



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 2025

Volume 40 Number 4



Pacific Loon at James M Robb State Park in Fruita by Verlee Sanburg

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Local Christmas bird counts!

By Missy Siders

The Christmas bird count is the longest running citizen science data set in the world! Volunteers have collected data for 125 years! Please join us for one or all four of the local counts. We welcome all levels of birding experience. Expect to spend most of each day tallying the birds that you see and/or hear. Bring: warm clothes (dress for expected weather), boots, snacks and/or lunch, water, sunscreen, binoculars, spotting scope (if you have one), and bird books. Clip boards are helpful. Your team will receive maps of birding areas, a checklist of birds and instructions. For additional information on local efforts contact Black Canyon Audubon Society at black.canyon.audubon.society@gmail.com. To join a webinar on participating, please click: [Christmas bird count webinar](https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count) For more information about CBC participation, visit Audubon's website at <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>.

Sunday Dec. 14th - Gunnison. This group will meet at 7:30 am at Hurst Hall, Room 130 on the Western Colorado University campus to get organized. Consider Gunnison in December and dress appropriately. After the count, we will have a Chili potluck to compile results. Please contact organizer Arden Anderson ([arden @Gunnison.com](mailto:arden@Gunnison.com))

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Presidents' Message

Over 100 attended a special presentation by retired National Park Superintendent and State Park Supervisor Walt Dabney at the Ute Museum in September. He spoke and illustrated the history of public lands, discussed potential consequences if these lands were to be turned over to individual states or to private entities, and urged us to take action to keep public lands public. In Walt's words, "If we lose them, we'll never get them back."

For those of you who can hardly wait for the Christmas Bird Count, Missy Siders has once again organized counts in Gunnison, Montrose, Delta, and Hotchkiss. For details, see page 1.

Our 7 PM, Second Thursday winter program schedule begins with Colorado Parks and Wildlife Biologist Amy Seglund, December 11, who will discuss her Pinyon Jay research and its relationship with diminishing pinyon juniper forests. On January 8, Don Marsh will share his experiences in the Kenya Highlands, and on February 12, Don will take us to the Kenya's Coast. For details see page 6.

Save the Date! 5 PM March 5, 2026 ,

Annual meeting and dinner with keynote speaker and author, Christopher Preston, of *"Tenacious Beasts: Wildlife Recoveries that Change How We Think about Animals"*, will present a message of hope as he discusses animal recovery success stories.

We love to see the members of the BCAS arranging for "Pop Up" bird-related events. Carol Pierce led a troop of Girl Scouts on an exciting bird-watching event. Carrie Krickbaum responded to a request from a Girl Scout troop in Telluride to help them build bluebird boxes with a promise to return in the Spring to help install them. Jon Horn put together the bluebird box kits. The BCAS has binoculars, bird books, and examples of programs to use. Create your own Pop Up and tell us about it!

The next Board of Directors meeting will be on March 1, 2026. We welcome participation from all members.

Caroline Evans and Sallie Thoreson, Co-Presidents

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BLACK CANYON AUDUBON SOCIETY

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AD HOC COMMITTEES (ANNUAL EVENTS)

Montrose County Fair Bluebird boxes auction —
Bruce Ackerman
Christmas Bird Count Team—Missy Siders
Eckert Crane Days— Alida Franco

Would you like to volunteer? Talk to an officer to see where we need help and where your talents can be used! We always need and welcome volunteers.

Local Christmas bird counts *(continued from page 1)*

for additional information and to let him know you are planning to attend.

Saturday Dec. 20th - Montrose. Meet at 8:30 AM. in the public parking lot at north 2nd St. Cascade Ave. in downtown Montrose. We will break into groups to cover the areas. Please contact Missy Siders at (black.canyon.audubon.fieldtrips @gmail.com) at least 5 days before the count so she can inform you of any last-minute changes to the count.

Saturday Dec. 27th – Delta. Meet at 8:30 AM at the east end of the Bill Heddles parking lot. Please note the changes! We will meet after the count to turn in results, compare notes, and socialize. Sign up ahead of time. If you have counted a specific area in the past and would like to be the group leader, please text Bill and indicate the area you prefer. There have been a few changes to boundaries, so refer to the map as needed. The groups will meet in the banquet room at CB's Tavern, 334 Main St. in Delta beginning at 3:30 PM. If you cannot attend, please photograph your count sheets and text them to Bill Harris, 970-901-4022.

Saturday, January 3rd - Hotchkiss. Meet at the Hotchkiss City Market parking lot at 8:00 AM. A catered lunch will be held at Andrea Robinsong's. Please contact Adam Petry at (petry @westernbiology.com) with questions or to RSVP.



Downy Woodpecker by Verlee Sanburg

Sandhill Crane Viewing Opportunities!! Cranes and Cocoa

Sat, Dec 6, 2025, 3 - 6 PM

BCAS is partnering with the Colorado West Land Trust, to watch Sandhill Cranes in Delta. Join us to view the Sandhill Cranes while enjoying a warm cup of cocoa. Stop by Crane Landing and learn about nearby locations to see the Cranes in the daytime. Then head back to Crane Landing for cocoa, chat with Audubon experts, learn about the conserved land with Colorado West Land Trust, and watch the Cranes fly in to gather on their night roost. The Crane Landing Boat Ramp is located on G50 Rd (North Delta) at the Gunnison River Bridge. FREE, OPEN TO ALL

Location: Crane Landing Boat Ramp, G50 Rd (North Delta) at the Gunnison River Bridge, Delta, CO

[Map to Crane Landing Boat ramp](#)

RSVP here: [Cranes and Cocoa](#)

Eckert Crane Days!!

Save the date

March 21 – 26, 2026

Citizen Science Opportunity

Brown-capped Rosy Finch Research

By Jon Horn

As a result of my eBird report on rosy finches seen on a hike, I was contacted to provide additional information for a winter study of rosy finches. If you observe Brown-capped Rosy Finches, they would like you to fill out a survey and include any photos and recordings that you might have. Here is a link to the study.

<https://coloradobirdresearch.wixsite.com/the-rosy-finch-winter>

Winter 2025/2026 Field Trips

By Missy Siders

All trips meet at the public parking lot at the corner of N. 2nd Street and N. Cascade Ave. in Montrose unless noted in the trip description. Bring snacks, water, binoculars, and a field guide. Please RSVP at black.canyon.audubon.fieldtrips@gmail.com and specify which trip(s) you are interested in attending.

December

Montrose 1st Tuesday

Date: Tuesday December 2, 2025, 9:00 AM
Bruce Ackerman will accompany the group to a nearby birding hot spot. Return should be about noon.

Delta 3rd Tuesday

Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025, 9:00 AM
Meet Alida Franco at Orchard City Park, 11245 2100 Rd. Orchard City. Parking lot is to the left as you enter. We will walk the trails in search of bluebirds, songbirds, and hawks.

January

Montrose 1st Tuesday

Date: Tuesday, January 6, 2026, 9:00 AM
Bruce Ackerman will accompany the group to a nearby birding hot spot. Return should be about noon.

Delta 3rd Tuesday

Date: Tuesday, January 20, 2026, 9:00 AM
Meet Dian Torphy at Sweitzer Lake State Park south of Delta. Meet at the first parking area just inside the park and we will carpool to the other end where the trail starts. You do need a state park pass. If you do not have one, please indicate this in your sign-up email and a carpool from Delta can be arranged. If you have one, spotting scopes would be good on this trip.

Want to learn more about birds?

Verlee Sanburg highly recommends visiting:
<http://academy.allaboutbirds.org/>
to take one of their online classes

February

Montrose 1st Tuesday

Date: Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 9:00 AM
A leader will accompany the group to a nearby birding hotspot. Return should be about noon.

Delta 3rd Tuesday

Date: Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 9:00 AM
Meet leaders Elizabeth Ivers and Doug Hemken at Orchard City Park, 11245 2100 Rd., Orchard City in the parking area to the left as you enter. Expect to find an amazing number of songbirds despite cold weather.

Grand Junction Wildlife Area (Mesa County)

Date: Saturday, February 7, 2026, 8:00 AM
Accompany leader Bill Harris on a visit to the Grand Junction State Wildlife Area. We will carpool from Montrose. Each participant needs a valid hunting or fishing license, or a State Wildlife Area pass. It is a great place to hike. Plan to return home by 3:30 PM. If time permits, we will visit Connected Lakes.

Rosy Finches. (Ouray County)

Date: Saturday February 14, 2026, 9:00 AM
Or Thursday, ~~February 29, 2026~~, 2/19/26 9:00 AM
Join Don Marsh on a visit to the home of a Ridgway BCAS member who regularly sees all three species of Rosy Finch at her home feeders. We will meet in Ridgway at the Cimarron Coffee parking lot and carpool up to her Elk Meadows home. Since it is a private residence with limited window space, the trip is limited to 10 participants.

WANTED!

We are looking for more field trip leaders! Do you like to be outside? And help others experience the great outdoors? Is this you? You do not need to be an "expert."
If you know good places and seasons to find butterflies, plants, flowers, and/or birds, we can use your expertise!
If you are interested or have questions, please contact Missy Siders at black.canyon.audubon.fieldtrips@gmail.com or call at 970-275-6639.

My hawkwatching trip to the Goshute Mountains of Nevada

By Janet Haw

Hawkwatch International has been monitoring several raptor migration routes around the world since the 1980s. I visited the longest continual monitoring site, Goshute Mountain, NV, this past September. I found it to be an amazing and beautiful experience. I later learned that Wrenderings editor Susan Werner had been on the initial Goshute discovery team in 1980.

This remote site is just west of the Great Salt Lake desert in eastern Nevada. Getting to the 9000-foot mountain top involves a lonely highway, a rocky dirt road, and a strenuous hike. I spent the night in Wendover, UT. An early start allowed me to stop several times on the strenuous hike to bird watch in the various habitats. I saw Mountain Chickadee, Clark's Nutcracker, Townsend's Solitaire, Hairy Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Northern Flicker.



View from the Goshute Mountain top at 9000 feet with immature Red-tailed Hawk by Janet Haw

I reached the campsite at around 9:45 AM and found an incredible 360-degree view of open space and far off mountains. The sky was mostly blue with a few puffy white clouds. The crew are there daily from Aug. 15 to Nov. 5. The three observers were busy watching and identifying hawks, some of which were flying extremely high. They were amazingly skilled, knowledgeable, friendly, and helpful, explaining or answering my many questions. They recorded data of their observations. An alarm reminded them to record weather observations and hourly bird totals. Radios enabled communication with the trapping/netting area, where two people were catching, measuring, and banding passing hawks.

Eight of us were lucky to see so many birds that day. The previous day had been stormy, so on this clear day, the hawks were moving! Between 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM, 329 hawks migrated south. Most of these were Accipiters. In the 4.5 hours I was there I saw 2 Cooper's

Hawk, 1 American Kestrel and 1 Red-tailed in hand after they were caught and banded.

If you are interested in knowing more about Hawkwatch, or about visiting a raptor migration site, check Hawkwatch International. Some sites have easier access, but none in the west are as busy as the Goshute Mountain site!



Cooper's Hawk in hand by Janet Haw

MOTUS UPDATE NOVEMBER 2025

David Sinton & Missy Siders

Our MOTUS tower is up and running in Montrose to receive signals from migratory animals. As we are reaching the end of the Fall migration, I would like to review what we have recorded. We recorded a Silver-Haired Bat that was tagged in Montana. Researchers tagged this bat on October 27 just south of Missoula, Montana. As the servers continue to crunch the data, this bat should eventually show up for all to see.

Our earliest Fall migrant was a Willow Flycatcher noticed on July 9. Late August brought us another Willow Flycatcher and two Wilson's Phalaropes. The Phalaropes were both tagged by separate projects, one near Vancouver and the other near Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

In September, the station detected two Vesper Sparrows and one Grasshopper Sparrow. These three sparrows came from the Intermountain West - University of Montana project.

Including our American white pelican detected last Fall, the Chris Lazo Memorial Station has recorded 7 species and 9 animals which carry light-weight radio tags. There are four other stations across the Western Slope. Colorado Parks and Wildlife established three stations near Grand Junction and in Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge. Dr. David Inouye also runs a station in Paonia.

A big Thank You to Gayle Johnson and Steve Manis for providing a new home for our tower.

BCAS Monthly Meetings

Thursday, December 11, at 7 PM, Montrose Field House Summit Room

“Pinyon Jay Research and Conservation in Colorado”

Amy Seglund, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)

In her 18-year career for Colorado Parks and Wildlife Biologist Amy Seglund has focused on many species including the American pika, Gunnison and White-tailed Prairie Dogs, White-tailed Ptarmigan, Kit Fox, Brown-capped Rosy Finches, and most recently, Pinyon Jays.



Pinyon Jay. Photo by Nick Lormand

Seglund’s and others’ discoveries and investigations of 130 breeding colonies within Colorado has improved understanding of Pinyon Jay behavior, habitat, and threats.

Pinyon Jays are rapidly declining and are being considered for threatened status by the USFWS under the Endangered Species Act. Seglund’s presentation will discuss causes of diminishing populations including beetle damage, drought, and poor management of the pinyon-juniper woodlands. Since 2019,

Thursday, January 8, at 7 PM, Montrose Field House Summit Room

“Birding the Kenya Highlands”

Don Marsh

After retiring from a career in Information Technology, Don Marsh moved to Ridgway in 2019. He is a BCAS board member and field trip leader. In September of 2024, he fulfilled a life-long dream to visit Africa and see its wildlife. “Birding the Kenya Highlands” will cover the 12-day bird and wildlife main tour that explored areas north and west of Nairobi. Sites visited included the Mount Kenya area, Buffalo Springs National Reserve, Lake Nakuru National Park, Lake Baringo, the Kakamega Forest, Lake Victoria, and points in-between. Covering a wide variety of habitats, this main tour resulted in sighting over 380 species of bird, plus dozens of mammal and reptile species.



Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill pair. Photo by Don Marsh

Thursday, February 12, at 7 PM Montrose Field House Summit Room

“Birding the Kenyan Coast and Nairobi National Park”

Don Marsh

Birding the Kenyan Coast and Nairobi National Park continues Don’s tour of Kenya, this time covering a five-day coastal extension of the main tour. Heading south and east of Nairobi, this program covers the vast Tsavo East National Park, the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Reserve (a remnant of the once vast coastal forest stretching from southern Somalia to northern Mozambique), and various hotspots near Malindi on the Indian Ocean, including Mida Creek and the Sabaki River Estuary. On his last day in Kenya, Don spent the day exploring the airport-convenient and wildlife-rich Nairobi National Park, home to white and black rhinos and a great variety of birdlife.



Crab Plover. Photo by Don Marsh

Conservation Conversations

By Sallie Thoreson

Life in the conservation arena seems bleak, but there are some rays of hope. Here are a few state stories.

The Colorado State Land Board, which manages state lands to provide money for Colorado public schools, recently voted to sell a 45,952-acre property in the San Luis Valley to the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. "This decision will permanently connect and protect critical wildlife habitat, ensure access for outdoor recreation, and allow for grazing and agricultural uses that support nearby economies." The \$49.6 million funding will come from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund and CPW's Habitat Stamp program.

We are lucky to have Abby Burk and Daly Edmunds working so diligently and expertly for us from the Audubon Rockies office. Abby and Daly asked the Audubon chapters in Colorado to sign a letter to the Colorado Water Conservation Board expressing our opinion to protect Shoshone water flows for birds, wildlife, and healthy rivers. (See details at [Shoshone water rights](#)) Abby told us that several people went out of their way to thank Audubon for showing up as a united statewide voice.

Abby and Daly are also providing strong leadership to ensure that Colorado Water Quality Control Commission knows that Audubon members throughout the state want strong protection in the state's new dredge and fill of existing wetlands permitting program. You can stay informed about Audubon Rockies advocacy projects at [Audubon Rockies | Audubon](#).

If you want to see how our state Senators and Representatives voted in 2025, check out the Scorecard at [2025 Legislative Scorecard - Conservation Colorado](#). You may want to thank your legislators when they passed a good bill (supporting public land and water issues) and letting them know your opinions on other issues. Our US senators also need our support, as well as keeping your Representatives informed on our opinions. You can find contact information for them at [Find Your Members in the U.S. Congress | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#).

If you would like to have a greater voice on important national issues surrounding bird habitat, bird migration, and all things related, the National Audubon Society has made it easy to keep abreast of these issues and have

your voice heard by allowing you to sign up for alerts as issues arise. Visit <https://www.audubon.org/takeaction> Scroll to near the bottom of the page to **Sign Up for Audubon's Action Network. United, we will make a difference.**

As Bill McKibben reports in his latest book, *Here Comes the Sun*, nations who do not have oil and gas reserves are not looking to the US or other large powers to ship them more tankers of energy. They are looking to solar power. In Kenya, they are developing green mini grids of decentralized energy systems that generate electricity from renewable sources, primarily solar and wind, and distribute it within a localized network. [Kenya: The Rise of Green Mini-Grids - How Community-Based Solar Projects Are Electrifying Kenya's Last Mile | Africa Energy Portal](#) After the recent hurricane that hit Jamaica, the New York Times reports that those with solar panels got energy use back quickly. [After Hurricane Melissa, Solar Power Kept the Electricity on for Some Jamaicans - The New York Times](#)

TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

by Janine Reid, Membership Chair

It is that time of year again! Membership in Black Canyon Audubon Society runs from January through December. Dues are \$20 (\$30 for family) to support BCAS programs and activities and to receive Canyon Wrenderings electronically, or \$30 (\$40 for family) for a printed copy through the mail. Please use the form on the back page of the newsletter to renew by mail or renew online at our website: www.blackcanyonaudubon.org. For those of you who have already renewed this fall, you are good through December 2026.

If you would like to join the National Audubon Society (NAS) directly and receive the Audubon Magazine, please go to www.audubon.org or call 1-844-428-3826. Minimum membership fee is \$20. If you choose to join NAS, we would appreciate your direct support of BCAS by either joining both BCAS and NAS, or by donating to BCAS.

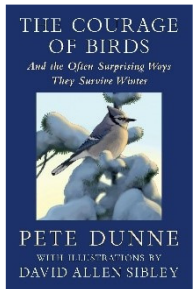
Upcoming Book Club Selections

By Sallie Thoreson

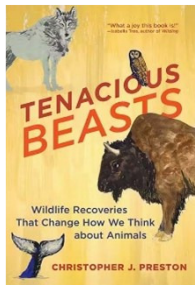
The **Black Canyon Audubon Book Club** meets the second Wednesday of the month at 3:00 p.m. Meetings are virtual (usually in the fall and winter) or in-person in Montrose (usually in spring and summer). In 2026 we will also experiment with hybrid meetings. Please join us, even if you have not read the book yet. Contact Bruce Ackerman at bruceackermanaud@aol.com to get the in-person location and/or the Zoom link. The full list of books for 2026 is on the BCAS website at blackcanyonaudubon.org



December 10. *The Birds That Audubon Missed: Discovery and Desire in the American Wilderness* by Kenn Kaufman (2024). Renowned naturalist Kenn Kaufman examines the scientific discoveries of John James Audubon and his artistic and ornithologist peers in this fascinating “blend of history, science, art, biography, and memoir” that is “a bird lovers’ delight.”



January 14. *The Courage of Birds: And the Often-Surprising Ways They Survive Winter*, by Pete Dunne and illustrated by David Allen Sibley (2024). This is an engaging exploration of how birds manage to survive the unforgiving winter months. From tiny Black-capped Chickadees enduring snowstorms to the formidable Snowy Owl thriving on the Arctic tundra, Dunne writes a compelling narrative about the resilience of wintering birds.



February 10. *Tenacious Beasts: Wildlife Recoveries That Change How We Think about Animals* by Christopher J. Preston (2023). Over 900 species have been exterminated since industrialization. However, there is hope. The author discusses the success stories of humpback and sperm whales, bears, wolves, and several other species. Preston discusses changing the way we think about animals, and what we can learn from studying the species that make a comeback. Special note: the author will be speaking at our March 5 program in Montrose!

Avian Ramblings

By Bill Harris

I heard Sandhill Cranes for the first time this fall recently. I noticed other birders were reporting them on eBird, so I was on the lookout. I was walking through the Marine Road Wildlife Area (MRWA) in Montrose. I could not locate them, but their call is distinctive.

The Marine Road Wildlife Area is one of my favorite “hotspots.” I have paid a visit sixty times since I first explored it ten years ago. It is an excellent place to see a variety of birds; I rarely see fewer than fifteen species. I have spotted ninety species total there. Currently, eBird shows one hundred and forty-one species documented by everyone at the MRWA. My favorite sightings at the BCWA are a Prairie Falcon, Blue Grosbeak, American Redstart and Virginia Rail.

It has been over ten years since Black Canyon Audubon began working with the City of Montrose to create a wildlife refuge. Implementing a plan to improve the property has been a slow process but continues. The trail system is in place thanks to the continuing efforts of help from volunteers from Grace Community Church. The blind overlooking the North Pond is in place, thanks to some resolute Audubon members. The city has constructed a sizeable parking area that makes access easier and safer.

The Audubon Board is currently looking at implementing a plan to plant bird-friendly, native trees and shrubs at MRWA. Future volunteer sessions to work on improvements are in the works, so keep an eye out for one of Bruce’s e-blasts. In the meantime, pay MRWA a visit. Winter is a good time to see waterfowl, Song and White-crowned Sparrows. If you are lucky, you will hear a Virginia Rail or Sora.

On a side note, I am using Merlin to help with bird ID. Specifically, I use it to help ID birds in my vicinity, then go looking for the birds. One curious observation I noticed this fall was Merlin IDing birds seemed out of place for my yard. Species like Killdeer, Black Phoebe, and Song Sparrow would appear on my Merlin app. Each time those species were IDed, European Starlings also appeared on my Merlin list. Starlings are great mimickers, so I think the Starlings were the source of those bird calls.

BCAS Board Meeting Highlights

By Allison Brody, Secretary with contributions from Bruce Ackerman

The Board of Directors convened on September 16 and again on November 17.

A significant accomplishment was the development of an operating budget. After several years without a formal budget, the Board of Directors approved a budget at their September board meeting for the current year. Our recently elected treasurer Todd Miller spear-headed this. Over the past year, the biggest expenses for BCAS were the MOTUS tower purchase and installation, and the annual dinner including room, dinner, and speaker. The website was redone this year so that was a big expense. Bluebird boxes raised about the same as last year – only a \$90 difference.

For the current budget, expected expenses include programs, education, the annual dinner, website, operating costs like liability insurance, honoraria, and study skin preparation. All are conservative estimates. We anticipate a new expense with the purchase of an Owl communication device and a Zoom account. This will provide the ability to have hybrid programs and increase the participation of our many members who live outside of the immediate Montrose area. This could also mean that we could sponsor national speakers who could “Zoom” in. Another new expense is the preparation of study skins to add to our collection of educational materials. Contact Todd Miller to look at the budget.

Todd reported that BCAS now has \$29,487.59 in its checking account.

In November, the Board decided to no longer display personal phone numbers and email addresses on the newsletter masthead, and the web site, due to a possible link to recent spam. Contact the Board at black.canyon.audubon.society@gmail.com.

Also in November, the Board decided to upgrade the BCAS insurance, which will improve our coverage in case of any injuries on field trips. We will also require signed liability waivers for people attending field trips.

Programs in the next quarter include: April 9, Nic Korte, “The Galapagos: Boobies and Vampires” May 14, Scott Rashid, TBA (have a menu of programs) Be on the look-out for straw vote on program choice and June 11, Sue Riffe, Bird Songs, needs speakers so audience can hear bird songs, will do next day bird walk, Billy Creek area.

Marine Road Wildlife Area

In September, Sandy Beranich reported that the Montrose City Park Department staff person (Dan Payne) in charge resigned unexpectedly. This will slow down City’s work on the site. BCAS will try to keep the trails open.

In November Bill Harris reported that Jon Waschbusch has been hired as the new Parks Superintendent. Jon Horn reported that Audubon volunteers put a fresh coat of linseed oil on all the wood surfaces.

Janine reported on BCAS membership:

In September, there were 103 local contributing members, 276 national contributing members and in November 118 local, and 274 national members. She deleted those local members who have not renewed since 2023. Fifteen new local members paid up in the past two months, good through 2026.

Preparation of study skins - Don

The Board discussed paying a person, Lea Squires from the San Diego Natural History Museum, \$500 to prepare 15 study skins from the freezer at Ridgway SP and other freezers. Lea has recently moved to Pagosa Springs, CO and is open to helping us out. We do not have the local expertise to prepare study skins, and we have accumulated many birds that we could add to our educational collection.

BCAS members in action!



Black Canyon Audubon member Carol Pierce led a lovely bird watching event with a troop of Girl Scouts in October. The girls were very bird-aware and loved using the BCAS binoculars to really see the birds and to then find them in the bird books. There were 11 scouts, 5 leaders and parents, 3 extra little siblings and an infant on their first bird walk. Carol and the girls saw an American Dipper, a Red-tailed Hawk and more! What a great event that other BCAS members could use as inspiration.

BIRD BANDING, SEPTEMBER 2025

By Sheryl Radovich

During the first two weeks of September 2025, Black Canyon Audubon Society, partnering with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies and Colorado Parks and Wildlife, organized the 19th year of bird banding at Dallas Creek in Ridgway State Park (RSP). That cooperative effort welcomed over 400 participants of all ages and backgrounds to experience the science of migration.

According to RSP Naturalist Shelby Martinez, 33 different species and a total of 135 birds were netted and banded. This included rare catches like Lazuli Bunting, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat, Northern Waterthrush and Downy Woodpeckers, plus an unusually high number of Wilson Warblers.



Bander Mitron inspecting mist nets By V. Sanburg

At the banding station, onlookers observed the process of mist netting followed by the placing of a numbered identification band on the bird's leg. Each bird was measured, weighed, checked for health and



Banded Wilson's Warbler ready for release By V. Sanburg

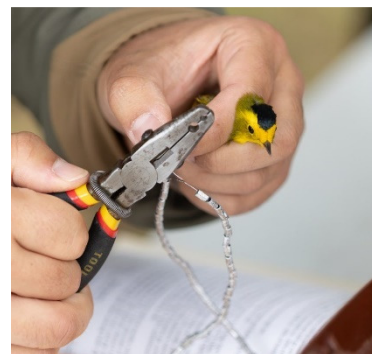
readiness to migrate, then safely released. Mitron, the bander explained how years of data collection and recaptures revealed trends in migratory species, routes,



Bander Mitron taking bird measurements by V. Sanburg

populations, and habitat conditions that are so essential to long distance flyers.

After leaving the banding station, students joined environmental educators at four more stations. At the Migration Challenge station, students selected a bird species and navigated a southerly migration route while facing challenges like predation and man-made structures. At the next station, groups learned how to



*Banding Wilson's Warbler
Photo by V. Sanburg*

focus and use binoculars in the field to identify birds. The fourth station demonstrated bird adaptations like wing structure, hollow bones, and specialized vision. Finally at the fifth station, students explored the essentials of a healthy habitat for birds with a game based on finding food sources, shelter, and water during migration.

BCAS recognized volunteers for their contributions to the program:

- 16 volunteers provided 174 volunteer hours at five stations
- Promoting stewardship of natural resources to over 400 participants
- Teaching students the importance of data collection and observation

Now we can begin looking forward to next year and celebrating twenty years of sharing the wonders of migration with life-long learners.

AUDUBON COLORADO COUNCIL REPORT

By Janine Reid, BCAS representative to ACC

Our virtual quarterly meeting was on November 8, 2025. We welcomed Henry Stiles from Environment Colorado and Colorado Field Ornithologists to discuss collaborative efforts. As individuals, we are encouraged to push our federal representatives to oppose efforts to overturn protections for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, allowing drilling and development [<https://act.audubon.org/a/arctic-npra-cra-2025>]. We discussed ongoing concerns about dilution of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Four people in the group will be reviewing states who have developed their own NEPA legislation to see if that may be feasible for Colorado.

The ACC Public Policy Committee reported on the feasibility of bringing legislation forward concerning bird collision risk management. Although this does not appear to be the year, the group will not give up the cause. The topic for January's First Gentleman's speaker series at the Governor's Mansion will be bird collision, moderated by John Shenot from the Northern Colorado Bird Alliance in Fort Collins.

The Trump administration cut funding for The Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. National Audubon Society has chosen not to do anything nationally concerning the Public Lands Rule, much to the dismay of the group.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is working on a bill that may fine property owners who have garbage that attracts bears. This could include bird feeders. CPW recommends putting out feeders October through April when bears are hibernating. An alternative to putting out bird feeders that could contribute to bear delinquency is offering birds water.

Senator Hickenlooper sponsored SB1462 Fix Our Forests Act. Its intention is to mitigate wildfires, although logging entities seem to be the primary beneficiaries. We are encouraged to ask Hickenlooper to improve the act by offering amendments to restore some public input. Audubon is collaborating with him to try to improve it as well.

I posed a question about how chapters manage insurance. One former insurance agent stated that having general liability insurance is more important than having liability insurance for Directors and Officers. I passed the information on to our co-Presidents and Treasurer.

It is not all doom and gloom... Is there any interest in participating with AARP to offer virtual Birding presentations via Zoom to our members? Wyoming Audubon is doing this. Let me know.

BCAS members in action!



BCAS member Carrie Krickbaum responded to a request from a Telluride Girl Scout Troop to help make bluebird boxes. BCAS member Jon Horn supplied the kits, and the 5 girls and their parents will assemble the boxes together. Another meeting is planned in the Spring to place the boxes in the right spots. Carrie has led similar events for first graders in Ouray and Ridgway. What a great way to introduce kids to conservation and the joy of birds!

Black Canyon Audubon Society
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Montrose, CO 81401



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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 2026. 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!

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone (Optional): _____

Email address (Required): _____

Enclosed: ____\$20 for individual membership, ____\$30 for family membership
____\$10 for printed/mailed copies of newsletter.

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