

# the ROADRUNNER.....



newsletter of  
El Paso Trans-Tecos Audubon Society  
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(by Robert P. Bleicher, President)

## Calendar:

### Board of Director's Meeting:

Monday, 7:30 p.m., 9 April. Chapter Board of Director's Meeting at the home of Ed and Elza Gilboe, 1305 Oakdale, El Paso, Texas, Ph. 772-1942.

### Program:

Monday, 7:30 p.m., 16 April 1979: Regular meeting at the El Paso Garden Center, Grant Street. Dr. William R. Canaris, Professor of Biological Science, UTEP, will present a program titled: The Rio Grande Channelization Project. Please come early and have refreshments and get acquainted--ok!

### Audubon Wildlife Film

Thursday, 12 April 1979, at 7:30 p.m. This film titled: "West Side Story--Mexico to Alaska" will be shown in El Paso at the Union Theater at the University of Texas at El Paso Campus. General admission \$1.50; Children 50c, with tickets available at the door. All the Audubon films have really been super so mark your calendar and come out to see this great film.

### Field Trips:

Sat-Sun, 31 March-1 April, 1979. Too late for the February newspaper, the news of the UK to visit the Clay Miller Ranch at Valentine, Texas, came just after the last paper was mailed! However the word has gone out to those who might make the trip and so far the number has reached twelve--that's great! We will be meeting at 08:00 hrs at Feather Lake for the trip to the Ranch. Ed and Geth White will be the trip leaders--they know just where to go--OK. We will arrive around noon on the 31st (Sat) and do some birding Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning before returning Sunday afternoon. Happy days!

Saturday, 21 April 1979. Meet at the El Paso Garden Center, on Grant St., (just a short ways from Sears at 5-Points) at 07:00. Joe De Pasquale will be the Field Trip Leader and we hope to get in on seeing spring migrants. Come, join us on this easy walking, close-by trip. Memorial Park is a very good birding area especially during the migration period.

Thank you to:

Mrs. Mildred Smith -- for the Excellent program titled: Resource Recovery, presented at our meeting on 19 March 1979. The program was a real good one and if you were not there you missed an interesting, informative program.

Mr. Ed Gilboe -- for your call letting us know that a Broad-tailed Humming bird arrived in your back yard on Monday, 19 March 1979. That was our first call on the arrival of hummingbirds in El Paso this Spring.

Mrs. Robert B. Lyons, 1652 Common Drive, El Paso, Texas, 79935, -- for your call about the Snow Goose on the Pond on the Lee Trevino golf course. I did go down and check it out and you were right - And additionally, I saw two Mallards, with mates, and a Coot, and a Pied-billed Grege -- that's ok.

Thanks again to all those who went on the Aguirre Springs Field Trip. This was the "best" togetherness trip I've seen up there. All ten people, who attended, made the five-mile hike and enjoyed the birds and scenery.

Thanks to all those who went on the Randall Pool trip on 25 Feb. We did see the Yellow-breasted Chat, our largest Warbler; now I'm wondering wheresle he may be found here in El Paso. If you know where, please call me: Bob Bleicher: Ph: 591-7261, or drop me a card at 2809 Hector Drive, EPT.

#### The Yellow-breasted Chat:

The Yellow-breasted Chat, our largest wood warbler, has an olive-green coloring to its upperparts, a yellow throat and breast, and white over and under the eye and the belly. Its size is between 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  and 7 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Their large size, thick bill and shorter wings plus an odd behavior make them seem out of place among the wood warblers. To many they seem like a vireo and to others they seem like a mockingbird.

We're told that the Yellow-breasted Chat breeds over most of the United States, especially where thickets surround small trees on low damp ground or in neglected pastures. Their astonishing medley of cackles, whistles, barks, news, and gurgles have made many think this bird is, a mockingbird.

The yellow-breasted Chat builds a bulky nest near the ground. The female lays three to five spotted white eggs and incubates them alone.

The range of the Yellow-breasted Chat ranges from Southern British Columbia, Canada to Southern New Hampshire, south to central Mexico and north Florida; it winters to Panama.

#### Membership

Here is the latest data on our membership. Our National and Chapter membership totals: 226, with 167 members (83%) in El Paso, Tx., and 39 (17%) out of town memberships. Additionally we have five (5) newsletter subscriptions for the local Chapter newsletter, totaling: 231. We still want to hear from our membership as the "members make the Chapter."



The following article was written by Chapter Vice President, Bill Hoppes.  
A report on my trip to the village of San Blas, in the State of Nayarit, Mexico.  
(Note: San Blas is approximately 900 miles south of El Paso, Texas on Mexico's west coast.)

When people begin to bird with any degree of regularity, they start to read about birds, birders, and birding sites. Pretty soon they begin to develop a list of places which comprise their "One day I'm going there" list. Usually this list is pretty short--just three or four sites. It could be Cape May (New Jersey), the Everglades, South Texas, Arizona, or Point Reyes, in California. One of the places that was on my list was San Blas in the State of Nayarit, Mexico. I do not remember how it first caught my attention, but I've always wanted to go there. I think that the draw was the combination of the exotic birds, seeing a real jungle, parrots, a sleepy Mexican village and the Pacific ocean. Last year, several friends and I were discussing where to take our next trip into Mexico. I suggested San Blas and with the help of Frontier Airlines, a trip, which seemed far distant in the future, was right at hand.

San Blas is about 150 miles south of Mazatlan and right on the West Coast. Once it was an important port but now it is in an excellent state of decay. The highway to San Blas is excellent and there is no trouble getting there. If you have plenty of time you can take a bus, but since the bus to San Blas, from Tepic, only goes once a day, allow two days to get there from Mazatlan. Once you are in San Blas, you do not need a car. If you feel you need transportation, there are plenty of taxis available.

I will not dwell on the beaches, fantastic sunsets, palm trees, and the beautiful city, instead I will make a few suggestions. Go!; but be prepared. Do not expect to get away from other Americans there. San Blas is getting to be a popular spot with the Southern California Set. We saw more Americans than Mexicans. Be sure that you have hotel reservations; I saw quite a few people turned away because they had none. Surprisingly with all the people there, we saw very few on the beach. With so many Americans there, it is hard to practice your Spanish but almost everyone speaks English. With only a few drawbacks, the trip is just a glorious experience.

Once you're established, start birding. Eat and bird, swim and bird, walk and bird; almost every bird you see will be a new one. Be sure to visit the ruins above the town, maybe you'll see parrots. Do visit this area for the beautiful sunsets which take place. Magnificent Frigatebirds are all over the bay and a sight to see. The highlights of the trip will be the boat trip up the Estero San Cristobal and into the jungle. The boat trip up the jungle river will take about four hours and cost about 500 pesos. The boat can hold four persons with comfort. You may see close to one-hundred bird species. Then to it is fantastic to take a walk in the jungle! At one point, I thought I might see Tarzan swinging through the trees. We spent two days in San Blas however, I suggest that you take four days to bird the area adequately. Going there only makes you determined to return again to the village of San Blas along the west coast of Mexico.

Here is a list of the birds seen on Bill Hoppes list. (no special order)

American Kestrel  
~~White~~ Vulture  
White-fronted Ibis  
Wood Stork  
American Avocet  
Mexican Crow  
Great-tailed Grackle  
White-winged Dove  
Belted Kingfisher  
Thick-billed Kingbird  
Black-necked Stilt  
Snowy Egret  
Great Egret  
American Coot  
Yellow-winged Cacique  
Blue Grosbeak  
Hooded Oriole  
Brown Pelical  
Willet  
Blue-winged Teal  
Cinamon Teal  
Black Vulture  
Osprey  
Common Gallinule  
Collared Plover  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Least Sandpiper  
Dowitcher  
White-tipped Dove  
Cilac-crowned Parrot  
Groove-billed Ani  
Citroglime Trogon  
Rose-throated Becard  
Thick-billed Kingbird  
Wied's Flycatcher  
Mangrove Swallow  
Swainson's Thrush  
Black and White Warbler  
Northern Waterthrush  
Fan-tailed Warbler  
Rough-winged Swallow  
Cray Hawk  
Ring-billed Gull  
Foster's Tern

Yellow-rumped Warbler  
White-fronted Parrot  
Magnificent Frigatebird  
Olivaceous Cormorant  
Golden-Cheeked Woodpecker  
Longbilled Curlew  
Kiskadee Flycatcher  
Ruddy Ground Dove  
Least Grebe  
Anhinga  
Great Blue Heron  
Little Blue Heron  
Louisiana Heron  
Green Heron  
Yellow-crowned Night Heron  
Bare-throated Tiger Heron  
Boat-billed Heron  
White Ibis  
Rosettee Spoonbill  
Gadwall  
Northern Shoveler  
Short-tailed Hawk  
Rufous-necked Woodrail  
Northern Jacana  
Killdeer  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Western Sandpiper  
Stilt Sandpiper  
Blue-rumped Parrolett  
Mangrove Cuckoo  
Ferruginous Owl  
Green Kingfisher  
Vermillion Flycatcher  
Social Flycatcher  
San Blas Jay  
Blue Mockingbird  
Blue-grey Gnatcatcher  
Mangrove Warbler  
Wilson's Warbler  
Painted Bunting  
Painted Egret  
Double-crested Cormorant  
Bonapart's Gull  
Sanderling

Additionally, Bill Hoppes seen the Cotamundi, the raccoon, crocodiles, and the iguanas; wow what a trip that seems to have been; and 88 birds!!!!!!

Bill also said, " Seeing thirty Frigatebirds soaring over the bay in Mazatlan, and seeing wild parrots, and to see over thirty Jacanas in less than four hours, and to walk over a mile into the jungle and see the birds following a column of Army ants was quite an experience."



## Endangered Species Committee Refuses to Exempt Tellico Dam:

In the first session of its kind, the newly created Endangered Species Committee met on January 23, 1979, and voted to deny an exemption for the TVA's nearly completed Tellico Dam from compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Established through recent amendments to the 1973 Endangered Species Act, the cabinet level Committee was directed to consider exempting the project thereby ruling on the fate of the famous Snail Darter.

The unanimous decision by the Committee essentially stops completion of the dam and reservoir, which would have impounded the critical habitat of the snail darter along the Little Tennessee River. In motioning to deny the exemption, committee member Charles Schultz, Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors, questioned the cost-effectiveness of the Tellico project saying that, "the costs clearly outweighed the benefits. It would be difficult to say there are no reasonable and prudent alternatives to this project."

## Golden Eagle Protection Bill in Texas Legislature

Representative Ron Coleman of El Paso has introduced a bill in the Texas House of Representatives which would extend state protection to the Golden Eagles. Currently Federal law protects the Golden Eagle but Texas law does not (!), thus state game officers do not enforce the Federal law. In addition, the law would permit state game officials to assist in relocating problem birds.

----- Above articles by Bill Hoppe, Chapter Vice President -----

From the "pen" of the Chapter President:

### The pendulum swings: Between Joy and Disappointment.

Being President of our El Paso Trans-Pecos Audubon Chapter brings both moments of "Joy and Disappointment" It was "Joy" to see ten individuals get up early and go on the Aguirre Springs trip on 10 March; but it was "disappointment" to see the "small" group at our last monthly meeting (especially since we can and should have done better). It is a "joy" to see some new helpers; it is a "disappointment" not to be helped by many who could---and should--- help our chapter. It was a joy to hear from people who called and asked about joining our chapter, to tell them about the chapter and to send them newsletters and applications for membership; then, it was a (big) disappointment to get our mailing list and find that membership losses were as great as (or greater) than membership gains.

It is life to experience "joy and disappointment" but it is a mark of "progress" when joys outweigh disappointments. Let us all work together because what we need is "more joy."

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