



# The Roadrunner

## Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

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### 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](mailto:jsproul@utep.edu).

### Albertson's ...

Every time you swipe your Community Partners Card, you earn cash for the Audubon Society.



Now isn't that a good reason to shop at Albertsons?

### A Wild and Scenic Photo Journey

Monday, April 19, 2010 at 7:00 pm

The Rio Grande Campus of El Paso Community College,  
100 West Rio Grande, Building 4010, Rm 119

Dr. Dwayne Marrott, who won first place in three out of five divisions of the December 2009 Holiday Photo Contest, will present a selection of his wildlife and scenic photos at the El Paso Audubon General Meeting, Monday, April 19, at 7:00 p.m., in Room 119, Building 4010, of the Rio Grande Campus of El Paso Community College, at 100 West Rio Grande. Don't miss this exciting program presented by a keen observer of the natural world!

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### The State of the Birds


Monday, May 17, 2010 at 7:00 pm

The Rio Grande Campus of El Paso Community College,  
100 West Rio Grande,  
Building 4010, Rm 119



Ursula Sherrill will speak at the Rio Grande Campus of EPCC, 100 West Rio Grande, Building 4010, Rm 119 on Monday, May 19 at 7:00 p.m., on "State of the Birds," a scientific analysis of 42 years of Audubon Texas Christmas Bird Counts. Ms. Sherrill

will also discuss the results of conservation partnership programs launched by Audubon Texas in response to declines of common birds. The work of individual landowners and conservation groups partnered with Audubon across the state is central to sustaining bird diversity, according to Iliana Peña, the Director of Education and Conservation for Audubon Texas. One initiative on which the speaker will focus is the Important Bird Areas Program (IBA), which restores and protects historically critical habitats. For more information, call 526-7725, or email: [usherrill@miners.utep.edu](mailto:usherrill@miners.utep.edu)



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

### Birdathon 2010

Let's get ready for Birdathon 2010, a fun event taking place on the weekend of **May 1-2!**

This event is the primary fund-raiser for El Paso Audubon Society. Portions of the proceeds from the Birdathon will be donated to the following organizations that benefit wildlife of the Northern Chihuahuan Desert.



**Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary**  
**Rio Bosque Wetlands Park**  
**Texas Audubon Society**  
**El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Chapter**

If you would like to participate in the annual bird count, now is a good time to begin sharpening your bird-identification skills and talking with friends and relatives you think may like to sponsor you.

### 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  
[www.keystoneheritagepark.org](http://www.keystoneheritagepark.org)

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

Friends of Rio Bosque 747-8663  
[www.riobosque.org](http://www.riobosque.org)

Southwest Environmental Center  
(505) 522-5552  
[www.wildmesquite.com](http://www.wildmesquite.com) [swec@zianet.com](mailto:swec@zianet.com)

Franklin Mt. Wilderness Coalition  
[www.franklinmountains.org/](http://www.franklinmountains.org/)

**General meetings are held at the Rio Grande Campus of El Paso Community College, 100 West Rio Grande, corner of West Rio Grande and Oregon, Building 4010, in Room 119.**

**There is parking behind the building on Oregon Street and also on Rio Grande Avenue.**

**Directions: From I-10-heading west, take the Mesa DOWNTOWN route**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Head west toward N Kansas St - 0.1 km | 2. Slight left at E Yandell Dr - 0.4 km            |
| 3. Turn right at N El Paso St - 0.3 km   | 4. Take the 1st right onto W Rio Grande Ave - 35 m |

**Directions: From I-10 heading east, take DOWNTOWN EXIT**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Continue straight until Oregon Street               | 2. Turn left on Oregon  |
| 3. Continue about 4 blocks                             | 4. Turn left into parking lot behind building, or go to W. Rio Grande |
| 5. Turn left on W. Rio Grande; enter 100 W. Rio Grande |   |

## AT FEATHER LAKE

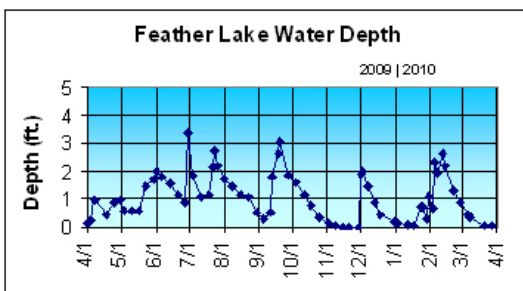
The water level at Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary continued its roller-coaster ride over the past 2 months. Rain in early February brought the lake to 2.6 feet deep. The water level then dropped steadily until the basin went dry in mid-March. Finally, late March brought the first irrigation water to the basin. At this writing, the central part of the basin is flooded; the east and west parts are still dry.

Our hope is intermittent deliveries of irrigation water will keep at least part of the basin flooded into the summer. If this happens, Feather Lake will remain open to the public through the end of May.

With or without water, Feather Lake will also be open on **Sat., June 5**, for our bi-monthly work-day. It starts at **8 a.m.** Join us to enjoy the cool, green expanse of the lake's cottonwood-willow bosque and to help with ongoing maintenance.

Work on excavation of the Feather Lake II basin, immediately west of Feather Lake, is now underway. Come on down and check it out. Feather Lake II looks bare and open right now – much like Feather Lake after it was expanded in 1986-87. Feather Lake has changed dramatically in the years since. Take a look at Feather Lake today, and you can glimpse the future of Feather Lake II 20+ years from now.

Audubon's Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux in El Paso, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave. Hours are 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays and 2 p.m. to dusk on Sundays. Admission is free.



## Audubon at RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK



Rio Bosque now has **two** pairs of White-tailed Kites. For the latest on what is being seen, check the recent-bird-sightings page on the Park's website, [www.riobosque.org](http://www.riobosque.org).

Upcoming free walking tours:

- **8 a.m. Sat., April 10 (Bird tour)**
- **4 p.m. Sun., Apr 25 (Wildflower tour)**
- **4 p.m. Sun., May 2 (Wildflower tour)**
- **8 a.m. Sat., May 8 (Bird 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.



## **Percha Dam, Saturday** **April 10, 2010**

We travel on I-25 (about 1 ½ hours) to Percha Dam and Caballo Lake state parks. Herring Gulls are frequently spotted at Caballo and Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Eastern and Western bluebirds have been observed at Percha. Mergansers and cormorants fish in the lake just above the dams.



**Date:** Saturday,  
April 10, 2010

**BRING LUNCH!**

**Time:** 7:30 a.m.

**Meet at:** The

Shell Station and Dairy Queen at the intersection of Transmountain Road and I-10.

**Reservations and Information:** Ursula Sherrill 526-7725; [usherrill@miners.utep.edu](mailto:usherrill@miners.utep.edu)

### **FeatherFest**

**What:** FeatherFest celebration will be held Saturday, April 24 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Keystone Heritage Park located at 4200 Doniphan in the El Paso Desert Botanical Garden. EPTP Audubon Society will have a table there with photos of the birds of Keystone, chapter literature, and spotting scopes set up so festival goers can view water birds, waders, and shorebirds at the wetland. We will probably see a Pied-billed Grebe and also Mexican Mallard, Cinnamon Teal and Bufflehead ducks. We hope to see a Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Greater Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, and Long-billed Dowitcher. A large group of Ring-billed Gulls will probably drop in, possibly accompanied by a rare gull.

**When:** 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

**Where:** Keystone Heritage Park, 4200 Doniphan Drive, near Frontera Drive.

**Information:** Ursula Sherrill, 526-7725, [usherrill@miners.utep.edu](mailto:usherrill@miners.utep.edu)

## **Field Trips**

### **Big Bend National Park**

**Fri., Sat., & Sun., April 16, 17, and 18, 2010**

Big Bend National Park in Texas is one of the top birding areas in the U. S. Many of the exceptional geologic formations, fossils, plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish that occur there are found nowhere else. We will hike to Boot Springs, elevation 6,300 feet, Boot Canyon, and the Pinnacle, which are the favorite nesting areas of the Colima Warbler, the most famous bird in the park. Big Bend is the only place where it can be found.



We will also watch for Hutton's Vireo, Acorn Woodpecker, Mexican Jay, Common Raven, Zone-tailed Hawk,

White-breasted Nuthatch, Bushtits, Broad-tailed and Blue-throated hummingbirds. We will stay in the Rio Grande Village campground, elevation 1,850 feet, on the river at the eastern end of the park. Here Gray Hawks have nested in the past. Birds found in this area are Vermilion Flycatcher, Orchard and Hooded oriole, Lesser Nighthawk, Elf Owl, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Summer Tanager, and Painted and Varied buntings and much more. The park checklist has 50 warbler species alone.

If you think you would like to join this weekend trip, contact Ursula Sherrill at 915-526- 7725, or [usherrill@miners.utep.edu](mailto:usherrill@miners.utep.edu). I will send you an itinerary, map and other details. We must have 9 people sign up in order to make the trip.

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

## Memorial Park and Arroyo Park Sun., May 16, 2010

**What:** Warbler migration should be near its peak and Memorial Park is always one of the better places to spot them. Also a stop at Arroyo Park could produce a few rare ones. In addition to warblers, orioles, vireos, possibly a tanager may be found in these lovely city parks.

**When:** 7:30 a.m., Sun., May 16

**Where:** The Garden Center in Memorial Park, 3500 Grant St.

**Coordinator:** Ursula Sherrill, 526-7725, or [usherrill@miners.utep.edu](mailto:usherrill@miners.utep.edu)



Hooded Oriole (Eskin 2008)

## Heron Rookery Sat., June 5, 2010

**What:** We hope to see Snowy Egrets, Cattle Egrets, and Black-crowned Night-Herons sitting in their nests with young. If time permits, we will go to other good birding sites.



Cattle Egret (Eskin 2008)

**When:** 7:15 a.m., Sat., June 5, 2010

**Where:** The parking lot in front of Burlington Coat Factory. Take Yarborough Exit 28B on I-10 East. At the light, turn left under I-10. BCF is up on the right.

**Coordinator:** Bob Johnson, [wildbirderbob@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wildbirderbob@sbcglobal.net), or 751-0125.

## Sierra Vista in Southeast Arizona Fri., Sat., Sun., and Mon., May 28-31

Southeast Arizona is an international magnet for birders seeking an outstanding experience in the field. More than 400 bird species are found here annually, and 514 species have been observed. Of these, 36 birds are found nowhere else in the U.S. and more than 40 occur only in this border region with Mexico (Taylor 1999).

Some of the birds we will seek are the Broad-billed, Violet-crowned, Magnificent, and White-eared hummingbirds. Also on our wish list are the Spotted Owl, Sulphur-bellied and Buff-breasted flycatchers, and Tropical, Thick-billed and Couch's kingbirds. We could see the Gray Hawk, Elegant Trogon, Bridled Titmouse, Bell's Vireo and Abert's Towhee, as well. We are almost certain to find the Mexican Jay, Acorn and Gila woodpeckers, Cassin's Kingbird, and Painted Redstart. Though we will plan to lodge in Sierra Vista, AZ, we will be birding in Fort Huachuca's Garden Canyon, the Nature Conservancy's Ramsey Canyon, Miller Canyon and the Hummingbird Sanctuary at Beatty's Guest Ranch, San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve and the Kino Springs Golf Course.

This Memorial Day weekend trip runs from Friday, May 28 until Monday, May 31. We will stay in Sierra Vista at one of the many motels. Camping facilities are scarce. If you are interested in joining this trip, contact Janet Perkins, [jntperk@elp.rr.com](mailto:jntperk@elp.rr.com), Mark Perkins, [mperkins4@elp.rr.com](mailto:mperkins4@elp.rr.com), (637-3521), or Bob Johnson, [wildbirderbob@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wildbirderbob@sbcglobal.net) (751-0125), for more details, an itinerary and map.

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

Nonprofit Organization  
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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

Local Chapter code:

**COZW100Z**

**Dates to Remember Call Ursula Sherrill for details 526-7725**

April

Sat 10: **Percha Dam**  
10 & 25: **Rio Bosque**  
Mon 12: **Board Meeting**  
Mon 19: **Gen Meeting**  
Sat 24: **FeatherFest**  
24 & 25: **Keystone**

May

1 & 2: **Birdathon**  
2 & 8 **Rio Bosque**  
Mon 10: **Board Meeting**  
Sun 16: **Memorial Park**  
Mon 17: **Gen. Meeting**  
28-30: **Sierra Vista**  
29 & 30: **Keystone**

June

Sat 5: **Feather Lake**  
Sat 5: **Heron Rookery**  
Mon 14 **Board Meeting**  
26 & 27: **Keystone**

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**

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## Lets “Fly” into Action! Audubon’s Birdathon! 2010

Birdathon counters are already “in training” in preparation for Birdathon 2010!

### What is Birdathon, you might ask?

*One thing is for sure, it’s not your average bird count or fund raiser! Birdathon is unusual and different: a wild weekend of birding and our organization’s most important source of income for conservation & education programs.*

**Birdathon! 2010 will occur on May 1st–2nd.**

We hope you can join us for a full, rewarding weekend of birding by being a **sponsor** and possibly even a counter (if you want to become part of the “Birdathon Flock” by becoming a Birdathoner yourself, contact Jane Fowler at 598-2448 or Betty Fisbeck at 581-0174).

### **Birdathon! 2010 will benefit the following programs and projects:**

#### **CHAPTER OPERATIONS & FEATHER LAKE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**

Scouts, students and adults can enjoy seeing birds up close in a natural habitat. When the lake has water, we have docents on duty to answer questions, provide printed trail guides & lend binoculars.

#### **RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK**

Each year, this site along the Rio Grande becomes more valuable as habitat for birds and other wildlife.

#### **AUDUBON TEXAS**

Our support helps keep National Audubon’s state office an effective voice for birds, other wildlife and their habitats in Texas.

### **How Birdathon Works**

On the weekend of **May 1-2**, our dedicated Birdathon counters will be busy scouring the countryside, trying to find as many bird species as possible, in a single 24-hour blitz. These hardy, energized & intrepid individuals will start early, stay out late, visit varied wildlife habitats and give their eyes, ears and bird knowledge a full workout. Why do they push themselves so hard? For the pleasure of a day out in the field, for the chance to collect meaningful data for a nationwide census project, for a test of their birding skills and **most importantly, for a better West Texas environment.**

Each counter will be backed by sponsors who pledge either a given amount for each species seen or a fixed total amount. Most counters will identify 50 to 100 species. A pledge of, say \$0.50 per species for 60 species would result in a contribution of \$30. 95% of Birdathon income goes to the programs and projects; 5% to fundraising (printing, paper and postage).

Looking for someone to sponsor for Birdathon? This year's outstanding counters are a dedicated bunch, most of whom are experienced Birdathoners. If you supported one of these people last year, please give them a call & sponsor them again. If you don't know any of the counters personally and don't know whom to choose, please give Jane (598-2448) or Betty (581-0174) a call. All or most of these hardworking people will be back at it this year and ready to do their part for the Birdathon 2010! **HOW ABOUT YOU? WILL YOU DO YOUR PART?**

**This year's Birdathon counters:**

|                        |                      |                         |                        |
|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Lois Balin</b>      | <b>Cliff Eidson</b>  | <b>Carlos Humphreys</b> | <b>Susan Schneider</b> |
| <b>Craig Braginton</b> | <b>Betty Fisbeck</b> | <b>Bob Johnson</b>      | <b>Ursula Sherrill</b> |
| <b>Scott Cutler</b>    | <b>Jane Fowler</b>   | <b>John Kiseda</b>      | <b>John Sproul</b>     |
| <b>Ben Ditlevson</b>   | <b>John Groves</b>   | <b>Marty Morrow</b>     | <b>Kathy Whelen</b>    |
| <b>Laura Ditlevson</b> |                      |                         |                        |

**Please pick one or more individuals and give them your support!**

**Birdathon 2010 POT LUCK Sunday, May 2nd at 6:00pm**

Join us for the POST-BIRDATHON pot luck picnic. This year we will gather on Sunday, May 2nd, the last day of the Birdathon. While enjoying good food, we will be totaling all the counter's sightings, unusual birds and other events of the weekend. Those who saw the most species and raised the most money will be recognized at the May 17th general meeting, so plan to join us then.

Bring something to share: salad, dessert or a favorite casserole. The chapter will furnish tableware, coffee, tea, sodas, fruit juice. Everyone is invited, **sponsors, counters, & all chapter members.** The Potluck/Picnic is May 2nd at 6:00pm at the home of Janet and Mark Perkins, 813 Montclair Drive.

Whether it's \$0.25 per species or \$1.00 per species or any given amount, we hope you will consider a pledge to Birdathon 2010. Please pick one or more counters to sponsor and return the enclosed coupon today. **Your generosity and support help make Audubon Birdathon a success.**

.....

**El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society**

**BIRDATHON! 2010**

YES! I'll sponsor \_\_\_\_\_  
for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per species for each species she/he finds  
\_\_\_\_\_ on the Birdathon.

From \_\_\_\_\_

**YES!** I'll sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ for  
a flat \$ amount of \_\_\_\_\_.

Address \_\_\_\_\_

I will add a bonus of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ if my  
Birdathon counter sees a \_\_\_\_\_.

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form by May 1 to:**

My tax deductible gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsoring \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.  
Payable to El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society.

**Birdathon! 2010**  
**c/o Betty Fisbeck**  
**613 W. Sunset**  
**El Paso, TX 79922**

**Thank you for your generous Birdathon pledge! Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law**