



# The Roadrunner

NEWSLETTER OF THE EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 32 Issue 3

August & September, 2003

## Points of Interest

- September Speaker
- New Bird Checklist
- Rio Bosque Park
- Friends of Hueco Tanks
- Keystone's Featherfest
- Field Trips
- Pot luck at Feather Lake

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## General Meetings

Monday, September 15, 2003  
Memorial Park Garden Center  
3105 Grant Street 7:30pm

Dr. Jerry Johnson  
U.T.E.P. Ecology Professor

Join the El Paso Audubon Society for the September General meeting and be rewarded by a presentation given by our guest speaker, Dr. Jerry Johnson, as he talks about UTEP's research facility at Indio Ranch (near Van Horn). Learn of the research being conducted at this site and opportunities for volunteers to get involved. See you there!



## Chapter Web Site

<http://www.gbarnett.com/eptpas/eptpashome.html>.

El Paso Audubon Online features updated graphics and more information for chapter members and visitors to El Paso.

El Paso Audubon Online supplements the Roadrunner and includes information about upcoming field trips, a calendar of upcoming events, recent bird sightings and an updated list of birding links to the Internet. Make bird sighting reports at [ElPasoBirdAlert@gbarnett.com](mailto:ElPasoBirdAlert@gbarnett.com)

## New Checklist Published

Enclosed with this newsletter is the new edition of our bird checklist for El Paso County, Texas, and adjacent areas, the first revision since 1987. Our sincere thanks go to Jim Paton, John Sproul and Barry Zimmer for their dedicated work compiling this new edition.

A lot has happened in the 16 years since 1987: new rarities, taxonomic changes, new breeding species, increased understanding of the status of many species, and changes in status of many. The new checklist reflects a wealth of new information. We hope you will find it useful.

The previous list included 374 species and 10 additional identifiable forms. The new list includes a whopping 426 species and 10 additional identifiable forms. Some of the 52 new species were added through taxonomic "splits" (e.g., Cassin's Vireo, Baltimore Oriole). Others were elevated from the historical list (Pacific Loon, Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Swallow-tailed Kite, Hudsonian Godwit, Carolina Wren, Varied Thrush, Sprague's Pipit, Golden-crowned Sparrow) or the hypothetical list (White-tailed Kite, Elf Owl, Allen's Hummingbird, Downy Woodpecker, Gray Vireo, American Tree Sparrow) due to documented sightings in the past 16 years.

Most of the new species, though, were added through first appearances in the checklist area. Among the most intriguing: White Ibis, Glossy Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, White-winged Scoter, Black Scoter, Barrow's Goldeneye, Zone-tailed Hawk, Piping Plover, Red-necked Stint, Ruff, Long-tailed Jaeger, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Arctic Tern, White-eared Hummingbird, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, White-eyed Vireo, Mexican Jay, Rufous-backed Robin, Gray Silky-flycatcher, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Scarlet Tanager. It has been a remarkable 16 years.

The family with the greatest number of new additions is Laridae (skuas, gulls, terns and skimmers), up from 14 species to 20. The family with the greatest percentage increase is Threskiornithidae (ibises and spoonbills), up from 1 species to 4.

New breeding species include: Western Grebe, Clark's Grebe, Neotropic Cormorant, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, White-tailed Kite, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Anna's Hummingbird, and Lucy's Warbler.

And one additional noteworthy change: the checklist is now in a digital format. That means future revisions and updates will be much easier to make. You won't have to wait 16 years for the next edition. If you would like additional copies, they will be on sale at our monthly meetings, at Feather Lake, at community events, and by mail. The price is \$2, plus \$.75 for shipping and handling on mail orders.

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## El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

### Officers

President	vacant	
Vice President	John Kiseda	533-4615
Secretary	Roxanne Schroeder	533-0061
Treasurer	Peter Dunavant	584-5351

### Directors

John Sproul	747-8663
Bob Johnson	757-1876
Paul Hyder	751-2408
Lois Balin	774-9603
Jane Fowler	598-2448
Kathleen Whelen	751-2408
Nancy Wilson	747-8604

## AT FEATHER LAKE

Feather Lake was dry for several weeks in late May and early June. An inflow of irrigation carriage water flooded it to a depth of 1.5 feet in mid-to-late June, then it began dropping again. At this writing, the lake is again largely dry, but that can change in a hurry if we get a good rain.

The water-level fluctuations at Feather Lake may seem disruptive, and this year the pattern is atypical, but in general fluctuating water levels play an important role in shaping the plant communities around the lake. Look along the shore, the interior berm or the islands, and you'll see a profusion of young cottonwoods and willows. They are

there because the flooding, followed by gradual water-level decline, that Feather Lake experiences mimics fairly well the spring-summer flooding these trees need for germination of their seeds and establishment of the seedlings.

Feather Lake re-opens to the public on October 4. In preparation, our next workday will be Sat., September 27. Come any time after 8 a.m. and help us get ready for Opening Day. Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave.

## RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK

UTEP offers free walking tours twice each month and also holds monthly community workdays at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park in El Paso's Mission Valley. Coming up:

8 a.m. Sat., Aug 9 (Reptiles and Amphibians)

8 a.m. Sat., Aug 16 (Workday)

8 a.m. Sat., Aug 23 (Birds)

8 a.m. Sat., Sept 13 (Reptiles and Amphibians)

8 a.m. Sat., Sept 20 (Workday)

9 a.m. Sun., Sept 21 (Birds)

For all of these activities, the meeting place is a bridge crossing Riverside Canal. To get there from I-10, take Americas Ave. (Loop 375) to Pan American Dr., turn left onto Pan American and travel 1.5 miles to the bridge.

Please be prompt. Information: 747-8663.



# ON THE TRAIL

## GLENWOOD - LUNA

This will be a great weekend in the part of the Gila NF that many of you have not birded. In the Luna- Reserve area we should get Lewis' Woodpecker and Pinyon Jay, in Glenwood Yellow-breasted Chat and Yellow Warbler, and at the Catwalk, the American Dipper. In Pueblo Park Campground Mountain Chickadee's, Purple Martin and Stellar's Jay. At Mangus Springs on the return trip a look for Lincoln Sparrow and Common Blackhawk. If you are not camping, make your motel reservation in Glenwood and Reserve. . **Please indicate your intentions to attend by 18 August.** If we do not have at least 5, its a no go.

The dates: **Sat. & Sun. 23/24 August**  
 Meet at: **Glenwood Ranger Station**  
 Time: **11:00 AM**  
 Who: **Bob Johnson (757-1876)**  
 for map and details

## DOWN THE VALLEY

McNary, Fort Hancock and Tornillo Reservoirs are usually good for Clark's and Western Grebes, Gulls, Ducks, Egrets, Cormorants, also White Pelicans could be present. We might catch a few passerines and most likely some birds of prey, probably a Harris' Hawk and sometimes a Peregrine Falcon has been around. Bring something to eat as we will lunch at the Tornillo Rest area.

Date: **Saturday Sep 6, 2003**  
 Time: **7:24 AM**  
 Meet at: **Feather Lake**  
 Leader: **Bob Johnson (757-1876)**



**GOLDEN EAGLE**

## HAWK WATCH

An overnight trip to the Monzano Mountains to observe part of the annual migration of **RAPTORS**. This is one of a number of sites in the west that Hawk Watch International uses as a counting and banding site for the study of raptor migration. The raptor count is conducted from about the middle of August until the first part of November. The observation point is located on Capilla Peak in the Cibola National Forest.

A few motels in Mountainair about 15 miles south from a campground below the peak and motels in Albuquerque about 50 miles north. This is not a trip where you have to get out at sunrise as the birds are flying by all day. The latter part of September usually has some of the highest counts. Two years ago when we went they had the biggest count day with over 300 birds seen.

You will see various species up close, including hand held raptors that have been mist netted for banding. They will show the wings and body size and explain about the bird. You might be one of the persons that will be allowed to hold and release a bird.

This trip will occur on **September 20th and 21st.** for itinerary and maps contact **Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson (757-1876)**

## BIRDS and PEOPLE

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 4; 4:30  
until ????**

What's going to happen?

**12th Annual Pot Luck Picnic.**

Where?

At our **FEATHER LAKE** sanctuary.

The chapter will provide the burgers, dogs and rolls, also the condiments to top them off. This is a family affair, the kids will enjoy it as the birds will be performing. The grill will be hot about 5:30. But come at **4:30 PM** so you can build up your appetite as you walk around looking at the birds. By early Oct. some ducks are starting to arrive and we will have some of regular night roosters(not chickens) flying in.

We ask you to bring a dish (Salad, Pasta, Dessert, or something else) to share with a few others, Also your own utensils and what ever beverages you like. If you would like something other than burgers or dogs feel free to cook on the grill, and you are not required to share your filet mignon. Our coffee pot with hot water and instant mix will be ready.

If you think you might be coming give John Sproul (545-5157) or Bob Johnson (757-1876) a call. as we need an approximate count for buying the goodies. If you have a change of plans and at the last minute you find you can make it, **please come** even if you haven't called.

## FEATHERFEST

Keystone Heritage Park. We will have a booth telling about the birds of Keystone and about our chapter:

A talk about the birds will be given about 12N. Other exhibits, tours and talks will also take place. Bring your friends and family out to the site to see what it is all about.

Date: **Saturday, October 4, 2003**

Time: **10 AM -- 2 PM**

Where: **Keystone Heritage Park**

## FRIENDS of HUECO TANKS

**Admission:** Hueco Tanks Historical Site - \$4.  
\$2 for Seniors 65 and older. Children under 12  
FREE. Call for information 857-1135.

### Bird Identification Tours

Sunday August	17	7:07 AM
Sunday September	21	7:07 AM
Sunday October	19	8:08 AM

**Check in at the Headquarters.** Leader Bob  
"Wildbirder" Johnson. 757-1876

## PLAN AHEAD

ANNUAL INTERPRETIVE FAIR - Hueco Tanks  
State Historical Site -- **October 18th & 19th.**  
All the details in the October ROADRUNNER

# OBSERVATIONS

## RARE AND UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

**Mar. 16, 2003 to Jul. 15, 2003**

Listing of birds is determined using the checklist "Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas" 8th Edition May 2003. Leave sightings at Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson (757-1876), or E-mail bobwildbirderj@cs.com.

**Bold print - Rare;**

Light highlighting - Casual;

Dark highlighting - Very Rare

-y seen in or from their yard. -f field trip leader.

**Observers:** Dan Allen, Helen Bigalow, Michael Charske, Hugh Jameson, Sally Jameson, Bob Johnson, John Kiseda, Kathy Kiseda, Jim Paton, Flora Pittard, Patricia Russell, John Sproul, Jimmy Zabriskie, Barry Zimmer.

### PELICANS THRU IBIS

American White Pelican	53	3/21	JP	FHc
	45	4/7	JS	McN
Brown Pelican		4/7	JS-f	FHc
<b>Anhinga</b>		<b>6/24</b>	<b>JP</b>	<b>McN</b>
Tricolored Heron		6/19	BZ	Key
		6/25	JK	Key
White-faced Ibis	2200	3/22	JS	FLk
	6700	4/19	JS	FLk

### DUCKS THRU BIRDS of PREY

Lesser Scaup		4/21	JP	Tor
Surf Scoter		5/18	JK	Key
		6/26	JZ	Key
Osprey		4/12	JK	Key
Mississippi Kite		7/6	JS	RBq
Northern Goshawk		3/24	JK	Trm
Common Black Hawk		4/6	DA	CCA
		4/6	JP	BSc
Swainson's Hawk (Earliest)		3/22	JP	BSc
Peregrine Falcon		4/21	JP	McN

**Locations:** Ant-Anthony, BgB-Big Bend Drive, BSc-Boy Scout, Brd-Broadmore, CCA-Country Club Area, EEP-East El Paso, FLk-Feather Lake, FBP-Fort Bliss Ponds, FHc-Fort Hancock, Hwk-Hawkins, Hor-Horizon City, HTk-Hucco Tanks SHS, KnJ-Kenyon Joyce, Key - Keystone, Mem-Memorial Park, McN-McNary, Red-Redd Road, RBq-Rio Bosque Wetland Park, STA-Santa Teresa Area, Ton-Tonto, Tor-Tornillo, Trm-Tramway.

### YELLOWLEGS to NIGHTHAWK

Greater Yellowlegs	7/14	JS	FLk
Willet (16)	4/27	JP	FBP
Long-billed Curlew	4/18	JS	RBq
Western Sandpiper	7/12	JK	Key
California Gull	5/11	JP	McN
<b>Caspian Tern</b>	<b>5/11</b>	<b>JP</b>	<b>FHc</b>
Band-tailed Pigeon	6/21	HJ-y	BgB
<b>Eurasian Collard Dove</b>	<b>6/8</b>	<b>JS</b>	<b>RBq</b>
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	5/12	JP-y	BSc
Lesser Nighthawk	4/12	KK	KnJ

### HUMMINGBIRDS

Broad-billed Hummingbird	4/12	BZ-y	Ton
<b>(1st April record in the checklist area)</b>			
Blck-chinned Hummingbird	3/23	BZ-y	Ton
Calliope Hummingbird	7/5	MC	EEP
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	3/16	BJ-f	HTk
Rufous Hummingbird	7/4	FP-y	Hor
	7/8	MC	EEP

### SAPSUCKER THRU JAY'S

Red-naped Sapsucker	3/28	DA	Hwk
Olive-sided Flycatcher	4/27	JP	Mem
Western Wood Peewe	5/20	HJ-y	BgB
Hammond's Flycatcher	5/11	JP	Mem
Gray Flycatcher	4/1	<b>JP-y</b>	<b>BSc</b>
Western Kingbird	4/7	HB	Ant
<u>Steller's Jay</u>	4/23	DA	Hwk
	5/12	HJ-y	BgB
Western Scrub Jay	4/12	BZ-y	Ton



## Observations continued

### BLUBIRD THRU WARBLERS

Mountain Bluebird	4/25	DA	Red
Townsend's Solitaire	5/10	DA	CCA
Swainson's Thrush	5/12	JP-y	BSc
Brown Thrasher	5/12	KK-y	KnJ
Palm Warbler	5/12	JS	FLk
American Redstart	6/26	BZ-y	Ton
Ovenbird	5/8	PR	STA
MacGillivray's Warbler	5/12	HJ-y	BgB

### TANAGER to SISKIN

Western Tanager	5/21	HJ-y	BgB
Dark-eyed Junco	5/6	DA	Hwk
Northern Cardinal	5/27	HJ-y	BgB
Black-headed Grosbk	4/21	JP-y	BSc
Painted Bunting	6/8	JS	RBq
Orchard Oriole	6/27	SJ-y	BgB
Hooded Oriole	3/25	BZ-y	Ton
	3/26	KK-y	KnJ
Red Crossbill	6/12	DA	Brd
Pine Siskin	4/1	DA	Hwk

## Wildlife 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  
[Keystonepark.com](http://Keystonepark.com) [keystonepark.org](http://keystonepark.org)

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

Friends of Rio Bosque 747-8663

Friends of Hueco Tanks 857-1135

Southwest Environmental Center  
[Severn.swec@zianet.com](mailto:Severn.swec@zianet.com)

Franklin Mountain Wilderness Coalition  
[www.iloveparks.com/fmw/](http://www.iloveparks.com/fmw/)

Audubon Texas will hold its second annual statewide meeting at the Y.O. Ranch in Kerrville. Our event is open to all Audubon members and chapters, birding clubs and conservation organizations, as well as individuals interested in birds, wildlife, and the environment.

### *The Second Statewide Annual Meeting of Audubon Texas*

October 9th - 12th, 2003

The Y.O. Ranch  
 Kerrville, Texas

#### Hotel Information:

The Y.O. Ranch  
 2033 Sidney Baker St  
 Kerrville, TX USA 78028 (830) 257-4440.

A small block of rooms have been reserved. Hotels fill up quickly. Please make reservations early to avoid any problems. Additional lodging is available at hotels and campgrounds in Kerrville. For additional listings, please see our website at <http://tx.audubon.org/annualmtg2003.html> Registration information and forms will soon be available on our web site.

For more information, please contact Lk Loflin, Communication and Chapter Services Associate at (512)306-0225

El Paso/Trans-Pecos  
 Audubon Society  
 P.O. Box 972441  
 El Paso, Texas 79907

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**National Audubon Society**  
 Chapter Membership Application

**Dates to Remember**

Call Bob Johnson for details 757-1876

**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

**August**

**Rio Bosque**  
 Saturday, 9th

**Rio Bosque**  
 Saturday, 16th

**Hueco Tanks B.I.T.**  
 Sunday, 17th

**Board Meeting**  
 Monday, 18th

**Glenwood/Luna**  
 Sat & Sun, 23 & 24

**Rio Bosque**  
 Saturday, 23rd

**September**

**Down the Valley**  
 Saturday, 6th

**Rio Bosque**  
 Saturday, 13th

**General Meeting**  
 Monday, 15th

**Hawk Watch**  
 Sat & Sun, 20 & 21

**Rio Bosque**  
 Sat & Sun, 20 & 21

**Hueco Tanks B.I.T.**  
 Sunday, 21st

**October**

**Pot Luck at Feather Lake**  
 Saturday, 4th

**Keystone Featherfest**  
 Saturday, 4th

**Hueco Tanks Event**  
 Weekend 18 & 19