



The Roadrunner
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Sadly, pages 1 and 2 of this issue are missing.

The content begins with page 3.

CHRISTMAS COUNTS

On December 20 and January 3, our local Audubon chapter will be participating in the nation-wide Christmas counts which have been sponsored since 1900 by the National Audubon Society. The rules for these counts are established by the National Society.

The rules by which the local society must abide include the following: Each count area is a circle with a diameter of 15 miles. All counts must be made during the official count period which has been set this year as December 20 to January 4 inclusive. Counts last from sunrise to sunset. Each participant pays \$1 per count which is used by AMERICAN BIRDS to help defray the cost of publishing the record of the counts. There is a compiler for each count whose job it is to make certain all sightings are accurately reported and detailed as necessary and to fill out all necessary papers and forward them before the due date.

Last year our local Christmas count was helped considerably by people who called in during the week preceding the count and also on count day to give us information about the birds in their area. Since we never could quite squeeze out that one hundredth species last year, we'll be trying extra hard to break the one hundred mark this time.

Not all of us are able to be out actively count on the big day, and those of us who are out can't possibly cover every part of the count circle during the daylight hours so your help will be particularly appreciated.

During the week preceding the count day, information on bird sightings may be telephoned to the Ed Whites: 566-2328; the Charlie Jensens: 584-7626; or the Eddie Chews: 532-6410. On count day, December 20, please telephone your reports AS EARLY IN THE DAY AS POSSIBLE to Mrs. Edna Mae Lyons: 533-1894 or Mrs. Helen Ponder: 542-0202.

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OFFICER NOMINATIONS NEW COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

The nominating committee appointed by the Board met on December 5 and submits the following report. The President serves a two-year term, and since Charlie Jensen begins his second year in February, no president is to be elected at this time. The terms of each of the other officers and directors is one year.

Vice-president/President-elect: Lucretia Chew

Secretary/Treasurer: Dorothy Williams

Directors: (six to be elected)

Bill Hunt
Carl Jones
Eddie Chew
Bill Hoppes
Kevin Zimmer
Ed White

According to local Audubon President Charlie Jensen, appointments as chairmen of standing committees for 1976 have been completed. Conservation will be chaired by Bill Hoppes, Education by Linda Jones, and Hospitality by Berttye and Bertha Barnhart. Kevin Zimmer will be in charge of Field Trips, Geth White will head up Membership, and Charlie Jensen will handle Finance.

Bill Hunt has accepted the chairmanship of the Feather Lake Project, and Kevin Zimmer will continue in charge of the "For the Birds" articles and publicity. The "Roadrunner" editor will be Lucretia Chew. Responsibility for the programs has been assumed by a committee composed of President Charlie Jensen, Bill Hoppes, and Kevin Zimmer.

Whooping Crane Bulletin. All eight of the new whooping cranes fledged this year in Canada have arrived safely at their wintering grounds at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. It was the largest number of young to be added since 1969, and with 48 adults, this brings the flock total to 56. Last year 49 whoopers returned to Texas, of which only two were newly fledged young.

And of the nine chicks born this spring from whooping crane eggs transplanted to sandhill crane nests at Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Idaho, in an experimental attempt to start a second wild flock of whoopers, six have arrived safely with the sandhills at their wintering grounds at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico.

Earthcare Petition. At a special ceremony at the United Nations on October 23, the Earthcare Petition calling for world environmental protection as a basic human right was submitted to Maurice F. Strong, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme. Some 200,000 persons in the United States and abroad signed the petition, which was first released at the National Audubon Society/Sierra Club Earthcare Conference held in New York City last June.

The petition requests that the United Nations Human Rights Commission and the Economic and Social Council investigate specific charges. A legal brief is being filed with the UN which documents three instances where governmental neglect of the environment has harmed human rights: mercury poisoning, threats to indigenous peoples in rain forests, and worldwide health endangerment from reduction of the ozone layer.

Urban Environment Study. A 124-page report summarizing the findings of the National Conference on the Urban Environment that was held in New York last April is now available from NCUE, Council on the Environment of New York City, Room 228, 51 Chambers St., New York, NY, 10007. Send two dollars. The report covers workshops on eleven subjects ranging from housing and environmental health to land use, recreation, solid waste, and noise.

Value of Dead Trees. Regional U. S. Forester Theodore A. Schlapfer of Portland, Oregon has set a policy that merits the thanks of conservationists. He has ordered that in timbering operations in his region, adequate numbers of dead and defective trees be left standing for cavity-nesting birds and animals; he notes that at least 43 such species are found in his region.

Mexican-American Wildlife Agreement. The United States and Mexico are establishing cooperative programs and study teams on the problems of mutual concern in endangered species, migratory birds, law enforcement, wildlife management, training, and unique ecosystems. In the U. S. the programs will be coordinated by the Fish and Wildlife Service; in Mexico, by that nation's wildlife agency, Fauna Sylvestre.

It's an Ill Plant That . . . The water hyacinth, that strangler of subtropical waterways, may prove to be a valuable pollution fighter and an energy source as well. The fast-growing plants can absorb cadmium, lead and other heavy metals while metabolizing the nitrates and phosphates of sewage effluent, reports a research team at NASA's Space Technology Laboratories in Mississippi, and the plants can be fermented to yield fertilizer and organic gas usable as fuel.

The editor wishes to express her thanks to those who called in this month to report their bird sightings. I'm hoping even more of you will be reporting in the near future -- 532-6410 evenings.

RECENT BIRD SIGHTINGS

BLACK HAWK by the Jensens on November 8 north of Truth or Consequences.

On November 11, a GRAY VIREO at the Whites on Silver Street.

Regulars in the Brockmoller yard in Mountain Park during November included ROBINS, 37 QUAIL, RUFOUS, BROAD-TAILED, and ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRDS, LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE, GROUND DOVE, and FLICKERS. Occasionals included PYRRHULOXIA, RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE, AMERICAN KESTREL, and CACTUS WREN.

At the Surratt Farm in the Lower Valley on November 15, SNOWY EGRET, 450 GREEN WINGED TEAL, 300 AMERICAN WIGEON, BLACK PHOEBE by Kevin Zimmer.

OREGON and GRAY-HEADED JUNCOS, CHIPPING, WHITE-CROWNED, and CASSIN'S SPARROWS at Memorial Park by Geth White on November 17.

At the Whites on November 18, ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD, HUMMINGBIRD species, and a HERMIT THRUSH.

In the Ponders' yard in Mission Hills, ROBINS, CEDAR WAXWINGS, STELLER'S JAYS, JUNCOS, various HUMMINGBIRD species, many SPARROWS.

Seen by Bill Hoppes near Orla, Texas, on the Pecos River on November 30, three WHISTLING SWANS, WILSON'S PHALAROPE, ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, and GREEN HERON.

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD in the Zimmer's yard in Mountain Park in December.

In the Jensens' yard in Coronado in early December, WHITETHROATED SPARROW and GREAT-HORNED OWL.

UPPER AND LOWER VALLEY FIELD TRIPS

A group of seven birders spent a very pleasant December 6 birding their way from the Country Club Bridge in El Paso to Caballo Dam and Percha State Park, New Mexico via Highway 85. Eighty species were seen.

Notable sightings included a very lark flock of SANDHILL CRANES, three BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS, three GOLDEN EAGLES, HAIRY WOODPECKER, MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE, two DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS, 12 GREAT BLUE HERONS, a flock of COMMON SNIPES, COMMON MERGANSERS, WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS, HERMIT THRUSH, WESTERN and MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS, two PRAIRIE FALCONS, COOPER'S and RED-TAILED HAWKS, BLACK and SAY'S PHOEBES, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, and BROWN CREEPER.

Field trip participants were Leader Charlie Jensen, Helen Barto, Barry Zimmer, Bill Hoppes, Lucretia Chew, Ed and Geth White.

Due to a confusion as cars left the meeting place, the field trip to the Lower Valley on November 15 resulted in two field trips, both in the Lower Valley to some of the same places but not at the same time.

Among the birds seen that day were a very large flock of perhaps 2000 YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRDS in a plowed field; many ducks including WIGEON, TEAL, PINTAIL, GADWALL, a few CINNAMON TEAL, RING-NECKED DUCK, RUDDY DUCK, and SCAUP, and a GOLDEN EAGLE.

Participants were Bob Reed, Carlyle Navadomskis, Bart Rumaker, Berttye and Bertha Barnhart, Kevin and Barry Zimmer, Geth White, and Bill Hunt.

The officers and field trip leaders are very red-faced over this mix-up, and every effort will be made to avoid any such difficulty in the future.

T O S FALL MEETING

Five El Pasoans were among 160 who attended the Fall Meeting of the Texas Ornithological Society at Fort Davis just preceding Thanksgiving. The meeting began with a talk and slide presentation by Dean Fisher, biology professor from Nacadoches, on his research on the effects of desert environment on Australian birds. The first evening's program also included a documentary film on black hawks of the Davis Mountains with narrated time lapse photography.

Another evening Dr. Granger Hunt of the Chihuahuan Research Institute spoke and presented slide of their current projects including raptor research.

There were field trips to Limpia Canyon and other lower canyons and on to the high country and Lake Balmorrhea. The El Pasoans especially enjoyed a trip into a canyon on the Espey Ranch to see wintering sparrows, a golden eagle, and a sharp-shinned hawk.

Kevin and Barry Zimmer, Bart Rumaker, Helen Barto, and Geth White attended the meeting from El Paso.

We are indebted to Mrs. William Coonly who has gifted the local society with the two-volume set of Oberholser's BIRD LIFE IN TEXAS, updated by Edgar Kincaid Jr., with beautiful illustrations by Luis Agazziz Fuertes. These books are available to Audubon members; they would be excellent as sources for those writing articles for the "For the Bird" column.

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FIRST CLASS