



# 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 2021/2022

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## Audubon Society's 122nd Annual Christmas Bird Count

By Missy Siders

Local hawk-eyed volunteers will join fellow birders across the country to brave various weather conditions to count birds during the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC). **This year's Christmas Bird Count takes place between December 14, 2021, and January 5, 2022, in our area.** Birders and nature enthusiasts take part in this tradition, many rising before dawn to participate in the longest running wildlife census on the planet.

From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the CBC does it for the love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition—and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation.

The count takes place within "count circles," which focus on specific geographical areas. Each circle is overseen by a "count compiler." Count circles will be divided and areas assigned to participants at the meeting times and locations on page 7. If you are a beginning birder, you will be able to join a group that includes at least one experienced birdwatcher.

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## President's Message

Winter is slowly creeping up on us. As I am writing this, tomorrow is Thanksgiving Day. We've had a few cold days. Have you been seeing birds migrating south? Sandhill cranes have been passing over—some headed south over the mountains to winter in New Mexico, some spending the winter in Delta on G50 Road west of town. Ducks and geese are slowly arriving from the north. Wintering hawks and bald eagles are starting to be seen. My best birds are two different merlins that I saw near my house in Montrose.

Christmas Bird Counts are coming up, between December 18 and January 2 in our area. I hope you can go along on one of them. Read about them in this issue. Expect them to be smaller than other years, socially distanced, masked, and with no social gatherings before or after. A big shoutout to the leaders, Missy Siders, Adam Petry, Arden Anderson, and Amy Seglund. It takes a lot of work to coordinate the counts, round up the data, and submit it all to the national database.

We also have some other good field trips lined up, from now until February. Please join us. Don Marsh is our field trip coordinator.

I am thankful to outgoing Treasurer Dian Torphy, who served the chapter for five years, and to incoming Treasurer Gayle Johnson.

Also, this is Mary Menz's last newsletter as editor, after two and one half years. Thank you for a great job! Susan Werner will be taking over as the new newsletter editor for the next issue in March 2022.

Bruce Ackerman

P.S. Note that annual membership expires for everyone in December. You can renew online or by check: \$20 for individuals or \$30 for families. When you renew, your membership will be paid through December 2022.

## Christmas Bird Counts Provide Great Opportunities to See and Photograph Birds

Kimberlee Douglass, a regular contributor to the Gunnison Christmas Bird Count with Arden Anderson says "Birds have been a passion of mine for many years. I learn something new about birds every season and I look forward to the annual Christmas Bird Count."

See her cover photo for this issue. The Black-capped Chickadee's buffy back and flanks appear yellow as they reflect the golden hues of surrounding foliage and algae-covered rock in the water at Roaring Judy Fish Hatchery between Gunnison and Crested Butte. Kimberlee snapped this photo during a Christmas Bird Count.

Consider participating this year! See page 7 for details.

### **Canyon Wrenderings**

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#### **Managing editor**

Mary Menz at mary.t.menz @gmail.com

#### **ON THE COVER**

Chickadee reflections © Kimberlee Douglas

### **BLACK CANYON AUDUBON SOCIETY**

#### **OFFICERS**

**President**—Bruce Ackerman (Montrose)  
(727) 858-5857

Bruceackermanaud @aol.com

**Vice President**—**OPEN**

**Secretary**—Sallie Thoreson (Montrose)  
(970) 249-1869

salliet900 @aol.com

**Treasurer**—Gayle Johnson (Montrose)  
gaylejeff@yahoo.com

**Past President**—Jon Horn (Montrose)  
(970) 209-5404

Jon\_horn @alpinearchaeology.com

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Kristal Cooper (Montrose)

(580) 919-5987

nationalparkfan1 @yahoo.com

Bill Harris (Montrose)

(970) 901-4022

TRLGPA48 @gmail.com,

Carrie Krickbaum (Ridgway)

(970) 209-3703

ridgway.naturalist @state.co.us

Don Marsh (Ridgway)

(209) 256-5744

ridgwaybrdr @gmail.com

Melissa (Missy) Siders (Montrose)

(970) 275-6639

missy.siders @gmail.com

#### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Audubon CO Council rep.—**OPEN**

Education.—**OPEN**

Conservation—Sallie Thoreson

(970) 249-1869

salliet900 @aol.com

Field Trips—Don Marsh (see above)

Membership—Missy Siders (see above)

Publicity—Susan Werner (970) 688-0757

susanw@springsips.com

Programs— **OPEN**

Website Manager—Jon Horn (see above)

#### **AD HOC COMMITTEES (ANNUAL EVENTS)**

Montrose County Fair—**OPEN**

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—Dian Torphy

**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 web crawlers from spam activities.**

See an OPEN position? Talk to an officer to see if it's a good fit for your skills and talents! Volunteers are always welcome.

## BCAS Member Bill Harris Describes His Montrose County “Big Year”

A Big Year isn't always traveling across North America to see and count birds. Sometimes, it's just traveling across the county. And Montrose County is BIG. At 2,243 square miles, Montrose County offers diverse habitat in which to find birds. In roughly three hours, a birder can drive from the east end of the county to the west end, but that doesn't count stopping to view birds!

Montrose county resident Bill Harris described his Montrose County Big Year in the November 19 edition of the *Montrose Press*. If you haven't seen it, check it out at [https://www.montrosepress.com/outdoors-a-montrose-county-big-year/article\\_d044e240-48d2-11ec-9ed3-938d23bf056c.html](https://www.montrosepress.com/outdoors-a-montrose-county-big-year/article_d044e240-48d2-11ec-9ed3-938d23bf056c.html).

The official Montrose County species checklist lists 282 species that live in or visit annually. Print a copy for your reference at <https://coloradocountybirding.org/Checklists/>. Checklists for all 64 counties in Colorado can be found at this site. ■

### Generating Conservation Conservations

*continued from page 11*

BCAS is following other issues as well.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has strengthened the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) by codifying prohibitions against the incidental take of migratory birds, and they are exploring options for an incidental take permitting program.

BCAS board members are reviewing grazing permit renewal applications as they are released for five or more grazing allotments on BLM lands administered by the Uncompahgre Field Office. Many of the permits contain Gunnison sage-grouse habitat. The permits are being released one allotment at a time, so collective impacts to the sage-grouse are not addressed. ■

### Birds and the Evolutionary Story of the Sweet Receptor

*continued from page 4*

lost from their DNA. All of this illustrates convergent evolution –two groups finding different pathways to the same outcome. In this case, different genetic changes led to hummingbirds and many songbirds being able to taste sugar. In the case of birds, an essential source of energy; for humans, maybe too much of a good thing. Time for another cookie! Or maybe a piece of pie. ■

## First Tuesday Field Trips

Mark your calendars for **December 2, January 4, February 1, and March 1.**

Meet at 9:00 AM at the northeastern corner of the Gold's Gym parking lot in Montrose (corner of Hillcrest and East Main St). All skill levels are welcome. Carpooling may be available. Independent driving and social distancing (including wearing masks and not sharing equipment) will be the protocol in use.

Bring a snack, water, binoculars, and field guides. Trips generally last until NOON. Contact Don at (209) 256-5744 or at [ridgwaybrdr@gmail.com](mailto:ridgwaybrdr@gmail.com) or contact Bruce at (727) 858-5857 or [bruceackermanAUD@aol.com](mailto:bruceackermanAUD@aol.com) for more information. ■

## BCAS Winter Field Trips

**Saturday, January 15**

**Confluence Park and G50 Road Delta**

Join fellow birders viewing the wintering waterfowl and raptors that take advantage of the reservoir in Confluence Park in Delta. Hundreds of ducks, geese and other species regularly use this lake as a resting spot. After looking around Confluence Park, the group will head out to G50 road to check out the ranch fields and ponds that often host well over 1,000 Sandhill Cranes and other birds. Meet at Gold's Gym at the corner of Hillcrest and East Main Street in Montrose at 8:00 AM or at Confluence Park near the reservoir just after 8:30 AM. Be sure to dress in layers, and bring a lunch, snacks, water, and a spotting scope if you have one. Please contact the trip leader, Don Marsh at (209) 256-5744 or [ridgwaybrdr\[at symbol\]gmail.com](mailto:ridgwaybrdr[at symbol]gmail.com) to RSVP.

**Saturday, February 19**

**Connected Lakes & Audubon Nature Preserve Grand Junction**

Connected Lakes State Park and the adjacent Audubon Nature Preserve in Grand Junction can offer up a good variety of waterfowl and songbirds during the winter months. This trip allows time at both areas. Meet at Gold's Gym at the corner of Hillcrest and East Main Street in Montrose at 8:00 AM. At NOON, the group will head back to Montrose. 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\[at symbol\]gmail.com](mailto:ridgwaybrdr[at symbol]gmail.com) to RSVP. ■

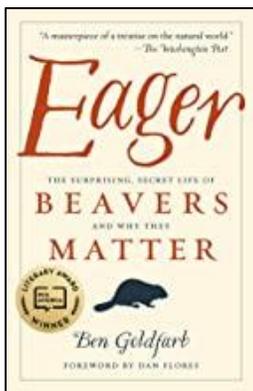
## BCAS Book Club Selections

By Sheryl Radovich

The BCAS book club formed in July as a way to meet other birders and explore the natural world through shared experience and literature. We began with *Fastest Things on Wings* by Terry Masear and continued through the fall with *American Wolf* by Nate Blakeslee, *The Ravenmaster* by Christopher Skaife, and *Birding Without Borders* by Noah Stryker.

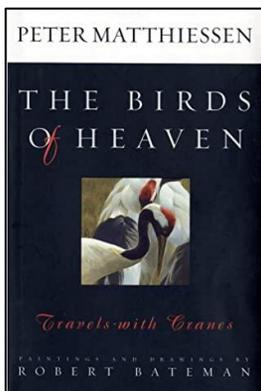
In November, we met via Zoom to discuss Carl Safina's *Becoming Wild*. In *Becoming Wild: How Animal Cultures Raise Families, Create Beauty, and Achieve World Peace*, author Carl Safina takes the reader on a guided journey from migrating sperm whales to the playful pairing of macaws and the peacemaking of combative chimpanzees. Along the way Safina discovers how the cultural bonding of these select familial groups through knowledge and experience passed from generation to generation is the key to their survival. Check it out at your local library.

The next two book club selections are described below. Meetings will be conducted via ZOOM. Contact Sheryl Radovich to confirm your participation. Reach her by email [canyon.creek\[at symbol\]bresnan.net](mailto:canyon.creek@bresnan.net) or phone (970) 240-3788. ZOOM links will be provided prior to the meetings.



### Tuesday, December 21

Meet virtually at 2:00 PM to discuss Ben Goldfarb's *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter*. Learn all about beavers by the author who lived in Paonia. Ben Goldfarb is an award-winning environmental journalist who covers wildlife conservation, marine science, and public lands management.



### Tuesday, January 19

Meet virtually at 2:00 PM to discuss Peter Matthiessen's *The Birds of Heaven: Travels With Cranes*. Matthiessen weaves together journeys in search of the fifteen species of cranes in Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, and Australia as he tracked them in the company of scientists, conservationists, and regional people encountered along the way.

The book includes color plates by renowned wildlife artist Robert Bateman. ■

## Birds and the Evolutionary Story of the Sweet Receptor

By Sallie Thoreson

The holidays are a cornucopia flowing into a winter season of cookies, cakes, and pies. There is no doubt we love the taste of sugar! This is one of the many traits we share with some birds, notably hummingbirds and many songbirds. We know from observing in our yards, or while hiking, that some bird species drink nectar from colorful flowers. And we know we can attract hummers with sugar water and attract orioles and tanagers with grape jelly and oranges. As you are enjoying your hot chocolate with marshmallows and a cinnamon roll, you may ask how all this evolved.

The early ancestors of birds were dinosaurs, who mostly ate meat and didn't seem to have highly developed sweet receptors to pass down to birds. Genetics show us that sweetness receptors are found in pair combinations of the T1R1, T1R2, and T1R3 genes. Most mammals have evolved a sweet receptor through the T1R2-T1R3 pairing. (There are some exceptions: cats, hyenas, seals, dolphins, and vampire bats have a faulty T1R2, so the sweet receptor doesn't work.)

Birds lack the T1R2 gene, but hummingbirds (developed in Eurasia, with modern lineage in the Americas from 22 million years ago) and songbirds (evolved in Australia 30 MYA) both have the T1R1-T1R3 gene combination of sweet receptor. Hummers taste sugar to ensure they are getting carbohydrates for energy. And in fact, they prefer sugar water to plain water, or water with artificial sugars. Somewhere around 45 MYA, (before they "moved" to South America) the hummingbirds' diet switched from insects to the abundant nectar in flowers. Through a series of mutations, selection was at work. The savory gene T1R3 (useful for tasting insects) was transformed until it reacted to carbohydrates, and, as a result, hummingbirds could taste sugar.

On the other side of the planet, selection in songbirds in Australia resulted in the transformation of the savory part of the T1R1 gene into a sweet receptor, the better to taste the sugar in nectar. This may have helped give songbirds the quick energy needed to move from Australia to other continents.

Scientists have tested other songbirds and found some like the canary (seed eater) and great tit (insect eater) still have the sweet receptor. This may give the birds the edge when they need to exploit sugar as an additional food source, or it may be that functioning sweet receptors just haven't been

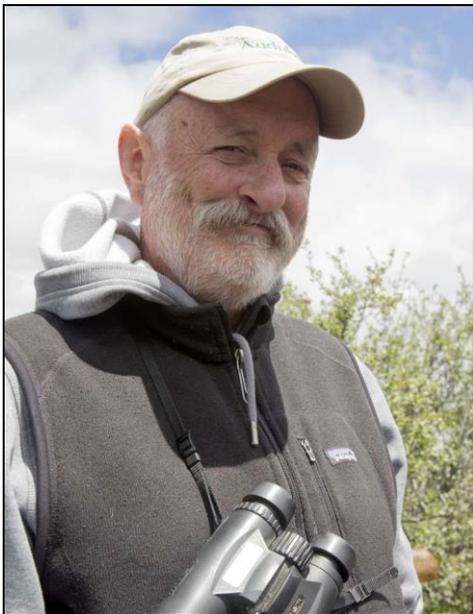
*Continued on page 3*

# In Memory of Chris Lazo

By Jon Horn

It is with great sadness, but with wonderful memories, that I am writing this remembrance of Chris Lazo, who passed away peacefully on October 11 at the age of only 67. Chris was a former board member of the Black Canyon Audubon Society, but was so much more than that as a friend of birds, all wildlife, and the land where he lived and visited. Chris moved onto a very rural piece of land on Fruitland Mesa near Crawford soon after his retirement from Colorado Mountain College in Glenwood Springs where he had been a counselor and had also been active with the Audubon Society group there. Their loss was our gain, because Chris became a board member of the Black Canyon Audubon Society in 2011. His cheerful demeanor and willingness to chip in and promote chapter activities helped transform the group and set the stage for many of the wonderful things that BCAS continues to do to the present time.

Soon after his arrival to the area, while working on a bird checklist for Crawford Reservoir and State Park, he met Carole Scott, who was working as a ranger at the park. They soon married and spent 11 wonderful years together supporting each other's interest in the outdoors, Carole, an accomplished wildlife photographer and author of a children's book on bears, expanded Chris' horizons, just as



he did hers. They traveled to many of the wild places in the western U.S., Canada, and Alaska. An interesting connection between the two is that Carole is a native of England, having grown up near London, and Chris spent much of his later childhood in London after his father was transferred there

from America, resulting in the family traveling to nearby European countries and Africa. It was then that Chris became an avid skier and soccer fan.

Closer to home, Chris was involved with revitalizing Eckert Crane Days at Fruitgrowers Reservoir, taught a beginning birdwatching class through the Montrose-Delta Vo-Tech, and was a regular participant at the annual bird banding at Ridgway Reservoir State Park. His involvement at the bird

banding station is a perfect example of how important it was to him to teach kids about birds and the outdoors. His gentle nature and patience made for excellent educational



experiences for the hundreds of young students that visited the station each year where he and other volunteers taught the kids how to use binoculars, understand the connection between habitats and birds, and see firsthand the wonders of bird migrations. Because of his earlier connections with the Audubon group in Glenwood Springs, Chris was also the BCAS representative to Audubon of Colorado.

Chris loved the land that he lived on and spent many hours hiking and cross-country skiing on the property, learning its birds and animals, and taking steps to protect the land. He became intimately involved with the Crawford Area Gunnison Sage-grouse Working Group comprised of federal and state agency biologists and local landowners and advocates for the endangered grouse. He was one of the hearty souls that woke before the crack of dawn to stake out one of the area leks to count grouse in order to gather data for the study of their population trends. His contributions were recognized in that the Lazo lek near his property is named for him. Chris and Carole worked diligently toward the development of a conservation easement for their property, something that has yet to come to fruition, but is a goal that Carole and Chris' siblings, Sandy, Jeff, and Suzi, are moving forward with.

For those of you who remember Chris and would like to recognize him in some way, he expressed that contributions to the Crawford Area Gunnison Sage-grouse Working Group would be much appreciated. Their address is:

Crawford Area Gunnison Sage-grouse Working Group  
c/o Robbie LeValley  
560 Dodge St.  
Delta, Colorado 81416

Please note on your check that the donation is in remembrance of Chris Lazo.

**Photos left to right: Chris showing his good-humored self, and Chris teaching kids about birds at one of the educational stations during bird banding at Ridgway State Park. ■**

# Annual Ridgway State Park Migratory Bird Banding Station Report

By Carrie Krickbaum & Mary Menz

Just 22 species and a total of 92 birds were banded between September 7 and 17, 2021, compared to September 2018 when 214 birds of 45 species were banded. Nearly 250 birds were banded in September 2019.

While the number of migrating birds was down from previous year counts, the number of students served was steady! Nearly 500 students from Ouray, Montrose, and



Delta counties were bused to the park to take part in Ridgway State Park's annual education event. These students were accompanied by more than 35 teachers and chaperones.

Students—primarily fourth graders—visited five stations at the Dallas Creek site to learn about birds. They rotated through the stations with their classmates and

teachers while volunteers and park staff presented information about the following topics during the half-day event.

- Adaptations and Jeop-birdy! game
- Habitat Inventory
- Bird banding demonstration
- Birds and binoculars walk
- Migration Challenge game

“We could not do this event each year without the valuable participation of volunteers,” explained Carrie Krickbaum, RSP naturalist and BCAS member. “We rely on volunteers to guide valuable discussions for students at the stations and to educate kids.”

Carrie said the enthusiasm of volunteers is infectious. “When kids see how genuine the adults are about their fascination, the kids really become engaged.”

## Thank You Volunteers!

Thank you to these volunteers who helped ensure the bird banding was station a success again this year: Susan Werner, Carol Pierce, Cyndi Nelson, Mary Menz, Don Marsh, Ann Janik, Bill Harris, Anita Evans, Sandy Dick, Amanda Clements, Kelsi Anderson, and Bruce Ackerman.

Three Ridgway State Park rangers also assisted: Hannah Beam, Jessa Newby, and Zoe DeGrande. Carrie extended special thanks to RSP volunteers Larry Hukill for lane mowing and trimming, hauling shelters, poles, and rebar, and to Mary Menz and Bruce Krickbaum for setting up shelters, benches, posts, and hauling, plus labor during take down after the banding station closed for the year.

The Saturday September 11 public day hosted another 20 or more adults and children who marveled at the variety of migrating birds. Invariably, visitors to the public banding demonstration ask who pays for the annual operation that spans two weeks in Ridgway and four weeks in Grand Junction. Here's a breakdown:

**Banders' wages** CPW pays bander's contract wages in Ridgway (two weeks) and Grand Junction (four weeks), plus allows schools free entry into the park.

**Banders' lodging** Park volunteers provide use of an RV at RSP; the bander stays with a Grand Valley chapter Audubon member in their home in Grand Junction.

**Banding materials** Bird Conservancy of the Rockies provides bands, permit, nets, and other necessary supplies.

**Net lanes** RSP volunteers erect and take down the numerous ten-foot poles for the nets and set up tables, tents, and a temporary outdoor learning center.

**Buses for students** Friends of Ridgway State Park pays half of the school district bus fees for students to attend the event.

**Dry storage** The Black Canyon Audubon chapter paid \$180 to store this year's donated RV for the winter at CPW's locked storage unit; CPW paid the other half.

Missed a visit to the banding station? Check out this story from Bird Conservancy of the Rockies at

<https://rockies.audubon.org/naturalist/articles/banding-start-finish>



Photos left and right: A future ornithologist is born? This elementary-age student, accompanied by her mother on Public Saturday, helped release a Black-capped Chickadee. A Green-tailed Towhee made an appearance at the banding station Thursday, September 15. Photos by Mary Menz. ■

## Christmas Bird Counts *continued from cover*

If your home is within the boundaries of a Count Circle, you can bird from your window and report the birds that visit your feeder!

Per national Audubon Society rules: Masking is required if social distancing is not possible while in the field. Carpooling may only occur within existing familiar or social “pod” groups. Activities must comply with all current state and municipal COVID-19 guidelines. All counts may be subject to change based on county COVID positivity rates and/or health department orders.

### Delta

#### Saturday, December 18

Meet at the Delta City Market parking lot at 8:30 AM. We will break into teams and you will be given maps and data sheets to complete the field count. All participants must be vaccinated against COVID to participate in the group count. Please contact amy.seglund[at symbol]state.co.us at least five days before the count so she can inform you of any last minute changes.

### Montrose

#### Sunday, December 19

Meet at 8:30 AM at the Centennial Room off Centennial Plaza, Downtown Montrose. We will break into teams and you will be given maps and data sheets to complete the field count. All participants must be vaccinated against COVID to participate in the group count. Please contact Missy Siders by email or phone missy.siders[at symbol]gmail.com (970) 275-6639 at least five days before the count so she can inform you of any last minute changes.

### Gunnison

#### Sunday, December 19

Meet at 7:30 AM in Hurst Hall Room 130 on the Western Colorado University Campus to get organized and break into field teams. We ask that all participants be vaccinated against COVID. Changes in local case counts for the pandemic could alter our plans so everyone who is planning to participate is asked to contact organizer Arden Anderson at arden[at symbol]gunnison.com at least five days before the count so he can let you know if there are any last minute changes.

### Hotchkiss

#### Sunday, January 2

Meet at the Hotchkiss City Market parking lot at 8:00 AM. All experience levels are welcome and encouraged. Please RSVP by emailing count leader Adam Petry at petry[at symbol]westernbiology.com. All participants must be vaccinated against COVID to join the group count.

## You, Too, Can Contribute to 122 Years of Citizen Science!

- All levels of birding experience are welcome in the count circles. We'll be birding most of the day.
- Bring warm clothes (dress for expected weather), boots, snack and/or lunch, water, sunscreen, binoculars, spotting scope (if you have one), bird books. Clip boards are very helpful.
- Your count coordinator will provide a map of birding areas, a checklist of birds which might be seen, and other instructions.
- For more information about the annual Christmas Bird Count, take a look at the Audubon Society's website <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count>.
- For additional information on local efforts call the location coordinators or contact BCAS president Bruce Ackerman (contact info on page 2). ■



**Northern Shrike during 2019 Christmas Bird Count.  
Photo by Missy Siders.**

Missy Siders has participated in the CBC for more than twenty years.

Said Missy, “I participate because I learned as a wildlife biologist that the long term data set that has been generated from the CBC provides important information to scientists and land managers about what changes are happening to bird distribution. It’s also fun to spend the day wandering a survey area just to find out what’s there. It’s also fun to bird with others. You make friends to bird with later, and you can learn from others, no matter what your skill level.” ■

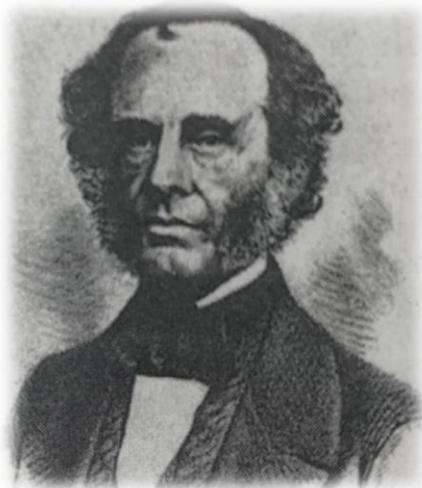
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## Who was that Bird Named For?

### Cooper's Hawk

By Susan Chandler-Reed

William C. Cooper (1798-1864) was not an ornithologist, but primarily a conchologist – a collector of shells. He was one of the founders of the New York Lyceum of Natural History (later known as the New York Academy of Sciences) and was elected Recording Secretary of the



Lyceum in 1818, when he was only 20.

Cooper studied zoology in Europe from 1821 to 1824, where he developed an interest in vertebrate paleontology. Although he seldom published his work, he directed collecting trips to Kentucky and shell-

dredging operations in Nova Scotia and the Bahamas. He is said to have been generous with his collections, allowing other scientists such as John James Audubon, Charles Lucien Bonaparte, and Thomas Nuttall, to study his materials.

A hawk that Cooper collected in 1828 was described by Bonaparte and named in Cooper's honor. Different names have superseded the names of other birds also originally named after Cooper. In fact, Audubon even attempted to rename the Cooper's Hawk, but did not prevail.

Cooper is also known for being the father of James Graham Cooper, a noted California ornithologist, who worked on the Pacific Railroad Survey and for whom the Cooper Ornithological Society is named.

The word *hawk* has Teutonic roots and means "to seize or take hold." Cooper's Hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*) are accipiters, a name assigned by Pliny from Latin, that also means "to take or seize." Both names describe well how Cooper's Hawks seize birds and small mammals and kill them by squeezing. Cooper's Hawks have also been observed drowning their victims.

Cooper's Hawks are medium-sized raptors with an extremely long, banded tail. They inhabit forests and woodlands, but they also find advantage in urban environments, taking prey at bird feeders and feeding on

doves and pigeons. They live year-round throughout most of the continental United States. The oldest recorded individual was more than 20 years old when captured at a banding station. Cooper's Hawks are slightly larger and have flatter heads than the virtually identical Sharp-Shinned Hawk.

### Sources

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Choate, Ernest A. 1973. *The Dictionary of American Bird Names.* Gambit, Boston.

Gruson, Edward S. 1972. *Words for Birds: A Lexicon of North American Birds with Biographical Notes.* Quadrangle Books, New York. ■



Photo courtesy of Alan and Elaine Wilson

<https://www.naturespicsonline.com/galleries/51#55>.

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# Generating Conservation Conversations

By Sallie Thoreson, Conservation Chair

**GMUG Forest Plan** Nov 26 was the deadline for organizations, agencies, and individuals to submit comments to the U.S. Forest Service on the Draft Revised Land Management Plan for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) Forests. The documents detailing the revised Plan and the Draft Environment Impact Statement are extensive, but open house Zoom meetings and comment and writing workshops held by many organizations helped reviewers through the process. BCAS submitted comments covering many topics including acres of timber suitability, species of conservation concern, recreation needs and protections, and wilderness and Wild and Scenic River designations. BCAS also signed on to a more than 200-page letter with other conservation organizations. And many members of BCAS sent in individual comments about the places they love and protections they want to see. The next step is for the GMUG Forest System to review, revise, and publish a Final Plan. Organizations and individuals can later protest elements of the final plan if they feel their comments were not addressed adequately. Thanks to everyone who participated in this step to protect and plan for use of our local National Forests for years to come.

**Wolf Reintroduction** The Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission meeting November 18 included a review of the contractor's Summer Public Engagement process and the unveiling of the Technical Working Group report on reintroduction logistics, such as how and when to introduce wolves into Colorado. The group based its recommendations on the best science and lessons learned from past reintroductions efforts, such as Yellowstone National Park. The Commission also started hearings on proposals to authorize livestock owners and their agents to use non-lethal hazing techniques (special permission required) on gray wolves under certain circumstances and to specify lawful hazing techniques. Many advocates see this as a positive and necessary step to address the economic issues for livestock producers and to plan for ways that wolves and livestock can coexist. The reports and background are available at

<https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/CommissionMeeting2021-11.aspx> items 19 and 20 (livestock measures) and item 21 (reintroduction reports). General wolf information is on the CPW website at <https://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/CON-Wolf-Management.aspx>.

**Climate change plans and solutions** The Convention on Climate Change 26th conference of the parties (COP26) concluded with many promises and some signed agreements. Young people led the charge to ask those in power to move forward faster. Climate solutions continue to focus on lowering methane emissions, eliminating our dependence on fossil fuels, protecting public lands and biodiversity, and

developing other climate friendly solutions. Here is a review of some recent actions and their probable climate solution potential.

**Energy extraction** The Biden administration recently opened more than 80 million acres of the Gulf of Mexico for new oil and gas leasing, as directed by court decisions. The administration also ordered a release of 50 million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to help bring down the costs of gas and energy in the US.

**Is this a Climate Solution = NO**

**Public Lands protections** The Biden Administration restored additional acreage protections to three national monuments: Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah and the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument. **Is this a Climate Solution =YES**

**Infrastructure to address solutions** The Build Back Better package heading to the Senate contains investments in clean energy, transportation electrification, climate-resilient agriculture, and environmental justice, and aims at curbing greenhouse gas emissions. The bill includes protections against leasing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. **Is this a Climate Solution = YES (when passed)**

**Oil and Gas Leasing in Colorado** The Colorado Oil and Gas Commission (COGCC) has been approving oil and gas permits, even when the permits do not meet all the requirements of their recently-enacted regulations. Environmental groups such as 350 Colorado and Sierra Club want other groups to assist with monitoring the process and sending letters and comments to COGCC.

**Is this a Climate Solution = NO**

The BLM is planning to hold oil and gas lease sales on over 740,000 of public land, including 141,675 acres in Colorado counties of Jackson, Moffat, Las Animas, Weld, and Rio Blanco. Audubon Rockies reports that "These lands include sensitive wildlife habitat for greater sage-grouse, elk, and mule deer, historic sites..." Audubon Rockies and Colorado Audubon chapters are among the groups following and commenting on the lease proposals. **Is this a Climate Solution=NO.**

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



[www.blackcanyonaudubon.org](http://www.blackcanyonaudubon.org)

Due to the evolving COVID-19 restrictions, all in-person programs and meetings are on hold. Watch your email and visit the website often to see when monthly programs start up again.

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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 2021. 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.

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