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## Birdathon 2011

Thank you to all who contributed to ASGD's 2011 Birdathon! We had eight groups hitting the trails throughout the Denver metro region and beyond, while one team counted birds at feeders in their backyard. Participants had a choice to do a Birdathon "sprint" or a "marathon", as long as they were raising money

to support ASGD programs one day in May. One new record this year: the fourth and fifth grade students from Ricks Center for Gifted Children at DU raised over \$1700. All the teams raised over \$10,000. Everyone had a great time in the field searching for as many bird species as possible. We are already looking forward to 2012.



Fourth and fifth grade students from Ricks Center for Gifted Children at DU raised over \$1700 during Birdathon 2011.

**Here are the reports from the teams:**

**3 Vets in Search of a Bird**

**May 13-14**

**Team Members:** Mackenzie Goldthwait, Doug Kibbe, Jeff Dawson

**Species Count:** 160 species

**Locations:** NE Colorado, Pawnee Buttes, Greeley, Big Thompson Canyon

**Great Railed Tackles**

**May 14**

**Team Members:** Karen Bickett, Sandy Selzer, Kara Spitler, Robert Martinez, Cheryl Chessick, Sharon Pfeifer, Kathy Bollhoeffer, Harriet Stratton

**Species Count:** 110

**Locations:** Bear Creek Lake Park, Red Rocks, Cherry Creek State Park, Walden Ponds

**The Lark Somethings**

**May 15**

**Team Members:** Angela Grun, Carol DeStefanis, Karl Brummert

**Unofficial Team Members:** Kate Frost & Todd Arcos

**Species Count:** 82 (plus one unidentifiable flycatcher)

**Locations:** Cherry Creek State Park, Grant-Frontier Park, South Platte Park, Audubon Center at Chatfield, Lair o' the Bear, and Red Rocks

**Kingery Kingbirds**

**May 15**

**Team Members:** Hugh & Urling Kingery, Nicole Buyck, Jessi Overbeck

**Species Count:** 116

**Locations:** Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Kingery Backyard

*Birdathon 2011 continued on page 3*

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Celebrating  
42 Years of service  
to the Greater  
Denver Community

### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK ~

Summer is here, and many of the ASGD staff and volunteers are thinking, "Wow, what a spring!". Those of us who work in the nature center field know that April/May is the busiest time of the year. When people ask us what we did to relax on the weekend, we often want to respond: "Weekend? What weekend?"

We certainly had many incredible accomplishments in the last few months. Our annual Spring Benefit raised over \$27,000 gross. We cannot thank Harriet Stratton and the Spring Auction team enough for all their hard work and dedication in organizing the event.

The 2011 Birdathon was another record breaker, with eight teams raising over \$10,000. We hope this is just the beginning of developing this enjoyable, recreational activity into a major fundraiser involving more of our members and supporters. It may be cliché, but the Birdathon is truly a FUNdraiser for everyone. Expert birders and novices all had a great time this year.

The bird banding station, open almost every day in May, had another successful season despite a little rain. We love the new entrance gate built on April 16 by ASGD Board Member Michael Kiessig and volunteers from the South Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce on the B.I.G. Day. Next year's project: a permanent, covered structure at the site. We also added Volunteer Naturalists at the station to assist with the educational experience.

As always, we had many school groups visit the banding station and participate in habitat ecology programs. New schools came out to the site this year, and we also held programs at several schools we have not worked with before. Members of the Douglas County SCFD council, one of our key supporters, visited the bird banding station.

Whew!

We aren't really stopping to rest, though. This summer, we are partnering with Thorne Ecological Institute to assist with operating their summer camp at Kassler and the Audubon Center. On July 2, at our new Hummingbird Day at the Audubon Center, we will celebrate these tiny avian wonders and unveil our new hummingbird garden supported through a grant from the Littleton Garden Club. We are gearing up for our first online photo contest in November. While you're exploring this summer, take your best shots and be ready to submit them in October. There is a \$1000 grand prize!

And believe it or not, we're already thinking about and planning for Spring 2012. Break? What break?



Karl Brummert  
Executive Director



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#### MISSION

**Audubon Society of Greater Denver  
advocates for the environment,  
connecting people with nature  
through education, conservation and  
research.**

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# Conservation Report

by Polly Reetz, ASGD Conservation Committee Chair

The Colorado Legislature ended its 68th session on May 11, 2011, and I'm very happy to report that it was a nearly 100% successful session for Audubon. Even though we had to spend a lot of time defending existing environmental law, we were able to kill, prevent, or modify every attack on the environment, thanks to those of you who responded to alerts and contacted your legislators. Here are the highlights:

**HB 1294: Revoking the ban on spring bear hunting.** This bill would have eliminated the ban on hunting bears prior to September 1, which the public voted in via a 1992 initiative by a 2-1 margin. Thanks to hard work by Audubon and other groups, we assembled the votes to defeat it when it arrived on the House floor. Knowing this, Speaker McNulty kept postponing the vote, so the bill died when the legislative session ended.

Audubon lobbyist Jen Boulton commented, "Attempting to repeal a highly popular initiative...was a slap in the face to the voters." While it's unlikely that the current wildlife commission would have hurried to reinstate spring bear hunts, the commission's refusal to address hunting of sows with dependent cubs in spring was the main reason for the initiative in the first place.

**HB 1223: Rolling back the makeup of the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission.** In 2007 the Legislature voted to add members to the COGCC and reduce its domination by the oil and gas industry. This expanded Commission then rewrote the regulations for oil and gas development to ensure that wildlife habitat and public health receive consideration in the oil/gas permitting process. This bill would have revived the industry's majority membership, and possibly lead to revoking of the new regulations, but it fortunately died.

**HB 1150: Raid on Game Cash Funds.** HB 1150 directed the state treasurer to move

\$5 million from the Division of Wildlife to the construction fund of the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) every year for 10 years, a total diversion of \$50 million.

Audubon's philosophy is that water supply projects should be paid for by those who benefit from them, not by hunters and anglers. Removal of the \$5 million from Division control would have disqualified the state from receiving about \$20 million a year in federal funds until all "diverted" funds were repaid with interest. The result: a loss to the Division of \$25 million a year for 10 years, plus however long it takes to fully repay the \$50 million.

A tremendous outcry from sportsmen and conservationists resulted in the tabling of the bill.

**HB 1083. Hydropower standard.** This bill amended Section 123 of the renewable energy standard to include hydropower; Audubon was able to get language included that sets fairly strong impact-based standards for this energy source, a first.

**GOCO:** No bill was introduced to allow lottery proceeds to be used for purposes other than parks, trails and open space – this was a victory in itself. However, bills will probably be introduced next year to do just that, so expect to hear more on this topic.

## Around the Chatfield Basin:

**Sterling Ranch.** On May 11 the Douglas County Commissioners voted to approve the Planned Development permit for Sterling Ranch, a proposed community of 30,000 people to be located along and south of Titan Road, between Roxborough and Chatfield State Parks. ASGD has expressed a number of concerns about SR to the Commissioners, including impacts on the parks and the poor design of the open space/wildlife habitat. We are also dubious that the developers have the water to support their plans, though they have designed an excellent water conservation program. The depressed housing market will undoubtedly play

a role here too. The Commission is to ratify their vote on May 31. If developed, Sterling Ranch will be easily visible from the Audubon Center.

**Chatfield Reallocation:** The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is supposed to appear in late July, but negotiations between the State (Parks and Wildlife) and the water providers have slowed things down. ASGD will be organizing a tour of the park to illustrate impacts as well as meetings and printed/digital information for the public. Our goals remain: full disclosure of impacts, full mitigation, and ample time for public comment.

*Birdathon 2011 continued from page 1*

## Elm Street Birdathon Lite (41 Residences)

**May 22**

**Team Members:** Carl Norbeck

**Species Count:** 12

**Locations:** All birds seen at 1435 S. Elm St., Denver (including flyovers!)

## Bird Dogs Learning New Tricks

**May 23**

**Team Members:** Suzy Hiskey, Mike Hiskey, Donna, Judy, and Steve

**Species Count:** 23

**Locations:** Highlands Ranch, Littleton, DU, Chatfield, Indian Hills

## Ricks Center Firebirds

**May 26**

**Team Members:** 40 Fourth & Fifth Grade Students from Ricks Center for Gifted Children. Mary Keithler, Andrew Mackie, Karl Brummert, Linda Osatinski.

**Species Count:** 40

**Locations:** Lair 'o the Bear Park (Jefferson County Open Space)

For more detailed team reports, visit <http://www.denveraudubon.org/getinvolved/birdathon-2011/>

Thank you REI Lakewood for donating the Ultra Light Rain Jacket for the drawing.

# Snakes, Cats, and Suckers...Oh My!

Garter snakes, free-roaming domestic cats, hybridizing catostomids (a type of sucker) and, yes, birds, filled the spring program of the Lois Webster Fund on May 5. The speakers included the three 2010 grant recipients, and one project from 2011 for research on garter snakes in the Denver metro area. Inclusion of the snake study was due to the upcoming high school graduation of several of the researchers, guaranteeing that they wouldn't be around next year to present their findings.

After a brief introduction, biology teacher Eric Gangloff and his students from PS 1 showed us their slides and resulting data from the radio-tagging and relocation of garter snakes in 4 locations around Denver. Re-development and habitat alteration face these fairly common



*Common garter snake*

snakes – so the research is being conducted while they are still common. CSU student Ashley Gramza presented her research on free-roaming domestic cats; her study also will examine cat owners' knowledge of

their pets' impacts on wildlife. LWF funds helped Se Jin Song from CU to research the hybridization of two native suckers with an introduced non-native sucker on the western slope and document the resultant genetic changes. LWF funds also aided CU grad student Mysti Martin to compile 50 years-worth of handwritten bird-banding data from a riparian open space area in Boulder County, where cows were excluded after the first 20 years.

All LWF grant recipients are required to write an article for the Warbler, so you will be hearing more about these projects. Audubon members who attended the LWF reception also nibbled on the tasty treats provided by the LWF Committee, an added bonus! Our thanks go to Chairman Margot Wynkoop, who organized this annual event.

## Beginning Bird-Watching Class



**Classroom Session at the Audubon Center:  
Thursday Sept. 22, 7-9 p.m.**

**Field Trips: Saturdays Sept. 24, Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22,  
and 29,, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.**

Field trips to bird-watching sites around Denver: Chatfield, Barr Lake, and Castlewood Canyon State Parks, Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, and Genesee Mountain. Voted "Best of Denver!" 20 years ago and still going strong. Colorado's premier (and most entertaining) birding couple teach the art and science of birding as no one else can. Learn bird identification, choosing binoculars and field guides, and more. Visit different habitats in the best birding spots around the Denver metro area. Develop a practiced eye and ear. You can make up any field trips that you miss during future fall or spring class sessions.

**Leaders: Mike Henwood\* and Urling Kingery**

**\*Mike Henwood, teacher and birdwatcher, Audubon Master Birder mentor and instructor, and field trip leader extraordinaire, will substitute for Hugh Kingery, who will be getting a new hip in the Fall.**

**Register early because this class fills up fast!**

**\$150/Friends Member, \$175/non-member (includes individual Friends membership)**



## Bird & Brew Trivia

**Wednesday, June 22  
7-9p.m.**

**Breckenridge Brewery Ballpark Pub  
2220 Blake Street • Denver 80205  
[www.breckbrew.com](http://www.breckbrew.com)**

Join us for an exciting night of nature and outdoor trivia!

Form a team of up to six or join a team that night.

Even if you're not a trivia buff,  
it's really all about friends, fun, and food.

\$5 entry fee per person

proceeds support ASGD programs

Call 303-973-9530 or email  
[info@denveraudubon.org](mailto:info@denveraudubon.org)



## Junior Naturalist Programs

### Animal Detectives

August 3, 10:30 am – noon

Find out about animals that live in the park, what they look like and how you can tell they are here – even if you can't see them. Meet at the Heronry at Chatfield State Park. Program is free with valid state parks pass.

### Secret Life of Birds

August 10, 10:30 am – noon

Discover which birds live in the Chatfield area and where they hang out. How do you find them and recognize them? Meet at the Audubon Center. Charge \$7 per family or valid state parks pass.

### Reptiles and Amphibians

August 17, 10:30 am – noon

Cold-blooded creatures of the park have their own special habitats, needs and food sources. Meet at the Heronry at Chatfield State Park. Program is free with valid state parks pass.

### Mucking in the Pond

August 24, 10:30 am – noon

Spend a morning looking at the creatures that live in the ponds and learn about their way of life. Meet at the Audubon Center. Charge \$7 per family or valid state parks pass.

\*Be sure to wear long pants and sunscreen. Bring water and bug spray.

Programs free with park pass. Registration required.

Please email [chatfieldgoco@gmail.com](mailto:chatfieldgoco@gmail.com) to register or call 303.979.9115.

Classes presented by the AUDUBON SOCIETY OF GREATER DENVER and CHATFIELD STATE PARK

### Walk the Wetlands

Sunday, July 3, 8 a.m.

Sunday, August 7, 8 a.m.

Everyone welcome, members and nonmembers alike! Hike along the South Platte River looking for fledglings, resident and migrating birds. Be sure to wear long pants and closed shoes; the poison ivy is lush and the knapweed prickly. Dress in layers for the weather. This is a wonderful adventure for all ages. **BBFGWS**. We can lend you binoculars and field guides if you don't have them.

**Meeting Place:** Audubon Center parking lot

**Leaders:** Karen von Saltza and Audubon Master Birders

**Registration NOT required: No Fee**

### Little Fledglings Preschool Nature Hour

For children ages 3-6 (and parents/guardians, too!)

Wednesdays: July 6, 20, August 3, 17, 10-11 a.m.,








Saturdays: July 16, August 20, 10-11am

Explore a theme each month with stories, songs, crafts, and activities exploring wildlife and the natural world. During July, children explore the importance of water for people, animals and plants with "Aqua Charades." In August, Children discover water sources for local wildlife and create a field notebook. This program introduces science skills and encourages active outdoor play.

**Meeting Place:** Audubon Center

**Registration required: \$5/Friends member child and their adult; \$2 each additional child**

**\$8/non-member child and their adult; \$4 each additional child**

LEGEND:  Photography  Audubon Center at Chatfield  Audubon Office  Field Trip  
 Easy to No Walking  Moderate Walking/Hiking  Extensive Hiking

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

## Snakes on the Plains

**Saturday, July 2 from 9-10:30 a.m.**

This family-friendly workshop offers participants an introduction to some of the amazing snakes that inhabit the plains and Front Range of Colorado, with a special focus on garter snakes. Led by Eric Gangloff, a local researcher and educator, the workshop includes a demonstration of field techniques in studying snakes and radio telemetry tracking. Participants will learn how to identify common species, better understand their roles in native ecosystems, and gain an appreciation for some of their incredible survival strategies. Finally, the group will take a guided walk to see these wondrous creatures in their native habitat.

**Leader: Eric Gangloff, 2011 Lois Webster Fund Grant Recipient**

**Registration required: Free/Friends member; \$5/non-member**

## Hummingbird Day

**Saturday, July 2 from 9am-1p.m.**

Celebrate our smallest, most acrobatic avian wildlife: hummingbirds! (Made possible by a generous grant from the Littleton Garden Club). There will be crafts and hummingbird-watching for all ages!

**Meeting Place: Audubon Center**

**Registration NOT required: No Fee for the event: class and craft fees may apply**

## Backyard Hummingbirds of Colorado

**Saturday, July 2, 11 a.m.-12 p.m.**

Tom Bush covers Colorado hummingbird behaviors including breeding and nesting, diet and feeding, and migration patterns. Learn how to attract hummingbirds to your yard using feeders and native plants. Tour the Audubon Center's new hummingbird garden and see feeder samples from Front Range Birding Company.

**Leader: Tom Bush of Front Range Birding Company**

**Registration not required: No fee**

## Bird Walk and Book Signing with Author Mike Foster

**Saturday, July 2 at 8 a.m.**

Field trip and book signing with local author Mike Foster, whose most recent book *The Ties That Bind: Birds, Nature and Us*, uses his personal experiences with birds to highlight problems that threaten birds and the environment. He also suggests how you can make a difference for our avian friends. After looking for birds in various habitats around the Audubon Center, enjoy lunch in the Amphitheater where Mike will read brief excerpts from his book and offer signed copies for \$12. **BBFGWS & Lunch Meeting Place: Audubon Center at Chatfield parking lot**  
**Registration required: No fee**

## Explore Evergreen – Evergreen Lake/Dam Garden, Evergreen Audubon Nature Center and Bear Creek

**Saturday, July 9, 7 –11 a.m.**

We'll explore park habitats, searching for American Dipper, Common Snipe, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Sora, ducks, warblers, hummingbirds, swallows, nuthatches, bluebirds, herons, cormorants, goldfinches and raptors. Elk, mule deer, beaver and muskrat are seen frequently. Look for birds at the Dam Garden and enjoy exhibits at the Nature Center.

**BBFGWS** Optional lunch after the trip creek side at the Bear Creek Tavern in Kittredge  
**Meeting place: Evergreen Lake parking lot**  
**Leaders: Marilyn Rhodes (303-674-9895; cell 720-333-2551) and Bob Santangelo (720-641-3899)**

**Call Marilyn with questions. Leaders can be reached before and during the field trip on their cell phones**

**Registration required: \$10/Friends member, \$12/non-member**

## Birding and History Walk at Roxborough State Park

**Saturday, July 16, 9 a.m. – 12p.m.**

Join Tom Bush and Sue Marino on a morning hike in beautiful Roxborough State Park looking for birds and hearing about the park's history. Sue is an inspirational story teller sure to entertain on the walk as we look for Golden Eagles, Prairie Falcons, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Spotted Towhees, Warblers, and Canyon Wrens. Children age 12 or older are welcome. **BBFGWS**

**Meeting Place: Roxborough State Park Visitor Center**

**Leaders: Tom Bush of Front Range Birding Company and Roxborough History Naturalist Sue Marino**

**Registration required: 303-973-3959**








**No fee. State Parks Pass or day use fee \$7 per vehicle**

## Stargazing and Nocturnal Wildlife

**Saturday, July 23, 7:30-9:30 p.m.**

Follow wildlife biologist, Brian Hoffmann, on a walk at dusk through habitats at the Audubon Center with spotlights to detect nocturnal wildlife (such as coyotes, foxes, and beavers) and using a bat detector to listen for bat calls. Then, come back to the amphitheater to relax for an evening of stargazing led by Pam Little from Chatfield State Park. This event is not intended for youngsters who have to be in bed early. Bring a snack, and get ready for an evening of summer night entertainment. Limit 20.

**Leaders: Brian Hoffmann and Pam Little**  
**Registration required: \$8/Friends member; \$10/non-member**

**LEGEND:**  Photography  Audubon Center at Chatfield  Audubon Office  Field Trip  
 Easy to No Walking  Moderate Walking/Hiking  Extensive Hiking

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

# ASGD Certificate in Outdoor Adventure



This series introduces you to outdoor adventure basics in a fun, relaxed way. Great for children, parents and other adults to explore together. Go at your own pace—sessions are offered throughout the year at the Audubon Nature Center. Complete all ten sessions and receive an **official ASGD Certificate in Outdoor Adventure!**

## Your adventure includes:

- ✓ Be Prepared for Your Adventures
- ✓ Map & Compass Basics
- ✓ Mucking in Wild Water Habitats
- ✓ Habitats of Denver
- ✓ Insects & Other Spineless Critters
- ✓ GPS for Beginners
- ✓ Birding 101
- ✓ Plants of the Platte
- ✓ Mammals
- ✓ Reptiles & Amphibians

## Upcoming Sessions

✓ July 2, 9-10:30 P.M. Reptiles & Amphibians

**FREE to ASGD Friends members and \$5 for nonmembers to participate.**

**To register, call 303-973-9530.**

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



## Buzz Bombers of the Sky

Tuesday, July 26, 6:30-8:30p.m. - (class)

Audubon Center

Saturday, July 30, 6:00-8:30 p.m.

(fieldtrip)

Have you ever wondered how hummingbirds maneuver when they fly backwards? In addition to this unique characteristic, these birds have survival skills that enable them to endure freezing temperatures. Learn the natural history & identification of Colorado's hummingbirds. This class also covers gardening for hummingbirds and how to attract them to

your yard. Field trip is to a very large private hummingbird garden. Limit: 15

**Instructor: Tina Jones, Audubon Master Birder and long time wildlife teacher**

**Registration required: \$15/Friends member; \$17/non-member**

## Shrine Ridge High Altitude Bird and Wildflower Walk



Saturday July 30, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Join Tom Bush of The Front Range Birding Company and Pam Irwin, author of

Colorado's Newest and Best Wildflower Hikes, for a hike over Vail Pass to Shrine Ridge. Pam will help us identify blooming tundra wildflowers as we look for raptors, American Pipits, White-crowned Sparrows, Horned Larks and other high altitude specialties. Bring lunch, sunscreen, and dress in layers. Children age 12 or older welcome. **BBFGWS**

**Meeting Place: Stegosaurus Parking lot I-70 and Hwy 26 (Exit 259, 1 mile west of C-470)**

**Leaders: Tom Bush and Pam Irwin**  
**Registration required: No fee**

## Mount Evans Summit at Sunrise – Atop the Highest Paved Road in North America



**Saturday, August 6, 4:30-10:30 a.m.**

We'll carpool to Mount Evans to be at the summit at sunrise, then bird along the road, passing Summit Lake, Mount Goliath and Echo Lake on the way down, searching for White-tailed Ptarmigan, hummingbirds, Mountain Bluebird, Horned Lark, Gray Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, Peregrine Falcon, Brown-capped Rosy Finch, White-crowned Sparrow, American Pipit, Rock Wrens, and alpine wildflowers. Most observation will be from the car. **BBFGWS** – Breakfast afterwards at Echo Lake Lodge.

**Meeting place: Bergen Park RTD Park-n-Ride near Evergreen.**

**Leaders: Marilyn Rhodes (303-674-9895; cell 720-333-2551) and Bob Santangelo (720-641-3899)**

**Call Marilyn with questions. Leaders can be reached before and during the field trip on their cell phones**

**Registration required: No fee, but donations to ASGD are appreciated and encouraged**

**\$10 park access fee per vehicle; no charge with Annual or Senior National Park Pass**

**LEGEND:** Photography Audubon Center at Chatfield Audubon Office Field Trip  
Easy to No Walking Moderate Walking/Hiking Extensive Hiking

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

### Nesting Black Swifts in Ouray

Friday, July 8 thru

Sunday, July 10, 2011

Join Master Birders Harriet Stratton and Mary Keithler for a trip to Ouray's Box Canyon to see nesting Black Swifts. En



*Black Swift*

route, we will stop to bird in Paonia and Fruitgrower's Reservoir. On our return to Denver on Sunday, we will stop by the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. Bring State and National Parks passes, if you have them. BBFGSW

**Meeting place:** 8:30 a.m. on Friday, July 8, at the NE corner of the I-25 and Colorado Park-n-Ride. Exit I-25 at Evans, go west one block and turn right

**Leaders:** Harriet Stratton 303-798-9924 and Mary Keithler 303-771-1421

**Fees:** \$360 double occupancy/Friends member; \$440 single occupancy/Friends member Non-members add \$40. Included are lodging, meals and snacks. Participants will provide their own transportation. Carpooling is encouraged and can be coordinated by ASGD. Riders should bring cash to help pay for gas. Payment is due upon registration.

### Grebes with Chicks on Walden Area Lakes

Saturday, August 6 and Sunday, August 7, 2011

Join Audubon Master Birder Tom Bush and his friends to scout colony nesting birds and fledglings at Arapahoe National



*Western Grebe*

Wildlife Refuge, Walden Reservoir, and Lake John. Hope to see Western and Eared Grebes with chicks on and off their backs. Bring your camera gear as leaders have tips for photography and digiscoping. After lunch on Sunday, caravan east on Hwy 14 over Cameron Pass birding along the way. Return to Denver via Ft. Collins and I-25. Bring binoculars, scopes, field guides and available 2-way radios.

**Meeting Place:** 9 a.m. Saturday at the Peck House in Empire by their hummingbird feeders.

**Leaders:** Tom Bush and friends

**Fees:** \$170 Friends member, double occupancy; \$195 Friends member, single. Non-members add \$40. Includes one night lodging at North Park Inn in Walden, continental breakfast Sunday morning and lunch Sunday. Pack a lunch for birding enroute Saturday. Dinner is your responsibility Saturday night.

### Owl Banding in Estes Park

Wednesday, August 24 and Thursday, August 25, 2011

Join resident owl bander Scott Rashid at the Estes Park YMCA banding station on Wednesday afternoon. Additional birding



*Northern Saw-whet Owl photo by Karl Brummert*

will take place en route and around the Estes Park area Wednesday and Thursday

We will stay in the Estes Park area overnight and return to Denver by late Thursday afternoon. Bring National and State Parks passes, if you have them. BBFGWS.

**Meeting Place:** Colorado Division of Wildlife, 6060 Broadway, 9 a.m. on Wednesday, August 24th.

**Leaders:** Harriet Stratton 303-798-9924 and Mary Keithler 303-771-1421.

**Fees:** \$170 for double occupancy/Friends member; \$245 for single occupancy/Friends member. Non-members add \$40. Price includes one night lodging in Estes Park, dinner Wednesday night, breakfast Thursday morning. Bring lunch for Wednesday, and money to stop for lunch on Thursday. Register early for best availability. Payment is due upon registration. Bring money to help with carpool expenses.

## Thank You friends for the Success of the Spring Benefit

Our Spring Fling held on Saturday, April 16, 2011 was a great success. The annual gathering of ASGD Friends and supporters raised \$22,000. With a catered dinner buffet as the centerpiece, guests circled and bid on 232 unique silent

auction offerings. After dinner, the live auction and a special appeal for ASGD educational programs raised \$10,000 in 25 minutes! Everyone enjoyed the pleasure of congregating with fellow conservationists and bird lovers. Making and renewing

connections over dessert topped a lovely night.

The good things happening at the Audubon Center and throughout Denver and beyond are due to our very good Friends who donate their goods and services to our cause.

### Donors – 2011 ASGD Spring Fling

Town Hall Arts Center  
Denver Museum NatureScience  
Denver Botanic Gardens  
Denver Art Museum  
The Wildlife Experience  
Denver Zoo  
Georgetown Loop Railroad  
Cool River Cafe  
Macaroni Grill  
Snooze  
Taste of Mexico  
Shells & Sauce  
Sienna Wine Bar  
Piatti Ristorante  
Olive Garden  
Annie's Café  
Earls Restaurant  
Daily Scoop  
Yogurt Guru  
Under the Umbrella  
Little Anita's  
Mici Pizza  
Applebee's  
Red Lobster  
Mi Cocina  
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Hanson's Grill & Tavern  
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# Backyard Birds



by Hugh Kingery

## ELIZABETH ERICKSON CALLED

**AUDUBON** to report a Wild Turkey walking down the sidewalk on University Blvd. between Cherry Creek & DU Apr. 22. Apr. 23, Monna Krebs emailed from Wheat Ridge that "the turkey I saw last year returned. I have one picture with a squirrel on its hind legs looking right into the eyes of the turkey, wondering what kind of bird is this?"

## LOTS OF BACKYARDERS ENJOYED A

**COLOR-FEST** this spring. On May 9, Cindy Valentine, in Surrey Ridge, listed Virginia's Warbler (rufous crown showing), Audubon's Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Evening Grosbeak,



Western Tanager  
Photo by Dick Vogel

Western Tanager, Western and Mountain Bluebirds, and a Say's Phoebe. On May 15, Gina Gerken, Castle Pines, listed 3 Western Tanagers, one Black-headed and 6 Evening Grosbeaks. On May 13, in Franktown we counted 6 Black-headed Grosbeaks, 2 Western Tanagers, 1 Bullock's Oriole, 2 Lazuli Buntings, 6 American Goldfinches, one Green-tailed and several Spotted Towhees, and House Finches.

**CAROLINE HANCOCK SPOTTED** a bright male Lazuli Bunting in Highlands Ranch on May 3. Diana Zimmerman, Castle Rock, photographed a Bullock's Oriole that "landed on our hummingbird feeder and stayed for ½ hour trying to get food, hanging upside



Bullocks Oriole, Photo by Diana Zimmerman

down, at various angles determined to get food. I gave my husband another feeder which he immediately drilled larger holes for the oriole, which hasn't left."

**GINA CALLS ONE TANAGER** "my new pet. He's on the mealworm feeder that hangs by my study window, happily gorging and loving his luck at finding a nice place to stop over during the snow." In four days, "he went through an amazing amount of mealworms and enjoyed my peanut butter suet and bathing in my birdbath."

**ON MAY 3, LOIS LEVINSON**, south of Cherry Creek State Park, reported "a beautifully plumaged Green-tailed Towhee, doing his shuffle in the leaf litter. The resident Spotted Towhee seemed to view him as an intruder, and there was a bit of an altercation, after which the Green-tailed departed."

## FROM COLOR-FEST TO SPARROW-FEST.

Kirk Huffstater counted six species in his Castle Rock yard May 3: Chipping, Song, Lincoln's, White-crowned, plus Gray-headed Junco & Spotted Towhee. In northwest Denver Apr. 6, Chuck Lowrie spotted an elusive Lincoln's Sparrow. Char and Tom Gottlieb, also north Denver, had their first-ever White-throated Sparrow on Apr. 25. Amy Law-Ziegler, on Green Mountain also saw several White-crowns.

## IN SOUTH DENVER DICK ANDERSON

saw a "Gambel's" White-crowned Sparrow after he spent the morning at the Audubon Center banding station where they banded some. Why Gambel's? Colorado sees two forms of White-crowns: one that breeds in our mountains with the white stripe ending at the eye; on the northbound form (Gambel's), the white stripe extends to the bill.

## MANY FLOCKS OF WHITE-FACED IBIS

moved through the metro area this spring. City flocks included a flock Andrea Forlina



White-faced Ibis  
Photo by Marilyn Rhodes

reported on Earth Day (Apr. 22) at Expo Park, Aurora. Andy Spellman saw flocks on Apr. 20 and 22 at Twenty-Mile Res. in Parker. Bill Hinckley saw a flock Apr. 29 in a flooded field near Columbine Country Club; along with them, Marbled Godwits and Willets, and even a Long-billed Curlew. A flock of 80 Sandhill Cranes flew over Colorado Blvd. & Arapahoe Road Apr. 1 (per mojogolf).

**FEW OTHER MIGRANTS** – no warblers except Cindy's and a Yellow-rumped in Gina's yard. Apr. 22-24 Barb Shissler hosted a Swainson's Thrush, "walking calmly under our bushes." Another first, a Spotted Towhee, tried "unsuccessfully to get seed out of our caged feeder. Unfortunately, also a first, 3 Eurasian Collared-Doves." Karen Metz in Franktown reported a possible hybrid Collared-Dove x Mourning Dove.

## MARY O'CONNOR SPOTTED 2 Say's

Phoebes in the Big Dry Creek open space Apr. 30. Bruce Leigh, in Littleton, saw a White-winged Dove somewhat regularly in March and April.



Say's Phoebe  
Photo by Dick Vogel

**GEORGIA HART SENT PICTURES** of some of the 40 Turkey Vultures that perched "in trees and on telephone lines Mar. 28-29", the first in her neighborhood, she reports, in her 35 years there. A flock of 8-10 vultures circled over downtown Littleton Mar. 26 (Greg Pasquariello).

**CYNTHIA MADSEN** "had a new yard-bird Apr. 19: a Western Scrub-Jay. They are pretty common up on the ridge during our Hawk Watch, but this is the first down here in the suburbs." Mary and Dave Driscoll also saw one Apr. 24-25 that visited the birdbath and suet feeder, their first in several months. Fran Shepperdson in Elizabeth, May 15, "just watched my lone magpie catch a mouse that I had just thrown out of the house and then



Western Scrub Jay  
Photo by Dick Vogel

balance on a fence wire trying to eat it whole. Couldn't quite do that, so he put the head in first to keep his balance and flew off."

**DICK ANDERSON'S REGULAR RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** perched, Apr. 20, motionless on an aspen log he had hollowed out and made a chickadee-size nest hole. "It remained completely oblivious to me and anything else in the immediate area. I didn't see a



*Red-breasted Nuthatch  
Photo by Dick Vogel*

hawk, but something really had the little guy frozen in time and space." He saw the same behavior again and "decided the predator the little guy was freezing to avoid was me." On Apr. 25 he "was greeted by a small striped face peering out from the nest hole. I hope the nuthatches use it this spring."

**CYNTHIA MADSEN (CENTENNIAL)** saw "two Mountain Chickadees checking out the apple tree property that was excavated by Black-capped Chickadees and used by them for the past two years. I hope they decide to rent!"

**LISA REYNOLDS (WASHINGTON PARK)** heard "an owl call. Mar. 30, with a flashlight, we spotted it in a tall tree in our alley. Screech-owl size and screech-owl type call." Denver hosts Eastern Screech-Owls in neighborhoods with old, almost decadent trees (they nest in old flicker holes). In early June, walk streets and alleys at sundown and stop for scolding robins: you might discover fledgling screech-owls.

**A GREAT HORNED OWL NEST** in Columbine that Bill Hinckley monitored blew apart in high winds. The owlets 'migrated' to the Birds of Prey facility north of Denver to grow up. Bill wondered about putting up a platform, but Great Horneds nest in old magpie nests and the like – they don't build their own nests. Char and Tom saw two Great Horneds, Apr. 10-25, "talking to each other at dusk and seemed, at first, to act like mating behavior. But it is very late for that. I always thought that they stayed

in the same place all day, but one day last week one moved five times, without provocation. Tom got a great picture of one giving him the claw."



*Baby Great-horned Owl  
Photo by Pat Skinner*

**AMY'S DAUGHTER, ALAINE,** looked up during a Southwest Plaza trip Mar. 14 and "pointed out a big bird flying toward us. It was dark, with wings held flat as an ironing board. Then it turned and the head and tail flashed white in the sun. We both shouted, 'Bald Eagle!' It spiraled up over our heads, then wandered northwest toward the foothills."

**ANDY EMAILED,** "We were very excited by a juvenile Cooper's Hawk consuming a European Starling in our back yard Mar. 9. Not that I have irreverence for starlings, it's just that natural events involving raptors happen in our suburban neighborhood and we watched for over half an hour as this drama unfolded." Cynthia watched a juvenile Red-tailed Hawk cruise through her yard, pursued by two crows and carrying a rat. Mary mentioned that red-tails have built a nest near an old Swainson's site and that the Swainson's returned in late April – where will they go this year?"

**ELLIE WALKER SENT A NOTE** from Wheat Ridge about ducks. "I feed Mallards (lots) from our yard on the Coors irrigation ditch. For the past couple of years, a pair of Wood Ducks also joins them; sometimes two pairs join the party. Yesterday three pairs joined us. As I phoned Patty Echelmeyer about them, a fourth male joined in! By 5 p.m. 10 Wood Ducks were in our yard – 3 females and 7 males. Nature does such surprising things and this was my moment of elation. Today, only my regular pair."

**CHAR AND TOM ALSO** "had the extreme pleasure of watching Wood Ducks



*Wood Ducks  
Photo by Brad Parks*

on our pond for two weeks. Sometimes two males and one female, but more often a pair. We have a duck nest box in a tree but they show no interest in it."

**TOM PARCHMAN AND HIS STEP-SON,** "a few years ago built a screech-owl nest box. We placed it 15-20 feet up in our silver maple. Nothing ever used it. Last summer a female squirrel with young moved from a nearby blue spruce. Something had happened and she brought her young and nesting material to our box. She raised the two she brought and a couple more. It was great fun to watch the young ones learning to climb. They wouldn't arise until well after the sun – 9 or 10am.

"Come February flickers began calling and drumming. One drumming spot was the top of the nest box. Then in March a male flicker began investigating the box. Soon we saw squirrel nesting-material hanging out of the entrance. It looked like the hair-like fibers from overstuffed furniture plus fuzz and cottony blobs; like the stuff from the bottom of a vacuum-cleaner bag. The next day, nothing was hanging out. Then it was. Then it wasn't. I finally saw the flicker reaching in and pulling stuff out but it was so long and fibrous he couldn't pull it clear. Occasionally a squirrel chased the flicker from the house. We finally found a big chunk of squirrel nest at the base of the tree. Then, for the last month nothing has been happening except for continued drumming, and once or twice a female looking into the box.

"Today (May 4) new developments. I saw a big wad of squirrel nest blocking the hole. Now the wad is no longer stuck in the hole, but hanging from it. Looks as if the flicker is once again trying to get rid of the unwanted materials.

"I'll let you know if anything more comes of the nest box wars."

**I WELCOME YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS COLUMN.** Send a note or post card to P.O. Box 584, Franktown 80116, or Email me: [ouzels8@aol.com](mailto:ouzels8@aol.com).



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### Memorial Donations:

Ed Lewis donated in memory of Mary Ann Lewis

### In-Kind Donations:

Bridget Milnes, display stands for the auction  
Ginger Sawatzki, electric stapler and staples  
Mary Ann Tavery, Audubon calendars & prints

## ASGD Wish List

- 1-17" or greater Flat Screen computer monitor
- Wood pellet stove – Travis Industries Model Yankee PS or similar
- Outdoor literature box for Audubon Center
- gift certificates to Murdochs, Home Depot, Lowes, or Office Depot

## Welcome New Friends Members

Betty Baker	Linda Clark
Carrie Hanson	Lisa Herbel
Darcy Dallin	Marcia Driscoll
Gretchen Waymen-Palmer	Mitzi Cline
Henry Raymundo	Myrna Windecker & Vickie Danielsen
Jan Mobley	Patricia Bardwell
Jenni Peters	Robert Young
Joe Weis	Sara Levisky
Kristine Yackel	Wendy Prokosch

**Audubon Center Garden Volunteers:** Doug Hodous, Carol DeStefanis, Amber Ballman, John Wright, Michael Kiessig, Carmine DeStefanis

### **BIG Day Volunteers from the**

### **South Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce:**

Amy Cervene (Arapahoe Library District), Cristin Tarr (Business Service Corps), Dale Christensen (Parsons), David Veal (Veal Creative), Eric Hofmann (Roper Insurance), Heather Blake (Remax Leaders), James F (Good Karma), Jeffery Huff (Mayor of Castle Pines), Jerry Ziegler (Monkey Business Burritos), Joe Salland (CMIT Solutions), John Stickel (Wingate by Wyndham), Michael Keglovits (Iron Gage), Neal Lundquist (Cleaner Carpet), Sandra Myers (Collateral Risk Solutions), Tracy (The Hyatt Place), Rob Young (Progressive Management), Tom Smith (Techen Enterprises, LLC)

### **South Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce members who volunteered at the Audubon Center on May 10:**

Kathy & Lindsay Graveley (Excelsior Youth Center), David Bolt (KW Commercial), Amy Welna & Kimberly McCarty (Whipplewood CPAs), Lou Arellano (L. James & Associates), Neal Lundquist, and Ken Wyble.

**Johns Manville Volunteers:** Jeanne Mitisek, Elaine Merkert, Andrew Voorhees, Lara Hutchison, Ashley Hutchison, Ethan Hutchison, David Rauscher, Lily Rauscher, Emery Rauscher, Steve Coughlin, Jennifer Coughlin, Thomas Coughlin, David Coughlin, Eric Adamczyk, Susan Adamczyk, Richard Peng, Jerry Guo, Nicole Zhu, Richard Guo, Bill Rauschert, Carolyn Agosta, and Jay Ahrenholtz

**Community First Foundation Volunteer:** Angela Bevacqua, Bryce Wilkinson, Cheryl Haggstrom, Dana Rinderknecht, Karen Newcomb, Kenneth Kirwin, Marla J. Williams, Mike Jackson, Paul Mulligan, Renetta Lueckenhoff,

**Field Trip & Program Leaders:** Mary Keithler, Barbara Shissler, Harriet Stratton, Karen von Saltza, Nicole Buyck, Tina Jones, Marilyn Rhodes, Bob Santangelo, Bill Turner, Cindy Valentine

**Little Fledglings:** Kate Frost, Urling Kingery

**Audubon Center/Bird Banding/School Programs:** Amber Ballman, Angela Grun, Arlene Raskin, Barb Masoner, Bob Santangelo, Brian Hoffmann, Carol DeStefanis, Dick Anderson, Doris Cruze, Dotty Biggs, Ginger Sawatzki, Jack Sawatzki, Julie Dorosz, Kate Frost, Kathy Bollhoefer, Kris Koff, Marsha Heron, Mary Keithler, Meg Miller, Polly Reetz, Rhonda Kelly, Sheila Burns, Tom Olkowski, Urling Kingery

**Office Help:** Bridget Milnes, Carl Norbeck, Phil Reynolds, Carolyn Roark, Grace Weber, Esther Weiner

**Website/Media:** Dick Anderson, Mary Urban



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