



THE Warbler

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2009

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF GREATER DENVER

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CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE GREATER DENVER COMMUNITY

ASGD Art and Photo Contest and Sale

by Linda Strand, ASGD Board Member

Mark your Calendars: Friday, Saturday and Sunday, December 4 – 6, 2009

Calling artists and photographers of all ages – the Audubon Society of Greater Denver is sponsoring an art and photo contest. Amateurs and professionals can submit their art and photos for judging and display. Prizes will be awarded for the best artists and photographers and all will have the opportunity to sell their work at the show. What a great idea for holiday presents!

Art and photos should be submitted to the Audubon Nature Center on the weekends of November 21 and 22 or November 28 and 29, 2009 between the hours of 10 am and 2 pm. Entries will not be accepted after 2:00 pm on Sunday, November 29. Entry fee is \$10 per entry. Entry forms are available on the ASGD website.

All entries must in some way represent the natural elements of Colorado whether it's a photo of the South Platte, a sculpture of a fox or cottonwood tree, a painting or drawing of a deer beside the stream, an aspen quilt, or a stained glass cattail window.

Categories:

Paintings/Drawings

Sculpture, Glass, Textiles

Photos (Traditional and non-enhanced digital)

Digital Art and Photos



Enter your "Colorado Nature" themed art or photos in the ASGD Art and Photo Contest December 4-6.
Coyote photo by Dick Vogel
Raven Quilt by Linda Strand

Art will be judged by category and by age. Prizes will be awarded in category/age groups that have a minimum of 3 entries with a single award for best of show.

Artists and ASGD members will be invited to a **special opening night reception** and award ceremony on Friday, December 4. The show will be **open to the public** on Saturday, December 5 and Sunday, December 6.

Rules and regulations are posted on the website at www.denveraudubon.org or can be mailed to interested parties by calling 303-973-9530 or by e-mail at info@denveraudubon.org.



ASGD Annual Appeal

Members and Friends – 2009 has been a good year for your organization. With the opening of the Audubon Nature Center, ASGD was able to reach 7,797 children, families and adults (up from 5,020 in 2008). With your help we are hoping to reach 10,000 people in 2010. Working together, we can do it.

As you think about your year-end giving, we hope that the Audubon Society of Greater Denver will be on your list. We hope you agree that the programs and projects you support have helped to enhance your quality of life and enrich your community. We thank you for your continued support now and in the coming year. We wish you a joyful holiday season and a Happy New Year

ASGD Board of Directors

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE-

Rhonda Shank, our office manager extraordinaire, opens the mail each morning. This morning she opened an envelope with a donation and a note. The note, written on the April 25th Founder's Celebration form, said: "...finally I can send you a contribution! Keep up the good work." What a great way to start our day, and not just because of the donation. This member recognizes that: ASGD does good work; there is a connection between her donation and being able to continue serving the Denver community; and contributions are never late. She is connected and knows that her contribution is making a difference.

We are beginning our Annual Appeal in just a few weeks. The money raised will help us continue the educational and environmental work that we do. In 2010, we anticipate helping over 4000 students connect with nature through ASGD's school programs. We see attendance at our newly opened Audubon Nature Center exceeding 6,000. Those are 10,000 lives enhanced by nature with untold thousands more interacting with those 10,000.

We have volunteers doing much of the work but not all. Even with the thousands of hours of volunteer time donated, there are costs associated with the programs and work ASGD does. For example, there is upkeep on the facilities, salaries and stipends, materials for the kids and for training. Please help ASGD to continue the good work.

Most of all, renew your membership and keep us on your list. Right now may be a bad time for the economy, but as our benefactor above knows, we can use the donation in February just as we can use it today. Tomorrow may be better, or next month may be better. If you can afford to help with \$2, please do. If you can't help today, keep us on your list, and help when you can. In the meantime, take a deep breath, visit the Nature Center, and enjoy what your organization can provide to you and your family.



Tom Parchman, President

ASGD welcomes our New Friends Members

Thank you for joining ASGD. We hope you will take pride in the award-winning programs your "new" organization offers, and will join us at the Audubon Center at Chatfield for Outdoor Adventures.

Welcome!

Alex Wiercigroch, Barbara Hoover, Bonnie Crawford, Carol Tellmann, Claudia Walters, Danielle Petersen, Deborah Gauchat, Diane Beer, Dick & Helen Rewey, Dick Prickett, Gloria Bennett, Jackie Trout, Jill Hawley, Joan Deheck, John Kappler, Jonnie Thompson, Kathy Petock, Linda Kardos-Klug, Linda Osatinski, Marianne Rose, Marsha Heron, Mattes Family, Michelle Mainridge, Nancy Roberts, Nick Nicholson, P.L. Behr, Pam Hernandez, Patti Binder, Richard Meunier, Rick Sodja, Sharon Rosnik, Shirley Swedeen, Susan Ely, Susan Kirksey, Suzy Hiskey, Yvonne Parrott.



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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).

Produced by C. Dale Flowers

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Children & Nature

by Karl Brummert, Audubon Nature Center Director

Do any of these names or titles sound familiar to you: Dr. Robert Michael Pyle, Richard Louv, the Children & Nature Network, No Child Left Inside Act, or Colorado Kids Outdoors? If not, perhaps you need to “get out” more (we mean that in a good way!).

If you have children or grandchildren or are an active outdoor enthusiast, you have probably heard or read about the above names associated with the rapidly growing movement to get children outdoors. Professionals from diverse fields recognize the importance of addressing a fairly recent societal ailment referred to as the “Extinction of Experience” and/or “Nature Deficit Disorder.”

Anyone who grew up before the 1980s remembers spending most of their free time outdoors, often going out in the morning and not coming home until “the street lights came on.” Today, a child’s time and attention is drawn indoors by television, video games, and the internet. As a result of a more sedentary lifestyle, studies show drastic increases in childhood obesity, attention disorders, depression, diminishment of creativity and imagination, and other physical and mental health concerns.

Within in the last five years, a significant number of science educators, parents, teachers, health care professionals, and political figures from all parties have joined to raise awareness of the benefits of children spending time playing outside.

ASGD is a recognized leader in “curing” the extinction of experience and nature deficit disorders. This is accomplished by providing a wide range of public and school programs that introduce children and parents to outdoor activities and increase their comfort level with nature. Program topics include map and compass basics, scientific field investigations, observing scientists in action, beginning birding for children and adults, plant and animal identification, habitat explorations, and how to properly prepare for your nature excursion. The ASGD family of members, donors and volunteers can take pride in providing great outdoor opportunities to the metro Denver community.

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

Angela Grun

It is not an easy task to select one particular person to highlight among our corps of talented and hardworking volunteers contributing to ASGD’s success. We decided to narrow the range by concentrating on the recent opening of the Audubon Nature Center.

To kickoff this series, we feature one of our newer volunteers - again, not a simple choice from those who joined the ranks of Center naturalists and hosts since January. From the moment she signed up, Angela Grun became actively involved by learning as much as she could about the natural history of the area, attending all of our training sessions, participating in school and public programs, leading hikes at the center on the weekends, and assisting with tabling at events. She even recruited several new members who joined on the spot. And she has not slowed down! In September, Angela attended the National Association of Interpretation’s Certified Interpretive Guide training, a week-long, intensive course focusing on the techniques of interpreting natural and historic resources.

Angela clearly enjoys interacting with people of all ages. With a great sense of humor, dedication, and eagerness to continually increase her knowledge, Angela is an important part of our team of naturalists and will be one of the leaders in the next phase of our programming: expanding offerings for families, children, and schools to connect them to science, nature, and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Give an ASGD Membership

While considering holiday gifts for your friends and family – we would like to offer an option with no carbon footprint, one that keeps on giving for twelve months, and one that offers benefits to many beyond the gift’s recipient. Give an individual or family membership to ASGD. Your friends and family can enjoy the many programs offered by ASGD, our informative newsletter, discounts on travel and the enjoyment of contributing to a great organization. Membership information is included on the back of this newsletter or by calling 303-973-9530.

Birding the Bosque del Apache

by Hugh Kingery

Mark your calendars: January 15 – 18, 2010 (Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday)

Too far to drive by yourself – join the Kingerys and others on a luxury motor coach to visit this premier winter birding destination south of Albuquerque. On the way down we’ll stop at several National Wildlife Refuges and spend our first night in Santa Fe. We’ll get to the Bosque the next morning. The Visitor Center has an amazing cactus garden which hosts lots of different birds

as well as feeders and a pond that you can view through a one-way window, with sounds. You can start exploring immediately.

After lunch we’ll have a guided tour of the Refuge. In the late afternoon we’ll watch thousands of Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese fly into the shallow ponds to spend the night. The sight and sounds are thrilling. The

next morning we’ll get up early to watch the sun come up as the flocks of cranes and geese wake up and fly off to the fields to feed. We’ll spend the day driving and hiking around the refuge with a choice of activities. On the last trip, the bus driver (not a bird-watcher) got quite good at spotting Roadrunners on the tour route. The final day we’ll drive back to Denver. See page 10 for details.



Eagle Eye

Watching Public Policy for the Environment
by Polly Reetz, ASGD Conservation Committee Chair

This is the last column for 2009, and already I'm wondering what 2010 will bring. One thing we know: Audubon of Greater Denver will hold our annual Legislative Forum on Saturday, February 20, 2010, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at First Plymouth Church. This is always an entertaining event: we get to talk with Jen Boulton, Audubon's lobbyist at the legislature, we have a great lunch (and continental breakfast) and we hear from State legislators first hand. We also hold sessions on particularly hot topics at that year's legislative session. So put the date on your calendar and plan to come!

On August 18, the Littleton City Council took up the question of whether Cooley Lake, in South Platte Park, should be open to the general public for fishing and other recreation, or closed except for monthly guided tours, to protect migratory bird habitat. ASGD was represented by our own Ann Bonnell, and former President Doris Cruze spoke about her experience as a member of a panel entrusted to survey public opinion about park management. Both of these ladies are intimately acquainted with the Park, and Doris had the extra advantage of having talked to many park visitors on this particular topic.

According to Doris, the majority of visitors felt that the park should be kept just the way it is now, and she presented that information to the Council. The final vote was in favor of keeping Cooley Lake closed to general recreation and preserving its valuable wildlife habitats.

This episode illustrates a couple of principles: first, that when we want to protect/preserve/restore habitat, we should know the site well, its vegetation, bird species, and recreational uses. Personal knowledge is always a plus!

Second, more and more of our special places, like South Platte Park, Chatfield, or Roxborough, will be facing the tough question of how much use is appropriate for preservation of the resource. Should State Parks build more trails, more roads, more swimbeaches, allow use of areas now mostly off-limits like Cooley Lake, allow picnicking in Roxborough, build cabins and gazebos, to accommodate the seemingly ever-growing number of users? After all, we WANT people to get outdoors —and bring their children — and enjoy the natural world.

This question also faces our National Parks — and if you didn't see the Ken Burns series on this topic on public television at the end of September, try to watch the DVD — and to some extent, National Wildlife Refuges and National Forests. What is the line between accommodating people who need that contact with the natural world, and overuse of it? Site by site, place by place, we have to wrestle with this question — probably through eternity. Sometimes the answer's fairly obvious: a trail or road that is suffering serious erosion and polluting streams should be closed

(though try to tell some of the ATV users that!). Often it's more subtle.

Meanwhile the US Senate continues to work toward a bill to address global warming. The House passed the Waxman/Markey "American Clean Energy and Security Act" last summer, and many conservation groups would like to see the Senate pass even stronger legislation. There is much debate about the "cap and trade" strategy (which is in the House bill) versus a carbon tax versus incentives for business rather than a government-set limit. Books have been written on this topic and this column is way too short to address it adequately – but you can get information and take part in the debate by checking with National Audubon, www.audubon.org, and by contacting Senators Udall and Bennet. The House bill did include funding to help birds and wildlife adapt to climate change, and we should urge our Senators to see that the Senate version also includes it.

Finally, on our very local level, we expect the Draft EIS for the Chatfield Reallocation project to come out this winter. The Draft must address the impacts of storing more water, for municipal and industrial use, in Chatfield Reservoir in years when runoff is high - which would raise the water level 12 feet in some years. What this will do to wetlands, the riparian corridor, Preble's mouse habitat and recreation in the State Park is a big question. Adequate mitigation measures MUST be part of the project and be fully funded. ASGD's Conservation Committee is watching this carefully, especially since Chatfield is an Audubon Important Bird Area. You can read about the project at this website: www.chatfieldstudy.org



ASGD Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
8am Walk The Wetlands *1	2	3	4	5	6	*7
9am Veterans Breakfast Club *8	9	7pm ASGD Board Meeting 10	11	12	13	8:30 am Quincy Reservoir FT 10am Wilderness Bound *14
8 am Castlewood Canyon FT *15	16	17	18	19	20	8am Jim Baker Reservoir FT *21
*22	23	24	25	ASGD Office Closed Happy Thanksgiving 26	ASGD Office Closed 27	8am Turkey Trek *28
*29	30					
*The Audubon Center is Open 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays during November						

DECEMBER 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	*5
9am Walk The Wetlands *6	7	7pm NO ASGD December Board Meeting 8	9	10	11	8:30am Ponderosa Preserve FT 10am Better Birding *12
8am Bear Creek Lake FT 9am Veterans Breakfast Club*13	14	15	16	17	18	Denver Christmas Bird Count (SW) *19
*20	21	22	23	ASGD Office Closed 24	ASGD Office Closed Happy Holidays 25	10am Wonders of Winter *26
*27	28	29	7 pm That Old Blue Moon 30	ASGD Office Closed 31	ASGD Office Closed Happy New Year Denver Christmas Bird Count (NW) 1	Douglas County Christmas Bird Count 2
*The Audubon Center is Open 10 .a.m-2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays during December						



FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS

To Register Call 303.973.9530

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

The Audubon Center is located on Waterton Road off S. Wadsworth Blvd 4.4 miles south of C-470.

Your Autumn Adventure begins at the Audubon Center at Chatfield!

November & December Hours
Saturday & Sunday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Discover nature, go on a hike with one of our naturalists, spend time outdoors with your children, explore with other adults, and celebrate with fun close to home.

~ PROGRAMS AT THE AUDUBON CENTER ~

Walk the Wetlands

Sunday, November 1, 2009, 9 a.m.

Sunday, December 6, 2009, 9 a.m.

Leaders: Hugh and Urling Kingery (303-814-2723) and
Master Birders

Pre-registration not required.

Donations to ASGD appreciated

That Old Blue Moon

Wednesday, December 30, 2009, 7 p.m.

Leader: Karl Brummert

\$10/Friends member, \$12/nonmember

(admission payable at the event)

Pre-registration requested

MEETING PLACE: Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield

DESCRIPTION: Walk along the South Platte River exploring ponds and habitats for late fall migrants, residents, and winter arrivals. Dress for the weather. Bring: water, snack, binoculars and field guides; loaners available.

MEETING PLACE: Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield

DESCRIPTION: Prepare for the New Year by living the last evenings of the old year out in nature. Walk (or snowshoe? or ski?) the Audubon trails to discover what hoots, cries, or caws in the moonlight. A campfire welcomes walkers back from their trek with hot cider and treats. Let the old year burn away by releasing a memento from your year into the fire. Lighter - you'll be ready for the New Year.

Military Veterans Breakfast Club

Sunday, November 8, 9-11 a.m.

Sunday, December 13, 9-11 a.m.

Leader: Carl Norbeck

Pre-registration: If you are planning on bringing kids or grandkids, please call ASGD and RSVP so we can be adequately staffed.

Donations to ASGD are appreciated

MEETING PLACE: Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield

DESCRIPTION: ASGD will provide coffee, Duffey Rolls, bagels AND nametags. In November we celebrate Veterans Day and in December, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. The Audubon Nature Center provides a pleasant setting to remember our veterans and enjoy the companionship of others. If you have kids or grandkids, bring them along. Our naturalists will keep them busy and enthralled, along with other kids at the Center that day. When you get there, ask for Carl Norbeck (U.S. Navy).

PROGRAMS AT OTHER LOCATIONS

Castlewood Canyon and Douglas County Open Space

Sunday, November 15, 2009, 8 a.m.

Leader: Hugh and Urling Kingery

\$10/Friends member, \$12/nonmember

Pre-registration required

MEETING PLACE: Colorado 86 & Castlewood Canyon Road (Douglas County Road 51). Intersection is: (a) 1/2 mile west of traffic light in Franktown; and (b) 8-9 miles from I-25, Exit 184. Park on the shoulder just after turning onto DCR 51.

DESCRIPTION: Join experts birding winter ponds and canyon habitat. Bring binoculars, field guides and water for a 4 hour trip. Bring lunch to eat around the bird friendly Kingery feeders.

FIELD TRIPS, CLASSES & PROGRAMS

To Register Call 303.973.9530

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



The Audubon Center is located on Waterton Road off S. Wadsworth Blvd 4.4 miles south of C-470.

~FAMILY ADVENTURE SERIES~

Get Out, Go WILD, Be Healthy!

Explore nature, expand your "nature knowledge", and discover fun ways to lead a healthier lifestyle.

Wilderness Bound!

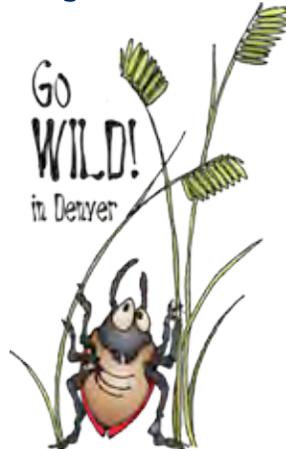
Saturday, November 14, 10 a.m-12 p.m.

You don't need to be an expert explorer to venture out in the wilderness. A basic knowledge of map, compass, and essential items will get you started.

Turkey Trek

Saturday, November 28, 10 a.m-12 p.m.

We won't see turkeys, but hopefully we will burn off that Thanksgiving dinner. Embark on a longer hike as we explore a variety of South Platte habitats.



Two Hours to Better Birding

Saturday, December 12, 10 a.m-12 p.m.

Just starting to bird? We have discovered a way to persuade birds to cooperate so you can get a better look at them in the field and improve your skills.

Wonders of Winter

Saturday, December 26, 10 a.m-12 p.m.

Winter has officially arrived... hopefully some snow will too. We'll explore the ponds and other habitats, and discover how life copes in the cold and snow.

**FREE for ASGD "Friends" Members • For non-members: \$4/session for adults
Parent and child (12 and under) \$6/session (additional child under 12 - \$3/session)
Become a member! \$25/individual; \$35/family**

**Please pre-register by calling 303-973-9530 or by e-mail to info@denveraudubon.org
To visit the Audubon Nature Center drive approximately 4.4 miles south on Wadsworth Blvd.
from C-470, turn left onto Waterton Road and then quickly left again into the Center parking area.**

Jim Baker Reservoir - North Denver

Saturday, November 21, 2009, 8 a.m - 10 a.m

\$8/Friends member, \$10/nonmember

Pre-registration required

MEETING PLACE: Jim Baker Reservoir located south of 64th between Lowell and Tennyson. Parking on Tennyson Street, just north of the railroad tracks and south of 64th.

DESCRIPTION: This flat 1.4 mile loop can accommodate wheelchairs and strollers. This is an excellent place to see a variety of ducks, American Coots, loons, and Great Blue Herons. Bring binoculars and field guides.

Bear Creek Lake Park

Sunday, December 13, 2009, 8 a.m - 12 p.m.

Leader: Mike Henwood

\$10/Friends member, \$12/nonmember

Preregistration required

MEETING PLACE: Bear Creek Lake Park entrance East of 470 on Morrison Road. There is a \$5 Park entrance fee. Leader will greet birders and direct cars to Skunk Hollow campground to begin the birding trip.

DESCRIPTION: Bird riparian and woodland corridors for wintering hawks, sparrows, and waterfowl. Dress for weather, bring binoculars and water for a 3 hour trip.

PROGRAMS OFFERED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CITY OF AURORA PARKS & OPEN SPACE DEPARTMENT

Information and registration: 303-739-2428

Quincy Reservoir

November 14, 2009, 8:30 a.m - 11 a.m

Leader: Mary Ann Bonnell

No fee but pre-registration required.

MEETING PLACE: Quincy Reservoir. More detailed directions provided at registration.

DESCRIPTION: Aurora Parks naturalist will lead registrants into non-public area for winter waterfowl. Portable facilities available.

Programs continued on page 8



ASGD PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS

For More Information or to Register See the Trip Descriptions Below

Ponderosa Preserve

Saturday, December 12, 2009, 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Mary Ann Bonnell

No fee but pre-registration required.

MEETING PLACE: Directions provided at registration

DESCRIPTION: This special ponderosa pine savannah habitat is not open to the public, so take advantage of an Aurora naturalist leading and watching for birds unusual to the Aurora list.

Call Roxborough State Park 303-973-3959.

The day begins at 7:30 a.m..

Sign up to get on a team by December 30.

Chili supper at the Park Visitor Center after the count.

Urban Denver Christmas Bird Count (Northwest)

(See table below)

**Offered in Partnership with Denver Field Ornithologists
Friday, January 1, 2010**

Contact Hugh Kingery, 303-814-2723 or go on-line to www.denveraudubon.org or www.dfobirder.org. The count covers a circle with a 15-mile diameter that covers the Northwest sector of the Metro area.

We invite everybody to participate – beginners, intermediate, and advanced. The more eyes we have, the more birds we see. And we like to encourage people to get involved. Start the New Year with a half day or whole day effort--a good way to start your New Year's List! After the count (5pm), Pot Luck, at Casey Davenhill's, 415 South High (5 blocks west of University, about 2 blocks south of Alameda); please call Urling (303-814-2723) so we can count you in on the chili pot, Urling's brownies, Casey's hospitality, and your salad, dessert, veggie, or finger foods.

~CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS~

All Audubon members, whether beginner, intermediate or advanced, are invited to join us on one or more Christmas Bird Counts. Taking place across the nation since 1900, data collected by observers allows researchers and conservation biologists to study the long-term health and status of bird populations. A 15 mile radius circle is divided into sections, with different parties assigned to each section. Contact Count Coordinator for section leaders, meeting time, location and to join the team.

Urban Denver Christmas Bird Count (Southwest)

**Offered in Partnership with Denver Field
Ornithologists**

Saturday, December 19, 2009

Contact Dick Schottler, 303-278-8035, or go on-line to www.denveraudubon.org or www.dfobirder.org. Circle covers the Southwest sector of the Metro area, from Red Rocks Park to the Audubon Nature Center, and from Littleton to Tiny Town and Doubleheader Mtn. Includes Chatfield State Park, Bear Creek Lake Park, 7 miles of the South Platte, and several foothills sections.

Urban Denver Christmas Bird Count (Northwest)	(Northwest)
LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
South Platte (south): To Confluence Park	Some walking
South Platte (central): Confluence Park to Riverside Cemetery	Some walking
South Platte (north)	Walking
Rocky Mtn. Arsenal (FULL—adding to waiting list)	Walking
Commerce City/Montbello	Car
Sand Creek/Tollgate Creek, Bluff Lake & Aurora	Walking
Cherry Creek Reservoir	Some walking
Kent School, S/Hampden	Some walking
SE Denver, N/Hampden	Walking
Cherry Creek: dam to University Blvd.	7-mile walk
Fairmont, Lowry Field (FULL)	Car, some walking
City Park/Park Hill	Car, some walking
Botanic Gardens, Denver Country Club, Wash. Park	Car, some walking

Douglas County

Christmas Bird Count

**Offered in Partnership with Roxborough
State Park**

Saturday January 2, 2010

backyard birds....

by Hugh Kingery



VICKI MUNROE, SOUTH OF FRANKTOWN, emailed me, "I asked you to help me identify a Say's Phoebe back in June. I want to tell you this little bird turned into a family of 4 and has nourished my life. Every evening since early June, with the exception of 4 nights, one or more Say's Phoebes have spent the night on the curved strapping of the lantern attached to the front of my house. The lantern is just up under the eaves and well protected. Each night he is silhouetted against the northern sky. I am amazed and thankful for this lengthy 4-month stay. I am not sure if the rest of the family remains. Every night I think this will be the last and there he is. Truly, what a joy this has been."

MORE ABOUT ROOSTING

BIRDS: Patti and Scot Locke discovered a bird roosting on their patio. They couldn't quite ID it until it moved to a new place in the front of their house. Scot's photo clinched the ID – a Black-capped Chickadee. Last winter in Golden, Sandy Dusdal watched flickers clinging to the brick side of her house all night.



Black Capped Chickadee.
Photo by Debbie Miller.

JACKIE AND JOHN DUNN have a birdhouse on the side of their house. Sitting on their porch the evening of July 24, John noticed some odd fluttering near the box. Three nestling swallows, as Jackie & John watched, became fledglings. As they watched, the three flew out of the box, up and away from the house. Jackie says that they flapped more frequently than the adults, but otherwise flew just as well. The next day the family returned and coaxed the fourth nestling out to join them.

"THE BIRDS MUST BE DESPERATE," says Urling, after Shirley Bowers sent this message on August 14: "Buzz just came rushing in announcing a new bird on the water catchment area of the new road right behind our houses. A great Blue Heron landed in the mud puddle that is the 'water catchment' and is wandering around down there wondering, probably, what is going on. In September, Shirley again saw a heron; it bailed out after it discovered the puddle had no fish. A Spotted Sandpiper, though, did stay and pick up insects along the side of the catchment."

SPECIAL MIGRANTS INCLUDE the Townsend's Warbler Bill saw in late September. Wilson's and MacGillivray's warblers stopped in Patty Echelmeyer's Wheat Ridge yard Sept. 2-10, and on Aug. 7 she tracked down an Olive-sided Flycatcher that sounded like a robin. On Aug. 25 Patty saw her first Chimney Swifts in years – 15 – and Common Nighthawks in late August.

KAREN METZ WROTE, "The short micro-sprinkler system for my perennials garden lures birds in to bathe. Last week the bathers included migrating Orange-crowned, Tennessee, and Wilson's warblers. And today, first under the sumac berries and then in a birdbath within a garden bed – an Ovenbird! Leaves of the larger plants, such as Boulder raspberry, are where most of the small birds bathe, and the hummingbirds also find the leaves of the 'red birds in a tree' to be a fitting size. Migrants need to keep their feathers in clean and healthy form for maximum flight efficiency."



Wilson's Warbler.
Photo by Cornell Laboratory.

"THE TURKEY POPULATION" Karen adds, "is almost too indecent to count – with an additional 18 poults this year, and an additional ten in nearby Conestoga, we expect the winter flock to be 60+. Hopefully, the Conestoga flock will stay there this winter, unlike last winter. Frank Black told me the date he stopped seeing them, and that's when the flock over here grew in comparable size." Meanwhile Lisa lamented that she hadn't seen "the turkey family who has come through the yard every day since July. A hen and three chicks. But my neighbor's dog has been out more, I'm guessing that has deterred them."

BOTH BILL AND MARY AND DAVE DRISCOLL reported Red-breasted Nuthatches; Bill also saw a Spotted Towhee and Bushtits. The Driscolls added a new yard bird: two Belted Kingfishers "flew over – heard them and then spotted them flying." A Western Scrub-Jay also visited their feeder, and Amy likewise "had two scrub-jays drop in for a few minutes before a flock of grackles ran them off."



Belted Kingfisher.
Photo by Dick Vogel.

PATTI, ON HER EVENING TWO-MILE WALK, saw "a Cooper's Hawk picking feathers out of a 'victim' on a lawn right next to the sidewalk. I hurried back to our house for my camera, which took about 2-3 minutes. When I returned he was gone, and all that was left of the 'victim' was a scattering of red Robin feathers and nothing else."

CYNTHIA MADSEN HAD A "SURPRISE GUEST" at the waterfall today! I gasped when I saw this Cooper's Hawk sitting on one of the rocks. I was glued to the window snapping about 60 pictures as it sat there from 10:30 until 11:10. I hoped it would grab a squirrel or two while it was there, but it seemed to ignore them because a couple got rather close and they didn't seem afraid of it. They were probably a bit too big for it. It was amazing to watch its neck rotation...very envious because with all my yoga, I don't think I will ever achieve that range of motion.

"THE HAWK KEPT A CLOSE EYE on the bird feeder. I guess they don't call it a 'bird feeder' for nothing. While it was on

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Birding the Bosque del Apache

January 15 – 18, 2010

DESCRIPTION: The Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, with its abundance of prairie, wetlands, and southwestern desert birds, is the premier winter birding destination in the intermountain west. More than 100,000 snow geese (both white and blue forms) and 20,000 sandhill cranes winter on the ponds, marshes and grain fields in and near the refuge located south of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Thousands of ducks, some shore and wading birds, many species of songbirds, and raptors such as bald eagles, Cooper's, red-tailed,

ferruginous, and rough-legged hawks, are also easily visible. This exciting excursion, led by Hugh and Urling Kingery, typically sells out quickly, so sign up soon!

PRICE: \$749 per Friends member (double occupancy), \$899 per Friends member (single occupancy). Non-members add \$60 per person. Price includes round-trip motor coach transportation, guide services, three nights accommodations, driver

gratuity, park entrance fees, 3 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 3 dinners. Deposit of \$100 due at registration with the balance due December 15, 2009.

DETAILS: The trip departs from Denver at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, January 15. Stops along the way include the Maxwell National Wildlife Refuge, south to Raton, NM, and the Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge. We spend the first night in Santa Fe. (Note: we will arrive too late to explore the city, since most shops and galleries close by 6:00 p.m. in winter) and the other two nights in Socorro.

Backyard Birds continued from page 9

the rocks it took a brief dip in the pond and did a quick drip-dry before I saw it lock its eyes on something and off it flew."

SEVERAL PEOPLE CALLED about the devastation from the mid-summer hailstorm that hit the Wheat Ridge and Lakewood area. Jackie King took a group to the Wheat Ridge greenbelt: "We were all shocked by the devastation from the wind and hail storm. Huge cottonwood trees were flat on the ground, some of their roots more than six feet in the air. Most standing trees were stripped of all or most of their leaves. The (cormorant & heron) rookery was a disaster — several blue heron bodies were stuck on the tree and it was very sad to see them. Some of the Canada Geese looked to be in sad shape with large amounts of their feathers heavily damaged and parts of their wings sticking out at strange angles."

PATTY OBSERVED that when a similar storm hit some years ago, the trees recovered and so did the birds. Urling heard that when birds have a poor breeding year, they try to make up for it the next year with extra broods and more eggs.

AND FINALLY, THE SICK FINCH REPORTS. All over the metro area people see sick House Finches or Pine Siskins. First rule for feeders: clean them every couple of weeks with a diluted bleach solution. Second, if you continue to see sick birds, stop feeding for at least two weeks. Bird diseases spread when birds feed in close proximity to each other. Stop feeding, disperse the flocks, and when you resume they will find you again – eventually.



House Finch. Photo by Dick Vogel.

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.



Can you find the western scrub jay in Hugh Kingery's Backyard Birds article on page 9 and 10?

Nicaragua Ecotour

Date: February 20-28, 2010 (8 nights, 9 days)

Our program begins with a short flight from the capital, Managua, to the small town of San Carlos located on the shores of Lake Nicaragua. Here we board boats and head down river birding along the way. This wetland environment is teeming with water birds and many tropical forest species. Explore El Castillo (The Castle), an old Spanish fort that dates back to the time of Henry Morgan and the Pirates of the Caribbean! Then we go to Solentiname Island located in the lake which has distinctive flora and fauna. We then fly back to Managua and explore the western shore of the lake including the colonial city of Granada and the volcanic island of Ometepe, where we bird in both forest and agricultural environments. There will be some free time in Granada to absorb the culture and also do some shopping. Our trip ends at San Juan del Sur on the Pacific coast where you can enjoy the beach before returning to Managua.

Price: \$1850 per person includes most meals, services of a local guide, transportation and internal airfare. Deposit of \$500 per person required. Does not include travel insurance (strongly recommended), tips, departure tax, or roundtrip international airfare from Denver to Managua (currently \$700 per person).

Detailed information, itinerary, and registration contact Becky Beckers at 303-766-5266, email at AgentBecky@aol.com, or visit www.TravelForTheBirds.com.

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The ASGD Board Welcomes Harriet Stratton

Harriet is freshly retired from 25 years of teaching Visual Art in Cherry Creek Schools: Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Ceramics and most recently AP Art History to elementary through high school aged youth. Raised on a cattle ranch in northeastern Colorado, she has long been a casual naturalist. Hugh and Urling's Beginning Bird Watching Class and then the Master Birder Program fed her desire to know more things ornithological and sparked a fondness for and commitment to Audubon. She also practices what she taught, keeping a painting studio in her Littleton home. The dirt under her fingernails is from a backyard redesign welcoming to birds and, for the moment, discouraging to squirrels. As head of the Audubon Field Trip Committee, Harriet welcomes input on trips you would like to see scheduled.



Can you find the female broad tailed hummingbird in Hugh Kingery's Backyard Birds article on page 9 and 10?

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The Audubon Society of Greater Denver (ASGD) and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado (BBBSC) have joined forces. When you donate a vehicle to ASGD, you also benefit BBBSC. Here's how it works: ASGD handles the initial calls; BBBSC handles the details.

To donate a vehicle, call ASGD at 303-973-9530 or send an e-mail to info@denveraudubon.org.

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Protect Birds! Protect Habitat!

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver has initiated a Planned Giving Program. Making a gift or a bequest is becoming a popular way to leave a lasting legacy. Protecting the birds, wildlife and places that make Denver special might be simpler than you think.

For more information, call ASGD at 303-973-9530 or send an e-mail to cnorbeck@denveraudubon.org



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