

# Join a Flock for 2003 Bird-A-Thon

by Susan Smith, ASGD Administrative Director

Want a great way to meet fellow bird watchers, get out-of-doors, have fun and make a difference for Audubon Society of Greater Denver (ASGD) at the same time? You can do all four things by joining a Bird-a-thon flock (team) during the month of May. Or, if you prefer, you can Bird-a-thon solo or form your own flock. Just call ASGD at 303-973-9530 to get your Bird-a-thon packet, pick a day in May, and collect pledges from friends, family and businesses. All the money raised will stay in Denver to directly benefit the Audubon Center at Chatfield State Park and ASGD environmental projects. As an added bonus, you can compete to win an Eagle Optics Raven Spotting Scope with a 20-60x zoom eyepiece, valued at \$399! This grand prize goes to the Bird-a-thon

participant that collects the most money in pledges. (Pledges must be returned to ASGD by June 16, 2003 to be eligible.) We are extremely grateful to Scott and David Menough at Wild Birds Unlimited for donating this eye-grabbing prize.



A group of avid ASGD birders participate in the January 2003 Walk the Wetlands program at Chatfield State Park

## 2003 BIRD-A-THON-FLOCKS (TEAMS)

### Kingery's Kingfishers at Bonny State Park

**Leaders of the Flock:** Urling and Hugh Kingery

**Starting location:** Foster Grove campground in Bonny State Park

**Date & Time:** Tues.-Thurs., May 13, 14 & 15 (Bird-a-thon Day will be Wednesday)

*\*For this flock only, please call the Kingerys at 303-814-2723 to register.*

What could be better than three days of bird watching? Camp out or stay in a motel. You'll see an amazing variety of birds as east meets west. Look for migrating warblers, orioles, and flycatchers, red-headed and red-bellied woodpeckers, eastern bluebirds, thrashers, and in the shelter belts, owls. In this wonderful park we'll walk in many different habitats, from wetlands to prairie. We'll have a pot luck Wednesday evening.

### Grown-ups & Goslings

**Leader of the Flock:** Susan Smith

**Date & Time:** Saturday, May 17, 9am-11am

**Starting location:** Audubon Center at Chatfield State Park

Kids, grab your favorite grown-up and head out the door. (Warning: adults will not be allowed without child supervision!) We'll take an easy hike to the ponds and look for quackers and other feathered friends. Babies, toddlers and little ones welcome!

### Sue's Swifts

**Leader of the Flock:** Sue Schulman

**Date & Time:** Sunday, May 18, 8am

**Starting location:** Cherry Creek State Park, west entrance opposite Cherry Creek HS.

Beginners, intermediates, advanced birders are equally welcome. Bring lunch, binoculars and lots of optimism for a great day of birding. We will try for at least 30 species.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Renovation work at the Audubon Center has been progressing well. It is exciting to see the old garage building transformed into bright, open classroom space. Plus, thanks to a grant from Colorado Garden Show, Inc., improvements around the building will include a children's sensory garden and a wildlife habitat garden featuring native Colorado plants.

I wanted to take this opportunity to express how very fortunate we are to have a partnership with Colorado State Parks to create the Audubon Center at Chatfield. Audubon Society of Greater Denver (ASGD) has been searching for a "home" since its inception in 1969. This nature center will serve not only as a premier environmental education facility, but also as headquarters for (ASGD). It feels wonderful to know that we finally have a place to call home!

I also want to take a moment to recognize the invaluable contributions that Jo Evans has made on behalf of Colorado's environment. Jo served as the Audubon lobbyist at our state capital for many years and retired this last year. She has been a dedicated advocate for laws and policies to protect Colorado's wildlife, water and ecosystems. Fortunately for us, Jo has decided to continue her involvement with Audubon and volunteer for the ASGD Board of Directors.

  
Lavonne Axford

# Thank You!

## WITH GRATITUDE—THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING ASGD

- Mary Ann & Ed Lewis donated a copy of the Guide to Birds of Panama.
- Members David Binkley & Marilyn Brenengen tied the knot in March and asked that donations be made to ASGD in lieu of wedding gifts. Donations were made by Meredith Anderson, Nina Routh, William & Joan Clayton, Toni Rautus, Arlen & Lola Hershberger, Curt & Sue Rautenstrauss, James & Margaret McGinley, Joseph Klune, Shirley Friend, Grace Cole, Brian & Sandra Burrell, Marilyn & David Binkley.

## APPLAUSE FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS!

- Grace Weber, Allison Hilf, & Courtney James for their help around the office.
- The Warbler Mailing Crew: Kevin Corwin, Jeanne McCune, Fred Griest, Ben Cooper, Barbara & Frank Shissler, Billy Funk, Mary Ann Brown, Vi Nicholson, Ailene Herranen, & Willa Brunkhorst.

## WISH LIST

- A vacuum cleaner in good condition for the ASGD office.

## Buy groceries & earn \$\$ for ASGD

Here's an easy way to donate money to ASGD while grocery shopping without having to spend anything extra. Simply purchase King Soopers gift certificates from ASGD and use them to pay for your groceries. King Soopers will then donate 5% of the value of the gift certificates to ASGD. Gift certificates can be purchased at the ASGD office. (Payment accepted by check or cash only.)



9308 S. Wadsworth Boulevard  
Littleton, Colorado 80128  
303-973-9530 • Fax 303-973-1038  
www.denveraudubon.org

## ASGD STAFF

### Administrative Director

Susan Smith  
ssmith@denveraudubon.org

### Office Manager

Rhonda Shank  
rshank@denveraudubon.org

### Program Instructor

Laura Steigers  
lsteigers@denveraudubon.org

For information about special projects, committees, general functions, events, fund raisers and partnerships, please phone, E-mail or write the ASGD office.

## ASGD OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### President Lavonne Axford

laxford@earthlink.net

### 1st Vice President Jerry Raskin

jerarlaskin@earthlink.net

### 2nd Vice President Ann Bonnell

abonnell@juno.com

### Treasurer Position Open

### Secretary Polly Reetz

reetzfam@juno.com

Loretta Davis Carol DeStefanis  
ldavis4@slb.com cdestefa@uhc.com

### Mary Marx

msmarx@ix.netcom.net

### Arlene Raskin

jerarlaskin@earthlink.net

C. Dale Flowers Judy Writer

cdale@cdale.com writerjudy@msn.com

## MISSION

ASGD is a nonprofit group, with over 3000 members, 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

National Audubon Society members in the Denver Metro Area are automatically members of the ASGD and receive *The Warbler*.

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

Editor C. Dale Flowers  
Flowers & Associates, Inc.  
cdale@cdale.com

# 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



## FIELD TRIPS

### Walk the Wetlands

**Sunday, May 4**                      **8am (Dawn Chorus at 7am)**  
**Sunday, June 1**                    **8am**  
**Leaders:**                            Hugh and Urling Kingery  
*Registration is NOT required.*  
**Fee:**                                    None  
**Meeting Place:** The Audubon Center at Chatfield State Park (contact ASGD for directions).

**Description:** On May 4 arrive at 7am and listen to the early morning spring chorus with Harold and Betty Oliver. Then at 8am we will hike along the South Platte River and look for nesting dippers, raptors, and spring arrivals. Bring binoculars, field guides, water, snack, and lunch if you'd like to stay.

### Roxborough State Park

**Sunday, June 15**                    **7:30am-Noon**  
**Leader:**                            Doris Cruze, Park Naturalist  
*Registration IS NOT required.*  
**Fee:**                                    Annual State Parks Pass or \$4 daily fee.  
**Meeting Place:** Patio outside Visitor's Center at Roxborough State Park  
**Description:** Hike the spectacular trails through the red rocks formations. Birds should be singing on their territories. Look and listen for canyon wrens, blue-gray gnatcatchers, towhees, and jays. You may spot golden eagles soaring along the ridges. Bring binoculars and water. If you like, bring a lunch and eat on the patio.

### Butterfly Treks

Fun, informal, learn-as-we-go field trips to find and identify butterflies. No experience required. Just bring your curiosity, binoculars, field guide if you have one, lunch, water, sunscreen and/or hat, and be prepared for afternoon thunderstorms. Group size limited to 10 people per hike. Carpooling is encouraged as trailhead parking is very limited.

**Fee:** \$7                                Friends members/\$9 non-members per trek.  
**Leader:**                            Lynne Forrester (303-904-3664, klforrester@msn.com)

### Sunday, June 22 Reynolds Park/Conifer (7,200 ft)

Follow a shallow stream and walk along a sun-dappled forest floor filled with all kinds of butterflies flitting from one wildflower to the next. Meet at 9am at Foothills P&R at Hampden and Wadsworth to carpool to site. Walk will start at 10am from the 2nd, smaller parking area at Reynolds Park on Hwy 97 (turn left off 285 onto Foxton Road just outside of Conifer). Target return to the P&R by 1:30 pm.

### Sunday, August 17 Golden Gate State Park/Golden (8,200 ft)

Open fields, streams and hillsides covered with flowers. Last year there were some unusual species even with the drought. Meet at 9am at Stegosaurus P&R in the southeast quadrant at I-70 and highway 26 (Red Rocks exit #259 on I-70) to carpool to site. Walk will start at 10am from the lower parking area near the restrooms at Ole Barn Knoll in G.G.S.P. on Mountain Base Road with a target return to the P&R by 2pm.

### Pawnee Grasslands with Kevin Cook

**Sunday, May 18**                      **8am-4:30pm**  
**Leader:**                                Kevin Cook  
*\*Registration IS required.*  
**Fees:**                                    \$20/Friends member; \$25/non-member  
**Meeting Place:** Crow Valley Campground near Briggsdale. (Overnight camping is available for those wishing to drive out on Friday.) Car pools from Denver will be arranged if requested.

**Description:** Enjoy a springtime visit to this fascinating habitat with noted naturalist Kevin Cook and awaken to the wonders of this little understood region. Did you know that shrimp live in this arid area? We'll look for these creatures and seek out the Earth wolf spider, the largest spider in Colorado, in its burrow. Waterferns, kangaroo rats, short-horned lizards, and wildflowers in bloom may all be part of our day's experience. And we'll be looking for mountain plovers, chestnut-collared longspurs, migrating warblers and other bird specialties, too. This trip is great for children as well as adults. Our leader, Kevin Cook, writes for nature-related articles for newspapers in Fort Collins and Loveland and also authors a monthly column in Bird Watcher's Digest. He teaches classes for the Rocky Mountain Nature Association.

### Canoe the Colorado River

**June 27-29, 2003**  
**Leaders:**                                Centennial Canoe Outfitters  
*\*Registration IS required.*  
**Fee:** \$295 per Friends member (tent camping, 3 days 2 nights), Non-members add \$40  
**Meeting Place:** Fruita, Colorado  
**Description:** Your trip will cover a 30-mile stretch of spectacular canyon country between Fruita, CO (just west of Grand Junction) and Westwater, UT. The river current is gentle with occasional small Class 1+ rapids to add spice to the journey. Roads do not bind this portion of the river, and the steep walled canyons are accessible only from the river, giving the area a true wilderness setting. There will be ample time along the way for hiking into the canyons, swimming in the cool river or simply relaxing on its banks. Floating through Horsethief and Ruby Canyons, you will pass high walls of red sandstone and shale deposited during the age of the dinosaurs. Interesting side trips into deep box canyons will leave you awed by the immensity of geologic time and the silence of the wilderness. Special treats include paddling through the remnants of an ancient volcano and hiking to some ancient Native American pictographs.

### Birds of Steamboat Springs Area

#### August 2003 Watch for more details & dates!

We are currently planning a three day trip to the Steamboat Springs area during the later part of August 2003. Highlights will include Strawberry Park and Hot Springs, Fish Creek Falls (Calliope, Broad-tailed, and Rufous Hummingbirds, Hammonds and Cordilleran Flycatchers, Dipper, among others); Steamboat Lake State Park; Crane Park (Sandhill Crane nesting grounds); Craig and Hayden (Sharptailed Grouse, Sage Grouse, Bald Eagle nest, Great Blue Heron heronry) and Yampa River Preserve (nearly 100 species). All birding trips will be accompanied by local Park Rangers and/or local tour leaders. For more information, and to request preferences (ie., which dates in August), contact either Allison Hilf at 303-393-2619; email: ahilf@aol.com; or call ASGD's office at (303) 973-9530.

# Lois Webster Fund reception and program a huge success

In February, supporters of the Lois Webster Fund enjoyed a reception and program highlighting current research on the threatened mountain plover. Speakers included Victoria Drietz, Ph.D., Fritz Knopf from the US Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division and Walt Graul from the Colorado Division of Wildlife. The Lois Webster Fund is providing partial funding for a multi-year study on mountain plover chick survival.



ASGD board member Polly Reetz addresses a full house at the February 6 Lois Webster Fund reception and program.

## Denver Area Spring Bird Counts

May 8, 10 & 11, 2003

Each spring ASGD and Denver Field Ornithologists fan out to eight major metro bird-watching sites to see spring migrants. All are welcome to come on any of the trips.

**Pre-registration:** *Not necessary unless indicated.*

**Fee:** None, except for admission to state parks (\$4/day)

### Thursday, May 8 Cherry Creek Reservoir

**Leader:** J. B. Hayes, 303-798-9683.

**Meeting Place:** Gather at 7am at Marina on west side (near Cherry Creek high school) of Cherry Creek State Park.

### Saturday, May 10 Barr Lake State Park

**Leader:** Dick Schottler, 303-278-8035

**Meeting Place:** Gather at 6:30am at the entrance station to Barr Lake State Park. This is a ten-mile, all-day hike around the lake. State Parks pass required.

### Saturday, May 10 Chatfield State Park

**Leader:** Joey Kellner, 303-978-1748.

**Meeting Place:** Gather at 6am at West (Deer Creek) entrance to park. State Parks Pass required.

### Saturday, May 10 Waterton, downstream. 4-5 mile hike.

**Leader:** Hugh Kingery, 303-814-2723.

**Meeting Place:** Gather at 6am at Discovery Pavilion & Audubon Center (left turn immediately after turning from Wadsworth (Colo. 121) onto Waterton/Roxborough road and before the DOW parking lot for Waterton Canyon). \*Wear long pants (not shorts) due to bare-leg-unfriendly plants such as poison ivy, thistles, and knapweed.

### Sunday May 11 Barr Lake periphery

**Leader:** Jackie King, 303-287-1644.

**Meeting Place:** Gather at 6:30am on access road to entrance station at Barr Lake State Park. This trip does not involve much walking and will be good for people with limited mobility or stamina.

### Sunday May 11 Castlewood Canyon State Park

**Leader:** Randy Lentz, 303-680-3381.

**Meeting Place:** Gather at 6:30 am at old entrance. From CO 86, 0.5 miles west of Franktown, turn south on Castlewood Canyon Road, go two miles to old entrance. State Parks pass required.

### Sunday May 11 Rocky Mountain Arsenal

**Leader:** Urling Kingery, 303-814-2723.

*\*Tentative and number limited. Must register with leader in advance.*

## Travel Adventures

### Birds of Paradise An Hawaiian EDventure

CHOOSE FROM THESE DEPARTURE DATES

August 2-9, 2003

September 6-13, 2003

November 1-8, 2003

Are you passionate about adding "lif-ers" to your list? Sightings of Hawaii's "winged-jewels" abound on this University of Hawaii's 2-island journey to Kauai and the Big Island of Hawaii. Join expert birding guides, field interpreters, naturalists and photographers as you discover Hawaii's anchialine ponds, and shoreline habitats that offer awe-some encounters. Our price of \$1,325 (double occupancy) and \$1425 (double) for Friend's members, includes 7 nights, 8 days (starting from Lihue, Kauai), inter-island air travel from Kauai to Hilo, oceanfront hotels, all ground transportation, park entrance fees and meals. (Non-members add \$100 each.) Pre- and post-trip extensions are available. Space is limited to 12 per group. For more information, contact Becky Beckers, Travel For the Birds at 303-766-5266 or email at AgentBecky@aol.com.

### Birds of Southern Florida

February 2004

Save a spot on your calendar! We are planning an exciting exploration of Southern Florida sanctuaries and islands (including the Everglades, Corkscrew, Ding Darling, Sanibel and Captiva) in the latter part of February 2004. Our trip in February 2000 sold out quickly, so watch your Warbler for details as we finish our arrangements and plan to join us for a wonderful adventure.

## ASGD Denim Shirts now available

We are now taking orders for "official" ASGD long-sleeve denim shirts. The ASGD name and logo are embroidered above the left hand pocket. Men's and women's sizes are available in small to extra-large. Cost is \$32 per shirt. Call 303-973-9530 or email [info@denveraudubon.org](mailto:info@denveraudubon.org) to order your shirt. (Credit cards, check and cash accepted.)

# Welcome to our new FRIENDS of ASGD

Davis & Ginny Ammons  
Meredith Anderson

Neil & Jill Bachman, Amy Baerenklau  
Robin Bartlett, Deanna Beaudoin  
Diane Birks, Evie Brame, Brenda Burrell  
Pam Metz & Charlene Byers  
Alex & Wendy Cattanach  
Gini Clarke, Kevin Corwin  
Jim & Ann Crawford  
Shirley DeLong-Muggli  
Phyllis Dillon, Peggy Fitzgerald  
Brian Friedman, Glenn & Barbara Fritts  
Dennis & Jane Froman  
Gilbert & Viola Geslin, Stuart Haskins  
Christy Honnen  
Gordon T. James, Lyle Jencsok  
Fred & Carolyn Johnson  
Peggy Johnson, Clint Jones, Bob Judge  
Joe & Norma Kamby, Elaine Kastner  
Karin Kiefer, Alice Kruse  
George & Bobbie Lohr  
Suzanne MacFarlane, Jeanne McCune  
Gail McIntire, Marilyn Miller  
Harold & Betty Oliver, Tam O'Neill  
Joan Palmer, Sidney Park  
Sally Payne, Robert Priestler  
Jim & Ladine Rintoul, Nina Routh  
Lynn & Mary Ellen Sargent  
Bob & Nancy Stocker, Dorothy Sutherlin  
Harry Syer, Mary Ann Tavery  
Susan Trumble  
Bruce & Linda Vautrin-Hale  
Robert & Grace Weber, Jane Wilken  
Beverly Williams, Sybil Winfield  
Cliff & Sharon Wink, Lynn & Fran Yehle

**Thank you for choosing to support Audubon Society of Greater Denver!**

## Get Involved!

It will be a busy summer at the Audubon Center. Your help is needed on many projects to improve the site for visitors. **Trail Crew** members are needed to help finish the paths around the building and to maintain the Audubon Discovery Trail. **Gardeners** are needed to help create and maintain a native wildlife habitat garden and children's sensory garden. **Audubon Ambassadors** are needed to greet visitors on weekend mornings and answer questions. Training will be provided.

If you are interested in helping on trail crews, as a gardener or an Audubon ambassador, please call 303-973-9530 or email [info@denveraudubon.org](mailto:info@denveraudubon.org). We will let you know as soon as work days are set.



# Become a FRIEND of the Audubon Society of Greater Denver

Everyone needs FRIENDS! Friends of the Audubon Society of Greater Denver (ASGD) strengthen the organization through their financial support. As a Friend of ASGD you also receive special benefits for one year from the month that you join.

### Why create a Friends of ASGD membership program?

ASGD's greatest assets are the grassroots projects that bring our mission to life. These projects—Conservation Issues, the Colorado Bluebird Project, environmental education programs and the Audubon Center—are the framework of our organization. ASGD is dependent on gifts from individuals, grants, fundraising events and *membership dues* for its financial survival. Recent changes in National Audubon Society's chapter policy have challenged us to find new ways to sustain our organization.\*

For every member in the Denver-metro area who joins National Audubon Society, ASGD now receives less than \$3. Over the next three years, our dues share will be further reduced to only \$1.79 per member. ASGD receives no other financial support from National Audubon Society. The Friends of ASGD program gives you the opportunity to insure that your contributions support the grass roots projects that have made ASGD strong.

\*Members of the National Audubon Society will continue to receive the *Warbler*. Friends of ASGD will receive special benefits such as, discounts on field trips.

### Become a Friend of ASGD at the following levels

#### INDIVIDUAL \$25

##### Benefits:

- ◆ Satisfaction that all of your Friends membership dues will stay at the local level.
- ◆ The award-winning, bi-monthly newsletter, the *Warbler*, to keep you informed on ASGD projects and activities.
- ◆ Invitations to Friends' only events.
- ◆ Friends discounts on ASGD field trips, classes and workshops for one person.

#### FAMILY \$35

##### All the benefits listed above, plus:

- ◆ Friends discounts on ASGD field trips, classes and workshops for an additional adult and the member's children or grandchildren under the age of 18.

**YES! I am a FRIEND of the Audubon Society of Greater Denver.**

Individual (\$25)  Family (\$35)  I have included an additional donation of \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check payable to **Audubon Society of Greater Denver**  
**9308 S.Wadsworth Boulevard**  
**Littleton, CO 80128**

Please charge my:  Visa  Mastercard

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Account # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ **Thank You!**

Please do not share my name with affiliated organizations or other groups.



# Eagle Eye

*Watching Public Policy for the Environment*  
by Polly Reetz

With May and the spring migration come long days and the end of the Colorado legislative session.

The Legislature has been attempting to deal with the drought, and though good bills have been introduced, the members' solutions have emphasized construction rather than conservation. Reps. Dyer and Hoppe co-sponsored a bill, SB 236, that would ask the voters for permission for the State to go \$10 billion in debt for construction of water infrastructure (read: dams). Although the bill was supposed to be a response to drought, no projects could possibly be completed in time to address the one we've been suffering.

Even if there were a way to complete storage projects immediately, we've seen that in years of low snowpack, like the last four, there would be little run-off to store. Many of Colorado's rivers and streams are already over-used, so diverting additional water for storage without increasing water use efficiency gets us nowhere. AND this bill shifts the burden of building water projects from water users and the private market, to the State, for the first time in our history (at a time of huge budget cuts elsewhere).

Most bills emphasizing conservation and efficient use of water died early in the session, the exception being SB 87, Senator Linkhart's bill to improve urban water use efficiency. This bill encouraged water providers to set voluntary efficiency targets, required the providers to repair system leaks, and told them to inform the public about the water conservation measures they intended to use to meet their targets. It also prohibited the State from funding new water projects proposed by any provider that didn't have an adequate water efficiency plan. A provision that has been in various other bills, prohibiting any new restrictive covenants that REQUIRED the planting of bluegrass, was also included.

In many legislative issues the question of local versus state control is often central, for example in the debate about gun control ordinances. In water policy the same questions arise. A bill by the environmental community required residents of each river basin in the State to create a basin plan, calculating the supply of water in the

basin as well as current and reasonable future demand for that water. Any changes in water rights would have to be consistent with the basin plans before they could be approved by water court. However, the bill endorsed by Gov. Owens, SB 110, mandates planning from the TOP DOWN, with the State determining the amount of water available, and needed, in each basin. This bill also authorizes a \$500,000 study of pumping water from the Colorado River at the Utah border back over the Divide to the Front Range (the "Big Straw") and, originally, \$190,000 to study water yield from Federal lands (over which the State has no legal control). SB 126, another top-down bill, even resurrects two old, discredited projects: Two Forks and Narrows (remember that one?). We can do better.

On the other hand, several bills to encourage conservation easements sailed through both House and Senate chambers, and a bill to increase fines for illegally feeding bears also passed. Celebrate the good things! It's also worth noting that bad bills can be amended, provisions

from good bills that died can be added to other bills, and a great deal of shuffling and adjustment is done as the session goes on.

On the federal level, Congress is again considering the federal budget, this time for fiscal year 2004. By including plans for revenues from oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, pro-drilling forces hoped to push open the Refuge to

oil and gas development. This back-handed strategy succeeded in the House, but failed in the Senate by a vote of 52 to 48, thanks to a determined effort by conservationists. Though no victory is permanent in this business, we have legitimate cause for rejoicing in this one!

The Bush administration continues to change environmental policy through inaction and regulation. For example, only 20 species have been listed under the Endangered Species Act (compared to 80 by Bush Sr. in the same time period), all in response to lawsuits and petitions. The administration rejected the advice of its biologists and specialists (a routine practice) on critical habitat designation for Mexican spotted owl and San Bernardino kangaroo rat. Decisions seem to be based on political considerations alone. There is lots of work to do.

The ASGD Conservation Committee advocates for conservation projects in the Denver metro area, from Barr Lake to Roxborough. The Committee meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month, usually on alternative months. We would love your help! Call the ASGD office, or Polly Reetz, Committee Chairman, at 303-333-2164.



**Audubon lobbyist Jen Boulton brings participants up to date at the 2003 Legislative Workshop. Over 30 ASGD and Sierra Club members attended workshops on water and wildlife related legislation facing Colorado this year. Standing at left of Ms. Boulton is Susan Lafevr, lobbyist from the Sierra Club.**

# backyard birds....

by Hugh Kingery



**NEW BIRDS** in the backyard always excite. Two backyarders discovered their first bushtits: Arlene Raskin in Castle Pines and Carol Blackard in southeast Denver. Arlene had a good time riffling the pages of the field guide to identify hers. Carol's showed up with a flock of sparrows and chickadees, and she heard them first. "They are very noisy with a fast, high, liquid, four-beat 'tseet tseet tseet tseet'." In east Denver, Paula Breese spotted her first brown creeper creeping up a linden tree on March 13. Joy Schieving in south Denver also saw one, Feb. 27 (not a first). Two more backyarders found their first Eurasian collared-doves: On Feb. 17 Veronica Holt in Elizabeth saw a pair "eating the hulled millet I throw out for the juncos." Doris Parks in Arvada on March 3 saw a pair "walking in my backyard under my two feeders. A little later I picked up the Warbler & read your recent article about them." (The last issue reported on these doves in Aurora and Arvada.) The male red crossbill that Veronica saw Feb. 2 wasn't her first backyard crossbill—she'd seen a family 19 years ago!

**CEDAR WAXWINGS** thrilled several. In Englewood, Mary Washburne saw a dozen on Jan. 7, her second observation. Joy saw four Jan. 22 and one Feb. 6 and 19. Feb. 15, Patty Echelmeyer hosted a dozen in Wheat Ridge. On Feb. 16 Dave and Lynn Conant saw 50 along the Highline Canal in Littleton. On our way back from watching Nebraska cranes, Urling and I encountered 275 waxwings at Jackson Lake Reservoir near Fort Morgan. These whirled around treetops and drank at the edge of the lake.

**WE MARVEL** at the spectacle of the cranes, and each observation awed our ASGD group. I don't know how many we saw, but it doesn't matter—we'll remember extraordinary sounds and sights from blinds, roadsides, and the Fort Kearny bridge. Cranes feeding, flying, settling down for the night, and springing up in the morning. A continuing stream of snow geese flying overhead, materializing out of the fog.

**MORE ON** non-backyard birds. Patrick Mundus "spotted a water ouzel [a/k/a dipper] along the South Platte at the Evans bridge in Denver"—an unusual urban sighting. At Union Reservoir near Longmont on Feb. 25 Chris Wood "spotted a juvenile bald eagle with a red band and yellow tag on its leg. Jerry Craig (state raptor biologist) said that this eagle was produced at Standley Lake last year. Kevin Corwin traced the source of pigeons in frenzied flight at Parker and Havana in Aurora to a cruising prairie falcon. Lucy Hoffhine spent a February night at a southeast Denver Holiday Inn and "heard a great horned owl calling several times during the night. This is an area of mostly concrete and pavement, with only a few small trees." But she also saw a cottontail crouching near the building—a food source for the owls among the stones and evergreen bushes. At least one great horned owl visited a backyard—one spent Jan. 22 at Judy Butterfield's in Aurora.

**MOUNTAIN BIRDS** continued their Denver sojourns. Near D.U. on Jan. 18 and several more days, Ursula Barsch had a mountain chickadee on her back porch feeder, and Joy had 1-2 in January. Lois Foreman and Donna Randolph, nearby in Englewood, saw mountain chickadees occasionally through the winter, along with continual visits from red-breasted nuthatches. Shirley and Buzz Bowers had a red-breasted for a month, and one or two have visited our feeders in Franktown all winter. Joy reported the only Townsend's solitaire for the winter – usually we have them all over the city. Near Congress Park Polly Reetz saw a spotted towhee occasionally, and Nan Brehmer sees them regularly on Green Mountain. Joy reported robins, up to 10 in January, and Nan Brehmer had 5 or so all winter. Elaine Hanak-Hall in Aurora counted two on Mar. at, her final Cornell backyard feeder-watch day.

**SCRUB-JAYS** continued their forays: Elaine had one Jan. 17 and Feb. 5 and Bill Wuerthele in Park Hill saw one (in September). He had seen two Steller's Jays at the Botanic Gardens Dec. 15, and Carmine DeStefanis saw one in Englewood, but I don't have the date.

**SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS** generate lots of reports. Kevin saw one "patrolling my townhouse complex in Aurora. On Valentine's Day I saw it with a house sparrow in its clutches, on the ground next to a large blue spruce. That tree is a sparrow roost, always noisy; except at that moment it was quiet as a tomb. The sharpie flew up and disappeared from view though occasionally a few feathers wafted out on the breeze." Jan. 13, Nan saw a sharp-shin chasing smaller birds while scrub-jays squawked. We watched one feed on a red-winged blackbird (with a deformed bill) in the scrub oaks below our house. Joy saw one twice in January, once in February, and she also saw a Cooper's hawk Feb. 6. On Mar. 19 in the midst of THE snowstorm, Debbie Carlson saw one "furiously de-feathering some poor little sucker that must have come to partake of the seed I put out the only door I could open."

**MIKE GARCIA** called Audubon in March to get somebody to identify two critters that roost four stories up on an AT&T building where he works. His shift begins at 4 p.m., and he and his workmates became quite curious about them. They showed up near dusk and clung to the wall between two columns; down below droppings indicated a seed diet. They decided the critters weren't bats – wrong season, wrong diet. Chuck Thornton-Kolbe went over one night and solved the mystery: flickers. This generated a Cobirds discussion about flicker diets: they do indeed eat a lot of seed from feeders. (Cobirds is the Colorado bird discussion group on Email: To subscribe via World Wide Web, visit <http://cfolink.cis.to/mailman/listinfo/cobirds>, or, via email, send a message with subject or body 'help' to <[cobirds-request@cfo-link.org](mailto:cobirds-request@cfo-link.org)>.

**I WELCOME** your contributions to this column. Drop me a note or post card at PO Box 584, Franktown 80116, or Email me, [ouzel@juno.com](mailto:ouzel@juno.com).

*Hugh Kingery has written Backyard Birds for the Warbler for 15 years. During that time he also directed the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas Project and edited the Atlas publication. He currently writes a column on Colorado birds that appears weekly in the Lifestyles section of the Sunday Denver Post.*

# Calling all Volunteers

*We need to know what you've been up to and how many hours you've donated to ASGD!*

Volunteers are the lifeblood of ASGD and it is critical that we document your contribution to the organization. This information is compelling data to include in our grant applications and fundraising activities. Plus, we want to be able to recognize and properly thank you for your efforts.

Please send your volunteer hours, along with the date & brief description of what you did, to the ASGD office. You can report your volunteer hours by calling 303-973-9530, e-mailing [info@denveraudubon.org](mailto:info@denveraudubon.org), or sending them by mail to ASGD, 9308 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Littleton, CO 80128. We don't even care if they arrive by carrier pigeon, just so that they arrive!

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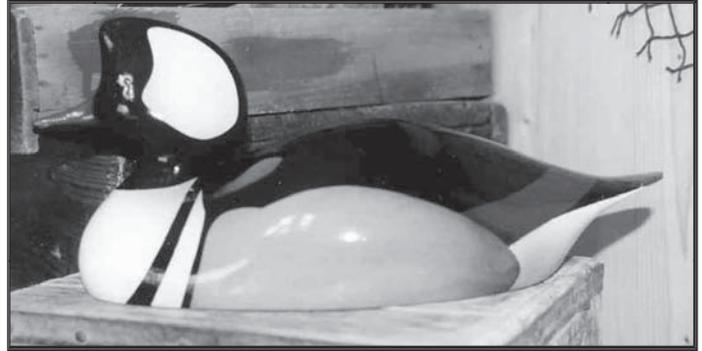
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