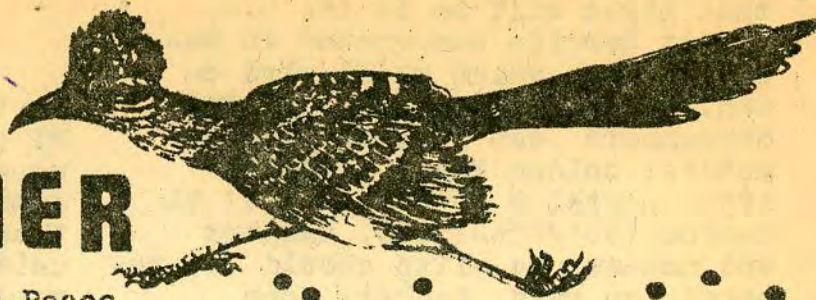


# the ROADRUNNER



Newsletter of El Paso/Trans-Pecos  
Audubon Society - P.O. Box 9655  
El Paso, Texas 79986

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June 1984

## GENERAL MEETING

MON., SEPT. 17, 1984, 7:30 PM Garden Center, 3105 Grant St. in Memorial Park. The next Roadrunner (in Sept.) will be in your mailbox to tell you all about it. Until then we have a full slate of field trips to tide you over. /Editors

## FIELD TRIPS

### RIO BOSQUE

SAT., JUNE 2. Meeting at Feather Lake at 7:30 AM, we will continue from there over to Rio Bosque. We hear the Painted Buntings are there as well as the Blue Grosbeaks and the Yellow-billed Cuckoos. Leader: Joyce Davis (581-9470 h, 544-6772 w).

### RUIDOSO/CLOUDCROFT

SAT., SUN., JUNE 16-17. Meet Sat. AM in K-Mart parking lot on Dyer St at 7:30. We will proceed to the Upper Canyon of Ruidoso to the Baker's cabin (505-257-4472) for lunch and to set up camp. For Sat. night there is sleeping space available inside or outside the cabin. Please call leader Tom Baker (566-9461 w, 562-9461 h) if you are interested in going. On the return trip Sun., Gloria Basden will take us back through the Cloudcroft area where she has been working this summer with the U.S. Forest Service. She will be showing us how they ran the project for controlling the bud worm infestation of spruce and fir forests.

### FORT BLISS SEWAGE PONDS

SUN., JULY 8. The leader will be Peggy Riede (821-0989) for our summer beginner's trip. This is an

excellent time for all birders to see adult birds with their young. Meet at 7:00 AM Sunday in the K-Mart parking lot on Dyer.

### GILA NATL. FOREST, GLENWOOD AND LUNA, NM

SAT., SUN., JULY 14-15. Meeting is tentatively scheduled for 6 AM at I-10 and Trans-Mt. Rd. Motels in Glenwood are: Lariat, Florida, Whitewater and Goldnugget which has an RV Park, too. Prices range from \$15-\$30 for 2. Make your own motel reservations, or get camping info from Bob Johnson, leader (757-1876, 751-0125). Call Bob if you plan to go. We anticipate seeing the Lewis' Woodpecker!

### RANDEL'S POOL/DURLING'S FARM

SAT., AUGUST 4. Meet at 7 AM at the Good Time Store on Country Club Rd. where Westside Rd. intersects. Leader: Tom Baker (566-9461 w, 562-9461 h).

BOSQUE DEL APACHE/MAGDALENA MTS. SAT., SUN., AUG. 18-19. You're probably acquainted with Bosque del Apache in winter. Here's a chance to visit this well-known natl. wildlife refuge near Socorro, NM, at a very different time of year. After touring the refuge Sat., we'll retreat to the cool of the

nearby Magdalena Mts. Our camp that night will be at the U.S. Forest Service campground in Water Canyon, which we'll bird on Sun. before returning to El Paso. Noncampers can stay at Socorro motels: Golden Manor (800/528-1234), Motel 6 (505/835-1492) El Camino (505/835-1500). Campers and noncampers alike should be prepared for rain. Leader: John Sproul (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w). Call John for further details if you plan to go.

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BIG BEND NATL. PARK  
PRI., SAT., SUN., APRIL 19, 20, 21, 1985  
Although a year away, now is the time to make reservations for those who want to have motel accommodations. Direct inquiries to: National Park Concessions, Inc. Big Bend National Park, TX 79834 915/477-2291

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#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON., JUNE 11, 6:00 PM. The Board will meet at the home of Jo Nagel, 3020 Douglas (566-2143) for supper. The official meeting will begin at 7:30 PM. All members are welcome.



#### FEATHER LAKE NEWS

#### FEATHER LAKE VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to everyone who volunteered to staff Feather Lake in April. Those who signed up were: Joyce Davis, John and Jean Coyle, Susan Harrison, Jane Fowler, Ken Beno, Bertye Barnhart, Bart Rumaker, Tom Baker, Sarah Jane Dodds, Ray Waite, Bob Johnson and John Sproul. Not all of those who signed up were needed, so please be the first to help next fall after we have all that rain to fill the lake! / J.C.

#### FEATHER LAKE AND IRRIGATION WATER

It appears that the water tax dispute between the City and El Paso County Water Improvement District is about to be settled. If so, we can obtain irrigation water at Feather Lake, possibly as early as June of this year. The irrigation ditches have been cleaned and improved and are ready for use. We plan to plant about 10 acres of grain and/or alfalfa as soon as we get the water. / Joe Guinn

#### COMMUNITY FOUNDATION HELPS

#### FEATHER LAKE

At its May 31 annual meeting, the El Paso Community Foundation announced its grant awards for 1984. Among the recipients: El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon. We will receive \$500 to go towards a sediment-removal project at Feather L., our chapter's wildlife sanctuary at 9500 N. Loop Rd. in the lower valley.

Feather L. has had it rough these last few years. Dry 2 summers in a row, it was also virtually dry this winter, a condition not well suited to attracting waterfowl. Conditions have been ideal, though for emergent vegetation, and cattails, sedges, bulrush and saltcedar have taken over the entire basin. The mix of open water and surrounding marsh that made Feather L. so attractive to water birds is not what you see today.

Part of the reason for this change is that Feather L. has accumulated a fair amount of sediment in its 15 years of existence, up to 2 feet deep in places. Our chapter would like to see the sediment removed, but such a project takes money -- lots of it, like over \$60,000. We are now actively seeking grants or any other assistance to help get this job done.

The Community Foundation is the 1st to answer our call. The Foundation works for a better El Paso in many ways, and this year it is contributing towards restoring the wildlife-habitat and environmental-education values of Feather L. We're extremely grateful for this support. Thank you, El Paso Community Foundation!

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \*  
 \*  
 \* ...quail, rock  
 \* rattlesnakes, spotted bats,  
 \* Texas horned lizards...?  
 \*  
 \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

#### FIELD TRIP FOLLOW-UPS

Wednesday mornings at Memorial Park yielded several good sightings of not so common inner city birds. Highlights were Townsend's Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager, Solitary and Warbling Vireos. We will have these short morning outings again this fall. More details will be in the Sept. RR.

The May 6 beginners trip saw a group of 4 make the climb to W. Cottonwood Spring in the Franklin Mts. Bird vocalization was the subject of the day, and prominent songsters included Ash-throated Flycatcher, Canyon Wren, Rufous-crowned, Black-chinned and Black-throated sparrows, and Scott's Oriole. Some 28 species were found in all, many of which exercised their right to remain silent. We closed the morning with a visit to a Black-throated Sparrow nest.

On a hot Sat. morning (May 12) 7 birders attacked the southern slopes of the Organ Mts. to test their endurance. The hike was not overproductive birdwise; a total of 16 species were seen. The scenery was very nice.

Our trip to Sonoita Creek and Ramsey Canyon May 18-20 was enjoyed by 14 people whose combined bird species totaled 95. One of the highlights of the trip was observing a Golden Eagle's nest on a rocky ledge above Mile Hi in Ramsey Canyon. A downy chick was visible and an adult soon arrived

June 1984

with prey for the youngster. Also seen were Hepatic Tanagers, a Beardless-Tyrannulet feeding young in the nest, Painted Redstart, Broad-billed Hummingbird and Zone-tailed Hawk.

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#### WAYS AND MEANS

The big success of our parking lot rummage sale on May 6 was a pleasant surprise with a total of \$551 in sales. Many thanks to all of those who worked (Tom and Ginny Baker, Liz Guinn, Sid Shepherd, Ray Waite, Bart Rumaker, Jo Nagel, Joyce Davis, Peggy Riede, Jane Fowler) and contributed articles for the sale. Special thanks go to Helen and Frank Porras for their generous contribution. /Joe Guinn

#### NORTHEAST OXIDATION PONDS (NEOP)

The army is going to clamp down. Unlimited access to NEOP (formerly referred to as Fort Bliss Sewage Ponds) will no longer be allowed. We have obtained a permit for access which must be in the possession of anyone going to the ponds. Also certain restrictions are listed on the permit - the basic one being no entry between 7:30 AM and 4:30 PM except on Sat., Sun. and holidays. If you desire to go to NEOP, contact Joyce Davis, Tom Baker, Bob Johnson or John Sproul to obtain a copy of the permit.

#### THE PLEASURE WAS ALL MINE

I want to thank each and every member of the EP/TPAS for my certificate and the pair of beautiful pink roses. The fun of housing our program speakers was the nicest part of the past year for me. To all of you dear people "Mi casa es su casa".

/Sarah Jane Dodds

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Our chapter extends a welcome to new members: Joy Noland, Robert Doss, Mary Caldwell.

3-The Roadrunner

## OBSERVATIONS - April 20 to May 20

Spring migration peaked during this period and a very exciting one it has been for our area, equal to any in recent years.

## LOONS - FALCONS

Single W. Grebes were at Fort Bliss Sewage Ponds (FBSP) 4/22 (BJ) and 4/28 (JS, BJ, et al.). Five Am. White Pelicans were seen there 4/26 (JS, SuW). A Double-crested Cormorant was there 4/22 (BJ) and 4 (3 imm., 1 ad.) were at Madden Lake 5/19 (JS). A Cormorant sp. was seen flying over the ponds 4/28 (JS, et al.). The only Cattle Egret reported was an adult at Madden Lake 5/19 (JS). White-faced Ibis were at FBSP in good numbers 4/22 (BJ), 4/28 (mob), and 5/13 (BJ, RW). The male Wood Duck was still present and observed consorting with domestic ducks at Singh Pond 4/28 (JoD, SJD, AS). Five N. Pintails were at FBSP 5/13 (BJ, RW). Blue-winged Teal were there 4/28 (mob), at Hueco Tanks 5/5 (AG, CG), and the Crossroads Pond in the upper valley 5/13 (JoD). The only Golden Eagle reported was 1 seen in the Franklin Mts. 4/28 (BJ). A very exciting Peregrine Falcon was observed at FBSP 4/28 (BJ, RW, PR, PaR). A Prairie Falcon was seen at Hueco Tanks that same day (BJ, et al.).

## QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

A Sora was heard calling at FBSP 4/28 (JN). Three Snowy Plovers were there 5/13 (BJ, RW) and a single 1 was seen at Tornillo 5/19 (JS). One Semipalmated Plover was seen by 1 group (JS, et al.) and 2 by another (BJ, et al.) at FBSP 4/28; 1 was seen there 5/13 (BJ, RW). Black-necked Stilts were observed pairing off there that same day (BJ, RW). A very exciting find at the ponds 4/28 was a WHIMBREL (3rd recent area record) observed near the sewage outlet (BeB, JS, et al.). What better than one but two observed there by another group that same day (BJ, et al.). Twenty-five Marbled Godwits were at FBSP 4/22 (BJ). A Stilt Sandpiper was there 5/13 (BJ, RW), 5 there the following day (BJ), 1 in breeding plumage was observed at Tornillo and another 1 at Ft. Hancock Res. 5/19 (JS). Franklin's Gulls were seen at FBSP on 4 occasions; 2 on 4/22 (BJ), 5 on 4/26 (JS, SuW), 2 on 4/28 (JS, et al.), and 6 on 5/13 (BJ, RW). An

adult was seen at Ft. Hancock Res. 5/19 (JS). Ten Forster's Terns and 8 Black Terns were at FBSP 5/13 (BJ, RW) and another 15 Black Terns were at Madden Lake 5/19 (JS). On 4/28, a Common Barn-Owl was seen at Hueco Tanks (JS, et al.). The first Lesser Nighthawk reported was 1 seen at Hueco Tanks 4/25 (AG, MG). An unusual number of Broad-tailed Hummingbirds were reported from various locations during the period (JB, JS, et al.). A very late female Williamson's Sapsucker was observed in e. El Paso 5/4 (JF) and again 5/5 (JF, JN).

## FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

An Olive-sided Flycatcher was noted at Durling's Farm (BJ), and a Gray Flycatcher at FBSP (JS, PaR) on 4/28. W. Kingbirds arrived in the area the 2nd week in April. On 5/4, 2 House Wrens were in the canyon area above Tom Mays Park, 1 was there 5/5 (JS). A Townsend's Solitaire appeared in a Thunderbird Heights yard 5/6 (FB); a SWAINSON'S THRUSH, rarely seen in our area, was observed in the Durling's-Owen's area 5/7 (BJ). Another very exciting report was a GRAY CATBIRD that appeared in an e. El Paso yard 5/8 (DT). Single Brown Thrashers were seen at FBSP and Hueco Tanks 4/28 (BJ, RW, et al.). A Bell's Vireo was heard calling in the Tornillo area and another 1 was in the Ft. Hancock area 5/19 (JS). On 5/7, a Warbling Vireo was singing in an e. El Paso yard (BR) and 6 were in Memorial Park 5/9 (TB, et al.).

## WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

Notable parulid reports for the period were a "Myrtle" Warbler at FBSP 4/22 (BJ), a Black-throated Gray Warbler at Hueco Tanks 5/5 (AG, CG), a female Am. Redstart at Horizon City 5/3 (MG), a N. Waterthrush in e. El Paso 5/5 and 5/8 (BR), and a female HOODED WARBLER at Horizon City 5/8 (AG, MG). A beautiful male HEPATIC TANAGER was observed at Hueco Tanks 4/28 (JS, JN, JF, BeB, PaR). A male Summer Tanager was at Madden Lake 5/19 (JS), and a W. Tanager was seen at Horizon City 4/29 (MG). Black-headed Grosbeaks were re-

ported on 5 occasions, 5 different locations, during the period (JF, MG, TB, FB, BJ). Single male Lazuli Buntings were at Durling's Farm 4/26 (JS, SuW), central El Paso 4/29-5/4 (JN), w. El Paso 5/1-5/4 (JE), and 2 were at FBSP 4/28 (BJ, et al.). A female was seen at W. Cottonwood Springs 5/5 (JS). On 5/20, a male Painted Bunting was singing at Rio Bosque Park (JS). A male Black-chinned Sparrow was singing in the canyon above Tom Mays Park 5/4 and 5/5 (JS) and another 1 was in a brush area just below W. Cottonwood Springs 5/5 (JS) and 5/6 (JS, JC, GG). An adult White-throated Sparrow visited an e. El Paso yard 4/28-4/30 (BR). A Bronzed Cowbird returned to a Mt. Park yard 4/20 and has been seen regularly since (JB). Three Hooded Orioles were there 4/22 and a pair seen 4/29 (JB).

CONTRIBUTORS: Tom Baker, Berttye Barnhart (BeB), Bertha Barnhart, Janet Brockmoller, Jeannette Cole, Joyce Davis, Sarah Jane Dodds, Joyce Ewald, Jane Fowler, Gil Gallegos, Al Gavitt, Chris Gavitt, Madeline Gavitt, Ed Gilboe, Elza Gilboe, Howard Jackson, Bob Johnson, Jo Nagel, Peggy Riede, Peter Riede (PeR), Patricia Russell (PaR), Ann Schultis, John Sproul, Dennis Taylor, Ray Waite, Suzanne Winckler. /Bettie Roberts, Observations Editor/  
Note: Please call 591-0421 with your summer sightings. They will be published in the Sept. Roadrunner.

#### BIRDATHON '84

Another success story! When all totals are in, we will have raised about \$2,100 which will be equally divided among Nat'l Audubon, the Society's Southwest Regional Office, and our chapter.

At the post-Birdathon drawing for all sponsors (Apr 29), the oriole plate, donated by Patti Canaris, was won by Malcolm Harris. Tom Baker won the gift certificate donated by Am-Camp.

A counter may only win one prize, even though he or she may qualify for a prize in more than one category. Prizes awarded at the May 21 general meeting were:

Most Species Seen: 1st place-Barry Zimmer(135), 2nd place-Jeff Donaldson(132)

Most Species Seen by New Birder: 1st-Patricia Russell(58), 2nd-Ray Waite(50)  
Most Sponsors: 1st-John Sproul, 2nd-Ken Beno  
Most Money Raised: 1st-Joyce Davis, 2nd-Jo Nagel

The Birdathon Committee wishes to thank all who participated either as counters or sponsors. The success we had would not have been possible without YOU.

#### NEWS FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

For those of us blessed by friendship with Geth and Ed White, it is sad news that Ed had surgery at Scott White early in May. The good news is he's home, feeling better and doing well.

Geth, for those of you who may not have been here, is the remarkable lady who got the Audubon Society going again in El Paso circa 1970. Ed gave us an excellent program on the Nature Conservancy a few years ago. Send him a card, why don't you, at Box 425, Alpine, Tx 79830.

#### URBAN WILDLIFE, TEXAS STYLE

What do major Texas cities have to offer in the way of wildlife? Suzanne Winckler will give you an introduction in "The Wild Side of Town" in the June 1984 issue of Texas Monthly. This lively article reports on the wild residents of Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Ft. Worth, Houston and San Antonio. How does El Paso compare with its east Texas counterparts? Read the article and be impressed!

\* \* \*

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. Please send any changes or corrections in name, address, or telephone # to this address.

The deadline for the September Roadrunner is August 27.

## CONSERVATION CAPSULES

**BOUNDARY PRESERVATION PROJECT:** Our lawsuit to force the International Boundary and Water Commission to adhere to its original environmental-protection commitments on the Rio Grande Boundary Preservation Project remains alive and kicking. This month should see action on the Justice Dept.'s motion to have the suit dismissed. If the motion is denied, the suit could be heard by late summer. Meanwhile, 2 more heavy hitters have chosen to join us in the suit: The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas General Land Office have both filed to intervene as co-plaintiffs.

**FRANKLIN MTS. ST. PARK:** Under existing law, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. is not allowed to spend any money for operation and maintenance of the Franklin Mts. St. Park (RR, June 1983). This limitation puts a large crimp in resource-protection efforts for the Park. Cactus and rock theft, unauthorized use of vehicles, and other illegal activities remain facts of life on the Mountain. Recently, the County Sheriff's Dept. increased its presence in the Franklins ("Operation Mother Nature"), a welcome move. In the same vein, the Wilderness Park Coalition (WPC), to which EP/TPAS belongs, is considering establishing a team of volunteer observers who would make regular patrols in the mountains and rapidly report any observed unauthorized activities to proper law-enforcement authorities. Interested in taking part? Call Joan Duncan (755-6798) or John Sproul (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w). If the interest is there, the WPC will pursue it.

**CLEAN AIR COALITION:** EP/TPAS also belongs to El Paso's recently formed Clean Air Coalition (CAC). Does the idea of breathing clean air appeal to you? The CAC could use some willing workers to help get its programs off the ground. If you're interested in working with the CAC, call Joyce Davis (581-9470) or John Sproul (see above).

**MISSISSIPPI KITES:** Will El Paso Country Club (EPCC) try an educational program this year to help golfers avoid surprise nest-defense swoops from Mississippi Kites? At press time, EPCC had not yet responded to our offer to develop one (RR, May). Meanwhile, Mississippi Kites returned to the EPCC area in late May. If they nest on the golf course, their aggressive nest-defense behavior can be expected by late June when the 1st young hatch out. It will last only until the young leave the nest, or roughly 1-1½ months for any given nest. With a sound educational program in place, we believe golfers and kites can coexist at EPCC during this brief period of potential conflict.

**FT. BLISS SEWAGE PONDS:** The structures now loom large on the horizon. The new Northeast Sewage Treatment Plant is approximately 90% complete and could start up as early as Jan 1985, according to Project Engineer Dan Knorr. Soon, we'll see the beginning of an ambitious new experiment to stretch our dwindling water supplies. Sewage from n.e. El Paso will get tertiary treatment, followed by injection into the Hueco Bolson for our ultimate reuse. We'll also see the end of the existing Ft. Bliss Sewage Ponds and overflow areas. No longer "needed", almost 500 acres of productive wetland wildlife habitat will be allowed to dry up and disappear. In a related development, workers at the construction site have judged the shooting that goes on around the ponds hazardous to their health. For this reason and for other safety reasons, Ft. Bliss is now enforcing actively the existing restrictions on access to the ponds (see story on p. 3).



**RIO BOSQUE PARK:** For the last 3 months, our Education Committee has worked hard to launch an environmental-education program at Rio Bosque Park. Nature walks, a draft cooperative management agreement with the City, a draft nature guide for the area, and letters introducing our program to school districts, youth groups and other organizations all have been part of the effort. By the time you read this, we should know whether it was worth it. Rio Bosque, of course, is the undeveloped 286-acre city park in El Paso's lower valley that will revert to federal ownership if the City doesn't start using it for open-space recreation (RR, Apr). On June 1, a Natl. Park Service representative was in El Paso to review the City's progress. The decision on whether to let El Paso keep the land was expected soon thereafter.

**RECYCLING:** Early this year, gross income from El Paso's revamped recycling program had been encouraging (RR, Apr), but when fuel costs and wages associated with the program were subtracted out, profits were negligible to nonexistent. The City's Sanitation Dept. reviewed the the situation recently and found it had more vehicles and personnel assigned to recycling crews than necessary. It streamlined the program and in April turned a tidy \$1,400 profit. Gross recycling income for April was \$3,700, highest yet under the new program. Participation remains in the 6% range, so there is plenty of room for more improvement. Depending on what part of the City you live in, please put your recyclables -- newspapers in 1 bag, cans in another, corrugated cardboard in another -- at curbside by 7:30 AM on either the 1st and 3rd or 2nd and 4th Fridays each month. To learn what recycling zone you are in, get a map from the Sanitation Dept. (594-8625). With aluminum cans, of course, you also have the option of donating them to EP/TPAS. Save this summer's aluminum-can accumulation, and bring your booty to the next general meeting in September.

**CALIFORNIA CONDOR:** The early-May hatching of a California Condor in a tree nest in California's Sequoia Natl. Forest brought to 17 the number of condors believed to be alive in the wild. Some

13 are alive in captivity, with 2 more eggs that are now being incubated at the San Diego Zoo expected to hatch in early June.

**THREATENED STATUS FOR SACTO. MTS.**

**THISTLE?:** On May 16, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed to list the Sacramento Mts. thistle (Cirsium vinaceum) as a Threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The plant occurs in the Sacramento Mts. of New Mexico, mainly on Lincoln Natl. Forest lands. Fourteen populations are known, all but 1 restricted to areas around springs flowing from limestone rock. There are several populations at Bluff Springs along the Rio Penasco, an area heavily used by recreationists. Threats to this species include habitat destruction by livestock and by water development, competition with introduced plant species, road construction, logging and recreational activities.

/John Sproul/

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Clean Air Act Coordinator	Joyce Davis	581-9470

\* - Board of Directors

\*\* - Elected Directors

SIERRA CLUB MEETING  
TO FOCUS ON MOUNTAIN LION

EDITORS ADVICE FOR SUMMER:

(think snow!)

WED., JUNE 27, 7:30PM, St. Paul's Methodist Church, 7000 Edgemere. Last Feb., the New Mexico State Game Commission strengthened considerably its regulations protecting the mountain lion. The group that did the most to prompt the Commission's action was the Wildlife Committee of the Sierra Club's Rio Grande Chapter. Sparkplug of this committee is its chair, Carol Cochran, who will travel from Albuquerque for this meeting and present the committee's newly developed slide program on the MOUNTAIN LION IN NEW MEXICO. Carol also chairs the Sierra Club's national Wildlife Committee.



NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
Chapter  
Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to join. Local Chapter:

El Paso/Trans-Pecos  
W10 7XCH

Membership Category desired:

- Individual/\$30 (H)       Senior Citizen
- Family/\$38 (J)         Individual/\$21(N)
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- Family/\$23 (P)

This is a  new  renewal membership.

Name.....

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Please make checks payable to National Audubon Society. Mail to Bob Johnson, 5109 Paris, El Paso, TX 79924.

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