



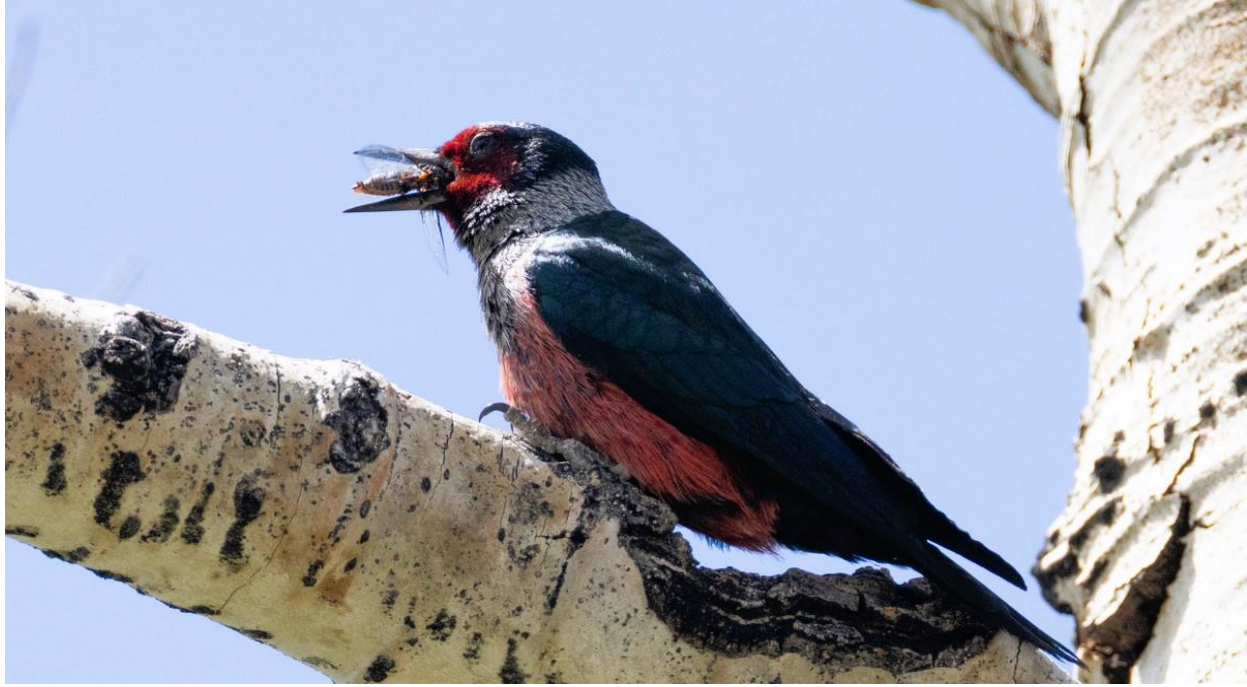
Canyon Wrenderings

The Journal of the Black Canyon Audubon Society

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

Fall 2025

Volume 40 Number 3



Lewis Woodpecker by Verlee Sanburg

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Migratory Bird Banding

The Science of Capturing Data to Inform Conservation Decisions

By Mary Menz

Editors note: Mary Menz is a long-time participant in bird banding at Ridgway State Park. This year's banding will be September 2 – 12 with a day for the public on Saturday, September 6.

Birds have been banded since the Romans used Pigeons to carry messages to troops during the Punic Wars. And falconers fitted their trained birds of prey with anklets and jesses (leg wraps) to hunt and communicate with fellow falconers. But it was not until the early 1900's that a federal bird banding program was developed to track and record migration data from birds. The program is now a function of the United States Geological Survey's Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL).

The BBL is responsible for issuing permits for banding. The BBL also provides standardized federal metal bands to all banders; oversees the ethical practices and techniques of banders (who are licensed after extensive training); and maintains the data collected. It also facilitates communication among banding organizations within the U.S., the Americas, and worldwide.

Managers use this data to make sound conservation decisions about bird habitat.

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President's Message

By Caroline Evans, BCAS co-president

Sallie Thoreson and I, Caroline Evans, are your new Co-Presidents. Thank you for choosing us and thank you for your support. We strive to remain healthy and unstressed. As Sallie says, "We want this job of being president to be so fun that people are clamoring to be president in two years when we retire."

As Co-Presidents we plan to continue to do what we, as Black Canyon Audubon Society members, have been doing well. Here is what our BCAS website shows as our purpose - and thanks to our former Webmaster Jon Horn, and our new Webmaster Susan Chandler-Reed for keeping this current at blackcanyonaudubon.org.

Our newly elected BCAS Board and membership will continue to:

- Promote natural resource conservation through our programs.
- Offer field trips and regular birding outings.
- Provide early education programs.
- Be effective environmental advocates.
- Contribute to Gunnison Sage Grouse recovery.

Here are just a few highlights for September:

September 2-12, Bird Banding at Dallas Creek at Ridgway State Park, visit the Bird Banding Site. (Refer to page 3)

September 11, America's Public Lands special presentation, at the Ute Indian Museum, presented by Walt Dabney, Former National Park Superintendent and Director of Texas State Parks. (Refer to page 5)

September 12, Gunnison Sage Grouse Habitat Improvement Project. (Refer to page 3)

We look forward to seeing you as you join us and our community of fellow bird, habitat, and wildlife stewards and advocates.

Most Sincerely,

Co-Presidents Caroline Evans and Sallie Thoreson

Canyon Wrenderings is the quarterly newsletter of the Black Canyon Audubon Society, **Vol. 40 No 3**. Send submissions to wrenderingseditor@gmail.com.

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Conservation—Sallie Thoreson (see above)
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AD HOC COMMITTEES (ANNUAL EVENTS)

Montrose County Fair — **OPEN**
Bird Banding—Ridgway State Park
Christmas Bird Count Team—TBD
Eckert Crane Days— Alida Franco

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 spam coming from web crawlers.

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.

Fall 2025 Field Trips

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. Items you may want to bring include snacks, water, binoculars, and a field guide. Please reserve your spot by emailing black.canyon.audubon.fieldtrips@gmail.com to specify which trip(s) you are interested in attending.

September

Montrose 1st Tuesday each month

Date: Tuesday 9/2/2025 8:00AM

Bruce Ackerman will accompany the group to a nearby birding hot spot. Return should be about noon.

Bird Banding Ridgway State Park (Ouray County)

Date: Saturday, 9/6/2025 Time: 7:00 AM - noon

Watch a professional bird bander at work. This is a drop-in opportunity and kids are welcome. Volunteers will be present to answer your questions. This is a great opportunity to see birds up close. The state park charges a \$10.00/car entrance fee unless you have an annual "Keep Colorado Wild" pass. Banding usually starts early (6:30 - 7 AM) and early morning is best. Nets are closed by noon or earlier (weather dependent). Enter Ridgway State Park at the Dallas Creek entrance and head to the southernmost parking lot. The banding station is just over the bridge.

Gunnison Sage Grouse "Lop & Scatter" Habitat Improvement Project

Date: Friday, September 12 9 AM - 2 PM

You MUST register! Registration is limited to 25 people. Leaders will provide the coordinates of the meeting spot near Crawford at registration.

In conjunction with the Colorado Canyons Association, volunteers will be using loppers and hand saws to cut small juniper and pinyon pine saplings that could become perches for predators, scaring away the sage-grouse. The cut trees are then scattered across the ground which helps retain soil moisture, improving the landscape for Gunnison sage-grouse habitat.

Please bring: Food, water, work gloves, eye protection, long pants, and closed-toed shoes. Colorado Canyon

Association will provide: Tools, orange vests, and National Public Lands Day T-shirts.

Missy Siders will be coordinating with CCA for this event. If you are interested in carpooling, contact Missy at black.canyon.audubon.fieldtrips@gmail.com.

Please sign up for this CCA field trip at <https://www.coloradocanyonsassociation.org/events/2025/lop-and-scatter-ggnca>

Delta 3rd Tuesday each month

Date: Tuesday 9/16/2025 8:30AM

Meet Dian Torphy at the Hotchkiss river access parking area, which is at E end of Delta County Fairgrounds, Hotchkiss. From Delta, go through Hotchkiss on Hwy 92 and turn right on Doc Maloney Way. We will walk along the new Miner's Trail which parallels and crosses the North Fork of the Gunnison. Plan 2-3 hours. It is possible to carpool from Delta, Cedaredge, or Austin if you let Dian know ahead of time to coordinate.

Ridgway State Park (Ouray County)

Date: Saturday, 09/20/2025 8:30AM

Meet leader Don Marsh at the Ridgway State Park Visitor Center near the Dutch Charlie entrance. Ridgway State Park in September can host a variety of migrating birds, including ducks, gulls, shorebirds, and migrant songbirds. The park charges a \$10.00/car entrance fee unless you have an annual "Keep Colorado Wild" pass. We will try to carpool with annual pass holders to minimize expenses. Dress in layers and bring a spotting scope if you have one. We will wrap up around noon.

October

Fall Colors (Ouray County)

Date: Thursday 10/02/2025 8:30AM

Meet leader Don Marsh at the Ridgway town Visitor Center near the intersection of Highway 550 and Highway 62. We will explore various backroads in Ouray County as we search for birds and incredible fall colors. As weather and birds can be unpredictable in October, we will stay flexible in our options. Dress in layers and bring your camera. We will wrap up in the early afternoon.

WANTED!

We NEED more field trip leaders!!

You do not have to be an “expert,” but should be someone who likes to go outdoors and help others do the same. You do not need to lead a birding trip. If you know some good places and seasons to find butterflies, plants, or flowers, that would be great too.

If you are interested or have questions you can contact Missy Siders at black.canyon.audubon.fieldtrips@gmail.com or call at 970-275-6639.

Montrose 1st Tuesday each month

Date: Tuesday 10/7/2025 9:00AM

Bruce Ackerman will accompany the group to a nearby birding hot spot. Return should be about noon.

Delta 3rd Tuesday

Date: Tuesday 10/21/2025 9:00AM

Meet Dian Torphy at Confluence Park in Delta in the large parking lot on the east side of the lake, Gunnison River Drive. From there we will carpool to Escalante State Wildlife area, G-50 road entrance. Each person needs a SWA pass. If you have one, please bring it. You can purchase a fishing, hunting, or access pass through cpw.state.co.us. Plan 2-3 hours.

November

Montrose 1st Tuesday each month

Date: Tuesday 11/4/2025 9:00AM

Bruce Ackerman will accompany the group to a nearby birding hot spot. Return should be about noon.

Delta 3rd Tuesday each month

Date: Tuesday 11/18/2025 9:00AM

Meet Dian Torphy at Confluence Park in Delta in the large parking area east of the lake, Gunnison River Dr. We will explore from there - either the lake or rivers or wetland areas. Plan 2-3 hours.



Black Canyon Audubon field trip with Ted Floyd on 6/6/2025. Photo by Verlee Sanburg

Christmas Bird Counts –Save the Dates!

With summer weather still with us, it is hard to think about Winter and the Audubon Christmas Bird Count. But Winter is coming, and the Audubon counts takes place each year between December 14 and January 5 (inclusive) within the existing 15-mile diameter circles. We participate in four counts: Montrose, Delta, Gunnison, and Hotchkiss.

You can find out more about Audubon Christmas Bird Counts and how they are used at <https://www.audubon.org/community-science/christmas-bird-count>.



Bruce Ackerman leading bluebird box trip at Ridgway State Park July 2025. Photo by Verlee Sanburg

BCAS Monthly Meetings

Thursday, September 11, at 7 PM

The Ute Indian Museum, Montrose

“The Future of America’s Public Lands” Special presentation

Walt Dabney, Retired National Park Superintendent and Texas State Parks Director

Walt Dabney is a retired park professional with a 43-year career spanning both the National Park Service and Texas State Parks. A Texas A&M graduate, he began as a ranger-naturalist in Yellowstone then served in leadership positions in Yosemite, Grand Teton, and the Everglades Parks. Dabney served as Chief Ranger of the NPS in Washington, D.C. and was leader of the Southeast Utah Group of parks. He now teaches at leadership institutes and universities and frequently speaks on the history of America's public land. Dabney will discuss how America’s public lands came to be, why most are in the West, the economic value of the lands, and what we all stand to lose if they are taken from our common ownership. These lands belong to all of us. Learn how and why that matters, now more than ever.

Thursday, October 9, at 7 PM

Montrose Field House Summit Room

“Floral Visitors, the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly”

Dr. Alison Brody, Retired Professor of Botany, University of Vermont

Dr. Alison Brody loves the mountain west and has led botanical research projects on plant adaptation and evolution at the Rocky Mountain Research Station in Gothic, Colorado. Alison is a newly elected BCAS Board Member.

Dr. Brody writes, “Plants are rooted to the spot in which they grow and thus most depend on animals for pollination. Showy flowers, sweet scents, ample and brightly colored pollen, have all evolved to attract pollinators. Each of these attractants work! Yet, they also attract animals that do plants harm such as florivores (flower eaters), seed predators, nectar-robbing bumblebees, and even birds that do not always pollinate the plants they visit.” Dr. Brody has focused on the evolutionary outcome of traits that attract both mutualist pollinators and antagonist herbivores, pre-

dispersal seed predators, and pollen-thieves. She will provide examples of the push-me-pull-you nature of floral attractants from her own work and that of others. She writes, “I hope to engage you in thinking about the complex evolution of floral traits.”

Thursday, November 13, at 7 PM

Montrose Field House Summit Room

Why are Beavers so Important to Birds (and so many other species)?

Jackie Corday, Corday Natural Resources Consulting

Jackie is a land and water conservation attorney who previously headed CPW's Water Resources Section in Denver. She moved to Montrose in 2019 to begin her natural resources consulting company. Jackie and Abby Burk (Audubon Rockies) are the Co-Chairs of the Colorado Healthy Headwaters Working Group. They collaborate with local, state, and federal agencies and non-profits to support stream and watershed health.

Jackie will discuss beaver natural history and how their dam building creates and maintains wetland habitat in Western Colorado that is crucial to many bird species and other aquatic and terrestrial species. Colorado and the West face unprecedented drought conditions, impacts from wildfires, and scarcity of water. These changes threaten our local and regional water supplies and our wildlife. Jackie will discuss how beaver wetlands play a critical role in improving the resiliency of our watersheds to wildfire and drought.



Migrating Western Sandpiper by Don Marsh

Migratory Bird Banding continued from page 1

Banding stations all over the Western Hemisphere provide scientists the opportunity to ethically capture birds using mist nets or other methods to recapture birds; and to learn about bird migration habits, food sources, preferred habitats, and more. All this data, for example, can help people understand how habitat loss affects bird populations and how a decline in bird populations might signal diminishing ecosystem health. An ecosystem that is unhealthy for birds is unhealthy for people.

Local Banding Efforts

Ridgway State Park (RSP) partners with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, and the Black Canyon Audubon Society since 2006. Every year (except for the first year of the Covid epidemic), the RSP banding station has banded migratory songbirds from Labor Day through the second Saturday in September.

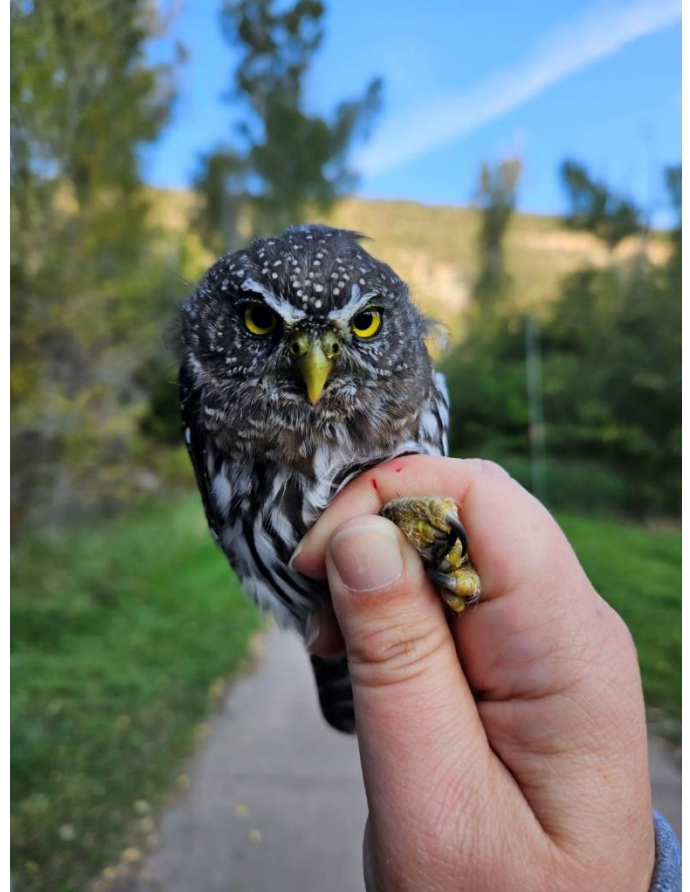
Banding happens at RSP and at the banding station in Grand Junction at the Grand Valley Audubon Nature Preserve from mid-September to mid-October. Temporary stations are operated during morning hours. Western Colorado is not a major flyway of migratory birds, yet birds observed, captured, and documented here provide a good indication of how wet or dry a year is, the quality and quantity of natural food sources and suitable habitat. Long-term, this data can also indicate changes in migration patterns.

A dozen other banding stations operate on Colorado's Front Range, many open for two months each spring and fall. Most of these stations encourage visitors and school children on field trips.

At all stations, the bander in charge is an ornithologist (usually with a background in wildlife biology). Operating under a federal banding permit, they set up mist nets and capture birds. After applying a permanent aluminum leg band with a unique nine-digit number, the birds are released; but, not before a thorough physical evaluation is completed. This includes wing and tail feather measurements, weight, sex and species identification, and age (either hatch year or after hatch year). All this data is logged online on the USGS BBL website, where anyone can report a found bird with a leg band to determine where and when it was banded.

Visit the Ridgway Banding Station on its public day September 6. The station is also open to visitors during

weekdays, but there will also be hundreds of school children visiting the station in class rotations at stations operated by BCAS volunteers. You never know what you will see! Among the usual species seen (warblers, vireos, sparrows and many more), you could also see a rarity like the Northern Pygmy Owl! Visit early in the day as birds are most active from 7:30 to 9:00 AM.



Mist nets at migratory bird banding stations sometimes capture unique, and unintended, species, like this Northern Pygmy Owl September 2024. Photo © Alicia Bachman.

Mary Menz is a naturalist, Colorado Native Plant Master, and author of two books on wildflowers. The most recent is Wildflowers of Colorado's Western Slope, available at area book sellers. She is especially interested in the relationship between native plants, pollinators, and birds.

BCAS Board Meeting Highlights

by Sallie Thoreson, Co-President

The new Co-Presidents, Caroline Evans and Sallie Thoreson convened the July Board meeting.

- BCAS regular projects and programs are continuing. Caroline has the meeting programs booked through November 2025. BCAS continues to contribute an article to the Montrose Daily Press every five weeks.
- The BCAS currently has 430 paid members. Several local members need to renew for 2025.
- The new BCAS website is completed. Board members will contact webmaster Susan Chandler-Reed when they have something to upload to the site.
- The Motus tower was moved to a neighborhood-friendly location in Montrose. A MOTUS tower is a tracking station that will detect tagged birds and insects that migrate over Montrose.
- At the Marine Road Wildlife Area, the City of Montrose continues to investigate grant possibilities to fund a contractor to develop an ADA-compliant design. BCAS will continue with trail maintenance. Grace Community Church volunteers will do some trail work in August as part of their annual community volunteer efforts.
- Our next big educational event will be our participation in the Ridgway State Park bird banding and educational activities Sept 2-13. Sheryl is coordinating the BCAS volunteers for this.
- Todd has gathered a committee to work on an annual budget for the BCAS. They will convene before the September meetings.
- The Chapter currently has \$30,511.83 in its checking account. We raised \$1,626 from our annual bird box fundraiser at the Montrose County Fair in July. A BIG thank you to the Montrose Area Woodturners, the Woodworkers Guild of Western Colorado and all the volunteers from BCAS that worked at the fair.

Next Board Meeting. Tuesday September 16, 2025 - Zoom 5-630pm. Subsequent Board meetings will be every other month on Monday from 5-630 pm. Please contact the BCAS Presidents at black.canyon.audubon.society@gmail.com for details on how to join the meeting.

An Update on the Motus Tower

By David Sinton

This spring, the Chris Lazo Memorial Station moved to a new location on Spring Creek Mesa off Oak Grove Road in Montrose. Since then, we have detected 4 tagged birds.

Tree Swallow. A tree swallow was tagged 30 June 2025 near Boundary Bay Field, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada by the Iona Tree Swallow & Insect Study. It was picked up by two towers in SE Idaho; one in NE Utah; then was picked up at our tower on 8 July 2025. The swallow continued south, being picked up by three towers in west central New Mexico (including Bosque del Apache). It is currently near Chihuahua City, Chihuahua, Mexico. Tree swallow populations are on the decline, so this research project is especially important.

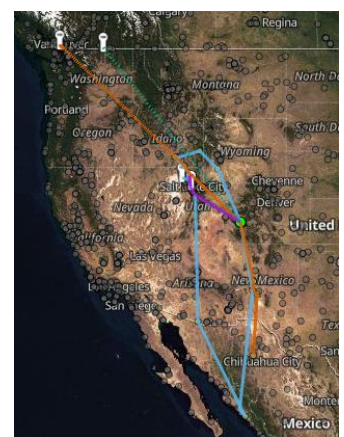
Willow Flycatcher was tagged by an organization called Connecting Conservation for Declining Pacific Migrants. It was tagged on July 6 near Oliver in British Columbia and was picked up by our tower on August 17.

Wilson's Phalarope was fitted with a transmitter on June 11, by an organization called Great Salt Lake Shorebirds. It visited several stations along the Wasatch Front before triggering our station on August 19.

White Pelican. The pelican we detected last fall, spent the winter near Chinitos, Sinaloa, Mexico (west side of Mexico; east side of the Sea of Cortez). This spring it took a different route, more to the west, through Arizona and Utah, returning to the Great Salt Lake. It will be interesting to see if this pelican returns to Montrose this Fall on its way back to Mexico.

If you want to look at the data from our tower, or any of the Motus data you can go to this link

<https://bit.ly/4fn7RmC>.



Map of movement of 4 tagged birds our MOTUS tower detected

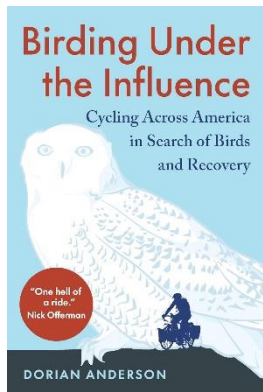
Upcoming Book Club Selections

Book club meetings are the second Wednesday of each month at 3 PM (Both in person and by zoom).

Please let us know if you would like to be on a separate email list just for the book club. Contact Sheryl Radovich at sherylradovich@icloud.com or Bruce Ackerman at BruceAckermanAUD@aol.com.

September 10

"Birding Under the Influence: Cycling Across America in Search of Birds and Recovery" by Dorian Anderson (2023).

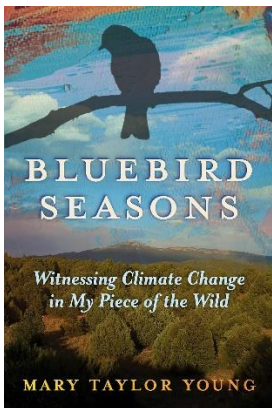


At a personal and professional crossroads, a man resets his life and finds sobriety, love, and 618 bird species, cycling his way to a Big Year. The author, a neuroscience researcher, walks away from the world of elite institutions, research labs, and academic publishing to pursue a North American Big Year. This is a massive undertaking under

any circumstances. But doing it on a bike while maintaining sobriety? That is next level.

October 8

"Bluebird Seasons: Witnessing Climate Change in My Piece of the Wild" by Mary Taylor Young (2023).

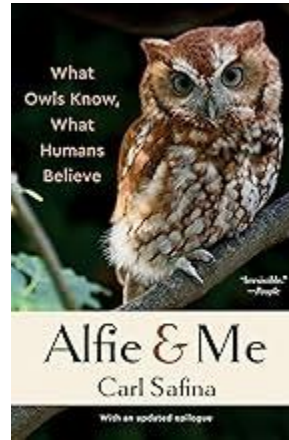


This Colorado author has monitored bluebird nest boxes for 28 years around her cabin in the hills above Pueblo, CO. In that amount of time, she began to see changes caused by climate change on her property -- increasing drought, wildfires, bears delaying hibernation, and the decline of familiar birds and appearance of new species. The author has

authored many books about the wildlife of Colorado.

November 12.

"Alfie & Me" by Carl Safina (2023).



Alfie is an orphaned screech owl rescued, raised, and released during the covid pandemic by Safina and his wife. As Alfie grew and gained strength, she became a part of the family, joining a menagerie of dogs and chickens and making a home for herself in the backyard. *Alfie & Me* is the story of the remarkable impact this little owl would

have on their lives. Along the way, the author takes a deep dive into humanity's relationship with the natural world from antiquity to today. Safina is a prominent ecologist and oceanographer; his writing is described as "lyrical non-fiction."

Montrose County Fair

By Bruce Ackema, BCAS past president

Black Canyon Audubon Society had 42 Bluebird Boxes and related items for sale year by Silent Auction at the Montrose County Fair July 20 to 26. By the time bidding ended Saturday at noon, we raised \$1626. BCAS will use the funds for education programs for youth and adults.

We thank the Woodworkers Guild of Western Colorado and Montrose Area Woodturners for their continued support in crafting creative and attractive bluebird boxes. This is the 17th year the woodworkers made boxes that ranged from basic to fanciful, showing off their different expert woodworking skills, tools, and different kinds of wood. This year, some that got the most attention were gorgeous boxes turned on lathes. Others included boxes described as a Cat, a Dog, a Wolf, and a Tree Hugger, and many others.

Local woodworkers contributing boxes included Rich Barker, Doug Bowman, Roger Burkpile, Al Head, Debra Houts, McRoe Dennis Murphy, Jim Norfleet, Rusty Olson, and Pat Pitz, John Renzelman, and Barrie Riddoch. Doug Bowman swept the First, Second, and Third-Place ribbons for his beautiful lathe-turned cylindrical birdhouses.

This year, 23 BCAS members worked at the booth over the week to talk with fair attendees: Sandy Beranich, Alison Brody, Dick Bushmiaer, Susie Buttery, John Doerr, Caroline Evans, Mary Hodson, Judy and Howard Kennedy, Pam Miller, Todd Miller, Dennis Murphy, Laura Murphy, Carol Pierce, Sheryl Radovich, Hildy Rosenbarker and Carter Smith, Heather Scott, Kristal Stidham, Karen Swan, Sallie and Ron Thoreson, and me. Thank You!

Conservation Conversations

By Sallie Thoreson, BCAS co-president

Eagle Cam sparks interest

Have any of you also watched the Eagle Cam from Big Bear Lake, California? This wildlife camera featured a pair of bald eagles, named Jackie and Shadow, on their journey to finishing their nest, laying eggs, and raising two young, named Gizmo and Sunny. I noticed that hundreds of people watched the live and recorded excerpts daily. There was a lot of joy when the eggs hatched, and sadness when one of the three eaglets died, outrage when other raptors and crows attacked the young, and admiration of the efforts of both parents to protect and feed the young. What an engaging way to draw people into the day-to-day life of wildlife, instead of the more abstract writing we see (and I am guilty of) – eagles are important, we need to protect them, advocacy is needed. As a further example of the value of drawing audiences into a personal relationship with wildlife, people were outraged when the July 4th fireworks over Big Bear Lake caused the eagles to scream and leave the area, at least temporarily. Over 40,000 people signed a petition asking the municipality involved to discontinue the annual fireworks. No press release from an Audubon chapter or newsletter article or Letter to the Editor would have garnered such

support for wildlife. My take-away message is that we need to build awe and immersion with birds and other wildlife – that is species-based, personal and extends to habitat conservation. I attended one of our Audubon chapter events at the Montrose Library, and I made a sandhill crane, named Ada, alongside the kids. Ada remains in my house reminding me how much I love and care about our local sandhill cranes. *“In the end, we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught.” Baba Dioum*



Colorado Audubon chapters impact Colorado legislation

Black Canyon Audubon Society participated with other Colorado Audubon chapters in the Public Policy Committee, meeting with Audubon Rockies and their contracted lobby organization during the 120-day Colorado legislative session. The group supported bills that passed including renewing the Wildlife Habitat Stamp program, more protection against wildlife trafficking, and providing continued support for water conservation. One endorsed bill that passed was to allow high voltage transmission lines to be co-located along state highway rights-of-way, following a Colorado Department of Transportation rulemaking process. Audubon Rockies was part of a coalition of organizations that worked together to get this passed, in hopes of minimizing impacts of transmission line development in Colorado. Of course, not all legislation went in the preferred direction, and budget shortfalls hampered many actions. More details on the legislation are available at <https://blackcanyonaudubon.org/news>.

Colorado Legislator Report Card

As a companion to the work of the Public Policy Committee of Colorado Audubon chapters, check out the Conservation Colorado scorecard of how Colorado legislators voted on climate change, environmental justice, and land/water issues. [2025 Legislative Scorecard - Conservation Colorado](#). The scorecard shows how each individual legislator voted on issues. While we do not have the strongest champions on the Western Slope, we do have legislators who need to hear our voices. Issues involving water, agriculture, and opposition to any efforts to sell or privatize public lands are places to start conversations.

Memories

I may forget where I left my sunglasses, keys, and water bottle, but I do not want to have *generational amnesia*. As reported in the summer issue of Bird Conservation, this is when we reset the baseline for birds and other wildlife. Each year we consider the “norm” to be what we see, forgetting the abundance that we saw in the past. This can allow species to slip away without our memory or outrage kicking in. “Didn’t we used to have black-capped chickadees at our feeder? Where are the rufous hummingbirds?” Questions like these can lead us to action. Whatever happened to the passenger pigeon, and could it happen again?



WE HAVE A DEAL FOR YOU!

By Janine Reid, Membership Chair
Black Canyon Audubon Society (BCAS) chapter memberships run for the calendar year, 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.

IF YOU RENEW NOW, YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS GOOD THROUGH NEXT YEAR, 12/31/26.

If you would like to join or donate to 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. NAS returns \$3 to our local chapter, Black Canyon Audubon Society/D14. 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

AUDUBON COLORADO COUNCIL REPORT

By Janine Reid, BCAS representative to ACC

As the new BCAS representative to the Audubon Colorado Council (ACC), I was delighted to go to the Denver Audubon office at Chatfield State Park (a great birding site!) and meet chapter representatives around the state. There are 10 Colorado chapters of Audubon. ACC, together with Audubon Rockies and other interested groups, meet quarterly, usually via Zoom. On July 19, 2025, we shared updates.

We signed a letter to Jeff Hurd regarding National Public Lands. The letter requests that Representative Hurd join the Public Lands Caucus, and co-sponsor HR 718: the Public Lands in Public Hands Act.

Other items of note:

- The Colorado Field Ornithologists 2025 Colorado Birding Challenge will be on Sept 6 in as many counties as possible; it is a fundraiser for conservation projects and administration.
- Led by Aiken Audubon (Colorado Springs), the ACC formally opposed the annexation of 1900 acres of grassland in eastern El Paso County. The voters agreed and voted down the annexation.
- Boulder County Audubon is working with NO CO Places (Northern Colorado), to conserve public lands via recreation, and inventorying rogue trails among six counties.

- Denver Audubon is commenting to the Planning Commission regarding the Denver landscape. One idea is to convert concrete medians to native plant beds. DA is working with Parks and Rec on what the former Park Hill Golf Course should look like.
- Roaring Fork Audubon reported that CPW's beaver restoration project is underway.
- ACC's Water Task Force is tracking the Colorado River's future and is working with Audubon to develop regulations for dredging and filling.
- The Department of the Interior's appropriations bill shows no money for sage-grouse planning, Lesser Prairie-Chicken, Wolverines, and no funding for banning lead.
- Uinta Basin Railroad project is still alive. The Colorado River Water Conservation District has concerns about the spills on the train route through Glenwood Canyon.
- USDA rescinded the Roadless Rule, which limited construction of roads and logging on public lands. Priorities have shifted from wildlife restoration and preservation to resource extraction and wildfire management. Logging is occurring now, removing swaths of old trees, threatening wildlife habitat, clean air and water, and supporting outdoor recreation.
- Bird-friendly ordinances. There was discussion about local and statewide legislation for new buildings to address bird-window collisions. The American Bird Conservancy has information bird-friendly building designs are available online. Boulder, Fort Collins, and Lafayette are designated "Bird Cities," a 3-year designation by Environment for the Americas.



Black Swift, on nest in Ouray's Box Canyon, July 2025 by Don Marsh

Fall Migration

By Don Marsh, BCAS Board member

As Rebecca Heisman states in her book *Flight Paths*:

“Migration is simply the seasonal movement of animals between regions. Birds can be permanent residents that opt out of migration entirely to spend their whole lives in one place, short- or medium-distance migrants that move anywhere from a few miles up or down a mountainside to a few hundred miles, or --like most of the birds in this book -- long distance migrants, whose journeys span entire continents. Birds make these treks to take advantage of shifting resources at different locations throughout the year, chasing booms in the availability of insects and other key foods and the right conditions to nest and raise babies.”

Unlike spring migration, fall migration occurs over a long period. Birds will be migrating through western Colorado into December, with September and October being the busiest months. One of the earliest and most obvious signs of fall migration is the arrival of male Rufous Hummingbirds into our area in mid-July. Many of us feed hummingbirds and the arrival of Rufous to our feeders is a welcome sight, although I am not sure the Broad-tailed and Black-chinned Hummingbirds would agree. The Rufous males leaving their breeding grounds in the Pacific Northwest after fulfilling their limited breeding role, then heading south toward Mexico. Here wildflowers are still blooming in mid-summer. Females and the young of the year will follow the males a couple of weeks later.

After breeding, most birds go through a partial or a complete molt prior to flying south. Therefore, many birds look “ratty” by late summer. Add to this the large number of newly fledged young and it becomes clear that identifying our fall migrants is much more challenging than during Spring migration. With hormone levels reduced, birds do not vocalize as much, making the “Merlin” app less helpful in identifying the birds. The good news is that these birds force you to look more closely at individual characteristics (physical and behavioral) before coming to an identification conclusion. Attempting to identify these “dull colored” birds, often breaks our reliance on using colors for identification as we develop our skills as a birder. With practice, you can narrow your identification based on various field marks even if the bird is only a silhouette against a gray sky. Fall migration with its many young first-time migrants also

offers us a chance to see birds that do not normally appear in our region. Even the chance of finding a “rarity” keeps some birders out in the field for long hours each autumn.

If you have ever wondered where those Bullock’s orioles or western tanagers that frequent your yard go in the winter, check out the “Bird Migration Explorer” website at <https://explorer.audubon.org>. This website is hosted by the National Audubon Society (NAS) and contains a series of interactive maps that show the migratory pathways of many species. Per the NAS website, “Visitors to the Bird Migration Explorer can learn about the full annual cycle for 458 species of migratory birds that regularly breed in the United States and Canada and use areas in Latin America and the Caribbean during other times of the year.” The data used by this website comes from many field studies shared by researchers from 330 institutions, including the MOTUS Wildlife Tracking System and eBird data from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Scientists are making new discoveries about the fascinating science of bird migration every day. Spend some time reading about these discoveries, either in book form or online, and I am sure you will be amazed at the abilities that birds possess. As an example, Scott Weidensaul in his book “A World on the Wing” writes about a semipalmated sandpiper that flew 3300 miles in a single flight. He wrote: “When in 2019 an Ethiopian athlete set a new world record by running a marathon in



Western Bluebird by Don Marsh

less than two hours, it was routinely described as ‘superhuman’. Perhaps, but also sub-avian. That small semipalmated sandpiper that flew from subarctic Canada to the jungle delta of the Orinoco [in Venezuela] managed the equivalent of running 126 consecutive marathons, and at a metabolic rate several times greater than

even an elite human runner can achieve. Again, six inches long, and not even an ounce in weight.”

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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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