

The Roadrunner



Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

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El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society General Meetings

Monday, December 9, 2013 7:00pm
Centennial Museum, at UTEP
Christmas Photo Extravaganza

Scott Cutler will be presenting a slide show of everyone's favorite photos of 2013. **Please mail your photos to scutler@utep.edu** in plenty of time for him to make sure all the images can be displayed on the museum's new digital big screen. Bringing your usb that evening is still an option if you forget to email the photos in.



Everyone is encouraged to contribute holiday snacks and sweets, as refreshments are a highlight of this annual event.

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.

Monday, January 20, 2014 7:00pm
Centennial Museum, at UTEP

DVD Presentation Penguins of the Antarctic

NATURE braves the extreme conditions of Earth's southernmost continent for a close-up look at the varied *Penguins of the Antarctic*.



Bring some popcorn or snacks and prepare to be educated and entertained by some amazing and very well dressed birds.

Albertsons ...



Every time you swipe your Community Partners Card, you earn cash for the Audubon Society.

Now isn't that a good reason to shop at Albertsons?



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

Membership: Roxanne Schroeder, 533-0061
 Programs: Elizabeth Chase 539-1191
 Conservation: Luis Sanchez, 599-7381
 Field Trips: Mark Perkins 637-3521
 Hospitality: Janet Perkins, 581-2849
 Way & Means: vacant

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

Officers

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

Committees

Publicity: Janet Perkins, 581-2849
 Education: Kathleen Whelen, 751-2408
 Publications: Jane Fowler, 598-2448
 Newsletter Editor: Kathleen Whelen, 751-2408
 Sanctuary: John Sproul, 545-5157

YOU ARE WANTED



Seeking volunteers for Burrowing Owl Conservation Projects at the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

BURROWING OWL

Would you like to assist with any of the following projects?

Nest sites need a major makeover.

Many artificial nest boxes and burrows are packed with soil and unusable or have been destroyed by canids. Help is needed for the construction and reinstallation of modified and improved nest boxes and burrow systems. Project begins Oct. 17, 2013 and will continue until finished.

Research opportunities.

Seasonal use and site fidelity. Volunteers are needed to monitor nest sites and record the alpha-numeric identification band on the owl's right leg using a spotting scope or good binoculars. Project begins in December 2013 and will continue throughout the 2014 breeding season.

Burrowing Owl diet and reproductive success.

Help is needed with the installation of solar-operated off-grid DVR video systems at 2 or 3 nest sites and to monitor the prey items taken to the nests from the DVR recordings every 3-4 weeks. Ideal level of identification would be to Genus species or Family but generalizations such as insect, spider, rodent, lizard, etc. would be acceptable. Project begins this Dec. or in Jan 2014 (after installation).

If you're interested in Burrowing Owl projects or for more details – contact: Lois Balin, cell: 227-1988, office: 774-9603, or lois.balin@tpwd.texas.gov

Conservation Organizations

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

Keystone Heritage Park 581-7920
www.keystoneheritagepark.org

Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park
 (575) 524-3334 www.asombro.org

Friends of Rio Bosque 747-8663
www.riobosque.org

Southwest Environmental Center
 (575) 522-5552
www.wildmesquite.org

Franklin Mt. Wilderness Coalition
www.franklinmountains.org/

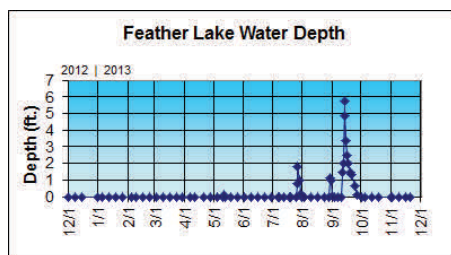
AT FEATHER LAKE

After a brief period of significant flooding in September, Feather Lake reverted to its all-too-frequent waterless state.

It has now been over 3 years since we last had a month when the lake continuously held water (August 2010). It has been almost 3 years since the lake was last open to the public.

Our next workday at Feather

Lake will be **Sat., December 14**, starting at **2 p.m.** We'll continue removing trash from within the dry basin. 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

Water deliveries to Rio Bosque resumed Nov 3. They should continue into early February. We are now entering the peak time for wintering water birds at the park.

For up-to-date information on Rio Bosque's birds and water conditions, check www.riobosque.org.

Upcoming free walking tours:

3 p.m., Sun., December 8 (Bird tour)

9 a.m., Sat., December 14 (Introductory tour)

3 p.m., Sat., January 11 (Bird tour)

9 a.m., Sun., January 19 (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. Info: 747-8663.

USFWS PROPOSES THREATENED STATUS FOR WESTERN YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS

On Oct 3, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) published in the Federal Register a proposal to list the Yellow-billed Cuckoo "in the western portions of the United States, Canada and Mexico as a threatened distinct vertebrate population segment under the Endangered Species Act." The comment period on this proposal is open until Dec 2.

There is a long history behind this proposal. Back in May 1986, 9 conservation organizations petitioned the USFWS to list the Yellow-billed Cuckoo as endangered in the states of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Nevada. In the western U.S., 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 prompted the 1986 petition.

Since then, a lot has happened: a finding that a listing as requested in the original petition was "not warranted;" a subsequent petition covering all western populations of the cuckoo; a status review; genetic studies; field work; a finding that a listing was "warranted but precluded by higher priority listing actions;" a court settlement; and now, 27 years after the original petition, a proposal to list the Yellow-billed Cuckoo in the western U.S. as threatened.

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

During these past 27 years, western Yellow-billed Cuckoo populations have continued to decline. In the listing proposal, the USFWS concludes, "The current population of the western yellow-billed cuckoo in western Texas is likely fewer than 10 pairs."

Notes From the Field

Ft. Davis Birds and Stars November 8-11, 2013

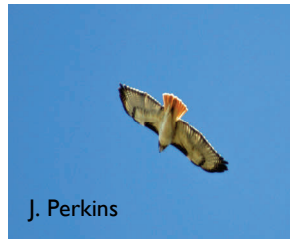
On Friday, four of us saw a **Williamson's Sapsucker**, a **Black-crested Titmouse** and a **Red-naped Sapsucker** at the rest stop in the Davis Mountains on the way to Alpine.



J. Perkins

That night, we dined at La Trattoria, a really good Italian restaurant in Alpine. Saturday morning we were in the Balmorhea area where we saw lots of **hawks, Ospreys, White Pelicans, American Pipit**, and a variety of waterfowl. In the afternoon, we traveled to Marathon to the Post, where we had several **Golden-fronted Woodpeckers, Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Vermilion Flycatchers, Eastern Phoebe**, and a flock of **Wild Turkeys**.

That evening we went to McDonald Observatory for the Star Party, where we looked through several large, great telescopes. Some of the things we saw were the Ring Nebula, globular star cluster and the Andromeda Galaxy. The weather was clear and not too cold – perfect for viewing.



J. Perkins

Sunday morning we went to The Nature Conservancy's Davis Mountains Preserve and drove up Madera Canyon. We stopped at Wolf's Den Canyon where we saw a beautiful soaring **Golden Eagle, Harris's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk**, and **Williamson's Sapsucker**. At the

visitor's center, we saw a confrontation between **Acorn Woodpeckers** and **Western Scrub-Jays** fighting over food. The **Acorn Woodpeckers** would take the food to a nearby corral fence and deposit it in the posts.

We picnicked at the Rest Stop, hiked up the mountain, had a flock of **Wild Turkeys**, and a **Red-naped Sapsucker**. Sunday evening we had dinner at a really good Mexican restaurant in Alpine – Los Jalapeños. Try it the next time you are there! Monday morning, we went to the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute's Nature Center where we had a guide. We managed to flush out quite a few **Montezuma Quail!** We then hiked along the rim of beautiful Modesta Canyon and ended our visit in their Botanical Gardens, where we saw **Bushtits, Sharp-shinned Hawk**, lots of **Western Bluebirds** and **Say's Phoebes**. We had 16 people on the trip. It was a great trip and lots of fun and lots of birds.

Percha and Elephant Butte State Parks October 19, 2013.

Ten of us were on this trip and we saw lots of **Northern Flickers**; they were everywhere!

One of the most interesting things we saw was a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** attacking a **Belted Kingfisher!** The kingfisher was not having anything to do with that, and made quite a ruckus.



J. Perkins

We had good looks at **Vermilion Flycatchers**.

At Elephant Butte State Park we again saw lots of **Northern Flickers**, **Great Blue Herons** along the river, and at the Dam we saw an **Osprey, White-throated Swifts** and lots of **Western Grebes**.

Field Trips

December 14 and 15, 2013. Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge

**Sandhill Cranes,
Snow Geese and
ducks galore!**

Also **Bald Eagles**
are seen often.

Mark and Janet
will go up on Fri-
day, December 13

for the fly-in if anyone wants to join them.



On Saturday, the group will view the fly-out and bird the area. On Sunday, there is a possibility we will go to the **Rosy-Finch** banding on Sandia Peak near Albuquerque. More on that later. We need to have confirmed at least 6 people in order to make the trip.

Awards Banquet February 15, 2014 6:00pm Opus World Bistro

Mark your calendars for the Annual Awards Banquet and Dinner, which will be on Saturday, February 15, 2014 at 6:00 p.m., at Opus World Bistro, 7128 Mesa Street, Colony Cove II in El Paso.

Reservations are necessary. Contact Janet Perkins at 637-5269 for more information.

January 18-21, 2014 Phoenix Area! Martin Luther King 3 day weekend.

New areas for birding have been identified and we'll also visit some of the great ones visited last year.

Join us for any or all events. You won't want to miss this trip. Nonmembers and beginners are

always welcome.

Register with Mark Perkins at 637-3521 by January 13, 2014.



Reservoirs Down the Valley Saturday, February 1, 2014.

We'll check out the 3 reservoirs in the Lower Valley looking for wintering hawks and waterfowl .

We will meet at 6:30 a.m. at the parking lot at the Burlington Coat Factory at 1144 N. Yarbrough. Exit at Yarbrough, at the light turn left under I-10. Burlington is on the right.

Bring lunch and binoculars. Nonmembers and beginners always welcome.

Contact Mark at 637-3521.

El Paso/Trans-Pecos
Audubon Society
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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

Mon 2: **Board Meeting**
8 & 14: **Rio Bosque**
Mon 9: **Holiday Meeting**
14 & 15: **Bosque del Apache**
Sat 14: **Feather Lake Workday**

January

18 & 21: **Phoenix**
11 & 19: **Rio Bosque**
Mon 13: **Board Meeting**
Mon 20: **General Meeting**

February

Sat 1: **Down the Valley**
Mon 10: **Board Meeting**
Sat 15: **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

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