



# The Roadrunner

## 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)

NEWSLETTER OF THE EL PASO/TRANS-PECOS AUDUBON

Volume 32 Issue 5

December 2003 & January 2004

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

Monday, December 8, 2003  
Christmas Celebration & Photo Sharing  
Wishing You all the Joys of the Season

Plan to join us at the Garden Center on December 8th at 7:30pm for what could be your very first Christmas party of December. As with all parties, we are having lots of goodies to eat and door prizes to award. Plus, to show what a talented group you all are, we are having a photo/slide contest with a prize or prizes for everyone's favorite. The categories are: Nature—birds, animals, scenic views, Humor, Pets & Children. If we have enough entries, we can have a prize for each category. You may submit entries in all three categories if you wish, but you are limited to three photos/slides in each.

Monday, January 19, 2004  
Paul Hyder, Ph.D.  
Dinosaurs to Doves, The Origin of Birds



Dr. Hyder will discuss current hypotheses regarding the origin of birds. Come and find out about current thinking about how dinosaurs evolved to become the feathered friends we know and love.

As usual, there will be a tasty line up of snacks and treats.

## Annual Awards Banquet

The February Awards Banquet/Meeting will be held on February 21st, 2004. Mark your calendar now so you won't forget. The Awards Dinner is always a enjoyable evening with great food and even better friends. The location will be determined and advertised in the next *Roadrunner* issue.

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**Happy Holidays from the Audubon Officers & Board!**

Well, the past two months have sure gone by quickly, and the changing seasons have helped bring about a change in the local birds being seen. Almost all of our neotropical migrants have left for their wintering grounds to the south, even though a few individuals continue to "hang tough" and stay in the area [a few hummingbirds, warblers, etc.] Waterfowl such as buffleheads, mergansers, green-winged teal and snow geese have been coming into the region for a few weeks, and a few Steller's jays have been spotted.

Another sure sign of the changing seasons, is the pending change of Audubon board members and officers. I once again, invite you to become involved with our chapter on a more personal level because we can use you knowledge, experience, skills and work ethic in various ways.....

-We are in need of people to provide us with names of outstanding local people that might be able to help further the Audubon cause and be willing to serve as an officer or as a board member for the coming year.

-We are searching for a chapter president, treasurer & public relations person for the coming year.

-I also want to once again encourage you to become more actively involved with YOUR Audubon chapter, as we come together to accomplish various projects in 2004.

**WE NEED YOU!**

So please help us to do more for our community, our wildlife and wild places.

Please call me, if you can help, or have any questions about helping out in 2004.

Have a joyous, healthy holiday season with friends, family & I hope that you can find the opportunity during this busy time of year, to enjoy the wonders of our natural world with those you care about.

**As El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon members, you are entitled to borrow tapes or books from our chapter library. Make a selection at the General Meeting in December.**



**New Monthly General Meeting Site to be Located**

We have found out that the Memorial Park Garden Center will be closing at the beginning of this coming year, so we are on the lookout for a centrally located venue for our meetings. If you have a space that is available, or think that you know of one that might fit the needs of the chapter, please contact one of the Audubon officers or board members.

Also, please be on the look out for a notice of our new meeting place, in the newspaper or contact a Board member or officer soon after the holidays, to find out where we will next meet.

**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		

The Roadrunner is published six times a year. Contributions are welcome.

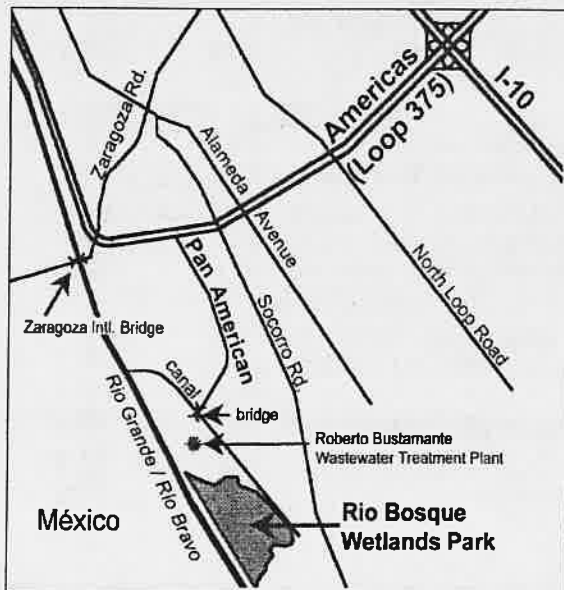
Please email to [whelenk@aol.com](mailto:whelenk@aol.com) or mail 6120 Quail Ave. El Paso, Texas 79924 (915) 751-2408

### AT FEATHER LAKE

The fall-winter schedule at our Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary continues to be uncertain. After 3 mostly dry months, the lake finally got some water with the rains of November 13-14. Not much, though, and it may be dry again soon. We had the lake open to the public during November and will keep it open as long as there is water, but it will be closed when the lake is dry. To learn its current status: John Sproul, 747-8663, jsproul@utep.edu.

Should the lake be open, you'll notice a couple of new improvements. Thanks go to Charles Simpson and Jonathan Mims for refinishing the tables and benches under the ramada and to John Kiseda for spearheading preparation of the fancy new banner at the entrance.

Our next workday at the sanctuary will be Sat., Jan. 24, starting at 2 p.m. 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 in El Paso's Mission Valley. Coming up:

- 9 a.m. Sat., Dec 6 (Birds)
- 3 p.m. Sun., Dec 14 (Introductory)
- 3 p.m. Sat., Jan 10 (Birds)
- 9 a.m. Sat., Jan 17 (Workday)
- 3 p.m. Sun., Jan 18 (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. Information: 747-8663.

The Rio Bosque website now includes a list of noteworthy birds found at the Park during the past month. Go to <[www.cerm.utep.edu/riobosque/](http://www.cerm.utep.edu/riobosque/)> and click on "Birds" to check it out.

# OBSERVATIONS

## UNCOMMON - RARE - CASUAL

### SIGHTINGS FOR THE PERIOD

September 16, 2003 to November 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](mailto:bobwildbirderj@cs.com).

**Observers:** Mary Lou Alcorn; Dan Allen; Robertm Fulton; Al Gavit; John Kiseda; Kathy Kiseda; Jim Paton; John Sproul; Barry Zimmer. Mob - Many observers; -y in the yard; -f field trip leader

**Locations;** BSc-Boy Scout; CCC-Coronado Country Club; Emy-Emory; FHc-Fort Hancock; Hor-Horizon Lake; HTk-Hueco Tanks State Historical Site; Key-Keystone Heritage Park; McN-McNary; Mem-Memorial Park; Nem-Nemexus Drain(near Sunset); RBq-Rio Bosque Wetlands Park; Resv-3Lower Valley Reservoirs; Sod-Sod Farm; Sun-Sunland Park Area; Tor-Tornillo.

#### LOONS thru Mergansers

<i>Common Loon</i>	11/14	BZ	McN
<i>Horned Grebe</i>	11/11	BZ	McN
White Pelican	10/1	BZ	McN
<i>Roseate Spoonbill</i>	9/23	BZ	McN
<i>Greater White-fronted Goose</i>	11/14	BZ	FHc
Ross's Goose	11/11	BZ	McN
	11/15	JS	RBq
Redhead	11/11	BZ	Tor
Ring-necked Duck	9/23	BZ	FHc
<i>Surf Scoter</i>	11/4	JS	RBq
Red-breasted Merganser	11/11	BZ	Tor

#### BIRDS of PREY

Osprey	9/20	JK	Key
Numbers seen regularly		Mob	Resv
Harris' Hawk	Seen all period	Mob	RBq
<i>Broad-winged Hawk</i>	9/27	JP	Nem
<i>Zone-tailed Hawk</i>	10/7	JK	Trm
Ferruginous Hawk	9/16	JK	Trm
Golden Eagle	10/31	JS	RBq
<i>Merlin</i>	11/14	JS	RBq
Peregrine Falcon	9/20	JK	Key
Juvenile seen regularly		Mob	Resv
Prairie Falcon	11/1	JS	RBq

#### CRANE thru TERNS

Sandhill Crane	overhead 10/20	JS	RBq
<i>Snowy Plover</i>	9/28	AG	Hor
<i>Sanderling</i>	10/4	JP	Tor
<i>Parasitic Jaeger</i>	9/23	BZ	McN
<i>2d Trans-Pecos record</i>			
Franklin's Gull	10/4	JP	McN
Bonapart's Gull	11/11	BZ	Tor
	11/15	JP	McN
<i>California Gull</i>	11/15	JP	McN
Herring Gull	11/15	JP	Tor
<i>Sabine's Gull</i>	10/11	JP	McN
<i>Caspian Tern</i>	9/23	BZ	McN
Black Tern	(Late) 10/4	JP	Tor

#### HUMMINGBIRDS thru FLYCATCHERS

Anna's Hummer	10/25	BZ-y	Ton
<i>Costa's Hummer</i>	10/24	BZ-y	Ton
Calliope Hummer	9/20	BZ-y	Ton
<i>Lewis' Woodpecker</i>	10/25	JP	Sun
<i>Acorn Woodpecker</i>	9/25	JK	Trm
Red-naped Sapsucker	10/12	BZ-y	Ton
Hammond's Flycatcher	9/25	BZ	Mem
Gray Flycatcher	10/4	JP	McN
<i>Scissor-tailed Flycatcher</i>	9/18	JS	RBq

#### JAY thru TANAGERS

Steller's Jay	9/16	MLA	Emy
Sage Thrasher	10/9	BZ	Trm
<i>Brown Thrasher</i>	10/8	KK	KnJ
<i>Tennessee Warbler</i>	9/21	JP	Nem
Virginia's Warbler	9/22	JS	RBq
<i>Chesnut-sided Warbler</i>	9/27	JP	Sun
<i>Black-and-White Warbler</i>	9/19	BZ-y	Ton
<i>Scarlet Tanager</i>	10/7	BZ-y	Ton
<i>2d County Record</i>			
Western Tanager	9/19	BZ-y	Ton

#### SPARROWS to DICKCISSEL

Black-chinned Sparrow	9/25	JK	Trm
<i>Grasshopper Sparrow</i>	9/26	JP	Sod
	9/25	BZ	Mem
<i>Baird's Sparrow</i>	9/27	JP	Sod
<i>White-throated Sparrow</i>	10/18	BJ-f	HTk
<i>tan-striped Morph</i>			
White-crowned Sparrow	9/16	DA	CCC
Chesnut-collared Longspur	9/21	JP	Sod
	10/18	RF	HTk
<i>Rose-breasted Grosbeak</i>	9/21	JP-y	BSc
	10/26	BZ-y	Ton
Dickcissel	9/21	BZ-y	Ton

# ON THE TRAIL

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

The El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Chapter calls upon volunteers in the El Paso area to join with birders across the western hemisphere and participate in one of Audubon's winter time traditions, the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). This year's count will be the 104th.

Today, over 55,000 volunteers from all 50 states, every Canadian province, parts of Central and South America, Bermuda, the West Indies, and Pacific Islands count and record every individual bird and bird species seen in a specified area. During the 103rd CBC last year, about 73 million individual birds were counted. Last year saw a new record high of 1,981 individual counts. Each individual count group completes a census of the birds found during one 24 hour period in a designated circle 15 miles in diameter-about 177 square miles.

People are asked to contribute \$5.00 to help defray the expense of publishing "American Birds", This is the volume detailing all 1900 plus counts. The El Paso/Trans Pecos Audubon Chapter will cover \$3.00 of this for the Hueco Tanks and El Paso counts.

The *Hueco Tanks Count* will take place on **Sunday December 14, 2003**, questions call Bob (915) 757-1876 - e-mail [bobwildbirderj@cs.com](mailto:bobwildbirderj@cs.com).

The *El Paso Count* will take place on **Thursday January 1, 2004**, questions call Jimmy (505) 541-8083 - e-mail [JZabris102@aol.com](mailto:JZabris102@aol.com).

## BOSQUE DEL APACHE NWR

One of the more popular National Wildlife Refuges in the country (there are over 500) is located about 180 miles north of El Paso off of Interstate 25. How about 20,000 Snow Geese with a number of Ross's included, see if you can tell them apart, 12,000 Sandhill Cranes, 25,000 plus ducks and MANY Bald Eagles.

Start off your 2004 bird list with some great entries. Last year 74 species were recorded on our trip, these included 15 waterfowl species, 7 Raptor and 3 grebe, also a number of passerines. The Refuge reported over a dozen Bald Eagles, and we saw 5 at one time.



Snow Geese with 2 Ross's Geese in the center

We are trying to arrange a tour in a large refuge van, so try to call Lois if you think you might attend, we need an approximate count.

Many good motels in Socorro NM, located about 12 miles to the north.

**Date:** Sat/Sun, January 10/11, 2004

**Time:** 11 AM

**Place:** Parking lot of the Visitors Center.

**Coordinator:** Lois Balin, Call for map and itinerary (915) 821-5098.

ON THE TRAIL Continued from page 5

**KEYSTONE - SUNLAND**

A look at hundreds of gulls, mostly *Ring-billed* but quite often a *Herring Gull* or *California Gull* has been around, and remember January, 2002 when a State of New Mexico first, the *Lesser Black-backed Gull* was in the area for almost 2 weeks. You probably will see *Snow Geese*, maybe *Canvasbacks*, and some wading birds, perhaps *Great Egrets*, *Longbilled Dowitchers*, *Greater Yellowlegs*.

**Date:** Saturday, January 31, 2004

**Time:** 7:51 AM

**Place:** Crossroads Ponding Area by RR tracks (Doniphan/Mesa/Country Club)

**Leader:** Betty Fisback (915) 581-0174

**FRIENDS of HUECO TANKS**

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

**Bird Identification Tours**

Sunday December 21 8:08 AM

Sunday January 18 8:08 AM

Sunday February 15 8:08

Check in at the Headquarters. Info 857-1135.  
Leader Bob "Wildbirder" Johnson 757-1876.

**CENTER FOR LIFELONG LEARNING**

Many of you have heard of the center, if not its for those of you who admit to being over 50. We will be conducting a 6 week class starting near the end of February and going until early April.

**Title:** *Finding and Identifying Birds in El Paso County and Adjacent Areas.*

It will include 6 field trips that will also be open to our chapter members. Check it out its a lot of fun and educational. (915) 747-6280.

**Donate your Live Holiday Trees to the El Paso Zoo**

If you are purchasing a living tree for the holiday season [those trees in pots or with root balls, that haven't been "chopped down"], you can donate the following species to the El Paso Zoo after the holidays & receive a tax write-off:

Aleppo Pine    Mondale Pine  
Norfolk Pine    Yaupon Holly

Pearson's Nursery at 6900 Doniphan in Canutillo [ phone: 877-3808], will also give you a 10% discount if you purchase a tree from them & give it to the zoo soon after the holiday season has ended. Contact Cheryl Garing, the El Paso Zoo Horticulturist, at 521-1850, if you have any questions.



## Wyer Tramway Hawkwatch

This season's hawkwatch ended a bit early for me, because of a late Oct., early Nov. trip to visit friends and family in NJ, NY & FL; but, this didn't mean that I stopped looking for raptors though, because I was able to enjoy the wonders of the Cape May hawkwatch spectacular & the beauty of Florida's amazing osprey population.

This season's Wyler Tram hawkwatch had approximately 100 hours of observation time & yielded a bounty of over 700 raptors.

Here are the raptors seen this season:

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



The bird checklist for the state park now rests at 101 species [the list increased by ~ 25 species in the past few months].

Almost 300 Western scrub jays were observed moving past the platform, as well as rarer to the area sightings of birds such as acorn woodpecker, hepatic tanager, & Cassin's finch.

I'd like to thank everyone that came out to help this past season, and encourage anyone with interest in this project, to contact me by January regarding helping out in this coming Spring's observation period that will begin in a few months.

**Don't be bashful**, if you are unsure of your skills, because training sessions will take place, in the field, at the tramway, and in the classroom [besides the best training of all, which is actually conducting observations]. Please contact John Kiseda 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.cdn.org](http://www.cdn.org) (505) 524-3334

Friends of Rio Bosque 747-8663  
[www.cerm.utep.edu/riobosque/](http://www.cerm.utep.edu/riobosque/) AT FEATHER LAKE  
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/fmwc/](http://www.iloveparks.com/fmwc/)

### 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 some bird observations from a 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, etc.

**THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!**

Contact John Kiseda in the evenings at 533-4615 (phone and fax).

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

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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

**Dates to Remember**

Call Bob Johnson for details 757-1876

December

- Board Meeting**  
Monday, 1st
- Rio Bosque Wetland Park**  
Saturday, 6th
- General Meeting**  
Monday, 8th
- Rio Bosque Wetland Park**  
**X-mas Bird Count Hueco Tanks**  
Sunday 14th
- Hueco Tanks**  
Sunday, 21st

January

- X-mas Bird Count El Paso**  
Thursday, 1st
- Bosque del Apache**  
Sat & Sun 10th & 11th
- Rio Bosque Wetland Park**  
Saturday, 10th
- Board Meeting**  
Monday, 12th
- Hueco Tanks**  
Sunday 18th
- Rio Bosque Wetland Park**  
Sat, 17th & Sun 18th

January continued

- General Meeting**  
Monday, 19th
- Keystone**  
Saturday, 31st
- February
- Board Meeting**  
Monday, 9th
- Hueco Tanks**  
Sunday, 15th
- Awards Dinner**  
Saturday, 21st