



Canyon Wrenderings

The Journal of the Black Canyon Audubon Society

Representing Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel Counties of Western Colorado

Fall 2011

Volume XXIV Number 1

Mark Your Calendar



Saturday, Sept. 10, Public Bird Banding, Ridgway State Park.

This event will be held at the Dallas Creek entrance to Ridgway State Park from 7:30 to 11 a.m. Observe the work of skilled bird banders from Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory who will be in the area for the chapter's bird-banding education program. It's a chance for a close look at birds you may only have seen moving from branch to branch. You may even get a chance to hold a banded bird before it is released into the wild. Visitors to the park will need a day or annual pass.

Saturday, Sept. 10, and Sunday, Sept. 11, Ouray County Bird Count Game

Once again, Coen Dexter is organizing a weekend bird-count competition. Rules call for birders to earn points based on predicting which birds they will see. Birders can join a group or bird independently. The reporting station for the event will be the visitor center at Ridgway State Park. Coen will be at the visitor center at 8 a.m. each day. The game may expand to San Juan County on Sept. 11, to look for fall migrants in higher and cooler country. For more information, contact Coen Dexter at 970-864-7195 or by e-mail at coenbrenda@yahoo.com. Information also will be e-mailed via the Western Slope Bird Network. (*For those not familiar with how to receive e-mails from the network, see item on Page 2.*)



Saturday, Oct. 22, Putting Up Owl Nest Boxes

Meet at 9 a.m. at the U.S. Forest Service office in Paonia, 403 North Rio Grande Avenue, to assist with putting up owl nest boxes in Gunnison National Forest near Paonia. Some birding can be done at the same time. Future field trips will be scheduled to band owl nestlings in the boxes, if possible. Dress for the weather, bring water, lunch, insect repellent and sun screen. Work until about 2 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 29, Delta County Lakes and Reservoirs Field Trip

Meet at Confluence Park at 9 a.m. in the big parking lot on the east side of the lake. Look at birds on the lake and on trails in the park. From there, travel to Sweitzer Lake State Park (day pass or annual pass required for all vehicles) and then to Fruit-growers Reservoir. Dress for the weather, bring lunch and something to drink. Bird as long as you want. Car-pooling encouraged. Trip leaders to be announced. More info: 970-252-0918.

Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2012, to Sunday, Jan. 15, 2012, Wings Over Willcox Birding and Nature Festival

Online registration begins Sept. 1. Go to www.wingsoverwillcox.com. For a brochure, call 1-800-200-2272.

Neighboring Audubon chapters in Grand Junction and Glenwood Springs have field trips scheduled this fall. To learn about those and about activities of other Audubon chapters in Colorado, visit www.blackcanyonaudubon.org and click on "Links of Interest."

Black Canyon Audubon Society Leadership 2011-2012

Officers:

President: Jon Horn	Montrose	249-6761, ext.14	jon_horn@alpinearchaeology.com
Vice President: Jan Smeltzer	Delta	874-8169	janonsunshinemesa@hotmail.com
Secretary: Marti Isler	Montrose	249-0737	martiisler@montrose.net
Sheryl Radovich	Montrose	240-3788	canyon.creek@bresnan.net
Treasurer: Elaine Probasco	Montrose	252-0918	eprobasco6@earthlink.net

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Theresa Childers	Gunnison	963-8049	theresa_childers@nps.gov
Martha Grewal	Cedaredge	856-4748	grewalmartha@yahoo.com
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Herb Probasco	Montrose	252-0918	herbprobasco@earthlink.net

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Marti Isler	249-0737	martiisler@montrose.net
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Membership: Elaine Probasco	252-0918	eprobasco6@earthlink.net
Publicity: Herb Probasco	252-0918	herbprobasco@earthlink.net
Newsletter: Herb Probasco	252-0918	herbprobasco@earthlink.net

BCAS and Mountain Roots Food Project Land Together Green Grant



A Together Green grant has been awarded to a cooperative venture of Mountain Roots Food Project, based in Crested Butte, Colo., and Black Canyon Audubon. The grant will support Mountain Roots' goals of increasing food production in Gunnison Valley: educating both children and adults about the many benefits of eating and growing fresh, local and organic food, and inspiring youth to develop a connection between food, people and the environment. The connection between the food production and the environment is what drew the support of Black Canyon Audubon's board. Mountain Roots seeks to raise food organically, both on school grounds and in urban spaces, thus supporting a growing environment that is friendly to birds and other wildlife. In late September, board members of Black Canyon Audubon will be meeting with staff

members of Mountain Roots. Biology Professor Pat Magee of Western State College, a board member for many years of Black Canyon Audubon, brought the grant request to the board's attention. While Pat has recently completed service on the board, he continues to provide support and has brought two new members to the board -- Theresa Childers, a wildlife biologist, and John Beene, a Western State student.

How to Join Western Slope Bird Network

There are two ways to read e-mail reports of birding in western Colorado, sent by individual birders. One way is to subscribe to the Western Slope Bird Network. Send an e-mail message to wsbn-subscribe@yahoogroups.com and indicate in the subject line that you wish to join the network. In your message, include your name and indicate that you wish to subscribe. You then will receive, by e-mail, reports from birders. To post your own report,

send an e-mail message to wsbn@yahoogroups.com To read reports without subscribing, join the wsbn Yahoo! group. To do that, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com> You will see a window (see above illustration) that says "Find a Yahoo!Group." In the "Search" field, type "wsbn" and click on "Search." That will bring up a window that includes the illustration shown at above right and which will allow you to click on "Join This Group." At that point you will need to set up a Yahoo account if you do not have one. That account will allow access to the Western Slope Bird Network and all its birding reports.

Find a Yahoo! Group

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Scores Visit Audubon Display on Outdoor Heritage Day

After violent storms marred the inaugural observance in 2010, the second annual Delta Outdoor Heritage Day, held in Confluence Park, enjoyed sunny skies on Saturday, June 11. The busy hands and creative juices of chapter members Sheryl Radovich and Marti Isler created Black Canyon Audubon's display. The space was shared with Brenda Miller and volunteers from Roubideau Rim Wildlife Rescue. Reports Sheryl: "The activities consisted of a bird picture identification game and a migration croquet game. Marti did a short interview on a local radio station. We made about a hundred bird seed packets to use as prizes in lieu of candy. Most of those were given away, so we can assume that at least that many participated. We spoke to some new and old residents in the valley who expressed an interest in becoming part of our organization. Hopefully, the day will increase awareness of Black Canyon Audubon. Organizers congratulated Audubon on a great booth and promised that we could share that same space with wildlife rehab again next year."



Photo by Elaine Probasco

Sheryl guides curious eyes through bird identification game.

Annual Meeting Receives Chapter Updates, Elects Officers, Follows Cole Wild's Big Year

With gusty winds just beyond the banquet room windows, 32 Black Canyon Audubon members relaxed in the calm of Remington's at the Bridges in Montrose for the chapter's annual dinner and meeting on June 16.

* Elaine Probasco, treasurer and membership chairman, reported total funds as of June 1, 2011, of \$15,863.13 including \$3,373.05 in restricted funds, which are: education/bird banding/birdskins, \$1,831.55; Gunnison Sage Grouse, \$596.50; and Fruitgrowers Reservoir, \$945.00. Membership as of May 11, 2011, was 225 national and 43 local with about one-third of the membership in Gunnison/Crested Butte; one-third in Delta County; and one-third in Montrose County, Ridgway and Ouray.

* Informal reports were given by Bill Day, conservation chairman, about the efforts of the Crawford-area Gunnison Sage-grouse working group; Marti Isler and Sheryl Radovich, education, about BCAS participation at Delta's Outdoor Heritage Day; and Barbara Hawke, who works with Leigh Robertson's San Miguel Basin project on behalf of the Gunnison Sage-grouse.

* Officers and new board members were elected. The new officers are: President, Jon Horn; vice president, Jan Smeltzer; secretary, Marti Isler and Sheryl Radovich; treasurer, Elaine Probasco. New board members elected at the meeting are: Theresa Childers, Marti Isler, Chris Lazo and Sheryl Radovich. (John Beene has since joined the board also.)

* Organic shade-grown coffee was available at silent auction, with all proceeds going to the chapter.

* Twenty-seven-year-old Cole Wild, from Fort Collins, treated his audience to a month-by-month video presentation of his 2010 Colorado Big Year. Wild, who only began birding in late 2003, counted a record 412 species, beginning with 122 in January, rising to 359 by June and ending with a Varied Thrush -- found together with his father -- on Dec. 26. Following his program, Cole autographed copies of his published account: "Wild Birding Colorado: The Big Year of 2010," co-written with Nicholas Komar of Fort Collins, an ornithologist with the U.S. Public Health Service.

The event was organized by Elaine Probasco.

And Speaking of Big Years: Book Now a Steve Martin Movie

Due for release on Oct. 14 is "The Big Year," starring Steve Martin and based on "The Big Year, a Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession," a book by a former Denver Post reporter, Mark Obmascik. The book was based on three extreme birders racing around the country in 1998 to see who would have the biggest year.

Coffee and Chocolate for the Birds

At least two companies now sell coffee and chocolate that are grown in bird-friendly habitat. Boston-based Birds and Beans Coffee sells shade-grown coffee that is organically grown and certified as a fair-trade product. It was offered at silent auction at the chapter's June annual meeting and dinner, and all proceeds went to the chapter. The coffee can be ordered at www.birdsandbeans.com. National Audubon Society has joined with Seattle-based Theo Chocolate to sell a 91% super dark and slightly bitter cacao bar. The chocolate is fair-trade certified and organically grown in Costa Rica where sustainable farming protects neotropical migratory bird habitat. The bar can be ordered at

<https://www.theochocolate.com/store/products/chocolate-bars/single-origin/theo-audubon-91-costa-rica-dark-chocolate>



Cooperative Effort Returns Golden Eagle to Wild

Near Ridgway, on July 19, a Golden Eagle is released by staff members from Morningstar Veterinary Clinic of Montrose. The eagle was eating road kill when it was hit by a panel truck on Dallas Divide in late June. Passerby Amie Miller wrapped the bird and drove it to the Montrose office of the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Staff there referred her to Morningstar and Dr. Bettye Hooley. Dr. Hooley x-rayed the bird and determined that no bones were broken. Brenda Miller of Roubideau Rim Wildlife Rescue took charge of the bird until it was picked up for release by Jeff Baiar of Birds of Prey Foundation. As noted in the Montrose Daily Press report about the eagle's successful release, people can help save other birds from similar fates by moving carcasses as far from traffic as possible. Once glutted on road kill, eagles can become so heavy they cannot fly quickly enough to avoid moving vehicles.

Terry Ryan Courtesy Photo from Montrose Daily Press

Members Can Join in Rescue and Release Efforts

Brenda Miller of Roubideau Rim Wildlife Rescue, based at Green Place Ranch southwest of Olathe, welcomes assistance from members of Black Canyon Audubon in rescue and release efforts. Interested members will be alerted by e-mail when a rehabilitated animal is to be released. Members also could monitor a release area. To add your name to the list for notification, please e-mail blackcanyonaudubon@gmail.com. Those on the list will receive e-mail notification about a release or need to monitor a release area.

Project FeederWatch Approaching 25th Season



It was the morning of Aug. 19, and I was captivated by five Evening Grosbeaks (one was a juvenile being fed by an adult female) at our feeding station. They were the first that I had seen since spring, and I realized that the opening weekend of Project FeederWatch was only three months off. This will be the 25th season for Project FeederWatch,

sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants can review their count reports for each year of participation, presented as a week-by-week record of birding activity at the touch of a few computer keys. Each fall, the lab mails participants a report of the previous year's FeederWatch, region by region across the United States, including data and observations about trends in the numbers and varieties of bird species reported by the thousands of watchers in the United States and Canada. Watchers pay \$15 a year. To enroll, visit www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/InstruxandUpdates/inst_index.html

--Herb Probasco

June Outing Collects Data for Breeding Bird Atlas II

A mid-June effort led by Jason Beason of Black Canyon Audubon and Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory collected data for the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II, which will update the previous atlas, published in 1994. Data for the atlas are collected in blocks from 26 regions throughout Colorado. The June effort collected data from a previously unsurveyed block in Delta County. Thirty-two species were observed, 11 of which were confirmed as breeding. To learn more about the current atlas project, begun in 2007, visit www.cobreedingbirdatlasii.org/index.asp

The June data from Delta County:

Ring-necked Pheasant - singing
Great Blue Heron - present
Turkey Vulture - present
Red-tailed Hawk - fledged young
American Kestrel - fledged young
Killdeer - present
Eurasian-collared Dove - pair
Mourning Dove - used nest
Black-ch'ned H'm'ingb'd - courtship behavior
Western Wood-Pewee - present

Say's Phoebe - carrying food
Western Kingbird - occupied nest
Northern Rough-winged Swallow - present
Bank Swallow - present
Cliff Swallow - occupied nest
Barn Swallow - present
American Robin - nest w/young
European Starling - feeding fledglings
Yellow Warbler - singing
Chipping Sparrow - present
Lark Sparrow - singing

Savannah Sparrow - singing
Black-headed Grosbeak - present
Blue Grosbeak - singing
Lazuli Bunting - singing
Red-winged Blackbird - nest w/young
Western Meadowlark - >6 singing
Brewer's Blackbird - pair
Brown-headed Cowbird - present
Bullock's Oriole - carrying food
House Finch - >6 singing
House Sparrow - carrying food

Vandals Discover Information Signs at Fruitgrowers Reservoir

Two signs illustrating the bird life at Fruitgrowers Reservoir were vandalized in early August. The signs were placed in the area several years ago by Black Canyon Audubon and had been undamaged until the recent vandalism. The sign at Crane Point, focusing on the Greater Sandhill Crane and its early spring migration through the area, was removed (*see photo at above left*), while the sign near the mudflats area of the reservoir, illustrating other bird life of the area, was



marred by scratches above the Avocet's head (*see above photo at right*). Board members of Black Canyon Audubon will address the vandalism and decide whether and when to replace the Crane Point sign, whose base and stand were undamaged. Thanks to chapter member Evelyn Horn for alerting the chapter to the vandalism and for taking the above photos.

Service Trip Takes Road Scholars To Audubon's Hog Island Camp

Dawn bird walks, evening lectures, full days of counting gull eggs, removing marine debris (lobster traps and buoys) and invasive habitat and observing the nesting colonies of Atlantic Puffins. From May 28 to June 4, we joined a Road Scholar (formerly Elderhostel) service and learning trip based at Hog Island Camp, an Audubon property for 75 years, along the Maine Gulf Coast. We were guided by an impressive group of ornithologists, led by Camp Director Steve Kress, who initiated Project Puffin in the early 1970s, an effort that brought the successful reintroduction of nesting Atlantic Puffins to the Eastern Shore. From our touring boat off shore, we saw only a few puffins. They are protected from most human encounters during their nesting season. (A September Road Scholar camp to Hog Island coincides with the peak of fall migration of landbirds and hawks and lands on Eastern Egg Rock.) Still standing and scheduled for preservation efforts are two cottages that belonged to the Todd-Bingham families, owners of Hog Island for several decades and responsible for its becoming an Audubon nature camp in the 1930s. In one of those cottages, Mabel Todd edited posthumously published editions of the poetry of Emily Dickinson, and Todd's work was carried on by her daughter, Millicent Todd Bingham.

-- Herb Probasco



Images from Hog Island and its neighbors (clockwise from upper left): Dory transport between Snow Goose III and Ross Island; Seabirds at Eastern Egg Rock, where Atlantic Puffins nest in spring, monitored by biology students; a lone Atlantic Puffin in water off Eastern Egg Rock; one of two Todd-Bingham cottages on Hog Island; Road Scholar campers moving across Ross Island and counting eggs of Herring and Lesser Black-Backed gulls and Common Eiders.

Photos by Elaine Probasco





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

Coming This Fall
Kids Pasta Project Dinner
Watch www.blackcanyonaudubon.org
for details

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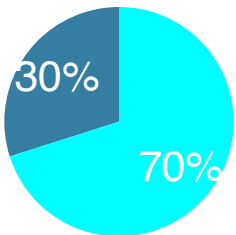
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blackcanyonaudubon@gmail.com

An e-mailed newsletter can be printed out.

Black Canyon Audubon Society (NAS chapter C9ZD140Z) Membership Renewal and Application Form

Members may participate in all chapter activities, receive the *Canyon Wrenderings* newsletter and vote on chapter issues. Annual local membership dues are \$10 if newsletter is received electronically, \$15 if newsletter is mailed. Dues remain locally.

(Check one) Renewal (see mailing label for expiration date) _____ New Member _____

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

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Mail your renewal to: Black Canyon Audubon Society, 14967 Rolling Hills Drive, Montrose, CO 81403.

If you would like to join or donate to National Audubon Society and receive Audubon magazine, send \$20 to National Audubon Society, PO Box 422250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250. Please use this form and list Black Canyon Audubon Society/C9ZD140Z on your check so that BCAS can receive membership recruitment funds.