



Canyon Wrenderings

The Journal of the Black Canyon Audubon Society

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

Summer 2012

Volume XXIV Number 3

Mark Your Calendar

JUNE

Bird of the Month—**Black Swift**

Saturday the 2nd: Delta Outdoor Heritage Day

A variety of agencies and non-profit organizations are joining hands to encourage children and their families to take advantage of their local outdoor recreation opportunities. This free event will be held from 9AM-4PM in Confluence Park. *For more information, visit www.outdoorheritageday.org.*

Saturday the 9th: National Get Outdoors Day

Like the Delta Outdoor Heritage Day, but on a nation-wide scale. Look forward to free admission to our west slope National Parks.

Saturday the 9th: Bird Walk at Devil's Canyon

Cary Atwood of the Grand Valley Audubon Society will be leading a hike in cooperation with the Colorado Canyons Association. *For more information, contact Cary at catwood814@gmail.com*

Thursday the 14th: BCAS Annual Dinner and Black Swift Presentation

We will be gathering once again at the Remington Restaurant at The Bridges Golf Course in Montrose. This year's meeting will include a delicious dinner and a talk by Jason Beason (see bio below). *For directions and reservations, see page 2.*



Black Swift at Box Canyon in Ouray. *Photo by Lee Farrell.*

About the Speaker

Jason Beason is the Special Monitoring Projects Coordinator for Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory. He has been researching Black Swifts since 2001 in Colorado and New Mexico. Jason and his wife own and operate Rain Crow Farm in Paonia where they have recorded 173 bird species, including the Black Swift. The farm is on the Southwest Colorado Bird Trail and they encourage visitors to bird their property.

JULY

Bird of the Month—**Rufous Hummingbird**

Wednesday the 11th: Gunnison Wetland Course

Take a one-day course on Wetlands in the Gunnison Valley, part of Western State College's Extended Studies program, and visit several wetlands and learn more about them. Cost is \$20. *For more information, contact the instructor Layne Nelson at lnelson@western.edu*

Tuesday the 17th: Horsefly Brewery Community Tap Night

Join us for this BCAS fundraiser at 846 East Main Street in Montrose. The brewery will donate \$1 from every pint sold. *Contact the brewery at (970)249-6889*



AUGUST

Bird of the Month—**Gray Catbird**

No events planned—Take a break... go birdwatching!

Black Canyon Audubon Society Leadership 2011-2012

Officers:

President: Jon Horn	(970) 249-6761 ext. 14	jon_horn@alpinearchaeology.com
Vice President: Jan Smeltzer	874- 8169	janonsunshinemesa@hotmail.com
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Treasurer: Elaine Probasco	252-0918	eprobasco6@earthlink.net

Board of Directors:

Chris Lazo	Hotchkiss	963-8049	2006clazo@myway.com
Theresa Childers	Gunnison	641-7364	theresa_childers@nps.gov
Martha Grewal	Cederedge	856-4748	grewalmartha@yahoo.com
Robin Nicholoff	Hotchkiss	527-3997	robgret@tds.net
Jon Horn	Montrose	249-6761 ext. 14	jon_horn@alpinearchaeology.com
Geoff Morton	Crawford	921-4141	morton2@skybeam.com
John Beene	Gunnison	(303) 519-9977	john.beene@western.edu

Committee Chairs:

Audubon CO Rep: Chris Lazo	963-8049	2006clazo@myway.com
Education: Marti Isler & Sheryl Radovich	249-0737 240-3788	martiisler@montrose.net canyon.creek@bresnan.net
Conservation: Bill Day	872-3216	billday@paonia.com
Membership: Elaine Probasco	252-0918	eprobasco6@earthlink.net
Publicity: OPEN		
Programs: OPEN		
Newsletter Editor: Amber Carver	(310) 483-5721	caramb22@gmail.com

Business

Financial report

 As of April 30, 2012, Black Canyon Audubon Society had assets of \$25,448.96. That total includes the following restricted funds: Bird-banding/Education, \$1,184.08; Fruitgrowers Fund, \$945.00; Gunnison Sage-Grouse Fund, \$596.50. Also included is a direct deposit from National Audubon Society for \$7,500.00. BCAS and the Mountain Roots Food Project received a Together Green Grant. The Mountain Roots Food Project in Gunnison and Crested Butte is exploring the connections of community gardening and birdlife. (See info@mountainrootsfoodproject.org for information about the organization.) BCAS receives the grant in allotments and releases the allotment as report requirements are fulfilled by Mountain Roots Food Project.

Banquet Reservation Form

Indicate choice and number of entrees, all priced at \$30, including tax and gratuity

- Grilled skirt steak served over seared spring greens with Argentina chimichurri sauce, seasonal vegetables and mashed potatoes
 Chicken breast roulade filled with fresh spinach, sundried tomatoes, mushrooms and ricotta accompanied with wild rice pilaf
 Veggie lasagna with Italian cheeses and fresh seasonal vegetables

Includes:

Coffee, iced tea, and water

Chef's choice dessert

_____ Total number of reservations, at \$30 each.

Your name _____

Phone# _____ Email address _____

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

Directions to Remington's: Take East Oak Grove Drive east from South Townsend Avenue (US 550) and turn right on Bridges Circle.

President's Corner

We are quickly approaching our annual meeting and have had a busy and productive year. The annual meeting will once again be held at the Bridges in Montrose – a wonderful venue for this event with excellent food and a wonderful program.

When you attend, you will have the unique opportunity to hear firsthand from Jason Beason about the remarkable success of the study of Black Swifts, solving the mystery of where these birds go during the winter. As many of you know, the Box Canyon in Ouray is probably the most reliable place to see Black Swifts on their nests in the country (so we have a great sense of ownership) and they should be arriving about the same time as the annual meeting.

I hope that you were able to witness the spectacle of Sandhill Cranes at Fruitgrowers Reservoir earlier this spring as they moved northward to their breeding grounds. Eckert Crane Days was a successful event this year largely because of the organizational skills of BCAS board member Chris Lazo. Chris orchestrated the collaboration of numerous interested groups and individuals. These included Delta County Tourism, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Todd Sheets with Hutman Video Productions, the Wildfire Grill, Starr's Guitars, Evelyn Horn – local crane expert, and Audubon Colorado.

Evelyn Horn gave a fireside chat at the Wildfire Grill on Friday evening, and Ken Strom with Audubon Colorado was the keynote speaker on cranes on Saturday afternoon after a marvelous crane lift-off at Fruitgrowers Reservoir in late morning and lunch at the Wildfire Grill. The Saturday morning lift-off was quite festive with an estimated 300 birdwatchers in attendance – including a large group from the Montrose Recreation District – and hospitality tables sponsored by BCAS, Parks and Wildlife, and Delta County Tourism. Also, many thanks to Kelli Hepler of Graphox Design on her quick response and financial assistance in replacing the damaged interpretive sign at the reservoir before the event.

Inclement weather on Sunday put a damper on the number of visitors, but the following weekend, Ken Strom with Audubon Colorado brought two busloads of crane enthusiasts from the Aspen area to witness spectacular afternoon arrivals and morning departures of thousands of cranes. We hope that the groundwork has been laid for continuance of Eckert Crane Days into the future. It is an excellent example of the positive value watchable wildlife can have on the economies of small communities. BCAS is committed to participating in Crane Days in the future and is hopeful that with the groundwork that has been established, more individuals and organizations will step up to spread the necessary work more widely so that no single individual or group is overtaxed by the effort.



Jon Horn, being interviewed by a reporter from the Paonia radio station at Eckert Crane Days. *Photo by Elaine Probasco*



Jon Horn and his daughter, manning the BCAS information booth at Eckert Crane Days. *Photo by Elaine Probasco*

To continue on that note, we have attempted perhaps in too gentle a way to find individuals that might fill some vacancies that we have at the BCAS. Amber Carver graciously stepped forward to fill the role as Newsletter Editor, but we are still in need of someone to handle publicity and website administration. Neither of these positions is particularly time consuming and the infrastructure for both is in place. Publicity includes sending email notices to members with email addresses on file about upcoming events and other information that is timely between newsletters. It also includes writing or forwarding press releases for events to local newspapers and radio stations so that a broader audience can be reached.

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President's Note

<<FROM PAGE 3

We have a beautiful website, but we are unable to update it as frequently as we would like because we do not have an administrator. An interest is all that is required because we can train an interested person in the nuts and bolts of the website. If someone is out there with the skills already, the website might provide a venue for their creative side to improve and expand on what we already have. Please, contact Elaine Probasco or me (or any other board member, for that matter) if you have would like to volunteer or would like to know more about either of these positions.

We are always looking for interested individuals to join the BCAS board. Again, this is not a particularly time-consuming commitment. We have board meetings once every two months and an annual meeting once a year. You can then make it anything that you would like if there is an ongoing committee or project you would like to participate in or if there is a project, event, or activity that you might like to spearhead or investigate.

We would also like to separate the duties of the Treasurer from the Membership Chair. These two tasks were joined several years ago to solve an unanticipated vacancy. Elaine Probasco is currently doing both jobs, but would prefer to focus on the Treasurer's duties. Again, the infrastructure is in place and we can ease someone into the position. The nature of the job requires close coordination with the Treasurer, so a transition could be quite smooth. As with the publicity and website coordinator positions, please contact Elaine or me if you would like additional information or would like to join us. We know that our membership is composed of some very talented people, so if you have any ideas on projects or field trips that you might like to do with BCAS as a sponsor, please contact any of us.

Jon Horn

BCAS President

Eckert Crane Days

By Chris Lazo

Once again the board members of Black Canyon Audubon Society (BCAS) have "stepped up". During Eckert Crane Days this March, six board members attended the BCAS hospitality table during the Sandhill Crane viewing at Fruitgrower's Reservoir near Eckert on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

At the table a variety of informational handouts were given out for free and, for a small donation, hand-made (thank you Jon Horn) birdhouses were offered. In all BCAS collected about \$230 in donations. Next to the BCAS table the volunteers from Colorado Parks and Wildlife also

offered a variety of handouts and they had a number of spotting scopes available for the public to get up close and personal with the cranes. There was a third table sponsored by the Wildfire Pizzeria and Wine Bar in Cedaredge that offered free coffee and hot drinks.

Saturday morning saw large numbers of birds and just as large numbers of bird watchers. By some estimates there were almost 1000 Sandhill Cranes at the lift off and the number of viewers was substantial as well. At the time of lift off, both sides of the causeway along the north side of Fruitgrower's Reservoir were lined nose to tail with cars.

Ken Strom from Audubon Colorado offered his expertise and incites about the positive effects Sandhill Crane celebrations can have for economies and for education as the afternoon presentation. Thirty five people sat in the audience, about half of which were with the Montrose Recreation Department trip. The numbers were polar opposites on Sunday morning. Strong winds and threatening rain/snow flurries kept both birds and birders at bay. The Sandhill Crane count topped out at fifty one and the number of resolute birders was less at about twenty five.

While the primary goal for this year was to simply have a festival, given the short notice, another objective was achieved. For the first time in the history of Eckert Crane Days, a coalition of agencies and individuals came together. The list of twenty contributors includes government agencies, non-profits, businesses and individuals. Over the course of the next couple of months, the BCAS board will discuss what level of involvement BCAS should commit to for next year.

If you would like to help with Eckert Crane Days 2013, please contact Chris at 2006clazo@myway.com.



Photo by Chris Lazo

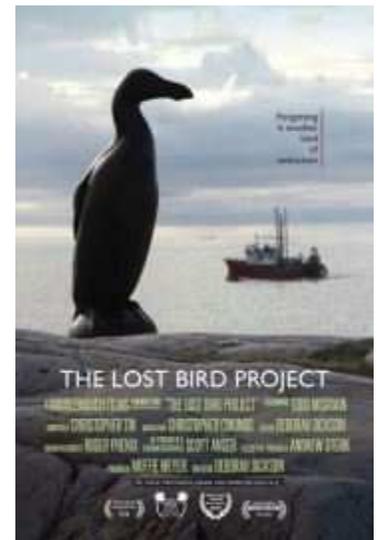


A flock of Sandhill Cranes in front of Cimarron Ridge. *Photo by Chris Lazo*

Cinema

Noteworthy Movie at End-of-Spring Festival

The Lost Bird Project will be screening at Mountainfilm Screenings in Telluride May 26 and 27. This film traces the stories of five bird species that have gone extinct, and the influence that their disappearance has on sculptor Todd McGrain. For full details, visit the film's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/lostbirdproject



Questions, comments, or contributions?

Feedback and input are always appreciated. Feel free to contact the editor if you would like more information, want to see sources, like something you saw, or have something to complain about. She can be reached at (310) 483-5721 or caramb22@gmail.com. And remember: *Canyon Wrenderings* is your newsletter. If you have a photo, article, graphic, or doodle that you would like to contribute, send it to the editor, and it will be included in the next issue.

