



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 2015 -2016

Volume XXVII Number 4

Join Us on BCAS Upcoming trips

During a recent BCAS Board Meeting, members met to identify trips and programs for the upcoming year. Trip information is posted on the BCAS website (www.blackcanyonaudubon.org.) as it becomes available and additional information will also be provided in this newsletter. Always feel free to propose trips or programs; contact Bill Harris (trlgpa @skybeam.com) with your ideas. Program dates have not been set as yet.

December: Annual Christmas Bird Counts will occur in Montrose, Gunnison, and Delta counties. See article on page 3 for more information, contacts for more information are provided below.

December 19: Delta County Bird Count, meet at 8:00 a.m. at the City Market Parking lot: Amy Seglund, 252-6014 or amy.seglund @state.co.us.

December 20: Montrose County Bird Count, meet at 8:30 a.m. in the BLM conference room at 2465 S. Townsend; counters will reconvene at the Two Rascals Brewing Co. to compile the data: Missy Siders, 275-6639 or msiders @blm.gov

December 20: Gunnison County Bird Count, meet at 7:30 a.m. at Hurst Hall—room 130 on the Western State Colorado University campus and reconvene at Arden Anderson's house to compile data and to enjoy a potluck: Arden Anderson, 641-5322 or kankan @frontier.net.

January: Final area Christmas Bird Count, see article on page 3 for more information.

January 2: Hotchkiss Bird Count: meet at 8:00 a.m. at the City Market parking lot: Jason Beason, 310-5117 or Jason.beason @birdconservancy.org.

January 16: Identify birds on open water, field trip, Montrose-Delta area, led by Jon Horn. Location and meeting time to come, watch the website for more information on this trip.

February: Annual Raptor trips

February 20: Annual Raptor trip in Montrose Area, space limited, contact Bill Harris for meeting location, time, and to reserve space trlgpa @skybeam.com

February 27: Annual North Fork Area Raptor trip, space limited to 12 participants, led by Jason Beason, Jason.beason @birdconservancy.org, will leave at 9 a.m. and trip will last until 2-3 p.m. Wear warm clothes, bring lunch, drink, contact to reserve space and find out meeting location.

February 28: Annual North Fork Area Raptor trip, space limited to 12 participants, led by Jim LeFevre; contact Jason Beason to reserve space, Jason.beason @birdconservancy.org, will leave at 9 a.m. and trip will last until 2-3 p.m. Wear warm clothes, bring lunch, drink, contact to reserve space and find out meeting location.

March

March 12: help cleanup Fruitgrowers causeway. Watch the website for more information. This activity is in preparation for the annual Eckert Crane Days event.

March 18 – 20: Annual Eckert Crane Days, more information to follow in March newsletter and on the website.

(Trip schedules continued on page 3)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Comings and Goings

It seems that we have moved quickly from warm fall days to frigid winter weather. It is nice to see the snow in the mountains on these clear, crisp days. Winter birds have arrived and we look forward to good Christmas Bird Counts in Delta, Gunnison, Montrose, and Hotchkiss. I hope that you will take advantage of these counts for getting out to see the surprising number of birds we have here this time of year. At our last board meeting, we spent a considerable amount of time planning for the upcoming year and have a wide variety of field trips and speakers planned – more than ever before!

We are still in critical need of a Treasurer for the group. Elaine Probasco has done the job (excellently) for several years and it is because of her good nature that she has stayed on as the interim treasurer, despite her term having expired. Our finances are not particularly complicated, but keeping track is important, and there are some reporting obligations that are necessary. Elaine is willing to train and work closely with you. Please call me at (970) 209-5404 or Elaine at (970) 252-0918 to volunteer or ask about the position. It doesn't matter where in the BCAS area that you live, as most of our communication is by email and telephone, and we can work out conferencing for board meetings (only once every two months) if travel to Montrose or Delta is not convenient. You will find us most welcoming and grateful, and your service will be very much appreciated. I know it is easy to think that someone else will step up, but in the months that we have been looking for a treasurer, that has not happened. Please, don't hesitate to call.

Jon Horn

BCAS President

Come visit us on our website: www.blackcanyonaudubon.org

OFFICERS

President – Jon Horn (970) 249-6761 ext. 14
jon_horn@alpinearchaeology.com
Vice President – Chris Lazo (970) 963-8049
2006clazo@gmail.com
Secretary – Sheryl Radovich (970) 240-3788
canyon.creek@bresnan.net
Treasurer – OPEN

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sandy Beranich Montrose (970) 240-4913
sj07pioneer@bresnan.net
Susan Chandler-Reed Montrose (970) 249-1076
susan.chandler.reed@gmail.com
Bill Harris Montrose (970) 249-8055
trlgpa@skybeam.com
Jon Horn Montrose (970) 249-6761 ext. 14
jon_horn@alpinearchaeology.com
Chris Lazo Crawford (970) 963-8049
2006clazo@gmail.com
Robin Nicholoff Hotchkiss (970) 527-3997
robret@tds.net
Elaine Probasco Montrose (970) 252-0918
eprobasco6@earthlink.net
Sheryl Radovich Montrose (970) 240-3788
canyon.creek@bresnan.net
Alan Reed Montrose (970) 249-1076
alan.reed.colorado@gmail.com
Carole Scott Crawford (970) 640-8711
Carolesscottphoto@hotmail.com
Geoff Tischbein Ridgway (970) 626-5002
geofftischbein@gmail.com
Marilyn Westerdahl Montrose (970) 249-8571
fmsimon66@hotmail.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audubon CO Council – Jane McGarry 433-0482
Westelk@tds.net
Education – Marti Isler 249-0737
Martiisler@montrose.net
Sheryl Radovich 240-3788
canyon.creek@bresnan.net
Conservation – Bill Day 872-3216
billday@paonia.com
Field Trips – Bill Harris 249-8055
trlgpa@skybeam.com
Membership – Marilyn Westerdahl 249-8571
fmsimon66@hotmail.com
Publicity – Geoff Tischbein 626-5002
geofftischbein@gmail.com
Programs – OPEN
Newsletter Editor – Sandy Beranich 240-4913
sj07pioneer@bresnan.net
Eckert Crane Days – Alan & Susan Reed
249-1076
alan.reed.colorado@gmail.com

April

April 16-27: Arizona Field trip, led by Coen Dexter and Geoff Tischbein. For more information, see article, page 5.

May

May 13-14: Spring Migration, weekend trip to West End Montrose County, led by Coen Dexter.

May 19 and 21: Beginning bird-watching/identification class: a 3-hour class on May 19 followed by field trip on May 21; taught by Chris Lazo through the Delta-Montrose Technical College; sign up through the college.

May 25: Birding Cerro Summit/Marine Road. Led by Bill Harris. More information to come.

Under development: possible night owl field trip and possible trip to the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area in conjunction with the Colorado Canyons Association.

June

June 21: BCAS Annual Dinner with speaker.

Mid-June: trip to observe nesting peregrine falcons (if nesting) and other birds at the Black Canyon National Park.

July

July 12: purple martins in the Upper North Fork, led by Bill Day, information to come.

August

Black Swifts at the Box Canyon and Perimeter Trail, Ouray. More information to come.

September

Annual bird banding and educational activities at Ridgway State Park; more information to come.

Annual Ouray Bird Count, fall migrants, led by Coen Dexter. This trip will coincide with the above bird banding activity.

October

Late Fall Migration, possible trip to Miramonte or Ridgway Reservoirs

November

Late November: Annual Barrows Goldeneye Count. More information to come, led by Jason Beason.

December

Annual Christmas Bird Counts Delta, Montrose, Gunnison, Hotchkiss. Dates to be determined for 2016

Annual Christmas Bird Counts

By Geoff Tischbein

The Black Canyon Chapter of the Audubon Society (BACS) and the Bureau of Land Management are teaming up to conduct this year's Audubon Society Annual Christmas Bird Counts and are inviting anyone interested in bird watching to join them. This is the 116th anniversary of the count which has provided over a hundred years of valuable information throughout the world to help scientists monitor the health of bird populations.

“We are encouraging anyone interested, regardless of experience, to help us with the count,” said Jon Horn, president of the BCAS. “It not only provides critical information on bird populations, but also is just a lot of fun.” Inexperienced birders will be teamed up with those with more experience to cover specific geographical areas. The counts often go into the afternoon so people are encouraged to dress warmly, bring binoculars, pack a lunch and bring plenty of water. The counts are usually not physically strenuous. Interested persons can call the persons listed in the trip schedule for more specific information.

By Sheryl Radovich

Bunting, only seen on four occasions in Western Colorado since the early 1900's, were banded and released.



This year was the tenth anniversary of the banding program made possible through the cooperative efforts of Black Canyon Audubon Society, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. During a nine day period, more than 600 students and community members came to the banding station at the confluence of Dallas Creek

This program has grown each year in terms of the number and age of participants. For the first time, students from 3rd through 5th grade, middle school, high school, and college-age interns took part in stations manned by BCAS volunteers and park staff. Next year promises new opportunities to observe and investigate the science and wonder of bird migration

[illegible]



Interested in Birding Sunny Arizona?



By Geoff Tischbein

The BCAS is offering a great opportunity for a spring birding trip to Arizona. The trip will be led by Coen Dexter and Brenda Wright and will hit many of the Arizona hotspots at a great time of the year. Here is a partial list of what we might see: Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Scaled and Montezuma Quail, Least Grebe, Neotropic Cormorant, Green Heron, Black Vulture, Gray Hawk, Common Black-Hawk, Harris Hawk, Zone-tailed Hawk, Common Gallinule, Common Ground-Dove, Greater Roadrunner, Whiskered Screech-Owl, Elf Owl, Spotted Owl, Lesser Nighthawk, Whip-poor-will, Broad-billed, Violet-crowned, Blue-throated, Magnificent, Anna's and Costa's Hummingbirds, Elegant Trogon, Green Kingfisher, Acorn, Gila, Ladder-backed, and Arizona Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Greater Pewee, Pacific-slope



U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Flycatcher, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Vermilion Flycatcher, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Cassin's Kingbird, Bell's Vireo, Hutton's Vireo, Mexican Jay, Chihuahuan Raven, Mexican Chickadee, Bridled Titmouse, Verdin, Cactus Wren, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Bendire's, Curve-billed, and Crissal Thrasher, Phainopepla, Olive Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Lucy's Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Hermit Warbler, Grace's Warbler, Red-faced Warbler, Painted Redstart, Hapatic and Summer Tanager, Canyon and Abert's Towhee, Rufous-winged, Cassin's, Rufous-crowned, Black-chinned, and Grasshopper Sparrows, Yellow-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Pyrrhuloxia, Eastern Meadowlark, Bronzed Cowbird, Hooded and Scott's Oriole and Lawrence's

Goldfinch. There are between 70 and 80 specialties that are present in the second half of April. We should be able to find between 150 and 200 species total counting all the common species that I did not list.

It will be a 12-day trip leaving Montrose 16 April and returning 27 April with stops in Sedona/Cottonwood/Tucson area/Patagonia/Cave Creek/Globe/Winslow. Rooms have already been arranged and will be about \$450/person for the entire trip. We have rented a van that will cost about \$280/person and will share the cost of gas. Food and drinks are on your own. The trip is limited to 10 people so with Coen, Brenda, and Geoff Tischbein who is helping to put it together, there are only 7 spots still open. If you are interested call Geoff (970-626-5002) for details and/or to confirm. We have set a deadline of 15 January for reservations which will require a \$200, non-refundable deposit. It will be on a first-come-first-serve basis so better hurry!



Photo credits to U.S Fish and Wildlife Service for upper left photo of a Northern Cardinal; credit to the Audubon Field Guide for the photo of a Green Kingfisher.

Where Our Membership Resides

The BCAS is comprised of members who choose to support the National Audubon Society or members who select membership specific to the BCAS chapter. For membership and organizational purposes, the National Audubon Society divides each state into Chapters. The BCAS Chapter covers seven counties: Montrose, Gunnison, Delta, Ouray, Hinsdale, San Juan, and San Miguel. Due to geography, there are basically four areas that are considered for trip planning purposes. The largest area includes Montrose, Olathe, Delta, and Ridgway with 136 members. The second largest area includes Paonia, Crawford, Cedaredge, Eckert, Austin, and Hotchkiss and has 83 members. The third largest membership concentration included Gunnison, Crested Butte, Cimarron, and Lake City with 60 members. A final grouping of members includes Telluride, Nucla, Placerville, Norwood, Ophir, Silverton, and Ouray with 46 members. When membership numbers were recently tabulated, the total Chapter membership comprised 325 members. **Thanks for your support and Happy Holidays!**

Nest Boxes have other uses in winter!

By Chris Lazo

This birder has been watching birds for almost half a century. That has included putting up many varied nest boxes to enjoy watching the spring and summer breeding behavior. We all learn early in our birding hobby how the cavity nesters use the boxes to raise their broods. Other than that, the boxes sit empty for the remainder of the year, or so it was believed.

Three years ago, a new behavior involving nest boxes became evident. During the longest and coldest days of winter we started to see a regular behavior that was totally unknown to us. As we sipped our coffee at the dining room window just prior to sunrise, we noticed activity at the Bluebird nest box that stands across the driveway. Each morning either a White Breasted Nuthatch or a Least's Chipmunk would pop its head out of the nest box hole to survey the waking world. It would take a good long look and then exit to start the day. It was obvious that they were competing for the nest box as an overnight nook and whoever claimed it first the previous evening won the accommodation. This went on much of the winter and soon became an amusing addition to our morning caffeine.



This winter, we have been treated to an even stranger nest box iteration. Late in the fall, we watched a Downy Woodpecker vigorously attack the opening of one of the Bluebird nest boxes. She hammered away, chips flew, and she regularly tried to squeeze into the box. Eventually she opened the hole up, she worked her way into the box, and that was it for the evening. Between two different houses, we have nine Bluebird nest boxes. By late fall, every one has had the holes enlarged, sometimes quite substantially. This winter, we have spent our morning caffeine hours observing the nest boxes and enjoying the wake up ritual of Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers. So far, our single morning record is one male Hairy Woodpecker and two female Downy Woodpeckers all popping out of nest boxes following extended head-out-of-hole inspections. We have shared this anecdote with several fellow birders. Astonishment has been the standard reaction.

Photo by Carole A. Scott

Selected Non-BCAS Birding Opportunities:

February 25-28: Whooping Crane Festival, in Port Aransas, Texas. www.whoopingcranefestival.org

March 11-13: Monte Vista Crane Festival, Colorado

Early April: Gunnison Sage Grouse Festival; contact www.Siskadee.org

April 15-17: Grand Isle Migratory Bird Celebration, Louisiana.

April 15-17: Olympic Bird Fest, preceded by a San Juan Islands Cruise April 12-14 and followed by a two-day excursion to the Neah Bay area of coastal Washington on April 17-19. These events are sponsored by the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society (OPAS) in Sequim, Washington. For more information, contact Bob Hutchison editor of the *Harlequin Happenings*, OPAS, rbrycehut@wavecable.com

Book Review:

The Audubon Ark: A History of the National Audubon Society,

by Frank Graham, Jr. 1990. The following review contains most of the original text review provided by Linda Verbiscar, (see *Canyon Wrenderings* August/September 2008) (with edits by Sandy Beranich)

How many of us, as we join an organization, are aware of the history of that organization? We generally join because of a concern and desire to participate in a larger effort or desire to participate in associated activities sponsored by the group. As Audubon members, how many of us know who started and when was the Audubon Society started? What was its original purpose and how has its original vision/mission changed over the years?

The Audubon Ark, answers these questions and also extensively covers other aspects of the society. Carl W. Buchheister, a former president of the National Audubon Society, was originally planning on writing the history of the society. However, when health issues and age crept up on him, he asked Frank Graham Jr. to take over his project and provided Frank materials from interviews and documents that he possessed. This book is the result.

The National Audubon Society was originally started by George Bird Grinnell. In 1886, Grinnell published an editorial in his *Forest & Stream* magazine stating: *We propose the formation of an Association for the protection of wild birds and their eggs, which shall be called the Audubon Society. Its membership is to be free to everyone who is willing to lend a helping hand in forwarding the objects for which it is formed. These objects will be to prevent, so far as possible, (1) the killing of any wild birds not used for food; (2) the destruction of nests or eggs of any wild bird; and (3) the wearing of feathers as ornaments or trimming for dress.*

Soon after, he published *The Audubon Magazine*. One purpose for starting the magazine was to protest the widespread destruction of birds for the fashion industry. Responses to Grinnell's manifesto included the statement: *"a dead bird does not help the appearance of an ugly woman and a pretty woman needs no such adornment."*

Being a "one-man show" Grinnell was unable to keep up with the correspondence, administrative details and the magazine. In 1888, he ceased publishing the magazine. In 1896, a Boston woman, Harriet Hemenway, again organized a group to deal with the continued destruction of the bird population. They chose the name Massachusetts Audubon Society. The current society dates from that time in Boston.

In addition to the history and development of the Society, The Audubon Ark also contains biographical materials on key individuals (among them Roger Tory Peterson) associated with the Society. Finally, the book discusses early approaches to protection of birds and the environment and includes some specific case studies. Like all organizations, the Audubon Society has had its own challenges, which are also described in the book; these included infighting among various prominent individuals to the financial problems of the 1980s.

Holiday and Winter Reminders:

- Participate in a Christmas Bird Count – all abilities are welcome and the 'after' events (where available) are great ways to meet other birders.
- If you provide suet cakes or other bird food, please remember to keep the containers clean.
- Wear sunscreen, even when cloudy.
- Commit to at least one BCAS trip this year!

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



<http://www.blackcanyonaudubon.org>



*Printed on recycled paper
Please recycle*



Your expiration date is shown on your mailing label. BCAS on the label means you are a local member only. Labels with an ID number indicate national membership. If your membership has expired, please renew using the form at right. National renewals should follow the instructions at the bottom of the form.

To help reduce our use of paper and postage and to receive photos in color, send an e-mail to:
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 email newsletter.

Email address: _____

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

Mail your renewal to:

Black Canyon Audubon Society, PO Box 387, Delta, CO 81416.

If you would like to join or donate to National Audubon Society and receive Audubon magazine, please send a check for \$20 to National Audubon Society, Inc., 225 Varick Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10014, Attn: Chance Mueleck. Please use this form and list Black Canyon Audubon Society/C2ZD140Z on your check so that BCAS can receive membership recruitment funds.