

RIO BOSQUE NEWS

A newsletter reporting on events at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

Center for Environmental Resource Management
University of Texas at El Paso



No. 22

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WE'RE ALL WET

Rio Bosque Wetlands Park is now in the middle of its wet season. Water deliveries began Oct. 29 and, except for a week in early December, have continued steadily since. As always, we thank El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 and El Paso Water Utilities for cooperating to make this water available.

If you want to see the Park at its winter best, now is the time to visit. Last year, water deliveries ended Feb. 14. In 2005, they ended Feb. 28. ✕

WE'RE ALSO FOR THE BIRDS

Waterfowl numbers at Rio Bosque have fluctuated this fall and winter. Low through most of November, they jumped to 2,000+ birds after a late-November cold snap, then plummeted when the Park went dry briefly in early December. By late December, they had rebounded to 2,000-2,500 birds. As we did last winter, we again have a male **Eurasian Wigeon** gracing the wetland cells, the 8th documented record of this species for El Paso county.

We are also seeing some avian indicators of a trend toward milder winters. **Turkey Vultures** migrate out of our area in fall. Prior to 2006, there was only one previous El Paso-area record later than Oct. 31.



Eurasian Wigeon, Wetland Cell 2, Dec 31, 2006.

This year, we've been amazed to see Turkey Vultures in and near the Park throughout November and December. Here's another sign: **Cave Swallows** have overwintered in record numbers this year, with over 200 birds observed in late December. ✕

BOSQUE BANTER

A stand of tornillo on the west side of Rio Bosque will soon be saltcedar-free. Thanks go to the members of the UTEP chapter of **Eta Kappa Nu**, the national Electrical Engineering honor society, who did great work removing saltcedar in this area Oct. 28. The Park was hopping Nov.



Friends of the Rio Bosque Membership Application

Name:	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Bosque Buddy (12 and under)	\$4
Address:	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$8
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior (62+)	\$8
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$10
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$15
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Bosque Booster	\$50
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Cottonwood Commando	\$75-\$249
E-mail:	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Restoration Patron	\$250-\$499
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands Society	\$500+

Please make checks payable to *Friends of the Rio Bosque* and mail to: Maria Trunk, Treasurer, Friends of the Rio Bosque, 1100 Kelly Way, El Paso, TX 79902.

Next Meetings

Thurs., Jan 25

Thurs., Feb 22

Thurs., Mar 29

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

411 Burges Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-545-5214

8-9, when 3 groups totaling 336 students from **Henderson Middle School** visited. Thanks go to the Friends of the Rio Bosque, UTEP's Environmental Advocates, the Texas Master Naturalists and members of RioCorps (the new AmeriCorps program of the El Paso County Extension office) for their outstanding help in making this a rewarding outing for the students.

Among other things, last summer's rains brought an explosion of Russian thistle (tumbleweed) in the Park's wetland cells. To increase open water available to waterfowl, we worked hard to burn what we could before the cells were completely flooded. Many thanks are due the students from **El Dorado** and **Hanks high schools** who helped with this effort at our November workday.

Faunal monitoring resumes Mar. 24 (see calendar). Join our volunteers for an intimate look at the Park's diverse animal life. In past years, this work focused on small mammals, reptiles, amphibians and arthropods in the Park. This year, we are also initiating point counts for birds at 10 sites. On Mar. 24, most of the monitoring will start at 9 a.m., but the bird counts begin at sunrise. ✕

FRIENDS OF THE RIO BOSQUE

January is when annual dues are due for the Friends of the Rio Bosque. If you are a member, you'll soon receive a renewal notice. If you are not, now is a great time to join (see front). The Friends are the heart of the Rio Bosque project. From education programs, to outreach, to ecosystem management, to faunal monitoring, to fundraising, to advocacy, their contributions were vital to the success of the project

in 2006. They deserve your support. ✕

FOR MORE INFORMATION

<http://www.riobosque.org>

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RIO BOSQUE CALENDAR

Join us at the Park for a free walking tour or to help with habitat management, Park maintenance or faunal monitoring. Coming up:

JANUARY

Sat., Jan 13	Bird Tour	3 p.m.
Sat., Jan 20	Community Workday	9 a.m.
Sun., Jan 21	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.

FEBRUARY

Sat., Feb 10	Bird Tour	9 a.m.
Sat., Feb 17	Community Workday	9 a.m.
Sun., Feb 18	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.

MARCH

Sun., Mar 4	Bird Tour	3 p.m.
Sat., Mar 10	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.
Sat., Mar 17	Community Workday	9 a.m.
Sat., Mar 24	Faunal Monitoring	9 a.m.

The meeting place for all of these activities 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.

