

# the ROADRUNNER



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

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December 1983

## GENERAL MEETING

FRIDAY (repeat...Friday) DECEMBER 9, 1983, 7:30 PM GARDEN CENTER, 3105 Grant St. in Memorial Park will be the date and place of our annual pre-Christmas Count Bird Identification program to be given by Kevin Zimmer. Kevin is one of the most expert birders in our area, and his programs prove him to be a born teacher. Even if you do not plan to participate in the Christmas Count, you will enjoy and learn from his talk to us. Remember the change of meeting date! Friday, Dec. 9 at our regular meeting place

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

SAT., DEC. 17, 1983. EL PASO COUNT. The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) extravaganza will soon be on its way.

Each count will be one of about 1500 similar counts taken from Hawaii to Labrador, from Alaska to Venezuela during the count period Dec. 17 to Jan. 2.

The CBC is the big birding event of the year. Some see it as a group sporting event -trying to count more species. Others look on it as a social event-meeting old friends to compare sightings at the count-down. All find it fun to be out for a day of birding.

By tradition the "count area" is a circle of 15 mile diameter or roughly 177 square miles. It takes some planning and strategy to collect, in a single calendar day, the biggest possible list of birds in the designated area.

Each count compiler selects leaders to cover a given area. The leaders divide the participants into teams which fan out to count the number of individual birds as well as the number of species. Leaders are generally ones who know the birds and the territory. Newcomers are welcome and have a great opportunity to learn from veterans on a team. The count is open to all birders

who are willing to pay a \$2 fee to help defray the cost of publication. Even if you can't be out in the field on count day, you can contribute by recording observations in your yard. The Robin seen in your yard may be the only one seen on the count day, or an unusual bird may visit your feeder.

The El Paso count is centered on the South end of the Franklin Mts. It covers 3 states (Chihuahua, New Mexico and Texas) and 2 countries (Mexico and U.S.).

Joyce Davis (581-9470) is the compiler for this count. Please contact her if you can be on one of the teams. Elza Gilboe (772-1942) will be the feeder compiler. She will also be the clearing house for rare-bird reports. If you see anything unusual, call her and she will try to get an observer to confirm it.

Annamarie Shields will host the post-count pot-luck dinner (6 PM) at the Camelot Apts. Party Room, 4800 Stanton. People are welcome to arrive any time after 5 PM. Non-participants are invited for this "species countdown". J. Davis





SAT., DEC. 31, 1983. HUECO TANKS COUNT. Birders, do something different this New Year's Eve - spend the day outdoors counting birds, and then the (early) evening at a festive pot-luck dinner. This count is done in the famed Hueco Tanks rock pile itself and the surrounding areas, so, like the El Paso count, it includes everything from climbing rocks to scanning the open desert. Contact compiler Jo Warolin (532-4318) or come to the Dec. 9th planning meeting to be placed on the team in your area choice. We'll start gathering at Jane Fowler's home, 8212 Parkland Dr. (772-0296) at 5 PM. At 6 PM we'll have dinner, goodies and the species countdown. This count, the fee for which is \$2, will mark the 10th year of counting birds at Hueco Tanks. Reason? The number of birds there are to count.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON., DEC. 12, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet at the home of Gloria Basden, 6257 Bandolero, El Paso (581-2365). All members are welcome.



THANK YOU, RHEA!

A big "THANK YOU" to our petite and energetic Audubon Southwest Regional Representative, Rhea Copening. She was an added attraction at our Audubon Awards Dinner and on Monday at our regular meeting, in spite of a troublesome sore throat, she gave a thoroughly enjoyable program on the history of the Audubon Society. She indeed does us proud! /S.J.D.

#### AUDUBON AWARDS DINNER

Never has the Red Room at Gillespie's looked more attractive than it did Nov. 18th, thanks to Jane Fowler and Jo Nagel! There was 1 empty seat at the well-attended dinner to see the Audubon Awards presented to John Sproul and Harry Gordon. Non-members of Audubon and the Sierra Club were sent invitations printed by Trudy Berman. Thank you, Trudy. Berttye Barnhart, the reservations chairman, and a member of the selection committee, deserves double thanks for two jobs well done. The other members of the Awards Selection Committee were Jim Owens and Howard Reiquam. These 2 busy men attended meetings faithfully and gave valuable input. Last, but certainly not least, was

the contribution made by our gracious president, Joyce Davis. I applaud you all./Sara Jane Dodds  
Chairman of Awards Committee

Ed.note: Congratulations to all connected with the idea for and fruition of the Audubon Awards. Those of us attending the dinner were happy about the whole thing

#### FIELD TRIP FOLLOW-UP

The 4 participants on the Oct. 29 trip to Aguirre Spring enjoyed fine hiking weather (max. 65 F), beautiful views of low clouds playing hide-and-seek among the Organ Needles, and a profusion of late wildflowers. They even saw some birds. Acorn Woodpeckers, Scrub Jays, Mountain Chickadees and Bushtits were among the 17 species found./ J.Sproul

Feather in Your Cap Award goes to Rafaela Schuller, Joe and Naomi Borntreger, Jeannette Cole, Jo Warolin, Ray Ortiz, Joyce Davis, Jane Fowler, John Sproul, Ray Waite, Joe Guinn, Bart Rumaker, Sid Shepherd and Jo Nagel. All responded to the call for clean-up day at Feather Lake on Sat. Nov 5.

Sun., Nov. 6 11 gung ho hikers arrived at Tom May Park to ascend to Cottonwood Springs. All enjoyed the morning, and 13 species of birds were seen notable among which was a Hermit Thrush.





On Sun., Nov. 13, 17 people showed up for the lower Lower Valley Tour. We went to Madden Lake and ended at Tornillo holding ponds. 42 species were seen. Highlights were: a pair of Harris Hawks, a Magnolia Warbler, Bufflehead, Cormorants and a flock of Cattle and Anowy Egrets.

B. Johnson

Randel's Pool/Durling's Farm trip Nov. 19 was well attended by 15 people. The weather was nice but cold. Outstanding birds and first time sightings for several of our group were 2 Barn Owls in a silo near Vado, NM. For all of us a thrill came in visiting Helen Bigelow's home and seeing her patients and boarders among which were found Swainson's Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Red-tailed Hawks, Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel. Lucky are the injured birds who come into this gentle woman's hands. Thank you, Helen, for your hospitality to man and beast alike./ J.N.

#### AUDUBON COUNCIL OF TEXAS

##### The "Nongame" Fund

You can look it up. Right there in Chapter 11, Subchapter D of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code is the statutory language on the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund. Audubon chapters statewide worked long and hard this year to put that language on the books.

Now we have to make it work. Not surprisingly, how to make it work was a major topic at the Audubon Council of Texas (ACT) annual meeting in Austin on Oct. 15. And, not surprisingly, the delegates decided making it work should be ACT's top action priority for the year ahead.

The main source of revenue for the "Nongame" Fund will be sales of special wildlife art prints, decals and stamps. The first year of income for these items will be 1985, but the groundwork is being laid now. If we are to have a 1985 Texas

wildlife stamp, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission (TPWC) must decide soon how design and printing will be handled. To this end, ACT is working with Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (TPWD) staff on a design-and-printing proposal for the TPWC to consider at its January 1984 meeting.

That out of the way, ACT will get serious about publicity. A brainstorming session at the Oct. 15 meeting generated some fiendishly clever promotional ideas. With voluntary contributions the main source of funds, the public must know about the "nongame" program for it to succeed. The program has the potential to make the greatest contribution to wildlife in Texas history, and ACT intends that it do nothing less.

##### Other Highlights

The "Nongame" Fund was not the only item on ACT's agenda. In other business, the council:

- set additional priorities for the year ahead. Its 2nd priority will be support of John Bryant's H.R. 3788, a bill to add 65,000 acres in 10 east Texas areas to the Natl. Wilderness Preservation System. Its 3rd priority will be participation in 3 important review programs: the sunset review of the TPWD, review of the Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan, and revision of the Texas Water Plan.

- elected a new slate of officers. Becky Lasley of Austin is the new president; John Sproul of El Paso, the new vice-president; Former El Pasoan Bill Hunt, now of Abilene, is the treasurer; Laura Grantland of Corpus Christi, the secretary; and Susan Rust of San Antonio, the board member at large.

- was briefed on current activities of Texas Audubon chapters, land-protection programs of 4 chapters, and current statewide



conservation issues.

● learned that next year's South-west Regional Conference will be in Louisiana on June 1-3./ John Sproul

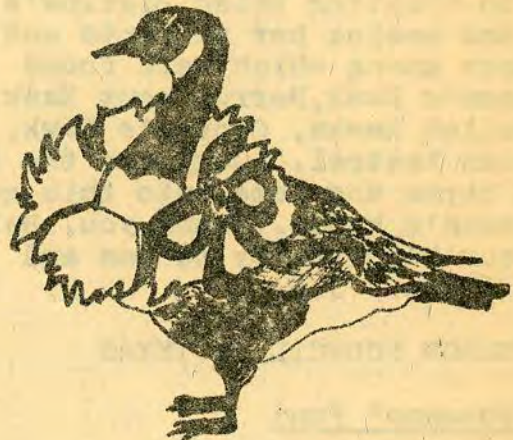
CONSERVATION CAPSULES

BOUNDARY PRESERVATION PROJECT: As expected, the Justice Dept. has filed a motion for dismissal of our lawsuit to force the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) to adhere to its original environmental-protection commitments on this project. The motion contends that the conservation groups who are the plaintiffs in the suit lack "standing", i.e. that they have not been directly injured or "aggrieved" by the IBWC's actions. Our response is in preparation.

RECYCLING: The latest changes in El Paso's recycling program (RR,Oct) are now in effect. Friday is the day, curbside the place. On Fridays, special Sanitation Dept. crews that collect only recyclables roam the city. Your job is to have your recyclables--newspapers in 1 bag, cans in another, corrugated cardboard in another--out at curbside for them to pick up by 7:30 AM. For this program, the city is split into 2 zones, Green and Orange. If you live in the Green Zone, your recyclables are collected on the 1st and 3rd Fridays each month. For folks in the Orange zone, it's the 2nd and 4th Fridays. The Sanitation Dept. is now distributing maps that show the zones. If you haven't received one, contact the department at 594-8625.

1080: On Oct. 31, Compound 1080, the highly poisonous compound banned from use in predator-control programs since 1972 took a big step to getting back out on the range.. Lee Thomas, an assistant administrator in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA),decided to allow resumed use of 1080 in single lethal dose baits and toxic collars to control coyotes and other predators. EPA Administrator,William Ruckelshaus, who was also EPA administra--

tor when the original ban was instituted in 1972 (RR,Sept.), had removed himself from the proceedings. Within minutes after Thomas signed the decision, A coalition of conservation groups, headed by Defenders of Wildlife, filed an appeal. So did the Pacific Legal Foundation, which wants even wider use of 1080. EPA still has to register 1080 for specific uses before it can be applied in the field. The specific terms of its use would be defined in the registration proceedings./J.Sproul



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Yes, I want to join the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Name .....

Address .....

City .....State.....

Zip .....Phone.....

Membership Category desired:

\_\_\_ Individual/\$25 \_\_\_ Family/\$32

\_\_\_ Sr. Citizen, Individual/\$17

\_\_\_ Sr. Citizen, Family/\$19

\_\_\_ Student/\$15

This is a \_\_\_ new \_\_\_ renewal membership.

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



ed as soon as possible, but many other factors are important as well, Call anytime (591-0421), I will enjoy hearing from you.

/Bettie Roberts, Observations Editor/

### ELECTIONS/BY-LAWS AMENDMENTS

1984. Leap Year. An Olympic year. Mr. Orwell's year. A presidential-election year? Not in our case, for Joyce Davis continues as chapter president in 1984. Our other officers will change, though. Our annual elections will take place at our Jan. 16, 1984 general meeting, and the Nominating Committee--Berttye Barnhart (592-3651), Sid Shepperd (566-2162) and Mysto Person (999-9999)--wants your ideas on suitable candidates. The positions open: president-elect, vice-president, and either secretary-treasurer or separate offices of secretary and treasurer, plus 3 elected directors.

The reason for the uncertainty is that the Board of Directors also proposes extensive revisions to our Constitution and By-laws. The vote on these proposed amendments will take place at the Jan. meeting, also. Most of the proposed changes merely revise format and wording to make the Constitution and By-laws clearer and more concise, but the Board does propose several substantive changes:

1. Split the office of secretary-treasurer into 2 offices, secretary and treasurer.
2. Add a provision to allow the general membership to petition for a special meeting of the chapter. (Currently only the President or Board of Directors can call a special meeting.)
3. Change the provision that permits up to 6 elected Directors (other than officers) to one that stipulates that there be 3 elected Directors on the Board.
4. Allow a person with 4 consecutive years on the Board to remain on the Board if he or she becomes president-elect. (The current By-laws prohibit anyone from serving more than 4 consecutive years on the Board, unless that person is elected president. The proposed change would extend this exception to the president-elect, also.)

5. State explicitly that all Board meetings are open to all members.

6. Assign the duty of budget preparation to the treasurer rather than the Finance Committee.

7. Rename the Finance Committee the Ways and Means Committee to reflect its exclusive concern with fund raising.

8. Include the Sanctuary Committee in the group of standing committees that have duties spelled out in the By-laws.

9. Identify our chapter's fiscal year as the calendar year.

10. Reduce from 2 to 1 the number of officer signatures required on checks, with the Board retaining authority to require more than 1 signature in special situations.

11. Require submittal of the proposed annual budget to the Board prior to the end of the previous fiscal year.

12. Require an annual audit of our financial records.

You can obtain copies of both the current Constitution and By-laws and the complete text of the proposed revisions from any Board member (see Directory on p.8). Do you agree with the proposed changes? Plan to vote "Aye" or "Nay" at our general meeting on Jan. 16, 1984. Then plan to vote for 1984-85 officers.

\* \* \*

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.

Ed. note: Members and RR subscribers who plan to move or have moved, please report your new address to Jane Fowler 8212 Parkland Dr., as soon as possible. You save the chapter money by doing so as we pay the post office 25¢ for each new address and returned newsletter. (Third class mail is not forwarded out of town unless the recipient pays for the postage.) We have gotten quite a few address changes lately from the PE and it is starting to add up. Please help save our chapter funds for more crucial matters. Thank you.

December 1983





OBSERVATIONS - October 19 to November 20

Although the "slow" trend continued during this observation period, the data reported produced some very good records, another "first" and 10 species of accidental or casual status. Still noticeably absent were the montane species reported for comparable periods the last 2 years.

LOONS - FALCONS

western Grebes were reported on 4 occasions with 3 seen at Fort Bliss Sewage Ponds (FBSP) 10/30 (BJ) and 11/20 (BJ,RW), 2 dark and 1 light phased at the McNary Ponding Area 11/13 (m.ob, fide JS), 1 dark phased at Tornillo and 2 at Socorro Sewage Ponds 11/20 (JS,JoD,RC). An Am. White Pelican with an injured wing (a possible gunshot wound) was observed in the Tornillo area 10/23 and reported to authorities that same day (JoD,SJD,Bar). On 11/20, the remains of a white pelican were found in the same area and quite likely those of the same bird (JS,JoD,RC). An imm. Double-crested Cormorant was at FBSP 10/30 (BJ), and 2 cormorant sp. at the McNary Ponding Area 11/13 (m.ob, fide JS). Cattle Egrets were noted in the lower valley 11/13 (JoD, m.ob) and at FBSP 11/20 (BJ,RW). Also on 11/20, 2 adult and 1 imm. Snow Geese were at Socorro Sewage Ponds (JS,JoD,RC). A male WOOD DUCK was observed at a pond near Anthony 11/5 (JoD,SJD). Both Ring-necked Ducks and Buffleheads were at FBSP 11/20 (BJ,RW). An Osprey, first seen in the Santa Teresa Country Club area 10/21, was noted there again 10/31 and 11/3 (TDB). A Cooper's Hawk was observed sitting in a field near the Old El Paso cannery 11/5 (JoD,SJD) and another in the upper valley 11/19 (JoD, m.ob). On 11/13, 2 Harris' Hawks were seen on Hwy. 20 near McNary (m.ob, fide JS).

QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

Of interest was a winter plumaged Black-bellied Plover at the Socorro Sewage Ponds 11/20, and 3 very late Am. Avocets at Tornillo on the same day (JS,RC,JoD). Also of interest was a Stilt Sandpiper at FBSP 10/30 (BJ). A single Ring-billed Gull was at the same ponds 11/7

and a winter plumaged Black Tern noted there 11/8 (BJ). Two Common Barn Owls were observed near Vado 11/19 (JS,m.ob). Very exciting was the MAGNIFICENT (Rivoli's) HUMMINGBIRD (3rd area record) that appeared at a Thunderbird Heights feeder 10/22 (FB). It was observed there twice again and photographed 10/23 (JS,et al) and last seen 10/24(FB). An Anna's hummingbird was at the same Thunderbird Heights address 10/18 (FB), 1 there 10/24 (JS,JN,JF), 2 seen daily as of 10/28, and 3 (1 an adult male) 10/31 (FB).

FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

A late Violet-green Swallow was at FBSP 10/30 (BJ). Very large numbers of Am. Crows (1000+) were observed in the fields bordering the river below Socorro 11/20 (JS,JoD,RC). This species has shown a considerable increase in numbers over the past 2 years. Only 10 Am. Robins were seen in the upper valley 11/19 (JS,m.ob) and 2 at FBSP on 11/20 (BJ,RW). A Sage Thrasher was at FBSP 10/23 and a Brown Thrasher noted there 11/7 (BJ). Six to 8 Cedar Waxwings were in the El Paso Country Club area 11/19 (JoD, m.ob).

WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

Top honors go to the male MAGNOLIA WARBLER (1st area record) carefully studied at FBSP 11/6 (BJ,BP). Another one was seen in the Tornillo area 11/13 (HA,SS,RW). On 11/14, a Yellow-rumped ("Myrtle") Warbler returned to a Mountain Park yard, 2 Sage Sparrows were at FBSP 11/20 (BJ,RW), and a female Hooded Oriole was still present in Mountain Park as of 11/3 (JB).

CONTRIBUTORS: Harry Assad, Flora Bittick, Janet Brockmoller, Rhea Copening, Joyce Davis, Tony DeBona, Sara Jane Dodds, Jane Fowler, Bob Johnson, Jo Nagel, Betty Pagel, Bart Rumaker, Sid Shepperd, John Sproul, Ray Waite.

Note: Your observation data is important and needed for the composite overall picture of records for our area. As always, rarities need to be report-





THE CHRISTMAS CATALOG

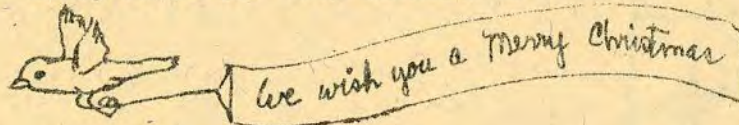
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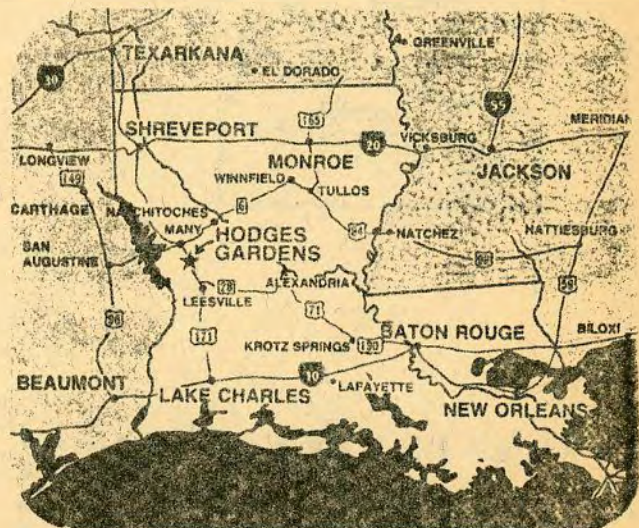
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1984 SOUTHWEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The National Audubon Society holds a national convention in odd-numbered years and devotes even-numbered years to regional conferences. Next year, the southwest Region will hold its conference in Louisiana, and plans are firming up fast. The dates: June 1-3. The place: Hodges Gardens and the adjacent Toro Hills Hotel in the rolling pinelands of west central Louisiana.

The Regional Conference has excellent vacation possibilities. The host Louisiana Audubon chapters plan both pre- and post-conference field trips, there is a variety of recreational and sight-seeing opportunities in the area, and the



1984 Louisiana World Exposition will be taking place in New Orleans. Watch the ROADRUNNER for more details.



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RAPTOR NEWSLETTER

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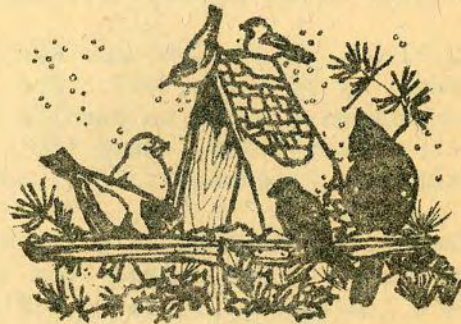
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THE LYAS, newsletter of the Natl. Wildlife Federation's Raptor Information Center, is sporting a new, expanded format. While emphasizing raptor research and management, it also reports on anything newsworthy relating to birds of prey. Published 3 times yearly, annual subscriptions are \$3 from: Natl. Wildlife Fed., Dept. 162, 1412 16th St., Nw, Washington, DC 20036.



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THIS SPACE RESERVED.

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ROBERT S JOHNSON  
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