

RIO BOSQUE NEWS

A newsletter reporting on events at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

Center for Environmental Resource Management
The University of Texas at El Paso



No. 67

January 2019

WINTER, WATER, WILDLIFE

Water deliveries from the Roberto Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant to Rio Bosque Wetlands Park resumed Nov 4. Over the next month, the park's wetland cells filled gradually, and by early December they were fully flooded. Waterbird numbers were low until a mid-November cold spell, when duck numbers jumped from ~100 to ~1,800. Currently, more than 2,000 are present.

For Rio Bosque, the phrase "dead of winter" doesn't quite apply. In many ways, winter is the most active time of year at the park. Late in the day, just before and after sunset, can be especially lively. Ducks constantly move across the sky, some settling in for the evening, some heading offsite. Herons, egrets and ibis fly in to roost for the night. Red-tailed Hawks are abundant, and Northern Harriers continue cruising low over the wetlands well after sunset. The thou-

New Birds: The bird-species list for Rio Bosque grew by just 1 in 2016 and 0 in 2017. In 2018, at least 5 new species appeared, most recently a **Red-naped Sapsucker** on Nov 4 and a **Chimney Swift** on Nov 13. Why the surge? One factor was more observers in the field. Our staff doesn't see every visitor at Rio Bosque, but the number of visitors we did see in 2018 was an all-time high 2,341, well above the previous high of 1,979 in 2008. Many of those new visitors were birders.



This Red-naped Sapsucker represented a long-overdue first record for the park.

(Photo: Al Wallace, Nov 4, 2018)

sands of American Crows and Chihuahuan Ravens that roost at the park in winter are seemingly everywhere, like a scene out of *The Birds*. Many evenings, a blazing sunset provides a dramatic backdrop. This remarkable show takes place nightly, available to all at no charge but observed by few.

Want to enjoy it? You should visit soon. The show has a limited seasonal run, dictated largely by water. In many years, water deliveries from the Bustamante Plant end in early February, the wetlands go dry, the landscape grows quiet, and it waits for spring. ✈

Friends of the Rio Bosque Membership Application

Name:

Address:

E-mail:

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

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., Jan 24
Thurs., Feb 28
Thurs., Mar 28

6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
206 Kelly Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

¡GRACIAS!

The Big Bosque Bird Bash on Nov 10 was a big hit! Many thanks go to the Friends of the Rio Bosque for organizing the event, the City of El Paso's Parks and Recreation Department for providing logistical support, and all of the great participating groups that shared their knowledge of our region's environment.

Thank you, El Paso Water! For years, after every good rain, the parking areas at the Tornillo and Wetland trailheads would become mud wallows. No longer. Last fall, El Paso Water graded and placed gravel surfaces on both areas.

On Dec 17, 120 enthusiastic aquatic-science students from Pebble Hills High School visited the park. They

gained an enhanced understanding and appreciation of the Rio Bosque environment, thanks to tour leaders Christy Adame, Liz DeMoultrie and Eric Suh. ✂

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 (or recently received) 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 fundraising, to advocacy, their contributions are vital to the success of the project. They deserve your support. ✂



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Return Service Requested

RIO BOSQUE CALENDAR

Join us at Rio Bosque for a free walking tour or to help with habitat management or park maintenance. Coming up:

JANUARY			FEBRUARY			MARCH		
12 (Sat.)	Birding Tour	8 a.m.	3 (Sun.)	Birding Tour	8 a.m.	3 (Sun.)	Birding Tour	3 p.m.
19 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.	9 (Sat.)	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.	16 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.
20 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.	16 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.	23 (Sat.)	Introductory Tour	9 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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.riobosque.org

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