



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 2018-2019

Volume XXXII Number 4



"Rollin' Down the River" Barrow's Goldeneyes at the bottom of the East Portal Road, Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. Photo by Betty Fenton.

Upcoming Events and Dates to Know

December

December 1, Saturday: BIRDING TRIP to Blue Mesa Reservoir. Join us as we look for fall ducks and other birds around Blue Mesa Reservoir. We will be looking for Barrow's Goldeneye and other cold season birds. Meet us at the Lake Fork Marina and boat ramp (near the dam) at 10 a.m. Trip size is limited and you need to sign up to reserve a place. Bring a picnic lunch and dress for cold weather. Contact trip leader Jon Horn at jon_horn@alpinearchaeology.com for directions, more information, and to sign up.

December 6, Thursday: SPEAKER - Theresa Childers, Wildlife Biologist with Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Curecanti National Recreation Area will present information on the National Park Service's bird monitoring program. The program will focus on the many decades of Peregrine Falcon nests, but will also highlight eagle nest monitoring and the Great Blue Heron Rookery and Black Swift colony. Theresa will highlight park efforts to determine nest and fledgling success and how to protect these important migratory bird production areas within the Parks. Come to the Montrose Field House at the corner of Rio Grande and Colorado Avenue at 7 p.m.

December 14 – January 5th: Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count. This annual event was started in 1900 by Frank Chapman. Each Audubon Chapter selects one day within the annual date range to conduct their count. However, because our Chapter covers multiple counties and a large area, we offer four different count days. The count dates and areas are listed below:

Dec. 16th Sunday, Montrose Count Area: Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Centennial Building on Centennial Plaza. Bring a lunch and be prepared for a full day of birding around Montrose. We anticipate meeting at 2 Rascals afterward to go over results. Questions: contact leader Missy Siders at missy.siders@gmail.com.

Dec. 16th Sunday, Gunnison count area: Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Hurst Hall, Room 130 on the WSCU (Western Colorado University) campus to get organized. At the end of the day's birding, we will gather to compile our results over a Chili Potluck. For further information participants can email count leader Arden Anderson at arden@gunnison.com.

Dec. 23rd Sunday, Delta count area: Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the Delta City Market parking lot. For any questions, contact count leader Amy Seglund at amy.seglund@state.co.us. Amy will provide maps and data sheets.

Jan. 5th Saturday, North Fork count area. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Hotchkiss City Market parking lot. Participants will survey in small groups until late afternoon. Please dress warm and bring binoculars, boots, and lunch. Coffee will be provided. Please contact count leader Adam Petry for more information or to RSVP at petry@westernbiology.com. Birders of all experience levels welcome.

January

January 3, Thursday: SPEAKER - Amy Seglund will provide a talk on the *White-tailed ptarmigan - an alpine icon in Colorado*. Amy is a conservation biologist with the Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and has conducted studies related to the ptarmigan in the higher elevations in Colorado. She will discuss the basic biology of the species, describe threats, and discuss the work CPW has done on the species. Photo: White-tailed Ptarmigan by National Audubon Society National photo gallery. More events on page 3



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Comings and Goings

As we come into winter.....

I hope you will participate in one of our Christmas Bird Counts (CBC). Did you know that this is the 119TH consecutive year since they were started in 1900? Christmas counts are a standardized count of all of the individual birds in certain specific areas. It is the longest-running citizen science project ever created. It is sponsored by the National Audubon Society, and now is done in many countries around the world. The data are used in many ways to study long-term trends in bird counts and wintering locations, across the country. Counts are held in about 45 locations in Colorado, and all across the US, in the days between December 14, 2018, and January 5, 2019. Four counts are held in the BCAS area (centered in Montrose, Delta, Hotchkiss, and Gunnison), and about 6 others in southwest Colorado. Dates are shown on page 1 of this newsletter. Everyone is welcome to participate. We'll meet in the early morning, divide up into teams and cover our assigned areas. Anyone can join in. We will pair beginners with more experienced birders. Dress for the weather, because we never know what it will be.

Sandhill cranes in Delta – Do you know about the Sandhill cranes wintering around Delta, Colorado? Most western cranes migrate to central New Mexico. I saw 25 yesterday (11/18/18/) winging their way south, up and over the San Juan Mts. But some choose not to go that far south. About 2,000 have started to winter over in the area west of Delta, in the last decade. They are easy to see, if you go late in the day. But during the mid-day, they typically fly many miles to find fields with corn and wheat grains. Just as it is getting towards dark, the cranes fly back from their feeding sites and cluster together in various locations. Usually they are near the intersection of G50 Road and 1250 Road. Or they may spend the night in the nearby Escalante State Wildlife Area. Either way, it is a spectacular sight if you can see them flying silhouetted against the red sky at sunset, great for taking photos. The cranes will likely be in that area from now until March, so be sure to go look for them. We will likely have a BCAS field trip to go see them, as well.

Bruce Ackerman,

BCAS President

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727-858-5857

Audubon Council Meeting Notes

By Bruce Ackerman

The Audubon Colorado Council (ACC) is comprised of representatives from each of the 11 Audubon chapters in Colorado. Chapter representatives meet in person twice a year and twice by conference call. The most recent meeting was held on October 6, 2018 and 9 chapters were represented. Bruce Ackerman currently represents BCAS. We were also joined by representatives from the Audubon of the Rockies (AOR), which is National Audubon's regional office in Fort Collins, serving all of Colorado and Wyoming. Each chapter presented an update on their activities. The state Audubon lobbyist, Jen Boulton, summarized her work with Colorado State legislature this year.

Group discussion included several environmental bills that were on the ballot at the 11/6/2018 election, in particular, Amendment 74 and Proposition 112. Abby Burke discussed water conservation projects that AOR is working on, which included sponsoring a Water Conservation meeting, which was recently held in Montrose on October 25, 2018. Four of the chapters are sponsoring projects to encourage hunters to use copper bullets to protect raptors from eating lead ammunition. Evan Barrientos is the new Communications and Marketing Director for Audubon Rockies. He presented ideas for making Audubon Rockies a hub of information and opportunities by promoting events on social media, using Instagram, and writing a blog. Complete ACC minutes are posted on the BCAS website: www.blackcanyonaudubon.org.

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January (Continued)

January 19, Saturday: BIRDING TRIP - Open Water Birding at several locations between Montrose and Delta. Most waterbodies are frozen in January, but we'll travel to a few places that don't freeze. Expect to see a wide variety of waterfowl, raptors, and other miscellaneous species. Meet at the Montrose downtown City Market south of the fuel pumps at 9:00 a.m. Dress for weather and bring lunch and a drink. Call or email Jon Horn, trip leader, if you plan to attend (970) 209-5404 or jon_horn@alpinearchaeology.com.

February

February 7, Thursday: SPEAKER - Nick Myers of the Black Canyon National Park is our featured speaker for February. He will talk about the constellations and nebulas that are named after birds, the mythology behind the names, and which ones we can see in our area. Do you know what the Milky Way "Bird Pathway" is? There are over eight constellations named after birds (e.g., Cygnus the Swan) and over five Nebula that are also named after birds (e.g., Running Chicken Nebula). This program will be held at the Montrose Field House on the corner of Rio Grande and Colorado Ave in Montrose. Join us at 7 p.m.

February 9, Saturday, and February 10, Sunday: North Fork Area Raptor Trips. Space each day is limited to 12 participants. Trips will be co-led by Jim LeFevre and Adam Petry. Contact Jim at jimlef@paonia.com to reserve your place. We plan to leave at 9:00 a.m. from the City Market in Hotchkiss. We will look for raptors until 2-3 p.m. Wear warm clothes; bring lunch, binoculars, and drink.

February 16, Saturday and Sunday, February 17: Montrose Area Raptor Trips. The Montrose area is home to several wintering and resident raptors. Expect to see most Red-tailed Hawk morphs, Golden and Bald Eagles, Kestrels, Northern Harriers, and other species, depending on the weather. 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. We will carpool and proceed to viewing areas. The field trips will end in early afternoon; bring your lunch. Please contact Bill Harris at 970-615-7166 or at trlgpa48@gmail.com to sign up for February 16 or Bruce Ackerman at Bruceackermanaud@aol.com to sign up for February 17. Contact either Bill or Bruce for more information.

March

March 7, Thursday: SPEAKER - Van Graham of Grand Junction will be speaking on the results of his studies on Sandhill Cranes in western Colorado. Van is a retired wildlife biologist and will join us at the Bill Heddle Recreation Center, Delta at 7 p.m. to hear about what is going on with our local sandhill crane populations. More information will be provided in the March newsletter and on the BCAS website.

March 15, 16, and 17 (Fri.-Sun.): Annual Eckert Crane Days Join us as we celebrate the annual migration of the Sandhill Cranes. More information will be provided in the March newsletter and on the BCAS website. We will be watching for the cranes to lift off and viewing other area waterfowl. Bring your binoculars and spotting scopes if you have them; BCAS will provide spotting scopes and will have members present to answer questions.

First Tuesday of the Month Bird Walks

Join us on the first Tuesday of the month as we visit local areas to bird and share our birding experiences. We meet at 9 a.m. at the northeast corner of Gold's Gym parking lot in Montrose (corner of Hillcrest and Main St). All skill levels are welcome. Bring a snack and water, your binoculars, field guides, and dress appropriately for weather. The trips generally last a half day; we car pool to limit the number of vehicles. For questions, contact leader Bruce Ackerman at Bruceackermanaud@aol.com or 727 858-5857.

Upcoming Tuesday trip dates: December 4, January 8, February 5, and March 5.

For More Birding Adventures

January 17 – 20: 26th Annual "Wings Over Wilcox", come to Wilcox, AZ. For information: <http://wingsoverwilcox.com/> or call 520-384-2272

February 7 – 10: The High Plains Snow Goose Heritage and History Festival, Lamar, CO. For information visit webpage: www.highplainssnowgoose.com

February 21 – 24: 23rd Annual Whooping Crane Festival in Port Aransas, TX. For information: <https://www.whoopingcranefestival.org/>

April 12 – 14: Olympic Birdfest, preceded by optional San Juan Islands Cruise, April 9-11 and followed by 2-day excursion to Neah Bay April 14-16. Need to make early reservations; contact www.olympicbirdfest.org.

For upcoming festivals around the country, please go to:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/birding-festivals/?utm_source=Cornell%20Lab%20eNews&utm_campaign=18c7068e96-Cornell-Lab-eNews-2018-08-07&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_47588b5758-18c7068e96-306385693#menu-toggle

Is That Even A Color?

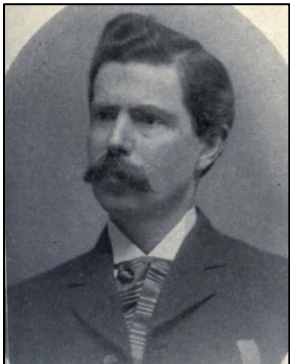
Odd Words for Bird Colors

By Bruce Ackerman

If you are a beginning birder, you are probably stumped by bird names that include words like: Rufous, Ferruginous, Cerulean, Violaceous, Vermilion, Cinereous, Ochraceous, Olivaceous – What The Heck? Are these even words? When you later become a better birder, you sort of get used to these names and don't question them anymore. But still.... what do those words mean and where did they come from? How do you pronounce them? Did you know that they are all names for very specific colors? These words all come straight from Latin words.

Birds in the Eastern US that were named by European settlers before about 1800, got simple names with colors that were very familiar to everyone – Blue, Red, Yellow, Orange, Gold, etc. But newly discovered bird species from the Western U.S., perhaps starting with Lewis and Clark in 1804, were named by Ornithologists. That's the difference!

Ornithologists were required to describe each new species in precise detail, using exact scientific words, so that it could be distinguished from every other similar species (still true today). They needed standardized names for colors, to be certain that they were each talking about the same colors. Remember that there were no color cameras and no internet, so you could not take a picture of the colors and you could not share that with someone else far away.



Robert Ridgway in 1886 was one of the top ornithologists in the country. He was the first curator of birds at the Smithsonian Museum (1880-1929). He published a small "Color Dictionary" in 1886, and a longer one in 1921, "*Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*". This new version had a list of 1,115 specific, standardized names for colors. He compiled names of colors, although many of the names had existed, in various languages for centuries. This was a book of color

swatches, so that each researcher could be sure what color they were talking about, whether for birds, or for mammals, flowers, rocks, or fabric dyes. The books were printed very carefully with precisely correct colors. That is where these color names come from.

PHOTO. 1903. Robert Ridgway. Bird Lore magazine, National Audubon Society.

SOURCES

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2018 Ridgway Banding Station Nets Record Number of Species

By Mary Menz

September's fall migratory bird banding station at Ridgway State Park (RSP) saw a total of 45 species in its ten days of operation this year. Species recorded for the first time included Cedar Waxwing, Evening Grosbeak, Gray Flycatcher, Hairy Woodpecker, Red-shafted Flicker, Western Bluebird, and Townsend's Solitaire.

The RSP's Station's Top Three Years

Year - Total birds - Total species

2010	332	29 (183 were Audubon's Warbler)
2017	177	20
2018	214	45

According to BCAS member Sheryl Radovich, the Ridgway banding station was started in 2006. Sheryl explained: "Several of us former teachers would bring our students to the station during the banding season. At that time, there were only three activities for the students. When fellow teacher Marti Isler and I retired from teaching in 2011, we both began volunteering each year to provide education programs in the schools before and after banding station visits."

Radovich says RSP's expanded program and learning stations eliminated the need for pre- and post- education visits to the schools. She and Isler continue as annual volunteers who present a learning activity at the station. This year's volunteers also included BCAS members Marcella Fremgen and Mary Menz who helped extract birds from nets and provided bander assistance, BCAS member Chris Lazo who led guided bird hikes for the school children, and BCAS member Gayle Johnson who led an activity one day. Several other non-member volunteers also helped at the station.

Close to 600 students from 11 schools participated in this year's program. Students were from schools in Delta, Montrose, and Ouray counties. In addition, 105 adults also visited the station. Each year a separate day is reserved for other visitors to watch the banding and release of the banded birds.

BCAS provides up to five volunteers daily at the park for the two-week banding period (up to 250 volunteer hours) and a birdfeeder with seed for each class that visits the station. The park also solicits volunteers to help with the event. Right: Yellow-breasted Chat.



Adam Cupito, this year's bander, took special care to identify birds in fall plumage.

The banding station opens the Tuesday after Labor Day with a public banding demonstration on the Saturday following Labor Day. Mark your calendars for next year's demonstration day! Read more about the banding station on the BCAS website: www.blackcanyonaudubon.org

Unexpected Sightings on the Western Slope

Ever submit your bird observations to eBird and get back something like – *this is an unusual occurrence for this date or location; please provide documentation of your reporting*. EBird data is based on records for specific dates and locations. Birds are creatures of habits; they predictably leave to migrate to southern climes and we generally don't see them until they return, as predicted, in the spring. However, what happens when the weather stays warm longer into the fall, or, the increasing temperatures are finding their way to northern latitudes? Or, previous birders just never happened to be present at the right moment? Here are a few recent examples of what we never expected to see at a location or time of the year – in spite of what the records show!

American Bittern: Historically known as the Stake Driver, Thunder Pumper, or Bog Bull, the American Bittern is a solitary and fairly rare visitor to the wetlands and marshes of western Colorado. It is heard more often than seen and is a master chameleon at hiding in plain sight. Summers are spent in the northern tier states and southern Canada but come colder weather Bitterns move to northern Mexico. But what happened on November 9 in Ridgway, CO? While traveling through Ridgway, Coen Dexter and Brenda Wright made this unusual discovery mid-day in wetlands near the Uncompahgre River Bridge. Two days later it snowed but night temperatures had been at freezing for several days. Photo credit to Brenda Wright.



Tundra Swan: Historically known as Whistling Swans, Tundra Swans breed in arctic areas, form pair bonds, and spend winters along Pacific coastal areas with scattered reported inland sightings in the Pacific Northwest states. On November 15, five Tundra Swans were seen at Highland Lake and reported by Mike Henwood, Eileen Cunningham, and Kathleen McGinley. On November 16, a pair of Tundra Swans was seen and photographed by Betty Fenton (left photo) on the large pond along G50 Rd outside of Delta. They have been sighted recently on this pond and would be worth a drive to see them.

How about seeing a hummingbird in the Grand Junction area on November 20? Recently overheard in *Wild Birds Unlimited* was an unidentified lady asking owner Larry Collins what to do about a hummingbird that showed up in her yard trying to

feed off a still flowering mum? Other than what was a hummingbird doing this far north this late into winter was the comment that she had not put out hummingbird feeders in her yard during the summer. Another unexpected visit by those birds that sure add an anomaly to the accepted statistics!

Great Egret, is a member of the heron family and was historically known for their beautiful plumage during breeding season. Great Egrets were almost hunted to extinction for the plumes that are present during mating and nesting and that were used in the millinery trade on women's hats. Great Egrets spend summers in isolated locations in the western to north western states, but are common east of the Rockies. They winter in northern Mexico but may be found year-round along the Pacific, Gulf, and eastern coasts. Another unexpected visitor in western Colorado, the Great Egret was seen and photographed by Sandy Beranich at Baldrige and Ute Park in Montrose on September 14.



Short-eared Owl, historically known as the Marsh Owl, Swamp Owl or Prairie Owl, it is known for its nocturnal foraging but might also be found hunting during the day if the weather is cloudy or foggy. This owl is considered a rare migrant and winter visitor to our area. It summers in Canada and Alaska and winters generally east of the Rockies and along the Pacific coast and parts of northern Utah and Colorado. Mike Henwood reported sighting a female Short-eared Owl in the Mack area, west of Grand Junction, on November 20. It is considered a casual summer resident and rare spring and fall migrant and rare winter visitor.

Sparrows and more sparrows. Grand Junction birders have been reporting on Western Slope Birding Network a variety of unusual sparrow sightings. Over a two-day period in November, Swamp Sparrows were reported at Horsethief Canyon State Wildlife Area by Ron Lambeth and Kathleen McGinley. It is considered a rare winter resident. White-throated Sparrows were reported at the Grand Junction Wildlife Area (GJWA) by Ron Lambeth and Eileen Cunningham. This is considered a rare migrant and winter visitor. Harris's Sparrows were also found at the GJWA by Ron Lambeth and by Leon Thurmon on East Orchard Mesa. Harris's Sparrows are considered a rare spring and fall migrant. In Montrose, Bruce Ackerman found a Sage Sparrow south of Montrose in October.

****We place an extra space before '@' in all member-cited emails, please remove before emailing the individual.****

Year of the Bird

In Retrospect

By Sandy Beranich

2018 began with lots of ink and photographs proclaiming it the *Year of the Bird*. But where are we today as 2018 is coming to a close? On September 5, eight states and several national groups, including the National Audubon Society and the National Wildlife Federation, filed suit in federal court against the Department of the Interior (DOI). The suit asked the court to vacate last year's opinion issued by the Solicitor's Office in the DOI regarding a new interpretation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. No settlement has been reached yet.

Birds and other wildlife continue to suffer mortalities related to severe storms and other human-caused events. A recent newspaper article spoke of the declining Puerto Rican parrot populations. Once numbering more than one million in the 1800's, the parrot population was down to about 13 individuals during the 1970's as a result of forest clearing. Programs were started to create breeding centers. Just weeks before Hurricane Maria hit the Caribbean Islands in 2017, scientists reported 56 wild birds in one location. Today, only 2 remain at that location as a result of Hurricane Maria.

As initially reported in *Canyon Wrenderings*, birders spend a lot of money. The result of research studies conclude that a birder might spend between \$1,850 and \$3,400 per year. There are questions, however, related to how to accurately determine how much money is spent specifically on birding activities – beginning with how do you even define a birder, and, do we have enough information to really address economic impacts? Surely individuals who engage in casual activities such as feeding pigeons or looking out windows at robins should not be considered in the same way as the birder who does bird surveys more than 20 days a year, purchases quality optics, and travels to see different species. Should these birders be counted and considered equally? Can birders become an economic force that ensures the presence of birds to view while also ensuring that birds still thrive to provide their important ecosystem services? Hunters and anglers lobby agencies for funding to ensure that they have something to hunt or fish – why not birders? Many of these questions are addressed and explored in: *Birding Economics and Birder Demographics Studies As Conservation Tools*, By Paul Kerlinger. Only seven pages – an interesting read.

https://www.fs.fed.us/rm/pubs_rm/rm_gtr229/rm_gtr229_032_038.pdf

Birds provide ecosystem services as described by editors Çağan H. Şekercioğlu, Daniel G. Wenny, and Christopher J. Whelan in their book: *Why Birds Matter*. Some examples of avian ecosystem services discussed in this book include insect control on agricultural crops, seed dispersal by seed caching species, pollination, and nutrient recycling. Losing our bird populations would result in using more chemicals on crops, which would contribute to the growing health problems related to chemicals in our water and soils as well as to inappropriate resource use. Although this is a dense book to read, it contains information that illustrates our dependence on birds for the quality of life on this planet. This book describes why birds matter in terms of the services they provide that would otherwise cost us money.

The question of why birds matter also has to consider how birds historically and currently contribute to our cultural fabric. We have festivals to honor the contributions of scavengers such as vultures; festivals to showcase the beauty and extraordinary abilities of many unique avian species, such as hummingbirds; and festivals to bring people together to enjoy some of migration's wonders – consider festivals that showcase the over 600,000 sandhill cranes that migrate through Nebraska each year.

Birds were historically at the center of human spirituality. Goldfinches commonly appeared in illuminated manuscripts in the Middle Ages, were associated with the Christ Child, and released during Easter celebrations in parts of Italy. Ancient Egyptians considered birds 'winged souls' and they occasionally used them to symbolize gods. Native Americans living on the northwest coast are renowned as bird artists that use stylized depictions of ravens, eagles, and oystercatchers (among others) in totem poles, carved masks and rattles as well as on painted screens, drums, and boxes. (*Birder's Handbook* by Paul R. Ehrlich, David S. Dobkin, and Darryl Wheye)

Artists, musicians, and writers also celebrate the beauty of birds. Poetry, dance influenced by birds, or dances depicting bird activities have been integral to cultures. Many books have been written exploring why birds do what they do (e.g., *Why Birds Sing?* By David Rothenberg), or the extent to which people search for birds (e.g., *Birding Without Borders* by Noel Stryker), among other subjects, and are one way we humans validate the importance of birds.

As we end this year emphasizing birds, are we any closer to explaining "Why Birds Matter", and why we should protect them? If nothing else, have the photographs and articles brought more of our attention to the beauty and resourcefulness that birds use to persevere against all odds? Or, do birds matter just because they exist and bring beauty and wonder to our lives?

Human-Caused Extinctions

If you missed a recent BCAS-sponsored talk by Robin Smith on anthropogenic-caused extinctions and what you can do, you missed hearing about one of the most relevant topics to our times. Historically, the earth has undergone five extinction periods related to natural events. Today, we are experiencing unprecedented losses of all species and this phenomenon is being called "The 6th Extinction". This time, however, the losses are due to multiple human-caused activities that are influencing not just our weather, not just a loss of available habitat for nonhuman species as our population continues to expand, but also influencing the quality of habitat for existing nonhuman populations. Consider a recent find of a dead 31-foot sperm whale that washed ashore in Indonesia. Its stomach contained 13 pounds of plastic waste, including 115 plastic cups, 2 flip flops, 4 plastic bottles, 25 plastic bags and over 1,000 other pieces of plastic. While tempted by holiday bargains, ask yourself: do I need it or do I want it?

If you missed Robin Smith's talk, find a copy of "*The Sixth Extinction*" by Elizabeth Kolbert. This extremely readable book documents historical extinctions and the incredible journeys undertaken by the author while researching her subject. The Montrose library has a copy.

Who Was That Bird Named For?

Franklin's Gull

By Susan Chandler-Reed



Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*) was not named for the naturalist who collected the specimen, nor for an ornithologist, but rather for Sir John Franklin, a British naval officer and Arctic explorer who does not seem to have had any particular interest in birds whatsoever. In fact, the gull was first described by the German herpetologist Johann Georg Wagler and named by the French ornithologist Louis Pierre Vieillot. In addition to the gull that is familiar to western Colorado birders, other birds bearing Franklin's name include a grouse, a nightjar, and a prinia (a small wren-warbler).

John Franklin was born in England and first went to sea at age 14. In 1805, he fought in the famous naval Battle of Trafalgar. Following the end of the Napoleonic wars, the British decided to make use of their unemployed ships and sailors by

launching naval expeditions to find a sea passage between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Following a failed 1818 attempt to cross the pack ice of the Arctic Sea, Franklin led expeditions seeking the Northwest Passage in 1819-1822 and 1825-1827. Even though the expeditions did not succeed, Franklin was hailed as a British hero, made a fellow of the Royal Society, and ultimately selected to be the Lieutenant Governor of Tasmania, where he served from 1837-1843. At age 59, Franklin was picked to lead yet another expedition to the Arctic. He left England in May 1845 with provisions for a three-year journey. His ships were last seen in late July of that same year, with no trace found of the ships or the men for five years. From 1847 to 1859, 30 searches were mounted. It was ultimately determined that Franklin had died in 1847. The rest of his party eventually succumbed to disease, hypothermia, lead poisoning from improperly tinned food, and starvation. In recent years, underwater archaeologists have found the remains of both of his ships.

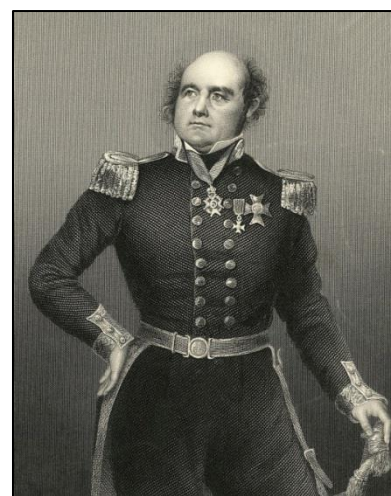
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Franklin's Gull Photo courtesy Alan and Elaine Wilson, <http://www.naturespicsonline.com>

Sir John Franklin (1786-1847), English sea captain and Arctic explorer (Painting courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)



Homemade Suet Dough No. 1

1 cup peanut butter
1 cup lard
4 cups corn meal (do not use mix)
1 cup all-purpose flour
Optional: ½ cup sunflower hearts/nut meats etc.
Melt peanut butter and lard in microwave on High for one minute. Mix in corn meal and flour (+ other optional). Or, melt peanut butter with lard on top of stove, add remaining ingredients.
Makes a soft dough. Put directly in cups or dishes to feed or pack into molds and refrigerate or freeze. Makes enough for 4 standard suet cages.

Sheryl Radovich's Suet Recipe No. 2

1 cup crunchy peanut butter
1 cup lard
1/3 cup sugar
2 cups quick cooking oats
2 cups cornmeal
1 cup flour
1 cup birdseed
Melt peanut butter and lard. Remove from stove, add sugar, combine remaining ingredients and add to the melted mixture, stirring well.
Line square pan with parchment paper and pat into pan. Once hardened, remove from pan and cut into 4 squares. Each square will fit into standard suet cage.

Black Canyon Audubon Society
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