



THE Warbler

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NEWSLETTER OF THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF GREATER DENVER

Global Warming and Birds

Right now, global warming impacts birds, their prey, and their habitat. Warming climate has been called the single biggest threat to birds and other wildlife in human history. Decisive action will forestall worse scenarios in our common future.

Steps taken today to prevent the most dangerous impacts of global warming can also begin to stabilize our climate again. At the same time, conservation, especially of larger areas with migratory corridors and buffer zones; better control of invasive species; and adaptive management are critical to stem the loss of bird and wildlife species.

Why Does Global Warming Matter for Birds?

Birds and other wildlife face habitat loss due to sea-level rise, more frequent and severe wildfires, flooding and droughts, invasive species, changes in vegetation and precipitation, and loss of snow and ice. Birds are highly adapted to particular vegetation and habitat types. To compensate for warmer temperatures, ranges of these habitats may move closer to the poles or to higher elevations. Habitat types that cannot colonize new areas may rapidly decline or cease to exist.

Timing of birds' migration, reproduction, breeding, nesting, and hatching match specific local conditions. With climate change, bird behavior may no longer be in sync with their food sources and other habitat needs. For example, robins in the Rocky Mountains arrive an average of two weeks earlier in spring than a few decades ago, but the worms they eat are not yet available for their newly hatched offspring.

Is Global Warming Already Affecting Birds?

More than 80% of plant and animal species studied have shown changes in the timing of migration or reproduction, shifts in habitat or migratory routes, or other changes associated with climate change. Observed impacts on birds include:

- Several North American warbler species have shifted northward. The Golden-winged Warbler's range has moved nearly 100 miles north just in the past two decades.

- Between 1971 and 1995, many British bird species began laying their eggs an average of nine days earlier each year.



Photo by Hugh Kingery

Colorado's White-tailed Ptarmigan are being pushed higher and higher up their alpine tundra habitat by global warming, so they may eventually run out of mountain. Climate change affects animals with specialized habitat needs most dramatically.

A dozen species in Great Britain have shifted their ranges an average of 12 miles northward in the past 20 years.

- On Michigan's Upper Peninsula, 15 species—including the Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Black-throated Blue Warbler—are arriving up to 21 days earlier than in the 1960s.

- Adelie Penguins are taking longer routes to find food in the ocean as icebergs break off the Ross Ice Shelf.

Will Some Species or Habitat Types Be More Vulnerable than Others?

Birds that already live at high altitudes or latitudes may not be able to move with the changing climate. Colorado's marquee example of this threat is the White-tailed Ptarmigan.

Imperiled species with limited habitat or small gene pools

See Global Warming and Birds continued on page 8

– DATES TO REMEMBER – ASGD Public Programs

Sunday, September 2 8 a.m.

Field Trip: Walk the Wetlands (Audubon Center at Chatfield, on Waterton Road, 4.4 miles south of C-470 and Wadsworth. Free and open to all.)

Wednesday, September 5 7 p.m.

ASGD Monthly Educational Lecture & Members Meeting (Audubon Center at Chatfield. Open to all; we'll pass the hat for donations and encourage non-members to become ASGD Friends.)

"GOING BATTY!" with Rick Adams

Dr. Adams, biology professor from University of

See Dates to Remember continued on page 11

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE—

The Raskins — True Auduboners

For more than 20 years, Jerry and Arlene Raskin have served as outstanding volunteers for the Audubon Society of Greater Denver. They have held offices, served on the board of directors, supported the chapter financially, and given unselfishly of their time and multiple talents to keep the chapter strong and to build our nature center.

Jerry is currently involved with several other worthwhile organizations. There are family members to look after and grandchildren to spoil. After what Jerry describes as many sleepless nights, he has resigned as our first vice-president. It is with regret that the board accepts this resignation, but Jerry assures us he will continue as a member and will attend events as he can. Arlene will continue to serve on the board, on the inclusivity and education committees, and she will continue to volunteer at the center, working with school groups and other visitors.

Jerry is a man of many talents. He has done everything from serving as our representative at state and national gatherings to photographing pre-school kids on the boardwalk. His expertise and wide range of experience have helped guide us through complicated contracts, strategic planning, and effective board action. He is the voice of reason when things get crazy, and he is always a friendly, positive presence.

Arlene, we are glad you will continue. Jerry, we will miss you. We wish happy trails to you and we look forward to seeing you again real soon.



Thanks To Our Volunteers!

FIELD TRIP LEADERS: Doris Cruze, Hugh & Urling Kingery, Bill Turner, Karen von Saltza, Lynn Willcockson

ADOPT-A-PLATTE: Fran Campbell, Ellie Jones, Joyce Quigley, Tom Reilly, Peggy Roberts, Betsy Weitkamp, Emilie & Ralph Wiersma

OFFICE SUPPORT: Phil Reynolds, Carolyn Roark, Grace Weber

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WARBLER MAILING: Patty Echelmeyer, Helen Hale, Jeanne McCune, Vi Nicholson, Lori Sharp

STUDY SKINS: Jeanette & Rebecca Duerksen

BIRD SEED SALE PICKUP: John Harrington

WEEDING AND TRAIL REPAIR: Ann Bonnell, Fred Griest, Doug Hodous, Kris Koff, Krista Redlinger, and from Lockheed Martin—Chad Bartel, Andrew Cober, Cavan Cuddy, Chris Howard, Jonathan & Rebekah Kovarik, Steven Nielson, Mike Pitoniak, Alan Versteeg

New Friends Members:

Cavan Cuddy, Jan Eckhardt, Rena Fugate, Marcia Goldin, Alisha Goldstein, Cymantha Higgins, Tyler Holden, Ethan Jordan, Jan & Andrew Mallory, Steve Meier, Ray R. Moorhead, Barbara Spagnuolo



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MISSION

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

MEMBERSHIP

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

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

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Fish and Wildlife Service to review endangered species decisions—Colorado affected directly

Two different government entities are investigating decisions by Bush administration officials related to the recovery of threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is reviewing the scientific integrity of decisions made by political appointee Julie MacDonald, an Assistant Secretary of the Interior, who resigned May 1 after the Interior Department's inspector general issued a critical report in March. The report found MacDonald had edited, commented on, and reshaped the endangered species program's scientific reports from the field, although she has no formal education in natural sciences. She also evidently disclosed nonpublic information to selected special interests.

Congress is investigating evidence of Vice President Cheney intervening in decisions involving water allocations in California and Oregon that caused the deaths of thousands of salmon, some of which are listed as Threatened. River water was sent to irrigate farmers' fields rather than provide stream flows for salmon going upstream to spawn.

Of the eight decisions under review, four of them involve species found in Colorado. They are:

- Preble's meadow jumping mouse proposed de-listing. Macdonald was involved in a decision to go ahead with a proposal to take the mouse off the list based on a questionable genetics study by Rob Roy Ramey.

- Final designation of Preble's meadow jumping mouse critical habitat.

- Petition to consider listing the white-tailed prairie dog. Field staff found information in the petition was substantial and warranted further review of the species status; Macdonald revised the report to be a "not substantial" finding and short-circuited the review.

- Final designation of Southwestern Willow Flycatcher critical habitat.

Fish and Wildlife Service employees complained that MacDonald "bullied, insulted and harassed the professional staff," according to the Interior report. A survey by the Union of Concerned Scientists of 450 Fish and Wildlife Service scientists found that two-thirds said they knew about cases in which political appointees interfered with scientific reports and decisions. Eighty-four said they themselves had had to remove or change information from scientific documents.

MacDonald evidently took part in another 200 species reviews and decisions, which should get the same kind of thorough review as the eight mentioned above. It's way past time to take the politics out of scientific decision-making; the reviews by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and members of Congress are first steps in that direction.

—*Information courtesy the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Christian Science Monitor.*

You are invited...

**ASGD Fall Members Dinner
with special guest speakers,
Cathy & Gordon Illg**

"A Year in the Life of a Nature Photographer"

Friday, October 19, 2007

6:30pm

(doors open at 6pm)

at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church

1401 East Dry Creek Road, Centennial

Located between Broadway and University on Dry Creek.

Cathy and Gordon Illg are freelance photographers specializing in nature and outdoor recreation. For more than 20 years, they have been searching out North America's most outstanding locations for both scenic and wildlife photography, even going so far as to be marooned on a deserted tropical island. And, they love to share adventure stories and tips!

Their work has appeared in Audubon Calendars, *Backpacker*, *Birder's World*, *Defenders*, *Islands*, *Men's Journal*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *National/International Wildlife*, *Natural History*, *Ranger Rick* and Sierra Club Calendars. Their wildlife images even decorate the tails of several of Frontier Airlines' jets.

The Illgs will also have copies of their book *Dynamic Wildlife Photography* on sale for a discounted price.

Reservations are required and space is limited. Dinner & Program: \$35 per Friends member; \$40 per non-member

For more information, call 303-973-9530 or email info@denveraudubon.com.



Eagle Eye

Watching Public Policy for the Environment
by Polly Reetz

The Board of the National Audubon Society, impelled by projected impacts on bird and other wildlife populations as well as on native ecosystems in general (coastal wetlands, for example), decided at the end of last year to make global warming a top priority issue for the organization. ASGD's Conservation Committee has been looking at ways to carry that priority forward, and to empower individuals to reduce our carbon footprint. While you may think, after watching "An Inconvenient Truth" or reading any of the many articles that have recently addressed global warming, that you can do little, that's not true! Here, for Audubon members, are suggestions for some positive action.

1. Change a light bulb. Replacing one incandescent light bulb with a compact fluorescent (CFL) saves 500 pounds of coal over the life span of the CFL bulb and avoids some 1,430 pounds of carbon dioxide pollution. If every U.S. family replaced one regular light bulb with a CFL it would eliminate 90 billion pounds of greenhouse gases, the same as taking 7.5 million cars off the road. Look for sales on Energy Star-rated CFLs—they are reasonably priced. Even better: Look for sales on light-emitting diode (LED) bulbs. They use about 90% less energy than a standard incandescent and are now widely available. Though they cost a bit more, LEDs are expected to last upwards of 10 years. Department of Energy estimates say LEDs could cut national energy consumption for lighting by as much as 29% by 2025. Furthermore, there is no mercury contained in these bulbs.

2. Think before you drive. Consider driving less by taking public transportation, walking, bicycling or carpooling. If you leave your car home two days a week, you would reduce your CO² by 1,590 pounds/year. When you need to buy a new car, get the most energy efficient and least-polluting car you can find/afford. Also, make sure to keep your tires inflated and your car tuned up. These can increase gas mileage by three percent. Use cruise control on highways and drive steadily and consistently in town. Doing so can lower your auto emissions by 25%.

3. Buy energy-efficient appliances. New refrigerators use about 50% less energy than those made just 10-15 years ago, and refrigerators account for 10-15% of total home energy consumption. When you buy a new one, look for the Energy Star label to make sure you are getting a high-efficiency model. If you keep your old one, try to clean the condenser coil regularly and keep the thermostat set to the recommended temperature.

4. Watch your water use. Here in Colorado we are well-educated about water conservation, but you can also reduce your energy consumption and CO² emissions by reducing water use. You can cut CO² by 350 pounds/year by using low-flow showerheads. Wash clothes in cold or warm water rather than hot. This can reduce CO² by 500 pounds/year. Run your dishwasher only when full and use the air dry option to reduce energy use. When you have to replace your washing machine

choose a new high-efficiency front-loader if possible.

5. Protect and restore habitat. Work with Audubon and other organizations to protect Important Bird Areas, like the Pawnee Grasslands, Barr Lake, or Chatfield State Park. There are some four dozen IBAs in Colorado. Join a local IBA support group and work to protect local habitat, to ensure birds and other wildlife have habitat available as the temperature rises. Support county open space initiatives and purchases.

6. Help change policies. The first thing is to stay informed. Go to sources you trust, like Audubon, National Wildlife Federation and Union of Concerned Scientists. Such groups have activist systems for updates when important state or federal issues come up. Visit and write your elected representatives and support candidates who care about global warming and our impact on the planet. Sign up for ASGD's listserv so you can have an impact on Colorado's energy, wildlife and water policies.

We need to reduce CO² emissions by 80% by 2050. Legislation we need to pass to achieve this goal includes: 1) Requiring higher vehicle fuel efficiency—an average of 35 mpg by 2020 is a good start. The U.S. House voted to include such a standard in one of its energy bills recently. 2) Setting a goal for electrical utilities to produce 20% of their electricity from renewable sources by 2020 (known as the RES or Renewable Electricity Standard). This has been done in Colorado, but not at the national level. 3) Investing in improved mass transit systems. 4) Requiring new technologies to capture, condense and store carbon emissions from power plants and industrial sources. We will have more information on global warming in future issues of *The Warbler*. Stay tuned!

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– FIELD TRIPS –

– SPECIAL EVENT –

ASGD Fall Photography and Adventure Workshop at JE Canyon Ranch

DATES: Friday, Oct. 19, 4 p.m. to Sunday, Oct. 21, 1 p.m.
LEADERS: Wendy Shattil & Bob Rozinski 303-721-1991
wendy@dancingpelican.com)

Pre-registration IS required;
call the ASGD office at 303-973-9530. Limit 10!

FEE: \$ 750 (Includes instruction, accommodations, all meals, and transportation around the ranch in Suburbans.)

MEETING PLACE: Ranch headquarters, 25 or so miles east of Trinidad (Detailed directions upon registration.)

DESCRIPTION: Join well-known wildlife photographers Bob and Wendy for the first workshop granted access to the 50,000-acre JE Canyon Ranch with its incomparable scenery, history, and mystery. This photographic workshop will explore a little-known but rich landscape in the Purgatoire River Canyon east of Trinidad, CO. Vast and intimate landscapes, century-old homesteads, and a working cattle ranch provide endless subjects for exploration. Wendy and Bob have photographed the spectacular red-rock canyons, a series of unusual seep springs, and picturesque stone buildings at the Ranch, and will guide our limited group to explore this special area.

Each day we will offer individualized instruction. With the advent of the digital age, we'll have on-the-spot ability to download images for viewing either on computer or via projection. We accommodate all levels of photographic expertise, from casual point-and-shoot to serious photographers. Rarely do you have the opportunity to attend a workshop that is truly an adventure. You will be an explorer discovering an unknown land.

Sumptuous meals and excellent accommodations await workshop participants, along with the incomparable expertise of Bob and Wendy. The rancher and Bob and Wendy offer this exclusive workshop to Denver Audubon as a unique chance to explore the wildlife and landscapes of this private ranch.

MEETING PLACE: Audubon Center at Chatfield. The Audubon Center is located on Waterton Road, 4.4 miles south of C-470 and Wadsworth.

DESCRIPTION: We will hike along the South Platte River and look for fall migrants and winter arrivals. We always have a surprise. Dress in layers for the weather. Bring binoculars, field guides, water, and a snack. We can lend you binoculars and field guides if you don't have them. Wear long pants because the poison ivy is lush and the knapweed is prickly.

Roxborough State Park Bird Hike

DATE: Sunday, September 16 8 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

LEADER: Doris Cruze, 303-798-8072

Pre-registration IS required;
call the ASGD office at 303-973-9530.

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

MEETING PLACE: Visitor's Center, Roxborough State Park. State parks pass required.

DESCRIPTION: Hike spectacular trails through the red rocks formations for two miles. Look for Golden Eagles as well as local foothills and scrub oak birds such as scrub-jays, towhees, and chickadees. If you like, bring lunch to eat on the patio, as well as binoculars and water.

Cherry Creek Reservoir

DATE: Saturday, October 6 8 a.m.- noon

LEADER: Karen von Saltza, 303-368-9961

Pre-registration is required;
call the ASGD office at 303-973-9530.

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

MEETING PLACE: Marina, Cherry Creek State Park. State parks pass required.

DESCRIPTION: This is a good time to see migrating shore birds: Horned and Eared Grebes, Common Loons, Franklin and other gulls. After scoping the reservoir, we will carpool to other areas in the park to check for migrating song birds. Bring water, a snack and binoculars. Trip leader will carry a scope. Beginners are welcome. The trip ends back at the Marina.

Walk the Wetlands

DATES: Sunday, September 2, 8 a.m.
Sunday, October 7, 9 a.m. (note later hour)

LEADERS: Hugh & Urling Kingery (303-814-2723),
Doris Cruze, and other Master Birders

Pre-registration NOT required;

FEE: None



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– FIELD TRIPS –

South Platte Park Bird Hike

DATE: Saturday, October 13, 8 a.m.-noon

LEADER: Doris Cruze, 303-798-8072

Pre-registration is required;

call the ASGD office at 303-973-9530.

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

MEETING PLACE: Carson Nature Center, South Platte Park (west on Mineral from Santa Fe; right at 1st traffic light; between 2 RTD parking lots.) Meet in parking lot north of 2-story log building.

DESCRIPTION: Join ASGD president Doris Cruze to explore this amazingly rich habitat along the South Platte River. This will be an easy hike and is wheelchair accessible. You'll see water birds as well as a variety of land birds in the cottonwood groves. Bring binoculars and water.

The Big Sit! at Chatfield State Park with the Denver Field Ornithologists

DATE: Sunday, Oct. 14 Dawn to dusk—
come any time

LEADER: Joey Kellner, 303-978-1748

Pre-registration NOT required.

FEE: None

MEETING PLACE: Heron Overlook, Chatfield State Park. From the Wadsworth Blvd. entrance, go right at the T and continue around the reservoir. A half-mile after you cross the South Platte River, make a hard left into a large parking lot. At the far right corner, a trail leads to the Heron Overlook.

DESCRIPTION: The Big Sit!, an international birding event, has exacting, loose, and frivolous standards. Big Sitters! count all the birds they see or hear from within a circle with a 17-foot diameter. Counting Sitters! may send out scouts and beaters to find other birds and identify them, as long as a Sitter! sees the bird from within the circle. All around the world, on this date, people will Big Sit!

Come and join Joey Kellner, and other recruits, for an hour, a morning, or all day. Drop by whenever you like or volunteer to substitute Big Sit! for the leaders for an hour or two. Joey maintains an hourly chart of the birds that Sitters! see from the circle. In the past two years he has tallied 55-65 species. Bring chairs, breakfast, lunch, dinner, picnics, coffees, etc. Also bring binoculars, scopes, field guides, and other essential birding equipment.

Intermediate to Advanced Bird Identification

DATES: Monday, Oct. 29, 7-9 p.m.

Monday, Nov. 5, 7-9 p.m.

LEADER: Tina Jones, 303-794-2647

Pre-registration is required;

call the ASGD office at 303-973-9530.

FEE: \$20/Friends member, \$25/non-member

MEETING PLACE: ASGD Office (At the main entrance to Chatfield State Park off Wadsworth, tell attendant you are going to the Audubon office. Proceed past the gate to the stop sign. Turn left and drive about one mile. Just after Massey Draw Picnic Area [on your right], turn left onto the service road and drive through the orange gates. At the next intersection, turn right. The classroom is on the main floor of the second brick house on the right.)

DESCRIPTION: Have you found yourself giving up on identifying certain birds? Bird I.D. can be challenging and tough at times. In this class you'll learn certain tools of the birders' trade. Some of the birds we will deal with: Greater vs. Lesser Scaup; Common Goldeneye vs. Barrow's Goldeneye; winter-plumaged Dunlin vs. winter Stilt Sandpiper; Short-billed vs. Long-billed Dowitcher; winter-plumaged Forster's, Common, and Arctic Terns; the phalaropes; House Finch vs. Purple Finch; Pacific coast Swainson's Thrush vs. Veery; and Western vs. Cassin's Kingbird. The difficult birds in the Flycatcher family and Hummingbird family will be tackled along with Brewer's and Rusty Blackbirds. This class is open for all levels of birding.

FALL COUNT SCHEDULE 2007

Denver has conducted Fall Bird Counts for over 20 years. Denver Field Ornithologists and ASGD sponsor this tradition. No fees, but some sites require a state parks pass or pre-registration. Bring binoculars, scopes for the reservoir counts, field guide, and lunch. Everyone welcome to help—more eyes see more birds.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 8

BEAR CREEK LAKE PARK & MARSTON LAKE

LEADER: Mike Henwood, 303-716-8551

MEET AT 6:30 a.m. at northwest corner of Hampden (US 285) and S. Sheridan Blvd., in front of Albertson's. Please call leader if you plan to go.

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– FIELD TRIPS –

WATERTON, DOWNSTREAM. 4-5 mile hike. Wear long pants (not shorts) due to bare-leg-unfriendly plants such as poison ivy, thistles, and knapweed.

LEADER: Hugh Kingery, 303-814-2723

MEET AT 6:30 a.m. at the Discovery Pavilion by Lockheed Martin (left turn immediately after turning onto Waterton Rd from Wadsworth Blvd., and before the DOW parking lot for Waterton Canyon).

CHERRY CREEK RESERVOIR

LEADER: Bob Brown, 303-791-6204

MEET AT 7 a.m. at Marina, inside west gate near Cherry Creek High School. State Parks Pass required.

CHATFIELD STATE PARK

LEADER: Joey Kellner, 303-978-1748.

MEET AT 6:30 a.m. at West (Deer Creek) entrance to park. State Parks Pass required.

BARR LAKE PERIPHERY. This trip does not involve much walking and will be good for people with limited mobility or stamina.

LEADER: Jackie King, 303-287-1644.

MEET AT 7 a.m. at entrance gate to Barr Lake State Park.

BARR LAKE STATE PARK. This is a 10-mile, all-day hike around the lake.

LEADER: Dick Schottler, 303-278-8035.

MEET AT 6:30 a.m. at Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 14500 Lark Bunting Lane. South off Bromley Lane; from I-76, first road east of railroad track. State Parks pass required.

SUNDAY SEPT. 9

CASTLEWOOD CANYON STATE PARK

LEADER: Randy Lentz, 303-680-3381.

MEET AT 6:30 a.m. at the Homestead. From CO 86, 0.5 miles west of Franktown, turn south on Castlewood Canyon Road, go two miles to old entrance; Homestead is first parking lot on the left. State Parks pass required.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARSENAL.

LEADER: Urling Kingery, 303-814-2723.

Call leader to sign up, before Aug. 23



Scientific & Cultural
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– TRAVEL –

Costa Rica—The Atlantic Side and Spring Raptor Migration

March 2008 (9 Nights/10 Days)

Join the Audubon Society of Greater Denver on a special trip to the Atlantic side of Costa Rica this March. This will be an opportunity to see a number of species not found in other parts of the country. We will stop in the central mountains on our way east for some quality birding on a private reserve dedicated to habitat improvement. Then it is off to the lowland forest and the famous OTS La Selva research station, which has recorded over 500 species of birds as well as numerous mammals, reptiles and amphibians. While here, we will bird at the Neotropical Center, another private research facility. We then continue on to the Atlantic coast and Selva Bananito. This is a private farm and rainforest reserve that contains both primary forest and secondary forest. Birding here is fantastic!



One of the many sights you are likely to see on the Costa Rica trip - a Jabiru on nest.

As a special treat, we should be arriving at the beginning of the spring raptor migration. This is one of the best kept secrets in the entire birding world! Every year millions of raptors from North America fly south in the fall to wintering grounds in South America. In the spring, these birds return north to their breeding grounds in the U.S. and Canada. Species include Swainson's Hawks, Turkey Vultures and, to a lesser extent, Ospreys, Swallow-tailed Kites and several others. Also common in the migration is the Broad-winged Hawk from Latin America. On a good day, one can see thousands of these birds moving overhead! The spectacle has been described as a ribbon of birds filtering through the sky. This is a migration involving millions of wild birds spread out over great distances. While this phenomenon has occurred for millennia, it is virtually unknown in the birding world.

Price of \$2,195 includes meals, park admissions, guide costs and gratuities, double-occupancy lodging; add \$50 for non-ASGD Friends member. Not included are airfare from Denver to San Jose (currently approximately \$700), Costa Rican airport departure tax, and alcoholic beverages. Travel insurance is strongly recommended. For more info contact Becky Beckers at 303-766-5266 or email AgentBecky@aol.com. To view complete itinerary, go to www.TravelForTheBirds.com.

See TRAVEL continued on page 10

Global Warming and Birds continued from page 1

Imperiled species with limited habitat or small gene pools may also not be able to adapt quickly enough to avoid extinction. Coastal and polar species will be vulnerable as coastlines advance inland and ice melts. Rising sea levels will jeopardize the threatened Western Snowy Plover and other shorebirds. More frequent and severe droughts in the central U.S. are likely to cause prairie pothole wetlands to dry up, jeopardizing millions of waterfowl during breeding season. The current projected loss of neotropical migrant songbirds is very high: 53% in the Great Lakes region, 45% loss in the Mid-Atlantic, 44% loss in the northern Great Plains, and 32% fewer in the Pacific Northwest.

Why Can't Birds Adapt to Global Warming?

The change is simply too fast for many species to adapt. The rate of temperature increase over the next century will be 10 times faster than the rate of increase since the last Ice Age. Species are now also constrained by urban and industrial development, large-scale agriculture, and habitat fragmentation. For instance, the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker in the southeastern U.S. depends on mature pine forest, a habitat type that cannot spread to new areas quickly.

Why is Loss of Bird Species Important for People?

Birds have great economic and personal value to people. One-third of all human food comes from plants that are pollinated by birds, butterflies, and other wild pollinators. Birds also disperse seeds and help to control rodents, insects, and other pests that would otherwise devastate crops, forests, and

ecosystems. In the western U.S., Savannah Sparrows, Sage Thrashers, egrets, and other birds help control grasshopper populations that would otherwise destroy many crops. In the eastern U.S., nesting wood warblers consume 84% of spruce budworms that would otherwise decimate forests.

More than 80 million Americans observe, fish, hunt, and otherwise enjoy birds and other wildlife. Together, they support more than 2.6 million U.S. jobs. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, America's 46 million birders spend \$32 billion annually, generating \$85 billion in overall economic output and \$13 billion in state and federal income taxes.

Many states risk losing their state birds. These include Brown Thrasher in Georgia, American Goldfinch in Iowa and Washington, Baltimore Oriole in Maryland, Black-capped Chickadee in Massachusetts, Purple Finch in New Hampshire, and California Quail in California. In-state populations of Colorado's own Lark Bunting have declined 64 percent in the last 40 years. These losses would be more than symbolic.

—adapted from a National Audubon Society Public Policy Fact Sheet

Sign up for Audubon's E-Activist list at www.audubonaction.org/audubon and send a letter to Congress here: www.audubonaction.org/campaign/global_warming

Go active locally:

ASGD Conservation Committee Meetings

Tuesday, September 18 7 p.m.

Tuesday, November 20 7 p.m.

Wild Oats at University & Orchard, Littleton



Photo by Hugh Kingery

Lark Buntings, like this male feeding his young, have declined by almost two-thirds in population in Colorado. The decline may be related to climate change.

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backyard birds....

by Hugh Kingery



WATCHING THE HUMMINGBIRDS of summer intrigues us. In our yard, two male Broad-tails vie for the feeders with acrobatic flights, aggressive demeanor, and temporal success. I wonder if the effort expended translates into anything beneficial. Unlike many, we didn't see a Rufous until late July, which suited us just fine. Now we have two—an adult male and an immature—both of which the Broad-tails dominate, atypical. Somebody speculated on CO-birds (birders' email chat group) that early-arriving Rufous don't dominate the Broad-tails; the later, maybe older, ones do. Karen Metz saw one of the first area Rufous, June 30 at her Franktown feeder, a week or two earlier than usual. She observes, "They typically seem timed to when the *Monarda*/bee balm blossoms open; those flowers are also a bit early." Randy Nelson, in Parker, saw his first one July 3, for only a day. His daily visitors include one female and two male Broad-tails and a male Black-chinned. Buzz and Shirley Bowers, also in Franktown, experienced "more hummingbird activity this summer than usual. That includes one male Rufous, who didn't stay past July 12." In her yard in Greenwood Village, Kate Frost has a hummingbird nest—Broad-tailed presumably—plunked on the branch of an ash tree.

RICK AND JUDY CRESWELL REPORTED that while swimming in their pool, "I saw a House Sparrow do that flutter up-and-down-with-beak-open in front of a Common Grackle, who then disgorged a meal into the sparrow's gullet. I saw the same kind of behavior in Boulder waiting for Antony and Cleopatra outside the open-air theater. This time the House Sparrow did its flutter routine in front of an American Robin who promptly obliged it with dinner. Do House Sparrows have an inside-the-mouth look that stays red and infantile so they can get this free food?" I haven't heard of this before. I suppose House Sparrows' nervy disposition may lead them to beg from likely soft touches, and that begging posture apparently strokes an innate instinct in other species.

ON GREEN MOUNTAIN, Nan Brehmer has "had too many Mourning Doves this year—sometimes a dozen at one time. After the wet spell, when the sun appeared, several doves literally 'hung themselves out to dry' by sitting on the top of the wall with their wings open and hanging over the edge." Sounds like mini-cormorants.

FROM LITTLETON on June 15, Doris Cruze sent "some big news. I have three screech-owl babies in my backyard nightly. Harold and Betty Oliver came over last evening just before dark and we watched the adult bird feeding them! They usually show up on the clothesline poles or on the wires which run along my back fence at just about dark or around 8 p.m. This is the second year the screech-owls have shown up with babies in my yard. I am scouting the big cottonwood trees on the canal for their home, but no luck."

THE MORNING OF JULY 19 in Roxborough, Jill Holden "had the second Lazuli Bunting (the first was probably a couple of years ago) that I have seen visit my feeder. He perched close to the feeder, but there was too much House Finch activity and, chased by a House

Finch, he took off. I hope it won't take another couple of years for one to try again."

RUTH SCHOENING DESCRIBED a mystery flicker. "I think it is a young male because of the red sideburns. But do they have the red crescent on the back of their neck like the yellow-shafted flicker?" Answer: hybrids do. Our red-shafted and the eastern yellow-shafted hybridize widely from the foothills to Kansas. Ann Bonnell opines that the Denver-area probably doesn't have any true red-shafted flickers. Urling and I saw a flicker like Ruth's last year for a couple of months, and you can see lots of other combinations of sideburns (I like Ruth's word; bird books call them whiskers, much less accurate), neck crescents, face color, cap color, and wing-and-tail color.

CEDAR WAXWINGS seem prominent this summer. In Wheat Ridge, Patty Echelmeyer saw flocks briefly in March and May, and Patti Locke saw a flock "for 10 minutes in our snow crab tree." Fleeting pairs and flocks moved through our yard in June, and we see them on most Walk-the-Wetlands trips during the summer. Patti mentions that "most of a 100-year plus tree [on her West-Slope farm] blew down, and when the tree company came to remove the remains, there was a Great Horned Owl nest in the hollow top of the trunk 15-20 feet up. The tree company left that much of the trunk standing and the owls hatched and have been sitting at the top edge. We were intentionally leaving the trunk because we knew the owls liked to sit up in the tree, but we left an extra six feet after the nest was discovered." Along those lines, Urling and I issued a strange order to our jack-of-all-trades, Don Wedow. Ten years ago when we bought our home in Franktown, 20 aspens graced the premises. All died within eight years, and only one tall skeleton remains. We have counted at least 20 birds that perch in the tree, from hummingbirds to hawks, and we regard it as an important part of our birding landscape. Fearful that it will topple like the other dead aspens, we sought a way to stabilize the tree so that it stays available. Don's solution: dig a hole, line it with concrete, cut the aspen at the base, and move the aspen to a new home (about 10 feet away). He hopes to work on it this weekend. We'll see what happens.

BILL AND SUZANNE WUERTHELE, in Park Hill, hosted a Carolina Wren during June. "It actively sings mornings and evenings from tall trees along Glencoe (and occasionally visits the bird bath). Suzanne first heard it singing while she was waiting for the bus one morning. Several neighbors have asked, 'what's that bird that's been singing every morning?'" They've seen Carolinas twice previously, and a pair nested in Englewood in the late 1980's, Colorado's only nesting record. Bill and Suzanne promised to look around the neighborhood.

WHILE FOLK-DANCING at the Washington Park boat-house, Polly Reetz heard about a "nestful of swallows" in the women's restroom. On June 21, Polly found a "Barn Swallow nest high on the wall with three juvenile birds peering down at me. They looked ready to fledge—their heads and tails were sticking well out of the nest. On June 28, the three young birds had left the nest but were roosting on the water

See Backyard Birds continued on page 10

TRAVEL continued from page 7

Alaska's Gold Rush Inside Passage on Cruise West – Seattle to Juneau

May 2008 (10 nights/11 days aboard the 138-guest Spirit of Yorktown)

Join Audubon Society of Greater Denver on this Inside Passage voyage between Seattle and Juneau, following the original route taken by stampedeers of the Klondike Gold Rush. We will visit the charming ports and scenic waterways largely unchanged from the gold rushers' era. From dense, forested shores to secluded fjords to immense glaciers and unspoiled waterways, the entire length of the Inside Passage is a paradise for wildlife lovers—mountain goats, sea otters, moose, wolves, puffins, auklets, murrets and Bald Eagles may be seen. To protect its fragile wilderness, few vessels are permitted to sail into stunning Glacier Bay. Let Cruise West's small ships show it to you the way it should be seen: up-close, leaving nothing behind but our small wake. Bear sightings are particularly exciting! Black bears can be



Keep an eye out for migrating whales on the exciting Alaska Inside Passage cruise.

seen from early spring as they wake and feed with their newly born cubs. Tracy Arm and Glacier Bay are perfect for our small ship to nudge close to shore and view these magnificent beasts in their natural surroundings. A National Park Service ranger and a Native Cultural Interpreter offer insightful narration and help you spot wildlife such as harbor seals, mountain goats, migrating seabirds, and, of course, bears. Humpback whales abound in Frederick Sound and orcas in the Strait of Georgia.

Group pricing per person, double-occupancy cabins start at \$4,027 for Quynan members and \$4,213 for first-time Cruise West passengers; add \$50 for non-ASGD Friends member. Save up to \$400 per person off of brochure rates. Single-share roommate match available in some cabins. Add-on airfare available from Denver into Seattle and back from Juneau for \$800 per person. Cruise includes meals, gratuities and selected shore excursions at each port. Trip will be led by ASGD 2nd Vice President Ann Bonnell. For more info contact Becky

Beckers at 303-766-5266 or email AgentBecky@aol.com. To view complete itinerary, go to www.TravelForTheBirds.com

Backyard Birds continued from page 9

pipes that run along the wall. A week later they had gone, so I assume they fledged successfully."

AMERICAN KESTRELS fascinate Karen von Saltza, who for several years has watched nesting pairs from her condo in southeast Denver. This year, "Boy Blue fledged 13 June. He sort of floated down from the flicker box above my front door and landed on the steps. My dogs and I watched until he made his way to the hedge. Once he was well-hidden the dogs and I went outside and looked up. A second male was looking out of the box. 14 June – 2 male fledglings. Boy Two had fledged. 16 June – lots of noise from the flicker box where kestrels still roost at night. Finally a female nestling appeared at the hole; she fledged later that afternoon. All three youngsters make a lot of noise and have started to follow the adults in flight." One male fledgling fatally hit a neighbor's window. "This morning I watched 'Mom' kestrel fly out over the golf course followed by only two young. Dad flew over the house (easy to recognize as he is missing a tail feather) by himself. Since I don't know which male crashed, I renamed the surviving male fledgling Too Blue."

CAT ANDERSON took issue with my comment in the last *Warbler* that I hadn't heard of Swainson's Hawks nesting in metro Denver; for a couple of years she's described them nesting where she lives, but I maintain that she's more country than city, even though Cat doesn't agree. Anyway, she has two nesting pairs near her at the south end of Colorado Blvd., plus another, last year, terrorized people in an office building on Bellevue. This last pair attacked people going into the building entrance near the nest, so that everyone needed an umbrella in order to get in and out safely. Cat and Bruce Paton located three Bushtit nests; Bushtits have burgeoned in the metro area and Joy Schieving sees her usual passing flocks, about once a month. Mary Beth and Ed Twining, July

24-25, saw "a flock of small gray birds [that] swept into our yard, flitted about in our lilac/sumac/chokecherry thicket for a few minutes, and then disappeared." A family group coursed by our house, one feeding a fledgling as they tittered along; maybe they nested nearby.

JACK FERGUSON watched a Cooper's Hawk nesting in his neighbor's yard (Greenwood Village); it fledged on July 5 but couldn't fly very well, if at all. I guess that in this case, the youngster didn't fledge, but rather left the nest prematurely. Nan O'Neal Campbell reported a nesting pair of Cooper's at Hampden and University. A Cooper's calls on Cat's feeder daily; it likes Mourning Doves, but on July 6 it took a Blue Jay.

URLING AND I ANSWER WILDLIFE QUESTIONS for people who call Audubon, but the one that Jean Lowry posed on June 18 topped the list of puzzling bird behavior. Jean and her Highlands Ranch neighbor have a crow problem. The crows eat the rubber on their windshield wipers and the rubber gaskets around the windshield itself. (Until she saw this happen, she had blamed the car dealer for poor quality.) I couldn't explain the cause so I sent her to Tony Leukering, who has particularly good insights to bird behavior. Meanwhile, Jean planned to spend the next day cleaning out her garage to accommodate the car.

TEN "ALPINE TUNDRA" STAMPS, featuring wildlife of Rocky Mountain National Park, are issued August 28. The stamps show a rosy-finch, ptarmigan, Golden Eagle, pika, marmot, bighorn sheep, Colorado alpine butterfly, and tundra flowers, with a backdrop of the view from Trail Ridge. You can call 800-782-6724 and order them.

I WELCOME YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS to this column. Drop me a note or post card at P.O. Box 584, Franktown 80116, or email me, ouzels8@aol.com (Note: new address).

– DATES TO REMEMBER –

ASGD Public Programs

Continued from page 1

“GOING BATTY!” with Rick Adams cont'd.

Northern Colorado, will present on Colorado bats, regional diversity and their habits. Following the talk, join Rick at Blackbird Pond to watch and listen for bats. Rick will also be setting mist nets and will hopefully be able to capture live bats for us to see!

Saturday, September 15 6:30 p.m.

Fireside Program by ASGD (Audubon Center at Chatfield. \$6/adult Friends member, \$4/18 & under Friend, \$8/adult non-member, \$5/18 & under non-member, free/under 5)

Call ASGD at 303-973-9530 for guaranteed tickets.

RAPTOR SUMMIT—featuring four live raptors—an owl, hawk, falcon, and eagle (presented by Raptor Education Foundation). Get up close and personal with America's raptors, plus get some great photo opportunities.

Sunday, September 16 8 a.m.

Field Trip: Roxborough State Park Bird Hike

Pre-registration required; call ASGD at 303-973-9530

Wednesday, October 3 7 p.m.

ASGD Monthly Educational Lecture & Members Meeting (REI Flagship Store, 1416 Platte St. in downtown Denver; just off I-25 near Invesco Field at Mile High. Open to all; we'll pass the hat for donations and encourage non-members to become ASGD Friends.)

“A BIRD HORROR STORY: BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS”

with Alex Cruz

Ever wonder why Brown-headed Cowbirds do the things they do? How come they have such a bad reputation with birders? Come learn answers to these and other cowbird questions from Dr. Alexander Cruz, professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Colorado at Boulder.

Saturday, October 6 8 a.m.

Field Trip: Cherry Creek Reservoir

Pre-registration required; call ASGD at 303-973-9530

Sunday, October 7 9 a.m.

Field Trip: Walk the Wetlands (Audubon Center at Chatfield. Free and open to all.)

Saturday, October 13 8 a.m.

Field Trip: South Platte Park Bird Hike

Pre-registration required; call ASGD at 303-973-9530

Saturday, October 13 6:30 p.m.

Fireside Program by ASGD (Audubon Center at Chatfield. \$6/adult Friends member, \$4/18 & under Friend, \$8/adult non-member, \$5/18 & under non-member, free/under 5)

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT—Join us around the fireplace in the Audubon Center for an evening of stories, crafts and games about those spooky, mysterious creatures of the night. We'll explore myths and facts surrounding owls, bats, spiders and other critters that call Chatfield home. Great non-scary family event in anticipation of Halloween.

Saturday, October 14 All day

Field Trip: The Big Sit! at Chatfield State Park

Pre-registration NOT required

Friday, October 19 6:30 p.m.

ASGD Annual Members Dinner (St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 1401 E. Dry Creek Rd., Centennial; located between Broadway and University on Dry Creek. Open to all; dinner & program: \$35 per Friend member, \$40 per non-member.)

“A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER”

with Cathy and Gordon Illg

You've likely seen the Illg's work in such places as Birder's World, National Geographic, and on the tails of Frontier Airlines' jets!

Mondays, Oct. 29 & November 5 7 p.m.

Class: Intermediate to Advanced Bird Identification

Pre-registration required; call ASGD at 303-973-9530

Wednesday, November 7 7 p.m.

ASGD Monthly Educational Lecture & Members Meeting (REI Flagship Store. Open to all; we'll pass the hat for donations and encourage non-members to become ASGD Friends.)

COLORADO'S WHITE-TAILED PTARMIGAN: Ghosts of the Alpine Tundra *with Joyce Gellhorn*

White-tailed ptarmigan, camouflaged to blend into their surroundings, are the only birds capable of survival in alpine environments throughout the year. The program, given by Dr. Joyce Gellhorn, author, teacher and biological consultant, takes a look at the unique adaptations of ptarmigan for living under these conditions. Because this species lives on the edge, it may serve as a barometer to the health of our planet in terms of global warming and preservation of habitats.



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**See inside on page 5 for more details.
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