



# The Roadrunner

## Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

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### El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society General Meetings

#### December Holiday Party!

Monday, December 8th at 7:00 p.m.  
at UTEP Centennial Museum, corner of Wiggins and University

The El Paso/ Trans-Pecos Audubon holiday merry-making is set for Monday, Dec. 8, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. at the UTEP Centennial Museum.

Join in the traditional photo contest, taste irresistible holiday refreshments, and meet Santa Claus! Bringing a snack is optional, but if you wish to bring something, we predict you will see grateful smiles. If you dream of winning the photo contest, here's what to do: Our guideline is

### Each person is allowed one photo in each category:

- Bird Photos
- Wildlife other than birds
- Scenic shots
- Kids and pets
- Humorous photos



Here's how to get your photos to Bob Johnson, photo contest coordinator:

- Email JPEG formatted photos to [wildbirderbob@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wildbirderbob@sbcglobal.net), OR
- Call Bob at 751-0125 to arrange for pick-up of printed photos or slides

**SEE YOU AT THE PARTY!!!**

### A Texas Birding Surprise

*Presentation by Lucretia and Eddie Chew*

**Monday, January 19, 2009 at 7:00 pm**  
**UTEP Centennial Museum, W. University and Wiggins**



Birders often remark that Texas has some of the top birding spots in the United States. You are invited to hear a delightful presentation by Lucretia and Eddie Chew on one of their best birding trips in the state and view their snapshots. The public is welcome. Refreshments will be served.





The Audubon Foundation of Texas represents Texas Audubon chapters in the Earth Share of Texas payroll-deduction plan for charitable giving.

**Earth Share OF TEXAS**

**El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society**

Officers

**President: Scott Cutler, 581-6071**  
**Vice President: Jane Fowler, 598-2448**  
**Secretary: Lucretia Chew, 587-9589**  
**Treasurer: Eddie Chew, 587-9589**

Committees

Membership: Roxanne Schroeder, 533-0061	Publicity: Janet Perkins, 581-2849
Programs: Ursula Sherrill, 526-7725	Education: Kathleen Whelen, 751-2408
Conservation: vacant	Publications: Jane Fowler, 598-2448
Field Trips: Ursula Sherrill, 526-7725	Ways & Means: vacant
Hospitality: Janet Perkins, 581-2849	Sanctuary: John Sproul, 545-5157

**THE ELECTRONIC ROADRUNNER**

THE ROADRUNNER is now also available electronically as a PDF file. If you would like to receive our newsletter in this way via e-mail, just send a note to John Sproul at [jsproul@utep.edu](mailto:jsproul@utep.edu).

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

<http://www.trans-pecos-audubon.org>

**Save the date!**

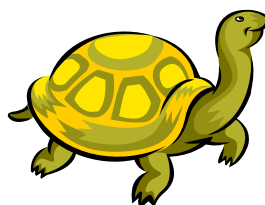
**The El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society's Annual Awards Banquet**



**Saturday, February 21, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.**

**Jaxon's Restaurant, 1135 Airway Blvd, El Paso**

**Betty Fisbeck, 2005 Meritorious Service Award winner, will present a program on her recent journey to the historic Galapagos Islands.**



Ms. Fisbeck will share with her audience the stunning landscapes, and birds and other wildlife she saw during her visit.

The EPTP Audubon Society Conservation Award and the Meritorious Service Award will be presented to their 2009 recipients.

**RSVP by February 14 to Scott Cutler 581-6071 for reservations, or email him at [scutler@utep.edu](mailto:scutler@utep.edu).**

**Conservation Organizations**

Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue  
[www.whc.net/cdwr](http://www.whc.net/cdwr)

El Paso Zoo 521-1850  
[www.elpasozoo.org](http://www.elpasozoo.org)

Keystone Heritage Park 581-7920  
[www.keystoneheritagepark.org](http://www.keystoneheritagepark.org)

Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park  
(505) 524-3334 [www.asombro.org](http://www.asombro.org)

Friends of Rio Bosque 747-8663  
[www.riobosque.org](http://www.riobosque.org)

Southwest Environmental Center  
(505) 522-5552  
[www.wildmesquite.org](http://www.wildmesquite.org) [swec@zianet.com](mailto:swec@zianet.com)

Franklin Mt. Wilderness Coalition  
[www.franklinmountains.org/](http://www.franklinmountains.org/)

## AT FEATHER LAKE

Once again, with no recent rainfall and the irrigation season ended, water levels at Feather Lake are dropping steadily. Without timely rains, the lake will likely be dry, or nearly so, by mid-December.

For the moment, conditions are good. Numbers of ducks, shorebirds and wading birds are climbing. The cottonwoods are still golden. Now is a great time to visit. Even without water, we plan to keep Feather Lake open at least through mid-December so visitors can enjoy the cottonwoods in fall color. We still have a few December dates for which we need volunteers to staff our sanctuary. Interested? Please contact John Sproul (747-8663, [jsproul@utep.edu](mailto:jsproul@utep.edu)).

We also have a couple of workdays coming up, on Sat., December 6, and Sat., January 31, both starting at 2 p.m. At the December workday, we'll deploy the new secret weapon in our campaign to knock back the kochia and Palmer amaranth that thrived in the uplands around the lake this year. Join us to learn its identity!

Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux in El Paso, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave. Hours are 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays and 2 p.m. to dusk on Sundays. Admission is free.

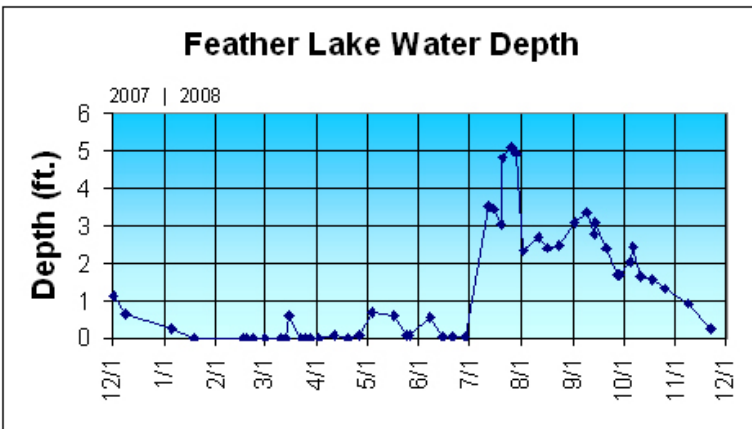
## Audubon at RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK



Rio Bosque Wetlands Park began receiving water November 2. Duck numbers have been increasing ever since. Meanwhile, construction of the border fence is poised to begin along the Park's western edge, effectively severing, for terrestrial wildlife and people, the current open connection between the Park and the Rio Grande. If you enjoyed viewing the wetland cells from the river levee in the past, you likely won't have that opportunity in the future. For the latest on water conditions, recent bird sightings, border-fence construction and more, check the Park's website, [www.riobosque.org](http://www.riobosque.org). Upcoming free walking tours:

- 9 a.m. Sat., December 6 (Bird tour)**
- 3 p.m. Sun., December 14**  
**(Introductory tour)**
- 3 p.m. Sat., January 10 (Bird tour)**
- 3 p.m. Sun., January 18 (Introductory tour)**

The meeting place is a bridge crossing the Riverside Canal. To get there from I-10, take Americas Ave. (Loop 375) to Pan American Drive, turn left onto Pan American and travel 1.5 miles. Information: 747-8663.



## News from the Trail

### DOWN TO THE RESERVOIRS

On Saturday 15 November, 5 members left Feather Lake about 7:45 AM. After a 50 mile drive we exited I-10 at exit 81 and started birding the fields below McNary Reservoir. Quite a few Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons were along the ditches. Highlight of that area was a flock of about 80 **Sandhill Cranes** foraging in a field.

At McNary Reservoir over 40 species were identified, the best was about 40 Snow Geese, and close-up views of **Western Grebes**, also Eared Grebes, Canvasbacks, and a flock of McCown's Longspurs across the road.



Western Grebe

At Fort Hancock, White Pelicans and a close flyby of a **Prairie Falcon**. We stopped for lunch at the rest area and had Western Bluebirds and Yellow-rumped Warblers. The last stop at Tornillo Reservoir yielded a Forster's Tern, more Eared Grebes and the BIRDS of the trip, 2 **Common Loons**.

### The new website is here!

Board members and volunteers will attend training to provide updated information about upcoming field trips, a calendar of upcoming events, recent bird sightings.

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society  
<http://www.trans-pecos-audubon.org>

On the October 4 Audubon bird tour of the Nature Walk Trail at Franklin Mountains



State Park, John Groves and Bob Johnson spotted a female immature Chestnut-sided Warbler at close range. This surprise visitor, in its first-winter plumage, was foraging in a large shrub down a broad wash south of

the road. Chestnut-sided warblers normally migrate through east Texas, and are rare sightings in the West. Let's hear it for John and Bob, and Franklin Mts. State Park!

### KEYSTONE HERITAGE PARK

The wetlands are open the last weekend of each month for people to come and birdwatch on their own. No Tour Guides, bring binoculars.

**Sat. Dec. 27, 7:30 - 10:00 AM**

**Sun. Dec. 28, 2:00 - 4:30 PM**

**Sat. Jan. 24, 7:30 - 10:00 AM**

**Sun. Jan. 25, 2:30- 5:00 PM**

Any questions, call Bob (915) 751-0125,  
[wildbirderbob@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wildbirderbob@sbcglobal.net)

### HUECO TANKS

#### Admission

Adults-\$5, Seniors-\$2, Children-free

#### **Bird Identification Tours**

Please check in at the Headquarters.  
 Reservations and information 857-1135



# Bird-watching

Saturday, December 6, 2008

## Do the Upper Valley Pond Hop!

Join us in checking for over-wintering birds at some excellent aquatic habitats in the El Paso Upper Valley area, such as Crossroads Pond, Sunland Park Racetrack, and the wetland behind the Polly Harris Senior Center.

**Date:** Saturday, December 6

**Time:** 8:00 a.m.

**Meeting place:** Keystone Heritage Park, 4200 Doniphan Drive, near Frontera intersection.

**Coordinator:** Ursula Sherrill (526-7725, [usherrill@miners.utep.edu](mailto:usherrill@miners.utep.edu))



## HUECO TANKS

### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

**Date** Sunday, December 28, 2008

The count circle is 15 miles in diameter, it just includes Hueco Tanks Historical Site and goes south to Horizon Lake. The western boundary on Montana is at the traffic light at Desert Meadows. The eastern boundary is east of the Border Patrol checkpoint.

Lets see if we can get over 65 species this year, a number that has been achieved only a couple of times since 1970. To accomplish this, I will need at least 8 counters, **Please call and volunteer.**

**Meeting Time: 7:30 AM**

**Place:** Flying Saucer Building  
(Junction US 62/180 & FM 2775)

**Compiler:**

Richard Hermosillo 915-491-0815  
e-mail [ebpirder@yahoo.com](mailto:ebpirder@yahoo.com) Total count time usually is 6-8 hours, but if you have other commitments you can leave at anytime.



## Sandia Mountains

**Sat & Sun, January 17&18, 2009**

**What:** Weekend trip to see Rosy Finches in the Sandia Mountains near Albuquerque and Bosque del Apache.

**When:** Sat & Sun, January 17 & 18, 2009

**Trip Coordinator:** John Groves. For information, Ursula Sherrill at 526-7725.

Rosy Finches at Sandia Mountains  
(J. Frazier 2008)



Black-capped Chickadee  
(H. Eskin 2008)

For stunning vistas and information about the Sandia Mountains and about Rosy Finches, check out <http://www.rosyfinch.com> <http://www.knme.org/sandias/index.html>

Highlights of the trip will be a visit to Bosque del Apache and the Rio Grande Nature Center on 1/17, observation of Rosy Finch banding on 1/18 morning, and scouting these sites for birds found there in the past: Tundra Swans, Red Crossbills, and a Black-capped Chickadee.

**Hawk Alley**  
**Sunday, February 1, 2009**



We travel to Hawk Alley to look for *Northern Harrier*, *Red-tailed Hawk*, *American Kestrel* and more. It's also possible that *Cooper's Hawk*, *Prairie Falcon*, and / or *Golden Eagle* could be present.

**Date:** Sunday, February 1, 2009

**Time:** 11:30 a.m.

**Meet at:** Lowe's parking lot, 4531 Trans-Mountain Road, behind Taco Bell

**Trip Coordinator:** Bob Johnson 751-0125;  
[wildbirderbob@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wildbirderbob@sbcglobal.net)

El Paso/Trans-Pecos  
Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 972441  
El Paso, Texas 79997

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### National Audubon Society

#### Chapter Membership Application

**Yes**, I'd like to join.

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

My check for \$20.00 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

W10  
Local Chapter Code

**7XCHA**

### Dates to Remember Call Ursula Sherrill for details 526-7725

#### December

Sat 6: **Upper Valley Ponds**  
Sat 6: **Feather Lake Work**  
6 & 14: **Rio Bosque**  
Mon 1: **Board Meeting**  
Mon 8: **Holiday Meeting**  
27 & 28: **Keystone**  
Sun 28: **Xmas Bird Count**

#### January

10 & 18 : **Rio Bosque**  
Mon 12: **Board Meeting**  
17 & 18: **Sandia Mts.**  
Mon 19: **General Meeting**  
24 & 25: **Keystone**  
Sat 31: **Feather Lake**  
**Workday**

#### February

Mon 9: **Board Meeting**  
Sat 21: **Awards Dinner**  
21 & 22: **Keystone**

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Local **Chapter Only Membership** Your \$15.00 will help support chapter activities & you'll receive

***The Roadrunner*** delivered to your mailbox.

Make checks payable to the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: EPTP Audubon P.O. Box 972441 El Paso, Texas 79997**

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