



# The Roadrunner

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

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

## Inside the Roadrunner

Chapter Info & Field Trips	2
Sanctuary	3
Awards Dinner	4
Rare Bird	5
Calendar	6

**El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Website!**

**Updated information about upcoming field trips, calendar of upcoming events, and recent bird sightings.**

[www.trans-pecos-audubon.com](http://www.trans-pecos-audubon.com)

## The e-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).



**General Meetings  
Centennial Museum at UTEP  
500 W. University Ave El Paso, Texas**

**January 15, 2024 7:00pm  
in person & via Zoom**

**The Urban Bird Program in Ecatepec, Mexico  
Diego Barrales**

Join us for our January 15th meeting where we will have Diego Barrales, a Biologist with a Masters Degree in Science from Mexico, give us a presentation on birding and conservation efforts in La Sierra de Guadalupe Mountain Range in Mexico City. Diego is one of the coordinators of PAU (Programa de Aves Urbanas) de la CONABIO (Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad) in Ecatepec, Mexico.

The mission of PAU Ecatepec is to promote bird watching in urban environments, and to encourage citizen participation in bird monitoring activities, as an educational and recreational option to increase knowledge of birds. The Urban Bird Program (PAU) of CONABIO has the purpose of providing recreational options for the urban population, promoting the link between humans and nature, including the population in the generation of knowledge useful for understanding and the management of Mexican urban systems and integrate basic information to develop long-term urban bird monitoring activities.

The meeting will begin at 7 pm on Jan 15th. The in-person meeting will be at the UTEP Centennial Museum. Doors open at 6:45 and there is parking in the lot behind the museum.

To join via Zoom, please register here to receive the link [https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZ0od-irqTgqHtHP5rYd\\_aFVv8lwXzczMBCM](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZ0od-irqTgqHtHP5rYd_aFVv8lwXzczMBCM)

## Field Trips

Current list of upcoming field trips at <http://www.trans-pecos-audubon.com/>

### El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

#### Officers

**President: Scott Cutler, 494-2193**  
**Vice President: Jane Fowler, 598-2448**  
**Secretary/Treasurer: Eddie Chew, 587-9589**

#### Committees

**Conservation:** Kevin Floyd, 613-6354  
**Education:** Kathleen Whelen, 820-1895  
**Field Trips:** Star Posada, 407-6442  
**Hospitality:** vacant  
**Membership:** vacant  
**Newsletter Editor:** Kathleen Whelen, 820-1895  
**Programs:** vacant  
**Publications:** Jane Fowler, 598-2448  
**Publicity:** Heather Rivera, 212-2825  
**Sanctuary:** John Sproul, 545-5157  
**Website:** vacant  
**Facebook:** Kevin Floyd, 613-6354

**The Audubon Foundation of Texas**

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



### BIRDATHON 2023 UPDATE

Congratulations to all on a good Birdathon again this year. We especially thank our sponsors and counters without whom the Birdathon would not be possible. We appreciate your participation and support for our conservation and education endeavors. Thanks, too, for our hard-working members who handle the details, especially Jane Fowler who handles the mailings.

Our net receipts totaled \$5,434. The money will go to chapter operations, Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, Audubon Texas, raptor rehabilitation at the El Paso Zoo, and Second Chance Wildlife Rescue.

Species seen by at least one counter were tallied. A total of 139 species were seen, compared to 145 last year.

The highest number of species seen by an individual or party was again **John Kiseda** with 111. The most money was raised by **Jim Paton**. The unusual birds seen this year were the White-eared Hummingbird by **Star Posada** at Dripping Springs, the Grasshopper Sparrow by **John Groves** and the Black-throated Green Warbler by **Susie Schneider** in Arroyo Park.

A big **THANK YOU** to all participants and sponsors!

**General Meeting**  
**March 18, 2024 7:00pm**  
**in person & via Zoom**

**This program is TBA & scheduled by the Sierra Club. It is sure to be amazing!**

### Conservation Organizations

**Chihuahuan Desert Education Coalition**  
<http://www.chihuahuandesert.org>

**Second Chance Wildlife Rescue**  
<https://www.secondchancewildliferescue.org>  
**Josie Karam (915) 920-7867**

**El Paso Zoo (915) 212-0966**  
[www.elpasozoo.org](http://www.elpasozoo.org)

**Stick House Sanctuary**  
<https://www.facebook.com/epwildliferescue>  
**(915) 219-2365**

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

**Asombro Institute**  
**(575) 524-3334** [www.asombro.org](http://www.asombro.org)

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

**Wildlife for All**  
**(formerly SW Environmental Center)**  
**(575) 522-5552**  
[www.wildmesquite.org](http://www.wildmesquite.org)

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

**Celebration of Our Mountains**  
[www.celebmtns.org](http://www.celebmtns.org)

**Frontera Land Alliance (915) 351-8352**  
[www.fronteralandalliance.org](http://www.fronteralandalliance.org)

## AT FEATHER LAKE

In 2000, we started taking regular measurements of water depth at Feather Lake, so 2023 was our 24<sup>th</sup> year of collecting those data. For the first time, the depth never reached 1 foot at any point during the entire year.

El Paso never experienced a storm event large enough in 2023 to put significant runoff into the basin. The greatest water depth at our gauge at the basin's inlet was 9 inches on September 23.

The basin is currently dry, but the irrigation season is expected to begin earlier in 2024 than it has the past two years. We might see some water as early as late March.

Our next workday at Feather Lake will be **Sat., February 3** starting at **9 a.m.** We've been working a lot in recent months pruning and clearing along the trail on the southeast side of the basin. Very likely, that work will still be in progress in February. Join us.

Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux in El Paso, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave.

## Audubon at

Rio Bosque  
Wetlands Park



Rio Bosque's wetland cells are flooded, and water is flowing the entire 2-mile length of the old river bend within the park. We expect the wetland cells to start going dry in February, but, thanks to El Paso Water, much of the old river bend should stay wet. Repair work El Paso Water did last year revitalized our two wells. Also, the park is currently receiving water from dewatering operations at the construction site for the expansion of the Roberto Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The most noteworthy birds in recent months? A pair of **Red-shouldered Hawks** soaring overhead on October 27.

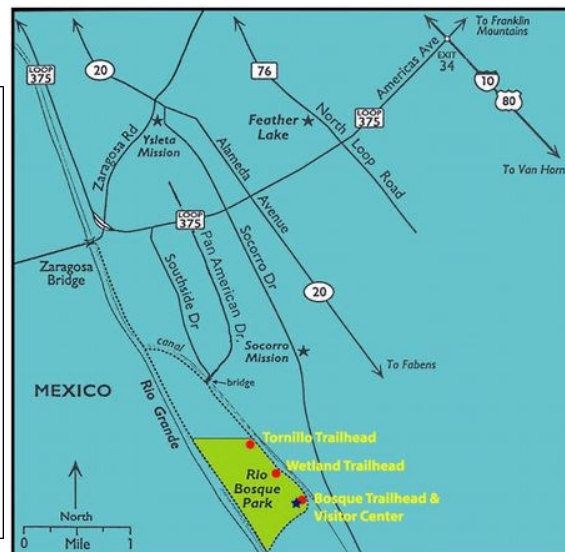
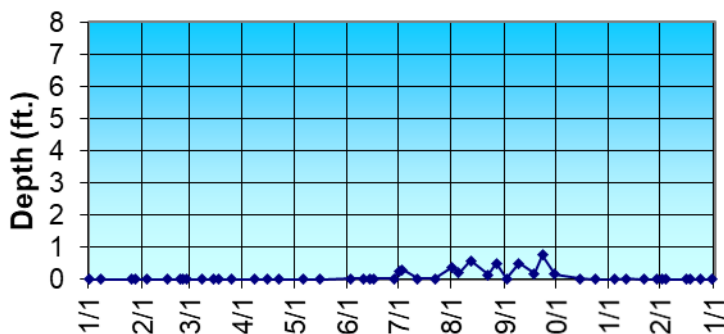
For up-to-date information on tours, birds and water conditions at the park, check [www.riobosque.org](http://www.riobosque.org). Upcoming tours and events:

- 8 a.m., Sat., Jan 13 (Birding tour)**
- 3 p.m., Sun., Jan 21 (Introductory tour)**
- 8 a.m., Sun., Feb 4 (Birding tour)**
- 9 a.m., Sat., Feb 24 (Introductory tour)**
- 3:30 p.m., Sun., Mar 3 (Birding tour)**
- 9 a.m., Sat., Mar 16 (Introductory tour)**

The meeting place for the tours 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.**

Feather Lake Water Depth - 2023



## Annual banquet is back!

### El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society Annual Dinner

We will be having our annual dinner meeting this year. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. Here are the details.

Our presentation will be by our board member Star Posada talking about her recent birding trip to Mexico City with the group Accipiters Birding CDMX and PAU Ecatepec. Star will discuss Accipiters Birding's Conservation Mission in the Sierra de Guadalupe Mountain Range as well as all the birds that were seen during the trip. Some of the places visited were Apaxco, Tequixquiac, Atenco, Bosque de San Juan de Aragon and the Sierra de Guadalupe.

When: **Friday, February 9, 2024**

Time: 6:00-8:30pm

Where: The Pavilion at Ascarate Park  
(see map for directions)

Cost: \$20 per person – includes meal (salad & entrée), drinks (water, tea, coffee), dessert (no alcohol permitted)

**Reservation deadline: February 2.**

From 6:00-6:30 will be a social half hour. Dinner will begin at 6:30 with the program starting at 7:00.

#### Pavilion Directions

**Follow Thompson Loop straight down (Lake should be on your right side)**

**Keep traveling down until you see pavilion on your left**

**Parking inside pavilion gates, in front of pavilion, or on Yarbrough**

The food will be Italian-themed from Olive Garden and will be served buffet style for you to select what you wish to eat. This will include two pastas (spaghetti and fettuccine), three sauces (Alfredo, beef/Italian sausage meat sauce, and marinara), three toppings (grilled chicken, meatballs and Italian sausage), house salad, breadsticks. So that we can order the proper amounts of each item, please let us if you will be choosing vegetarian marinara, grilled chicken or meatballs for your pasta entrée.

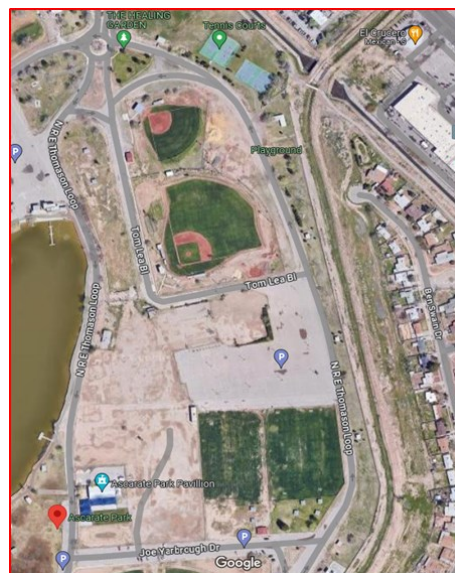
**Please send your reservation with a check made out to the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society (EPTPAS) to:**

**Eddie Chew  
390 Flemish Circle  
El Paso, Texas 79912**

We look forward to seeing all of you on February 9<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely yours,

Scott Cutler  
President  
El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society





## Extremely Rare Bird Captured on Film

[Peer-Reviewed Publication](#) UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

A striking and extremely rare half female, half male bird has been spotted by a University of Otago zoologist. Sesquicentennial Distinguished Professor Hamish Spencer was holidaying in Colombia when an amateur ornithologist John Murillo pointed out a wild Green Honeycreeper with distinct half green, or female, and half blue, male, plumage.

“Many birdwatchers could go their whole lives and not see a bilateral gynandromorph in any species of bird. The phenomenon is extremely rare in birds, I know of no examples from New Zealand ever. “It is very striking, I was very privileged to see it,” Professor Spencer says.

Photographs of the bird make the discovery even more significant as they are “arguably the best of a wild bilateral gynandromorphic bird of any species ever”. A report on the find, only the second recorded example of gynandromorphism in the species in more than 100 years, has just been published in the *Journal of Field Ornithology*.



CAPTION

Photos of a bilaterally gynandromorphic Green Honeycreeper near Manizales, Colombia, 20 May 2022. CREDIT: JOHN MURILLO

Professor Spencer says gynandromorphs – animals with both male and female characteristics in species that usually have separate sexes – are important for our understanding of sex determination and sexual behaviour in birds. The main groups in which the phenomenon has been recorded include animal species which feature strong sexual dimorphism; most often insects, especially butterflies, crustaceans, spiders, even lizards and rodents.

“This particular example of bilateral gynandromorphy – male one side and female the other – shows that, as in several other species, either side of the bird can be male or female.

“The phenomenon arises from an error during female cell division to produce an egg, followed by double-fertilization by two sperm,” he explains.

He hopes the novel discovery will inspire people to “treasure exceptions” as they always reveal something interesting.

“Be always on the lookout for oddities – who will find the first New Zealand example of a bilateral gynandromorph in a bird?”

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

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
El Paso, Texas  
Permit #2440

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**National Audubon Society  
Chapter Membership Application.**

Yes, I'd like to join. Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Chapter.

Send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to address below.

Check for \$20.00 enclosed payable to National Audubon Society

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**National Audubon Society  
Chapter Membership Data Center  
PO Box 97194  
Washington, DC 20090-7194**

Local Chapter Code **C1ZW100Z**

**Dates to Remember**

January

Mon 8: **Board Meeting**  
13 & 21: **Rio Bosque**  
Mon 15: **General Meeting**

February

Sat 3: **Feather Lake Workday**  
4 & 24: **Rio Bosque**  
Fri 9: **Awards Dinner**  
Mon 12: **Board Meeting**

March

Mon 11: **Board Meeting**  
3 & 16: **Rio Bosque**  
Mon 18: **General Meeting**

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

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