



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 2017

Volume XXX Number 2

Upcoming BCAS Events



A gaggle of American Pelicans beautifully photographed by Betty Fenton. Learn about her photography on June 8.

Join us this summer:

June

June 3: Field trip to Kevin Park Wetlands. Meet us near the Kevin Parks wetlands at 7:00 a.m. for a tour of this privately-owned riparian area. In addition to birds of prey, expect to see riparian woodland species, wetland obligates, and waterfowl. The wetlands are located near Hotchkiss. In 2015, 24 species were identified as present. The area also contains Yellow-billed Cuckoo habitat. For more information, directions, and to sign up, contact trip leader Adam Petry 970 462-8702 or email petry@westernbiology.com. The trip is limited to 12 participants, including the trip leader; there is room for four more participants.

June 8: Betty Fenton, local wildlife photographer and birder, will speak on wildlife photography. Join us at the former Montrose City Council Chambers off Centennial Plaza in Montrose at 7 p.m. to get some tips on how to be a better wildlife photographer. Sponsored by BCAS, no charge. For more information, call 970 497-0376.

June 17: Join us birding at the Black Canyon National Park. Trip leader: Bruce Ackerman, contact for reservation: backerman1@aol.com

June 22: Annual Dinner and Silent Auction. BCAS invites all members and their friends to celebrate a year of birding, dinner, and Silent Auction at Remington's Restaurant at the Bridges Golf Course in Montrose. Nic Korte of the Grand Valley Audubon Chapter is our speaker this year. Nic is just returning from a trip to Costa Rica and will provide a presentation on migratory birds. Reservations are needed by June 15. See page 3 for a reservation form. For more information contact Dian Torphy at dctorphy@gmail.com or Jon Horn at jon_horn@alpinearchaeology.com.

July

July 9: Join Bill Day on a field trip to see Purple Martins and other bird species in aspen habitat in the Muddy Creek area of the Upper North Fork Valley. Purple Martins are colonial cavity nesters, and this trip last year successfully found numerous nesting Purple Martins. Meet at the Paonia River Park in Paonia at 7:45 a.m. Bring or car pool with a high clearance vehicle; this will be a full day so bring your lunch, sunscreen, hat, and rain gear. Sign up with Bill at 970 872-3216, or, billday@paonia.com.

July 21-30: Join us at the Montrose County Fair to see the Woodworker's Guild Bluebird Box display. For more information, see page 5.

July 27: Join us to hear about work in Antarctica, presented by Jesse McGill. Meet us at 7 p.m. at the Centennial Building, Montrose. (Continued on Page 6)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Comings and Goings

Spring has been rather fickle this year, but the birds are arriving in large numbers to brighten our days! I hope you have been able to get out and enjoy the wonderful place that we live and that the birds are good to you. We have some great field trips lined up for this spring and summer, and I hope that you have been able to attend some of the talks that we have had periodically. Check the website for updates on coming events.

In addition to field trips and speakers, I hope that you plan to attend our annual dinner on Thursday June 22. As we have done for the past few years, we will be enjoying the view and exceptional food in the upstairs banquet room at Remington's Restaurant at the Bridges Golf Course in Montrose. Nic Korte will be our speaker, talking about tropical birds in Costa Rica and other countries to our south. Nic is a wonderful presenter, has traveled widely, and has beautiful photos of birds and places. A reservation form is included in the newsletter, so check your calendar and let us know that you will be attending.

I hope you have been able to visit our website over the last year or so and have benefitted from the information that it contains. The calendar is something that I think has really added to it and is something I hope you refer to. Something that I am very excited about is that we have added several informative write-ups in the Places to Birdwatch section. These include descriptions of the places, how to access them – including maps, and possible birds that you might see there. We hope that you will find one or all of them interesting enough to visit! We hope to keep adding to the page. If you have a particular place that you would like to share with people, look at our basic format and put something together for us (you can email it to me) that we can post on the page. You don't have to worry about making a map. With your description, we should be able to put a map together for you that we can include.

It is hard to believe, but it has now been six fun years that I have served as your BCAS president. It has been my pleasure to have worked together with all of the wonderful board members we have had through those years. They are a great group of motivated people. With their participation, we have been able to provide many educational opportunities to school children and adults, including the bird banding at Ridgway State Park, many community events, and through school visits. But that is not all! We have also increased our field trip offerings, have lined up many interesting speakers on a variety of topics, and have made thoughtful comments on various federal and state management plans and undertakings. Thank you all for making my time as president a fun and rewarding venture!

Jon Horn,
BCAS President

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Black Canyon Audubon Society Annual Dinner

Thursday, June 22, 6:00 p.m.

We will be gathering at Remington's Restaurant at The Bridges Golf Course in Montrose. This year's annual dinner will include a delicious meal and a talk by **Nic Korte** about tropical birds in Costa Rica and other points south that migrate northward to our area to breed. Included will be wonderful photos from many countries and information about how birds change their diet and fill different niches depending upon whether they are residing in the south or north. Nic will also talk about the various environments that the birds inhabit, variable behaviors, and challenges for their survival.

Please join us for a fun and relaxing evening!

Dinner Reservations

Please indicate choice and number of entrees, each priced at \$35 (includes gratuity):

_____ Stuffed Pork Chops

_____ Beef Roulade with sundried tomato pesto

_____ White Fish Rosettes with feta, Roma tomatoes, fresh basil and EVO

_____ Grilled Polenta Cakes with vegetable Napoleon

Buffet style with salad, fresh seasonal veggies, roasted red potatoes, and bread and butter.

Special dietary needs can be accommodated: please ask!

Includes: Coffee, iced tea, and water — Cash bar available!

_____ Total number of reservations, at \$35 each.

Your name _____

Phone# _____ Email address _____

Please mail your check to arrive by June 15 to: **BCAS, P.O. Box 387, Delta, CO 81416**

Directions to Remington's at the Bridges (2500 Bridges Drive):

Take East Oak Grove Road (at Walgreens) from South Townsend Avenue (US 550) eastward for about 1.25 miles to the entrance on the right to the Bridges clubhouse where we will be upstairs. East Oak Grove Road transitions seamlessly into Bridges Drive.

Please be prepared to bid on delightful silent auction items!

If you have any questions, please contact:

Dian Torphy at (303) 709-4386 or Jon Horn at (970) 209-5404.

Returning Cranes at Yampa Valley!

The sixth annual Yampa Valley Crane Festival takes place Aug. 31-Sept. 3, 2017 in Steamboat Springs and Hayden. Bud Werner Memorial Library is festival headquarters. The Greater Sandhill Crane is an iconic species of the Yampa Valley. Returning in the



spring, cranes nest and raise their young in wetland areas throughout the valley. In late summer and early fall, hundreds of cranes from the Rocky Mountain-flock join the local birds to rest and feed before continuing their journey south. The annual festival includes daily crane viewings, expert speakers, films, crane

art, workshops, family activities, live raptors at the library, and more. Daily schedules will be announced mid-summer 2017. Photo by Holly Harker. Article taken from:

<http://www.steamboatchamber.com/annual-events/yampa-valley-crane-festival>

A Recap of Eckert Crane Days 2017

By Chris Lazo

From March 17 - 19 over five hundred people came to view the annual migration of the Sandhill Cranes at Fruitgrower's Reservoir near Eckert, Colorado. During those three days, the reservoir was visited by approximately 2,450 Sandhill Cranes that had flown 136 miles (as the Crane flies) from Monte Vista, Colorado. For the sixth year running, Black Canyon Audubon Society (BCAS) was the primary sponsor of Eckert Crane Days. Thanks to the efforts of the many BCAS volunteers, the people who visited were able to view the cranes through spotting scopes. They were also able to learn about crane behaviors and migration from provided information.

The highlight of each morning is watching cranes lift off, and this year was no exception. On all three days, the lift off occurred just before 11:00 a.m. Many of the visitors were able to see the cranes up close and in detail through the BCAS volunteer-provided spotting scopes and then enjoy the lift off as the birds circled overhead. Copies of the BCAS newsletter were available, as was Evelyn Horn's six-panel handout on crane behavior.

Two of the five BCAS Chapter goals include offering opportunities to observe and study birds and wildlife and to promote conservation of natural resources through informative public programs, our newsletter, and our website (www.blackcanyonaudubon.org). For the past six years, BCAS has addressed these Chapter goals at Eckert Crane Days. If you were not able to participate this year, we encourage you to watch for the seventh Eckert Crane Days, usually the third weekend of March. We'll see you on the Causeway!

Global Big Day

By Sandy Beranich

What were you doing on Saturday, May 13th? I joined in with 20,000 other birders from 150 other countries to be part of a world bird count. Participants from Antarctica to Madagascar submitted close to 53,000 checklists to eBird that identified more than 6,500 species – or, 60 percent of the world's bird species. It is a new record for the number of bird species reported in one day. Birders in Columbia took first place with 2,479 complete checklists that identified 1,486 species. Peru came in second with a report of 786 checklists and 1,340 species, and Ecuador came in third with 352 checklists that identified 1,259 species. Where was the United States? Not too far down in 7th place with 31,708 checklists that identified 715 species. Texas and California topped the state rankings; however, Colorado had a team of three that reported a record 214 species observed on May 13. eBird continues to update results. Let's have a BCAS team compete next year and see if we can top 214 species!

HELP with BCAS Silent Auction

It's only once a year that you are invited to enjoy a great dinner with your friends and like-minded birders while listening to an engaging speaker. Another part of the evening, however, is our silent auction - we are still collecting donations and need your help!! Do you have something you would like to donate to Black Canyon Audubon? We would like to have this be the best auction ever – think outside the box!

Here are some ideas:

- Do you have a favorite birding trip? Would you consider taking a couple of members with you, and maybe feed them lunch?
- Do you make a great homemade soup? Or incredible homemade jam? Consider donating a batch or a jar?
- Do you wash windows? Have a pick-up truck that could be filled with yard waste and hauled to the dump?
- Do you have a special skill that you would be willing to donate for a couple of hours? Weeding? Computer maintenance?
- Of course, we would also love to collect your donations of books, artworks, pottery, antiques, etc.
- Other ideas?

We want to make this auction fun and profitable for the chapter! Please contact Sandy Beranich at 970-497-0376 (sj07pioneer@bresnan.net) or Susan Werner at 970-688-0757 (susanw@springsips.com) by **June 12**. **Thanks!**

Brown-Capped Rosy Finches

The Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, along with the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, UC Santa Cruz, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have color-banded over 300 Brown-capped Rosy Finches (BCRF) in order to better understand their movements in Colorado. They are asking for people to report their sightings of these birds during the period of June 15 to August 15, but will accept information from anytime of the year. Resightings can be reported on eBird in the comments



section or with the Brown-capped Rosy-Finch app at www.Citsci.org

BCRF are found in alpine areas above 11,000 feet, and their distribution is almost entirely limited to Colorado. BCRF have declined by as much as 95 percent over the past 50 years.

If you observe a BCRF, please report the following: date, time, location (lat/long in decimal degrees from phone or GPS), number of birds, photographs of the birds, general location, and bands (record the color – silver, gold, blue, purple, red, or green). Enter your sightings on eBird, on the Rosy Finch page at www.Citsci.org, or using the Cit/sci app available for iPhones or Android devices.

For more information contact Luke George at luke.george@birdconservancy.org.

Help with Field Trips

By Chris Lazo

Many of us participate in BCAS field trips simply because we want to learn more about the wildlife of western Colorado or to discover new places to view it. Another enjoyable aspect is the opportunity to socialize with fellow wildlife enthusiasts

Although BCAS has maintained a robust field trip program during the recent past, it has recently hit a bump in the road. If BCAS is to continue offering a complete schedule of field trips, including some of our popular annual trips, we need to recruit some new leaders. If you have ever thought about sharing your favorite birding spot with fellow birders, now is the time. Please consider offering a field trip through BCAS. It can be a bit daunting when we think about becoming a field trip leader, so what about co-leading a trip with a fellow leader?

Chris Lazo is now coordinating BCAS field trips. Please feel free to send him an email if you are interested in offering a field trip. You can reach him at 2006clazo@gmail.com.

Bluebird Trails In the Area

Bluebirds were once considered common across North America but more recently became threatened. Concerned citizens stepped in to create what are known as bluebird trails. These trails consist of a number of bluebird nesting boxes spaced 100 or more yards apart and placed such that they can be accessed by foot, car, or bicycle. Every state has bluebird trails; the boxes are typically constructed and monitored by volunteers. Monitoring begins in late March and involves cleaning out and refurbishing the boxes, if necessary. Once the bluebirds have arrived, monitoring includes checking for eggs, recording the number of eggs present and the number of birds that have fledged, and identifying non-bluebird species that are using the nest box. Bluebirds will generally have a second clutch, and monitoring will continue through July. Bluebird boxes are monitored along the



perimeter and within Ridgway State Park; within Billy Creek State Wildlife Area; outside of Colona; and at various locations on the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forest. In 2016, 37 bluebird boxes were installed around 13 operating or plugged natural gas wells in the Muddy Creek area north of Paonia. There are likely other bluebird trails within the BCAS Chapter area. Photo by Terry Ryan.

On the western slope, two kinds of bluebirds are found: Mountain Bluebirds and Western Bluebirds. Western Bluebirds are generally found at lower elevations of between 5,000 to 7,000 feet whereas Mountain Bluebirds are found between 7,000 and 9,000 feet. Blue birds live about three years. For more information about Bluebird trails, go to www.nabluebirdsociety.org.

The bluebird carries the sky on his back.

Henry David Thoreau, Journal

More on Bluebirds

Come to the Montrose County Fair between July 21 and July 30 and bid on bluebird boxes handcrafted by the Montrose Woodworker's Guild members and only available during the fair. The Guild members volunteer their time and supplies in support of BCAS. The majority of the bluebird boxes are entered in a Silent Auction that is held during the fair. Creative use of a variety of materials and imaginative designs result in unique and functional bluebird boxes that can be enjoyed for many years. This year will be the third year that the Guild is sponsoring the bluebird box silent auction.



Summer and Fall Education Events With Black Canyon Audubon

By Marcella Fremgen

Most of the upcoming education events will be hosted cooperatively with Ridgway State Park during summer and fall; check in with Ridgway State Park for a full listing of planned educational activities. The main education event coming up is the annual fall banding station, which will be in its 12th year! Banding is an important way for ornithologists to track the movements, migration timing, and survival of birds, based on re-captures and band recoveries. It provides valuable scientific information, as well as a great opportunity to show birds to both children and the public up close. This program is a collaboration between Black Canyon Audubon Society, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. Over the last 12 years, 62 species have been captured at the site, with a total of 1,416 birds receiving bands. School groups will visit the site from September 6-8 and 11-15. The public banding day will be on Saturday, September 9 and is open to anyone interested in visiting the site. If you would like to visit, the banding station is at the farthest north entrance to the park (Dallas Creek), and entrance to the park is \$7 per car for a day. If you would like to volunteer with the school groups, please contact Sheryl Radovich (970-318-0849), as we are looking for consistent, reliable volunteers!



BCAS member Sheryl Radovich talking about bird banding at Ridgway State Park, September 2016. Photo by Marcella Fremgen

Want to watch baby eagles develop? Visit
www.dceagles.com

BCAS Gives Thanks for Donation

BCAS received a generous donation in memory of Michael J. Schendel who died in March. Michael loved birds and the outdoors. Thank you Rebecca and Chris Nybo.

Comments Needed on National Monuments

By Bill Day

On April 26, President Trump issued Executive Order 13792 that called for the review of all National Monuments created since 1996. Among the 18 monuments being reviewed are Canyons of the Ancients, Rio Grande del Norte, Bears Ears, and Grand Staircase Escalante.

In a separate but related process, five Marine National Monuments will also be reviewed. As directed by Section 4 of Executive Order 13795, the Department of Commerce will lead the review of the marine monuments.

Information on the executive orders, including how to comment can be found at the Department of Interior website at <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-releases-list-monuments-under-review-announces-first-ever-formal>

More info, including a sample letter, can be found at the Western Slope Conservation Center website at <http://westernslopeconservation.org/defend-national-monuments-antiquities-act/>

The following Denver Post article mentions the positive impact of the National Monuments to the local economies in New Mexico and Utah: <http://www.denverpost.com/2017/04/26/trump-executive-order-national-monuments/>

The comment period for Bears Ears will be over before this newsletter comes out, but the comment period for the others ends on or about **July 10th**. BCAS will send in a comment letter, but it will be helpful if our members also comment to the Department of Interior to show support for all of our National Monuments. Comments mentioning experiences in some of the monuments might be especially helpful.

Monuments provide valuable undeveloped habitat for birds and other wildlife, as well as opportunities for birders.

BCAS Events (Continued from page 1)

August

August: Plans are underway to view Black Swifts at Box Canyon in Ouray; check our website later this summer.

September

September 9: Public bird banding day at Ridgway State Park, for more information, see article this page.

September 9: Join us on the annual Ouray Bird Count and survey. For more information check the BCAS website later this summer: www.blackcanyonaudubon.org

September 28: Join us in Delta to learn about the Sharp-tailed Grouse. More information to come.

Who Was That Bird Named For?

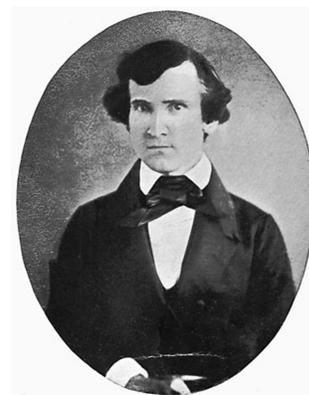
By Susan Chandler-Reed



Townsend's warbler (left) and Townsend's solitaire (right). Photographs courtesy of www.audubon.org

Although birders who live in Montrose are familiar with the name "Townsend" as the name of the main north-south street through town and the 1888 Victorian "Townsend House," historic Montrose resident Thomas Townsend is not the same Townsend for whom the Townsend's warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*) and Townsend's solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) were named.

John Kirk Townsend was born in Philadelphia in 1809. A Quaker, he was trained as a naturalist and ornithologist. When only 24, the botanist Thomas Nuttall invited him to join Nathaniel Jarvis Wyeth's 1834-1835 expedition across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. Townsend's scientific efforts were sometimes hampered by others on the expedition, according to *The Oregon History Project*:



John Kirk Townsend's traveling companions in November, 1834, had a hankering for alcohol. They were so desperate for a drink that, while the naturalist was away, they downed alcohol he used to embalm reptiles, ruining months worth of work. It wasn't the first time Townsend lost to his companions' appetite. Earlier, Townsend had returned to his camp to find fellow naturalist Thomas Nuttall National Wyeth [sic] eating an owl Townsend had intended to preserve as a scientific specimen.

Townsend was able to collect a large number of bird and mammal specimens on the journey, sending many of them back to John J. Audubon. In all, eight North American birds and seven mammals were named after him. Townsend stayed for a time on the Pacific coast, apparently acting as both a surgeon and a magistrate, before returning to Philadelphia by way of Hawaii and Cape Horn. He published *Narrative of A Journey across the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River* in 1839. Unfortunately, Townsend had developed a taxidermy powder with a "secret ingredient" – arsenic. He died of arsenic poisoning in 1851 at the age of 42.

References:

Bo Beolens and Michael Watkins, *Whose Bird: Common Bird Names and the People They Commemorate.* Yale University Press.

<https://oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/biographies/john-kirk-townsend-biography/> accessed May 4, 2017.

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<http://www.blackcanyonaudubon.org>



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Your expiration date is shown on your mailing label. BCAS on the label means you are a local member only. Labels with an ID number indicate national membership. If your membership has expired, please renew using the form at right. National renewals should follow the instructions at the bottom of the form.

Black Canyon Audubon Society (NAS chapter D14)
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: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (optional): _____

Enc: _____ \$10 for email newsletter.
Email address: _____
_____ \$15 for U.S. mail/print subscribers.

Mail your renewal to:
Black Canyon Audubon Society, PO Box 387, Delta, CO 81416.

If you would like to join or donate to National Audubon Society and receive Audubon magazine, please send a check for \$20 to National Audubon Society, Inc., 225 Varick Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10014, Attn: Chance Mueleck. Please use this form and list Black Canyon Audubon Society/D14 on your check so that BCAS can receive membership recruitment funds.