

# 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. 40

July 2011

## THE RAPTOR REPORT

Each year at Rio Bosque, we live-trap small mammals once a month between March and October as part of the park's faunal-monitoring program. Here are the numbers caught between March and June over the past 3 years: 65 in 2009 (147 trap-nights), 23 in 2010 (147), 14 in 2011 (154). Clearly, the dry conditions the past 2 years have been hard on small-mammal populations at Rio Bosque.

How has this decline in small-mammal numbers affected birds of prey at the park? In 2010, we observed a clear drop in nesting success. Two pairs of White-tailed Kites and 3 pairs of Harris's Hawks tried to nest. None raised any young.

With even lower numbers of small mammals captured in 2011, we expected a similar lack of success this year. We were wrong. In early June, a pair of Harris's Hawks fledged 3 young, followed in mid-June by a White-tailed Kite pair fledging a single young.

As of late June, second pairs of both Harris's Hawks and White-tailed Kites were still nesting. The kites are a model of persistence. After strong winds in late April destroyed their first nest, they rebuilt at the same location. Then in mid-June, they abandoned that nest and built a sturdier one nearby. ✂



This young White-tailed Kite is about to fledge from its nest at Rio Bosque. Photo: June 11, 2011.

## ROAD WORK

Over the years, the City of El Paso's Department of Transportation has helped Rio Bosque in many ways. This year, it again stepped up for the park. Due to the dry conditions since last fall, the short road leading to the Bosque Trailhead had become very soft and sandy in places. Cars were getting stuck. No longer. In May, both the road and the trailhead received a new gravel surface. Thank you, Department of Transportation! ✂



### Friends of the Rio Bosque Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- Bosque Buddy (12 and under) .....\$6
- Student or  Senior (62+)..... \$10
- Individual ..... \$15
- Family ..... \$20
- Bosque Booster ..... \$50
- Cottonwood Commando ..... \$75-\$249
- Restoration Patron ..... \$250-\$499
- Wetlands Society ..... \$500-\$999
- Life Member ..... \$1,000

Please make checks payable to *Friends of the Rio Bosque* and mail to: Friends of the Rio Bosque, CERM-UTEP, 500 W. University Ave., El Paso, TX 79968-0684.

### Next Meetings

Thurs., July 28

Thurs., Aug 25

Thurs., Sep 22

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

209-A Burges Hall  
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

## SUMMERTIME BLUES

The continuing drought, a dropping water table, and the arrival of persistent 100+° F temperatures in June are presenting challenging conditions for riparian vegetation at Rio Bosque. In the northern part of the park, in the area kept wet with water from our well, cottonwoods and willows are doing fine. Elsewhere they are stressed, especially in the southern part of the park.

UTEP students and volunteers planted most of the cottonwoods and willows now found along the old river bend in the southern part of the park in 1999 and 2001. Those trees thrived in 2001-02, the two years when water was available to Rio Bosque during the growing season. But in subsequent years, with water not available, many died. Still, some survived, either because of favorable site-specific conditions or superior qualities of individual trees.

Now, the future of those survivors is uncertain. Trucking water to stressed trees – already our main spring-summer activity – has become even more frequent of late. The Friends of the Rio Bosque water trailer continues to be an invaluable asset. ✎

## BOSQUE BANTER

On May 10-12, an **American Bittern** visited the park, the 230th bird species found to date at Rio Bosque ... Construction of the **Border Wall** in 2008-09 severed the connection between Rio Bosque and the river corridor, but one large gap was left in the wall just below the park at Wasteway One to accommodate future work to replace the wasteway. That work took place this past winter, and in June work to close the gap in the wall began. ✎

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

[www.riobosque.org](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:

#### JULY

Sat., Jul 9	Bird Tour	7 a.m.
Sat., Jul 16	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sun., Jul 17	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Jul 23	Faunal Monitoring	7 a.m.

#### AUGUST

Sun., Aug 7	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Aug 20	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sun., Aug 21	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Aug 27	Faunal Monitoring	7 a.m.

#### SEPTEMBER

Sat., Sep 10	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Sep 17	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sun., Sep 18	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Sep 24	Faunal Monitoring	8 a.m.

Meeting place for all activities is a bridge crossing the Riverside Canal. 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.

Return Service Requested

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