



# THE Warbler

January/February 2006

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NEWSLETTER OF THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF GREATER DENVER

## Plan to attend the 2006 Legislative Workshop

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver and the Enos Mills chapter of the Sierra Club are once again co-sponsoring our annual Legislative Workshop. It will be held on **Saturday, February 25, 2006, at First Plymouth Church**, at the southwest corner of Colorado Blvd. and E. Hampden, in the Fellowship Hall from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Both the Audubon and Sierra Club lobbyists will present information on the bills that the Legislature is considering. Their talks will include a question-and-answer session and will be followed by break-out sessions. A pot-luck lunch

will be served at noon.

Members of the Colorado Legislature



*Audubon lobbyist, Jen Boulton and ASGD board member, Jo Evans bring participants up to date on legislative issues at the 2005 Workshop.*

are invited to speak with us during lunch, and this has always been a lively and interesting discussion, as well as a chance to talk with legislators directly. Cost of the workshop will be \$12 in advance or \$15 at the door. Mark the date on your calendar and plan to attend! We all need to tell the Legislature to protect the things Audubon and Sierra members value: our wildlife, water, air and open spaces.

To register in advance, call 303-973-9530 or go online to [www.denveraudubon.org](http://www.denveraudubon.org). Please specify if you are willing to bring a salad, bread, dessert or drink to share for the potluck lunch.

## Master Birder Program accepting applications

An exciting new volunteer program for 2006—the Audubon Master Birders is being launched by ASGD. *Audubon Master Birders will provide an important service to the community and will become a critical part of ASGD's public outreach efforts. They will educate citizens about birds and nature and promote a stewardship ethic.*

The Audubon Master Birder Program will provide extensive training for volunteers in ornithological topics, especially those that are of interest to the general public. The year-long training involves a mix of structured classes, field trips and independent field study. Throughout the training, participants will complete their certification requirements, such as, demonstrating the ability to identify at least 100 species by sight and 40 by sound. Course topics will include information on bird behavior,

migration, habitats, citizen science projects and more. After graduation, Audubon Master Birders will contribute 48 hours of volunteer service to ASGD each year to maintain their certification.

To receive an information packet and application, call 303-973-9530. The information packet will include an overview of the Audubon Master Birder program, the complete list of qualifications necessary for certification, a tentative class and field trip schedule, volunteer service agreement and an application. Experienced bird watchers are encouraged to apply. **Applications, along with a \$25 registration fee, are due February 15, 2006.** Class size is limited to 20 participants. Interviews will be completed by March 15. (If someone is not accepted into the program, their \$25 application fee will be returned to them.)

## Start a FLOCK

Want to meet Audubon members in your neck of the woods? Start a FLOCK!

Audubon Society of Greater Denver represents over 3,000 people. In a metropolitan area our size – from Castle Rock to Brighton and Golden to Aurora – it is difficult to get to know your fellow members. Finding a meeting location and time that is convenient for everyone is nearly impossible. And who wants to spend more time driving across town when they could be out birding?

We have decided to try something new. Birds of a feather flock together, right? So if you are one of those people sitting at home wishing you could make new Audubon friends, try starting a new flock and see what happens.

Here's how it works: Any ASGD member can start a flock in their neighborhood—Lakewood, Centennial,

*Continued on page 10*

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE-**

### **WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?**

As the coldest days of the year bring snow and icy winds, our avian friends struggle to survive. If they can just make it through the long nights, tomorrow's brilliant Colorado sunshine will bring life-saving warmth as they search for food, water, and one more day of life.

Many of us want to help. We spend thousands of dollars on bird seed, feeders, and bird baths. We invest in books and magazines to learn just how to landscape the yard to attract, feed, and shelter birds. We curse at squirrels and the neighbor's cat. Some of us go to great lengths to welcome special favorite birds, tempting them with just the right foods. Others of us spend time and energy rigging heaters so the bird bath won't freeze over, or cleaning the feeders with bleach on a timely schedule.

What are we looking for in return? Is the call of a blue jay or the sight of a dozen cedar waxwings in the yard enough to satisfy us? Do we laugh at the acrobatics of a black-capped chickadee? Do we boo the Cooper's hawk lurking in the shadows or resist the urge to shoo away a mob of house sparrows taking over the yard?

What are we looking for? Can it be we are looking for a way to reach out and make a difference? We know our efforts affect our own backyards. Together we can make a difference in our neighborhoods, our communities - our little corner of the world. Audubon Society of Greater Denver wants to be a difference maker. Through education, research, and actively working on environmental issues, we are doing what it takes to enable members to make a difference on a larger scale. An added bonus is that the lives of our members, friends, and families are enriched by the programs and opportunities Audubon offers.

Our volunteers, our donors and sponsors, our visitors and friends make it possible for us to learn, to grow, and to be enriched by the experiences we share. Isn't that what we are looking for? Thank you for helping to make it happen.



## **ASGD Website gets a makeover**

Next time that you are online surfing, check out [www.denveraudubon.org](http://www.denveraudubon.org). Glenda Crawford is giving our website a whole new look. Watch for the new design in February. *We have also partnered with SPORG.com to provide a secure site for online donations, membership renewals and field trip registrations.*

## **Memorial bricks are a gift that last forever**

There is still time to **Sponsor a Brick** for the Audubon Center at Chatfield. With each brick you sponsor, you are literally helping to build the amphitheater one step at a time. Inscriptions on bricks can recognize your contribution or honor a family member, friend or business. In addition, your donation will help meet the challenge grants from the Gates Family Foundation (\$50,000) and Boettcher Foundation (\$25,000).

Family/Memorial Bricks are \$50-\$100 and Business/Corporate Bricks are \$250-\$500 depending on placement within the Audubon Center.

Contact ASGD at 303-973-9530 for more information or go online to [www.denveraudubon.org](http://www.denveraudubon.org).



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### **MISSION**

ASGD is a nonprofit group dedicated to maintaining the health of natural ecosystems through education, political action, scientific research and land preservation, with primary focus on birds, other wildlife and ecosystems of the South Platte River watershed.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

FRIENDS OF ASGD receive the *Warbler* and additional membership benefits. **Members of the National Audubon Society in the Denver Metro Area receive complimentary copies of the *The Warbler*.**

*The Warbler* is published bimonthly by the Audubon Society of Greater Denver (ASGD).

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# Protect the roadless areas of the Pike-San Isabel and Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forests

by Lisa Smith

Like an amazing snow-capped fourteen-thousand foot mountain in the Collegiate Peaks or an unroaded area surrounding the Mount Evans Wilderness and you have likely traversed through a roadless area on the Pike-San Isabel National Forest. Explore roadless areas surrounding the Indian Peaks Wilderness or near the Cache La Poudre River and you are likely visiting a roadless area on the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest. The list of incredible roadless areas in your backyard goes on and on. These amazing US Forest Service roadless areas are now being reviewed and their fate determined and we need to speak up and help protect Colorado's heritage, forest, water and wildlife for ourselves and future generations.

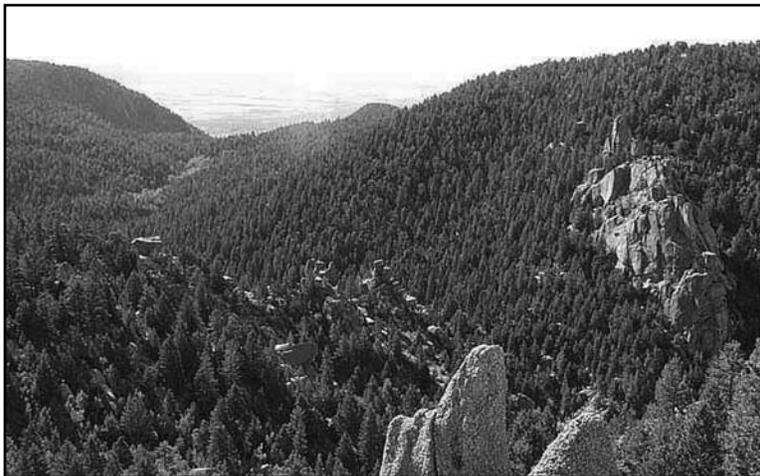
Please save the date, mark your calendar and tell your friends and family because the Colorado Roadless Areas Review Task Force is hosting a series of public meetings to hear from the local citizens about their desires for the future of the roadless areas in Colorado. The Roadless Area Public Meetings will be held on January 6, 2006 in Pueblo regarding the Pike-San Isabel National Forest; **on February 24, 2006 in Denver to comment on any National Forest in Colorado**; and on March 17, 2006 in Fort Collins for the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest.

While the exact times and locations for these meetings are not currently available, stay tuned to [www.roadless.net](http://www.roadless.net) for updates on meeting locations and other information.

## How did we get here?

In May, 2005, the Bush Administration repealed the 2001 Roadless Rule and replaced it with a process requiring governors to petition the Department of Agriculture in order to seek protections for roadless areas. The State of

Colorado created a Roadless Areas Review Task Force to craft recommendations to the governor. The Task Force is a 13-member bipartisan group and will host a series of public meetings throughout the state over the next seven months. The Task Force will then make its recommendations to the governor who will then review the recommendations from the Task Force and petition the Department of Agriculture.



## Why are Roadless Areas so Important?

Roadless areas help define the Rocky Mountain West and are inherent to our heritage. They provide diverse recreational opportunities, protect watersheds, augment our economy, provide havens for wildlife (including many bird species), and overall enhance our quality of life. Roadless areas also provide a refuge for diverse wildlife and help to ensure that their habitat, shelter, forage and water are protected. Elk, deer, trout and other native species thrive in unroaded areas and often need these large expanses to survive. For more

information about the value of roadless areas visit [www.roadless.net](http://www.roadless.net).

## How You Can Help

Please attend one of the Roadless Area Task Force public meetings listed above and sign up to speak. The Task Force has repeatedly requested that citizens make SPECIFIC comments about SPECIFIC roadless areas.

If you cannot attend the public meetings, or even if you can, the Roadless Task Force has requested that concerned citizens should submit written comments. For more information about how to submit written comments or how you can help please visit [www.roadless.net](http://www.roadless.net) or contact Lisa Smith at 303-405-6707 or [lisa@cecenviro.org](mailto:lisa@cecenviro.org).



# Eagle Eye

Watching Public Policy for the Environment  
by Polly Reetz

**WILDLIFE HABITAT.** Last year when legislators passed HB 1266, a bill increasing hunting and fishing license fees, they also included a provision establishing the Colorado Wildlife Habitat Stamp. This stamp, the fruit of numerous discussions among the Division of Wildlife, sportsmen, and conservationists, provides funds to protect wildlife habitat from fragmentation and development through acquisition and conservation easements. For the first four years 60% of the money raised by sales of the stamp must be spent on big game winter range and big game migration corridors. Though this priority was not Audubon's first choice, it will benefit nongame species as well.

The stamp, which costs \$10 if bought without a fishing or hunting license, will be required for use of State Wildlife Areas, for example for birdwatching or hiking. If you purchase a hunting or fishing license, the stamp costs an additional \$5 to the license. It is required for the first two such licenses purchased by an individual in a calendar year, according to the Division's informational brochure. You can buy the stamp wherever licenses are sold. A lifetime stamp is \$200.

The Habitat Stamp gives wildlife watchers a second opportunity to contribute financially to the conservation of wildlife in Colorado (the first is through the Nongame Wildlife Check-Off on your income tax form). Not only will it help protect wildlife habitats, but it can also give those of us who do not purchase licenses regularly an increased voice in wildlife management and habitat protection. The impacts of the growth predicted for Colorado make it mandatory that everyone interested in the wildlife of our state, whether hunters, fishermen, birdwatchers or photographers, speak out for maintaining and restoring the lands that sustain that resource. So be sure to purchase your stamp this year.

Informational Note: The license fee increase bill would have died last year, except for the quick thinking of Audubon's lobbyist, Jen Boulton. She persuaded House leaders to accept changes in the bill wrought by the Senate, rather than imperil its passage by trying to tinker with it in Conference Committee. Thanks to Jen, the Division of Wildlife can now count on new revenues to help cover the cost of inflation, and we got the habitat stamp as well.

**WHAT ISSUES WILL DOMINATE ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION THIS YEAR?** If you've followed legislative issues in this column, you'll recognize some old friends: Recreational In-Channel Diversions (RICDs in legislative parlance), Takings, and Super Slab. As a reminder:

RICDs are a type of water right that leaves water in the stream. They are claimed by local governments for a recreational use, such as kayak courses, tubing courses, or river walks and frequently have positive benefits to wildlife. However, they are NOT the same as an in-stream flow right,

which can only be held by the State and is intended to maintain or restore the environment. RICDs are only for recreational use and must involve "diversion or control of the river within its natural channel" such as a boat chute or placement of rocks. Several Colorado towns and cities have claimed this type of water right, and others plan to; they are struggling to keep the concept viable against the "water buffaloes" who see ANY water in a stream as an invitation to divert it.

**Takings** revolves around the question of whether governments can regulate private entities (polluters, developers, landowners) for the public health, safety, and welfare (like clean air, clean water, open space, etc.). The anti-government folks want governments to pay every time a regulation affects someone's ability to make money, even if their development schemes are unrealistic pie-in-the-sky. But a regulation that guides the use of private property to protect the public - say, to prevent you from putting a toxic waste dump in your back yard - only says HOW you can use your property; it doesn't keep you from using it. ASGD Board member Jo Evans is a nationally-recognized expert in this field.

**SuperSlab:** a proposed private toll-road and railroad corridor that would drive right through the Chico Basin Ranch, as well as other valuable wildlife habitats on the eastern plains. Right now an old law allows a private toll-road builder to condemn private lands for such an enterprise.

If you want more information, please come to our 2006 Legislative Workshop on February 25 and question environmental lobbyists Jen Boulton and Susan LeFever. And enjoy a great lunch too! Information is included in this issue of the Warbler.

**NEW**

## LEICA - "TEST DRIVE PROGRAM"

We now have the following Leica products available to sign out for an in the field weekend "Test Drive":

- 8 x 42 Ultravid Binoculars**
- 10 x 32 Ultravid Binoculars**
- 77mm Televid Spotter &**
- 62mm Apo-Televid Spotter**



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in the Brookridge Shopping Center)*



# AUDUBON SOCIETY

of GREATER DENVER

## Calendar of Events

### JANUARY 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Denver Urban Christmas Bird Count 1	Douglas County Christmas Bird Count 2	3	4	5	6	7
9am Walk the Wetlands 8	9	8am Education Committee 7pm ASGD Board Meeting 10	11	9am Master Birder Steering Committee 12	13	14
9am Ducks in Winter 15	ASGD Office Closed 7pm Development Committee 16	7pm Conservation Committee 17	7pm Adopt-An-IBA Meeting for Pawnee National Grasslands 18	19	Deadline for Webster Fund Proposals 20	21
9am Winter Hawks & Eagles 22	23	24	25	26	27	9am Raptors of Cherry Creek 28
9am Winter Hawks & Eagles 29	30	31				

### FEBRUARY 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
9am Walk the Wetlands 5	6	7	Birdseed Order Deadline 8	9	10	11
12	13	7pm ASGD Board Meeting 14	15	16	Great Backyard Bird Count Starts 17	Birdseed Pick-Up Day Rosy Finches Field Trip 18
19	ASGD Office Closed 20	21	22	9:30am Snowshoe for Ptarmigan 23	Training for Adopt-An-IBA at Pawnee 24	8:30am Legislative Workshop 25
26	27	28				

# TRAVEL, FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS

To Register for Trips & Classes Call the ASGD Office at 303.973.9530

Join FRIENDS of ASGD and Receive Discounts on Field Trips and Classes

View Photos and Read Reviews from Trip Participants in Our Trip Scrapbook Online at [www.denveraudubon.org/scrapbook.htm](http://www.denveraudubon.org/scrapbook.htm)



## – FIELD TRIPS –

### Walk the Wetlands

**DATES:** Sunday, Jan. 8 9 a.m.

Sunday, Feb. 5 9 a.m.

**LEADERS:** Hugh and Urling Kingery (303-814-2723),  
Bob Brown, and Doris Cruze

**Pre-registration:** Not necessary

**FEE:** None

**MEETING PLACE:** Parking lot beside Audubon Center at Chatfield. From C470 & Wadsworth, go south on Wadsworth 4.4 miles. Turn left onto Waterton Road. Turn left immediately into the first parking lot, at the Audubon Center sign. We'll search for river dippers and ducks while looking up for circling raptors including bald eagles. Dress in layers for the weather. Bring binoculars, field guides, water, and a snack.

### Ducks in Winter

**DATE:** Sunday, Jan. 15 9 a.m. to noon.

**LEADERS:** Harold and Betty Oliver

**Pre-registration:** Required

**FEE:** \$8/Friends member, \$10 non-member

**MEETING PLACE:** Pasquinell Park, northeast corner of Evans and the South Platte River.

**DESCRIPTION:** In winter ducks wear their most brilliant plumage. Join knowledgeable leaders Harold and Betty for spectacular, up-close views of hooded mergansers, goldeneyes, buffleheads, shovelers, and many other ducks. Sometimes they pick up red-breasted merganser and Barrow's goldeneye.

### Winter Hawks and Eagles on the Northern Front Range

**DATES:** Sunday, Jan. 22 9 a.m.

Or

Sunday, Jan. 29 9 a.m.

**LEADERS:** Harold and Betty Oliver

**Pre-registration:** Yes—each trip limited to 10 people

**FEE:** \$8/Friends member, \$10 non-member

**MEETING PLACE:** Ramada Plaza, southeast corner of I-25 and 120th Ave. Carpooling from there with four participants/car.

**DESCRIPTION:** The Olivers have generously agreed, again, to lead their popular trip on two different days—choose either one. Participants may see up to nine different hawk species. In past years the Olivers have recorded over 100 raptors on this trip, including numerous bald eagles and ferruginous hawks.

Bring lunch or buy it at McDonald's. Bring binoculars and field guides.

### Snowshoe for Ptarmigan

**DATE:** Thursday, Feb. 23 9:30 a.m.

**LEADER:** Allison Hilf.

**Pre-registration:** Yes—limited to 10 people

**FEE:** \$10/Friends members, \$15/non-members

**MEETING PLACE:** Denver Audubon office, to car pool

**DESCRIPTION:** January is a great time to try for this Rocky Mountain specialty, always difficult to locate, and not at all guaranteed. Last winter, as the group from Denver Audubon strapped on their snowshoes, one tardy strapper gave the group time to spot a clump of birds burrowed in the snow nearby. The snow could be deep and we have to be prepared to walk in deep snowdrifts. Hence, snowshoes are required. (Call Denver Audubon for information on snowshoe rental locations.)

Afterwards we will go to Georgetown to warm up with a hot beverage before trying to find rosy-finches. Plan to return in late afternoon. Wear layers and come prepared for the cold. Bring lunch, water, snacks, binoculars, etc.

### Rosy-Finches at Mountain Feeders

**DATE:** Saturday, Feb. 18

**LEADER:** Allison Hilf

**Pre-registration:** Yes—trip limited to 10 people.

**FEE:** \$8/Friends members, \$10/non-members

**MEETING PLACE:** To be announced.

**DESCRIPTION:** Close to the field trip date Allison will find the best feeders and let you know when and where to meet. Rosy-finches wear lingerie-pink feathers on their breasts and nest in cliffs above timberline. That makes them challenging to see, except at winter feeders, where they gather in showy flocks. The flocks include not only the Colorado nesting species, brown-capped, but also gray-crowned (two forms) and a few blacks along with the rosy-finches.

### Beginning Bird Watching Class

**DATES & MEETING PLACES**

**Thursday, March 23: 7-9pm**—classroom session at the Audubon Center at Chatfield

**Saturdays, March 25, April 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29: 8am-2pm** – field trips to

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birdwatching sites around Denver:  
Chatfield, Barr Lake, and Castlewood  
Canyon state parks, Wheat Ridge  
greenbelt, and Genesee Mountain.

**LEADERS:** Urling & Hugh Kingery

**Pre-registration:** Required

**FEE:** \$125/members, \$150/non-members

**DESCRIPTION:** Voted "Best of Denver!" 20 years ago and still going strong. Colorado's premier (and most entertaining) birding couple teaches the art and science of birding like no one else. Learn bird identification, choosing binoculars and field guides, and much more. Visit a variety of habitats and some of the best birding spots in the Denver metro area. Become observant and develop a practiced eye and ear. Make new friends and change the focus of your time outdoors. You can make up any field trips that you miss during future fall or spring class sessions -- you'll meet people from more than one

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## Raptor Trip in Cherry Creek State Park

A special program sponsored by the  
Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners.

**DATE:** Saturday, January 28 at 9 a.m.

**LEADERS:** Harold & Betty Oliver

**DESCRIPTION:** Cottonwood Creek is a tributary to Cherry Creek Reservoir and is the site of an innovative restoration project designed to stabilize the channel and recreate a natural, well-vegetated, functional prairie stream system. Access is limited to guided groups and facilitated activities.

The Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners organize volunteer opportunities specifically to assist with the Cottonwood Creek Restoration. Volunteers help to assess the overall health and function of the stream and wetland complex. We are scheduling field trips for interested groups and individuals to help us collect census information on Colorado wildlife and native plants. If you would like to become a part of this demonstration project, please join us on January 28th at 9:00 am as we look for prairie dogs, rabbits and the raptors who love them.

There is no charge for the trip but donations to ASGD are welcome and gladly accepted. For more information and to register contact Casey Davenport at [casey@cherry-creek.org](mailto:casey@cherry-creek.org) or call (303) 345-1675.

## – TRAVEL –

### Point Pelee, Kirtland's Warbler and Spring Eastern Migrants

Saturday, May 20 to Sunday May 28, 2006

By Allison Hilf

There is nothing like seeing many of North America's eastern warblers in their spectacular breeding plumage. Hearing the birds singing their beautiful songs on a bright spring morning can be spellbinding. The numbers of individual migrants should be impressive as well as the number of species. Twenty five to thirty plus species of warbler are possible.

Join us as we look for many of North America's eastern warblers including the endangered Kirtland's Warbler. With Joey Kellner as our guide, some of North America's greatest migrant traps including Point Pelee and Crane Creek will be explored as we look for warblers, cuckoos, bitterns, rails and shorebirds.

A typical day will find us birding early in the morning with a light breakfast "on the go," lunches will be either sit-down or take-out depending upon location and how the migration is going that day. Dinners will always be sit-down and relaxing. After dinner we'll tally the day's list and talk about the birds seen and what the next day has in store. If there is interest, night birds may be listened for at several locations.

Cost is \$1,650 per person for double occupancy. Add \$400 if you prefer single occupancy. Fee includes all meals, transportation during the trip, guide services, entry fees. Space is limited; call 303-973-9530 to register.

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## Family Birding in Southeast Arizona with Norm Lewis

July 29 to August 4, 2006

Why not take the children along to one of the most productive birding spots in the United States? Adults and children will be thrilled to see elf owls, elegant trogon, spotted owl, and flame-colored tanager. We have timed this trip to maximize our opportunities to see hummingbirds, including magnificent, violet-crowned, and blue-throated. A few rarities are also bound to show up. Norm Lewis, our birding guide, will help us find over ten species of hummingbird and many other Arizona specialties. The great thing about all of these birds is that we will have a chance to share our appreciation (and views) of them with our children.

This trip is designed for families with children from first

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# TRAVEL, FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS CONTD.

To Register for Trips & Classes Call the ASGD Office at 303.973.9530



## Family Birding Continued from page 7

to sixth grade (older siblings are encouraged to come along) and will provide all family members numerous opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and birding. Unlike other birding trips, the children's education and recreational activities will be supported by two terrific Outdoor Instructors—Bill Schmoker and Mandi Prout. Opportunities will exist for parents to bird in the early morning by themselves and during times when the children are engaged in outdoor education and recreation. We will also have many opportunities to share birds, wildlife and the outdoors with our children. For more information on birding, other children activities, and a full itinerary, please go to [www.nestlingtours.com](http://www.nestlingtours.com) or call 720-320-1974.

Prices for the whole family range from \$2,314 for two family members (a parent and a child) for five nights (\$1,157 per family member) to \$4,464 for family of five for seven nights. Trip begins in Sierra Vista, about one hour from Tucson. Rental cars (\$893 per family member) are available if needed. For more information about how this trip can fit your family and your family vacation plans, please call Charles Thornton-Kolbe at 720-320-1974.

## Spectacular South Africa

by Becky Beckers

**March 1 to 13, March 1 to 16 or March 1 to 19, 2006**

Africa! The very mention of the word evokes a primordial response in all of us. For the birder, Africa offers many unique species as well as unparalleled adventure. Our trip to eastern South Africa will include the world famous Kruger National Park as well as the Kingdom of Swaziland and more.

Most of the trip will be spent in the "veldt" which is a combination of brush scrub, small forest and open areas. In addition to the wonderful diversity of birds, we may see elephants, rhinos, lions, leopards, buffalo and antelopes of all kinds.

Our extension to Victoria Falls in Zambia opens up a whole new area with new birds as well as the mighty falls themselves. Join us this March on a true African adventure. March 1 to 13, 2006 – the cost is \$3,959 double occupancy (add \$500 for single). Extensions available.

For more information and a detailed itinerary, contact Becky Beckers at [www.travelforthebirds.com](http://www.travelforthebirds.com) 303-766-5266 or [AgentBecky@aol.com](mailto:AgentBecky@aol.com).

## The Great Backyard Bird Count returns for its ninth season

**February 17-20, 2006**

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), a joint project of Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, returns for its ninth season February 17-20, 2006. Bird enthusiasts of all

ages can share their love of birds with a friend, a child, a scout troop, a class, or a co-worker - opening new eyes to the joy of birding and the fun of creating a unique snapshot of winter bird abundance and distribution across the continent.

"The level of energy created each February by Great Backyard Bird counters is phenomenal," said Dr. Paul Green, director of Citizen Science for Audubon. "What always amazes me are the new discoveries made by people across North America. Some bird watchers even send digital photos to back up their reports. Last year participants sent in more than 1,000 photos and many are now part of the GBBC web site gallery."

Everyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to seasoned experts. During the count, bird watchers can tally up birds for as little as 15 minutes, or for as long as they like, keeping track of the highest number of each bird species they see together at one time. People are encouraged to report birds from public lands and local parks, as well as from their own backyards. Participants enter their numbers online at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc) and can explore sightings maps, lists, and charts as the count progresses.

For more information contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at [cornellbirds@cornell.edu](mailto:cornellbirds@cornell.edu) or (800) 843-2473 or contact Audubon at [citizenscience@audubon.org](mailto:citizenscience@audubon.org) or (215) 355-9588 Ext. 16.

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# backyard birds....

by Hugh Kingery



**AT OUR HOUSE** marauding raccoons and bears prompt us to bring the feeders in every night. After the snowstorm of October 10, I couldn't find one of our suet feeders. Two days later I discovered its fate: a scrub-jay went to it—20 feet up! I'd hung it from a branch bowed down by the snow, and as the snow sloughed off, the branch sprang up to its normal tallness.

**JILL AND MARK HOLDEN**, who live in Roxborough Village, also haul in their feeders each night. In October, Jill reported, "When I went out in the dark to get the feeders, I heard some animal's claws against the wooden stairs. Not knowing what it was I backed toward the door—until I saw a squirrel appear on the railing. I went back for the feeders with this squirrel watching me from only three feet away. A little too bold if you ask me. Mark laughed when I told him I was thinking 'possible bear' when it turned out to be a little squirrel. When I went to put the feeders out this morning, there was the squirrel waiting on the railing. I considered not putting the feeders out at all, but after seeing the disappointed scrub-jay and house finch who sat there looking at where the feeder should be and there at me, I couldn't take it any more. They have us well trained. On the weekend if I sleep in, and a house finch is looking where the feeder should be, it melts my heart. I waited for the squirrel to run off to the neighbor's yard (after he sat up and looked as cute as he could manage) and then put out the feeders. I wonder how much seed the birds got to eat today versus how much the squirrel may have eaten."

**AT BELMAR PARK'S HERITAGE CENTER**, where Karleen Schofield volunteers, a flicker managed to get trapped inside the building on November 11. After consulting with innumerable advisors, Karleen finally called the Lakewood Fire Dept., who cheerfully came out with ladders and other equipment. The firemen cornered the bird in a long tunnel in the rafters, but couldn't catch it without a net. Everybody went home, and on Saturday nobody saw the flicker inside, but outside near the center, they did see one; Karleen and company deem this the bird who probably escaped out an open door when nobody looked.

**"MY FAVORITE BIRDS, NORTHERN FLICKERS,"** says Nan Brehmer, on Green Mountain, "gets people upset when they drum on their rain gutters. This fall, almost daily, four flickers came silently as dawn was breaking to feed at my neighbor's rain gutters, as if the gutters were feed troughs."

**THIS FALL, LOTS OF PEOPLE** noticed sandhill cranes flying over; we see this every few years (or, I guess, hear them). Eric Anderson reported them on October 14; we counted 114 on November 4 and one November 7. Cobirds contributors mentioned them overhead all through October and early

November. Less ostentatious birds stopped in backyards: Mario and Meredith Anderson, in late September in Arvada, watched a rock wren work the rock wall and fences before it flew off. Joy Schieving in south Denver had several migrants from the foothills: broad-tailed hummingbird from Sept. 1-18; red-breasted nuthatch six times in October, Wilson's warbler seven times in September and a yellow-rumped warbler September 28 and October 15 and 18, spotted towhee September 9 and 16, a Brewer's sparrow September 24, pine siskins, October 21-23, her first in years, and of course, her resident bushtits both months.

**URLING AND I SAW** a bunch of October migrants: eastern bluebird, orange-crowned warbler, green-tailed towhee, and white-throated sparrow. Our neighbor Suzy Deger saw a quail in her corral October 4. "I got a very good look at him before he flew away because he got trapped between my llama and me. We think he's still up in the canyon because Tim heard some pretty unusual bird calls this morning when he was feeding. Another neighbor, Mary Anne Greer, saw one too. Then in November a bobwhite showed up in our yard. Very skittery, he doesn't follow a set pattern: sometimes he shows up a dawn to feed on millet we throw on the ground, sometimes at midday, and sometimes he hops up to a hanging flat feeder to eat black oil sunflower seeds. Mary Anne says Charley, who lives between us, bought some quail to train his new hound dog puppy, so maybe our bobwhite escaped from puppy training. (Several years ago Charley had some chickens that escaped and ended up as coyote food.) Meanwhile we're enjoying "Bob" visits.

**FRANKTOWN RESIDENTS** tallied pine siskins at their feeders in early November: six yards totaled 450 siskins. Glenn Walbek, in Castle Rock, said he hadn't any: he sent a picture of a sharp-shinned hawk perched atop his seed feeder. Joy regularly sees sharp-shins and we have one once in awhile (one perched on our wellhead last week). Pat Broadbent stood in the driveway on a business visit to a Parker friend when "a sharp-shinned hawk swooped down about a foot from my head and grabbed a goldfinch out of the air. The hawk flew up from behind me and my customer was standing in front of me watching all this happen above my head. I could hear the wings flap and what seemed to be the momentary sound of the finch trying to dart away. The hawk landed on a nearby roof where we both watched while he ate his dinner. We were not certain if the finch was trying to land on my head, but I assume he was just in the wrong place at the wrong time."

**KEVIN CORWIN REPORTS** an almost-backyard bird: "an Osprey perched atop the high tension tower about 200 yards north of my home in west Centennial, No water to speak of in the area, I'm guessing it was a bird migrating that just stopped to rest."

**I WELCOME YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS** to this column. Drop me a note or post card at P.O. Box 584, Franktown 80116, or Email me, ouzels@juno.com.

## APPLAUSE FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS

**OFFICE SUPPORT:** Lynne Forrester, Jeanne McCune, Phil Reynolds, Carolyn Roark, Grace Weber

**IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER TALK:** Barbara Brown, Les Brown, Leslie Gerard, Jeanne McCune, Janet Sacks, Barbara F. Shissler, Frank Shissler, Karen von Saltza

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**BUILDING STUDENT NEST BOX KITS:** Fred Griest, Doug Hodous

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**TAGAWA GARDEN CENTER FESTIVAL BOOTH & FEEDER WASH:** Laurie, Steve, Abbie & Rachel Bender, Ed & Judy Butterfield, Lydia Garmaier, Janet Sacks, Sue Schulman, Pat Skinner

**VOC WETLANDS TRAIL PROJECT:** Ann Bonnell, Carol DeStefanis, Kayleen Drissell, Lynne Forrester, Doug Hodous, Marianne Sladek

**FALL APPEAL ENVELOPES:** Cathy Caezza, Julie Cady, Doris Cruze, Lynne Forrester, Courtney James, Barbara Shissler, Jess & Claudie Walters, Cynthia Yergler

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**CONTRIBUTION IN MEMORY OF ELEANOR COOK:** Frank & Barbara Livingston

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**NEW FRIENDS MEMBERS:** Cherie Cassel, Kent & Elizabeth Kreider, Frank Montarelli

## 2006 Environmental Stewardship Awards Nominate your favorite conservationist

The ASGD Board of Directors is now accepting nominations for the 2006 Environmental Stewardship Awards. The awards are presented to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to environmental protection. The board typically selects one ASGD member and one Denver-area community member for this prestigious recognition.

To nominate someone, please send a letter, not to exceed two pages, to Doris Cruze, President; ASGD; 9308 S. Wadsworth Blvd.; Littleton, CO 80128. The letter should explain why you feel that the nominee is worthy to receive the award. The awards are presented annually at ASGD's Spring Benefit (April 8, 2006 at the Phipps Mansion). Past recipients include Fred Griest, Doug Faulkner, Jo Evans and Senator Ken Gordon

### Start a FLOCK Continued from page 1

Arvada, Castle Rock, central Denver, etc. (You can think of flocks as sub-chapters or discussion groups.) *Just contact the office at 303-973-9530 to register your flock.* We will collect the names of everyone interested and help make connections between Audubon members in the same area. Each flock can decide what they would like to do – plan a monthly or quarterly bird hike together, host a local speaker, start a nature book club, meet socially every other month and swap bird stories, etc. Each flock can post reports on their activities in the Warbler and the website. The sky is the limit!

Make a New Year's resolution to get involved in ASGD and spread your wings. We hope to hear from you in 2006.

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## Help protect the Pawnee National Grasslands

Several Audubon organizations are working together with the Pawnee National Grasslands administration to support conservation efforts to protect and expand bird habitat at the Pawnee National Grasslands. This project is part Audubon's Adopt an IBA (Important Bird Area) program and was reported on in the last issue.

To get involved attend our first kick off meeting on January 18, 2006 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. at the Washington Park United Church. From the University and I-25, go 1.7 miles to the north on University Boulevard. At Dakota and University, turn left and go .3 miles to the Wash Park United Church of Christ (400 South Williams in Denver, CO).

A conservation work project is already planned for April 22. This day will involve about four hours of work cleaning up trash (from tin cans to refrigerators) and moving salt licks to concentrate cattle grazing to expand mountain plover habitat. Afterwards, we will relax and do a little birding.

We have several other projects in the works. If you want to get involved in any way, please contact Charles Thornton-Kolbe at 303-777-7588. This is Chuck's work phone number, but feel free to leave a message at any time.

## 2006 Spring Benefit at new venue

Our annual Spring Benefit and Auction in 2006 will be on a new night at a new venue. The date will be Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup>, at the Phipps Mansion and Tennis Pavilion near the University of Denver. Senator and Mrs. Lawrence C. Phipps built the Phipps Estate in the early 1930's to provide Colorado with business and jobs during the Depression. The estate, donated to the University of Denver in the 1960's, is used extensively for events and weddings. The Tennis Pavilion, where the Benefit will be held, has a 55 foot high glass ceiling, huge ficus trees growing inside, and elegant architecture throughout.

This should be an exciting event this year with several special items available for auction, an excellent buffet, and special entertainment. We are actively looking for more unique auction items. If you have something special that you can donate yourself, such as a personal service (how about a few hours of weeding or a home cooked meal?) or a handmade item, these are always very popular and often generate fierce bidding wars. We also need your help in soliciting and retrieving donations from local merchants. Large items such as mountain bikes, binoculars, cameras, and vacation homes are especially needed for the live auction.

We also need lots of volunteers to help before and during the benefit. We need people to pick up items from donors and deliver them to the ASGD office, to enter donations into the computer, to prepare auction items for display in the days before, to set up the items and tables at the event Saturday morning, and to handle compilation of the silent auction bid sheets and to help collect items for winning bidders on the night of the auction. If you would like to help in any way or have any questions please call me, Lynne Forrester, at 303-904-3664. You can also send me an email at [auction@denveraudubon.org](mailto:auction@denveraudubon.org).

## Karl Sussman will be missed

by Ed Butterfield

Dr. Karl Sussman passed away suddenly while on an educational vacation in Mexico. Karl was an active Board of Director's member for ASGD in the late 1990's. Karl's expansive knowledge of nonprofit finances made him a valuable asset to ASGD during the early start of the Audubon Center at Chatfield. Many Audubon members know Karl for his avocation with metal sculpture. He generously donated several of his bird pieces for the annual benefit auction.



*Dr. Karl Sussman*

During his long medical career, Dr. Sussman traveled and taught extensively at major universities

around the world. He was fluent in Spanish, and he remained a life long learner and teacher. He facilitated a very popular and well-received VIVA class in the fall of 2004 entitled Globalization, Markets and Democracy. Karl also was actively involved with ALIANZA, the support group of the New World Department of the Denver Art Museum. As with ASGD, he became a willing volunteer in ALIANZA, serving as its president several years.

Dr. Sussman received his Bachelor of Sciences degree from Johns Hopkins University and his medical degree from the University of Maryland School of Medicine. He is a past president of the American Diabetes Association, a retired Professor of Medicine from the University of Colorado Health Science Center, and a former Chief of Medicine at the V.A. Medical center. He and his wife Joan celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary this year. He is survived in Denver by his wife Joan, their daughters Ann and Paula, and many friends.

## Lois Webster Fund offers wildlife research grants

Each year ASGD funds research and/or education projects on Colorado's nongame wildlife through the Lois Webster Fund. This fund was set up through the generosity of Lois and her friends and colleagues, who were particularly interested in species that are declining or under stress from habitat loss. In 2005 the request for proposals was sent out in mid-November to a large number of academic institutions, local, state and federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations. The deadline for grant applications is January 20. Watch the Warbler for an announcement of the 2006 grant recipient(s).



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