

Rio Grande
Delta
Audubon



Rio Grande
Valley
Texas
March 2004



Northern Cardinal at Sabal Palm in Feb. 2004

Brownsville

International Birding Festival

July 15—18, 2004 Thursday - Sunday

Visit the web site for up coming details at www.audubonbrownsvilleinternationalbirdingfestival.org

Final planning of the festival is ongoing. A few changes to the festival are underway with similar field trips and seminars otherwise. We would like very much for you to think about coming and enjoying the festival, fellow birders, and area during the summer when we have the coolest of all Texas summers. You can increase your US list and make an impressive Mexican list on the Pre and Post Field Trips.

Sabal Palm, Laguna Atascosa NWLR, Santa Ana NWLR, Laguna Madre, Bentsen Rio Grande Valley State Park, and nearby Mexico will continue to provide the well over 100 species spotted each year. Mexican birds reaching their Northern most range during the summer and rarely seen outside this area are the most special birds of the festival. The Pre-festival trip to the El Cielo and Sierra Madres will continue with a trip to Catemaco for the Post-festival being added.

An exciting Post Festival trip to tropical Mexico led by Steve Labuda will give more Mexican bird species than ever before. The Catemaco area is the

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Mark Your Calendars

March 22, 6PM - Bob Brister in person will present video **Utah Wild** of famous Redrock Country by Pulitzer Prize winning author Wallace Stegner. at Rio RV Park, 8801 Boca Chica, Brownsville.

April 5, 6PM - Monthly meeting with Dr. **Gene Lester on landscaping** with native plants. Historical Brownsville Museum.

April 15, 7PM Alonzo Building, 510 E. St Charles, Brownsville- **Gorgas Science presents**

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Special chapter Grants Program winner

Rio Grande Delta Audubon is the winner of an educational grant to assist 5th grade teachers address the Texas Essential Knowledge Skills science concepts for the 5th grade. Leonel Rosales, Grant Chairman along with Mike Baldwin, Dorothy Greaney, and Joe Krause did a good job getting the grant. We plan to offer Continued Professional Education credit for teachers involved. They may be calling in need of help and participation in implementing the program.

THE GUTTER ONE FINE DAY

El Pobrecito "Poor Boy" was slowly riding to work one fine day on his bright red bicycle. He was taking the usual quick route straight to what he knew would be a hard but interesting job. This day, however, was different from all the others that he had previously experienced. About a quarter of a mile ahead was a large implement of some sort slowly moving along the curb. He squinted and concentrated but at first could not make out what kind of machine it was. Then, less than a block away he recognized the aged street sweeper he had seen only once before in another part of town.

It still worked well doing a nice task of cleaning

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up the gutter. The area it had covered appeared spick and span. Soon El Pobrecito caught up and slowly rode behind for a brief period of time. The dust churned up by the swirling brush became a bit too much so he peddled harder and passed on ahead. It was then that for the first time he noticed what lay in the gutter.

Just forward was evidence of a hardy meal. It had apparently come from a nearby drive through, fast food restaurant. There was the wrapper from a really big burger and next to it the container for delicious French-fries. It seemed that whoever had eaten the food skipped the ketchup and mustard because the tubes were still fat and full. Not a stone thrown away was a still quarter-filled soda cup and straw. El Pobrecito could not but reflect on how good the repast must have been.

Up a short distance folded neatly was a once-white and now-quite tarnished and odiferous disposable diaper utterly filled to the brim. The youngster must have felt, oh, so good, to have been clean again. The plastic castoff was probably destined to reside there for many a moon, being rather resistant to biodegradation. Not much else can boast of such lasting quality. Except, perhaps, a plastic bag of which there was not a one. They had all blown into the nearby bushes where they hung like half-ethereal ghosts to haunt the night as passersby paused to eat or change a babe or two.

A short way ahead was a blowout's remnant serving to roughen the biker's ride as potholes do to cars. That truck's tire was absolutely huge and elongated to take up more than five feet of space and, there, to find close to eternal rest. The driver had probably been in such a hurry to deliver his goods on time that he could not stop, as all others do, to gather up the ruined, black remains. After all, the street sweeper would come in its turn.

Yet more dangerous, however, was a short, brightly shining roofing nail. It had a large head and stood upright at attention just waiting to end a tire's breath of life. Such as this had many a time done in El Pobrecito, so he stopped to pick it up, right then and there, to avoid doing so at a later date to his chagrin. He was proud of his dedication to travelers passing by.

As he moved along with thoughts in distant vistas, a silver disk caught the corner of his eye. He quickly braked his bicycle and traced back his passage about ten feet. There to his delight he spotted a twenty-five cent piece. He stooped to pick it up noticing only slight scratches here and there from vicious traffic that had passed over it. He held up the quarter to the brilliant blue sky, let it reflect the sun's golden glare, opened his stubby thumb and index finger to let it drop, aptly caught it in his opened, scaly hand, and raised it to his ruby lips to caress his find and praise his good fortune. Now, this was precisely his error!

From that time forward for several long months El Pobrecito kept looking down as he rode along in the vain hope to double, yes, even triple or quadruple his luck. About all he saw was frequent bottle caps nearly flattened by wheels bearing more than two thousand pounds of weight. Many were squashed leaving just ripples in the metal which, when polished to a silver hue by repeated passage of rumbling tires, gave the appearance of the stiff profile of our very first president, that is, to one with the imagination and hope to father the thought. He positively thought he saw quarters as often as others had tossed the caps in apparent plot to deceive. He even began to love the thought that a green one, five, even ten or twenty dollar bill might grace the gutter in his path. At long last he finally ceased the quest and looked up and forwards again to fulfill his basic need for safety. As luck would have it, he survived the greed so easily inflamed by such a little coin. But then, he was poor and one can understand.

You may ask what else he saw on his trip to work that fine day. It was a soda can that rolled down the street heading north urged on by the gusty prevailing southeast wind. This one longingly wished to be snared and brought to a recycling center. It had faithfully served to contain fizzing sugar water and only recently had formulated the plan to be the center of the nose of a Boeing 747. It had heard that the aluminum in the cans discarded every three months were enough to replace the whole U. S. commercial fleet. So, why not?

Can you imagine, are you willing to accept that the trip described above covered just one short block? Pobrecitos!

Joe Krause

final destination. Steve's frequent trips to the area will bring you the best it has to offer.

The El Cielo—Sierra Madre Pre-festival field trip will be lead by Ray Bieber. Ray has led this trip before and had great finds meeting everyone's expectations. Well over 150 species can be expected with past years exceeding 200 species.

Some of the species of the Catemaco area include: Great Tinamou, Thicket Tinamou, Bare-throated Tiger Heron, Boat-billed Heron, Muscovy Duck, Lesser Yellow-head Vulture, Grey-headed Kite, Bicolored Hawk, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Laughing Falcon, Barred Forest-Falcon, Bat Falcon, Ruddy Crake, Sungrebe, Limpkin, Northern Jacana, Short-billed Pigeon, Blue Ground-Dove, Maroon-chested Ground-Dove, Tuxtilla Quail-Dove, Northern Potoo, Chestnut-collared Swift, Long-tailed Sabrewing, Canivet's Emerald, White-billed Emerald, Grey-collared Becard, Yellow-winged Tanager, Black-throated Shrike-Tanager, and others do inhabit the area.

You can get a full list of potential birds from "A Bird-Finding Guide to Mexico" by Steve N. G. Howell.

Birding equipment and information will again be available at the Info Share area. Also, the Family Nature Day Saturday will give our youth a hands on view of conservation and birding.

Visit the Festival web site at WWW.audubonbrownsvilleinternationalbirdingfestival.org

For Information:

Brownsville Information Center

956/546-3721

Fax 956/546-3972

800/626-2639

E-mail visinfo@brownsville.org

Sabal Palm Grove

956/541-8034

Fax 956/504-0543

E-Mail JimmyPaz@ies.net

Lee Zieger

956/831-4653

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800/776-1895

E-Mail RioRVpark@aol.com

Palo Alto Battlefield

This is an excellent birding site in addition to the outstanding Historical Location. I led a group of Girl Scouts on a field trip in February 2004. We found a pair of White-tailed Kites building a nest not too far from the Center. Palo Alto Battlefield offer habitat from the scrub brush to ponds depending on the weather. There is no charge at this time for visiting this fine location. It is located near Brownsville on Parades Line Road (FM 1847) just north of the FM 511 intersection. Lee Zieger

Mission Statement

Rio Grande Delta Audubon is dedicated to conservation of our native habitat for the protection of birds, other wildlife, and for the enhancement and appreciation of our environment.

Dues for Rio Grande Delta are due now for the same as last year at \$25.00 for an individual and \$35.00 for a family. You can also join in Categories of Green Jay for \$100.00, Buff-bellied Hummingbird for \$250.00 and other business classes. A membership includes an annual free pass to Sabal Palm and other ANCA properties all over the USA and \$5.00 off a Los Ebanos Preserve annual membership.

See Page 4 for membership application or visit www.riograndedeltaaudubon.org for a downloadable application with all the membership details.

Many thanks to **Selena King and Frontera Audubon** in Weslaco for their help in distributing this newsletter. Also, Joe Krause with his article. Photography by Lee Zieger.

Rio Grande Delta Audubon

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Lee Zieger - President—Newsletter Publisher

Greg Vail—Vice-President

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Sally Arroyo—Treasurer

Board Members:

Margaret Etchinson

Jorge Garcia

Dorothy Greaney

Advisor:

Joe Krause



Like what we are doing? Want to help?
**Support the local Rio Grande Valley nature, conservation and
 birding by joining Rio Grande Delta Audubon.**

- I would like to give a Gift Membership
 Good for friends, family, or a business. Include your name and
 address, as well as your recipient's name and address.
- I would like to Upgrade my Membership
- I'm not a member, but would like to join.
- I would like to talk with someone about sup-
 port via a will, land donation, or planned gift.

Local Dues Levels

\$25	Individual		Business Membership:
\$35	Family	\$100-249	Community College
\$60	Painted Bunting	\$250-999	University
\$100	Green Jay	\$1,000	Business Members
\$250	Buff-bellied Hummingbird	\$2,500	Business Supporter
		\$5,000	Business Benefactor
\$500	Roseate Spoonbill	\$10,000	Business Guarantor
\$1,000	Chachalaca		Groove-billed Ani
			Corporate Council

Payment Method

Check or Money Order Visa Master Card Discover American Express

Complete this form and send to: Rio Grande Delta Audubon, 8801 Boca Chica, Brownsville, Texas 78521 or call 800-776-1895 to charge by phone. Make check payable to Rio Grande Delta Audubon. E-Mail Riorvpark@aol.com

Member Information (or Gift Recipient)

Check circle If Change of Address

Member's name _____ Last _____ & _____ & _____
 Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Work Phone (____) ____ / _____ Home Phone (____) ____ / _____
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Gift Giver Information:

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 Work Phone (____) ____ / _____ Home Phone (____) ____ / _____ E-Mail _____

Gift Card Note (12 words maximum): _____

We do encourage membership in National Audubon to get a very fine Magazine and support national conservation.

Mark Your Calendar Continued

The Glick Butterfly Collection etc., live caged view of butterfly evolution, and video presented by Gwen Carnean. RSVP Joe Lee Rubio 956/346-9177 limited attendance.

May 3, 6PM - Monthly meeting with **Don Hockaday from the Coastal Studies Lab on SPI.**

June 20, Gorgas Science Foundation **trip to El Cielo Ranch.** Call 956/554-5050 for details and price.

July 15—18, 2004 Brownsville International Birding Festival

Monthly meetings for April and May are 6PM at the:

Historic Brownsville Museum
 641 E. Madison
 Brownsville, Texas

A map will soon be on our web site with meeting locations designated.

See more at www.riograndedeltaaudubon.org

Rio Grande Delta Audubon
 8801 Boca Chica Blvd
 Brownsville, Texas 78521



- **Special Calendars**
- **Grant winners**
- **Special Program "Utah Wild"**
- **The Gutter One Fine Day**
- **Brownsville International Birding Festival**