



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

Summer 2022

Volume 36 Number 2



Blue-gray gnatcatcher (Photo by Verlee Sanburg)

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Annual Picnic!!

- WHEN?** Save the date!! July 23, 2022, at 5:00PM
- WHERE?** Cerise Park Picnic Shelter
- WHAT?** Annual meeting with dinner, conversation, a fabulous program with Nature's Educators including **LIVE** birds and election of Board of Directors!!
- WHO?** YOU!!
- COST?** \$25 for box dinner from Camp Robber

RSVP required!! See page 7 for dinner selections and sign up!

President's Message

By Bruce Ackerman

Spring Into Summer – Good Birding! I am Blown Away (it has been so windy!) by all the good bird sightings this season. We have lots of good field trips scheduled. I hope you will join us.

Annual Meeting and Picnic July 23 at Cerise Park in Montrose. We have finally scheduled our annual picnic. Please join us! We have not been able to get together like this in the last 2 years. Tasty foods will be provided by the Camp Robber restaurant. See more information elsewhere in this issue.

Your Board of Directors is doing an excellent job of organizing many events for this summer -- field trips, annual picnic, book club, and bird house auction at the Montrose County Fair. I deeply appreciate their support. We are gearing up to get our monthly speaker programs back up and running, after a gap of 2 years. Hopefully COVID is winding down.

I really appreciate the help and dedication of the Board of Directors. Maybe you would like to volunteer to help with the BCAS, we can always use a few more volunteers. Here are two annual projects that always need some volunteers – Auctioning bluebird boxes at the Montrose County Fair in July and banding birds at Ridgway State Park in September.

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, or 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 are willing to work at the County Fair, contact Sandy Beranich at 970-497-0376, or if you have ideas for activities you could help organize, contact Bruce Ackerman (BruceAckermanAUD@aol.com; 727-858-5857).



Yellow-rumped warbler by Verlee Sanburg

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Managing editor

Susan Werner at wrenderingseditor@gmail.com

BLACK CANYON AUDUBON SOCIETY

OFFICERS

President—Bruce Ackerman (Montrose)
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Bruceackermanaud@aol.com

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970-964-8051

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970-209-5404

Jonhorn56@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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nationalparkfan1@yahoo.com

Bill Harris (Montrose) 970-901-4022
TRLGPA48@gmail.com

Carrie Krickbaum (Ridgway) 970-209-3703
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Don Marsh (Ridgway) 209-256-5744
ridgwaybrdr@gmail.com

Melissa (Missy) Siders (Montrose)
970-275-6639

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COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audubon CO Council rep.—**OPEN**

Education— Carrie Krickbaum

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

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 (see above for contact information)

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 webcrawlers from spam activities.

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.

BCAS Summer Field Trips

Wednesday, June 15, 8:00AM

Silver Jack Reservoir and the Cimmaron Valley

Explore this lightly birded watershed east of Cerro Summit. Some late Spring migrants may still be moving through the area and the resident breeders should be in full song. Temperatures may be cool in the morning so dress in layers. Bring drinks, snacks, and a lunch. 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** and return in the early afternoon. For questions and to sign up, contact Don Marsh at ridgwaybrdr@gmail.com or 209-256-5744.

Saturday, June 25, 8:00AM

Grand Mesa

The Grand Mesa has a wonderful array of birds during the summer that include Lincoln Sparrow, Swainson's Hawk, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Hermit Thrush, Pine Grosbeak, Red Crossbill to name a few. We will be stopping along highway 65 at several points, going for short hikes to view birds. Hiking distance around 2-3 miles total. This will be an all-day trip, so bring lunch, snacks, water, and clothing to deal with cooler, inclement weather. Group limited to 10 people. Meet at the parking lot at the corner of N. 2nd Street and N. Cascade Ave. in Montrose at **8AM**. Contact trip leader, Bill Harris at 970-901-4022 or at trlgpa48@gmail.com to sign up.



Lark sparrow (photo by Verlee Sanburg)

First Tuesday Field Trips

Mark your calendars for **June 7th, July 5th and August 2nd**

The First Tuesday Field Trips continue! Meet at **8:00AM**. 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 for more information.

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



Long-billed Dowitchers and American Avocets (Photo by Verlee Sanburg)

Saturday August 27, 8:00AM

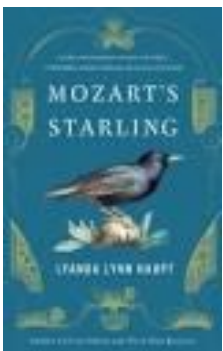
Ridgway State Park

Ridgway State Park in late August can host a variety of migrating shorebirds and post breeding songbirds. The state park charges a \$9.00 day use fee, but we'll meet at the Visitor Center near the Dutch Charlie entrance at **8 am** and see if we can carpool with annual pass holders to minimize expenses. We'll wrap up around noon. As always in Colorado, dress in layers, bring water and a lunch or snacks, and a spotting scope if you have one. Please contact the trip leader, Don Marsh at (209) 256-5744 or ridgwaybrdr@gmail.com to RSVP.

BCAS Book Club Selections

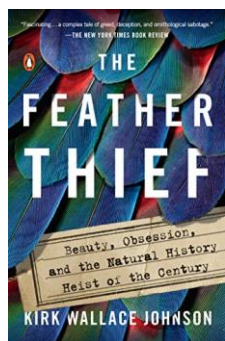
By Sheryl Radovich

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 canyon.creek @bresnan.net or phone (970) 240-3788 to confirm dates and location.



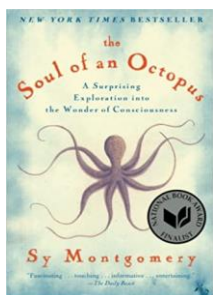
Tuesday, June 21

The June book club selection is "*Mozart's Starling*" by Lynda Lynn Haupt. Author Lynda Haupt explores the bond between one of history's most cherished composers and one of earth's most common birds. She intertwines stories of Mozart's pet with her own experiences to create a window into the world of starlings and music.



Tuesday, July 12

Discuss Kirk Johnson's "*The Feather Thief*" which examines the theft of 299 rare bird skins from a British natural history museum. Johnson fascinates the reader, plunging with vigor into exotic bird exploration, the crackdown on rare bird trafficking, and the insular world of fly-tying enthusiasts.



Tuesday, August 16

Meet to discuss "*Soul of an Octopus*" by Sy Montgomery. This award-winning book dissolves the human-constructed borders between "them" (other animals) and us. For those wanting additional exploration of the life of an octopus, Netflix has a great film entitled "*My Octopus Teacher*."

Avian Ramblings

By Bill Harris

As promised in my previous article, I will highlight some of my favorite birding spots during my Montrose County Big Year, 2021. To see as many species as possible, I explored a variety of habitats. I broke down the county into 4 general areas – east side which included the Black Canyon National Park, Cerro Summit, and Buckhorn Lakes, the Uncompahgre Valley, the Uncompahgre Plateau, and the West End.

I then used eBird to identify birds I had seen during what time of the year in the past. The eBird bar charts were very helpful. Also, I subscribed to the eBird rare bird alert - it kept me informed about rare birds other birders were seeing. Another strategy that proved to be helpful was sharing texts with a few friends who bird frequently.

My yard was the most convenient place to bird. Besides feeders in the backyard, my yard has plenty of bushes and several trees. There is lots of good bird habitat in the adjoining yards. A day at home rarely goes by that I do not check for birds around the feeders. I tallied 65 species in my yard in 2021, a third of the species I spotted in Montrose County.

The Otter Pond area is a wonderful birding hotspot. It is particularly good late fall through early spring with lots of waterfowl. It is also a good place to see great-tailed grackles. The best birds in 2021 were 3 different terns – Black, Forster's and Common.

Finding shorebirds in Montrose County can be a challenge due to the lack of habitat. The stock pond on East Oak Grove Road is the exception. It is easy to access and produces some surprising results. Willets, Least Sandpipers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and Wilson's Snipes are occasional visitors in the spring and fall. The best pond bird in 2021 was a Snowy Plover. The waste treatment ponds near Nucla and small stock ponds in West Paradox Valley produce some good shorebird sightings as well.

Other favorite birding spots include the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Ute Indian Museum, Uncompahgre National Forest along County Road 90, and Cerro Summit. So far this year I am at 135 Montrose County species, ahead of 2021's count. Another interesting observation is that I see 85-90% of my annual bird species in the first 6 months of the year.

Good luck birding out there!

Conservation Conversations

Summer 2022

By Sallie Thoreson

Gunnison Sage-grouse

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) published a request for comments on completing 2022 draft Land Health Assessment (LHA) amendments for three grazing allotments (Green Mountain, Iron Canyon and Gould Reservoir) in the Crawford area. All three allotments contain Gunnison sage-grouse habitat. The issues in these areas are protecting Gunnison sage-grouse habitat in all seasons, and general land conditions and grazing regulations during persistent drought. In one allotment there is also the issue of domestic sheep grazing in areas where these animals may contact bighorn sheep. The BLM will complete the LHAs and then publish a request for comments about the grazing permits based on the new LHAs. Black Canyon Audubon Society and individual members have provided comments in the past.

Colorado Legislation Updates

The state legislative session concluded on May 11, 2022. Several bills passed regarding air toxins, oil and gas, and environmental justice. Two bills were specific to wildlife habitat.

The Safe Crossings for Colorado Wildlife And Motorists (SB22-151) will create a cash fund for use by the Colorado Department of Transportation to fund projects that provide safe road crossings for wildlife. This will improve habitat connectivity for wildlife and public safety. Audubon Rockies reports



Highway 9 Wildlife Crossing (Photo from CPW)

that animal-vehicle collisions are the fourth most common crash in Colorado, with most incidents occurring in the spring or during fall migration. Wildlife killed on roads also attract avian scavengers, like Golden Eagles, which are at risk of being killed by vehicles as they eat. The good news is that wildlife crossings such as the one along State Highway 9, between Kremmling and Green Mountain Reservoir, have resulted in a 92% reduction in reported wildlife-vehicle collisions!”

The **Native Pollinator Study bill** (SB22-109) authorizes a statewide study regarding the protection of native pollinating insects. The Colorado Department of Natural Resources will conduct the study on how best to address the various threats native pollinators face. Insect conservation benefits birds too.

Colorado Water Plan

The first update of the state Water Plan will be released for public comment on June 30th. Stay tuned on how to provide review and comments. Water is key to survival of birds and all species in our state. More information is available at Colorado Water Conservation Board <http://www.engagecwcb.org> and Audubon Rockies Western Water Initiative at www.rockies.audubon.org/rivers



Yellow-Breasted Chat by Bruce Ackerman

Federal legislation

The **CORE Act** is getting closer to passage. The Colorado Outdoor Economy and Recreation Act would protect over 400,000 acres of public lands across Colorado. The Act is currently in a key Senate committee and may advance to a Senate vote. The Act has already passed in the House.

The **Recovering America's Wildlife Act of 2021** (H.R.2773) proposes to provide funding for the conservation or restoration of wildlife and plant species of greatest conservation need; support conservation strategies of states, territories, or the District of Columbia; and enhance wildlife conservation education and recreation projects.

The **Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Enhancements Act** (S. 4187) would provide additional funding and capacity for the Fish and Wildlife Service to manage an important grant program. It would support the conservation of bird habitat as well as research, monitoring, outreach, and education for conservation of the more than 350 neotropical bird species in the U.S. President Biden on Earth Day (April 22, 2022) signed an Executive Order laying the groundwork for **protecting some of the biggest and oldest trees in America's forests**. The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management are directed to inventory mature and old-growth forests nationwide within a year, identify threats to these trees, and to use that information to craft policies that protect them. Old growth forests are part of our cultural and landscape heritage, sequester large amounts of carbon, and provide habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Viewing the Web of Life

By Sallie Thoreson

Recently, I have watched a few good videos that highlight the complex global connections between climate change issues, the strategies to solve the problems, and the people involved.

Defending the North (7 minutes) highlights the impact of wind generation on Reindeer habitat in Norway.

<https://vimeo.com/612492965>

Newtok: The Water is Rising (97 minutes) tells the story of how Yup'ik residents in an Alaskan village prepare to move due to climate change.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNYQfdVEOk>

Lost World (16 minutes) shows the impact to the land and people of Cambodia when sand is dredged from their forests for construction projects in Singapore.

<https://vimeo.com/309335117>

Also PBS FRONTLINE has a three-part series

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/the-power-of-big-oil/> on the fossil fuel industry and climate change –

what did they know, when did they know, and what did they do about it.

Highlights from the Board of Directors

By Sallie Thoreson

- Membership is at 336 from members through the National Audubon Society and 104 local members. Some 350 people receive the quarterly newsletter.
- The Board approved a donation to the Ute Museum to purchase binoculars and bird guides to support their Summer Camps and other kid activities. They were able to purchase 17 pairs of binoculars and 14 bird guides.
- Eckert Crane Days were March 18-19-20, 2022 (Friday to Sunday) at Fruitgrowers Reservoir. Stormy weather on Thursday disrupted the migration and cranes did not fly out on Friday. Cranes were difficult to observe on Saturday and Sunday, but we estimated 200 flew out on Sunday. BCAS members were on hand to talk with some of the 20 to 30 cars each day. The two interpretive signs purchased by BCAS helped to tell the story.
- The Board is exploring how to bring back in-person programs.
- The Board decided to have an annual meeting/picnic in Montrose July 23 at Cerise Park. More details in this newsletter.
- From Treasurer Gayle Johnson: The balance in the checking account is \$28,005.45. Since the last newsletter, \$500 went to the Ute Museum for binoculars and bird books, \$153.44 for bird bracelets for Paonia Conservation Days, \$288 for our website domain, \$374.50 for insurance and \$41.20 to Copy Cats for newsletter copies.



Mountain bluebird – Billy Creek SWA by Bruce Ackerman

Black Canyon Audubon Society Annual Dinner (Picnic)
Saturday, July 23, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.

We will be gathering at the picnic gazebo in Cerise Park in Montrose. The annual dinner will be a box supper provided by Camp Robber, dinner at 5:45 PM. The 6:30 PM program will be a raptor demonstration by Devin Jaffewirth of Nature's Educators.

Please join us for a fun and relaxing evening! It is not necessary to be a BCAS member to participate. Please ask anyone you think would enjoy the evening to join us!

Dinner Reservations:

Please indicate choice and number of entrees, each priced at \$ 20 (includes gratuity):

___ ***Roast Beef with cheddar Sandwich*** ___ ***Turkey with Swiss Sandwich***

___ ***Veggie Sandwich*** ___ ***Ham/Turkey Club Wrap***

___ ***Thai Peanut Chicken Wrap*** ___ ***Veggie Wrap***

Choice of 1 side dish: ___ ***Potato salad*** ___ ***Cole Slaw*** ___ ***Veggie sticks*** ___ ***Fruit salad***

Dessert: ___ ***Brownie.*** ___ ***Cookie.***

Gluten-Free: ___ ***yes***

Includes: lemonade, iced tea, and water

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

Guest name(s) _____

Phone# _____ Email address _____

Please mail your meal choice (s) and payment check to arrive by July 15 to:
BCAS, P.O. Box 387, Delta, CO 81416

Directions to Cerise Park Gazebo:

Take West Main St. in Montrose from its intersection with Townsend Ave. Turn left at Chipeta Dr. In 200 ft. left again at Shane's Way. Gazebo at south end of parking lot.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Bill Harris (970) 901-4022 Bruce Ackerman at (727) 858-5857

Animal Ambassadors from Nature's Educators



Turkey Vulture (Photo from Nature's Educators)



Barn Owl (photo from Nature's Educators) 1

Crossword Puzzle answers

Across		Down	
3.	Roc	1.	Arn
4.	Tern	2.	Nene
5.	Eider	6.	Rhea
9.	Ibis	7.	Tit
11.	Emu	8.	Auk
12.	Moa	10.	Smew

Audubon Education

By Carrie Krickbaum

On May 6, Black Canyon Audubon partnered with Ridgway State Park this year to host a station at the Paonia Conservation Days for approximately 150 area 3rd graders. Students learned about breeding plumages, nesting territories, the function of bird song, and the artistry of some bird nests. They looked at bird study skins, actual nests, and egg replicas. BCAS purchased bookmarks and “Bird Buddy” friendship bracelets for each student to wear or take home. The future looks bright for budding birders!



Students excited to look at bird study skins (photo by Carrie Krickbaum)

Across

3. Mythical bird from the *Arabian Nights*
4. Migratory seabird with forked tail
5. Northern seabird with especially warm feathers
9. Long-legged wader in Everglades
11. Down Under flightless bird
12. Extinct flightless bird once hunted by the Maori

Down

1. Sea eagle with white tail
2. Endangered state bird of Hawaii
6. Flightless South American bird
7. Cousin of a chickadee
8. Seabird with webbed feet and short wings
10. Freshwater diving duck found in parts of Eurasia

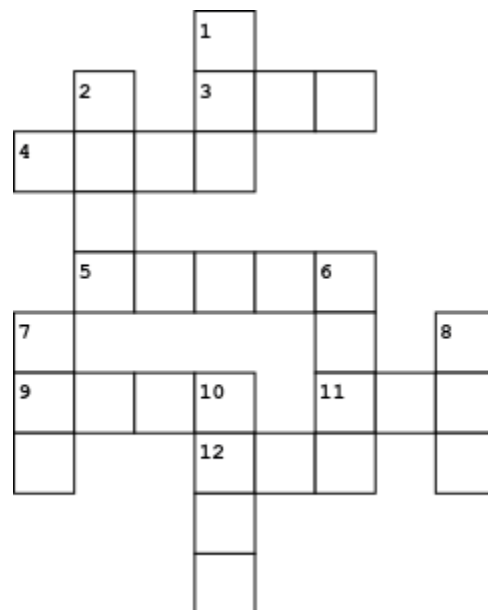
Citizen Science – Monitoring Bluebird boxes

Audubon members are monitoring bluebird boxes at Ridgway State Park and Billy Creek State Wildlife Area. Weekly visits to boxes allow detailed notes about nest construction, number of eggs, hatchlings, and fledglings. Volunteers enter the data into Nestwatch, an online database administered by Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Scientists working in an area or on a species may access this national data to contribute to their knowledge bank.



Linda maintains a bluebird box by Kristal Stidham

Crossword birds: Twelve birds that frequently show up in crossword puzzles



Source:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/02/crosswords/crosswords-aviary.html>

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



www.blackcanyonaudubon.org

Watch your email and visit the website often to see when monthly programs start up again.

Want to see the color photographs in this publication?

Help reduce the use of paper and lower BCAS expenses by receiving this publication in color via email. Send your request for electronic delivery in PDF format to blackcanyonaudubon@gmail.com.

Please remember to renew your membership

Local memberships expired 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 also a member of BCAS!

(Check one) Renewal New Member

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (Optional): _____

Email (Required): _____

Enclosed

\$20 for individual membership

\$30 for family membership

Renew online or mail your renewal to: Black Canyon Audubon Society
PO Box 387, Delta, CO 81416.