the Roadrunner

NEWSLETTER OF
EL PASO-TRANS PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY
Published at 4220 Wallington, El Paso, Texas 79902

October, 1974, Vol. IV. No. 8 Geth Osborn White, Editor

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Oct. 16-18 SYMPOSIUM ON THE BIOLOGY OF THE CHIHUAHUAN DESERT, Sul Ross College, Alpine, Texas. This will be a short session covering the modern and paleo-environment of our desert, its mammals, botany, soils. Open to interested people, registration is at 8:30 A. M. on Wednesday the 16th. No fee was stated, but there will probably be a modest one. This is an opportunity to get a valuable intensive education on our native environment.

MONDAY
Oct. 21 REGULAR MEETING, 7:30 P. M. at Centennial Museum, UTEP campus. GARY MCVICKERS, Planning and Environmental Coordinator for the Bureau of Land Management in the Las Cruces Unit, will be our speaker. Graduating from NMSU at Las Cruces in 1964 with a degree in range management, he has spent all of his time since graduation working in New Mexico. He is keenly aware of environmental problems in BLM lands and will illustrate his talk with slides of animals and birds in some of the remote canyons and mountains.

BLM has asked the Audubon Society for input on future management of multiple resources within this unit which includes the Las Uvas Planning Unit and such choice natural areas as Guadalupe Canyon, the State Cave Preserve at Big Hatchet, a management unit for the Mexican duck south of Lordsburg, and others.

We hope to schedule some field trips in the next 6 months to some of these wild places.

SATURDAY
Oct. 26 FIELD TRIP. To Ft. Bliss Sewage Ponds. Margaret McDaniel will lead. Meet at Barcelona Cash Lumber Store, 4801 Fred Wilson at 7:00 A. M. Ducks and water birds should be in and wintering sparrows are always good in the brush around the ponds.

SATURDAY
Nov. 9 FIELD TRIP. To Hueco Tanks. We have a Christmas bird count here this year and we need to keep tabs on what is here and study the area every opportunity. Wintering hawks like to perch on the rocks and whirl away into the air currents, making this a choice spot for raptors. With extraordinary rains in late September, there will be a bountiful seed supply and probably good bird population there now.

REPORT ON FIELD TRIP TO LOWER VALLEY ON LEVEES

September 21 had heavy overnight rains with a light rain falling, tempting one to say "ho hum, no one will come" and turn over for some more shuteye. To our surprise at Denny's restaurant were eight people, including ourselves. It was a first time for Bill Principe, birder extraordinaire, graduate student working with Dr. Ralph Raitt at NMSU, recently removed from San Francisco where he was very active with the Golden Gate Audubon Society. With him was a very charming young lady, eager to tally lifers, Carol Dimeff, also a student at NMSU. Lucille Swick was a first-timer to birding trips, and Margaret McDaniel brought

Donna Mortdecai, who is interested in birding. Bob Bleicher, Bill Hunt who joined us at the sewage treatment plant, Geth and Ed White completed the group.

We tallied a list of 50 birds for the morning, including some unusual ones, most notable being two immature Harris's Hawks, perched in a tree quietly while we studied their field marks with the telescope. Just before we ran into the Harris' we had two immature Cooper's hawks perched, finally flying to confirm our identification.

In the melee of black terns, osprey, gulls, hawks and avocets whirling above the sewage ponds, we let get away what we suspected to be a black hawk.

Six bedraggled little blue herons with five in white immature plumages, one in calico blue, stood forlornly on the levee in the gravel. Three snowy egrets were separately standing at the side of the flooding drainage ditch, and in the course of the morning we spotted seven great blue herons and four cattle egrets in a field, and a total of four green herons. A great day for the heron family. A Foster's tern was sighted flying much higher than the black terns and we noted Franklin's gulls which are uncommon here. Barn swallows, with a few roughwings and cliffs were on the move by the hundreds as were Western and Cassin's kingbirds.

Nervous little flocks of newly arrived Brewer's and vesper sparrows were seen in the brush along the drainage ditch.

REPORT ON GUADALUPES WILDERNESS MEETING

An informal public meeting was held in the Student Union Building on the UTEP campus the weekend of the 5th and 6th of October. Attendance of about 70 people, representing a broad spectrum of interests, included civil engineers, national park management personnel, forest service people, cavers, backpackers and birdwatchers.

Consensus of the meeting was that we need a unified Guadalupes wilderness which would take in the whole reef, encompassing Guadalupe Mountains National Park in Texas, Carlsbad National Park in New Mexico, and a part of Lincoln National Forest, currently managed by the Forest Service in New Mexico.

Saturday was spent studying the problem with inputs from the various interests. Sunday, after recapitulation, it was decided to form an informal, temporary organization with representation from the conservation organizations. Purpose: to work to the end that the unified wilderness in the Guadalupes was achieved. About $200 was pledged to handle postage and expenses incident to contacting the Congress, state legislature, etc.

Status of the Park as proposed by the Master Plan is in limbo with further development still pending.

Meantime, visitations to Carlsbad National Park has dropped off, reflecting less travel with gasoline shortage. Their headquarters have been moved into town as planned and corrections on the moisture in the caverns has been made. Their wild cave has been well received.

Guadalupe Mountains National Park has had quite an increase in a two year period of backpackers into the wilderness areas of the Park. Campsites for overnight stops are already showing the impact of public use and they are limiting the number of people in any one campsite and into McKittrick Canyon.

RELICT FOREST IN FRANKLINS

Mayor Fred Hervey wrote a letter of thanks to all the people who signed the petition who represented conservation groups interested in preserving the relict forest high in the Franklins as a scientific study area. In his letter to Geth White, he said he and the Council felt that the proposal was in keeping with the wilderness concept of the Franklins Wilderness Park.

We are grateful that this administration is sensitive to the need for preserving such a unique and valuable pocket of old trees in the Franklins, particularly in view of the rapid development of the Heritage Museum within the park.

BIRDS IN YOUR BACKYARD CONTEST

Betty Roberts is certainly the winner, with a list for September, as follows. The tropy should look well sitting on the window sill next to her binoculars. She is also keeping a running list and now has 54 species since she moved into the new house in a new real estate development in east El Paso in February, 1973. This in spite of blowing sand, new shrubs and small trees. Doesn't Betty have a challenger for October?

1. House sparrows -- every day visitors
2. House finches -- " " "
3. Dark-eyed junco 9/28.
4. Inca dove 9/28
5. Chipping Sparrow -- 9/3
6. Female Scott's oriole -- 9/3
7. Wilson's warblers -- 9/4 - 8-10-14-26.
8. McGillivray's Warbler -- 9/5
9. House wren -- 9/7 8-9-10-13-16-17-18-19-22.
10. Savannah Sparrow -- 9/8-13-14.
11. Yellow warbler -- 9/9
12. Black-chinned hummingbird, males, females, immatures. 9/9-10-13-14-19-21-25.
13. Rufous immature 9/13. 2 males 23/26/27.
14. Brewer's sparrows -- 9/13-14-27-28.
15. Clay-color sparrow -- 9/13-14-20-23
16. Kestrel 9/13
17. Loggerhead shrike -- 9/13
18. Ash-throated flycatcher -- 9/17.
19. Western Kingbird -- 9/20
20. Cassin's kingbird (2) 9/20.
21. Olive sided flycatcher - 9/22 Sat on a chair-rung on back porch that rainy day.
22. Marsh hawk female -- 9/27.

BIRD SIGHTINGS, SEPTEMBER.

9/1	House wren	Ed White	Silver
9/7	" "	Betty Roberts	Cabot
9/7	Anna's hummingbird	Geth and Ed White	Silver
9/8	Anna's hummingbird	Bill Principe	In Organ Mtns.
9/5	Yellow warbler	Geth and Ed White	Memorial Park
9/5	McGillivray's warbler	" "	Memorial Park
9/13	Wilson's warbler (14)	" "	"
9/13	Townsend's warbler	" "	"
9/13	Brewer's sparrows (20 plus)	" "	"
9/13	Clay-colored sparrows (6)	" "	"
9/13	Savannah sparrow	" "	"
9/13	Chipping sparrow	" "	"
9/14	Western sandpipers	" "	Lower valley, Rio Grande
9/14	Baird's sandpipers	" "	"
9/14	Yellow-rumped warblers (30)	" "	"
9/14	Blue-winged teal (8)	" "	"
9/14	Prairie falcon	" "	"
9/14	Marsh hawk, female	" "	"
9/18	American redstart, titmouse spec.	Mrs. Douglas Ramsey	Mountain Park
9/20	pair summer tanagers, 1 male hepatic tanager	Geth and Ed White	Memorial Park
9/21	Hutton's vireo	Geth White	Silver
9/21	Snowy egrets (21)	Eddie, Lucretia & Steve	Rincon, on Rio Grande
9/21	Osprey, 6 little blue herons, 3 snowy egrets, 4 cattle egrets, 2 Harris Hawks, 2 Cooper's hawks	Geth White, et al	Lower valley field trip
9/21	Olive-sided flycatcher	Betty Roberts	Cabot
9/22	Olive-sided flycatcher,	Geth White	Memorial Park
	western Wood pewee (calling)	Geth White	Memorial Park
9/28	Moulting black hawk	Bill Principe	Lower valley 4 mi. N. of Fabens crossing
9/27	Green towhee	Geth White	Silver
9/29	Black hawk (catching a mouse at side of road)	Geth and Ed White	Los Alamos

FIGHTING GOLIATHS WITHOUT A SLINGSHOT

Excerpted from Science News, June 8, 1974.

The whooping crane could be wiped out in one night with a bad storm sweeping into the Aransas Refuge on the Gulf coast. What would be the loss? Only aesthetics?

What would be the cost of trying to save them? Land. Tax dollars. Priorities? A handful of birds or land for growing food or saving money to help our wretched cities? Whooping cranes are close, but how about myriads of species being extinguished in the tropics to the south of as whole jungles are cut down as South Americans face economic problems of growing populations needing food?

Faced with painfully limited resources, under growing attack from other interest groups, the American conservation movement is currently in the throes of trying to find new answers to questions such as these.

Through abrasive courtroom conflicts, academic conservation types are drawn into the rough and tumble confrontation with the Goliaths of industry. Conservationists are learning to refine their goals and methods to accommodate political and economic reality.

In a recent hearing on Endangered Species Act, a dramatic exchange on fundamental issues of economics and priorities in conservationism took place between John Dingell, chairman, and Robert C. Hughes of the Sierra Club. Dingell challenged Robert Hughes to suggest a way habitats could be saved without allowing some hunting to help pay for its preservation. Hughes responded that the photo-safari business is booming. "You have to live in the real world here," shot back Dingell, "and the one fool we have been able to stick with the cost of this program over the years is the hunter." He continued: "The hunter buys the duck stamps, the fisherman buys a fishing license, but the dickybird watcher raises cain about the hunters slaughtering the beast." That's an old argument, retorted Hughes; lack of money "is the fault of those who make the laws who have not legislated payment."

The discussion then degenerated into a squabble over whether to tax the dickybird watchers when Dingell launched into a sermon which cut to the heart of the global challenge facing conservationists: Progress is slow coming, other priorities must be considered: "you're not going to sell aesthetics to a starving Hindu."

Conservation is a global affair, no longer just a matter of saving a few animals for the aesthetic enjoyment of a few well-off people. In the face of dwindling resources, exploding population and a growing threat of famine, mankind is having to adopt a broader view of the world, one with which conservationists should be familiar -- that the earth is not only a relatively small planet of limited wealth, but also that survival here depends on an incredibly interrelated and complex web of life.

By helping bring together experts familiar with various areas of that life-web, and learning to speak the language of business and government policy makers, conservationists can thus make a major contribution to saving humanity as well as the whooping crane.

We have an immediate problem in our own backyard, i. e. habitats of endangered species found on BLM land (about 45 endangered and threatened species are found on BLM land). There is currently a public land policy and management act (H.R. 16675) which has been reported to the House Interior Committee. Section 202 (f) states that use of land for conservation of endangered or threatened species shall be given equal but not greater consideration than other uses in determining proper resource allocations under multiple use and sustained yield principles. The Endangered Species Act was passed to protect threatened creatures. Habitat preservation is critical for the survival of endangered species. Under multiple use we have grazing, mining, and forestry. These are not easy questions to answer -- how best to manage the land to meet the needs of man without losing endangered species.

Attend the next meeting and listen to the speaker who is the environmental specialist for BLM lands in our immediate vicinity.

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ADDENDUM: There will be a Board meeting on November 11 at 7:30 P. M. at 2906 Silver.

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FIRST CLASS