



The Roadrunner

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

Inside the Roadrunner

Chapter Info	2
Sanctuary	3
Calendar	4

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.

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



Next General Meeting
Mon., October 19, 2020, 7 p.m.
 (a virtual meeting via Zoom link)

**The 2020 Migration in El Paso and Environs:
 A Year to Remember**

John Groves

(Our October General Meeting will again be a virtual meeting. You will need to register in advance [here](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.)

Our Fall Migration has been superb! It started early and was very strong and steady. Energetic and enthusiastic birder John Groves will be our speaker. He will discuss possible reasons for the strength of this migration, species that came through as well as show photos he has taken here and in Arizona. Join us on Monday, October 19!

WESTERN YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS RETAIN THREATENED STATUS

On Nov 3, 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) listed the Yellow-billed Cuckoo population in the western United States, Canada and Mexico as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Included in this listing were cuckoos found in the Rio Grande Valley in both southern New Mexico and Trans-Pecos Texas.

Less than 3 years later, on May 3, 2017, a group of livestock, resource-extraction and property-rights entities petitioned the USFWS to strip the cuckoo of its threatened status. They contended 1) the cuckoo's western populations "do not constitute a discrete and significant distinct population segment (DPS)" and 2) the USFWS overstated the threats to the species in the West because it assumed western cuckoos require "large expanses of low-elevation cottonwood-willow riparian woodlands for breeding." To support this second contention, the petition cited indications that western cuckoos may be breeding in other habitats.

The USFWS concluded the petition did not provide substantial information to support delisting based on an erroneous DPS analysis, but that delisting may be warranted based on the information presented regarding additional habitat use. On June 27, 2018, the USFWS began a status revue to determine whether the western population of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo should be delisted.

Continued on page 2

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

Officers

President: Scott Cutler, 581- 6071
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: Star Posada, 407-6442
Hospitality: vacant
Membership: Elizabeth Chase, 539-1191
Newsletter Editor: Kathleen Whelen, 820-1895
Programs: Susie Schneider, 542-3041
Publications: Jane Fowler, 598-2448
Publicity: Heather Rivera, 212-2825
Sanctuary: John Sproul, 545-5157
Website: vacant
Facebook: Kevin Floyd, 613-6354

**The Audubon
 Foundation of
 Texas**



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

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS continued

That review is now complete. The conclusion, published in the [Sep 16 Federal Register](#): “We found that the threats identified in the final listing rule are still acting on the species and continue to affect the cuckoo’s viability....Current yellow-billed cuckoo breeding populations are fragmented and geographically isolated. The western yellow-billed cuckoo continues to meet the definition of a threatened species. Therefore, we find that delisting the western yellow-billed cuckoo is not warranted.”

The National Audubon Society provided [detailed comments](#) as part of the status review and [applauded the decision](#): “Audubon is pleased that this bird will continue to enjoy federal protections **as it struggles for survival against all the threats it faces**. Thanks to everyone who contributed science information and spoke up for this bird!”

Join us on Facebook!



There is now an El Paso Audubon Society group on Facebook. Our aim is to provide a space for people around El Paso to share pictures, sightings, and other information about birds and conservation.

All levels of pictures are welcome. If you are looking for help with identification, please include the location and date of the picture, as both are important with narrowing the possibilities.

Conservation Organizations

Greater Big Bend Coalition
<https://greaterbigbend.wordpress.com/>

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

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

Keystone Heritage Park 581-7920
www.keystoneheritagepark.com

Asombro Institute
 (Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park)
 (575) 524-3334 www.asombro.org

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

Southwest Environmental Center
 (575) 522-5552
www.wildmesquite.org

Franklin Mt. Wilderness Coalition
www.franklinmountains.org/

Celebration of Our Mountains
www.celebmtns.org

AT FEATHER LAKE

In the late 1990's, in anticipation of a need for additional holding capacity, the City of El Paso began partial excavation of a second stormwater basin immediately west of Feather Lake. Known as Feather Lake II, the basin at this 23-acre site was initially excavated to a depth of 5 feet to provide fill for a construction project elsewhere.

The plan was to continue excavation in future years. When the storms of 2006 prompted the City to develop a stormwater master plan for El Paso, completion of Feather Lake II became part of that plan. In 2010, the basin was excavated an additional 13 feet deep. The area of maximum depth occupies some 10.5 acres.

The Feather Lake II basin is thus deeper and closer to the water table than our Feather Lake I. In the years since 2010, a nice mix of native river-valley vegetation – Rio Grande cottonwoods, Goodding's willows, coyote willows, tornillo, honey mesquite, seepwillow, willow baccharis and more – has developed within Feather Lake II.

Also in that mix is a fair amount of young saltcedar. Over the years, Boy Scouts with Troop 4 have developed considerable skill removing saltcedars at Feather Lake as part of Eagle Scout service projects. Now, they've turned their attention to Feather Lake II.

Christopher Torres got the ball rolling in July 2019. This summer, Hampton Perez and Marco Melchor both led Eagle service projects removing saltcedars at Feather Lake II. There is still work to be done, but additional Eagle candidates are stepping up to contribute. And Feather Lake II is evolving into a hidden gem of a natural area.

Speaking of work, our next Feather Lake workday is **Sat., October 10**, starting at **8 a.m.** We'll be following appropriate COVID-19 safety guidelines as we remove accumulated trash from the basin. Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux in El Paso, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave. Bring your mask.

Audubon at

Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

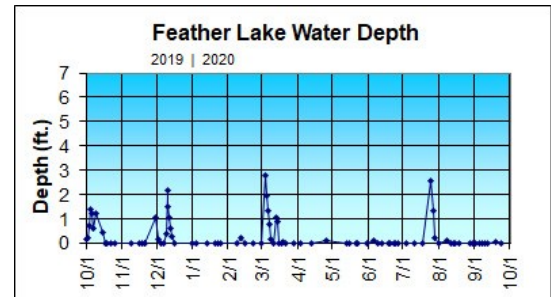


In November, tours at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park are tentatively set to resume:

8 a.m., Sat., November 14 (Birding tour)
9 a.m., Sun., November 29
 (Introductory tour)

We'll be following COVID-19 safety guidelines. Participants should maintain appropriate social distancing and wear a mask. 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 (Exit 48A), turn left onto Pan American and travel 1.5 miles. Information: 747-8663.

For up-to-date information on tours, birds and water conditions at Rio Bosque, check www.riobosque.org.



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

**National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Application.**

Yes, I'd like to join. Please enroll me as a member of 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 97194
Washington, DC 20090-7194**

Local Chapter Code **C1ZW100Z**

Dates to Remember

October

Sat 10: **Feather Lake Workday**
Mon 12: **Board Meeting**
Mon 19: **General Meeting**
(virtual—2020 Migration)

November

Mon 9: **Board Meeting**
14 & 29: **Rio Bosque**
Mon 16: **General Meeting**
(Virtual -TBA)

December

Mon 7: **Board Meeting**
Holiday Meeting

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 & 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