



The Roadrunner

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

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El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society General Meetings

Monday, April 20 at 7:00 p.m.

The El Paso / Trans-Pecos Audubon Society general meeting will be held on Monday, April 20, at 7:00 p.m. at the Rio Grande Campus of EPCC, 100 W. Rio Grande, Building 4010, in Room 119.

On Monday, April 20, at 7:00 p.m., Kevin Bixby, executive director of the Southwest Environmental Center in Las Cruces, will address the El Paso / Trans-Pecos Audubon Society's general meeting on "The Past, Present and Future of the Rio Grande and the Paso del Norte Region." The meeting will be held at the Rio Grande Campus of EPCC, 100 W. Rio Grande, Building 4010, in room 119.

Mr. Bixby traces the changes since humans harnessed a vigorous "Rio Bravo" to support their settlements in the region. The future of a river in which native river-spawning sturgeons once thrived may depend on how people of the Paso del Norte embrace opportunities for its re-birth. The public is invited.

Monday, May 18, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

The El Paso / Trans-Pecos Audubon Society General meeting will be held at the Rio Grande Campus of EPCC, 100 W. Rio Grande, Building 4010, in Room 119.

On Monday, May 18, at 7:00 p.m., Christian Andresen, remote sensing specialist with the UTEP Aquatic Ecology Labs, presents "Wetlands of the Rio Grande: Habitats in Peril," at El Paso Trans-Pecos Audubon's general meeting on the EPCC Rio Grande Campus, 100 W. Rio Grande, Building 4010, in room 119.

Mr. Andresen will use GIS maps, satellite images and photos in his discussion of how critical riverside and floodplain habitats are changed by human factors. The public is invited to attend.

Birdathon 2009



In early May, this event captures the excitement of migration.

Join friends and see how many bird species your group can see or hear, while supporting the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society with donations from you and your sponsors.



The proceeds help to preserve or restore critically important local wildlife sanctuaries and organizations.



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: Ursula Sherrill, 526-7725
Hospitality: Janet Perkins, 581-2849

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

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

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.

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

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iGive.com

HOW IT WORKS

Join to support El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society. It's FREE, private, & easy.

<http://www.iGive.com/html/refer.cfm?memberid=480225&causeid=38480>

Shop the online mall at iGive.com. You'll see familiar stores like Lands' End, Office Depot, JCPenney, Neiman Marcus, Expedia, Barnes & Noble, and eBay to mention just a few!

Conservation Organizations

Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue
www.whc.net/cdwr

El Paso Zoo 521-1850
www.elpasozoo.org

Keystone Heritage Park 581-7920
www.keystoneheritagepark.org

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

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

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

Franklin Mt. Wilderness Coalition
www.franklinmountains.org/

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 - 4:30 PM

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

Lets “Fly” into Action! Audubon’s Birdathon! 2009

Birdathon counters are already “in training” in preparation for Birdathon 2009!

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 & education programs.

Birdathon! 2009 will occur on May 2nd–3rd.

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” by becoming a Birdathoner yourself, contact Jane Fowler at 598-2448 or Betty Fisbeck at 581-0174).

Birdathon! 2009 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.

FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS STATE PARK ENDOWMENT FUND

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 2-3**, 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 & 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 out in the field, for the chance to collect meaningful data for a nationwide census project, 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, postage and prizes). All Birdathon sponsors are entered in our ever-popular drawings for a number of great prizes such as gift cards, binoculars, books and the like. Counters will also be eligible for some cool prizes.

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 & 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 Betty (581-0174) a call. All or most of these hardworking people will be back at it this year and ready to do their part for the Birdathon 2009! **HOW ABOUT YOU? WILL YOU DO YOUR PART?**

This year's Birdathon counters

Joe Cancellare	Cliff Eidson	Bob Johnson	Susie Schneider
Betty Fisbeck	Jane Fowler	John Kiseda	Ursula Sherrill
Scott Cutler	John Groves	Marty Morrow	John Sproul
Ben, & Laura Ditlevson	Carlos Humphreys		Kathy Whelen

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

Birdathon 2009 POT LUCK Sunday, May 3rd at 6:00pm

As usual, the prize drawings will take place at our annual POST-BIRDATHON pot luck picnic. This year we will gather on Sunday, May 3rd, the last day of the Birdathon. While enjoying good food, we will be totaling all the counter's sightings to tally the total species count, the highest number by an individual counter, and the highest by a Junior counter (12 and under). The counter that raises the most money, the one with the most sponsors and the most unusual sighting will be determined.

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, & all chapter members.** The Potluck/Picnic is May 3rd at 6:00pm at the Whelen/Humphreys home located at 6120 Quail, 1/4 mile east of Parkland High School.

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 2009. 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

YES! I'll sponsor _____
for \$ _____ per species for each species she/he finds
_____ on the Birdathon.

YES! I'll sponsor _____ for
a flat \$ amount of _____.
I will add a bonus of \$ _____ if my
Birdathon counter sees a _____.

BIRDATHON! 2009

From _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Please return this form by May 1 to:

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

Birdathon! 2009
c/o Betty Fisbeck
613 W. Sunset
El Paso, TX 79922

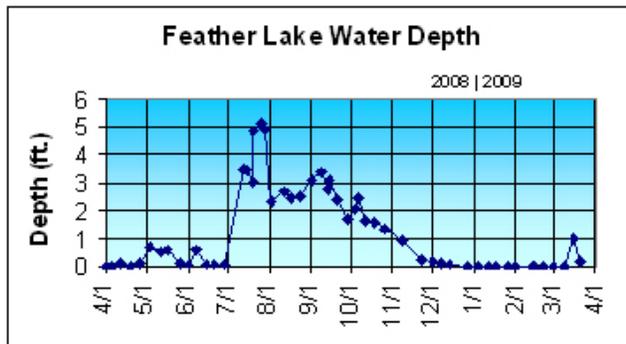
Thank you for your Generous Birdathon pledge! Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law

AT FEATHER LAKE

In mid-March, after 3 dry months, Feather Lake received its first good shot of water for the year, and we quickly re-opened our sanctuary to the public. We hope to keep it open through the end of May. As always, we need volunteers to staff Feather Lake 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 the lake in April or May.

We'll also be open on **Sat., June 6**, for our bi-monthly workday. It starts at 8 a.m. Join us for this exclusive opportunity to see what is nesting at our sanctuary, enjoy the greenery, and get some exercise to boot.

Audubon's Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux in El Paso, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave.



The new website is here!

Board members and volunteers attended training to provide updated information about upcoming field trips, a calendar of upcoming events, recent bird sightings.

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

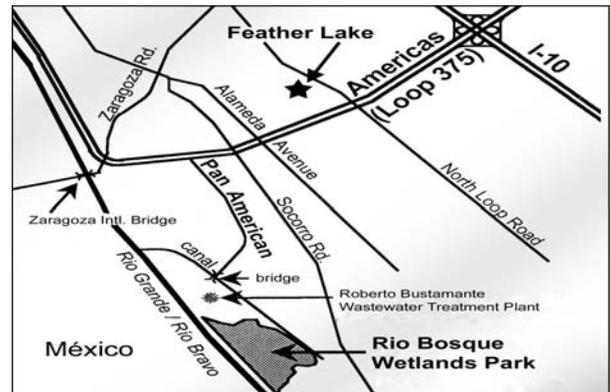
Audubon at RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK



A pair of White-tailed Kites is nesting at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, and another appears to be getting ready to nest. For the latest on bird sightings at the park, visit www.riobosque.org. Upcoming free walking tours:

- 8 a.m. Sat., April 4 (Bird tour)
- 4 p.m. Sun., April 26 (Wildflower tour)
- 4 p.m. Sun., May 3 (Wildflower tour)
- 8 a.m. Sat., May 9 (Bird 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.



HUECO TANKS

Admission

Adults-\$5, Seniors-\$2, Children-free

Bird Identification Tours

Please check in at the Headquarters.
 Reservations and information 857-1135

News from the Trail

March 21, 2009

At Otero Mesa, brilliant sunshine, blue sky, and golden grasslands to the horizon greeted our group of 36 naturalists on the March 21, 2009 field trip. Called "America's wildest grassland," (McNamee 2008) Otero Mesa spans 1.2 million acres in a remote part of southern New Mexico near the Texas border. Horned Larks flew around us and native Pronghorn Antelope stared curiously as we drove the gravel road through pristine grassland. Our first stop was Alamo Mountain. Alamo is the Spanish word for cottonwood, the tree species that still forms a grove at the mountain's base. Ruins of the Butterfield Stagecoach stop are visible nearby. After lunch, half of our group walked about 300 meters to see thousands of petroglyphs etched in the mountainside. The other half went in search of birds near cattle watering tanks. We counted about 34 species for the day, including McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs, and both Eastern and Western Meadowlarks. Unfortunately we did not see any prairie dogs, a species whose activities help maintain healthy grasslands. But twice we spotted a coyote loping through waves of grass near the road. Another field trip to Otero Mesa is projected for the fall, after the late summer monsoon rains. Thanks to Steve West, of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, for his expert leadership on our first visit to this amazing grassland.

April 25, 2009

Feather Fest at Keystone Heritage Park

What: A celebration of spring at beautiful Keystone Heritage Park Wetland. El Paso Audubon will be there with volunteers and some binoculars and spotting scopes to help you observe and learn about wetland birds. We hope to see Pied-billed Grebes, Mexican Mallards, Cinnamon Teals and Bufflehead Ducks, along with Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, Greater Yellowlegs, Least Sandpipers, and Long-billed Dowitchers. Ring-billed Gulls may stop by, and perhaps a rare gull. Local bird checklists and tee shirts are also for sale.

When: 10:00 a.m. till 3:00 p.m.

Where: Keystone Heritage Park,
4200 Doniphan Drive, near Frontera Dr.

Coordinator: Ursula Sherrill, 526-7725, usherrill@miners.utep.edu

Upcoming Field Trips

April 3, 4, & 5, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: Lesser Prairie Chickens Field Trip



April is the peak time for Lesser Prairie-Chickens' famous displays in their mating areas, named "booming grounds," for the drumming sound the males produce. Join us for an unforgettable wildlife experience!

What: Field trip to Caprock Wildlife Habitat area, east of Roswell, NM, to view Lesser Prairie-Chickens.

Meet: Saturday, at 1:00 p.m., we will meet at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center. On Sunday, we meet at 5:15 a.m., to observe the chickens.

More Information: For the weekend itinerary, directions and area motel information, contact **Trip Coordinator Ursula Sherrill, (915) 526-7725.**



Black-necked Stilt (Eskin 2008)

Bird-watching

May 17, 2009

Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park



Blue Grosbeak (U of Fla, 2009)

This river-side state park is where we came upon a Killdeer's nest filled with speckled eggs in spring 2008. Large grassy fields, a restored marsh, and small ponds ringed with willows and reeds ensure that a mix of aquatic and land birds can be seen here. The park in spring and summer is home to Crissal Thrasher, Phainopepla, Yellow-breasted Chat, Bullock's Oriole, Common Moorhen, Black Phoebe, swallows, Verdin, Song Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak, and Red-tailed Hawk.

Date: Sunday, May 17, 2009

Time: 7:30 a.m. BRING LUNCH

Meet at: I-10 & Trans-Mountain Rd Shell station parking lot

Trip Coordinator: Ursula Sherrill 526-7725; usherrill@miners.utep.edu

JUNE 6, 2009 Heron Rookery

We hope to see Snowy Egrets, Cattle Egrets, and Black-crowned Night-Herons sitting in their nests with young. If time permits, we will go to other good birding sites.

Date: Saturday, June 6, 2009

Time: 7:15 a.m.

Meet at: Parking lot in front of Burlington Coat Factory. Take Yarborough Exit 28B on I-10 East. At light, turn left under I-10. BCF is up on the right.

Trip Coordinator: Ursula Sherrill 526-7725; usherrill@miners.utep.edu



Cattle Egret in breeding plumage
(Eskin 2008)

Chiricahua Mountains of Southeastern Arizona:

Join us at the Chiricahua Mountains for a "sky island" birding adventure over Memorial Day weekend, Friday, May 22, to Monday, May 25. Our first stop will be Cave Creek, located in the Coronado National Forest, near Portal, Arizona. This area is one of the best places to see the Elegant Trogon, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Painted Redstart, Gray-breasted Jay, Blue-throated Hummingbirds and Acorn Woodpeckers.

One of our hikes will be at Rustler Park (el. 8500 ft.), habitat known to attract **Mexican and Mountain Chickadees, Yellow-eyed Juncos, and Red-faced Warblers**. Tent under the Sycamores at any of these campgrounds: Idlewild, Stewart, and Sunny Flats campgrounds at Cave Creek. Or choose indoor lodging within a few miles of the campgrounds.

For information, contact Ursula Sherrill 526-7725, usherrill@miners.utep.edu

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 _____

*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 Ursula Sherrill for details 526-7725

April

3,4,5th: **Prairie Chickens**

4 & 26: **Rio Bosque**

Mon 13: **Board Meeting**

Mon 20: **General Meeting**

Sat 25: **Feather Fest**

25 & 26: **Keystone**

May

2 & 3: **Birdathon**

3 & 9: **Rio Bosque**

Mon 11: **Board Meeting**

Sun 17: **Mesilla Valley**

Mon :18 **General Meeting**

22-25: **Chiricahua Mts.**

30 & 31: **Keystone**

June

Sat 6: **Feather Lake**

Sat 6: **Heron Rookery**

Mon 13: **Board Meeting**



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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