

the ROADRUNNER.....



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

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June 1983

GENERAL MEETING

You're all excused for summer vacation. Come back in the fall for the interesting program being prepared for you, MONDAY 19, SEPTEMBER. #

FIELD TRIPS

BREAKFAST AT WILDERNESS PARK MUSEUM, SUN., JUNE 5. We will meet at the Museum (on Trans-Mtn. Rd.) at 6 AM. Bring breakfast ready to eat or to cook. Birding in the area will follow. Leader: Joe Guinn (566-8438). #

S.E. NEW MEXICO HERONRY, SAT. SUN., JUNE 11-12. Meet at 6:30 AM at Bella Napoli Restaurant, 10600 Montana. Rattlesnake Springs, Cave Swallows at Carlsbad Caverns, and a large heronry near Loving, all will be part of this s.e. New Mexico weekend. The heronry boasts 500-1000 nesting birds, mostly snowy Egrets and Black-crowned Night-Herons, and in recent years has gained notoriety for its nesting records of Little Blue and Tricolored (=Louisiana) herons. Prominent New Mexico birder Steve West, who bands young in the heronry, will be our expert guide. Camp with us at Pine Springs Campground in Guadalupe Mts. Natl. Park or stay at a Carlsbad motel. Leader: John Sproul (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w). Please call John for necessary sartorial guidance if you plan to go. ##



LOWER GILA RIVER VALLEY, NM, SAT. SUN., JUNE 18-19. Those folks wanting to travel in a group will meet at the junction of Trans-Mt. Rd and I 10 at 7:45 AM on Saturday. If you are traveling separately we will meet at the junction of U.S. 70 and State Rd. 90 2.5 mi north of Lordsburg at 12:30 PM. For those who'd like Sat. night indoors there are a number of motels available in Lordsburg and which are the HOLIDAY and THE AMERICAN, a Best Western. The campers will travel north on State Rd. 90 for about 13 mi go 0.3 miles beyond Grant/Hidalgo county line, turn left on dirt road (Forest Rd. #859), then go 0.1 mile, take right fork and there you should see a camping area under large trees. We should see warblers, Vermillion Flycatchers, Black and Zone-tailed Hawks, Ground Dove, and will look for Abert's Towhee and many others. Leader: Bob Johnson (751-0125) #

RIO BOSQUE PARK, SAT., JULY 9. Meet at 6 AM at Feather Lake, 9500 N. Loop Rd., 0.3 miles n.w. of Americas Ave. Plan on about 2.5 miles of walking and 3 hours of birding in this lower-valley park where Yellow-billed Cuckoos and Painted Buntings are among the summer residents. Leader: John Sproul (545-5157 h, 541-6126 w).

SACRAMENTO MTS., NM. SAT.-SUN.,
JULY 23-24. Meet at 7:30 AM at
K-Mart 9484 Dyer. Accomodations
in Cloudcroft available for those
not willing to camp. One used pre-
viously and satisfactorily by J.
D. is Summit Inn (505-682-2814).
We can look forward to seeing
Stellar's Jays and other mon-
tain birds and several humming-
bird species. Leader: Joyce Da-
vis (581-9470 h, 544-6772 w). #

HUECO TANKS and PERSEID METEOR
SHOWER., FRIDAY, AUGUST 12. Meet
at 5:15 PM Bella Napoli Parking
lot at 10600 Montana. After sup-
per at the Tanks we'll move on
to the viewing location. Bring
pillows, chairs or pallets -
anything to make skywatching a
little easier- and bring the
whole family. Leader: Tony Worth
(593-3777 w, 592-4926 h.) ##

GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS, RATTLE-
SNAKE SPRINGS. SAT-SUN, AUGUST
20-21. Meet at 7:00 AM at the
Bella Napoli Restaurant at 10600
Montana. Overnight will be at
Pine Springs campground as there
are no other facilities available.
Please call if you plan to go.
Leader: Jo Nagel (566-2143)

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT FEATHER LAKE

In order to keep our trees and
plants alive during the summer,
they must be watered weekly. We
plan to install the irrigation
pump so that most of the trees
can be watered simply by running
the pump. Come out Saturday,
June 4, 8:00 AM and lend a hand.
Bring water, snacks, lunch. If you
have any questions call Joe Guinn
(566-8438) or Sid Shepperd (566-
2162). ###

BART'S CORNER

- Q. What happens to a jackrabbit
when it's hit by a car?
A. It becomes a TV dinner!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MON., JUNE 13, 6:00 PM. Supper fol-
lowed by meeting will be held at
the home of Jo Nagel, 3020 Doug-
las, El Paso (566-2143). All mem-
bers are welcome. ##

WHAT HAPPENED?

Nine birders led by Joyce Davis
found 30 species at Hueco Tanks
May 7th. Highlights were the Ver-
din, Townsend's Warbler, Black-
headed Grosbeak, White-winged
Dove, Scott's Oriole and a Broad-
tailed Hummingbird was heard. #

The Wednesday mornings in May pro-
vided some pretty sightings -
Bullock's Orioles, Western Tana-
gers, Hepatic Tanager, Cedar Wax-
wing, Yellow and Yellow-rumped
Warblers, Solitary Vireo, Verdin,
Gambel's Quail, Brown Towhee and
Black-throated Sparrow. ##

What does it take to find Little
Blue Herons at 2 different loca-
tions in our area in a single day?
Try beginners luck. The 4 partici-
pants on our May 14 beginners trip
also found Double-crested Cormor-
ants, a Great Egret, Orchard Ori-
oles, a singing male Painted Bun-
ting and 55 other species as they
visited a string of birding hot
spots from Feather Lake to "Gib-
son's Lake", a small ponding area
near the river below Ft. Quitman.

What does it take to find Elegant
Trogons? Try a trip to the Chiri-
cahua Mts. of s.e. Arizona. Some
29 El Pasoans made the journey on
May 21-22, and none came away dis-
appointed. A late spring seeming-
ly left many of the specialty
birds of the area harder to find
than usual, but they were there
and were even more appreciated
when finally spotted. Collectively
the group found close to 100 spe-
cies. They came back with tales
of quick glimpses of Zone-tailed
Hawks, evening encounters with

Western Screech Owls, brazen Elegant Trogons moving through camp like jays, and Red-faced and Olive warblers saving the trip leader from acute embarrassment, perhaps even bodily injury, by making a belated appearance. ##

NEW ADDITIONS FOR:

Art and Donna Arteaga, Jane Fowler Jeff Donaldson, Barry Zimmer, Betty Roberts who saw the Cape May Warbler in Horizon City. Jane Fowler who also saw the Orange-crowned Warbler same place. Dennis and Ann Taylor who saw the Elegant Trogon and the Red-faced and Olive Warblers in Chiricahuas. On the same trip Bob Johnson marked up 3 new birds - Gila Woodpecker Lucy's Warbler and Broad-billed Hummingbird. Margaret McDaniel added Brown-crested Flycatcher, Mexican Jay and Yellow-eyed Junco to her life list in Chiricahua Mts. ####

PLEASE TAKE NOTE: Field Trip Committee meets June 6 to prepare field trips for next 6 months. Please mail your completed trip preference sheet right away to Art, 1313 Backus, El Paso, 79925 or call with your suggestions at 598-5723. Thanks. #####

THE EP/TPAS GALLERY OF STARS

Among the helpers at our May 14 work day at Feather L. were Emma and Howard Jackson, Mary Multer, and Col. and Mrs. John White, all of the El Paso Cactus and Rock Club. These cactophiles added a number of new specimens to our sanctuary's cactus garden. Many thanks!

Also entitled to wear a roadrunner feather in his cap this month is Ken Beno. Ken had the signal honor of placing the 100th order with our chapter for a "Support Texas Wildlife" T-shirt. Just call him Century Man.

Finally, our announcement last month about new caretakers at Feather Lake was premature. The new caretakers didn't move in until May 14, and they are Joe and Esther Borntreger, not Al and Madeline Gavit. Welcome, Borntregerers! We hope you enjoy and take good care of your new backyard. ###

SUPPORT TEXAS WILDLIFE!

Wear the Audubon Council of Texas T-shirt! It's 100% cotton and features a soaring white Whooping Crane with the legend "Support Texas Wildlife." Proceeds go to EP/TPAS and to ACT's campaign to pass legislation creating a nongame/endangered species fund for Texas. Price: \$7 (Non-El Paso residents, please add \$1 for postage and handling). Circle preferences:

Color: Lt Blue Tan Yellow

Size: S M L XL

(No child's sizes right now)

Name _____

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Mail checks, payable to "El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society," to: T-shirts, P.O. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986.

THE ROADRUNNER is sent to all members of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society. Nonmembers can subscribe for \$4 per year. Make check payable to "El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society" and mail to: RR Editor P. Box 9655, El Paso, TX 79986. Please send any changes or corrections in name, address or telephone # to this same address.

The deadline for the September Roadrunner is August 24.

OBSERVATIONS - April 21 to May 15

Late April and early May proved to be excellent for birding. A total of 186 species was recorded, 18 of which were of casual or accidental status. One new record was also obtained. Noteworthy totals included 15 warbler species and 4 vireo species, while noteworthy absences included Cassin's Kingbird, Western Flycatcher, and Lincoln's Sparrow.

LOONS - FALCONS

An American White Pelican was sighted at the Fort Bliss Sewage Ponds (FBSP) 4-30 (m.ob.). A lone Double-crested Cormorant was at Fort Hancock 4-30 (BZ, JD), while another was at McNary 5-13 (JS, JD, BJ), followed by 2 there 5-14 (JS et al.). One Great Egret was still frequenting the McNary area through 5-14 (m.ob.). An adult LITTLE BLUE HERON (accidental) was seen near Esperanza 5-13 (JS, JD, BJ) and 5-14 (JS et al.), while a molting first year bird was at Feather Lake 5-14 (JS et al.). A late Northern Pintail at McNary 4-30 was noteworthy (JD, BZ). A pair of WOOD DUCKS at FBSP 5-3 was extremely unusual (JD, BJ). The first Mississippi Kite of spring was seen in central El Paso 5-3 (SW). Late Ospreys were sighted at FBSP 5-3 (JD, JB) and Tornillo 5-7 (BZ, JD).

QUAIL - WOODPECKERS

Both Sora (BZ, JD, JS, JF, JN) and Virginia Rails (JS, JN, JF) were calling from the Tornillo drainage 4-30. The first and only Willets of spring were recorded at FBSP 5-3 (JD, BJ). Four Semipalmated Plovers were at Tornillo 4-30 (m.ob.). Eight Marbled Godwits were seen at the Socorro Sewage Ponds (SSP) 5-7 (BZ, JD). Two Black Terns were also at SSP on the same date (BZ, JD). A lone BAND-TAILED PIGEON was flushed from Whispering Springs 5-10 (JD). A very late Long-eared Owl was found roosting in a cottonwood at FBSP 5-3 (JD, BJ). Meanwhile, a pair of Barn Owls was discovered nesting near Santa Teresa Country Club (STCC) 4-30 (JD, BZ). Arrival dates for goatsuckers were as follows: Lesser Night-hawk at STCC 4-27 (JD) and Common Poorwill at Tom Mays Park 4-30 (BZ, JD). Broad-tailed Hummingbirds were unusually

numerous this spring at Hueco Tanks and West Cottonwood Springs (BZ, JD).

FLYCATCHERS - VIREOS

Arrival dates for this group include: Willow Flycatcher at Durling's Farm 4-28 (BZ), Dusky Flycatcher at Hueco Tanks 4-30 (BZ, JD), Western Wood-Pewee at Durling's Farm 4-28 (BZ), Olive-sided Flycatcher at Hueco Tanks 4-30 (BZ, JD), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Hueco Tanks 5-7 (BZ, JD), Solitary Vireo at Durling's Farm 4-29 (BZ), Bell's Vireo at Tornillo 5-13 (JS, JD, BJ) and Warbling Vireo at Hueco Tanks 5-7 (BZ, JD). Two GRAY FLYCATCHERS were seen near Hueco Tanks 4-30 (BZ, JD), while a HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER (1st spring record) was photographed at Durling's Farm 5-15 (BZ). Convincing evidence of Black Phoebe nesting was discovered 5-13 near Esperanza (JS, JD, BJ). Vermilion Flycatchers were also reported in this area on 5-13 and 5-14 (JS et al.). The Blue Jay in northeast El Paso remained until at least 4-23. At least 1, and probably 2, Brown Thrashers remained at Durling's Farm through 5-3 (BZ), while another was sighted at FBSP 5-3 (JD, BJ). Late Curve-billed Thrashers were at Clint 4-30 (BZ, JD) and at Mountain Park throughout the month (JB). A very late Townsend's Solitaire was seen in the south canyon at Hueco Tanks 4-30 (BZ, JD). A PHILADELPHIA VIREO (runner-up for bird-of-the-month honors) was foraging in the hackberries at West Cottonwood Springs 5-7 (BZ, JD).

WARBLERS - WEAVER FINCHES

Arrival dates were as follows: Black-and-white Warbler at Horizon City 4-28 (MG), Yellow Warbler at Horizon City 4-25 (MG), Townsend's Warbler at No-Name Springs 4-27 (JD), MacGillivray's Warbler at No-Name Springs 4-27 (JD), Yellow-breasted Chat at Tornillo 4-30 (BZ, JD), American Redstart at Horizon City 5-10 (MG), Summer Tanager at Durling's Farm 4-27 (BZ), Western Tanager at Memorial Park 4-30, Black-headed Grosbeak at Owen's Farm 4-25 (BZ), Blue Grosbeak at Hueco Tanks 5-13 (BZ, CM),

Lazuli Bunting at FBSP 4-30(BJ), Painted Bunting at Tornillo 5-13 (JS,JD,BJ), and Lark Sparrow at Durling's Farm 4-25 (BZ). Two TENNESSEE WARBLERS, 1 at Hueco Tanks and 1 at West Cottonwood Springs, were seen 5-7 (BZ,JD). Bird-of-the-month, perhaps bird-of-the-year, honors go to an adult male CAPE MAY WARBLER first sighted 4-21 at Horizon City (AG,MD). The bird was photographed 4-23 (KZ), and remained until 4-25 during which time it was observed by many. A Northern Water-thrush frequented a flooded corner of Durling's Farm from 4-28 through 5-10 (BZ), while another was at Hueco Tanks 5-7 (BZ, JD). Two Eastern Meadowlarks were heard singing from an alfalfa field near McNary 4-30 (BZ,JD). Most interesting was the fact that 3 Westerns were singing from the same field. A male BRONZED COWBIRD (2nd record) frequented the Mountain Park area throughout the month (JB), while a female was photographed at Owen's Farm (1st Dona Ana Co. record) 5-12 (BZ). ORCHARD ORIOLES, apparently regular in the far southeastern corner of the checklist area, were seen near Esperanza 4-30 and 5-14 (JS et al.). A "BALTIMORE" ORIOLE was at Anthony 5-8 (HB). A male Northern Cardinal was at Randel's Pool 5-12 (BZ), while a male ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK was photographed at Owen's Farm 5-10 (BZ). An Indigo Bunting was also at Owen's on the same date (BZ). A CLAY-COLORED SPARROW at Hueco Tanks 4-30 (1st spring record) was the bird of the day on Birdathon (BZ,JD). A very late Song Sparrow was at Tornillo 5-7 (BZ,JD), while a late Swamp was in the same area 4-30 (BZ,JD).

CONTRIBUTORS: Helen Bigelow, Janet Brockmoller, Jeff Donaldson, Jane Fowler, Al & Madeline Gavit, Joe James, Bob Johnson, Michael Kolstad, Charlie McElwee, Jo Nagel, John Sproul, Scott Wilson, Barry Zimmer, Kevin Zimmer.

Note: I will be out of town for the summer (until about mid-Aug.). Please report any rare or unusual bird sightings to Bettie Roberts at 591-0421 until my return. Time is of the essence in reporting rare birds, so please call immediately after an unusual bird is seen. Have a great summer.

/Barry Zimmer - Observations Editor/

YOU ARE INVITED

WHAT pot luck dinner & swimming
 WHERE Fiesta Room Hillmark Apts
5000 Alabama (please park on
Louisiana not McKelligon Dr.)
 DATE Aug 28
 TIME 6-9 PM

QUERIES call Liz or Joe Guinn 566-8438
 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

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Membership Category desired:
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 — 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.

CONSERVATION CAPSULES

NONGAME WILDLIFE: Success! H.B. 1064, the bill to establish a Special Non-game and Endangered Species Conservation Fund for Texas, passed the Senate without opposition on May 19, and Gov. White will sign it soon. Once again, thanks to everyone who helped promote its passage. Don't forget to thank Tati Santiesteban (Texas Senate, P.O. Box 12068, Austin, TX 78711) for sponsoring H.B. 1064 in the Senate. The next step? Raising money for the fund, so it can be put to work on behalf of Texas wildlife.

FRANKLIN MTS. STATE PARK: Also clearing the Senate on May 19 was S.B. 1394, Sen. Santiesteban's bill, introduced May 5, to give the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) authority to spend money for operation and maintenance.

nance of Franklin Mts. State Park. Existing law prohibits such spending for the park, evidently under the theory that operation and maintenance should be funded by our city and county governments, not TPWD. The practical effect has been to keep Franklin Mts. State Park a park in name only, with no master plan, no rangers, essentially no maintenance. And it probably will stay that way a while longer yet, for at press time, S.B. 1394 appeared unlikely to move in the House. Why? It was referred to the Environmental Affairs Committee, whose chairman, Fred Agnich of Dallas, was responsible for the original funding prohibition. Agnich does not want to see it removed.

BOUNDARY PRESERVATION PROJECT: On May 4, the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) released its draft environmental assessment (EA) on work done thus far on the Rio Grande Boundary Preservation Project (RR, Mar). The EA dismisses most of the concerns of state and federal wildlife agencies, Audubon and other conservation groups about the IBWC's failure to adhere to the original project design. According to the IBWC, the changes were either unavoidable, or have been corrected, or have actually increased project benefits for wildlife. The agency does make a number of commitments to improved practices in the future. The IBWC requested comments by May 31; at press time, our chapter comments were in preparation.

WETLAND LOSSES: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported recently on nationwide wetland losses between the mid-1950s and mid-1970s. Through comparisons of aerial photographs from the 2 decades, the agency determined that wetland acreage in the 48 conterminous United States dropped from approximately 108.1 million acres in the 1950s to 99.0 million acres in the 1970s, an 8.4% decline. Among the big losers in the Central Flyway: the Great State of Texas.

FT. BLISS SEWAGE PONDS: Construction of the new Northeast Sewage Treatment Plant has been underway for a year now and is proceeding on schedule for a mid-1985 start up. At that time, sewage from n.e.

El Paso will start getting tertiary treatment, followed by injection into the Hueco Bolson for reuse. The flow of water to the existing ponds and overflow areas will cease. After evaporation and percolation have done their things, we will be left with the trees that have grown around the ponds, but little else. Almost 500 acres of productive wetland wildlife habitat will be gone.

RECYCLE: If you live in El Paso, remember to put your recyclables--newspapers in 1 bag, cans in another, corrugated cardboard in another--out next to your trash for the 2nd garbage pickup each week.

MOUNTAIN LION: The proposal to control mountain lions within Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mts. national parks (RR, Jan) appears dead. The original request to the U.S. Interior Department for a control program had come from Bill Huey, former secretary of New Mexico's Dept. of Natural Resources. The Anaya administration, however, sees things differently, and in April Shirley Hill Witt, the new secretary, withdrew the request. Noting that reports of livestock depredations on ranches near the 2 parks have declined recently without this control program being in effect, Witt said her department will attempt other resolutions of future depredation problems.

CONTAINER DEPOSIT BILL: H.B. 136, the bill to require deposits on all soft drink and beer containers sold in Texas, also gets an obituary. After the bill received widespread public support at an April 13 hearing before the House Liquor Regulation Committee, Committee Chairman Billy Hall of Laredo assigned it to a subcommittee for "further consideration." There it died, as the subcommittee took no action whatsoever. On the bright side, this is the farthest a container-deposit bill has gone in 3 tries before the Texas legislature. The Texas Coalition for Container Deposit Legislation is learning with each effort and will be back in 1985.

TEXAS WATER PLANNING I: In yet another

tale of legislative woe, at press time a comprehensive, broadly supported package of 8 water-related bills appeared likely to die in the Texas House after clearing the Senate on May 3-4. The package included bills relating to water conservation, protection of bays and estuaries, an agricultural-water-conservation loan program, water quality problems associated with oil and gas production, and increased funding for water development. It was referred to the House Natural Resources Committee, where Chairman Tom Craddick of Midland displayed interest only in the water-development bills. He appeared particularly unwilling to let S.B. 1026, the bill for protection of bays and estuaries, out of committee. Since all of the bills are needed for a credible, politically acceptable package, Craddick's intransigence appeared likely to kill the whole thing.

TEXAS WATER PLANNING II: "Water for Texas", the 700-page opus on planning for the state's water future, will be the subject of hearings throughout Texas in June and July. The El Paso hearing is slated for 7 PM, Tues., July 19, at the Chamber of Commerce, 10 Civic Center Plaza. /John Sproul/

BIRDATHON 1983

This year's Birdathon was successful, but nowhere near what it could have been. Membership response was low. Less than 10% of the members counted and less than 20% sponsored a counter. Let's all make it a point to improve next year. Better yet, it's still possible to make a Birdathon donation this year. Please send checks, payable to National Audubon Society, to Bob Johnson, 5109 Paris, El Paso 79924 by June 13. As of May 25, we have collected \$1,946 and have roughly \$200 outstanding. Those of you who have not turned in your money or Nat'l Birdathon entry forms, please call this week (751-0125). Finally, to all who did participate as counters or sponsors, a big THANK YOU. /BJ/



DIRECTORY

EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

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	Jane Fowler	772-0296

* - Board of Directors

LOOKING AHEAD

We will be going to Big Bend National Park April 13-15, 1984. Sorry folks, there is no room at the inn-or in this case, the Chisos Mountain Lodge. However, there is a new establishment called the Cavalry Post, near Lajitas, which you may wish to check out. This is a motel-cabin-campground affair located about 30 minutes from the main entrance to the park. It has 20 rooms 4 cabins with kitchenettes, and an RV park with 40 camper hookups. There is a restaurant and possibly the swimming pool has been completed by now. You can write to the Cavalry Post, Box 18, Terlingua 79852 for more info. Don't forget to bring a camera to record the scenic beauty of the park. And for those of you who plan to camp out in The Basin, you shouldn't have to bring your warm woolies since we will be going almost a month later than this years trip.

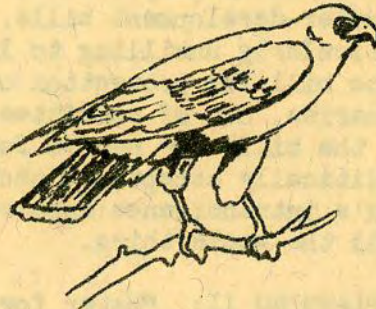


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 in the Fall.
 Ed.

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