

# The Roadrunner



Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society  
Volume 31 No. 6 October & November, 2001

## General Meetings

Monday, October 15, 2001  
Memorial Park Garden Center  
3105 Grant Street 7:30pm  
Barry Zimmer

I would like to give the program on what I consider to be the two greatest eco-tourist lodges in the world---Chan Chich Lodge, Belize and The Canopy Tower, Panama. Chan Chich is located near the Guatamalan border amidst 300,000 acres of protected subtropical rainforest. No hunting has been allowed for 40 years, there are over 9 miles of trails, and it is located in the middle of a plaza of old Mayan ruins. The Canopy Tower is a lodge built out of an old military radar installation in the Sobernia National Park, just 45 minutes outside of Panama City along the canal. Birds and mammals abound and you can watch them from the top of the tower at tree top level. Both amazing places!

Monday, November 19, 2001  
Memorial Park Garden Center  
3105 Grant Street 7:30pm  
Michael Robinson

This slide program explains how Mexican wolves fit into the ecology of the Southwest, outlines the history of the government wolf extermination campaign on behalf of the livestock industry and of the emergency captive breeding program to save the species, explains the biological and policy basis of the reintroduction and how the wolves have fared since that began, and addresses prospects for their future recovery.

Michael Robinson works on predator recovery for the Center for Biological Diversity. He lives in Pinos Altos, New Mexico, next to the Gila National Forest at the edge of the Mexican wolf recovery area. He is currently finishing work on a book documenting the political and cultural history of the wolf extermination campaign of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

## 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

[ElPasoBirdAlert@gbarnett.com](mailto:ElPasoBirdAlert@gbarnett.com)

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## HELP PROTECT THE CASTNER RANGE

The following document involves a pending threat to the preservation of El Paso's important Castner Range. Please contact John White at 915-589-3320, and offer your aid in future efforts to protect the relatively unexploited and ecologically significant Castner Range.

September 23, 2001

"On Wednesday evening, 9/19/01", I attended a meeting of the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition. One item under discussion was the proposed location of the new Border Patrol Headquarters. It will involve some 100 acres and there are seven sites under consideration. I understand that three of these sites are in the Castner Range on the east side of Franklin Mountains State Park. Negotiations have begun by the Corps of Engineers in Albuquerque to let a contract for an environmental assessment by an independent corporation. Once the contract is let, public input will be invited.

There will be a 30 day period allowed for this, which means we will have a rather narrow window to make our concerns known. All interested groups will receive notification of this invitation for public input. These groups need names of people who are concerned and are willing to write letters. Then, upon notification, they can swing into action by providing the address and suggestions for content of the letters. A detailed personal letter would have most impact, but a form letter (to be provided) would be better than no letter at all. I understand that the Border Patrol's preferred site is at the corner of Hondo Pass and Gateway South, next to the TXDOT facility. This land was outside of the "firing fan" of the old range and would require the least removal of unexploded ordnance. Another site in the Castner Range may include an area immediately east of the Border Patrol Museum. The Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition objects to any site in the Castner Range, due to the adverse impact on the ecology of the area. The corporation conducting the environmental impact study must give all seven sites equal consideration, regardless of the Border Patrol's preference. A large negative input on the public in regard to any Castner Range site would carry a lot of weight; as much weight as a report of a negative environmental impact.

We need your letter. If you would be willing to make this effort, please let me know. Then, when the "scoping letters" arrive at the interested groups, we can immediately contact you. You will promptly receive the necessary information and a sample letter. We would prefer your email address for most prompt response and to save on postage.) Together we CAN make a difference.

JOHN C WHITE, President  
Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue

### El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Society

#### Board of Directors:

President	Betty Fisbeck	581-0174
V-President	John Kiseda	533-4615
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Treasurer	Hugh Jameson	751-7952

#### Committee Chairs:

Conservation	John Kiseda	533-4615
Education	Elizabeth Chase	591-5119
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Hospitality		
Membership	Jane Fowler	598-2448
Programs	Nancy Wilson	877-4600
Publications	Kathleen Whelen	751-2408
Publicity	Barbara Buck	
Sanctuary	John Sproul	545-5157

#### About the Roadrunner:

Roadrunner is your newsletter. We welcome your contributions.  
Contact Kathy Whelen 751-2408 email: [whelenk@aol.com](mailto:whelenk@aol.com)

### From the President's Aerie

by, Betty Fisbeck

You received, as an insert in the August-September Roadrunner, a copy of the Constitution and By-Laws for our chapter, and the proposed changes. At the September general meeting, Bob Johnson discussed the proposed changes and we will do this again at the October general meeting before voting on the changes in November. The By-Laws have not been amended since 1984 and the Board felt that some changes were needed. Here is a brief summary of the changes:

- a.. A membership class is established for those wanting to belong to the local chapter only. Local members would have all the rights and privileges of membership.
- b.. A quorum would be one-twentieth of the membership instead of one-tenth.
- c.. The Board would consist of the elected officers and nine elected directors. Directors would be elected for a three-year term with three being elected each year. Each elected director would chair a standing committee.
- d.. Directors would serve no more than six consecutive terms. The same person could hold any elective office and President elect.

Please consider these changes and come to the October general meeting with your comments and questions. We need everyone's input on these changes. You may also call any of the Board members if you have questions.

## At Feather Lake

Feather Lake, our wildlife sanctuary at 9500 North Loop, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave. in El Paso's Mission Valley, is again open to the public. Hours are 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays and 2 p.m. to dusk on Sundays. Admission is free.

The big recent change at Feather Lake is our new visitor center. Charles Simpson and his hardworking crew have this project almost complete, and you'll be able to enjoy it when you visit. We greatly appreciate the contributions of Baker Glass, Rio Grande Materials, and West Texas Express to the success of this project. We also greatly appreciate your contributions. Funding for this structure has come mainly from our annual Birdathon. Thank you, Birdathon sponsors, for making our new visitor center possible!

Between Oct 2001 and April 2002, Feather Lake will be open on 60 weekend dates. We need volunteers to staff the sanctuary on those dates. The work is easy but very important for the success of our education efforts at Feather Lake. You open and close the sanctuary, look after the area while it is open, greet visitors, and help them enjoy their visit. Please contact John Sproul (545-5157; ae494@rgfn.epcc.edu) if you can help.

You can also help at Feather Lake in other ways. To contribute to habitat management and sanctuary maintenance, join us for our next workday on Saturday, November 10, beginning at 2 p.m.



## Texas Parks & Wildlife

**Nov. 6 Ballot Includes \$100 Million for Texas Parks & Wildlife in Proposition 8**

Proposition 8 is one of the 19 ballot items that Texas voters will consider on Nov. 6. It would authorize up to \$100 million over the next six years for repairs and improvements at Texas Parks and Wildlife sites, including state parks, wildlife management areas and fish hatcheries.

The Proposition 8 ballot language does not directly mention Texas Parks & Wildlife. It reads, "The constitutional amendment authorizing the issuance of up to \$850 million in bonds payable from the general revenues of the state for construction and repair projects and for the purchase of needed equipment."

Any registered voter can vote at local polling precincts from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on November 6, 2001. The Texas Secretary of State's office has general voter information online at [www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/index.shtml](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/index.shtml)

A listing of all items on the November 6 ballot is online at [www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/constitutionalamendments.shtml](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/constitutionalamendments.shtml)

**Feather Lake Workday  
Saturday, November 10, 2001  
2:00pm**

## YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO LISTING "WARRANTED BUT PRECLUDED"

On July 25, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced results of its status review on whether to propose listing western populations of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The finding: "The Yellow-billed Cuckoo is in such severe decline in 10 western states as to warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act, but the agency's current workload precludes the proposal of the species for protection at this time."

The USFWS concluded Yellow-billed Cuckoos in the western U.S. are not a separate subspecies but do merit listing as a "distinct population segment". The area inhabited by this population segment is the western U.S. roughly west of the crest of the Rocky Mountains. This area includes New Mexico west of the east boundary of the Rio Grande drainage and West Texas west of the Pecos River drainage. Thus, cuckoos in the Rio Grande Valley in southern New Mexico and far West Texas are considered part of the distinct population segment.

What does the "warranted but precluded" status mean? It means that current scientific evidence supports listing western Yellow-billed Cuckoos as endangered or threatened under the ESA but that, with the limited funding of its endangered-species program, the USFWS believes it must work first on other higher-priority listing decisions before it proposes listing the cuckoo. In the interim, the western Yellow-billed Cuckoo population will be treated as a "candidate" for future listing.

For the full text of the USFWS finding on the cuckoo, go to:

<<http://endangered.fws.gov/frpubs/01jul.htm>>

## 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:

- \* 8 a.m. Sat., Oct 13 (Rio Bosque Birds)
- \* 4 p.m. Sun., Oct 14 (Introduction to Rio Bosque)
- \* 9 a.m. Sat., Oct 20 (Workday - Dia del Rio)
- \* 3 p.m. Sun., Nov 4 (Birds)
- \* 9 a.m. Sat., Nov 10 (Introduction)
- \* 9 a.m. Sat., Nov 17 (Workday)

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: (915) 747-8663.

### An Opportunity To Help & Have Fun in The Copper Canyon Area of Mexico

Doug "Diego" Rhodes runs an ecotourism lodge in the Copper Canyon region. Doug has approached the chapter with a great offer! If people are willing to bird the locales in the vicinity of the lodge [via horseback or hiking] & help build on the current bird list for the area, he is willing to have them stay at the lodge at a VERY minimal cost (contact Doug for the exact details, but I think that he was looking at a cost of ~\$15 US/day). This is a great opportunity for people to bird in a beautiful area of the world that has great birds, such as trogons, while also helping on a conservation project.

Doug has also recently asked for help in acquiring rescue litters for use in the remote villages of the area. If anyone can help acquire rescue litters, contact John Kiseda @ 521-1850 [day], or 533-4615 [evening]; I would be willing to store any donated litters, until they can make their way down to Mexico.

The most effective and least expensive way to contact Doug due to the remote and rugged conditions of his mountain region is via the internet at

[.doug@mexicohorse.com](mailto:.doug@mexicohorse.com) - contact John K., if you have questions or have trouble contacting Doug.

# On The Trail

## HAWK WATCH

**October 5 and/or 6 and/or 7 (whenever you want to come)**

An overnight trip to the Monzano Mountains to observe part of the annual migration of **RAPTORS**. This is one of a number of sites in the west that Hawk Watch International uses as a counting and banding site for the study of raptor migration. The raptor count is conducted from about the middle of August until the first part of November. The observation point is located on Capilla Peak in the Cibola National Forest.

A few motels in Mountainair about 15 miles south from a campground below the peak and motels in Albuquerque about 50 miles north, Moriarty 40 miles northeast. This is not a trip where you do not have to get out at sunrise as the birds are flying by all day. The last week in September and the first week in October are usually the best weeks. Two years ago when we went they had the biggest count day on Sat. Oct 2d with over 300 birds seen.

You will see various species up close, including hand held raptors that have been mist netted for banding. They will show the wings and body size and explain about the bird. You might be one of the persons that will be allowed to hold and release a bird.

We will meet at the campground, 8 AM and noon each day. Call Bob (757-1876) for map and details.

## DESERT BIRDS / MIGRANTS

A chance to see some of the birds that inhabit the desert scrub. Then out along Hawk Alley and on to the Fort Bliss Ponds.

**DATE:** Saturday, October 13  
**TIME:** 7:47 AM  
**PLACE:** Wilderness Park Museum.

## FRIENDS of HUECO TANKS

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

### Bird Identification Tours

Sunday October 21 8 AM  
(also the Annual Interpretive Fair)  
Sunday November 18 8 AM  
Sunday December 16 8 AM

**Check in at the Headquarters.** Leader Bob  
"Wildbirder" Johnson. 757-1876

## WATER and WADING BIRDS

Down the valley to the reservoirs in McNary, Fort Hancock, and Tornillo. A good chance to see *Cormorants*, *Heron*s, *Egrets*, a number of duck species including *Mergansers* and *Buffleheads* and maybe *White Pelicans*.

**DATE:** Sunday, October 28.  
**TIME:** 7:08 AM  
**PLACE:** Feather Lake

## DONA ANA COUNTY

We will traverse the west side of the river using NM Route 28 and other side roads hoping to see some of the birds that winter in the area. Possibly we will get as far as the "Old Refuge" near Messilla Dam.

**DATE:** Saturday, December 1.  
**TIME:** 7:37 AM  
**PLACE:** Crossroads Ponding Area  
(Doniphan/Country Club)

## REPORTS FROM THE TRAIL

**Water Canyon.** 6 adults and 3 children enjoyed the Bosque Del Apache, seeing a flight of White Pelicans and a Great Blue Herons nest with 3 young. The late afternoon wasn't as pleasant because it poured. However on Sunday the Vary Large Array was a hit. Then on the backroad to T or C Pronghorns, a Prairie Falcon and a Lewis' Woodpecker were spotted.

**Lincoln Nat. Forest at Ruidoso.** 13 adults and 4 young ones had a great time. Some saw the target bird American Dipper, and many saw 4 species of Hummers, 4 of warblers, Mountain Chickadees, Pygmy Nuthatches and Clark's Nutcrackers.

**Davis Mountains.** 4 adults from the chapter attended the TOS (Texas Ornithological Society) fall conference at the Prude Ranch. By my count we had 72 species, including good hummers, Zone-tailed Hawk and Black Hawk.

# OBSERVATIONS

May 16, 2001 to September 15, 2001

Uncommon, Rare, and Very Rare sightings

The listing of birds is determined using the checklist "Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas" 7th Edition, October 1987. Leave sightings at (757-1876) Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson, E-mail [BobWildbirderJ@cs.com](mailto:BobWildbirderJ@cs.com).

**Observers:** Lois Balin; Jane Fowler; Jean Marie Hamilton; Al Gavit; John Kiseda; Kathy Kiseda; Mary lou Alcorn; Jim Paton; Flora Pittard; Ross Rassmussen; John Sproul; John White; Barry Zimmer; J/M-Jimmy Zabriskie/Marcy Scott;  
++ - Many observers; Var - Various.

**Locations:** Coh-Cohen Stadium; Can-Canutillo; CCA-Country Club Area; Emy-Emory; Fab-Fabens; FtH-Fort Hancock; FBP-Fort Bliss Ponds; HuTk-Hueco Tanks; Hor-Horizon City; KnJ-KenyonJoyce; Kil-Kilkenny; McN-McNary; Mem-Memorial Park; PTF-Peterson Tree Farm; RioB-Rio Bosque Park; Redd-Redd Road; SRS-Stan Roberts Sr; Sun-Sunset; STA-Santa Teresa Area; Tor-Tornillo; Ton-Tonto.

Some very rare or unusual sightings for this area follows in the first section.

## EGRETS THRU DOWITCHERS

Redish Egret	7/8 - 8/4	J/M	RioB
2d County Rcrd			
Yellow-crnd Night Heron	6/23	BZ	RioB
" "	7/7 - 7/23	JP	McN
Roseate Spoonbill	8/31	J/M	McN
2d County Rcrd			
Fulvous Whistling-Duck-3	5/28 - 7/31	JS++	RioB
1st since 1940			
White-tailed Kite	6/11	J/M	RioB
1st since 1938	6/12 & 6/25	JP	
Short-billed Dowitcher	8/10	J/M	FtH
" "	9/12	BZ	FBP

## GULLS TO BOBOLINKS

Laughing Gull	9/1	BZ	McN
Sabine's Gull	9/2	BZ	McN
Caspian Tern	6/16	J/M	FtH
Common Tern	5/25	J/M	FtH
Eurasian Collared-Dove	8/10	J/M	Tor
" "	8/15	J/M	PTF
Northern Pygmy-Owl	5/19	AG	Hor
Winter Wren	9/9	FP	Hor
Prairie Warbler	8/23	J/M	FBP
Mourning Warbler	5/22	BZ	FBP
Canada warbler	5/22	BZ	Ton
Varied Bunting	8/16	BZ	McN
Bobolink	9/12	BZ	FBP

The following sightings are seen most every year in the area but are not common.

## PELICANS TO FALCCNS

Brown Pelican	8/16	BZ	Tor
Little Blue Heron	7/9-8/31	JS++	RioB
Osprey	5/23	JS	RioB
Harris' Hawk	Var	JS	RioB
Golden Eagle	8/16	BZ	Fab
" " 4 - (2A, 2J)	8/18	JK	SRS
Peregrine Falcon	8/3	BZ	Coh
" "	9/12	JS	RioB

## PLOVER THRU TERNS

American Golden-Plover	5/22-28	BZ	RioB
Upland Sandpiper	8/10	BZ	FtH
Long-billed Curlew	5/23	JS	RioB
Marbled Godwit	6/14	J/M	FtH
California Gull	5/25	BZ	McN
Least Tern	7/13	JP	FtH
Black Tern	8/9	BZ	FBP

## PARROTS TO OWLS

Red-crowned Parrot (11)	8/31	MLA	Emy
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	6/2	LB	HuTk
Great Horned Owl	9/1	JK	KnJ

Continues on page

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## SPECIAL WEEKEND AT HUECO TANKS STATE HISTORICAL PARK

The 7th Annual Interpretive Fair will be held on October 20th and 21st at Hueco tanks SHP. This will be held in conjunction with Texas Parks & Wildlife's state wide Lone Star Legacy Weekend.

Friends Of Hueco Tanks will have a food booth with Hot Dogs, Nacho's, Bratworst, Cookies, Soda and **Buffalo Stew** on sale. Also the Mescalero Apaches will have Fry Bread.

Activities will include Native American Drummers, Native American Dances (Kiowa and Apache groups have been invited), Rock Climbing Demonstrations, Folklorico Dancing. The Ranch House Interpretive Center will be open, Horses and Cowboys from the Bowen ranch, and a Buffalo Soldiers Encampment. Static displays and booths by the Mescalero Apaches, the UTEP Ecology Club with the Sierra Club, the Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue and others. Also artists with their crafts for sale.

Rock Art and Botany tours will be conducted on a regular basis, and BIRDING tours will be at 8 AM each day. An evening campfire storytelling program will take place on Saturday at 7 PM.

Entrance to the park will be **FREE**. To reach the park go east on Montana(US 62/180) from the airport 20 miles and turn north(left) on FM2775 and go 8 miles to the Park Headquarters.

Continued from page 6 OBSERVATIONS

JUNCO TO COWBIRD

### HUMMINGBIRDS THRU FLYCATCHERS

Magnificent Hummer	9/15	FP	Hor
Calliope Hummer	7/24	JMH	Redd
Broad-tailed Hummer	7/31	BZ	Ton
Rufous Hummingbird	7/9	KK	KnJ
Willow Flycatcher	8/20	BZ	Ton
Hammond's Flycatcher	5/19	RR	FBP
"	9/15	JP	FBP
Vermillion Flycatcher (F)	8/9-9/8	BZ++	FBP

Dark-eyed Junco (gry-hd)	7/15	JF	Kil
Northern Cardinal	8/10	JW	STA
Lazuli Bunting	8/23	J/M	FBP
Painted Bunting	8/23	J/M	FBP
Dickcissel	8/26	JP	FBP
Bronzed Cowbird	5/20	JP	FBP

### Chapter Volunteers Needed

**If you are not currently active in the chapter, we need your help. By becoming more involved with the chapter, you can gain a lot of personal knowledge, especially about birds, wildlife & the local ecology. You will have a more direct role in shaping our chapter's projects and goals, meet some really nice people, and make a difference.**

**Yes, it is fun and enlightening to help lead field trips, host at Feather Lake, or be on a chapter committee. Be assured that you won't be "left out" or feel out of place by becoming more active in chapter activities; everyone goes out of their way to make sure that newcomers are made to feel at home and aren't left in the dark, to sink or swim!**

**There are many ways that you can help your local chapter become better, so please consider it as a fun and worthwhile endeavor. Please contact Betty Fisbeck or John Kiseda, for more information about the ways in which you can become involved.**

### JAYS THRU THRASHERS

Western Scrub-Jay	9/8	JP	FBP
Red-breasted Nuthatch	9/3	JP	Sun
Swainson's Thrush	9/15	J/M	Can
Sage Thrasher	9/12	BZ	FBP
Brown Thrasher	8/1	MLA	Emy

### WARBLERS

Nashville Warbler	5/20	JS	RioB
"	9/12	BZ	FBP
Lucy's Warbler	8/25	JP	Sun
Northern Parula	6/28	JP	CCA
American Redstart	9/3	JP	Sun
Prothonotary Warbler	8/16	BZ	McN



**SUPPORT LOCAL WILDLIFE  
CONSERVATION  
ORGANIZATIONS**

**Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue**

Meets: 4th Tuesday of; Jan., Feb.,  
Apr., June, Aug. & Oct.  
El Paso Community College  
Northwest Campus, Room 45,  
6701 South Desert Blvd.  
[www.whc.net/cdwr](http://www.whc.net/cdwr)

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

**Keystone Heritage Park**  
Meets 3rd Wednesday of each  
month at El Paso Police Dept.  
Westside Regional Command  
Center, 4801 Osborne  
[keystonepark.com](http://keystonepark.com) or  
[keystonepark.org](http://keystonepark.org)

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

**October**

5, 6 & 7 Hawk Watch  
Mon. 8 Board Meeting  
Sat. 13 Desert Birds  
13, 14 & 20 Rio Bosque  
Mon. 15 General Meeting  
Sun. 21 Hueco Tanks  
Sun. 28 Wading Birds

**November**

Mon. 6 Vote YES Proposition 8  
4, 10 & 17 Rio Bosque  
Sat. 10 Feather Lake Workday  
Mon. 12 Board Meeting  
Sun. 18 Hueco Tanks  
Mon. 19 General Meeting

**December**

Sat. 1 Dona Ana County  
Mon. 10 General Meeting  
Sun. 16 Hueco Tanks

**Rock Art Tours**

*Every Sat & Sun 9:00am & 11:00am*

**Birding Activities at Hueco Tanks**

***Bird Identification Tours & Slide Show Presentations***

**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

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  
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