



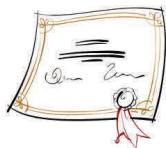
# The Roadrunner

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

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### Save the Date for Annual Awards Program & Dinner to be held



Saturday,  
February 21,  
2015  
Details to follow

### 2014 Christmas Bird Count at Guadalupe Mountains N. P. Saturday, January 3, 2014

Anyone interested in participating can contact Janet Coles at this phone number or email:

(915) 828-3251 x 2400  
[Janet\\_Coles@nps.gov](mailto:Janet_Coles@nps.gov)

### 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 General Meetings

**Monday, December 15, 2014      7:00 - 8:30pm**  
**Centennial Museum, at UTEP**  
**Annual Photo Sharing Event**



It's time to pull out your favorite photos from 2014 (or there abouts) and share them and their stories with friends. We will format them into a presentation for which you will be able to talk about the shots. Nothing formal, just a fun time to show and tell with your images. Here is what to do:

#### 1. Select your 10 images

Digital files, prints, or slides can be sent. For prints or slides we will scan them into a digital format. Images should fall into the following categories. Titles for the images are optional.

- Birds
- Other animals
- Landscapes
- Children
- Humorous



#### 2. Get the images to Scott Cutler at the Centennial Museum at UTEP

You can e-mail the digital images to him or bring them to the museum on a memory stick. For prints or slides, bring them by the museum or send them to Scott.



**Scott's e-mail:** [scutler@utep.edu](mailto:scutler@utep.edu)

**Scott's phone number:** 747-6668

**Address:** Centennial Museum

The University of Texas at El Paso  
500 W. University Ave  
El Paso, TX 79968-0533

**Deadline** for submitting images is **December 5, 2014**.  
If you have any questions, call Scott at 747-6668.

We look forward to seeing you on December 15 for the Annual Photo Sharing program and Holiday Event.

## El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

### Officers

**President:** Scott Cutler, 581- 6071

**Vice President:** Jane Fowler, 598-2448

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Eddie Chew, 587-9589

The Audubon Foundation of Texas

represents Texas

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



### **Christmas Bird Count 2015**



The El Paso Zoo's Animal Curator, John Kiseda, wants you to join the fun with the El Paso area's Christmas Bird Count. This is a citizen science event involving the wild birds of our area. Identifying and counting El Paso birds in specific areas on a certain date can be a blast, not just a wintry Arctic one!

Prior to the turn of the century, people held holiday hunt competitions known as the Christmas "Side Hunt". The idea of wildlife conservation was in its infancy, but even then, people were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the then budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition, a "Christmas Bird Census" that would count birds in the holidays rather than hunt them. Thus began the event known as the Christmas Bird Count, CBC.

That first CBC had 27 enthusiastic birders who conducted twenty-five counts, from Toronto, Ontario to Pacific Grove, California with most counts in or near the urban centers of northeastern North America. Those original 27 counters tallied around 90 species on all the counts combined.

Last year's 114th CBC had over 70,000 bird counters who identified and counted birds from 2408 specified areas, with 1863 in the United States, 438 in Canada, and 107 in the Caribbean, Latin America, and Pacific Islands. Overall, more than 66 million individual birds were tallied and 2403 species were counted.

This year's 115<sup>th</sup> Audubon Christmas Bird Count will take place nationwide from Dec 14, 2014 to Jan. 5, 2015, *with our local El Paso count being 'run' on January 1, 2015*. To ring in the New Year in a fun, new way, contact the coordinator, Jim Paton, at either (915) 585-2628 or at [jnpaton@att.net](mailto:jnpaton@att.net) Have a great New Year connecting with nature & Chihuahuan Desert wildlife!

### Committees

**Conservation:** Luis Sanchez, 599-7381

**Education:** Kathleen Whelen, 751-2408

**Field Trips:** Mark Perkins 637-3521

**Hospitality:** Janet Perkins, 637-5269

**Membership:** Roxanne Schroeder, 533-0061

**Newsletter Editor:** Kathleen Whelen, 751-2408

**Programs:** Elizabeth Chase 539-1191

**Publications:** Jane Fowler, 598-2448

**Publicity:** Janet Perkins, 637-5269

**Sanctuary:** John Sproul, 545-5157

**Way & Means:** vacant

### **Conservation Organizations**

**Chihuahuan Desert Education Coalition**  
[www.chihuahuandesert.org](http://www.chihuahuandesert.org)

**Second Chance Wildlife Rescue**  
**Josie Karam (915) 920-7867**

**Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue**  
<http://www.cdwr.org>

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

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

**Asombro Institute**  
**(Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park)**  
**(575) 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**  
**(575) 522-5552**  
[www.wildmesquite.org](http://www.wildmesquite.org)

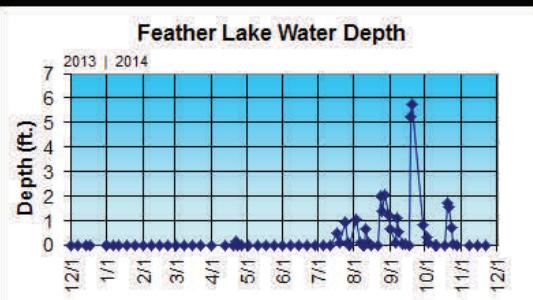
**Franklin Mt. Wilderness Coalition**  
[www.franklinmountains.org/](http://www.franklinmountains.org/)

## AT FEATHER LAKE

It's not saying much, but 2014 has been the wettest year at Feather Lake since 2010. Storms put water in the basin at least intermittently in July, August, September and October. The severe decline in the riparian vegetation bordering the lake has been halted for the moment.

November, alas, brought a return to a dry basin, a condition likely to continue until next summer. It has now been almost 4 years since Feather Lake was last open to the public.

Our next workday at Feather Lake will be **Sat., December 13**, starting at **2 p.m.** We'll be removing trash washed in with this year's storms. Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux in El Paso, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave.



Water delivery to **Audubon at**

Rio Bosque resumed Nov 9, but construction work in progress on the pipeline from the Bustamante Plant to the park prevented flooding of the wetland cells during November. Water likely won't reach the cells until December. For up-to-date information on Rio Bosque's birds and water conditions, check [www.riobosque.org](http://www.riobosque.org). Upcoming free walking tours:



- **3 p.m., Sun., December 7 (Bird tour)**
- **9 a.m., Sat., December 13 (Introductory tour)**
- **8 a.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.

**Monday, January 19, 2015**  
**7:00 - 8:30 pm**  
**Centennial Museum, at UTEP**  
**Birds of Chiapas, Mexico**

Brock Huffmann will do a slide presentation of the birds found in Chiapas, Mexico.

The presentation will cover birds most likely to be seen in the habitat of both the highlands and the lowlands.

Brock is a longtime birder and a lawyer by trade in San Antonio, Texas.

We hope you will join us for this general meeting and informative program.



## USFWS LISTS WESTERN YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS AS THREATENED

On Oct 3, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) published in the Federal Register a final rule listing the Yellow-billed Cuckoo population in the western United States, Canada & Mexico as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The listing took effect Nov 3.



The area in which cuckoos are now listed as threatened includes the Rio Grande Valley in both southern New Mexico and Trans-Pecos Texas. Here, the USFWS identified the watershed boundary between the Rio Grande and Pecos rivers as the optimum dividing line between western and eastern populations of the cuckoo.

Western Yellow-billed Cuckoos are highly dependent on cottonwood-willow forests along rivers and streams for nesting. Extensive loss, degradation and fragmentation of this riparian-forest habitat, large declines in cuckoo numbers, and a major contraction of the species' range in the West led to the listing. Next steps include designation of critical habitat for the species and development of a recovery plan.

In the Aug 15 Federal Register, the USFWS proposed designating critical habitat for the cuckoo on approximately 546,335 acres in 9 western states, including New Mexico and Texas. The USFWS proposed 8 critical-habitat units totaling 82,408 acres in New Mexico and 2 units totaling 9,053 acres in Texas: 1,261 acres along 8 miles of the Rio Grande upstream and downstream of Arroyo Caballo in Hudspeth County and 7,792 acres along 45 miles of the Rio Grande in Big Bend National Park. The USFWS is currently seeking comments on the proposed critical-habitat rule and recently extended the comment deadline to Jan 12, 2015. More info: <http://www.fws.gov/cno/press/release.cfm?rid=668>.



### Let Nature Take its Course?

By, Josie Karam

As a long time Wildlife Rehabilitator, I have witnessed years of compassion from thousands of rescuers that have brought me birds and mammals in need of human intervention. I have also heard, many times, the inane comment that we should "let nature take its course". Is it considered "nature" when the animals die because of human negligence (free-roaming cats that kill 1.4 BILLION birds every year), human construction (large buildings with lots of windows), human pollution and poisons (no explanation needed there), or human cruelty (killing or torturing a helpless bird or mammal)?

The latest statistics of diminishing wildlife are staggering. In the last 40 years, we have lost 50% of all wildlife. At that rate, in another 40 years or less, our world will be without wildlife. If immature wildlife is not injured and not in danger, we encourage the "rescuer" to leave it with the parents, but observe to make sure parents are returning and feeding their babies. Seldom does a parent not know the location of their young.

If it is safer to place a baby bird in a nearby tree or a make-shift nest, do so. The parents will return, even though the baby now has "human scent" on it. Young mammals will wander and explore when they are ready. Unless your cat has brought you one as a "gift", it too should be left for mom and dad to care for. Common sense should be the deciding factor to intervene or not. When necessary, proper intervention is crucial. With as little stress as necessary, use gloves or a towel, wrap the "patient", keep it warm and quiet and make it a priority to get it to a wildlife rehabilitator immediately. Your job ends; ours begins. Observation, from a distance, and common sense will help you decide if wildlife needs help. Don't turn a blind eye. Don't leave them to suffer a long, agonizing death. They give us so much and ask for nothing. If in doubt about the right thing to do, call a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Many can be found under various websites.

**Josie Karam is a licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator. She can be reached at Second Chance Wildlife Rescue, 635 Country Club Rd, (915) 920-7867.**

## Notes from the Field

### Majesty & Wonder in Dell City, Texas. October 4, 2014 by, Susie Schneider

We come upon two very large abandoned metal buildings. The yard around the buildings is weed infested. Michael and I fear snakes and tread carefully. Mark gamely walks ahead, telling us he will break the trail through the calf-high weeds. He adds, "no self respecting snake will be found here. It's too hot." Shards of broken glass, discarded pieces of equipment, their uses now unrecognizable, litter the floors of the buildings, litter the porches on the west side. In a long derelict office, a calendar still counts the days. Many of them have passed since 1991, but the calendar is ever hopeful, not faded, still fresh.

We carefully peer into the first building. We marvel at the evidence of the predatory power of the owls. Hundreds of owl pellets containing tiny skulls, bones, fur litter the floors of the buildings and later, the patios outside. Right in front of us looms a deep, circular, brick-lined pit. It is the stuff of scary cop shows, of people who disappear in abandoned buildings. Almost immediately, we see two Great Horned Owls. They are huge and majestic. One flies overhead toward us as the other flies away, silently, smoothly, gliding on enormous wings to escape from us. The motion of its wings is too beautiful to be called "flapping." No, the motion is more like rippling velvet. The owl flies through a doorway, seemingly into another room in the building. We go back outside, brave the weeds and find another vantage point—one that sees into the room into which we saw the owl fly. No sign.

We walk carefully toward the other building and peer into the dim interior. Lofty ceilings, rusted metal beams, turbines, shafts. There--high in a corner--life. The heart-shaped face, slim body, pale feathers, innocent gaze—a treasure—a barn owl. We disturb her. She looks anxiously, shifts from one taloned foot to another. We retreat after a glimpse. We respect her sanctuary and have no desire to alarm her. We speak in quiet voices outside the sagging building. From inside the ramshackle hulk comes a shriek. A warning? An alarm? Another shriek. We smile. We have seen one of God's most powerful and yet somehow vulnerable creatures. We are blessed.

## Field Trips

### Saturday, December 13, 2014 Sod Farms & Pancho Villa State Park in Columbus, NM.

At the Sod Farms we will be looking for **shorebirds**. Pancho Villa State Park is an oasis for migrating birds as are the sod farms. Some birds we could see are the **Black-throated Sparrow, Pyrrhuloxia, Crissal Thrasher & Greater Roadrunner**.

Meet at 7:00 a.m. behind the Sam's Carwash in Sam's Parking Lot at 7970 N. Mesa. Bring lunch and water. There is a nominal fee at Pancho Villa State Park.

Nonmembers & beginners welcome.  
Contact Mark Perkins at 637-3521

### Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge January 24 & 25, 2015

Thousands of **Sandhill Cranes** and **Snow Geese** winter at the Refuge. Join us on this great birding weekend. Mark and Janet will be staying at Econolodge, 713 California St. (575) 835-1500.

**Saturday, January 24**, Meet at 1:00 p.m. at the Refuge Visitor Center. We will bird the Refuge and watch the fly-in.

**Sunday morning January 25**, meet at 5:15 a.m. at the Econolodge and we will carpool to the Refuge to watch the fly-out. Return to El Paso. We need at least 5 people signed up for the trip.

Contact Mark at (915) 637-3521.

### Phoenix Trip February 13-16, 2015

Join us for wonderful birding in the Phoenix area over the President's Day Weekend. Contact Mark, (915) 637-3521 for a detailed itinerary.

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 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 422250  
Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250**

**Local Chapter Code C1ZW100Z**

**Dates to Remember Call Mark Perkins for details 637-3521**

**December**

7 & 13: **Rio Bosque**  
Mon. 8: **Board Meeting**  
Mon 15: **Holiday Meeting**  
Sat 13: **Sod Farms**  
**Feather Lake workday**

**January**

Thursday 1: **C Bird Count**  
Sat 3: **X-mas Bird C GMNP**  
10 & 18: **Rio Bosque**  
Mon 12: **Board Meeting**  
Mon 19: **General Meeting**  
24 & 25: **Bosque del Apache**

**February**

Mon 9: **Board Meeting**  
13-16: **Phoenix, AZ**  
Sat 21: **Awards Dinner**



**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: \_\_\_\_\_

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