

**DEAR READER**

PERIODICALLY **ASGD** RECEIVES SUGGESTIONS FOR UPDATING THE LOOK OF **THE WARBLER**—RANGING FROM SELECTING A MORE READABLE FONT TO INCLUDING TOPIC HEADERS ON ALL THE PAGES. STARTING WITH THE LAST ISSUE, WE ARE GRADUALLY INTRODUCING YOUR SUGGESTIONS. LET US KNOW IF YOU LIKE THE NEW LOOK!

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## The Magic of May

by Meredith McBurney, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) Bander

Each May, ASGD and RMBO partner in operating a bird banding station at Chatfield. This year, the banding provided a unique educational experience to over 1,000 adults and children, including 16 local school groups, complementing the many exciting science education programs offered at the Audubon Nature Center.

At the station, we captured over 700 individual birds this season. We banded 634 this year and 67 were recaptures from prior years. We did not come close to the 819 captured in 2009, nor did we have a fallout - the only one experienced during banding at Chatfield - which generated 135 birds in one day during that same season. Indeed, 2010 was our second best season. It's hard to believe we caught less than 350 each year prior to 2008.

The 65 recaptures included 11 species - 1 Robin, 3 Black-capped Chickadees, 4 Brown-headed Cowbirds, 1 Downy Woodpecker, 7 Gray Catbirds, 8 House Wrens, 2 Song Sparrows, 1 Warbling Vireo, 2 Western Wood-pewees, 5 Chats, and a whopping 32 Yellow Warblers. A few of the Yellows go back to 2005, when the station was located at the old site in Waterton. We recaptured our favorite House Wren, who holds the record for the most times caught in our nets - at least 34 times since he was banded in 2006. His nest is in a dead tree overlooking the river, between nets 14 and 15, the nets in which he always gets caught.

Although some of these recaptured birds likely live full time in the banding station area, others are migrants, returning

each year from as far away as Central America (Yellows, Chats, House Wrens and Warbling Vireo) and perhaps South America (Pewees).

The Yellows banded in 2005 have made the round trip at least 6 times. We have one record of a Yellow Warbler banded in Costa Rica (Nov 2007) being recaptured at Chatfield (May 2008), providing a clue to where Colorado's Eastern slope Yellows spend their winters.

Over the 5-week period, a great crew of volunteers, many of them returning year after year, makes it possible to run a banding station with over 20 fairly widely spaced nets. Thanks to Nathan Berry, Nicole Buyck, Francis Commercon, Bill Eden, Mackenzie Goldthwait, Alison Hazel, Jill Holden, Jennifer Hyypio, Michael Kiessig, Kylie Mattes and the Mattes Family, Mary Menz, Lucinda Miller, Tom Parchman, and Glenn Rodriguez.



*Yellow-billed Cuckoo caught on the last day of bird banding.  
Photo by Meredith McBurney*



**ASGD  
Rockies Night**  
See page 2



Find us on:  
**facebook.**

~MARK YOUR CALENDARS~

### ASGD Gala Fall Dinner

(and short members meeting)

Saturday, October 23, 2010

Gourmet Dinner • Noted Speaker

**An evening NOT TO BE MISSED!**

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE—

Often I spend the President's Message column asking for money or other help. This month I am just saying thank you; thank you to our members and to a few non-members.

Pat McClearn again hosted our annual Spring Reception and Silent Auction on May 14. She welcomed over 140 people into her home just to help the Audubon Society of Greater Denver make some money. And, we did make money: nearly \$12,000. It was an amazing evening with lights and laughter and food and rooms full of good people. Most people were from ASGD, but a good number were not. Some ASGD members kindly brought friends and family.

And the auction items, all donations, were as amazing as the crowd. There were trips at home and abroad. There were hours of personal services like gardening help and birding trips. There were art pieces that left us silent. The community donated big time. There were food baskets and dinners and picnics and gift certificates. The community support, ASGD and otherwise, was phenomenal.

So, for the people who planned, who gave, who bought; for the time, for the efforts, for the laughter; for the wonderful evening, thank you all. Please join us next year.

*I would be irresponsible to not mention the Gulf spill. National Audubon has been coordinating volunteer recruitment. Sign up by going to [http://audubonaction.org/site/Survey?Action\\_Required](http://audubonaction.org/site/Survey?Action_Required). And click on "Oil Spill Response."*



Tom Parchman, President



## Audubon Night at Coors Field

**Colorado Rockies vs. Cincinnati Reds  
Wednesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:40**

Join us for a family fun night with the Colorado Rockies and support ASGD. Enjoy a night at Coors Field — spot a few passing birds along with a few home runs.

Tickets are \$35 and are located in Section 117 Lower Level, Outfield Box - down the 1<sup>st</sup> base line

**Call Rhonda today to reserve 303-973-9530**



9308 S. Wadsworth Boulevard  
Littleton, Colorado 80128  
303-973-9530 • Fax 303-973-1038  
[www.denveraudubon.org](http://www.denveraudubon.org)

### ASGD OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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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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JULY/AUGUST 2010

ISSN: 1531-2283

VOLUME 44 NUMBER 3

# Lois Webster Fund Wildlife Research Program

At the Lois Webster Fund's (LWF) annual reception and program, about 30 people enjoyed presentations by Rob Schorr and Dr. Boyce Drummond of their 2009 LWF funded projects. Over the past 13 years the Lois Webster Fund has awarded \$40,711 in grants to more than 23 research and education projects for Colorado non-game wildlife. The LWF is totally dependent on individual contributions that can be sent to ASGD (with LWF clearly delineated on the check).

Below is a summary of a project abstract, "Roost descriptions for male pallid bats (*Antrozous pallidus*) along the Purgatoire River, Las Animas County, Colorado") by Rob Schorr, Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Colorado State University.

"Bats are second only to rodents in mammalian diversity, but our knowledge of basic ecology and natural history is limited. The pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) is large, up to 19 grams, and found throughout much of western North America from British Columbia to Texas

(Hermanson and O'Shea 1983). Pallid bats are one of the few species that glean their food off the ground or vegetation, feeding on terrestrial arthropods like scorpions,



*Pallid Bat. Photo by Rob Schorr*

centipedes, spiders and grasshoppers.

Typically pallid bat roosts are found in caves, mines, crevices, trees, and abandoned buildings but little is known about roosts here in Colorado. Most Colorado records have come from incidental encounters in buildings or during caves and mines surveys as there

has been little effort in documentation to support the likelihood they are utilizing other roost structures.

For this study, small telemeters (0.5 grams) were attached to twelve male pallid bats that were tracked to 53 roosts. The telemetered bats were seen on 6 occasions. The majority of roosts were well-hidden behind rock structures or inaccessible crevices. Nearly all the roosts were located near the top of mesas or high up in sun-heated south- to southwest-facing cliff walls with no surrounding trees or tree canopy. Roost temperatures were comparable to the ambient temperatures and crevice roosts were typically narrow and variable in length.

Pallid bats are known to roost in warm locations and the telemetered individuals along the Purgatoire River were no exception. Why they utilize such high-temperature roosts is not well understood, but it may be a behavioral mechanism to maintain high metabolism for gamete production or digestion."

## "Little Fledglings" Program Strengthens STEM\*

by Suzy Hiskey

\*STEM - science, technology, engineering, and math

ASGD's new Little Fledglings Preschool Nature Program provides families with children ages three to six with nature and science experiences. This program was successfully implemented at the Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield this past spring. Fifteen children from eleven families participated with over half attending three or more sessions. According to a Wheelock College Aspire Institute report, "Students need to begin training in the sciences and math as early as pre-kindergarten for success in today's global economy". Scientific study is encouraged in children as young as four years old according to an article by Debra Viadero in Education Week. During ASGD's Little Fledglings, young children explore nature and science through

stories, games, crafts, and short hikes.

Little Fledglings provides opportunities for parents to explore life sciences with their children, engaging



*Toddlers Exploring the Wonders of Nature by Karie Watt*

in simple experiments and exploration. A survey conducted by the National

Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc. indicates that 94% of science teachers wish parents had more opportunities to participate in science with their children. "We know that family involvement is important, and parents need help getting involved with their kids in a subject they may not feel comfortable with themselves," says Francis Eberle, NSTA executive director. The Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield gives parents access to materials and resources that encourage their children's interest in science and provides a place where parents can take their children to explore science.

Starting in September, Little Fledglings will continue with a new curriculum introducing new themes, crafts, and outdoor activities appropriate for children three to six.

# Legislative Update

by Polly Reetz, ASGD Conservation Committee Chair

## Lottery Fund Diversion

In the previous Eagle Eye, I reported on SB 98, an attempt to divert lottery funds from their constitutionally mandated purpose of supporting open space, parks, wildlife and recreation. When the State is suffering a financial crisis that pot of lottery money is extremely tempting, and the legislature has tried to divert it for prisons, higher education, soil conservation district operations, and so on. After much hard work and testimony, mainly by Audubon, SB 98 was amended, rendering it harmless.

It was probably too much to hope that SB 98 would be the only assault on the lottery and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) funding. Sure enough, as the 2010 legislative session cruised to a close, Auduboners found themselves fighting several more attempts to raid the lottery fund:

- SCR 4, a proposed constitutional amendment, would have created a new lottery game, Keno, with proceeds directed to scholarships for higher education. Our major objection was

that this scheme would take away money from GOCO if many lottery players switched to Keno. Keno is also an extremely addictive form of gambling. Audubon, alone of all the environmental organizations, scrambled to find the votes to kill SCR 4 in Committee - and eventually succeeded. The sponsor, Sen. Chris Romer, pulled it from consideration rather than have an actual vote.

- SB 215 was another brainchild of Senator Romer. Again it would have resulted in new lottery games. The details of this bill would have, in effect, required the lottery commission to borrow money to fund college scholarships and then pledged the use of all lottery revenues to repay the loans – a complicated scheme that would have left no money for parks and open space. Audubon members managed to rally the “no” votes again, and the sponsor withdrew the bill without a vote.
- HCR 1007, also a proposed constitutional amendment, would have diverted ALL net lottery proceeds that fund GOCO, state parks and local government recreation to the state education fund whenever 60% of the legislature voted to declare a fiscal crisis.

Although all these measures were defeated, primarily by the work of Audubon lobbyist Jen Boulton and many Audubon members, we can expect to see similar

bills in 2011. That lottery money is just too tempting when State income is low!

## Water Diversion

One bill that passed for the first time ever: a first stab at requiring mitigation of the damage caused by taking water out of one river basin and moving it into another (think: Dillon Reservoir to Roberts Tunnel to S. Platte River). It requires applicants who want to move the water to enter into mitigation agreements with the water conservancy district in the area from which the water would come. If these entities can't reach agreement, the matter goes to water court.

## More Audubon Successes

Bills to require stricter emissions standards from the dirtiest power plants along the Front Range, to increase the renewable energy standard, to require uranium processing plants to clean up their mess before they can enter into a new contract, and to increase penalties for traffic violations within wildlife “crossing” zones, all passed and were sent to the Governor's desk.

But there are still more challenges out there – protection for intermittent streams and seasonal ponds and standards for renewable energy facilities are two issues we'd like to see the legislature address. We hope to cover these at our next Legislative Forum, on February 12, 2011. Mark your calendar!

# Update on Safe Skies Colorado

Working cooperatively, ASGD and the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Sierra Club with assistance from the Building Owners and Managers Association, the American Lung Association and Xcel Energy have successfully completed part of the Safe Skies Project aimed at reducing bird/glass strikes. Phase 1 emphasized working with tall building owners and managers to turn off the lights at night during the spring and fall migration. Phase 2 is currently being planned by the Safe Skies Work Group and focuses on homeowners and renters. The issue is re-highlighted in the summary of article by Angela Moxley titled ***The Collision Course We Unknowingly Create for Birds*** (to read the full article, go

to [http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/resources/facts/flight\\_risk.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/resources/facts/flight_risk.html))

“Wherever they fly—above cities, through suburban backyards, over roads through country fields—birds face an indiscriminate threat. Hurling toward tall buildings, houses, shopping malls, even automobiles, they're unable to recognize clues like [window] sills or framework that might warn them to change course before they collide with a window. To birds, glass is deceiving whether it's transparent (birds see a clear flight path ahead) or reflective (they think they're flying into trees or sky).

While most people have probably seen or heard a bird hitting a window on occasion, few realize how much the numbers add up. Even back in the 1970s

using field data he collected, Daniel Klem, a professor at Pennsylvania's Muhlenberg College, estimated 1 to 10 birds fatally strike each building in the U.S. every year. Based on census data, that's 100 million to 1 billion birds annually.”

Although glass presents a huge threat, you can help:

- Look for the upcoming exhibit at the Audubon Nature Center highlighting the problem and prospective solutions.
- Evaluate your home for its potential for bird strikes and take preventative measures such as installation of blinds, window decals, screens and other structures. Visit [www.abcbirds.org/conservationissues/threats/buildings.html](http://www.abcbirds.org/conservationissues/threats/buildings.html) for more information.
- Locate the address and phone of the nearest bird rescue organization; they can deal with any injured birds you find.

## PROGRAMS AT THE AUDUBON NATURE CENTER

The Audubon Center is located on Waterton Road off S. Wadsworth Blvd. 4.4 miles south of C-470. For programs that require registration call 303-973-9530 or [info@denveraudubon.org](mailto:info@denveraudubon.org).

### Walk the Wetlands

- Sunday, July 4, 8am
- Sunday, August 1, 8am

This 2-3 hour leisurely hike is a great opportunity to learn to find and identify birds in the habitats around the Audubon Center. All ages and abilities welcome! BFBGWS. We can lend you binoculars and field guides if you don't have them.

Leaders: Karen von Saltza and Master Birders  
No Fee; Donation to ASGD appreciated  
Pre-registration NOT required

## PROGRAMS AT OTHER LOCATIONS

### Filius Park, Echo and Summit Lakes (Mt. Evans)

- Wednesday, July 14, 8am (full day)

Avoid the Mt. Evans weekend crowds! Explore diverse habitats from foothills to alpine. We hope to see Green-tailed Towhee, Pine Siskin, Western Bluebird, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Rufous Hummingbird, Cassin's Finch. Limited to 10 participants. BFBGW and lunch.

Leader: Lynn Willcockson  
\$15/Friends member, \$17/non-members  
Pre-registration required

Meeting Place: West on I-70 to Evergreen exit then 2mi to first Bergen Park exit (stop light); turn right to Filius Park (100 yards). Mt. Evans has a \$10 per car fee. Golden Eagle Pass may be used.

### Grebes with Young on Walden Area Lakes • Saturday & Sunday, August 14 & 15, 9am

Join Master Birder Tom Bush and friends to scout colony nesting birds and fledglings at Arapahoe NWR and Walden Reservoir. Hope to see Western and Eared Grebes with young on and off their backs. Bring your camera gear for photography and digiscoping tips. (Lee Farrell won ASGD photo contest last December). After lunch on Sunday, caravan over Cameron Pass birding along the way for hummingbirds and possible Three-toed woodpeckers. BFBGWS plus cameras, scopes and 2-way radios if you have them.

Leaders: Tom Bush and friends

# ASGD Certificate in Outdoor Adventure

Are you eager to venture beyond your local park, but don't feel completely prepared? Are you a seasoned hiker interested in knowing more about "what's out there"? This series introduces you to the basics of outdoor adventure in a fun, relaxed way. Great for children, parents and other adults to explore together. Go at your own pace – sessions are offered 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 Your Adventures
- ✓ Map & Compass Basics
- ✓ Mucking in the Pond
- ✓ Prairies
- ✓ Foothills
- ✓ GPS for Beginners
- ✓ Birding 101
- ✓ Know Your Plants
- ✓ Mammals
- ✓ Reptiles & Amphibians

## Upcoming Sessions

- Saturday, July 17, 9am-11am – Mammals of Chatfield
- Saturday, July 24, 9am-11am – Mucking in the Pond
- Saturday, July 31, 9am-11am – Know Your Plants
- Saturday, August 14, 9am-11am – Be Prepared
- Saturday, August 28, 9am-11am – Birding 101

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

ASGD Certificate in Outdoor Adventure sponsored by TogetherGreen,  
an alliance between Audubon and Toyota.



\$170 Friends member, double occupancy; \$195 Friends member, single occupancy; Non-members add \$40. Includes one night's lodging at North Park Inn (a new Walden motel), continental breakfast & brunch Sunday. Lunch and dinner on your own Saturday.

Meeting Place: Peck House in Empire at 9am for their hummingbird feeders. (three species)

### Live Raptor ID Class

- Tuesday, August 17, 8:30am (half day)

Raptor education specialist focuses on key ID points using flight pattern, shape, behaviors and field

marks. Learning enhanced by up-close views of approximately 20 species of live raptors. The Raptor Education Foundation (REF) is a non-profit devoted to educating the public about raptors. A lucky participant will win a license plate membership with REF!

Leader: Anne Price, Curator of Raptors, Raptor Education Foundation (REF)

\$40, includes handouts

Pre-registration required

Meeting Place: 17101 E. 136th Ave. Brighton. Exit 20 off I-76 (across hwy west from Barr Lake)

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

# Programs

## PROGRAMS OFFERED IN PARTNERSHIP CHATFIELD STATE PARK

### Secret Life of Birds

#### • Wednesday, July 7, 10:30am-12pm

No Fee

Meeting Place: Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield

### Skins, Skulls & Tracks - Mammals in the Park

#### • Wednesday, July 14, 10:30am-12pm

Park Entrance Fee (\$7/car)

Meeting Place: Chatfield Heronry Parking Lot

### Mucking in the Pond

#### • Wednesday, July 21, 10:30am-12pm

No Fee

Meeting Place: Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield

### Snakes Alive!

#### • Wednesday, July 28, 10:30am-12pm

Park Entrance Fee (\$7/car)

Meeting Place: Chatfield Heronry Parking Lot

## PROGRAMS OFFERED IN PARTNERSHIP CITY OF AURORA PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

### Quincy Reservoir

#### • Saturday, July 10, 7:30 – 9:30am

Enjoy a stroll along the cottonwood-lined shores of Aurora's Quincy reservoir. We'll look for waterbirds, orioles, and raptors along the way. BBFGWS.

Leader: Mary Ann Bonnell

\$7/person

Meeting Place: Call 303.739.2428 for information and registration

### Ponderosa Preserve

#### • Saturday, August 14, 7:30 -10am

Discover montane birding in a prairie setting at Aurora's Ponderosa Preserve. We'll look for broad-tailed hummingbirds, pygmy nuthatches, lark sparrows, raptors and great horned owls. BBFGWS.

Leader: Mary Ann Bonnell

No Fee

Meeting Place: Call 303.739.2428 for information and registration

## ATLAS BLOCK FIELD TRIPS

### ASGD's Elbert Atlas Block

#### • Thursday, July 8

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

Leaders: Urling & Hugh Kingery

No Fee

Pre-Registration required, with leaders

Urling & Hugh Kingery, 303-814-2723,

[ouzels8@aol.com](mailto:ouzels8@aol.com)

Meeting Place: Meet at 6am at the Franktown Post Office. From the intersection of CO 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.

### Atlas "Blockbuster" trip to Summit County

#### • Saturday and Sunday, July 10-11

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. BBFGWS and lunch, plus camping gear if needed

Leaders: Urling & Hugh Kingery

No Fee

Pre-Registration required, with leaders

Urling & Hugh Kingery, 303-814-2723,

[ouzels8@aol.com](mailto:ouzels8@aol.com)

Meeting Place: Saturday: 7am, Wendy's restaurant in Silverthorne. From I-70, turn right onto CO 9, then right at the traffic light into Wendy's parking lot.

Sunday: 7am, Horseshoe Campground, 15mi south of Parshall on Grand County Road 3 (also about an hour north of Silverthorne).

### ASGD's Pine Atlas Block

#### • Wednesday, July 14

The foothills Pine block has 61 species – we'll work on 48 that need confirmations, including Spotted Sandpiper, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Plumbeous and Warbling vireo, bluebirds, five warblers, and goldfinches. We might add a few species: Lincoln's Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting, Hermit Thrush. BBFGWS and lunch.

Leaders: Urling & Hugh Kingery

No Fee

Pre-Registration required, with leaders

Urling & Hugh Kingery, 303-814-2723,

[ouzels8@aol.com](mailto:ouzels8@aol.com)

Meeting Place: Meet at 6am at Walmart, SE sector of C-470 and Bowles Ave, on the far south side next to plant sales.

## LOOKING AHEAD

### Beginning Bird-Watching Class Classroom Session:

#### • Thursday, Sept. 16, 7-9pm

#### Field Trips:

#### • Saturdays, Sept. 18 and 25, Oct. 2, 9, 16, and 23, 8am-2pm

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! Limited to 20 participants. Class fills quickly, so register early!

Trips to bird-watching sites around Denver: Chatfield, Barr Lake and Castlewood Canyon State Parks, Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, and Genesee Mountain Park

Leaders: Urling & Hugh Kingery

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

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

Pre-registration is required

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

# Veracruz River of Raptors— World’s Largest Raptor Migration

October 2 - 10, 2010

With Catemaco (Los Tuxtlas Rainforest) Extension October 10 – 13, 2010

A 9-day (12-day with extension) birding adventure exploring the central Veracruz region of the Gulf Coast of Mexico at the height of southern migration when a River of Raptors—several million strong—stream the skyway in one of the most incredible wildlife spectacles anywhere in the world.

Overall, 540 bird species inhabit central Veracruz, including over 25 endemics. Skillful, local birding guides help build a trip list consistently exceeding 250 species including Altamira Oriole, Violaceous Trogon, Blue-crowned Motmot, Roadside Hawk, Hook-billed Kite, Laughing and Aplomado falcons, Blue Mockingbird, Red Warbler,

and a huge diversity of hummingbirds. Pronatura Veracruz, the nonprofit environmental tour provider was voraciously commended by ABA and The Nature Conservancy for highly

and vegetable and spice combinations. \$2,550/person (add \$268 single supplement). With Extension: \$3,050/person (add \$343 single supplement). Tour fee includes excellent food, lodging,

transportation (from airport through multiple stops and back to airport), local guides, initial tips, and donations to Pronatura and ASGD. Airfare is not included. Detailed

Pronatura Veracruz itinerary is available. For safety concerns traveling in Mexico we rely on the US State Department which has issued no travel advisories for the Veracruz area. Trip limited to 9 participants. \$1,000 deposit reservation is due July 20 to [info@denveraudubon.org](mailto:info@denveraudubon.org) or 303.973.9530. Balance due September 1.



successful tours October 2009. Harriet Stratton leads the ASGD group to stays in comfortable hotels in Veracruz City, Cardel and Xalapa. Visits to the Xalapa Museum of Anthropology and local archaeological sites of La Antigua and Hernan Cortez’s first Spanish colony are included. Veracruzeans proudly serve local cuisine highlighting fresh seafood,

## RECOGNITION

## Volunteers

### ASGD Naturalists

- Dick Anderson
- Amber Ballman
- Dotty Biggs
- Kathy Bollhoefer
- Emily Crowley
- Doris Cruze
- Carol DeStefanis
- Julie Dorosz
- Bill Eden
- Paulina Erices
- Angela Grun
- Suzy Hiskey
- Mary Keithler
- Kris Koff
- Barbara Masoner

- Jeanne McCune
- Tom Olkowski
- Mike Petcock
- Arlene Raskin
- Polly Reetz

### Field Trip Leaders

- Kathy Bollhoefer
- Nicole Buyck
- Dave Hill
- Mary Keithler
- Hugh & Urling Kingery
- Marilyn Rhodes
- Bob Santangelo
- Karen von Saltza

### Office Help

- Phil Reynolds
- Carolyn Roark
- Grace Weber



## 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](mailto:info@denveraudubon.org).

## Recognition

# Donors

### Benefactor Circle

Johns Manville  
Xcel Energy

### Contributor Circle

Maud Duke  
Fred Griest

### Direct Donors

Alisa Bishop  
Leslie Brown  
Amy & Bill Christiansen  
Bonnie Crawford  
Yvonne Davidoff  
Laura Derrington  
Carol DeStefanis  
Roberta Deyoung  
Donald Fisher  
Judy Garcia  
Robert & Joanne Hart  
Robert Heberton  
Janet Henson  
Jessica Jenner  
Monica Johnson  
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Christine Sibona  
Carol Tone  
Fred & Gloria Vallier  
Jean Van Loan  
Lynn & Fran Yehle

### In Memory of

Lavonne Axford by Steve & Mary Marx

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The Estate of Ellen W. Swanson  
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Lynne Forrester

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Jack Sullivan  
Tish & Pete Varney  
Deb Wittwer





by Hugh Kingery

**GROSBEAKS GALORE!** Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, splashed with cherry-red on their breasts, charmed at least five backyarders: in Parker Debbie Wedlake saw one May 10-11 for the second year; Sherry Mahalac saw one in Firestone May 15-16; Judy and Ed Butterfield (Aurora) saw one May 17-18, Carolyn Zwhalen spotted one May 5 in Perry Park and then Frank Black (Franktown) said, "I don't know nuttin about birds, but knew the bird sittin on my feeder May 8-9 to be one I had never seen before (another Rose-breast). The first eve it feasted on millet and the second on safflower. It stayed over a half hour each evening. His girlfriend didn't show either night."

**BOB SPENCER**, in suburban Golden reported that on May 17, "about 8:30 a.m. an Evening Grosbeak appeared in the Russian Olive. It is a first for my yard in 50 years. A male, possibly first-year. Did not stay long." Scarce for the last several years, Evening Grosbeaks



*Evening Grosbeak.*  
Photo by Dick Vogel

appeared at several non-suburban Denver yards. Kirk Huffstater, near Castle Rock had them all winter; on April 29 he counted "62 on feeders and trees! It seems like every time I look out, more have arrived. About 28 are crammed into my deckside platform feeder right now, which is standing room only!" Close by, Brad Smith saw four on April 1, Kathy Dressel had five April 15 for an hour, and we had 4-5 May 12-13. Marilyn Rhodes, on May 5 in Evergreen, "had three pairs. Since then, more Evening Grosbeaks have arrived, joining the ever-present Pine Siskins and House Finches, and, yesterday, beautiful little Lesser Goldfinches returned.

Last week, during the heaviest snow, dozens of Evening Grosbeaks descended into the trees around my house. I took many breaks from work that day to enjoy the Grosbeak symphony."

**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAKS**, more common breeders, also arrived in May. The first for Merikay and Walt Haggerty (Wheat Ridge) at the suet feeder May 10; a male May 13-14 at Gordon James' (University Park) "feeding at my black-oil sunflower (whole seeds) feeder, or actually at the tray below the feeder, where some seeds fall.



*Black Headed Grosbeak.*  
Photo by Eric Peterson

But the bird was extremely skittish – any glimpse of me within my kitchen, it would fly away." Other Black-headed Grosbeaks visited E. B. Ellis in Roxborough, Maxine Litzo in Federal Heights, and Judy and Ed Butterfield in Aurora. At Green Mountain Amy Law watched a "female stop by for a bite and not ten minutes later, a bolt of red and blue that turned out to be a Lazuli Bunting."

**BILL AND EVELYN STEINKUHLER** on May 21 saw "a pair of Lazuli Buntings hopping around the radishes in our garden in west Arvada." They also saw a Black-headed Grosbeak the week before.

**IN MAY URLING AND I** had a plethora of blue birds. Lazuli Buntings arrived May 6; on May 19 we watched a gorgeous Lazuli/Indigo hybrid: stunning, all lazuli-blue, white belly, no wing bars, a bit darker in the face. Western Bluebirds (they have replaced the nesting Mountain Bluebirds of a few years ago), Tree Swallows, scrub-jays, Blue Jay (only one left from the two dozen last winter), and Steller's Jays. Then on May 20, on the hanging flat feeder: a Blue Grosbeak -- the first we've seen in our yard. It fed for 5 minutes and disappeared. We decided that a mystery song we heard (while still in bed) must have been this bird. It didn't look totally adult -- besides the chestnut wing bars it also had rust in the back.

**BONNIE STAVANSKY**, in Lakewood, saw a stunning Blue Grosbeak May 25-26 – a rare record for Denver suburbs. She also hosted a pair of Black-headed Grosbeaks.



*Blue Grosbeak.*  
Photo by Dick Vogel

**OTHER BRIGHT BIRDS:** Western Tanagers. Cynthia Madsen: "I looked out the kitchen window after breakfast and there was the Western Tanager in my maple tree. He didn't linger, but flew into my neighbor's black walnut tree, but then I spied a second male – double my pleasure, double my fun! What a way to brighten a cold, gloomy day."

**GINA GERKEN** in Castle Pines May 11 saw her first-ever Western Tanager, "sitting on my birdbath. My first thought was, someone's small parrot must have escaped. . . he is so brightly colored he looks tropical (or fake!). He flew off . . . until a few minutes ago, I was talking on the phone, with my feet propped up. Suddenly a bright red head peeked into the window at me. The tanager was sitting on the window sill above my suet feeder checking me out! I almost fell out of my chair! Avian ecstasy." Also, Debbie Wedlake in the Pinery. Greg Pasquirello saw two males "in the McDonald's parking lot of all places, Chatfield & Wadsworth."



*Western Tanager.*  
Cornell Lab of Ornithology

**BULLOCK'S ORIOLES** arrived May 14 to work on Merikay and Walt's hummingbird feeders. "Maybe this is a benefit of cool, wet spring weather." In the Pinery Debbie Wedlake saw one May 11, and Pat Skinner one on May 21; they started nesting at Judy and Ed's. Urling's and my hummingbird feeders attracted 3-4 orioles May 12-25.

# Backyard Birds

**CAROLYNE PARFIT** reported the first hummer, Apr. 15, in Larkspur. Three backyarders saw their first ones Apr. 29, a cold, rainy, snowy day: Lynn Ackerman in Highlands Ranch, who said, "The feeder was fresh and ready and I have some penstemon in bloom in my garden planted mainly for hummingbirds"; Josette Mastra in the Pinery, who saw one that first fed and then "decided to perch in an aspen under the eaves," and Kirk.

**BRUCE HALE**, "more than 20 years ago planted two mountain ash trees in our backyard of SW Denver, hoping to attract waxwings. Until last week, I had only seen a few, and never more than one at a time. On March 17, Linda and I saw eight Cedar Waxwings for a brief time in the one remaining tree."



*Cedar Waxwing*  
Photo by Dick Vogel

**KATHY FORD** "saw six Cedar Waxwings in a locust tree in the backyard Apr. 18. They were hesitant to come to the birdbath the first day tho they sat nearby and watched other birds drink. One brave soul did finally come twice while two robins were already drinking. Later all six moved to another tree and pecked at leaf buds. Two passed blossoms from a plum tree back and forth, beak to beak, a dozen times."

**BRUCE ALSO SAW** two Bushtits the same day. Matt Newport saw two on Mar. 28 in Aurora "New yard bird at my normally mundane feeders." They visit Bill and Suzanne's yard regularly but by May 15 visited without coming to their suet feeder.

**E. B. ELLIS**, in Roxborough Village, saw two first-time yard birds on May 13: "In the morning I had a Swainson's Thrush hopping around for about an hour. Later in the day a male Lewis's Woodpecker started hanging out. Another male came in and fought with it. Both were gorgeous and closer than I had ever seen them."

**SPARROWS MAY SEEM PLAIN**, but they have beautiful songs and many wear distinctive plumages. A White-throated Sparrow arrived in Scott and Sandy Menough's Lakewood yard Dec. 2 and stayed through March 2. Maxine, on May 16, discovered a Lark Bunting – a first for a metro-Denver yard, I think. By itself, it ate seeds off the ground underneath her feeder.

**BILL AND SUZANNE WUERTHELE** in Park Hill reported a "pretty good backyard birding day May 15. The highlight was a Harris's Sparrow. Both a new yard bird and new life bird for us. Totally surprising for an inner-city backyard. It hung around all afternoon, including several trips to our back deck. We also had a MacGillivray's Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Swainson's Thrush, and House Wren. Red-breasted Nuthatches continue to visit the feeders (I'm sure they're nesting in one of the nearby spruce trees)."

**DOVES USED TO COME** in one denomination: now we have three. The now widespread Eurasian Collared-Dove (they are not Ringed Turtle-Doves) showed up Apr. 20 at Bill Hincley's in Columbine Valley, at Bill and Suzanne Wuerthele's in Park Hill May 15, and our yard starting Apr. 10. Then Rex Nelson heard, "could've sworn, an E. Collared-Dove imitating the call of a Mourning Dove. Same intervals, but that crazy, hoarse timbre that collareds have. . . Never mind," he



*Eurasian Collared Dove*  
Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

emailed an hour later, "I saw the culprit making that guttural dove sound, and by golly, if it wasn't a Mourning Dove! He must have throat problems." It pays to listen – sometimes you find a bird you might not otherwise notice, like the Warbling Vireo Urling and I just chased. The third dove: White-winged. Still rare, but Loch Kilpatrick had, for the second year, one coming to his feeder in Parker.

**PATTY ECHELMAYER** starts the list of weird

city interlopers: an Osprey that roosted in her Wheat Ridge yard – she saw it at 6:30 a.m. April 23. Linda Powers likewise saw one April 24, but hers sat in "Kingfisher tree" in Washington Park. Susan Smith saw her first Turkey Vulture in Parker Apr. 1. On the same day, Diane Henrichs, from her second floor apartment in residential Lakewood, "watched 30-40 TVs circling and circling, going south. They came so low that I could see their red heads – without binoculars. They kept coming and coming."



*Osprey.*  
Photo by Mike Baird

**RICK BRUNE** spotted a Sandhill Crane, "flying south over North Table Mountain, north of Golden, on Apr. 9 at 3:08 p.m. It was a few miles ahead of a cold front approaching from the north." On Apr. 10, the Dinosaur Ridge hawk watch at I70 and the Hogback, saw "a lone Sandhill Crane soaring up and down Green Mountain, seemingly looking for other cranes." I wonder if they watched Rick's crane. Rick responded, "So will someone shepherd it home with an ultra light?"

**MONNA KREBS**, Apr. 17, "had a female Wild Turkey sitting on my back window ledge that faces the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt. It's hard to believe. The turkey flew up on my neighbor's roof and I thought it would stay there for the night; but it came back into my yard and then down to the greenbelt just as it was getting dark." On May 1 she appended, "Have been seeing the turkey several times in my back yard, and today I enjoyed an extra bonus - a Peacock. It was with the turkey and they were eating some of the bird seed I had put out at the back."

**JILL HOLDEN**, by Mar. 27, started seeing "a lot of Pine Siskins at my (Roxborough) feeder. We can usually count on some when the weather turns bad in the mountains and will usually see up to 20

at a time. This morning there were at least 50. I was happy to see a couple of American Goldfinches yesterday starting to get some of their bright yellow feathers. I just love spring!"



Goldfinch.  
Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

**FROM FRANKTOWN**, Vicki Munro says the good news is that "I have had at least 20 goldfinches all winter this year for the first time." The bad news: "I have only seen 2-4 House Finches at a time, all winter. I've seen six sick finches, four of which seemed to be traveling together."

**DICK SHERER**, emailed May 12 from Franktown, "For several days before this snowfall, I have been watching a magpie pluck mane and tail hair from Rosie, my

horse. When she (?) gets about a 1/8-inch bundle, it is off to the ponderosa where they have built a new nest. Rosie is oblivious to it. Reminds me of oxpeckers in Africa."

**AT ROGER FLOREN'S WORKPLACE**, Canada Geese nested on the roof; he worried about what would happen when the eggs hatched. On May 20 he reported, "Three days ago the parents decided they wanted the babies off the roof; the problem was that there was a ledge and the babies could not climb up and jump off and follow the parents. So the LPS security folks came over, climbed the roof, and took the babies, and dropped them off the roof. Eventually mom and dad found them and they waddled off as a very happy family of six."

**FROM LOUVIERS**, Tom Halverstadt keeps a town list. New this spring, "eight Wilson's Phalaropes feeding on the sewage lagoon. Some more uncommon species: Swainson's Thrush, Northern Mockingbird, and two Black-and-white Warblers."

**LINDA POWERS** specializes in Washington Park. She also saw a Black-and-white Warbler, May 16, as well as a Blackpoll Warbler and Spotted Sandpiper. Cooper's Hawks started nest-building there Apr. 5.

Amy Law says, "The Cooper's Hawks that I watched last year are back, nesting in a different tree but perching in the same one, which is great because it is right next to the sidewalk. Greg saw, on May 14, a Cooper's "eating a robin on a fence, so close I could hear the bones breaking."

**LAST YEAR BILL WUERTHELE** began a different kind of listing: he's compiling a year-list of birds he sees by walking or biking from home in Park Hill. He's pedaled as far as Red Rocks Park and Cherry Creek Reservoir this year, with 91 species by May 15. He had 110 last year, and hopes to best that number in 2010. More energy than I have.

The "Bigby" website [www.sparrowworks.ca/bigby.html] defines Big Green Big Year as "A Big Year in which you only count those species seen within walking or cycling distance of your home or principal place of work. As simple as that, no dashing off to the far corners of the planet burning fossil fuels as you go."

**AS CYNTHIA SAID**, "Isn't it great to be a birder?" 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](mailto:ouzels8@aol.com).

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