



## JOIN US!

Saturday, April 6 from 6-9pm  
The Barn at Raccoon Creek  
7301 W Bowles Ave, Littleton, CO 80123

Beer & wine begins  
At 6pm; dinner starts at 7pm

## SPRING BENEFIT

### CELEBRATE OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY!

Our annual Spring Benefit is an opportunity to network, socialize with friends, make new connections and share birding adventures while enjoying great food and libations. Celebrate our accomplishments, and support our work by bidding on silent and live auction items and taking part in a powerful collective appeal.



Spring is our busiest season for school programs, family programs, and for our popular bird banding at the Audubon Nature Center. Our annual Spring Benefit helps raise funds to support all of these programs that connect children and adults to nature. We invite you to join us for an unforgettable evening!

Please invite family and friends who love birds, nature, and supporting a great organization that focuses on environmental education, conservation and research. We always enjoy meeting new people and sharing our passion for birds! Not Able to Attend? You can still make a donation to support our spring programs. Please indicate your contribution is for the Spring Benefit 2019. THANK YOU!

## TICKET INCLUDES APPETIZERS, BEER, WINE, AND DINNER

\$80 per person through March 20

\$650 for a table of 10 through March 20

\$100 per person late registration after March 20

### REGISTER TODAY AT:

<http://www.denveraudubon.org/programs-events/spring-benefit-dinner-auction-2019/>

## THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS:



**Eagle (\$1000)** Nexus Financial

**Hawk (\$500)** Denver Water • My Denver Home Loans • NREL • Yellow Dog Printing & Graphics • Revel Rouser • Jerry & Arlene Raskin • Reefs to Rockies • Live Urban Real Estate

**Falcon (\$250)** Tedford Dental • First Bank

# Denver-Metro City Nature Challenge April 26-29

## SPREAD THE WORD!

Whether it's informing your neighbors, friends, or co-workers, posting on your Facebook or Twitter accounts, or distributing some of our posters and flyers, it all helps. The more promotion CNC has the more successful it will be!

## HOST AN EVENT!

A mini-bioblitz, a big bioblitz, a nature observation hike, a lunch break scavenger hunt, a team competition, the possibilities are endless!

## MAKE IT A CLASS PROJECT!

If you're an educator, you could create a weekend assignment to get your students outside and teach them the value of citizen science. They don't even have to put their phones down!

## HELP MAKE IDS!

We can only count observations toward our project if they are identified down to the species level by midnight May 2. We will need lots of help assigning those IDs as the observations roll in! You could do this in your PJs from your couch, or you could make it a social event by planning an ID party.



## MAKE SOME OBSERVATIONS!

Whenever you're outside between April 26-29, whether you're on a hike, walking the dog, or taking the trash out, pause a moment to observe the nature around you. You might discover something you've never noticed before!



## WHAT IS THE CITY NATURE CHALLENGE?



The City Nature Challenge (CNC) is an ongoing project to document urban biodiversity and engage city residents in the nature around them. The project is framed as a competition between cities to see which can make the most observations, identify the most species, or have the most participants. The program was started in 2016 by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles and the California Academy of Sciences as a competition between Los Angeles and San Francisco. This past year over 60 cities on 5 continents participated in the City Nature Challenge.

## THE 2019 CITY NATURE CHALLENGE WILL TAKE PLACE FROM APRIL 26TH-MAY 2ND

The first four days, April 26th-29th, are the days that observations will be collected, and the last three days, April 30th-May 2nd, are when those observations will be identified and verified. The Denver Metropolitan Area City Nature Challenge encompasses Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties. Anyone within these counties is encouraged to participate!

## HOW DO I CONTRIBUTE OBSERVATIONS?

Participants will use the free iNaturalist app to record the plants, animals, bugs, and fungi they observe. With this app, you can quickly and easily take a picture of your observation and upload it to the Denver Metro Area CNC project. The app automatically records the time and location of the observation, which is very important data for scientists and land managers to have. You are encouraged to identify your observation if you can. There is even a feature in the app which will analyze your photo and suggest possible identifications! If you don't know what it is, the community of nature enthusiasts on iNaturalist will work together to identify what you observed.



## HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

There are many ways that you can get involved with various levels of commitment. Some suggestions are listed in the sidebar. If you are interested in contributing in any way do not hesitate to contact us!

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR EVENTS YOU CAN JOIN!**

# JOIN US AT THESE EVENTS!

DENVER-METRO CITY NATURE CHALLENGE APRIL 26-29 (CONT.)

## DENVER METRO NATURE CHALLENGE & INATURALIST APP TRAINING SATURDAY MARCH 30, 9-11 AM

Help Denver compete in the nationwide City Nature Challenge (CNC)! This ongoing project documents urban biodiversity and engages residents in the nature found all around them. The 2019 Denver Metro Nature Challenge will take place from April 26 -29 utilizing the popular iNaturalist.org app to collect observations made of local wildlife or plants. We will be hosting a free training on the app and the event itself at the Audubon Nature Center in partnership with Colorado Parks & Wildlife! Meeting Place: Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield, 11280 Waterton Rd, Littleton, CO 80125.

Leaders: Kate Hogan, Community Outreach Coordinator, and Kent Schnake, Denver City Nature Challenge Coordinator with Colorado Parks & Wildlife.

Registration Required. No fee.

## DENVER METRO NATURE CHALLENGE BIOBLITZ SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 2019, 9-11AM

Help Denver compete in the nationwide City Nature Challenge (CNC)! This ongoing project documents urban biodiversity and engages residents in the nature found all around them. The 2019 Denver Metro Nature Challenge will take place from April 26 -29 utilizing the popular iNaturalist.org app to collect observations made of local wildlife or plants. We will be hosting a free event with Denver Audubon Master Naturalists and we need community volunteers to help us create a snapshot of our wildlife around the Audubon Nature Center!

Meeting Place: Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield, 11280 Waterton Rd, Littleton, CO 80125.

Leaders: Dave and Mariane Erickson, Audubon Master Naturalists

Registration requested but not required. No fee.

## WILDERNESS FIRST AID FOR BIRDERS AUDUBON NATURE CENTER MARCH 16-17, 2019

Chatfield - 11280 Waterton Rd, Littleton, CO 80125



## LEARN HOW TO PREVENT AND DEAL WITH WILDERNESS MEDICAL EMERGENCIES IN ENVIRONMENTS AROUND THE WORLD

~ Taught by University of Colorado school of medicine faculty who are also avid birders

~ Emphasizes practical hands-on First aid skills including assessment, wound care, splinting, abdominal illnesses and injuries, and travel and tropical illnesses, and more.

~ No experience necessary and emphasis is on wilderness medicine

## REGISTER NOW COLORADOWM.ORG

More Information -

Contact: Todd Miner

(Todd.Miner@ucdenver.edu)



January and February have been quite a roller-coaster ride, with the 5-weeks-long federal government shutdown, the comment period for a draft Environmental Impact Statement on leasing the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Christmas Bird Counts, two big snowstorms (at least in Denver) and the beginning of the Colorado General Assembly's 2019 session at the Capitol.



**First, the shut-down:** we were lucky in Colorado that the National Parks here were not vandalized or trashed, and that volunteers, at least at Rocky Mountain, came in to take care of some most pressing needs. Social costs to federal workers were considerable, and we will all pay, one way or another, for the impasse between Congress and the President. But it turns out that oil and gas leasing was not shut down – in fact, several leases were issued for federal minerals under private lands – a split estate situation – in the Pawnee Grasslands. Noble Energy obtained the leases, and questions have arisen about connections between this company and soon-to-be Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt, who once worked for them.

Audubon has a long history of activity and interest in the Pawnee, starting with Denver Audubon founder Lois Webster, who collected early data on the mountain plover there, and extending through our Grasslands Institute, which occurred every summer on the Pawnee for almost 20 years. Although the Forest Service has oil and gas plan that stipulates no surface occupancy on federal lands that leaves room for a lot of development – and impacts – on private lands just across the fence. So if you travel to the Pawnee on a birding trip take notes and let us know what you see.

### **Arctic Refuge EIS**

The tax “reform” bill that passed in November 2017 contained language promoting oil and gas leasing on the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, sneaked in by friends of the industry. Environmental laws require preparation of an EIS, which the Bureau of Land Management published in late December. Comments were due Feb.11, and both our chapter and National Audubon strongly opposed leasing any of this still intact ecosystem, as we have done for many years. Denver Audubon asked for an extension of the public comment period but the administration wants to push this through as fast as possible. At least there was no seismic testing this winter (Sierra Club note).

### **Colorado General Assembly**

Environmental bills were slow to come in at first, so we haven't yet seen (as of this writing) a bill to expand the Instream Flow Program, though sponsors are lined up. More bills dealing with oil and gas are expected, and we have several already that deal with climate change: Rep. Chris Hansen (D-Denver) has introduced one to make it easier for utilities to shut down their coal-fired power plants. The bill calls for use of some monies to retrain workers and soften economic impacts on communities that have depended on those jobs for years. Rep. Hansen also has a bill to allow bigger solar gardens and in general smooth the way for this particular form of renewable energy. Audubon's lobbyist will let us know if we need to contact our legislators to get the good bills through or oppose bad ones. IF you want to be active send your email address to: polly\_reetz48@live.com with notification of your interest.

### **The Wall:**

Reason for the Shut-down. What many people don't know is that Congress already appropriated 1.6 billion dollars to build segments of the border wall. Since the federal government owns certain properties along the border with Mexico, that's where the building can proceed most easily.

Result: 18 miles of wall through the Lower Rio Grande National Wildlife Refuge, Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park and the National Butterfly Center, which support one of the most diverse assemblages of flora and fauna in the country. Endangered and threatened species in the area, whose movements will be blocked by the wall, include the ocelot, jaguarundi and aplomado falcon as well as many other bird species.

In addition, the administration has waived 28 environmental laws to speed up construction. They include the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Migratory Bird Conservation Act, the National Fish and Wildlife Act, the Eagle Protection Act, and the Antiquities Act as well as many others.

If you find this despicable – call your Congressperson and Senators. They need to know that we all object to this environmental destruction in the name of a structure that will fail to solve our immigration problems. Telephone the US Capitol switchboard at (202) 225 – 3121 and ask for them by name: Senators Michael Bennet and Cory Gardner; Representatives will vary.

*May bird counts will be here soon; Denver Audubon encourages everyone to get out, enjoy, and count species and numbers with the groups sponsored by us and the Denver Field Ornithologists. Check our website, [www.denveraudubon.org](http://www.denveraudubon.org), for information.*

### **ASGD/Front Range Birding Seed Sale Partnership: A portion of all seed sales will be donated to ASGD**

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver and The Front Range Birding Company have partnered to make backyard bird feeding easy and affordable. You will be supporting Denver Audubon as a portion of all seed sales - all year - will be donated to ASGD. Be sure to take advantage of Front Range Birding's "Seed Vault Program." You can buy as much as you like up front and pick up fresh seed anytime. Seed Vault purchases never expire! There's no need to pre-order. Just stop by the Front Range Birding Company store and let them know you are there for Denver Audubon. Front Range Birding Company: 10146 W San Juan Way #110, Littleton, CO 80127 303-979-Bird (2473)



Spotted Towhee by Dick Vogel

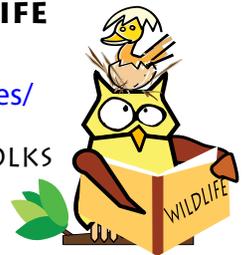
### **WOODPECKER WOES AND OTHER WILDLIFE ISSUES?**

<http://www.denveraudubon.org/about/wildlife-issues/>



HERE IS THE WEBSITE FOR FOLKS TO REPORT FOX SIGHTINGS AS PART OF A RESEARCH PROJECT:

[www.ifoundafox.org](http://www.ifoundafox.org)



THIS LINK WILL CONNECT YOU TO THE NATIONAL AUDUBON WEBSITE AND OTHER HELPFUL LINKS TO HELP YOU DEAL WITH COMMON QUESTIONS!

# LOIS WEBSTER FUND - ANNUAL RECEPTION & PROGRAM

*JOIN US! EVERYONE IS WELCOME - LEARN ABOUT THE LWF 2018 PROJECTS*

## PROJECTS:

*BLACK SWIFT MOVEMENT ECOLOGY*

*THE ROLE OF URBAN CONSERVATION IN ENHANCING AND ENGAGING CITIZENS*

*PROBIOTIC SOLUTIONS TO DECLINES IN BOREAL TOAD POPULATIONS*



**Tuesday, April 23, 2019**

**Kent Denver School,  
4000 E. Quincy Ave.,  
Englewood, CO**

**6:30 – 7:00: Reception with  
delicious desserts  
7:00 – 9:00: Program**

## ABOUT THE LOIS WEBSTER FUND

Lois Webster, a founder of the Denver Audubon Society, always was concerned about how little funding there was for song birds and all of the other non-game species in Colorado. Meanwhile hunting licenses paid for robust research into the many hunted game species. For her 75th birthday in 1995 her many Denver Audubon friends established The Lois Webster Fund (LWF) of the Denver Audubon Society specifically to support Colorado non-game wildlife research and education projects that lead to the conservation of these species. A small committee made up of wildlife experts, educators, environmentalists and several members of the Denver Audubon Society Board has guided the LWF since then and has awarded grants totaling over \$89,487 to 48 projects. This has been made possible by a small group of loyal donors who have given small --and some not so small-- donations every year.



The LWF has been carefully managed in an investment account that has provided funding for the grants and a solid foundation for the fund.

Last year, The Lois Webster Fund received a challenge grant and the LWF Committee wishes to extend a special thanks to all who came forward and met that challenge. We also are particularly grateful to the John and Helen Hale Environmental Legacy Fund, which provided the Lois Webster Fund with an extremely generous contribution. John and Helen were both valued Denver Audubon volunteers and were dedicated supporters of the Lois Webster Fund from the very beginning. A significant bequest from Lois's sister, Dorothy Webster was also received.

All of these contributions have made it possible for the LWF Committee to grow the fund and enable us to award up to \$11,278 in grants in 2019. Last year the LWF received 16 excellent proposals requesting over \$55,000 and was able to fund 3 for a total of \$8,474. Given our experience over the years, we know there will be many worthy projects to consider this year and that we will, once again, only be able to fund a portion of the high quality proposals submitted. For that reason, we will continue to urge more people to contribute and will be grateful to all of our donors. Thanks to their generosity, we will have the ability to make a meaningful contribution to Colorado nongame wildlife research and education again this year.

We hope all of you who have contributed over the years will join us at the LWF annual spring program where the grantees from the previous year will present the findings of their research. We want to be able to thank all of our amazing supporters in person. And we hope that many of you who want to learn more about Colorado non-game wildlife and the LWF will also come to hear what these exciting young researchers and educators have to share with us. It's always a fun and fascinating evening.

*Directions: The Kent Denver School at 4000E Quincy Ave., Englewood, CO. It is easily accessed from University, Dahlia or Colorado Avenue. The entrance to the campus, (two stone walls on either side of the main entrance) is about ¼ mile west of Dahlia and 1 mile east of University Blvd. The dining hall is the last building on the top of the hill—see map.*

*Questions: Call Margot Wynkoop, 303-885-8789*

*We hope you will join all of us on the Lois Webster Fund Committee for an entertaining and educational evening!*

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### **LWF FUND RESEARCH PROJECT: SKIN PROBIOTICS: A LIFELINE for Boreal Toads Under Threat of Disease**

By Tim Korpita, McKenzie Lab, CU Boulder

A few decades ago, Boreal toads (*Anaxyrus boreas*) were a relatively common sight during summers in the southern Rocky Mountains. They inhabited wetland areas above 8,500 feet right up to treeline, from southern Wyoming all the way to New Mexico, and their warty skin with prominent toxin-producing parotoid glands behind the eyes made them easily recognizable to local hikers. The best time to see them was in the early summer, as they emerged from underground winter hiding spots to breed. More active at night, they would head to lakes, beaver ponds or wetlands swollen by snowmelt, and find some calm, shallow water, where the more numerous males would sit patiently for a chance to mate with a female.



Boreal Toad by USFWS Mountain-Prairie - Wikipedia

If mating was successful, the female would leave behind a gelatinous string of thousands of tiny eggs in shallow water. The eggs would hatch a few weeks later as dark black tadpoles barely larger than mosquito larvae. If the water was warm enough, these tadpoles would grow and eventually metamorphose, losing their tail and gaining legs. These metamorphs, which could be encountered from late summer up to the first snowfall were very tiny, easily fitting on a penny. They would disperse from the area around their birthplace and feed on small invertebrates until they themselves were large enough to mate a few years later.

Unfortunately, the last few decades have been very bad for the Boreal toads of the southern Rocky Mountains. Many pristine wetland sites, which should contain dozens of individuals during mating season, are now completely empty, and others have just a few lonely adults holding on with no successful mating taking place. In the few locations where you can still find breeding populations, the number of adults and the egg masses they lay are drastically reduced. They have been listed as endangered in Colorado since 1993, and despite concerted efforts from conservation officials, populations continue to disappear.

So what is the cause of this dramatic decline? By far, the most significant issue facing Boreal toads in Colorado is the recently emerged fungal pathogen *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, or Bd for short. Bd causes a skin disease called chytridiomycosis, and Boreal toads are particularly susceptible. They are hardly alone, however. Bd is decimating amphibian species all over the globe from Australia to South America, and it is a main reason why amphibians have quietly become the most threatened class of vertebrates on the planet. The fungus infects the skin of its amphibian host, slowly eating away at the keratin that gives the skin its structure. The skin is a vital organ in amphibians, responsible for gas exchange and electrolyte balance. When the Bd infection becomes dense enough, it prevents the proper functioning of the skin, and the host dies. Throughout the infection, spores are released from the skin that will swim through water to find another host to infect, continuing the cycle until all susceptible individuals are gone from an area.

While the skin of the toads may be their weakness, it may also harbor the key to overcoming Bd. Like all amphibians, toad skin is a mucosal surface. Similar to inside our digestive tract and nasal passages, mucus is constantly being secreted to keep their skin moist and protect it from irritation. This mucus also provides a rich environment for bacteria to grow and reproduce. In fact, most amphibians, including Boreal toads, have rich microbial communities consisting of hundreds of unique bacterial species living on their skin. While many of these bacteria are likely just commensalists along for the ride, some have been shown to help amphibians fight off fungal skin pathogens. One of these bacteria that has been found on amphibian skin, *Janthinobacterium lividum* (J liv), has been shown to be particularly effective at inhibiting the growth of Bd. It does this by producing a deep purple pigment, called violacein, which is quite toxic to the fungus.

With this knowledge, researchers have been attempting to develop probiotic treatments that increase the number of inhibitory bacteria on the skin of amphibians to protect them from Bd infection. This is preferable to treating toads with a toxic anti-fungal medicine because the bacteria could establish more permanently on the skin, providing a sustainable source



Mount Princeton near Buena Vista by Hogs555 - Wikipedia

of protection that stays on the skin for an extended period. Skin probiotics have proven to be effective against Bd in controlled laboratory settings in multiple species. The research group of Dr. Valerie McKenzie at CU Boulder (my supervisor) is attempting to translate this lab research to a practical solution for wild Boreal toad populations facing Bd associated declines.

For the past three field seasons, our main study sites have been located in a drainage near Mt. Princeton in Chaffee County Colorado. The Chaffee County Boreal toad populations were for many years some of the healthiest and largest in the state, but recently tested positive for Bd and have seen the expected declines. Our drainage is long, steep, and narrow, with a series of shallow beaver ponds that make for excellent toad habitat.

Our goal has been to treat toads with our probiotics right around metamorphosis, as they are transitioning from aquatic to terrestrial life stages. This is a particularly vulnerable life phase for amphibians, and it is not made easier in the presence of Bd. During metamorphosis the skin keratinizes (think about the smooth, slimy skin of a tadpole compared to the tougher skin of a toad) and this means Bd can spread around their body. It also does not help that toads do not have much of an immune system as young metamorphs.

*(Cont. next page)*

The idea is that if our probiotic treatments can get them over this hump in vulnerability, they stand a much better chance of surviving to reproductive age.

With the help of Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the U.S. Forest Service, and other government agencies we capture individuals right around metamorphosis, and house them in large plastic tubs adjacent to the sites. We add billions of bacteria, in this case a J liv we isolated from a toad in the area, to the water in the containers and the moss the toads hang out on. To facilitate resampling, we keep the young toads in the containers for a few weeks, feeding them wingless fruit flies. Before we release them, we tag them with a little tiny colored dot of an injectable colored rubber-like substance, so we can see how well treated individuals survive.

We also collect samples from the toads that allow us to estimate how inhibitory the skin environment is to Bd, and compares those with untreated toads. We swab the toads and extract all the bacterial DNA off the swab, to see how much J liv stuck on them, and we soak them in sterile water to let the chemicals from their skin mucus seep in so we can test them back in the lab without killing them. As we accumulate data over the next few years, we should be able to tell if our efforts are working to protect these unique high elevation amphibians from their biggest threat.

*Support from the Audubon Society's Lois Webster Fund has been instrumental in getting the next phase of our amphibian skin probiotic project off the ground. A grant for sampling materials and culturing supplies allowed us to swab toads at many sites with surviving toad populations. The goal of this work is to find other bacteria that may be anti-Bd probiotic candidates, either instead of, or in conjunction with J liv. We are currently evaluating in the lab over 200 unique bacterial isolates that were collected this summer for their potential as probiotics. Thank you to all Denver Audubon Society members for helping us to expand our toolbox for protecting this unique species.*



## JOIN US IN CELEBRATING OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY!

*at these upcoming events*

**March 14**

*~ Birds and Brews Pub Quiz Trivia at the Blackbird Restaurant*

**April 6**

*~ Spring Benefit at the Barn at Raccoon Creek*

**May 12**

*~ Mother's Day Bird Banding Breakfast at the Nature Center*

**June 22**

*~ Bird Habitat Garden Tour in Highlands Ranch*

**July 20**

*~ Nature Center Open House & Celebration  
with John Denver Cover Band*

**September 21**

*~ HOOtenanny Owl & Music Festival*

**October/November**

*~ Annual Fall Gathering*

**December**

*~ Denver Audubon Christmas Bird Count*

The January snowstorms drew birds to feeders in droves. In Roxborough Village, **Jill Holden**, on Jan. 13, counted 14 species, including Black-capped Chickadees, Bushtits, Pine Siskins, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay, and a Cooper's Hawk.



Northern Goshawk by Hugh Kingery

came out and she left. We called her a female because of her bulky size. During her perch, bird activity diminished not at all!

We counted 16 Spotted towhees, 40 juncos, a dozen Pine Siskins, 6 Blue Jays (one 'jaying' at the Goshawk from a foot & a half). Two Song Sparrows, 2 Tree Sparrows. One Fox Sparrow, which we have seen sporadically over the last 10 days (just before the first snowstorm).



Spotted Towhee by Hugh Kingery

In Lakewood during the Jan. 22 storm, **Keith Hidalgo** counted 13 species, including 6 Bushtits, 15 House Finches, 6 Black-capped Chickadees, and a surprising 2 Lesser Goldfinches (plus 3 American Goldfinches). He missed the Red-breasted and White-breasted nuthatches that had come in before the snowstorms.

In our yard the same day, A Northern Goshawk perched in the scrub oaks, 10 feet behind all our feeders, for over an hour. The sun



Fox Sparrow by Hugh Kingery

We have one species that Jill didn't list: a flotilla of Blue Jays – 6 to 10 – that invade during the winter but leave in summer.

**During the Jan. 11 snowstorm**, Lois Levinson reported, "Just had a Northern Goshawk perched on my backyard feeder in the snow. Greenwood Village, 2 miles southwest of Cherry Creek State Park." **Karen Metz** saw one the week of Jan. 7 in her Franktown yard. She also has almost a dozen Blue Jays, "more than I've ever seen here before."

Jill started a discussion on Douglbirds (ASGD's discussion group for Douglas & Elbert counties) about junco behavior. Normally they feed on the ground, but Jill saw "a Gray-headed Junco get up on the suet cage and eat the suet -- which seemed to be a whole new behavior. Yesterday we saw an Oregon up there eating suet as well. This morning there were several juncos interested in eating suet instead of being down on the deck eating the millet."



Dark-Eyed Junco by Hugh Kingery

Karen responded that "during snow and cold temperatures, and also during competitive times when Wild Turkeys are monopolizing seed on the ground, I see Dark-eyed Juncos at platform/tray seed feeders. I also sometimes see them clinging to the suet feeders (but



Tree Sparrow by Hugh Kingery

the competition is pretty fierce) and they are consistently under those feeders for the PB crumbs. Mostly, they're the Gray-headed race that live here year-round, but I see other races there also. At least a few of the Spotted Towhees do the same." She counted 58 Wild Turkeys in her neighborhood, often sees 2-3 dozen at her feeders.

**LeAnn Joswick**, Highlands Ranch, commented, "I have observed Juncos on my thistle feeder on more than one occasion this season. I also had a pair of Mourning Doves Jan. 13." Like LeAnn, we have seen a junco or two on our thistle feeder for a month or more, lately seeing them patronizing the suet cages.



Townsend's Solitaire by Dick Vogel

Karen had a rewarding non-turkey sighting: "The turkey noises attracted me one morning and I saw a very healthy looking Bobcat run at a few as they flew into the pines."

Mel Melnicoe, southeast Denver, emailed, "I'm a long time birder here in Denver. Typically, we have multiple species on feeders and in the yard. Today I spotted a single Townsend's Solitaire in our backyard birdbath -- first time ever! Are they common this time of year?"

Solitaires breed in the mountains and drop down to the foothills and metro areas for the winter. They set up winter territories, mostly around Juniper bearing lots of berries (cones) which sustain them through the winter. The foothills have the most junipers, but sometimes they descend into the city, as Mel observed.

Suzanne Johnston sent pictures of a White-crowned Sparrow and an American Goldfinch that she took at her bird bath.

Not exactly a backyard, but Bill Schreitz emailed, "I saw a Northern



White-Crowned Sparrow by Suzanne Johnston

Shrike this past Tuesday in spruce/fir habitat, bordering the willow-populated stream of Sacramento Creek, at 11,250' in Park County, about 4 miles west of Alma. I didn't know they worked that high. They usually occur at lower elevations according to eBird 8000-9500'. Have you heard of them being seen that high?" That seems like quite a high elevation for them.



American Goldfinch by Suzanne Johnston

Warbler I had seen a few weeks prior. After getting some decent pictures the following week, I was somewhat surprised it wasn't the yellow rump, but a Palm Warbler. I didn't think they came this far West. I've also seen a couple of other birders spotting them along the Front Range this week too. Is this normal or are they just moving further west for food?" As Tom says, people saw several Palm Warblers this fall, but some may have come from the West rather than the East. Tom's looks more like the western subspecies.



Palm Warbler by Tom Sather

And lastly, Tom Sather reported an amazing rare bird Nov. 24: a Palm Warbler. "I go for quick "nature walks" around my office located in Broomfield. I took this picture this week, but had heard it the week prior. A couple days later I managed to get a photo of it in a pinyon tree, mid-flight, capturing a bug but assumed it was the Yellow-rumped



Palm Warbler by Polly Reetz

And then, a month later on Dec. 19, Polly & Gene Reetz “were walking along the east side of the South Platte River in South Platte Park, about a half mile south of the Mineral Street bridge, in a strong wind. A small bird flew/

was tossed across the river onto the river bank near us and began hopping from rock to rock, moving fast and hunting insects/larvae/eggs/ whatever in the crevices. We watched it for several minutes and it seemed to be successful in its hunt. The main field marks were its bright yellowish-green rump and undertail coverts, eye line, faint striping on the breast and dull brown back. A check with the Sibley bird guide suggested it was a Palm Warbler.” See photo – this one looks like the eastern race.

*Your contributions write this column. Thanks to you in urban and suburban Denver who sent in all these intriguing reports. Send a note or post card to P.O. Box 584, Franktown 80116, or Email me: ouzels8@aol.com.*

## DENVER AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT



*At the “Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, counters trek to a locust grove at the north edge of the count circle. In the grove they found both a Great Horned and a Barn Owl.*

*Denver Audubon has sponsored this Christmas Bird count for 31 years. With a center in downtown Aurora, it includes 10 miles of the South Platte, Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Cherry Creek State Park, and swings around south through Cherry Hills to the Platte at about Evans.*

This year our 91 counters found 83 species and 54,310 birds – 40,656 of them Canada and Cackling Geese. The number of species matched the average, but the number of birds almost doubled the average, with almost twice as many geese as average. The number of counters dropped because of the cold weather (from 3 below zero to 15 above).

### OTHER SPECIES THAT BESTED THE AVERAGE:

- Northern Shovelers (3,184 cf. 2,122 average);
- Hooded Merganser (197 cf. 111);
- Blue Jay (65 cf. 50);
- Townsend’s Solitaire (23 cf. 15).
- Way up: Bushtit (82 cf. 29) and White-breasted Nuthatch (39 cf. 14). On the first 11 counts, we had 0-4 Bushtits and WB Nuthatches.

### QUITE A FEW SPECIES WE FOUND IN LOWER NUMBERS – INCLUDING ALL DUCKS EXCEPT THE SHOVELER AND HOODED MERGANSER. OTHER LOW COUNTS:

- American Coot (57 cf. 112);
- Ring-billed Gull (1,059 cf. 1,832);
- Downy Woodpecker (36 cf. 54); Flicker (120 cf. 255);
- Magpie (324 cf. 755);
- Crow (306 cf. 805);
- Starling (573 cf. 5,378 !!);
- Dark-eyed Junco (252 cf. 494);
- House Finch (421 cf. 1,459); and
- House Sparrow (216 cf. 1,730).

**WE MISSED THREE SPECIES FOR THE FIRST TIME: SHARP-SHINNED HAWK, RING-NECKED PHEASANT, AND HERRING GULL.**

# Leave a Legacy

## *Educate Generations - Protect Birds and Habitats into the Future Include ASGD in Your Will, and Other Gift Planning Options*

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver offers an opportunity for you to make a gift or bequest to leave a legacy and a lasting impact. The goal of planned giving is to help you plan your estate and charitable giving in a way that benefits you, your family and ASGD. We invite friends who share a commitment to educating all ages about birds, other wildlife, and habitats to consider making a personal investment in the future of our programs. There are several ways you can make these planned gifts to charity and enjoy tax and income benefits:

- **Specific, Residuary and Contingent Bequests**
- **Retirement Accounts and Pension Plans**
- **Insurance**
- **Securities**
- **Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT)**
- **Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA)**

Please consult with your financial planner and attorney to assure you receive the best financial advantages and that your intentions are carried out fully.

We would be glad to discuss any planned giving option with you – in confidence and without obligation. For more information, please call 303-973-9530 or e-mail Karl Brummert, Executive Director, at [kbrummert@denveraudubon.org](mailto:kbrummert@denveraudubon.org)

## *Please Let Us Know*

We often receive bequests from people whom we have never had the opportunity to thank. If you include Audubon Society of Greater Denver in your estate plans, please let us know. We value the opportunity to express our gratitude in person to let you know that your gift is greatly appreciated now and for future generations of people and birds to come. Those people who have notified us of their intention to make a bequest to the Audubon Society of Greater Denver are invited to our Legacy Circle. Legacy Circle special events and activities highlighting the work we accomplish together will keep you connected to the “legacy” that you have planned for us.

**Legal Designation: If you wish to name Audubon Society of Greater Denver in your will or estate plan, we should be legally designated as:** *“Audubon Society of Greater Denver, a nonprofit organization (Tax ID #23-7063701), with its principal business headquarters address of 9308 S. Wadsworth Blvd, Littleton, CO 80128.”*  
**Date of Incorporation: September 30, 1969**



Photo by Dick Vogel

# QUICK GLANCE - UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS & PROGRAMS

## JANUARY / FEBRUARY CHEAT SHEET

MAR 2	SAT	FRONT RANGE BIRDING	APR 11	THU	ROXBOROUGH STATE PARK
MAR 3	SUN	WALK THE WETLANDS	APR 13	SAT	FIRST CREEK PARK
MAR 9	SAT	BIRDING INSIGHTS - THRUSH RUSH	APR 13	SAT	ECHTER'S GARDEN CENTER PRESENTATION "BIRDS ON THE BRAIN" (ARVADA)
MAR 14	THU	BIRD AND BREW TRIVIA AT BLACK BIRD RESTAURANT (DENVER)	APR 18	THU	BEGINNING BIRDWATCHING EVENING MEETING
MAR 14	THU	ROXBOROUGH STATE PARK	APR 20	SAT	EARLY SPRING MIGRANTS AT WALDEN PONDS
MAR 16	SAT	WHEAT RIDGE GREENBELT/PROSPECT PARK	APR 23	TUE	LOIS WEBSTER FUND ANNUAL PROGRAM
MAR 16-17	SA/SU	WILDERNESS FIRST AID FOR BIRDERS CERTIFICATION COURSE	APR 27	SAT	CHATFIELD STATE PARK
MAR 23	SAT	BARNUM PARK	APR 27	SAT	BIRD BANDING STATION OPENING DAY
MAR 30	SAT	CHATFIELD STATE PARK	APR 27	SAT	BIOBLITZ WITH MASTER NATURALISTS AT THE AUDUBON CENTER
MAR 30	SAT	INATURALIST APP TRAINING AND CITIZEN SCIENTIST DENVER CHALLENGE	APR 28	SUN	BIRD BANDING STATION PUBLIC VISITS
APR 6	SAT	NORTHERN PONDS	MAY 12	SUN	MOTHER'S DAY BIRD BANDING BREAKFAST
APR 6	SAT	FRONT RANGE BIRDING			
APR 7	SUN	WALK THE WETLANDS			

FOR A FULL DESCRIPTION OF THESE FIELD TRIPS, VISIT [WWW.DENVERAUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS/](http://WWW.DENVERAUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS/) OR CALL 303-973-9530

## QUICK GLANCE - DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

### **Kansas Prairie-Chickens and Spring Migration: Wetlands, Shorebirds and Grasslands:**

**May 4 to 9, 2019  
and May 11 to 16, 2019**

This birding tour will take you east into Kansas, with stops at some of the best midwestern birding destinations – Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge.



Lesser Prairie-Chicken by Bill Schmoker

*Price: \$1,360 per person with 9 participants for 6 Days and 5 Nights Trip cost includes guide and driver, all access fees, five nights of lodging and more.*

*Register: Charles Thornton-Kolbe, 720-320-1974, email [charles@PIBird.com](mailto:charles@PIBird.com)*

### **Brazil's Pantanal July 7-15, 2019**

This is one of our most popular trips with first time Brazil bird watchers and nature lovers. Every birder and wildlife lover wants to see the Pantanal and South America's king of the jungle, the magnificent Jaguar. The Pantanal has some 40 specialty bird species and several Brazilian endemics, including Hyacinth Macaw, Greater Rhea, Bare-faced Curassow, Mato Grosso Antbird, Chestnut-bellied Guan and much more. Besides seeing 200 plus bird species, everyone enjoys seeing Capybara, Giant Anteater, Silvery Marmoset, Black Howler Monkey and other Pantanal wildlife.

*\$2,990/person*

*Register at [www.pibird.com](http://www.pibird.com)*

### **Peru – Sacred Valley, Machu Picchu and Manu September 2019**

Peru is home to more than 1800 species of birds, including 45% of the world's neotropical species. It's also home to the Sacred Valley, Machu Picchu and Amazon basin - bucket list destinations for many travelers. This Denver Audubon exclusive itinerary combines unique birding experiences at all three locations including Andean condor, cock-of-the-rock (Peru's national bird), and many endemics. Hosted by Karl Brummert, Denver Audubon Executive Director. More details coming soon.

*\$4495/person double occupancy. Single supplement: \$630*

*Register: <https://reefstorockies.com/destinations/south-america/peru/peru-discovery-2019/>*

### **South Africa Birding and Wildlife Safari: Kruger National Park and More**

**Oct 21 – Nov 1, 2019**

*Details to follow*

*Register at [www.pibird.com](http://www.pibird.com)*

### **Belize: Rainforest to Reef November 9-16, 2019**

Nestled between Mexico and Guatemala on the Caribbean coast of Central America, Belize is one of the few remaining unspoiled places on earth. From colorful coral reefs to tropical rainforest to gorgeous beaches to the mysteries of the ancient Maya, you can truly experience it all in Belize. The only English-speaking country in Central America, Belize offers a unique combination of rewarding travel experiences that make it unlike any other destination in the world. Hosted by Kate Hogan, Community Outreach Coordinator

*\$2795/person based on double occupancy. Single supplement: \$775*

*Register: <https://reefstorockies.com/destinations/central-america/belize/belize-rainforest-to-reef-2019/>*

## Volunteers, Donors, New Friends and Officers & Staff

### Audubon Center Volunteers/School Programs/Naturalists

Keith Ehrman, Lisa Chase, Lucy Michel, Laurie Gibb, Mariane Erickson, Rebecca Jackson, Audrey Stokes, Pam Schmidt, Angela Grun Lynne Forrester, Jamie Simo, Bill Schreitz Cindy Kristensen, Ruth Gabreski, Bea Weaver

### Field Trip Leaders

Dick Anderson, Tom Bush, Georgia Hart, Mary Keithler, Michele Ostrander, Karen von Saltza, Barbara Shissler, Cindy Valentine

### Office Help & Mailing Crew

Kathy Ford, Betty Glass, Jeanne McCune, Carolyn Roark, Linda McIntyre

### Website/Media

Dick Anderson, Mary Urban, George Mayfield

### Public/Outreach Volunteers

Lisa Chase	Rick Hunter
Pam Schmidt	Jeanne McCune
Tina Jones	Nancy Matovich
John Liberatore	Diane Hutton
Angela Grun	Susan Sass
Betty Glass	Kodi Jo Jaspers
Carol Hunter	

*Thanks to all committees, board members and Audubon Master Birders for volunteering their time.*

### New & Renewing Friends

John T Arthur, Kevin E Beato, Dale P Benson, Blake Besser, Mary Burger, Stephen Catterall, Cynthia Cestkowski, Christina Clayton, Gail Ferber, Denise Gonzalez-Walker, Paula and Stan Gudder, Dwight Hall, Irene Horn, Patty Jaacks, Christina Jeske, Deb A Keever, Jennifer Krieger, Tom Loucks, Robert Magee, Joann Marshall, Vickie A McSchooler, Jeannie Mitchell, Mark Montgomery, Becky Orr, Alex Osteen, Kathy Parker, Susan Permut, Sharon C Pickens, Nona Radin, Hank Rosen, Janice Rosen, Paul Schreck, Renee Schwark, Eric Schwarz, Clinton & Rosita Shoemaker, Karl Stecher, Eric Storms, Martha Strickland, Laura Webb, Cheryl Wilcox, Bill Wuerthele, Giselle S Youngblood, Quirino H Zaragoza

### Maintenance Volunteers

Fred Griest, Don Niemczyk

### Garden

Diana Hornick, Bea Weaver, Ruth Gabreski, Dale Benson, Tina Leslie, Audrey Stokes

### Your volunteer hours are very important to us!

Your volunteer hours are very important to us as we use them to raise money through grants and the SCFD. Please record your hours on Volgistics or email Kate Hogan with your completed hours as soon as possible. Thanks!

### Officers & Directors

Wendy Woods, President  
Arlene Raskin, 1st Vice President  
Ann Bonnell, 2nd Vice President  
Vacant, Treasurer  
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Leslie O'Connor  
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### Staff

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Emily Hertz  
School Programs Coordinator

Suzy Hiskey  
Nature Educator

Rhonda Shank  
Office Manager

Mary Urban  
Newsletter Design/Layout



**Thanks to Our Generous Annual Donors - see next page**

## **Annual Appeal Donors - THANK YOU!**

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