

# The Roadrunner



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

## El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society General Meetings

**Monday, April 16, 2012**

Memorial Park Garden Center  
3105 Grant Street, 7:00 p.m.

### RAPTOR FORCE

Humans have had a unique relationship with raptors for more than four thousand years, first through the ancient sport of falconry, and, more recently, as scientists and engineers have turned to these mighty birds as the inspiration for the latest in aircraft design. Using the tricks and tactics of raptors as their model, engineers have devised fighter jets with unprecedented maneuverability and stealth.

In Raptor Force, *you'll learn the secrets of these astonishing aerialist, and how they've mastered, more than any other type of bird, the art of soaring.* With the help of engineer and falconer Rob MacIntyre's ingenious miniature television station — a camera, transmitter, and battery small enough to be harnessed onto the backs of raptors — you'll see for yourself what it's like to fly with these masters of the sky.

Please join us for this exciting NATURE Series DVD look at how birds of prey have developed uncanny flying skills that make them such majestic animals to watch. Contact Eddie Chew at 587-9589 for more information.

**Monday, May 21, 2012**

Memorial Park Garden Center  
3105 Grant Street, 7:00 p.m.

### Birds of Belize

Come to hear about birding in Belize. Eddie and Lucretia Chew will present impressions of the country and photographs by Eddie and Steve Chew. Birds photographed include Jabiru (stork), Red-lored Parrot, Magnificent Frigatebird, and Bat Falcon. Places visited were Belize City, Monkey Bay, Caye Caulker, and Crooked Tree (Bird's Eye View Lodge). It is a great country--very friendly.

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### 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).

### iGive.com

Join to Support  
El Paso/Trans-Pecos  
Audubon Society  
<http://www.iGive.com/>  
Shop the online mall at  
iGive.com.



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: vacant  
Conservation: Luis Sanchez, 422-5530  
Field Trips: Mark Perkins 637-3521  
Hospitality: Janet Perkins, 581-2849

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

Officers

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

Committees

Publicity: Janet Perkins, 581-2849  
Education: Kathleen Whelen, 751-2408  
Publications: Jane Fowler, 598-2448  
Ways & Means: vacant  
Sanctuary: John Sproul, 545-5157

BatsLIVE!

Overview:

BatsLIVE! is an integrated distance-learning program that will use technological media to reach children and their educators in classroom settings, professional land managers, and interested general public. The project will develop a website:  
<http://batslive.pwnet.org>

Many of our readers opt to receive THE ROAD-RUNNER electronically as a PDF file. By going paperless in this way, you can help us reduce costs associated with printing and mailing our newsletter. If you would like to discontinue receiving the print version of THE ROADRUNNER and only receive it via e-mail, just send a note to John Sproul at [jsproul@utep.edu](mailto:jsproul@utep.edu).

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

Conservation Organizations

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

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

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

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

Here we go again: Feather Lake is still dry and closed to public use. The lake has now been completely dry for 13 of the past 17 months and mostly dry the other 4 months.

From August 2010 to February 2012, a remarkable five Eagle Scout service projects took place at Feather Lake. Even more remarkable, Boy Scouts from a single troop, Troop 4, organized and carried out all five.

Prior to the current drought, Feather Lake enjoyed 4+ years of favorable conditions during which vegetation thrived. Along the inner berm that winds through the lake basin, the lush growth became impenetrable in many places, greatly limiting our ability to use the berm for access when we worked within the basin. At the same time, many non-native salt cedars had popped up along the inner berm following a disturbance event in 2004.

The scouts took on the major task of clearing a trail along the berm and removing the salt cedars. Eagle Scout candidate Evan Longpré got the ball rolling in August 2010. In December 2010, Fernie Espinoza took up the baton. By the completion of Fernie's project, over half the berm was cleared.

In January 2011, the scouts took a break from work on the berm. Under the direction of Christian Savusa, they harvested cottonwood and willow poles at Feather Lake and planted them at the adjacent Feather Lake II. By August, these trees were thriving, but many young salt cedars were also appearing at Feather Lake II. Kyle Volkov led a project to remove those salt cedars and also continue clearing the inner berm at Feather Lake.

Now, just one portion of the inner berm – the densest, most jungle-like portion – remained uncleared. In February 2012, Jonathan Kaplan led his fellow scouts in a final charge. Thanks to the tremendous dedication and hard work of the Troop 4 scouts, we again have access along the entire inner berm. Well done!

A lot of work, but then there is always work to be done at Feather Lake. Our next workday is **Sat., June 2** starting at **8 a.m.** Join us to help with sanctuary maintenance. 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



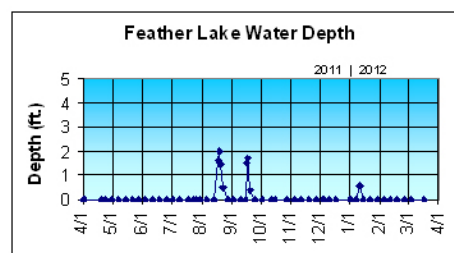
Heavy winds on 18 March damaged the Wood Duck nest box in which a Western Screech-Owl had been roosting. Will the owl return? For up-to-date information on Rio Bosque's birds, check the park's website, [www.riobosque.org](http://www.riobosque.org). Upcoming free walking tours:

8 a.m. Sat., April 7 (Bird tour)  
4 p.m. Sat., April 28 (Introductory tour)

8 a.m. Sun., May 6 (Bird tour)  
8 a.m. Sun., May 20 (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.

Information: 747-8663.



## NEW EDITION OF EL PASO-AREA BIRD CHECKLIST

The 9th edition of our checklist “Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas” is now available. It continues the evolution and improvement of this publication since the first edition in 1938.

Sincere thanks go to Jim Paton, John Sproul and Barry Zimmer for their dedicated work compiling this new edition. It represents a distillation of their extensive knowledge of El Paso-area birds. Thanks also go to Roxanne Schroeder for her drawing of a Gambel's Quail that graces the cover and to the many contributors whose observations are the foundation for the checklist.

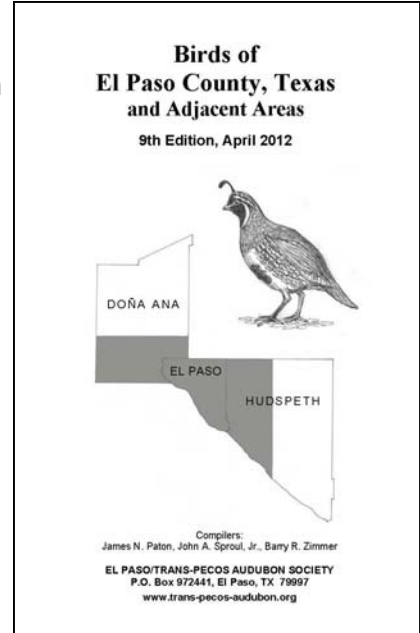
From 1973 to 2003, the number of species on the checklist grew remarkably, from 272 in 1973 (5th edition), to 297 in 1980 (6th edition), to 374 in 1987 (7th edition), to 426 in 2003 (8th edition). The growth reflected in the new edition is more modest: an increase of just 11 species to 437. Our understanding of the El Paso-area avifauna has now grown to the point where the finding of a new species is a very infrequent event.

In the new checklist, 12 species have been added and one – Blue-throated Hummingbird – has been removed from the main list and placed on the hypothetical list. The new species are: Cackling Goose, Anhinga, Purple Gallinule, Iceland Gull, Glaucous Gull, Royal Tern, Parasitic Jaeger, Tropical Kingbird, Couch's Kingbird, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Blue-winged Warbler and Streak-backed Oriole.

Although there are relatively few new species on the checklist, that doesn't mean the list is only slightly changed from the previous edition. The new checklist includes a number of formatting changes aimed at making it more readable. It incorporates all the applicable taxonomic and name changes since 2003. The seasonal-occurrence bar graphs for many species have changed to reflect either their changed status, our increased understanding of their status, or both.

Six species have seen changes in their breeding status since 2003: Northern Harrier (confirmed, Fort Bliss Ponds, 2007), Cooper's Hawk (attempted breeding, upper valley residential area, 2010), Peregrine Falcon (suspected breeding, Franklin Mts.), Long-eared Owl (confirmed, Rio Bosque, 2007), Acorn Woodpecker (suspected breeding, upper valley residential area), and Varied Bunting (suspected breeding, Hueco Tanks).

The new checklist reflects a wealth of new information. We hope it will add to your knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of El Paso-area birds. You can view the online version of the new edition (and previous editions) at [www.trans-pecos-audubon.org](http://www.trans-pecos-audubon.org). Hard copies will be on sale at our monthly meetings, at Feather Lake (some day, it will have water again), at community events, and by mail. The price is \$2, plus \$1 for shipping and handling on mail orders.



**Celebrate Urban Birds &  
the 20th year of International Migratory Bird Day  
Friday, May 4, 2012 from 2:00-4:00 at the  
EPCC Northwest Library**

With the financial assistance of The Cornell Lab of Ornithology Celebrate Urban Birds Mini-Grant, the library is extending an invitation to urban birds to visit the Children's Reading Garden by providing native plants, hummingbird and seed stations and fresh water features.



Try your hand at citizen science, view bird species visiting the garden and record data to be submitted to Cornell, discover benefits of native, bird-friendly landscaping and plant identification, and how to create artistic water features out of recyclable and low cost materials. Explore new ways to integrate the arts, gardening and conservation.

Refreshments will be provided.

**Cornell Lab eNews Flash  
LIVE: Red-tailed Hawk Nest**

A new nest camera high above a Cornell University athletic field is streaming crystal-clear views of a Red-tailed Hawk nest via the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds website. The new camera stream puts viewers 80 feet off the ground and right beside the nest, where they can watch the hawks arrive, see them taking turns incubating the eggs, and compare notes on the two birds—the male has a more golden-tawny face and is slightly smaller than the female, who has been nicknamed "Big Red" for her alma mater.

The nest should be active for at least the next two months, and we hope you'll join us as we watch the young birds hatch and grow. The parents have raised young here for at least the last four years. As signs of spring began to show, the pair began adding sticks and green pine boughs to the nest, and the male started bringing prey, such as squirrels and pigeons, to offer the female. The pair now has two eggs, laid last Friday and on Monday, and we're waiting to see if they lay a third. The birds will incubate for 28-35 days from the date the first egg is laid.

To make sure no one misses out on the early stages of this Red-tailed Hawk story, we've put together a temporary page on our All About Birds website where we invite you to watch these magnificent birds. The site will be live 24 hours a day and the video can be streamed in HD. You can also watch on mobile devices such as smartphones and iPads. A full-featured Bird-Cams site will launch in late April with many more species, including Osprey, Black Vulture, and Great Horned Owl. Enjoy the view! [www.allaboutbirds.org/cornellhawks](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/cornellhawks)

## Field Trips

**April 13, 14 and 15, 2012.**

### Lesser Prairie-Chickens

Bitter Lake NWR / Bottomless Lakes State Park

April is the peak time for Lesser Prairie-Chickens' famous displays in their mating areas called booming grounds.



Mark and Janet will arrive Friday and check into a motel in Roswell. We'll do some local birding and everyone is invited to join us. Saturday morning we will tour Bitter Lake NWR.

Bring lunch and drinks as we'll be out all day. In the afternoon, we'll bird and tour Bottomless Lakes State Park and on Sunday morning we will need to get a very early start to view the Lesser Prairie-Chickens. There is a possibility we won't be able to view them. This will depend on the results of the BLM Prairie Chicken Population Census that the BLM is conducting. The fires last year and the ongoing drought may have affected the population.

If we are not able to view the prairie chickens, we will drive to Carlsbad and bird that area until noon and head back to El Paso. We need to have at least 5 people on the trip or it will be a no-go.

If you want more information or if you plan to go please contact Mark at 637-3521 or [mperkins4@elp.rr.com](mailto:mperkins4@elp.rr.com).

**Saturday, April 28, 2012**

### Percha & Caballo Dam State Parks

An all day trip up the Rio Grande to birding hot spots. Caballo always has gulls and other water birds.

Percha should have Vermillion Flycatchers and Summer Tanagers.

**Bring lunch and drinks. There is small nominal fee for the state parks. Meet at the Shell station at I10 and Transmountain Rd. at 7:00 a.m. We will car-pool. Contact Mark at 637-3521 or [mperkins4@elp.rr.com](mailto:mperkins4@elp.rr.com).**

**Saturday, May 12, 2012**

### Memorial & Arroyo Parks

Warbler migration should be in full swing and the orioles, vireos and tanagers should have arrived. Meet at the Garden Center at Memorial Park at 7:00 a.m.

After birding Memorial Park, we'll head over to Arroyo Park for flycatchers and Gambel's Quail. Contact Mark at 637-3521 or [mperkins4@elp.rr.com](mailto:mperkins4@elp.rr.com).

### The Audubon website!

Updated information about upcoming field trips, a calendar of upcoming events, recent bird sightings. El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon <http://www.trans-pecos-audubon.org>

**May 25, 26, 27 & 28.  
Chiricahua Mountains &  
Southeastern Arizona.**

The Memorial Day weekend will see us traveling to the Chiricahua Mountains for great birding. We should see Blue-throated and Magnificent hummingbirds, Sulfur-bellied Flycatchers, Painted Redstarts and Yellow-eyed Juncos. Best of all will be the Elegant Trogon.

There is camping at Cave Creek and lodging at Cave Creek Ranch (602-558-2334) and others. Saturday night we'll do some owling. We need to have at least 5 people on the trip or it will be a no-go.

A more comprehensive itinerary will soon be available by contacting Mark at 637-3521 or [mperkins4@elp.rr.com](mailto:mperkins4@elp.rr.com).

**June 22, 23 and 24, 2012.  
Gila National Forest,  
Glenwood and Luna areas.**

Mark will go up Friday the 22nd and will be camping in the Pueblo Campground for those that wish to camp. For those wishing not to camp, there are motels in Glenwood, NM.

Friday afternoon we'll bird around the Pueblo Campground for Mountain Chickadee, Steller's Jays and Cassin's Kingbird.

We'll meet Saturday arrivals at 11:00 a.m. at the Ranger Station at the south end of Glenwood. We will visit the Luna-Reserve area with a good chance of Lewis's Woodpeckers and Pinyon Jay. Also there are some prairie dogs in the area.

We'll then go over to Luna Lake for lunch, where we might see mergansers and a possible Bald Eagle. Other places we might bird will be the fish hatchery in Glenwood for Summer Tanagers and flycatchers, the Catwalk for American Dipper and a stop at Mangas Springs for the Black Hawk.

At least 5 people must be signed up or it will be a no-go. Contact Mark at 637-3521 or [mperkins4@elp.rr.com](mailto:mperkins4@elp.rr.com).

**Saturday, June 9, 2012.  
Rio Bosque Park.**

This will be a local 4-5 hour trip into El Paso's Lower Valley. The Rio Bosque Park is noted for being the western-most point of migration for the Painted Bunting.

Also we may see Burrowing Owls, Harris's Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Mississippi Kite and possibly a Western Screech-Owl.

Meeting place to be determined. Contact Mark at 637-3521 or [mperkins4@elp.rr.com](mailto:mperkins4@elp.rr.com).

**Overnight Field Trips.**

Because of the expense of gas, and the time and preparation involved for the overnight field trips, it's important that you let Mark Perkins know in advance if you are planning to go on one of the overnight trips. If there aren't at least 5 people going on a trip, it will be a no-go. Thanks for your cooperation and understanding.

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

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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 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**

April

Sat 7: **Feather Lake**  
Mon 9: **Board Meeting**  
7 & 28: **Rio Bosque**  
13-15: **Prairie Chickens**  
Mon 16: **General Meeting**  
Sat 28: **Percha & Caballo**

May

Fri. 4: **Celebrate Urban Birds**  
5 & 6: **Birdathon**  
6 & 20: **Rio Bosque**  
Sat 12: **Memorial Park**  
Mon 14: **Board Meeting**  
Mon 21: **General Meeting**  
25-28: **Chiricahua Mountains**

June

Sat 2: **Feather Lake**  
Sat 9: **Rio Bosque Park**  
22-24: **Gila N. Forest**



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**

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## Let's "Fly" into Action! Audubon's Birdathon 2012!

Birdathon counters are already "in training" in preparation for Birdathon 2012.  
It all takes place May 5-6.

### What is Birdathon, you might ask?

*One thing is for sure, it's not your average bird count or fund raiser! Birdathon is unusual and different: a wild weekend of birding and our organization's most important source of income for conservation and education programs.*

We hope you can join us for a full, rewarding weekend of birding by being a **sponsor** and possibly even a counter (if you want to become part of the "Birdathon Flock" as a counter, please contact Jane Fowler at 598-2448 or Eddie Chew at 587-9589).

### Birdathon 2012 will benefit the following programs and projects:

#### **CHAPTER OPERATIONS & FEATHER LAKE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**

Scouts, students and adults can enjoy seeing birds up close in a natural habitat. When the lake has water, we have docents on duty to answer questions, provide printed trail guides & lend binoculars.

#### **RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK**

Each year, this site along the Rio Grande becomes more valuable as habitat for birds and other wildlife.

#### **AUDUBON TEXAS**

Our support helps keep National Audubon's state office an effective voice for birds, other wildlife and their habitats in Texas.

### How Birdathon Works

On the weekend of **May 5-6**, our dedicated Birdathon counters will be busy scouring the countryside, trying to find as many bird species as possible, in a single 24-hour blitz. These hardy, energized and intrepid individuals will start early, stay out late, visit varied wildlife habitats and give their eyes, ears and bird knowledge a full workout. Why do they push themselves so hard? For the pleasure of a day in the field, for a test of their birding skills and **most importantly, for a better West Texas environment.**

Each counter will be backed by sponsors who pledge either a given amount for each species seen or a fixed total amount. Most counters will identify 50 to 100 species. A pledge of, say \$0.50 per species for 60 species would result in a contribution of \$30. 95% of Birdathon income goes to the programs and projects; 5% to fundraising (printing, paper and postage).

Looking for someone to sponsor for Birdathon? This year's outstanding counters are a dedicated bunch, most of whom are experienced Birdathoners. If you supported one of these people last year, please give them a call and sponsor them again. If you don't know any of the counters personally and don't know whom to choose, please give Jane (598-2448) or Eddie (587-9589) a call.

**At press time, our confirmed counters for this year's Birdathon include:**

<b>Eddie Chew</b>	<b>John Kiseda</b>	<b>Mark Perkins</b>	<b>Luis Sanchez</b>
<b>Scott Cutler</b>	<b>Jim Paton</b>	<b>Susan Schneider</b>	<b>Kathy Whelen</b>
<b>Jane Fowler</b>	<b>Janet Perkins</b>	<b>John Sproul</b>	<b>Urban Bird Team EPCC NW</b>

**Please pick one or more individuals and give them your support!**

**Birdathon 2012 POT LUCK Sunday, May 6 at 6:00 p.m.**

Join us for the POST-BIRDATHON pot-luck picnic on May 6. While enjoying good food, we will be totaling all the counters' sightings, unusual birds and other events of the weekend. Those who saw the most species and raised the most money will be recognized at the May 21 general meeting, so plan to join us then also.

Bring something to share: salad, dessert or a favorite casserole. The chapter will furnish tableware, coffee, tea, sodas, fruit juice. Everyone is invited, **sponsors, counters and all chapter members.** The potluck/picnic is May 6 at 6:00pm at the home of Janet and Mark Perkins, 813 Montclair Drive.

Whether it's \$0.25 per species or \$1.00 per species or any given amount, we hope you will consider a pledge to Birdathon 2012. Please pick one or more counters to sponsor and return the enclosed coupon today. **Your generosity and support help make Audubon Birdathon a success.**

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

**BIRDATHON 2012**

**YES!** I'll sponsor \_\_\_\_\_  
for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per species for each species she/he finds  
on Birdathon 2012.

From \_\_\_\_\_

**YES!** I'll sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

for a flat \$ amount of \_\_\_\_\_.

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

I will add a bonus of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ if my  
Birdathon counter sees a \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

My tax deductible gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
sponsoring \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.  
Payable to El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society.

**Please return this form by May 3 to:**  
**Birdathon 2012**  
**c/o Eddie Chew**  
**390 Flemish Cir.**  
**El Paso, TX 79922**

**Thank you for your generous Birdathon pledge! Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law**