

the ROADRUNNER



newsletter of the
El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society
P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986

Editor: Sarah Dodds

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Volume 12, Number 2

GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 1982, 7:30 PM, Garden Center, 3105 Grant St. in Memorial Park. The program will be on the lower valley OMAR N. BRADLEY MEMORIAL RIVERPARK. The idea of a riverfront park through El Paso has been talked about for over twenty years. Now it is moving beyond talk and into the planning stages.

What sort of development is envisioned? Where does the Rio Bosque Park fit into the picture? Who is going to pay for it all? Our February general meeting will give some answers.

Suzie Gardy, one of the key movers behind the proposal, will present a slide-illustrated introduction to the riverpark idea. We will see what the early planning has produced and what lies ahead. Our EP/TPAS Board has endorsed the riverpark proposal. Come learn why!

This meeting is also our Annual Meeting and installation of officers. Our out-going officers deserve a rousing cheer of gratitude and appreciation. Our incoming officers deserve our help and cooperation. #

AUDUBON FILMS SCHEDULED

THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY, 7:30 PM, Garden Center, 3105 Grant St. in Memorial Park. At this special program, the Audubon Ark will show two films, LAST STRONGHOLD FOR THE EAGLE and PROJECT PUFFIN. The eagle

(continued next column)

AUDUBON FILMS (continued)

film focuses on the phenomenal winter concentration of Bald Eagles in Alaska's Chilkat Valley. Upwelling warm water keeps a 3 - 5 mile stretch of the Chilkat River open all winter, and up to 3,500 eagles gather to feast on spawned-out chum salmon.

From Alaska, the second film goes to Eastern Egg Rock in Maine where Audubon biologists are working to reestablish the Atlantic Puffin as a breeding species. PROJECT PUFFIN tells the tale of a project that in 1981 saw puffins nest on the island for the first time since the 1800's. This is a new film, released just this month, and just may not be available to us. If not, a slide presentation on endangered species will be our second feature. #

FIELD TRIPS

SUNDAY, 14 FEBRUARY. RANDEL'S POOL/DURLING'S FARM. Meet at 8 AM at the Good Time Store, 1098 Country Club Road in the upper valley. Great Blue and Green Herons, accipiters, Ferruginous Hawk, Common Snipe and White-throated Sparrow are all possibilities. We'll walk 2+ miles. Lunch optional. Leader: Jeff Donaldson (755-2455).

(Field Trips continued on page 2)

FIELD TRIPS continued

SATURDAY, 20 FEBRUARY. BEGINNERS FIELD TRIP. Can't tell a Northern Shoveler from a snow shovel? Then be at the Bella Napoli Restaurant, 10600 Montana at 7:30 AM. We'll go to Hueco Tanks for this first in a series of beginners-only field trips. The emphasis will be on the basics of bird watching and on how to recognize different families of birds. Bring a lunch and plan to walk 2+ miles. Leader: John Sproul (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w).

(Note to beginners from the editor: John Sproul is that rarest of rare beings, a born teacher. He is one of the best birders in our group and his tact and patience are legendary. GO FOR IT!)

SATURDAY, 27 FEBRUARY, APACHE SPRING in the northern Franklin Mts. Meet at 7:30 AM at the Wilderness Park Museum, 2000 Transmountain Rd., east side of the Franklin Mts. There is a 1½ mile walk to the spring. En route, we'll look for Golden Eagle, Curve billed and Crissal thrashers, Lesser Goldfinch, 3 different towhee species and who knows what else. Leader: Peggy Heisel (821-0989). #

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MONDAY, 8 FEBRUARY, 7:30 PM. The Board will meet at the home of Sarah Jane Dodds, 2809 N. Florence, El Paso (533-7990). This will be the last meeting of the present Board; their attendance is mandatory. All others are welcome. Approval of a 1982 chapter budget which is presented for the perusal of the membership on a following page will be on the agenda.

#

AND THE WINNERS ARE

Elected by acclamation at our January general meeting were these 1982-83 chapter officers: President - - - John Sproul (serving the 2nd year of the 2 year term of office)
Vice-President - Janø Fowler
President-elect - Peggy Heisel
Treasurer - - Jp Ellen Warolin
Congratulations to all! Our thanks to the Nominating Committee--Berttye Barnhart, Bob Johnson and David Weinstein--for securing such qualified candidates. #

HIGH FINANCE

On the following page is our chapter financial statement for 1981 and a draft budget for 1982. Looking at 1981, there are several things we can be pleased with. First of all, we're solvent. But also, for the first time in recent memory, the majority of our income came not from member dues but from our own fund-raising activities. If you didn't know it already, Ep/TPAS is an active, hardworking group.

In 1981, as in years past, the newsletter and Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary claimed the lion's share of our expenses, a pattern we expect will continue in 1982. Program expenses for general meetings shot up from \$38 in 1980 to \$456 in 1981, due largely to our importing Noel Snyder for a special California Condor program. In 1982 we anticipate more modest program expenses, but no lessening of the quality of our programs. The big budget item for 1982 will be improvements at Feather Lake. Also slated for increases are conservation and educational programs and our chapter library. Your input is encouraged. /John Sproul

EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY
1981 FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND 1982 DRAFT BUDGET

	For the Years Ended 31 December	
	1981	1982
	<u>(Actual)</u>	<u>(Proposed)</u>
INCOME		
Member dues	\$1,397	\$1,500
Contributions	571	200
Sales (books, plants, etc.)	183	200
Rummage sales	511	400
Newsletter (subscriptions, ads)	73	60
Book fair	-	378
Birdathon	392	400
Interest	60	60
	<u>3,187</u>	<u>3,198</u>
EXPENSES		
General meetings:	593	380
Hall rental	120	135
Program	456	220
Hospitality	17	25
Administrative:	364	330
Mailing/office supplies	105	60
Gifts and awards	122	50
Other chapter administrative	121	120
Audubon Council of Texas	16	100
Newsletter:	667	565
Mailing permit	-	40
Postage	150	175
Mailing labels	100	100
Materials (stencils, ink, paper)	417	250
Feather Lake:	897	1,013
Lease	5 ^a	-
Liability insurance	168 ^b	168
Utilities	708 ^b	345 ^c
Improvements	16	500
Conservation:	195	250
ASARCO hearing	130	
Texas Nature Conservancy	25	
Other	40	
Education	48	100
Fund raising (items for resale)	121	150
Library	20	100
	<u>2,905</u>	<u>2,888</u>
EXCESS, INCOME OVER EXPENSES	282	310
FUND BALANCE, BEGINNING	<u>1,395</u>	<u>1,677</u>
FUND BALANCE, ENDING	<u>\$1,677</u>	<u>\$1,987</u>

a - Payment for 5 years, 1981-1986.

b - Includes \$95 credit accrued by caretaker in 1980 and \$135 reimbursed by caretaker in 1982; Chapter's normal share of utility expense is \$480.

c - Chapter will pay \$480 in 1982; caretaker has paid \$135 in 1982 for 1981 expenses; \$480 - \$135 = \$345.

1981-1982 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Christmas came both early and late for El Paso birders, as they turned out in force to enjoy our two Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs). Our thanks go to: Madeline and Al Gavit and Kris and Leon Kohlhoff for hosting the post-count dinners, Phelps Dodge and Sunland Race Track for access to their grounds for the El Paso CBC, T. Bunn & Sons and the Tigua Indian Tribe for access during the Hueco Tanks CBC, and Craig Phelon of the EL PASO TIMES for the excellent count publicity.

EL PASO COUNT - 19 DECEMBER

The weather was good: temperature 34-65° F, winds SE 0-8 mph, mostly clear in the AM, partly cloudy in PM, no rain. The participation was great: an all-time high 39 observers. But at day's end the common refrain was, "The birds just weren't there." Our totals of 8054 individual birds and 88 species were down from 8887 birds and 92 species a year ago. The species total was the lowest since 1971.

What caused the drop? From 1974 to 1979, we averaged 14 duck species per count. In 1980 we fell to 10. This year, it was 7. Incredibly, we missed Green-winged Teal for the first time ever on an El Paso CBC. Also, owls were down from 3 species to 1, and we missed several expected birds such as Ring-billed Gull and Brown-headed Cowbird.

But enough of this grouching! Consider the highlights: We equaled or exceeded our all-time highs for Red-tailed Hawk, Greater Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Cactus Wren, Brown Thrasher, Crissal Thrasher, Lesser Goldfinch and Brown Towhee. We did well in the montane-bird department, picking up Scrub Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Siskin and Red Crossbill, all of which we missed last year. The siskin and crossbills

EL PASO COUNT (continued)

were the first since 1973. We got our first CBC record for White-necked Raven since 1963, our first for Sora since 1956 and our first for Greater Yellowlegs since 1939. And, even though it's not included in the results because it was probably a released bird, one count team was startled to find a CHUKAR feeding with a group of Gambel's Quail in the Mountain Park neighborhood! /John Sproul, Compiler/

EL PASO CBC RESULTS

Pied-billed Grebe 1; Heron: Great blue 2, Green 2; Snow Goose 12; Mallard 24; Gadwall 35; Pintail 10; American Wigeon 220; Northern Shoveler 80; Bufflehead 6; Ruddy Duck 15; Hawk: Sharp-shinned 4, Cooper's 3; Red-tailed 14; Ferruginous 1; Golden Eagle 2 ad Marsh Hawk 4; PRAIRIE FALCON 1 (JG et al.); American Kestrel 40 falcon, sp. 2; hawk sp. 2; Quail Scaled 117, Gambel's 128; SORA 1 (JDIP); American Coot 11 (low); Killdeer 72; Common Snipe 1; GREATER YELLOWLEGS 5 (EK); Least Sandpiper 484; Dove: Rock 673, White-winged 37, Mourning 310, Ringed Turtle 1 (ELG), Inca 135;

Roadrunner 4; Burrowing Owl 2; Anna's Hummingbird 2; Selasphorus, sp.1; hummingbird, sp. 1; Belted Kingfisher 4; "Red-shafted" Flicker 33; Ladder-backed Woodpecker 5; Phoebe: Black 4, Say's 5; Scrub Jay 15; jay, sp. 2; White-necked Raven 20; Verdin 5; Red-breasted Nuthatch 1; Wren: Bewick's 4, Cactus 35, Long-billed Marsh 1, Canyon 6, Rock 25; wren, sp. 4; Mockingbird 26; Thrasher: Brown 4; Curve-billed 5, Crissal 25; American Robin 31; Hermit Thrush 2; Ruby-crowned Kinglet 42; Pipit 5 (low); Loggerhead Shrike 1; Starling 85;

"Audubon's" Warbler 68; House

(continued next page)

EL PASO CBC RESULTS (cont.)

Sparrow 1287; Western Meadowlark 86; Blackbird: Yellow-headed 20; Red-winged 224; ORIOLE, SP. 1 (JB); Brewer's Blackbird 598; Great-tailed Grackle 272; Pyrrhuloxia 34; House Finch 1117; PINE SISKIN 1; Goldfinch: American 8, Lesser 54; RED CROSSBILL 5 (JA et al.); Towhee: Green-tailed 1, Rufous-sided 30, Brown 19; Lark Bunting 180; Sparrow: Savannah 2, Rufous-crowned 9, Black-throated 275; Junco: "Oregon" 205, Gray-headed 33; junco sp. 10; Sparrow: Chipping 17, Brewer's 91, Black-chinned 1; White-crowned 419; Song 17; sparrow, sp. 100.

TOTAL: 88 species; about 8054 individuals. (Incount area during count week but not seen count day: Cedar Waxwing.)

PARTICIPANTS: Joseph Arteaga, Martha and Berttye Barnhart, Helen Barto, Flora Bittick, Janet Brockmoller, Gary Burleson, Jean and John Coyle, Joyce Davis, Joseph DiPasquale, John Dixon, Sarah Dodds, Bob Dukes, Donna Elliott, Jane Fowler, Al Gavit, Ed and Elza Gilboe, Joe Guinn, Magdalena Heisel, Howard Jackson, Bob Johnson, Earle King, Jo Nagel, Mary Patterson, Ed and Shawn Pierce, Jim and Mollie Polk, Peter Riede, Sid Shepperd, Frank Smith, John Sproul (compiler), David Steinbach, Lucile Swick, Al and LaVon Warfield, Jo Warolin. #

HUECO TANKS COUNT - 2 JANUARY 1982

This count will be given in next month's newsletter. 53 species were seen. #

SIERRA CLUB MEETING

WEDNESDAY 24 FEBRUARY, 7:30 PM, 1. Paul's Methodist Church, 7000 Edgemere. Want to learn what equipment knowledgeable hikers are using these days? Come to the Sierra Club annual Show-n-Tell. #

FIELD TRIPS FOLLOW-UP

On November 21st, 1981, nineteen participants drove to the lower valley for a most satisfying day of birding. 49 species were seen in all, including Bonaparte's Gulls, Water Pipits, Greater Yellowlegs, and a Great Egret.

Seven birders made the Lake Holoman field trip December 5, 1981. We had a cold morning with a smattering of rain, but were fully rewarded for braving the elements by our sightings of 3 Hooded Mergansers, an immature Whistling Swan, and a Great Horned Owl at very close range.

A total of 26 species were seen. We can also attest to the skill of David Weinstein at opening a locked car with a wire hanger. Our thanks to Forrest Sprester, trip leader and Public Health and Environmental Officer for Holoman AFB, for taking time out to show us a new birding area.

Some 37 birders from El Paso and 1 from Zuni, N.M. made the trip to Bosque del Apache on January 16-17. The birds and weather were at their best (many and sunny). Among the most notable species seen: Whooping Cranes, Bald Eagles, an American Bittern and a Hairy Woodpecker. We saw 59 species on a memorable weekend in one of the Southwest's choicest birding areas. /Jane Fowler/ #

RUMORS OF RUMMAGE

The rummage inventory is at an all-time high, and everything must go! At least that's what the folks who store our junk for us say. So 7 February is the day and Woolco on Dyer is the place for our first 1982 rummage sale. Deliver your discards to Jane Fowler (772-0296), Joe Guinn (566-8438) or Peggy Heisel (821-0989), or call for our handy pick-up service. #

OBSERVATIONS 12/20/81 - 1/18/82

Reports during this period remain consistent with the expected species for this area, and the always hoped for rare or unexpected birds are rare indeed. There are, however some very interesting observations to be noted.

HERONS THROUGH FALCONS:

On 1/18, two Great Blue Herons were observed in the upper valley near Westside Rd. (JD). A single Canada Goose was seen at a pond off Gary Lane on 1/10 (JS,JD). Still present and observed again at Surratt's Pond on 1/6 was the male European Wigeon (KZ, fide JS). Greater than usual numbers of some species were reported seen at Feather Lake on 1/9, with approximately 115 Ring-necked Ducks, 2 male and 9 female Common Merganser noted in particular (JS). A Golden Eagle was seen near Newman Road on 1-13 (JD). An Osprey was observed roosting at the bosque near Randal's Pool on 1/12 (JD, fide JS). On 1/13, a single Prairie Falcon was sighted in northeast El Paso off McCombs Road (JD).

RAILS THROUGH SWIFTS:

Surprising was the Virginia Rail observed in an irrigation ditch near Tornillo on 1/6 (KZ, fide JS). A "goodly" group of 25 Common Snipe were seen at the corner of Country Club and Doniphan on 1/10 (JS,JD). On 1/6, a single Herring Gull was observed near Fort Hancock (KZ, fide JS). Unusual for an urban area were the 2 Great Horned Owls in an east El Paso yard on 1/7 (JL, PL), and on 1/13 a Short-eared Owl was seen in northeast El Paso off McCombs Rd. (JD). A number of White-throated Swifts were noted in the upper valley on 1/10 (JS,JD).

PASSERINES:

On 1/14, 13-14 Mountain Chickadees appeared at a feeder in a northeast El Paso yard, but most surprising were the 2 PLAIN TITMICE that appeared with them. (JB). This is the first sighting for this species in

PASSERINES: (continued)
many years. The only Western Bluebird report for this period is the flock of 20 seen in northeast El Paso on 1/13 (JD). A gnatcatcher species was also seen and heard in that area on the same day (JD). On 1/9, a male Common Yellowthroat was observed at Feather Lake (JS). Flocks of Eastern Meadowlark were observed and heard singing in the southeastern section of Hueco Tanks State Park on 1.17 (BZ,JD). The female Hooded Oriole reported last month as tarrying in a northeast El Paso yard disappeared briefly but returned on 1/3 and was still present on 1/14 (JB). On 1/17, two Cassin's Sparrows were observed just outside Hueco Tanks (BZ). A Swamp Sparrow was seen in an irrigation ditch near Tornillo on 1/6 (KZ, fide JS). Outside of the checklist area but worthy of note were the 100 Chestnut-collared Longspurs seen in the Jornada Exposition Range northeast of Las Cruces on 1/9 (KZ, fide JS).

List of observers: Janet Brockmoller, Jeff Donaldson, Joe Lykins, Phoebe Lykins, John Sproul Barry Zimmer, Kevin Zimmer.

/Bettie Roberts/ #

THANK YOU, BETTIE!

We want to thank Bettie Roberts for her crisp, well-written observations reports these past two months. To make an interesting narrative, in the correct order yet, from a random list of birds, is no small chore. How fortunate we have been to have the quality observations editors we've had in the past.

Now we welcome Barry Zimmer to this post. Barry is a student at UTEP and one of the best birders in our area. Report all your noteworthy sightings to him at 545-5184. #

(continued next column)

THE BEST IS YET TO COME - -

NAMELY, THE AUDUBON ARK ! !

THE WASHINGTON SCENE

The Audubon Ark will be in port at Bassett Center Mall from February 24th through 27th. Don't miss this professional exhibition on the endangered species of wildlife, paid for by the Celanese Corporation.

The ark has something for everyone; thought provoking, eye-catching displays, electronic quiz board games for children and plenty of free literature on Audubon activities. The co-captains of the Ark are Tom Troy and Gloria Hanley; Tom is pictured below. They will be spreading the word "By learning to respect the complexity of nature and to consider the consequences of our actions, we can ensure a safer future for all living things, including ourselves."

Our chapter display will show local activities with particular emphasis on Feather Lake. Volunteers to man the booths are still needed. Please contact Kris Kohlhoff (581-3565) of John Sproul (545-5157) if you can come aboard!

/Kris Kohlhoff/



The Audubon Ark--a traveling mini-museum devoted to informing Americans about endangered species of wildlife and why they matter--was launched at the Estes Park convention. The ark is a van carrying a portable display. It set out from Colorado on a three-year tour of the country. The exhibit will be set up in communities along the way.

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Do you have old Audubon magazines you no longer need? The Membership Committee will gladly take them off your hands. They are particularly interested in the May 1981 issue. Please call Jo Warolin (594-7318).

The 97th Congress is now in its second session, with the Reagan administration's attack on environmental safeguards showing no signs of waning. That attack extends to the Clean Air Act and the Endangered Species Act, both up for reauthorization this year. Both can remain strong, effective laws, but only if an informed public speaks out on their behalf. To keep you informed and to encourage you to speak out, our chapter has designated a pair of special coordinators, Joe Lykins (598-6694) for the Clean Air Act and Diane Dutton (532-7546) for the Endangered Species Act. They will report in the Roadrunner on the progress of efforts to keep these laws intact and will let us know when letters to elected representatives are needed. For more information on these two acts, call on Joe Lykins or Diane Dutton. #



UP, UP AND AWAY

The latest round of postal rate increases has prompted a subscription rate increase for the Roadrunner. Next month, it will go from \$3 to \$4 per year. Renew now and you can still get the \$3 rate. Send checks, payable to El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society, to RR Editor, P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79-986. Of course if you are a member of EP/TAS, you will receive the ROADRUNNER as a pre-paid service and you needn't subscribe. #

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Yes, I want to join the El Paso/
Trans-Pecos Chapter of the Na-
tional 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

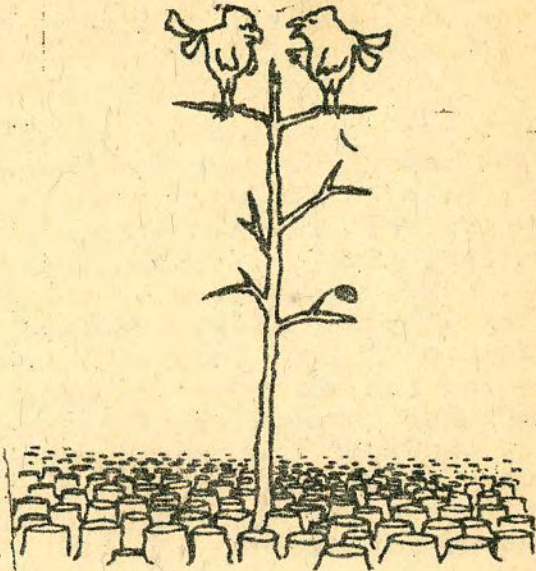
This is a new renewal member-
ship.

Please make your checks payable
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Mail to Jo Ellen Warolin, 8404
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I think it's time we joined
the Audubon Society!



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