

# The Roadrunner

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

Volume 28 No. 6 December 1998 January 1999



## General Meetings

60th Birthday Celebration

"A Round Table of Reminiscence"

Monday, December 14, 1998

Memorial Park Garden Center

3105 Grant Street 7:30pm

El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society will commemorate its 60th birthday December 14 with a round table discussion of the sights and sounds of El Paso in 1938, the year of our founding as the El Paso Bird Study Club. The special birthday celebration begins at 7:30pm at the Memorial Park Garden Center, 3105 Grant.

On the panel of long-term El Pasoans who will recall myriad aspects of the border community in the 1930s (social life, medical practices, Fort Bliss, clubs and festivals, scandals and politics) will be Sheri Spier, volunteer coordinator of the Turner House Medical Museum; Henrietta Owen, past president of Las Comadres, a woman's association of long-time El Paso residents who meet 4 times/year for a history program; Lea Vail, member of the Historical Society and chairperson of the historic Burgess Home in Sunset Heights; and Maj. Frank McNight, the incoming president of the Historical Society and a retired cavalry officer at Fort Bliss.

El Paso Bird Study Club was created on the night of December 4, 1938. Founding officers were Dr. I.M. Epstein, president; Mrs. F.A. Snidow, vice president; Mary Belle Keefer, secretary, and Mrs. Jasper Haraway, treasurer. The club published the first issue of *The Roadrunner*, the chapter newsletter, in January, 1942. In 1949, the club became a chapter of the National Audubon Society and changed its name to El Paso Audubon Society.

The late 1950s and 1960s were difficult times for the small club, which lost its National Audubon charter in 1966, but in 1970 the group began a renaissance. *The Roadrunner* resumed publication in 1971 and the next year the group received a new provisional charter as the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society. It received its full charter in May 1974 and has been thriving ever since.

Travels with Joe-Terrific Tongo

Dr. Joseph Leach

Monday, January 18, 1999

Memorial Park Garden Center

3105 Grant Street 7:30pm

The El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society meeting will host Dr. Joseph Leach as he presents a slide show presentation of "Paradise in the Pacific". Expect to see beautiful photographs of golden beaches, blue skies and of course, hundreds of birds. Visit this place where you can walk for miles and your own tracks will be the only footprints found.

After the program, take a few minutes to enjoy the refreshments and friendship of your fellow Audubon members.



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## Election Season Nears

Chapter elections take place at our January meeting. We will be choosing a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and three directors.

The new officers and directors will be installed at our Annual Meeting in February. That meeting will also feature the presentation of our Meritorious Service and Conservation awards. The Meritorious Service Award goes to a chapter member who has made outstanding contributions to El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon and its programs. The Conservation Award goes to an individual, organization or other entity outside the chapter who has done exceptional work on behalf of the environment in Trans-Pecos Texas.

Are you interested in serving as an officer or director? Do you wish to suggest a candidate? Want to nominate someone for one of our chapter awards? Please contact a member of the nominating committee before January 11:

They want to hear from you!

## The El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society Awards Dinner Sunday, February 20

Grab your scissors and clip out this calendar as a reminder that our annual meeting and awards dinner will take place Feb. 20, 1999. We will also have the installation of chapter officers for 1999-2000. This worthy event will take place in the UTEP Union building, 2nd floor faculty dining room. The dinner will be catered by University Food Services which provides the wonderful meals for the Union Dinner Theater, and we know how delicious they always are. **RESERVE THIS DATE!** You will receive more info in the February/March *Roadrunner*.

### El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society Board of Directors:

President	Elizabeth Chase	591-5119
V-President	Weldon Fisbeck	581-0174
Secretary	Betty Fisbeck	581-0174
Treasurer	Hugh Jameson	751-7952

### Committee Chairs:

Conservation	John Kiseda	833-6212
Education	Susan Schneider	542-3041
Field Trips	Bob Johnson	757-1876
Hospitality	volunteer needed	
Membership	Jane Fowler	598-2448
Programs	Nancy Wilson	833-3907
Publications	Kathleen Ditlevson	544-7339
Publicity	Roxanne Schroeder	534-7019
Sanctuary	John Sproul	545-5157

### About the Roadrunner:

Roadrunner is your newsletter. We welcome your contributions. For further information, you may contact Elizabeth W. Chase:

W: 857-4323

fax: 857-4324

email: echase @ socorro.k12.tx.us

Annual Audubon Awards Dinner  
Saturday, February 20, 1999

FEBRUARY, 1999

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	<b>20</b>
21	22	23	24	25	26	
28						

Clip and Save ---Clip and Save

# El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Year of Celebration

## Looking Back: A BIRD CLUB IS BORN

On the night of December 4, 1938 an informal group of El Paso bird watchers met to act on an idea they had considered for some time. They created a new organization, the El Paso Bird Study Club. The founding officers were Dr. I. M. Epstein, President; Mrs. F. A. Snidow, vice president; Mary Belle Keefer, secretary and Mrs. Jasper Haraway, treasurer.

Today's El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society traces its lineage back to that night 60 years ago. The Bird Study Club published the first issue of *The Roadrunner* in January 1942. In 1949, the club became a chapter of the National Audubon Society and changed its name to El Paso Audubon Society.

The organization hit lean times in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and in 1966 it lost its National Audubon charter. Then, in 1970, the group began a renaissance. *The Roadrunner* resumed publication in 1971, and in May 1972, the group sought and received a new provisional charter as the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society. It received its full charter in May 1974.

All of which means we've got a lot to celebrate in the year ahead! This month marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the El Paso Bird Study Club. Next March will bring a major statewide event, the 100th anniversary of Audubon in Texas. In May, we'll celebrate the 25th anniversary of El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon as a fully chartered National Audubon Society chapter.

In recognition of these many anniversaries, we're planning a year-long series of special events, a Year of Celebration. December will feature an open-house at Feather Lake on December 5th (see on the Trail), field trips to the Fort Bliss Ponds and Doniphan Marsh on December 6 (see on the Trail), and at our general meeting on December 14, a fascinating look back at El Paso in 1938, the year it all began (see page 1).

## The President's Corner

Loss of habitat for wildlife, migrating birds to be monitored, another forest burned to the ground, increasing population, the list goes on. The need for our organization to be more actively involved is most crucial.

I recommended to the board that our by laws be reviewed for revision. The review process will provide the opportunity for members to get involved and will also evaluate the following:

- a. if the needs of the members are being met
- b. if changes are needed to meet those needs
- c. what we have accomplished
- d. what should be our future goals and how to put them in action
- e. what should be our focus
- f. will ensure that we have by laws we can live with
- g. look into challenges ahead of us and how we can address those challenges

There is a lot of work to be done and we need to work together and be committed to the future of El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society. Our environmental future depend on the active participation from each and everyone of us and that stewardship of our earth is our responsibility to protect for future generations. Although it is a difficult task, our chapter has initiated and continued several programs to address the "stewardship of our environment" issue.

- a. Bob Johnson and his committee members: Mary Lou Alcorn, Estela Rodarte, George Barnett, Joe Cancellare have worked hard into the review of the by-laws and have given their recommendation to the board. I would like to commend them for their excellent and thorough job
- b. Our 60th anniversary is forthcoming. We will have a series of activities to celebrate throughout the year. Roxanne Schroeder, our Publicity Chair, has put our celebration into focus. She has been instrumental in planning and organizing this special event.
- c. Our 1990/1999 Audubon Program offers a variety of interesting presentations of which Nancy Wilson, our Program Chair has put together.
- d. As always, our newsletter has been very informative, productive and stronger than ever. Kathy Ditlevson, Publications Chair, has been instrumental to the success of the *Roadrunner*.
- e. We can't deny the success of the Birdathon under the leadership of John Kiseda, our Conservation Chair
- f. finally, John Sproul, Sanctuary Chair, is gearing up for the planned activities that will be happening at Feather Lake.

I commend these committed members, and other volunteers that have freely donated their time and talent to provide essential assistance in the general meetings, a host at Feather Lake and the implementation of other programs for the chapter. Most of all, the general members with their continued support by their yearly renewals of their memberships. Truly, our Auduboners are dedicated to protecting all aspects of our environment. To all of you a big "thank you".

On behalf of the board, we wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*Elizabeth Chase*

# Feather Lake Notes

By, John Sproul

At feather lake, fall means migratory birds, autumn leaves... and lots of requests for tours from school classes and other groups. Again this year, our dedicated guides - Mary Lou Alcorn, Lupe Barrera, Jane Fowler, Joyce Kautz, Bob Johnson, Charles Simpson and John Sproul -- were equal to the task. Thank you, one and all! Are you interested in helping lead future tours? Please contact John Sproul (545-5157).

If you've visited Feather Lake recently, you know we installed six new benches in September. This project was made possible by many generous donations we received last year in memory of David Hilles, by the fund raising efforts of Beth Garcia's students at El Paso Country Day School, and by contributions from loyal chapter members. Sincere thanks to all, and especially Lorenzo Escalante, Jane Fowler, Richard Hermosillo, Bob Johnson and Charles Simpson for their help with the installation work.

Also enjoying fall at Feather Lake were the 23 participants at our potluck picnic October 10. Thanks are due Dayle Edwards for providing the barbecue grill; Jane Fowler, Bob Johnson and Betty Pagel for event planning and preparation; Craig Braginton for his deft work at the grill, and all the talented chefs who attended.

Now that we're well fed, back to work: since 1996, we've been removing non-native saltcedars from the lake's largest island. That task is now almost complete, due to the hard work this fall by Boy Scouts in Troop 4 led by Eagle Scout - candidate, Clint Chamales. Thanks, guys! October's late storms put plenty of water in the lake but also washed in

plenty of trash. Want to help with the clean-up? Join us for our next Feather Lake Appreciation Day on Sunday, January 24 at 2:00pm.

Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux in El Paso's lower valley. It is open every Saturday, 8:00am to noon, and every Sunday, 2:00pm to dusk. Admission is free.

## Feather Facts

presented by  
Eastwood Heights Elementary  
Junior Audubon Club

## Canada Goose

by, Aften Cardoza

The Canada Goose is a very large bird and it is very pretty. It has a wing span of over five feet. Its weight is around 14 pounds. The Canada Goose has a brownish body with a black head and a long dark black neck and a broad white chin strap.

In the spring and summer, the Canada Geese eat large amounts of insects and different plants, leaves and seeds.

The Canada Goose is a very attractive bird. I would like to know how to tell a male from a female.



# On The Trail

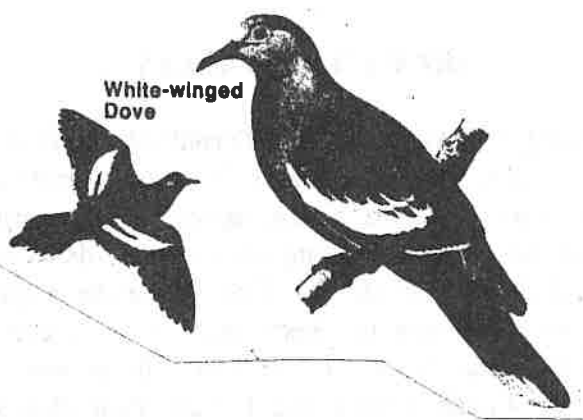
## ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

**SATURDAY DECEMBER 5th** we will have tours all day at Feather Lake in honor of the Chapters 60th anniversary. this will be followed on **SUNDAY DECEMBER 6th** with 2 special field trips.

**Fort Bliss Ponds** - Meet at the former Walmart **9825 Dyer Street, 7:31 AM.**

OR

**Doniphan Marsh** - Meet at the Crossroads, Doniphan and Mesa/Country Club, **7:31 AM.**



## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

It's time for our annual bird count and were hoping for a record year. In North America over 1700 counts will take place between December 18, 1998 and January 3, 1999. As usual we will sponsor 2 of these, Hueco Tanks and El Paso. The compiler for both of these counts is Bob Johnson (757-1876).

The count area is defined as a 15 mile diameter circle (about 115,000 acres), we sub-divide this circle and a team is assigned to each sub area. They spend the day counting every bird seen or heard. Each team will have at least one experienced birder to help in identification, so do not be bashful and say "I'm not any good at telling one species from another, so I will not go out and help". We need your eyes and/or ears to help find them, someone else will try to figure out what they are. If you cannot be out all day come for a few hours in the morning or afternoon.

Hope your interest has been piqued by this explanation of Christmas Bird Counts. We need people to help us, in the field and at their yard feeders. The count dates will be:

Saturday December 19th - **Hueco Tanks**, meet at the **Flying Saucer Building, US62/180 and FM 2775 at 7:33 AM.**

Saturday January 2nd - **El Paso**, we do not have a common meeting spot for this count, so you will meet your sub-area team leader at a spot that person designates. To be assigned to a team call Bob Johnson (757-1876) you can call as late as Friday evening.

All participants are asked by National Audubon to pay a \$5.00 fee. Your chapter will pay this fee for the El Paso Count. This money goes to defray the expence of publishing the results of the counts. Come to the meetings and see a copy of last years issue "AMERICAN BIRDS". Its quite a document and you will see the need for this fee.

For additional information on the Bird Counts come to the Board meeting at the **Enviornmental Center, 800 South Piedras at 7PM on Dec 7th** or the General meeting at **The Garden Center** in Memorial Park, **3500 Grant Street on Monday December 14th.**

Call BOB "*Wildbirder*" JOHNSON - compiler - (757-1876) to get your name on one or BOTH lists.

Count down - after the counts are completed, we always get together to determine what was seen and enjoy the fellowship of the BIRDWATCHERS. This year we will have our dinner at a local diner, place to be announced later.

## FRIENDS OF HUECO TANKS

Sun. December 20 - Bird Identification Tour - 8AM.

Sun. January 24 - Bird Identification Tour - 8AM

Call ahead for reservations, for details of new park operations see page 7.

**On The Trail:** Continued from Page 5.

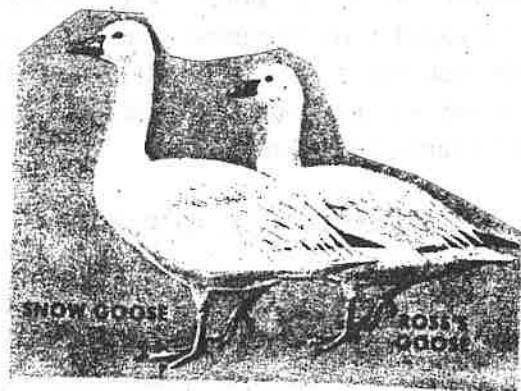
### NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

One of the most popular NWR in the country is the Bosque Del Apache, located just south of Socorro, New Mexico. How about 20,000 Snow Geese, 12,000 Sandhill Cranes and a dozen Bald Eagles, come with us to see all this and plenty more species, and enjoy a weekend of BIRDER COMRADERIE. We hope to have a special tour on Sat. at 1PM into the back area where we often see Pocupines and Wild Turkeys.

This is a good way to start your 1999 bird list, and if you already have it started its a good way to add quite a few additional species. This trip will take place on the weekend of **January 16 and 17**. Most birders will be staying at the Motel 6 in Socorro(1-800-466-8356) or one of the other good motels in town. Also Birders RV park is available just outside the refuge boundry.

On **Sat. Morning Jan. 16** meet at **I-10 and Transmountain Rd.** at **7:29 AM** , or if you are planning on going up at a different time, the **Refuge Visitors Center** parking lot at **11:07 AM**. We will tailgate for lunch. On Sunday the return trip will include a stop at Percha/Caballo Dams State Park, where gulls, grebes and possibly a Loon could be present.

The coordinator for this trip will be Nancy Wilson (833-3907) or call Bob (757-1876).



### DOWN THE VALLEY

McNary, Fort Hancock, and Tornillo Reservoirs are always good for *Gulls, Ducks, ??Geese, Egrets and Cormorants*. Quite a few species of passerines could also be present along with some birds of prey to include *Harris' Hawk*. You will make a quick stop at Esperanza to check out a flood control ponding area where *Vermillion Flycatchers* are possible. Lunch break at the Tornillo Rest. Bob will lead the parade down Interstate 10 from **Feather Lake** (our sanctuary on North Loop Road) where you can meet him at **7:23 AM on Saturday Feb 6th**. This is about a 6 hour roundtrip so bring lunch.

\* \* \* \* \*

### CHAPTER BY - LAWS

*The committee appointed to study the By-Laws is still in session. They would like more input from the membership, to get a copy to read please call one of the appointees.*

- |                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Mary Lou Alcorn</i>  | <i>584-8768</i> |
| <i>Estela Rodarte</i>   | <i>532-8514</i> |
| <i>George Barnett</i>   | <i>581-1829</i> |
| <i>Joe Cancellare</i>   | <i>833-8874</i> |
| <i>Bob Johnson (Ch)</i> | <i>757-1876</i> |

*You have until January 5, 1999 to get your comments in. Please show interest in your chapter and participate in this project.*

# HUECO TANKS STATE HISTORICAL PARK

## VISITOR INFORMATION

### HOURS OF OPERATION

8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. during the winter season (October 1 - March 31),  
7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. during the summer season (April 1 - September 30).

### FEES

Adults (age 13 and above)-----\$4.00  
Children (age 12 and under)-----FREE  
Persons who turned 65 on or after Sept. 1, 1995 (TX residents)-----\$2.00  
(Non-residents)-----\$4.00  
Persons who turned 65 before Sept. 1, 1995 and  
veterans with at least 60% disability (TX residents and non-residents)-----FREE  
Texas Conservation Passport accepted for the holder only.

### ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE

Educational tours, hiking, birding, picnicking, camping and rock climbing.  
When planning to visit the park, please note the information below.

### NOT ALLOWED

Bicycling, pets, charcoal or wood fires, public consumption of alcohol.

### UNGUIDED ACCESS

North Mountain - open for day-use by visitors without a guide.

- Each visitor must first complete a 20-minute orientation session, renewable on an annual basis.
- Number of visitors on North Mountain is limited to 50 at one time. Reservations may be made, but walk-ins are accepted until the Limit is reached. Visitors must check out before leaving the park.
- Visitors must observe closures of any specific areas on North Mountain.

Picnicking - allowed at the 10 tables closest to the headquarters.

- Reservations are recommended. Walk-ins are accepted if picnic sites are available and the 50-person limit in the unguided area has not been reached.
- Any cooking must be with containerize fuel (camp stoves and gas grills) only. Wood and charcoal fires are not allowed.

### GUIDED ACCESS

The remainder of the park (West Mountain, East Mountain and East Spur) is accessed by guide only.

- The staff offers educational tours to Native American pictograph sites of the park, also covering the prehistory, history, geology, plants and animals of the area.

#### Rock art tour schedule:

Sat. and Sun. 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. (summer)  
10:00a.m. and 2:00 p.m. (winter)

- Additional educational tours and hiking, birding, or rock-climbing tours are led by staff, on request, at the following times:  
Wed. - Sun. 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. (summer)  
10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. (winter)
- Trained volunteer and commercial guides will assist the park by providing additional tours. Reservations for tours are recommended but not required. Please call the park headquarters for more information or to find out how to become a guide.

**FOR INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS, CALL: (915)857-1135**

## WEB SITE UPDATED

Thanks to the wizardry of Bill Howe, our chapter's Home Page on the World Wide Web is now updated and sports a bright new look.

### Check it out at:

<http://www.whc.net/cdwr/tpashome.htm>

There is information on our chapter, on upcoming events, on Feather Lake, on local birding, and links to other web sites of interest, especially ornithological interest, in Texas and New Mexico. There are many other possible improvements; e-mail us your ideas through the web site. Thanks, Bill!

## Dates to Remember

### Dec.

#### Special Anniversary Tours

Sun, Dec. 6, 7:31am  
Fort Bliss Ponds (9825 Dyer)

X-roads (Doniphan & Mesa)

Dec. 9-Board Meeting 7:00pm

Dec. 14- General Meet 7:30pm

Bird Tour-Hueco Tanks

Sun. Dec. 20 8:00am

### Jan.

#### Bosque del Apache

Sat. & Sun., Jan. 16 & 17

#### Hueco Tanks

Sun., Jan. 24, 8:00am

monthly bird tour

Jan 11 Board Meeting

Jan 18 General Meeting

### Feb.

#### Feather Lake

Sun., Dec. 6  
on to McNary

& Ft. Hancock

Awards Dinner

Sun., Jan. 20

UTEP

### 1998-1999 Christmas Bird Count

Sat, Dec 19 - Hueco Tanks

Sat, Jan. 2 - El Paso

### Friends of Hueco Tanks

#### Rock Art Tours

Every Sat & Sun 10:00am & 2:00pm

#### Birding Activities at Hueco Tanks

Bird Identification Tours

&

Slide Show Presentations

## National Audubon Society

Chapter Membership Application  
Yes, I'd like to join.

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

My check for \$20 is enclosed.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Please make all checks payable to the  
National Audubon Society

National Audubon Society

Chapter Membership Data Center

P.O. Box 51001

Boulder, Colorado 80322-1001

EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

W10

Local Chapter Code

7XCHA

The Roadrunner is published six times a year. Contributions are welcome. Please e-mail to [echase@socorro.k12.tx.us](mailto:echase@socorro.k12.tx.us) or mail to 1011 Moore St. El Paso, Texas 79902. Publication is assisted by Eastwood Heights Elementary Junior Audubon Society Club students.  
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