truan and Vick Hines of his staff have strongly supported this effort. You can help too by writing a letter to the following to request swift action on the petition for regulations:

Mr. Charles D. Travis, Executive Director
Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.
4200 Smith School Rd.
Austin, TX 78744

Honorable William L. Graham
Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission
2326 Lakeview Dr.
Amarillo, TX 79109

Thank you
Murray T. Walton
Southwest Regional Office

EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Officers

President	Tom Baker	877-3365
Vice-President	Sid Shepperd	566-2162
Secretary	Ann Schultis	584-7382
Treasurer	Bart Rumaker	544-6432

Elected Directors

Anne Hussmann	584-4081
Larry Jordan	833-5969
Neil Keith	778-5937

Committees

Conservation	Gloria Woelfel	833-7523
Education	John Sproul	545-5157
Field Trips		
Hospitality	Anne Hussmann	584-4081
Membership	Neil Keith	778-5937
Programs		
Publications	Sarah Dodds	533-4150
Publicity		
Sanctuary	Sid Shepperd	566-2162
Ways & Means	Larry Jordan	833-5969

ACT Delegate	John Sproul	545-5157
Clean Air Coalition Representative		
	Joyce Davis	581-9470
Franklin Mts. Coalition Representative		
	Gloria Woelfel	833-7523

(reprinted from the Utah Audubon Society News)

"ASTROTURF" LAWNS

Twenty years ago the lawn care industry did not exist. People were content to let the kids dig dandelions by hand, let the white clover do the fertilizing (it adds nitrogen), and let the earthworms do the aerating and the dethatching.

Then herbicides and pesticides were made available to the public and the revolution started. All you had to do was spread on the chemicals and the weeds and insects disappeared. Never mind that it also killed the clover and earthworms, you ended up with a uniform green lawn, just like astroturf. And so the lawn care industry was born. Not only will they spread the chemicals, they will also dethatch, aerate and spray your

(...Lawns cont.)

yard with long lasting insecticides so you won't be bothered by any stray bugs that may wander your way. The problem is that the spray also kills honeybees, praying mantises, ladybugs and many birds. Birds are sensitive to many pesticides such as bebomyl, dursban, dacthal, diazinon, baygon and dylox. The lawn care industry has captured a market and is promoting one of the fastest growing industries around. Everyone has received the lawn care propaganda they send through the mail.

To counter the lawn care industry promotions, the other side of the coin is that an astroturf lawn is undesirable because:

1. All herbicides contain minute amounts of dioxins that do not degrade, and after repeated applications, they can build up to undesirable levels.
2. Many birds are killed, sickened or driven away as their food supply dwindles.
3. Many beneficial insects are killed, and as natural predators are removed from the scene, more pesticides are applied.
4. City dwellers are exposed to nearly five times as many pesticides as those who live in rural areas. Allergic reactions to these chemicals are increasing in numbers and intensity.
5. Lawn clippings are not recommended to be used as mulch on vegetable gardens if they have been treated with pesticides or herbicides.
6. It costs \$200 to \$300 a year for the average lawn to be sprayed. Is it really worth that much to have an "astroturf" lawn in which you can't even find a four leaf clover?



Woodsy Owl for
Clean Air

Give a hoot.
Don't pollute.

Forest Service, U.S.D.A.

The deadline for the November
ROADRUNNER is Oct. 20!

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