



THE Warbler

January/February 2010

News of the Audubon Society of Greater Denver

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41 Years of Service to the Greater Denver Community

ASGD Art and Photo Contest a Success

by Harriet Stratton, ASGD Board Member

The guests at the opening reception for the ASGD Art and Photo Show & Sale on Friday, December 4 enjoyed a display of 104 works of photography, painting, drawing and sculpture at the Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield. Lots of good cheer accompanied the awarding of prizes and commendations. The pieces were judged by Wendy Shattil, Bob Rozinski, and Harriet Stratton.

Heidi Snyder and Dorothy DePaulo shared the honor of 1st place in Drawing. Maggie Rosche and Anna Troth took home Painting prizes. Lee Farrell won both 1st and 2nd place prizes in Photography and was accompanied in being honored in the category by Match Grun, Nancy Stocker, John Maginness, Roberta Wiseman and James Bennett. Raymond Cassel and Ellen Westbrook won Digital Art. Peggy Campbell and Lori Storm shared honors for Sculpture. ASGD commended Kathy Mitchel for a singular Fiber Arts entry. Kristin Kraybill and Greta Sandberg, our student artists, both received commendations.

This first Art and Photo Show & Sale was a success in drawing many talented people to the Audubon Nature Center and raising funds to support programs at the Center. Artists enjoyed a unique venue to display and sell their wildlife photos and art.



Art Show and Contest photos clockwise from top left: Lee Farrell's 1st and 2nd place photos "Eared Grebes" and "Sphinx Moth"; Best friends and both winners, Heidi Snyder and Dorothy DePaulo; Winning sculpture with ASGD's back to back Karl and Carl; A happy crowd enjoys the show; Lee Farrell, star of the show, receiving 1st and 2nd place awards from Harriet Stratton. Photos by Jerry Raskin.

of life and longevity. ASGD member Gary Mattes has done the research, and his conclusion is that all these important factors are incorporated into the hobby of birding.

Birding challenges mental stimulation by problem solving with bird identification. Intellectually stimulating experiences can help maintain cognitive skills and is associated with a reduced risk of developing Alzheimers disease later in life. The process of learning new information about birds and recalling that information improves brain function. It has been proven that the ability to learn new information improves memory and fluid intelligence. Reading about birds, studying field guides, and identifying birds outside can improve a person's life satisfaction.

Well being, quality of life, and even mental health can all be improved with healthy social interactions. This means that joining a birding group is a great way for seniors, especially those who

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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Research confirms – Birding is good for you

Research report by Gary Mattes, ASGD Member
Reviewed by Doris Cruze, ASGD Board Member

The 2010 United States Census is expected to document that a large segment of the population will be celebrating milestone birthdays as Baby Boomers reach their 50's and 60's. As these "seniors" seek life satisfaction, researchers point out that mental stimulation, social contacts, and physical activity are keys to enhancing quality

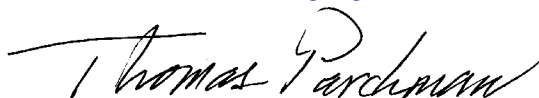
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE—

Audubon Colorado and its chapters are Charter Partners in the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II, now in its third of five years. Volunteers adopt 10 square miles of land where they survey nesting bird species. The volunteers are like you and me: people, Audubon members and others, who care about birds and the Colorado natural resources.

Atlasing is more than listing species. You check whether that Meadowlark is carrying food to young; you watch the Eastern Kingbird with nesting materials to see where the nest is. The rewards are legion. You watch young fledglings begging for food; you see the Bullock's Oriole weaving her nest; you see the acrobatics of young birds learning to fly and, more importantly, to land.

You also meet some wonderful people who don't often get thanks from groups like Audubon. I met Brian, a rancher near Last Chance. Brian welcomed me onto his land; he told me where to look; he gave me directions to other lands and owners. Brian cares for our lands and resources. He participates in government conservation programs. He is a good steward. So, I'm taking this opportunity to say thanks to Brian and his like for all they do for the Breeding Bird Atlas, and by association, for Audubon, for our lands and for our resources. I ask you to do the same if you get that chance.

Saying thank you, however, is only the beginning of what I ask. We are almost three thousand members strong. Like Brian, you have resources that you could share with Denver Audubon, its programs, and its members. I am not talking about money; money comes to mind and is easy if you have it, but impossible if you don't. Rather, I'm thinking about skills and time. Your time and skills are more valuable than gold. Do you like working with kids? Have you seen a child's eyes grow wide with discovery? Do you know computers? Do you take nature pictures? Do you just like getting out of the house and doing some work in good company once in a while? Please, start thinking about what you have to give, and I promise the giving will create its own reward. Give us a call. Tell us what skills and resources you can share. We will start working together, and we will all grow, smile, and be the better.



Tom Parchman, President

ASGD welcomes our New Friends Members

Thank you for joining ASGD. We hope you will take pride in the award-winning programs your "new" organization offers, and will join us at the Audubon Center at Chatfield for Outdoor Adventures.

Welcome!

Barbara Boardman, Bruce Ducker, Caroline Lowsma, Christy Hansen, Clyde Hoadley, Deborah Gauchat, Dick Prickett, Donna P. Moore, Dorothy Laura Hampton, Ford & Ann Frick, Haruko Ishiyama, Jack Ferguson, Jerry & Linda Berry, Jocelyn Seller, Judy Garcia, Kathy Ford, Kirk Bateman, Linda Hackley, Lucille Clark, Maralee Nobis-Jacobsen, Margaret Smith, Mariana Enriquez-Olmos, Maxine Johnson, Michael Hope, Paula Boltz, Ralph & Emilie Wiersma, Sue Cannon, Susan Long, Yvonne Parrott



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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).

Produced by C. Dale Flowers
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2010 Lois Webster Fund Wildlife Grants Available

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver's Lois Webster Fund is again offering grants for research and education projects on Colorado non-game wildlife. The LWF was established thirteen years ago to honor ASGD founder, environmentalist and educator Lois Webster, and in its years of existence has distributed approximately \$40,000 worth of research grants. In 2009 the Fund supported a study of the pre-adult life stages of the Pawnee montane skipper, an endangered butterfly, and research into the distribution of the Townsend's Big-eared bat. Funds have also assisted flammulated owl research, an investigation of Boulder County

bat species, a study of burrowing owl population dynamics, research on possible impacts of climate change on pikas, and compilation of 14 years of mountain plover survey data.

The LWF was set up to fund research and education projects "designed to lead to the conservation of non-game species in Colorado that are declining or under stress or suffering loss or degradation of habitat," according to the LWF Funding Guidelines. The LWF focuses on partnering with other organizations and expects the grantee to provide the leadership and coordination to obtain additional funding and to involve

others. The Guidelines and Application for LWF grants can be found on the ASGD website (www.denveraudubon.org) under the Research Fund or Lois Webster Grant Applications link.

The Committee will be accepting grant proposals through January 29, 2010 for approximately \$5,400 worth of funds for research in the coming year. In addition, the LWF has two spotting scopes available to loan to projects requiring such equipment, described in the Guidelines. Grantees will be notified by March 5, 2010 and the funds dispersed in time for the spring field season.

Special Event— Owls and Woodpeckers of North America

Date: Monday, March 15

Time: 7-8:30pm

Presenter: Paul Bannick – Birder, Photographer, and Author

Pre-registration is requested.

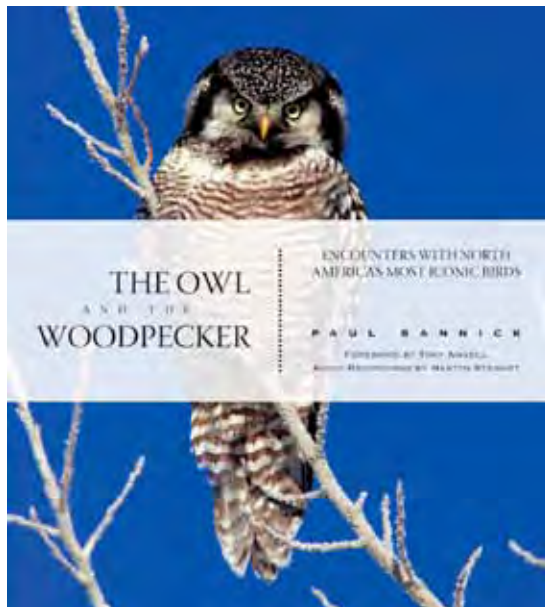
Call 303-973-9530 or rshank@denveraudubon.org

Donations to ASGD are appreciated.

MEETING PLACE: REI Flagship Store, 1416 Platte Street, Denver. Please check their website for directions; if you get lost on the way, their number is 303-756-3100.

DESCRIPTION:

Paul Bannick is the author of *The Owl and The Woodpecker: Encounters with North America's Most Iconic Birds*. This is a comprehensive look at all 41 owl and woodpecker species in North America and the ways in which their life histories are intertwined with each other and with their habitats. The program consists of stunning images, powerful audio and stories from thousands of hours in the field. Check out his website at www.paulbannick.com. Copies of Paul's book will be on sale at the event.



Join Us for the 2010 Legislative Forum!

Date: Saturday, February 20, 2010

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

**Place: First Plymouth Church,
3501 S. Colorado Blvd.
(Colo. Blvd & Hampden)**

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver and the Enos Mills Group of the Sierra Club invite you to attend the 2010 Legislative Forum and get informed on the hot environmental topics of this year's legislative session. This is always an entertaining and educational event! After the continental breakfast at 8:30 a.m., Audubon Colorado Lobbyist Jen Boulton and Sierra Club Legislative Committee Chair Gary Lindstrom will go over the session's environmental bills and we'll hear speakers on several of the key issues. During lunch we'll talk with several Colorado legislators on items such as the effect of budget cuts on Colorado's environmental programs, clean energy, and habitat protection. A final agenda will be available in early February.

The cost of the Forum is \$12 per person in advance, \$15 at the door. To register in advance, call Rhonda in the ASGD office at 303-973-9530. If you are interested in volunteering at the Forum, call that number or send an email to: rshank@denveraudubon.org.



Eagle Eye

Watching Public Policy for the Environment
by Polly Reetz, ASGD Conservation Committee Chair

We all know the Colorado Legislature makes the laws, but what happens after that? Answer: Many laws require the creation of regulations, or rules, to implement them; problem is, few people usually keep track of, or participate in, that process. Occasionally there are exceptions: in 2007 the Legislature passed laws requiring that wildlife and public health be given consideration when the State issues oil and gas leasing permits. The Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission then spent almost two years collecting public comments, drafting and revising the regulations, and finally issuing them, with much media coverage, moaning and groaning by the oil and gas industry, and lots of public participation. But much more often, we forget about the rules that have to be written and implemented so that laws can take effect.

Currently the Colorado Division of Wildlife is re-writing their rules that regulate the sport of falconry. (Yes, Virginia, there is such a sport, and about 200 people in Colorado pursue it). This move was prompted by the issuing of new falconry regulations at the federal level, basically turning the responsibility for regulation and enforcement over to the States. Colorado's original rules, first written in 1963, pre-date the old federal ones, which were adopted in the 1970's. The two non-governmental groups most involved with the regulation re-write are Audubon and the Colorado Hawking Club. The latter group, representing about half the State's falconers, offered to work with Audubon to find common ground on the regulations, and talks between the two groups are proceeding. Meanwhile, here are some key points the new regulations will cover and Audubon's position on them:

Capture of wild raptors by nonresidents:

Audubon opposes the "take" of wild raptors for falconry by non-residents. We know relatively little about the population dynamics of our raptor species in Colorado, and allowing non-residents to capture birds and export them opens those populations up to a whole new level of exploitation.

Timing of capture of wild raptors: The existing Colorado regulations allow capture for a 180-day period: June 1 to July 31 for nestlings, 1 September to 15 January for 1st-year birds, with a two-week gap in October to keep the total to 180 days. The new federal regulations allow take year-round. Audubon urges that no capture be allowed during the breeding season, approximately January 1 to May 31.

What species can be taken for falconry? Colorado rules now say no capture of osprey, kites or owls. Audubon agrees with this and would like to see the gyrfalcon added to this list. This species is a rare vagrant in Colorado, and when a bird shows up it should be left in the wild for the thousands of avid birdwatchers in the State to appreciate, not captures and removed from public view.

Avoid commercialization of wild raptor populations: Colorado's rules now allow a raptor bred in

captivity to be sold one time only; the new owner cannot then turn around and sell the bird again (Only birds bred in captivity can be sold). Audubon supports retention of this language, so that raptor populations aren't turned into lucrative money sources.

Audubon has also put together a set of four principles that should govern any changes in the falconry regulations:

- Falconry is a sport, and it should be regulated following the same principles of good wildlife management that apply to any other sport that involves the "take" of wildlife.
- Any changes in the regulations should be made for good cause, to improve the sport and to benefit the health of wildlife populations. Raptors should not be kept as pets, nor should these species be commercialized.
- Any changes in the regulations that might increase the take of birds from the wild need to be supported by good data on current "harvest" figures, population status and productivity, and other parameters related to the health and conservation of our wild raptors.
- New regulations should be considered in the light of the ability of the Division of Wildlife to administer and enforce them.

The Wildlife Commission will be considering new falconry regulations at their January and March meetings. Please take time to write to them and stress the issues and principles above. Audubon is almost the only group, besides the falconers, that has participated in the writing of these rules: let's keep up the tradition. Write to: Colorado Wildlife Commission, 6060 Broadway, Denver Co 80216.

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A nature center for you and your family!

Continuing the Legacy of Sigrid Ueblacker

by Wendy Shattil & Bob Rozinski

Thousands of raptors are injured every year, but if a bird was brought to Sigrid Ueblacker and her Birds of Prey Foundation, it had an excellent chance of recovery and return to the wild.

Sigrid established the Foundation in 1984 to treat primarily raptors, such as eagles, hawks and owls, and return healthy members of the breeding population to their natural habitat. Her passing on October 28th was a devastating loss, but her life's work and high level of ethical care of birds continues at the Broomfield rehabilitation facility she established.

Sigrid's legacy as Director of the Foundation includes the release of over 10,000 birds. Her quarter-century of often intensive, round-the-clock work gave an immeasurable boost to America's raptor population from the many thousands of successful releases, and in turn, those birds' countless offspring in the wild. One of Sigrid's outstanding qualities was to see each bird as an individual, determine its needs, recognize its personality and provide treatment in the most effective manner possible. The result was an astounding 70 percent release rate for birds brought to her.

The proof of Sigrid's success was dramatically illustrated when we photographed a wild peregrine falcon nest in Dinosaur National Monument. Peregrines were listed as endangered at the time, and every individual was critical to the population. Identification from her federal leg band confirmed the female peregrine that raised this brood of chicks was "The Blue Lady," a bird that Sigrid had released two years previously. Rarely do we know the fate of a released bird, but this was living proof of Sigrid's remarkable skills, which benefitted common and endangered species equally. As Sigrid said, "Every animal here is treated with care, dignity and respect regardless of whether it is a mouse or an eagle."

Our first impression of Sigrid Ueblacker when we met her in 1982 was of a generous, dedicated woman, passionate about making life better for injured birds by nursing them back to health. She invited us into her backyard and introduced us to vultures, owls and hawks, telling the story of each one. Elton, an unreleasable great-horned owl occupied a large cage built onto the side of Sigrid's house, and his favorite perch allowed him to look in her bedroom window. During mating season, Elton hooted at her through the night - - thus his name. Sig-

rid's humor permeated her work, helping people relate to the birds.

Sigrid was equally as dedicated to sharing her knowledge with others and was honored for her educational efforts in 2004 with the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association Lifetime Achievement Award. She received many other well-deserved recognitions, including the Boulder Audubon Environmental Activism Award, Colorado Wildlife Federation's

Conservationist of the Year Award, the Cherokee Ranch Stewardship Award, and Boulder County Parks & Open Space Environmental Stewardship Award. In 2009 Sigrid was one of ten finalists for Animal Planet's "Hero of the Year." Schoolchildren all over the area were captivated and enriched by her educational programs, which featured unreleasable birds, her longtime friends and companions. She also conducted training seminars in bird rehabilitation and trained her staff personally.

Sigrid's legacy will continue as long as we continue to support the

Birds of Prey Foundation.

A celebration of her life, open to all, will be held in May of 2010, and will be announced through the Birds of Prey Foundation. In lieu of gifts or flowers, memorial donations can be made to the Birds of Prey Foundation, 2290 S. 104th St., Broomfield CO, 80020, or online through their website, www.birds-of-prey.org.



Sigrid Ueblacker poses with a great horned owl. Photo © Wendy Shattil / Bob Rozinski. 303-721-1991 www.dancingpelecan.com



ASGD's Karl Brummert Receives Audubon/Toyota TogetherGreen Fellowship

The Audubon/Toyota TogetherGreen Fellowship is designed to advance the work of individuals with outstanding leadership potential to help shape a brighter environmental future. ASGD Audubon Center Director Karl Brummert is one of 40 individuals nationwide selected as a 2009 TogetherGreen Fellow. The TogetherGreen Fellowship offers specialized training in conservation planning and execution, the chance to work and share best practices with conservation professionals, and assistance with project outreach and evaluation. Each Fellow receives \$10,000 towards a community-focused project to engage local residents in conserving land, water and energy, and contributing to greater environmental health.

For his fellowship, Karl will offer progressive skill building programs for children, teens, and adults at the Audubon

Nature Center at Chatfield. The Center's indoor/outdoor lab and miles of trails will be used to encourage independent exploration and learning about the surrounding river, forest, and grassland ecosystems. He will develop two naturalist certification programs and work with health care providers to develop outdoor programs and weekly hikes at the Center that encourage more sedentary children, teens, and adults to lead a healthier lifestyle. Karl will also reach out to local colleges and universities to develop an affiliation to provide the outdoor component of environmental courses on the Center's property.

The vision is to develop the Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield into a "training center" for naturalists, outdoor recreationists, and environmental advocates, advancing conservation action and helping Denver residents to be well informed about issues related to their local wildlife and habitats.

Research confirms – Birding is good for you contd. from page 1

live alone, to find new friends and get involved in social networks. Birding trips create an environment where people easily socialize, and research shows that people with active social lives tend to report feeling better about themselves and their lives. Birders can meet new friends on day trips, travel trips, and trips to other countries to seek out new birds all over the world.

Another advantage of joining a birding group is the opportunity for socializing through volunteering. Seniors looking to make a difference and to give back to the community are always welcome and will soon gain a sense of belonging by volunteering at ASGD. One study reported that frequent contact with children and friends and the satisfaction that comes from this volunteering are related to a reduced risk of dementia. Feelings of loneliness and depression melt away while leading a lively group of kids on a nature walk or doing a craft activity at the ASGD Nature Center.

Donating to organizations is another way seniors can feel they are necessary to society and are appreciated. ASGD and other birding groups are non-profit operations and need support through donations.

Seniors looking for ways to improve physical health will find that birding is an excellent motivation to get outside and do some walking. Studies show that walking enhances older adults' cognitive function while exercise

increases blood flow to slow the effects of aging. Walking while birding is a low impact activity that improves a person's quality of life and helps in performing everyday tasks, even being more independent. Birding and walking as a physical activity can decrease depression and anxiety disorders, improve mood, and substantially benefit cognitive functions. These benefits are not related to the speed of walking but rather to regular exercise.

Less physically active birders can also benefit from studying and observing birds. Birding while sitting and viewing feeders can stimulate the mind and be a social activity. Bird banding stations, such as the ASGD station at Chatfield, are very accessible to birders with limited mobility and are a great way to see a variety of

birds up close. Volunteers with limited mobility can find opportunities to get involved by helping with mailings or other projects in the ASGD office.

Birding fits all the categories needed to improve life satisfaction and the good news is that birds are almost everywhere. Seniors who take up birding can improve mood, live longer, reduce depression, increase physical activity, and enjoy social interactions. Join an ASGD group or visit the ASGD Nature Center and get out there and look for birds.



*Lunch at the Kingery's after bird watching at Castlewood Canyon.
Photo by Carolyn Vigil.*

ASGD Calendar of Events

JANUARY 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					ASGD Office Closed Happy New Year Denver Christmas Bird Count 1	7:30am Douglas County Christmas Bird Count *2
9am Walk The Wetlands *3	4	5	6	7	8	8:30 am Waterfowl at Quincy FT 10am Animal Homes at AC *9
9am Veterans Breakfast Club 9am Ducks in Winter FT *10	11	7pm ASGD Board Meeting 12	13	14	15	8am Jim Baker Reservoir FT *16
*17	Martin Luther King Day 18	7pm Conservation Committee 19	20	21	22	10am Mucking in the Ponds at AC *23
9am Raptors of North Front Range FT *24	7pm DFO Members Meeting 25	26	27	28	WILDLIFE RESEARCH PROPOSAL DEADLINE 29	9am Raptors of North Front Range FT 10am Coping with the Cold FT *30
*31	*The Audubon Center is Open 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays during January					

FEBRUARY 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	9am South Platte Park FT 10am Six Weeks of Winter at AC *6
9am Walk The Wetlands *7	8	7pm ASGD Board Meeting 9	BIRDSEED ORDER DEADLINE 10	11	— Great Backyard Bird Count — 12	8:30am Coal Creek Arena FT *13
9am Veterans Breakfast Club — Great Backyard Bird Count — *14	President's Day 15	16	17	18	19	8:30am LEGISLATIVE FORUM 10am BIRDSEED PICKUP DAY *20
*21	7pm DFO Members Meeting 22	23	24	25	26	*27
*28						
*The Audubon Center is Open 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays during February						

FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS

To Register Call 303.973.9530

The Audubon Center is located on Waterton Road off S. Wadsworth Blvd 4.4 miles south of C-470.

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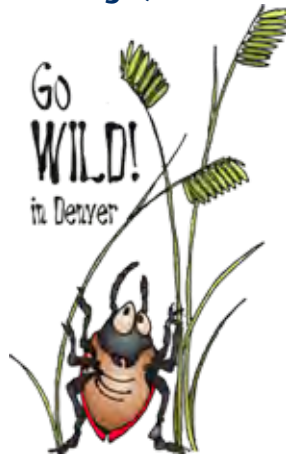
Saturday, January 9, 10am-12pm

On our hike, we'll search for bird nests and other signs of animal dwellings. You'd be surprised at how many are out there!

Mucking in the Pond...In Winter?

Saturday, January 23, 10am-12pm

Usually a warm weather activity, we'll attempt to find out if life continues in a frozen pond in winter. What's your guess?



Six Weeks of Winter

Saturday, February 6, 10am-12pm

As of this printing, we can't predict if the groundhog will see his shadow on February 2, but meteorologically, winter will last until April...So let's enjoy it!

Be Prepared...

Saturday, February 20, 10am-12pm

...for your next wilderness adventure. Many people avoid exploring because they feel they don't know what to do. We'll teach you the basics to get you on your way.

FREE for ASGD "Friends" Members

For non-members: \$4/session for adults

Parent and child (12 and under) \$6/session (additional child under 12 - \$3/session)

Become a member! \$25/individual; \$35/family

Please pre-register by calling 303-973-9530 or by e-mail at info@denveraudubon.org.

To visit the Audubon Nature Center - drive approximately 4.4 miles south on Wadsworth Blvd. from C-470, turn left onto Waterton Road and then quickly left again into the Center parking area.

Urban Denver Christmas Bird Count

Friday, January 1

(Contact Hugh Kingery, 303-814-2723 or go on-line to www.denveraudubon.org or www.dfobirder.org)

Details in November/December 2009 Warbler.

Douglas County Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, January 2; 7:30am

(Contact Roxborough State Park, 303-973-3959)

Details in November/December 2009 Warbler

~ PROGRAMS AT THE AUDUBON CENTER ~

Walk the Wetlands

Sunday, January 3, 9am

Sunday, February 7, 9am

Leaders: Hugh and Urling Kingery (303-814-2723) and Master Birders

Pre-registration not required.

Donations to ASGD appreciated.

MEETING PLACE: Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield

DESCRIPTION: Walk along the South Platte River exploring ponds and habitats for winter residents and visitors from the north. Dress for the weather. Bring: water, snack, binoculars and field guides; loaners available.

Military Veterans Breakfast Club

Sunday, January 10, 9-11am Sunday, February 14, 9-11am

Leader: Carl Norbeck (U.S. Navy)

If you are planning on bringing kids or grandkids, please call ASGD and RSVP so we can be adequately staffed.

Donations to ASGD are appreciated.

MEETING PLACE: Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield

DESCRIPTION: ASGD will provide coffee, bagels AND nametags. The Audubon Nature Center provides a pleasant setting to remember our veterans and enjoy the companionship of others. If you have kids or grandkids, bring them along. Our naturalists will keep them busy and enthralled, along with other kids at the Center that day.

FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS

To Register Call 303.973.9530

The Audubon Center is located on Waterton Road off S. Wadsworth Blvd 4.4 miles south of C-470.

~ PROGRAMS AT THE OTHER LOCATIONS ~

Ducks in Winter

Sunday, January 10, 9am-12pm

Leaders: Mary Keithler, Dave Hill, Lois Levinson

Fee: \$10 / Friends member \$12/ nonmembers

Pre-registration is required. Call 303-973-9530 or
rshank@denveraudubon.org

MEETING PLACE: Grant Frontier Park, southeast corner of Evans and the South Platte River.

DESCRIPTION: In winter, ducks wear their most brilliant plumage. Join Audubon Master Birders for spectacular views of Hooded Merganser, American Wigeon, Bufflehead, Northern Shoveler, and other divers and dabblers. Past years have produced Red-breasted Merganser and Barrow's Goldeneye. Dress for walking in weather with binoculars on a concrete path along and crossing the Platte River.

DESCRIPTION: Winter in Colorado brings colder temperatures. Join us for a walk through City Park to discover how plants and animals cope with the cold in the heart of the urban environment. Dress for the weather and bring water and binoculars.

South Platte Park

Saturday, February 6, 9am-12pm

Leaders: Barbara Shissler and Cindy Valentine

Fee: \$10 / Friends member, \$12 / nonmember

Pre-registration requested

MEETING PLACE: Carson Nature Center, South Platte Park (west on Mineral from Santa Fe; right at first traffic light; between 2 RTD parking lots). Meet in parking lot north of the two-story log building.

DESCRIPTION: Enjoy a close-up view of a variety of wintering ducks while exploring the beautiful habitat along the South Platte River. You will also see terrestrial birds in the cottonwood groves along the river. Bring binoculars.

Raptors of the Northern Front Range

Sunday, January 24, 9am-3pm

Saturday, January 30, 9am-3pm

Leaders: Harold and Betty Oliver (303-936-6902)

Fee: \$10 / Friends member; \$12 / non-member

Pre-registration is required. Call 303-973-9530 or
rshank@denveraudubon.org

MEETING PLACE: Exit 1-25 at Exit #225 at 136th Avenue. Meet at WalMart parking lot on west side of 1-25. Bring your lunch. Limit 10.

DESCRIPTION: Join the Olivers on one of our most popular field trips! We will be looking for bald eagles, great-horned owls, red-tailed hawks and other high flyers. Bring binoculars and field guides. This is mostly a car trip with very little walking. Follow Harold and Betty Oliver and years of experience spotting nesting raptors.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Count for Fun, Count for the Future!

Friday, Saturday, Sunday and/or Monday, February 12-15, (Presidents' Day Weekend)

Pre-registration is NOT required

DESCRIPTION: People of all ages and experience levels are invited to take part wherever they are—at home, in schoolyards, at local parks or wildlife refuges, even counting birds on a balcony. Observers count the highest number of each species they see during at least 15 minutes on one or more of the count days. Then they enter their tallies on the Great Backyard Bird Count web site. Last year, participants turned in more than 93,600 checklists online, creating the continent's largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded!

Coping with the Cold in City Park

Saturday, January 30, 10am-12pm

Leader: Sheridan Samano

Fee: None

Pre-registration required.

MEETING PLACE: City Park in Denver. Parking lot between Duck Lake and Ferril Lake

Please consider the Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield as a likely spot for your Great Backyard Bird Count.

So get out and get involved. For more information, visit www.birdcount.org.

FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS

To Register Call 303.973.9530

The Audubon Center is located on Waterton Road off S. Wadsworth Blvd 4.4 miles south of C-470.

PROGRAMS OFFERED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY OF AURORA PARKS & OPEN SPACE DEPARTMENT

Winter Waterfowl at Quincy Reservoir

Saturday, January 9, 8:30-10:30am

Leader: Mary Ann Bonnell

Fee: None

Pre-registration is required.

**REGISTRATION, DIRECTIONS, AND MEETING PLACE
INFORMATION** at 303.739.2428 or nature@auroragov.org

DESCRIPTION: Quincy's gates may be closed and locked for the season, but birders will get a special glimpse of winter waterfowl on this walk. If the water is still open, we could be treated to buffleheads, goldeneyes, mergansers, scaups, teals, and more.

Coal Creek Arena

Saturday, February 13, 8:30-10:30am

Leader: Mary Ann Bonnell

Fee: None

Pre-registration is required:

**REGISTRATION, DIRECTIONS, AND MEETING PLACE
INFORMATION** at 303-739-2428 or nature@auroragov.org

DESCRIPTION: Coal Creek Arena is a common roosting location for bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, American kestrels and great-horned owls.

~ LOOKING AHEAD TO MARCH ~

Sandhill Crane Festival Monte Vista, Colorado

Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 12-14

Leaders: To Be Announced

Fee: \$250 Friends, double occupancy; \$290 Friends, single. Nonmembers add \$40. Includes lodging for two nights at a Monte Vista motel and dinner Saturday night. Be prepared to buy dinner on Friday and lunch on Saturday and Sunday. Continental breakfast is included.

Pre-registration is required.

Call 303-973-9530 or rshank@denveraudubon.org,
Details will be provided with registration.

MEETING PLACE: TBA in Monte Vista on Friday at 4 p.m. for a tour of the refuge to watch the cranes fly in. Participants will provide their own transportation to and around Monte Vista. Audubon can coordinate carpooling. Monte Vista is a scenic 4 hour drive from Denver.

DESCRIPTION: Experience one of Colorado's most impressive wildlife spectacles against the backdrop of the snow-capped Sangre de Cristo Mountains. See 20,000 Sandhill Cranes feeding on Monte Vista Wildlife Refuge, flying in at dusk and out at dawn, and young cranes dancing to attract their life long mate. Between dawn and dusk we'll bird the area lakes and roads for waterfowl, wintering eagles and raptors. After a community Pancake Breakfast Saturday morning, the Crane Festival presents a menu of short workshops and lectures of interest to naturalists and a decent local craft fair. You will be free to return to Denver on Sunday after lunch in the San Luis Valley (or earlier).

Special Event, March 15 –Owls and Woodpeckers of North America

(See details of this Special Event on page 3)

Beginning Bird-Watching Class

Classroom Session: Thursday, April 1, 7-9pm

Field Trips: Saturdays, April 3, 10, 17, 24,
May 1 and 15; 8am-1-2pm

Fee: \$150/members, \$175/non-members
(includes membership)

Graduates of the class may drop in at \$20 a field trip.

Pre-registration is required.

Call 303-973-9530 or rshank@denveraudubon.org

Leaders: Urling & Hugh Kingery

DESCRIPTION: Bird-watching sites around Denver including Chatfield, Barr Lake, and Castlewood Canyon State Parks, Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, and Genesee Mountain Park.

Are you new to birding in Colorado? Wondering where to begin? Join Colorado's foremost—and most entertaining—birding couple as they introduce the art and science of birdwatching as no one else can. Learn how to identify birds, choose a good pair of binoculars, select field guides, and much more. Instruction takes place on a series of field trips to the best birding spots in the Denver metro area. Learn to observe and develop a practiced eye and ear. Meet new friends and change the way you spend time outdoors. Make up any field trips that you miss during future class sessions. Be forewarned. This class has hooked hundreds on the lifelong adventure of bird watching!

Kayak the Niobrara in Nebraska

JULY 6 – 9, 2010

The Niobrara River flows through a unique ecosystem in the sandhill area of the northwest part of Nebraska. The river canyon, with many lovely waterfalls, contains remnants of the eastern deciduous forest and the northern boreal forest. This part of the Niobrara is an easy float in single person, recreational kayaks (more stable and comfortable than canoes), moving with the current at about 7 miles per hour. Most of the river waters are about hip deep. We will listen and look for birds along the river, at the cabins, and during our other stops along the way. Wild Turkeys are usually seen.



ASGD members enjoy kayaking the Niobrara River in Nebraska. Photo by Ann Bonnell.

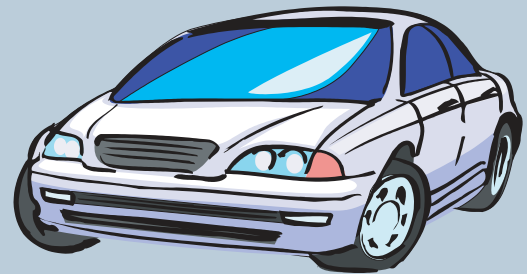
The trip is limited to 20 participants and usually fills early. We will stay in two cabins at the Niobrara River Ranch, located just north of Smith Falls State Park. The cabins have an expansive view of the river valley. The trip is scheduled for Tuesday, July 6 through Friday, July 9, 2010. Tuesday is a travel day in personal cars from Denver to the Niobrara River Ranch, stopping in Keenesburg for breakfast, stopping for lunch at Buffalo Bill Cody Park in North Platte, and enjoying dinner in Valentine. Wednesday is a river day, kayaking about 12.5 miles from the Cornell Bridge put in to the Smith Falls State Park take out. Thursday we will visit The Nature Conservancy Niobrara Preserve, Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge and Smith Falls. Friday morning we will kayak the other 12.5 miles of river taking out at Sunny Brook Camp. By mid-afternoon Friday, folks will head back to Denver. The trip fee includes all meals from Wednesday morning through Friday lunch, park fees, river fees, a donation to Nature Conservancy, shuttles, and single recreational kayak rentals for two days on the river. You pay for your breakfast in Keenesburg on Tuesday, bring your lunch for that day, and pay for your dinner in Valentine. Children over the age of 10 who are able to handle their own kayaks are welcome. Kayak rentals, transfers, and people shuttles for the river will be handled by Sunny Brook Camp Outfitters. Each participant is expected to participate in group plans and help our super chef prepare at least one meal and help clean up after one meal. We will try to arrange a kayak practice time in Denver before the trip. If you want to car pool, we will give you a list of contacts.

The fee is \$550.00 per person for Friends of the Audubon Society of Greater Denver, or \$580.00 for non Friends members. You may join Friends for \$25.00. A \$275 nonrefundable deposit is due April 14, with the balance due by June 9. If you find a replacement for yourself or someone is able to replace you from a waiting list, your full fee can be refunded.

If you want to go on this trip, make your deposit soon. This trip has always filled up early. To register call ASGD at 303-973-9530. For other information about the

trip, please call volunteer trip coordinator Ann Bonnell at 303-979-6211.

ASGD Donation Program



Donate a Vehicle

Help Birds! Help Kids!

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver (ASGD) and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado (BBBSC) have joined forces. When you donate a vehicle to ASGD, you also benefit BBBSC. Here's how it works: ASGD handles the initial calls; BBBSC handles the details.

To donate a vehicle, call ASGD at 303-973-9530 or send an e-mail to info@denveraudubon.org.

Safe Skies Colorado Update

by Joe Bartell, ASGD Board Member

ASGD's work to make conditions safer for migrating songbirds - Safe Skies Colorado, or SSC - has made some substantial strides in the past months. Board Member Joe Bartell, accompanied by Stefan Kazmierski from the Conservation Committee, met with author David Sibley (The Sibley Guide to Birds, The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America, etc.) in early October to talk about the downward trend in bird populations in North America and our attempts to reduce bird mortality by setting up "Safe Skies." Sibley was very supportive of ASGD's efforts and made several suggestions about reaching homeowners via birdseed retailers and the media. While Safe Skies at present focuses on a "lights out" policy for skyscrapers during spring and fall migration, Sibley urged that ASGD expand its work to include bird mortality due to daytime collisions with glass in windows and walls. He mentioned the use of window coatings that eliminate reflections and make glass visible to birds - most are still in the early stages of commercial development but could, if widely used, reduce bird mortality substantially.

Working with the Sierra Club, American Lung Association of Colorado, Xcel Energy, the Building Owners

and Managers Association, National Jewish, Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper, Denver Field Ornithologists and the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, SSC has produced a flier stressing the benefits of the "lights out" program to birds and the global environment and arranged for its distribution. Contacts have been established with the Colorado Hotel Owners Association, which took some of the fliers for its trade fair. A "splash site" website has been set up, which will offer links to ASGD's site and eventually to FLAP (Fatal Light Awareness Program), a Toronto-based group that has promoted solutions to bird/glass collisions, and to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

What Lies Ahead: The Safe Skies committee has set its sights on a possible bill or joint resolution in the legislature, grants to fund development of displays and more fliers, and broader exposure of the problem of birds and glass on the internet. Eventually we'd like to set up a display at the Audubon Nature Center and at other similar facilities in Colorado.

If you'd like to work on the SSC committee, please contact Joe Bartell at 720-524-8622 or call the Audubon office at 303-973-9530.

Have You Seen the Kids? An Observation...

by Joe Bartell, ASGD Board Member

Where are all the young birders? With green issues at the forefront of the political debate, where are the young people interested in these issues and the outdoors? With Denver bordering Rocky Mountain National Park, Chatfield State Park, and the eastern plains, why do we meet so few young people when we are out enjoying our passion visiting state parks and open spaces? Yes, we occasionally see families with children in strollers on up to pre-teens. After this, they seem to disappear. During the past two years of participating in field trips and birding in Colorado, I have seen very few youngsters and all but one was male! I do not think the middle-aged and seniors are the only people who actually care about habitat and are interested in conservation of the birds.

Perhaps we do not see teens joining us because they anticipate the way we may treat them? Maybe they feel we may not welcome them into the society and hobby we all enjoy because they look different, dress different, speak different, or have fresh new ideas. With their sharp eyes, they see and identify that "LBJ" (little brown job) before other long-time birders. We should not be jealous

of their rare talent, but encourage it as much as possible and pass on any of our valuable experiences.

I do not care what ethnicity a young person is, whether they have spiked hair or no hair, have tattoos and body piercing, what their faith might be, which gender they are, or which accent or dialect they speak. I DO care that many young people are missing out and appear not to be interested in birding, specifically in greater Denver and across the country. This is sad and they have a tremendous amount to contribute to both birding and society with their "modern ideas". They are the future and we must encourage our young friends and neighbors to integrate into our wonderful hobby.

ASGD Note: ASGD is actively recruiting young birders who have visited the Audubon Center over the last year. Several have become involved in bird banding, Walk the Wetlands, and other activities. We plan to start a young naturalists club in January. We will also continue to expand our family programs to get more children - and their parents - active in nature and the outdoors.



backyard birds....

by Hugh Kingery



HUMMINGBIRDS GALORE (JUST LIKE SUMMER)! Historically few visited city yards, but in September this year, many did. From Green Mountain, Nan Brehmer says, “an unusual number this year.” Joy Schieving, near D.U., had 1-2 Broad-tails daily and Tina Jones (BowMar), from Sept. 23-26, had 8 Broad-tailed, 2 Black-chinned, 2 Rufous. In Coal Creek Canyon (not city, I guess) Jan & Dave Wadlington saw their last one Sept. 29.

MOSTLY BROAD-TAILED PERSISTED INTO OCTOBER.

Oct. 6: Roy Hohn in Centennial and Nancy DeLong near Larkspur; Oct. 8-11: one each Black-chin and Broad-tailed on Green Mtn. (Mark Chavez); Oct. 8: Neil Hanson in Parker and Lynn Ackerman in Highlands Ranch.



Broad-tailed Hummingbird.

Photo by Dick Vogel

Oct. 11-13: at Tina's, a Broad-tail and a Rufous (“trying to feed on salvias which were pretty much gone”). Oct. 16: south in Perry Park, Carolyn Zwhalen: “a hummingbird drank for a long time, perched on a nearby branch, scratched, and preened. It had another long drink and left. At first I thought it was a young female broad-tail, but when it stretched its neck way around, it had a small band of bright red under the outer feathers.” Mark Chavez had the last call, a Broad-tailed on Oct. 19.

KAREN METZ, IN FRANKTOWN, hosted a “disheveled Rufous,” last seen Oct. 11 after an 11-day stay. “I think she was a hatch-year female Rufous, but she was so very shaggy all over and was missing tail feathers that I never was positive. When she arrived she was a mess; after a few days she looked less pitiful. She was skittish all the time, unlike most of the other hummingbirds.”

CRANES GALORE! Watchers in Douglas and Elbert counties saw thousands of Sandhills in October.

OCT. 9, 1 to 7:15 p.m.: Debbie Trujillo, NW Elbert County: “I was very fortunate to witness the great numbers of cranes migrating today. I lost count after 3200. It was glorious! They were flying right over my house and would circle in the thermals before heading south again. . . a steady stream all afternoon. My



Sandhill Crane

Photo by Dick Vogel

neck hurts from looking up all day! A friend called at 6 and said she saw 5 huge groups flying over at Delbert and CR186. It was dark at 7:15 and I heard a couple of groups going over.”
3 p.m.: Fran Shepperdson: “Two flocks heading south between Elizabeth and Kiowa, probably the same as those seen by others. They started at about 1000 feet and soared up the thermals until they hit a southward flow at about 4000-5000 feet. I also heard a flock east of Kiowa, but didn't see them. The airplanes coming into DIA were going straight at them and then must have seen them or been warned by the FAA. They [the planes, I think] turned about two miles away and headed northwest.”
Afternoon: Ben Duke, Elizabeth, saw about 1000.
5:15 p.m.: Kit Bazley, Castle Rock: “I heard them before I saw them - 60 birds, circling over my house. I ran inside, grabbed my binoculars, and by the time I got back outside, they were well south, heading toward Keene Ranch.”

5:20 p.m.: Urling & I heard one flock, then saw another 100 or so, really far away — on the skyline, five miles east.

6:30 p.m.: Christine Dressler: “a huge flock just flew over our place NE of Kiowa, headed south.”

OCT. 10, Debbie: “I just came in from feeding horses and heard big groups going over. You can't see them, but you can sure hear them. It's 8 p.m. and they are coming over pretty steadily.”

OCT. 11: Urling and I saw two flocks, way east, during our The Big Sit! on our roof.

OCT. 13: Robert Doriss, Watkins, 1:24 p.m.: “Just heard my first Sandhill Cranes chortling overhead. 50 or so were flying lower than usual, maybe a bit lower than 2000 feet. I used to be a pilot—that's how I judge heights.”

OCT. 15: 7:10 p.m. (after dark) Urling and I heard a flock.

OCT. 20: 9:20 a.m. 50 over Debbie's.

OCT. 22: Near Cherry Creek Reservoir, 100 spent the night on a golf course near Allison Hilf's. “The golf course tends to run dogs every a.m. in an effort to chase the geese away. They agreed to keep the dogs in today and the cranes left on their own terms.”

TUDI ARNEIL SENT A PHOTO by Art Eiser of hundreds that stopped to feed at the Plains Conservation Center; “They are flying, cranking, standing, and being beautiful.”

7:30-8:30 a.m.: Bob Rozinski and Matt Newport: 200-400 at Cherry Creek Reservoir.

9 a.m. Mrs. Pauley: 200 at Parker & Hampden.

10 a.m.: Karen Metz & Merrye McGilvray heard and finally saw skeins, “minimum count of 250, as they flew over the east rim of Castlewood Canyon. Within the flock we heard the whistle-like calls of hatch-year cranes among the deep and distinctive calls of adults. Within 10 minutes another flock of 75 flew over.”

10:15 a.m.: Urling and I: 250 over Castlewood Canyon.

10:30 a.m.: 200 over Debbie's.

Backyard Birds continued on page 10

11:30 a.m.: Robert Doriss: a flyover about “1100-1300 feet up. Have never seen them that low before. Another skein at 6 p.m., this time at the usual height, 2500-3000 feet up, 80 or more.”

OCT. 26: Dave Cameron, Green Mountain: “a flyover of 32 very vocal cranes, circling in the clear blue sky.”

AND THE LAST WORD: “I was walking near Cheesman Park east of downtown Denver,” emailed Ann Stoenner, “when I heard the unmistakable chirrup sounds of Sandhill Cranes overhead. About 150 in one of those confused groupings where they fly in several directions at once. After a few minutes they sorted themselves into two V-formations and headed southward.” Hers is one of the few Denver-proper observations.

BACKYARDS HAD GROUND-BOUND BIRDS—temporarily, at least. Oct. 7,

Bill Eden “delighted to see a grosbeak eating black-oil sunflower seed (south-central Denver). It reappeared Oct. 8. With better light and with photos, I ID’d it as an immature male Rose-breasted Grosbeak in first autumn



Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Photo by Bill Eden

plumage. It looks similar to a female—streaked brown with broad white eyebrow-stripes but has a clear, emerging rosy triangle on its breast. The bird fed on sunflower seeds along with a large flock of House Finches and occasionally retreated when a group of Blue Jays dropped in.” Intriguing: about a mile from Bill’s, Joy Schieving also saw a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, “a surprise, only there a short time and chased off by a Blue Jay.” I’d guess that they saw the same bird.

AN ODD MIGRANT—a Common Poorwill—overnight Oct. 15-16 in a Boulder chicken coop: Larry Arp “went to take a picture and turn it loose. His head was tucked in as if sleeping so I could sneak up and grab him. He didn’t move. I put him on Rosemary’s hand so I could take a picture and he almost fell off, he was so deep asleep. I put him in a cat carrier, took him outside to a sunny spot. He slowly opened his eyes, spread his wings, and finally started his open-mouth defensive-position. Boy did he have a big mouth! Finally he flew away and out of sight.”

WARBLERS VISITED CITY YARDS in September. Joy saw Virginia’s three times, Wilsons’ six times, and Yellow-rumped twice. Tina had the same mix. Other migrants included a Ruby-crowned Kinglet that Roy Hohn added to his yard list Oct. 8. Carol Blackard in Arapahoe County, on Oct. 27, had her “best look at a [Gray] Catbird ever. Took a 30-sec. bath at our birdbath smack in the middle of our open urban yard. Must be a young and invincible one.”

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES have adopted south Denver. Reports came from Kevin Corwin (Centennial), Tina (“usual”), Mark Chavez, Roy Hohn, Joy Schieving, and Lynn Willcockson. Ursula Barsch sees them “everywhere”—“the other day four went up and down the trunk of an old crabapple tree.



Red-breasted Nuthatch
Photo by Dick Vogel

Cute, active little creatures.” Many saw Bushtits, now regular in Denver yards, especially south-side: Joy, Lynn (10 birds), Mark (30), Doris Cruze, Littleton (7), Mary Cay Burger (6); “lots of evergreen trees maturing” – they may explain the city Bushtit bonanza”.

JAN AND DAVE, at 8260 feet in Coal Creek Canyon, spotted a Merlin that “swooped by to check out our juncos and Steller’s Jays Sept. 25-29.” Dave Riggs, in west Washington Park, says that he and wife “were sitting in our front room and she noticed a large hawk in the Silver Maple next door. This Cooper’s Hawk had something in its possession. As I ventured out I could see a poor flicker struggling in the hawk’s grasp. The old life-and-death scenario. Along comes a squirrel to investigate and the hawk takes his prize and flies off down the street. My wife was not pleased. I enjoy seeing hawks here in town a lot and I also happen to really like flickers.”

FRANK AND NANCY HATCH (Oct. 9) saw two Broad-winged Hawks that “flew out of the woods along the Highline Canal. As they flew away, 15 crows and magpies caught up with them, and mobbed and chased them back into the woods.”

ON OCT. 12, V ALLISON HILF “was walking near the Cherry Creek Country Club Golf Course when a VERY aggressive and seemingly hungry Broad-winged Hawk took a too-close-for-comfort look at my African Grey Parrot (who was perched on my shoulder in a harness/leash contraption). The hawk dove at us and got within 20-30 yards before it turned away and called several times. My parrot returned the call with repeated Red-tailed Hawk calls and seemed to chase the Hawk away to a large cottonwood. The calling back and forth went on for about the whole 10 minutes it took me to carefully get home with the calling parrot hidden in my jacket--no more shoulder rides during hawk migrations.”

DORIS CRUZE sent a storm list from Oct. 30-31: 15 species including 2 robins, a Spotted Towhee, and 25 juncos. Also squirrels (5 on the day shift) and a raccoon (night shift). Lynn Willcockson’s mid-November yard list had 15 species, including a Mountain Chickadee. Nov. 14 at Ed and Judy Butterfield’s, near Parker, “the storm not only brought snow but three lovely Western Bluebirds, one Townsend’s Solitaire, and a group of juncos.”

I WELCOME YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS. Send a note or post card to P.O. Box 584, Franktown 80116, or Email me: ouzels8@aol.com.

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Protect Birds! Protect Habitat!

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver has initiated a Planned Giving Program. Making a gift or a bequest is becoming a popular way to leave a lasting legacy. Protecting the birds, wildlife and places that make Denver special might be simpler than you think.

For more information, call ASGD at 303-973-9530 or send an e-mail to cnorbeck@denveraudubon.org



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