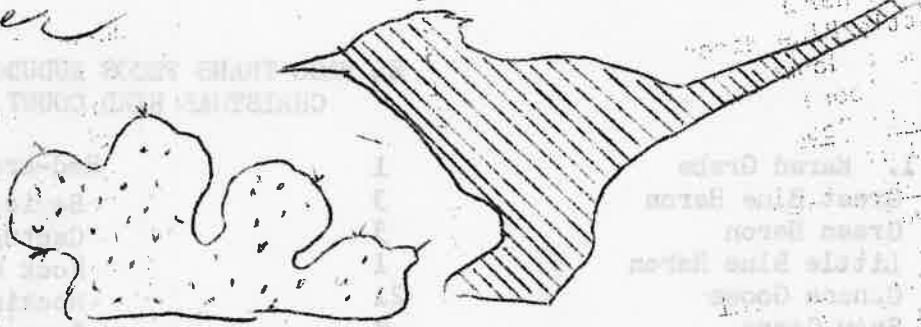


The Roadrunner

NEWSLETTER OF
EL PASO-TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY
3123 Federal Avenue
El Paso, Texas 79930
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Vol. III, January, 1973

Geth Osborn White, Editor

CALENDAR, Saturday, January 13, 7:30 A. M. Field trip to Upper Valley. Rendezvous at Coronado Shopping Center. Check out Sunland Lake and old irrigation drainage ditch paralleling the levee of the Rio Grande which runs back of Camp Pioneer. This is a kind of "seek and search" trip to develop more territory for birds.

Monday, January 15th, 7:30 P. M. Monthly meeting at Centennial Museum, UTEP campus. This will be a members slide show of birds on our checklist, a compilation of slides given by Dr. John Hudd, Margaret and Jack McDaniels, and Geth White, and Clarence Shelfer. Some of us who have previewed the collection think it is especially good and excellent material to develop different types of bird programs to present to groups in education.

We also will elect officers for the next two years. Mary Moore, chairman of the nominating Committee, will present the slate. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

Sunday, January 21, 1:30 P. M. Rendezvous at Tom Mays Park, first picnic shelter. Trip to explore washes and canyons. There was lots of life and action in mid-afternoon in some of these canyons on the Christmas count.

CHRISTMAS COUNT

30th of December dawned bright and clear, but windy -- a better day than the preceding two years for the Christmas count. Nineteen people composing six parties set out in their respective territories to list the birds -- species and numbers of species.

The Rio Grande was covered from Anapra to Canutillo roughly, including some bosque and dammed-up pools, cultivated fields, irrigation drainage ditches and levees. Irrigated and flooded farmland yielded some unexpected ducks feeding between furrows. Ascarate Lake and Sunland Park Lake were checked for waterfowl as well as some industrial cooling ponds on the east side of town. Urban yards, gardens and parks were combed for birds and some feeders were watched. Higher canyons and mesas, washes on mountain slopes, even the tops of peaks were scanned for elusive birdlife.

Each person participating in the count had his own special reward in enjoying the birds seen, whether a rarity or an old familiar with the sun glinting on glossy plumage.

Louise and Weldon Yerby and I liked the watery scene of trees swarming with blackbirds as they came in to roost around the cooling ponds which were jam-packed with green-winged teal and shoveler ducks. Late afternoon sun turned the scene into an unforgettable vignette of golden-headed blackbirds over a sea of chestnut, green and white forms swimming below in tight formation.

EL PASO TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, 1972

1. Eared Grebe	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	2
Great Blue Heron	3	Bevick's Wren	2
Green Heron	3	Cactus Wren	8
Little Blue Heron	1	Rock Wren	16
Canada Goose	21	Mockingbird	6
Snow Goose	8	Curve-billed Thrasher	4
Ross's Goose	1	Crissal Thrasher	3
Mallard	97	Robin	40
Mexican Duck	2	Western Bluebird	51
Gadwall	61	Mountain Bluebird	6
Pintail	67	Townsend's Solitaire	3
Green-winged Teal	354	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	6
American Widgeon	423	Water Pipit	30
Shoveler	457	Cedar Waxwing	9
Wood Duck	1	Loggerhead Shrike	16
Redhead	5	Starling	180
Lesser Scaup	13	Audubon's Warbler	46
Bufflehead	1	House Sparrow	274
Cooper's Hawk	2	Western Meadowlark	12
Red-tailed Hawk	4	Yellow-headed Blackbird	510
Golden Eagle	2	Redwinged Blackbird	505
Marsh Hawk	7	Brewer's Blackbird	1,848
Sparrow Hawk	15	Boat-tailed Grackle	60
Scaled Quail	62	Brown-headed Cowbird	4
Gambel's Quail	15	Pyrrhuloxia	7
Common Gallinule	3	Dickcissel	4
American Coot	17	Cassin's Finch	2
Killdeer	7	House Finch	210
Common Snipe	1	Pine Siskin	76
Least Sandpiper	28	American Goldfinch	20
Western Sandpiper	7	Lesser Goldfinch	8
Ring-billed Gull	1	Green-tailed Towhee	18
White-winged Dove	10	Rufous-sided Towhee	21
Mourning Dove	116	Brown Towhee	9
Inc. Dove	41	Lark Bunting	1
Roachrunner	1	Savannah Sparrow	10
Great Horned Owl	1	Baird's Sparrow	9
Long-eared Owl	1	Vesper Sparrow	30
White-throated Swift	1	Rufous-crowned Sparrow	15
Anna's Hummingbird	1	Black-throated Sparrow	111
Belted Kingfisher	4	Sage Sparrow	2
Red-shafted Flicker	42	Oregon Junco	66
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	3	Gray-headed Junco	43
Black Phoebe	2	Chipping Sparrow	38
Say's Phoebe	4	Clay-colored Sparrow	23
Steller's Jay	28	Brewer's Sparrow	33
Mexican Jay	5	Black-chinned Sparrow	9
Scrub Jay	13	White-crowned Sparrow	38
Verdin	1	Song Sparrow	4

A total of 98 species with an estimated 6,336 birds counted.

LETTER FROM THE TRAVELLERS, KENT AND BENEDICTA CARNIE: "To the Whites and all our El Paso bird friends our best wishes for a very pleasant holiday season and a truly happy new year!

"We have had quite a time since my retirement last July and departure from El Paso. August Benedicta visited with her family in Denmark and then with friends in England and Scotland while I spent the whole time hunting grouse in Scotland with English friends.

"In September we were off to Iran in our new VW camper (very comfortable for 20 people) and we returned last week after almost 14,000 miles (to Copenhagen). I was at work on studies of falcon migration in Iran and the government authorities there couldn't have been more helpful. Although our objective this year was simply an initial survey, we did trap and band 4 falcons among them 3 peregrines for the Iranian government. We were tragically interrupted when Benedicta's father died without warning in Copenhagen in October, only a month before his scheduled retirement from the Danish Navy after some 42 years of service! Naturally, Benedicta went back to Denmark for the funeral and 2 weeks with her family before rejoining me in Iran. The Iranians found our efforts of sufficient interest to ask us to return for an even longer period next fall.

"Between now and our next season in Iran, we'll be back in Scotland for some more grouse hunting (hawking) and in the interim we are off to Spain and Portugal where I hope the bird-watching is as interesting as it was in Iran. Beyond our falcon observations, there were some truly interesting times -- 10,000 waterfowl migrating overhead in a single afternoon -- or the frequent contact with the rare (elsewhere) white-tailed eagle.

"We should be back in El Paso after our next season in Iran, probably about May, 1974, enroute to Mexico this time, and do hope to see you then, if not subsequently in San Miguel de Allende."

A letter just crossed this editor's desk from the Society for the Preservation of Birds of Prey, P. O. Box 293, Pacific Palisades, Ca. 90272, stating that a Conference on Raptor Conservation Techniques has been scheduled by the Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. and other private and public wildlife agencies for 22-25 March 1973 at Colorado State University.

The Society is looking at the conference as an opportunity to express our views about harvesting raptors. This Society feels that harvesting birds of prey for falconry and research is a threat. Among their arguments is that few licensed falconers actually fly birds in their possession. They're also opposed to using birds of prey to breed in captivity and other research. They are seeking Audubon Societies endorsements of their stand. (Personally, I would be the last one to deny a falconer his sport and think the greater impact results from habitat encroachment, persistent pesticides, illegal shooting - Ed.)

The September-October issue of BIRDING has a report on the Gyrfalcon from Dr. J. B. Tatum of Victoria, B. C. which informs that a major breeding locality for this species is being carefully guarded against all visitors. The young sell for about \$400 apiece to falconers and just a few weeks ago a Canadian ornithologist took 12 young from the nests and attempted to sell them. He was caught and fined \$2,225. but still, the damage was done. (I'm glad they're guarded, but it points up this is a worldwide problem) Ed.

DECEMBER BIRD RECORDS

Cattle Egrets	Mr. and Mrs. David Surratt, Clint, Texas, have a cattle feeding operation; in late November 1 egret was seen with the cattle and now there is a flock of 16. We need photographic documentation.
Vermillion Flycatcher	Mr. and Mrs. David Surratt have two. They have a small lake with a lot of brush around it. Many ducks can be seen in the lake. The flycatchers seem to be wintering over.
Western Kingbird	Libby Shelfer, East El Paso, the week before the Christmas count and again on December 31.

HOTLINE FOR CONSERVATIONISTS will be instituted for those who want to be informed of environmental matters needing immediate attention. If you want to be on the list, drop a postcard to Lexie and John Mudd, 5316 Yvette, El Paso 79924. If you'd like to see the Gila Wilderness preserved, write a letter before January 16 in support of the Joint Conservationists' proposal for a 614,918 acre Gila. Let's not let it be chipped away.

Our thanks for Eddie and Lucretia Chew for running off the mimeo copies of the newsletter and mailing it, and to Bob and Helen Barto for hospitality at the meetings.

OFFICERS

- President: Mrs. Edmund White (Geth)
- Vice-president: Eddie Chew
- Secy'Treasurer: Mrs. Clarence Shelfer (Libby)
- Historian: Mrs. Jack Ponder (Helen)

El Paso-Trans Pecos Audubon Society dues are \$12 individual, \$15 family; includes membership in National Audubon Society, its magazine, and our local newsletter; participation in eco-action matters, field trips and activities. Please mail check to Mrs. Clarence Shelfer, 3050 A Chandler, El Paso, Texas 79904.

COMMITTEES

- Conservation: Bob Barto
- Field Trips: Ed White
- Membership: Mrs. Leigh Wilcox (Roberta)
- Education: Mrs. Carl Jones (Linda)
- Checklist Revision: Bill Hunt

Name _____
 Address _____
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FIRST CLASS

MEMBER LIST

[Faint, mostly illegible text, likely a member list or administrative notes.]