

# The Roadrunner

NEWSLETTER OF THE EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON

## 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 upcoming 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)

Volume 32 Issue 4

October & November, 2003

General Meetings  
Memorial Park Garden Center  
3105 Grant Street 7:30pm

Monday, October 20, 2003

Terry Austin

Executive Director, TX Audubon

All the way from Austin, the Executive Director of Audubon Texas, as well as, Vice President of National Audubon Society, will give a brief presentation on the history of Audubon Texas followed by a presentation on the current Grassland Initiative. This initiative focuses on recovery efforts for quail and other grassland birds. We hope you can come for this special event.

Monday, November 17, 2003

The Birds and People of Guatemala

Rev. Dr. LoraKim Joyner

Host, LoraKim Joyner, veterinarian and minister will lead us through a tour of her work with parrot conservation in tropical countries. You will develop an understanding of the concerns of people interconnected with avian species. LoraKim Joyner worked with birds for 12 years as a veterinarian, where she found that the healing of birds is intimately associated with the healing of entire communities of mixed species. She currently serves as the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Community of El Paso.

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EL PASO NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
FIELD TRIP TO McKITTRICK CANYON  
IN THE GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS OF NEW MEXICO

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST  
ENJOY THE COLORFUL DISPLAY THAT MARKS THE SEASON

For more information call trip leader Peter Beste at 755-3558  
Admission is free, and non-members are always welcome.  
For more information, call: 584-3742 or 533-6072

### Happy Fall, from John Kiseda!

Since we are currently without a president to send you a greeting, I'm doing so. I hope that you have all had a healthy and happy summer, and that it was full of great experiences (hopefully, some of which involved our feathered friend and the great outdoors)!

Your officers and board of directors have been active in the past months:

Indestructible (we hope) "No Hunting" signs have been installed around the ponds at the Fred Hervey water treatment plant. We hope that these signs help to remind hunters of their ethical and legal responsibilities as true sportsmen, as to where and what to hunt/not hunt.

An "Action Plan" for the next calendar year, has been developed for the chapter (see the Action Plan, at the end of this message).

The dispersal of Birdathon 2003 funds has been approved, and funds will shortly be sent to CDWR, the Texas Audubon office, and the El Paso Zoological Society. The remaining funds will be retained for chapter education endeavors and Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary projects.

I also want to once again encourage you to become more actively involved with YOUR chapter. We need help with various projects (we will need help in translating English documents into Spanish, etc.), we need help to fill officer and board vacancies (for example, we are currently without a president, and a public relations person), and in general, WE NEED YOU!

A diverse, active membership is critical to the future of this organization and we would greatly appreciate it if you (or another excellent individual that you could recruit) can help us to do more for our community and our wildlife and wild places. Please call me, if you wish to discuss the items mentioned above.

### El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

#### Officers

President	vacant	
Vice President	John Kiseda	533-4615
Secretary	Roxanne Schroeder	533-0061
Treasurer	Peter Dunavant	584-5351

#### Directors

John Sproul	747-8663	Jane Fowler	598-2448
Bob Johnson	757-1876	Lois Balin	774-9603
Paul Hyder	751-2408	Kathleen Whelen	751-2408
Nancy Wilson	747-8604		

## EPTP Chapter Action Plan 2003-2004

- Improve upon the current lack of publicity notices & the subsequent reduction in the chapter's public relations successes.
- Find and elect a new president
- Install "No Hunting" signs at Ft. Bliss Ponds.
- Complete and publish the EPTP Chapter Fact Pamphlet.
- Complete and publish the El Paso Birding Site Guide.
- Initiate the revision and publication of a bilingual Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary Trail Guide.
- Conduct additional Wetland's Teachers Workshops and revise the guidebook.
- Review stored chapter items at M. Alcorn's; dispose of unnecessary items and find a new storage site for those items that should be saved.
- Conduct 3 field trips especially for children (and parents).
- Conduct joint field trips with other similar organizations.
- Investigate the cost and implementation of having TX DOT signs installed for Feather Lake Sanctuary.
- Initiate and implement proposed revisions to the bylaws:
  - modify, so that the board of directors nominates and elects the chapter's officers, not the general membership.
  - modify, so as to eliminate the current term limits imposed on office holder's; the board of directors may hold a vote of confidence at any time, to deal with any issues regarding a long standing officer.
- Attempt to improve upon the amount of items sold at the monthly meetings.
- Initiate guided tours at Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Continue the ADA renovation projects at Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Provide more wildlife appreciation and conservation experiences for the area's children and young adults, to increase their interest and participation in local and regional flora and fauna, and important conservation concepts and issues.

The Roadrunner is published six times a year.

Contributions are welcome.

Please email to [whelenk@aol.com](mailto:whelenk@aol.com) or mail  
6120 Quail Ave. El Paso, Texas 79924 (915) 751-2408

## AT FEATHER LAKE

Feather Lake has been dry or largely dry since early August and could stay that way all through the fall and winter. Given these conditions, we've postponed opening day at our sanctuary from Oct. 4 to Nov. 1

We would much rather have water, but there is one advantage to the dry conditions. They may give the City of El Paso's Streets Department the opportunity to remove some of the cattails that now cover 75% of the 40-acre basin. We say may because, as of this writing, the basin is still too soft to permit access with heavy equipment. We are working closely with the Streets Department on this project and greatly appreciate their help.

Whether the basin has water or not, maintenance activities and restoration work continue. Our next workday will be an afternoon session on Sat., Nov. 29, starting at 2 p.m.

## RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK

UTEP 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 11 (Birds)

9 a.m. Sat., Oct 18 (Workday)

9 a.m. Sun., Oct 19 (Introductory)

9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Sat., Nov 1 (Day at the Bosque - tours, exhibits, kids' activities, even a chili cook-off - bring the whole family)

3 p.m. Sun., Nov 2 (Birds)

9 a.m. Sat., Nov 15 (Workday)

9 a.m. Sun., Nov 16 (Introductory)

For all of the tours and workdays, 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. For the Day at the Bosque on Nov. 1, visitors will park just across the bridge and travel by shuttle bus to the Park.

Information: 747-8663.

Finally, the postponement of opening day does not mean our annual potluck picnic at the lake is postponed. It still takes place Sat., October 4, starting at 4:30 p.m. Come on down, take a walk around the lake, then enjoy good food and conversation. We'll start serving at 5:30 p.m. Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux, 0.3 miles west of Americas Av.

### AOU CHECK-LIST REVISIONS

In the current issue of THE AUK (120(3):923-931), the Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) presents the most recent changes to the AOU's Check-list of North American Birds. They range from broad taxonomic shifts to simple spelling changes that provide consistency of gender between generic and specific names. Changes involving birds in Trans-Pecos Texas include:

The orders Anseriformes (ducks, geese and swans) and Galliformes (guans, partridges, grouse, turkey and quail) are shifted to a position in the check-list preceding Gaviiformes (loons). [And, just like that, our new El Paso-area bird checklist is now out of date.]

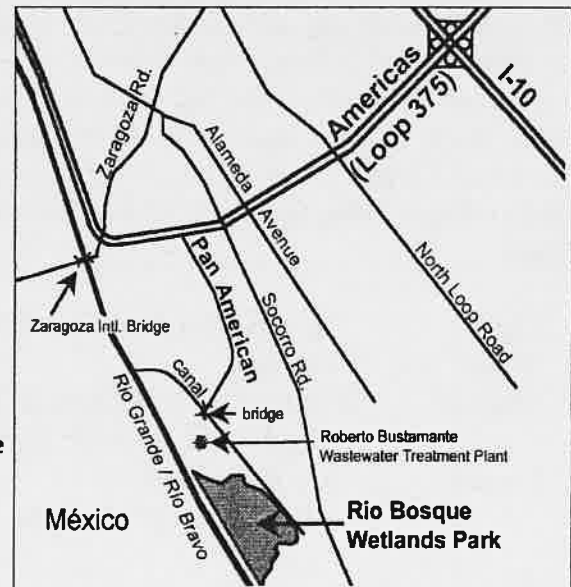
The English name of Columba livia is changed from Rock Dove to Rock Pigeon.

The Band-tailed Pigeon is moved from the genus Columba to the genus Patagioenas. Its scientific name is now Patagioenas fasciata.

Western and Eastern screech-owls are moved from the genus Otus to the genus Megascops. The scientific name of the Western Screech-Owl is now Megascops kennicottii; the Eastern is now Megascops asio.

The scientific name of the Black-capped Vireo is changed from Vireo atricapillus to Vireo atricapilla.

The scientific name of the Ovenbird is changed from Seiurus aurocapillus to Seiurus aurocapilla.



# ON THE TRAIL

## CELEBRATION of THE MOUNTAINS

During October we will be having a number of birding observation and identification locations staffed in El Paso. These will be in conjunction with various tours conducted for the Celebration of The Mountains. Check the October EL PASO SCENE, the El Paso Times each week from the end of Sep.

The first of these will be **FEATHERFEST** at Keystone Heritage Park. We will have a booth telling about the birds of Keystone and about our chapter. A talk about the birds will be given about 12N. Other exhibits, tours and talks will also take place. Bring your friends and family out to the site to see what it is all about.

Date: **Saturday, October 4, 2003**  
Time: **11 AM - - 3 PM**  
Where: **Keystone Heritage Park**  
Leader: *Bob Johnson (757-1876)*

The second activity we will conduct, will be a birding tour in Tom Mays Park. The first part of the walk will be fairly level, the second half will be a moderately steep trail up to **West Cottonwood Springs**. For those that think its too tough we will have a knowledgeable birder stay at the lower level. Birds to be seen probably will include *Black-chinned, Rufus-crowned, Black-throated, and White-crowned Sparrows. Rock, Canyon, and Cactus Wrens, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet*. This tour is in conjunction with the Outdoor Expo, being held by Franklin Mountain State Park.

Date: **Sunday, October 12, 2003**  
Time: **7:49 AM**  
Meet at: Entrance to Tom Mays on the TransMt. Road. West side.  
Leader: *Lois Balin and Bob Johnson (757-1876)*

## ANNUAL INTERPRETIVE FAIR

October 18th and 19th, 2003

### **HUECO TANKS STATE HISTORICAL SITE**

This will be the 9th Annual Interpretive Fair and will be held in conjunction with the **LONE STAR LEGACY WEEKEND**. Fair activities include *Birding Tour; Rare Plant Tour; Pictograph Tours; Guest Speakers; Native American Performances by Kiowa group, Ysleta del Sur, Santa Domingo Pueblo; Charro Performance; Climbing Demo; Atl-atl Throwing and other contests; Folklorico Dancers; Matachine Dancers; Buffalo Soldier Encampment; Cowboy Singers and Storytellers, at the Sunday Evening Campfire Program.*

The Saturday Evening program will be special:

*Dance of the Mountain Gods (Gahe) Ceremony.*

Information Booths, Books and Art Crafts Booths, and a Food Booth (with our famed **BUFFALO STEW**)

Saturday 18th Oct. 10:30 AM - 8:30 PM

Sunday 19th Oct. 10:30 AM - 8 PM

(Bird and Plant tours will start at 8 and 10 AM)

**FREE ADMISSION TO THE PARK**

## **DAY AT THE BOSQUE**

Saturday, November 1st, 9AM - 2 PM

An outdoor family fun day to learn about and explore El Paso's 372-acre wildlife refuge in El Paso's Mission Valley. Nature tours, birdwatching, children's activities, a raffle and a chili cookoff highlight the day's events. Learn about Rio Bosque's wildlife, particularly the variety of **migratory and year-round bird species** at the park. Knowledgeable guides will be stationed along the 1.5 mile nature trail. One of the stations will be operated by your local Audubon Chapter.

Longer (2.4 mile) guided tours and childrens activities will also be offered. Free shuttles will take visitors into the park from the Robereto Bustamante Water Treatment Plant. Take Americas Ave (Loop 375) south from I-10 to Pan American Dr., turn left onto Pan American, then 1.5 miles to the bridge.

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# OBSERVATIONS

July 16, 2003 to September 15, 2003

Listing of birds is determined using the checklist "Birds of El Paso County, Texas and Adjacent Areas" 8th Edition May 2003. Leave sightings at Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson (757-1876), or E-mail bobwildbirderj@cs.com.

Some entries appear because the location or date put the bird in an unusual situation.

-y in their yard; -f field trip leader; **Bold** - Rare; **Light shading** - casual; **Dark shading** - Extremely Rare

**Observers:** Dan Allen; Doris Gurs; Hugh Jameson; Bob Johnson; Johns Kiseda; Kathy Kiseda; Mary Lou Alcorn; Jim Paton; Susie Schnieder; John Sproul; Barry Zimmer.

**Locations:** ArP-Arroyo Park; BgB-Big Bend; BSc-Boy Scout; Cor-Coronado; Emy-Emory; FLk-Feather Lake; FBP-Fort Bliss Ponds; Fhc-Fort Hancock; HTk-Hueco Tanks; KnJ-Kenyon Joyce; McN-Mcnary Resv; Mem-Memorial Park; Rim-Rim Road; RBq-Rio Bosque Wetland; Sod-Sod Farm; Spg-Spaghetti Bowl; Ton-Tonto; Tor-Tornillo Area; Trm-Tramway.

## PELICANS THRU DUCKS

Brown Pelican	observ by many 7/23 - 9/6	McN
Double-crstd Corm.	8/9 JS	RBq
American Bittern	7/17 JS	FLk
Snowy(Hybrid Little Blue or Tri-color)	8/21 BZ	McN
Egret (same as above)	8/27 BZ	Tor
Redish Egret	8/16 JP	McN
Roseate Spoonbill (J)	8/16 JP	McN
(3d record for our checklist area)	8/27 BZ	Tor
Blue-winged Teal	8/7 JP	Fhc
Northern Pintail	8/7 JP	Fhc

## OSPREY to RAIL

Osprey	8/16 JP	McN
(4)	9/6 JP	McN
Mississippi Kite	7/17 JS	RBq
Harris' Hawk	8/6 JS	RBq
Peregrine Falcon	8/30 BZ	Spq
(3)	9/6 JP	McN
Prairie Falcon	8/26 JK	Trm
	8/30 BZ-y	Ton
Sora	8/9 JS	FLk

## WADING BIRDS

Snowy Plover	7/23 BZ	McN
American Avocet	7/25 JP	Tor
Lesser Yellowlegs	7/23 BZ	McN
Solitary Sandpiper	7/17 JS	FLk
Willet	8/7 JP	McN
Upland Sandpiper	8/30 JP	Tor
Long-billed Curlew	8/7 JP	McN
Sanderling	9/6 JP	Fhc
Western Sandpiper	7/25 JP	Fhc
Baird's Sandpiper	7/25 JP	Fhc
Stilt Sandpiper	7/17 JS	FLk

## PHALAROPE THRU NIGHTHAWKS

Wilson's Phalarope (1200+)	8/23 JP	Fhc
Red-neckd Phalarp.	9/6 JP	Tor
Sabine's Gull	9/10 BZ	McN
Common Tern	9/10 BZ	McN
Foster's Tern	8/7 JP	Tor
Black Tern	8/23 JP	McN
Red-crownd Parrot(about 4 years ago 4 of these birds were reported a few times from the upper valley, many reports this year) (16birds)	8/8	MLA Emy
Yellow-billd Cuckoo	8/25 BZ-y	Ton
Great Horned Owl	8/22 DG-y	BgB
Common Nighthk.	7/17 JS	RBq



Calliope Hummingbird

## HUMMINGBIRDS THRU VIREOS

Calliope Hummer	7/23 BZ-y	Ton
Broad-tailed Humm.	7/23 BZ-y	Ton
Williamson's Sapsuk.	9/13 JP-y	BSc
Olive-sided Flyctch.	8/18 JK-y	KnJ
Willow Flycatcher	8/16 JS	FLk
Hammond's Flyctch.	9/11 BZ	Mem
Gray Flycatcher	8/5 BZ-y	Ton
Cordilleran Flyctch.	8/26 BZ	Mem
Cassin's Vireo	8/29 DA	Rim
	9/11 BZ	Mem
Warbling Vireo	7/22 JP-y	BSc

Continued on page 6

## OBSERVATIONS

Continued from page

### JAYS to WAXWINGS

Steller's Jay	9/7	JK	Trm
	9/15	MLA	Emy
Western Scrub-Jay	8/31	JK	Key
(114) During Hawk counting from 9/2-9/15		JK	Trm
Red-breasted Nuthat.	9/9	JK	Trm
<b>White-breasted Nuthat.</b>	<b>8/26</b>	<b>BZ</b>	<b>Mem</b>
Winter Wren	8/6	HJ-y	BgB
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	9/11	BZ	Mem
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	8/24	SS	ArP
Cedar Waxwing	9/11	DA	Cor

### WARBLERS

Virginia's Warbler	8/2	JS	FLk
Lucy's Warbler	7/29	JP-y	BSc
Black-throat Gray Warb.	7/28	JP-y	BSc
Townsend's Warbler	8/10	BZ-y	Ton
American Redstart	8/28	BZ	FBP
Northern Waterthrush	8/15	HJ-y	BgB
	8/28	BZ	FBP
MacGillivray's Warbler	8/23	DA	Cor
	8/24	JK-y	KnJ
Red-faced Warbler	8/15	KK	KnJ

### TANAGERS THRU SPARROWS

Hepatic Tanager	9/12	JK	Trm
Western Tanager	7/20	BJ-f	HTk
	7/23	BZ-y	Ton
Spotted Towhee	9/12	JK	Trm
Clay-colored Sprow.	9/11	BZ	Mem
<b>Black-chinned Sprow.</b>	<b>8/29</b>	<b>JK</b>	<b>KnJ</b>
Lark Bunting	7/20	BJ-f	HTk
Grasshopper Sprow.	9/13	JP	Sod
Baird's Sparrow	8/30	JP	Tor
(3 weeks earlier than the state record - 1st record for El Paso County)			
in New Mexico (2) 8/13 JP Sod			

### LONGSPUR to DICKCISSEL

Chesnut-collar Lngspr.	9/13	JP	Sod
(about 1 month early)			
Black-headed Grosbk.	7/23	BZ-y	Ton
<b>Lazuli Bunting</b>	<b>8/26</b>	<b>JK</b>	<b>FBP</b>
Painted Bunting	7/17	JS	RBq
	8/2	BZ-y	Ton
Dickcissel	9/6	JP	McN

## ON THE TRAIL

Continued from page

### YOUNG FOLKS DAY

Bring your pre-teen and teenagers to the Crossroads ponding area, so that they may learn about our wildbirds of the valley. If you no longer have young people at home bring your grand-kids, neices and nephews and/or the neighbors yung-uns.

Date: Sunday Nov. 23d  
 Time: 3 PM (sunset will be at 5:10)  
 Where: Doniphan and Mesa  
 (Crossroads Ponding area)  
 Instructors: Chapter Birders

### FRIENDS OF HUECO TANKS

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

#### Bird Identification Tours

Sunday Nov. 16 8:08 AM  
 Sunday Dec. 21 8:08 AM

Please check in at the Headquarters.  
 Reservations and Information 857-1135.  
 Leader Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson 757-1876.

### LOOKING AHEAD

#### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Hueco Tanks Count Sun. Dec. 14  
 (Call Bob 757-1876)

El Paso Count Thur. Jan. 1  
 (Call Jimmy Z 505-541-8083)

## Wyer Tramway Hawkwatch

John Kiseda continues with his hawkwatch/bird migration observations at the Ranger Peak tramway platform, which will continue through the Fall.

Come enjoy the spectacular views & hopefully sight more than a few interesting birds. A few Texas Master Naturalists & George Barnett are currently helping with this project, but John still needs many more willing and competent observers to expand the observation efforts.

Don't be bashful, if you are unsure of your skills, because training sessions do take place, in the field, at the tramway, and in the classroom (besides the best training of all, which is actually conducting observations. Here are some of the observations, so far this season:

Osprey & Ferruginous hawk  
Sharp-shinned and Coopers' hawks  
Kestrels & Red-tailed hawks  
N. Harrier & Swainson's hawk  
Prairie falcon & Peregrine Falcon

Many smaller birds have also been seen, including 5 species of warbler, 6 species of flycatcher, various sparrows, hermit thrushes, house wrens, tanagers, and green-tailed towhees. On 9/9, I had a red-breasted nuthatch. I have added 14 new species to the bird checklist, one of the most recent being a female or immature hepatic tanager on 9/12. Since 9/2, 122 W. scrub jays have been observed (35 seen on one recent day, between ~ 9 am & 11 am). Please contact John at the zoo, at 521-1850 during the day, or at night at 533-4615.

## Conservation Organizations

Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue  
[www.whc.net/cdwr](http://www.whc.net/cdwr)

El Paso Zoo 521-1850  
[www.elpasozoo.org](http://www.elpasozoo.org)

Keystone Heritage Park 581-7920  
[Keystonepark.com](http://Keystonepark.com) [keystonepark.org](http://keystonepark.org)

Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park  
[www.cdnpp.org](http://www.cdnpp.org) (505) 524-3334

Friends of Rio Bosque 747-8663

Friends of Hueco Tanks 857-1135

Southwest Environmental Center  
[Severn.swec@zianet.com](mailto:Severn.swec@zianet.com)

Franklin Mountain Wilderness Coalition  
[www.iloveparks.com/fmw/](http://www.iloveparks.com/fmw/)

A call for your reports on bird sightings at Keystone Heritage Park:

If you go birding at this site, please contact me and let me know what birds you saw during your trips. I am still attempting to "add to" the bird checklist that has been compiled for the site & there are still a few "gaps" in the lists. For example, I have not yet been able to document that anyone has seen a goldfinch at Keystone Marsh & I would think that some of these birds should have been observed using this site. I have received information from only a very few people and am still in need of whatever information YOU may have! Please send me information that you have regarding bird species seen, the dates of the observations, the numbers of individuals of observed, etc. Contact John Kiseda in the evenings at 533-4615 (phone and fax). THANKS!

### EL PASO NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY MONTHLY MEETINGS AT THE CENTENNIAL MUSEUM on the UTEP CAMPUS

BEFORE EACH MEETING

6:30-7:00pm "Using Keys to Unlock the Door of Plant Identification"

Dr. Paul Hyder will be teaching the basic tools needed to identify native plants.

Wynn Anderson will conduct "Plant Clinic Services" so, bring a photo or a plastic bag of your plant samples, prepare your questions, and get ready to find the answers that your garden has been looking for.

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9TH AT 7:00 PM**

**DR. PAUL HYDER: "THE CRYPTIC CHEMISTRY OF THE CREOSOTE BUSH"**

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH AT 7:00 PM**

**SPEAKER: JACK MAKEPEACE, PRESIDENT OF THE EL PASO CACTUS AND ROCK CLUB**

Non-members are always welcome.

El Paso/Trans-Pecos  
 Audubon Society  
 P.O. Box 972441  
 El Paso, Texas 79997

Nonprofit Organization  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 El Paso, Texas  
 Permit #2440

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

**Dates to Remember**

Call Bob Johnson for details 757-1876

**October**

**Pot Luck at Feather Lake**  
 Saturday, 4th

**Keystone Featherfest**  
 Saturday, 4th

**Rio Bosque**  
 Saturday, 8th

**W. Cottonwood Springs**  
 Sunday, 12th

**Rio Bosque**  
 Saturday, 18th

**Hueco Tanks Event**  
 Weekend 18 & 19

**Rio Bosque**  
 Sunday, 19th

**November**

**Day at Rio Bosque**  
 Saturday, 1st

**Rio Bosque**  
 Sunday, 2nd

**Board Meeting**  
 Monday, 10th

**Rio Bosque**  
 Saturday, 15th

**Rio Bosque & Friends of Hueco Tanks**  
 Sunday, 16th

**General Meeting**  
 Monday, 17th

**Crossroads Young People's**  
 Sunday, 23rd

**December**

**General Meeting**  
 Monday, 8th

**X-mas Bird Count Hueco Tanks**  
 Sunday 14th

**Hueco Tanks B.I.T.**  
 Sunday, 21st

**January**

**X-mas Bird Count El Paso**  
 Thursday, 1st





## Healthy Bird Feeding, Watering & Hanging Out

by, John Kiseda

Now that the fall/winter season has arrived it is a good time to remind ourselves that we need to put some extra effort in keeping our feathered friends that visit with us, healthy and whole.

**Bird baths** and feed stations concentrate numerous birds in a small area, and birds being birds, they have no way to prevent themselves from going to the bathroom wherever they tend to spend time (don't hold this against them, they can't help it; they just don't have the internal body parts to "hold it in" till they reach a more appropriate place for a "toilette"). This means that birds that utilize our feeders and baths, tend to come into frequent contact with feces and other items that can be sources of disease. Other unpleasant and harmful things such as molds, fungus, etc. can also arise from the buildup of old, wet, uncollected food items and seed husks at feeders or feed areas. With the potent and deadly spread of avian diseases such as salmonellosis and trichomoniasis in the past few years, it behooves us to do our best in maintaining clean feeding and watering areas. Here are some suggestions on how to keep the little guys that are nice enough to visit us, healthy!

**Water** Bird baths should be cleaned out and receive fresh water, daily or more often, if necessary. Bird baths should be scrubbed, cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis (bleach, if used/diluted as directed, is the disinfectant of choice because of its effectiveness, safe use and low cost); for my wife and I, this means at least twice a week in the fall/winter months. Use of a scrubbee pad or a similar scrub/sponge pad really helps in removing those "stubborn patches".

**Solid Food** If possible, try to replace seed in your feeder only when it is practically empty; this makes it much easier to do a "quick whisk" or similar type of almost effortless clean-up on an almost daily basis, without having to possibly either throw out much "good seed" or feeding out much "bad seed". Seed gravity feeders, platform feeders and similar devices should be regularly cleaned out, but soap/water cleaned and bleach disinfected, irregularly, as indicated. Start out by removing all old seed husks and any food that appears unfit to be eaten. Then, as necessary (this depends on you, your feeder type, the amount of birds that visit your feeders, the weather, etc.; possibly try to envision you yourself eating food out of that feed device, in judging this) clean with soap & water and then disinfect (be sure to let your feed device dry thoroughly before placing food in it, otherwise you'll be creating a nice humid area for horrible things to multiply and go forth to wreak havoc). Also don't forget to regularly clean those areas near and around your feeders where hulls, seeds, bread, fruit, etc. fall and build-up (such as the ground underneath your feeder).

**Sort of Solid Food** If you feed suet, be sure to regularly check that it hasn't gone rancid, and clean/disinfect the funky device that holds the suet, as needed. One way to cut back on your clean-up time and effectiveness with suet holders is to purchase ones that have a plastic coating (these are pretty cheap even with the suet price included and usually can be found in town) or try to find and use the flexible plastic net bags that produce is sold in.

**Liquid Food** For those of you who still have hummingbird feeders out, be sure to clean (be sure to use a bottle brush, a soft scrubbee pad or similar to remove residual sugar build-up) & disinfect them on a regular basis (an every three to four day interval should be safe, as our ambient high temperatures reach the 60's & 70's). Be sure to rinse feeders well before reuse. Those of us that live near the foothills, tend to have a few hummers "about" almost year round and the most recent articles that I have read reinforced my own inclination that it is "OK" to keep feeders "up" even in the winter time (at home & at the zoo, we keep feeders "active" for any individuals that have decided for whatever reason not to migrate further south, and for any latecomers that may straggle past on the heels of a cold weather front). Your keeping a feeder "on-line" throughout the winter, may provide a VITAL lifeline for a few, "in need", hummers!

**Miscellaneous** Also be sure to routinely clean those areas where "your" birds really like to hang-out, roost and perch such as that favorite rock wall, branch or bush of theirs, because these areas will also be of concern due to fecal build-up. My wife and I favor the "blast it with the hose" technique

**Have a great time feeding, caring for and watching your feathered friends in the coming months!**