



# 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

Fall 2022

Volume 36 Number 3



Western Tanager (Photo by Verlee Sanburg)

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## In-person Programs Return!!

Thanks to Board member Kristal Stidham, Black Canyon Audubon is once again hosting in-person program meetings at the Montrose Field House! All meetings will begin at 6:00PM.

**Thursday, September 15:** Dr. Bruce Bauerle, Professor Emeritus at Colorado Mesa University will speak about the *Edible, Poisonous and Useful Plants of Western Colorado*. Dr. Bauerle is an engaging speaker, world traveler and a life-long student of nature.

**Thursday, October 13:** Deb Callahan, President of the Friends of the San Luis Valley National Wildlife Refuges will speak about the Alamosa, Baca and Monte Vista refuges, and her group's efforts to support them with fundraising, education, and events. The group is a sponsor of the popular Monte Vista Crane Days in March of each year.

**Thursday, November 10:** Our guest speaker will be Dr. Timothy Armstrong, Professor of Biology and Earth Sciences at Adams State University. Tim's presentation will feature the fuzzy, feathered, and freaky critters that are using abandoned mines in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the San Luis Valley near Alamosa.

## President's Message by Bruce Ackerman

There has been so much going on in the last couple of months, that it is hard to thank everyone enough. Audubon was busy this summer, especially in July. Our annual picnic and election (that we have not had at in the last 2 years) was at Cerise Park in Montrose on July 23. About 73 people signed up, a new record, and some came quite far. Kendal Davis from Nature's Educators brought 4 live raptors from Canon City on the Front Range. She did an excellent job of telling us about these educational birds. Plus, we had excellent take-out food from the Camp Robber restaurant in Montrose. Bill Harris organized the food and the venue, with many other helpers. It was so nice to see so many new and old friends, in person!

Big thanks to the Montrose Woodworkers Guild, who make creative birdhouses for us. Audubon then auctions the birdhouses at the Montrose County Fair between July 24 and July 30 to raise money for our education projects. Sandy Beranich organized all the Audubon volunteers. Thank you to the 14 volunteers at our booth, and all the people who bought the birdhouses.

Kristal Stidham, our Program Chair, is going full steam ahead for a new series of in-person evening lectures. We have not done this in 2 years, since Covid arrived. Our first lecture in the new series was August 25 - Evan Phillips of CPW told us about the Lynx Reintroduction in Southwest Colorado. Thank You to everyone who helped or participated this summer!

### Volunteer opportunities!!

By Missy Siders

Black Canyon Audubon Society is looking for more volunteers to help us accomplish our mission. You do not have to be an expert birder to lead bird walks, organize talks, serve on the Board, or participate in other activities. If you would like to help with bird walks, contact Don Marsh (ridgwaybrdr@gmail.com; 209-256-5744). If you have ideas for speakers for the monthly meetings, contact Kristal Stidham (nationalparkfan1@yahoo.com; 580-919-5987). If you have ideas for activities you could help organize, contact Bruce Ackerman (BruceAckermanAUD@aol.com; 727-858-5857).



*Cedar Waxwing*



*Cedar Waxwing nestlings (both by Verlee Sanburg)*

### Canyon Wrenderings

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## BLACK CANYON AUDUBON SOCIETY

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### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audubon CO Council rep.—**OPEN**

Education— Carrie Krickbaum (see above)

Conservation—Sallie Thoreson (see above)

Field Trips—Don Marsh (see above)

Membership—Missy Siders (see above)

Publicity—Susan Werner 970-688-0757

Programs— Kristal Stidham (see above)

Website Manager—Jon Horn (see above)

### AD HOC COMMITTEES (ANNUAL EVENTS)

Montrose County Fair—Sandy Beranich

Bird Banding—Carrie Krickbaum (see above)

Christmas Bird Count Team—Arden

Anderson, Adam Petry, Amy Seglund,  
and Missy Siders

Eckert Crane Days—**Open**

**A note about email addresses in this newsletter: All emails have an extra space before the @ sign or “[at symbol]” in the email address to discourage spam coming from web crawlers.**

See an OPEN position? Talk to an officer to see if it is a good fit for your skills and talents! We would love to have an at-large board member. Volunteers are always welcome.

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## BCAS Fall Field Trips

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### Saturday, September 10

#### Birding Banding at Ridgway State Park

Watch a professional bird bander at work. This is a drop-in opportunity and there will be no leader, but volunteers will be present to answer your questions. The banding station is set up over the Uncompahgre River bridge in the Dallas Creek Day Use area at the far southern end of the park. The state park charges a \$9.00/car entrance fee. The banding starts at 7:00AM and continues until around 11 am depending on weather conditions, so it is best to arrive early in the day. Bruce Ackerman has volunteered to lead a group from Montrose to Ridgway State Park to see the bird banding and look for migrants around the park. We will meet at the public parking lot at the corner of N. 2nd Street and N. Cascade Ave. in Montrose at **8:00 am**. Please contact Bruce at (727) 858-5857 or [bruceackermanAUD@aol.com](mailto:bruceackermanAUD@aol.com) to RSVP.

### Saturday September 24

#### Specie Mesa and Miramonte Reservoir

Join us as we look for migrating ducks and shorebirds at Miramonte Reservoir near Norwood (the Dan Noble State Wildlife Area). It hosts a good variety of sagebrush birds, shorebirds, and raptors during fall. To get to the reservoir, we will drive up CR 44/Specie Creek Road, a gravel road that is readily passable with a passenger car at this time of year. It is also often very "birdy." The reservoir itself is an hour and forty-five minutes from Montrose. For those coming from Montrose and further north, we will meet at the public parking lot at the corner of N. 2nd Street and N. Cascade Ave. in Montrose at **7:30 am**, at the Ridgway Visitor Center at the southwest corner of Highway 550 and Highway 62 at **8 am**, or at the Specie Mesa Picnic area near Highway 145 approximately 3 miles north of Placerville around **8:30 am**. We expect to head home around 1 pm. Dress in layers, and bring a lunch, snacks, water, and a spotting scope if you have one. Please contact the trip leader, Don Marsh at (209)256-5744 or [ridgwaybrdr@gmail.com](mailto:ridgwaybrdr@gmail.com) to RSVP.

## First Tuesday Field Trips

Mark your calendars for **September 8, October 4, and November 1**

The First Tuesday Field Trips continue! Meet at **8:00AM on September 8, and 9:00AM in October and November**. We will meet at the **public parking lot at the intersection of N. 2nd Street and N. Cascade Ave. in Montrose**. A leader will accompany the group to a nearby birding hotspot. Return about noon.

We will be watching community COVID infection rates to determine appropriate protocols. Please stay home if you are ill. Contact Bruce Ackerman at (727) 858-5857 or [bruceackermanAUD@aol.com](mailto:bruceackermanAUD@aol.com) or Don Marsh at (209) 256-5744 or [ridgwaybrdr@gmail.com](mailto:ridgwaybrdr@gmail.com) for more information and to RSVP.

Bring a snack, water, binoculars, and field guides.

### Saturday, October 15

**Blue Mesa Reservoir** - Join us as we look for fall ducks and shorebirds around Blue Mesa Reservoir near Gunnison. The reservoir's size and exposed mud shoreline attract a variety of birds in the fall. Be sure to dress in layers, and bring binoculars, a lunch or snacks, water, and a spotting scope if you have one. We will meet at the public parking lot at the corner of N. 2nd Street and N. Cascade Ave. in Montrose at **8:30 am**. Please contact the trip leader, Don Marsh at (209) 256-5744 or [ridgwaybrdr@gmail.com](mailto:ridgwaybrdr@gmail.com) to RSVP.

### Saturday, November 12 –

#### Confluence Park and G50 Road, Delta

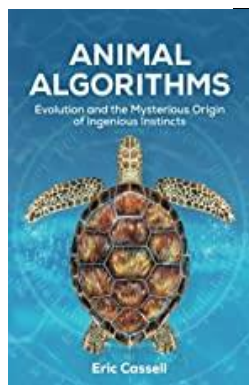
Join us as we look at the wintering waterfowl and raptors at the reservoir in Confluence Park. Hundreds of ducks, geese and other species use this lake as a resting spot. We will then head to G50 road to check the fields and ponds that often host well over 1000 Sandhill Cranes and other birds. We will meet at the public parking lot at the corner of N. 2nd Street and N. Cascade Ave. in Montrose at **9:00 am** or in Delta at the park next to the lake at **9:30 am**. Be sure to dress in layers, and bring binoculars, a lunch or snacks, water, and a spotting scope if you have one. Please contact the trip leader, Don Marsh at (209) 256-5744 or [ridgwaybrdr@gmail.com](mailto:ridgwaybrdr@gmail.com) to RSVP.



# BCAS Book Club Selections

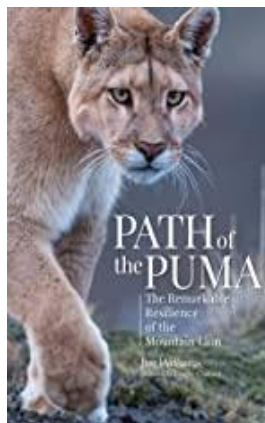
By Sheryl Radovich

The BCAS Book Club formed in July 2021 to meet other birders and explore the natural world through shared experience and literature. Recently we read about birds' intellect, vultures, and coyotes. We are so fortunate to be able to appreciate diversity of our natural world. Here are the next three club selections. Meetings will be outside on the third Tuesday of each month at 2:00PM at the Radovich residence. Reach Sheryl Radovich by email SherylRadovich@icloud.com or phone (970) 240-3788 to confirm dates and location.



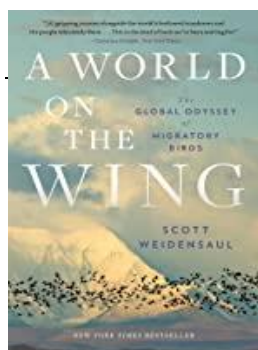
## Tuesday, September 20

In *Animal Algorithms*, Eric Cassel makes a fascinating case for intelligent design and challenges the very foundations of evolutionary thinking that have guided research in animal behavior since Charles Darwin first proposed his theory over 140 years ago.



## Tuesday, October 18

What makes a Mountain Lion such a survivor in an ever-changing western landscape of human pressures and habitat decline? Jim Williams draws from years of experience as a wildlife manager in the Rocky Mountains and Patagonia (Argentina) to explore the complex web of biodiversity in which pumas play a vital role.



## Tuesday, November 15

Join in a discussion of Scott Weidensaul's latest book on bird migration, *A World on the Wing*. This narrative will take us on a gripping journey alongside the world's feathered wanderers and the people who study them.

# THANKS to Black Canyon Audubon members!!

## Birding at the Ute Indian Museum

By Dena Sedar, Education Director

The Ute Indian Museum received a generous donation of \$500 from the Black Canyon Audubon Society for the purchase of fifteen pairs binoculars and kid-friendly birding books for the museum's *Hands on History* camps. This donation expanded our curriculum to include Colorado's native birds and give the kids a taste of birdwatching. We were lucky to have Carrie Krickbaum from Black Canyon Audubon help us with the introduction to birding. The kids loved hearing bird calls and learned why the Black-capped Chickadee is also known as the "cheeseburger" bird.

The Ute Museum grounds are a perfect place to learn how to bird, especially on the boardwalk in the Ethnobotany Garden. The kids were excited to spot the redwing blackbird that hangs out in the wetland area, and we even searched for butterflies with the binoculars. The kids and I agree that birding is a lot easier than butterfly watching! We hope that our birdwatching activities sparked a lifelong interest in birdwatching in the summer campers.



Camper using donated binoculars by Dena Sedar

## Avian Ramblings

By Bill Harris

The 2022 birding year, so far, has not been much different from other years. No specific personal challenges as in past years – just see how many bird species I can spot in the year. Usually by the end of July I have seen most species I will see in a year. I spent some time in Arizona, so spotted birds that I do not see around western Colorado.

It is fun to envision ways to spice up birding adventures. Traveling to other locales in search of birds not usually seen locally is one way to spice things up. Another option is to stay closer to home. For the last 6-7 years I have joined birding cohorts on a day-long marathon to attempt to spot 100 bird species in a single day.

This summer, I joined Alan Reed, Jon Horn, and Steve Dike for a 100-bird challenge. For the past several years we have picked early June for our challenge day since the weather is typically good. Most migrating birds have arrived, year-round residents are active, and all are singing.

We ended this year's challenge at Fruitgrowers Reservoir in the early evening. Fruitgrowers has the greatest variety of avian wildlife in west-central Colorado. We spotted 45 species at the reservoir and tallied 108 species for the day. We came close to our record from a few years back of 110 species. We thought it would be fun to challenge other birders in BCAS to create their own team for the 100-bird day next year.



*Rufous Hummingbird by Verlee Sanburg*

Currently I am at 182 species for Montrose County, 217 for Colorado, and 261 U.S. birds. Best birds so far this year are Lawrence's Goldfinch, Bronzed Cowbird, and Olive Warbler in Arizona, and Common Redpolls and a Glossy Ibis in Colorado. The Bobolinks near Mesa, Colo. were neat to see, as well. But my numbers pale in comparison to the species seen by those who have traveled to Central or South America this year. Steve, Jon, Alan, and I are hoping to add to our life list during our fishing trip to Ontario in late August. It coincides with the beginning of fall migration, so we hope to see a lot of birds on the move.

## Audubon Education

### **Bird Banding at Ridgway State Park**

By Carrie Krickbaum

Ridgway State Park is gearing up for our annual fall bird banding! We have nine different schools from Ouray, Ridgway, Montrose, and Delta bringing 50 – 80 students each day between September 6th and 16th . Along with the banding station, kids rotate through education stations learning how to use binoculars, discussing adaptations, and playing “Jeop-BIRDY,” playing an active migration challenge game, and studying the area’s habitat for birds. The public banding day will take place on September 10 between 7:30 – 11:00AM at the Dallas Creek banding site, across the bridge at the south end. The berries are looking good in the area! This is always a wonderful experience for students, teachers, and volunteers! (To play “Jeop-BIRDY” for yourself, go to [Jeop Birdy](#)) For a list of the 60 bird species that were banded in past years at this station, please open this link: [Ridgway State Park banded bird species list](#)

### **Highlights from the Board of Directors**

By Sallie Thoreson

- Notes from the virtual Board meetings on May 26 and July 21.
- Membership is at 336 from the National Audubon Society and 206 local members. There is overlap between National members and local members. Three hundred and fifty people receive the quarterly newsletter.
- We have had many successful birding trips from monthly First Tuesday trips to longer trips to Silver Jack Reservoir and the Cimarron, and Grand Mesa. We plan more trips for the rest of the summer and fall.
- The Audubon Book Club is going strong. Sheryl Radovich is leading the group and it is open to anyone. The meetings are currently the second Tuesday of the month, 2pm, outdoors at Sheryl Radovich's house in Montrose.
- Kristal is working on great ideas for speakers at in-person programs. Local speakers might be CPW biologists, Black Canyon National Park staff, CMU professors, and members who have been on recent birding trips.

*Continued Page 6*

### Board of Directors highlights *continued from Page 5*

- Sandy Beranich will again coordinate our members to be at the bluebird house silent auction at the County Fair.
- The Board decided on the annual meeting/picnic in Montrose on July 23 at Cerise Park with Camp Robber box dinners. First choice for a speaker is Nature's Educators on raptors. We discussed details.
- All Board members expressed interest in staying on the Board for another year. We are open to adding additional Board members.
- At our annual on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, all current Board of Directors were re-elected by a show of hands of the membership. We do have open positions and are looking for volunteers to fill them.



*Red-tailed Hawk at picnic by Verlee Sanburg*

- From treasurer Gayle Johnson:
  - Current balance: \$29,416.02 which includes \$890 from the bluebird house auction
  - Expenditures: \$1,328.30 Camp Robber for the dinner Sandwiches; \$74.51 Bill Harris for ice, and drinks for dinner; \$57.25 Copy Cats for newsletter copies; \$23.20 Missy Siders for postage

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## Conservation Conversations

By Sallie Thoreson

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 may cut U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent by 2030 and help move the US toward climate goals. While we are waiting for that legislation to be implemented, we can look at some key environmental laws passed in

Colorado by the Legislature in the 2022 session. Conservation Colorado has a factsheet about the 2022 session, which includes voting records for state senators and representatives. Consider reviewing this before you vote in November.

([scorecard.conservationco.org](https://scorecard.conservationco.org)) I summarized the information from Conservation Colorado in this document: [Key Colorado 2022 environmental legislation](#). More details on individual bills are available at <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/>.

### Back to the '50s

I have recently read a couple of books from the 1950s which led to me thinking about current conservation efforts in the two states added to the U.S. in the 50's.

#### Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska

The statistics are improving. Environment America reports that:

- The six largest banks in the US have issued policies against financing drilling in the Refuge.
- Fourteen insurance companies have decided not to insure drilling in the Refuge.
- The three oil companies with leases in the Refuge have ended their leases. Right now, there are no oil companies holding drilling leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. More details at [alaskawild.org/](http://alaskawild.org/), and [ak.audubon.org/life-heart-arctic](http://ak.audubon.org/life-heart-arctic).

#### Hawaiian birds are not in paradise

The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) reports that Hawaii is the bird extinction capital of the world. "No place on Earth is home to more bird species under threat of extinction. Since humans arrived, 95 of 142 bird species found nowhere are now extinct on Hawaii. Thirty-three of Hawaii's remaining 44 endemic birds are listed under the Endangered Species Act; 11 of those have not been seen for decades and are likely extinct." ABC has a campaign to address the threat that **up to 12 species of Hawaiian honeycreepers** facing extinction. To combat the transmission of avian malaria to these bird species, one promising plan is to use a common, naturally occurring bacteria as a "mosquito birth control" to suppress mosquito populations. More information is at [Hawaiian birds face extinction](#) and [Hawaiian birds and mosquitos](#)

### Colorado Water Plan – Get Involved NOW!!

The public comments period on the draft 2023 Colorado Water Plan is open! This is an important document as water is so crucial to the land, wildlife, and people in our *Continue page 7*



## Colorado Water Plan – continuation from page 6

state. The Water Plan will direct Colorado's water priorities and management for the next ten years.

Audubon Rockies encourages members “to track down where your water comes from, commit to an expanded water stewardship ethic (for ideas, see Water '22 at [water22.org](https://water22.org) and Habitat Hero at [Habitat Hero | Audubon Rockies](https://habitat-hero.org)), and read about your basin as well as chapter six in the draft updated water plan.” You can also get details at <https://engagecwcb.org/colorado-water-plan>.

Comments on the Plan are due September 30, 2022.

Please let Sallie Thoreson or Bruce Ackerman know if you are interested in reviewing and commenting. More details from Audubon Rockies are at

<https://rockies.audubon.org/rivers/articles/new-water-plan-charting-colorados-water-resilient-future-birds-and-people>.

## Wolf Reintroduction

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) continues to work on the Wolf Restoration and Management Plan, as required by Proposition 114. For those who are interested in attending virtually, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission will hear a presentation about the status of the planning effort at their September 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. To learn more about the status of the process, please visit [Colorado wolf public involvement](https://coloradoparksandwildlife.com/wolf-restoration). Some wolf advocates feel that the work to date concentrates too heavily on the issues of livestock interactions, impacts on other big-game numbers, potential interactions with humans, and the possibility of public hunting. A consortium of groups released an alternative plan in July. The [CO-Wolf-Restoration-Plan-2022.pdf \(wildearthguardians.org\)](https://www.wildearthguardians.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/CO-Wolf-Restoration-Plan-2022.pdf) seeks to focus on a different approach.

## Conservation Easement

Long-time Black Canyon Audubon active member Chris Lazo and his wife Carole worked with Colorado Land Trust to conserve their 146 acres of Fruitland Mesa near Hotchkiss. This is an important win for wildlife in the area. He died in October of 2021. See Montrose Daily Press article for more information: [Conservation Easement Honors Chris Lazo](https://montrosedaily.com/2021/10/21/conservation-easement-honors-chris-lazo/)

## What to Expect on a Guided Bird Tour

By Susan Chandler-Reed

Have you ever gone on a guided bird trip in the U.S. or elsewhere in the world? You have seen the glossy ads in birding magazines and wondered if a birding tour was something you might like to do? What follows is my perspective on what to expect on a guided birding trip, based on several tours that my husband and I have gone on, mostly in Latin America. I recommend also checking out the essay written by one of the guides we have traveled with from Eagle-Eye Tours, “Why Take a Guided Birding Tour” for a guide’s perspective on group birding: <https://www.eagle-eye.com/blog/why-take-a-guided-birding-tour/>

Our first experiences with birding guides were limited to half-day or so forays from ecolodges that included birding as part of their daily offerings. Having struggled to identify birds that were new to us with inadequate field books, it was wonderful to have someone who could tell us what we were seeing and who knew the habits of the local birds. We selected our first week-long birding trip—to Costa Rica— based on availability by merely entering “March birding trips Central America.” Luckily for us, it was with an excellent company. Not only have we signed up for subsequent tours with them, but two other couples we met on that first trip were such good companions that we have since traveled with them on other birding trips.

Why take a guided birding trip? In addition to the expertise with the birds themselves, it is liberating to travel in a small group with the logistical arrangements are when traveling in countries where you do not speak the language well or at all. Airport transfers, lodging, meals, and local travel (vans, boats, etc.) are all arranged in advance and included as part of the tour package, as are local guides and entry fees to parks and nature reserves. One key aspect of birding tourism is the influx of foreign dollars to poorer parts of the world, encouraging locals to regard the conservation of natural resources to be an important economic benefit. Tour companies often know of small nature preserves run by local families or tribal groups who are training their group members to be wildlife guides and who may also offer meals at their homes or community centers.

*Continue page 9*

## THE MONTROSE COUNTY FAIR – BLUEBIRD HOUSES

By Sandy Beranich

After another successful county fair, BCAS thanks the many volunteers that made the BCAS booth possible. The Montrose Woodworkers Guild and Montrose Area Woodturners donated birdhouses and 5 decorative owls that were displayed for sale in the BCAS booth. John Renzelman, President of the Woodworkers Guild of Western Colorado, brought the woodworkers and the BCAS booth back to The Event Center this year. John and Jim Norfleet made many of the displayed



birdhouses. Alpine Lumber donated cash awards to the top three birdhouses, as chosen by the county fair judge. Other woodworkers included Aaron Hill, Debra Houts, Dennis Murphy, and Rusty Olson. The woodworkers are having an event to highlight their work at Cobble Creek on October 14.

Jon Horn donated time and materials to make 13 birdhouse kits for sale. BCAS President Bruce Ackerman helped with the booth setup, met most days with our volunteers, took photos, and produced an online Google spreadsheet to provide daily updates on bids for those not attending the fair. The BCAS volunteers who represented BCAS to the public and answered questions about the bluebird houses and encouraged visitors to make a bid in the silent auction were Bill Harris, Carol Pierce, Dick Bushmaier, Fred Simons,

Gayle Johnson, Kristal Stidham, Lauren Ruddell, Linda Moreland, Marilyn Westerdahl, Melanie Rees, Missy Siders, and Susan Chandler Reed.

So how did the fair go? There is a lot of creativity in the bluebird house design. The Pirate birdhouse by Jim Norfleet received first place. The pirate's black eye patch and attached 'string' were of ebony, a black wood. The unique "Feather Twig Inn" constructed by Debra Houts, had twigs on all sides with a roof of pinecone parts for its shingles; it received second place. Third place went to the soaring bald eagle by John Renzelman. Popular were the series of five small decorative owls and several small turned wood houses. Other creative birdhouses included a



*Second place winner  
Feather Twig Inn*

Sea Hag, an outhouse, a church, several log cabins made from various woods by Rusty Olson, and of course, 'standard' bluebird houses. Each entry had a minimum bid. Bidding ended at noon on Saturday July 30, the last day of the fair.

Birdhouse kits that contained pieces cut to size with screw holes drilled and all tools and instructions included sold for \$10. Final bids ranged as high as \$155.

BCAS uses the funds raised by the silent auction to support our education programs that include field trips, participation in the annual Ridgway State Park bird banding program in September, and other events that benefit birders of all ages. If you missed it this year, come as a volunteer next year or come to enjoy the fair and bid on a birdhouse!



*First place winner - Pirate*



### ***Guided bird tour from page 7***

It is important to keep in mind that the trips we have participated in are BIRDING trips, primarily. We did take one trip advertised as a wildlife tour that, while still focused primarily on birds, did take time to seek out other wildlife. Unless explicitly stated in the tour description, however, birding trips are not generally designed to visit cultural sites or to do other types of sightseeing or shopping, other than what might incidentally be encountered along the way. If you want to incorporate some birding into a more standard international travel experience, it is possible to book a guide who can take you out for the day. We once found a birding guide on Trip Advisor who picked us up at our Barcelona hotel in his car and drove us out of the city to a wonderful wetland area where we were able to experience the fall migration across Spain to Africa. The businesswoman who joined us on the tour that day told us that she tries to arrange a birding trip whenever she travels to a new city.

You should expect long days—dawn to dusk birding (unless you go out owling after dark). On our most recent trip to Colombia, we typically met everyone at the van at 5:15 am so that we could arrive at a good birding spot shortly after sunrise, leaving before breakfast (and sometimes even before coffee!). We ate our “field breakfast” in the van or while birding or sat down at a local café for a late morning meal in route to our next birding locale. Lunch stops are often also erratic. On one memorable trip, the guide did not want to waste valuable birding time stopping at restaurants, so would buy a big sack of empanadas and cookies for us all to pass around the van and eat while we drove. Dinner is at whatever lodge or hotel we are staying at for the night. After dinner, the group stays together to compile the bird lists for the day before heading to bed around 9 pm. As one guide kept reminding us “You can sleep when you get home.” There is little opportunity for solitary pursuits and good motivation to have a good relationship with everyone in your group. Lodging can be rustic, and showers are sometimes cold, but we have always felt safe and comfortable.

Most birding trips want to identify as many birds as possible, which means traveling to a variety of geographical and ecological settings and staying only one or two nights in any one lodge. Long drives in the middle of the day do at least provide an opportunity for napping! Because you are on a fixed schedule, you will be birding in whatever weather the day brings.

Many days involve easy to moderate hikes; other days may be primarily briefer stops along roads or even sitting

in a chair and watching the birds that come to a feeder. Some days, birding may be from a small boat.

Although you do not need to bring along a spotting scope, you will need to have your own binoculars. The tour company should provide you with a packing list, but items that we have found essential to have along are a daypack, water bottles and a SteriPen or other means of purifying water so as not to contribute to the plague of plastic water bottle waste, travel medications, insect spray and sunscreen, a good sun hat, appropriate footwear and outdoor wear, and electronic language and birding applications for your phone or tablet. Even if you have no cellular service, wi-fi is widely available. It is helpful to become at least familiar with the types of birds you will be seeing. Although not essential, if possible, it is also good to have a basic idea of the local plant life, so that you have a clue where to look if the guide says the bird is in the cecropia tree! A camera is also nice, though if your primary objective is photography, you might be happier on a trip with that focus.



*Birding while waiting for road repair*

All-inclusive, small-group trips such as I have described are not cheap, and it is important to be clear about what is included in the price. Round-trip travel to the destination city is not generally included, nor are meals or lodging prior to the official start date of the trip. If the tour requires in-country air travel, be sure to verify that those tickets are part of the tour package, as we have found some trips where they are not. Another expense that is handled differently by different companies is tips for the local guides and for the driver. Some companies cover these gratuities as part of the trip cost, but others collect cash from participants for the tips. Regardless, you will still need to tip the primary birding guide(s) for your trip (on our last trip, each participant chipped in a \$50/week tip for our guide). Other trip expenses include trip insurance, travel immunizations, and purchase of a local birding guide or phone application. Have fun!!

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**Please remember to renew your membership**

Local memberships expire December 31. Please pay online or by check and extend your membership through December 2022. Dues paid to the Black Canyon Audubon Chapter stay in the chapter and help fund activities, public outreach, and more!



**Black Canyon Audubon Society (NAS Chapter D14)  
Chapter Membership Form**

Local Audubon chapter members may participate in all chapter activities, receive the chapter newsletter *Canyon Wrenderings*, and vote on chapter issues. Annual membership dues are \$20 for individual and \$30 for family membership. These annual dues remain local. If you are a member of National Audubon, you are already a member of BCAS!

(Check one)      Renewal     New Member

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