

Bird-a-thon 2005

Join the fun to raise funds and friends for Audubon Society of Greater Denver

by Sandy Elliott, ASGD Development & Community Relations Coordinator

May is Bird-a-thon month and Americans love to bird watch! In 2002 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published *Birding in the U.S.: A Demographic and Economic Analysis*. The report said that 46 million Americans call themselves birdwatchers. That's one in five! Many of those watched birds around their home and tried to identify them, while others traveled at least a mile from their home to observe birds. True to the stereotype, the average age of American bird watchers is 49 years old and 54 percent are women.

All those bird watchers—both backyard birders and travelers—can raise money for ASGD during May by participating in Bird-a-thon. It works like a walk-a-thon. Participants ask for pledges from friends and family for every species they see (or they could accept a flat donation) either on their own during May or

on May 21 at 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. on a Bird-a-thon hike with ASGD at the Audubon Center at Chatfield. Bird-a-thon is a perfect activity for families, neighbors or kids groups. It's fun, easy and educational.

And there are prizes and a party. On June 4, at 6 p.m., ASGD will host a dinner and night hike at the nature center. The grand prize this year is a free spot on the Point Pelee field trip in 2006. The grand prize goes to the person that collects the most money. Other prizes will be presented for the most species seen and for the rarest species spotted.

All donations collected in Denver support grassroots projects of the Audubon Society of Greater Denver including environmental education and advocacy. Call the office at 303-973-9530 email to info@denveraudubon.org for a Bird-a-thon pledge form. Happy and profitable birding to you!

BIRD-A-THON 2005

**– Grand Prize –
A FREE SPOT ON THE
POINT PELEE FIELD TRIP!**

*Just by bringing in
the most money.*

**Also prizes for the
most species seen and the
rarest species spotted.**

When and Where

ALL OF MAY—Sign up pledges. Look for birds in your own backyard or anywhere else!

MAY 21, 7 A.M. OR 9 A.M.—Take part in Bird-a-thon hikes at the Audubon Center at Chatfield

JUNE 4, 6 P.M.—Dinner, prizes, night hike for Bird-a-thon participants at the Audubon Center at Chatfield

How Does It Work?

It works like a walk-a-thon—Ask friends, family or neighbors to sponsor you. Ask sponsors for any amount (like \$1) for every bird species you see. Or accept a flat donation for your participation, All it takes is a minimum of \$25 in pledges to participate.

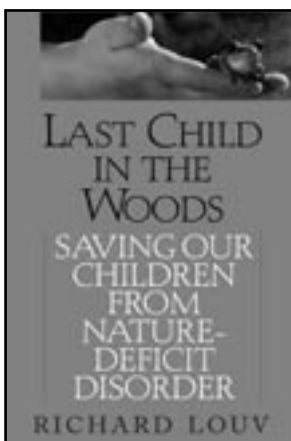
**GET INVOLVED TODAY
Call ASGD at 303-973-9530**

Richard Louv reading, June 16

Author Richard Louv reads from *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficient Disorder*

by Sandy Elliott, ASGD Development & Community Relations Coordinator

ASGD teams up with the Denver Woman's Press Club to host Richard Louv, author of the popular new book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficient Disorder*. ASGD Friends members will receive invitations to join with members of the DWPC on Thursday, June 16, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., at 1325 Logan Street in



Denver, to meet Louv.

In *Last Child in the Woods*, Louv explains how computers, television, video games, homework, structured schedules and parents fears work together to keep children inside, resulting in serious social, psychological, and spiritual implications. In *Last Child in the Woods* Louv talks with parents,

Richard Louv contd. on page 8

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

William Stark is a scientist who investigates, among other things, ultraviolet vision in fruit flies. Stark himself has hyper-sensory vision as a result of a childhood accident which cost him the lens in his left eye. In a normal human eye, ultraviolet light is filtered out by the lens. Stark and other UV-seeing people are able to see wavelengths on the electro-magnetic spectrum beyond the colors of the visible rainbow. Such vision is rare for people, but common in the animal world in butterflies, fish and some birds.

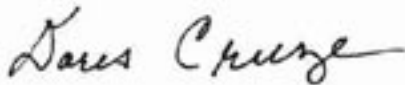
Stark and others who lack a lens in an eye see the world very differently. But, think about this. Don't we each have a unique view of the world? Don't we each bring a different perspective to any organization? Some see an opportunity to be of service. At Audubon Society of Greater Denver, these are our volunteers who help in the office and at the nature center with things like cleaning the classroom building, helping with seed sales, working in the gardens and building trails. Others give of their time writing articles, speaking to groups or conducting classes.

Some members see a chance to learn new things and to build on knowledge they already have. These are our volunteer naturalists, the learners in beginning birder classes, and many others.

To another group of volunteers, our organization is seen as an opportunity to socialize with others with similar interests. These are the members who join field trips and come to open house events, dinners and workshops.

Some volunteers have skills like computer know-how, while others are not so specialized but they bring skills and a can-do attitude that makes them valuable to the organization.

Few of us can claim Superman-like vision, but if we look, all of us can see worthwhile ways to volunteer at Audubon Society of Greater Denver.



Doris Cruze

Thank You!

APPLAUSE FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS

- Art Inspired by Nature: Courtney James, Jeanne McCune, Krista Redlinger
- Mar./Apr. Warbler Mailing: Jo Ann Bushnell, Billy L. Funk, Marcus L. Goodbody, Charlotte Gottlieb, Vi Nicholson, Carolyn Roark, Frank & Barbara Shissler
- Auction Invitation Mailing: Midge Ball, Mary Ann Brown, Willa Brunkhorst, Ben Cooper, Lynne Forrester, Billy Funk, Marc Goodbody, Ailene Herranen, Jeanne McCune, Carolyn Roark, Barb and Frank Shissler, Ann Stark
- Members to Members Appeal Mailing: Midge Ball, Mary Ann Brown, Willa Brunkhorst, JoAnn Bushnell, Ben Cooper, Kevin Corwin, Lynne Forrester, Billy Funk, Marc Goodbody, Fred Griest, Ailene Herranen, Doug Hodous, Jeanne McCune, Vi Nicholson, Carolyn Roark, Ruth Schoening, Barb and Frank Shissler, Ann Stark
- Office Support: JoAnn Bushnell, Courtney James, Carolyn Roark, Grace Weber
- Adopt-A-Platte Bird Count: Peter Mullholland, Joyce Quigley, Peggy Roberts, Ruth Schoening, Nell Swiers, Ralph and Emily Wiersma
- Bird Skin Preparation: Jeanette and Rebecca Duerksen



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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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TRAVEL, FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS

To Register for Trips & Classes Call the ASGD Office at 303.973.9530

Join FRIENDS of ASGD and Receive Discounts on Field Trips and Classes

View Photos and Read Reviews from Trip Participants in Our Trip Scrapbook Online at www.denveraudubon.org/scrapbook.htm



– FIELD TRIPS –

Dawn Chorus

DATE: Sunday, May 1st 8am

LEADERS: Harold and Betty Oliver

FOLLOWED BY

Walk the Wetlands

DATE: Sunday, May 1st 8am

DATE: Sunday, June 5th 8am

LEADERS: Hugh & Urling Kingery, 303-814-2723,
Bob Brown & Doris Cruze

Pre-Registration NOT required.

FEE: None

MEETING PLACE: Audubon Center parking lot. From C-470 & Wadsworth go south on Wadsworth 4.4 miles. Turn left onto Waterton Road. Immediately turn left into the first parking lot at the Audubon Center sign.

DESCRIPTION: Everyone welcome — Audubon members and visitors. Come in May at 7 a.m. to hear and see the Dawn Chorus. Then we will hike along the South Platte River looking for spring migrants and summer nesting birds. We can lend you binoculars and field guides. Bring water and snacks.

Pawnee Grasslands with Kevin Cook

DATES: Saturday, May 14 8am-4:30pm or

Saturday, June 4 8am-4:30pm

LEADERS: Kevin Cook

Pre-registration IS required.

FEE: \$30 per Friends member, Non-members \$35.

MEETING PLACE: Crow Valley Campground near Briggsdale. (Overnight camping may be available for those wishing to drive out on Friday.) Car pools from Denver will be arranged if requested.

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

Endangered Species Act –

SLIDE SHOW & DISCUSSION

DATE: Tuesday, May 17 at 7pm

LEADER: Michael J. Robinson with the Center for Biological Diversity

Pre-registration is NOT required.

FEE: None

MEETING PLACE: First Plymouth Congregational Church at 3501 So. Colorado Blvd., Englewood, CO 80113. From I-25 & Hampden, go west on Hampden to Colorado. The church is on the south side of Hampden.

DESCRIPTION: This special presentation will include:

- The history of predator extermination carried out by the federal government in the early 20th century;
- The history of habitat destruction assisted by the federal government;
- The ESA's predecessor laws passed in 1966 and 1969 and how they were too weak to save wildlife from extinction;
- President Nixon's Feb. 8, 1972 proposal for a stronger endangered species law, Congressional hearings on the proposal, and Nixon's signing of it on Dec. 28, 1973;
- What the Act says, how the Act works, what are the animals and plants that have benefited, and what ecosystems and habitats have been saved; and finally,
- The current attacks on the Act and the consequences if it is eviscerated.

Denver Audubon's conservation committee meeting will follow. Anyone interested is welcome to stay for the meeting and learn about conservation issues affecting the Denver-metro area.

Bluff Lake Nature Center

WHEN: Saturday, June 11 7 – 11 a.m.

LEADER: Mike Foster

Pre-registration is required

FEE: \$8/Friends and Members, \$10/non-members

MEETING PLACE: Bluff Lake Nature Center. Exit I70 at Havana St. and head south. The road bends left and becomes Moline St. Look for the entrance to Bluff Lake Nature Center on the left.

This wildlife area is in the Sand Creek Regional Greenway corridor near the former Stapleton Airport. See what cottonwood stream bottom and marsh birds have chosen this urban wild area for nesting. Birds will be singing, as well as feeding young. Bring binoculars, field guides, snacks, and water.

TRAVEL, FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS CONTD.

To Register for Trips & Classes Call the ASGD Office at 303.973.9530



Colorado Wildscapes Workshop

DATE: June 16, 2005 at 6:30pm

LEADER: Susan Tweit, Salida author of *Rocky Mountain Garden Survival Guide*, and contributor to *Colorado Wildscapes*

Pre-registration is required.

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

MEETING PLACE: Audubon Center at Chatfield

DESCRIPTION: Join us for an early preview of Colorado Wildscapes – a gardening guide that presents, in easy-to-do steps, backyard stewardship known as wildscaping – creating healthy, diverse habitats that feed, shelter and nurture wild creatures. The guide promotes:

- Planting for year-round interest and wildlife habitat diversity
- Conserving water supplies by choosing waterwise plant selections
- Creating a healthy yard – a refuge for people as well as wildlife – by reducing pesticide usage, thus protecting water supplies
- Selecting native plant species and removing invasive species.

Learn about, and become, Habitat Heroes – people throughout Colorado who are transforming their ordinary landscapes into wildscapes that support a diversity of wildlife. Colorado Wildscapes is really a program for optimists – gardeners for sure – who believe that the actions they do can have a positive impact on the world around them. Colorado Wildscapes will be available for sale, with proceeds benefiting Denver Audubon's program activities.

Special offer for the first five people that register: Bring digital photos of your yard. Susan will incorporate them into the workshop and offer design ideas and planting suggestions for your home habitat.

TRAVEL ADVENTURES

Hawks on the Wing— Fall Migration in Duluth, Minnesota

September 10- 17, 2005

A maximum of ten people will have the opportunity to spend a week birding in the beautiful Minnesota fall foliage near Lake Superior. We will be in Duluth during prime-time, as September bird migration brings over 100 species of hawk, shorebirds, waterfowl, passerines, and other birds to this area.

The centerpiece of this birding oasis is Hawk Ridge, in Duluth, a bird-watchers' paradise that has been rated one of the top five spots in the United States for viewing hawks. The migration there begins in mid-August and continues through mid-December. The "big days," when tens of thousands of broad-winged hawks fly over, generally occur from September 10 to 20.

Our week-long venture around the Duluth area will cover all the local migrant traps and funnels, such as Two Harbors and Stoney Point. We will also venture into the more boreal areas such as Sax-Zim Bog and Gunflint Trail. All types and species of bird are fair game at this point in fall migration in Duluth. Last year, during this time 25 species of warbler were

seen. If the weather cooperates (cloudy and foggy), a good fallout could occur.

The guides for this trip will be Nathan Pieplow and Allison Hilf. Nathan, our bird guide, is a popular trip leader for Colorado Field Ornithologists and is intimately familiar with the Duluth region. Allison, our travel guide, has made two trips to Duluth in the past six months and is happy to answer any questions you might have about this area.

The leaders will fly into Minneapolis on September 10. Trip participants have the option of flying into Minneapolis and driving with the leaders to Duluth; flying directly into Duluth; or driving to Duluth. Please call or e-mail Allison for more information (home) 303-369-2541; (cell) 303-888-5110; e-mail: ahilf@aol.com. Call ASGD (303) 973-9530 to reserve a spot, as trips have been filling up quickly.

Discover Trinidad and Tobago

October 27 – November 6, 2005 (11 days)

\$1995 per person (double) / \$2395 (single)

You will awaken on your first morning to the raucous noise of the crested oropendola and a host of other exotic sounds including the anvil-like chorus of the bearded bellbird. Birding from the veranda of the Asa Wright Lodge, a first-time visitor to the tropics will likely see 25 to 30 new species before breakfast!

Your observations will likely include channel-billed toucan, chestnut woodpecker, bay-headed, and silver-billed tanagers, along with tufted coquette, barred antshrike and green honeycreeper. Our stay in Trinidad will include exploring the rain-forested slopes of the Northern Range searching for swallow-tailed kite, ornate hawk-eagle, and bat falcon. You can also examine the fascinating world of leaf-cutter and army ants and take photographs of orchids and gorgeous butterflies.

Trips to coastal areas of the island will provide tide pool and mangrove habitats to explore. We will likely encounter pinneated bittern, azure gallinule, wattled jacana, green kingfisher and possibly red-bellied macaw. Lowland forest and grassland habitats will provide looks at red-breasted blackbird, southern lapwing, white-headed marsh tyrant, green-rumped parrotlets and squirrel cuckoo.

Two highlights of the Trinidad portion of this tour include visiting the beautiful riparian grotto located at the centre to view the breeding colony of the fascinating nocturnal oilbird; and a visit to the famous Caroni Marsh, a very specialized mangrove forest that provides a classic example of plant adaptation in this brackish water community. The Caroni is home to striated heron, white-cheeked pintail, pied water-tyrant and red-capped cardinal. Our visit to the Caroni will end with the spectacular flight of the scarlet ibis returning to their mangrove roosts at dusk, truly one of the world's most dramatic moments.

On Tobago you will stay at the charming Blue Waters

Trinidad and Tobago continued on page 8



Eagle Eye

Watching Public Policy for the Environment
by Polly Reetz

Despite a kayakers' victory in the courts — reported in the papers in mid-March — their cause hasn't fare so well down at the legislature. SB 62, which would severely limit water rights for recreational in-channel uses like kayak courses, passed the Senate, then headed to the House Agriculture Committee. In Committee, Reps. McKinley and Gallegos inexplicably switched their votes from "no" to "yes," thus allowing the bill to pass out of Committee and head for the House floor. Audubon Lobbyist Jen Boulton was pessimistic about the possibility of defeating this bill, as of this writing.

Why worry about what seems a purely recreational issue? The basic principle is that water **in** a stream supports all kinds of aquatic and terrestrial life; most of Colorado's wildlife spend some time in their life-cycle in the streamside, or riparian, areas. Our watercourses are extremely valuable songbird habitat, for example. Recreational in-channel diversions, as they are called, keep the water in the stream for use by kayakers, rafters, inner-tubers, etc. Agricultural and municipal entities want to take the water **out**, to use for homes, industry and crops. Most of Colorado's streams are over-appropriated (i.e. people have claims on them that total more than is in the stream) already. SB 62 would cap the amount of flow that a city could claim for its kayak runs, to the lesser of 350 cubic feet/second or the flows still unappropriated in that stream (which is 0). So basically SB 62 shuts down any future recreational in-stream use, and with it the hope of keeping some water in the stream, although claims for the water filed before Feb. 17, 2005, would get the minimum needed for "a reasonable recreational experience."

This is a classic conflict between "Old West" uses like agriculture and "New West" uses like recreation. Both are major economic engines for our state, but recreation has the advantage of preserving streams, vegetation and wildlife.

We did get a real water conservation bill at last, courtesy of Rep. Paul Weissman and Sen. Dan Grossman. It outlaws existing and future covenants requiring homeowners to plant bluegrass (Audubon chapters wrote this language), limits the hours the state can water in the summer, and allows state money — through the Colorado Water Conservation Board — to be used for conservation projects as well as construction. About time.

Meanwhile the bill to promote in-state river basin agreements, HB 1177, is moving along slowly. Audubon has wanted to add environmental direction for the state-wide negotiating committee, environmental direction to river basin committees, requirement of public hearings and inclusion of real environmental experts at both the state and river basin level. That has been done. As now written (Feb. 23), the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate get to appoint the environmen-

tal members of the statewide committee; if this happens next year, we should get some good representation. The bill sunsets in seven years unless renewed by the Legislature.

The Division of Wildlife's fee bill will have passed by the time you read this, complete with a \$200 fee for taking a wild peregrine and a \$10 fee for use of all state wildlife areas. It doesn't take effect until 2006, however, so in 2005 four falconers will get to take a wild peregrine for just \$20. This is transferring a public resource — peregrines — to a private entity — a falconer — despite all the public resources used to recover the species, and Audubon has objected to this many times over. (At the March Wildlife Commission meeting, it was pointed out that falconry is 4,000 years old. In return we pointed out that in those older times, people were horribly executed for disagreeing with their rulers — not everything was wonderful).

On the national scene—we lost the vote to keep drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge out of the Senate budget resolution, but the budget process is long and complicated and hopefully there will be opportunities to get that language out. The refuge's coastal plain, with its spectacular wildlife and scenery, should be preserved, not divided and degraded by a network of well pads, roads, pipelines and collection stations! This issue will be coming up again, so keep your pens (and computers and phones) handy to call your Congressional reps. If you haven't already joined the ASGD listserve, call the office at 303-973-9530 and ask to be put on it. As Molly Ivins says, politics can be just plain fun.

Discover the hidden world in your backyard!



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303-231-9252

Migration—Marvel, Mystery, Magic!

by Doris Cruze

The robin that suddenly appeared on the front lawn last month is always a welcome sight, a sure sign that spring is on the way. Birders know the bird has traveled far to get here, but even the most well-informed ornithologists have unanswered questions about bird migration.

In Colorado, migration is essentially north-south along the central flyway, one of four principal migration routes identified in North America. Seasonal migration enables birds to find breeding areas in northern latitudes in spring and summer when insects and other food sources are plentiful. By migrating, the birds move to areas with a more hospitable climate and avoid the stress of northern winters. Some birds migrate by moving to higher elevations during the relatively warm summer months, then retreating to lower elevations in the same region for the winter. Still other birds do not migrate at all, but are able to survive year-round in the same habitat. Each species has its own patterns of migration. The how and why of migration are still being explored as birders and scientists equipped with modern tools and technology continue to study migration.

Here are some facts about the marvel, mystery and just plain magic of bird migration:

- According to Mark Obmascik, writing in his book *The Big Year* even so learned a scholar as Aristotle was “stumped by swallows.” Aristotle believed swallows disappeared from ancient Greece in autumn because they hibernated in tree holes. It was not until the 1800’s that the work of Linneaus and Darwin helped people to embrace the concept of bird migration.
- The question of how birds find their way back to breeding grounds after wintering in warmer climes remains a mystery. How do birds find their way back to precise nesting sites? How do they navigate over thousands of miles? The short answer is, birds use a variety of cues such as stars, the sun, the Earth’s magnetic field and topography of the earth to guide them. The big question is how can a bird like a hummingbird with a brain smaller than a pea use these cues to travel hundreds, maybe thousands of miles, while humans with a much larger brain cannot find the way back to a vehicle parked just hundreds, maybe thousands of feet away in the mall parking lot?
- Shorebirds are some of the most long-distance migrants. Nearly two-thirds of the species that breed in North America spend winters in Central and South America and then return to arctic nesting grounds the following spring. These birds cover distances of thousands of miles at altitudes more appropriate for aircraft and at amazing speeds.
- Most long-distance migrants, especially smaller birds, fly at night. Birds that migrate only relative short distances within a region generally travel during the morning, then forage and rest during the remainder of the day.
- Bird banding has greatly increased ornithologists understanding of migration routes, the timing of migration, identifying wintering areas birds use, and

confirming that birds return to the same breeding areas year after year. Birds may be fitted with metal leg bands, colored plastic leg bands, tiny transmitters, neck collars, or other devices. Each banding tool is marked with a unique serial number. When birds are found dead, shot by hunters, or recaptured by banders, much can be learned by tracing the time and place that bird was originally banded and comparing that data to the time and place the bird was found.

Birds that successfully rear young are likely to return to the same nest site the following year. This means that after breeding and raising young, birds are somehow able to fly great distances, and locate suitable habitat to survive for several months. Next, they build themselves up, gaining weight and finding strength for an incredible return flight to breed once more. Almost as if by magic, the robin returns to the front lawn!

Sources:

Obmascik, Mark, *THE BIG YEAR*, Free Press, 2004.

Ehrlich, Paul R., Dobkin, David S. and Wheye, Darryl, *THE BIRDER’S HANDBOOK*, Simon and Schuster, 1988.

Spring is just around the corner. Mark your calendars for our Open House and celebration of International Migratory Bird Day on April 30. HawkQuest will be there with Eagles, Hawks, Falcons and Owls. See a Harris hawk fly! Many other activities planned. See you there!



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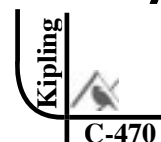
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Lower Rio Grande Valley Field Trip

by Norm Lewis

In mid-February the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas was invaded by an enthusiastic band of Denver Audubon birders including Catherine Campbell, Mel and Elaine Emeigh, Marilyn Fowler, Joan Kirk, Bobbie and George Lohr, Joyce Mosectic, Arlene Raskin, Nina Routh and Jack and Joan Whiting, Allison Hilf, Toni Rautus, Norm Lewis and Ted Cooper. After arriving in Texas, we set off for the Frontera Audubon Center in Weslaco.

This winter the valley has seen an invasion of Mexican species, which has not happened in some years. It wasn't long before several of these unusual wanderers the border found their checklists- white-throated and clay-colored robins, crimson-collared grosbeak, and a spectacular elegant trogon.

On day two we headed for one of the legendary birding localities of south Texas- Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge. Monday, brought a change of pace--sunny beaches and the vast lagoon of South Padre Island, where we saw a wide variety of birds, including mangrove warbler, peregrine falcon, roseate spoonbill, whimbrel, and many others. On another day we

were overwhelmed with bird songs in Salineno.

We also visited Laguna Atascosa and Laguna Madre, where we saw a variety of good shorebirds and roseate spoonbills. We achieved our goal to spot a gray-crowned yellowthroat and got a bonus of seeing the groove-billed anis.

"Raptor Alley," to the north, is aptly named. The skies were alive with raptors of all descriptions- white-tailed hawk, crested caracara, Harris' hawks, white-tailed kite, and even a peregrine falcon.

On Saturday cruising across the bay to the Aransas National Wildlife



Egret viewing at the rookery in Port Arthur, TX.



from south of way onto our

Area we were treated to sightings of loons, grebes, cormorants and a variety of ducks and whooping cranes!. The stately cranes moved slowly through the tall grasses in small family groups, taking advantage of the abundant food supplies of the marshes.

The final days of the trip included a route that circles through the scrublands northwest of the refuge where we saw. wild turkeys, a vermilion flycatcher, golden-fronted and ladder-backed woodpecker pyrrhuloxias and eastern phoebes.

Springtime on the bayou Steamboatin' on the Delta Queen Birding on the Intra coastal Waterway, New Orleans to Galveston

by Barbara Patton

Our first feel-good memory on the Delta Queen was the pleasure of our senses. At sunrise the first morning, the paddleboat was barely moving. A fresh, cool and dewy fog had settled on the bayou-like channel. Moss hung from the limbs of magnificent live oaks that were interlaced with the brilliant red leaves of swamp maple trees.

The second feel-good memory was the joy of the diversity in the many birds we saw. Our bird-watching was enhanced by a lecture by Bob Faber, a naturalist and guide with an extensive background in botany, earth science and zoology. He enjoys being off the beaten path to go where the crowds aren't.

On one of our field trips to the Louisiana swamps we saw the snowy egrets and roseate spoonbills building their nests. The weather was too chilly for the alligators to show their faces, however, we were told the birds built their nests in the swamp trees because the alligators protected the bird eggs by eating the

raccoons.

Our group was introduced to Cajun music, revisited the 50's with big band music and jazz, lightened up with laughter, and savored incredibly delicious food.

The Delta Queen will take another Denver Audubon group next March for its intra-coastal birding cruise between Galveston and Brownsville. Contact Becky Beckers, 303-766-5266, for more information.

These are birds we spotted: Loggerhead shrike, red-shouldered hawk, laughing gull, snowy egret, barn swallow, great egret, roseate spoonbill, kingfisher, purple martin, bald eagle, osprey, merlin common wren, northern cardinal, Coopers hawk, northern harrier, storks, white pelicans anhinga, black vultures, caracara, great blue heron, black-necked stilt, oyster catcher, white ibis, double-crested cormorant, black-crowned night-heron, common moorhen Carolina wren.



Birds, Bats and BioBlitz supported by ASGD's Lois Webster Fund

By Polly Reetz

Flammulated owls, Colorado's bats, and the whole gamut of living organisms in one spot of grasslands held ASGD members' attention at the third annual reception for the Lois Webster Fund on March 3 at the Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado offices in Washington Park. In 2004 the LWF Board awarded grants to three projects: a Grasslands BioBlitz in open-space lands in Jefferson and Boulder counties; a study of flammulated owl reproduction in forests affected by the Hayden fire of 2002 and a survey of bat species in the upper montane forests of Teller County. All of these projects involved multiple cooperators and were focused on species whose status is unknown or declining in Colorado. A member of the project team for each one was invited to the LWF reception to give a brief report on their research. We also heard from Dr. Vicky Dreitz, now with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, who is heading up a research project on mountain plover and received LWF funds for radio transmitters in 2002 and 2003.

After an initial half hour of socializing, Dr. Dreitz led off with an account of research results from 2004. Her team is investigating and contrasting mountain plover nesting success on native prairie, agricultural lands and prairie dog towns. The research will continue through 2008. At this point, they have discovered no significant difference in nesting success between these habitats, but Dreitz felt it was too early to draw any conclusions from the data. She did find more insects present on prairie dog towns than on the two other types of sites.

Katie Salipante talked next about the research that Dr. Brian Linkhart of the Colorado College Biology Department did this year on flammulated owls in unburned forest patches within the Hayman fire perimeter. Most of his team's

Trinidad and Tobago continued from page 4

Inn. This property is located on a beautiful golden sand beach. Swimming, snorkeling and sunbathing all beckon, along with enjoying blue-crowned mot-mot, rufous-tailed jacamar and other species on the lovely wooded grounds of the inn.

We will also travel to Speyside and then by glass-bottom boat to Little Tobago Island, one of this nation's most important wildlife sanctuaries. En route to Little Tobago we will watch for leatherback and hawksbill sea turtles, enjoy pristine coral reef formations. On the island we will explore the nesting colonies of red-billed tropicbird, red-footed and brown boobies and sooty and noddy terns. All meals, transfers and accommodations are included. Air from Denver to Port of Spain is approximately \$750 on either American or Continental. Travel insurance is strongly recommended. This trip is limited to 12 participants. For more information contact Becky Beckers, 303-766-5266 or email AgentBecky@aol.com.

efforts went towards establishing study areas where the male flammulated owls had set up breeding territories (Salipante described the study in detail in a January 2005 *Warbler* article).

Karen Hollweg described the results of the 24-hour BioBlitz, an effort that was headed up by University of Colorado scientists and looked at all possible taxa, both plants and animals. The project not only produced enormous quantities of data, but also involved many volunteers from surrounding communities and had a major educational impact, through press coverage, flyers and articles.

The Catamount Institute in Colorado Springs, which ran the bat project, was unable to get a speaker to the reception, but a report on the research will be published in a future *Warbler* issue. They did identify seven species of bats in the study area.

A representative from LWF presented a check for this year's grant award to Terri Anderson-Hicks from the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, who will be heading a survey of Mountain Plover in the San Luis Valley. Many people have observed the bird there but this will be the first comprehensive survey.

I hope this has given readers a feel for the kinds of research that the Lois Webster Fund supports. The fund relies on donations to increase its principle; research grants are made from the yearly interest on this principle. Donations are needed and welcome! In recent years the level of giving has dropped, so we especially need your help to ensure that ASGD can continue to fund wildlife research in Colorado. Send checks to ASGD made out to ASGD/Lois Webster Fund. Hurry!

Richard Louv continued from page 1

teachers, scientists, religious leaders, child-development researchers and environmentalists who recognize the threat and offer solutions. Readers learn how environment-based education dramatically improves standardized test scores and grade-point averages and develops skills in problem solving, critical thinking and decision making. Anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that childhood experiences in nature stimulate creativity.

Last Child in Woods shows an alternative future in which parents help their kids experience the natural world more deeply and find the joy of family connectedness in the process.

Louv is the author of six other books about family, nature and community, including *Childhood's Future*, *The Web of Life*, and *Fly-Fishing for Sharks: An Angler's Journey Across America*. He is a columnist for *The San Diego Union-Tribune*. He also served as a columnist and member of the editorial advisory board for *Parents* magazine.

Louv helped found Connect for Kids the largest child advocacy site on the World Wide Web. The United Nations commissioned his monograph on fatherhood for the U.N. Year of the Child. He also serves as an advisor to the Ford Foundation's Leadership for a Changing World award program and the Scientific Council on the Developing Child.

backyard birds....

by Hugh Kingery



EMAIL CHANGES handed me several mysterious challenges recently. One result, I lost the identity of three of you who sent reports. Oh well, anonymous is OK in Backyard Birds. I guess—like a newspaper reporter—I’ll report them as coming from “authoritative sources.”

FROM BOULDER TO FORT COLLINS, this winter saw huge flocks of Bohemian waxwings (up to 1000 in some flocks). Urling and I saw several of these aggregations when we explored Fort Collins hotspots with Nick Komar in February. From Denver, though, we’ve heard of almost none: Joy Schieving near DU sent in the only report to us. She saw cedar and Bohemian waxwings on both Jan. 16 and 22, but by February her flock, now smaller, included only cedars. In Ken Caryl, Janet Sickafuse saw a flock of 100 cedar waxwings on Feb. 24 and a bunch of mountain bluebirds Feb. 21.

JOY’S LIST REFLECTS those of several other backyarders, with a number of winter visitors from the high country. In both months she’s observed one Townsend’s solitaire almost daily, white-breasted nuthatches frequently, red-breasted nuthatches infrequently, and a brown creeper once. An authoritative source in Centennial watched a “brown creeper work the cottonwood tree in my backyard at 6:45 a.m., March 15.” Flo DeCesare, in Greenwood Village, reports a Townsend’s solitaire drinking at her pond, white-breasted and red-breasted nuthatches and a brown creeper that visited her yard both months. She also hosted goldfinches “in winter dress with bright yellow at the neck.”

CHRIS SEDLMAYR IN ARVADA continues to see a Eurasian collared-dove occasionally, but she liked seeing a mountain chickadee on a regular basis.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS intrigued us, as usual. Flo watched one on Feb. 4, and observed it closely. “Yellow around the eye, beautiful spotted breast (honey colored), and solid brown face, wide tail with three slate-colored wide stripes with inverted V in middle of straight tail, yellow legs. Washed face and tried to bathe, went to a rock near waterfall so he could get splashed. Stayed about half hour.”

BARBARA SHISSLER REPORTED on a sharp-shin that “visited one of our feeders. He tried to grab a house sparrow feeding in a tube feeder with a metal cage around it (to discourage large birds.) The hawk grabbed the sparrow but was unable to pull him out due to the bars. We watched for some time before the hawk gave up and flew away. Then the sparrow flew away.”

ANOTHER AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE sent pictures of a somewhat bedraggled sharp-shin perched on a picnic bench next to a waterfall and pool. She said, that the mallards (whose picture she also transmitted) ‘seem a little nervous’ to have the hawk nearby. One duck “has been coming to our pond most of the winter. He has very unusual markings on his head.” The picture suggests that the duck may be a hybrid between a mallard and a wigeon.

RAY AND KIT STANFORD, near University Hospital, sent a “small contribution” to the Audubon Center, in memory of a

long-time friend, Dr. Jack Reeves, and Ray commented, that “a red-tailed hawk flew in and perched for a moment on our northern badminton post in the back yard. About five days later, it [or a clone] came again to the exact same spot. Since then our feeders have been nearly devoid of small birds, perhaps not a surprise.” Ray wondered if others had seen red-tails, but not as far as I know.

(Ray is one of the country’s leading lepidopterans. While watching the red-tail, he was preparing his extensive collection of butterflies and moths to donate to Colorado State University. His collection adds a fine complement to the CSU collection.)

THE BIRDS THAT NAN BREHMER LISTED in her monthly Green Mountain reports differed a lot from Joy’s city birds. A second white-crowned sparrow joined her lone December bird, then 16 on Jan. 5. She didn’t see any more until one or two showed up regularly in February. Nan also comments on what’s not showing up: she hasn’t seen scrub-jays or spotted towhees at the feeder as often as usual. Her list includes a male kestrel (twice in January), a red-tailed hawk and a great horned owl that “flew off roof and across back patio” Jan. 4 in a snowstorm. “There are ample mice in the railroad-tie wall to keep fox and owl well fed,” she added.

SHE ALSO NOTES that the “early birds are the juncos that creep in at ground level from the south. Soon a flock of house sparrows flies in from the north and settles in a bush while they survey the situation before coming down to the feeders. The house finches, fewer than the other small birds, but once the most numerous, arrive a bit later.”

AS AT NAN’S, birds arrive at our feeders at different times, though they don’t always adhere to their schedule. Steller’s jays have intrigued us this year, both by their numbers and their arrival. This year we counted 25-40 of these top-knotted show-offs eight times in January and February. Sometimes they arrive at sunrise; sometimes an hour later, sometimes 2-3 hours later. And sometimes they don’t show up en masse at all. Juncos arrive regularly at sunrise, and pine siskins flock in half an hour or so later. Urling just walked in the door (at noon) and said, “It sounds like 100 siskins out there.” It does, but I can only pick out a dozen.

CHICKADEES (both kinds) and white-breasted nuthatches come in most of the day, and we have a pair of red-breasted nuthatches that sneak in and out mid-morning. Sometimes a brown creeper sidles up (and once in a while, down) the scrub oaks outside my new office window.

THE BUSHTIT SAGA CONTINUES. Patty Perron still sees a flock in Parker. Joy saw the DU bunch on Jan. 10, and Tina Jones studied her Bow Mar group. Tina has an observant eye, and here’s something she posted on Cobirds: “They seem to be feeding mainly on pinon and Austrian pines. The other day I realized that they primarily were feeding at the base of the pine needles. This took several times to figure out since they move so fast and are so flitty. A guess, but I’m thinking they are feeding on scales (a type of insect which is very camouflaged, which lives under a hard covering or shell). If true, that’s fine with me since scales suck nutrients out of pine needles and in that case the pine becomes weakened. I do not spray my trees. So far I’m lucky, since my wrens, chickadees, bushtits and other birds seem to take care of a lot of the insect problem.”

Backyard Brds continued on page 10

BY EARLY MARCH, spring flocks of robins and bluebirds showed up in the metro area. Polly Reetz wrote, "The robins around our house have started shrieking about 5 a.m., but I haven't yet heard any real song. They are much more visible during the day now, hopping around hunting worms. However the flickers are carrying on like crazy, though they started late this year, about Feb. 20 as opposed to the eighth or ninth last year. The chickadees are back from wherever they were in early January." Robin flocks have showed up all over the metro area — even though some spend the winter here, this quantity has to involve migrating birds. We saw our first real flocks on Feb. 26, and 20-50 have hung around ever since.

AL MEDINA SAW AND HEARD a bobwhite on March 24, "I have scattered safflower seed on the ground and I suspect this bird has been around for a few days because I've heard it before but only spotted it yesterday." He sent three splendid pictures to buttress his observation. I had a similar report from an authoritative source east of Franktown. I always conclude that the bobwhites and chukars that we see have escaped from some game farm. Probably true for chukars, but bobwhites occur naturally in eastern Colorado and could travel up the Platte and end up in Al's or that other source's backyard without benefit of a game breeder.

I WELCOME YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS to this column. Drop me a note or post card at P.O. Box 584, Franktown, CO, 80116, or email me, ouzels@juno.com.

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26th ANNUAL SPRING COUNT – 2005

Free – everyone welcome. Call leader to sign up or simply meet at the appointed time and place. Most leaders need more participants, but the trips that require pre-registration limit the number of participants.

Thursday, May 5

CHERRY CREEK RESERVOIR

LEADER: Bob Brown, 303-791-6204

MEET AT: 7 a.m. at Marina on west side (near Cherry Creek high school) of Cherry Creek State Park.

Friday, May 6

LOWER BEAR CREEK

LEADER: Tamie Bulow, 303-462-1238.

MEET AT: 7 a.m. in front of Albertson's, northwest quadrant, South Sheridan Blvd. and Hampden.

CHEROKEE RANCH

LEADER: Lynn Willcockson, 303-757-7000

Must register with leader in advance.

Saturday, May 7

BARR LAKE STATE PARK

LEADER: Dick Schottler, 303-278-8035

MEET AT: 6:30 a.m. 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 10-mile, all-day hike around the lake. State Parks pass required.

CHATFIELD STATE PARK

LEADER: Joey Kellner, 303-978-1748.

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

LEADER: Hugh Kingery, 303-814-2723.

MEET AT: 6 a.m. at Audubon Center at Chatfield (left turn immediately after turning from Wadsworth (Colo. 121) onto Waterton \ Roxborough road and before the DOW parking lot for Waterton Canyon)

Waterton, downstream. Four to five mile hike. Wear long pants (not shorts) due to bare-leg-unfriendly plants such as poison ivy, thistles and knapweed.

Sunday, May 8

BARR LAKE PERIPHERY

LEADER: Jackie King, 303-287-1644.

MEET AT: 7 a.m. on access road to entrance station at Barr Lake State Park. This trip does not involve much walking and will be good for people with limited mobility or stamina.

CASTLEWOOD CANYON STATE PARK

LEADER: Randy Lentz, 303-680-3381.

MEET AT: 6:30 a.m. at old entrance. From Colo. 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.

Must register with leader in advance.

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IN-KIND DONATIONS

Michael Knox, Office Stuff—Corner Desk

Mary Jane Black—12 porcelain plates “Gamebirds of the World” by Basil Ede, Singing bird clock, Western Bird Songs on vinyl, bird figurines, and “The Wonder of Birds”

Ann Groshek—“Field Guide to Western Songbirds” and a Birding Game

Greg Marquez—Painted sandwich boards for Audubon Center

John A.C. Wright—Bird and natural history books

WELCOME TO OUR NEW FRIENDS OF ASGD

Judith Alliprandine, Karen Archer, Larry and Wanda Bailey, Barbara & Dennis Baldwin, Marjorie Bezdek, Don Brian, Judy Capra, Jeanette and Rebecca Duerksen, Alice Grano, Marilyn Hackett, Linda Harvill, Joy Hilliard, Kim Johnson, James J. Kelley, Valerie S. Layman, Gerry Minson, Sharon Minzer, Nancy Osborn, Sandra Schnitzer, Stephen & Kathryn Smith, Kara Spitler, Debra Thomas, Mary and Tom Trotter, Tom Umland, Carolyn Vigil, Don and Rae Wiseman

How you can support ASGD without spending a penny

by Sandy Elliott, ASGD Development and Community Relations Coordinator

If you have wanted to support ASGD, but keep finding yourself coming up “short” every month, like many of us do, you will be happy to know that there are other ways you can help out. First, of course, is volunteering. Volunteers are the lifeblood of this organization. It would be impossible to operate ASGD without the help of its many volunteers. As a volunteer, you can work in the gardens, write articles or speak to groups, assist with special projects and educational offerings, computer input, mailings of the Warbler, invitations and other publications. Volunteers have been valuable working on site at the nature center as we renovate the existing buildings and build trails. If you have special skills, call and see where they could be put to use.

ASGD is active in recycling efforts. Everything that can be recycled from the office. You can bring your recyclable paper products and computer ink cartridges to be turned in. Those recycled products will bring income to the Society.

Another innovative fundraising program that ASGD participates in is gift certificates that can be redeemed at most King Soopers, Safeways and Wild Oats food stores. By purchasing the certificates in \$25 denominations from ASGD, you get the full benefit of the certificate plus those stores donate five percent to ASGD on each dollar's worth you purchased. Staff and frequent volunteers in the office buy enough for their entire month's worth of food shopping. You can too!

Occasionally we publish a “wish list” of items needed either in the office or at the nature center. When you have those items, you can donate them.

You can see that it can be fun and easy to contribute to ASGD, even without spending money. We hope to hear from you soon

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