



The Roadrunner

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

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The El Paso Trans-Pecos Audubon Society's Annual Awards Banquet Saturday, February 21, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. Jaxon's Restaurant, 1135 Airway Blvd, El Paso

Betty Fisbeck, 2005 Meritorious Service Award winner, will present a program on her recent journey to the Galapagos Islands.

The EPTP Audubon Society Conservation Awards & Meritorious Service Awards will be presented to their 2009 recipients.

The Society's Conservation Award will be bestowed upon **John Sproul**, Program Coordinator/Manager for the Center for Environmental Resource Management at UTEP & Rio Bosque Wetlands Park Manager and also to **Lois Balin**, Texas Parks and Wildlife Urban Wildlife Specialist.

The Meritorious Service Awards will be given to **Ursula Sherrill**, Programs Committee Chair and Field Trip Coordinator for the Society and also to **Eddie Chew**, Treasurer of the Society.

Betty Fisbeck will present a program on her recent journey to the Galapagos Islands. Cost of dinner is \$18.00. Entree choices are available. RSVP to Janet Perkins at 637-5269 or jntperk@elp.rr.com by February 14, 2009.

PHOTO CONTEST

Our annual December Photo Contest was a great success. We had pictures from 13 people, some had pictures in all 5 categories other in fewer. Picture total was 42.

First Place Winners were:

Birds- Barry Zimmer
Violet-crowned
Wood Nymph
Wildlife- John



Sproul-Couch's Spadefoot
Scenes- Barry Zimmer – Summit Lake, AK
Kids/Pets- John Kiseda - Birdwatching cat with binoculars
Humor- John Kiseda – Woodhouse Toad

Second Place: Categories in same order:

Bob Johnson - Anhinga
Eddie Chew - Tortoise
Scott Cutler - Desert Storm
Craig Braginton - Kids on the beach
Janet Perkins - Black Phoebe on scope

Third Place: Categories in same order:

Eddie Chew - Frigate bird
Janet Perkins - Dragonfly
Janet Perkins - Flower
Lois Balin - Boy and his horse with milk
Lois Balin - Dog and man on Couch


No professional judges, meeting attendees voted by paper ballot. Each photographer's identity was concealed.

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society General Meeting

*Monday, March 16 at 7:00 p.m.
at UTEP Centennial Museum, corner of Wiggins and
University*

From the Grand Canyon to the Grand Tetons:

Bob Johnson shares photos and stories of his remarkable summer, 2008 journey through national parks of the American West. At the Grand Canyon, Bob captured on film one of the rarest birds in the world, the California Condor, with a mature wing-span of 9 ½ feet and weight of 22 pounds. He was greeted by the sight of a Trumpeter Swan in the Grand Tetons National Park toward the end of his trip. In his inimitable style, this expert birder will entertain and educate us until the evening has flown away.



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

Committees


Membership: Roxanne Schroeder, 533-0061	Publicity: Janet Perkins, 581-2849
Programs: Ursula Sherrill, 526-7725	Education: Kathleen Whelen, 751-2408
Conservation: vacant	Publications: Jane Fowler, 598-2448
Field Trips: Ursula Sherrill, 526-7725	Ways & Means: vacant
Hospitality: Janet Perkins, 581-2849	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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You are invited to join us for an evening of Great Food, Great Music, and Great Art, all for a Great Cause!

Taste of Frontera!

Gala Fundraiser for the The Frontera Land Alliance

Thursday, February 26, 2009, 6:00 p.m. at Ardovino's Desert Crossing

\$40 per person
 Tickets available at the door or call for reservations
 R.S.V.P 915-526-7725 or 915-490-8601

Proceeds support conservation and restoration of critically important natural land resources in the El Paso region.

www.FronteraLandAlliance.org

Featuring
 Locally inspired appetizers and regional wines

Music by
 Ricardo Valencia & Radio la Chusma

Silent Auction
 Golf at Painted Dunes
 Art: Hal Marcus
 Carmen Navar
 Jewelry: DeFranco Designs
 Salon: Marie Otero
 RubyAnn D. Gaglio
 and much, much more

The third annual Franklin Mountains Poppies Celebration at Castner Range is coming soon
March 14, 2009 10 AM – 6 PM
at the El Paso Museum of Archaeology, 4301 Transmountain Rd.

This should prove to be a bigger event than previous years with more exhibitors, speakers and craft vendors as well as music and food. Please plan to come out and support our efforts to protect Castner Range and the magnificent poppy displays that occur there.

The program includes nature talks, wildlife displays, educational exhibits, and demonstrations. Educational speakers will be in the Gazebo from 10 AM – 2 PM and there will be music, entertainment and tequila tasting from 2 – 6 PM. The Celebration will also include videos by local documentarian and producer, Jackson Polk, puppet shows, a magician, and raffle prizes all day.

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison is an invited honored guest to whom we'll present hundreds of scenic Castner Range postcards, each personalized with written sentiments about the Range by El Pasoans and visitors and asking her assistance to preserve the Range as open space, in its natural state.

Many thanks to Judy Ackerman of the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition, the staff of the El Paso Museum of Archaeology at Wilderness Park, Franklin Mountains State Park, Chihuahuan Desert Education Coalition, the El Paso Archaeological Society and others for helping organize this event. Don't miss it!

AT FEATHER LAKE

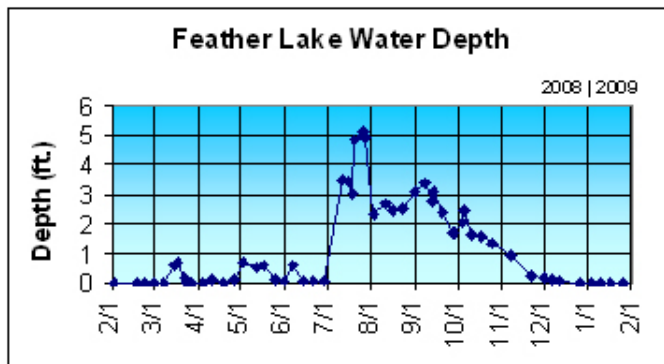
Feather Lake has been dry since late December. In only one year (2003) in the last nine has it been consistently flooded in January. As has been our pattern in recent years, we're again splitting the visitor season at our sanctuary into two seasons.

The fall season ran from September through December. We're now closed due to lack of water, but we look forward to opening for the spring season as soon as water returns.

Sincere thanks go to everyone who helped staff Feather Lake during visitor hours since September: Lois Balin, Lupe Barrera, Clarence Cooper, Scott Cutler, Jane Fowler, Mike Gaglio, Beth and Bob Garcia, Manny Gonzalez, Inga and Joe Groff, Bob Johnson, Carlisle Navidomskis, Janet and Mark Perkins, Flora Pittard, Roxanne Schroeder, Ginger Simons, and John Sproul.

With or without water, we will be open on Sat., March 28, for our bi-monthly workday. It starts at 2 p.m. Join us for some spring cleaning at the lake!

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



Audubon at RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK



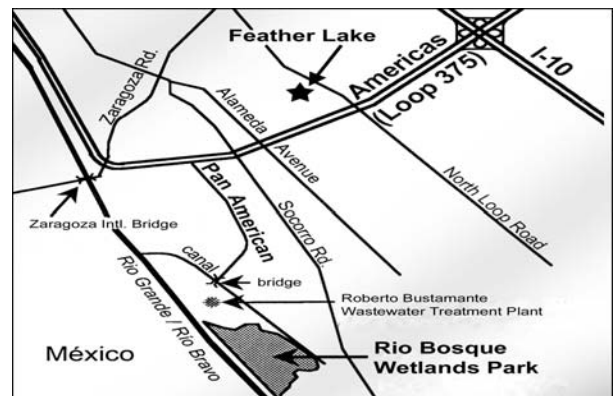
This spring, for the first time in seven years, Rio Bosque Wetlands Park will have water, at least intermittently, during the growing season. The source is a new well, and El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon, through its annual Birdathon fundraising event, was an important partner in making this well possible. Thank you, Birdathon contributors!

For the latest on water conditions, recent bird sightings and more at Rio Bosque, check the Park's website, www.riobosque.org.

Upcoming free walking tours:

- 9 a.m. Sat., February 7 (Bird tour)
- 3 p.m. Sun., February 15 (Introductory tour)
- 3 p.m. Sat., March 7 (Bird tour)
- 3 p.m. Sun., March 15 (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.



News from the Trail

Twelve intrepid birders set out to bird **Bosque del Apache NWR, Albuquerque, and the Sandia Mountains** on Jan 17th and 18th. In attendance were Joe and Lila Grosinger, Mark and Janet Perkins, Floyd Back and his wife (sorry can't remember the name) Bob Johnson, Cliff Eidson, Kerri-Ann Gardner, Angela Chavez, Steve Vinson, and John Groves.

The Bosque was less birdy than it might have been but still yielded some surprises: 5 Bald Eagles in a single tree and several American Goldfinches were among the highlights. After a quick lunch in the parking lot, the group made its way to Albuquerque where several of us found a Golden-crowned Sparrow at the Alameda Bridge along with lots of waterfowl on the river there. A quick check of the Rio Grande Nature Center at sundown revealed Mountain Chickadees, Downy Woodpeckers, and lots of Nuthatches. After a delightful round of wine and cheese in Cliff's room, the group had a great dinner at the Flying Star Restaurant.



The next morning found us up before dawn to make our way up the east side of the Sandia Mountains. We birded our way up the canyon, stopping at several spots along the way. Sightings at these stops

included Band-tailed Pigeon, Pine Grosbeak, Hairy Woodpecker, Townsend's Solitaire, Brown Creeper, Northern Goshawk, and lots of Mountain Chickadees. After settling in at the Crest House at the very top of the Sandias, we were treated to the main attraction: Rosy-Finches. All three species of Rosy-Finch (plus a subspecies which may be split off as a separate species) were coming in to the trees just outside the windows and the feeders which were used to trap the birds for measurement and banding.

We were treated to up-close-and-personal views of the captured birds as they were being studied and three of us — Janet, Angela, and Kerri-Ann — got to release some of these beautiful and rare birds from the tundra. Other birds right outside the windows were Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches, Steller's Jays, and of course more Chickadees. A good time was had by all.



Upcoming Field Trips

Sunday, February 22, 2009 Sunland Park Race Track & Sod Farm

Don't miss this opportunity for overwintering water birds at the Sunland Park Race Track pond.



A Snow Goose was spotted at the pond in late fall, 2005.



A Glaucous Gull, seen in winter 2006, was the first El Paso County record of

this species. The sod farm is known for great winter birds, from Sandhill Cranes to many small birds, such as the uncommon Grasshopper Sparrow and Baird's Sparrow that relish seeds found there. We will look for birds that spend the cold months in grassland habitat.

Date: Sunday, February 22

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Meet at: Keystone Heritage Park, 4200 Doniphan Dr., near Frontera Dr.

Trip Coordinator: Ursula Sherrill

526-7725; usherrill@miners.utep.edu

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

Bird-watching

Saturday, March 7, 2009 Reservoirs in the Lower Valley

McNary, Fort Hancock and Tornillo Reservoirs are always good for Gulls, Ducks, Egrets, Cormorants, and Grebes. Quite a few songbirds could also be present, along with large raptors, such as Harris's Hawks.

Date: Saturday, March 7

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Meet at: Feather Lake, 9500 North Loop & Bordeaux St., 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave. Bring a lunch: We'll stop under cottonwood trees at the Tornillo rest area.

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

Saturday, March 21, 2009 Daytrip to Otero Mesa, New Mexico

Otero Mesa contains rare Chihuahuan Desert grasslands where pronghorn antelope graze and re-colonizing Aplomado Falcons soar. Along with these wonders, we will hope to find Mountain Plovers, Chestnut-collared Longspurs, migrating sparrows, and possibly a Sprague's Pipit or Long-billed Curlew. Prairie Dogs and Burrowing Owls will also be on our list.



Date: Saturday, March 21

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Meet at: In front of Evergreen Cemetery, 12400 E. Montana, ~ 1/4 miles east of Loop 375.

Secure parking is available.

We will car-pool for the hour-long trip.

Bring a lunch.

Trip Coordinator: Ursula Sherrill, 526-7725;

usherrill@miners.utep.edu.



Look ahead: April and May Field, 2009
Friday, April 3, Saturday, April 4, and
Sunday, April 5: Lesser Prairie-Chickens
Caprock Wildlife Habitat Area,
east of Roswell, N.M.

April is the peak time for Lesser Prairie-Chickens' mating displays on leks, also called, "booming grounds."



We will view and photograph these amazing birds. Join us for an unforgettable wildlife experience! For more information, please contact Ursula Sherrill, 526-7725; usherrill@miners.utep.edu, or Bob Johnson, 751-0125; wildbirder-bob@sbcglobal.net.

Birdathon: 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. More details are coming soon!

Chiricahua Mountains

of southeastern Arizona:

Memorial Day weekend, Friday, May 22,
Saturday, May 23, Sunday, May 24, and
Monday, May 25, 2009.

Don't miss the Elegant Trogon.
More details coming your way!

El Paso/Trans-Pecos
Audubon Society
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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

February

Mon 9: **Board Meeting**

7 & 15: **Rio Bosque**

Sat 21: **Awards Dinner**

Sun 22: **Sunland Park**

21 & 22: **Keystone**

Thur. 26: **Taste of**

Frontera

March

Sat 7: **Lower Valley**

7 & 15: **Rio Bosque**

Mon 9: **Board Meeting**

Sat 14: **Poppy Celebration**

Mon :16 **General Meeting**

Sat 21: **Otero Mesa**

28 & 29: **Keystone**

Sat 28: **Feather Lake work**

April

3-5: **Prairie-Chickens**

Mon 13: **Board Meeting**

Mon 20: **General Meeting**

25 & 26: **Keystone**

May

22-25: **Chiricahua Mts.**

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: _____

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