

MAY/JUNE 2010

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2010 State of the Birds Report Focuses on Challenges of Climate Change

by Polly Reetz, ASGD Board Member and Conservation Committee Chair

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Audubon and other leading conservation organizations recently released the latest State of the Birds Report. It shows that climate change will have an increasing impact on birds and their habitats, and on the ecological and other benefits they provide to people.

The report evaluates bird species on the basis of their sensitivity to climate change, the susceptibility of their habitats to climate change, and their current conservation status (such as endangered or threatened).

Colorado birds that scored in the medium to high range for vulnerability include grassland species like the Greater and Lesser Prairie Chicken and Sharp-tailed grouse, which are closely tied to leks, or male display grounds, and are less likely to shift their range in response to changed conditions. The

drier conditions predicted as the West warms would also magnify the peril faced by species such as the Greater and Gunnison's Sage

Grouse, both of which are candidates for Endangered Species listing.

The report identified a number of actions that we can take to reduce the impacts of climate change, including.

Help pass climate and energy legislation to control greenhouse gas emissions

Protect and restore our Important Bird Areas (IBAs), such as Chatfield and

Roxborough State Parks

Monitor species most sensitive to climate change and incorporate that information into land management decisions

Ensure that renewable energy facilities minimize impacts to birds and other wildlife

Restore native vegetation and wildlife habitats. The report is available at www.stateofthebirds.org.



Prairie Chicken by Lee Farrell

May is Bird Banding Month

by Karl Brummert, Audubon Nature Center Director

The Audubon Nature Center will be open again during the operation of the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory's bird banding station. Visitors will be treated to the unique experience of watching research in action and seeing warblers, sparrows, woodpeckers, thrushes, and a variety of other songbirds up close. Last year a number of families made their visit to the Chatfield banding station a frequent outing, stopping by on weekends and before school during the week. Some kids helped Meredith McBurney, RMBO's ornithologist, record data and honed their bird identification skills.

This year, ASGD volunteer naturalists will lead hikes to the banding station and introduce visitors to the uniqueness of the Chatfield Basin ecosystem. Did you know that over 300 different species of birds either

pass through or live in the Basin over the course of the year? There will be activities and programs for all ages to expand their knowledge of the plants and animals in the area (see ASGD Certificate in Adventure series in the green pages).

If you are interested in volunteering to help us in the gardens surrounding the Nature Center, we'll have volunteer days on the weekends throughout May. Call 303-973-9530 for dates and details.

We encourage you to visit the bird banding station as often as possible for an opportunity to see some of the resident and migrant birds. And don't forget to bring your camera!

The Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield will be open 9 am-2 pm Saturdays and Sundays in May. The banding station will be open from 7 - 11 am on those days.

~ NEW ~

**PURCHASE YOUR
BIRDING SUPPLIES
THROUGH ASGD!**

It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

(PLUS, a percentage
of all sales go to ASGD)

Step 1.

Go to ASGD's website at
www.denveraudubon.org

Step 2.

Scroll down homepage
and click on

"Purchase birding
supplies here"

Step 3.

Place your order!

Celebrating
41 Years of service
to the Greater
Denver Community

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE--

In this time of incredible political and economic struggle and strife, I am going to ask you to give support and friendship to something besides Audubon Society of Greater Denver. We, of course, can use all the support and friendship we can muster, but we have sibling organizations around us also in need. By making them stronger, we make ASGD stronger; we make the state birding and conservation community stronger. I know that I will fail to mention many organizations. I apologize in advance for the oversight, and, it is an oversight, not a purposeful slight. Just a few of the organizations advancing birding and conservation in our state:

Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO), Denver Field Ornithologists (DFO), Colorado Field Ornithologists (CFO), Raptor Education Foundation, HawkQuest, Birds of Prey Foundation and many other bird rehab centers, Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited--all contribute to birding and habitat conservation in Colorado. We need them all; they all play their parts, have their niches. For example, for decades RMBO has been not only doing basic bird research, but they have been working with landowners to preserve vital avian habitat, allowing the rest of us to see the birds. DFO through its field trips has taught birders for years where to go and what they can see. CFO has been giving us the state convention, again, for years. All these activities contribute to our community.

So, please continue to support ASGD, but if you have even \$2 that you can spare, please give to other parts of the community. If you have enough to join another organization, please do; when applying for grants, writing letters, membership numbers count. We need each other, please help.



Tom Parchman, President

ASGD welcomes 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.

Angela Barnes, Carol Lofft, Denise Arnold & Alisa Bishop, Dick Prickett, Donna Keslin, Dorine Tomer, Elizabeth Singer, Ellen Miille, Fast Food Free, Jackie Marchetti, Joanne Roll, Judy Bleakley, Julie Bateman, Kathy East, Kirk Zufelt, Kristina Smith-Becker, Kurt Badertscher, Linda Powers & Jim Masur, Lisa Estrada, Marian Hoffman, Merrye McGilvray, Patti & Kin Quitugua, Rebecca Pyle, Rob Przybylo, Robert Harkness, Sharon Thayer

Say's Phoebe



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MISSION

ASGD is a nonprofit group dedicated to maintaining the health of natural ecosystems through education, advocacy and research, with primary focus on birds and 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 3 complimentary copies of the *The Warbler* annually.

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

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ASGD SPECIAL EVENTS

Memorial Reception in Honor of Lavonne Axford

Sunday, June 6, friends and family of Lavonne Axford are invited to a memorial reception in her honor at the Audubon Nature Center from 12:00 to 2:00 pm. Bring photos, mementos, and stories to share. Refreshments will be served as we remember Lavonne and her dedicated long-time service to ASGD.

Lois Webster Fund Annual Reception and Program

Sunday, May 2

5:00 pm: Wine and Cheese Reception, 5:45-8:30 pm: Program

Location: Audubon Center at Chatfield

(For carpooling information and questions, call Margot at 303-733-2868)

Come and enjoy a glass of wine and appetizers while learning about the latest research projects funded by the Lois Webster Fund! The Fund hosts this annual event to say THANK YOU to all of our wonderful contributors and to introduce the Lois Webster Fund to others who are not familiar with its activities. We look forward to seeing you at the reception.

Dr. Robert Schorr will discuss his research on the rare Townsend's big-eared bat.

Dr. Boyce Drummond will reveal secrets of the life cycle of the endangered Pawnee montane skipper butterfly.

Dr. Victoria Dreitz will give us an Update on Mountain Plover Research.

Mother's Day Bird Banding Breakfast

Sunday, May 9 from 9-11a.m.

Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield

Mothers Free!

\$10/additional adult, \$5/child

Pre-registration required – 303-973-9530

Treat your mother to a light continental-style breakfast, a leisurely spring hike, and a visit to our popular bird banding station.

Tapas, Treasures & Tunes *Spring Benefit & Silent Auction*

Supporting ASGD's Education and Conservation Programs

Friday, May 14, 2010 • 6:00-9:00 pm

Hosted by Pat McClearn
Denver Cherry Creek Area

**Live Acoustic Entertainment • Hearty Hors d'ouvres • Wine or Beer
Tequila Tasting • Unique Silent Auction • Treasures • Good Company**

ASGD SPECIAL EVENTS



Do you consider yourself the best birder in Denver? Would you like to prove it?

Or...are you just beginning to bird and want to test your skills?

Join the Audubon Society of Greater Denver (ASGD) as we host our annual Bird-a-Thon fundraiser in May. Bird-a-thon is a fun way to raise money for a great cause – and spend time with your birding cohorts in a friendly competition. Proceeds help fund our nature center and programs for all ages.

Teams select a day in May and spend up to 24 hours counting bird species. The pledge system works like most challenges: a dollar amount is pledged by team members, their families, friends, neighbors, businesses, or organizations based on the number of species the team identifies on their day.

Challenges

MOST BIRDS SEEN: The team identifying the most species in 24 hours will be awarded a prize and the prestigious title of **BEST BIRDERS IN DENVER**.

MOST MONEY RAISED: The independent team raising the most money to support ASGD will be awarded a prize.

YOUNG BIRDERS: This year, there is a special category for teams with two or more participants under 18.

Not a big fan of competition? ASGD is sponsoring several highly competitive teams seeking pledges. Details about these teams, their past performance, and expected species goal will be available on the website and the ASGD Facebook page. Cell phone service permitting, teams will update their results from the field as the day progresses. Most - but not necessarily all - teams will stage their Bird-a-thon during the May 15 weekend to capitalize on peak migration.

REMEMBER: Anyone with an interest in birding can form a team and compete for prizes and the distinction of being the **BEST BIRDERS IN DENVER**.

Details, rules, pledge forms, and other important information are available on our website at www.denveraudubon.org, by calling 303-973-9530 or by e-mailing info@denveraudubon.org.

We know you'll be birding in May anyway, so why not challenge your skills and help ASGD? See you in the field!

FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS

For programs that require registration call 303.973.9530 or info@denveraudubon.org

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

~ EARN AN ASGD CERTIFICATE IN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE ~

Sign-up for our new series for beginner outdoor enthusiasts and seasoned hikers who want to know more about “what’s out there.” This fun, lighthearted, informative series is great for children, parents and other adults to explore together. Go at your own pace – sessions are offered each weekend throughout the year at the Audubon Nature Center. When you complete all ten sessions, receive an official ASGD Certificate in Outdoor Adventure!

Your adventure includes...

- ✓ Be Prepared for the Outdoors
- ✓ Map & Compass Basics
- ✓ Front Range Habitats : Ponds and Rivers
- ✓ Front Range Habitats : Prairies
- ✓ Front Range Habitats : Foothills
- ✓ GPS for Beginners
- ✓ Birding 101
- ✓ Common Plants
- ✓ Mammals
- ✓ Reptiles & Amphibians

Upcoming sessions...

- Saturday, May 1, 10 am - 12 pm - Birding 101
- Saturday, May 8, 10 am - 12 pm - GPS for Beginners
- Saturday, May 15, 10 am - 12 pm – Ponds & River
- Saturday, May 22, 10 am - 12 pm – Common Plants
- Saturday, June 5, 10 am - 12 pm – Prairies
- Saturday, June 26, 10 am - 12 pm – Reptiles & Amphibians

You must become an ASGD Friends member to participate. To register, please call 303-973-9530

~ PROGRAMS AT AUDUBON NATURE CENTER ~

Dawn Chorus

Sunday, May 2, 7 am
Leader: Karen von Saltza
Pre-registration NOT required

Followed by coffee and cinnamon rolls at 8 am before Walk the Wetlands in the Audubon Center

Walk the Wetlands

Sunday, May 2, 8 am
Sunday, June 6, 8 am
Leaders: Karen von Saltza and Master Birders
Fee: None
Pre-registration NOT required

Everyone welcome – members and non-members. We will hike along the South Platte River looking for spring migrants and summer nesting birds. **BBFGWS**. We can lend you binoculars and field guides if you don't have them.

NEW – Do You Know Your Audubon Important Birding Areas (IBAs)

Learn about Denver's IBAs and visit local ones in this 4-part series
Saturday, May 22, 8 am Saturday, May 29, 8 am
Saturday, June 5, 8 am Saturday, June 12, 8 am
Leaders: Doris Cruze and Audubon Master Birders
\$64/Friends members, \$80/non-members. Space limited to 12 participants
Pre-registration required

MEETING PLACES: Audubon Center for May 22 orientation and field trip; May 29, June 5, and June 12 locales will be announced then.

Audubon-designated IBAs are those special places throughout the world where birds, habitat, migration routes, and other factors come together to make those areas special. The Chatfield IBA, for example, has 29 of the 42 habitats listed in the Breeding Bird Atlas; 320 bird species have been documented in the area. All sessions will include a visit to an IBA in the metro area. Instruction, materials, maps and some surprises will be including in the cost. **BBFGWS**

***** BBFGWS = Bring binoculars, field guides, water, and a snack. *****

FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS

For programs that require registration call 303.973.9530 or info@denveraudubon.org

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

Birding and Banding

Saturday, May 29, 7 am (1/2 day trip)

Leader: Nicole Buyck, Audubon Master Birder Candidate
\$10/Friends members, \$12/ non-members

Pre-registration required

Life science educator Nicole Buyck focuses on local breeding birds and migrants. Visit the Chatfield Banding Station to discover how and why we band birds. See wild birds close-up as researchers collect data! Appropriate for all ages and birding levels. Wear long pants to protect against poison ivy. BBFGW

*Brown Creeper
Photo by Dick Vogel*



~ PROGRAMS AT OTHER LOCATIONS ~

Star K Ranch

Saturday, May 8, 8:30 am

Leader: Mary Ann Bonnell,
Senior Natural Resources Specialist, City of Aurora
Fee: None

Pre-registration required: 303-739-2428

MEETING PLACE: Information on registration

Watch for spring migrants and resident raptors as we enjoy an urban birding adventure in the cottonwood forests of Star K Ranch and the Sand Creek Greenway trail. BBFGWS

Denver City Park Colonial Birds

Sunday, May 16, 5:30-7:30 pm

Leader: Kathy Bollhoefer, Audubon Master Birder
Fee: None

Pre-registration NOT required

MEETING PLACE: Denver Museum of Nature and Science parking lot, northwest corner.

Three colonial bird species (night-herons, cormorants, and Snowy Egrets) historically nest on two islands in Denver City Park. We'll look for nests, nestlings, and fledglings. Find out about unique and intriguing birds that live near home. Kathy studied these colonies for her Audubon Master Birder certificate. BBFGWS

Flycatchers, Swallows, Hummingbirds, and Goldfinches at Lair o' the Bear Park

Sunday, May 30, 8 am-noon

Leaders: Mary Keithler, Dave Hill, and Kathy Bollhoefer (Audubon Master Birders)

\$10/Friends members, \$12/non-members

Pre-registration required

MEETING PLACE: Lair o' the Bear Park. From C-470 take the Morrison exit. Drive about 4 miles west of Morrison along Colorado 74, past Idledale, to the park entrance on the left.

Search this foothills gem for Lazuli Buntings, swallows, hummingbirds, dippers, flycatchers, goldfinches, Cedar Waxwings, grosbeaks, vireos and orioles. We will also study spring wildflowers along Bear Creek and the canyon walls. Be prepared for foothills hiking, with some elevation gain. Lunch optional after hike. BBFGWS and sturdy hiking shoes

Flocks at the Rocks

The Birds of Red Rocks Park

Sunday, June 13, 7 am - 11 am

Leaders: Bob Santangelo (720-641-3899) and Marilyn Rhodes
\$10/Friends members, \$12/non-members

Pre-registration required

MEETING PLACE: Trading Post parking lot, Red Rocks Park

Explore cliffs, valleys, and streams. Look for Yellow-Breasted Chats, Lazuli and Indigo Buntings, and breeding Peregrine Falcons. Hummingbirds, gnatcatchers, grosbeaks, flycatchers, and Virginia's Warblers, too. An easy to moderate hike. BBFGWS (and afterwards, optional all-you-can-eat brunch on the patio at the Ship Rock Grill in the park--\$22 per person).

***** BBFGWS = Bring binoculars, field guides, water, and a snack. *****

FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS

For programs that require registration call 303.973.9530 or info@denveraudubon.org

~ ANNUAL SPRING BIRD COUNT FIELD TRIPS ~

29th Annual Spring Bird Count

2010 – International Migratory Bird Day

We need you — Everyone welcome: members and non-members – just show up. More eyes spot more birds. All levels of birdwatchers can contribute and enjoy these trips. Choose any of the following trips, and stay for as long as you want. BFGWS and lunch No fee, no pre-registration

Saturday, May 8

Chatfield State Park

Leader: Joey Kellner, 303-978-1748

Meet at 6:00am at West (Deer Creek) entrance to park. State Parks pass required.

Waterton, downstream. 4-5 mile hike

Leader: Hugh Kingery, 303-814-2723

Wear long pants (not shorts) due to bare-leg-unfriendly plants such as poison ivy, thistles, and knapweed.

Meet at 6:00am at Audubon Center. From Wadsworth and C-470, travel south on Wadsworth (approx. 4.4 miles), turn left onto Waterton Rd., immediately turn left into the first parking lot at the Audubon Center sign.

Barr Lake State Park

Leader: Dick Schottler, 303-278-8035

Call leader if you plan to go. Meet at 6:00am at Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory. Exit I-76 at Bromley Lane; go east about ¼ mile and turn right (south) on Lark Bunting Lane, to end of road. This is a ten-mile, all-day hike around the lake. State Parks pass required.

Barr Lake periphery

Leader: Jackie King, 303-287-1644

Meet at 7:30am on access road to entrance station at Barr Lake State Park. This trip does not involve much walking — good for people with limited mobility or stamina.

Cherokee Ranch

Leader: Lynn Willcockson, 303-757-7000

Call leader for details.

Lower Bear Creek

Leader: Mike Henwood, 303-716-8551, cell 720-840-5070,
hawkhen@aol.com

New meeting place: Meet at 6:00am at parking lot on Morrison Road at C470, northwest corner, next to the Conoco station.

Sunday, May 9

Castlewood Canyon State Park

Leader: Randy Lentz, 303-680-3381

Meet at 6:30am 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.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal

Leader: Urling Kingery, 303-814-2723

Trip full

Monday, May 10

Cherry Creek Reservoir

Leader: Bob Brown, 303-791-6204

Meet at 6:30am at the Marina on west side (near Cherry Creek High School) in Cherry Creek State Park. State Parks pass required.

INTERNATIONAL BIRDING TRIP River of Raptors, Veracruz, Mexico, October, 2010

Every fall, North America's migrating raptors converge over Veracruz, Mexico, sandwiched between the mountains and the Gulf Coast. In addition to Swainson's and Turkey Vultures, the sky will be thick with kettles of soaring Broad-winged Hawks, Mississippi Kites, Coopers, Sharp-shinned, Kestrels, and Osprey, sometimes as many as 100,000 hawks in a single day! Birdwatching in varied habitats produce many tropical species such as the blue mockingbird, red warbler, blue-crowned motmot, and rufous-capped brushfinch

If you are interested in a 9-day trip to Veracruz and surrounding areas in October, 2010, led by ASGD member and experienced tour provider Bill Turner, call Rhonda at the Audubon Office, 303-973-9530. We need to assess interest to complete plans for this trip.

***** BFGWS = Bring binoculars, field guides, water, and a snack. *****

FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS

For programs that require registration call 303.973.9530 or info@denveraudubon.org

~ LOOKING AHEAD – ATLAS BLOCK FIELD TRIPS ~

Atlas “Blockbuster”

Trip to Arriba and Burlington

Saturday-Sunday, June 12-13
Leaders: Urling & Hugh Kingery
Fee: None

Pre-Registration required, with leaders

Details from Urling & Hugh Kingery, 303-814-2723, ouzels8@aol.com

MEETING PLACE: SATURDAY 7 AM, Arriba Highway I-70 rest stop
This weekend, state-wide, Atlasers will work untouched blocks. In Arriba, we'll assign blocks north of I-70 to various groups. Go home Saturday, or overnight in a Burlington motel or camp in Bonny State Park. Sunday, we'll also assign groups to various blocks. BCFGWS

ASGD's Elbert Atlas Block

Thursday, July 8
Leaders: Urling & Hugh Kingery
Fee: None

Pre-Registration required, with leaders

Details from Urling & Hugh Kingery, 303-814-2723, ouzels8@aol.com

MEETING PLACE: Meet at 6 am at the Franktown Post Office. From the intersection of Colo. 83 and 86 in Franktown, go east one-quarter mile, turn left and left again at the first opportunities; park on the south side of the area to set up car pools. No restrooms.

One of ASGD's four Atlas blocks, this one, south of Elbert, already has 60 species, so we will concentrate on the 38 that need confirmations. Targets include Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Plumbeous Vireo, Chickadees, both Towhees, Chipping, Vesper, & Lark Sparrows, and goldfinches. BCFGWS and lunch



Western Scrub Jay
Photo by Dick Vogel

Atlas “Blockbuster”

Trip to Summit County.

Saturday and Sunday, July 10-11
Leaders: Urling & Hugh Kingery
Fee: None.

Pre-Registration required, with leaders

Details from Urling & Hugh Kingery, 303-814-2723, ouzels8@aol.com

MEETING PLACE: SATURDAY: 7 AM, Wendy's restaurant in Silverthorne. From I-70, turn right onto Colorado 9, then right at the traffic light into Wendy's parking lot.

MEETING PLACE: SUNDAY: 7 AM, Horseshoe Campground, 15 miles south of Parshall on Grand County Road 3 (also about an hour north of Silverthorne).

This weekend Atlasers will work on untouched mountain blocks. We'll work on one block along the Blue River and two an hour north of Silverthorne. Observers can camp or stay in Dillon/Silverthorne. BCFGWS, scope and lunch (meals and camping gear if needed)

ASGD's Pine Atlas block

Wednesday, July 14
Leaders: Urling & Hugh Kingery
Fee: None

Pre-Registration required, with leaders

Details from Urling & Hugh Kingery, 303-814-2723, ouzels8@aol.com

MEETING PLACE: Meet at 6 am at Walmart, SE sector of C470 and Bowles Avenue, on the far south side next to plant sales. The foothills Pine block, has 61 species – we'll work on 48 that need confirmations, including Spotted Sandpiper, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Plumbeous and Warbling vireos, bluebirds, five warblers, and goldfinches. We might add a few species: Lincoln's Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting, Hermit Thrush. BCFGWS and lunch

***** BCFGWS = Bring binoculars, field guides, water, and a snack. *****



Eagle Eye

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

The 2010 Colorado General Assembly is winding down, after an unusually nasty and contentious session (arguments over money tend to be that way). Audubon lobbyist Jen Boulton had to spend major amounts of time to change or defeat the following bills:

SB 98 – this bill, described in the last Warbler, initially awarded 7.5 million dollars of lottery money to the Colorado Dept. of Agriculture to distribute to local governments for weed control and to fund Soil Conservation Districts. The bill was amended in the Senate to say that local governments could award money they received from the lottery to Soil Conservation and Weed Control Districts for “natural conservation” purposes on “public lands.” The bill’s proponents were obviously looking for money to shore up the Soil Conservation Districts’ work, which does include noxious weed control, reduction of soil erosion, forest health, and other projects valuable in themselves. BUT....did this mean lottery money could be spent on weed control around parking lots and on highway medians? On private ranches and farms? To clean out irrigation ditches?

Audubon, alone of all the environmental groups, objected strenuously that lottery monies that go to local governments must by law be spent for “parks, recreation and open space purposes” according to the Colorado constitutional amendment that voters approved in 1992 (the “GOCO amendment”). If they want, local governments can also spend lottery funds for maintenance – such as weed control – on lands acquired with lottery money for those same recreational purposes. But nowhere else.

The bill passed the Senate. In the House, it was assigned to the Agriculture Committee, and during the Committee’s hearing on March 17, Jen, several ASGD members, Audubon staff, and the Dept. of Local Affairs (DOLA) raised the constitutional issue. DOLA’s representative also pointed out that since these lottery funds are apportioned to local government on the basis of POPULATION, rural counties that need the most help with weed control would get very little money out of this deal. This shifted some members’ opinions! As a result of all the testimony, the Committee removed a good deal of the objectionable language in the bill. On the House floor, Rep. Hullinghorst (D-Boulder) proposed an amendment to ensure that “recreational purposes” specified by the State Constitution were specifically referred to in the bill. As finalized in late March, the bill was neutralized and the threat to divert lottery funds was avoided – for now.

HB 1361 was an attempt by some legislators to tie the hands of the Division of Wildlife’s habitat conservation program. It required a long, tedious bureaucratic process before the DOW could use Habitat Stamp money to

buy wildlife habitat – a relatively rare event, since the DOW usually prefers to use conservation easements, but occasionally crucial to protect especially critical wildlife areas. To add insult to injury, the bill was drafted without any input from the DOW, sportsmen, Audubon, other conservation groups, or the Habitat Stamp Committee (which makes recommendations on how to use Habitat Stamp funds) itself. Jen sent out an alert on March 22 to constituents of Representatives on the Local Affairs Committee, which was hearing the bill. Metro Denver reps voted 2-1 against it and it died there. We thank all ASGD members who responded to her alert and called the Capital.



*Red-breasted Nuthatch
Photo by Dick Vogel*

OPEN HOUSE SET FOR MAY 1ST All - Day Event 10am - 5pm

Hawkquest Returns With 5 Raptors on Display

- Bald Eagle • Peregrine Falcon • Harris Hawk
- Great Horned Owl • Burrowing Owl
- You will see a Harris’s Hawk Fly

Dove Race

- 200 Homing Pigeons Released for the Captain Jason Dahl Scholarship Fund



Arts & Crafts Fair

A GREAT ENTERTAINMENT & MOTHER’S DAY SHOPPING EVENT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY. COME ON OUT!

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15%OFF
Storewide
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Expires July 1, 2010



Open 7 Days A Week
M-F 10-6 Sat 10-5 Sun 12-5



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(NE Corner of C-470 & Kipling)
303-979 BIRD (2473)
www.fronrangebirding.com

A nature center for you and your family!

Lois Webster Fund Announces Grantees for 2010

by Margot Wynkoop, Chair, Lois Webster Fund

The Lois Webster Fund (LWF) of the ASGD received eleven proposals for grants for research and education projects on Colorado non-game wildlife totaling over \$28,500 for 2010. The LWF Committee had approximately \$5,400 available for grant funding this year and found the following three proposals to be outstanding and awarded them grants for 2010. We are pleased to announce the recipients:

- Mysti Martin, Colorado State University, "Understanding changes in avian communities within a riparian habitat;"
- Ashley Gramza, Colorado State University, "Merging biological and social science data to understand the ecological role of free-ranging domestic cats in Colorado,"

- Se Jin Song, University of Colorado, Boulder, "The threats of hybridization on two native catostomid (fish) of Colorado."

The LWF was established 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 of degradation of habitat." according to the funding guidelines. It focuses on partnering with other organizations, and this year nine other organizations and government agencies will be contributing to these projects.

On Sunday evening, May 2nd the LWF will be hosting its Annual Reception and Program with presentations from last year's grant recipients. See the announcement on p. 3 under "ASGD Special Events" for details. We hope many Audubon members will join us for a fun and interesting evening!

Lois Webster Fund Thanks Its Contributors

The Lois Webster Fund of the ASGD is totally dependent on the generosity of our contributors. The individuals listed below are the Lois Webster Fund! They enable the LWF to sponsor research and education projects on Colorado non-game wildlife, and everyone with ASGD wishes to express our thanks to them for their support! THANK YOU!

Doris Cruze, Carol DeStefanis, Frederic Griest, Polly & Gene Reetz, Ed & Judy Butterfield, Elaine McCoach, Hugh & Urling Kingery, Harold and Betty Oliver, Paul Slingsby,

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In-Kind: Anne Schaefer donated a Dell Desktop Computer

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ASGD is fortunate to have a wonderful group of active volunteers. We would like to thank each and every one of you for your time, expertise, and commitment to ASGD. We couldn't do what we do without you!



by Hugh Kingery

backyard birds.....

“SO, MY NEIGHBOR CAME TO MY DOOR around 11 am. Feb 24, ‘I’m sorry to bother you, but there’s an eagle in your backyard.’ My first thought is ‘she probably saw a Sharp-Shinned Hawk,’ wrote Candace Stuart. We walked out to the street to peer over my house. OMG, an adult Bald Eagle sitting high in the tree. He was RIGHT THERE. Then a shadow over us and a second eagle glides to perch by the first.

“THE FIRST REMAINED FOR OVER AN HOUR. The second sat for about 20 minutes, took a brief flight around the ‘hood’, came back, then flew off followed by eight suddenly brave crows and a magpie.

“AS THE SECOND ONE SAT, three crows flew to its tree, cawing loudly, but a good 10-feet away and on a lower branch. Just like the photo in the book *Bird Brains*, one youngster flew to a branch directly between the two eagles and perched there for about 45 seconds. The book reports that young crows will often display a macho behavior with eagles or larger birds to show off for their home-ies. He then flew back with others, and would no doubt be the talk of the murder for days.

“I LIVE IN A MODEST, working-class neighborhood a few blocks south of Colfax Avenue. Those guys are right there, imbedded in my memory – what a picture, what a gift. So, don’t give up hope of seeing only house finches or sparrows in your yard.... the eagles have landed.”

Almost as spectacular, Jeanine Defrancesco, in Highlands Ranch, “saw a hawk on Jan. 20 and that weekend.” She couldn’t identify it but Hawk Quest did: a Northern Goshawk! Jeanine’s photo clearly shows an adult goshawk perched on top of her bird feeder. “We’re pretty sure he got one of our resident squirrels, “Little Mama,” who had been coming around for eight years. She all but came into our house, she was so friendly. We’re sad about that. We don’t have proof but she disappeared around the same time we saw this hawk.”

CHRIS BLAKESLEE’S MERLIN, in contrast, seems almost mundane. He saw it near his house west of the Tech Center Feb. 6. He also lists “two gorgeous dark-phase Red-tailed Hawks and kestrels.” Bob Backus sent the only report of a Sharp-shinned Hawk, a 15-20 minute visitor in his backyard Jan. 21. “Sparrows and finches were next to him, hiding inside a pyracantha bush.”

THEN CYNTHIA MADSEN on a walk in Centennial, “Finally

spotted a Great Horned Owl. Since all the leaves were off the trees, I kept thinking that my chances were pretty good. This one was so magnificent looking. An awesome sight!”

MEG JOHNSTON HAD A DIFFERENT REPORT from Franktown, Mar. 18: “We saw a flock of 30 Wild Turkeys crossing Highway 86 at Flintwood! All cars stopped and let them cross the highway – many people were leaning out their windows taking pictures. Nice to see everyone smiling and enjoying the group.” Following up on that, Karen Metz and Kathy Dressel, who live a half-mile and mile away, see them. Karen says, “Our neighborhood count of hens and chicks last summer, plus the toms, totaled at least 55. The Deerfield flock has been around for a decade or so and may have ‘maxed out,’ and they may be seeking new territories for breeding season.”

WEST OF CASTLE ROCK, Kirk Huffstater says, “My feeders continue to be teeming with Evening Grosbeaks, anywhere from 12 to over 30 birds. They’re here every day from first light through late morning, often well into the afternoon. The day he sent this report he listed 17 other ‘backyard’ birds including 3 Cassin’s Finches, 12 Spotted Towhees, 12 Bushtits, and 3 Red-tailed Hawks.

SANDY BOLTON, IN COLUMBINE, wrote, “Cheep, cheep, chirp woke me up at 7 a.m. Feb. 21. Outside my bedroom window the cedar tree was full of Cedar Waxwings and robins who were eating the berries and fluttering around in the snowy branches. It was cold, below freezing, their feathers were all puffed up as they popped around eating and chirping. Probably 20 robins and 20 waxwings. A wonderful way to start this snowy day.” Flo DeCesare, nearby in Centennial also saw Cedar Waxwings, five on Feb. 14, also with robins.

SNIPPETS: Larry Modesitt has had 3 Red-breasted Nuthatches all winter and a Brown Creeper Feb. 24. Iris Blancett in Centennial called Denver Audubon for an ID of Bushtits.

FROM HIGH COUNTRY NEWS, a piece of history: Fred Quartarone interviewed a bunch of old-timers in northwest Colorado about native fish that few people nowadays have seen. “In the early 1950s, near Lodore Canyon, Chuck Mack watched as baby Cliff Swallows – eager to leave their nests – flapped their wings hard but often flopped down into the water. ‘Every big squawfish in the Green River must have migrated to the canyon to feast on the swallows. We landed a lot of 10-20 pounders and every one that we gutted had a stomach plumb-full of baby swallows.’ Historical Accounts of Upper Colorado River Basin Endangered Fish just reissued with great photos. 303-969-7322; www.ColoradoRiverRecovery.fws.gov.

POST-SCRIPT: A 13-year old said to an Audubon Master Birder: “Audubon is where you meet old people who don’t act like old people.”

I WELCOME YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS to this column. Send a note or post card to P.O. Box 584, Franktown 80116, or Email me: ouzels8@aol.com, or post your unusual sightings on the ASGD Facebook page.



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