



Canyon Wrenderings

The Journal of the Black Canyon Audubon Society

Representing Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, San Juan, and San Miguel Counties of Western Colorado

Winter 2016/2017

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Join Us on BCAS Trips: These People Did!



13 BCAS members and one visitor from Colorado Springs searched for Barrow's Goldeneyes with perfect weather at Blue Mesa Reservoir. Photo credit to Alan Reed.

December: Annual Christmas Bird Counts in Montrose, Gunnison, and Delta counties. Bring: warm clothes (dress for weather), snack and/or lunch, drinks, binoculars, spotting scope (if you have), bird books. You will be provided with a map of birding area along with a checklist of birds that might be seen. Instructions will be given prior to beginning the count.

Saturday, December 17, Montrose. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the BLM/Forest Service parking lot, 2465 South Townsend Avenue. Bird until we get the circle done, or run out of daylight. All data needs to be turned into the leader by the end of the day. Contact Missy Siders, 970-240-5332, msiders@blm.gov. For those interested in meeting afterwards to informally discuss counts and observations, join us at Two Rascals Brewing Co. in Montrose around 4 p.m.

Sunday, December 18, Gunnison. Meet at 7:30 a.m. on the Western State College Campus - Hurst Hall Room 130 to get organized. Chile potluck at 5:30 that evening to compile results. Things can be wintry in Gunnison so come prepared for whatever weather we may have. Contact Arden Anderson at 970-641-5322 the week before the count if there are any questions. All data needs to be turned into the leader by the end of the day, or make other arrangements with the leader.

Saturday, December 31, Delta. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Delta City Market parking lot to receive maps, data sheets and directions for conducting surveys. Please contact Amy Seglund at 970-252-6014 or amy.seglund@state.co.us if you are interested in participating or need additional information.

Sunday, January 1, Hotchkiss. Meet at 8 a.m. in the Hotchkiss City Market parking lot to break into groups. For more information contact Jason Beason at 970-310-5117 or jason.beason@birdconservancy.org. Jason would like to hear from everyone that plans on helping with the count, but it isn't necessary to participate!

January

Saturday, January 21: Open water birding at several locations between Montrose and Delta. Expect to see a wide variety of waterfowl. Meet at the Montrose downtown City Market south of the fuel pumps at 9:00 a.m. Call or email Jon Horn, trip leader, if you plan to attend (970) 209-5404 or jon_horn@alpinearchaeology.com. For more information, see article on page 3.

More trips on page 3.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Comings and Goings

The change of seasons resulted in a wonderful fall and a warmer and drier than expected November. It seems like I have been seeing a pretty good variety of birds about, but smaller than usual numbers. Maybe the warmer weather has allowed birds to keep spread out a bit more than is typical, and perhaps migrants simply passed right through on their way south, mostly undetected.

Our annual bird banding and educational program at Ridgway State Park in September was a spectacular success. Hundreds of school kids were bussed to the park and received first-hand experience with the science of birds. The effort was spearheaded by Sheryl Radovich and Marcella Fremgen with an incredibly dedicated force of volunteers. The kids came ready to learn! It is hoped that their enthusiasm results in the beginning of a lifetime of appreciation for the natural world. For more information on banding results, see article on page 4.

As a sidelight to the bird banding, the two-day annual Ouray County bird count led by Coen Dexter and Brenda Wright was well attended. All told, 122 species of birds were identified, including four species not previously noted: marsh wren, blue-headed vireo, lesser yellowlegs, and Grace's warbler. The last weekend in November, we had a wonderfully clear and calm day at Blue Mesa Reservoir (even felt warm in the afternoon) for the Barrow's goldeneye count led by Jason Beason of the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. We saw many ducks, grebes, gulls, eagles, and other birds (including a common loon) throughout the day, but the highlight was a group of 34 Barrow's goldeneye on the far eastern end of the reservoir.

Speaking of the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, they plan to do additional research on the migratory patterns of the black swift. Technology has improved so much that small tracking devices can now provide very specific locational data. Not only will this allow the swifts to be more precisely tracked to their wintering grounds, data can be collected about their foraging areas while they are in our area during the nesting season. BCAS provided some funding for the initial, ground-breaking research that revealed that swifts from Colorado migrate to Brazil during the winter. The BCAS board decided to donate \$2,000 to the upcoming effort. We look forward to finding out what new information is learned about this iconic local bird.

Christmas bird counts are coming up in December and early January. Details are presented elsewhere in the newsletter. Please plan to attend one or more of these counts. They are a great way to meet other birders, improve your skills, and are always fun! Beginners are always welcome.

Finally, I would like to thank Bill Harris for the time he spent on the board and as our field trip coordinator. Bill has decided to resign, though he will still make the arrangements for the February raptor field trip in the Montrose area and the annual two-day spring trip to the west ends of San Miguel and Montrose counties. We are looking for someone to fill in as the coordinator of field trips. This does not mean that you need to lead the trips, only that someone is designated as the leader, a meeting place and time is determined, and that the information is made available. We already have a pretty full array of regularly scheduled field trips, so the job is not arduous. New ideas are always welcome. Please let me know if that is something you would find interesting to do.

Jon Horn, BCAS President

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(BCAS Trips continued)

February: Annual Raptor trips around Montrose and up the North Fork. Based on past trips, you can expect to see most Red-tailed Hawk morphs, Golden and Bald Eagles, Kestrels, Northern Harriers, and other species, depending on the weather.

Saturday, February 11 and Sunday February 12: North Fork area raptor trips. Space each day is limited to 12 participants. Trips will be led by Jason Beason or Jim LeFevre. Contact Jason at Jason.beason @birdconservancy.org to reserve your place. Plan to leave at 9:00 a.m. and trip will last until 2-3 p.m. Wear warm clothes, bring lunch, binoculars, drink, must contact to reserve space and find out meeting location.

Saturday, February 18 and Sunday February 19: Montrose area raptor trips. The Raptor Field Trip was initiated several years ago by, now deceased Audubon member, Herb Probasco. These field trips are organized in his memory. The Montrose area is home to several wintering and resident raptors. We will travel the back roads to view these avian species. Meet at 8:30 a.m. by the fuel pumps at the downtown City Market in Montrose. To maintain road safety, the trip is limited to 12 participants each day. We will carpool and proceed to viewing areas. The field trip will end in early afternoon. Please contact Bill Harris at 970-615-7166 or at trlrgpa48 @gmail.com to sign up or for more information.

March

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, March 17 – 19: Annual Eckert Crane Days, more information to follow in March newsletter and on the website. We will be observing migrating sandhill cranes and area waterfowl. Bring your binoculars; BCAS members will have spotting scopes set up with members present to answer questions.

Open Water Field Trip – What to expect in 2017

by Jon Horn (with minor additions by Sandy Beranich)

So what kind of a trip is an 'open water trip'? Do I need to bring my canoe? Isn't all water open? If it isn't, doesn't that mean it is ice? Last January, 2016, a group of seven led by Jon Horn of Montrose, headed out searching for birds in open water in the Montrose and Delta areas. Last year's cold winter had locked up most of the ponds in the area with ice, but it was thought that a few places would be pretty reliable for seeing waterfowl. We started out at Otter Pond, which has bubblers on its large central pond to keep water open, and has become a winter haven for a wide variety of waterfowl. We found 12 species on and around the pond, mostly ducks and geese, with the highlights being five canvasbacks and three hooded mergansers. With that, we headed to Cobble Creek where a pond that is not visible until you are right on top of it held another five species including 70 widgeons and five buffleheads. The group next headed over to the City of Montrose 18-acre property between Marine Road and the backwaters of the Uncompahgre River. Ground water keeps wetlands open during the winter and a wide variety of water birds and marshland species have been noted throughout the year; songbirds also frequent the trees and shrubs in the drier areas. It was by far the most productive area we visited during the trip with 19 species identified. Highlights were 30 gadwalls and four green-winged teal, a fly-by of a killdeer, a snipe that jumped up and then circled back to buzz right over our heads, and a distant merlin. We then decided to head to Delta and see what we could find at Confluence Park, another winter waterfowl haven. In addition to 100s of Canada geese, we saw 26 snow geese and a smattering of ducks, including 42 common goldeneye; we just missed a group of Barrow's goldeneye on the river. Overall, we had 12 species at Confluence Park. We then headed north of Delta on G50 Road, where we stopped at the bridge over the Gunnison River. Here, we had nine species, including 200 sandhill cranes flying in, a distant golden eagle, and 18 mountain bluebirds and a yellow-rumped warbler feeding in the Russian olives and other shrubs along the river. We also scared off a group of goldeneye before we could get the scope on them – maybe the elusive Barrow's goldeneyes we had missed earlier. Down the road, we took a nice walk into the Escalante Wildlife Area where we had eight species completely different from what we had seen earlier in the day. These included three northern harriers, two sharp-shinned hawks, one Cooper's hawk, and a brown creeper. Although these were wonderful birds to see, the highlight was nice views of an American pipit walking along the bank of the river. Most of the group departed for home at this point, but a few of us went back to the Confluence Park area and climbed over the levee behind Big O Tires to see what was on the river. Looking under the Highway 50 bridge, we spotted large numbers of waterfowl feeding on the river. Included were 65 redheads, two common mergansers, 25 ring-necked ducks, 40 widgeon, 15 mallards, 60 Canada geese, 70 coots, and one common goldeneye. We also spotted a Red-tailed hawk and a Great blue heron for 10 species at that spot. For the day, we identified 43 species and a total of 2,188 birds. Not bad for a cold, but pleasantly sunny, winter day. Join us this January – just remember, with birds, there are no guarantees! *Photo credit for American pipit to Carole London.*



Having trouble using email addresses?

A space is inserted in all member email addresses in this newsletter to avoid unwanted emails. When emailing any of the individuals identified in this newsletter, find and delete the space or your email will get rejected.

MISC Miniature new transmitters recently revealed that the 4-ounce Arctic tern follows zigzagging routes between Greenland and Antarctica each year to travel about 44,000 frequent flier miles. Since the birds often live 30 years or more, the researchers estimate that, over its lifetime, an arctic tern migrates about 1.5 million miles!—equal to three trips to the moon and back.

Banding at Ridgway State Park:

Article and Photos by Marcella Fremgen

This year was the 11th year of banding at Ridgway State Park, and it was a great year for both kids and birds! The average number of birds previously caught in mist nets at the station was around 128; this year 131 birds were caught during 9 days of banding, bringing the total number of birds banded at the site up to 1,416 over 11 years of banding. There were 24 species caught at the site this year.



This year's schedule had one day open to the public and eight days of banding for an audience of school groups.



Over the eight days dedicated to school groups, approximately 700 students participated in a number of education stations. The stations included (1) banding, (2) bird walk, (3) bird skins, (4) habitat, and (5) dangers of migration.

Almost every group was able to see a live bird at the banding station, which was very exciting to everyone involved!

How Do Birds Survive a Winter Storm?

Paraphrased from Emily Silber, January 22, 2016,
www.audubon.org/news

When bad weather hits, birds will generally seek shelter in microhabitats, such as inside a thick hedge, or on the downwind side of a tree. Hunkering down in these spots can protect them from wind, rain, and even cold. Cavity nesters (woodpeckers, bluebirds, and chickadees), can also hide out in their tree holes. Some birds will even wander several miles looking for adequate shelter and reliable food sources. Dense evergreens, spruces, or junipers provide better cover than the bare branches of a deciduous tree in winter.

Fat birds have a better chance of surviving a storm. When birds sense changes in air pressure, they tend to forage more, or flock to feeders. Birds can survive really cold temperatures as long as they get enough to eat.

Birds have evolved to withstand bad weather. Their lanky legs and little feet have what are called counter-current circulation. Birds have cold blood in their feet, which means very little heat is lost when they are standing on cold ground. Their feathers provide perfect insulation. The down feathers underneath a bird's contour feathers trap air, holding in the warmth from its body and preventing cold air from reaching its skin. Birds that winter in cold climates also have a thicker plumage in the winter, which is molted in the fall and spring.

Nuts for the boys and girls to crack!

Editor: Early Audubon efforts to recruit and enlarge membership included developing programs for school kids. Badges were earned by participating in a variety of activities and demonstrating avian knowledge. The programs were popular and thousands of school-aged kids became members. Below is an example of the type of educational material that was developed at the time. How many questions can you answer! (Have any names changed since 1905?)

1. Name five birds which walk.
2. Name five birds which sing on the wing.
3. Name five birds which sing in the night.
4. Name five birds which nest in holes.
5. Name five birds which nest in bird houses.
6. Name five birds that repair and use last year's nest.
7. Name five birds which creep up the trunks of trees.
8. Name five birds which have blue plumage.
9. Name two birds that carry their young as a cat does kittens.
10. What is a "Merry thought?"

Answers

1. Cowbird, Ovenbird, Meadowlark, Titlark, Partridge
2. Bobolink, Bluebird, Goldfinch, Indigo, Bunting, Purple Finch
3. Chat, Vesper, Sparrow, Carolina Wren, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Mockingbird
4. Woodpeckers, Bluebirds, Swallows, Great-crested Flycatcher, wren
5. Martins, Bluebirds, Wrens, Sparrows, White-bellied Swallows
6. Owls, Eagles, Fish Hawks, Bluebirds, Great-crested Flycatcher
7. Brown Creepers, Black and White Warblers, White and Red-breasted Nuthatches, Woodpeckers
8. Bluebird, Indigo Bunting, Kingfisher, Blue Jay, Black-throated Blue Warbler
9. Whip-poor-will, Wood Duck
10. A Merry thought is the forked bone of a fowl's breast, often called a wishbone

Anonymous, *American Ornithology for the Home and School*, Volume 2, 1905

More Upcoming birding events:

General information: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/birding-festivals/>

Tumacanbac: multiple trips searching for raptors, [Jan. 28, 29, Feb 1, 4, and 5](#). For more information, contact: Grand Valley Audubon website: <http://www.audubongv.org/>

[March 10 -12:](#) **34th Annual Monte Vista Crane Festival**, Monte Vista, CO 719 852-2452, email taarmstr@adams.edu

Olympic Bird Fest [April 7 – 9, 2017](#), guided birding trips, boat tours, auction, banquet and more. www.olympicbirdfest.org 360 681-4076 Options include pre-trip 3-day 2 night cruise in San Juan Islands and post trip exploring northwest coastal Washington state.

The Origin of the Christmas Bird Count

Excerpted from *The Audubon Ark* by Frank Graham, Jr. Pub. 1990

Prior to the turn of the 20th century, hunters participated in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt." At that time, 'sportsmen were accustomed to meet on Christmas Day, 'choose sides' and then...hie themselves to the fields and woods on the cheerful mission of killing practically everything in fur or feathers that crossed their path....' Whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won the contest. On Christmas Day in 1900, ornithologist Frank M. Chapman proposed a new kind of Christmas side hunt in the form of a Christmas Bird Census. The first year (1900), 27 people in 25 localities accepted the challenge and went out to count birds. Before the middle 1920s, most of the counts were made by small uncoordinated parties that fanned out into the countryside. Clubs competed against each other as well as ornithologists against businessmen who had to work during the week. Since that time, the count continues to grow yearly. In 1988 (most recent data available to the author of the *Audubon Ark*), 42,671 people took part in 1,563 Christmas Bird Counts that took place from Alaska to Panama and the Amazon. The total number of species observed ranged from a high of 341 in Panama's Atlantic Canal area to 1 species in Prudhoe Bay (15 ravens). The count is traditionally held between December 14 through January 5 each year and covers all of western hemisphere.

Join BCAS members and other volunteers to take part in this tradition. Volunteers are needed to help with the 2016/2017 count.

Audubon Council News

By Jane McGarry

The 2016 fall quarterly meeting of Audubon Colorado Council (ACC) was hosted by Black Canyon Audubon Society (BCAS) at BCAS Member Jane McGarry's house in Paonia on October 1. The day began with a birding outing to Bethlehem Cemetery led by BCAS members Jon Horn and Geoff Tischbein.

Attending the meeting were ACC president Becky Herman (Weminuche Chapter) and representatives from the following state chapters Aiken, Arkansas Valley, Black Canyon, Boulder County, Ft. Collins, Greater Denver, and Weminuche as well as BCAS members.

Several chapters requested letter-writing support for various proposed projects that potentially would harm or remove prime bird habitat. One chapter requested ideas on where to apply for grants and ways of fundraising. Member suggestions included locating and watching a California Audubon video about fundraising, insisting those that want newsletters be members, and soliciting local membership when people join National Audubon.

Non avian-related information was shared related to proposed delisting of the Yellowstone grizzly and other proposed projects that would allow hunters to increase kill numbers of cougars in several areas with the objective of increasing mule deer populations. It was moved and passed that the ACC Conservation Chair will write a letter opposing these projects.

Winter Bird Feeding Tips

By Geoff Tischbein

Winter bird feeding is more important than ever, as natural food sources become scarce or just not available. However a few precautions to keep in mind related to ensuring healthy birds congregating at your feeder.

All species of animals, including humans, are more prone to disease when concentrated, which is what feeding does. If it is possible, try to have several feeders spaced out in different areas in your yard and at different elevations to accommodate a greater variety of species. To prevent collisions with windows, try to place the feeders at least three feet away from this potential hazard. Decals are available that can be put up on the windows which alert birds to this problem. Hanging mobiles in front of windows also helps.

Here are three steps to prevent your feeders from becoming a potential source of disease:

1. Clean the feeders at least monthly with soapy water then dunk into a solution of one part bleach to nine parts water. If you suspect there might be a disease present, wash the feeders every two weeks.
2. Keep the area below the feeder clean of feces and the hulls from the seeds, especially if wet, spoiled or moldy. A regular raking should take care of this. Scraping off a few layers of snow in the winter is also important.
3. As stated previously, spread your feeders out so there is less opportunity for sick birds to contaminate each other.

While numerous commercial mixes are available, a good mix for the birds around this area consists of cracked corn, white millet, and black oil sunflower seeds. These can be found at seed stores such as the farmer's coops and Murdoch's. Mix two parts of the corn and sunflower seeds to one part millet. Suet and peanut butter (mix one part peanut butter to five parts corn meal to stuff in pine cones) in the winter provides much-needed energy.



If you've started feeding the birds during the winter, don't suddenly stop (such as taking a winter vacation) as they have come to depend upon this source of energy and nutrition and do not have other sources of food available as they do in the summer.



Over one hundred species of birds in North America are known to come to feeders providing thousands of hours of enjoyment to those of us who love birds. We can continue to enjoy their presence while not contributing to their deaths if we take these simple, but necessary precautions.

House finch and Junco by Sandy Beranich; Rose-breasted Grosbeak

from Bill Harris.

Who Was That Bird Named For?

By Susan Chandler-Reed (Bird images courtesy Alan and Elaine Wilson, <http://www.naturespicsonline.com>)

I am sure that I am not the only birder who has wondered about the persons whose names have been given to birds. Such names are known as “eponyms.” I have recently come across two books, *Whose Bird: Common Bird Names and the People They Commemorate* by Bo Beolens and Michael Watkins (2003, Yale University Press) and *The Eponym Dictionary of Birds* by Bo Beolens, Michael Watkins, and Michael Grayson (2014, Bloomsbury Publishing Co.). Together, these books contain over 4,000 brief biographies of every person after whom a bird has been named. In this and upcoming BCAS newsletters, I will tell the story of the people behind the common names of the birds from the western United States.

Even though many birds are named after famous ornithologists (Audubon’s warbler, Baird’s sandpiper, or Cassin’s finch, to name just three), it turns out that it is strictly forbidden to name a bird after yourself. As the authors point out, it sometimes happens that a person may name a bird in honor of his father or son, who may just happen to have the same name. For the most part, however, names (particularly scientific names) are bestowed by the scientist who first formally describes the species. These names often honor the naturalist who collected the bird specimen, but they may also be given to recognize the benefactor who financed the expedition. Ornithologists also name birds after their colleagues, with the not unreasonable expectation that such colleagues may return the favor. It is not surprising that many North American birds were named in the nineteenth century, during the period of exploration of the continent by Europeans.



Two eponymous birds that are familiar to us in western Colorado are the Lewis’s Woodpecker and the Clark’s Nutcracker, named after Meriwether Lewis and William Clark of the 1804-1806 Lewis and Clark Expedition.

At the time of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, Captain Meriwether Lewis (1774-1809) was President Thomas Jefferson’s private secretary. Jefferson chose Lewis to lead the Corps of Discovery’s 4,000-mile journey from St. Louis, Missouri, to the Pacific Ocean. Lewis selected his close Army friend, Second Lieutenant William Clark (1770-1838), to share command of the expedition.

Lewis collected several Lewis’s Woodpeckers. It is possible that the specimen collected near Helena, Montana in 1805 that is now at Harvard University may be the only specimen remaining from the Lewis & Clark Expedition. He described the “black woodpecker” in his journal on May 27, 1806 (<http://www.lewis-clark.org/article/1067>).

Recognizing that this bird was new to science, Lewis gave one of his specimens to the American ornithologist Alexander Wilson, who named the bird after its discoverer. The scientific name, *Melanerpes lewis*, means “Lewis’s creeper.”



Clark’s Nutcracker was first documented by William Clark in August 1805 while trying to navigate the Salmon River. Clark’s description of the bird as a “*Bird of the woodpecker kind which fed on Pine burs it’s Bill and tale white the wings black every other part ...*” was corrected in Lewis’s May 28, 1806 journal entry (<http://www.lewis-clark.org/article/559>).



The Clark’s Nutcracker has a remarkable memory for relocating the tens of thousands of nuts and seeds it caches each fall. This caching behavior is also thought to play a critical role in replanting pine forests. The first Clark’s Nutcracker specimen was also sent to Alexander Wilson, who named it the

“Columbia [River] Nut-breaker” (*Nucifraga columbiana*) and also assigned the common name, Clark’s Nutcracker, in 1811.

Citizen Science and How to Participate!

By Marcella Fremgen

In recent years, citizen science has become an increasingly popular way to collect and analyze data from the natural world. This collaborative effort between scientists and the public has allowed researchers to collect larger amounts of data and over wider geographic regions than they were previously able to, and all for a smaller budget. Citizen scientists participate in research on astronomy, butterflies, birds, oceanography, technology and seismology. Because birds are typically charismatic species and there are many people interested in studying and recording bird sightings, they are particularly amenable to citizen science work. In fact, the North American Bird Phenology Program may have been the earliest citizen science project, dating back to 1833. Other common programs are the Audubon Society’s Christmas Bird Count (started in 1900) and eBird (a recent database that allows data collection on mobile devices). (Continued next page)

(Citizen Science- Concluded)

As with all research, there are ethics that must be followed to protect the scientific integrity of the work. Scientists running citizen science programs are expected to train volunteers to have adequate levels of training to complete projects. In turn, members are expected to spend the time learning how to properly collect data and present truthful reports of their observations. Once trained and ready to collect data, citizen scientists are wonderful additions to most projects!

If you are interested in participating in citizen science projects, there are plenty of opportunities for people to participate in the scientific process! For the technologically savvy, there are a number of apps for phones that allow naturalists to submit data to a database. For those who would prefer to follow more traditional avenues to data collection, the Christmas Bird Count is the perfect way to get involved. Below is a list of some of the more popular types of citizen science involving birds and where to find more information. With a little searching, you can find more programs that fit your interests, skill level, and schedule. Good luck and happy data collection!

1. **Christmas Bird Count:** This is a program began by the Audubon Society in 1900 to collect data on winter inhabitants found on the counting route. See article on page 5 of this newsletter for information on the origin of the Christmas Counts. Each year, counts are conducted in areas around Montrose, Delta, Gunnison, and Hotchkiss. All are invited to participate. Page 1 of this newsletter provides meeting locations, dates, and start times.
2. **North American Bird Phenology Program:** Housed by the U.S. Department of the Interior (U.S. Geological Survey), this program began in 1833 to track the phenology of migrating birds. Although most of the field data collection occurred prior to World War II, the handwritten notes are being transcribed to a database to be accessed by scientists and the public. This is a great opportunity for people that want to be involved in the scientific process, but are uncomfortable identifying birds in the field on their own for other projects. For more information, visit <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bpp/>.
3. **eBird:** Started by Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology, this database allows birders to input information on-the-go in their phone, as well as back home on the computer. It also allows citizens to explore the data collected by their fellow citizen scientists! For more information, visit <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/> or download the apps at your app store.
4. **Project Feeder Watch:** Also through Cornell's Lab of Ornithology, this is a winter-long bird count that volunteers can participate in from November through early April. Volunteers regularly count the birds that visit feeders at their house (and can conduct counts as often as they want), and then submit data to the lab. This program is great for people of all skill levels and has a flexible schedule. Cornell provides a research kit and identification information, and you provide a feeder with seed. For more information, visit <http://feederwatch.org/about/>.
5. **Nest Watch:** Cornell's nationwide monitoring program for birds during the nesting season. The program provides information that allows volunteers to become certified Nest Watchers, and volunteers visit nests that they find once every 3-4 days and submit observations. For more information, visit <http://nestwatch.org/>.
6. **The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC):** This Cornell program has documented 5,689 birds across the globe, with submissions coming from nearly every country in the world! The next GBBC is scheduled for February 17-20, 2017, and allows bird watchers of all skill levels to submit data anywhere in the world. For more information, visit <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>.

Still Eating Turkey?

By Avery Cullinan, Nov 13, 2015 as reported on:

<http://www.audubon.org/news/9-fun-facts-about-turkeys>

1. Benjamin Franklin did not advocate for the turkey as the National Bird. However, according to The Franklin Institute, he was against the Bald Eagle, stating in a letter to his daughter that it was a "Bird of bad moral Character" whereas the turkey was a "much more respectable Bird... a Bird of Courage."
2. Turkeys are named after the country. Linguists theorize that early Europeans were reminded of the African Guinea Fowl which had come to Europe through Turkey, and the similarity led to its name.
3. Despite their large girth and weight, Wild Turkeys roost overnight in trees.
4. The first official presidential turkey pardon wasn't given until George H.W. Bush's in 1989, although reports credit many presidents with the tradition including Abraham Lincoln, whose son took a liking to the turkey destined for Christmas dinner, and Harry Truman, who was the first to appear in a photo op with a turkey that would later be served.
5. Another turkey fan, John James Audubon, featured "*Wild Turkey, Male*" as the first bird in John James Audubon's *Birds of America* and was later followed by a second work portraying a hen and her poults.
6. Is it a male or female? Check its poop. A turkey's gender can be determined from its droppings—a male's will be shaped like the letter J, a female's more spiral-shaped.
7. Wild Turkeys can fly at up to 60 miles per hour.
8. They have excellent vision, seeing three times more clearly than 20/20. Turkeys can also see in color and have a 270 degree field of vision.



Black Canyon Audubon Society
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<http://www.blackcanyonaudubon.org>



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