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Share the View Photo Contest

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver is excited to inaugurate its first ever International Nature Photography Contest and you (and all your friends and family) can be a part of it. Submit your best images of the natural world, including landscapes, flora, fauna, macro, aerial, behavior, portrait, underwater, urban wildlife, abstract, black & white, and atmospheric and see how they stand against the competition. You'll even have a chance to



Photos courtesy of Wendy Shattil & Bob Rozinski Shattil / Rozinski Photography

that the image is in keeping with the theme of nature and wildlife. All entries should accurately reflect the subject matter and scene as it actually appeared when captured with the camera. Photos may NOT be digitally altered beyond standard optimization. Domestic animals and plants, people, and the "hand of man" may be included, but wildlife, landscape or nature must be the featured element.

What images cannot be entered

into the competition? Game farm animals are not allowed – game farms are defined as private for-profit operations whose primary income is generated from hiring out captive animals for photography, videography and filmmaking. We will accept images of animals from wildlife sanctuaries, zoos and rehabilitation facilities, but judges will be instructed to favor photographs of animals in the wild over those in controlled conditions. We will not accept any images that obviously involved a photographer over-stressing an animal.

All images will be entered digitally on our contest website. Proceeds from the contest will go to support ASGD programs – what a great way to support our organization and show us the beauty of our surroundings. We've seen you take the pictures. We know you have them – now let's see them!

And may the best nature photographs win!

win the \$1000 Grand Prize, or one of the four first prizes of \$250 each. Five Honorable Mentions will win \$100 each. That's not bad for a \$10/ image entry fee – enter as many images as you'd like to increase your odds of winning, but make them your best!

Not only will you have the chance to win some big bucks, but if you place in the top 250, your image will appear on the contest website throughout 2012, one featured image per day that will be accompanied by the photographer's name, contact information and website link (if requested).

The contest takes place from October 15 through November 30, 2011. If you register on our website now (<http://denveraudubon.contestvenue.com/>) we will send an email to remind you when the contest submission period is open.

Trying to figure out what images to submit? Other than making sure the image was taken by the person submitting it, be sure

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Find us on: facebook.

Celebrating 42 Years of service to the Greater Denver Community

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK ~

Our members and members of the public often become more familiar with ASGD by participating in our educational programs, whether it is a family activity at the Audubon Center, our popular beginning bird watching class, a field trip to one of many locations throughout Denver and beyond, or an adventure on one of our domestic or international trips. We also reach over 3,000 students each year through our school programs. Education is certainly our "main pillar".

However, we should not forget the other two important pillars of the ASGD mission: Conservation and Research. Our members and the public may not always be aware of our activities in these two areas and the dedicated people on the Conservation Committee and the Lois Webster Fund Committee. We are working to change this.

On July 2, we had a family program called Snakes on the Plains. It was presented by Eric Gangloff, a 2011 Lois Webster Fund recipient. What made the program so great was not only Eric's excellent presentation and ability to relate to children and adults, but the program was an ideal example combining Education, Conservation, and Research. Eric taught participants how to operate the telemetry equipment that he uses during his research. He continually stressed the importance of protecting not only rare species, but common ones as well. And the highlight: a beautiful garter snake Eric found by the ponds at the Audubon Center. That's what we call a teachable moment!

You can be active in conservation on many levels. Recently, one of our Volunteer Naturalists used his wildlife biology background to save an injured Swainson's hawk found in a parking lot. We've had many more non-biologist members of ASGD and the public call us to find out how they can help an injured bird. This is just one of many ways you can help birds, wildlife, and habitats. Keep abreast of current conservation issues on the ASGD website, our Facebook page, and by meeting other concerned naturalists during our programs.

We hope to continue to offer more family, adult, and school programs that incorporate our conservation and research programs. Stay tuned!



Karl Brummert
Executive Director



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MISSION

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

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Bird & Brew Trivia

Wednesday, September 28, 7-9pm
Breckenridge Brewery Ballpark Pub

2220 Blake Street • Denver 80205 • www.breckbrew.com

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

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

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

\$5 entry fee per person proceeds support ASGD programs

303-973-9530 or info@denveraudubon.org

Conservation Report

by Polly Reetz, ASGD Conservation Committee Chair

Have you ever heard developers/ agency folks/columnists (take your pick) say, “Those radical conservationists want it all” when you, as a citizen, ask for protection of wildlife habitat, plans that avoid massive negative impacts on bird species, or just maintenance of parks or open space that already exist?

Several issues that the Conservation Committee is working on might seem to be “asking for it all” but when you look closer, “all” often means protection of migratory bird habitat or alternatives to a development that make more sense environmentally, fiscally and socially. Here are some examples:

Audubon and other conservation organizations have strongly supported conversion of our energy production systems from fossil fuels to greener alternatives like wind and solar. BUT we also request that these alternative energy sources not inflict massive damage on bird populations and habitats. Now a **wind-generation facility** is being proposed along the Texas Gulf Coast, which gets used by huge numbers of migrating waterfowl, raptors, songbirds and other species. National. Audubon is asking that an Environmental Impact Statement be written to analyze impacts of the project so that an alternative that minimizes effects on migrating birds can be identified. Yes, we want more wind energy, but is it unreasonable to ask that birds be protected at the same time? We think not.

Neighborhood activists around **Cushing Park** in Englewood are objecting to RTD’s plans to pave over the western end of the Park to expand the parking lot for the Englewood light rail station. This part of the Park includes a segment of Little Dry Creek, which supports a small riparian community, an ecosystem that is rare in Colorado and getting rarer, as we dam and divert our streams. Audubon supports public transportation all right, but don’t we also want to maintain our riparian areas, however small? A neighborhood

park, especially with some natural riparian vegetation, is somewhere kids can experience nature. National movements to combat childhood obesity and re-connect children (and their parents) with nature stress the need for such accessible natural areas, no matter how small or degraded. So yes, we want public transportation, but we also want to maintain these small green spaces to benefit both wildlife and our children. We have to ask RTD to seek less damaging alternatives!

The final example is the **Chatfield Reallocation**. Here we have a project that will use existing infrastructure – Chatfield Reservoir – to store more water for municipal and industrial users, rather than requiring a new reservoir be built. Isn’t that what environmentalists want? Well, yes, but not if the project destroys Chatfield State Park as we know it and eliminates much of the crucial cottonwood gallery forest, wetlands and uplands that are so important to migrating, nesting and wintering birds. Rather than asking to “have it all” we’re asking for consideration of alternatives that don’t eliminate important wildlife habitat, for actions that can mitigate the impacts of the project, and for ample time for public comment. We the people should be smart enough to figure out how to achieve an adequate water supply without irreparably damaging a much-loved, much-used State

Park and Audubon Important Bird Area.

Supporters of the Chatfield project – a collection of suburban water providers, one ditch company, Denver Botanic Gardens, several municipalities like Aurora and Castle Rock, and the Highlands Ranch metro district– have emphasized the supposed benefits. Some of these, like “releases of water during dry periods (that) could provide environmental benefits to the urban and downstream reaches of the South Platte River” are highly questionable. “Construction of new facilities” at the State Park is cited as another benefit, but these facilities will be a long way from the lake shore most years, and will most likely be bereft of the large cottonwoods that provide shade and wind protection to picnickers and boaters.

Publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Chatfield project has been postponed from late July to probably mid-September (or maybe even later). The Conservation Committee is planning to hold meetings for our members and tours of the affected areas to help the public evaluate the alternatives, and the Corps of Engineers will host three public meetings to receive public comment and answer questions. ASGD members should watch their inboxes for notice of the DEIS and those meetings as summer draws to an end and autumn begins.

ADVOCACY TECHNIQUES 101

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 7 – 9 P.M.
ST. TIMOTHY’S CHURCH. 1401 E. DRY CREEK

Learn how to work effectively at the city, county and state level to protect wildlife habitat, support open space, and create responsible development! The Conservation Committee is sponsoring an advocacy training session on Tuesday, September 20, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at St. Timothy’s Church, 1401 E. Dry Creek (Dry Creek and Clarkson). We plan to host several organizers of grassroots movements at the city and county level and have information available to help our members be more effective conservation advocates. Off-street parking is available; come in the west entrance to the church.

This workshop is FREE. To register please call 303-973-9530

Lois Webster Fund Committee Welcomes Susan Skagen, PhD

The Lois Webster Fund Committee of the Audubon Society of Greater Denver is pleased to announce that Susan Skagen, PhD, Research Wildlife Biologist with the US Geological Survey, is joining the committee. She is replacing Vicky Drietz, PhD, who served on the LWF Committee for over six years and has accepted a position at the University of Montana. Vicky gave several excellent presentations on her Mountain Plover research at the LWF annual programs and made numerous significant contributions to the LWF.

Susan Skagen brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the LWF Committee. She is a well known scientist with over 64 research publications.

Her current research is in the field of "Forecasting the Effects of Agricultural



Susan Skagen, PhD

Practices on Prairie Wetlands: Implications for Conservation of Migratory Shorebirds" and "Implications of Climate Change for Avian Conservation in Great Plains Landscapes."

The Lois Webster Fund provides funds to support Colorado non-game wildlife research and education projects that lead to the conservation of those species. It has provided over \$46,500 in grants to over 26 projects since its inception sixteen years ago. There are ten members of the LWF Committee who select grantees from proposals received early in the year. For additional information go to the ASGD website and click on "Research".

Lois Webster Fund Project Update

Understanding the Ecological Role of Domestic Cats in Urbanizing Landscapes

by: Ashley Gramza, M.S/Ph.D. Student at Colorado State University

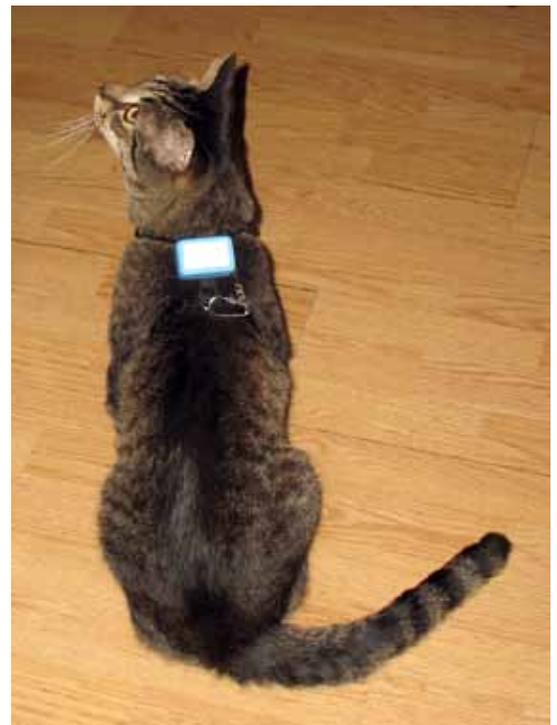
Outdoor domestic cats, including feral animals or pets allowed outside, impose risks on the natural systems they visit. For example, predation by cats can impact local populations of native birds and small mammals, and cats may act as disease transmission agents to wildlife or compete with native wildlife. Conversely, cats suffer a variety of risks from wildlife including harassment and predation by native carnivores and increased exposure to disease. Allowing cats outside access is therefore a controversial topic of significant importance to wildlife biology and ecosystem health.

For my graduate research, I am conducting an interdisciplinary study to examine actual and perceived risks associated with outdoor cats in urbanizing landscapes. The main risks I am interested in are disease transmission between cats, wildlife, and people and predation both to and from cats. In the first phase of my study, I am distributing

human surveys to residents near the urban-wildland interface near Boulder, Colorado and the rural Uncompahgre Plateau in western Colorado. The objectives of these surveys are to explore the attitudes, beliefs, and risk perceptions concerning outdoor domestic cats and their interactions with the environment. Many respondents thought that the risk of carnivore predation on outdoor cats was an important reason to keep cats indoors, but few people thought disease transmission was an issue. The most common reasons that cat-owning respondents let their cats outside is that they felt the cats needed to be outside and have freedom to roam.

The final survey results

Cats contd. on next page



Kink the Cat

will be compared to data on actual risks associated with outdoor cats. I will quantify these actual risks by tracking cats with GPS units (Figure 1) to see how far they are roaming into natural areas west of Boulder. These study cats will be identified through survey responses where respondents have the option of checking a box if they are willing to volunteer their cat for the study. I will also collect prey items brought home by the cats that I am tracking. Additionally, I will be placing motion triggered cameras along the urban-wildland interface just west of Boulder. I am currently scouting for places in natural areas near homes that both domestic cats and wildlife use. Bobcats and mountain lions are also being tracked in this same region by another graduate student, Jesse Lewis, and the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Outdoor domestic cats, bobcats, and mountain lions will also be monitored for diseases such as feline immunodeficiency virus and feline leukemia in these areas.

I field tested outdoor cat GPS units

on two cats in Fort Collins. These two cats were tracked for a two week period in Summer and Fall with locations taken every ten minutes by the GPS unit. Kink, spent most of his outdoor time close to his home with his furthest movement being around 236 meters from home (Figure 2). Santiago, on the other hand, moved a little further from home (around 317 meters) and seemed to spend some time in a natural area north of his home (Figure 3).

Overall, my research will help us understand the effects domestic cats may have on wildlife and vice versa. It will help identify knowledge gaps regarding these risks so we can create effective public education programs that mitigate negative impacts to outdoor cats, wildlife and the environment.

Thank you so much for your support. Through the Lois Webster Fund Grant, I was able to purchase domestic cat GPS units to complete my study.

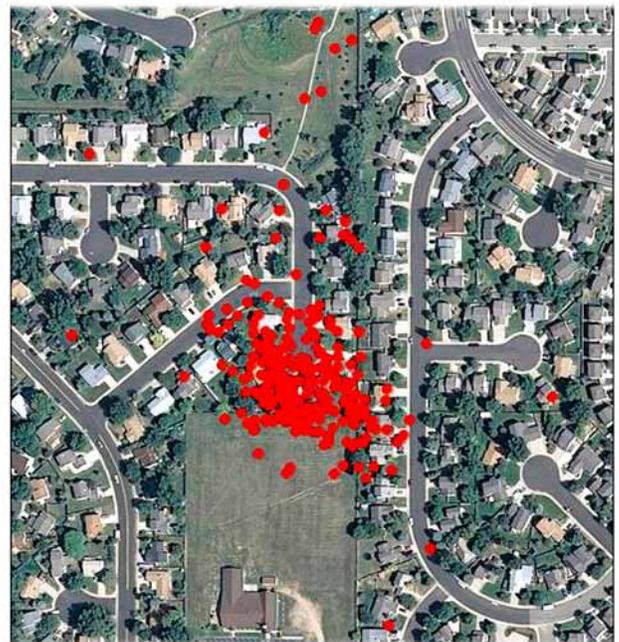
Post your latest
bird sightings
and
questions
on our
FaceBook Page



Kink the Cat's Movement Patterns



Santiago the Cat's Movement Patterns



Walk the Wetlands

Sunday, September 4, 8am

Sunday, October 2, 9am

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

Meeting Place: Audubon Center parking lot

Leaders: Master Birders

Registration NOT required: No Fee

Little Fledglings Preschool Nature Hour

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

Wednesdays,

September 7, 21, October 5, 19, 10-11am

Saturdays, to be announced, check web page for dates

Explore a theme each month with stories, songs, crafts, and activities exploring wildlife and the natural world. September: "Show Me the Energy!" Children discover that all animals, including people, depend on plants as a food source. October: "Wildlife as Symbols" Children explore how wild animals are used as symbols for a variety of purposes. This program introduces science skills and encourages active outdoor play.

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

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

Roxborough State Park

Sunday, September 18, 8am - 11:30am

Hike for two miles along spectacular trails through this unique red rocks formation. Look for golden eagles and local foothills and scrub oak birds such as scrub-jays,

towhees, and chickadees. If you like, bring lunch to eat on the patio. **BBFGWS**

Meeting Place: Visitor's Center,

Roxborough State Park

Leader: Doris Cruz 303-798-8072

Registration required

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

South Platte Park

Saturday, October 1, 8am - noon

Explore this amazingly rich habitat along the South Platte River. This will be an easy hike and is wheelchair accessible. You'll see water birds as well as a variety of land birds in the cottonwood groves. **BBFGWS**

Meeting Place: Carson Nature Center,

South Platte Park (west on Mineral from Santa Fe; right at first traffic light,

between 2 RTD parking lots) Meet in parking lot north of 2-story log building.

Leader: Lois Levinson

Registration required No fee

Cherry Creek State Park

Sunday, October 16, 8 am - noon

This is a good time to see migrating shore birds: Horned Grebes, Common Loons, Franklin and other gulls. After scoping the reservoir, we will carpool to other areas in the park to check for migrating song birds. Beginners welcome. **BBFGWS**; The trip leader will carry a scope.

Meeting Place: Marina, Cherry Creek State Park *The trip ends back at the marina.*

Leader: Karen von Saltz *Registration required No fee; State parks pass per car required*

Owl Hootenanny

Saturday, October 15, 10am-2pm

Who's haunting the night skies at the Audubon Center? Discover the secret life of owls with crafts, classes, displays, and music. Two classes will be offered during the day: "Owls of Colorado" and "Who's for Dinner." During "Owls of Colorado," learn about the different owls who call Colorado

home with Tina Jones, wildlife teacher and Audubon Master Birder. In "Who's for Dinner," discover owl hunting characteristics and explore their food sources with an Audubon Naturalist. More details will be available on our website closer to the date.

Meeting Place: Audubon Center

No Registration required for the event;

Class and Craft Fees may apply

South Table Mountain

Thursday, September 15, 8am - noon

Come be surprised by the variety of birds in this grassland/shrubland habitat surrounded by suburban Denver. In addition to the usual suspects, expect to find some migrants. Moderately strenuous: 3-4 miles of walking off trail, plus 800' elevation gain. **BBFGWS**

Leader: Mike Foster, 303-456-264

Registration required After registering with ASGD, please call Mike Foster to confirm as well Limit of 10.

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

Meeting Place: the mall one block north of intersection of 32nd Avenue & Youngfield (which is an exit of I-70) As you turn right into the mall, look to your left for mail boxes and park near them We'll carpool to trailhead.

Fall Migrating Shorebirds

Saturday, September 24, 7am-5pm

Mackenzie "Kez" Goldthwait and Doug Kibbe offer an all day car trip to appropriate NE Colorado lakes to search for fall migrating shorebirds. As water levels and shorelines are assessed, a specific itinerary will form and be communicated to registrants within a week of the trip. **BBFGWS**

Meeting place and carpooling arrangements will also be determined

Leaders: ASGD Board Members Doug Kibbe and Dr. Mackenzie Goldthwait

\$15 Friends member, \$17 non-member

Registration required

Meeting Place: CO Department of Wildlife and Parks offices at 6060 Broadway (58th Street exit of I-25) Carpooling advised.

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

Beginning Bird-Watching Class

Classroom Session at the Audubon Center:

Thursday Sept. 22, 7-9pm

Field Trips: Saturdays Sept. 24,
Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29. 8am-2pm

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

Leaders: Mike Henwood* and Urling Kingery

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

Register early because this class fills up fast! \$150/Friends Member, \$175/non-member (includes individual Friends membership)

**Programs Offered in Partnership
with Denver Field Ornithologists**

The Big Sit! at Chatfield State Park

Sunday, October 9, dawn to dusk
(come any time)

The international Big Sit! has exacting, loose, frivolous standards. From a 17-foot diameter circle, Sitters count any bird seen or heard, or that scouts and beaters identify, providing a Sitter sees/hears it from the circle. Come for an hour, the morning, or whatever. **BBFGWS**, bring chairs, breakfast, lunch, dinner.

Meeting Place: Heron Overlook, Chatfield State Park From the Wadsworth Blvd. entrance, go right at the T and continue around the reservoir. One half-mile after you cross the South Platte, turn hard left into the large parking lot. At the far right, a trails leads to the Heron Overlook (about 100 yards). Leader: Joey Kellner, 303-978-1748. Registration not required. No fee; State parks pass required per car.

ASGD ENCOURAGES YOU TO REGISTER EARLY FOR INCREDIBLE BIRDING TRAVEL!

Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival

November 9-13, 2011

Audubon Master Birder Mary Keithler and Field Trip Planner Lori Sharp pilot a group to the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival in Harlingen, Texas. Fly into Harlingen on Tuesday (Southwest or Continental, approx. \$400 roundtrip), then shuttle to the Country Inn and Suites. Begin expertly guided bird watching early Wednesday on Colley's "private" Island (dolphins, American oystercatcher). On Thursday, head to Brownsville West to explore the Resacas (oxbows of the Rio Grande) at the University of Texas (green parakeet, red-crowned parrot). On Friday, enjoy the Sabal Palm Sanctuary (groove-billed ani). On Saturday head to Aguna Atascosa NWR (aplomado falcon) and on Sunday discover Bentsen-RGV State Park (long-billed thrasher). See the rich variety of festival offerings available

at www.rgvbf.org and make adjustments for personal preferences. Leaders with rental cars will drive for dinners and points of local interest. Return to Denver Sunday evening. Check out the post-festival trip to Aransas NWR for the whooping cranes.

\$1050 double, \$1250 single. Includes 5 nights at Country Inn and Suites, birding festival registration, tours, seminars at auditorium, keynote speakers, breakfasts at hotel, Wed. festival reception dinner, festival cordial hour Thur., Fri., Sat.. Registrants responsibility: airfare to Harlingen, lunches (available through the festival), dinners.

Have questions? Lori Sharp, auntloribear@msn.com, Mary Keithler mkeithler@yahoo.com. Register EARLY FOR BEST TRIPS: 303-973-9530 or info@denveraudubon.org. \$400 deposit due by September 15; trip balance due October 24. Any tour preferences that are different from the selections noted here must be requested in writing with your deposit.

Heads Up! Flamingos!

Bird the Yucatan Peninsula from a Tulum Beach house, a restored Hacienda near Merida, and a boat into the Celestun Biosphere Reserve (for mating dance of American Flamingo). Naturalist guides will help us avoid the crowds and enjoy Spanish colonial history, Mayan archeological sites, as well as hundreds of bird species. Land travel in full size rental cars. Limited to 8 participants.

Hosts: Harriet Stratton, Sheridan Samano
Dates: 9 day trip late January - early February, 2012

Many details are tentative at this Warbler publication. Complete itinerary with pricing will be published on ASGD website.
To Register: 303-973-9530

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

2011 Fall Bird Count Schedule

Saturday and Sunday, September 10 and 11

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

Saturday, Sept. 10

Cherry Creek Reservoir

Leader: Cheryl Teuton & Dan Brooks, 303-912-3341.

Meet at 7:00am at Marina, inside west gate near Cherry Creek High School.

State Parks Pass required.

Waterton, downstream. 4-5 mile Hike

Wear long pants (not shorts) due to bare-leg-unfriendly plants such as poison ivy, thistles, and knapweed.

Leader: Hugh Kingery, 303-641-8823

Meet at 6:30am at Audubon Nature Center (left turn immediately after turning onto Waterton/Roxborough road and before the DOW parking lot for Waterton Canyon).

Chatfield State Park

Leader, Joey Kellner, 303-978-1748.

Meet at 6:30am at West (Deer Creek) entrance to park. State Parks Pass required.

Lower Bear Creek & Marston Reservoir

Leader: Mike Henwood, 303-716-8551, hawkhen@aol.com

Meet at 6:30am at parking lot adjacent to the Conoco Station at the NE corner of Morrison Road and C470. We will bird Bear Creek Lake Park and the Bear Creek Greenbelt in the morning and Marston Reservoir in the afternoon.

Sunday Sept. 11

Barr Lake Periphery

This trip, mostly driving, does not involve much walking and will be good for people with limited mobility or stamina

Leader: Dick Anderson, 303-757-4582

Phone leader, or send email to him at rholmesanderson@earthlink.net

Meet at 7:00am at Barr Lake Entrance Station.

Castlewood Canyon State Park

Leader: Kirk Huffstater, 303-660-9298.

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

Barr Lake State Park

This is a ten-mile (or equivalent), all-day hike around the lake

Leader: Dick Schottler, 303-278-8035.

Meet at 6:30am at RMBO, 14500 Lark Bunting Lane. South off Bromley Lane; from I-76, first road east of railroad track.

State Parks pass required.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal

Leader: Urling Kingery, 303-641-8823.

Call leader to sign up; limited spaces available.



by Hugh Kingery

GINA GERKEN, raking sticks in her Castle Pines yard, “uncovered the body of a badly decomposed rabbit. I noticed a Mountain Chickadee watching me rake. A couple of times it flew down to the pile of sticks; seconds after uncovering the rabbit I walked away. The chickadee was on the rabbit corpse wildly pulling out fur. I watched for 30 seconds. With a mustache-like load of fur, it flew off to its box to line its nest. It’s the little things in life that bring me joy!”



Mountain Chickadee,
Photo by Dick Vogel

JEFF STROUP, IN LITTLETON, went out to pick up the morning newspaper. “I was surprised to see a hovering hummingbird zipping around our front yard, especially around our large oak tree. Then I saw it sitting in a nest, about six feet off the ground on the lowest horizontal tree limb. Every once in a while I look out the window and 90% of the time, she’s sitting there peacefully.” On June 30, “Good news. We have two newborn Broad-tailed Hummingbirds in the nest. Last night I climbed up using a stepladder and with a flashlight saw both of them. Wiggling fuzzballs.”



Broad-tailed Hummingbird,
Photo by Dick Vogel

JAN ECKHARDT, IN ARVADA, June 26, watched a Black-capped Chickadee fledgling feast on aphids. The parents flew to a chokecherry, collected aphids, and brought them to the kid. Two days later,

“20-25 chickadees showed up at the same time, adults frantically feeding aphids to the fledglings. Some feeding, some being fed. A feast.”

MICHELL CLEVELAND, IN CASTLE PINES NORTH, sent a picture of a fledged Great Horned Owl. The nest, say John and Cassie Pazour, “is in a nearby tree (where the owls have nested for years), but the parents have moved three baby owls into these bushes. She didn’t know the babies were there until her dog started sniffing around and she saw them. Just after Michell took the picture an owl parent hit her from behind, raking the back of her neck and drawing blood! She said it was totally silent and felt like getting punched hard. The neighbors now know to keep their pets away and to leave the owls alone.”

PAT MARSH CALLED about House Finches that built a nest in a pine tree in a container on her porch. Because they want to plant the tree, she decided to move it a foot per day until it’s at its designated destination where they will put it in the ground. She hasn’t reported on the success of this maneuver.



House Finch,
Photo by Dick Vogel

CYNTHIA MADSEN has monitored a Cooper’s Hawk nest in Centennial. In June she “noticed this little daredevil chick up on the edge of the nest. No sign of the parents.” Earlier in June, one of the parents “flew through my backyard and I think it grabbed a House Finch from my flat feeder. It then flew to a fence where it proceeded to pluck away. Watch those feathers fly! You could tell that the hawk was nervous about those scolding crows and finally decided to move his meal elsewhere.”

BRUCE DUCKER (CENTRAL DENVER) “came down to breakfast and sighted, at our freshly stocked koi pond, a Cooper’s Hawk the size of a Volkswagen. I wondered if any neighbor saw him. If so I’d get all cats and slender people inside. I weighed the excitement of the sighting against the price of koi, but before I could decide whether to sit through his breakfast, he saw me, ten

feet away, and flew off.”

IN THE LAST COLUMN I reported on the Color-fest that many birders enjoyed in May. Debbie Trujillo, in Elbert County, enjoyed the same: Lazuli Bunting (her first), Black-headed Grosbeak, Northern Mockingbird, goldfinches, Yellow Warbler, White-crowned, Lark, and Chipping sparrows, and more. Gina on May 18 reported “lots of Western Tanagers, Evening and Black-headed grosbeaks and a Bullock’s Oriole couple that discovered my large mealworms and are gorging. Having a hard time getting anything accomplished besides staring out my windows.” In south Denver, Patti Locke reports a Lazuli Bunting at a friend’s feeder in late May and on May 31, Bill Eden saw Chipping Sparrow, Western Wood-Pewee, and Black-headed Grosbeak. Merikay Haggerty, in Littleton, had tanagers for a week. In Columbine Valley, May 19, Bill Hinckley saw a Green-tailed Towhee and a Baltimore Oriole. Linda Williams, (Highlands Ranch) on May 20, Audubon’s Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, American Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, Spotted Towhee, Black-capped Chickadee, and a female Broad-tailed Hummingbird.

KAREN METZ CONCOCTED a theory about why the birds jammed up in our yards this year: “Some of these birds are likely trapped here. They need to get up to prime condition for breeding. Drought in western Mexico, where some of these species winter, reduced their food supply for non-breeding season. They may not yet be in good enough condition to continue their migration beyond here – the slouched jet stream and weather further north isn’t too inviting just yet. They stop here and if they find a good food source (such as our feeders) they stay and make the most of it to build up their fat reserves.”

URLING AND I NOTICED a couple of Yellow-rumped Warblers in the same ten trees for a week, as if they had found that irreplaceable food source. And the orioles and tanagers that graced our yard in May may have followed the same script.

PEGGY WAIT REPORTED another Wild Turkey, after the two reports in the last

Backyard Birds

Warbler. The mailman for her Tech Center office said he had seen a turkey regularly for about a month. Then, about June 18, he saw her with nine chicks. On June 23 Peggy saw the clutch, "with those nine chicks huddled under her wings directly next to a building and address marquee. Go figure." Karl Stecher saw them the next day; "the mother was aware of me and showed only the standard half-concern of her relatives about 20 miles south on Castle Pines Golf Course. Will an employee at the Tech Center go home tonight and complain that he had to work around a bunch of turkeys?"

MERIKAY HAD "a memorable Memorial Day. A Great Blue Heron landed on our roof!" Rick Brune emailed, "A friend of mine watched a Great Blue Heron intensively studying something at a horse stable, not really near water. It grabbed what it was watching and flew off – with a squealing cottontail rabbit! Seems like large prey."



Great Blue Heron,
Photo by Dick Vogel

ELLEN BARTON, IN SOUTHWEST

DENVER, noticed, on May 25, "some very noisy chattering birds in the back yard. I took a peek and saw MANY birds flitting back and forth in low and high branches. They ducked and dove, landing frequently but taking off quickly. I sent a note with pictures to a few friends asking what they were. Only one taker – Cedar Waxwings. A whole big flock. 50, 60, perhaps 80, lots and lots. I've never seen this particular beauty in the 28 years I've lived here."



Cedar Waxwing,
Photo by
Dick Vogel

LINDA HAS A GOOD TIME with the Bushtits in her Highlands Ranch yard. July 2, as she hosed down her crab tree, "one of our Bushtits landed on a branch a few feet away. It promptly began showering among the leaves, enjoying the gentle

spray of water. A little fluff ball." She also has "one pair of Lesser Goldfinches that stands out from the others, because the male is quite bossy and overprotective. The female landed on the birdbath to get a drink of water. When she did, a robin landed across from her. The male Lesser dive-bombed the robin, nearly hitting the robin's back. Of course the robin was unfazed, and the female Lesser seemed puzzled – especially when the male flew at her and made her leave. He has done this before, when they're on the thistle feeder. He bumps her right off the perch, and she flies away with him. When he says, 'it's time to go,' it's time to go!"

GINA WATCHED a different dispute: "In order to knock her off my mealworm feeders, a female Western Bluebird landed on top of the female Bullock's Oriole and then the two flew off in a flurry of feathers. . . however the oriole came right back, unharmed."

KAREN HAS "wooden mealworm feeders and today (June 26) a White-breasted Nuthatch is intent on building a nest in the one by our front door." Karen says that "after the first (Western) Bluebird family fledged, I switched to tossing mealworms on the front steps when they come 'round.

The fledglings come for them now, with or without dad. He'd defended two boxes all spring, and his lady was laying eggs in that second box before the first brood fledged from the first box. Talk about multi-tasking."

BOB SPENCER EMAILED, "June 28 the temperature outside my place went over 90 by Noon. So I looked at the neighbor's swamp cooler and sure enough – there were five sparrows clinging to the grate and one to the side grate, each flattened out. They are called House Sparrows because they know how to make themselves at home!"

JULY 2, LINDA REPORTS, "The raccoons struck again, this time breaking a large branch on our ash tree to get to the sunflower feeder. Somehow they also managed to abscond with the suet feeder, which was way out on a branch in the middle of the yard, hanging from a 2-foot wire. So far the raccoons have torn down or ripped off every suet feeder we've had. I guess it's time to start bringing everything in again at dusk."

I WELCOME YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS to this column. Send a note or post card to P.O. Box 584, Franktown 80116, or Email me: ouzels8@aol.com.



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Please invite old and new friends to join us for the dinner catered by Kate Frost, program, and short member's meeting.

The cost is \$35/member (\$40/non-member) for the dinner and program. Tickets may be purchased by calling 303-973-9530 or sending a check to 9308 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Littleton, CO 80128.

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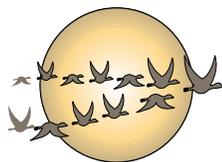
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