

The Roadrunner

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society



* * OCTOBER SPECIAL * *

9th ANNUAL POTLUCK PICNIC

SATURDAY OCTOBER 14 AT FEATHER LAKE

The chapter will provide the burgers, dogs, and rolls, also the condiments to top them off. This is a family affair, so bring the kids and the in-laws, they all will enjoy the evening as the birds will be performing. We have booked a great act for this year, Yellow-headed Blackbirds circling in the air, American Coots doing a Water Ballet to the music of hundreds of ducks in the background.

Come about 4:30 PM, this will let you build up your appetite while walking around looking at the show. We will have the grill hot about 5:30 so all can eat after that. **Bring your own liquid refreshment** and we ask that you bring a **dish (salad, pasta, dessert or something else)** to share with about 6 others.

If you think you might be coming give John Sproul (545-5157) or Bob Johnson (757-1876) a call. If you have a sudden change of plans and haven't called, **come anyway**, we will have plenty of food.

OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY OCTOBER 16, 2000
Memorial Park Garden Center
3105 Grant Atreet 7:30 PM

SILENT AUCTION

A special feature of the evening. The chapter was bequeathed a large collection (over 150 pieces) of Bird Figurines, Bird Books, and Pictures, some originals. Come early so you can examine all, and **BID**.

We will also have program on **RIO BOSQUE PARK**, given by our own **John Sproul**. He is the Program Coordinator/Manager of the park which is located along the river in Socorro. It also has water and birds.

NOVEMBER 20th, GENERAL MEETING - SEE PAGE 2

Possible Concerns Regarding the Future of Feather Lake & Rio Bosque

During a recent City of El Paso Parks and Recreation Department Advisory Board meeting, there was brief mention of the possibility that the "City" might want to acquire a more active and pivotal role in the management/operations of these two sites. If you have comments or concerns regarding this, contact your Mayor & City Council Rep.:

	Phone/ Fax
Mayor Carlos Ramirez	541-4145/ 4501 Mayor@ci.el-paso.tx.us
Rep. Jan Sumrall, Dist. 1	541-4886 District#1@ci.el-paso.tx.us
Rep. Rose Rodriguez, Dist. 2	541-4996 District#2@ci.el-paso.tx.us
Rep. Larry Medina, Dist. 3	541-4572 District#3@ci.el-paso.tx.us
Rep. John Cook, Dist. 4	541-4140 District#4@ci.el-paso.tx.us
Rep. Presi Ortega, Dist. 5	541-4701 District#5@ci.el-paso.tx.us
Rep. Paul J. Escobar, Dist. 6	541-4182 District#6@ci.el-paso.tx.us
Rep. Luis Sarinana, Dist. 7	541-4108 District#7@ci.el-paso.tx.us
Rep. Elvia Hernandez, Dist. 8	541-4123 District#8@ci.el-paso.tx.us

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From the Presidents Aerie

- Yet another very rare bird has shown up in the area. A Long-tailed Yeager (Jim Paton had one at McNary in 1996). See storys next column and page 8.

Guest Columnist, Mary Lou Alcorn

CLOUDCROFT TRIP

The August 12th and 13th tour was birding at its best. Special thanks to Carole and Jay Fenberg our leaders. Jay guided the group to orchards in Haynes Canyon, then on to Sunspot where the trees and grounds were "alive" with birds. We toured the Observatory then lunch break at the picnic area.

On to Sixteen Springs canyon Road and a tree full of Yellow Warblers. Thanks to Audrey and Mose Corona for a Bed & Breakfast and a campsite. The Pot Lick Supper setting was spectacular in the spacious hillside home of the Fenbergs. Audrey Corona brought a freezer full of her special home made ice cream to top off a perfect day. Good friends, good birding and good food.

We tallied 52 species of birds, good sightings were, Hairy Woodpecker, Cassin's Kingbird, Band-tailed pigeon, Mountain Bluebird, Juniper Titmouse and Pigmy Nuthatch. Alas no Evening Grosbeak, but the best sightings were of a Male Hooded Warbler and a Montezuma Quail with 3 young.

NOVEMBER 20TH GENERAL MEETING

7:30 PM at the Memorial Park Garden Center, 3105 Grant St.

THE AUDUBON WETLANDS CAMPAIGN

Beth Lapin, Grassroots Coordinator

Audubon Wetlands Campaign, National Audubon Society

Wetlands are an Audubon priority nationally, at the state level and locally. In November, we're extremely fortunate to have Beth Lapin joining us to paint the big picture of Audubon's wetlands programs. Beth recently joined Audubon as Grassroots Coordinator in the Audubon Wetlands Campaign. She has a Master's Degree in Biology, another degree in community organizing, and over 20 years experience as a field biologist with the Nature Conservancy. She has lived in California, Colorado, Connecticut and Puerto Rico and has traveled throughout the U>S> and Central America. Plan to cap our special wetlands weekend (see p. 3) by welcoming Beth at our November 20 meeting.

THE LONG - TAILED YEAGER STORY

I went to the Fort Bliss Ponds the afternoon of August 31 to check on the Jaeger and to work on shorebird ID. At 3:05 I spotted the Jaeger (which still seem to have some oil on its chest) on the second pond (east side), called Mark Adams (who had left about an hour before) and Marcy Scott to report the Jaeger and 10 Red-necked Phalaropes (also 10 additional shorebird species, 6 Black Terns, Bank and N Rough-wing swallows, 5 warbler species, 2 Olive-sided Flycatchers, 3 Painted Buntings and other goodies). I had the pleasure of meeting Mark Adams a little before 6:00 PM and we relocated the Jaeger. Around 6:30 PM many of the shorebirds flushed and I looked around for a raptor. I located a large bird flying low over the NW edge of the pond, got the bird in my binos and noted that it was the Jaeger. I got great views of the tail and noted that the 2 central tail feathers extended noticeably (I would estimate ~ 1 1/2") from the others. The bird landed, then flew again and landed. I noticed Mark leaving the area close to where the bird landed and wondered why. I glanced to my right and noticed another large bird on the water, got in the binos and it WAS the original Jaeger. I glance towards the other one and shouted to Mark. He got both it spotted and then the original spotted and concluded that it was another Jaeger. I made some phone calls then began to study the bird. We both viewed it from different angles. We both separately concluded that it was a second dark morph juvenile Long-tailed Jaeger (we both seperatly WANTED to conclude that it was a Parasitic). I was able to note on both birds that the distance from the gonydeal angle to where the throat feathers stop on the base of the lower mandible was about 1/2 of the total bill length (thanks for the lesson Barry and Jim)! The tips of the feathers on the back of the second bird appeared to have a bit more buff color but overall the pattern seem to look the same as on the first bird. The upper tail coverts seemed to have the same proportion of black and white though not quite as evenly barred as the first bird. Richard Hermosillo and Marcy Scott arrived shortly after and both observed the bird. Both Mark and Marcy were able to see a pink rear toe and black front toes on the bird. The 2nd bird did not seem oiled, and after about 20 minutes of swimming around on the pond, and right about sunset, it took flight and looked as if it may have landed on the main pond. Jimmy Zabriskie; Canutillo, TX

"Editor - See story on page 8 by Mark Adams.

Desert Winds

by, John Kiseda

*Conservation Committee:

A birding guide to the Chihuahua region is being developed by a gentleman in Mexico, and to a certain degree, our chapter is going to be involved in this Mexico driven conservation project. If you have any "good" quality native bird slides that you would like to donate for use, or if you would like to help out with this project in any other manner, contact John Kiseda in the evenings at 533-4615 (phone and fax). A bird species list of needed slides is available upon request.

*Keystone Marsh:

The marsh continues to maintain fairly good water levels & a good number of shorebirds [including black-necked stilts] coots, snowy egrets and killdeer are currently at the marsh! Surprisingly, a few White-faced Ibis were seen at the marsh throughout the summer. Waterfowl species/numbers are still fairly low. A "pretty cool" Keystone sighting of this past summer was one of a long-billed curlew by Kathy Kiseda! Protection efforts for the wetlands & archaeological site continue, with more and more support coming from various governmental & non-governmental agencies, but help & \$\$\$ are still needed. Our chapter recently provided support to this great local conservation project with a \$1000.00 donation made possible by our chapter's great Birdathon 2000 efforts. If you want to help with the efforts to preserve the Keystone Marsh & archeological site, contact Bernie Sargent at 581-7099 or Carol Miller at 584-7088. You can also check out their web site at www.keystonepark.org

A call for your reports on bird sightings at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, Keystone Marsh and the Fort Bliss Sewage Ponds: If you go birding at these sites, please contact me and let me know what birds you saw during your trips. I am still attempting to "add to" the bird checklists that have been compiled for these two areas & there are still many gaps in the lists. For example, I have not yet been able to document that anyone has seen a ladderback woodpecker or any species of oriole, towhee or goldfinch at Keystone Marsh & I would think that some of these birds should have been observed using this site. I have received information from only a very few people and am still in need of whatever information YOU may have! Please send me information that you have regarding bird species seen, the dates of the observations, the numbers of individuals of observed, etc. Contact John Kiseda in the evenings at 533-4615 (phone and fax). THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!

El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

Board of Directors

President	Bob Johnson	757-1876
V-President	Weldon Fisbeck	581-0174
President Elect	Betty Fisbeck	581-0174
Secretary	**** volunteer needed****	
Treasurer	Hugh Jameson	751-7952

Committee Chairs

Conservation	John Kiseda	533-4615
Education	Elizabeth Chase	591-5119
Field Trips	Bob Johnson	757-1876
Hospitality	**** volunteer needed****	
Membership	Jane Fowler	598-2448
Programs	Nancy Wilson	877-4600
Publications	Kathleen Whelen	751-2408
Publicity	Roxanne Schroeder	534-7019
Sanctuary	John Sproul	545-5157

About the Roadrunner:

Roadrunner is your newsletter. We welcome your contributions. Contact Bob Johnson 757-1876 or Kathy Whelen 751-2408 email: whelenk@aol.com

GET READY FOR A WETLANDS WEEKEND

Local wetlands will be our focus November 18-20, when we host two wetlands workshops and Beth Lapin speaks on wetlands at our November meeting (see p. 1). Both workshops will be at Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, 9500 North Loop in El Paso.

The first workshop will be specifically for teachers and will emphasize using local wetlands as outdoor classrooms. It takes place Saturday, November 18, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information and to sign up, contact Elizabeth Chase at 591-5119 or ewchase1@msn.com. Space is limited to the first 15 who sign up.

The second workshop will be Sunday, November 19, from 1 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and will be open to anyone interested in working for wetlands locally. You'll learn about four local wetlands -- Feather Lake, the Keystone wetlands, Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, and the Fort Bliss Ponds -- and how you can get involved and help at each site. To sign up, contact John Sproul at 545-5157 or ae494@rgfn.epcc.edu.

FEATHER LAKE IN FALL

by, John Sproul

We've said it before: Feather Lake is a dynamic, changing environment. With water levels low most of last spring, cattails again expanded across much of the lake's east side. At the same time, the cottonwoods, willows and other native species we've been encouraging along the shoreline continue to gain in stature.

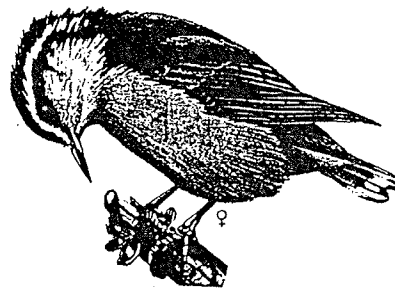
You'll want to view these changes for yourself. Fall is a great time to visit Feather Lake. It is open Saturdays from 8 a.m. to noon and Sundays from 2 p.m. to sunset. You'll also have three other excellent opportunities to visit in the next two months. Our annual potluck dinner at Feather Lake takes place Saturday, October 14 (see *On the Trail*). Our next sanctuary workday is Saturday, November 11 beginning at 2 p.m. And our special wetlands workshops will be November 18 and 19 (see page 3).

Remember, we need your help to keep Feather Lake open. Want to spend a relaxed, enjoyable morning or afternoon staffing our sanctuary during visitor hours? Please contact Charles Simpson at 598-2274.

Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave. Admission is free.

More Birdathon 2000 "Stuff"

Thanks to the efforts of our chapter & the support of our chapter's friends and sponsors, Birdathon 2000 enabled us to provide over \$5000.00 to state and local conservation endeavors. The Texas State Audubon office received well over \$3,000.00, the Rio Bosque Wetlands Project received \$1,000.00, and as noted elsewhere in this newsletter, Keystone Heritage Park, Inc. received \$1,000.00. The residual monies raised, will be used for El Paso/Trans-Pecos Chapter projects.



Red-breasted Nuthatch

FRANKLIN MTS. WILDERNESS COALITION DINNER

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon is a charter member of the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition, the group that has worked since 1978 to protect the scenic beauty and wilderness character of the Franklin Mountains. The Coalition will have a special dinner meeting on Friday, November 3, and you're invited! The event takes place in the Faculty/Staff Lounge in the Student Union at UTEP, beginning at 6:30 p.m. The featured speaker will be Rey Sierra, superintendent of Franklin Mountains State Park. You'll also enjoy the premier of the Coalition's new video, "What is the Future of Castner Range?", plus other surprises. The dinner is \$13 per person. Make reservations by sending a check, payable to "Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition", to Scott Cutler, Treasurer, FMWC, 112 Colina Alta, El Paso, TX 79912. Reservations must be received by October 29.

Support Local Wildlife Conservation Organizations

Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue, Inc. :

Board Meetings are all "open" meetings and held at the El Paso Environmental Center at 800 S. Piedras.

Visit the CDWR website at:
www.whc.net/cdwr

Visit the El Paso Zoo website at:
www.whc.net/epzoo

KEYSTONE MARSH

Contact: Carol Miller at 584-7088

Visit the KAPPA website at:
www.keystonepark.org

On The Trail

HAWK ALLEY AND THE PONDS

Good birds have been showing up at the ponds and along HAWK ALLEY, I saw a couple dozen *Swainson Hawks* recently also a *Prairie Falcon* and 2 adult *Golden Eagles*. Last week at the ponds I had 14 species of wading birds including a *Marbled Godwit*, also a couple *Black Terns*.

Date: **Sunday, October 8, 2000**
Time: **7:30 AM**
Meet at: Walmart, 4530 Woodrow
Bean/TransMt. Rd.
North end of parking lot.
Leader: *Bob Johnson (757-1876)*

LOMBARDY and SUNSET

We seem to be having an invasion of montaine birds, see the observation page. On this trip we have a good chance of seeing *Red-breasted Nuthatch*, *Pine Siskin*, *Cassin's Finch* and maybe *Red-crossbills*. *Lesser* and *American Goldfinch*, some *Towhees*, and maybe a late migrating *Warbler*.

Date: **Saturday, November 4, 2000**
Time: **7:30 AM**
Meet at: Crossroads ponding area.
Doniphan and Mesa.
Leader: *Bob Johnson (757-1876)*

FRIENDS OF HUECO TANKS

Admission: Hueco Tanks State Historical Park - \$4.
\$2 for Seniors 65 and older. Children under 12 FREE

Bird Identification Tours

Sunday October 15	8 AM
Sunday November 19	8 AM
Sunday December 17	8 AM

Check in at the Headquarters. Leader - Bob
"Wildbirder" Johnson.

FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS

We will hike around The TOM MAYS section of the Franklin Mountain State Park. The first part of the walk will be fairly level. The second half will be a moderately steep trail up to **West Cottonwood Springs**. For those that think its too tough we will have an excellant birder stay at the lower level. Birds to be seen will include *Black-chinned*, *Rufus-crowned* *Black-throated*, and *White-crowned Sparrows*. *Rock* and *Cactus Wrens*, and *Ruby-crowned Kinglet*.

Date: **Sunday, December 3, 2000**
Time: **7:45 AM**
Meet at: Entrance to Tom Mays on the
TransMt. Road. West side.
Leader: *Bob Johnson (757-1876)*

ANNUAL INTERPRETIVE FAIR

October 21st and 22nd, 2000

HUECO TANKS STATE HISTORICAL PARK

This will be the 6th Annual Interpretive Fair and will be held in conjunction with the LONE STAR LEGACY WEEKEND. Fair activities include *Birding tours, Rock Art Tours, Guest Speakers, Kiowa Dancers and Singers, Climbing Demo, Wagon Rides, Mescalero Apache War Dance, Folklorico Dancers, Santo Domingo Pueblo Dancers, Cowboy Singers and Storytellers, an evening Campfire Program.* Food and Crafts Sales.

FREE ADMISSION TO THE PARK

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Be prepared by marking your calendar now. The counts this year will probably be held on Saturday Dec. 16 and Saturday Dec 30.

OBSERVATIONS

July 16, 2000 to September 15, 2000

Uncommon, Rare, and Very Rare sightings

A very rare sighting has the full entry italicized, bold and underlined. Some of the listings may not be considered **RARE**, but because of the season or habitat the date and/or location will be **bold** and italicized. The very very rare also have a gray background. The listing of birds is determined using the checklist "Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas" 7th Edition, October 1987. Leave sightings at (757-1876) Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson, E-mail BobWildbirderJ@cs.com.

Observers: Mark Adams; Mary Lou Alcorn; Lois Balin; Helen Bigalow; Lois Blount; Toni Drake; Betty Fisbeck; Weldon Fisbeck; Jeff Groff; Madaline Gavit; Sallie Homan; Richard Hermosillo; Sue & Wally Hill; Bob Johnson; John Kiseda; Kathy Kiseda; Jim Paton; Ross Rasmussen; Patricia Russell; Lorraine Schulte; Marcy Scott; John Sproul; Jimmy Zabriskie; Barry Zimmer. Mob, many observers; -y, in their yard.

Locations: Ant-Anthony; ATS-Atlas; BSC-Boy Scout; CCA-Country Club Area; CRW-Crawford; EMY-Emory; FAB-Fabens; FLK-Feather Lake; FBP-Fort Bliss Ponds; FHC-Fort Hancock; HOR-Horizon City; HTK-Hueco Tanks; KNJ-Kenyon Joyce; KYM-Keystone Marsh; MCM-McCombs; MCN-McNary; STA-Santa Teresa Area; SRS-Stan Roberts Sr. SUN-Sunset; TNW-Tennis West; TON-Tonto.

GREBES to RAILS

Eared Grebe	7/30	BJ	FBP
	8/29	BZ	FBP
Great Blue Heron	8/7	BJ	FBP
	8/17	BZ	FBP
Great Egret	8/26	JS	FLK
	9/9	JS	FLK
White-faced Ibis	Var	Mob	FBP
(200)	9/9	JS	FLK
Greater White-fronted Goose	9/9	RR	FBP
Cinnamon Teal (F+7 duckling)	8/10	BZ	FBP
Gadwall	8/15	BZ	FBP
American Wigeon	8/11	BZ	FHC
Osprey	9/10	JP	MCN
<u>Swallow-tailed Kite</u>	<u>7/30</u>	<u>BF</u>	<u>SUN</u>
	<u>8/6</u>	<u>JP</u>	<u>BSC</u>
Mississippi Kite	Var	Mob	CCA
Northern Harrier	8/5	BJ	FBP
	8/15	PR	FBP
Sharp-shinned Hawk	9/13	HB-y	ANT
Cooper's Hawk	8/21	JK	FBP
	8/26	JP	FBP
Harris' Hawk	Var	BJ	MCM
	8/11	BZ	FAB
Golden Eagle	(2 Adults, 4 different days from 3-10 Sep.)		
		BJ	SRS
Peregrine Falcon	7/24	JP	MCN
Prairie Falcon	8/10	BJ	SRS
Sora	8/15	RR	FBP
Virginia Rail	9/15	BZ	FBP

SHOREBIRDS

<u>Snowy Plover</u>	<u>7/23</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>FHC</u>
Semipalmated Plover	8/29	BZ	FBP
	8/30	BZ	FHC
American Avocet	8/7	BJ	FBP
	8/25	RR	FHC
Lesser Yellowlegs	8/25	RR	FBP
	8/27	BJ	KYM
Solitary Sandpiper	8/21	JK	FBP
	8/27	RR	FBP
Willet	8/12	PR	FBP
	9/1	SH	FBP
Spotted Sandpiper	7/20	JP	MCN
Long-billed Curlew	7/20	JP	MCN
	8/3	JK	KYM
<u>Marbled Godwit</u>	<u>8/7</u>	<u>BJ</u>	<u>FBP</u>
	<u>8/30</u>	<u>BZ</u>	<u>MCN</u>
Semipalmated Sandpiper	8/10	BZ	FBP
	8/27	RR	FBP
Western Sandpiper	8/12	RR	FBP
Baird's Sandpiper	7/20	JP	MCN
	9/2	RR	FBP
Pectoral Sandpiper	9/2	RR	FBP
	9/14	BZ	FBP
Stilt Sandpiper	7/20	JP	MCN
	8/27	RR	FBP
Long-billed Dowitcher	7/20	JP	MCN
	8/27	RR	FBP
Wilson's Phalarope	7/21	BJ	FBP
<u>Red-necked Phalarope</u>	<u>9/1</u>	<u>JZ/MS</u>	<u>FBP</u>

OBSERVATIONS Continued

<i>Long-tailed Jaeger</i>	8/31	BJ	FBP
<i>(Identified by Barry Zimmer)</i>			
<i>a 2d bird</i>	9/1	JZ/MA	FBP
<i>(This bird flew in with observers present. See story page 2.)</i>			
<i>This is the 1st El Paso county and 2d checklist area record.</i>			

Gulls to Woodpeckers

<i>Laughing Gull</i>	7/20	JP	MCN
	7/22	RR	MCN
Ring-billed Gull	8/30	BZ	MCN
Foster's Tern	7/22	RR	FHC
	8/30	BZ	FHC
Black Tern	7/22	RR	FHC
	8/7	BJ	FBP
<i>Red-crowned Parrot</i>	8/3	WF-y	SUN
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	8/10	BZ	FBP
Calliope Hummer	7/23	KK-y	KNJ
	7/25	PR-y	STA
Broad-tailed Hummer	7/23	JK-y	KNJ
Belted Kingfisher	8/15	BZ	FBP
No.(Red-sh)Flicker	7/30	HB-y	ANT
Red-naped Sapsucker	9/15	BZ	FBP

Flycatchers

Olive-sided Flycatcher	8/15	BZ	FBP
Western Wood Pewee	8/10	BZ	FBP
Willow Flycatcher	8/15	BZ	FBP
	8/26	JS	FLK
<i>Least Flycatcher</i>	8/28	BZ	FBP
<i>Hammond's Flycatcher</i>	8/28	BZ	FBP
	9/2	RR	FBP
Dusky Flycatcher	9/12	BZ	FBP
Cordilleran Flycatcher	9/9	RH	MDR
Black Phoebe	8/5	BJ	FBP
	8/15	RR	FBP
Cassin's Kingbird	8/25	RR	FBP
	9/2	LB	FBP
<i>Scissor-tailed Flycatcher</i>	8/4	SWH/LS	FBP
	9/2	LB	FBP

Swallows and Jays

Bank Swallow	8/11	BZ	FBP
Cave Swallow	8/29	BZ	FBP
Black-throated Magpie Jay	Var	LB	TNW
	9/13	TD	CRW
Western Scrub Jay	9/9	RR	FBP
	9/15	BZ	FBP

Nuthatches thru Vireos

Red-breasted Nuthatch	8/17	PR-y	STA
	9/4	RR	FBP
White-breasted Nuthatch	9/3	BZ-y	TON
House Wren	8/26	JP	FBP
	9/4	RR	FBP
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	9/10	RR	MDR
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	9/4	RR	FBP
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	8/17	BZ	FBP
Hermit Thrush	9/15	BZ	FBP
Sage Thrasher	8/12	PR	FBP
	9/12	BZ	FBP
Plumbeous Vireo	8/28	BZ	FBP
Cassin's Vireo	9/3	RR	MDR
	9/9	JK	MDR
Warbling Vireo	8/10	BZ	FBP

Warblers

Orange-crowned Warbler	8/17	BZ	FBP
	8/27	RR	FBP
Nashville Warbler	9/4	RR	FBP
Virginia's Warbler	8/15	RR	FBP
	8/26	BF-y	SUN
Yellow Warbler	8/10	BZ	FBP
	8/12	PR	FBP
Black-throated Gry Warbler	8/11	BZ-y	TON
Townsend's Warbler	8/12	RR	FBP
	9/3	BJ	FBP
Grace's Warbler	8/28	BZ	FBP
American Redstart	8/23	KK-y	KNJ
	9/9	SH-y	LOV
<i>Prothonotary Warbler</i>	8/21	JK	FBP
	9/1	RR	MDR
Northern Waterthrush	8/15	BZ	FBP
	8/30	JG-y	ATS
MacGillivray's Warbler	8/26	BF-y	SUN
	8/26	JP	FBP
Wilson's Warbler	8/13	JP	FBP
Yellow-breasted Chat	9/4	RR	FBP
	9/15	BZ	FBP

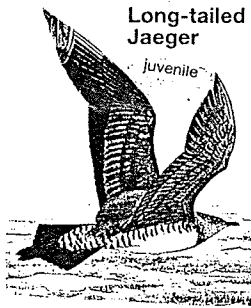
Tanagers thru Buntings

Summer Tanager	8/29	BZ	FBP
Western Tanager	8/9	KK-y	KNJ
	8/17	BZ	FBP
Black-headed Grosbeak	7/30	KK-y	KNJ
	8/17	BZ-y	TON
Blue Grosbeak	9/9	JS	FLK
Lazuli Bunting	8/18	BZ	FBP
	8/20	BJ	HTK
Painted Bunting	8/12	RR	FBP
	8/20	BJ	HTK

OBSERVATIONS Continued

Dickcissel to Junco

Dickcissel	8/28	BZ	FBP
	9/4	PR	FBP
Spotted Towhee	9/15	BZ	FBP
Green-tailed Towhee	9/10	RR	MDR
	9/14	KK-y	KNJ
Clay-colored Sparrow	9/9	JP-y	BSC
	9/10	LB	FBP
Cassin's Sparrow	9/15	BZ	FBP
Brewer's Sparrow	8/20	BJ	HTK
	8/29	BZ	FBP
Lark Sparrow	7/26	MG-y	HOR
Lark Bunting	8/5	BJ	MCB
	8/28	BZ	FBP
Savannah Sparrow	9/15	BZ	FBP
Lincoln's Sparrow	8/12	BZ	FBP
White-crowned Sparrow	9/14	BZ	FBP
Dark-eyed Junco	9/15	BZ	FBP



Meadowlarks thru Goldfinches

Eastern Meadowlark	7/24	JP	MCN
	8/30	BZ	MCN
Yellow-headed Blackbird	8/1	BJ	FBP
(500)	9/9	JS	FLK
Brewer's Blackbird	9/15	BZ	FBP
Orchard Oriole	Var	MLA	EMY
	8/15	RR	FBP
Scott's Oriole	8/29	BZ	FBP
<u>Red Crossbill</u>	<u>8/17</u>	<u>BZ-y</u>	<u>TON</u>
Pine Siskin	8/28	BZ	FBP
American Goldfinch	9/15	BZ	FBP

"Chasing the Long-tailed Jaeger" by Mark Adams

I recently travelled from my home in the Davis Mountains to the Fort Bliss sewage ponds in El Paso to see a very rare bird for Texas: a Long-tailed Jaeger. This bird was discovered by Bob Johnson on the afternoon of 31 August and was carefully studied by Bob, Barry Zimmer, Jim Paton, Jimmy Zabriskie and others.

As always, getting there was more than half the fun.

When I heard about the Long-tailed Jaeger on Friday morning 1 September, (via Jimmy Zabriskie's TEXBIRDS post and a private e-mail from Barry Zimmer), I decided that I had to find some way to try for the bird that day. Some ROADRUNNER readers know that I am doing a Texas Big Year. I could not let a Long-tailed Jaeger pass without a serious attempt to see it. So I started plotting Friday morning and managed to escape from work at 3:00 pm CDT, at which time I got in my Jeep Wrangler and started for El Paso. Fort Bliss is a 3 hour drive from my house at the McDonald Observatory.

Between the Observatory and I-10, a remote 40 mile stretch of TX 118, I drove through 15 miles of rain, with just the bikini top on my Jeep. I didn't want to stop and waste time putting the whole soft top up. A little rain is no problem!

BUT ... About 13 miles east of Van Horn, a metal strip on my Jeep, located above the windshield -- the "windshield channel" -- started working itself loose. This strip holds the front edge of my Jeep top down and in place. When I noticed the windshield channel coming loose, I started slowing down to pull off the interstate. But before I could get off the highway safely, the entire 6 foot long metal strip just up and blew off back over the Jeep! I stopped and searched for this piece, looking on the roadside and in the road, for 10 minutes (Remember, this is I-10 we're talking about here). But I could not find it. I declared this bit of Jeep hardware a casualty of my Texas Big Year effort, got back in the Jeep, and headed west again.

Continued on page 9

BUT ... I headed west too fast. A few miles east of Sierra Blanca, The Man appeared in my rear-view mirror, with his lights on, urging me to pull over. OOPS! 80 mph in a 70 mph zone. No mercy from the DPS. Just to make it more interesting, I did not have my current insurance card with me. Twenty minutes later, I was again on my way, \$105 lighter and saddled with a need to copy my auto insurance card for the Hudspeth County Justice of the Peace, so she could be certain I am an upstanding fellow and have insurance.

After the speeding ticket, I was upset with myself. I almost turned around I was so irritated. These delays and problems were consuming not only money but time. I was worried that I would not have enough time to search for the Long-tailed Jaeger before dark, especially if no one was looking for it except me (admittedly improbable). I had brought a change of clothes, however, and was prepared to spend the night in El Paso so that I could search for the bird again Saturday morning, if necessary. *Ed. note - The Yeager was not to be found on Sat. Morn.*

Despite my problems, I persevered and kept going to El Paso, though at the speed limit (well, maybe a wee bit more).

Until this trip, I had birded the Fort Bliss sewage ponds when flying in or out of El Paso on business trips to distant lands. This has usually meant staying at a hotel near the airport and driving to the Fort Bliss sewage ponds through the middle of the city. This time, since I was coming to Fort Bliss from the east, rather than from the airport, my plan was to take a shortcut (Loop 375) that skipped the busiest parts of El Paso. But I took the wrong exit from I-10. DON'T ASK! Eventually I found a policeman (sans radar gun). He gave me the directions I needed. But I lost ANOTHER 20 minutes.

I finally reached the Fort Bliss sewage ponds at 05:50 pm MDT. I had 80 - 90 minutes before the Sun would disappear behind the Franklin Mountains. Fortunately, I had called and reached Barry Zimmer, prior to leaving for El Paso. Though he did not know of any Friday observations of the bird, he did

provide detailed directions to the bird's location the previous day. I drove to the appropriate pond ("middle"), got out my scope and started looking. Jimmy Zabriskie soon pulled up behind my Jeep and introduced himself. He had recently seen the Long-tailed Jaeger and brought me the outstanding news that it was still present. We moved closer to the pond and found the first ("oiled") Long-tailed Jaeger almost immediately, near the pond's east shore. You likely know the rest from Jimmy's **TEXBIRDS** post. Most amazing was his discovery and our joint observations, with Marcy Scott and Richard

Hermosillo, of a second Long-tailed Jaeger that flew in and joined the first on the middle pond that evening.

We stayed at the sewage ponds until dark, observing these jaegers and other migrants. Then I joined Jimmy Zabriskie and Marcy Scott for a pleasant dinner at a nearby restaurant. Meeting so many interesting people and birders has been a real highlight of my Texas Big Year.

After dinner I drove home. I only had to drive through one rain shower with absolutely no top on the Jeep. Not much rain made it into the Jeep at 65 - 70 mph. I did some owling on the drive back along TX 118, in the Davis Mountains. I heard nothing but Western Screech Owl, but quite a few of them. I walked back in my front door, at the Observatory, at 02:30 am CDT.

The Long-tailed Jaegers and the Red-necked Phalaropes (a nice bonus) I saw at the Fort Bliss sewage ponds on Friday evening 1 September were both new year birds for me. After seeing these, my **TX Big Year** reached a pleasing new total of **456** species.

My Long-tailed Jaeger chase was a quick but interesting adventure. I extend sincere thanks to my fellow birders for their assistance, especially Jimmy Zabriskie and Barry Zimmer. I look forward to seeing my El Paso friends again soon.

Mark Adams; Fort Davis, TX; mta@astro.as.utexas.edu

Editor - As of October 3d Mark reports his TX Big Year is now at 463 species.

RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK

UTEP's Center for Environmental Resource Management offers free walking tours twice each month and also holds monthly community workdays at the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park in El Paso's Mission Valley.

Coming up:

- * 9 a.m. Sat., Oct. 14 (Workday)
- * 4 p.m. Sun., Oct. 15 (Introduction to Rio Bosque)
- * 8 a.m. Sat., Oct. 21 (Rio Bosque Birds)
- * 3 p.m. Sun., Nov. 5 (Birds)
- * 9 a.m. Sat., Nov. 11 (Workday)
- * 9 a.m. Sat., Nov. 18 (Introduction)

For all of these activities, the meeting place is a bridge crossing Riverside canal. To get there from I-10, take Americas Ave. (Loop 375) to Pan American Dr., turn left onto Pan American and travel 1.5 miles to the bridge. Please be prompt

Information: (915) 747-8663.

Would you like to send a Message to Bob
E-Mail bobwildbirderj@cs.com

CALENDAR

Oct 2000

- Sun. 8 - Field Trip - Hawk Alley/FBP - 7:30 AM
- Mon. 9 - Board Meeting - El Paso Zoo - 7PM
- Sat. 14 - Annual Picnic - Feather Lake - 4:30+ PM
- Sun. 15 - Bird ID Tour - Hueco Tanks - 8 AM
- Mon. 16 - General Meeting - Garden Center - 7:30 PM

Nov 2000

- Sat. 4 - Field Trip - Lombardy/Sunset - Crossroads 7:30AM
- Sat. 11 - Help out at Feather Lake - 2 PM
- Mon. 13 - Board Meeting - ?? - 7 PM
- Sat. 18 - Teachers Wetland Class - Feather Lake - 8 AM
- Sun. 19 - Bird ID Tour - Hueco Tanks SHP - 8 AM
- Sun. 19 - Community Wetland Conf. Feather Lake - 1:30 PM
- Mon. 20 - General Meeting - Garden Center - 7:30 PM

Dec 2000

- Sun. 3 - Field Trip - Franklin Mts. - Tom Mays - 7:45 AM
- Mon. 4 - Board Meeting - Mary Lou Alcorns - 6 PM
- Mon. 11 - General Meeting - Garden Center - 7:30 PM

HUECO TANKS STATE HISTORICAL PARK
Rock Art Tours: Every Sat. & Sun. at 10 AM & 2 PM

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