

# The Roadrunner



Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society  
Volume 31 No. 13 December 2002 & January 2003

## General Meetings

Monday, December 9, 2002  
Memorial Park Garden Center  
3105 Grant Street 7:30pm

John Kargas and Karen Talley  
The Davis Mountains Preserve

Not many people know there are opportunities to visit one of the most biologically rich Mountain Islands in the Chihuahuan Desert? Over the past several years, numerous bird species have been discovered breeding on the preserve. John Kargas, Conservation Biologist and Karen Talley, Outreach Coordinator for the Davis Mountain Nature Conservancy Preserve will give a presentation that focuses on the rare birds found on the Preserve. The presentation will also include discussion on The Nature Conservancy's conservation goals in the Davis Mountains and on the organized events and preserve activities that are available at the Preserve.

Monday, January 20, 2003  
Memorial Park Garden Center  
3105 Grant Street 7:30pm

John Kiseda  
Conservation Efforts for Endangered Species  
El Paso Zoo

Come, listen and discover the valuable conservation efforts that are occurring here in El Paso. John Kiseda, the Animal Curator Supervisor, will discuss the multifaceted aspects in which our zoo is contributing towards accomplishing the objectives of the Endangered Species Survival Plan. John will discuss the zoo's involvement in the captive breeding, release and management plans.

## 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  
[EIPasoBirdAlert@gbarnett.com](mailto:EIPasoBirdAlert@gbarnett.com)

Thank you very much

Scott Mitchell

and

Alberto Macias-Duarte

for October and November meeting presentations

## Inside The Roadrunner

Chapter Info.....	p. 2
Sanctuary News.....	p. 3
Conservation .....	p. 4
On the Trail.....	p. 5
Observations .....	p. 6
Calendar .....	p. 8

## El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

### Officers:

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

### Directors:

Saul Acosta	849-9284
Lois Balin	774-9603
Matthew Briones	541-4292
Elizabeth Chase	539-1191
Cliff Edison	
Jane Fowler	598-2448
Vince Giordano	
Mike Ross	858-6407
Kathleen Whelen	751-2408

The Roadrunner is published six times a year. Contributions are welcome. Please e-mail to [whelenk@aol.com](mailto:whelenk@aol.com) or mail to 6120 Quail Ave. El Paso, TX 79924. (915) 751-2408

### **Board Election Coming Up**

We are looking for a few good men (or women) to serve on the Audubon Board for the coming year. Elections will be in January and we need nominations for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and three director positions. Some of the present board have served six consecutive years and are ineligible for another term. Please help us by nominating someone and it can be yourself! Just contact any Board member with your nomination.

### The Southwest Environmental Center

The Southwest Environmental Center offers Back by Noon natural history outings to the public. The remaining trips in the Fall 2002 series is as follows:

Organic Farming On Arid Land with Author/Farmer, Robert Gerard, December 7th at 9:00 a.m.

To sign up, contact Jean Renfroe at (505) 522-5552

or

[swec@zianet.com](mailto:swec@zianet.com)

### From the President's Aerie by, Betty Fisbeck

Did you know that ordinary people like you and me can contribute something to science? (You can now even join Audubon as a Citizen Science member.) One of the contributions any member can make is to participate in monitoring bird populations. The Christmas Bird Count dates from 1900 when a handful of birders began the tradition of recording species and their numbers in 25 circles around the continent. Today tens of thousands birders gather data in those same circles and 1900 additional sites. The Great Backyard Bird Count is only six years old but this data will become more valuable with each year. Project Feeder Watch is fifteen years old and collects data on feeder birds. All of these projects contribute to monitoring bird population patterns. So consider becoming a citizen scientist and joining the thousands of other birders in one of these projects. More information will be forthcoming.

### Chapter Award Suggestions?

The Board is seeking suggestions for recipients for the Chapter Service Award and the Conservation Award. The awards are traditionally presented at the Annual Dinner Meeting in February. If you have suggestions on possible recipients, please contact any Board member.

## At Feather Lake

by, John Sproul

Our Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux in El Paso, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave. It is open 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays and 2 p.m. to dusk on Sundays. Admission is free. Some things to look for on your next visit:

- Late-October rains brought the water level to 3.56 feet on Nov. 2, the lake's highest level in several years. Feather Lake might have water all winter this year. That's good news for wintering water birds, but it complicates our plans to remove cattails from part of the basin this winter.

- The Feather Lake visitor center is a brighter place today, with new lighting both inside and out. Thank you, Charles Simpson and Jonathan Mims, for installing these latest enhancements to the visitor center!

- Look along the inner berm on the east side of the lake, near the middle, and you'll see a small, lonely stand of saltcedar. They're the last of their tribe. On October 5 and 12, Eagle Scout candidate Ben Connell and fellow scouts from Troop 2 removed most of the remaining saltcedar from the inner berm. Thanks, Ben! At Feather Lake, the end for this exotic tree is drawing near.

Volunteers staff Feather Lake during visitor hours. Want to help in this way? Contact John Sproul, 545-5157. Want to help with habitat-management at the lake? Join us for our next workday on Sat., Jan. 25. We'll start at 2 p.m., work a few hours, then enjoy the lake at the end of the day.

## RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK

UTEP's Center for Environmental Resource Management 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:

- 9 a.m. Sat., December 7 (Birds)
- 3 p.m. Sun., December 15 (Introductory Tour)
- 9 a.m. Sat., January 11 (Introductory)
- 9 a.m. Sat., January 18 (Workday)
- 3 p.m. Sun., January 19 (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.



## Wildlife Conservation Organizations

Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue  
[www.whc.net/cdwr](http://www.whc.net/cdwr)

El Paso Zoo  
[www.elpasozoo.org](http://www.elpasozoo.org)

Keystone Heritage Park  
[keystonepark.com](http://keystonepark.com) or [keystonepark.org](http://keystonepark.org)

Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park  
[www.cdn.org](http://www.cdn.org)

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/)

### Keystone Marsh

Please continue to inform John Kiseda of your bird sighting observations, because he continues to add to and refine the current checklist [you can view the current checklist on the Keystone Website].

In other news, the Master Plan for Keystone Heritage Park (KHP) has just been completed, and the Junior League continues to play a vital role in the plans for the Botanical Garden and other aspects of the KHP. Contact Bernie or Melissa Sargent @ 581-7920 for information on how you can become more involved in this valuable local project.

## El Lobo: Forum Focuses on Mexican Gray Wolf

On February 7-8, 2003, historians, wolf-experts, and ranchers will discuss the history and future of the Mexican gray wolf at a public forum in Las Cruces, New Mexico. "El Lobo" will open on February 7 with a keynote session at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum. The session will feature Susan Flader, the historian, biographer of Aldo Leopold, and author of *Thinking Like a Mountain*; L. David Mech, the country's foremost wolf biologist and author of *The Wolf: The Ecology and Behavior of an Endangered Species*; and Caren Cowan, executive director of the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association. On February 8, a day-long symposium at the Corbett Center auditorium, New Mexico State University, will include talks and a round-table discussion with leading environmental historians, biologists, policy-makers, environmental activists, and ranchers on both sides of the issue. Hank Fischer, Special Projects Coordinator for the National Wildlife Federation, will be the featured speaker at dinner. The event will be free and open to the public, although there is a charge for lunch and dinner. Seating will be limited, and advanced registration is required by January 24, 2003.

For registration information, contact  
Vanessa Stewart at  
[wolfconf@nmsu.edu](mailto:wolfconf@nmsu.edu)  
or visit the conference website at  
[www.nmsu.edu/~histdept/wolf](http://www.nmsu.edu/~histdept/wolf).

The Department of History at New Mexico State University has organized the forum, which is co-sponsored by the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum and the NMSU College of Agriculture.

# ON THE TRAIL

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

The El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Chapter calls upon volunteers in the El Paso area to join with birders across the western hemisphere and participate in one of Audubon's winter time traditions, the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). This year's count will be the 103d.

Today, over 55,000 volunteers from all 50 states, every Canadian province, parts of Central and South America, Bermuda, the West Indies, and Pacific Islands count and record every individual bird and bird species seen in a specified area. During the 102nd CBC last year, about 52 million individual birds were counted. Last year saw a new record high of 1,936 individual counts. Each individual count group completes a census of the birds found during one 24 hour period in a designated circle 15 miles in diameter-about 177 square miles.

People are asked to contribute \$5.00 to help defray the expense of publishing "American Birds", This is the volume detailing all 1900 plus counts. The El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Chapter will cover \$3.00 of this for the Hueco Tanks and El Paso counts. Any questions call Bob (915) 757-1876 or Jimmy (505) 541-8083.

### HUECO TANKS CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The first count in this area will be conducted in and around Hueco Tanks State Historical Park. Lets see if we can get over 65 species this year, a number that has been achieved only a couple of times since 1970. To accomplish this I will need at least 10-12 counters, **Please call and volunteer.** With the montane invasion this year it could be accomplished, during the Nov. monthly BIT for a period of 3 hours and only in the park we had 37 species, unusual were Stellar's Jay, Townsend's Solitair, and Mountain Chickadee.

**Date:** Saturday, December 14, 2002

**Time:** 6:30 AM, Flying Saucer Building  
(Junction US 62/180 & FM 2775)

**Compiler:** Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson 757-1876  
E-mail; [bobwildbirderj@cs.com](mailto:bobwildbirderj@cs.com)

It would be better to call ahead of time, so that you can be assigned to a zone leader and report to that specific location.

### EL PASO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The compiler for the El Paso area count is Jimmy Zabriskie. To volunteer for his team you may contact him at (505) 541-8083 or E-mail [jzabris102@aol.com](mailto:jzabris102@aol.com).

**Date:** Wednesday, January 1, 2003

Other nearby counts, the date, whom and how to contact follows.

**14 Dec.**-Las Cruces NM, Gordon Ewing  
E-mail [geewing@NMSU.Edu](mailto:geewing@NMSU.Edu)

**15 Dec.**-Balmorhea TX, Kelly Bryan (915) 426-3721, E-mail [kellyb@nexus.as.utexas.edu](mailto:kellyb@nexus.as.utexas.edu)

**22 Dec.**-McNary TX, Barry Zimmer

**28 Dec.**-Caballo NM, Barry Zimmer (915) 757-8682, E-mail [brzimmer@aol.com](mailto:brzimmer@aol.com)

**29 Dec.**-Peloncillo Mts. Alan Craig (520) 558-2220, E-mail [narc@vtc.net](mailto:narc@vtc.net)

# OBSERVATIONS

## RARE AND UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

Sep. 16, 2002 to Nov. 15, 2002

Listing of birds is determined using the checklist "Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas" 8th Edition October 2002. Leave sightings to Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson (757-1876), or E-mail [obwildbirderj@cs.com](mailto:obwildbirderj@cs.com). **Bold - Rare**; Light highlighting - Casual; Dark highlighting - Very Rare

Observers: Mary Lou Alcorn: Dan Allen: Beth Garcia: Jeff Groff: Inga Groff: Doris Gurs: Mary Holmesley: Hugh Jameson: Bob Johnson: John Kiseda: Eve McCullough: R. Michael: Jim Paton: Flora Pitard: Brian Pierson: John Sproul: Jimmy Zabriskie: Barry Zimmer. -ft on a field trip; -yd from their yard.

### Loon to Merganser

<b>Common Loon</b>	<b>10/27</b>	<b>JP</b>	<b>Tor</b>
Am White Pelican	10/8	BP	Asc
100's flew in for the night, most gone by 10 AM			
Neotrop Cormorant	11/9	JS	RBq
	11/10	BJ-ft	Xrd
<b>Tricolored Heron</b>	<b>10/6</b>	<b>JS</b>	<b>RBq</b>
Ross's Goose	11/4	JP	McN
Redhead	10/1	BZ	McN
	11/10	BJ-ft	Xrd
Ring-necked Duck	10/6	JP	Xrd
Bufflehead	11/10	BJ-ft	Xrd
<b>Hooded Merganser</b>	<b>11/8</b>	<b>BJ</b>	<b>Xrd</b>

### Osprey to Phalarope

Osprey	10/26	JS	RBq
Harris' Hawk	11/12	DA	Xrd
Swainson's Hawk	11/4	DA	CCA
Ferruginous Hawk	9/23	BZ-yd	Ton
Merlin	9/24	DA	FBP
	10/20	JP	McN
<b>Peregrine Falcon</b>	<b>10/12</b>	<b>JK</b>	<b>Key</b>
	<b>10/20</b>	<b>JP</b>	<b>McN</b>
	10/18	DA	R28
Prairie Falcon	10/19	JS	RBq
Sandhill Crane	10/19	CM	Frn
<b>Long-billed Curlew</b>	<b>10/19</b>	<b>CM</b>	<b>Frn</b>
Baird's Sandpiper	10/6	JP	Sun
Wilson's Phalarope	11/9	JS	RBq

Locations: Asc-Ascarate Park; Arr-Arryo Park; BBn-Big Bend; BSc-Boy Scout; Cor-Coronado Country Club Area; CCA-El Paso country Club Area; Dch-Montoya/Sunset ditch; Dny-Donnybrook; Emy-Emory; FBP-Fort Bliss Ponds; Frn-Frontera; Hor-Horizon City; HTk-Hueco Tanks; KnJ-Kenyon Joyce; Key-Keystone Marsh; Kng-Kingery; Mem-Memorial Park; McN-McNary Area; NLp-North Loop; RbL-Rainbow Lakes; RBq-Rio Bosque Park; Ris-Risner Place; R28-Route 28 above Canutillo; Rst-Tornillo Rest Stop; Sun-Sunland Park Racetrack; Ton-Tonto; Tor-Tornillo Resv; Tnc-Titanic; VDM-Vista Del Monte; Xrd-Crossroad Ponding.

### Gull to Poorwill

California Gull	10/1	BZ	McN
<b>Common Tern</b>	<b>(9) 10/8</b>	<b>BZ</b>	<b>McN</b>
<b>Eurasian Collard-Dove</b>	<b>11/4</b>	<b>JP</b>	<b>McN</b>
<b>Common-ground Dove</b>	<b>10/27</b>	<b>JP</b>	<b>McN</b>
<b>5th Hudspeth County record</b>			
Lesser Nighthawk	11/4	DA	NLp
Common Poorwill	10/6	BZ	Trm
	10/7	JP-yd	BSc

### Hummingbirds thru Jays

<b>Anna's Hummer</b>	<b>10/18</b>	<b>BZ-yd</b>	<b>Ton</b>
Calliope Hummer	9/16	RM	Ris
<b>Williamson's Sapsucker</b>	<b>9/29</b>	<b>BZ-yd</b>	<b>Ton</b>
	10/25	JG	Itu
<b>Vermillion Flycatcher</b>	<b>11/10</b>	<b>JP</b>	<b>RbL</b>
<b>Blue-headed Vireo</b>	<b>10/15</b>	<b>BZ</b>	<b>Rst</b>
<b>Steller's Jay</b>	<b>9/27</b>	<b>JK-yd</b>	<b>KnJ</b>
	9/30	MH-yd	Kng
	10/16	DG	Arr
Western Scrub-Jay	9/25	DA	CCA
<b>Pinyon Jay</b>	<b>9/30</b>	<b>JH-yd</b>	<b>NEE</b>
	10/25	JZ	Cor

### Chickadee to Thrush

<b>Mountain Chickadee</b>	<b>10/20</b>	<b>BG</b>	<b>HTk</b>
Red-breasted Nuthatch	9/20	DA	CCA
<b>White-breasted Nuthatch</b>	<b>9/19</b>	<b>DA</b>	<b>CCA</b>
<b>Pygmy Nuthatch</b>	<b>11/2</b>	<b>IG</b>	<b>NEE</b>
<b>Brown Creeper</b>	<b>10/12</b>	<b>JP</b>	<b>VDM</b>
<b>Mountain Bluebird</b>	<b>11/14</b>	<b>HJ</b>	<b>BBn</b>
Townsend's Solitaire	9/20	BZ-yd	Ton
Swainson's Thrush	10/20	JK-yd	KnJ
<b>Wood Thrush</b>	<b>10/6</b>	<b>BZ-yd</b>	<b>Ton</b>
<b>3d El Paso Record</b>			
	10/22	JG	Tnc

CBC's will also be conducted in Bosque Del Apache NWR, Carlsbad, Gila, Guadalupe Mts., La Luz/Otero County, Loving, Portal, Roswell, Ruidoso and Silver City. The dates for these will be between December 14, 2002 and January 5, 2003, for information on whom and how to contact get in touch with Bob the Hueco Tanks compiler.

### BOSQUE DEL APACHE NWR

One of the more popular National Wildlife Refuges in the country (there are over 500) is located about 180 miles north of El Paso off of Interstate 25. How about 20,000 Snow Geese with a number of Ross's included, see if you can tell them apart, 12,000 Sandhill Cranes, 25,000 plus ducks and MANY Bald Eagles.

Start off your 2003 bird list with some great entrys. Last year 74 species were recorded on our trip, these included 15 waterfowl species, 8 Raptor and 3 grebe, also a number of passerines. The Refuge reported over 40 Bald Eagles, and we saw over 17 at one time in one water cell.

We are trying to arrange a tour in a large refuge van, so try to call Lois if you think you might attend, we need an approximate count.

Many good motels in Socorro NM, located about 12 miles to the north.

**Date:** Sat/Sun, January 11/12, 2003  
**Time:** 11 AM  
**Place:** Parking lot of the Visitors Center.  
**Leader:** Lois Balin (915-821-5098)  
 Call for itinerary & map.

### KEYSTONE - SUNLAND

A look at hundreds of gulls, mostly *Ring-billed* but quite often a *Herring Gull* or *California Gull* has been around, and remember last January when a State of New Mexico first, the *Lesser Black-backed Gull* was in the area for almost 2 weeks. You probably will see *Snow Geese*, maybe *Canvasbacks*, and some wading birds, perhaps *Great Egrets*, *Longbilled Dowitchers*.

**Date:** Saturday, January 25  
**Time:** 7:51 AM  
**Place:** Crossroads Ponding Area by RR tracks (Doniphan/Mesa/Country Club)  
**Leader:** Betty Fisback (915) 581-0174

### FRIENDS of HUECO TANKS

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

#### Bird Identification Tours

Sunday December 15 8 AM  
 Sunday January 19 8 AM

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

Observations: continued from page 6

#### Catbird thru Warblers

Gray Catbird	10/9	MH-yd	KnJ
	10/17	JK-yd	KnJ
	10/28	JG	Tnc
Sage Thrasher	9/30	BZ-yd	Ton
Cedar Waxwing	10/19	JK-yd	KnJ
Nashville Warbler	10/6	JP	Dch
Virginia's Warbler (late)	10/19	BZ-yd	Ton
Black-thrtd Gray Wbler	10/16	BZ-yd	Ton
Townsend's Warbler	10/6	JP	Dch
Hermit Warbler	9/18	BZ-yd	Ton
Blackburnian Warbler	10/20	JP	Rst
American Redstart	9/30	BZ-yd	Ton
Wilson's Warbler	10/13	EM	Dny
Painted Redstart	10/4	BZ	Mem

#### Towhee to Crossbill

Spotted Towhee	10/26	MLA	Emy
Lincoln's Sparrow	10/19	JS	RBq
Swamp Sparrow	10/12	JK	Key
Indigo Bunting	9/20	BZ-yd	Ton
Painted Bunting (late)	10/16	BZ-yd	Ton
Dickcissel (late)	10/9	BZ-yd	Ton
Red Crossbill	10/12	JP	VDM

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 request

**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

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

December	January	February
Board Meeting Monday, 2nd	El Paso X-mas Bird Count Wednesday, 1st	Board Meeting Monday, 10th
General Meeting Monday, 9th	Board Meeting Monday, 13th	No General Meeting
Hueco Tanks X-mas Bird Count Saturday, 14th	Bosque del Apache Sat & Sun, 11 & 12	Awards Dinner Saturday, 22nd (tentative)
Hueco Tanks Bird ID Tour Sunday, 15th	Hueco Tanks Bird ID Tour Sunday, 19th	
McNary X-mas Bird Count Sunday, 22nd	General Meeting Monday, 20th	
	Feather Lake Workday Keystone Heritage Park Saturday, 25th	

Printed by Superior Copy