



THE Warbler

January/February 2008

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NEWSLETTER OF THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF GREATER DENVER

ASGD welcomes Carl Norbeck as Executive Director

Carl Norbeck has been selected as ASGD's new Executive Director effective January 2008.

Carl brings to Denver Audubon expertise in ecosystem protection, watershed sustainability, public-private sector partnerships, and non-profit organization management. Professional experience include:

- Co-founder and Member, Board of Directors of the Clear Creek Watershed Foundation
- Watershed Program Manager, Colorado Water Quality Control Division
- Director, Center for Public-Private Sector Cooperation, University of Colorado
- Executive Director, Thorne Ecological Institute, Boulder
- Environmental Planner, Lombard North Group, Calgary Alberta. Project Manager for the Master Plan for the Klondike

Gold-Rush International Historic Park, Yukon River Unit; Senior Environmental Planner for the Master Plans for Prince Albert National Park, Cypress Hills Provincial Parks, and Edmonton's



New ASGD Executive Director Carl Norbeck chats with board member Kent Wiley and his wife Karen at the ASGD Holiday Open House.

Terwilliger Park

- Geologist, Pan American Petroleum Corporation and Amoco Canada
- Communications Officer, USS Henry B. Wilson (DDG7) and Staff, ComPhib-Pac.

Carl's education includes:

- BS, Geology, Stanford University (NROTC Scholarship)
- Graduate Studies, University of California, Berkeley
- MA, Resources, Environment and Planning, University of Calgary, Alberta
- Post Graduate Studies, Yale University (Mellon Fellowship)

Carl has also been a commercial boatman on the Grand Canyon for 10 years and has earned his Black Belt in Tang Soo Do.

Look for Carl in the office and at Denver Audubon events beginning in January.

Audubon's Fine Feathered FUNdraiser

Call for Auction Items

This spring our annual dinner & auction are taking on a new life! Our special events team is planning one of the funniest auctions yet! We can't give away all the details yet, but we can tell you that it will be a "Comedy Night with Friends." Watch for your invitation in the mail and reserve your spot early before space runs out.

We will launch the auction ONLINE in January. With a click of your mouse you can preview auction items as they are received and start the bidding early. Just surf over to www.denveraudubon.org and look for the auc-

tion link on our home page. Even if you can't make the event in April, you can still bid and win.

Most importantly, remember that when you win an auction item, Denver Audubon also wins. Your donations fund the grassroots projects that are the reason we exist.

We are searching for auction items that will create a flurry of excitement and frenzied bidding. What can you donate? Some of the best items are donations of time, resources and talents that we can offer to others. Examples include:

- Transportation to & from Airport
- Yard work

- Pet sitting/dog walking
- House sitting
- Guided hikes
- Computer assistance
- Cater home cooked meal
- Airline miles
- Homemade edibles
- Homemade arts & crafts
- Timeshare/Vacation Home
- Gift Certificates from businesses you patronize

Contact Carolyn Roark with donations or questions. 303-973-0895 or roarkcolorado@aol.com. To volunteer with the event planning team contact Susan 303-973-9530 or ssmith@denveraudubon.org.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE—

Happy New Year 2008!

We are pleased to announce that Carl Norbeck is our new Executive Director. We hope you will help welcome Carl to the ASGD flock. The search committee waded through almost 50 resumes, many interviews, e-mails, telephone calls, and meetings before making the decision to offer Carl the position. We appreciate the interest shown by all the candidates and we say "thank you" to board members and staff who worked so hard through the entire process.

Our monthly members meetings will begin again the first Wednesday in February at 7:00 p.m. REI has most generously given us the use of their large meeting room at the Flagship Store. Our program committee is working to bring interesting and timely programs every month. If you have not attended these meetings lately, make plans now to come. The store is easily accessible from I-25, parking is free, and it is fun to browse through the store before or after the meeting.

This spring and summer, the monthly meetings move to the Audubon Center at Chatfield. We have a beautiful facility and plans are underway for fun programs for everyone. Look for the complete schedule elsewhere in this newsletter. Mark your calendar and come!



Thanks To Our Volunteers!

FALL MEMBERS DINNER MAILING: Benjamin Cooper, Caroline Hancock, Vi Nicholson, Carolyn Roark, Sue Schulman, Lori Sharp, Barbara & Frank Shissler

NOV/DEC WARBLER MAILING: JoAnn Bushnell, Marc Goodbody, Helen Hale, Jeanne McCune, Vi Nicholson, Carolyn Roark, Loris Sharp, Frank Shissler

ANNUAL APPEAL MAILING: Midge Ball, Leona Berger, JoAnn Bushnell, Ben Cooper, Patty Echelmeyer, Marc Goodbody, Tom & Char Gottlieb, Caroline Hancock, Vi Nicholson, Krista Redlinger, Carolyn Roark, Lori Sharp, Barb & Frank Shissler, Bill Turner

OFFICE ANGELS: Phil Reynolds, Carolyn Roark, Grace Weber

CLASS & FIELD TRIP LEADERS: Doris Cruze, Tina Jones, Hugh & Urling Kingery, Wendy Shattil & Bob Rozinski, Karen von Saltza, Barbara Masoner

Great Backyard Bird Count Count for Fun, Count for the Future! February 15–18, 2008

Millions of bird watchers can make their fascination with nature add up for science and for the future during the Great Backyard Bird Count, led by Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. During "Presidents' Day" weekend, February 15–18, 2008, anyone can count birds from wherever they are and enter their tallies online at www.birdcount.org. These reports create an exciting real-time picture of where the birds are across the continent and contribute valuable information for science and conservation.

"These volunteers are counting not only for fun but for the future," said Tom Bancroft, Chief Science Officer for Audubon. "It's fun to see how many different kinds of birds can be seen and counted right in your backyard or neighborhood park. Each tally helps us learn more about how our North American birds are doing, and what that says about the health and the future of our environment."

For more information on how to participate visit www.birdcount.org. The Great Backyard Bird Count is sponsored in part by Wild Birds Unlimited.



9308 S. Wadsworth Boulevard
Littleton, Colorado 80128
303-973-9530 • Fax 303-973-1038
www.denveraudubon.org

ASGD OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

President Doris Cruze

cruzeduo@aol.com

1st Vice President Allen Stokes

allenstokes@aol.com

2nd Vice President Ann Bonnell

abonnell@juno.com

Treasurer Carol DeStefanis

carmdstf@aol.com

Secretary Polly Reetz

reetzfam@juno.com

Lavonne Axford

Tom Easley

teasley1@comcast.net

Mackenzie Goldthwait

kezgold@comcast.net

Jo Evans

jo.evans@comcast.net

Senator Ken Gordon

ken.gordon.senate@state.co.us

Tina Jones

tjcalliope@hotmail.com

Arlene Raskin

raskinarlene@comcast.net

Linda Strand

LJeanStrand@comcast.net

Kent Wiley

wileysk1@msn.com

ASGD STAFF

Executive Director

Carl Norbeck

cnorbeck@denveraudubon.org

Education Director

Susan Smith

ssmith@denveraudubon.org

Office Manager

Rhonda Shank

rshank@denveraudubon.org

Bookkeeper

Nancy Abramson

nabramson@ieee.org

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).

Editor C. Dale Flowers
Flowers & Associates, Inc.

cdale@cdale.com

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South Rockies Ecosystem Project studies potential wildlife overpass

by Paige Bonaker

Editors Note: Audubon Society of Greater Denver's Lois Webster Fund awards grants to Colorado non-game research projects. In 2007, the Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project received a grant of \$2,500.

Interstate 70 and its associated urban sprawl represent a significant barrier to wildlife movement through the Colorado Rockies. To solve this problem, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is proposing to build a wildlife bridge across I-70 near Vail Pass which will reconnect vital wildlife habitats. However, state agencies need a standardized methodology to monitor the effectiveness of wildlife projects like this one. The Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project (SREP) and other Colorado organizations are developing a monitoring strategy that will help CDOT choose the best site for the overpass as well as evaluate wildlife crossing behavior once the bridge is built.

Our study, entitled Using multiple sampling techniques to test roadway permeability and to monitor wildlife presence at Shrine Pass Road and Interstate 70 at Vail Pass, Colorado, evaluated four methods of sampling wildlife species presence: track transect surveys, scat transect surveys, hair snares, and remotely-triggered camera surveys. We wanted to determine which methods are most effective at documenting the presence of various species. Each method was assessed during both baited and unbaited study periods. During baited periods, a non-rewarding, non-food, scent lure was applied to the study sites. During unbaited study sessions, no lure was used.

In August 2006 at sites along Shrine Pass Road near I-70 at Vail Pass, we conducted an unbaited and a baited study period. A generous grant from the Lois Webster Fund allowed us to genetically analyze most of the scat and hair samples collected during these study sessions to determine the species of origin.

The data recorded from each of the four methods during the baited session were compared to determine if any method was more effective at detecting the presence of four species: mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), elk (*Cervus elaphus*), marten (*Martes americana*), and

red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*). Preliminary results indicate that track surveys are a better method for detecting both deer and elk presence, while scat surveys are more effective than most methods to detect marten. Hair snares are more efficient than most methods at detecting red fox.

However, if a study is focused on more species rather than just these four, it seems that camera surveys are the most successful method since they detected significantly more species per night than both hair and scat. For example, in one night, a camera might take pictures of four deer, two elk, one fox and one porcupine for a total of four species for that night. On the other hand, records from a scat survey might only indicate the presence of three deer for a total of one species in one night. This study also indicated that adding a scent lure to study sites made no difference in the number of species detected by cameras. Therefore, unbaited cameras may be the best method for monitoring multiple mammalian species.

The hair snares also detected the presence of a large number of domestic dogs. We assumed that most, if not all, of these dogs were accompanied by humans while they were in the area. Indeed, there is considerable human traffic on Shrine Pass Road. Thus these results are very im-

portant because they indicate the amount of human activity in the area which, in turn, could affect the presence of wildlife in the area.

These preliminary results enable us to begin to see which methods are the most effective at documenting species presence. An assessment of the time and money needed to implement each method will be used in conjunction with these results to identify the most efficient monitoring methods. Most of the organizations working on this project have limited budgets, and cost effective monitoring strategies are obviously of great importance to them. This study will contribute to the development of an appropriate long-term monitoring strategy for the Vail Pass linkage which, in turn, will help make the wildlife bridge project a success.

Future analysis of data from a 2007 baited study period at sites along I-70 on the east and west sides of Vail Pass should give us more comparisons of the four sampling methods. We will also be analyzing photographic data obtained during unbaited study sessions at different roadway types – forest service roads vs. highways without underpasses, for example – which should yield valuable information about the response of mammalian species to various types of roads.

LOIS WEBSTER FUND GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINE IS JANUARY 28

The Lois Webster Fund Committee is seeking grant proposals for Colorado non-game wildlife research projects. The deadline for the applications is January 28th. This year there will be approximately \$6,000 available for research projects.

The Lois Webster Fund was established to fund research and education projects designed to lead to the conservation of non-game species in Colorado that are declining or under stress or suffering loss or degradation of habitat. More information and application forms can be found at www.denveraudubon.org under the Research Fund link. Successful applicants partner with other organizations and secure matching funds. Grants will be available for research projects in the spring of 2008 and grantees will be notified by the end of February.



Eagle Eye

Watching Public Policy for the Environment
by Polly Reetz

The 2008 Colorado General Assembly will convene on January 9, 2008. This will be the beginning of 120 mad-cap, intense days for the Audubon lobbyist. We now have a sense of what environmental bills will be introduced, some positive and some negative.

Water, a scarce and heavily used resource in Colorado, will be a contentious issue as always. Two bills that we know are coming will address the question of instream flows, i.e. water left in streams and rivers to provide fish and wildlife habitat instead of being diverted for agricultural or municipal use. The first would authorize funding from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) budget, about \$1 million per year, for the Board to purchase long-term leases of water rights to protect instream flows. At present the owners of a water right can donate it to the CWCB but the Board cannot purchase or lease such rights themselves. The bill would add one more tool to the kit for protecting our free-flowing rivers and streams.

The second bill would encourage donations of water for instream use on a long-term basis. Just now the problem is that, if the owner of a water right donates it for a period of years and doesn't use it himself, he may lose that right under current law (the "use it or lose it" doctrine), even though the water is going for a good cause and is maintaining fish and wildlife habitat. This bill would give him some leeway and ensure that he doesn't lose the right. When the State engineers' office calculates the amount of water he uses, it won't count the years in which the right was donated but rather calculate average amounts of water use only from the years in which he actually did take the water himself.

You may have read about the uranium solution mining now being proposed for areas in Weld County. Legislators will introduce a bill that would strengthen environmental protections on land that was being mined. In particular, it would require that mining companies be able to show that groundwater quality can be protected before they get their permit to mine. No on-site leaching operations could occur unless 5 years of data show that water quality in the involved aquifers can be restored.

Several bills will address global warming issues. One will strengthen air pollution standards for coal-fired power plants in Colorado (i.e. Xcel Energy facilities). A second will define "clean energy." This may be tricky: is hydroelectric power clean energy if it requires building a dam and reservoir, alters stream flows and destroys riparian habitat? Is corn-based ethanol a clean source of energy if it encourages farmers to plow up fragile soils and destroy wildlife habitat? This bill may offer us a chance to get some standards for siting energy facilities into the statute books, such as a requirement that wind turbines be located a specified distance from raptor nesting areas.

Finally, several bills will tackle growth issues. One that would have substantial positive impacts (and probably won't get out of Committee) would state that new growth (subdivisions, etc) cannot occur unless there is a hundred-year supply of water available to support it. What a concept – you gotta have water before you can build! Don't expect this bill to go far, but we might be pleasantly surprised.

Expect to see bills with negative environmental impacts as well. For example, there will be a fair number of bills to create new reservoirs for trans-basin water diversion. Such storage projects might be "sweetened" by the inclusion of hydropower or wind energy. In considering new reservoir projects we have to think about two things: a) by all estimates the Colorado River drainage will have lower flows due to climate change so there won't be much water to divert; and 2) if you store water in reservoirs, the surface is subject to evaporation, which could substantially reduce the amount of water available. A bill to privatize the Colorado lottery may see the light of day this year, as well as one to take away the Division of Wildlife's status as an "enterprise," which makes it exempt from the State's financial limitations under TABOR.

All Audubon chapters join in supporting a lobbyist, the only full-time environmental lobbyist at the legislature. This year we would like to pass measures to protect Audubon-identified Important Bird Areas and for wetlands protection. The latter is also a federal issue – Rep. James Oberstarr has introduced legislation in the Congress to amend the Clean Water Act so that ALL streams, rivers, lakes, ponds, marshes, potholes, fens, intermittent streams, etc. can be kept free of pollution. This is a particularly important issue in Colorado, because many of our streams dry up in the summer but pollution of their headwaters could have serious effects on drinking and agricultural water.

If you are a legislative "junkie" you can sign on to the ASGD listserv and be notified when your representative or senator's vote is key and you need to contact them; you can also attend the 2008 Legislative Conference on February 16 (see article elsewhere in the Warbler) to get information about this year's environmental issues.

Birds of a Feather Flock Together,
as we watch in admiration.



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AUDUBON SOCIETY of GREATER DENVER

Calendar of Events

JANUARY 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		ASGD Office Closed Denver Urban Christmas Bird Count New Year's Day	1	2	3	4
9am Walk the Wetlands		7pm ASGD Board Meeting				5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9am Ducks in Winter	7pm Master Birder Open House	7pm Conservation Committee			Bosque del Apache Trip Departs	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	ASGD Office Closed Bosque del Apache Trip Returns					
20	Martin Luther King Day	21	22	23	24	25
9am Winter Hawks & Eagles		7pm Master Birder Entrance Test & Apps. Due	29	30	31	
27	28	29	30	31		

FEBRUARY 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						9am Winter Hawks & Eagles
					1	2
9am Walk the Wetlands			7pm Members Meeting at REI			
Super Bowl Sunday	3	4	5	6	7	8
		7pm ASGD Board Meeting				8:30am Legislative Conference
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	ASGD Office Closed		2pm Field Trip Committee Meeting			
17	President's Day	18	19	20	21	22
24	25	26	27	28	29	



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 –

Walk the Wetlands

DATES: Sunday, January 6 9 a.m.
Sunday, February 3 9 a.m.

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

Pre-registration is NOT required.

FEE: None

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

DESCRIPTION: We will hike along the South Platte River and look for winter birds such as raptors, ducks and seed-eating perching birds. We always find surprises. Dress in layers for the weather. Bring binoculars, field guides, water and a snack.

Aurora Bird Walk – Ponderosa Preserve

DATE: Saturday, January 12 8:30 a.m.

LEADER: Mary Ann Bonnell, Lead Naturalist
City of Aurora Parks and Open Space Dept.

Pre-registration is required through Aurora Parks at 303-739-2428 or nature@auroragov.org

FEE: None

MEETING PLACE: Call 303-739-2428 for instructions and registration. Ponderosa Preserve, which is accessible only by special arrangement, is located in far southeast Aurora, off S. Coolidge Way, outside E-470.

Ducks in Winter

DATE: Sunday, January 13 9 a.m. – noon

LEADERS: Harold & Betty Oliver (303-936-6902)

Pre-registration is required; each trip is limited to 10 people.

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

MEETING PLACE: Pasquinell Park, northeast corner of Evans and the South Platte River.

DESCRIPTION: In winter ducks wear their most brilliant plumage. Join knowledgeable leaders Harold and Betty for spectacular, up-close views of Hooded Mergansers, Common Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, Northern Shovelers, and many other ducks. Sometimes they pick-up Red-Breasted Mergansers and Barrow's Goldeneyes.

Winter Hawks and Eagles on the Northern Front Range

DATES: Sunday, January 27 9 a.m.
or Saturday, February 2 9 a.m.

LEADERS: Harold & Betty Oliver (303-936-6902)

Pre-registration is required; each trip is limited to 10 people.

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

MEETING PLACE: Highway 7 and I-25, Exit 229, Lark Ridge Shopping Center, Home Depot parking lot, west end of store, near contractors exit.

DESCRIPTION: The Olivers have generously agreed, as in years past, to lead their popular trip on two different days—choose either one. Participants may see up to nine different hawk species. The Olivers have recorded over 100 raptors on these trips, including numerous Bald Eagles and Ferruginous Hawks. Bring lunch or buy it at McDonald's. Bring binoculars and field guides.

Members Meeting – Birding Around the World

Date: Wednesday, February 6 7pm

MEETING PLACE: REI Flagship Store, 1416 Platte St. in downtown Denver

DESCRIPTION: Join fellow ASGD members for a photographic tour of the places we've explored in our quest to see birds and other wildlife. From the comfort of your seat, we will visit Copper Canyon in Mexico, the Czech Republic, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico and more.

Aurora Bird Walk—Quincy Reservoir

DATE: Saturday, February 9 8:30 a.m.

LEADER: Mary Ann Bonnell, Lead Naturalist

City of Aurora Parks and Open Space Dept.

Pre-registration is required through Aurora Parks at 303-739-2428 or nature@auroragov.org

FEE: None

MEETING PLACE: Call 303-739-2428 for instructions and registration.

TRAVEL, FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS

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– FIELD TRIPS & TRAVEL –

Members Meeting – Bird Conservation Issues in Colorado

Presenter: Ken Strom, Director of Bird Conservation
for Audubon Colorado

Date: Wednesday, March 5 7pm

MEETING PLACE: REI Flagship Store, 1416 Platte St. in downtown Denver

Meet the Authors –

Kirk Johnson and Mary Ann Bonnell,
Authors of

Gas Trees and Car Turds -

A Kids' Guide to the Roots of Global Warming

DATE: Saturday, March 15 10am - Noon

Pre-registration is NOT required. You are encouraged to pre-order your books from Denver Audubon: 303-973-9530 or info@denveraudubon.org. Proceeds from book sales will benefit ASGD.

FEE: None - Open to the public.

MEETING PLACE: The Audubon Center at Chatfield.

DESCRIPTION: Kirk Johnson and Mary Ann Bonnell will join us to sign books and read excerpts from their new books. It will be a great event for your kids, grandkids and neighbors. Mary Ann is an Audubon Master Birder and Lead Naturalist for the City of Aurora. Kirk Johnson is Vice President of Research and Collections and Chief Curator with the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. We will also have copies of Kirk's book "Crusin' the Fossil Freeway" (co-written with Ray Troll) available, too.

Bluebird Project Open House

DATE: Saturday, March 22, 10am - Noon

RSVP to 303-973-9530 so we'll know how many snacks to bring.

FEE: None - Open to the public.

MEETING PLACE: Audubon Center at Chatfield

DESCRIPTION: Come join us. The bluebirds are returning for another season and so are we! There will be presentations of bluebirds' life history, construction of nest boxes, monitoring techniques, protecting nestlings from predators and much more.

Beginning Bird Watching Class

DATE: Thursday, March 27th 7 p.m.
(Classroom Session)

Saturdays, March 29, April 5, 12, 19, 26 and
May 3 (Field Trips)

LEADERS: Hugh & Urling Kingery (303-814-2723)

Pre-registration is required.

FEE: \$125/Friends members, \$150/non-members

MEETING PLACE: Classroom session at the Audubon Center at Chatfield; field trips to birdwatching sites around Denver: Chatfield, Barr Lake and Castlewood Canyon State Parks, Wheat Ridge greenbelt, and Genesee Mountain Park.

DESCRIPTION: Voted "Best of Denver!" two decades ago and still going strong. Colorado's premier (and most entertaining) birding couple teaches the art and science of birding like no one else. Learn bird identification, choosing binoculars and field guides, and much more. Visit a variety of habitats and some of the best birding spots in the Denver metro area. Become observant and develop a practiced eye and ear. Make new friends and change the focus of your time outdoors. You can make up any field trips that you miss during future fall or spring class sessions—you'll meet people from more than one previous class repeating the fun!

– TRAVEL –

Birding the Bosque del Apache January 18 – 21, 2008

If the thought of seeing thousands of snow geese, thousands of sandhill cranes, bald eagles, Cooper's, red-tailed, ferruginous, and rough-legged hawks, wintering songbirds, rails, roadrunners, and thrashers excite you—then this is the trip for you!

ASGD's exciting excursion to Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge will be January 18 – 21, 2008. This trip, led by Hugh and Urling Kingery, is currently full, however, there are often last minute changes, so call 303-973-9530 to be added to the wait list.

Cost is \$685 per Friends member (double occupancy), \$835 per Friends member (single occupancy). Non-members add \$60 per person.

Travel continued on page 11

Plan NOW to Attend The 2008 Legislative Conference Decisions are made by those who show up!

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver and the Enos Mills chapter of the Sierra Club are co-sponsoring our annual Legislative Conference on **Saturday, February 16, 2008**, at **First Plymouth Church**, 3501 So. Colorado Blvd., **from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.** This is a great opportunity to meet like-minded people, review the issues, learn how to influence legislation, eat a great meal, and hear from lobbyists and legislators about bills that affect Colorado's environment. We'll start with registration and a continental breakfast at 8:30am. At 9am we'll hear Sierra and Audubon lobbyists describe this year's major environmental bills, then host a panel on three major issues. Breakout sessions with experts on those issues follows at 11am. Lunch will be served at noon, and guest speakers, including legislators, will keep the discussions going until we adjourn.

Cost of the Conference is \$15, to cover materials and rental fees. Please join us at this informative session that will help us protect the things Audubon and Sierra members value: wildlife habitat, clean water, clean air and open spaces.

To reserve your spot register online at www.denveraudubon.org or call 303-973-9530. **Walk-ins are also welcome.**

Front Range Ospreys expand nesting territory in 2007

by Harold Oliver

Ospreys built a new nest near an old gravel pit in the St. Vrain State Park this year. We saw the first nest building activity in mid-May and visited there several times during the summer. We observed incubation and the raising of one young bird to fledgling size in mid-August. They have since migrated.



This nest site is an expansion of a population of ospreys from an introduction effort done by the Division of Wildlife in the Fort Collins area in the 1990s. At the present time there are at least six active nests in the Northern Front Range, where there were none before this introduction.

The nest at St. Vrain was built on a large utility pole near the park entrance road. The power company wanted the nest removed and the park wanted the nest to be farther from the entrance road. So after the ospreys migrated this fall the power company, with advice from the park, installed a platform pole nearby but farther from the road, where it will be safer

Linda Strand joins ASGD Board of Directors

Linda Strand lives in Aurora and has joined the Board after retiring from the City of Aurora. Linda finished her 31 years with Aurora as Manager of the Open Space and Natural Resources Division within the Parks and Open Space Department. She is a Certified Interpretive Guide and a Certified Interpretive Planner through the National Association for Interpretation. Since retirement (Linda's preferred term is "re-invention"), she has joined the Board of the Colorado Open Space Alliance and is Deputy Director for Region 7 of the National Association for Interpretation. Linda continues to consult with the City of Aurora on their efforts to conserve the State Land Board property south and east of the metropolitan area. She volunteers with the City of Aurora naturalist program and has started her own company, Vortex Arts, selling her silver jewelry, art quilting, and photo cards. Linda's focus as a member of the ASGD Board is to increase the visibility of the program and the Audubon Center.



Ospreys continued from left column

for nesting in the future. The old nest material was removed. Since ospreys are obligate tree top nesters they have taken well to nest platforms provided for them.

Ospreys show good nest site fidelity and we are optimistic that these birds will accept the new platform. We look forward to watching the progress of this new nest in 2008.

backyard birds....

by Hugh Kingery



THIS FALL FEATURED TWO STRIKING BIRD PATTERNS: Sandhill Cranes overhead and mountain birds in city yards. More people contributed reports to Backyard Birds than ever, mostly about these two trends.

FIRST YOU HEAR THE CRANES and then you scan the sky to find them. On Oct. 12 we heard cranes, and eventually estimated that the 25 flocks that we did see contained 3,500 birds; our neighbor Bayne Phagan heard and saw them before we did – probably 5,000 flew over. They would move south along Cherry Creek, circle, flow west along the ridge, and south out of sight. Bernie Smith and Ken Gammon saw them over Franktown, Brenda Beatty saw them near Castle Rock, and Jackie Dunn over Elbert. In Castle Rock, Clarke Poos called to share his awe at the sight of thousands flying by at dusk. And the sight did amaze. Urling and I took chairs out and sat in the driveway to watch.

THE MOUNTAIN BIRDS started to show up in September; so many reports came in that I had to make a spread sheet. They came from Joy Schieving, Denver; Kevin Corwin, Littleton; Mary and Dave Driscoll, Denver; Patty Echelmeyer, Wheat Ridge; Jan Eckhardt, Arvada; Jim Fredlund, western Adams County; Bill Hamilton, Denver; Veronica Holt, Elizabeth; Tom Olkowski, Roxborough Park; and Greg Pasquariello, Littleton. Joy reported the earliest: Mountain Chickadees starting on Sept. 12. Others saw them in Arvada, Littleton, south Denver, Denver Botanic Gardens, Elizabeth, Adams County, and Wheat Ridge. Red-breasted Nuthatches followed the same pattern, with the first at Joy's in September; others in Arvada, Littleton, Adams County, Denver, Roxborough Park, and Wheat Ridge. White-breasted Nuthatches stopped in Arvada, Denver, and Wheat Ridge. Patty saw a Brown Creeper Nov. 15. Mary and Dave saw the first city Townsend's Solitaire in October, Joy saw them frequently, and Patty saw them in Nov. in Wheat Ridge and Edgewater.

THE MOST AMAZING REPORT came from Lynn Willcockson's south Denver feeder: a flock of 10-15 Red Crossbills on Nov. 12. Another surprise: a Clark's Nutcracker observed in Roxborough by Tom and a neighbor, Oct. 29-30. Mary and Dave report a Western Scrub-Jay during October. I wonder if these mountain birds will stay all winter. Let me hear from you!

IN DOUGLAS COUNTY Caroline Parfit has "a large group of Steller's Jays and a lone Blue Jay (only a stray Steller's or two in previous years). We watched a Hairy Woodpecker take sunflower seeds from our feeder, one at a time, then move from the feeder to hide the seed in the trunk of a ponderosa pine. My husband thinks they'll forget where they put them. We watched a nuthatch find one left in the tree trunk by the woodpecker and enjoy his 'ill-gotten gain.' Nature at its finest!"

MIGRANTS DURING THE PERIOD consisted mostl of the usual: Ruby-crowned Kinglets from Joy three times in

September and October and Oct. 19 at Jim Fredlund's. White-throated Sparrows visited Jim on Oct. 28 and Patty on Nov. 15. Joy saw a Swainson's Thrush in September, and a Hermit Thrush crashed into a window at Casey Davenhill's in Denver Oct. 4. Kim Moore (Thornton) "had a Gray Catbird in the yard Thanksgiving week." Tim Davis saw a White-winged Dove at his Parker feeder Oct. 29. This species has started to spread into the state after establishing a stronghold in Rocky Ford, but metro Denver reports remain scarce. In Commerce City, Jackie King now sees the other, now more common dove, Eurasian Collared-Dove, regularly. "Now (Nov. 15) I have four feeding at my feeder all the time—they actually do land on the feeder and it is one of the big tube feeders with a tray and they land on the tray and feed quite happily. They don't seem to bother the other smaller birds at all."

ON SATURDAY, OCT. 20, our bird class wound up on the porch of the Audubon Center at Chatfield for lunch. As we sat munching sandwiches and brownies, we watched a flotilla of goldfinches feeding in the sunflowers 10-20 feet away. Education Director Susan Smith has supervised the installation of a garden of natives that has attracted birds all year long. Dick Vogel has some splendid pictures of a variety of birds using the garden.

DURING THIS LUNCH HOUR, we saw 20 Lesser Goldfinches, as the sunflowers waved in the wind. We could see their yellow-green, slightly streaked backs, their yellow breasts, and particularly, the essential field mark, the yellow under the tail. Then a couple of American Goldfinches arrived, the comparison striking. Different shade of yellow, shades of pink, and white under the tail. Quite a show! Lunch took twice as long as usual.

JUNCOS ALSO Poured INTO THE CITY. Jackie saw her first ones in November ("I don't remember them coming to my yard this early.") Debbie Carlson, who lives in rural Douglas County, has identified Pygmy Nuthatches. "I first noticed a nuthatch working his way up and down the tree and deck-railling balusters. This year he became a daily visitor. In September, I heard a commotion at the feeder like a squeaky toy run amok. What I saw was a flock of at least six of the tiny birds. I'm always tickled by their noisy, communal nature."

JOY HAD A PLETHORA OF HUMMINGBIRDS in September: Broad-tailed five times, plus Calliope and Black-chinned (first for her yard). But in Franktown Kathy Dressel had a Broad-tailed male that didn't produce a wing whistle (they may lose the trill when molting Primary feather # 10), starting on October 19 (an amazingly late date). On Oct. 21 she emailed that the hummer "is on our feeder in the snow. He drank for a very long time and just sat on the feeder before flying off into a nearby pine. I have a baffle over that feeder so that the snow and rain does not get into the nectar and dilute it. Plus the baffle helps protect the hummers from the weather. The feeder concoctions froze overnight, but Kathy put out new, unfrozen nectar on Oct. 22. "We saw our male Broad-tailed Hummingbird with no wing whistle again Oct. 30. He visited the flowers and the feeder. I immediately put out the two other feeders for him!"

See Backyard Birds continued on page 10

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ANNE PRICE FROM THE RAPTOR EDUCATION FOUNDATION reports that, on Nov. 15, "one of our directors observed an adult Prairie Falcon flying in the vicinity of 13th and Gilpin in Denver. The bird was carrying prey, which turned out to be a red-shafted flicker. It landed on a building, and the director got permission and access to the roof and confirmed the prey. When it was done eating, it flew over to another building at 13th and Williams, where it has been observed roosting."

RON BAKER RESPONDED to Urling's question about the Downy Woodpecker on the hummingbird feeder. "I had a downy using mine a couple of months, several times a day this summer. Apparently this guy had a real sweet tooth and he guzzled with gusto. The hummers, of which there are about a zillion, just ignored him."

NAN BREHMER ON GREEN MOUNTAINS ASKS, "What is the favorite bird of other birders? Her short essay considers magpies ("beautiful; enchanting even if it makes birders raise their eye-brows in disbelief. I had never seen a magpie in Wisconsin, but on our honeymoon to the Black Hills in 1951, we saw many."); robins (#1 for her as a child in Wisconsin, "especially the year a nest fell out of the thorn apple tree and we put the nest and baby robins back, and they survived."). Yet Flickers are #1 for me. . . a delight. Obviously I like the familiar birds more than rare ones.

SANDY BOLTON WINDS UP this fascinating fall season. "Mr. and Mrs. Flicker enjoyed a Thanksgiving feast in my crab apple tree. They were joined by robins who were all puffed up because of the cold, 28 degrees. These birds shared with each other but chased away any little birds who tried to join them. The crab apple trees are still heavy with fruit and the flickers are returning daily to my yard in the Columbine area."

I WELCOME YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS to this column. Drop me a note or post card at P.O. Box 584, Franktown 80116, or Email me – NEW ADDRESS – ouzels8@AOL.com.

Donors continued from left column

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IN-KIND GIFTS:

Doris Cruze handcrafted a braided rug for the Audubon Center. Fred Griest donated a socket set and temperature gauge. Debra Miller contributed wildlife photos. Doris Robertson donated a collection of books. Bob Turner: Nature Program booklets from Nat'l Audubon.

Birds and Beasts of Costa Rica

March 7 to 16, 2008

(9 nights, 10 days)

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

As a special treat we should be arriving at the beginning of the spring raptor migration. This is one of the best kept secrets in all of the birding world! Every year millions of raptors from North America fly south in the fall to wintering grounds in South America. In the spring these birds return north to their breeding grounds in the US and Canada. Species include Swainson's hawks, Turkey vultures and to a lesser extent Ospreys, Swallow-tailed kites and several others. Also very common in the migration is the broad-winged hawk from Latin America. On a good day one can see thousands of these birds moving overhead!! The spectacle has been described as a ribbon of birds filtering through the sky. While this phenomena has occurred for millennia it is virtually unknown in the birding world.

Price of \$2,195 includes meals, guide gratuities, park admissions, double occupancy lodging. Add \$50 for non-members and \$395 for single supplement. Does not include airfare from Denver to San Jose (currently approximately \$700), Costa Rica airport departure tax, and alcoholic beverages. Travel insurance is strongly recommended.

Audubon Master Birder Program Open House

Monday, January 14 at 7pm

Are you ready to take your birding skills to the next level AND share your passion for birds with others? Mark your calendars for January 14 at 7pm. The Master Birder committee will host an informational open house at the ASGD office. Anyone who is considering applying for the program is encouraged to attend. Applications are due on Tuesday, January 29 and all applicants will be asked to participate in an entrance test on January 29 at 7pm (at the ASGD office). The test will include sight and sound bird identification using slides and recorded bird songs. Students accepted into the program will pay a \$100 materials & speakers fee. (Financial assistance may be available for qualified applicants that cannot afford this fee.)

Check out our website, www.denveraudubon.org/masterbirder.htm, for more information. Be sure to review the list of certification requirements and download your application.

If you have questions about becoming a Master Birder, you can contact Susan at 303-973-9530 or ssmith@denveraudubon.org.

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

May 14 - 24, 2008

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

Join Audubon Society of Greater Denver on this Inside Passage voyage between Seattle and Juneau, following the original route taken by stampedeers of the Klondike Gold Rush. We will visit the charming ports and scenic waterways largely unchanged from the gold rushers' era. From dense, forested shores to secluded fjords to immense glaciers and unspoiled waterways, the entire length of the Inside Passage is a paradise for wildlife lovers—mountain goats, harbor seals, bears, humpback whales, orcas and Bald Eagles may be seen. To protect its fragile wilderness, few vessels are permitted to sail into stunning Glacier Bay. Let Cruise West's small ships show it to you the way it should be seen: up-close, leaving nothing behind but our small wake. Bear sightings are particularly exciting! Black bears can be seen from early spring as they wake and feed with their newly born cubs. Tracy Arm and Glacier Bay are perfect for our small ship to nudge close to shore and view these magnificent beasts in their natural surroundings. A National Park Service ranger and a Native Cultural Interpreter offer insightful narration and help you spot wildlife and migrating birds. Humpback whales abound in Frederick Sound and orcas in the Strait of Georgia.

Group pricing per person, double-occupancy cabins start at \$4,027 for Quynana members and \$4,213 for first-time Cruise West passengers; add \$50 for non-ASGD Friends member. Save up to \$400 per person off of brochure rates. Single-share roommate match available in some cabins. Add-on airfare available from Denver into Seattle and back from Juneau for \$800 per person. Cruise includes meals, gratuities and selected shore excursions at each port. Trip will be led by ASGD 2nd Vice President Ann Bonnell. An extension to Denali from May 24 – 28 is available. For a complete itinerary or more information, contact Becky Beckers, 303-766-5266, AgentBecky@aol.com or go to www.TravelFotTheBirds.com.

ASGD recognizes our New Friends Members

Kristin Berg & Peg Snyder, Sandie Booth, Beverly Bresnick, Caryl Buckstein, Amber Davis, Susan Dveirin, Lee & Linda Farrell, Melissa Gardner, Alyson & Jerry Hyatt-Johnson, Monica Johnson, Kathy Kelley, Sandy Kerns, Sue Knight, Walt & Linda Knudsen, Susan Lee, Rene Malden, Chuck & Tisa Meisel, Jeannie Mitchell, James & Patricia Neel, Irene Neff, David Nykerk, Christine Quinlan, Rick & Betsy Rush, Laura Speek, Marian Thornton, Else & Tom Van Erp, Whitney Wimer, Dale Zitek & John Chapter



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