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Summer 1997
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THE MOCKINGBIRD CHRONICLES

Newsletter of the South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, Inc.



3308 95th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79423 • (806) 799-2142

Volume 3 Number 1

On Her Own - - -

On January 18th, 1997, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department game warden Mark Collins of Plainview delivered an immature bald eagle to the Wildlife Center. He picked up the eagle on a private ranch in Floyd County 100 miles NE of Lubbock after a rancher phoned saying he had seen the injured bird. When first discovered, the bird was barely responsive and presumed to be near death.

From the moment of her arrival, our attention shifted to providing her with the best care possible. Drs. Larry Farley & Lane Preston of Animal Medical Center conducted extensive diagnostic tests. X-rays showed no broken bones, embedded or ingested lead shot. Blood chemistries were within normal limits. As a precaution, blood was also tested for lead and heavy metals. (This is a major problem in West Texas, where eagles sometimes eat waterfowl that ingest lead pellets along with vegetation as they scavenge playa lakebeds for food. The eagle would then have become ill from lead poisoning.) Her symptoms suggested she had not been electrocuted, and it is doubtful she collided with an object. The bird may, however, have ingested prey contaminated by pesticides. Once in the food chain, this could have had adverse effects. Even though diagnostic studies can "rule out" some problems, it is still sometimes impossible to pinpoint a diagnosis, as in this particular case. Conditioning must start as soon as possible so that the efficiency of her heart, lungs, tendons and muscles does not decrease. It is important not to compromise her physiologic functions during captivity and inactivity. With a strong appetite and no indications of injury or illness, we began her conditioning program the third day, and began planning for her release.

Over the next three weeks, many hours of care & treatment were put into the rehabilitation of this bird. Specialized equipment was readied for her use. Each day she was hooded to minimize her stress, then transported ¼ mile to the adjacent field for tethered flights. At first, she was flown only short distances for brief intervals of time. Every day the distance, duration and number of her flights increased. Her health continued to be monitored. The eagle responded beautifully to the increased activity and experienced no setbacks. She continued to improve, regaining her power once again. Within a week, we were running to keep up with her.

Meanwhile, Mark Collins was likewise planning for her release by locating an appropriate site near where she was first discovered. On Sunday, February 9, the hour of departure arrived. She was transported to a release site several miles from where she was rescued. The carrier was uncovered. She was visibly excited and appeared aware that freedom was imminent.

As the door was opened, she stepped outside, barely touching the ground before she was aloft, heading toward the mesas in the distance. No longer tethered, she was now able to fly freely and enjoy her freedom once again. She continued to gain altitude, exhibiting her energy and strength. She soared and circled effortlessly, ever higher in and out of the clouds until she became merely a speck in the afternoon sky. Over sixty volunteers, spectators and four film crews were still able to see her overhead after twenty minutes. It was a spectacular release. She never looked back, neither did she thank us, but this was unquestionably an exhilarating experience for all involved in her rehabilitation.

During the news broadcast of the release, some people wondered if we misidentified the Bald eagle as a Golden eagle, as it did not have the characteristic white head and tail for which the US national bird is known. This mottled brown plumage is normal for immature bald eagles. Through a succession of molts, Bald eagles attain the characteristic white head and tail when they are five or six years old. This is also when they reach sexual maturity. Also, the 11-lb. weight suggested the bird was female. In most raptor species, the female is heavier and larger.



"Our released Bald eagle"

We again thank Mr. Stephen Thrash and HubNet for providing us with Internet/E-mail service. This enabled us to keep in touch with experts while the eagle was in our care. You may view the article by the HubNet staff: <http://www.hub.of.the.net/refuge/>

Quote: *One touch of nature makes the whole world kin* —
William Shakespeare

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Letter from the Director ~

Our Ninth Year Begins...March and April of 1997 brought us some very welcome news: The IRS has at long

last granted our tax-exempt status.

Mr. Jimmie Mason, of Mason, Warner, P.C. spent many hours on our behalf preparing the various forms and paperwork necessary to complete this



process. We now have that important federal tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status. Mr. Mason and his courteous, helpful staff donated their services to us, and we sincerely appreciate their time and their assistance! Also, we received a grant from the **Junior League of Lubbock** for the purchase of portable display items that will be used in our educational presentations. We thank Melissa Postnikoff, 1996-97 Community Assistance Fund Chairman, and Betsy Jones, President of the organization, for this grant!

As our eighth year drew to a close, we looked ahead to 1997. Each year seems to be the *busiest* ever. We put 918 protected birds and mammals on our state and federal records for 1996...an increase of nearly 150 animals over 1995. We admitted sixteen "new" species. The Center presented 71 educational programs to area schools, scout and interested civic groups. Five Eagle Scout projects were completed. We admitted 93 raptors: 39 owls and 53 hawks and one Bald eagle. That Bald eagle was our first, and it died overnight from wounds and trauma. Thankfully, our second Bald eagle admitted early in 1997 was a completely different story! Here are a few noteworthy year-end statistics: It was a great year for raptors, especially Barn Owls (we admitted 25 and 18 were released), Kestrels (21 admitted 12 released) and Mississippi kites (15 admitted, 9 released). We admitted 73 ducks, 88 Blue Jays, 76 Mourning doves, 57 Inca doves, 55 Mockingbirds, 45 House finches, and 39 American Robins. Mammal summaries were as follows: 98 Gray squirrels (61 released), 46 cottontails (32 released), 31 opossums (29 released), 11 Ground Squirrels (6 released) and 7 Jackrabbits (6 released). There were several hundred "others" of both bird and mammal species. Now, suddenly it is spring once again, and this means our lives will suddenly be consumed caring for youngsters of all species once more. We moan because we have no life, the house is a mess, there is no time to cook, and the laundry is piling up. Free time and adequate sleep become luxuries, and suddenly we do only the things that are "necessary." Suddenly we find ourselves surrounded by hungry mouths of all shapes and sizes, as the ever-needed babies come

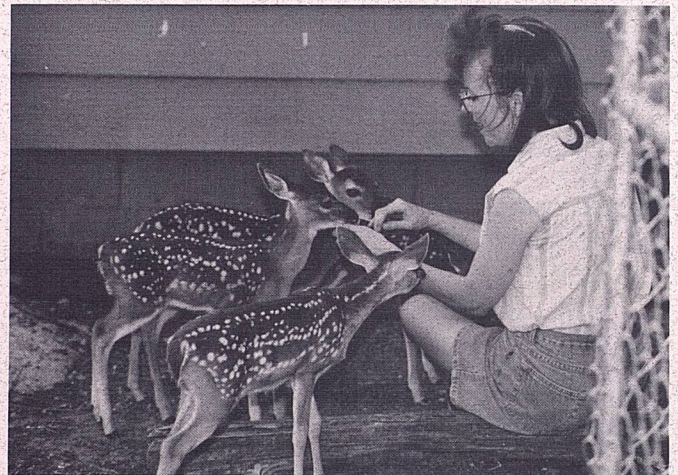
by the hundreds over the next five months. Bird dishes and laundry get done first. Bird and cottontail diets are prepared for our charges, as we eat on the run! However, when all of the complaining is said and done, we see the same familiar faces returning year after year to do what they do best - giving small creatures a second chance at life.

Carol Mitchell

Volunteer Spotlight

by Mary Baze

The spring spotlight focuses on Marla Carver. Marla has been a registered nurse at Methodist Hospital for 22 years. She currently works in the Cardiac Care Unit. She is from Lubbock and resides with her sixteen-year-old son, Cody, two ferrets (Bandit & Rascal), and two dogs, one of which she adopted from the Lubbock Animal Shelter. Marla has volunteered at the center for three years. It's her favorite hobby and a great "stress reliever". She especially enjoys the baby mammals, the feeding and caring of ducklings and her all time favorites are the deer fawns that appear in the summer! It seems the things we remember the longest, aren't always the happiest, Marla says. Last year one of the fawns died in her arms, just as she and another volunteer pulled up at the clinic, despite the CPR and mouth to snout resuscitation she administered. As rehabilitators, we all know we can't save them all, but Marla goes the extra mile to try. We are very lucky to have Marla on our team and want to say "thank you" on behalf of all the animals you've helped! Marla's son Cody completed an Eagle Scout project at the Wildlife Center. Governor George Bush spoke and honored him at his ceremony last year! - Ed.



- Spring is In the Air

Early birds are the sparrows and doves, followed by the larger songbirds such as robins, jays and mockingbirds in early May. We always know when the fledges "fledge" because our phone rings more than fifty times a day. As always, we will be stressing that baby birds normally spend a few days on the ground. Please do not kidnap healthy baby

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birds at this time as they often succumb to stress, and bringing them to us unnecessarily is detrimental to their well being. Problems for which we need to admit the animals are listed in the following article. If you are interested in helping, we need you! Please call Debbie at 799-2142. Supplies needed for the summer: Dry Purina brand cat chow, used soaked for the birds, pop-up tissues, towels without fringes, nuts in and out of the shell, bird seed, laundry detergent (liquid), trash bags, dishwashing soap. Please leave your name so we can thank you. We appreciate the support many of you have shown in the past.

EVERYTHING (ELSE) YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT BABY BIRDS, BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK:

Young birds leave the nest at different times, depending upon the species. Some ground nesting precocial birds such as Killdeer, leave the nest almost immediately after hatching. Passerine birds such as Blue jays, Robins, and raptors such as Barn owls and kestrels are all altricial birds, and may remain in the nest several weeks. At this time they have few feathers, are completely dependent, and cannot thermoregulate. They are called nestlings. At about 3 weeks, many birds have developed sufficiently to leave the nest and they are fully feathered. However, they do NOT have long tail feathers...these feathers will continue to grow once the bird is on the ground. At this stage the bird is called a brancher, or a fledgling. Birds do not leave the nest automatically knowing how to fly. They may be pushed out prematurely, they may fall out, or they may flop out, ready to explore the world around them. They will normally spend 3-7 days on the ground. This period of time is a crucial time when they will learn survival skills from the parents, while they are still being fed and protected by them. They will learn how to forage or hunt for food, to seek shelter and cover in inclement weather, to seek out roost sites, and they will learn about their natural food sources. This, unfortunately, is when the youngsters are also most vulnerable: to being kidnapped, exposed to sudden weather changes, and being exposed to roaming predators. Well-meaning people are also one of the worst detriments to a young fledgling. Bringing them in to the center sets them back, and may even result in an unnecessary death because of stress from handling, transport, etc. The parent is the best suited to care for its own offspring. Remember that birds have no sense of smell...this is an old wives' tale. Mammals, on the other hand, do have a sense of smell, and if possible, leave a displaced squirrel, rabbit or opossum alone for awhile if conditions warrant, and often the mother will return for her offspring. Cottontails and jackrabbits as big as "tennis balls" should be left alone...they are old enough to be on their own! A bird may be picked up and moved to a safer spot, a safer yard close by, or out of harm's way, such as out of the street. We discourage people from bringing their problems to us, as often happens when someone's cat "gets" or even "almost gets" a baby bird or squirrel! Free roaming cats take an enormous toll on wildlife, and it seems wiser to control the cat. Please at least keep kitty in during breeding season. Remember that you will not always see the parents, but if the bird looks healthy, bright

eyed, like a miniature adult minus the long tail feathers, it is most likely okay. Remember, it should tell you something if it tries to run or flutter away from you! Some species such as blue jays, kites and mockingbirds dive-bomb intruders: they are simply trying to tell you to stay away from their youngsters. When to rescue: If a bird is only partially feathered and is on the ground, return it to the nest if possible. Also rescue a bird that is weak, appears ill, has a lame wing or leg, is bleeding, or injured, cat attack (more lethal than dog, but dog bites should be brought in promptly also); staying in the same place for several hours, suffering from heat, cold, or other weather exposure problems, emaciation, or is turning in circles (often a clue that the bird or animal is blind). If there are flies, ants or other insects on it, or if it is in obvious danger do bring the animal to us. If you bring a young bird, time is of the essence. Nestlings and fledglings must be fed about 20-40 minutes a minimum of 15 hours per day. Transport in a box lined with tissue or a small towel - not a cage. The less visual stress the better. Put your name, address, etc. on the box for our records. Warm the bird immediately if it is cold (in your hands is fine, for smaller birds.) Warmth, darkness, and quiet are essential.

NOTES & THANK YOUS

We erroneously listed Dr. James Shotwell as residing in Levelland. He is a resident of Littlefield! Heather Walls, one of our three LHS LEAP Honors student volunteers (for the 2nd year in a row!) was accepted at Texas A&M University. We wish her the best of luck, and we'll miss her! Thank you's to: **Lois Tanner** of **TechType Secretarial Services** for typesetting this newsletter; **Matthew Figun**, a LHS Senior is presently working on an Eagle Scout project that will benefit our raptors. **Jerry Rocha** of **Rocha Construction**, **Larry Rocha**, and **Leo Gustafson** did a very professional job creating a fox enclosure for our non-releasable gray fox, complete with a burrow. Their labor was donated for this project, and we sincerely appreciate it. Jerry also replaced gutter on the barn. Thanks also to **Abercrombie Lumber Company** for 7 Bags of cement for this enclosure, and to **Allen Johnston** who helped rescue the fox after he got caught under the aviary building! He was on site repairing our barn roof with Plains Roofing, and offered his help. Thanks to **Marcy Miles & Cox Cable** for promoting our April garage sale, and to **K-Mart** and **Target Stores** for supplies. **Glenn Joyce** brought many supplies at Christmas, and especially heartwarming were little flannel receiving blankets tied up with Christmas ribbon. They were under our Christmas tree then, but they are all in use now! **Rob Lee**, **Joyce Lisenby**, **Joyce Komkov**, **Carre Avian** and **Glenn & Grace Joyce** for their monthly contributions. Thanks again to **K-Mart Stores**, **Animal Kingdom**, **Nature's Gifts**, **PetsMart**, **United Supermarkets**, **Wal-Mart**, and **South Plains Mall** for participating in an extended fundraiser from which we raised over \$2000! The Grand Prize was a night for two donated by the **Barcelona Court** of Lubbock. **Standard Sales**, **Nature's Gifts**, and **Scuttlebutt's Restaurant** donated other prizes. Thanks to **Debbie Mullins** for infant formula and supplies. The children

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of **Wheelock Elementary School** saved their change for wildlife and matching funds and a pizza party were donated **Papa Johns Pizza**, (Manager **Alex Zamora**); \$110.00 was raised altogether! Many thanks also **Lubbock-Cooper Elementary School** which donated money which will be used to help fund the native plant bird garden project (which in turn will help sustain the many songbirds we release over the summer months), and toward the replacement of two trees. To **KLBK** and **Mike Shaw** and **Adrienne Tovar** for welcoming us at the Noon newscast on Fridays. A big thank you also goes out to **Terry St.Clair** for making our lives a little easier: He made us a much needed baby bottle holder, which will enable us to feed six deer fawns at one time. **Shawn Wallace**, a Coronado HS senior of Troop #157, is constructing a flight cage and planning & executing a native plant garden at the center for his Eagle Scout project. The first two Burrowing Owls were released April 5th from the artificial burrow built by **Ethan Dalley**, which was also an Eagle Scout project. Thanks to all of you who donated items for our April 5th Garage sale. We had few "large" items to sell, and raised \$923.68 in spite of that! We thank **Chris James**, Manager of **United Supermarket #537** at 82nd and Boston for donating fried chicken and trimmings for lunch for all of the volunteers who helped man the sale. Thanks also **Joe Bill Rogers & Flyer's Specialty Pets** for raptor food, **Karen & Steve Dawson** for supplies and help, **Vintage Press** for printing our newsletter; **Shere Forkner** and **Tina Bryant** and folks at **Pack n' Mail** on Slide Road. Also thanks to **Jack Henshall** for the donation of several pine trees, and to **Leo Gustafson** for drawing the Eagle which was used on our last printed Tee shirts!

EYE ON A HAWK

The first Swainson's hawks returned to Lubbock around April 5th. The annual journey of this hawk is one of the greatest migrations on earth, crossing 13 countries on 2 continents and requiring a round trip of up to 14,000 miles. Thousands of these hawks died last year after ingesting pesticides put out by farmers in La Pampa, Argentina, where this species winters. The hawks migrate to La Pampa in the late fall from western Canada and the US and are known to the farmers in La Pampa as the "hawk that eats the locust." The area was inundated by more destructive insects than the Swainson's hawks could feed on, so the farmers began to use a "cheap, plentiful" insecticide in the organophosphate family, resulting in an estimated 20,000 deaths. Currently much work is being undertaken with Argentine, US and Canadian agencies "to find a safe, economical chemical substitute."

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

by Butch Shoop

In the last issue we discussed the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, that administers our Federal permit. In this issue, we review the state regulating agency that also administers a permit, covering the rehabilitation of both wild birds and mammals. -Ed.

The **Texas Parks & Wildlife Department** is a State agency responsible for managing and conserving the natural and cultural resources of the State of Texas for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department is comprised of several divisions that include Law Enforcement, Public Lands, Wildlife, Fisheries, Resource, etc. The headquarters are in Austin, Texas. The Law Enforcement Division has ten regions throughout the state, one of which is Lubbock.



"Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Staff"

The Lubbock Regional Office is responsible for 65 counties from Breckenridge, north to the Oklahoma line and from Abilene west to the New Mexico border. The law enforcement duties include water safety, hunting and fishing compliance, hunter and boating education, various other outdoor education programs, environmental pollution enforcement, various commercial license compliance, enforcement of threatened and endangered species of all wildlife resources and plants, and many other duties. The Lubbock Regional office is located at 1702 Landmark Lane, Suite 1, Lubbock, TX 79415. 806 761-4930.

Why Can't I Shoot A Blue Jay? Part II

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act, originally passed in 1918, provided much needed protection for migratory birds. Plumage from certain species sought by the millinery industry resulted in the decline of some species after the turn of the century. Under the MBTA, all parts of migratory birds are also protected, including feathers, nests, and eggs. This Act also protects all common wild birds found in the US except the House sparrow, starling, feral pigeon, and resident game birds such as pheasant, quail, and wild turkeys (these are managed separately by each state). Migratory bird hunting regulations allow the taking of some species during designated seasons. The exceptions to the MBTA will be covered in this issue. These include Scientific Collecting, Falconry, Taxidermy, Captive Breeding, Wildlife Rehabilitation, Special Purpose Possession

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and Depredation. All of these activities require special permits. Scientific collecting is the taking of migratory birds for scientific study, display and/or teaching. Falconry, or hawking, is the training of falcons or hawks to capture wild game or fowl for the falconer, and also the sport of hunting with these trained birds of prey. Both the state and Federal governments also carefully regulate this. Falconers must first study as an apprentice and pass a written test and inspection. Taxidermy is mounting specimens in a lifelike way for display or study, and is practiced professionally by skilled museum personnel, commercial taxidermists, hobbyists, hunters, and fishermen. In Texas, taxidermists need only a Federal license to stuff and mount migratory birds. Captive Breeding is breeding wildlife in captivity, and this requires both a state and a federal permit. Wildlife rehabilitation is providing care to ill orphaned, displaced or injured wildlife and returning an animal to the wild whenever possible. Wildlife Rehabilitation is also a carefully state and federally regulated activity requiring year-end reporting of all protected migratory birds admitted. Special Purpose Possession is granted so that a facility may retain, under certain circumstances, migratory birds (usually non-releasable birds) for the purpose of being utilized in educational presentations.) SPWRC has both a wildlife rehabilitation permit and a special purpose possession permit. Protected wild animals sometimes cause damage to property or crops or otherwise cause economic harm to humans. In some cases you can get a special "Depredation" permit which may be obtained to protect your health, safety or property. Note: Most mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and plants are also protected or regulated by individual states. These may also receive additional Federal protection if they are threatened or an endangered species. A lucrative market still exists for migratory bird feathers and eagle feathers. Prohibitions under this act are therefore intended to eliminate any commercial market for the birds themselves, as well as for their feathers and parts. One exception to this is the possession of eagle feathers by Native Americans for religious and ceremonial purposes; such exceptions require certification and feathers or other parts must be obtained from designated legal sources. (Application must be made through the regional permit offices). The National Eagle Repository near Denver, Colorado serves as the central location for all dead eagles acquired by the Fish & Wildlife Service, and the feathers and parts are distributed to permit holders. Part III, the Eagle Protection Act, will be covered in our summer newsletter.

FEEDING HUMMINGBIRDS

Few people are not fascinated by these tiny glitzy garden birds. They have beautiful iridescent coloring and remarkable physical characteristics. There are approximately 340 species of hummingbirds in total; about 21 species reach North America, and about 6 species visit our area. One of those six, the Rufous Hummingbird, breeds as far north as Alaska. It is interesting to observe their interaction with plants; nectar from blossoms of a wide variety of annuals, perennials, plants, vines and trees will attract hummingbirds, and

also butterflies. Much of their nourishment is obtained from the nectar producing flowers of plants.

Hummingbirds are extremely active with high caloric requirements. To maintain their high metabolic rate they must feed often and will visit hundreds of flowers in a day. In many cases, the plants are in turn dependent on the hummingbirds for their pollination. The flowers of these plants are often tubular, brightly colored (often red or orange), scentless, and easy for the tiny birds to hover before. Hummingbirds also visit flowers for tiny insects, which provide them with essential protein. In addition to their ability to hover in midair, they can also fly forward, backward, and reach speeds of up to 30 mph. Their wings may beat 80 beats per second in forward flight, and 200 beats per minute in display dives. They make long nonstop flights during migration. Hummingbirds are present during some part of the year in every part of North America except the far North, and the treeless plains. The way to start attracting them is to provide them with sugar-water solution in specially designed feeders, and to add plants to your garden that hummingbirds like.

Planting many flowers that bloom at different times of the year is necessary to meet the nectar demands of even a few hummingbirds. The feeders will supply unlimited amounts of sugar water and bring hummingbirds into closer view. The following is the best recipe for making your own nectar; it is easy to prepare, and cheaper than the instant commercial mixes. 1 Part Sugar to 4 Parts Water; Boil 1-2 minutes; Cool and store in refrigerator. Never use honey or artificial sweeteners. Honey is an unnatural food for hummingbirds, and spoils much more quickly than sugar. It also contains bacteria that causes a fungus disease on the tongue and is always fatal to hummingbirds. Artificial sweeteners have no food value. There is always controversy about whether or not to use red food coloring to color the sugar water. The consensus of opinion is that the red color should NOT be used. An artificial dye, its safety has been questioned in regard to its use in foods for human consumption. Most feeders have red on them and that should be enough. To attract attention to your feeder, place it among flowers that hummers like. Feeder activity will slow as more flowers bloom in your yard. The birds prefer natural nectar to what we offer in our feeders.



Feeder Care: Your hummingbird feeders need to be cleaned, and nectar changed every 3-4 days; more often in hotter weather. Black spots inside your feeder indicate mold and you will need to scrub it out with a good bottle brush, or, you can add some sand with water and shake the feeder to remove the mold. Never use harsh detergent to clean your feeder. Rinse out each time you change your nectar with hot water, and if you do this

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on a regular basis you should not have a problem with mold. Don't fill more than half full, because the birds won't be able to drink it all before it will need to be changed. If you live in the eastern part of the United States, you will find you only have one hummingbird that will visit for the summer, and that is the Ruby-throated. They are very territorial and defend flowers and feeders within their favorite roost spot, so if you want to attract more than one hummer, try putting up 2-3 more feeders out of sight from each other--perhaps on another side of your house. Some insects are attracted to hummingbird feeders, namely bees, ants and wasps. One way to discourage them is to use bee guards-small screens that come with many feeders and fit over the feeder ports. You can deter ants by smearing salad oil around the feeder openings. Do not get any in the feeder solution, and do not use pesticides! Also, some commercial feeders have a small moat around the hanger to discourage ants. As many as 60 other bird species may also visit the sugar water species, as well as bats, lizards, opossums, raccoons, foxes chipmunks and squirrels.

When To Put Up A Feeder: Most Hummingbirds are migratory, and visit North America in the warmer seasons. Feeders should be put up in time for their arrival. This will vary greatly depending upon where you are located. In the Florida area they arrive as early as January, and in the Upper Great Lakes they arrive in May. It is important to know the average date they arrive in your specific area to get your feeder up 5-10 days before the average date so they will see your feeder.

When To Take Feeders Down: One of the biggest misconceptions about hummingbirds is the belief that if you do not take your hummingbird feeder down they will not migrate. This is false. In many areas hummingbirds start to migrate even before the flowers and insects start to wane. Males generally migrate several weeks ahead of immatures (new hatchlings) and females. Migration is done according to changing day length or photoperiod. Feeders left up may actually help migrating hummingbirds.

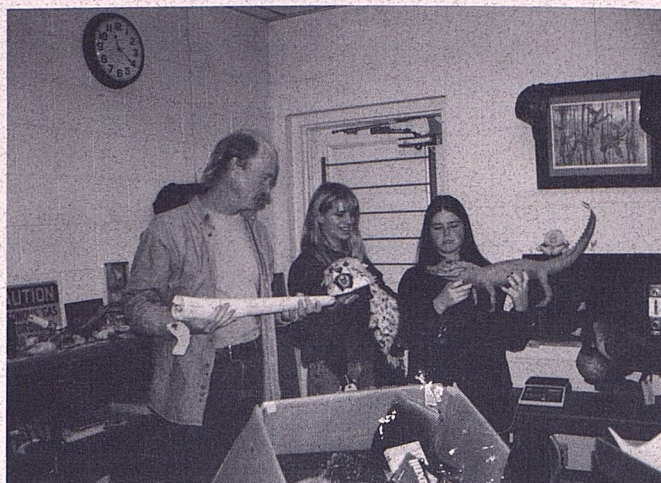
Flowers, Shrubs, Vines and Trees That Will Attract Hummingbirds: The following is only a partial list of flowers, and none of these need to be red in color, although the color red is attractive to hummingbirds. To determine whether any of the following will flourish in your area, check with your local nursery.

Flowers: Cardinal Flower, Lantana; Columbine, Fuchsias, Impatiens, Hollyhocks, Petunia, Geranium, Coralbell, Penstemon, Begonia; Indian-paintbrush; Lupine; Zinnia; Rosemary, Scarlet sage, Salvia, Nasturtium

Shrubs: Butterfly Bush, Vitex, Azaleas, Flowering Quince, Weigelia, Ocotillo

Trees: Flowering Crab, Tulip Poplar, Eucalyptus, Mimosa

Vines: Japanese or Trumpet Honeysuckle, Trumpet Creeper, Morning Glory, Cypress vine, snapdragon vine



"Rob Lee and Lubbock High School students, Katrina May & Heather Walls during a field trip to the USFWS Office"

Purple Martin Banding

Jim Ray, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department biologist, recently received state and federal permits for banding Purple martins. He hopes to have banding sites on the western edge of their Texas range, namely Lubbock, Canyon, Amarillo and Spearman. These sites must consist of housing with accessible nest compartments, (housing that will raise/lower vertically, compartments that open, etc.). If you host a colony of purple martins in such housing and would allow Jim to band the nestlings, he would like to hear from you. You would send a postcard when the first eggs appear. This will allow him to calculate the optimum time that he needs to visit the colony, i.e. when the nestlings reach the age of 15-22 days. This will allow Jim approximately a month to adjust his schedule. Please spread the word to those individuals who are purple martin hosts. Jim can be reached at 605 Butterfield Trail, Canyon, TX 79015. (806) 655-3550.

Cliff's Notes

by Cliff Stogner

Results of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count (December 1996): There were a few big surprises on our Christmas counts this year. The biggest had to be the species that were nowhere to be found, such as the Cedar waxwing, Lark bunting, Roadrunner, Sandhill crane, and the Northern bobwhite. On the Muleshoe count, there were no Cedar waxwings or Lark buntings and few species of waterfowl. Lubbock's 97 and Muleshoe's 43 species seen were both below average for total number of species seen. In the twenty years I have been involved with Christmas counts, the average have been around 103 for Lubbock and 50 for Muleshoe. Species that were unusually high for the Lubbock count included Snow geese, Ring billed gulls, and Mourning doves. One of the trends for the Lubbock count pertains to the

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Canada geese: back in 1977 the new high was 173 and now the geese are in the 30-40,000 range. Some now even remain and nest here. The Scaled quail has gone in the opposite direction. In 1977, the new high for this species was 306, and is now no longer found in the Lubbock area. The same trend is seen with the Sandhill cranes on the Muleshoe count. In 1977, Sandhills numbered 104,000. Now we usually have only 1000-3000. On the Lubbock count, Inca doves continue to increase in numbers. Another trend for both counts is the declining waterfowl numbers over the years. Lack of water at the Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge is one factor for that area. Overall, the Christmas count is an event many local Audubon members and non-members look forward to and enjoy every year. We feel like we are part of a good project, we get to enjoy the outdoors, and we welcome the opportunity to count the many species of birds we observe.

May 10th is International Migratory Bird Day; our local Audubon Chapter will be counting species May 3.
— Ed

The "Eagle Lady" Will Return to Lubbock

On Wednesday, September 23, Doris Mager, fondly known as the "Eagle Lady" of Florida, will be coming through Lubbock for perhaps the last time. On Thursday, September 24, she will do three school presentations. Doris's adult life has been devoted to caring for birds of prey, and she founded S.O.A.R. (Save our American Raptors). She spends most of the year traveling with her birds of prey doing educational programs all over the US. She has been visiting Lubbock for the past ten years. Doris does charge a fee to defray her out of pocket cost for travel and expenses. We are hoping to find some corporate sponsors for her, in which case the sponsor could select the school in which they would like Doris to speak. If you are interested, or know someone who might be, please contact me: Carol Mitchell, 806 745-8120.

HOUSE CALLS IN THE WILD

Dr. Jeanette Wyant and Dr. Cheryl Boehm expressed an interest in wildlife veterinary care when they visited the wildlife center last summer. They are currently employed at the South University Veterinary Hospital. We would love to have more veterinarians listed on our permit so we would be able to extend the care that we provide to wildlife beyond the one clinic currently licensed (Animal Medical Center, Drs. Larry Farley and Lane Preston). At the end of the year, we received applications for Jeanette and Cheryl, and they have been approved. Dr. Pat Allen, owner of SUVH will also be licensed shortly. Dr. Allen had a license years ago when there were no rehabilitators in this area. Now we have the rehabilitators and we need him back in our midst again!

New & Renewing Members

New Members are indicated with an asterisk *

— Patrons —

Carla Davis, Lubbock
Ray Farmer, M.D., Lubbock*
Mary & John Gillaspay, Lubbock*
Kay & Norvell Johnson, Lubbock*
Glenn Joyce, Ralls, TX*
Grace Joyce, Ralls, TX*
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