

The Roadrunner

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

The Annual Awards Dinner

Saturday, February 24, 2007 from 6:00-10:00 PM;

Dinner at 7:00 PM

Jaxon's Restaurant, 1135 Airway Blvd

ENTREE: Choose between Chicken Breast Magoffin and 1/2 Rack of Ribs. Side dishes included are a salad, baked potato, and tea or coffee.

\$18.00 per person (includes one entrée, tax, and gratuity). Appetizers, beer or wine, and dessert are available for additional charge.

AWARDS AND RECIPIENTS:

The Conservation Award: Wynn Anderson, designer and curator of the Chihuahuan Desert Gardens at UTEP since 1999, will receive the El Paso / Trans Pecos Audubon Society conservation award at its annual dinner Saturday, February 24 at Jaxon's Restaurant, 1135 Airway Blvd. Anderson is well-known for his dedication to preserving indigenous Chihuahuan Desert plants and promoting their inclusion in regional gardens. As curator, he teaches, lectures, and consults about native plants. UTEP faculty and students utilize the Chihuahuan Desert Gardens as sites for teaching and research. Anderson also serves as a horticultural resource for local citizens and conservation organizations such as the El Paso Native Plant Society.

The Meritorious Service Award: Scott Cutler, curator of the UTEP Centennial Museum, will receive the EPTP Audubon Society meritorious service award given annually to a member who has contributed significantly to the organization over time. For many years, Cutler has held the position of chapter hospitality chair, and has been recently elected president for 2007-2009.

THE EVENING'S PROGRAM: *African Journey*

Betty Fisbeck, El Paso Educator, 2005 Meritorious Service Award winner

Fisbeck will present photos from her African travels and commentary on the people, birds and wildlife of the Serengeti, Ngorengoro volcanic crater, Tarangire National Park, Olduvai Gorge, and a Maasai village and school.

RSVP by February 16: Scott Cutler 581-6071 for reservations, or email scutler@utep.edu.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Ursula Sherrill 526-7725

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<http://www.gbarnett.com/eptpas/eptpashome.html>

El Paso Audubon Online supplements the Roadrunner and includes information about upcoming field trips, a calendar of upcoming events, recent bird sightings and an updated list of birding links to the Internet. Make bird sighting reports at: ElPasoBirdAlert@gbarnett.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: Ursula Sherrill, 526-7725
 Conservation: vacant
 Field Trips: Bob Johnson, 751-0125
 Hospitality: Scott Cutler, 581-6071

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

Officers

President:
 Vice President: Bob Johnson, 751-0125
 Secretary: Lucretia Chew, 587-9589
 Treasurer: Eddie Chew, 587-9589

Committees

Publicity: Kathy Kiseda, 533-4615
 Education: Kathleen Whelen, 751-2408
 Publications: Jane Fowler, 598-2448
 Ways & Means: Flora Pittard, 852-2353
 Sanctuary: John Sproul, 545-5157

General Meeting

Monday, March 19 at 7:00

at UTEP Centennial Museum, corner of Wiggins & University

"DIARY OF A GARDEN'S TRANSFORMATION"

Kathy Kiseda will provide an entertaining and informative, photo-filled presentation documenting the process of her conversion of a traditional turf yard into a native wildlife habitat. Topics will include plant selection, planting tips, irrigation system planning, mulch considerations, the El Paso Water Utility's Turf Rebate Program and the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department's Wildscape Program.

Admission is free, and non-members are always welcome. For more information, call 526-7725

Find a Parking Place!

You can park for Audubon meetings behind the Centennial Museum, even if the places in front are filled.

Here's how:

Coming from Sunbowl Drive: After passing the guard house, turn right at first driveway. Parking is permitted in the lined spaces and along the driveway behind the building. Coming from Mesa on University Drive: After passing the Museum at the corner of Wiggins and University, turn left at first driveway and continue as above.

Conservation Organizations

Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue
www.whc.net/cdwr

El Paso Zoo 521-1850
www.elpasozoo.org

Keystone Heritage Park 581-7920
keystonepark.com keystonepark.org

Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park
 (505) 524-3334 www.cdnpp.org

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

Southwest Environmental Center
 (505) 522-5552
www.wildmesquite.com
swec@zianet.com

Franklin Mt. Wilderness Coalition
www.iloveparks.com/fmwc/

**Thank you, Lois Balin,
 Texas Parks & Wildlife's
 El Paso Urban Wildlife Biologist,
 for the
 BIRDS OF THE ECUADOR LOWLAND
 RAINFOREST Presentation.**

AT FEATHER LAKE

After it was dry for 2 months, the storms in late January put water back in Feather Lake. The lake was closed during the dry period, but now we're open again!

We're often asked why Feather Lake is dry so often these days. The year 2003 was pivotal. Prior to that year, the lake generally received water from 2 sources: storm runoff and, during the irrigation season, water remaining in the irrigation laterals after deliveries. The basin was typically flooded most of the year. In some years, it would go dry briefly in winter if there were no significant winter storms.

In 2003, the effects of continuing drought hit home. Allocations of river water for irrigation were cut dramatically. The water that was available for irrigation was used as completely as it could be. Very little found its way to Feather Lake. That pattern has continued. Since 2003, Feather Lake has seen very little irrigation water. The lake has been largely dependent on storm runoff and now is dry more often than wet. Without water in the basin consistently, the local water table has dropped, and water in the lake, when it is present, percolates more rapidly to groundwater.

Last summer's rains put a lot of water in Feather Lake, but it disappeared relatively quickly. Still, we were able to open Feather Lake to the public for 3.5 months between September and December. Sincere thanks go to our volunteers who staffed the sanctuary during this time: Lupe Barrera, Lucretia and Eddie Chew, Jean and John Coyle, Scott Cutler, Jane Fowler, Chriss and Paul Gerbino, Inga and Joe Groff, Carlos Humphreys, Bob Johnson, Carol Moreno, Flora Pittard, Roxanne Schroeder, Ursula Sherrill, John Sproul, and Kathy Whelen.

Last summer's rains not only brought a lot of water to the basin, they also brought a lot of trash that had been dumped in the drains upstream. Over the past few months, we've removed an amazing variety of debris, but there is still much remaining. Join us for our next workday on **Sat., Mar. 24**, starting at **2 p.m.** Be part of the elite crew that will remove the refrigerator now found along the basin's inner berm.

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 Saturday mornings and 2 p.m. to dusk on Sunday afternoons. Admission, free.

Audubon at RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK

Except for a week in early December, Rio Bosque Wetlands Park has received water since late October. The wetland cells are fully flooded, and wintering waterfowl are abundant, highlighted by a male Eurasian Wigeon. Raptor and corvid numbers are also high. Opportunities to view the water birds won't last much longer, though. Last year, water deliveries to the Park ended Feb. 14; in 2005, they ended Feb. 28. Upcoming free walking tours:



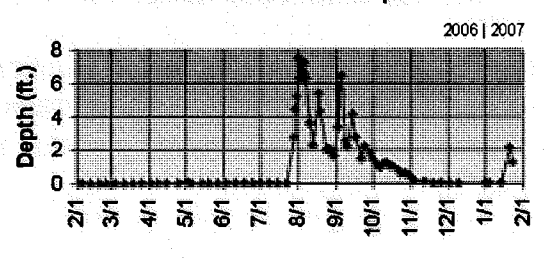
- 9 a.m. Sat., Feb. 10 (Bird tour)
- 3 p.m. Sun., Feb. 18 (Introductory tour)
- 3 p.m. Sun., Mar. 4 (Bird tour)
- 3 p.m. Sat., Mar. 10 (Introductory tour)

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.

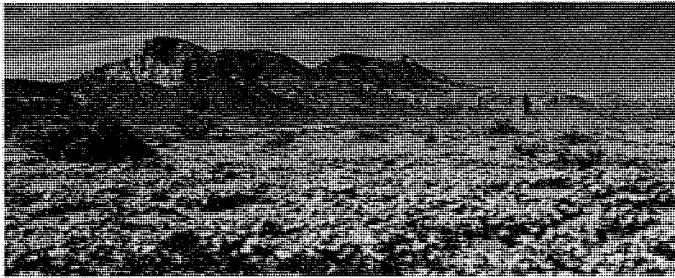
Information: 747-8663.



Feather Lake Water Depth



FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS POPPIES CELEBRATION



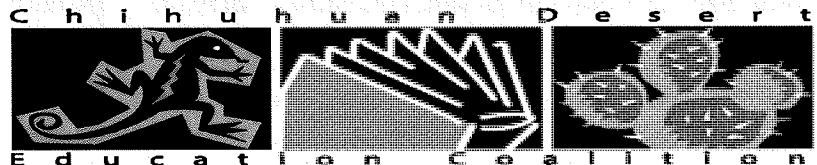
MARCH 17, 2007

Over 5,000 people have signed our petition to Representative Silvestre Reyes asking him to help protect Castner Range, the site of breathtaking poppy blooms on the east side of the Franklin Mountains. The petitions will be presented to the congressman on **Saturday, March 17th, at 2:30 p.m.** on the grounds of the Museum of Archaeology, 4301 Transmountain Road, in the heart of the poppy fields on Castner Range. The presentation will be the highlight of a free, outdoor family event that day, the **Franklin Mountains Poppies Celebration**, featuring dozens of educational exhibits and wildlife demonstrations.

The petition states support for a resolution unanimously passed by El Paso City Council on March 14, 2006, in favor of permanent preservation for the range. Signers ask Congressman Reyes "to work actively with Congress and the Department of the Army to achieve the preservation of all of Castner Range in its natural state for the benefit and enjoyment of all Americans forever." Signatures were collected over the past nine months by members and friends of the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition.

Coalition acting president Scott Cutler stated, "The enthusiasm of the public for protecting Castner Range from development is inspirational. The thousands who signed the petition are from all walks of life and political persuasions. To El Pasoans, Castner Range is a special place."

The Franklin Mountains Poppies Celebration will kick off at 10 a.m. on March 17 with a full program of nature talks, wildlife demonstrations, educational exhibits and photography workshops. Everyone is invited to come out and enjoy the beauty of the mountains and the poppies during this free event which will last until 3 p.m.



The Chihuahuan Desert Education Coalition, (CDEC), is organizing the Celebration. CDEC President Rick LoBello noted, "This will be a festive day and a wonderful opportunity for us to help educate our community about both the wonders and threats to our Chihuahuan Desert."

We will, of course, continue to collect petition signatures until shortly before the event. Blank petitions can be downloaded from the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition Website, www.iloveparks.com/fmwc/ Click on the Conservation issues page. Let's keep the petitions coming.

BIRD WATCHING

BACKYARD BIRDS

A stop in members backyard to learn something about the birds, feeders and feeding. *Phainopepla*, *Ruby-crowned Kinglet*, *White-crowned Sparrow*, *Dark-eyed Junco*, and *House Finch* are some of the birds that will probably be seen.

DATE: Saturday, February 3.

TIME: 8:00 AM

MEET: 4331 Emory

Trip Coordinator: Mary Lou Alcorn
(915) 584-8768

WATER and WADING BIRDS

Take in the sights of Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, then over to Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. *Herons*, *Egrets*, *White-faced Ibis*, *Gadwalls*, *Green-winged Teal*, and *Northern Shoveler*.

DATE: Saturday, February 17.

TIME: 7:35 AM

MEET: Feather Lake Wildlife
Sanctuary 9500 North Loop Drive.

Trip Coordinator: 751-0125

DOWN THE VALLEY

McNary, Fort Hancock, and Tornillo Reservoirs are always good for *Gulls*, *Ducks*, *Geese*, *Egrets* and *Cormorants*. Quite a few species of passerines could also be present along with some birds of prey to include *Harris' Hawk*. A trip extension to the Espranza exit may be included. A lunch break will probably occur at the Tornillo Rest Area.

DATE: Sunday, March 11.

TIME: 7:25 AM

MEET: Feather Lake Wildlife
Sanctuary 9500 North Loop Drive.

Trip Coordinator: Ursula Sherrill 524-7725

Another Learning Experience

The Master Naturalist class of 2007 will be having a Field Ornithology class, and Audubon Members are welcome to attend. It will be Saturday March 24, meeting approximately 8AM. For details on meeting location check with Bob or the Trip Coordinator, Lois Balin 774-9603

DESERT BIRDS / BIRDS of PREY

A chance to see some of the birds that inhabit the desert scrub, *Cactus Wren*, *Pyrrhuloxia*, *Scaled Quail*, and *Curve-billed Thrasher*. Then out along *Hawk Alley* for *Northern Harrier*, *Red-tailed Hawk*, *Swainson's Hawk*, *American Kestrel* and *Turkey Vulture*. Often Golden Eagles are present.

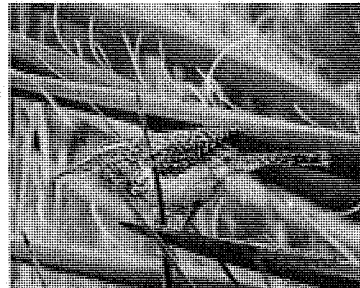
DATE: Saturday, April 14.

TIME: 7:20 AM

MEET: Wilderness Park Museum

4301 Trans-Mountain Rd.

Trip Coordinator: To Be Announced



Cactus Wren

HUECO TANKS

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

Bird Identification Tours

Sunday February 18 8:08 AM

Sunday March 18 8:08 AM

Sunday April 15 8:08 AM

Check in at the Headquarters for info call 857-1135. Leader Bob "Wildbirder" 751-0125.

BIRDWATCHERS WELCOME

The gate at Keystone will be open the last weekend of each month for birders to come in and bird on their own. No tour guides.

| | |
|---------|-------------------|
| Feb. 24 | 7:15AM - 9:30 AM |
| Feb. 25 | 3:30 PM - 6:00 PM |
| Mar. 24 | 7:15 AM - 9:30 AM |
| Mar. 25 | 4:30 PM - 7:00 PM |
| Apr. 28 | 7:15 AM - 9:30 AM |
| Apr. 29 | 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM |

WEEKENDERS

Tentative schedules for weekend trips this summer. If you feel a different date or location would fit better let us know.

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| May 25 - 28 | Cave Creek, Portal AZ |
| Jun. 23 - 24 | Catwalk, Glenwood NM |
| Jul. 14/15 or 21/22 | Water Canyon, NM |
| Aug. 11/12 or 18/19 | Fort Davis, TX |
| Sep. 29 - 30 | Hawk Watch, Monzano, NM |

PRAIRIE CHICKEN FESTIVAL

Apr. 13, 14, 15 2007 - Milnesand, NM
We will not be having an organized Field Trip this year. However anyone wishing to go or find out more check

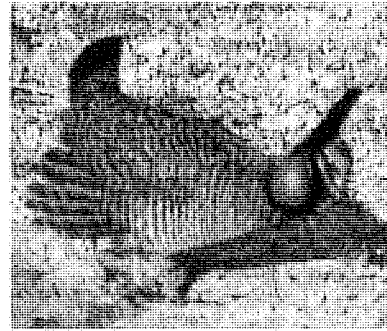
www.wildlife.state.nm.us

go to Upcoming Events & Programs.

Festival Co-Coordinator: Tish McDaniel,

#1 Pueblo Pt. Clovis, NM 88101

(505) 762-6997; e-mail <McDaniel@tnc.org



Lesser Prairie Chicken

BOSQUE DEL APACHE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

The trip to the BDA on Jan 13 and 14 was very successful. 25 birders came and enjoyed the bus tour on Sat. afternoon, it was led by a volunteer staff member and all learned quite a bit about the refuge. Great sightings for all were the Bald Eagles, Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese, Mountain Blubirds White-throated Sparrow, Wilson's Snipe, Ring-necked Pheasant and Feeruginous Hawk. At Percha State Park on the way back on Sunday we saw Ceder Waxwings, White-breasted Nuthatch, Vermillion Flycatcher and a GREAT HORNED OWL. Then over to Caballo SP for Common Mergansers and a rare (for the time of year) Bonapart's Gull.

CHRISTMAS BD CT HUECO TANKS

Twelve (12) counters showed up on Sat. Dec 30 at 6:30 in the morning. Four (4) people visiting in El Paso, and three (3) from here but new to the organization.

Total species 56; last 10 year average 56.7, total birds 1674; last 10 year average 2023. Some species that were higher than average; American Kestrel, White-winged Dove, Long-eared Owl (14), Green-tailed Towhee. Species that were lower than usual Scaled Quail, Ladderback Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Verdin, Crissal Thrasher.

OBSERVATIONS

November 16, 2006 to January 15, 2007

Listing of birds is determined using the checklist "Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas" 8th Edition May 2003. The area is defined as the western one-half of Hudspeth County (west of longitude 105 30, and the southern one-third of Dona Ana County (south of latitude 32 10) the line will be approximately thru Mesquite.

Observers: Dan Allen; Lois Balin; Tom Gill; John Groves; Bob Johnson; John Kiseda; Jim Paton; Susie Schnieder; John Sproul; Barry Zimmer.



Eurasian Wigeon at Feather Lake

WIGEON thru PELICAN

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Eurasian Wigeon | 11/25 | JK | Key |
| Canvasback | 12/5 | JS | RBq |
| Common Goldeneye | 11/20 | JP | McN |
| | 1/1 | BJ | XRd |
| Hooded Merganser | 11/18 | JK | Key |
| | 12/2 | JS | RBq |
| Red-breasted Merganser | 12/8 | BZ | McN |
| American White Pelican(30) | 11/20 | JP | FtH |

VULTURES thru WADERS

| | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Turkey Vulture | Dec/Jan | JS | Rbq |
| (The Time of Year) | | | |
| Golden Eagle | Various | BJ | SRS |
| Merlin | 11/19 | JS | RBq |
| Sora | 11/18 | JK | Key |
| Sandhill Crane | 11/20 | JS | RBq |
| Lesser Yellowlegs | 11/20 | JP | FtH |

GULLS

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Bonaparte's Gull | 11/20 | JP | McN |
| Mew Gull | 12/8 | BZ | Sun |
| California Gull | 12/7 | JP | Sun |
| Iceland Gull | 12/5 | JP | Sun |
| <i>1st New Mex. Record</i> | | | |
| | 12/25 | JP | Key |
| <i>2d Texas Record</i> | | | |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | 11/20 | JP | McN |

12/26 BZ Key

Locations: Ary-Arroyo Park; CCC-Coronado Country Club Area; EPC-El Paso country club Area; FtH-Fort Hancock; HTk-Hueco Tanks SHP; Key-Keystone Heritage Park; KnJ-Kenyon Joyce; LaU-LaUnion; McN-McNary Resv; MSH-Mesa Hills; Rbq-Rio Bosque Wetland Park; SRS-Stan Roberts Sr. (Hawk Alley); Sun-Sunland Park Racetrack; Ton-Tonto; Xrd-Crossroads (Mesa/Doniphn)

OWL to JAY

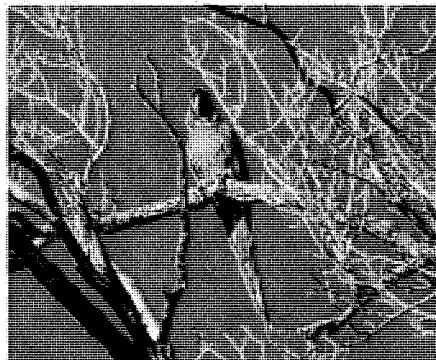
| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Long-eared Owl | 12/17 | LB | HTk |
| | 1/15 | JG | HTk |
| Anna's Hummingbird | 11/17 | BZ-y | Ton |
| Broad-tailed Hummingbird | " " | " " | " " |
| Rufous Hummingbird | " " | " " | " " |
| Acorn Woodpecker | 12/21 | DA | CCC |
| Red-naped Sapsucker | 11/17 | BZ | Ton |
| | 12/1 | DA | EPC |
| Vermilion Flycatcher | 11/17 | JS | RBq |
| Green Jay | 12/2 | JK-y | KnJ |

Not a countable bird in the checklist area

GNATCATCHERS thru GOLDFINCH

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| Black-tailed Gnatcatcher | 12/1 | JK | Key |
| Western Bluebird | 11/29 | DA | LaU |
| | 12/8 | BZ | Ton |
| Mountain Bluebird | 12/26 | DA | LaU |
| Townsend's Solitaire | 11/26 | TG | MSH |
| White-throated Sparrow | 11/19 | JK-y | KnJ |
| Lesser Goldfinch | 12/3 | SS | Ary |
| Military McCaw | 12/31 | JG | Key |

Not a countable bird in this area



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 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 _____

*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

W10
 Local Chapter Code
7XCHA

Dates to Remember Call Bob Johnson for details 751-0125

February

Backyard Bird Count
 10, 18: Rio Bosque
 Mon 12: Board Meeting
 Sat 17: Wading Birds
 Sun 18: Hueco Tanks
 Sat 24: Awards Dinner
 24 & 25: Keystone

March

4, 10: Rio Bosque
 Sun 11: Down the Valley
 Mon 12: Board Meeting
 Sat 17: Franklin Mountains
 Poppy Celebration
 Sun 18: Hueco Tanks
 Mon 19: General Meeting
 Sat 24: Master Naturalist
 Sat 24: Feather Lake Work
 24 & 25: Keystone

April

Mon 9: Board Meeting
 13,14,15: Prairie
 Chicken
 Sat 14: Desert Birds
 Sun 15: Hueco Tanks
 Mon 16: Gen. Meet
 28 & 29: Keystone

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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