



# Canyon Wrenderings

*The Journal of the Black Canyon Audubon Society*

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

Summer 2011

Volume XXIII Number 4

## Mark Your Calendar

### **Wednesday, May 11, to Sunday, May 15: Ute Mountain/Mesa Verde Birding Festival, Cortez.**

As the festival's website boasts: "Spring migrants and early nesters attract birdwatchers from across the nation to the Ute Mountain-Mesa Verde Birding Festival. Located in the Archaeological Center of America, many of the birding field trips visit spectacular archaeological areas such as Mesa Verde National Park and the Ute Tribal Park." For general information and a link to the festival's schedule, visit: [www.mesaverdecountry.com/tourism/festivals/birding/birdfest.html](http://www.mesaverdecountry.com/tourism/festivals/birding/birdfest.html)



### **Black Canyon Audubon Members to Lead Field Trips**

Coen Dexter and Brenda Wright, members of Black Canyon Audubon Society, again will lead three field trips at the Ute Mountain/Mesa Verde Birding Festival. "Birding Among the Ancients & Pinto Bean Tour ('Birds & Beans') begins at 7:15 a.m. on Thursday, May 12. "Ute Mountain Tribal Park & Pottery" begins at 6:30 a.m. on Friday, May 13. "Birds of the Ponderosa Forest" begins at 6:45 a.m. on Saturday, May 14. More information at: [www.mesaverdecountry.com/tourism/festivals/birding/birdschedule.html](http://www.mesaverdecountry.com/tourism/festivals/birding/birdschedule.html)



### **Friday, May 20, through Monday, May 23, Colorado Field Ornithologists Annual Convention, Grand Junction**

Based at the Doubletree Hotel, the convention offers field trips and programs. The keynote speaker is Jeff Gordon, president of the American Birding Association. Jeff's keynote address, "Ten Birds that Changed Birding" will introduce us to 10 birds -- from the Ross's Gull to the Ivory-billed Woodpecker -- that left their mark on field ornithology as sport and science. Schedule and registration details at [cfo-link.org/events/convention.php](http://cfo-link.org/events/convention.php)

### **Saturday, June 11, 9 to 4 p.m., Second Annual Outdoor Heritage Day, Confluence Park, Delta**

Black Canyon Audubon will have a booth at this event that highlights outdoor sports and recreation for all ages. Assistance from members is welcomed. Contact Dennis Garrison at 970-527-4131 or [dennisgarrison@hotmail.com](mailto:dennisgarrison@hotmail.com). Thanks to Dennis for organizing this effort.

### **Thursday, June 16, Annual Meeting and Dinner, 6 p.m., Remington's Restaurant, Montrose**

Cole Wild, who set a record for identifying 412 species in Colorado last year will speak. A reservation form will be found on Page 5 of this newsletter. For more information, call 252-0918.

### **Wednesday, Aug. 17 through Sunday, Aug. 21, Western Field Ornithologists Conference: Sierra Vista, Arizona**

Ed Pandolfino, vice president of Western Field Ornithologists extends the following invitation: "If you've never been to southeast Arizona during the late summer season (or even if you have), this is an opportunity you won't want to miss. Besides a program of speakers and workshops, we will offer field trips to all the southeast Arizona hotspots looking for local specialties like Scaled and Montezuma quail, Gray, Short-tailed, and Zone-tailed hawks, a dazzling variety of hummingbirds and flycatchers, Elegant Trogon, Red-faced Warbler, Cassin's, Botteri's, Rufous-winged and Five-striped sparrows and much more. To register and see full details go to [www.westernfieldornithologists.org](http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org) and click on the 'Annual Conference' banner in the middle of the page. Download the Conference Details document and review before you begin registration. Non-member registration includes a one-year membership to WFO and a subscription to our publication, *Western Birds*."

# Black Canyon Audubon Society Leadership 2010-2011

## Officers:

President: Position vacant  
Vice President: Position vacant  
Secretary: Martha Grewal 856-4748 [grewalmartha@yahoo.com](mailto:grewalmartha@yahoo.com)  
Treasurer: Elaine Probasco 252-0918 [eprobasco6@earthlink.net](mailto:eprobasco6@earthlink.net)

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## Board of Directors

Pat Magee Gunnison 943-7120 [pmagee@western.edu](mailto:pmagee@western.edu)  
Robin Nicholoff Hotchkiss 527-3997 [robgret@tds.net](mailto:robgret@tds.net)  
Geoff Morton Crawford 921-4141 [morton2@skybeam.com](mailto:morton2@skybeam.com)  
Herb Probasco Montrose 252-0918 [herbprobasco@earthlink.net](mailto:herbprobasco@earthlink.net)  
Jon Horn Montrose 249-6761, ext.14 [jon\\_horn@alpinearchaeology.com](mailto:jon_horn@alpinearchaeology.com)  
Jan Smeltzer Delta 874-8169 [janonsunshinemesa@hotmail.com](mailto:janonsunshinemesa@hotmail.com)

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## Committee Chairs

Audubon Colorado Rep: Jan Smeltzer 527-3167 [janonsunshinemesa@hotmail.com](mailto:janonsunshinemesa@hotmail.com)  
Education: Sheryl Radovich 240-3788 [canyon.creek@bresnan.net](mailto:canyon.creek@bresnan.net)  
Marti Isler 249-0737 [martiisler@montrose.net](mailto:martiisler@montrose.net)  
Conservation: Bill Day 872-3216 [billday@paonia.com](mailto:billday@paonia.com)  
Membership: Elaine Probasco 252-0918 [eprobasco6@earthlink.net](mailto:eprobasco6@earthlink.net)  
Publicity: Herb Probasco 252-0918 [herbprobasco@earthlink.net](mailto:herbprobasco@earthlink.net)  
Newsletter: Herb Probasco 252-0918 [herbprobasco@earthlink.net](mailto:herbprobasco@earthlink.net)

## Financial Report

As of May 1, 2011, Chapter Treasurer Elaine Probasco reports that the chapter had \$1,914.04 in its checking account and \$13,780.40 in its money market account. The chapter's funds include three funds restricted for specific projects -- \$1,731.55 for education, bird-banding and the birdskin collection; \$945 for Fruitgrowers Reservoir; \$596.50 for Gunnison Sage-grouse protection.

## Update on Gunnison Sage-grouse Conservation Efforts

Six months after the official end of the BCAS Together Green Grant, we are still seeing results from our efforts. Thanks to Crawford Working Group Coordinator Doug Homan, we got the Crawford Area Gunnison Sage-grouse Conservation Plan finished on time. Doug has also been able to get a grant from the National Wild Turkey Federation to improve grouse habitat on 1,164 acres near Crawford.



We have really good news this spring regarding two more long-awaited projects. The Colorado Division of Wildlife has transplanted nine grouse from the Gunnison Basin to the Crawford area. Also, Doug had a chance to help the U.S. Geological Survey, the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service put a GPS transmitter on one of our Crawford birds -- in addition to another bird that was collared by the DOW last year. Information about where the grouse spend various parts of the year is considered critical to our understanding how to help the grouse.

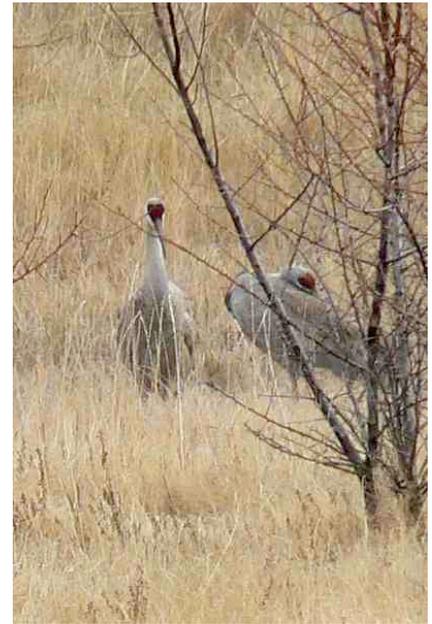
Finally, we want to thank BCAS board member Pat Magee and everyone involved in the very successful third Gunnison Sage-Grouse Summit in Gunnison last month. The amount of scientific knowledge presented there on fire, genetics, predation, habitat improvement, GPS tracking and much more was both interesting and important to the species survival. -- *Bill Day, conservation chair* Photo by Doug Homan

*Neighboring Audubon chapters in Grand Junction and Glenwood Springs have field trips scheduled this summer. To learn about those and about activities of other Audubon chapters in Colorado, visit [www.blackcanyonaudubon.org](http://www.blackcanyonaudubon.org) and click on "Links of Interest."*

## Crane Watchers Enjoy Less Trashy Basin, Following Mid-March Cleanup



Chapter volunteers were on hand at Fruitgrowers Reservoir on three March weekends -- first to pick up trash and then to greet visitors during Eckert Crane Days. On the calm mild morning of March 12, five people collected trash on both sides of the road. A



rough count of the collection: 25 aluminum cans (mostly Budweiser beer), more than 20 glass bottles (mostly having held beer) and more than 10 plastic bottles. Also found: lip gloss, body spray, a can of Santa Snow (with no CFCs or ozone-depleting ingredients, so the label said), 20 or more empty cigarette packs (mostly Marlboro), countless cigarette butts, a snuff container and an empty 2.5 gallon container of generic Roundup weed killer. In the background was the sound of toads; several species of ducks were on the water, and 18 Greater Sandhill Cranes were spotted.

The next two weekends, chapter volunteers encountered dozens of crane watchers, from as far east as New Jersey and as far west as Nevada. Numbers of cranes on most of those weekend days were not high -- in the low hundreds --- but more than 1,000 began arriving in mid- to late afternoon on March 26. -- *Herb Probasco*

Photos by Elaine Probasco

## Hotchkiss Third Graders Again Explore Bird Skins

On Earth Day 2011, April 22, in a park behind Zack's Restaurant, about 30 Hotchkiss third-graders explored Black Canyon Audubon's collection of bird skins, presented by Herb and Elaine Probasco. Divided into four groups, the children gathered around the bird skins, listened first to a brief introduction and then examined the more than 20 skins, from a Broad-tailed Hummingbird to a Great-horned Owl. Respectful and curious, each group had about 20 minutes to explore the skins. Typical of the reaction is the smile on the face of the girl at right, as she examines a Red-naped Sapsucker. Enthusiastic thank-you notes were received a week later from several of the children. "Thank you for coming to our Ecology Day," wrote Kylee. "I learned not to catch hummingbirds or any birds. I like to hold them (the skins). The one I liked best was the big owl. That owl was huge. I felt like I couldn't hold it."

## Bird Skin Collection Grows

Several new birds have joined or soon will join the chapter's collection of bird skins and mounts, including a Northern Harrier, a Bonaparte's Gull and a Short-eared Owl. In the process of being prepared by taxidermist Cindy Loos are a Great Blue Heron, two Dark-eyed Juncos, two Red-naped Sapsuckers, a female American Goldfinch, a Pine Siskin and a Northern Flicker. Several skins also have been repaired by Cindy. All of the birds have been added to the permitted list held by the chapter, thanks to Dennis Garrison.



Photo by Elaine Probasco

## -- BIRDING NEWS FROM BEYOND SOUTHWEST COLORADO --

### Wind Power: It Needs to Be Done Right If Wild Birds Are to Be Protected



Wind power can be an important energy source, but it needs to be done right, reports American Bird Conservancy.

At the current rate of expansion to meet federal targets, collisions with wind turbines will likely kill 1 million birds or more each year by 2030, including Golden Eagles, songbirds and endangered species such as the Whooping Crane. The impact of wind farms also will be felt over 20,000 square miles of habitat for birds such as the Greater Sage-Grouse.

At [www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRSvD8VAbI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRSvD8VAbI) you can watch dramatic video of a vulture being struck by a wind turbine in Greece. (A still image from the video is shown at left.)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has opened an official public comment period on its Draft Wind Guidelines. To comment via the internet, visit [org2.democracyinaction.org/o/5400/p/dia/action/public/?action\\_KEY=6259](http://org2.democracyinaction.org/o/5400/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=6259)

American Bird Conservancy describes itself as a not-for profit organization whose mission is to conserve native birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. It is based in the Washington, D.C. area. Its website is [www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org)

### Cornell Lab Team Spots 264 Species in 24 Hours, a One-Day Record

A national record has been set for the highest number of bird species identified in a 24-hour period. It happened during a midnight-to-midnight birding blowout across eastern and southern Texas on April 22. The six members of Team Sapsucker from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology identified 264 species by sight or sound, topping the previous record of 261. The feat also raised nearly \$200,000 dollars for Cornell Lab bird conservation programs. Supporters pledged a set amount for every species the team found.

At the stroke of midnight the tally began in San Antonio with a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, quickly followed by a Mallard and a Barred Owl. Fueled by endless numbers of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, the Sapsuckers roamed the state, searching for resident Texas birds along with migrants. The bird that put the Sapsuckers over the top was the Clapper Rail, bird number 262, heard in coastal Rockport at dusk. It was followed by the Virginia Rail and then the final bird of the day, a churring Black Rail at Cape Valero.

**(Editor's Note:** I have expressed concern (not on behalf of the chapter) to the Cornell Lab about the environmental impact of six birders traveling to Texas for this effort. As reported by the Cornell Lab, the birders made a scouting trip to Texas earlier this year, then returned for the actual big day of birding. I suggested to Cornell that the next big day be done where the birders could reach the birding area by foot, bicycle or skateboard.)

### Update on Great Backyard Bird Count

Higher numbers of Evening Grosbeaks were reported during this year's Great Backyard Bird Count, held in mid-February. That is good news, because dramatically fewer numbers of the species had been counted in recent years.

Of no great surprise was the report that the European Starling was the most-reported bird in this year's count. It led the list in Montrose, from which 13 lists were sent to the GBBC. A total of 27 species were reported on those lists, and the numbers included 756 starlings. Next was the Red-Winged Blackbird: 279, followed closely by the Western Scrub Jay: 220. The Mourning Dove was the most widely reported from Montrose, showing up on 10 of the 13 lists.

A breakdown of the count, state by state, can be found on the internet at: [gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/statelinks](http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/statelinks)

### Project Feeder Watch Completes 24th Year

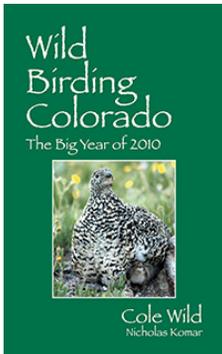
Project Feeder Watch of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology finished its 24th season of reporting in early April. Anyone who joins Project Feeder Watch can explore count reports for every year of participation, providing a week-by-week snapshot of birding activity at the touch of a few computer keys. Each fall, in advance of the mid-November start of Project Feeder Watch, the lab mails a report of the previous year's data, region by region across the United States, and including data and observations about trends in the numbers and varieties of bird species reported by the thousands of watchers in the United States and Canada. Watchers pay \$15 a year. To enroll, visit [www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/InstruxandUpdates/inst\\_index.html](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/InstruxandUpdates/inst_index.html)



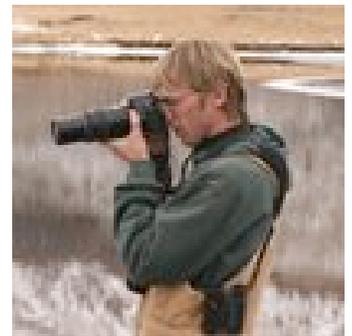
Enjoy a drink on the upper deck of Remington's, just above the patio shown above.

Dine indoors out of range of errant fairway shots and enjoy a panoramic view of the Northern San Juan Mountains.

## Big-Year Birder to Speak at June 16 Annual Meeting in Montrose



Black Canyon Audubon's annual meeting and dinner will be held on Thursday, June 16, in Montrose, at Remington's restaurant at the Bridges Golf Club, overlooking the Northern San Juan Mountains, beginning at 6 p.m. Following a short business meeting, Cole Wild (*photo at right*) of Fort Collins will speak on his record-breaking Colorado big year in 2010 -- he saw 412 species. Cole is a native Coloradan whose passions are birds, birding, bird photography and anything else related to birds. He is a regional e-bird editor for northern Colorado. As a guide for Fort Collins-based Quetzal Tours, Cole leads day trips in Colorado and some week-long tours to Colorado, Texas and Arizona. His recently published book, "Wild Birding Colorado" is an account of his record-breaking Colorado big year.



### Banquet Reservation Form

Indicate choice and number of entrees, all priced at \$25, including tax and gratuity:

- Marinated Grilled Flank Steak
- Chicken Roulade in Brandy Sauce
- Eggplant Timbale

All entrees include dinner vegetable of the day and rice.

Coffee and chef's choice of dessert included

Cash Bar

\_\_\_\_\_ Total number of reservations, at \$25 each.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your check by June 5 to: BCAS, P.O. Box 387, Delta, CO 81416

(Directions to Remington's: Take Niagara Drive east from South Townsend Avenue and turn right on Pavilion Drive, the street east of the Montrose Pavilion. Continue south into the Bridges development, following the road as it winds toward the Bridges clubhouse and parking lot.)



Black Canyon Audubon Society  
 P.O. Box 387  
 Delta, CO 81416

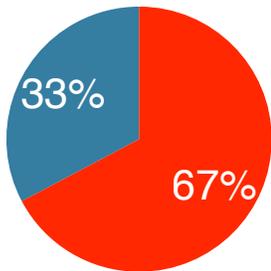
**Coming June 16:  
 BCAS Annual Meeting/Dinner**

**Details Inside**



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Print copy subscribers: 67 percent  
 E-mail subscribers: 33 percent

Compared to the spring issue, another 1 percent of the membership is receiving the newsletter by e-mail, which then can be printed out. To save paper and postage and to receive photos in color, send an e-mail to:  
[blackcanyonaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:blackcanyonaudubon@gmail.com)

### Black Canyon Audubon Society (NAS chapter C9ZD140Z) Membership Renewal and Application Form

Members may participate in all chapter activities, receive the *Canyon Wrenderings* newsletter and vote on chapter issues. Annual local membership dues are \$10 if newsletter is received electronically, \$15 if newsletter is mailed. Dues remain locally.

(Check one) Renewal (see mailing label for expiration date) \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Enc: \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 for e-mail newsletter. E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15 for U.S. mail/print subscribers.

Mail your renewal to: Black Canyon Audubon Society, 14967 Rolling Hills Drive, Montrose, CO 81403.

*If you would like to join or donate to National Audubon Society and receive Audubon magazine, please call 1-800-274-4201 or send \$20 to National Audubon Society, PO Box 422250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250. Please use this form and list Black Canyon Audubon Society/C9ZD140Z on your check so that BCAS can receive membership recruitment funds.*