

Why is Audubon talking about Global Warming?

Why is Audubon taking on the global warming issue? Isn't Audubon all about birds?

Call it global warming or climate change—it is, perhaps, the most significant environmental threat the human species has ever faced. There is no part of our lives that will not be touched. Audubon's President John Flicker, at a workshop in Washington D.C., shared with us that the impacts of this threat have the potential to “undo all the important conservation work we have done throughout the organization's history”.

Audubon brings a unique aspect to this effort—one of the largest grassroots memberships of all the large environmental organizations. There are between 46 and 70 million birdwatchers in the United States. If we can engage the birdwatchers in the battle to slow global warming, we can make a difference.

It's also within Audubon's mission —to *conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of*

humanity and the earth's biological diversity. Audubon members are close to and concerned about all ecosystems.

So what about the birds? When you think about it, Audubon's birders are the ideal group to help understand and then express concern about global warming. The proverbial “canary in the coal mine,” birds are a powerful indicator of the earth's health. Bird's sensitivity to ecosystems around the world is magnified by their migrations. Audubon birders have been tracking and recording bird activities for over 100 years, who better to carry the message of concern for global warming? So please keep watching the birds, continue to record numbers and species, and then compare it to the records you've kept for years. You can help all of us understand changes that are occurring globally.

Also at the workshop, Greg Butcher, Audubon's Director of Bird Conservation, highlighted “things to watch for” of interest to birders:

- Birds from farther north and inland are doing better than coastal birds.
- Birds that used to die back during cold winters (the non-migrators) are thriving.
- Grassland and shrubland species have the highest number of “red list” and “yellow list” species due to habitat loss.
- Global climate change includes drying as it warms with implications to habitats worldwide.
- As warming and drying continues, the elevations where birds have typically lived will change. The same impacts will change the timing for flowers and seed production of plants – also understand this as an impact to “bird food”.

Greg offered these suggestions:

1. HELP Birds!
2. Make your yard a bird haven providing natural cover and food.
3. Go bird watching – your observations and records will help us understand changes in our climate.
4. Buy bird/earth friendly products. A lifestyle change to reduce consumption will help reduce global warming which will help birds. Buy products that are ecosystem friendly like shade grown coffee.
5. Be a citizen scientist. Learn about global warming and climate change and what it means to your area. For example: the western states are expected to be more severely impacted by global warming as temperatures rise and drought becomes more of an issue.
6. Support and save Important Bird Areas (IBAs). You can help save habitats through Audubon, the Nature Conservancy or your local open space program or land trust.
7. Become an Audubon Grassroots activist. (sign-up with www.audubonaction.org)

Audubon has joined with the Alliance for Climate Protection (Al Gore's group) to spread the message that “WE are the solution”. Check out their website at <http://www.wecansolveit.org>.

Do you need to know more about global warming? Go to www.audubon.org/globalwarming. The website is a wealth of knowledge about the facts and fictions surrounding global warming, the legislation being discussed in Washington, and what you can do as an individual.

See *Global Warming Forum—a great success on page 3 for more information.*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Talking About Global Warming	1
President's Message	2
Thanks to our Volunteers.....	2
New Friends members.....	2
ASGD goes to Washington, D.C.	3
Global Warming Forum	3
Eagle Eye	4
Calendar of Events	5
Field Trips & Travel	6-8
Backyard Birds	9-10
Global Warming Forum contd.	11
New Service for ASGD Donors.....	11
What's in a name?	11
Donor Recognition.....	11

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE—

What's in a name?

Every birder recognizes the name of John James Audubon and experienced birders can quickly identify the warbler named in his honor. Birders may not be so familiar with another early naturalist, Alexander Wilson. He emigrated to America in 1794 from Scotland and traveled the wilderness painting birds and writing about them. Between 1808 and his death in 1813, he managed to publish seven illustrated volumes of his *AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY*. With two more volumes published posthumously, the set of nine volumes was marketed for \$100.

He met Audubon, who was 19 years younger and painted in a much different style. The publishers in Philadelphia supported Wilson's work, turning Audubon down. It was not until 1827 that Audubon found a publisher in London.

Meanwhile, Thomas Nuttall at Harvard University lectured on natural history from 1825 to 1834 and was honored in the Nuttall Ornithological Club founded in 1873. Ten years later the group organized the American Ornithologists Union. Today, their Checklist of American Birds is recognized as the standard reference guide.

Audubon, Wilson, Nuttall and others are remembered with the birds and plants named in their honor. These early naturalists took the opportunity to explore North America and discover the wonderful abundance of life. Even today, new species of plants, animals, and birds are still being discovered, but most of us will never have that opportunity. Instead, we must seize the opportunity to continue what these pioneers started. We can support research, education, and habitat preservation. We may never get a species named for us, but we can teach a child to love nature or support a cause financially or volunteer. Like those early naturalists, we can all make a difference for years to come



Thanks To Our Volunteers!

TRIP LEADERS: Ann Bonnell, Hugh & Urling Kingery, Harold & Betty Oliver, Karen von Saltza

OFFICE SUPPORT: Courtney James, Phil Reynolds, Carolyn Roark, Grace Weber

ADOPT-A-PLATTE SURVEY: Mary Jane Black, Ellie Jones, Peter Mulholland, Joyce Quigley, Tom Reilly, Peggy Roberts, Jean Stevenson, Betsy Weitkamp, Emilie & Ralph Wiersma

AUCTION INVITATION MAILING: Tom Parchman, Carolyn Roark, Lori Sharp, Nancy Stocker, Marc Goodbody

GLOBAL WARMING FORUM POSTCARD MAILING: Marc Goodbody, Helen F. Hale, Courtney James, Jeanne McCune, Betty McGinnis, Vi Nicholson, Tom Parchman, Carolyn Roark, Lori Sharp

MAY/JUNE WARBLER MAILING: Willa Brunkhorst, Jo Ann Bushnell, Marc Goodbody, Merikay Haggerty, Caroline Hancock, Carolyn Roark, Barbara & Frank Shissler

ASGD recognizes our New Friends Members

Ann Groshek, Arthur Sarlat, Bev Tuel, Beverly Elinoff, Bobbie Jo & Richard Naito, Brenda Voorhies, Carol Thorp, Carolyn Earley, Cymantha Higgins & Darrell Connelly, Darlene Jensen, David Harris, Debra Trujillo, Diane & Marshall Wallach, Dianne Osborne & Bruce Durtsche, Elena Lacinski, Eric Nyre, Evan Moffett & Heidi Crawford, Holly Wilson, Jerry Kromer, Judith Crosson, Karen Joos, Kristine Bryant, Lee Ann Henderson, Liz Ullman, Marleen Wasson, Nicole Buyck, Pam & George Beardsley, Paula & James Breese, RC & Karen Myles, Roisin McEwen, Sean Yates, Sondra Hansen, Sonya Ellingboe, Tanya Zito



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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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ASGD goes to Washington D.C.

by Linda Strand, ASGD board member

After 31 years as a “public servant”, the word advocate sort of gives me the cold sweats. So when the ASGD Board asked me to apply to National Audubon to attend advocacy training in Washington D.C. on the new global warming initiative, I quickly suggested three other people that would be better qualified than me. But after a little convincing, I thought “Well, what the heck, Washington D.C. is supposed to be nice this time of year and I’m certainly interested in the issue of global warming, how bad can it be?”

The agenda for the workshop was for 18 people from targeted states to spend two days at Audubon’s offices in D.C. learning about global warming and legislation being discussed in the House and the Senate. Then

on the third day, we took our newly acquired information and met with our Senators and Representatives or their staff members and shared our position. Our pre-work included reading all the literature sent to us and setting up our appointments on “the hill”.

This is when the Civics courses you had in high school have a benefit. I can now actually tell you where our Con-

gressional Districts are in Colorado, who the Representative is, and how they feel about global warming. I can also tell you what our Senators see as impediments to



ASGD board member Linda Strand “Got her feet wet” learning the ropes during National Audubon’s advocacy training in Washington, D.C.

proposed actions we might take to slow global warming. I know where their offices are, how to make an appointment and how the flashing lights in the cafeteria work when there is a vote coming up on the floor. (OK, I realize that wasn’t part of the Civics class.) I can also tell you that I wish there had been time for twice as many meetings and that we have far to go before substantive change

will occur if we leave this all to the elected officials.

It is now imperative that we become educated on the issue and that we become advocates for the health of the earth. You can help do that by having a conversation with the folks you elected. Advocacy is a powerful thing!

Some tips:

1) Know enough about what you are talking about to carry on an educated conversation. You don’t need to know the science but you do need to know the general cause and effect.

2) Haul out your old Civics book and understand the difference between the House and the Senate and who represents you.

3) To contact your Senator or Representative, call them, write a letter, or make an appointment to express your opinion. They receive far too many mass e-mails to ever read them all or respond.

4) Write a letter to the editor about an action or a vote. Staff members are paid to read the local newspapers.

5) Find out when they will be in town, it’s easier to meet with them when they are in Colorado. Meet with their staff – their job is to talk to you.

Global Warming Forum—a great success

Saturday, May 31 was a beautiful day, just the kind of day you want to be outside birding. Yet, almost 100 people chose to attend the Audubon-sponsored Global Warming Forum instead. The forum was designed to provide a significant amount of information about climate change and what each individual can do to help slow global warming. Each speaker shared their expertise and their passion about this issue.

Gary Graham, Executive Director of Audubon Colorado, discussed the forecast for birds, biodiversity and people, helping us all understand the global impacts that climate change will have on our lives and on the lives of our feathered friends. (www.audubon.org/

globalwarming)

Tom Easley, Director of Programs at the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization (and ASGD Board Member) highlighted the fact that the Rocky Mountain region will feel the warming and drying impacts of global warming more acutely than the rest of the nation. (www.rockymountainclimate.org)

Julia Levin, Global Warming Campaign Director for National Audubon Society, talked about the Lieberman-Warner Bill (The Climate Security Act) which was up for passage and emphasized the importance of letting our elected officials know we want action on this issue. (www.audubon.org/globalwarming)

Laura Farris, Regional Climate Change Coordinator for US EPA Region 8, shared what EPA is doing through regulatory channels to address emissions at all levels of use both by industry sector and as individuals. (<http://www.epa.gov/region8/climatechange>)

Susan Innis, Manager of the Colorado Carbon Fund through the Governor’s Energy Office brought the State perspective highlighting the Colorado Energy Action Plan and incentives for generating alternative energy sources to meet the State’s two greenhouse-gas reduction goals: 20% below 2005 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050. (<http://www.colorado.gov/energy>)

See Global Warming Forum contd. on page 11



Eagle Eye

Watching Public Policy for the Environment
by Polly Reetz

When the 2008 legislative session ended, Audubon lobbyist Jen Boulton characterized it as “the most successful session we’ve ever seen.” Her reason? All the bills that Audubon supported were passed by the legislature, except one, and all the really terrible ones died in Committee. The pace of work was uneven – bills of concern seemed to “bunch up” and require long hours at the statehouse, to be succeeded by down time, followed by another frantic burst of activity.

In the last issue I mentioned several bills we supported, still in the legislative pipeline. Excellent news! HB 1141, linking water supply with new development, passed and went to the Governor for his signature. The final language requires that developers demonstrate that a sustainable (i.e. perpetual) water supply exists to serve their proposed development when they apply to local governments for their permit, if it involves building more than 50 residences. Although it eventually took on a “softer” form than Audubon would have written, it remains, in Jen’s words, “a landmark victory.” But not an easy victory – the bill was rewritten numerous times and amended to gain the neutrality of the realtors’ and homebuilders’ organizations. It was eventually supported by a wide coalition of water providers and local governments, as well as the conservation community. Thanks are due to Rep. Kathleen Curry and Sen. Bob Bacon for introducing the bill and initiating a dialogue that Colorado badly needs.

The bill to regulate uranium mining as a “designated mining operation” also passed both Houses and will be signed by Gov. Ritter. The enactment of HB 1161 means that in situ uranium operations have to demonstrate that they can reclaim the aquifer to pre-mining conditions, requires a heightened standard of environmental protection, monitoring, and surety for reclamation, and gives the operator the task of notifying the Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety immediately if anything goes wrong, among other provisions. Weld County legislators, facing such a mining operation, were instrumental in passage of this bill.

Legislators also passed a bill dealing with pine beetle damage and watershed protection. Audubon wanted this bill. SB 221, to include guarantees of long-term forest health, such as reforestation requirements and prohibition of any new roads, so that logging to remove beetle-killed trees doesn’t do more damage in the long term than the beetles. Another provision Jen worked on would include forestry experts in the process, to certify that forest health projects will have the intended effect and to minimize environmental impacts. All these provisions were included in the final bill. Good work, Jen!

A number of bills that will help combat global warming—or “global climate disruption” as we should probably call it—made it through the process. Legislation increases fees for pollution from stationary sources, requires municipally owned utilities and REAs to reimburse customers who contribute to the

energy grid (by producing their own energy from solar or wind sources, e.g.), encourages the development of solar power resources, helps homeowners and businesses finance solar, wind and energy efficiency improvements, and extends an existing prohibition on covenants and deed restrictions that limit the use of solar energy devices and adds wind-powered awnings, lighting fixtures and even clotheslines to the list of items that can’t be banned by covenant. In combination with bills to protect Bald Eagles and fund the Species Conservation Trust Fund adequately, these made for a terrific legislative session.

The one bill Audubon supported that didn’t pass was a tax credit for donating water rights for instream flow protection. We hope to see this revive next year, along with bills to protect wetlands and – long shot- repeal a requirement that county commissioners have to approve relocation of prairie dogs.

It has been my honor and pleasure to chair the Audubon Public Policy Committee, which advises the lobbyist on legislative priorities, for four years. The Committee elected a new chairman in May, Dr. Ron Harden of Loveland. Ron will do a great job as chairman and we all hope for another good year in 2009. We also wish a fond farewell to several excellent legislators who are retiring due to term limits: Sen. Ron Tupa, Reps. Andrew Romanoff and Alice Madden and especially Sen. Ken Gordon. They have been staunch champions of the environment, often in difficult circumstances. They will be very much missed.

To read Jen’s final report, go to www.auduboncolorado.org, and click on the link to **Issues and Action**, then on **Current Colorado Legislative Efforts**.

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AUDUBON SOCIETY

of GREATER DENVER

Calendar of Events

JULY 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			6:30am Mt. Glennon Bird Survey 8:30-11:30am Garden Stewards 2		Independence Day 4	7:30am Prospect Park/Wheatridge Greenbelt FT 5
8am Walk the Wetlands 6	7pm Master Birder Class 7	Niobrara Trip Departs 7pm ASGD Board Meeting 8	6:30am Mt. Glennon 8am Filius Park FT 8:30-11:30am Garden Stewards 9		Niobrara Trip Returns 11	6am Master Birder FT 12
		7pm Conservation Committee 15	8:30-11:30am Garden Stewards 16		2pm Master Birder Committee 18	8:30am Master Birder FT 7am Lair 'o the Bear FT 19
	7pm Master Birder Class 21		8:30-11:30am Garden Stewards 23			6am Master Birder Field Test 26
	6am Master Birder Field Test 28		8:30-11:30am Garden Stewards 30			

AUGUST 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
8am Walk the Wetlands 3	7pm Master Birder Class 4		8:30-11:30am Garden Stewards 7pm Member Meeting 6			6:30am Master Birder FT 9
		7pm ASGD Board Meeting 12	8:30-11:30am Garden Stewards 13			
	7pm Master Birder Class 18		8:30-11:30am Garden Stewards 2pm FT Committee 20		— RM Balloon Festival (at Chatfield) — 22	6am Master Birder FT 23
7am Fountain Creek Park FT — RMB Festival — 24			8:30-11:30am Garden Stewards 27			
5:30am Pruitt & Jackson Reservoir Field Trip 31						



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– FIELD TRIPS –

NO MEMBER MEETING IN JULY

Mt. Glennon Bird Survey (Morrison)

Date: July 2, 2008, Wednesday, 6:30am
July 9, 2008, Wednesday, 6:30am

Leader: Kathanne Lynch

Fee: None

Pre-registration is required.

MEETING PLACE: Contact leader Kathanne Lynch at 303-968-4750 for the exact meeting location.

DESCRIPTION: Morrison's Mt. Glennon is part of Jefferson County Open Space. This hogback is primarily a montane grasslands habitat that attracts roughly 30 bird species. The three-hour trip requires moderately strenuous walking.

TO REGISTER, call ASGD at 303-973-9530 or send an email to rshank@denveraudubon.org.

Prospect Park – Wheatridge Greenbelt

Dates: July 5, 2008, Saturday, 7:30am

Leader: Jackie King

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

Pre-registration is required.

MEETING PLACE: Meet at Prospect Park Lake near the permanent restrooms, south of West 44th Ave., just east of Robb St. This is an excellent area to see Warblers as well as shore and water birds. This will be a half day trip so bringing lunch is optional. Leader is using a scooter for mobility so this trip is accessible and will involve easy walking only.

TO REGISTER, call ASGD at 303-973-9530 or send an email to rshank@denveraudubon.org.

Walk the Wetlands

Date: July 6th, 2008, Sunday 8:00am

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

Fee: None

Pre-registration not required.

MEETING PLACE: Audubon Center at Chatfield. The Audubon Center is located on Waterton Road, 4.4 miles south of C470 and Wadsworth.

Filius Park – Echo & Summit Lakes (Mt. Evans)

Date: July 9, 2008 Friday 8:00am

Leader: Lynn Willcocksin

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

Pre-registration is required

MEETING PLACE: Meet at Filius Park. The habitat is diverse going from foothills to alpine. In the foothills, we hope to see Green-tailed Towhee, Pine Siskin and Western Bluebird. Echo Lake – Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Rufous Hummingbird, White Capped Rosy Finch. Directions to Filius Park: Go west on I 70 to Evergreen exit then 2 miles to first Bergen Park exit (stop light) and turn right to Filius Park (100 yards). Full day of birding. Bring lunch and water. Mt. Evans has a \$6 per car fee. Golden Eagle Pass may be used. Group is limited to 8 participants.

TO REGISTER, call ASGD at 303-973-9530 or send an email to rshank@denveraudubon.org.

Lair o' the Bear Park - Bear Creek Canyon

Date: July 19, 2008, Saturday, 7:00am

Leader: Norm Lewis

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

Pre-registration is required.

MEETING PLACE: Meet at the park, which is in Bear Creek Canyon. The road is Highway 74, AKA Morrison Road, AKA Bear Creek Canyon Road. The park is about five miles west of Morrison, or one mile west of Idledale. Meet at the west end of the main parking lot.

DESCRIPTION: Lair o' the Bear (Jefferson County Open Space Park) is one of the premier sites in the Front Range for observing foothills nesting species. The park's variety of habitats (coniferous and riparian, deciduous woodland, creek, marsh, brushy meadow, etc.) attracts a wide number of nesters. Lair is known as one of the best places to see nesting Lesser Goldfinch and Lazuli Bunting. Other species present include Cedar Waxwing, Song Sparrow, American Dipper, Plumbeous Vireo, Virginia's Warbler, Cordilleran Flycatcher, and many more. Mid-July is the perfect time to see late nesting and fledging birds. Join us for a half day of observation and fun. This outing will involve a couple of miles of moderately strenuous hiking.

TO REGISTER, call ASGD at 303-973-9530 or send an email to rshank@denveraudubon.org.

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– FIELD TRIPS –

Walk the Wetlands

Date: August 3, 2008, Sunday 8:00am
Leaders: Hugh and Urling Kingery (303-814-2723),
Doris Cruze, and other Master Birders
Fee: None
Pre-registration not required.

MEETING PLACE: Audubon Center at Chatfield. The Audubon Center is located on Waterton Road, 4.4 miles south of C470 and Wadsworth.

Members Meeting

Date: Wednesday, August 6, 2008 7pm
Presenters: Jan and Charlie Turner

MEETING PLACE: Audubon Center at Chatfield

DESCRIPTION: "Wildflowers of Red Rocks Park and other Front Range Sites." Join Jan and Charlie Turner for a beautiful photography show of some of Colorado's Front Range wildflowers. Flowers seen at Red Rocks Park will be emphasized. The Turners have produced three photography books on Colorado's wildflower. Not only are they photographers and Botanists, but they share the position of president of the Colorado Native Plant Society.

Fountain Creek Park

Date: August 24, 2008, Sunday, 7:00am
Leader: Mackenzie Goldthwait
Fee: \$8/Friends members, \$10/non-members
Pre-registration is required.

MEETING PLACE: Meet to carpool at the Lowe's Home Improvement store at the south end of the Castle Rock Outlet Store parking lot at the Contractor entrance. We will drive to the Fountain Creek Visitor's Center and walk approximately 3 to 4 miles along the creek and around several ponds. Should time permit we will move to a second location along the creek to look for shorebirds.

DESCRIPTION: Fountain Creek is a floodplain habitat just south of Colorado Springs that is a favorite corridor for migrants and lowland riparian breeders. Over 50 species of birds nest in this park and more than 260 species have been observed. We should see this year's young and early migrants heading south. This is a ¾-day trip. Bring lunch, water and

dress in layers. Weather is changeable; afternoon thunder showers probable. The visitor's center is closed on Sunday so there are no bathroom facilities. Contact Mackenzie Goldthwait, leader, for details 720-981-5689.

TO REGISTER, call ASGD at 303-973-9530 or send an email to rshank@denveraudubon.org.

Northeastern Colorado, Pruitt Reservoir & Jackson Reservoir

Date: August 31, 2008, Sunday, 5:30am
Leader: Joey Kellner
Fee: \$8/Friends members, \$10 for Non Friends
Pre-registration is required.

MEETING PLACE: Meet leader at the Division of Wildlife, 6060 N. Broadway – Exit I-25 at 58th Ave.: Go west 2 blocks to Broadway, then north 2 blocks to parking lot on right. Wildlife Habitat Stamp for State Wildlife Areas and State Parks Pass required.

DESCRIPTION: This is an excellent time of the year to observe numerous migrating shore and land birds. It is an all day trip. Intermediate and seasoned birders should bring lunch, plenty of water, sunscreen and bug spray.

TO REGISTER, call ASGD at 303-973-9530 or send an email to rshank@denveraudubon.org.

Looking Ahead to September...

Beginning Bird Watching Class

Dates: Thursday, Sept. 18, 2008: 7-9pm – Classroom session at the Audubon Center at Chatfield.
Field Trips Dates: Saturdays, Sep. 20nd, 27th, October 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th - 8am to 1pm
Leaders: Hugh and Urling Kingery
Fee: \$125/Friends members, \$150/non member
Pre-registration is required.

MEETING PLACE: Meeting place information will be provided to registered participants.

DESCRIPTION: Trips to bird watching sites around metro Denver: Chatfield, Barr Lake and Castlewood Canyon State Park, Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, and Genesee Mountain. Voted "Best

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– FIELD TRIPS & TRAVEL –

of Denver!" 20 years 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.

TO REGISTER, call ASGD at 303-973-9530 or send an email to rshank@denveraudubon.org.

– TRAVEL –

Costa Rica Wildlife Tour: Nature's Spectacles

October 9-24, 2008

This trip features the nesting of olive ridleys (the most abundant sea turtle) and the raptor migration. Watch as hundreds or even thousands of turtles lay their eggs on the beach at Ostional on the Pacific Coast. Marvel as 100,000 raptors or more (annual total is over two million - one of the three largest raptor migrations in the world!) migrate southward daily along the Caribbean.

This trip is timed for the peak of the raptor migration and the most likely period of the largest *arribadas* (arrivals) of nesting olive ridleys. We'll also visit Tortuguero, the area made famous by Archie Carr's studies of the green turtle. The geothermal Rincon de la Vieja National Park in the dry, tropical forest provides a contrast to the lush rainforests of the Caribbean.

Migrating raptor species include broad-winged hawks, Swainson's hawks, peregrine falcons, merlins, ospreys, and turkey vultures. We may also encounter crested and yellow-headed caracaras, bat falcon, zone-tailed hawk, mangrove black-hawk, roadside hawk, and white hawk.

We will also seek out: coatis, sloths, three species of monkeys, collared anteaters, and a panoply of tropical birds - toucans, tanagers, parrots, hummingbirds, warblers.

A knowledgeable, bilingual, Costa Rican naturalist guide will accompany us throughout, along with our own coach and driver and specialist guides at each destination. Enjoy charming accommodations in lovely natural settings and delicious local cuisine. Maximum group size is 16.

The land cost for this unique 16-day tour is \$3,995 which includes all meals, lodging, guiding, and national park fees.

The tour price includes a \$300 donation to ASGD for any members, friends, and relatives who go. International airfare (currently about \$600 roundtrip from Denver) is not included. For a detailed itinerary, please email Bill Turner at toursbyturner@aol.com, call (303) 795-5128, or mail a request to 7395 S. Downing Circle W.; Centennial, CO 80122.

The Columbia and Snake Rivers: A Small-Ship Experience

April 17 - 24, 2009 (7 nights/8 days)

Roundtrip from Portland, OR on the Spirit of '98 (96 guests)

Step back into history as we follow in the footsteps of Lewis and Clark on the Columbia and Snake Rivers on this Cruise West expedition.

For Lewis & Clark, the Snake River was an area of almost continual rapids and waterfalls. Today, the area is starkly beautiful, with a mixture of orchards, farmland, and rangeland where beef cattle and deer graze. Many scenic parks dot the shoreline. Several areas have also been set aside as wildlife refuges by the Corps of Engineers to mitigate natural habitat areas lost when water backed up behind the dams. Look for osprey, golden eagles, and numerous species of hawk along the cliffs, bluffs, and shorelines.

As our small ship approaches the mouth of the mighty Columbia, you disembark to visit Fort Clatsop. Other new wonders await around every bend-- dramatic waterfalls and ancient petroglyphs carved into the 4,000 foot cliffs. And a fascinating look at how the rivers themselves were tamed in the 1930s, as you transit almost 1,000 miles and navigate eight major sets of locks and dams.

Cruise West staff and exploration leaders will guide a series of excursions to help you recapture the past. You'll learn about the hardships of establishing the Whitman Mission in the wilderness; the contributions of the Nez Perce in the shaping of this region and their vision for the future, and about modern environmental issues of salmon survival and irrigation rights. The trip offers an exquisite balance of discovery, adventure, relaxation, and personal exploration.

Group pricing per person, double-occupancy cabins start at \$3,069 for Quyuana Members and \$3,235 per person for first time Cruise West passengers; add \$50 for non-ASGD Friends member. Cruise includes meals, gratuities and selected shore excursions. Save up to \$330 per person off of brochure rates. Single share roommate match available in some cabins. Trip will be led by ASGD Second V.P. Ann Bonnell. For complete itinerary or additional information, contact Becky Beckers, 303-766-5266, AgentBecky@aol.com or go to www.TravelForTheBirds.com

backyard birds....

by Hugh Kingery



BUCKTHORNS, SAYS BEN COOPER, spread brazenly with suckers and berries. He started to thin them when a neighbor told him, "The birds just love 'em as winter comes on, then into early spring when they really need 'em!" Ben quit his eradication campaign and this spring, "the birds, especially the robins, have been gobbling those berries. They seem very thirsty though; they're popping into our water trays, sometimes for a drink; they also may take a little jump, plop right in for a bath! Their water is a gross yellowy green or even black! It's got to be those buckthorn berries. Well, I've been into birds too long to quit now. I shall just have to call it 'Buckthorn's Revenge!'"

FROM GREEN MOUNTAIN, Nan Brehmer calls "Robin Red-breasts my favorite bird—ever since I was a small child. My grandparents gave me a salt shaker and said if I could shake some salt onto the tail of a robin digging for worms then the bird wouldn't fly away but would become my special robin—a sort-of-pet. I tried and tried but somehow could never get quite close enough." Patrick Marshall noticed a robin with a white head and a white tail feather; in the city we seem to notice partial albino (leucistic) birds more often than in the field.

JEAN DAVIDS, has fed robins for years in her Lakewood backyard – "35-40 this year. We used to have only one stay the winter. This year we had hoped for four and all of a sudden we had this big flock. The Qwest telephone technician stood there laughing when he saw all the robins fly down to the patio. Why are people so surprised when I tell them robins eat raisins? Like the King Soopers checkers when they ask what I do with all the raisins I buy."

THE WINTER INFLUX of mountain birds abated some. Celia Greenman, in Lakewood, enjoyed Mountain Chickadees and Red and White-breasted Nuthatches through the winter, and then in late March saw a Brown Creeper. Karl Stecher, Centennial, reported two Red-breasteds coming to sunflower seeds daily from mid April into May. Roy Hohn had them all winter in Centennial; Jean saw two on April 10. Yet Wil Harrington, in southern Jeffco, has a pair nesting in a birdbox near five Austrian pines. They coated the entrance with pine pitch from the pines.

A FEW OTHER WINTER BIRDS stopped by: Doug Kibbe reported the last Denver-area Bohemian Waxwings, a flock of over 100, feeding on crabapples in Littleton April 13.

APRIL 6, URLING HEARD strange sounds coming from a patch of scrub oak below our house. The singer included clear whistles, some chatters, and some odd clucking sounds. After 15 minutes of peering into the oak patch, we finally saw a Harris's Sparrow flip up towards the top of the patch for a 10-second exhibition, then disappear. Through the winter, one has come in sporadically with a flock of juncos to feed on millet that we throw on the ground. Generally it showed up during bad weather.

MIGRANTS MADE A BIG IMPRESSION, many on the snowy blustery days this spring. On March 28 Gerrie Pawley saw a flock of Sandhill Cranes ("a line an inch long") flying over near Cherry Creek dam. Likewise, on March 30, Myriam Grant reported 100-200 Sandhills flying over her house in Lone Tree; they circled over the house in some disarray and then headed, sort of, northeasterly.

MARCH 28: KEVIN CORWIN says "eight Turkey Vultures flew in close formation low over my home in west Centennial." April 11, Tom Abbott "was startled to see a Turkey Vulture cruising around between snow flurries about 500 feet over Kipling in Arvada. May 3, Ken Gammon in Franktown watched one "land on an anthill. He went through the top of the anthill with his bill." Probably it was "anting" – a sort of bathing behavior used by many species.

APRIL 10, IN LAKEWOOD, Jean says "my husband, Harvey, saw them first: a flock of ten Red Crossbills flew to the top of a backyard spruce tree. For years now, what with all those spruce cones, I had hoped for crossbills. What fun to watch them hanging upside down on the cones."

APRIL 15, KATHY DRESSSEL (FRANKTOWN): "our first hummingbird (male Broad-tailed) visited our feeders this afternoon. This is the earliest hummer visit for us!" Ken Gammon saw his first hummers on May 10. May 13, Flo DeCesare, in Greenwood Village, saw her first, a Calliope female. "She ate four times while we watched with joy."

APRIL 16, KAREN METZ IN FRANKTOWN: "A Ruby-crowned Kinglet is singing while snow flurries fall this afternoon. This is the usual first-appearance date." May 1, Carolyn Zwahlen, Perry Park: "This a.m., during the snowstorm, a male Lazuli Bunting at our feeder. During the summer it will occasionally come to drink, but I have never seen it at the feeder. It made quite a picture with snow falling all around that blue." May 3, Roy Hohn, a Green-tailed Towhee. May 6 in Lakewood, Alison Kondler "had a delightful visit from two Evening Grosbeaks. They chatted away as they ate buds/bugs in a tall willow tree. Ten minutes later an American Kestrel flew nearby and the grosbeaks were gone." May 12, Flo in Greenwood, a Western Tanager and Mary Driscoll saw one May 25 ("hadn't seen one since 06").

MEREDITH MCBURNEY operated the banding station near the Audubon Nature Center during May; she recorded more species (and banded more birds) than any of the previous four years of banding there. Inclement weather may have caused more migrants to stop in the shelter of the cottonwoods. She added a slew of first-ever migrants: four warblers – Tennessee, Hooded, Blackpoll, Northern Parula, and her second Ovenbird; first-ever Lazuli Bunting, Marsh Wren, second Veery, and first swallows (usually they fly high above the banding nets): Violet-green, N. Rough-winged, and Barn. She banded five Empidonax Flycatchers (Hammond's, Dusky, Least, Cordilleran, and the first Gray).

ON MAY 26, MARK CHAVEZ got home to Green Mountain "just as the drizzle and rain began; in ten minutes, I saw a Wilson's Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, Yellow Warblers, an

Backyard Birds continued on page 10

Backyard Birds continued from page 9

Empidonax flycatcher, and a lot of Black-chinned Hummer activity before a Cooper's Hawk flushed all the birds from the backyard. After the Cooper's left, I noticed a bird drop into the water fixture. It was a great-looking Ovenbird!"

COOPER'S CONTINUE TO PLY THE CITY. In Aurora, Dodie Hampton watched one nest-building in mid March. Then in April Bill (I lost his last name) watched a Cooper's as "he touched down and then hopped into the bushes next door, apparently stalking the House Finches and English Sparrows that ground-feed there. Great viewing; he is around nearly every day, usually getting a finch. Patti Locke saw a Cooper's catch a Mourning Dove in her yard on May 10. She says in two days the doves eat all the seeds she puts out – safflower and thistle. Otherwise 30-40 Common Grackles come in. Judy Reilly says, "A Sharp-shinned Hawk has turned my feeding area into a buffet line. The only birds that seem to be taking a beating are the flickers, but the little birds aren't being affected, nor are the Blue Jays or magpies."

NEAR HIGHLANDS RANCH, TOM FOSTER observed a Great Horned Owl that took over a magpie nest. The crows harass it regularly. In late April in southeast Denver, Gail Evans woke at 4 a.m. to the whinny of an Eastern Screech-Owl.

FROM WILLOWBROOK, Richard Casper sent notes about his Northern Saw-whet Owl:

March 26: heard commotion on deck; saw beautiful bird, all yellow eyes. Two flickers scolding it and 2 Blue Jays; also 6-12 chickadees. Got within a foot of it without disturbing the owl.

March 28: Went to clean out the flicker box and saw yellow eyes that filled the opening; it had its head out for three hours, with eyes closed."

BILL WOLFE LIVES ALONG HIGHLINE CANAL in Littleton. A flotilla of Wood Ducks comes into his yard to feed on sunflower seeds that he scatters over his driveway; sometimes as many as 36 of them! They come in at morning and dusk, and roost in cedars along the driveway or on his roof. The ducks plow through 40 pounds of sunflower seeds every two weeks. Since this happened in April, he wondered where they will nest, because the closest ponds are at least a block away. As a carpenter, he can easily make nest boxes. Trouble is, he hasn't figured out where to put them, because of the distance from the ponds and advice that they should be spaced 600 yards apart.

IN THE POND IN CHAR GOTTLIEB'S ARVADA YARD, "in May, we had Wood Duck and Blue-winged Teal males. The pond is also home to a pair of Mallards, and we will soon have baby ducks. In 34 years of living here I have never found the nest. Killdeers have returned to the field, and I never find their nest either. Also of note is the return in mid April of the Black-crowned Night-Heron, and I spotted one Common Snipe along the edge of our pond and streams. I saw the snipe last year also, and I don't think it should be a "common" snipe because I hardly ever see it!"

CHAR'S COMMENT RAISES THE ISSUE of bird names. The Checklist Committee of the American Ornithologists Union determines the relationships and names of North American birds. New research regularly challenges existing notions about birds. And Char – you're liberated. Two decades ago, the AOU changed Wilson's Snipe to Common Snipe because of its presumed identity as a subspecies of the Eurasian species of that name. Five years ago, they recanted; now it's Wilson's Snipe. Not "common" any more.

THIS HAPPENS TO LOTS OF OUR BIRDS. Among those reported to Backyard Birds this spring, the AOU gave our oriole its previous name, Bullock's; no longer Northern. Ditto our towhee: now Spotted, no longer Rufous-sided. Both of these have eastern affiliates – Baltimore Oriole and Eastern Towhee. Others: Red-naped Sapsucker, split from Yellow-bellied, and Solitary Vireo, split into three species – Blue-headed (eastern U.S.), Cassin's (West Coast), and Plumbeous (Rocky Mountains).

ON THE OTHER HAND, the AOU "lumped" Red-shafted and Yellow-shafted Flickers into Northern Flicker – they hybridize particularly in eastern Colorado; Ann Bonnell says that along the Front Range, we can designate very few, if any, as pure 'Red-shafted.' Audubon's and Myrtle Warblers are now Yellow-rumped, and we see a few hybrids during migration.

COLORADO HAS A CONNECTION to that Checklist Committee: two members went to high school here: Van Remsen in Lakewood (now a professor at Louisiana State) and Doug Stotz in Evergreen (now a staff ornithologist at the Field Museum in Chicago).

DOVE INCURSIONS CONTINUE: Judy Reilly panicked when a Eurasian Collared-Dove showed up in her backyard, because inside the house she has a Ringed Turtle-Dove which she feared had escaped. The two species look alike, and many bird books don't show the Collared-Dove, which became widespread in the U.S. only in the last ten years. In Parker, a White-winged Dove (also a spreading species but at least a native) spent the winter; Tim Davis mentioned that "the call is quite different from the much more common Collared-Doves." Five years ago we would have compared it to Mourning Doves!

A COTERIE OF FRANKTOWN OBSERVERS reported their spring birds. Western Bluebirds showed up early: Ken Gammon's first ones March 11, ours March 12. Now they have young in bird houses from those sites to Elizabeth (Veronica Holt), Franktown (Karen Metz), and Castle Rock (Kirk Huffstater). Urling and I watched spring unfold daily; our first records: May 4, Black-headed Grosbeak (May 5 at Ken Gammon's); May 5 – Lazuli Bunting; May 6 – Plumbeous Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Virginia's Warbler; May 15 – Bullock's Oriole; May 24 – Common Nighthawk; May 8 – Common Poorwill; May 20 – Warbling Vireo, Western Tanager, Yellow-breasted Chat; May 22 – Lesser Goldfinch.

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 — ouzels8@AOL.com.

Ann Livingston, Sustainability Coordinator for Boulder County, brought the issue down to the local level with an impressive list of initiatives adopted in Boulder to make the County government "greener" and to encourage action on the part of County residents. (www.bouldercounty.org/sustain) Boulder also features a great "how to" website called Climate Smart. (<http://www.beclimatesmart.com>)

Dr. Roger Pulwarty, NOAA Climate Scientist and member of the Nobel Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, gave an informative, entertaining and inspirational keynote presentation on the big picture and inter-governmental discussions related to climate change. His comments regarding adaptation and mitigation were especially insightful and valuable. (<http://www.climate.noaa.gov/ipcc/first-ipcc.html>)

Polly Reetz, ASGD Board Member and Chair of the ASGD Conservation Committee, highlighted the Audubon Society's global warming "Action Toolkit" and underscored it with a message of personal commitment and action.

The important messages from the forum were:

- 1) Global warming is occurring. As you read this article, we are already seeing impacts of the earth's rising temperatures as we observe earlier snowmelt, bird populations moving to higher elevations and to more northerly locations, altered bud and bloom cycles on plants, and weed and bug infestations that are favored by warmer, drier climates.
- 2) Alternative energy sources are being investigated and developed. Some of those sources will prove to be good for slowing climate change and others will prove to be ineffective. We should encourage the process but not jump at the quick fixes. It will take some time to develop the right mix of energy sources, create the infrastructure to support their distribution, and make modifications to the ways we use energy.
- 3) The critical time frame will be the next five to ten years as alternative energy sources are developed. During that time, the best course of action is for each of us to reduce consumption. There is no lack of information available for each of us to learn what we can do from not buying bottled water, to low flow shower-heads, walking on errands, taking the light rail, changing out light bulbs, and the list continues.
- 4) Become an advocate, call your elected officials at all levels. Contact your Senators and Representatives at the national and state levels to pursue "green" initiatives. Encourage your municipal and county officials to green their service delivery and development approaches.

Sign up for Audubon Action at http://audubonaction.org/campaign/co_pledge.

New Service for ASGD Members

Vehicle Donation Program

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver is partnering with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado to offer a vehicle donation program. This is a great way to support programs that benefit birds and kids. If you have a vehicle to donate, please contact Rhonda at ASGD at 303-973-9530.

AN INVITATION TO OUR BIRDING FRIENDS

Please help Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) celebrate its 20th anniversary during its annual picnic on Saturday, August 16, 2008 at the Old Stone House at Barr Lake State Park. Anyone interested in birds is invited to attend this event, highlighted by a keynote address, "Frontiers in Field Ornithology," delivered by popular speaker and ABA editor, Ted Floyd. The event also features morning bird walks, visits to RMBO's banding station, birding workshops, children's activities, live birds, a silent auction, and its famous BBQ lunch. Cost is \$10 RMBO members, \$12 non-members, children ages 17 and under free.

RMBO's banding station will be open from 7 to 9:30 in the morning and field trips led by RMBO birding experts will leave from the Stone House between 7 and 9 a.m.

Concurrent workshop sessions will begin at 10 and 11 a.m. Susie Mottashed, author of *Who Lives in Your Backyard? Creating a journal that opens your eyes and heart to nearby wonders*, will be presenting a workshop on field sketching birds. RMBO biologists Arvind Panjabi and Jason Beason will speak on "The Mexican Connection," and the "Yellow-billed Cuckoo" respectively; Mike Carter, RMBO's founder will talk about the beginnings of the organization, and Lynn Wickersham, coordinator of the project, will discuss the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II.

Check the RMBO web site (www.rmbo.org) for further information.

ASGD Recognizes our valued Donors

Dave & Nan Anderson, Bill & Joan Bevington, The Front Range Birding Company, Ed & Judy Butterfield, Carol DeStefanis, David & Mary Driscoll, Leo Eisel & Nina Churchman, Betty McGinnis, Thomas Parchman, Bob & Sandy Righter, Sean Yates, Tanya Zito

MEMORIAL GIFTS:

Elise Brougham in honor of Bob & Margaret Miller

FROM THE LOIS WEBSTER FUND: Our thanks to Ardith E. Rieke, a long time friend of Lois Webster's for her generous contribution to the Lois Webster Fund in the names of Lyn and Gary George of Casper, WY., Jon and Allison George, and Timothy George, all of Lakewood, CO.



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