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The Roadrunner

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society December Holiday Party!

Monday, December 14, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. At the Rio Grande Campus of El Paso Community College, 100 West Rio Grande, Bldg. 4010, Rm. 119.

The Merry-making is ready to start Monday, December 14, with our traditional photo contest, delicious holiday refreshments, and Santa Claus himself!

Here's how to enter our photo contest:

Each person is allowed one photo in each category:

Bird photos
Wildlife other than birds
Scenic shots
Kids and pets
Humorous photos



You can write a caption for your photo

Winners will be chosen by audience vote; no professional judges To get your photos to Bob Johnson, photo contest coordinator:

• Email JPEG formatted photos to wildbirderbob@sbcglobal.net, OR Call Bob at 751-0125 to arrange for a pick-up of printed photos or slides

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 isproul@utep.edu.

iGive.com

Join to Support El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

http://www.iGive.com/

Shop the online mall at iGive.com.

Mechanisms for Conservation & the Roles of Frontera & Audubon

A presentation by Michael Gaglio, president of The Frontera Land Alliance

Monday, January 18, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.

The Rio Grande Campus of El Paso Community College, 100 West Rio Grande, Building 4010, Rm 119.

Mr. Gaglio will briefly describe various ways land is conserved and introduce the audience to a local land trust whose mission is to preserve lands in west Texas and southern New Mexico.

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

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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

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

Officers

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

Committees

Membership: Roxanne Schroeder, 533-0061

Programs: Ursula Sherrill, 526-7725

Conservation: vacant

Field Trips: Ursula Sherrill, 526-7725

Hospitality: Janet Perkins, 581-2849

Publicity: Janet Perkins, 581-2849 Education: Kathleen Whelen, 751-2408 Publications: Jane Fowler, 598-2448

Ways & Means: vacant

Sanctuary: John Sproul, 545-5157

KEYSTONE HERITAGE PARK

The wetlands are open the last weekend of each month for bird-watching.

No Tour Guides, bring binocular

Saturdays 7:30 - 10:00 AM Sundays 2:30 - 5:00 PM

Bob (915) 751-0125, wildbirderbob@sbcglobal.net

HUECO TANKS

Admission

Adults-\$5, Seniors-\$2, Children-free
Bird Identification Tours
Third SATURDAY Each Month
Please check in at Headquarters.
Reservations and information 857-1135

Save the date!

The El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society's Annual Awards Banquet

> Saturday, February 20, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. Jaxon's Restaurant, 1135 Airway Blvd., El Paso Jim Paton, co-author of

A Birder's Guide to the Rio Grande Valley (2008)

Will present a program on Going Solar!

Mr. Paton wants to share with his audience his experience of going solar over the past year (20 photovoltaic panels on the roof) and to clear up confusion so that others can save energy and protect the environment, too.

The EP/TP Audubon Society Conservation Award and the Meritorious Service Award will be presented to their 2010 recipients.





AT FEATHER LAKE

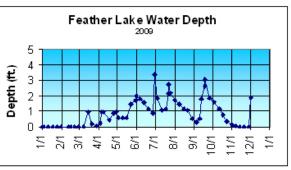
By late November, Feather Lake was completely dry, and we were all set to close it until water returned. That changed with the recent snow storm. At this writing, the lake is almost 2 feet deep, and we anticipate staying open to the public well into the winter. Volunteers, of course, are needed to staff the sanctuary during visitor hours. Can you help? Please contact John Sproul (747-8663, jsproul@utep.edu) if you can put in a Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon at our sanctuary in December or January.

With the lake again full, it looks like workday activities will stay focused on upland areas for a while longer. There is plenty to do. We have two workdays coming up, on **Sat., December 5**, and **Sat., January 30**, both starting at **2 p.m.** Plan to join us!

One of the City of El Paso stormwater projects soon to get under way is the Feather Lake II Basin Project. Funded through a loan to El Paso Water Utilities from the Texas Water Development Board as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the "stimulus bill"), project construction must start no later than February 17, 2010 or the funding is lost.

Feather Lake II is the partially excavated basin immediately west of Feather Lake. The project will involve completing the excavation and constructing a spillway to the basin from the Mesa Drain Interceptor channel, the channel immediately downstream of Feather Lake. Once the work is complete, the intent is to manage Feather Lake II as an open-space natural area similar to the existing Feather Lake.

Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux in El Paso, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave. Hours are 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays and 2 p.m. to dusk on Sundays. Admission is free.



Audubon at RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK

Waterbirds and rap-

tors are currently abundant at the Park, including a male Eurasian Wigeon back for its 5th straight winter. For the latest on what is being seen, check the recent-bird-sightings page on the Park's website,

<u>www.riobosque.org</u>. Upcoming free walking tours:

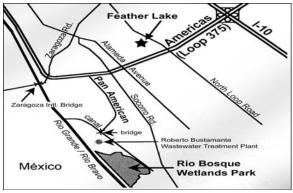
8 a.m. Sat., December 5 (Bird tour)

3 p.m. Sun., December 13 (Introductory tour)

3 p.m. Sat., January 9 (Bird tour)

3 p.m. Sun., January 24 (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.





Hi Everyone!

I hope that you enjoy this newsletter's nature observations feature, **Sightings** is to a wonderful baliday as a feature. Cheers to a wonderful holiday season for each of us to share with our friends and family, and may the coming weeks be full of fun, joy and happiness for us all.

If you're able to fit it in between rounds of holiday related activities, try to get outside and enjoy the bounty of nature. We are in the midst of a bit of what is known as an irruption year, with some atypical birds being sighted, though not yet in great numbers (IF that is going to happen)!

Take care & see you in the New Year! Happy Holidays & Merry Christmas from John & Kathy K.

If you want to provide me with your sightings, email me your observations @ kisedajj@elpasotexas.gov. Email reports are greatly preferred because I don't have to type up my own written record & there will be less chance of me making a mistake or an omission.

Take care & I'm looking forward to hearing from you, so get out & enjoy what nature has to offer us!

<u>Observers</u>		HB	Helen Bigelow	JZ	Jim Zabiskie	Sept 27 \rightarrow Nov 30,
Al	Ada Ibarra	JF	Jane Fowler	KK	Kathy Kiseda	2009
BJ	Bob Johnson	JG	John Groves	TG	Tom Gill	MOB
ΒZ	Barry Zimmer	JK	John Kiseda	US	Ursula Sherrill	Multiple observers
DΔ	Dan Allan	.IP	Jim Paton	VM	Vikki Milne	Multiple observers

Quail → Doves

Scaled quail 9/27 - JK/KJAT

White-tailed kite 10/7 1st fledgling JS/RIO B, [4] 10/31- JS/RIO B, [2] 11/15 - JS/RIO B

N. harrier 9/28 - BZ/FBP

Sharpshin hawk [2] 9/28 - BZ/FBP

Cooper's hawk [2] 11/11 - JS/RIO B

Harris's hawk [13] 10/31 - JS/RIO B, [5] 11/15 -

JS/RIO B

Golden eagle [2] 10/18 BJ/HKA, 11/7 – VM/RIO B

Osprey 9/27 - JP/MCN, 11/28 - VM/PERC Peregrine falcon 11/10 - DA/KEY, [2] 11/13 -

JS/RIO B

Prairie falcon 10/2 - BZ/HWY 20

Merlin 11/15 - JS/RIO B, 11/19 - BZ/TON

Burrowing owl 11/4 - JS/RIO B

W. screech owl 11/2 - JS/RIO B

Long-eared owl 11/3 - JS/RIO B

Great horned owl 11/17 & 18 - BZ/TON

Barn owl 9/28 - BZ/FBP, [2] 10/14 - JS/RIO B

Belted kingfisher [2] 10/16 - JK/EX&DN

Ruddy ground dove 10/12 - JZ/House

$\textbf{Loons} \rightarrow \textbf{Ducks}$

Clark's grebe 9/29 - BZ/FTH

Double-crested cormorant [2] 10/17 - JK/EX&DN

Neotropic cormorant [90] 10/8 - JK/EX&DN

Blue-winged teal [60] 10/12 - JS/RIO B

Eurasian wigeon 10/31 & 11/15 - JS/RIO B

American wigeon [45] 10/3 - JK/EX&DN

N. pintail 10/31 - JK/EX&DN

Snow goose [100+] 11/23 - JP/MCN

Ross's goose [24] 11/5 - BZ/MCN

Bufflehead duck [3] 11/4 - JS/RIO B, [3] 11/6 - JK/ASC

Ring-necked duck [6] 10/3 - FOS JK/EX&DN

Lesser scaup [hundreds] 11/05 - BZ/The SE Reser-

voirs, 11/13- JK/ASC

Redhead [2] 9/29 - BZ/MCN

Canvasback [12]11/5 - BZ/MCN, [18] 11/18 - BZ/MCN

Hooded merganser [3] 11/5 - BZ/FTH

Common merganser 11/5 - BZ/FTH

Red-breasted merganser [7] 11/23 - JP/MCN

Albatross → **Shorebirds**

American white pelican...MOB TOR throughout reporting pd, [20] 11/1 - JP/FTH, [15] 11/23 - JP/FTH
Brown pelican 11/4 – BZ/ASC, 11/13 - JK/ASC
Lesser black-backed gull 11/10 - JP/SUN RT, 11/25 - DA/KEY

Mew gull 11/1 - JP/MCN

California gull 10/14 - BZ/TOR

Sabine's gull...10/7 - BZ/MCN

Franklin's gull [18] 10/7 - BZ/MCN

Ring-billed gull 9/29 [3] - BZ/FTH, [200] 11/10 - JP/SUN

RT, [100] 11/25 - DA/KEY

Forster's tern 9/27 - JP/FTH, 11/5 BZ/MCN

Reddish egret 10/1 - BZ/FBP

Snowy egret [17] 10/17 - JK/EX&DN

Great egret [8] 10/31 - JK/EX&DN

Roseate spoonbill [imm] 9/27 - JP/FTH, 10/14 - BZ/FTH

Black-crowned night heron 10/8 - JK/EX&DN

White-faced ibis [40] 9/27 - JP/FTH, [169] 9/29

BZ/HWY20 ~ Acala, 11/1- JS/FLK

Sandhill Crane [25] 10/27- JS/RIO B, [400] 11/28 - VM/PERC

Sora [2] 9/28 - BZ/FBP, 10/16 - JK/EX&DN

Greater yellowlegs [24] 9/29 BZ/HWY20 ~ Acala, [20] 11/23 - JP/FTH

Lesser yellowlegs [6] 9/29 BZ/HWY20 ~ Acala

Dunlin [2] 9/29 BZ/HWY20 ~ Acala

Long-billed dowitcher [2] 9/27 - JP/FTH, [60], DA/KEY

Wilson's snipe 9/27 - JP/FBP, 11/6 - JS/FLK

Wilson's phalarope 10/2 - BZ/MCN

Red-necked phalarope 9/27 - JP/FTH

Least sandpiper [17] 9/28 - BZ/FBP

Solitary sandpiper 9/27 - JP/FBP

Stilt sandpiper 9/28 - BZ/FBP

Pectoral sandpiper 10/6 - BZ/FBP, 10/13 - BZ/FBP

Baird's sandpiper [2] 10/6 - BZ/FBP

Parrots → Flycatchers

Ruby-throated hummer 10/16 - JK/EX&DN Violet-crowned hummer 10/4 - JZ/House Anna's hummer [5] 11/8 - JK/KJH

Black-chinned hummer [20] 9/26 BZ/TON, [5] 10/3 - JK/EX&DN, 11/1 BZ/TON

JN/EXADIN, II/I BZ/I'UN

Broad-tailed hummer [4] - 9/26 BZ/TON, [3] 9/27 - JK/KJAT, 11/30 – JK/KHJ

Rufous hummer [3] - 9/26 BZ/TON, 11/28 JK/KJH Calliope hummer [3] 9/26 BZ/TON

Acorn woodpecker 10/3 - JK/TRAM

Red-shafted flicker [10] 9/27- JK/KJAT, [13] 10/24 - JK/EX&DN

Red-naped sapsucker 9/28 - BZ/FBP

Cordilleran flycatcher 10/6 BZ/TON

Cassin's kingbird [2] 9/26 BZ/TON

Western wood-pewee - 9/28 BZ/FBP

E. Phoebe 10/7- BZ/HWY 20

Black phoebe [5] 11/7 - VM/RIO B, [5] - VM/PERC

Larks → Phainopeplas

Vaux's swift 4/16 - US & JG/FMSP

Violet-green swallow 11/7 - JK/EX&DN

Cave swallow [150+] 11/5 BZ/TOR, [20] 11/15 - JS/RIO B

Tree swallow 9/27 - JP/FTH

White-throated swift [2] 11/14 - JK/ EX&DN

Western scrub jay [8] 9/27 - JK/KJAT, [10+] 9/27 - TG/UTEP.

[20+] 10/18 - JK/CCC, [4] 10/26 - ZOO

Steller's jay [2] 10/12 JP/BOY

American crow [260] 11/7 - JK/EX&DN

Juniper titmouse [4] 9/4 - BZ/TON, [3] 10/3 - BZ/TON, 11/17

BZ/TON, [2] 11/18 - DA/KERN

Red-breasted nuthatch [4] 10/18 - JK/CCC

White-breasted nuthatch 11/5 - KK/KJH

Brown creeper [2] 11/28 - VM/PERC, 11-18 & 25 DA/KERN

Bewick's wren [2] 11/7 - JK/EX&DN

House wren [3] 10/3 - JK/EX&DN

Winter wren 10/7 - BZ/FTH, 10/16 - JK/EX&DN

Marsh wren [3] 11/7 – VM/RIO B

Ruby-crowned kinglet 9/26 - BZ/TON, [8] 10/31 - JK/EX&DN

Golden-crowned kinglet 10/16 - JK/EX&DN, [2] 11-18 & 25 DA/KERN

Blue-grey gnatcatcher 9/27 - JK/KJAT, [2] 10/17 - JK/EX&DN

Townsend's solitaire 11/15 - JK/KJH

Gray catbird 10/6 & 8 JK/KJH

Brown thrasher 10/10 - HB/ANT

Hermit thrush 9/27 - JP/FBP, 11/9 -AI/UPV

Eastern bluebird 11/22 - JZ/House

Western Bluebird [30] 11/28 - VM/PERC

Loggerhead shrike 10/3 - JK/EX&DN\

Horned lark [100] 10/29 DA/SOD

American pipit [2] 9/28 - BZ/FBP, [15] 11/28 - VM/PERC

Cedar waxwing [31] 11/15 - JK/KJH, [30] 11/28 - VM/PERC

Phainopepla 11/13 - JK/ASC, 11/16 - JK/ZOO

Vireos → Tanagers

Hutton's vireo 11/3 BZ/TON, 11/8 JP/BOY

Bell's vireo - 9/29 BZ/FTH

Plumbeous vireo - 9/26 BZ/TON

Cassin's vireo 9/27 - JP/FBP, 11/13 & 19 JZ/House

Warbling vireo 10/18 - JP/BOY

Northern parula 10/3 - JK/EX&DN

Common yellowthroat 9/28 - BZ/FBP, 10/16 BZ/TON

Virginia's warbler 10/3 - JK/EX&DN

MacGillivray's warbler 10/3 - JK/EX&DN

Wilson's warbler 10/16 - JK/EX&DN

Yellow-rumped warbler [50] 10/17 - JK/EX&DN

Orange-crowned warbler 11/25 - JF/KIL

Townsend's warbler 10/31 - JK/EX&DN

Black-throated gray warbler 10/18 - AI/UPV, 10/31 -

JK/EX&DN, 11/11 JP/BOY

Western tanager 9/28 - BZ/FBP, 10/8 JK/KJH

Summer tanager 10/3 – BZ/TON

Scott's oriole 10/3 - BZ/TON

Hooded oriole 10/13 - BZ/TON, 11/17 [2] - B.

Zimmer/TON

Baltimore oriole 9/27 HB - ANT

W. meadowlark [4] 11/15 - JS/RIO B

SIGHTINGS continued

Sparrows → **Lark Buntings**

McCown's longspur [10] 10/24 - DA/SOD Chestnut-collared longspur [2] BZ/FBP, [2] 11/19 -DA/SOD

Green-tailed towhee 10/3 - JK/EX&DN, 11-19 DA/CCC

Spotted towhee [4] 10/24 - JK/EX&DN Canyon towhee 9/27 - JK/KJAT

Dark-eyed junco [80+] 10/18 - JK/CCC, [200] 11/28 -

VM/PERC

Yellow-headed blackbird 9/28 - BZ/FBP

Brewer's blackbird 9/28 - BZ/FBP

Black-throated sparrow [4] 9/27 - JK/KJAT

Brewer's sparrow [75] 9/28 - BZ/FBP

Lark sparrow 9/28 - BZ/FBP

Vesper sparrow 9/28 - BZ/FBP

Savannah sparrow 9/28 - BZ/FBP

Lincoln's sparrow [2] 10/16 - JK/EX&DN

Song sparrow [2] 10/31 - JK/EX&DN

White-throated sparrow 11/20 - JZ/House

Clay-colored sparrow 9/28 - BZ/FBP

Painted bunting 9/28 – JK/ZOO

Lesser goldfinch 11/19 - JZ/House

Lawrence's goldfinch 10/6 - JZ/House, 11/28 - VM/PERC

Dickcissel 9/29 - BZ/FTH

Mammals

Texas antelope squirrel 11/19 - KK/KJH (bkyd winter resident?)

Reptiles

Mediterranean house gecko – JK/KJH (last of the season?)











Make history in the El Paso Christmas Bird Count January 3, 2010



The El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count will be conducted on Sunday, January 3. **There is a \$5 fee to take part.** Three important things to remember are:

New members are welcome! However, if you would like to participate, please contact Jim Paton BE-FORE the count date so that he can make sure your territory will not overlap or conflict with those of others. His email address is jnpaton@att.net.

You may be asked to go out on your own to count or join a group of good birders whom you know. Since the count data will become part of the national historical record, accuracy is important. If you see an unusual species, be ready to take a photo and submit it with your count record.

For 110 years, the National Audubon Society has been recording bird species and abundance as reported by chapters worldwide in December and January. In 2008, an analysis of the past 40 years of Audubon's Christmas Bird Counts revealed dramatic declines in common species.

Jim says that birding in neighborhoods will likely be more productive in this 2010 count because more mountain birds have been spotted in backyards in recent months than in the past few years. Low rainfall may be a factor in drawing birds to home water features.

Hueco Tanks Christmas Bird Count, Saturday, Jan. 2, 2010

The Hueco Tanks Christmas Bird Count circle is 15 miles in diameter. Included are Hueco Tanks Historical Site and Horizon Lake which forms the south boundary. The western boundary on Montana is at the traffic light at Desert Meadows. The eastern boundary is east of the Border Patrol Checkpoint.

Our goal is to find more than 65 species this year, an achievement that has occurred only a few times in the last 40 years. We will need at least eight counters to meet this goal. *Please call and volunteer!* Total count time is usually 6-8 hours, but if you have other commitments you can leave at any time.

Meeting time: 7:30 a.m.

Place: Flying Saucer Building (junction US 62/180 & FM 2775) **Compiler:** Richard Hermosillo 915-491-0815; epbirder@yahoo.com

Sunday, December 13, 2009

Join us in looking for over-wintering birds at

some excellent aquatic habitats in the El Paso Upper Valley area, such as Keystone Heritage Park, Sunland Park Racetrack, and the wetland behind the Polly Harris Senior Center.



Greater Yellow Legs (H. Eskin 2008)

Sunday, December 13, 2009

Meeting place: Keystone Heritage Park, 4200 Doniphan Dr., near Frontera intersection For Information: Ursula Sherrill (526-7725);

usherrill@miners.utep.edu

Sandia Mountains and Bosque Del Apache, Sat. & Sun., January 23 & 24, 2010



Gray-crowned Rosy Finch (Wikimedia: A.Wilson 2007)

Start your 2010 bird list at our weekend trip to see Rosy Finches in the Sandia Mountains near Albuquerque. We stop at Bosque Del Apache for most of Sat. before heading north. Among other birds we will seek are Tundra Swans, Red Crossbills, and Black-capped Chickadees.

Date: Sat. and Sun., Jan. 23 & 24, 2010
Reservations & Information: Ursula Sherrill

526-7725; usherrill@miners.utep.edu

Hawk Alley, Sunday, Feb 7, 2010

We travel to Hawk Alley to look for Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrels, and more. It's also possible we may see Cooper's

Hawks, Prairie Falcons, and/or Golden Eagles.



Date: Sunday, Feb 7,

2010

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Meet at: Lowe's parking lot, 4531 Transmountain Road, behind Taco Bell.

Reservations and Information: Ursula
Sherrill 526-7725; usherrill@miners.utep.edu

General meetings are held at the Rio Grande Campus of El Paso Community College, 100 West Rio Grande, corner of West Rio Grande and Oregon, Building 4010, in Room 119.

There is parking behind the building on Oregon Street and also on Rio Grande Avenue.

Directions: From I-10-heading west, take the Mesa DOWNTOWN route

- 1. Head west toward N Kansas St 0.1 km
- 2. Slight left at E Yandell Dr 0.4 km
- 3. Turn right at N El Paso St 0.3 km
- 4. Take the 1st right onto W Rio Grande Ave 35 m

Directions: From I-10 heading east, take DOWN-TOWN EXIT

- 1. Continue straight until Oregon Street
- 2. Turn left on Oregon
- 3. Continue about 4 blocks
- 4. Turn left into parking lot behind building, or go to W. Rio Grande
- 5. Turn left on W. Rio Grande; enter 100 W. RioGrande

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 my local chapter. Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

[] My check for \$20.00 is enclosed

Name			
Address			
City	State	Zip	
J			

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

> _<u>W10</u> Local Chapter Code **7XCHA**

Dates to Remember Call Ursula Sherrill for details 526-7725

December

5 & 13: Rio Bosque Sat 5: Feather Lake Mon 7: Board Meeting Sun 13: Keystone HP

Mon 14: Holiday Party

January

2 & 3: Xmas Bird Counts 9 & 24: Rio Bosque Mon 11: Board Meeting

Mon 18: **Gen. Meeting** 23&24: **Sandia Mts**.

Sat 30: **Feather Lake** 30 & 31: **Keystone**

<u>February</u>

Sun 7: Hawk Alley Mon 8: Board Meeting Sat 20: Awards Dinner 27 & 28: Keystone

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Local **Chapter Only Membership** Your \$15.00 will help support chapter activities & you'll receive

The Roadrumer 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