



# The Roadrunner

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

## General Meetings

The April and May meetings will be held at the El Paso Zoo  
4001 E. Paisano Dr. and streamed online via Zoom

Monday, April 20, 2026 7:00pm

Digital Tools for Birding presented by Kevin Floyd

Merlin Bird ID and iNaturalist are transforming birding by making identification more accessible, and Dr. Kevin Floyd will share practical tips to use these helpful but imperfect tools effectively. Register for the Zoom link at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/TRGtiC4GTwW5PUBUQ2SGSw>

Monday, May 18, 2026 7:00pm

Rio Grande: A River in Peril presented by Liz Walsh

The southwestern US drought continues to impact flows in the Rio Grande and the wildlife it supports. Liz Walsh will update us on the current state of the river and how it is affecting species dependent on it. Register for the Zoom link at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/zzbhWwdFRsO7-m5IEw8baA>

## MORE EVIDENCE OF BIRD POPULATION DECLINES

In recent years, multiple studies have drawn attention to widespread and alarming declines in North American bird populations. A [peer-reviewed paper](#) in the February 26 issue of the journal *Science* looks at these declines from a new angle: The authors analyzed data from 1,033 North American Breeding Bird Survey routes to see if the rate of change is speeding up or slowing down. For the period from 1987 to 2021, they evaluated 261 bird species in 54 avian families and 10 habitat types. The conclusions:

**Survey Routes** -- 70% (718) of the 1,033 survey routes experienced a significant decrease in total bird abundance, and just 17% (172) experienced a significant increase. Bird abundances in Florida, Texas, Louisiana and Arizona underwent the most pronounced average declines per route.

**Rate of Change** – Of the 718 routes with significant declines, 163 exhibited a significant year-to-year increase in the rate of decline and 146 had a significant decrease in that rate.

**Bird Species** – Of the 261 species evaluated, 122 showed a significant decrease in abundance; for 63 of those 122 species, the rate of decline accelerated over time. 84 of the 261 species showed a significant increase in abundance; for 67 of those 84 species, the rate of increase slowed over time.

**Habitats** – The strongest declines were observed for towns, grasslands, marshes and open woodlands. Hotspots of accelerating declines appear to be associated with regions with intensive agricultural practices (high cropland area, high fertilizer use or high pesticide use) and warming temperatures.

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### The e-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](mailto:jsproul@utep.edu).

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Website!

Updated information about upcoming field trips, calendar of upcoming events, and recent bird sightings.

[www.trans-pecos-audubon.com](http://www.trans-pecos-audubon.com)



## El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

### Officers

**President:** Scott Cutler, 494-2193  
**Vice President:** Jane Fowler, 598-2448  
**Secretary/Treasurer:** Eddie Chew, 587-9589

### Committees

**Conservation:** Kevin Floyd, 613-6354  
**Education:** Kathleen Whelen, 820-1895  
**Field Trips:** vacant  
**Hospitality:** vacant  
**Membership:** vacant  
**Newsletter Editor:** Kathleen Whelen, 820-1895  
**Programs:** Kevin Floyd, 613-6354  
**Publications:** Jane Fowler, 598-2448  
**Publicity:** Heather Rivera  
**Sanctuary:** John Sproul, 545-5157  
**Website:** vacant  
**Social Media:** Lillian Smith

**The Audubon  
 Foundation of  
 Texas**

represents Texas  
 Audubon chapters in the Earth Share of Texas  
 payroll deduction plan for charitable giving.



### WILSON'S PHALAROPE UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR THREATENED STATUS

Have you noticed a decline in numbers of Wilson's Phalaropes migrating through our region? In its [2025 State of the Birds report](#), the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (which includes Audubon) listed this shorebird as a "Red-Alert Tipping Point Species," a bird "with perilously low populations and steep declining trends." Its numbers have declined by ~70% since the early 1980s.

On March 28, 2024, the Center for Biological Diversity petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to list Wilson's Phalarope as a Threatened species. The [petition](#) highlighted the importance of large saline lakes in the interior American West to these birds during migration, especially the Great Salt Lake in Utah, Lake Abert in Oregon and Mono Lake in California. All three face significant ecological challenges.

This year, on January 26, the USFWS published in the Federal Register [its finding that the listing may be warranted](#) and announced it was initiating a status review that will provide the basis for a decision on whether to list Wilson's Phalarope as Threatened or Endangered. Do you have information that can contribute to this review? The Federal Register announcement provides guidance on how to submit it to the USFWS.

### Conservation Organizations

**Chihuahuan Desert Education Coalition**  
<http://www.chihuahuandesert.org>

**Second Chance Wildlife Rescue**  
<https://www.secondchancewildliferescue.org>  
 Josie Karam (915) 920-7867

**El Paso Zoo (915) 212-0966**  
[www.elpasozoo.org](http://www.elpasozoo.org)

**Stick House Sanctuary**  
<https://www.facebook.com/epwildliferescue>  
 (915) 219-2365

**Keystone Heritage Park 581-7920**  
[www.keystoneheritagepark.com](http://www.keystoneheritagepark.com)

**Asombro Institute**  
 (575) 524-3334 [www.asombro.org](http://www.asombro.org)

**Friends of Rio Bosque 747-5766**  
[www.riobosque.org](http://www.riobosque.org)

**Celebration of Our Mountains**  
<https://celebrationofourmountains.squarespace.com/>

**Frontera Land Alliance (915) 351-8352**  
[www.fronteralandalliance.org](http://www.fronteralandalliance.org)

**Field Trips:** Current list of upcoming field trips at <http://www.trans-pecos-audubon.com/>

## AT FEATHER LAKE

With new plant growth this spring, we are getting a better sense of the impacts of the fire at Feather Lake last May. Honey mesquites and tornillo are recovering well. Though some saltcedars were knocked out, many are recovering. Some cottonwoods and willows are bouncing back, but most of the larger trees in the direct path of the fire appear dead. Still, standing dead snags and dead and downed woody material are important elements in a forest ecosystem. It looks like that will be the role many of these trees play going forward.

Our next workdays at Feather Lake will be **Sat., April 4** and **Sat., June 6**, both starting at **8 a.m.** Join us. Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux in El Paso, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave.

## Audubon at

Rio Bosque  
Wetlands Park



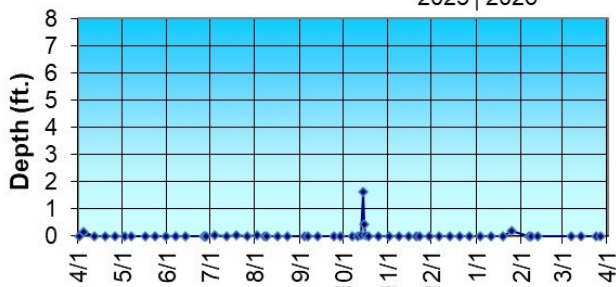
The dry winter conditions at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park have extended into spring. There is currently no water in the wetland cells or in 75% of the old river channel. Significant flows to the park likely won't resume till early May. On a positive note, there is water in the channel near the visitor center. The willows there are thriving, and a pair of Cooper's Hawks is again nesting. Their attempt last year failed, but they are trying again.

For up-to-date information on birds and water conditions at Rio Bosque, check [www.riobosque.org](http://www.riobosque.org). Upcoming tours at the park:

- 5:30 p.m. Sun., Apr 5 (Introductory tour)**
- 8 a.m. Sat., Apr 25 (Birding tour)**
- 7 a.m. Sun., May 17 (Birding tour)**
- 8 a.m. Sat., May 30 (Introductory tour)**
- 8 a.m. Sun., June 14 (Introductory tour)**
- 6:30 a.m. Sat., June 27 (Birding tour)**

Feather Lake Water Depth

2025 | 2026



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: 915-861-4361.



Want to get involved in the organization? We are looking for new board members, field trip leaders, and help with outreach events. This is a great opportunity to share your love of birds with the rest of El Paso!

Please email us at [elpasoaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:elpasoaudubon@gmail.com) for more information.

We are looking for ideas for presentations. If you have someone in mind, please email us at [elpasoaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:elpasoaudubon@gmail.com).

El Paso/Trans-Pecos  
Audubon Society  
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El Paso, Texas 79997

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**National Audubon Society  
Chapter Membership Application.**

Yes, I'd like to join. Please enroll me as a member of **both** the National Audubon Society and the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Chapter.

Send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to address below.

Check for \$20.00 enclosed payable to National Audubon Society

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**National Audubon Society  
Chapter Membership Data Center  
PO Box 8908  
Topeka, KS 66608-9978**

**Local Chapter Code  
C1ZW100Z**

**Dates to Remember**

April

Mon 13: **Board Meeting**  
Mon 20: **General Meeting**  
5 & 25: **Rio Bosque**

May

Mon 11: **Board Meeting**  
Mon 18: **General Meeting**  
17 & 30: **Rio Bosque**

June

Sat 6: **Feather Lake Work Day**  
Mon 8: **Board Meeting**  
**No General Meeting**  
14 & 27: **Rio Bosque**

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

**El Paso/Trans-Pecos Local Chapter Only Membership.**

Your \$15.00 will help support chapter activities and 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**