

The Roadrunner

Newsletter of the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

Birdathon 2004

Chihuahuan Desert Land Trust Endeavor

There have been a few recent meetings, to discuss the possibility of trying to preserve open space and local and regional natural areas, via the creation of a public land trust entity. Bob Johnson and Ursula Sherrill have been our representatives at these meetings. If you have interest in these meetings or would like to participate in them, please contact Bob J. at 757-1876 or Ursula S. at 833-7339.

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As of early May, approximately \$5000 had been raised by this year's bird counting fundraiser! First off we want to give a big, heartfelt "Thank You" to our corporate Birdathon sponsors; Sun Harvest, Albertson's and Walgreen's. We appreciate your participation and support for our conservation endeavors, and your community spirit in El Paso is truly noteworthy.

As usual, we also want to say congratulations and thanks to our hardworking & observant counters, and our supportive sponsors! Birdathon and its resultant "good works" and achievements wouldn't exist, without you! If anyone has not yet sponsored one of our counters, it isn't too late (you'll make us very happy).

Our annual post-Birdathon potluck dinner & wrap-up event was once again filled with plenty of excellent food, great conversation, plenty of prizes & birding "adventure" stories, galore!

The lucky winners of some of our Birdathon sponsor prizes, were as follows:

Mary Ann Vernon won a \$100 gift card for Best Buy!

Polly Fogel won a delightful, framed photograph of a Scissor-tailed flycatcher!

Lisa Studdard won a pair of Minolta brand Activa 8 x 25 binoculars!

Jim Paton won a birding book, for counting the most species of birds, 114

John Kiseda won an Albertson's gift card & Leatherman tool, (Chimney Swift).

Darbie Braginton, best Birdathon2004 story (Dad locked the keys in the car).

Once again, I'd like to thank Jane Fowler, Betty Fisbeck, Flora Pittard, Carol Maxwell-Moreno and Ursula Sherrill for all their hard work in coordinating Birdathon 2004! Thanks, Ladies!!! Everyone involved in this annual fundraiser should be proud of their efforts to help provide funds for our chapter's numerous conservation and educations endeavors.

THANKS AGAIN, ALL! WE COULDN'T DO IT, WITHOUT ALL OF YOU! John Kiseda, Birdathon Co-coordinator

No General Meetings in the summer

The next meeting will be **Monday**, **September 19th** at 7:00pm

UTEP Centennial Museum Sun Bowl & University

Interested in a Fall, Barnes & Noble Bookfair?

Audubon member, Ursula Sherrill has been in contact with the Sunland Park Barnes & Noble to discuss the possibility of a future bookfair event. This event could raise some funds for the chapter, enable members to by books at a discount, while also promoting literacy. If you think that this is a good idea, or would be interested in helping out with this possible project, please contact Ursula at 833-7339

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President's Corner John Kiseda

Have a Fun & Mellow Summer! Now that our yearly cycle of high daily has once again arrived temperatures (May 19th was our first 100 F day of the season!), I hope that you all plan on taking things a bit easier; take the opportunity to catch up on some indoor projects & to "rev up" your batteries for more fun and productive chapter activities and projects.

If you plan on going out & having birding adventures during the next few months, please be sure to start early or late in the day when the birds are most active, and the temperatures are a bit cooler. Wear a hat, drink plenty of water & make sure that someone knows what your outdoor plans are (just in case). Be prepared for a great, and somewhat different, Arizona birding experience with **Bob Johnson** over the **Memorial Day weekend**. Approximately 16 of your local birding buddies are planning on participating, & as usual great birds & a great time should be had by all.

Please consider coming out to our next Feather Lake breakfast & work day in early June (more details in this newsletter's Sanctuary article); you'll have a nice breakfast "on the chapter", get to see some nice birds & help to get some needed work done at the site.

Over the past few months, YOUR Audubon Chapter has been busy with.....

- -a nice slate of in-town weekend birding trips
- -the opening of Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary to the public (due to some water finally being in the lake)
- -the resumption of reptile and insect live-trapping efforts at Keystone Marsh
- -the Wyler Tramway State Park Hawkwatch
- -the FeatherFest event at Keystone Marsh
- -Birdathon 2004
- -the Women in the Outdoors event

In "behind the scenes" activities, Kathy Whelen has been putting the finishing touches on an updated Chapter Fact Sheet pamphlet, Bob & Beth Garcia have begun work on Spanish language versions of the new Chapter Fact Sheet & the Feather Lake Trail Guide, Betty Fisbeck, Jane Fowler, Flora Pittard, Ursula Sherrill & Carol Maxwell Moreno have been busy with Birdathon event planning and coordination, and John Sproul continues to coordinate work day activities at Feather Lake. Once again, I encourage you to become active in the chapter's events and projects; you'll have fun & will "feel" that great emotional satisfaction of volunteer accomplishment. If you can make the time to help our local wildlife and wild places, please join us in Chapter activities; we need your experience, knowledge and skills.

Chapter Web Site

http://www.gbarnett.com/eptpas/eptpashome.html

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

Thank you

Robert Newman, Game Warden
Texas Department of Fish & Game!



Your presentation was as spectacular as promised, and even more so! We appreciate your time and expertise.

(and now I check the back yard for mountain lions before the kids go out to play).

El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

Officers

President: John Kiseda, 533-4615

Vice President: open

Secretary: Nancy Wilson, 747-8614 Treasurer: Carol Nelson, 544-2521

Directors

Feather Lake: John Sproul, 545-5147 Education: Beth & Bob Garcia, 755-9119 Membership: Jane Fowler, 598-2448 Ways & Means: Flora Pittard, 852-2353

Conservation: open

Field Trips: Bob Johnson, 757-1876 Programs: Lois Balin, 774-9603 and

Virginia Galarza, 727-6399

Publicity: Kathy Kiseda, 533-4615

Special Events: Roxanne Schroeder, 533-0061

Hospitality: Scott Cutler, 581-6071
Projects: Ursula Sherrill, 526-7725 and
Carol Maxwell-Moreno, 593-0967
Publications: Kathleen Whelen, 751-2408

The Roadrunner is published six times a year.

Contributions are welcome.

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

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AT FEATHER LAKE

Rain in early April put water back in Feather Lake, but it was a temporary phenomenon. On April 13, the lake was 2.3 feet deep. It then dropped steadily over the next month and by May 15 was completely dry. In years when full allocations of river water are available to local irrigators, irrigation-carriage water helps keep the lake up in spring and summer. But this year, as last, we can expect storm runoff to be the lake's only significant source of water. Will we have another long, dry summer?

We did take advantage of the brief return of water to re-open Feather Lake to the public in late April and throughout May. Thanks go to Lupe Barrera, Bob Garcia, Joe and Inga Groff, Carol Moreno, Flora Pittard, Roxanne Schroeder, Charles Simpson and John Sproul for staffing the sanctuary during this time. Tentatively, we'll re-open in October, if we have water.

Don't forget our annual breakfast at Feather Lake on Sat., June 5, starting at 8:30 a.m. Partake in a culinary extravaganza, then help for a few hours on sanctuary projects.

Following the breakfast, your next chance to visit Feather Lake will be our workday on Sat., August 7.
Come any time after 8 a.m. to enjoy the lake in mid-summer and help with habitat-management activities. Feather Lake is located at 9500 North Loop at Bordeaux, 0.3 miles west of Americas Ave.

RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS PARK

UTEP offers free walking tours twice each month and also holds monthly community workdays at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, 4 miles from Feather Lake.

Coming up:

8 a.m. Sun., June 6 (Birds)

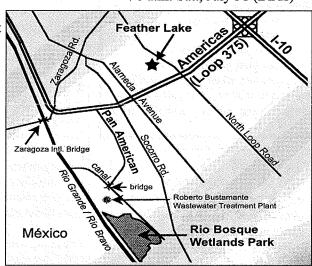
9 a.m. Sat., June 12 (Reptiles and Amphibians)

8 a.m. Sat., June 19 (Workday)

8 a.m. Sat., July 10 (Reptiles and Amphibians)

8 a.m. Sat., July 17 (Workday)

8 a.m. Sat., July 31 (Birds)



For all of these activities, 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.

Information: 747-8663.

The Fort Bliss Ponds "No Hunting" Signs Project by, John Kiseda

Last year, the chapter purchased and installed 6 "No Hunting" posts & signs along the dirt access roads that circle the pond basins that are near the Fred Hervey Sewage Plant. We had decided to do this in an attempt to try to cut back on the illegal hunting that sometimes occurs in the area, especially because species that shouldn't be hunted at all, such as shorebirds and birds of prey, have sometimes been shot by people in the past.



These signs were the type used in national wildlife refuges and other similar places and are supposed to be almost indestructible. Even though it took a lot of effort from a number of people to install the signs, by the end of the hunting season, only one sign remained; the other 5 signs were missing, post and all. We are now considering replacing the missing signs & posts prior to the beginning of Fall hunting season and trying to modify our installation methods. If anyone would want to help with sign & post installation, or help offset the costs of sign & post acquisition, please contact John K.

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Keystone Heritage Park

If you have any interest in learning about (and handling, if desired) the reptiles and invertebrates of the site, come on out & volunteer to participate in this live trapping & release project. People are currently needed for "trap checks" on Mondays, Thursdays & Fridays (trap "checks" can be done at any time during daylight hours), & training is available. Contact Charles Mayer @ 833-4140, or John K. for more information

The site's bird checklist is now up to 182 species seen, because of my recent Birdathon Chimney Swift sighting (go to the Keystone website to see the current list). If you bird the site during the next few months, please contact me if you observe any unusual birds, nesting species, or a species that isn't on the current list, I'm still hoping that if I get some more good help from people such as yourself throughout this year, we can bring the bird list up to the 200 species mark.

Please call if you see any of the birds listed below.....

"theoretically possible" species to be seen in the next months):

Willow Flycatcher Any vireo Lucy's Warbler Painted Bunting Cordilleran Flycatcher Rock Wren

Summer Tanager Hooded or Scott's Oriole

If you're interested in coming out to the site when I do my weekly site check, you're more then welcome to join me. Just call me during the week to verify my schedule & when /where we should meet.

Crossroads Pond

Have you birded there recently? A bird checklist was recently developed for the site by John Kiseda (~110 documented species seen); a number of rare, unusual species have been noted at the site, but many "common" birds, have not been noted. Please give me your sightings, if you visit this little gem of a birding spot (a site guide & bird checklist can be found on our Audubon website).

Wyjer framway Bawkwatch



This Spring's raptor migration observations at Wyler Tramway State Park, have concluded. **162 raptors** were observed during 60 hours of observation conducted by Charles & Marion Mayer, UTEP students & John K.

If you want to add to the body of knowledge regarding raptor migration in this area & want to hone your bird identification skills, come on out & give it a try, starting this August (especially because the Fall migration typically has many more raptor observations). Observer training is available, as needed. If interested, please contact John K. at the zoo, at 521-1850 during the day.

El Paso Native Plant Society

THURSDAY, JUNE 10TH AT 7:00 PM
The Centennial Museum on the UTEP Campus

The Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park: "Environmental Science Education For All Ages"

Executive Director, **Dr. Stephanie Bestelmeyer**, will present an informative slide show of the park, located just north of Las Cruces, and its' education programs that bring science to life for more than 12,000 students each year.

AFTER OUR PROGRAM, Wynn Anderson will conduct "Plant Clinic Services"

So, bring a photo or a secure plastic bag containing your plant or problem samples, prepare your questions, and get ready to find the answers that your garden has been looking for. Admission is free, non-members are always welcome. For more information, call: 588-1562 or 533-6072

Chihuahuan Desert Education Coalition

This group has decided to have a regular meeting, every other month on the 1st Tuesday. Meetings will take place at the EL Paso Zoo and begin at 10:30am and last for one hour. Contact Rick LoBello at the El Paso Zoo for more information (Ph: 521-1881).

A directory of educators and resources has been posted on the El Paso Zoo's website at

http:www.elpasozoo.org/edu/partners.htm
This directory may eventually be printed and become a
one-stop resource center for teachers wanting to learn
more about educational programs available for schools.

The group also discussed focusing on one major annual event that would promote the region and the overall mission of the organization.

Organizational Vision The Chihuahuan Desert region will be a science literate community of lifelong learners that maximizes all its resources.

Organizational Mission To collaborate efforts among public educators and CDEC to enhance and enrich science education to increase science literacy in the CD region.

Objectives

- 1. Disseminate information about CDEC.
- 2. Identify and enhance instructional interface between formal and informal educators regarding subject, content/materials, and regional state curricula standards.
- 3. Ensure on-going development and coordination of informal science education resources and information available to the regional community.
- 4. Provide a link between real-world application and inquiry with formal science and environmental education.

OBSERVATIONS

UNCOMMON - RARE - CASUAL SIGHTINGS FOR THE PERIOD

March 16, 2004 to May 15, 2004

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.

Observers:Mary Lou Alcorn; Dan Allen; Helen Bigalow; Craig Braginton; Madaline Gavit; Hugh Jameson; Bob Johnson; John Kiseda; Kathy Kiseda; Jody Lawrence; Marty Morrow; Jim Paton; Flora Pittard; Patricia Russell; Charles Simpson; John Sproul; Barry Zimmer. Mob Many observers; -y At their house; -f Field trip

Loon thru Ducks

(Ao)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)(1)	Children States of the state of
	SHNeva (ergana)
Tricologed Heron 5/8	
White-faced Ibis (50) 3/20	O JS RBq
Ross's Goose (60) 3/18	B JP FHc
Blue-winged Teal 4/10	O JS FLk
Lesser Scaup 3/24	4 MM Pul

Birds of Prey

Peregrine Falcon	3/21	JK Trm
Harris' Hawk	II Period	Mob RBq
	5/14	JS RBq
Mississippi Kite	5/1	CB Key
Osprey	4/4	BJ-f McN

Curlew to Woodpeckers

Long-billed Curlew	4/10	JS RBg
Franklin's Gull	4/17	JP Tor
California Gull	3/18	JP McN
Eurasian Collard-Dove	3/22	FP-y Hor
	4/13	PR-y STe
Great Horned Owl	3/19	MM-y MtV
Burrowing Owl	All Period	Mob RBq
Blck-chinned Hummer	3/20	MLA Emy
Rufous Hummingbird	3/18	BZ-y Ton
Lewis Woodpeaker	- Gien	IDA GOLL
	3/13	

Locations: Ant-Anthony; BBn-Big Bend; Bsc-Boy Scout; Cor-Coronado; Ewd-eastwood; Emy-Emory; FLk-Feather Lake; FHc-Fort Hancock; Hor-Horizon; KnJ-Kenyon Joyce; Key-Keystone; LaU- La Union; McN-McNary; Mem-Memorial Park; MtV-Montana Vista; Pul-Pullman; RBq-Rio Bosque; RvB-River Bend; STA-Santa Teresa Area; SRS-Stan roberts Sr; Sun-Sunland Park; Ton-Tonto; Tor-Tornillo; Trm-Tramway; VdM-Vista Del Monte; Zoo-El Paso Zoo.

Flycatchers thru Bluebirds

Eastern Phoebe	3/25	DA	LaU
Western Kingbird	4/3	JS	RBq
	4/10	HB	Ant
Cassin's Viréo	4/9	JP	Sun
	4/4	UK.	Z(0,0
	4/15	CIŞL	g Ewel
Hojritejd Sarik	5/4	87	SRS
(pair possible nesting as the	male was d	oing dis	play flight
Design Organia	4/3	JP-J	/
Brown Greeper	777 🕶		
Brown Creeper	BSc		
Brown Creeper Eastern Bluebird	da e filozofia	JP	RvB

Warhlers

Lucy's Warbler	4/9	JP 1	Sun
	4/18	BZ	Mem
Lewynsemils Warolen co	4/17	JP.	Mem
Hermit Warbler	4/1	8 JL	Wem
Black-and-White Warbler	4/18	JL	Mem
Ealmer Caragnette	(6)(6)(1)	UPA	,
	5 3 e		
Flooded Warbler	3/23	- KKG	y Knd -
Wilson's Warblet	4/13	JР	Sun
Yellow-breasted Chat	5/11	JS	RBq

N THE THAIL

FRIENDS OF HUECO TANKS

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

Bird Identification Tours

Sunday June 20 7:07 AM Sunday July 18 7:07 AM August 15 7:07 AM Sunday Please check in at the Headquarters. Reservations and Information 857-1135. Leader Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson 757-1876.

FREE BREAKFAST

Come to Feather Lake on Saturday June 5th at 8:30 AM. Free Orange Juice. Pancakes, Bacon. and Coffee. Come and enjoy the company of other great and intelligent people. After you are stuffed and can hardly move, get a little exercise by helping out around the place.

Don't forget its FREE.

HERONS

This field trip we hope to get good looks at Blackcrowned night Herons on the nest. Then move on and see Harris' Hawks and Burrowing Owls.

Date:

Sun. June 13

Time:

7:14 AM

Place:

Meet at Feather Lake. 9500 North Loop Drive





DOUBLE SUNSET

This will be a SUNSET Tour, the sun will set about 8:10 PM, along SUNSET Dr. Many young birds are now fledged and out learning how to survive. A number of Mississippi Kites have nests within the area and the young probably will not have fledged yet. We always see some great birds in the thickets along the Nemexas Drain at the west end of Sunset Drive.

DATE:

Saturday June 26th

TIME:

5:27 PM

PLACE:

Crossroads Ponding Area, Corner Mesa, Doniphan, and Country Club Road.

Leader

Bob Johnson (757-1876)

HAWKS etc.

The Swainsons Hawks that have been nesting near Painted Dunes Golf Course and the El Paso Northeast Landfill will just about be ready to fledge. Also the Red-tailed Hawk in the area also might still be at the nest. The Chihuahuan Ravens nesting on poles will probably be fledged by this time, but who knows. If time permits a stop at the Fort Bliss Ponds will follow.

Date:

Sat. July 10th

Time:

7:19 AM

Place:

Meet in the Lowes parking lot, 4531 Trans Mt. Rd., on

the front side behind Taco Bell.

GILA CLIFF DWELLINGS

The beautiful mountain country in the vicinity of <u>Silver City</u>, <u>New Mexico</u> will be the destination of this overnight trip during the weekend of July 24 & 25. We'll be visiting the <u>Cliff Dwellings</u>, the <u>Gila Wilderness</u>, and <u>Lake Roberts</u>. This is what happened a few years ago. A White-breasted Nuthatch took seeds out of Sid's hand and a little Grace's Warbler feeding a baby (over twice as big as the Warbler) Brown-headed Cowbird, Black-headed grosbeaks and Hepatic Tanagers coming within 40 feet of the campsite.

Great camping along the Gila River, but if you would like more comfort call Doc Campbells Trading Post (505-536-9551) or the Grayfeathers Lodge (505-536-3206). If you are interested we will have a campground picnic Sat evening. Call Bob 757-1876 for meeting details and Map.

DOWN THE VALLEY

McNary, Fort Hancock, and Tornillo Reservoirs are always good for *Gulls, Ducks, Egrets, Cormorants*, and *GREBES*. Quite a few species of passerines could also be present along with some birds of prey to include *Hams' Hawk*. Lunch break will probably occur at the Tornillo Rest Area.

Date: Sunday, August 1st

Time: 7:34 AM.

Place: Meet at Feather Lake Who: Bob Johnson (757-1876)

All field trips - allowance for late arrivals, we will not leave the meeting area until about 15 minutes after the designated time. Any questions call **Bob** (915) 757-

1876 or e-mail bobwildbirderj@cs.com

New Address: Friends of Hueco Tanks

P.O. Box 961897 El Paso, TX 79996

E-mail: desertmorrow@msn.com

More Observations

Sparrows	to Oriole	•
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- F			_
Lark Sparrow	4/11	MG	Hor
Lazuli Bunting	4/27	HJ	BBn
	4/27	BZ	Mem
Painted Bunting	5/3	BZ	Tor
Hooded Oriole	3/25	BZ-y	Ton
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		•	

The Birds of El Paso's Birdathon 2004!

Well, all the observation reports are "in" from our Birdathon weekend, and here are some of the more interesting sightings.....

The total number of species observed during the "official" Birdathon count days, was 150 species, with approximately twenty counters in the field. Jim Paton found 114 hard-earned species of birds during his bird search day, outdistancing by far, all other counters; Good Job, Jim! The weekend weather was actually fairly nice, but the "cooling snap" that arrived just prior to the count days, may have "pushed" some birds out of the area, a bit "too early". Birds seen on Birdathon weekend.

"Down South, Down River"- Vermillion Flycatcher, Summer Tanager

Ft Hancock Reservoir Area- Redhead duck

McNary Reservoir Area- Osprey, Prairie Falcon, Lesser Nighthawks, Lark Sparrow

Tornillo Reservoir Area-Harris's Hawk, Forster's Terns

The Bos Dairy-Ross's Goose

Rio Bosque Wetlands Park-Burrowing Owl

Rainbow Lake- Clay-colored, White-crowned & Brewer's Sparrow

Feather Lake- Willet

Horizon City- Wilson's Snipe

Hueco Tanks S.P.- Cordilleran Flycatcher, White-throated Swift, Hermit Thrushes, Black-throated Grey Warbler, Black & White Warbler, Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeak, Green-tailed Towhee, Scott's Oriole

Hawk Alley- Red-tailed Hawk

Ft Bliss Ponds- Wilson's Phalarope, Eurasian Collared Dove, N. Harrier, Dusky Flycatcher, Cassin's Kingbird, House Wren, American Pipits, Spotted Towhee

Trans-Mountain Rd Gap- Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Common Poorwill

Memorial Park- Cassin's & Plumbeous Vireo, Virginia's Warbler, Lesser Goldfinch

Boy Scout Lane Area- Great Horned Owl

Sunset Lane Area- W. Scrub Jay, Gray Catbird,

Lombardy Area- Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Sally Homan's- Warbling Vireo, Tennessee & Yellow Warbler, Lazuli Bunting

Keystone Heritage Park- Mississippi Kites, Virginia Rail, Sora, Chimney Swift, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Bank Swallow

Have a great Summer! John Kiseda/El Paso Zoo.

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

City	State Zip	
Address		
Name		1. 5. 5.

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

> <u>W10</u> Local Chapter Code

> > 7XCHA

Dates to Remember

Call Bob Johnson for details 757-1876

<u>August</u> **Breakfast with Birds** Hawks **Board Meeting** Saturday, 5 Saturday, 10 Monday, 9 6:00pm **Feather Lake Herons Board Meeting Hueco Tanks** Sunday, 13 Monday, 12 6:00pm Sunday, 15 Hueco Tanks **Hueco Tanks** Sunday, 20 Sunday, 18 No General Meeting **Double Sunset** Gila Cliff Dwellings Saturday, 26 Sat & Sun, 24 & 25

No General Meeting

July



No General Meeting

June

Keep them in your thoughts.....

Sid Shepperd has only recently been able to go home after a recent hospital stay. **Lois Balin** continues treatment, and has "good" days & "not so

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