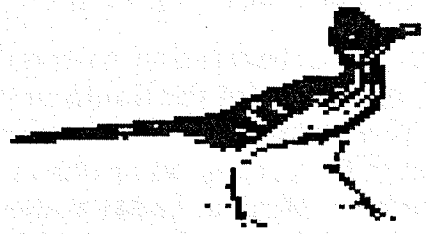


# The Roadrunner



Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society  
Volume 31 No. 8 February 2002 & March 2002

## General Meetings

Saturday, February 16, 2002 6:30pm  
Annual Awards Dinner  
La Hacienda Restaurant

This year's awards dinner will be on Saturday, February 16, 2002, at 6:30 pm at La Hacienda Restaurant, 1720 W. Paisano Dr. Be prepared for a wonderful evening of Mexican dining. A gourmet buffet will be provided so that members will have a wide variety of delicious food from which to choose. Tea or coffee will also be served. An open bar will be available. Call Nancy Wilson 747-5349(w) or 877-4600(h) if you have questions. For reservations: Make checks payable to El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society for \$15.50 and mail:

Nancy Wilson  
B7 Statesburg Street  
Canutillo, TX 79835

### This year's Honorees:

"Meritorious Service Award" will be given to:

Mary Lou Alcorn

"Conservation Award" will be given to:

Kevin Bixby

Our guest speaker is Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson who will regale, delight and entertain us with birds and photography of the south Texas coast. We will also have the installation of chapter officers for the year 2002.

Monday, March 18, 2002  
Memorial Park Garden Center  
3105 Grant Street 7:30pm

The guest speaker for this program will be Scott Cutler, curator from the UTEP Centennial Museum. He will give us a presentation on landscaping your yard for wildlife and water conservation. Scott is a long time member of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon and has been involved in many chapter activities.

## 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 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)

## Thank you

Oscar Mestas

and

Dr. Sandra Perez

for giving

presentations in the  
December and January

General Meetings

## Inside The Roadrunner

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## Awards Recipients to be Honored

This year's Conservation Award recipient is Kevin Bixby, Executive Director of the Southwest Environmental Center in Las Cruces. One of the Center's top priorities has been the restoring of the ecological health of the Rio Grande in southern New Mexico. Today water managers and decision makers are at least starting to consider the ecological health of the Rio Grande in their planning. No one has done more to foster this change than Kevin Bixby.

Mary Lou Alcorn is the recipient of the Meritorious Service Award. Mary Lou has served the Chapter in many ways over the years. She has served on the Board of Directors as Secretary, has coordinated youth field trips to Feather Lake, and has opened her home and yard to numerous field trip groups. When the Environmental Center closed, she offered storage space for the Chapter to use. She recently spoke to a retired teachers group on birding opportunities. The birds have never had a better ambassador!

### PAPER FREE RENEWAL PROGRAM

The latest AUDUBON magazine includes notice of a new and very exciting option for renewing Audubon memberships, open to all chapter members. Instead of receiving multiple renewal notices, members can now call 800/274-4201 and ask to sign up for Audubon's Paper Free Renewal Program. Starting January of 2002, those who sign up will have their membership automatically renewed each year, and will simply receive one bill approximately two months in advance of their membership expiration date. Chapter generated members will continue to be credited as such, and, of course, you can cancel at any time. Save paper and simplify your accounting.

## El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

### Board of Directors:

President	Betty Fisbeck	581-0174
V-President	John Kiseda	533-4615
Secretary	Roxanne Schroeder	534-7019
Treasurer	Hugh Jameson	751-7952

### Committee Chairs:

Conservation	John Kiseda	533-4615
Education	Elizabeth Chase	591-5119
Field Trips	Bob Johnson	757-1876
Hospitality		
Membership	Jane Fowler	598-2448
Programs	Nancy Wilson	877-4600
Publications	Kathleen Whelen	751-2408
Publicity	Barbara Buck	
Sanctuary	John Sproul	545-5157
Ways and Means		

Roadrunner is your newsletter. We welcome your contributions.

Contact Kathy Whelen 751-2408 email: [whelenk@aol.com](mailto:whelenk@aol.com)

## From the President's Aerie

by, Betty Fisbeck

On February 16th we will have our annual meeting and a new Board of Directors will be installed. Looking forward to the new year is a good time to look ahead to what we need to accomplish next year and to review what the chapter accomplished during the past year. The 2001 Birdathon raised \$7,000, which was used to support education, Feather Lake, and Rio Bosque. Under the planning and direction of Charles Simpson, a new Visitor Center was built at Feather Lake. Bob Johnson continued to provide interesting field trips each month for both members and the public. Volunteers served as guides for school groups visiting Feather Lake. The El Paso Christmas Bird Count, organized by Jimmy Zabriskie, counted 120 different species. Nancy Wilson arranged interesting and educational programs for all of our meetings.

Kathy Whelen and Jane Fowler have made sure the Roadrunner comes to you every month. John Sproul has kept volunteers at Feather Lake every weekend of the season. Needed changes to our By-Laws were approved at the December meeting.

One of the major things I think we need to accomplish in 2002 is improving our publicity so that more people can take advantage of our programs and facilities. We need to involve more of our membership in our programs and in the leadership of the Chapter. We will continue projects nearing completion (a Visitors' Guide to Birding El Paso and a new Fact Sheet). Our efforts will be in line with the mission of the National Audubon Society that is to "conserve and restore natural ecosystems for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity."



## At Feather Lake

Feather Lake is a 43.5-acre wildlife sanctuary our organization manages in El Paso's Mission Valley. It is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave. Feather Lake is open to the public every Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to noon, and every Sunday, 2:00 p.m. to dusk. Admission is free.

In dry years, Feather Lake can go almost dry by mid-winter. This past year, of course, has been extremely dry, and the lake is now down to just a few puddles. When will it be a lake again? Probably not until late February, when the irrigation season is underway.

In April, we traditionally hold our monthly general meeting at Feather Lake. This year, please make an extra effort to attend. We'll be dedicating the new sanctuary visitor center and honoring the people who made it possible.

We'll also honor some of our new volunteers. Volunteers staff Feather Lake during visitor hours. They also help with sanctuary projects at scheduled workdays and other times. Want to help with our visitor program? Please contact John Sproul at 545-5157. Want to help at our next workday? Grab your gloves and join us Saturday, March 23, beginning at 2:00 p.m.

## RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK

UTEP's Center for Environmental Resource Management offers free walking tours twice each month and also holds monthly (except December) community workdays at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park in El Paso's Mission Valley. Coming up:

- \* 3 p.m. Sun., Feb. 3  
(Introduction to Rio Bosque)
- \* 9 a.m. Sat., Feb. 9 (Rio Bosque Birds)
- \* 9 a.m. Sat., Feb. 16 (Workday)
- \* 3 p.m. Sun., Mar. 3 (Birds)
- \* 9 a.m. Sat., Mar. 9 (Introduction)
- \* 9 a.m. Sat., Mar. 16 (Workday)

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: (915) 747-8663.



## Conservation

Your chapter and the El Paso Zoo have been working on a Chihuahuan Desert conservation project together, but they need your help. A wildlife biologist in Chihuahua City has been working on a birding/bird site guidebook for the Chihuahua City region and has asked us to provide him with quality slides of ~ 120 species of birds, to include in that guidebook.

If you have a great slide of a Chihuahuan Desert bird, contact John K. to see if it is of better quality than what has already been located (even if the species isn't listed below).

We also need slides of certain species that John Kiseda has not been able to find in either the chapter's collection, or his own. If you can provide us with slides of any of the following species, it would be greatly appreciated.

If you need more information, contact John K.

We either don't have any slides of these species of birds, or have very poor ones:

WESTERN GREBE	MEXICAN DUCK
WHITE-TAILED KITE	ROCK DOVE
COMMON POORWILL	DUSKY FLYCATCHER
CASSIN'S KINGBIRD	VERDIN SWALLOW
CANYON WREN	SAGE THRASHER
CASSIN'S SPARROW	VESPER SPARROW
PAINTED BUNTING	ELF OWL
EASTERN MEADOWLARK	HOUSE SPARROW
	BLACK-CHINNED SPARROW
	GRASSHOPPER SPARROW
	BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD
	BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER

We have slides of these species of birds, but could readily use one of better quality:

GREAT EGRET	CINNAMON TEAL
CANVASBACK	REDHEAD
LESSER SCAUP	BUFFLEHEAD
MERLIN	GREATER YELLOWLEGS
OLIVE SPARROW	LARK BUNTING
WESTERN KINGBIRD	CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN
COMMON RAVEN	VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW BARN
SWALLOW	CRISSAL THRASHER
SCOTT'S ORIOLE	GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE
	LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER
	BLACK-THROATED SPARROW
	RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD
	NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD

## **Just Like Uncle Sam We Need You**

In the April/May time frame, Audubon has its one and only fund raiser of the year (Birdathon), and its largest educational outreach program (International Migratory Bird Day) of the year, at the El Paso Zoo.

Please contact John Kiseda or Betty Fisbeck, to let them know how you would love to help out. Help our local birds, local wildlife sanctuary, local and state conservation projects, local educators and local lovers of wildlife and wild places, by participating in these important chapter events.

## Keystone Heritage

You can now purchase small to large pieces of property at the Keystone site! You can give someone a very unique gift (they receive a personalized certificate) and help Keystone purchase more of the 40 acres needed to complete their acquisition of the rest of the available land at the site. Help prevent commercial development of these valuable community assets (biological, archaeological & recreational). One square yard costs \$25 and one acre costs \$50,000. Contact Bernie or Melissa Sargent at 584-0503.

Visit the UTEP Centennial  
Museum now through April  
15th to enjoy their Insect  
Exhibit!

# ON THE TRAIL

## HAWK ALLEY/FORT BLISS PONDS

One of the best locations to find birds in the northeast part of town is the Fort Bliss Ponds. Good winter water birds and many raptors, then a ride along Hawk Alley. Its possible that the Prairie Falcon and Golden Eagle, which are sitting on the poles about 1 out every 4 trips could be around.

**Date:** Saturday, February 9  
**Time:** 7:49 AM  
**Place:** Walmart, 4530 Woodrow Bean/  
Transmountain Road.  
(north end of parking lot)  
**Who:** Bob "Wildbirder" (757-1876)



## DOWN THE VALLEY

McNary, Fort Hancock, and Tornillo Reservoirs are always good for **Gulls, Ducks, ??Geese, Egrets and Cormorants**. Quite a few species of passerines could also be present along with some birds of prey to include **Harris' Hawk**. A trip extension down the Levee at Ft. Quitman will be the first stop where its possible to see **Vermillion Flycatchers**. Lunch break will probably occur at the Tornillo Rest Area.

**Date:** Sunday, March 3.  
**Time:** 7:17 AM.  
**Place:** Feather Lake  
**Who:** Bob Johnson

## G B B C

### Great Backyard Bird Count

We are going to partner with many other Audubon Chapters around the country in the 5th annual Great Backyard Bird Count. We will get together at 2 main locations in the valley and see how many species can be tallied.

**This will take place on February 15th.**

The prime location will be at the Keystone Marsh, alternate location will be 4331 Emory. Bob is going to host at Keystone and Mary Lou Alcorn will host at her house. The period of counting will be from **8 AM to 5 PM**, this means you can drop by for 1 or 2 hours at anytime, please bring a friend that you would like to introduce to the birds.

**Information - Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson  
757 - 1876**

## PERCHA DAM

A trip up I-25 (about 1 1/2 hours) to Percha and Caballo Dams State Parks. A **Herring Gulls** and **Common Loons** are frequently spotted at Caballo and a **Golden-crowned kinglets** and both **Eastern and Western Bluebirds** at Percha. **Mergansers** and **Cormorants** fish in the Lake just above the dam and many gulls are continuously flying by.

**Date:** Saturday, April 6.  
**Time:** 7:27 AM  
**Place:** I-10 & Transmountain Road  
(across from the Texaco Sta)  
**Who:** Bob Johnson

# OBSERVATIONS

September 16, 2001 to January 15, 2002

Listing of birds is determined using the checklist "Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas" 7th Edition October 1987. Leave sightings at Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson (757-1876), or E-mail bobwildbirderj@cs.com.

**Observers:** Helen Bigalow; Betty Fisbeck; Jane Fowler; Madaline Gavit; Sallie Homan; Hugh Jamesson; John Kiseda; Mary Lou Alcorn; Jerry Oldenettle; Jim Paton; Ross Rassmussen; Patricia Russell; Marcy Scott/Jimmy Zabriskie; John Sproul; Barry Zimmer.

**Some vary rare or unusual sightings for this area follows in this first section.**

**Hummingbirds:** We have had a number of people report having these birds hanging around through most of the winter. Kiseda's have had Broad-billed, Anna's, and Rufus. Helen Bigalow has a Violet-crowned and so has Barry Zimmer. The following is a part of a report that Barry put out on Nov. 28th.

*For the past hour I have been watching one of the most unlikely avian sights ever to be seen in Texas---my Violet-crowned Hummingbird chasing a Female Broad-billed that arrived in mid-morning! There are about four previous county records for Broad-billed in El Paso. The odds of having these two very rare hummers in the same yard in El Paso in Late November in a snowstorm seem incredibly unlikely. In addition the adult male Rufus has returned after being gone for a couple hours. Five species of hummingbirds (immature male Anna's and male Broad-tailed coming in often as well) in the yard at one time!*

<u>Species</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Obsv.</u>	<u>Loc.</u>
Pacific Loon	12/19	BZ	Tor
Roseate Spoonbill	11/6	MS/JZ	McN
Greater Scaup	11/10	MS/JZ	Sun
Surf Scoter	10/26	MS/JZ	Tor
	11/14	BZ	McN
Bald Eagle	12/31	JS	RBs
Broad-winged Hawk	9/27	BZ	FBP
Zone-tailed Hawk	9/27	MS/JZ	RBs
Rough-legged Hawk	11/29	MS/JZ	Can
American Golden-Plover	10/2	MS/JZ	Sod
Mountain Plover	10/8	MS/JZ	Sod
Short-billed Dowitcher	9/16	JP	FBP
Laughing Gull	9/22	JP	McN
Lesser Black-backed Gull	12/25	JO	Key

(This is the 2d area record and it spent most of its time at Sunland Park and was the 1st New Mexico record. It was last reported on Jan 8)

**Locations:** Ant-Anthony; BBn-Big Bend Dr.; Bor-Borderland Farms; Can-Canutillo; Cor-Coronado CC area; Emy-Emory Rd.; FBP-Fort Bliss Ponds; FtH-Fort Hancock; Gat-Gato Rd.; Hor-Horizon City; HTk-Hueco Tanks; Key-Keystone Marsh; KnJ-Kenyon Joyce; Kil-Kilkenny; Lov-Love Rd.; McN-McNary Res.; Mem-Memorial Park; RBq-Rio BosquePark; Ran-Randel's Pool; STA-Santa Teresa area; Sod-Sod Farm; Sun-Sunland Park area; Tor-Tornillo; VDM-Vista Del Monte.

Ruddy Ground-Dove	11/1	PR	STA
Red-eyed Vireo	9/24	BZ	FBP
Blue Jay	9/24	JK	Zoo
(These birds have been seen regularly thru Jan 15)			
Winter Wren	12/17	BZ	FBP
(4th area record)			
Sprague's Pipet	10/16	BZ	Bor
Black-throated Blue Warb	10/1	BZ	FBP
	10/8	SH	Lov
Blackburnain Warbler	10/17	BZ	FBP
Palm Warbler	9/23	JS	RBs
	10/11	BZ	McN
Louisiana Waterthrush	9/16	JP	FBP
Kentucky Warbler	11/22	HJ	BBn
Canada Warbler	9/24	BZ	FBP
Painted Redstart	9/16	JP	FBP
Scarlet Tanager	10/8	JP	Lov
Grasshopper Sparrow	10/16	BZ	Bor
Lapland Longspur	11/7	BZ	Bor
Bobolink	9/27	BZ	FBP

The sightings in the second section are seen most every year but are not common, or are out of season.

Common Loon	10/26	JP	Tor
Horned Grebe	12/27	BZ	McN
Clark's Grebe	10/20	JP	McN
(2 pair with newly hatched young)			
Gr. White-frntd Goose	10/4	MS/JZ	McN
Osprey	10/2	MG	Hor
Cooper's Hawk	11/15	JF	Kil
(Has been in Jane's backyard through the period)			
Peregrine Falcon	1/12	MS/JZ	Can
Long-billed Curlew	9/23	JP	FBP
	12/7	BZ	FtH

(During the McNary CBC-16 Dec. Barry had 93 LBC)

## FRIENDS of HUECO TANKS

**Admission:** Hueco Tanks Historical Park - \$4.  
\$2 for Seniors 65, Children under 12 - FREE.

### Bird Identification Tours

Sunday February 17 8:08 AM  
 Sunday March 17 8:08 AM  
 Sunday April 21 7:07 AM

Check in at the Headquarters. Reservations  
and Information 857-1135.  
Leader Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson 757-1876.

### PLANNING AHEAD

**International Migratory Bird Day** - - at the  
El Paso Zoo - Saturday, April 20.

**Birdathon** - Saturday & Sunday May 4 & 5.

**Annual trip to Arizona** - May 25, 26 & 27.

## T O S

How about joining the Texas Ornithological  
Society (TOS). See Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson.  
(915) 757-1876, E-mail bobwildbirderj@cs.com  
The Spring conference will be in Del Rio, Texas  
a great chance to see the Black-capped Vireo.  
Bob has the data and registration forms for the  
conference.

## A B A

The American Birding Association (ABA) will  
be having its 18th convention in Duluth, Minn-  
esota from June 10-16. Loons, Grouse and  
Black-backed Woodpeckers. Bob is going.

Observations - continued from page 6

Dunlin	10/20	RR	FBP
Red-necked Phalarope	9/16	JP	FBP
Sabine's Gull	9/23	JP	Sun
	10/1	MS/JZ	Sun
California Gull	12/20	BZ	Sun
Mew Gull	12/20	BZ	Key
Red-crowned Parrot	9/24	MLA	Emy
Williamson's Sapsucker	9/20	BZ	Mem
Red-naped Sapsucker	9/21	BZ	HTk
	9/30	HJ	BBn
Willow Flycatcher	9/20	BZ	FBP
Vermillion Flycatcher	10/7	BF	Sun
Philadelphia Vireo	10/8	JP	VDM
Steller's Jay	10/21	JK	Cor
Western Scrub Jay	9/21	BZ	HTk
	9/28	HB	Ant
Purple Martin	9/22	JP	McN
Tree Swallow	12/14	JS	RBq
Golden-crowned Kinglet	11/30	BZ	FBP
Eastern Bluebird	11/30	BZ	Gat
Gray Catbird	10/6	MS/JZ	FBP
Cedar Waxwing	11/2	HB	Ant
Northern Parula	11/28	BZ	Ton
Chestnut-sided Warbler	10/17	BZ	FBP
Magnolia Warbler	10/8	SH	Lov
Pine Warbler	11/29	MS/JZ	Ran
Black and White warbler	9/23	JP	FBP
American Redstart	9/20	BZ	Mem
Dickcissel	9/21	BZ	HTk
White-throated Sparrow	11/3	JK	KJ
Common Grackle	10/24	PR	STA
	12/1	JS	RBq
Scott's Oriole	10/24	PR	STA
Red Crossbill	10/8	MLA	Emy

## CHAPTER LIBRARY

Our library is now located in the Garden Center.  
Come early to the meetings and browse, you  
can also look after the meeting, and sign a book  
out.

We have various guide books, some technical  
books, and some novels. All are associated  
with birds in some way.

Also we have a number of bird related videos.



SUPPORT LOCAL WILDLIFE  
CONSERVATION  
ORGANIZATIONS

Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue

Meets: 4th Tuesday of; Jan., Feb.,  
Apr., June, Aug. & Oct.  
El Paso Community College  
Northwest Campus, Room 45,  
6701 South Desert Blvd.  
[www.whc.net/cdwr](http://www.whc.net/cdwr)

El Paso Zoo

[www.elpasozoo.org](http://www.elpasozoo.org)

Keystone Heritage Park

Meets 3rd Wednesday of each  
month at El Paso Police Dept.  
Westside Regional Command  
Center, 4801 Osborne  
[keystonepark.com](http://keystonepark.com) or  
[keystonepark.org](http://keystonepark.org)

**Dates to Remember**  
Call Bob Johnson for details 757-1876

February

Sat. 9 Hawk Alley  
Mon. 11 Board Meeting  
Fri. 15 Great Backyard Bird Count  
Sun. 16 Awards Dinner  
Sun. 17 BIT Hueco Tanks

March

Sun 3 Down the Valley/McNary  
Mon. 11 Board Meeting  
Sun. 17 BIT Hueco Tanks  
Mon. 18 General Meeting

April

Sat. 6 Percha Dam  
Mon. 15 Celebration at Feather Lake

Rock Art Tours

Every Sat & Sun 9:00am & 11:00am  
Birding Activities at Hueco Tanks  
Bird Identification Tours & Slide Show Presentations

**National Audubon  
Society**

Chapter Membership Application

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

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

My check for \$20 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  
SOCIETY**

W10

Local Chapter Code

7XCHA

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welcome. Please e-mail to [whelenk@aol.com](mailto:whelenk@aol.com) or mail to  
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